



MEDIA RELEASE

MALAYSIA IN LONELY PLANET'S TOP 10 COUNTRIES FOR 2010

Malaysia has been chosen as one of the **world's top ten countries for 2010** by Lonely Planet, a popular travel guidebook that recently published its fifth annual collection of the world's best journeys, destinations and experiences for the coming year.

The *Best in Travel 2010* presents the top ten countries, regions and cities to visit in 2010, chosen by Lonely Planet's global team members comprising authors, travellers and writers. Joining Malaysia in the top ten countries list for 2010 are El Salvador, Germany, Greece, Morocco, Nepal, New Zealand, Portugal, Suriname and USA.

Lonely Planets describes Malaysia as such: *"Diversity is what Malaysia is all about. From chaotic and modern Kuala Lumpur to the near mystical wilds of Borneo, there are mountains to tackle, beaches to bake on, coral reefs to dive and malls to shop. And if this incredible geographical variety isn't enough, wait till you meet the people. Malays live in rhythm to the mosque's call to prayer, while just around the corner garlands of marigolds are sold in front of towering Hindu temples and the sweet smells of incense emanate from ornate Chinese Buddhist clan houses. Top off a multicultural day with an Indian curry, Chinese noodles, Malay rice dishes with spicy sambal or the region's most famous fusion dish, coconut-curry noodle laksa."*

The listing is even more meaningful as Malaysia is the only South-East Asian country in the top ten countries for 2010. Some of the events and festivals that are highlighted in the latest guidebook are the Hindu Thaipusam, Harvest Festival in Sabah and Sarawak, Dragon Boat Festival in Penang as well as the Rainforest World Music Festival in Sarawak.

There is a special mention about the Iskandar Malaysia project which it describes as “a city being constructed from scratch in the Johor state on a plot of land three times the size of Singapore. It hopes to one day welcome approximately three million inhabitants and rival Asia’s biggest metropolises.”

In addition, the guide has also identified Malaysia as one of the **Best Value Destinations for 2010**, promoting Malaysia as a clever choice for travellers on the lookout for a bargain.

It points out Malaysia’s well-developed tourism industry offering a wide range of accommodation, from fine resorts to charming low-cost places to stay, such as the traditional wooden *kampong* houses on the beach or in the jungle; its regular, reasonable and extra low-priced flights such as AirAsia X; and its relatively affordable food (approximately US7.50 for a three-course meal).

The book also suggests that readers make a beeline for the tropical paradise of the Perhentian Islands that offers sugar-soft white-sand beaches and crystal clear waters.

Besides Malaysia, those in the 10 best-value destinations for 2010 are Iceland, Thailand, London, South Africa, Mexico, India, Bulgaria, Kenya and Las Vegas (destinations not ranked).

In addition, the Lonely Planet’s top travel list includes Malaysia among **the top spots for medical adventures**. The guide states, “Mix procedures with pleasures in Malaysia,

another leading destination for medical travellers. Places like the beach resort town of Penang, on the country's northwestern coast, are popular for breast enhancement surgery that comes with packaged-tour. It is good that a recuperative vacation is included since doctors warn that long plane journeys after surgery can cause thrombosis."

For more information about the *Best in Travel 2010*, please log on to Lonely Planet's website at www.lonelyplanet.com.

For more information on Malaysia holiday destinations, please log on to www.tourismmalaysia.gov.my .

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