

PRESS RELEASE

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NEW SHANGHAI–PENANG DIRECT FLIGHT FOR VISIT MALAYSIA 2026 (VM2026) TO DRIVE CHINESE VISITOR ARRIVALS

PENANG — Tourism Malaysia today welcomed the inaugural flight from Shanghai to Penang by Spring Airlines (9C), marking a significant milestone in strengthening air connectivity between China and Malaysia.

Officially commencing today, the new route operates daily using an Airbus A320 9C7259 aircraft with a capacity of 186 passengers. The service is designed to meet the growing demand for both leisure and business travel, while enhancing people-to-people exchanges between the two countries.

A welcoming ceremony was held this afternoon at Penang International Airport (PEN) following the flight's arrival at approximately 2.30 pm. The event was officiated by YBhg. Dato' Yeoh Soon Hin, Deputy Chairman of Tourism Malaysia, alongside YB Wong Hon Wai, Penang State Executive Councilor (EXCO) for Tourism and Creative Economy. Also in attendance were Ms Yu Jiali, General Manager for Southeast Asia, Spring Airlines; Mr Egaluk Ngiwpmor, Marketing Manager for Southeast Asia; and Mr Mohd Ridzuan bin Ahmad Walid, Operation Manager Penang International Airport. This commencement marks a significant milestone in strengthening international visitor arrivals to the 'Pearl of the Orient'.

In support of Visit Malaysia 2026 (VM2026), the launch of this route forms part of a strategic initiative to boost inbound visitor arrivals from China, reinforcing Malaysia's position as a preferred destination for Chinese travellers while enhancing regional aviation connectivity. Through continued cooperation and support from friendly nations such as China, together with key industry partners like Spring Airlines, Malaysia aims to increase international visitor arrivals in support of the VM2026 campaign.

"This new air link serves as a direct bridge for discovery between Malaysia and one of China's most vital economic zones. This expansion aligns perfectly with Malaysia's strategic efforts to attract more Chinese visitors, particularly following the implementation of visa-free entry for Chinese citizens," said Mr Mohd Amirul Rizal Abdul Rahim, Director General of Tourism Malaysia.

Penang, a UNESCO World Heritage site, offers a unique blend of colonial history, contemporary street art and world-class cuisine, making it highly appealing to the Shanghai market. This direct air connection is expected to stimulate not only leisure

tourism but also business travel and cultural exchange across the region. The service operates daily, offering travellers with flexibility and seamless access to Malaysia's renowned culinary and heritage hub.

With Penang serving as a major gateway to Southeast Asia, the Shanghai – Penang service highlights the successful partnership between Spring Airlines and Tourism Malaysia in driving tourism growth and strengthening economic ties between China and Malaysia. This direct connection reflects shared confidence in Malaysia's appeal as a destination and reinforces a commitment to long-term bilateral cooperation.

China remains as one of Malaysia's key source market, as demonstrated by sustained growth in visitor arrivals, which reached 4.7 million in 2025, representing a 25.1 per cent year-on-year increase. Recognising the importance role of enhanced air connectivity in driving visitor growth, Tourism Malaysia will continue to work closely with airlines and travel trade partners in China to promote curated itineraries and travel packages. These initiatives aim to showcase Malaysia's diverse attractions, rich culinary heritage, vibrant festivals, and renowned hospitality. The additional flight capacity supports ongoing efforts to boost visitor arrivals and tourism expenditure from key source markets.

Tourism Malaysia extends its full support to Spring Airlines on the launch of this new service and looks forward to collaborating on promotional initiatives to highlights Malaysia's diverse travel experiences to potential travellers in Shanghai.

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About Tourism Malaysia

Malaysia Tourism Promotion Board, also known as Tourism Malaysia, is an agency under the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture Malaysia (MOTAC). It focuses on promoting Malaysia as a preferred tourism destination and has, since its establishment, played a significant role in strengthening the country's presence and competitiveness in the global tourism landscape.

Visit Malaysia 2026 (VM2026) underscores Malaysia's commitment to sustainable tourism development, in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs). The campaign aims to showcase the nation's diverse natural attractions, rich cultural heritage, and vibrant tourism offerings, while driving inclusive growth and long-term value for local communities and industry stakeholders.

For more information, visit Tourism Malaysia's website www.tourism.gov.my and social media accounts on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [X](#), [YouTube](#), and [TikTok](#).

About Spring Airlines

Spring Airlines (9C) is the China's first and largest low-cost carrier (LCC) airline headquartered in Shanghai, established in 2004. It is the aviation subsidiary of the Shanghai Spring International Travel Service, one of China's largest travel agencies. This company's services comprise tourism services, flight operations, Meetings, Incentives, Conferences & Exhibitions (MICE), ticket booking services, third-party payment solutions, tour bus rentals, and financial leasing.

Spring Tours is also a pioneer in the integrated tourism-airline business model because Spring Airlines is a subsidiary of Spring International Travel with a fleet strength of 134 aircraft.

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