

## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **GUANGZHOU–PENANG DIRECT FLIGHT DEBUTS: STRENGTHENING AIR CONNECTIVITY FOR VISIT MALAYSIA 2026 (VM2026)**

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

Officially commencing today, the new route operates three times weekly on every Wednesday, Friday, and Sunday using an Airbus A320 (flight 9C7097) with a seating capacity of 186 passengers. The service is designed to meet the growing demand for both leisure and business travel to George Town's UNESCO World Heritage precinct, scenic beaches, and renowned street food, while further enhancing people-to-people exchanges between the two countries.

A welcoming ceremony was held this morning at Penang International Airport (PEN) to mark the flight's arrival at approximately 11.00 am. The event was officiated by YB Wong Hon Wai, Penang State Executive Councilor (EXCO) for Tourism and Creative Economy, together with Tourism Malaysia Northern Region Director Mr. Abdul Hadi Che Man. Also in attendance were Mr Egaluk Ngiwprom, Marketing Manager for Southeast Asia; and Mr Mohd Nadzim bin Hashim, Senior Airport Manager Penang International Airport.

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

"This new direct route by Spring Airlines is perfectly timed and aligns seamlessly with our strategic objectives for VM2026. It is a direct response to the growing demand for immersive cultural and gastronomic experiences. China remains one of our most important source markets, and enhancing direct air access particularly to key destinations like Penang, is fundamental to increasing visitor arrivals and extending their length of stay," said Mr Mohd Amirul Rizal Abdul Rahim, Director General of Tourism Malaysia.

China remains a key source market for Malaysia, as demonstrated by the sustained growth in arrivals, which reached 4.7 million visitors in 2025, marking a 25.1 per cent year-on-year increase. Tourism Malaysia will continue to work closely with Spring Airlines and

local industry partners in Penang to develop attractive travel packages and promotional campaigns. These initiatives aim to showcase the unique 'Malaysia Truly Asia' experiences awaiting Chinese visitors, from our rich culinary heritage and vibrant festivals to our renowned hospitality. Enhanced air linkages, such as this new Spring Airlines service, provides the critical infrastructure needed to realise this vision.

Tourism Malaysia extends its full support to Spring Airlines on the launch of this new route and looks forward to collaborating on campaigns that bring Malaysia's vibrant culture and world-class hospitality to travellers from Guangzhou.

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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](http://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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