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YANGON-PENANG DIRECT FLIGHT LAUNCHED, SET TO BOOST TOURISM FOR VM2026



Reception of Inaugural Myanmar International Airlines (MAI)
flight 8M505 at Penang International Airport

PENANG, 10 April 2025 – Tourism Malaysia welcomes the launch of Myanmar Airways International (MAI)'s new direct flight connecting Yangon (RGN) and Penang (PEN), which is expected to boost tourism, trade, and cultural exchange. The twice-weekly service, operating every Monday and Thursday, will utilise an Embraer 190 (E190) aircraft with a capacity of 96 passengers per flight, providing seamless connectivity between the two destinations.

The inaugural flight landed at Penang International Airport today and was celebrated with the presence of distinguished guests, including H.E. U Aung Soe Win, Myanmar Ambassador to Malaysia; YB Wong Hon Wai, Penang State EXCO for Tourism & Creative Economy, and YBhg. Datuk Manoharan Periasamy, Director General of Tourism Malaysia.

This Penang route expands MAI's presence in Malaysia, complementing its established Yangon-Kuala Lumpur service, which commenced in April 2022 and currently operates 14 weekly flights.

Datuk Manoharan Periasamy, Director General of Tourism Malaysia, stated: “The launch of direct Yangon–Penang flights is poised to significantly boost tourism between Myanmar and Malaysia, especially for Visit Malaysia 2026 (VM2026). By establishing Penang as a destination on new routes, we are excited to anticipate a surge in international visitor arrivals, opening the door and opportunities for both leisure and business travellers and strengthening cultural ties. This direct connection will also unlock new prospects for economic growth, further showcasing the best of a variety Malaysia has to offer as a premier travel destination in Southeast Asia.”

Mr Tanes Kumar, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of MAI, stated: “The launch of our Yangon–Penang route marks another milestone in MAI’s commitment to enhancing regional connectivity. With its rich culture and tourism appeal, Penang is the perfect addition to our growing network. This new service will facilitate stronger business, tourism, and people-to-people ties between Myanmar and Malaysia while providing greater convenience for travellers. We are confident that this route will support economic growth in both regions, and we look forward to welcoming more passengers on board as we continue to expand our network with our signature hospitality.”

Echoing the significance of this new route for regional tourism, **YB Wong Hon Wai**, Penang State EXCO for Tourism & Creative Economy, said: “We warmly welcome MAI’s new Yangon–Penang direct flight, which enhances our international connectivity and creates exciting opportunities for tourism, business, and cultural exchange. This strategic link further strengthens Penang’s position as a dynamic gateway to Malaysia and a vibrant destination for global travellers. We also look forward to welcoming more visitors from Yangon to explore Penang’s renowned offerings, including our world-class medical tourism services.”

Myanmar visitors’ arrival to Malaysia from January to December has demonstrated significant growth over the years, reflecting the increasing appeal of Malaysia as a travel destination. In 2024, a total of 147,133 Myanmar visitors arrived, marking a substantial rise from 102,587 in 2023 and 57,232 in 2019. This upward trend represents a notable 43.4% increase from 2023 to 2024 and an impressive 157.1% surge from 2019 to 2024, underscoring the strengthening of travel ties between the two nations.

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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 & Culture Malaysia. It focuses on the specific task of promoting Malaysia as a preferred tourism destination. Since its inception, it has emerged as a major player in the international tourism scene.

The next Visit Malaysia Year, set to take place in 2026, will commemorate the sustainability of the nation's tourism industry, which is also in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDG).

Furthermore, Tourism Malaysia actively endorses the Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand Growth Triangle (IMT-GT), working towards the realisation of the IMT-GT Visiting Year 2023-2025, with the shared aim of promoting the region as a unified tourism destination. For more information, visit Tourism Malaysia's social media accounts on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [X](#), [YouTube](#), and [TikTok](#).

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