

PRESS RELEASE

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MALAYSIA STRENGTHENS CHINA CONNECTIVITY WITH NEW CHONGQING–PENANG ROUTE AHEAD OF VISIT MALAYSIA 2026

PENANG — Malaysia’s connectivity with China continues to strengthen with the arrival today of Chongqing Airlines’ inaugural direct flight from Chongqing to Penang, marking a significant enhancement in air access from Western China in support of the Visit Malaysia 2026 (VM2026) campaign.

The inaugural service arrived at Penang International Airport from Chongqing Jiangbei International Airport, marking the commencement of direct connectivity between Chongqing and Penang. The service operates four times weekly on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays using a B738 aircraft with a seating capacity of 165 passengers per flight. This new route enhances accessibility from Western China, supporting tourism growth while strengthening bilateral travel and business exchanges between the two destinations.

“The launch of this direct route by Chongqing Airlines marks a significant boost for our tourism sector for Visit Malaysia 2026. With a seamless four-hour connection from Western China, travellers can now more easily discover Penang’s rich heritage and world-renowned cuisine. This reflects our continued commitment to enhancing air connectivity and ensuring Malaysia remains a preferred destination for the Chinese market,” said Mr. Mohd Amirul Rizal Abdul Rahim, DirectorGeneral of Tourism Malaysia.

Penang, a UNESCO World Heritage Site renowned for its rich cultural heritage, historic architecture and vibrant culinary scene, is well positioned to attract a growing number of visitors from China seeking authentic and immersive travel experiences. The introduction of this direct connection further strengthens Malaysia’s ongoing efforts to enhance accessibility and attract international tourists, particularly following the implementation of visa-free entry for Chinese nationals.

China continues to be one of Malaysia’s key source markets, underscoring the importance of expanding direct air connectivity to support sustained tourism growth. In 2025, Malaysia recorded 4.7 million visitor arrivals from China, representing a 25.1 per cent year-on-year increase. As of February 2026, air connectivity remains robust, with approximately 871 weekly flights offering a total capacity of 170,862 seats across 30 cities. This positive momentum reflects strong travel demand and reinforces Malaysia’s appeal among Chinese travellers.

Further strengthening connectivity, Chongqing Airlines is set to launch an additional direct route from Chongqing to Kuala Lumpur at the end of April 2026, complementing

existing services operated by Sichuan Airlines, Shanghai Airlines, Xiamen Airlines and AirAsia.

Tourism Malaysia, in collaboration with Malaysia Airports Holdings Berhad (MAHB) and its airline partners, remains committed to expanding international air connectivity as a key enabler of tourism growth. These efforts play a vital role in ensuring Malaysia remains a top-of-mind destination, offering a diverse range of experiences spanning culture, heritage, gastronomy and nature.

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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](#).

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