

PRESS RELEASE

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NEW ROUTE LAUNCHED: JINAN–KUALA LUMPUR DIRECT FLIGHT TO DRIVE CHINESE VISITOR ARRIVALS FOR VISIT MALAYSIA 2026 (VM2026)

SEPANG — Tourism Malaysia today welcomed the inaugural flight from Jinan to Kuala Lumpur by Shandong Airlines, marking a significant milestone in strengthening air connectivity between China and Malaysia.

Officially commencing on 19 January 2026, the new route operates seven days a week using a Boeing 737 aircraft with a capacity of 176 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 morning at KL International Airport (KLIA) Terminal 2 upon its arrival at about 3.00 AM. It was officiated by Mr. Lee Thai Hung, Deputy Director General (Promotions II) of Tourism Malaysia, together with Mr. Ibrahim Mohamed Salleh, Chief Operating Officer, Aerodarat, Ms. Hao Shu, Deputy General Manager, Asia – Pacific Region, Air China and Mr. Zainuddin Mohamed, General Manager Aviation, Marketing & Development - Malaysia Airports Holdings Berhad (MAHB). Also present were Madam Nuwal Fadhilah Ku Azmi, Senior Director of the International Promotions Division (Asia/Africa), Tourism Malaysia and Mr. Azmi Abdullah, Senior Deputy Director of the International Promotions Division (Asia/Africa), Tourism Malaysia.

In the spirit of supporting Visit Malaysia 2026 (VM2026), the launch of this route is part of a strategic effort to boost inbound tourist arrivals from China, reinforcing Malaysia's position as a preferred destination for Chinese travellers while enhancing regional aviation connectivity.

"We warmly welcome the inaugural Jinan–Kuala Lumpur flight by Shandong Airlines, which marks a positive step forward in meeting the growing travel demand between China and Malaysia. This new daily service will make it more convenient for Chinese travellers to discover Malaysia's diverse attractions, culture, and hospitality, while reinforcing our commitment to strengthening tourism cooperation under the Visit Malaysia 2026 (VM2026) campaign," said Mr. Mohd Amirul Rizal Abdul Rahim, Director General of Tourism Malaysia.

"As a vital member of the Air China family, Shandong Airlines has long been a pillar of the Shandong market. We are proud to strengthen Jinan and Qingdao as two core hubs, while steadily expanding our international footprint. The successful launch of the Jinan–Kuala Lumpur service is not just a milestone for Shandong Airlines'international growth,

it is a clear demonstration of our collective ability to identify market opportunities and drive regional prosperity. This new route will further enhance our network in Southeast Asia. Through effective connections among the routes of Group airlines, it will offer passengers more diverse and seamless travel options, while further strengthening the role of Jinan as an important hub within our international network,” said Ms. Hao Shu, Deputy General Manager, Asia – Pacific Region, Air China

With Kuala Lumpur serving as a major gateway to Southeast Asia, the Jinan – Kuala Lumpur service highlights the remarkable partnership between Shandong Airlines and Tourism Malaysia in promoting tourism growth and strengthening bilateral economic cooperation between China and Malaysia. This direct connection reflects confidence in Malaysia’s appeal as a destination and reinforces efforts to strengthen bilateral cooperation.

China remains as a key source market for Malaysia as demonstrated in the sustained tourism growth of arrivals which reached 4.3 million visitors from January to November 2025, marking a 25.9% year-on-year increase. Recognising the significance of enhanced air connectivity in driving visitor growth, Tourism Malaysia will continue working closely with airlines and travel trade partners in China to promote curated itineraries and travel packages. These efforts will showcase Malaysia’s diverse attractions, rich culinary heritage, vibrant festivals, and renowned hospitality. The added flight capacity supports ongoing efforts to boost visitor arrivals and increase tourism spending from key source markets.

Tourism Malaysia extends its full support to Shandong Airlines on the launch of this new service and looks forward to collaborating on promotional initiatives to showcase Malaysia’s diverse travel experiences to potential travellers in Jinan, the wider Shandong province and China.

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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 Shandong Airlines

Shandong Airlines (IATA: SC, ICAO: CDG) is a major Chinese airline headquartered in Jinan, Shandong Province, established in 1994. The carrier operates a large domestic and regional network from its primary hubs in Jinan, Qingdao, and Yantai, connecting major cities across China as well as destinations in Asia.

As of 2025, Shandong Airlines operates an all-Boeing 737 fleet of approximately 139 aircraft, serving over 380 routes with more than 4,700 weekly flights to 80+ cities.

The airline's extensive network includes frequent domestic services and growing international operations, including routes to Northeast and Southeast Asia. In addition to passenger flights, Shandong Airlines has expanded cargo services linking China with regional markets.

Shandong Airlines is part of the Air China group, benefiting from network synergies, codeshare agreements, and alliance partnerships that enhance connectivity for its passengers.

The airline maintains a strong safety record and continues to optimise operations with modern aircraft and service enhancements, supporting both business and leisure travel demand.

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