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SHOWCASING MALAYSIA'S 'SURREAL EXPERIENCES': SABAH FAMILIARISATION TRIP FOR VIETNAMESE TRAVEL AGENTS AND INFLUENCERS

HO CHI MINH CITY, 27 May 2025 – In a strategic effort to diversify inbound tourism markets and increase visitor arrivals, Tourism Malaysia office in Ho Chi Minh City, in collaboration with AirAsia and the Sabah Tourism Board, is organising a four-day, three-night (4D3N) familiarisation trip to showcase Sabah as a premier travel destination.

This initiative is designed to position Sabah as a top choice for Vietnamese travellers seeking a refreshing blend of multicultural heritage, stunning island landscapes, and pristine beaches. Taking place from 24 to 27 May 2025, the programme brings together four (4) leading travel agents, three (3) travel influencers, and two (2) media representatives from Ho Chi Minh City for an immersive Sabah experience.

Participants will enjoy firsthand exposure to Sabah's rich cultural heritage, pristine islands, and vibrant culinary scene. Highlights of the itinerary include visits to Tunku Abdul Rahman Park, Tagal Tinopikon Park, Mari-Mari Cultural Village, Kokol Hill and gastronomic hotspots such as the Api-Api Night Food Market and a sunset dinner cruise - all reflecting the surreal charm and diverse appeal of Sabah.

This effort is further supported by AirAsia's launch of its new direct route between Kota Kinabalu and Ho Chi Minh City, which commenced on 3 December 2024. Operating three times weekly, the new connection enhances regional accessibility and supports Tourism Malaysia's broader goal of increasing Vietnamese arrivals, especially in the lead-up to the highly anticipated Visit Malaysia 2026 (VM2026) campaign.

"This FAM trip marks a significant step in strengthening tourism ties between Vietnam and East Malaysia. With AirAsia's convenient thrice-weekly direct flights, Sabah is now more accessible than ever to Vietnamese travellers," said Ms. Amirah Nadiah Mazlan, Director of Tourism Malaysia in Vietnam.

Under the theme "Surreal Experiences," VM2026 aims to showcase Malaysia's rich diversity in tourism offerings. Vietnam remains one of Malaysia's key source markets

within ASEAN, with growing demand for nature-based, cultural, and family-friendly travel experiences.

Sabah and Sarawak, rich in ecotourism, indigenous heritage, and outdoor adventure, are actively promoted as emerging gems for Vietnamese travellers seeking authentic and meaningful holidays beyond the traditional cityscape.

From January to February 2025, Malaysia recorded 54,894 visitor arrivals from Vietnam, reflecting a 7.2% increase compared to the same period in 2024, and indicating a steady recovery trajectory with only a 6.2% gap from pre-pandemic levels in 2019.

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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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