

# travel

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## MDTF 2009: Holiday bargains, prizes and tourism talks

IT'S all systems go for the Malaysian Domestic Tourism Fair (MDTF) which opens this Friday to Sunday. More than 100 exhibitors will set up booths at Putra World Trade Centre Kuala Lumpur to entice visitors with attractive travel bargains, fun activities and freebies.

Expect special offers from airlines, hotels, resorts, travel and tour agents, health and wellness operators, leisure recreation and lifestyle companies as well as retailers of travel-related products.

Among the biggest bargains expected are from Malaysia Airlines, MasWings and Firefly.

Sabah, Sarawak, Perak, Langkawi, Penang, Johor, Terengganu and Malacca tourism bodies will also be there to promote places of interest in the country.

The event organiser, National Tourism Council Malaysia, is encouraging people to travel more within Malaysia. There will be something for everyone, from high-end travellers to those on a shoestring budget. Senior citizens and students will find affordable travel packages specially tailored for them.

RHB Bank Bhd, the event main sponsor and official card, will be there in a big way to help visitors make the best choices in financial products and services. RHB is collaborating with MDTF in a contest for visitors with over 30 prizes up for grabs, including the first prize of two Business Class Malaysia Airlines tickets to Manila, second prize tickets to Bangkok, and third, a 4D/3N holiday package to Sabah.

Sabah Tourism Board also offers seven other packages as prizes. Another sponsor, Celcom Berhad, has more than RM10,000 worth of prizes to be won.

Besides scouring for the best bargains and participating in contests and other activities, visitors can also attend tourism talk sessions on Saturday. There will be nine speaker sessions starting at 10am, with the last at 7pm. Speakers who are experts in their fields will give talks related to lifestyle, health and beauty, feng shui, eco-tourism, history and heritage, budget travelling and tour guiding. The speakers include Asian Overland Services Tours and Travel Sdn Bhd group managing director Anthony Wong who will talk about "Green & Eco-tourism – the fastest growing tourism sector. How does one get in?" and author of Not Just A Good Food Guide, Alice Yong, who will present the Malaysian gastronomic trails in her session, titled "Makan-makan Travel".

MDTF is aimed at promoting domestic travel and tourism. Event organising chairman Datuk Shamsul Falak Abdul Kadir says: "Malaysians should spend more time exploring our own country which we tend to take for granted. We don't spend time to do any research before we go on holidays here unlike when we plan for our overseas holidays where we spend much more time and take the trouble to research and seek information on a place.

"When we go on holiday locally, we tend to choose more popular destinations, play safe, and make travel easier. But doing so makes local vacations less exciting as we don't discover hidden attractions, the less beaten paths and so miss the more exciting but lesser known destinations."

He adds that MDTF will be showcasing the hidden gems to offer Malaysians new options. He notes that Malaysians are also feeling the effects of the global economic downturn and so have to be more cautious in their spending.

"What better way than to take advantage during this lean period to travel and explore within the borders of our own country. Discover our rich tapestry of culture, heritage, natural wonders, leisure and lifestyle and look out for special interests and nature-based escapades. Malaysia is now more affordable than ever with many fantastic holiday options," he says.

With the support of Tourism Malaysia and the New Straits Times as the official newspaper, MDTF is held for the first time this year and it is set to be an annual event.

"We aim to make it the premier domestic fair that not only showcases destinations and tourism products but also culture, food, heritage, festivals, traditions and lifestyle," Shamsul says.

Entrance fees to the fair at Hall 4 (Dewan Tun Razak), PWTC, are RM2 for adult and RM1 for child and senior citizen. Ticket holders will be entitled to take part in hourly lucky draws for hundreds of prizes from holiday

packages and hotel stays to F&B vouchers, spa packages and mobile phones.

Those who spend a minimum of RM200 per transaction can enter a "slogan" contest and stand a chance of winning Malaysia Airlines Business class tickets to Surabaya and a Celcom Blackberry mobile phone.

For more details, contact the event organiser at 03-6280 2281.

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