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All about domestic holidays

[LAVIINIA DHANAGUNAN](#)

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HIS mega-watt smile grabs your attention when you first meet National Tourism Council Malaysia (NTCM) deputy president Datuk Shamsul Falak Abdul Kadir. And, as he talks about Malaysia and everything the country has to offer, the smile grows to infinite proportions.

Shamsul, who is also Kuala Lumpur Tourism Association chairman, has just taken on the role of organising chairman of the Malaysian Domestic Tourism Fair 2009. He talks to LAVIINIA DHANAGUNAN about the fair and what visitors can expect from this inaugural event.



Can you tell us more about the event?

Shamsul: The Malaysian Domestic Tourism Fair 2009 (MDTF 09) is scheduled for July 3-5 at Putra World Trade Centre, KL. It's organised by NTCM and is endorsed and supported by the Ministry of Tourism. We expect more than 100 exhibitors to take up the 180 booths at the three-day fair. The fair's in July so that it won't clash with other major tourism fairs but instead will complement the timing and gap within such fairs.

Why is NTCM organising an event that is just about domestic tourism?

Domestic tourism contributes a fair share to the tourism revenue. We have always promoted domestic tourism strongly. As a national body with member affiliates comprising State tourism associations and other national trade associations, we feel we should take up this role and support the Government and Tourism Ministry's objectives and focus.

This year, it does seem to be even more appropriate, taking into account the global financial downturn. More will be travelling within the country instead of abroad to save costs. We've tagged the event ... "the best of Malaysia".

Why do you think domestic tourism is so important today?

Malaysia has much to offer. We recorded the second highest tourist arrivals in this

search article



region, behind China. This shows we have the infrastructure, tourism attractions and travel info products. Lots of Malaysians have not seen, visited or experienced the many interesting places. Pick the state : Johor

This fair will try to expose the essence of Malaysia, not only in its destinations but also the respective local products and culture, thus promoting interaction with the people themselves. People make the place and we want all Malaysians to think tourism and be friendly regardless of whether it's foreign tourists or locals.

Do you think the fair will be well received by the public? How many people are expected to attend?

Yes, I think people will come to find out what's available for holidays in Malaysia. We are expecting 30,000 visitors and we hope exhibitors will offer good deals, bargains and attractive holiday and travel packages.

Airlines are also offering special fares during the fair. The public should take advantage of this and seek value-for-money holiday packages and deals. In particular, we are promoting packages to Government offices, universities and colleges as we'd like to focus on family, leisure and student travel.

What can visitors expect?

As mentioned earlier, Malaysians want value for their money – do the same things on holiday but pay less. For example, why go to Maldives to dive when you can do the same thing in Pulau Sipadan?

Also, taking a weekend break is possible domestically without burning a hole in your wallet. With the current hectic lifestyle, a weekend break is necessary to maintain balance and have a better quality life. This is also why we are encouraging students to travel as travel offers them a different perspective of life and an opportunity to understand and interact with their own people.

Many operators of new destinations and attractions will be promoting their products. We are organising workshops and talks on topics such as eco-tourism, health and wellness, leisure and special interest hobbies such as birdwatching, mountaineering, budget travel etc. Everyone is welcome to attend.

There will be hourly lucky draws with prizes such as holiday packages, hotel stays, F&B dining vouchers and other gift vouchers. There will also be a contest with prizes like airline tickets, electrical appliances and mobile phones.

How has the response been so far from exhibitors?

Tourism Malaysia has taken up 30 booths. MAS, Firefly and MASWings will be participating. Most of the State Tourism bodies have also registered. Other exhibitors include hotels and resorts, travel and tour agents, tourism attractions and product operators, etc. More than half the booths have already been taken. However, we hope to have greater participation from all sectors including health and wellness, spas, leisure and recreation, theme parks and event promoters.

Have you started promoting the event to the public yet?

We will hold a Press conference soon to announce the event officially. We have also planned the publicity and visitors promotion programme including Press coverage, radio advertisements, street buntings, posters and flyers and other channels such as the electronic media.

Those interested to participate in the fair may contact the event managers at 03-6280 2281.



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