



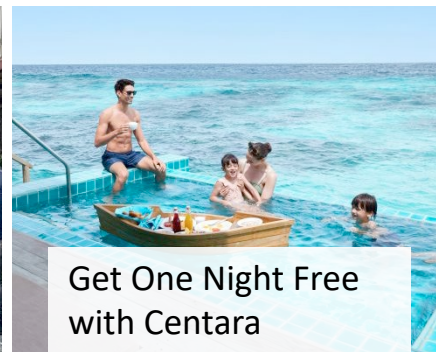
Emirates renews Dubai Desert support



Sabah takes a cue from Yogyakarta



LADA promotes February attractions



Get One Night Free with Centara



Langkawi
99 Magical Islands

LADA reaches out to investors

Langkawi Development Authority (LADA) will host a Langkawi Invest Day to unlock investment opportunities for sustainable tourism projects in the archipelago.

LADA announced the project last week on its Facebook and Twitter accounts, inviting tourism investors to attend the half-day event from 0930 to 1300...

Fairfield by Marriott expands in Japan

Fairfield by Marriott, part of Marriott Bonvoy's portfolio of 30 brands, announced Tuesday seven anticipated openings of 2023, adding to the portfolio of 22 Fairfield by Marriott hotels in Japan.

The new hotels will be located along national roadside rest areas in the prefectures of Hyogo, Kagoshima, Okayama, Saga, Kumamoto, and Fukuoka in the southern region of Japan. The Fairfield...

Sun Princess to debut in 2024

SINGAPORE, 6 February 2023: Princess Cruises has revealed a first glimpse of the contemporary and state-of-the-art designs onboard Sun Princess "The Love Boat" scheduled to debut in early 2024.

It is the largest Princess ship ever constructed, accommodating 4,000 guests...

Thai Vietjet to fly charters to Okinawa

Thai Vietjet has concluded a business partnership with a leading travel agency in Thailand, Tourladfah, to offer charter flights on the Bangkok-Okinawa Japan route.

The twice-weekly flights (Thursday and Sunday) from Bangkok's Suvarnabhumi airport to Okinawa, Japan, come under the airline's charter flight operations department. The first flight will depart on 16 March to Okinawa...

Bedsonline strengthens sales in the Philippines

Bedsonline, a leading global provider of online accommodation, has appointed Worldrep Inc as its general sales agent (GSA) in the Philippines.

Worldrep Inc will now represent Bedsonline in all sales and commercial activities, helping to grow...

Qatar offers discounts on February travel

Qatar Airways will sponsor the 2023 edition of the Doha Jewellery and Watches Exhibition (DJWE), one of the longest-running events in Qatar's annual calendar.

The business-to-consumer event held annually in the Gulf region is expected to attract more than 30,000 visitors to Qatar worldwide. The 19th edition of DJWE will run for six days...

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Those who travel more spend more

Leisure travel takes the largest chunk of our annual discretionary spending budgets on par with dining but ahead of shopping, home improvements and entertainment, according to the latest Tripadvisor study, 'An Economic Portrait of the Traveller'

uncertainties, respondents are prepared to absorb higher costs to keep travelling, with 78% planning to spend the same amount on travel as last year.

Tripadvisor's study conclusions are a good read for travel and hospitality suppliers. It's music to their ears to read that while

compared to 38% of occasional travellers. Compared to the average respondent, frequent travellers made purchases more consistently across every spending category, even accounting for income levels and budget.

The study shows that most travellers purchase from various categories when preparing for a trip. In addition to travel spending, they are likely to splurge on clothes (89%), luggage (72%), and electronics (62%). Importantly, these are not one-off purchases, with respondents buying these items at least two to three times in the past three years before travelling.

This mindset extends when they arrive at their destination, with 63% claiming shopping is an integral part of their travel budget and 62% agreeing that shopping is an important way to spend time while travelling.

Only 4% of travellers surveyed don't usually shop during leisure trips, while 20% ranked shopping as the activity they spend the most on while travelling.

Key findings

Those who travel more, spend more

Frequent travelers are enthusiastic consumers across multiple categories



Accommodations remain one of the key big-ticket items for travelers.

1 in 3 travelers

are spending more than \$200/night.

Travelers' spending power extends across multiple categories and stages of travel.

CLOTHES 89%

ACCESSORIES 80%

OTC PRODUCTS 75%

SKINCARE 74%

LUGGAGE 72%

Respondents prepare for travel by regularly purchasing from a wide range of categories.

95%

of respondents would decrease spend in other categories to save for their next vacation.

78%

of respondents plan to spend more or the same on travel as last year.

63%

think shopping is an important part of their travel budget.

The study's executive summary states that despite rising prices, intent to travel is on par with 2019 levels. "Travellers want to go and are willing to spend to make it happen. One in five discretionary dollars goes toward travel, tied with restaurants as the top category for discretionary spending."

Leisure trips and dining out each accounted for 19% of discretionary spending, higher than shopping (18%), home improvements (14%) or entertainment (13%).

Despite the global economic

travellers are tightening their belts, 75% of those ready to reduce discretionary spending say they are avoiding cuts to travel plans. Almost all respondents (95%) said they would rather decrease spending on other categories to save for a future vacation.

Travel influences spending in categories

Over half (53%) of frequent travellers will spend more on travel in the next 12 months than they did in the past year,

Those who travel more spend more

Frequent travellers (those planning three or more trips over the next 12 months) are especially enthusiastic consumers. This group plans more trips, but they typically spend more on accommodations per night than occasional travellers – 41% will book accommodations priced at over USD200/night, 71% higher than occasional travellers.

[Full story.](#)

Langkawi

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Emirates renews Dubai Desert support



The Emirates Group has renewed its agreement with Dubai Municipality to manage the Dubai Desert Conservation Reserve (DDCR) in its continuous commitment to preserving wildlife and protecting natural habitats.

As custodian of the reserve for over 20 years, the Emirates Group is charged with its full operations and funding of its efforts to nurture the fragile ecosystem of the UAE, in addition to research and education programmes.

Engineer Alya Abdulrahim Alharmoudi, Acting CEO – Environment, Health & Safety Agency at Dubai Municipality.

DDCR was born out of

the Dubai Government's commitment to preserving the emirate's unique desert habitat and biodiversity. The reserve is the UAE's first national park, spanning an area of 225 square kilometres, roughly 5% of the total land area of Dubai.

Signing the agreement on behalf of Emirates Group, Ali Mubarak Al Soori, Executive Vice President – Facilities, Projects Management & Group Procurement & Supply Chain said: "At the core of Emirates' Group strategic goals is our commitment to sustainability and protecting the precious environment that we operate in. Since the establishment of DDCR in 2002, the Emirates

Group has supported this important initiative by operating the reserve and managing its extensive facilities on behalf of the Government of Dubai. The UAE has declared 2023 the Year of Sustainability, and we are proud to continue playing a role in achieving the nation's sustainability goals."

Commenting on the renewed management agreement, Engineer Alya Abdulrahim Alharmoudi, Acting CEO – Environment, Health & Safety Agency at Dubai Municipality, added: "Our collaboration with Emirates Airline to preserve and manage the Dubai Desert Conservation Reserve (Al Maha) demonstrates the significant role



Signing the agreement on behalf of Emirates Group, Ali Mubarak Al Soori, Executive Vice President – Facilities, Projects Management & Group Procurement & Supply Chain and Engineer Alya Abdulrahim Alharmoudi, Acting CEO – Environment, Health & Safety Agency at Dubai Municipality.

of public-private partnerships in promoting the sustainable development of natural reserves. It also reflects the Municipality's commitment to efficiently coordinate with all its partners to boost the economy further. This agreement plays a vital role in preserving the diversity of environmental and natural reserves, as well as strengthening wildlife conservation, which is essential for developing tourism and environmental sectors in the Emirate of Dubai and the UAE. At Dubai Municipality, we are committed to fostering sustainability in the natural and desert reserves by carrying out research operational plans and studies. This will contribute to sustainably conserving their ecological diversities and highlight their relevance as significant tourist attractions for wildlife and desert safaris."

The Emirates Group has invested more than AED28 million in the nature reserve since its establishment in 2002 to fund and support the conservation of the natural desert landscape and its indigenous fauna and flora. The protected inland desert habitat



is currently home to over 560 species of plants and trees, birds, mammals, reptiles and arthropods – more than double the original 150 indigenous species which thrived in the area before DDCR's efforts. The reserve's effective management strategies have helped promote the natural processes that lead to rewilding of the desert habitat and its rehabilitation.

By protecting Dubai's valuable desert ecosystems, Emirates has also made it possible for the DDCR to provide an authentic desert experience for visitors through carefully managed and monitored

tours. Funding from the Emirates Group and limited tour operations at the DDCR also enables the reserve to conduct scientific research, collect data, develop new technologies necessary for its management, and roll out education programs designed to enrich the visitor experience.

The sustainable tourism offering allows visitors worldwide to experience spectacular dune drives, desert safaris and traditional Arabian experiences while gaining a deeper understanding and appreciation of the desert's natural habitat, heritage and wildlife, and the importance of conservation. A new Desert Visitor Centre is currently being developed

to enhance the educational experience for guests of the reserve.

Since the inception of the DDCR, the reserve has been successful in growing the population of sand gazelles, Arabian gazelles and the Arabian oryx from 230 initially to over 1,300 today. A further 171 Arabian Oryx have been relocated to other protected areas in the UAE. Also amongst its other milestone achievements is the re-introduction of 2,800 Houbara, or Macqueen's Bustard, which roam freely within the safe environment of the reserve.

Sabah takes a cue from Yogyakarta

Taking a cue from Yogyakarta's award-winning Nglanggeran Tourism Village will help Sabah improve its sustainable community-based tourism initiatives.



Sabah Tourism, Culture, and Environment Assistant Minister and Sabah Tourism Board chairman Datuk Joniston Bangkuai said that this is paramount as the state is planning to have more of its tourism players achieve international recognition as part of the process of transforming Sabah into a world-class rural destination.

"We should not limit ourselves to our examples of success, but instead look to the achievements of others and draw ideas and motivation from them.

"In this way, we will be able to raise the bar for rural tourism and make significant improvements. We want to see the high-end offering in our rural destination so we can lure quality tourists," he said after touring the Nglanggeran Tourism Village on Friday.

Joniston was in Yogyakarta, along with the Sabah Tourism team attending last week's ASEAN Tourism Forum. He also visited several attractions for

products update.

Also present were Sabah Tourism Board deputy chief executive officer Julinus Jimit and Federation of Rural Tourism Association Sabah (FeRTAS) President Walter Kandayon, also a board member of Sabah Tourism.

Joniston also said Sabah rural tourism players could learn from Nglanggeran village's

2017 ASEAN Community Based Tourism (CBT) Award.

Located within the Gunung Sewu Geopark, Nglanggeran offers a variety of tourism activities and services, such as cultural tours, homestays, and outdoor recreation, appealing to a wide range of tourists.

Joniston added that Sabah could also learn from the local experts here regarding how to



effective marketing of itself as a unique and authentic tourism destination that draws visitors from around the world.

"I have informed the FeRTAS to get in touch with the Nglanggeran Tourism Village committee with the hope that we can make future engagements in Sabah," he added.

The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has named Nglanggeran Tourism Village the World's Best Tourism Village in 2021. It also won the

manage geo-parks and apply them to its own Kinabalu National Geopark, which covers the districts of Ranau, Kota Belud, and Kota Marudu.

During the visit, Nglanggeran Tourism Village manager Sugeng Handoko shared with the Sabah Tourism delegates that the village's efforts to promote community-based tourism bring in approximately RM2 million each year...

[Full story.](#)

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ATF 2023 attendance flops

ASEAN Tourism Forum set a new record last week as attendance slumped to an all-time low since the region's top event was established in 1981.

Hosted in Indonesia's heritage capital of Yogyakarta, the ASEAN Tourism Forum closed

The 26th ASEAN Tourism Forum chairman's statement later confirmed the trade show's top participants were the media delegates invited by the host destination Indonesia.

The show theme, "Journey to Wonderful Destinations", fell

of its popularity, the ATF 2018 in Chiang Mai, Thailand, delivered a tally of 240 buyers, 650 sellers and over 890 booths.

Indonesia's Minister of Tourism and Creative Economy Sandiaga Salahuddin Uno, had earlier forecasted the ATF 2023 would draw around 250 buyers and 350 sellers.

Next year the ATF will be hosted by Lao PDR from 15 to 19 January, and expectations are a carbon copy of Indonesia's forecast – 350 sellers and 250 buyers. But the last time Laos hosted the ATF in 2013, it managed to attract 459 international buyers and 989 sellers with 495 booths booked.

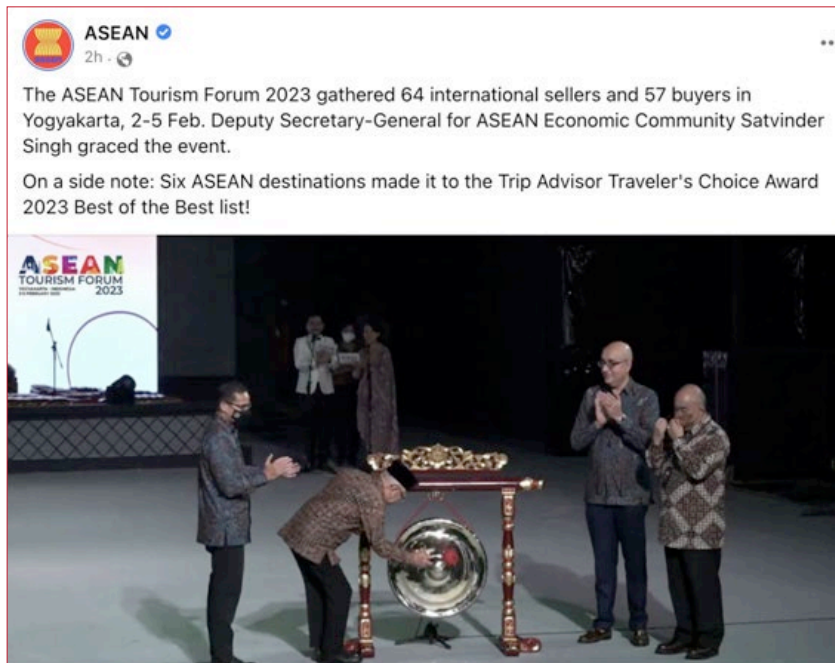
Asian Trails chairman Luzi Matzig responded to questions from TTRW, saying the ATF was no longer a priority due to financial challenges.

"Asian Trails did not attend ATF as after Covid; we had to tighten our belts and plan to attend only the most important trade shows, such as ITB Berlin and World Travel Market."

Muqbil told TTRW he was undertaking an in-depth report on the ATF to identify the show's direction and the possible long-term outcomes, post Covid pandemic.

Singapore's HPL Hotels & Resorts vice president of sales & marketing Michael Chua who attended the ATF 2023, conceded it was a "smaller ATF, but we got good appointments. There are still many who are worried about travelling due to Covid."

Long haul buyers were much fewer than in past years...



on 5 February having attracted just 57 international buyers, 64 sellers and 74 domestic and international media, delivering a total audience of no more than 192 travel delegates excluding the 200 plus government officials who meet for their annual meetings held on the sidelines of the ATF.

The unprecedented slump in international travel buyers and sellers was first observed by Travel Impact Newswire executive editor and tourism historian Imtiaz Muqbil hours before the Official ASEAN Facebook account confirmed the tally yesterday evening.

far short of expectations for international buyers seeking new travel experiences for their 2023 tours. The paltry turnout of 64 sellers came from 10 member countries that comprise ASEAN (Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam). Attendance was far off the pace of any previous ATF going back to 1981 when the inaugural show in Genting Highlands Malaysia was officially opened by former Prime Minister Dr Mahathir.

In 2020 the ATF in Brunei delivered 265 sellers, 160 buyers and 109 media. But at the height

[Full story.](#)



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LADA promotes February attractions

Langkawi is promoting three attractions this month; hidden gems on an island famous for its natural heritage and UNESCO Global Geopark.



MAHA Tower

One of the popular tourist attractions in Langkawi is the MAHA Tower or Menara MAHA, a towering 138-metre-tall steel structure located in Kuah town, according to Langsura Geopark Facebook account. The Facebook page introduces the unique tower initially opened by Tun Dr Mahathir, noting “there are no prizes for guessing the origin of the tower’s name.”

Sandbar Walk

Travellers who wake up at dawn can experience an amazing natural phenomenon as the sea splits at Tanjung Rhu Beach, allowing visitors to walk with the sea lapping at their feet on both sides of a spectacular sandbar.

LADA, in partnership with Tanjung Rhu Resort Langkawi, will hold the Sand Bar Walk 2023 @ Pantai Tanjung Rhu Langkawi. You can witness the ‘split sea’ phenomenon and enjoy walking on the sandbank through the middle of the sea at a low tide. For more information, visit <https://www.lada.gov.my/acara/sand-bar-walk-2023/>



Langkawi’s tallest waterfall

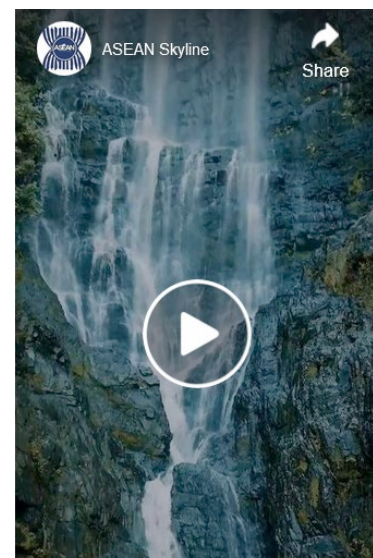
ASEAN Skyline promotes the Jurassic Hidden Gem of Langkawi Island: Temurun Waterfall. Located in the Dataran Bay area, Temurun, a three-tier waterfall, features an awesome, cumulative 200-metre drop from the top ledge to the pool below. This is the tallest waterfall in Langkawi. During the rainy season, fresh mountain water cascades down the northern slope of Mount Mat Cincang, carving out a gorge from 500-million-year-old sandstone and shale cliff and rocks.

From the car park on the main road, the first tier is only a short five-minute stroll along a paved

walkway through the rainforest of Mount Mat Cincang. The ascent to the waterfall’s base is gradual, with a railing on one side.

One visitor posted on the ASEAN Skyway Facebook page, “check the weather when visiting the waterfall. During the dry season, the water is just a trickle

to what you see in the video”. Check out the ASEAN Skyway video of Langkawi’s Temurun Waterfall.





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February 2023 for stays from 1 May to 30 September 2023, where a 3-night minimum stay means one night free. Guests can also opt to extend their travels to stay 6 nights and pay for 4 stays 9 nights and pay for 6, or even longer, at participating properties.

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Sabah wins three ASEAN awards

Three rural tourism operators have been awarded the prestigious 2023-2025 ASEAN Tourism Standard Award in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, further elevating the reputation of Sabah's rural tourism products on the international stage.

The recipients are Padas Farmstay (ASEAN Community Based Tourism); Mari-Mari Cultural Village (ASEAN Community Based Tourism); and Homestay TaunGusi (ASEAN Homestay Standard).

Padas Farmstay managing director ThamYau Kong, Mari-Mari Cultural Village base manager Jeremiah Jamson, and Homestay TaunGusi coordinator Ismail Muile @ Muele received the awards on 5 February, during the ASEAN Tourism Forum.

Sabah Tourism, Culture and Environment Assistant Minister cum Sabah Tourism Board chairman Datuk Joniston Bangkuai joined the award ceremony.

He was in Yogyakarta leading the Sabah Tourism Board

delegation at the ASEAN Tourism Forum event held from 3 to 5 February.

"I'm delighted to be here to see Sabah's incredible success story in rural tourism unfold. I congratulate our award recipients on their perseverance in maintaining the highest levels of product and service quality despite the challenges of the pandemic.

"The accreditation of three Sabah rural tourism products with the ASEAN Tourism Standard Award is a major boost to the international profile of Sabah's rural tourism offerings.

"This success bodes well for Sabah Tourism's mission to help rural areas and their communities thrive off of tourism. Hopefully, this inspires others to raise the bar and work together to make our rural area a world-class place to visit by 2030," he remarked.

Additionally, the Sabah International Convention Centre won the ASEAN MICE Venue Award (Category Exhibition

Venue), with the awarding ceremony set for next year.

Padas Farmstay in Tenom was officially established in 2017, but it has been open to the public since 2013 when an international student group expressed interest in educational and community programmes.

They have received between 10 and 20 school groups per year since then and have completed 60 community projects that have benefited 20 nearby villages.

Mari-Mari Cultural Village started operation in 2008, offering a glimpse into the lives of Sabah's rich culture with its distinctive houses, costumes and traditional skills of Sabah's five major ethnic groups.

Homestay TaunGusi in Kota Belud is a community-based homestay registered with the Ministry of Tourism, Art, and Culture in 2011. It has 18 certified homestay members, offering unique experiences to guests, including cultural

[Full story.](#)



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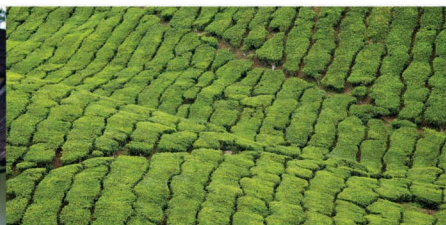


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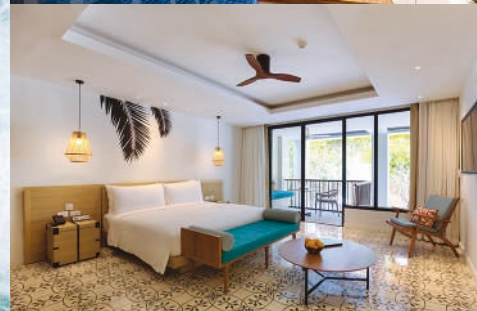
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