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Malaysia is the most-visited ASEAN nation in 2024 with 38 million foreign arrivals

Malaysia has officially surpassed Thailand as ASEAN's most-visited country in 2024, recording 38 million foreign tourist arrivals. Tourism Minister Datuk Seri Tiong King Sing announced that the country exceeded its initial target of 27.3 million visitors, prompting a review of the 2026 Visit Malaysia Year (TMM 2026) goal. The ministry aims to set a more ambitious target while maximizing economic benefits, with a revenue goal of at least RM150 billion.

Malaysia outperformed Thailand's 35.54 million international arrivals, despite Bangkok remaining the world's most-visited city and Kuala Lumpur ranking 10th. Other ASEAN tourist arrivals include Vietnam (17.5 million), Singapore (15.3 million*), Indonesia (12.66 million*), Cambodia (6.7 million), the Philippines (5.43 million), Laos (5 million*), and Myanmar (0.9 million).

Malaysia's January–November 2024 data recorded 34.1 million visitors, including excursionists. The 38 million total cited by Tiong is believed to be the final full-year figure, pending public release. (**Figures for Singapore, Indonesia, and Laos cover only the first 11 months.*)



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Malaysia to leverage business, border tourism

Tourism Malaysia will intensify promotions in ASEAN, focusing on business and border tourism to strengthen Malaysia's appeal as a key regional destination. Deputy director-general Lee Thai Hung said the agency will conduct strategic sales missions in border areas with Singapore, Thailand, Indonesia, and Brunei, featuring airlines, hotels, theme parks, and homestay operators to boost collaboration and tourism offerings.

Malaysia's ASEAN chairmanship in 2024 will bring regional meetings and events, attracting more business visitors and reinforcing its role as a tourism hub. Lee highlighted that this presents significant growth opportunities for the sector.

The initiative follows Malaysia's record-breaking 38 million foreign tourist arrivals in 2024, exceeding its 27.3 million target and surpassing Thailand's 35.5 million. The country aims to further capitalize on this momentum with competitive promotions and enhanced tourism experiences. By leveraging business tourism, regional accessibility, and cross-border engagement, Malaysia seeks to sustain its leading position in ASEAN's tourism landscape.



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Uzbekistan, Malaysia Chart Course for Tourism Expansion

Uzbekistan and Malaysia are strengthening their tourism partnership by enhancing transport links, developing joint tour packages, and promoting tourism offerings. Umid Shadiey, Chairman of Uzbekistan's Tourism Committee, highlighted tourism's role in economic growth and infrastructure development. Direct flights between Tashkent and Kuala Lumpur are key to increasing visitor flows, with plans for more routes. A twin-centre tour package covering both nations is being developed to attract tourists.

Uzbekistan and Malaysia aim to position themselves as prime destinations for Muslim-friendly, educational, and eco-tourism. Uzbekistan's historic cities, such as Samarkand and Bukhara, attract Malaysian pilgrims. The introduction of a 30-day visa-free regime has significantly boosted Malaysian visitor numbers to Uzbekistan, doubling from 4,396 in 2023 to 9,464 in 2024.

Both countries see potential in sustainable tourism and educational exchanges, encouraging academic collaborations between universities. Malaysia's expertise in organizing heritage tours makes it a key partner for Uzbekistan's tourism growth.



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