

ITB
Asia

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Singapore

Hungry JTBs out there

DMCs expect consolidation of Asian agencies to go on

By Gracia Chiang

ASIA'S fragmented travel industry is witnessing a period of consolidation, mirroring what occurred in the West years ago, said trade observers, who described one of the region's latest transactions – JTB Group's purchase of six Tour East Group offices – as a "natural progression".

Targeted for completion by year-end, the acquisition would help JTB grow its non-Japanese inbound business, JTB global inbound general manager Dennis Law told *TTG-ITB Asia Daily*.

JTB will take over Holiday Tours & Travel's stake in Tour East's offices in Singapore, Australia, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand, the last of which is still being negotiated.

Earlier this year, JTB also bought Dynasty Travel Singapore and, in 2010, Star Holiday Mart and Singapore Alive.

Manuel Ferrer, founding part-

ner & chairman, QOS Consultancy, who will be moderating a panel on consolidation today as part of ITB Asia Clinics, reasoned that with the exception of Japan and South Korea, the travel market in Asia is still very fragmented and not mature, similar to North America or Europe 15 or 20 years ago. At work are also huge forces such as technology, transparency, client preferences, emerging middle classes and young affluent Asians, necessitating major changes in the business.

"Over the past 10 years, big global players have entered or grown further in Asia...It is understandable that big regional players like JTB want to compete (directly) with them. Maybe, in a few years' time, in a globalised world, JTB could move the battlefield to Europe and North America, and compete there

Ferrer agreed: "In reality, it doesn't matter whether you are big or small. What is important is to have a good strategy and to serve your clients well...If I may guess, I would say (the losers will be) those who fail to adjust and deliver to the Asian new middle classes and/or to the Asian young generation."

too," Ferrer predicted.

Nicholas Mulley, COO, Destination Asia, also saw the move as "a natural progression for (competitors) to acquire companies across the region to further expand their footprint, product and service offerings".

But big doesn't always mean best. Said Maarten Groeneveld, incoming CEO, Diethelm Travel Group: "Of course it could be beneficial to own the entire value chain. But one plus one does not always make one very big one. In our view consolidation is good – it gives room for more specialised agencies to grow in niche markets where large corporations cannot deliver."

Ferrer agreed: "In reality, it doesn't matter whether you are big or small. What is important is to have a good strategy and to serve your clients well...If I may guess, I would say (the losers will be) those who fail to adjust and deliver to the Asian new middle classes and/or to the Asian young generation."



Ferrer: having a good strategy is what counts



Ramaa: no drastic hike in rates

WHY TOUR EAST?

- Compared to JTB's purchase of Singapore Alive, which focuses more on Asian markets such as Indonesia and India, the Tour East buy helps JTB move on to the next level of being a global business, said Law. Tour East is strong in Australia, Europe, the UK, South Africa and Russia.

- The new ownership is expected to help Tour East grow its incoming traffic from regions where the Japanese company has sizeable outbound presence. Judy Lum, Tour East group vice president, sales & marketing, believes one such market could be South America, where JTB has offices in and which Tour East has just started tapping.
- There are no plans to rebrand Tour

East, which would continue to operate as a stand-alone business, said Lum. Not part of the sale are other Tour East branded offices, namely the Philippines, Vietnam, Taiwan, South Korea and Sri Lanka.



Lum: potential in South America

M'sia DMCs swallow GST in the face of soft demand

By S Puvaneswary

INBOUND tour operators in Malaysia are not raising rates substantially for the new contracting period in 2015 despite the recent 10 per cent hike in fuel prices and the introduction of the six per cent Goods and Services (GST) tax beginning April 1 next year, both of which are expected to add to their costs.

Several Malaysian inbound consultants that *TTG-ITB Asia Daily* spoke to said they were willing to lower their profit margins by absorbing some of the tour package costs to remain competitive.

"The market has been very soft for us in 2014 due to the two airline tragedies and the numerous kidnapping cases reported in Sabah," said Mona Abdul Manap, sales and marketing manager of Kuching-based Planet Borneo Tours.

"Prices will be maintained for the next contracting period as we want to spur demand for existing packages as well as new packages we will introduce (next year)."

While KL Tan, general manager of Borneo Trails Tours & Travel in Sabah, will raise his contract rates by three to four per cent, they will be matched with value-added services such as the addition of more products in the tour itinerary.

Likewise, Ganneesh Ramaa, manager at Luxury Tours Malaysia, said his company "will not

increase (rates) too drastically" for fear of losing business.

"We will introduce new niche products next year so we do not compete with other (agencies). These will include photography tours, bicycle tours and tours targeted at disabled Europeans tourists (those on dialysis or the hearing impaired)."

Buyers at ITB Asia are also expecting next year's rates from their Malaysian suppliers to hold steady and not dampen demand for the destination.

Angela Wong, Singapore-based global accounts director of Helmes Briscoe, said:

"Many Malaysian (consultants) are maintaining ground rates. Some hotels are increasing rates slightly, but it is still at an acceptable level."

M Raja Arunmozhi, proprietor of Bengaluru-based Spaceline World Travel, said: "Malaysian hoteliers and groundhandlers have maintained contract rates over the last two years to win business due to the depreciation of the Indian rupee against the US dollar."

MakeMyTrip.com vice president-international markets, Deepak Rawat, commented: "We are still negotiating rates with hoteliers – some hoteliers said they will maintain the same rates as 2014. A slight increase in rates will not have an impact on demand from the Indian market."



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News

Jokowi's pro-tourism moves

New era for Indonesia tourism expected as new president creates dedicated tourism ministry

News analysis by Mimi Hudoyo

INDONESIA's new president Joko Widodo (Jokowi)'s move to create a stand-alone tourism ministry, announced last Sunday during the introduction of his new Cabinet, was lauded by industry members *TTG-ITB Asia Daily* spoke to.

The Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy will now become the Ministry of Tourism. Arief Yahya, CEO of state-owned telecommunication company Telkom Indonesia (Telkom), has been appointed to spearhead the ministry.

WHY Jokowi has outlined tourism as one of the most important sectors in the country. In his Bahasa-language book entitled *22 Solutions for Indonesia*, the president has set an ambitious target of achieving 20 million tourist arrivals to the country by 2019.

With tourist arrivals to Indonesia last year totalling 8.8 million and expected to reach between 9.3 million and 9.5 million this year, the new ministry will undertake the task of boosting arrivals by 16 per cent annually, or double the average growth rate achieved in the last five years.

Data from the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy recorded the average increase of arrivals as around eight per

cent, although the last couple of months posted a stronger growth of nine per cent compared with the same period last year.

RESPONSES Budi Tirtawisata, group CEO of Panorama Group, attending the Asia Travel Leaders Summit yesterday, told the *Daily*: "It is a positive move. This means that tourism is receiving a bigger attention. It is about time the government does this as the sector is the fourth top contributor to the Indonesian GDP, with strong potential to grow."

Budi is also hopeful about Jokowi's commitment to "work, work, work" with his new Cabinet. He expects that with the new tourism minister bringing "fresh blood" into tourism owing to his marketing and ICT background, there are likely to be breakthroughs to achieve the tourism goals.

Herman Rukmanadi, managing director of Bhara Mekar Wisata, said: "Having a dedicated tourism ministry is what we have been expecting for a long time. A stand-alone ministry will allow the minister and the team to focus on developing tourism."

He expects the "new kid on the block" minister Arief would learn fast from tourism stakeholders – who span the spec-

trum, from elites to grassroots – to understand the industry and come up with policies that will foster the growth of tourism in the country.

CHALLENGES Budi remarked: "In the Indonesia Tourism Strategic Plan 2025, the 20 million mark is targeted to be achieved by 2025."

"While Indonesia has the potential to achieve (the target) earlier, there needs to be revolutionary developments to make that happen. We need better infrastructure, accessibility, improvement in products and services, and new product offerings."

The challenge, he pointed out, is that many of these initiatives would require inter-department co-operation to support tourism development.

Hera Adiwikarta, vice president sales & marketing of Aerowisata Hotels & Resorts, said: "What is important is to look at is the amount of budget the government is allotting to tourism and how well the ministry will manage and spend it."

"The ministry needs to have more and better professionals to present the country during trade shows and sales missions, so that the time and money spent will achieve the target."



Herman also opined that it would be better to focus on quality over numbers. "It is more important to secure more tourism revenue rather than the number, (of tourists)" he said.

Also, citing the example of improving regulations for foreign businesses in the country, he said: "Allowing foreign operators to open business with 100 per cent ownership will not benefit Indonesia much as the majority of revenue will be (channelled) back to their countries."

Outrigger in big drive to build expert agencies

By Raini Hamdi

ARMED with more resorts now in various locations than just Hawaii, Outrigger Resorts will aggressively recruit travel agencies to its side, launching its rewards programme in Asia-Pacific in mid-2015 in multiple languages.

Outrigger Expert Agents earn points that are redeemable for cash when they book clients into an Outrigger property or complete an Outrigger destination online training course. Clients will also enjoy a welcome amenity in the agency's name and gifts specific to the geographic market.

This reward programme has existed since 2009 and currently has 8,000 members, but primarily agencies in the US, Canada and Australia. Outrigger's vice president sales & marketing Asia-Pacific, Mark Simmons, said the chain is looking to bolster the number of its expert agency consultants globally to 15,000 in 12 months and 18,000 in 18 months, 30 per cent of whom will be agencies from Asia-Pacific.

In this region, China and Australia are key markets and Outrigger is further massaging their growth with the opening of new offices in Beijing and Sydney this year. China, Hong Kong, Australia, Singapore, India, Japan and South Korea will be among the markets where "the big bang" to get expert agency consultants will happen, said Simmons.

"Travel agencies and wholesalers contribute 50 per cent, and in some cases 80 per cent, of business. We don't see this going away, and this is why we are launching this programme and forging strategic rela-

tionships in which we do joint marketing and give brochure support. The OTAs are also another channel, so our approach is two-pronged," said Simmons.

He pointed out that a resort product needs agency specialists as invariably the clients are couples, honeymooners, families and the likes for whom other vital components must be packaged.

"We also have more products now in destinations that are aspirational for Asian clients," added Simmons.

Outrigger has been buying up properties in Asia-Pacific and gaining several management contracts in the region. It now has three resorts in Thailand, two in Fiji, four in Australia and one in Mauritius. Among five properties it fully owns in Asia-Pacific are the Outrigger Laguna Phuket Beach Resort and a new resort debuting in the Maldives in 2015.

In the pipeline too is a resort in Hainan, opening in 2016, and another in Vin Huy (Hoi An, Vietnam), opening in 2017. It parted company with Bali recently "due to product issue", said Simmons, but added "we've got a few properties cooking in Bali", as well as in "the Philippines, Japan, Micronesia, Australia and Thailand".

The expansion is a far cry from just a few years ago when Outrigger is synonymous only with Hawaii, where it has no fewer than 35 resorts. With a more global footprint and with Hawaii itself an aspirational destination for Asians, Simmons believes travel agencies and wholesalers will quickly latch on to Outrigger to increase their revenues.



Simmons: Agencies are key



MOBILE ALONE SO YESTERDAY

By Hannah Koh

TRAVEL companies would do well to create an overarching data strategy, instead of merely focusing on mobile.

This was one takeaway from the morning sessions at Web In Travel conference yesterday, taking place as part of Travelrave Singapore.

Asia-Pacific is the global leader when it comes to mobile bookings with over 20 per cent, according to Criteo's Travel Flash Report for 1H2014.

Turochas Fuad, co-founder & CEO of vacation rentals site Travelmob, which currently has a mobile-optimised website and an iPhone app, backed this observation. "About 45 per cent of our web traffic and 25 per cent of transactions are com-

ing from mobile," he said.

Likewise, Booking.com's mobile business is nothing short of impressive – growing from a US\$1 billion business in 2011, to US\$3 billion in 2012, and US\$8 billion in 2013, said Gillian Tans, COO, Booking.com.

However, when asked about Expedia Worldwide's mobile approach in Asia, John Kim, chief product officer, said: "We don't talk about mobile, we talk about data. The platform we are building is a data platform and we have been able to syndicate that all across the world no matter what the device. The mobile device provides contact and data that may be otherwise lost on the desktop experience."

This same data strategy can eventually be extended to wearables to harvest the same information, he added.

Timothy Hughes, vice president marketing, Agoda, shared that his proudest achievement in the last one year is making non-desktop devices "the core of Agoda's business".

"It's not about having a mobile strategy and if you have a mobile strategy, you've already missed the boat. It's about making non-desktop devices the core of your business and building the rest around it," he explained, adding that the move has altered the way Agoda approaches contracting and marketing.



TRAVELLERS from Sri Lanka are increasingly seeking heritage and ecotourism experiences during their holidays.

Rohana Mahaliyanaarachchi, senior consultant (tourism) at Affinity Lanka

Tours & Travels, said: "Thailand, Myanmar and Vietnam in the beginning gained popularity among Sri Lanka's religious travellers. As our economy grows, more people (can afford to travel) and there is (a growing demand) among the mid and upmarket travellers for heritage and green tourism products."

Rohana is a trade visitor at ITB Asia. Email: rukshan@affinitylanka.com; tel: (94-11) 3603-067 – Mimi Hudoyo



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News

PTM eyes SMEs

A Hardy side to new PATA CEO as he seizes PATA mart's niche

By Gracia Chiang

THERE is room in the marketplace for both an ITB Asia and PATA Travel Mart (PTM), opined PATA's COO, Mario Hardy, who will become interim CEO on November 1.

Addressing concerns from some members about PTM's relevance in the face of a growing ITB Asia, Hardy said feedback gathered from the recent show in Cambodia was "very positive".

"I spoke to some of the people like The Code and Wild Asia, and they came back with actual money i.e. people signing up for membership. It (PTM) was the right audience for them as they target the SMEs," he explained, adding that PTM could differentiate itself from ITB Asia by focusing on a different type of audience.

"In order for us to make it sustainable we need a much larger volume because the price we charge compared to ITB is considerably less. We don't have the big brands, but do we really want the big brands? I don't know the answer yet."

Taking over from Martin Craigs, Hardy's big job for next year is to move PATA back into the black. Although the association announced a profit of

around US\$33,000 for 2013 – the first time it did not see red in three years – it would again make a loss in 2014, he revealed.

Reasons include the last-minute cancellation of the Pacific Asia Indigenous Tourism Conference in New Zealand and relocation of PATA's board meetings to Zhuhai, the absence of an adventure travel mart and substantially less funding for its event in Cambodia compared with previ-

We don't have the big brands, but do we really want the big brands?

Mario Hardy
COO, PATA

ous editions.

Moving forward, PATA will have to watch its costs better and find new opportunities to grow revenue, said Hardy.

Digital will increasingly be a medium PATA will use to engage with members, with Hardy bringing to the table his own experience of running popular cof-

fee website Map2Cafe.

He elaborated: "We are launching on November 1 a new PATA.org. Plans are to add features such as a career board for members to post jobs, a marketplace where businesses can sell their services to each other and a networking platform similar to LinkedIn."

A sustainability-focused website would also be rolled out later next month, providing a rich content source for industry members who want to learn about best practices, among other relevant information.

Further down the line, Hardy also wants to relook at how membership is structured, adopting a tiered model where members pay according to the benefits they get rather than what industry category they belong to.

"It will take time...What I'd like to do in 2015 is increase the value (of PATA) by delivering new services, (inventing) new ways of delivering and being more engaging with our members. So that when I do ask the question in hopefully early 2016, their perceived value has increased. Right now most members don't even know or are aware of the benefits that they have."

UNIQUE PRODUCT

Quality motorcycle tours in Thailand from new firm, Bike Tour Asia

HITCH ON THIS RIDE

By Raini Hamdi

A NEW company, Bike Tour Asia, wants to ramp up your revenue with its quality motorcycle tours in Thailand.

Bike Tour Asia's managing partner, Daniel Senicar, is circling this show to find travel agencies who are keen to sell the product on a commission basis.

Said Senicar: "We have all the required licences and insurances. We are starting with four tours in Thailand and plan to offer tours in South-east Asia, Laos, Cambodia and Myanmar. Our motorcycle fleet consists mainly of new BMW F800GS and R1200GS motorcycles, and a couple of Harley Davidson motorcycles.

"We take away the hassle of planning the trip and we ensure that every day is exciting yet safe and luxurious. Think boutique hotels, fantastic local cuisine and secure bike parking, with the

itinerary planned by fellow riders who know all the best roads, most spectacular scenery and hidden treasures."

The first season's four Thailand tours include a weekend or four-day tour in Kanchanaburi; an eight-day in north (central-east) Thailand and a 12-day journey of north (central-west-east) Thailand, including the remote province of Nan.

Customised tours for individuals, groups of friends, teams, associations and companies can also be arranged.

Groups are not more than eight guest motorcycles. A road captain leads riders while a support van with a travel guide and support staff accompany groups at all times.

Said Senicar: "We are targeting motorcycle enthusiasts all over the world and there are more and more of them. They want to explore Thailand and South-east Asia on a big motorcycle in an well-organised, comfortable and secure way."

Senicar is a trade visitor at ITB from Thursday. Email: daniel@biketourasia.com; mobile: (66-9) 2903-9013; www.biketourasia.com



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Creating a real Scene in Batam



Artist's impression of the Moroccan Alley, The Scene

By Mimi Hudoyo

ASIA's first movie-themed holiday resort, located in the movie town in the upscale Nongsa area of Batam, Indonesia, is starting construction on November 8.

Batam has emerged as a movie production destination since the 2011 debut of Infinite Studios' facility on the island, which has since hosted such HBO Asia movie productions as *Dead Mine* and *Serangoon Road*, MediaCorp Singapore's *Mata-Mata* TV series, and Cine Bazar and Nippon TV's *Joker Game* feature film.

Infinite Studios is now joining hands with Landstar Development to create The Scene. Featuring classic European-inspired design by architect Piter Gan and Hollywood scenic artist Peter

Collias, the 31,600m² development boasts 295 low-rise condotel units (one and two-bedroom apartments and studios which will be leased back by owners as hotel rooms), and 50 retail spaces. The resort will also be home to an all-day dining restaurant, rooftop bar, wedding chapel, fitness and wellness centre, shopping streets and meeting rooms.

Construction of The Scene is planned in four phases, with the first phase launching on November 8. The project is expected to be completed by December 2018.

"We have witnessed the growth of the hotel industry (in Batam), resulting in the city having the third highest tourist arrivals in Indonesia," said Djaja Roeslim, chairman of Landstar Develop-

ment. "The Scene is expected to further rejuvenate Batam's hospitality sector by transforming the island into a vibrant and dynamic resort destination."

Miike Wiluan, CEO of Infinite Studios, said: "The Scene's unique concept stems from the strong demand we are seeing in Asia for movie production, with more international directors now choosing to come to this region."

"Its cinematic environment presents an exciting opportunity as a new vibrant place to stay. Its close proximity to Singapore, excellent transport links, first-rate architecture and hotel facilities will make The Scene a new iconic landmark."

Leisure, MICE and movie cast and crew will be target markets, according to Wiluan.

Filming, however, may require some parts of the resort to be closed to the public. However, Wilian said: "We will try to minimise restrictions and inconvenience to guests as much as possible by scheduling (production) during off-peak times and giving advanced notices to guests when they make reservations."

Guests would also be allowed to use facilities in other resorts in Batam owned by the group, including Turi BeachResort.

NUMBERS THAT MATTER

77 The percentage of air passengers who are comfortable with the use of wearable tech by staff to help them on their journey, according to the 2014 Passenger IT Trends Survey of 6,300 passengers across 15 countries worldwide by Air Transport World and SITA.

80 The percentage of passengers who own a smartphone, of which 76 per cent use airline apps while 43 per cent say it's made a definite improvement to their travel.

54 The percentage of passengers who think that flight comparison websites should be a priority investment. Next on the priority wish list are real-time information and in-flight Wi-Fi.

56 The percentage of passengers who want onboard connectivity so that they can use their smartphones, tablets or laptops for in-flight entertainment. Fifty-four per cent want to be able to send and receive emails and text messages and make and receive phone calls in-flight.

Marketplace

Resorts World Sentosa highlights one-stop MICE offerings

Resorts World Sentosa on Sentosa island, about 15 minutes from the heart of Singapore, will showcase its options for business events at ITB Asia 2014.

Meetings, banquets and other events can be organised at the expansive, columnless Resorts World Ballroom. This 6,000m² space with an 11m high ceiling can be converted into three smaller ballrooms or nine halls with configurable seating, VIP rooms and other holding rooms.

Corporate gatherings can also be held at the resort's unique venues, such as Universal Studios, for its 1950s' New York setting; S.E.A Aquarium, for its panoramic backdrop of swimming manta rays and other exotic marine animals; Palio, for its unique wine cellar; and Hard Rock Hotel, for its music and dance atmosphere.

For pre- or post-meeting entertainment, Resorts World Sentosa offers myriad dining and shopping experiences.

Business event planners can enjoy two promotional packages for bookings made between October 1, 2014 and January 31, 2015. Selected dates apply and the package is applicable to groups with a minimum booking of 15 rooms and maximum 99 rooms per night.

Package A comprises a 3D2N stay with breakfast for two at S\$270 (US\$213) per pax and a buffet at Starz Restaurant or function room at Resorts World Convention Centre. Package B comprises a 3D2N stay with breakfast for two at S\$320 per pax, a one-day meeting with lunch at Starz Restaurant or function room at Resorts World Convention Centre, and two S.E.A Aquarium passes for entry after 17.00. Quote code ITB2014 when booking via telephone at (65) 6577-9977 or email at mice@rwsentosa.com.

Business event planners stand a chance to win a 3D2N stay at Tree Top Loft when they book during ITB Asia 2014.

Meanwhile, Resorts World Sentosa will host a networking cocktail on October 30 from 18.30 to 21.00 at S.E.A Aquarium.

Booth: F43



Saint Petersburg to showcase its draws in Asia

Representatives from the Saint Petersburg Committee for Tourism Development and inbound tour companies will present the Russian city's myriad tourism attractions to Asian and Oceania travel buyers at ITB Asia 2014.

Considered one of the most beautiful destinations in Russia, Saint Petersburg is home to some 4,000 outstanding architecture and historical monuments. The collection includes 221 museums, 2,000 libraries, more than 80 theatres, 100 concert organisations, 45 galleries and exhibition halls, 62 cinemas and 80 cultural establishments.

The Historic Centre of Saint Petersburg and Related Groups of Monuments is also hailed a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Besides these physical attractions, Saint Petersburg also hosts more than 100 international festivals a year, many of which are held on the streets and in city squares.

To offer ITB Asia visitors a taste of the destination, the Saint Petersburg booth will host happy hours with local delicacies featured on the menu.

Booth: E/P43



Touch down at VietJet booth to score free trips

Vietnam's VietJet, which debuted in 2011, is exhibiting at ITB Asia for the first time this year and has prepared a range of exciting giveaways to tantalise visitors.

The airline will offer a lucky draw with opportunities to win free round trip tickets from Singapore to Ho Chi Minh City and from Ho Chi Minh City to Danang in Central Vietnam, as well as one of 500 tickets with a 50 per cent discount for a round trip connecting Singapore and Ho Chi Minh City.

Up for grabs are also thousands of gifts and complimentary souvenirs.

Direct sales points will have an opportunity to win free trips to Dalat and gain S\$1,000 (US\$789) in their VietJet credit account whenever they top up their account of S\$10,000.

VietJet promises high quality flights at the best possible prices, and its fleet of brand new Airbus aircraft flies to 21 destinations within and beyond Vietnam. It has plans to expand its flight network across the Asia-Pacific region to Taiwan and Cambodia this year.

Booth: M42

Vietnam's coastal charms sweep into ITB Asia

Central Coast Vietnam (CCV), an independent, non-profit destination marketing organisation dedicated to building awareness for Danang, Hoi An and Hue as a tourist destination, is highlighting an array of four- to five-star accommodation, restaurants and golf courses through its participation at ITB Asia 2014.

Its members include Furama Resort Danang, Laguna Lang Co Golf Club and Red Bridge Restaurant & Cooking School.

To further create awareness of the coastal region and stimulate renewed confidence in the global market to plan travel to Vietnam, CCV has been conducting a social media campaign since September. ITB Asia 2014 delegates are invited to join in a lucky draw and stand a chance to win the grand prize which will be drawn on October 31.

To participate, visit CCV's Facebook page (<http://bit.ly/CentralCoastVietnam>) and fill up a short form. The winner will be chosen at random. Contest closes on October 31, 2014 at 17.00 (Vietnam time).

The grand prize will comprise business class airfares for two on Vietnam Airlines from any of the carrier's hubs in the world, airport transfers from Danang International Airport, a five-day/four-night stay at The Nam Hai in Hoi An, a BBQ dinner with sparkling wine and spa treatment.

Booth: A26

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Host city

Roaring good time in Singapore

From world-class nature parks and quirky attractions that offer memorable photo opportunities, to quality dining establishments for all budgets, Singapore is a treasure trove for anyone in search of fun. By [Paige Lee](#)



Amazon River Quest

Visitors to the River Safari can now see exotic animals like the red-backed bearded saki monkey, collared peccary and red howler monkey as they journey down a 483m man-made river in a boat.

The Amazon River Quest, the latest attraction at the River Safari, is a 12-minute boat ride which simulates an open-top boat voyage down the Amazon River. Aimed at showcasing the rich diversity in the Amazon basin, visitors will be able to catch a glimpse of over 30 animal species.

Tickets are priced at S\$5 (US\$4) for adults and S\$3 for children, but purchase of River Safari admission is required first.

Website: www.riversafari.com.sg

Trick Eye Museum Singapore

Trick and treat your eyes at the Trick Eye Museum Singapore at Resorts World Sentosa, which opened in June this year as the first overseas branch of South Korea's popular attraction of the same name.

Home to 90 optical illusions and amazing sculptures, 800m² attraction invites visitors to participate in fantastical feats and dive into new worlds, from levitation to skydiving without the altophobia, to transforming into a mermaid.

Ticket prices start from S\$20 for children and senior citizens, and S\$25 for adults.

Contact: (65) 6577-8888

Website: www.rwsentosa.com

Madame Tussauds Singapore

Lights, camera, action! Meet your favourite stars at the new Madame Tussauds Singapore on Sentosa Island. Join the stars on set to recreate some of the most iconic scenes in film history. Encounter classic celebrities such as Marilyn Monroe and



Be part of the exhibits at Trick Eye Museum Singapore



Madame Tussauds Singapore



Amazon River Quest

Audrey Hepburn, and join Madhuri Dixit and Amitabh in a Bollywood film festival before practicing your martial arts skills against Bruce Lee.

Don't forget to hop aboard the *Spirit of Singapore*, the first ever Madame Tussauds boat ride, and travel through a fantasy, tropical garden.

Contact: (65) 6715-4000

Website: www.madametussauds.com/Singapore

Flux Realities: A Showcase of Chinese Contemporary Photography

This new exhibition at Marina Bay Sands' ArtScience Museum showcases the works of both well-established and emerging Chinese photographers.

Comprising over 60 photographs of seven photographers – Wang Qing Song, Yang Yongliang, Wei Bi, Zhang Dali, Liu Xiaofang, Maleonn (Ma Liang) and Wang Ningde – the exhibition highlights the individualistic artistic approach and personal experience of China's recent modernisation process.

The exhibition will conclude on November 2.

Contact: (65) 6688-8888

Website: www.marinabaysands.com



Singapore Cable Car

Popular superheroes have come to life in Singapore's skies through a new collaboration between DC Comics and the Singapore Cable Car.

From now till March 31 next year, 45 cable cars will bear graphic wraps of some of the world's favourite superheroes such as Superman, Batman, Wonder Woman and Green Lantern. With the help of in-cabin Augmented Reality (AR) technology, passengers can see these superheroes appear in their cabins.

Photo opportunities are available at Faber Peak Singapore where 3D life-sized statues of superheroes stand, and at Singapore Cable Car Museum (Sentosa Station) via a green screen powered by PictureMEX.



Fly with superheroes

Tickets are priced at S\$29 for adults and S\$18 for children.

Contact: (65) 6270-8855

Website: www.flywithsuperheroes.com.sg

Flight Experience

This flight simulator, located at the Singapore Flyer on Raffles Avenue, fully replicates a commercial jet and offers an immersive experience as participants take to the skies controlling a Boeing 737-800.

It has an enclosed cockpit which comes with full functioning avionics and photo-realistic visuals, and also boasts features such as a 180-degree wrap-around screen which projects stunningly accurate visuals of scenery and terrain.

Participants can fly into Paris in semi-darkness at dusk or view the picturesque sights of Rome overhead from the air.

Contact: (65) 6339-2737

Website: www.flightexperience.com.sg

Haw Par Villa

While not a new attraction in ever-changing Singapore, Haw Par Villa continues to charm visitors with an unforgettable journey through a whimsical landscape that tells stories of Chinese myths and legends.

Built in 1937 and also known as the Tiger Balm Garden, Haw Par Villa's appeal has recently gained a booster through a new walking tour offered by The Original Singapore Walks. The experience

takes visitors through the attraction while helping them make sense of the tapestry of Taoism, Buddhism and Confucianism which is seamlessly woven into the poetry of the garden.

Tickets are priced at S\$35 for adults and S\$15 for children.

Contact: (65) 6325-1631

Website: www.journeys.com.sg

Fish@Big Splash

Nestled in the heart of East Coast Park, Fish@Big Splash is Singapore's very first garden-resort concept fishing/prawning attraction. Prawning rods and baits are provided for visitors to hook up their own seafood such as big-head prawns and freshwater lobsters. The harvest can then be cooked on BBQ grillers.

Contact: (65) 8338-6530

Website: www.fishatbigsplash.com

MacRitchie Reservoir's TreeTop Walk

Nature lovers will enjoy a trek through the lush MacRitchie Reservoir and its well-loved



TreeTop Walk. Said to be the first of its kind in Singapore and the region, this free-standing suspension bridge connects the two highest points in the reservoir and a bird's eye view of the community of plants and animals that live in the forest canopy.

Website: www.nparks.gov.sg



Haw Par Villa



Eighty Days

Eighty Days is the perfect venue for visitors to let their taste buds travel across the globe as they chomp their way through an array of bite-size pizzas that are inspired by flavours from different cities.

Located in Marina Bay Link Mall, this quirky pizza parlour presents familiar local flavours such as Punggol Crab and Katong Laksa, as well as Asian inspirations like Delhi Masala and Tokyo Okonomi. Diners can 'travel' farther with pizzas like Chicago Bull, Berlin Wurst and Salsa Amigo. Pastas, oysters and imported beers are also on the menu.

Contact: (65) 6634-2962

Website:

www.facebook.com/eightydayspizza

Potato Head Folk

The first international venture for the creative Jakarta-based Potato Head restaurant and lifestyle group, Potato Head Folk on 36 Keong Saik Road is designed to be a home away from home, with the central theme of fun and childhood filling the interiors.

The four-storey project includes a restaurant which boasts mouthwatering burgers, sides, sodas and cocktails, a lounge called Studio 1939 and a rooftop garden with a tiki bar, done in collaboration with Australian artist David Bromley.

Private parties can be hosted at Potato Head Folk and event packages are being created at press time.

Contact: (65) 6327-1939

Website: www.pttheadfolk.com

Soi 60

Contemporary Thai restaurant Soi 60 is one of the latest dining spots to emerge along the bustling Robertson Quay. Boasting a casual riverside setting, Soi 60 makes a perfect dinner venue for family and friends to unwind after a long day. Award-winning chef Martin Boetz (formerly from Sydney's famed Longrain restaurant) has created a menu that embodies the essential flavours of Thai cuisine – sweet, sour, spicy and salty.

Contact: (65) 6635-6675

Website: www.soi60.com.sg

The Clifford Pier

One of Singapore's iconic heritage sites, the Clifford Pier, can now be enjoyed over a meal.

The new 272-seat, all-day dining restaurant, The Clifford Pier, pays homage to Singapore's hawker food culture through local favourites such as Soup Kambing (a traditional spiced mutton soup), laksa and Teochew porridge.

Located at the foot of the Fullerton Bay Hotel, the historical venue has been carefully restored and enhanced to evoke a

sense of nostalgia.

Contact: (65) 6597-5266

Website: www.fullertonbayhotel.com/dining/the-clifford-pier

Pince & Pints Restaurant & Bar

Lobsters fans will rejoice at this new lobster-only restaurant on Duxton Road. The menu features only three options: whole lobster – grilled or steamed, a lobster roll and lobster slathered in a savoury chilli

crab-inspired sauce. Sourced from New England and Canada, each lobster weighs 600 grams on average and costs S\$48.

The restaurant's eight-seat bar counter boasts a menu of craft beers, wines and cocktails.

One word of advice: Be there early or get ready to queue as no reservations are accepted.

Contact: (65) 6225-7558

Website: www.pinceandpints.com



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Host city



Local travel players spill the beans on their favourite aspects of Singapore as a destination



I love Singapore for its diversity of cultures which is reflected in its various fascinating ethnic enclaves, be it Chinatown, Arab Street, Little India or the Peranakan trail in Katong and Joo Chiat. It's a fun and fast way for tourists to soak in Singapore's history, culture and traditions, particularly during festivals like Chinese New Year, the Mid-Autumn Festival, Hari Raya and Deepavali.

The myriad cultures are also beautifully mirrored in Singapore's food heritage – another thing I've come to embrace. When friends are in town, I like to take them to

try out new restaurants, usually in the hip Keong Saik and Tiong Bahru neighbourhoods, or for a cold beer and snack at Holland Village. And if it's local food they'd like to try, we're spoilt for choice really, whether it's the neighbouring hawker centre, the recently reopened Lau Pa Sat or Satay by the Bay.

And most importantly, what I love about this island is its gorgeous year-round summer weather. I'm always grateful for the daily warmth and sun, and I'm sure tourists here are too.

Martin Sinclair
General manager
Regent Singapore



The top of my list would be Singapore's array of local dishes. There are many hawker centres and I like to explore the ones frequented by locals, such as ABC

Brickworks Market and Food Centre (on Jalan Bukit Merah). My favourite dishes are chicken in bamboo steamer, claypot rice and Chinese desserts.

I also love the night scene in Singapore and my favourite haunt is Quayside Isle at Sentosa Cove. I equate it to Monaco of Asia with its idyllic setting – having a meal while watching yachts bob against the setting sun is always a pleasure.

I enjoy the arts scene here too. With more world-class performances and performers taking the stage, such as The Sound of Music musical, Cavalia and Maria Carey, Singapore is Asia's Broad-

way. Who said Singapore is boring? Come and see it for yourself!

Patrick Fiat
General Manager and Chief Experience Officer
Royal Plaza on Scotts



The great thing about Singapore is that you can access many different experiences conveniently. Nature, food and creative expressions are three of my favourite aspects to explore.

I'd start my day with a nature fix – a run at the Botanic Gardens or by the East Coast beach, or a hike in one of our nature reserves.

Food is the quintessential Singaporean experience. We not only have the range, but the quality is unbeatable too. I could have laksa for breakfast, cold soba for lunch, angel hair pasta for dinner and Hokkien mee for supper (ensuring I have to run again the next morning).

Another must for me is checking out the latest creative products by Singaporeans. The newly launched KEEPERS showcase along Orchard Road is a great way to do this. It houses over 50 of our very own designers and artisans, each with a unique design story to tell.

Lionel Yeo
CEO
Singapore Tourism Board



Singapore is rich with quality attractions and F&B outlets.

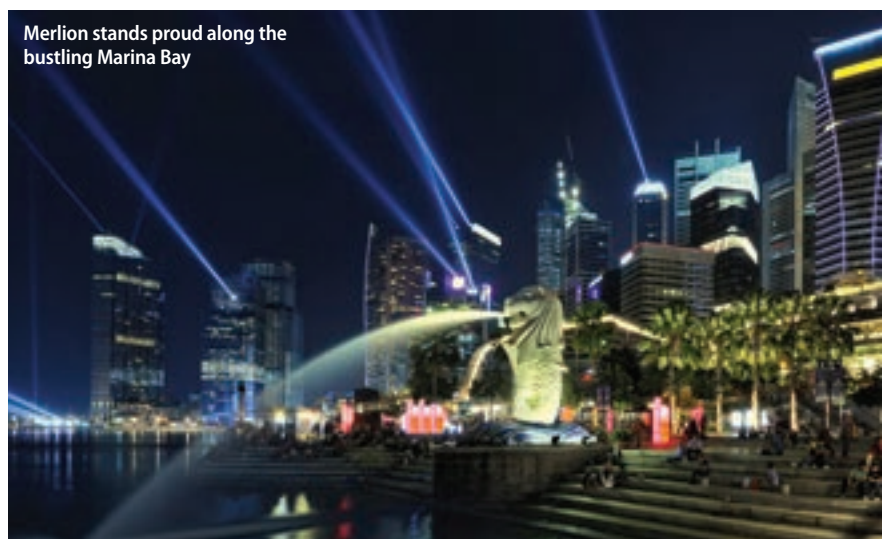
I recommend starting a tour of Singapore with a visit to the Merlion statue at Marina Bay. Visitors can learn about the Merlion's gender, the fengshui elements surrounding it and how the icon reflects Singapore's characteristics as a young nation.

A stroll around Chinatown should follow. One can experience Singapore's religious and cultural harmony where five

major religions – Islam, Hinduism, Christianity, Buddhism and Taoism – co-exist. Drop by the Buddha Tooth Relic Temple which boasts a beautiful architecture.

End the tour of Chinatown at the Chinatown Food Centre with a noodle feast. Dig into Hokkien prawn noodles, Cantonese wonton noodles, Teochew fried kwayteow, Indian mee goreng or Malay mee soto.

Edmund Chua
General manager
Lex Travel



Singapore may be a tiny island but it's packed with mega-sized fun. On Sentosa Island alone we have world-class attractions that appeal to adrenaline junkies or families alike, from the region's first Universal Studios theme park, Singapore 4D Adventureland and Skyline Luge Sentosa to one of the world's largest aquarium, S.E.A. Aquarium and Madame Tussauds.

I love Singapore for its variety of food as well – from local food stalls to celebrity chef restaurants, there is definitely something for everyone.

Lastly, I love that the place I call home lives up to its Garden City title. Among modern buildings and paved streets, we

have managed to conserve lush greenery across Singapore.

Goh Chye Boon
Executive vice president (resort operations)
Resorts World Sentosa



Photo: Heau Fook

Sesame Street © 2012 Sesame Workshop

Intelligence

In a youth state of mind

PATA's new consumer survey takes a look at the motivation and aspirations driving the travel preferences of Asian youths

PATA has recently released *The Rise of the Young Asian Traveller* report, revealing the key travel habits and attitudes of Asia's future travellers in order to help tourism professionals understand the need to engage young people as consumers and employees of the industry.

The report is based on participation from almost 3,000 travellers between the ages of 15 and 34 in an online survey distributed across 13 countries in North-east and South-east Asia, namely Brunei, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

Key findings of this report are presented in the following columns.

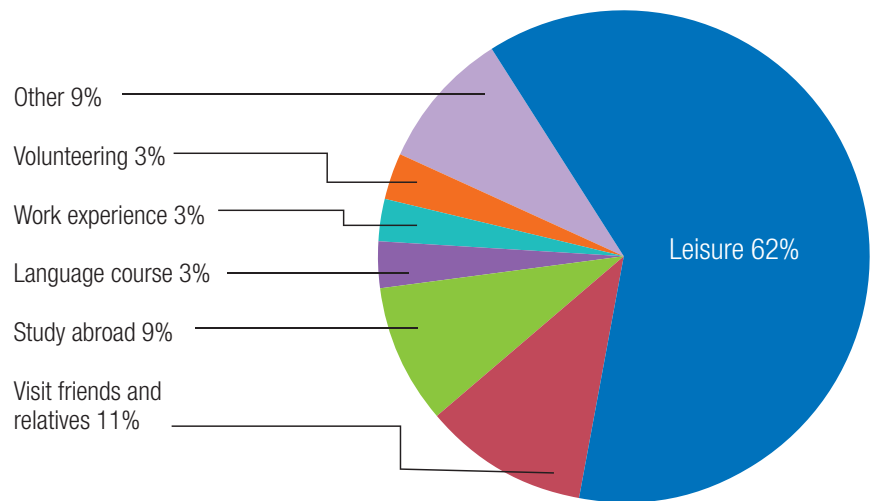


Quick overview

- Average respondent age: 24
- Average number of trips taken in the last year: 3.6
- Average trip length: 10.4 days

Purpose of travel

Travelling for leisure is obviously on the top chart for young Asian travellers. If combined with the 'visit friends and relatives' purpose, the proportion rises to nearly three-quarter of all respondents.



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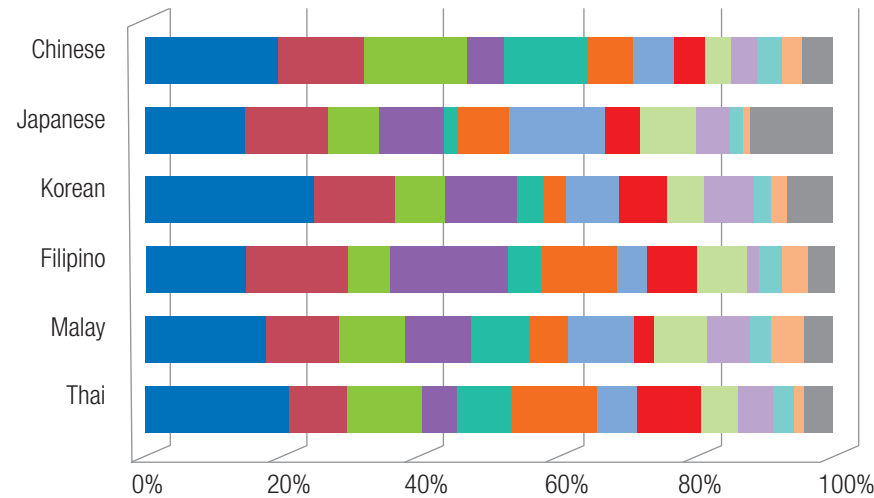


DiscoverAmerica.com

Intelligence

Biggest influences on destination choices

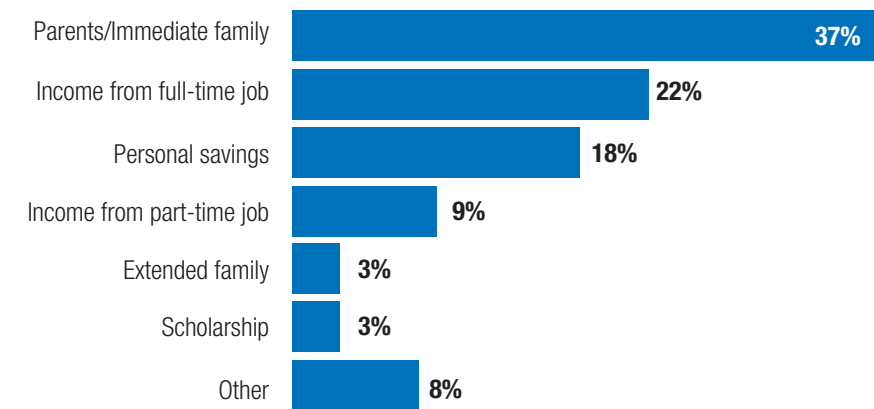
- A desire to see a place they have never seen before
- Friends' social media posts
- Direct recommendations by family and friends through word of mouth via social media, email and in person
- Special offers on transport and accommodation
- Thais and Filipinos most likely to be influenced by friends' social media posts, supported by the high level of social media usage in these countries
- Chinese are the most sensitive to special offers on flights – a factor which bodes well for LCC growth in the country
- Japanese are more motivated than most to travel to destinations perceived as being cheaper
- Filipinos are the most likely to visit friends and relatives overseas



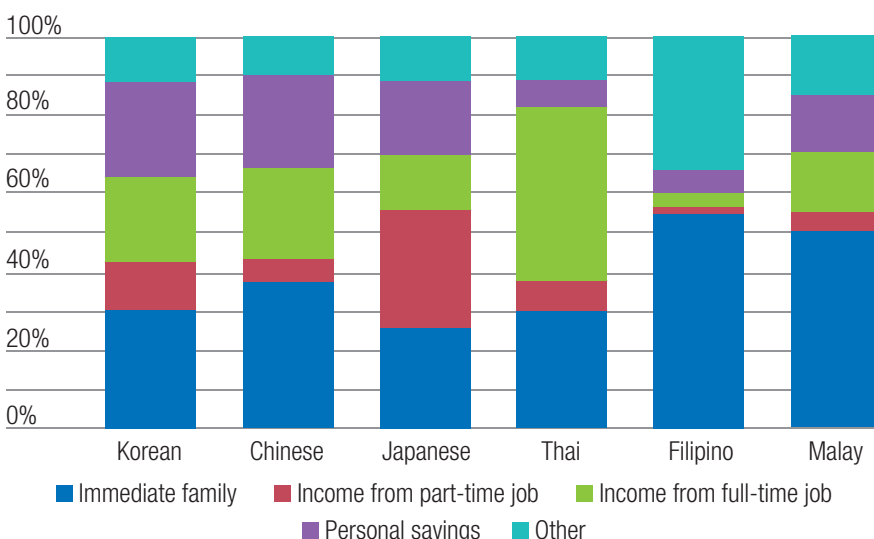
- Always wanted to visit
- Personal recommendation – friends/family/colleagues
- Want to learn more about the local culture
- Friend/Family lives there
- Special offer – airline/accommodation/travel agency
- Seeing friends' photos on social media sites
- Relatively cheap destination
- Blog post/News article
- Visited before and want to return
- Ability to speak the language
- Special event – sports, music concert/festival
- Specific field trip for study course
- Other

How do young Asian travellers fund their travel?

The distribution of funding sources among the respondents confirms the immediate family position as the key source of finance for young Asian travellers.

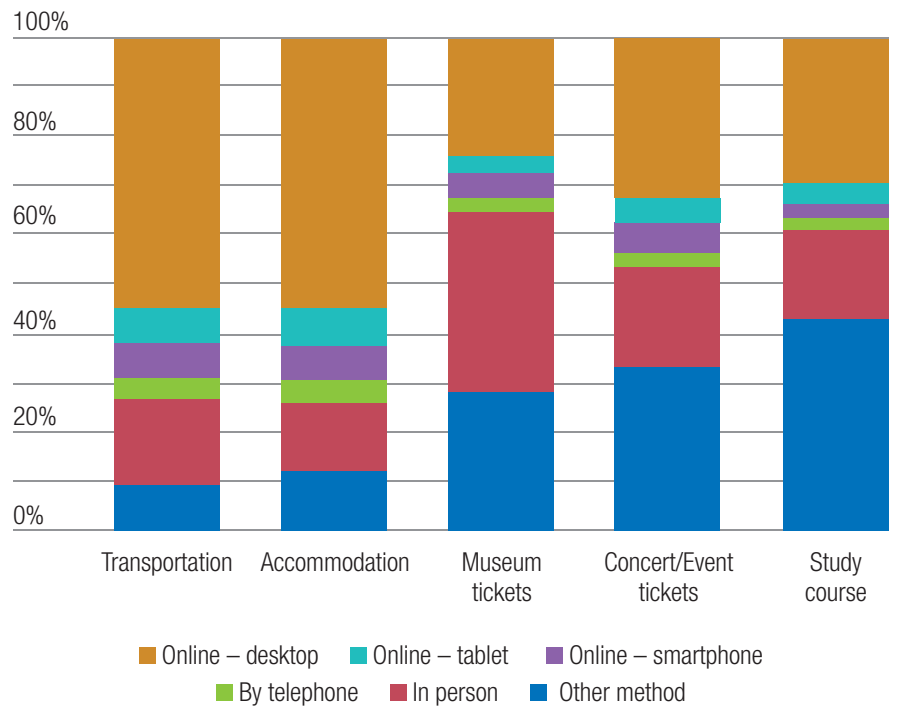


A breakdown of funding sources by six outbound markets across North-east and South-east Asia reveals some considerable variation in the way young people source their travel funds. For the majority, money received from the immediate family represents the largest proportion of funding (see chart below).



Young Asian travellers made over 70 per cent of their travel and accommodation bookings online

Consistent with large, highly active online populations in the surveyed countries, a high number of survey respondents booked their travel and accommodation online with a desktop PC, smartphone or tablet. Event tickets, concert tickets and overseas study courses were still booked in a variety of ways, most often in person or by phone. The role of 'legacy' travel consultants (conducting none or only part of their business online) is still significant, especially in South-east Asia; however this is expected to change rapidly.



Note: multiple responses

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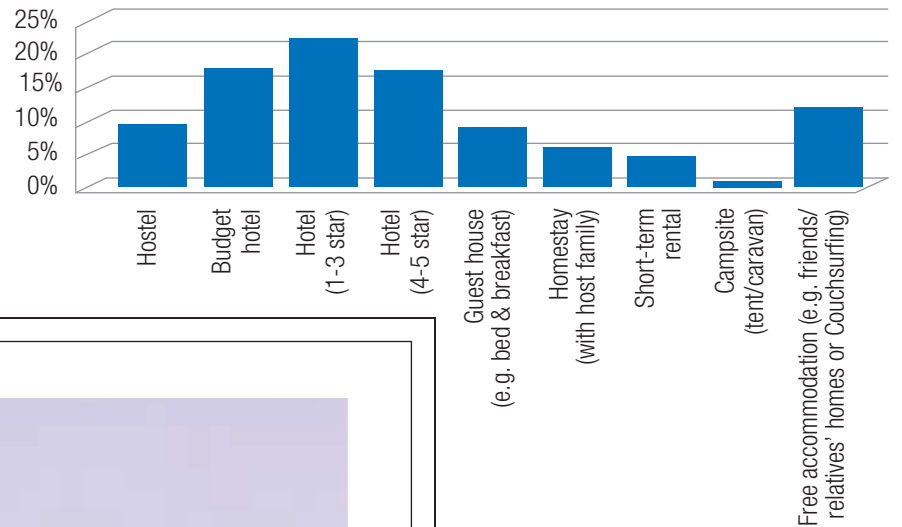
www.jayakartahotelsresorts.com

Intelligence

Four- and five-star hotels favoured over hostels

Twice as many young Asian travellers surveyed had stayed in a four- or five-star hotel on their last trip than those who stayed in a hostel. Overall one- to three-star and budget hotels were the most popular option for overnight stays, followed by luxury hotels. Free accommodation offered by friends and relatives or through sites like Couchsurfing was the next most popular option. Few hostel chains (with the notable exception of the Youth Hostelling Association) have made significant inroads in Asia, where the cost of homestays and budget accommodation is relatively cheap. The effect of collaborative consumption sites such as Airbnb (or a Korean startup Bnbhero featured in the full report) is becoming evident as 43 per cent of respondents who stayed in a short-term rental had used this method.

Accommodation choice



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A dynamic city of endless possibilities, Dubai has earned a reputation of being a favoured destination for spectacular getaways. Explore the allure of endless desert landscapes and enjoy adrenaline-packed activities perfect for the whole family. Savour cuisines from all over the world and indulge in remarkable experiences as you choose from an extensive selection of hotels and spas. Wander through the bustling souks or visit the world's largest and best shopping malls to discover exactly why Dubai is voted the world's number 1 shopping destination.

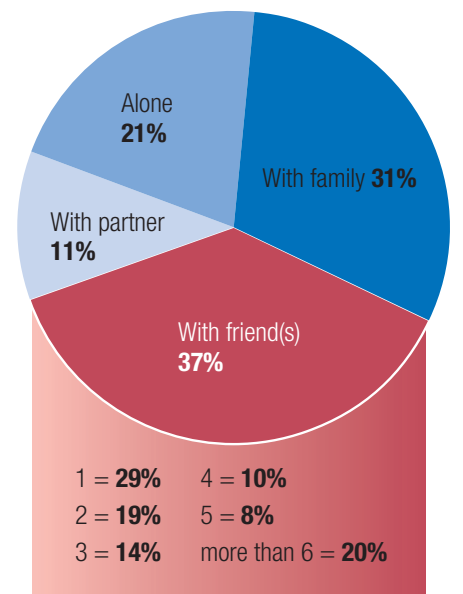
Create unforgettable memories in Dubai as you experience a vacation like never before.



Small group travel is a firm favourite

For young Asian travellers, solo travel is still relatively uncommon. Of those who said they travelled with friends (37% overall), going as a couple (29%) or in groups of up to five was the favoured option among our respondents. A desire to experience travel activities as a group and the effect of 'safety in numbers' are key drivers of this trend.

Overall, industry research on the Asian youth market confirms a gradual decline in group sizes consistent with growing confidence among travellers to plan and manage their own travel.



Traveller review websites are the most trusted source of information about destinations

Sites such as TripAdvisor are the first stop for young Asian travellers looking to find out more about their chosen destination. In recent years traveller review sites in different languages and for different audiences have sprung up around Asia, giving young consumers the opportunity to exchange advice on activities and accommodation options. A refreshing alternative to 'official' tourism sources, sites such as Eurang (South Korea) and Mafengwo (China) have become popular; while Lagisatu (Malaysia) is a rapidly growing travel portal offering reviews and booking options for Muslim travellers, an example of the diversity of the outbound travelling public in the region.

For more information contact:
 Representative Office in the Far East
 Tel: +852 2827 5221 Fax: +852 2511 5472
 dubaitourism.ae



Which apps can't our survey respondents travel without? Social media of course!

Our survey respondents were asked to rate 11 different types of apps used when travelling (maps, language tools, deal of the day, social media, dating and friendship...) and social media apps were chosen as the most indispensable. When heading for the airport, discovering a new city, travelling home or sharing special memories, social media comes into play at every stage of the journey.

Interestingly, language translation apps were also highly popular as well as those that offer quick searches of local transport and accommodation options

Dream destinations for young Asian travellers

When asked which would be their top three dream destinations to visit in the next 10 years, the US was in the top five dream destinations for every nationality surveyed. France also appeared in the top five for every nationality except Singaporeans, and was rated first overall. The results demonstrate a balance between the classic heritage destinations of Europe, the allure of the modern US and Canada, and the 'urban cool' exuded by South Korea and Japan. Some countries' ratings may also be explained by cultural ties or by big sporting events, for example, the recent FIFA World Cup or 2016 Olympic Games.

Top 10 destination wish list

- | | |
|------------------|-------------------|
| 1. France | 6. United Kingdom |
| 2. United States | 7. Canada |
| 3. Australia | 8. Brazil |
| 4. Japan | 9. New Zealand |
| 5. Italy | 10. South Korea |



Top three dream destinations for different nationalities

 <p>CHINESE • Australia • France • Japan</p>	 <p>JAPANESE • France • US • Australia</p>	 <p>KOREANS • France • US • Australia</p>
 <p>MALAYSIANS • US • Japan • UK</p>	 <p>FILIPINOS • France • US • Japan</p>	 <p>THAIS • Japan • US • France</p>
 <p>CAMBODIANS • Australia • South Korea • US</p>	 <p>INDONESIANS • France • Turkey • US</p>	 <p>MYANMARESE • France • US • Japan</p>
 <p>SINGAPOREANS • Japan • US • Maldives</p>	 <p>VIETNAMESE • US • Australia • France</p>	



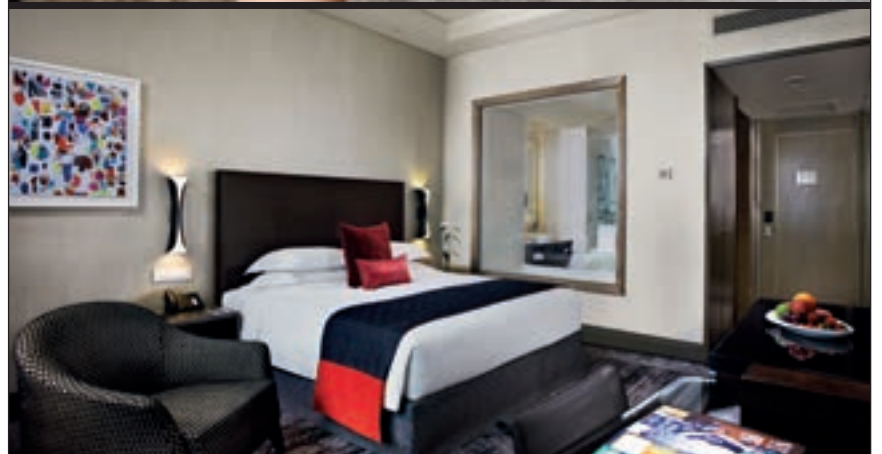
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And within these emerging markets, Best Western International is creating a range of contemporary hotels and resorts offering all the services and amenities these modern travelers desire.

Built on almost 70 years of hospitality excellence, Best Western now offers a portfolio of more than 200 properties across the Asia region, with 30,000 comfortable, convenient and well-equipped rooms ready to welcome guests.



From the mega-economies of China, Japan and South Korea to the emerging giants of India, Indonesia, Vietnam and the Philippines, and up-and-coming destinations like Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Cambodia, Best Western is multiplying rapidly across some of the world's most exciting business and leisure travel markets.

From Bangkok to Beijing, Kathmandu to Kuala Lumpur, Mumbai to Manila, travelers can relax, knowing that they are booking an internationally-branded hotel with global standards and consistent amenities, including complimentary Wi-Fi in every room.



BEST WESTERN Hariston, INDONESIA

And as Asia continues to develop, Best Western continues to create new hotels in an ever-expanding range of destinations. In late 2013, it became one of the first international hotel groups to enter Myanmar, while plans are in place for new properties in such exciting new markets as Nepal, Sri Lanka, Laos and Bangladesh. In Indonesia, Best Western now has no fewer than 20 new hotels and resorts under development, while Malaysia, Thailand and the Philippines will also see multiple openings. And recognising the diverse range of clientele in this vast region, Best Western is now offering a selection of products to cater for guests.

The globally-recognized BEST WESTERN is Asia's favorite midscale hotel brand, while the new BEST WESTERN PLUS label offers an exceptional upscale option for Asia's well-heeled consumer. And finally, BEST WESTERN PREMIER hotels are now offering exquisite luxury hotel experiences in some of the region's key destinations, including Kuala Lumpur, Bangkok, Phuket and Bali. In short, Best Western International is rolling out a range of hotels to cater for Asia's new generation of traveler, in all the main markets they want to visit. The 21st century is Asia's century, and Best Western is proud to be facilitating travel across the world's fastest-growing region.



BEST WESTERN Hotel La Corona Manila, PHILIPPINES



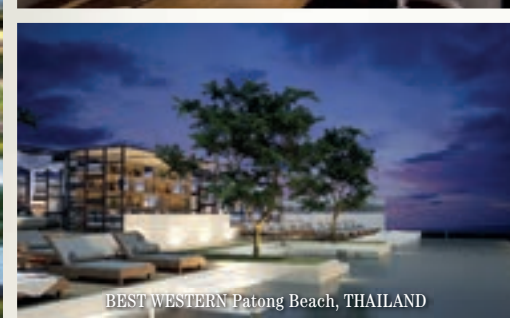
BEST WESTERN PREMIER The Haven Ipoh, MALAYSIA



BEST WESTERN PREMIER Dua Sentral, MALAYSIA



BEST WESTERN Tokyo Nishikasai, JAPAN



BEST WESTERN Patong Beach, THAILAND

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Destination Australia

Cooking up a delicious image

Australia has launched a new campaign to beef up its image as a food and wine destination. Paige Lee Pei Qi reports

Tourism Australia is keen to whet the world's travel appetite for Down Under with the launch of *Restaurant Australia*, an initiative focusing on the country's gastronomic offerings and culinary experiences.

Coming under the NTO's global *There's nothing like Australia* campaign, the A\$10 million (US\$9.4 million) dollar blitz has been rolled out in 12 key international markets since its official launch in May.

Tourism Australia's managing director, John O'Sullivan, explained: "*Restaurant Australia* is all about bringing together the incredible stories of our people, place and produce to demonstrate to the world that everyday, unique and exceptional food and wine experiences are being served up in remarkable locations, and then sharing these stories through the creation of rich and compelling content."

O'Sullivan shared that the strategy to garner global attention lies in getting Australia's tourism, food and wine businesses to work together to tell the country's stories.

He said: "When we originally launched *There's nothing like Australia*, we asked Australians to talk about their 'nothing like' experiences. This time our rally cry is to the industry, with Tourism Australia providing the platforms to show the world *Restaurant Australia*."

Research conducted by Tourism Australia in 2013 identified a significant gap in the perceptions of Australia's food and wine offerings; for people who have never

visited Australia, only 26 per cent associate good food and wine with the destination.

Tourism Australia chief marketing officer, Nick Baker, revealed: "The concept of *Restaurant Australia* has been built on consumer research which identified food and wine as a key factor in holiday decision-making and the most important emotive trigger, ahead of world-class beauty, for influencing people's destination choice. For people who have never visited Australia, awareness of our food and wine offerings is low. However, once they visit, people realise the variety and quality of our food and wine experiences is world class and Australia moves to the top of the rankings as one of the world's best culinary destinations."

Eng-waa Teh, managing director of Australian Tours Management, believes that the new campaign presents a fresh strategy to court tourists. He said: "We see people travelling purposefully for food today and this will be a good way to draw them because we have so much to offer in that alone. I am thinking of working with the famous chefs and restaurants like Tetsuya's. These big names are really icons in the food industry and I think it will be well-received if I can package food-centric tours to these celebrity restaurants."

Pointing out that interest in the Australian wine culture is steadily rising, Andy Indra, sales manager, Experience Tours Australia, said: "Australia is already famous for its winery experiences and I think this campaign will help to hype this



Indulge in memorable outdoor dining experiences in Australia

up even more.

"I foresee Yarra Valley will become an even hotter destination and there could probably be interest to develop multi-day packages there in future," he said.

Sally Cope, executive officer, Ultimate Winery Experiences Australia, said: "Our wineries are not simply venues to taste and purchase wine. They offer a memorable experience featuring quality restaurants, accommodation, tours, as well as exciting behind-the-scenes winery experiences."

"They allow visitors to interact with the products, the winemakers and enjoy firsthand the rich diversity that Australia's many wine regions have to offer."

"We see this as an opportunity to challenge France and Italy as a quality food and wine destination. This will help to create a greater awareness of quality Australian wineries," she added.

According to Cope, Australia's renowned regions include New South Wales (Hunter Valley), Victoria (Yarra Valley and Mornington Peninsula), South Australia (Barossa Valley, McLaren Vale and Adelaide Hills), Western Australia (Margaret River) and Tasmania (Southern Tasmania and Tamar Valley).

VIEWPOINT How will you use the *Restaurant Australia* campaign to promote the country?



Mei Teh, senior sales manager, Tour East Australia

"Seafood is of great appeal to a lot of our clients and I think it is possible to use that to promote new seafood packages in our destination. We have such a large and wide variety of fish markets and classy restaurants that can cater to different tastes and budgets too."

WHAT'S NEW

1 Next Hotel Brisbane

The first of SilverNeedle Hospitality's technology-focused Next Hotels brand opened in Brisbane on September 24.

Guests of the 304-room hotel are encouraged to download the Next App from the Apple App Store or Google Play Store, allowing them to perform express check-ins, room selection and check-outs. Guests who do not want to download the app can use the self-service Next Kiosks in the Meet & Greet Zone to check in.

The app also gives visitors the ability to unlock the room door, control room temperature, lights and entertainment channels, order cocktails by the pool, and call for room service.

Each guestroom is also equipped with a complimentary Samsung Galaxy S4 phone, which can be tapped as a personal hotspot. Local calls on the phone are free and international calls are cheaper, while incoming calls to the hotel room are automatically diverted to the S4 phone.

Facilities at the hotel include a 24-hour Club Lounge and InTransit Zone with shower pods and sleep pods.

2 Taronga Western Plains Zoo

Taronga Western Plains Zoo, near Dubbo in New South Wales, has launched 10 luxurious African-style lodges at Zoofari Lodge. The new safari lodges feature African-inspired décor, king-size beds, double bath and private decks right on the edge of the zoo's African Savannah, enabling guests to see giraffes, elephants and zebras

roaming from the comforts of their accommodation.

3 Tigerair Australia

Tigerair Australia has launched new daily return services between Brisbane and Cairns, reflecting growing confidence in the Far North Queensland tourism industry. The introduction of the service will provide a 30 per cent growth in Tigerair's existing services to Cairns. Also launched in April are daily return services between Brisbane and Darwin.



Zoofari Lodge

HOW TO DO QUEENSLAND

Day1 Begin your morning in style and zip down the roads of the Gold Coast on a Harley Davidson towards Surfers Paradise for breakfast with the dolphins.

SeaWorld's Dolphin Encounter also allows you to touch and feed bottlenose dolphins and learn hand signals used to communicate with them. Spend the rest of the morning getting lost in this premier marine park that offers attractions and rides for all ages.

As noon approaches, indulge in a sumptuous buffet of local seafood and international delicacies at Four Winds 360° while enjoying panoramic views of the Pacific Ocean and the Hinterland. After lunch, take a helicopter out to an exclusive island getaway to South Stradbroke Island. Enjoy a diverse range of activities including speedboat rides, paraflying and four-wheel drive tours.

Day2 Rise and shine early to catch the sunrise while floating around in a hot air balloon. Following this 60-minute ride, dig into a hot breakfast with champagne at a secluded vineyard.

Later, embark on a Gold Coast hinterland tour for a refreshing break from the city to some of the most verdant and visually striking displays of waterfalls, rainforests and stunning lookout points in the South-East Queensland region.

Wind down with a romantic sunset cruise dinner back to the Gold Coast. Get a taste of the beautiful ocean while enjoying a glass of champagne onboard.

Day3 Get your wallets ready today as you make your way to Harbour Town Shopping Centre on the Gold Coast, where you can find outlets and specialty stores with all the latest fashion, homewares and accessories at discounted prices.

End the day in true Aussie style with an Australian Outback Spectacular. Enjoy this unique BBQ dinner and show experience filled with outback music, drama and action with over 40 stock horses.

Itinerary by Gold Coast Tourism

Bohol

1,776 hills. And then some.



Bohol is covered with beautiful scenery from end to end. Spend the afternoon lounging on a pristine white sand beach, after a morning of viewing the Chocolate Hills.



Getting There:

Accessible via air from Manila and via ferry from Cebu



More Things to Do:

- Enjoy traditional Filipino cuisine while cruising down the Loboc River
- Soak up the sun and party on Panglao Island.
- Explore the underwater wonders of the Balicasag islet.
- Stock up on natural products at the Bohol Bee Farm.
- Get a glimpse of an endangered species at the Philippine Tarsier Sanctuary.



Reaching for loftier goals

Indonesia is determined to surpass arrival targets despite reduced tourism funds.

By Mimi Hudoyo

The year so far for Indonesia has been characterised by steady growth in international arrivals, prompting the local tourism authority to be confident of achieving – and even surpassing – its arrival target of 9.3 to 9.5 million by the end of 2014.

Visitor arrivals to Indonesia reached 4,551,000 in 1H2014, a 9.6 per cent increase over the same period last year.

Commenting on the figure, minister of tourism and creative economy, Mari Elka Pangestu, said: “The growth rate achieved in the first six months was above our target of eight per cent. As the peak season is just coming in, we can expect to surpass this year’s arrival target.”

Esthy Reko Astuti, director general of tourism marketing at the ministry, noted that Asia-Pacific is a key region for Indonesia’s tourism sector.

“It contributed 3.1 million arrivals or 68.7 per cent market share in the first six months this year, an increase of 12.3 per cent over the same period last year.”

Sharing Esthy’s observation is Rocky Praputrantoro, director of Panorama Leisure Group, who told the *Daily* that Asia-Pacific “has been growing quite rapidly” since his company entered the region five years ago.

“It is now becoming the second largest market after Europe, with a 34 per cent share,” he added.

At the same time Panorama Leisure Group is also seeing improving business



Mount Bromo, the star of East Java and an active volcano, may become an optional item in an itinerary due to higher entry fees

from the US. “It is a new market for us, but we see a potential for significant growth. The US market made up 2.3 per cent of our total passengers last year and we are expecting this to rise to four per cent this year,” he said.

Despite the good showing on the tourism front, the country’s tourism marketing budget remains tight. According to Antara News Agency, the fund was slashed from 435 billion rupiah (US\$37.5 million) to 373,025 billion rupiah in the middle of this year, due to a national budget cut.

Esthy revealed that the budget revision had led to eight of 59 international activities being dropped. Instead, greater cooperation with Indonesia’s regional tourism offices and the private sector on destination marketing has been ordered.

Budget restrictions notwithstanding,

Mari, whose portfolio under president Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono’s government will end in October, is optimistic that Indonesia’s tourism sector has a bright future. “Of all the G20 major economies, Indonesia is one of the countries with the highest tourism growth and is considered to be able to ride on the momentum of the world’s improving tourism performance which this year has reached US\$7 trillion,” she said.

But for now, the government’s decision to raise the entry fees of major national parks and natural attractions by up to three folds has cast a shadow over local trade players’ business expectations.

With the tariff change, which comes into effect on November 1, international tourists can expect to pay 207,500 rupiah on weekdays and 307,500 rupiah on week-

ends for an entry to Mount Bromo in East Java. Today, a visit to the iconic active volcano costs only 72,500 rupiah.

Indra Fadjar, CEO of Horas Tour Medan, lamented that the new regulation also requires travellers who stay overnight in a natural park, like Mount Leuser National Park in North Sumatra, to pay an entrance fee for every day of their stay.

Aji Sutomo, managing director of Ayu Mandiri Tours and Travel Jogjakarta, said: “This poses a challenge for overland tour operators like us. Mount Bromo is the icon of East Java, if we take that out of the programme, what else is there to offer (as the main draw)?”

However, the *Daily* understands that some national parks had applied the new tariff since last May to walk-in tourists and kept the old tariff for tour operators.

VIEWPOINTS

How will the new national park tariffs impact business, and what can you do to minimise it?

Umberto Cadamuro, COO inbound, Pacto

“Travellers who do 11 days in Jakarta and Bali spend around US\$1,500. What is the impact of an additional US\$10 to US\$20 dollars to them? The issue is actually about the coordination (between the central government and the local authority who issues the final price). (They are taking) too long to announce the prices for us to inform our business partners (in time). In my opinion, rather than crying over the increase, we should tell (the authority that) we need better infrastructure. I do not care about the increase if you give us good toilets, for example. To me it is not about how much the increase is but more about the (implementation) and what we will get in return.”



Adjie Wahjono, operations manager, Aneka Tours and Travel Services Surabaya

“The new tariffs will reduce competitiveness. Transport, tour guide and attraction entry can cost more than US\$100 per day, so a 10-day Java-Bali programme can go up to US\$1,000 now, from US\$700-US\$800 in the past.

(We will need to adjust our itineraries) but the problem is most of East Java’s attractions are nature based. Different clients have different preferences. Some may want current itineraries, others may prefer to drop national parks and have them as optional tours, while there are also those who desire something else entirely. We have many packages to suit different clients, and will have to observe which ones are truly selling.”

HOW TO DO KOMODO

Day1 On arrival at the airport participants will be welcomed by locals dressed in traditional Flores costumes and then taken to the Tado Ecotourism Village by coach. There, they can experience local culture and traditional activities such as pottery, rice planting and ancient jamu making. Villagers will present a home-cooked lunch at a site that oversees the beautiful countryside.

On the way to Plataran Komodo Beach Resort, where participants will be spending the night, a stop will be made along the way to see the authentic Flores dance, *Caci*.

Time to rest and freshen up will be provided, and later the group will proceed to a gala dinner on the beach. A fun quiz on Flores culture will be conducted, with prizes to be won.

Day2 This morning, participants will be picked up by a Phinisi vessel – a traditional two-mast sailing ship – from the resort. Breakfast will be served onboard, as the group sets sail for Rinca to visit the Komodo National Park for a spot of trekking and to see the Komodo Dragon in his natural habitat. After the adventurous trek, the group will sail on to the Pink Beach for some



Cruise around Komodo in a Phinisi vessel

games and later on, dinner on the Phinisi. A restful night will also be spent onboard.

Day3 Before setting foot back on land, the group will dig into breakfast onboard, after which the boat makes a final stop at Bidadari Island for final activities and photo-taking. From there, the Phinisi will sail back to the resort where an extravagant seafood buffet awaits. After lunch, participants will get a few hours to relax and prepare for the evening programme.

This evening, guests will prepare their own dinner, Sumbanese style in a traditional Rumah Sumba! The evening ends with a farewell cocktail under the stars.

Itinerary by Plataran Komodo

WHAT'S NEW

1 The Hermitage Hotel Jakarta

The Hermitage Hotel Jakarta opens in the historical district of Menteng, in Central Jakarta, occupying an Art Deco building from 1923 which was once a Dutch telecommunications office, the Telefoongebouw. The luxurious 90-room hotel not only retains the original façade but the interior has also been built with a contemporary interpretation of the era's heritage style. Facilities include various F&B outlets and more than 350m² of function space.

Visit www.jakarta.hermitage.co.id for more information.

2 Fairmont Sanur Beach Bali

From this December, Regent Bali will be known as Fairmont Sanur Beach Bali, following a rebranding exercise.

The all-suite beachfront resort offers one-, two- and three-bedroom layouts, and houses various dining outlets, a 55m infinity pool, a fitness centre, an expansive spa, and a kids' club.

3 Best Western Premier The Hive

The luxury 191-key Best Western Premier The Hive has opened in the Greater Jakarta region, offering both rooms and suites over 15 floors, the Heather Resto restaurant, an outdoor swimming pool, a fitness centre, the Bhuvana Spa and seven meeting rooms that can seat between 20

and 300 pax. The property sits close to the bustling Cawang business district and the recently opened Halim Perdanakusuma Airport.

Visit www.bwpremierthehive.com for more information.

4 TABLE8

TABLE8 is the latest dining destination at luxury hotel, The Mulia Bali. The oriental restaurant specialises in authentic Cantonese and Sichuan delicacies, and even offers a tea corner where guests can enjoy imported varieties of premium leaves from China. Menu highlights include Australian five-head whole abalone braised with wild mushroom, and roasted suckling pig. Diners can also choose to have dim sum or pick off a buffet spread.

TABLE8 can seat 100 guests. For private functions, the restaurant offers a private

dining room for 48 guests.

Visit www.themulia.com for more information.

5 Courtyard by Marriott Bali Seminyak

The second Courtyard by Marriott hotel has opened in Bali, offering 290 rooms and suites to leisure and business travellers. Located in the entertainment enclave of Seminyak, Courtyard by Marriott Bali Seminyak is equipped with 308m² of event facilities including a poolside pre-function area, all-day-dining Seminyak Kitchen, Pool Bar & Lounge, a fitness centre and swimming pool. Free Wi-Fi access is available throughout the hotel.

Visit www.marriott.com for more details.

6 VW Limo Bali

VW Limo Bali has reconstructed a vintage 1980 Brazilian Volkswagen Kombi to make it a fun transportation option for tours around Bali.

Good for small groups of five people, the iconic vehicle features an L-shape living room equipped with air-conditioning, a minibar, an eight-speaker sound system with hundreds of music albums to make the journey a fun party, and Wi-Fi access.

The Kombi is available for day or night charters at US\$150 for eight hours, and includes a driver and concierge staff who will assist clients in creating itineraries and booking restaurants and bars.

VW Limo Bali will add four more Kombis to its fleet by early next year.

Email owner Brett Morgan at brett@privatevillasandhouses.com for more information.



From left: The Hermitage Hotel Jakarta; Courtyard by Marriott Bali Seminyak; Best Western Premier The Hive

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CONTENT

How can travel agencies use technology to expand their range of content at little cost?

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- As a click-and-mortar agency, how should you approach marketing platforms such as social media, user-generated content sites and search?
- How can marketing messages be consistent across all touch points?

C-LEVEL

- As a travel agency boss, how can you use technology to boost staff productivity and automate your operations?
- What kind of technology talents should you be hiring?
- What technology developments should you be watching out for?

CASE STUDY

- Winner of TTG Asia's 40th Innovator Award will be sharing what the technology company has invested in to stay ahead of the game.

GUEST SPEAKERS:

- Angel Gallego, President, Amadeus Asia Pacific
- Stephen Fowler, CRM Business Lead, Microsoft Dynamics Asia
- Bong SC, Partner, ManghamGaxiola
- Maarten Groeneveld, Chief Operating Officer, Diethelm Travel Group
- Clifford Neo, Managing Director, Dynasty Travel

Destination Cambodia

A destination in its own right?

Cambodia's fullest potential as a standalone destination remains untapped without a strong national strategy. By **Greg Lowe**

Phnom Penh's Royal Palace, still a functioning royal dwelling, is a star tourist attraction



Promoting Cambodia as a destination in its own right, rather than as a mere extension to a regional tour, is essential if the country is to develop a long-term sustainable tourism industry, travel experts say.

Increased flight connectivity, especially from LCCs, has helped to grow international arrivals. However, Cambodia still requires significant investment in infrastructure, strategic leadership from the government and the NTO, plus a more proactive mindset from travel sellers.

"We need to sell Cambodia as a destination, not an extension to a regional trip," said Grégoire Imberty, general manager of Exotissimo Travel Cambodia. "We have to convince people not to come just for the

temples in Siem Reap. Many people, including (travel consultants), have no real idea about Phnom Penh."

Imberty said Siem Reap, home to the World Heritage site of Angkor, still nets about 80 per cent of inbound travel to the country. Phnom Penh, which only has two five-star hotels compared with a more diverse offering in Siem Reap, accounts for most of the remaining 20 per cent. The vast majority of leisure tourists to the capital are certain to include the Angkor ruins as part of their Cambodia trip.

On a more positive note, agencies in key source markets are starting to show a greater interest in selling Cambodia's potential as a single destination, a development that could be further facilitated by

trade fam trips, observed Imberty.

Sharing similar sentiments, Charles-Henri Chevet, general manager of Sofitel Phnom Penh Phokeethra, said: "We've been receiving more requests from big companies considering Phnom Penh for their annual Asia-Pacific meeting for the region. They are quite surprised by what the city has to offer once they actually come here for an inspection trip. It is a new destination for them."

Beyond historic sites such as the Royal Palace, Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum and The Killing Fields, the capital is also home to a burgeoning F&B scene which boasts scores of small bars and contemporary restaurants offering international-standard cuisine at reasonable prices.

Most visitors to the city, however, are unaware of this, resulting in short stays for leisure tourists of typically just one or two nights, trade experts say.

Greater development of other attractions in the city as well as key infrastructure around the country, such as the highway between Phnom Penh and Siem Reap which would significantly reduce the eight-hour journey time, are much needed. This is unlikely to happen without a smarter approach and concerted strategy from tourism authorities though.

The country also needs to develop its beach destinations to better compete with the likes of Thailand or even Vietnam, but it has currently put all its eggs in one basket – Sihanoukville. However, the destination's dearth of higher-end hotels not only

weakens its appeal with four- and five-star guests, but also carriers which would provide the essential flight load, said Khek Norinda, media manager at Cambodia Airports, which operates Phnom Penh, Siem Reap and Sihanoukville airports and is investing some US\$40 million in Sihanoukville to renovate the international terminal and extend the runway.

"There's so much competition among Asia resort destinations," he said. "AirAsia is adopting a wait-and-see approach because it is concerned about the opportunities. There is only about 1,000 four- and five-star rooms (in Sihanoukville), and a single Airbus brings in about 200 pax."

There are positive signs for Sihanoukville, namely Skywings Asia Airlines' July launch of seasonal direct charter flights from Seoul, to the resort town.

Otherwise, Cambodia's tourism has been relatively healthy in terms of arrivals, which grew steadily over the past decade and posted solid double-digit increases from 2010-13. Last year saw 4.2 million arrivals, up 17.5 per cent year-on-year, generating close to US\$2.6 billion in revenue. 1H2014 arrivals grew at a slower rate of 5.2 per cent to 2.2 million due to political turbulence in Phnom Penh and knock-on effects of protests in Bangkok.

Despite the slowdown, many DMCs remain upbeat about Cambodia's performance. "It has been very good this year, with strong growth all round of 30 to 40 per cent," said Jack Bartholemew, Cambodia general manager at Khiri Travel.

HOW TO DO CAMBODIA

Day 1 Visit the Royal Palace complex, which was built in 1886 and houses the official residence of the king of Cambodia and the Silver Pagoda.

Break for a Western lunch at Red Fox.

Next, call at Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum, a former school which was used as an interrogation camp, known as S-21, by the Khmer Rouge in the late 1970s.

Then, travel to the Killing Fields of Choeung Ek on the outskirts of town. This is where the thousands of men, women and children who had their confessions "ex-

tracted" at S-21 were killed and buried in mass graves.

Later, lift your spirits over cocktails at The Elephant Bar at Raffles Hotel la Royal, which was built in 1929. Proceed for dinner at Malis Restaurant, which serves contemporary Cambodian cuisine in luxurious surrounds.

Spend the night at Sofitel Phnom Penh Phokeethra.

Day 2 Transfer to Phnom Penh airport and fly to Siem Reap. Check in at Raffles Grand Hotel d'Angkor and indulge in an hour-long traditional Khmer massage at Raffles Spa.

Enjoy lunch at Viroth's, which serves local cuisine that has been modified for the foreign palate. Later, take a rickshaw tour of Siem Reap town and Old Market.

Have the rest of the afternoon to yourself.

Dinner is served at Marum, a contemporary restaurant run by an NGO which supports street children. Conclude the day with a walking tour of Angkor Night Market.

Day 3 Spend the day exploring the sprawling Angkor Wat complex. Take a mid-day break with a picnic lunch and foot massage in the temple grounds. Later, relax over cocktails at the Foreign Correspondents Club and dinner at Sugar Palm.



WHAT'S NEW

1 Khiri Travel

Khiri Travel won the 2014 PATA Grand Award for Heritage and Culture for its Banteay Chhmar Tented Camp initiative, located just 100m away from the 12th century ruins of a temple in north-west Cambodia, a 3.5-hour drive from Siem Reap. Featuring two luxury tents which can sleep two people each, the luxury camp has a strong CSR element to ensure minimal environmental impact while providing employment and other opportunities for the local community.

2 Aeon Mall Phnom Penh

Cambodia welcomed the opening of its first international shopping centre, Aeon Mall Phnom Penh, in June. While it cannot compete with the much more devel-

oped shopping offerings in Bangkok, Singapore or Hong Kong, the new 108,000m² development does include the country's largest cinema, skating rink and bowling alley, which provide additional leisure options for meetings and incentives groups.

4 Angkor Heritage Boutique Hotel

Angkor Heritage Boutique Hotel opened its doors earlier this year to add 30 new rooms to Siem Reap. Located a short walk from Psa Leu Market, the property features a private garden, a swimming pool, Bophakun Restaurant, Body Sense Spa and a business services facility. Visit www.angkorheritagehotel.com for more information.

5 Vego Salad Bar

Vego Salad Bar offers plenty of healthy eating options, including vegetarian dishes, at two locations in Phnom Penh

– on Street 51 and Street 294. Order straight from the menu or build your own salads supplemented with bagels, falafels and home-baked treats. The restaurant also sells a decent range of healthy fruit and vegetable juices. More information at www.facebook.com/vego.saladbar.



VIEWPOINT

What can be done to improve Cambodia's tourism development?

Charles-Henri Chevet, general manager, Sofitel Phnom Penh Phokeethra

"There's no real masterplan at the moment. The private sector is not the government, so we can't develop things like infrastructure, which needs improving. We want better traffic, better garbage collection and so on.

Finding staff is also difficult, partly because of the level of development in the country and the education system, so it would be good to see more tourism-focused training and education."





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Destination Brunei

Lures of the deep blue sea

The sultanate gears up for a deeper dive in its fledgling dive tourism market to draw tourists. By **S Puvaneswary**



Oceanic Quest

This year, Brunei Darussalam is targeting 240,149 air arrivals, an increase from last year's total arrivals of 224,904.

It is hardly surprising that its closest geographical neighbour, Malaysia topped arrivals to Brunei with 57,476 arrivals followed by China with 30,481 arrivals. Philippines took third position with 18,868 arrivals, followed closely by Indonesia with 18,109 arrivals and Singapore with 17,819 arrivals. Australia which has direct flights from Royal Brunei Airlines, followed closely behind Singapore with 13,823 air arrivals.

As most air arrivals came from within Asia-Pacific, Brunei Tourism will continue to focus its marketing efforts on this region to promote culture, heritage, nature and community based products.

Brunei Tourism's acting director, Mariani Sabtu, said her department is also working with German consulting company, Aphec Independent Economics Consulting, on the Tourism Satellite Account (TSA) project, scheduled for completion in 2H2015. The project is designed to generate more extensive data on tourist activities in Brunei such as a breakdown on expenses and popular places of interest.

She said: "Such data will give us in-depth knowledge on what tourists are spending on and what sectors are benefiting the most from tourism. TSA will complement the general statistics we have on air arrivals and help us evaluate the tourism sector's contribution towards GDP and overall economic development."

In terms of products for tourists, Brunei Tourism is strongly promoting Islamic tourism packages to the Muslim segments in Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia.

Khurul Zainie, managing director of MegaBorneo Tour Planner, said the introduction of Islamic law, or Sharia, in May had resulted in increased business from Malaysia and Indonesia. He saw a 20 and 50 per cent increase in visitors from Indonesia and Malaysia respectively in the months of May and June.

He noted that travellers from both countries were mainly matured, educated

travellers and good spenders who took full-board packages.

Diving is another new attraction being promoted by Brunei Tourism. There is relatively little fishing in Brunei waters, resulting in many diving sites still in pristine condition and mostly unknown to the diving community at large. There are shallow coral dives perfect for inexperienced divers as well as more challenging reef- and wreck-dives.

Brunei Tourism's Mariani told the *Daily*: "We have done our research and found more dive sites such as off the Abana Reefs that are unique and have never been explored before."

Khurul said the company promotes diving in Sabah but now with Brunei Tourism's promotions, it will also start to promote diving in Brunei to its existing clients looking for new dive destinations in the region.

A local, major dive operator in Brunei, Oceanic Quest managing director, Steven Ng, said the company has charted more than 50 potential dive sites in Brunei waters and the most interesting and accessible dive sites are on the sheltered waters of Brunei Bay and the coastal reefs of Brunei.

"These are very accessible, with the Brunei International Airport being less than 30 minutes' drive away," he said, adding that clients were mainly from the region and long-haul markets such as the UK, Germany and Switzerland.

According to Ng, most divers spend at least five days in Brunei which is more than the average tourist visit to Brunei which is three nights. He said: "The dive sites in Brunei are a great contributor to tourism as it has the potential to attract repeat tourists."

Oceanic Quest also offers short dive courses such as Enriched Air Course, Deep sea diving course and wreck specialty courses.

By this year-end, it will manage the dive centre at The Empire Hotel & Country Club and will offer dive recreation programmes and advanced training programmes for both children and adults.

■ HOW TO DO BRUNEI

Day1 After checking into your hotel, your experience of Brunei begins at sunset. Pay a visit to Gadong night market where you can sample a variety of local food. With your belly now happy and full, go on a drive around the city and take in the night views of the capital, Bandar Seri Begawan.

Day2 After breakfast at the hotel, proceed for a half-day city and water village tour.

The tour begins with a quick look at Lapau, the ceremonial hall where royal ceremonies in Brunei are usually held, as well as Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin Mosque, a landmark and tourist attraction in Brunei.

Next, spend some time at the Brunei Museum and The Royal Regalia Museum where royal trappings from the coronation of His Majesty the Sultan are displayed along with regalia used during the Silver Jubilee celebrations.

From the city, move on to Brunei's water village, Kampong Ayer, which is also known as the Venice of the East and has a history dating back 600 years. Hop onto a local "water taxi" and cruise down the Brunei River. Alight at one of the houses built on stilts in

Kampong Ayer, and enjoy some local cakes and tea.

End the half-day tour with a hearty lunch at Tarindak D'Seni Restaurant located on the first floor of the Arts and Handicraft Centre. The restaurant offers good views of Kampong Ayer.

Day3 After breakfast at the hotel, you will be driven to Tasek Merimbun Heritage Park in Tutong district which is approximately half an hour's drive from the capital. A photo stop will be made along the way at Tutong town and the wet market.

A nature guide will greet you at Tasek Merimbun Heritage Park and lead you on a jungle trek while talking you through the array of native flora and fauna.

The trek should build up an appetite and soon a picnic lunch will take place.

After refuelling, visit the Tasek Merimbun museum where you can learn even more about the park's habitat at the natural history section. Live and preserved specimens, as well as models and pictures are on display.

Return to the hotel and the rest of the day is free and easy.

Itinerary by Freme Travel Services

■ WHAT'S NEW

1 Royal Brunei Airlines

National flag carrier Royal Brunei Airlines has resumed four-times weekly flights to Bali from July 26.

Flights depart Bandar Seri Begawan on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays while the return flights run every Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Sunday. The flights are operated with Airbus A319 aircraft.

Royal Brunei Airlines deputy chairman, Dermot Mannion, said in a press statement: "In (our) latest studies (on commercial routes), Bali had emerged a frontrunner in providing connections to key markets in London and Dubai and also for regional destinations like Hong Kong and Shanghai."

The airline terminated direct flights to Bali in 2008.



2 Brunei International Airport

Brunei International Airport's new arrival hall opened in October 2013 as part of an expansion project that is scheduled for completion by end-2014. This upgrade will also include a new departure check-in

hall, improved security system and baggage handling, and the expansion of floor areas. The B\$150 million (US\$120 million) modernisation project is expected to double Brunei International Airport's annual passenger capacity to three million.

3 Jerudong Park Country Club

Jerudong Park Country Club recently added new carousel, ferris wheel and junior coaster rides as well as a 21-hole mini golf course.

Designed by Australian mini golf expert Craig Bartlett, the mini golf course also includes several artificial lakes, sound systems, playground, kiosks and challenging courses designed for competitive play at various levels of difficulty.

4 Brunei Darussalam Sports Gallery

Located at the Hassanal Bolkiah National Stadium in Berakas, Brunei Darussalam Sports Gallery was opened in April this year to showcase the history of sports development in the country.

Comprising five zones, the museum exhibits cover the sporting events Brunei has engaged in over the years, the participation of national athletes in the Southeast Asia Games and the sultanate's milestones in the Malaysia Cup, S-League, regional competitions as well as sporting events involving athletes with special needs.

■ VIEWPOINT

What needs to be done to further promote diving tourism in Brunei?

Hamzah Rahmat, director, Bestar Travel Centre Malaysia

"There's nothing better than experiencing the product itself. Brunei Tourism should organise familiarisation trips to the dive sites which will help foreign travel experts to sell the product better. The tourism board should also support consultants in key markets through collaterals and consumer promotions. Diving is a niche segment for Brunei which has potential to grow for the Malaysian outbound market as Brunei is easily accessible and divers are always looking to experience new dive spots."



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30 OCTOBER 2014
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JOIN US FOR A SENSATIONAL NIGHT!

Let us fire up your night with electrifying fire twirlers, stunning fiesta dancers and LED water drummers. With such hot entertainment acts, gourmet canapés and lip-smacking beverages, the night promises to be the most exhilarating networking function this ITB Asia!

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News/Snapshots

ADAM TAN
@ITB 

Good luck, Kenny

KENNY GOH and I go back a long way. We would be revealing our age if I told you when I first interviewed Kenny. But in true Kenny style, neither age nor bankruptcy would prevent him from trying again and, for that, I salute him.

The boss of Ken Air Tours, which then ruled the market as one of South-east Asia's biggest outbound players majoring in the US market, is back with TravelZingo.com, which he calls a "travel vending machine". An optimised web app, it enables travellers to pick a tour product template, then add, scrap, change the components to their liking, book online and pay online.

The product is preliminarily targeted at US travellers as, according to Kenny, they are the ones who are ready for such a product. While the aim is to enable travellers to create programmes around the world, he is currently focusing on mainly European products as these are the US travellers' fave.

Remember Kenny also pioneered the electronic distribution for prepaid hotel and tour services in 1995, Spy Travel Network, an online B2B consolidator? Alas, that too did not take off. Perhaps this time, Kenny will strike gold and get lots of dollars from the vending machine. That is Adam's dear wish for him.

Inefficient? Out!

Qunar CEO asks suppliers to cut – not raise – commissions

By Gracia Chiang

FOR a journey he calls "accidental", CEO and co-founder of Qunar, CC Zhuang, is doing pretty darn well.

Set up in 2005 as a meta-search engine, the Chinese company has now evolved into a travel ecosystem offering everything from flights and hotels to attraction tickets, allowing bookings to be completed on its own platform as well. In fact, it was reported that Chinese OTA Ctrip recently removed its hotel products from Qunar because the site has "largely abandoned its original model as a neutral online travel products search platform". In 2011, Qunar had 200 employees, but today, the number has swelled to 8,000.

BACKGROUND An engineer by training, Zhuang founded Shawei.com, a leading sports portal in China, which was acquired by TOM.COM in 2000. He later joined World Bank, where he was a core member of its System Architecture team, based in the US from 2001 to 2005. Applying his engineering background to the travel industry, Zhuang is a firm believer in "squeezing out" all possible efficiencies from the distribution business.



MAN TO WATCH

WHO HE REALLY IS Fearless and straight-talking. Speaking at the WIT Conference yesterday, Zhuang revealed he has been "aggressively asking travel service providers to cut commissions". That way, "most of the travel distribution players will be out of the game because they are simply inefficient".

He explained that Qunar has been able to live on very thin profits, requiring "very little money to support a very large volume of transactions". This means that benefits can be transferred to consumers and

suppliers. He eschews labels like "meta-search" or "OTA", saying it "doesn't matter what model we are; I have no idea what model means".

WHAT HE IS DOING While it became profitable in 2011, the company has deliberately gone into loss-making mode over the last year or so as it turns "aggressive" in "reshaping the Chinese travel industry". Foraying into revenue management, Zhuang explained that airlines only need to give the company a simple order with instructions on how many seats to be sold and revenue it wants to make, and Qunar would be able to optimise the trade using technology that allows it to manage prices dynamically and gain insights into consumer purchase intention.

While Qunar claims to have 25 per cent of the domestic air market, it is way behind when it comes to hotels – around five per cent. As such, it hired nearly 3,000 salespersons this year to sign on more hotels.

But despite its expansion, Zhuang remains focused on only serving Chinese customers and remaining asset-light. "We will go where Chinese consumers go. We want to serve their full life cycle," he said.

ADAM TAN
@ITB 

Oh we're no longer freezing

WE used to freeze in our press room at Marina Bay Sands (MBS) but this year, happily, we're warmer.

That's because MBS is guiding ITB Asia to cut its footprint by five per cent from 399 tonnes in 2012, mainly through more optimal use of power and air-con.

MBS will also be paying to offset the total carbon footprint of ITB Asia this year, which will be computed at the end of the show. The offset will be done through its certified partner, Carbon Story, and the carbon credits will in turn be invested in two regional climate change mitigation projects, Sungai Kerling Hydropower in Malaysia and Wayang Windu Geothermal in Indonesia.

In addition, MBS will collect all unused booth giveaways and stationery such as note pads and pens from exhibitors at the end of the show and donate them to its charity partner Food from the Heart. Leftover brochures at the booths will also be collected and recycled.

According to Kevin Teng, MBS' executive director of sustainability, biggest areas of waste at trade shows are unused pamphlets/brochures and food waste. So hey, Adam says, let's do our bit and watch that waste line okay?

Striking a balance in business

TTG's Ken Tay captures the smiles of delegates eager to leverage networking opportunities at the show



Shanghai Intercontinental Travel Service's Lisa Zhang



Vietnam Indochina Travel's Hoang Mai Tuyet and Nguyen Duc Cuong



PHM Hospitality Indonesia's Hera Nitihardja and The 101 Yogyakarta Tugu's Wahyu Wikan Trispratiwi



Messe Berlin US' Arielle Henscheid and Dorothea Baxter



Outrigger Resorts Thailand's Bryce Schneider and Netnapa Tadakittikul



Right: Yoga Travelers Asia Singapore's Stefania Set

Snapshots

Shifting into higher gear

Buyers and delegates converge on Marina Bay Sands for ITB Asia 2014. TTG's Ken Tay swoops into action



Hangzhou Shangri-La Business International Travel Service's Su Hua



Easy Tours Belgium's Antoine Noens



Samui Vacation China's Joseph Sze



Helms Briscoe China's Laura Hu



Affinity Lanka Tours & Travels Sri Lanka's Rohana Mahaliyanaarachchi and Rukshan Kumarasinghe



Rakuten Travel Japan's Takashi Yokaichiya



Dormas Tourism Israel's Doron Sternberg



Penang Global Tourism's Yoon Pauline



Morahols Travel Malaysia's Eric Sinnaya



LWT Business MICE Poland's Leszek Tumkiewicz



Above: World Federation of Consuls Belgium's Patrick Debus

Left: Singapore Tourism Board's Jane Goh and Josephine Wee, Singapore Tourism Board Thailand's Titiwanlaya Thaimongkolrat and The Nation Thailand's Suchat Sritama

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LEGEND

- 1 FERRARI WORLD ABU DHABI
- 2 YAS WATERWORLD ABU DHABI
- 3 YAS LINKS GOLF COURSE
- 4 YAS PLAZA HOTELS
- 5 YAS BEACH
- 6 du FORUM
- 7 YAS MARINA
- 8 YAS MARINA CIRCUIT
- 9 du ARENA
- 10 YAS CENTRAL
- 11 YAS KARTZONE
- 12 YAS DRAG RACING ACADEMY
- 13 YAS MALL *
- 14 IKEA
- 15 ACE
- 16 SEAWINGS - YAS MARINA
- 17 O1NE YAS ISLAND

*OPENING NOVEMBER 2014

HOTELS

- 18 YAS VICEROY ABU DHABI
- 21 CROWNE PLAZA ABU DHABI YAS ISLAND
- 23 CENTRO YAS ISLAND
- 19 PARK INN BY RADISSON YAS ISLAND
- 22 STAYBRIDGE SUITES ABU DHABI YAS ISLAND
- 24 YAS ISLAND ROTANA
- 20 RADISSON BLU YAS ISLAND

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Experience the roar of Formula 1® racing and other premium motorsport events.



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Live the ultimate water adventure through 45 exhilarating rides, slides and attractions.



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TTG Travel Awards 2013-2014

Best City Hotel - Singapore

MARINA MANDARIN SINGAPORE

World Luxury

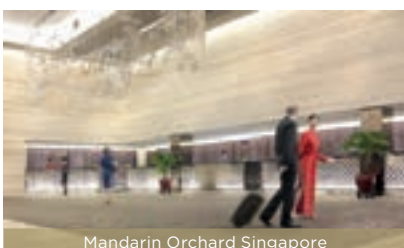
Hotel Awards 2013-2014

Country Winner (Singapore)
- Luxury Business Hotel

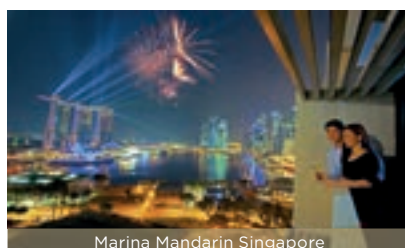
MERITUS PELANGI BEACH
RESORT & SPA, LANGKAWI

**Malaysian Interior Design
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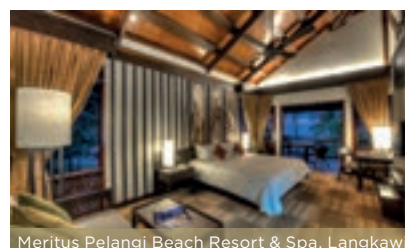
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MAJOR EVENTS IN THE



MUSIC & ARTS



LIFESTYLE & ENTERTAINMENT



HISTORY & CULTURE



BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

MANILA | JANUARY 2015

Be enchanted by a musical love story that never grows old on its first-ever international Broadway tour in Asia.



MALASIMBO: MUSIC & ARTS FESTIVAL

PUERTO GALERA
MARCH 5-8, 14-15, 2015

Catch a concert of the biggest international and local musicians set against the beautiful terraced steps of Mount Malasimba.



MTV MUSIC EVOLUTION

QUIRINO GRANDSTAND,
MANILA | MAY 2015

Sing your heart out at a massive event of music's biggest legends juxtaposed with regional and local artists on one stage.



LIFE DANCE PHILIPPINES

CEBU | JANUARY 2015

Show off your moves on the streets of Cebu at the biggest outdoor electronic dance music party in the Philippines.



MANILA FAME

METRO MANILA,
MARCH & OCTOBER 2015

Discover the best of Filipino craftsmanship and artistry at the country's premier design tradeshow.



MADRID FUSION MANILA

SMX CONVENTION CENTER,
PASAY CITY | APRIL 2015

Taste the fusion of Spanish and Filipino influence as more than 400 leading chefs whip up everything from traditional recipes to avant-garde cuisine.



SINULOG

CEBU | JANUARY

Take part in the festival as drums and street festivity patron saint.



POPE PAPAL VISIT

MANILA | MARCH

Be moved by the chance to see the Pope in person marking the start of the World Youth Day.



PANAGBENGA

BAGUIO | FEBRUARY

See the colorful garden as parade its beauty during the season.

BASTILLE LIVE IN MANILA

WORLD TRADE CENTER, MANILA
JANUARY 5, 2015

THE VAMPS LIVE IN MANILA

MALL OF ASIA ARENA, PASAY CITY
FEBRUARY 1, 2015

ONE DIRECTION ON THE ROAD AGAIN TOUR 2015

MALL OF ASIA ARENA, PASAY CITY
MARCH 21-22, 2015

THE 1975 LIVE IN MANILA

AYALA MALLS | MARCH 27-29, 2015

TRAVEL TOUR EXPO

SMX CONVENTION CENTER
FEBRUARY 13-15, 2015

HOT AIR BALLOON FESTIVAL

CLARK PAMPANGA
FEBRUARY 12-15, 2015

6TH PHILIPPINE INTERNATIONAL PYROMUSICAL COMPETITION

MALL OF ASIA COMPLEX, PASAY CITY
FEBRUARY-MARCH

INTERNATIONAL FOOD EXHIBITION

SMX CONVENTION CENTER, PASAY CITY
MAY 21-24, 2015

THE SOUTHEAST ASIAN FOOD MARKET (ASEAN)

WORLD TRADE CENTER MANILA
JUNE 17-19, 2015

ASEAN FOOD CONFERENCE

SMX CONVENTION CENTER, PASAY CITY
JUNE 24-26, 2015

PHILIPPINE TRAVEL MART

SMX CONVENTION CENTER, PASAY CITY
SEPTEMBER 2015

70TH YEAR OF THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE PHILIPPINES

NATIONWIDE | YEAR-LONG

ENCOUNTERS: WORSHIP AT THE CHURCHES OF THE WORLD BAROQUE EXHIBIT BY FERRAN

NATIONAL MUSEUM | FEBRUARY

ANDREA O. VENERABLE INTERNATIONAL CHURCH EXHIBIT

CULTURAL CENTER OF THE PHILIPPINES
JULY 22 - 25, 2015

GIANT LANTERN FESTIVAL

SAN FERNANDO, PAMPANGA

METRO MANILA FILM FESTIVAL

NATIONWIDE | DECEMBER

PHILIPPINES THIS 2015



CULTURE

BOHOL
JANUARY 2015
Experience the city of Cebu
come amidst the sound of
dancers at this 9-day
activity in honor of a local
saint.

POPE FRANCIS VISIT
JANUARY 15-19, 2015
Witness a once in a lifetime
event with Pope Francis
at his apostolic visit
to the 20th anniversary of
Youth Day.

DAVAO
FEBRUARY 2015
The city turn into a festive
celebration with giant flowers
and streets in honor of
the month of blooming.

LIBERATION
JANUARY 2015
Experience the
WORLD HERITAGE BAROQUE
PHILIPPINES & NEW
SPAIN PHOTOGRAPHY
EXHIBITION BY
FRANCESCO FERRANTI
JANUARY 4 - APRIL 26, 2015

INTERNATIONAL
CARNIVAL FESTIVAL
THE PHILIPPINES, MANILA
JANUARY 2015

BOHOL
BOHOL | DECEMBER 2015
Experience the
BOHOL FESTIVAL
JANUARY 2015



SPORTS, ADVENTURE
& ECOTOURISM



COBRA IRONMAN
CEBU | AUGUST 2015
Get your adrenaline rush amidst
the beautiful coastline and terrain
of Cebu at the largest triathlon
competition in the country.



9TH BORACAY INTERNATIONAL DRAGON BOAT FESTIVAL
BORACAY ISLAND, AKLAN
APRIL 23-25, 2015
Paddle it out at a competitive
boat-racing event that displays the true
spirit of sportsmanship and camaraderie.



MT. APO TREK
KIDAPAWAN, NORTH COTABATO
APRIL 30 - MAY 3, 2015
Trek your way to the top of the country's
highest peak and be welcomed with
diverse plant ecosystems and a scenic
view at its peak.

ASIAN POKER TOUR (ASIAN SERIES)
CEBU CITY | JANUARY 27 - FEBRUARY 4, 2015

IRONMAN 70.3 SUBIC
SUBIC BAY | MARCH 8, 2015

NESTEA BEACH VOLLEYBALL
BORACAY | APRIL 2015

5150 TRIATHLON SUBIC
SUBIC BAY | JUNE 7, 2015

CHALLENGE PHILIPPINES CAMSUR
CAMARINES SUR | JUNE 14, 2015

6TH INTERNATIONAL MARTIAL ARTS GAMES & 8TH INTERNATIONAL MARTIAL ARTS CONGRESS
MANDALUYONG CITY | AUGUST 12-16, 2015

5150 TRIATHLON BOHOL
BOHOL | NOVEMBER 8, 2015



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Volunteer at one of the largest youth
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ASEAN CHIEF JUSTICES MEETING
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2ND SMART GRID SOUTHEAST ASIA FORUM
MANILA | MARCH 16-18, 2015

CYBER INTELLIGENCE ASIA
MANILA | APRIL 21-24, 2015

M&I FORUM ASIA
CEBU | MAY 26-30, 2015

6TH ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN PAIN SOCIETIES CONGRESS
MANDALUYONG CITY | MAY 15-17, 2015

17TH ASIA PACIFIC RETAIL CONFERENCE & EXHIBIT MANILA
SMX CONVENTION CENTER, PASAY CITY
OCTOBER 2015

MAJOR EVENTS IN THE



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LIFESTYLE & ENTERTAINMENT



HISTORY & CULTURE



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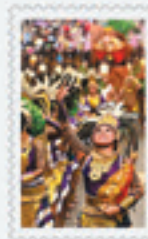
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PHILIPPINES THIS 2015



CULTURE

LOG

JANUARY 2015
 as the city of Cebu
 amidst the sound of
 dancers at this 9-day
 activity in honor of a local
 int.

FRANCIS VISIT

JANUARY 15-19, 2015
 by a once in a lifetime
 witness Pope Francis
 at his apostolic visit
 the 20th anniversary of
 Youth Day.

GBENGA

FEBRUARY 2015
 city turn into a festive
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 streets in honor of
 of blooming.

LIBERATION

NG
**WORLD HERITAGE BAROQUE
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 A PHOTOGRAPHY
 FERRANTI**
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**ACION
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M FESTIVAL
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 SMX CONVENTION CENTER, PASAY CITY
 OCTOBER 2015

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PHILIPPINES
YEAR

20
15

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BEAUTIFUL ISLAND



TAKE A HISTORY LESSON
IN A CLASSROOM THAT HAS
MORE THAN FOUR WALLS



CATCH A CONCERT
AND SEE MORE STARS
THAN EXPECTED



WORK ON YOUR
PHOTO SKILLS AT THE WORLD'S
SELFIE CAPITAL



GO SIGHTSEEING
AND BE THE
MAIN ATTRACTION



GET THE JOB DONE
BUT NEVER RUN OUT OF
THINGS TO DO



CHECK EVERYTHING
ON YOUR SHOPPING LIST IN
MALLS THE SIZE OF CITIES



MAKE NEW FRIENDS
WHERE THERE'S MILLIONS
TO CHOOSE FROM



DO YOUR REGULAR
WORKOUT IN A GYM THAT
ISN'T ORDINARY



MAKE LUNCH PLANS
WITH THE NEXT BIG THING
IN FOOD



TAKE A MOMENT TO
RECHARGE IN THE WORLD'S
BEST PLACE TO UNPLUG



GO FOR A STROLL
AT A UNESCO WORLD
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MAKE A NEW DISCOVERY
ON ONE OF THE
BEST SECRET BEACHES



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DAY OF THE YEAR
FOUR MONTHS LONG



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more fun is our people.

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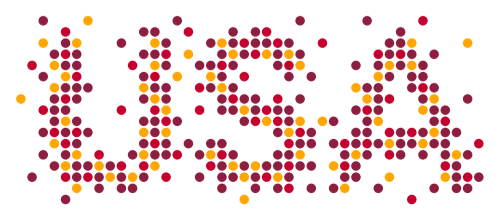


It's more fun in the
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Taste of USA
Join us at the "Taste of USA" luncheon!
Meet Brand USA representatives, US destinations,
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1.00 pm - 2.00 pm, October 30 2014, Thursday
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at ITB Asia 2014.

Spurred by the buoyant confidence and enthusiastic interest from South-East Asian buyers, the Brand USA Pavilion returns for the second year, with an even bigger USA presence in this leading trade show.

The Asia-Pacific is the world's fastest-growing travel region. The economies of South-East Asia, including Indonesia, Malaysia, The Philippines, Singapore and Thailand have been enjoying stable and consistent growth. These markets have an overall population of over 400 million and more than 55 million in total outbound travel. Travel to the United States is growing steadily by 5 to 10%.

Committed to growing our presence, Brand USA will further anchor our footprint in South-East Asia through our appointment of BrandStory who will be focusing on business-to-business outreach, trade shows and trade missions. In 2015, we will be launching the Brand USA Discovery Program, a new online training program, to inspire travel agents to sell the complete U.S. multi-state experience.

On the consumer front, we will be celebrating the Centennial Anniversary of the National Park Service, by unveiling a film for giant screen theatres featuring USA's most treasured natural assets - 400 U.S. National Parks and Federally managed lands.

At ITB Asia, Brand USA kicks off our culinary initiative with the release of Discover America: Great American Food Stories. The culinary guide features tantalizing USA food stories by 31 James Beard Foundation affiliated chefs in over 60 pages of mouth-watering recipes that are sure to delight even the most fussy palate!

We take this opportunity to thank you for partnering Brand USA in igniting the desire of South-East Asian travelers to experience the limitless possibilities that the land of dreams has to offer. Be it savoring the flavorful culinary landscape or immersing in most grandiose and awe-aspiring natural landscapes, there is something different to experience at every corner.

Christopher L. Thompson
President and CEO
Brand USA



THE USA - JUST A CLICK AWAY

Learning about the USA
has never been easier.

The Brand USA Discovery Program was launched in UK in 2013 as a one-stop platform for agents to learn about the USA and enhance their abilities to market its destinations. It won an award in 2014, and will be rolled out in Hong Kong, Taiwan and South-East Asia in the first quarter of 2015.

The Program holds a wealth of information on the USA's diverse spread of offerings, laid out in an intuitive, user-friendly interface. Explore the USA by its regions and states, or by holistic themes that showcase the destination for travelers with specific interests.

You'll also find extensive resources - from practicalities like the latest entry requirements into the USA and time zone information, to ready-made itineraries for all kinds of travelers, to downloads of its latest collateral.

The Program takes learning seriously - its training modules enable agents to learn about the USA in a structured manner, albeit with the flexibility of online learning.

Start with the five regional tests that cement your understanding of the USA by geography, then take on the experience-based modules.

After completing these modules and

passing the quizzes, you'll be awarded badges - recognized qualifications acknowledging your expertise as a "Great Outdoors Specialist", "Luxury Specialist", and more. With this, you'll enjoy more credibility with your clients!

The Program connects agents across the world with its social functionality. Besides being able to log into the site through Facebook or Twitter, you'll definitely enjoy the dedicated forum. There, you can ask specific questions, and share knowledge with your peers.

If words aren't your preference, the platform's "Member Photos" module is a like a U.S.-themed Instagram where agents share first-hand experiences with photography. Agents are invited to post photos they take during familiarization trips or personal holidays - all tagged by theme and region.

You'll be kept abreast of the USA's trendiest new attractions and latest developments through exclusive online learning opportunities, including video training sessions, live Q&As, and webinars by its partners.

Agents keen on seeing the USA in person can enjoy perks like invitations to attend exclusive events, roadshows, and familiarization trips such as the Brand USA Megafam.

**To sign up, please contact
reene@brandstory.asia**



Grab a copy of Discover America: Great American Food Stories at the USA Pavilion!



GET A TASTE OF THE STATES



Gear up for a culinary adventure spanning time and space.

American cuisine encompasses not only the rich culinary tradition bound to its people by its history and natural environment, but also its reputation as “Land of the Free” – a large part of its cuisine is strongly influenced by its immigrants through time.

As you embark on this mouth-watering journey through the USA, expect to savor a spectrum of tantalizing flavors, even as you immerse yourself in a mesmerizing kaleidoscope of coasts, plains, and neighborhoods, all of which form the backdrop of USA’s culinary heritage.

Start at the **Northeast** to soak in the sights, sounds, and tastes of its melting pot of cultures. You’ll easily find authentic Italian pizza, Greek falafels and Spanish churros from neighboring street vendors along its bustling streets.

Sample seafood harvested fresh from the Atlantic, as you enjoy the rugged scenery of the Northeastern coasts. Don’t miss the tender Maine lobster or the world-famous clam chowder.

Travel south, and be greeted by warm Southern hospitality amongst the **Southeast’s** dense layers of history. The region’s cuisine, molded by a perfect unity of European, Native



Seafood, chilies, wine, and wild game!

Key Foodie Events

- SPRING**
 - Austin Food & Wine Festival
Austin, Texas
- SUMMER**
 - Midwest Wild Harvest Festival
Prieur du Chien, Wisconsin
- AUTUMN**
 - Flavori Napa Valley
Napa Valley, California
- WINTER**
 - The Good Food Awards
San Francisco, California

American, and African-American influences, includes fried chicken, barbecue, and locally grown okra. As you explore the sunny coasts of the Southeast, taste local shrimp in the stew-like gumbo and “po’ boys” (that’s “poor boys” with a Louisiana accent), a baguette-like sandwich with its own story. Chesapeake Bay’s Maryland crab cakes are a perfect way to sample the succulent native blue crabs.

The **Southwest’s** culinary heritage blends Mexican, Native American, and Spanish culture. The strong tastes and colors of chili, spice, shredded cheese, braised meat, beans, and tortillas are the perfect accompaniment to an adventure along Route 66 and its magnificent landscapes. The classic Margarita is a must-try.

America’s most geographically-diverse region lies just north, where

travelers go to embark on stirring outdoor adventures and experience simple cowboy and ranch culture. The **West’s** cuisine is centered on meat dishes from animals hunted in the region like elk, deer, quail, and trout, accompanied by potatoes. If simplicity isn’t to your taste, then head to the region’s cosmopolitan centers, Las Vegas or Denver, to cleanse your palate with international gourmet cuisine.

Head north to the **Pacific** and enjoy the rewards of the eco-friendly region’s farm-to-table movement. The freshest ingredients, such as salmon from the Pacific, are used in the cuisine here - sometimes you’ll even see chefs foraging for their own ingredients, or tending their own herb gardens. Dishes are often simple, with an Asian and Mediterranean influence. Sushi, salads, and wraps, showcase the freshness of the ingredients perfectly. Complete your meal in the tranquility of Napa Valley with an exquisite Californian wine.

Finally, circle back to the **Midwest**, where the finest produce from its sprawling wheat fields and cattle ranches is used in its cuisine. Sink your teeth into the region’s prized heritage breed pork, accompanied with sweet corn straight off the cob with salt and butter, and wild rice. The region is also famous for its Wisconsin cheeses and craft beer.

Learn more about culinary USA at discoveramerica.com/foodstories



Yellowstone's Morning Glory Pool

400 NATIONAL GEMS TO SHINE ON GIANT SCREEN

This blockbuster film will be a chance for the world to experience USA's gorgeous national parks at home.

The U.S. National Park Service turns 100 next year, and in celebration, the giant screens will be taken over by a giant-screen film in high-definition technology featuring USA's trove of natural assets.

"Today, there are over 400 of these gems located in wilderness areas, and in the core of many of the United States most vibrant cities, making for some of our most popular tourist destinations and the world's most iconic attractions," said Christopher Thompson, Brand USA president and CEO. "This giant-screen film will capture the myriad of experiences available through the nation's great outdoors, therefore inspiring

visitors to discover the beauty and diversity across the United States."

The film will be produced by Brand USA, in partnership with MacGillivray Freeman Films, the leading independent producer of films for giant-screen theatres for over 30 years. They have produced five of the top 10 highest grossing giant-screen films of all times.

"U.S. national parks feature some of the most grandiose and awe-inspiring natural landscapes on the planet, and we are thrilled to bring them to the giant screen," said producer Shaun MacGillivray of MacGillivray Freeman Films.

U.S. national parks feature some of the most grandiose and awe-inspiring natural landscapes on the planet, and we are thrilled to bring them to the giant screen.

"The size and immersive nature of the giant screen platforms is the perfect canvas to showcase the beauty and wonder of the national parks. We are excited to take global audiences on a journey into these great places that inspire the adventurer in all of us."

USA's national parks form a stunning collection of natural wonders, and are amazingly varied. These iconic national parks are just a tiny, tiny sampler of the range of natural wonders featured in the highly-anticipated giant-screen film.

Yosemite National Park, California

A World Heritage Site since 1984, Yosemite is recognized for its spectacular granite cliffs, waterfalls, clear streams, and biodiversity. Outside the popular Yosemite Valley, travelers can enjoy 800 miles of hiking trails through a variety of terrain ranging from forested Giant Sequoia groves to high-altitude meadows.

Yosemite is a rock-climber's playground, with its granite formations creating huge variety of challenges for climbers of all skill levels. Winter sports like downhill and cross-country skiing, and snowshoeing are popular.

Biscayne National Park, Florida

Biscayne National Park preserves the mangrove swamps and shallow waters of Biscayne Bay and the northernmost region of the Florida Reef, one of the world's largest coral

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reefs in the world. The reefs and waters hold more than 200 species of fish, pelagic birds, whales and hard corals, making it one of the best places in the world for snorkeling, scuba diving, and kayaking.

Multiple shipwrecks to explore amongst the reefs add a fascinating historical dimension for travelers.

Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming

Widely regarded as the first national park in the world, Yellowstone comprises lakes and rivers, forests and grasslands, amidst soaring mountain ranges. It holds Yellowstone Caldera, an active volcano that fuels the extensive geothermal features throughout Yellowstone National Park, including the popular Old Faithful Geyser.

Renowned for its wildlife, Yellowstone is home to hundreds of species, including megafauna like grizzly bears, wolves, bison, and elk. The national park offers plenty of opportunities for

the outdoor enthusiast including hiking, camping, and boating.

Mount Rainier National Park Washington

Picturesque valleys, waterfalls, subalpine wildflower meadows, old-growth forest and glaciers surround Mount Rainier in its namesake national park. While regarded as one of the most dangerous mountains in the world, Mount Rainier remains a popular mountaineering destination, attracting more than 10,000 climbers yearly.

Meanwhile, the aptly-named Wonderland Trail circles the mountain, bringing hikers through the breathtaking beauty of the national park.

Crater Lake National Park, Oregon

The sapphire of USA's natural gems, Crater Lake National Park is characterized by its caldera lake's clear azure waters. The caldera was formed by a massive eruption of the volcanic

Mount Mazama, leaving behind the deepest lake in the USA.

Travelers can take a plunge into the lake and visit its two islands, Wizard Island and Phantom Island, then hike through the rest of the national park to see its wealth of smaller volcanic formations.

Death Valley National Park, Nevada

The deceptively-named Death Valley is a stunning specimen of natural beauty. Travelers can visit the lowest point in North America, Badwater Basin, and its reflective salt flats which will delight photographers.

Far from being dull and colorless, the valley holds colorful marbled rock in Artist Drive and Mosaic Canyon, and blooms with wildflowers in March and April. The park boasts the second tallest sand dunes in USA – the Eureka Sand Dunes. The national park can be explored on foot, ATV, or bicycle.

Gates of the Arctic National Park, Alaska

Named for the pair of mountains framing the head of the north fork of the Koyukuk River, the Gates of the Arctic National Park is the second largest national park in the USA. Its pristine wilderness doesn't contain any roads and trails, and invites visitors to discover intimately the otherworldly landscape full of glacier-carved valleys, alpine lakes, boreal vegetation, and its six Wild and Scenic rivers. The park is also full of wildlife like grizzly bears, moose, wolves, black bears, eagles and caribou.

Climbers will enjoy the Arrigetch Peaks and Mount Igikpak.



Crater Lake

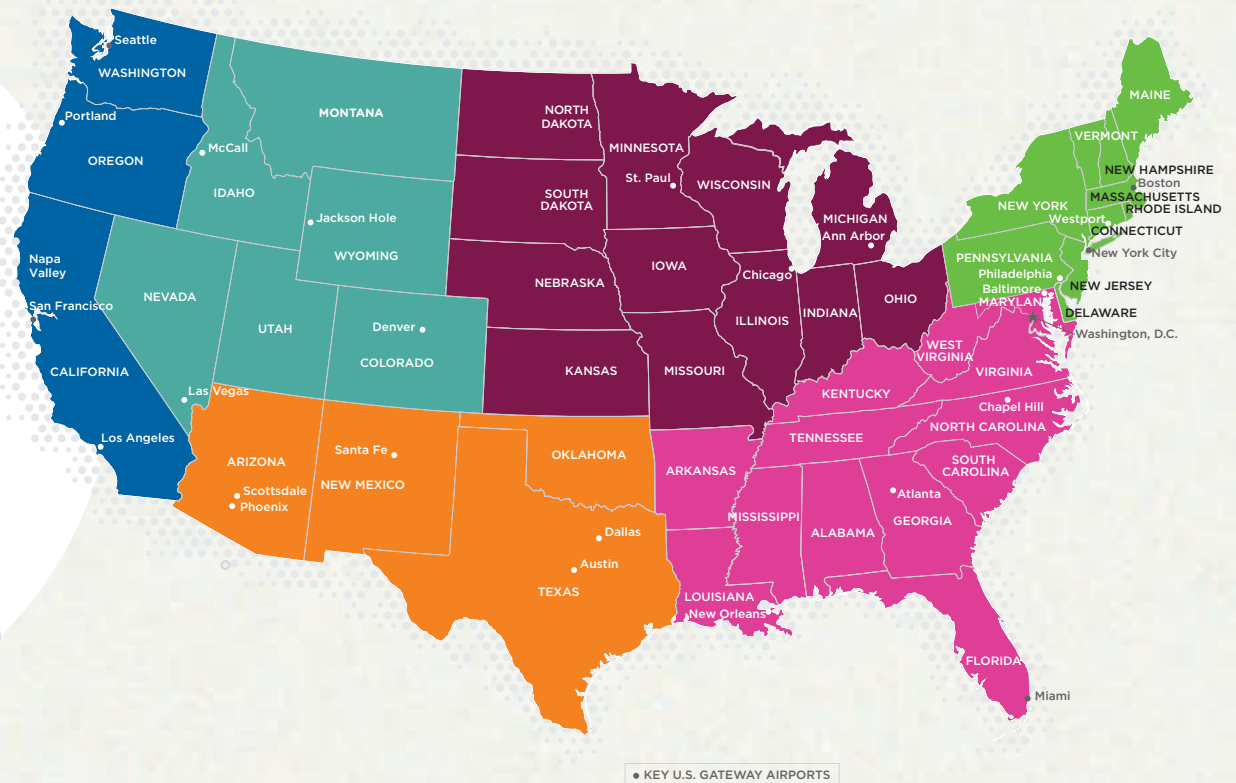
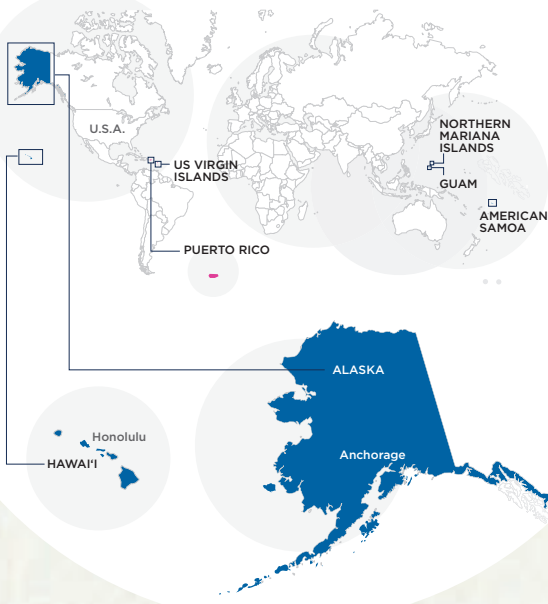
Some key facts

- 14 of USA's national parks are World Heritage Sites.
- Some of the national parks require permits to enter, especially if they are designated wilderness zones.
- The most-visited national park is the Great Smoky Mountains in North Carolina and Tennessee, receiving 9 million visits in 2011!
- The General Grant Tree in California's Kings Canyon is the world's second largest tree.
- Updated alerts on park or road closures and special events can be found on the National Parks site, www.nps.gov.



WELCOME TO THE USA

NON CONTINENTAL STATES AND TERRITORIES



ENTRY INFORMATION

Are you a Visa Waiver Program traveler? If you're planning a trip to the United States, make sure you get your travel authorization first. The ESTA (Electronic System for Travel Authorization) application process is fast, easy, costs only \$14 and is valid for up to two years or until your passport expires. Apply for your ESTA and learn more on the only official website: esta.cbp.dhs.gov.

Before entering the country, make sure you know what items you must declare. Educate yourself on U.S. travel regulations for a quicker, simpler entry process, whether you're coming home or taking a holiday with family and friends.

What are the rules regarding large amounts of money?

Anyone travelling with \$10,000 or more in cash — whether it's in U.S. Dollars, another currency or any other monetary instrument — you must declare it

What may I bring in duty-free?

- No more than 200 cigarettes and 100 cigars per individual 18 and older
- Up to one liter of alcoholic beverages per individual 21 and older
- Gifts and purchases valued at a maximum of \$100 total



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