

Oct + Nov 2017

# where2

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Vol. 39



## TOURISM GURU

**All Systems Go**  
Ipoh International Fashion Week

**The Place to be**  
Fisherman's Wharf Langkawi

**October's Double Festivals**  
Mid-Autumn's & Diwali

**LANGKAWI bags PATA 2017 Awards**  
Best Poster goes to Tourism Malaysia



**DATUK SERI UTAMA**  
**IR. HAJI IDRIS BIN HAJI HARON**  
Melaka Chief Minister

IDRIS





Melaka has clinched a string of accolades from the federal government due to its steep

## 2017

**"THE WORLD'S TRENDIEST HOLIDAY DESTINATION IN 2017"**  
awarded by British Post

2nd Most Popular Tourist Destination in Malaysia in **"DESTINASI PELANCONGAN POPULAR"** awarded by Ministry of Tourism and Culture (MOTAC)

**No. 9 Top 25 Destinations Malaysia** awarded by Tripadvisor.com



Nonya Mee Siam Donald & Lily's



Jalan Kuli Satay

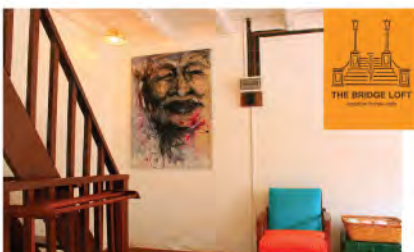
**TOP 50 WORLD STREET FOOD AWARDS"**  
awarded by The World Street Food Congress 2017 to:-

**Donald & Lily's Nonya Mee Siam**  
as the "Top 34th World Street Food"

**Jalan Kuli Satay**  
as the "Top 43rd World Street Food"

### 10 Best Destination Must Visit Asia 2017

Zheng He Duo Yun Zuan, Trash & Treasure, The Shore Shopping Gallery, Melaka River Cruise, Maritime Museum, Villa Sentosa, Rumah Merdeka, Swiss-Garden Hotel & Residences, The Sky Tower, Vedro Shopping Mall, Discovery Cafe, Bridge Loft, The Quayside Hotel, 1825 Gallery Hotel in **"BEST IN ASIA 2017"** awarded by Lonelyplanet.com



The Bridge Loft



**"10 BEST DESTINATION MUST VISIT IN ASIA 2017"**  
awarded by Tripadvisor.com

**Top 25 Hotels & Top 25 Luxury Hotels Malaysia**

No.14 - Casa Del Rio Hotel

No.22 - The Majestic Malacca

**Top 25 Hotel for Romance Malaysia**

No.18 - The Majestic Malacca

No. 20 - Courtyard @ Hereen Boutique Hotel

**Top 25 B&Bs & Inns Malaysia**

No. 8 - KnockKnock Home

No. 11 - The Bridge Loft

No. 25 - Old Town Guesthouse





# TOURISM TONES

from renowned overseas travel bodies and  
ed historic world class attractions.



**"THE TOURISM GURU"**  
awarded by where2  
Travel & Lifestyle  
Magazine to **Chief  
Minister of Melaka,  
Datuk Seri Utama Ir.  
Haji Idris bin Haji Haron**

**PORTUGUESE SETTLEMENT MELAKA** is featured in the  
book of **Secret Marvels of The World** by Lonely Planet



## 2016



**LOCAL FAVORITE 2016 AWARD** by theculturetrip.com  
to Melaka Straits Mosque in category Beautiful Temples  
in and around Kuala Lumpur

**THE BEST CITY TO DRIVE IN**  
awarded by **Waze App**



**TRIPADVISOR 2016 TRAVELLER'S CHOICE AWARDS** awarded to

**Melaka** as **Top 10 Destinations** in Malaysia  
**Melaka Straits Mosques** as **Top 10 Landmarks** in Malaysia  
**The Majestic Malacca** as **Top 25 Hotels, Top 25 Luxury Hotels,  
Top 25 Hotels for Service & Top 25 Hotels for Romance** in Malaysia.  
**Casa Del Rio** as **Top 25 Luxury Hotels** in Malaysia  
**Courtyard @ Hereen Boutique Hotel Melaka**  
as **Top 25 Hotels for Romance** in Malaysia



The Majestic malacca

## 2015



Straits Chinese Jewelry Museum



Baba & Nyonya Heritage Museum

Top 10 Museums in Malaysia in  
**TRIPADVISOR 2015 TRAVELLER'S CHOICE AWARDS**  
awarded by Tripadvisor.com to  
No. 2 - **Straits Chinese Jewelry Museum**  
No. 4 - **Baba & Nyonya Heritage Museum**  
No. 7 - **Villa Sentosa (Malay Living Museum)**  
No.10 - **Malacca Heritage Centre**



# Interview: MELAKA CHIEF MINISTER

DATUK SERI UTAMA IR. HAJI IDRIS BIN HAJI HARON

**M**elaka leapfrogged to become the top local tourist destination and fourth in Asia in a matter of a few years. The state owed its success to the persistence of Datuk Seri Utama Ir. Haji Idris bin Haji Haron, an engineer by profession, who is bent on leveraging on historical Melaka's rich and glorious past as a trading port on the Spice Route.

A state that lacks natural resources has overcome its disadvantages to attain milestones that propelled it to what it is today. Read Melaka Chief Minister and his forthright replies.

**Q** Looking back, did you have any inkling as to what you could achieve in this short four years?

Having been in office as the Chief Minister of Melaka since 7 May 2013, I had intended to bring back the glory of Melaka's past by maintaining Melaka's position as one of the most preferred tourism destinations in Malaysia.

Melaka has been receiving travellers far and wide due to its role as an international trading post and the epicentre of the Melaka Sultanate empire in the 15th century. The state strongly leverages on this fact to make it more relevant to travellers in this day and age.

With such wealth of history, legacy and vestiges, Melaka has been enlisted as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO since July 2008, together with Georgetown. In 2012, The New York Times recognised Melaka as one of the top 45 places to visit in the world.

Recently, Lonely Planet has listed Melaka in the Top 10 Destination You Must Visit in 2017.

The state is also strong in culture, besides exquisite architecture that can be seen in the UNESCO heritage core area, including landmarks such as the Stadthuys, A Famosa Port of Santiago and St. Paul's Hill.

**Q** Melaka Tourism's achievements on the ground has catapulted Melaka to become the top 4th Asian tourism destination? What was the key that you found that has unlocked Melaka's tourism potential?

Tourism provides huge contribution to Melaka's economy, therefore participating in international travel fairs is crucial to increase visibility and awareness of the state.

Melaka takes part in the World Travel Mart in London, International Tourism Bourse in Berlin and the Arabian Travel Mart in Dubai together with Tourism Malaysia.

Our positioning strategy is that travellers must visit Melaka whenever they visit Malaysia, otherwise their visit to Malaysia is not complete. Visiting Melaka means visiting Malaysia.

So whenever Tourism Malaysia goes on any sales mission, Melaka will always be a part of that delegation. Our amazing performers and artistes in their performances have captivated the crowd and help to make the state as well as Malaysia attractive.

We also have our own programmes to lure fellow Malaysians to visit Melaka.



Domestic tourists contribute more than 75% of the total tourist arrivals to Melaka every year.

Last year in 2016, we recorded 16.28 million tourist arrivals, with the majority coming from the domestic market. On average, the domestic tourists stay for 2.6 nights in Melaka.

In terms of foreign tourists, China contributes significantly to Melaka's tourism industry. The state recorded the highest arrivals of Chinese tourists in 2016, numbering 1,351,742, due to the strong relationship forged between Melaka and China, without even having to do large scale promotions but by constantly reminding Chinese tourists of Melaka's hospitality and friendliness.

**Q Can you elaborate on the second phase of the Progressive Melaka Plan in transforming Melaka economy to energise the state which lacks in natural resources?**

My predecessor has done much to turn Melaka into what it is today by bringing Melaka to the world stage. My task now is to elevate Melaka a notch higher, which is a great challenge because the state's achievement is already high.

The state government now embarks on Melaka Phase II programme that focuses on four attributes to propel Melaka further: high quality products and services; efficient mechanisms or systems in place to ensure that the quality of the products and services delivered are consistent at all times; conducive working environment and liveability; and inculcating ownership mentality and high integrity among the people of Melaka to ensure that the state remains clean, safe and secure.

The Melaka state government also institutes the National Blue Ocean Strategy that requires all departments and agencies, including the management of Melaka River, to set work quality standards and deliverables.

The move provided impetus for Melaka River to become the best river in Malaysia and among the best transformed in the world.

Your visit to Melaka would also not be complete without taking the cruise along the Melaka River, which is where Melaka's history began.

Interestingly, Melaka River was not as conducive as it is now because 20 years ago, it was polluted, left unattended and became an eyesore. The state government, through

its foresight, turned the problem into an opportunity by cleaning it up and instituted a law that requires properties located within one-kilometre radius from the river and along the banks to switch their front entrances to face the river instead.

Phase II of the Melaka River Programme involves the opening of the Future Trail along the river, which is currently being upgraded and will include sports and recreational spaces for young people such as futsal and volleyball courts to be built on both sides of the river, besides a spectacular light show at night.

The 4.5-km long stretch of Melaka River that is already in use is called the Heritage Trail. The government also plans to improve this part of the river by upgrading and sprucing up the Hang Tuah Commercial Centre to make it more dynamic and reflect local culture.

**Q Melaka's illustrious past as an important trading port is part of the DNA of Melaka's rich cultural history. How is it relived to attract tourists to visit?**

Melaka has an outstanding record of achievements in tourist arrivals to Melaka increasing from year to year. For record, from 1999 to 2016, a total of 130.3 million tourists visited Melaka with an average increase of nearly 20% per annum and the average length of stay for 2.6 nights.

We have more than 800 tourism products with their own uniqueness. In addition, we also have world-class hospitality services, tourism infrastructure of a modern and convenient transportation system

**Q Vision is good but when combined with your passion, the sky is the limit to achieving the undreamed of? What would you like to share?**

The Melaka State government is in the process of rehabilitating 11 tourism projects that were abandoned in the state to ensure productivity in the tourism industry remained positive

The projects concerned included the upgrading of the monorail at Melaka River, the Melaka Zoo and the Dolphin Park at Pulau Melaka here as well as the development of the Extreme Park in Chin Chin, Jasin.

It is the first Malaysian state to put electric buses in service and introduce the One Number Call Centre, +606 333 3333 which provides non-stop assistance to tourists, investors and the people about

anything they need to know about Melaka.

By dialling, callers can reach any government office or subsidiary across the state and can access an electronic complaint management system. To support this programme, Melaka has installed information kiosks all over the state.

**Q What are Datuk Seri's immediate plan for Melaka Tourism?**

Melaka aspires to attain a higher level of excellence than where it is currently at and offering genuine world-class hospitality to travellers near and far.

The Melaka River Programme Phase II, when completed, will enable small vessels to enter the river's various canals and even conveniently enter into buildings along the river.

The river will be revived as a waterway to transport the members of the public from one point to another. I also envisage that Melaka would be able to realise its plans over the next few years as its tourism products are further enhanced.

Finally, I hope that the people of Melaka understand the state government's aspirations, which is to make Melaka vibrant economically and socially, ensuring that it remains prosperous and hospitable.



Datuk Seri Utama Ir. Haji Idris bin Haji Haron  
Melaka Chief Minister



# MELAKA TOURISM ROBUST

**N**orena Jaafar least expects the tall order she would have to carry on her shoulders after agreeing to take up a job offer that she was head-hunted for.

Literally hitting the ground running, she has to keep her work-life balance; juggling her family life with a heavy responsibility to manage, execute and promote historical Melaka in the world.

Summarizing the role she has played as educational, this humble lass has agreed to share what she has to do to overcome the challenges that lie ahead to sustain the lead Melaka has attained so far.



**Norena Jaafar**  
General Manager of Tourism Melaka

## **Q** Can you relate why you took up this job though you were headhunted to head it?

It was an opportunity too good to miss. My role requires me to manage, execute and promote Melaka worldwide on behalf of state at the macro and micro levels. It calls on me to meet the need to manage Melaka as a brand, managing perceptions towards it and to turn problems into an opportunity that benefits the tourism industry.

Though people thought that 'selling' Melaka would be easy as Melaka has already become a popular destination in Malaysia. It challenges me to embark on programmes that will bring Melaka to another level. It means I have to continuously come up with new ideas like events, campaigns etc to draw tourists to visit Melaka over and over again.

With the dedicated team that I have right now, we are able to overcome constraints and consistently push Melaka forward to maintain its standing as the top 5 destinations in Malaysia and top 10 in Asia.

We are seeing an increase of European, Korean and Chinese tourists, including those coming from Kuala Lumpur and Singapore to Melaka and they generally stay for up to three nights. They are also high spenders. For Koreans, they stay up to three months for golfing here in Melaka.

## **Q** How was Melaka Tourism doing before you took over?

Melaka has always been prominent as a popular local destination and easily accessible from the main north-south highway between KL and Singapore. The accommodation options are many and varied, there is always something to suit every traveler - from grand and luxurious hotel chains to more traditional homestays, all of which provides a perfect base for exploring Melaka's fascinating city centre.

Melaka now has to cope with a changing world. Singapore which was earlier reported having the highest number for international arrivals to Melaka has been overtaken by

China. This change was the result of the strong relationship that we have built up with China from the numerous roadshows to the various parts of China.

Tourism has shown extraordinary strength and resilience in recent years, particularly those related to safety and security. Yet, international travel continues to grow strongly and contribute to job creation and the well-being of communities around the world.

As we can see, Melaka now has become well known globally and we have received numerous awards and recognitions from various sources such as Lonely Planet, TripAdvisor, The Culture Trip, British Post, New York Times, Waze and many more for our destinations, foods and services. These proved that tourism in Melaka has been become known internationally and it's not an easy job to maintain the standard achieved and stay on top. What is most important is that these recognitions benefit both the state government and the industry.





▼ Destination Melaka app



We are glad to have the continuous support from the industry players and it brings out the best in us and motivates us to work harder to introduce and promote Melaka to every part of the world.

**Q Now that Melaka Tourism has topped the list; you are even busier. I guess the bigger challenge is to sustain the momentum to stay on top.**

Melaka targets the youth market because the travelers are mainly between 20 and 27 years old and they come with kids. Their presence has turned Melaka into youthful and vibrant destination with many hipster cafes and accommodations.

These young travelers are adventurous, willing to explore more of the UNESCO World Heritage enclave. Within 10 to 15 years, these travelers will progress economically later in life. By that time, they will surely feel nostalgic towards the places they have visited, therefore they will return to Melaka with their own families.

**Q Melaka has embarked on the new concept of experiential travel; can you elaborate on this?**

The tourism industry in Melaka holds huge potential for the state since the state is best known for its well-preserved culture and heritage. Total tourist arrival to Melaka increased to 16.28 million in 2016 and the state government is highly optimistic of the tourist numbers and by extrapolations the number will likely reach 20 million by year 2020.

Today's travelers as consumers have reached a stage that goes beyond tourism in which their travel motivation is not about wanting to just visiting but rather to become exposed and experience the local languages, art, heritage, culture and etc.

Tourist experience has become a major aspect in our cultural heritage marketing. More and more 'heritage' tourists seek the total experience of soaking in and experiencing the local culture and by social interaction

they would have a memorable trip here.

For example, with the concept of bullock cart ride, trying out traditional costumes, playing out in paddy field and engaging in a few other activities in Kampung Balik Bukit, the state's bullock cart production has increased.

Melaka has become popular for family with small kids, foreign students and youngsters who have never experienced kampung lifestyle before.

The concept of memorable tourism measures a person's memory that relates to tourism experiences that encompass the components of involvement in local culture, the feeling of refreshments, meaningfulness and knowledge.

Travellers who interact with local culture are more likely to have enjoyed unique and memorable travel experience and has a high possibility of returning to the destinations.





where2 Editor K.Y. Pung (second from right) presented Tourism Guru award to Datuk Seri Utama Ir. Haji Idris bin Haji Haron (third from left). Also present were Melaka State Secretary Datuk Seri Haji Naim Abu Bakar (second from left), Deputy State Exco member for Tourism Datuk Wira Haji Ghazale Muhamad (first on right) and General Manager of Tourism Melaka Norena Jaafar (first on left).

## TOURISM GURU where2 Travel & Lifestyle has conferred on Melaka Chief Minister its inaugural Tourism Guru Award.

**M**elaka has outperformed all other 13 states to rank top with the highest number of tourist arrivals in the country.

This historical city of Melaka has regained its former prominence; where once it was an important trading port along the Spice Route, it is today the fourth in the top 10 Asia tourism destinations.

where2 Editor KY Pung presented the Tourism Guru accolade to Datuk Seri Utama Ir. Haji Idris bin Haji Haron at a brief ceremony at the Chief Minister's Office on Aug 10.

Present were the Melaka State Secretary Datuk Seri Haji Naim Abu Bakar, Deputy State Exco member for Tourism Datuk Wira Haji Ghazale Muhamad and Tourism Melaka Norena Jaafar.

The Chief Minister, in accepting the accolade, said the State Government has spared no effort to promote tourism both in and outside the country and is proud of its success.

"Lonely Planet has recognised that Melaka ranks fourth as the top 10 tourism destinations in Asia," he said.

Waze - the world's largest community-based traffic and navigation app - has voted Central Malacca as the best place to drive in Malaysia according to its latest data from the Waze 2016 Global Driver Satisfaction Index.

The Tourism Guru Award is the apex recognition of a tourism personality who has contributed immensely to the industry as well as displaying outstanding leadership in moving the industry to the next level of excellence.

where2 published a series of tourism personalities who are featured in each issue of the travel and lifestyle magazine.



### CITATION

**T**he Tourism Guru accolade is a fitting recognition of the tireless efforts by the Melaka State government to promote tourism in the state.

Melaka now ranks first as the state with the most tourist arrival in the country. The journey to success is marred by many challenges that Melaka has successfully overcome. It has shown that under the leadership of Melaka Chief Minister Datuk Seri Utama Ir. Haji Idris bin Haji Haron, Melaka has displayed remarkable resilience in attracting over 16.5 million foreign tourists into this historical city.

The need to push the frontiers and think out of the box has borne much fruits; the state has shown its ability to re-invent itself with the creation of many new and innovative tourist attractions that have helped to draw many more tourists to visit.

where2 Travel and Lifestyle magazine is amazed at the resolve and commitment of the state leadership to execute a very focus tourism plan that enabled Melaka to achieve the objectives of what it intends to do.

We are proud to confer the Tourism Guru Award to the Right Honourable Chief Minister for his vision to turn Melaka into a top travel destination in Asia.