

How do tourists differ from excursionists?

LETTERS: Those in the tourism business should know the difference between tourists and excursionists.

The former stays overnight while the latter would leave the same day. At any one destination, visitors are either tourists or excursionists.

But the same visitor can be a tourist in one city and excursionist in another. So terms used must be correct to help tourism business tap into both markets.

Recently, I was struck by the heading of a report claiming, "First eco-tourism farm launched". This is because there is no such thing as eco-tourism farm.

Eco-tourism is nature-based, while farms for plants or animals are manmade. There can only be one, the two cannot be combined.

The practice of ecological farming with results friendly to the ecology or environment is known as eco-farming. Although such efforts ought to be lauded, it would be incorrect to label them as eco-tourism.

Initiatives by farms to receive visitors are known as agriculture tourism or agritourism. It was also referred to as agrotourism by the Tourism, Arts and Culture Ministry as a tourism concept.

Therefore, it would be wrong to claim that the newly launched hydroponic farm in Bentong is the first agrotourism farm. It may be the first for the company, but certainly not the first to be opened to visitors or the pioneer in hydroponics.

Recently, the Visit Melaka 4.0 campaign was launched with the aim of attracting 5.6 million tourists this year. Chief Minister Datuk Seri Sulaiman Md Ali said 33 tourist spots were involved compared with 24 in the previous campaign.

He disclosed that the campaign would be held until Dec 31 and offered discounts of up to 57 per cent to all visitors.

Had the state authorities been clear on the difference between visitors, tourists and excursionists, the report would have stated that the campaign is expected to attract 5.6 million visitors, as not all are tourists.

Most would be excursionists from within Melaka or other states taking a day trip to visit the many attractions.

Those who stay overnight at hotels or private residences are deemed tourists, and the estimated numbers could only be ascertained through scientific surveys.

The authority that conducts annual surveys on domestic tourism is the **Department of Statistics Malaysia**. Pre-pandemic in 2019, Melaka received 13,979,000 domestic visitors, Negri Sembilan 13,303,000, Kelantan 10,986,000 and Perlis had 2,088,000.

Higher numbers were recorded in Terengganu at 14,158,000, Johor (14,274,000), Kedah (14,831,000), Penang (15,411,000), Pahang (18,498,000), Sarawak (19,793,000), Perak (21,070,000), Sabah (22,035,000), Kuala Lumpur (22,633,000) and Selangor (33,589,000).

Many would argue that Sabah and Sarawak could not possibly attract such a high number of domestic visitors, given their distance from other states, not knowing that intrastate travel is also counted.

And two-thirds of domestic visitors are excursionists, one-third tourists.

As for foreign visitors, are their entries and exits recorded as tourists or excursionists at the checkpoints manned by the Immigration Department?

<https://www.nst.com.my/opinion/letters/2022/04/785002/how-do-tourists-differ-excursionists>