

Travnews

NATAS
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
TRAVEL AGENTS SINGAPORE

Apr-Jun 2019 • ISSUE 50



40

YEARS OF TRAVEL
EXCELLENCE

1979 - 2019



- + NATAS TURNS 40!
- + NATAS GOLF CHALLENGE 2019
- + INTERVIEW WITH FOUNDING PRESIDENT:
MR PETER CHOO

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2018-2020**

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Singapore 088892

APPROVED MEMBERSHIPS

Company	Classification	Approval Date
Gui Hao International (Singapore) Pte Ltd	Ordinary Member	4 April 2019
Etiqa Insurance Pte Ltd	Associate Member	12 April 2019
Manlin Communications Pte Ltd	Ordinary Member	3 June 2019
Ready to Travel Pte Ltd	Associate Member	3 June 2019
Tiger Travel Pte Ltd	Ordinary Member	14 June 2019

The total number of NATAS members as at 21 June 2019
Ordinary Members: 319 • Associate Members: 69 • Honorary Life Members: 5

SAY HELLO TO OUR NEW MEMBERS!

NATAS welcomes the following companies as new members.

Etiqa Insurance Pte Ltd

Etiqa Insurance Pte Ltd is a licensed life and general insurance company registered in the Republic of Singapore and regulated by the Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS). Owned by Maybank Ageas Holdings Berhad (MAHB), one of Asia's leading banking groups, it is a joint venture company that combines local market knowledge with international insurance expertise to provide trusted insurance solutions.

Gui Hao International (Singapore) Pte Ltd

Gui Hao International Travel (Singapore) Pte Ltd was incorporated in Singapore on 9 April 2018 with the aim of bringing tourists from China, Hong Kong and Indonesia to Singapore. With a focus on China tourists travelling to South East Asia, particularly Singapore, the company offers organised tours to Batam/Bintan and other nearby islands. Gui Hao International Travel (Singapore) Pte Ltd also provides learning tours for students from China and Indonesia to Singapore.

Manlin Communications Pte Ltd

Manlin Communications Pte Ltd was established in March 2005 and specialises in the field of education. Over its 14 years in the market, the company has forged long-term relationships

with many government agencies and is a recognised brand in China. Besides offering unique tours that provide students with the opportunity to 'play as they learn', Manlin Communications Pte Ltd ensures that all its students fulfil the requirements set by the various education institutes it works with.

Ready to Travel Pte Ltd

Ready to Travel Pte Ltd is a 100% direct subsidiary of SATS. A travel app focusing on various travel-related touchpoints, it provides travellers with all the tools needed for a seamless and enjoyable travel experience. Besides allowing users to purchase various travel essentials, the app also contains useful travel "must-knows" such as VISA requirements, weather forecasts and a currency converter. And with collaborative itinerary planning, sharing travel plans with friends and family is easier than ever.

Tiger Travel Pte Ltd

Established with the aim of contributing to the growth of the tourism industry, Tiger Travel Pte Ltd specialises in providing a one-stop travel solution that travellers can count on. By building a good rapport with relevant stakeholders, especially hotels and travel agents, along with its 15 new coaches, the company offers a first-class holiday experience to tourists visiting Singapore.



Celebrating 40 years of travel excellence at NATAS 40th Anniversary Dinner

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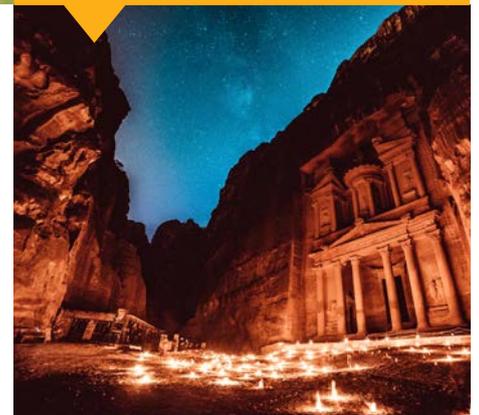
Teeing off at NATAS Golf Challenge 2019

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Exploring the treasures of Jordan – the jewel of the Middle East

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Celebrating 40 years of travel excellence at NATAS 40th Anniversary Dinner



It was a night of celebration, achievements and revelry as members, sponsors, industry partners, former presidents of NATAS, embassy ambassadors and media partners gathered to celebrate NATAS' 40th birthday. Held on 24 May 2019 at Orchid Country Club, the joyous occasion welcomed over 200 guests for an unforgettable night of festivities. Gracing the event as Guest-of-Honour was Mr Keith Tan, Chief Executive of Singapore Tourism Board.



Since its establishment in 1979, NATAS has come a long way in serving and representing travel agencies in Singapore. As NATAS President



Mr Steven Ler said in his welcome address: "Our pioneer generation took their first stride with the support of only about 80 members accompanied by the fervent passion to steer the tourism trade. Galvanised by such, NATAS thrived. And till date, NATAS has close to 400 members under our wing."

But NATAS' success would not have been possible without the strong support from our sponsors and firm guidance of our past presidents Mr Peter Choo, Dr Robert Khoo and Mr Devinder Ohri. As guests tucked into the sumptuous banquet, tokens of appreciation were presented to the various sponsors.





NATAS also prepared a special screening to honour the contributions of our past presidents and highlight their efforts in the formation and growth of NATAS. To the delight of those present, Mr Peter Choo, Dr Robert Khoo and Mr Devinder Ohri took to the stage to share their experience of their many years in the trade and express their well wishes to NATAS.



As the night progressed, the spirit of camaraderie was evident as guests laughed, joked and mingled over dinner. And when the birthday cake was finally wheeled onto the stage, guests readily broke into a loud and cheerful rendition of 'Happy Birthday NATAS'.

However, the festivities were far from over. After a fun and noisy game of 'Guess the number of golf balls', prizes were presented to the winners of the NATAS Golf Challenge 2019, which had taken place earlier in the day. This was followed by a special lucky draw, which saw guests walking away with amazing prizes.



Too soon, the night came to an end. However, the spirit of NATAS remains stronger than ever. In the words of Mr Steven Ler: "As we celebrate NATAS 40th anniversary, it is an opportune time for us to appreciate the phenomenal achievements that our pioneers had built and continue committing ourselves to build on their legacy."

Here's to the next 40!



+ NATAS EVENTS

Thank you all who participated in NATAS 40th Anniversary Dinner and NATAS Golf Challenge 2019 and a special word of thanks to all of our generous sponsors: AIG Asia Pacific Insurance Pte Ltd, DWF Compliance (Singapore) Pte Ltd, Turkish Airlines, Singapore Airlines, United Airlines, Orchid Country Club, Cityneon, Valencia Yachts, Agility Fair & Events, Amara Sanctuary Resort Sentosa, Avis and Budget Car Rental, Bestlink travel Pte Ltd, Courtyard by Marriott Singapore – Novena, Competition and Consumer Commission of Singapore, Paulaner Brahaus, The Horse’s Mouth Bar, Singapore Press Holdings, SingEx Venues Pte Ltd, Suisai, The Saujana Hotel Kuala Lumpur and Uma Ramen Restaurant.





Teeing off at NATAS Golf Challenge 2019



It was a day of birdies, putts and hole-in-ones as almost 100 golfers and their supporters gathered at Orchid Country Club for the NATAS Golf Challenge 2019. Held as part of NATAS' 40th anniversary celebration, the highly anticipated event saw golfers vying for the top spot in the competition. After registering and collecting their goodie bags, participants gathered for a group shot before heading for a pre-tournament briefing.

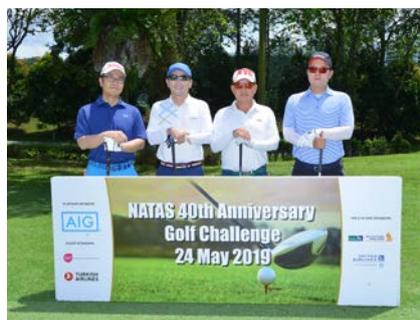


As golfers moved to their respective tee boxes, the tournament officially began with a shotgun start that saw all participants teeing off simultaneously.

And with that, the game was on! Despite the searing heat, there was little effect on the mood of the golfers as they engaged in a great deal of friendly banter and goading across all flights.



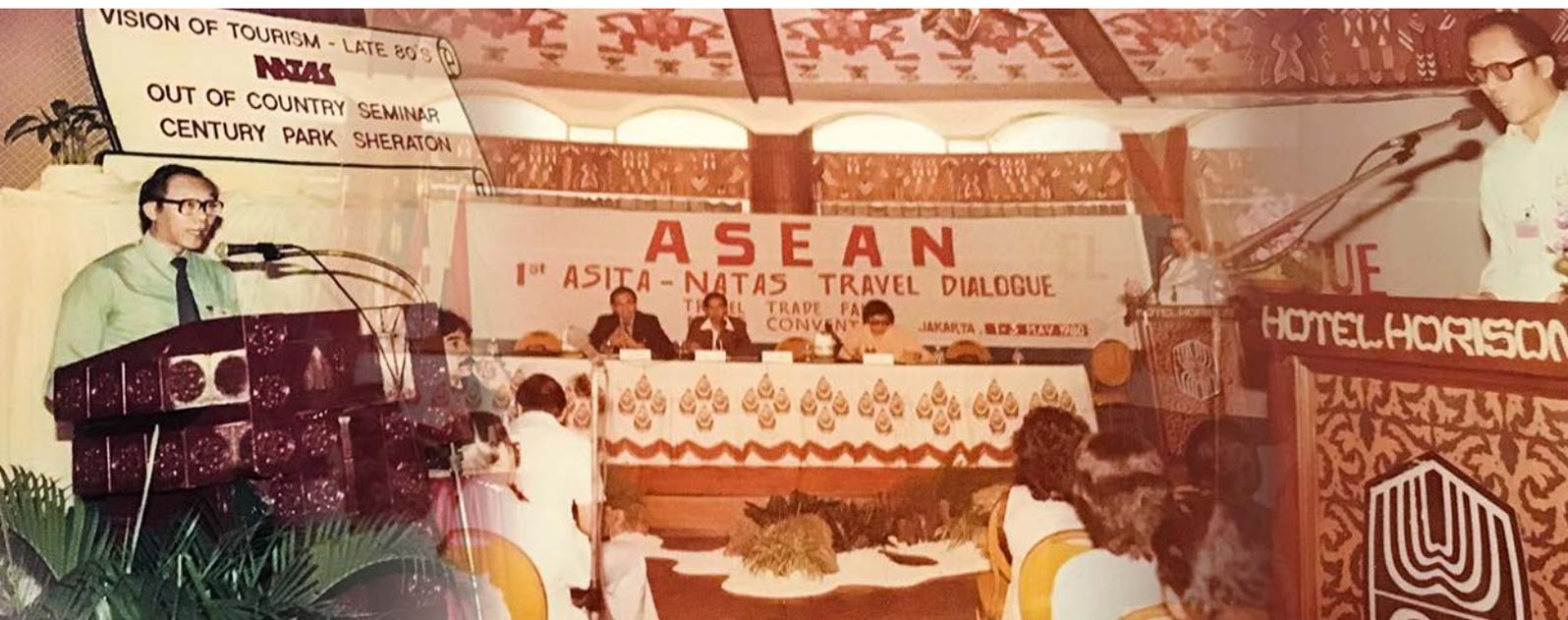
Laughter resonated across the greens even as the golfers showed off their powerful drives and impressive putting skills. The spirit of camaraderie remained in the air as participants slowly played their way through all 18 holes.



Too soon, the tournament was over. But even as the event wound down, the great atmosphere was carried off the greens as golfers continued to chat and joke while walking back to clubhouse to freshen up for the main event – NATAS' 40th Anniversary Dinner.



A hearty congratulations to all the winners and we look forward to seeing you again next year!



A walk down memory lane with **NATAS Founding President Mr Peter Choo**

As the founding President of NATAS, Mr Peter Choo was instrumental in establishing the association and leading it to achieve the success it enjoys today. Today, Mr Choo remains passionate and active in his contributions to NATAS and the trade.

As a boy, the only travelling I did was on the daily ferry to and from St. John's Island and Singapore. Back then, air travel was very expensive and only a lucky few could afford to fly. But despite never having been to the airport, I had wanderlust in my blood. So it's no surprise that I really enjoyed my physical and commercial geography lessons in school.

When I first got into the travel industry in 1959, it was more out of necessity than desire. I was anxious to find a job to help my parents feed my family of nine. And as luck would have it, my first job was as a junior clerk at a Danish MNC The East

Asiatic Company, where I was assigned to the Scandinavian Airlines System Department. Many travel veterans will recall the young man rushing around delivering tickets and timetables. Yes, I was also the office boy, but the interaction with the travel trade helped me greatly in my career. And I've never looked back.

A voice for the industry

Since my first job, I've spent 60 years in the travel and transport trade, of which 16 were in the SAS and Thai joint office. In 1977, I was appointed as the Managing Director of the newly incorporated Diners World Tour Royale (DWTR). Two



years later, the late Chairman of the Singapore Tourism Promotion Board (now Singapore Tourism Board) Mr Tan I Tong approached me with concerns about a lack of unity among travel agents and asked if I could unite them.



United We Stand, Divided We Fall

At that time, travel agents were represented by two different organisations. The Association of Travel & Tourism Association (ATTA), which mainly represented ticketing and outbound agents, and the Singapore Society of Travel agents, which represented inbound and outbound agents as well as coach and car rental companies. After speaking to the presidents of both associations, they agreed it made sense to unite the sector through a single body.

Previously, I had asked Mr Tan I Tong for consent to use the word 'National' as part of the organisation's name. Reason being, I wanted it to be clear that the new association was the national representative and spokesman for travel agents. And with that, NATAS was born.

Paving the way for a united association

During my term, the committee had to do all the work ourselves. Technology was not so advanced so there were no emails or social media. We had to rely on manual labour to get everything done. For that, I'm really thankful to all my colleagues for their support and their families for being so understanding.

It was very heartwarming to see how quickly all the travel agents jumped on the NATAS bandwagon. There were very few obstacles. In fact, the first few years were mostly spent laying the foundations and fostering ties with our ASEAN neighbours.

We also worked very closely with the Singapore Tourism Promotion Board to see how we could work together to promote Singapore tourism. We met so many times at one point, I was at the office almost three to four times a week.

But it all paid off as international trade shows started holding their events here and Singapore grew as a tourist hub.

The road ahead

Looking back, NATAS has come a long way. The business and travel landscapes have changed tremendously, and they will keep changing. But I'm sure that NATAS is more than up to the challenge. I'm confident that the association will keep abreast if not ahead of changes and challenges and develop platforms and skills for the trade to remain relevant while satisfying the needs of both travellers and partners. What I hope for now is to see every agency back in the fold. As the saying goes: "united we stand, divided we fall".

Lastly, I'd like to congratulate all members and office bearers through the years. Let's unite and work towards celebrating our Golden Anniversary.



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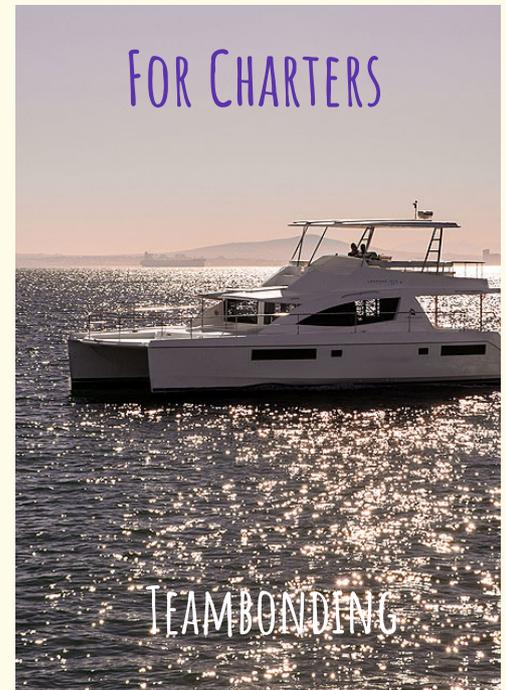
Email: Glen.Chee@dwfcompliance.com or Timothy.Khaw@dwfcompliance.com

Welcoming new blood at **NATAS' 40th Annual General Meeting**



It was a morning of new beginnings, new plans and new faces at NATAS' 40th Annual General Meeting. Held on 31 May 2019 at the Furama Riverfront Hotel, the event saw more than 50 NATAS members coming together to discuss issues and make critical decisions that would be executed in the upcoming year.

The meeting also introduced and welcomed two new committee members Mr Kliff Ang, Director of Asia Travel Group Pte Ltd, and Mr Eugene Tan, General Manager of Corporate Travel Management. They will be assuming the post of IT Chairman and Air Transport Chairman, respectively.



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*Flights on Sunday will commence 6 October 2019.
Schedules are subject to seasonal changes and regulatory approval.

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New Zealand Destination Update



Local travel agents were introduced to the wonders of New Zealand when Tourism New Zealand organised a Destination Training session on 1 April 2019 in light of the recent earthquake in Kaikoura. Besides receiving updated news on the earthquake, participants also gained useful tips on how to plan the perfect itinerary and promote New Zealand as a driving destination.

Gearing up for the holidays at the CAG and SATS briefing

In anticipation of the holiday peak season, Changi Airport Group (CAG) and Singapore Airport Terminal Services (SATS) organised a briefing session on 21 May 2019 to provide local travel agents with a better understanding of airport operations. Besides learning about key developments in the new Jewel Changi Airport, participants were also briefed on the checking in process for SQ/MI as well as the CruiseFly service.



Boosting industry capabilities at the IATA WORKSHOP



To provide participants with an update on recent IATA initiatives, NATAS and IATA jointly organised an IATA workshop on 26 June 2019. Following a brief overview of the airline business landscape, attendees were introduced to new distribution capabilities (NDC) and the new generation of IATA settlement systems (NewGenISS) such as GoLite, GoStandard, GoGlobal and IATA EAsyPay. Through such workshops, NATAS hopes to enhance the standards and efficiency of the travel industry as a whole.



FORGING CONNECTIONS WITH THE EMBASSY OF MALDIVES

NATAS has always strived to build and maintain strong relationships with countries around the world. Testament of our efforts, on 21 May 2019, we received a courtesy visit from Ambassador H.E Abdulla Mausoom and Managing Director Mr Thoyyib Mohamed from the Embassy of Maldives in Singapore.

STRENGTHENING TIES WITH THE AMBASSADOR OF UKRAINE

A big part of NATAS' success stems from our close ties with leaders and ambassadors from various countries. In line with this, we regularly conduct and receive visits from representatives of foreign travel associations and government bodies. On 30 May 2019, we welcomed the Ambassador from the Embassy of Ukraine in Singapore H.E Dmytro Senik and Chief Trade Officer Ms Olena Feleniuk.



Indulge in a taste of Germany at PAULANER BRÄUHAUS SINGAPORE



Germany has long been known for its delicious cuisine and amazing beers. And as the oldest German microbrewery in town, Paulaner Bräuhaus Singapore offers diners exactly that – onsite brewed beer paired with authentic German food. In line with true Bavarian tradition, each dish on the menu is infused with flavours that pair perfectly with hand-crafted premium quality Paulaner beers and served on large wooden boards for communal dining. Diners can look forward to indulging in traditional “Biergarten” food like sausage salad, pork roast and dumplings. But that’s not all!



Beer lovers will be thrilled to know that the heart of Paulaner Bräuhaus Singapore houses its own microbrewery with two impressive brew kettles. Guests can not only enjoy homebrewed beers, but also experience the art of brewing and learn about beer.

For more details or event enquiries please contact Christiane Kasper at christiane.kasper@paulaner-brauhaus-singapore.com

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TURKISH AIRLINES

Products and services are subject to change depending on flight duration and aircraft.

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- Twice-daily nonstop service to San Francisco starting from October 28, 2018.
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UA28	SIN	22:20	SFO	20:55
UA29	SFO	10:55	SIN	20:15 ⁺¹
UA1	SFO	22:40	SIN	08:00 ⁺²

Timings are subjected to changes.



FAMILIARISATION VISITS

Appreciating Singapore’s architectural history at Six Senses Maxwell 26 APRIL 2019

Set in a block of heritage shophouses in Singapore’s Chinatown and beautifully restored to its original grandeur with interiors by French designer Jacques Garcia, Six Senses Maxwell is an architectural marvel. The five-star luxury hotel features 138 guestrooms and suites, each carefully decorated with custom furnishings and original artwork. Besides an eclectic collection of concept restaurants and bars, guests can look

forward to the outdoor rooftop lap pool and well-equipped gym. Weekend staycation anyone?



Experiencing private dining on Marina Bay waters

3 MAY 2019



It was a day of fun, sun and sea for NATAS’ inbound committee as they took to the water on a special site visit to The Floating Donut Company. Promising a private dining experience like no other, this unique boat cruise concept offers guests an exclusive voyage around Singapore’s Marina Bay complete with delicious food and drink. And with various cruise packages for every occasion, it’s the perfect way to explore the waters of Singapore.



Enjoying the layover of dreams at YOTELAIR

28 MAY 2019

NATAS’ inbound members were treated to a dreamy afternoon when they embarked on a site visit to Asia’s first YOTELAIR at Singapore Changi Airport. Located in Jewel Changi Airport, this beautiful hotel provides travellers with all the amenities they need to freshen up or bed down from a matter of hours to overnight. Inspired by luxury first-class aircraft design, the 130 ‘cabins’ are smartly designed with adaptable spaces to suit every need. The icing on the cake: the hotel’s signature Club Lounge overlooks Jewel’s iconic rain vortex.



Exploring the treasures of

JORDAN

the jewel of the Middle East



An oasis of tranquillity in a region of conflict, Jordan has delighted visitors for centuries with its ancient ruins, mythical cities, friendly towns and dramatic mountains.

A land of great beauty and even greater history, Jordan promises to amaze even the most jaded of travellers. In places, it's like stepping into the world's biggest open-air museum, where World Heritage sites and undiscovered treasures dot the horizon. And with rolling hills and inspiring desert landscapes that stretch as far as the eye can see, Jordan truly is a photographer's dream come true.

Throw in delicious cuisine and unparalleled hospitality, and you have a magical destination filled with intrigue and adventure.

DISCOVER THE WONDERS OF PETRA

With its striking rose-red sandstone rock facades, mysterious tombs and majestic temples, the 10,000-year-old city of Petra in Jordan is a sight to behold. One of the seven wonders of the world, this ancient city has a long and storied history that dates back more than 2,000 years, when it was an important part of the Silk Route to China and India. In fact, such is the beauty of this legendary setting that it has been used as filming locations in *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* and, more recently, *Transformers*.



Journey back in time as you walk through the deep narrow gorge of the Siq, the ancient entrance to Petra. Stop to marvel at the mélange of sculptures and carvings of gods and animals, remnants of the Egyptian, Assyrian, Greek, Roman, and Mesopotamian cultures that passed through Petra by trade. Admire the

majesty of the Al Khazna, or the Treasury, the masterpiece of the city. Then, head to the 'Street of Facades', a cluster of tombs with crow-stepped attics.

Pick up a souvenir or two at the many stalls selling local handicrafts or just enjoy a brief respite from the hot sun. Alternatively, don a kaffiyeh, a traditional Middle Eastern headdress, to ward off the heat as you continue to explore Petra. Next, make your way up to the Royal Tombs, one of the most magnificent structures in the city. Before you leave, don't forget to venture up to the Monastery for a stunning view of the end of the world.



SLEEP UNDER THE STARS IN WADI RUM

Often called the Valley of the Moon, Wadi Rum is a protected desert reserve in the southern part of Jordan. Known for its pink-red sands, stunning natural arches and prehistoric rock engravings, this dramatic desert wilderness promises an otherworldly experience like no other. As Wadi Rum is basically a huge desert, the easiest way to get around would be by jeep or, if you're feeling adventurous, by horse or camel! Alternatively, you can sign up for a hiking tour. If you're lucky, you just might spot the large yurts (goat-hair tents) that are unique to the Bedouin tribes living in the desert.



One of the best things Wadi Rum is known for is its spectacular sunsets. Peeking through the various mountain and rock formations, the sunsets are stunning to say the least. Another thing to check off your itinerary would be Jabal Umm ad Dami, the highest mountain peak in Wadi Rum at over 6,000 feet. From the top, you can see the Red Sea and, on clear days, even the Saudi Arabian border. If you're not into climbing, make your way to the Burrah Canyon, a 5km-long corridor of rock that weaves through the mountains. Cool and shady, it's a perfect place to soak in the special atmosphere of Wadi Rum's hidden heartland.



As night falls, grab a warm blanket and a telescope or snuggle up in your very own bubble tent and get ready to witness a celestial lightshow like no other. Just don't wander too far from your accommodation as the desert can be dangerous for those unfamiliar with it!

FLOAT IN THE DEAD SEA

No visit to Jordan is complete without a trip to the famous Dead Sea. Extremely saline and 9.6 times saltier than the ocean, there's no doubt this body of intense blue water is the saltiest on earth. But it's this peculiarity that makes it possible for visitors to float in the waters of the Dead Sea, even without a life jacket. In fact, people have been known to lay on their backs to read a book or newspaper.



Other than its extreme buoyancy, the Dead Sea draws crowds with its healing qualities or, more specifically, its mud. Travelers from all over the world flock here just to slather themselves with handfuls of thick mineral-rich mud before washing it off in the salty water. Rumour has it, that the mud treatment will leave your skin as smooth as a baby's bottom.



FEAST LIKE A JORDANIAN

There's a quote in Jordan and the Middle East that goes along the lines of "Even when you're full, you can still always eat 40 more bites of food." And looking at the many mouthwatering dishes Jordan has to offer; one has to agree.

Topping the list of must-eats in Jordan is the falafel. Ground chickpeas that are mixed with spices and deep fried, falafels are light and fluffy on the inside and crispy on the outside. Yum! Another dish to try is Labneh or strained yoghurt. Rich, sour and creamy, it's typically used as a spread for bread or a dip for vegetables. Meat lovers will absolutely love the shawarma. Lamb, beef or chicken is cooked on a spit before being shaved off in thin layers and wrapped in warm bread with either garlic sauce or tahini. Delish!



Whether you're into ancient cities, preserved Roman ruins or amazing food, this magical country has it all and more. So pack your bags and get ready to set forth on a great journey to Jordan!



Programmes :

IATA Managing the Travel Business Diploma (Dec Intake)

This course will improve skills to supervise and manage a team, initiate change and make business decisions based on sound negotiating strategies and to gain a competitive business strategy by developing new products and marketing it effectively. Students also gain insight on agency accounting procedures to build business plans that ensure good financial health.



I have worked in the travel industry for more than 20 years now. Back then, I started out as a travel executive in the 1990s, and 12 years later, I decided to start my own business. The SkillsFuture Study Award was definitely a great gift for me; it helped me reach further for a diploma course that taught me many skills I couldn't have learned myself. Now, I plan to hire more people and apply these learnings to grow my company.



Madam Radheka was awarded the SkillsFuture Study Award (Travel Agent Sector) and successfully completed the IATA Managing the Travel Business Diploma with TMiS in March 2018.

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(Mandarin : Aug/Oct/Dec Intake)

WSQ NATAS Professional Tour Leading (English : July/Aug/Oct Intake)
(Mandarin : Aug Intake)

WSQ Create Customer Experience (Nov/Dec Intake)

WSQ Handle Cruise Packages (Nov/Dec Intake)

WSQ Promote Singapore as Tourist Destination (Nov/Dec Intake)

WSQ Sell Product & Services (Nov/Dec Intake)

WSQ Higher Certificate in Tour & Travel Services (Course under review, launching in Q4'19)

WSQ Diploma in Tour & Travel Services (Course under review, launching in Q4'19)

WSQ Provide Guide in Eco-Tourism & Nature Tourism (14 PDC hours)(Sep/Dec Intake)



I noticed the professionalism of teachers; they are focused in many aspects such as class training and tour conducts. Their sharing in workplace experiences have also given me tremendous insight about tourism. I'm glad I'm able to complete the course in TMIS.

Wong Shi Wei, Tourist Guide Programme (Mandarin)



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