

# Study and Improvement of Halal Travel Routes linked to Neighboring Countries under the Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand Growth Triangle: IMT-GT

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## Abstract

This study employed quantitative and qualitative methods and aimed to examine and develop routes for halal traveling in the five southern bordered provinces in order to connect land transports air transport within Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia; to develop halal traveling programs by designing the types of traveling within the five southern bordered provinces in accordance with the tourists' wants in the forms of both text descriptions and maps, to investigate the perceptions of tourists both Thais and foreigners towards the attractive places of the halal traveling routes which connected within the five southern bordered provinces, Indonesia and Malaysia; to examine the necessity of traveling sites development and facilities for traveling through the halal traveling routes which connected within the five southern bordered provinces, Indonesia and Malaysia; to study laws, restrictions, agreements, cooperation framework, and other disciplines relevant to ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) and cooperation of IMT-GT that obstructed Halal tourism in Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia. The purposive samplings population and methods of the research involved the following: 50 head staff working in tourism, 150 Muslim tourists both Thais and foreigners, and 150 people living in the contexts of traveling places . In-depth interview and content analysis were used in the study. The results showed that 1) The routes development for traveling in the five southern bordered provinces connected among land transport (trains and cars), water transport, and air transport within Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia ; 2) The Halal tours were designed for 43 traveling programs to respond the tourists'wants in terms of text descriptions and maps ; 3) The survey of tourists found that according to the survey of tourists traveling in the five southern bordered provinces, the attractive places the tourists were mostly interested were in the Hot Spring in Yala, Had Chalathat and the Muslim tourists considered the worthiness of the traveling sites in terms of their popularity / well- known such Ban Wat Ancient City (Pattani), Pikulthong Garden (Narathiwat); 4) More than 80% of the Muslim tourists found the problems and obstacles while traveling such lack of Halal tourism information, Prayer rooms were not available at the traveling sites, None of Islamic transportation systems provided, etc. and 5) Have the legislative acts relevant to Halal tourism that should stress cooperation framework, rules and disciplines under the cooperative framework of Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand Growth Triangle (IMT-GT)

**Keywords:** Halal Travel Routes Development, Halal tourism, Legislative Acts, Indonesia-Malaysia- Thailand Growth Triangle (IMT-GT),

## Introduction

Tourism is considered as a part of the development of Thailand economics. In 2012, Thailand gained 983,928 million bath from tourism which make up 26.76 percent of economic growth (Department of Tourism, 2011). The vast numbers of tourists a year travel in Southern part of Thailand because of the well- known and beautiful mounts, sands, beaches, groups of

islands, and some world class traveling sites. Nonetheless, based on the study, both official and private organizations and relevant traveling entrepreneurs do not yet consider the significance of Halal Tourism.

The meaning of halal travel is to go out of the house to the desired destination with provisions. Halal tourism is a trip to see the traces of racism, traveling to study and celebrate the Haji and so on.(Arbu Mahama, 2013) . The Department of Tourism under the Ministry of Tourism and Sports has to determine the strategies of travelling services in accordance with the target groups of Halal tourism. When the Halal tourism is developed, not only the information hub is available but also new routes of traveling are introduced to respond the needs of Muslim tourists who are considered as the influential tourist group. In addition, food is regarded as a crucial factor in attracting tourists. In other words, to promote the Muslim tourists' travel in Thailand, Halal catering services should be available for the tourist's needs. There is also a need to create awareness and understanding among catering service entrepreneurs about the Halal food and its processes. This will build trust and satisfaction for the tourist customers to use the services again in the future. Halal catering entrepreneurs should also be marked in the traveling routes.

Hence, if the routes for Halal traveling in the southern part of Thailand are developed along with the analysis of possibilities of cooperation with Malaysia and Indonesia under the cooperative framework of Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand Growth Triangle (IMT-GT), this would lead to more appropriate travel routes and preferred traveling programs services provided for the Muslim tourists. Moreover, this will enhance the development of travel strategies of Thailand in the future.

### **Purposes and Methods**

This research of routes development for traveling connected with the neighboring countries of Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand Growth Triangle (IMT-GT):

1. Examined and developed routes for halal traveling in the five southern bordered provinces in order to connect land transport (trains and cars), ship transport, and air transport within Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia
2. Developed halal traveling programs by designing the types of traveling within the five southern bordered provinces in accordance with the tourists' wants in the forms of both text descriptions and maps
3. Investigated the perceptions of tourists both Thais and foreigners towards the attractive places of the halal traveling routes which connected within the five southern bordered provinces, Indonesia and Malaysia
4. Examined the necessity of traveling sites development and facilities for traveling through the halal traveling routes which connected within the five southern bordered provinces, Indonesia and Malaysia.
5. Studied laws, restrictions, agreements, cooperation framework, and other disciplines relevant to ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) and cooperation of IMT-GT that obstructed Halal tourism in Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia.

This research of traveling routes development for the cooperation with the neighbor countries of Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand Growth Triangle (IMT-GT) employed quantitative and qualitative methods. The data was collected from October 2014 to July 2015. The purposive samplings of the research and methods were as followed:

Group 1: Head staff working in tourism related fields both from official and private organizations. For example, the staff working in Thailand Tourism of determined provinces, provincial chambers of commerce, provincial administrative organizations, travel agencies,

travels guides, etc. The purposive sampling used in-depth interview in the five southern bordered provinces. 50 head staff intervened in this group.

Group 2: Muslim tourists both Thais and foreigners who travelled in the contexts research conducted: Songkla, Satun, Yala, Pattani, and Narathiwat. The accidental sampling was used with in-depth interview with 150 Muslim tourists who participated in this research.

Group 3: People living in the contexts of traveling places in each province also participated in this research. They consisted of monks, Tambon leaders, civil servants, people, and merchandise, tour guides, etc. living in the contexts. The purposive sampling was used with in-depth interview with the 150 people participated in the research.

## Results and Discussion

1. Results of routes development for traveling in the five southern bordered provinces connected among land transport (trains and cars), water transport, and air transport within Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia.

The research found that there were 95 travelling sites qualified to be included in the routes for travel in the five southern border provinces. Pattani province had 24 qualified traveling sites which is the largest number compared with other provinces. The province of Satun had 22 qualified traveling sites; Songkla had 19 qualified traveling sites; Narathiwat had 18 qualified traveling sites; and Yala had 12 qualified traveling sites. Among those traveling sites, the researcher was able to develop 43 routes for traveling. The traveling routes of each province were as followed: 6 routes for traveling in Narathiwat province; 9 routes for traveling in Yala province; 9 routes for traveling in Pattani; 9 routes for traveling in Songkla; 10 routes for traveling in Satun. Table 1 shows the 9 routes for travelin Pattani .

Table 1  
*Routes for halal travel in Pattani province*

Route No.	Duration	Visiting Routes
1	1 Day	<b>One Day Trip Pattani “Visiting the Land of Three Cultures (Thai, Chinese, and Malay)”</b> : Chao Leng Chu Kiang Shrine, Pattani Provincial Central Mosque, Mujalin Tawapiharn Temple, Sai Kao Waterfall, Ratchaburana Temple, 300 Years Kuan Lang Nga Mosque
2	1 Day	<b>Pattani One Day Tour “Discover and Appreciate Islamic Pattani Civilization”</b> : Pattani Provincial Central Mosque, Kru Sae Mosque, Sai Buri Palce, Yaring Palce, Phipit Phakdee Palce, Ta Lo Kapo Beach, Dato Mosque
3	3 Days 2 Nights	<b>Experience Thainess namely Pattani</b> : Learn the history of 3 cultures, nature and community ways of life
4	1 Day	<b>One Day Trip Village</b> : Bang Poo Village, Kru Sae Mosque, Talubo Village
5	3 Days 2 Nights	<b>Pattani Tour</b> : Chao Mae Lim Ko Niao Shrine, Phaya Intira Graveyard, Yaring Palace, Hat Ta Lo Kapo, Lampho Village, Graveyard of Bann Dato, Ancient Yarang Town, Chang Hai Temple, Namtok Sai Kao Natioanl Park, King Rama VII Pavillion

Table 1

Routes for halal traveling in Pattani province (continued)

Route No.	Duration	Visiting Routes
6	2 Days 1 Night	<b>Pattani:</b> Chabangtigo Palace, Ancient Yaring Town, Kuhapimuk Temple, 300- Year Mosque, Sai Kao Village, King Rama VII Pavillion, Pattani Central Mosque
7	3 Days 2 Nights	<b>Pattani- Penang</b> “Visit the Land of 3 Cultures (Thai, Chinese, and Malay)”: Chao Mae Lim Ko Niao Shrine, Pattani Central Mosque, Mujalin Tawapiharn Temple, Sai Kao Waterfall, Ratchaburana Temple, 300- Year Kuan Lang Nga Mosque, Penang Island
8	4 Days 3 Nights	<b>Pattani- Penang:</b> Chabangtigo Palace, Ancient Yaring Town, Kuhapimuk Temple, Chang Hai Temple, Sai Kao Waterfall, 300- Year Mosque, King Rama VII Pavillion, Pattani Central Mosque, Penang Island
9	4 Days 3 Nights	<b>Langkasuka to Malaka:</b> Bang Poo Village, Kru Sae Mosque, Talunbo Village, Padi Museum, Kuala Lumpur, Malaka

2. The results of Halal tour programming in the five southern border provinces from designed in accordance with the tourists’ needs resulting from the Focus Groups and content analysis.

The Halal tours were designed for 43 traveling programs to respond the tourists’ wants in terms of text descriptions and maps. The examples of halal traveling programs are shown in the following diagrams 1-3.

2.1) Program Tours of Wang Prachan Border- Kuala Lumpur (Kuden Mansion- Mambang Mosque- Huathang& Kok Payom Villages- Wang Prachan Border- Thale Ban National Park- Wangsai Waterfall- Phuphaphet Cave- Kuala Lumpur- Putrajaya)



Diagram 1: Program Tours of Wang Prachan Border- Kuala Lumpur

2.2) Program Tours of Thailand Deep South (Wat Khuhaphimuk- Kwan Muang Public Park- Betong Public Park- Wat Buddhathiwat- Chulabhorn 10 Village- Piyamit Tunnel- Winter Flower Garden- Phiphitthammarong Museum- Songkhla Old City Walls- Songkhla National Museum- Kao Tnagkuan- Songkhla Aquarium- Had Samil- Sultan Sulaiman Tomb)



Diagram 2: Program Tours of Thailand Deep

2.3) Routes and Program Tours of Yala- Hadyai- Satun- Kuala Lumpur (Wat Khuhaphimuk- Wat Chang Hai- Chao Mae Lim Ko Niao Shrine- Kru Sae Mosque- Pattani Central Mosque- Had Samila- Songkhla Old Town- Songkhla Central Mosque- Satun Old Town- Satun Central Mosque- Kuden Mansion- Kuala Lumpur- Putrajaya)

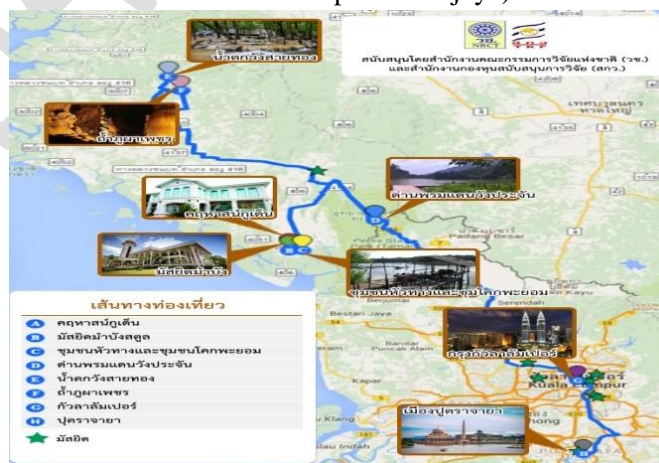


Diagram 3: Routes and Program Tours of Yala- Hadyai- Satun- Kuala Lumpur

3. The survey of tourists' perceptions both Thais and foreigners towards the traveling sites included in the routes for traveling in the five southern bordered provinces connected to Malaysia and Indonesia

3.1) The travel sites which greatly interested the tourists were :

The survey of tourists traveling revealed that the most attractive places were the Hot Spring in Yala, Had Chalathat, Winter Flower Garden, Laem Samila, Piyamit Tunnel, Kanchanawanit Market, Songkhla Aquarium, Kimyong Market, Big C Hadyai Superstore, Khlong Hae Floating Market, Ice Dome, Somdet Phra Srinagarindra Park Pattani, Koh Sipe/ Lipe, Kao Namkhang National Park, Susara Plaza, Gen Prem Historical Park, Ton Nga Chang Waterfall, Hadyai Central, Narathiwat Central Mosque, Kallayaniwathana Institute of Arts and Culture, Kao To Phayawang, Wat Chanathip Chalerm, Tarutao Island, Laem Tunyong Po, Had Sai Yao, Thaleban National Park, the Institute for Southern Thai Studies, Hadyai Municipality Public Park, Wat Hadyai Nai, Wat Tham Kao Rubchang, Wannisa Waterfall, Takbai Border, Luang Po Dang at Wat Cheng Kao, Narathiwat Lak Muang, Satun National Museum, Songkhla Lake, Koh Yo, Noknam Kut Ku National Park, Hadyai Lantern Festival, Song Thale Garden, Had Narathat, Thaksin Ratchniwet Palace, Pattani Central Mosque, and other attractive places respectively.

3.2) The tourists found the following as well- known in the five southern bordered provinces and worthy to travel to, namely:

The Muslim tourists considered the worthiness of the traveling sites in terms of their popularity / well - known as followed: Ban Wat Ancient City (Pattani), Pikulthong Garden (Narathiwat), Namtok Sai Kao National Park (Pattani), Hadyai Central Festival (Songkhla), Somdet Phra Srinagarindra Park Pattani, Had Bame (Narathiwat), Songkhla Aqurium (Songkhla), Thaksin Ratchniwet Palace (Narathiwat), the 60<sup>th</sup> Birhtday Anniversary of H.M. the Queen Garden (Narathiwat), Thale Ban National Park (Satun), Sungai Kolok Border (Narathiwat), Pajo Waterfall (Narathiwat), Takbai Border (Narathiwat), Namtok Sipo National Park (Narathiwat), Pattani Central Mosque (Pattani), Kao Noi (Songkhla), Thalesab Songkhla (Songkhla), Phyanak Ponnam Achitecture, Songkhla Central Mosque (Songkhla), Had Chalathat (Songkhla), Hot Spring (Yala), Kallayaniwathana Institute of Arts and Culture (Pattani), Had Pamai (Pattani), Had Panare (Pattani), and other traveling sites respectively.

4. The examination of the necessity to develop the traveling sites and facilities for halal travel routes which connected within the five southern bordered provinces, Indonesia and Malaysia.

4.1) Problems and obstacles found while traveling in the five southern bordered provinces

More than 80% of the Muslim tourists found the following problems and obstacles while traveling , namely: Lack of Halal tourism information, Prayer rooms were not available at the traveling sites, No Islamic transportation systems provided, Entertainment and night life went against Islamic principles. Activities during traveling went against Islamic principles, Accommodation services went against Islamic principles, and Few numbers of halal restaurants which consistent with studies of Jariyajamsit Sakun and Wongleedee Kawin (2012) study of travel routes of Malaysia tourists in Thailand: a case study of 20 sites critical of the district of Hat Yai, Songkhla There were also problems of not enough parking and toilet. The sidewalks were often used to sell products which was not safe. However, mostly routes still in workable condition.

4.2) Necessity for travel sites development

More than half of the Muslim tourists identified that the traveling sites in the five southern bordered provinces had fundamental infrastructure problems as followed:- Problems of electrical system, Inconvenient road conditions for traveling, No effective telecommunication system, and problems of water supply system

#### 4.3) Facilities needed at the traveling sites

The Muslim tourists wanted facilities provided at the traveling sites as the following respectively:- Optimal numbers of washrooms/ toilets, Route buses available, Center of information services provided, Optimal numbers of bins, Restaurant readiness, Department stores/ Souvenir shops, Parking for bus, Accommodation readiness, Clean toilets available at the traveling sites, Not too narrow parking lots

Other facilities needed at the traveling sites were:- Advertisement/ presentation about the travel sites, Security for living and properties, Sign boards to the traveling sites, Connection from a traveling site to one another, Visitor welcome, and Communication skills of sellers have to improve.

As mentioned this study was consistent with the directional and operational research of Sunthornwat Arpaporn (2009) stated that the importance of the cultural tourist sites and security were very high potential and the travel link for 3 routes in 2 days 1 night program, the satisfaction of tourists was high level.

5. Study of laws, restrictions, agreements, cooperation framework, and other disciplines relevant to ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) and cooperation of IMT-GT (2003) that obstructed Halal tourism in Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia.

The legislative acts relevant to Halal tourism derived the following problems:

5.1) The international organizations associated with the development of ASEAN tourism lack clearness and continuity of policies in promoting the tourism within the five southern border provinces connected with Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand. The organizations such as the Sub-Committee on Tourism of the Committee on Trade and Tourism, Tourism Concern, and Universal Federation of Travel Agent were established during specific conditions of politics and economics. However, when the social conditions were changed, the staffs working on such policies were changed too. Unfortunately, those international organizations no longer have continuity in doing any acts to promote halal tourism even though the Muslim tourists really needed it.

5.2) Framework agreements affected the tourism in AEC including the tourism in the five southern border provinces connected with Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand did not identify the significance of halal tourism:

- The agreement dealing with Mutual Recognition for ASEAN Tourism Professionals (2015) had the main purposes to conveniently mobilize tourism professionals within the countries of ASEAN.

- The agreement dealing with standards for sustainable tourism development were identified in six issues: Homestays, green hotels, spa services, public toilets, clean city, and community based tourism

- The agreement dealing with the products of ASEAN tourism (Thailand Tourism, 2013) were identified to promote the efficacy of the following tourism: natural tourism, cultural tourism, ecotourism, water tourism, and health tourism.

- The strategies dealing with tourism industry derived from AEC blueprint B.E. 2551 (2008) included the issues of free flow of products mobility, free flow of services, free flow of investments, free flow of capital mobility, free flow of labors mobility, and other mobility of tourism industrials related.

- The agreement of APEC/PATA Code for Sustainable Tourism identified the issues to promote among the country members. Those issues were to enhance quality and efficacy of tourism in the contexts in order to remind and control tourism development of the country members. In other words, those agreements did not consider the significances of halal tourism standards or did not include halal tourism as the important issue in any agreements or ASEAN cooperation frameworks even in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand.

5.3) The obstacles affected the free flow of tourism services in ASEAN were, for example, lack of fundamental information and effective advertisement or presentation from the government, small and medium enterprises lack readiness in competition, the problem of tourism staff and Thai personnel, the problem of educational curricula of tourism, the problem of official staff working on tourism lack quality and efficiency, and the problem of natural resource readiness. These problems also inevitably affected the tourism in the five southern provinces connected with Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand.

### **Recommendations**

Recommendations for solving the problems in terms of law enforcement for Halal tourism and agreements of cooperation framework, rules and disciplines under the cooperative framework of Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand Growth Triangle (IMT-GT) towards the tourism in the five southern bordered provinces connected with Indonesia, Malaysia and Thai:

1) Organizations relevant to tourism management especially Thailand Tourism Authority and tour business should design diverse travel programs such as: natural tourism, ecotourism, agro tourism, health tourism, and edu- mediation tourism, etc., or to design activity based: nature visit, historical site visit, cultural tour, making a merit, learn ways of living, and massage or spa, etc.

2) To strengthen the policies or presentation and communicate with enterprises to recognize the significance of halal laws in order to respond the Muslim tourists' needs. This is because the Muslim tourist groups are influential and could bring the financial profits for the country.

3) To strengthen the confidentiality for the Muslim tourists in the tourism products and services by resolving laws dealing with Halal management for tourism services. In other words, to control, examine, guarantee or withdraw the halal standards should be acted seriously. Moreover, the name lists of enterprises that the halal standards are withdrawn should be announced in public.

4) Urgently to resolve the problems of laws dealing with halal and halal signs especially its Penal codes and Trademark Legislation of Thailand, B.E. 2534 to be more precise in terms of penalty when someone doing wrong acts or use halal sign without a permission. The penalty should be harder because the halal sign standards aim to protect Muslim ways of life. This is different from Trademark Legislation which aims to protect the rights of enterprises.

5) The laws dealing with halal should be enacted specifically. The laws should include legislative acts of halal standard promotion, examination of halal standards in order to enhance living standard quality under the right Islamic principles.

6) The government should reexamine the agreements and cooperation framework, rules and other disciplines dealing with tourism strategies in ASEAN especially under the cooperation framework of Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand Growth Triangle (IMT-GT). That is to say, the government should signify the halal standards and promote halal tourism concretely. It is proposed that all stakeholders should promote community involvement to the development of commercial tourism. This is consistent with studies of Khiaorat Manikan (2010) Study the approaching for development of Cultural tourism routes by the involvement of the community: case study Baan Phu, Udonthani that the factors that affect the participation of the community.to



tourism development are moderate level and the problem and the need to development of cultural tourism with the participation of the community are moderate level too.

7) The government should ensure the living safety of tourists both Thais and foreigners traveling in the contexts so that to make the tourists feel safe and decide to travel through the routes for traveling in the southern bordered provinces.

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