

UNESCO Creative Cities for its gastronomic delights

Phuket, best known for its beautiful beach resorts, has now earned yet another distinction – inclusion on the UNESCO Creative Cities listing for its gastronomic delights.

Thailand's second most important destination after Bangkok, the Andaman Sea island was one of 47 cities from 33 countries included as new members of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network. They were categorised in seven creative fields (Crafts and Folk Art, Design, Film, Gastronomy, Literature, Media Arts and Music)

Thailand's largest island, often dubbed as the 'Pearl of the Andaman', Phuket is famous the world over for its beaches, diving, water-sports and other marine-related activities. In recent years, the island resort has seen the emergence of a spectacular product range, especially spas, health and wellness resorts, attractions and boutique hotels.

Strong airline connections now provide direct access from many parts of Asia. One of the fastest growing market segments is weekend holiday breaks by visitors from neighbouring countries; such as, Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia and India.

In 2014, visitor arrivals to Phuket totalled 11,958,603, (Thai 3,499,187; foreigners 8,459,416), generating an estimated 259.290 billion Baht in tourism income.

Mr. Yuthasak Supasorn, Governor of the Tourism Authority of Thailand said, "Phuket is no longer just a beach resort. It has become a complete holiday destination with a broad range of cultural attractions and convention facilities. Being recognised by the United Nations' most important cultural organisation for its culinary creativity is an added asset."

He added, "Phuket is already world famous for its seafood. And promotion of Thai cuisine is one of the TAT's topmost priorities because it is an indispensable part of the travel and tourism experience."

Launched in 2004 and now comprising 116 Member Cities, the UNESCO Creative Cities Network aims to foster international cooperation with and between cities committed to investing in creativity as a driver for sustainable urban development, social inclusion and cultural vibrancy.

UNESCO Director-General, Irina Bokova stated, "The UNESCO Creative Cities Network represents an immense potential to assert the role of culture as an enabler of sustainable development. I would like to recognise the many new cities and their countries that are enriching the Network with their diversity."

In 2015, UNESCO marked the 10th anniversary of the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted by the international community in September 2015, highlights culture and creativity as key levers for sustainable urban development. The Network will continue to serve as an essential platform to contribute to the implementation and achievement of this international agenda.

