

Taste of Borneo | 14 Days



This program begins with a sightseeing tour of fascinating Kuching, the capital of Malaysia's Sarawak state, followed by Cultural Heritage tour of Sarawak which provide us insight of richly diverse multi-ethnic cultures of Sarawak. Next, we explore the oldest and smallest National Park in Sarawak – Bako National Park where we observe an amazing array of diverse tropical vegetation and wild-life, including such species as Dipterocarp trees, pitcher plants, mangrove forests and 'Padang' or bush type vegetation.

In our excursion of Kinabalu Park, a World Heritage site, we witness rich and diverse assemblage of plants and animal species. It is actually a hot spot of particularly the plant biodiversity with affinities to flora from the Himalayas, China, Australia, Malay Peninsula, as well as pan-tropical region. In Sepilok, we witness the effort of Sepilok Orangutan Rehabilitation Centre in rehabilitation of orphan organutans. We also take a ten minutes' walk through the rainforest on wooden boardwalks to witness the feeding of the orangutans. A boat ride of about two and half hours to Sukau on Sabah's longest river, Kinabatangan will offer ample opportunity to view birds and wildlife alike.

Trip Highlights

- The opportunity to view the largest array of wildlife in Sarawak including proboscis monkeys, silver leaf monkeys, long-tailed macaques and monitor lizards as well as diverse vegetation
- Semenggoh Wildlife Centre – see orphaned and rescued orangutans

- Lemanak River and Batang Ai – meet local Iban people in their natural surroundings and observe their traditional lifestyle, handicrafts, natural medicines and see virgin rainforest Semadang river kayaking, visiting mini waterfalls and caves en route and feeding river fish
Excursion to Gaya Island
- Kundasang WWII Memorial Park – learn about Sabah's WWII history
- Sepilok Orangutan Sanctuary
- Sukau Rainforest – home to an array of wildlife. River cruise in search of wildlife
- Kinabatangan River and Kelenanap oxbow lake – river cruise to view birds and wildlife
- Poring treetop canopy walkway – spectacular views of the rainforest below
- Kinabalu National Park – tropical rainforest

Detailed Itinerary

Day 1: Arrive in Kuching

Welcome to Borneo! Upon arrival in Kuching, meet by *travel-to-nature Asia* representative/guide and transfer to your hotel. Please look out for your name-card once you exit out of arrival area.

Reminder of the day at leisure.

Accommodation: The LimeTree Hotel

Day 2: In Kuching | City Tour

We proceed from our hotel for the city tour to main attractions such as the Chinatown, Cat monument, City Tower for a bird's eye view of Kuching city, the Malay Houses on stilts, Old State Mosque, Main Bazaar, India Street, Gambier Road, Wet Market, Colonial Centre, Textile Museum, Chinese Museum, Sarawak Museum, Kuching Waterfront to view the ultramodern State Legislative Assembly building, alongside the historical Astana and Fort Margherita.

Evening at leisure. Overnight in Kuching.

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Accommodation: The LimeTree Hotel

Meal: Breakfast



Day 3: Sarawak Cultural Heritage

We go on a day trip to Sarawak Cultural Village located at the foothill of Mount Santubong, 32 km from Kuching and take about 40 minutes' drive. This tour combines both experiences of culture and nature of Sarawak. Known as the "Living Museum" Sarawak Cultural Village offers you an opportunity to admire the richly diverse multi-ethnic cultures of Sarawak as displayed and presented in the traditional homes of the various indigenous tribes in the village. See how local handicrafts are made such as bamboo & wood carving, basket weaving, bead work, sago & pottery making. The tour concludes with the fascinating cultural performances at the air-conditioned theatre. We return to Kuching in the late afternoon.

Overnight in Kuching.

Accommodation: The LimeTree Hotel

Meal: Breakfast

(The Sarawak Cultural Village hosts the annual Rainforest World Music Festival which is usually held on the 2nd weekend of the month of July).

Day 4: Bako Wildlife Trek

Today we take a trip to Bako N.P. famous for Proboscis monkeys. Our first foray into Borneo's amazing nature as we head to nearby Bako National Park famous for its Proboscis monkeys. Our experienced guide will lead us through selected trails

to explore the oldest and smallest National Park in Sarawak. We explore & Observe an amazing array of diverse tropical vegetation and wildlife, including such species as Dipterocarp trees, pitcher plants, mangrove forests and 'Padang' or bush type vegetation. Along the trail, a chance to see silver leaf langurs, long tailed macaques, monitor lizards, wild boar, hornbills, and many other species of birds, but the star attractions of the park are the rare Proboscis monkeys, found exclusively in Borneo.

For lunch, we may opt for Malay or local food in the park canteen before heading back to Kuching.

Note: Not recommended during the months of December to February due to rough sea conditions. Please bring along comfortable light clothing, sandal, drinking water bottle, a sun hat, sun block lotion, poncho and some insect repellent.

We return to Kuching for the night.

Accommodation: The LimeTree Hotel

Meal: Breakfast

Day 5: Fly Kuching - Mulu N.P. (1.6 hrs) | Sunset walk to Deer Cave for Exodus of millions of Bats

Today we fly to Mulu National Park. Meet at Mulu Airport and transfer to your hotel for check-in. After lunch, trek 45 minutes on raised plankwalk through lowland rainforest and peat swamp to Lang Caves. Walk inside the largest cave passage of Deer Caves. Caves formations have their own ecosystems with plants and animals living in the cave chambers.

Deer Cave, the largest cave passage in the world, is home to millions of bats and swifts that live side by side on the roof of the Cave. The Cave floor has a raised platform, though that is no escape from the smell of the 'guano' – the excrement from millions of birds and bats. Close-by is Lang's Cave, which though much smaller, has some excellent stalactites and stalagmites and other cave formations. The forest around the caves is spectacular and there is plenty of time to examine it closely.

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The walk to Deer Cave is 3kms (each way) along boardwalks and there are wooden steps leading to different viewing platforms inside the show caves. We will arrive at Deer Cave in time for dusk to witness the daily exodus of millions of bats at the Observatory at sunset before we return to the Park HQ and transfer to our hotel. Overnight in Mulu.

Accommodation: Mulu National Park Garden Cottages or similar

Meal: Breakfast

Day 6: Wind and Clearwater Caves Adventure

Full day exploring Mulu N.P.

Today is a day for exploring this stunning park with a local guide. In the morning we visit two of the 'show caves' including Clearwater where a picnic lunch can be had in the gorgeous riverside location. The park has some incredible statistics; It has over 3,500 plant species, 8,000 different types of fungi and 170 species of orchid. Over 100 new plant species were discovered between 1960 and 1973, and many are still being added. There are 262 species of bird, almost 300 species of butterflies and many reptiles and mammals.

Members of the Penan tribe live within the park. They are a small population of nomadic forest dwellers who live as hunter-gatherers. There has been fierce international opposition to the Malaysian government who tried to settle them in permanent longhouses and indeed the Penan themselves have also resisted. In 1994 they were granted an area of the forest where they could continue their traditional lifestyle. Although you are unlikely to meet these elusive people, you occasionally see their fishing shelters or areas in the forest where they have recently visited.

This afternoon simply enjoy in the park listening to the weird and wonderful creatures that call it home or explore self-guided trails within the park.

Those with a head for heights can try the optional canopy walkway. This 480-metre skywalk takes approximately 2 hours to complete. Along the way, we may be able to see macaque monkeys, hornbills,

flying lizards, squirrels, and a variety of rainforest birds. However, time slots to do the canopy walk can be limited and may subject to availability during busy periods.

In the evening there is an optional night walk, or we can try the local Mulu 'firewater', Tuak.

Accommodation: Mulu National Park Garden Cottages or similar

Meal: Breakfast



Day 7: Fly Mulu – Kota Kinabalu (55 min)

We take the morning flight to Kota Kinabalu. Depending on what time we fly out of Mulu there may be some time to walk along self-guided trails or at the visitor's centre. Kota Kinabalu known as KK to the locals, the capital of Sabah is a now a modern multi-cultural city. The evening is free to relax, explore the bustling Filipino markets or enjoy a sundowner on the waterfront.

Kinabalu Park, the World Heritage Site covers an area of 754 sq km, is the first Park in the Malaysian Borneo's state of Sabah. Its main feature is Mount Kinabalu (4,095.2 m), the highest mountain between the Himalayas and New Guinea. Its slope is home to a rich assemblage of plants and animal species. It is a hot spot of particularly the plant biodiversity with affinities to flora from the Himalayas, China, Australia, Malay Peninsula, as well as pan-tropical region.

Accommodation: Hotel Dreamtel or similar

Meal: Breakfast

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Day 8: Day at leisure

Free day; optional snorkeling and island trip, wetland birdwatching or cultural village

Today you are free to enjoy some of the many activities Kota Kinabalu has to offer. A popular option is to visit one of the tropical islands in the marine park, a 15-minute boat journey from the city and offering excellent snorkeling and diving opportunities. Here you can never be bored whether you are relaxing on the white sand, snorkelling or just swimming in the warm South China Sea.

There are some good birdwatching opportunities in the wetlands not far from KK as well as a cultural village in Mari Mari for an insight into the different cultures of Sabah. Your tour leader can help organise any of these options.

Accommodation: Hotel Dreamtel

Meal: Breakfast

Day 9: Drive Kota Kinabalu - Kundasang (92.5 km | 2 hrs) | Kinabalu Park World Heritage Site

We drive 2 hours overland to the foothills of Mt. Kinabalu. We make a short stop at Pekan Nabalau market to sample local fruits in season and to stretch our legs. Thereafter, we proceed to the Education Centre and Mountain Garden in Kinabalu Park Headquarters. If weather permits, take a guided walk on one of the trails to explore the cool montane forest.

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Overnight in Kundasang.

Accommodation: Zen Garden Resort

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 10: Drive Kundasang – Sepilok (219 km | 4.3 hrs)

After breakfast, we visit the Kundasang War Memorial Park to learn about Sabah's WWII history and for great photos with the majestic Mount Kinabalu (if weather permits). Continue the drive to Poring, east of Kinabalu Park HQ to walk amidst tropical lowland rainforests leading up to the treetop canopy walkways.

Enjoy lunch, before visiting the Kipungit Waterfall, stopping for a soak here or in the rejuvenating hot sulphur public pools. If the weather permits, treat your foot to a delightful but very ticklish fish massage at the Moroli River in Luanti which will almost certainly leave you in giggles. Continue overland to Sepilok for overnight stay.

Accommodation: Sepilok Nature Resort

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Note: Please bring along drinking water bottle, insect repellent, hat, walking shoes & raincoat.

Day 11: Sepilok Orangutan Rehabilitation Centre | Boat ride to Sukau

Pickup from hotel, transfer to Sepilok Orangutan Rehabilitation Centre. We proceed to watch a video show about the plight of Orangutans and the rehabilitation efforts ongoing at the Centre. Walk ten

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minutes through the rainforest on wooden boardwalks to witness the feeding of the orangutans at 1000hrs, and then we continue to the newly completed enclosed nursery area for young orangutans. Thereafter visit the Borneo Sun Bear Conservation Centre to learn about conservation of the world's smallest bear.

After lunch, transfer to Sandakan jetty for 2½ hours boat journey to the multi awards winning Sukau Rainforest Lodge along Sabah's longest river, Kinabatangan with opportunity to view birds and wildlife. Take a river cruise using electric motor in search of wildlife and birds. Enjoy candle light dinner overlooking the riverbank followed by slide presentation and interpretation by naturalist guide. Overnight in Sukau.

Accommodation: Sukau Rainforest Lodge
Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Note:

Please make sure that you travel light to Sukau Rainforest Lodge. There will be a complimentary Night Cruise if no sightings of the Proboscis Monkey on the FIRST Afternoon Cruise.



Day 12: In Sakau

Take a 0600hrs morning river cruise up the Kinabatangan River to Kelenanap oxbow lake to view more birds and wildlife. After breakfast, proceed for an educational tour along the lodge's Hornbill Boardwalk with our in-house naturalist.

After lunch, join our in house Orangutan Talk activity. In the afternoon, we proceed for another river cruise for more wildlife. Overnight in Sukau.

Accommodation: Sukau Rainforest Lodge
Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 13: Drive Sukau - Sandakan (131 km | 2.5 hrs) | Fly Kota Kinabalu (50 min)

After an early morning breakfast we head out to Sandakan where we will have our lunch and in the afternoon we will fly to Kota Kinabalu. Overnight stay in Kota Kinabalu.

Accommodation: Hotel Dreamtel
Meal: Breakfast

Day 14: Depart Borneo

Transfer to the airport for your homeward-bound flight.

Meal: Breakfast

Includes

- Airport (pick up/drop off) transfers by private A/C vehicle
- Twin room sharing accommodation at all hotel/lodge/resort as mentioned
- Daily breakfast throughout the trip and other meals as mentioned in the itinerary
- A local tour leader/guide throughout the trip
- Transportation in private air-conditioned vehicles and river boats
- Internal flight tickets
- Guided Sightseeing, all activities and day excursions as per itinerary
- Entrance fees to all included sites (national parks/conservation areas/monuments etc.)
- Local nature guides at included sites
- Applicable government taxes

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Excludes

- International flight tickets
- Visa fee
- Travel insurance
- Meals not mentioned in the itinerary
- Personal clothing and equipment
- Tips for trip leader/guide, driver, hotel staff and porters
- Items of personal nature such as alcoholic beverages, soft drinks, laundry, and other unforeseen expenses
- Items/services not listed in "included"
- Extra expenses/payment for 'Optional' activities/programs if participated

Accommodation

The LimeTree Hotel, Kuching

The LimeTree Hotel is a unique, mid-range boutique hotel with a passion for limes and a strong commitment for environmental sustainability. Centrally located in the area of Padungan, it is minutes away from New Chinatown, local eateries, shopping malls and just an 8 to 10-minute walk to Kuching Waterfront - making it an ideal base to explore the city.

Dreamtel Kota Kinabalu

Dreamtel Kota Kinabalu is located in Kota Kinabalu, main city of Sabah. We are only 20-minute drive from the International Airport. Across the road, in front of the property lies the Gaya Street where you will find popular local eateries for local delicacies. There are also a few popular local tourist attractions in the surrounding neighbourhood, such as Padang Merdeka.

Zen Garden Resort, Kundasang

Established almost a decade ago, Zen Garden Resort has grown from a tiny business, consisting of just 6 rooms and 1 chalet, to the largest resort that Mount Kinabalu has to offer. Presently, it has 7 chalets and 120 individual rooms to accommodate your various needs. In addition, there is an open-air coffee house to enjoy a relaxing afternoon sipping coffee.



Sepilok Nature Resort, Sepilok

It all started in 1991, when John and Judy opened what was then known as Wildlife Lodge, with only 5 fan rooms. With passion and interest in nature, they slowly increase the number of rooms to 60 and now it is known as Sepilok Jungle Resort which now is set amidst in this magnificent landscape full of nature.

Sukau Rainforest Lodge, Kinabatangan

The award winning Sukau Rainforest Lodge nestles on the banks of one of Borneo's most important waterways, the Kinabatangan River, home to many of Borneo's magnificent wildlife. It offers the rare comfort and luxury in the midst of the Borneo Rainforest whilst retaining an Eco-Lodge ethos, the delicate balance of true sustainability.

Group/Individual

On this trip you will be traveling privately with your family & friends. Our representative/tour partner will look after your transfers to and from the airport and will be around to answer other questions you may have about your trip.

Accommodation - Hotel, Resort

Your accommodation has been selected for convenience of location, comfort or character, and can range from a business hotel in one city to a fine heritage hotel in another or a family-run guesthouse or lodges in a smaller town. Accommodation in remote areas tend to be basic and may not have western amenities.

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Single Accommodation

Single (room) supplement is provided on request (single supplement charge applies) and are subject to availability.

Food & Transport

All breakfasts, 4 lunches and 4 dinners are included.

Malaysia is renowned for its culinary excellence; however, food can often be relatively unexciting and limited in the lodges and for hotel breakfasts. Meals will be more varied for everyone in cities and seafood is widely available on the coast.

Most meals will be basic based around rice and noodles although most accommodation does offer a western breakfast of beans, toast and eggs. In the bigger hotels and cities the full range of Western and local foods are available. You can generally avoid the spicier food if you wish. You should allow at least Euro 11-22 (USD 15-30) per day for lunch and dinner. You can eat out very cheaply in Borneo, but if you go to the more expensive restaurants most of the time, you will spend more than the suggested amount.

Vegetarians can be catered for but will find the food choice limited. Please inform us before departure of any special dietary requests.

Please note that in Borneo the availability of certain products is minimal or non-existent, for example wheat or dairy-free, please be prepared for this and you may need to bring such items from home.

For airport, sightseeing transfers, and for long drives we use a private air-con car, jeep, van depending upon group size. Internal flights are based on economy class, with reputable airlines.

Weather

Borneo has an equatorial monsoon climate with the weather remaining similar throughout the year. It is hot and humid; temperatures range from 23-33°C during the day and rarely drop below 20°C at night.

The rainy season starts from November and ends in January/February and the dry season is from May to September, but in reality it can rain at any time. A Borneo rain shower is quite an event!

Baggage Allowance

At time of writing the standard weight limit is one checked baggage is 25kg (55lb) and hand baggage 7kg (15lbs). We recommend packing only one piece of checked baggage. Luggage allowances for both hand and checked luggage are subject to change, we suggest you check the airline's website for the latest information prior to your departure.

ESSENTIAL/PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Passport & Visas

All nationalities require a passport that must be valid for 6 months beyond the intended length of stay. It is your responsibility to have the correct personal documents and to obtain your own visa, in accordance with the regulations of the country you are to visit. The information below is primarily for EU passport holders, and other nationalities should check with the relevant embassies. We are not responsible for the actions of local immigration and customs officials, whether at points of entry or otherwise, and any subsequent effects.

Visitors (tourist) visa is not required for most of EU countries, UK and US nationals to enter Malaysia.

Please note: Visa regulations can change without notice and it is your responsibility to obtain any required visas for this trip. Therefore, we recommend that you check with the nearest embassy or consulate of your chosen destination(s), including any countries you may be transiting or transferring through.

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Vaccination & Health

Travel health can often be something people forget about before going away, but a little preparation and knowledge can go a long way to help you stay fit and healthy while abroad.

There are no mandatory vaccination requirements. Recommended vaccinations are: hepatitis A, hepatitis B, typhoid, Japanese encephalitis, rabies, meningitis, polio, measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR), Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis), chickenpox, shingles, pneumonia, and influenza. The risk of malaria is slight, but you may wish to consult your GP or travel health clinic for further advice.

You will also need a yellow fever vaccination certificate if you're arriving from a country with risk of yellow fever transmission or transiting for more than 12 hours through a country with risk of yellow fever transmission. Please confirm your vaccine recommendations and requirements with your doctor or travel clinic.

Dengue and zika fevers, both spread by mosquitoes, are known risks in places visited. There are currently no vaccines or prophylaxes available; therefore, we recommend you take the usual precautions to avoid mosquito bites.

Local Time

UTC/GMT + 8 hours.

Electricity

Malaysia operates on 240V and 50 Hz. They use power outlets and plugs of type G. Plug G has three rectangular pins in a triangular pattern.

Money

The Malaysian unit of currency is Ringgit and indicated as RM. One euro is roughly equivalent to RM 5 and 1 US\$ RM 4.50. Bank notes come in denominations of 100, 50, 20, 10, 5 and 1.

ATM | Credit Cards

ATM's are widespread throughout Malaysia and cash advances can be obtained, but these can incur a relatively large fee so it's best to check with your card issuer before travelling. Cirrus/Maestro are the most prevalent cards accepted, and you will also be able to use your Visa and Mastercard for cash advances. You may want to notify your bank before leaving home, as some will automatically cancel your card after withdrawals from exotic destinations as a fraud prevention method. The more remote areas have few or no ATM's so it is worth planning your expenditure to ensure you have enough money to survive in these areas.

You will find money changers all over Malaysia, and GBP Sterling and US dollars are the most useful foreign currencies to bring as they are the most widely accepted currencies (USD more so in non-touristy and more rural areas). There are plenty of ATM's and money changers at the airport on arrival. Foreign currency can be converted at banks and money changers throughout the country. Most major credit cards are accepted with Visa and MasterCard being the most widely so, but many shops and banks charge a transaction fee of between 2-4%. AmEx is also accepted in a few places in the major tourist areas, but will not be quite as useful.

Extra Expenses & Spending Money

You will need to bring some extra money to cover drinks, laundry, souvenirs and any other personal expense, plus any additional sightseeing that may be offered to you. Though it totally depends on individual but generally an approximate amount of US\$200 per person, per week should be sufficient (more if you enjoy a few beers); however, for those that can't resist a bargain or may wish to participate in all of the optional excursions, consider allocating a higher amount. Or if you are the one frugal with money probably allocating less would also suffice.

Optional Tours may be offered in some city you visit during your tour. These are not included in the standard itinerary and will only be available if time

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permits and if seats are available. Please ensure you have additional funds available if you feel you may wish to participate in any extra activities. Each optional tour/activity will be arranged locally by our local partner/guide, participation and tipping for optional excursions is completely at your discretion.

necessary action which, in some circumstances, may involve asking someone to miss that activity.

Tipping

Tipping is of course entirely at your discretion and it is not expected and customary in Malaysia but a little extra is always appreciated as a thank you for excellent service. Tips should be given individually and at the end of their service.

Itinerary Change

In case of some unusual events/incidents the order of programs (sightseeing, excursions etc.) might have to change in order to accommodate the local situations. In these circumstances we will make the best possible arrangements while maintaining the overall integrity of your trip.

The domestic airlines may change their schedule frequently and, in such cases, our local partner/guide will inform you about the changes.

Travel Insurance

We highly recommend to choose/get an insurance plan/policy that covers your needs. And please make sure to keep/carry a hard-copy of your travel insurance documents on your person while on tour. It's prudent to check thoroughly the inclusions and procedure to file claims prior to purchasing insurance coverage. *travel-to-nature Asia* will not be responsible for any costs incurred by you due to your failure to purchase appropriate travel insurance from the date of booking.

Important Information

On all guided trips although our leaders/guides are well trained to deal with different capabilities, if they have any concerns about someone's ability to safely partake in an activity, or their impact on other people's enjoyment, we authorize them to take