

## Borneo Special Adventure and Honeymoon Notes

Indulge your wanderlust and immerse yourself in an adventure that will take you from the highest peak in South East Asia to some of the world's best diving sites. In Borneo you can see orang-utans, lose yourself in dense jungle and experience colours and culture like nowhere else. If it's adventure you seek, then look no further.

### Highlights

- Unwind at the fabulous Nexus Resort
- Explore indigenous craft villages
- Hike the spectacular trails of Kinabalu National Park
- Soak in the Poring Hot Springs
- Spend a night at 'Miki's Jungle Survival camp'
- Visit Sepilok Orang-Utan Sanctuary
- Stay on the secluded Lankayan Island



### Factfile

#### Transfers

Airport transfers upon arrival and departure.

**Escorted**

Local English-speaking guides for all tours listed as part of the itinerary, local qualified trekking guides for all trekking elements of itinerary.

**Transport**

All transfers and tours conducted in air-conditioned vehicles or 4WDs, speedboat to Lankayan, 1 domestic flight.

**Activities**

Extensive trail walking in Mt Kinabalu National Park and on Miki's Jungle Trek, jungle walks in Sepilok and Tabin, snorkelling and diving opportunities.

**Accommodation**

7 nights beach resort hotel, 1 night camping, 4 nights nature lodge, 2 nights hotel.

**Meals**

As per itinerary.

B - Breakfast, L - Lunch, D - Dinner.

**Entrance Fees**

Included for all sites and parks listed as part of the itinerary

## Itinerary

### DAY 1 - KOTA KINABALU – KARAMBUNAI PENINSULA

Arrive at Kota Kinabalu airport and transfer to the Nexus Karambunai Resort, set in a stunning beachside location.

Upon arrival at Kota Kinabalu International Airport, please look for our representative who will be holding a sign with either your name or 'Imaginative Traveller' on it.

**Nexus Karambunai Resort**

Located 30km north-east of Kota Kinabalu city on 3,335 acres of natural and landscaped surroundings, this resort borders a 6km long pristine white sandy beach on one side and a tropical rainforest on the other. It offers luxurious rooms with private balconies and traditional solid wood furnishings and wonderful facilities including an 18 hole golf course, spa treatment rooms, 3 free-form swimming pools, an outdoor Jacuzzi, a gym, and tennis and squash courts.

PLEASE NOTE: There is also an option to stay at the Shangri-La's Rasa Ria Resort should you prefer. Please ask your Consultant for details.

### DAY 2 - KARAMBUNAI PENINSULA

Free day to take advantage of the wonderful facilities available. (B)

### DAY 3 - KARAMBUNAI PENINSULA – KINABALU

This morning you will visit Kinabalu Mountain Garden for a guided walk. Later this morning you will visit the fruit and handicraft markets at Pekan Nabalun en route to Kinabalu National Park. Those who wish can start to climb Mt Kinabalu today. If you choose not to climb the mountain you can enjoy a guided trek along some of the many extensive trails in its foothills. Overnight at the Perkasa Hotel. (BL)

**Kinabalu Mountain Garden**

Visit the Mountain Garden where you can view more than 1000 species of rare orchids and as well as the endemic and medicinal plants found within the Kinabalu Park.

**Pekan Nabalun**

The markets at Pekan Nabalun are a colourful introduction to the culture of Borneo. All of the stalls are crammed with goods ranging from delicious tropical fruits to small local handicrafts.

### **Perkasa Hotel**

The hotel is situated approximately 5,000 feet above sea level and has a naturally cool atmosphere as a result. There is a commanding view of the majestic Mt. Kinabalu, the highest mountain in South East Asia, and also a panoramic view of the sprawling foothills dotted by the temperate vegetable farms of Kundasang.

## **DAY 4 - MT KINABALU**

Morning trail walks in the National Park. Afternoon visit to Poring hot springs and the canopy walkway. (BLD)

### **Kinabalu National Park**

Your guide will take you on some of the extensive trails that wind throughout the 754km<sup>2</sup> of protected parklands in the foothills of Mt Kinabalu. You will trek through lowland rainforest and see oak and fig trees, rhododendron shrubs, wild berries, conifers and other alpine vegetation.

### **The Canopy Walkway**

This walkway is a suspension bridge, anchored in three giant trees and situated some 100-200 feet above the floor of the forest. It takes 40-50 minutes to cover the length of the walkway and you will get fabulous views over the surrounding scenery and a unique view of the many birds and animals of the forest.

### **Poring Hot Springs**

Within Kinabalu National Park are the Poring Hot Springs, where hot sulphurous water has been channeled into several tiled pools and tubs. Whilst the area can get very busy, a soak in one of the tubs can be pleasantly therapeutic after a morning of walking.

## **DAY 5 - MT KINABALU – MIKI'S JUNGLE SURVIVAL CAMP**

Short transfer to 'Miki's Village' where you will trek across mountain ranges, through rice paddies and into primary forest to learn about survival in the jungle. Spend the night in a tent at Miki's campsite. (BLD)

### **Miki's Jungle Survival Camp**

Miki, his family, and the local people developed the survival camp to help preserve the environment and to benefit the indigenous people of the region through education. Miki will give you an unforgettable experience of survival in the jungle and you will trek across mountain ranges, through rice paddies and into primary forest. Miki may teach you to build a hut, to make traps, to identify edible fruits and foods and to learn to pick traditional medicines. You will spend the night in a tent at Miki's campsite.

Note: The campsite and tent is very simple; if you prefer to stay in comfort, please discuss this with your consultant and they will be able to suggest an alternative itinerary for this day.

## **DAY 6 - SANDAKAN**

Drive to the world famous Sepilok Nature Resort in Sandakan. In the afternoon you visit the orang-utan sanctuary to see 'feeding time'. Later you will enjoy an evening jungle walk to search for other wildlife. (BLD)

### **Sepilok**

The Kabili-Sepilok Forest Reserve is home to the last wild orang-utans of Northern Borneo. On the edge of the reserve lies the Sepilok Orang-Utan Sanctuary, a world-renowned centre for rehabilitating orang-utans rescued from captivity or orphaned and displaced by logging activities. The animals are kept for up to seven years until they are fit for release into their natural habitat. Other species are also cared for at the sanctuary, including sun-bears, gibbons, Sumatran rhinos and the occasional injured elephant.

### **Sepilok Nature Resort**

Hidden amidst tropical plants and grasses, huge trees and spectacular blooming orchids, the traditional bungalows of the Sepilok Nature Resort provide the perfect base for visiting the forest reserve. All the timber chalets sit on the shore of a beautiful natural lake and have attached bathrooms with hot and cold water, a shower and a bathtub, a ceiling fan and air-conditioning. Meals are served in the central building under covered terraces.

## DAY 7 - SANDAKAN – TABIN

Transfer by land to Lahad Datu and the Tabin Wildlife Lodge, deep in the heart of the eastern Sabah rainforest. (BLD)

### **Tabin Wildlife Reserve**

Tabin is the Borneo Wilderness at its best. With a protected forest area of 120,500 hectares, Tabin plays an important role as a dedicated breeding ground for the endangered wildlife and protected mammals in Sabah. You will find the wildlife reserve to have large numbers of animal species inhabiting its forest, including several which are highly endangered. It is no wonder that Tabin is one of the finest wildlife viewing areas in Borneo. The three largest mammals of Sabah, namely Borneo Pygmy Elephant, Sumatera Rhinoceros and Tembadau are all found within Tabin.

### **Tabin Wildlife Lodge**

The Tabin Wildlife Lodge has been carefully and sympathetically integrated into its magnificent surroundings with accommodation and facilities to ensure a memorable and comfortable stay whilst experiencing the spectacular Borneo flora and fauna. There are just 20 timber jungle chalets all nestled within the forested hill or overlooking the River, each with its own private balcony, en-suite bathroom and hot shower and ceiling fan. Each chalet is linked by an inter-connecting timber walkway to the Sunbird Café where you can sample delicacies of the traditional local cuisine and maybe steal one or two recipes from the chef when he is in a good mood!

## DAY 8 - TABIN

Hike some of the Jungle Trails in search of Wildlife or try some of the exciting Jungle activities on offer. Alternatively indulge in a good book and relax amongst the enchanting noises of the Rainforest. (BLD)

## DAY 9 - TABIN – SANDAKAN

Transfer back to Sandakan where the rest of the day is free to relax. (BLD)

Later this morning you will transfer overland back to Sandakan and stay at the Borneo Rainforest Lodge over night. Travel time permitting there may be another chance to see one of the Worlds most endearing Primates up close. (BLD)

## DAY 10 - SANDAKAN – LANGKAYAN ISLAND

Take a early morning transfer to a jetty for a boat ride to the Langkayan Island Resort for three nights of pure relaxation. (BLD)

### **Langkayan Island**

A tiny jewel-like island in the Sulu Sea, unpopulated and covered by thick tropical island vegetation, this peaceful, untouched little bit of paradise is ringed by an endless pure white sandy beach. From March to May there are regular sightings of gigantic but harmless whale sharks.

### **Langkayan Island Dive Resort**

The resort offers simple, elegant accommodation in a handful of roomy and perfectly-appointed seafront chalets made out of local wooden materials to blend with the natural surroundings. Meals are informally served in the central open-air building with its beautiful wooden terrace from where you can admire dozens of juvenile black tip sharks swimming leisurely a few feet beneath you. Despite the remoteness of the location you will enjoy all the amenities of an international resort.

**Diving Package?** There are excellent snorkelling and diving opportunities in the waters off the coast; if you are a qualified diver and wish to take advantage of these, please do not forget to bring your PADI certificate. There is an option to pre-book your Diving Package to maximize your Diving opportunities. Please ask your Consultant for details.

## **DAY 11 TO DAY 12 - LANGKAYAN ISLAND**

Two full free days to dive, snorkel and swim. (BLD)

## **DAY 13 - LANGKAYAN ISLAND – KOTA KINABALU**

Transfer to Sandakan Airport for a flight back to Kota Kinabalu. On arrival, drive to the Nexus Karambunai Resort. (B)

## **DAY 14 - KARAMBUNAI PENINSULA**

There is the option to take a day trip to the Kota Klias wetland for a rivercruise in search of proboscis monkeys and other wildlife, or to drive to Kota Kinabalu for a day of sightseeing. Alternatively, relax and enjoy the last day of your special trip in Karambunai. (B)

## **DAY 15 - KARAMBUNAI PENINSULA – KOTA KINABALU**

Transfer to the international airport for your onward flight. (B)

### **Itinerary Notes**

#### **Climbing Kinabalu**

More active and adventurous travellers might like to consider climbing Mount Kinabalu. The highest mountain in South East Asia, at 4,095 m, it is situated in the heart of Kinabalu National park, one of the richest assemblages of biological diversity and natural landscapes in tropical South east Asia. From the top there are breath-taking views over the surrounding area and you will feel a huge sense of achievement !

The climb can be included on day 3 and 4.

#### **Day 3, Karambunai Peninsula - Mount Kinabalu**

Drive to Mt Kinabalu Park and begin your journey to the summit. You will spend the night in a mountain hut at 3,350m. Accommodation is in a dormitory. (BLD)

#### **Day 4, Mount Kinabalu**

An early start at 3am to climb to the summit of Mount Kinabalu from where you will see the sun rise over the magnificent surrounding scenery. Later you will make a leisurely descent back to the base of the mountain. (BLD)

#### **Climbing Mount Kinabalu**

The well-marked trail is predominantly made up of steep steps. There is no rush, so you can enjoy the surroundings as the trail passes through tropical rainforest and sub-alpine vegetation before arriving at the rugged rock face of the exposed peak. The climb is about 6km (5-6 hrs walking). You spend the night at a mountain rest house (3,300m) and very early the following morning you make the ascent to the summit where you will experience a spectacular sunrise and fantastic views – well worth all the effort. You can descend to the mountain rest house for breakfast and then continue down at leisure, stopping to look at the array of flora including over 1,000 varieties of orchid.

At times, the ascents and descents can be steep so you do require a good level of fitness. We recommend that you do some physical preparation before your trip; the more physically fit you are, the more easily your body will adapt to trekking up Mt Kinabalu. Footing can be treacherous, so we recommend that you bring hiking boots with ankle support.

You will only require a small amount of luggage during the trek and so you will only need to carry a small daypack / rucksack. You can leave the vast majority of your belongings in storage at our accommodation in Kinabalu National Park. You'll stay one night in a mountain rest house, with communal sleeping and washing facilities. The

rest house is heated and blankets are provided. You may however wish to bring your own sleeping sheet to use with the blankets.

It frequently rains heavily on the mountain. In order to keep your daypack waterproof it is worth putting all of the contents into plastic bags or small bin liners. There is nothing worse than sleeping in wet clothes and then having to resume your climb in them!

#### **Luggage checklist for climbing Mount Kinabalu**

- Waterproof hiking boots with ankle support
- Sleeping sheet
- Torch
- Binoculars
- Waterproof jacket
- Fleece / warm sweater (the temperature can drop considerably at night on the summit)
- Warm hat & gloves
- Daypack

## **Supplementary Information**

### **Staffing**

Throughout the tour you will be provided with all the assistance that you will need. Local English-speaking wildlife or trekking guides will accompany you on all tours listed as part of the itinerary.

### **Hotels**

We have selected a wide range of accommodation in Borneo. During your stay at Karambunai and Langkayan you will be in beautiful accommodation right on the beach. In Sandakan and Tabin we have selected unique jungle lodges which offer a wonderful opportunity to stay in comfort in the heart of the rainforest. In Kinabalu the Perkasa is one of the best available hotels but does not offer luxury so please be prepared for this. And finally, the jungle survival camp is excellent fun and enables you to see how people survive in the rainforest, but you will be staying in a very simple tent and should not expect any creature comforts. If this does not appeal, please discuss this with your travel consultant and they can arrange alternative accommodation for this night.

All of the hotels that we have listed in the itinerary will be booked subject to availability. If we are unable to secure a booking at the selected hotel we will suggest a suitable alternative; however please be aware that some of the places that we visit have only a limited selection of accommodation and the alternative may not be of equivalent standard. Where this is the case, we may be able to offer a small discount off the cost of the trip to reflect the lower standard. Please discuss this with your travel consultant at the time of booking, if appropriate.

### **Transport**

Road - All transfers and tours will be in air-conditioned vehicles or 4WD's.

Plane – The domestic flight included in your tour is made with Malaysian Airlines, and is subject to their flight schedule programme. We are therefore unable to advise the flight times in advance. There is a departure tax payable before boarding the flight; this must be paid on the spot and costs approximately US\$1.5.

### **Visas & Taxes**

Most nationalities will be issued a visa on arrival in Sabah. However, as regulations do change for time to time it is best to confirm this with your local Malaysian embassy.

When leaving Sabah by plane, there is an exit tax of US\$11.

### **Travel Insurance**

Fully Comprehensive travel insurance is compulsory for all travellers. We recommend that you take out insurance to cover cancellation and curtailment, baggage loss or damage, medical expenses, emergency travel, repatriation and personal accident, before you leave home. It is your responsibility to ensure that you are fully insured to financially safeguard against unforeseen circumstances.

### **Money**

The currency used in Borneo is the Malaysian Ringgit. It is an easy currency to use with simple notes and coins.

Both traveller's cheques and cash can be exchanged easily. ATMs are available in major towns and some banks may be able to arrange a cash advance with a credit card.

British pounds, US dollars and Euros are the easiest currencies to exchange, though other major currencies are also possible.

Approximate exchange rates (as at Oct 07) are as follows:

- 1 Pound Sterling = 6.9 Ringgit
- 1 US Dollar = 3.38 Ringgit
- 1 Euro = 4.78 Ringgit

XE.com is a useful site for currency conversion.

### **Entrance fees**

Entrance fees are included for all sites listed as part of the itinerary apart from the Sepilok Sanctuary. This needs to be paid locally and costs US\$12 per day.

Also, please note that the optional excursions on day 14 are not included and cost US\$60 per person.

### **Tipping**

Tipping is discretionary; most meals are inclusive of a service charge and small change is acceptable for portage.

### **Voltage and Plug Sockets**

The voltage in Borneo is 220-240 Volts. Sockets are of 3 pin square variety.

### **Meals & Drinks**

In Borneo, the vast majority of dishes are of Chinese influence. Hotels will often have buffets which will offer a selection of different dishes. Whilst some may be spicy there are usually non-spicy alternatives.

Many of the meals on this trip are included. Please see the itinerary for further details;

B - Breakfast, L - Lunch, D - Dinner.

Approximate costs for meals and snacks not included are shown below:

- Simple snack: US\$3-4
- Light meal: US\$4-10
- Fancy restaurant: US\$15-20

### **Vegetarians**

Vegetarianism is not a well known concept in Borneo and whilst it can generally be accommodated you may find that the range of food on offer is limited. It is worth learning to say "tanpa daging" (no meat), when ordering.

### **Drinks**

You should not drink the local tap water in Borneo. However, bottled water and soft drinks are widely available and are not expensive (though it is considerably cheaper to buy these outside the hotels). Beer is also widely available and reasonably priced; Tiger beer is the local brew.

### **Clothing**

As a general guideline, clothing should be lightweight, loose fitting, hard-wearing and easily washed. In Borneo with its year round tropical heat, cotton clothing is much more comfortable than man-made materials like nylon.

### **Culture**

There are a number of different indigenous groups in Borneo. In Sabah, the largest group is the Dusun or Kadazan people. Within this group there are at least 10 distinct languages with a possible 30 or more dialects. The Dusun are traditionally farmers who occupy the fertile plains of the West Coast and the interior. The majority of these people are Christian. Two other distinct groups are the Murut and Bajau.

The second largest group in numbers is the Chinese. While the Chinese have been trading in Borneo for over 1,000 years, mass migration started in the 1880s after the formation of the British North Borneo Chartered Company. You will meet many Chinese people running businesses in the cities of Borneo. There are also Malays, who tend to work in both the public sector and on small farms. These people are Muslim, which is the national religion.

**Dress**

Whilst the local people in Borneo generally dress quite conservatively, as the majority of this tour takes place either on the beach or in remote jungle areas, shorts and sleeveless shirts are generally perfectly acceptable dress for both men and women. However, it is worth taking at least one long skirt or pair of trousers and a long sleeved top for when you pass through more conservative towns or villages. If in doubt, please ask your driver or guide what is appropriate for the region through which you are travelling.

**Customs**

In Borneo it is considered very inappropriate to express anger by raised voices; if you are frustrated, it is important to discuss issues in a quiet and controlled way with the people concerned.

Physical contact between people of the opposite sex is frowned upon and you should not give or receive things with your left hand - use your right hand at all times. Lastly, you should not touch people in Borneo on the head (if the situation were to arise!).

**Begging**

Begging is a way of life in much of South East Asia. Ultimately donations are a travellers personal choice, however in line with initiatives and government policy in many of our destinations, our recommendation is NOT to give money, pens, gifts or sweets as this encourages a begging mentality and is largely ineffective. If you do want to help it is probably better to give to a recognized charity. If you choose not to give, simply say no with a smile and keep on walking. If you learn nothing else of the local language, learn to say 'no thank you'!

**Haggling**

Haggling is also a way of life in Borneo. In the shops there is no fixed price so the shop keeper will start with a high price which you are then expected to haggle down until you reach a fair price. Haggling should always be relaxed and can be a lot of fun – you will find most shop owners are very friendly and will probably invite you in for a cup of tea to break the ice before the haggling starts.

**Safety**

Most people find that Borneo a very friendly and hospitable place and feel quite comfortable wandering around alone during the day. However, as with any country you are not familiar with, it is recommended that you exercise more caution at night and generally take taxis rather than walk. Negotiate a price beforehand.

## General information

**Communications**

**Email** - Internet cafes can now be found in all the big cities of Borneo. Some hotels may also offer this service.

**Phone** - Most hotels allow you to make international phone calls but these can be expensive. It is generally cheaper to use public phones located on most main streets and shopping centres, many of which have international direct-dialling facilities.

**Cameras and Film**

Slide film is sometimes hard to find, and when you do find it, it is often stored in the bright sunshine or has expired. If you use a special or "professional" brand of film you would need to bring this from home. If you have a digital camera you should ensure that you bring an adequate supply of memory cards to cover the entire trip. While you may find an internet café which will burn your memory card to CD, PCs may be infected with viruses or lack the adequate software. Similarly, camera batteries are hard to find. The best bet is to bring two sets of rechargables and your own charger (with an international adapter).

**Weather**

Borneo has a typical tropical climate and it is generally hot and humid throughout the year. Temperatures stay in the high 20s most of the year, dropping back to the low 20s at night. As in most tropical areas the rain falls in short heavy bursts and is followed by sunshine. In theory, the wet season runs from November through to February, but in reality there is little difference in the seasons and it is very unlikely that your trip would ever be greatly affected by adverse weather conditions.

## **Suggested Reading**

### **Guidebooks**

- Wild People - Travels with Borneo's Headhunters (By Andro Linklater)
- Culture Shock Borneo (By Heidi Munan)
- Into the heart of Borneo (By Redmond O'Hanlon)
- Borneo Stories (By Somerset Maugham)
- A stroll through Borneo (By James Barclay)

### **History and Anthropology**

- Natural Man - A record from Borneo (By Charles Hose)
- My life in Sarawak (By Margaret Brooke, the Ranees of Sarawak)
- World Within - A Borneo Story (By Tom Harrison)
- The White Rajahs of Sarawak (By Robert Payne)

### **Conservation**

- A Naturalist in Borneo (By Robert Shelford)

### **Contact Details**

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