



BEST OF BORNEO

Go Beyond Tour | 16 Days | Physical Level 2

Kuching – Bako – Semenggoh – Kota Kinabalu – Sandakan – Sepilok –
Kinabatangan River

An island of uncharted jungles and tribal culture, Borneo is a destination that exudes adventure! Discover 'head-hunter' heritage, see a wealth of wildlife, delve deep into nature and meet the beautiful orangutans.

- Discover historic Kuching
- Walk the Bako National Park trails
- Explore protected orangutan reserves
- Meet an Iban tribe in their longhouse
- Visit a sun bear conservation centre
- Spend two nights in a jungle lodge
- Enjoy river safaris at dawn and dusk

TOUR MAP



BEST OF BORNEO TOUR INCLUSIONS:

- Return international economy flights, taxes and current fuel surcharges (unless land only is selected)
- All accommodation
- Meals as stated
- All sightseeing and entrance fees
- All transportation and transfers
- English speaking National Escort (if your group is 10 or more passengers) or Local Guides
- Specialist advice from our experienced travel consultants
- Comprehensive travel guides

The only things you may have to pay for are personal expenditures e.g., drinks, optional excursions or shows, insurance of any kind, tipping, early check in or late checkout and other items not specified on the itinerary.

GO BEYOND TOURS:

Venture off the beaten track to explore fascinating destinations away from the tourist trail. You will discover the local culture in depth and see sights rarely witnessed by other travellers. These tours take you away from the comforts of home but will reward you with the experiences of a lifetime. These tours include:

- Walking through classic sites
- Unique cultural experiences and encounters
- Off the beaten track destinations
- More evenings at leisure for independent exploration

PHYSICAL LEVEL 2:

All our tours feature a physical rating to help you select the right holiday for you. To travel on any of our tours requires unaided mobility and the ability to stroll around the sights.

‘Best of Borneo’ is rated as a **physical level 2** tour. A reasonable level of fitness is required, but it is more about spending time on your feet rather than covering large distances. You will be getting on and off coaches and boats, walking around the sights and climbing some steps.

- On several days there will be sightseeing on foot for extended periods of time
- At some of the sights visited, there are a large number of steps to climb
- You will be required to get on and off varying sizes of boats, sometimes without assistance

Of course, our National Escorts and local guides will always endeavour to provide the highest level of service and assistance; however, they cannot be expected to cater for customers who are unfit to complete the itinerary.

JOINING YOUR TOUR:

The tour is 16 days in duration including international flights.

Travellers booked on a ‘Land Only’ package, the price includes your arrival/departure airport transfers if arriving/departing on the start and conclusion date of your tour. Please advise your international flight times to our reservations team.

Join the tour on Day 2 in Kuching and end the tour on Day 15 in Kota Kinabalu. Please refer to your final itinerary for more specific meeting instructions pertaining to your departure.

ITINERARY CHANGES:

We intend to adhere to the day-to-day itinerary as printed; however, the order of events or sightseeing may change as we look to improve our tours, or as dictated by local conditions. In these circumstances, we will endeavour to make the best possible arrangements whilst maintaining the integrity of your trip.

DETAILED ITINERARY**Day 1-2: Fly overnight to Kuching**

Meals: D

Your tour begins in Kuching, the capital of the state of Sarawak. Guests arriving today will be met in the arrivals hall by the Local Guide or National Escort for a short group transfer to the hotel. Check in to your room, or store luggage if arriving ahead of check-in time.

This evening, enjoy a welcome dinner and meet the rest of your group.

Additional nights before and after your tour can be arranged. Please contact our Reservations team to book.

**Destination Information**

Kuching – Kuching is the capital of the Malaysian state of Sarawak in the north-western part of Borneo. The state has a very diverse ethnic mix including the native Iban people, Chinese and Malay as well as many other minority groups. Borneo's most stylish and sophisticated city brings together a multitude of cultures, crafts and cuisines. Wander down the waterfront promenade, and soak up the individual culture while exploring the contrasting modern and colonial streets.

Day 3: Kuching

Meals: B, L, D

Discover Sarawak's diverse culture and the strong influence of China on the state's culture. Get an overview at the small Chinese History Museum on Kuching's waterfront before continuing to Chinatown to see the traditional merchant houses.

Pay a visit to a 'sinseh' (Chinese medicine man) and hear about his work before continuing to a 'hio chek' (ceremonial shop), where you'll hear about the custom of worshipping your ancestors. Finally, visit a 'Pak Tik' - a tin smithing shop where you will be able to try your hand at this art.



Continue to Gambier Street, where you will sample a local dish and hear about the use of spices in Malay cooking. Stop by the impressive Borneo Cultures Museum before a relaxed sampan ride across Kuching's river to visit a Malay village. Discover the astonishing contrast between the bustling city and the quiet village just across the water.

Day 4: Bako National Park

Meals: B, L, D

Drive around 40 minutes out to the small Malay village of Bako, where you'll board a boat to reach Bako National Park on the peninsula, just 20 minutes across the water.

Explore the park on foot with a guide – one of Borneo's most biodiverse areas, the diversity of flora and fauna here is incredible, and easily accessible. Follow trails along streams, past caves and across plateaus, keeping an eye out for wild boar, macaques, monitor lizards and, if you are lucky, a proboscis monkey! Return to Kuching for dinner.



Please note: The treks around Bako National Park are of varying difficulty, with some being over boardwalk and others up and down more uneven surfaces. The longest trek is 1 and a half hours each way. If you wish, you may stay at the café area as all treks return to this point. Treks will be decided on the day of your visit according to suitability and availability.

Destination Information

Bako National Park - Bako National Park is one of the best places in Sarawak to see rainforest animals in their natural habitat. The park touches the ocean and is famous for its spectacular coastal scenery, only 37 kilometres away from downtown Kuching.

Day 5: Kuching – Sri Aman

Meals: B, L, D

This morning you have the opportunity to meet Borneo's most famous native, the orangutan! Drive 40 minutes to Semenggoh, where we visit a centre dedicated to the rehabilitation of rescued or orphaned young orangutans – here they are taught how to survive in the wild.

The area you are visiting is where the orangutans are released after their training, to live freely in the nature reserve, so please bear in mind that even at the feeding time, it is not guaranteed that you will spot a resident.



Continue to Sri Aman, stopping to visit a local market, a pepper plantation and the village of Lachau enroute. Arrive at Sri Aman in the late afternoon and check into your hotel. You may wish to join a guided stroll of the town of Sri Aman, taking in Fort Alice and the majestic Tze Yin Khor Chinese temple. Dinner will be at a local restaurant.

Please note: We recommend packing a smaller bag for your 2-night stay in Sri Aman. Your main luggage will be kept in safe storage at the hotel in Kuching, and you will pick it up on your return. Your hotel in Sri Aman is simpler than in Kuching, but is clean, comfortable, and the only suitable option for our clients in this more remote area.

Day 6: Iban Longhouse

Meals: B, L, D

Today you will discover more about Borneo's native Iban people, renowned for their former practice of headhunting.

After breakfast, drive approximately 1 hour to the jetty. Here, board a traditional Iban longboat for a 45-minute cruise along the Lemanak River to a longhouse, where you will have the chance to meet an Iban community. Witness a performance of a traditional ceremony and tribal dance.



If weather permits, Iban locals will demonstrate their traditional cooking style (food steamed in bamboo over an open fire). After lunch, return to Sri Aman, where the rest of the day is at leisure.

Please note: It is customary to bring some gifts for the Iban longhouse people, which can be divided by the number of families. Our guide can assist you during one of the stops enroute to buy some suitable presents.

Destination Information

Iban People – Mostly located in Sarawak, the Iban people have long been considered a fearsome and strong tribe, formerly notorious for their culture of headhunting (the practice of taking and preserving a person's head after killing them). Traditionally living in simple accommodation called longhouses, more recently these households have progressed to using more modern technology.

Day 7: Sri Aman – Kuching

Meals: B, L, D

After breakfast, check-out and return to Kuching, with a stop enroute for lunch at a local café. Transfer to your hotel in Kuching for check-in. This evening, meet your guide in the hotel lobby before dinner.

Day 8: Kuching – Kota Kinabalu

Meals: B, L, D

Transfer a short distance to the airport and fly over to Borneo's other Malay state, Sabah, and the vibrant city of Kota Kinabalu. On arrival, the rest of the day is at leisure until dinner.

Please note that today a light lunch will be provided on the flight only, due to the flight time. The typical flight time is 12:50-14:20 but may vary according to the local schedule.



Destination Information

Kota Kinabalu – Known as KK, the city lies to the west of Mt Kinabalu, its namesake. Due to its popularity with tourists, easy access by flight and being one of the major industrial and commercial centres of East Malaysia, Kota Kinabalu is one of the fastest growing cities in Malaysia.

Day 9: Kota Kinabalu

Meals: B, L, D

Enjoy a walking tour of this fascinating city. Begin your explorations at the Sabah State Museum, where you can learn about the state's diverse cultural and natural heritage, before exploring some of the city's beautiful architecture, including the Blue Mosque surrounded by reflecting pools and Chinese Temple to Kwan Yin, the Goddess of Mercy.



Browse the piles of wares at the Handicraft Market and spice bazaar before strolling through the oldest part of the city. Lunch will be at a local restaurant before returning to the hotel for an afternoon at leisure.

Destination Information

Sabah Museum – Centred on a modern 4-storey structure inspired by the Iban longhouses, the Sabah Museum is the perfect place to see collections of historical and tribal artefacts giving an insight into the extensive history of Borneo.

Day 10: Kinabalu National Park

Meals: B, L, D

Take a 2-hour drive along the ridges of the Crocker range to reach Kinabalu Park, at the foot of Mt Kinabalu, Borneo's highest mountain (4,095 metres).

Spend the day exploring the beauty of Kinabalu Park, Malaysia's first UNESCO World Heritage Site. With four climatic zones, the Park boasts one of the richest collections of biodiversity in the world, housing and protecting more than 4,500 species of flora and fauna.



Join a guided walk along one of the forest trails to get a first-hand impression of the park, its plants and birdlife. Visit the Mountain Garden with its collection of orchids and plants that are unique to Kinabalu. Depart the park after lunch and return to Kota Kinabalu.

Day 11: Kota Kinabalu – Sandakan – Sepilok Resort

Meals: B, L, D

Transfer approximately 15 minutes to the airport for your early 1-hour flight to Sandakan. Pay your respects at the Sandakan Memorial Park, which commemorates the suffering of British and Australian prisoners of war held during the WWII Japanese occupation.



Continue into Sandakan itself and tour the city, passing the William Pryer and Sandakan Liberation monuments. Stop at the English Tea House before continuing to the Agnes Keith Museum, a historic house which tells the story of colonial life in North Borneo during the British Administration, and the impact of the subsequent Japanese occupation in WWII.

This afternoon, transfer to your hotel in the countryside, close to the rainforest.

Please note it is recommended to pack a smaller bag for your 3-night stay in Sandakan and the Kinabatangan River. Your main luggage will be kept in safe storage at the hotel in Kota Kinabalu, and you will pick it up on your return.

Destination Information

Sandakan Memorial Park – the Park is adjacent to the site of the original Sandakan POW Camp. The park commemorates the death and suffering endured by more than 2,400 Australian and British soldiers who were held here by the Japanese between 1942-45 following their capture in the Fall of Singapore. By the end of the war, only 6 POWs escaped. It is considered one of the worst atrocities suffered by Australian servicemen during the war.

Day 12: Sepilok and the Bornean Sun Bear Centre

Meals: B, L, D

This morning, check out of your hotel and head to Sepilok Orangutan Rehabilitation Centre, where you will learn all about the orangutans undergoing a rehabilitation program to return to the wild. You will also visit the Bornean Sun Bear Conservation Centre to visit the world's smallest bear and learn about the conservation efforts to protect them.



Drive further into the countryside. Embark your boat (usually noon) and cruise to your jungle lodge, where we enjoy lunch before checking into your room. Later, join an evening 'safari' cruise along the Kinabatangan River to spot some of the abundant wildlife. The waterway sustains one of the world's richest ecosystems, including 10 species of primates. As the sun sets, look out for the fireflies that illuminate the forest. Return to the lodge for dinner. Afterwards, you may like to wander around the lodge's boardwalk, keeping an eye out for nocturnal wildlife.

Please note: The boat transfer/river cruise will be on a shared basis, and you may have other travellers on the boat with you.

Jungle Lodge – please be aware the eco-lodge is a simple facility, but is clean and comfortable, and is the best option in the area for those who love to stay close to nature and is in a position where it can be easy to spot local wildlife. Most rooms are equipped with a ceiling fan rather than air conditioning.

Destination Information

Sepilok Orangutan Centre – Sepilok offers another chance to see orangutans in their natural habitat – like Semenggoh, this is a centre for the rehabilitation of former captive and orphaned orangutans, teaching them the skills needed to survive in the wild. Around 60 to 80 orangutans live free within the centre’s forest, and there may be young orangutans to visit in the nursery.

Day 13: Kinabatangan River Safari

Meals: B, L, D

The early morning is a good time to spot wildlife activity. Embark on a pre-breakfast cruise to the Oxbow Lake, looking out for wildlife or simply enjoying the peaceful ambience. Return to the lodge for breakfast.

Visit a local village before lunch and then return to the lodge and enjoy some time at leisure to nap or explore. Take a final wildlife cruise this evening, in search of hornbills, pygmy elephants and orangutans, before returning to the lodge for dinner.



Destination Information

Kinabatangan River – Sabah’s longest river, also the second longest river in Malaysia, is one of the most exciting and easily accessible places to explore the rich biodiversity of Sabah. The lower Kinabatangan offers an incredible opportunity to see a large range of wildlife including Borneo’s unique proboscis monkeys, the wild orangutan, Bornean pygmy elephants, crocodiles, otters, bears, wild cats and countless rare and beautiful birds such as hornbills and the Oriental darter.

Day 14: Sandakan – Kota Kinabalu

Meals: B, L, D

Return to Sandakan by boat for lunch at a local restaurant before transferring to the airport to fly back to Kota Kinabalu. This evening, enjoy a farewell dinner.



Day 15-16: Depart Kota Kinabalu

Meals: D

Today, enjoy breakfast at your hotel prior to your 15 minute-transfer to the airport for your departure flight, arriving in the Australia the following day.

Late check-out is not included. Additional nights before and after your tour can be arranged. Please contact our Reservations team to book.

BEST OF BORNEO TRAVEL INFORMATION

VISAS:

Australian passport holders do not need a visa for Borneo if they are travelling for less than 90 days for tourist purposes.

Please be advised that your passport must have at least six months validity left on it when you arrive back into Australia.

Please note the visa procedures and requirements may change at any time. These changes are often made by the relevant embassy or consulate, Wendy Wu Tours acts as a third party and has no influence on the process of a visa. Wendy Wu Tours does not accept responsibility for lost or undelivered items. All information with regards to visas will be updated regularly on our website as we find visas process' are changing on regular basis.

For the latest information on visa procedures, processing times and requirements, please kindly refer to our website <https://www.wendywutours.com.au/help-and-advice/passports-and-visas/>

INSURANCE:

We strongly recommend that you take out a policy as soon as you pay your deposit. Wendy Wu Tours cannot in any way be made liable for any additional cost incurred by the customer on any tour due to the customer not having adequate travel insurance.

We also encourage all customers to take a copy of their travel insurance documents (especially relevant international contact numbers) with them while on tour. We advise that you check the inclusions and procedures for lodging claims prior to your departure. These documents should be stored separately from the original.

EATING IN SOUTHEAST ASIA:

Southeast Asia is home to an incredibly rich food history. The local cuisine is known for its intense flavours, spices and some of the freshest ingredients you can find. In general, meals include either rice or noodles and are packed full of flavour. Lemongrass, ginger, lime leaves, coriander, fish sauce and soy sauce are used in many local dishes. Whilst Southeast Asian food has a reputation for being hot and spicy, each region actually has its own distinct characteristics. Vietnam, for example, is perhaps best known for its fresh and aromatic dishes – relying heavily on flavours from fresh herbs such as mint, basil and dill.

When dining in Southeast Asia, although some restaurants have adopted a western approach to dining, expect some restaurants to follow the traditional communal style of eating. Typically, this will mean each diner has their own small bowl and may serve themselves from a variety of shared dishes. At some local restaurants, appetizers and main courses might be served when they are ready instead of following a particular order.

Determining when it's appropriate to use chopsticks, forks or spoons can be challenging for some travellers, even other Asians, as each country has different customs. In Vietnam, dishes are normally placed in the centre and people serve food for themselves with their own chopsticks and bowl. Usually, chopsticks or other utensils are provided to scoop the food into your bowl to prevent your own chopsticks from touching the food that remains on the table. Dining in Southeast Asia is fairly casual with not too many rules. Leaving food on the plate is not considered rude.

Those with dietary requirements - just make sure to inform your booking agent of any specific requirements well in advance of your trip. Please read your travel guide, which you will receive with your final documents for more information about eating in Southeast Asia. We recommend that when it comes to Asia food, you stay open minded and try to be adventurous!

GROUP SIZE:

Most of our groups consist of 10 travellers or more and will be accompanied by a national escort. There will usually be no more than 18 travellers in a tour group, although you may encounter other Wendy Wu tour groups while you are travelling.

All our departures are guaranteed to operate with a minimum of 8 travellers booked (unless cancelled due to factors beyond our control). However, at our discretion we may operate departures with a smaller group size as we try to operate advertised departures wherever it is viable to do so. For groups with fewer than 10 travellers, departures will operate with local guides only.

ACCOMMODATION:

Your accommodation is selected for convenience of location, comfort or character, and can range from a business hotel in one city to a family run guesthouse in a smaller town. In more remote areas, accommodation may be of a lower standard and may not have all western amenities. Hotels are generally rated as local three to four-star standard, but please note that there is no international classification system for hotels and differences in facilities and quality do exist between Australia and Vietnam. All group tour hotels have private western bathroom facilities, air conditioning, TV and telephone. Plumbing and electricity supplies can be erratic and quite often the power in hotel rooms is turned off while guests are out of the room. If you experience any difficulty, please speak to your National Escort/Local Guide. Rest assured that all hotels used by Wendy Wu Tours are regularly inspected by our staff and our partners to ensure that standards meet your needs.

Solo travellers: If you are a solo traveller and willing to share a room, you will not have to pay a single supplement for any hotel rooms. Willing to share single travellers booking within 75 days of the first day of a group tour will be subject to availability. If no suitable match is available at time of booking you will be required to pay all single supplements.

PORTERAGE:

Please be aware that portering is not included on our tours in Southeast Asia. You will therefore need to be able to handle your own luggage within the hotel and when using transportation like trains and coaches.

TRANSPORT:

Coaches: Coaches with air conditioning are used on our group tours for city sightseeing, short excursions to the countryside and longer transfers where necessary. **However, mini buses may be used for smaller groups (under 10 passengers).** Roads in Southeast Asia have generally improved over recent years, but traffic and/or weather conditions may extend driving times. Road construction work usually covers an enormous section of road - not just one or two kilometres as you may be used to. For this reason, the timings listed in the itinerary are approximations only.

Planes: Internal flights are based on economy class, with reputable airlines.

TIPPING POLICY:

Tipping while on holiday is common in most parts of the world and Southeast Asia is no exception. However, it is not always clear who it is appropriate to tip and how much. Furthermore, travellers may not have the right amounts of cash available at the right time. In order to avoid any inconvenience Wendy Wu Tours operates a tipping policy where a stated amount is given to your national escort at the beginning of your tour and tips are disbursed to local guides and drivers throughout your tour. The amount is designed to be at a reasonable level for travellers while being fair to the local people and includes a gratuity for the national escort.

If you are travelling in a smaller group with local guides only, then tipping is paid in each destination. To be fair to the guides we ask for slightly higher amounts per traveller with small groups.

We generally find that most customers appreciate the convenience of our tipping policy but we do recognize that it may not suit everyone. However, as this is a group tour we ask that everyone follows the same protocol to be fair to other group members and to ensure smooth operation of your tour.

DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTHEAST ASIA:

Although Southeast Asia is developing quickly, it still lacks the international standards of civil infrastructure and tourist facilities. Concepts of personal responsibility are also different to those in Australia. Consequently, tourist and public facilities may not uphold the same safety standards as in Australia; for example, you may see a hole in the road without a warning sign or safety barricade. All of our suppliers meet local safety standards as a minimum. We want you to have an enjoyable holiday so we ask that you take extra care, use your common sense, refer to notices and follow advice from your National Escort or Local Guides.

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS:

If you are travelling within the below Malaysian Public Holidays, please note that celebrations can last a couple of days and during these times some businesses will be closed and coach, air and train travel may be affected. Tourist attractions will be open but may be crowded. International Labour Day is on 1st May every year. Wesak Day will be on 12 May 2025; Harvest Festival is held on the 30th and 31st May, Awal Muharram is on June 25-26 2025; Malaysia Day is on the 16th September and Sabah Governor's Birthday is celebrated on the first Saturday of October every year (Sabah, Borneo only).

SOUVENIRS:

We want to be able to give you an opportunity to buy souvenirs, so we include some stops at museums or exhibitions which demonstrate a craft or product unique to that region with pieces available to buy. We understand that souvenir hunting is not for everyone, so we aim to take you to places, which hold local interest. We trust you will enjoy these opportunities to learn about local arts and crafts and understand their historical and cultural importance.

LUGGAGE:

All travellers are limited to two items of luggage each: a suitcase with a maximum weight of 20kg and one piece of hand luggage with a maximum weight of 5kg. It is essential that your luggage is lockable. Please note that authorities will only allow bottles onto the aircraft if they have been checked in as main baggage. Bottles in hand luggage may be confiscated.

PERSONAL EXPENSES:

You will need to take some extra money to cover drinks, laundry and souvenirs, plus any additional sightseeing that may be offered to you. Based on the advice of previous customers an approximate amount of \$300AUD per person, per week should be sufficient; 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.

CLIMBING STEPS:

Sightseeing at nearly all of the palaces, fortresses and some temples involves climbing quite a number of steps. These palaces were built to provide defense against potential invaders so nearly all of them stand on top of a hill, while the interiors have layers of narrow hallways and steps to slow down the advance of enemies once they were inside. The steps tend to be quite large, not level and sometimes without handrails. Hindu and Buddhist temples or pagodas also tend to be built at an elevation, as this is the most auspicious position according to ancient beliefs. This means you sometimes need to walk from the bus park to the entrance, and/or need to climb some steps inside.

People with knee or hip injuries, who have poor balance or are otherwise unable to complete these activities independently should consider the suitability of this itinerary carefully.

VACCINATIONS AND YOUR HEALTH:

We recommend that you contact either your GP or Travelvax (1300 360 164) for advice on vaccinations and travel health. Travelvax has a comprehensive website that you may also find useful www.travelvax.com.au

BEFORE YOU LEAVE:

We strongly recommend registering your travel plans with www.smartraveller.gov.au as in the event of an emergency, Australian Consular assistance will be more readily available. You can also access the Australian Government's travel advisory service for up to date information about your destination on the same website.

AFTER YOUR BOOKING:

Once you have booked with Wendy Wu Tours, you will receive a confirmation invoice including a visa application form (if applicable), and a help sheet. Your final documentation pack will be sent to you approximately 2-3 weeks prior to departure.

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