

# The Malaysian Orangutan experience - 14 days

## Project Overview

### Looking to get in touch with your primal instincts?

Swing into action on this 14-day orangutan conservation tour on the magical island of Borneo. By taking a walk on the wild side, animal lovers can observe these gentle giants and learn about them in their natural habitat. They can also enjoy exclusive "back stage passes" to the orangutan rehabilitation centres of Sarawak helping to sustain the orangutan population. The jungle is massive and you will have the opportunity to monkey around by hiking along the trails, exploring the rainforest's flora and fauna, and swimming in the jungle waters. So if you fancy yourself as the next Tarzan or Jane, come meet the descendants of the infamous head-hunters of Borneo and explore the Bako, Kubah and Batang Ai national parks.



### Trip Highlights:

- The chance to see Orangutans in the wild - a real privilege!
- Experience life in Borneo's fabled rainforest and see how the Iban tribespeople live
- Trekking through the rainforest
- 'Backstage passes' to the Ape Centre at the world leading Matang Wildlife Centre
- See first hand the efforts being made to rehabilitate the seriously endangered Orangutan population

### Day 1: Arrive in Kuching, Sarawak, Borneo

Today you will be met at the airport and transferred to your guesthouse. Check in and settle into the guesthouse; a welcome dinner will be held at the local restaurant. Dinner is included.

### Day 2: Orangutan & Animal Wildlife Centre

Enjoy a relaxing morning and head to the Matang Wildlife Centre in the afternoon. This wildlife centre is located near the Kubah National Park and you will get "back stage" passes to visit the Ape Centre. At the Ape Centre you will come face to face with the world famous Aman. On the 16th of May 2007, after ten long years in the dark, Aman became the first orangutan in the world to receive eye cataract surgery. You can also meet Aman's baby daughters. You will see first hand the efforts being made to rehabilitate orangutans back into the wild and to establish new populations in the Sarawak jungle. Breakfast, lunch and dinner are included.

### Day 3: Kubah National Park

After breakfast you will journey to the Kubah National Park. You will spend the day trekking and visiting the park's beautiful waterfalls and swimming in the waters of the jungle river. You will return to the wildlife centre for lunch and have the afternoon to visit with the resident orangutans. You will spend the night at the centre. Breakfast, lunch and dinner are included.



#### **Day 4: Kuching**

After enjoying a tasty breakfast, you will travel back to Kuching. Spend the afternoon relaxing in town and doing some shopping. This is your last opportunity to purchase those last minute supplies before heading into the jungle! Breakfast, lunch and dinner are included.

#### **Day 5: Semenggoh Nature Reserve & Bako National Park**

Indulge in a filling breakfast and then travel to the Semenggoh Nature Reserve, just a short drive from the centre of Kuching. You will arrive at the Semenggoh Nature Reserve just in time to see orangutans inhale their mid day meal. In the afternoon, you will depart for Bako National Park by boat. The ride from Kuching to the park is only 25 minutes. Bako is one of the best places in Sarawak to see wildlife including the amazing proboscis monkeys. You will stay overnight in park chalets. Breakfast, lunch and dinner are included.

#### **Day 6: Bako National Park**

Welcome to the jungle! Today you will be hiking through jungle trails, enjoying the sunset, and swimming in the sea by secluded beaches. Be one with nature! Overnight accommodation is in the park chalets. Breakfast, lunch and dinner are included.

#### **Day 7: Bako National Park to Kuching**

After a peaceful morning, you will return to the guesthouse in Kuching in the early afternoon (exact time of schedule will depend on the tide). Breakfast, lunch and dinner are included.

#### **Day 8 to 12: Batang Ai National Park - Orangutan Country**

Welcome to orangutan country. Today you will arrive in Batang Ai National Park, passing through the rubber, cocoa and pepper plantations on the way. Stop en-route to sample some of the local delicacies and see the local wildlife. Visit the colourful native market in Serian town where you can buy a variety of jungle produce including edible ferns, bamboo shoots and unusual tropical fruit. Catch a boat through the valleys to see the Iban tribe longhouses. You will stay at the jungle lodge for the next few days. Here you can enjoy various activities including trekking through the jungle in search of wild orangutans and participating in orangutan nest counting. You will be working with the Iban tribe and truly experience the Iban way of life. If you find orangutans in the wild, do not approach them but appreciate them from a safe proximity. Breakfast, lunch and dinner are included. Note: Jungle trekking can be hard work and it is travellers do need a medium level of fitness in order to appreciate the treks.

#### **Day 13: Transfer back to Kuching**

After breakfast you will make the journey back to Kuching. You will arrive in Kuching in the afternoon and enjoy a warm shower at the hostel. Breakfast, lunch and dinner are included.

#### **Day 14: Departure**

Say your goodbyes and continue on to your next adventure. Breakfast is included.

NOTE: Please be advised that throughout the trip touching of the animals is strongly discouraged by the Borneo authorities.

#### **Accommodation Details:**

You will stay in various accommodations during your trip. While in Kuching you will stay at the Singgahsana Lodge. This guesthouse is comfortable with all the modern amenities including: internet, shower with warm water, phones and television. You will be expected to share a bedroom with a fellow traveller. While visiting the Matang Wildlife Centre, you will be staying in a basic dormitory at the centre. While in the rainforest at

Batang Ai National Park, you will be staying in a basic jungle lodge. This is jungle living at its best but you should not expect luxury. The shower is run by cold water from the nearby waterfall and electricity is produced by a generator which is not switched on all the time. A mosquito net is provided - you will need it! However the geckos tend to help keep the insect population down for you!

### **Why the project needs visitors:**

According to the World Wildlife Fund, fewer than 63,000 orangutans exist in the world today, and the majority of these call Borneo home. In the past 100 years, orangutan populations have fallen by over 90% due to destruction of their habitat, poachers, and illegal pet trading. Because orangutans give birth to a single offspring only every 8 years or so, concentrated efforts are needed to conserve current populations and to promote and protect breeding programmes to encourage orangutan population growth. This tour gives you the opportunity to see a number of different orangutan conservation organisations, focusing on education and raising awareness.

### **Who this trip is for:**

Participants for this project should love animals. You should also have a love of the outdoors and adventure and enjoy trekking. A moderate to good level of fitness is required. Since you will be part of a group, the ability to work as part of a team is essential.

### **Where the project is based:**

The city of Kuching in the Malaysian state of Sarawak, located on the north-western shore of the island of Borneo, will be the starting and ending point for the tour. The city of Kuching is a perfect blend of traditional and modern, and there will be plenty of time for exploring the cities colourful markets, Chinese temples and interesting museums.

### **When you arrive:**

You should fly into Kuching (KCH) airport for this project. Please ensure that you arrive into Kuching on the start date of the tour, unfortunately early airport pick ups cannot be arranged if you arrive early.

### **What's included:**

- Airport pick-up on arrival
- All local transport related to the tour
- All accommodation in shared rooms
- All meals - as per itinerary
- The services of an in-country team throughout your time in Malaysia
- An amazing experience!

### **What's not included:**

- Flights to Malaysia
- Visa - if applicable
- Any optional additional activities

Fast Facts

### **Project Information**

- Project Duration: Min 2 weeks
- Project Costs: £1 199.00 for 2 weeks
- Location of project: *Kuching and local national parks on Borneo*
- Arrival Airport: *Kuching (KCH)*
- Activities: *Visiting with the orangutans, treks through the jungle and living with the Iban tribe in their traditional village*

- Working Hours: *Full days on tour*
- Transport: *Varied; bus and short boat ride*
- Requirements: *Minimum age 18*

### What's Included

- Accommodation: *Varied; shared jungle lodge, dormitory at wildlife center and guest house accommodation*
- Food: *All meals as per itinerary*
- Airport Pickup: *Included on arrival date.*
- Training: *In-country orientation*
- Support: *Pre-departure helpdesk, Local in-country team and 24hr emergency support*

### What's not included

- *Flights, Insurance, Visas, Return airport transfer*

## Country Guide - Malaysia

### A little bit of history...

Malaysia was created in 1963 when Sabah and Sarawak (north Borneo states), and for a brief time Singapore, joined Malaya to form the 13 state federation that exists today. The earliest Malay settlers are believed to have arrived around 10,000 years ago on the Malaya Peninsular from the north. Malaya's prime maritime position made it an attractive location for traders and colonists alike. While Indian and Chinese traders had long held an attachment to the country, by the early 16th century Portuguese colonists lay claim to the land. In 1641, the Dutch gained control until they were overthrown by the British in 1795. Malaya achieved independence by 1954 but not before the country was occupied by the Japanese during WW II and Chinese communists attempted to gain power.



Initially, the formation of Malaysia was marred by external and internal tensions; during the late 1960s conflict between Indonesia and escalating racial tensions, mainly between the Malay and Chinese, threatened the country's stability. Steps were made to ensure economic and political security when in 1968 Malaysia became a founding member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and in 1971 a new economic policy was devised to give Malays a greater economic foothold. During the 1980s and early 1990s, Malaysia experienced a strong economy and the rapid development of its manufacturing and industry sectors. It continues to have a stable economy despite the Asian economic crisis in 1997 and the effects of the Tsunami in 2004.

### Best time to go...

Malaysia enjoys a constant hot and humid climate, averaging at around 30°C, with the highland areas several degrees cooler. The main hindrance to enjoying all that the country has to offer is the monsoon season which pelts the east coast of Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah's north east region and the west of Sarawak with heavy rains from November to February. During this time, many resorts close and boat services come to a halt. A scattering of thunderstorms can occur on the Peninsular's west coast during April and May. Weather wise, April through to October are the best times to visit.

The country is at its most populous with an influx of tourists from early December to late January and during the peak summer season which runs from June to August. It's advisable to book travel and accommodation in advance if visiting during these times.

### **Getting around...**

Flying is the only practical way of crossing the South China Sea to get to the Peninsular from East Malaysia and back. Main domestic carrier Malaysia Airlines and Air Asia fly between the two regions and it tends to be cheaper to fly to East Malaysia from Johor Bahru than from Kuala Lumpur.

Train services are comfortable and efficient, albeit limited. Peninsular Malaysia has two rail lines, one running from Singapore to Thailand via Kuala Lumpur and a line branching out at Gemas and running to the north east of the country; it's also known as the Jungle Train. There is also a line that runs from Tenom to Kota Kinabalu in East Malaysia.

An extensive system and cheap fares makes bus travel a top choice for long distances. There are a number of bus companies such as Transnasional which run regular services to major towns in air-conditioned comfort. But you can sometimes have too much of a good thing and the air-con can feel like an arctic chill so it's advisable to travel with a thick jumper or blanket.

With a well developed highway system and the presence of major car rental firms in towns and cities, driving is a feasible option. There are different packages available with some agencies offering unlimited mileage, while some rentals include a driver. Petrol prices are comparatively reasonable and tolls are charged on some roads. Parking spaces in major cities is limited.

For travelling shorter distances, there are regular bus services between the main cities, while 4 wheel drive vehicles are the vehicles of choice in the rural areas of Sabah and Sarawak. There's an abundance of taxis, which can also be hired for long distances, and most are metered. Bicycle rickshaws are a novel way to get around and appear to be in existence primarily for the tourist trade; you'll be pressed to find them in Kuala Lumpur, though they can be found in Penang and Malacca. It's advisable to negotiate a fare before you board.