



Christmas and New Year in Borneo

Departs 23 December, 2019

Blue Dot Travel

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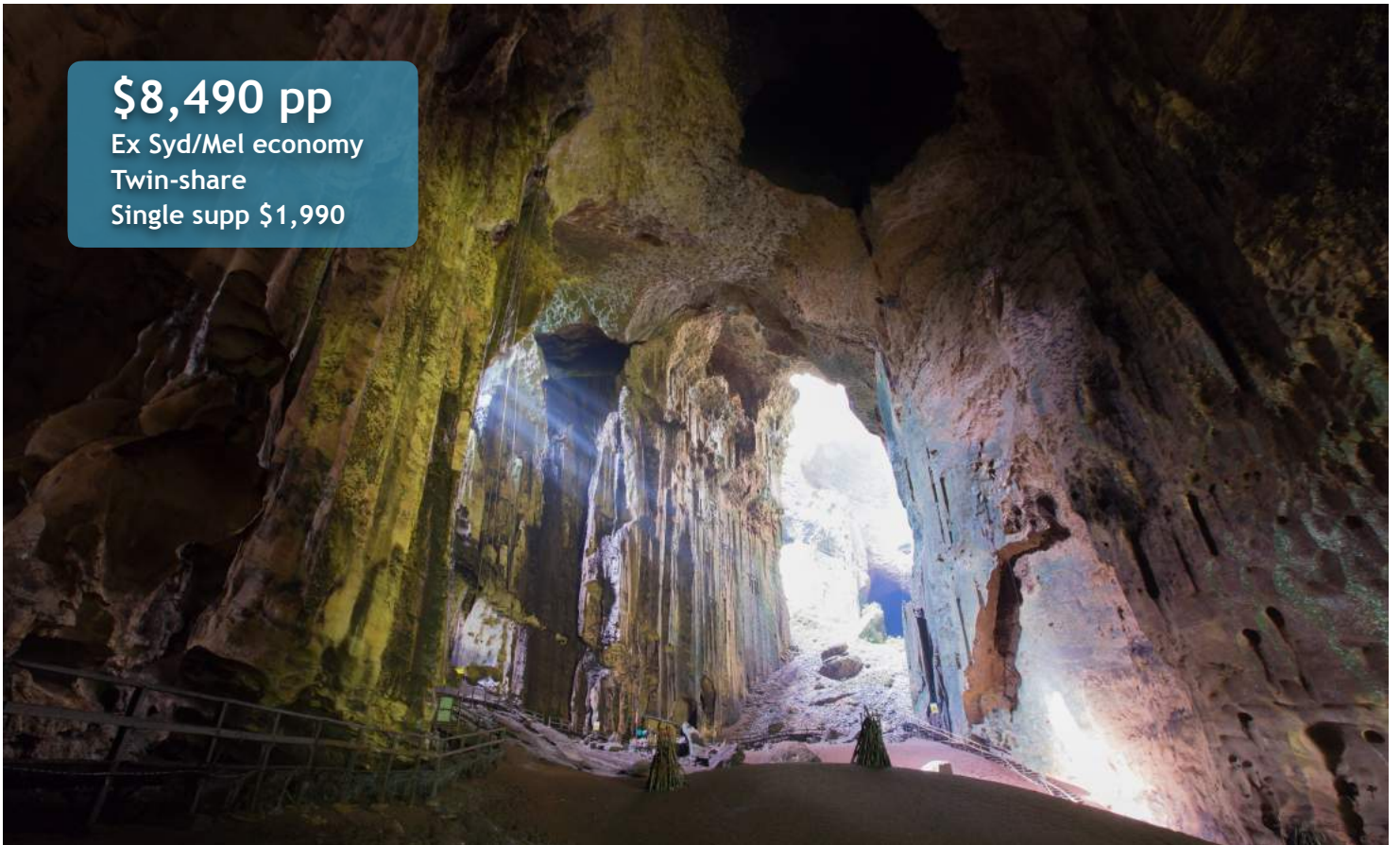


\$8,490 pp

Ex Syd/Mel economy

Twin-share

Single supp \$1,990



BORNEO FOR CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR

Borneo in the South China Sea is a land of rare and undiscovered treasures, offering captivating experiences and natural wonders...

The Malaysian part of the island is divided into two states, Sabah and Sarawak. The Borneo jungles contain some of the oldest, undisturbed areas of rainforest in the world. The island is home to many unique and endangered species, such as the orang utan, proboscis monkey, Borneo Rhino, Pygmy Elephant, as well as the Green and Hawsbill Turtle. Witnessing wild orang utans in their natural environment, is a truly captivating experience, enhanced by the knowledge that they share 96.4% of their DNA with us. Females have the strength of five or six men, while a 110kg male (think front-row forward) can muster the strength of 10 men. Many species of exotic birds, crocodiles, Borneo elephants and Irrawaddy dolphins are only found here. Few things say 'Borneo' more than the stilted wooden longhouse — a series of houses joined together with communal verandas and balconies. Some stretch for what seems to be kilometres, housing as many as 400 people, each new resident being added by marriage.

Raging rivers like the Kinabatangan are a sight to behold with logging barges and thunderous jet-like express boats. Sarawak's capital Kuching provides a comfortable pocket of post-colonial charm, a reminder of Britain's earlier stamp on this part of the world. In Sabah, South East Asia's tallest peak, Mount Kinabalu -- with rainforest dating back 130,000,000 years -- towers above the city, Kota Kinabalu, which was razed during the second world war. Named from Aki Nabal, 'home of the spirits of the dead', the locals believe its clouds protect the spirits.

Endless tea, teak and palm plantations cover the state's mountainous terrain, which was once home to grand colonial outposts like Sandakan. These days in Borneo you'll feel nothing but peace and tranquility ... even its notorious head-hunters have given up the ghost.



**Day 1, Wednesday 23rd December
Depart Australia**

On arrival at Kota Kinabalu Airport you'll meet our guide and transfer to Grandis Hotel for check in. In the afternoon, you will be picked up from hotel and driven to the Sabah Museum to discover the local unique heritage. Then proceed to Tanjung Lipat for a brief visit. This offers panoramic scenery of the Gaya Island, South China Sea, Tun Mustapha Tower and the Kampung Likas village. Proceed to the Kota Kinabalu City Mosque, recognized as one of the most beautiful mosques in Malaysia. Visit the Puh Toh Tze Buddhist temple (if time permits) before we continue with brief sunset tour covering Signal Hill overlooking the city centre, Atkinson Clock Tower and Gaya Island. Visit the night market to bargain for the wide array of local spices, souvenirs, fruits and vegetables. Enjoy a scrumptious dinner before we return to hotel. Your hotel is The Grandis Hotel where you'll stay for three nights. *D*

**Day 2, Thursday 24th December
Kota Kinabalu**

After breakfast you'll be collected from the Grandis Hotel and driven 20 minutes to the Mari-Mari Cultural Village. You'll visit each tribe's traditional house to learn about their ancient cultures and take part in some in-house activities. Then, there's a cultural performance before we move on to the Dining Hall. Try delectable traditional and fusion cuisines before shopping for handicrafts and enjoying the natural surroundings. After lunch you will be picked up from

Cultural Village and driven about 2 ½ hours to Weston Labuk Jetty. After high tea, you'll embark on a river Safari to search for the Proboscis Monkeys. Seeing the lovely view of the mangrove area, flocks of egrets and the reddish-fire sunset view will be a memorable experience. As you return back to the jetty, enjoy the view of the mangrove trees lining the riverbanks glowing in the dark lighted up by the fire flies. A sumptuous dinner will be served before returning to Kota Kinabalu. Stay overnight at Grandis Hotel – Superior. *B/L/D*

**Day 3, Friday 25th December
Sepanggar Island**

Christmas lunch is special today. You'll be collected from the hotel after breakfast and transferred to the the jetty for Mari-Mari Sepanggar Island, a lovely hideaway a mere 10 minutes boat ride from the Kota Kinabalu City. Upon arrival, free at your own leisure to explore the island. Take a walk along the white sandy beach or simply bask in the sun on the beach, dozing to the sound of the lapping waves, and in the tranquillity of an island where few have tread. You can also take a dip or go snorkelling. After lunch, return to your hotel. (Towel can be rented at the jetty or, you may bring their own). In the later afternoon, proceed to a nearby seafood restaurant that is walking distance from Grandis Hotel. Enjoy dinner before returning back to hotel. Stay overnight at Grandis Hotel – Superior. *B/L/D*

Day 4, Saturday 26th December **Tanjung Simpang Mengayau**

Pick up from Grandis Hotel after your breakfast and drive 2 ½ hours to Kudat. Set off to Tanjung Simpang Mengayau - the northernmost tip of Borneo. Visit Kg. Kimihang to observe the local community processing virgin coconut oil and then proceed to Tinangol Village to stay overnight at the guesthouse. Enjoy a traditional-style dinner followed by a colorful cultural performance by the local Rungus community. Stay overnight. Note that the accommodation is very basic with mattress on the floor (mosquito net provided) and shared bathroom/toilet but it is just for the one night. *B/L/D*

Day 5, Sunday 27th December **Mt. Kinabalu**

After breakfast, you'll trek to the nearby rubber estate to learn about rubber tapping. On our journey back to Kinabalu Park, we will make a stopover at two villages to study the local cottage industry, which includes gong making and honey-bee farming. The drive to Kinabalu Park takes approximately 3 hours overland (88 km) through paddy-fields and Dusun villages over the ridges of the Crocker Range to the foothills of Mt. Kinabalu at 5,000 ft, to arrive at the park headquarters at Kundasang. Stay overnight at Kinabalu Park – Hill Lodge. *B/L/D*

Day 6, Monday 28th December **Kinabalu Park - Sandakan**

Today you will start at the Visitor Centre and Mountain Garden; home to some of the 24 species of flowering rhododendrons, 10 species of carnivorous pitcher plants, estimated 1,400 species of orchids, over 600 species of ferns, more than 40 species of oak trees and over 300 species of birds. Then you'll proceed to Poring, east of Kinabalu Park HQ. Vegetation here is tropical lowland rainforest. Upon your arrival, you'll be briefed by your guide with two options, either accompany the guide on a nature walk up to the canopy walkway or decide to have a dip in the Hot sulphur spring baths. Due to the limited time, you'll have to choose either one. (Please bring swimmers and towel). Next, we will continue to Sandakan via approximate 6 hours overland journey. On arrival at Sepilok Nature Resort, check in and have dinner. Stay overnight at Sepilok Nature Resort for two nights. *B/L/D*

Day 7, Tuesday 29th December **Sepilok Nature Resort**

Pickup from Sepilok Nature Resort and depart to Sepilok Orang Utan Rehabilitation Centre. First you'll watch a video show about the plight of the orang utans and the rehabilitation efforts ongoing at the Centre. Walk ten minutes through the rainforest on wooden boardwalks to witness the feeding of the orang utans at 1000hrs then we continue to the newly completed enclosed nursery area for young orang utans. Thereafter visit the Borneo Sun Bear Conservation Centre to learn about conservation of the world's smallest bear. (Note there are charges for cameras and video cameras). After lunch we will proceed to visit Rainforest Discovery Centre. Take a bird view of the centre from the canopy walk and hanging bridge, explore the botanical garden, home to various species of flora. Proceed to Sandakan Memorial Park for a short visit before returning to resort. Stay overnight at Sepilok Nature Resort – ROH. *B/L/D*

Day 8, Wednesday 30th December **Sukau Rainforest Lodge**

Your morning free before being collected from Sepilok Nature Resort and taken for lunch. After lunch, transfer to Sandakan jetty for long-ish 2 ½ hours boat journey to the multi awards winning Sukau Rainforest Lodge along Sabah's longest river, Kinabatangan with opportunity to view birds and wildlife. In the evening you'll take a boat trip (electric motor) in search of wildlife and birds. Enjoy candle light dinner overlooking the riverbank followed by slide show and interpretation by naturalist guide. Stay for two nights at the Sukau Rainforest Lodge. (B/L/D) Please make sure that you travel light to Sukau Rainforest Lodge. We strongly recommend soft duffel style baggage at a 15kg limit.

Day 9, Thursday 31st December **Kelenanap Oxbow Lake**

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 the in-house orang utan Talk activity. In the late afternoon, proceed 27 km overland journey to the vicinity of Gomantong Cave. Traverse to the Gomantong Caves on a 15 minute boardwalk trail through the rainforest, and we might be able to sight the "Man of the jungle"! Witness the exodus of over two million bats as well as raptors. Enjoy New Year's Eve celebrations with a drink or two over-looking the river. Stay overnight at the Sukau Rainforest Lodge. *B/L/D*

Day 10, Friday 1st January **Borneo Rainforest Lodge**

Happy New Year! 0630hrs – after breakfast, proceed 2 ½ hours overland to Lahad Datu where we'll stopover for registration. Then continue to drive 83km to Borneo Rainforest Lodge which is surrounded by pristine virgin rainforests. In the evening a slide show and explore nature trail leading to canopy walkway. If weather permits we go spotlighting to view some of the nocturnal animals. Stay overnight at the delightful Borneo Rainforest Lodge. *B/L/D*

Day 11, Saturday 2nd January **Borneo Rainforest Lodge**

Spend the whole day exploring the forest for birds and mammals, leading up to an escarpment with ancient burial coffins. Trek to waterfall for a refreshing dip in rock pools. There is a high probability that you'll spot the orang utans. Return to lodge for lunch. In the afternoon, explore more trails. Stay overnight at the Borneo Rainforest Lodge – Standard chalet. *B/L/D*

Day 12, Sunday 3rd January **Kota Kinabalu**

Today is at leisure until late morning check-out when you'll depart back to Lahad Datu around 1.30pm. On arrival at Kota Kinabalu Airport ETA 1710HRS, meet and transfer to the Grandis Hotel for check in. Dinner and stay overnight at Grandis Hotel. *B/L/D*

Day 13, Monday 4th January **Departure**

Today is at leisure until check-out and transfer back to Kota Kinabalu Airport for your departure flight (TBA). *B*
