

# BORNEO: EXPLORING SABAH

23 FEBRUARY - 9 MARCH 2025



FROM  
£9,380  
PER PERSON

Tour Leader: Andy Bunten

  
The Ultimate  
TRAVEL COMPANY





Join wildlife expert and birder Andy Bunten to discover a land of enchanting forests, remote jungle lodges, meandering rivers, untouched beaches and some of the most exotic and rare species on earth.

Flying into Sandakan, we begin in Sepilok where orphaned and injured orang-utans and sun bears are brought to be rehabilitated before returning to forest life.

We then travel by boat to the Kinabatangan Floodplain, an exceptional part of Sabah, and an area recognised for its natural beauty and role in supporting diverse life. Expect to see proboscis monkeys, langur, gibbon, crocodile, kingfisher, hornbill and many other species of bird, as well as Borneo pygmy elephant and orangutan in the wild.

We journey by road to the lowland rainforest of the Tabin Wildlife Reserve in search of more rare and interesting wildlife like pygmy elephants, highly endangered Sumatran rhino, clouded leopard and wild orangutans (amongst other primates), not to mention countless birds, reptiles and insects.

We continue to the ancient rainforest of the Danum Valley to enjoy the immense beauty of untouched nature and explore the forest in the hope of seeing Sumatran rhino, pygmy elephant, sun bear, orang-utan, Wallace's flying frog, Bornean gibbon, rhinoceros hornbill or the elusive clouded leopard.

The tour ends in the tropical paradise of Gaya Island, the largest island within the Tunku Abdul Rahman National Park, home to birds, butterflies, monkeys and wild boars. Here we stay in a secluded boutique hideaway framed by jungle-covered hills, sweeping ocean views and golden sands.

During the tour Andy will give informal talks and guidance and share his 50 years of wildlife experience.





*Proboscis Monkeys*



*Kinabatangan River*



*Black Hornbill*

## 15-DAY ITINERARY, DEPARTING 23 FEBRUARY 2025

### 23 February London / Kuala Lumpur

Suggested flight (not included in the cost of the tour) Malaysian Airlines MH 3 departing London Heathrow at 10.25 hrs.

### 24 February Kuala Lumpur / Sandakan / Sepilok

Arrive Kuala Lumpur at 07.15 hrs and connect to MH 2710 departing at 10.20 hrs arriving Sandakan at 13.10 hrs.

Group transfer to Sepilok and check in at the Sepilok Nature Lodge located close to the renowned Orangutan Rehabilitation Centre, where two nights are spent. The tranquil lodge consists of separate wooden chalets set in verdant gardens with many species of orchids, overlooking a lake. Remainder of the afternoon at leisure. Welcome dinner at the lodge.

### 25 February Sepilok

Optional early morning walk around the lodge. After breakfast, head to the Bornean Sun Bear Conservation Centre, where captured bears are rehabilitated, for a private talk with the founder or a senior officer. This is followed by a visit to the nearby Sepilok Orangutan Rehabilitation Centre to witness the morning feeding session. Before the creation

of a reserve in the area, many young orang-utans were the victims of the illegal pet trade throughout Asia. They were either caught during logging or forest clearance or captured by poachers who slaughtered the adult apes to get at the youngsters.

Lunch at the lodge followed by some time at leisure. Optional night walk at the Rainforest Discovery Centre, within the famous Kabili-Sepilok Forest Reserve, to spot nocturnal species such as mouse deer, elusive civet cats, tarsiers, and various insects and birds. Dinner at the lodge.



*Orang-utans, Sepilok*

### 26 February Sepilok / Kinabatangan

Morning at leisure before transferring to Sandakan Jetty.

Lunch in Sandakan. Transfer by boat to the Sukau Rainforest Lodge (approx. 2½ hrs) along Sabah's longest river, the Kinabatangan, observing the wildlife along the river from the coastal mangroves around Sandakan, through nipa-lined riverbanks, to the upper reaches of the river. Check in at the Sukau Rainforest Lodge, enclosed by tropical rainforest on the banks of the river, where three nights are spent. The eco-lodge has bright and comfortable villas with ceiling fans and facilities include open-air dining and a plunge pool. Afternoon river cruise in search of wildlife such as proboscis monkey, long tailed macaques and several species of birds. Return to the lodge for a candlelight dinner overlooking the riverbank.

### 27 February Kinabatangan

Early morning cruise up the Kinabatangan to Kelenanap Oxbow Lake to view the surrounding forest come to life. Return for breakfast followed by a tour along the lodge's Hornbill Boardwalk with an in-house naturalist to learn more about the Kinabatangan ecosystem.

Lunch at the lodge followed by a talk on orangutans. Sunset river cruise. Dinner at the lodge.





Borneo pygmy elephant



Leopard cat, Tabin Wildlife Reserve



Gomantong Caves

## 28 February Kinabatangan

Early morning river cruise along the Menanggol River using a silent electric motor to search for wildlife.

Riverside lunch. Afternoon excursion by road to the Gomantong Caves which are ecologically important for the swifts and bats that occupy this intricate cave system and economically important to local bird nest harvesters. Traverse deep into the forest along a trail in search of orangutans, which are often seen feeding nearby. Witness the exodus of over two million bats from the caves. Return to the lodge for dinner.

## 1 March Kinabatangan / Tabin

Transfer by boat to Sukau Jetty and drive (approx. 3½ hrs) via Lahad Datu to the Tabin Wildlife Reserve. Check in at the Tabin Wildlife Resort, within the reserve on the bank of the Lipad River, where two nights are spent in spacious riverside bungalows, each with a private balcony. The surrounding area is home to a surprising variety of birds, insects, and small mammals. It is also known for its rich variety of jungle herbs, some endemic, used for generations by local people for the treatment of various ailments.

Lunch at the lodge, Afternoon trek from the Elephant Trail to the active Lipad Mud Volcano, which provides a mineral salt lick for wildlife. The adventurous can try the effects of the volcanic mud, said to be beneficial for the complexion. Dinner

at the lodge followed by a night safari in search of wildlife.

## 2 March Tabin

Depart before dawn by road to visit the BORA (Bornean Orangutan Rescue Alliance) planting site to learn about the conservation work they are doing with elephants, banteng and orangutans, in particular planting trees to enrich their habitat and food sources. Return to the lodge for breakfast. Drive into the reserve for a trek to the Lipad Waterfall through the lush green rainforest known for its rich diversity of plants and animals. Option to swim in the natural pool under the waterfall.

Lunch at the lodge. In the afternoon, experience the Tabin Rainforest Foot Soak made with a natural blend of herbs to relax tired muscles. Evening dusk drive to observe more nocturnal wildlife and birds coming out to forage for food. Dinner at the lodge followed by a night walk along the resort trails in search of sleeping birds, frogs, and other nocturnal wildlife.

## 3 March Tabin / Danum Valley

Transfer by road (approx. 3½ hrs) via Lahad Datu, to the Danum Valley, a 472km sq conservation area of pristine, mostly primary, lowland dipterocarp forest that is home to 300 species of birds, as well as many mammals and insects. The area boasts an amazing diversity of animal life including the highly endangered Sumatran

rhino, Borneo pygmy elephant, sun bear, orang-utan and clouded leopard. Eight species of hornbills can also be found here. Check in at the Borneo Rainforest Lodge, an unrivalled eco-lodge, tucked within the conservation area beside the beautiful Danum River, where three nights are spent in a Deluxe Chalet with superb river or jungle views.

Lunch at the lodge. Introduction by your guide to the rainforest and the trails surrounding the lodge. Evening cocktail before dinner at the lodge. Guided night safari to spot nocturnal creatures.



Buffy Fish Owl, Danum Valley  
© Charles Ryan

## 4 March Danum Valley

Wake up to the calls of Borneo gibbons. Morning guided trek to Kadazandusun viewpoint and burial site, 'Coffin Cliff', before taking a short break by a natural pool for a refreshing dip.

Lunch at the lodge. Optional afternoon activities such as guided jungle trekking, or, weather permitting, water tubing down the Danum River. Dinner at the lodge followed by a night walk on the lodge's nature trail.





**TOUR PRICES PER PERSON**

Tour Price	£9,380
Single Supplement	£1,540
Upgrade to Premium Suite at Borneo Rainforest Lodge	£680
Upgrade Single Supplement	£995

*Please note we have not included the cost of the flights in the tour price. Please contact us for prices should you wish to book them through us.*

**PRICE INCLUDES**

- Accommodation throughout as shown in the itinerary
- Breakfast daily; 11 lunches; 12 dinners
- Group transfers and transportation as per the itinerary
- All entrance fees, visits, excursions
- Gratuities in restaurants for included meals; gratuities to guides/s; gratuities to driver/s; portage
- Local English-speaking guide/s
- The services of your tour leader throughout

**PRICE EXCLUDES**

- International flights
- Travel insurance
- Meals 'under own arrangements'
- Items of personal expenditure (e.g. telephone calls / laundry etc.)
- Government levies or taxes introduced after costing and publication of this programme on 06/03/24.



**5 March Danum Valley**

Optional early morning walk before breakfast. Option to trek to the Fairy Falls and Serpent Falls.

Lunch at the lodge. Remainder of the day at leisure or a guided hike along the Segama River. Dinner at the lodge.

**6 March Danum Valley / Kota Kinabalu / Gaya Island**

This morning transfer to Lahad Datu Airport for a flight to Kota Kinabalu. Transfer to Jesselton Point Jetty and transfer by boat to Bunga Raya Island Resort where two nights are spent in a secluded wooden villa perched on stilts. Features include a 25-metre infinity swimming pool as well as a private, crescent-shaped beach and a restaurant serving a fusion of Malay, Chinese and Western cuisine.

Lunch at the hotel. Afternoon at leisure. Dinner at the hotel.

**7 March Gaya Island**

Day at leisure. Optional activities including snorkelling, kayaking, nature walks and spa treatments (at an additional cost).

Lunch at the hotel. Sunset catamaran cruise. Dinner at the hotel.

**8 March Gaya Island / Kota Kinabalu / Kuala Lumpur**

Take the scheduled boat back to

Jesselton Jetty on the mainland. Group transfer to Kota Kinabalu Airport.

Lunch under own arrangements. Suggested flight (not included) Malaysian Airlines MI 2645 departing at 18.00 hrs arriving Kuala Lumpur at 20.40 hrs. Connect to flight MH 2 departing at 23.20 hrs.

**9 March Kuala Lumpur / London**

Arrive London Heathrow at 05.30 hrs.





## YOUR TOUR LEADER



### ANDY BUNTEN

Andy previously worked for many years in the field of nature conservation for wildlife trusts, local government and, for 26 years as Regional Director for the RSPB. He has been passionate about wildlife and nature conservation for as long as he can remember. Now an independent tour leader and lecturer who delights in leading Ultimate Travel's travellers. He is well travelled, too, having worked in the Seychelles, Burma and Sierra Leone helping local people solve their local conservation issues and having led groups to places as far afield as Iceland, Poland, Austria, Brazil, Costa Rica, Romania and Ethiopia.



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