

Wildlife Adventures in Borneo

ORANGUTANS, PYGMY ELEPHANTS, AND THE KINABATANGAN RIVER



TRIP DATES

2025

April 17-27, 2025

September 25-October 5, 2025

2026

April 17-27, 2026

September 22-October 2, 2026

ITINERARY	3
TRIP COST, PAYMENT & INSURANCE	7
LODGING	8
ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE	10
TRIP LEADER	11
TRIP DETAILS	11



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Orangutans, pygmy elephants, proboscis monkeys, sun bears—Borneo’s extraordinary wildlife is just as fascinating as its emerald-green rainforests. At Sepilok Forest Reserve, we’ll walk among free-roaming orangutans, watching their upside-down vine-dangling prowess. From our eco-lodge on the Kinabatangan River, we boat at dawn and dusk in search of primates and pygmy elephants along the rainforested banks. In the lowland forests of Tabin, we’ll look for flying squirrels, Asian palm civets, Malayan civets, and pig-tailed macaques. Our grand finale finds us in the ancient wilderness of the stunning Danum Valley, with its incredible diversity of endemic animals in towering treetop canopies. Join us to discover one of the most biodiverse places on the planet!



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Itinerary

DAY 1

KOTA KINABALU

Arrive in Kota Kinabalu, the capital city of Sabah province in eastern Malaysia, where you are met for transfer to the Hyatt Centric Kota Kinabalu. We gather for a trip briefing and a Welcome Dinner. Overnight at hotel...D

DAY 2

SEPILOK ORANGUTANS / CANOPY WALK

A short flight brings us to the bustling port town of Sandakan, where we head to the famous Sepilok Orangutan Rehabilitation Centre, founded in 1964 and now home to 60 to 80 orangutans who roam freely in the forests of the reserve. The reserve was originally set up to rehabilitate orphaned and injured orangutans. Today the facility provides medical care for dozens of other wildlife species as well. Some of the other animals treated here have included sun bears, gibbons, Sumatran rhinos, and the occasional injured elephant. On arrival we'll watch the morning feeding of the orangutans at the feeding platform (sightings are likely but not guaranteed, as the animals are free-roaming). The orangutan, the original "wild man of Borneo," gets its name from the Malay words for "man" (orang) and "jungle" (utan). Found in the wild only on Borneo and the Indonesian island of Sumatra, the orangutan is fighting a battle for survival as its habitat shrinks. Later we head to the Rainforest Discovery Center for a walk on the canopy bridge, a chance for a bird's-eye view of the forest's green rooftop and perhaps a view of the giant flying squirrels that come out at dusk. Dinner and overnight at the Sepilok Nature Resort, with its simple chalets in a garden setting just a 10-minute walk from the reserve...BLD

DAY 3

KINABATANGAN WETLANDS / DUSK RIVER CRUISE

We start our day with an exclusive private visit with the founder of the Bornean Sun Bear Conservation Centre, a recovery center for the world's smallest bear species—and one of its most threatened due to deforestation, commercial hunting, and the pet trade. The center is currently home to 44 rescued orphaned or ex-captive sun bears. After lunch, we'll transfer to the Sandakan jetty and board a covered speedboat for a two-hour journey along the coast to the mouth of the 350-mile-long Kinabatangan River, and then upriver through mangrove forests and into freshwater wetlands. Our destination is the Kinabatangan Wetlands Resort, a small eco-retreat hidden away on a tributary of the main river. After settling in, we'll take a late afternoon river cruise in search of wildlife along the river's edge, which may include wild orangutans, proboscis monkeys, macaques, and riverine birds. This evening after dinner, we can take a night walk to search for nocturnal species such as mousedeer, western tarsiers, and civet cats as well as reptiles and insects. Overnight at Kinabatangan Wetlands Resort, with its wooden chalets connected by boardwalks in a jungle setting. The comfortable chalets have air conditioning, private outdoor showers, and individual balconies or large windows overlooking the forest, a nice way to spot birds, monitor lizards, wild pigs, civet cats, and more, right from your room. Overnight at Kinabatangan Wetlands Resort...BLD

Walking Details: Flat trails and wooden walkways, under 2 miles



TRIP DETAILS AT-A-GLANCE

Length:	11 days
Arrive:	Kota Kinabalu, Borneo, Malaysia
Depart:	Kota Kinabalu, Borneo, Malaysia
Lodging:	8 nights lodges, 2 nights hotel
Meals:	All meals included (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner)
Activity:	Cultural Adventures, Wildlife and Natural History
Trip Level:	1 ②+ 3 4 5 6 Easy nature walks and light hikes in a hot and humid climate, river excursions by speedboat and longboat

HIGHLIGHTS

- Walk among the free-roaming orangutans at the Sepilok feeding station
- Enjoy dawn and dusk excursions on the wildlife-rich Kinabatangan River
- Meet with conservationists in Tabin Wildlife Reserve and other locations
- Explore the Danum Valley's world-famous primary rainforest
- Stay in remote lodges with fantastic amenities as well as superb access to wildlife and natural wonders

Itinerary (cont'd)

DAY 4

KINABATANGAN WETLANDS / DAWN RIVER CRUISE / PYGMY ELEPHANTS



After early morning coffee and toast, we set off on a river cruise at dawn, an optimum time to see wildlife. On our river trip back to the lodge, we'll continue to look for wildlife along the rainforest edge, keeping an eye out for the pygmy elephants that sometimes travel through this area. Once believed to be remnants of a domesticated herd given to the Sultan of Sulu in the 17th century, Borneo's pygmy elephants were determined by DNA analysis in 2003 to be genetically distinct from other Asian elephants, and are now recognized as a likely new subspecies. These elephants are baby-faced, with oversized ears, plump bellies, and tails so long they sometimes drag on the ground as they walk. They are also more gentle-natured than their Asian elephant counterparts.

After lunch and leisure time to enjoy the tranquility of the resort, we head out again in the late afternoon for wildlife-spotting in a new section of the river. After dinner, we can take an optional night walk along the boardwalks or an evening boat ride. Overnight at Kinabatangan Wetlands Resort...BLD

Walking Details: Optional night walk on flat trails and wooden walkways, under 2 miles

DAY 5

GOMANTONG CAVES / TABIN WILDLIFE RESERVE / FOREST WALKS

We travel up river for about two hours to Sukau, stopping in at Gomantong, a colossal limestone cave system that is Malaysia's largest site for the collection of edible birds' nests. The caves are home to millions of bats and have a fascinating ecosystem. From Gomantong, we travel overland to our lodging, Tabin Wildlife Resort, set along the Lipad River. Tabin is a large and wildlife-rich reserve of second-growth lowland forest and mineral-rich mud volcanoes surrounded by palm-oil plantations. After we settle in, we head out to look for wildlife. Mammals inhabiting Tabin include flying squirrels, Asian palm civets, Malayan civets, and pig-tailed macaques. Two of the larger mammals in Sabah, the Borneo pygmy elephant and the banteng (known locally as tembadau) are found within the Tabin reserve, along with nine species of primates. Tabin is also one of Borneo's best birding areas, home to sought-after species such as the rhinoceros hornbill and the endemic blue-headed pitta. Tonight we can walk around the area looking for nocturnal creatures including various owls. Overnight at Tabin Wildlife Resort, set right inside the reserve. Guest rooms are air-conditioned and have balconies that allow us to see the sights and sounds along the river...BLD



Driving Details: approximately 4 hours, 2.5 hours on main roads and 1.5 hours on a remote road

DAY 6

TABIN WILDLIFE RESERVE / MUD VOLCANO / NIGHT WALK

We head out for a short walk to one of Tabin's "mud volcanos," a small hill of mixed mud and clay pushed to the surface by geological forces. It's essentially a salt lick for wildlife, who receive important minerals from the nutrient-rich mud. We'll learn about local flora during the walk and view the surrounding forest from the reserve's observation tower. The rest of the afternoon is free at your leisure. You can enjoy an optional mud facial treatment and an herbal foot soak at the resort, and later we'll take a dusk or evening drive to see nocturnal animals, either before or after dinner. Overnight at Tabin Wildlife Resort...

BLD

Walking Details: under 2 miles

DAY 7

DANUM VALLEY / RAINFOREST WALKS

Departing Tabin, we travel to the town of Lahad Datu and further to the remote Danum Valley, a conservation area with more than 200 square miles of virgin primary rainforest. Danum is home to extremely rare and endangered mammal species including the banteng wild cattle, clouded leopard, mousedeer, gibbon, and maroon-leaf langur. Bird life is also extensive and varied, with over 300 species recorded. Arriving at our lodge, we head out for an introductory afternoon walk with a lodge guide. The forest comes alive with night fall, and it is an ideal time to experience the jungle. This evening, we'll enjoy a nighttime walk to explore the rainforest and look for tiny mousedeers, slow loris, and bioluminescent fungi. The Borneo Rainforest Lodge is idyllically set on the banks of the Danum River. The open lodge and dining area offer an ideal spot for afternoon tea or a pre-dinner cocktail while you soak in the sights and sounds of the surrounding rainforest. Overnight at the Borneo Rainforest Lodge...BLD

Approximate Driving Time: 4 hours

Walking Details: Nature walks on mixed terrain including hills with uneven footing, 1.5-2 hours, 2 miles (longer hikes may be possible); night walk (1-2 hours)

DAY 8

DANUM VALLEY / CANOPY WALK / RAINFOREST WALK

Most of the action in a tropical rainforest happens up in the tree tops, so we'll rise early to explore on a canopy walk before breakfast. For the remainder of the morning, we'll explore the forest on foot, possibly trekking to an ancient burial site for a panoramic view over the valley. In the evening, we will set out for a night drive and search for flying squirrels and mammals hunting in the open areas along the road.

Overnight at the Borneo Rainforest Lodge...

BLD



Itinerary (cont'd)



Walking Details: 2-6 hours depending on options, 2-3 miles (may vary) of forest walking on mixed terrain with some hills; ground can be slippery and uneven. Optional midday hike to waterfall.

DAY 9

DANUM VALLEY / OPTIONAL FOREST WALKS

Spending an additional day in the Danum Valley allows us extra time for exploring the rainforest, searching for wildlife, and relaxing at the beautiful lodge in the heart of the jungle. Borneo Rainforest Lodge also has a spa where guests can experience a traditional massage (an "on your own" expense).

Overnight at the Borneo Rainforest Lodge...BLD

Walking Details: Forest walking on mixed terrain with some hills; ground can be slippery and uneven.

DAY 10

DANUM / KOTA KINABALU

This morning we enjoy our last hike with our guide searching for wildlife in the rainforest. After an early lunch, we depart on our journey to Kota Kinabalu. Upon arrival, we'll check into our hotel for our final night in Sabah. We'll share a farewell dinner, and afterwards you can explore the city's vibrant market center or relax in the lounge and soak up the views of the surrounding islands.

Overnight at hotel...BLD

Driving Details: 2.5 hour drive, 50 minute flight

DAY 11

DEPART

After breakfast, transfer to the airport for your flight home...B



Trip Cost, Payment & Insurance

TRIP COST

Prices are per person, valid through 2025

\$9,495 (11-15 members)

\$9,695 (5-10 members)

Single supplement: \$1,685

Internal airfare: \$325 (subject to change)

Please contact us for future years' pricing

To offer the lowest possible cost, our trips are priced according to the number of participants on the trip. All costs are per person, based on double occupancy. If you wish to have a single room, you must pay the single supplement fee. Please note that Wilderness Travel staff, or guests of Wilderness Travel such as travel writers, photographers, or leaders-in-training, are not included in the tier pricing count.

CURRENCY EXCHANGE RATE

Because the prices published for our program are set so far in advance of the trip dates, we are occasionally faced with exceptional cost increases and/or currency fluctuations that affect the actual cost of running the trip. In most years, no price changes are necessary. However, we do reserve the right to raise or lower the trip price if there is a significant change in costs or exchange rates. If this is the case, your final invoice will reflect the difference in trip cost.

TRIP COST INCLUDES

- Expert leadership of a Wilderness Travel Trip Leader and local guides
- Accommodations as noted
- All meals included as indicated in the Detailed Itinerary (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner)
- Land transportation, airport transfers as noted

TRIP COST DOES NOT INCLUDE

International airfare, any meals not specified after each itinerary day, international airport departure taxes, optional tipping or gratuities to leaders or staff, hotels en route to/from Malaysia and any additional hotel nights that may be necessary due to airline schedule changes or other factors, pre-trip expenses of medical immunizations (if any), emergency medical evacuation insurance (required), or passports and visas, any services not mentioned, and other expenses of a personal nature (alcoholic beverages, laundry, etc.).

PAYMENT SCHEDULE

At time of reservation: \$600

110 days prior to departure: Balance

CANCELLATION AND TRANSFER FEE SCHEDULE

Up to 111 days prior to departure: No charge!

61-110 days prior to departure: 25% of trip cost

46-60 days prior to departure: 50% of trip cost

45 days or less: 100% of trip cost

MANDATORY EMERGENCY EVACUATION INSURANCE

Please note: Insurance for emergency medical evacuation is required for this trip. Wilderness Travel offers a comprehensive Travel Protection Plan through Travelex Insurance that meets this requirement. For more details, visit our website: www.wildernesstravel.com/insurance. Alternatively, you can purchase a different policy on your own, as long as it includes emergency medical evacuation coverage of at least \$250,000 per person. You can compare various options at www.insuremytrip.com.

Lodging



HYATT CENTRIC KOTA KINABALU

Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia

Day 1 (1 night)

Day 10 (1 night),

This newly opened hotel is located in the heart of Kota Kinabalu and has spacious guest rooms with locally inspired decor and custom artwork that reflects the culture of Sabah. Each room has a private balcony with views of Signal Hill and large bathrooms including a walk-in rain shower. The hotel also has a pool, fitness center, and a nice restaurant serving fresh, locally sourced dishes.



SEPILOK NATURE RESORT

Sepilok, Malaysia

Day 2 (1 night)

The lovely lakeside Sepilok Nature Resort enjoys a prime location, surrounded by tropical rainforest and within walking distance to the Sepilok Orangutan Center. Guest chalets feature spacious rooms with comfortable beds, en suite facilities, private viewing decks, and each room has air-conditioning. Enjoy the sights and sounds of the forest from the comfort of your room, or in the open dining area overlooking the lake, and be sure to take a stroll throughout the property, which has a vast array of colorful plants including more than 150 different species of orchids.



KINABATANGAN WETLANDS RESORT

Sandakan, Malaysia

Days 3 to 4 (2 nights)

Tucked away on a tributary of the river, the pristine Kinabatangan Wetlands Resort is a fantastic stay for intrepid travelers looking for a little more comfort. We love this resort for its one-of-a-kind access (you can only get there by boat). Raised walkways throughout the resort are a great vantage point to view the surrounding jungle, and there are many opportunities to spot wildlife in the nearby river and trees.



TABIN WILDLIFE RESORT

Tabin Wildlife Reserve, Malaysia

Days 5 to 6 (2 nights)

Tabin Wildlife Resort is set right inside the Tabin Reserve itself, with 20 air-conditioned en-suite guestrooms with small verandas that are great for wildlife viewing, allowing guests to see the sights and sounds along the Lipad River. The café is a comfortable place to enjoy a meal while watching nectar-sipping birds, and you can look for otters and birdlife from a hide built near a natural pool in the Lipad River. (Note: Meals here are very simple, but the resort is the only option for places to stay in the area and it will be well worth the wildlife experience!)



BORNEO RAINFOREST LODGE

Labad Datu, Malaysia

Days 7 to 9 (3 nights)

Whether you're an avid birder, monkey and marsupial lover, or simply enjoy the peace of no TVs and cell service, the Borneo Rainforest Lodge manages to combine the best of outdoor adventure with indoor comforts. Guest rooms have high ceilings and comfortable beds, while the lounge areas give way to spectacular views so you can watch the rainforest come to life while you enjoy a meal or drink. The canopy walks are a great way to get a bird's-eye view of the property and of the nearby Danum Valley Conservation Area, with more than 100,000 acres of protected rainforest.

These are our signature accommodations for this trip. Although it is highly unlikely, we may make substitutions when necessary. To see more photos and descriptions, please visit our *Wildlife Adventures in Borneo* webpage and click on the "Lodging" tab.

Arrival & Departure

Upon confirming your trip reservation, we will send you a Welcome Packet that includes a list of documents (passport, visas, etc.) required for your trip. Please feel free to call if you would like this information before making your air arrangements.

If you have booked extra services before or after the trip, an Extra Services Confirmation will be sent with your Final Documents.

ARRIVAL & MEETING PLACE

Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia

Suggested Airport: Kota Kinabalu Int'l Airport (BKI)

Suggested Date & Time: Day 1, anytime

Meeting Place: Your Trip Leader or a WT representative will meet you outside the customs area and will be holding a Wilderness Travel sign. A transfer is provided from Kota Kinabalu Int'l Airport to the Hyatt Centric Kota Kinabalu for all trip members whenever you arrive on Day 1.

DEPARTURE

Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia

Suggested Airport: Kota Kinabalu Int'l Airport (BKI)

Suggested Date & Time: Day 11, anytime

On Day 11, a complimentary transfer will be provided from the hotel to Kota Kinabalu Int'l Airport. If you are departing on a different day and have booked your nights through Wilderness Travel, a transfer will be provided. Otherwise, a transfer can be arranged at additional cost.

INTERNATIONAL AIR TRAVEL

You are responsible for making your own arrangements for flights to and from Malaysia.

There are many online consolidators for booking travel, but for more personal help arranging air transport, you can contact Exito Travel at 970-818-8459 in the US or Canada. They are very adept at putting flight itineraries together, to even the most far-flung places. More information can be found on Exito's website at www.exitotravel.com.

Depending on your routing, it is necessary to depart from the US one day prior to Day 1 of the trip itinerary. The name on your airline ticket must match the name on your passport exactly, and your passport must be valid for at least six months after your date of return to the US.

Please do not purchase your tickets until you are confirmed on the trip. Once your tickets have been purchased, please send us a copy of your airline schedule so we can reserve your airport transfers. It is your responsibility to ensure your flight times coordinate with the arrival and departure logistics for this trip.

Trip Leader

Wilderness Travel Trip Leaders have a passion and a joy for creating an unforgettable journey. We are extremely proud of them and the incredible travel experiences they make possible. For more information, including client comments about them and which specific trips they will be leading, please visit our webpage and click on “Trip Leaders”: www.wildernesstravel.com/trip/malaysia/orangutans-danum-wildlife-rainforest



AZMIL PILLANTONG

Azmil Pillantong grew up exploring the forests of Borneo. He began his career as a guide with Borneo Rainforest Lodge, then started leading trips throughout Sabah. His knowledge of the flora and fauna of Borneo is second to none, and one of his biggest passions is birding, with a goal to see every species on the island of Borneo. Azmil’s ability to mimic bird sounds is incredible, especially his mimicking of the Bornean bristlehead!



MIKE MICHERWEN

Micherwen (also known as Mike), hails from Sabah’s west coast, where his childhood encounters with proboscis monkeys and hornbills sparked his deep fascination with Borneo’s wildlife. Early in his career, he honed his guiding skills across Sabah, including a position at a prestigious lodge in the Danum Valley. Working there not only deepened his understanding of Borneo’s rainforest ecology but also instilled in him a commitment to providing high-standard guiding services, a trait he continues to uphold with dedication and professionalism. His journey from a small village to becoming a respected guide exemplifies his perseverance, passion, and dedication to promoting the natural beauty and biodiversity of Sabah to the world. Mike is funny, passionate about botany, loves everything in the forest, and loves a good conversation!

Trip Details

WHAT THE TRIP IS LIKE

The trip is Level 2+, easy to moderate, according to our trip grading system. For your own enjoyment, we recommend you make a special effort to be in good physical condition. We’ve crafted an active expedition, with nature walks and light hikes of two to five hours on several days, in hot and humid climate, and over a variety of terrain including forest trails, cave passages, and wooden canopy walks and boardwalks. The terrain is relatively flat but the forest floor can be slippery and uneven (especially with tree roots!), and the trails in the Danum Valley include hills. We also explore Borneo’s jungles and river wetlands by speedboats

and longboats. Our explorations are timed with wildlife activity, so dawn, dusk and nighttime nature excursions are a highlight of the trip, but you will need to be prepared for long days.

WEATHER

Borneo has a typical tropical climate of high heat and humidity, with the “dry season” spanning March to October, although afternoon showers can occur year-round. Daytime temperatures are typically in the high 80s and low 90s. Inside the rainforest, humidity is at 85-90% and can make temperatures seem even warmer.

AVERAGE DAILY MAX/MIN °F												
	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Borneo	86/73	88/75	88/75	88/75	90/75	91/75	5/77	93/75	91/77	88/73	88/73	88/73
RAINFALL - INCHES												
Borneo	14.7	2.4	2.9	5.0	9.0	11.4	10.2	10.2	12.2	13.8	12.0	9.9



WILDERNESS TRAVEL HAS BEEN AWARDED:

Best Travel Specialists in the World: *Conde Nast Traveler*, 2024, 4-time winner

World's Best Tour Operators: *Travel + Leisure*, 11-time winner

Best Wildlife, Hiking & Walking Trips: *AFAR Magazine*, 3 years in a row

Best Adventure Travel Companies: *USA Today*

Trip of the Year: *Outside Magazine*, 9-time winner

50 Tours of a Lifetime: *National Geographic Traveler*, 9 years in a row

Best Adventure Travel Companies: *National Geographic Adventure*, 3-time winner

Please be advised that California has established a Travel Consumer Restitution Fund under the California Seller of Travel Law that took effect January 1, 1996. This fund is designed to protect consumers from unscrupulous practices by discount airfare ticket sellers or air charter operators. Unfortunately, this law does not cover non-California residents and, even in the case of California residents, it does not cover any foreign travel where the foreign "providers of transportation or travel services" are not in compliance with the Sellers of Travel Law (compliance being defined as registered as a Seller of Travel in California and a participant in the Travel Consumer Restitution Fund). Thus none of Wilderness Travel's tours qualify and we are required by law to advise each client that they are not covered by the California Travel Consumer Restitution Fund. California law requires sellers of travel to maintain a trust account or bond. This business has a trust account. California Seller of Travel #100769640

While as accurate as possible at the time of printing, this itinerary should be considered an approximate indication of the schedule and scope of activities and trip routing, rather than an inflexible schedule of events; it is subject to change due to circumstances beyond our control. This trip is subject to the Limitation of Liability and all the terms and conditions as detailed in the General Information section of the Wilderness Travel Catalog.

December 10, 2024 12:24 PM