

the adventuretraveller

take the road less travelled



Detailed Trip Notes

Borneo & the Rainforest World Music Festival

We think that Borneo is one of South East Asia's best-kept secrets, with incredible beauty and amazing diversity.

Our adventure begins in Sabah, a Malaysian state renowned for its abundance of flora, fauna and superb coral reefs. Our first stop is the amazing Danum Valley which hosts one of the most complex ecosystems in the world.



An express boat takes us to Sarawak – truly an adventurer's paradise. We begin with a stay in a traditional longhouse, as guests of the Iban people. Only last century these people were warring headhunters who killed their enemies with blowpipes! From here we trek along the ancient Headhunters Trail before making our way by boat into the pristine rainforests of Gunung Mulu National Park and explore the massive cave systems.

After the challenge of the trek to the Pinnacles at Mulu National Park we head to beautiful riverside city of Kuching to visit the Semmenggoh Orangutan Rehabilitation Centre. The opportunity to see these amazing creatures swinging freely in the forest is an unforgettable experience.

Our stay in Kuching will coincide with the annual Rainforest World Music Festival. The Rainforest World Music Festival is a unique festival that brings together renowned world musicians from all continents as well as indigenous musicians from the interiors of the mythical island of Borneo, all performing on the same stage in a not to be missed musical spectacular. You will have the opportunity to participate in informative workshops, lectures and jam sessions and enjoy the evening performances in the midst of the lush jungle.

Day 1

Saturday, 27 June 2009

Kota Kinabalu

Your trip begins today at the airport in Kota Kinabalu. You are met by a representative of Gecko's and transferred to the hotel. There are no activities planned today so we encourage you to venture out and explore Kota Kinabalu. Make sure you are back at the hotel for your pre-departure briefing this evening.

Please note that if you would like to arrive in Kota Kinabalu a few days early to climb Mt Kinabalu – the highest mountain in South-East Asia at 4095 metres – please let your travel agent know as this trek can be arranged for you as an add-on if you book well in advance. (minimum 4 people required).

Day 2

Sunday, 28 June 2009

Kota Kinabalu

Drive north passing-by scenic paddy fields, rubber plantations and native houses with majestic Mount Kinabalu as the background. Arrive at Kota Belud, the rice bowl of Sabah. Try your bargaining skills at the open market and observe the natives engaging in trade. Chickens, goats, ducks, fish and crabs are sold side by side with handicraft and foodstuff. Drive south to Mengkabong water village, home to the Bajau fishermen whose houses are built on stilts over the water. Explore the village on foot to feel the authentic lifestyle of fishermen before we return to Kota Kinabalu.

Day 3

Monday, 29 June 2009

Danum Valley

Transfer to airport for early morning flight to Lahad Datu. Arrive Lahad Datu Airport, drive 83km from Lahad Datu airport to Danum Valley through selectively logged forest, cocoa and soft-wood plantations before arriving at the Borneo Rainforest Lodge beside Danum River on the edge of 438 sq. km of undisturbed lowland rainforest. The Lodge is home to the full range of Sabah's lowland fauna, including the rare Sumatran Rhinoceros, Elephants, Clouded Leopards, and Orang Utans. So far some 275 species of birds have been recorded in the area. Explore nature trail and nearby river. In the evening a slide show and if weather permits one can go spotlighting to view some of the nocturnal animals. Overnight at Borneo Rainforest Lodge.

Day 4

Tuesday, 30 June 2009

Danum Valley

Early morning bird walk before breakfast. Spend the whole day exploring the forest for birds and mammals, leading up to an escarpment with ancient burial coffins. Trek to a waterfall for a dip in refreshing rock pools. Return to lodge for lunch. In the afternoon, walk through trails leading to canopy walkway. Overnight at a Rainforest Lodge.

Day 5

Wednesday, 1 July 2009

Kota Kinabalu

Morning trek in search of mammals and birds. Return to the Centre before departing for Lahad Datu. Take the late afternoon flight back to Kota Kinabalu.

Day 6

Thursday, 2 July 2009

Kota Kinabalu

Spend a day of sun, sea and sand on an offshore coral island. Transfer to the jetty in the morning for a 20 minute boat journey to Manukan Island for a day of relaxation and exploring jungle trails on your own. Snorkel in crystal clear water among coral reefs and rainbow-coloured fishes before returning at mid-afternoon. Snorkeling gear available for hire at a surcharge.

Day 7

Friday, 3 July 2009

Limbang

We board an express boat and make our way to the island of Labuan, where we change to another boat bound for Limbang. Labuan was a place of much activity during World War II, but today it is a place full of modern shops. The boat schedules can vary - sometimes we have a bit of time to walk around, but other times there is only enough time to transfer from one boat to another. Each journey takes between one-and-a-half and two hours. Limbang is in Sarawak, sandwiched between the two parts of Brunei, and is where we spend our last night in a town before heading into the forested Mulu region. It is possible to send some of your heavy luggage (up to 18 kilograms) onwards instead of carrying everything on the Headhunters Trail trek and in Mulu National Park; however, there is a fee of RM35 (US\$9.30) payable for this cargo service with the airlines

Day 8

Saturday, 4 July 2009

Longboat

We travel overland to Medamit, where we continue our journey by longtail boat to our overnight accommodation in a traditional longhouse. Here, we spend a night as guests of our Iban hosts. Please don't expect any comforts and be prepared for the fact that the living conditions in the longhouse are extremely basic - this night is designed to give you a first-hand taste of how the Iban people live and also provide an insight into their unique customs. We will be sleeping on the ground, on simple mats and it is highly recommended that you bring your own sleeping sheet. The Iban are generally very reserved people unless, of course, they get on to their home-brewed rice wine!

Day 9

Sunday, 5 July 2009

Trekking - Camp 5

This morning we farewell our Iban friends and continue our journey on foot. Our trek takes us through a section of lowland forest, known as the Headhunters Trail. This trail was originally used by Kayan warriors, who made their way through the jungle to invade the people of the Limbang region. Although the path is well used by locals, few tourists get the opportunity to experience it. Following this route, we make our way to the Melinau Gorge and to Camp 5, where we stay overnight on the floor in very basic jungle hut accommodation. It is possible to hire simple mats to sleep on.



Day 10

Monday, 6 July 2009

Mulu National Park

The Pinnacles at Mulu National Park are a collection of 45 metre high limestone pinnacles that cling to the side of Fire Mountain. The Pinnacles Summit Trek is one of the most popular treks in the park. But be warned, the trek is a tough and challenging one. The trail is 2.4 km in length but rises some 1,200 metres. Vegetations vary following the changes of altitudes. The varieties of wild orchids and pitcher plants scarcely seen elsewhere can be spotted along the trek before reaching the Pinnacles. The last section of the trail is near vertical, with rope sections and 15 aluminium ladders strategically positioned to help with the climb. The vegetation is sparse although orchids, rhododendrons and pitcher plants thrive in the area, and can be seen at the side of the trail. The viewpoint area is made up of a number of pinnacles, rocks and vegetation and has excellent views of the silver-grey forest of stone that rises up from the surrounding vegetation. Be sure to pack some energy boosting snacks for the climb!

Day 11 - 12

Tuesday, 7 July – Wednesday, 8 July 2009

Mulu National Park

Given the spectacular nature of the park and its biological significance, it was not surprising that Mulu was successfully listed as a World Heritage site in November 2000. Mulu National Park, (52,000 Ha) encompasses incredible caves and karst formations in a mountainous equatorial rainforest setting. Emphasis is also placed on promoting an awareness of the park's significance and its environment through activities that foster an understanding and appreciation of the parks values. There are over 3500 species of plants recorded in the park and a large diversity of fauna species that include deer, monkeys, porcupine and hornbills. Over the next two days, we enjoy the natural wonder of Mulu National Park.

Day 13

Thursday, 9 July 2009

Kuching

Today we fly to Miri, then transfer to another flight for Kuching, one of the most attractive cities in South East Asia. We have ample time to explore this picturesque city and there is much to see. Fort Margherita was built by Charles Brooke in 1879 and sits on a hill opposite the waterfront – the perfect location to guard Kuching against pirates! The Istana is a shingle roofed white palace built by Charles Brook in 1870. Used during the Japanese occupation to house prisoners, it is today the residence of the Governor of Sarawak. You may also wish to visit the famous Sarawak Museum, one of the best in South East Asia, as well as take a relaxing stroll along the waterfront.

Day 14

Friday, 10 July 2009

Kuching & the Rainforest World Music Festival

***** Your 3-day ticket to the Rainforest World Music Festival must be purchased online prior to departure and is not included in the cost of the tour. Tickets are approx \$120 AUD**
<http://www.rainforestmusic-borneo.com/> ***

This morning we visit the Semonggoh Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre, outside Kuching, where we have the chance to spot some orang-utans, which are being rehabilitated for re-introduction back into the wild.

You will be transferred to the Rainforest World Music Festival site just after lunch. This is a unique annual festival that brings together renowned world musicians from all continents as well as indigenous musicians from the interiors of the mythical island of Borneo. Its formula of afternoon informative workshops, ethno-musical lectures, jam sessions and mini concerts, followed by evening performances on the main stage has proven to be a hit with the audience, who come from near and far. Held in a beautiful rainforest setting at the foot of Mt Santubong, the Rainforest World Music Festival is a not to be missed event in the jungles of Borneo. A return transfer back to the hotel will provided late this evening, at the conclusion of Day 1 of the festival.



Day 15 - 16

Saturday, 11 July – Sunday 12 July Kuching & the Rainforest World Music Festival

Over the next two days you have the mornings at your own leisure to explore Kuching and its' wonderful markets or to get a traditional hand-tapped Iban tattoo before being transferred to the Rainforest World Music Festival after lunch to enjoy some more of the entertainment which is on offer in the rainforest. A return transfer back to the hotel is also provided at the conclusion of the festival each night.

Day 17

Monday, 13 July 2009 Matang Wildlife Centre

This morning we have the unique opportunity for a behind the scenes tour of Matang Wildlife Centre. Located about 45 minutes drive from Kuching, the Matang Wildlife Centre houses endangered animals in large enclosed areas of rainforest. The main attraction is the Orang Utan training programme, where young Orang Utans, who were either orphaned or rescued from captivity, are taught how to survive in the wild. As well as the Orang Utans, the centre includes spacious enclosures housing sambar deer, crocodiles, sun bears, civets and bear cats, and three large aviaries featuring hornbills, sea eagles and a host of other birds native to Sarawak. We return to Kuching where the afternoon is at leisure to do some last minute shopping.



Day 18

Tuesday, 14 July 2009

The tour ends after breakfast at which time you will check out of the hotel and transfer to Kuching Airport for your onward flight.

About Gecko's

Gecko's is designed for younger travellers, on a budget, who want the freedom and flexibility of independent travel, with the safety and fun of a small group. You travel with a highly-trained local tour leader, who was raised in the region and can show you a side of their homeland that other travellers miss out on. We visit the 'must see' sights, and on many trips we venture off the beaten track for some unforgettably unique and unusual experiences. Gecko's trips are great fun, highly interactive and designed to immerse you in the culture of the place you're visiting.

Trip grade

Active

These trips involve some activity and occasional hard travelling days. Accommodation can sometimes be quite basic. Physical preparation is important and a flexible, open-minded approach is essential. On treks you may be hiking up to six hours a day through steep terrain, sometimes at altitude, and a good level of physical fitness is required.

Fitness

Please note that the Pinnacles climb requires a good level of fitness, and we recommend that you build up your walking stamina before departure. Specialist equipment is not required, however you must have comfortable, strong shoes with good grip and be prepared for a steep climb. The final section involves climbing steep exposed rock - if the weather is wet or your tour leader feels your fitness is not sufficient you will not be allowed to summit.

Included

An experienced local leader, and there will be the services of local guides at some sites plus an Adventure Traveller escort. All transportation, accommodation, sightseeing 3-day Rainforest World Music Festival ticket* and meals as indicated.

Not included

International and internal domestic flights, departure and airport taxes, 3-day World Rainforest Music Festival Ticket visas, all other meals, all optional tours or activities during free time, transfers outside of the tour program, travel insurance, tips and items of a personal nature.

****IMPORTANT**** The 3-day tickets to the Rainforest World Music Festival are **subject to availability and a surcharge could apply**. Please visit <http://www.rainforestmusic-borneo.com/> for more information.

Meals

Allow US\$270 for additional meals. On tour we generally do not include all meals, as this gives you the flexibility to go out and make your own choices as far as what to eat and where to go and eat. This flexibility reflects the very nature of Gecko's tours. Your tour leader will always be on hand to offer recommendations and, in many cases, organise group meals that introduce you to the local specialities. These meals are optional. Please note that many places we visit on this tour are fairly remote and choices for vegetarians will be quite limited.

Transport

bus, longboat, on foot, plane

Single travellers

Most of our travellers are single and like the thought of travelling with a few like-minded souls. As part of Gecko's core philosophy, we do not charge a single supplement. You'll probably be sharing your accommodation with a travelling companion of the same gender, but even if you do get your own room, you won't be charged extra, unless the tour has a minimum of one person. Because many of our travellers come on their own, your tour will probably have a strong social element and you'll almost certainly come home with some great new friends.

Travelling responsibly

At Gecko's, we take our global responsibilities seriously. After all, we are passionate about the places we visit and want to help preserve them.

Gecko's Community Trust

The Gecko's Community Trust, a division of Peregrine Adventures, provides funds for local community projects and initiatives that promote responsible and sustainable tourism development in the destinations in which we operate. First and foremost, but not exclusively, the Trust supports projects and initiatives that advance education and employment within the tourism and hospitality industry. The Trust operates on a not-for-profit basis, with funds donated by Gecko's, our staff and our travellers, with every cent going to the nominated projects.

By donating to one on the projects supported by The Gecko's Community Trust you will help promote responsible and sustainable tourism and make a positive difference for communities and travellers right now, and for the future. For online donations go to: www.geckosadventures.com/trust

Detailed country and trip information

For information about the countries that this trip travels to, refer to the relevant Country Notes online at www.geckosadventures.com.

With your booking confirmation, you will be sent a detailed pre-departure pack which will contain information on visas, medical issues, what to pack, money matters, vaccinations and other important trip specific information.

About these trip notes

The information provided here is given in good faith and has been compiled with all reasonable care. However, things change and some of the information may become out of date. Please keep this in mind when you read it and check with us if you want to be sure about something. If you have any queries, please contact The Adventure Traveller for more information. We are here to help you! PH 1800 121 020 or visit www.theadventuretraveller.com