

Ultimate Borneo Wildlife Experience

Pioneer Expeditions
15 Days/14 Nights



Features:

- 3 nights deep in Deramakot
- Dawn safaris & night spotlighting
- Sun bears, orangutans & elephants
- 130-million-year-old rainforest
- Beach resort finale

Overview:

Fourteen nights through Sabah's most biodiverse landscapes — from the remote Deramakot Forest Reserve and the Kinabatangan's wildlife-rich riverbanks to the ancient rainforest of Danum Valley. Encounters with orangutans, pygmy elephants, and clouded leopards await, before a restorative finale on the shores of the South China Sea.

Trip Outline

Day 1	Arrival - Kota Kinabalu	Day 9	Kinabatangan - Danum Valley
Day 2	Kota Kinabalu - Kinabalu Park - Ranau	Day 10	Danum Valley
Day 3	Ranau - Deramakot	Day 11	Danum Valley
Day 4	Deramakot	Day 12	Danum Valley - Kota Kinabalu
Day 5	Deramakot	Day 13	Kota Kinabalu
Day 6	Deramakot - Sepilok	Day 14	Kota Kinabalu
Day 7	Sepilok - Kinabatangan	Day 15	Departure
Day 8	Kinabatangan		

Day 1: Arrival - Kota Kinabalu

-/-/-

On arrival at Kota Kinabalu International Airport, a driver is on hand for the transfer to the hotel. The remainder of the day is at leisure to explore the waterfront, heritage shophouses and local food options within easy reach of the hotel.

In case you cannot find your guide, please call our 24-hour Customer Care number +6 013-8819332.

Overnight in Kota Kinabalu

Day 2: Kota Kinabalu - Ranau

B/L/-

Departing at 07:30, the drive heads into the Sabah interior, climbing steadily from the coastal plains through patchwork paddy fields and traditional kampung villages. The landscape changes as you ascend into the cool, refreshing Crocker Range highlands.

The first stop is Kinabalu National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage site. A guided walk with a local naturalist winds through the rich montane forest at the foot of Southeast Asia's highest peak. Your guide will reveal the diverse flora and endemic plant species that thrive at this elevation, while striking views of Mount Kinabalu's jagged summit punctuate the walk.

From the park, the journey continues down toward the lowlands of Poring Hot Springs. Here, natural Japanese-style thermal pools offer a refreshing soak set against a lush, forested backdrop. A short, scenic walk leads to Kipungit Waterfall, where the cascade flows into a clear plunge pool below. After working up an appetite, enjoy a relaxing lunch nearby.

After lunch, the route heads to the Sabah Tea Plantation, one of the last certified organic tea estates in Malaysia. A guided walk through the terraced farmland reveals the careful cultivation and hand-harvesting techniques that define quality tea production.

To wrap up the day, visit the onsite restaurant. Perched above the valley, it commands sweeping views across the layered hillsides, an ideal spot to sample the estate's own brews before the return drive to the hotel for a late afternoon check-in.

Note:

Sabah Tea Factory is closed on Sundays and public holidays. The Poring canopy walkway is temporarily closed for maintenance.

Overnight in Ranau

Distances and journey time:

Kota Kinabalu - Kinabalu Park (89 km): Approx. 2 hours

Kinabalu Park - Poring Hot Spring (38 km): 1 hour

Poring Hot Spring - Sabah Tea Plantation (20 km): Approx. 30 mins (v.v)

Day 3: Ranau - Deramakot

B/-/D

At 08:00, depart the accommodation in Ranau for the transfer to Telupid. This overland journey typically takes between four and five hours, concluding in Telupid town where time is allocated for lunch at a local establishment (own expense).

The expedition continues at 14:00, departing Telupid by 4WD for the final two-hour leg into the forest. Navigating a mix of paved and gravel surfaces, the route passes through vast oil palm estates before reaching the gates of the Deramakot Forest Reserve. This remote biodiversity hotspot serves as a pristine sanctuary for Sabah's most remarkable flora and fauna.

After checking in and receiving an introductory briefing on the lodge and its facilities, set out for the first wildlife drive through the reserve.

Deramakot is renowned for its exceptional density of endemic and rare species, housing thousands of flowering plants and over 3,000 tree varieties. This vast ecosystem supports roughly 420 bird species and 221 terrestrial mammals, including iconic residents like the Bornean orangutan, pygmy elephant, and the elusive clouded leopard. Beyond wildlife encounters, the experience provides insight into the sophisticated management of a world-class sustainable commercial forest reserve.

Overnight in Deramakot

Distances and journey time:

Ranau - Deramakot (175 km): Approx. 5 hours 30 mins

Day 4-5: Deramakot

B/L/D

The day begins at 05:00 with a pre-dawn 4WD safari, navigating the reserve's trail network in search of active wildlife. Listen for the morning chorus of Bornean gibbons as the forest awakens before returning to the lodge for breakfast and a subsequent guided jungle walk.

A relaxing lunch is served back at the lodge, then enjoy a leisurely afternoon before the activities to follow.

Free time between activities can be spent exploring the surrounding jungle trails. These paths offer excellent opportunities for spotting orangutans, gibbons, and a diverse range of birdlife within the immediate grounds.

In the late afternoon, depart for another dusk wildlife drive, keeping a close watch for various species before returning for dinner.

Following dinner, embark on a night safari by 4WD to seek out nocturnal residents. Deramakot is renowned for its diverse fauna, including the elusive clouded leopard. After roughly two hours of spotlighting through the forest, return to the lodge for the night.

Overnight in Deramakot

Day 6: Deramakot - Sepilok

B/-/-

Following breakfast, depart Deramakot at approximately 09:00 for the overland journey to Sandakan, arriving at the lodge set within the Kabili-Sepilok Forest Reserve as the light begins to soften through the rainforest canopy.

Overnight in Sepilok

Distances and journey time:

Deramakot - Sepilok (167 km): Approx. 4 hours 45 mins

Day 7: Sepilok - Kinabatangan

B/-/D

A guide and driver will collect at 08:45 (City Hotel: 08:15 pick up) for the short transfer to the Sepilok Orangutan Rehabilitation Centre. A short introductory film sets the scene for the conservation work underway before a ten-minute walk along raised wooden boardwalks leads to the feeding platform at 10:00, where rehabilitated orangutans descend from the canopy with ease. The nursery area, where young orangutans develop climbing and socialising skills on specially constructed structures, provides a quieter and equally compelling view of the programme.

From Sepilok, a visit to the Borneo Sun Bear Conservation Centre introduces the world's smallest bear species, with 36 rescued individuals currently housed across large sections of natural forest enclosed for rehabilitation. The opportunity to adopt a bear to support the programme is available at guests' own expense.

At 11:00, a private air-conditioned minivan transfers to Sandakan Jetty for a two-hour boat journey up the Kinabatangan River — one of the most biodiverse waterways in Borneo. Local villages and stretches of lush riverine forest line the banks, with wildlife sightings possible en route.

Lunch and check-in at the lodge are followed by an afternoon briefing from the local guide. At 16:30, a riverboat cruise sets out along the Lower Kinabatangan in search of proboscis monkeys, pygmy elephants, hornbills, gibbons, and a wide variety of bird species. Return to the lodge for dinner, with a night boardwalk stroll available afterwards for those keen to look for nocturnal insects and animals.

Overnight in Kinabatangan

Distances and journey time:

Kabili-Sepilok Forest Reserve - Sepilok Orangutan Rehabilitation Centre (16 km): 18 mins

Borneon Sun Bear Conservation Centre & Sepilok Orangutan Rehabilitation Centre - Sandakan Jetty (28 km): 42 mins

Sandakan Jetty to Kinabatangan Wetlands Resort by boat (Join in Basis): 2hrs

Cruise times: PM – 16:00

Cruise duration will depend on wildlife spotting: approx. 2 hours

Day 8: Kinabatangan

B/L/D

A 06:30 morning cruise heads to Kelenanap Oxbow Lake — a crescent-shaped lake formed where a river meander cut itself off from the main channel over time. The stillness and relative seclusion of the lake

support a distinct ecosystem of its own, with bird species and plant life that differ markedly from those of the main river.

The afternoon returns to the river at 16:30 for a second cruise along the mangrove-lined banks, with the late afternoon light well-suited to wildlife photography. Proboscis monkeys, silver leaf monkeys, hornbills, and a variety of water birds are typically active at this hour. On clear evenings, firefly colonies illuminate certain stretches of the riverbank. Return to the lodge for dinner.

After dinner, a night river safari at 20:30 ventures out in search of target nocturnal species before returning to the lodge.

Optional Activity:

Take 45 minutes on a river boat to **Kulamba Field Centre**. We go straight to the conservation area village of the native “Orang Sungai” people and take part in a **tree-planting project**. Conservation efforts such as these are a great way of helping to preserve the natural environment and support the local community.

After the Tree Planting area, proceed to explore the **Kulamba Field Centre Observation Tower** area, make sure you bring along your binoculars, and look for any tree moving!! There may be wild orangutans! Silver leaf monkeys, birds and many others!

A Light Tea will be served by the Orang Kg at **Tundun Bohangin Resthouse**. Interact with local Orang Sungai from the river people and observe the daily activities such as catching crabs and prawns.

(If weather permits and depends on sea tide) We proceed with clamshell digging at Sandy beaches, which are the most commonly sought locations for digging clams. These are being done by the use of a clam rake, which will reveal the shells from the sand after pulling it. The clams found here are well adapted to surviving the pounding surf and low-tide exposures. Cruise back for 45 minutes to Kinabatangan Wetlands Resort.

Lunch will be served at the resort.

Overnight in Kinabatangan

Distances and journey time:

Cruise times: AM – 06:30, PM – 16:00, EVE – 20:00 (Join-in Basis)

Cruise duration will depend on wildlife spotting: approx. 2 hours

Day 9: Kinabatangan - Danum Valley

B/L/D

Enjoy an early breakfast before an early boat transfer out. At 07:00, a boat transfer departs the lodge for Sukau Lepit Jetty, where the journey continues by road toward Lahad Datu.

The expedition proceeds with a private transfer into the pristine virgin rainforest of Danum Valley—one of the world's most sophisticated and complex ecosystems. The initial 30 km traverse paved surfaces,

while the final 60 km leg follows a gravel route, providing a rugged yet fascinating introduction to the deep interior.

Upon arrival at the Borneo Rainforest Lodge around 12:00, check in and prepare for an orientation to the day's nature programme. This introduction includes guided explorations of the trail network and the Canopy Walkway—spanning 360m at a height of 27m—suspended within a 130-million-year-old forest canopy that is literally humming with life.

Following dinner, board an electric buggy for a night safari through the reserve. Guided by a local naturalist with a spotlight, seek out nocturnal residents ranging from sambar deer and civets to elusive leopards and a diverse array of evening insects and frogs.

Afterwards, return to the lodge for the night.

Overnight in Danum Valley

Distances and journey time:

Sandakan Jetty to Kinabatangan Wetlands Resort by boat (Join-in Basis): 2 hours

Sandakan Jetty - Danum Valley (km):

Day 10: Danum Valley

B/L/D

Set out on a morning expedition toward Fairy Pools and Merchant Pools. These cascading waters provide an ideal setting for a cooling swim and quiet reflection before heading back to the lodge for a well-earned lunch.

The afternoon remains at leisure, offering an opportunity to unwind amidst the lush forest backdrop or further explore the intricate network of nature trails surrounding the resort.

Overnight in Danum Valley

Day 11: Danum Valley

B/L/D

The forest awakens with a morning chorus of birds and primates. Setting out with a packed breakfast, follow the 2.6km Viewpoint Trail toward the ancient Kadazandusun burial grounds at "Coffin Cliff." From the summit, take in the expansive vista across a 130-million-year-old jungle canopy before returning via the cascading waterfalls.

Return to the lodge for lunch.

Enjoy a relaxed afternoon at leisure. Optional activities such as river tubing or private guided treks can be arranged locally, while the nature trails surrounding the Canopy Walkway remain open for independent exploration.

After sunset, join a naturalist for a guided night walk through the reserve. This quiet excursion into the interior reveals the diverse nocturnal residents and remarkable variety of insect life that emerges under the cover of darkness.

Overnight in Danum Valley

Day 12: Danum Valley – Kota Kinabalu

B/-/D

Recommended flight: MY 3015 LDU - BKL at 14:00 (Air Borneo)

A final morning walk along the nature boardwalk offers a concluding glimpse of the habitat before preparing for checkout and the journey ahead.

Following breakfast at the lodge, depart at 09:00 for the transfer back toward Lahad Datu. The expedition continues to the airport for the domestic flight to Kota Kinabalu.

Upon arrival in Kota Kinabalu, a driver is on hand for the transfer to the jetty, where a short boat crossing leads to an island beach resort—an easy, unhurried change of pace after the previous days spent in the Borneo interior.

Overnight in Kota Kinabalu

Distances and journey time:

Transfer Borneo Rainforest Lodge to Lahad Datu by 4WD (100KM): 3hrs (bumpy unsealed road)

Day 12-14: Kota Kinabalu

B/-/-

Three full days at leisure at the beachfront resort. The white sands of the beach slope gently into clear waters, while the resort pool and coastal scenery provide ample opportunity for rest and reflection after the previous days of activity. Additional water and beach activities are available to book locally at a supplement.

Overnight in Kota Kinabalu

Day 15: Departure

B/-/-

Following breakfast at the hotel, the morning remains at leisure until check-out. At the designated time, a driver is on hand for the transfer to the airport for onward departure flights.

Rates & conditions

Accommodation			
City	Hotel	Hotel Category	Room Type
Kota Kinabalu	Hyatt Centric	5-star	Standard City View with ABF
Ranau	Poring Hot Springs Nature Lodge	3-star	Jungle Lodge with ABF
Sandakan	Sepilok Nature Resort	3-star	Chalet with ABF
Kinabatangan River	Kinabatangan Wetlands Resort	3-star	Deluxe Chalet with F/Board
Danum Valley	Borneo Rainforest Lodge	4-star	Deluxe Chalet with F/Board
Kota Kinabalu	Shangri La Rasa Ria Resort	5-star	Ocean Wing Junior Suite Seaview Room with ABF
Optional Tours			
Day	Activity	MYR / Pax	
Day 12 – Kinabatangan	Tree Planting at Kulamba Field Centre	400	

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Notes:

Fitness Level

Jungle treks throughout this itinerary involve uneven terrain, dense vegetation, and occasionally steep

or slippery trails in hot and humid conditions. Some sections require walking for several hours. Fitness levels vary across family members; it is recommended to discuss trail options with the guide on the day and select routes suited to the group. Wear appropriate footwear, carry sufficient water, and apply insect repellent throughout.

Wildlife Spotting

Wildlife spotting is not guaranteed at any point during this itinerary. Sightings depend on seasonal patterns, weather conditions, and animal behaviour. At the Sepilok Orangutan Rehabilitation Centre, orangutans are free-ranging and may not appear at feeding platforms during fruiting season (approximately April–August), when natural food is abundant in the forest. Any wildlife encounter should be considered a privilege rather than a certainty.

Guide Requirements Malaysian legislation requires a licensed guide for groups of 7 or more participants at Kinabalu National Park and Kinabatangan Wetlands Resort.

Transfers — Kinabatangan Scheduled boat transfers operate between 07:00 and 23:00. Transfers between 23:00 and 07:00 are subject to a midnight surcharge. Private boat transfers are available on request at a supplement.

Additional Kinabatangan Cruises A join-in night cruise supplement of RM 145 per person applies (minimum 2 pax). Private cruise supplement of RM 330 per boat per cruise.

Seasonal Surcharges Seasonal surcharges and blackout dates may apply. Specific dates will be confirmed at the quotation stage.

Weather and Activity Organisation Activities throughout this itinerary are subject to weather conditions and departure times, and may be reorganised to best meet operational requirements.

Special Requirements Please inform your Travel Consultant of any special dietary requirements or physical conditions of travelling clients, including children.

Suggested items to bring:

- Lightweight and breathable clothing that is quick drying
- Good walking shoes
- Waterproof raincoat (BRL provides umbrellas but a waterproof jacket is advisable to carry on all the activities)
- Leech Socks (or can be bought at the Gift Shop at Borneo Rainforest Lodge)
- Hat to protect from the sun
- Insect repellent
- Sun block
- Headlamp or torchlight
- Birds of Borneo and Mammals of Borneo books
- Poncho / Raincoat

Our services include:

- Accommodation in shared twin or double room as selected

- Meals as indicated (B = Breakfast, L = Lunch, D = Dinner)
- English-speaking naturalist guide on a join-in basis throughout
- All transfers as per itinerary (join-in basis unless otherwise stated)
- Domestic flights as recommended: LDU-BKI
- Guided orangutan feeding visit at Sepilok Orangutan Rehabilitation Centre
- Guided visit to Borneo Sun Bear Conservation Centre
- River cruises on the Kinabatangan as per itinerary (join-in basis)
- Activities as per itinerary

Our services do not include:

- International flights
- Meals not mentioned in the itinerary
- Laundry, telephone calls, and personal expenditure
- Gratuities and tips
- Travel insurance (must include helicopter evacuation coverage for Borneo)
- Visa for Malaysia
- Tourism Tax (RM 10.00 per room per night)
- Camera fees where applicable
- Beverages unless included with meals
- Optional activities and supplements (additional Kinabatangan cruises, canopy walkway, bear adoption at BSBCC)
- Single supplement (applicable for solo travellers)
- Early check-in or late check-out fees