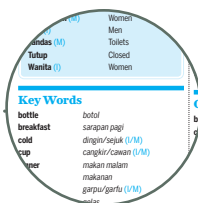
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**Look out for these icons:**

Our author's recommendation



A green or sustainable option



No payment required

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# Top Experiences >



## Kinabatangan Safaris

River banks teeming with animals (p103)

## Poring Hot Springs

Scalding and soothing (p85)

## Danum Valley

Primeval jungle, pygmy elephants, orangutans (p110)

## Derawan & the Sangalaki Archipelago

Beautiful islands (p276 & p273)

## Kelabit Highlands

Cool air, smiles, great trekking (p213)

## Pegunungan Meratus

Forested peaks, misty rivers (p257)

# itineraries



One Week

## Kuching Excursions

Spending your first day in **Kuching** picking up the vibe of the city's kaleidoscopic mix of cultures and cuisines. Explore the shophouses of **Chinatown**, ride a tiny passenger ferry to the English Renaissance-style **Fort Margherita**, and take a sunset stroll along the **Waterfront Promenade**. If it's Saturday, head to the **Weekend Market** in the afternoon; if it's Sunday, visit in the morning. And if a giant **Rafflesia flower** happens to be in bloom in **Gunung Gading National Park**, drop everything and rush over before it rots; on the way back explore the **Wind Cave** and the **Fairy Cave**. On other days, combine a daytime excursion with an evening enjoying Kuching's fine eateries and chic but laid-back nightlife. Spend a half-day spotting orangutans at **Semenggoh Nature Reserve**, then drive further inland to the longhouse of **Annah Rais**, where you can stay overnight. Take a boat to **Bako National Park**, keeping an eye out for proboscis monkeys, macaques and pitcher plants as you hike around the peninsula, or spend the sunset hour cruising around **Kuching Wetlands National Park**, alert for fireflies, crocs and proboscis monkeys.



20 Days

## Around Sabah

Arrive in **Kota Kinabalu (KK)** and give yourself two days to pre-book accommodation in places like Sungai Kinabatangan, the Semporna Archipelago (if you plan on diving) and Mt Kinabalu – accommodation at the latter should ideally be booked before you get to Sabah. Whilst in KK, make sure to eat at the **Night Market**, take a trip to the **Mari Mari Cultural Village**, **Sabah Museum** and **Lok Kawi Wildlife Park** – you can get a taste of the cultures, landscapes and animal life you're about to encounter first hand! Party on the KK waterfront your first night in town, but try to keep your head clear the morning you leave Sabah's capital.

If you decide to climb **Mt Kinabalu**, it's easiest to leave from KK. You'll need to budget in two or three days for the mountain – there's the climb itself, and the day of rest you'll need afterwards! Whether you climb the highest mountain in Borneo or not, give yourself a few days to explore northwest Sabah. In **Tuaran**, you can see the lovely Penambawan water village, while in **Kota Belud** you can relax at Mañana Guest House and see, if you time things right, the famous Sunday *tamu* (market). Heading north are the hidden beaches of **Kudat**, and offshore, the isolated, off-the-tourist-trail islands of **Pulau Mantanani** (easier to get to from Kota Belud) and **Pulau Banggi**. This area is great for home stays.

Now a little over a week into your trip, head east to **Sepilok** and its famous orangutan sanctuary. After watching our arboreal cousins get fed in a wildlife reserve, try to spot them in the wild during a river cruise down the **Sungai Kinabatangan**. There are great lodges and home stays out this way. Relaxing in these two spots could easily fill four days to a week. Now decide – do you want to finish by diving in the **Semporna Archipelago**? Trekking in the **Danum Valley**, or the **Maliau Basin**? All of the above are possible, but to be practical and give these destinations the time they deserve, budget in five days for each. If you want to both dive and do the Danum or Maliau, cut out the days allotted for exploring northwest Sabah above.



Two Weeks

## Kuching to Brunei

After exploring **Kuching** and nearby nature sites for a few days, hop on the express ferry to **Sibu**, a mostly Chinese river port that's long been the gateway to the mighty **Batang Rejang** (Rejang River), 'Borneo's Amazon'. Board an early-morning 'flying coffin' (express boat) upriver to **Kapit**, a bustling trading centre dating back to the days of the White Rajas. If the water is high enough, continue on to back-of-the-beyond **Belaga**, not far from several Orang Ulu **longhouses**. A bone-jarring 4WD will get you down to the coastal city of **Bintulu**; spend a day or two chilling out on the trails and beaches of oft-overlooked **Similajau National Park**. Then hop a bus to **Batu Niah Junction**, a short ride from the vast caves, bat colonies and prehistoric archaeology of **Niah Caves National Park**. Next stop is the petroleum city of **Miri**, now developing a guest-house scene to complement its lively dining options. After a day or two, take the daily bus – or the newspaper van – to **Bandar Seri Begawan**, the surprisingly laid-back capital of the tiny, oil-rich sultanate of Brunei. Finally, travel by speedboat, car and then longboat to the pristine jungles of **Ulu Temburong National Park**.



Three Weeks

## Around Kalimantan

➤ Fly to the town of **Pangkalan Bun** and then head upriver to **Camp Leaky** in **Tanjung Puting National Park** – this is the best place in the world to see semi-wild orangutans.

From there fly or bus it to **Banjarmasin**, a must for experiencing local river culture, including atmospheric floating markets. Nearby are the majestic **Meratus Mountains** – the area is perfect for trekking, river rafting and Dayak home stays surrounded by some of the best scenery in Borneo. Head north from Banjarmasin to oil-rich **Balikpapan** or straight on to **Samarinda**, the gateway city to the **Mahakam River**, ideal for the adventurer seeking out their own *Heart of Darkness* odyssey rich in shamans, longhouses and wildlife. From Samarinda, bus it to **Kutai National Park** to trek among wild orangutans, sun bears, monitor lizards, giant squirrels and 250 bird species, then return to Samarinda and fly straight to **Berau**, springboard for the beautiful coral-fringed desert island of **Pulau Derawan**, famed for its scuba diving, and the **Sangalaki Archipelago**.



## OUR STORY

A beat-up old car, a few dollars in the pocket and a sense of adventure. In 1972 that's all Tony and Maureen Wheeler needed for the trip of a lifetime – across Europe and Asia overland to Australia. It took several months, and at the end – broke but inspired – they sat at their kitchen table writing and stapling together their first travel guide, *Across Asia on the Cheap*. Within a week they'd sold 1500 copies. Lonely Planet was born.

Today, Lonely Planet has offices in Melbourne, London and Oakland, with more than 600 staff and writers. We share Tony's belief that 'a great guidebook should do three things: inform, educate and amuse'.

## OUR WRITERS



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### Published by Lonely Planet Publications Pty Ltd

ABN 36 005 607 983

2nd edition – July 2011

ISBN 978 1 74179 215 7

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10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2

Printed in China

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