

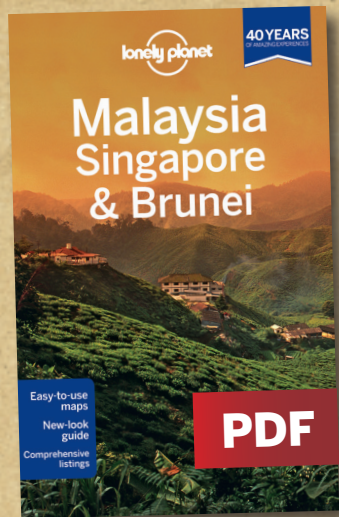
Malaysia, Singapore & Brunei

Plan your trip (Chapter)

Edition 12th Edition, May 2013

Pages 40

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Coverage includes: Welcome to Malaysia, Singapore & Brunei, Malaysia, Singapore & Brunei's Top 25 Experiences, Need to Know, If You Like, Month by Month, With Kids, Itineraries, Outdoor Adventures, Eat Like a Local and Regions at a Glance.

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PLAN YOUR TRIP

YOUR PLANNING TOOL KIT

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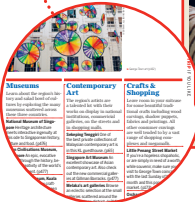
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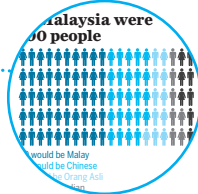
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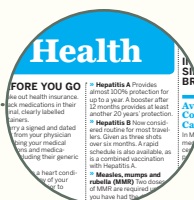


The Era of Mahatma
 In 1947, the British government decided to grant independence to the Malay Peninsula. The British had ruled the region for over a century, and the people were now free to choose their own path. The first Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman, led the country to independence in 1957. The country was then a federation of states, and the people were now free to choose their own path. The first Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman, led the country to independence in 1957. The country was then a federation of states, and the people were now free to choose their own path.





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THIS EDITION WRITTEN AND RESEARCHED BY

Simon Richmond

Cristian Bonetto, Celeste Brash, Joshua Samuel Brown,
Austin Bush, Adam Karlin, Daniel Robinson

➤ **Every listing is recommended by our authors, and their favourite places are listed first**

➤ **Look out for these icons:**



Our author's top recommendation



A green or sustainable option



No payment required

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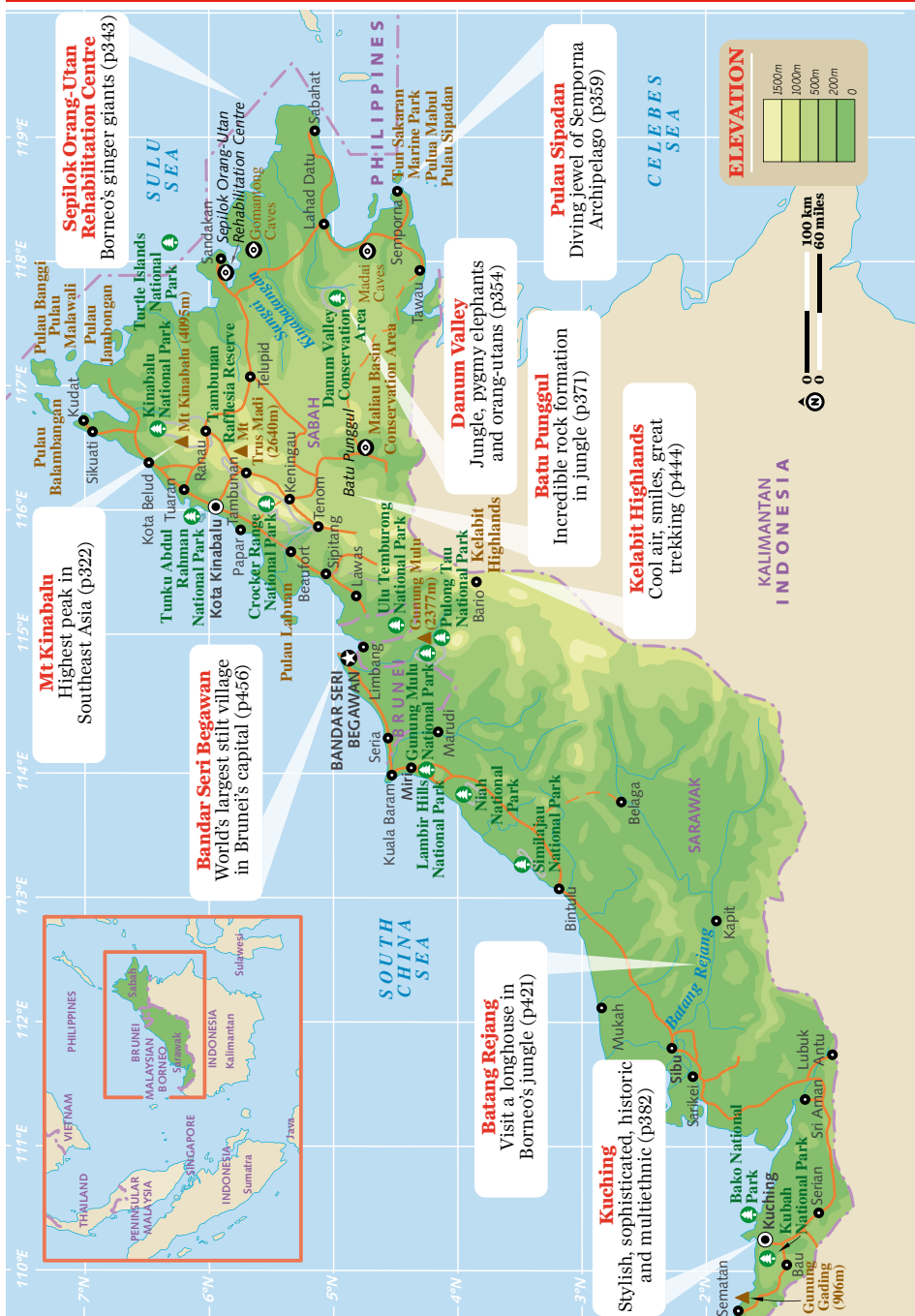
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Peninsular Malaysia & Singapore



Malaysian Borneo & Brunei





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



Simon Richmond

Coordinating Author, Plan Your Trip, Kuala Lumpur & Around, Selangor & Negeri Sembilan, Understand, Survival Guide Simon first started travelling in the region back in the early 1990s. A lot has changed since, but both Malaysia and Singapore remain among Simon's favourite destinations for their easily accessible blend of cultures, landscapes, adventure and, crucially, lip-smacking range of cuisines. This is the fourth time the award-winning travel writer and photographer

has helped Lonely Planet's *Malaysia, Singapore & Brunei* guide. He's also the coordinating author of Lonely Planet's *Kuala Lumpur, Melaka & Penang* guide as well as a shelf-load of other titles for this and other publishers.

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Cristian Bonetto

Singapore Cristian's voracious appetite was custom made for Singapore, and you'll often find him chomping his way across the island in search of edible thrills. Throw in a passion for contemporary architecture and postcolonial politics, and his soft spot for Singapore makes perfect sense. Cristian graduated from the University of Melbourne with a degree in politics and cultural studies, and his musings on food, culture and design have appeared in publications worldwide. To date, his Lonely Planet titles include *New York, Italy* and *Denmark*.



Celeste Brash

Melaka, Johor Celeste first visited Malaysia while she was studying at Chiang Mai University, Thailand, in 1993; she later moved to Singapore to teach English. The more of Malaysia she's visited over the years, the more she's fallen in love with it – especially the food. When not desensitising her taste buds with *sambal*, Celeste lives in Portland, Oregon with her husband and two children. She's contributed to around 40 Lonely Planet titles. Find out more about her at www.celestebrash.com.

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Pahang & Tioman Island; East Coast Islands, Kelantan & Terengganu Writer, raconteur and lifestyle gypsy Joshua Samuel Brown has been on the road semi-constantly since the last century and writing for Lonely Planet since 2006; he's also a regular contributor to www.lonelyplanet.com. His blog *Snarky Tofu* (josambro.blogspot.com) contains regular updates, photos and the occasional rant.

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Published by Lonely Planet Publications Pty Ltd

ABN 36 005 607 983
12th edition – May 2013
ISBN 978 1 74179 847 0

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10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Printed in China

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Austin Bush

Eat Like a Local; Regional Specialities; Perak; Penang; Langkawi, Kedah & Perlis; Food & Drink Austin Bush came to Thailand in 1998 on a language scholarship and has remained in Southeast Asia ever since. This is his first time contributing to *Malaysia, Singapore & Brunei*, a gig he soon came to realise is quite possibly Lonely Planet's most delicious. Austin is a native of Oregon and a freelance writer and photographer who often focuses on food. Samples of his work can be seen at www.austinbushphotography.com.



Adam Karlin

Sabah, Brunei Adam thinks Borneo is like a savage garden, which may explain why he loves it truly, madly, deeply. On this trip, his second exploring Sabah (and third exploring Malaysia) for Lonely Planet, he glimpsed primates, hiked jungle mountains, held his own in expat drinking games and floated on his back down a river through virgin rainforest – a pretty good moment, that. He has written or contributed to some 30 titles for Lonely Planet.

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Daniel Robinson

Sarawak Daniel has been covering Southeast Asia and its rainforests since 1989, when he researched Lonely Planet's first award-winning guides to Vietnam and Cambodia. On his many visits to Sarawak, he has developed a fondness for travelling *ulu-ulu* (way upriver) by longboat, tramping through the jungle in search of gargantuan rafflesia flowers, and slurping Sarawak laksa. Daniel, who holds a BA in Near Eastern Studies from Princeton University, writes on travel for a variety of magazines and newspapers, including *The New York Times*.

Read more about Daniel at:
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itineraries

Whether you've got six days or 60, these itineraries provide a starting point for the trip of a lifetime. Want more inspiration? Head online to lonelyplanet.com/thorntree to chat with other travellers.



Two Weeks

Essential Malaysia & Singapore

Ease yourself into Malaysian life by spending three days in **Kuala Lumpur (KL)**. On your to see and do list should be the **Petronas Towers**, **Chinatown** for shopping and eating, and the Lake Gardens for the **KL Bird Park** and **Islamic Arts Museum**.

Head to the magnificent national park **Taman Negara** where even on a two-day visit you can clamber across the canopy walkway and make some short jungle treks. Return to KL and hop on a flight to **Penang** where three days will give you a good taste of the heritage district of **George Town** and other island highlights such as **Kek Lok Si Temple**.

Historic **Melaka**, another Unesco World Heritage Site, deserves a couple of nights but visit midweek to avoid the crowds. Then head across the causeway to **Singapore** where you can spend your final four days enjoying everything from maxing out your credit card at glitzy shopping malls and sampling delicious hawker food to the eye-boggling space age architecture of **Marina Bay**, the excellent **zoo and night safari**, and the vacation island of **Sentosa** for some beachside R & R.



Six Weeks

The Grand Tour

Schedule a week in **KL** and surrounds for sightseeing and acclimatisation. Day trips could include **Batu Caves**, **Forestry Research Institute of Malaysia (FRIM)** and **Putrajaya**, the nation's fast-evolving administrative capital and a showcase of modern Malaysian architecture. The sleepy old royal capital of **Kuala Selangor**, near to which you can observe the dazzling natural display of fireflies, is also only a couple of hours drive from KL.

After a pit stop in the happening foodie destination of **Ipoh**, which has some great accommodation options, your second week takes you up to the **Cameron Highlands** for a cooler climate and invigorating walks past verdant tea plantations. Return to the coast and hop across to **Pulau Pangkor** for a few days further relaxation on this off-the-beaten track island with white sand beaches and jungle interior.

Suitably refreshed you should be ready for the urban delights of **George Town on Penang**, particularly the Unesco World Heritage district packed with colourful, fascinating sights. Do plenty of walking to work up an appetite, as Penang is also Malaysia's number one food destination with oodles of tempting dishes to sample. A quick flight away are the resorts, gorgeous beaches and jungle hinterlands of **Pulau Langkawi**.

Into week four and it's time to cross the mountainous spine of the peninsula to **Kota Bharu**, a great place to encounter traditional Malay culture. Island- and beach-hop down the east coast, pausing at **Pulau Perhentian**, **Cherating** and **Pulau Tioman**. For jungle adventures head to **Taman Negara** or, to avoid the crowds, opt for nearby **Kenong Rimba State Park**.

Singapore can easily swallow up a week of shopping, museum viewing and world-class eating. From here you can fly to **Kuching** in Sarawak, a good base for a longhouse excursion or for arranging a trek in the **Gunung Mulu National Park**. Rack up the visa stamps by taking the overland and river route from Sarawak to Sabah via Brunei stopping in the capital **Bandar Seri Begawan (BSB)**.

Having made it to Sabah's capital **Kota Kinabalu**, your final challenge, should you choose to accept it, is to climb **Mt Kinabalu**. Alternatively, it's difficult to resist the chance to eyeball close up the supercute ginger apes at **Sepilok Orang-Utan Rehabilitation Centre**.



One Month Ultimate Borneo

From **Kuching** explore the local **long-houses** and **Bako National Park**. Fly to **Miri**, which is the base for trips to the impressive **Niah Caves**; **Gunung Mulu National Park** for more caves (the world's biggest), the heart-pumping trek to the Pinnacles and a sweat-drenching trek along the Headhunters Trail; and **Bario**, a quiet farming community tucked away in the vine-draped **Kelabit Highlands**.

You'll need to pass through Miri again to make your way overland to **Bandar Seri Begawan**, Brunei's friendly microcapital. While here don't miss out on **Ulu Temburong National Park** in Temburong, Brunei's pristine sliver of primary rainforest.

Cross back into Malaysia and pause in **Kota Kinabalu** before setting your sights on **Mt Kinabalu**. Catch some ape love at **Sepilok Orang-Utan Rehabilitation Centre**, followed by a layover in **Sandakan** for a brief lesson in colonial history. The mighty **Sungai Kinabatangan** is next, offering wildlife enthusiasts plenty of photo fodder. If you've got the time (and the dime), head deep into Sabah's green interior for a trek through the **Danum Valley Conservation Area**. Explore the magnificent dive sites of the **Semporna Archipelago** accessed from **Semporna**.

Two Weeks Sabah-Sarawak Sampler

Start with Sabah's star attraction, **Mt Kinabalu**. Assaults on Malaysia's highest peak can be launched from the state's government seat, **Kota Kinabalu (KK)**, which encapsulates South-east Asian city life on a manageable scale. You'll be obliged to spend a day or two here sorting permits, during which you can stoke up on energy by indulging in the flavourful local cuisine. Consider a day-trip cruise (including buffet dinner) down one of the tea-brown rivers in the **Beaufort Division**, or learn a little about the local culture at the **Mari Mari Cultural Village**.

Leapfrog by plane from KK to Miri and then on to **Gunung Mulu National Park**, home to the world's largest caves, and several memorable jungle treks, including the notorious Headhunters Trail. Pass through Miri once more for a quick flight down to **Kuching**. Sarawak's capital is a real charmer and will easily keep you occupied for several days. Break up your time in town with a visit to **Semenggoh Wildlife Centre**, **Bako National Park** and, if you have time, to a longhouse such as **Annah Rais Longhouse**.



Three Weeks Jewels of the North

Explore **KL** for a few days then take a bus across the peninsula to **Kuantan**. Beach- and island-hop up the east coast pausing in laid-back **Cherating** and **Kuala Terengganu**, with its pretty Chinatown and the **Kompleks Muzium Negeri Terengganu**. At **Penarik** see fireflies and stay at the **Terrapuri Heritage Village**, a resort made up of 29 classically furnished antique houses.

Although other island idylls await further up the coast it's difficult to ignore the Perhentians, accessed from Kuala Besut. **Pulau Perhentian Besar** tends to be less crowded and just as gorgeous as its more popular twin, **Pulau Perhentian Kecil**. Back on the mainland, linger a day or two in **Kota Bharu**, for its museums, cultural events and night market, then head to northern Perak, making the **Royal Belum State Park** your base.

Dig into fish-head curry in **Alor Setar** before taking the ferry from **Kuala Perlis** to **Pulau Langkawi** where there's yet more opportunities for sunbathing, island hopping and jungle exploration. Fly to **George Town**, the essential stop on Penang. Connect to **Ipoh** from where you could cool off in **Fraser's Hill** (Bukit Fraser) before returning to KL.

Three Weeks Southern Comforts

Singapore is the logical start and finish to this loop around the southern end of Peninsular Malaysia; leave yourself several days to soak up its multiple attractions. If you're strapped for cash then **Johor Bahru** just across the causeway is a cheaper base. Recently spruced up, it's become a decent hangout, not least for its street food and duty-free booze.

The lethargic riverside town of **Muar** has a graceful colonial district that's worth a look, and can be used as a base for assaults on 1276m Gunung Ledang, Johor's highest mountain, within the **Gunung Ledang National Park**. Recover in World Heritage-listed **Melaka** where you can spend several days soaking up the enduring Portuguese and Dutch influence.

Explore the last remaining stands of lowland forest on the peninsula in **Endau-Rompin National Park**, the last refuge of the Sumatran rhinoceros. Stunning **Pulau Tioman** has epitomised an island paradise since it doubled for Bali Hai in *South Pacific*. Alternatively, indulge in some island hopping and diving around the 64 comparatively little visited gems of the **Seribu Archipelago**.

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