



# Brunei Darussalam

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## Best Places for Cultural Connections

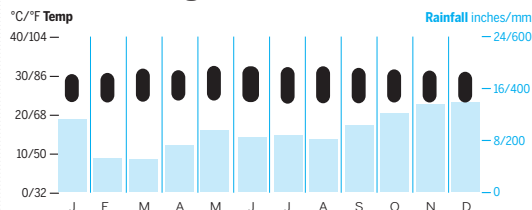
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## Why Go?

The tiny sultanate of Brunei, the last remnant of a naval empire that once ruled all of Borneo and much of the Philippines, is known for its unimaginable riches – it has some of the largest oil fields in Southeast Asia – but should be no less famous for having had the foresight and wisdom to preserve its rainforests. Today the country is blessed with some of the most pristine jungle habitats in all of Borneo – you can get a sense of their verdant vastness in Temburong District. If you take the time to slow down and talk with the locals, in the capital Bandar Seri Begawan (BSB) as well as in outlying towns and longhouses, you may find that there's more than first meets the eye in this quiet, verdant *darussalam* (Arabic for 'abode of peace').

## When to Go

### Bandar Seri Begawan



**23 Feb** Brunei National Day is celebrated with festive parades.

**15 Jul** Nationwide ceremonies mark the birthday of Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah.

**Jul–Aug** Sultan's palace open to public for Hari Raya Aidilfitri (last three days of Ramadan).

## Don't Miss

Spending time surrounded by the rustling, buzzing, chirping rainforests of Ulu Temburong National Park is one of the highlights of a visit to Brunei Darussalam. After whizzing along *nipa*-lined waterways on a turbo-charged speedboat from BSB, you board a narrow Iban longboat, dodging submerged boulders and hanging vines as you make your way upriver through the early morning mist. A steep, slippery climb through virgin jungle takes you to a towering wall of scaffolding: the park's famous canopy walk. Held steady by guy wires, the structure creaks as you make your way up into the jungle canopy, passing bird's nest ferns, orchids and (if you're lucky) the flash of a hornbill's plumage.

## ITINERARIES

### Three Days

Spend your first day exploring BSB: visit the water village of Kampung Ayer in the morning, have lunch at Tamu Kianggeh market, and then head to the Twelve Roofs House and the Brunei Museum. Spend your second day on a tour of Ulu Temburong National Park, and your third back in BSB checking out Omar Ali Saifuddin Mosque, the Royal Regalia Museum and more excellent food stalls.

### One Week

In addition to the three-day itinerary, spend another couple of days exploring BSB's culinary wonders and soaking up the gilded atmosphere of the Empire Hotel & Country Club; spend the night in Temburong District and do a bit of exploring; and add a day of beach relaxation (eg in Muara).

## Essential Food & Drink

If there's one word you should learn during a visit to Brunei, it's *makan*, meaning 'eat' in Bahasa Malaysia. *Makan* isn't just a word, it's a way of life – because, the locals joke, there's nothing else to do!

BSB's hawker centres serve up some superb – and remarkably inexpensive – local dishes. In the city centre, Tamu Kianggeh has Malay-style chicken mains for just B\$1 as well as mouthwatering desserts, while in the evening you can't beat Tamu Selera for BBQ specialities such as satay.

## AT A GLANCE

- » **Currencies** Brunei dollar (B\$), Singapore dollar (S\$)
- » **Language** Bahasa Malaysia, English
- » **Money** ATMs easy to find in towns, except in Temburong District
- » **Mobile phones** Pre-pay local SIMs B\$30

## Fast Facts

- » **Area** 5765 sq km
- » **Capital** Bandar Seri Begawan (BSB)
- » **Country Code** 673
- » **Emergency** ambulance 991, police 993, fire 995

## Exchange Rates

Australia	A\$1	B\$1.30
Canada	C\$1	B\$1.25
Euro zone	€1	B\$1.65
Japan	¥100	B\$1.50
New Zealand	NZ\$1	B\$1.05
UK	UK£1	B\$2.00
USA	US\$1	B\$1.25

## Set Your Budget

- » **Dorm bed** B\$10
- » **Food stall meal** from B\$1
- » **Museum admission** free
- » **Beer** fuhgeddaboutit!

## Entering the Country

Daily buses link Sabah, Lawas and Limbang, and Miri with BSB and Temburong District. Ferries run to BSB from Pulau Labuan and – when they're running – from Lawas and Limbang.