

# Wild Borneo Expedition

## *Malaysian Borneo*

Proboscis monkeys, orangutans, a longhouse visit, ancient caves, Mt. Kinabalu and coral reefs

The expedition takes in the very best wildlife highlights that Borneo has to offer. Starting with a boat journey to see proboscis monkeys, we explore towering tropical rainforests in search of one of the world's largest flowers (with blooms up to 1 metre in diameter). We then travel up river by canoe to stay at a remote longhouse, to experience traditional life and customs, then transfer to explore vast caves used by hunters of bird nests for soup, both in ancient times and still today. We then observe orangutans up close and personal, because relaxing in bubbling, geothermal, hot water springs before an ascent of Borneo's tallest and most spectacular mountain, Mt. Kinabalu. After seeing exquisite orchids and giant carnivorous pitcher plants, we then end the tour on a beautiful coral island for two days of relaxing on tranquil beaches and snorkelling in fish filled waters.

Only 10 working days are required for this expedition. All dates for this expedition start on a Sunday and end on a Saturday, enabling participants 24 hours before and after the expedition for international flights.

This expedition offers outstanding photographic opportunities for a very diverse range of Borneo's most spectacular animals, plants, scenery and traditional life.

**COST:** £2,000 per person for **14 days / 13 nights** (all inclusive from start point to end point).

**START POINT:** Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysian Borneo.

**END POINT:** Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysian Borneo.

**EXPEDITION LEADER:** Dr. Michael Thomas (experienced field naturalist and Borneo expert).

**DATES:** Wild Borneo Expeditions 1: Sunday July 13th – Saturday July 26th

Email [sales@redfernnaturalhistory.com](mailto:sales@redfernnaturalhistory.com) for more information and to make bookings.



# Wild Borneo Expedition **ITINERARY**

**Day 1:** Meet in Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysian Borneo. Overnight in a hotel and expedition brief at dinner in a local restaurant.

**Day 2:** Early morning transfer into small boats and short journey into the South China Sea to land on a beautiful beach at Bako National Park. We sign into the park head quarters, then follow trails through mangroves that are home to troops of proboscis monkeys, to explore heath forest filled with orchids, pitcher plants, ant plants, exquisite butterflies and abundant birdlife. We return to Kuching by boat at sunset. Overnight in a hotel and dinner in a local restaurant.

**Day 3:** After breakfast, we drive to the Gunung Gading National Park in search of the giant flower of *Rafflesia tuan-mudae*. The orange bloom of this parasitic plant is one of the world's largest flowers, and can measure up to nearly 1 metre in diameter. Flowering times are unpredictable, and a sighting cannot be guaranteed, but the park also offers beautiful jungle trails through spectacular tropical rainforest filled with abundant wildlife. We then transfer to canoes and head up the Rejang River to an Iban village, arriving in the mid-afternoon with a traditional welcome from the village chief. We sleep in the longhouse.

**Day 4:** After breakfast, we are shown around the longhouse and given small demonstrations of Iban life and culture. We try traditional food, a tour of the Iban garden and a chance to learn how to shoot the blowpipe, a traditional hunting tool. In the evening, enjoy a small performance of local dance and music. The evening brings local rice wine and a last night in the long house.

**Day 5:** After breakfast, we return to the canoes, and enjoy a leisurely journey back down the Rejang River and back to Kuching. Overnight in a hotel and dinner in a local restaurant.

**Day 6:** We fly from Kuching to Sandakan in Sabah, arriving after lunch, and transfer to the Gomantong Caves to explore the grottos, and ancient tradition of collecting valuable birds' nests for birds nest soup. We stay until sunset to watch over 2 million resident bats spiral out for their evening feed. As the bats leave, the swiftlets are usually beginning to make their way back to the caves after a day's foraging. We sleep at a hotel in Sandakan and have dinner in a local restaurant.

**Day 7:** We visit Sepilok Orangutan Sanctuary to observe and photograph orangutans up close and learn about their conservation. We sleep at a hotel in Sandakan and have dinner in a local restaurant.

**Day 8:** We depart Sandakan on an early flight to Kota Kinabalu, transfer to mini-vans, and travel to Poring Hot Spring for a second opportunity to see the giant *Rafflesia* flower. We relax in tubs filled by the rejuvenating waters of local geothermal hot springs. We then drive on to the Kinabalu Park Headquarters where we overnight, dining in a hotel at the base of Borneo's tallest and most enigmatic mountain.

**Day 9:** We meet a local guide and begin a climb up Mt. Kinabalu from Timpohon Gate, passing through lush vegetation rich with tree ferns and orchids, along a path offering spectacular views across Borneo. The trail is uphill, but is maintained with steps, and we go at a gentle pace. Along the trail, we photograph beautiful cloudforest bonsai unusual carnivorous pitcher plants. In the afternoon, we reach Laban Rata, a guesthouse perched at the tree line; it is a wooden, heated building with comfortable beds. We enjoy a hot dinner and watch the sun set over Borneo's jungles.

**Day 10:** An optional 4 am start to climb to the summit of Mount Kinabalu to watch the sun rise from the mountain top. The early morning is chilly, but the views are spectacular. We return to Laban Rata Guesthouse for breakfast, then begin the descent down Mount Kinabalu, taking a side trail to the Mesilau Gate, for a delicious meal in the Mesilau restaurant.

**Day 11:** We have an option to visit the Mesilau Gardens to see exquisite slipper orchids and the world's largest pitcher plant, which has been recorded to catch animals as large as rats, and then transfer by minivan back to Kota Kinabalu in time to meet boats to take us to the Tunku Abdul Rahman Marine Park. We overnight on a beautiful coral island in the park, with a sunset walk on the beach.

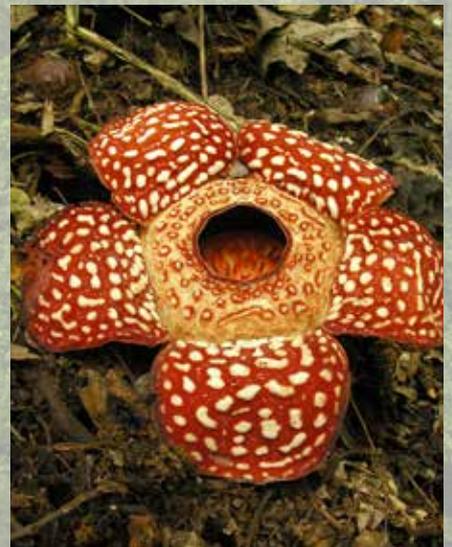
**Days 12 & 13:** Snorkelling on reefs, relaxing on the beach and meeting the island's macaques.

**Day 14:** After breakfast, we return by boat back to Kota Kinabalu in time for departing flights home in the afternoon and evening.



## Highlights of the **Wild Borneo Expedition**

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