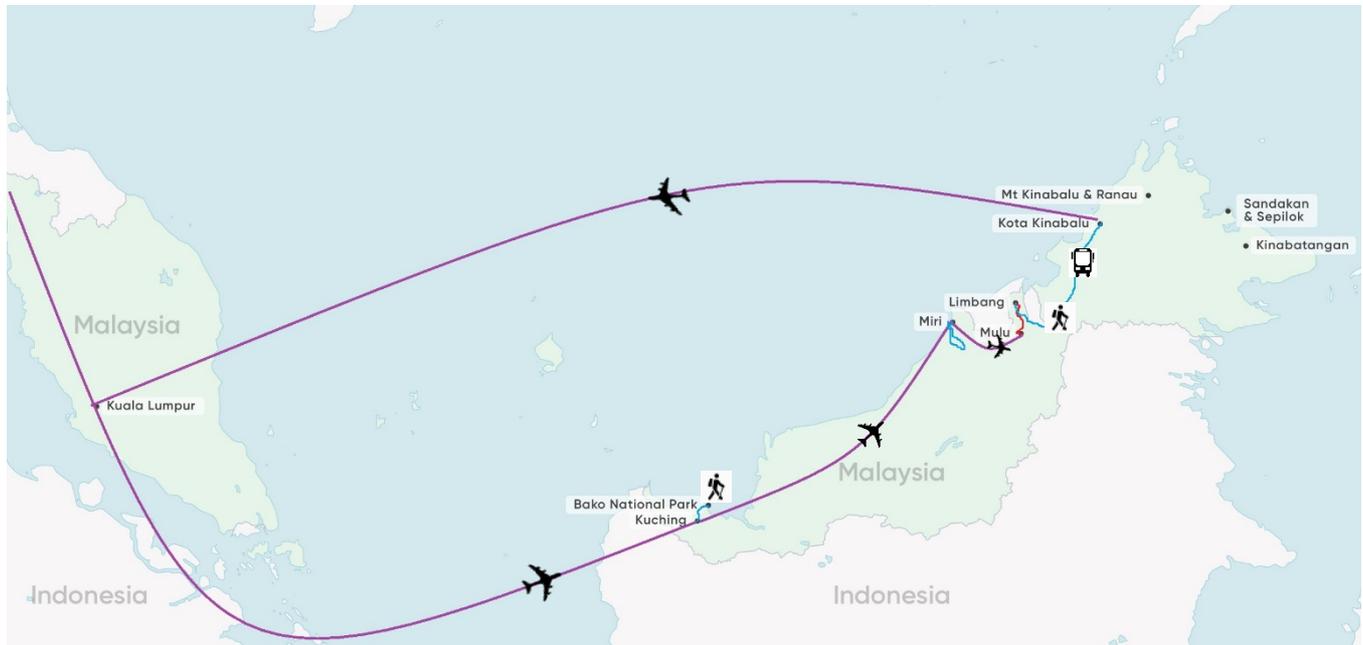


Borneo - *It's a jungle out there!* East Malaysia (10 Days)



Departs anytime (2021-2022)



Please note: This itinerary can be modified in any way to best suit your school's aims, learning objectives and budget.

Whilst Borneo's Dayak tribes stopped headhunting long ago, the ancient customs and ceremonies of this intriguing corner of Asia remain a great lure for those looking for an exotic adventure. This 10-day trip to East Malaysia (Borneo) is specifically designed for students intrigued by environmental issues and wildlife as well as those wishing for an active exploration of this legendary land.

Highlights of this adventure will include a challenging 3-day hiking activity, an up-close encounter with Borneo's enigmatic orangutans, visits to less travelled tribal regions and an excursion to the incredible *Mulu Caves* - the largest and most accessible of their kind in the world.

This trip is further intended to provide students with a social and cultural understanding of Malaysia and the island states that make up this always welcoming Asian nation.



David Eales
David Eales
Asia Manager

Day 1

Kuching



The varied ethnic and cultural backgrounds of Borneo's people have made this island (which shares borders with Indonesia and the Sultanate of Brunei) a melting pot of diversity that we will soon learn more about on arrival. After being greeted by our tour leader in Kuching, we will be escorted to our hotel and begin a quick orientation tour.

Meaning 'cat' in Malay, Kuching is a pleasant and green city, once home to the infamous White Raja of Sarawak, whose mysterious rule in this remote corner of the world sparked the imagination of many people who dreamt of becoming royalty.

This evening we will enjoy a stroll around this city's vibrant waterfront home to a plethora of hawker stalls and a thriving fish market. Here we will enjoy fine Malaysia cuisine - *Sarawak laksa*, *Kolok mee* and *roti chanai* to name a few! (meals: lunch, dinner)

Day 2

Bako National Park (hiking activity)



After breakfast, we will depart for the fishing village of Kampung Bako where we will catch a local boat up the coast to *Bako National Park*. This expanse is the oldest national park in Sarawak and features rainforest, abundant wildlife, waterfalls, secluded beaches and trekking trails. Millions of years of erosion formed a coastline of steep cliffs, rocky headlands and stretches of white, sandy bays. Waves have carved the cliffs into fantastically shaped sea arches and sea-stacks, with coloured patterns formed by iron deposits. Here we will enjoy an energetic walk (2-3 hours) to the beautiful beach at Telok Pandan Kecil.

The trail climbs through the forest before emerging onto an open plateau covered in scrub, from where curious pitcher plants can be discovered, as well as the quirky proboscis monkeys who dwell in the canopy above us. This evening we will enjoy a visit to a beach to observe wildlife at sunset, which may include turtles and other aquatic animals. **NB: Our accommodation this evening will be in comfortable but simple park lodgings (fan-cooled, dormitory-style rooms (separate for female & male students)).** (meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner)

Day 3

Kuching (orangutan experience)



After breakfast, we will return to Bako Village by boat and then back to Kuching this morning. Later we will visit the *Semenggoh Orangutan Sanctuary* – a government-funded rehabilitation centre set in lush surrounds. The centre was set up to help re-introduce these wonderful creatures back into the wild after a life of domestication or having been orphaned. We will head into the jungle where we can observe the region's most iconic species as they swing into view and eat the supplementary diet of bananas and milk that is laid out for them twice a day.

We will return to Kuching and then explore the famous Sarawak Museum (one of the most popular attractions here), and later head out to one of the many Chinese-influenced hawker markets for dinner and experience the range of local delicacies. (meals: breakfast, lunch)

Day 4

Kuching Miri

A short flight will take us to the far-flung town of Miri. On arrival, we will travel to Niah National Park, a place where the oldest human remains in Southeast Asia have been unearthed, dating back 40,000 years. Here we will visit a small museum before starting our pleasant walk through the rainforest to Niah Caves – famous for



its bats and moreover, the ancient cave paintings and signs of early human settlement that can be found here. We will continue a further two kilometres to an Iban longhouse where we will spend the night. On arrival, our tour leader will introduce us to our hosts.

In the afternoon there will be a chance to join in a game of volleyball or football with the local people before assisting our host families to prepare dinner. Tonight, we will enjoy a cultural performance by the local village. **NB:**

As this activity is a very authentic experience, please be aware that the sleeping and bathing arrangements are basic. Our main luggage will be sent ahead whilst we will need to carry our day packs for the next 3 days. meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner)

Day 5

Miri Mulu National Park



Our adventure continues as we travel deeper into the Borneo interior, farewelling our hosts and transferring to the airport for our short flight to Mulu. On arrival in Mulu, we will head into the heart of one of the most spectacular national parks in Asia – *Gunung Mulu*. We transfer the short distance to *Mulu HQ* where we will stay for the next two nights. Later we will enjoy a treetop adventure on the world's longest tree-based canopy walkway, before dusk when we take a walk to search for some weird and wonderful insects and reptiles. Tonight, we'll stay in the park headquarters, retiring to our dormitory-style accommodation. *(meals: breakfast, lunch)*

Day 6

Mulu National Park



Today we will board longboats and travel upriver to explore the 180-million-year-old rainforest and caves for which this park is duly famous. This World Heritage-listed park is recognised for its unparalleled cave networks, rock pinnacles, and for being the largest known and navigable cave system in the world. It was formed when surface waters worked its way through the rock, carving through gigantic passages.

Perhaps the most famous of all caves is the Deer Cave, which at some two kilometres long and 220 metres tall is the biggest internal cavern so far

discovered.

After a light lunch, we will take a refreshing swim in a cave feed river (designated swimming area) and then later enjoy a mass exodus of bats as they emerge for their nightly feeding, like a seemingly endless black plume of smoke twisting across the sky. In the nearby Lang Cave, we can appreciate the work that millions of years of water commotion did in sculpting waves on the ceiling, drawing stalagmites, columns and stalactites. *(meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner)*

Day 7

Mulu National Park *(hiking activity)*



We will farewell the park HQ this morning and venture deeper into the Borneo interior, en route exploring the amazing Clearwater and Wind Caves, which contain Asia's longest underwater river. The system gets its name from the bright jungle pool at the base of the steps that lead up to the cave mouth. The Wind Cave draws a cooling breeze through its lengths and features some of Gunung Mulu's best cave formations. We will continue our journey by longboat downriver before disembarking to hike through undisturbed jungle to Camp 5, nestled at the end of Melinau Gorge (approximately 8 kilometres).

During the dry season, we may at the time have to disembark our boats to help push them over stone and obstacles in the river so we will need to wear strap-on sandals or

shoes that can get wet. At Camp 5 we will sleep in these wonderful surrounds; mats on raised open-air platforms. Dinner will be a basic yet tasty affair. *(meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner)*

Day 8

Mulu National Park *(hiking activity)* 🧑‍🦵



Today we'll tackle the infamous Headhunters' trail. Located in an isolated area of the Borneo jungles, this 12-kilometre (approximately 5 hours) trail takes its name from its historical role as the route taken by warring parties between the *Tutoh* and *Limbang* Rivers. The trek journeys through the dense jungle along a well-defined, mainly flat track, although the way can be muddy during the rainy season. We'll also have to cross some streams by rope bridges, wooden walkways - surrounded by stunningly diverse flora, massive bird-filled trees, and the magical sounds of the forest – a hornbill flapping its wings, the cries of monkeys, and the pulse of cicadas and crickets.

This afternoon we will board our boat from Kuala Trekian to Kuala Medamit, a journey of around 3-4 hours, depending on how much rainfall there has been. This challenging but rewarding day will finish as we disembark our boat for our bus transfer to the town of Limbang. Here, comfortable hotel accommodation awaits us with our luggage and dinner ready. *(meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner)*

Day 9

Kota Kinabalu



We will leave Limbang by ferry this morning travelling about two hours before boarding another ferry to Kota Kinabalu, East Malaysia's premier city of activity and commerce. Modern-day 'KK' is a vibrant metropolis and a pleasant place to spend the last evening of our epic Borneo travel experience. We will have a chance to see some of KK's places of interests including its state mosque, a Chinese temple and the Sabah Museum to learn more of the region's indigenous people. We will also visit the city's renowned Natural History Museum.

Tonight, we will head out for a final meal to celebrate our Borneo adventure where we will choose our own dishes from the city's buzzing hawker's market and enjoy an escorted tour along its seaside boardwalk. *(meals: breakfast, dinner)*

Day 10

Kota Kinabalu *(zipline activity)* 🧑‍🦵 Home

Before departure today, we will enjoy a picture-perfect zip lining experience, soaring between two tropical islands in the *Tunku Abdul Rahman Marine Park* adjacent to the city. Our coral flyer zipline is the world's longest island-to-island flying fox, affording us aerial views of clear water, white sand beaches and coastal trees.

Time permitting, we will stop by one of the states beautifully designed Islamic temples to learn about Islam in southeast Asia before returning to our hotel to prepare for our flight back home. Our tour leader will escort us to the airport and assist us with all our onward travel arrangements and wave us farewell. *(meals: breakfast)*

Ascent of Mt. Kinabalu option *(alternative option to 3-day hike)* 🧑‍🦵

As an alternative to the three-day hiking activity from Mulu National park to Limbang, students can elect to visit Mulu national park for a climbing activity of Mount Kinabalu.

Please contact us for a full alternative itinerary.



Alternative Day 7 Mt. Kinabalu (Mountain ascent) Awaking early this morning, we will enjoy a big breakfast before we depart Kota Kinabalu and head to the Kinabalu National Park to begin our rewarding (and challenging!) 2-day climb to the summit of Borneo's tallest mountain (4095m) in the care of our knowledgeable local guides.

Fortunately, Mt Kinabalu is one of the easier peaks in the world to conquer, and students do not need any previous experiences in mountain climbing. However, there is an expectation of a reasonable standard of fitness.

After an easy start, the eight-kilometre trail to the top gradually becomes steeper whilst all along the trail are rest huts. Later in the day as the rainforest canopy becomes increasingly dense, we will arrive at Labuan Rata (3345m) hill station where we will enjoy dinner followed by a very early (and much anticipated) night's sleep. *(all meals)*

Day 8 Mt. Kinabalu (Mountain descent) Poring Hot Springs

Beginning at about 4:00 am (!) we will enjoy a light breakfast as we head off into the darkness. After seemingly endless flights of stairs and ascents up the rocky trail, we will emerge on to a small rocky plateau for our final assault on Low's Peak (summit). As we trudge further, the views out over the clouds and the valleys below are simply breathtaking, making all the effort worthwhile as we finally reach the top, enjoying incredible views in all directions across the South China Sea to the Philippines. Arriving at the base of the mountain around midday we will enjoy a well-earned meal before heading south this afternoon to bathe our wiry bones in some delightful sulphur springs. *(meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner)*

Summary

Grading

Challenging; Students will be required to be in good health to get the most out of this trip whilst anyone of reasonable fitness will be able to take part. There are no real physical difficulties however students will be expected to walk every day. You will also be expected to be able to participate in a hiking activity. It will be necessary for you to carry your own luggage throughout the trip but only for short distances.

Group Size

Minimum group size 20 students & 2 staff members travelling *free of charge*.

▲ **Smaller group sizes can be quoted upon application**

Specific Trip Activities

KUCHING

- *Kuching City tour*
- *Orangutan encounter*
- *Batu Cave exploration*
- *Bako National Park excursion*

BAKO NATIONAL PARK

- *½ day hiking activity*

MIRI

- *Niah Caves & National park visit*
- *Indigenous homestay experience*

MULU NATIONAL PARK

- *Two-day Mulu cave exploration excursion*
- *Longboat excursion*
- *Dayak minority tribe blowpipe Activity*

MULU NATIONAL PARK (3-day hike)

- *Jungle hiking activity (days 7 & 8)*
- *Jungle survival & camping activity*
- *Canopy exploration activity*
- *Melinau Gorge swim*
Kuala Trelian ferry trip

KOTA KINABALU

- *Kota Kinabalu city tour*
- *Museum visit (Kota Kinabalu)*
- *Hawker food experience*
- *Ziplining activity*

MT KINABALU (Alternative day 7 & 8)

- *2-day Mountain ascent (please contact us for full details)*
Poring Hot Spring excursion

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#Please contact *Student Educational Adventures* for a competitive flight quote for flights from your country to Malaysia.

Inclusions

- All accommodation, transport, activities, entrance costs and other programs as described in the itinerary
- **2 internal flights; Kuching – Miri, Miri – Mulu National Park**
- Professional *Student Educational Adventures* tour leader throughout trip & additional specialist guides
- Community project sourcing and arrangements
- Extensive destination-specific risk management and assessments
- Meals (and drinking water) as listed in the itinerary
- 24 hours **IN COUNTRY** support from *Student Educational Adventures* staff
- Pre-departure support, briefings and planning meetings for students and parents
- All equipment including extensive medical supplies
- Parents information evening presentation
- Parental & student advice for vaccinations & equipment etc.
- Tips for local guides & drivers
- **Cost of a community project**

Exclusions

- International flights to/from Malaysia #
- Some meals as described in itinerary
- Camera, video fee at some sites
- Malaysia visa (Not required by most nationalities)

Accommodation

Student accommodation is on a twin/triple share basis. Teacher accommodation is on a single room basis. Hotels hold a 3-star equivalent rating.

Transport

Modern air-conditioned bus, plane, longboat, ferry, bicycle

7 things to check before choosing a student travel company



Choosing the right travel company is one of the most important decisions you'll make for your students. As you compare different school travel providers, you'll need to weigh up everything from staffing arrangements to overall trip cost – and, of course, educational value.

To help you choose with confidence, we've created a checklist of seven essential factors to consider when you're assessing travel companies. You'll be pleased to know that these factors are a feature of every trip we run.

1. Does your travel provider have a truly local presence?

You might not know it, but many school travel companies have no local presence in the countries they send your students to. Behind the façade, these providers are marketing companies who outsource their trips to in-country operators – often importing a foreign manager at your schools' expense. Value for money aside, running trips in this way has far-reaching consequences in an emergency, when access to language skills and local knowledge are vital.

To make sure you're getting a genuinely local experience, it's important to choose a bonafide in-country travel company who has a real local presence in the country you're travelling to. For example, we use our own in-country supervisors and tour leaders to manage the school trips we run. As local experts, they travel with you and your students throughout your entire trip and are responsible for every aspect of your students' wellbeing.

2. Is your school trip *really* of value to your students?

A trip abroad with friends will appeal to any young person, and many will relish the chance to explore a world away from home. But to be of real and enduring educational value, a school trip should challenge students beyond the kinds of basic touristic experiences they might just as easily have on a family holiday.

To this end, your school travel provider should provide a customised itinerary that shows quality and depth of engagement. We tailor each of our itineraries to push students beyond a surface-level exchange and maximise their time in-country so they're learning the whole time they're travelling. Our activity-rich programs are big on cross-cultural interaction, team-building and authentic local experiences. We also include community service projects wherever possible, which make our trips not only highly educational but life-changing, too.

3. Is the person leading your students up to the task?

The best people to lead you through a country are the folk who live there. But on top of having expert local knowledge, the people leading your students should also be expertly trained to deal with young student travellers. A tour leader who's up to the task can teach across the full range of personalities, interests and abilities found among every student group.

For this reason, we make sure our tour leaders have at least three years' experience leading student groups before they go in-field with yours. And they're more than just guides – they're also teachers, translators and troubleshooters. Our tour leaders will welcome you warmly when your group arrive, manage all of your trip logistics, and work responsibly to make sure you and your students always stay healthy and safe.

4. How safe is your travel provider, really?

While some travel companies offer a 24-hour call centre, there's no substitute for having local people by your side and looking after you where you are. Local staff know the lay of the land, how to access the best medical attention in times of crisis and which dialect or language to speak when you need it most. This is especially important outside of major cities, where major providers' services can be limited.

Our in-country staff and tour leaders not only access the best international providers (such as SOS, Global Rescue and Columbia Asia), but also complement these with expert knowledge of the nearest and most appropriate medical attention within every local area. So, if a worst-case scenario happens – when you need to communicate with non-English speaking doctors; when a comprehensive first aid kit won't do the job; or when the phone number of an international medical provider just isn't sufficient – you can be sure your student group is in the best of hands, no matter where they are.

5. How authentic are your service-learning programs?

Today, having students raise money for their overseas trip is a common way for schools to give back to the places they visit. However, exchanging skills – and smiles – with local communities can leave a positive legacy that's even more powerful.

Fundraising, while well-intentioned, can be in vain if it's not done in consultation with local communities. To make sure your impact isn't simply an add-on, choose a school travel company that facilitates projects that solve real community problems and which help build local capacity.

Take our community service projects, for instance. We develop them through extensive cooperation with local people's committees, NGOs and women's organisations to ensure your students' altruism has a lasting impact. All our service components are meticulously planned, designed to be meaningful and transparent, and, most importantly, provide tangible long-term benefits for communities.

6. Does the program you're being offered match your students' learning needs?

No two school groups are the same, which is why no two school trips should follow the same itinerary. Check that the travel company you choose offers a customised program that's flexibly designed to match your students' unique interests. In our experience, nothing inhibits a successful trip more than 'off the shelf' programs with generic activities.

For this reason, each trip we run is tailored to your school's curriculum and your students' distinct learning needs. We also like to involve students in co-designing their itinerary. Prior to their trip, we run a series of student-initiated activities to promote agency and collaboration, setting them up for success once they're overseas.

7. Is the tour priced competitively?

A foreign travel experience for your students needn't cost the earth. And while variations in destinations, flights and trip durations add complexity to the task of pricing your trip, the school travel company you choose should offer you that transparency, without question.

Alongside integrity in pricing sit sound educational outcomes. If your trip provider can't quantify how your students will benefit from the trip, then you might ask whether they're the right fit for you and your school.

Because we operate entirely in-country, with exclusively local staff, our overheads are significantly lower compared to those of other travel companies. With us, your money goes directly toward creating your tour, rather than to overseas administration costs or third-party suppliers.