

Borneo (East Malaysia) *Week Without Walls (7 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.

For students wishing to experience the richness of real equatorial rainforests, Borneo will fulfil your wildest dreams. Synonymous with inaccessibility and adventure, this 7-day educational tour of Malaysia (Borneo) is specifically designed to appeal to adventurous individuals wishing to explore this varied and geographically unique Asian nation.

From historic Sandakan to a remote village in the heart of this wild region, this trip will entail a host of leisure and cultural activities including a fun Malaysian cooking lesson, an exploration of some of the world most divine rainforests as well as white water rafting, hiking and an exhilarating jungle camp experience.

Whilst the trip is designed to be educational, it is also intended to be highly enjoyable. As such, this trip promises to provide a very memorable introduction to this unique and rapidly changing region, as well as a very fulfilling service-learning activity.



David Eales
David Eales
Asia Manager

Day 1

Arrive Sandakan (East Malaysia)



Our tour leader will greet us upon arrival in the remote town of Sandakan in the East Malaysian State of Sabah. En route to our first adventure, our tour leader will run through our itinerary for this coming week and tell us all the things we need to know when travelling in this lush corner of Asia.

Our first stop will entail an exploration of the friendly town of Sandakan which looks out across the Sulu Sea. Sandakan has been the gateway for thousands of trading vessels since the 15th century seeking to exploit the riches of the fabled island of Borneo had to offer.

Razed by the British air force during World War II in an attempt to shake off the grip of the invading Japanese, Sandakan is today a buzzing little place whose wealth these days owes much to the palm oil industry. This afternoon we will wander down to Sandakan's bustling waterfront to enjoy the vibrancy of this friendly city and our first taste of Malaysian cuisine. This region brings together an astonishing array of cultures and languages, as well as age-old traditions of hospitality where all visitors are welcomed. There will be a short time after dinner for an escorted tour of the town before returning to our hotel. *(meals: lunch, dinner)*

Day 2

Sepilok Orangutan Sanctuary Kinabatangan region (village homestay)



We will farewell Sandakan and travel to a remote wildlife reserve to meet Borneo's most endearing inhabitant – the orangutan. At this reserve, young orphaned or captured orangutans are rehabilitated into the wild, and it is one of the few places on earth where people have an opportunity to see orangutans up close in their natural habitat. A boardwalk leads to a viewing gallery and feeding platform where the orangutans are fed twice a day. From here we will travel deeper into Sabah's jungle interior to a small Malay village where we will spend the coming days. En route, we will visit the nearby *Batu Tulug Caves*, a steep limestone cliff that is part of the 20-million-year-old Labang limestone formation.

We will continue a short distance to arrive in our village. There will be a briefing detailing the activities and programs that we shall participate in before having the opportunity to participate in some traditional games, a cultural performance by the local villages as well as a cooking class to learn the secrets of Malay cuisine. It is here that we will spend the night in a communal hall under mosquito nets. The communal hall is an open-air 'longhouse' style of accommodation overlooking the Kinabatangan River. *Male and female students will sleep on separate sides of the hall. Students will be equipped with mattresses, pillows, blankets, mosquito nets, ceiling fans, electric lights, mosquito coils and western-style toilets. (All meals provided in the village.) (meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner)*

Day 3

Community Project (local village experience)



Today we will undertake a community service activity that will entail waterway restoration as well as a conservation program designed to promote awareness of Borneo's fragile ecosystem. This activity is intended to reforest an area of the hinterland surrounding the village and moreover, to raise our awareness of the challenges facing this fragile habitat that is under pressure from increasing population and government policies favouring the development of palm oil plantations.

After lunch, we will farewell our village and travel deeper into the Borneo interior to a delightful eco-lodge on the banks of the river. This region is home to what is widely acknowledged as the largest concentrations of wildlife species to be found anywhere in the world. Later we will take part in a wildlife observation cruise to see more of the Island's famous animal species including the proboscis monkey, langurs, macaques, hornbills and a host of other wildlife. The area of Borneo is also home

to one of the world's best-preserved primeval rainforests, long since vanished in other parts of Asia. *(meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner)*

Day 4

Jungle Camp Homestay *(Jungle Adventure Centre)*



After breakfast, we will board our private bus for our journey west across the Island. Whilst it will be a long day's travelling, we will have ample opportunity to enjoy the picturesque Borneo landscape, viewing oil palm plantations and remote villages en route. In the mid-afternoon, we will arrive at our jungle camp where we will set up our own hammocks and mosquito nets followed by an introduction to the camp by our jungle guides.

There will be time for some jungle skills training as well as an opportunity to try out the camp's rope courses. Tonight, we will sleep on comfortable hammock style beds, in pre-constructed long-house style shelters. *NB: En route today there is the option to visit a local school to learn of the Malay educational system, meet local students and learn of their aspirations. Please contact Student Educational Adventures for more details. NB: During our jungle camp program, good quality shower and bathroom facilities are available. (meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner)*

Day 5

Kota Kinabalu *(ropes & rafting activity)* 🚣



For a safe and fun adrenaline rush, there is nothing quite like rafting. After breakfast we will transfer to our starting rafting point where we will undergo a comprehensive safety briefing before embarking on our trip down the grade 1 & 2 rapids of the Kiulu River, accompanied by our expert river guides. All students are required to wear life jackets/helmets.

After a couple of hours on the river, we will arrive at the picnic area where lunch will be served and where we can clean up and get changed. This afternoon we will travel to Kota Kinabalu, Borneo's premier city which we

wander down to the city's vibrant handicraft market and later enjoy some traditional East Malaysian cuisine. *(meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner)*

Day 6

Kota Kinabalu



Urban allure meets rural charm! Today we will enjoy a scenic exploration tour of Kota Kinabalu (KK) in the State of Sabah. The city, formerly known as "Singgahmata" or "the place where the eye lingers", rose from the destruction of World War II to become a vibrant and modern city that still retains its traditional charms.

This afternoon 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 of the region's indigenous inhabitants. Tonight, we will

head out for a final meal to celebrate our Borneo adventure – the night market is filled with fresh grilled seafood. *(meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner)*

Day 7

Kota Kinabalu 🏠 Home

There will be a short time this morning for an escorted stroll through this quaint old district before we transfer to Kota Kinabalu Airport for our flight back home. Our group leader will take care of your onward travel arrangements and bid us farewell. *(meals: breakfast) Flight details to be advised*

Summary

Grading

Moderate to Challenging; Whilst the trip is designed for any student with a good level of fitness, the trip requires students and accompanying staff to be fit and able to walk long distances. Throughout the trip, you will be expected to carry your own luggage but only for a short distance.

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, longboat, speedboat, plane.

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

SANDAKAN

- Sandakan City tour
- Visit former WWII prisoner of a war (POW) camp site
- Water village home visit
- *Orangutan experience*
- *Batu Cave* exploration

KINABATANGAN

- Village homestay experience
- Malaysian Cooking class activity
- Sports activity with local villages
- River cruise (wildlife spotting) excursion
- Eco-lodge stay
- *School visit activity (service-learning)*
(Please see below - [7 things to check before choosing a student travel company #5. How authentic are your service-learning programs?](#))

RANAU

- Jungle centre challenge activity
- Ziplining & rope course
- ½ day white-water rafting activity
- Community building (service-learning) program (Please see below [#6 - Does the program you're being offered match your students' learning needs?](#))

- **KOTA KINABALU**
- Kota Kinabalu city tour
- Museum visit (Kota Kinabalu)

Borneo (East Malaysia)

Week Without Walls (7 days)

Please contact [Student Educational Adventures](#) for a competitive flight quote for flights to Malaysia (Borneo) from your country.

Inclusions

- All accommodation, transport, activities, entrance costs and other programs as described in the itinerary
- Professional *Student Educational Adventures* tour leader throughout trip & additional specialist guides
- Community project sourcing and arrangements
- Extensive destination-specific risk management and assessments
- All 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
- Parents information evening presentation
- Parental & student advice for vaccinations & equipment etc.
- Tips for local guides & drivers
- **Cost of the community project**

Exclusions

- International flights to/from Malaysia #
- Camera, video fee at some sites
- Malaysia visa (Not required by most nationalities)

School visit activity

Visiting a local school as part of an educational travel program is a carefully planned activity that Student Educational Adventures staff initiate after consultation with local teaching staff.

This activity is always initiated based on a model of mutual learning and designed as an immersion experience. An understanding of the importance of an integrated approach to community development is useful to frame what students might see, learn or experience during such an activity.

Prior to the activity, visiting students are provided with basic teaching materials and rudimentary teaching skills (i.e. methods of eliciting language, lesson planning etc.). This preparation is conducted by our tour leaders. Typically, visiting students are divided into small groups to teach English. If local students have a sound grasp of English (as is often the case in Malaysia), the activity can be modified to be of a cultural exchange nature.

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.