

MIRI

& Northeast Sarawak
Visitor's Guide

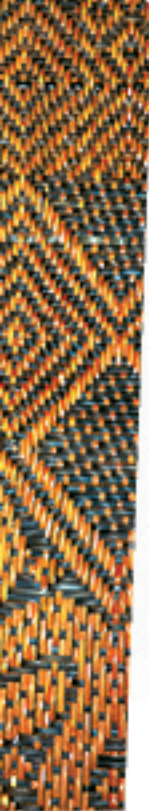


SARAWAK TOURISM BOARD
www.sarawaktourism.com



Sarawak Tourism Board
Level 4, Plaza Aurora, Jalan McDougall,
93000 Kuching, Sarawak
Tel: +6 082 - 423600 Fax: +6 082-416700
Email: stb@sarawaktourism.com

Sarawak
More to Discover



Sarawak

Sarawak is the largest state in Malaysia, stretching some 800 km along the northwest coast of Borneo, the world's third largest island. A beautiful land coloured by peace, tradition and unmatched biodiversity, it is a prime destination for discerning travellers seeking vibrant culture, exhilarating adventure and breath-taking nature.

You can share in the lifestyle of an upriver longhouse, follow in the footsteps of a dynasty of White Rajahs, explore gigantic caves in the heart of the Borneo rainforest, or paddle through jungle streams in search of elusive wild orangutans, to mention just a few possibilities. Whatever your choice, you will leave Sarawak with memories to last a lifetime.

Whether you stay in a luxurious resort, an award winning boutique hotel, a heritage homestay or a simple jungle camp, you will be cared for with genuine warmth and sincerity. The people of Sarawak are equally at home in the past and the present, taking the same pride in their traditions of hospitality as they do in their modern infrastructure and seamless connectivity.

Revealing a side of Asia unlike anywhere else, Sarawak is a place for people seeking authentic and engaging experiences rather than tourist-trap clichés. And most importantly, it's a safe, peaceful and friendly place to visit, for large groups and solo travellers alike. Make Sarawak your next destination, as the highlight of your visit to Southeast Asia, or as a journey of discovery all on its own.



TOURIST INFORMATION

The Sarawak Tourism Board (STB) offers a range of services to provide visitors and the travel industry with up-to-date travel information about Sarawak. The Visitors' Information Centres in Kuching, Miri and Sibü stock a wide range of guidebooks, maps, brochures and leaflets. The helpful staff can also assist with detailed travel enquires.

Kuching Visitors' Information Centre

Sarawak Tourism Complex
(Old Court House),
93100 Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia.
Email: vic-kuching@sarawaktourism.com
Tel: +6082 410 944
Fax: +6082 256 301
Open Mon-Sun: 9am to 6pm

Miri Visitors' Information Centre

Lot 452, Jalan Melayu,
98000 Miri, Sarawak, Malaysia
Email: vic-miri@sarawaktourism.com
Tel.: +6085 434 180 / 181
Fax: +6085 434 179
Open Mon-Fri: 8am – 5pm
Saturday, Sunday & Public Holidays 9am – 3pm

Sibü Visitors' Information Centre

Sublot 3a & 3b, Sibü Heritage Centre, Jalan Central,
96000 Sibü, Sarawak, Malaysia
Email: vic-sibü@sarawaktourism.com
Tel: +6084 340 980
Fax: +6084 341 280
Open Mon-Fri: 8am – 5pm
Saturday & Public Holidays: 9am – 3pm
Closed on Sundays

STB's Kuching Head Office provides comprehensive media and travel industry liaison services, up-to-date information on tourism policy and planning in Sarawak, and replies to written or email enquiries.

Sarawak Tourism Board

Level 4, Plaza Aurora, Jalan McDougall,
93000 Kuching, Sarawak
Email: stb@sarawaktourism.com
Tel: +6082 423600 Fax: +6082 416700

Online Information

Detailed travel information for Sarawak is available from STB's online outlets:

www.sarawaktourism.com

www.facebook.com/visitsarawak

www.instagram.com/sarawaktravel

www.twitter.com/SarawakTravel

www.youtube.com/user/sarawaktourismbcm

www.weibo.com/sarawaktourism (华语)

www.pinterest.com/sarawaktravel

MIRI & NORTHEAST

SARAWAK

INTRODUCTION

Miri is Sarawak's second largest city and the gateway to the state's fascinating northeast region. A rapidly expanding business, commercial centre and the home of Sarawak's oil industry, Miri is located in Northeast Sarawak close to the Brunei border. In recent years Miri has become a major tourism gateway and the starting point for some of Sarawak's world-famous National Parks, including Niah Caves, Gunung Mulu, Loagan Bunut and Lambir Hills. Other interesting possibilities include the remote Bario Highlands and the mighty Baram River, as well as a number of excellent offshore dive locations.

Miri's original population was primarily Melanau, but since the development of the oil industry people have flocked here from all over the state, and Miri's 300,000 inhabitants reflects Sarawak's diverse ethnic make-up. Chinese, Ibans, Malays, Melanau, Bisayas, Orang Ulu (mostly Kayan, Kenyah, Kelabit and Lun Bawang), Bidayuhs, Indians and Eurasians all make their home here, along with West Malaysians and a sizeable expatriate community.

The city is fast becoming an important tourism destination in its own right, in line with its official designation; "Miri – The Most Liveable Resort City". The city has an excellent range of hotels in all price categories and a wide selection of food outlets. Combine this with vibrant night-life, bustling native markets, a number of popular beaches nearby and even a top class marina, and Miri makes an ideal base for exploring the National Parks, the offshore reefs and the other natural and cultural attractions of Northeast Sarawak. It is also a great place to relax for a few days after the rigours of jungle trekking.

MIRI

Note: The area code for all telephone numbers in Miri and its surroundings, unless otherwise stated, is 085 from outside the area and +6085 from overseas. Where no postcode is given, all addresses are 98000 Miri, Sarawak, Malaysia.

A Brief History

The history of Miri is also the history of Sarawak's oil industry. The area had long been known for black oil that seeped from the ground, as noted by the Resident of Baram, Claude Champion de Crespigny, in 1882. One of de Crespigny's successors, Dr Charles Hose, persuaded the Anglo Saxon Petroleum Company, a British subsidiary of Shell, to conduct exploratory drilling in the area, and on August 10 1910, the first oil was struck on a hill overlooking the small fishing village of Miri, at a depth of 123 metres. The well, subsequently christened the "Grand Old Lady", continued to produce oil until 1972.

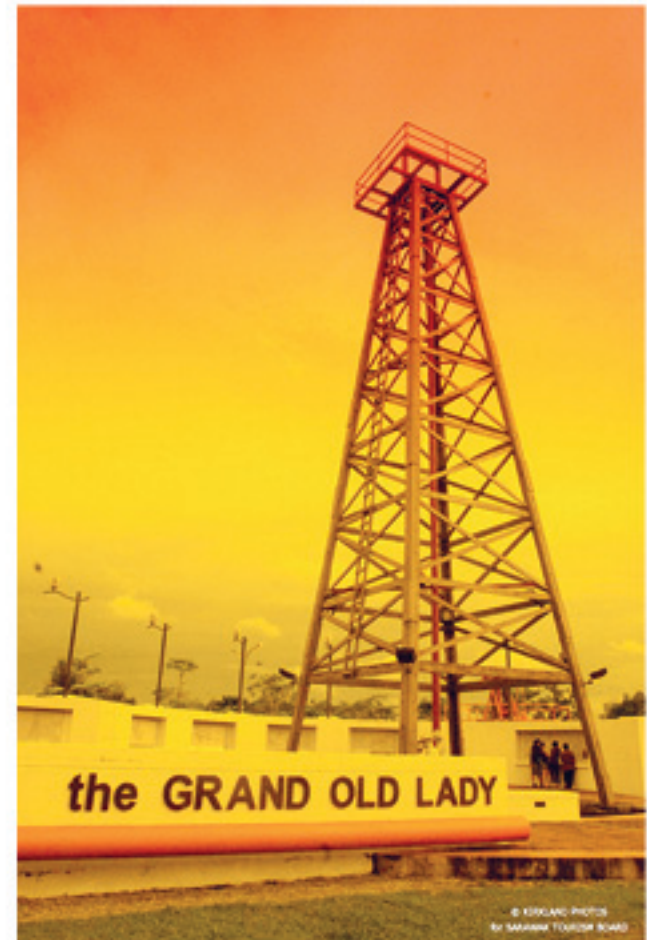
With the discovery of commercial quantities of oil, Miri was rapidly transformed from a sleepy fishing village to a booming oil town. By the mid 1920s it had become the administrative centre of the Baram region, and continued to thrive until the onset of World War 2. Shell staff did their best to sabotage the Miri oilfield, to prevent the invading Japanese forces from making use of it, but resourceful Japanese engineers soon had the field back to pre-war production levels.

During the late 1950s, the onshore oilfield began to dry up. Prospecting in remote peat swamp forest yielded poor results, so exploration moved offshore with the development of mobile exploration rigs. By the early 1970s offshore production had reached 95,000 barrels a day, but the onshore field was now in terminal decline, and was closed down on 1st October 1972. At the same time, the support and administration facilities were moved to Lutong, just north of the town.

The offshore move coincided with a boom in Sarawak's timber industry, and Miri became a major timber processing and transshipment hub, so the economy of the town continued to grow throughout the 1970s and 80s. The tourism sector also began to take off, fuelled initially by weekend visitors from nearby Brunei. Miri

continued to prosper throughout the 1990s, and in recognition of its booming population and crucial contributions to Sarawak's economy, was granted City status on 13th May 2005.

Attractions – Around City



All attractions are within easy walking distance of the city centre unless otherwise indicated.

Miri Old Town is a narrow warren of streets crammed with tiny shops selling a huge variety of goods, from Chinese funeral supplies to hi-tech electronics, as well as some of the most traditional and original coffee shops in town. The Old Town is gradually being renovated, street-by-street, but the architectural style and layout is being carefully preserved.

Tamu Muhibbah and Tamu Kedayan, opposite the central bus station, is a colourful native market where you'll find a range of exotic fruits and vegetables, handicrafts and produce from upriver areas, including fragrant Bario rice. Good photo opportunities.

Tanjong Lobang, on Brighton Beach, is a popular food centre, and an ideal spot for watching the sunset. The beach here is popular with joggers and as a family hangout spot. Choices of foods available from fast food

such as KFC and Pizza Hut to fresh seafood as there is a Food Bazaar in addition to the many restaurants available in the area. Near to Everly and Marriott hotels, taxi or e-hailing from city centre.

Coco Cabana, located right next to the iconic Seahorse Lighthouse near the newly developed Marina Bay area, is worth visiting. It features a serene seaside ambiance, with intricately carved wooden detailing on the main hall and an unforgettable view of the Miri coastline from all sides. Taxi or e-hailing.

The Fish Market, on Jln Bendahara next to the Chinese temple, is where the local catch is landed early every morning. An enormous variety of fresh fish and seafood is sold here, and some of the fishmongers' displays are minor works of art.

Next to the fish market is the Tua Pek Kong temple, dedicated to the deity most beloved by overseas Chinese. According to local legend, work started in the temple in 1913, in order to give thanks to the deity for helping to end a mysterious epidemic.

Miri City Fan (Jln Merpati/Jln Kipas) is an award-winning urban park complex comprising a variety of theme gardens, including a Botanical Garden and an Islamic Garden. It is also home to Miri City Library, a Public Swimming Pool, and a large Amphitheatre where concerts are frequently held. The City Fan is popular with locals for strolling, jogging or just chilling out.

Canada Hill, the Petroleum Museum & Oil Well No. 1. Canada Hill, a limestone ridge overlooking the city, offers excellent views of Miri and the surrounding area. Oil Well No. 1, known as the "grand old lady," is situated on top of Canada hill. The well has an important place in Miri's history, as it was here that oil was first struck by Sarawak Shell in 1910. Nowadays the site also houses a well designed and interesting Petroleum Museum (open on Tuesday - Sunday except Monday, 9 am – 5 pm, admission free), which traces the history and technological development of the oil and gas industries in Malaysia. Take a taxi or e-hailing.

The Miri Handicraft Centre on Jln Brooke is a fascinating showcase of the ethnic arts and crafts of northern Sarawak. Stalls are run by the individual producers, and craftspeople can often be viewed at work here. Items on sale include Penan mats and

basketry, Orang Ulu beadwork and woodcarvings, and a variety of textiles from around the state. Cultural performances are occasionally held on weekends. Open 9 am – 6 pm daily.



The Saberkas Night Market (Saberkas Commercial Centre, Pujut – Lutong road) has a huge variety of goods on sale, from everyday household items to local handicrafts and jungle produce, as well as dozens of tempting food stalls. Runs from Wednesday evening until Saturday night. Take a taxi or e-hailing.

The San Ching Tian temple (Jln Krokop 9) is the largest Taoist temple in Southeast Asia. The superb red roof, elegant lotus design motif and the delightful wind chimes make this a very impressive and atmospheric place to visit. Take a taxi or e-hailing.

The Sikh Temple on Jln Kubu (10 mins walk from city centre) is one of the only two in Sarawak. It is attractively located in the shade of a 100-year-old angšana tree.



Taman Awam Miri is a huge family park with children's playground, botanical garden, soft adventure activities and jogging trails. The park is dotted with stone carvings and sculpture, overlooked by a towering wooden walkway leading

to an observation platform. Open daily, entrance is free. Located 3km from City Centre, take a taxi or e-hailing.

Taman Bulatan is a large urban park sandwiched between two major roads with a wide running track around lakes and a smaller cycling track, the park is very popular with joggers and bicyclists. Take a taxi or e-hailing.

Piasau Nature Reserve, 5 km north of Miri city centre in the suburb of Piasau, was previously part of the Piasau Camp, an area owned by Sarawak Shell Berhad. The 88.67 hectares of land is now protected and is being used as a conservation site for hornbills and other wildlife. It has 107 species of flora as well as 75 species of fauna comprising hornbills, 44 other species of birds, mammals, amphibians, reptiles and butterflies. Visiting hours are from 8.30 am to 6.00 pm from Monday to Sunday, including Public Holidays. For further information, call 085-644487. Take a Taxi or e-hailing.

Amateur geologists will be fascinated by the Airport Road Outcrop, a raised outcrop of layered laterite and other soft rocks that clearly illustrate how the surrounding land was formed and how Miri rose from the sea over the last 10-15 million years. Just get your taxi or e-hailing driver to make a brief stop on the way to or from the airport.

Attractions – Out of City

The Miri Crocodile Farm at Kuala Baram, 24km from Miri, is home to more than 1,000 estuarine crocodiles and false gharials, and also features a snake house and a small zoo. The farm is fully CITES registered. Open daily 9 am to 6 pm. Enquire for feeding times, Tel: +6085 406179. Taxi or Kuala Baram bus.

Luak Bay Esplanade, 11km south of town, has an attractive white sand beach, making it a popular spot for picnics and barbecues, and probably the best spot in Miri to enjoy the spectacular tropical sunsets. Taxi or e-hailing.

Just south of Kampung Bakam, Tusan Beach and Cliffs is a series of relatively narrow white sand beaches broken by rock outcrops and backed by a mixture of sandstone and limestone cliffs for its entire 11 km length. The cliffs rise to a height of



45m in places. The views from the top of the cliffs are spectacular, especially at sunset. No direct beach access - walk from Bakam Beach or Bungai Beach. The clifftop can be accessed from the coastal road. Taxi or e-hailing.

Further down the coast towards Bekenu are a number of attractive casuarina-fringed beaches - Bungai Beach, Sibuti Beach and Peliau Beach - that are ideal for picnicking. They are around an hour's drive if you have your own transport.

A great way to discover the Bekenu area is the Kedayan Homestay, which involves 28 fishing and farming families form the three ethnic Kedayan villages of Kampung Peliau, Kampung Bungai and Kampung Jambu. Activities available include deep sea fishing and diving. Tel: 014 8879238 (Mr Nawar Kadir) Homestay Coordinator.

Kampung Kuala Sibuti is a Melanau fishing village about 85 km from Miri which boasts arguably the best beach in Northern Sarawak, running for 2.5 km from the mouth of Sungai Sibuti to the mouth of Sungai Niah. Past Sungai Niah, a further 32 km of continuous beach, broken only by small streams, runs as far as Kuala Suai.

Village homestay available, Tel: 019-4686828 (Iswandi Ramli)/ 019 8679692 (Ramlee Nawawi) Villagers can arrange crocodile spotting and firefly watching trips. 1½ hrs drive,

The Rumah Patrick Libau Homestay offers visitors the opportunity of staying in an Iban longhouse and enjoying traditional longhouse life. The longhouse is located next to Niah National Park, so guests not only experience the longhouse life but also get to visit the world-famous national park. The Niah cave is only 15 minutes walk from the longhouse and this serves as a convenient base to explore the caves.

For details on the homestay, tel: 019 8052415 (Mr. Patrick Libau ak Ignatius Sulla)

Diving



Miri is fast becoming a popular dive destination, due to an abundance of pristine patch reefs that make up the Miri-Sibuti Coral Reef National Park, lying at depths from 7 to 30 metres with average visibility ranging from 10 to 30 metres. Hard and soft corals cover the entire reefs, with abundant gorgonians, sea-whips, anemones, sponges and crinoids. Angel fish, butterfly fish, fusiliers, groupers, stingrays, trigger fish, parrot fish, wrasses are among the numerous reef species that can be seen and over 40 species of nudibranch have been recorded. There are also some interesting wreck dives.

The best time to dive is from March to August, but diving is available all year round. The Dive Sites listed below are just a short boat ride from the city (times given in brackets). All descriptions are courtesy of CoCo Dive.

Eve's Garden (15 min): A shallow reef of just 7 - 12 metres carpeted with soft corals such as leather corals, elephant's ear and dead man's fingers. Giant anemones and clown fishes inhabit the reef, along with schooling yellowtail fusiliers and angel fishes.

Anemone Garden (30 min): One of the most interesting reefs with a depth range of 10 to 16 meters, with hard and soft corals, anemones and their symbiotic clown fishes, bubble corals, anchor corals, colourful dendronephthya soft corals, feather stars, giant clams, nudibranches and schooling yellowtails.

Sea fan Garden (30 min): This unique 16 metre deep reef provides an excellent environment for an

amazing variety of gorgonian sea fans, sea whips and schooling batfish.

Tukau Drop-Off (50 min): An exciting drop-off reef (20 – 40 metres) with a vertical wall. Schooling jacks, barracudas, napoleon Wrasses, yellowtail fusiliers and large groupers are always present, and sharks and trumpet fish are occasionally seen.

Grouper Patch (1 hr): Giant groupers inhabit this reef of 15 – 18 metres depth. Spiny lobsters are also present together with yellowtail fusiliers and other schooling fishes.

Santak Point (45 min): The average visibility here is 30 meters or more. Large gorgonian fans of 2 meters in size are all over the top of the reef at 21 meters. The reef edge drops to 35 meters.

Atago Maru Wreck (15 min): A WWII Japanese wreck just off Lutong. The 100 metre ship sits upright with the top deck just 10 metres below the surface. Most of the hull is covered with cave corals. A large moray eel has made its home here and travelly, jacks and barracudas are frequently seen.

Batu Belais Reef (30 min): A picturesque reef covered with gorgonian trees and seafans. Batfishes are common among the long swaying sea whips - a photographer's heaven.

Sunday Reef (35 min): Large hard corals make up this richly inhabited 11 – 16 metre deep reef, populated with anemones, clown fishes and nudibranches.

Sri Gadong Wreck (1 hr 10 min): A small 30 metre cargo ship sits on an 18 metre sand bottom. The whole wreck is teeming with life; jacks, yellow grunts, batfish and barracudas circle the wreck while giant groupers swim in and out of the cargo holds.

Dive Operators: CoCo Dive, Lot 2117, Block 9, Miri - Pujut Road, Tel: 417053, www.cocodive.com.my.

ACCOMMODATION

Accommodation ranges from budget hostels to luxury international and boutique hotels. The premises listed below are located in the central area and within easy walking distance of major tourist attractions and the central business district, unless otherwise stated. Star ratings are shown where applicable, but many hotels do not apply for rating.

The following is a selection of the more established properties - you may find more on tripadvisor.com and similar websites.

International / Business Class Hotels

Imperial Hotel (4*), Jln Pos (located adjacent to Imperial Shopping Mall), Tel: 431133, Fax: 431122, E-mail: enquiries@imperialhotel.com.my, www.imperialhotel.com.my. 118 rooms and 144 serviced apartments.

Imperial Palace Hotel (4*), Lot 1120, Block 7, Jln Sehati, Tel: 437799 Fax: 437733. Email: enquiries@imperialpalacehotel.com.my, www.imperialpalacehotel.com.my. 307 rooms.

Meritz Hotel (4*), Bintang Megamall, Jalan Miri-Pujut, Tel: 417888, Fax: 418666, Email: info@meritzhotel.com, www.meritzhotel.com. 190 rooms.

Grand Palace Hotel (4*), Pelita Commercial Centre, Jln Miri-Pujut, Tel: 428888, www.grandpalacehotel.com.my.

Mega Hotel (4*), Jln Merbau, Tel: 432432, www.megahotel.com.my.

Miri Marriott Resort & Spa (5*), Jln Temenggong Datuk Oyong Lawai (facing Brighton Beach), Tel: 421121, www.marriott.com/myymc.

Parkcity Everly Hotel (4*), Jln Temenggong Datuk Oyong Lawai (facing Brighton Beach), Tel: 418888, website: miri.theeverlyhotel.com.

Place2stay Business Hotel, Emart Riam, 1st Floor, Lot 8556-8557, Jln Miri-Bintulu, Tel: 326961, website: www.place2stay.com.my.

Pullman Miri Waterfront (5*), Lot 1347, Miri Waterfront Commercial Centre, Tel: 323888, Fax:

323999, E-mail: H9731-RE@accor.com, www.pullmanhotels.com.

Medium Class Hotels

Ajang Hotel, Lot 1326-1335, Block 9, Miri Waterfront Commercial Centre, Tel: 433173, email: bestrate@ajanghotel.com.my, www.ajanghotel.com.my.

Ano Hotel (3*), Lot 1755, Block 9, Off Jalan Permaisuri Miri Concession Land District, Tel: 321 166, WhatsApp: 012 875 9166, www.anohotel.com, fb: [anohotelmiri](https://www.facebook.com/anohotelmiri).

Dynasty Hotel (3*), Lot 683, Block 9, Jln Pujut-Lutong. Tel: 421111. www.dynastyhotelmiri.com.my.

Eastwood Valley Golf & Country Club (3*), Jln Miri By-Pass, Tel: 421010, www.eastwoodvalley.com. Chalet-style suburban golf resort.

Jinhold Hotel & Serviced Apartment, Lot 14735, Airport Commercial Centre, Jalan Airport, Tel: 638555, www.jinhold.com, fb: [Jinhold Hotel & Serviced Apartment](https://www.facebook.com/JinholdHotel).

Kenyalang Suites, Lot 2133, Edward Jeli Road, Off Krokop 10, Tel: 421663, Email: kenyalangsuites@gmail.com.

Kingwood Boutique Hotel, Lot 826, Jln Yu Seng Utara, Tel: 415888, Email: bookings@kingwoodmiri.com.my, www.kingwoodmiri.com.my.

Miri Hotel (1*), 47 Jln Brooke, Tel: 421212.

Pacific Orient Hotel (2*), 49 Jln Brooke, Tel: 413333, www.pacificorienthotel.com.

Paragon Hotel Lutong, Lot 10203-10220 Jalan Kampung Pangkalan Lutong, Tel: 662211, Email: resv@paragonlutong.com, www.paragonlutong.com.

Somerset Hotel (2*), 12 Jln Kwangtung, Tel: 422777, E-mail: somerhot@streamyx.com.

Telang Usan Hotel, Lot 2431, 2.5km Airport Road, Tel: 411433, Email: tu_miri@streamyx.com.

Budget Hotels

Apollo Hotel, Jln Yu Seng Selatan, Tel: 433077.

BlueBerry Inn, Permyjaya Commercial Centre, Tel: 421175.

Boulevard Inn, Jln Boulevard, Boulevard Commercial Centre, Tel: 426336.

Brooke Inn, 14 Jln Brooke, Tel: 412881.

Bunker Inn, Lot 8009, 1st Floor, Block 11, Pusat Bandar Baru Permyjaya, Tel: 410531.

Check Inn, Lot 675, Jln Permaisuri, Tel: 322014.

Chemara Boutique Hotel, Lot 1436 & 1437, Block 1, Jalan Pasar Lutong, Tel: 663 666, fb: chemaraboutiquehotel.

Citihotel@Eastvalley, Lot 2350, Block 17, Jln Cahaya, Tel: 325600, Email: citihotel1016@gmail.com.

City Inn, Lot 568, Jln Lee Tak, Tel: 435077.

Classy Inn, Lot 709-10, Jln Masjid, Tel: 412533.

Cosy Inn, Lot 545-7, Jln Yu Seng Selatan, Tel: 415522.

Crown Prince Inn, Lot 358, Taman Jade Manis, Tel: 417404.

De Central Inn, 14 Jln Yu Seng Utara, Tel: 424168, Email: decentalmiri@hotmail.com.

Dragon Inn, Lot 355, Jln Masjid, Tel: 422266, Email: dragon.inn12@gmail.com.

Fairland Inn, 21 Jln Raja, Tel: 413981.

Fortune Inn, Lot 756, Jln Merpati, Tel: 423669.

Garden Inn, Lot 290B Jln Teochew, Tel: 419822.

GG room, No.381B, jln Yu Seng Selatan, Tel: 410966.

Gloria Hotel, 27, Jln Brooke, PO Box 1283, 98008 Miri. Tel: 416699.

Goodstay, No.45, Brooke Road, Tel: 435555.

Grand SH Hotel, Lot 802 & 803, Jln Bintang, Tel: 424096, Email: reservation@grandshhotel.com, www.grandshhotel.com.

Harbour View Inn, Lot 124, Jln Bendahara, Tel: 412177.

Hua Kiew Inn, Lot 621, Jln Serdang, Tel: 423266, Email: huakiewinn@gmail.com.

Hotel Nur, Miri Waterfront, Jalan Permaisuri, Tel: 420420, Email: reservation.hotelnur@gmail.com.

Hong Kong Suites, Lot 841, Merpati Road, Tel: 424210.

Kingsley Hotel, Lot 2167, Jln Sylvia, Tel: 423988, website: www.kingsleyhotel.my.

King Hua Air Cond Inn, Lot 311, Taman Jade Manis, Tel: 412512.

Ku's Inn, 3 Jln Sylvia, Tel: 413733.

La Mirina Boutique Inn, Lot 1955, Ground Floor, Marina Square 2, Marina Parkcity, Tel: 320903, E-mail: reservation@lamirina.com.my.

M Boutique Inn, 1056 Bintang Jaya Commercial Centre, Tel: 418299, Email: mboutiqueinn@gmail.com.

Mcity Inn, Lot 382, South Yu Seng Road, Tel: 418408.

M Empire Motel, Lot 1245-1246, Centre Point Commercial Centre Phase 1, Tel: 411119.

Metro Inn, Lot 762, Jln Merpati, Tel: 411663.

Million Inn, 6 Jln Yu Seng Selatan, Tel: 415077.

Muhibbah Inn, Lot 548, Jln Yu Seng Selatan, Tel: 412003.

New Hua Kiew Hotel, Lot 911, Lee Tak Street, Tel: 429366.

Nova Hotel, Lot 1016, Jln Brooke, Tel: 322555.

One Times One Inn, Lot 3532-3533, Al-Bayt square, Miri 101 Commercial Centre, Jln Miri-Pujut, Tel: 325598, Email: 1times1inn@gmail.com.

Palace Inn, Lot 192, Jln Kwangtong, Tel: 421999.

Pari Inn, Lot 9333, Mega Emart Commercial Centre, Jln Miri-Bintulu, Tel: 325555, Email: roompariinn@gmail.com.

Pavillion Inn, Ground Floor, 1st & 2nd Floor, Lot 7157-7158, Pusat Bandar Baru Permyjaya, Tel: 628788.

Raja Inn, Lot 246, Jln Setia Raja, Tel: 422422.

Rasa Sayang Inn, 566 Jln Lee Tak, Tel: 413880.

River Inn, Lot 652, Jln Nakhoda Gampar, Tel: 415507.

Silverwood Inn, 20A Jln Bendahara, Tel: 420577.

The Room, Lot 1570-1573, Jln Brooke, Tel: 424646, Email: theroomjalanbrooke@yahoo.com.

Today Inn, Lot 571, Jln Lee Tak, Tel: 414000.

Treez Inn, Lot 1428-1429, MCLD Lutong, Tel: 668681.

Tropical Inn, Lot 852, Jln Teochew, Tel: 411376.

Venice Inn, Block 9, Waterfront Commercial Centre, Tel: 433200, Email: veniceinnmiri@hotmail.com.

Visa Inn, Lot 571, Jln Lee Tak, Tel: 411376.

Walk Inn, Lot 1819 Jln Merbau, Tel: 012-9945678, Email: walkinnmiri@gmail.com.

Yew Hotel, Lot 243, Jln Setia Raja, Tel: 413289.

YS Inn, Mega Emart Commercial Centre, Jln Miri-Bintulu, Tel: 324933.

91 Street Boutique Inn, Lot 2016-2018, Marina Square 1, Marina Parkcity, Tel: 321591.

98 Inn, Lot 1329, Centre Point Phase 1, Jln Melayu, Tel: 421773/415909.

101 Hotel, Lot 1608, Hokkien Road, Tel: 416371.

Guest Houses, Lodges, Retreats and Homestays

Borneo Tropical Rainforest Resort, Km 36 Miri-Bintulu Road, Sibuti Land District, 98000 Miri. Tel: 407198 (Resort) 613888 (Miri Office), Fax: 613808, E-mail: info@borneorainforestresort.com, www.borneorainforestresort.com. Agro and nature resort situated adjacent to Lambir National Park.

30 rooms and 18 chalets, as well as a budget hostel block.

Apple Lodge, Lot 343-344, Jln Miri-Pujut, Tel: 419696.

City Homestay, Lot 278 – 280, 1st Floor, Brighton Centre, Jln Temenggong Datuk Oyong Lawai, Tel: 428118.

Coco House, Lot 2117, Block 9, Jln Miri-Pujut, Tel: 417051, www.cocohouse.com.my.

Dillenia Guesthouse, Lot 846, Jln Sida, Tel: 434204, E-mail: dillenia.guesthouse@gmail.com.

Jatidiri Farmstay Sungai Gatas, Kampung Sungai Gatas, Bungai Sibuti, Bakam, Tel: 650237/ 019 8747826 (Hj.Abdul Gani Bin Kamit) Email: jatidirifarmstay@gmail.com, jatidirifarmstay.blogspot.my.

JJ Homestay, Lot 11A, Jln Lee Tak, Tel: 417072, Email: jjhomestaymiri@gmail.com.

Lixion Homestay, No.2B, Ground Floor, Mayland Building, Merbau Road, Tel: 431100, Email: lixioninn2013@gmail.com.

Miri Waterfront Homestay, Lot 1158, Waterfront Commercial Centre, Tel: 019-8659686, miriwaterfronthomestay.blogspot.com.

Next Room Homestay, Lot 637, Jln Yu Seng Utara, Tel: 411422, Email: nextroomhomestay@gmail.com.

Mark Guesthouse, Lot 2721, Jalan Pantai 5, Taman Bayshore, Tel: 016 872 3738, fb: [markhouse.miri](https://www.facebook.com/markhouse.miri).

MyHomestay, Lot 1091, Jln Merpati, Tel: 429091, staymyhomestay.blogspot.com.

Siang Bing Homestay, Lot 281 Beautiful Jade Centre, Tel: 417524.

Tim's Seaside Hideout Café and Lodge, Lot 524, Beraya Lama, Tel: 013-8865118, www.facebook.com/timseaside.

Serviced Apartments

Homelite Eco Park Serviced Apartments, Lot 8000, Eco Park, Jln Sze Chuan 1, Off jln Airport, Tel: 019-8517755, Email:

reservation@hlservicedapartments.com, www.hlservicedapartments.com.

Imperial Hotel - see International Class Hotels.

Jinhold Serviced Apartment Miri, Lot 2160 Jln Bulatan Park, Tel: 660555, www.jinholdapartment.com.

Jinhold Hotel & Serviced Apartment - see Medium Class Hotels.

Mciti Suites, Lot 2645, Piasau Business Park, Jln Bulatan Park, Tel: 665777, www.mcitisuites.my.

Merdeka Suites Hotel, Lot 6920, Jln Miri-Bintulu, Tel: 432181, Email: mshotel@streamyx.com.

EATING OUT



Miri's multi-ethnic population means visitors are assured of a wide variety of Malaysian and international cuisine. Miri has literally hundreds of dining outlets, so only a small selection can be listed here. Visitors planning to stay more than a few days should check the local press and get dining tips from locals.

Container City, North Yu Seng corridor, is a roofed open space area decorated with modified shipping containers as food stalls with plenty of seating and tables throughout. The various food available include western, local, Taiwanese snacks, desserts and much more. Operating hours from Tuesday-Thursday: 7am-11pm, Friday-Saturday: 7am-12am and Sunday: 7am-11pm.

Chinese

Chinese coffee-shops are dotted all over town, with food stalls serving a variety of local noodle dishes. Most also serve economical mixed rice dishes at lunchtimes.

2020 Café, 557/558 Pelita Commercial Centre. Wide selection of dim sum in the mornings and fast food, rice and noodle dishes at lunchtime. 6 am - 2.30 pm.

Didi Cafe, 948 Jln Perry (near Imperial Hotel). Popular coffee shop with stalls selling *laksa*, *kolomee*, claypot noodles and chicken rice. 6 am - 4.30 pm.

Dynasty Chinese Restaurant, Dynasty Hotel. Gourmet Chinese restaurant (non halal). 11 am - 2.30 pm, 6 pm - 10 pm.

Good Taste Bak Kut Teh, Jln Krokop-Miri. Serves some of the best *bak kut teh* (herbal pork rib soup) in town. 8 am - mid-afternoon.

Han Palace Restaurant, Grand Palace Hotel. Extensive Cantonese menu, *dim sum* served from 8 am - 2 pm and dinner from 6 pm - 10 pm.

Imperial Restaurant, Imperial Hotel. Consistently well-reviewed Chinese & fusion restaurant with an extensive wine list. Take a jacket for the generous air conditioning. 11 am - midnight.

Jing Wood Café, 612 Pelita Commercial Centre. Very popular for its fried oyster *kway teow*. 7.30 am - 1 am.

Michael Steamboat, next to Boulevard Shopping Mall. Steamboat and BBQ buffet dinner. Eat as much as you want for RM 20 per head. 5pm - 10pm.

Miri City Food Court, 2563 South Piasau, Jalan Bulatan Miri. Stalls with a selection of Chinese, Malay and Indian food. Good beef noodles and *dim sum*. 6 am - 11pm.

Open Air Market, Jln Brooke. Centre of Miri Old Town, with famous local dishes whose recipes have been passed on for generations. Look out for the curry rice and fried *kway teow*. Sells out fast so go in the morning to avoid disappointment. Non-halal.

New Kuok Kee Cafe (at Metro Hotel), Jln North Yu Seng. Chinese coffee shop selling *kolo mee* and good beef noodles.

Pelita Hai Ma Food Centre, 553-554 Pelita Commercial Centre. Busy 24-hour coffee shop popular with night-owls place due to cheap beer and live football on TV.

QQ Restaurant, 539 Pelita Commercial Centre. This coffee shop boasts some of the best roasted duck in town. 7 am - 10.30pm.

Sky Garden, 17th Floor, Meritz Hotel, offers al fresco steamboat with spectacular views. 3.30 pm - midnight.

Yong Seng Café, 542 Pelita Commercial Centre. One of the best *kolo mee* stalls in town and a popular hangout for supper. 7 am - 4.30 am.

WTZ Cafe, Ground Floor, Lot 584, Jln North Yu Seng. This busy cafe serves just about every type of Chinese noodle dish there is. 6.30 am - 5 pm.

Coffee, Tea & Snack Bars

Miri is home to many leading coffee bar franchises and some local coffee shops have sprung up over the years.

The Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf is on the Outdoor Ground Floor, Bintang Megamall. Starbucks has outlets at Miri Airport, Bintang Megamall, Permaisuri Imperial City Mall and a Drive-Thru at Marina Parkcity.

Little Roast Co, Lot 2012, Grd Floor, Lorong Marina 1/3, Marina Phase 1. Specialised in Brazillian & Sumatra blend coffee beans. 10am - 11pm.

Chapter One Café, Lot 2288, Jalan Marina 2/1, Marina Square Phase 2. Serves espresso based coffee alongside pastries, lasagne and sandwiches. 10am - 11.30pm.

Route 66 Café, Ground Floor, New World Mart Lutong. Coffee crafted with Latin American & Asian Blends. Mon - Fri 7am - 7pm, Sat - Sun 10am - 6pm.

Caffien Port, Lot 1964, Ground Floor, Marina Parkcity Phase 2. Espresso based such as cappuccinno, latte mocha etc. Mon - Fri 8am - 11pm, Sat-Sun 9.30am - 12am.

Motown Motor Coffee, Lot 1447, Jalan Sekolah, Pasar Lutong. Espresso based (Americano, cappuccino, latte, mocha). Mon - Sat 8am - 7.30pm, Sun closed.

Zeppelin by Kenny's & Coffeebrick, Lot 1943, Grd Floor, Marina Parkcity Phase 2. Specialty coffee beans manually brewed. Also serves Japanese & French fusion cuisine. Mon - Sun 10am - 11pm.

The Maker Café, Lot 2376, Ground Floor, Boulevard Commercial Centre, Miri, Sarawak. 10am - 10pm.

Desserts, Ground Floor, Pelita Commercial Centre. Homemade ice-cream, teas and pastries. 11 am - midnight.

Secret Recipe, 349-350 Pelita Commercial Centre. Local branch of Malaysia's popular cake & fusion franchise. 9 am - 9 pm.

Fast Food & Franchise Outlets

Pizza Hut & McDonalds are in Bintang Megamall, together with Kenny Rogers Roasters and Sushi King. KFC has branches dotted around town including Bintang Megamall, Jln Bendahara, Imperial Mall and Boulevard Hyper Market. Local chain Sugar Bun has branches at the Imperial Mall, Bintang Megamall, Wisma Pelita and Boulevard Hyper Market. Marrybrown, another Malaysian franchise, is at Miri Airport.

Indian

Banana Leaf Restaurant & Krishna Fish Head Curry, Lot 1396, Jln Kubu. Spicy South Indian banana leaf meals. 11am - 10pm.

Bilal Islamic Restaurant, Taman Jade Manis (near Mega Hotel). An old Miri favourite, serving a variety of curries plus *biryani* rice and Indian bread dishes such as *murtabak*, *roti canai* and *thosai*. 7 am – 9 pm.

Khan's Islamic Restaurant, Jln Maju. Run by the same family as Bilal, same comments apply.

Restoran Al-Asna, Lot 947, Jln Perry (near Imperial Hotel) and Lot 549, Pelita Commercial Centre. Breakfast favourites such as *thosai*, *roti canai*, *murtabak*, plus *biryani* rice, curries and noodles served all day. 6 am - 9 pm.

Taj Restaurant, 113 Lutong Bazaar. North Indian tandoori dishes and South Indian curries. Well worth the taxi fare. 10 am - 10 pm.

Indigenous (Kelabit)

Summit Café, Centre Point Commercial Centre. A warm, friendly restaurant offering traditional ethnic food, especially genuine Kelabit dishes from the highlands of Bario. Recommendations include *Nuba Laya* (Bario rice in *isip* leaves) and *Labo Senutuk* (pounded and seasoned wild boar meat). 7 am - 3 pm. Closed on Sundays.

Japanese

Shiki, Ground Floor, Boulevard Commercial Centre. Reasonably priced authentic Japanese cuisine. 11 am - 10.30 pm.

Sushi King, Bintang Megamall and Permaisuri Imperial City Mall.

Escapade Sushi, branches at Jalan Tanjong Lobang and Bintang Megamall.

Korean

New Seoul, Jln Brighton. Known for its huge portions. 10 am - 2 pm, 5 pm - 11 pm. Closed on Sunday at lunchtime.

Malay

Awang Mahyan Cafe, branches at North Yu Seng Road & open 24 hours.

Bulatan Cafe. Lot 234, Taman Jade Manis (near Mega Hotel). Mixed rice buffet of curries and vegetable dishes. 7 am - midnight.

FJ Kafe, No 437, Jln Fragrans. Fried rice and noodles plus mixed rice. 5.30 am - midnight.

Gerai Wawasan Food Stalls, Jln China. Conveniently located in the centre of town, this busy food centre has a range of stalls selling Malay hawker favourites.

Irdyna Bistro, Lot 427, Jln Bendahara. Large Malay corner café serving mixed rice, *laksa*, noodles and soups. 7 am - 4 pm.

Kornia's Recipe, Marina Parkcity Phase 1. Considered the best mee jawa in town. 7am - 3pm.

Madli's, Jln Merpati. Popular Malay restaurant serving a wide range of dishes, including *roti canai*, noodles, mixed rice, satay as well as simple western dishes. Lunch buffet. 8 am - midnight.

Nagaliar Nasi Lemak, Jalan Merpati, next to Standard Chartered Bank. The *nasi lemak* here is so popular the whole restaurant is dedicated to this special dish. The crispy chicken and spicy *sambal* are the icing on the cake. Mid-morning - 3 pm.

Nur Zanah & Catering, Lot 429, Jln Bendahara. Mixed rice, *nasi lemak*, curries, tom yam soup and more. 6 am - 5 pm.

Selera Rasa Segar, Jln Permaisuri. Mixed rice and *nasi lemak*. 7 am - 9 pm (7 pm weekends).

Restoran Serai Wangi, Lot 641, Jln Yu Seng Utara. Buffet of mixed rice dishes. Open 7 am - midnight.

Surabaya Restaurant, Lot 288 Jln Bendahara. Chicken rice, mixed rice, Malay soup and noodle dishes. 9 am - 9 pm.

Taman Seroja Food Stalls, Jln Brooke (Opp. Miri Hotel). Good range of Malay food including mixed rice, *laksa* and noodles. Daytime & evenings.

Seafood

Apollo Seafood, 4 Jln Yu Seng Selatan. A popular old Miri favourite, Apollo has been serving value-for-money seafood for as long as most of its patrons can remember. Open daily, 6pm – late.

Dragon Seafood Restaurant, 531 Bakam Road. On the edge of town facing the sea. Definitely worth the taxi fare. 11 am - 11 pm.

Maxim Restaurant, Lot 1062, Bintang Jaya Commercial Centre, Jln Miri-Pujut. Long established Miri favourite selling a wide selection of seafood and the best curry fish head in town. 11 am - 11 pm.

Food Bazaar, Brighton Beach. A variety of Chinese stalls serving fresh seafood - as well as Malay stalls offering satay, rice and noodle dishes - to be eaten to the sound of waves breaking on the nearby beach. 4pm – 11 pm (although most stalls open between 5 and 6 pm).

New Tanjung Seafood, Lot 1, Brighton Rd, opposite Marriott Hotel. Popular and friendly seafood restaurant set in and around an old wooden house. Steamed red snapper is the house speciality. 6pm – 11 pm.

Tanjung Pak Hock Lin Seafood. Lot 720 & 721, Jln Brighton. Next to New Tanjung, with a similar menu and ambience.

Yi Hah Hai Seafood, 892-893 Miri Waterfront Commercial Centre. Choose from a selection of live seafood in aquarium displays. Reasonable prices and relaxing river views. House specialty is *Assam Fish*. Also serves great crab. 3pm - 12.30 am.

Thai

Siamese Secrets, Lot 513, Ground Floor, Jln Merbau. Popular city centre restaurant serving Thai food plus pasta & pizza, Western, Malaysian and Mexican dishes. 12 pm - 3 pm & 6 pm - 4 am.

Vegetarian

CGS Vegetarian Cafe, Lot 2922, Jln Bulan Sabit. Popular, vegan-friendly Chinese restaurant - you may have to wait for a table at peak times. 11 am -10 pm.

Convenient Vegetarian (Con-V), Lot 518, Ground floor, Pelita Commercial Centre. Serves both western and Chinese vegetarian food. 11 am - 9 pm.

Tzu Xin Yuan, Lot 779, Jln Bintang Jaya Utama. Chinese vegetarian cuisine. 6.30 am - 4 pm.

Veg King, Lot 1399 Jln Kubu. Chinese & Malay dishes, vegan-friendly, with juice bar. 7 am - 9 pm.

Western/International

Mango Tree - see Entertainment listing.

Beach Republic, Jln Bakam, Luak Bay. This lively resort complex is popular for its DIY burgers and barbecues. Also serves local favourites. 10 am - midnight. Take a taxi or Miri Bus 11 or 13.

Café Miri Bar & Bistro, Lot 2120, Jln Bulan Sabit, Taman Yakin. Open air bar-cum-restaurant serving western food at reasonable prices. 3 pm - 11 pm, closed on Tuesday.

Chillax Café & Bistro, Lot 2085 & 2084 Ground Floor, Jalan MS1/1, Marina Square, Phase 1. Open café and bistro concept offering western food and beverages. 4.30pm - 1.00am.

Fratini's Restaurant, Block 5, Boulevard Commercial Centre. Popular restaurant serving a range of pizza and pasta dishes. Kids can make their own pizzas - an added attraction for families. 10 am - 11 pm.

M Signature Revolving Restaurant, Meritz Hotel. There is no better place in town to enjoy dinner with a superlative view. The near 2-hour rotation

time is perfect for a relaxing meal. 11 am - 2 pm, 6 pm - 10 pm.

Ming Café, Jln Yu Seng Selatan opp. Mega Hotel. Very popular and busy corner café and bar with budget western dishes, as well as Chinese, Indian and Malay stalls. Huge selection of beers. Open 12noon until late.

Pipe Bistro, Lot 2080 Marina Square Phase 1. Great spot for those who like to dine and chill. Pool tables available 4pm - 1.00am.

Seahorse Bistro, Taman Piasau Indah. Serves a wide selection of continental and local dishes, from fresh barbeques to fried finger foods. Quite a distance from town area, so take a taxi, or e-hailing 5 pm - 1 am. Halal.

ENTERTAINMENT

Pubs and Bars

The residents of Miri like to enjoy themselves, the city has a justified reputation as a party town, especially at weekends, and there is no shortage of entertainment outlets. There are a few pubs, bars and karaoke lounges in the city centre, but the most happening nightlife takes place in and around the Pelita Commercial Centre & Marina Parkcity. Take a short taxi or e-hailing ride from the city centre hotels. Here you'll find a few pubs ideal for a chat with friends and a cluster of lively bars and clubs where Miri's party crowd hangs out. For cheap beer, head for the coffee shops which offer special '3-can' deals.

Hazard Bistro, Canada Hill, next to Petroleum Museum. It is an unwritten rule in Malaysia that if you want to make new friends over a beer or many, you go where the local Hash House Harriers hang out, which is how this place got its name, after the local Hazard Hash. Perched on top of Canada Hill, Hazard has the best view of any spot in Miri. Get here early for spectacular sunsets, a great selection of affordable beers, tasty barbecues and excellent company. 4 pm - 1 am.

Alice in Borneoland, Lot 2002 & 2003, Ground Floor, Marina Square, Phase 1. Live music performances everyday. 5pm - 2am

Mango Tree, Unity Centre, Pelita Commercial Centre. This pavement café cum bar serves western food and pasta dishes, but is also a popular drinking spot thanks to giant TV screens showing live football. 2 pm - 2 am.

Barthyme, Lot 2094, Blk 9, MCLD, Marina Square Phase 1. An open music cafe concept ideal for live music performances and events. A good place for chilling and entertainment. 5pm - 2am

Kenyalang Pub, Upper Floor, Unity Centre, Pelita Commercial Centre. Pub with dancefloor that attracts the younger party crowd. Packed at weekends - 6 pm - 2am.

Chaplins, 339, Ground Floor, Pelita Commercial Centre. Small, friendly pub popular among Miri's expat community. 5 pm - 2 am.

Cheerie Berries, Unity Centre, Pelita Commercial Centre. Popular for its live bands and R&B playlist. 2 giant TV screens and a pool table. 5 pm - 2am.

Cross Border Vape Bar & Bistro, Lot 2101, Ground Floor, Marina Square, Phase 1. Miri's first Vape Bar which serves quality food and beverages while providing professional vaping advice. 1pm - 12am.

Club Celebrities, Imperial Palace Hotel. Miri's biggest and swankiest dance club, with cutting-edge sound & lights as well as top DJs and live bands. Go with friends and buy your beer by the barrel. 4 pm - 2.30 am.

Island, Block 7, Unity Centre, Pelita Commercial Centre. Relaxed hangout with a selection of over a hundred cocktails. You won't run out of choices. 4pm - 2am.

Ming Cafe - see Eating Out - Western.

Reflections, Meritz Hotel. Stylish lounge bar with live music nightly as well as private KTV rooms. 3 pm - 1 am.

Triple Twenty Sport Bistro, Lot 2031, Marina Park City Phase 1. Lively bar and bistro with the emphasis on darts and Karaoke.

Cinemas

Golden Screen Cinemas (GSC), Bintang Megamall, Tel: 417459 Features 3D screens.

TGV Cinemas, Permaisuri Imperial City Mall feature 8 cinema halls, 1261 seats, state of the art sound and digital projection system. Check local press for movie listings. Tel: 1-300-22-2848

The Performing Arts

Traditional music and dance performances are often staged in the leading hotels, outdoors at Miri City Fan, public parks and at the Civic Centre (off Jln Gartak). Check local press for details. The popular Borneo Jazz Festival is held in early May every year - see Events listing on page 78.

TRAVEL CONNECTIONS

Any fares quoted in this guide are for one-way and do not include taxes and surcharges (where applicable).

Air: Regular Malaysia Airlines (MAS) flights connect Miri with Kuching (2x daily), and Kuala Lumpur (3x daily), with onward connections to over 80 destinations worldwide. Air Asia, operates frequent flights to Miri from Kuala Lumpur LCCT (6x daily), Kuching (5/6x daily), Johor Bahru (3x weekly), Kota Kinabalu (2/3x daily) and Singapore (5x weekly). MASWings operates frequent ATR-72 turboprop flights to Bintulu, Sibu, Kuching, Labuan, Limbang and Mulu, as well as a Rural Air Service, operating DHC-6 Twin Otters (baggage allowance 10kg max - excess baggage is not available) to Ba Kelalan, Bario, Lawas, Limbang, Long Akah, Long Banga, Long Lellang, Long Seridan, Marudi and Mukah.

Air Asia. 1st Floor, Main Terminal Building, Miri Airport. Also at Pelita Commercial Centre next to Grand Palace Hotel. Call centre: 03-76512222. www.airasia.com.

Malaysia Airlines & MASWings. Lot 10635, Airport Commercial Centre. Tel: 423500. Call centre 1300 883000. www.malaysiaairlines.com.

Road: Miri has road links with all major towns in Sarawak and Brunei.

Bus: Local Services depart from the bus station next to the Visitor's Information Centre. Long Distance Services depart from the Long Distance Bus Terminal at Pujut Corner. At peak holiday periods it is advisable to book long distance bus tickets in advance.

Batu Niah: See section on Niah Caves National Park.

Bintulu (RM25) – Sibu (RM45) – Sarikei (RM56) - Sri Aman (RM72) – Kuching (RM90): Frequent services from long distance bus terminal.

Brunei: PHLS Express, daily at 8.15 am and 3.45 pm (RM50).

Kuala Baram for Crocodile Farm, —Miri Bus No. 1 or 1A.

Lambir Hills: See section on Lambir Hills National Park.

Long Distance Bus Terminal: Miri Bus No. 33A

To Mukah: 4x daily (also to Dalat) from long distance bus terminal (RM52).

To Pontianak (Indonesia): 4x daily from long distance bus terminal RM96).

Taxis: Airport to town is RM30. The main taxi stand is off Jln. China in the centre of town. Miri taxis do not use meters so it is best to agree the fare first. Short distances around town are RM7-10. Taxis can be booked by phoning 432277. A call out fee is levied. To charter a taxi for 1 hour costs RM35-40.

E-hailing Services: E-hailing services include Grab, MyCar and QRGO.

Car Hire: This is a great way to explore in and around Miri. At peak periods, make sure to book in advance.

Avis Rent-A-Car, Miri Airport Counter. Tel: 613907, Email: miri@avis.com.my.

Brighton Tour & Travel, 15 Level 2 Soon Hup Tower, Jln Maju. Tel: 433113, 019-8846186 (24 hrs), Email: brightontt@gmail.com, www.brightontt.com. Also offers chauffeur service.

Casbumi Car Rental, Miri Airport Counter, Tel: 612799, Email: staney2000@yahoo.com, www.casbumi.blogspot.com

FT Car Rental, Miri Airport Counter, Tel: 614772, Email: info@ftcarrental.com, www.ftcarrental.com

Golden System Car Rental, Miri Airport Counter. Tel: 613359, Email: goldencr88@hotmail.com www.goldencr.com.my.

Green Matrix Car Rental, Bulatan Commercial Centre, Tel: 320540, Email: miribranch@greenmatrixcarrental.com, www.miricarrental.com

Insas Pacific Rent-A-Car, Miri Airport Counter, Tel: 616182, Email: miri@iprac.com, www.iprac.com

Kong Teck Car Rental, Miri Airport, Tel: 434722/617767, Email: kongteck@tm.net.my, www.kongteck.com.my

Mann Travel & Tours, Miri Airport Counter, Tel: 612118, Email: infor@mann-travel.com, www.mann-travel.com

Mega Services Rent A Car. 3 Lorong 1, Sungai Krokop. Tel: 427436.

Sime Darby Rent A Car. Miri Airport Counter. Tel: 614740, Email: miri@hertz.simedarby.com, www.simedarbycarrental.com.

Trackway Car Rental, Miri Airport Counter, Tel: 019-8512599/019-8103599, Email: trackwaysmotors@gmail.com

Tour Operators: Beware of unlicensed tour operators or individuals offering tours, as they and their vehicles will not be properly insured.

Brighton Tour & Travel, 15 Level 2 Soon Hup Tower, Jln Maju. Tel: 433113, 019-8846186 (24 hrs), Fax: 439113, Email: brightontt@gmail.com, www.brightontt.com. Well established company with a full range of tour, transportation, vehicle rental and reservation services.

Inter-Continental Travel Centre, 669, Ground Floor, Jln Tritonia, off Jln Permaisuri. Tel: 432007 Fax: 439113 Email: miri@intercont.com.my, www.intercont.com.my. Experienced operator with a wide variety of family-oriented tours. Branches in Bintulu & Kuching.

Happy Trails Borneo Tours, 2nd floor, Wisma Pelita Tunku, Tel: 433511, Email: info@happytrailsborneo.com, www.happytrailsborneo.com

Heart of Borneo Tours & Travel, Lot 11214, Taman Jelita Commercial Centre, Tel: 612792/ 016-8858275, website: www.heartofborneotours.com

KKM Travel & Tours, Lot 236, Taman Jade Manis, Tel: 417899/417728, Email: kkmh@tm.net.my, www.kkmtravelntours.com.

Majestic Leisure & Tours, Lot 1084, 1st Floor, Jln Merpati, Tel: 427751, www.borneotravelnetwork.com.

Miri Borneo Travel Agencies, Lot 1178, 2nd Floor (Sarawak Plantation Building), Miri Waterfront, Tel: 414336, Email: fatemah@miriborneo.com, www.facebook.com/MBTA.SDN.BHD

Minda Travel Tours & Travel, Pullman Miri Waterfront, Tel: 323888, Email: mindatravel@gmail.com www.mindatravel.com.my.

Sayu Travel & Tours, 1st Floor, No. 8, Bangunan Sim Peng Lim, Jalan Merbau, Tel: 426100, Email: sayumiri@streamyx.com

Transworld Travel Services, 2.04 2nd Floor, Wisma Pelita Tunku, Tel: 422227, Email: twtmiri@po.jaring.my, www.twtmiri.com.my.

Tropical Adventure Tours & Travel, Ground Floor, Soon Hup Tower, Jln Merbau, Tel: 419337, Email: sales@tropicaladventuremart.com, www.borneotropicaladventures.com.

SHOPPING

Miri has a wide variety of shops, stores and street markets, selling everything from daily necessities to designer goods and Sarawak handicrafts. The Old Town area and Jalan Yu Seng are particularly good for bargain hunting.

Shopping Malls

Bintang Megamall (City Centre, off Jln Merbau) offers over 140 shops and food outlets, plus a bowling alley, a food court, a cineplex and an indoor archery range. Tel: 435852

Boulevard Shopping Complex, Jln Miri-Pujut, has over 80 retail outlets, a hypermarket, department

store, rooftop food court, children's playground and video arcade. Tel: 432999

The Imperial Mall (part of the Imperial Hotel complex on Jln Yu Seng Utara/Jln Pos) has over 120 retail outlets and restaurants spread over four floors. Tel: 419818

Miri Plaza (Pelita Commercial Centre, next to Grand Palace Hotel) features the Servay supermarket and department store and a good selection of small clothing outlets.

Permaisuri Imperial City Mall, linked to Imperial Mall through a sky bridge, has 160 units of retail shops. Shoppers will be pampered with choices of international fashion houses, food outlets, bookstore, electrical & electronic shop and a cinema, Tel: 419818

Handicrafts

Borneo Arts, Lot 548, Jln Yu Seng Selatan, has an excellent selection of local handicrafts.

Miri Handicraft Centre (Jln Brooke, see Attractions) offers a wide range of authentic local handicrafts direct from the producers.

Sarawak Handicraft, Lot 96, Merbau Road

Tiang Heng & Sons, 51 Jln. Bendahara, sells handicrafts, antiques and curios along with a full range of fishing nets and equipment.

Markets

See Attractions section.

SPORTS & RECREATION

Angling: The Miri Anglers Club organises deep sea game fishing trips and the annual Miri International Deep Sea Fishing Tournament. Tel: 661676 (Simon Wee), E-mail: miriangersclub@gmail.com.

Archery: An indoor archery range is located in Permaisuri Imperial City Mall (see Shopping).

Bowling: A 24-lane bowling centre is located in Bintang Megamall.

Diving: See separate Diving section, page 10

Fitness Centres: Well-equipped fitness centres are located in all major hotels and there are plenty of private ones scattered around the city.

There are X-Trim Fitness Centres at the Imperial and Imperial Palace Hotels.

Golf: Miri has a choice of two excellent courses; the 18-hole Miri Golf Club course (whose former pros include Vijay Singh) has an idyllic location between the Miri River and the South China Sea. Green fees (non-members) RM 52.50 (9-holes, weekdays) to RM 147 (18 holes, weekends). Tel: 416787, www.mirigolfclub-sarawak.com.

The Eastwood Valley Golf and Country Club offers a par-72 18-hole course in an attractive forest setting 10 minutes drive from the city centre. Tel: 421010, www.eastwoodvalley.com.

Hash House Harriers: The Miri Hash (Tel: 656979) and the Hazard Hash (Tel: 019-8558582) both organise regular runs in the surrounding countryside, followed by "on-ons" at some of the city's many pubs.

Mountain Biking: There are many challenging bike trails around Miri. Contact the Miri Mountain Bike Club, E-mail: jhyttb@gmail.com for information.

Sailing: The new Miri Marina offers state-of-the-art berthing facilities for yachts up to 115ft (100m). Contact Capt. Ariffin for details, Tel: 019-3998570 www.mirimarina.com. The Piasau Boat Club, home of the Sarawak Sailing Association, offers dinghy sailing, as well as comprehensive sports facilities. Tel: 655313, www.piasaubaatclub.com.

Swimming: The Public Swimming Pool is located at the Miri City Fan recreation area. Tel: 411412 (see Attractions).

USEFUL INFORMATION

Banks & Money Changers: The following is the list of centrally-located banks and money changers. Banks charge a service fee for changing travellers' cheques whilst money changers only deal with cash transactions.

Banks

Hong Leong Bank, Lot 1090, Jln Merpati.

HSBC Bank, Lot 1268, Miri Commercial Centre, Jln Melayu.

MayBank, Wisma Yong Lung, Pelita Commercial Centre.

OCBC Bank, Lot 1375, Miri Commercial Centre, Jln Kubu.

Public Bank, 28 China Street.

RHB Bank, Lot 362 Jln Nakhoda Gampar.

Standard Chartered Bank, 1383, Jln Kubu, Centre Point II.

Money Changers

Asia Gangsa, Ground Floor, Imperial Mall.

Chin Guan, 1 High Street (in back lane).

Brilworth Trading, Lot 277 Taman Jade Manis.

Instant Produce, 7 Jln Raja.

PK Tho & Sons, 21 High Street.

ST Sim, Lot 1156 Waterfront Commercial Centre.

Teck Soon, Lot 355 Jln Brooke (in Khung Chung General Store).

Doctors and Dentists: Some hotels have doctors on call, while others will be happy to recommend doctors and dentists. Visitors may use the outpatients department at the Miri Hospital (Jln Lopeng, Tel: 420033). There are also two private hospitals, the ColumbiaAsia Medical Centre (Jln Maigold, Tel: 665262) and the Miri City Medical Centre (Jln Hokkien, Tel: 426622).

Pharmacies: Pharmacies are dotted all over town and are open 7 days a week, usually from 9.00 am to 6.00 or 7.00 pm. Staff almost always speak good English and are able to advise on minor health problems.

Post Office: The Central Post Office is on Jln Kingsway. There is also a Post Office in the Boulevard Shopping Complex (see Shopping).

Places of Worship: For other religions and denominations please check the local press or enquire at the Visitor's Information Centre.

Miri Mosque, Jln. Merpati

Chinese Temples, Jln. China & Jln Krokop 9 (see Attractions)

St. Columba's Church (Anglican), Jln. Kubu.

St. Joseph's Cathedral (RC), Jln. Angsana, off Miri-Pujut Rd.

SIB (Evangelical Church of Borneo), Lot 67, Lrg. 2, Krokop.

Sikh Temple, Jln Kubu.

Useful Telephone Numbers

Central Police Station, Jalan Raja, Tel: +6085-433677

Police Tel: 999/+6085-433730

Fire & Rescue, Tel: 994/+6085-420991

Immigration Office, 2 & 3 Floor, Yu Lan Plaza,

Tel: +6085-442117/+6085-422388

Miri Taxi Association (24 hr) Tel: +6085-432277

Miri Resident's Office, Kompleks Islam, Jalan Pujut, Tel: +6085- 433202

BINTULU

Note: The area code for all telephone numbers in Bintulu and its surroundings, unless otherwise stated, is 086 from outside the area and +6086 from overseas. All addresses are 97000 Bintulu unless otherwise stated.

Introduction

Originally a sleepy Melanau fishing village, Bintulu is nowadays Sarawak's main industrial town and principal deep-water port, servicing the oil, gas and timber industries. The town is located at the mouth of the Kemena River and has a population of approximately 180,000, made up primarily of Iban, Chinese, Malay and Melanau, with a smattering of Bisaya, Kedayan, Bidayuh and Orang Ulu and a sizeable expatriate contingent.



Attractions

For the visitor, Bintulu's main tourist attraction is Similajau National Park, a narrow strip of forest fronted by golden sand beaches (see National Parks chapter). Other attractions & town features are listed below.

Pasar Tamu & Pasar Utama are two markets located near each other along the riverfront selling a range of local produce. The cone-shaped roofs symbolize the

traditional Melanau headgear, the *terendak*. The top floor of the Pasar Utama has stalls selling local hawker food favourites.

The Night Market (*Pasar Malam*), off Jln Abang Galau, is a good place to stroll around and try snacks, grilled meats and fish, and delicious local cakes.

The Council Negeri Memorial in the town centre commemorates Sarawak's first State Legislative Assembly meeting, which was held in Bintulu on 8th September 1867.

Tanjung Batu Beach is a local picnic and recreational spot located approximately 3 km from the town centre. Take a taxi or bus No. 9.

Taman Tumbina is a mini-zoo and botanical park located near Tanjung Batu. It features a walk-in hornbill aviary, a walk-in butterfly garden, and exotic animals including flamingos, tigers, crocodiles and pythons. www.tumbina.com.my. 8 am - 6 pm daily, adult RM 2, child (under 12) RM 0.50. Local bus No. 9.

Kidurong Tower, a small observation tower located at Tanjung Kidurong on the outskirts of town offers views of Bintulu's oil and gas facilities and structures. It's best to go shortly after dark when the flame-offs from the refineries and processing facilities make an awe-inspiring sight.

ACCOMMODATION

The following is a selection of the more established properties - you may find more on tripadvisor.com and similar websites.

International/Business Class Hotels

@Thome Boutique Hotel, Lot 2535 Kidurong Gateway, Jalan Kidurong. Tel: 315006. www.athomebintulu.com.

Parkcity Everly Hotel (4*), Jalan Tun Razak. Tel: 318888. Fax: 318899. www.bintulu.theeverlyhotel.com.

Green Hotel & Suites, Bintulu Commerce Square H 01 & H 02 Along Jalan Diwarta. Tel: 343535. www.greenshotel.com.my.



Golden Bay Hotel, Lot 3493, Bintulu Town, Jalan Tun Razak. Tel: 311113. www.goldenbayhotel.my.

NU Hotel, No.126, Lot 8349, Assyakirin Commerce Square, Jalan Tanjung Kidurong. Tel: 312233. www.nuhotel.com.my.

Samalaju Resort Hotel, Lot 132, Block 1, Kemena Land District, Samalaju Industrial Park. Tel: 291999. www.samalajuresorthotel.com.

Promenade Hotel Bintulu, Lot 8074, No. 178, Bintulu Sentral, Jalan Kidurong. Tel: 858888. www.promenade.com.my/bintulu.

Li Hua Hotel (3*), Lot 36, Berjaya Commercial Centre, Jln Sultan Iskandar, Tel: 335000. www.lihua.com.my.

New World Suites (3*), Parkcity Commerce Square, Lot 3971, Jln Tun Ahmad Zaidi, Tel: 331122. www.newworldsuites.net.

Kemena Plaza Hotel (3*), 116 Taman Sri Dagang, Jln Abang Galau. Tel: 335111. Email: kemenaplazahotel@yahoo.com.

Serviced Apartments

Imperial Suites, Lot 3218, Jln Tanjung Batu, Tel: 330399, www.imperialsuites.com.my.

Jinhold Apartment Hotel, Lot 7920, Jln Tanjung Batu, Tel: 318333, www.jinholdapartment.com.

Budget Hotels

Hoover Hotel, 92 Jln Keppel. Tel: 337166.

Kapitan Inn, Lot 3407, Parkcity Commercial Square, Tel: 332777.

Kemena Hotel (2*), Lot 176, Assyakirin Commerce Square, Tel: 319222, Email: kemenahotel@yahoo.com.

Kintown Inn, 93, Jln Keppel. Tel: 333666.

Parkcity Garden Inn, Lot 4197, Parkcity Commerce Square, Tel: 319666, www.parkcitygardeninn.com.

Regent Hotel (2*), Lot 166, Kemena Commercial Complex, Jln Tanjung Batu, Tel: 335511.

Riverfront Inn (1*), 256 Taman Sri Dagang. Tel: 333111.

Sea View Inn, 254 Jln Masjid, Taman Sri Dagang. Tel: 339118.

Sunlight Inn, 7 Jln Pedada, Tel: 332577.

Tune Hotel, 203 Assyakirin Commerce Square, Tel: 03-79625888 (call centre). www.tunehotels.com.

360 Inn, Lot 405, Parkcity Commerce Square, Tel: 335260, Email: 360innbtu@gmail.com.

900 Boutique Hotel, Lot 900, Fortune Park, Jln Tanjung Batu, Tel: 315527, www.900boutiquehotel.com.

EATING OUT



Chinese

Chinese coffee shops are found all around the town centre and sell a range of noodle dishes, chicken rice, mixed rice and other local hawker food.

Apple Restaurant, No 78-79, Parkcity Commerce Square. Halal. Popular restaurant serving Malaysian & Chinese dishes. Bookings advisable on weekends. Tel: 333377. 10 am - 2 pm and 5 pm - 10 pm.

Riverfront Café, Riverfront Inn. 24-hr café serving Chinese, Malay & western dishes. Excellent laksa stall.

Pineapple Restaurant, 14-15 Parkcity Commerce Square. Good selection of Cantonese dishes & seafood. 11 am - 10pm.

Indian

Abida Café, 159 Taman Sri Dagang, Jln Masjid. South Indian Muslim food including *nasi biryani*, curries, *thosai*, *chapati*. 6 am to midnight.

JF Banana Leaf, 318 Parkcity Commerce Square. South Indian banana leaf curries, rotis and murtabak. 9 am - 9 pm.

International

Marco Polo Restaurant & Grill, Lot 114-116 BDA-Shaida Commercial Centre. Halal. 10 am - 2 pm, 5 pm - 11 pm.

M&D's Restaurant, Parkcity Everly Hotel. International and Malaysian cuisine. Open kitchen, live music during dinner. 6 am - midnight.

Brew73 Gastropub, Ground Floor, Lot 7547, Block 31, Kemena Land District. Tel: 335820 11 am - 12 am daily.

Japanese

Niku Japanese Kitchen, Ground Floor, Lot 7550, Block 31, Kemena Land District. Tel: 331429. 11 am - 2 pm & 5 pm - 11 pm.

Korean

Korea House, SS1, 13 Jln Tanjung Kidurong. Also stocks a selection of Korean groceries. Noon - 2 pm, 6 pm - 10 pm.

Malay

Jalan Sommerville is probably the best place to head for as it has a cluster of outlets open from early morning until late at night.

An-Nur Café, 39 Jln Sommerville. 6.30 am - 10 pm.

Famous Mama Café, 10 Jln Sommerville. *Nasi Kandar* is the speciality here. 6.30 am - midnight.

Seribu Bintang Restaurant, Jln Kampung Baru. Predominantly Malay but also serves Thai, Indonesian & Chinese, mostly seafood dishes. 6 pm - midnight.

Sri Impian, Lot 108, Taman Sri Dagang. 8 am - 6 pm.

Shalimar Restaurant, 22 Jln Sommerville. Malay food plus some Pakistani dishes such *tandoori* chicken and fish and good *naan* bread. 7 am - 11 pm.

Seafood

Chiems Restoran Nelayan, Jln Kampung Baru. Spicy Malay seafood - pick your own dinner from the tanks. 5 pm - 11 pm.

Esplanade Restaurant, Bintulu Esplanade. Chinese seafood in a pleasant waterfront location. 6 pm - 11 pm.

Happy Valley Seafood, 273 Parkcity Commerce Square. Affordable Chinese seafood. 12 noon - midnight.

Vegetarian

JF Banana Leaf - see Indian.

Su Xiang Yuan, Jln Tun Ahmad Zaidi. Chinese dishes, vegan-friendly. 7 am - 2 pm, 6 pm - 9 pm.

Entertainment

Avoid the darker karaoke lounges and all dangdut bars if karaoke and paying for 'ladies drinks' is not your thing. The places listed below are all visitor-friendly with no hidden extras:

D'Codes, 7861 Assyakirin Commerce Square. Beer, giant burgers and live sport on TV. 3 pm - 2 am.

Eternity, Medan Raya, Jln Bunga Raya. Popular dance club with DJs & live bands. 6 pm - 2 am.

Ezy Plus, 282 Parkcity Commerce Square. A pleasant corner bar with reasonably priced drinks. 5 pm - 2 am.

Waves Pub, Parkcity Everly Hotel. This popular hangout is the longest-running pub in town. Live bands Mon - Sat. 5 pm - 2 am.

2H Music Lounge, 319 Parkcity Commercial Square. Karaoke for the older crowd. 5 pm - 2 am.

Golf

Bintulu Golf Club, Jln Tanjong Kidurong. Tel: 252001. www.kelabgolfbintulu.com. 18 hole course set on hilly terrain adjacent to the coast. Weekday green fees, RM 52.50 (9 holes), RM 105 (18 holes). Weekend green fees RM 78.75 (9 holes), RM 157.50 (18 holes).

Travel Connections

Air: Bintulu airport is 27 km from the town centre. Air Asia fly to Kuching 4/5 x daily. While 2/3 x daily to Kuala Lumpur. Malaysia Airlines fly 2x daily to Kuala Lumpur. MASWings fly to Kuching (1x daily), Miri (1x daily), Sibul (2x daily) and Kota Kinabalu (2x daily). See Miri Travel Connections for airline contact details. The taxi fare from the airport to town (30 min) is RM 35. No airport bus service.

Bus: The Long Distance Bus Station is 5 km from the town centre at Medan Jaya. As Bintulu is on the main Pan Borneo Highway, long distance destinations are the same as for Miri. Use bus No. 29 or take a taxi or e-hailing. The Town Centre Bus Station is on Jln Abang Galau, next to the taxi and minivan stand.

Road: Bintulu is connected by road to all major towns in Sarawak.

Car Rental:

Casbumi Car Rental, Bintulu Airport Counter. Tel 311799

Golden Car Rental, Bintulu Airport Counter. Tel: 019-8873359

Kong Teck Car Rental, No. 12, Bangunan Baru Terminal Bas, Jln Tun Hussein Onn. Tel: 312106/337767

Mann Car Rental, Bintulu Airport. Tel: 311336

UP THE BARAM RIVER

The Batang Baram, Malaysia's (and Sarawak's) second longest river, drains much of the northern region, and is home to many of the Orang Ulu tribes, including the Kayan, the Kenyah, the Berawan, their numerous sub-groups and the shy and semi-nomadic Penan. Much of the Baram region is poorly accessible, but there are some fascinating sights in the region, including the famous Gunung Mulu National Park and the lesser-known Loagan Bunut National Park (see National Parks chapter). Other attractions accessible to visitors include the small riverside town of Marudi, the bustling Kenyah community at Long San, and the delightful Kayan longhouse community of Long Bedian.

MARUDI

Note: Telephone dialling code is +6085 from overseas and 085 within Malaysia. All addresses are 98058 Marudi, Sarawak, Malaysia.

Marudi is situated on the northern bank of the Baram roughly 80 km from Miri. It is a busy bazaar town whose traders supply most of Sarawak's northern interior, so you are likely to bump into

members of dozens of different ethnic groups here. The town's main attraction is Fort Hose, a Brooke-era wooden fort named for Marudi's most famous administrator, the naturalist, ethnographer and pioneer photographer Charles Hose. The fort is now a museum, featuring some of Hose's remarkable ethnographic photographs, as well as local textiles, handicrafts and ceremonial items. To get there, walk uphill along Jln Fort from the Main Bazaar (10 min). The nearby Taman Tasik (lake park) offers excellent river views from the hilltop. The best time to visit is during the popular Baram Regatta, held on the first weekend of October biennially, but book your accommodation first.



Accommodation

Alisan Hotel, 63-65 Queen Square, Tel: 755911.

Baram Hotel, 7 Queen Square, Tel: 756008.

Grand Hotel, 92 Lorong Lima, Tel: 755711.

Ka Lee Inn, 3 Queen Square, Tel: 755897/755098

Marudi Hotel, 3 Queen Square, Tel: 755141.

Mayland Hotel, 347 Marudi Bazaar, Tel: 755106.

Mount Mulu Hotel, 89-90 Jln Kampung Cina, Tel: 756671.

Queen Inn, 34 Jln Lim Chin Kiat, Tel 755330.

Victoria Hotel, 961 Marudi Bazaar, Tel: 756067.

An interesting alternative to Marudi's hotels is the homestay in Kampung Narum, a Malay village on the edge of town, Contact Marudi District Office, Tel: 755211, www.marudido.sarawak.gov.my.

Eating Out

Marudi has a fair selection of Chinese coffee shops serving noodle and rice dishes (the town is famous for its char kway teow), while the Boon Kee restaurant (Jln Newshop) is popular for sumptuous dinners. Malay food is available from the stalls at the Pasar Rakyat food centre. Restoran Kopaselera on Jln Cinema serves economical Indian Muslim dishes.

Travel Connections

Air: MASwings operates DHC-6 Twin Otter turboprop flights to Miri (3-5x daily) and Bario (1x daily). Less frequent flights (1-2x weekly) serve the remote communities of Long Akah, Long Banga, Long Lellang and Long Seridan. See Miri Travel Connections for contact details.

Road: Marudi is also accessible from Miri by 4WD along an old logging road. Vehicles depart from the central bus station. Check with the Visitor's Information Centre in Miri for details.

Permits: A permit is necessary to travel upriver beyond Marudi. This is available free of charge from the District Office on Jln Kubu Hose.

LONG SAN

The sprawling Kenyah community of Long San is the last major settlement on the Baram River. Long San is something of a surprise to those who expect a sleepy riverside village rather than a mini-boom-town. However it's still the principal home of traditional Kenyah art, crafts, music and dance, and visitors are sure to have a fascinating time.

The region around Long San is a complex ethnic mix, and visitors can take in the Kayan longhouse of Long Mekaba, famous for its traditional musicians who are expert in playing the lute-like *sape*, as well as the abandoned Brooke-era fort at Long Akah, and even visit nomadic Penan groups when they are in the area. These activities generally cost about RM 150 per person per day for 4 persons, due to the vehicles, boats and fuel costs involved, and can be arranged at the Long San Guesthouse (see below).

Accommodation:

The Long San Guesthouse offers comfortable fan-cooled rooms in an attractive wooden building close to the river. RM 80 per person including all meals. A small shop nearby sells basic essentials, including cold beer and the powerful local rice wine, *borak*. Check with the Visitor Information Centre in Miri for contact details.

Travel Connections

Road: The 4WD service from Miri passes along old logging roads (RM 90, 4½ hrs). Check with the Visitor's Information Centre in Miri for the latest schedules. From Long San it is possible to charter a 4WD vehicle (RM 300, 4 hrs) to the remote Kenyah longhouse at Lio Matoh, starting point for the trek to Bario in the Kelabit Highlands (see Kelabit Highlands chapter).

LONG BEDIAN

Long Bedian is one of those rare longhouses that is not gradually losing members through migration to the cities. Instead, it is thriving to such an extent that it has even been visited by the King and Queen of Malaysia.

Accommodation

The Tapun Homestay accommodates visitors in the longhouse lodge or with individual families. Village shops sell all basic necessities for self caterers, or meals can be arranged. Contact Jok Eng Jok (Tel: 013-8305962), Ding Laing Jok (Tel: 012-8556118) or Ulau Wan (Tel: 019-4838311) for reservations.

Travel Connections - Boat: Take an express boat from Marudi to Long Lama- not daily: depend on demands (RM 25, 4hrs), then a local 4WD charter from Long Lama to Long Bedian (RM 140 per vehicle, 1 hr). **Road:** The Long Bedian community offers a direct 4WD charter service from Miri via old logging roads (RM 480 per vehicle, 4 hrs). Contact Mr Wan Jok (Tel: 019-8454510) or Mr Lagang (Tel: 013-8013200) for 4WD charter reservations.

THE KELABIT HIGHLANDS

The Kelabit Highlands is a series of beautiful mountain valleys lying slightly over 1000m above sea level and flanked by jungle-covered peaks rising

to more than 2,400m. The climate is probably the most pleasant in Borneo, although it can become quite chilly in the evenings. The Kelabit, after whom the area is named, and the neighbouring and closely related Lun Bawang, are Borneo's only wet rice farmers, and their well tended *padi* fields bring order to the rugged landscape, and produce the fragrant and much sought-after Bario rice. Both groups are branches of the Orang Ulu, and live in large longhouses widely dispersed throughout the area. They are friendly, hospitable people and enjoy receiving visitors.



Bario

Bario is the gateway to the Kelabit highlands, thanks to its airport and a small network of paved roads leading to some of the nearby villages. The main attraction at Bario is the old longhouse, Bario Asal, whose ancient timbers are darkened by the constant smoke of generations of cooking fires. Most accommodation is found in and around Bario, and it is the main starting point for treks through the area.

Ba Kelalan

Ba Kelalan is the most important of the Lun Bawang settlements in the northern highlands. The village is famous for its apples and organic vegetables, and for the local musicians and their 'bamboo bands'. The village is connected to Lawas and Miri by air, and it is also possible to travel to Lawas via an old logging road.

Treks and Trails

One of the great attractions of the Kelabit Highlands is trekking from longhouse to longhouse through

dense rainforest and past sparkling green *padi* fields. These treks last from a few hours to a few weeks in duration, and vary from a gentle stroll to a tough jungle hike, using log bridges to cross fast-flowing rivers. Some of the treks involve a short excursion into Kalimantan, Indonesia.

A variety of other treks include week long trails to Long Lellang or Lio Matoh longhouses on the Upper Baram (with overnight stops in the rainforest), for boat or air connections downriver, trails leading north to Indonesia, and a pleasant 2-3 day trek to Ba Kelalan from Bario (or vice versa). It is also possible to climb Gunung Murud (2,424m, reasonable going) or Batu Lawi (2,043m, very tough), but these are both serious expeditions and guides and porters will need to be hired in Bario or Ba Kelalan. For Batu Lawi, mountaineering equipment and experience is also necessary.



Guides

Experienced guides are essential for all of these treks. Expect to pay RM 100 per day, plus an additional RM 80 per day for porters if you don't want to carry everything yourself. The Kelabit Highlands guides are fiercely proud of their reputation and ensure that only the very best are allowed to guide visitors. However, this means that guides usually need to be booked in advance. Most guides are usually attached to one of the guesthouses so should be booked at the same time as your room. If you require specialist skills, such as mountaineering or birdwatching guides, please make this clear when you book.

Accommodation – Bario and Around: Detailed information and for most guest houses in the area is available at community websites www.barioexperience.com

(Bario area only), which both accept bookings. Expect to pay between RM60 and RM100 per room including all meals. Please note that cellphone coverage is erratic and landline numbers are those of associates in Miri, so email (via the community satellite link) is usually more reliable and direct.

Bariew Backpackers Lodge, Jln Bario, E-mail: Tel: 085 791038, Email: bariewlodge@yahoo.com. Near the shops past the old airstrip.

Bario Asal Longhouse, Bario, Tel: 085 791 065, Email: paranmaku@yahoo.com. Homestay in the original Bario longhouse, complete with motherly Kelabit matrons.

De Plateau Lodge, Jln Pa Umur, Bario, E-mail: deplateau@gmail.com. 3 km east of Bario on the 'road' to Pa Umur. Owner Douglas Bala is a birding specialist.

Gem's Lodge, Pa Umur, Bario, E-mail: gems_lodge@yahoo.com. Delightful riverside setting 6km southeast of Bario (transport provided from airport). Possibly the finest home cooking in NE Sarawak.

JK View Lodge, Bario, E-mail: rose_sabot@hotmail.com. 500m from village near new shophouses. **Junglebluesdream Art Gallery & Homestay**, Ulung Palang Longhouse (3 km from airport), Tel: 019 8849892, junglebluesdream.weebly.com.

Labang's Longhouse, Bario, contact via www.ebario.com. Longhouse-style lodge 1km east of Bario village.

Leminan Lodge, Bario, Tel: 019-4822034 Email via www.ebario.com. Charming rustic lodge with great views next to the Penan settlement.

Mado Homestay, Pa Lungun (see Batu Ritung, above), Tel: 019-8549700.

Mustapha Lodge, Old Airstrip, Bario (20 mins walk from airport), Tel: 013-5664866, Email: hari_hhd@hotmail.com. Only Muslim lodge in the highlands, serving Halal food.

Nancy & Harris Homestay, Old Airstrip, Bario, Tel: 013-8505850, Email: nancyharriss@yahoo.com. Quiet riverside location on working farm.

Ngimat Ayu House, Bario (10 mins drive from airport), Tel: 013-8406187, Email: engimat_scott@yahoo.com. Well-appointed lodge on a hilltop near Bario village.

Tarawae's, Jln Bario, Tel: 019 4381777, E-mail: jtarawe@bario.net. Bario's original lodge, just a short walk from the airport. Owner John Tarawe is a renowned authority on pitcher plants.



Accommodation – Ba Kelalan: Unless otherwise indicated, contact Ba Kelalan homestays.

Apple Lodge, Kampung Buduk Nur (5 mins walk from airport), Tel: 013-2865656.

Balang Sigar Homestay, Kampung Buduk Nur. Small family homestay above village grocery store.

Home Sweet Homestay, Kampung Buduk Nur. Located in centre of village. Motorcycle rental available.

Juliasang Homestay, Kampung Buduk Nur. Conveniently located only 300m from airport.

Sakai Dawat Homestay, Long Langai (30 mins walk from airport). Family homestay surrounded by paddy fields.

Tadam Asi Homestay, Homestay in large modern family house.

Yudan Meru Homestay, Kampung Buduk Nur. Elegant hilltop house offering great views.

Travel Connections - Bario: Unless you are trekking from Ba Kelalan, Long Lellang or Lio Matoh, Bario is only accessible by air. MASWings operates regular DHC-6 Twin Otter turboprop flights to and from Miri (2x daily) and Marudi (1x daily) – see Miri Travel Connections for full details. It is essential to book

as far ahead as possible to be sure of connections to and from Bario.



Travel Connections – Ba Kelalan

Flights to Ba Kelalan are listed as "Bakalalan" in Maswings flight listings.

Air: MASWings operates 3 times a week that is Mon, Wed & Sat. DHC-6 Twin Otter turboprop flights to and from Miri via Lawas. See Miri Travel Connections for full details.

Road: A daily 4WD service operates between Lawas Bus Station and Ba Kelalan along old logging roads (6hrs, RM 70-RM80). Check with the Visitor's Information Centre in Miri for the latest schedule. In Ba Kelalan, book at Home Sweet Homestay.

SARAWAK'S

FAR NORTH – LIMBANG AND LAWAS

LIMBANG

The small market and port town of Limbang is situated on the narrow tongue of land that divides Brunei in two. It has an idyllic location stretched out along the eastern bank of the Sungai Limbang. A bustling Malay water-village directly across river simply adds to the charm. Limbang is a popular weekend destination for neighbouring Bruneians, but is otherwise seldom visited.



Nearby Attractions

Many of Limbang's attractions are spread out around the town, and it is well worth booking a short tour (see Around Limbang, below) or chartering a taxi for an hour or two. Bukit Mas (gold hill) is a 210m high jungle-clad limestone outcrop which dominates the town. The summit offers excellent views of nearby Brunei and is accessible via a steep road leading off Jln Pandaruan, or by foot via a long staircase leading from the Lake Garden at the eastern end of the town. There is a small Buddhist shrine halfway up the summit road.

There are some well kept Malay and Chinese kampungs (traditional villages) along Jln Pandaruan which offer excellent photo opportunities. Further along the road towards the Brunei Ferry are a number of Kedayan kampungs where delicious fresh swamp clams are offered for sale. If you buy

some, most seafood restaurants in town will be happy to cook them for you.

Back in town, the Esplanade is a popular place for strolling in the evening (it is used as a car park until 4pm) with a memorial of the Limbang Rebellion as its focal point. The wooden Limbang Museum, 200 metres upriver, has a modest collection of archaeological finds and ethnic artifacts. Downriver is an attractive Chinese Temple across from the Purnama Hotel. There is also a public library (4th floor of Limbang District Council building, adjoining Purnama Hotel) with a reference collection of books on the Limbang region. The bustling Tamu or wet market is on the waterfront in the centre of town, while the informal 'bawah payung' ('under the umbrella') market sets up at weekends outside the shophouses across the road, selling all manner of cheap goods.

Around Limbang

Local tour agents do offers a choice of interesting trips around Limbang. Possibilities include proboscis monkey and crocodile spotting boat tours amongst the mangroves, the bizarre 80cm high mud volcanoes at Kampung Meritam, 35km from town, day and overnight trips to nearby Iban longhouses, mountain bike trips to Gunung Buda, visits to the idyllic Mentawi Ranger Station at the northern border of Gunung Mulu National Park, and trekking to Mulu via the historic Headhunters Trail (see National Parks, Gunung Mulu). For tour arrangement visitor are advice to contact local tour agent Borneo Touch Ecotour, Mr Lim Chong Teah on 0138443861, www.walk2mulu.com. Other local agent service available in Limbang is Borneo Kenyalang Experience Tours, Tel: 017-8503666/012-8549512, www.borneokenyalang.com.my



Accommodation

All addresses are 98700 Limbang, Sarawak, Malaysia. Telephone dialling code is +6085 from overseas and 085 within Malaysia.

Centre Point Hotel, Lot 1587-8, Jln Buangsiol. Tel: 213699.

Hota Inn, Lot 1453, Jln Buangsiol. Tel: 212733

Jia Lun Hotel, Lot 1116, Jln Buangsiol. Tel: 215060

Mariner Inn, Lot 1371-3, Jln Buangsiol. Tel: 212922.

Mesra Inn, Lot 787-8, Jln Bank. Tel: 213351.

Metro Hotel, Lot 781-2, Jln Bangkita. Tel: 211133.

Muhibbah Inn, Lot 790-2, Jln Bank. Tel: 212482.

Prime Hotel, Lot 112, Jln Buangsiol. Tel: 213833.

Purnama Hotel (3*), Jln Buangsiol. The best location in town. Get a river view room if you can. Tel: 216700, www.purnamalimbang.com.

Royal Park Hotel, Lot 1089-90 Jln Buangsiol, Tel: 212155.

Eating Out

For a small town, Limbang has a remarkably wide choice of dining possibilities. The following are just a small selection.

Chinese: Dozens of Chinese hawker stalls set up every evening around the three rows of old wooden shophouses in the town centre, offering economical noodle and rice dishes and local specialities. More Chinese hawker stalls operate from early morning to late afternoon on the first floor of the Tamu (wet market) building. More demanding diners will find a good selection of Chinese seafood restaurants; amongst the most popular are Waterfront Seafood and King's Seafood (both facing the riverfront on Jln Buangsiol opposite the Customs Department building), and Maggie Café (open late to 2 am) on the riverside to the north of town. The town is full of traditional Chinese coffee shops serving drinks and simple breakfast and lunch dishes – for sheer atmosphere none of them beats the tiny and very friendly Ah Mee Café in an old wooden building on Jln Merdeka.

Malay: A selection of Muslim food stalls operate from early evening to around midnight near the waterfront off Jln Buangsiol, and more Malay stalls can be found on the first floor of the Tamu (wet market). Good Malay restaurants include the busy and popular Sarimah Curry House, uphill from the clock tower on Jln Rickett, Adnan Restaurant next to the airport road roundabout near RHB Bank, Mesra opposite the bus station and Selera Muhibbah on Jln Bank.

Western: Fast food lovers will find Sugar Bun outlets in Limbang Plaza, the shopping centre adjoining the Purnama Hotel, while the ever-popular Maggie Café (see Chinese, above) serves simple western dishes such as steaks and fish and chips.

Entertainment

Much of Limbang's nightlife is geared up to catering to thrill-seeking male visitors from Brunei. If you don't want to pay for 'ladies drinks' then stick to the regular coffee shops or the Purnama Hotel Lounge, which usually features decent live bands and affordable drink prices.

Useful Information

Internet Access: Media Cybercafé, 2nd Floor, Limbang Plaza.

Swimming Pool: The public swimming pool is on Jln Panduran, about 20 mins walk or a short taxi ride from the town centre.

Healthcare: The Limbang Hospital is on Jln Panduran about 10 mins drive from town. There are a few private clinics in the town itself.

Money Changers: Thanks to the weekend trade from Brunei, money changers are located on every street corner and shopping centre.

Travel Connections

Air: MASWings operates regular ATR72 turboprop flights to Miri (3x daily) see Miri Travel Connections for full details.

Bus: There is no bus service between Temburong (Brunei) and Limbang.

Boat: There are express boat service to the island of Labuan (8.00 am, jetty access via the Customs Department building next to the Tamu (wet market), 2 hrs, RM 15) and Lawas (8.00 am, jetty off Jln Buangsiol opposite Royal Park Hotel, 3hrs, RM 30).

Taxis: The taxi stand is on the waterfront opposite the Customs Department building (Tel 213781). Most trips around town are RM 7-10, and the airport is RM 20.

LAWAS

Lawas is a bustling little border town sandwiched between the Temburong district of Brunei and the neighbouring Malaysian state of Sabah on the Lawas River (Sungai Lawas). The only significant attractions in town are the large and spotlessly clean Central Market (Pasar Raya), which offers a great selection of tropical fruits and vegetables, an attractive Chinese Temple on Jln Bunga Teratai, and an old Mosque on the banks of the Sungai Limbang about 400m east of town. If you are here on a Saturday, check out the Tamu Lawas (weekend market) for jungle produce and handicrafts.

The few visitors who come to Lawas are usually stopping over on their way to Sabah or Ba Kelalan. There are some hot springs with resort accommodation at Merarap, about 70 km from town along an old logging road (see Accommodation, below), some Malay water villages (Kg Awat Awat and Kg Punang) and a pleasant beach at Punang (7 km, minibus from bus station, RM 4).

The Lun Bawang village of Long Tuma, 7 km from Lawas has a thriving cottage industry producing traditional and modern beads. Nearby Tang Itong in another Lun Bawang village formed for its handicrafts, especially processing tree bark into traditional textiles.

Sarawak's newest Birding Destination at Paya Maga in the Trusan Highlands offers the exceptionally rare Black Oriole, as well as many other rare endemic species. Access is via a 3-4 hr trek, overnighting in a jungle camp or local village.



Accommodation

All addresses are 98750 Lawas, Sarawak, Malaysia. Telephone dialling code is +6085 from overseas and 085 within Malaysia.

Eastern Hotel, Lot 317, Jln Trusan, Tel: 285980.

Gaya Inn, Lot 363-364, Jln. Punang, Tel: 285855.

Hotel Federal, Lot 252, Jln Masjid Baru, Tel: 285341

Hotel Perdana, Lot 365, Jln Punang, Tel: 285888.

Hotel Seri Malaysia, Jln Gaya, Tel: 283200, www.serimalaysia.com.my. In a different class to other local options.

Mega Inn, Lot 153, Jln Muhibbah, Tel: 283888.

Merarap Hotspring Lodge, 2 hrs from Lawas, Tel: 012-8792218, www.meraraphotspring.com. Return transport RM 300, shared by guests travelling together.

Mexion Hotel, Lot 406, Jln Pantai, Tel: 284699.

Million Hotel, Lot 157, Jln Muhibbah, Tel: 285020.

Sakura Inn, Lot 375, Jln Datuk Pengiran Hj Matussin, Tel: 285054.

Shangsan Hotel, Lot 235-236, Jln Trusan. Tel: 285522.

Soon Seng Hotel, Lot 346, Jln Punang, Tel: 283338.

Eating Out

Chinese: The town abounds with traditional coffee shops serving noodle and rice dishes for breakfast and lunch. For dinner, the Soon Seng restaurant in Jln Punang is a good choice, as is the bustling Good Corner Seafood behind the Ngiu Kee department store.

Malay: There is a good choice of Muslim food stalls upstairs at the Central Market. Restoran Hajjah Latifah (corner of Jln Pantai), the nearby Restoran Hj Narudin and Al Amin behind the Shangsan Hotel offer good lunch buffets.

Western: The Sugar Bun outlet on Jln Pantai offers burgers and fries. Good coffee, cakes and snacks are available at the Intan Cake House, also on Jln

Pantai. The Gaya Café at the Hotel Seri Malaysia is the best bet for international cuisine.

Entertainment

There are quite a few bars and karaoke lounges in town, all of which feature hostesses anxious to consume 'ladies drinks'. Drinkers not looking for female company are advised to keep to the coffee shops.

Travel Connections

Air: MASWings operates regular DHC-6 Twin Otter turboprop flights to Miri (4-6x daily), Ba Kelalan (3x a week) and Kota Kinabalu (4x weekly) see Miri Travel Connections for full details.

Bus: There are 2x daily bus connections to Beaufort (2 hrs, RM 15) and Kota Kinabalu (5 hrs, RM 30) in Sabah. A passport is required to cross the Sarawak/Sabah border.

Taxis: The taxi stand is next to the bus station. Airport taxi fare is probably the lowest in Malaysia at RM 6.

NATIONAL PARKS

Northern Sarawak's national parks feature a wide range of natural habitats and contain some of the region's leading visitor attractions. The national parks listed below are all open to visitors and offer accommodation, reasonable ease of access, and useful visitor facilities including well marked trekking trails. Four other National Parks - Gunung Buda, Bukit Tiban, Usun Apau and Pulong Tau - are either not yet open to visitors, or do not have visitor facilities yet. However, trekkers using the Headhunters Trail from Gunung Mulu to Limbang town will pass through parts of Gunung Buda, and a number of the Kelabit Highlands trails pass through parts of Pulong Tau. For future developments, check with Sarawak Forestry at www.sarawakforestry.com.

Entry Fees & Other Charges: See Sarawak Forestry website for details. As a UNESCO World Heritage Site, Gunung Mulu National Park has its own schedule of fees - see below.

Note: Unless otherwise specified, telephone dialling code is +6085 from overseas and 085 within Malaysia.

GUNUNG MULU NATIONAL PARK



Introduction

Gunung Mulu is Sarawak's largest national park (544 sq km), and also Malaysia's first UNESCO World Heritage Area, a status it was awarded in 2000. It is most famous for its limestone cave systems, including the world's largest natural chamber (the Sarawak Chamber), the world's largest cave passage (Deer Cave) and the longest cave in Southeast Asia (Clearwater Cave). The park's main attractions are the four show caves, all readily accessible by wooden walkways and paths. Other fascinating sights and activities include; a bat observatory; a rainforest canopy skywalk; adventure caving trips to some of Mulu's less accessible caves; the challenging Mulu Summit climb, the spectacular Pinnacles trail, and the historic Headhunter's trail through remote rainforest scenery.

Situated 100 km from the coast, the park is dominated by three mountains - Gunung Mulu (2,376m), Gunung Api (1,750m) and Gunung Benarat (1,585m). Gunung Mulu is sandstone, whilst Gunung Api and Gunung Benarat are formed from limestone and therefore have different geographical features. The summit of Gunung Mulu is covered by moss forests and stunted montane vegetation,

whilst razor-sharp limestone pinnacles, some as high as 50 metres, are found on the upper slopes of Gunung Api. The park's forest ecosystems include peat swamp, heath, mixed dipterocarp, moss forest and montane vegetation – home to thousands of species of ferns, fungi, mosses and flowering plants, including 170 species of orchid and 10 species of pitcher plants, an impressive variety of mammals, birds (including 8 species of hornbill), frogs, fish and insects. Mulu's wildlife is often heard but not seen, but visitors are almost certain to encounter bats, swiftlets, cave dwelling insects, snakes, lizards, tree frogs and an abundance of beautiful butterflies.

Park Headquarters

Upon arrival visitors must register at the park office (Tel: 792300) and pay the park entrance fees (RM 30, valid for 5 days visitor). Guides and boats can also be booked here. A short walk from the Park Office is the main accommodation building, which also offers a canteen, a small shop selling souvenirs and basic essentials, and an interesting and well designed Information Centre.

Park Guides

Visitors may not enter any of the caves or the Mulu Canopy Skywalk without a Park Guide. For most trails, including the Mulu Summit climb, the Pinnacles trail and the Headhunter's trail, a Park Guide is also mandatory. Bookings and payment of fees can be made at the park office. If you require a Park Guide you need to book the day before. During peak season, guides for popular activities such as the Pinnacles trail may be fully booked weeks in advance.

Visiting the Show Caves

Note: Visitors may only visit the show caves at fixed times, and only when accompanied by a park guide, in order to minimize human impact on the delicate rock formations and cave ecosystems. A flashlight, sturdy non-slip shoes, rainwear and insect repellent are essential, and a hat can be useful to protect from dripping bat guano. Flash photography and the use of tripods and monopods are strictly forbidden, so as smoking (except in designated areas) and littering.



Wind and Clearwater Caves (half-day, mornings): Meet the Park Guide at the Wind Cave entrance (08.45 or 09.15, booking required, RM 67 per person include longboat. Walk along the Moonmilk Cave Trail (1 hr) or take a longboat along the Melinau and Clearwater Rivers. The boats usually make a short stop at the Batu Bungan Penan Settlement, where Penan women operate a small craft market (closed Sundays) offering a wide selection of superb handicrafts, including rattan mats, baskets, woodcarvings, jewellery and musical instruments.

The entrance to the Wind Cave is situated above an ancient Berawan burial site. Inside, cool breezes can be felt at narrow parts of the cave, and there is a spectacular chasm caused by a catastrophic roof collapse to the left of the walkway. Further into the cave is a circular walkway leading through the King's Room; this chamber contains one of the finest collections of calcite stalagmite (upward growing) and stalactite (downward growing) formations known to science. The formations are carefully lit to bring out their bizarre and dramatic appearance.

From the Wind Cave, a short walk along the river leads to the Clearwater Cave. Formed by an underground river which emerges near the cave mouth, it is Southeast Asia's longest cave passage at over 108km. From the river, 200 steps lead to the cave mouth, which has some superb dripping stalactites and two species of bizarre one-leaved plants (*Monophyllae pendula* and *M. glauca*). Inside the cave entrance are strange spike-like formations formed by bacterial action, all facing towards the cave entrance. As the bacteria are dependent on sunlight, the formations become smaller and more delicate further into the cave.

At the end of the walkway a bridge leads across the subterranean river, where visitors can clearly see how the cave was sculpted by the force of

rushing water. A skylight formed by a roof collapse and a great vault formed by a floor collapse (in the adjacent Lady Cave) are amongst the other unusual features of the cave system. There is an excellent swimming area at the cave entrance, with changing and picnic facilities. Most visitors stop here for a picnic lunch and a relaxing swim.

The Turtle Cave is an alternative exit route from the Clearwater Cave. Visitors are led into the subterranean blackness of the underground river, clambering over sharp rocks and swimming with the river current to emerge into a crystal clear pool. A waterproof flashlight and sturdy shoes are essential. Must be booked in advance.



Deer and Langs Caves (half day, afternoons): Guided tours leave the Park HQ daily at 2pm and 2.30 pm (RM 35). A 3-km wooden walkway passes through peat swamp, alluvial flats and limestone outcrops before reaching the Deer Cave, which at 120 metres high and 100 metres wide is the world's largest discovered cave passage. The cave is home to the world's largest known bat colony comprising several million bats from 12 different species, and their droppings and remains have created a thriving and complex ecosystem on the cave floor. The billions of invertebrates include a unique species of luminous centipede, and cave racer snakes and pythons can occasionally be seen. The huge cave passage was formed by an ancient river that carved the spectacular scalloped walls and left a number of fascinating rock formations; at one point it is possible to see a remarkably lifelike profile of Abraham Lincoln outlined at the cave entrance.

The nearby Langs Cave is altogether smaller and more intimate, with elegant rock shawls and cave curtains, dramatic stalagmites and stalactites, and unusual rim stone pools on the cave floor. From the cave exit, visitors usually walk over to the Bat

Observatory, to view the mass exodus as millions of bats emerge from the vast entrance of the cave to forage in the rainforest between 5.50 and 6.30 pm. This is a unique and memorable display, as the huge flocks of bats fly in rapidly shifting spiral formations to confuse predators. Occasionally the bats fail to emerge, and visitors who wish to return the next day without visiting the caves may do so provided they notify the park HQ first. The walk back along the steadily darkening plankwalk is enhanced by the sounds of frogs and cicadas and the sight of hundreds of fireflies amongst the trees.

Visitors may opt for the **Garden of Eden** tour package (RM120 inclusive of 2 show caves and the Bat Exodus), proceeding the rear entrance of the Deer Cave, climbing down to the underground river and wading and scrambling to the glowing pool of light and water at the far end of the cave. Intrepid visitors will enjoy spectacular scenery and can swim in a secluded mountain pool. Prior booking is essential.

Adventure Caving: This is a great way of getting to know Mulu's caves, that involves wading, swimming, climbing, crawling with your face to the floor and getting covered in dirt. The Park HQ provides qualified guides, caving helmets and headlamps. The caves are graded in order of ability. The Lagangs Cave trip (3 hrs) is suitable for beginners and family groups as it does not involve climbing. The intermediate Racer Cave trip (3 hrs) offers the chance to view remarkable cave dwelling snakes and invertebrates, and requires a reasonable level of fitness and upper body strength. The Clearwater - Wind Cave Connection trip (6-8 hrs) with its exceptionally beautiful river section requires advanced caving skills, as does the Sarawak Chamber trip (10-15 hrs) to view the world's largest cave chamber. Full details are available at www.mulupark.com.

Walks, Treks, Trails and Climbs: The 480 metre Mulu Canopy Skywalk is the longest tree-based walkway in the world. The complex ecosystem of the forest canopy provides a unique opportunity to view a variety of birds, insects and plants that cannot be seen from the ground. Guided tours (RM 45, approx 2 hrs) leave the Park HQ daily.



The 30 metre **Tree Top Tower** and bird hide, 10 mins from the Park HQ, provides the opportunity to observe canopy birds swooping through the branches. During fruiting season there is a chance to see hornbills or macaques feeding on the fruits of the fig trees that surround the hide. No charge but a refundable RM 50 key deposit is required. Bird watchers can arrange private use of the tower for dawn (5-8am) and dusk (5-8pm), enquire at the office for fees and reservations.

The **Mulu Botanical Heritage Trail** is an unguided tour of the plants used by the indigenous people to survive in the rainforest, whether as food, medicine, or to make everyday implements. It also includes the opportunity to try some of the edible plants.

The guided **Night Walk** (1hr, RM 22) winds its way through 7 different types of vegetation and offers the opportunity to see many different Mulu plant species, including pitcher plants, as well as species only visible at night, such as fire-flies and fluorescent fungi.

The 4-5 hr **Paku Waterfall Trail** is a self-guided walk that passes through peat swamp forest to a small waterfall on the banks of the Paku River, an ideal spot for a picnic lunch and a refreshing swim.

The all-day **Camp 1 Trail** (RM 140) continues past Paku Waterfall and passes near a spectacular 'strangling fig' before proceeding through pristine rainforest to one of the camps used during the 1977 Royal Geographic Society Expedition. If you wish to stay overnight in the rainforest, a basic forest hut provides shelter.

The **Long Langsat** tour (RM 150) is a longboat trip down the Sungai Melinau and up the Sungai Tutoh to the small Long Langsat stream, where crystal clear waters cascade down a narrow valley between

steep slopes. On the way back you can visit the Penan community at Long Iman and learn about their way of life.

The 3 days/2 nights Pinnacles Trail (RM 423, max 8 persons) leads to the remarkable limestone pinnacles near the peak of Gunung Api (1732m). The first day involves a 3-4 hour boat journey to Long Berar, followed by a pleasant 4 hour jungle trek to reach Camp 5 for the overnight stay. The ascent begins the following day. Although the trail is only 2.5 km, Gunung Api's steep slopes make it feel a lot longer. It takes about 4 hours to reach the Pinnacles where the fantastic views make it all worthwhile.

The Summit Trek to the top of Gunung Mulu (2,370m) is for the fit and adventurous. It's usually done as a 4 days/3 nights out and back trek (from RM 650). However the super-fit can opt for 3 days, or even 2 days treks. There are a number of wooden huts along the trail (Camps 1, 2, 3 & 4). The choice of overnight locations depends on the length of your trek, and the schedule you arrange with the park guides. Details can be obtained at the Park HQ.

The Headhunters' Trail follows the route of Kayan headhunting parties who dragged their war boats through the rainforest to raid the inhabitants of the Limbang river system. A boat journey to Camp 5 is followed by an 11.3 km trek through a very remote rainforest area, with a good possibility of wildlife encounters. Trekkers then take another boat for an overnight stay at an Iban longhouse, followed by a further 1½ hr boat ride to Medamit to catch the van for Limbang. The trek can also be done in reverse, starting at Limbang. Either way, it offers a fascinating route into or out of Mulu National Park.

Accommodation

The Park Headquarters offers air conditioned Garden Bungalows and Longhouse Rooms and a fan-cooled Dormitory. For reservations and enquiries contact Borsarmulu Park Management, Tel: 792300, www.mulupark.com.

Benarat Inn, opposite Royal Mulu Resort, www.mulu-hotels.com.

Buduk Ubung Homestay, opposite park entrance. Tel: 019-8885523

D'Cave Homestay, 10 mins from park, Tel: 012-8729752, Email: beckhamjunior46@yahoo.com.

Diana Homestay, Sungai Melinau. Tel: 011-2999 9100

Lydia Homestay, Sungai Melinau. Tel: 011-3547 3714

Mulu River Lodge, opposite park entrance, Tel: 012-8527471, Email: muluriverlodge@gmail.com.

Mulu Backpacker Homestay, 5 minutes from Mulu Airport. Tel No. 01135241007

Mulu Village Guesthouse, Sungai Melinau. Tel: 013-6363851, Email: muluvillage@gmail.com

Mulu Marriot Resort & SPA, Sungai Melinau, 10 mins from park. Tel: 790388, www.marriott.com International class resort on the banks of the Melinau River.

Waterfront Homestay, Sungai Melinau. Tel: 012-8085472

Eating Out

Café Mulu, Park HQ. Variety of reasonably priced meals and snacks. 7.30 am to 9.00 pm

D'Cave Homestay offer home-cooked local dinner to non-residents - phone in advance.

Wildflower Restaurant, Mulu Rainforest Resort. Asian, Western and local cuisine with live dance performances every evening. 6.30 am - 10.30 pm

Sweetwater Restaurant, across river from the Park HQ offers simple rice and noodle dishes and can prepare multi-course traditional dinners to order. They also have cheap beer and excellent borak (rice wine). 11 am - 11 pm.

Travel Connections

Air: MASWings operates ATR72 Turboprops to Mulu from Miri and Kota Kinabalu – see Miri Travel Connections for full details.

Boat: It is possible to arrive by boat from Marudi but this could end up costing a lot more than planned. Boats no longer ply Marudi for Long Terawan on

a daily basis. From Long Terawan to Mulu you will need to charter a boat (best arranged in Marudi) – RM 300 or RM 70 per person for larger groups. For charters, Tel: 755025 (Amiho Travel, Marudi).

On Foot: It is possible to trek to Mulu by taking the Headhunters Trail (see above) in reverse, starting from Limbang town. See Limbang chapter for details.

NIAH NATIONAL PARK



Introduction

Niah National Park provides some interesting and impressive sights. The area was a major centre of human settlement as early as 40,000 years ago, and features one of the world's largest cave entrances, Palaeolithic and Neolithic burial sites, and iron-age cave paintings. The surrounding area is covered in dense primary rainforest and is home to many species of plants and wildlife. Even today, the caves remain important for local communities, with birds nest and guano collection providing valuable employment and income. Niah Cave is a very pleasant place to spend a few days, although most of the major attractions are accessible to the day visitor. The park was nominated for UNESCO World Heritage Status in 2010 and is currently awaiting approval.

Historical Background

In 1958, a team led by Sarawak Museum curator, Tom Harrisson unearthed a human skull estimated to be 40,000 years old. The scientific community remained sceptical of Harrisson's claims, but

as dating techniques improved, Harrisson was eventually proved right. Further excavations have shown a continued human presence over tens of thousands of years, from Palaeolithic times until as recently as 1400 AD. The nearby Painted Cave houses wall-paintings depicting the boat journey of the dead into the afterlife, along with remnants of "death-ships" on the cave floor - boat-shaped coffins containing the remains of the deceased, and grave-goods for use in the afterlife, such as ceramics, ornaments and glass beads. The death-ships have been dated from 1 AD to 780 AD, although local Penan folklore tells of the use of death-ship burials as late as the 19th century.

Visiting the Park

Niah National Park is located on the Sungai Niah, about 3 km from the small town of Batu Niah, 110 km south-west of Miri. The park has a visitor centre, archaeology museum and good accommodation, and is very easy to get around, thanks to an extensive network of plankwalks. A flashlight and good walking shoes are absolutely essential - the caves are unlit, and the plankwalk can become slippery from the constant dripping of water and bat guano from the ceiling of the cave. A wide-brimmed hat is desirable, for obvious reasons.

The Great Cave is situated at the end of a 3.5 km plankwalk which cuts through dense primary rainforest, passing close to giant *tapang* trees, *padanus* plants, exquisite orchids and tree fungi. Colourful birds, squirrels, lizards, butterflies and unusual insects and invertebrates are commonly seen, as well as occasional monkeys, flying lizards and hornbills.

The cave complex starts at the Trader's Cave, an extended rock overhang where birds nest and guano traders used to conduct their business. A little further along is the West Mouth of the Great Cave; over 60m high and 250m wide, it is one of the world's most spectacular cave entrances. To the left of the cave mouth, archaeological excavations are clearly visible. The view from the cave mouth out over the surrounding jungle is quite unique; the jagged stalactites, overhangs and dangling creepers of the cave mouth provide a dramatic photo opportunity.

Inside the cave chamber, guano (bat and bird manure) collectors work by the dim light of paraffin lamps, collecting the guano from the cave floor for sale as fertiliser. Bamboo poles, and ladders made from ironwood (*belian*), are evidence of the birds nest collectors, local people who have practised this dangerous occupation for generations. The half million swiftlets living in the cave make their nests purely from their own salivary secretions, and these valuable nests (over US\$1,000 per kg for the best quality) are used to produce birds nest soup, highly regarded in Chinese cuisine. Note: visitors cannot be sure of seeing birds nest collectors in action, as harvesting is a seasonal activity, and is subject to temporary bans to protect swiftlet populations.

At the back of the Great Cave is a large chamber - the Padang - where shafts of sunlight stream down from large holes in the cave roof to illuminate the bizarre rock formations in the Burnt Cave (Lubang Hangus) - another excellent spot for taking photos. After the Padang comes a totally dark passage - Gan Kira (Moon Cave) - where a flashlight is essential to find your way and to admire the remarkable rock shapes and weathering effects.

From Gan Kira (Moon Cave), the plankwalk emerges into daylight and a short trail leads through the forest to the Painted Cave, site of the famous Niah cave paintings and 'death-ships'. The contents of the death-ships have been transferred to the Sarawak Museum, but the cave paintings and some of the empty death-ships can still be viewed on the wall behind the fenced-off burial site.

The paintings are difficult to see until your eyes become accustomed to the light. Executed in red hematite, they cover a long narrow strip (approx. 30m) at the back of the cave wall. The spread-eagled human figures probably represent warriors and hunters, the animals of the surrounding forest, and - most importantly - longboats carrying the souls of the deceased on the dangerous journey to the land of the dead. Thus the cave offers a clear insight into the development of the traditional religions of Borneo.

Visitors leaving the Great Cave around sunset will see two great black clouds intermingling - the nightly 'changing of the guard' as hundreds of thousands of swiftlets return to their nests, whilst an approximately equal number of bats fly out to

forage in the forest. A variety of luminous fungi can be clearly seen from the plankwalk at night.

Treks and Trails: The Bukit Kasut Trail (green and white markings, 45 min.) leads to the summit of Bukit Kasut and passes through beautiful primary rainforest before moving into Kerangas forest at the foot of the hill. The trail is steep but the view at the top is worth it, offering a sweeping panorama of the rainforest canopy. The Madu Trail (red and white markings, 1 hr.) follows the banks of the Sungai Subis, passing through alluvial and peat swamp forest to the foot of Bukit Kasut. There are plenty of wild orchids, bizarre mushrooms and giant pandanus plants along the way.

The Park Headquarters

Upon arrival visitors are required to register at the Park HQ (Tel: 737454). There is an information centre where video films about Niah are shown nightly (upon request), as well as an excellent Archaeology Museum (just across the river) and a cafeteria serving a range of local and western food and drinks.

Accommodation

Accommodation booking are now available online at www.sarawakforestry.com. If you need to stay in Batu Niah (to catch an early bus, for example), there are a range of lodging houses and small hotels. Batu Niah is a bustling little township and is well provided with coffee shops and restaurants.

Travel Connections

Niah is within easy reach of both Miri (109 km) and Bintulu (131 km). There is no public bus from either Miri or Bintulu directly to Batu Niah or the park HQ. From Miri Pujut Bus Terminal or Bintulu Long-Distance Bus Terminal, take an express bus to Batu Niah. The Park HQ is about 3 km from Batu Niah. Chartered taxis and tour buses will take you straight there. Alternatively, a motorised longboat from Batu Niah to the Park HQ brings you through delightful jungle scenery. A taxi from Batu Niah is a good idea if it is raining. The Park HQ is also a pleasant 45 minute stroll along the river bank.

LAMBIR HILLS NATIONAL PARK



Introduction

Lambir Hills National Park is probably the world's most complex and diverse forest ecosystem. Its 6,952 hectares of lowland dipterocarp and heath forests rise to a height of 450m and produce the greatest known level of plant biodiversity on the planet. This provides a home for 237 different species of birds, flying squirrels, wild pigs, gibbons, many different types of monkey, various species of deer, and untold insects and other invertebrates, as well as dozens of international research scientists who are permanently stationed in the park. Lambir also offers fascinating trekking trails leading to sparkling waterfalls and bathing pools scattered about the rainforest, all within 40 minutes drive of downtown Miri.

Treks and Trails

Most of Lambir's trails are interconnected, so it is easy to do quite a few in a day. The Latak Waterfall Trail is the shortest, easiest and most popular - if you are looking for peace and solitude, come on a weekday. The trail (red/white markings, 20 min) follows the course of a clear, fast-flowing stream past two very pretty small waterfalls to a large forest pool surrounded on three sides by steep rock walls and fed by the 25-metre Latak waterfall. Changing rooms, toilets and picnic areas are provided and the pool is safe for swimming, but non-swimmers and small children should take care, as it is deep in parts.

The Pantu, Bukit Pantu and Pantu Waterfall Trails are all branches of the same trail system. Shortly before the Latak Waterfall, the Pantu Trail (white markings, 1 hr.) branches off to the left up a series of steep steps past an abandoned tree tower, then downwards through

dense forest to the Nibong waterfall, an idea place to cool off. A few hundred metres further along are the Bukit Pantu Trail on the right (yellow/white markings, 1½ hrs) offering superb views, and the Pantu Waterfall Trail on the left (red/yellow markings, 1 hr.).

Beyond the Pantu Waterfall Trail the terrain gradually rises, passing through rugged, dense forest filled with the sounds of Lambir's wildlife. After 4 km, the trail forks, the right fork leading to the summit of Bukit Lambir. The Summit Trail (red/blue markings, 3½ hrs) is a hard work for the not-so-fit, but the abundant wild orchids and the superb view from the summit (456m) make it worthwhile, and trekkers can cool off in the pool below the Dinding waterfall on the way down. Lambir also offers a variety of tougher trails for serious trekkers; for further information, please consult the park wardens.

Accommodation at the Park Headquarters (Tel: 471630). Accommodation booking are now available online at www.sarawakforestry.com.

An interesting and comfortable alternative is the nearby Borneo Tropical Rainforest Resort, which also has more dining options. See Miri accommodation listings.



Travel Connections

Lambir is only 32 km from Miri. The journey time is 30-40 mins. If you take a taxi or e-hailing arrange a pick-up time for the return journey.

LOAGAN BUNUT NATIONAL PARK



Introduction

Loagan Bunut features a unique ecosystem based on Sarawak's largest natural lake (65 ha). The shallow lake usually drains completely when the water in the nearby Tinjar river is low (normally February and late May or early June/July). As the water level subsides, huge flocks of wading birds gorge themselves on fish and other aquatic creatures trapped in the mud. When the lake is dry, plants sprout from the mud and are eaten by insect larvae. When the rains come and the lake fills up, returning fish feed on the larvae, breed in the lake, and the whole cycle starts again.

Fishermen from the local Berawan tribe have developed a unique method only found at Loagan Bunut, known as *Selambau*. They use huge scoop nets mounted on large rafts to catch migrating fish, which are kept alive in submerged bamboo cages until they can be transported to market.

The surrounding terrain features a variety of forest types, ranging from mixed peat swamp forest with huge stilt-rooted trees at the water's edge, to towering *Alam* forest with a canopy height of over 60 m, and helps to make Loagan Bunut a birdwatcher's paradise. Permanent residents include eagles, swallows, malkohas, stork-billed kingfishers, magpies, robins, doves, bulbuls, racket-tailed drongos, pied hornbills and kites, while darters, egrets, herons, bitterns, storks and broadbill arrive during dry spells to feed on the trapped fish. Other animals found in the park include barking deer, bearded pigs, sambar deer, long-tail macaques, black banded langurs, lesser mouse deer, small-tooth palm civets, giant squirrels, provost squirrels, Bornean gibbons, many species of frogs and small lizards, dog-headed water snakes and a variety of tree snakes. Estuarine crocodiles are occasionally sighted.

Activities

During dry spells it is possible to stroll across the dried-up lake bed, but visitors must be accompanied by a local guide for safety reasons. More permanent trails include the Hydrology Trail (2km) which provides a close-up view of the peat swamp ecosystem. The 260m Tapang Trail showcases the towering tapang tree (*Koompassia excelsia*), the world's third tallest tree, whose heavy, dense wood is claimed to be the best for making blowpipes. The Belian Trail (720m) features the belian tree (*Eusideroxylon zwageri*, also known as Borneo ironwood) which produces one of the world's hardest, and most valuable timbers.

Boat trips can be arranged at the Park Headquarters. Early morning is the best time to appreciate the mist-shrouded scenery, midday is best for viewing wading birds feeding on trapped fish, and late afternoon offers superb sunsets and more bird watching possibilities. The boatmen usually drive the narrow boats right into the forest, amongst huge stilted tree roots where monkeys and squirrels can often be seen. A boat trip will usually include a visit to the fascinating *Selambau* scoop nets, and during fish migrations visitors can watch the fishermen at work and buy freshly caught fish. The boatmen will also point out an ancient Berawan burial platform, or *Klirieng*, supported above the lake by sturdy *belian* pillars.

The boats are operated by local Berawan fishermen who have a great deal of local knowledge and usually speak acceptable English. The charter rate is RM 60.00 per boat per hour for up to 4 passengers, with an additional RM 15.00 per hour for every extra passenger. Charter rate are subject to change.

Accommodation: The Forest Hostel at the Park HQ (Tel: 019-8610994) has 4 rooms with 9 single beds each. Accommodation booking are now available online at www.sarawakforestry.com. There is a small canteen serving simple cooked meals, snacks and drinks. A generator supplies electricity during the evenings.

Mutiara Homestay, Tel: 013-5781396, Email: mutiarahomestay@live.co.uk. Operated by a local Berawan family, offers 9 twin-bed rooms plus a 15-person dormitory with sleeping mats. Self catering or full board.

Travel Connections: Loagan Bunut is approximately 120 km or 3 hours by road from Miri. Travel agents in Miri operate tours to the park. Independent travelers can take public transport (4wd) from Miri directly to the Park Headquarters upon arrangement in advance. Mutiara Homestay meet and transport their guests from Lapok Bridge.

SIMILAJAU NATIONAL PARK



Introduction

Similajau National Park showcases the unique geographical features of the Sarawak coastline north of Bintulu - a chain of golden sandy beaches, punctuated by small rocky headlands and jungle streams, and bordered by dense green forest. The 8,996 hectare park is at its best during the dry season (approximately February to October) when the emerald green waters are crystal clear and ideal for swimming. The park is very popular with locals at weekends. If you want to avoid the crowds, visit during the week when you are likely to have the park all to yourself.

Natural Attractions

Similajau's littoral fringe, kerangas (or heath forest) and mixed dipterocarp forest provide a variety of diverse habitats for a wide range of fascinating species. In amongst its pitcher plants, mangroves and giant dipterocarp trees, Similajau is home to 24 species of mammals, including long-tailed macaques, gibbons, banded langurs, shrews, mouse deer, barking deer, squirrels, wild boar, porcupine, and civet cats. It is also a birdwatcher's paradise, with 185 species of birds having been recorded within the park's boundaries.

Similajau is also home to two crocodile species. The estuarine or saltwater crocodile (*Crocodylus porosus*) lives near the river mouths of the larger rivers in the park and feeds on small mammals, lizards, turtles, fish and water birds. It has also been known to attack humans at other locations in Sarawak and in Australia. There are no known cases of crocodiles attacking visitors at Similajau, but to be on the safe side, visitors are advised to take note of the crocodile warning signs. Please do not attempt to wade across the larger streams in the park, but use the bridges instead. Similajau's other crocodile species is the harmless false gharial (*Tumistoma schlegelii*), which feeds exclusively on fish. Crocodiles are more easily spotted at night, and the Park HQ can arrange crocodile spotting boat trips for visitors.

Prehistoric-looking horseshoe crabs can often be found on the beaches or in the shallows, and green turtles frequently come ashore to lay their eggs at Golden Beach and the two Turtle Beaches closer to the park HQ. There are also occasional landings by hawksbill and leatherback turtles. All marine turtles are Totally Protected Animals in Sarawak and anyone found tampering with a nest is liable to a heavy fine and/or a jail sentence. Other marine visitors include five species of dolphin that are occasionally seen, usually between March and September - the Irrawaddy dolphin, the bottlenose dolphin, the Indo-pacific humpback dolphin, the finless porpoise dolphin and the pantropical spotted dolphin.

Treks & Trails

The main trekking trail (red markings) follows the coastline of the park; from the park HQ you first cross the Sungei Likau suspension bridge to reach the plankwalk over the mangroves, from where you have two choices - to follow the plankwalk to the start of the trail proper, or take a short on the left at the very beginning of the plankwalk; a wooden ladder leads down to a secondary trail which joins the main trail near the junction for the Viewpoint Trail. This leads to a shelter with picnic tables looking back to the beach and park HQ. From shortly after the viewpoint turn-off, the main trail hugs the coastline and passes numerous small bays and beaches, eventually (1½ - 2 hrs) reaching three idyllic beaches - two turtle beaches each set in

beautiful bays, and the aptly named Golden Beach with its long, unbroken stretch of sand.

A good way to get the most out of Similajau is to hire a boat and be dropped off at Golden Beach and then trek back to the HQ (or vice versa). Boats can be hired for half day and full day coastal and river tours, or for crocodile spotting tours at night. Enquire at the park HQ for details.

Upon arrival visitors are required to register at the Park HQ (Tel: 019-8610998). Next to the registration counter there is a good information centre. The Park HQ also has a canteen which serves drinks, snacks, lunch and evening meals.

Accommodation consists of Rest Houses Forest Lodges, a Hostel and a Campsite. Accommodation booking is available online at www.sarawakforestry.com. Early booking is advised if you are visiting at weekends, public holidays or school holidays. Barbecue pits are provided for visitors wishing to prepare their own meals.

Travel Connections: Similajau is approximately 30 km northeast of Bintulu town. There is no public bus service to the park. The taxi fare from Bintulu town is RM 80 each way - arrange a time with the driver to pick you up. Alternatively you may charter a fast boat from Bintulu Wharf (rates negotiable), a somewhat more expensive but enjoyable option.

EVENTS LISTING OF NORTHERN REGION

MIRI

Gong Xi Fa Chai Bazaar Kingsway, (February) - This annual event takes place a week before the celebration of the Chinese New Year. Lion dances, dragon dances and cultural performances are scheduled most nights. Contact: Miri Chinese Chamber of Commerce & Industry. Tel: +6085 432570

Miri Afrolatin Fiesta (March) – A dance event that gathers international dance artists from USA, Spain, Sweden, Norway, Luxemborg, Kenya, Australia etc all under one roof in Miri. Contact: La Danza Studio. Tel: +6085 417888

Miri Marathon (March) – A road running event that offers full marathon, half marathon, 10KM and 5KM races. 3,000 local and foreign runners are expected. Contact: Miri Marathon Association. Tel: +6017 898 6966 www.mmamarathon.com

Miri City International Deep Sea Fishing Tournament (May) – Internationally famous deep sea fishing tournament held over Luconia Shoals. Contact: Miri Anglers Club Tel: +6017 802 9002

Borneo Jazz (May) A major regional Jazz festival with an audience estimated at 8,000 people. The line-up features regionally and internationally famous jazz musician. Contact: Sarawak Tourism Board. Tel: +6082 423600 Website: www.jazzborneo.com

Borneo International Yachting Challenge (July) – Yachtsmen from all over the world are expected at the BIYC challenge. Activities include a harbour race, regional and an ocean race from Miri to Kota Kinabalu. Contact: Miri District Office Tel: +6085 411841

Pesta Nukenen Bario (July) – Pesta Nukenen & Kebudayaan Kelabit, a community owned food and cultural festival held in Bario, centre of the remote Kelabit Highlands. It celebrates food, farming, forest and cultural heritage of the highland – one of the last surviving fully intact traditionally farmed and forested highland watersheds in Sarawak and East Malaysia. Contact: FORMADAT Tel: (Dora Tigan) +6013 8148780 (Lucy Bulan) +6019 8155453

Baram Regatta (October) – Baram River, Marudi. First held in 1899 as an alternative to headhunting, this is one of Sarawak's oldest and most historic regattas.

Miri City Christmas Parade (December) – A combined effort of all churches in Miri and Miri City Council to celebrate this joyous festive occasion. Contact: Miri City Council Tel: +6085 433501

BINTULU

Borneo International Kite Festival (September) – The annual Borneo International Kite Festival has grown to become a signature event for Bintulu, and never fails to draw a huge crowd made up of local

and international kite enthusiasts. Contact: Bintulu Development Authority (BDA) Tel: +6086 332277

Similajau Nature Challenge (October) – Participants will have the chance to experience Similajau national park's white sandy beach, crystal clear sea and rainforest. Contact: Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture, Youth and Sports Bintulu Tel: +6086 254072

LIMBANG

Pesta Babulang (Bisaya Festival) (June) – Limbang Division. A 3-day festival held by the Bisaya Community, including buffalo racing, cooking competitions and a traditional costume beauty pageant.

LAWAS

Irau Aco Lun Bawang Festival (June) – a showcase of Lun Bawang culture and heritage, featuring music and dances as well as traditional handicrafts and authentic Lun Bawang cuisine. The world-renowned bamboo bands are a highlight. Contact: Lun Bawang Association Tel: +6010 772 8084