

Sarawak Visitor's Guide

Kuching

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PART 1 - KUCHING & SOUTHWEST SARAWAK

INTRODUCTION

Note: The **area code** for all telephone numbers in Kuching and its surroundings, unless otherwise stated, is 082 from outside the area and +6082 from overseas. All addresses are 93000 Kuching unless otherwise stated.



First Impressions

Kuching, the capital of Sarawak, is simply unique. No other city in Malaysia has such a romantic and unlikely history, nor displays its charms with such an easy grace. The residents of Kuching (pop. 650,000 approx.) enjoy living here, and take great pride in their fascinating city, which is reflected in their attitude to visitors. Kuching welcomes visitors warmly, but it does not put on an act for them. Instead it goes about its own business in a relaxed manner that hasn't changed in 160 years. It is impossible to really enjoy Kuching from the air conditioned comfort of a tour bus. To make the most of your visit you must put on your walking shoes, take to the streets (and the water), and join in.

Kuching has an unusual name - the word means "cat" in Malay. There are a number of stories as to how this name came about, but it is unlikely that it has anything to do with cats. The two more likely explanations are that it derives from the Chinese word *kochin*, meaning "harbour," or that it is named after the *mata kuching* or "cat's eye" fruit, a close relative of the lychee that grows widely here.

Like all towns and cities in Borneo, the focal point of Kuching and the reason for its existence is the river. Hiring a sampan to meander slowly up and down the Sarawak River is the best way to get your first impression of Kuching. From the river you will see picturesque Malay villages (*kampungs*), a golden-domed mosque, a Victorian fort, a whole street of 19th century Chinese shophouses and an imposing wooden-roofed palace, all set against a background of distant mountains.

Sarawak is a unique and enjoyable tourism destination, and Kuching is the ideal base from which to go exploring. The nearby **national parks** include the famous Bako, home of the rare proboscis monkey, Gunung Gading, where giant *rafflesia* flowers bloom, Kuching Wetlands, which protects a fascinating mangrove ecosystem, Kubah, with its rare palms and orchids, and Semenggoh and Matang Wildlife Centres with their resident orangutans. Literally hundreds of Iban and Bidayuh longhouses are within easy travelling distance. Damai, on the nearby Santubong Peninsula is Sarawak's main resort area, and many travel agents offer "two-centre" packages allowing you to explore Kuching, go on a longhouse trip, visit Bako and the rainforest and then relax on the beach after the rigours of jungle trekking. See the **Damai and Santubong** section for details.

Kuching's city centre is well preserved and very compact; virtually everything that is worth seeing can be reached on foot or by sampan. The narrow, bustling streets are crammed with shops selling all manner of goods, from the mundane to the exotic. There are ornate Chinese temples, many fine examples of colonial-style architecture, a beautiful waterfront and a number of interesting museums, including the historic Sarawak Museum. There is an excellent range of accommodation, from luxury via boutique to budget, good restaurants, and nightlife to suit most tastes and pockets. You can try local delicacies such as deer meat and jungle fern, drink a glass or two of *tuak* (local rice wine), or feast on a vast array of seafood dishes.

Kuching is also the ideal base for **visiting longhouses**. Local travel agents have a variety of tours, ranging from half-day trips to nearby Bidayuh longhouses, to week-long safaris to Iban longhouses on the Skrang, Lemanak and Batang Ai river systems.

The People

Kuching is a cosmopolitan city, and this is reflected in the faces on the streets. Whilst the population is predominantly Chinese and Malay, Kuching is home to people from



KUCHING & SOUTHWEST SARAWAK



virtually all of Sarawak's ethnic groups. As well as Bidayus (formerly known as Land Dayaks) and Ibans (Sea Dayaks), you are sure to encounter Melanau from the central coastal areas and Orang Ulu (literally "upriver people"), the collective name given to the smaller indigenous societies, including Kayan, Kenyah, Kelabit, Berawan, Lun Bawang, Penan, etc. All are thoroughly modern Malaysians nowadays, but many rural people still live in village or longhouse communities.

History - The White Rajahs

Kuching's history is also Sarawak's - the kind of adventure story that would be unbelievable if it were not true. Local bookshops are crammed with volumes old and new describing the reign of the White Rajahs in great detail. What follows is a brief summary.

At the beginning of the 19th century, Sarawak was a typical Malay principality, under the control of the Sultan

of Brunei. Apart from occasional piracy on the coast and headhunting in the interior, Sarawak was peaceful. All of this changed when the Sultan of Brunei appointed a hugely unpopular Governor. The Malays and Bidayus of the Sarawak River revolted in 1836 and declared independence. An ugly guerrilla war ensued, which continued until 1839, when James Brooke, a young, wealthy Englishman arrived on the scene in his well-armed yacht, the *Royalist*.



Brooke set himself up as a freelance adventurer and the Sultan's uncle immediately asked him to help put down the rebellion. The spears and muskets of the rebels were no match for the *Royalist's* cannon. As a reward, the grateful Sultan made Brooke the Rajah of Sarawak in 1841. Brooke was not content to rule over a small riverside town, and set out to pacify his new kingdom, with the help of the British Navy. By the time of his death in 1868, Sarawak was a relatively peaceful territory covering the area between Tanjung Datu (now the Indonesian border) and Kuching.

James Brooke's nephew Charles, who succeeded him, was no adventurer like his uncle, but an excellent administrator and politician. He set up a proper system of government, gradually expanding his area of control until it formed the present day Sarawak. His legacy is everywhere in Kuching. It was he who built the Istana, Fort Margherita, the Courthouse, the Sarawak Museum and many other fine buildings. Charles Brooke died in 1917, and was succeeded by his son, Charles Vyner Brooke, who built on his father's achievements and improved the general administration of the state. In 1941 he set up a State Council to oversee the passing of new laws, bringing the first stirrings of democracy to Sarawak. The rule of the State Council was short-lived, as the Japanese invaded at the end of the same year.



When the Japanese surrendered in September 1945, Sarawak came under Australian military administration. Vyner Brooke felt the state would be better off as a Crown Colony and ceded it to Britain. This move was very unpopular and resulted in the assassination of the Governor, Duncan Stewart, in 1949. Order was eventually restored and the colonial administration

concentrated on preparing Sarawak for independence. On 22nd July 1963, Sarawak gained independence, then shortly afterwards joined with Malaya, Sabah and Singapore (subsequently expelled in 1965) to form the new nation of Malaysia on September 16th 1963.

City Government

Many publications cite Kuching as having two city councils. This is not strictly true, as Kuching is actually administered by three local governments. The **Commission of the City of Kuching North (DBKU)** covers all areas of the city north of the Sarawak River, including the Santubong and Bako Peninsulas, as well as the western part of the central business district. **Kuching South City Council (MBKS)** administers the eastern part of the Central Business District and the urbanised heart of the city. Many of the southern and eastern suburbs fall under the remit of the **Padawan Municipal Council (MPP)**.

CITY ATTRACTIONS

Old Kuching is easy to discover by yourself. However, most local tour operators offer affordable half-day guided tours of the city, either by bus or on foot. CPH Travel (Tel: 414921) even offer a guided bicycle tour - see tour operator listings on page 26 for contact details. **Orientation:** This guide is aimed primarily at tourists.

Therefore when we refer to walking or taxi distances from the city centre, we mean the historic centre, i.e. Main Bazaar and the Kuching Waterfront

Along the River

Kuching Waterfront, a major restoration and land reclamation project, has become the most popular meeting place in the city. A 1.2km long promenade, further extended by the 550 m **Kuching Esplanade** as far as the **Brooke Dockyard**, it is beautifully landscaped and dotted with wooden benches, food stalls, restaurants and entertainment facilities. A number of older buildings have been preserved and incorporated into the design, including the Chinese History Museum, the Sarawak Steamship Building and the Square Tower. Modern additions include a restored Chinese pavilion, an open-air theatre and a number of contemporary sculptures. During the daytime, the Waterfront offers



excellent views of the Astana, Fort Margherita, the State Assembly Building and the Malay *kampungs* which line the north bank of the river, but at night-time it really comes alive; it seems like half of Kuching is out meeting friends, watching a show, or just taking the air.

Note: Parts of the Waterfront, especially around the Square Tower, may not be accessible during 2014 due to construction of the forthcoming Golden Bridge.

Main Bazaar, opposite the Waterfront, is the oldest street in the city and the heart of old Kuching. It has some superb examples of Chinese shophouse architecture, many of which have been occupied by the same family for generations. These families still pursue traditional occupations



such as tin-smithing, carpentry and petty trading. Kuching's highest concentration of antique, handicraft and souvenir shops are to be found here, and shoppers can rest between bargaining sessions in old-fashioned coffee shops with panelled walls and marble-topped tables.

Jalan Carpenter, which extends into **Jalan Ewe Hai**, runs parallel to Main Bazaar and has a similar selection of small traders, coffee shops and food stalls. The whole area oozes charm and character. Off **Leboh China** (Upper China St.) there is a row of perfectly preserved 19th century Chinese houses.

Contemporary Architecture

Dominating the north bank of the Sarawak River is the **New Sarawak State Assembly Building** or *Dewan Undangan Negeri Sarawak* with its remarkable umbrella-shaped roof. Completed in 2009, it is the seat of the State Parliament and is not open to visitors.

The futuristic **Civic Centre Tower** in Jalan Taman Budaya offers the best all-round views of Kuching and the surrounding area. The city and its hinterland, Mount Serapi, Mount Santubong and even the mountains of Kalimantan are visible on a clear day. Open daily 9 am - 5 pm, entrance to viewing platform RM3. The adjacent **Sultan Iskandar Planetarium** presents a selection of full-dome astronomy movies daily. RM 2 per showing. Open 9 am - 4 pm Mon - Fri, 9 am - 1 pm weekends. Closed public holidays.

The **Kuching South City Hall** on Jalan Padungan is one of the city's best-known landmarks, and also houses a fascinating **Pictorial Gallery** of photos and artifacts tracing the history of Kuching (gallery open Mon-Fri 8.30 am - 5 pm). The **Kuching North City Hall** with its huge Sarawak flag dominates the Petra Jaya skyline, offering great views of the city, and is home to the world's first **Cat Museum** (see page 9).

Mosques, Temples & Churches

The **Kuching Mosque**, previously the State Mosque, is best seen from the river. It was built in 1968 on the site of an older wooden mosque and is enclosed by a tranquil Muslim cemetery. Its gilded cupolas make it one of the city's most striking landmarks, particularly at sunset.

The **State Mosque**, built in 1990 across the Sarawak River at Petra Jaya, is the largest religious building in Sarawak. Its striking design features a single cupola and Italian marble interior detailing.



Tucked away between Jalan Gambier and Jalan India, the **Masjid India** is the oldest intact mosque in Sarawak. Built by Sarawak's Indian Muslim community in 1837, it features a huge drum, or *bedok*, which accompanies the call to prayer.

Note: Visitors to mosques are requested to dress respectfully and remove their shoes. Non-Muslims may not enter during prayer times.



The ornately decorated **Tua Pek Kong Temple** is located on Jln Tunku Abdul Rahman, opposite the Waterfront, and is the oldest Chinese temple in Kuching. It is believed to date from 1843, although official records only recognise its existence since 1876.

The **Shang Ti Temple** in Jalan Carpenter was built by Teochew Chinese in 1863. Dedicated to the deity Hiang Thian Siang Ti, it also has a shrine to a child-god said to have saved Kuching from a great fire in 1884. Dating from the same era is the **Fung Shan (or Phoenix Mountain) Temple** in Wayang Street. This recently restored Hokkien Chinese temple is dedicated to the deity Guang Ze Tian Wang.

Just south of the city centre on Jalan Tabuan (15 mins walk) is the **Lim Fah San Monastery**, one of the city's major landmarks thanks to its giant statue of Guan Yin, the Goddess of Mercy.

St Thomas' Cathedral, on Jalan Tun Abang Haji Openg facing Padang Merdeka, was built in 1956 on the site of its predecessor, the first church in Sarawak. It is the Seat of the Anglican Diocese of Kuching, which covers Sarawak and Brunei.

St Josph's Cathedral, just a little further along Jalan Tun Abang Haji Openg, is notable for its remarkable roof built entirely from *belian* (Borneo ironwood). Consecrated in 1969, it is the seat of the Catholic Archdiocese of Kuching.

The **Sri Srinivasagar Kaliamman Temple** on Jalan Ban Hock is tranquil most of the week, but comes alive with the chanting of *Bhajans* (Hindu devotional songs) on Friday evenings, as does the larger and more modern **Sri Maha Mariamman Temple** on Jalan Tun Ahmad Zaidi Aducci (3 km from centre). Visitors are welcome at both temples.

The gilded domes of Kuching's only Sikh temple, the imposing **Gurdwara Sahib** in Jalan Masjid, complement those of the neighbouring Kuching Mosque (see above), providing excellent photo opportunities. Visitors are welcome to enjoy a free vegetarian lunch every Sunday.

Historic Buildings and the Brooke Legacy



The Astana, the imposing palace on the north bank of the river opposite the Waterfront, was built in 1870 by Charles Brooke as a bridal gift to his wife Margaret. It is nowadays the official residence of the Governor of Sarawak, and only open to visitors during the Governor's Hari Raya Open Day (28th or 29th July 2014, check local media for details).

Fort Margherita was built in 1879 to guard Kuching's river approaches from pirates. Named after Charles Brooke's wife, Rane Margaret, it is an extremely interesting building. It is currently undergoing renovation but should be open by early 2014. Sampans go to the Fort from various Waterfront jetties.



The Square Tower on the Waterfront was built in 1879 as a fortress, but fortunately never fired a shot in anger, unlike its wooden predecessor which was burnt down in the 1857 gold miners' rebellion. The **Sarawak Steamship Building**, also on the Waterfront, was built in 1930, and was previously the offices and warehouse of the Sarawak Steamship Company. It now the home of the **Kuching Waterfront Bazaar**, with dozens of stalls selling handicrafts and souvenirs.

KUCHING CITY CENTRE MAP



INFORMATION

- Police Station
- Town Centre Bus Station
- Taxi
- Visitors' Information Centre
- Toilets
- Medical Centre
- Bank

HOTELS (CITY CENTRE ONLY) 1 G = Jln Green Hill

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ABELL HOTEL 2. ARIVA GATEWAY KUCHING 3. BATIK BOUTIQUE HOTEL 4. BORNEO HOTEL 5. B & B INN 6. BATU BATA 7. BEDS GUESTHOUSE 8. BERAMBIH LODGE 9. BORNEO SEAHARE 10. BROOKE TERRACE 11. CHONGLIN PLAZA HOTEL & SUITES 12. CHUNG HIN HOTEL 13. CITY INN 14. DORMANI HOTEL 15. DE PALMA WATERFRONT 16. FATA HOTEL | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 17. FURAMA HOTEL G 18. GOODWOOD INN G 19. GRAND MAGHERITA HOTEL 20. GRAND SUPREME HOTEL 21. GREEN MOUNTAIN LODGING HOUSE G 22. GW FURAMA APARTMENT G 23. HILTON KUCHING 24. HARBOUR VIEW HOTEL 25. HUA KUOK INN 26. HOTEL GRAND CONTINENTAL 27. JAMBU RESIDENCES 28. KAPIT HOTEL 29. KUOK PIN HOTEL G 30. KUCHING WATERFRONT LODGE 31. LIME TREE HOTEL 32. LAILA INN |
|--|--|

33. LIWAH HOTEL
34. LODGE 121
35. MERDEKA PALACE
36. MARCO POLO TRAVELLERS
37. MR D's B & B
38. MY SARAWAK TRAVEL CAFÉ
39. NOMAD BORNEO G
40. ORCHID INN G
41. PULLMAN HOTEL KUCHING
42. PLANET BORNEO LODGE
43. PINNACLES LODGE
44. RIVERSIDE MAJESTIC HOTEL
45. REGAL COURT HOTEL
46. RIVERVIEW INN G
47. SAMUDRA COURT HOTEL
48. SINGGAHSANA LODGE

49. THE RANEE
50. TELANG USAN HOTEL
51. TAIPAN HOTEL
52. TUNE HOTEL
53. THE FAIRVIEW
54. THE ROOM
55. WESBERLY APTS
56. WO JIA LODGE
57. 360 XPRESS

ADVERTISERS (CITY CENTRE ONLY) 1 G

1. AMANSAR TOURS
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3. BORNEO TRANSVERSE TOUR & TRAVEL
4. BORNEO ADVENTURE
5. BORNEO EXPERIENCES
6. DIETHELM TRAVEL
7. INSAR TOURS AND TRAVEL
8. OOOHAA TOURS & TRAVEL
9. JAMBU RESTAURANT / JAMBU JOURNEYS
10. LL BANANA LEAF
11. INTER-CONTINENTAL TRAVEL CENTRE
12. LITTLE LEBANON (X3)
13. PLAZA MERDEKA
14. RUAI BAR
15. RUMAH HIJAU RESTAURANT (X2)
16. SARAWAK CRAFT COUNCIL
17. SEE GOOD FOOD CENTRE
18. SUNTRAVEL



The **Court House Complex** or **Sarawak Tourism Complex** (junction of Main Bazaar and Jalan Tun Abang Haji Openg, facing the

Waterfront) was built in 1871 as the seat of Sarawak's government, and was used for this purpose as late as 1973. It is a superb collection of buildings, with magnificent belian (ironwood) roofs and beautiful detailing inside and out, reflecting local art forms. The colonial-baroque **Clock Tower** was added in 1883 and the **Charles Brooke Memorial** in 1924. The complex also includes **The Pavilion Building** - a piece of old New Orleans transplanted to Kuching, completed in 1909 used for many years as the General Hospital and now transformed into Sarawak's **Textile Museum** - and **The Round Tower**, originally planned as a fort (1886), then used as a dispensary, and nowadays the headquarters of the Sarawak Craft Council. Following restoration of the original buildings and redevelopment, this important heritage site reopened in 2003. Now known as the **Sarawak Tourism Complex**, the area also houses the **Visitor Information Centre**.

The **Main Post Office** on Jln Tun Haji Openg is another good example of Kuching's cosmopolitan architectural mix. Built in 1931, it appears to belong to the early 19th century with its neo-classical style and Corinthian columns.

Museums, Galleries, Etc.

Note: *Unless otherwise stated, museums are open daily from 9 am to 4.45 pm weekdays, 10 am to 4 pm weekends, and closed on major public holidays.*

The **Sarawak Museum**, straddling both sides of Jln Tun Abang Haji Openg, has one of the best ethnographic



collections in Southeast Asia. The **Old Building**, opened in 1891, is designed in the style of a Normandy town-house. It houses an exceptional ethnographic collection, some good natural history displays and a section on the work of Alfred Russel Wallace. The exhibition of traditional wood-carvings on the first floor is magnificent. The adjacent **Art Gallery** houses works of art pertaining to Sarawak, as well as exhibitions by local artists, while the **Natural History Museum**

expands on the collection housed in the Old Building. The **New Wing** across the footbridge is used for events and exhibitions and has a pleasant **Museum Café** offering light lunches, pastries, snacks and drinks. The Museum grounds contain an **Aquarium**, the **Botanical Gardens** and the **Heroes' Memorial**.

The **Islamic Museum** is located on Jln P. Ramlie in the Maderasah Melayu Building (1930). It is also accessible from the rear of the Sarawak Museum's new wing. It presents a clear picture of the rich historical heritage and special culture of the Muslim community in Sarawak and throughout the Malay-Indonesian archipelago, and traces connections with the development of Islam in the rest of the World. The museum consists of 7 galleries set around a central courtyard garden, each with a different theme.

The **Chinese History Museum**, on the Waterfront opposite the Tua Pek Kong temple, traces the history of the Chinese community in Sarawak. Exhibits include early trade routes, migration from China, geographical distribution, early pioneers, traditional trading activities, formation of trade / community associations, political history, and the involvement of the Chinese community in modern, multi-racial Sarawak.

The small **Sabati Women's Museum**, in the Courthouse Complex, traces the contribution of the state's womenfolk to the development of modern Sarawak.

The **Textile Museum**, housed in the Pavilion Building opposite the Main Post Office on Jln Tun Haji Abang Openg, showcases Sarawak's fascinating traditional textiles, most notably the Iban *pua kumbu* and Malay *kain songket*.

Textile buffs interested in a more hand-on experience should not miss the **Datin Amar Margaret Linggi Memorial Gallery**, 4th Floor, Tun Jugah Tower, Jln Tunku Abdul Rahman. Run by the Tun Jugah Foundation, it houses a superb collection of Iban *pua kumbu* textiles, as well as exquisite Iban silverware and jewellery. You can also watch the weavers at work, or even learn the craft yourself (if you have a year or two to spare). Visitors are welcome, but should make an appointment. www.tunjugahfoundation.org.my Tel: 239672. Open Mon - Fri 9 - 12 am, 2 - 4 pm.

Another good place to see authentic Sarawak handicrafts is the **Sarawak Craft Council's Handicraft Centre** in the Round Tower (see Court House Complex). Groups of craftspeople from rural villages and longhouses demonstrate their skills in various Sarawak crafts, rotating on a monthly basis. The centre also has interesting handicraft displays, and a resource centre with a library and handicraft videos. Tel: 425652. Open Mon-Fri 8.30 am - 12.30 pm (11.30 pm Fri) and 2 pm - 5 pm, weekends and public holidays 8.30 am - 12.00.

Tanoti House on Jalan Tabuan (1st right after the Inland Revenue Academy) is a collective of Sarawakian women weavers dedicated to producing and promoting hand-crafted Sarawakian *songket* textiles. Originating as a research and development workshop supported by HM the Queen of Malaysia, Tanoti seeks to improve the livelihoods of womenfolk and rural communities through the ancient art of songket weaving. Visitors are welcome to visit the workshop and textile gallery but please call before you drop by, Tel: 019 2810098, <http://tanoticrafts.com>.

More textiles and other handicrafts can be found at **Sarakraf Pavilion**, 78 Jalan Tabuan. This Chinese-Colonial style mansion houses a workshop where a wide range of crafts are demonstrated. Visitors may sign up for courses and workshops. Open daily 9 am - 4.30 pm. Tel 258771. 20 mins walk from centre or take a taxi.

Traditional Potteries - see page 45

Galleria at Wesberly House on Rubber Road West is a well-lit and spacious gallery displaying the work of some of Sarawak's best known and most interesting painters, including Melton Kias, Sylvester Jussem, Raphael Scott Ahbeng, Magdalene Tai and Tan Wei Kheng, as well as work of emerging artists from throughout Southeast Asia. Well worth a visit. Short taxi ride from city centre or Bus No K5, K7, K15, K21, K21B or K71 to Jln Satok (ask driver for Green Rd stop then 5 mins walk). Mon-Fri 9 am - 5 pm. Tel: 429361 Email: wesberly@gmail.com. www.wesberly.com.my.

The World's first **Cat Museum**, devoted to all things feline, is in Petra Jaya in the Kuching City North City Hall. Cat lovers will find a range of exhibits, photos, feline art and cat souvenirs. Tel: 446688. Open daily 9 am to 5 pm (closed public holidays). Admission free, camera fee RM 3, video fee RM 5. CPL bus No K5 or K15.

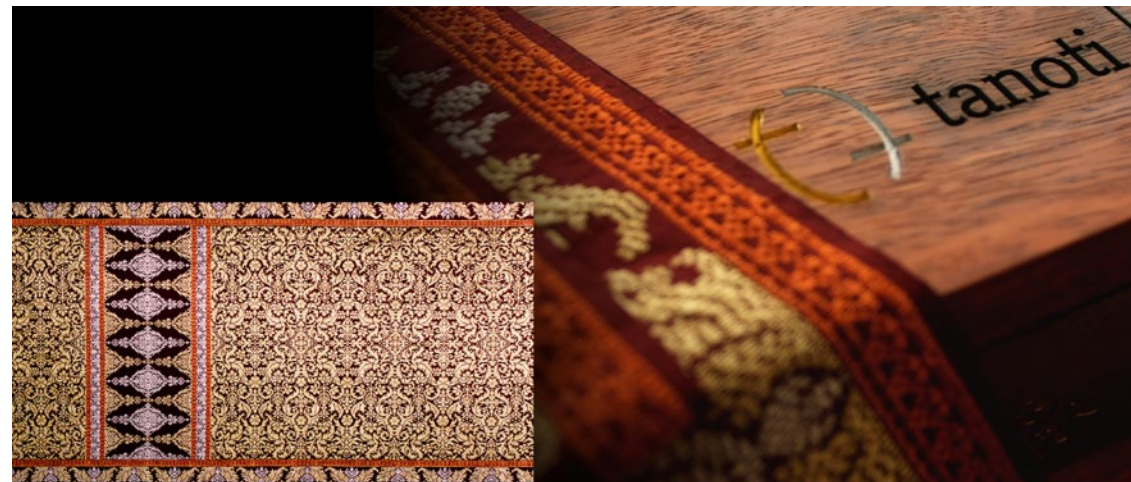
The **Timber Museum** is situated in the Wisma Sumber Alam building in Petra Jaya. Anyone with an interest in forestry, traditional wood items, forest products and the development of the timber industry should head here. Tel: 443477. Mon-Fri 8.30 am - 5 pm. Take a taxi.

The **Sarawak State Library**, an elegant modern building in Petra Jaya, has extensive collections and databases on almost everything you could want to know about Sarawak. Tel: 442000. Open Mon. 2 pm - 9 pm, Tue-Sat 10 am - 9 pm, closed most public holidays. The library enforces a strict dress code - smart casual is the order of the day. Take a taxi.

Orchid lovers should make a beeline for the **DBKU Orchid Garden** between the New State Assembly Building and the Astana. This 15.4 acre garden houses over 75,000 plants belonging to 82 genera, including Sarawak's state flower the Normah Orchid (*Phalaenopsis bellina*), the Lady's Slipper (*Paphiopedilum sanderianum*), *Coelogyne pandurata* - the green and black flowered orchid, and *Bulbophyllum beccarii* - the flower with stinking smell. Open Tuesday-Sunday 9.30 am - 6 pm, admission free. Access by *tambang* from Waterfront.

Streetlife

The **Satok Weekend Market**, which actually starts on Saturday afternoon, has now moved from Jalan Satok to new purpose-built premises just across the river. It is still renowned for the Bidayuh ladies who set up shop here selling fruit and vegetables, and there are also many good Chinese and Malay stalls. Goods on offer include handicrafts, forest produce (including delicious wild honey), pets of all descriptions, orchid plants, live fish, and a whole range of local snacks and delicacies. The market is a must for weekend visitors, as it is very colourful and teeming with shoppers. The best time to go is Saturday night or early Sunday morning. Bus No K5, K7, K15, K21, K21B or K71.





Jalan Padungan is lined with Chinese shophouses, mostly built in the 1920's and 30's during the rubber boom. Some are very elegantly decorated, and a walk round the back of the buildings can reveal

fascinating architectural details. The area has some excellent coffee shops, pubs and restaurants, more handicraft shops and some unusual specialist retailers including an entire block of fruit and flower sellers. The **Great Cat of Kuching**, a monumental kitsch statue, is situated at the junction of Jln Padungan and Jln Central.

The **Jalan India** pedestrian area is lined with shops selling all kinds of goods, particularly textiles, watches, bags and gold jewellery. Mid-way down Jln India is a narrow passageway that passes by the entrance of the Indian Mosque (see page 5) and leads to **Jln Gambier**, home of Kuching's Indian spice traders.

The **Malay Kampung** (villages) along the riverside next to Fort Margherita have some beautiful examples of traditional and modern Malay architecture and the residents are very pleased to see visitors. Many families here have developed a thriving cottage industry selling *kek lapis* (Sarawak layer cake) from their homes and are generous with free samples. There are some more superb Malay houses south of the river around Jln Datuk Ajibah Abol, past the Kuching Mosque. Both these areas are particularly noteworthy as they are self-contained, intact traditional communities existing within a modern city.

DAMAI AND SANTUBONG

The Santubong Peninsula is located at the West Mouth of the Sarawak River. At its northern tip, **Mount Santubong** (810 m) rises majestically from the sea. The area has been settled since ancient times, and was once a major trading centre. The Peninsula, particularly Damai, is a popular beach resort area and a good base for discovering the charms of Southwest Sarawak. All manner of attractions are here; sleepy fishing villages, primary rainforest, superb seafood restaurants, an Arnold Palmer-designed golf course, a "living museum", and a choice of beach resort hotels and guest houses. On a clear day, Santubong offers spectacular sunsets, as the sun sinks slowly into the sea framed by rolling hills on one side and scattered islands on the other.

Tours and excursions can be made from the various hotels at Damai or from Kuching, and include jungle treks to the summit of Mount Santubong (recently gazetted as a National Park), Irrawaddy dolphin watching tours, river cruises and wildlife watching



tours, and bird watching at Buntal - one of Malaysia's most important sites for migratory birds. Just offshore are two small islands - Pulau Satang Besar and Pulau Satang Kecil, part of the Talang-Satang National Park. Satang Besar is one of Sarawak's three "Turtle Islands" and an important conservation zone for green turtles which come ashore to lay eggs.

Transport: Santubong Village is roughly 31 km from Kuching. The Damai Beach area is 35 km. If you are staying more than a day or two, a rental car, motorcycle or bicycle is highly recommended. For transport details see **Travel Connections** listings.

Tour Options & Day Trips

Sarawak Cultural Village, Damai Beach (turn right at roundabout): "See Sarawak in Half a Day" is the claim made by Sarawak Cultural Village, a unique award-winning living museum offering an excellent introduction to local cultures and lifestyles. On a sprawling 17-acre site just a short walk from the nearby resort hotels, there are replica buildings representing every major ethnic group in Sarawak; Bidayuh, Iban and Orang Ulu longhouses, a Penan jungle settlement, a Melanau tall-house, a Malay town house with adjacent top-spinning court, a Chinese farm House and a Chinese pagoda. All the buildings are staffed with members of the various ethnic groups, in traditional costume, carrying out traditional activities. Each building has a "storyteller" who is expert in describing and interpreting traditional cultures and lifestyles. Staff will happily pose with you for photos.



After touring the village, you can enjoy a multi-cultural dance performance in the village's own theatre, or maybe take dance and music lessons for only RM10 per hour. There is also a good restaurant and a handicrafts shop on-site. The Cultural Village can also host theme dinners and parties (check with your hotel), and you can even get married here, in traditional Iban, Bidayuh,



Malay or Orang Ulu style! Admission is RM 60 (Children age 6-12, RM 30.00, below 6 free). Local tour operators also offer half-day and full-day tours from Kuching, including lunch and transport to and from your hotel, at very affordable prices. Open 9 am – 4.45 pm daily. Dance performances at 11.30 am and 4.00 pm. Tel: 846411/846108, Fax: 846988, Email enquiry@scv.com.my for tour bookings and enquiries. www.scv.com.my.

River Cruises: See **Kuching Wetlands National Park**.

Irrawaddy Dolphin Watching:

The Santubong area is one of the best places in Sarawak to see the rare Irrawaddy dolphin, which inhabits the Santubong, Salak and Buntal river estuaries. On rare occasions finless porpoises and Indo-pacific humpback dolphins also are sighted. The Irrawaddy is a relatively shy dolphin - it's usually hard to see so a good guide-cum-spotter is essential. CPH Travel pioneered dolphin watching tours in Sarawak and run regular dolphin-spotting trips. Best from April to October, but also possible at other times if water conditions are right. Contact CPH at Tel: 243708. www.cphtravel.com.my.



also offers the **D'Cove Family Park**, with food stalls, rest areas, children's playground and children's pool. Although Santubong is within walking distance (4 km) from Damai beach, the other villages require transport.

Buntal, a colourful Malay fishing village located off the Kuching-Santubong road 25 km from Kuching, is famous for the seafood restaurants perched on wooden stilts which line the shore. Less well known is that the surrounding sand flats, mangroves, rivers and nearshore waters provide a rich habitat for wildlife. Buntal is an important wintering ground for migratory bird species and the best site in the Santubong Peninsula for **bird watching**. The whole Bako-Buntal Bay is listed as an 'Important Bird Area' by Birdlife International. The best time for bird watching is from October to March, when large numbers of migratory birds can be seen including plovers, terns, egrets, sandpipers and godwits plus some rare migrants. Resident birds include the white-bellied sea eagle, brahminy kite and collared kingfisher. The **mangroves** near Buntal support silver-leaf monkeys, long-tailed macaques, monitor lizards, otters, crocodiles and a diversity of birdlife. **Buntal Boat Cruise** offers a range of mangrove and wildlife cruises - contact Ehwam Ibrahim on 082-846977 or 019-8785088.

Historical Sites

Just after the 6km marker on Kuching-Damai road (viewed from Damai) is a narrow gravel lane leading downhill past two wooden houses to a prehistoric human figure carved on a rock, known as the **Batu Gambar**. 3 km further along the road, next to the turnoff to Kampung Santubong, is the **tomb of Sultan Tengah ibnu Sultan Muhammad Hassan**, the first and only Sultan of Sarawak, who ruled briefly during the mid-17th Century.

Sports & Activities

Damai Golf & Country Club: Jln Sultan Tengah, Santubong. Tel: 846088, Fax: 846044. Email: dgcc@po.jaring.my. www.damainet.com. Arnold Palmer designed course featuring a Mountain Nine that sprawls over the foothills of Mount Santubong, and an Ocean Nine which hugs the coastline and the mangrove forests. According to Palmer, it's a "must-play course for those who love golf." Open to members and the public and playable all year. Facilities include driving range, practice green, buggy rental, caddies, pro shop, teaching pro, tennis courts, swimming pool, *Sweet Swing Cafeteria*, banquet hall.

Watersports: Local resorts offer a range of watersports including kayaking, sailing and windsurfing, and can also arrange coastal excursion trips and snorkelling

Malay Villages: There are a few interesting coastal villages (*kampungs*) in the Santubong Peninsula. The most accessible from Damai is Kampung **Santubong**, a well-kept Malay beach-side village at the foot of Mount Santubong. **Pasir Panjang** and **Pasir Pandak** are two kampungs which are surrounded by small rolling hills, coconut groves and durian orchards. Both have good beaches which can get busy at weekends. Pasir Panjang

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and beachcombing trips. Further details and prices are available from hotel recreation counters or the Damai Beach boathouse.

Accommodation



Cove 55, Telok Nipah, Jalan Sultan Tengah, Santubong. Tel: 846068, 012 8651077, Email: contact@cove55.com. www.cove55.com. Band D. Sumptuously appointed boutique resort & retreat that sets a new benchmark for luxury resort accommodation in Sarawak. 8 superbly appointed rooms and 2 suites, all with large private balcony, as well as 2 private chalets. Captivating views of Mt Santubong and the Bako Peninsula. Facilities include a lap pool, library, residents' lounge. In-villa dining with a bespoke menu from your own private chef (guests are also welcome to use the superbly-equipped kitchen by arrangement). There is also an art gallery showcasing fine Iban artifacts and antiques, hardly surprising as the resort is operated by the descendants of the late Tun Jugah anak Barieng, the last Paramount Chief of the Iban. Cove 55 is also available for private hire for weddings, incentive groups, corporate retreats and suchlike

Damai Beach Resort (4*), Teluk Bandung, Santubong. Tel: 846999, Fax: 846777, Email: general@damaibeachresort.com, www.damaibeachresort.com. 252 ethnically-designed rooms in two wings - the Beachfront Wing and the Hilltop Wing. Band D. Outlets include two restaurants and a bar. Features include Borneo Odyssey Spa, squash and tennis courts, mini golf, kids village, watersports, mountain biking, jungle trekking, 2 swimming pools and 1 children's pool, hairdressing salon, extensive conference & banquet facilities, wedding & theme party packages, business facilities, laundry & dry cleaning, tour information & car rental desk, lobby shops, nurse on call, non-smoking rooms, facilities for disabled guests. All rooms air-con, with in-house movie plus local & satellite channels, IDD telephone, coffee/tea maker, hair dryer and minibar.

Nanga Damai, Jalan Sultan Tengah, Santubong. Tel: 019-8871017, 016-8871017, Fax: 414802 Email: polseb@pc.jaring.my, www.nangadamai.com. Band B-C. Well-appointed, family-run bed & breakfast homestay set in a tropical garden on the edge of the rainforest, overlooking the South China Sea. Close (20 mins

walk) to Cultural Village, Damai beaches, golf course and seafood restaurants. 4 double air-con rooms with phone, fridge and sea & jungle views, plus 2 air-con rooms in wooden jungle cottage. Minimum 2 nights stay. Amenities include multi-gym, bar terrace, swimming pool. Own jungle trail with access to Santubong peak trail. Please note: Nanga Damai is not suitable for small children or the elderly & infirm, family dogs are kept on the premises.

Village House by Singgahsana. Tel: 846166, Fax: 846266, Email: info@villagehouse.com.my. www.villagehouse.com.my. Band B-C. Located in Santubong Village, approx. 100 m from the beach. Luxury homestay with the emphasis on chilling out. Traditional Malay-style stilted rooms set around tropical gardens and swimming pool. 2 x Rajah Rooms (air-con), 10 x Village Rooms (air-con) and 2 x House Dorms (fan, 6 pax per dorm). Other facilities include a restaurant, bar and living area with library, TV, DVD player, board games and internet terminal. Please note: Village House does not accept children under 12.

Damai Puri Resort & Spa (4*), Teluk Penyau, Santubong (turn right at roundabout). Luxury beach resort & spa. Tel: 846900, www.damaipuriresort.com. Band D

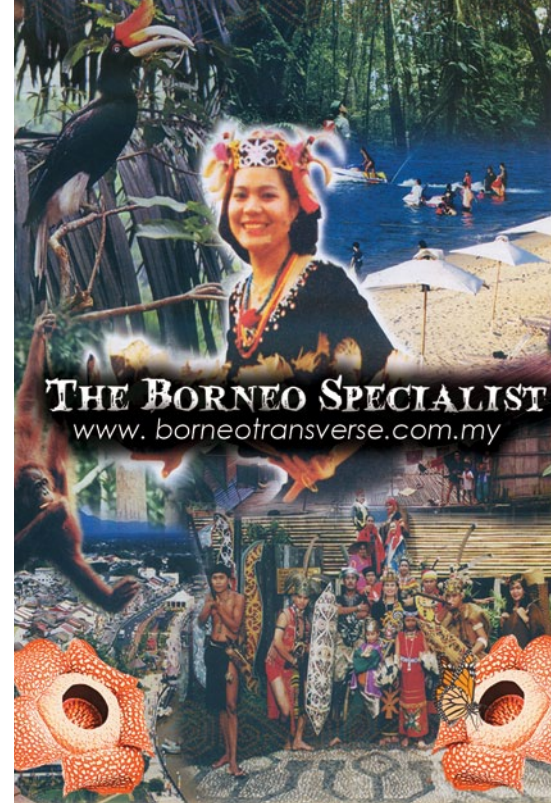
Permai Rainforest Resort, Pantai Damai, Santubong. Tel: 846487/90, www.permairainforest.com. Air-con tree houses and cabins. Band C.

One Hotel Santubong (3*), Jalan Sultan Tengah, Santubong (access via Damai golf course) Tel: 846888, Email: santubong@onehotelmalaysia.com. Band C.

There are also village homestay packages with activities available at Kampung Santubong (Tel: 013 8020420) and Kampung Buntal (Tel: 013 8453417). See page 36 for further details.

Eating Out

The resort hotels have a choice of restaurants, with menus ranging from spicy Malay curries and Chinese seafood to Continental cuisine and Western fast food. See accommodation listings for full details. The **Damai Central** beachfront development opposite the Cultural Village has a popular **food court** serving local dishes, as well as the **Escobar** bar and grill (which turns into a thumping dance club after 9 pm) and the **Bayridge** seafood restaurant, both offering stunning sea views. Perhaps the best place to eat in the Damai/Santubong area is **Buntal** village, which has a host of excellent seafood restaurants overlooking the estuary. Also, **Sarimah Enterprise** café and bakery, 211 Kampung Buntal, sells some of Sarawak's finest *kek lapis* (layer cake). There are a few more seafood restaurants dotted along the Kuching-Santubong road. Hotels can arrange transport.



AROUND KUCHING & SOUTHWEST SARAWAK

Kuching's Hinterland

The **Sri Maha Mariamman Temple** on Mount Matang is the oldest Hindu temple in Sarawak and the only Hindu temple in the world constructed from *belian* (Borneo ironwood). It was built in the late 19th Century by Tamil plantation workers but fell into disuse after 1912. It has recently been fully restored and was reconsecrated in June 2011. The 45-minute walk up the mountain is rewarded with stunning views. Best time to go is just before midday, when prayers are conducted (usually daily, guaranteed at weekends). Km 12 Jalan Matang - CPL Bus K21 or K21B, taxi or *bas sewa*. Amogha Tours (Tel: 463984, www.amoghatourstravel.com) and Suntravel (Tel: 422023, www.suntravelborneo.com) both run guided tours which include a vegetarian lunch in the temple compound.

Sinar Serapi is a family activity theme park at Jalan Sungai Tengah near Mount Serapi. It is also open evenings, with live entertainment. Accommodation available. Tel: 641227, www.sinarserapi.com.my. Taxi or *bas sewa*.

Jong's Crocodile Farm and mini-zoo is located 29 km from Kuching, just off the Serian road. Open daily from 9 am to 5 pm. Feeding times 11 am and 3 pm. RM 16

(adult), RM 8 (child). Take CPL bus K3 to Siburan (ask driver for farm entrance), then 10 mins walk. Tel: 863570.

Padawan Pitcher Plant and Orchid Garden showcases lowland pitcher plants and orchids from around Borneo. Open from 9 am to 4pm, Tuesdays to Sundays. Entrance fee: RM 2. Located on the way to Semenggoh at Kota Padawan, 10th Mile Penrissen Road. When you reach the Bazaar, follow the signposts. Tel: 615566 for further details.

Bau: A 19th century gold rush put Bau on the map. Small-scale mining continues, but nowadays Bau is a market town and administrative centre, about 60 km from Kuching. There are some interesting caves around Bau. The **Wind Cave** - a collection of small passageways - is a popular local picnic spot. The **Fairy Cave** is larger and more impressive - there is a small Chinese shrine in the main chamber and varied vegetation at the entrance. A flashlight is essential to explore the rock formations within. Travel agents can arrange trips, or there are frequent buses to Bau. From the town, take a taxi or hitch-hike (usually quite easy).

If you are in Sarawak during June, it is well worth travelling to the Bau area to witness **Gawai Padi** (or Gawai Sawa'a), the culmination of a remarkable shamanistic ritual where the Bidayuh community give



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thanks to the Rice Goddess for an abundant harvest. Each village has its own ritual, complete with shamens, priestesses, trance dancers, musicians, and of course an all-night street party. Contact community insider Mr. Diweng Bakir, Tel: 019-8565498, Email: diweng@gmail.com, for further details.

Serikin Bazaar is a busy weekend market held at the border village of Serikin, 40 km from Kuching, where Indonesian traders come to sell their wares. This is a good place to buy cheap textiles, clothing, fresh fruits, jungle produce and handicrafts. Many Kuching tour operators offer day trips for shoppers.

Borneo Highlands Resort & Hornbill Golf & Jungle Club, Jalan Borneo Heights. This hill resort is situated at the Sarawak-Kalimantan border, at an altitude of 600 to 1,000 metres, and features an 18-hole golf course and a Clubhouse & Jungle Spa with 30 rooms. Tel: 577930. www.borneohighlands.com.my. Taxi or *bas sewa*.

Matang Family Park: A popular recreation and picnic spot situated at the foothills of Mount Serapi about 25 km from Kuching. There are picnic areas, a children's playground, jungle tracks and a crystal clear mountain stream ideal for swimming. Entrance fee RM 3 (adult), RM 2 (teenagers) and RM 1 (child). Taxi or *bas sewa*.

The Southwest Coast

The fishing village of **Muara Tebas** off Jalan Bako is noted for an attractive beach (not safe for swimming due to fast-rising tides), some good seafood restaurants, and the **Ching San Yen Temple**, a large and beautifully decorated Chinese temple on a hilltop above the village where pilgrims enjoy stunning the sea views and pay homage to Ma Cho, Goddess of the Seas. Taxi or *bas sewa*.

Sempadi offers a fine 10km stretch of palm fringed beach with views of Sarwak's Turtle Islands. It is largely underdeveloped except for a few Malay fishing villages and is the ideal spot for a day of beachcombing. There is no accommodation at the time of writing, but the **Jambu Village** eco-retreat is set to open a small number of poolside chalets in early 2014 - see www.jambuvillage.com or phone 012 3721850 for details. Taxi or *bas sewa* - 60-90 mins depending on ferry times.



Lundu is a sleepy seaside town comprising a few rows of shophouses, a small market, and some attractive *kampong* houses, inhabited by very friendly residents. It is a

good base for exploring **Gunung Gading National Park** and there are some attractive beaches nearby, including Siar and Pandan.

Lundu Accommodation: Union Yes Retreat at Siar Beach. Contact: Sarawak Bank Employees' Union,

2nd Floor, Block B, Queen's Court, King Centre, 93350 Kuching. Tel: 453027 Fax: 461829, Email: headoffice@sbeu.org.my. www.sbeu.org.my. Band B-D. This not-for-profit retreat offers the best value resort accommodation in the Lundu area. Chalet, deluxe & superior rooms, 2-bedroom penthouse suites, a 3-bedroom beach house and 10-bed hostels with a total capacity of 195 guests. Most rooms have rustic outdoor showers. Restaurant, bar, karaoke, live entertainment, extensive conference facilities, adventure and team-building activities, pool, spa pool, children's pool and a clean and well-maintained beach.

Lundu Gading Hotel. Lot 174, Lundu Town District. Tel: 735199, Band B

Sematan is a picturesque fishing port located about 110 km from Kuching and the gateway to **Tanjung Datu National Park**. The long beach north of the town is a popular weekend getaway for residents of Kuching. Due to the low sloping sand you have to walk out some distance if you want to swim. There are several chalet developments at Sematan beach, of which the best value is probably **Sematan Palm Beach Resort**. Band C-D, incl. breakfast & dinner. Tel 712388. spbresort.com.

Telok Melano is a picturesque Malay fishing village situated at the western tip of Sarawak, about an hour's boat ride from Sematan. The village's homestay programme offers visitors the chance to experience village life and enjoy the many natural attractions of the area. Activities include snorkelling, diving, fishing, jungle trekking and trips to nearby Tanjung Datu National Park. Contact local tour operators for details.

Into The Heart Of Borneo

Serian: A small market town about 1 hour from Kuching. Tour groups heading for the Skrang, Lemanak and Batang Ai areas often stop here. The main attraction is an excellent farmers' market selling all manner of fruit, vegetables and forest produce, and a thriving fish market. If you are lucky you will also see sago worms, a favourite local delicacy, offered for sale. The Serian District Council has a number of chalets at nearby **Ranchan Pools**, a local beauty spot. Chalets RM 80-120, Dormitory RM 150 (10 beds). Tel: 876681.

Lachau is a bustling roadside bazaar, 140 km from Kuching, where just about every truck driver, tour group and express bus stops for lunch. You can hardly avoid it if you are heading north. In addition to some thriving cafés, there is a lively market selling handicrafts and jungle produce.

The town of **Sri Aman**, 180 km from Kuching, is famous for its **benak** or **tidal bore**, which almost ended the life and literary career of W. Somerset Maugham, as described in his short story *The Yellow Streak*. The bore occurs daily and is best viewed from the new Tidal Bore Observatory on the waterfront. The town celebrates an annual Tidal Bore Festival (see page 100).



The 19th Century **Tze Yin Khor Temple** on the bank of the Batang Lupar is Sri Aman's oldest Chinese temple, and is unique for having a green roof instead of the traditional

red. The temple is built on a "live crab" feng shui site and the roof colour has been chosen to avoid "cooking" the crab. Other places of interest include **Rumah Sri Aman**, the former British Residency where the treaty ending the Communist Insurrection was signed in 1973 (view by appointment only, Tel: 083 322011) and **Fort Alice** on Jln Astana, a Brooke-Era wooden fort built in 1864 and hopefully undergoing much-needed restoration by the time you read this guide.

Sri Aman Accommodation: Batang Ai Longhouse Resort by Hilton (4*), on Batang Ai Hydro Lake near Lubok Antu, 90 mins from Sri Aman. Access via resort ferry. Tel: 083-584388, Contact via Hilton Kuching. Tel: 082-248200, www.hilton.com. Band D.

Hoover Hotel, 139 Jalan Club, 95000 Sri Aman, Tel: 083 321985. Band B.

Taiwan Hotel, 123 Jln Majlis, 95000 Sri Aman, Tel: 083 322493. Band A-B.

Lubok Antu, 30km from the main highway, is a small settlement which acts as the gateway to the **Batang**



Ai Hydro Lake, the longhouses of the Upper Ai river system and Batang Ai National Park. Visitors can charter longboats at the Lubok Antu Jetty to visit the lakeside and upriver longhouses, but this can prove more expensive than joining an organised tour. The District Office is worth a quick visit as it is situated in **Fort Arundell**, a converted Brooke Era fort.

The town of **Betong**, 240 km from Kuching, is notable for **Fort Lily**, one of the earliest of the Brooke-era wooden forts, unfortunately not open to the public. Betong is an excellent place to hang around for a day or two if you are hoping to get an invitation to an Iban longhouse (see below).

Betong Accommodation: Kok Thai Hotel, 470 Jln Datuk Basil Temenggong, 95700 Betong, Tel: 083 472246. Band A-B.

Medan Hotel, New Township, 95700 Betong, Tel: 083 471919 Email: mhbetong@mymedan.com. Band B.

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VISITING VILLAGES & LONGHOUSES

Bidayuh villages and longhouses can be found within easy reach of Kuching and can usually be visited as a day trip, although there are a few that also offer accommodation (see listings). Iban Longhouses are usually found in the Skrang, Lemanak and Batang Ai areas and in the Rejang and Baram river basins. Orang Ulu longhouses are also located in the Rejang and Baram river systems and in the northern highlands, and are accessed via Sibul and Miri

Bidayuh Villages & Longhouses

Kampung Annah Rais, Jalan Borneo Heights, 40km from Kuching. A traditional bamboo longhouse enclosed by a modern village. Don't



miss the the *barok* (skull house) with its ancient brass cannon and smoked human skulls. Natural hot springs nearby. Homestay available. Open daily, 8 am - 6 pm, entrance RM 5. Taxi or *bas sewa*. Local tour operators also run trips.

Kampung Benuk, Jalan Borneo Heights, 34km from Kuching. A Bidayuh village with an old bamboo longhouse complete with *barok* (skull house) and a mini-museum. Homestay available. Open daily 9.30 am 5 pm. Taxi or *bas sewa*. Local tour operators also run trips.

Kampung Semban, Jalan Bengoh, 40 km from Kuching. A 4-5 hr trek uphill past delightful waterfalls brings you to Sarawak's famous 'village in the clouds'. This remote kampung is noted for its traditional unspoilt lifestyle the as well as the elderly ladies who still wear their traditional brass arm and leg rings. Borneo Experiences run 3-day 2-night treks to the village, Tel : 429239, borneoexperiences.com.

Iban Longhouses

It is almost a crime to come to Sarawak without visiting an Iban longhouse. Iban hospitality is legendary, and visitors are



guaranteed a good time. A longhouse is basically a terraced street of separate dwellings covered by one roof, under the authority of a headman, or *tuai rumah*. Each family lives in its separate apartment, or *bilik*, and communal activities take place outside on the covered verandah, or *ruai*.

Most longhouses are busy, modern farming communities, and people wear practical clothes like jeans and T-shirts when they are at work. Traditional



costumes and head-dresses are usually only worn for special festivals like *gawai dayak* (the Iban harvest festival, 1st June), *gawai antu* (the ancestor festival, very rare) and weddings. If you want to see traditional rituals, customs and dances, then it is best to go with an organised tour group.

Tour groups are usually greeted with a glass of *tuak* (rice wine) and a welcome dance. They are then shown around and treated to various cultural performances, including dancing and drumming. You will usually be invited to attempt the *ngajat* dance. Do not try to refuse as guests are expected to contribute to the entertainment. If you know any dances, folk songs or poems from your own country, you will make some lifelong friends, no matter how badly you perform. Normally you will be able to stay in the longhouse overnight, but if you prefer some privacy, many tour operators have their own guest houses near the longhouse.

Most Iban longhouses that accept guests are on the Lemanak and Batang Ai river systems. Visits usually involve at least one overnight stop and a longboat trip on the river, but some longhouse safaris can last for a week or more. The Visitors' Information Centre in Kuching has a list of approved tour operators. If you want to arrange a personal invitation, your best bet is to spend a couple of days in one of the busier market towns such as Sri Aman or Betong and make friends in the local coffee shops.

Borneo Adventure work together with the local Iban community to operate an **award-winning lodge** at Nanga Sumpa and a jungle camp at Lubok Kasai in Ulu Ai, upriver from the Batang Ai Hydro Lake. These lodges allow visitors to experience both the traditional Iban culture and the rainforest ecosystem. They are also the jumping off points for Borneo Adventure's treks in search of wild orangutans (see Batang Ai National Park). Tel: 245175, www.borneoadventure.com.

Suntravel take community participation a step further by arranging authentic Iban **weddings** and **baby-naming** ceremonies, conducted by tribal elders. These are not simply costume photo shoots with the locals but full rituals according to local *adat* (customary law) and concluding with a feast for the entire longhouse. Tel: 422023, www.suntravelborneo.com.

NATIONAL PARKS & NATURE RESERVES

Entry Fees & Other Charges: Visitors to all national parks in Sarawak must pay an entry fee upon arrival, shown below. More detailed information on park fees can be found at www.sarawakforestry.com. **Note:** Mulu National Park has its own schedule of fees - see Miri & Northeast Sarawak, page 89.

National Parks: Adult RM 20, Disabled Adult RM 10, Child 7-17 yrs RM 7, Child 6 yrs & under free. 50% discount for residents of Sarawak.

Wildlife Centres - Semenggoh & Matang: Adult RM 10, Disabled Adult RM 5, Child 7-17 yrs RM 7, Child 6 yrs & under free. 50% discount for residents of Sarawak.

Nature Reserves - Wind & Fairy Caves (Bau): Adult RM 5, Disabled Adult RM 3, Child 7-17 yrs RM 2, Child 6 yrs & under free. Residents of Sarawak RM 1, concessions free.

Commercial Filming & Photography Permit: RM 1,000. Advance notification required. Please contact Sarawak Forestry's corporate affairs department, Tel: 610088, www.sarawakforestry.com.

Accommodation Bookings: The **National Park and Wildlife Booking Office** (Tel: 248088, Fax: 248087), next to the Kuching Visitors' Information Centre in the Sarawak Tourism Complex, handles accommodation bookings for all national parks and wildlife centres. Campsites do not include tents - please bring your own. For online bookings see www.sarawakforestry.com.

Bako National Park

A National Park since 1957, Bako offers the perfect introduction to Sarawak's forests and wildlife. The park covers the northern tip of the Muara Tebas peninsula, an area of 27 sq km. Despite its seemingly small size, Bako contains a wide range of vegetation - swamp forest, scrub-like *padang* vegetation, mangrove forest, dipterocarp forest, delicate cliff vegetation and more. In fact, at Bako it is possible to see almost every type of vegetation found in Borneo. Bako also contains a rich variety of wildlife and a coastline covered with small bays, coves and beaches.

The park's well-marked trails offer interesting walks ranging from short strolls to serious full-day hikes, and visitors are almost guaranteed to see wildlife. Long-tailed macaque monkeys and silver leaf monkeys are ever present, wild boar are often found rummaging around the park HQ, squirrels and monitor lizards are also common. There is every chance of seeing the rare and unusual proboscis monkeys on trails such as *Telok Paku* and *Telok Delima*, particularly early morning or late afternoon. You are more likely to see wildlife if you keep quiet and list carefully - you'll probably hear the crash of vegetation before you are able to locate a proboscis monkey high up in the forest canopy.



Bako's plant life is both beautiful, and readily accessible. All the trails have a great variety of vegetation, from mighty 80-metre dipterocarps to dense mangrove forest. Carnivorous pitcher plants are found on the *Lintang* trail. Bako also has some good white sand beaches that provide perfect resting spots in between jungle treks. *Telok Pandan Kecil* is perhaps Bako's best beach, but all of the beaches are bordered by limestone and sandstone cliffs, and the action of the sea has left some remarkable rock formations, such as the famous Sea Stack.

If you visit *Telok Assam* beach near the park HQ, you will see hundreds of swifts hovering around their nests at the rocks at the far end of the beach. Don't leave the beach after the sun disappears behind Mount Santubong. Wait another 20 minutes as the sky's colours often change dramatically, providing a colourful backdrop to the mountain.

Trail Closure: Bako's long distance trails are occasionally closed to trekkers for conservation reasons so that an area is left undisturbed for a fixed period of time. Please check with the National Parks & Wildlife booking office if you wish to know which particular trails are closed.

Accommodation: Be careful of the monkeys - they are compulsive thieves. Bako is very popular, especially at weekends, so it is advisable to book accommodation well in advance. Accommodation consists of Types 4, 5 and 6 Forest Lodges (RM 238, RM 159 & RM 79.50) a Hostel (RM 42.50 per 4-bed room or RM 15.90 per bed) and a Campsite (RM 5).

The Park HQ: Upon arrival visitors must register at the Park HQ. There is an information centre, canteen and shop at the Park HQ. The information centre shows films and slide shows on Bako's wildlife, and has full details of all the trails and what to look out for. The canteen serves a range of hot and cold drinks, snacks and light meals (fried rice, noodles etc.).

Getting There: Take a taxi (RM 40), Rapid Kuching Bus No 1 or *bas sewa* to Kampung Bako, a picturesque fishing village. From there you have to charter a boat at the National Park Terminal. The return fare is RM 94 per boat (up to 5 people) to the ParkHQ. There will be an additional boat fee if you wish to visit the Sea Stack or

Bako's remoter beaches. The boat ride is an adventure in itself, with the skilled and experienced boatmen riding the surf at high speed, to the delight of most visitors. For many people, this is where Borneo really starts! If you have to wait at Kampung Bako for a bus, or for the tide to rise, there is a good seafood restaurant near the old jetty that also serves snacks and drinks.

Batang Ai National Park

Batang Ai National Park is part of the region's largest trans-national protected area. The 24 sq km park adjoins the Lanjak-Entimau Wildlife Sanctuary in Malaysia and the Bentuang-Karimun National Park in Indonesia, forming a 10,000 sq km sanctuary for over 1,000 orangutans as well as other endangered species.



The park is only 15 km upriver from Batang Ai Hydro Lake, and offers good possibilities of seeing wild orang-utans for visitors who are prepared to spend some time trekking in the area.

The park does not offer any visitor accommodation or canteen facilities so it is best explored via organised treks hosted by local Iban communities.

Borneo Adventure work together with communities in the Ulu Ai to offer a variety of treks around the fringes of the park, including their renowned **Red Ape Trail**, where the chances of seeing wild orang-utans are highest, although no guarantees are offered. However, evidence of their presence, such as old and fresh nests, are almost always encountered. Trekkers must be reasonably fit, and are required to play their part in conservation by recording sightings and nest locations on portable GPS devices. Tel: 245175, www.borneoadventure.com.

Gunung Gading National Park

Gunung Gading is home to the world's largest flower, the *rafflesia*, which can grow up to one metre in diameter. When in bloom the flower gives off a nasty smell which attracts flies and other insects. The *rafflesia* has no specific season, taking nine months to mature and flowering for only 4 or 5 days before dying.



Gunung Gading was only opened to the public in mid-1994, after extensive environmental impact studies. Previously it was used solely as a conservation zone for the *rafflesia*. The emphasis is still on conservation, and Sarawak Forestry have taken measures to allow visitors to view flowering *rafflesia* without damaging young buds and other plants. There is a plankwalk close to where *rafflesia* are commonly found, and if a plant is flowering deeper in the forest, the park rangers should be able to take you on a guided walk to the site. Please take care; the small brown buds that you see on the forest floor may be *rafflesia*, so tread carefully and follow the park ranger's instructions. Guiding fees are RM 30 per hour (per group).

Owing to the *rafflesia*'s rarity and brief flowering period, timing (and luck) are important. The park staff usually know when a plant is about to bloom. Visitors can check with the park HQ (Tel: 735144) or the National Parks and Wildlife Booking Office in Kuching (Tel: 248088). Although flowers generally bloom throughout the year, November, December and January are the peak flowering season as the frequency of blooms is high.

The *rafflesia* may be Gunung Gading's main attraction, but the park is well worth visiting anyway with some enjoyable walks and a challenging jungle trek. The *Waterfall* trail offers the shortest walk, winding its way up through the forest past a series of waterfalls. It takes about one hour to reach the last one, Waterfall No. 7. You'll need to be fit for the other trek, the *Gunung Gading Summit* trail (3-4 hours, one way) as it involves some serious hill walking. You must complete the trail the same day, as overnight stays in the forest are not permitted. From the summit you can take a side trek to *Batu Bakubu*, which was a former communist camp during the insurgency. Further information can be obtained from the Park HQ.

Accommodation: The HQ is fairly small and consists of an information centre, toilet blocks and accommodation facilities. There are two Type 5 Forest Lodges (RM 150), a hostel (RM 40 per room, RM 15 per bed) and a campsite (RM 5). There is no canteen at the park HQ. Overnight visitors can head into nearby Lundu for food or bring their own provisions.

Getting There: Gunung Gading is 5 minutes drive from the small town of Lundu in Southwest Sarawak. Kuching tour operators can arrange tours. Independent travellers should take CPL Bus K26 from Kuching Sentral to Lundu. From there, take a taxi or white *bas sewa* to the park HQ.

Kubah National Park & Matang Wildlife Centre

Kubah National Park is an easy and enjoyable day trip from Kuching. Situated on a small sandstone plateau, this small park (2,230 ha.) boasts crystal clear



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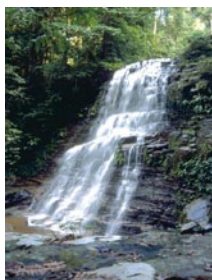
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Inside Sarawak

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streams and a host of small waterfalls and bathing pools. Kubah is mostly covered by mixed dipterocarp forest, but it also has one of the widest selections of palms and orchids in Borneo. The varied wildlife includes bearded pig, mouse deer, black hornbill and many species of amphibians



and reptiles. However, Kubah's wildlife tends to stay deep in the forest so it is not really a park for "wildlife encounters". Kubah's appeal lies in its rainforest scenery, its waterfalls, streams and bathing pools and the 93 species of palm found within its boundaries.

The park has six jungle trails and a path leading to the summit of Gunung Serapi (5-6 hours return trip). Wooden shelters are located along the various trails. The *Main Trail* passes through dipterocarp forest and links the various trails of the park. The *Palmetum* is the park's showcase trail, passing through an area rich in palms. The *Selang Trail* leads to a view point about 45 minutes walk from the HQ. After about 30 minutes you come to a very steep section where ropes are provided to help with the climb. At the end of the trail is a raised wooden platform complete with a bench chair and some superb views of Matang and the Santubong peninsula. The *Waterfall Trail* is the most popular trail, passing through mixed dipterocarp forest with plankwalks that cross streams and swampy land. From the HQ, it takes about 1 hr 30 mins to reach the waterfall.

The *Rayu Trail* leads from the park HQ to the Matang Wildlife Centre (see below) and takes about 3-4 hours (one way). Follow the main trail before turning right to begin a relatively easy descent through the rainforest. Mid-way along the trail you'll find some rainforest giants, and pass numerous Bintangor trees which are currently the subject of Aids research. At the end of the trail you enter a swampy section (watch out for leeches) before coming to a crystal clear stream and the riverside picnic areas at the Wildlife Centre. You can also start both the *Waterfall* and *Rayu* trails just past the 900 ft point on the Mount Serapi path. The trek from the road to the waterfall takes about 45 minutes and begins with a steep descent on a wooden staircase down the forested slopes. The new *Belian Trail* is about 1 hour's easy walking and as well as huge *Belian* (Borneo ironwood) trees, there is a wide variety of other plant life. Colourful forest birds including the maroon woodpecker, white rumped shama, chestnut-naped forktail, and rufous-collared kingfisher are often heard and seen, and giant squirrels are frequently spotted jumping from tree to tree.

Matang Wildlife Centre, part of Kubah National Park,

houses endangered wildlife in large enclosed areas of rainforest or spacious cages. The main attraction is the orangutan training programme, where young orangutans, who were either orphaned or rescued from captivity, are taught how to survive in the wild. The best time to see the orangutans is at feeding time (see below). As well as orangutans, the centre includes spacious enclosures housing sambar deer, crocodiles, sun bears, civets and bear cats, and three large aviaries featuring hornbills, eagles, kites, storks and a host of other birds native to Sarawak.

There is an information centre, accommodation, some pleasant riverside picnic spots and a small canteen just a short walk from the car park, as well as two jungle trails (not including the trails connecting from Kubah). The *Pitcher Trail*, which follows a circular path through the forest, takes approximately two hours and trekkers should not have too much difficulty spotting the various specious of pitcher plants that litter the forest floor at the sides of the trail. The *Sungai Buluh Trail* leads to two secluded waterfalls and takes 2-hours (one way).



Animal Feeding Times

9.00 – 10.00 am

3.00 – 4.00 pm

Animal enclosure opening hours

9.30 – 11.30 am

2.00 – 3.30 pm

Helping Sarawak's Orangutans:

Sarawak Forestry run two programmes to enable

businesses, organisations and the general public to assist in orang-utan conservation. The **Orangutan Adoption** programme allows participants to adopt and sponsor orang-utans at Matang and Semenggoh Wildlife Centres; adoption packages range from RM200 to RM100,000. The **Heart 2 Heart With Orangutan** programme allows groups of between 4 and 20 people to spend a day working with the orangutans and learning about orangutan conservation. Fees start at RM350 per person. Visit orangutan.sarawakforestry.com for further details. UK-based volunteer tourism specialists The Great Traveller offer 2 & 4-week **volunteering holidays** at Matang from around RM 6,000 ex Kuching. Visit www.orangutanproject.com for more information.

Accommodation: Kubah Park HQ, Type 4 & 5 Forest Lodges (RM 225, RM 150), a Hostel (RM 40 per 4-bed room or RM 15 per bed) and a Campsite (RM 5).

Matang Wildlife Centre, Type 5 Forest Lodges (RM 150), a Hostel (RM 40 per 4-bed room or RM 15 per bed) and a Campsite (RM 5).

Getting There: Kubah is only 21 km from Kuching, whilst Matang Wildlife Centre is 35 km. There is no regular bus service to either. Take a taxi or *bas sewa*. Local tour operators run day trips to both.

Kuching Wetlands National Park

Located just 15 km from Kuching and approximately 5 km from Damai Beach, the Kuching Wetlands National Park covers an area of 6,610 hectares on the estuarine reaches of the Sibulaut and Salak rivers. The park mostly comprises a saline mangrove system that includes an extensive network of marine waterways and tidal creeks interconnecting the two major rivers that form the boundaries of the park. Small patches of heath forest are found in the interior of the park.



The park is an important spawning and nursery ground for fish and prawn species and contains a wide diversity of wildlife, including proboscis monkeys, long tailed macaque monkeys, silver leaf monkeys, monitor lizards, estuarine crocodiles and a range of birdlife, including kingfishers, white-bellied sea eagles and shore birds, including the rare lesser adjutant stork.

Gazetted as a national park in July 2002, the site is one of the last remnants of the formerly extensive Sarawak Mangrove Forest Reserve, which previously covered approximately 17,000 hectares and was first protected in 1924. In November 2005 the park was designated a Ramsar Site, a wetland of international importance.

The area has long attracted nature enthusiasts owing to its fascinating ecosystem and excellent wildlife viewing opportunities. Kuching Wetlands offers an excellent introduction to the mangrove environment, and a chance to see a range of wildlife and spend some time soaking up the sights and sounds of one of the most interesting stretches of coastline in the whole of Sarawak.

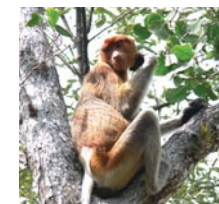
River Cruises: A number of tour operators offer coastal and river cruises in and around the park. These cruises follow the main waterways of the park with most trips taking up half a day. Tours usually meander up the Salak River before entering the smaller rivers and creeks in the park. Some tours stop at the Malay fishing village on Salak Island, which lies just outside the park's boundary. **Santubong Wildlife Cruise:** This award-winning tour is run by CPH Travel and is one of the best wildlife watching tours in Sarawak. The tour departs from the Santubong Boat Club between 4 and 5 pm (depending on tide and weather) and returns around 7.30 pm. You head first to the Santubong and Salak river estuaries (just outside the

park boundary) to search for Irrawaddy dolphins. Small groups of dolphins often feed at these river mouths and occasionally enter the Salak River itself. After searching for dolphins, your boat then enters the park proper, navigating the smaller river channels. Along the way you'll get a chance to experience the mangroves and go in search of the park's wildlife, including proboscis monkeys. As darkness descends the boat makes its way to sites where fireflies and crocodiles are commonly seen. Flashlights are used to locate the 'eye shine' from the crocodiles. Bookings are essential - Tel: 243708, www.cphtravel.com.my.

Getting There: The park is only accessible by boat. Contact hotel recreation counters or tour operators for details.

Maludam National Park

Maludam National Park Covers an area of 432 square kilometres and is the second largest National Park in Sarawak. It is located on the Maludam Peninsula between the Lupar and Saribas rivers and encompasses the largest single patch of peat swamp forest remaining in Sarawak and Brunei. It has the only viable population



of Red Banded Langurs (*Presbytis chrysomelas cruciger*) remaining in the world today. It is also home to sizeable populations of proboscis monkeys and silver leaf monkeys, as well as many fascinating bird species.

Maludam is not officially open to visitors and has no visitor facilities. However, it may be visited by boat from Kampung Maludam, with guests overnighting in the village homestay. Contact Borneo Transverse, Tel: 082-257882, www.borneotransverse.com.my, or Greatown Travel, 084-219243, www.greatown.com.

Semenggoh Wildlife Centre

For over 30 years, Semenggoh's staff have trained young orangutans, who had been orphaned or rescued from captivity, how to survive in the wild. The success of this programme has left the surrounding forest reserve with a thriving population of healthy adolescent and young adult orangutans, who are now breeding in the wild. The rehabilitation programme has therefore been transferred to Matang Wildlife Centre, but Semenggoh is still home to its successful graduates, semi-wild orangutans and their offspring. They spend most of their time roaming the forest but frequently come back to the Centre for a free meal. However, if it is the fruiting season in the forest, some or even all of them may not come to feed and a visit to Matang Wildlife Centre may be more rewarding. Check with the National



Parks Booking Office, Tel: 248088, for frequency of recent sightings.

Opening hours are 8 am to 12 pm and 2 pm to 4.45 pm, but visitors are only allowed into the feeding areas during feeding times - 9 to 10 am, 3 to 4 pm approx. Tour operators arrange trips here, often

combined with other local attractions. Otherwise take a taxi or CPL bus K6, which stops outside the gate (RM 4 one-way). Only the 7.20 am and 1 pm bus services from Jln Masjid will arrive in time for feeding, last bus back around 4.20pm. It's a 20-minute walk from the main entrance to the feeding area; enterprising locals sometimes offer shuttle services for RM1 each way.

Talang-Satang National Park

Sarawak's first marine protected area, Talang-Satang National Park covers an area of 19,414 hectares. The park was gazetted in 1999 to enhance marine turtle conservation in Sarawak. Marine turtles face a number of threats including entanglement in fishing nets, habitat destruction, water pollution, boat strikes, predation of eggs and hatchlings, poaching for eggs, meat or shells, and ingestion of marine debris such as plastic bags.



The park encompasses the coastline and waters surrounding four islands; Pulau Talang-Talang Besar and Pulau Talang-Talang Kecil (located off Sematan), and Pulau

Satang Besar and Pulau Satang Kecil (located off Santubong). These small islands are surrounded by patches of shallow coral reef which provide shelter and resting grounds for sea turtles that come ashore to lay their eggs. Three of the islands in the park - Talang Talang Besar, Talang Talang Kecil and Satang Besar - are known as Sarawak's "Turtle Islands."

Adult female turtles return to the beach where they were born to lay their eggs, often travelling thousands of kilometres. Whilst four species of marine turtles nest in Sarawak, the Green Turtle accounts for 90% of turtle landings. The park's islands account for 95% of all recorded turtle landings in Sarawak, a clear indicator of their importance for marine turtle conservation.

Conservation work began in the 1940's and in 1953 the first tagging of Green turtles was done. Today, Sarawak

Forestry manages the park and has set up a number of hatcheries. During the peak turtle nesting season (May-September), park wardens monitor the beaches for turtle landings, remove eggs from the nests and place them in the hatcheries. After 40 to 60 days incubation, the young hatchlings are released and scamper across the beach to the sea.

The Talang-Satang National Park also includes the **Pulau Tukong Ara-Banun Wildlife Sanctuary**, two small islets located close to the Satang Islands. **Pulau Tokong Ara**, the larger of the two rocky outcrops, is home to breeding colonies of bridled terns and black-naped terns. Black coloured pacific reef egrets are also frequently sighted on the rock. Tokong Ara is best seen as part of a wider coastal tour of the Santubong area.

Pulau Satang Besar: Pulau Satang Besar, the largest of the park's islands, is open to visitors and accessible by boat from Santubong or Damai Beach. Standard national park fees apply and tickets can be purchased on the island. There is a small information centre near the beach and visitors can also view the turtle hatchery. The beach on Satang is one of the best in Sarawak and it is possible to snorkel on the nearby reef if there is good visibility. Visitors can stay overnight on Satang Island in privately owned basic chalets. CPH Travel (Tel: 243708, www.cphtravel.com.my) run overnight trips Satang can be combined with their other boat tours.

Pulau Talang Besar: Turtles take priority over tourists at Pulau Talang Besar so access to the island is restricted to researchers and national park staff. However, you can visit the island as a volunteer on Sarawak Forestry's **Sea Turtle Adoption Programme**. This allows volunteers to spend 4 days learning more about turtles and taking part in a range of activities including: beach patrols to locate turtle landings; monitoring of nesting activities; tagging and measuring turtles; transferring eggs to the hatchery; releasing hatchlings and data recording.

The volunteer programme is open from May to September and costs RM 600 for Malaysians and RM 1,200 for non-Malaysians. However, the total package price including transport and meals depends on the number of people in your group and is likely to be around RM 2,500 per person. Contact local tour operators or visit seaturtle.sarawakforest.com for more information.

Tanjung Datu National Park

Tanjung Datu, at the southwestern tip of Sarawak, is the smallest and most secluded of Sarawak's national parks and possibly the most beautiful. The beaches really are undisturbed, the corals offshore are untouched and the forest trails are virtually untrodden.



The 14 sq km park is essentially a ridge of rugged mixed dipterocarp forest which reaches almost to the water's edge in some places, and this close proximity of rainforest and coral reef - the two most diverse natural communities on our planet - make Tanjung Datu a very important reservoir of biodiversity.

Seven of the eight hornbill species in Sarawak can be spotted at Tanjung Datu, as well as Bornean gibbons, pig-tailed and long-tailed macaque monkeys, silver-leaf monkeys, bearded pigs, sambar deer, civet cats and green turtles. The waters of Tanjung Datu are perfect for swimming, snorkelling and scuba diving, and dolphins are frequently seen. **Note:** diving or surfing shoes must be worn to protect against venomous cone shells.

Getting there: Access is only possible by boat from Sematan (1 hr) and only during the dry season (April-October) because of sea conditions. To manage impacts, the park may only be visited in small groups through an approved tour operator.

Accommodation: Visitors may overnight in the park (basic hostel or covered campsite) or at the nearby village of Telok Melano. Contact Amansar Travel, Borneo Adventure or Borneo Transverse (see tour operator listings) for further information.

TRAVEL & TOUR CONNECTIONS

AIR: Frequent daily Malaysia Airlines (MAS) flights connect Kuching with Kuala Lumpur (KL), Johor Bahru, Kota Kinabalu, Miri, Sibul, Bintulu and Singapore, as well as Brunei (4x weekly), Hong Kong (daily via KK) and Pontianak (Indonesia, daily). Air Asia operates frequent flights to Kuching from KL (LCCT), Johor Bahru, Kota Kinabalu, Penang, Miri, Bintulu and Sibul. Malindo Air flies 3-4x daily from KL and Silk Air flies 4-6x weekly (depending on season) from Singapore. Connections to other destinations are via Kuala Lumpur, Kota Kinabalu, or Singapore.

MAS Wings operates ATR72 turboprops to Mulu National Park and major towns throughout East Malaysia, as well as a Rural Air Service, flying 19-seat DHC-6 Twin Otter turboprops to over 20 rural destinations (see Miri section).

Hornbill Skyways offer helicopter and fixed-wing charter services from their own hangar.

Kuching Airport Information: Tel: 457373/454242.
Air Asia: Wisma Ho Ho Lim, 291 Jln Abell. Tel: 283222

Call Centre: 03-76512222, www.airasia.com.
Hornbill Skyways: Tel 455737. www.hornbillskyways.com.
Malaysian Airlines (MAS) and MAS Wings: Lot 215, Jln Song Thian Cheok. Tel: 1-300-88-3000, www.malaysiaairlines.com.
Malindo Air: 15A Level 2 Kuching International Airport. Tel: 03-78415388, www.malindoair.com
Silk Air: 07-1A, Gateway Kuching, Jalan Bukit Mata. Tel: 256772, www.silkair.com

ROAD: The Trans-Borneo highway connects Kuching to all major cities in Sarawak. Kuching to Sibul takes about 5 hours by car. Roads in and around Kuching are generally good.

LOCAL BUSES: Local **City Public Link (CPL)** buses depart from the near the **Saujana Car Park** (K5, K7, K13, K15, K21, K 21B, K71) or **Jalan Masjid** (K1, K2, K3, K6, K8, K10A, K11, K17, K18, B2). **Rapid Kuching Bus No.1** serves **Borneo Convention Centre Kuching** (RM 2) and **Bako National Park** (RM 3) -hourly starting 7 am from Main Bazaar/Waterfront. Last bus from Bako 5.30 pm. **White minibuses (bas sewa)** serve many suburban and rural locations around Kuching. They generally operate from 6 am to 6 pm and depart from the behind the Saujana Car Park and the Open Air Market. No fixed schedule - minibuses leave when they are full.

Airport. At the time of writing, there is no bus service between Kuching Airport and the city centre or the Regional Bus Terminal at Kuching Sentral. It is roughly 30 mins walk to Kuching Sentral from the airport.

Bau. CPL Bus B2, hourly from 6am to 5 pm, 1 hr, RM5.
Damai, Santubong & Sarawak Cultural Village. A shuttle bus runs 4x daily from Damai to Hotel Grand Margherita and stops at the Damai resort hotels and Sarawak Cultural Village. 1-way fare RM 12 (adults), RM 6 (children), takes approx. 45 mins. From Damai, 9.15 am, 1.15, 3.15 & 5.15 pm. From Kuching, 10.15 am, 2.15, 4.15 & 6.15 pm. Reservations often necessary. Tel: 846999. White minibuses (bas sewa) serve **Buntal, Pasir Panjang, Pasir Pandak** and **Santubong** villages.
Serian. CPL bus. K3. RM 5.00, approx. 1½ hr. Every half hour. First bus (from Kuching) 6.30 am, last bus 5.30 pm. See also long distance.

National Parks & Nature Reserves - see listings

LONG DISTANCE BUSES: All services depart from the **Regional Bus Terminal at Kuching Sentral**, Kota Sentosa (CPL bus K10A, K13, B2 from city centre). The most convenient place in the town centre to buy tickets for most destinations is **Bus Asia's** office at the corner of Jln Abell and Jln Chan Chin Ann (Tel: 411111). You can also book online at ba.my and asiastar.my. Other bus companies all have ticket counters at Kuching Sentral - phone numbers shown below. The Visitor Information Centre has a display board with the latest bus schedules and prices. Fares shown are for standard air-con buses - de-luxe services are usually 15-20% more. Journey times are approximate.

Bus Ticket Counters

Baram (BAR), Tel: 531 168
Biararnas (BIA), Tel: 531 199
Bintang Jaya (BIN), Tel: 531 133
Borneo Amalgamated (BOR), Tel: 531 312
City Public Link (CPL), Tel: 531 133
EVA, Tel: 531 155
Freesia (FRE), Tel: 013-825 8009
MTC, Tel: 531 161
SJS, Tel: 531 122
STC, Tel: 012-898 3055
Vital Focus (VFO), Tel: 531333

Betong - 2x daily, 8.15 am and 1 pm, 4½ hrs, RM 30, STC.
Bintulu - 35x daily from 7.30am to 10 pm, 10 hrs, RM 70, BAR, BIA, BIN, BOR, EVA, FRE, MTC, VFO.
Lundu - CPL bus K26. Buses at 7.30 am, 10 am, 1.30 pm, 4 pm, 90 min, RM10. Last return bus 5 pm.
Miri - 43x daily from 6.30 am to 10.30 pm, 13 hrs, RM 80, BAR, BIA, BIN, EVA, FRE, MTC, VFO.
Mukah - 5x daily from 10 am to 10.30 pm, 9 hrs. RM 65, BIA, BIN, EVA, VFO.
Pontianak (Indonesia) - 11x daily from 7 am to 11.30 am, 9 hrs, RM 90, BIN, DAM, EVA, SJS, VFO.
Sarikei - 35x daily from 7.30 am to 10.15 pm. 5½ hrs. RM 40, BAR, BIA, BIN, BOR, FRE, MTC.
Sematan - CPL bus K26. Buses at 7.30 am, 10 am, 1.30 pm, 4 pm, 2 hrs, RM15. Last return bus 4.30 pm.
Serian - 39x daily from 7 am to 10.30 pm, 1 hr, RM 10, BAR, BIA, BIN, EVA, MTC, STC.
Sibu - 41x daily from 7.30 am to 10.30 pm, 6 hrs, RM 50, BAR, BIA, BIN, BOR, EVA, FRE, MTC, VFO.
Sri Aman - 34x daily from 7.30 am to 10.30 pm, 3½ hrs, RM25, BAR, BIA, BIN, BOR, CPL, EVA, MTC, STC.

EXPRESS BOATS (Kuching to Sibu, stops at Sarikei, Tanjung Manis): Probably the most interesting form of long-distance travel. Even poor sailors are unlikely to feel queasy between April and October, but the boat can roll a little during the wet season. The **Express Bahagia** service departs daily at 8.30 am from the Express Boat Wharf in Pending. RM 45, 5 hrs to Sibu. Tickets are sold at the jetty. It's advisable to get there 30 mins before departure. Taxi fare is RM 20.

SAMPANS (known locally as *Tambangs*): To get across river take one of the small ferries that connect the riverside kampungs to the town. Place the fare (50 sen) on the seat as you leave. Hiring a sampan (RM 20-25 per hour) is a great way to see the river and the waterfront villages. From the river you'll have great views of the city, get in close to the villages and get some good photos of river life.

RIVER CRUISES: CPH Travel (Tel: 243708), offer morning river cruises (9 am) and sunset cruises (5pm) in high-powered pontoon boats. RM 40 (adult), RM 20 (child). Cruises last approx. 2-2½ hours and offer a unique introduction to Kuching and life on the Sarawak River.
Harbour Cruises (Tel: 240366) offer 1½ hr afternoon

(3.15 pm) and sunset (5.30 pm) cruises on a large double-decker boat, which is also available for charter.
SSoonz Resources run 1 hr cruises throughout the day in traditional Iban, Malay and Orang Ulu boats (RM19 per person). Visit the Waterfront booth or call 012-8933230.

TAXIS: Airport to town is RM 26, Airport to Damai is RM 70 - buy a coupon at the taxi stand at the airport. City to Damai is RM 50. Most Kuching taxis do not use meters so agree the fare first. Taxis can always be found outside the big hotels and at the taxi stand where Jln Gambier meets Leboh Jawa. Alternatively, call 343343, 342255 or 348898 for 24-Hour Radio Taxi service (RM 1 surcharge). Short distances around town are RM 10-15. All fares are +50% between midnight and 6 am.

CAR RENTAL: This is a great way to explore in and around Kuching. Be wary of unlicensed operators, as they will not be fully insured - look for the Hire & Drive Permit fixed to the windscreen. It is advisable to book in advance. The following companies offer fully licensed rental cars: Borneo Interland, Cat City Holidays, Golden System Car Rental, Pronto Car Rental, Mayflower. See tour operator listing for contact details.

MOTORCYCLE & BICYCLE RENTAL: Motorcycles (100-150cc) are available from 3Bikes Rental (Tel: 016-8609389, borneorental.blogspot.com) and Ah Hui Motor (29 Jln Tabuan, Tel: 230508). Bicycles can be rented from Borneo Bicycle Hire (Ground Floor, Tun Jugah Mall (Tel: 019-4844393, borneobicyclehire.blogspot.com) and Singgahsana Lodge (see accommodation listings). Some tour operators and resorts also have bicycles for rent. Motorcyclists are required to wear a helmet by law, and cyclists are strongly advised to do so.

TOUR OPERATORS: Kuching has many licensed tour operators offering a wide choice of tours and excursions (see list below). Their prices are very competitive, often better value than organising the trip yourself, and you also have the benefit of a knowledgeable local guide. Beware of unlicensed tour operators or individuals offering tours, as they (and their vehicles) will not be properly insured. All addresses are 93000 Kuching unless otherwise stated.

Amansar Travel & Tours Sdn Bhd, Suite #02-3, Wesbery House, Rubber Road West, 93400 Kuching. Tel: 241200 Fax: 247200 Email: info@amansar.com, www.amansar.com. Owned and managed by one of Kuching's most experienced travel professionals, Amansar focuses on educational tours, special interest tours, conservation projects and volunteer tourism.

Amogha Tours and Travel Sdn Bhd, Cp 201, Batu Kawah New Township, Jln Batu Kawa, 93250 Kuching. Tel: 463984 Fax: 462984 Email: amoghatourstravel@yahoo.com, www.amoghatourstravel.com. Amogha is a Sanskrit word meaning "one who never fails", and this

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young, family-run company works very hard to live up to their name with a range of family-oriented tours.

Borneo Adventure Sdn Bhd, 55 Main Bazaar. Tel: 245175, Fax: 422626, Email: info@borneoadventure.com, www.borneoadventure.com. Multiple award-winning ecotourism operator renowned for its pioneering work in sustainable community partnerships and orangutan conservation.

Borneo Experiences by Singgahsana Lodge Adventures Sdn Bhd, 96 Main Bazaar. Tel: 429239 Email: info@borneoexperiences.com, www.borneoexperiences.com. Established in 2011 as the travel and adventure arm of award winning guesthouse Singgahsana Lodge, focuses on sustainable and responsible 'off-the beaten track' tourism.

Borneo Interland Travel Sdn Bhd, No 63, 1st Floor Main Bazaar. Tel: 413595, Fax: 411619, Email: bitravel@myjaring.net, www.bitravel.com.my. Very experienced and affordable local operator, also providing car rental, Airport/Damai transfer and hotel booking services.

Borneo Transverse Tours & Travel Sdn Bhd, No 15, Jln Green Hill. Tel: 257882, Fax: 421419, Email: bntv@po.jaring.my, www.borneotransverse.com.my. Popular, well established and very experienced tour operator celebrating its 30th anniversary in 2014. German and Italian-speaking guides available.

Borneo Trek & Kayak Adventure Sdn Bhd, Lot 8962, Jln Sekama, 93300 Kuching. Tel: 013-8048338, Email: ivy@rainforestkayaking.com, www.rainforestkayaking.com. Adventure kayaking specialists offering a variety of self-paddling tours on Sarawak's jungle rivers, visiting longhouses, caves and even orang-utans along the way.

CPH Travel Agencies (Sarawak) Sdn Bhd, No 70, Jln Padungan. Tel: 421018, Fax: 424587, Email: cphtrvl@po.jaring.my, www.cphtravel.com.my. Sarawak's pioneering tour operator, with a strong focus on nature and marine tourism and a modern fleet of tour boats for dolphin watching and river and mangrove cruising.

Diethelm Travel & Tours Sdn Bhd, 2nd Floor, Lot 257 Jln Chan Chin Ann, 93100 Kuching. Tel: 412778, Fax: 258320, Email: sarawak@mydietheltravel.com, www.dietheltravel.com. Locally-managed subsidiary of the multinational Diethelm Group with operations throughout Asia. German-speaking staff and guides available.

Insar Tours & Travel Sdn Bhd, Lot 2598, 2nd Floor Wisma Sandhu, Green Road, 93150 Kuching. Tel: 248112, Fax: 245112, Email: info@insar.com, www.insar.com. A very experienced operator, focusing on nature, educational and community tourism Japanese-speaking staff and guides available.

Inter-Continental Travel Centre Sdn Bhd, Lot 572-3, Section 10, Jalan Nanas, 93400 Kuching. Tel: 256155 Fax: 422518 Email: inbound@intercont.com.my, www.intercont.com.my. Experienced operator with a wide variety of family-oriented tours. Branches in Bintulu & Miri.

Jambu Journeys Sdn Bhd, 32 Jln Crookshank, 93200 Kuching. Tel: 012-3721850, www.jambujourneys.com. New offshoot of the Jambu group, focusing on adventure tours for independent travellers. Commencing activities early 2014. See website for announcements.

Ooo Haa Tours & Travel Sdn Bhd, 1st Floor, 40 Main Bazaar (use Bishopgate entrance). Tel: 012-5269719, Fax: 235106 Email: gogogo_vacation@hotmail.com, www.gomalaysiatour.com. Focus on affordable adventures and work closely with Iban communities on the shores of Batang Ai Hydro Lake.

Suntravel Sdn Bhd, 18 Ground Floor, Wisma Phoneix, Jln Song Thain Cheok, 93100 Kuching. Tel: 422023, Fax: 429375, Email: sun@suntravelborneo.com, www.suntravelborneo.com. The all-woman team at Suntravel offer a wide range of tailor-made tours, as well as hotel and flight booking, and are best known for their innovative and authentic Iban longhouse wedding and baby-naming ceremonies.

Telang Usan Travel & Tours (S) Sdn Bhd, c/o Telang Usan Hotel, Persiaran Ban Hock Tel: 236945/6, Fax: 236589, Email: ask@telangusan.com, www.telangusan.com. This Orang Ulu-owned and managed business is well known for its schools educational tours and photographic tours, amongst others. French-speaking staff and guides available

Adventure Alternative Borneo Sdn Bhd, 37 Jln Tabuan. Tel: 248000, www.aaborneo.com.

Aspen Holidays, Blk A Queens Court, Jln Wan Alwi, 93350 Kuching. Tel: 459494, www.sarawakaspenholidays.com

Bel-Air Travel & Tours Sdn Bhd, 255, Jln Datuk Wee Kheng Chiang. Tel: 414419, www.bel-air.com.my.

Borneo Exploration Tours & Travel Sdn Bhd, 76 Jln Wayang. Tel: 252137, www.borneoexplorer.com.my.

Borneo Fairyland Travel & Tour Sdn Bhd, Sarawak Tourism Complex, Jalan Tun Abang Haji Openg. Tel: 420194, borneofairyland.tripod.com.

Borneo Tours Sdn Bhd, Lot 153, Jln Ban Hock.. Tel: 246422, www.borneotours.com.my.

Cat City Holidays Sdn Bhd, Suite 29, Kueh Hock Kui Commercial Centre, Jalan Tun Ahmad Zaidi Aducre, 93150 Kuching. Tel: 414200, www.catcityholidays.com.

Great Leap Tours Sdn Bhd, 2nd Floor, RH Plaza Blk 16, Jalan Lapangan Terbang, 93250 Kuching. Tel: 457181, www.greatleap.com.my.

Golden System Car Rental, 58-1B 1st Floor, Block G, Pearl Commercial Centre, Jalan Tun Razak, 93450 Kuching. Tel: 333609, www.gocar.com.my.

Ik Chin Travel Service (K) Sdn Bhd, Sublot 17, Panavol Commercial Centre, Jln Simpang Tiga, 93300, Kuching. Tel: 411323, www.ikchin.com.my.



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Inter-Borneo Tours Sdn Bhd, 91 Jln Green Hill. Tel: 233193, www.inter-borneo.com.
Interworld Travel Service Sdn Bhd, No 1 Temple St. Tel: 252344, borneobudgetvacation.com
Journey Travel Agencies Sdn Bhd, Hilton Hotel Lobby, Jln Borneo. Tel: 251187 Email: dolores@pd.jaring.my.
Kuching Holiday & Car Rental Sdn Bhd, Sarawak Tourism Complex, Jln Tun Abang Haji Openg. Tel: 422955 Email: kuchingholiday@yahoo.com
Lung Chia Pin Travel & Tours Sdn Bhd, 42 Jln Padungan. Tel: 256781, Email: angelalcp2010@hotmail.com.
Matahari Tours Sdn Bhd, 68 Jln Padungan. Tel: 246333, www.mataharitours.com.

Mayflower Acme Tour Sdn Bhd, No 254, 1st Floor, Jln Padungan. Tel: 410110 www.mayflowercarrental.com.my.
Pronto Car Rental Sdn Bhd, 98, 1st Floor, Jln Padungan. Tel: 237889, www.prontocarrental.com.
Samasa Tour & Travel Sdn Bhd, 358 Rubber Road, 93400 Kuching. Tel: 258888, www.samasa.travel.
Straits Central Travel & Tour Agencies Sdn Bhd, No 123, Lot 41, Jln Tabuan. Tel: 242295, kuchingtravelagency.com.
The Sarawak Steamship Co. Bhd, 52 Main Bazaar. Tel: 243366, www.sarawaksteamship.com
Tours of Joy Sdn Bhd, 30M Jln Tabuan. Tel: 243089, Email: ycpek@tm.net.my
Unicatay Travel & Tours Sdn Bhd, 106, Jln Simpang Tiga, 93300 Kuching. Tel: 411879, Fax: 243567, Email: unicatay@hotmail.com
Wah Tung Travel Service Sdn Bhd, 7K Ban Hock Road, 93100 Kuching. Tel: 248888, www.wahtung.travel.

MEETINGS, CONFERENCES & INCENTIVES

Sarawak is an emerging MICE destination, with a wide array of unique products and attractions, and the state is determined to develop this market sector to the highest international standards.

Sarawak Convention Bureau (SCB), Kuching Head Office, Lot 31, Jln Masjid, 93400 Kuching (facing Padang Merdeka). Tel: 242516, Fax: 242519, Email: info@sarawakcb.com, www.sarawakcb.com.
SCB Kuala Lumpur Office, Suite C-07-02, Plaza Mont Kiara, No.2, Jalan Kiara, 50480 Kuala Lumpur. Tel: 03-62111385 Fax: 03-62011520 Email: scklrep@sarawakcb.com

Sarawak's innovative and multiple award-winning Convention Bureau should be the first point of contact for conference organisers and incentive planners. SCB offers a comprehensive range of support services including convention bidding, product development, venue & vendor selection, delegate boosting, marketing and promotion. They can arrange generous financial support for organising and promoting suitable events. Their unique 'Tribal Wisdom' speaker programme can also add a fascinating local dimension to any gathering.



Borneo Convention Centre Kuching, The Isthmus, Sejingkat, 93050 Kuching. Tel: 392888 Toll-Free: 1-800-88-BCCK (2225) Email: please use website email form, www.bcck.com.my. The first purpose-built convention centre on the island of Borneo, located on an isthmus fronting the Sarawak river with convenient links to the city centre and airport. BCCK has a state-of-the-art design with a flexible capacity for events of up to 5,000 guests, as well as almost 3,800 sq metres of highly customizable conference space. Since its launch in 2009 it has already attracted hundreds of successful events. BCCK's Raintree Restaurant is widely held to be Kuching's finest (see page 38).

Kuching's major hotels also offer a wide range of convention and meeting facilities, whilst resorts and lodges are the bases for secluded beach, jungle and mountain retreats. Local destination management companies offer unusual incentive products such as rainforest adventures, volunteer camps, kayaking expeditions, and golfing in the clouds, to mention just a few.

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.

Room rates are shown in bands as follows. Many properties have rooms in more than one band.
 Band A : RM Under RM 50
 Band B : RM 50 - 149
 Band C : RM 150 - 299
 Band D : RM 300 plus

Where no postcode is given, all addresses are 93100 Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia. Out-of-town hotels and resorts are listed in the **Santubong and Damai** and **Around Kuching** sections. National Park accommodation is described in the **National Parks** section.



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 - Complimentary Daily Newspaper
 - Late Check-out at 2:00 p.m. upon availability

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For Enquiries: Tel +60 82 230 399
 Fax +60 82 230 339

International Class Hotels

Hotel Grand Continental (4*), Lot 42, Section 46, Jln Ban Hock. Tel: 230399, Fax: 230339/255099, Email: reservation_kuching@ghihotels.com.my, www.ghihotels.com.my. 192 rooms. Band C. Situated in city's central business district, 7-8 mins walk to Waterfront. Features include *Brasserie Kuching* Coffee House, pool, business centre, health spa, non-smoking rooms, rooms & facilities for disabled guests, ladies rooms, baby cots available, extensive banquet & conference facilities.

Grand Margherita Hotel (4*), Jln Tunku Abdul Rahman, PO Box 2362, 93100 Kuching. Tel: 532111 Fax: 236041 Email: reservations@gmh.my. www.grandmargherita.com. 288 rooms incl. suites & Executive Club Floor. Rooms for disabled guests & non-smoking rooms available. Band D. Situated directly on riverbank overlooking Fort Margherita and Malay villages. Outlets include *Orchid Garden Coffee House*, *Meisan Restaurant*, *Macam-Macam Bistro* and *Rajang Lobby Lounge*. All kitchens certified halal by Dept of Islamic Affairs Sarawak. Features include free high speed in-room WiFi, swimming pool & children's playground, tour desk, extensive conference & banquet facilities, Sarawak Plaza & Riverside shopping centres adjacent.

Pullman Kuching (5*), Jln Mathies. Tel: 222888 Fax: 222999 Email: H6332@accor.com. www.pullmankuching.com. 389 rooms. Band D. Kuching's newest luxury hotel, with a commanding hilltop location and some of the best views of the city. Outlets include *Puzzle* (all day dining), *Nu Er Hong* (gourmet Chinese cuisine), *Déjà Vu* (lobby lounge), *Liquid* (poolside bar), *Café Ch@t* (coffee Bar) Features include outdoor swimming pool & children's playground, non-smoking floor, business centre, rooms & facilities for disabled guests, concierge, valet parking, extensive conference & banquet facilities, Hills Shopping Centre adjacent.

Riverside Majestic Hotel (5*), Jln Tunku Abdul Rahman. Tel: 247777, Fax: 425858, Email: reservations@rmh.my. www.riversidemajestic.com. 241 rooms. Band D. Spectacular views of Kuching Waterfront and surrounding city. Outlets include *Café Majestic* Coffee House, *River Palace* Chinese Restaurant, *Coca Thai Restaurant*, *The Club* Lobby Lounge. Features include Executive Club Floor & Lounge, tennis & squash courts, outdoor swimming pool, non-smoking floor, rooms & facilities for disabled guests, business centre, extensive conference & banquet facilities. Cineplex, shopping centre & bowling centre adjacent.

Four Points By Sheraton (4*), Jln Lapangan Terbang Baru, 93350 Kuching (convenient for Airport). Tel: 466666, www.fourpoints.com/kuching. Band C-D.
Hilton Kuching (5*), Jln Tunku Abdul Rahman (facing Waterfront, entrance in Jln Borneo), Tel: 248200. www.hilton.com. Band D.

Imperial Hotel Kuching (4*), Jalan Datuk Tawi Sli, 93250 Kuching (Boulevard Shopping Centre). New hotel opening in March/April 2014. www.imperialhotelkuching.com.my.

Merdeka Palace Hotel & Suites (5*), Jln Tun Abang Haji Openg, 93000 Kuching (facing Padang Merdeka). Tel: 258000. www.merdekapalace.com. Band C-D

Luxury Boutique Hotels

The Ranee. 6 & 7 Main Bazaar. Tel: 258833 Fax: 255322 Email: reservations@theranee.com. http://theranee.com. Band C-D. A lovingly rebuilt 19th Century shophouse (with possibly the best location in town) has been transformed into Kuching's most exclusive boutique hotel. 24 luxurious suites, some with sky decks or private verandahs, each individually designed & opulently furnished so no two are alike. Includes *Café Trios*, *MBar & Bistro*, Guests Reading Room. Facilities include all standard amenities plus Astro Satellite TV, large bathtub in every room. Non-smoking throughout. **Note:** The Ranee does not accept children under 12.

Batik Boutique Hotel. 38 Jln Padungan, Tel: 422845. batikboutiquehotel.com. Band C. Spectacular shophouse conversion with 16 rooms & suites. Winner of Malaysian Institute of Architects award (interior design). Includes *BITES* Bar & Restaurant.

Cove 55, see Damai & Santubong, page 14.

Business Class Hotels

Harbour View Hotel (3*), Lorong Temple, 93000 Kuching. Tel: 274666, Fax: 274777, Email: sales@harbourview.com.my. www.harbourview.com.my. 245 rooms. Band C. Located next to Tua Pek Kong Temple overlooking Kuching Waterfront with spectacular views of Sarawak River & surrounding area. Outlets include *Café Harapan* (Asian & Continental Cuisine), *Zodiac Lounge* (Lobby Bar & Karaoke). Features include In-house movies & satellite tv, in-room Internet, business centre, extensive conference & banquet facilities, convenience shop, concierge & shoe shine service, seamless & one-stop service concept.

Abell Hotel, 22 Jalan Tunku Abdul Rahman. Tel: 239449, www.abellhotel.com. Band B-C. Non-smoking.

Dormani Hotel, Lot 68, Jln Datuk Ajibah Abol, 93400 Kuching (near Kuching Mosque). Tel: 241111. www.dormanihotel.com. Band B-C.

Kingwood Inn (3*), Lot 618, Section 62, Jln Padungan (short taxi ride from centre). Tel: 330888, www.kuchinghotels.net. Band C

Kuching Park Hotel (3*), Lot 606, Jln Padungan (short taxi ride from centre). Tel: 239888. www.kuchingparkhotel.com.my Band B-C.

Lime Tree Hotel, 317 Abell Road. Tel: 414600. www.limetreehotel.com.my. Band C. Non-smoking.

Regal Court Hotel (3*), Jln Tun Ahmad Zaidi Aduce, 93400 Kuching (in Satok business district). Tel: 412211. www.regalcourthotel.com.my. Band B-C.

About Us

Dorset Boutique Hotel is secluded within pleasant surroundings in the heart of Kuching's Central Business District. It offers elegant, artistically-designed and affordable rooms ranging from standard through deluxe to superior, which come with beautiful views of the surrounding city. All rooms are fully equipped with modern amenities such as: 32 inch LCD TV offering 21 cable, local & satellite channels for all age groups; free Wi-Fi inside the hotel; individually adjusted air conditioning units; temperature controlled hot showers; coffee/tea making facilities; in-room safe deposit box; writing tables; and even more (see below).

Dorset Boutique Hotel provides a host of conveniences our guests can enjoy:

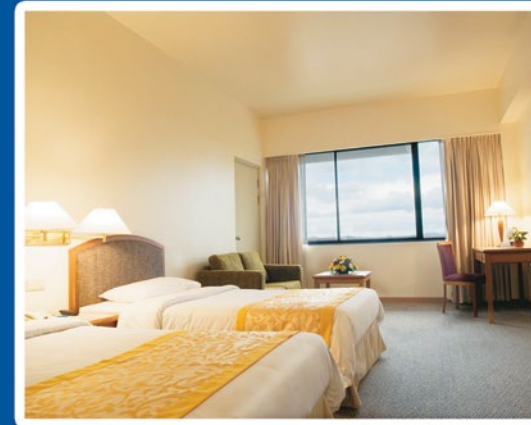
Facilities

- 24-hour Reception and Bell-boy Service
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- Room Service & Packed Lunches
- Free Wi-Fi
- Laundry Service
- 32 inch LCD TV with Cable & Local Channels
- Coffee / Tea Making Facilities
- In-Room Hair Dryer
- In-Room Safe Deposit Box
- Queen / Twin Size Beds
- Facsimile Service, Postal Service & Concierge
- Local Tour & Ticketing Service
- Free Shuttle from Hotel to Waterfront (9am and 2pm daily)
- Barber/Saloon & Massage Service Nearby
- Car Rental & Sightseeing Services by Request
- Airport Shuttle Service at RM5 per Pax (Min of 5 Pax)
- Local Attraction & Map Guide
- Conference & Catering Services
- Luggage / Baggage Room Service
- Daily Housekeeping
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Regency Rajah Court Hotel (3*), Kuching By-Pass, Pending, 93450 Kuching (15 min taxi ride from centre). Tel: 484791, www.theregency.com.my. Band B-C.

360 Urban Resort (3*), Hock Lee Centre, Jln Datuk Abang Abdul Rahim, 93450 Kuching (short taxi ride from centre). Tel: 484888, www.360kuching.com. Band B-C.

56 Hotel, Jln Tun Jugah, 93350 Kuching (nr Jln Song business district). Tel: 575666, www.56hotel.com.my. Band B-C.

Serviced Apartments

Ariva Gateway Kuching, 9 Jln Bukit Mata. Tel: 250958, Fax: 259958, Email: kuching.enquiry@stayariva.com. www.stayariva.com. 72 1-3 bedroom deluxe apartments. Band C-D, monthly & long-term rates available. Located just 5 mins walk from Kuching Waterfront, with excellent all-round views. Rooftop pool, fitness centre, residents' lounge, function rooms, business support service & full facilities.

Citadines Uplands Kuching, 55 Jln SimpangTiga, 93350 Kuching. Tel: 281888 Fax: 281889 Email: enquiry.kuching@the-ascott.com. www.citadines.com. 215 studio, 1-bed & 2-bed luxury apartments. Band C-D, monthly & long-term rates available. Conveniently located for Federal Government Complex, The Spring Shopping Centre and Swinburne University Sarawak, short taxi ride from centre. Pool, fitness centre, residents' lounge, function rooms, & full facilities.

Wesberly Apartments, Lot 2812, Block 195, Rubber Road West, 94000 Kuching Tel: 246197, 016-8865278 Fax: 243521, Email: wesberly@gmail.com. www.wesberly.com.my. Family-run apartment complex in secluded location near Satok Bidge, convenient for exploring Weekend Market and nearby Malay Kampung. 12 well appointed self-catering apartment suites. Band B-D, monthly & long-term rates available.

See also **Merdeka Palace** (Luxury Hotels), **360 Urban Resort** (Business Hotels) and **Chonglin Plaza** (Budget Hotels).

Budget Hotels

Dorset Boutique Hotel (3*), 175A-C, Jalan Sekama, 93300 Kuching (short taxi ride from centre).Tel: 347799 Fax: 346799. www.dorsetboutiquehotel.com. Band B. New and well-appointed small hotel with full facilities. *Dorset Café* serves Asian, Western, and Middle-Eastern cuisine. Conference facilities. Free shuttle to waterfront 2x daily.

Telang Usan Hotel (3*), Persiaran Ban Hock, off Jln Ban Hock. Tel: 415588 Fax: 425316 Email: ask@telangusan.com. www.telangusan.com. 66 rooms. Band B. Kuching's only Orang Ulu owned and managed hotel, extensively decorated in Orang Ulu style, with some very fine paintings by the late Tusau Padan. Full facilities. Includes *Dulit Coffee House* (6am-11pm), outdoor garden bar, conference rooms available.

Borneo Hotel (2*), 30 C-F Jln Tabuan. Tel: 244122, www.borneohotelgroup.com. Band B-C.

Chonglin Plaza Hotel & Suites, 107 Green Road, 93150 Kuching (short taxi ride from centre). Tel: 256999, www.chonglinplaza.com.my. Band B-C.

Chung Hin Hotel, 74 Jln Padungan. Tel: 411678. Band A-B.

City Inn, 275-276 Jln Abell. Tel: 414866. Band A-B.

De Palma Waterfront, off Jalan Abell (facing river). Tel: 230008, www.depalmahotel.com. Band B-C,

Fata Hotel, 1 Jln McDougall. Tel: 248111. Band B.

Furama Hotel, 4 Jln Green Hill. Tel: 413561. Band B.

Goodwood Inn, 16-17 Jln Green Hill. Tel: 244862. Band B.

Grand Supreme Hotel, Lot 395 Jln Ban Hock. Tel: 255155, www.grandsupreme.my. Band B.

Green Mountain Lodging House, 1 Jln Green Hill. Tel: 416320. Band B.

GW Furama Apartment, 20 Jln Green Hill. Tel: 234237. Band A-B

Hua Kuok Inn (1*), Jln Ban Hock. Tel: 429788, www.huaakuokinn.com. Band B.

Kapit Hotel, 59, Jln Padungan. Tel: 244179, Band A-B.

Kuok Pin Hotel, 10 Jln Green Hill. Tel: 426822. Band A-B. Also operates the nearby **John's Place** lodge.

Laila Inn, 149-151 Jln Datuk Alibah Abol, 93400 Kuching (near Kuching Mosque). Tel: 420930. Band A-B.

Liwah Hotel (2*), Jln Song Thian Cheok. Tel: 429222, Band B.

Orchid Inn, 2 Jln Green Hill. Tel: 411417. Band A.

Penview Hotel (3*), Jln Tun Razak, 93450 Kuching (15 min by taxi from centre). Tel: 341200. www.penviewhotel.com. Band B.

River View Inn, 22-23 Jln Green Hill. Tel: 412561. Band B.

Samudra Court Hotel, Lorong 6, Jln Nanas, 93400 Kuching. Tel: 256363, www.samudracourt.com. Band B.

Tai Pan Hotel, 93 Jln Padungan. Tel: 417363. Band A-B.

Tune Hotel, Taman Sri Sarawak, Jln Borneo. Tel: 03-79625888 (call centre). www.tunehotels.com. Band A-C. Budget chain operating airline style booking system.

360 Xpress, Wisma Phoenix, Jln Song Thian Cheok. Tel: 236060, www.360xpress.com.my. Band B.

Guest Houses, Lodges, Retreats and Homestays

(and anything that doesn't fit elsewhere)

New lodges, guest houses and homestays are popping up (and disappearing) like mushrooms in Kuching. We simply don't have space to list them all. The following is a selection of the more established outlets - you can find more on tripadvisor.com and similar websites.

Jambu Residence, 32 Jln Crookshank (10 mins walk from centre). Tel: 235292, 012 3721850. www.jamburesidence.com. 3 elegant guest rooms in a Brooke-era bungalow and 2 garden chalets, adjacent to *Jambu Restaurant & Lounge*. Pool, lush gardens, library, private dining area. Opening early 2014, check website for further details. Band B-C.

Sarakraf Pavilion, 78 Jalan Tabuan (20 mins walk from centre). Tel: 258771 Email: info@sarakraf.com.my, www.sarakraf.com.my. The City Homestay offers well-appointed dorms, shared-bath rooms and ensuite rooms in a converted house, Band B-D, while the Boutique Homestay has 5 luxurious rooms in the historic mansion complete with full board, Band D.

Telang Usan HOTEL

Ban Hock Road, P.O. Box 1579, 93732 Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia
Tel: +60 82 41 5588 | Fax: +60 82 42 5316

Telang Usan was created with a vision in mind - to operate a Hotel who's service reflected the friendly culture of Sarawak, that showcased authentic Sarawakian art & decor and conformed to international Hotelier's standards of comfort and cleanliness.

www.telangusan.com

Email: ask@telangusan.com

Guest Room

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- Room Service
- Hair dryer in Deluxe Rooms
- Iron & Board on request
- Mini-Bar in Superior & Deluxe

Conference Room

- Capacity of 100 persons theatre style
- Banquets for up to 250 persons
- Overhead Projector
- Slide Projector
- Microphones
- Video & Television
- Whiteboard & Flipcharts

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 - Facsimile
 - Photocopying
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Email: wesberly@gmail.com Website: www.wesberly.com.my Tel: +6082-246197, +6016-8865278, Fax: +6082-243521

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Tel: 082-232609 fax: 082-251397

12pm till 1030pm Offday 4th and 18th Everymonth
Major Credit Cards Accepted

Singgahsana Lodge, No 1 Temple St. (corner of Main Bazaar), Tel: 429277, Email: info@singgahsana.com. www.singgahsana.com. Kuching's first boutique backpacker lodge still leads the way. Stylish, well appointed rooms with individual air-con (some with shared bath). Rooftop Backpackers' Bar. Band A (dorm), Band B.

Anglican Guest House, St. Thomas Cathedral, Jln Tun Abang Haji Openg. Tel 414027. Church guest house -rooms not always available to the public. Band A.

Annah Rais Longhouse Homestay, Jln Borneo Heights, 94200 Padawan. Homestay in historic Bidayuh village. www.longhouseadventure.com. Band C-D.

B & B Inn, 30 Jln Tabuan. Tel: 237366. Band A (dorm) & B.
Basaga Holiday Residences, 69-70 Jalan Tabuan (20 mins walk from centre). Tel: 416069, www.basaga.com. Boutique resort based around a 1920s mansion. Band B-C.
Batu Bata, 8 Jln Carpenter. Tel: 239075, www.batubataguesthouse.com. Band A (dorm) & B.

Beds Guesthouse, 229 Jln Padungan. Tel: 424229, www.bedsguesthouse.com. Band A (dorm) & B.

Berambih Lodge, 134 Jln Ewe Hai. Tel: 238589, www.budgetlodgekuching.com. Band A.

Borneo Seahare, Teochew Assn. Building, Jln Tabuan. Tel: 010-9620253, www.borneoseahare.com. Band A.

Brookes Terrace, 291 Jln Abell. Tel: 427008, www.brookesterrace.org. Band B-C.

The Fairview, 6 Jln Taman Budaya (nr Sarawak Museum). Tel: 240017, www.thefairview.com.my. Band B.

Jambu Village, see Sempadi, page 16.

The Kebun, Jalan Kubah-Matang, 93050 Kuching Tel: 014 5775666, www.thekeburn.com. Farmstay in Matang with self-drive car included. Band C-D (full board).

Kuching Waterfront Lodge, 15 Main Bazaar. Tel: 231111, www.kuchingwaterfrontlodge.com. Band A (dorm), B-C.

Kurakura, Kg. Semadang, Jln Borneo Heights, 93250 Kuching. Tel: 012 8920051, www.kurakura.asia. Bidayuh rainforest homestay. Band C-D (full board).

Lodge 121, Jln Tabuan (opp. Borneo Hotel). Tel: 428121, www.lodge121.com. Band A (dorm) & B.

Marco Polo Travellers, 236 Jln Padungan. Tel: 246679. Band A (dorm) and B.

Mr D's B&B, 26 Jln Carpenter. Tel: 248852, www.misterdbnb.com Band A (dorm) & B.

My Sarawak Travel Café, 94 Jln Carpenter. Tel: 256729. Band A (dorm) & B.

Nadin Homestay, No. 312, Kampung Siol Kandis, 93050 Kuching. Tel 445085, www.nadinhomestay.com. Malay kampung homestay near city centre, Band B.

Nanga Damai, see Damai & Santubong, page 14.

Nomad Borneo, 3 Jln Green Hill. Tel: 237831, www.borneobnb.com. Band A (dorm) & B. Also operate the adjacent **Tracks**, plus **Threehouse** in Jln Cina.

Planet Borneo Lodge, 10 Lorong Park. Tel: 412100,

www.planetborneolodge.com. Band A (dorm) & B.

Pinnacles, Jalan Borneo (opp. Hilton). Tel: 419100, www.pinnacleskuching.com. Band A (dorm) & B.

The Room, 6 Padungan Arcade, Jln Song Thian Cheok. Tel: 423688, www.theroom.com.my. Band A-B

Rom Orchid Garden, 33A, Lorong 5, Jln Siol Kandis, 93050 Kuching. Tel: 447001, www.romhomestay.com. Malay kampung homestay near city centre, Band B.

Saloma's Villagestay, Kg. Sadir, 94200 Siburan. Tel: 016-8682525, www.salomavillagestay.org. Bidayuh village & jungle homestay. Band C (full board).

Secret Sanctuary, 132 Taman Stutung Indah, 93350 Kuching. Tel: 363001, www.thesecondsanctuary.com Charming & eccentric boutique chalets in Kuching suburb.

Union Yes Retreat, see Lundu, page 16.

Village House, see Damai & Santubong, page 14.

Wo Jia Lodge, 17 Main Bazaar. Tel: 251776, www.wojialodge.com. Band A-B.

There are a number of government-organised **Village Homestay Programmes** that offer visitors the opportunity to stay with local communities and enjoy local attractions. Guests stay with their host family and can participate in daily village activities. For further information visit www.right.sarawak.gov.my/homestay.

EATING OUT

Kuching has a great deal to offer the adventurous gourmet. As well as typical Malaysian and Western fare, there is a whole range of local delicacies worth trying - see *Sarawak Specialities*. At the last count there were more than a thousand food outlets in Kuching. As we can barely scratch the surface in this guide, we have generally focused on popular, well known and centrally located outlets. We strongly recommend that visitors who have time get out and about in Kuching's suburbs and make their own dining discoveries.

Coffee Shops

Coffee-shops with their attendant food-stalls are dotted all over town. Some of the most interesting and traditional ones are found around Jln Carpenter, Main Bazaar, Jln Ban Hock and Jln Padungan, The coffee shops on Lebuah Temple are conveniently located near the budget hotels on Jln Green Hill, and serve a wide selection of dishes, including good roasted chicken rice (Green Hill Café). At lunchtimes, many coffee shops serve *economy rice*, *mixed rice*, *fast food* or *nasi campur*. These are four different names for the same dish - a plate of rice with portions of meat, fish, curry and vegetables selected from the delicacies on display. Cheap (RM 4-6), delicious and very filling.

Coffee Bars

Raintree Café, Lower Ground Floor, Plaza Merdeka. This city centre offshoot of the award-winning Raintree Restarant serves great coffee, pies, quiches and sandwiches and is already a local legend for its jaw-breakingly huge chicken shawarmas.

Bing, 84 Pandungan Road. Serves a range of coffees, teas and light snacks.

Black Bean, 87 Jln Ewe Hai. This tiny and popular café is noted for its coffee made from locally-grown *liberica* and *robusta* beans.

Coffee Bean - The Spring Shopping Centre Level 2. Local branch of popular international chain.

The Seattle Coffee & Tea Co, Merdeka Palace Hotel. Local branch of this famous chain.

Starbucks Coffee Co. Branches at Plaza Merdeka, Kuching International Airport and The Spring mall.

Food Centres

These are the most popular eating places amongst locals. There is always a wide selection of value-for-money stalls and you can select food from as many as you like. If you are not familiar with a dish, just be adventurous and try it. Nine times out of ten you will be delighted.

Kubah Ria, river front location next to Satok Weekend Market. Over 40 Malay and Chinese stalls serving local specialities. Highlights include the excellent satay, and the delicious *Sop Kambing* (mutton soup) at Doreen Abdullah's stall. 10 am to 10 pm.

Lau Ya Keng Chinese Food Centre, Jln Carpenter (opposite temple). A wide range of Chinese food stalls. Excellent fish balls (afternoons only) and superb fish and prawn soup from late afternoon until late at night.

Open Air Market, (near Electra House) Jln Market. Oddly named, as the whole area is covered. A wide selection of Chinese and Malay food stalls. Some very reasonably priced seafood and noodle stalls operate late into the evening. Famous for beef noodles, rice porridge and fresh soya bean milk.

Top Spot Food Court, Jln Bukit Mata Kuching. See Seafood listings

Most **shopping malls** feature good food courts, notably **Plaza Merdeka** (level 3), **The Spring** and **Tun Jugah** (2nd floor).

Chinese

Kuching has a huge selection of Chinese food outlets, from simple noodle stalls to full-blown banqueting palaces. Many of them feature regular food promotions - see local press for details. More Chinese restaurants are listed under Seafood.

Fook Hoi in Jln Padungan is an old-fashioned coffee shop, famous for its *dim sum*, especially *sio bee* and *ha kau* (pork dumplings). Daytime only.

Heritage, Lorong 1 Jln Song Thian Cheok (behind Hong LeongBank). Fine Cantonese/Szechuan style restaurant renowned for its suckling pig, spare ribs and rainbow prawns. Reservtion advised. Tel: 252627.

Jong Siang Teng, 68 Carpenter St. Serves Hokkien-style pork leg rice and chicken rice. Daytime only.

Juat Siang Café, 34 Carpenter St. Good beef noodle soup. Daytime only.

Life Café, 108 Ewe Hai Street, Tel: 411754. 11 am-10pm (closed Tuesdays). Tea house serving inexpensive food (RM 4-6) plus wide range of coffees and teas.

Meisan in the Grand Margherita Hotel offers high quality Halal-certified Szechuan cuisine.

Min Joo, corner of Carpenter & Bishopsgate St. Small but very popular coffee shop selling Chinese noodle dishes. At breakfast time the place is packed.

Ming Heng Café, 6 Carpenter St. This old-style Chinese coffee shop is another popular breakfast hang out. A choice of *laksa*, chicken *satay* and *kolo mee*.

Nu Er Hong at Pullman Kuching, JlnMathies. Students of Chinese cooking will love watching the chefs at work in the glass-fronted kitchen. The Szechuan smoked duck is simply unmissable

One & One Cafe, Jln Ban Hock (behind Hornbill's Corner). Hakka-style country cooking (e.g. tender braised pork) & seafood.

River Palace in the Riverside Majestic is the place to go for Halal-certified Cantonese banquet fare.

Ting Noodle House, 117B Ban Hock Road. This lunchtime favourite serves spicy Taiwanese beef noodles. 8 am - 8.30 pm.

Continental / Western

All major hotels serve continental cuisine, usually in their coffee houses. Diners have a choice of a la carte or all-you-can-eat buffets. Some also feature high tea buffets on Saturdays or Sundays. Look out for food promotions advertised in the local press. Some coffee shops and food centres have stalls selling Western food. **Continental or American Breakfast** is normally served in hotel restaurants, but most Chinese coffee shops will serve eggs with toast and jam or honey if you ask for them.

Jambu, 32 Crookshank Rd. Tel: 235292, 012 3721850. www.jamburestarant.com. Sprawling colonial style bungalow conceals a stylish restaurant offering steaks, pasta and main dishes with local ingredients, plus a welcoming bar and a pleasant garden terrace for chilling out. 10 mins walk from city centre. Open 5.30pm - 12.30 am, closed Mondays.

Raintree Restaurant, Borneo Conference & Convention Centre. Tel: 392988. Kuching's most talked-about restaurant features global cuisine from Virginia Kedit, Sarawak's most innovative chef, combining classic French techniques, ethnic ingredients and Japanese presentation skills. Stunning ambience and first-class service. If you think we're exaggerating, read their reviews. 11 am - 10 pm daily.

Beccari's Ristorante, Merdeka Palace Hotel. Authentic dishes from all over Italy, 12 noon - 11 pm daily.

BITES, Batik Boutique Hotel. Tasty and affordable (by hotel standards) comfort food, esp. home made soups, burgers & sandwiches.

Bla Bla Bla, Tabuan Road. Tel: 233944. Balinese décor and an exotic mix of Chinese and fusion dishes. 6 pm - 11.30 pm. Closed Tuesdays.

The Carvery at Abell Hotel offers a 'churrascaria-style' meat barbecue buffet for lunch and dinner (RM43), plus à la carte dishes. Tel: 239449.

Dulit Coffee House, Telang Usan Hotel. Pleasant terrace cafe serving generous portions of western and local food, including delicious French oxtail stew.

The Junk, 80 Wayang St, Tel: 259450. A Kuching landmark, the Junk features rustic Chinese ambience and Italian influenced cooking. 6pm - 12.30 am.

Magenta, Sarawak Tourism Complex, Tel: 237878. Modern Italian & fusion food in heritage surroundings.

Orchid Garden, Grand Margherita Hotel, serves Western, Thai and local specialities. 6.00am - 1.00am.

Toms, 82 Padungan Road. Famous for excellent steaks and cakes. Open 11.30 am - 11 pm Tue-Sun. Booking advisable, Tel: 247672.

Twin Apple Café, 7B Jln Ban Hock. Affordably priced burgers, grills, pasta and cakes. 6 pm - 2 am.

21 Bistro, 64 Jln Padungan. Tasty grills and pasta dishes are the hallmarks of this lively bistro. Food served 6 - 11 pm.

More Western restaurants, including themed outlets and franchises, can be found elsewhere in Kuching, particularly the **Jalan Song** area.

Fast Food & Franchise Outlets

The golden arches of **McDonalds** are at Plaza Merdeka and Jln Tunku Abdul Rahman (opp. Sarawak Plaza).

Pizza Hut is also at Plaza Merdeka and Jln Tunku Abdul Rahman. **KFC** has branches in Plaza Merdeka, Sarawak Plaza and Riverside Shopping Centre. Local chain **Sugar Bun** is located in the Riverside Shopping Centre, while **Roadhouse Grill** is on the terrace outside Sarawak Plaza. Malaysian cake and fusion food outlet **Secret Recipe** is at Plaza Merdeka and Jln Song Thian Cheok. See also Coffee Bars.

Indian

Many of Kuching's "Indian" restaurants actually serve a mixture of Indian and Malay food. Saying that, there are quite a few places well worth trying.

King's Curry, Wisma Nation Horizon, Jln Petanak. Tel: 016 8879936. Worth a detour (15-20 mins walk from centre) for the authentic North & South Indian food, including *tandoori* grills and *naans*, as well as some excellent Indonesian dishes. The *roti boom* is a popular breakfast dish. Regulars rave over the *murtabak* chicken and cheese *naan*. Open daily 6 am - 10 pm.

LL Banana Leaf, 7G Lorong 1, Jln Rubber. Tel: 239404. 7.30 am - 9 pm (Mon 5 pm). Authentic South Indian banana leaf meals from RM 5.50 (vegetarian RM 4.50). If the fish curry is available (+RM 3), don't miss it. The spicy fried *tenggiri* fish (order separately) is a local favourite. Also serves *dosai* & *murtabak* breads, plus a great mango lassi.

Azreen Café, 351 Lorong 12, Jln Rubber. Good Muslim Indian restaurant serving home-cooked dishes.

Buhari Café, 157F Jln Satok. An old Kuching favourite, famed for its chicken and mutton *biryani*.

Curry House, Lot 409, Lorong 3A, Jln Rubber. Good range of curries and other mixed rice dishes.

Maharajah's Cuisine, Jln Padungan. Home-cooked South Indian buffet.

Tandoori Palace, Jln Wayang/Leboh Temple. North Indian buffet and cook-to-order dishes. 11 am - 11 pm daily.

Indonesian

Riung Kuring, Jln Dagok (behind RHB Jln Kulas). Tel: 016-8503888. Authentic Sundanese and Minangkabau dishes. The Padang-style beef rib is superb. 11am - 3 pm, 6 pm - 11 pm daily.

Japanese

Café Majestic, Riverside Majestic Hotel. Famous for its twice-weekly Japanese buffets (Wednesdays & Saturdays) and high tea buffets (Sat & Sun afternoon).

Minoru, Lot 493-G, Jln Rubber. Tel: 251021. 11.30 am - 2.30 pm, 6-10.30 pm. Consistently good service and extensive menu.

Sakae Sushi, Plaza Merdeka Mall. Sushi, sashimi & cakes.

Sanga, Jln Chan Chin Ann. Japanese & some Korean specialities. 11 am - 10 pm.

Sushi King, Hils Shopping Centre & The Spring. Fresh sushi from the conveyor, other dishes cooked to order.

Korean

Seoul Garden, Blk 10, 3rd Mile Commercial Centre. Tel 013-8009447. Take a taxi.

Goong (rear of Korean Products Store) and **Koreana** can both be found at Premier 101 Shopping Centre, Jln Tun Jugah. Take a taxi.

Late Night Eats

Most restaurants in Kuching close at or before 10 pm. Fortunately the late night eateries in the city centre seem to congregate together in certain locations. All are open until 2 am unless otherwise stated. Around **Main Bazaar**, the **burger stall** outside Singgahsana Lodge does great home-made burgers and the **Old Bazaar Café** serves western and local dishes. **Jalan Ban Hock**, opposite the Tabuan Roundabout, offers *lok-lok*, noodles and Malay dishes at **Lok Lok**, pasta, burgers and cakes at **Twin Apple Café** and barbecued pork from the stall behind **Ruai Pub**. The city end of **Jalan Padungan** offers grilled and roasted chicken dishes at **RJ Ayam Bakar** (Jln Abell), spicy Malaysian rice and noodle dishes at **Planet Sambal** (60 Jln Padungan, open 24 hours), and Chinese noodle dishes at the **Kapit Hotel Coffee Shop** (open 24 hours). At the other end of Jalan Padungan is **Homecook Padungan**, a bustling late night coffee shop known for its Sarawak *laksa*. You can find plenty of other late night eating possibilities in food centres throughout Kuching - taxi drivers will be happy to advise.

Malay

Malay food served in Sarawak is generally not quite as spicy as that served in Peninsular Malaysia. There are not many specifically Malay food outlets in the city centre, but most food courts and many coffee shops have Malay food stalls. Adventurous gourmets can take a taxi or *bas sewa* to the **Jln Semariang - Jln Santubong** area of Petra Jaya, where there are literally dozens of small family-run Malay restaurants, mostly operating from their own homes (early evenings only).

Rumah Hijau, 24 Jln Rubber. You can't miss this bright turquoise building that offers probably the best selection of regional Malay food in town, including *ayam penyet*, *ayam percik* and *laksa Penang*. There are also a few simple western dishes on the menu just in case you don't do spicy. Good range of cakes and desserts too. Open 9 am - 11 pm. Tel: 016-5891947. There's also a branch at Riveredge, Petra Jaya, handy for the Satok Weekend Market.

Jubilee Restaurant, Jln India. Serves a range of Malay curries and vegetable dishes and good *roti canai*.

Kubah Ria (see food centre listings) offers the widest variety of Malay food in town.

Rom Orchid Garden (see page 36) offers spicy Malay cuisine in a delightful *kampung* setting. 8 am - 10 pm daily.

Satok Road Food Stalls. Running from early evening until about 3 am, these stalls serve a variety of popular Malay hawker dishes.

Tumis, Taman Sri Sarawak. Tasty Malay meals, cakes and super-sweet desserts. Daily from 11 am - 10 pm.

Malaysian

These are places that are typically Malaysian but do not represent any particular ethnic cuisine.

Aroma Café, Jln Tabuan (opp. Borneo Hotel). The only Bidayah restaurant in town serves traditional *kampung* food for buffet lunch and a la carte dishes until 10 pm.

Attap Corner, 21 Bishopsgate. Cheap and tasty Malay, Chinese, Thai and western dishes from breakfast until early evening.

John's Place, Jln Green Hill. Budget Malay and Chinese dishes plus in-house creations. Their fried *kway teow* has been featured on TV. 11 am - 2 pm, 6 pm - 1 am

Lok-Lok, 7D Jln Ban Hock. Serves *lok-lok* (tid-bits on skewers cooked steambot-style), *nasi lemak*, *laksa*, *ayam penyet* and noodle dishes from 6 pm until late. Closed Sundays.

Old Bazaar Café, Leboh Wayang. *Lok-lok*, Malaysian and Western dishes served until 2 am.

Shack, 33 Jln Carpenter. Mostly Malay and traditional Sarawak dishes, 11 am - 11 pm.

Singapore Chicken Rice (SCR), Jln Song Thian Cheok, branches throughout town. Generous portions of chicken rice and other local dishes. 10 am - 9 pm.

Middle Eastern

Little Lebanon, Japanese Building, Sarawak Tourism Complex (Old Court House). Tel: 247523. A selection of Middle Eastern Cuisine and local Malaysian favourites. Choice of flavoured *shisha* available. 11.30 am - 3 pm, 6.30 pm - 10.30 pm. Closed Mondays. Branches at Kuching Waterfront (Sarawak Steamship Building) and 360 Urban Resort.

Hubbaba's Arabic Kitchen, 49 Jln Wayang. Kebabs, freshly-baked pitta bread, vegetarian meals, pizzas. MSG-free. 10 am - 10 pm.

Sarawak Specialities

Sarawak *laksa* - a spicy noodle dish laced with beansprouts, shredded chicken and prawns in rich coconut gravy - is the great Borneo breakfast. *Laksa* can be found in many coffee shops and everyone in Kuching has their favourite stall - two of the best in the city centre are **Chong Choon** (Jln Abell, opp. Maybank), and **Choon Hui** (Jln Ban Hock). Both are sold out by 11 am. Further afield, the **Golden Arches** café at 3rd Mile Roundabout, **Madam Tang's** at Jln Petanak and **Mom's Laksa** at Jln Astana have a devoted following. **Tinot Laksa** serves their much-loved breakfast in a kampung garden setting on Jln Patingan, Mon-Sat 6.30 - 10 am. *Kolo mee*, egg noodles served with minced beef, pork or chicken or thinly-sliced char siew (barbequed pork) is

Kuching's other signature noodle dish. Try it at **Min Joo** (Jln Carpenter), **Sin Lian Shin** (Jalan Geen) and dozens of other spots around town. The best bet for pork-free kolo mee is **Mohammad Lim's** stall at Ting Café, Taman Sri Sarawak.

Umei, a spicy salad of raw marinated fish, limes and shallots, is the traditional dish of the Melanau people, and is often found at hotel buffets or Malay food stalls. Local vegetables are served widely, particularly the two types of crispy jungle fern, *midin* and *paku*. Good local venison (ask for deer meat) is available from some Chinese restaurants. **Manok pansoh** (chicken cooked in bamboo) is a great Iban delicacy, as is *babi panggang* (grilled 3-layer pork belly). Both are usually on the menu at **Tanju Bistro** and **The Dyak**.

M-Bar & Bistro at The Ranee, Main Bazaar. Although they serve great tapas and international dishes, the main attraction here is the authentic native Sarawak cuisine, including chicken-in-bamboo, jungle ferns and fish specialties. A selection of "true blue Borneo specials" are only offered when fresh ingredients are available straight from the rainforest. Kitchen open 6 - 11 pm. Tel: 258833.

Tanju Bistro, 1st Floor, Lrg Upland 1, Simpang Tiga (opposite The Spring), is the world's first Dayak Gastropub, where you can sip imported beers and exotic cocktails while feasting on Sarawak longhouse food. Try the wonderfully named "eternity pork", sago worms, chicken with fermented durian and many less challenging but equally authentic dishes. They also have grills and pasta for the less adventurous. RM 40-50 for 2, or come at lunchtime for the bargain RM 5 dayak buffet. Open daily 12 midday - 1 am. Tel: 241880.



Absolute Tribal - see Thai section. Excellent *manok pansoh*, dabai fried rice and Sarawak laksa, amongst others.
The Dyak, corner of Jln Mendu / Jln Simpang Tiga. Pioneering fine dining restaurant focusing exclusively on Dayak cuisine. Try the chicken in tapioca leaves, with *tuak* ice cream for dessert. 6-10 pm daily, booking advised. Tel: 234068.
Tribal Stove, Taman Sri Sarawak (opp. Hilton). The only pork-free tribal restaurant in Kuching, serving authentic Kelabit food from the Bario Highlands. Open for lunch & dinner. Tel: 234873.
 Also check out the **Dayak food stall** at Delight Food Court, King's Centre, Simpang Tiga (lunchtimes).

Seafood

Kuching has superb seafood. The steamed *pomfret* and *manchong* fish are unmissable. *Assam* prawns, *sambal* prawns and slipper lobster are other local favourites. One dish that you are unlikely to find elsewhere is *ambal* (bamboo clam), which is usually cooked as a mild dry curry or steamed in Chinese wine. Unusual appearance (looks like a worm in a bamboo shell!) - but tastes superb. None of the restaurants listed below serve pork.

See Good, off Ban Hock Road, opposite Hua Kuok Inn. Tel: 251397/012-8832629. Probably Kuching's most popular seafood restaurant, See Good's cooking style is robust rather than fussy, with strong-flavoured sauces and lots of herbs. Friendly hosts the Kong family will happily guide you through the extensive menu, and can make some interesting suggestions. Also has the biggest (and cheapest) selection of wines in Kuching. Open 12 midday - 10.30 pm. Closed 4th and 18th of every month. Come before 6.30 or around 9 to be sure of a table.

Top Spot Food Court, Jln Bukit Mata, probably offers the widest choice of seafood outlets in all of Borneo. Set in landscaped surroundings on the breezy top floor of a car park, there are well over a dozen al-fresco restaurants here offering Malay seafood, Chinese seafood, seafood curries, claypot seafood, satay, and of course more seafood. The fresh fish and crustaceans are displayed for you to take your pick (as seen on Discovery Channel). Unusual and very, very popular. 12 am - 11 pm daily. All stalls open 6pm - 10 pm.

Batu Lintang Food Centre, tucked away behind junction of Jln Batu Lintang & Jln Rock. The stalls here serve Kuching's cheapest seafood. Evenings only. Be prepared to wait for a table.

Benson Seafood, Off Jln Abell. Tel: 255262. Well-established riverside restaurant serving a full range of Sarawak seafood. Very popular at weekends.

Buntal Seafood Village - see Damai & Santubong, page 14.

The Colony Seafood, Jln Chan Chin Ann. Simple coffee shop serving good-value seafood by the river.

Open-Air Market - see Food Centre listings, page 37.

Padungan Bay, JlnPetanak. Good selection of dishes. The bitter gourd omelette is unusual and delicious. 6 - 10 pm.

Pending Seafood Centre, Jln Simen Raya in Kuching Port industrial area. A wide range of stalls selling seafood and local specialties. If you go by taxi arrange a pick-up time.

Rock Road Seafood, 2nd Mile, Jln Rock, Tel: 241575. Popular outlet where you select your dinner from the tanks lining the walls. Take a taxi. Booking advisable.

Tanju BISTRO The Original Dayak Gastropub

Buffet lunch: 12 - 2 pm
 Dinner: 6.30 - 9.30 pm
 Open: 12 noon - 2 am
 Fun: Always

Simpang Tiga, opposite The Spring
 Tel: 082 241 880

f tanjubistro

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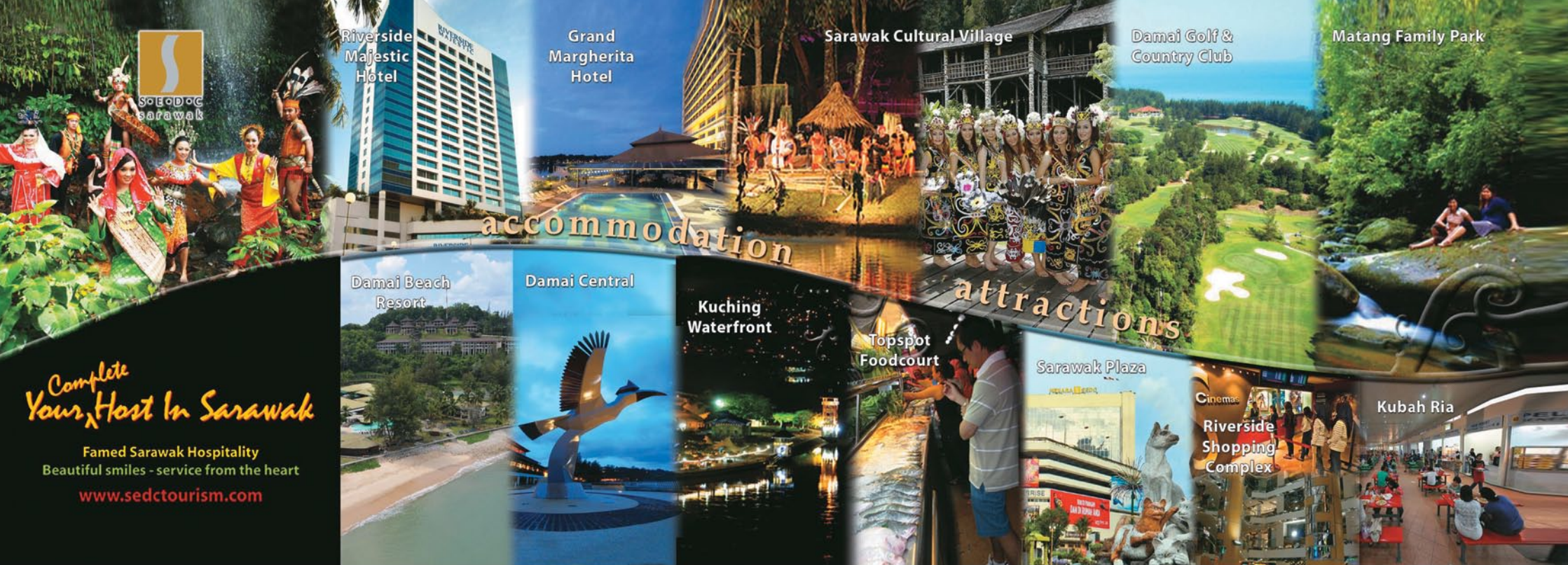
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Steamboat

A local favourite - an all-you-can-eat seafood buffet which you cook yourself in a gas-heated stewing pot bubbling and sizzling in the middle of your table, with a barbecue plate attached for grilling marinated beef, lamb and chicken. If you have never tried before, the staff will show you how it's done. Very Malaysian, excellent value (RM 20-30 per person) and great fun. The city centre's three most popular steamboat restaurants are all within a stone's throw of each other on Jln Ban Hock. If one is packed, simply check out the others.

Annuar BBQ Steamboat, Persiaran Ban Hock (Tel: 019-8867900) is the only Muslim steamboat in the area. Always busy so come early or late to get a table. Closed Mondays.

Hornbill's Corner Café, 85 Jln Ban Hock Road. Tel: 016-8565495. Come early as Kuching's longest running steamboat really gets busy. Pork-free. Open daily.

D11 Steamboat (behind Hornbill's Corner) is also very popular. Pork-free. Open daily.

Coca at the Riverside Majestic Hotel specialises in spicy Thai-style steamboat. See Thai listings below.

Thai

Absolute Tribal, Sarawak Pavillion, Jln Tabuan (20 mins from centre or take a taxi). Hugely popular and stylish restaurant serving Southeast Asian, local,

fusion and tribal dishes. Listed here because of their overall emphasis on Thai cooking. Proprietor Gerald is an exceptional host. Exotic, eclectic and surprisingly affordable. Open daily 10.30am - 10 pm. Tel: 237468. www.sarakraf.com.my.

Coca Restaurant, Riverside Majestic Hotel. Tel: 532222. Open 11.30 am - 2.30 pm, 6.30 - 10.30 pm. Famous for its Thai-style steamboat.

Mango Tree, Jln Crookshank, Tel 235353. Malaysia's first branch of the Thai franchise. Also have a **Mango Tree Bistro** outlet with live music in Jln Bukit Mata.

Vegetarian

If you're a strict vegetarian, make sure you say so when ordering vegetable dishes in non-vegetarian outlets - dried prawns, *belacan* (shrimp paste), shredded chicken, etc., are often used in vegetable dishes. Most cook-to-order restaurants can prepare vegetarian dishes on request.

LL Banana Leaf serves value-for-money vegetarian babana-leaf rice. see Indian section.

Zhun San Yen Vegetarian, Lot 165, Jln Chan Chin Ann. Tel: 230068. 7.30 am - 2.30 pm, 5 pm-8.30 pm. Popular self-service vegetarian buffet.

ENTERTAINMENT



Kuching has entertainment and nightlife to suit most tastes. As this guidebook has been produced with tourists in mind, we have not included places that concentrate on lavish business entertainment or where female visitors would feel uncomfortable. Socialising in Kuching is also done in restaurants and coffee shops. Basic pubs usually charge around RM 8-12 for a beer. Live music pubs, hotel bars, plush karaoke lounges and trendier bars are usually more expensive. Most places have "happy hours," with discounts or 2-for-1 offers. Unless otherwise stated, outlets are open daily from around 5 pm to 1 am. The listings below are only a small selection - the inquisitive will make their own discoveries.

Bars & Pubs

Ruai Bar, 7F Jln Ban Hock (opp. roundabout). Proudly proclaiming itself "the world's worst bar", this laid-back pub is run by a friendly Iban family and their relatives and friends. Sociable, mostly Dayak guests enjoy

welcoming visitors. Mellow and mature crowd early evenings, young and vibrant after 11. Huge selection of music (a great place to top up your i-Pod), cheap beer. Occasional live bands. Open late.

The Club, Riverside Majestic Hotel. Cosy wine, coffee & cocktail lounge with a relaxed setting.

Five Foot Way, Jln Padungan. Compact corner bar decorated with the owner's paintings. Very friendly, with cheap beer and tasty pub food.

Gawing, 24 Jln Tabuan. AI-fresco bar turns into dance club (mostly trance, packed with students) around 10 pm. Open late.

Grappa, Jln Padungan. Happening club with a remarkably diverse crowd at weekends. Progressive house and dubstep. Open late

Havana, 22 Jln Tabuan. A watering hole on weekdays, party bar at weekends.

Jambu, 32 Crookshank Road. Cosy, atmospheric saloon cum terrace bar in a colonial style bungalow. Great selection of tapas. Closed Mondays. 10 mins walk from city centre.

The Junk Bar, 80 Jln Wayang. As the restaurant winds down the bar fills up and the music plays. Kuching's Wannabe Central.

King's Arms, Jln Rumbia, off Jln Padungan. Popular English-style bar with decent pub food, nice for a quiet beer at happy hour but comes alive later with DJ and live bands.

Knight's, Jln Bukit Mata. Lively corner pub with live entertainment Thurs - Sat.

Latino, Jln Borneo (opp. Hilton). Friendly corner pub with live music at weekends.

Mbar & Bistro at the Rane, Main Bazaar. Refined, low-key watering hole with excellent *tuak*, a strict no-smoking policy and a pleasant courtyard out back for smokers.

Old Bazaar Cafe, Leboh Wayang. Open-air café with a good selection of beers. Happy hour from 3.30 pm.

Rajang Lobby Lounge, Grand Margherita. Cosy lounge bar, famous for its happy hour deals. Live music most evenings. Bartender mixes a near-perfect martini.

Sapphire, Jln Ban Hock. Friendly karaoke bar with a mature clientele. The owner, a fine guitarist, occasionally leads live karaoke sessions.

Shore, Jln Abell. Cocktail lounge cum sports bar with a great selection of beer and whiskies. Happy hour from 4 pm.

Station One, Hills Shopping Mall terrace. Lounge bar with live music, mostly Chinese standards on weekdays and jazz at weekends.

Tanju, Simpang Tiga (see page 40). The place to go for bargain cocktails, all at RM 15 (Wed RM 10). Also serves excellent *tuak* and exotic Dayak food. Occasional live bands.

Terminal 1, Jln Padungan Utara (off Jln Petanak) Large party bar with live bands and DJ.

Utopia, Jln Tunku Abdul Rahman. Popular new bar with a very diverse crowd - entertainment ranges from acoustic duos through salsa nights to hardcore DJs.

Victoria Arms, Merdeka Palace Hotel. English Pub featuring live bands.

Zeus, Jln Padungan. Popular sports bar with separate karaoke zone, live bands at weekends.

The **Third Mile** area is teeming with Karaoke lounges, whose names seem to change on a weekly basis. The only area in Sarawak where customers order beers by the case. There are also a few more up-market theme bars in the **Jalan Song** area, especially around **Brighton Square**. Take a taxi.

Cinemas

LFS Cineplex, Riverside Complex, next to Riverside Majestic Hotel. Tel: 246199. Check local press for details.

MBO Cineplex, 2nd Floor, Spring Shopping Mall. Tel: 421203.

Star Cineplex, Level 9, Medan Pelita, top floor of the car park on Wayang/Temple Street. Tel: 234077.

SHOPPING

Kuching is an excellent place to buy Borneo arts, crafts and curios. Particular items to look out for are Iban *pua kumbu* and Malay *songket* (hand-woven textiles), Iban hornbill carvings (used in rituals) and silver jewellery, Bidayuh baskets, Orang Ulu beadwork and woodcarvings, and Penan blowpipes and mats. Most

of the antique and curio shops are scattered along **Main Bazaar** and **Carpenter Street**, with a few in the **Padungan area**. Whilst a few are laid out like elegant galleries, most are crammed full with every possible variety of Sarawakian bric-a-brac, and items from Brunei, Kalimantan and Sabah. Well-established outlets on Main Bazaar include **Native Arts**, **Nelson's Gallery**, **Rainforest**, **Sarawak House**, **Atelier Gallery** and **Arts of Asia**, all offering quality antiques and handicrafts at reasonable prices..



Prices of handicrafts are not always fixed so you may have to bargain. If you have the time it's best to shop around and get a rough idea before buying. Certain antiques require an export permit from the Sarawak Museum. The more established shops can assist with this and with shipping arrangements (if required). Most art and craft shops close on Sundays. **Note:** Australian and New Zealand authorities insist that wood and bone handicrafts are fumigated upon arrival.

Artrageously Ramsay Ong, 94 Main Bazaar. Showcases the talents of Ramsay Ong, one of Malaysia's leading painters, as well as a range of work from local and occasionally international artists. They also stock a fine selection of prints, cards, handicrafts and other collectibles.

Kuching Waterfront Bazaar in the historic Sarawak Steamship Building is open daily until 10 pm, ideal for last minute gift and souvenir shopping.

The **Museum Shop & Café** (Sarawak Museum New Wing) has a good selection of unusual arts, crafts and souvenir items, as well as official Sarawak Museum merchandise

Sarakraf Pavilion, 78 Jln Tabuan (see page 9). Art and handicrafts with a built-in "feel-good factor." Crafts are guaranteed "made in Sarawak," and the producers have been fairly rewarded for their efforts. Branch at airport. **Tanoti House** offers fine *songket* textiles and craft items - see page 9.

Sarawak Handicraft Centre, Round Tower, Sarawak Tourism Complex. Tel: 425652, Fax: 445311. www.sarawakhandicraft.com. Indoor showroom plus outdoor stalls featuring top quality Sarawak handicrafts, whose authenticity is guaranteed by the Sarawak Craft Council. Some of the items on sale are produced by the craft demonstrators who showcase their skills here. Open Mon - Fri from 8.30 am to 5 pm (12 midday on Sat, Sun and public holidays).

Pepper: Malaysia is a major producer and exporter of pepper, producing around 25,000 tonnes annually, of which 98% is grown in Sarawak. This valuable cash crop provides an important source of income for over 60,000

rural families. Visitors travelling outside Kuching should not miss the chance to visit a pepper garden. High-quality Sarawak pepper and pepper-based products are widely available in Kuching. More information from the Malaysian Pepper Board, www.mpb.gov.my.

Pottery: Kuching is well known for its unique, locally-influenced Chinese pottery. Most potteries are located out of town on Jln Penrissen. Visitors are welcome to watch the potters at work. Just take a bus (CPL K3 or K6) or taxi and ask for the potteries. Many antique and souvenir shops stock their wares.

Bird's Nests: For centuries Sarawak has exported top quality bird's nests to China. Today, a number of retailers in Kuching specialise in the sale and export of these exotic delicacies. Prices are significantly cheaper than elsewhere (e.g. Hong Kong, Singapore or West Malaysia) and the quality is excellent.

Film, Processing & Camera Repairs: Film processing and digital printing laboratories are found all over town. **Kingdom Photography** (Jln Green Hill) is centrally located and consistently produces good quality prints. For camera repairs, **Empress Studios** (1B Jln India) are fast, reliable and reasonably priced. For good prices on digital video tape head to **Top Photo** (Jln Abell).

Bookshops: For books on Sarawak and Borneo try **Mohamad Yahia & Sons** (Basement, Sarawak Plaza - they also have some good maps), **Benzamine Bookshop** (Jln Carpenter), **Star Company** (30 Main Bazaar) and the **Museum Shop & Café**, which also has editions of the *Sarawak Museum Journal*. For general books, novels etc., try **Popular Books** (Tun Jugah Centre), **Times Books** (Riverside Complex) or **MPH** (the Spring).

Traditional Music: CD's of traditional music from Sarawak can be found at the **Museum Shop & Café**, many handicraft shops on Main Bazaar and the shop at the **Sarawak Cultural Village**.

Computers & IT: If you need any computer or smartphone equipment, software, accessories or repairs, the places to head for are **Wisma Saberka** (Jln Tun Abang Haji Openg, CPL Bus K8 or K10-A) or **One TJ Shopping Mall** (Jln Setia Raja, CPL Bus K8).

Malls & Supermarkets

Plaza Merdeka, 88 Jln Pearl, is the most conveniently located mall for general shopping. Kuching's newest mall, located directly opposite Padang Merdeka, it offers a host of designer outlets, a Parkson department store, a well-stocked supermarket, dozens of dining outlets (including all the fast-



food favourites) and a popular food court. There's even an indoor paintball arcade on the top floor!

The smaller city centre malls include **Riverside Shopping Centre** (next to Riverside Majestic Hotel), **Sarawak Plaza** (next to Grand Margherita Hotel), **Hills** (Jln Bukit Mata) and **Tun Jugah** (across the road from Sarawak Plaza). Other good places for bargain hunting are **Electra House** (next to the Covered Market), **Wisma Hopoh** (Jln P, Ramlie - good for shoes and eyewear) and **Wisma Satok** (Jln Satok). The **India Street** pedestrian area and nearby **Jln Gambier** are good for textiles, kitchenware and hardware. For imported foods and fresh meat, the **Ting & Ting Supermarket** (Jln Tabuan next to Borneo Hotel) is the best bet.

Further afield, the major shopping malls include **The Spring** and **ST3** on Jln Simpang Tiga, **Boulevard** on Jln Datuk Tawi Sli, **Hock Lee Centre** on Jln Datuk Abang Abdul Rahin and **City One** on Jln Song.

SPORTS & RECREATION

All the 4 & 5-star hotels have **fitness centres** with **tennis** courts. Riverside Majestic also has a squash court. There is a **public swimming pool** on Jln Padungan just past the Kuching City South Council office complex. Reservoir Park is a popular local **jogging** spot. **Riverside Superbowl** is a 24-lane bowling centre situated in the Riverside Complex. Damai Beach is the best area for **watersports** (jet-skiing, windsurfing, water-skiing) - see Damai and Santubong section for details.

If you are into **deep sea fishing**, Kuching is the ideal base, with excellent catches reported, mostly from Tanjung Datu at the western tip of Sarawak. For further details and to arrange trips, contact the Sarawak Anglers Association, Mr Alaric Soh, Tel: 014-6800000, Email: alaricsoh@gmail.com. For **freshwater fishing**, check with local tackle shops for venues, etc.



Golfers have a choice of courses. The 36-hole **Kelab Golf Sarawak** at Petra Jaya is strictly members only. Tel: 440966 for reciprocal membership details. The

quaintly named **Prison Golf Club** on Jln Penrissen has 9 holes, green fees RM 40/60, caddies RM 6, Tel: 617209. The Arnold Palmer designed **Damai Golf Course** at Santubong is described in the Damai and Santubong section. See page 12. For golfers wishing to avoid the tropical heat, the 18-hole **Hornbill Golf & Jungle Club** at Borneo Highlands Resort, 70 km from Kuching, is located at over 1,000 metres altitude. Tel: 019-8280790, www.borneohighlands.com.my.



Kayaking enthusiasts Ivy Chin and Jackson Chan offer a range of river **Kayaking Tours** in the wider Kuching area. Some of the most popular trips are on the upper reaches of the Sarawak River near Bau. Kayak down jungle streams and pass through

some stunning upcountry scenery, whilst catching a glimpse of the life of the local Bidayuh communities along the way. Contact Borneo Rainforest Trek & Kayak, Tel: 013-8048338, www.rainforestkayaking.com.

A number of local operators offer **adventure caving** and **rock climbing** trips (and combinations of both) in the Bau and Serian areas. These include one-day caving or climbing adventures and longer expeditions that combine caving, climbing, 4x4 treks, jungle walks and visits to Bidayuh villages. Beginner, intermediate and advanced level activities are offered and equipment and protective clothing are supplied. Many of the trips are suitable for beginners and do not require a high level of fitness. Contact Kuching Caving (www.kuchingcaving.com), Borneo Adventure, Borneo Experiences or CPH travel (see listings on page 28)

Sarawak is essentially pioneer territory when it comes to **Mountain Biking**. However, a few local riders have discovered some great trails just outside Kuching and further afield. If you want to link up with local riders, contact the **Kuching Bike Hash** (see below) or **WG Cycles**, 36A, Nam Meng Building, Ban Hock Road. Tel: 238239.

Kuching City Hash: If your idea of fun is running through humid jungle, getting covered in mud, sweat, bites and scratches (and enjoying a few drinks afterwards with your new friends), the Kuching Chapter of the **Hash House Harriers** would love to hear from you. Harriers (Men Only) Tue 5.30 pm, Harriettes (Ladies Only) Wed 5.30 pm, City Hash (Mixed) Sat 4.30 pm. Contact Polycarp Teo Sebom (Tel: 019 8871017) or Jennifer Yap (Tel: 411694). Cyclists should contact the **Kuching Bike Hash** (weekend rides only) at www.kbh.doturf.com.

Scuba Diving: Although Kuching is not yet developed as a diving destination (unlike Miri in Northeast Sarawak, gateway to the Luconia Shoals), there are a number of interesting dive sites within easy access of Kuching. For further details contact **CPH Travel** (Tel: 243708, www.cphtravel.com.my), **Kuching Scuba Centre** (Tel: 485335, www.kuchingscuba.com) or **Premier Dive & Scuba** (Tel: 012-8892336, www.wetwolfdive.com).

USEFUL INFORMATION

Banks & Money Changers: These centrally located banks and money changers handle both travellers cheques and cash. Most banks open Mon-Fri 9.30 am - 4 pm.

Alfa Millions Money Changer, Lower Ground Floor, Plaza Merdeka Mall.

Alliance Bank, 178 Jln Chan Chin Ann.

Ambank, Lower Ground Floor, Plaza Merdeka Mall

CIMB Bank, Wisma Bukit Mata Kuching, Jln Tunku Abdul Rahman.

Everrise Money Changer, Lot 199, Jln Padungan. Tel: 429354. Mon-Fri 10 am - 9 pm. Sat & Sun 10 am - 6 pm.

Hong Leong Bank, 122 Jln Song Thian Cheok.

Hong Xi Enterprise, Ground Floor, Tun Jugah.

HSBC Bank, Bangunan Binamas, off Padungan Road (near Cat Statue).

Majid & Sons Money Changer, 45 Jln India. Mon-Sat 9 am - 7.30 pm Sun 9 am - 3 pm.

Maybank, 13 Jln Tunku Abdul Rahman.

Mohamad Yahia & Sons, LGF3, Sarawak Plaza. 10 am - 9 pm (closed Friday lunchtime).

OUB Bank, 1 Jln Tun Haji Openg (corner of Main Bazaar).

Public Bank, 102 Jln Song Thian Cheok (behind Everrise).

RHB Bank, 256 Jln Padungan (Cat Statue roundabout).

Standard Chartered Bank, Wisma Bukit Mata Kuching, Jln Tunku Abdul Rahman.

Doctors, Dentists & Hospitals: The **Clinic** on Main Bazaar (opp. Chinese History Museum) is excellent, well equipped, and very experienced in dealing with tourists' ailments. There are a number of other good clinics around town. Consultation and simple medication is usually around RM 30-50. Names are not given for legal reasons. There are many good **dentists** in town, and their charges for both emergency and cosmetic work are low by world standards. **Sarawak General Hospital**, Jln Ong Kee Hui (Tel: 276666, CPL Bus K6, K8, K10A, K17, K18), has a first rate Accident and Emergency department - foreign visitors are charged RM50 for consultation. A cash deposit, insurance card or credit card will be required for in-patient treatment - prices are low by international standards.

Kuching's private hospitals are staffed by specialists and have a good reputation both locally and internationally. They include **Normah Medical Centre**, across river on Jln Tun Datuk Patinggi (Tel: 440055, CPL Bus K5), **Timberland Medical Centre** at 3rd Mile Commercial Centre (Tel: 234991, CPL Bus K3, K6, K10A, K18, B2), and **Kuching Specialist Hospital** at Jln Setia Raja, Stutong (Tel: 365777, CPL Bus K8). If you prefer a traditional approach there are **Chinese Physicians** and **Traditional Massage Centres** located all over town. Prices of **prescription eyewear** (both glasses and contact lenses) are a fraction of those charged in many other countries, whilst the practitioners are of international standard.

Pharmacies: Many of Kuching's smaller pharmacies have been take over by major drugstore chains whose

Sarawak Craft Council

Round Tower, Lot 32, Section 25, KTLD,
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Rumah Hijau@Riveredge
Lot 16, Ground Floor, Riveredge Commercial Centre
Jalan Merdeka 93050 Petra Jaya, Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia
Tel: 0109795147 Email: rhriver@gmail.com

pharmacists only work certain hours. However, there are still a few who are well stocked, helpful and always have a pharmacist in attendance. The best bet in the city centre is **UMH Pharmacy**, Jln Song Thian Cheok (opp. MAS, Mon - Sat 9 am to 6 pm. If UMH are closed, **JOY Pharmacy**, **Central Park Pharmacy** and **Ee Syn Pharmacy** are located in the same row of shops at 3rd Mile (a.k.a. Central Park) Commercial Centre and take turns to remain open until 11 pm daily. CPL Bus K3, K6, K10A, K18, B2.

Places of Worship: The Department of Islamic Affairs can provide contact details for mosques and prayer times throughout the state. Tel. 429811. Christian churches conduct services in a number of local languages. Phone for details.

Anglican, St. Thomas's Cathedral, Jln McDougall. Tel: 240187.

Baha'i Centre, 1 Nanas Garden, Nanas Road. Tel: 252009.

Borneo Evangelical Church (SIB) Lorong 8, Jln Laksamana Cheng Ho, Tel: 425212.

Buddhist, Sarawak Buddhist Association, Jln Tun Razak. Tel: 366786.

First Baptist Church, Jln Kampung Sungai Tapang (nr Airport). Tel: 014-2645848.

Hindu, Sri Maha Mariamman Temple, 11/2 Mile, Jln Rock, Tel: 257855, 240227. Sri Srinivasagar Kaliaman Temple, Jln Ban Hock.

Kuching Mosque, Jln Masjid.

Methodist, Trinity Methodist Church, 57 Jln Ellis. Tel: 411044.

Roman Catholic, St. Joseph's Cathedral, Jln Tun Abang Hj. Openg. Tel: 423424.

Seventh Day Adventist Church, 3rd Mile, Rock Road/BatuKawa. Tel: 242340.

Sikh Temple, Jln Masjid. Tel: 412850

State Mosque, Jln Bako, Petra Jaya.

Post Office and Telephone Facilities: The main post office is on Jln Tun Haji Openg. Open Mon - Sat 8 am-6 pm, Sun 10 am - 1 pm. From outside the Kuching area, the dialling code is 082. Malaysia's country prefix is 60. To avoid expensive roaming charges, prepaid (or pay-as-you-go) SIM cards for cellular phones are on sale almost everywhere - IC or passport required.

Internet Access: Most hotels and guest houses offer Internet access, and many restaurants and pubs have Wifi for customers. Charges may apply.

Useful Telephone Numbers

Tourist Police Unit
(Kuching Waterfront, 8am-midnight) 250522

Central Police Station
(Opp. Padang Merdeka) 241222

Emergency (Police/Ambulance), Tel: 999 (Tel: 112 from mobile phone)

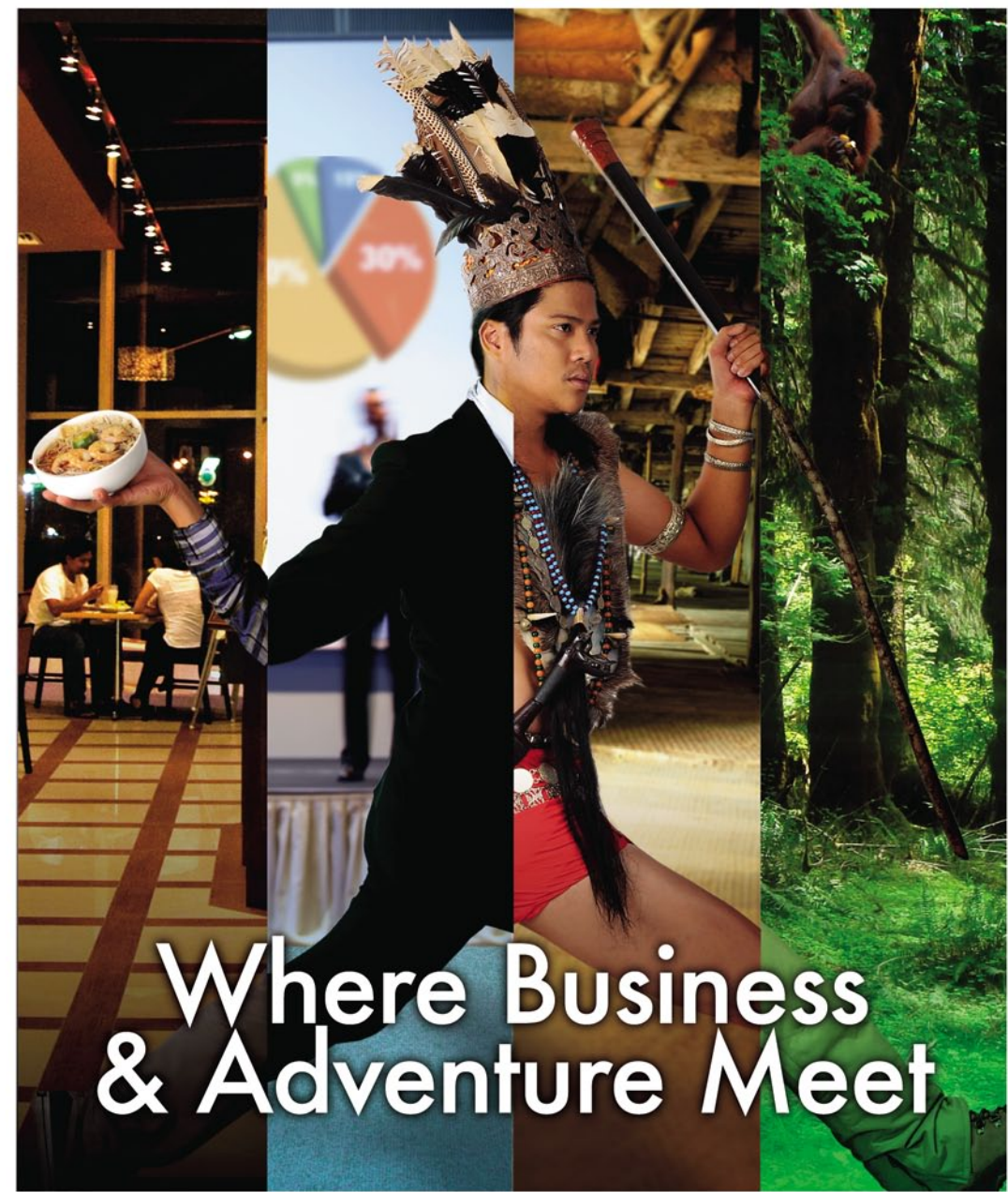
Fire & Rescue, Tel: 994 (Tel: 112 from mobile phone)

Immigration, Federal Complex, Simpang Tiga (CPL Bus K8) 245661

Brunei Consulate, 325 Lorong Seladah. 456515

Chinese Consulate, Jln Ong Tiang Swee. 240344

Indonesian Consulate, Jln Stutong. 460734



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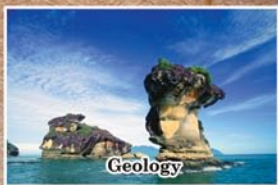
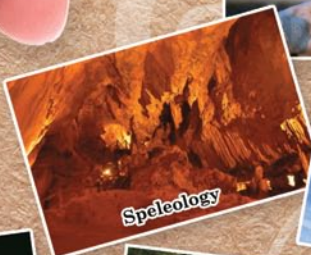
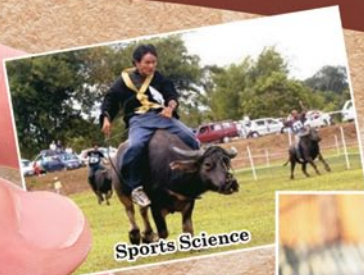
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