

A traditional Sarawak longhouse



Malaysia: Rainforest Festival

Borneo

8 days – July 9-16 2012 (ex-Kuching)

13 days – July 9-21 2012 (ex-Kuching)

While mainland Malaysia tries to mimic the US at the expense of its local culture, Sarawak, on the northern coast of Borneo, retains a strong cultural identity and is home to a diverse range of indigenous ethnic groups. The island has some of the world's richest rainforest – packed with tropical flora and fauna, including hornbills and orangutang. Trekking here is a fantastic experience and it also helps reinforce the value of the environment which is seriously threatened by logging and deforestation.

In July the town of Kuching plays host to the annual Rainforest World Music Festival, the best in the region. It's a great place to hear local artists as well as big international names. It takes place in the Sarawak Cultural Village, a living museum featuring traditional longhouses and dwellings of the various ethnic groups. Many of the workshops and informal concerts take place inside these longhouses. Listen to the gorgeous sound of the plucked *sapé*, the most beautiful of the indigenous instruments. While all around the rainforest forms a magnificent visual and aural backdrop.

In addition to the Rainforest Festival, our eight-day tour offers the chance to get a taste of the interior with an overnight trip to Bako National Park. However, for those who really want to experience the rainforest, our 13-day trip provides another five nights in Sarawak, offering time to take a couple of trips into the interior. Options include trekking in Mulu National Park, a river cruise, a caving trip or an overnight stay in a longhouse, a very warm and sociable experience. The choice is yours. There's also time to just relax in Kuching, a fascinating city in its own right, and watch a very different world go by.

To reserve your place

Please read the booking conditions on the website and contact the reservations office on:

+44 (0)20 8505 2582
or email: songlines@thegroupscompany.com

The Kuching Rainforest Festival – 8 days

Itinerary

Day 1 Mon Today we join our *Songlines* Travel Leader at our hotel in Kuching. After a long flight, and given that Kuching is tropical, hot and humid, the rest of the day is free to relax and settle in.

Day 2 Tues After breakfast we join our guide for a walking tour of downtown Kuching. We'll see the Cat statue (Kuching means 'cat' in the local language), and wander through the old part of the city. There are a number of markets to see – amongst them the spice market and the food market, before we visit the Sarawak Museum. After lunch we can opt to take an afternoon river cruise; a chance to see the city from the water. And in the evening there are some tasty bars and restaurants.

Day 3 Wed Today is left free for us to just wander the streets of this intriguing city; a chance to sit and watch the world go by. For those who want to explore, we have arranged an optional trip out of Kuching, to Bako National Park. Our trip starts with a drive of about half an hour, then a boat ride of about 30 minutes, to the Park. Although not far from Kuching the park is one of the best places in Borneo to see wildlife. Proboscis monkeys, long tail macaques, wild boar and monitor lizards are commonly spotted amidst rainforest ranging from mangroves to swamp vegetation. There is time for a late afternoon walk along one of the marked park trails, before dinner and overnight at the Forest Lodge or Hostel.

Day 4 Thu For those in Kuching, another day to just laze and chill out in the tropical heat. For those waking up in Bako, there is an easy and optional morning hike before an early afternoon return to Kuching.

Days 5-7 Fri-Sun On Friday the Rainforest Festival gets under way. For these next three days we leave Kuching for a journey of about an hour to the festival site, a stone's throw away from the quiet beach area of the Santubong Peninsula. Afternoons at the festival feature workshops and lectures, and quite often jam sessions. This is a great opportunity to hear local musicians – playing, for instance, the beautiful *sapé*. As evening approaches, the main focus moves to the stage by the lake for the evening concert. Each day in the late evening we head back to Kuching and our hotel.

Day 8 Mon After breakfast, with the festival over, our tour ends. Time to head for the airport and the flight back home.

The Kuching Rainforest Festival and the Interior of Borneo – 13 days

Day 1-7 Mon-Sun As above.

Days 8-12 Mon-Fri Our five additional days in Sarawak offer the opportunity to spend a lazy few days just chilling out and living life at the pace of this tropical river port surrounded by jungle. However, there is a lot to see beyond Kuching city, and so we have arranged a number of optional excursions which can be taken during our additional time here – see details below. After these optional trips there's a chance to relax before the journey home.

Day 13 Sat After breakfast, our tour ends. Time to head for the airport and the flight home.

The air holiday packages in this brochure are ATOL protected by the Civil Aviation Authority. Our ATOL number is 9349. Please see our booking conditions for more information. ATOL protection does not apply to all holiday and travel services in this brochure. All non flight inclusive packages for UK customers are also protected by a TOPP policy.



A workshop held in one of the longhouses

Optional three days visit to Mulu National Park – days 8-10, Mon-Wed

Day 8 Mon After an early morning flight from Kuching to Mulu airstrip we check into our accommodation at the Royal Mulu Resort, before a walk through primary rainforest to visit Deer Cave, the world's largest single passage cave. We move on to Lang's Cave, with its amazing limestone formations, before returning by torchlight to our accommodation. Dinner is included.

Day 9 Tues This morning we visit Wind Cave, and then Clearwater Cave with its rare orchids and pitcher plants. Time then for a picnic lunch and a swim, before returning to our accommodation. Today is on a full board basis.

Day 10 Wed After breakfast we have time at leisure until the transfer to the airstrip for our flight back to Kuching.

Optional one day caving trip

Day 11 After breakfast we drive about an hour to the village where we meet our guides and have our safety briefing. Entering the caves we find cave paintings, streams and waterfalls so large that some ceilings are 100 metres above us. After a day's exploring, and with time for a swim, we head back to Kuching.

Optional journey on the Lamanak river to an overnight at an Iban Longhouse

Day 1 We leave Kuching for a drive of some four hours through rural Sarawak, passing pepper gardens, cocoa and rubber plantations, rice fields and oil palm groves. En route we stop at the colourful market in Serian, where edible ferns, bamboo shoots and tropical fruits are on display. We take a longboat journey of about an hour through tropical rainforest to reach an Iban longhouse. The rest of the day is spent relaxing on the *ruai* (communal veranda) and spending time with the Iban people with whom we are staying. We enjoy some local rice wine and dinner in the longhouse.

Day 2 After breakfast, a variety of activities are available, including a blowpipe demonstration, a short jungle walk or a farm visit on the outskirts of the village. Late morning we depart down river by longboat and, with lunch en route, continue by coach to Kuching and our hotel.



Sapé player, Lan E-Tuyang

Tour costs

We have designed these tours to give you the option of taking up an all-inclusive package which includes your air seats, or the option of making your own way there and then meeting up with the rest of your party at the first hotel.

8 day tour (ex-Kuching) July 9-16 2012

Tour Price £795 per person

Tour includes:

- 7 nights twin-share accommodation at a 4 star hotel in Kuching on a bed and breakfast basis
- entry to Rainforest Festival, sightseeing & transfers as listed
- services of our *Songlines* Travel Leader

Items not included: Single room supplement, travel insurance, visas, all meals with the exception of breakfast, gratuities and any items of a personal nature.

Single supplement: £269 per person.

10 day tour (ex-London) July 8-17 2012

Overnight flights to and from Borneo make this a 10 day tour ex-London and are available from £885 per person. Transfers from and to the airport in Kuching are included with flights purchased through *Songlines Music Travel*.

13 day tour (ex-Kuching) July 9-21 2012

Tour Price £995 per person

Tour includes:

- 12 nights twin-share accommodation at a 4 star hotel in Kuching on a bed and breakfast basis
- entry to Rainforest Festival, sightseeing & transfers as listed
- services of our *Songlines* Travel Leader from July 9-16

Items not included: Single room supplement, travel insurance, visas, all meals with the exception of breakfast, gratuities and any items of a personal nature.

Single supplement: £395 per person.

15 day tour (ex-London) July 8-22 2012

Overnight flights to and from Borneo make this a 10 day tour ex-London and are available from £885 per person. Transfers from and to the airport in Kuching are included with flights purchased through *Songlines Music Travel*.

Optional tours

Kuching afternoon river cruise

£60 per person. Price includes pick up and drop off from your hotel in Kuching, boat trip, the services of an English speaking guide.

Bako National Park 2 day/1 night excursion

£125 per person based on two people sharing a twin room. Price includes pick up and transfers from Kuching, boat transfers, entrance fees, one night in the National Park in a lodge or hostel, the services of an English speaking guide.

Mulu National Park 3 day/2 night excursion

£515 per person based on two people sharing a twin room. Price includes transfers to the airport, flights from Kuching to Mulu, two nights in a longhouse style hotel, meals as stated in the itinerary, the services of an English speaking guide. Please note this tour requires domestic flights from Kuching to Mulu airstrip. These can be booked as part of the package and the current cost for these flights is £210 per person.

Kuching 1 day caving excursion

£140 per person. Cost includes transfer to the caves.

Lamanak River and Iban Longhouse 2 day excursion

£230 per person based on twin share accommodation.