

Sabah Wildlife Express: Sepilok Orangutans & Kinabatangan River

Prepared by TourGrids



Destination
Malaysia



Duration
4 Nights 5 Days



Starting from
Rs. 64,500 / person

ITINERARY ROUTE

✈ Sandakan · 1N

✈ Kinabatangan River (Sukau) · 2N

✈ Kota Kinabalu · 1N

<https://tourgrids.com/packages/malaysia/malaysia-4-nights-5-days-package-1175>

Overview

A short, high-yield Borneo wildlife trip built around the two places in Sabah where sightings are most reliable. At Sepilok you watch rehabilitated Bornean orangutans at the morning feeding platform and meet rescued sun bears at the adjoining Bornean Sun Bear Conservation Centre. From there the route moves to the lower Kinabatangan, Sabah's longest river, where dawn and dusk boat cruises pass proboscis monkeys, long-tailed macaques, oriental pied and rhinoceros hornbills, crocodiles, and, with luck, Bornean pygmy elephants that move along the floodplain in herds.

Stays are in a riverside jungle lodge with fan or air-conditioned chalets, plus a night in Kota Kinabalu for the flight home. Best months are February to April and July to September, when rainfall drops and river levels suit cruising. Daytime temperature stays around 28 to 32 degrees. Suitable for first-time Borneo travellers, photographers and families with children above eight.

✓ What's Included

- ✓ 4 nights accommodation: 1 night Sandakan hotel, 2 nights Kinabatangan jungle lodge, 1 night Kota Kinabalu hotel
- ✓ Daily breakfast, plus all meals at the Kinabatangan lodge (4 breakfasts, 3 lunches, 3 dinners)
- ✓ Airport transfers and all land transfers in air-conditioned vehicle
- ✓ Sepilok Orangutan Rehabilitation Centre and Bornean Sun Bear Conservation Centre visits
- ✓ Rainforest Discovery Centre canopy walkway
- ✓ Four Kinabatangan River boat cruises (dawn and dusk)
- ✓ Guided night jungle walk at Sukau
- ✓ English-speaking naturalist guide throughout the Kinabatangan section
- ✓ All applicable taxes

✗ Not Included

- ✗ International and domestic flights (Kuala Lumpur to Sandakan, Kota Kinabalu to Kuala Lumpur)
- ✗ Malaysia eNTRI/visa fees and travel insurance
- ✗ Camera and video permit fees at wildlife centres
- ✗ Meals not specified, drinks, laundry
- ✗ Optional Gomantong Caves entry and Turtle Islands add-on
- ✗ Tips to guides, boatmen and drivers
- ✗ Anything not listed under inclusions

Day-by-Day Itinerary

Day

1

Arrive Sandakan & Sepilok Orangutan Afternoon Feeding

Arrive at Sandakan airport and transfer 40 minutes to Sepilok. Attend the 3 pm feeding session at the Sepilok Orangutan Rehabilitation Centre, where semi-wild orangutans come to the platform, then walk across to the Bornean Sun Bear Conservation Centre to see the world's smallest bear species from raised viewing decks. If time allows, climb the 28-metre tower at the Rainforest Discovery Centre for canopy views over lowland dipterocarp forest. Check in to your Sandakan hotel and have dinner at the seafront.

Day

2

Transfer to Kinabatangan & First River Cruise

After breakfast drive around two and a half hours through oil palm country to Sukau on the lower Kinabatangan. Check in to your riverside lodge and take lunch. The late-afternoon boat cruise heads into quieter tributaries such as the Menanggul, prime habitat for proboscis monkeys settling into riverside trees for the night, plus silvered langurs, macaques and hornbills returning to roost. After dinner join a guided night walk on the lodge boardwalk to look for kingfishers, civets, tree frogs and stick insects.

Day

3

Dawn and Dusk Cruises on the Kinabatangan

Set out at first light when the river mist is still lifting and wildlife activity is at its peak. Mornings are the best time for Bornean pygmy elephants along the banks, storm's storks, crocodiles and eight species of hornbill. Return for breakfast and rest through the hot middle of the day. Optional visit to the Gomantong Caves, a swiftlet nest cave with a large bat population. A second cruise goes out before sunset, followed by dinner and stargazing from the lodge jetty.

Day

4

Morning Cruise, Drive to Kota Kinabalu

One final dawn cruise, then breakfast and check out. Drive west across Sabah to Kota Kinabalu, about six hours with stops, or take the short flight from Sandakan if upgraded. On arrival check in and spend the evening at the Filipino Market and the waterfront, where the sunset over the South China Sea is the city's signature view. Indian and halal restaurants are easily available around Gaya Street for dinner.

Day

5

Kota Kinabalu Departure

After breakfast, visit the Sabah Museum or shop for tribal crafts and Sabah tea at Gaya Street before checking out. Transfer to Kota Kinabalu International Airport for your onward flight. Travellers with a late flight can add a half-day trip to Manukan Island in Tunku Abdul Rahman Marine Park for snorkelling over reef fish and clownfish, subject to availability.

? Frequently Asked Questions

? What is the best time to visit Malaysia from India?

December to February is the most reliable window, with drier weather in Kuala Lumpur, Penang and Langkawi and daytime temperatures around 31–33°C. March to May stays warm and works well if you want lower crowds. The west coast (Langkawi, Penang) gets heavy rain from September to early November, while the east coast islands like Perhentian and Redang shut down roughly from November to February during the northeast monsoon. If you are heading to Borneo for Sabah's diving or Mount Kinabalu, aim for March to September. Chinese New Year (January or February) and Hari Raya bring festive energy but also higher hotel rates and packed transport.

? How much does a Malaysia trip cost from India per person?

A 6-night Malaysia package from India typically costs Rs 65,000 to Rs 95,000 per person on twin sharing, covering return flights, 3–4 star hotels, airport transfers, breakfast and key sightseeing. Budget travellers doing it independently can manage Rs 45,000 to Rs 55,000 by booking AirAsia or Batik Air fares early and staying in Bukit Bintang budget hotels. Mid-range daily spend runs about Rs 3,500–5,000 covering meals, Grab rides and entry tickets. Genting cable car, Petronas Twin Towers observation deck and Langkawi Sky Bridge each cost roughly Rs 700–1,900. Luxury island resorts in Langkawi push the total past Rs 1.5 lakh per person.

? Do Indians need a visa for Malaysia?

Indian passport holders currently enjoy visa-free entry to Malaysia for stays up to 30 days, a facility Malaysia extended for Indian and Chinese nationals from December 2023. You must complete the Malaysia Digital Arrival Card (MDAC) online within three days before arrival, which is free. Carry proof of return or onward ticket, confirmed hotel bookings and sufficient funds, as immigration officers do check these. Your passport should have at least six months validity. Policy extensions are announced periodically, so verify the current status on the Immigration Department of Malaysia website or with your tour operator before booking non-refundable flights.

? **How do I reach Malaysia from India?**

Direct flights to Kuala Lumpur International Airport operate from Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Kochi, Thiruvananthapuram, Kolkata and Ahmedabad on Malaysia Airlines, AirAsia X, Batik Air Malaysia, IndiGo and Air India Express. Flying time is around 4 hours 30 minutes from Chennai and Bengaluru, and about 5 hours 30 minutes from Delhi. Return fares usually sit between Rs 18,000 and Rs 32,000 depending on season. Penang has direct connections from Chennai on some carriers. For Langkawi, Kota Kinabalu or Kuching, take a domestic hop from KLIA, which takes an hour or so and costs Rs 3,000–6,000 when booked in advance.

? **How many days are enough for a Malaysia trip?**

Six to seven nights suits most first-time Indian travellers. A practical split is three nights in Kuala Lumpur covering Petronas Twin Towers, Batu Caves, Merdeka Square and a day trip to Genting Highlands or Putrajaya, followed by three nights in Langkawi for the cable car, island hopping and beaches. If you prefer heritage and food, swap Langkawi for Penang and spend two nights exploring George Town, Kek Lok Si and Penang Hill. Adding Malacca needs one extra night. Sabah or Sarawak for orangutans and diving deserves a separate four-night extension. Anything under five nights leaves you rushing between airports rather than enjoying the destinations.

? **Is Malaysia safe for Indian tourists and solo travellers?**

Malaysia is among the safer Southeast Asian destinations for Indian travellers, including women and solo visitors. Violent crime against tourists is uncommon; the practical risks are pickpocketing and bag snatching in crowded areas like Petaling Street, Bukit Bintang and Chow Kit, and occasional taxi overcharging, which you avoid by using the Grab app. Malaysia has strict drug laws with severe penalties, so never carry parcels for anyone. Dress modestly when visiting mosques and in conservative states like Kelantan and Terengganu. Tap water is treated but stick to bottled water. Save the tourist police number 03-2149 6590 and keep digital copies of your passport and MDAC confirmation.

? **Is vegetarian and Indian food easily available in Malaysia?**

Yes, easily. Malaysia has a large Indian-origin population, and Kuala Lumpur's Brickfields (Little India) is packed with South Indian vegetarian restaurants serving banana leaf meals, dosa and thali for Rs 250–500. Jalan Masjid India and Bangsar have more options, including Gujarati and North Indian places. Penang's Little India in George Town and Ipoh also serve familiar food. Halal certification is widespread, so Muslim travellers from India have no difficulty. Do try local vegetarian-friendly dishes like roti canai with dal, nasi lemak (ask without anchovies), cendol and Nyonya kuih. In Langkawi and island resorts, Indian food is limited, so inform your hotel about dietary needs at booking.

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