

Borneo Beach & Reef: Kota Kinabalu, Semporna & Kuala Lumpur

Prepared by TourGrids



Destination
Malaysia



Duration
8 Nights 9 Days



Starting from
Rs. 1,32,500 / person

ITINERARY ROUTE

✈ Kuala Lumpur · 2N

✈ Kota Kinabalu · 3N

✈ Semporna · 3N

<https://tourgrids.com/packages/malaysia/malaysia-8-nights-9-days-package-1182>

Overview

Sabah in Malaysian Borneo holds the country's most serious reef country, and this eight-night route covers both the easy island beaches of Kota Kinabalu and the world-class water around Semporna. From Kota Kinabalu you take boats into Tunku Abdul Rahman Marine Park for Manukan, Sapi and Mamutik islands, watch sunset over the South China Sea from Tanjung Aru and visit the Mari Mari cultural village. The second leg flies to Tawau and drives to Semporna for island trips to Sibuan, Mantabuan and Mandul in the Tun Sakaran Marine Park, plus a day at Sipadan-adjacent Mabul for snorkelling or diving. The trip closes with two nights in Kuala Lumpur for the Petronas Towers, Batu Caves and shopping. Best months are March to October. Sipadan permits are limited and must be booked well ahead through licensed operators.

✓ What's Included

- ✓ 2 nights Kuala Lumpur, 3 nights Kota Kinabalu and 3 nights Semporna area with daily breakfast
- ✓ All airport and jetty transfers on private or shared basis as specified
- ✓ Tunku Abdul Rahman Marine Park island hopping (Manukan and Sapi) with park fees
- ✓ Mari Mari Cultural Village visit with lunch
- ✓ Semporna full day island hopping to Tun Sakaran Marine Park with snorkelling gear and lunch
- ✓ One day trip to Mabul with snorkelling
- ✓ Kuala Lumpur half day city tour with Batu Caves

✗ Not Included

- ✗ International flights and domestic Malaysian flights (KL to Kota Kinabalu, Kota Kinabalu to Tawau, Tawau to KL)
- ✗ Malaysia eVisa fees and Sabah entry formalities
- ✗ Scuba diving courses, Sipadan permits and dive equipment hire
- ✗ Lunches and dinners other than those specified
- ✗ Petronas Towers deck tickets, tips, insurance and personal expenses

Day-by-Day Itinerary

Day

1

Arrive Kota Kinabalu & Tanjung Aru Sunset

Arrive at Kota Kinabalu International Airport, usually via Kuala Lumpur, and transfer to your hotel in the city centre. Kota Kinabalu is compact and walkable, with the waterfront a short distance from most hotels. In the late afternoon head to Tanjung Aru beach for the sunset that Sabah is known for, with the marine park islands sitting on the horizon. Dinner at the Filipino Market food stalls, where grilled fish and prawns are priced by weight.

Day

2

Tunku Abdul Rahman Marine Park Islands

Boat out from Jesselton Point to Tunku Abdul Rahman Marine Park, only 15 to 20 minutes offshore. Spend the day between Manukan Island, which has the best swimming beach and a good house reef, and Sapi Island, popular for snorkelling and the sea walking and zipline activities across to Gaya Island. Snorkelling gear is provided and the shallow water suits non-swimmers with life jackets. Lunch on the island. Return to the city by evening and walk the Kota Kinabalu waterfront.

Day

3

Mari Mari Cultural Village & Free Beach Time

Morning transfer to Mari Mari Cultural Village on the city outskirts for a walk through replica longhouses of the Bajau, Rungus, Lundayeh, Murut and Dusun communities, with bamboo cooking, blowpipe demonstrations and a lunch of local dishes. Afternoon free for the resort beach at Tanjung Aru, a spa session or shopping at Suria Sabah and the handicraft market. Those who want an extra activity can add a Klias river cruise for proboscis monkeys and fireflies at their own cost.

Day

4

Fly to Tawau & Drive to Semporna

Morning flight from Kota Kinabalu to Tawau, about 50 minutes, then a road transfer of roughly 90 minutes to Semporna town, the gateway to the Celebes Sea reefs. Check into your hotel or a water village resort. Semporna is a working fishing town, so the evening is best spent at the waterfront seafood restaurants where you pick your catch from tanks. Confirm your island trip timings and permit paperwork with the operator tonight.

Day

5

Tun Sakaran Marine Park Island Hopping

Full day boat trip into the Tun Sakaran Marine Park. Stops usually cover Sibuan Island with its sandbar and lone palm cluster, Mantabuan for clear shallow reef, and Mandul or Maiga where Bajau Laut sea nomad families live in stilt houses. Snorkelling here brings up giant clams, cuttlefish, reef fish and the occasional turtle. Lunch is served on one of the islands. Bring reef-safe sunscreen, a hat and a dry bag, since shade on the sandbars is limited.

Day

6

Mabul Island Day Trip

Boat out to Mabul, about 45 minutes from Semporna and the base island for Sipadan. Snorkel the shallow reefs and artificial reef structures around the water bungalows, where frogfish, turtles and schooling batfish are regular sightings. Certified divers can arrange dives at Mabul or Kapalai, and Sipadan permits can be requested in advance at extra cost. Walk through the Mabul village and stilt settlement, then return to Semporna in the late afternoon.

Day

7

Semporna to Kuala Lumpur

Free morning in Semporna for a slow breakfast or last snorkel session, then road transfer to Tawau airport for the flight to Kuala Lumpur, usually two and a half to three hours. Arrive at KLIA and transfer to your hotel in Bukit Bintang. Evening free for the Jalan Alor food street, the Bukit Bintang malls or the KLCC fountain show. This is a good night for Indian food, with Little India in Brickfields a short Grab ride away.

Day

8

Kuala Lumpur City Tour & Batu Caves

Half day city tour covering Merdeka Square, the National Mosque and Islamic Arts Museum area, the Petronas Twin Towers and KLCC Park, and Batu Caves with its 272 painted steps and Lord Murugan statue. Afternoon free for shopping at Suria KLCC, Pavilion or Central Market for pewter, batik and chocolates. Optional evening at the KL Tower deck or a Klang Valley Indian dinner. Pack tonight for the flight home.

Day

9

Departure from Kuala Lumpur

Check out after breakfast and transfer to Kuala Lumpur International Airport for your flight back to India. If your flight is in the evening, keep the morning for the Aquaria KLCC, the Bird Park at Lake Gardens or a final round of shopping at Mitsui Outlet Park near the airport. Allow three hours before departure for international check-in and duty-free.

? 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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