

Borneo

Primates of the Ancient Forest

May 3 to 17, 2025



Orangutan

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SAFARI OVERVIEW

Discover the **untamed beauty of Borneo**, home to ancient rainforests, thriving ecosystems, and some of the **world's rarest wildlife**, including **orangutans**, **Bornean pygmy elephants**, and **proboscis monkeys**. Begin your journey at a **renowned orangutan rehabilitation sanctuary**, where you'll witness these **gentle primates** feeding, playing, and swinging through the treetops.

Ascend into the rainforest canopy for breathtaking views, spotting **exotic birds like hornbills and kingfishers gliding through the dense jungle**. Cruise along the **legendary Kinabatangan River**, one of Borneo's **best wildlife corridors**, where you may see **pygmy elephants** bathing along the riverbanks and **proboscis monkeys** leaping between mangrove trees.

Embark on thrilling jungle treks and guided game drives, uncovering Borneo’s hidden wildlife treasures, from **Bornean gibbons and flying lemurs to elusive clouded leopards**. Experience the rich biodiversity of this tropical paradise, where pristine rainforests, serene waterways, and remarkable wildlife encounters make for an unforgettable adventure.

WHY CHOOSE THIS TRIP?

- **Unforgettable Wildlife Encounters:** Spot iconic species like **orangutans, pygmy elephants, and proboscis monkeys** in their natural habitats. The **Bornean Sun Bear Center** is also a great place to see the smallest bears in the world.
- **River Cruises:** The **Kinabatangan River** provides a perfect setting for sunrise, dusk, and nocturnal cruises where you’ll have close-up views of **incredible wildlife**, including birds and river creatures.
- **Natural Wonders:** The **evening bat exodus** from the **Gomantong Caves** is a true spectacle—millions of bats emerging at dusk is a sight you won’t forget.
- **Eco-Friendly Accommodations:** Stay in **eco-lodges** that balance comfort with a strong commitment to preserving the surrounding ecosystems, ensuring that your adventure helps sustain the natural wonders you're exploring.

LEADER: Charlie Ryan.

DAYS: 15, including estimated travel time.

GROUP SIZE: 12.

COST: \$10,750 per person, double occupancy, not including airfare (except for one-way flight from Lahad Datu to Kota Kinabalu), singles extra. See the *Costs* section on page 5.

TRANSPORTATION: Travel in open-air trucks that allow for wildlife viewing along the way. The river safaris are in private boats that are stable and wide, which are great for photography.

Date	Description	Accommodation	Meals
May 3–4	Travel to Sandakan, Sabah, Borneo.		
May 5	Welcome to Borneo. Arrive in Sandakan and enjoy a welcome dinner.	Sepilok Nature Resort, Kabili-Sepilok Forest Reserve	D
May 6	Explore Sepilok Nature Reserve. Explore this incredible virgin rainforest Reserve. Visit the Orangutan Sanctuary and also spot free-roaming orangutans.		B, L, D
May 7–9	Kinabatangan Adventure. Spend two full days of birding, jungle walks, and river safaris through the Kinabatangan Wildlife Sanctuary. Visit the Bornean Sun Bear Center. Explore nearby Gomantong Caves and watch the bat exodus cloud the sky.	Sukau Rainforest Lodge, near Kinabatangan Wildlife Sanctuary	B, L, D
May 10–11	Tabin Wildlife Reserve. Head to the Tabin Wildlife Reserve with afternoon and nighttime exploration and game drives. Hike to a mud volcano for stunning views of the surrounding forest.	Tabin Wildlife Resort, Tabin Wildlife Reserve	B, L, D

May 12–14	Sungai Kapur. Travel to Sungai Kapur and explore the undisturbed rainforest and its pristine, diverse ecosystems.	Utan Rainforest Lodge, Sungai Kapur	B, L, D
May 15	Final Trek and Kota Kinabalu. Relax on your final morning in Sungai Kapur before flying to Kota Kinabalu.	Hyatt Centric, Kota Kinabalu	B, L, D
May 16	Extension or departure. Continue on our Mount Kinabalu extension or fly home.		B
May 17	Arrive home.		

ENHANCE YOUR TRIP

- Continue your journey on our [Mount Kinabalu](#) extension from May 16 to 19, 2025. Experience the rich tropical lowland, the hill rainforest, and the tropical mountain forest in Kinabalu National Park. As you explore the diverse and beautiful scenery, you will have the opportunity to see a sampling of 326 bird species, including 18 Bornean endemics.

LEADER



Charlie Ryan

After signing up for a volunteer program in Indonesia in 2008, Charlie was re-routed to Sabah, Borneo where he helped set up community initiative programs for the Abai village. He has resided in Sabah ever since. Charlie guides for the National Geographic Adventure groups in Borneo and helps train nature guides, providing them with first-hand knowledge and experience. He is also an avid photographer, which compliments his passion for wildlife, culture, and travel.

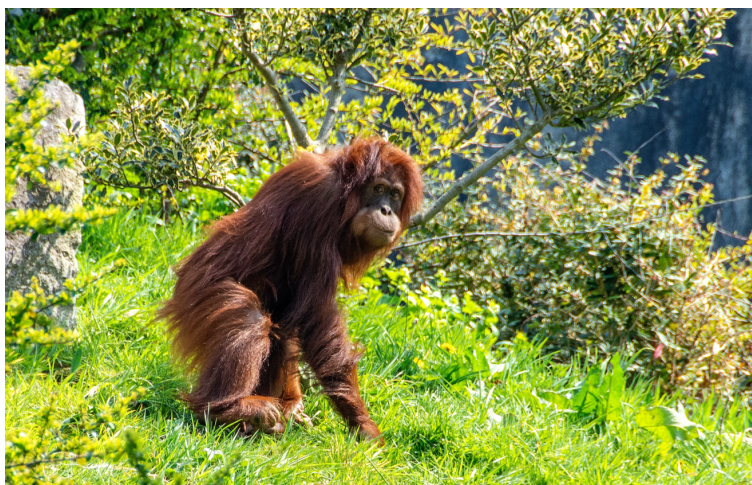
DETAILED ITINERARY

May 3–4 ~ Travel to Sandakan, Sabah, Borneo

Begin your adventure by traveling to **Sabah, Borneo**, an island renowned for its rich biodiversity and untouched rainforests. Fly into Sandakan and prepare for an unforgettable journey into the heart of **Borneo's wildlife**.

May 5 ~ Arrive in Borneo

Arrive in Sandakan, Sabah, and get transferred to your **eco-lodge** nestled in the forest just outside the city. After check-in, your expert guide will brief you on the exciting activities ahead. Enjoy a welcome dinner and, for those interested, join an



Orangutan

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optional **night walk** to discover the fascinating **nocturnal wildlife** of **Borneo's rainforests**. For those arriving earlier, extra nights and alternative airport transfers are available.

May 6 ~ Sepilok Forest Reserve

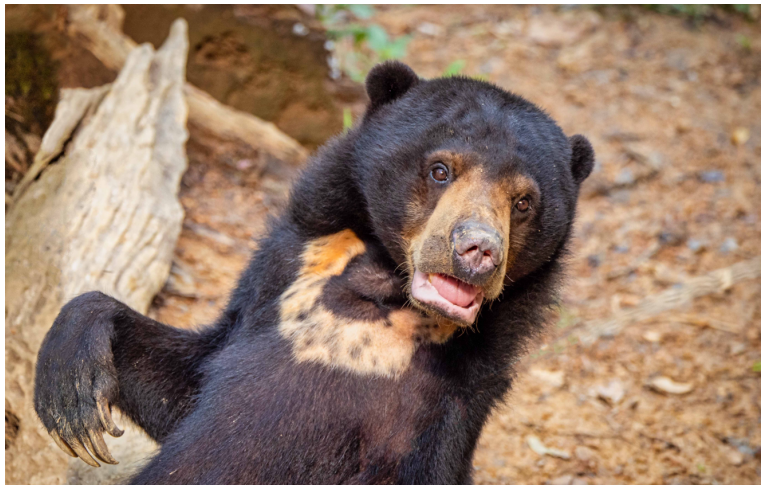
Explore the **Sepilok Forest Reserve**, a vital haven for **Borneo wildlife**. Take an early morning canopy walk in search of **endemic birds** and mammals. Visit the **Sepilok Orangutan Rehabilitation Centre**, a key conservation facility, to see **orangutans** feed and interact in the wild. Experience both day and night treks through the forest to observe species like the **giant red flying squirrels**, known for their incredible aerial acrobatics.



Black and Yellow Broadbill
© Grace Chen

May 7-9 ~ Kinabatangan River and Wildlife Sanctuary

Embark on an optional dawn **birdwatching walk** before visiting the **Bornean Sun Bear Conservation Center**, where you'll meet the world's smallest bears and learn about their conservation. Next, head to the **Kinabatangan River**, home to one of the highest concentrations of wildlife in Borneo. After settling into your lodge, embark on a **dusk river cruise** to search for **orangutans**, **proboscis monkeys**, **slow lorises**, **hornbills**, and more.



Sun Bear
© Grace Chen

Over the next few days, enjoy early morning river cruises to experience the **sunrise over Kinabatangan River** and witness the region's breathtaking natural beauty. Trek through the jungle and engage with an **orangutan expert** to learn more about these iconic primates. Visit **Gomantong Caves**, where you'll witness a **bat exodus** with over one million bats emerging at dusk. Join a **nocturnal cruise** to spot **night-active wildlife** along the riverbanks.

May 10–11 ~ Tabin Wildlife Reserve

Drive to the **Tabin Wildlife Reserve**, one of Borneo's most biodiverse regions, home to over 220 species of birds, **wild banteng cattle**, and 10 primate species. Experience an off-road adventure in a 4x4 vehicle to spot elusive creatures like **leopard cats**, **marbled cats**, and **binturong bearcats**. Participate in a morning trek to the **mud volcano**, a natural salt lick that attracts a variety of wildlife. Climb an observation tower to enjoy panoramic views of the surrounding rainforest, then meet the **Borneo Rhino Alliance** to learn about **Sumatran rhino conservation**. Finish your day with night game drives to search for nocturnal wildlife.

May 12–14 ~ Sungai Kapur

Travel to **Sungai Kapur's Virgin Jungle Preserve**, where you'll encounter unique wildlife, including **gibbons**, **hornbills**, and **endemic bird species**. During guided hikes, observe these creatures in their natural habitats, then cruise the rivers to spot **flying foxes**, **dolphins**, and stunning sunsets over the **estuary**. As night falls, join safari drives and walks to observe **nocturnal wildlife** like **civets**, **leopard cats**, and **moonrats**. Explore **mangrove forests** and photograph Borneo's rare **birdlife**, soaking in the beauty of this vibrant ecosystem.

May 15 ~ Kota Kinabalu

On your final morning in Sungai Kapur, relax at the lodge before traveling to Lahad Datu (a 2.5-hour drive on dirt track) for your flight to **Kota Kinabalu** (a 50 minute flight). After checking into your hotel, join your fellow travelers for a celebratory dinner, reflecting on the incredible wildlife and natural wonders you've encountered.

May 16 ~ Join our [Mount Kinabalu](#) extension or fly home

Choose to continue on our [Mount Kinabalu](#) extension or take some time to relax before your flight home.

May 17 ~ Arrive home

Arrive back home, carrying unforgettable memories of Borneo's **wildlife safaris** and **rainforest adventures**.

COSTS (ALL COSTS ARE IN US DOLLARS)

Cost

Type	Cost per Person
Trip Cost, double occupancy	\$10,750
Single Supplement	\$1,650

Costs are per person, double occupancy, not including airfare (except for one-way flight from Lahad Datu to Kota Kinabalu), singles extra. See *Included* and *Not Included* sections for more details.

If you are a single traveler and would like a roommate, we will try to find someone for you, but if we cannot find someone, we may charge you a single supplement. Single rooms cost extra and are subject to availability.

Payment Schedule

Payment	Due Date	Amount per Person
Deposit	Due now to reserve your space	\$500
Final	November 25, 2024	Remaining Balance

Payments are due based on the schedule above. All reservations require a deposit to confirm reservation of your space.

Cancellations

Until the Final Payment due date, deposits are refundable except for a cancellation fee of \$150 per person, which can be applied toward another trip if reserved within six months of the cancelled trip's departure date. Cancellations are non-transferrable. No refunds are given after the Final Payment due date.

Included

- Carbon offsets for the duration of this trip.
- All leaders, transport, camera fees, park entry fees, and permits for all activities unless described as optional.
- One-way flight from Lahad Datu to Kota Kinabalu.
- Transfers from Sandakan Airport to Sepilok Nature Resort on May 5 and to Kota Kinabalu Airport on May 16.
- Accommodations for the nights of May 5 through May 15.
- Meals from dinner on May 5 through breakfast on May 16.
- Non-alcoholic bottled beverages throughout the trip.
- Snacks during travel between locations.
- Incidental tipping (porters, boatmen, drivers, hotel staff, etc.).
- Lectures from an orangutan expert and from the executive director of the Borneo Rhino Alliance.
- Private access to Sun Bear Centre.
- *Mammals of Borneo* book.
- Trip Planning Materials – information about flights, packing, entry and departure requirements, airport transfers, gratuities, etc.

Not Included

- Carbon offsets for your flights to/from this trip.
- All airfare (except flights listed as included), airport and departure taxes, and excess baggage fees. Airfare is approximately \$1,200 to \$2,400 from the US to Sabah, Borneo, and back to US from Kota Kinabalu, depending on origin.
- Passport and visa fees.
- COVID tests.
- Divergent airport transfers (arranged by us) and extra hotel nights.
- Gratuities – tipping is always discretionary. However, we suggest budgeting about \$350 total per participant.
- Emergency evacuation insurance and trip cancellation [insurance](#).
- Items of a personal nature such as laundry, telephone calls, medical costs or hospitalization, room service, alcoholic beverages, items not on the regular menu, etc. If you have special dietary needs, please indicate them on your Reservation Form.

SIGN UP

Please contact us first to check availability, reserve your space, and obtain a Reservation Form. To confirm your reservation, we require a deposit and signed form from each participant.

Cheesemans' Ecology Safaris

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WhatsApp: (408) 741-5330 | Skype: CheesemansEcologySafaris

Phone: (800) 527-5330 or (408) 741-5330

OTHER DETAILS

Climate

Temperatures vary greatly. The lower altitudes are often hot, while the forests and higher altitudes can be surprisingly cool. In May, the average daytime temperature in Borneo is in the mid 80s°F (28°C), with highs in the low 90s°F (33°C); the evenings get down into the mid 70s°F (24°C). There is very high humidity in the lowlands, and it will feel much warmer. Temperatures in the forest and at higher altitudes are only slightly cooler, averaging 60 to 80°F (16 to 26°C). Although May is considered the dry season, rain is still possible.

Fitness Level

Most wildlife viewing is done from vehicles, boats, and on foot. Walks to search for wildlife are generally 2-3 hours long and along relatively flat trails, gravel roads, and single-track trails that are undulating. You have the option to split into smaller groups based on desired level of exercise. In Sepilok, Tabin, and Danum, the heat and humidity can make a 3 to 5km walk feel like double the distance. Drinking water is imperative. Please contact us if you have any health concerns that may make this trip challenging.

Transportation

Travel in open-air trucks that allow for wildlife viewing along the way. The river safaris are in private boats that are stable and wide, which are great for photography.

Flights

Detailed logistical information is included in the Trip Planning Materials we will send you.

Flights you book

- Arrive in Sandakan, Malaysia (SDK) by 3:00pm on May 5.
- Depart from Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia (BKI) after 12:00am on May 16. **If you are continuing on our [Mount Kinabalu Extension](#)**, see the *Flights* section in its itinerary for departure information.

Flights we book

- The one-way flight from Lahad Datu to Kota Kinabalu is included in the trip cost.

Terms and Conditions

Read our current [Terms and Conditions](#).

Conservation

Our company ethos has always regarded conservation as inseparable from responsible tourism. We struggle with the dilemma that traveling worldwide expends climate-changing carbon. However, we wholeheartedly believe that traveling with us will cultivate your passion for conserving our beautiful world while stimulating each destination's local economy. We encourage you to explore the various ways in which Cheesemans' operates within this context:

- **Ecotourism and Conservation for [Borneo](#).**
- **Cheesemans' Trips are [Carbon Neutral](#).**
- **Offsetting your Travel to/from our Trip:** We ask you to pledge to offset the carbon emissions for your travel to and from our trips. Use this [tool](#) to calculate your emissions and purchase your carbon offset today through Sustainable Travel International, or through your favorite carbon offsetting organization.