Borneo

Primates of the Ancient Forest

May 8 to 21, 2028



Orangutans

SAFARI OVERVIEW

Journey through some of Borneo's richest wildlife habitats, from the montane forests of Mt. Kinabalu to lowland rainforest, wildlife-rich rivers, mangroves, and the coast. Search for wild orangutans, Bornean pygmy elephants, proboscis monkeys, gibbons, banteng, and an intriguing cast of smaller and nocturnal mammals. Birding is woven throughout the journey, from the species-rich forests of Kinabalu to hornbills along the Kinabatangan and endemic birds deep in the rainforest. Visit the Sepilok Orangutan Rehabilitation Center and Bornean Sun Bear Conservation Center, cruise the Kinabatangan at dawn and dusk, explore Tabin Wildlife Reserve by foot and 4x4, and witness the spectacular bat exodus at Gomantong Caves. Finish at remote Sungai Kapur, where rainforest meets mangroves and the coast. With canopy walks, river cruises, forest trails, night walks, and wildlife drives, we'll experience Borneo's remarkable biodiversity from many different perspectives.

WHY CHOOSE THIS EXPEDITION?

- **From Mountains to Mangroves:** Experience an unusually broad range of Bornean ecosystems, ending at Sungai Kapur where rainforest, rivers, mangroves, and coastal habitats bring another dimension to the wildlife experience.

- **Remarkable Wildlife Diversity:** Search for orangutans, Bornean pygmy elephants, proboscis monkeys, gibbons, hornbills, and a fascinating cast of smaller and nocturnal wildlife across several of Sabah's richest habitats.
- **Exceptional Birding:** Explore habitats from Mt. Kinabalu's montane forests to lowland rainforest and mangroves, searching for Bornean endemics, colorful hornbills, kingfishers, and an extraordinary diversity of tropical birds.
- **Borneo from Dawn to Dark:** Explore by boat, 4x4, and on foot, from early-morning birding and river cruises to night walks and drives when tarsiers, civets, flying squirrels, and other nocturnal wildlife become active.
- **Extraordinary Natural Spectacles:** Watch giant red flying squirrels glide from their roosts and visit Gomantong Caves around dusk for the remarkable emergence of vast numbers of bats.
- **Sustainable Comfort**: Stay in eco-lodges that combine comfort with a deep commitment to preserving Borneo's unique ecosystems.

LEADER: Charlie Ryan.

DAYS: 14

GROUP SIZE: 8.

COST: $15,300 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 8	**Welcome to Borneo.** Arrive in Kota Kinabalu. Your trip leader will brief you on the upcoming adventures at your welcome dinner.	Hyatt Centric Kota Kinabalu	D
May 9–10	**Explore Kinabalu National Park.** Mt. Kinabalu is a UNESCO World Heritage site, renowned for its biodiversity. You'll explore various trails of this birdwatcher's paradise with about 326 species (more than 50% of the species in Borneo).	Sutera Sanctuary Lodges, Mt. Kinabalu	B, L, D
May 11–12	**Sepilok Adventure.** Morning at Mt. Kinabalu then journey to Sepilok Nature Reserve where you'll spend your evenings on night walks and a full day in this incredible virgin rainforest reserve, visiting the Orangutan Sanctuary and searching for free-roaming orangutans.	Sepilok Nature Lodge, Sepilok	B, L, D
May 13–15	**Kinabatangan.** 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.	Hornbill Lodge near Kinabatangan Wildlife Sanctuary	B, L, D

	Experience an evening cruise on the river and night walk to spot nocturnal wildlife.		
May 16–17	**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 18-20	**Sungai Kapur.** Travel to the Virgin Jungle Reserve and contemplate the undisturbed rainforest and its pristine, diverse ecosystems.	Utan Rainforest Lodge, Sungai Kapur	B, L, D
May 21	**Departure for home.** A leisurely morning with breakfast and the sounds of the jungle. Catch your afternoon flight to Kota Kinabalu and your flights home.		B, L

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 8 ~ Arrive in Kota Kinabalu, Borneo
Arrive in Kota Kinabalu, Borneo. Our local agent will transfer you from the airport to the hotel. Once settled in, your leader will give you a briefing, followed by a welcome dinner. We can arrange divergent airport transfers and extra nights if you want to arrive earlier.

May 9–10 ~ Explore Kinabalu National Park.
Travel through the scenic Kadamaian Valley to Kinabalu National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site celebrated for its extraordinary diversity of plants and animals. Spend the afternoon and the following full day exploring trails through montane forest at the base of Mt. Kinabalu. With about 326 bird species recorded in the park, including many Bornean specialties, we will devote plenty of time to birding and searching for other wildlife among its varied forest habitats.



Whitehead's Trogon

May 11–12 ~ Sepilok Forest Reserve
Explore the Sepilok Forest Reserve and its surroundings. Take an early-morning canopy walk to search for birds and mammals unique to this region.

Visit the Sepilok Orangutan Rehabilitation Center and witness these gentle primates feed and interact in the rainforest. Enjoy day and night treks through the forest to observe wildlife, including a canopy walk at dusk to witness giant red flying squirrels emerging from their nests and "flying" up to 500ft between trees.

May 13–15 ~ Kinabangtan River and Gomantong Caves
Take an optional dawn birdwatching walk near the lodge followed by a behind-the-scenes tour of the Bornean Sun Bear Conservation Center with its founder.

Continue to the Kinabatangan River, home to one of Borneo's highest concentrations of wildlife. After settling into your lodge, go on a dusk cruise in search of orangutans, hornbills, slow lorises, western tarsiers, civets, proboscis monkeys, and more.



Bornean Sun Bear
© Grace Chen

Spend two more days in this magical location. Set out on an early morning river cruise through the panoramic hues of sunrise to explore this region's natural beauty and rich wildlife diversity. Trek through the jungle to search for wildlife. Learn from an orangutan expert. Embark on a short boat ride and transfer to the famous Gomantong Caves to spend an afternoon exploring. At dusk, see a mind-boggling bat exodus, where over one million bats emerge from the cave to feed. Cruise at night in search of nocturnal wildlife on the riverbanks.

May 16–17 ~ Tabin Wildlife Reserve
Drive to one of the most biodiverse regions of Borneo, the Tabin Wildlife Reserve, which boasts an impressive 220 bird species as well as the wild banteng cattle and 10 primate species. Explore the reserve in 4x4 off-road vehicles hoping to find leopard cats, marbled cats, flying squirrels, and binturong bearcats in their natural habitats. Participate in a morning trek to the mud volcano, where salt-enriched mud bubbles up and attracts many different animals. Climb an observation tower and soak in the stunning views of the surrounding forest canopies. Depending on conditions, choose another jungle trek or wildlife drive in the afternoon before heading out again after dinner for a night drive in search of nocturnal species.



White-bellied Sea Eagle
©Kari and Glenn Ciegler

May 18–20 ~ Sangai Kapur
Continue to Utan Rainforest Lodge in the Virgin Jungle Reserve of Sungai Kapur, where rainforest, river, mangrove, and coastal habitats come together. Begin exploring on foot around the lodge before taking a sunset river cruise, with the possibility of seeing fireflies on the return journey if conditions are right. After dinner, venture out again on a night safari.

Over the next two days, explore this diverse landscape on guided forest walks and river cruises. Visit a hide for opportunities to observe and photograph Bornean birdlife, and, when weather and sea conditions permit, cruise along the coastline and through the Segama River mangroves in search of flying foxes, eagles, dolphins, and other wildlife. Evenings bring additional chances to explore after dark on night walks and safari drives, searching for civets, leopard cats, mouse deer, moonrats, and other nocturnal wildlife.

May 21 ~ Fly home
Enjoy a leisurely final morning surrounded by the sounds of the rainforest. After an early lunch, travel to Lahad Datu for our late-afternoon flight to Kota Kinabalu, then continue with your flights home.

COSTS (ALL COSTS ARE IN US DOLLARS)

Cost

Type	Cost per Person
Trip Cost, double occupancy	$15,300
Single Supplement	$5,100

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 30, 2027	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 canceled trip's departure date. Cancellations are non-transferable. 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 Kota Kinabalu International Airport to Hyatt Centric Kota Kinabalu on May 8 and to Lahad Datu Airport on May 21.

- Accommodations for the nights of May 8 through May 20.
- Meals from dinner on May 8 through lunch on May 21.
- Non-alcoholic bottled beverages throughout the trip.
- Snacks during travel between locations.
- Incidental tipping (porters, boatmen, drivers, hotel staff, etc.).
- Lectures from orangutan and sun bear experts.
- Gratuities for drivers, boatmen, lodge guides, porters, meals, and hotel services.
- Private access to Sun Bear Center.
- Leech socks, refillable water bottle, and *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.
- Passport and visa fees.
- Divergent airport transfers (arranged by us) and extra hotel nights.
- Gratuities for your trip leader.
- Emergency evacuation insurance and trip cancellation insurance.
- Personal items 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 Traveler Form.

SIGN UP

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

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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. Wildlife walks are generally 2-3 hours long and follow relatively flat trails, gravel roads, and undulating single-track trails. You can split into smaller groups based on your desired level of exercise. In Sepilok, Tabin, and Sungai Kapur, the heat and humidity can make moderate walks feel more strenuous than a similar walk in a cooler climate. 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. River safaris take place on private boats that are stable and wide, and great for photography.

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

Flights you book

- Arrive in Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia (BKI) by 3:00pm on May 8.
- Depart from Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia (BKI) after 7:00pm on May 21.

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 your favorite carbon offsetting organization.

FAQS

Where are the best places to see wild orangutans and other wildlife in Borneo?
On our trip, you search for wild orangutans in Sepilok and along the Kinabatangan River, two of the best places in Sabah to see them. Dawn and dusk river cruises, rainforest walks, and night walks also give you chances to see proboscis monkeys, Bornean pygmy elephants, gibbons, hornbills, and nocturnal species such as tarsiers and slow lorises. You also visit the Sepilok Orangutan Rehabilitation Center and the Bornean Sun Bear Conservation Center. Wildlife sightings are never guaranteed, but this route covers many of Borneo's richest habitats.

Is Borneo a good destination for birdwatching as well as mammal photography?
Absolutely! Borneo is exceptional for both birdwatching and mammal photography. Our itinerary explores Mt. Kinabalu's montane forests, home to numerous Bornean endemic birds, as well as the lowland rainforests of Sepilok and Tabin, the Kinabatangan River, and Sungai Kapur's mangrove and coastal habitats. We'll search for hornbills, kingfishers, trogons, and other tropical birds alongside orangutans, monkeys, flying squirrels, and nocturnal mammals. Early-morning birding, canopy walks, river cruises, and night drives provide varied wildlife viewing and photography opportunities.

How physically demanding is a Borneo wildlife safari, and what is the weather like in May?
Our Borneo wildlife safari includes guided forest walks, river cruises, and wildlife drives. Most walks last two to three hours on relatively flat or gently undulating trails, with opportunities to divide into smaller groups according to walking preferences. May is generally considered part of Borneo's drier season, although tropical rain is always possible. Lowland temperatures typically reach the mid-80s°F (around 28°C), with high humidity that can make walking feel more strenuous. Cooler conditions are common around Mt. Kinabalu.