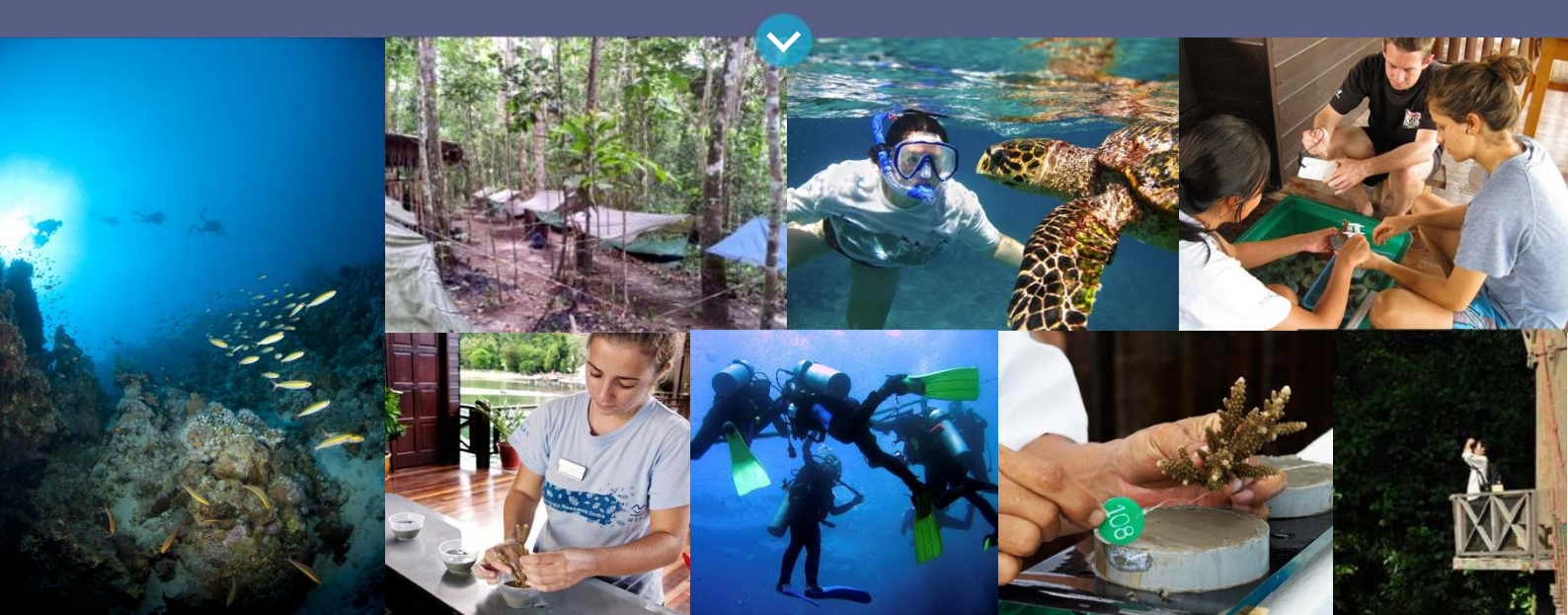


# Borneo

## Science, Sea Life and SCUBA



This truly incredible educational journey will inspire students in their studies as they visit live jungle and marine research centres and work alongside scientists to discover the importance of their work on the spectacular Bornean ecology. Prepare to be amazed by the diverse flora and fauna we come across and watch school work come to life before our eyes. Not to mention trekking to the depths of the jungle to spend the night camped out in hammocks and the opportunity to gain the PADI Open Water SCUBA Diver certification. It truly is a biology trip like no other.



### Recommended Itinerary

Culture shock rating: 

Physical rating: 

#### Day 1 and 2: Fly from UK to Kota Kinabalu

Upon our arrival on the beautiful island of Borneo, we will be met by our local Trip Leader, who will be our guide and friend throughout our journey. We will transfer to our hostel in Kota Kinabalu where we will have the chance to freshen up and relax after our journey.

#### Day 3: Trek and Jungle Camp

This morning we will drive for about 2 hours to Kiau where we will leave the cars to trek into the Bornean jungle! During our trek our Trip Leader will point out some of the incredible, local flora and fauna - which are certainly more interesting than grey squirrels! After about 4 hours of trekking we will reach our jungle camp. Here we will have the opportunity to learn about some of the survival techniques which indigenous people have developed to allow them to thrive in the jungle. As night falls we will climb into our hammocks to be gently rocked to sleep while listening to the croaking frog orchestras and sounds of the nocturnal animals awakening.

#### Day 4: Trek and Memorial Visit

After an incredible night in the jungle, we will trek for around four hours to meet our vehicles once more and head to our next hotel on the edge of Kinabalu Park, Malaysia's first UNESCO World Heritage Site. This afternoon we will visit the Kundasang War Memorial, a sobering memorial dedicated to the British and Australian soldiers who died in the Sandakan POW camp during their death marches to Ranau.

#### Day 5: Travel via Lahad Datu to Danum Valley Field Centre

Today we have a long day's travel. Our first goal is Lahad Datu (approximately 5 hours drive). From here, we set off to the Danum Valley Field Centre, a live research centre and one of the foremost rainforest research establishments in South East Asia. It's usually a 2 hour drive from Lahad Datu. Once at the research station, we have an incredible opportunity to meet real scientists, biologists and researchers and learn about the importance of their work in the Bornean ecology. The forest is dominated by dipterocarp trees and countless local fauna call the place home, including orangutans, the Bornean Pygmy elephant, the Malayan sun bear and the clouded leopard. It is also one of the last refuges in Sabah for the endangered Sumatran rhino. We will be staying on site in dorm rooms.

### Days 6/7: Danum Valley Field Centre

Over the next two days we will work alongside local scientists to see the work that they are doing at Danum Valley. This will be an eye opening and inspirational opportunity and will certainly bring all of the things we have learnt about in biology lessons to life! These days could involve tasks such as sampling the nearby Segama River, night walks through the forest, bird watching and exploring the interpretive trails throughout the area.

*PLEASE NOTE – This is a live centre and research is ongoing, hence our involvement with scientists there depends entirely on who among them is available to organise some kind of research related activities for us.*

### Day 8: Return to Kota Kinabalu

Today we will say goodbye to the jungle as we head back to Kota Kinabalu by land and air, first driving back to Lahad Datu before a short flight. We check in to our hostel which will become our home for the remainder of the trip.

### Days 9/10/11/12: PADI Open Water Diving

It is now time to move our focus from the biology and ecology of the jungle to that of the marine environment, no doubt it will seem like an alien world given our surroundings for the last few days! We will spend the next four days completing our PADI Open Water Diver SCUBA course. This will teach us the fundamentals of SCUBA diving, including dive techniques and equipment, as well as a series of confined and open water dives. Borneo is renowned as a world class diving area and over 3000 species were first found and classified in Malaysian waters. We can expect to see pristine coral, schools of fish, octopus, turtles and if we are lucky a majestic ray or two. Not only is SCUBA diving a fantastic opportunity to view marine wildlife up close, it will also allow us to see first hand examples of symbiotic relationships in the marine world. Those who already hold their PADI Open Water Diver Certificate may be able to complete a higher level course. These days will run from about 8:30 to 4 leaving us the late afternoons free to relax on the beach and discuss marine conservation issues in the area.

### Days 13/14: MERC

Having proudly achieved our PADI Open Water diver certificates, we will spend the next two days at the Marine Ecology Research Centre which also acts as a rehabilitation centre for marine life. Upon our arrival, we will meet with MERC staff for a briefing and full tour of the centre. We will then spend our time working alongside biologists at MERC and learning about the importance of their work for the local ecology. This could include activities such as: coral and sea grass planting, collection of broken coral fragments from the sea bed, collection of sea grass from donor sites, cleaning the coral nursery (brushing algae and collecting snails!) and learning about the importance of phytoplankton as a live food source for many young sea animals.

### Day 15/16: Kota Kinabalu and Depart Borneo

This morning we will have the final chance to explore Kota Kinabalu and purchase any last gifts or souvenirs - remembering of course not to purchase anything which would have harmed the delicate local marine system. We will then be transferred to the airport to wish farewell to our Trip Leader and beautiful Borneo, ready for our return flight to the UK, arriving on day 16.

*Important information: It is important to realise that the itinerary needs to be flexible. While every effort will be made to follow the above schedule, in the event of political problems, airline schedule changes or natural events, we will do our best to make your trip as enjoyable and hassle-free as possible, but it is important to EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED and be prepared to accept some slight changes. Relax and have faith in your guides.*



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