



# THE COMPLETE BORNEO SAFARI PLANNING GUIDE FOR SENIOR TRAVELLERS

## YOUR STEP-BY-STEP RESOURCE FOR PLANNING THE ADVENTURE OF A LIFETIME

Welcome! This guide is designed to take you from "I'm curious about Borneo" to "I'm ready to book" with confidence. We've compiled everything you need to know in one place. Consider this your personal planning companion.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. [Is Borneo Right for You? Quick Self-Assessment](#)
2. [Timeline: When to Start Planning](#)
3. [Choosing the Best Time to Visit](#)
4. [Fitness Self-Assessment & Preparation](#)
5. [Health & Medical Preparation Checklist](#)
6. [Complete Packing List](#)
7. [Budget Planning Guide](#)
8. [Sample Itineraries](#)
9. [Frequently Asked Questions](#)
10. [Pre-Departure Checklist](#)
11. [Emergency Contacts & Resources](#)

# 1. IS BORNEO RIGHT FOR YOU? QUICK SELF-ASSESSMENT

Answer these questions honestly to gauge your readiness:

---

## PHYSICAL CAPABILITY

- I can walk for 15-20 minutes on flat ground without significant discomfort
- I can climb 10-15 stairs with a handrail
- I can get in and out of a vehicle or boat with minimal assistance
- I can stand from a seated position without help
- I can be active for 3-4 hours with rest breaks

---

## TRAVEL PREFERENCES

- I'm genuinely excited about seeing wildlife in natural habitats
- I prefer authentic experiences over luxury resort amenities
- I'm comfortable with group travel (6-12 people, or private tour for a more intimate group)
- I can be flexible if weather changes plans
- I enjoy learning from expert guides

---

## PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

- I'm willing to prepare health-wise (vaccinations, doctor consultations)
- I can handle warm, humid weather for extended periods
- I'm comfortable being in remote areas with basic medical facilities nearby
- I can manage my own medications and basic self-care

### Scoring:

- **12-14 checks:** You're an ideal candidate for a Borneo safari!
- **9-11 checks:** You're a good fit with some customisation

- **6-8 checks:** Let's discuss your specific needs. Customisation may work
- **Below 6:** Consider a consultation to explore alternatives

## 2. TIMELINE: WHEN TO START PLANNING

---

### 9-12 MONTHS BEFORE TRAVEL (IDEAL FOR PEAK SEASON: JUNE-AUGUST)

- Decide on travel dates
- Research tour operators
- Request quotes and itineraries
- Check passport validity (must be valid 6+ months beyond travel)
- Begin saving/budgeting

---

### 6-8 MONTHS BEFORE

- Book your tour (peak season fills up!)
- Book international flights
- Purchase travel insurance
- Schedule doctor appointment for health consultation
- Begin fitness preparation routine if needed

---

### 3-4 MONTHS BEFORE

- Start vaccinations (some require multiple doses)
- Finalise domestic flight arrangements if needed
- Begin purchasing gear/clothing
- Read up on Borneo wildlife and culture
- Arrange for home/pet care during absence

---

### 6-8 WEEKS BEFORE

- Complete all vaccinations
  - Have final doctor check-up
  - Start taking malaria prophylaxis if prescribed (optional)
  - Confirm all bookings
  - Notify credit card companies of travel dates
  - Make copies of important documents
- 

## **2-4 WEEKS BEFORE**

- Pack and test all equipment (especially cameras, binoculars)
  - Fill all prescriptions with extra supply
  - Break in any new footwear
  - Download offline maps/apps
  - Confirm dietary requirements with tour operator
  - Exchange some currency (Malaysian Ringgit)
- 

## **1 WEEK BEFORE**

- Final packing
- Print all confirmations and documents
- Set up out-of-office messages
- Leave emergency contacts with family
- Charge all devices
- Review itinerary one last time

## 3. CHOOSING THE BEST TIME TO VISIT

---

**Good News:** Borneo is a Year-Round Destination!

Thanks to its tropical location, Borneo offers excellent wildlife viewing opportunities throughout the entire year. Each season brings its own unique advantages, and the unpredictable weather, especially in the jungle and rainforests means that even "wet" season days can surprise you with sunshine, while "dry" season visits might include refreshing rain showers. This unpredictability is part of the authentic rainforest experience!

The key is choosing the time that best matches your personal preferences for crowd levels, budget, and travel schedule.

---

### MONTH-BY-MONTH GUIDE

#### MARCH - MAY

- **Weather:** Transitioning season with pleasant conditions and occasional rain
- **Wildlife:** Very active during breeding season
- **Crowds:** Moderate, comfortable group sizes
- **Best for:** Seniors seeking a balance of good conditions without peak season crowds
- **Book:** 3-6 months ahead

#### JUNE - AUGUST

- **Weather:** Peak season with generally favourable conditions (though rain is always possible in the rainforest)
- **Wildlife:** Excellent activity
- **Crowds:** Busiest period, so book early!
- **Best for:** Those with fixed summer schedules or traveling with family
- **Book:** 6-9 months ahead
- **Note:** Premium pricing during this popular period

#### SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER

- **Weather:** Lovely conditions continue with the authentic rainforest experience
- **Wildlife:** Remains excellent throughout this period

- **Crowds:** Lower than peak
- **Best for:** Flexibility seekers who want great value
- **Book:** 3-6 months ahead

## NOVEMBER - FEBRUARY

- **Weather:** "Green season" with lush rainforest at its most vibrant
- **Wildlife:** Animals remain active and present
- **Crowds:** Quietest period, perfect for those seeking tranquillity
- **Best for:** Budget-conscious travellers and those who appreciate the dramatic beauty of the rainforest in full bloom
- **Book:** 2-3 months ahead

---

## OUR PERSPECTIVE FOR SENIORS

**The truth is: There's no "wrong" time to visit Borneo.** Your best time depends on:

### **Choose March-October if:**

- You prefer traditionally "drier" weather patterns
- You're traveling during summer months
- You want peak wildlife activity periods
- You don't mind premium pricing and more tourists

### **Choose November-February if:**

- You want the best value for your budget
- You prefer quieter, more intimate experiences
- You appreciate dramatic rainforest scenery
- You're flexible about weather (rain doesn't bother you)
- You want more personalized attention from guides

**Pro Tip:** Pack for all weather conditions regardless of season. The jungle and rainforest have their own microclimate as rain can happen anytime, even on "dry" days!

## WILDLIFE VIEWING BY SEASON

**Important Note:** Encounters with more elusive wildlife such as Bornean pygmy elephants and orang utans are largely up to luck and weather patterns. While we maximise your chances through expert guiding and optimal timing, there is no guarantee of sightings in the wild. This is what makes each encounter so special and authentic.

### **Year-Round Reliability:**

- Proboscis monkeys: Consistent year-round (virtually guaranteed sightings)
- Hornbills: Present year-round
- Pygmy elephants: Seasonal movements, sightings are possible but never guaranteed
- Orangutans: Year-round presence, slightly easier in dry season, but wild sightings depend on luck
- Crocodiles: Year-round

**Bottom Line:** You'll see wildlife any month—dry season just increases odds and comfort. However, remember that pygmy elephants and orang utans are wild animals with their own schedules. Some guests see both multiple times; others may not see them at all. This unpredictability is part of the authentic wildlife experience.

## 4. FITNESS SELF-ASSESSMENT & PREPARATION

---

### CURRENT FITNESS ASSESSMENT

**Walking Endurance Test:** Walk on flat ground at a comfortable pace and note:

Can you walk 15 minutes continuously?  Yes  No

Can you walk 20 minutes continuously?  Yes  No

Can you walk 30 minutes continuously?  Yes  No

### Mobility Test:

Can you climb 15 stairs without stopping?  Yes  No

Can you step into/out of a high vehicle?  Yes  No

Can you sit comfortably for 2 hours?  Yes  No

### Balance Test:

Can you stand on one foot for 10 seconds?  Yes  No

Can you walk heel-to-toe for 10 steps?  Yes  No

---

### 8-12 WEEK PREPARATION PLAN

**If you answered "NO" to several questions above, this gentle preparation will help:**

#### Weeks 1-4: Build Foundation

- Walk 15 minutes daily at comfortable pace
- Practice stairs 2-3 times per week (5-10 steps)
- Simple stretching for 10 minutes daily

#### Weeks 5-8: Increase Gradually

- Walk 20-25 minutes daily
- Add gentle inclines if possible

- Practice stairs 3-4 times per week (10-15 steps)
- Continue stretching

### **Weeks 9-12: Fine-Tune**

- Walk 25-30 minutes daily
- Practice getting in/out of high vehicles (SUV or friend's truck)
- Maintain stair practice
- Add balance exercises (stand on one foot)

**Important:** Consult your doctor before starting any fitness program.

---

### **WHAT IF I CAN'T MEET THESE STANDARDS?**

Don't worry! Many guests have mobility limitations. Let us know during planning, and we'll customise:

- More boat-based activities (less walking)
- Longer rest periods
- Vehicle selection for easier boarding
- Extra guide assistance
- Modified itinerary

## 5. HEALTH & MEDICAL PREPARATION CHECKLIST

---

### 8-10 WEEKS BEFORE TRAVEL

#### **Doctor Consultation:**

- Schedule comprehensive check-up
- Discuss travel plans and get medical clearance
- Review all current medications
- Discuss any chronic conditions (diabetes, heart disease, etc.)
- Get prescription refills with extra supply
- Request doctor's letter for controlled substances
- Discuss altitude, heat, humidity concerns

#### **Vaccinations to Discuss:**

- Routine vaccinations up-to-date (MMR, tetanus, etc.)
- Hepatitis A (recommended)
- Hepatitis B (recommended, especially if 60+)
- Typhoid (recommended)

#### **Malaria Consultation:**

- Discuss malaria risk in your specific travel areas
- Decide on prophylaxis (antimalarial medication)
- Understand side effects and start date
- Alternative: Aggressive mosquito bite prevention

#### **Dental Check:**

- Schedule dental exam and cleaning
- Address any potential issues before travel. You don't want a toothache in the rainforest!

---

## MEDICAL DOCUMENTATION TO PREPARE

- List of all medications (generic names)
- Copy of prescriptions
- Doctor's contact information
- Summary of medical conditions
- Blood type
- Allergy information
- Emergency contacts
- Travel insurance card and policy number

**Pro Tip:** Photograph all medical documents and email them to yourself for cloud access.

---

## TRAVEL INSURANCE (ESSENTIAL)

### Must Include:

- Medical coverage (minimum \$100,000 USD)
- Emergency medical evacuation
- Trip cancellation/interruption
- Lost/delayed baggage
- 24/7 assistance hotline

**Declare Pre-Existing Conditions:** Most policies exclude pre-existing conditions UNLESS you:

- Purchase insurance within 14-21 days of initial trip deposit
- Declare all conditions
- Pay applicable premiums

### Recommended Providers:

- World Nomads (comprehensive coverage)

- Allianz Global Assistance
- Travel Guard
- IMG Global

## 6. COMPLETE PACKING LIST

---

### DOCUMENTS & MONEY

#### Essential Documents:

- Passport (valid 6+ months beyond travel)
- Printed flight confirmations
- Printed hotel/tour confirmations
- Travel insurance policy and card
- Vaccination records
- Doctor's letter for medications
- Emergency contact list
- Copies of everything (separate from originals)

#### Money:

- Credit cards (notify bank of travel)
- Small amount of Malaysian Ringgit cash
- Small amount of USD (for emergencies)
- Money belt or hidden pouch

---

### CLOTHING (NEUTRAL COLORS PREFERRED)

#### Tops (5-7 items):

- 3-4 lightweight long-sleeve shirts (sun/mosquito protection)

- 2-3 short-sleeve breathable shirts
- 1 light fleece or jacket (for early morning boat rides)

**Bottoms (4-5 items):**

- 2-3 lightweight long pants (zip-off pants ideal)
- 1-2 shorts (for lodge downtime)
- Underwear (6-7, quick-dry fabric)

**Footwear:**

- Comfortable walking shoes with grip (BROKEN IN!)
- Water-resistant sandals with straps (for boats)
- Flip-flops (for lodge/room)

**Accessories:**

- Wide-brimmed hat with chin strap or cap (ESSENTIAL)
- Lightweight rain jacket or poncho
- Swimsuit (some lodges have pools)
- 2-3 pairs of socks (lightweight)
- Bandana or buff (versatile)

**Evening Wear:**

- 1-2 comfortable casual outfits for lodge dinners
- Light sweater or cardigan (air-conditioned dining)

---

**HEALTH & TOILETRIES**

**Medications:**

- ALL prescription medications (+ 5-7 days extra)
- Pain reliever (ibuprofen/acetaminophen)
- Anti-diarrheal (Imodium)

- Antihistamine (for allergies/insect bites)
- Antacid
- Motion sickness tablets
- Any OTC medications you regularly use
- Malaria prophylaxis (if prescribed)

**First Aid Kit (optional):**

- Bandages (various sizes)
- Antiseptic wipes
- Antibiotic ointment
- Blister treatment
- Tweezers (for splinters)
- Thermometer
- Medical tape

**Sun & Insect Protection:**

- High SPF sunscreen (50+, reef-safe)
- Insect repellent with 20-30% DEET
- After-bite cream
- Lip balm with SPF
- Aloe vera gel (for sunburn-optional)

**Toiletries:**

- Toothbrush & toothpaste
- Shampoo/conditioner (small bottles)
- Soap/body wash
- Deodorant

- Razor
  - Prescription glasses/contacts
  - Extra pair of reading glasses
  - Any personal care items/skincare
- 

## **WILDLIFE VIEWING GEAR**

### **Optics:**

- Binoculars (8x42 or 10x42 recommended)
- Camera with zoom lens (or smartphone with good camera)
- Extra camera batteries/memory cards
- Battery charger
- Dry bag or waterproof case for electronics

### **Accessories:**

- Small daypack (for boat cruises)
  - Reusable water bottle
  - Notebook & pen (for wildlife sightings)
  - Headlamp or small flashlight (for night cruises)
  - Ziplock bags (various sizes, keep things dry)
- 

## **COMFORT & CONVENIENCE**

- Neck pillow (for transfers)
- Earplugs
- Eye mask
- Small quick-dry towel
- Wet wipes
- Hand sanitizer

- Tissues/toilet paper (backup)
- Compression socks (for long flights)
- Book or e-reader

---

## **ELECTRONICS**

- Phone & charger
- Camera & charger
- Power adapter (UK-style 3-pin plugs for Malaysia)
- Portable power bank
- Universal adapter (backup)
- Headphones/earphones (optional)

---

## WHAT NOT TO BRING

- ✗ Expensive jewelry
- ✗ Heavy books (bring e-reader)
- ✗ Multiple pairs of shoes (2-3 max)
- ✗ Hair dryer (lodges provide or unnecessary)
- ✗ Large amounts of cash
- ✗ Formal clothing
- ✗ "Just in case" items you probably won't use

## 7. BUDGET PLANNING GUIDE

---

### TOUR PACKAGE COSTS (ESTIMATION)

#### Typical 5-Day/4-Night Safari Package:

- **Mid-Range:** \$1,200 - \$1,800 per person
- **Premium:** \$2,000 - \$3,000 per person

#### Included in Package:

- All accommodation
- All meals
- All wildlife activities and excursions
- Professional guide services
- River boat and vehicle transportation
- Park entrance fees
- Drinking water

#### NOT Included:

- International flights
- Domestic flights within Malaysia (if needed)
- Airport transfers (often available for additional fee)
- Travel insurance
- Alcoholic beverages
- Tips for guides
- Personal expenses

---

### ADDITIONAL COSTS TO BUDGET (ESTIMATION)

#### Flights:

- International to Kota Kinabalu: \$800 - \$2,500 (depending on origin)

- Domestic flight (if needed): \$50 - \$150

**Insurance:**

- Comprehensive travel insurance: \$150 - \$300

**Pre/Post Tour Accommodation:**

- Budget hotel: \$30 - \$60 per night
- Mid-range hotel: \$60 - \$120 per night

**Meals Outside Tour:**

- Budget: \$10 - \$20 per day
- Mid-range: \$25 - \$50 per day

**Tips (Discretionary but Appreciated):**

- Guide: \$10 - \$20 per person per day
- Boat operator: \$5 - \$10 per person per day
- Lodge staff: \$5 - \$10 per person per stay

**Miscellaneous:**

- Souvenirs: \$50 - \$200
- Extra snacks/drinks: \$20 - \$50

**Total Estimated Budget (per person):**

- **Budget-Conscious:** \$2,500 - \$3,500
- **Mid-Range:** \$3,500 - \$5,000
- **Comfortable:** \$5,000 - \$7,000

## 8. SAMPLE ITINERARIES

To help you visualise what your Borneo adventure could look like, we've outlined three popular itineraries designed with senior travellers in mind. Each offers a different level of immersion, from a quick highlights tour to an extended exploration across multiple wildlife areas. All itineraries include stays at award-winning ecolodges, expert naturalist guides, and a balance of activity and rest time.

Choose the itinerary that matches your available time, budget, and desired depth of experience. Remember: all tours can be customized to your fitness level and interests.

---

### 3-DAY/2-NIGHT KINABATANGAN WILDLIFE SAFARI (BEGINNER-FRIENDLY)

**Perfect for:** First-time visitors, limited time, testing the waters with wildlife safaris

**Highlights:** Sepilok Orangutan Rehabilitation Centre, Kinabatangan River cruises, Sukau Rainforest Lodge

#### Day 1: Arrival & River Adventure

- Morning/Midday: Pick-up from Sandakan Airport or hotel
- Late Morning: Visit Sepilok Orangutan Rehabilitation Centre
- Afternoon: Lunch, then embark on 2.5-hour speedboat journey up Kinabatangan River
- Late Afternoon: Check into Sukau Rainforest Lodge, then immediately head out for afternoon river cruise
- Evening: Dinner at Melapi Restaurant, followed by slide presentation by naturalist guide

#### Day 2: Full Day Wildlife Exploration

- Dawn: Morning river cruise to Kelenanap Oxbow Lake for bird and wildlife viewing
- Morning: Breakfast, then guided nature walk along the lodge's Hornbill Boardwalk

- Midday: Lunch and free time at leisure (rest, swimming pool, or explore lodge grounds)
- Late Afternoon: Another river cruise for more wildlife sightings
- Evening: Dinner and relaxation

### **Day 3: Departure**

- Morning: Breakfast and check-out
- Late Morning: Speedboat journey back to Sandakan, stop for lunch
- Afternoon Option 1: Transfer to airport for 2:30 PM flight
- Afternoon Option 2: Visit Rainforest Discovery Centre (canopy walk, botanical garden) before evening flight

**Wildlife You'll Likely See:** Proboscis monkeys, various birds, hornbills, possibly orang utans and crocodiles

---

## **5-DAY/4-NIGHT BORNEO WILDLIFE SAFARI (RECOMMENDED)**

**Perfect for:** Comprehensive wildlife experience combining river and jungle exploration, for more fit and adventurous seniors

**Highlights:** Stay at award-winning lodge Sukau Rainforest Lodge in Kinabatangan, and explore the pristine Sungai Kapur Virgin Jungle Reserve with stay at Utan Rainforest Lodge

### **Day 1: Sepilok & Kinabatangan River**

- Morning: Pick-up from Sandakan Airport or hotel
- Late Morning: Visit Sepilok Orangutan Rehabilitation Centre
- Afternoon: Lunch, then 2.5-hour speedboat journey to Sukau Rainforest Lodge
- Late Afternoon: Check-in, then late afternoon river cruise
- Evening: Dinner and slide presentation by Borneo specialist guide

### **Day 2: Deep Dive into Kinabatangan**

- Dawn: Morning river cruise to Kelenanap Oxbow Lake

- Morning: Breakfast, then nature walk on Hornbill and Attenborough Boardwalks
- Midday: Free time at leisure (dip pool, exploring, or resting)
- Afternoon: Ape Talk at the refurbished Ape Gallery
- Late Afternoon: Visit Gomantong Caves and explore limestone outcrop and cave system, optional climb to witness bat exodus
- Evening: Return to lodge for dinner

### **Day 3: Transfer to Sungai Kapur Virgin Jungle Reserve**

- Morning: Breakfast, then 2-hour overland journey with light refreshments stop
- Late Morning: Continue 2.5-hour journey to Utan Rainforest Lodge at Sungai Kapur Virgin Jungle Reserve
- Midday: Welcome briefing, lunch, and check-in
- Afternoon: Hike Kapur Trail to explore flora and fauna
- Late Afternoon: River cruise for wildlife and estuary sunset viewing
- Evening: Dinner, then night safari drive to spot nocturnal wildlife

### **Day 4: Virgin Jungle Exploration**

- Early Morning: Quick bite, then short morning hike to Cuckoo Hide for birdwatching and photography
- Morning: Return for breakfast
- Late Morning: River cruise along coastline into Segama River and mangrove forest (weather permitting)—possible sightings of flying foxes, eagles, dolphins
- Midday: Lunch and free time (information gallery, souvenir shop, dip pool)
- Afternoon: Jungle trek along various trails (longer treks available for more active guests)
- Evening: Dinner, then night walk around lodge to spot nocturnal creatures (civets, leopard cats, mouse deer)

## Day 5: Departure

- Morning: Breakfast and free time at leisure
- Late Morning: Early lunch and check-out
- Afternoon: Depart for Lahad Datu for afternoon flight

**Wildlife You'll Likely See:** Proboscis monkeys, diverse birdlife including endemic species, hornbills, various jungle fauna. Possible encounters with orangutans, pygmy elephants, crocodiles, nocturnal mammals, dolphins, and flying foxes.

---

## 8-DAY/7-NIGHT SABAH WILDLIFE SAFARI (ULTIMATE EXPERIENCE)

**Perfect for:** Serious wildlife enthusiasts, photographers, those wanting comprehensive Borneo immersion

**Highlights:** Three distinct wildlife areas, three award-winning lodges, Danum Valley primary rainforest, maximum species diversity

### Day 1: Arrival in Sandakan

- Arrival: Meet guide at Sandakan Airport
- Day: Transfer to hotel, free time at leisure to rest and acclimate
- Evening: Dinner and overnight at Sepilok Nature Lodge

### Day 2: Sepilok Orangutans & Rainforest Discovery

- Morning: Visit Sepilok Orangutan Rehabilitation Centre—watch video, witness feeding, observe outdoor nursery
- Late Morning: Visit Rainforest Discovery Centre (RDC)—explore elevated canopy walkway 25 meters above ground
- Afternoon: Free time at leisure
- Evening: Guided night walk in search of nocturnal animals
- Night: Return to Sepilok Nature Lodge

### Day 3: Journey to Kinabatangan River

- Morning: Free time at leisure

- Afternoon: Lunch, then transfer to Sandakan jetty for 2.5-hour boat journey up Kinabatangan River to Sukau Rainforest Lodge (wildlife viewing en route)
- Late Afternoon: Afternoon river cruise using hybrid electric motor boat
- Evening: Dinner overlooking riverbank, slide presentation by naturalist guide

#### **Day 4: Kinabatangan Wildlife Immersion**

- Dawn: Morning river cruise to Kelenanap Oxbow Lake
- Morning: Breakfast, then nature walk along Hornbill Boardwalk with naturalist
- Midday: Lunch and free time at leisure
- Late Afternoon: Another river cruise for wildlife spotting
- Evening: Dinner and relaxation

#### **Day 5: Leisure Day at Sukau**

- Full Day: Free at leisure—relax by swimming pool, wine tasting, or choose from optional tours available at lodge
- This rest day allows you to recharge before the Danum Valley adventure
- Evening: Dinner and overnight

#### **Day 6: Transfer to Danum Valley**

- Early Morning: Rise early, breakfast, then prepare for Danum Valley journey
- Morning: 2-hour overland journey to Lahad Datu, then continue to Borneo Rainforest Lodge in Danum Valley
- Midday: Lunch upon arrival and check-in
- Evening: Slide show, then explore nature trail leading to canopy walkway
- Night: Spotlighting to view nocturnal animals (weather permitting)

#### **Day 7: Danum Valley Deep Exploration**

- Full Day: Comprehensive forest exploration for birds and mammals
- Morning: Trek to escarpment with ancient burial coffins, continue to waterfall for refreshing dip in rock pools
- Midday: Return to lodge for lunch
- Afternoon: Explore more trails at your own pace
- Evening: Final dinner at the lodge, share highlights of the week

### **Day 8: Departure**

- Morning: Free time at leisure until check-out
- Late Morning: Depart back to Lahad Datu
- Afternoon: Late afternoon flight to Kota Kinabalu

**Wildlife You'll See:** Maximum diversity across three distinct ecosystems. Best chances for full Big 5 encounters plus countless bird species, insects, and mammals across river, secondary forest, and primary rainforest habitats.

## 9. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

---

### BEFORE YOU GO

**Q: Do I need a visa for Malaysia?**

A: Most Western passport holders receive a 90-day tourist visa on arrival (free). Check with Malaysian embassy for your specific country.

**Q: What vaccinations are absolutely required?**

A: None are legally required to enter Malaysia. However, Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B, and Typhoid are strongly recommended.

**Q: Should I take malaria medication?**

A: Malaria risk is low in most Borneo safari areas. Discuss with your doctor as many travellers choose prophylaxis for peace of mind, while others rely on mosquito prevention.

**Q: Can I drink the tap water?**

A: No. Bottled or filtered water is provided throughout your tour. Tap water is only used for brushing teeth, washing and bathing.

**Q: What's the currency and should I exchange money before I go?**

A: Malaysian Ringgit (MYR). Exchange small amount before departure or at airport. Credit cards (Visa & Mastercard) accepted at lodges. You'll need minimal cash during the tour itself.

**Q: Will my phone work?**

A: Cell service is limited/non-existent in remote rainforest areas. Lodges may have Wi-Fi (often slow). Embrace the digital detox!

**Q: What if I have dietary restrictions?**

A: Inform us at booking. Lodges accommodate vegetarian, vegan, gluten-free, and most allergies/religious restrictions.

---

### HEALTH & SAFETY

**Q: What if I get sick during the tour?**

A: Guides have wilderness first aid training. For minor issues, they can help. For serious issues, evacuation to medical facilities is arranged (covered by your travel insurance).

**Q: Are there dangerous animals?**

A: Borneo's wildlife is generally non-aggressive but being 'wild', keeping a safe distance from them is paramount. You'll have a chance to view them safely in boats/vehicles. Follow guide instructions always.

**Q: What about leeches?**

A: Possible during jungle walks, especially after rain. Wear long pants tucked into socks. They're harmless (though unpleasant). Guides help remove them.

**Q: Is it safe for solo senior travellers?**

A: Yes! Many guests travel solo. You'll be part of a small group with guides throughout.

---

**DURING YOUR TRIP**

**Q: How much walking is really involved?**

A: Minimal. Most guests walk less than 30 minutes total per day. Walks are optional and on maintained paths.

**Q: What if I'm too tired to do an activity?**

A: Skip it! All activities are optional. Rest at the lodge guilt-free.

**Q: Will I have my own room?**

A: Yes, unless you book shared accommodation. Rooms have private bathrooms.

**Q: Is there air conditioning?**

A: Yes, in rooms. However, some common areas may use fans.

**Q: Can I do laundry?**

A: Most lodges offer laundry service (small fee). Bring quick-dry clothing to wash in your sink if needed.

**Q: What if I don't see much wildlife?**

A: Very unlikely, but nature doesn't guarantee anything. Proboscis monkeys are seen on nearly every cruise. Orang utans and elephants are more variable but sighting rates are high.

**Q: How close do we get to wildlife?**

A: Varies by species and situation. Sometimes very close (monkeys in trees overhead), other times you'll need binoculars. Guides position boats optimally.

---

**PRACTICAL MATTERS**

**Q: Should I tip the guides?**

A: Not required but appreciated. Standard: \$10-20 per person per day for guide, \$5-10 for boat operator.

**Q: Can I charge my devices?**

A: Yes. Lodges have electricity (though some use generators with specific hours). Bring UK-style adapter.

**Q: What about internet/email?**

A: Very limited or none in rainforest. Some lodges have slow WiFi in common areas. Plan to be disconnected.

**Q: Is photography difficult?**

A: Can be challenging (moving boat, foliage, lighting). Zoom lens recommended. Guides help position for best shots. Many guests get excellent photos with just smartphones.

**Q: What if weather cancels an activity?**

A: Guides adjust schedule. Activity rescheduled or substituted. Flexibility is key in rainforest!

## 10. PRE-DEPARTURE CHECKLIST

---

### 1 WEEK BEFORE

- All documents printed and packed
  - Medications organised with extras
  - Gear tested (especially camera, binoculars)
  - Footwear broken in
  - Final packing complete
  - House/pet sitter confirmed
  - Mail held or collected
  - Bills paid/auto-pay set up
- 

### 3 DAYS BEFORE

- Confirm all flights
  - Check in online if possible
  - Verify tour pickup details
  - Download offline maps
  - Charge all devices fully
  - Final weather check
  - Review itinerary
- 

### DAY BEFORE

- Recheck passport, documents
- Set alarms for airport
- Arrange airport transportation
- Final device charges

Wear comfortable travel clothes

Get good sleep!

---

## **DAY OF DEPARTURE**

Take daily medications

Carry-on packed with essentials:

- Passport & documents
- Medications
- Valuables
- Change of clothes
- Toiletries

Checked bag within weight limit

Arrive airport 3 hours early for international

Relax and enjoy the adventure ahead!

---

## 11. EMERGENCY CONTACTS & RESOURCES

---

### IMPORTANT NUMBERS (SAVE IN PHONE)

#### Our Tour Company (Borneo Eco Tours):

- Main Office: +088 438 300
- Emergency Line (24/7): +6013 8002198 OR +6012 2001527
- Email: info@borneoecotours.com

#### Malaysian Emergency Services:

- General Emergency: 999
- Police: 999
- Ambulance: 999
- Fire: 994

#### Travel Insurance:

- Policy Number: \_\_\_\_\_
- Emergency Hotline: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Medical:

- Your Doctor: \_\_\_\_\_
- Family Contact: \_\_\_\_\_
- Blood Type: \_\_\_\_\_
- Allergies: \_\_\_\_\_

---

### USEFUL WEBSITES

#### Health Information:

- CDC Travel Health: [wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel](http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel)
- WHO: [www.who.int/travel](http://www.who.int/travel)
- Travel Health Pro: [travelhealthpro.org.uk](http://travelhealthpro.org.uk)

### **Weather:**

- Kota Kinabalu/Sandakan weather: [weather.com](https://www.weather.com) (search "Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia" or "Sandakan, Malaysia")

---

## **MEDICAL FACILITIES NEAR SAFARI AREAS**

### **Sandakan:**

- Duchess of Kent Hospital
- Address: Jalan Utara, Sandakan
- Phone: +60 89-218-166

### **Kota Kinabalu (if needed):**

- Queen Elizabeth Hospital
- Gleneagles Kota Kinabalu (private)

## **FINAL THOUGHTS**

Planning a Borneo safari might feel overwhelming at first, but thousands of senior travellers successfully make this journey every year. This guide gives you everything you need. Now it's just a matter of taking it step by step.

### **Remember:**

- Start planning 6-9 months ahead for peak season
- Consult your doctor early
- Be honest about your fitness level so we can customise
- Pack light and smart
- Stay flexible. Nature has its own schedule
- Trust your guides. They're experts

**Most importantly: Don't let fear stop you from experiencing something extraordinary.**

Margaret and John (remember them from our blog?) almost didn't go. Now they're planning their return trip.

Your Borneo adventure is waiting.

## READY TO TAKE THE NEXT STEP?

**Schedule Your Consultation:** Email us at [info@borneoecotours.com](mailto:info@borneoecotours.com)

**Request a Custom Itinerary:** Visit <https://www.borneoecotours.com/contact/> to tell us about your interests and needs

---

*This guide is provided by Borneo Eco Tours, specialists in senior-friendly Borneo wildlife safaris since 1991. We've helped over 1,000 senior travellers experience the wonder of Borneo's rainforests.*