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SARAWAK TOURISM BOARD



**Ministry of Tourism
and Heritage**



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The purpose of this guide is to provide an introduction to the City of Miri, and the surrounding towns, National Parks and other attractions of Northeast Sarawak. In order to provide the reader with as much local detail as possible, the authors have not included information on immigration requirements, exchange rates, climate, language, history, economy, system of government etc. These details are readily available from Tourism Malaysia and popular guide books.

INTRODUCTION



Miri is Sarawak's second largest city and the gateway to the state's fascinating northern region. A rapidly expanding business and commercial centre and the home of Sarawak's oil industry, Miri is located in Northeast Sarawak close to the Brunei border. In recent years Miri has become a major tourism gateway and the jumping-off point for some of Sarawak's world-famous National Parks, including Niah Caves, Gunung Mulu and Lambir Hills. Other interesting possibilities include the remote Bario Highlands and the mighty Baram River, as well as a number of excellent offshore dive locations.

Miri's original population was primarily Melanau, but since the development of the oil industry people have flocked here from all over the state, and Miri's 300,000 inhabitants reflects Sarawak's diverse ethnic make-up. Chinese, Ibans, Malays, Melanau, Bisayas, Orang Ulus (mostly Kayan, Kenyah, Kelabit and Lun Bawang), Bidayuhs, Indians and Eurasians all make their home here, along with West Malaysians and a sizeable expatriate community.

The city is fast becoming an important tourism destination in its own right, in line with its official designation; "Miri - Resort City". Recent developments include the new Miri Waterfront, and the world-class Miri Marina. The city has an excellent range of hotels in all price categories and a wide selection of food outlets. Combine this with vibrant night-life, bustling native markets and a number of popular beaches nearby, and Miri makes an ideal base for exploring the National Parks, the offshore reefs and the other natural and cultural attractions of Northeast Sarawak. It is also a great place to relax for a few days after the rigours of jungle trekking.



MIRI CITY

A Brief History



The history of Miri is also the history of Sarawak's oil industry. The area had long been known for the black oil that seeped from the ground in various locations, as noted by the Resident of Baram, Claude Champion de Crespigny, in 1882. One of de Crespigny's successors, Dr Charles Hose, persuaded the Anglo Saxon Petroleum Company, a British subsidiary of Shell, to conduct exploratory drilling in the area, and on August 10 1910, the first oil was struck on a hill overlooking the small fishing village of Miri, at a depth of 123 metres. The well, subsequently christened the "Grand Old Lady", continued to produce oil until 1972.

With the discovery of commercial quantities of oil, Miri was rapidly transformed from a sleepy fishing village to a booming oil town. By the mid 1920s it had become the administrative centre of the Baram region, and continued to thrive until the onset of World War 2. Shell staff did their best to sabotage the Miri oilfield, to prevent the invading Japanese forces from making use of it, but resourceful Japanese engineers soon had the field back to pre-war production levels.

During the late 1950s, the onshore oilfield began to decline as well after well dried up. Prospecting in remote peat swamp forest yielded poor results, so exploration gradually moved offshore with the development of mobile exploration rigs. By the early 1970s offshore production had reached 95,000 barrels a day, but the onshore field was now in terminal decline, and was closed down on 1st October 1972. At the same time, the support and administration facilities were moved to Lutong, just north of the town.

The move offshore coincided with a boom in Sarawak's timber industry, and Miri became a major timber processing and transshipment hub, so the economy of the town continued to grow throughout the 1970s and 80s. It was during this period that the tourism sector also began to take off, fuelled initially by weekend visitors from nearby Brunei. Miri continued to prosper throughout the 1990s, and in recognition of its booming population and crucial contributions to Sarawak's economy, was granted City status on 13th May 2005.

Attractions – Around Town

All attractions are within easy walking distance of the city centre unless otherwise indicated.

Miri Old Town is a narrow warren of streets crammed with tiny shops selling a huge variety of goods, from Chinese funeral supplies to hi-tech electronics, as well as some of the most traditional and original coffee shops in town. The Old Town is gradually being renovated, street-by-street, but the architectural style and layout is being carefully preserved.



Tamu Muhibbah, opposite the central bus station, is a colourful native market where you'll find a range of exotic fruits and vegetables, handicrafts and produce from upriver areas, including fragrant Bario rice. Good photo opportunities.

Taman Selera, on **Brighton Beach**, is a popular food centre, noted especially for its fresh seafood, and an ideal spot for watching the sunset. The beach here is popular with joggers and Tai Chi exponents. Two small piers are popular with anglers, and offer excellent views of **Miri Marina's** unique **seahorse lighthouse** (the seahorse is the city emblem of Miri). Near to Everly and Marriott hotels, taxi or bus from city centre.

The Fish Market, on Jln Bendahara next to the Chinese temple, is where the local catch is landed early every morning. An enormous variety of fresh fish and seafood is sold here, and some of the fishmongers' displays are minor works of art.

Next to the fish market is the **Tua Pek Kong temple**, dedicated to the deity most beloved by overseas Chinese. According to local legend, work started in the temple in 1913, in order to give thanks to the deity for helping to end a mysterious epidemic.

Miri City Fan (Jln Merpati/Jln Kipas) is an award-winning urban park complex comprising a variety of theme gardens, including a **Botanical Garden** and an **Islamic Garden**. It is also home to **Miri City Library**, a **Public Swimming Pool**, and a large **Amphitheatre** where concerts are frequently held. The City Fan is popular with locals for strolling, jogging or just chilling out.

Canada Hill, the Petroleum Museum & Oil Well No. 1. Canada Hill is a limestone ridge overlooking the town and offering excellent views of Miri and the surrounding area. Oil Well No. 1, known as the "grand old lady," is situated on top of Canada Hill. The well has an important place in Miri's history, as it was here that oil was first struck by Sarawak Shell in 1910. Nowadays the site also houses a very well designed and interesting Petroleum Museum (open daily except Monday and first day of Public Holidays, 9 am – 4.30 pm, admission free), which traces the history and technological development of the oil and gas industries in Malaysia.

The **Miri Handicraft Centre** on Jln Brooke is a fascinating showcase of the ethnic arts and crafts of northern Sarawak. Stalls are run by the individual producers, and craftspeople can often be viewed at work here. Items on sale include Penan mats and basketry, Orang Ulu beadwork and woodcarvings, and a variety of textiles from around the state. Cultural performances are occasionally held at weekends. Open 9 am – 6 pm daily.

The **Saberkas Weekend Market** (Saberkas Commercial Centre, Pujut – Lutong road) has a huge variety of goods on sale, from everyday household items to local handicrafts and jungle produce, as well as dozens of tempting food stalls. Runs from Friday evening until Saturday.



The **San Ching Tian temple** (Jln Krokop 9) is the largest Taoist temple in Southeast Asia. The superb red roof, elegant lotus design motif and the delightful wind chimes make this a very impressive and atmospheric place to visit.

The **Sikh Temple** on Jln Kubu (10 mins walk from city centre) is one of only two in Sarawak. It is attractively located in the shade of a 100-year-old agsana tree.

Taman Awam Miri is a huge family park with children's playground, botanical garden, soft adventure activities and jogging trails. The park is dotted with stone carvings and sculpture, overlooked by a towering wooden walkway leading to an observation platform. Open daily, entrance is free. Located 3km from City Centre.

Taman Bulatan is a large urban park sandwiched between two major roads. It is a popular jogging spot and also features a children's boating lake.

Attractions – Out of Town

Hawaii Beach is located at Kampong Bakam, a 15 minute drive from Miri. The entrance is in the village next to the bus stop, and a wooden footbridge leads to the palm-fringed beach. Picnic and barbecue facilities can be provided for a small charge. Taxi or Miri Bus No. 13.

Amateur geologists will be fascinated by the **Airport Road Outcrop**, a raised outcrop of layered laterite and other soft rocks that clearly illustrate how the surrounding land was formed and how Miri rose from the sea over the last 10-15 million years. Just get your taxi driver to make a brief stop on the way to or from the airport.

The **Miri Crocodile Farm** at Kuala Baram, 24km from Miri, is home to more than 1,000 estuarine crocodiles and false gharials, and also features a snake house and a small zoo. The farm is fully CITES registered. Open daily 9 am to 6 pm. Enquire for feeding times, Tel: 604108 website: www.miricrocodilefarm.com. Take a taxi or Kuala Baram bus.



The **Luak Bay Esplanade**, 11km south of town, has an attractive white sand beach, making it a popular spot for picnics and barbecues, and probably the best

spot in Miri to enjoy the spectacular tropical sunsets. Take a taxi.

Further down the coast towards Bekenu are a number of attractive casuarina-fringed beaches - **Bungai Beach**, **Sibuti Beach** and **Peliau Beach** - that are ideal for picnicking. They are around an hour's drive if you have your own transport.

Diving

Miri is fast becoming a popular dive destination, due to an abundance of pristine patch reefs that make up the Miri-Sibuti Reef Marine Park, lying at depths from 7 to 30 metres with average visibility ranging from 10 to 30 metres. There are also some interesting wreck dives. The best time to dive is from March to August, but diving is available all year round.

The diversity and accessibility of corals and other marine life on the reefs is amongst the best in the region. Hard and soft corals cover the entire reefs, with abundant gorgonians, sea-whips, anemones, sponges and crinoids. Angel fish, butterfly fish, fusiliers, groupers, stingrays, trigger fish, parrot fish, wrasses are among the numerous reef species that can be seen and over 40 species of nudibranch have been recorded.

Miri Dive Sites

All the sites listed below are just a short boat ride from the city (times given in brackets). All descriptions are courtesy of Tropical Dives.

Eve's Garden (15 min): A shallow reef of just 7 - 12 metres carpeted with soft corals such as leather corals, elephant's ear and dead man's fingers. Giant anemones and clown fishes inhabit the reef, along with schooling yellowtail fusiliers and angel fishes.

Anemone Garden (30 min): One of the most interesting reefs with a depth range of 10 to 16 meters, with hard and soft corals, anemones and their symbiotic clown fishes, bubble corals, anchor corals, colourful dendronephtya soft corals, feather stars, giant clams, nudibranches and schooling yellowtails.

Sea Fan Garden (30 min): This unique 16 metre deep reef provides an excellent environment for an amazing variety of gorgonian sea fans, sea whips and schooling batfish.

Tukau Drop-Off (50 min): An exciting drop-off reef (20 – 40 metres) with a vertical wall. Schooling jacks, barracudas, napoleon Wrasses, yellowtail fusiliers and large groupers are always present, and sharks and trumpet fish are occasionally seen.

Grouper Patch (1 hr): Giant groupers inhabit this reef of 15 – 18 metres depth. Spiny lobsters are also present together with yellowtail fusiliers and other schooling fishes.

Santak Point (45 min): The average visibility here is 30 meters or more. Large gorgonian fans of 2 meters in size are all over the top of the reef at 21 meters. The reef edge drops to 35 meters.

Atago Maru Wreck (15 min): A WWII Japanese wreck just off Lutong.



The 100 metre ship sits upright with the top deck just 10 metres below the surface. Most of the hull is covered with cave corals. A large moray eel has made its home here and travelly, jacks and barracudas are frequently seen.

Batu Belais Reef (30 min): A picturesque reef covered with gorgonian trees and seafans. Batfishes are common among the long swaying sea whips - a photographer's heaven.

Sunday Reef (35 min): Large hard corals make up this richly inhabited 11 – 16 metre deep reef, populated with anemones, clown fishes and nudibranches.

Sri Gadong Wreck (1 hr 10 min): A small 30 metre cargo ship sits on an 18 metre sand bottom. The whole wreck is teeming with life; jacks, yellow grunts, batfish and barracudas circle the wreck while giant groupers swim in and out of the cargo holds.

Contact **Tropical Dives**, a division of Planet Borneo, for further details and packages. Lot 273, Brighton Centre, Jln Temenggong Datuk Oyong Lawai, 98000 Miri. Tel: 415582 Fax: 412469 E-mail: info@tropical-dives.com website: www.planetborneotours.com

Other dive operators which can be contact for arranging dive trip is the Red Monkey Divers, Kelab Gymkhana Miri (GCM), Lot 732, Jln Dato Abang Indeh, 98000 Miri. Tel: 014-699 8296 Email:info@redmonkeydivers.com website: www.redmonkeydivers.com.

Accommodation

Miri's accommodation ranges from budget hostels to international class hotels. Unless otherwise indicated, all are located in the City Centre area. Rates shown range from cheapest single to most expensive double, and are inclusive of 5% government tax and 10% service charge except where indicated (++) . Telephone dialling code is +6085 from overseas and 085 within Malaysia.

International Class Hotels

Dynasty Hotel, Lot 683, Block 9, Jln Pujut-Lutung, 98009 Miri. Tel: 421111 Fax: 422222 E-mail: dyhlmyy@streamyx.com. Website: www.dynastyhotelmiri.com. 132 rooms.

Grand Palace Hotel, Lot 638, Block 7, MCLD, 2 KM, Jln Miri-Pujut, PO Box 1525, 98008 Miri (located in Pelita Commercial Centre, Miri's principal entertainment and nightlife area). Tel: 428888 Fax: 427777 E-mail: gpalace@po.jaring.my. Website: www.grandpalacehotel.com. 125 rooms.

Imperial Hotel, Jln Pos, 98000 Miri (located adjacent to Imperial Shopping Mall). Tel: 431133 Fax: 431122 E-mail: enquiries@imperialhotel.com.my. Website: www.imperialhotel.com.my. 96 hotel rooms and 144 serviced apartments.

Imperial Palace Hotel, Lot 1120, Block 7, Jln Sehati, MCLD, 98000 Miri. Tel: 437799 Fax: 437733. Email: enquiries@imperialpalacehotel.com.my Website: www.imperialpalacehotel.com.my. 307 rooms.





STRATEGIC LOCATION

Centrally located in the business, entertainment and shopping hubs of Miri City. Only fifteen minutes drive from Miri City airport. Whether in Miri for business or pleasure, Mega Hotel is the perfect choice.

ACCOMMODATION

Elegantly decorated in restful hues, each of its rooms is furnished with modern day amenities, individually controlled air-conditioning, colour television with satellite network, bedside control panel, remote control, hair-dryer, IDD telephone and coffee/tea making facilities.

DINING/ENTERTAINMENT

Chatterbox Coffee House offers local specialities and western favourites.

Lotus Court Chinese Restaurant serves exquisite Chinese cuisine with a blend of local flavours.

CONFERENCE/BANQUET FACILITIES

The conference and banquet facilities at Mega Hotel boasts six versatile and well equipped function rooms, with capacity ranging up to 1,200 persons. An ideal venue for seminars, banquets, exhibition and private celebrations.

Lot 907, Jalan Merbau, 98000 Miri, Sarawak, Malaysia.
Tel:(6) 085-432432 Fax:(6) 085-433433
Email:info@megahotel.com.my
Website:www.megahotel.com.my



Borneo Tropical Rainforest Resort is an agro and nature resort nestled in the natural setting of pristine and lush tropical rainforest of the Lambir Hills neighboring to the renowned Lambir Hills National Park, Sarawak, Malaysia.

The resort offers a range of accommodation, banqueting and meeting facilities, outdoor pavilions, multi-purpose hall, food and beverage outlets and camping facilities ideal for educational retreats, team building and holiday camps.

Set in tranquil and serene beautiful natural tropical landscapes, the Borneo Tropical Rainforest Resort is trully a retreat for relaxation and revitalization of the body, mind and spirit.



Feel our Passion for Nature

KM36 Miri-Bintulu Road, Lot 15, Block 2, Sibuti Land District, 98000 Miri, Sarawak, Malaysia.
T. +6 019 885 8593 (Resort) +6 085 613888 (Miri Office)
F. +6 019 834 0113 (Resort) +6 085 613808 (Miri Office)
E. Info@BorneoRainforestResort.com

www.BorneoRainforestResort.com



Mega Hotel, Lot 907, Jln Merbau, PO Box 1165, 98008 Miri. Tel: 432432 Fax: 433433. E-mail: megahot@po.jaring.my. Website: www.megahotel.net. 292 rooms.

Miri Marriott Resort & Spa, Jln Temenggong, Datuk Oyong Lawai PO Box 1145, 98008 Miri (facing Brighton Beach). Tel: 421121 Fax: 421099 E-mail: reservations.miri@marriott-hotels.com. Website: www.marriott-hotels.com/myymc. 220 rooms.

Parkcity Everly Hotel, Jln Temenggong, Datuk Oyong Lawai, PO Box 2295, 98008 Miri (facing Brighton Beach). : Tel: 440288/418888 Fax: 419999 E-mail: reservation.pehm@vhmis.com. Website: www.vh-hotels.com. 168 rooms.

Eastwood Valley Golf & Country Club, Lot 1379, Block 17, Jln Miri By-Pass, P.O. Box 1437, 98008 Miri. Tel: 421010/016-5576667 Fax: 430515. Website: www.eastwoodvalley.com. 120 rooms.



Mid-Range & Budget Accommodation.

Miri's Mid-Range and budget hotels offer excellent value. All rooms have air conditioning and attached bathroom (except where indicated).

Apollo Hotel, Jln Yu Seng Selatan, P.O Box 162, 98007 Miri. Tel: 415236/433077. Fax: 419964. 17 rooms.

Apple Lodge, Lot 343-344, Block 7, MCLD Jln Miri-Pujut, 98000 Miri. Tel: 419696 Fax: 417163. 31 rooms.

Boulevard Inn, Lot 2459, Block 5, Jln Boulevard, Boulevard Commercial Centre, 98000 Miri. Tel: 426336 Fax: 424336. 24 rooms.

Brooke Inn, No 14, Jln Brooke, P.O Box 96, 98007 Miri. Tel: 412881 Fax: 420899. 15 rooms.

Cempaka Inn, Lot 226, Jln Hokkien, P.O Box 482, 98007 Miri. Tel: 438099 Fax: 410181. 36 rooms.

City Inn, Lot 568, 1st Floor, Block 9, Jln Lee Tak, 98000 Miri. Tel: 435077 Fax: 415085. 10 rooms.

City Homestay, Lot 278, 279 & 280, 1st Floor, Brighton Centre, Jln Temenggong Datuk Oyong Lawai, 98008 Miri. Tel: 428118 Fax: 436382

Classy Inn, Lot 709-710, Jln Masjid, P.O Box 1571, 98000 Miri. Tel: 412533 Fax: 419635. 23 rooms.

Cosy Inn, Lot 545-547, Jln Yu Seng Selatan, P.O Box 2200, 98008 Miri. Tel: 415522 Fax: 415155. 30 rooms.

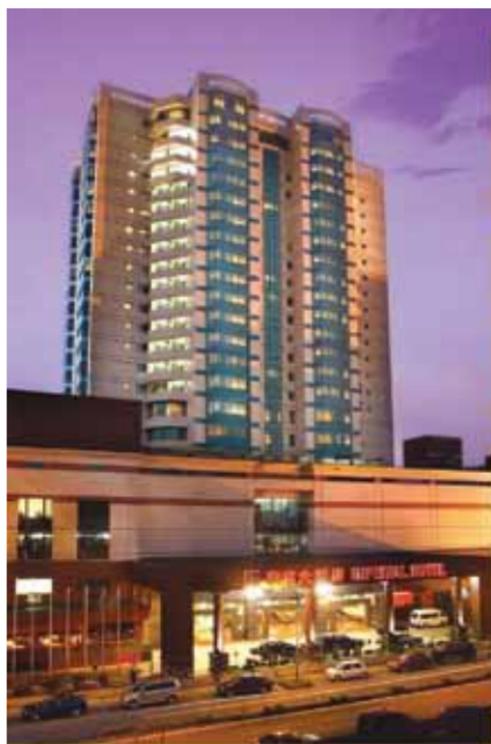
Crown Prince Inn, Lot 358, Taman Jade Manis, 98000 Miri. Tel: 436822 Fax: 432822. 13 rooms.

Dragon Inn, Lot 355, Jln Masjid, P. O. Box 1673, 98008 Miri. Tel: 422266/430996 Fax: 438966. E-mail: dragon.inn12@gmail.com website: www.dragoninnmiri.com 27 rooms.

De Central Inn, No 14, Jln Yu Seng Utara, P.O Box 2086, 98008 Miri. Tel: 424168 Fax: 424163. 20 rooms, room rate RM 55-65. E-mail: ynt@pd.jaring.my. 66 rooms.

Dillenia Backpackers Guest House, Lot 846, Jln Sida, 98000 Miri. Tel: 434204 E-mail:dillenia.guesthouse@gmail.com.

Fairland Inn, No 21, 2nd Floor, Jln Raja, 98000 Miri. Tel: 413981. 14 rooms.



Imperial Hotel is centrally located in the heart of Miri City with a 15 minutes drive from Miri Airport. The 4-Star hotel is towering with 23 floors above Miri city and adjoining with shopping mall. Commercial buildings & entertainment outlets are within walking distance. With its strategic location, the hotel is an ideal choice for both leisure and business travelers. Hotel guests will get a choice of hotel or apartment room types with free internet service. Guests can also enjoy the gym facilities and have a tantalizing meal at our food & beverage outlets.

Your Preferred One-Stop Hospitality Choice!

 帝宫大酒店
IMPERIAL HOTEL

Reservations & Further Enquiries

Jalan Pos, 98000 Miri, Sarawak, Malaysia
Tel: +60 85 431133 Fax: +60 85 431122
Email: enquiries@imperialhotel.com.my
Website: www.imperialhotel.com.my

Fortune Inn, Lot 756, Block 9, Jln Merpati, 98000 Miri. Tel: 423669. 22 rooms.

Genial Inn, No. 381B 1st Floor, Jln Yu Seng Selatan, 98000 Miri. Tel: 410966 Fax: 420816. 16 rooms.

Gloria Hotel, No 27, Jln Brooke, P.O Box 1283, 98008 Miri. Tel: 416699 Fax: 418866. 42 rooms.

Harbour View Inn, Lot 124, Jln Bendahara, P.O. Box 1078, 98000 Miri. Tel: 412177 Fax: 420871. 30 rooms.

Highlands Lodge, Lot 1271 Jln Sri Dagang, 98000 Miri (above Wheels pub). Tel: 422327 E-mail: thehighlan@streamyx.com. Miri's first specialist backpacker's lodge. 8 rooms plus dormitory.

King Hua Air Cond Inn, Lot 311, Taman Jade Manis, 98000 Miri. Tel: 412512 Fax: 422330. 28 rooms.

Kingwood Inn Miri, Lot 826, Jln Yu Seng Selatan, P.O Box 1838, 98008 Miri. Tel: 415888 Fax: 415009. 49 rooms.

Ku's Inn, No 3, Jln Sylvia, P.O Box 869, 98008 Miri. Tel: 413733. 22 rooms.

Metro Inn, Lot 762, Parent Lot 529, Block 9, 1st Floor, Jln Merpati, 98000 Miri. Tel: 411663 Fax: 424663. 20 rooms.

Million Inn, No 6, Jln Yu Seng Selatan, P.O Box 2200, 98000 Miri. Tel: 415077 Fax: 415085. 32 rooms.

Miri Hotel, No. 47, Jln Brooke, P.O Box 138, 98000 Miri. Tel: 421212 Fax: 412002. 50 rooms.

Miri Trail Guesthouse, Sublot 10634, 1st & 2nd Floor, Airport Commercial Centre, 98000 Miri. Tel: 017-8503666/016-8071305. Email: miritrail@yahoo.com Website: www.miritrailguesthouse.com www.muluguide.com. 7 rooms.

Minda Backpackers Guest House, 1st - 2nd Floor, Lot 637, North Yu Seng road, 98000 Miri. Tel: 411422 Website: www.mindaguesthouse.com

Muhibbah Inn, Lot 548, Jln Yu Seng Selatan, 98000 Miri. Tel: 412003/414619 Fax: 415155. 28 rooms.

Pacific Orient Hotel, No 49, Jln Brooke, 98000 Miri. Tel: 413333 Fax: 410003

Palace Inn, Lot 192, Jln Kwangtung, 98009 Miri. Tel: 421999 Fax: 419199. 30 rooms.

Park Hotel, P.O Box 241, Jln Raja, 98007 Miri. Tel: 414555 Fax: 414488. 69 rooms.

Raja Inn, Lot 246, Jln Setia Raja, 98000 Miri. Tel: 422422 Fax: 421582. 25 rooms.

Rasa Sayang Inn, No 566, 1st Floor, Jln Lee Tak, P.O Box 2200, 98000 Miri. Tel: 413880 Fax: 415085. 23 rooms.

Richmond Inn, Lot 243, Jln Setia Raja, P.O Box 217, 98000 Miri. Tel: 413289/90 Fax: 413297. 30 rooms.

River Inn, Lot 652, Jln Nakhoda Gampar, 98008 Miri. Tel: 415507 Fax: 415508. 24 rooms.

Silverwood Inn, No. 20A, Jln Bendahara, P.O. Box 324, 98000 Miri. Tel: 420577 Fax: 420149. 18 rooms.

Somerset Hotel, No 12, Jln Kwangtung, 98000 Miri. Tel: 422777 Fax: 421234 E-mail: somerhot@streamyx.com. 52 rooms.

Telang Usan Hotel, Lot 2431, Block 1, 2.5 KM, Jln Lapangan Terbang, 98009 Miri (located north of town centre near to airport). Tel: 411433 Fax: 419078 E-mail: tu_miri@streamyx.com. Website: www.telangusan.com. 52 rooms.

The Garden Inn, Lot 290B, Teochew Road, 98000 Miri. Tel: 421839 Fax: 428663. 25 rooms.

Today Inn, Lot 1258, Bk9, MCLD 98000 Miri. Tel: 414000. 19 rooms.

Tropical Inn, Lot 852, Jln Teochew, P.O Box 724, 98000 Miri. Tel: 411376 Fax: 417148. 22 rooms.

Visa Inn, Lot 571, Jln. Lee Tak, 98000 Miri. Tel: 411376 Fax: 417148. 22 rooms.

Serviced Apartments

See **Imperial Hotel** under International Class Hotels.

Eating Out

Miri's multi-ethnic population means visitors are assured of a wide variety of Malaysian and international cuisine. Miri has literally hundreds of dining outlets, so only a small selection can be listed here. Visitors planning to stay more than a few days should check the local press and get dining tips from locals.

Chinese

Chinese **coffee-shops** are dotted all over town, with food stalls serving a variety of local noodle dishes. Most also serve economical mixed rice dishes at lunchtimes.

2020 Café, 557/558 Pelita Commercial Centre. Wide selection of *dim sum* in the mornings and fast food, rice and noodle dishes lunchtime. Open 6 am - 2.30 pm.

Didi Cafe, 948 Jln Perry (near Imperial Hotel). Popular coffee shop with stalls selling *laksa*, *kolo mee*, claypot noodles and chicken rice. Open 6 am - 4.30 pm.

Dynasty Chinese Restaurant, Dynasty Hotel. Gourmet Chinese restaurant (non halal). Open 11 am - 2.30 pm, 6 pm - 10 pm.

Good Taste Bak Kut Teh Restaurant, Center Paint Phase 2 Miri. Serves some of the best *bak kut teh* (herbal pork rib soup) in town. Open 8 am - mid-afternoon.

Han Palace Restaurant, Grand Palace Hotel. Extensive Cantonese menu, including popular *dim sum* served from 8 am to 2 pm (Thurs - Sun). Open daily, lunch 10 am to 2 pm, dinner 6 pm to 10 pm.

Jing Wood Café, 612 Pelita Commercial Centre. Very popular amongst locals for its fried oyster *kway teow*. Open from 7.30 am to 1 am.

Kok Chee Restaurant, Park Building next to Park Hotel. Tel:433814. Gourmet Chinese cuisine, booking advisable at weekends and public holidays. Open 9 am - 12 pm.

May Jin Restaurant, Lot 1134-1136, Waterfront Commercial Centre. Tel 085-421691. Open 10.20 pm - 2pm and 5 pm - 10 pm.

Michael Steamboat, next to Boulevard Shopping Mall. Steamboat and BBQ buffet dinner. Eat as much as you want for RM 20 per head. Open 5pm - 10pm.

Ming Café, Jln Yu Seng Selatan opp. Mega Hotel. Very popular and busy corner café with a variety of Chinese stalls plus Indian and Malay curries. Open late.

Miri City Food Court, 2563 South Piasau, Jalan Bulatan Miri. Stalls with a selection of Chinese, Malay and Indian food. Good beef noodles and *dim sum*. Open from 6 am to 11pm daily.

Mr. Ho's Fine Foods, Lot 661, Block 7, MCLD, Pelita Comm. Centre. Tel: 085-413933. Open (Mon-Fri) 9am-12am (Sat-Sun) 9 am-1 am.

Open Air Market, Jln Brooke. Centre of Miri Old Town, with famous local dishes whose recipes have been passed on for generations. Look out for the curry rice and fried *kway teow*. Food sells out fast so go in the morning to avoid disappointment. Non-halal.

New Kuok Kee Cafe (at Metro Hotel), Jln North Yu Seng. Chinese coffee shop selling *kolo mee* and good beef noodles.

Pelita Hai Ma Food Centre, 553-554 Pelita Commercial Centre. Busy coffee shop selling Chinese and Western food (steak, fish and chips, etc). Famed as a night-owl place due to its cheap beer and wide-screen TV showing live football. Free Wi-Fi. Open 24 hours.

QQ Restaurant, 539 Pelita Commercial Centre. This coffee shop boasts some of the best roasted duck in town. Open 7 am - 10.30pm.



Yong Seng Café, 542 Pelita Commercial Centre. One of the best *kolo mee* stalls in town and a popular hangout for supper. Open 7 am - 4.30 am.

WTZ Cafe, Ground Floor, Lot 584, Jln North Yu Seng. This busy cafe serves just about every type of Chinese noodle dish there is. Choose from *wan ton*, *mee hoon*, *kway teow*, *kolo mee* and more. Open 6.30 am - 5 pm.

Coffee Bars

Borneo Baking Company, Miri Marriott Resort & Spa. Bakery and delicatessen serving pastries, cakes, sandwiches, breads and a range of coffees and other beverages.

Desserts, 529 Ground Floor Pelita Commercial Centre. Popular ice-cream parlour serving delicious homemade ice-cream and a wide range of teas and pastries. Open 11 am - 12 midnight.

The Coffee Bean, Outdoor Ground Floor, Bintang Megamall. Miri branch of the international chain, serving a range of



coffees, teas, a la carte meals and pastries. Free Wi-Fi access. Open 8.30 am - 1.30 am.

San Francisco Coffee, Bintang Megamall. An indoor and outdoor terrace overlooking the streets of Miri. Offers a wide selection of coffee, specialty teas, pastries and sandwiches. Free Wi-Fi access. Open Mon – Thurs 9 am - 11pm, Friday 9 am – midnight, Saturday & Sunday 8 am - midnight.

Starbucks, Bintang Plaza Shopping Complex, Miri Airport, Ground Floor.

Fast Food

Pizza Hut & McDonalds are in Bintang Megamall. **KFC** has branches dotted around town including Bintang Plaza, Jln Bendahara, Imperial Mall and Boulevard Hyper Market. Local chain **Sugar Bun** has branches at the Imperial Mall, Bintang Plaza, Wisma Pelita and Boulevard Hyper Market.

Indian

Banana Leaf Restaurant & Krishna Fish Head Curry, Lot 1396, Jln Kubu, Centre Point 2, Miri. Open: 11am - 10pm. Tel: 430095

Bilal Islamic Restaurant. Taman Jade Manis (near Mega Hotel). An old Miri favourite, serving a variety of curries plus *biryani* rice and Indian bread dishes such as *murtabak*, *roti canai* and *thosai*. Open 7 am – 9 pm. **Khan's Islamic Restaurant** on nearby Jln Merbau is run by the same family, with an identical menu.

Restoran Al-Asna, Lot 947, Jln Perry (near Imperial Hotel). Breakfast favourites such as *thosai*, *roti canai*, *murtabak*, plus *biryani* rice, curries and noodles served all day. Open 6 am - 9 pm. Al-Asna has another branch at Lot 549, Pelita Commercial Centre.

Indigenous (Kelabit)

Sultanah Cafe. 343 & 344, Block 7 MCLD, Pelita Commercial Centre. A warm, friendly restaurant offering traditional ethnic food and Western favourites. Serves genuine Kelabit dishes from the highlands of Bario. Recommendations include *Nuba Laya* Bario Rice Special and Fried Bario Rice Sultana's Special. Open 4pm - 11.30pm. Closed Sundays.

Japanese

Nikko, Lot 2407, Block 4, Piasau Business Park, Jln Bulatan. Tel: 654288. Open 12 noon - 2.30 pm and 6 pm - 10.30 pm. Good service and an extensive menu of Japanese dishes (including excellent sushi). Located 10 minutes drive from the town centre hotels (take a taxi) but worth the trip.

Shiki, Lot 2410, Block 5, Ground Floor, Boulevard Commercial Centre. Tel: 422323. Serves a range of reasonably priced authentic Japanese cuisine. Mon - Fri 12 noon - 2.30 pm, 6 pm - 10.30 pm. Sat & Public Holidays 11 am - 10.30 pm, Sun 11 am - 9.30 pm.

Korean

Yu Lai Chun Korea Restaurant, Boulevard Comm. Centre. Tel: 085-419377.

Malay

Bulatan Cafe. Lot 234, Taman Jade Manis (near Mega Hotel). Tel: 085-413468. Mixed rice buffet of curries and vegetable dishes. Open 7 am - midnight.

Cafenika & Catering, Lot 437, Jln Bendahara. Roti canai, rojak, fried rice and noodles plus mixed rice. Open 5.30 am - midnight. Closed Sun.

Gerai Wawasan Food Stalls, Jln China. Conveniently located in the centre of town, this busy food centre has a range of stalls selling Malay hawker favourites.

Irdyna Bistro, Lot 427 & 428, Jln Bendahara. Large Malay corner café serving mixed rice, *laksa*, noodles and soups. Mon to Sat 7 am - 4 pm. Sun 7 am - 2 pm.

Madli Satay & Food Corner, Jln Merpati. Tel: 085-426615. Popular Malay restaurant serving a wide range of dishes, including *roti canai*, noodles, mixed rice, etc. Lunch buffet. Open 8 am - midnight.

Nagaliar Nasi Lemak, Jalan Merpati, next to Standard Chartered Bank. The *nasi lemak* here is so popular the whole restaurant is dedicated to this special dish. The crispy chicken that comes with the *nasi lemak* and the hot *sambal* are the icing on the cake. Open mid-morning - 3 pm.

Nur Zanah & Catering, Lot 429 Jln Bendahara. Mixed rice, *nasi lemak*, curries, tom yam soup and more. Open 6 am - 5 pm.

Ras Segar, Lot 324 Jln Cressandra (off Jln Bendahara). Mixed rice and *nasi lemak*. Open 7 am - 9 pm (Mon-Fri), 7 am - 7 pm (Sat & Sun).

Restoran Serai Wangi, Lot 641 & 642, North Yu Seng Rd. Buffet of mixed rice dishes. Open 7 am - midnight.

SEDC Food Centre, near Tua Pek Kong Chinese temple, Jln Oleander. A number of Malay stalls selling mixed rice, noodles, soups, curry dishes, etc.

Surabaya Restaurant, Lot 288 Jln Bendahara. 9 am - 9 pm. Chicken rice, mixed rice and range of Malay soup and noodle dishes.

Taman Seroja Food Stalls, Jln Brooke (Opp. Miri Hotel). Range of Malay food including mixed rice, *laksa* and noodles. Open daytime and evenings.

Seafood

Apollo Seafood, 4 Jln Yu Seng Selatan. A popular old Miri favourite, Apollo has been serving value-for-money seafood for as long as most of its patrons can remember. Open daily, 6pm - late.

Dragon Seafood Restaurant, Lot 531, Bakam Road. Tel: 085-414189. Open 11 am - 11 pm.

Marina Seahorse Bistro II, Lot 280, Ground Floor, Brighton Centre, Jln. Temenggong Datuk Oyong Lawai. Tel: 016-7132928/016-8713333

American & Western breakfast, BBQ Sea Food, Western & Asian Cuisine.

Marina Bay Seafood Restaurant, MCLD Marina Park. Tel: 012-2880445, 019-2323389.

Maxim Restaurant, Lot 1062-1063, Bintang Jaya Commercial Centre, Jln Miri-Pujut. Long established Miri favourite selling a wide selection of seafood and the best curry fish head in town. Open 11 am - 11 pm.

New Tanjung Seafood, Brighton Road. Popular air-con seafood restaurant located near the Marriott.

Seaworld Seafood Centre, Jln Yu Seng Utara. Tasty and economical fish noodle dishes served during the day, and somewhat pricier fresh live seafood straight from the display tanks in the evenings. Open 9 am - 2 am daily.

Taman Selera, Brighton Beach. This popular hawker centre has a variety of Chinese

stalls serving fresh seafood - as well as Malay stalls offering satay, rice and noodle dishes - to be eaten to the sound of waves breaking on the nearby beach. Open daily 4pm – 11 pm (although most stalls open between 5 and 6 pm).

Tanjong Seafood, Lot 1, Brighton Rd, opposite Marriott Hotel. Popular and friendly seafood restaurant set in and around an old wooden house. Steamed red snapper is the house speciality. Open daily 6pm – 11 pm.

Tanjong Pak Hock Lin Seafood. Lot 720 & 721, Jln Brighton. Next to New Tanjung, with a similar menu and ambience.

Yi Hah Hai Seafood, 892-893 Miri Waterfront Commercial Centre. Choose from a selection of live seafood in aquarium displays. Reasonable prices and relaxing river views. House specialty is *Assam Fish*. Also serves great crab. Open 3pm - 12.30 am.

Thai

Siamese Secrets, Lot 513, Ground Floor, Jln Merbau. Tel: 085-431168. Popular city centre restaurant serving Thai food plus pasta & pizza, Western, Malaysian and Mexican dishes. Open 12 pm - 3 pm & 6 pm - 4 am.

Vegetarian

Convenient Vegetarian (Con-V), Lot 518, Ground floor, Pelita Commercial Centre. Tel: 085-430886. Serves both western and Chinese vegetarian food.

Western/International

Café Bavaria, 1150, Ground Floor, Jalan Bendahara. Tel: 429495. Cosy corner café serving, authentic German dishes and other western grills. House specialties are Mitternacht Schnitzel and Fish Normandy. Open 11 am - 1 am.

Café Miri Bar & Bistro, Lot 2120 & 2121, Jln Bulan Sabit, Taman Yakin. Open air bar-cum-restaurant serving western food at reasonable prices. Open 3 pm - 11 pm, closed Tues.

Dave's Deli, Jalan Merpati, Imperial Mall. Western style deli serving pies, roast chicken, coffees and desserts. Open 10 am - 10 pm.

Fratini's Restaurant, Block 5, Boulevard Commercial Centre. Tel: 431155. Popular family restaurant serving a range of pizza and pasta dishes. Kids can make their own pizzas - an added attraction for families. Open 10 am to 11 pm.

Piccolo Fratini, Lot 1399, Centrepont Blvd, Phase 2, Jln Kabu. Tel: 430255. Located in the town centre, same menu and successful formula as Fratini's.

Seahorse Bistro, Taman Piasau Indah. Serves a wide selection of continental and local dishes, from fresh barbeques to fried finger foods. Quite a distance from town area, so take a taxi. Open 5 pm - 1 am. Halal.

Halo Café, Jalan Merpati, opposite The Imperial Mall. Miri. Serves a wide selection of Local (Chinese and Malay), Korean, Japanese and Western food

Zest, Miri Marriott Resort & Spa. Open for breakfast, lunch and dinner. A la carte menu of local and international dishes plus the best buffet in town.

Entertainment

Pubs and Bars

The residents of Miri like to enjoy themselves and the city has a justified reputation as a party town, especially at weekends, and there is no shortage of entertainment outlets. There are a few pubs, bars and karaoke lounges in the city centre, but the most happening nightlife takes place in and around the **Pelita Commercial Centre**, a short taxi ride from the city centre hotels. Here you'll find a few pubs ideal for a chat with friends and a cluster of lively bars and clubs where Miri's party crowd hangs out. For cheap beer head for the coffee shops which offer special '3-can' deals.

Atmosphere, Lot 1120, Jalan Sehati, Miri Square Shopping Complex. Located on the terrace of the shopping complex, this outdoor bistro is hard to miss. With its white,



giant canopy it makes for a breezy place to hang out. 2 giant TV screens cater to the football crowd. Open 8 am - 1 pm and 5pm - 1.30am.

Balcony, Upper Floor, Unity Centre, Pelita Commercial Centre. Large corner pub with dancefloor that attracts

the younger party crowd. Music is a random mix of R&B, pop and techno. Packed at weekends - even the shark in the huge aquarium above the bar dances in this place. Open 6pm - 2am.

Chaplins, 339, Ground Floor, Pelita Commercial Centre. Small, friendly pub that is popular among Miri's expat community. Open 5 pm - 2 am.

Cheerie Berries, Ground Floor, Unity Centre, Pelita Commercial Centre. Popular for its live bands and R&B playlist. 2 giant TV screens and a pool table. Open 5pm - 2am, happy hours on alternate Mondays.

Crescendo, Ground Floor, Unity Centre, Pelita Commercial Centre. Small bar next to Al Fresco. Ladies night on Saturdays.

Island, Ground Floor Block 7, Unity Centre, Pelita Commercial Centre. The music is nicely restrained making for a relaxed environment to hang out. With a selection of over a hundred cocktails, you won't run out of choices. Open 4pm - 2am.

Lush Bar, Miri Marriott Resort & Spa. Stylish hotel lounge, also serves food including *tapas*, salads and Asian dishes. Open 3 pm - 1 am, live band 9 pm - 11.45 pm.

The Other Office, Ground Floor, Lot 349 Pelita Commercial Centre. A favourite amongst expatriates and locals. If you want cheap beer and pleasant company, this friendly pub is the place to go. Open 3.30pm - 2am, happy hours until 8pm.

Thai Bar, Lot 2212, 1st Floor, Krokop 5, Taman Yakin. 5 mins taxi drive from the town centre. One of the largest clubs in Miri with a central dance floor, large bar and balcony area. The dance floor and pool tables attract the younger crowd whilst the balcony and sofa areas provide quieter areas to drink and hang out with friends. Open 4pm - 2am.

Wheels Bar & Café, Miri Waterfront Commercial Centre (below the Highlands Hostel). Music café serving western food and playing pop and R&B. Live band on Saturdays. Open 4 pm - midnight (weekdays) and 2pm - 1am (weekends).

Cinema

Star Cineplex, Bintang Plaza, Level 3. Tel: 417610. Email: mstarcine@yahoo.com. Check local press for movie listings.

The Performing Arts

Traditional music and dance performances are often staged in the leading hotels, outdoors at Miri City Fan, public parks and at the Civic Centre (off Jln Gartak). Check local press for details. The popular **Miri International Jazz Festival** is held at the Parkcity Everly Hotel in early May every year.

TRAVEL CONNECTIONS

Any fares quoted in this guide are for one-way and do not include taxes and surcharges (where applicable).

Air: Regular **MAS** flights connect Miri with Kuching (three times daily) connection from KL, Kota Kinabalu (twice daily) and Kuala Lumpur (twice daily) direct, with onward connections to over 80 destinations worldwide. Malaysia's budget airline **Air Asia**, operates frequent flights to Miri from Kuala Lumpur (three times daily), Kuching

(once daily) and Kota Kinabalu (twice daily). Like most budget airlines, prices vary depending on how far in advance you book. As a rough guide, one-way fares typically range between RM 80 and RM 200. Please note that baggage allowance is only 15kg. **MASWings** currently operates the Inter-Town **Air Service**, flying Fokker 50s (baggage allowance 15kg) to Kuching, Bintulu, Labuan, Limbang, Mulu and Sibul, as well as a **Rural Air Service**, operating Twin Otters (baggage allowance 10kg) to Bakelalan, Bario, Lawas, Limbang, Long Akah, Long Banga, Long Lellang, Long Seridan, Marudi and Mukah.



Air Asia. 1st Floor, Main Terminal Building, Miri Airport. Also at Pelita Commercial Centre next to Grand Palace Hotel. Call centre: 03-76512222. Online booking & enquiries: www.airasia.com. Tickets available from travel agents, subject to booking fee.

Malaysian Airlines System (MAS) & MASWings - Miri Airport. Tel: 417315. Call centre 1300 883000. Online booking & enquiries: www.malaysiaairlines.com.

Road: Miri has road links with all major towns in Sarawak and Brunei.

Boat: Express boats for Marudi and Long Lama depart from the wharf near the ASEAN Bridge at Kuala Baram. See Marudi section for details.

Bus: Local Services depart from the bus station next to the Visitor's Information Centre. **Long Distance Services** depart from the Long Distance Bus Terminal at **Pujut Corner**. At peak holiday periods it is advisable to book long distance bus tickets in advance. To Limbang (Bintang Jaya Express at 1.30pm)

To Airport: Miri Bus No. 28 First bus 5.35 am, last bus 6.40pm.

To Bakam (for beaches): Miri Bus No. 13

To Batu Niah: See section on Niah Caves National Park.

To Bintulu (RM 27) – Sibul (RM 50) – Sarikei (RM 60) - Sri Aman (RM 85) – Kuching (RM 90): Frequent services from long distance bus terminal.

To Brunei: PHLS Express, daily at 8.15 am and 3.45 pm. (RM 40). Departs from long distance bus terminal and Tudan terminal.

To Kuala Baram (for Crocodile Farm and Express Boats to Marudi): Miri Bus No. 1 or 1A.

To Lambir Hills: See section on Lambir Hills National Park.

To Long Distance Bus Terminal: Miri Bus No. 33

To Mukah: 4x daily (also to Dalat) from long distance bus terminal (RM48).

To Pontianak (Indonesia): 4x daily from long distance bus terminal.

To Taman Selera and Marriot and Everly Hotels: Miri Bus Nos. 11& 13

Taxis: Airport to town is RM 22.00. The main taxi stand is off Jln. China in the centre of town. Miri taxis do not use meters so it is best to agree the fare first. Short distances around town are RM 6. Taxis can be booked by phoning 432277. A call out fee is levied. To charter a taxi for 1 hour costs RM 30.

Car Hire: This is a great way to explore in and around Miri. A number of tour operators provide chauffeur-driven cars, vans or 4WD vehicles, but there are only a few fully-fledged self-drive companies operating in Miri. Be wary of unlicensed operators, as they will not be fully insured - look for the Hire & Drive Permit fixed to the windscreen. At peak periods it is advisable to book a car in advance.

Avis Rent-A-Car. Lot 616, Grd Floor, Jln Permaisuri, Miri. Tel: 430222.

Golden System Car Rental. Miri Airport Counter. Tel: 013-8085559/613359
E-mail: goldencr88@hotmail.com Website: www.goldencr.com.my.

Kong Teck Car Rental. 1A-1B Jln Krokop, Miri. Tel: 434722/437093 Fax: 410543.

Mega Services Rent A Car. No. 3, Lorong 1, Sungai Krokop, Miri. Tel: 427436/431885.

FT Car Rental, Miri Airport, Tel/Fax 085-614772

Casbumi Car Rental. Miri Airport Counter. Tel: 612799

Sime Darby Rent A Car. Miri Airport Counter. Tel: 614740

E-mail:miri@hertz.simedarby.com Website:www.simedarbycarrental.com.

Tour Operators: Miri has many licensed tour operators offering a wide choice of tours and excursions. Their prices are very competitive, especially if you are in a group, are often better value than organising the trip yourself, and you also have the benefit of a knowledgeable local guide to accompany you. Beware of unlicensed tour operators or individuals offering tours, as they and their vehicles will not be properly insured.

SHOPPING



Miri has a wide variety of shops, stores and street markets, selling everything from daily necessities to designer goods and Sarawak handicrafts. The Old Town area is particularly good for bargain hunting.

Shopping Malls

Bintang Megamall (City Centre, off Jln Merbau) offers over 100 shops and food outlets, plus a bowling alley, a food court, a cineplex and an indoor archery range.

The **Boulevard Shopping Complex** on Jln Miri-Pujut (next to Pelita Commercial Centre) has over 80 retail outlets, a hypermarket, department store, and a rooftop food court, children's playground and video arcade.

The **Imperial Mall** (part of the Imperial Hotel & Suites complex on Jln Yu Seng Utara/ Jln Pos) is Miri's largest mall with over 120 retail outlets and restaurants spread over four floors.

Miri Plaza (Pelita Commercial Centre, next to Grand Palace Hotel) features the Servay supermarket and department store and a good selection of small clothing outlets.

Handicrafts

Borneo Arts, Lot 548, Jln Yu Seng Selatan, has an excellent selection of local handicrafts.

Miri Heritage Centre (Jln Brooke, see Attractions) offers a wide range of authentic local handicrafts direct from the producers.

Rong Reng Heritage, 12B, Jalan Brooke, 98000 Miri

A **Royal Selangor Pewter** shop is situated at 28F High St.

Tiang Heng & Sons, 51 Jln. Bendahara, sells handicrafts, antiques and curios along with a full range of fishing nets and equipment.

Markets

See Attractions section.

SPORTS & RECREATION

Angling: The Miri Anglers Club organises **deep sea game fishing trips** and the annual Miri International Deep Sea Fishing Tournament. Tel: 413550 Fax: 414358 E-mail: nelson58@streamyx.com. The 90-foot MV Crystal Coral is available for **live-aboard fishing** charters (up to 10 anglers). Contact Mr Wong Yung Min, Tel: 019-8841154, www.borneocoral.com.

Archery: An indoor archery range is located in the Bintang Plaza Shopping Mall (see Shopping).

Bowling: A 24-lane bowling centre is located in the Bintang Plaza Shopping Mall (see Shopping)

Diving: See separate Diving section

Fitness Centres: Well-equipped fitness centres are located in the Parkcity Everly,



Marriot, Mega and Grand Palace Hotels (members and guests only, short-term membership is available).

Go-Karting: Miri is home to Sarawak's only international standard go-karting circuit. The circuit will be holding track days for visitors in the near future. Contact the Visitor's Information Centre in Miri for further details.

Golf: Miri has a choice of two excellent courses; the 18-hole **Miri Golf Club** course (whose former pros include Vijay Singh) has an idyllic location between the Miri River and the South China Sea. Green fees (non-members) RM 52.50 (9-holes, weekdays) to RM 147 (18 holes, weekends). Tel: 416787 Fax: 417848 E-mail: admin@mirigolfclub.net website: www.mirigolfclub.net. The new **Eastwood Valley Golf and Country Club** offers a par-72 18-hole course in an attractive forest setting 10 minutes drive from the city centre. Tel: 421010/472515/471775 Fax: 471814/432515.

Email: info@eastwoodvalley.com Website: www.eastwoodvalley.com.

Hash House Harriers: The Miri Hash (Tel: 656979) organises regular runs in the surrounding countryside, followed by "on-ons" at some of the city's many pubs.

Mountain Biking: There are many challenging bike trails around Miri. Contact the Miri Mountain Bike Club (Tel: 423589 website: www.mmbc.com.my) for information.

Sailing: The new **Miri Marina** offers state-of-the-art berthing facilities for yachts up to 115ft (100m). Contact Capt. Ariffin for details, Tel: 019-3998570 E-mail: info@mirimarina.com website: www.mirimarina.com. The **Piasau Boat Club**, home of the Sarawak Sailing Association, offers dinghy sailing, as well as diving, tennis, squash, hockey, volleyball and a state-of-the-art fitness facility. For membership details call 655313 or check the website at www.piasaubaclub.com.

Swimming: The Public Swimming Pool is located in the Miri City Fan recreation area (see Attractions). Tel: 411412. Opening Hours: Tues -Sat (9 am - 9 pm) Sun (9 am - 7 pm) Monday & PH closed. Entrance Fee: RM 1.00.

Useful Information

Banks & Money Changers: The following is list of centrally-located banks and money changers. Banks charge a service fee for changing travellers' cheques whilst money changers only deal with cash transactions.

Banks

Bumiputera Commerce Bank, Lot 507-508 Jln Permaisuri

EON Bank, Lot 725 Jln Merbau.

Hong Leong Bank, Lot 1090-1091 Jln Merpati.

HSBC Bank, Lot 1268-1270, Miri Commercial Centre, Jln Melayu.

Malayan Banking, 112 Jln Bendahara

Public Bank, 28 China Street.

RHB Bank, Lot 362 Jln Nakhoda Gampar.

Standard Chartered Bank, Centre Point Phase II.

Money Changers

Asia Gangsa, Ground Floor, Imperial Mall, Jln Yu Seng Utara.

Chin Guan, 1 High Street (in back lane)

Brilworth Trading, Lot 277 Taman Jade Manis.

Instant Produce, 7 Jln Raja.

PK Tho & Sons, 21 High Street.

ST Sim, Lot 1156 Waterfront Commercial Centre.

Teck Soon, Lot 355 Jln Brooke (in Khung Chung General Store).

Doctors and Dentists: Some hotels have doctors on call, while others will be happy to recommend doctors and dentists. Visitors may use the outpatients department at the **Miri Hospital** (Jln Lopeng, Tel: 420033). There are also two private hospitals, the **ColumbiaAsia Medical Centre** (Jln Maigold, Tel: 665262) and the **Miri City Medical Centre** (Jln Hokkien, Tel: 426622).

Pharmacies: Pharmacies are dotted all over town and are open 7 days a week, usually from 9.00 am to 6.00 or 7.00 pm. Staff almost always speak good English and are able to advise on minor health problems.

Post Office: The Central Post Office is on Jln Kingsway. There is also a Post Office in the Boulevard Shopping Complex (see Shopping)

Places of Worship: For other religions and denominations please check the local press or enquire at the Visitor's Information Centre.

Miri Mosque, Jln. Merpati

Chinese Temples, Jln. China & Jln Krokop 9 (see Attractions)

St. Columba's Church (Anglican), Jln. Kubu.

St. Joseph's Cathedral (RC), Jln. Angsana, off Miri-Pujut Rd.

SIB (Evangelical Church of Borneo), Lot 67, Lrg. 2, Krokop.

Sikh Temple, Jln Kubu.

Useful Telephone Numbers

Central Police Station (Jalan Raja)	433677
Emergency Service (Police/Ambulance)	999
Fire Brigade	994
General Hospital	420033
Immigration (Jln Gartak)	432209
Miri Taxi Association (24 hr)	432277
Resident's Office (Jalan Raja)	433202

BINTULU

Introduction



Originally a sleepy Melanau fishing village, Bintulu is nowadays Sarawak's main industrial town and principal deep-water port, servicing the oil, gas and timber industries. The town is located at the mouth of the Kemena River and has a population of approximately 100,000, made up primarily of Ibans, Chinese, Malays and Melanau, with a smattering of Bisayas, Kedayans, Bidayuhs and Orang Ulu, and a sizeable expatriate contingent.

Attractions

For the visitor, Bintulu's main tourist attraction is **Similajau National Park**, a narrow strip of forest fronted by golden sand beaches (see National Parks chapter). Other attractions & town features are listed below.

Pasar Tamu & Pasar Utama are two markets located near each other along the riverfront selling a range of local produce. The cone-shaped roofs symbolize the traditional Melanau headgear, the *terendak*. The top floor of the Pasar Utama has stalls selling local hawker food favourites.

The **Night Market** (*Pasar Malam*), off Jln Abang Galau, is a good place to stroll around and try snacks, grilled meats and fish, and delicious local cakes.

The **Council Negeri Memorial** in the town centre commemorates Sarawak's first State Legislative Assembly meeting, which was held in Bintulu on 8th September 1867.

Tanjung Batu Beach is a local picnic and recreational spot located approximately 3 km from the town centre. Take a taxi or bus No. 9.

Taman Tumbina is a mini-zoo and botanical park located near Tanjung Batu. It features a walk-in hornbill aviary, a walk-in butterfly garden, and exotic animals including flamingos, tigers, crocodiles and pythons. Open 8 am to 6 pm daily, adult RM 2, child (under 12) RM 0.50. Local bus No. 9.

Kidurong Tower, a small observation tower located at Tanjung Kidurong on the outskirts of town offers views of Bintulu's oil and gas facilities and structures. It's best to go shortly after dark when the flame-offs from the refineries and processing facilities make an awe-inspiring sight.

Accommodation

International Class Hotels

Bintulu's accommodation ranges from budget to international class hotels. Unless otherwise indicated, all are located in the Town Centre area. Rates shown range from cheapest single to most expensive double, and are inclusive of 5% government tax and 10% service charge except where indicated (++). Telephone dialling code is +6086 from overseas and 086 within Malaysia.

Parkcity Everly Hotel, Jalan Tun Razak. Tel: 318888. Fax: 318899. Email: pkcity@po.jaring.my. www.vhhotels.com. 228 rooms. Outlets include *Luconia Bay Coffee House* (local and international cuisine), *M&D's Restaurant* and *Waves Pub*. Amenities include laundry and dry cleaning, business centre, baby sitting service, children's playground, fitness centre, swimming pool, internet access, hotel shop, executive lounge, conference & banqueting facilities.

Regency Plaza Hotel, 116 Taman Sri Dagang, Jln Abang Galau. Tel: 335111. Fax: 332742. Email: rihbtu@tm.net.my. 3 star hotel with recently refurbished rooms. Facilities include swimming pool, coffee house, laundry and dry cleaning and conference & banqueting facilities.

Mid-Range Hotels

Hoover Hotel, No 92, Jln Keppel. Tel: 337166. Fax: 337597.

Kemena Inn, 78 Jln Keppel. Tel: 333378. Fax: 316998.

Li Hua Hotel, Lot 36, Berjaya Commercial Centre, Jln Sultan Iskandar. Tel: 335000. Fax: 335222. Email: lihuahb@yahoo.com. www.lihuahotelbtu.com. Amenities include laundry and dry cleaning, swimming pool, WiFi access, beauty saloon, karaoke rooms, cafe, restaurant, conference & banqueting facilities. Well run 2/3 star property located just outside the town centre.

Kintown Inn, No. 93, Jln Keppel. Tel: 333666. Fax: 333335. Email: kintowninn@yahoo.com. One of the better mid range inns in town.

Riverfront Inn, 256 Taman Sri Dagang. Tel: 333111. Fax: 339577. Pretty decent mid range hotel on the riverfront.

Sunlight Inn, No 7 Pedada Road. Tel: 332577. Fax: 334075. Good location, spotlessly clean and good value for money.

Budget Hotels

There are numerous budget inns in the town centre. Noise can be a problem in some of these places and standards vary widely so ask to see the rooms before checking in. One of the most popular budget inns for foreign travellers is the centrally located Sea View Inn.

Sea View Inn, No 254, Jln Masjid, Taman Sri Dagang. Tel: 339118. Fax: 339228. Basic, clean rooms on the waterfront.

Eating Out

Chinese

Chinese coffee shops are found all around the town centre and sell a range of noodle dishes, chicken rice, mixed rice and other local hawker food.

Apple Restaurant, No 78-79, Parkcity Commerce Square. Tel: 333377. Halal. Popular restaurant serving Malaysian & Chinese dishes. 5 mins taxi ride from the town centre. Bookings advisable on weekends. Open 10 am - 2 pm and 5 pm - 10 pm.

Marco Polo Restaurant & Grill, see International below.

Riverfront Café (in the Riverfront Inn), 256 Taman Sri Dagang. Tel: 333111.

Indian

Abida Café, 159, Taman Sri Dagang, Jln Masjid. South Indian Muslim food including *nasi biryani*, curries, *thosai*, *chapati*. Open 6 am to midnight.

International

Marco Polo Restaurant & Grill, Ground Floor, Lot 114-116 BDA-Shaida Commercial Centre. Halal. Tel: 332458. Open 10 am to 2 pm and 5 pm to 11.30 pm.

M&D's Restaurant, Parkcity Everly Hotel, Jln Tun Razak. Tel: 318888. International and Malaysian cuisine.

Malay

There are some good Malay restaurants in the town centre with most places offering mixed rice, *roti canai*, noodles, *nasi lemak*, etc. Jalan Sommerville is probably the best place to head for as it has a cluster of outlets open from early morning until late at night.

An-Nur Café, 39 Jln Sommerville. Open 6.30 am to 10 pm.

Famous Mama Café, 10 Jln Sommerville, Open 6.30 am to 12 midnight.

PJ Corner, No 18 New Commercial Centre, Jln Abang Galau. Open 7 am to 11 pm.

Puteri Café & Catering, 28 Jln Sommerville. Roti canai, nasi lemak, nasi campur and fried rice and noodle dishes. Open 5 am to 6 pm.

Puteri Corner Café, 26 Jln Sommerville. Open 7 am to 3 am.

Rom Café, No. 2 New Commercial Centre, Jln Abang Galau. Open 7.30 am to 5 pm.

Sri Impian, Lot 108, Ground Floor, Taman Sri Dagang. Open 8 am to 6 pm.

Shalimar Restaurant, 22 Jln Sommerville. Open 7 am to 11 pm. Malay food plus some Pakistani dishes such *tandoori* chicken and fish and good *naan* bread.

Jing Cheng Café, 9 Jln Sommerville. Range of Malay stalls selling satay, *mee jawa*, mixed rice and *roti canai*. Open 7 am to 5 am.

Entertainment

There are countless **karaoke lounges** and **dangdut bars** located in the town centre, all with a similar set-up. If karaoke and being hassled to buy 'ladies drinks' is not your thing, your best bet is to head to a coffee shop where cheap beers are available. Other options include **Waves Pub** at the Parkcity Everly Hotel, a popular Bintulu hangout with live bands on Mon to Sat; and **Ezy Plus** (No 282 & 283 Phase 4, Parkcity Commercial Square. Tel: 332558), a pleasant corner bar with reasonably priced drinks located a 5 minute taxi ride from the town centre.

Golf

Bintulu Golf Course, Jln Tanjung Kidurong. Tel: 252001. 18 hole course set on hilly terrain adjacent to the coast. Weekday green fees, RM 52.50 (9 holes), RM 105 (18 holes). Weekend green fees RM 78.75 (9 holes), RM 157.50 (18 holes).

Travel Connections

Air: Bintulu's international airport is located 27 kilometres from the town centre.

Air Asia (www.airasia.com), **MASWings** and **MAS** (www.malaysiaairlines.com) all service Bintulu. See Miri Travel Connections for airline contact details, and airline websites for the latest schedules, frequencies and fares. The taxi fare from the airport to town (30 min) is RM 35.00.

Bus: The **Long Distance Bus Station** is 5 km from the town centre at Medan Jaya.

As Bintulu is on the main Pan Borneo Highway, long distance destinations are the same as for Miri. Use bus No. 29 or take a taxi (RM 10). The **Town Centre Bus Station** is on Jln Abang Galau, next to the taxi and minivan stand.

Road: Bintulu is connected by road to all major towns in Sarawak.

Car Rental: Kong Teck Car Rental, No. 12, Bangunan Baru Terminal Bas, Jln Tun Hussein Onn, 97000 Bintulu. Tel: 312106

UP THE BARAM RIVER

The Batang Baram, Malaysia's (and Sarawak's) second longest river, drains much of the northern region, and is home to many of the Orang Ulu tribes, including the Kayan, the Kenyah, the Berawan and the shy and semi-nomadic Penan. Much of the Baram region is highly inaccessible, but there are some fascinating sights in the region, including the famous **Gunung Mulu** National Park and the lesser-known **Loagan Bunut** National Park (see National Parks chapter). Other attractions accessible to visitors include the small riverside town of **Marudi**, the bustling Kenyah community at **Long San**, and the delightful Kayan longhouse community of **Long Bedian**.



MARUDI

Marudi is situated on the northern bank of the Baram roughly 80 km from Miri. It is a busy bazaar town whose traders supply most of Sarawak's northern interior, so you are likely

to bump into members of dozens of different ethnic groups here. The town's main attraction is **Fort Hose**, a Brooke-era wooden fort named for Marudi's most famous administrator, the naturalist, ethnographer and pioneer photographer Charles Hose. The fort is nowadays a museum, featuring some of Hose's remarkable ethnographic photographs, as well as local textiles, handicrafts and ceremonial items. To get there, walk uphill along Jln Fort from the Main Bazaar (10 min). The nearby **Taman Tasik** (lake park) offers excellent river views from the hilltop.

Accommodation

All addresses are 98058 Marudi, Sarawak, Malaysia. Telephone dialling code is +6085 from overseas and 085 within Malaysia.

Business Class Hotel

Grand Hotel, No. 92, Lorong Lima, Tel: 085-755711, 755712, 755143 Fax: 755293.

Budget Hotels

Alisan Hotel, No. 63-65, Queen Square. Tel: 755911.

Baram Hotel, No. 7, Queen Square. Tel: 756008/755773

Ka Lee Inn, Queen Square. Tel: 755897/755098

Marudi Hotel, No.3, Queen Square. Tel: 755141/756603

Mayland Hotel, Lot 347, Marudi Town District. Tel: 755106/755089 Fax: 755333

Mount Mulu Hotel, Lot 89 & 90, Marudi Town District. Tel: 756671 Fax: 756670
Queen Inn, No. 34, Jalan Lim Chin Kiat. Tel 755330
Victoria Hotel, Lot 961, Main Bazaar. Tel: 756067, 756071 Fax: 756864

Eating Out

Marudi has a fair selection of **Chinese coffee shops** serving noodle and rice dishes, while the **Boon Kee** restaurant (Jln Newshop) is popular for sumptuous dinners. **Malay food** is available from the stalls at the **Pasar Rakyat food centre**. **Restoran Kopaselera** on Jln Cinema serves economical **Indian Muslim** dishes.

Travel Connections

Air: **MASWings** currently operates regular Twin Otter turboprop flights to and from Miri and Bario. Less frequent flights (1-2x weekly) serve the remote communities of Long Akah, Long Banga, Long Lellang and Long Seridan.

Boat: Downriver express boats leave approximately hourly for Kuala Baram (near Miri) from 7.30am (RM 20). There is a daily service to Long Terawan (RM 20, 4hrs) with an onward connection to Mulu National Park (connection must be booked in advance, see National Parks chapter).

Road: Marudi is also accessible from Miri by 4WD along an old logging road. Vehicles depart from the central bus station. Check with the Visitors' Information Centre in Miri for details.

Permits: A permit is necessary to travel upriver beyond Marudi. This is available free of charge from the Resident's Office in Miri.

LONG SAN

The sprawling Kenyah community of Long San is the last major settlement on the Baram River. Long San is something of a surprise to those who expect a sleepy riverside village rather than a mini-boom-town. However it's still the principal home of **traditional Kenyah art, crafts, music and dance**, and visitors are sure to have a fascinating time.

The region around Long San is a complex ethnic mix, and visitors can take in the Kayan longhouse of **Long Mekaba**, famous for its traditional musicians who are expert in playing the lute-like *sape*, as well as the abandoned Brooke-era fort at **Long Akah**, and even visit **nomadic Panan groups** when they are in the area. These activities generally cost about RM 150 per person per day for 4 persons, due to the vehicles, boats and fuel costs involved, and can be arranged at the Long San Guesthouse (see below).

Accommodation

The **Long San Guesthouse**, a community-run project, is the only accommodation option. It offers comfortable fan-cooled rooms in an attractive wooden building close to the river. Room rate is including all meals. A small shop nearby sells basic essentials, including cold beer and the powerful local rice wine, *borak*.

Travel Connections

The only practical way to get to Long San without chartering boats and incurring excessive costs is the **4WD service** from Miri, passing along old logging roads (RM 80, 4½ hrs). Check with the Visitor's Information Centre in Miri for the latest schedules. From Long San it is possible to charter a 4WD vehicle (RM 300, 4 hrs) to the remote Kenyah longhouse at Lio Match, from where it is possible to trek to Bario in the Kelabit Highlands (see Kelabit Highlands chapter)

CATION



LONG BEDIAN

Long Bedian is one of those rare longhouses that is not gradually losing members through migration to the cities. Instead, it is thriving to such an extent that it has even been visited by the King and Queen of Malaysia. Keen to showcase their success to others, the Kayan people of Long Bedian have set up a community tourism programme with riverbank chalets and a lodge attached to the longhouse. They offer an authentic upriver experience, setting up an extensive network of jungle trails and providing treks and boat trips to picturesque waterfalls and other idyllic locations.

Accommodation

The **Tenyok Rimba Resort** offers one and two room chalets with electricity, running water and cooking facilities. When full, visitors can also be accommodated in the longhouse lodge or with individual families. Village shops sell all basic necessities for self caterers, or meals can be arranged. E-mail lbedian@longbedian.com for reservations. Further information is available at www.longbedian.com.

Travel Connections

Boat: From Miri, take one of the frequent express boats from Kuala Baram to Marudi (fare approximately RM 30, 3-4 hrs), then change into another express boat to Long Lama (fare approximately RM 20, 4 hrs). From Long Lama, charter the local 4WD service to Long Bedian (RM 120 & above per vehicle (4 passenger)). Contact person: Mr Lagang, Tel: 013-8013200. Mr Wan Jok, Tel: 019-8454510.

Road: The Long Bedian community offers a direct 4WD service from Miri via logging roads and journey takes about 5-6 hrs. Charter rate one way approximately RM 450 & above per vehicle (4 passenger). Contact person: Mr Lagang, Tel: 013-8013200. Mr Wan Jok, Tel: 019-8454510.

Flight: By MAS Wings 15 mins flight on this unique aircraft - Twin Otter to Marudi (air fare approximately RM 63), then travel into the express boat to Long Lama and finally on the 4WD service to Long Bedian.

THE KELABIT HIGHLANDS



The Kelabit Highlands is a series of beautiful mountain valleys lying slightly over 1000m above sea level and flanked by jungle-covered peaks rising to more than 2,400m. The climate is probably the most pleasant in Borneo, although it can become quite chilly in the evenings. The Kelabit, after whom the area is named, and the neighbouring and closely related Lun Bawang, are Borneo's only wet rice farmers, and their well tended *padi* fields bring order to the rugged landscape, and produce the fragrant and much sought-after Bario rice. Both groups are branches of the Orang Ulu, and live in large longhouses widely dispersed throughout the area. They are friendly, hospitable people and enjoy receiving visitors.

Bario



Bario is the gateway to the Kelabit highlands, thanks to its airport and a small network of paved roads leading to some of the nearby villages. The main attraction at Bario is the old longhouse, Bario Asal, whose ancient timbers are darkened by the constant smoke of generations of cooking fires. Most of the area's accommodation is found in and around Bario, and it is the main starting point for treks through the area.

Bakelalan

Bakelalan (formerly Ba'Kelalan) is the most important of the Lun Bawang settlements in the northern highlands. The village is famous for its apples and organic vegetables, and for the local musicians and their 'bamboo bands'. The village is connected to Lawas and Miri by air, and it is also possible to travel to Lawas via an old logging road.

Treks and Trails

One of the great attractions of the Kelabit Highlands is trekking from longhouse to longhouse through dense rainforest and past sparkling green *padi* fields. These treks last from a few hours to a few weeks in duration, and vary from a gentle stroll to a tough jungle hike, using log bridges to cross fast-flowing rivers. Some of the treks involve a short excursion into Kalimantan, Indonesia. Mountaineers can tackle Gunung Murud (2,424m, reasonable going) or the famous Batu Lawi (2,043m, very tough).

A variety of other treks include week long trails to **Long Lellang** or **Lio Matoh** longhouses on the upper Baram (with overnight stops in the rainforest), for boat or air connections downriver, trails leading north to Indonesia, and a pleasant 2-3 day trek to **Bakelalan** from Bario (or vice versa). It is also possible to climb **Gunung Murud** or **Batu Lawi**, but these are both serious expeditions and guides and porters will need to be hired (RM 80 per day) in Bario or Bakelalan. For Batu Lawi, mountaineering equipment and experience is also necessary.

Guides

Experienced guides are essential for all of these treks. Expect to pay RM 80-100 per day, plus an additional RM 80 per day for porters if you don't want to carry everything yourself. The most experienced guides are usually attached to one of the guesthouses. Jungle survival expert Wilson Bala and dedicated naturalist Lian Tarawe operate from Tarawe's lodge (jtarawe@bario.net, wilsonbala@hotmail.com), while Peter Matu, a keen local historian, operates from Bario Asal Homestay (kelabit@kelabit.net). James Jaman Riboh is a real all-rounder with superb communication skills, who operates from Gem's Lodge (gems_lodge@yahoo.com). Douglas Munney operates from De Plateau Lodge (deplateau@hotmail.com) and specializes in birdwatching trips. Over the last few years, these experts have been training up a new generation of trekking guides, so whoever you get you are sure of a memorable experience, and all speak excellent English and Bahasa Malaysia.

For treks starting from Bakelalan, the best people to contact are Borneo Jungle Safari, who run the Apple Lodge and its counterpart in Miri. Tel: 475736 Fax: 417984 Website: www.borneojunglesafari.com.

Accommodation – Bario and Around

Bariev Guesthouse, Jln Bario, E-mail: reddish@hotmail.com. 20 rooms, shared bath. Near the shops past the old airstrip – ask for Reddish's place.

Bario Asal Homestay, Bario Asal, E-mail: kelabit@kelabit.net. Family-run homestay in the old longhouse at Bario Asal.

De Plateau Lodge, Jln Pa Umur, Bario, E-mail: deplateau@hotmail.com. 7 rooms. 3 km east of Bario on the 'road' to Pa Umur.

Gem's Lodge, Pa Umur, Bario, E-mail: gems_lodge@yahoo.com. 8 rooms. Delightful riverside setting 6km southeast of Bario (transport provided from airport).

Labang's Longhouse, Bario, E-mail: ncbario@yahoo.com. 17 rooms longhouse style. 1km east of Bario village.

Tarawae's, Jln Bario, E-mail: jtarawe@bario.net. 4 rooms plus a nearby annex. Bario's original lodge, just a short walk from the airport. Owner John Tarawe is a renowned authority on pitcher plants.

Bario Hill View Lodge, (bariohillviewlodge@yahoo.com.my)

Junglebluedream Art Gallery & Homestay, Ulung Palang Longhouse, Bario. (junglebluedream@gmail.com)

Accommodation – Bakelalan

Apple Lodge, Kampung Buduk Nur, Bakelalan, website: www.borneojunglesafari.com. 10 rooms, room rate RM 20-30, meals by arrangement.

Travel Connections - Bario

Unless you are trekking from Bakelalan, Long Lellang or Lio Match, Bario is only accessible by air. **MASWings** currently operates regular Twin Otter turboprop flights to and from Miri, Marudi and Bakelalan. - see Miri Travel Connections for full details.

Travel Connections – Ba Kelalan

Air: **MASWings** currently operates regular Twin Otter turboprop flights to and from Lawas and Bario. – see Miri Travel Connections for full details. See also the Lawas and Bario sections for connecting flights.

Road: A daily 4WD service operates between Lawas Bus Station and Bakelalan along old logging roads (6hrs, RM 60). Check with the Visitors' Information Centre in Miri for the latest schedule.

SARAWAK'S FAR NORTH – LIMBANG AND LAWAS

LIMBANG



The small market and port town of Limbang is situated on the narrow tongue of land that divides Brunei in two. The town has an idyllic location stretched out along the eastern bank of the Sungai Limbang. A bustling Malay water-village directly across river simply adds to the charm of the location. Limbang is a popular weekend destination for neighbouring Bruneians, but is otherwise seldom visited.

Nearby Attractions

Many of Limbang's attractions are spread out around the town, and it is well worth booking a short tour (see Around Limbang, below) or chartering a taxi for an hour or two. **Bukit Mas** (gold hill) is a 210m high jungle-clad limestone outcrop which dominates the town. The summit offers excellent views of nearby Brunei and is accessible via a steep road leading off Jln Pandaruan, or by foot via a long staircase leading from the **Lake Garden** at the eastern end of the town. There is a small **Buddhist shrine** halfway up the summit road.

There are some well kept **Malay and Chinese kampungs** (traditional villages) along Jln Pandaruan which offer excellent photo opportunities. Further along the road towards the Brunei Ferry are a number of **Kedayan kampungs** where delicious fresh swamp clams are offered for sale. If you buy some, most seafood restaurants in town will be happy to cook them for you.

Back in town, the **Esplanade** is a popular place for strolling in the evening (it is used as a car park until 4pm) with a memorial of the Limbang Rebellion as its focal point. The wooden **Limbang Museum**, 200 metres upriver, has a modest collection of archaeological finds and ethnic artifacts. Downriver is an attractive **Chinese Temple** across from the Purnama Hotel. There is also a **public library** (4th floor of Limbang District Council building, adjoining Purnama Hotel) with a reference collection of books on the Limbang region. The bustling **Tamu** or **wet market** is on the waterfront in the centre of town, while the informal '**bawah payung**' ('under the umbrella') **market** sets up at weekends outside the shophouses across the road, selling all manner of cheap goods.

Around Limbang

Borneo Touch Ecotour, the only local operator, offers a choice of interesting trips around Limbang. Possibilities include **proboscis monkey** and **crocodile spotting** boat tours amongst the mangroves, the bizarre 80cm high **mud volcanoes** at Kampung Meritam, 35km from town, day and overnight trips to nearby **Iban longhouses**, mountain bike trips to **Gunung Buda**, visits to the idyllic **Mentawi Ranger Station** at the northern border of Gunung Mulu National Park, and **trekking to Mulu** via the historic Headhunters Trail (see National Parks, Gunung Mulu). Call the ever-helpful Mr Lim Chong Teah on 013-8443861, E-mail walktomulu@yahoo.com. my, or look for him at his wife's confectionery shop next to the Sports Toto outlet on Jln Merdeka, which also doubles as Limbang's unofficial tourist information centre. Visitors requiring **further information** on Limbang and its surroundings should feel free to call Mr Chua Eng Hin, a knowledgeable and enthusiastic local citizen who acts as Limbang's one-man tourism promotion and information service, at 019-8145355, or E-mail him at chualbg@streamyx.com.

Accommodation

All addresses are 98700 Limbang, Sarawak, Malaysia. Telephone dialling code is +6085 from overseas and 085 within Malaysia.

Business Class Hotels

Purnama Hotel, Jln Buangsiol. 3-star business hotel with the best location in town. Get a river view room if you can. Tel: 216700 Fax: 216711.

Budget Hotels

Centre Point Hotel, Lot 1587-8, Jln Buangsiol. Tel: 213699 Fax: 217637.

Hota Inn, Lot 1453, Jln Buangsiol. Tel: 212733 Fax: 212788.

Jia Lun Hotel, Lot 1116, Jln Buangsiol. Tel: 215060 Fax: 215048.

Mariner Inn, Lot 1371-3, Jln Buangsiol. Tel: 212922/3/5/6 Fax: 215898.

Mesra Inn, Lot 787-8, Jln Bank. Tel: 213351 Fax: 212153.

Metro Hotel, Lot 781-2, Jln Bangkita. Tel: 211133 Fax: 211051.

Muhibbah Inn, Lot 790-2, Jln Bank. Tel: 212482 Fax: 212153.

Prime Hotel, Lot 112, Jln Buangsiol. Tel: 213833 Fax: 217999.

Royal Park Hotel, Lot 1089-90 Jln Buangsiol, Tel: 212155 Fax: 212233.

Eating Out

For a small town, Limbang has a remarkably wide choice of dining possibilities. The following are just a small selection.

Chinese: Dozens of **Chinese hawker stalls** set up every evening around the three rows of old wooden shophouses in the town centre, offering economical noodle and rice dishes and local specialities. More Chinese hawker stalls operate from early morning to late afternoon on the first floor of the **Tamu** (wet market) building. More demanding diners will find a good selection of Chinese **seafood restaurants**; amongst the most popular are **Waterfront Seafood** and **King's Seafood** (both

facing the riverfront on Jln Buangsiol opposite the Customs Department building), and **Maggie Café** (open late to 2 am) on the riverside to the north of town. The town is full of traditional **Chinese coffee shops** serving drinks and simple breakfast and lunch dishes – for sheer atmosphere none of them beats the tiny and very friendly **Ah Mee Café** in an old wooden building on Jln Merdeka.

Malay: A selection of **Muslim food stalls** operate from early evening to around midnight near the waterfront off Jln Buangsiol, and more Malay stalls can be found on the first floor of the **Tamu** (wet market). Good Malay restaurants include the busy and popular **Sarimah Curry House**, uphill from the clock tower on Jln Rickett, Adnan Restaurant next to the airport road roundabout near RHB Bank, **Mesra** opposite the bus station and **Selera Muhibbah** on Jln Bank.

Western: Fast food lovers will find **KFC** and **Sugar Bun** outlets in **Limbang Plaza**, the shopping centre adjoining the Purnama Hotel, while **Maggie Café** (see Chinese, above) serves simple western dishes such as steaks and fish and chips.

Entertainment

Much of Limbang's nightlife is geared up to catering to thrill-seeking male visitors from Brunei. If you don't want to pay for 'ladies drinks' then stick to the regular coffee shops or the **Purnama Hotel Lounge**, which usually features decent live bands and affordable drink prices.

Useful Information

Internet Access: Media Cybercafé, 2nd Floor, Limbang Plaza.

Swimming Pool: The public swimming pool is on Jln Panduran, about 20 mins walk or a short taxi ride from the town centre.

Healthcare: The Limbang Hospital is on Jln Panduran about 10 mins drive from town. There are a few private clinics in the town itself.

Money Changers: Thanks to the weekend trade from Brunei, money changers are located on every street corner and shopping centre.

Travel Connections

Air: **MASWings** currently operates regular Fokker 50 flights to and from Miri.

Bus: There is no bus service between Temburong (Brunei) and Limbang. However regular buses travel as far as the Pandaruan Ferry, but it is necessary to cross the border on foot and take a taxi onwards to Temburong.

Boat: There are express boat services to the island of Labuan (8.00 am, jetty on the Esplanade wharf, 2 hrs, RM 30) and Lawas (8.00 am, jetty off Jln Buangsiol opposite Royal Park Hotel, 3hrs, RM 30). The speedboat service to Bandar Sri Begawan in Brunei (2x daily, 30 min, RM 20) departs from the Customs wharf. Access via the Customs Department building next to the Tamu (wet market). Boats leave when full, so get there early. Alternatively, to charter a speedboat to Brunei, call Mr Chiew (019-8066055) or Mr Lai (013-8249551).

Taxis: The taxi stand is on the waterfront opposite the Customs Department building (Tel 213781). Most trips around town are RM 5-7, and the airport is RM 15.

LAWAS

Lawas is a bustling little border town sandwiched between the Temburong district of Brunei and the neighbouring Malaysian state of Sabah on the Lawas River (Sungai Lawas). The only significant attractions in town are the large and spotlessly clean **Central Market** (Pasar Raya), which offers a great selection of tropical fruits and vegetables, an attractive **Chinese Temple** on Jln Bunga Teratai, and an **old Mosque** on the banks of the Sungai Lawas about 400m east of town.

The few visitors who come to Lawas are usually stopping over on their way to Sabah, or to the remote settlement of **Bakelalan** (formerly Ba' Kelalan), home of the Lun Bawang ethnic group (see Kelabit Highlands chapter). There are some **hot springs** with resort accommodation at **Merarap**, about 70 km from town along an old logging road (see Accommodation, below), and a **pleasant beach** at **Punang** (7 km, minibus from bus station, RM 3).

Accommodation

The attitude of hoteliers in Lawas town is somewhat "take-it-or-leave it" in regard to room rates, maintenance and quality of service. It's best to inspect your room and its facilities before accepting it. All addresses are 98750 Lawas, Sarawak, Malaysia. Telephone dialling code is +6085 from overseas and 085 within Malaysia.

Eastern Hotel, No.18, 1st Floor, Lot 317, Jln. Trusan, Tel: 285980.

Gaya Inn, No. 18-19, Lot 363 & 364, Jln. Punang. Tel: 285855 Fax: 285733.

Hotel Federal, No.8, Lot 252, Jln. Masjid Baru. Tel: 285341 Fax: 283085.

Hotel Perdana, No.24, Lot 365, Jln. Punang. Tel: 285888 Fax: 285999.

Mega Inn, No.1, 1st Floor, Lot 153, Jln. Muhibbah Tel: 283888 Fax: 283800.

Mexion Hotel, No.7, Lot 406, Jln. Pantai. Tel: 284699 Fax: 285233.

Million Hotel, No.5, Lot 157, Jln. Muhibbah. Tel: 285020

Sakura Inn, No.18, 1st Floor, Lot 375, Jln Datuk Pengiran Hj Matussin. Tel: 285054.

Shangsan Hotel, No.17, Lot 235-236, Jln Trusan. Tel: 285522 Fax: 285024.

Soon Seng Hotel, No.1, Lot 346, Jln. Punang. Tel: 283338/9 Fax: 285233.

Merarap Hotspring Lodge, Lawas, Sarawak. Tel: 283472 Fax: 283927 E-mail: meraraphotsp@yahoo.com. Features natural hot spring spa pools, restaurant. Activities include fishing, birdwatching, visits to local Lun Bawang communities, adventure trails. Note: return 4WD transport is provided for a flat fee of RM 300, shared by however many guests are traveling together.

Eating Out

Chinese: The town abounds with traditional **coffee shops** serving noodle and rice dishes for breakfast and lunch. For dinner, the **Soon Seng** restaurant in Jln Punang is a good choice, as is the bustling **Good Corner Seafood** behind the Ngiu Kee department store.

Malay: There is a good choice of **Muslim food stalls** upstairs at the **Central Market**. **Restoran Hajjah Latifah** on the corner of Jln Pantai near the market is highly recommended for mixed rice dishes, as are the nearby **Restoran Hj Narudin**, and **Al Amin** behind the Shangsan Hotel.

Western: The **Sugar Bun** outlet on Jln Pantai offers burgers and fries. Good coffee, cakes and snacks are available at the **Intan Cake House**, also on Jln Pantai.

Entertainment

There are quite a few bars and karaoke lounges in town, all of which feature hostesses anxious to consume 'ladies drinks'. Drinkers not looking for female company are advised to keep to the coffee shops.

Travel Connections

Air: **MASWings** currently operates regular Twin Otter turboprop flights to and from Miri and Bakelalan. – see Miri Travel Connections for full details.

Bus: There are regular bus connections to Kota Kinabalu in Sabah (7am onwards, 4 hrs, RM 20), and to Merapok on the Sarawak/Sabah border (RM 5) with onward connections to Beaufort (Sabah, 4 hrs, RM20). Note: A passport is required to cross the Sarawak/Sabah border.

Boat: There is a daily express boat service to Limbang (8.00am, 2½ hrs, RM 25), a 5x weekly service to Labuan (7.30am, 2 hrs RM 25), and a daily service to Bandar Sri Begawan (Brunei) (7.30am, 2 hrs, RM 25, returns at 1.30pm).

Taxis: The taxi stand is next to the bus station. Airport taxi fare is probably the lowest in Malaysia at RM 4-5.

NATIONAL PARKS

Northern Sarawak's national parks feature a wide range of natural habitats and contain some of the region's leading visitor attractions. The national parks listed below are all open to visitors and offer accommodation, reasonable ease of access, and useful visitor facilities including well marked trekking trails. Four other National Parks - **Gunung Buda**, **Bukit Tiban**, **Usun Apau** and **Pulong Tau** - are either not yet open to visitors, or do not yet have visitor facilities. However, trekkers using the Headhunters Trail from Gunung Mulu to Limbang town will pass through parts of Gunung Buda, and a number of the Kelabit Highlands trails pass through parts of Pulong Tau. For future developments, check with Sarawak Forestry at www.sarawakforestry.com.

Entry Fees

Visitors to all national parks in Sarawak must pay an entry fee upon arrival. Entry fees and special passes are listed below. More detailed information on park fees can also be found at www.sarawakforestry.com. A permit is required for professional photography or filming, which should be arranged in advance with the National Parks Booking Office in Miri (see below).

	Single Entry	Multiple Entry (non-transferable)		5 Entry Pass Group Entry (5 persons per group)	
		1 month	3 months		
Adult	RM 10	RM 50	RM100	RM 40	RM 40
Student ¹ /Senior Citizen ² /Disabled Person	RM 5	RM 25	RM 50	RM 20	RM 20
Mixed Group ³	-	-	-	-	RM 30
Children ⁴	Free	Free	Free	Free	Free

¹ A person who is studying at primary or secondary school or university. University students should produce a valid university identity card.

² A person aged 55 and above.

³ At least one person in the group must be a student, senior citizen or disabled person.

⁴ 6 years & below.

Accommodation Bookings

The National Park and Wildlife booking office in the Miri Visitors' Information Centre handles accommodation bookings for national parks in Northern Sarawak (**except for Gunung Mulu National Park**, see separate listing under Gunung Mulu, below). An online booking service is available at www.sarawakforestry.com or <http://ebooking.com.my>. Day-trippers can obtain entry permits and pay fees upon arrival. Room rates shown below include 5% Government Service tax.

National Parks Booking Office
c/o Visitors Information Centre
Lot 452, Jln Melayu, 98000 Miri,
Sarawak, Malaysia.
Tel: 085-434184 Fax: 085-434179

Opening Hours

National Parks	Monday-Friday	0800 hrs – 1800 hrs
Booking Office (Miri)	Saturday, Sunday & Public Holidays	0900 hrs – 1500 hrs

GUNUNG MULU NATIONAL PARK

Introduction

Gunung Mulu is Sarawak's largest national park (544 sq km), and also Malaysia's first **World Heritage Area**, a status it was awarded in 2000. It is most famous for its limestone cave systems, including the **world's largest natural chamber** (the Sarawak Chamber), the **world's largest cave passage** (Deer Cave) and the **longest cave in Southeast Asia** (Clearwater Cave). The park's main attractions are the four **show caves**, all readily accessible by wooden walkways and paths. Other fascinating sights



and activities include; a **bat observatory**; a **rainforest canopy skywalk**; **adventure caving** trips to some of Mulu's less accessible caves; the challenging **Mulu Summit climb**, the spectacular **Pinnacles trail**, and the historic **Headhunter's trail** through remote rainforest scenery.

Situated 100 km from the coast, the park is dominated by three mountains - Gunung Mulu (2,376m), Gunung Api (1,750m), and the as yet unconquered Gunung Benarat (1,585m). Gunung Mulu is sandstone, whilst Gunung Api and Gunung Benarat are formed from limestone and therefore have different geographical features. The summit of Gunung Mulu is covered by moss forests and stunted montane vegetation, whilst razor-sharp limestone pinnacles, some as high as 50 metres, are found on the upper slopes of Gunung Api. The park's forest ecosystems include peatswamp, heath, mixed dipterocarp, moss forest and montane vegetation – home to thousands of species of ferns, fungi, mosses and flowering plants, including 170 species of orchid and 10 species of pitcher plants, an impressive variety of mammals, birds (including 8 species of hornbill), frogs, fish and insects. Mulu's wildlife is often heard but not seen, but visitors are almost certain to encounter bats, swiftlets, cave dwelling insects, snakes, lizards, tree frogs and an abundance of beautiful butterflies.

Park Headquarters

Upon arrival visitors must register at the park office (Tel: 085-792300/792301) and pay the park entrance fees (RM 10 per visitor). Guides and boats can also be booked here. A short walk from the Park Office is the main accommodation building, which also offers a **canteen**, a **small shop** selling souvenirs and basic essentials, and an interesting and well designed **Information Centre**.

Park Guides

Visitors may not enter any of the caves or the Mulu Canopy Skywalk without a Park Guide. For most trails, including the Mulu Summit climb, the Pinnacles trail and the Headhunter's trail, a Park Guide is also mandatory. Bookings and payment of fees can be made at the park office. If you require a Park Guide you need to book the day before. During peak season, guides for popular activities such as the Pinnacles trail may be fully booked weeks in advance.

Visiting the Show Caves



Note: Visitors may only visit the show caves at fixed times, and only when accompanied by a park guide, in order to minimize human impact on the delicate rock formations and cave ecosystems. A flashlight, sturdy non-slip shoes, rainwear and insect repellent

are essential, and a hat can be useful to protect from dripping bat guano. The use of tripods and monopods are strictly forbidden, as are smoking and littering.

Wind and Clearwater Caves (half-day, mornings)

Meet the Park Guide at the Wind Cave (either 09.45 or 10.30, booking required),



travelling by longboat along the Melinau and Clearwater Rivers. If the water is low, you may have to get out and help to push the boat. The boats usually make a short stop at the **Batu Bungan Penan Settlement**, where Penan women operate a small craft market (closed Sundays) offering a wide selection of superb handicrafts, including rattan mats, baskets, woodcarvings, jewellery and musical instruments. Alternatively there is a 3 km trail from the Park HQ passing by the **Moonmilk Cave**, so named for the soft white cheese-like sediments found in the cave.

The entrance to the **Wind Cave** is situated above an ancient Berawan burial site. Inside, cool breezes can be felt at narrow parts of the cave, and there is a spectacular chasm caused by a catastrophic roof collapse to the left of the walkway. Further into the cave is a circular walkway leading through the **King's Room**; a chamber with a fine collection of calcite stalagmite (upward growing) and stalactite (downward growing) formations. The formations are carefully lit to bring out their bizarre and dramatic appearance.

From the Wind Cave, a short walk along the river leads to the **Clearwater Cave**. Formed by an underground river which emerges near the cave mouth, it is Southeast Asia's longest cave passage at over 170km. From the river, 200 steps lead to the cave mouth, which has some superb dripping stalactites and two species of bizarre one-leaved plants (*Monophyllae pendula* and *M. glauca*). Inside the cave entrance are strange spike-like formations formed by bacterial action, all facing towards the cave entrance. As the bacteria are dependent on sunlight, the formations become smaller and more delicate further into the cave.

At the end of the walkway is a bridge across the subterranean river, where visitors can clearly see how the cave was sculpted by the force of rushing water. A skylight formed by a roof collapse and a great vault formed by a floor collapse (in the adjacent **Lady Cave**) are amongst the other unusual features of the cave system. There is an excellent swimming area at the cave entrance, with changing and picnic facilities. Most visitors stop here for a lunch and a relaxing swim.

The **Turtle Cave** is an alternative exit route from the Clearwater Cave. Visitors are led into the subterranean blackness of the underground river, clambering over sharp rocks and swimming with the river current to emerge into a crystal clear pool. A waterproof flashlight and sturdy shoes are essential, and this add-on tour must be booked in advance.

Deer and Langs Caves (half day, afternoons)

Guided tours leave the Park HQ daily at 1.30 and 2.30 pm. A 3-km wooden walkway passes through peat swamp, alluvial flats and limestone outcrops before reaching the **Deer Cave**, which at 120 metres high and 100 metres wide is the world's largest discovered cave passage. The cave is home to the world's largest known bat colony comprising several million bats from 12 different species, and their droppings and remains have created a thriving and complex ecosystem on the cave floor. The billions of invertebrates include a unique species of luminous centipede, and cave racer snakes and pythons can occasionally be seen. The huge cave passage was formed by an ancient river that carved the spectacular scalloped walls and left a number of fascinating rock formations; at one point it is possible to see a remarkably lifelike profile of Abraham Lincoln outlined at the cave entrance.

The nearby **Langs Cave** is altogether smaller and more intimate, with elegant rock shawls and cave curtains, dramatic stalagmites and stalactites, and unusual rim stone pools on the cave floor. From the cave exit, visitors usually walk over to the **Bat Observatory**, to view the mass exodus as millions of bats emerge from the vast entrance of the cave to forage in the rainforest between 5.50 and 6.30 pm. This is a unique and memorable display, as the huge flocks of bats fly in rapidly shifting spiral formations to confuse predators. Occasionally the bats fail to emerge, and visitors who wish to return the next day without visiting the caves may do so provided they notify the park HQ first. The walk back along the steadily darkening plankwalk is enhanced by the sounds of frogs and cicadas and the sight of hundreds of fireflies amongst the trees.

Visitors may opt for the **Garden of Eden** tour extension, to the rear entrance of the Deer Cave, climbing down to the underground river and wading and scrambling to the glowing pool of light and water at the far end of the cave. Intrepid visitors will enjoy spectacular scenery and can a swim in a secluded mountain pool. Prior booking is essential.

Adventure Caving



Adventure caving is a great way of getting to know Mulu's caves, and involves wading, swimming, climbing, crawling with your face to the floor and getting covered in dirt. The Park HQ provides competent guides, caving helmets and headlamps. The caves are graded in order of ability. The **Lagangs Cave** trip (3 hrs) is suitable for beginners and family groups as it does not involve climbing. The intermediate **Racer Cave** trip (3 hrs) offers the chance to view remarkable cave dwelling snakes and invertebrates, and requires a reasonable level of fitness and upper body strength. The **Clearwater - Wind Cave Connection** trip (6-8 hrs) with its exceptionally beautiful river section requires advanced caving skills, as does the **Sarawak Chamber** trip (10-15 hrs) to view the world's largest cave chamber. Full details are available at www.mulupark.com.

Walks, Treks, Trails and Climbs

The 480 metre **Mulu Canopy Skywalk** is the longest tree-based walkway in the world. The complex ecosystem of the forest canopy provides a unique opportunity to view a variety of birds, insects and plants that cannot be seen from the ground. Guided tours (approx 2 hrs) leave the Park HQ daily.

The **Plants for Life** walk (1 hr) is a guided tour of the plants used by the indigenous people to survive in the rainforest, whether as food, medicine, or to make everyday implements. It also includes the opportunity to try some of the edible plants.

The guided **Night Walk** (1hr) winds its way through 7 different types of vegetation and offers the opportunity to see many different Mulu plant species, including pitcher plants, as well as species only visible at night, such as fire-flies and fluorescent fungi.

The 4-5 hr **Paku Waterfall Trail** is a self-guided walk that passes through peat swamp forest to a small waterfall on the banks of the Paku River, an ideal spot for a picnic lunch and a refreshing swim.

The all-day **Camp 1 Trail** (Park Guide mandatory) continues past Paku Waterfall and passes near a spectacular 'strangling fig' before proceeding through pristine rainforest to one of the camps used during the 1977 Royal Geographic Society Expedition. If you wish to stay overnight in the rainforest, a basic forest hut provides shelter.

The **Long Langsat** tour is a longboat trip down the Sungai Melinau and up the Sungai Tutoh to the small Long Lansat stream, where crystal clear waters cascade down a narrow valley between steep slopes. On the way back you can visit the **Penan community** at Long Iman and learn about their way of life.

The 3-day/2-night **Pinnacles Trail** leads to the remarkable limestone pinnacles near the peak of Gunung Api (1732m). The first day involves a 3-4 hour boat journey to Long Berar, followed by a pleasant 4 hour jungle trek to reach Camp 5 for the overnight stay. The ascent begins the following day. Although the trail is only 2.5 km, Gunung Api's steep slopes make it feel a lot longer. It takes about 4 hours to reach the Pinnacles where the fantastic views make it all worthwhile.

The **Summit Trek** to the top of Gunung Mulu (2,370m) is for the fit and adventurous & is done as a four day/3 night out and back trek. There are a number of wooden huts along the trail (Camps 1, 3 & 4).

The **Headhunters' Trail** follows the route of Kayan headhunting parties who dragged their war boats through the rainforest to raid the inhabitants of the Limbang river

system. A boat journey to Camp 5 is followed by an 11.3 km trek through a very remote rainforest area, with a good possibility of wildlife encounters. Trekkers then take another boat for an overnight stay at an Iban longhouse, followed by a further 1½ hr boat ride to Medamit to catch the van for Limbang. The trek can also be done in reverse, starting at Limbang. Either way, it offers a fascinating route into or out of Mulu National Park.



Accommodation

Park Headquarters offers, wooden **Longhouse Rooms** (aircon, attached bath) from RM 180 twin share. **Rainforest Rooms** (fan, attached bath) from RM 110 twin share and a **Dormitory** (21 beds, fan, shared bath) at RM 40 per person. All accommodation includes breakfast. Reservations 085-792300 Fax: 085-792305-correct for September, 2009. Address: P. O. Box 2413, 98008 Miri, Sarawak, Malaysia. E-mail: enquiries@mulupark.com, Website:www.mulupark.com

Royal Mulu Resort, CDT62, 98007 Miri, Sarawak. Tel: 085-792388 Fax: 085-792399 Website: www.royalmuluresort.com. 40 large air-con rooms in wooden longhouse style. International class resort on the banks of the Melinau River adjacent to the National Park. Conference facilities available. Features *Wildflower Restaurant*, *Splash Bar*, *Riverside Lounge*, swimming pool, sun deck, satellite TV. Activities include rock climbing wall, quad bike safaris, kayaking, rafting, mountain biking, archery.

Eating Out

Café Mulu at the Park HQ is open daily from 7.30 am to 9.00 pm and provides a variety of reasonably priced meals and snacks.

The **Wildflower Restaurant** at Royal Mulu Resort offers Asian, Western and local cuisine with live dance performances every evening.

Travel Connections

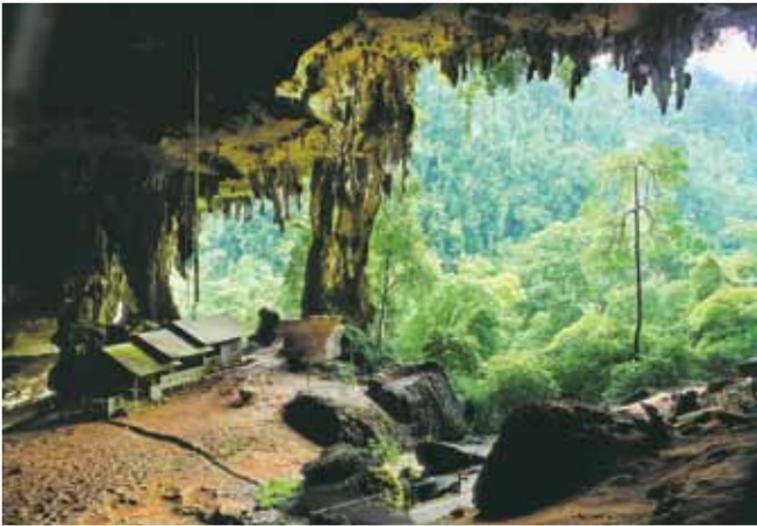
By Air: **MASWings** currently operates Fokker 50 Turboprops to Mulu from Miri, Kuching and Kota Kinabalu. – see Miri Travel Connections for full details

By Boat: The introduction of regular flights to Mulu has drastically reduced the number

of people travelling to the park by boat. Consequently the boat service has become somewhat irregular. However, it is still possible to go by boat but this may involve waiting around for enough passengers and could end up costing a lot more than planned. The first stage is from Miri to Kuala Baram (RM 3.00 by bus, RM 20 by taxi). There is a regular express boat service from Kuala Baram to Marudi (RM 20). The first boat departs at 7.40 am and the trip takes 2-3 hours. The next stage is from Marudi to Long Terawan (RM 20). Boats leave when there are enough passengers. If the water level is high boats go all the way to Long Terawan. If not, there is a boat change at Long Apoh. From Long Terawan to Mulu you will need to charter a boat (best arranged in Marudi) – count on or RM 55 per person for larger groups.

On Foot: It is possible to trek to Mulu by taking the Headhunters Trail (see above) in reverse, starting from Limbang town. See **Limbang** chapter for details.

NIAH NATIONAL PARK



Introduction

Niah National Park provides some interesting and impressive sights. The area was a major centre of human settlement as early as 40,000 years ago, and features one of the world's largest cave entrances, Palaeolithic and Neolithic burial sites, and iron-age cave paintings. The surrounding area is covered in dense primary rain forest and is home to many species of plants and wildlife. Even today, the caves remain important for local communities, with birds nest and guano collection providing valuable employment and income. Niah Caves is a very pleasant place to spend a few days, although most of the major attractions are accessible to the day visitor.

Historical Background

In 1958 a team led by Sarawak Museum curator Tom Harrisson unearthed a human skull estimated to be 40,000 years old. The scientific community remained sceptical of Harrisson's claims, but, as dating techniques improved, Harrisson was eventually proved right. Further excavations have shown a continued human presence over tens of thousands of years, from Palaeolithic times until as recently as 1400 AD. The nearby Painted Cave houses wall-paintings depicting the boat journey of the

dead into the afterlife, along with remnants of “death-ships” on the cave floor - boat-shaped coffins containing the remains of the deceased, and grave-goods for use in the afterlife, such as ceramics, ornaments and glass beads. The death-ships have been dated from 1 AD to 780 AD, although local Penan folklore tells of the use of death-ship burials as late as the 19th century.

Visiting the Park

Niah National Park is located on the Sungai Niah, about 3 km from the small town of Batu Niah, 110 km south-west of Miri. The park has a visitor centre and good accommodation, and is very easy to get around, thanks to an extensive network of plankwalks. A flashlight and good walking shoes are absolutely essential - the caves are unlit, and the plankwalk can become slippery from the constant dripping of water and bat guano from the ceiling of the cave. A wide-brimmed hat is desirable, for obvious reasons.

The Great Cave

The Great Cave is situated at the end of a 3.5 km plankwalk which cuts through dense primary rainforest, passing close to giant *tapang* trees, *padanus* plants, exquisite orchids and tree fungi. Colourful birds, squirrels, lizards, butterflies and unusual insects and invertebrates are commonly seen, as well as occasional monkeys, flying lizards and hornbills.

The cave complex starts at the **Trader's Cave**, an extended rock overhang where birds nest and guano traders used to conduct their business. A little further along is the **West Mouth** of the Great Cave; over 60m high and 250m wide, it is one of the world's most spectacular cave entrances. To the left of the cave mouth, archaeological excavations are clearly visible. The view from the cave mouth out over the surrounding jungle is quite unique; the jagged stalactites, overhangs and dangling creepers of the cave mouth provide a dramatic photo opportunity.

Inside the cave chamber, guano (bat and bird manure) collectors work by the dim light of paraffin lamps, collecting the guano from the cave floor for sale as fertiliser. Bamboo poles, and ladders made from ironwood (*belian*), are evidence of the birds nest collectors, local people who have practised this dangerous occupation for generations. The half million swiftlets living in the cave make their nests purely from their own salivary secretions, and these valuable nests (over US\$1,000 per kg for the best quality) are used to produce birds nest soup, highly regarded in Chinese cuisine. Note: visitors cannot be sure of seeing birds nest collectors in action, as harvesting is a seasonal activity, and is subject to temporary bans to protect swiftlet populations.

At the back of the Great Cave is a large chamber - **the Padang** - where shafts of sunlight stream down from large holes in the cave roof to illuminate the bizarre rock formations in the **Burnt Cave** (Lubang Hangu) - another excellent spot for taking photos. After the Padang comes a totally dark passage - **Gan Kira** (Moon Cave) - where a flashlight is essential, both to find your way and to admire the remarkable rock shapes and weathering effects.

The Painted Cave

From Gan Kira (Moon Cave), the plankwalk emerges into daylight and a short trail leads through the forest to the **Painted Cave**, site of the famous Niah cave paintings and 'death-ships'. The contents of the death-ships have been transferred to the Sarawak Museum, but the cave paintings and some of the empty death-ships can still be viewed on the wall behind the fenced-off burial site.

The paintings are difficult to see until your eyes become accustomed to the light. Executed in red hematite, they cover a long narrow strip (approx. 30m) at the back of the cave wall. The spread-eagled human figures probably represent warriors and hunters, the animals of the surrounding forest, and - most importantly - longboats carrying the souls of the deceased on the dangerous journey to the land of the dead. Thus the cave offers a clear insight into the development of the traditional religions of Borneo.

Bats, Swiftlets and Luminous Fungi



Visitors leaving the Great Cave around sunset will see two great black clouds intermingling - the nightly 'changing of the guard' as hundreds of thousands of swiftlets return to their nests, whilst an approximately equal number of bats fly out to forage in the forest. A variety of luminous fungi can be clearly seen from the plankwalk at night.

Treks and Trails

The **Bukit Kasut Trail** (green and white markings, 45 min.) leads to the summit of Bukit Kasut and passes through beautiful primary rainforest before moving into Kerangas forest at the foot of the hill. The trail is steep but the view at the top is worth it, offering a sweeping panorama of the rainforest canopy. The **Madu Trail** (red and white markings, 1 hr.) follows the banks of the Sungai Subis, passing through alluvial and peat swamp forest to the foot of Bukit Kasut. There are plenty of wild orchids, bizarre mushrooms and giant pandanus plants along the way.

The Park Headquarters

Upon arrival visitors are required to register at the Park HQ (Tel: 085-737454). There is an information centre where video films about Niah are shown nightly (upon request), as well as an excellent **Archaeology Museum** (just across the river) and a cafeteria serving a range of local and western food and drinks.

Accommodation

Accommodation consists of a luxurious VIP chalet, Class 2 chalets (2 rooms, 4 beds, air-con), Class 3 chalets (2 rooms, 4 beds, fan), and a Hostel (4 rooms with 4 beds each), all with electricity and hot showers. There are no

cooking facilities. Please contact the National Parks Booking Office in Miri to make reservations. If you need to stay in Batu Niah (to catch an early bus, for example), there are a range of lodging houses and small hotels. Batu Niah is a bustling little township and is well provided with coffee shops and restaurants.

Travel Connections

Niah is within easy reach of both Miri (109 km) and Bintulu (131 km). There is no public bus from either Miri or Bintulu directly to Batu Niah or the park HQ. From Miri, take local bus 33 (from the station near the Visitor Information Centre) to the Pujut Bus Terminal. Then take an express bus to the Niah Rest Stop which is on the main Miri-Bintulu road. From Bintulu (Long-Distance Bus Terminal) take an express bus to the Niah Rest Stop. Private cars and mini buses take passengers from the rest stop junction to the park for RM 15-20 per person. If you plan to return to Miri the same day arrange a time for the driver to pick you up, otherwise you might have to wait around at the park HQ for a lift back to the Niah Rest Stop. Share taxis and regular taxis are also available from both Miri (1 hr 20 min, RM 150 one way) and Bintulu (1 hr 40 min, RM 100 one way), although the cost may be prohibitive if you travel alone.

Note: If you are heading to Niah by public transport you have no choice but to go via the Miri-Bintulu Road (see transport section). However, if you have your own transport or hire car it is quicker to use the coastal highway (via Bekenu & Sibuti) rather than the main Miri-Bintulu Road. The coastal highway begins near Luak Bay (near the Everly and Marriott hotels).



LAMBIR HILLS NATIONAL PARK

Introduction

Lambir Hills National Park is probably the world's most complex and diverse forest ecosystem. Its 6,952 hectares of lowland dipterocarp and heath forests rise to a height of 450m and produce the greatest known level of plant biodiversity on the planet. This provides a home for 237 different species of birds, flying squirrels, wild pigs, gibbons, many different types of monkey, various species of deer, and untold insects and other invertebrates, as well as dozens of international research scientists who are permanently stationed in the park. Lambir also offers fascinating trekking

trails leading to sparkling waterfalls and bathing pools scattered about the rainforest, all within 40 minutes drive of downtown Miri.

Treks and Trails

Most of Lambir's trails are interconnected, so it is easy to do quite a few in a day. The **Latak Waterfall Trail** is the shortest, easiest and most popular - if you are looking for peace and solitude, come on a weekday. The trail (red/white markings, 20 min) follows the course of a clear, fast-flowing stream past two very pretty small waterfalls to a large forest pool surrounded on three sides by steep rock walls and fed by the 25-metre Latak waterfall. Changing rooms, toilets and picnic areas are provided and the pool is safe for swimming, but non-swimmers and small children should take care, as it is deep in parts.

The Pantu, Bukit Pantu and Pantu Waterfall Trails are all branches of the same trail system. Shortly before the Latak Waterfall, the **Pantu Trail** (white markings, 1 hr.) branches off to the left up a series of steep steps past an abandoned tree tower, then downwards through dense forest to the Nibong waterfall, an idea place to cool off. A few hundred metres further along are the **Bukit Pantu Trail** on the right (yellow/white markings, 1½ hrs) offering superb views, and the **Pantu Waterfall Trail** on the left (red/yellow markings, 1 hr.).

Beyond the Pantu Waterfall Trail the terrain gradually rises, passing through rugged, dense forest filled with the sounds of Lambir's wildlife. After 4 km, the trail forks, the right fork leading to the summit of Bukit Lambir. **The Summit Trail** (red/blue markings, 3½ hrs) is hard work for the not-so-fit, but the abundant wild orchids and the superb view from the summit (456m) make it worthwhile, and trekkers can cool off in the pool below the Dinding waterfall on the way down. Lambir also offers a variety of tougher trails for serious trekkers; for further information, please consult the park wardens.

Accommodation

Accommodation at the Park Headquarters (Tel: 085-471630) consists of Type 5 Forest Lodges (2 rooms, bed configuration varies, air-con and Type 6 Forest Lodges (2 rooms, 2 single beds per room, fan, all with electricity and hot water), and a camp site. Please contact the National Parks Booking Office in Miri to make reservations.

An interesting alternative is the new Borneo Tropical Rainforest Resort, Km 38 Miri-Bintulu Road, Lot 15, Block 2, Sibuti Land District, 98000 Miri. Tel: 019-8858593, 019-8852193 Fax: 019-8340113 E-mail: info@borneorainforestresort.com Website: www.borneorainforestresort.com. Miri sales office Tel: 613888 Fax: 613808. This agro and nature resort is situated adjacent to the park. 30 rooms and 18 chalets with a range of facilities for most budgets, includes self-catering chalets. Room rates not yet available as the resort is in its opening phase and currently only offering packages with accommodation and activities. Enquire for full details.

Travel Connections

Lambir is only 32 km from Miri. From Miri (Long Distance Bus Terminal) take any express bus to Bintulu or Sibui, all of which stop directly opposite the park HQ. The journey time is 30-40 mins. If you take a taxi (approx.RM40 each way), arrange a pick-up time for the return journey. Self-drive cars are also available - ask at your hotel counter or check in the yellow pages. Note: The bus marked 'Lambir' **does not** go to the National Park.

LOAGAN BUNUT NATIONAL PARK



Introduction

Loagan Bunut features a unique ecosystem based on Sarawak's largest natural lake (65 ha). The shallow lake usually drains completely when the water in the nearby Tinjar river is low (normally February and late May or early June/July). As the water level subsides, huge flocks of wading birds gorge themselves on fish and other aquatic creatures trapped in the mud. When the lake is dry, plants sprout from the mud and are eaten by insect larvae. When the rains come and the lake fills up, returning fish feed on the larvae, breed in the lake, and the whole cycle starts again.

Fishermen from the local Berawan tribe have developed a unique method only found at Loagan Bunut, known as *Selambau*. They use huge scoop nets mounted on large rafts to catch migrating fish, which are kept alive in submerged bamboo cages until they can be transported to market.

The surrounding terrain features a variety of forest types, ranging from mixed peatswamp forest with huge stilt-rooted trees at the water's edge, to towering *Alam* forest with a canopy height of over 60 m, and helps to make Loagan Bunut a birdwatcher's paradise. Permanent residents include eagles, swallows, malkohas, stork-billed kingfishers, magpies, robins, doves, bulbuls, racket-tailed drongos, pied hornbills and kites, while darters, egrets, herons, bitterns, storks and broadbill arrive during dry spells to feed on the trapped fish. Other animals found in the park include barking deer, bearded pigs, sambar deer, long-tail macaques, black banded langurs, lesser mouse deer, small-tooth palm civets, giant squirrels, provost squirrels, Bornean gibbons, many species of frogs and small lizards, dog-headed water snakes and a variety of tree snakes. Estuarine crocodiles are occasionally sighted.

Activities

During dry spells it is possible to stroll across the **dried-up lake bed**, but visitors must be accompanied by a local guide for safety reasons. More permanent trails include the **Hydrology Trail** (2km) which provides a close-up view of the peatswamp ecosystem. The 260m **Tapang Trail** showcases the towering tapang tree (*Koompassia excelsia*), the world's third tallest tree, whose heavy, dense wood is claimed to be the best for making blowpipes. **The Belian Trail** (720m) features the belian tree (*Eusideroxylon zwageri*, also known as Borneo ironwood) which produces one of the world's hardest, and most valuable timbers.

Boat trips can be arranged at the Park Headquarters. Early morning is the best time to appreciate the mist-shrouded scenery, midday is best for viewing wading birds feeding on trapped fish, and late afternoon offers superb sunsets and more

bird watching possibilities. The boatmen usually drive the narrow boats right into the forest, amongst huge stilted tree roots where monkeys and squirrels can often be seen. A boat trip will usually include a visit to the fascinating *Selambau* scoop nets, and during fish migrations visitors can watch the fishermen at work and buy freshly caught fish. The boatmen will also point out an ancient Berawan burial platform, or *Klirieng*, supported above the lake by sturdy *belian* pillars.

The boats are operated by local Berawan fishermen who have a great deal of local knowledge and usually speak acceptable English. The charter rate is RM 60.00 per boat per hour for up to 4 passengers, with an additional RM 15.00 per hour for every extra passenger.

Accommodation

The **Forest Hostel** at the Park HQ (Tel: 085-775119) has 4 rooms with 7 double-decker bunk beds each. There is a small canteen serving simple cooked meals, snacks and drinks. A generator supplies electricity during the evenings. Please contact the National Parks Booking office in Miri for reservations and the latest room rates.

The **Mutiara Hostel**, operated by a local Berawan family, offers 9 twin-bed rooms plus a 15-person dormitory with sleeping mats. Visitors may cook their own food in a simple kitchen - ingredients are sold by the floating grocery shop nearby. The owners will cook meals if notified in advance. Contact Mr Meran Surang at the hostel, Tel: (+6) 011-292164, or Mr Rolland Ayu in Miri, Tel: (+6) 085-612014. Reservations can also be made at the National Parks Booking office in Miri.

Travel Connections

Loagan Bunut is approximately 120 km or 3 hours by road from Miri. Travel agents in Miri operate tours to the park. Independent travelers can take public transport (bus or 4wd) to Long Lapok, about 15 km from the Park Headquarters. The coffee shops near the bus stop can arrange onward transport to the park. Mutiara Hostel meet and transport their guests from Lapok Bridge. Check with the National Parks Booking Office in Miri for the latest timetables and fares.

SIMILAJAU NATIONAL PARK



Introduction

Similajau National Park showcases the unique geographical features of the Sarawak coastline north of Bintulu - a chain of golden sandy beaches, punctuated by small rocky headlands and jungle streams, and bordered by dense green forest. The 8,996 hectare park is at its best during the dry season (approximately February to October) when the emerald green waters are crystal clear and ideal for swimming. The park is very popular with locals at weekends. If you want to avoid the crowds, visit during the week when you are likely to have the park all to yourself.

Natural Attractions

Similajau's littoral fringe, kerangas (or heath forest) and mixed dipterocarp forest provide a variety of diverse habitats for a wide range of fascinating species. In amongst its pitcher plants, mangroves and giant dipterocarp trees, Similajau is home to 24 species of mammals, including long-tailed macaques, gibbons, banded langurs, shrews, mouse deer, barking deer, squirrels, wild boar, porcupine, and civet cats. It is also a birdwatcher's paradise, with 185 species of birds having been recorded within the park's boundaries.

Similajau is also home to two crocodile species. The estuarine or saltwater crocodile (*crocodylus porosus*) lives near the river mouths of the larger rivers in the park and feeds on small mammals, lizards, turtles, fish and water birds. It has also been known to attack humans at other locations in Sarawak and in Australia. There are no known cases of crocodiles attacking visitors at Similajau, but to be on the safe side **visitors are advised to take note of the crocodile warning signs**. Please do not attempt to wade across the larger streams in the park, but use the bridges instead. Similajau's other crocodile species is the harmless false gharial (*tumistoma schlegii*), which feeds exclusively on fish. Crocodiles are more easily spotted at night, and the Park HQ can arrange crocodile spotting boat trips for visitors.

Prehistoric-looking horseshoe crabs can often be found on the beaches or in the shallows, and green turtles frequently come ashore to lay their eggs at Golden Beach and the two Turtle Beaches closer to the park HQ. There are also occasional landings by hawksbill and leatherback turtles. All marine turtles are Totally Protected Animals in Sarawak and anyone found tampering with a nest is liable to a heavy fine and/or a jail sentence. Other marine visitors include five species of dolphin that are occasionally seen, usually between March and September – the Irrawaddy dolphin, the bottlenose dolphin, the Indo-pacific humpback dolphin, the finless porpoise dolphin and the pantropical spotted dolphin.

Treks & Trails

The **main trekking trail** (red markings) follows the coastline of the park; from the park HQ you first cross the Sungei Likau suspension bridge to reach the plankwalk over the mangroves, from where you have two choices - to follow the plankwalk to the start of the trail proper, or take a short on the left at the very beginning of the plankwalk; a wooden ladder leads down to a secondary trail which joins the main trail near the junction for the Viewpoint Trail. This leads to a shelter with picnic tables looking back to the beach and park HQ. From shortly after the viewpoint turn-off, the main trail hugs the coastline and passes numerous small bays and beaches, eventually (1½ - 2 hrs) reaching three idyllic beaches - two turtle beaches each set in beautiful bays, and the aptly named Golden Beach with its long, unbroken stretch of sand.

A good way to get the most out of Similajau is to hire a boat and be dropped off at Golden Beach and then trek back to the HQ (or vice versa). **Boats can be hired** for half day and full day coastal and river tours, or for crocodile spotting tours at night. Enquire at the park HQ for details.

The Park Headquarters

Upon arrival visitors are required to register at the Park HQ (Tel: 086-327284). Next to the registration counter there is a good information centre. The Park HQ also has a canteen which serves drinks, snacks, lunch and evening meals.

Accommodation

Accommodation consists of a VIP Rest House (2 rooms with 2 single beds, air con); 'Class III' Chalets (2 rooms with 4 single beds); 'Drive In' Chalets (2 rooms with 2 single beds); and hostel accommodation (4 beds per room) . All rooms have fans. For accommodation bookings contact the National Parks booking office in Miri. Early booking is advised if you are visiting at weekends, public holidays or school holidays. There is also a camp site, and barbecue pits are provided for visitors wishing to prepare their own meals.

Travel Connections

Similajau is approximately 30 km northeast of Bintulu town. There is no public bus service to the park. The taxi fare from Bintulu town is RM 40 - arrange a time with the driver to pick you up. Alternatively you may charter a fast boat from Bintulu Wharf (rates negotiable), a somewhat more expensive but enjoyable option.



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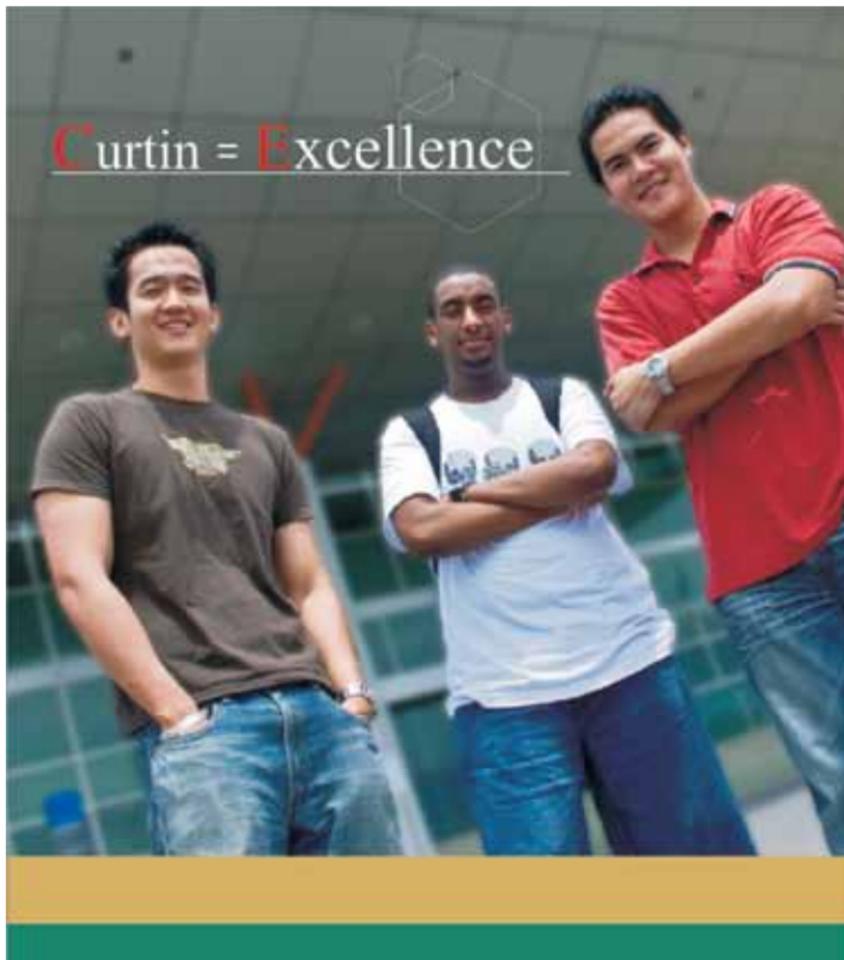
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