

Heart of Borneo

Malaysian Borneo

An expedition to see pitcher plants, orchids, orangutans, proboscis monkeys, caves & pinnacles

This intrepid jungle adventure takes you well off the tourist trail to Borneo's 'lost world' – the Maliau Basin, a seldom visited, massive crater-like refuge that harbours one of Borneo's last great tracts of pristine wilderness that is home to Bornean elephants, rhinos, clouded leopards, barking deer, mouse deer, gigantic trees, enormous waterfalls, pristine cloud forest, a plethora of orchid species, spectacular carnivorous pitcher plants (tree-hugging, climbing *Nepenthes veitchii*, as well as *N. ampullaria*, *N. hirsuta*, *N. reinwardtiana* and *N. stenophylla*), a rare species of *Rafflesia* and some of the most spectacular scenery Borneo has to offer.

After a five day circular trek around the Maliau Basin, we travel to Sepilok to observe and photograph orangutans and proboscis monkeys up close. We then transfer to Mulu National Park and in canoes we speed upriver to climb Mt. Api to enjoy views of the breathtaking, towering, blade-like limestone pinnacles (one of Borneo's greatest wonders), orchids and carnivorous pitcher plants (*Nepenthes faizaliana* and *N. bicalcarata*). During a well earned rest day, we visit a vast cave system, exploring the grottos and caverns by boardwalk to re-emerge before dusk to see tens of thousands of bats leaving the cave, flying high into the air like clouds of smoke. We then ascend Mt. Mulu to experience some of Borneo's most beautiful cloudforest that is festooned with orchids and unique pitcher plants (*Nepenthes lowii*, *N. muluensis* and *N. tentaculata*).

This expedition offers a very diverse range of spectacular scenery, wildlife, orchids and carnivorous plants.

Optional pre- or post-expedition add-ons that can be arranged include **Mount Kinabalu (3 days extra)**, Borneo's greatest mountain, to see *N. tentaculata*, *N. villosa* (Kinabalu form), *N. x kinabaluensis*, and/or **Mt. Murud (5 days extra)** to see *N. hurreliana*, *N. lowii*, *N. reinwardtiana*, *N. stenophylla*, *N. veitchii* and more!

COST: £2,500 per person for **16 days / 15 nights** (all inclusive from start point to end point).

START POINT: Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysian Borneo.

END POINT: Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysian Borneo.

EXPEDITION LEADER: Dr. Alastair Robinson (experienced field botanist and *Nepenthes* expert).

DATES: June 25th – July 10th (main expedition). June 21st – June 24th (Mt Kinabalu optional).

HEART OF BORNEO EXPEDITION ITINERARY

Day 1: Meet in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysian Borneo. Overnight in a hotel and expedition brief at dinner in a local restaurant.

Day 2: Early flight to Tawau, Overland transfer in 4x4 to the Maliau Basin (approximately 5-6 hours). Arrive at Agathis Camp in the afternoon. Explore Agathis Camp nature trail. After dinner (if weather permits) we go for a night safari in search of nocturnal animals (past groups have seen elephants, barking deer, mouse deer and clouded leopards).

Day 3: After a hearty breakfast, we start a 7km trek through the rainforest to Camel Trophy Camp (approximately 6 hours). This is the hardest day of trekking in Maliau. Along the way, we pass through lush forest that is home to ferns, orchids and pitcher plants. After arriving at camp, we have the option of trekking to see two beautiful waterfalls: Giluk Falls and the spectacular Takob Akob Falls (in which we can have a refreshing swim).

Day 4: We trek through extraordinary highland heathforest home to climbing *Nepenthes veitchii* pitcher plants which ascend by hugging the trees with their leaves. We reach Ginseng Camp, and then trek to see the enormous, 7-tiered Maliau Falls, looking for *Rafflesia* flowers along the way.

Day 5: After a relaxed breakfast, we trek onwards through enormous lowland dipterocarp rainforest, past trees with gigantic buttress roots to reach Beliam Camp in the afternoon.

Day 6: We arrive back at Agathis Camp, explore a canopy top walkway for incredible views over the rainforest and the Maliau River, then transfer into a 4x4 and drive back to Tawau. Overnight in hotel in Tawau and dinner in a local restaurant.

Day 7: An early departure in a minibus to travel to Sepilok to observe and photograph orangutans and proboscis monkeys up close. We fly to Kota Kinabalu, where we dine in a local restaurant and overnight.

Day 8: We fly from Kota Kinabalu to Gunung Mulu National Park. On arrival, we transfer into canoes to journey upstream to the Mt. Api base camp, stopping at a traditional village half way up stream to experience traditional Sarawak cultures, and buy traditional craftwork.

Day 9: After an early start, we trek up Mt. Api (a steep climb of 1.8 km) to reach the summit of the mountain to enjoy spectacular views of the towering, blade-like, limestone pinnacles. On the trail up Mt. Api, we find populations of orchids and the carnivorous pitcher plant *Nepenthes faizaliana*. Back at camp, there is the option of visiting a nearby population of the fanged pitcher plant (*N. bicalcarata*).

Day 10: After a relaxed start, we return to the canoes and travel back downstream to the Mulu Park headquarters, looking for giant *Amorphophallus* flowers along the way. We sleep in dorms and have a restaurant dinner, relaxing in tropical gardens (optional upgrade to resort accommodation possible).

Day 11: We enjoy a well-earned rest day, during which we explore the vast caves of Mulu, and follow an extensive boardwalk into the Deer Cave to explore grottos and watch tens of thousands of birds emerge from the cave like smoke at sunset. We sleep in dorms and have dinner in a restaurant (optional upgrade to resort accommodation possible).

Day 12: We begin the ascent of the little-visited, spectacular peak of Mt Mulu, passing at first through dense tropical rainforest and then crossing a few shallow streams. We look out for wildlife, birds and exquisite butterflies. We sleep in tents at an established jungle camp site.

Day 13: Today, we climb through increasingly mossy montane forest. The giant buttress root trees give way to gnarled, shorter trees.

Day 14: We enter true cloudforest - some of the most beautiful in all of Borneo. The spectacular, toilet bowl-shaped traps of the bizarre pitcher plant, *Nepenthes lowii*, hang from the vegetation along the trail, along with the tiny pitcher plant, *N. tentaculata*, and countless orchids.

Day 15: We reach the summit of Mt. Mulu, and find all of the cloudforest trees festooned with thousands of small white, black, purple and red pitchers of *Nepenthes muluensis*, like miniature candles. We enjoy spectacular views over the jungle, and after a few hours exploring, we begin the descent.

Day 16: We trek back to the Mulu National Park, and catch an evening flight back to Kota Kinabalu.



Highlights of the **Heart of Borneo Expedition**
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