

Use our general accessibility guide to see resources for all of our programs. [Click here](#)

If you're looking for specific country information, see below.

## Borneo



Helpful information about your country destination and planned activities

Check the website for examples of past syllabi

<https://www.forestry.oregonstate.edu/international/about-forest-conservation-malaysian-borneo>

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## Traveling to the program site

Participants can choose to drive or fly into stops along the route from Corvallis to PDX and will depart from the USA and arrive at [Sandakan Airport \(SDK\)](#).

## Hikes/Physical Activity

Activities will include hiking, field activities, tree planting, boat rides, cultural activities. There will be opportunities for swimming/water activities and rice planting in paddy fields.

Students will not handle wildlife as part of the program, but may come into contact with stray cats and dogs.

## Lodging

This 2-week program takes place in the state of Sabah, Malaysia. Accommodations will be hotel and hostel-style.

Mosquito nets are not necessary to bring.

We will make roommate assignments in advance for each sleeping location on the trip. You will be given a logistics questionnaire to help match you with various roommates throughout the program

[Sepilok B&B](#)

[Deramakot Forest Reserve](#)

[KOPEL Mandaa Kampung Stay](#)

[Tawau Hills](#)

KampOng

[Kota Kinabalu Dreamtel](#)

## Food

We should be able to accommodate most dietary needs. Please be aware that dietary restrictions are different in each country and may affect the group experience. You will be given a logistics questionnaire where you can list only necessary requirements, not preferences.

While vegan and vegetarian options may be available, it is wise to confirm arrangements with group leaders.

Common allergens like eggs, milk, peanuts, shellfish, wheat, soy, and fish are frequently used in local dishes.

Tap water is generally not recommended for drinking unless boiled. It's advisable to bring your own reusable water bottle to refill with a filter.


## Environment

Borneo is subject to intense tropical climate. In the lowlands, temperatures range between 25°C (77°F) and 35°C (95°F) and is a lot cooler at higher elevations. Be mindful of excessive heat and humidity. Bring a refillable water bottle with you.

Borneo has 2 monsoon seasons. The “dry” monsoon season happens from May to October and still experiences rainfall.

Lowlands have high humidity usually around 80%.

Compared to Oregon’s warm, relatively dry summer, Borneo experiences a hot, humid, and potentially wet summer due to its location with the tropics and monsoon seasons.

	Average Temp [High / Low]	Average Rainfall
January	84° / 71°	14.7 in.
February	84° / 71°	2.4 in.
March	86° / 73°	2.9 in.
April	87° / 73°	5.0 in.
May	87° / 73°	9.0 in.
June	87° / 73°	11.4 in.
July	86° / 73°	10.2 in.
August	86° / 73°	10.2 in.
September	86° / 73°	12.2 in.
October	86° / 73°	13.8 in.
November	86° / 73°	12.0 in.
December	86° / 73°	9.9 in.

## Culture

Borneo is a culturally rich island with a diverse mix of indigenous tribes, Malay, Chinese, and Indian influences. Visitors can expect to encounter a range of customs, traditions and languages as well as delicious food fusions.

Respect for local customs, particularly regarding modesty in dress and behavior is essential.

Malay is widely spoken in Malaysian Borneo.

Be mindful of local customs, such as removing your shoes before entering a house, covering up when bathing, and respecting prayer times.

While Islam is the predominant religion in many parts of Borneo, particularly in Malaysian Borneo, there are also significant Buddhist and indigenous belief systems.

Dress modestly, particularly in areas with a strong Muslim presence, covering shoulders and knees. Pack clothing that is appropriate for the local culture, particularly for religious sites and during interactions with indigenous communities.

Showing respect for elders is highly valued in Bornean culture.

Avoid public displays of affection, loud or boisterous behavior, and be respectful of local customs regarding eating and drinking.

Malaysia is one of the former British colonies to retain homophobic colonial-era laws. Malaysia is now one of the worst countries in the world for trans rights. The Malaysian government's increasing move towards a more conservative version of Islam has made things more difficult in almost every aspect of life. LGBTQ+ travelers are unlikely to encounter hostile reactions, and authorities are likely to turn a blind eye to tourists acting discretely.

LGBTQ+ culture in Malaysia remains fairly underground; you won't find openly gay bars, but there are clubs, cafés and karaoke bars that are well-known in the community as gay-friendly hangouts, as well as a number of specifically LGBTQ+-friendly hotels and guest houses around the country. Kuala Lumpur has the biggest (discrete) gay scene in the country, with Penang, Johor Bahru and Borneo Island also having a number of LGBTQ+-friendly venues. Many websites are blocked by the Malaysian government, so it's worth investing in a decent VPN before you go.

Whatever you think, the best thing to do is to take your cue from the LGBTQ+ community in Malaysia.

As a whole, Malaysia remains a very conservative society, and couples of any orientation should avoid kissing and putting their arms around each other in public. In fact, if you do see two men or two women with their arms around each other or holding hands, this is usually a sign of friendship.

[LGBTQ+ Malaysian Travel Guide](#)

[Racism in Malaysia](#)

[Vegan Travel Malaysia](#)

[Solo Female Travel Malaysia](#)

## **Country laws**

Visitors and citizens traveling between Peninsular Malaysia and the Borneo states of Sabah and Sarawak must present passports or national identity cards at immigration checkpoints, even for domestic flights.

Malaysia has Strict laws regarding drug offenses with severe penalties.

Certain federal laws apply differently in Sabah and Sarawak, particularly concerning land and natural resource management.

Malaysia's legal system is a mix of common law, Islamic law, and customary law.

The Malaysian Constitution outlines fundamental liberties, including the right to life, liberty, and equality before the law.

While the Constitution provides for freedom of speech, assembly, and religion, these rights are sometimes restricted in practice.

Cross-dressing is prohibited under Sharia law, and homosexual acts are criminalized under both federal and Sharia law.

<https://my.usembassy.gov>

## **Academics**

You'll use Canvas, Zoom, and Word/PPT.

Currently, part of the course grade relies on daily journaling. Talk with DAS and program leader about alternative options.