

Towns worth visiting

Driving to all the township in the State can be an interesting activity for tourists and school children during the holidays.

One of the furthest townships from Kota Kinabalu City is Tawau. Tawau is the third largest town in Sabah. The district it is in is also called Tawau. It is located in the South East coast of Sabah and face the Celebes Sea.

There are two sections of the town one is the Sabindo area and one is the Fajar area. There are several government offices in the Sabindo area while the Fajar area contains mostly commercial establishments, as well as banks. The Port is located in the south-western part of the town.

There are a number of interesting sites in Tawau. One of them is the Tawau Hills National Park. Nature lovers can go for picnics and camping there. There are also chalets for those who wish to stay over comfortably. This area is located about 20 kilometres from Tawau town. There is also a waterfall there.

For those who wish to trek, you will be able to enjoy sights of monkeys and squirrels in the park. Wild orchids can also be found in this area.

Tawau is a transit point to several beautiful islands such as Sipadan, Mabul, Kapalai and Matakang islands. It is also a place of transit to those who wish to go to Indonesia.

The population of the Tawau are Malay of Bugis descent, Chinese, Kadazandusuns and Bajaus.

From Tawau, we travel to Semporna, which is well known for its salted fish. This is because one of the best kinds of salted fish comes from this town. Most residents of this coastal town are fishermen.

Semporna is actually in Tawau Division, with the main population being mostly Bajau.

They live in stilt houses over the water on the outskirts of town. There are attractive beaches in this area and many people also visit this area to scuba, snorkel or dive especially at the renowned island, Sipadan. This island is 36 kilometres from the township.

The Lepa Regatta, a traditional boat race is also held in Semporna annually.

The British North Borneo Company actually founded Semporna soon after Sandakan was established. Chinese traders settled in the area then.

Semporna is well known for its seafood and marine products are one of the income generating items here, including culturing pearl.

From Semporna we travel to Lahad Datu. Lahad Datu occupies the peninsula on the north side of Darvel Bay.

This area which is accessible by airplane, is surrounded with cocoa



and oil palm plantations..

It is believed that a settlement existed here in the 15th century. There were excavations that unearthed Chinese ceramics.

Lahad Datu is well visited by nature lovers and tourists as it is like a gateway to attractive places like the Danum Valley Conservation Area, the Tabin Wildlife Reserve in the east, and Madai Caves further south.

From Lahad Datu we travel further towards the West and it is Kinabatangan Township or Kota Kinabatangan.

Kinabatangan is populated with Orang Sungei, one of the group under the Kadazandusun umbrella.

The Kinabatangan River is one of the most visited areas here due to its rainforest vegetation and ecosystems. The area is home to Borneo's indigenous Proboscis Monkey

Further on, we pass Telupid and reach Ranau.

Ranau is a town located in the interior of the State. Sited almost 2000 metres above sea level, this area is about 60 kilometres away from the State Capital, Kota Kinabalu.

The district, also called Ranau, is populated by kadazandusuns, most of whom are farmers.

A road that runs from Kota Kinabalu to the West Coast of Sabah, Sandakan runs through Ranau, making it a stopping point from travellers from the two places. In fact, travellers to Tawau and Semporna also need to pass this township.

Ranau is also a gateway to the Kinabalu National Parks. The Poring Hot Spring is also located in Ranau.

Ranau now a bustling township, made a mark in the annals of history for being the terminus of some 2000 prisoners of war in the Second World War. The prisoners were forcibly

marched to Ranau from Sandakan.

The Kundasang War Memorial Display Garden with plants and flowers from all over Borneo is in memory of the dead soldiers who hailed from Australia and Great Britain.

As you travel towards the Crocker Range, you will inevitably drive through Kundasang. Whenever we mention Kundasang, it always makes us think about cabbages and other highland vegetables. We are not wrong as this mountain township is well known for its daily vegetable market. Highland vegetables grow easily in this area due to the cool atmosphere.

Whenever we pass that area, the tremendous array of vegetables boggles the mind and nowadays, flowers too have made an appearance alongside the edibles.

Kundasang is very near to Mount Kinabalu, so those who live in this village will enjoy the beautiful sight of Kinabalu being lighted up by the rising sun during fine days, or clouds surrounding the craggy surface during cooler days.

The people here are mostly Dusuns and are vegetable farmers. Some are professionals and businessmen.

One of the main tourism attractions here is the War Memorial. The garden around the memorial is beautiful.

Avid golfers do not have to miss a game while visiting Kundasang as a golf course is located very near to the border of Kinabalu National Park.

From Kundasang, it will take us just two hours to reach Kota Kinabalu. If you enjoyed the trip, try any driving tour. This time you can travel from Kota Kinabalu to Sindumin and inevitably Lawas, Sarawak.

Now is the fruit season, so it should be doubly fun.

