

SEPILOK JUNGLE RESORT

By REKHA BAHBRA

NATURE'S WONDERLAND

A five minute walk from the world famous Sepilok Orang Utan Rehabilitation Centre is the Sepilok Jungle Resort. This family owned and run resort, initially built by Datuk John Lim and run by his son Johnny Lim allows today's ecotourist that arrive from around the world to experience a close but un-

intrusive glimpse of this nature paradise and yet have the comforts of a world class resort.

Borneo is special, not just because it's one of the most beautiful parts of the world, definitely unique in regards to flora and fauna, blessed with adequate sunshine and water, but by its location allows you to get away from

daily grind and makes you appreciate the things that are really important in life.

Spend couple of days at Sepilok Jungle Resort with family and friends and the difference between life and living becomes evident, the bonds that were always there resurface when you spend quality time togeth-

er, without distractions, without worries, enjoying nature the way is used to be. Walk through virgin forest on the resort or indulge in some fruit picking, catch a glimpse of a baby orang utan escapee from the neighboring rehabilitation centre, the resort is full of surprises unlike any other.

The resort offers an exciting array of nature tours and depending on your budget and available time you can choose a package that suits your needs. I picked the 4 day 3 night Jungle Tour package and wrote a diary of my Sandakan nature adventure:

Day 1: Arrive at Sandakan airport, meet and transfer to Sepilok Jungle Resort, enclosed within a tropical virgin rainforest and is just 5 minutes walk to the Sepilok Orang Utan Rehabilitation Centre. Watch one of the nature's most endangered animal species – the "orang utan" or "man of the jungle" in local language swing from branches to branches towards the feeding station. Tour Labuk Bay Proboscis Monkey Sanctuary in the afternoon and do the night jungle walk at the Rehabilitation Centre.

Day 2: After breakfast, transfer to Gomantong Cave to explore the largest limestone and birds nest cave in Sabah where millions of swiftlets make the cave their home. Later I continue overland to Bilit, Kinabatangan River, home to the 10 species of primates namely Proboscis monkeys, langurs, macaques, orang utan, slow loris, western tarsier, 8 species of hornbills such as Rhinoceros Hornbill, Pied Hornbill, Black Hornbill, Helmeted Hornbill (50kg, 120cm), kingfishers, bubuls, trogons, flycatchers, sunbirds, broadbills, herons, mangrove snakes, vipers, estuarine crocodile, asian elephants and countless other wildlife. I take an afternoon cruise along the Kinabatangan River where I spend the evening with new friends.

Day 3: The next morning I wake up to the calls of gibbons and birds. In the morning we take a cruise to an Ox Bow Lake where I take a walk in the jungle and have the opportunity to meet the 'bloodsuckers' in the jungle – leeches! It's important to stay calm and relax and treat your ears to the many fascinating sights and sounds of the jungle wildlife.

Late that evening, me and my group transfer to the Resort and stay overnight, that sense of leaving something so special fills our hearts as we pack our bags to get ready to go back home the next day. Sepilok Jungle Resort is truly a beautiful place and not to be missed. Nature reserves and preservation of our flora and fauna are imperative not just to protect the rare and beautiful species but to keep our culture and way of life as well.



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