

Sightseeing in Sabah



By Anna Vivienne

MOST of us will play host to our overseas visitors at least once in our life. At that time we will proudly show off our homes, our village and our culture as well as the surrounding tourist attraction.

If however you are at a quandary as to what to show off your guests, here are some places that are highly recommended. The Tuaran Crocodile Farm is located at Jalan Sulaman Tuaran, about half an hour drive from Kota Kinabalu. This is one of the largest crocodile farms in Sabah. There are about 1000 crocodiles there ranging from a huge rather sedate croc to feisty two feet long ones.

If you visit this farm you should do so during feeding times which is 12 noon, 1.30pm, 2.15pm, 4.15pm and 4.45pm.

There is also a croc show at 11am and 3pm during weekdays and 11am, 1pm and 3pm during Sundays and public holidays. Besides the shows, there are also the fishponds to look at. There are koi fish, African eels and huge Arapaima fish.

For souvenirs, you can purchase leather goods at the store nearby. There are handbags, purse, key chains and belts. If your guests are the intrepid types, get them to go for white water rafting in Kiulu, which is nearby Tamparuli Township.

The Kiulu River white water rafting is commendable for those who want to experience an adrenalin rush without the danger. The water is quite swift but not so that it can be dangerous.

There are some experienced white water rafting tour company that tend to the adventure sport here. One of them is the Crocker Range White Water Rafting company located by one of the scenic spot

along the river in Kiulu. You may have to call them before you go in so they can get everything ready for you. Get them at 240814.

They have three rafting routes to offer. There are varying distances, so you can pick whether you want a short route or a longer glide down the rushing water. This should be fun.

Exit Kiulu and travel to Kota Belud. The sights in Kota Belud are mostly nature's bounty.

Visit a fishing village, first. This will ensure that your guests have a feel of the ethnic community there.

Kampung Kuala Abai is a recommended site. It is a fishing village that face towards the vast blueness of the South China Sea. This is a gateway to Pulau Mantanani, a popular island ideal for fishing and diving.

Watch the blazing sunset over the ocean and feel the sea breeze caress your face. If you enjoy this so will your guests. This is also a great time to take photographs. Souvenirs can be acquired from Kampung Siasai in the form of parangs. This village is famous for its parang making population.

Of course you can also get these souvenirs from the Tamu, or traditional market, which is held, in Kota Belud every Sunday.

Travel on to Kota Marudu, some one-hour drive from Kota Belud and you will be on the way to our far northern area.

The site to see here is the Sorinsim Waterfall. Sorinsim Waterfall is about 40 kilometres from Kota Marudu township. So if you are not too familiar with the route, get a local to guide you. The waterfall in all its glorious beauty is ideal for picnics.

But if you want to experience the peace and tranquillity of this park, camp

out for a night. However if you wish to do this, you have to inform the Sabah Park just so they will know you are there, camping. Call them at 211881.

Kota Marudu has some scenic places where you will see villages that are still as they were thirty to fifty years ago. The stark beauty of nature with little encroachment by humans is especially quaint and perfect for photographs. It must be remembered however that Kota Marudu is a thriving district just like any other areas in Sabah. Exit Kota Marudu and travel up to Pitas.

Pitas is a northern town that is seldom promoted as a tourism area. However there are various and many interesting sights that can be enjoyed there.

First and foremost is the Melobang rock. It is an interesting rock formation that seemed to depicted a dancing stone figure. There is a legend attached to this interesting sight. It seems that a long time ago there was son, who was cursed for his sins. He was turned into stone. This wonder is coupled with a well where fresh water springs from even though it is surrounded by seawater. Besides that a cruise down Bengkoka and Kenibungan River is recommended if you love sighting wildlife such as proboscis monkeys.

More information on transportation and accommodation can be acquired from the district officer Sapdin Ibrahim at 019 8523476 or 615760.

From Pitas, you can travel up to Kudat. On the way to this northern Sabah township, stop by the Maranjak Longhouse homestay. This longhouse is one of the most authentic traditional houses in this area. You will be able to see people's architecture of yore where the bamboo reigns supreme. You can stay in this longhouse as they let out rooms for visitors. They can accommodate two to three

people in a room. You will also be able to taste local brews and eat traditional food,

If you wish to show your guests the surroundings there, you can go jungle trekking. Get a local guide to bring you around. The people are very friendly there so you will have no problem.

Souvenir items in form of beads and woven clothes are also available for your guests. A gongmaker's factory at Gombizau, is also a good place to stop and ask about gong making.

This factory is different from the commercialised Sumangkap Gong factory. At Gombizau, you will see a family, husband and wife, plus their parent, who work together to produce gongs for the market. Go further up and you will come to the famous Gombizau Honey Bee Farm. The Rural Development Corporation (KPD) started this farm several years ago but it has since become independently owned by the people in that village.

You will be able to see how they harvest and process the honey there. Of course you will be encouraged to buy honey from them. The honey here is very good when added to your tea, or eaten with bread. After leaving this village you can also travel on to the Tip of Borneo. Nice place to go especially when you remember that you ARE on the tip of our State, overlooking the South China Sea.

And then you go into Kudat proper. Stay overnight in this northern township. Next day you can go sightseeing within the area. Don't forget to visit the 100-year-old water village. You will notice that you have seen the northwest side of Sabah, and it have taken you just a few days.

I believe you will feel the satisfaction of knowing that you are a tourist guide in your own right and that you have helped the Government in promoting tourism in the State.

