

Cultural Villages of Sabah

Hundreds years ago, our land was ruled by spirits and headhunting, the perception of world was very different from now. After headhunting was no longer fashionable, some traditional practices were vanishing as well. In Sabah, there are a few cultural villages that offer you a taste of ancient lifestyle (headhunting not included!) and knowledge of the past.

MONSOPIAD CULTURAL VILLAGE



Monsopiad Cultural Village (MCV) was opened in 1996 by Monsopiad's direct descendants at Kg. Kuai, Penampang, about 16 KM away from Kota Kinabalu (KK). Born about 300 years ago, Monsopiad is a legendary Kadazandusun hero and most popular headhunter in Sabah history. Besides stories of Monsopiad, MCV also presents the history of Bobohizans, the female high priestesses of Kadazandusun, and Kadazandusun cultures.

Siou Do Mohoing, or the House of Skulls, is not for the faint-hearted. All 42 skulls, the 'trophies' of Monsopiad, hang from the rafters. The Kadazandusun ancestors believed that the spirit of the skull would protect the headhunter who 'harvested' it. On display in the same room are Bobohizan costumes, ritual tools and antiques such as ceramic jars used in ancient burial.

MCV is really a living museum and a showcase of Kadazandusun traditions. A friendly and knowledgeable guide will introduce you the traditional houses and farming equipments such as paddy grinders used in the olden days. You could try out the traditional games and activities, like 'lastik' (slingshot), stilt walking, sago grating as well as hands on experience with the Kadazandusun's musical instruments. At the end of the tour, visitors could enjoy the cultural show and traditional music. You would be invited to have fun trying blowpipe, Sumazau dance and bamboo dance.

For more info, please check out the website at <http://www.monsopiad.com>

MARI-MARI CULTURAL VILLAGE



Started last year with the slogan of "as it was, as it is," Mari-Mari Cultural Village (MMCv) gives you a genuine experience of how the people lived in the past. Located in Kionsom, Inanam, 25 minutes away from KK, MMCv is in the middle of lush forest next to the Kionsom River. You need to book the trip via a tour company, as walk-in tourists will not be entertained.

The journey to MMCv starts with a walk on the suspension bridge. Upon arrival, you will feel like being taken into a hundred-year old village. At the gate you will be surrounded by hostile-looking warriors armed with spears and parang (machetes). A group of high priestesses will cleanse you to chase away the "bad things" that come with you, before you are allowed to enter. Actually they purposely scare you a bit, but hey, this is part of the fun.

In MMCv, there are five authentic traditional houses of five different tribes, namely, Lundayeh, Rungus, Murut, Dusun, and Bajau. A guide will bring you into each house and explain the architecture of the house, how each indigenous tribe live in this house, and how they 'create' their daily necessities, for example, starting fire with bare hand and bamboo, making vest from tree bark, cooking traditional dishes, fermenting rice wine, making blowpipe,



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etc. Instead of watching, tourists will be encouraged to take part in some of the interesting activities themselves. Probably the favourite of the tourists is to get a "tattoo," in fact it is an Indian henna painting, painless and will disappear in a few days. Then the tour ends with a delightful cultural show.

For booking and more details on MMCv, please look at <http://www.traversetours.com>

LINANGKIT CULTURAL VILLAGE



Linangkit is a new cultural village located in Kg. Selupoh in Tuaran. Dusun Lotud is a sub-ethnic of Kadazandusun and very famous with their skillful weaving. The beautiful traditional costume of Dusun Lotud is one of the popular choices of dress for beauties contesting in Unduk Ngadau beauty pageant (Harvest Festival Queen). The word "Linangkit" is the name of handmade decorative embroidery by Dusun Lotud people.

Linangkit Cultural Village (LCV) is a platform to present the colourful culture and history of Dusun Lotud, and they also use it as a nursery ground for the younger generation to learn and appreciate their culture. Walk-in tourists are welcomed but you need to contact them 3 hours in advance. Prior arrangement for customised package, with cultural performance, serving of traditional food and other activities, is available. By the way, do not forget to chew some betel nut and smoke the local tobacco, to complement your cultural adventure.

Upon arrival, you will be taken to a traditional Dusun Lotud longhouse, where you could gain better understanding of the culture and the lifestyle of the Lotud. The house has a good collection of ritual tools used by the Tantagans, the traditional priestesses of Lotud. Nowadays, many indigenous people are converted to Christians and Muslims, so the mystical practices is gradually fading.

The official web site of LCV is <http://www.linangkit.com>, if you would like to know more.

In conclusion, each cultural village has its features and uniqueness. For Monsopiad, I like its historical heritage, and I like the "cultural shock" of Mari-Mari and traditional delicacy of Linangkit too. These cultural villages will keep alive the rich cultures that make us proud.