

**FROM FRONT PAGE**

here. This cave actually seeks to show guests how the caves in Sabah look like. One fine example of functional caves (at least in the past) is the Agop Tulug Caves in Kinabatangan,

The Agop Tulug is used to as burial ground in the olden days. Within the caves are carved coffins more than 250 years old.

In fact, the simulated cave at the houses a pair of intricately carved coffins which are two of the old coffins found in the Agop Tulug caves.

Some section of the Time Tunnel shows the evolvement of the State in modern age. There you will be able to see how the State grew from the colonial era to how it is today.

This includes the administration during British times, the Second World War, and the independence of Sabah. You will also know how the leaders of yesteryears looked like.

The people's life in the past is mystical in that there are spirits in every living beings even inanimate subjects like stones, rocks and boulders. They carry out rituals to appease these spirits. In these rituals earthen containers are used. The rites and rituals are almost gone now, but you can view the vessels that were used in the ceremonies.

A gallery is dedicated to these items; there the various wares that were used are exhibited. The vessels were acquired by barter trade. In the gallery 14th. - 19th. Century trade ceramics of Vietnamese origin, 17th. - 19th. Century Japanese make, 19th. - 20th. Century European origin and

the trade wares of Thailand are exhibited.

There are also several ceramics from China. They include ceramics from the Song, Yuan, Late Ming, and Late Qing periods. Burial and dowry jars used by the people are also on exhibit.

Also on display are several ritual jars which are used by the local people for burial and as dowry.

The rich and diverse zoological and botanical heritage of Sabah is also on exhibit at the Natural History Gallery.

Preserved local zoological specimens are also displayed.

They include a 2-horned Sumatran rhinoceros, Rheithrosciurus macrotis, the Otter Civet, Moon Rat, Tangalung, Giant Tufted Ground Squirrel, and short-tailed Mongoose.

A gallery is also dedicated to the people of Sabah. Called the Colour, Cloth and Costumes gallery, various traditional attire of the indigenous people of Sabah are on display there.

The traditional costumes, headgear and personal ornaments of the seven main groups of people are shown here. As we all know each group have their own costumes and attires so the exhibition is quite colourful to say the least.

The seven groups represented in the gallery are: Bajau, Kadazan Penampang, Lotud, Rungus, Suluk, Murut and Dusun Tindal.

For an insight of the people's home, the Sabah Museum Heritage Village located within the Ethnobotanical Gardens, in the Sabah Museum Com-

plex, is a good place to go. The Village displays replicas of traditional houses which are made up of 11 units of houses of the local communities from various areas in Sabah. A Lepa boat is also located there. Lepa doubles as a home for the people at Semporna.

The ethnobotanical garden found here consists of herbs and ritual plants used by the people since time immemorial.

The traditional houses there depict the usage of wood and related materials by the people. They show how ingenious the people were in the utilisation of wood and other plant material. I am informed that the houses were built by the relevant ethnic group to ensure authenticity.

To emphasise this authenticity, the houses are furnished with items that were part of the people's household in the past.

They include bamboo water containers, spoons, ladles and various others.

Occasionally activities such as handicraft making demonstrations and sales, cultural dance performances and traditional games are held here. These activities are usually carried out during the month of May, to coincide with the State level Harvest Festival Celebrations.

Any visits by dignitaries and VIPs will usually end at the Heritage Village.

So if you are taking your tourists on a tour of Sabah, treat them like VIPs and end their visit at the Museum. I am sure they will leave with better and deeper insight about Sabah and its people.

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