

ASIA · WILDLIFE · SACRED SITES · ARCHITECTURE · CULTURE



Brunei

Ulu Temburong's canopy walkway puts you above the rainforest rather than beneath it, and the golden-domed Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddien Mosque anchors a capital with a stilt-house water village at its heart. Brunei is quiet, orderly and alcohol-free, which makes it an easy, unhurried add-on to a Borneo trip.

 Before you go, read the UK government's travel advice for Brunei and entry requirements (visas, passport validity). Last updated by FCDO 19 March 2026.

 CAPITAL Bandar Seri Begawan	 CURRENCY Brunei dollar (BND) £1 ≈ BND 1.71	 LANGUAGE Malay, English Chinese	 BEST TIME Feb–Apr
 DAILY BUDGET £40–£210 ££ Moderate	 PLUGS Type G 240V · UK plugs fit	 FLIGHT FROM LONDON 13h 30m direct ~£700–£1,200 return	 TIME ZONE UTC+8 standard time

Brunei is a sliver of northern Borneo, split in two by Malaysian Sarawak, and roughly 70 per cent of it is still forested, partly because oil and gas wealth removed any need for large-scale logging. Most visitors give it three or four days. Bandar Seri Begawan, the low-rise capital on the Brunei River, covers the mosques, the Royal Regalia Museum and Kampong Ayer, the stilt village across the water. The second essential is Temburong, the eastern exclave, now reached by a 30-kilometre bridge across Brunei Bay, where longboats run upriver into the national park.

The pace is gentle, almost sleepy. There is no nightlife and no alcohol for sale, businesses pause for Friday prayers, and evenings revolve around night markets such as Gadong's, where satay and grilled fish cost a few dollars. Accommodation is limited and mid-priced, but food is cheap and the country feels orderly and unhurried. It suits curious travellers, families and anyone combining Sabah and Sarawak, and its wildlife surprises people: proboscis monkeys feed in mangroves a short boat ride from the capital.

Top 5 highlights

- 1

NATURE

Ulu Temburong National Park

Reached by longboat up the Temburong River and visited with licensed operators, this protected rainforest is best at dawn: climb the steel towers of the canopy walkway for views over unbroken forest, then swim in the river.
- 2

CULTURE

Kampong Ayer

Several thousand people still live in this stilt village on the Brunei River, linked by plank walkways, schools and mosques. Hop on a water taxi from the waterfront and start at the Cultural and Tourism Gallery.

3

SACRED SITE

Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddien Mosque

Completed in 1958, the capital's landmark mosque rises from an artificial lagoon beside a replica royal barge, its gold dome floodlit at night. Non-Muslims may visit outside prayer times, with robes provided.

4

ARCHITECTURE

Jame' Asr Hassanil Bolkiah Mosque

Brunei's largest mosque, opened in 1994, has 29 golden domes commemorating the country's 29 sultans. Its gardens, minarets and tiled interior are at their most striking in the late-afternoon light.

5

WILDLIFE

Brunei River mangroves

Late-afternoon boat trips from the capital's waterfront slip into the mangroves to find proboscis monkeys, Borneo's pot-bellied, long-nosed primates, along with macaques, monitor lizards and, with luck, estuarine crocodiles.

Biggest cities

LARGEST CITY

Bandar Seri Begawan

≈ 270,000 people

A compact, low-key capital: two landmark mosques, the Royal Regalia Museum, water taxis to Kampong Ayer and Gadong's night market fill two days comfortably.

2ND LARGEST CITY

Kuala Belait

≈ 28,000 people

Brunei's westernmost town, built on oil money near the Sarawak border; quiet, with a riverside and beach, and mainly useful as a stop on the road to Miri.

3RD LARGEST CITY

Seria

≈ 16,000 people

Brunei's oil was first struck here in 1929; nodding-donkey pumps still work among the houses, and the Billionth Barrel Monument marks the field's milestone output.

Outside the capital's urban area Brunei's towns are small; figures are approximate urban-area estimates.

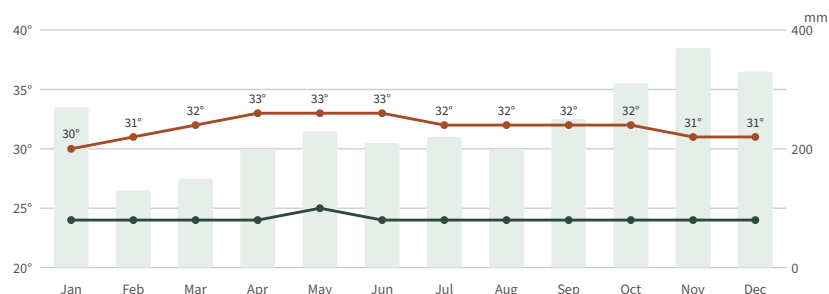
When to go to Brunei

Best time: **Feb–Apr**.



Average climate in Bandar Seri Begawan

— High °C — Low °C ■ Rain (mm)



Festivals & events

Feb–Mar

Hari Raya Aidilfitri

At the end of Ramadan the Sultan opens Istana Nurul Iman, the world's largest residential palace, to the public for three days of handshakes and festive food.

Feb	National Day On 23 February the capital marks Brunei's independence with parades, choreographed displays and celebrations, and the districts hold their own events.
Jul	Sultan's Birthday Around 15 July the country celebrates with processions, fireworks, trade fairs and festivities in every district, and the capital's waterfront is decorated for weeks.

How much does Brunei cost?

SHOESTRING £40 per person / day ≈ BND 68.33 hostels, street food, buses	MID-RANGE £95 per person / day ≈ BND 162 3-star hotels, restaurants, some taxis	COMFORTABLE £210 per person / day ≈ BND 359 4-star+, guided trips, private transfers
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Estimates per person per day, excluding flights. Prices vary by season and city.

Food to try

Ambuyat

Brunei's national dish: a gluey mass of sago starch twirled onto bamboo chandas and dipped in sour cacah sauce, eaten with grilled fish and vegetable sides.

Nasi katok

A cheap, filling parcel of rice, fried chicken and sambal, sold around the clock; the name comes from knocking on the seller's door.

Kelupis

Glutinous rice steamed in a tight leaf wrapping, often eaten with rendang or curry; a breakfast and festival favourite.

Getting around

Public transport is thin. Buses run from the central terminal in Bandar Seri Begawan to Gadong, Tutong and the Belait towns, but services stop early in the evening. Street taxis are scarce, so most visitors use Dart, the local ride-hailing app, or hire a car: roads are excellent and fuel is cheap. Water taxis zip across the river to Kampong Ayer, and the Temburong Bridge has turned the exclave into an easy drive.

Practical information

PLUGS & VOLTAGE



G

240V — UK plugs fit

DIALLING CODE

+673

TAP WATER

Generally safe to drink

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

Ambulance: **991**

Fire: **995**

Police: **993**

Search and rescue: **998**

Source: FCDO “Getting help”

TIME ZONE

UTC+8 (standard time)

DRIVING

On the left

TIPPING

Not expected; upmarket hotels and restaurants usually add a 10 per cent service charge. Rounding up for drivers or guides is appreciated.

ETIQUETTE

Dress modestly, especially at mosques, where women should cover their hair. Point with your thumb rather than a finger, avoid public displays of affection and don't eat or drink in public during Ramadan.

MAIN AIRPORTS

Brunei International Airport (BWN), Bandar Seri Begawan

Visas & entry for Brunei

Shown for a British passport.

No visa needed

British citizen passport holders may enter Brunei as visitors for up to 90 days without a visa. If you have another type of British nationality, check visa requirements with Brunei immigration authorities.

To stay longer or if you're travelling for work, study, business travel or other reasons, you must meet the Brunei government's entry requirements. Check which type of visa or work permit you need with the Brunei High Commission in the UK.

From the UK government's FCDO entry requirements for British passport holders — read the full page for passport validity, permits and exceptions.

Health & vaccinations



See a travel health nurse, GP or travel clinic **6–8 weeks before you go**. Make sure routine UK vaccinations (such as MMR and diphtheria-tetanus-polio) are up to date.

RECOMMENDED FOR MOST TRAVELLERS

Hepatitis A

Tetanus

Typhoid

SOMETIMES ADVISED — DEPENDS ON YOUR TRIP, ACTIVITIES AND HEALTH

Dengue

Hepatitis B

Japanese encephalitis

Rabies

Tuberculosis

YELLOW FEVER CERTIFICATE

A yellow fever certificate is only required if you arrive from (or transit through) a country with yellow fever risk — not if you fly direct from the UK.

MALARIA

Very low risk of malaria

- There is very low risk of malaria in Brunei Darussalam: awareness of risk and bite avoidance recommended.

Source: TravelHealthPro (National Travel Health Network and Centre), checked 21 October 2026. This is a summary, not medical advice.

Public holidays in Brunei

The next 12 months. Banks, offices and some sights may close, and transport and hotels get busy around these dates.

Fri 25 Dec 2026	Christmas Day
Sat 26 Dec 2026	Christmas Day (observed)
Fri 1 Jan 2027	New Year's Day
Sat 2 Jan 2027	New Year's Day (observed)
Wed 6 Jan 2027	Isra' and Mi'raj (date may shift)
Sat 6 Feb 2027	Lunar New Year
Mon 8 Feb 2027	First Day of Ramadan (date may shift)
Tue 23 Feb 2027	National Day
Wed 24 Feb 2027	Anniversary of the revelation of the Quran (date may shift)
Wed 10 Mar 2027	Eid al-Fitr (date may shift)
Thu 11 Mar 2027	Eid al-Fitr (date may shift)
Fri 12 Mar 2027	Eid al-Fitr (date may shift)
Sat 13 Mar 2027	Eid al-Fitr (observed, estimated) (date may shift)
Mon 17 May 2027	Eid al-Adha (date may shift)
Mon 31 May 2027	Armed Forces Day
Sun 6 Jun 2027	Islamic New Year (date may shift)
Mon 7 Jun 2027	Islamic New Year (observed, estimated) (date may shift)
Thu 15 Jul 2027	Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah's Birthday
Sun 15 Aug 2027	Prophet's Birthday (date may shift)
Mon 16 Aug 2027	Prophet's Birthday (observed, estimated) (date may shift)

National holidays only. Dates based on lunar calendars can move by a day or two depending on official announcements.

Useful phrases in Malay

ENGLISH	MALAY	SAY IT
Hello	Apa khabar	<i>ah-pah KAH-bar</i>
Thank you	Terima kasih	<i>t'REE-mah KAH-see</i>
Please	Tolong	<i>TOH-long</i>
Excuse me	Maafkan saya	<i>mah-AHF-kan SAH-yah</i>
How much is this?	Berapa harganya?	<i>b'RAH-pah har-GAH-nyah</i>

Know before you go

Alcohol is not sold anywhere. Non-Muslim visitors may bring in a small personal allowance, which must be declared at customs and drunk privately.

Many shops, cafés and offices close from about noon to 2pm on Fridays for prayers, so plan museum visits and meals around the gap.

Singapore dollars are accepted at par alongside Brunei dollars; carry small notes for water taxis, night markets and roadside nasi katok stalls.

