

# Visitor Information

## NEGARA BRUNEI DARUSSALAM



### **Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin Mosque in Bandar Seri Begawan**

*The mosque is considered one of the most beautiful mosques in the Asia Pacific*



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Brunei is officially known as the **Nation of Brunei, the Abode of Peace.**

Brunei is a country located on the north coast of the island of Borneo in Southeast Asia. Apart from its coastline with the South China Sea, the sovereign state is completely surrounded by the Malaysian state of Sarawak. It is separated into two parts by the Sarawak district of Limbang.

Brunei is the only sovereign state completely on the island of Borneo; the remainder of the island's territory is divided between the nations of Malaysia and Indonesia.

At the peak of the Bruneian Empire, Sultan Bolkiah (1485–1528) is alleged to have had control over most regions of Borneo, including modern day Sarawak and Sabah, as well as the Sulu Archipelago off

the northeast tip of Borneo, Seludong (Manila), and the islands off the north-west tip of Borneo.

During the 19th century, the Bruneian Empire began to decline. The Sultanate ceded Sarawak (Kuching) to James Brooke and installed him as the White Rajah, and it ceded Sabah to the British North Borneo Chartered Company.



# History of Brunei



Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien Sultan and Yang di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam is the 29th and current Sultan and Yang di-Pertuan of Brunei.

## A 1000 years of History in the making



National Emblem of Brunei

**Brunei is mentioned in one of the earliest Chinese records. In a letter dated 977 AD to the Chinese emperor from the ruler of Po-ni, which some scholars believe to refer to Borneo.**

In 1225, a Chinese official, Chau Ju-Kua, reported that Po-ni had 100 warships to protect its trade, and that there was a lot of wealth in the Kingdom.

Local history states that Brunei was founded by Awang Alak Betatar, later to be Sultan Muhammad Shah, reigning around 1400. He moved from Garang in the Temburong District to the Brunei River estuary, discovering Brunei

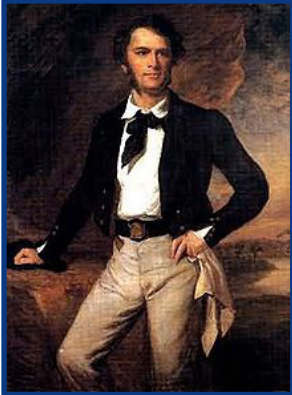
According to legend, upon landing he exclaimed, **Baru nah** (loosely translated as "that's it!" or "there"), from which the name "Brunei" was derived. He was the first Muslim ruler of Brunei

The Spanish invaded the capital on 16th April 1578. The Sultan Saiful Rijal and Paduka Seri Begawan Sultan Abdul Kahar were forced to flee to Meragang then to Jerudong.

In Jerudong, they made plans to chase the conquering army away from Brunei. Suffering high fatalities due to a cholera or dysentery outbreak, the Spanish decided to abandon Brunei and returned to Manila on 26 June 1578, after 72 days

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## Negara Brunei Darussalam - The Abode of Peace



Sir James Brooke, Rajah of Sarawak.  
29th April 1803 – 11th June 1868

### British Intervention

The British have intervened in the affairs of Brunei on several occasions.

Britain attacked Brunei in July 1846 due to internal conflicts over who was the rightful Sultan.

In the 1880s, the decline of the Bruneian Empire continued. The sultan granted land (now Sarawak) to **James Brooke**, who had helped him quell a rebellion and allowed him to establish the Kingdom of Sarawak.

Over time, Brooke and his nephews leased or annexed more land. Brunei lost much of its territory to him and his dynasty which is known as the **White Rajah**.

Sultan Hashim Jalilul Alam Aqamaddin appealed to the British to stop further encroachment by Brooke.

The "**Treaty of Protection**" was negotiated by Sir Hugh Low and signed on 17 September 1888. The treaty said that the sultan "could not cede or lease any territory to foreign powers without British consent"; it provided Britain effective control over Brunei's external affairs, making it a British protected state - which continued until 1984.

However, when the Kingdom of Sarawak annexed Brunei's Pandaruan District in 1890, the British did not take any action to stop it.

The earliest recorded documentation by someone from the West about Brunei is by an Italian known as **Ludovico di Varthema**. His account written in 1550 states:

We arrived at the island of Bornei which is distant from the Maluch about two hundred miles, and we found that it was somewhat larger than the aforesaid and much lower. The people are pagans and are men of goodwill... .. in this island justice is well administered .

This final annexation by Sarawak left Brunei with its current small land mass and separation into two parts.

British residents were introduced in Brunei under the Supplementary Protectorate Agreement in 1906. The residents were to advise the sultan on all matters of administration.

### Discovery of oil

Petroleum was discovered in 1929 after several fruitless attempts. Seria Well Number One (S-1) was drilled on 12th July 1928. Oil was struck on 5th April 1929.

Seria Well Number 2 (S-2) was drilled on 19th August 1929, and still continues to produce oil today.

The British Malayan Petroleum Company (now Brunei Shell Petroleum Company) was formed on 22nd July 1922.



Sir Hugh Low GCMG  
Governor of Labuan

Oil and natural gas have been the basis of Brunei's development and wealth since the late 20th century.

### Japanese occupation

The Japanese invaded Brunei on 16th December 1941.

They landed 10,000 troops at Kuala Belait. After six days of fighting, they occupied the entire country.

The British had anticipated a Japanese attack, but lacked the resources to defend the area because of their engagement in the

war in Europe. The troops from the Punjab Regiment filled in the Seria oilfield oil wells with concrete in September 1941 to deny the Japanese their use.

During the occupation, the Japanese had their language taught in schools, and Government officers were required to learn Japanese. The local currency was replaced by what was to become known as **duit pisang** (banana money).



On 10 June 1945, the Australian 9th Division landed at Muara under Operation Oboe Six to recapture Borneo from the Japanese

### Post-World War II

After World War II, a new government was formed in Brunei under the British Military Administration (BMA). It consisted mainly of Australian officers and servicemen.

In 1959, a new constitution was written declaring Brunei a self-governing state, while its foreign affairs, security, and defence remained the responsibility of the United Kingdom.

A small rebellion erupted against the monarchy in 1962, which was suppressed with help of the UK. Known as the **Brunei Revolt**, it contributed to the failure to create the North Borneo Federation. .

Brunei gained its independence from the United Kingdom on 1st January 1984. The official National Day, which celebrates the country's independence, is held annually on 23rd February.



# Culture & Customs

## **The culture of Brunei is strongly influenced by Malay cultures and the Islamic religion.**

The culture is also influenced by the demographic makeup of the country: more than two-thirds of the population are Malay, and the remainder consists of Chinese, Indians and indigenous groups such as Dayaks, Dusuns and Kedazans.

### **Language**

While Standard Malay is the official language of Brunei, languages such as Brunei Malay and English are more commonly spoken.

### **Religion**

The Constitution of Brunei states that “The religion of Brunei Darussalam shall be the Muslim religion according to the Shafi’i sect of that religion”, although it also guarantees religious freedom, albeit with restrictions. His Majesty the Sultan, is depicted as the defender of Islam in the country under a system known as Malay Islamic Monarchy,

On 30th April 2014, His Majesty the Sultan, announced the implementation and enforcement of Sharia law in Brunei.

The first phase of Sharia law, included fines and prison sentences for “crimes” such as pregnancies outside of wedlock, propagating religions other than Islam, and not attending mandatory Friday prayers.

The second phase introduced harsh punishments such as floggings and cutting off hands for property offenses

The third and final phase implemented in 2016, introduced executions,

including stoning, for offenses such as adultery, abortion, homosexuality/sodomy, taking drugs and blasphemy.

### **Food**

The Malay diet mainly consists of rice and curries consisting of vegetables, fish, shellfish, and fruits.

Curries of water buffalo, chicken, and beef are consumed on special occasions.

Game birds and animals (especially mouse deer, barking deer, and sambar) are eaten in rural areas.

Pork products are forbidden to Muslims.

There is a wide range of open-air markets and restaurants in the main towns. A popular local drink is iced unripe coconut milk. Coffee is widely consumed however, alcoholic drinks are forbidden to Muslims and not for sale in Brunei.

### **Food Customs at Ceremonial Occasions.**

At large Malay wedding feasts and the forty-day funeral feast, rice and coconut cream-based meat curries (santan) are served, often to a hundred or more guests.

### **Etiquette**

The following rules of etiquette are universal throughout Asia:

- pass items only with the right hand;
- refuse food by touching the container with the right hand, never verbally;
- use a thumb, never an index finger, to point;
- remove shoes whenever entering a home or public building, especially

a mosque;

- shake hands gently and then gently touch the center of one’s chest with the right hand afterward;
- never address a person by name alone;
- never consume items until specifically requested to do so;
- avoid public inter-sexual bodily contact; and...
- never lose one’s temper.

### **Marriage and Family**

Usually the parents of a young man will arrange a marriage with the parents of a young woman.

For a Muslim, the spouse must also be Muslim; thus, individuals, especially men, often convert to Islam in order to marry a Muslim.

Inter-ethnic group marriages are not uncommon. There is considerable minor variation in marriage ceremonies from group to group and within ethnic groups.



**A selection of traditional Malay dishes**

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- **CHILDREN - ARE STRICTLY BOUND BY CUSTOM TO LOOK UPON THEIR PARENTS WITH RESPECT AND TOTAL OBEDIENCE**
- **PRAYERS - FOLLOWING ISLAMIC PRACTICE THERE ARE 2 HOURS OF PRAYER BETWEEN 12 AND 2 ON FRIDAYS**
- **CLOTHING - ALL CLOTHING MUST BE CONSERVATIVE. ARMPITS AND SHOULDERS SHOULD BE COVERED AT ALL TIMES**
- **HOUSING - IS TRADITIONAL CONSTRUCTED OF WOOD AND PALM LEAVES (ATTAP) RAISED ON STILTS**
- **FASTING - DURING HARI TAYA THERE IS A MONTH LONG FAST KNOWN AS RAMADAN**
- **EATING - ALWAYS USE THE RIGHT HAND WHILE EATING & DONT EAT WHILE WALKING**
- **AFFECTION - AVOID ALL PUBLIC DISPLAYS OF AFFECTION**
- **CROSSING LEGS - WHEN SITTING, NEVER CROSS YOUR LEGS IN FRONT OF AN ELDER**
- **FEET - NEVER EXPOSE THE SOLES OF YOUR FEET AND NEVER PUT THEM ON A TABLE OR IN THE AIR**
- **BODY LANGUAGE - PLACING HANDS ON HIPS IS A SIGN OF ANGER**
- **CLOTHING COLOUR - ON SPECIAL OCCASIONS YELLOW CAN ONLY BE WORN BY ROYALTY.**
- **VISITING - THE HOST GREETES GUESTS WITH THE ARABIC PHRASE ASSALAMUALAIKUM WHICH MEANS “PEACE BE UPON YOU”**



# Ethnic Groups

The Brunei Constitution defines a Bumiputera as a member of the following seven ethnic groups:

## Bruneian Malay

Are a native Malay ethnic group that lives in Brunei, the federal territory of Labuan, the south-western coast of Sabah and the northern parts of Sarawak. The Bruneian Malays are different from the larger Ethnic Malay population found in the other parts of the Malay World, namely Peninsular Malaysia and the central and southern areas of Sarawak including neighbouring lands such as Singapore, Indonesia and Southern Thailand especially in language and culture

## Bisaya Tutong

The Bisaya-Tutong are culturally diverse and live in small groups interspersed among other peoples. They have adapted many of their cultural features from these peoples. Little is known of their history.

In the past, their reputation was a violent one. There was much inter-tribal warfare, and the Bisayan warriors beheaded their enemies to gain power.

## Belait

The Belait People are an ethnic group which reside mainly in the Belait District of Brunei. They are the native inhabitants of the district from which the name was taken.

The majority of the Belait People live in the Belait District and they are overwhelmingly Muslims.



## Dusun (image above)

The Dusun ethnic group at one time made up almost 40% of the population of Sabah and is broken down into more than 30 sub-ethnic, or dialect groups, or tribes, each speaking a slightly different dialect of the Dusunic family language.

One interesting fact about the Dusun is that they do not have the word 'dusun' in their vocabulary. It has been suggested that the term 'Dusun' was a term used by the Sultan of Brunei to refer to the ethnic groups of inland farmers in present-day Sabah. 'Dusun' means 'orchard' in Malay

## Murut (image below)



The Murut are an indigenous ethnic group, comprising 29 sub-ethnic groups. The Murut were the last of Sabah's ethnic groups to renounce head-hunting. As with the Iban of Sarawak,

The Murut population in Brunei is mainly found in the sparsely populated Temburong district. They once supplied military might to the Sultans of Brunei

## Kedayan (image below)



The Kedayan are an ethnic group residing in Brunei, Labuan, Sabah, and parts of Sarawak

The origins of the Kedayans are uncertain. Some of them believe their people were originally from Java, which they left during the reign of Sultan Bolkiah

## Bisaya (image page 9 top left)

The Bisaya are an indigenous people of the north-west and the coast line of Borneo, Malaysia. They mostly live near the Beaufort district, the Padas River also Kuala Penyu in the Sabah region.

The Bisaya people are also regarded as a relatives of the Dayak people.



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**Bumiputera - from the Sanskrit word 'Bhumiputra', which roughly translated means 'sons of the soil' can also be referred to as Melayu Jati or Indigenous Malays. In Brunei is the term used to refer to a member of majority Malay ethnic group**



are still prohibited by certain churches

### **Kelabit**

The Kelabit are an indigenous Dayak people of the Sarawak/North Kalimantan highlands of Borneo. Because the highlands are largely inaccessible by river (due to rapids), the Kelabit have been relatively untouched by modern western influences.

During the Second World War the Kelabit, were co-opted by the Allies into fighting the Japanese. They were supplied with weapons by the Australian military and played an essential role in the liberation of Borneo

The term Dayak is a loose term for over 200 riverine and hill-dwelling ethnic subgroups, located principally in the central and southern interior of Borneo, each with its own dialect, customs, laws, territory and culture, although common distinguishing traits are readily identifiable.

Dayak languages are categorised as part of the Austronesian languages in Asia.

The Dayak were traditionally animist in belief; however, many converted to Islam and since the 19th century there has been mass conversion to Christianity.

**Other indigenous people are not defined as being Bumiputera by the Brunei constitution i.e. people of Malay-speaking ethnic groups who don't belong to the Islamic faith. These are:**



### **Iban (image left)**

The Iban or Sea Dayaks are a branch of the Dayak people.

Iban were renowned for practicing head-hunting and tribal/territorial expansion, and had a fearsome

reputation as a strong and successful warring tribe

For hundreds of years, the Iban ancestors practiced animistic beliefs, although after the arrival of James Brooke, many were influenced by European missionaries and converted to Christianity.

Although the majority are now Christian; many continue to observe both Christian and traditional ceremonies, particularly during marriages or festivals, although some ancestral practice such as 'Miring'

### **Penan**

Penan are one of the last such peoples remaining as hunters and gatherers. The Penan are noted for their practice of 'molong' which means never taking more than necessary. They eat plants, which are also used as medicines, and animals and use the hides, skin, fur, and other parts for clothing and shelter.



### **Dayaks (image above)**

The Dayaks are the native people of Borneo.

### **Sama-Bajau (image above)**

The Bajau have sometimes been called "Sea Gypsies" or "Sea Nomads".

Sama-Bajau is a collective term, used to describe several closely related indigenous people who consider themselves a single distinct bangsa.

The Sama-Bajau are mostly a nomadic, seafaring people, living off the sea by trading and subsistence fishing.

The boat-dwelling Sama-Bajau see themselves as non-aggressive people.

They kept close to the shore by erecting houses on stilts, and travelled using lepa, handmade boats which many lived in.



# Useful Information

## Flying to Brunei

Royal Brunei Airlines (www.flyroyalbrunei.com) is the national carrier for Brunei and should be used for all official visits to Hornbill School.

You will depart from London Heathrow Terminal 4 (there are two departure times - please check your ticket) You will fly on the 787 Boeing Dreamliner non-stop service with a flight time of between 12 and 14 hours.

Your final destination is Bandar Seri Begawan - referred to as BSB and you will arrive at Brunei International Airport (BIA)

**BI003 from LHR to BIA**  
**BI004 to LHR from BIA**

## Visas

The Government of Brunei Darussalam allows citizens of specific countries and territories to travel to Brunei for tourism or business for up to 90, 30 or 14 days without having to obtain a visa.

All visitors must hold a passport valid for 6 months.

Passports must have at least 4 clear empty pages for visa stamps etc.

## Getting around - Taxi

Brunei has only a small number of official taxis, all of them operated by independent drivers. The sultanate's only taxi rank is at Bandar Seri Begawan's bus terminal on Jalan Cater.

Taxis do not have meters so negotiate the fare before boarding. Tipping is not necessary.

## Getting around - Bus

Public buses link Bandar Seri Begawan's city centre bus terminal with towns such as Kuala Lurah, Muara, Tutong and Seria.

## Getting around - Hire Car

You may prefer for Hornbill School to help you hire a car during your stay. If so please contact the school office who will be more than happy to help arrange this.

## Documentation

Driving licences issued by other countries are valid for up to three months. You must carry your licence with you at all times.

## Vehicles

The Brunei transport system drives on the left-hand side of the road. All car passengers are required to wear seat belts.

Use of mobile phones while driving is prohibited.

## Speed

Speed limits are 100kph on dual carriageways, 80kph on single carriageways and 50kph in built-up areas.

## Breakdown services

If your car breaks down, roadside assistance is available 24 hours a day from 24-7 Assist (tel: +673 247 0247)

## Smoking

Smoking is prohibited in certain public places, including shopping and eating areas, bus stops and stations, and all government buildings. Offenders may be fined.

It's difficult to buy cigarettes in Brunei and there's no duty-free allowance for tobacco or tobacco products, even for personal consumption.

## Opening Hours

Places of business and offices including shops and restaurants are open from around 0900hrs until 1700hrs. However, restaurants and some shops will still be open until 2200hrs.

All businesses shut between 12 noon and 2pm every Friday.



*Brunei Ritual Bronze Kettle used as a dowry or heirloom*

## Emergency & Important Numbers

**Ambulance - 991**

**Fire - 995**

**Police - 993**

**Search & Rescue - 998**

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## Money

Credit cards are accepted at most major establishments. However, a large number of shops and restaurants will only accept cash and will not have a credit card facility.

Travellers' cheques can be cashed at banks or major hotels in the capital.

Most other major currencies are convertible at banks, hotels or official money changers.

The Brunei dollar (Ringgit) has a currency code of BND and is normally abbreviated with the dollar sign \$, or alternatively B\$ to distinguish it from other dollar-denominated currencies.

The dollar is divided into 100 sen (Malay) or cents (English).

Under a Currency Interchangeability Agreement in 1967, the Brunei dollar is interchangeable with the Singapore dollar at par. As such, the Brunei dollar is accepted in Singapore as "customary tender"; likewise, the Singapore dollar is accepted for payments in Brunei. However, you can not use a torn Singapore Dollar in any establishment - check your change!



### Brunei coins are:

- 1 sen
- 5 sen
- 10 sen
- 20 sen
- 50 sen



## History of the Straits Dollar in Brunei.

In 1837, the Indian rupee was made the sole official currency in the Straits Settlements

In 1867, administration of the Straits Settlements was separated from India and the dollar was made the standard currency.

From 1899, the Straits dollar was issued by a new Board of Commissioners of Currency

### Note:

The Straits Settlements were a group of British territories located in Southeast Asia.

Originally established in 1826 as part of the territories controlled by the British East India Company, the Straits Settlements came under direct British control as a Crown colony on 1 April 1867.

The colony was dissolved in 1946

The Straits Settlements originally consisted of the four individual settlements of Malacca, Dinding, Penang and Singapore. Christmas Island and the Cocos Islands were also included.

The island of Labuan, off the coast of Borneo, was also incorporated into the colony with effect from 1 January 1907

# Brunei Life

**Kampong Ayer is a historical settlement area in Bandar Seri Begawan, the capital of Brunei. It literally means ‘water village’**

Kampong Ayer consists of a cluster of traditional stilt villages built on the Brunei River, mainly in the vicinity of the present-day Pusat Bandar or the City Centre.

It has often been dubbed by tourists as ‘Venice of the East’

Kampong Ayer consists of several small neighbourhoods which are officially designated as villages, each has its own village head called ketua kampung. The villages are under a few subdistricts or mukims of the Brunei-Muara District, with a Penghulu as the mukim head.



## **Tamu Kianggeh**

The open market brings together numerous small entrepreneurs selling local vegetables, fruits, live chickens, fish, potted plants, assorted food and beverages.

