



The Enchanting Rural Baram of Sarawak



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(1) The Baram River (2) Ferry transportation (3) Journey to
Long San (4) Baram Regatta statue (5) Fishing activity along
Baram River (6) Scenic view of Long Lama (7) Rooftop view at
Baram River (8) Tenyok Rimba Bridge of Freedom

The magical beauty of Sarawak can only be fully understood if one dares to venture into the deep interior of Sarawak. A group of researchers from Universiti Malaysia Sarawak visited Long Lama, Long Bedian and Long San to study the rural Baram community awareness about H1N1 influenza outbreak and preventions.

Our memorable research journey began from Kuching to Miri on 14th of May 2012. Thanks to Air Asia promotion! We enjoyed a good bargain for our return flight ticket. Everyone in the group was really excited and kept talking about the trip. One of our team members even reminded us (the ladies) to bring an extra 'kain sarung' as we probably need it to take bath in the river. Other members from West Malaysia who never reached the interior of Sarawak also asked funny questions like the possibility of getting attack by a crocodile and leeches. Dr Samuel Lihan,



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a microbiologist who originated from Ulu Baram, kept feeding us with many exciting stories about the different

Sarawak tribal groups of Baram and their unique lifestyle whom we will be meeting later.

On the same day, we reached Marudi from Miri by using MASWing Twin Otter. Then from Marudi, we took the fascinating journey by an express boat, costing us about RM20 per person, to reach Long Lama. The three-hour boat journey to Long Lama offered us a great opportunity to appreciate the significant role of the mighty Baram River to the local communities. We reached Long Lama, a very quiet and peaceful small town, around 5pm. Long Lama has few small hotels that offer basic and modest accommodations. It also has few eating places including two small restaurants owned by the Moslem locals.



Departing from Miri Airport to Marudi



Lodging road to Long San



Taking an express boat from Marudi to Long Lama

The following day, approximately at 09:30am, we headed to Long Bedian using three chartered 4WD vehicles. The two-hour bumpy ride along the rough and uneven



Staying at the Bedian Homestay and enjoying excellent local dishes and warm hospitality of the local folks

logging road surface felt like a great adventure already! We were really touched by the warm reception and friendly hospitality of the Kayan and Kenyah community at Long Bedian. The accommodation and warm hospitality we received from our homestay owner and his wife, Aunty Elizabeth felt like a real home away from home. The **Bedian Homestay** owner, Mr Luhah, can be contacted at **019-8258265**.

Before waiting for the evening research activities to start, we took a short break to appreciate the beauty of Tenyok Rimba waterfall, courtesy of Mr Luhah. The river is so cool and clear! Forest areas around Tenyok Rimba remain relatively untouched and preserved. The tranquility of Tenyok Rimba permits us to blend into its environment to further appreciate the beauty of Baram.

On 17th of May, we departed from Long Bedian to Long San. Our research works demand us to cover Long San area, which is the largest settlement of the Kenyah ethnics.

The bouncy adventure road journey using 4WD vehicles continued. This was really the highlight of the road adventure! Without our expert drivers, we don't think we will pass this challenging journey to Long San. The spectacular views passing through the beautiful Sarawak rainforest and mountains will remain



Adventurous road journey travelling from Long Bedian to Long San



Breath taking views along the journey to Long San

forever in our memory. This thrilling journey, no doubt, is part of what the interior areas of Sarawak such as Baram can offer to visitors.

At Long San, we received a warm hospitality from Aunty Maria and Senior JM Shirley, who managed the Long San Health Clinic. Long San Village is surrounded by beautiful mountains and is located near the Baram River. There is also a primary boarding school, St. Pius and a secondary School, SMK Temenggong Oyong Lawai Jau, which cater for the educational needs of children from Kayan, Kenyah, Penan and other tribes. On our last day of this expedition, we exchanged stories and information with the locals. Goodbye was hard!



Local dish at the homestay

We departed from Long San to Long Akah Airport, kindness of Cikgu Louis Dagu, who transported us to our destination. Whilst waiting, we had the opportunity to befriend Claudio, a tourist, from Spain. He shared with us his interesting jungle adventures about living with the



Our short break at Tenyok Rimba, appreciating nature

Penan tribe in the jungle of the deep interior of Baram. On the plane back to Miri, few of us could not stop laughing about our limited pre-conceived understanding about Baram. The ladies could not stop themselves giggling about the 'kain sarung' and the fear of 'bujang senang' stories. The only 'bujang senang' who were always with us throughout the journey are our own team members, Rekaya and Rudy!

This research expedition has opened our mind and offers many important perspectives for us to further understand and appreciate the uniqueness and beauty of Sarawak. The beautiful landscapes of rural Baram and the warm hospitality of the local communities offer us strong emotional connection beyond what words can describe.

We found the magical beauty of Sarawak in Baram.



Departing from Long Akah back to Miri

We would like to thank the Ministry of Higher Education for funding our research works and made this trip possible. More details about the research can be obtained from Dr Rohaya Mohd Nor via email at mnrohaya@feb.unimas.my.



The mighty Baram River near Long San



Views from the plane on the way back to Miri



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