

Kalimantan



Deep, dark and exotic, the very notion of Borneo rouses something in the subconscious. Summoning visions of mythical people and ancient forests, it tugs at the adventurer within. It's a romantic notion, but the world's third-largest island has managed to keep some of her secrets and most of them lie in the impenetrable interior of Kalimantan.

Occupying two-thirds of Borneo's primeval land mass, Kalimantan is one of Indonesia's least-visited provinces. A void on the tourist radar, it's a red flag to those hungry for the unknown. Mountains, forests and mighty rivers stretch across the interior, influencing the culture, history and livelihoods of villages throughout. Although the logging and mining industries have had a 30-year feeding frenzy, the fury of the chainsaw and the tide of wasteland is beginning to slow. But you need to be quick – Kalimantan's hidden world continues to diminish.

The once mysterious Sungai Mahakam is now a highway of river traffic, yet treacherous rapids still protect the customs of traditional Dayak villages. Even the urban jungle begs exploration. Dawn canoe rides to Banjarmasin's floating markets and dusk journeys through its enigmatic canals imbue travellers with a taste of modern culture.

You can trek in Kayan Mentarang National Park, the Apokayan Highlands, and around the eastern reaches of the vast Sungai Kapuas. And with little effort you can come face to face with orang-utans, macaques, proboscis monkeys, bird life and maybe even the odd sun bear.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Coursing Sungai Kumai in a *klotok* (motorised river canoe) and glimpsing the rust-red figure of an orang-utan in **Tanjung Puting National Park** (p631)
- Testing longboat limits; investigating Dayak villages beyond the rapids of **Sungai Mahakam** (p654)
- Discovering **Banjarmasin** (p635) at dusk and dawn from the canals of this animated city
- Trekking, rafting and exploring South Kalimantan's enigmatic **Pegunungan Meratus** (p644) around Loksado
- Going coastal in the tropical islands around **Pulau Derawan** (p663) and the isolated beaches north of **Pontianak** (p618)



- POPULATION: 11.2 MILLION
- LAND AREA: 539,460 SQ KM
- HIGHEST PEAK: BUKIT RAYA (2278M)

HISTORY

Kalimantan's position on the India-China trade axis ensured strong influence from these two countries long before Europeans set foot on Borneo. By about AD 400, Hinduism arrived and Chinese settlements were established. As Islam spread east around the 15th or 16th century, coastal ports were converted and sultanates, such as Kutai and Banjarmasin, became major trading centres.

But it was ultimately the Europeans who colonised and shaped the province's modern history. In the early 17th century, Kalimantan became a scene of conflict between the British and the Dutch, ostensibly over the Brit's flourishing pepper trade. The conflict culminated in rebellion by 1701, and the British were evicted six years later. By the late 1820s the colonising Dutch had concluded treaties with various small west-coast states, including parts of the Banjarmasin sultanate.

In 1839 the establishment of a private colony in Kuching, Sarawak, by Englishman James Brooke, fuelled Dutch concerns to cement their commercial interests in Kalimantan. New coal mines in South and East Kalimantan were quickly developed and gradually the island gained commercial importance. The 1840s and 1850s brought several internal disputes, culminating in war between the Dutch and the Banjarmasin sultanate in 1859. The Dutch regained control after four years, but resistance continued until 1905.

By the end of the 19th century, Dutch commercial exploitation of the archipelago was at its peak. Rubber and oil markets were flourishing, and pepper, copra, tin and coffee plantations were developed. By the end of the century, oil was being drilled in East Kalimantan. In 1907, the British company Shell Transport & Trading merged with the Royal Dutch Company for the Exploitation of Petroleum Sources in the Netherlands Indies to form Royal Dutch Shell. By 1930 Shell was producing 85% of Indonesia's oil, and Kalimantan's fate as a stronghold was sealed.

The current division of Borneo between Indonesia and Malaysia originates from the British-Dutch rivalry. After WWII the Brooke family handed Sarawak over to the British government, at the same time that Sabah came under British administration,

putting Britain in the curious position of acquiring a new colony at the time it was shedding others. Both remained under British control until 1963, when they joined with the Malay Peninsula – and, temporarily, Singapore – to form the nation of Malaysia.

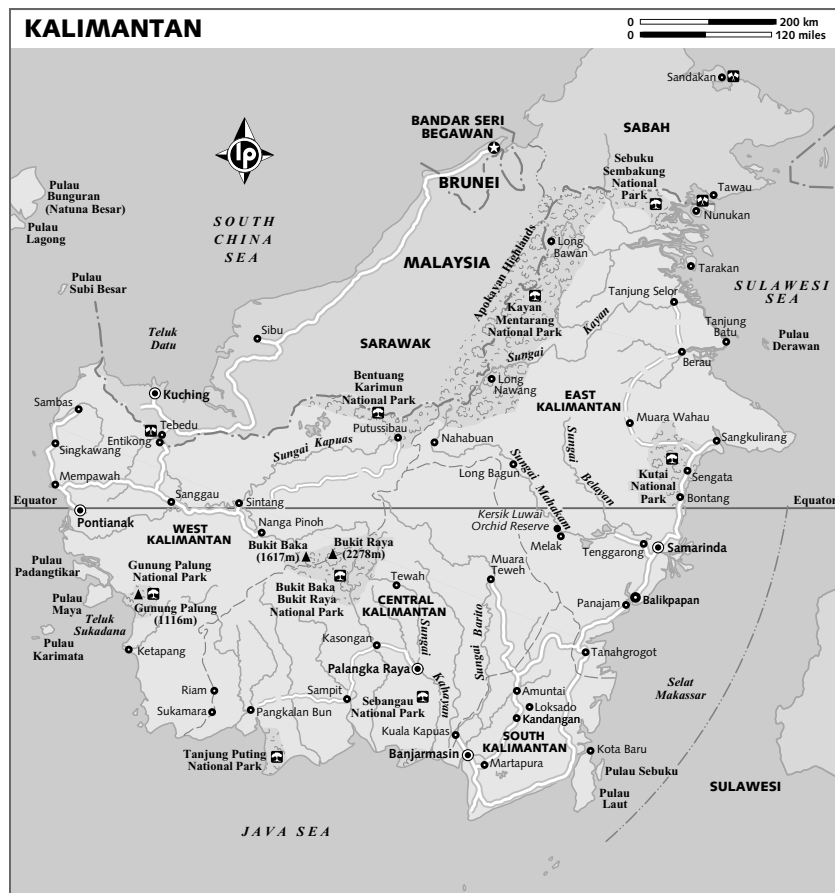
East Kalimantan has been one of Indonesia's prime *transmigrasi* (transmigration) targets, a campaign which has had disastrous effects on the province. The transmigrants have settled on marginal lands, replacing diverse tracts of jungle with extensive monocultures of rubber and pulpwood trees. This practice is in direct discord with Dayak groups, whose indigenous land-use regimens and land rights are rarely recognised. Transmigrants have also provided mining and logging industries with a ready supply of cheap and young labour.

By the late '90s almost a fifth of the population were transmigrants, and brewing ethnic tension, particularly between Madurese migrants and the Dayaks and Malays, reached a bloody peak. During the 1997–98 upheaval hundreds died in violent clashes, most were Madurese. Dayaks returned to their traditional practice of head-hunting and the island seemed in a state of chaos. Calm was restored relatively quickly but the conflict flared again briefly in 2001. Again hundreds of people lost their lives and thousands of Madurese fled the island. Today tension between the Madurese and other ethnic groups is a mere simmer and most travellers will be oblivious to it. The pursuit of peace and progress have become common denominators for all groups.

CULTURE

The population of Kalimantan is more than 11 million. The three biggest ethnic groups are the recently arrived Malay Indonesians, who tend to follow Islam and live in settlements along the coasts and the main rivers; the Chinese, who have controlled trade in Kalimantan for centuries; and the Dayaks, the collective name for the indigenous inhabitants of the island. Individual Dayak tribes use their separate tribal names, such as Kenyah, Kayan, Iban and Punan.

The most striking feature of many of the older Dayak women is their pierced ear lobes, stretched with the weight of heavy gold or brass rings. This custom is increasingly rare among the young. Older Dayaks,



influenced by missionaries, often trim their ear lobes as a sign of conversion.

It was once the custom for all women to tattoo their forearms and calves with bird and spirit designs. Tattooing of young women has almost disappeared, except in tribes deep in the interior. It's still seen among men, although traditionally men in many Dayak cultures were expected to earn their tattoos by taking heads.

In the past, many Dayak tribes lived in large communal buildings, known as longhouses, which sit on tall posts above the ground, mainly for defence. But Dayak traditions and belief systems have taken a beating in the 20th century and this tradition has largely gone by the wayside in the

last 50 years. Pressure from the Indonesian government, increasing development and Protestant missionaries also continue to weaken the backbone of Dayak tribal cultures.

WILDLIFE

Kalimantan's most celebrated inhabitant is the unbearably human-esque orang-utan. These rich amber-coloured primates with their soulful disposition are an undisputed highlight of the islands' fauna and an obvious magnet for tourists. Today, the few remaining orang-utan refuges are found in the national parks and reserves of Kalimantan. Camps in Tanjung Puting National Park in Central Kalimantan were

the first such facilities, mainly dedicated to studying ex-captive orang-utans in order to reintroduce them into the wild. In East Kalimantan, the Wanariset Orang-utan Reintroduction Centre, which is closed to visitors, was established in the early 1990s with similar goals. Due to the lack of success with reintroducing orang-utans into the wild, in recent years the focus at these and other centres has shifted to behavioural studies, with an aim to promote a greater understanding of the need to protect orang-utans and the forest in which they live.

The easiest place to see orang-utans is Tanjung Puting National Park, where ex-captive and orphan feeding stations virtually guarantee close encounters, but spotting wild orang-utans is also possible. But the best place for wild orang-utans is Kutai National Park in East Kalimantan.

The deep waters of Sungai Mahakam in East Kalimantan are home to freshwater dolphins; there are proboscis monkeys, crab-eating macaques and crocodiles in the mangrove swamps; while the forest is

the haunt of gibbons, clouded leopards, giant butterflies and hornbills, including the legendary black hornbill.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Balikpapan's Seppangan is the only entry point in Kalimantan where Visas on Arrival (see p862) can be issued. For all other entry, whether by sea or air, you must have obtained a visa in advance.

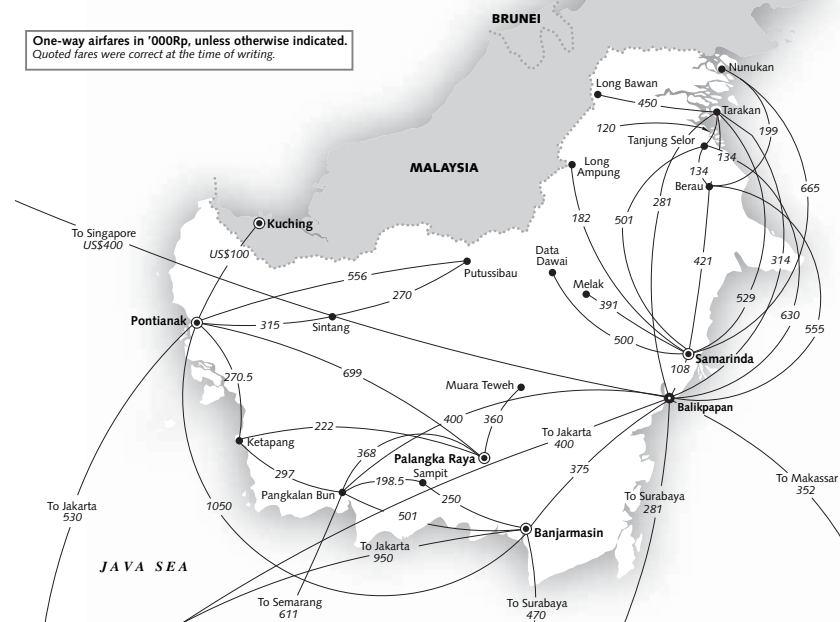
Air

Malaysian Airlines flies between Pontianak and Kuching in Sarawak.

Balikpapan, Pontianak and Banjarmasin are the busiest airports, with connections throughout Kalimantan as well as Java and Bali. Due to turmoil in recent years, in addition to changes in government at the national and local levels, flights are in constant flux. The arrival of new airlines, coupled with fluctuating oil prices, has made competition stiff in recent years. As a rule, double check all flight times and prices with a local travel agency. See p607 for flight routes and fares in Kalimantan.

KALIMANTAN AIRFARES

One-way airfares in '000Rp, unless otherwise indicated.
Quoted fares were correct at the time of writing.



KALIMANTAN UN-VISA RUN

At the time of writing only residents of Sarawak were able to obtain visas from the Indonesian Honorary Consul in Kuching. This means of course that if you're in Sarawak or Indonesia and require a new visa, you'll need to fly to Singapore to apply for one at the Indonesian embassy there.

Boat

Speedboats depart frequently from Nunukan in East Kalimantan to Tawau in Sabah. Buy tickets on the dock on Tarakan.

There are ferry connections from Balikpapan, Samarinda, Banjarmasin, Pontianak and Kumai to Java and Sulawesi, with both Pelni and other companies. Hitching a ride on cargo ships is also possible in many ports.

Bus

Air-con buses from Pontianak to Kuching cost 140,000Rp to 200,000Rp and take about 10 hours. Bookings can be made at agencies around Pontianak and at some hotels.

GETTING AROUND

Kalimantan's dense jungle and flat, wet terrain make communications and travel difficult. Bus travel is the norm, although roads vary from a few tarred routes to laughable trails of dust and potholes. Boat is often quicker and more comfortable, although also pricier. For comprehensive travel it's best to throw the odd flight into your itinerary. Sufficient competition makes them affordable and a flight can spare you a day or two on the road.

Air

Airlines have regular flights to the coastal cities and into the interior of Kalimantan. Dirgantara Air Service (DAS) and Trigana Air (Kal-Star; KS) carry the bulk of the traffic, but Batavia, Bouraq and Deraya Air also have useful routes. Other possibilities include planes run by missionaries, Missionary Air Fellowship (MAF), which serve the most isolated communities.

DAS, Deraya and Kal-Star fly small propeller aircraft and their services are heavily booked. But it's worthwhile going to the airport even if the office in town says the plane is full. Be polite, but firm, and you

may be surprised at what you can get away with. For travel on the smallest planes, passengers are weighed along with their luggage, so it doesn't help piling all your heaviest items into your hand luggage. The usual limit is 10kg, anything over will be charged accordingly.

Boat

The various river ferries have gone by the wayside these days as most public transport is by bus or Kijang (4WD vehicle used as a taxi). That said, one of Kalimantan's cultural highlights is to journey up Sungai Mahakam on a *longbot*, which, as the name suggests, is a longboat – a narrow vessel with two large outboard motors at the rear and bench seats in a covered passenger cabin. These still ply the river on a daily basis.

In rivers of all size throughout the province, *ces* (small motorised canoes) and speedboats are common modes of transport. The cost of fuel makes them pricey options, but they are easily the quickest way to get from A to B for locals and travellers alike. In some more remote areas you may find *taxi sungai* (river taxi), all of which carry both cargo and passengers. Along Sungai Kapuas in Pontianak are the *bandung*, large cargo-houseboats that take up to a month to move upriver to Putussibau.

Bus

Bus services continue to expand in Kalimantan as more roads become (at a snail's pace) passable. There are a couple of comfortable air-con routes, such as Banjarmasin to Balikpapan or Samarinda. Other than that, most bus trips in Kalimantan are hot, crowded and...well...interesting. During the rainy season vehicles often get stuck in the mud, which is a good excuse for everyone to get out and help push. Another road option is the Kijang, a long-distance taxi, usually in the form of a small jeep with as many passengers squeezed in as possible.

WEST KALIMANTAN

West Kalimantan (Kalimantan Barat) is home to the province's longest river – the potent Kapuas, which slugs its way through the interior into the very heart of Borneo. Deforestation and the heady, now-defunct,

days of water traffic may have robbed the Kapuas of much of its mystery, but its magnitude alone ensures remnants of untouched jungle and adventure. Eight hundred kilometres upriver, Dayak villages cling fiercely to tradition in scatterings around Putussibau.

North of Pontianak are water activities of an entirely different nature, on the tiny but magical beaches of Pasir Panjang and Tanjung Gundul. The transfrontier Bentuang Karimun National Park lies deep in the interior, sharing its border with the neighbouring Lanjak Entimau Wildlife Sanctuary in Sarawak, making it the largest conservation area in all of Borneo. Treks from Putussibau can also be made to the

headwaters of Sungai Mahakam in East Kalimantan.

West Kalimantan is enriched by the highest concentration of ethnic Chinese in Indonesia. The proportion of Chinese residents is estimated to be 40% in Pontianak and 65% in Singkawang. Architecture, food, language and culture all have a distinct Chinese flavour, and even the major Islamic festivals are celebrated with Chinese firecrackers.

PONTIANAK

☎ 0561 / pop 460,000

Situated right on the equator, Pontianak lies astride the confluence of Sungai Landak and Sungai Kapuas. Some describe the city as



bustling...which it is in the wee hours. By midday, though, Pontianak churns with road, river and human traffic in various degrees of haste, all contributing their part in the urban din. The city itself sprawls over a vast area, with bus terminals and ramshackle suburbs creating mini-communities. Like Banjarmasin it really needs to be seen from the canals and riverside boardwalks. Charter a boat or walk over the Kapuas bridge from Jl Gajah Mada for a sweeping view of the river and brilliant orange sunsets.

Orientation

The commercial hub of Pontianak is in the north of town, particularly on Jl Rahadi Usman. Here you'll find markets, the main *opelet* (small minibuses with side benches in the back) terminal (Kapuas Indah), banks and moneychangers. Between here and Jl Pattimura there are numerous places to eat and shop. A good landmark is the Santo Yoseph church clock tower on Jl Pattimura.

MAPS

For regional maps of West Kalimantan try the bookshops on Jl Juanda:

Toko Buku Budaya (Jl Juanda 8-10) Upstairs.

Toko Juanda (Jl Juanda 32)

Information

EMBASSIES & CONSULATES

Immigration office (☎ 734516; Jl Sutoyo) Deals with visa issues.

Malaysian Consulate (☎ 732986, 736061; mwptk@telkom.net; Jl Sultan Syahrir 21, ☎ 8am-4pm Mon-Fri)

INTERNET ACCESS

Centrine Online (off Jl Nusa Indah III; ☎ 7.30am-10pm) Signposted in a short alley.

INTERNET RESOURCES

www.borneoaccess.com Under construction at the time of writing, this site promises to provide tourist information for Borneo, and West Borneo in particular.

MONEY

ATMs are abundant. Banking hours are 8am to 3pm Monday to Friday.

Bii bank (Bank Internasional Indonesia; cnr Jl Tanjungpura & Jl Diponegoro)

BNI bank (Bank Negara Indonesia; Jl Tanjungpura)

PT Safari (Jl Tanjungpura 12) Moneychanger with good rates.

POST

Main post office (Jl Sultan Abdur Rahman 49; ☎ 7.30am-9.30pm Mon-Sat, 8am-2pm Sun) Poste restante.

TOURIST INFORMATION

City tourist office (☎ 732340; Jl Johar 1) Has some maps and information on Pontianak.

Kalimantan Barat tourist office (☎ 736172; fax 743104; Jl Sutoyo 17) Pa Iwan here can provide good advice on travel in West Kalimantan and he speaks English.

TRAVEL AGENCIES

Alex Afdhal (☎ 081 25768066; alexafdal@borneoaccess.com) Based at the Kartika Hotel on Jl Rahadi Usman, Alex speaks excellent English and is the general-secretary of the West Borneo Tour Guide Association; the most knowledgeable contact in town for trips throughout the province.

Ateng Tour (☎ 732683; fax 736620; ateng@pontianak.wasantara.id; Jl Gajah Mada 57) English-speaking staff. Offers expensive but worthwhile tours to places such as Gunung Palung, with a couple of weeks' notice.

PT. Mentari Tour (☎ 767196; mentari_tour_ptk@yahoo.com.sg; Jl Hijas 108) For flight bookings.

PT. Panorama Anugrah Pratama Tour & Travel (☎ 740545; tour_panorama@yahoo.com; Jl Diponegoro 149) For flight bookings.

Sights

RIVER LIFE

Pontianak's wealth stems from its river trade, and the best vantage point from which to view river activity is the water. The attractive **taman** (Jl Rahadi Usman), between the ferry crossing and the Kartika Hotel, is a good place to get your bearings. To see the city from the water, hire a sampan (35,000Rp per hour) or a speedboat (60,000Rp per hour) from the docks next to the ferry terminals or behind the Kapuas Indah Building.

For an interesting experience of river-front life, take a walk from Mesjid Abdurrahman (Abdurrahman Mosque) along the wobbly wooden boardwalks past the stilt houses at washing time, either early or late in the day. The people of the *kampung dalam* (village) are friendly and curious. Take your camera. There are plenty of walking models, especially the kids.

Along Jl Kom Yos Sudarso on the riverfront is the *pinisi* (schooner) harbour, where the Bugis-style sailing schooners dock alongside the large houseboats, or *bandung*, peculiar to West Kalimantan.

PONTIANAK

To Babu Layang Intercity Bus Terminal (2km); Singkawang (145km)

Equator

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- Ateng Tour.....1 C4
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- BNI Bank.....3 C3
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- Post Office.....7 A4
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- PT Panorama Anugrah Pratama Tour & Travel.....9 C4
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- SJS.....52 (see 43)
- Sri Merah Bus Ekspres (see 43)
- Sriwijaya.....52 C4
- Taxi Stand.....53 B3

To Airport (15km)

Bandung function as floating general stores that ply Sungai Kapuas, trading at villages. Their family owners live on board, and a typical run up the Kapuas might last as long as a month.

MESJID ABDURRAKHMAN

Also known as Mesjid Jami, **Mesjid Abdurrahman** was the royal mosque of Syarif Abdul Rahman (also known as Abdurrahman), who reigned as Sultan of Pontianak from 1770 until his death in 1808. The Sumatran-style mosque has a square-tiered roof and is made entirely of wood. Beautiful inside and out, it's worth the short canoe trip across the river. Charter a boat for 15,000Rp or wait for a shared canoe taxi for 3,000Rp per person; you can do both from the piers next to the Kapuas Indah building.

ISTANA KADRIYAH

Approximately 100m north of the sultan's mosque, his former **palace** (admission by donation; ☎ 8.30am-4pm) hasn't been lived in since 1952 but is still impressive. Preceding the two-storey ironwood building is an immense veranda with ornate light fittings above. The interior is now a museum housing the personal effects of the sultan's family. A donation is encouraged.

MUSEUM NEGERI PONTIANAK

Near Tanjungpura University, south of the city centre, this national **museum** (Jl Ahmad Yani; ☎ 8am-3pm Tue-Sun) has, among other things, a collection of *tempayan*: Southeast Asian ceramics (mostly water jugs) from Thailand, China and Borneo. The jugs displayed vary in size from tiny to tanklike and date from the 16th century.

Tribal exhibits include displays of the clothing, musical instruments, tools and crafts of the Dayak cultures of West Kalimantan. Around the corner is a replica of a **Dayak longhouse** (Jl Sutoyo).

EQUATOR MONUMENT

The official monument marking the equator was originally erected in 1928 as a simple obelisk mounted with a metallic arrow. In 1930 a circle was welded to the arrow, in 1938 another circle was added in the other direction and its subsequent incarnation is unintentionally funny, looking like a giant gyroscope on a pillar. The caretakers then

encased the original in a building in 1991 and built a huge replica. On 23 March and 23 September, the monument is engulfed by thousands of Pontianak residents who come to see the shadowless sun.

To get to the monument, take a *bis kota* (intercity bus) from outside the Kartika Hotel (2000Rp) or an *opelet* (3000Rp) from the Siantan bus terminal heading northwest on the highway. The monument is right on the highway, and even if you can't get your tongue around the name for equator – *khatulistiwa*, taken from Arabic – people will know what you mean.

Festivals & Events

Pontianak's proximity to the equator has given rise to a biannual **Equator & Culture Festival**, to promote tourism in West Kalimantan. Held during the spring and autumn equinoxes in late March and September, it features Dayak and Malay traditional dancing, singing and games. Ask at the hotels or tourist offices for the exact dates.

Sleeping BUDGET

Pontianak Raya City Hotel (☎ 732496; fax 733781; Jl Pa'kasih 44; s/d incl breakfast from 70,000/80,000Rp plus 10% tax; ☎) This super-friendly hotel has small but clinically clean economy rooms and twice-as-big 'standard' rooms. All rooms have air-con, but some are a little dark.

Guest House Meranti (☎ 731783; Jl Meranti 31A; r 100,000Rp) Perfect if you're looking to escape the crowds and traffic. This homely guesthouse is on a quiet residential street, and has snug and spotless (if a little bland) rooms. There is a small dining area where morning tea and coffee are served.

Hotel Sentral (☎ 737444; fax 734993; Jl Cokroaminoto 232; r incl breakfast 115,000-170,000Rp plus 10% tax; ☎) The cold beer in the lobby fridge may be reason enough for some to hang their hat here for a few nights, but the large windows and showers in the clean and spacious rooms are just as appealing. Staff will want to adopt you.

More budget options:

Hotel Khatulistiwa (☎ 736793; fax 734930; Jl Diponegoro 56; r with/without air-con from 88,000/77,000Rp; ☎) Sprawling hotel, just off Jl Diponegoro, with passable rooms.

Hotel Surya (☎ 734337; fax 760334; Jl Sidas 11A; r 80,000-100,000Rp; ☎)

MIDRANGE & TOP END

Hotel 2000 (☎ 735061; fax 760939; Jl Gajah Mada 84; r 135,000-180,000Rp; ☎) Sandwiched between much pricier options, this compact, three-storey hotel has bare but cosy rooms, all with air-con, bath tubs and TVs. It's dirt-free, friendly and good value.

Hotel Merpati (☎ 745481; fax 762662; Jl Imam Bonjol 111; r 130,000-260,000Rp plus 10% tax; ☎) Another waterfront hotel but well south, this understated place has lovely rooms. The distance from the rest of Pontianak's action is something of a drawback, but easily worth the tranquil location and good night's sleep.

Kartika Hotel (☎ 734401; fax 738457; Jl Rahadi Usman; r incl breakfast 140,000-300,000Rp plus 21% tax; ☎) Overlooking the water, this concrete edifice has flagging but comfy rooms, all with loads of space, air-con, TV and private bathroom. The numerous facilities include a restaurant (mains 20,000Rp to 40,000Rp) serving breakfast, lunch and dinner, with floor-to-ceiling views of the Kapuas.

Hotel Peony (☎ 732878; hotel-peony@ptk.centrin.net.id; Jl Gajah Mada 86; r incl breakfast 220,000-450,000Rp; ☎) Modern, soft-lit rooms decorated in neutral tones and complete with luxury bathrooms put this small hotel a refreshing leap above much of the competition. Satellite TV and air-con are standard, and there's a bar, restaurant and smiling staff. As close to a boutique hotel as Kalimantan gets.

Hotel Kapuas Palace (☎ 736122; fax 734374; Jl Imam Bonjol; r from 350,000Rp plus 21% tax; ☎) One of Pontianak's most posh hotels, the Kapuas Palace lavishes guests with plenty of creature comforts, including a fitness centre (perhaps not so comfortable), tennis court, bar and Western-style coffee shop, and a 100m pool. Rooms are *very* comfortable and the surrounding grounds are pleasant. Discounts are common year-round.

Hotel Santika (☎ 733777; www.santika.com; Jl Diponegoro 36; r incl breakfast 530,000-605,000Rp; ☎) Rivalling the Kapuas Palace in the quality stakes, Hotel Santika wins by a whisker with newer rooms and trendier décor. No expense has been spared to make guests as comfortable as possible, with little touches like 24-hour room service and a business centre.

Eating

Pontianak has excellent coffee and *warung kopi* (coffee shops) are central to its character, though they are generally frequented by

male clientele. The best place to seek them out (the coffee shops, not the men!) is in the centre of town on the side streets between Jl Tanjungpura and Jl Pattimura.

Kabar Gembría (Jl Siam 206; mains 10,000Rp; ☎ breakfast & lunch) It doesn't look like much from the outside, but this small cafeteria-style diner serves a good spread of colourful and zesty vegetarian dishes, plus a few chicken and beef options for the carnivores. Dishes are diverse and inventive – think tempé kebabs and roasted, curried eggplant. Diners help themselves from a long line of dishes and then pay for the contents of their plate. You can consume six variations plus a drink for under 10,000Rp, which makes it very popular with lunchtime office workers, although students and housewives fill the tables too. Die-hard health addicts will also appreciate the packaged goods on sale.

Legend Cafe & Restaurant (☎ 739260; Jl Pattimura 23; mains 15,000-35,000Rp; ☎ breakfast, lunch & dinner) A smidge more global than your average Pontianak restaurant, Legend offers far-flung (for Kalimantan) delights including spaghetti bolognese, and Singaporean laksa alongside Indonesian favourites. The restaurant's doors are left wide open, making it a breezy spot for a cold Bintang, and you may even dine to a lounge singer crooning Whitney Houston ballads.

Restaurant Satria Wangi (Jl Nusa Indah II; mains 15,000-35,000Rp; ☎ lunch & dinner) This industrious restaurant serves Chinese-Indonesian fusion dishes of chicken, veggie and seafood, as well as excellent squid. The cool and calm interior is a perfect haven to escape the lunchtime heat, particularly when coupled with a fresh fruit juice. The homemade *sambal* (chilli sauce) may be the world's quickest solution to blocked sinuses.

Italian Steakhouse (☎ 736582; Jl Nusa Indah II 109; mains 15,000-40,000Rp; ☎ lunch & dinner) Behind dim glass and polished doors, this Western-style restaurant cooks up hamburgers, pasta and steak, as well as Japanese-style hotpot at reasonable prices. Cool and elegant surrounds, and a good spot if you're sporting kids.

More options:

Restoran Hawaii (Jl Nusa Indah III 80; mains 15,000-25,000Rp; ☎ lunch & dinner) Good Chinese food.

Matahari Mall (cnr Jl Jendral Urip & Jl Pattimura) The food court has a supermarket, and Western and Indonesian fast food.

Hero Super Mall (Jl Gajah Mada) For self-caterers.

Two bakeries serving cakes, bread and other goodies on Jl Pattimura are Do n'Mi and Kaisar Bakery.

Night warungs on Jl Sudirman and Jl Diponegoro dish up steaming plates of rice noodles, crab, prawns, fish and vegetables, and goat sate for under 10,000Rp.

Shopping

It's worth looking out for *kain songket* (material with silver or gold thread woven into it) from the town of Sambas. Various souvenir and material shops along Jl Nusa Indah I, II and III sell it, as do the market stalls lining Jl Pattimura. Prices are often cheaper than those at Sambas. Some of these shops also stock selections of old (and reproduction) trading beads, cheap bags of rough-cut gems and beautiful old Chinese and Dutch china and glassware.

Getting There & Away

AIR

Pontianak is well served by domestic airlines and the quickest way to get the cheapest fare is through a travel agent.

Batavia (☎ 734488; fax 736604; Jl Cokroaminoto 278), **Sriwijaya** (☎ 768777; Jl Gajah Mada), **Garuda** (☎ 734142; Jl Tanjungpura) and Adam Air have daily flights to Jakarta. **DAS** (☎ 731166; Jl Gajah Mada 67) and Kal-Star fly to Ketapang and DAS also flies to Putussibau. There are no direct flights to Balikpapan; you need to fly via Jakarta and at the time of writing Adam Air was the cheapest option.

Malaysian Airlines (☎ 737327; www.malaysiaairlines.com; Hotel Kini, Jl Nusa Indah III) flies to Kuching three times a week (US\$100), with connections to Kuala Lumpur and Singapore.

MAF (☎ 733476; Jl Suprpto 50A) flies to various places in West Kalimantan; contact it for the most recent schedules. Fares for regular flights and charters are quite expensive. There's no sign on the office in Pontianak, but it's around the corner from the Malaysian Consulate.

Deraya connects Pontianak with Pangkalan Bun and Palangka Raya daily except Sunday.

BOAT

There are two **Pelni** (☎ 748124; fax 748131; www.pelni.co.id; Jl Sultan Abdul Rahman 12) ships sailing regularly between Pontianak and Java. The *Lawit* makes a weekly run to Jakarta (economy/

cabin 170,000/600,000Rp, 36 hours) and also travels to Semarang for around the same price. Twice a month, the *Bukit Raya* goes from Pontianak to Surabaya (economy 170,000Rp, 40 hours).

The *Senopati Nusantara* is a private boat that sails to Semarang (economy 180,000Rp, 40 hours) about once a week. Another private boat, the *Kapuas Express*, sails to Jakarta (1st class/2nd class 400,000/300,000Rp, 20 hours) twice a week. Agents around town sell tickets for both of these. Daily jet boats go south along the coast to Ketapang (1st-class 135,000Rp, six to seven hours). All of these coastal boat services, including the *Pelni* ships, leave from the harbour area on Jl Pa'kasih north of the Kartika Hotel.

River boats up Sungai Kapuas have become a rarity as public buses have surpassed traditional river travel for speed and convenience. This is somewhat disheartening as the Western hustle and bustle leaves its mark; to truly get a taste of the local life in Kalimantan one must travel by its waterways. If time permits, seek out a *bandung* (cargo-cum-houseboat) and travel upriver with a family. The 800km journey from Pontianak to Putussibau could take anywhere from four days to a month. Families ply the river as a way of life, stopping to buy and sell along the way. Prices are completely negotiable, and for the right price there is always a more direct route. There is no organised way to arrange this and Bahasa Indonesia is essential for negotiations. Alex at the Kartika Hotel will be able to help you charter a boat.

BUS

Pontianak's intercity bus terminal is in Batu Layang, northwest of town. Take a ferry to Siantan (3000Rp) and a white *opelet* to Batu Layang (3000Rp), or take one of the *opelet* (3000Rp) that make the trip from the terminal on Jl Sisingamangaraja near the offices for buses to Kuching. From Batu Layang, buses go north along the coast to Singkawang (13,000Rp, 3½ hours) and Sambas (19,000Rp) and inland to Sanggau (22,000Rp) or Sintang (60,000Rp). Agents around the Kapuas Indah terminal also sell tickets for economy-class buses going to Putussibau (110,000Rp), but it's a grueling 20-hour ride. All of these buses leave daily.

Virtually on top of each other on Jl Sisingamangaraja are numerous bus companies that run to/from Kuching on a daily basis (economy/executive 140,000/200,000Rp, 10 hours). Buses are relatively comfortable and generally depart Pontianak around 9pm, stopping at the border for several hours before it opens. Companies include: **Eva Express** (☎ /fax 743045; Jl Sisingamangaraja 143A) **SJS** (☎ 734626; fax 744207; Jl Sisingamangaraja 155) **Sri Merah Bus Ekspres** (☎ 733175; Jl Sisingamangaraja 137)

CAR & MOTORCYCLE

Renting a car and driver in Pontianak is the perfect way to see coastal West Kalimantan at your own pace. Travel agencies or your hotel can arrange a car for about 650,000Rp per day, plus petrol. You might get a better price

by bargaining with the taxis that wait around the entrance to the Kapuas Indah *opelet* terminal, near the Garuda office. Motorcycles are an option for experienced riders only and cost around 100,000Rp a day.

Getting Around TO/FROM THE AIRPORT

A counter at the airport sells tickets for taxis into town (60,000Rp). Alternatively, walk down the road in front of the terminal building to the main road into Pontianak, where you should be able to get an *opelet* for 3000Rp. It's a half-hour drive from the airport to the Kapuas Indah *opelet* terminal.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

The main *opelet* terminals are in the middle of the city: the Kapuas Indah terminal

KALIMANTAN'S KILLING FIELDS

Mandor is a lush and sleepy settlement on the main road into West Kalimantan's interior. Diminutive in size, it's a place of overgrown jungle, subsistence farming and rice fields. But the serene demeanour is tainted by a tragic past; the town is also the burial ground of 21,037 West Kalimantan people who were murdered by Japanese troops during their three-year occupation of the area, a tragedy that has earned it the moniker of Kalimantan's Killing Fields.

When the Japanese navy arrived in Kalimantan in 1942, they entered a country readying itself for independence. Dutch authorities had returned home, leaving a leadership vacuum and an environment ripe for exploitation. The Japanese goal to incorporate Indonesia into its 'Great Asia' empire was no secret and they quickly established troops from Sambas to as far south as Ketapang. Treatment of the local population was shocking and although West Kalimantan's ethnic and cultural make-up was diverse, the desire to retain autonomy prompted a meeting of Dayak, Chinese, and Malay leaders as well as regional sultans. They journeyed from all over the province to meet secretly in Pontianak but were betrayed from within. With accurate information, the Japanese targeted influential leaders and brought them one by one to Mandor, where they were executed. To begin with, victims were restricted to sultans and their families, intellectuals and ethnic leaders, but before long the Japanese targeted anyone who posed a possible threat. This included most men over the age of 17 and any women who had the capacity to influence the local population.

The massacre spanned three years and went unrecognised until 1971, when a local man, Pak Sambad, presented the West Kalimantan governor with a report appealing for recognition. His efforts were successful, and by the end of the year sufficient funds were provided for a road to the site of the killings and a monument in the victims' honour.

Today Pak Sambad lives outside the gates of the memorial site and he is happy to talk about the area's history (in Bahasa Indonesia). The site itself contains 10 mass graves, one of which is a shrine to the slaughtered family of Sultan Abdul Hamid II. A carved stone storyboard also depicts the tragedy from the Japanese invasion to their departure. It is an exquisitely peaceful and reverent place, and the flourish of green and wildflowers are a fitting tribute to those who died. There's no official admission fee but Pak Sambad maintains the site and a donation of 20,000Rp or more is welcomed.

There are daily buses to Mandor (7,000Rp, two hours) from Pontianak's Batu Layang terminal. Buses heading to Ngabang will also stop at Mandor if you ask. The journey itself is beautiful, passing kilometres of rice fields, with forested hills and low-slung cloud hovering above.

near the waterfront, a terminal on Jl Sisingamangaraja and another one on Jl Antasari. There's a taxi stand outside Matahari Mall on Jl Jendral Urip, and becak (bicycle rickshaws) aplenty. A tour of the city and environs by taxi is 60,000Rp per hour, with a two-hour minimum.

The best and most fun way to get around is by public *opelet*. Rides cost 2000Rp to 3000Rp.

Motorised canoes depart from piers next to the Kapuas Indah building on the river. Crossing the river to the Istana Kadriyah and Siantan bus terminal is 2000Rp per person. A passenger ferry 100m downstream from the Kapuas Indah building takes passengers to the other side for 1000Rp.

SUNGAI KAPUAS

Pontianak is the launching point for trips along Indonesia's longest river. From the air, the many curves and oxbow lakes of the Kapuas basin make it a geographical spectacle; but at ground level, the primary attractions are the vessels and life on the river itself. As elsewhere in Kalimantan, take a slow boat to see and photograph the river activity.

Boats of all shapes and sizes journey the Kapuas, but these days it is mainly local traders. Even the road to Putussibau has improved to the point that buses have now replaced speedboats. Beyond Putussibau, however, or along tributaries, boats remain the dominant mode of moving people, though this usually means waiting around for enough people to fill a boat or chartering one yourself at considerable expense. In general, motorised canoes are less expensive (and slower) than speedboats, but still count on paying an average of 150,000Rp to 200,000Rp per hour for the journey.

Sintang

☎ 0565 / pop 25,000

Transmigrasi brought new farming families to the Sintang area in the early 1980s, and most now service the logging boom. During the rainy season, the streets of Sintang's waterfront are flooded. Don't be surprised if you have to wade knee-deep through the water or teeter on planks to get around.

The nearby **Gunung Kelam** monolith forms a 900m backdrop to Sintang and offers a challenging hike through the jungle. Butterflies, a waterfall (*air terjun*) and panoramic views

of the surrounding countryside are to be enjoyed. Take a white *opelet* to Pasar Impres (2000Rp) and then a Kelam *opelet* to the base (6000Rp). A road circles the hill and you can be dropped off at the gaudy park entrance. The challenging path to the top has steel ladders on the more difficult rock faces.

Take a boat across the river (3000Rp) to visit the **Dara Janti Museum**. The former sultan's palace houses royal relics, Dayak artefacts, a gamelan orchestra and Portuguese cannons. Ask around to get the keeper to let you in and leave him a small donation. Boats congregate in front of the shops facing the river.

For excursions further afield seek the assistance of **Daniel Madu** (☎ 21815; Jl Sugiono 4), a local guide who speaks excellent English and local Dayak dialects. He specialises in trips down Sungai Pinoh to Central Kalimantan, across to the headwaters of the Mahakam in East Kalimantan and north to the lakes and rivers of Bentuang Karimun National Park. Contact him a month before your trip to arrange a trek.

SLEEPING & EATING

Sesean Hotel (☎ 21011; Jl Katamso 79; s/tw/d from 35,000/50,000/50,000Rp; 🍷) On the waterfront, this is a friendly place with tiny singles, large twin rooms and doubles with air-con. The covered veranda facing the river is a great place to sit in the evening.

Sintang Permai (☎ 21053; Jl Supratman; r 55,000Rp) Run by the hard-working Mezeira Zain, this is a hotel in the style of a losmen (basic, often family-run, accommodation), and the newest and nicest spot to overnight in Sintang. It offers clean, non-nonsense but appealing fan-cooled rooms.

For eats, head to the waterfront area, where you'll find numerous warungs serving inexpensive *nasi* (rice), *ayam goreng* (fried chicken) and Padang food. Not far from Sintang Permai, **Bakso 33 Ripah** (☎ 21741; Jl Supratman 89; mains 7,000-15,000Rp; 🍷 lunch & dinner) serves good Indonesian food, and **Selera Kita** (mains 15,000-20,000Rp; 🍷 lunch & dinner) dishes up Chinese fare.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

At the time of writing there were no flights to Sintang, however DAS may recommence its schedule of flights here; check in Pontianak.

The road is partly sealed from Sintang to Putussibau, but heavy rains still create the odd mud hole that swallows up buses. The journey costs 65,000Rp and can take six to eight hours, depending on the weather. Buses to both Putussibau and Pontianak leave from the bus terminal in town. For buses south to Nanga Pinoh (5000Rp, one hour) head to Sungai Uko bus terminal, 10km southwest of Sintang (2000Rp by *opelet*).

River boats in Sintang stop by the dock in front of Jl Katamso. Speedboat charters are also available here.

Putussibau

☎ 0567 / pop 28,000

Putussibau is in a constant state of boom, owing to the increase of logging along the Indonesian-Malaysian border. On the Kapuas, a few kilometres upstream, are the traditional longhouse villages of **Melapi I** and **Sayut** (also known as Melapi II). Up Sungai Mendalam are **Semangkok I** and **Semangkok II**, which has a much older longhouse. You can charter a boat from the riverbank to go to the longhouses for about 150,000Rp per hour. A cheaper way to the Melapi longhouses is by public *opelet* for 7,500Rp, which leaves from the car park on the waterfront. The Melapi longhouses accept overnight guests, but payment for food is expected and it is customary to give gifts, such as pens, cigarettes (despite Western cries of horror) or bonbons. It's also polite to pay for any photographs you take.

Increasingly popular is the **Bentuang Karimun National Park** to the north, which offers good excursions to view indigenous flora and fauna in a pristine forest setting. There are also various adventure tours available, including rafting and trekking; ask the **Bentuang Karimun National Park office** (☎ /fax 21773; Jl Komodor Yos Sudarso 130) for trip details and the best transport options.

SLEEPING & EATING

Losmen Harapan Kita (☎ 21157; Jl Pelita 3; s 25,000Rp, d 35,000-45,000Rp) Those on a tight budget are rudimentarily served at this simple losmen. The cheaper rooms have shared *mandis* (Indonesian-type bath).

MESS Pemda (☎ 21010; Jl Merdeka; r 90,000Rp; 🍷) This ever-popular government hostel has clean rooms with air-con and a fairly raucous TV lounge.

Aman Sentosa (☎ 21691; Jl Diponegoro 14; r with/without mandi 100,000/50,000Rp; 🍷) New and nice, Sentosa caters well to foreign travellers and is more likely to have availability than the cheaper options in town.

Tiara (Jl Melati 5; mains 5,000-12,000Rp; 🍷 lunch & dinner) Dishes up excellent sate, green vegetables, rice and mixed dishes.

Melati (Jl Diponegoro 7; mains 10,000-20,000Rp; 🍷 lunch & dinner) Has good food and beer; look for the prominent Guinness sign in front of the restaurant.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

DAS flies between Pontianak and Putussibau when there are sufficient passengers. A trip from Putussibau to the airport costs 35,000/30,000Rp by *opelet*/motorcycle.

From time to time MAF operates flights between Putussibau and Tanjung Lokan, although there's no guarantee. Make inquiries at the airport.

The bus to Pontianak from Putussibau is 110,000Rp and takes 20 hours.

To continue from Putussibau upriver to the village of Tanjung Lokan, it's necessary to charter a boat; ask at your hotel for local operators. The two-day trip costs around 3,000,000Rp.

Putussibau to Long Apari

The hardy, intrepid and wealthy (expenses are considerable) can begin a river and jungle trek eastwards from Putussibau, across the West-East Kalimantan border through the Muller Range to Long Apari at the headwaters of the Mahakam. It's dense and steamy going and only for highly experienced hikers, but there is prolific bird life and you may spot the odd snake or honey bear.

The first step is to find a knowledgeable guide, particularly for the trek from Tanjung Lokan to Long Apari. See the boxed text on p619 for information on guide etiquette and what to bring. Guide fees cost from 500,000Rp per day. See opposite for information on Sintang-based guide **Daniel Madu** (☎ 0565 21815; Jl Sugiono 4, Sintang). In Putussibau try **Jahari** (☎ 0567-21534). Alternatively the *bupati* (district head) in both towns can assist. Would-be guides will also find you; they will certainly be willing to take your cash, but may have little knowledge of the track and local languages. The village of **Tanjung Lokan** also has guides. *Do not* attempt

the trip beyond Tanjung Lokan alone, as trails are not well marked.

In Putussibau charter a motorised canoe (1,800,000Rp) to make the one-day trip to Bungan. From there you must charter a smaller canoe for about the same amount for another day's travel to Tanjung Lokan. Fuel is *very* expensive.

From Tanjung Lokan eastwards, the rugged jungle trekking begins and you'll need six to seven days to reach Long Apari. A guide is essential as there are no villages along the way. This is a true adventure and your journey will take you into territory literally known as the 'Heart of Borneo', where the rainforest is pristine and thick in patches and the threat of the chainsaw is yet to arrive. From Long Apari, you have to charter a boat down the first part of the Mahakam. Regular public boat services begin at Long Bagun.

Mesra Tours (☎ 738787, 732772; fax 741017; www.mesra.com/tour), in Samarinda, offers tours of this trek going in the opposite direction.

SINGKAWANG

☎ 0562 / pop 104,000

This predominantly Hakka Chinese town boomed in the early 18th century, when mines from Sambas to Pontianak accounted for about one-seventh of the world gold extraction. Singkawang is also the site of Chinese ceramic workshops, making reproductions of the Ming dynasty water jars that, due to the Chinese influence on the island, featured prominently in the history of Kalimantan.

Apart from the ceramic workshops, Singkawang's main attractions are the nearby beaches of Pasir Panjang and Tanjung Gundul (see right).

The hotel precinct is at the northern end of Jl Diponegoro near the Chinese temple. **Hotel Khatulistiwa Plaza I** (☎ 631697; Jl Selamat Karman 17; r 40,000-80,000Rp; 🍽️) has a range of rooms in its three-storey shell, the nicest of which are on the lower floors. Air-con is an additional 10,000Rp. More upmarket is **Putra Kalbar III** (☎ 631551; Jl Diponegoro 27; r 95,000-120,000Rp; 🍽️), which has lovely midrange rooms, and the classy **Mahkota Singkawang Hotel** (☎ 631308; Jl Diponegoro 1; r 200,000-560,000Rp plus 21% tax; 🍽️ 🍷), which has four-star quality and a disco.

Chinese food is an obvious Singkawang speciality and one of the best places to sample it is **Rumah Makan Tio Ciu Selera** (Jl Diponegoro

106; mains 10,000-16,000Rp; 🍽️ lunch & dinner). The seafood variations are fresh and unique and most are prepared in the savoury Chiu Chao (southern Chinese traditional) style. Cheap servings of noodles and *bakso* (meatball soup) can be had at **Bakso 68** (Jl Diponegoro; 🍽️ lunch & dinner) and **Warung Dangau** (Jl Johan Godang; 🍽️ lunch & dinner). A meal at either costs 8,000Rp to 14,000Rp.

Getting There & Away

There are frequent buses from Pontianak's Batu Layang terminal to Singkawang (13,000Rp, 3½ hours). From Singkawang to Gunung Poteng (see below), catch a Bengkayang bus east for the 12km trip (5000Rp). Let the driver know where you're going and he'll let you off at the foot of the hill.

Beyond Singkawang there are buses to Sintang (65,000Rp, nine hours) and Kijang north to Sambas (13,000Rp, three hours), or south to Mandor (11,000Rp, three hours). The Singkawang bus terminal is in the southern part of town.

AROUND SINGKAWANG

The mountains surrounding Singkawang are lush and inviting. The slopes of **Gunung Poteng**, just 12km east of town, are a great place to search for the largest flower in the world, the rafflesia. Each flower only blooms once a year, but there is no season so you can see them year-round. Take a Kijang to Poteng and make the two-hour hike to the top.

On the highway just south of Singkawang is a series of **ceramic factories** that make huge Chinese jars with colourful motifs. The Semangat Baru site, about 100m off the main road, 5km from Singkawang, has a long, ancient kiln and ceramics at various stages of manufacture. Prices are quite reasonable, ranging from 250,000Rp to over 1,000,000Rp, and if you like what you see, the factory can ship your purchase to Jakarta. Another kiln, the Sinar Terang, is 400m down the road.

Pasir Panjang & Tanjung Gundul

The jungle gives way to palm trees, white sand and crystalline water at two of the loveliest beaches in Kalimantan, both of which are easily reached from Singkawang.

About 12km south, **Pasir Panjang** is the better known of the two and teems with families on weekends and public holidays.

KALIMANTAN'S TOP JUNGLE ADVENTURES

Kalimantan has some spectacular jungle journeys for the intrepid traveller. The following require resilience, respect, Bahasa Indonesia and a keen sense of adventure; the reward is glimpses of ancient rainforests that may not be around for much longer.

Putussibau to Long Apari (p617)

The meek need not front up for this trek and river combo, which encompasses dense and magnificent jungle with all the primal trimmings. It involves two days of river travel and six or seven of trekking. Basic Bahasa Indonesia is essential in order to hire a guide.

Loksado & Around (p644)

This combo tour is easy to organise from Banjarmasin, but also simple enough to do on your own with some Bahasa Indonesia language skills. Bus from Banjarmasin to Loksado, take a few days to trek around Tanuhi and then return to the big smoke onboard a bamboo raft. The best fun you can have on floating foliage.

The Apokayan Highlands (p659)

A week's adventure with a flight into the interior and a five-day jungle trek through the Dayak villages of Long Uro, Lidung Payan and Long Sungai Barang. The highlands themselves are visually splendid and this trek requires a good level of fitness.

Long Bawan & Kayan Mentarang National Park (p660)

From Kalimantan's remote northern pocket you can travel by foot and motorised canoe into the 'Heart of Borneo', which encompasses some of the last pristine rainforest on this spectacular island. Forays into Kayan National Park reveal stunning flora and the chance to see clouded leopards.

What to Take?

They don't call it the jungle for nothing; Kalimantan's interior gets steamy and wet. Downpours are heavy and the humidity can keep your clothes somewhere between soggy and sopping for a frustratingly long time. A waterproof jacket is essential and layers of clothing are also recommended. For camping take a strong, waterproof material for shelter. Proper footwear is of course mandatory, not just for the terrain, but also to thwart entrepreneurial leeches and indignant fire ants. Basic medicines and iodine for drinking water are wise. Most importantly you want to pack this all up in as light a load as possible, in all likelihood you'll be carting your own gear.

Anything Else I Should Know?

All these treks require previous hiking experience and most of them also require a guide. Guide fees vary depending on the length and remoteness of the trek, but you should bank on paying 200,000Rp to 500,000Rp per day. On top of that you'll need to pay for food (allow around 50,000Rp per day) and transport costs.

Palapa Beach Hotel (☎ 633367; fax 633402; r 70,000-140,000Rp, cottages 160,000Rp; 🍽️) has clean twin rooms and small cottages with minibar fridges. The hotel manager, Ari Gu, can help organise overnight snorkelling tours to a tiny, deserted island called Pulau Randayan. Getting there can be as much as 800,000Rp and accommodation on the island is 100,000Rp for simple rooms. Snorkelling gear can also be organised.

From Singkawang take any *opelet* heading south on the highway from the Singkawang bus terminal (3000Rp, 20 minutes). Get off at the Taman Pasir Panjang (Long Beach Park) gate. There is a 2500Rp entrance fee to enter the park. It's a 500m walk to the beach. A motorcycle taxi from Singkawang is about 10,000Rp.

The **Kura Kura Resort** (☎ 085 822181173; www.kurakurabeach.com; Charlie@kurakurabeach.com; camping

per tent 20,000Rp, r incl meals per person 100,000Rp, villa 600,000Rp) is much more isolated, about 3km from the village of Tanjung Gundul. The beach and surrounding hills here are unspoilt, a state that Charlie (the owner, who originally hails from Scotland) and his wife Siska are doing their best to maintain. The unobtrusive resort has no electricity or bright lights due to the interruption it would cause to turtles laying their eggs on the beach, and littering is against the rules. But the accommodation, which includes camping (tents supplied), homestay rooms and a villa sleeping up to seven people, is very comfortable. Meals are available with notice, as are a bevy of activities, including snorkelling, trekking, sailing and fishing.

To reach Kura Kura, call or email ahead to let Charlie and Siska know you're coming. They can meet you at Tanjung Gundul, which is 23km south of Singkawang and 5,000Rp by *opelet*.

SAMBAS

☎ 0562 / pop 56,000

Archaeological finds indicate Sambas had connections with the Sriwijaya kingdom and perhaps India in the 6th century, and became an important port city in its own right from the late 13th century. The Dutch established a warehouse for diamond trading in Sambas between 1608 and 1610, but showed little interest in colonising the area.

Palace ruins hint at the city's former prosperity, but Sambas is now better known for its *kain songket* (cloth with silver or gold thread woven through it). Check the prices in Pontianak before taking on the weavers or vendors at Sambas market. Prices might still be cheaper down south.

The market is at the end of the main street that runs north from the bus terminal towards the river. You can hire a canoe from the riverbank for about 10,000Rp and paddle the shortish distance on Sungai Sambas to visit **Keraton Sambas**, the former palace, now a museum, built by Sultan Mulia Ibrahim Tsjafoeddin in 1933. Both the architecture and the view of Sambas from the river are enchanting. It is only accessible by river.

Hotel Sejatra (☎ 91182; Jl Gusti Hamzah; r 50,000Rp; 🍽️), about 1km west of the market on the road from Singkawang, has spotless rooms. A good place to eat is **Restaurant Malayu** (Jl

Pangaran); it serves the local speciality *bubur pedas* (a spicy vegetable rice porridge).

Buses to Sambas (13,000Rp, three hours) leave regularly from the Singkawang bus terminal.

GUNUNG PALUNG NATIONAL PARK

Home to several thousand wild orang-utans, Gunung Palung National Park has managed to cling onto pockets of untouched forest, despite the ugly intrusion of illegal logging. Long known as an area for research, the park is now being promoted for tourism as well. Facilities are simple and tourists are welcome to join the researchers at the Cabang Panti research site to view the orang-utans in small groups. A network of trails covers about 15 sq km of the park, traversing some of Kalimantan's most pristine tracts of swamp, and lowland dipterocarp, hill and mountain forest. Aside from the orang-utans, there is an amazing variety of wildlife, including gibbons, proboscis monkeys and hornbills.

Unless you visit Gunung Palung on an organised tour, patience, money and excellent Bahasa Indonesia are essential.

Orientation & Information

To get to Gunung Palung National Park the first order of business is to obtain a permit from the office of the **Unit Taman Nasional Gunung Palung** (UTN; Map p621; ☎ /fax 0534-32720; Jl Di Panjaitan; 🕒 8am-2pm Mon-Fri, 8am-11am Sat) in Ketapang. It is best to fax the UTN office before arrival, so the staff can arrange a guide and begin processing a permit for the dates you plan to stay in the park. You will need to bring a copy of your passport to the office to process the permit and coordinate plans for departure with your guide. The fee is 1000Rp per person per day, with a 10,000Rp one-time processing fee.

Once you have the permit, stock up on food and provisions in Ketapang (get a list from the UTN office) and catch the bus (30km) north to Sukadana (40,000Rp, 1½ hours). The Cabang Panti research site can be reached by foot or boat. The latter is not recommended as accessibility depends on the river level – you may be required to drag the boat at low water. Additional time and money are also necessary to make arrangements for boat hire; UTN can help with the logistics.

It is mandatory to have a UTN guide with you on any ventures into the park. The people at the UTN office can help arrange one. The rate is 100,000Rp per day, plus your guide's food and transport costs. UTN guides don't necessarily know the terrain as well as local guides in and around Sukadana, so if you hire an additional guide for trekking you'll need to pay for their expenses (from 50,000Rp per day) too. In Tanjung Gunung ask for Nurual Hasan, who doesn't speak English, but knows the area well. The bus from Ketapang to Sukadana can drop you off at Tanjung Gunung, which is about 15km before Sukadana.

For more information on the research at Cabang Panti, contact Betsy Hill, field director at the **Gunung Palung Orang-utan Conservation Program** (GPOCP; Map p621; ☎ /fax 31150; Kotak Pos 144, Ketapang 78801, Kalimantan Barat).

KETAPANG

☎ 0534 / pop 30,000

Tucked away on the far southwestern coast of Kalimantan, Ketapang has stayed somewhat isolated, even by Kalimantan standards.

With no major roadways connecting the region, bar a hellish bus journey, the only way to get here is by boat or plane. Both options are quite feasible and relatively inexpensive. Most travellers only go to Ketapang to begin trips to the Gunung Palung National Park.

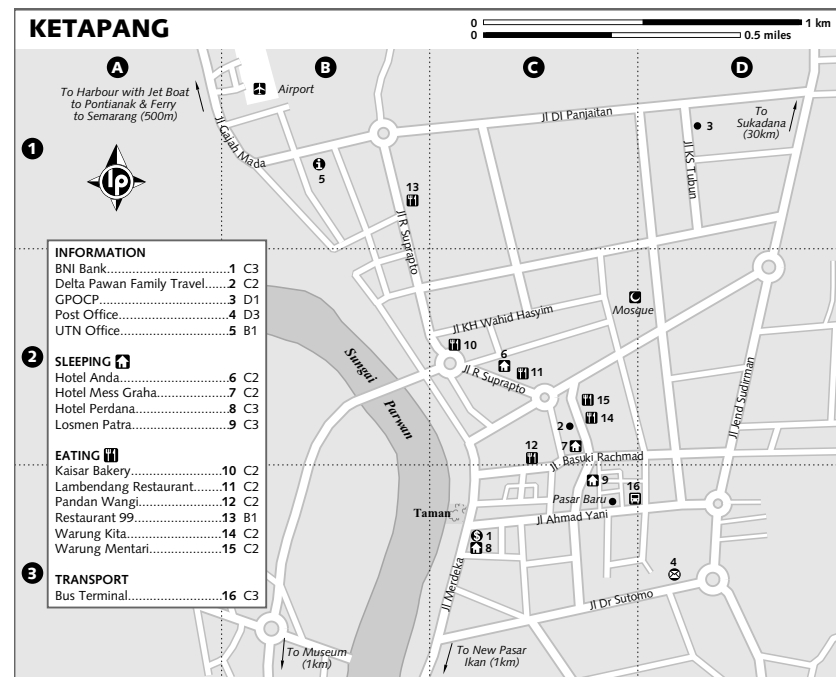
Information

Facilities in Ketapang include the following: **BNI bank** (Bank Negara Indonesia; Jl Merdeka) Has an ATM. **Delta Pawan Family Travel** (☎ 35206; Jl Diponegoro 20) Can book Pelni and other ferry tickets. **Post office** (Jl Dr Sutomo)

Sleeping

Hotel Anda (☎ 32575; Jl R Suprpto; r 30,000-75,000Rp plus 10% tax; 🍽️) The cheapest rooms at the two-storey Hotel Anda are basic shells with fans, TVs and shared *mandis*, but the 'VIP' rooms are significantly more pleasant with air-con and private bathrooms. It's in a good spot with plenty of eating options nearby.

Losmen Patra (☎ 32742; Jl Diponegoro 63; r 155,000Rp) A great budget option, this simple losmen has tidy, fan-cooled rooms with teeny but immaculate *mandis*. The rooms



can get a little steamy if it's a hot night, but the free drinking water, tea and coffee and friendly staff compensate.

Hotel Mess Graha (☎ 081 25746712; Jl Basuki Rachmad 15; r 60,000-85,000Rp; 🏠) Clean rooms, reasonable prices and a central location attract local tourists and visiting businessmen by the truckload to Hotel Mess Graha. The downstairs TV lounge and lobby seem to be a meeting place for half of Ketapang.

Hotel Perdana (☎ 33333; fax 32740; Jl Merdeka 112; r 90,000-350,000Rp plus 10% tax; 🏠) Down near the water, this is the most upmarket hotel in town. Rooms are carpeted and clean and the pricier options have showers. The hotel's best feature is its array of facilities – there's a restaurant downstairs and boat tickets can be arranged at the front desk. January to March attracts a 20% discount.

Eating & Drinking

Restaurant 99 (Jl R Suprpto; mains 15,000Rp; 🍴 lunch & dinner) Seafood is the speciality at this cheerful restaurant, and fans should sample the local prawns. Fresh fish is also sizzled up, as are the Indonesian and Chinese chicken and veggie dishes.

Pandan Wangi (Jl Basuki Rachmad) To cool off after a few days of hiking in the park, head to this juice bar serving tasty *es campur* (ice cubes with frozen fruit and syrup; 6000Rp), ice cream and other fresh local fruit blends. Highly recommended.

More eats:

Lambandang Restaurant (Jl R Suprpto 22; mains 10,000-20,000Rp; 🍴 lunch & dinner) Traditional Indonesian fare.

Kaisar Bakery (Jl R Suprpto; snacks 2,000-6,000Rp; 🍴 breakfast, lunch & dinner) Sweet and savoury baked goods.

Almost side by side on Jl Diponegoro, Warung Kita and Warung Mentari both serve Padang-style lunch and dinner for around 10,000Rp a meal.

Getting There & Around

AIR

DAS, Kal-Star and Deraya have offices at the airport and fly to Pontianak and Pangkalan Bun.

BOAT

From the harbour north along Jl Gajah Mada, twice-daily jet boats head to Pontianak (1st

class/economy 135,000/90,000Rp, six to eight hours depending on conditions). The upgrade to 1st class is recommended to get a reclining seat, and to avoid the crowds below, particularly when the seas get a bit choppy. Express ferries are also available to Semarang (150,000Rp, 10 hours) on Java. Inquire at Hotel Perdana or Delta Pawan Family Travel for more information.

BUS

The Ketapang bus terminal is on Jl Ahmad Yani, next to the Pasar Baru. Northbound buses go to Sukadana (17,000Rp, 1½ hours) and *ojeks* (motorcycles that take passengers) cost 50,000Rp. It is feasible to go overland to Pontianak, but the roads are so poor that it makes for an arduous, if not incredibly time-consuming, journey. For an adventure, it is also possible to go overland to Pangkalan Bun by combining bus, boat, minibus and a bit of trekking. This option is for those with loads of time, and the cost will depend on your bargaining abilities.

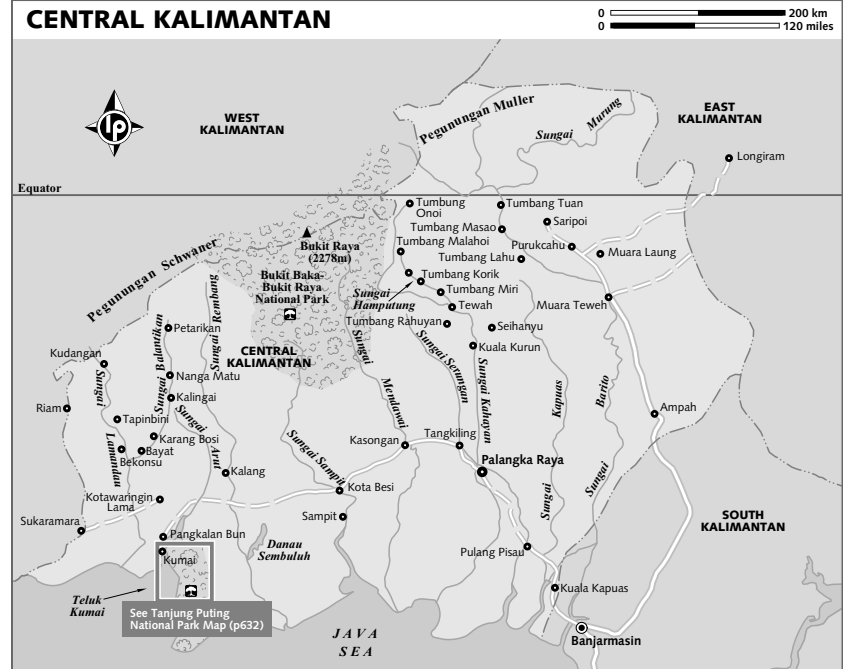
TO/FROM THE AIRPORT

A taxi to/from the airport costs 40,000Rp, or it's 15,000Rp by *ojek*. *Ojeks* can be hired at the park across from Hotel Perdana and charge 8,000Rp around town.

CENTRAL KALIMANTAN

Central Kalimantan province (Kalimantan Tengah, or Kal-Teng) was formed in 1957, after a Dayak revolt calling for greater autonomy from centuries of domination by Banjarmasin. It remains the only province with a predominantly Dayak population, mostly Ngaju, Ot Danum and Ma'anyan peoples. It's also the least populated province in Kalimantan, with just under two million people.

Central Kalimantan's northern reaches are mountainous, while the rest of the province is low, flat and poorly drained. Timber extraction has stripped much of the province of its forest cover, yet the interior offers some of the most fascinating journeys in Kalimantan. Climbing north, the rivers Kahayan, Lamandau and Balantikan consist of river rapids, jungle and Dayak villages, where longhouses, some several centuries old, remain intact. The province is also a magnet



for wildlife lovers, owing to the celebrated Tanjung Puting National Park, home to Kalimantan's most accessible orang-utans.

PALANGKA RAYA

☎ 0536 / pop 186,500

Palangka Raya (Great and Holy Place) was built on the site of the village of Pahandut. During the Soekarno period it was considered for development as the capital city of Kalimantan. Today the city is a dusty swathe of streets with a seemingly endless supply of mechanics and shops selling merchandise in bulk. This makes it the perfect stopover en route to elsewhere (particularly if you have an ailing vehicle). If you find yourself here for a couple of days, veer off the main roads into the residential backstreets where life ambles at a warm and relaxed pace.

Information

There are several warnets about 2km down Jl Yos Sudarso with internet access for around 5000Rp per hour. Several banks on

Jl Ahmad Yani have ATMs which accept international cards.

Bali Indah Photo (Jl Ahmad Yani 77) Sometimes has maps of Central Kalimantan.

Bank Mandiri (Jl Ahmad Yani; 🕒 7.30am-2.30pm Mon-Fri) The best place to change money.

Dinas Pariwisata regional tourist office (Km 5, Jl Cilik Riwayat; 🕒 7am-2pm Mon-Fri) On the A taxi route; has a few brochures and may be able to suggest guides for travel into the interior.

Main post office (Jl Imam Bonjol; 🕒 7.30am-2.15pm) On the D taxi route.

Palangka Raya Guide Association – Yusuf Kawaru (☎ 32223341; Dandang Tingang Hotel, Jl Yos Sudarso 13) Can put you in contact with guides for trips into the interior.

PT Mulio Angkasa Raya (☎ 3221031; mulyo_plk@telkom.net; Jl Ahmad Yani 55) They can book flights and tours.

Sights

On the southern side of Jl Panjaitan, **Man-dala Wisata** (Jl Panjaitan; admission free) is a model of a traditional longhouse that acts as an arts centre and venue for traditional dances and other performances when troupes are in town. For wandering around, try the

DAYAK FESTIVALS OF CENTRAL KALIMANTAN

Tiwah, Ijambe & Wara Ceremonies

The region is famous for its *tiwah*: colourful ceremonies in which dozens of Ngaju Dayak families retrieve the remains of their dead from temporary graves and send them on their way to the next life, according to the traditions of the Kaharingan faith (a religion professed by many Dayaks). Groups of villages participate, dispatching up to 150 or more long-dead 'spirits' in a month of feasting and ceremonies. The peak of activity is when bones are taken from the graves and washed and purified to cleanse the spirit of sins. Water buffalo, pigs, chickens and everything else needed for the journey to the next life are tethered to a totem then slaughtered. After more feasting, dancing and ceremonies, the purified human remains are transferred to the family *sandung* (house-shaped boxes on stilts).

Most *tiwah* ceremonies occur along Sungai Kahayan, once or twice a year, with a major one every four or five years. Everyone is welcome, even foreigners. Introduce yourself to the chief of the organising committee, explain why you are there, ask permission to take photos, then enjoy the hospitality. Nothing happens in a hurry, so don't be too surprised if the organisers are a bit vague about the programme.

The *ijambe* is a Ma'anyan and Lawangan Dayak variation on the *tiwah*. In sending their dead relatives on the journey to the next life, the bones are cremated and the ashes are stored in small jars in family apartments.

Wara is the funeral ritual of the Tewoyan, Bayan, Dusun and Bentian Dayak people of the northern Sungai Barito. They are far less concerned about the physical remains; instead, they use a medium in the *wara* ceremony to communicate with the dead and show their spirits the way to Gunung Lumut, the nirvana of this branch of the Kaharingan faith.

Potong Pantan Ceremony

One other Kaharingan tradition is the Potong Pantan welcoming ceremony, in which important guests are met by the head of the village, offered a machete and invited to cut through *pantan* – lengths of wood that block the entrance to the village – to purge themselves of bad spirits. As they cut, guests introduce themselves and explain the purpose of their visit. *Tapung tawar* is an extension of the Potong Pantan, in which guests have their faces dusted with rice flour and their heads sprinkled with water to protect them from bad spirits and illness.

lively **pasar malam** (night market; cnr Jl Jawa & Jl Halmahera).

Museum Balanga (Km 2.5, Jl Cilik Riwat; donations welcome) opens when you knock on the door and provides a good glimpse into the indigenous cultures of the area. The main building has displays of Ngaju ceremonies, performed to celebrate the cycle of birth, marriage and death. The A taxi route goes past the museum.

The **Kalaweit Care Centre** (☎/fax 3226388; www.kalaweit.org; Jl Pinus 14) is a research and rehabilitation centre for ex-captive gibbons on their way into the wild. Gibbons face much the same problems as their more popular cousins the orang-utans and are just another reason these pockets of forests need to be protected. Tourists can call ahead to arrange a visit to the office to learn more about the work, but the gibbons are

inaccessible as they are highly susceptible to disease. Kalaweit also takes on volunteers for one- to seven-week projects. Check its website for costs and details.

Sleeping BUDGET

Hotel Melati Serasi (☎ 3223682; Jl Dr Murjani 54; s 22,000-44,000, d 33,000-60,500Rp; ☺) This quaint and friendly hotel is in a quiet spot and has a range of rooms. For next to nix, you can sleep in a basic shell with shared *mandis* or blow the budget on a comfy air-con room with private *mandi* and TV.

Hotel Virgo (☎/fax 3221265; Jl Ahmad Yani 13; r with/without air-con from 66,000/38,500Rp plus 21% tax; ☺) Pick of the budget bunch, Hotel Virgo has simple fan-cooled rooms with shared *mandis* and breezy 'VIP' rooms that rival the midrange options in town.

It's spotless and exceedingly popular with local tourists.

Hotel Dian Wisata (☎ 3221241; fax 3223952; Jl Ahmad Yani 68; r 55,000-90,000Rp; ☺) Edging closer to the hub, this inexpensive hotel has a pleasant interior with an atrium-like centre. Economy rooms (with shared *mandis*) are boxy and dank, but the standard and 'VIP' rooms are spacious, if a little ragged, and have air-con.

Two clean and friendly options in a quiet pocket of Jl Nias with similar standards are **Hotel Mahkota** (☎ 3221672; Jl Nias; s 33,000-66,000Rp, d 44,000-77,000Rp plus 21% tax; ☺) and **Hotel Mina** (☎ 3222182; Jl Nias 17; s 30,000-55,000Rp, d 40,000-100,000Rp plus 21% tax; ☺).

MIDRANGE & TOP END

Adidas Hotel (☎ 3221770; fax 3225328; Jl Ahmad Yani 90; r from 144,000Rp; ☺) This friendly sized hotel has slightly dank but sizeable 'deluxe' rooms with capacious beds. But the cheaper, standard rooms are bright and cheerful and much better value. There's also a small restaurant attached.

Hotel Lampang (☎ 3220003; hl@palangkaraya

.wasantara.net.id; Jl Irian 2; s/d incl breakfast from 150,000/180,000Rp plus 21% tax; ☺) Things look a little weary at the Lampang these days but it still fits the midrange bill – if for no other feature than the price. Some of the staff speak English.

Hotel Sakura (☎ 3221680; Jl Ahmad Yani 87; r incl breakfast 160,000-240,000Rp plus 21% tax; ☺) The Sakura's best feature is its sizeable restaurant and central atrium. The rooms don't have quite the same flair. Nevertheless they contain the requisite TV, air-con, and shower head in the bathroom.

Dandang Tingang (☎ 3221805; dandang_tingang@yahoo.com; Jl Yos Sudarso 13; r 126,000-342,000Rp, ste 600,000Rp plus 21% tax; ☺) On the outskirts of the main strip and laid across expansive green grounds, these are the nicest rooms in Palangka Raya. The wee, rustic (and comfortable enough) standard rooms don't quite fit the bill, but those in the middle of the five-tiered price bracket are well-kitted out. There's also a good restaurant, bar and disco.

Eating

Fabulous barbecued fish and freshwater

PALANGKA RAYA

0 0.5 miles 1 km

Legend:

- INFORMATION**
 - Bali Indah Photo.....1 C2
 - Bank Mandiri.....2 C2
 - Main Post Office.....3 A2
 - Palangka Raya Guide Association-Yusuf Kawaru.....(see 7)
 - PT Mulio Angkasa Raya.....4 C2
- SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES**
 - Mandala Wisata.....5 B1
- SLEEPING**
 - Adidas Hotel.....6 D2
- EATING**
 - Depot Rizky.....15 B2
 - Rumah Makan Melati.....16 D1
 - Simpang Raya.....17 B1
- SHOPPING**
 - Barata Plaza.....20 C2
 - Citra Raya Plaza.....21 D2
 - Souvenir Shops.....22 D1
- TRANSPORT**
 - Garung Mas Pier.....23 B1
 - Taxi Bus Station.....(see 21)
 - Taxi Terminal.....(see 21)
- Other locations:**
 - Dandang Tingang.....7 A2
 - Hotel Dian Wisata.....8 C1
 - Hotel Lampang.....9 C2
 - Hotel Mahkota.....10 D1
 - Hotel Melati Serasi.....11 D1
 - Hotel Mina.....12 D1
 - Hotel Sakura.....13 D2
 - Hotel Virgo.....14 B1
 - Supermarket.....18 C1
 - Toko Kue Lirissa.....19 C1

THE GREAT FIRES

In 1997 Kalimantan was ablaze, ravaged by fires that continued to burn for up to two years. Many were a result of the slash-and-burn agriculture practised by some of Kalimantan's indigenous peoples. Despite a 1997 presidential ban, this method is the fastest and cheapest way to clear land. Plantation companies also use fire to prepare land for planting. The ferocity of the fires was greatly exacerbated by the unusually dry conditions caused by El Niño. The catastrophe had a devastating impact on the environment, wildlife, human health and the region's economy.

With large areas of forest and peatland destroyed, wildlife and endangered species faced greater risk. The incidence of human respiratory disease rose dramatically in affected areas. Rain became dangerously acidic, causing damage to freshwater and marine ecosystems. Furthermore, biomass burning is a major source of gases in the atmosphere that contribute to global warming.

The Association of South East Asian Neighbours (Asean), along with other world nations have requested that Indonesia intensify efforts against slash-and-burn practices and encourage zero burning by the plantation industry. Although pockets of freshly burned land can be seen with relative ease, the type of large-scale destruction that fuelled the 1997–98 fires is now a thing of the past.

crayfish are *the* dishes to tuck into in Palangka Raya.

Toko Kue Lirissa (Jl Ahmad Yani; snacks 2000–5000Rp; ☺ breakfast & lunch) Hotel Dian Wisata's next door neighbour is an excellent bakery selling a diversity of sweet and savoury roti, as well as fresh steamed dumplings and slices of cake.

Simpang Raya (☎ Jl Ahmad Yani; mains 10,000–18,000Rp; ☺ lunch & dinner) Without a neighbour in sight, this restaurant serves decent Padang food, specialising in chicken and fish. It's all displayed in colourful marinades in the front window, and the large interior is bright, cool and clean.

Rumah Makan Melati (Jl Madura; mains 12,000–18,000Rp; ☺ lunch & dinner) This welcoming corner restaurant has lovely 180-degree open doorways, street views and fat wooden bench seating, all of which endow it with a cosmopolitan air (well, Kalimantan-style anyway). Just about everything is barbecued, including spectacular *udang* (prawns) and a good spread of fish.

The lively *pasar malam* around Jl Halmahera and Jl Jawa has plenty of cheap noodle and rice stalls, plus a colourful range of seasonal fruit. For morning coffee, there are a few warungs on Jl Nias towards Rambang Pier.

More eating:

Supermarket (Jl Ahmad Yani) For self-caterers.

Depot Rizky (Jl Ahmad Yani; mains 6,000–10,000Rp;

☺ lunch & dinner Mon–Sat) Simple and cheap.

Shopping

Central Kalimantan is best known for its skilful rattan weaving.

Souvenir shops (along Jl Madura) West of Jl Dharmasugondo, these have some nice baskets and mats from 70,000Rp up to 250,000Rp.

Pasar malam (cnr Jl Jawa & Jl Halmahera) Has tubular rattan or bamboo fish weirs for sale, just like the ones in the museum.

Citra Raya Plaza and the Barata Plaza on Jl Ahmad Yani both sell anything else you might need.

Getting There & Away

AIR

Between them Deraya, Kal-Star and DAS have daily flights to Pangkalan Bun, Ketapang, and Pontianak. DAS also flies to Muara Teweh three times a week. The best place to book tickets is **PT Mulio Angkasa Raya** (☎ 3221031; mulyo_plk@telkom.net; Jl Ahmad Yani 55).

BOAT

Speedboats head upstream along Sungai Kahayan to Tewah (300,000Rp, five hours, daily) from Garung Mas Pier.

BUS & KIJANG

Morning and evening buses depart for Pangkalan Bun (95,000Rp, 14 hours) and Banjarmasin (35,000, six hours) from the bus terminal, about 5km out of town on the D taxi route. There are also Kijang services to Banjarmasin, with eight people crammed into a 4WD for about 80,000Rp each; the

Kijangs also take six hours. There has been an ongoing attempt to build a raised highway above the swamplands between Palangka Raya and Banjarmasin. The saga continues.

Getting Around

It takes a good 15 minutes to get to the airport. Taxis cost 60,000Rp.

Efficient taxi buses around town – marked A (heads northwest), B, or D (heads southwest) – cost 2500Rp. There's a taxi terminal on the corner of Jl Ahmad Yani and Jl Dharmasugondo in the Citra Raya Plaza.

Ojek hire is about 20,000Rp per hour. Becak drivers congregate around Rambang Pier and along Jl Halmahera at the *pasar malam*.

SEBANGAU NATIONAL PARK

South of Palangka Raya, this recent addition to Kalimantan's national parks is a peat swamp forest and home to an incredible diversity of **wildlife**, including more than 100 species of birds, 35 species of mammals and 6,900 orang-utans; one of the highest wild populations in Borneo. WWF-Indonesia has conducted a tireless campaign to establish protection for the area due to indications that the impact of illegal logging and palm oil plantations may have reduced the orang-utan population from as much as 13,000 since 1996.

Presently the park is inaccessible to tourists as it's maintained as a research reserve; however, there are ecotourism plans afoot. The best source of information is **WWF-Indonesia** (www.wwf.or.id).

SUNGAI KAHAYAN

It's tough going to explore Central Kalimantan's interior; it's so far off the tourist track the concept doesn't even exist. In its northern reaches is some of the least spoilt Dayak culture on the island. Isolation has limited the effects of modernity in the villages above Tewah and many don't see daily road or river traffic. Sadly much of the area has been logged, but pockets of forest still remain. If you go it alone, excellent Bahasa Indonesia is essential. Even if you do have language skills it's worthwhile seeking a guide through the **Palangka Raya Guide Association** (☎ 0536-32223341; Dandang Tingang Hotel, Jl Yos Sudarso 13, Palangka Raya).

Be prepared for improvised, expensive and sometimes uncomfortable travel.

Below are some routes you could take, but they are suggestions only. This area is an opportunity for intrepid travellers to do their own thing and getting from A to B or X is going to be a similarly adventurous exercise whatever route you create. Some price estimates are given below but they fluctuate wildly.

One route is to take a speedboat from Palangka Raya to **Tewah** (300,000Rp), and then charter a *klotok* (motorised river canoe) to reach the Dayak villages north. First head to **Tumbang Miri** on Sungai Hamputung, via river rapids, and the longhouse settlement of **Tumbang Korik** (300,000Rp or more, six hours). It's possible to stay overnight in Tumbang Korik with a family and then trek to the Dayak village of **Tumbang Malahoi** (spending a night in the jungle). There are no official guides in Tumbang Korik but you may be able to recruit a local. From here charter a *klotok* to the historic village of **Tumbang Onoi** (200,000Rp, four hours). During the 1600s, the Dutch intervened here to stem fighting between rival tribes and the frequent incidence of head-hunting. The peace was commemorated by a stone in the village, engraved with the names of all the village chiefs at the time. Tumbang Onoi also has a traditional longhouse still in use. You can spend the night in Tumbang Onoi, again with a family, and then head back downstream to Tewah by *klotok* (600,000Rp, 10 hours). Count on at least five or six days to do this trip.

Another, three-day option involves travelling by *ojek* from Tewah to Tumbang Miri, and then southwest to **Tumbang Rahuyan** or the gold-mining area near **Sungai Antai** (three hours). Then continue downriver by boat to **Tumbang Baringei** (three hours), on to **Tumbang Malahoi** (the site of a longhouse) by *ojek* and then by *klotok* or speedboat south to **Tangkiling** and on to Palangka Raya.

For a four- to five-day trip, take a speedboat from Palangka Raya as far as **Kuala Kurun** (200,000Rp, three hours) and travel by *ojek* north to **Seihanyu**. From here take a *klotok* to the upper reaches of the Kapuas to **Sungai Mendaun** and on to **Jarak Masuparia**. Hike from there to **Masuparia**, a gold-rush field in a natural depression in the jungle. Continue by *ojek* to **Tumbang Masao** then by *klotok*

downstream to **Purukcahu** and **Muara Teweh** or continue from **Tumbang Masao** to **Sungai Barito** headwaters, past a series of rapids north of **Tumbang Tuan**. This territory, north of **Muara Teweh** has pockets untouched by logging, but in future years it is hard to say what will be left due to the voracity of the illegal logging operations. These last options are the most difficult and expensive, but well worth considering if you have the cash and the stamina.

MUARA TEWEH AREA

☎ 0519 / pop 37,500

Deep in the heart of logging country, **Muara Teweh** is the last river-boat stop on **Sungai Barito**, unless the water is high enough for boats to reach **Purukcahu**. From **Purukcahu** you can go further north by boat and hire **Dayak** guides to trek into the northeastern mountains and forest. Near **Gunung Puncungapung**, on the border of Central and East Kalimantan, a cement pillar marks the geographical centre of Borneo.

The main settlement of **Muara Teweh** is on the north bank of the **Barito**. The road parallel to the river, **Jl Panglima Batur**, is where you'll find most accommodation.

Muhsin Hussein (☎ 3222342) is a teacher who speaks English and can help arrange guides. In **Purukcahu**, ask for **Mahrani**, a **Siang Dayak** who also speaks English and is a good person to ask about trips further inland.

In **Muara Teweh** you can rest your bones at **Barito Hotel** (☎ 3221080; **Jl Panglima Batur** 43; s/d/tr from 25,000/40,000/45,000Rp) or the very comfortable **Wisma Pacifik** (☎ 321231; **Jl Panglima Batur** 87; r from 120,000Rp; 🍽️), which also has a good restaurant.

There are a couple of warungs along **Jl Panglima Batur** west of **Barito Hotel**, one or two up the hill on **Jl Surapati** and also further along near the market.

In **Purukcahu** there are a couple of **losmen** (r around 20,000Rp), or you can also stay in the longhouse at **Konut**, about 10km from **Purukcahu**. Make a donation for your hosts' efforts.

Getting There & Away

AIR

DAS connects **Muara Teweh** with **Palangka Raya** three times a week. The airport is 5km north of town and costs 10,000/35,000Rp by *ojek*/Kijang or *opelet*.

BOAT

Cargo ships still ply **Sungai Barito** and it is possible to negotiate a ride. Another option is to charter a speedboat. Ask a local guide whom to contact.

BUS

The uncomfortable trip to **Banjarmasin** (55,000Rp, 12 hours) is served by daily (and nightly) buses. The bus terminal is 3km west of town across the bridge.

Opelet go to **Purukcahu** (50,000Rp, three hours) from the terminal on **Jl Surapati**.

MUARA TEWEH TO SAMARINDA

From **Muara Teweh** you can trek overland to **Long Iram** in East Kalimantan and then catch a boat down **Sungai Mahakam** to **Samarinda**. A number of different routes are possible, depending on whether you want to trek through the jungle or just follow logging roads – a depressing way to see the jungle. Logging roads head east from **Muara Teweh** or **Muara Laung** upriver. The trek takes up to two weeks and can be done on your own, or you can also try hitching rides if they come by. Be sure to take sun protection and iodine to purify your water. There are more interesting trails upriver from **Purukcahu**. Hire a guide along the way or bring one from **Palangka Raya**, **Banjarmasin**, **Muara Teweh** or **Purukcahu**.

PANGKALAN BUN

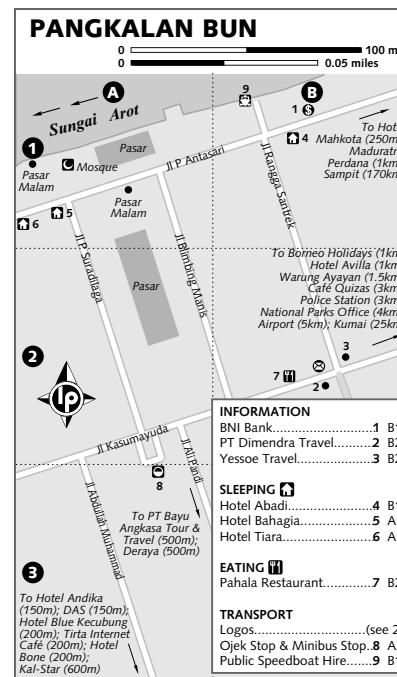
☎ 0532 / pop 39,500

If Kalimantan ran a 'Tidy Towns' contest **Pangkalan Bun** would leave the opposition in its dust, which it would have to import because it has none of its own. Largely used as a stopover en route to **Tanjung Puting National Park**, this is a surprisingly pleasant spot to hang the hat for a couple of days. Wide, ordered roads lined with processions of greenery, attractive residences and warm and friendly locals create a convivial and appealing atmosphere. There's also a neat waterfront market punctuated by gemshops and tidy warungs.

Information

Banks around town have ATMs.

BNI bank (Bank Negara Indonesia; **Jl P Antasari**) Will exchange US dollars and euro travellers cheques and cash at pitiful rates.



Borneo Holidays (☎ 29673; borneoholidays@planet-save.com; **Jl HM Raffi Kompleks Beringin Rindang Gg J Ambu 25**) Personalised guided tours to **Tanjung Puting** and **Sungai Lamandau**.

PT Bayu Angkasa Tour and Travel (☎ 22374; www.bayuangkasa.co.id; **Jl Hasanudin 11/75**) Tours to **Tanjung Puting** and elsewhere in Central Kalimantan.

PT Dimendra Travel (☎ 21170; **Jl Kasumayuda**) Air and boat tickets plus information about river trips and guides.

Tirta Internet Café (**Jl Domba 23**; per hr 9000Rp)

Yesso Travel (☎ 21212) Books bus and air tickets and can suggest guides.

Sleeping

Hotel Bone (☎ 21213; **Jl Domba 21**; room r 35,000-84,000Rp) A decent budget hotel with fan-cooled rooms, **Hotel Bone** has clean and frugal economy rooms with shared *mandis*. The pricier 'VIP' rooms are more comfortable but not as good value.

Hotel Tiara (☎ 22717; fax 22721; **Jl P Antasari 16**; r from 45,000Rp; 🍽️) Big thumbs up! **Hotel Tiara** has ever-smiling staff and sparkling deluxe rooms with good beds and clinically clean *mandis*. The economy rooms are less fancy but still the best value in town. Breakfast

is included, and tea, coffee and drinking water are free.

Hotel Andika (☎ 21218; fax 21923; **Jl Hasanudin 20A**; s/tw from 40,000/50,000Rp, d 70,000-85,000Rp; 🍽️) Modest but lovely rooms with miniporches sit on either side of a central atrium at this reliable hotel. Rates include breakfast and there is also a restaurant. Perfect for those on middle-of-the-road budgets.

Hotel Mahkota (☎ 21172; **Jl P Antasari**; r 138,000-270,000Rp; 🍽️) Hot water, air-con and plenty of room to stretch the toes are standards in every **Mahkota** room. Tariffs increase with the quality of the furnishings, and the 'Executive' is quite huge. Everything's spotless, but there is little direct sunlight.

Hotel Avilla (☎ 27710; fax 27711; **Jl Pangeran Diponegoro 81**; r incl breakfast 200,000-250,000Rp; 🍽️) Fresh and fine, **Hotel Avilla** has stylish and bright rooms, with glorious bathrooms, satellite TV and sinkable lounge chairs. Breakfast is served in the upstairs dining area before wide patio doors.

Hotel Blue Kecubung (☎ 21211; fax 21513; **Jl Domba 1**; s 186,500-285,500Rp, d 225,500-324,500Rp; 🍽️) The chandeliered-splendour of the shimmering lobby doesn't make it all the way to the rooms, and **Blue Kecubung's** a tad overpriced. The beds, however, are firm and the sizeable rooms all have air-con and satellite TV. There's also a restaurant, bar and fitness centre.

Also available:

Hotel Bahagia (☎ 21226; **Jl P Antasari 100**; r 50,000-170,000Rp; 🍽️) Central and spotless.

Hotel Abadi (☎ 21021; fax 21021; **Jl P Antasari 150**; r incl breakfast 65,000-125,000Rp; 🍽️) Decent value.

Eating & Drinking

Warung Ayayan (**Jl Kasumayuda**; mains 5,000-10,000Rp; 🍽️ lunch & dinner) This wide and airy warung has a local fan club owing to excellent chicken and goat steak. The menu is mighty tasty and mighty cheap, and it's a great spot to make **Pangkalan Bun** pals.

Pahala Restaurant (**Jl Kasumayuda**; mains 5,000-12,000Rp; 🍽️ lunch & dinner) A step up from the warung, this clean and breezy restaurant serves good iced drinks, *tempe* (fermented soya-bean cake), *nasi goreng* (fried rice) and the usual Indonesian fare.

Café Quizas (**Jl Iskandar 63**) If you're craving coffee, this spot with a beautiful garden setting in a traditional Indonesian building serves delicious blended hot and cold

drinks. There is also a restaurant and disco playing music nightly.

You'll find barbecued chicken aplenty at the warungs around the *pasar* (market) by the waterfront, and small supermarkets on Jl P Antasari.

Getting There & Away

AIR

DAS (Jl Hasanudin), near Hotel Andika, **Kal-Star** (☎ 22824; Jl Hasanuddin 2) and **Deraya** (☎ 21224; Jl Antasari 55) connect Pangkalan Bun to Palangka Raya, Ketapang, Pontianak via Ketapang, Semarang and Sampit, and Banjarmasin and Surabaya, both via Sampit.

BOAT

Public speedboats leave from the dock near Losmen Selecta for Kotawaringin Lama (50,000Rp, two hours) up Sungai Lamandau. From there, 4WDs go to Sukamara (50,000Rp), from where you can take a speedboat to Manis mata and further on up to Riam in West Kalimantan. You can continue up to Ketapang from Riam.

BUS

Numerous companies operate buses to Palangka Raya (95,000Rp, 14 hours), including **Yessoe Travel** and **PT Dimendra Travel** (☎ 21170; Jl Kasumayuda), **Maduratna Perdana** (☎ 22129; Jl P Antasari 17) and **Logos** (Jl Kasumayuda). Some also operate buses to Sampit (50,000Rp, six hours). Buses leave from their respective offices.

Getting Around

A taxi to/from the airport costs 45,000Rp. *Angkot* (minibus) to Kumai (7,500Rp) and *ojek* leave from near the roundabout on the hill leading up from Jl Kasumayuda.

SUNGAI LAMANDAU & SUNGAI BALANTIKAN

Snaking its way due north, Sungai Lamandau and its tributaries support a number of Dayak villages where longhouses and tradition are still intact. A guide is highly recommended and transport is irregular and expensive, but the route is ideal for experience-hungry travellers. Two hours north of Pangkalan Bun by speedboat (50,000Rp), the village of **Kotawaringin Lama** has a longhouse and a frail wooden palace, which was once occupied by the region's sultan. Continuing north, a peppering of small villages

along the river leads to **Bekonsu**, also home to a number of longhouses, as well as traditional mausoleums. There are a series of rapids just south of Bekonsu that may make the going rough and hiring a speedboat from Kotawaringin Lama (1,000,000Rp, three hours) is expensive but it's possible to stay overnight with a family in the village. From Bekonsu it's only an hour or so by speedboat (500,000Rp) to **Tapinbini**, where a number of longhouses have survived several hundred years of weathering and fire. There's a twice-weekly minibus between Tapinbini and Pangkalan Bun which is far less expensive than travelling by river, but the ride will test the mettle of your spine.

An alternative route is to veer off Sungai Lamandau onto little-trafficked **Sungai Balantikan**, where friendly Dayak villages welcome visitors and invite them to share *tuak* – a traditional rice wine (not to be confused with *tuak* in other parts of Indonesia). No longhouses remain, but the river itself is beautiful and its banks accommodate orang-utans and that anomaly of Indonesian fauna – the wild cow. You can hire a speedboat from Pangkalan Bun to **Bayat** (2,000,000Rp, five hours) and stay overnight with a family. From Bayat the river closes in and turns to rapids, so journeying further north must be by motorised canoe. A particularly feisty rapid at **Nanga Matu** often forces people to haul their vessels along land for a kilometre or two. In two days you can explore the river all the way north to **Petarikan**, staying in villages along the way. Chartering a motorised canoe from Bayat will cost around 1,500,000Rp.

KUMAI

☎ 0532 / pop 23,000

Kumai is a small port town with freighters, and Bugis and Madura schooners tied up to the docks. It's the gateway for trips along Sungai Kumai to Tanjung Puting, and for boat travel further afield.

The main street, Jl HM Idris, runs parallel to the river, and most of the hotels are near the intersection with Jl Gerliya. At the southern end of Jl HM Idris is the Peln office, shops, wartel and market. There are no money-changing facilities.

Anggun Jaya Travel Agency (☎ 61168; Jl Gerliya 383), near the Hotel Garuda can book airline, bus and Peln tickets.

Sleeping

There's usually no problem getting a room in Kumai, *except* the night before a Peln boat comes into town, when the town swells to bursting.

Losmen Aloha (☎ 61238; Jl HM Idris 465; s/d 25,000/35,000Rp) Conveniently placed near the wharf, this losmen has clean and basic fan-cooled rooms with shared *mandis*. It's at the intersection with Jl Gerliya.

Losmen Permata Hijau (☎ 61325; r from 50,000Rp; ☎) This small and polished losmen is a sheer delight for budget travellers, with immaculate rooms, new beds, TVs and air-con. Even the shared *mandis* in the cheaper rooms glisten.

Hotel Garuda (☎ 61145; Jl Gerliya 377; r 110,000Rp; ☎) A step up from the dosshouses, Hotel Garuda caters well to the comfort-needy, with clean rooms and friendly staff.

Eating

Aloha Rumah Makan (Jl HM Idris 465; mains 8,000-14,000Rp; ☎ lunch & dinner) Beneath Losmen Aloha, this corner restaurant has a pub aesthetic and serves filling and tasty Indonesian dishes. The fish is usually quite fresh, given that it's caught only a stone's throw away.

There are plenty of warungs serving noodles, sate, *bakso* etc, on Jl HM Idris towards the market. In the evening, vendors come out to sell *martabak* (pancakes), which are delicious.

Getting There & Away

Kumai is about 25 minutes away from Pangkalan Bun by *angkot* (7,500Rp); they depart from the hill on Jl Kasumayuda, just past the roundabout. Taxis from Pangkalan Bun airport to Kumai are 70,000Rp, including a stop to photocopy your passport and visa, a stop at the Pangkalan Bun police station for park registration and a check at the Tanjung Punting National Park and Conservation Office (PHKA) to enter the reserve. The trip by *ojek* costs 40,000Rp.

BOAT

Peln ships connect Kumai with Semarang (150,000Rp) and Surabaya (170,000Rp) three times a week. The trip takes a full day and night to/from either city. The **Peln office** (Jl HM Idris) is opposite the market, a short walk south from Losmen Aloha.

Private boats also run these routes on a daily basis – try the *Dharma Kencana I* and *II*, which can be booked at Hotel Garuda (150,000Rp to 300,000Rp). They take about the same time as the Peln ships.

There are also private services offering a faster service to Java from Kumai. Contact **Anggun Jaya Travel Agency** (☎ 61168; Jl Gerliya 383) or **PT Dimendra Travel** (☎ 0532-21170; Jl Kasumayuda) in Pangkalan Bun.

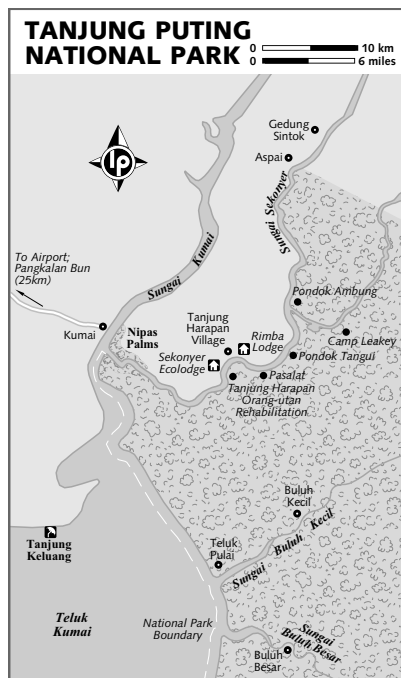
TANJUNG PUTING NATIONAL PARK

Tanjung Puting National Park is one of Indonesia's highlights, and not just because of the enigmatic primates living in its maniacal forest. Coursing the river at a

ON THE FRONT LINE FOR KALIMANTAN'S FORESTS

Things have been looking up for the forests of Kalimantan in recent years, well at least in theory that is. The federal government's (relatively) progressive ideas about conservation have decelerated the fervour of the corporate chainsaw. But Kalimantan's vast interior is its own worst enemy. Providing the perfect cover, it enables illegal logging to run rampant. Local operations exploit government disorganisation to make quick cash. Corruption and payoffs are common as government officials often fold under their own economic pressures.

In the fight to save the few remaining areas of primary jungle, Kalimantan's national parks have become the only benchmark against which to measure what remains of the forest. Fortunately some tangible progress is also being made. Greater cooperation between some of the parks (most notably Tanjung Puting in Central Kalimantan) and surrounding villages has resulted in environmentally sustainable practices and a more equitable dispersal of the tourism dollar. A greater slice of the pie of course means that people don't necessarily need to fell trees to feed their families. The consequence is that protection of the forests in national parks is more than a warm and fuzzy concept. For this plan to work on a grand scale, however, there still needs to be much stricter enforcement of the laws protecting all parks, and this is an ideal yet to be realised.



in the wild. **Camp Leakey**, the primary site, was established in 1971 when Canadian researcher Dr Biruté Galdikas – known locally as ‘ibu’ (mother) professor – began taking in rescued orang-utans with the assistance of the Leakey Foundation, the US philanthropic foundation.

The orang-utans in Borneo and Sumatra are the only great apes outside Africa, and Dr Galdikas probably knows more about them than anyone. In the early days of her research, she would spend weeks tracking wild orang-utans and was the first to document, for instance, that the birth interval for orang-utans is about once in every eight years, making them vulnerable to extinction. Originally these camps were established to study and reintroduce orphaned or rescued orang-utans into the wild. Under the supervision of researchers, juvenile orang-utans learn to live in the forest, spending longer and longer away from the camps. However, being accustomed to human contact, as adults they never fully kick old habits and usually return for an afternoon feeding. In more recent years it has been discovered that these great apes can never be completely wild again. What the camp does provide is a sanctuary for these primates, and a unique place to study their behaviour. The knowledge acquired from Camp Leakey’s research continues to be important to the survival of the orang-utan.

Today there are a number of research camps where you can witness orang-utans socialise and eat at specific feeding times. The bananas and condensed milk sessions are designed to supplement the diets of ex-captives, but inquisitive wild orang-utans sometimes watch from a distance. Feeding at **Tanjung Harapan** is at 3pm, at **Pondok Tangui** it’s at 9am and at **Camp Leakey** it’s at 2pm. Reaching feeding stations from each camp involves a short walk through jungle, which can be a slippery exercise if there has been recent rain. Boots or enclosed shoes are recommended as is a vat of insect repellent. There’s also an excellent information centre at Camp Leakey and some of the knowledgeable rangers speak English. A fourth camp has been established at **Pondok Ambung**, but it’s restricted to research and inaccessible to visitors.

Pasalat is a reforestation camp where saplings of sandalwood, hardwood and other

trees are being reintroduced to the area to combat the devastating effects of logging, mining and the 1997–98 fires. It’s worthwhile stopping in to see the impressive work the local rangers do, and to appreciate their dedication to the conservation of the park.

For additional information about the orang-utan research in Tanjung Puting contact the **Orangutan Foundation International** (OFI; ☎ +1-323-938 6046; www.orang-utan.org; 4201 Wilshire Blvd, Suite 407, Los Angeles, CA, USA 90010). The OFI also publishes *A Guidebook to Tanjung Puting National Park*, written by Drs Biruté Galdikas and Gary Shapiro.

The dry season in the park is May to September, and reduced rainfall will make your journey more enjoyable. On the other hand the river is higher during the wet season and this enables better access to smaller tributaries, albeit with more rain.

Orientation & Information

A trip into the park begins at the Pangkalan Bun police station, where you must register. Make sure you have photocopies of your passport and visa.

Then head to the **PHKA office** (national parks office; Map p629; ☎ /fax 23832; Km 1.5 Jl HM Raffi; ☎ 7am–2pm Mon–Thu, 7am–11am Fri, 7am–1pm Sat) on the way into Pangkalan Bun from the airport. Registration costs 70,000Rp per person per day and 5000Rp a day for a *klotok* ‘parking’ fee or 15,000Rp for a speedboat. You must provide a copy of your police letter from Pangkalan Bun and a photocopy of your passport. The park office will give you two letters: one for you and one for the ranger at Camp Leakey.

Lastly head to Kumai, where you can arrange transportation upriver.

For more information contact the Director of Tanjung Puting National Park, at the PHKA office. For updates concerning what is being done in the local conservation effort, contact the director Pak Bayu at the **Friends of the National Park Foundation** in Bali (FNPf; ☎ 081 1398025; www.fnpf.org) or Wisnu at **Conservation International** (CI; ☎ 24858).

Guides

At the time of writing park management planned to make guides mandatory for all tourists. In Kumai, freelance guides will track you down and it can get a bit an-

noying after a while – patience is an asset. Guide fees are 150,000Rp to 200,000Rp per day. **Borneo Holidays** (☎ 0532-29673; borneoholidays@planet-save.com; Jl HM Raffi Kompleks Beringin Rindang Gg J Ambu 25, Pangkalan Bun) is run by Harry Purwanto and his guide Danson – who spent three years working inside the camp as a researcher. Danson’s knowledge of the park and its wildlife is profound. They can arrange tours that cater to individual plans and budgets. **Suyono Majit**, who works on the *Satria* boat can also recommend guides. Another option is to hire a PHKA guide when you register. Some speak English and their knowledge of the park is an obvious asset.

Rules & Conduct

The park has certain rules of conduct that are imperative for the health of the ecosystems and their inhabitants. Unfortunately some visitors disregard them for the sake of a photo. Always go with a ranger or guide on the trails in the park. The orang-utans are ex-captives and unafraid of humans. No matter what the boat crew or rangers do, don’t succumb to the temptation to feed the orang-utans or initiate contact with them. The younger ones especially are *very* hard to resist picking up and cuddling, but they are highly susceptible to human diseases and you may be inflicting a great deal of harm.

The orang-utans look cute, but they are strong animals who will grab your camera, bag or anything else that is hanging off your body.

Another word of warning is do not swim in the river anywhere in the park. Especially at Camp Leakey; it may be tempting to take a dip to cool off, but there are plenty of crocodiles lurking in the murky waters. Several years ago a British volunteer worker was killed when taking a swim just off the Tanjung Puting dock. Stay on the dock during your *mandi*.

Klotok Hire

By far the best way to see the park is by hiring a *klotok* for a few days (or more). It serves as your transportation, accommodation and restaurant. At night the crew moor the boat well away from settlements, allowing passengers to enjoy the sunsets, fireflies and wildlife in peace. Sleep on mattresses on the upper or lower deck, wake to the haunt-

leisurely pace aboard a *klotok* or in a motorised canoe is as much a part of the experience. Walls of pandanus fringe the water’s edge, beyond which proboscis monkeys and impudent macaques leap across the forest canopy. Joining them in less ostentatious fashion are sun bears, wild boars, clouded leopards, pythons, gibbons, porcupines, Sambar deer, crocodiles, the Giant Bornean butterfly and a wealth of bird life.

Small and unsullied tributaries branch off Sungai Kumai, their tannin-tinted water the colour of rich, black tea. In low season you can chug for hours without seeing another soul. Best of all the park maintains a tight grip on the impact of tourism – only a handful of trails provide access past the research centres, leaving the jungle untamed and teeming.

One of the park’s seldom talked-up treats is the nightly spectacle of **fireflies**. From dusk till the wee hours they dance in the pandanus palms, lighting them up like Christmas trees.

Most visitors head straight to the research camps to get a glimpse of an orang-utan

ing cries of gibbons at dawn and watch for the telltale splash of big crocodiles.

You can wash from the dock at the river pool at Camp Leakey, but avoid contact with the contaminated waters of Sungai Sekonyer. Mercury used in the gold mining upstream at Aspai is dumped directly into the river.

Plan for at least three days on the river. That way you can work your way slowly up the river to the various stations. Allow time to explore the forest reserves around the rehabilitation camps and plan your river movements for dawn or dusk, when various primates come down to the river's edge.

Numerous *klotok* operate from Kumai. They're identified by their boat names: *Harapan Mina III* and *Rosalia* (operated by Pak Muliadi and Pak Housni), *Cahaya Purnama* (operated by Pak Emeng), *Everedy* (operated by Pak Ari), *Garuda I* and *Garuda II* (both operated by the Bakso family), *Satria I* and *Satria II* (operated by Surono Majit), *Omega* (operated by Anung Emen), *Britania* (operated by Jen Joan) and *Spirit of the Forest* (operated by Herry Ros-taman). At the time of writing, the standard price was 400,000Rp to 450,000Rp a day. Food is generally an additional 50,000Rp per day. Decide beforehand with the captain whether you are paying for their food as well, which is usually the case. If there's a cook on board that's also an additional 50,000Rp per day.

You can book a *klotok* beforehand with tour agencies in Pangkalan Bun (see p628) and Banjarmasin (p636). Boats are in high demand in July and August and around school and public holidays, but outside these times hiring a *klotok* on your own once you're in Kumai is a simple matter – operators will generally find you. The boats vary in standard and size so head to the docks to shop around. The operators of your accommodation in Kumai will also be able to assist.

Sleeping

Rimba Lodge (☎ bookings 0532-6707083; www.rimbalodge.com; r US\$45-85; 🏠) Tucked behind a wall of forest, this comely ecolodge is Kalimantan's answer to the African safari camp. Devoid of glossy lighting and mod cons, it is constructed out of timber, in tune with the surrounding environment. A network of boardwalks connect clusters of

rooms, and rich foliage provides privacy and entertainment; at night sleepy macaques compete with birds for space. Rooms are split into three categories – fan-cooled Ruby and Sapphire rooms and air-con Emerald rooms. The latter two also have hot water and immense beds. All rooms have mosquito nets and private bathrooms. The restaurant (mains 20,000Rp to 35,000Rp) serves Chinese and Indonesian fare and is open for breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Sekonyer Ecolodge (fax 22991; r 400,000Rp) Downstream and directly across from the Tanjung Harapan dock, this lodge is managed by locals and has comfortable rooms with private bathrooms and mosquito nets. It's not as classy as Rimba but a good option for those seeking a little more comfort than the *klotok*. There's also a restaurant attached serving simple fare (mains around 15,000Rp, open for lunch and dinner).

Four families in Tanjung Harapin Village offer simple **homestays** (incl dinner 150,000Rp) which provide an excellent opportunity to add a cultural bent to your experience of the park. Accommodation is in solid rooms behind each house, all with private *mandi*. This is a good cooperative effort for the village to earn income from the park's tourism and to be involved in its preservation.

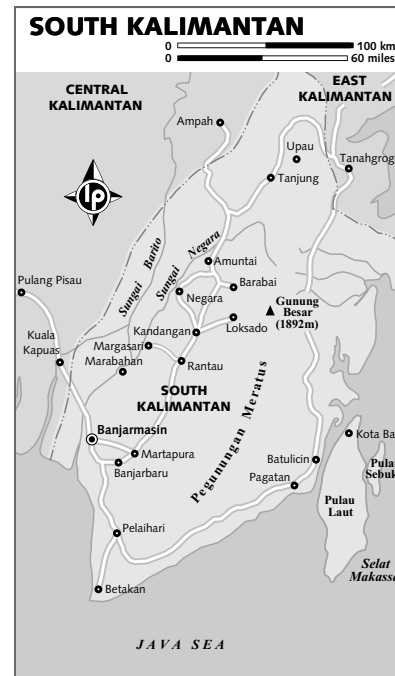
Getting There & Around

Other than *klotok*, you can also hire wooden canoes at some of the stations for about 30,000Rp per day. This is a better way to explore Sungai Sekonyer and its shallow tributaries. The canoes are also much quieter so you're likely to see more wildlife, including crocodiles if you're lucky – or unlucky, depending on your viewpoint. Bring an umbrella or hat and lots of drinking water.

Speedboats from Kumai cost about 400,000Rp per day but this should be a last resort. It takes less than two hours to reach Camp Leakey but the trip is nowhere near as comfortable, the din of the motors chases away wildlife and the propellers wreak havoc on fish and crocodiles.

SOUTH KALIMANTAN

Dwarfed by its neighbours, South Kalimantan (Kalimantan Selatan, or Kal-Sel) may



be the smallest province but it compensates by having Kalimantan's largest city and a tightly compacted diversity of geography and culture. Covering an area of just 37,660 sq km, it squeezes in a population of over three million, with plenty of wild interior to spare. This means detours from the urban swell are relatively accessible and it's the easiest spot to find organised treks, rafting and other activities.

In the mountainous northeastern interior of South Kalimantan are groups of Dayaks said to be descendants of the original Banjar race. *Balai* (communal houses) accommodate up to 30 or more families and serve as a ritual centre for these mountain villages.

The province also has 10,000 sq km of wetlands, including 2000 sq km of tidal marshland and 5000 sq km of freshwater swamp. Although their very rich reserves are heavily exploited, their sheer size still makes them a valuable refuge for wildlife.

Kal-Sel is also the centre of Banjarese culture, which leaves its distinctive mark on every aesthetic. Traditional Banjarese

clothing is made from *kain sasirangan*, cloth produced by a striking tie-dyeing process. The traditional Banjar-style house is the 'tall roof' design and the best examples can be seen in the town of Marabahan, 50km north of Banjarmasin on Sungai Barito.

BANJARMASIN

☎ 0511 / pop 810,000

Kalimantan's largest and most beguiling city rests gingerly over a labyrinth of canals, its taped-together mosques and houses perched on stilts or bundles of floating logs, and its residents up to their floorboards in water. Beyond, Banjarmasin's terra firma is a furor of traffic and trade, but the façade is wafer thin and the city's charm will envelop you quicker than the dust kicked up by the two-millionth *ojek*. A spread of attractions in and around the city can occupy several days, and absorbing Kalimantan's best urban culture in the markets both on and offshore is a must.

Orientation

Banjarmasin is big, but just about everything you might need is packed into the city centre around Pasar Baru. Most of the big banks are along Jl Lambung Mangkurat. Travellers arriving by ship at the port can catch small yellow *taxi kota* (city minibus) direct to Jl Hasanuddin (2000Rp), but most minibuses terminate at Central Antasari Plaza, a few hundred metres east of the city centre.

MAPS

Maps of South and Central Kalimantan are available at these places:

Toko Buku Merdeka (Jl Hasanuddin 44)

Gramedia bookshop (Jl Veteran 55-61)

Information

INTERNET ACCESS

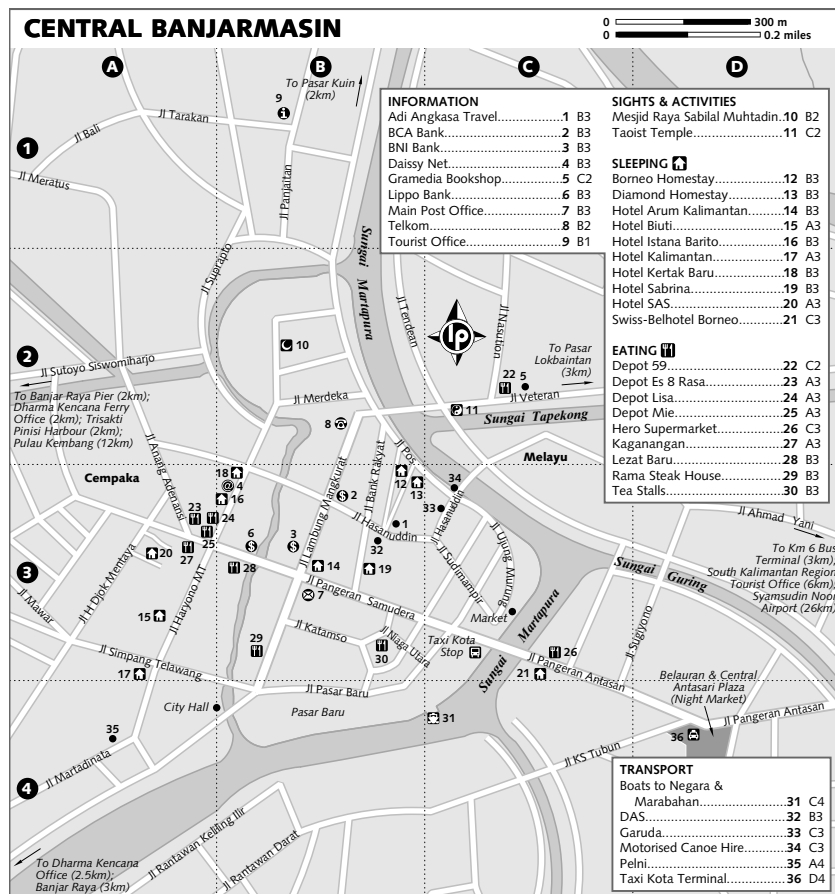
Daissy Net (Jl Haryono MT; per hr 8000Rp) Upstairs from a wartel.

MONEY

The major banks have plenty of ATMs. **BNI bank** (Bank Negara Indonesia; Jl Lambung Mangkurat) **Lippo Bank** (Jl Pangeran Samudera; ☎ 8am-3pm Mon-Fri) Can change up to US\$500.

POST

Main post office (cnr Jl Pangeran Samudera & Jl Lambung Mangkurat)



TELEPHONE

Telkom office (Jl Lambung Mangkurat 4) For long-distance phone calls.

TOURIST INFORMATION

There's an information counter at the airport.

South Kalimantan regional tourist office

(☎ 264510; fax 264512; Jl Pramuka 4; ☎ 7.30am-2.30pm Mon-Thu, 7.30am-11.30am Fri) On the way to the airport. Helpful staff can contact guides from the South Kalimantan Tourist Guide Association.

TRAVEL AGENCIES

See p638 for information about local guides and tours in the area.

Adi Angkasa Travel (☎ 4366100, 3352920; fax 4366200;

Jl Hasanuddin 27) English-speaking staff; can arrange local tours and trekking trips into the interior, as well as flights.

Arjuna Satrya Wisata Putra (☎ 3365235; Ground fl, Arjuna Plaza, Jl Lambung Mangkurat) Can book domestic flights and tours in South and East Kalimantan. Also operates Amandit River Lodge in Loksado.

Sights & Activities

MESJID RAYA SABILAL MUHTADIN

A far cry from its ornate and reverent counterparts found elsewhere in Kalimantan, this enormous and modern **mosque** (Jl Sudirman) looks a bit like a landed mother ship. The copper-coloured dome and minarets with lids and spires have a sci-fi quality to them, but the vast interior is elegant. It's one of the largest mosques

in the country and that's reason enough to visit. Proper attire is essential; visitors must wear long pants or skirts and suitable shirts.

FLOATING MARKETS

Banjarmasin's floating markets are a colourful exhibition of the area's fresh produce and an insight into the art of trading. The 5.30am wake up call is well worth it to see vessels laden with bananas, shrimp, fish, yams, spinach, coconut, incandescent spices and chillies, buckets of fuzzy rambutan and whatever else is in season. Sole traders in small canoes travel from as far as Negara, leaving at 2am to arrive on time. Manoeuvring their boats with dexterity and precision, they exchange goods and money and the frenzy is usually over by 9am. For breakfast, pull up beside the canoe café and, using a bamboo pole with a nail pushed through the end, spike your choice from the generous smorgasbord.

There are several markets in the area – one of the best and busiest is **Pasar Kuin** at the junction of the Kuin and Barito rivers. East of the town centre, another floating market, **Pasar Lokbaintan**, takes longer to get to, but is also worthwhile.

CANAL TRIPS

Another water-bound way to scratch beneath Banjarmasin's surface is an afternoon canoe tour through its canals. With the sun on its descent, residents pour from houses lining the narrow waterways to wash clothes, children and themselves. You'll find yourself a spectacle of gleeful kids who follow the boat from the banks, gathering in numbers a la piper. A demure 'selamat sore' (*sel-amat sor-ay*, meaning 'good day'), wave and the universal language of the high five will all be warmly received. The wall-to-wall houses range in stature from veritable mansions with wide verandas to tiny shacks on the verge of capsizing. A glimpse inside, however, will reveal spotless interiors and proud residents. Some of the canals are tiny, particularly in dry season when the water level is low, and rubbish and vegetable matter is a constant.

The easiest way to see the canals is on a tour or with a guide (see p638). If you have sufficient Bahasa Indonesia you can organise a motorised canoe yourself. They congregate near the Jl Hasanuddin bridge and charge from 20,000Rp per hour.

PULAU KEMBANG

Home to a large tribe of long-tailed macaques who congregate at a decrepit Chinese temple, Pulau Kembang is an island 20 minutes from the city centre by boat. You can organise a boat from near the Jl Hasanuddin bridge; they cost from 20,000Rp per hour. On Sunday, Chinese families bring along gifts of eggs, peanuts and bananas for the monkeys. The temple is a decidedly minor attraction and, if you've fed monkeys before, it can be safely dropped from your itinerary. Otherwise, proceed with caution and *don't* touch the monkeys. Macaques can be quite aggressive when they're feeling peckish.

WALKING & CANAL TOUR

Begin your exploration of Kalimantan's largest city at the **Mesjid Raya Sabilal Muhtadin** (1; opposite), marvelling at its sci-fi exterior from the grassy grounds that surround it. Delve inside to see the contrasting and intricately adorned interior. After circumnavigating the mosque, make your way to Jl Merdeka and head across the bridge, over Sungai Martapura, to the Melayu area. Residences outnumber businesses on Banjarmasin's eastern bank, and it has the appearance of an endless village. Just after the bridge you'll pass a splendid **Taoist temple** (2) painted in vivid colours with gold inlay. The doors are often open and you can peer into the polished dark wood and candlelit interior. If you're lucky you may also catch the drum maestros at work. Continue along Jl Veteran and take in the modest houses, some with haphazard picket fences, lining Sungai Tapekong. Stop at **Gramedia Bookshop** (3; Jl Veteran 55-61), Indonesia's answer to Borders, where you're likely to find a few foreign-language publications. Afterwards pop next door and cool off with a rich fruit juice or grab a bite to eat at **Depot 59** (4; p640).

Cross back over the river and head down busy Jl Lambung Mangkurat, past the imposing geometric architecture of **City Hall** (5) to the southern banks of Sungai Martapura. Walk east along the Jl Pasar Baru and amble through the bustling **Pasar Baru** (6), where you might pick up a one-of-a-kind hat or exquisite *kain sasirangan* (tie-dye batik). Wander past tea stalls in the streets next to the market and make your way along

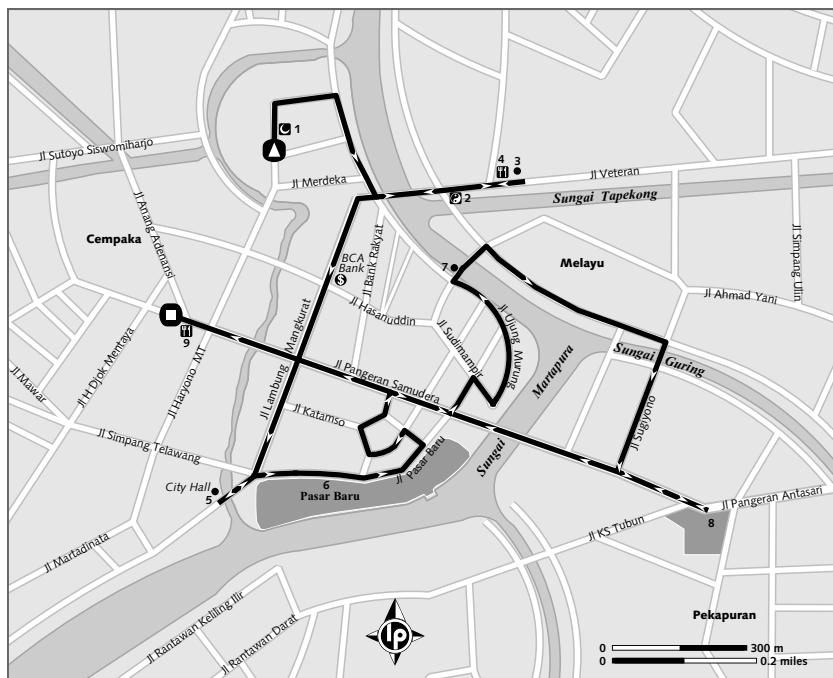
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WALK FACTS

Start Mesjid Raya Sabilal Muhtadin
Finish Kandangan
Distance 5km
Duration Three hours

Jl Ujung Murung. At the Jl Hasanuddin bridge flag down a motorised canoe and negotiate a tour of the canals and a trip to **Pulau Kembang (7; left)**. If it's late enough make your way past the shops and eateries along the eastern bank of Sungai Guring to the **belauran (8)**, where traders sell colourful produce alongside street snack vendors and tiny warungs. If you have the energy and hunger, take yourself to **Kandangan (9; p642)** for a well-earned dinner.

Tours

Local travel agents can organise tours of the city, canals and Pegunungan Meratus (Meratus Mountains) with English speaking guides. The best independent guide in the city is **Tailah** (☎ 4366100/3271685) who is

based at Diamond Homestay. Friendly, fluent in English and utterly genuine, he also leads excellent tours to Loksado and the Pegunungan Meratus. Borneo Homestay offers similar tours, but make sure you're getting what you paid for. The going rate for a guide is about 75,000Rp for canal tours and 85,000Rp for floating-market tours, including all transport costs. Combined tours including a trip to Pulau Kaget will cost more. Guide fees for jungle tours to Loksado are about 100,000Rp per day, plus food, accommodation and transport.

Festivals & Events

Independence Day Banjarmasin celebrates 17 August with boat races on Sungai Martapura, and celebrations throughout.

Pasar Wadai (cake fair) During Ramadan dozens of stalls sell South Kalimantan's famous Banjarese pastries near Mesjid Raya or at Pasar Baru near City Hall.

Sleeping

Banjarmasin's accommodation generally leaps from budget to top end, skipping anything in between.

BUDGET

Diamond Homestay (☎ 4366100; fax 4366200; Jl Hasanuddin 58; s/d 30,000Rp/40,000Rp) Disregard the locked and forbidding exterior, this dirt-cheap option has a spacious and fan-cooled (but rustic) dorm, as well as smaller rooms. All have shared *mandis*. Your rupiah buys plenty of friendly attitude here. The homestay is on a nameless alley just off Jl Hasanuddin.

Borneo Homestay (☎ 4366545; borneo@banjarasin.wasantara.net.id; Jl Hasanuddin 33; r 45,000-55,000Rp) This narrow, labyrinthine lodge caters to backpackers with friendly, English-speaking staff, rudimentary rooms and discount rates. City and further-afield tours can be arranged here but readers have provided mixed reviews of the quality. On the top floor is an abandoned bar with open windows, which is a nice spot to watch the sunset, but it feels like the homestay's heyday has passed. It's located just off Jl Hasanuddin.

Hotel Biuti (☎ 3354493; fax 4369884; Jl Haryono MT 21; r with/without mandi 75,000/60,000Rp, with air-con 100,000-150,000Rp; ☎) The economy rooms at this busy spot are a little cell-like, but the larger rooms with private *mandi* and air-con are amenable and come with TVs. The range of rooms is good, tea and coffee are included in the price and it's in a quiet location.

Also available:

Hotel Sabrina (☎ 3354721; fax 3354442; Jl Bank Rakyat 5; s 60,000-105,000Rp, d 70,000-125,000; ☎) Central and reliable.

Hotel Kalimantan (☎ 3354483; Jl Haryono MT 106; r from 25,000Rp) For the broke and brave.

MIDRANGE & TOP END

Hotel Kertak Baru (☎ 3354638; Jl Haryono MT 1; r 85,000-120,000Rp, ste 165,000Rp; ☎) You'll have to beat the local travellers to the reception desk at this extremely popular hotel if you want to spend the night. Decent rooms, the cheapest of which have private *mandis*, peel off a small corridor. It's the bottom end of midrange but a good step up from the backpacker haunts.

Hotel SAS (☎ 3353054; fax 3365967; Jl Kacapiring Besar 2; r with fan 72,000Rp, with air-con 140,000-165,000Rp, ste/f 175,000/195,000; ☎) The best midrange place in Banjarmasin, Hotel SAS has a broad spectrum of rooms. The

pick of the bunch is the 'Mandiingin', with an enclosed front patio, spotless bathrooms (with tub!), cool interiors and satellite TV – for those in need of some lazy R&R. Economy rooms on the ground floor are more basic but just as roomy and the furnishings and class increase with the price. Staff are friendly and some speak a little English. Breakfast is included and it's in a quiet spot on a small street just off Jl H Djok Mentaya. Mind the early morning calls to prayer from the mosque though.

Hotel Istana Barito (☎ 4367300; fax 3352240; Jl Haryono MT 16-20; r from 450,000Rp plus 21% tax; ☎) On the downhill run from its glory days, the Istana Barito's lobby has the atmosphere of an underground car park. But the facilities are reasonable and the rooms still pass for lovely. Staff are gracious and walk-in discounts can be haggled.

Hotel Arum Kalimantan (☎ 4366818; fax 4367345; arumbjm@indo.net.id; Jl Lambung Mangkurat; r 450,000-676,000Rp, ste from 1,929,000Rp; ☎) A fine top-end hotel; walk past the smudged-concrete exterior into the fresh and renovated interior. The plush rooms are very comfortable, with colourful décor and pool or city views. Breakfast in the open ground-floor restaurant is included.

Swiss-Belhotel Borneo (☎ 3271111; www.swiss-belhotel.com; Jl Pangiran Antasari 86A; r from 480,000Rp; ☎) This flashy and upscale hotel has doormen in heavily adorned uniforms and an elegant array of rooms with all the creature comforts. Those at the cheaper end of the scale don't fare as well as the Hotel Arum Kalimantan's though. There's also a lounge bar and a good restaurant.

Eating

Banjarmasin's excellent array of *kueh* (cakes) includes deep-fried breads – some with delicious fillings – and sticky banana rice cakes, both cheap but tasty options for breakfast at the tea stalls. Local specialties include *ayam panggang* (chicken roasted and served in sweet soy sauce), fish and freshwater crayfish.

Kaganangan (☎ 4364203; Jl Pangiran Samudera 8; mains 12,000-20,000Rp; ☎) breakfast, lunch & dinner) A Banjarmasin institution, Kaganangan distinguishes itself from the bevy of similar eateries with a colourful interior, high-backed chairs, spotless table settings and walls of packaged snacks and supplies in

choreographed display. Served in all manner of marinades, the fish here is fab and the rest of the menu boasts local specialities. It's also a nice spot if you're just hankering for a thick, sweet coffee and some fan-cooled respite.

Depot 59 (Jl Veteran 59; mains 6000-12,000Rp; ☺ breakfast, lunch & dinner) Tucked off the road, this popular diner is a weekend favourite with families, who feast on thick, lurid fruit juices and crowd-pleasing chicken. The *nasi pecel* (similar to *gado gado*) is also tasty, as is the chocolate *roti bakar* (baked bread).

Depot Es 8 Rasa (Jl Anang Andenansi; mains 8000Rp; ☺ lunch & dinner Mon-Sat) Another popular spot, you can fill up on excellent Indonesian food and juices and savour the social buzz here. Dishes don't win creativity awards but they go down easily without denting the wallet.

Depot Lisa (Jl Haryono MT; mains 14,000Rp; ☺ lunch & dinner) This neat, cheap and clean little eatery serves a good spread of fish and chicken dishes, plus *udang* when they've got them. It's fan-cooled, tidy and sheltered from the dust of the main road.

Rama Steak House (Arjuna Plaza, Jl Lambung Mangkurat; mains 45,000Rp; ☺ lunch & dinner Mon-Sat; ♿) The name says it all – steaks in large quantities are served to middle-class locals and foreigners looking for a change from *sambal* and *ayam*. The surrounds are suitably refined.

More eating options:

Lezat Baru (☎ 3353191; Jl Pangeran Samudera; mains 15,000-25,000Rp; ☺ lunch & dinner; ♿) Good Chinese restaurant.

Hero Supermarket (Jl Pangeran Antasari) For self-caterers.

Depot Mie (cnr Jl Haryono MT & Jl Pangeran Samudera; mains 5000Rp; ☺ lunch & dinner Mon-Sat) Hot and cheap noodles and rice.

For a taste of street culture, eat at the tea stalls along Jl Niaga Utara near Pasar Baru. Kalimantan's version of the night market is called *belauran*. Banjarmasin's is a huge affair at the Antasari terminal, where you will find more cheap eateries.

Shopping

The city is famous for its *kain sasirangan*, a kind of colourful tie-dye batik. A few stalls in the market near the Jl Antasari bridge sell *sasirangan*, but mostly as material. Clothes are sold in stores at Km 3.7, Jl Ahmad Yani. Large sizes may be difficult to find.

Getting There & Away

AIR

Several airlines including **Garuda** (☎ 3359065; fax 3359066; 2nd fl, Jl Hasanuddin HM 31) operate flights to Jakarta. There are also services to Balikpapan and Surabaya. **DAS** (☎ 52902; Blok 4, Jl Hasanuddin 6) and Kal-Star both have daily flights to Pangkalan Bun and the latter also flies to Pontianak. As with all airlines you'll get the best deal at a travel agent; see p636 for listings.

BOAT

River boats from the wharf at Pasar Baru travel twice a week to Negara (20,000Rp, 12 hours) and daily to Marabahan (10,000Rp, four hours). The seemingly impenetrable market is at the intersection of Jl Niaga Utara and Jl Pasar Baru. Walk through to the river.

Pelni (☎ 3353077; Jl Martadinata 10) boats travel to Surabaya (from 180,000Rp, 18 hours, weekly), Semarang (from 232,000Rp, 24 hours, twice weekly) and Jakarta (from 354,000Rp, 20 hours, weekly) from Trisakti Pinisi Harbour. Take a *taxi kota* from the terminal on Jl Pangeran Antasari for 2000Rp. The route passes by the harbour master's and various ticket offices, but the best place for updated Pelni information is its office.

The air-con **Dharma Kencana** (☎ 3351419) ferry to Surabaya (seat/economy 170,000/130,000Rp, 20 hours) docks at Jl Yos Sudarso 8 near the Trisakti Pinisi Harbour. It leaves every other day in the afternoon. There is a cafeteria on board. Buy tickets at Dharma Kencana's office.

BUS

Orange Colts and other buses depart frequently from the Km 6 terminal for Martapura (16,000Rp, 30 minutes) and Banjarbaru (16,000Rp, 45 minutes). There are also Colts to Kandangan (23,000Rp, three hours), Negara (35,000Rp, four hours), Barabai (38,000Rp, four hours) Margasari (25,000Rp, three hours) and Pagatan (40,000Rp, five hours). Frequent economy buses travel to Muara Teweh (60,000Rp, 12 hours), Balikpapan (75,000Rp, 15 hours) and Samarinda (90,000Rp, 17 hours). For the latter two destinations you can opt for a more comfortable air-con night bus: Ba-

likpapan (110,000Rp, 12 hours), Samarinda (135,000Rp, 14 hours).

One bus leaves daily to Marabahan from Km 6, but it's easier to go to Kayu Tani Ujung in the northern part of Banjarmasin. Colts leave frequently from there for Marabahan (6000Rp), a journey of about two hours. There's an extra 500Rp charge for the short ferry crossing. Take a *taxi kota* to Kayu Tani Ujung (1000Rp) from the Jl P Antasari terminal.

Getting Around

TO/FROM THE AIRPORT

Banjarasin's Syamsudin Noor airport is 26km from town. Take a *taxi kota* from Pasar Baru or the terminal at Jl P Antasari to the Km 6 terminal. From there catch a Martapura-bound Colt, get off at the branch road leading to the airport and walk the 1.5km to the terminal. From the airport to the city, walk through the car park, turn left and head to the Banjarmasin-Martapura highway. From there pick up one of the frequent Colts to Banjarmasin. A taxi to/from the airport costs 60,000Rp.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

It is possible to hire a boat operator to navigate the canals near Jl Hasanuddin bridge. Expect to pay 20,000Rp to 25,000Rp per hour without a guide.

Onshore, the area around Pasar Baru is small, central and easy to walk around. Taxis are 400,000Rp a day or 50,000Rp per hour, with a minimum of two hours. There are also plenty of becak, *ojek* and *bajaj* (three-wheeled motorised taxis). A *bajaj* from the city centre to Banjar Raya pier is around 10,000Rp; by *ojek* it costs about 10,000Rp.

The yellow minibuses are called *taxi kota* and they go to various parts of town, including the Km 6 terminal. The standard fare is 2000Rp. The taxi kota terminal is on Jl Pangeran Antasari near the night market, just east of the city centre.

AROUND BANJARMASIN

About 30km southeast of Banjarmasin are three towns that make interesting day trips from Banjarmasin.

Banjarbaru

In Banjarbaru, the **Museum Lambung Mang-**

kurat (☎ 0511-92453; Jl Ahmad Yani 36; ☺ 8.30am-2.30pm Tue-Thu & Sun, 8.30am-11am Fri, 8.30am-1.30pm Sat) has a good collection of Banjar and Dayak artefacts, and some fascinating items excavated from the sites of Hindu temples in Kalimantan. The museum is on the Banjarmasin-Martapura road. Ask the Colt driver to drop you.

Martapura

Martapura is a little further east of Banjarbaru. With the diamond, gold and agate mines closed on Friday, the **market** swells with locals on their day off. This can be a photographer's paradise, with every type of food on sale and lots of colourfully dressed Banjar women. If crowds are not your thing, come on another day to shop and see the mines in Cempaka.

You can't miss the recent addition to the market area: a brilliant-white building with blue roofing built in traditional style. The choice of uncut gems, silver jewellery and trading beads – both strung and unstrung – are excellent, but be prepared to bargain hard. The old market is behind the new building. The old **Kayu Tangi diamond-polishing factory** (Jl Sukaramai) behind the market is open to visitors as a tourist shop. Colts leave frequently for Martapura (16,000Rp, 45 minutes) from the Km 6 terminal in Banjarmasin.

Cempaka

The Cempaka diamond fields are a short detour off the Banjarmasin-Martapura road. It's a good place to see some of the smaller diamond and gold digs and the conditions people are willing to endure in the hope of finding treasure lying within the soil. The diggers at the bottom of the shaft can spend the day up to their necks in water, passing up baskets full of silt that is washed away in the search for gold specks, diamonds or agate.

There are records of 20-carat diamonds from these fields as far back as 1846 – a 106.7-carat monster in 1850 and, the biggest of all, the 167.5-carat Tri Sakti (Thrice Sacred) found in August 1965. Most diamonds are a fraction of that size, but the hope of another big find keeps the miners focused on the job.

Diggers usually work in teams of 10 to 15, digging one day, sluicing the next. Typi-

cally, a 'chief' pays the miners 2500Rp a day lunch money to work the claim. If there's a find the team gets to divide about 50% of its value, after payments to the land owners, chief, pump operator and wood cutter are subtracted. The activity on the fields tends to follow the big finds. There are touts aplenty to show you the way and sell you polished stones. It's customary to give a 2000Rp tip to these 'guides'.

To get to Cempaka, take a Banjarmasin–Martapura Colt and ask to get off at the huge roundabout just past Banjarbaru. From there take a green taxi to Alur (2000Rp) and walk the last 1km along a dirt road off the main road to the diamond digs. The diamond mines and polishing centres are closed Friday.

MARABAHAN & MARGASARI

For a glimpse of river life, take a boat 65km up the Barito from Banjarmasin to Marabahan, a small town with some old, traditional Banjar-style wooden houses. The losmen on the river, such as the **Hotel Bahtera**, have adequate accommodation with rooms from 30,000Rp, with shared *mandis*.

From Marabahan you can charter a boat to Margasari, a handicraft village, which produces lots of rattan and bamboo products, such as fans, hats and maps. Colts from there to Banjarmasin (25,000Rp, daily) take about three hours. Boats leave daily from the Pasar Lima pier in Banjarmasin for Marabahan (10,000Rp) and take four hours.

KANDANGAN

☎ 0517

A transit town and launching point for exploration into the Meratus interior, Kandangan has a remarkable old marketplace built in the colonial era, and is a good spot to overnight and stock up.

Bangkau Hotel (☎ 21455; Jl Suprpto 2; r from 40,000Rp; 🍽️), around the corner from the central minibus terminal, has excellent accommodation in fan-cooled and air-con rooms. Cheaper digs can be found at **Losmen Loksado** (☎ 21352; Jl Suprpto; r 25,000–30,000Rp), about 100m up the street.

Food stalls at the minibus terminal have excellent *nasi bungkus* (takeaway rice parcels) with chicken or liver, but the best thing to eat in Kandangan is *ketupat*, a delicious local speciality that features sticky rice tri-

angles and broiled *harawan*, a river fish, covered in coconut sauce and a squeeze of lime. Warung Ketupat Kandangan, about 1km northwest of the minibus terminal on the road to Barabai, is a good place to eat.

There are frequent Colts from Banjarmasin's Km 6 terminal (23,000Rp, three hours). There's a bus terminal 2km east of Kandangan where night buses stop each evening on the way from Banjarmasin to Balikpapan and Samarinda, usually at around 7pm. To get to the terminal, catch a minibus (5000Rp) heading to Negara, or take an *ojek* for 30,000Rp.

NEGARA

Northwest of Kandangan, the town of Negara is propped up on stilts along Sungai Negara. A wetland area during the rainy season, Negara is surrounded by water, making the city look like a very waterlogged island. The only land above water is the road, but even that disappears occasionally – in a fog of mosquitoes if not because of rain.

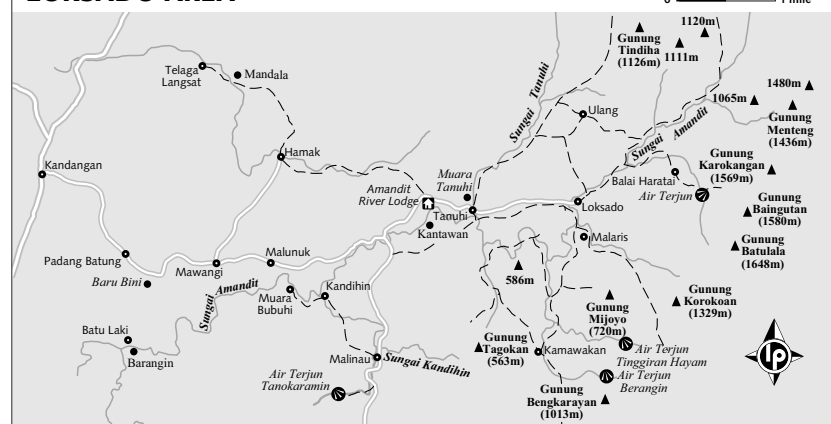
One amazing Negara custom is the raising of water-buffalo herds on wooden platforms. They are released daily for grazing and drinking, swim up to 5km and are herded home by 'canoe cowboys'. The wetlands are also remarkable for their prolific fish and bird life, the occasional snake and plenty of ducks.

Tour the town by boat – it may be as much as 50,000Rp for half a day, depending on your bargaining skills. Back on land, ask to see the sword-making. The local craftsmen forge beautiful swords, machetes and kris (daggers) in a variety of styles, complemented by remarkably decorative sheaths.

Surprisingly for such a large town, Negara has no hotel. You might manage to find a homestay, but it's probably better to stay in Kandangan. There are a few small warungs that serve *ketupat* and *ayam panggang*.

Colts from Banjarmasin to Negara (35,000Rp, four hours, daily) leave from the Km 6 terminal. From Kandangan to Negara there's the option of public minibus taxi (7000Rp), shared Japanese sedan with four people (per person 35,000Rp), chartered taxi (one way or return 350,000Rp) or *ojek* (40,000Rp). Twice-weekly boats leave from the Pasar Lima pier in Banjarmasin for Negara (20,000Rp) and take 12 hours.

LOKSADO AREA



LOKSADO

About 40km east of Kandangan in the Pegunungan Meratus, Loksado is the largest of some 20 villages spread over 2500 sq km between Kandangan and Amuntai to the west and the South Kalimantan coast to the east. It's an important market village accessible by road and a good base for trekking in the area.

The small island on the river running through Loksado has basic accommodation available at **Loksado Kotek** (r 35,000Rp); ask for Amat who can arrange your stay.

Amandit River Lodge (s/d from US\$45/50) is just off the road before arriving in Loksado. Those looking for a little luxury in this neck of the woods should check it out. The pleasant rooms are fan-cooled and there's a garden and a coffee shop. **Arjuna** (☎ 3365235; Ground fl, Arjuna Plaza, Jl Lambung Mangkurat) in Banjarmasin takes reservations.

Eateries along the main lane from the suspension bridge are basic and close shortly after dusk. The best breakfast is *roti* (bread) from the wok at a warung about 20m from the bridge.

Getting There & Away

Pick-ups leave the Kandangan minibus terminal for Loksado (12,000Rp, 1½ hours) in the afternoon, and leave Loksado for Kandangan early in the morning, departing from the main bridge.

Coming back from Loksado, many travellers charter a bamboo raft and pole down

Sungai Amandit. The usual drop-off point is Muara Tanuhi, two hours downstream (80,000Rp), where there are also **hot springs** (have your bathing suit ready). Continuing on to Muara Bubuhi a few more hours downstream is feasible and there are some exciting rapids, but it costs a lot more. From the nearby road at Muara Bubuhi, minibus taxis and *ojek* go back to Kandangan. It's also possible to raft the whole way from Loksado to Kandangan; it takes about a day. There are tours to the area from Banjarmasin (see p638).

AROUND LOKSADO

From Loksado there are hundreds of paths through mountain garden plots to other villages over the hills, many crossing streams via suspension bridges. Follow the path upstream on Sungai Amandit for three hours (8km) to a series of **air terjun** just past Balai Haratai. It's easy enough to find the first waterfall, but local knowledge is handy if you want to climb to the middle and top falls, and find the nearby cave. Ask at Haratai or get someone from Loksado to tag along in exchange for some English practice or at least make it clear whether you will pay them or not.

Malaris

A 30-minute walk (1500m) or 10-minute *ojek* ride through a bamboo forest southeast of Loksado brings you to Malaris village. Until recently 32 families (about 150 people)

lived in a large *balai*. There are now separate houses built for new families as the village begins to modernise. Ask to speak to the *kepala balai* (village head) about staying the night (including tea and coffee 30,000Rp).

Upau

At the base of the northern Pegunungan Meratus, Upau (which means jackfruit, due to their abundance) is a Deah Dayak village in south Kalimantan's northeast pocket. The tribe has been cornered into this remote area after some 600 years of regency tension and a staunch refusal to convert to Islam. It's one of the smallest Dayak tribes in Kalimantan and traditional ceremonies are still performed, including the *balian* (shaman) ceremony to drive evil spirits from the sick, and the *aru* ceremony, which readies warriors for head-hunting (although the actual head-hunting itself no longer occurs).

English is not spoken and there is no formal accommodation, but you can stay with a local family; take food with you and provide a modest amount of money to your hosts. You can stock up on supplies in Tanjung or at Upau's weekly market, which takes place on Friday.

Pegunungan Meratus is about 2km from the village, making it a good access point for treks. Two Upau locals who know the mountains very well and can act as guides are Aman and Dudang – ask around for them when you arrive. It's possible to do a moderate one-day trek from the village, but you can also trek for two or three days. The terrain is rough in parts and trekking experience is required.

To get to Upau catch a public minibus taxi from Negara (40,000Rp, two hours) to Tanjung. You can also catch a Colt directly from Banjarmasin's Km 6 terminal to Tanjung (70,000Rp, six hours). From Tanjung take a red and yellow *angkot* to Upau (6,000Rp, 1½ hours).

Treks

An excellent three-day trek begins at the village of **Tanuhi**, 2km from Loksado. Here you'll trek for a few hours through secondary agricultural forest and various isolated mountain villages, crossing suspended bamboo bridges along the way. On day two go through the primary forest of **Pegunungan Meratus** where the ancient forest provides a tranquil yet awe-inspiring spectacle. The

ancient forest trees tower above the canopy, holding beehives suspended seemingly out of reach. But for the local Dayak and the rarely spotted honey bear, no obstacle is too great to get a taste of this divine nectar. Accommodation is at longhouses along the way, and you can return downstream by bamboo raft.

Guides can be found in Loksado – use your best Bahasa Indonesia and bargaining skills. You can also ask around for Amat or Horlan here, both of whom speak English. If your Bahasa Indonesia is rudimentary organise the trek in Banjarmasin – the best guide for the area is **Tailah** (☎ 4366100/3271685; see p638. Guides cost around 100,000Rp per day, plus transport costs.

With a restaurant, **Fusfa Hotel** (☎ 41136; Jl Hasan 144; s/d/tr from 40,000/60,000/90,000Rp; 🍽️) offers immaculate rooms. From Barabai, taxi minibuses go to Kandangan (8000Rp, one hour).

Treks can also be made over the hills from Loksado to the coast. The trek to **Kota Baru** on Pulau Laut takes three or four days by a combination of foot, minibus and boat, passing through hillside gardens, forests and over Gunung Besar, the province's highest peak at 1892m. You can return to Banjarmasin by bus (55,000Rp, six hours, daily).

SOUTH COAST

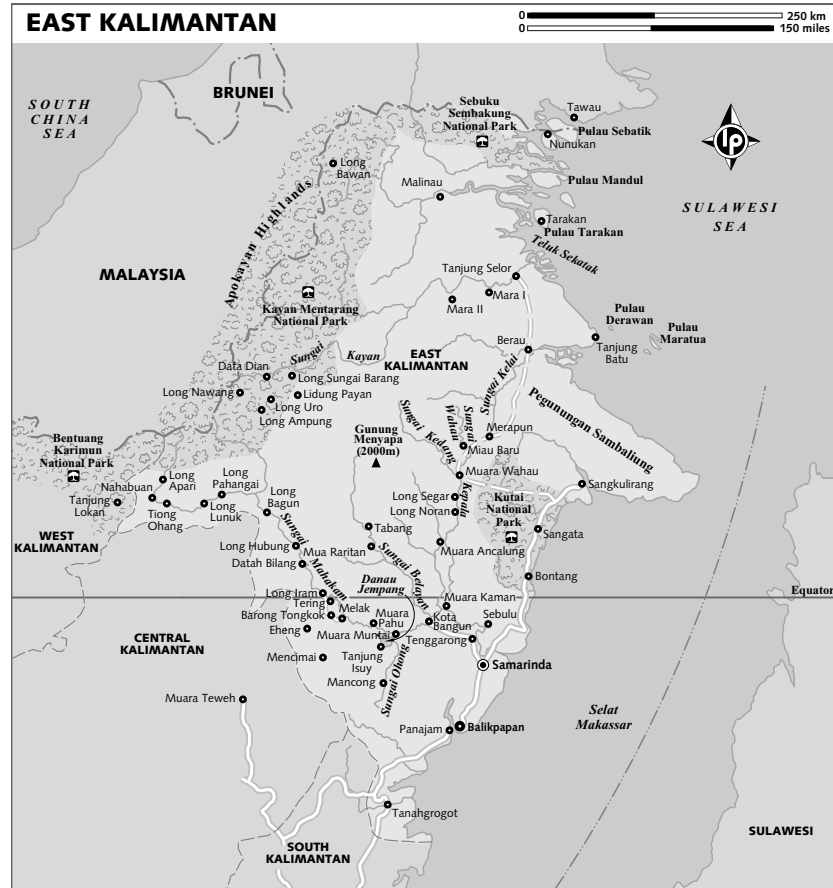
An alternative route between Banjarmasin and Balikpapan is the coastal route via **Pagatan** and **Batulicin**. Buses to Batulicin (45,000Rp) take six hours. From Batulicin, Pelni boats go to Makassar in Sulawesi.

Pagatan is known for its Bugis community and tradition of building the beautiful schooners that ply Indonesian waters. On 17 April each year, local Bugis make offerings to the sea. The ceremony known as the **Mapan Retasi**, literally 'giving the sea food', takes place at the end of week-long celebrations.

From Banjarmasin's Km 6 terminal, Colts to Pagatan take five hours and cost 40,000Rp.

EAST KALIMANTAN

East Kalimantan (Kalimantan Timur, or



Kal-Tim) is the daddy of Kalimantan's provinces, covering 202,000 sq km. For decades the oil, mining and logging industries have gorged on the province's feast of natural resources, pumping prosperity into the cities and leaving scarred and battered footprints on the landscape. Thousands of hectares have been reduced to poor-quality grassland. The fires of the early '80s and late '90s also exacted their toll. Yet chunks of the terrain remain resilient, posing geographic obstacles in the form of river rapids, impenetrable forests and mountains to stem the ugly tide. With time and planning, intrepid travellers in search of a true adventure can still enjoy pockets of wilderness and reach places that rarely see a foreign

face. Those looking for an easier route can exploit the commercial activity and infrastructure of the southern coastline and the mighty Sungai Mahakam. Dayak villages on the wider banks of this mighty river have confronted dramatic change, but modernisation's touch is muted once the jungle and waterways close in.

BALIKPAPAN

☎ 0542 / pop 450,000

Black gold pumps through Balikpapan's veins, from the endless stream of traffic, to the concrete, glass and steel business blocks competing for attention along the main drag. The huge oil refinery dominates the

city and, when flying in, you can see stray tankers and offshore oil rigs.

For travellers it's best enjoyed for a bout of air-con and Western pleasantries. Industrious strips of traders, eateries and hotels line the waterfront, and climbing the hills, the concrete peters out into the lush green suburbs that pepper slopes around Gunung Pancur.

Balikpapan's oilfields made it a strategic target during the 1941 Japanese invasion, and again in the Allied advances in 1944–45. Australians occupied Balikpapan after a bloody invasion and suppressed anticolonial unrest. A memorial stands on Blvd Meridian near Pertamina Hospital for the 229 Australians who died here, and there's a memorial for Japanese soldiers near the beach at Lamaru, east of the airport on the way to Manggar.

Orientation

The best landmark is Balikpapan Plaza, at the corner of Jl Sudirman and Jl Ahmad Yani, a large shopping complex at the axis of the commercial and hotel district. Head north along Jl Ahmad Yani to find the restaurants, east along the shore to get to the airport, or west along Jl Sudirman to find the immigration, government and post office.

MAPS

Gramedia (2nd fl, Balikpapan Plaza) has maps of Balikpapan and other areas in Kalimantan, plus the odd English-language publications.

Information

INTERNET ACCESS

Bcom (Jl Ahmad Yani; per hr 8000Rp)

Internet Cafe (BRI Bank Bldg, Jl Sudirman 37; per hr 5000Rp)

MONEY

Banks and ATMs are prolific along Jl Sudirman.

BNI bank (Bank Negara Indonesia; cnr Jl Ahmad Yani & Jl Sudirman)

BRI bank (Bank Rakyat Indonesia; Jl Sudirman 37)

PT Haji La Tunrung Star Group (Jl Ahmad Yani 51)

TELEPHONE

Telkom office (Jl Ahmad Yani 418) Has facilities for local, national and international phone calls.

TRAVEL AGENCIES

PT Agung Sedayu (☎ 420601; fax 420447; Jl Sudirman 28) Sells airline and Pelni tickets.

Tours

Tours along Sungai Mahakam and into the Apokayan Highlands can be booked with the following:

Bayu Buana Travel (☎ 422751; www.bayubuana.travel.com; Jl Ahmad Yani)

Rivertours (☎ 422269; fax 422211; rivertours@borneo.kalimantan.com)

Sleeping

Midrange and top-end hotels corner the accommodation market in Balikpapan; budget-priced options are hard to come by here. Better deals can be found in Samarinda to the north.

BUDGET

Hotel Citra Nusantara (☎ 425366; fax 410311; Jl Gajahmada 76; s incl breakfast 90,000–110,000Rp, d incl breakfast 120,000–140,000Rp; ☎) Cheap and central, this homely guesthouse has small and shabby budget rooms and decent superior rooms, with air-con. The whole lot is scattered over several floors and everyone gets a TV and telephone.

Hotel Mitra Amanni (☎ 422857; fax 421649; Jl ARS Muhammad 31; r incl breakfast 120,000–185,000Rp; ☎) This excellent hotel straddles the budget-midrange divide with spotless, fan-cooled standard rooms and snug but comfortable superior rooms with air-con. Breakfast is served on a breezy, 1st-floor terrace.

More budget options:

Hotel Murni (☎ 738692; Jl P Antasari No 2; s/d from 50,000/75,000Rp; ☎) Adequate rooms and a family atmosphere.

Hotel Aida (☎ 731011; Jl Ahmad Yani 29; r 75,000–150,000Rp, f 200,000Rp; ☎) A good range.

MIDRANGE

Hotel Gajah Mada (☎ 734634; fax 734636; Jl Sudirman 14; s 95,000–235,000Rp, d 135,000–285,000Rp plus 10% tax; ☎) Boasting three room categories, the Gajah Mada caters to budget and midrange travellers with glistening rooms off a cool, wide corridor. The cheapest versions are fan-cooled and the nicest are upstairs with river views.

Miramar Hotel (☎ 412442; miramar@indonet.net.id; Jl Pranoto 16; r incl breakfast 265,000–450,000Rp plus 21% tax; ☎) In two separate buildings Miramar has a host of rooms, all with Western

bathrooms, air-con and TVs. They could do with a touch-up but the facilities are good, the breakfast excellent and there's a pub attached.

Hotel Pacific (☎ 750888, 750345; www.hotelpacific.balikpapan.com; Jl Ahmad Yani; r incl breakfast from 350,000Rp, ste from 610,000Rp; ☎) This glitzy new number treats guests to stylish rooms with tasteful Southeast Asian furnishings and first-class service. Onsite is a 24-hour restaurant and coffee lounge. Wireless internet access is also available.

More in the midrange bracket:

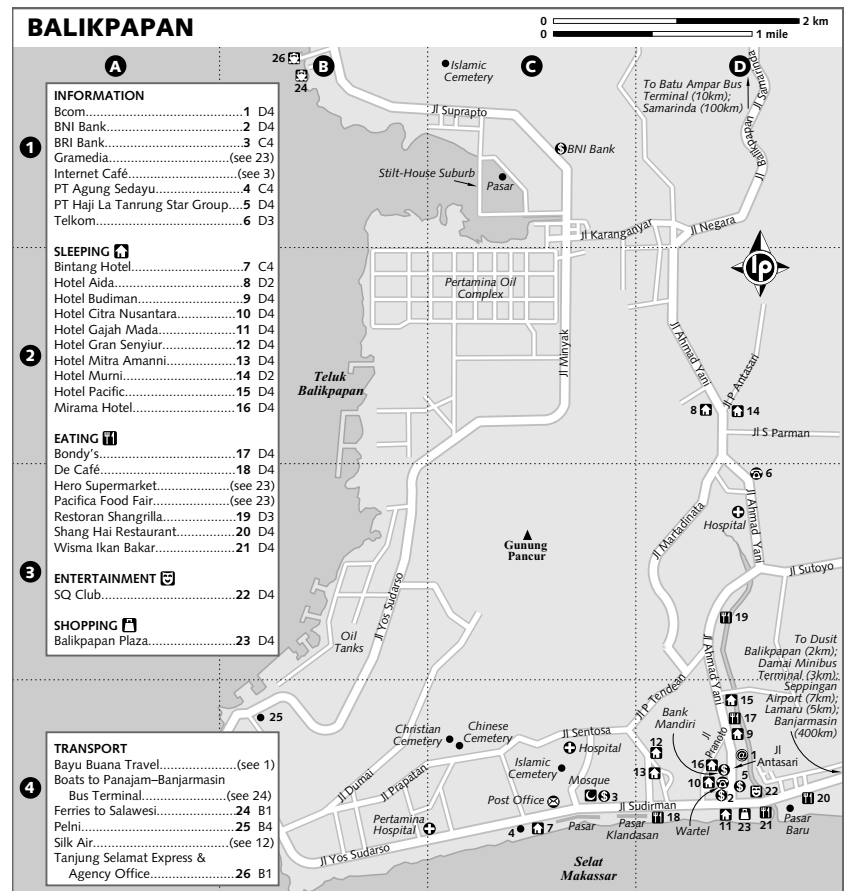
Bintang Hotel (☎ 735908; bintang@indosat.net.id; Jl Sudirman Blok B, 31–34; r 190,000–245,000Rp, f/ste 315,000/445,000Rp plus 10% tax; ☎) Good service and decent rooms.

Hotel Budiman (☎ 736030; fax 423811; Jl Ahmad Yani 34; r from 220,000Rp, ste 305,000Rp plus 20% tax; ☎) Central and reasonable.

TOP END

Dusit Balikpapan (☎ 420155; dusitbpn@dusit.com; Jl Sudirman; r incl breakfast from 650,000Rp, ste incl breakfast from 1,740,000Rp plus 20% tax; ☎) Sprawled over a huge area like a luxury colony, the Dusit has indulgent and appealing rooms, a fitness centre, tennis courts, restaurants and a cruising lounge bar. It's as comfortable as Kalimantan gets.

Hotel Gran Senyuir (☎ 0800 1 226677, 820211; hgs@senyuirhotels.com; Jl ARS Mohammad 7; r/ste incl breakfast from 1,100,000/1,700,000Rp; ☎) Balikpapan's classiest downtown digs require



deep pockets but you get English-speaking staff, a choice of smoking or nonsmoking floors, facilities galore and stylish rooms. 'Superiors' are crisp and simple with polished bathrooms, and deluxe rooms have oodles of room, day beds and enormous bathrooms.

Eating & Drinking

There are plenty of cheap warungs near the water, particularly around Pasar Klandasan.

Wisma Ikan Bakar (Jl Sudirman; meals 11,000-28,000Rp; ☺ lunch & dinner) It looks like any other hole in the wall, but this little seafood restaurant sizzles fresh fish (which you hand pick) and dishes it out with equally fresh *sambal* and salad. It's fan-cooled, fuss-free and great value.

Restoran Shangrilla (Jl Ahmad Yani 29; mains 14,000-25,000Rp; ☺ lunch & dinner) A favourite with the locals, this family-run restaurant serves over 30 prawn dishes, plus tame and daring versions of clams, duck, beef, frog, chicken and literally pages of seafood. It's bright, cheerful and reasonably priced.

Shang Hai Restaurant (☎ 422951; Jl Sudirman; mains 22,000-40,000Rp; ☺ lunch & dinner) This cool and classy restaurant serves excellent Chinese with a healthy dose of water views. Crab, prawns and claypots come in plenty of versions, and there are abalone and lobster treats for the true connoisseur.

Bondy's (Jl Ahmad Yani; mains 30,000-50,000Rp; ☺ lunch & dinner) Prefaced by an unassuming bakery, this outdoor restaurant is a favourite with expats and the local riche. Diners create a sociable din while they tuck into juicy steaks and Bintang, or hand-picked fish. There's also a spread of other Indonesian and Western fare – all excellent.

Quick and cheap eats:

De Café (Jl Sudirman; snacks 6,000-10,000Rp; ☺ breakfast & lunch) Excellent sandwiches, pastries and coffee.

Pacifica Food Fair (Balikpapan Plaza, Jl Sudirman; snacks 5,000-10,000Rp; ☺ breakfast & lunch) Decent food court.

Hero Supermarket (Balikpapan Plaza, Jl Sudirman) Well-stocked supermarket.

Dusit Balikpapan and Hotel Gran Senyuir have excellent, upmarket restaurants serving Western and tame Indonesian cuisine.

Entertainment

SQ Club (cnr Jl Ahmad Yani & Jl Sudirman) This recent addition to all things after dark in Balikpapan offers everything from steaks, to pool

to local celebrity DJs. Women will enjoy it a whole lot more in a group.

Getting There & Away

AIR

Adam Air, Bouraq, Garuda Citilink, and Kartika fly daily to/from Jakarta. Garuda Citilink and Kartika also fly daily to/from Surabaya, and Merpati has daily flights between to Makassar. There are daily flights to Tarakan.

Kal-Star and DAS fly to/from Berau, and DAS flies to Pangkalan Bun several times a week. Batavia flies to/from Banjarmasin.

Silk Air (☎ 730800; www.silkair.com; Hotel Gran Senyuir) flies to Singapore (US\$480) daily.

BOAT

Pelni (☎ 424171; Jl Yos Sudarso 76) ships travel fortnightly to Pare Pare (economy 180,000Rp) in Sulawesi and then onto Surabaya (economy 300,000Rp) in Java. The *Dobonsolo* travels fortnightly to Toli Toli in Sulawesi (economy 130,000Rp) and then back to Tarakan (economy from Balikpapan 157,000Rp) and north to Nunukan (economy from Balikpapan 219,000Rp).

There are also Pelni weekly services to Makassar in Sulawesi (economy/1st class 116,000/357,000Rp, 1½ days).

At the next dock over, the Tanjung Selamat Express leaves twice a week for Pare Pare (80,000Rp, 22 hours). Tickets are sold at the dock between 10am and 2pm or at the nearby **agency office** (☎ 734516; Rt 1, Jl Mong-insidi 4), about 500m from the docks.

BUS

Buses to Samarinda (19,500Rp, two hours, three daily) depart from the Batu Ampar bus terminal north of the city, accessible by taxi on route number 1, 2 or 3 for 3000Rp. Buses to Banjarmasin (75,000Rp, 15 hours, two daily) depart from the bus terminal on the opposite side of the harbour to the city. To get here take route number 6 taxi from Jl Sudirman near Balikpapan Plaza to the pier on Jl Monginsidi. You'll never arrive at the pier because kids mob the minibus to solicit passengers for speedboat charters. Speedboats to the bus terminal cost about 6000Rp per person, or around 30,000Rp to charter, and take 10 minutes.

Air-con buses to Banjarmasin (110,000Rp, 12 hours) also leave from a stand on Jl

Soekarno-Hatta on the way to the Batu Ampar terminal.

Getting Around

TO/FROM THE AIRPORT

Taxis to/from the airport cost a standard 35,000Rp. A short walk from the airport, you can catch route number 7 taxis on the highway going to the Damai minibus terminal. Transfer to a route number 1 or 3 taxi to get into town (1500Rp).

TAXI MINIBUS

Damai, along Jl Sudirman towards the airport, is the main minibus terminal in town. The usual price within town is 1500Rp, but watch out for overcharging.

For more personalised service at a budget price, *ojek* cost between 6000Rp and 8000Rp per ride.

SAMARINDA

☎ 0541 / pop 600,000

The mighty Sungai Mahakam skirts Samarinda like a giant muddy flood. Here the river is a highway in its own right, peppered with houseboats and fishing vessels, boats lugging timber and tugs pulling demonic loads of coal. Along the banks, the city follows the water via a green esplanade, with two spectacular mosques dominating the view. Although it's another important trading port, Samarinda has retained far more of its Indonesian character than Balikpapan, and visitors will get a dose of East Kalimantan culture in between the business blocks. Meandering through the stalls of the lively Citra Niaga market will fill the nostrils, ears and eyes with all the heady activity of Southeast Asia. Samarinda city maps and regional maps can be found in the Gramedia bookshop in the Mesra Indah shopping centre.

Information

INTERNET ACCESS

Internet Cafe (Jl KH Khalid 1, Hotel MJ; per hr 10,500Rp)
Wartel Helma (Jl Basuki Rahmat 22; per hr 8000Rp)

MONEY

There are plenty of ATMs about town. For foreign exchange:

BCA bank (Bank Central Asia; Jl Sudirman)

BNI bank (Bank Negara Indonesia; cnr Jl P Sebatik & Jl Panglima Batur)

POST

Main post office (cnr Jl Gajah Mada & Jl Awang Long)

TOURIST INFORMATION

Tourist office (☎ 736850; cnr Jl Sudirman & Jl Awang Long) Decent information about the city and surrounds with some English-speaking staff.

TRAVEL AGENCIES

Many of Samarinda's travel agencies offer tours upriver.

Angkasa Express (☎ 200281; fax 200280; Plaza Lembu Swana)

Mesra Tours (☎ 738787, 732772; fax 741017; www.mesra.com/tour; Jl KH Khalid 1, Hotel Mesra) Excellent tours along Sungai Mahakam, treks to West Kalimantan, the Apokayan Highlands, Loksado in South Kalimantan and tours to Tanjung Puting National Park in Central Kalimantan. The manager Lucas Zwaal speaks fluent Dutch, English and Bahasa Indonesia.

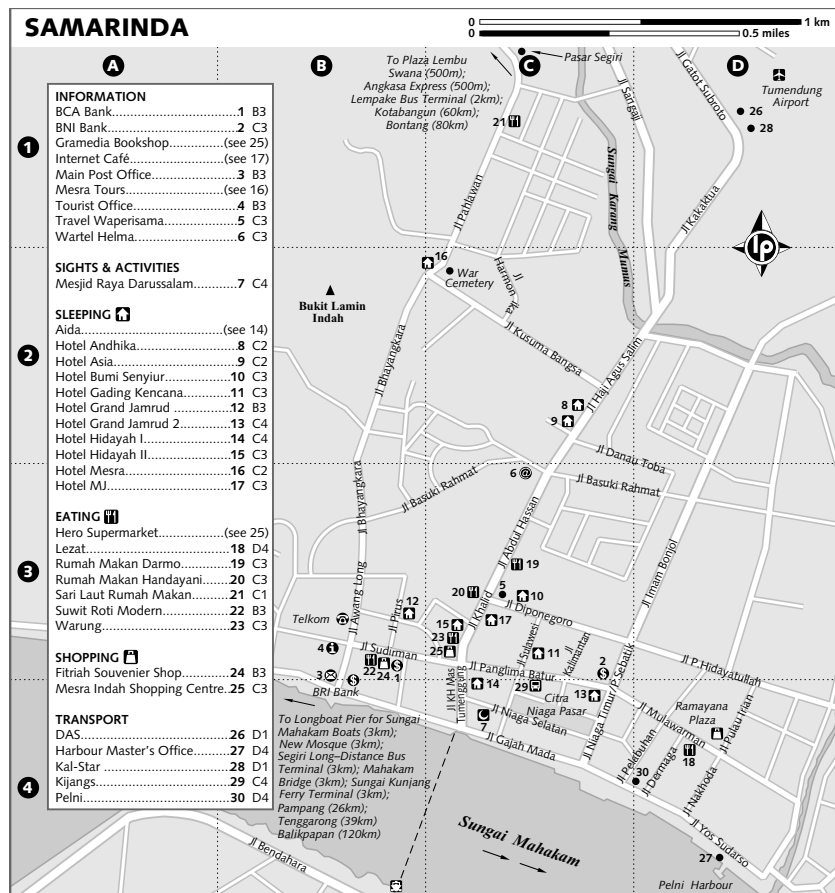
Travel Waperisama (☎ 743124; Jl Diponegoro 7) Good for domestic flights.

Sights

Samarinda is a pleasant place to stroll around and the main attraction is seeing the city in action. There are two striking mosques on the waterfront, the oldest of which is **Mesjid Raya Darussalam** (Jl Niaga Selatan). It's possible to enter the mosque as long as it's not during Friday prayers. Visitors should dress respectfully, which means long pants and sleeves. About 3km west, the largest mosque in Southeast Asia is being constructed and its spires and gilded domes are suitably dramatic.

Every Sunday at 2pm traditional ceremonies incorporating dance and singing are held in the Kenyah Dayak village of **Pampang**, around 26km west of Samarinda. These are not made-for-tourist performances and the ritual is unadulterated. Inhabitants of the village still adorn their hands, feet, arms and legs with traditional tattoos and the women's earlobes are stretched by their characteristic earrings. The ceremonies are performed inside and around a longhouse. If you are taking photographs it's polite to make a small donation. Yellow public minibuses head to Pampang from Samarinda's Segiri long-distance bus terminal for around 7000Rp per person one way.

During the day the area between Jl Panglima Batur and **Citra Niaga** is bustling with



vehicles, gold merchants, food-stall operators and fruit sellers.

On the south side of Sungai Mahakam, in the part of town called **Samarinda Seberang**, you can visit cottage industries where Samarinda-style sarongs are woven. The traditional East Kalimantan wraparound is woven from *doyo* leaf.

Sleeping

Budget hotels far outweigh midrange and top end options in Samarinda.

BUDGET

Hotel Asia (☎ 731013; fax 746426; Jl Haji Agus Salim 33; r from 52,000Rp; 🏠) It doesn't waste much energy on the aesthetics but Hotel Asia's sheets are crisp and the surfaces clean. Skip

the dismal economy rooms and splurge a few rupiah on the standard or medium ones, which have hot water and working flyscreens.

Hotel Hidayah I (☎ 731210/7311261; fax 737761; Jl KH Mas Temenggung; s 100,000-155,000Rp, d 125,000-190,000Rp; 🏠) Aiming high, the efficiently run Hotel Hidayah I hits the mark with dependable budget rooms, showers, air-con options, a good restaurant and a balcony bar. It's also right in the thick of Citra Niaga, so there's a constant (noisy) buzz of activity.

Cheap as chips:

Hotel Hidayah II (☎ 741712; Jl Khalid 25; s from 50,000Rp, d 100,000-125,000Rp; 🏠) Pleasant but windowless rooms.

Hotel Pirus (☎ 741873; fax 735890; Jl Pirus 30; r from 50,000Rp; 🏠)

Aida (☎ 742572; Jl KH Mas Tumenggung; r incl breakfast from 95,000Rp; 🏠) Low fuss and plenty of room types.

MIDRANGE

Hotel Gading Kencana (☎ 731512, 741043; fax 731954; Jl Sulawesi 4; r incl breakfast 115,000-187,500Rp; 🏠) Possibly the only hotel in Indonesia where a Harley Davidson greets you in the foyer, the Gading Kencana has tidy and spacious rooms with air-con and private *mandi* or bathroom. Some of the cheaper versions have far more sunlight than their better-bedded upgrades.

Hotel MJ (☎ 747689; www.mjhotel.com; Jl KH Khalid 1; r 198,000-475,000Rp plus 21% tax; 🏠) Behind a bank-like façade, Hotel MJ has comfortable, sunlit rooms with bland but inoffensive décor. The beds are beautifully oversized and the ground floor has a restaurant, travel agent, internet café and boutique.

Hotel Grand Jamrud 2 (☎ 731233; fax 736096; Jl Panglima Batur 45; r incl breakfast 200,000-389,000Rp; 🏠) Emulating a Western chain, this sparkling hotel has austere but spotless rooms and pristine Western bathrooms. All have air-con but hot water costs a little extra. There are smiles aplenty from staff and breakfast is ample for lunch and dinner too.

Also available:

Hotel Grand Jamrud (☎ 743828; fax 743837; Jl Jamrud 34; r 160,000-315,000Rp; 🏠) Cool and comfortable.

Hotel Andhika (☎ 742358; fax 743507; Jl Haji Agus Salim 37; r incl breakfast 110,000-215,000Rp; 🏠) Pokey economy rooms but lovely 'medium' versions.

TOP END

Hotel Mesra (☎ 732772; www.mesra.com/hotel; Jl Pahlawan 1; r 320,000-630,000Rp, cottage 850,000Rp, ste 1,648,000Rp; 🏠) Presiding over town from an elevated position with plenty of greenery, Hotel Mesra has indulgent rooms and lovely cottages. Extras include tennis courts, a large pool, restaurants and bars.

Hotel Bumi Senyur (☎ 741443; www.senyur.co.id; Jl Diponegoro 17-19; r from US\$85, ste from US\$150 plus 21% tax; 🏠) Glitzy and modern, this luxury hotel has more brass than class but the rooms are lovely and the wealth of facilities excellent.

Eating

Samarinda's chief gastronomic wonder is

the brilliant orange *udang galah* (giant river prawn) found in all the local warungs.

Rumah Makan Handayani (☎ 732452; Jl Abdul Hassan 7; mains 7,000-15,000Rp; 🍴 lunch & dinner) A fat photo album illustrates every dish on the Indonesian-flavoured menu at this quiet and clean restaurant. You can wolf down tasty *gado gado* (mixed vegetables and peanut sauce) and *nasi goreng* (fried rice), or linger over more refined chicken, seafood and pigeon.

Rumah Makan Darmo (☎ 737287; Jl Abdul Hassan 38; mains 15,000-20,000Rp; 🍴 lunch & dinner) If you pass by this Chinese-cum-Indonesian restaurant early enough, you may see them unloading the day's live crab and fresh seafood. The menu is exhaustive and there's a bright sea of spotless tables upstairs.

Sari Laut Rumah Makan (☎ 735848; Jl Pahlawan; mains 25,000-40,000Rp; 🍴 dinner) It's worth the small journey north to tuck into the best *udang galah* in town. Super fresh and served in sizzling fragrant, spicy or Padang style, these dishes lure Javanese tourists by the car load.

Quick eats, bakeries and self-catering:

Suwit Roti Modern (Jl Sudirman 8; snacks 4,000Rp; 🍴 breakfast & lunch) Sticky pastries and bread.

Warung (Jl Khalid; snacks 2,000-5,000Rp; 🍴 breakfast, lunch & dinner) Excellent and nameless, near Mesra Indah Shopping Centre.

Hero supermarket (Mesra Indah Shopping Centre)

Shopping

Rattan goods, *doyo*-leaf cloth, carvings and other forest products are available from a string of souvenir shops west along the riverfront on Jl Slamet Riyadi and Jl Martadinata. Mesra Indah Shopping Centre is a large, glossy mall with a food court and Western-style clothing shops.

Fitriah Souvenir shop (Jl Sudirman 10) Catering to tourists, this shop sells high-quality items with price tags to match.

Getting There & Away

AIR

DAS (☎ 735250; Jl Gatot Subroto 92) flies to Melak, Long Ampung Data Dawai and Tanjung Selore several times a week. A month's advance booking is generally necessary to secure a seat. DAS and **Kal-Star** (☎ 742110; Jl Gatot Subroto 80) also fly to Tarakan, Berau and Nunukan.

BOAT

Pelni (☎ 741402; Jl Yos Sudarso 76) boats travelling between Balikpapan and Nunukan, and Balikpapan and Surabaya often take passengers in Samarinda (see p648). Fares vary depending on the boat; your best option is to check at the office for updated information.

The *Teratai* is a private boat that leaves every second day for Berau (150,000Rp, 27 hours). Ticket sellers hang around on Jl Yos Sudarso outside the harbour passenger terminal.

For information on which boat leaves when, check at the **harbour master's office** (Kantor Administrator Pelabuhan; Jl Yos Sudarso 2), about 200m east of Jl Nakhoda.

For daily passenger boats heading up Sungai Mahakam, take a green A route taxi to get to Sungai Kunjang ferry terminal, southwest of the town centre. Get to the pier by 6am, as boats leave at 7am. The journey to Melak (upper deck 120,000Rp) takes 19 hours and to Long Iram one day and a night (upper deck 150,000Rp). If conditions permit it's another 12 hours to Long Bagun (upper deck 200,000Rp). Most boats have a sleeping deck upstairs, as well as a sleeping deck and simple canteen on the lower level.

BUS

From Samarinda you can head northwest to Tenggarong or south to Balikpapan. The long-distance bus terminal is adjacent to the river-boat terminal at Sungai Kunjang, on the north side of the river a couple of kilometres upstream from the Mahakam bridge. Take a green A taxi from the centre of town (2500Rp). There are daily buses to Balikpapan (19,500Rp, two hours) and frequent buses to Kota Bangun (20,000Rp, three hours).

There are also Kijangs to Sebulu (8000Rp, 45 minutes) from Citra Niaga or Tenggarong (8000Rp, one hour) from Harapan Baru, the terminus for the orange G taxi, which leaves from Citra Niaga.

Buses to Bontang (20,000Rp, three hours, daily) and Berau (135,000Rp, 16 hours, daily) leave from the Lempake terminal north of the city, at the end of the B taxi route (5000Rp), which you can hail on Jl Bhayangkara.

Getting Around

Taxis from Tumendung airport are

35,000Rp. Alternatively, walk 100m down to Jl Gatot Subroto, turn left and catch a reddish-brown B taxi – all the way to the waterfront (3000Rp).

City minibuses, called taxis, run along several overlapping routes, designated A, B and C. Route C goes past Hotel Mesra and the university area. Most short runs cost 2500Rp.

KUTAI NATIONAL PARK

One of East Kalimantan's most underrated pockets of wilderness, Kutai National Park holds excellent opportunities to see wild orang-utans and prolific bird life. Sadly sizeable chunks of the park remain damaged due to fire, logging and entrepreneurial farmers, but the remaining forest teems with wildlife. Access to Kutai from Samarinda is easy, and if you're heading north it's a great way to break up the journey.

To get here catch a yellow bus from Samarinda's Lempake terminal to Bontang (20,000Rp, three hours), where you need to register at the **National Park office** (PHKA; Jl Mularman 236; ☎ 7.30am-4pm Mon-Thu, 8am-noon Fri). Registration is free, but you must provide photocopies of your passport. Technically you don't need a guide to enter the park but finding orang-utans without one can be difficult. PHKA staff can act as guides for around 50,000Rp (or 100,000Rp for trekking) per day, plus transport costs. It's possible to charter a boat from the PHKA office into the park for around 200,000Rp.

A more intrepid alternative is to continue your bus journey from Bontang north to Sangata (10,000Rp). Ask the driver to drop you off at the main street rather than the bus terminal and walk several hundred metres to the right to **Hotel Kutai Parmai** (r 100,000Rp) and a small market. From the banks near the market you can pay local fishermen to take you to Camp Kakap in the park for around 200,000Rp one way. A cheaper way to do this is to catch a yellow local bus from Sangata's main street to Kabo Jaya, a small fishing settlement just west of the town. Charters from here only cost around 90,000Rp but they may be harder to come by.

Inside the park you can stay overnight at one of the basic guesthouses at Camp Kakap research centre, or at Sangkima for around 100,000Rp per night. Facilities are rudimentary and you must bring your own

food. Staff at the office in Bontang will be able to provide updated information about staying overnight.

TENGGARONG

☎ 0541 / pop 75,000

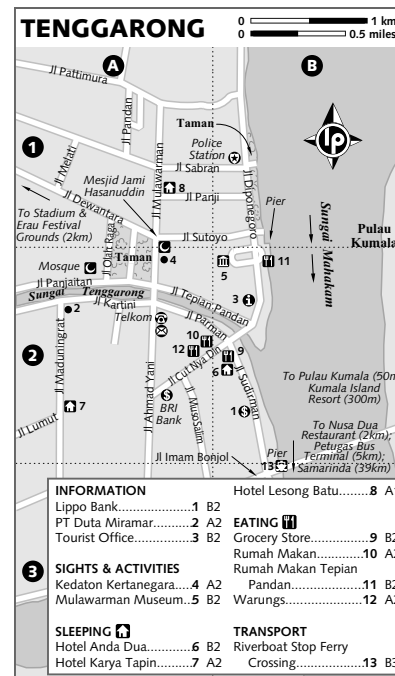
A surprising pocket of urban finery, comely Tenggarong sits about 40km from Samarinda on the banks of Sungai Mahakam. Once the capital of the mighty sultanate of Kutai, the town's regal air is today buoyed by the colour and flair of government investment. An elegant esplanade slides up to the river before giving way to an ordered grid of streets and tidy buildings. Tenggarong is a pleasant place to explore on foot and there's enough to keep you here for a day or two. It's also a beautifully laid-back alternative to Samarinda.

Orientation & Information

Lippo Bank (Jl Sudirman) Has an ATM.

PT Duta Miramar (☎ 661184; Jl Kartini 35) Flight bookings.

Tourist office (☎ 661042; fax 661093; Jl Diponegoro)



Information on the Erau Festival, the main cultural attraction at Pulau Kumala.

Sights

Tenggarong's **Mulawarman Museum** (Jl Diponegoro; admission 2500Rp; ☎ 10am-2pm Tue-Sun) is a tribute to the sultanate history of the area. The building is the former palace, although this version was built by the Dutch in 1936 after the more aesthetic original was destroyed by fire. The ground floor holds a modicum of artefacts and belongings of the 19 sultans who reigned here, including an elaborate Balinese puppet theatre complete with musical instruments, which was a gift from the Sultan of Yogyakarta. There are centuries-old statues, an opulent bedroom setting and some exquisite *doyo* cloth woven by Dayak women. Open only on Sunday, the basement holds the sultan's magnificent porcelain collection, which includes Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasty Chinese water jars.

Behind the museum the 'new' **Kedaton Kertanegara** (Sultan's Palace) is a photographer's delight. Huge but uninhabited, the building boasts beautifully crafted wooden balconies and magnificent stained-glass windows.

Across the banks of the river, **Pulau Kumala** (admission 10,000Rp; ☎ 9am-5pm) is a kitsch fun park occupying a chunk of the island by the same name. Littered with tame rides and activities, it's aimed squarely at young families. Unfortunately it was constructed at the expense of a once lush forest. Water taxis to the island leave from the pier at the end of Jl Imam Bonjol and cost 20,000Rp one way.

Festivals & Events

Once a year, Dayak people travel to Tenggarong from various points in Kalimantan to celebrate the **Erau Festival**. Although the festival is somewhat touristy, it's a good opportunity to see the Dayaks in their traditional finery perform tribal dances and ritual ceremonies and a fabulous excuse for a huge inter-tribal party. The festival is usually held the last week in September and lasts for one to two weeks. Contact the tourist office in Tenggarong or Samarinda for the exact dates.

Sleeping

Hotel Anda Dua (☎ 661409; Jl Sudirman 65; r 60,000-

125,000Rp; 🍷) Basic, fan-cooled rooms with shared *mandis* occupy the rustic front section of this friendly hotel, and there is a splendid timber building out the back with comfortable air-con rooms containing private bathroom. Tea and coffee are served for these guests on the wide and gracious veranda.

Hotel Karya Tapin (☎ 661258; Jl Maduningrat 29; r incl breakfast 175,000-200,000Rp; 🍷) The décor and bedspreads are a tad faded, but the rooms at this small hotel come with high ceilings, TVs, showers in the bathrooms and spotless interiors. Service is exuberant.

Kumala Island Resort (☎ 6690277; fax 7069296; Pulau Kumala; r from 400,000Rp, ste 1,500,000Rp; 🍷 🍷) Planted on the southern tip of Pulau Kamala, this resort has a splendid timber interior and comfortable, generic rooms with private balconies. There are also lovely cottages plus a pool, spa, bar and restaurant.

Hotel Lesong Batu (☎ 663499; www.kutaikartane.gara.com/lesongbatu; Jl Panji 1; r incl breakfast 532,000-602,000Rp, ste 2,108,000Rp; 🍷) Tenggarong's finest hotel has a lobby big enough to park a plane in, in fact several vintage cars reside in it. Opulent and brassy, it offers indulgent rooms and first-class service. There's a good café serving Indonesian and Western fare, and a classy piano lounge.

Eating

Rumah Makan Tepian Pandan (Jl Diponegoro 23; mains 10,000-20,000Rp; 🍷 lunch & dinner) Another waterside restaurant, Tepian Pandan serves a good spread of dishes, leaning towards Chinese and Indonesian flavours. The atmosphere is relaxed and the views across the river to the island are lovely.

Rumah Makan (☎ 663087; Jl Cut Nya Din; mains 10,000Rp-20,000Rp; 🍷 breakfast, lunch & dinner) This friendly option serves fresh and tasty Padang food, displayed in the front window, as well as great tea and coffee in the morning. The interior is ordered and spotless.

Nusa Dua Restaurant (Jl Bukit Biru; mains 20,000-30,000Rp; 🍷 lunch & dinner) Tenggarong's classiest restaurant is a couple of kilometres south of the centre but worth the small trip. Excellent Chinese and Indonesian cuisine is complemented by great service and even better views.

A number of warungs are on Jl Cut Nya Din, near the intersection with Jl Sudirman, and a **grocery store** (Jl Sudirman) near the same

corner is well stocked with food and cold drinks.

Getting There & Away

Kijangs to Tenggarong from Samarinda take one hour and cost 10,000Rp. They deposit passengers at the Petugas Bus terminal on the outskirts of Tenggarong, about 5km from the centre of town. From here *taxi kota* go to the centre of Tenggarong for 1500Rp. *Ojek* will take you for 5000Rp. Kijangs from the Petugas Bus terminal also go to Kota Bangun (15,000Rp, two hours).

SUNGAI MAHAKAM

Carving a mighty swathe through Borneo's southern pocket, Sungai Mahakam dominates the landscape and culture of southeast Kalimantan. Much of the towering forest that once flanked its 523km length has been reduced to flat and lonely scrub, but detouring onto small lakes and shallow tributaries rewards voyagers with Amazonian scenery. Here silence is punctuated by the chatter of impish macaques, the hoot of indignant proboscis monkeys and the flash of verdant kingfishers. Many of the towns and villages along the Mahakam are built over wooden walkways to keep them above water during the wet season. Some abodes are grand ironwood affairs with floor-to-ceiling glass fronts and sweeping balconies, while others are decaying shacks tucked neatly behind the 'Jones'.

Daily passenger boats ply the river from Samarinda all the way to Long Bagun. Here Sungai Mahakam protects the ensuing forest from logging boats by virtue of gorges and churning rapids. When conditions are right, it's possible to charter a motorised canoe to cover the 18-hour journey from Long Bagun to Long Pahangai. The return trip to Long Bagun takes just six or seven hours, but this stretch should *never* be tackled without local assistance – these waters can be lethal.

Beyond Long Pahangai, there are motorised canoes through to Long Apari, and from there you can walk through to Tanjung Lokan on Sungai Kapuas headwaters in West Kalimantan.

If the Mahakam is low, boats may not be able to get any further than Long Iram, 114km short of Long Bagun. If the river is

A CES BY ANY OTHER NAME

The most common form of transport off Sungai Mahakam's beaten waterway is the *ces* – a motorised canoe with a long propeller shaft. These innovations only came to the area in 1990 when an entrepreneurial soul attached a 21/1HP engine to the back of his boat. The name (pronounced chess) comes from the sound made when starting the engine. It stuck and became as good a moniker as any. Coursing the river with all the power of a lawnmower must have been heavy going but the engines you'll encounter today are more likely to be 20HP.

too high the same can apply, since the currents may be too swift.

Any journey beyond the earliest villages requires good Bahasa Indonesia skills or a guide.

Budget hotels in Samarinda keep local guides informed about who is in town; their rates and expertise vary enormously depending on the kind of trip you are planning. Travellers have warned us of disappointing trips with cheaper guides, so the rule of thumb is you get what you pay for, however Bahasa Indonesia-language skills will of course reduce the risk substantially. For real adventure, don't expect anything in the way of a bargain.

Suryadi (☎ 081 64598263; surya57@hotmail.com) is a reliable and friendly guide and a mine of information on treks upriver. He can organise customised trips along the Mahakam, across into West Kalimantan or into the Apokayan Highlands, at reasonable rates. If you can't reach him by phone, leave a message at **Hotel Hidayah I** (Jl Mas Tumenggung). **Rajim Rustam** (☎ 081 25854915, 0541-735641) is another English-speaking, knowledgeable and reliable guide operating out of Samarinda.

Kota Bangun

Kota Bangun is a dusty stop at the start of the Mahakam lake country, about three hours by bus from Samarinda along a sealed road. The only reason to stop here is to hire a *ces* (motorised canoe) and elude the main river via Muara Muntai, Tanjung Isuy and Mancong. Once off the main drag, pockets of forest climb maniacally, opening

up for small villages populated by friendly and curious locals. You'll have to bargain for a *ces*, but it should be around 200,000Rp to Muara Muntai (one hour), 400,000Rp to Tanjung Isuy (three hours) and 600,000Rp to Mancong (six hours). Maskur, a local schoolteacher in Kota Bangun, speaks good English and offers his services as a guide.

If you get stuck here, you can overnight at **Losmen Muzirat** (☎ 081 25532287; Jl Masjid Raya 46; s/d 20,000/40,000Rp), directly opposite the main mosque. It has basic rooms with shared *mandis* and abrupt staff.

There are eight buses a day to/from Samarinda (20,000Rp, three hours) between 7am and 4pm.

Muara Muntai

Muara Muntai is a colourful Kutai market town built over mud flats in the heart of the Mahakam's lake country. Wide, sturdy boardwalks act as streets, and dwellings range from cobbled-together shacks to two-storey timber houses. Check out the Bappeda's (Agency for Regional Development) fine, old wooden abode and huge portico, straight ahead from the dock. Things shut down during afternoon prayers but the population fills the boardwalks after dusk, particularly when the weekly night market takes place, although it changes regularly so pinning down a day is futile.

Penginapan Adi Guna (☎ 0541-205871, 081 545 146 578; tw 50,000Rp) is a clean and friendly losmen with simple, fan-cooled rooms and roomy shared *mandis*. There's a balcony overlooking a patch of boardwalk, and tea and coffee are served at all times. To get here follow the boardwalk from the dock and turn right.

An alternative is **Penginapan Tiara** (☎ 081 347 376 794; s/d 30,000/50,000Rp), a smaller affair left of the docks, also with simple fan-cooled rooms and shared *mandis*. It's not as breezy as Adi Guna but there's a good balcony out the front where you can watch Muara Muntai's world go by.

The warung between the two losmen serves *sop Muara Muntai*, a filling soup with rice, chicken, noodles, cabbage and a squeeze of lime. Several warungs opposite the Nita Wardana sell fried rice, noodles etc.

A longboat to/from Samarinda costs 70,000Rp and takes about 12 hours. But you can reach the village in around five hours

by bussing from Samarinda to Kota Bangun and hiring a *ces* from there (200,000Rp, two hours). You can also charter a *ces* in Muara Muntai for a full day on the lakes for about 500,000Rp.

Tanjung Isuy

Tanjung Isuy, on the shores of Danau Jempang, is the first Dayak village on the Mahakam. This is Banuaq Dayak territory, but don't anticipate traditional dress and tattoos. Modernisation has introduced stereos, televisions and the ubiquitous motorcycle, all of which are welcomed by those who can afford them. The transformation is largely skin deep, though, and the sense of community remains intact. The most popular night-time entertainment is still chewing the fat with locals on their front verandas, the rooster cacophony still calls the 5am alarm and the all-pervading river remains the focus of activity.

Tour groups stop at Tanjung Isuy for an 'authentic' Dayak experience. Most arrive in speedboats from Samarinda, mob the souvenir stalls in the longhouse, watch a mix of Dayak dancing and zoom back. Activity focuses on the **Louu Taman Jamrout**, a longhouse vacated in the late 1970s, and rebuilt by the provincial government as a craft centre and tourist hostel.

Despite the commercial nature of the pay-by-the-hour performances in the Louu Taman Jamrout, they are lively, rhythmic and loads of fun for the whole town. The mix of Kenyah, Kayan and Banuaq dancing is confusing, but very entertaining. Solo travellers could commission a dance for about 350,000Rp.

A *ces* journey from Muara Muntai to Tanjung Isuy traverses spectacular wetlands, shallow lakes and **Jantur**, a Banjar village built on a flooded mud flat. Jantur's **mesjid** stands alone on a bend in the river, accessible only by boats and high gangplanks. Beside it is the cemetery, the highest point in town but still just 20cm above the water level at the end of the wet season. Bodies buried here must be anchored in their watery graves to prevent them bobbing to the surface.

There are two good losmen in Tanjung Isuy (both have shared *mandis*). About 500m from the jetty, **Losmen Wisata** (Jl Indonesia Australia; s/d 35,000/50,000Rp) has rooms with

double beds leading off a central dining area. The common space has breezy, wall to wall windows and a lengthy conversation-inducing table. Just next door is **Louu Taman Jamrout** (Jl Indonesia Australia; per person 60,000Rp), where the Dayak performances are held. Both losmen have mosquito nets to keep the ravenous bugs at bay, although the equally prolific geckos keep the numbers down. At night macaques scramble over the buildings' exteriors like cheeky stowaways.

Warung Makan Arema (Jl Taman Siswa; mains 7,000Rp; ☎ lunch & dinner) dishes up fragrant servings of *sop ayam* (chicken soup), tofu, veggies and chicken with large bowls of rice. It also sells everything from bottled water to iced coffee in a carton. From the jetty turn right and follow the main street. Take the first street on the left; the warung is about 200m along.

There are some nice *doyo* weavings and *mandau* (machetes) with carved handles (as well as a lot of junk) available in the craft centre next door to the Louu Taman Jamrout, at reasonable prices. Back down the road towards the dock, there's a house across from the first intersection that also sells carvings and weavings.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Longboats from Samarinda don't schedule stops to Tanjung Isuy because it's well off the main route. The easiest way to get here is to hire a *ces* from Muara Muntai (200,000Rp, 1½ to two hours). There are also public *ces* to Muara Muntai leaving daily in the early evening (from 60,000Rp, depending on the number of passengers), but check at the dock. You can charter a *ces* direct to Kota Bangun (400,000Rp), then catch a bus and be in Samarinda or Balikpapan that night.

Mancong

The scenic area heading south to Mancong is a highlight of Sungai Mahakam and well worth the time and money it incurs to explore. The journey by *ces* takes you along Sungai Ohong, where the gorgeous stretch of riverside jungle is home to flocks of magnificent water birds. Hornbills sail above the canopy, electric blue kingfishers skim close to the water, and proboscis monkeys fling themselves from one branch to the next. Near villages and towns on the water,

FANCY MEETING YOU HERE

Tanjung Isuy sits in the southwest corner of **Danau Jempang** (Jempang Lake), a 15,000-hectare body of water fed by the tributaries of the Mahakam. The wetlands of Danau Jempang are crucial breeding and migration grounds for approximately 90 bird species as well as the critically endangered **Irawaddy dolphin**, also known as the Pesut Mahakam. It is estimated that only 70 remain in the Mahakam and although they are protected by law, their habitat is not. Traffic along the Mahakam poses the greatest threat; collisions with fishing vessels, entanglement in nets, water and noise pollution from giant coal tugs and chemical waste from the mining industry have all taken their toll.

The good news is that a local nongovernment organisation – **Yayasan Konservasi RASI** (Conservation of Rare Aquatic Species of Indonesia; www.geocities.com/yayasan_konservasi_rasi/index.html) is making headway in the conservation of the Pesut Mahakam. Based at Muara Pahu, where the dolphins are most likely to be spotted, the organisation has researched and monitored the dolphins since 2000, raised awareness among the local population and worked with local fishermen to reduce specific dangers to the species. Their efforts have paid off and between 2003 and 2006 the number of dolphins rose from 65 to 70.

In conjunction with **Mesra Tours** (☎ 738787, 732772; fax 741017; www.mesra.com/tour), RASI promotes ecotours of the area, providing accurate information about where to best sight the dolphins and how to do so in a nonobtrusive manner. If travelling independently you can visit RASI's headquarters at Muara Pahu, which has information displays about the region's biodiversity importance. Staff here can also advise which tributaries to visit, and there are volunteer opportunities if you'd like to turn it into a real adventure.

From Muara Pahu you can hire a *ces* for a scenic river tour down **Sungai Bolowan** – a favourite stomping ground of the dolphins. The roundtrip takes about two hours and costs around 200,000Rp.

large ibis hang around the house docks hoping for an easy feed.

Mancong itself is a small village of only 500 or so people, but it provides one of the best impressions of how life on the Mahakam was before the era of logging, coal and oil. One side of the village is backed by towering trees and thickets of forest. The other was cleared long ago for cash crops of oil palm, which went up in smoke in the '97 fires. The main attraction is a grand, two-storey **longhouse** built with government assistance in 1987 after the original collapsed. With its demise went the last of the traditional longhouse-living in Mancong as families moved into new, separate dwellings. Today only one family occupies the new longhouse, making it the cleanest of its kind in all of Borneo. The building is still used for ceremonial purposes, including folk dances. A dozen or so totem statues grace the front, each marking a buffalo slaughtered for a feast. It's possible to stay in the longhouse for around 60,000Rp per person but be prepared for no electricity, bedding or food. Bahasa Indonesia is needed in order to ask permission from the

family inside or whoever is manning the souvenirs in the white shack by the jetty.

To get to Mancong hire a *ces* from Tanjung Isuy (about 250,000Rp for the round trip) early in the morning. You'll need to go slowly to appreciate the scenery along the way and it should take about three hours in each direction. You can reduce the cost by returning to Tanjung Isuy by *ojek* for 100,000Rp. The trip takes about half an hour.

THE UPPER MAHAKAM Melak & Around

Melak is the largest town on the Mahakam and the dusty activity here is a far stretch from the fishing villages you will have encountered along the way. Its ever expanding streets are filled with 4WDs and the constant thud and chatter of construction, but Melak is a good supply stop for trips further north and the surrounding area is worth visiting. There's a colourful weekly market every Tuesday, where giant catfish and *udang galah* dwarf earthly sized chickens and fuzzy bunches of rambutan.

About 30km inland from Melak, the tiny settlement of **Eheng** is home to one of the

last operating longhouses in East Kalimantan. Built in 1960, its crumbling façade is held together by new planks of hardwood. About 30 families occupy the interior but they're only here in force on Monday night – market day eve. This is when most of the inhabitants who have been gathering rattan reeds or tending rice fields come home to prepare produce for the next day and indulge in a bout of socialising and gambling. The inhabitants are happy for people to have a look inside their home but Bahasa Indonesia is essential here, as a mark of respect more than anything else. It's also possible to stay overnight but you need to take bedding and food. It's also polite to offer money for your stay, but this will vary on who you speak to and how many of you there are. If you're just visiting during the day take a small gift with you – cigarettes and bonbons are favourites (despite the health implications).

From Melak a public minibus goes to Barong Tongkok then continues on to Eheng (12,000Rp, one hour), or you can hire an *ojek* in Melak for about 75,000Rp a day, or charter a 4WD for 300,000Rp.

Mencimai has an excellent museum (admission by donation; ☎ Mon-Fri) with detailed explanations in English and Bahasa Indonesia of the local systems of shifting agriculture. It explains the Banuaq systems of land use, methods for collecting wild honey, traps for pigs and monkeys, and bark-cloth production. It also has relics, including excellent old *mandau* and rattan ware.

In Melak **Penginapan Setiawan** (☎ 0545-41437; Jl Dr Sutomo; r 50,000Rp) is the newest losmen in town and has nine spacious rooms off a bright, open corridor. Tea and coffee are free, as is boiled drinking water. Next door, **Penginapan Blue Safir** (☎ 0545-41098; Jl Dr Sutomo; r 50,000Rp), has similar, if more dated rooms. About 100m closer to the jetty, **Warung Banjar** (Jl Dr Sutomo; mains 10,000Rp; ☎ lunch & dinner) serves good barbecued catfish with a side of soup and rice.

Souvenir shops are scattered around town and you can pick up great rattan bags, hats, baskets etc for 25,000Rp to 50,000Rp, depending on size and quality. You might find a few old *mandau* as well.

Boats leave daily for the 325km trip to Samarinda between 11am and 2pm (120,000Rp, 19 hours). A *ces* to/from Tan-

jung Isuy costs 500,000Rp and takes around four hours.

There is also a daily bus to Samarinda (100,000Rp, nine hours) but it's an exceedingly uncomfortable ride on unsealed roads. Regular public minibuses operate between Melak and Tering (9,000Rp, one hour).

Tering & Long Iram

A pleasant, quiet village with a few colonial buildings, Long Iram is often the end of the line for many would-be explorers because of river conditions or lack of time. It's an easy walk through market gardens to **Tering**, a congregation of three villages straddling the Mahakam at a point where the river begins an ascent north. Go north along Jl Soewondo, turn right at the path to the police station and walk on over pretty bridges to **Danau Gap**, 3km away.

On the northern bank of the river, **Tering Lama** is a Bahau Dayak village where traditional tattoos and elongated earlobes are still visible. The village also has four wooden statues carved in traditional Bahau Dayak style. There is also a magnificent church at the eastern end of town. **Tering Seberang** and **Tering Baru** are the busier counterparts on the southern side of the river. A *ces* between Long Iram and Tering takes about 40 minutes and will set you back around 60,000Rp.

When you arrive in Long Iram, get off at the floating café on the east bank, climb to the main road, turn right and wander down to **Penginapan Wahyu** (Jl Soewondo 57; r with breakfast per person 60,000Rp); look for the tiny sign opposite the two-storey shops. It has clean rooms.

Down the road Warung Lestari is the place to go for the best food on the Mahakam. Ignore the menu. Dinner is whatever's on the stove.

Long Iram is 1½ days' travel by longboat from Samarinda (lower/upper deck 110,000/150,000Rp).

Datah Bilang to Muara Merak

If conditions allow you to ferry upriver beyond Long Iram, places of interest include Datah Bilang, where there's a Protestant community of **Kenyah** and **Bahau Dayaks** who moved here from the Apokayan in the 1970s. The older women have the traditional long earlobes and will charge

15,000Rp to 20,000Rp per photograph. **Long Hubung**, 45 minutes north of Datah Bilang by motorised canoe (100,000Rp), is another Bahau Dayak village that has a basic **losmen** (r 50,000Rp).

Just 25km downstream is Muara Merak, a **Kenyah** settlement. Intrepid and experienced trekkers with good knowledge of Bahasa Indonesia may like to tackle some of the country here. It's possible to reach Tabang from Muara Merak by following Sungai Merah to the northeast. It's a seldom journeyed route and will take around six days to conquer. Good equipment, food and a Kenyah guide are essential. Unfortunately the latter can be difficult to come by but it's worth asking in Datah Bilang, Muara Merak and Long Hubung. Expect to pay at least 250,000Rp a day for their assistance. From Tabang you can journey down back to Kota Bangun along Sungai Belayan (see right).

Long Bagun to Long Apari

The end of the line for regular longboat services from Samarinda is Long Bagun, a small settlement with an abandoned longhouse, reasonably stocked shop for supplies and the utterly rudimentary **Penginapan Artomorow** (r 40,000Rp). It takes between three to six days by longboat from Samarinda, and the journey costs 150,000/180,000Rp for upper/lower deck. The rapids and shallow water here are prohibitive to large vessels and this turn of Mother Nature's hand has kept the forests eastwards safe from harm. Travel from this point onwards is more arduous and demanding, but it's where the real Borneo jungle lies.

The longboat journey from Samarinda to Long Bagun (200,000Rp, three days) stops overnight in Long Iram. Navigation can be tricky this far upriver and the crew uses the opportunity to sleep.

From Long Bagun you must charter motorised canoes from village to village or trek through the forests. River conditions must be optimal because of river rapids between Long Bagun and the next major settlement, **Long Pahangai**. Under normal conditions, it's a one- or two-day canoe trip from Long Bagun to Long Pahangai, then another day to Long Apari. **Long Lunuk**, between Long Pahangai and Long Apari, is a good place from which to visit Kenyah

villages or alternatively, stay at **Tiong Ohang**, two hours upstream from Long Lunuk.

Long Apari is the uppermost longhouse village on the Mahakam and is beautiful. The longboat trip from Long Lunuk takes five to six hours. Dinner in Long Apari, if you're lucky, is often greasy pig and bony fish – tasty supplements from the city make welcome presents, not to mention a necessary break from the daily rice and noodles. The village is the stepping-off point for treks to West Kalimantan.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

To start your trip from the top, fly to Data Dawai, an airstrip near Long Lunuk. DAS flies from Samarinda (500,000Rp, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday), but you need to book a month in advance. From there you can work your way downriver back to Samarinda, or trek overland to the Apokayan Highlands.

SUNGAI KEDANG KEPALA

There are regular longboat services up the Kedang Kepala, which branches north off the Mahakam near **Muara Kaman**; from Samarinda to **Muara Wahau** takes three days and two nights, and goes via the Kenyah and Bahau villages of **Tanjung Manis**, **Long Noran** and **Long Segar**. This trip is best for those looking to explore untouristed territory; the villages themselves are fairly isolated and many inhabitants have moved to more convenient destinations. Nearby caves were the site of 5th-century Sanskrit finds, now in the museum at Tenggarong.

An alternative route from Samarinda to Berau is to take a boat north from Muara Wahau to **Miau Baru** and try hitching a ride to the Dayak village of **Merapun**, two hours away. From Merapun, take a 12-hour boat ride down the Kelai to Berau.

SUNGAI BELAYAN

Another adventurous trip that offers a more cultural approach is up Sungai Belayan to **Tabang**. The Belayan branches northwest off the Mahakam at Kota Bangun, and chartered longboats take two nights and three days to reach Tabang from Samarinda (250,000Rp). You could also hire a *ces* in Kota Bangun to reach Tabang. The journey would only take about a day but expect to pay 1,000,000Rp plus for the expediency.

Tabang can also be reached on foot from

the town of Muara Merak on the Mahakam. Hire a Punan guide in either Tabang or Muara Merak to lead you through the extensive rainforests that are nomadic Punan territory.

SUNGAI KAYAN & THE APOKAYAN HIGHLANDS

South of Tarakan is **Tanjung Selor** at the mouth of the mighty Sungai Kayan. Regular longboat services go up the Kayan as far as the Kenyah villages of **Mara I** and **Mara II**, but a long section of rapids – Kalimantan's wildest white water – prevents boats from reaching the headwaters of the Kayan in the Apokayan Highlands.

The Apokayan Highlands has some good trekking; you could also trek overland to the Mahakam headwaters from Long Ampung in about a week with a guide from Long Ampung. Guides in Samarinda lead easy or vigorous treks to Dayak longhouses from Long Ampung.

A most picturesque tour by **Suryadi** (☎ 081 64598263; surya57@hotmail.com), see p655, consists of the following itinerary: first a flight from Samarinda to Long Ampung on DAS, then a 2½-hour easy walk to stay overnight at the longhouse of **Long Uro**. The next day there's a 45-minute walk to the longhouse of **Lidung Payau** where you catch a boat back to Long Ampung for the flight back to Samarinda. Hardy travellers may include a difficult five-hour jungle walk from Lidung Payau to **Long Sungai Barang**. Nights are cold and longhouse verandas can be hard, so pack a sleeping bag.

DAS flies from Samarinda to Tanjung Selor (501,500Rp, daily except Friday and Sunday).

LONG BAWAN

Further north in the interior is the picturesque area around Long Bawan. Like the Apokayan, it's too far above the rapids to be of much interest to logging companies – yet. Also like the Apokayan, there's a noticeable military presence and prices are high, even for the simplest commodities. Any presents from the city will be welcome – cigarettes, toys, salt, sugar etc. DAS flies daily to Long Bawan from Tarakan for 450,000Rp. **Penginapan Agung Raya** (☎ 086 812105064; 60,000Rp) is a small, simple and clean hotel where you can overnight.

There is excellent trekking around Long Bawan, including forays into **Kayan Mentarang National Park**. Bordering Malaysian Sarawak to the west, this park holds the largest remaining block of rainforest in Kalimantan and boasts some of the most pristine tropical mountain ecosystems in the world. The rare clouded leopard, Malaysian sun bear and *banteng* (wild ox) are some of the spectacular fauna found in the area. The World Wildlife Fund (WWF) promotes ecotourism and a close relationship with the local communities to ensure sustainable development. With cloud forests reaching 2000m above sea level, you get the sense that you are the first to explore this rare and mystical landscape.

Treks in the area take several days, depending on your stamina and how long you want to hike for. A guide is essential and you should be able to secure one in Long Bawan for around 70,000Rp per day; ask **Penginapan Agung Raya** to get in contact with Alex Balang, who speaks English. Porters charge slightly less: 60,000Rp per day. Homestays in the area's villages cost between 60,000Rp and 90,000Rp, with meals included. Some of your journey may require the use of a motorised canoe, which will be your greatest expense at around 200,000Rp per hour.

For more information about visiting the park, contact the tourist offices in Samarinda (p649) or **Tanjung Selor** (☎ 0552-22321). For other information, including conservation, contact **Yayasan WWF Indonesia Kayan Mentarang Project** (☎ 0451-34661; fax 37242; Jl Gatot Subroto Rt 49, 53, Samarinda, Kalimantan Timur).

East of Kayan Mentarang lies the proposed **Sebuku Sembakung National Park**. The WWF is appealing to the Indonesian and Malaysian governments to establish the park as part of a network of protected areas, in order to conserve the remaining rainforests of the 'Heart of Borneo'. The proposed area for Sebuku Sembakung National Park is a pristine ecosystem that encapsulates 4000 sq km of all major habitats in Kalimantan, especially lowland hills composed of limestone outcrops. This area is home to the only known population of elephants in Kalimantan. Establishment of the park will be contingent on cooperation between the Malaysian and Indonesian governments and access is likely to remain poor for many

years. The best source of information for progress is the **WWF website** (www.wwf.or.id).

BERAU

☎ 0554 / pop 52,000

Perched at the confluence of the Kelai, Berau and Segan rivers in Kalimantan's northeast corner, Berau is an ambling town with a sociable disposition. Inquisitive locals warm to new faces here and the place hums with a proud mood of self-sufficiency. The streets are sleepy during the day, but activity picks up after dusk when whole families pile onto *ojeks* and join the crowds at the nocturnal warungs.

People use the names Berau and Tanjung Redeb interchangeably. Strictly speaking, Tanjung Redeb is the spit of land between the Segan and Kelai rivers, whereas Berau refers to the whole urban area.

Information

ATMs are plentiful on Jl P Antasari and Jl Maulana.

BNI bank (Bank Negara Indonesia; Jl Maulana) US-dollar foreign exchange.

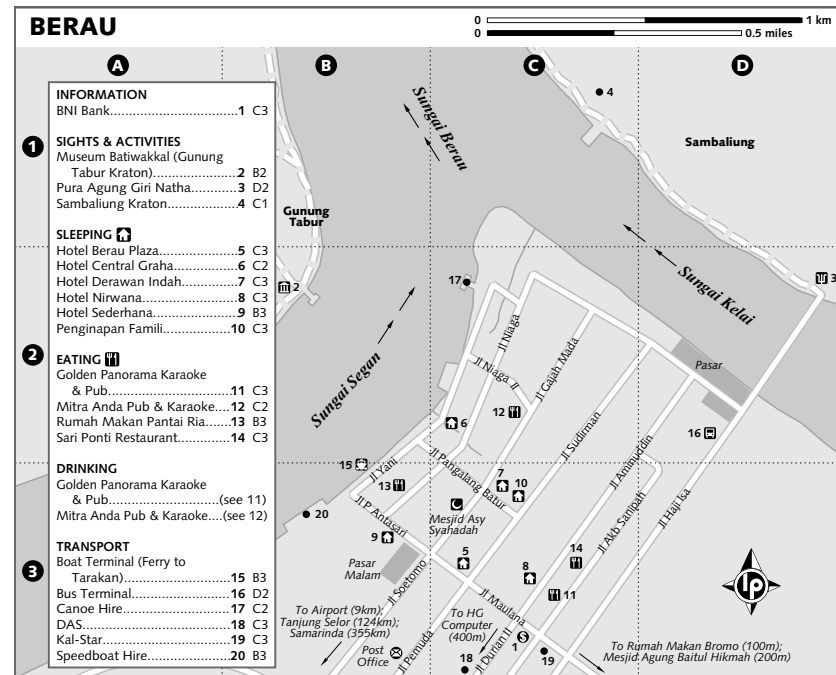
HG Computer (Jl Durian II; per hr 9,000Rp) Internet access.

Sights

Berau was once the seat of two minor kingdoms, Gunung Tabur, with its *kraton* (palace) on the banks of the Segan, and Sambaliung, with a *kraton* on the Kelai. The *kraton* face each other across Tanjung Redeb. Gunung Tabur's moment in history came towards the end of WWII when the *kraton* was mistaken for a Japanese military post and flattened by Allied bombers. The Sambaliung *kraton* was untouched, supposedly because of the spiritual power of two cannons.

The Gunung Tabur *kraton* was rebuilt, belfry and all, and is now **Museum Batiwakkal** (☎ 8am-2pm Mon-Sat; admission by donation). It contains a few relics, including an old cannon found in the jungle by the very first rajah; however, its spiritual powers have been in doubt since the Allied bombing. Canoe ferries cross the river regularly (1000Rp).

Sambaliung kraton is not a museum but has some relics of the last nine rajahs. The *kraton* has no strict opening hours but you



should be able to access it between 10am and 3pm on weekdays. Get there by canoe (10,000Rp), or walk across Sungai Kelai by the bridge near the bus terminal. Just across the bridge on the right, the Hindu temple **Pura Agung Giri Natha** is worth a look as well.

At the bustling *pasar* by the bridge across Sungai Kelai you can purchase bunnies, birds, breakfast and just about everything in between, accompanied of course by the ubiquitous 'Hello Mister'.

The vivid green domes of Berau's monolithic **Mesjid Agung Baitul Hikmah** (Jl Mualana) rise above the skyline and flicker with fairy lights at night. Inside the grounds are a polished oasis of brass and pillars.

Sleeping

Hotel Central Graha (☎ 22580; Jl Yani; r 30,000-100,000; 🏠) The tidiest of Berau's cheap digs, this waterside hotel has snug and spartan fan-cooled rooms with shared *mandis*, which go for a song. If you're in need of a little more comfort opt for an air-con room with private *mandi*.

Hotel Nirwana (☎ 21893; Jl Aminuddin 715; s 60,000-100,000Rp, d 65,000-110,000Rp; 🏠) The rooms here are snug but spotless and appealing, and even the simplest come with TV. In the cooler months, the fan-cooled options are great value. Breakfast is included.

Hotel Berau Plaza (☎ 23111; Jl P Antasari; r incl breakfast 140,000-190,000Rp; 🏠) In a good central location, this long-standing hotel has reasonable accommodation, all with air-con and private bathrooms. The cheaper versions have small bathrooms and dim lighting but the place has a warm and efficient buzz.

Hotel Derawan Indah (☎ 24255; Jl Panglima Batur 396; r 250,000-350,000Rp plus 21% tax; 🏠) Easily the best value in town, this modern hotel offers four-star quality and standards. Immaculate and cheerful rooms have cable TV and generous Western bathrooms. Superior and executive rooms have tubs and private balconies.

More accommodation:

Penginapan Famili (Jl Pangalang Batur; r 60,000Rp) Quiet and family-run.

Hotel Sederhana (☎ 21353; Jl Pangeran Antasari; r incl breakfast 200,000-280,000Rp; 🏠) Ageing gracefully, but a tad dirty.

Eating & Drinking

Rumah Makan Pantai Ria (Jl Niaga; mains 10,000Rp;

☎ lunch & dinner) This simple eatery is a great place to head for cheap and filling barbecued chicken or fabulous baked fish. Dishes are served with knock-your-socks off chilli.

Rumah Makan Bromo (☎ 22238; Jl Maulana; mains 15,000-20,000Rp; ☎ lunch & dinner) Good *sambal* and fresh *nasi goreng* headline the Indonesian menu at this cool and roomy restaurant. There are no culinary surprises, but the modestly refined interior is a pleasant upgrade from the warungs.

Sari Ponti Restaurant (☎ 23616; Jl AKB Sanipah; mains 20,000Rp; ☎ lunch & dinner) The constant stream of Chinese patrons proves how well the menu fares at this industrious restaurant. Chicken (cooked to perfection), seafood, beef, pigeon and plenty of veggie options are served in all manner of Chinese flavours, and the fruit juices are thick and fresh.

Both the following have restaurants next door serving the usual Indonesian fare plus a few Western dishes:

Mitra Anda Pub & Karaoke (Jl Gajah Mada) Cold beer and entertainment.

Golden Panorama Karaoke & Pub (Jl AKB Sanipah) Live music on weekends.

Wall to wall warungs spring up at night along Jl P Antasari, and you can tuck into barbecued shrimp, chicken and fish for under 10,000Rp.

Getting There & Away

AIR

DAS (☎/fax 21965; Jl P Durian II 26) and **Kal-Star** (☎/fax 21007; Jl Maulana 17) fly to Tarakan, Tanjung Selor and Nunukan daily between them. Kal-Star also flies to Balikpapan and Samarinda.

BOAT

There are passenger boats leaving from Berau to Tarakan roughly twice a week (130,000Rp, 11 hours); check information listed at the boat terminal and buy your tickets on the boat. The *Teratai* leaves every second day for Samarinda (150,000Rp, 27 hours).

Speedboats congregate at the dock at the end of Jl P Antasari and charge 1,000,000Rp each way to Pulau Derawan (three hours).

BUS

It takes 3½ hours travelling over 124km

of partially unsealed road to reach Tanjung Selor (65,000Rp). Buses to Samarinda (135,000Rp, 16 hours) leave from the terminal on Jl Hari Isa just south of the bridge crossing Sungai Kelai. Buses leave from the Jl Hari Isa terminal.

Getting Around

The airport is about 9km southwest of town. Taxis cost 40,000Rp. For short trips on the waterways around Berau, you can charter a motorised canoe for around 50,000Rp per hour.

PULAU DERAWAN & AROUND

☎ 0551

Anchored in the Sangalaki Archipelago, a marine reserve off Tanjung Batu, Derawan is a beautiful tear-shaped speck of land with a village around the fringe, spotless white-sand beaches, coconut plantations in the centre and a good supply of fresh water. Schools of *tongkol* (tuna fish) surround the island and cause feeding frenzies near the surface where birds dive for spoils. Rare green turtles lay eggs on the beach near the Derawan Dive Resort. The area has some of the best snorkelling and diving in Indonesia and addicts happily pay the expensive transport out here for several days of bliss.

There are no cars, just a couple of motorcycles, and electricity generators run for only a few hours in the evening. The main entertainment is the volleyball and badminton matches in the early evening, and satellite TV.

Other islands in the group with accommodation include **Nabucco** and **Sangalaki**, which is home to manta rays and green turtles. Nearby are the islands of **Karaban**, which has an ecologically intriguing lake in its centre, caves with swallows' nests and a population of huge coconut crabs; and **Maratua**, which has a population of 2100 in four villages, set around a lagoon.

Activities

Pulau Derawan's main attractions, snorkelling and diving, are conducted from the Derawan Dive Resort. Individual dives cost around US\$35, including tank and equipment hire. Dives off Pulau Sangalaki and other outer islands cost more. Renting snorkelling equipment is US\$6 a day. You can also try hiring boats in the village; read-

ers have recommended a captain named Agil for trips to the outer islands.

Sleeping & Eating

Losmen Ilham (Pulau Derawan; r 30,000-50,000Rp) This small and simple losmen has clean rooms with fans (when the electricity is on) and shared *mandis*. An additional 75,000Rp per person includes three meals a day.

Losmen Danakan (☎ 0868 121 6143; Pulau Derawan; r incl meals 75,000Rp) Next door to the Derawan Dive Resort, this warm, welcoming and immaculate homestay has just five rooms, all with shared *mandis*.

Derawan Dive Resort (☎ 0542-7072615; www.divederawan.com; Pulau Derawan; 5-nights all inclusive per person from US\$970; 🏠) This classy resort treats guests to comfortable accommodation in timber cottages and good buffet meals of Western and Indonesian dishes served in a floating restaurant. Packages include transport to the island and three dives per day. A minimum of two people is required.

Sangalaki Dive Resort (☎ 608 8242336; www.sangalaki.net; Pulau Sangalaki; r per person US\$250; 🏠) The most exclusive resort in the area has 12 beachfront chalets with private verandas. They're elevated to allow nesting turtles clear access to the rest of the beach. The central complex includes a restaurant that serves excellent seafood, a bar and satellite TV. Rates include meals and three dives per day.

More accommodation options:

Penginapan Yos Mas (Pulau Derawan; s/d with fan & shared mandi 40,000/60,000Rp) Near the public pier at the northern end of the island.

Nabucco Island Resort (☎ 0542-420258; www.nabucco.island.com; Pulau Nabucco; s/d/t US\$120/180/250; 🏠) Isolated and indulgent resort. Rates include meals and snorkelling.

There are a couple of warungs in the village on Pulau Derawan. It's a good idea to bring along fruit and snacks from Berau or Tarakan for variety.

TANJUNG BATU

This is a fishing village with a couple of warungs and a losmen. If you are stuck here waiting for a boat, **Losmen Famili** (r 30,000Rp) has rooms with shared *mandis* (no fan).

Getting There & Away

The twice-weekly boats between Berau and Tarakan drop passengers at Tanjung

Batu, from where you can hire a speedboat to Pulau Derawan (200,000Rp, one hour). A speedboat directly from Berau (1,000,000Rp, three hours) is far more expensive. Boats between Derawan, Sangalaki and Nabucco cost from 400,000Rp.

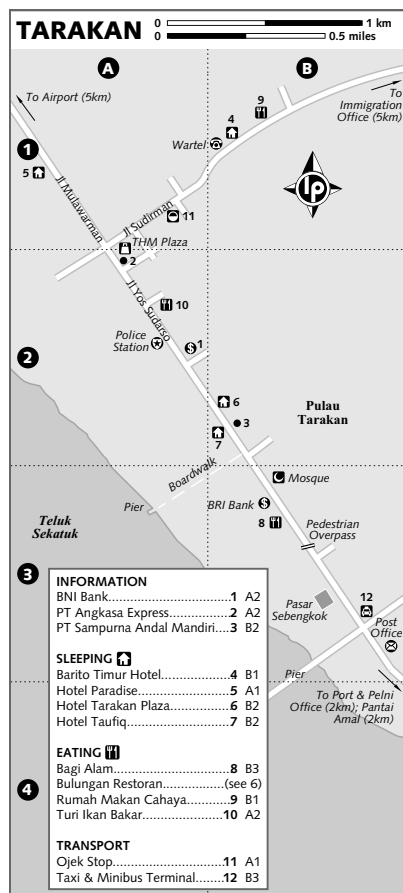
TARAKAN

☎ 0551 / pop 100,000

Although it's conveniently close to the Sabah border and a stepping stone to other places, Tarakan offers little of cultural interest. It was the site of bloody fighting between Australians and Japanese at the end of WWII.

Information

BNI bank (Bank Negara Indonesia; Jl Yos Sudarso) Foreign exchange and an ATM.



Immigration office (☎ 21242; Jl Sumatra) For visa regulations related to crossing between Indonesia and Malaysia.

PT Angkasa Express (☎ 51789; fax 23326; Jl Yos Sudarso, THM Plaza, Blok D-5) Air and boat tickets.

PT Sampurna Andal Mandiri (☎ 21975; Jl Yos Sudarso) Also air and boat tickets.

Sights

There's a **memorial** (*kuburan Australia*) to the Australian soldiers on the grounds of the Indonesian military barracks, right in front of their volleyball courts. A **gravesite** (*kuburan Jepang*) lies in the hills nearby for the Japanese who were killed, alongside old bunkers.

Pantai Amal is a swimming beach outside of town. Get there by public minibus (3000Rp) or charter a taxi for 10,000Rp.

Sleeping & Eating

Hotel Taufiq (☎ 21347; fax 25940; Jl Yos Sudarso 26; s 45,000-100,000Rp, d 55,000/110,000Rp; 🍴) This is a great budget option, although the pricier air-con rooms could take on any midranger. Spotless and friendly to boot.

Barito Timur Hotel (☎ 21181; Jl Sudirman 133; r 170,000-220,000Rp; 🍴) A lovely midrange option, the Barito Timur has pleasant rooms and a sweet breakfast of cake, tea and coffee.

Hotel Tarakan Plaza (☎ 21870; fax 21029; Jl Yos Sudarso 1; s/d from 250,000/280,000Rp; 🍴) The English-speaking staff here may be a bonus for some and although the rooms are ageing, they're lovely. There's a good restaurant (mains 20,000 to 30,000Rp) serving Indonesian fare and seafood, and a bar downstairs.

Hotel Paradise (☎ 22999; fax 32668; Jl Mulawarman 21; s/d from 240,000/260,000Rp; 🍴) Tarakan's nearest version to high-end accommodation, the Hotel Paradise has reasonable rooms with a tad more comfort than other options in town. Inside, the Bulungan Restoran (mains 15,000-25,000Rp) is a comfortable retreat serving delicious Chinese, Western and Indonesian food for breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Rumah Makan Cahaya (Jl Sudirman; mains 10,000Rp; 🍴 breakfast, lunch & dinner) This eatery is a wee upgrade from the simple warungs around town, and serves steamy and spicy seafood, *nasi goreng* and Chinese dishes.

Tarakan is blessed with an abundant supply of fresh fish and plenty of warungs serve excellent *ikan bakar* (barbecued fish).

On Jl Yos Sudarso try Turi Ikan Bakar or Bagi Alam.

Getting There & Away

AIR

Garuda Citilink and Kartika fly to Balikpapan. DAS and Kal-Star fly to Samarinda, and Kal-Star also flies to Tanjung Selor. DAS flies to Long Bawan.

BOAT

Pelni (☎ 51169; Jl Yos Sudarso) is at the main port. The *Dobonsolo* travels fortnightly to/from Toli Toli in Sulawesi (economy 140,000Rp) and north to Nunukan (economy 60,000Rp).

Private passenger boats head to Berau roughly twice a week (130,000Rp, 11 hours) from the other pier, located about halfway between the Pelni office and the THM Plaza.

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