

# Kalimantan



Kalimantan is one of the world's last, vast wilderness areas, a symphony of natural beauty and indigenous cultures.

Covering two-thirds of Borneo in four provinces, Kalimantan showcases countless natural wonders. It's the last refuge for most of the world's wild orangutans, and home to ancient civilisations, including Dayak tribes that selectively embrace the 21st century, struggling to balance modernity with tradition.

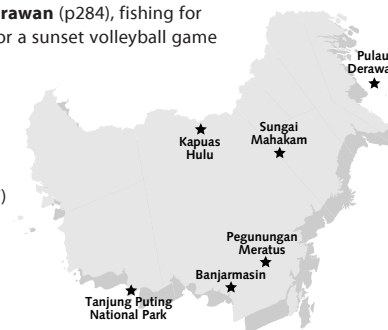
While roads are improving, the best attractions remain tied to Kalimantan's waterways. River boats up the mighty, mysterious Sungai Mahakam lead to rainforests and longhouse villages. Simpler craft with put-put engines reminiscent of cinema's *the African Queen* reveal the great apes and vibrant jungle of Tanjung Puting National Park. Narrow canoes call on Banjarmasin's water villages and floating markets. Off the east coast, amid some of the world's best diving, Pulau Derawan preserves bygone times, where easy smiles remain the openly exchanged currency.

There is a dark side to Kalimantan, too. Ongoing destruction, from logging and intentional forest fires, plus energy extraction, continues to reduce the areas where these natural attractions thrive. This cloud merely underscores that there will never be a better time to visit Kalimantan than right now.

Time is running out: don't miss the boat.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Chugging up Sungai Sekonyer by *klotok* (canoe with water-pump motor) to see orangutans in **Tanjung Puting National Park** (p253), sleeping on deck with cicadas singing lullabies and gibbons' whoops as a morning alarm
- Flying underwater with mantas off **Pulau Derawan** (p284), fishing for dinner on the return trip, returning in time for a sunset volleyball game
- Nailing breakfast at a floating market and trading high-fives at wash time in the waterways of **Banjarmasin** (p260)
- Seeking Dayak longhouse traditions of intricate tattoos and drive-through earlobes above the rapids of **Sungai Mahakam** (p277) or in **Kapuas Hulu** (p244)
- Swinging across bamboo bridges over river valleys in breathtaking **Pegunungan Meratus** (p267), wrapping up with a river raft to hot springs



■ POPULATION: 12,223,300

■ AREA: 558,266 SQ KM

## HISTORY & CULTURE

Kalimantan's riches drew Chinese and Indian traders as far back as AD 400. Hinduism, Chinese settlers, and, a millennium later, Islam all arrived ahead of Europeans. Dutch and English imperialists began sparring over Kalimantan in the early 17th century. Holland won here, while England took Sarawak and Sabah (see p23).

The lurking British, as well as Kalimantan's bounty, spurred Dutch industriousness, particularly during the 1800s. Envoys signed treaties with local sultans, though Banjarmasin fought the imperialists in 1859 and resisted until 1905. Global industrialisation and expanding wealth spurred demand for traditional commodities and new ones: coal and oil.

Petroleum drew Japan's attention during WW II, and the war's end brought independence to Indonesia. But over the past six decades, Kalimantan has struggled to find its place in Indonesia.

Kalimantan is less homogenous than much of Indonesia. It has three major ethnic groups: Malay Indonesians from other islands who tend to follow Islam and live along the coasts and rivers; Chinese, traders in Kalimantan for centuries; and Dayaks, Kalimantan's indigenous inhabitants. Each group holds a majority in parts of Kalimantan.

Population has grown through *transmigrasi* (transmigration), a government policy begun by the Dutch and expanded under Suharto. Clashes between Dayaks and Maduranese,

frequent transmigrants, erupt periodically. In many towns, Jln Madura has been renamed.

Beyond *transmigrasi*, economic opportunity and expanding government increasingly bring outsiders to Kalimantan. With a cast now comprising crusading missionaries and imams, loggers, planters and conservationists, government administrators and traditional leaders, the struggle for Kalimantan's soul continues. Joseph Conrad would be busy indeed.

## GETTING THERE & AWAY

Balikpapan's Seppingan Airport is Kalimantan's only entry point offering visa on arrival (VOA, see p299). All other entry from outside Indonesia – by land, sea or air – requires a visa in advance. Indonesian consulates in Sabah – Tawau (see p151) and Kota Kinabalu (p91) – issue visas to foreigners.

### Air

**Silk Air** ([www.silkair.net](http://www.silkair.net)) flies between Balikpapan and Singapore. **Batavia Air** ([www.batavia-air.co.id](http://www.batavia-air.co.id)) flies between Pontianak and Kuching in Sarawak, plus Batam near Singapore. **Garuda** ([www.garuda-indonesia.com](http://www.garuda-indonesia.com)) and **Batavia** fly the most routes to the rest of Indonesia.

Air schedules and carriers constantly change due to rapid growth and, following major accidents in 2007, heightened safety concerns. Now more than ever, rely on travel agents for the best information, service, and prices.

### Boat

Boats depart daily (except Sunday) from Taranak and more frequently from Nunukan in East Kalimantan to Tawau in Sabah.

**Pelni** ([www.pelni.co.id](http://www.pelni.co.id)) and other carriers connect to Jakarta, Semarang and Surabaya on Java and Makassar, Pare Pare, Mamuju and Toli Toli on Sulawesi.

### Bus

Air-con buses link Pontianak and Kuching (140,000Rp to 200,000Rp, 10 hours).

## GETTING AROUND

Roads now connect most major towns, and construction continues. Quality varies dramatically by location and season. Bus routes follow roads but trips often include stops to get out and push or await repairs. Air-con, smoke-free buses remain the exception. Kijangs, a local SUV brand, runs scheduled routes between some cities and

can be chartered everywhere, often through hotels and travel agencies. Where necessary and available, 4WD versions are far more expensive.

For long distances, flights via **Kal-Star** ([www.kalstaronline.com](http://www.kalstaronline.com)), Dirgantara Air Service (DAS) and others may save time and wear, often at surprisingly low fares.

*Kapal biasa* (river ferries) or *long boats* (narrow wooden boats with covered passenger cabins) are a pleasant alternative to buses and best for exploring the jungle. Scheduled and chartered speedboats and motorised *ces* (canoes) reach many small towns and tributaries.

## WEST KALIMANTAN

Blessed with Indonesian Borneo's widest variety of attractions, West Kalimantan (Kalimantan Barat or KalBar) is also blessed – or cursed – with its least-developed tourist infrastructure. A sizable Chinese minority spices the mix. Visitors can find the most traditional villages, wild orangutans, virgin forests and idyllic beaches, but gird for struggle, with success by no means guaranteed.

### PONTIANAK

☎ 0561 / pop 520,000

Stoutly astride the equator, Pontianak is Kalimantan's city with big shoulders, processing rubber and timber from the interior and marketing the region's abundant produce. At the confluence of Sungai Landak and Sungai Kapuas, Kalimantan's longest river at 1243km, KalBar's biggest city doubles as gateway to the Dayak settlements and forests of Kapuas Hulu (upper Kapuas). Pontianak's coffee stalls and brisk roadside commerce create an urban buzz rare in Kalimantan.

### Orientation

Pontianak's centre of gravity has expanded south across Jln Diponegoro to Jln Gajah Mada. Streets there pulsate far into the night.

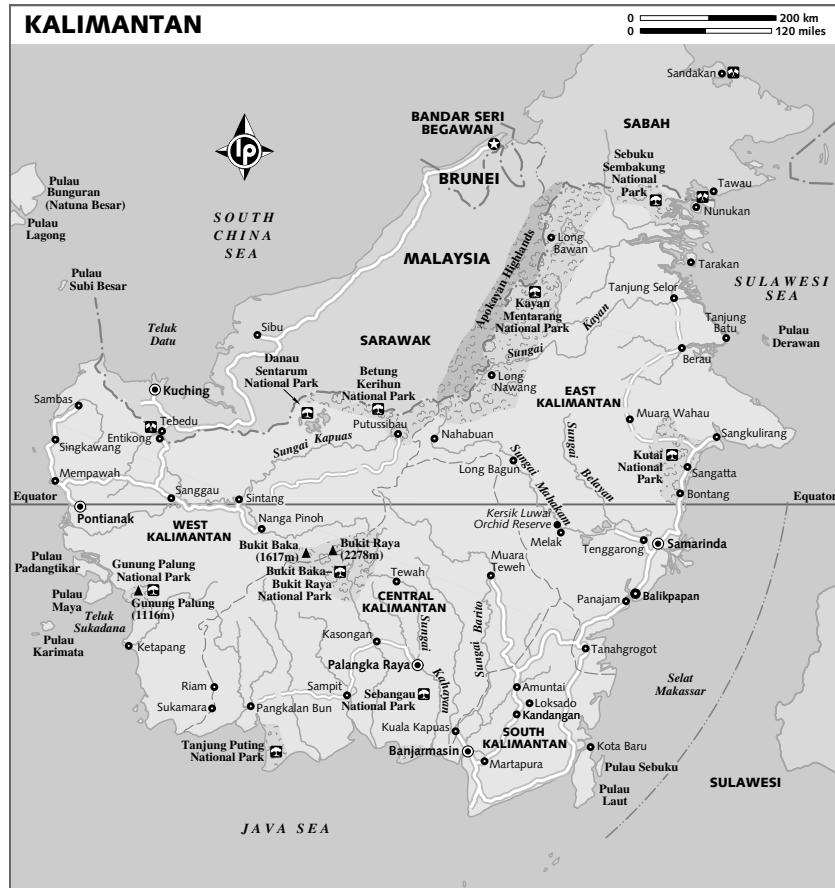
### Information

#### INTERNET ACCESS

**Centrine Online** (per hr 4000Rp; ☎ 7.30am-10pm)

Signposted in a short alley off Jln Nusa Indah III.

**Mitra Tour & Travel** (☎ 733-544; Jln Teuku Umar Komplek; per hr 4000Rp; ☎ 9.30am-midnight) Music, snacks and flight bookings, too.





## IMMIGRATION OFFICES

**Immigration office** (☎ 734-516; Jln Sutuyo)

**Malaysian Consulate** (☎ 732-986, 736-061; mwptk@telkom.net; Jln Sultan Syahrir 21, ☎ 8am-4pm Mon-Fri)

## MEDICAL SERVICES

**Klinik Kharitas Bhakti** (☎ 734-373; Jln Siam 153)

## MONEY

ATMs abound. For currency exchange:

**BII bank** (cnr Jln Tanjungpura & Jln Diponegoro)

**BNI bank** (Jln Tanjungpura)

**PT Safari** (Jln Tanjungpura 12) Moneychanger with good rates.

## POST

**Main post office** (Jln Sultan Abdur Rahman 49;

☎ 7.30am-9.30pm Mon-Sat, 8am-2pm Sun) Poste restante.

## TOURIST INFORMATION

**City tourist office** (☎ 732-340; Jln Johar 1) City maps (when in stock) and rudimentary information.

**Kalimantan Barat tourist office** (☎ 736-172; fax 743-104; Jln Sutuyo 17) Ebullient, English-speaking Pak Iwan provides ambitious regional travel tips.

## TOUR & TRAVEL AGENCIES

**Berjaya Tour & Travel** (☎ 737-325; www.berjayatour.com; Jl Pahlawan 224/2) Pontianak agent for Putussibau's ecotourism initiatives (see p243), plus full travel services and a Ketapang branch.

**Borneo Access** (☎ 081-2576-8066; alexafdal@borneoaccess.com) Founder and West Borneo Tour Guide Association general secretary Alex Afdhal is a knowledgeable and tireless KalBar booster.

**Mentari Tour** (☎ 767-196; mentari\_tour\_ptk@yahoo.com.sg; Jln Hijas 108)

**Panorama Anugrah Pratama Tour & Travel** (☎ 739-483; tour\_panorama@yahoo.com; Jln Diponegoro 149) Air, boat and Kuching bus tickets, plus in-town delivery. Responds to English emails.

**Times Tour & Travel** (☎ 770-259; timestravel@yahoo.com; Blok H6, Komplek BTN Jeruju, Jln Yos Sudarso) English-speaking Iwan aids travellers with ticket delivery and Sunday service.

## Sights

### RIVER LIFE

The **taman** (park; Jln Rahadi Usman) between the ferry crossing and Kartika Hotel showcases river activity. The **Pinisi Harbour** further south features these sailing schooners, produced by South Sulawesi's Bugis seafarers, docked alongside KalBar's unique *bandung* (floating general stores).

### ISTANA KADRIYAH & MESJID ABDURRAHMAN

The ironwood palace of Syarif Abdurrahman Alqadrie, Pontianak's sultan from 1770 to 1808, **Istana Kadriyah** (admission by donation; ☎ 8.30am-4pm) is now a museum showing royal relics.

Approximately 100m south, royal mosque **Mesjid Abdurrahman** (also known as Mesjid Jami) has a Sumatran-style square-tiered roof. Continue across wobbly planks to stilt houses, best enjoyed at washing times early or late in the day.

Get here by canoe taxi (3000Rp) or charter (15,000Rp) from the Kapuas Indah piers.

### MUSEUM NEGERI PONTIANAK & DAYAK LONGHOUSE

South of Pontianak's centre, the **museum** (Jln Ahmad Yani; ☎ 8am-3pm Tue-Sun) features Dayak tribal artefacts and *tempayan*, ceramics (mostly water jugs) from Thailand, China and Borneo dating from the 16th century.

Around the corner, a replica **Dayak longhouse** (Jln Sutuyo) has genuine totems and carved log steps.

### EQUATOR MONUMENT

Grown from a simple marker in 1928 into a goofy collage of circles and arrows with a huge replica outside marking *its* spot, the **Equator Monument** (Patung Khatulistiwa) makes much – too much – of Pontianak's geographical draw. It draws crowds every equinox to experience shadowless sunlight.

Take a *bis kota* (intercity bus; 2000Rp) from outside Kartika Hotel or an *opelet* (local mini-van; 3000Rp) from Siantan terminal heading northwest. Patung Khatulistiwa is alongside the highway, and, believe us, you can't miss it.

### SAHAM LONGHOUSE

The traditional Dayak dwelling closest to Pontianak, **Saham longhouse** (*rumah betang*) in Pahauman is one of KalBar's oldest (more than 200 years) and longest (180m).

Visit by bus from Batu Layang toward Ngabang (114km, 7500Rp, 3½ hours) or executive buses toward Sanggau. Get dropped at the Pahauman turn, then catch a local taxi or *ojek* (motorcycle taxi; 12km). Kijangs from Pontianak can cost up to 500,000Rp.

### Festivals & Events

Pontianak's geography inspires the twice-yearly **Equatorial Culture Festival** around the March and September equinoxes, with Dayak, Chinese and Malay traditional dancing and singing, and competitions.

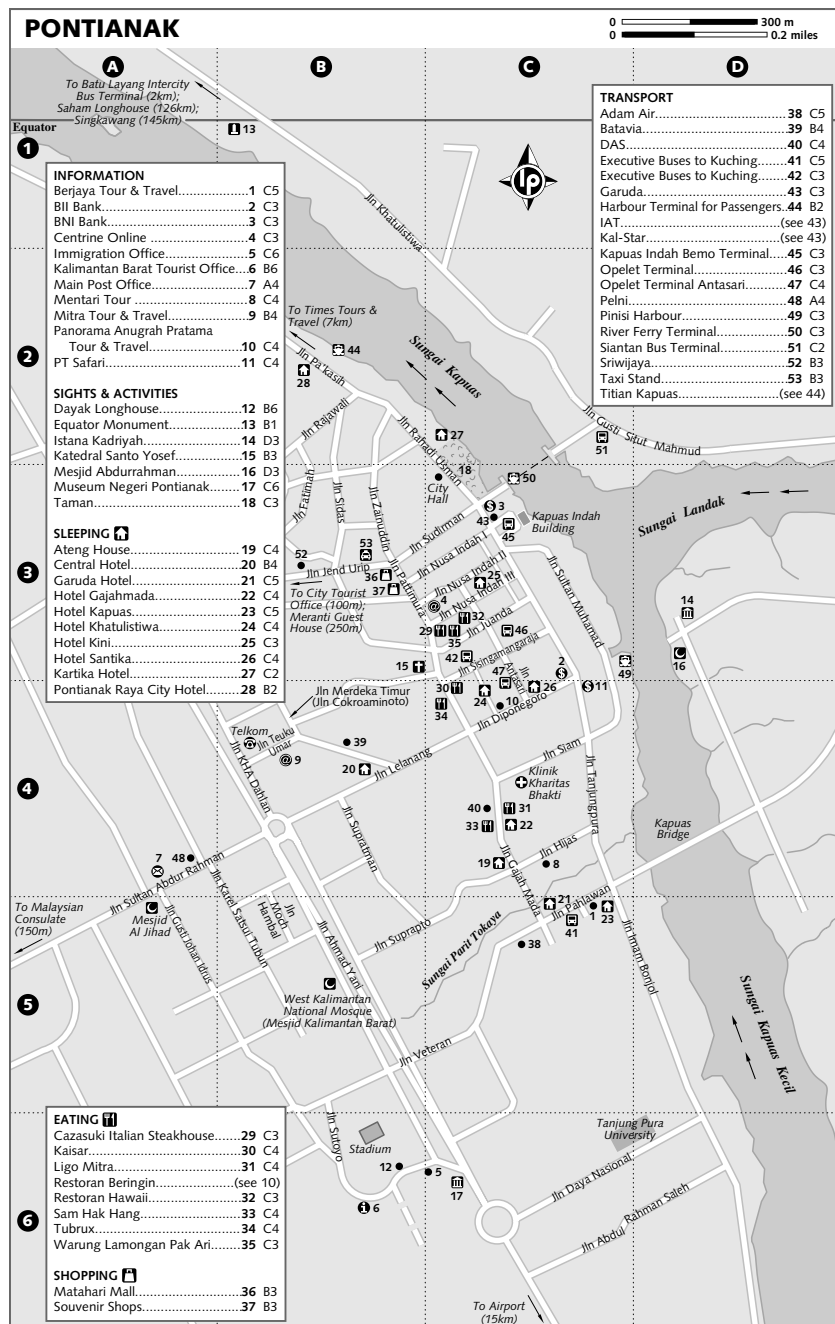
**Robok-Robok** celebrates the founding of Pontianak's Mempawah kingdom with a royal yacht procession, dragon-boat races, and terrestrial events. Dates follow the Islamic calendar, falling in mid-January in 2009, and moving two weeks earlier annually. The **Gawai Dayak** harvest festival in May is centred on Pontianak's **Dayak longhouse** (Jln Sutuyo).

### Sleeping BUDGET

**Pontianak Raya City Hotel** (☎ 732-496; fax 733-781; Jln Pa'kash 44; s/d incl breakfast from 77,000/88,000Rp plus 10% tax; ☎) Open-air corridors and welcoming staff show the way to cosy economy digs and huge standard rooms. The harbour end of town provides abundant traveller services.

**Ateng House** (☎ 732-683; atenghouse@yahoo.com; Jln Gadjah Mada 201; s/d incl breakfast 79,000/89,000 plus 15% tax; ☎) Affiliated with the travel agency underneath it, each bright, cosy room has air-con, TV, private bathroom, and homely touches such as bedspread and curtains. Borneo's best cup of coffee is just outside.

**Central Hotel** (☎ 737-444, fax 734-993; Jln Cokroaminoto 232; r incl breakfast 115,000-170,000Rp; ☎) Ignore that ground-floor barber shop: Central's no clip joint. Large, comfortable, if weathered, rooms offer Pontianak's cheapest hot-water showers.



More budget options:

**Meranti Guest House** (☎ 731-783; Jln Meranti 31A; r 50,000-130,000Rp; ☎) Variety of room types jigsawed into a converted house down a residential street.

**Hotel Khatulistiwa** (☎ 736-793; fax 734-930; Jln Diponegoro 56; r 77,000-110,000Rp; ☎) Vast, basic hotel in an alley smack city-centre.

### MIDRANGE & TOP END

**Kartika Hotel** (☎ 734-401; fax 738-457; Jln Rahadi Usman; r incl breakfast 170,000-310,000Rp plus 21% tax; ☎) Bright yellow décor puts a shine on flagging rooms. The tennis court and river-view restaurant – wipe those windows! – recall Kartika's glory days.

**Garuda Hotel** (☎ 736-890; fax 739-001; Jln Pahlawan 40; r 199,000-499,000Rp, ste 599,000Rp; ☎) Renovated in 2005, Garuda's rooms are as tarted up as the visitors to its rooftop disco. Cushy digs score with domestic business travellers.

**Hotel Gajahmada** (☎ 761-598, 081-2578-9900; hotel-gajahmada@ptk.centrin.net.id; Jln Gajah Mada 177; r including breakfast 230,000-446,000Rp; ste 599,000-788,000Rp; ☎) This two-star hotel features fresh, spacious rooms, helpful staff, and a top location. The lobby coffee shop's 24-hour food- and internet-service includes a tantalising Indonesian buffet breakfast.

**Hotel Kapuas** (☎ 736-122; www.hotelkapuas.com; Jln Gajah Mada 889; r incl breakfast from 261,000Rp, ste incl breakfast from 528,000Rp; ☎) Urban resort amenities such as a fitness centre, tennis court, 100m pool and bar, make Kapuas' posh rooms great value.

**Hotel Kini** (☎ 732-223; hotelkini\_ptk@yahoo.com; Jln Nusa Indah III; r incl breakfast 366,000-420,000Rp, ste incl breakfast 541,000-748,000Rp; ☎) Newish and garish, 'Hotel Now' indulges guests with semicircular lounge chairs, and a spa and sauna. Call the crooner fronting a jazz combo in its Blue Sapphire Cafe 'high class' or 'high kitsch'. Discounts run big on rooms, but are stingier on suites.

**Hotel Santika** (☎ 733-777; www.santika.com; Jln Diponegoro 36; r incl breakfast 521,000-558,000Rp, ste incl breakfast 596,000-1,158,000Rp plus 21% tax; ☎) Pontianak's freshest three-star entry and part of a national chain, Santika has relaxing rooms, plus a complete business centre.

### Eating

**Tubrux** (☎ 708-1900; Jln Pattimura 211D; drinks from 2,000Rp; ☎) breakfast, lunch & dinner) The most popular coffee shop downtown. People pack its outdoor and indoor tables to share the local

dish. Tubrux also dishes up simple Indonesian food, and solo women will feel comfortable.

**Kaisar** (☎ 731-554; Jln Pattimura) This bakery-turned-shopping empire's Roman logo nobly roams KalBar. Breads run very sweet or very white.

**Restoran Beringin** (☎ 732-803; Jln Diponegoro 151; meals 9,000-15,000Rp; ☎) breakfast, lunch & dinner) Padang restaurant offering enormous variety. With Panorama Tours, it flanks the alley to Hotel Khatulistiwa.

**Czasuki Italian Steakhouse** (☎ 733-420; Jln Nusa Indah III; mains 11,000-30,000Rp; ☎) lunch & dinner) Fusion or confusion? Shabu-shabu, spaghetti, sauerbraten, steaks and burgers, even satay, are all scrumptious.

**Restoran Hawaii** (☎ 738-038; Jln Nusa Indah III 79-80; mains from 15,000; ☎) lunch & dinner) This Hawaii is a comfortable place to sample Chinese food, KalBar style, blending traditional and tropical flavours.

**Warung Lamongan Pak Ari** (Jln Juanda; mains 10,000-18,000Rp; ☎) lunch & dinner) Giant deep fryers outside draw big crowds for fish or chicken served with special *sambal* (chilli sauce) guaranteed to clear airways.

Food and coffee stalls appear nightly, many along Jln Gajah Mada. For a stellar Chinese street feed and cooking demonstration, try Sam Hak Heng opposite Hotel Gajahmada. Self-caterers, use **Ligo Mitra** (Jln Gajah Mada 77).

### Getting There & Away

#### AIR

**Batavia** (☎ 734-488; fax 736-604; Jln Cokroaminoto 278A) flies to Kuching (US\$50), Batam near Singapore (720,000Rp; continuing to Pekanbaru), Jakarta (365,000Rp), Surabaya via Yogyakarta, and Semarang.

**Kal-Star** (☎ 739090; Jln Tanjungpura) and **IAT** (Indonesia Air Transport; ☎ 736-603; Pasar Sudirman A16, Jln Tanjungpura) fly to Ketapang (320,000Rp), Pangkalan Bun (650,000Rp) and Semarang (1,170,000Rp) in central Java. **IAT** and **DAS** (☎ 736-407; Jl Gajah Mada 67) fly to Putussibau (700,000Rp), with DAS continuing to Samarinda (965,000Rp). **Garuda** (☎ 734-986; Jln Tanjungpura), **Sriwijaya** (☎ 768-777; Jln Jendral Urip 19) and **Adam Air** (☎ 767-999; Jln Veteran 6) also serve Jakarta.

#### BOAT

Long distance boat services leave from the harbour on Jln Pa'kasih, north of Kartika Hotel. River boats for the 800km journey to Putussibau are virtually extinct.

**Pelni** (☎ 748-124; fax 748-131; www.pelni.co.id; Jln Sultan Abdur Rahman 12) sails every 14 days to Jakarta (economy 210,000Rp, 36 hours), Semarang (economy 165,000Rp, 38 hours) and Surabaya (economy 197,000Rp, 40 hours).

**Titian Kapuas** (☎ 731-187; Jln Usin 3) at the harbour entrance is a ticket agent for the twice-weekly *Dharma Kencana* to Semarang (179,000Rp, 32 hours) and *Marisa* to Jakarta (170,000Rp, 32 hours).

Daily jet boats head south along the coast to Ketapang (90,000Rp to 135,000Rp, six to eight hours). In choppy waters, first class is worth it.

## BUS

Batu Layang intercity bus terminal is northwest of town. Ferry across the river to Siantan to the white *opelet*, or take a direct *opelet* from Jln Sisingamangaraja. From Batu Layang, daily buses head to Singkawang (15,000Rp, 3½ hours), Sambas (22,000Rp), Sanggau (24,000Rp, four hours) and Sintang (65,000Rp, nine hours).

Chock-a-block on Jln Sisingamangaraja and Jln Pahlawan, several companies run air-con day or night buses to/from Kuching (economy/executive 140,000/200,000Rp, 10 hours). Most also service Singkawang, Sambas, Sanggau, Sintang and Putussibau (200,000Rp, 20 hours). It's more convenient, comfortable, and costly than using Batu Layang.

## CAR & MOTORCYCLE

Travel agencies or hotels arrange Kijangs with drivers (per day 750,000Rp plus petrol) for exploring KalBar at your pace. Taxi drivers around town may offer lower prices. For experienced riders only, motorcycles rent for 150,000Rp per day.

## Getting Around

Airport taxis cost 60,000Rp to town (15km). Alternatively, hike to the main road to find an *opelet*.

*Opelet* (minibus; 3000Rp) routes cover most of town with terminals at the Kapus Indah Building, Jln Sisingamangaraja, and Jln Antasari. Taxis wait outside **Matahari Mall** (cnr Jln Jendral Urip & Jln Pattimura), with becaks around **Katedral Santo Yosef**. Hotels have Kijangs standing by; the starting fare for these 'hotel taxis' is Rp20,000.

Motorised canoes depart from piers alongside the Kapuas Indah building. Crossing to

Istana Kadriyah or Siantan bus terminal costs 3000Rp. Public ferries, 100m north, to Siantan cost 1000Rp.

## SUNGAI KAPUAS

Sungai Kapuas, Kalimantan's longest river, leads to the rich rainforests and indigenous communities of KalBar's eastern highlands. River boats up Sungai Kapuas from Pontianak are a casualty of road building, (poorly) paving the way for brutally bumpy bus rides.

With luck, substantial Bahasa Indonesia, and a lengthy visa, you may be able to travel by *bandung*. An 800km journey from Pontianak to Putussibau on this combination houseboat, freighter and general store can take from four days to four weeks, and itineraries and prices are negotiable.

Beyond Putussibau and along Kapuas Hulu tributaries, travel is still primarily by boat. Similar to local minivan or Kijang travel, that means waiting for enough people to fill a boat, or else chartering one at considerable expense. In general, motorised canoes are less expensive (and slower) than speedboats. Speedboat charter rates average 150,000Rp to 200,000Rp per hour.

## Sintang

☎ 0565 / pop 40,000

At the confluence of Sungai Kapuas and Sungai Melawi, and with the grey curtain of Gunung Kelam behind it, Sintang marks the start of Kapuas Hulu, the upper river.

Scattered ATMs around town take international cards. For medical emergencies, consult **Rumah Sakit Ade Mohammad Djoen** (☎ 22805/07/09; Jln Pattimura).

**Kobus Centre** (Jln Mohammad Saad; ☎ 9am-2pm) displays a range of local handicrafts, especially the renowned local *ikat* (woven cloth). Father Maessen, a Dutch missionary resident for more than 30 years, founded Kobus to help preserve craft traditions. Kobus and local government support *ikat* production at **Ensaid Panjang** (50km or one hour), one of several Dayak *rumah betang* near Sintang.

Across the river, the former sultan's palace is now **Dara Janti Museum**. The keeper will open it up for a small donation. Boats to cross the river (10,000Rp) congregate beyond the riverfront *warung* (food stalls).

Outside town, **Taman Baning** (2km) is a 215-hectare slice of tropical forest for watching

birds and viewing wild orchids. Take an *opelet* (3000Rp) or *ojek* (5000Rp to 10,000Rp).

A more testing trek, **Gunung Kelam** features butterflies, a waterfall (*air terjun*) and panoramic views. The challenging path up the 900m peak has steel ladders on its toughest rock faces. For the 18km trip, take an *opelet* to Pasar Impres (3000Rp) and then a Kelay *opelet* (7000Rp) to the gaudy park entrance.

Eight hours south of Sintang, **Bukit Bakau-Bukit Raya National Park**, named for two of Kalimantan's highest peaks, offers extraordinary montane forest vistas, breathtaking waterfalls, meandering rivers, giant rafflesia blooming every March, and barely any tourist facilities. Reach the sprawling 181,000-hectare Schwaner Range reserve by 4WD from Nanga Pinoh or boat from Nanga Popai. From Palangka Raya in central Kalimantan, get there by combining road, river and trekking via Tumbang Jatuh, Tumbang Manggu and Tumbang Gagu. To visit, contact the **park office** (☎ /fax 23521; Jln Dr Wahidin Sudirohusodo).

It's about four hours by 4WD or seven hours by boat to **Danau Sentarum National Park** (see p244).

## SLEEPING & EATING

**Sakura Hotel** (☎ 23418; Jln MT Haryono 58A; r 70,000-128,000Rp; ☎) The rustic lobby leads to comfortable rooms with refrigerator, Western bathroom, and, in air-con grades, hot water. The spacious parking lot makes Sakura a trucker favourite.

**Hotel Setia** (☎ 23433; Jln Mahapahit 1-4; r 75,000-85,000Rp; ☎) In Sintang's centre, Setia snags business travellers. Identical rooms include private *mandi* (a common Indonesian form of bath, consisting of a large water tank from which water is ladled over the body), TV and air-con; walking upstairs saves 10,000Rp.

**Sintang Permai Hotel** (☎ 22725; Jln MT Haryono 117; r 120,000-140,000Rp; ☎) Up a hill about 600m outside downtown, Sintang's newest hotel has bright rooms with refrigerator, TV and hot water. Helpful staff arrange chartered cars from 15 minutes upward, and a 24-hour canteen dishes up Indonesian basics (mains 6,000Rp to 14,000Rp).

*Warung* on stilts blanket the riverfront. Find fruit vendors, food stalls and Padang eateries one block inland on Jln Kol Sugioso. **Sartika Restaurant** (Jln Kol Sugioso; mains 8,000-10,000Rp; ☎) breakfast, lunch & dinner) offers steamy noodle and vegetable soups that go down well in the

mountain air. **Intar** (Jln Kol Sugioso) sells groceries and other essentials, and there's a Kaiser bakery down the street.

## GETTING THERE & AWAY

At the time of research there were no flights to Sintang; check in Pontianak for updates.

Buses to Putussibau (125,000Rp, 12 hours), Semitau (50,000Rp, four hours), and Pontianak (90,000 Rp, nine hours) leave from Pasar Durian terminal on Jln Wisapati. The road to Putussibau is partly sealed, but heavy rains still create havoc. When dry, the heavily cratered route is merely hellish.

For buses south to Nanga Pinoh (10,000Rp, one hour) head to Sungai Uko bus terminal, 10km southwest of Sintang by *opelet* (10,000Rp).

## Putussibau

☎ 0567 / pop 15,000

Putussibau is the last sizable Kapuas Hulu town, and a launch point for excursions to traditional communities and the remaining untouched forests.

Local government, national park authorities, WWF and villagers jointly created **Kompakh** (☎ 085-6500-2101; www.kompakh.org; Kompleks GOR, Jln Pendidikan) to develop ecotourism. Kompakh offers touring options including Danau Sentarum and Betung Kerihun National Parks, longhouse visits, river cruising, and jungle treks from mild to extreme, featuring a trans-Borneo journey by foot and boat. With two weeks' notice, Kompakh can arrange white-water rafting. All tours can be customised, and prices depend on group size and precise itinerary.

Putussibau's centre falls between Sungai Kapuas and Sungai Sibau. Jln Kom Yos Sudarso runs north-south (*angkot* – small minibus – rides 3000Rp), becoming Jln Panjaitan, home to Putussibau's lone ATM, and Jln A Yani to the south near the bus and boat terminals and traditional market. The **Telkom office** (Jln KS Tubun) has internet access. **Rumah Sakit Dr Achmad Diponegoro** (☎ 21129; Jln Kom Yos Sudarso 42) offers medical services.

## SLEEPING & EATING

Most hotels can arrange cars, drivers and guides. None include breakfast in their room rates.

**Hotel Merpati Indah** (☎ 21317; Jln KS Tubun 26; r 40,000-100,000Rp; ☎) Located 50m from the

Telkom office, this upmarket losmen's economy rooms have fans and shared *mandi*.

**Aman Sentosa Hotel** (☎ 21691; fax 21357; Jln Diponegoro 14; r 40,000-150,000Rp; 📶) Tour companies still steer foreigners here, once Putussibau's best hotel. Cheapest rooms have fans and shared *mandi*; the best add TV, air-con, refrigerator and private *mandi*.

**Permata Bunda Inn** (☎ 22249; Jln Kom Yos Sudarso 87; r 50,000-150,000Rp; 📶) This ambitious place boasts phone and photocopy service in the lobby. Luxury-grade rooms feature hot water showers. Its restaurant does filling Indonesian meals (mains 6000Rp to 10,000Rp).

**Sanjaya Hotel** (☎ 21653; fax 22366; Jln Kom Yos Sudarso 129; r 50,000-200,000Rp; 📶) The newest hotel in town has a lobby wartel, but requires a walk up one or two flights to its rooms. 'VIP' class includes hot-water shower, air-con and refrigerator.

**Mess Pemda** (☎ 21010; Jln Merdeka 11; r 125,000-150,000Rp; 📶) This government hostel has air-con in every clean, simple room. Its TV lounge broadcasts the local vibe.

**Siti Nurbaya** (☎ 22082; Jln Kom Yos Sudarso; mains 6000-12,000Rp; 🍳; breakfast, lunch & dinner) Combines precooked Padang food and freshly made Indonesian standards.

**Famili** (☎ 21378; Jln KS Tubun; mains 15,000-20,000Rp; 🍳 lunch & dinner) Putussibau's Chinese finest.

Food stalls operate day and night around the market at the south end of town. Try the local speciality *krupuk basah* (5000Rp): ground fish steamed in banana leaf, sprinkled with shrimp crackers and spicy peanut sauce.

#### GETTING THERE & AWAY

**IAT** (Indonesia Air Transport; ☎ 22663; Jln Danau Sentarum 21A) and **DAS** (☎ 21046) fly to/from Pontianak (700,000Rp). DAS continues to Samarinda (1,390,000Rp). Taxis from the airport cost 35,000Rp, while taxis to the airport run 20,000Rp.

Several companies downtown operate buses to Pontianak (125,000Rp, 20 hours) and Sintang (90,000Rp, nine hours). A Pontianak service passes through Sanggau for connections to Kuching in Sarawak. Local buses, *angkot* and *ojek* use the terminal on Jln Rahadi Usman, opposite the market.

Charter boats for Tanjung Lokan in the Kapuas watershed; ask Kompakh or your hotel, or, with Bahasa Indonesia and brass, try it yourself at the pier on Sungai Kapuas

just east of the bridge. The two-day trip costs around 3,000,000Rp.

#### Around Putussibau

Just upstream from Putussibau, find long-house villages **Melapi I** and **Sayut** (also called Melapi II). **Semangkok I** and **Semangkok II**, with a much older longhouse, are both up Sungai Mendalam. The trip can take three hours, and charters cost 150,000Rp per hour. *Angkot* (8000Rp) is a cheaper alternative to the Melapi longhouses. Both *rumah betang* accept overnight guests. Etiquette dictates offering cash payment for food and any photographs you snap, plus gifts to show appreciation for the accommodation.

**Bangun** (1,800,000Rp return, eight hours each way) and **Tanjung Lokan** (3,000,000Rp return, 12 to 16 hours each way) are traditional villages accessible only by longboat. Don't expect longhouses; these are Punan Dayaks, ancestral cave dwellers. Villagers still practise traditional methods of gold mining, incense making, farming, and boat building. Trans-Borneo and Betung Kerihun National Park routes pass Bangun.

#### DANAU SENTARUM NATIONAL PARK

This 132,000-hectare wetland area regulates the water levels of Sungai Kapuas. In the wet season, lake depths reach 8m. In the dry season, fish huddle in isolated pools.

Danau Sentarum is famous for super red arowana *Scleropages formosus*, an aquarium trophy fish frequently seen leaping out of the lake. Wildlife in peat swamps and lowland rainforest include orangutans, proboscis monkeys, crocodiles, stork and great argus pheasant.

At least four Dayak groups – Iban, Sebaruk, Sontas and Punan – with several longhouses, live in and around the park.

Before visiting, contact the **park office** (☎ 0565-22242; Jln Oesiang 0eray 43) in Sintang for registration (10,000Rp per day). It can also arrange guides (50,000Rp per day) and boats (2,500,000Rp per day). Kompakh in Putussibau (see p243) also arranges tours here.

Local accommodation for visitors is planned. Until then, a basic facility for researchers in Bukit Tekenang, a fishing village with floating houses, has floor mattresses and shared kitchen; you pay what you wish for its use.

#### BALANCING ECOTOURISM *Katsuki Nose*

As a child, I loved reading stories about animals and became interested in their behaviour, in nature, in forests and even insects. I'd watch ants march for hours.

As I grew older, I collected information about the destruction of nature. I couldn't abandon nature when it came time to get a job; I wanted to promote conservation through my work.

After high school, I couldn't afford university, so I decided to work and study as a volunteer abroad. I contacted WWF Indonesia, and they gave me a job, working to develop ecotourism.

The traditional livelihood of many Dayaks, Borneo's indigenous people, depends on hunting. But with the development of national parks that prohibit hunting, Dayaks need alternative ways to earn a living.

WWF suggested ecotourism as an option for Dayaks. Community members can work as guides, producing and selling crafts, and staging performances. Beside the profits for the Dayaks, tourists also gain enlightenment from the contacts.

Of course, there's a potential downside, too. If overdeveloped or mismanaged, ecotourism can lead to destruction far more serious than hunting. No matter how sensitively it is developed, ecotourism is bound to affect Dayak culture.

Everyday, my WWF colleagues and I work hard to find the right balance.

*Katsuki Nose, from Kyoto, Japan, is a volunteer with WWF in Putussibau, West Kalimantan, and helped create the website www.kompakh.org.*

Danau Sentarum is reached from Sintang by bus (50,000Rp, four hours) or longboat to Semitau (seven hours). From Putussibau, charter a longboat to Nanga Suhaid (seven hours) or take a minibus to Lanjak (65,000Rp, 3½ hours). Boats for hire and guides can be found in those villages and in settlements within the park.

#### BETUNG KERIHUN NATIONAL PARK

Sheltering the headwaters of Sungai Kapuas amid a diversity of ecosystems and animals, mountainous **Betung Kerihun National Park** traces the border with Sarawak. WWF's Heart of Borneo initiative aims to unite this park with Malaysia's Lantjak Entimau Wildlife Reserve.

The 800,000 hectare park, named for two Muller Range peaks, has some 1200 tree species accommodating 300-plus species of birds. Eight types of forest, from lowland to montane, shelter orangutan, gibbon, tarsier, various leaf monkeys, sun bear and clouded leopard. Salt springs dotting the park attract wildlife.

Visitors can do trekking, caving, and, with advance arrangement, kayaking, canoeing or white-water rafting, as well as cultural tourism in Tanjung Lokan, Bangun and other settlements scattered around the park. For details, contact Kompakh or **Betung Kerihun National Park office** (☎ /fax 0567-21773; Komodor Yos Sudarso 130, Putussibau).

#### TRANSBORNEO: PUTUSSIBAU TO LONG APARI

The reasonably fit, ambitious and funded can attempt crossing to East Kalimantan. Trekking experience helps, but even novices are likely to do better than George Muller, the first European to try it. In 1825, Muller crossed the mountain range that now bears his name, then was beheaded.

From Putussibau, trans-Kalimantan travel begins by boat to Tanjung Lokan. Then it's five to seven days walking across the Muller Range and pristine forests to the headwaters of Sungai Mahakam at Long Apari. From there, progressively larger boats carry travellers to Samarinda in three or four days.

Aside from drive and legs, you need dosh for substantial expenses. Figure roughly 3,000,000Rp to Tanjung Lokan. A guide is essential beyond there. Expect to pay 150,000Rp to 250,000Rp per day. Budget at least 3,000,000Rp for boats in East Kalimantan. Food costs around 50,000Rp per person daily and also has to be provided for guides and porters (per day 50,000Rp to 80,000Rp).

Few guides for hire in Tanjung Lokan speak English. Your chances are better in Putussibau: ask at hotels about independent guides. Kompakh (or in Pontianak, its partner Berjaya Tours; p238) can also provide guides or complete tours. Packages start from 12,000,000Rp to 15,000,000Rp per person for two.

Some choose to trek across Kalimantan from Samarinda (see p272) or Balikpapan (see p269).

Aside from where and how (and why), there's the issue of when to trek. In the rainy season, cooler temperatures provide some compensation for the wet. July and August are dry but very hot, and the annual forest fires follow. May and June seem ideal for jungle jaunts. Honeybees agree, and often plague trekkers during those months.

## Singkawang

0562 / pop152,000

Known as *Kota Amoy* (City of Young Chinese Women), predominantly Hakka Chinese Singkawang attracts men from Taiwan seeking brides. Even if you're not ready for a lifetime commitment, Singkawang's a pleasant place to get your bearings in KalBar or chill on the beach after trekking.

## SLEEPING & EATING

**Hotel Sinar Khatulistiwa I** (☎ 631-816; Jln Selamat Karman 17; r 45,000-100,000Rp; 🏠) At a busy intersection along Jln Diponegoro, this landmark offers choice. All but top-priced rooms are shabby and noisy.

**Hotel Paseban** (☎ 631-449; Jln Ismail Tahir 41; r 70,000-120,000Rp; 🏠) Outside the centre (1.5km), this concrete-block truckers' favourite is a solid option. Most basic but comfortable rooms include a Western bathroom. Expect 20% discounts.

**Hotel Prapatan** (☎ 636-888; Jln Sejahtera 1; r 150,000-275,000Rp plus 8% tax; 🏠) Shiny and bright Prapatan has modern rooms in Singkawang's centre. It's a favourite with bride-shoppers and business travellers.

**Hotel Mahkota** (☎ 631-244; Jln Diponegoro 1; hmskal bar@plasa.com; r 315,000-725,000Rp plus 18% tax; 🏠 🍷) This grand dame, the height of luxury a generation ago, still stands proud. Four-star facilities include a swimming pool, a tennis court, a disco, plus blue-and-gold drapery that would do Liberace proud.

**Rumah Makan Tio Ciu Selera** (☎ 631-226; Jln Diponegoro 106; mains 10,000-16,000Rp; 🍽️ lunch & dinner) Chinese food is an obvious local favourite. The speciality here is Chiu Chao-style seafood.

**Warung Dangau** (☎ 639-000; Jln A Yani; mains 7000-15,000Rp; 🍽️ lunch & dinner) Dangau spices its local menu with Malaysian and Singaporean specialities.

## GETTING THERE & AWAY

Buses to Pontianak's Batu Layang (15,000Rp, 3½ hours) and Sambas (13,000Rp, three hours) leave frequently until late afternoon from a lot on Jln Sejahtera. Several companies nearby run air-con buses to Sintang (70,000Rp, eight hours), Pontianak's centre (35,000Rp, four hours), and Kuching in Sarawak (80,000Rp, six hours).

Local buses from the Jln Pasar Hulu terminal to Bengkayang stop at Gunung Poteng (5000Rp; see below). Ask to get dropped at the foot of the hill. Kijang leave north to Sambas (13,000Rp, three hours) or south to Mandor (11,000Rp, three hours).

## Around Singkawang

Search for the world's largest flower at **Gunung Poteng**, 12km east of town. Each rafflesia plant only blooms once a year, but there are flowerings year-round. Reaching the mountaintop takes two hours.

**Ceramic factories** 5km south of town produce huge, colourful Chinese jars. The Semanggat Baru factory, 100m from the main road, has an ancient kiln and can ship purchases. Prices start from 250,000Rp. Sinar Terang, 400m further, is another cool kiln.

## Pasir Panjang & Tanjung Gundul

Thick coastal forests south of Singkawang shelter some of KalBar's best beaches.

Mobbed on weekends and holidays, **Pasir Panjang** (12km south) has a public pool and other facilities. **Palapa Beach Hotel** (☎ 633-402; fax 633-400; r 195,000-340,000Rp, cottages 250,000-275,000Rp; 🏠) features clean, casual rooms and pokey cottages with carports. Weekend discounts run 33%. Its **Palapa Discotheque** (admission 30,000Rp, 🍷 Friday & Saturday nights) crosses Cinderella's castle with a Chinese temple. The hotel offers snorkelling trips to tiny **Pulau Randayan** (800,000Rp, 40 minutes); overnighting in basic accommodation (100,000Rp) is optional.

Take any *opelet* south from Singkawang's bus terminal (3000Rp, 20 minutes) or *ojek* (15,000Rp) to the **Taman Pasir Panjang** (Long Beach Park; admission 3000Rp) gate, and walk 500m to the beach.

Protected by an unpaved road, **Kura Kura Resort** (☎ 085-8221-81173, 081-5122-637811; www.kurakurabeach.com; charlie@kurakurabeach.com; rind meals per person 75,000Rp, villas 300,000Rp) is more isolated and relaxed. Owner Charlie Robertson, and

## CHARLIE'S EGGSHELLS

To preserve the turtles that lend Kura Kura Resort its name, Charlie Robertson guards their eggs. His beach is a favoured hatchery area, and turtle eggs are a prized delicacy. 'You'll find them on the menu in any Chinese restaurant,' Robertson says. 'Sometimes guests come here with them to cook. I send them away.'

Robertson has tried various strategies to protect turtle eggs. None are perfect.

'I offer to buy the eggs. You leave them and I'll pay you for them,' Robertson says. 'But then they tell their friend, 'I know where the eggs are. Charlie will buy them.' I was spending a fortune buying the same turtle eggs three times a day,' Robertson laughs.

'People here tell me, 'What's the big deal? My father took turtle eggs, my grandfather did it, and we still have plenty of turtle eggs.' They don't realise, it's the same turtle they've been taking the eggs from all these years, while they've been eating its replacements.'

'If I can keep the turtle eggs safe and give the hatching two months until its shell gets hard, then it's got a chance.' Until then, Charlie's their guardian angel.

wife Siska, strive to preserve this patch of white sand sheltered by unspoiled hills 3km from Tanjung Gundul village. The resort has no electricity or bright lights to avoid disturbing *kura-kura* (turtles) laying eggs ashore (see above). Comfortable, all-wood accommodation includes homestay rooms and a villa sleeping up to seven. The resort commandeers platoon-sized tents for bigger crowds and welcomes individual campers. Snorkelling, trekking, sailing and fishing can be arranged. But a lie-about on the beach to drink in the vista and perhaps a cold beer – resupplies of ice and beer are always welcome here – is about the right speed for most visitors.

To visit Kura Kura, call or email ahead. Because of limited internet access, it's best to SMS an alert after emailing. Access is via Tanjung Gundul (10,000Rp by *opelet*, 23km south of Singkawang).

Another 15km south (or 100km north of Pontianak), well-hidden **Pantai Gosang** overlooks offshore islands. Look for Bapak Dendy, head of the local fisherman's association, for day trips or camping on Pulau Pelapis or another idyllic spot.

## SAMBAS

☎ 0562 / pop 56,000

Archaeological finds link Sambas to the Srivijaya Kingdom and perhaps 6th-century India. Diamonds and 18th-century gold finds brought Chinese settlers. Sambas is now best known for *kain songket* (cloth with silver or gold thread woven in), but check prices in Pontianak before shopping here.

**Keraton Sambas** hints at the former prosperity. Now a museum accessible only by

river, the architecture and view are enchanting. Hire a canoe for 10,000Rp and paddle over. Or charter a motorised canoe to tour **stilt homes** along Sungai Sambas. It's similar to canal tours in Banjarmasin (see p262), but Sambas receives far fewer visitors, so you'll get bigger greetings.

Sambas is usually a day-trip destination. For accommodation, try **Hotel Wella** (☎ 392438; Jln Panji Anom; r 40,000-140,000Rp; 🏠) or hotels at **Pemangkat Beach**, 25km north of Singkawang, 50km from Sambas:

**Hotel Fortuna** (☎ 380-123; Jln Wikora; r 50,000-165,000Rp; 🏠)

**Grand Hotel** (☎ 242-558; fax 242-553; Jln Nusantara 69; r 120,000-220,000Rp; 🏠)

Transport from Singkawang to Sambas (13,000Rp, three hours) stops at Pemangkat.

Beyond Sambas, long stretches of isolated beach, including Tajung Datok (two hours) at Kalimantan's northwestern tip, offer Robinson Crusoe-type stays.

## KETAPANG

0534 / pop 30,000

Gateway to hidden destinations such as Gunung Palung National Park (p249) and KalBar's southwest coast, even Sungai Pawan is hidden as it flows through Ketapang's centre. With effort, travellers can discover river in a soothing park and journey further.

**Kendawangan** (80km south) has unspoiled, largely undeveloped beaches with quaint fishing settlements and simple losmen (basic accommodation, though not always, and usually cheaper than hotel; often family-run). Reach it by bus or rented car.

**ORIENTATION & INFORMATION**

*Opelets* (3000Rp) cover town via Pasar Baru. *Ojek* (from 8000Rp) wait near Hotel Perdana along Jln Merdeka. For cash, ATMs dot Ketapang's centre.

**Berjaya Tour & Travel** (☎ 770-0907, 081-2562-0680; Jln MT Haryono 142; www.berjaya.com; 🕒 8am-5pm & 7-9pm) Hard-working wife and husband Mulia Lie and Rudy Salimu are a travellers' English-speaking welcome wagon. This branch of Pontianak's Berjaya Tour (see p238) books flights, ferries, local tours and more.

**Karya Tours** (☎ /fax 303-6633; Jln A Yani 49) Flights and Gunung Palung National Park arrangements.

**Post office** (Jln Suprpto) Near Seafood 26 there's also one on Jln Dr Sutomo.

**Rumah Sakit Fatima** (Jln Jend Sudirman) Hospital.

**SLEEPING**

**Hotel Bersaudara** (☎ 32874; Jln Diponegoro 5; r 30,000-60,000Rp; 🕒) In an old pink house, this friendly losmen features a 2nd floor balcony shaded by a tree. The cheapest of its clean but tired rooms are bare with shared *mandi* and ceiling fan. A little more money buys much more comfort.

**Hotel Anda** (☎ 32575; Jln R Suprpto; r 30,000-75,000Rp plus 10% tax; 🕒) This simple place draws crowds

with scrubbed rooms and low rates. The location has food plus shopping within steps.

**Losmen Patra** (☎ 32742; Jln Diponegoro 63; r 55,000-75,000Rp; 🕒) Exceptionally bright and friendly, Losmen Patra rooms have private *mandi*. There's a *warung kopi* (coffee stall) in the front yard of this quiet, residential setting.

**Putra Tanjung Hotel** (☎ 32574; Jln Pak Nibung I 12A; r 66,000-104,500Rp, ste 121,000Rp; 🕒) This three-storey hotel's small, tidy rooms feature lots of wood. The front desk sports Ketapang's top collection of taxi service name cards, but the staff attitude needs a tune-up.

**Hotel Perdana** (☎ 33333; fax 32740; Jln Merdeka 112; r 112,500-350,000Rp plus 10% tax; 🕒) Ketapang's best hotel has hot-water showers and a crisp, shiny look. The 20% discount from January to March typically extends to other months. The lobby restaurant serves Indonesian food (mains from 8000Rp; open breakfast, lunch and dinner) and cold beer.

**EATING**

**Rumah Makan Anna S** (☎ 32751; Jln Diponegoro; mains 7000-12,000Rp; 🕒 lunch & dinner) Break from Padang food for West Java home cooking.

**BIRDHOUSE BLUES**

When banqueters in Taipei and Hong Kong savour birds-nest soup, the key ingredient can hail from Ketapang. The town has dozens of *rumah walet* – tall, dark buildings housing thousands of swiftlets whose spit produces high-priced nests – in a variety of designs. A hexagonal green *rumah walet* in Pasar Baru is the most prominent structure in town.

In Sabah and Sarawak, caves remain the predominant source for swiftlet nests, mainly because villagers jealously guard birds. But throughout Kalimantan, urban *rumah walet* dominate the trade. As town centres lose residents to suburbanisation, these bird houses have become a civic issue.

To suit the birds and maintain security for produce worth hundreds of dollars per kilo, *rumah walet* have no exterior lights or no windows. For some town elders, dark buildings filled with hundreds of noisy birds that occasionally bombard pedestrians during flights equal blight. They contend *rumah walet* encourage urban exodus.

As Indonesia widens its global lead in human bird flu (avian influenza) deaths, complaints, tinged with genuine fear, soar. *Rumah walet* owner associations assure all they are very concerned about avian influenza due to its potential to devastate their business, grimly adding that *rumah walet* tenders would be the people first afflicted.

There could be a satisfying solution to the debate. Despite millions of birds, there's not a bowl of their special soup to be found in Kalimantan. Perhaps an annual birds-nest banquet at Ketapang's ornate **Kam Thien Tai The** (Jln Merdeka Utara 162) temple would soothe local tempers and attract tourists to feather local nests.

**Wong Lamongan** (Jln R Suprpto 22; mains 10,000-13,000Rp; 🕒 lunch & dinner) Owner Haji Masuri has a grill on the left, a deep fryer on the right. You choose the fate for fish or chicken.

**Seafood 99** (☎ 34222; Jln Suprpto 162; mains 10,000-60,000Rp; 🕒 lunch & dinner) Locally renowned Chinese seafood served in cosy, air-con comfort.

**Seafood 26** (☎ 34575; Jln Suprpto 139; mains 8,000-60,000Rp; 🕒 lunch & dinner) Open-air Seafood 26 sprawls across a family compound with seating for hundreds. An air-con section in back has karaoke and, thankfully, sound-resistant glass.

Find *warung* and street stalls around Pasar Baru, Jln Suprpto and Jln MT Haryono. Self-caterers use **Fokus Swalayan** (Jln Suprpto).

**GETTING THERE & AWAY****Air**

**IAT** (☎ 303-6736) and **Kal-Star** (☎ 35588) fly to Pontianak (338,000Rp), Pangkalan Bun (378,000Rp) and Semarang (868,000Rp) in central Java. A taxi to/from the airport (6km) costs 40,000Rp; it's 15,000Rp by *ojek*.

**Boat**

Daily jet boats head to Pontianak (economy/first class 90,000/135,000Rp, six to eight hours) from the harbour north of town on Jln Gajah Mada. Reclining seats in first class give

comfort in choppy seas. *Satya Kencana* sails weekly to Semarang (185,000Rp, 30 hours) and Pontianak (85,000Rp, 12 hours).

**Bus**

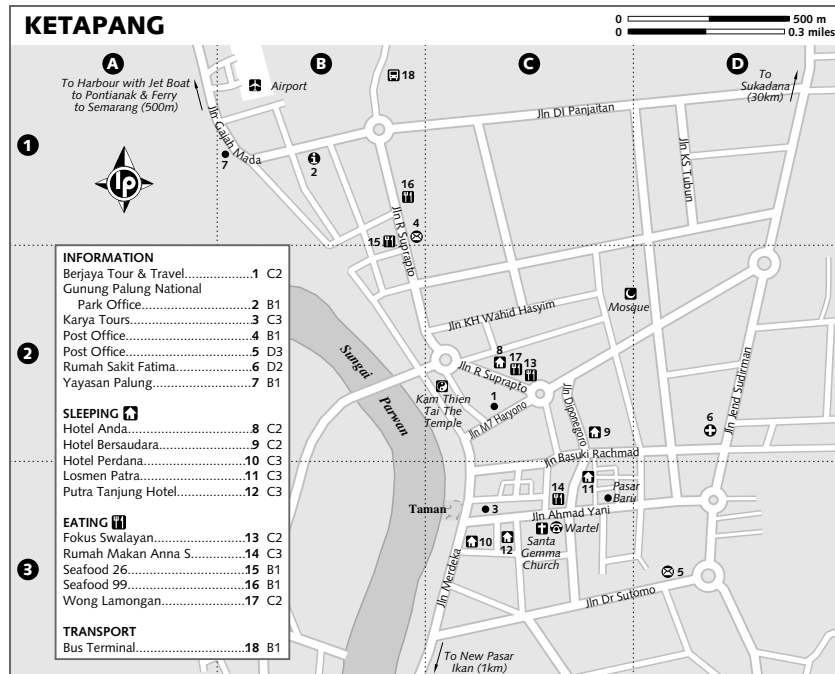
Like many bus terminals in Kalimantan, Ketapang's has moved from its former convenient downtown location, and accessible by *opelet* (5km). Northbound buses to Sukadana (17,000Rp, 2½ hours) for Gunung Palung National Park run from 7am. Buses south to Kendawangan (20,000Rp, three hours) depart twice daily – early morning and afternoon.

**GUNUNG PALUNG NATIONAL PARK**

Perhaps 10% of the world's wild orangutans live in **Gunung Palung National Park** (entrance fee 10,000Rp). Unlike the redheaded apes at some popular sites, orangutans here are completely wild.

Seaside Gunung Palung is among Kalimantan's top biodiversity preserves; the Massenerhebung effect compresses vegetation zones, creating several forest types within this relatively compact 100,000hectare park. The richness extends to wildlife, with three dozen species of mammals and nearly 200 types of birds, representing every avian family, if not every species, in Kalimantan.

Frequented by Harvard and Yale researchers, Gunung Palung has also been a top





choice for illegal logging and poaching. Park management has recently cracked down, including patrols by microlight aircraft, and encouraged tourism.

**Yayasan Palung** (Map p248; ☎/fax 0534-303-6367; yaya.sanpalung@fastmail.fm; Jln Gajah Mada 97, Ketapang) arranges tours and independent travel. Ketapang independent guide **Lufti Faurusal Hasan** (☎ 081-3450-98018; lhasan\_6677@yahoo.com) also has a good reputation and speaks English.

## Orientation & Information

Obtain permits for Gunung Palung at the **park office** (Balai Taman Nasional; Map p248; ☎/fax 0534-770-7345, 0534-32720; Jln Gajah Mada Desa Kali Nilam; ☎ 8am-2pm Mon-Fri, 8am-11am Sat) in Ketapang. Bring a passport copy. The office can arrange transport to Sukadana, guides, tour packages, and supply recommendations for the trip. After shopping, catch the bus north to Sukadana (80km, 20,000Rp, 2½ hours), or charter a Kijang (350,000Rp).

From Sukadana, walk two hours to the new camp at Lubuk Baji. Opportunities for cultural tourism are available en route at Air Pauh and Begasing villages. On a hillside, Lubuk Baji has views of **Gunung Palung** (1116m) and **Gunung Panti** (1050m) plus the distinctive temples of Balinese *transmigrasi* villages.

Opened in 2007 as a community-based ecotourism initiative by Yayasan Palung, Lubuk Baji includes simple sleeping and cooking facilities. Nearby waterfalls include a 30m beauty just below camp, plus swimming holes, all with clear, potable mountain water. Yayasan Palung estimates a two-night stay costs from 400,000Rp to 1,000,000Rp per person, depending on the type of transport used, food choices and excursions.

**Batu Barat**, in lowland swamp forest, has orangutan, proboscis monkey, sun bear and freshwater crocodile. Black orchids bloom February to April. Accommodation is rough camping or very basic homestays. For Batu Barat, continue past Sukadana to Teluk Melano (7km), then take a motorised canoe along Sungai Matan (50,000Rp). Yayasan Palung estimates 400,000Rp to 800,000Rp for excursions here.

Many Gunung Palung visits end with a splash in the sea at Pulau Datok outside Sukadana.

Park officials hope to open more areas, but Cabang Panti research camp no longer welcomes tourists.

# CENTRAL KALIMANTAN

Kalimantan's least-developed province boasts a leading tourist attraction, Tanjung Puting National Park. Beyond that famed orangutan haven, the interior of Central Kalimantan (Kalimantan Tengah, or KalTeng) remains largely unvisited. Indonesia's third-largest province at 153,564 sq km, and with a population of barely two million, KalTeng is mainly flat and poorly drained. Chainsaws have ravaged large swathes of forest, but pockets of jungle and traditional life remain, including longhouses over a century old.

Predominantly Dayak, KalTeng split from South Kalimantan in 1957 to escape Banjarmasin's dominance. Gem and souvenir shops hawkling beads and swords reinforce KalTeng's Dayak identity. So does a dearth of vegetables and fruit, since Dayaks focus on protein and rice, with prices double those in KalBar.

## PANGKALAN BUN

☎ 0532 / pop 40,000

In 2005, Pangkalan Bun got religion. Since the town went Islamic in a Dayak-dominated province, local authorities banned alcoholic beverages, except for religious ceremonies. However, to date, there's no Church of Bintang (the national beer) conducting services.

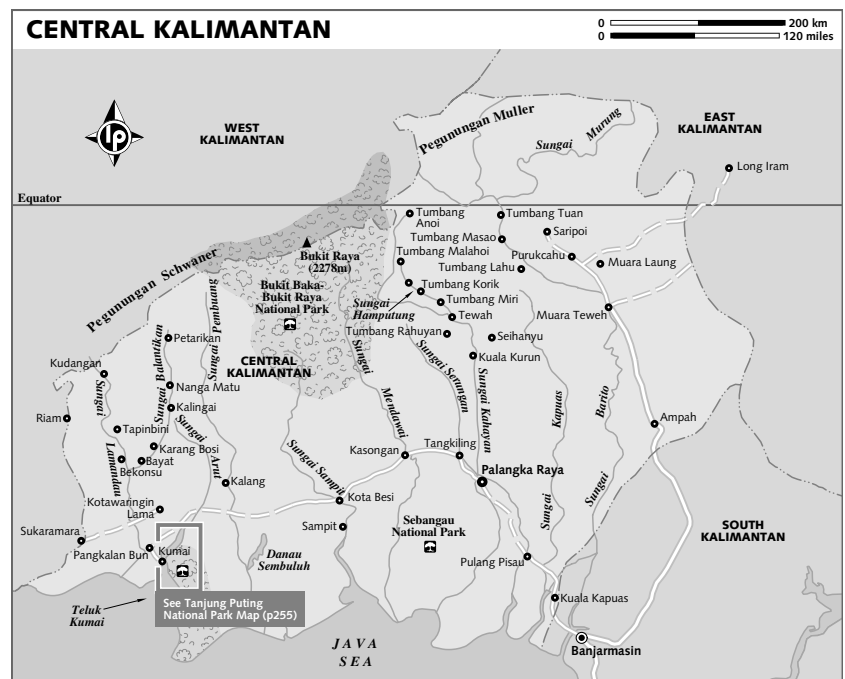
Don't call Pangkalan Bun a dry town, though, not with Sungai Arot running through it. (Nor with its copious mud during the rainy season.) Strolling the boardwalk off Jln Antasari yields dozens of photo opportunities, mainly schoolboys vamping during their afternoon swim.

The main drag, Jln P Antasari runs parallel to the river. Beware of confusion Jln Kasumayuda, officially named Jln PRA Kasumayuda is sometimes mistaken for Jln Prakasumayuda.

Most tourists arrive en route to Tanjung Puting National Park. Flight schedules may permit avoiding an overnight stay, but, even without alcohol, Pangkalan Bun can be a pleasure rather than a sentence if you take some time to explore the town.

## Information

Many businesses close late afternoons and reopen after dark. Banks around town have ATMs.



**Bayu Angkasa Tour and Travel** (☎ 22374; www.bayuangkasa.co.id; Jln Hasanudin 11/75) KalTeng tours to Tanjung Puting and beyond.

**BNI bank** (Jln P Antasari) Exchanges travellers cheques and cash.

**Borneo Holidays** (☎ 29673, 081-2500-0508; borneo.holidays@planet-save.com) Owner Harry Purwanto and guide Danson lead personalised tours of Tanjung Puting and KalTeng's rivers.

**Pahala Internet Café** (Jln Kasumayuda; per hr 7000Rp)

**Post office** (Jln Kasumayuda 29)

**Tirta Internet Café** (Jln Domba 23; per hr 7000Rp)

**Yessoe Travel** (☎ 21212) Books air tickets, runs buses, and suggests guides.

## Sleeping

**Hotel Bone** (☎ 21213; Jln Domba 21; r 35,000-85,000Rp; 📶) The top feature at the Bone (pronounced 'Bo-nay') is the 2nd floor terrace lounge area overlooking a quaint side street on the *opel* route. Fan-cooled economy rooms with shared *mandi* and large, air-con 'VIP' rooms are good value.

**Hotel Andika** (☎ 21218; fax 21923; Jln Hasanudin 20A; s incl breakfast 40,000Rp, d incl breakfast 50,000-85,000Rp; 📶) Small porches lend charm to simple

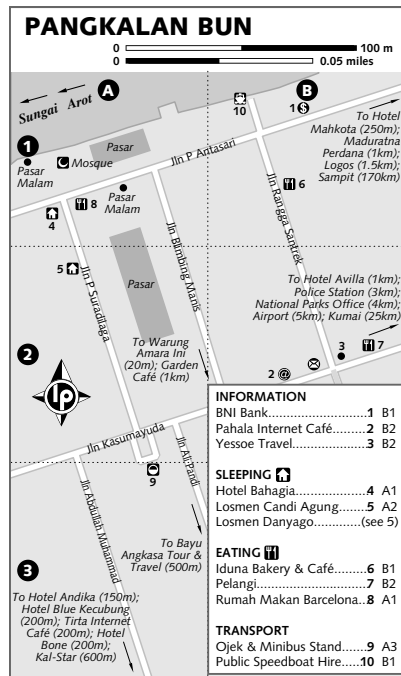
rooms. This helpful hotel arranges cars for a short time or a full day. Its restaurant (mains 8,000Rp to 15,000Rp; open breakfast, lunch and dinner) features Indonesian favourites.

**Hotel Bahagia** (☎ 21226; Jln P Antasari 100; r 50,000-170,000Rp; 📶) You'll be happy (*bahagia* is Bahasa Indonesia for happiness) if you beat domestic travellers to a clean room in this central spot.

**Hotel Mahkota** (☎ 21172; Jln P Antasari; r incl breakfast 150,000-270,000Rp; 📶) Furnishings and afternoon tea would suit grandma's parlour, but there's fresh paint, hot water and air-con in every spacious room.

**Hotel Avilla** (☎ 27710; fax 27711; Jln Pangeran Diponegoro 81; r incl breakfast 200,000-250,000Rp; 📶) This bright and stylish place features very comfortable rooms off its open-air atrium and accommodating staff. Breakfast is served in the upstairs dining area before wide patio doors.

**Hotel Blue Kecubung** (☎ 21211; fax 21513; Jln Domba 1; s incl breakfast 186,500-285,500Rp, d incl breakfast 225,500-324,500Rp; 📶) The choice of overseas tour groups; the lobby luxury doesn't reach rooms or service. Beware of the stairs to



rooms, the restaurant, and the four flights to the fitness centre.

**Losmen Danyago** (☎ 22259; Jln P Suradilaga 59; r 35,000Rp), and **Losmen Candi Agung** (☎ 21483; Jln P Suradilaga; r 35,000Rp) above, offer clean, basic rooms with private *mandi* in the centre of town.

## Eating

**Warung Amara Inl** (cnr Gang Addullah Machmud & Jln Kasumayuda; meals 3,000-7,000Rp; ☎ breakfast & lunch) Vegetarians' delight with at least four home-cooked varieties, plus fish and chicken choices dished out cafeteria style. Take away or join the family at a low table around a huge TV.

**Rumah Makan Barcelona** (Jln P Antasari; meals from 5,000Rp; ☎ breakfast, lunch & dinner) The only thing Castilian in this busy place is the owner's son's favourite football team. Sample local fish, seafood or chicken with a fingerbowl as your lone utensil.

**Garden Café** (cnr Jln Hasanuddin & Jln Diponegoro; mains 6,000-12,500Rp; ☎ breakfast, lunch & dinner) This open-air corner serves juices and hot drinks, plus basic Indonesian food and snacks. Its shaded

long tables are perfect for catching a breeze and the local buzz.

**Iduna Bakery & Café** (☎ 24007; Jln Rangka Santeak 5; mains 15,000-32,000Rp; ☎ lunch & dinner) Get your burger fix at this cosmopolitan joint with hip coffees, juices and ice cream. Get your fresh-air fix, too, in smoke-free air-con. The adjacent bakery opens at 7am.

Find more *warung* on Jln Kasumayuda and Jln P Antasari, supplemented by nightly food stalls. The leading supermarket **Pelangi** (Jln Kasumayuda) has ATMs.

## Getting There & Away

### AIR

**Kal-Star** (☎ 28765; Jln Hasanuddin 2) and **IAT** (☎ 21224) both offer regular daily flights to/from Pontianak (593,000Rp) via Ketapang and to/from Semarang (717,000Rp).

### BOAT

Public speedboats leave from the end of Jln Rangka Santeak for Kotawaringin Lama (50,000Rp, two hours) on Sungai Lamandau.

For ferry services to Java, see opposite.

### BUS

Buses to Palangka Raya (70,000Rp to 100,000Rp, 14 hours) are run by Yessoe Travel, **Maduratna Perdana** (☎ 22129; Jln P Antasari 17) and **Logos** (☎ 27275; Jln P Antasari). Most also serve Sampit (50,000Rp, six hours).

## Getting Around

Taxis to/from the airport (5km) cost 40,000Rp. *Opelet* around town cost 3,000Rp. Minibuses to Kumai (7500Rp) and *ojek* leave from the roundabout at the end of Jln Kasumayuda.

## SUNGAI LAMANDAU & SUNGAI BALANTIKAN

Sungai Lamandau and its tributaries snaking north of Pangkalan Bun sustain Dayak villages with longhouses and traditional lifestyles. If you plan on visiting, patience bear with the irregular, expensive transport is essential, and hiring a guide is heartily recommended.

Two hours from Pangkalan Bun by speedboat (50,000Rp), **Kotawaringin Lama** has a longhouse and frail wooden sultan's palace. From there, 4WDs go to Sukamara (50,000Rp) for speedboats to **Manismata** and **Riam** in West Kalimantan. Hearty travellers can continue from Riam to Ketapang.

Continuing north from Kotawaringin Lama, villages pepper the river to **Bekonsu** (1,000,000Rp, three hours), with longhouses, traditional mausoleums and homestays. From Bekonsu it's about an hour by speedboat (500,000Rp) to **Tapinbini**, where a handful of longhouses defy centuries of weathering and fire. There's a twice-weekly minibus between Tapinbini and Pangkalan Bun (60,000Rp, 10 hours), a less expensive, less comfortable alternative to river travel.

Alternatively, veer off Sungai Lamandau onto more remote **Sungai Balantikan**, where villagers often invite visitors to share *tuak*, the traditional rice wine, that's more potent than palm-sugar *tuak* elsewhere in Indonesia. Hire a speedboat from Pangkalan Bun to **Bayat** (2,000,000Rp, five hours) and stay overnight with a family. From Bayat, rapids require travel by motorised canoe. A feisty rapid at **Nanga Matu** often requires hauling vessels on land for a kilometre or two. From Bayat, in two days, it's possible to explore north to **Petarikan**, staying in **Kalingai** or other villages along the way by motorised canoe (1,500,000Rp).

Though well beyond the beaten path, even by KalTeng standards, tour companies, including **Borneo Holidays** (☎ 0532-29673, 081-2500-0508; borneoholidays@planet-save.com), organise itineraries along both rivers.

## KUMAI

☎ 0532 / pop 23,000

Kumai is home port for *klotok* (canoes with water-pump motors) travelling to Tanjung Puting National Park. This small but lively harbour also has passenger ships to Java, freighters, Bugis *pinisi* (schooner) and Maduran schooners bobbing at its docks.

The main street, Jln HM Idris, runs parallel to the river. Hotels are within walking distance here or up Jln Gerliya. There are no money changers, and non-nautical travel is best arranged in Pangkalan Bun.

## Sleeping & Eating

Rooms are plentiful in Kumai, *except* the night before a Pelni boat arrives.

**Losmen Aloha** (☎ 61238; Jln HM Idris 465; s/d 25,000/40,000Rp) Above the commendable restaurant of the same name, Aloha's basic rooms have fans and shared *mandi*.

**Losmen Permata Hijau** (☎ 61325; Jln HM Idris; r 50,000-60,000Rp) Staff are constantly armed with a

broom or mop at this immaculate guesthouse. Even shared *mandi* for budget rooms shine.

**Hotel Mentari** (☎ 61558; Jln Gerliya 98; r incl breakfast 110,000Rp; ☎) Mentari is fresh and very clean, with rooms bright and well furnished.

At *warung* and food stalls along Jln HM Idris toward the market, try the fresh fish, caught a fly-cast away.

## Getting There & Away

Reach Kumai by minibus from Pangkalan Bun (7500Rp, 35 minutes). Taxis from Pangkalan Bun airport to Kumai cost 70,000Rp, including all stops for visiting Tanjung Puting National Park (see p254).

Boats run by Pelni connects Kumai with Semarang (150,000Rp, 24 hours) and Surabaya (170,000Rp, 26 hours) three times weekly. The **Pelni office** (Jln HM Idris) is opposite the market. **Dharma Lautan Utama** (☎ 61008, 081-3483-33444; Jln Gerliya 265) runs boats to Semarang (economy/1st class 140,000/205,000Rp, 19 to 22 hours) weekly and Surabaya (economy/1st class 150,000/200,000Rp, 23 to 26 hours) every four to five days. Send a text message for current schedules.

## TANJUNG PUTING NATIONAL PARK

The world's best place to see orangutans in their natural habitat, **Tanjung Puting National Park** is a stellar family vacation destination. Unlike most other outdoor adventures, physical exertions required to enjoy jungle wildlife here are suitable for anyone age four to 84.

Like other orangutan rehabilitation sites, Tanjung Puting guarantees plenty of these irresistible auburn primates close up. What sets Tanjung Puting apart is the journey on Sungai Sekonyer straight out of *The Heart of Darkness* by *klotok*, your private floating losmen.

Motoring gently between walls of pandanus fringing the river like spiky-haired stick-figures, sharp-eyed captains or guides may spot wild orangutans perched on riverside branches or macaques scurrying through the forest canopy shared among 200-plus bird species. Tanjung Puting is also home to sun bears, wild boars, clouded leopards, spotted cats, pythons, gibbons, porcupines and Sambar deer, none of which are likely to turn up along the riverbank.

But absolutely count on seeing proboscis monkeys. Found only in Borneo, these odd creatures with their potbellies, awkward movements (by monkey standards), white

faces highlighted by a tubular nose, and, among the males, obvious, constant sexual readiness – when colonists showed up, natives rechristened the proboscis *monyet Belanda* (Dutch monkey) anxiously await *klotok* arrivals. A troop of 30 light-brown monkeys may plunge from branches 10m or higher into the dark river and cross directly in front of the boat. Proboscis monkeys act out Borneo's version of 'Why did the chicken cross the road?' because they know the boat's engine noise and the threat of its propeller scares crocodiles, which find the chubby monkeys delicious.

The only great apes outside Africa, orangutans face a very real threat of extinction this century as their rainforest habitat is converted to furniture from often illegally cut timber and palm-oil plantations; for more information see the boxed texts, p273 and p53. Canadian researcher Dr Biruté Galdikas began research here in 1971. The least known of three female ape-experts mentored by legendary anthropologist Dr Louis Leakey, Dr Galdikas' discoveries included the orangutan's eight-year birth cycle, which makes the species highly vulnerable to extinction. Valuable studies continue at Tanjung Puting.

The 415,040-hectare park was Indonesia's first site for the now-controversial practice of orangutan rehabilitation: training orphaned or former captive orangutans to live in the wild (sometimes known as referralisation). But after prolonged, close contact with human rehabilitators, orangutans never lose their taste for it. Orangutans can also pick up human diseases and spread them to wild populations. Current regulations require reintroduction in areas without native orangutan populations. Tanjung Puting's rehabilitation work is being phased out.

Part of the rehabilitation process that survives is daily feedings to released orangutans at jungle platforms. That's where visitors go to see orangutans. Feedings take place at three camps: **Tanjung Harapan** at 3pm, **Pondok Tangui** at 9am, and **Camp Leakey** at 2pm (but check for schedule changes). Reaching camp feeding-stations requires a short walk through jungle from the dock. Trails can be slippery when wet. Wear boots or enclosed shoes, bring sun (or rain) protection and vats of insect repellent. Camp Leakey and Tanjung Harapan have information centres, and some rangers speak English.

**Paslat** is a reforestation camp where saplings of sandalwood, ironwood and other native trees are being reintroduced to combat logging, mining and fires. On Paslat's bulletin board:

*Hutan...  
Bukan hanya milik kita  
Hutan...  
Warisan bagi anak cucu kita  
Lestarikan Hutan*

The Forest...  
Not only ours  
The Forest...  
Our grandchildren's inheritance  
Preserve the Forest

### Orientation & Information

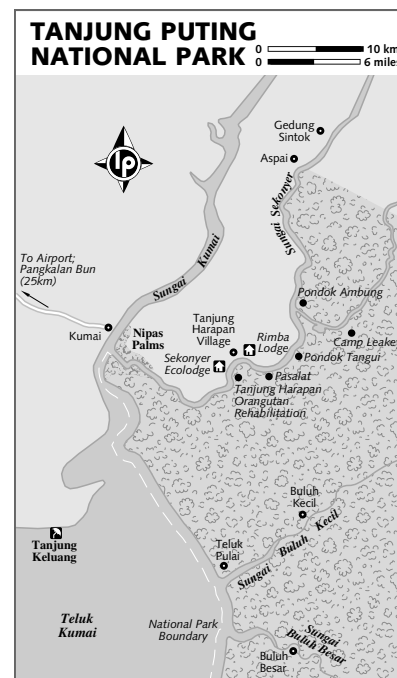
Visiting Tanjung Puting starts with registration at Pangkalan Bun police station. Bring photocopies of your passport and visa. (Airport taxi-drivers know the steps.)

Next stop is the **PHKA office** (national parks office; Map p252; ☎/fax 23832; Jln HM Rafi' Km 1.5; ⏰ 7am-2pm Mon-Thu, 7am-11am Fri, 7am-1pm Sat) on the way into Pangkalan Bun from the airport. Registration costs 50,000Rp per day per person, and 5000Rp per day for a *klotok* (15,000Rp for a speedboat). Provide a copy of your police letter from Pangkalan Bun and another photocopy of your passport. Then head to Kumai. When the park office is closed, it may be possible to arrange entry at the park's entry checkpoint. Ask your boat captain or guide.

For additional information about Tanjung Puting's orangutans, conservation efforts, and volunteer opportunities, contact **Friends of the National Parks Foundation** (FNPF; ☎ 0361-977978; www.fnfp.org). Based in Bali, FNPF runs Tanjung Harapan, Paslat, plus community education and ecofriendly enterprise initiatives; see p258 for more information.

**Orangutan Foundation International** (OFI; ☎ 1-323-938-6046; www.orangutan.org; 4201 Wilshire Blvd, Ste 407, Los Angeles, CA, USA 90010) runs Camp Leakey and publishes *A Guidebook to Tanjung Puting National Park* by Dr Biruté Galdikas and Dr Gary Shapiro.

The dry season runs May to September when reduced rainfall makes journeys more enjoyable. But higher water during the wet season expands boat access. Tanjung Puting's 200 varieties of wild orchids bloom mainly January to March.



### Guides

Guides are not required in the park, but are helpful for touring camps and essential for travel beyond them. *Klotok* captains are usually excellent wildlife spotters, but few speak much English.

Guide fees range from 150,000Rp to 250,000Rp per day. In Kumai, freelance guides abound. **Borneo Holidays** (☎ 0532-29673, 081-2500-0508; borneoholidays@planet-save.com) employs former rangers and researchers (from Tanjung Puting and beyond) as guides. Boat operator **Suyono Majit** can also recommend guides. PHKA staff can work as guides; some speak English and know the park. Camp rangers or residents of Tanjung Harapan village, across the river from that camp, are another option.

### Rules & Conduct

Follow park regulations to ensure the health of ecosystems and their inhabitants; don't disregard them for the sake of a photo. Never travel park trails without a ranger or guide. Many orangutans are ex-captives and unafraid of humans. No matter what boat crew or rangers do, don't feed orangutans or initi-

ate contact with them. Young ones especially are very hard to resist, but they are highly susceptible to human diseases and you can inflict great harm.

Orangutans are also very strong animals that may grab your camera, bag or anything else hanging off your body. In a tug-of-war, they'll win.

Resist the temptation to swim in rivers. Crocodiles lurk; several years ago a British volunteer was killed swimming just off a dock. Water may also be polluted due to mining activities upstream. Wash safely at the river pool at Camp Leakey dock. Elsewhere, get advice from your boat crew or guide before drawing water.

### Klotok Hire

*Klotok* travel is a windfall pleasure of visiting Tanjung Puting. These 8m-to-10m houseboats serve as transport, accommodation and restaurant, generally for up to four adults. At night, crews moor well away from settlements, so passengers can enjoy sunsets and wildlife peacefully. Sleep on mattresses on deck under mosquito nets, and wake to the haunting cries of gibbons and lilting songs of sunbirds: 'It's like those tapes of the rainforest,' one visitor said.

Three days is a reasonable length of stay, though it's possible to see all three camps and only stay overnight. Some travellers spend a week or more. Three days allows time to survey the rivers unhurriedly and explore around and beyond the camps. Plan river movements for dawn or dusk, when primates come down to the banks.

Boat demand peaks in July and August and around local school holidays, but outside these times hiring a *klotok* independently in Kumai is a simple matter – operators will generally find you. Basic boat designs are similar, but there are differences in size, standard and deck arrangement, so shop around.

Each *klotok* is identified by name: *Harapan Mina III* and *Rosalia* (operated by Pak Muliadi and Pak Housni), *Cahaya Purnama* (Pak Emeng), *Everedy* (Pak Ari), *Garuda I* and *Garuda II* (the Bakso family), *Satria I* and *Satria II* (Suyono Majit), *Omega* (Anung Emen), *Britania* (Jen Joan), *Spirit of the Forest* (Herry Rostaman), *Harapan Mina I* (Anang), *Harapan Mina II* (Maslian), *Gaya Baru* (Andi), *Kalimantan I* (Usup), and *Kalimantan II* (Sukma).



**MINER DAMAGE** *Kay Howe*

When my last child flew the nest, so did I. Indonesia's Friends of the National Parks Foundation (FNPF) drew me to Tanjung Puting National Park. Admiration for FNPF – a plucky NGO creating effective conservation, restoration, and community development programs on tiny budgets – inspired me to volunteer.

I work on issues arising from small-scale gold mining. Rainforest destruction, sedimentation, and methyl mercury infiltration into rivers result from mining practices. Across Indonesia, mercury is used to amalgamate gold, then burned off, often in miners' homes. Foetal exposure causes nerve and brain damage and irreversibly affects children's cognitive development.

I connected FNPF with the Global Mercury Project, and we developed an alternative technology and health awareness campaign. We visit mining villages demonstrating methods to reduce mercury use. We also educate downriver communities about dangers from potential methyl mercury accumulation in fish, a key component of local diets. Awareness throughout Kalimantan remains low, but FNPF is trying to change that.

It's a gift for me to work here. The simplicity of life and surroundings are beautiful. The path feels good under my bare feet, the sampan sits like a feather on the river current when I cross. Magically, fireflies announce the night, owa-owa [gibbons] the dawn.

It's a gift to be embraced by this community, wrapped in its culture. I've witnessed joy and heartbreak, attended weddings and funerals, planted trees, fought fires, sweated, laughed and cried with the staff. The experience has humbled me and given me deep respect for these people and their work. They are my heroes, labouring ceaseless in the seemingly impossible task of saving the forest. They feel like my family, and this feels like home.

*Consultant Kay Howe integrates place-based education in solving environmental issues with children.*

**Palangka Raya Guide Association – Yusuf Kawaru**  
(☎ 322-3341; Dandang Tingang Hotel, Jln Yos Sudarso 13)

**Sleeping**

**Hotel Melati Serasi** (☎ 322-3682; Jln Dr Murjani 54; s 22,000-49,500Rp, d 33,000-66,000Rp, tw 44,000-93,500Rp; 🍷) Very clean and quiet; the cheapest options have shared *mandi* and fan.

**Hotel Mahkota** (☎ 322-1672; Jln Nias 5; r incl breakfast 44,000-155,000Rp; 🍷) Near the town centre bus-drop and market; choices here range from basic with fan to palatial with air-con, terrace and hot-water shower. A domestic traveller and student favourite.

**Hotel Dian Wisata** (☎ 322-1241; fax 322-3952; Jln Ahmad Yani 68; r incl breakfast 75,000-125,000Rp; 🍷) Watch your head descending to economy rooms (with shared *mandi*) via the central atrium. Standard and 'VIP' rooms have air-con; all are clean.

**Hotel Banama Tingang** (☎ 322-8054; fax 322-2438; Jln Ahmad Yani 68; r incl breakfast 80,000-165,000Rp; 🍷) Good value, bridging budget to midrange, and all with air-con and TV.

**Hotel Sakura** (☎ 322-1680; Jln Ahmad Yani 87; r incl breakfast 160,000-240,000Rp plus 21% tax; 🍷) A friendly place popular with business travellers, Sakura's best feature is its open-air restaurant where a buffet breakfast is served, overlooking a gar-

den with playground swings and a concrete menagerie, including deer and zebra.

**Dandang Tingang** (☎ 322-1805; www.dandangtingang.com; Jln Yos Sudarso 13; r incl breakfast 126,000-342,000Rp, ste 600,000Rp plus 21% tax; 🍷) In-town resort wannabe cultivates green grounds and rustic air, though it's just beyond Bunderan Besar. Only middle- and upper-range rooms reach resort aspirations.

**Eating**

**Warung Laris 90** (cnr Jln Sumatra & Jln Ahmad Yani; mains 8000-12000Rp; 🍷 dinner) Impossible to miss with its screaming pink exterior and nonstop stream of customers, this simple place's speciality is *ayam goreng kalasan* – fried chicken west Java style.

**Rumah Makan Melati** (Jln Batam; mains 10,000-18,000Rp; 🍷 lunch & dinner) Bapak Arila grills up the catch of the day – select it yourself – and local vegetables. This breezy, central corner is a spot to see and be seen.

The food stalls at the *pasar* (market) run day and night around Jln Halmahera and Jln Jawa. For morning coffee, try *warung* on Jln Nias towards Rambang Pier.

For self-catering, **Raja Roti** (Jln Ahmad Yani 8) and **Toko Kue Lirissa** (Jln Ahmad Yani), next to Hotel Dian Wisata sell sweet and savoury breads

and cakes. Larissa also has fresh steamed dumplings. **Sendy Supermarket** (cnr Jln Ahmad Yani & Jln Dr Marjani) and **Telaga Biru** (Jln Ahmad Yani) have the best grocery selections.

**Getting There & Away****AIR**

**Garuda** (www.garuda-indonesia.com), **Sriwijaya Air** (www.sriwijayaair-online.com) and **Batavia Air** (www.batavia-air.co.id) all fly to Jakarta with fares from 350,000Rp. **DAS** (☎ 322-1550) flights to Purukcahu, Banjarmasin and Muara Teweh were suspended at research time.

Banjarmasin offers more flight options. Kijangs go direct to/from the airport (90,000Rp, five hours).

**BOAT**

Sungai Kahayan speedboats head to Tewah (300,000Rp, five hours) daily from Gang Flamboyan, off Jln Ahmad Yani.

**BUS & KIJANG**

Morning and evening buses depart from Pangkalan Bun (95,000Rp, 14 hours) and Banjarmasin (40,000Rp to 60,000Rp, six hours) from Milono bus terminal (5km) on taxi route E. **Yessoe Travel** (☎ 3223466; Jln Banda 7) runs buses from its in-town terminal just north of the market area at comparable fares.

A scheduled Kijang service to Banjarmasin (90,000Rp, five hours) is well organised and comfortable, with a pick-up and drop-off at your designated location.

**Getting Around**

Minibuses here are called 'taxis' (3000Rp) and ply major thoroughfares. *Ojek* hire costs 20,000Rp per hour. *Becak* (bicycle-rickshaws) congregate on Jln Ahmad Yani around the petrol station near Jln Halmahera.

Taxis to/from the airport (6km, 15 minutes) cost 60,000Rp.

**SEBANGAU NATIONAL PARK**

Gazetted in 2004, **Sebangau National Park** is a peat swamp forest area between the Katingan and Sebangau Rivers south of Palangka Raya. Researchers estimate the 568,700-hectare park is home to 6900 wild orangutans, among the world's largest populations. Sebangau's biodiversity includes more than 100 bird species, 35 mammal species, and several forest types, most recovered from the 1997–98 fires.

**WWF-Indonesia** (www.wwf.or.id) campaigned to establish the park and is at the forefront of plans to involve local groups in low-impact logging, home industry, and ecotourism. Its **Palangka Raya office** (☎ 0536-36997; fax 0536-39404; Jln Pangrango 59) has details on those efforts, and travelling independently to Sebangau. Partnering with park researchers, **Sabancı Tourism Development** (☎ 0819-5205-6762; www.wowborneo.com; kalimantantours@gmail.com) runs day trips tracking wild orangutans. Only the fit need apply, and one-third of the 1,400,000Rp fee directly supports local conservation efforts.

**SUNGAI KAHAYAN**

Central Kalimantan's interior is so far off the tourist track, there aren't even footprints to follow. Isolation has limited modernisation in Dayak villages above **Tewah** in the headwaters of Sungai Kahayan. Independent travel here is improvised, expensive and sometimes uncomfortable, with excellent Bahasa Indonesia essential. Any route is an adventure. Prices may fluctuate wildly from estimates following.

Take a speedboat from Palangka Raya beyond Tewah, then a *klotok* up Sungai Hamputing to **Tumbang Miri** (200,000Rp, six hours; one-way charter 3,000,000Rp, 5,000,000Rp return) via river rapids. There's also a minibus service from Palangka Raya (200,000Rp; charter 750,000Rp to 1,500,000Rp). Stay at **Losmen Berkat Karunia** (s/d 33,000/44,000Rp) or try the longhouse settlement at **Tumbang Korik**.

Next day, trek to the Dayak village of **Tumbang Malahoi**, with its magnificent old ironwood longhouse. From here, charter a *klotok* to the historic village of **Tumbang Anoi** (500,000Rp, three hours; speedboat 1,000,000Rp, two hours) with a traditional longhouse still in use. Spend the night with a family, and return to Tumbang Miri by *klotok*. Figure at least five days for this route.

A three-day option goes from Tumbang Miri southwest to **Tumbang Rahuyan** or the gold-mining area near **Sungai Antai** (three hours). Continue downriver to **Tumbang Baringei** (three hours), by road via Tumbang Malahoi to **Tumbang Jutuh**, then by *klotok* or speedboat south to **Tangkiling** or by road to Tewah (2½ hours) and on to Palangka Raya. Boats from Tumbang Jutuh leave mornings only and don't run during the dry season.

For a four- to five-day trip, take a speedboat from Palangka Raya to **Kuala Kurun** (200,000Rp,

three hours) and travel by *ojek* north to **Seihanyu**. Take a *klotok* on Sungai Kapuas to **Sungai Mendaun** and on to **Jarak Masuparia**. Hike to **Masuparia**, a gold field in the jungle. Continue by *ojek* to **Tumbang Masao** then by *klotok* downstream to **Purukcahu** and **Muara Tewe** or continue from Tumbang Masao to Sungai Barito's headwaters, past a series of rapids north of **Tumbang Tuan**. Given the difficulty, expense and need to negotiate each step, even confirmed independent travellers may want help. Try the **Palangka Raya Guide Association** (☎ 0536-322-3341) or tour agencies in Palangka Raya (see p257).

## MUARA TEWEH

☎ 0519 / pop 37,500

In the heart of Sungai Barito logging country, Muara Tewe is the last river-boat stop, unless the water is high enough to reach **Purukcahu**. From Purukcahu you can go further north by boat and hire Dayak guides to trek into the northeastern mountains and forest featuring waterfalls, stone carvings and orchids. Climbing **Gunung Bondang**, a holy peak to some Dayaks, takes a day. Near Gunung Pacungapung, on the border between Central and East Kalimantan, a cement pillar marks the geographic **centre of Borneo**.

You can also trek overland to **Long Iram** in East Kalimantan for boats down Sungai Mahakam to Samarinda. Different routes are possible, via jungle or logging roads on which you can try hitching rides with passing vehicles, for this journey of up to two weeks.

Muara Tewe's main settlement is on the north bank of Sungai Barito. Jln Panglima Batur, parallel to the river, is the main drag. Rooms at the very comfortable **Wisma Pacifik** (☎ 21231; Jln Panglima Batur 87; s/d incl breakfast 170,000/194,000Rp; 📺) include TV, refrigerator, and hot water, plus English-speaking staff. **Barito Hotel** (☎ 21136; Jln Panglima Batur 43; s/d/tr from 25,000/40,000/55,000Rp) is the alternative.

Find *warung* along Jln Panglima Batur west of Barito Hotel, up the hill on Jln Surapati, and near the market. In Purukcahu there are a couple of **losmen** (r around 35,000Rp), or try the longhouse at Konut (10km).

**Muksin Hussein** (☎ 22342), who is a teacher in Muara Tewe and speaks English, can help arrange guides. In Purukcahu, ask for Mahrani, a Siang Dayak who also speaks English.

Daily (and nightly) buses travel equally long and uncomfortable routes to Palangka

Raya (50,000Rp, 12 hours) and Banjarmasin (55,000Rp, 12 hours) from the terminal across the bridge (3km). Minibuses to Purukcahu (50,000Rp, three hours) use the terminal on Jln Surapati. Cargo ships still ply Sungai Barito, and it is possible to negotiate a ride.

The airport is 5km north of town, but at the time of research, DAS flights to Palangka Raya were suspended.

## SOUTH KALIMANTAN

The seat of Banjar kings that once dominated much of the region, modern South Kalimantan (Kalimantan Selatan, or KalSel) combines Kalimantan's largest and most beguiling city with the scenic Pegunungan Meratus (Meratus Mountains). KalSel packs all that plus three million people and 10,000 sq km of wetland into just 37,660 sq km. So it's relatively easy to combine the urban jungle with treks, rafting and other wilderness activities.

## BANJARMASIN

☎ 0511 / pop 810,000

Arriving in Banjarmasin from Central Kalimantan, you should set your watch ahead one hour, but the time difference will seem more significant. While Banjarmasin's back streets and famed waterways still harbour old-time charm, its space-age mosque, towering buildings, and 24-hour internet shops confirm at least one foot firmly in the 21st century.

## Orientation

Life in Banjarmasin has migrated toward the suburbs, leaving desolate patches in the centre. But Banjarmasin is large and deeply rooted enough to remain vibrant at its traditional core, around the bend of Sungai Martapura. Most banks are along Jln Lambung Mangkurat. *Angkot* routes run outward into the sprawl. The *belawan* – Banjar for night market – around Jln Katamso is a focus of evening activity and a good place for local cuisine.

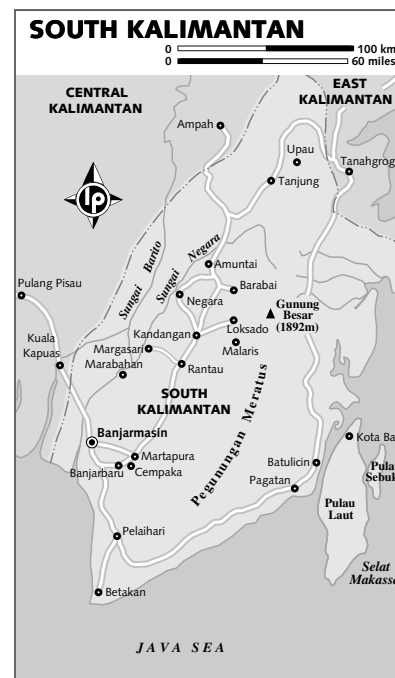
## MAPS

**Gramedia** (Jln Veteran 55-61)

## Information

### INTERNET ACCESS

**Daissy Net** (Jln Haryono MT 4; per hr 6000Rp; 📶 24hr) Air-con Daissy goes smoke-free from 8am to 3pm.



**Warnet Kyagi** (Jln Pangeran Samudera 94-96; upstairs/downstairs per hr 4500/5200Rp; 📶 24hr) Street level has chairs, fans and cigarettes while above has floor cushions, air-con and no butts.

## MEDICAL SERVICES

**Rumah Sakit Ulin** (Jln A Yani Km 2)

## MONEY

Major streets and malls have ATMs, plus there's a cluster at Hotel Istana Barito. For foreign exchange:

**BNI Bank** (Bank Negara Indonesia; Jln Lambung Mangkurat)

**Lippo Bank** (Jln Pangeran Samudera; 🕒 8am-3pm Mon-Fri)

## POST

**Main post office** (cnr Jln Pangeran Samudera & Jln Lambung Mangkurat)

## TOURIST INFORMATION

**South Kalimantan regional tourist office** (☎ 327-4252; fax 326-4512; Jln Pramuka 4; 🕒 7.30am-2.30pm Mon-Thu, 7.30am-11.30am Fri) Even though the staff try hard, tour operators and guides are more helpful.

## TRAVEL AGENCIES

See p262 for more guided tours.

**Adi Angkasa Travel** (☎ 436-6100; fax 436-6200; Jln Hasanuddin 27) Flight bookings.

**Arjuna Satrya Wisata Putra** (☎ 335-8150; ground fl, Arjuna Plaza, Jln Lambung Mangkurat) Books domestic flights and regional tours. Operates Amandit River Lodge in Loksado (p265).

**Family Tour & Travel** (☎ 326-8923; familytourtravel@yahoo.com; Komp Aspol Bina Brata 1E, Jln A Yani Km 4.5) Flights and tours throughout Kalimantan, plus car rental and hotel bookings. The helpful owner Syamsuddinor speaks English.

**Tailah** (☎ 327-1685; Diamond Homestay, Jln Hasanudin 58) Independent guide.

## Sights & Activities

### MESJID RAYA SABILAL MUHTADIN

This massive **mosque** (Jln Sudirman) resembles a landed spaceship. During Ramadan, the famous **Pasar Wadai** (Cake Fair) runs along the adjacent riverfront.

## FLOATING MARKETS

The 5.30am boarding is worthwhile to join the small, open canoes laden with vivid produce and manoeuvred precisely in tight quarters. For breakfast, supplement your fruit purchases at the floating café, using a bamboo pole with a nail pushed through the end to spike cakes.

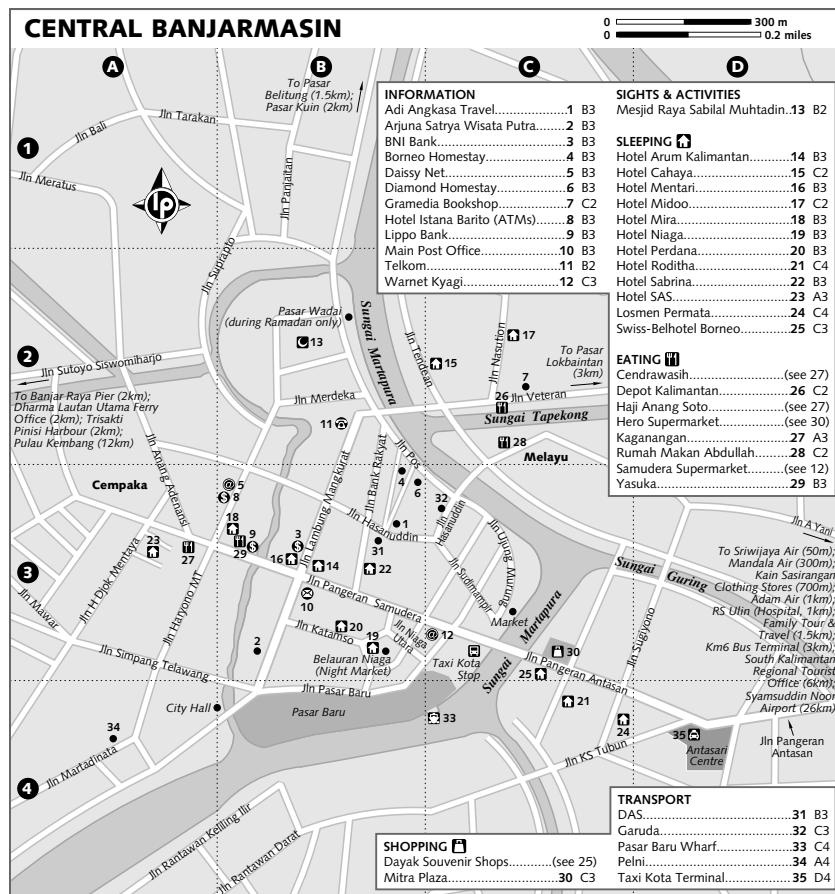
**Pasar Kuin** (30 minutes from Hasanuddin bridge) is the best-known floating market. **Pasar Lokbaintan** (45 minutes) is often busier.

## CANAL TRIPS

The water is filthy brown, and those booths behind houses aren't for telephone calls. A trip through people's bathrooms during wash time sounds unappealing. But as water-villagers wash, scrub clothes on wooden plank porches, paddle or swim alongside your boat, or just idle in the late afternoon breeze, their smiles light up these waterways where life dates back at least 350 years. Children are the stars but everyone joins in, trading waves and high fives.

## PULAU KEMBANG

Pulau Kembang is home to the long-tailed macaques that greet visitors noisily at the dock. Charter a boat (from 25,000Rp per hour) or elect the optional stop on Pasar Kuin tours. Caution: macaques can be aggressive.



## Tours

Many travel agents and hotels organise city and Pegunungan Meratus touring with English-speaking guides. **Tailah** (☎ 436-6100, 327-1685), based at **Diamond Homestay**, is the best independent guide in town. Friendly, fluent in English and utterly genuine, he's adept at all itineraries. He lives his motto: 'Enjoy your trip as a family trip.'

Readers give mixed reviews of tours from **Borneo Homestay** (☎ 436-6545; borneo@banjarmasin.wasantara.net.id; Jln Hasanuddin 33) and owner Johan Yasin, head of the South Kalimantan Tour Guide Association.

Going rates run 60,000Rp for canal tours and 75,000Rp for floating markets, including a guide and all transport. Combination

tours with Pulau Kaji (home to proboscis monkeys) cost more.

Guide fees for forest trekking start from 150,000Rp per day, plus food, accommodation and transport.

## Sleeping BUDGET

**Losmen Permata** (☎ 326-5775; Jln Kol Sugiono 14; s/d 30,000-35,000Rp) The most basic of budget (and above) accommodation between Antasari Centre and Mitra Plaza. The slippery-when-wet outside staircase leads to clean, bare rooms with fan and shared *mandi*.

**Hotel Perdana** (☎ 335-2376; hotelperdana@plasa.com; Jln Katamsu 8; s 60,000Rp, d 75,000-110,000Rp; ) The pick of the *belauran* budget bunch, gracefully

ageing Perdana has clean rooms around and above an atrium lounge. Solo female travellers will appreciate management's zero tolerance of prostitutes.

Also available:

**Hotel Niaga** (☎ 335-2595; Jln Niaga 14; s 30,000-35,000Rp, d 50,000Rp, tr 60,000Rp) Clean and basic, near *belauran* and with fans and shared *mandi*.

**Hotel Sabrina** (☎ 335-4721; fax 335-4442; Jln Bank Rakyat 5; s 60,000-105,000Rp, d 70,000-125,000Rp, f 145,000Rp; ) Appealing rooms in a prime spot.

## MIDRANGE & TOP END

Recent additions offer choices from around 250,000Rp.

**Hotel SAS** (☎ 335-3054; fax 336-5967; Jln Kapuring Besar 2; r incl breakfast 72,000-165,000Rp, ste/f 175,000/195,000Rp; ) Dark wood in the open-air lobby looks forbidding, but rooms are comfortable and bright, and staff warm and deceptively efficient. Travel vibes spill from the economy rooms' front porches.

**Hotel Midoo** (☎ 325-8918; fax 325-0626; Jln Nasution 8; r incl breakfast 135,000-150,000Rp; ) Cross the bridge to this newish hotel off bustling Jln Veteran, Banjarmasin's Chinatown teeming with food options. Large, boxy rooms include air-con, hot water, and 40 TV channels.

**Hotel Mira** (☎ 336-3955; fax 335-2465; Jln Haryono 49; r incl breakfast 150,000-175,000Rp; ) Centrally located Mira has identical modern, spotless rooms with hot-water showers. Save by climbing to the 3rd floor.

**Hotel Roditha** (☎ 336-2345; rodithahotel@yahoo.com; Jln Antasari Pasar Pagi 41; r incl breakfast from 230,000Rp, ste incl breakfast from 320,000Rp plus 21% tax; ) The newest and swishest near the Antasari Centre, business-class Roditha features Western bathrooms with glass block accents.

**Hotel Arum Kalimantan** (☎ 436-6818; arumbjm@indo.net.id; Jln Lambung Mangkurat; r incl breakfast 450,000-676,000Rp, ste incl breakfast from 1,928,000Rp; ) Beyond its cold concrete façade, recently re-decorated Arum is classy and cushy. Enjoy buffet breakfast on the open terrace, then work it off at the fitness centre.

More choices:

**Hotel Cahaya** (☎ 325-3508; fax 326-6748; Jln Tendeen 22/64; r incl breakfast 125,000-210,000Rp; ) Clean and cosy, just across Hasanuddin bridge.

**Hotel Mentari** (☎ 436-8944; fax 335-3350; Jln Lambung Mangkurat 32; r incl breakfast 300,000-500,000Rp; ) Comfortable business hotel, usually offering 30% discounts.

**Swiss-Belhotel Borneo** (☎ 327-1111; www.swiss-belhotel.com; Jln Pangeran Antasari 86a; s/d incl break-

fast from 700,000/760,000Rp; ) Also known as 'Hotel Borneo', luxuries here include frequent 30% discounts.

## Eating

Banjar food is one of Indonesia's famed cuisines; for more information see p40. For a taste of street culture, try *belauran* stalls along Jln Niaga Utara.

**Depot Kalimantan** (☎ 325-8286; Jln Veteran 19; mains 8000-12,000Rp; ) breakfast, lunch & dinner) Bright, air-con, no-smoking refuge serves Chinese dishes and fruit juices. Popular with families and couples.

**Rumah Makan Abdullah** (Jln A Yani Km 1; mains 10,000-16,000Rp; ) lunch & dinner) Locals say *nasi kuning* (saffron rice) at this unassuming place, next to Hotel Rahmat is Banjarmasin's best in town.

**Haji Anang Soto** (☎ 7231549; Jln Pangeran Samudera; mains 12,000-16,000Rp; ) lunch & dinner) This hole in the wall between Jln Haryono and Jln Anang Andenansi draws big crowds for *soto banjar*, especially after noon and evening prayers. Broth here is savoury, *lontong* (rice steamed in pandanus leaves) lush, homemade *sambal* scorching.

**Cendrawasih** (Jln Pangeran Samudera; mains 12,000-44,000Rp; ) lunch & dinner) Delve deeper into Banjar cuisine at this renowned spot next to Haji Anang Soto. Pick fish, seafood or chicken for the grill outside and enjoy it inside with a full array of Banjar sauces.

**Kaganangan** (☎ 436-4203; Jln Pangeran Samudera 8; mains 12,000-45,000Rp; ) lunch & dinner) Equally as famous as, and just opposite Cendrawasih, it adds bad attitude toward foreigners.

More food:

**Yasuka** (☎ 335-8827; Jln Pangeran Samudera 21) Scrumptious homemade ice cream by the dish (4,500Rp) or half-litre (17,500Rp) featuring fruit flavours in season.

**Hero Supermarket** (Mitra Plaza, Jln Pangeran Antasari) **Samudera Supermarket** (Jln Pangeran Samudera 94-96)

## Shopping

Banjarmasin residents are fussy about *belauran*. Huge groups of night stalls around Antasari Centre and along Jln Anang Andenansi aren't *belauran*. Outside the city centre, **Pasar Belitung** (Jln Belitung), on the north side of town, is a 2km *belauran*. It's also known as Pasar Tungging, Banjar for 'squat toilet', once the area's commercial staple. Visit during early evening to sample modernised, urbanised traditional life.

Banjarmasin is known for *kain sasirangan* (tie-dyed batik). Market stalls near Antasari bridge sell *sasirangan*, mostly as material. Stores at Jln Ahmad Yani Km 3.7 sell *kain sasirangan* clothes, but large sizes are hard to find.

Shops sell Dayak and other traditional souvenirs along Jln Pangeran Antasari, opposite Mitra Plaza.

## Getting There & Away

### AIR

**Garuda** (☎ 335-9065; Jln Hasanudin 31) flies to Jakarta, three times daily (700,000Rp). **Sriwijaya Air** (☎ 327-2377; Jln A Yani Km 2.5), Lion Air, and Wings fly to Jakarta (400,000Rp) and Surabaya (320,000Rp). **Batavia Air** (☎ 335-8996) flies to Surabaya, Jakarta, plus Balikpapan (Rp380,000). **Adam Air** (☎ 326-0999; Jln A Yani Km 4) serves Surabaya. **Mandala Air** (☎ 325-1947; Jln A Yani Km 3) goes to Yogyakarta (350,000Rp).

**DAS** (☎ 470-5277; Jln Hasanuddin 6) services to Pangkalan Bun, Muara Teweh, Sampit, and Kota Baru was suspended at the time of research; Riau Airlines took over Kota Baru (360,000Rp) flights.

Taxis to/from Syamsuddin Noor Airport (26km) cost 70,000Rp. Alternatively, take an *angkot* to Km 6 terminal, then a Martapura-bound Colt. Get off at the airport approach road, and walk 1.5km to the terminal. From the airport, walk to the Banjarmasin–Martapura highway for a Colt to Km 6.

### BOAT

**Pelni** (☎ 335-3077; Jln Martadinata 10) sails every other day to Semarang (233,500Rp, 24 hours) and twice monthly to Jakarta (359,000Rp, 20 hours) from Trisakti Pinisi Harbour (3km). **Dharma Lautan Utama** (☎ 441-4833; Jln Yos Sudarso 8) ferries depart for Surabaya (165,000Rp, 18 hours) every other day.

River boats from **Pasar Baru wharf** leave five times weekly to Marabahan (15,000Rp, six hours), continuing twice weekly to Negara (20,000Rp, 18 hours).

### BUS

The main bus terminal is at Jln A Yani Km 6, southeast of downtown. Colts (minibuses) depart frequently for Banjarbaru (16,000Rp, 25 minutes), Martapura (16,000Rp, 35 minutes), Kandangan (40,000Rp, three hours), Negara (45,000Rp, four hours) and other Penunungan Meratus destinations.

Several companies run day and night buses to Balikpapan (from 75,000Rp, 12 hours), Samarinda (from 115,000Rp, 15 hours), Muara Teweh (60,000Rp, 12 hours), Palangka Raya (35,000Rp, six hours), and Pangkalan Bun (105,000Rp, 20 hours).

One bus leaves daily to Marabahan from Km 6, but it's easier to go to Kayu Tani Ujung in northern Banjarmasin for a Colt (25,000Rp, three hours). There's an extra 500Rp charge for the short ferry crossing. Take an *angkot* to Kayu Tani Ujung (1000Rp) from Antasari terminal.

## Getting Around

*Angkot* routes (3000Rp) fan out from terminals at Jln Pangeran Samudera circle in the city core and Antasari Centre to the east. *Becak* and *ojek* for hire gather around market areas.

Charter boats (from 25,000Rp per hour) near Jln Hasanuddin bridge for canal cruising.

## AROUND BANJARMASIN

Three towns southeast of Banjarmasin make interesting day trips, either visited separately or combined.

### Banjarbaru

Amid ancient banyan and lontar trees, **Museum Lambung Mangkurat** (☎ 0511-92453; Jln Ahmad Yani 36; admission 750Rp; 🕒 9.30am–2.30pm Tue–Thu, Sat & Sun, 9.30am–11am Fri) exhibits relics from pre-Islamic Hindu temples, Dayak artefacts, and *halat*, Banjar carved-wood walls and doors. The museum is on the Banjarmasin–Martapura Colt route.

### Martapura

Just east of Banjarbaru, Martapura has a colourful **market**, rich with regional produce, including precious stones. Purchasing uncut gems – many from local mines – silver jewellery and trading beads requires hard bargaining, with your knowledge and the seller's reputation the only indicators of authenticity.

Area mines close Fridays, so the market swells with workers and families. To avoid crowds, visit another day.

### Cempaka

Cempaka's **diamond fields** (🕒 closed Fri) illustrate how unglamorous pursuing precious rocks can be. Prospectors work up to their necks in water, hoisting silt to be washed in makeshift

contraptions and sifted for gold specks, diamonds or agate.

From 1846, 20-carat diamonds have been found – and largest of all, the 167.5-carat Tri Sakti (Thrice Sacred) in August 1965. Most diamonds are a fraction as big, but hopes of a huge find keep miners focused.

To reach Cempaka, take a Banjarmasin–Martapura Colt to the huge roundabout just past Banjarbaru. Switch to a green taxi to Alur (2000Rp) and walk 1km from the main road. Touts aplenty show the way. It's customary to tip these 'guides' 2000Rp.

## MARABAHAN & MARGASARI

To see river life, take a boat 65km up Sungai Barito from Banjarmasin to Marabahan, a small town with some traditional Banjar-style 'tall roof' wooden houses. Losmen on the river, such as **Hotel Bahtera** (r 30,000Rp), have adequate accommodation with shared *mandi*.

From Marabahan, charter a boat to Margasari, known for rattan and bamboo handicrafts. Colts run daily between Marabahan and Banjarmasin (25,000Rp, three hours). Boats run five times weekly from Banjarmasin's Pasar Baru (15,000Rp, six hours).

## KANDANGAN

☎ 0517

Shop here before exploring Penunungan Meratus. The town centre features a crumbling colonial-era market and minibuses can take you deeper into the interior.

**Losmen Loksado** (☎ 21352; Jln Suprpto 8; r 40,000–60,000Rp), around the corner from the minibuses terminal, has comfortable, fan-cooled rooms. Harder to find, **Wisma Duta** (☎ 21073; Jln Permuda 9; r 65,000–150,000Rp; 🍽️), in a converted family house, has cosy rooms on a quiet street.

Kandangan's speciality is *ketupat*, sticky rice triangles enjoyed across Indonesia, and served with broiled *harawan*, a river fish, with coconut sauce and a squeeze of lime. Try this dish at **Warung Ketupat Kandangan**, 1km northwest of the minibuses terminal on the road to Barabai.

Fathurrahman at the government **tourism office** (☎ 21363; Jln Jend Sudirman 26), on the main road, 2km south of the town centre, can suggest trek guides.

Colts run frequently to/from Banjarmasin's Km 6 terminal (40,000Rp, three hours) until midafternoon. Night buses stop en route from Banjarmasin to Balikpapan and Samarinda

around 7pm at a terminal 2km east of town. Catch a Negara-bound minibuses (5000Rp) there, or take an *ojek* (15,000Rp).

## NEGARA

Northwest of Kandangan, Negara is home to some of world's most spectacular swimmers. A wetland during the rainy season and surrounded by water year-round, Negara's buildings are on stilts. The only land above water is the road, and even that can disappear – in floods of mosquitoes, if not rain.

Negara's incredible swimmers are water-buffalo. Farmers rear buffalo on wooden platforms, releasing them daily for grazing and drinking. Buffalo swim up to 5km until 'canoe cowboys' herd them home late afternoons.

Tour Negara by boat (it may cost 100,000Rp, depending on bargaining skill). The wetlands are also remarkable for prolific fish- and bird-life, and occasional snakes. The town is also noted for forging swords, machetes and *kris* (daggers).

Surprisingly, Negara has no hotel. You might find a homestay, but Kandangan is a better bet. A few *warung* serve *ketupat* and grilled chicken, also known as *ayam panggang*.

Colts from Banjarmasin to Negara (45,000Rp, four hours) leave from Km 6 terminal. From Kandangan to Negara choose among public minibuses (7000Rp, one hour), shared Japanese sedan with four people (15,000Rp per person; charter 60,000Rp), or *ojek* (40,000Rp). Twice-weekly boats leave from Pasar Baru pier in Banjarmasin (20,000Rp, 18 hours).

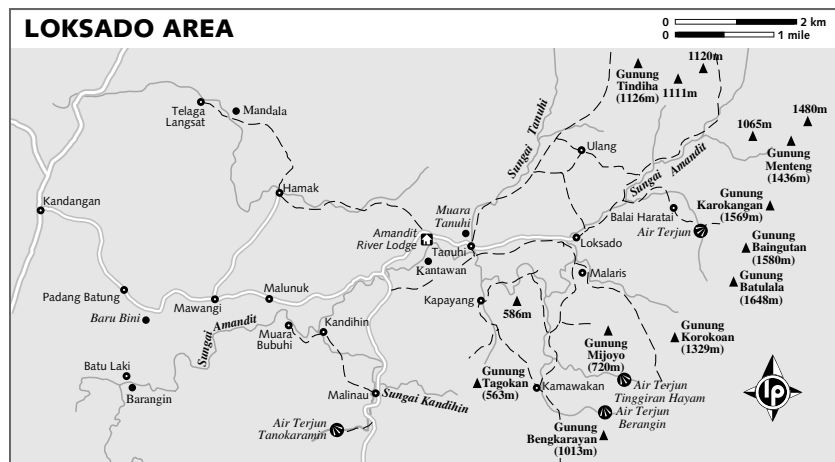
## LOKSADO

At the end of the road 40km east of Kandangan, Loksado is the largest of about 20 villages spread around Pegunungan Meratus. Limits of the 2500-sq-km range include Kandangan and Amuntai to the west and KalSel's coast to the east. Thanks to road access, Loksado is an important market village and base for trekking.

**Amat** (☎ 081-3487-66573), a personable Dayak who speaks good English, is Loksado's tourism source. A new visitor-information kiosk sets standard prices for services.

Reports of accommodation in Loksado, including photos some travel offices display, are greatly exaggerated. Construction of cottages on the small island opposite the village began years ago and remains years from completion. The only current option, three rooms





at **Loksado Guest House** (r 35,000Rp), are virtually unfurnished and absolutely filthy.

**Amandit River Lodge** (r 125,000Rp), 3km west of Loksado, has simple, comfortable rooms, and guests can arrange for meals. Amandit opens by appointment; give two days' notice to **Arjuna Satrya Wisata Putra** (☎ 0511-335-8150) in Banjarmasin; see p261 for details.

Muara Tanuhi's **hot springs** (admission adult/child 3000/2000Rp), 2km west of Loksado, have **holiday cottages** (☎ 081-2508-6913; r 125,000-150,000Rp) with two pools and a tennis court. The suburban aesthetic targets Banjarmasin weekenders.

Pick-up trucks leave Kandangan terminal for Loksado (12,000Rp, 1½ hours) afternoons, and leave Loksado for Kandangan early mornings.

After treks, many travellers charter bamboo rafts down Sungai Amandit. The usual drop-off point is Muara Tanuhi, two hours downstream (125,000Rp for up to three passengers). Continuing hours further downstream to Muara Bubuhi, crosses some exciting rapids when the river is high and costs a lot more. From the nearby road at Muara Bubuhi, minibuses and *ojek* return to Kandangan. Rafting Loksado to Kandangan takes a full day.

## AROUND LOKSADO

Hundreds of mountain paths from Loksado lead over the hills to other villages, many crossing streams via suspension bridges. Villagers negotiate the bridges easily, but newcomers usually set them rocking, amusing onlookers.

## Malaris

A 30-minute walk (1.5km) or 10-minute *ojek* ride through bamboo forest southeast of Loksado leads to Malaris. Its aged *balai* (longhouse) once housed 32 families; modernisation means separate houses for families. Ask the *kepala balai* (village head) about **homestays** (30,000Rp).

## Upau

One of the smallest Dayak groups, Deah Dayaks have lived at the remote northern edge of Pegunungan Meratus, isolated by centuries of aristocratic intrigue and refusal to embrace Islam. In Upau (meaning 'jackfruit', abundant locally) Deah traditional ceremonies are still performed, including the *balian* (shaman) ceremony to drive evil spirits from the sick, and the *aru* preparing warriors for head-hunting (although they now skip the head-hunting). English is rare, and there's no formal accommodation. But some local families take in guests. Bring food from Tanjung or Upau's Friday market, and offer a modest sum of money.

There's prime trekking in Pegunungan Meratus, 2km away. Villagers Aman and Dudang know the mountains and act as guides. Take a moderate one-day trek into the foothills, or more strenuous two- or three-day adventures. Terrain can be rough, demanding trekking experience.

To reach Upau, go to Tanjung by mini-bus from Negara (40,000Rp, two hours) or Colt from Banjarmasin's Km 6 (70,000Rp, six

hours). From Tanjung, take a red and yellow *angkot* to Upau (6,000Rp, 1½ hours).

## Treks

Pegunungan Meratus' combination of limestone mountainsides, dense tropical forests, rolling hills and river valleys is breathtaking, more for the scenery's splendour than the difficulty of the journey. Guides are necessary for most treks to find the right paths and best vistas. Enlist one in Loksado, though if you require an English speaker, hire in Banjarmasin. Penunangan Meratus treks are a speciality of **Tailah**: see p262. Guides cost 150,000Rp to 250,000Rp per day, plus transport costs and other expenses. You may also occasionally find villagers willing to show you the way for English practice.

To sample the hills, follow the path from Loksado upstream along Sungai Amandit for three hours (8km) to a series of **air terjun** (waterfalls) past Balai Haratai. Finding the first waterfall is easy, but the middle and top falls and nearby cavern require assistance. Ask for help at Haratai.

Longer treks begin from Loksado or 2km west in **Tanuhi**. The combination of mountains and rivers means plenty of waterfalls and bamboo suspension bridges. The primary forest is a tranquil yet awe-inspiring spectacle. Accommodation is at *balai* along the way, including Haruyan, about four hours from Tanuhi; Kepayang, one to two days; Niwak, two days; and Pangong, three days. Return downstream by bamboo raft.

**Barabai**, renowned for its scenic views, is another terminus for treks. The **Fusfa Hotel** (☎ 0517-41136; Jln Hasan 144; s/d/tr from 40,000/60,000/90,000Rp; 📶) has clean rooms and a restaurant. Barabai minibuses go to Kandangan (8000Rp, one hour).

It's also possible to trek from Loksado to the coast. Reaching **Kota Baru** on Pulau Laut takes three or four days by foot, minibus and boat, crossing Gunung Besar (1892m), KalSel's highest peak. Return to Banjarmasin by bus (55,000Rp, six hours) or take the coast road north to Balikpapan.

## SOUTH COAST

The coast road is an alternative route between Banjarmasin and Balikpapan, via **Pagatan**, a beach area, and **Batulicin**, a port.

Bugis from South Sulawesi build elegant *pinisi* schooners here. Every 17 April, they

perform **Mapan Retasi**, literally 'giving the sea food', culminating week-long celebrations.

From Banjarmasin's Km 6 terminal, Colts run to Pagatan (40,000Rp, five hours) and buses to Batulicin (45,000Rp, six hours). From Batulicin, Pelni boats serve Makassar. Minibuses continue north toward Balikpapan.

## EAST KALIMANTAN

East Kalimantan (Kalimantan Timur or KalTim) has Borneo's richest and most diverse natural resources. Its oil, coal and timber fuel coastal development while extraction wounds ecosystems and traditional cultures. But not all of KalTim has been reduced to denuded grassland and urban sprawl. Measuring 202,000 sq km, East Kalimantan has space for effective preservation and areas where distance and natural obstacles make exploitation excessively difficult, at least for now. With time, planning, patience and budget, travellers can reach even these out of the way places. But not every worthy KalTim destination requires an enormous ordeal or outlay. River boats make it relatively easy and inexpensive to explore Dayak communities along Sungai Mahakam.

## BALIKPAPAN

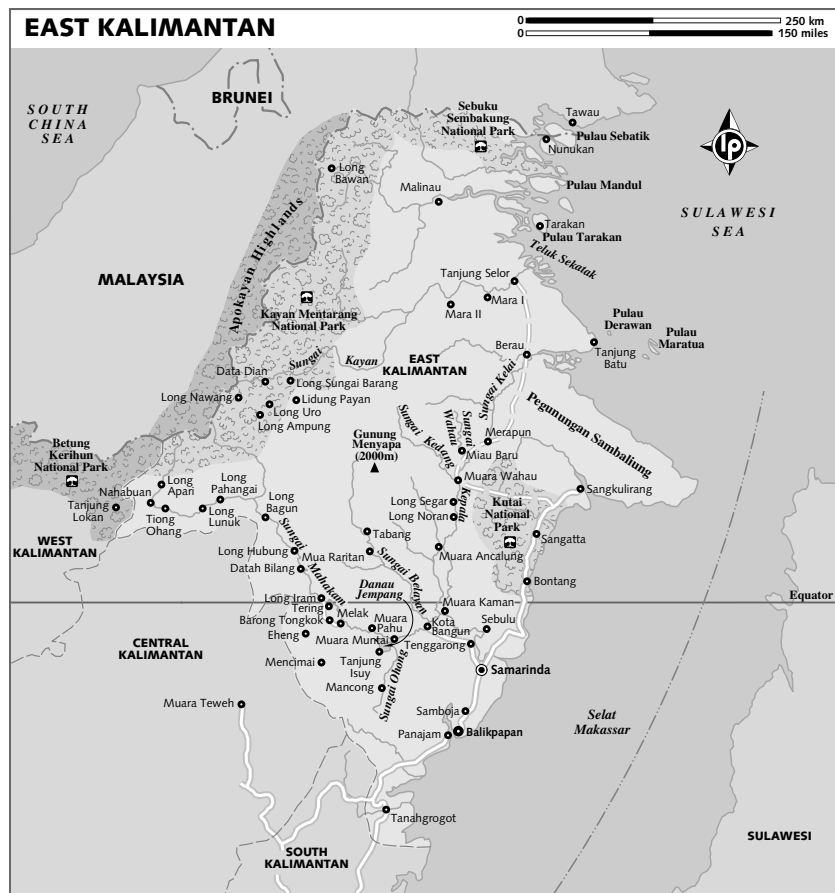
☎ 0542 / pop 510,000

Catering to oil men on expense accounts, this gateway city rarely gets its due from other travellers. Balikpapan is Indonesia's urban frontier: everyone seems to have come from someplace else to work hard and make a new life. These newcomers enhance Balikpapan's cosmopolitan, welcoming air. Sungai Mahakam journeys can originate here, and you may find Balikpapan more pleasant than Samarinda.

Oil fields made Balikpapan a target for Japanese forces in 1941 and for advancing Allies in 1944-45. A memorial near Pertamina Hospital honours 229 Australians who died here, with a Japanese memorial near the beach at Lamaru, east of the airport.

## Orientation

Shopping mall **Balikipapan Plaza** (cnr Jln Sudirman & Jln Ahmad Yani) anchors the town centre. East along Jln Sudirman leads to produce at Pasar Baru and eventually the airport, west to government offices, plus Pasar Klandasan, which specialises in clothing. Jln Sudirman



also parallels the reviving waterfront with restaurants, clubs and hotels, all pleasantly low-key. A shopping and hotel complex, opening mid-2008, promises to raise the volume substantially.

#### MAPS

**Gramedia** (2nd fl, Balikpapan Plaza)

#### Information

##### COURSES

**Suprioso** (☎ 081-5455-28484; per hr 135,000Rp) Bahasa Indonesia lessons.

#### INTERNET ACCESS

**Bcom** (Jln Ahmad Yani; per hr 6000Rp) Next to Hotel Budiman.

**Family Net** (ground flr, BRI Bank Bldg, Jln Sudirman 37; per hr 7000Rp)

#### MONEY

Banks along Jln Sudirman have ATMs. Many handle foreign exchange:

**BNI** (cnr Jln Ahmad Yani & Jln Sudirman)

**BRI** (Jln Sudirman 37)

**Haji La Tunrung Star Group** (Jln Ahmad Yani 51; ☎ 7.30am-9pm) Moneychanger with several branches.

#### MEDICAL SERVICES

**Pertamina Hospital** (☎ 734020; www.rspb.co.id; Jln Sudirman 1)

**Rumah Sakit Ibu Restu** (☎ 422304; Jln Ahmad Yani 85) Opposite Bondy's.

**Rumah Sakit Umum** (☎ 734181; Jln Ahmad Yani)

#### TRAVEL AGENCIES

**Agung Sedayu** (☎ 420-601; fax 420-447; Jln Sudirman 28) Best source for Peln schedule and all boat tickets. Also books domestic flights.

**Bayu Buana Travel** (☎ 422-751; www.bayubuana.travel.com; Jln Ahmad Yani) Very helpful English-speaking staff for flights, Sungai Mahakam tours.

**Golden Nusa Travel** (☎ 417-321; ticket-bpn@goldennusa.com; Hotel Benakutai, Jln Ahmad Yani) Staff speak English and try hard to please.

**Kaltim Adventure** (☎ 732-563; kaltim\_adventurebnp@yahoo.com; Complex Balikpapan Permai, Jln Sudirman) Boats, domestic flights plus Sungai Mahakam tours.

**Totogasono Travel** (☎ 413-535; tgs\_lestari@hotmail.com; Jln Ahmad Yani 40) All flights.

#### Tours

**Rivertours** (☎ 422-269; fax 422-211; rivertours@borneokalimantan.com) Established specialist with first-class tours and connections throughout Kalimantan.

**Transborneo Adventure** (☎ 762-671; tborneo@indo.net.id; Jln Sudirman 21) Wide menu includes dolphin ecotours with Yayasan Konservasi RASI (see p279).

#### Sleeping

Find budget options near the fork of Jln Ahmad Yani and Jln Pangeran Antasari, also called Gunung Kawi, 2km from Balikpapan Plaza via *angkot* route 3 or 5.

#### BUDGET

**Hotel Murni** (☎ 738-692; Jln P Antasari No 2; s/d incl breakfast from 55,000/75,000Rp; ☎) This family-run losmen has immaculate rooms, all with private *mandi*, on three floors. Indonesian solo travellers are mainstays: meet over tea on the enormous red leather sofa.

**Hotel Ayu** (☎ 425-290; Jln P Antasari, Gunung Kawi 18; r 100,000-160,000Rp; ☎) Hidden delight with spotless, bright rooms up a flight of stairs. The cheapest rooms require climbing more stairs.

**Hotel Gajah Mada** (☎ 734-634; fax 734-636; Jln Sudirman 328; s 95,000-235,000Rp, d 135,000-285,000Rp plus 10% tax; ☎) Good luck beating domestic travellers to these glistening and lovely rooms – some with water views – right next to Balikpapan Plaza.

**Hotel Citra Nusantara** (☎ 425-366; fax 410-311; Jln Gajahmada 76; s incl breakfast 110,000-175,000Rp, d incl breakfast 130,000-200,000Rp; ☎) Just off the main road, this guesthouse's shared *mandi* budget rooms are basic – the higher ranks surprisingly modern – all with a fresh scent.

#### MIDRANGE

Several new options cost around 250,000Rp. **Hotel Buana Lestari** (☎ 737-175; blh\_bpp@indo.net.id; Jln Sudirman 418; r incl breakfast from 193,000Rp; ☎) This local chain's economy-class hotel's luxury touches include buffet breakfast in its 24-hour coffee shop, big rooms and comfortable beds. Popular with domestic businesspeople.

**City Hotel** (☎ 427-500; www.cityhotel.co.id; Jln Sudirman 45; r incl breakfast 215,000-245,000Rp, ste 275,000Rp; ☎) Fraying around the edges, City Hotel's good value rooms have hot-water shower and TV. Huge suites include kitchen table, refrigerator and bathtub.

**Hotel Grand Tiga Mustika** (☎ 733-788; fax 733-288; Jln ARS Muhammadiyah 51; r incl breakfast from 363,000Rp, ste from 665,000Rp, plus 21% tax; ☎) From emerald-green dragons poolside to cherry-wood sofas, new Grand Tiga Mustika ('three magical stones') runs to Chinese kitsch. But it's serious three-star value.

**Hotel Pacific** (☎ 750-888, 750-345; www.hotel.pacificbalikpapan.com; Jln Ahmad Yani 33; r incl breakfast US\$55-75, ste US\$90-100; ☎) Pacific's game is 'Let's Make a Deal': ignore posted rates and negotiate for standard rooms around 350,000Rp. Comfortable, tasteful Southeast Asian furnishings and first-class service are worth the bother.

More midrange:

**Bintang Hotel** (☎ 735-908; bintangh@indosat.net.id; Jln Sudirman Blok B, 31-34; r incl breakfast 215,000-245,000Rp, f/ste 345,000/495,000Rp plus 10% tax; ☎) Comfortable waterfront favourite.

**Mirama Hotel** (☎ 412-442; mirama@indonet.net.id; Jln Pranoto 16; r incl breakfast 265,000-315,000Rp, ste 530,000-580,000Rp plus 21% tax; ☎) Freshly renovated value with 35% discounts.

#### TOP END

**Le Grandeur** (☎ 420-155; www.legrandeurhotels.com; bppres@legrandeurhotels.com; Jln Sudirman; r incl breakfast 640,000-890,000Rp; ☎) Formerly the Dusit, seafront Le Grandeur caters to expense-account travellers with indulgent rooms, a fitness centre, tennis courts, and a lounge bar. Outside Balikpapan's centre, but a nearby bustling shopping area lends an urban buzz.

**Hotel Gran Senyuir** (☎ 080-0122-6677, 820-211; hgs@senyuirhotels.com; Jln ARS Mohammad 7; r/ste incl breakfast from 1,100,000/1,700,000Rp; ☎) Balikpapan's classiest choice mixes Kalimantan style – wooden floors, Dayak *doyo* bark cloth on walls – with five-star luxury. There are several good restaurant choices on the premises..

## BALIKAPAN

INFORMATION		
Agung Sedayu.....	1	C4
Bayu Buana Travel.....	(see 5)	
Bcom.....	2	D4
BNI Bank.....	3	D4
BRI Bank.....	4	C4
Family Net.....	(see 4)	
Golden Nusa Travel.....	5	D4
Gamedia.....	(see 29)	
Haji La Tanrung Star Group.....	6	D4
Pertamina Hospital.....	7	C4
Rumah Sakit Ibu Restu.....	8	D4
Togogasono Travel.....	9	D4

SLEEPING		
Adika Hotel Bahtera.....	10	D4
Bintang Hotel.....	11	C4
City Hotel.....	12	C4
Hotel Ayu.....	13	D2
Hotel Buana Lestari.....	14	D4
Hotel Citra Nusantara.....	15	D4
Hotel Gajah Mada.....	16	D4
Hotel Gran Senyur.....	17	D4
Hotel Grand Tiga Mustika.....	18	D4
Hotel Murni.....	19	D2
Hotel Pacific.....	20	D4
Mirama Hotel.....	21	D4
Novotel Balikpapan.....	22	D4

EATING		
24-hour Warung.....	23	D4
Bondy's.....	24	D4
Hero Supermarket.....	(see 29)	
Ocean's Resto.....	25	D4
Restoran Shangrilla.....	26	D3
Shang Hai Restaurant.....	27	D4
Warung Rejeki.....	(see 14)	
Wisma Ikan Bakar.....	28	D4

SHOPPING		
Balikpapan Plaza.....	29	D4

TRANSPORT		
Adam Air.....	(see 2)	
Batavia Air.....	30	D4
Boats to Panajam-Banjarmasin		
Bus Terminal.....	(see 32)	
Dharma Lautan.....	31	B1
Garuda.....	(see 10)	
Harbour.....	32	B1
Prima Vista.....	33	C4
Merpati.....	33	C4

More luxury options:

**Adika Hotel Bahtera** (☎ 418-000; www.bahtera hotel.com; Jln Sudirman 2; r incl breakfast US\$60-95, ste incl breakfast US\$120-200 plus 21% tax; 🍷) Bargain for a moderate room below 400,000Rp at this behemoth opposite Balikpapan Plaza.

**Novotel Balikpapan** (☎ 080-7177-7777, 733-111; www.novotel.com/asia; Jln Brigjen Ery Suparjan 2; r incl breakfast from 765,000Rp; 🍷 🍷) Lush international sterility.

### Eating & Drinking

Find cheap eats around Gunung Kawi, along the waterfront, particularly around Pasar Klandasan; there's a trio of all-night *warung* on Jln Pranoto.

**Wisma Ikan Bakar** (Jln Sudirman 16; meals 11,000-28,000Rp; 🍷 lunch & dinner) The 'Grilled Fish Inn'

ain't just another *warung*. Select fish or seafood for the fire and enjoy it with *lalapan* style: served with sambal and aromatic leaves.

**Restoran Shangrilla** (Jln Ahmad Yani 29; mains 14,000-25,000Rp; 🍷 lunch & dinner) This popular, family-run restaurant serves meek and daring Indonesian-Chinese versions of seafood (pages of it!), duck, beef, frog and chicken.

**Ocean's Resto** (☎ 739-439; Ruko Bandar waterfront, Jln Sudirman; mains from 18,000Rp; 🍷 lunch & dinner) In the fledging waterfront district, choose fish or seafood, sold by weight, plus burgers, fish and chips, and Indonesian food. Sit inside with air-con or go rustic in the garden with the sea breeze and casual vibe.

**Shang Hai Restaurant** (☎ 422-951; Jln Sudirman; mains 22,000-40,000Rp; 🍷 lunch & dinner) Water views

are a bonus at this cool and classy home of superb Chinese seafood. Shellfish cooked in various styles and clays are the order.

**Bondy's** (☎ 424-285; Jln Ahmad Yani; mains 30,000-50,000Rp; 🍷 lunch & dinner) An institution among expats and local *riche*, this boozy garden restaurant features fish on ice, steaks and Indonesian favourites. Bread and desserts featuring homemade ice cream, come from the bakery in front.

Most large hotels have restaurants serving Western and tame Indonesian cuisine, plus pubs, live music and dancing. *Ruko*, near the waterfront east of Pasar Klandasan, conceal dance clubs.

Cheap eats: **Warung Rejeki** (Jln Sudirman 15; mains 8000-10,000Rp; 🍷 breakfast, lunch & dinner) Late-night option for Indonesian mainstays.

**Hero Supermarket** (Balikpapan Plaza, Jln Sudirman) Commendable food court here, too.

### Getting There & Away

#### AIR

**SilkAir** (☎ 730-800; Hotel Gran Senyur, Jln ARS Muhammad 7) flies daily to Singapore (US\$291). **Merpati** (☎ 424-452; Jln Sudirman 32) flies daily to Makassar (796,000Rp). **Garuda** (☎ 422301; Adika Hotel Bahtera, Jln Sudirman 2) flies to Manado, Surabaya (310,000Rp), Denpasar (663,000Rp) and Tarakan (327,000Rp). **Riau Airlines** (☎ 761-855-333; www.riau-airlines.com) flies daily to Balikpapan (500,000Rp). **Kal-Star** (☎ 737-473; Jln Sudirman 80) and Riau Airlines fly to Berau (500,000Rp), with Kal-Star connecting to Tarakan (761,000Rp), Nunukan (893,000Rp) and Tanjung Selor (761,000Rp).

**Batavia** (☎ 739-225, 766-886; www.batavia-air.co.id; Jln Sudirman 15C) flies to Banjarmasin (395,000Rp), Tarakan, Jakarta, Surabaya, Yogyakarta (545,000Rp), Palu (415,000Rp) and Manado (565,000Rp). **Adam Air** (☎ 743999; www.adamair.co.id; Jln Ahmad Yani 40) and **Lion Air** (☎ 0804-177-8899, 707-3761; www.lionair.co.id) fly to Jakarta and Surabaya. Mandala also flies to Tarakan. Air Asia (350,000Rp) and Sriwijaya Air also serve Jakarta.

#### BOAT

**Agung Sedayu** (☎ 420-601) is the best source for all nautical transport information and tickets. See p269.

**Pelni** (☎ 424-171; Jln Yos Sudarso 76) sails to Makassar (economy/1st class 122,000/377,000Rp, 36 hours), Pare Pare, Surabaya, and beyond.

**Dharma Lautan** (☎ 422-194; Kampung Baru dock) runs daily ferries to Mamuju (96,000Rp, 14 hours). **Prima Vista** (☎ 732-607; Jln Sudirman 138) sells tickets for Pare Pare (120,000Rp, 20 hours), Makassar (125,000Rp, 24 hours), and Surabaya (160,000, 36 hours).

#### BUS

Buses to Samarinda (19,500Rp, two hours) leave from Batu Ampar bus terminal at the north end of town. Buses to Banjarmasin (from 75,000Rp, 12 hours) leave from the terminal across the harbour. Take a route 6 *angkot* to Jln Monginsidi and hop on a speedboat (6000Rp, 10 minutes) to the other side.

### Getting Around

Taxis to/from Seppangan Airport cost 35,000Rp. Or catch a route 7 *angkot* on the highway outside the airport to Damai minibus terminal. Transfer to a route 1 or 3 *angkot* downtown.

Balikpapan Plaza is a focal point for *angkot* (3000Rp). Drivers frequently equip their rides with vast speakers, cranked to ear-splitting levels.

*Ojek* drivers congregate near Balikpapan Plaza, Gunung Kawi and other strategic spots. Bargaining begins at around 10,000Rp.

### SAMBOJA LODGE

It's not surprising that **Borneo Orangutan Survival Foundation** (BOS; www.orangutan.or.id) has a low profile. It follows modern orangutan rehabilitation theory, minimising contact between humans and orangutans. The resident primatologist at the BOS Samboja Lestari re-introduction project warns, 'Those wishing to hug orangutans will need to go elsewhere.' (In fact, no orangutan rehabilitation program endorses hugging.)

Despite the antisocial agenda, BOS opened **Samboja Lodge** (☎ 081-153-7630; www.sambojalodge.com; r with meals US\$100, ste with meals US\$150-200; 🍷) for day-trippers, overnights and long-term volunteers. Visitors can observe, from a suitable distance, BOS projects, perhaps assist, and savour 1850 splendid hectares of regenerating forest.

Samboja Lestari is open on Saturday mornings by appointment – other times by special arrangement – for **day visits** (☎ 0542-702-3600; fax 0542-413069; admission by donation US\$50 Saturdays, other time US\$70). Semboja Lestari is located 90 minutes from Balikpapan and the

unpaved approach road requires 4WD during the rainy season.

The site houses three BOS projects: Samboja Lestari Land Rehabilitation Program; Samboja Lestari Wanariset Orangutan and Sun Bear Project; and Samboja Lodge. Two lookout towers and self-guided nature trails facilitate observing three species of eagle, deer, butterflies and occasional wild primates. Every visitor plants a native species tree as part of the BOS reforestation program.

Overnight visitors can assist projects through the **Helping Hands program** (US\$20 per day). Tasks include enclosure cleaning, organic farming, and wildlife behaviour observation.

BOS also arranges limited visits to orangutan release areas. At **Meratus Forest Camp** (per person per day US\$50), about five hours from Samboja, humans are caged to prevent interaction with released orangutans. Guides lead forest treks to spot orangutans in trees. The price includes meals and accommodation, but not 4WD transport, which is approximately US\$100 per day.

During the 1990s, BOS released 75 orangutans into **Sungai Wain**, less than an hour from Samboja. Day-trekking there costs US\$37, excluding transport. Plans include a camp for overnight stays there, too.

Samboja staff can facilitate trips to other KalTim sights. BOS doesn't want anyone touching the apes, but it will lend visitors a hand.

## SAMARINDA

☎ 0541 / pop 600,000

Samarinda's reputation as a travellers' haven is greatly exaggerated. East Kalimantan's largest city is a prime example of exodus from urban centres. Places where travellers most easily find services don't attract leading elements of Samarinda's citizenry. Travellers come here as a launch point to unspoiled forests and Dayak villages on Sungai Mahakam; avoid lingering and just hit the road.

## Orientation

The town centres around **Pasar Pagi** (morning market; Jln Sudirman) and **Mesra Indah Mall** just opposite. *Angkot* (3000Rp) congregate here. Hotels also cluster here, running north toward Tumendung Airport. The town centre spreads east through **Citra Niaga** traditional market and west to Jln Awang Long. The striking main mosque, **Mesjid Raya Darussalam**

(Jln Niaga Selatan), with its missile-like minarets, is between the markets. River boats leave from docks 3km west. Long-distance bus terminals are dispersed inconveniently around town.

## MAPS

**Gamedia** (Mesra Indah, Jln KH Khalid)

## Information

### INTERNET ACCESS

**Internet Cafe** (Hotel MJ, Jln KH Khalid 1; per hr 10,000Rp; ☎ 24hr)

**Sumangkat Internet** (Jln Agus Salim 35; per hr 6000Rp; ☎ 8am-midnight) Plus postal services and *wartel*.

**Warnet Mesra Indah** (Mesra Indah Mall, 2nd floor; per hr 6000Rp; ☎ 9am-9pm) Pornography ads start sessions and persist; also postal services and *wartel*.

### MEDICAL SERVICES

**Rumah Sakit Haji Darjad** (☎ 732-698; Jln Dahlia) Modern, massive hospital. Off Jln Basuki Rahmat.

**RS Bhakti Ngurah** (☎ 741-363; Jln Basuki Rahmat 150) Clinic.

### MONEY

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

**Bank Central Asia** (BCA; Jln Sudirman)

**Bank Negara Indonesia** (BNI; cnr Jln P Sebatik & Jln Panglima Batur)

### POST

**Main post office** (cnr Jln Gajah Mada & Jln Awang Long)

### TOURIST INFORMATION

**Tourist office** (☎ 736-850; cnr Jln Sudirman & Jln Awang Long) Kalimantan's best tourism office with knowledgeable, friendly staff (some English-speaking), helpful maps and accurate information.

### TRAVEL AGENCIES

Many Samarinda travel agencies offer tours upriver. For air tickets:

**Angkasa Express** (☎ 200-281; aexsri@telkom.net; Plaza Lembuswana)

**Prima Tour & Travel** (☎ 737-777; prima\_sriol@yahoo.co.id; Hotel MJ, Jln Khalid 1)

### Tours

Independent guides have made Samarinda the main starting point for touring the mighty Mahakam and beyond. **Junaid Nawawi** (☎ 085-2502-49370; junaid.nawawi@plasa.com; Hotel Piru;

## ORANGUTAN FACTS

Three per cent: that's all that separates human DNA from orangutan, which means 'person of the forest' in Malay. Looking into their soulful brown eyes or seeing one use a banana leaf as an umbrella seemingly confirms the intelligence of humans' third-closest relative, casting it as a distant redheaded cousin rather than a powerful, wild animal.

The only great apes outside Africa, orangutans once ranged throughout Southeast Asia but species survive only on Sumatra (*Pongo abelii*) and Borneo (*Pongo pygmaeus*). As few as 15,000 wild orangutans survive, compared with 250,000 a century ago.

Males of this gingery, long-haired species grow to 80kg and 1.5m, with an arm span of more than 2m. They sport black cheek pads and throat pouches for their booming long calls, heard for up to 2km, warning off rivals. Females are smaller and grow beards. Their eight-year birth cycle, the longest among mammals, exposes the species to extinction.

Nature's largest arboreal animal, orangutans rarely come to the ground, building up to a half-dozen nests daily for sleeping. They are crucial to the rainforest as seed dispersers, and the forest is crucial to them. They forage over large ranges, eating more than 200 varieties of fruit, bark and leaves, plus occasional insects and meat.

According to 'The Last Stand of the Orangutan', a 2007 United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP) report, humans are destroying orangutans' rainforest habitat at a rapidly accelerating rate. By 2022 – 10 years earlier than a 2002 UNEP projection – researchers estimate 98 percent of Borneo's rainforest will be gone, thanks to human destruction.

What's in that 3% difference that's making it so difficult for us and our redheaded cousins to get along?

☎ 2-5pm), **Suryadi** (☎ 081-6459-8263) and **Rustam** (☎ 735-641; 081-2585-4915) get good reviews.

**Mesra Tours** (☎ 738-787; fax 741-017; www.mesra.com/tour; Hotel Mesra, Jln Pahlawan 1) runs full service Sungai Mahakam tours, treks to West Kalimantan, Apokayan Highlands and beyond, and books flights.

## Sights

On the south side of Sungai Mahakam, Samarinda-style sarongs are woven in **Samarinda Seberang**. Take a yellow *angkot* from Pasar Pagi.

Every Sunday at 2pm, **Pampang**, 26km west of Samarinda, has Kenyah Dayak ceremonies at its longhouse. These are not made-for-tourist performances, and rituals are relatively unadulterated. Do offer a small donation for snapping photographs. Public minibuses to Pampang leave from Segiri terminal (7000Rp, one hour). Chartering a taxi or Kijang with other travellers for 100,000Rp is an alternative.

## Sleeping

Hotels in Samarinda, particularly budget choices, trend towards old and tired. Nostalgic backpackers can probably have the same room, maybe the same mattress, their parents enjoyed.

## BUDGET

**Hanyani Hotel** (☎ 742-653; Jln Pirus 31; r 70,000-140,000Rp; ☎) Large rooms in this cavernous place include *mandi* and a choice of one or two beds. Fan-cooled economy rooms are often cleaner on the 3rd floor. Request discounts.

**Hotel Gelora** (☎ 742-024; gelora@smd.mega.net.id; Jln Niaga Selatan 62; r 75,000-200,000Rp; ☎) Overlooking Citra Niaga market and routinely overlooked by foreigners, Gelora is a well-kept secret. All rooms include *mandi*; rooms with air-con start from 99,000Rp.

More choices:

**Aida** (☎ 742-572; Jln KH Mas Tumenggung; r incl breakfast from 75,000Rp; ☎) Variety of rooms, marginally cleaner than neighbours.

**Hotel Hidayah I** (☎ 731-210, 731-261; Jln KH Mas Temenggung; s incl breakfast 100,000-155,000Rp, d 125,000-190,000Rp; ☎) Skidding downhill. Guides still frequent its balcony (coffee) bar.

**Hotel Hidayah II** (☎ 741-712; Jln Khalid 25; s from 75,000Rp, d 125,000-175,000Rp; ☎) Clean but worn.

## MIDRANGE

**Hotel Mega Sentosa** (☎ 749-218; fax 749219; Jln Veteran 88; r incl breakfast 150,000-225,000Rp, ste incl breakfast 300,000-375,000Rp; ☎) On a quiet street near Pasar Pagi and with helpful staff, its generous rooms are worth hiking the flight or two of steps. The restaurant (mains 12,000Rp to

## SAMARINDA

**INFORMATION**

BCA Bank.....1 B3  
 BNI Bank.....2 C3  
 Gramedia.....(see 26)  
 Hotel Pirus.....(see 9)  
 Internet Café.....(see 18)  
 Main Post Office.....3 B3  
 Mesra Tours.....(see 17)  
 Prima Tour & Travel.....(see 18)  
 RS Bhakti Ngraha.....4 C2  
 Rumah Sakit Haji Darjad.....5 C2  
 Sumangkat Internet.....6 C2  
 Tourist Office.....7 B3  
 Warnet Mesra Indah.....(see 26)

**SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES**

Mesjid Raya Darussalam.....8 C4

**SLEEPING**

Aida.....(see 14)  
 Hanyani Hotel.....9 B3  
 Hotel Bumi Seniyur.....10 C3  
 Hotel Gelora.....11 C4  
 Hotel Grand Jamrud.....12 B3  
 Hotel Grand Jamrud 2.....13 C4  
 Hotel Hidayah I.....14 C4  
 Hotel Hidayah II.....15 C3  
 Hotel Mega Sentosa.....16 B4  
 Hotel Mesra.....17 C2  
 Hotel MJ.....18 C3  
 JB Hotel.....19 C2

**EATING**

Hero Supermarket.....(see 26)  
 Rumah Makan Darmo.....20 C3  
 Rumah Makan Handayani.....21 C3  
 Sari Laut Rumah Makan.....22 C1  
 Sweet Roti Modern.....23 B3  
 Warung Kopi Hai Nan.....24 C4

**SHOPPING**

Fitriah Souvenir Shop.....25 B3  
 Mesra Indah Shopping Centre.....26 C3

**TRANSPORT**

Harbour Master's Office.....27 D4  
 Kal-Star.....28 D1  
 Pelni.....29 D4

30,000Rp) offers buffet breakfast and 24-hour room service.

**JB Hotel** (☎ 737-688; jbhôtel\_samarinda@yahoo.com; Jln Agus Salim 16; r 150,000-240,000Rp; 🏠) New and bright, JB caters to domestic business-travellers with smart rooms. Add 30,000Rp for buffet breakfast for two, or skip it and try nearby *warung*.

**Hotel Grand Jamrud** (☎ 743-828; fax 743-837; Jln Jamrud 34; r incl breakfast 160,000-315,000Rp; 🏠) Immaculately maintained in a quiet location, Grand Jamrud attracts government travellers and business meetings. Economy rooms run boxy but comfortable.

**Hotel Grand Jamrud 2** (☎ 731-233; fax 736-096; Jln Panglima Batur 45; r incl breakfast 200,000-389,000Rp; 🏠) Has simple and spotless rooms in a nightlife node.

**Hotel MJ** (☎ 747-689; www.mjhotel.com; Jln Khalid 1; r incl breakfast 240,000-349,000Rp, ste incl breakfast 465,000-575,000Rp plus 21% tax; 🏠) Catering to business travellers, MJ has sunlit rooms with inoffensive décor. There's a restaurant, a travel agent, an internet café and a boutique on the ground floor, and a free computer terminal in the lobby. Suites are discounted 20% on weekends.

### TOP END

**Hotel Mesra** (☎ 732-772; www.mesra.com/hotel; Jln Pahlawan 1; r incl breakfast 320,000-630,000Rp, cottages 850,000Rp, ste 1,648,000Rp; 🏠) On a green hill overlooking downtown, Hotel Mesra has a rustic resort-feel in comfortable rooms and oversized cottages with KalTim touches. Outsiders can use the pool (15,000Rp).

**Hotel Bumi Seniyur** (☎ 741-443; www.seniurhotels.com; Jln Diponegoro 17-19; r incl breakfast 615,000-880,000Rp, ste incl breakfast from 1,348,000Rp plus 21% tax; 🏠) Indonesia's president stays here when visiting Samarinda, and so would you if someone else paid. Rooms are tastefully indulgent with local accents including *meranti* (red hardwood) floors and rattan or wooden furniture.

### Eating

For trendy dining after dark—food stalls with everything from sizzling *udang galah* (giant river prawns) to chic fusion—try Jln Juanda on *angkot* route A.

**Rumah Makan Handayani** (☎ 732-452; Jln Abdul Hassan 7; mains 7,000-15,000Rp; 🍽️ breakfast, lunch & dinner) Cheerful and cheap central Java entry in culinary *tour de Indonesia* running north from Mesra Indah Mall. Find Banjar, Padang, Bugis and more along the route, with most open until late at night.

**Rumah Makan Darmo** (☎ 737-287; Jln Abdul Hassan 38; mains 12,000-20,000Rp; 🍽️ lunch & dinner) Quality far exceeds prices at this rare Chinese restaurant attuned to individual diners and couples. Fresh seafood is the speciality, and there's smoke-free air-con upstairs.

**Sari Laut Rumah Makan** (☎ 735-848; Jln Pahlawan; mains 25,000-40,000Rp; 🍽️ dinner) The name 'Seafood' is its claim to fame. *Udang galah* served fragrant, spicy or Padang-style nets Samarindans and Javanese tourists.

Citra Niaga's many *warung* serve local specialties and Indonesian standards.

Self-catering and snacks:

**Warung Kopi Hai Nan** (Jln Niaga Utara 50) Chinese-Indonesian-Western bakery and coffee shop.

**Sweet Roti Modern** (Jln Sudirman 8) This bakery's aroma perfumes the street.

**Hero supermarket** (Mesra Indah Mall)

### Shopping

Mesra Indah Shopping Centre has a mix of local and chain stores, plus a food court. Citra Niaga shops sell Dayak rattan, *doyo*, carvings and other souvenirs. **Fitriah Souvenir Shop** (Jln Sudirman 10) offers high-quality items with price tags to match.

### Getting There & Away

#### AIR

**Kal-Star** (☎ 742-110; Jln Gatot Subroto 80) flies to Tarakan (660,000Rp), Berau and Nunukan (796,000Rp). **DAS** (☎ 736-989; Blk D, No 8, Jln Komplek Lembuswana) has twice weekly services to Data

Dawai (184,000Rp). DAS also flies to Long Ampung (206,000Rp) five times weekly, and Balikpapan (193,000Rp), Putussibau (690,000Rp) and Pontianak (965,000Rp).

#### BOAT

**Pelni** (☎ 741-402; Jln Yos Sudarso 76) routes visit Pare Pare (127,500Rp, 21 hours), Surabaya (258,000Rp, 24 hours), Toli Toli (134,000Rp, 24 hours), Tarakan (259,000Rp, 24 hours) and Nunukan (225,000Rp, 24 hours).

In addition, there's a twice-weekly private service to Pare Pare (Jln Mesra 125,000Rp, 24 hours). Just ask the **harbour master** (Jln Yos Sudarso 2) for details.

Mahakam river ferries (*kapal biasa*) leave at 7am from Sungai Kunjang terminal (3km via *angkot*) for Tenggarong (20,000Rp, two hours), Melak (100,000Rp, 16 hours), Long Iram (120,000Rp, 18 hours) and—sometimes—Long Bagun (350,000Rp, 36 hours).

#### BUS

Samarinda has multiple bus terminals. Sungai Kunjang terminal serves Kota Bagun (20,000Rp, three hours) and Balikpapan (19,500Rp, two hours). Use Lempake terminal at the north end of town for Bontang (20,000Rp, three hours), Sangatta (25,000Rp, four hours), and Berau (135,000Rp, 16 hours). Buses leave as filled from 7am until early afternoon. Minibuses to Tenggarong (10,000Rp, one hour) depart Harapan Baru terminal on the south bank of Sungai Makaham, reached via *angkot* route G. Minibuses for Sunday afternoon Dayak rituals at Pampang (7000Rp, one hour) leave from Segiri terminal at the north end of Jln Pahlawan.

### Getting Around

Minibuses, called *angkot* or taxis (3000Rp, watch for overcharging), converge at Pasar Pagi.

Taxis from **Tumendung Airport** (3km) cost 35,000Rp. Alternatively, walk 100m to Jln Gatot Subroto, turn left and catch *angkot* B into town.

### KUTAI NATIONAL PARK

Lauded by wild orangutan buffs, Kutai National Park's 198,000 hectares include coastal mangroves, Indonesia's largest, relatively untouched ironwood forest, plus a wide variety of wild orchids. The park was hit hard by the fires of 1997–98, but has recovered

to face renewed threat from illegal loggers and wildcat miners. Kutai is surrounded by energy extraction – coal, oil, gas – and park authorities have enlisted companies in preservation efforts.

Besides orangutans, Kutai has at least a half-dozen primate species from leaf and proboscis monkeys to slow lorises, mainly in the coastal areas. Sun bear, deer, flat-headed cat and other mammals are found throughout the park. Abundant bird-life includes sea eagle, stork, and myna. Treks feature encounters with golf ball-size, tiger-striped beetles straight out of Alice's Wonderland. It's also possible to spot wildlife by motorised canoe along the park's numerous waterways.

Kutai has visitor facilities at **Sangkimah**. Take a bus from Samarinda's Lempake terminal to Bontang (20,000Rp, three hours) to register at the **National Park office** (PHKA; ☎ 0548-27218; Jln Mularman 236; ☎ 7.30am-4pm Mon-Thu, 8am-noon Fri). Registration is free, but a passport photocopy is required. Call ahead for weekend arrivals.

Guides are not required inside Kutai but finding orangutans without one is difficult. PHKA charges 50,000Rp per day (or 100,000Rp for trekking), plus transport costs. It's possible to charter a boat from the PHKA office into the park for 200,000Rp.

Overnight accommodation is at **basic guest-houses** (dm 100,000Rp) at Sangkimah or Camp Kakap near Sangatta, one hour further north along the main highway. Facilities are rudimentary; bring your own food.

Exploring Kutai from **Sangatta** was a more attractive option when Papa Charlie, a beloved boatman on Sungai Sangatta, ran game-viewing day trips. He's no longer on the scene, and no-one has adequately replaced him. Without that attractive choice, there's not much reason to come to Sangatta, a booming coal town. **Pak Willis** (☎ 081-3474-23297) supervises University of Kyoto research facilities at Camp Kakap and can arrange visits. The 20-minute boat ride from Kobo Jaya, a fishing village east of town, to Camp Kakap costs 300,000Rp (return), or about 500,000Rp from Sangatta's riverside market.

In Sangatta, **Golden Hotel** (☎ 0549-25000; Jln Diponegoro; r incl breakfast 125,000-250,000Rp; 🏠) is the best value for accommodation. **Warung Akrab** (Jln IA Muis II 20; mains from 7000Rp; ☎ breakfast, lunch & dinner) dishes up great and cheap local fish. Swim upmarket for fish and seafood at **Warung Diponegoro** (Jln APT

Pranoto; mains from 15,000Rp; ☎ lunch & dinner) – look for the young coconuts and barbecue grill outside. **Dayak Coffee Shop and Restaurant** (☎ 0549-21333; Hotel Kutai Permai; Jln Yos Sudarso I; mains from 20,000Rp; ☎ breakfast, lunch & dinner) exudes country class within wood-panelled walls.

## TENGGARONG

☎ 0541 / pop 75,000

Once capital of the mighty Kutai sultanate, Tenggarong is first stop on many Mahakam river boats. The main attractions are a museum in the former palace and the Erau Festival that brings thousands of Dayaks to town. Some travellers adopt Tenggarong as a laid-back alternative to Samarinda, most skip it altogether.

## Orientation & Information

**Bank Danamon** (Jln Ahmad Yani) ATM.

**Kumala Net Cafe** (Komplek Pertokoan Pasar Tangga Arung, Kios 5, Jln Maduningrat; per hr 10,000Rp; ☎ 9am-10pm)

**Lippo Bank** (Jln Sudirman) ATM.

**Tourist office** (☎ 661-042; fax 661-093; Jln Ahmad Yani 12) Information on Erau Festival and other attractions.

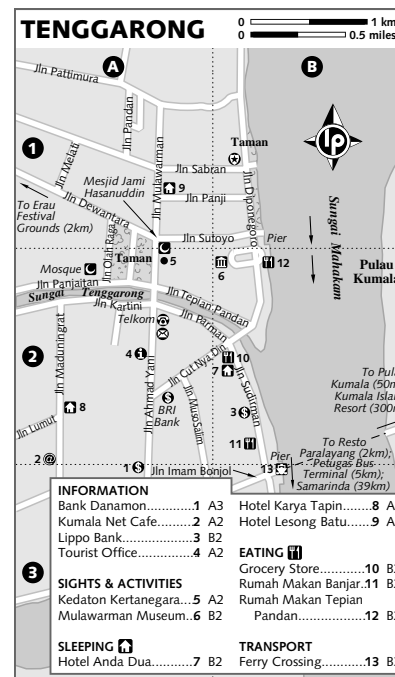
## Sights

Guarded by ceramic dragons and snakes, **Mulawarman Museum** (Jln Diponegoro; admission 2500Rp; ☎ 9am-4pm, closed Mon & Friday) honours the Kutai sultanate that ruled for 19 generations and continues to occupy local pride of place. Royal remnants in this stolid former palace include an elaborate puppet theatre with gamelan, a gift from Yogyakarta's sultan. The basement holds royal porcelain, including Yuan, Han, Ming and Qing dynasty water-jars. Topping it off is an (unintentionally) amusing exhibit of traditional headwear from every Indonesian province.

Behind the museum, the royal cemetery, souvenir shops and *warung* lead to the latest **Kedaton Kertanegara** (Sultan's Palace). The ornate building with finely crafted wooden balconies and stained-glass windows is vacant, except during Erau Festival, when the sultan takes up temporary residence.

## Festivals & Events

Once a year, Dayaks travel to Tenggarong from throughout Kalimantan for the **Erau Festival**. Though touristy, it's a chance to see traditional dances and ritual ceremonies and join a vast intertribal party. Events take



place at the *kedaton* (walled city palace) and around town.

The festival is usually held in late September for one to two weeks. Tourist offices in Tenggarong or Samarinda can provide upcoming dates.

## Sleeping

**Hotel Anda Dua** (☎ 661409; Jln Sudirman 65; r 60,000-150,000Rp; 🏠) Basic, fan-cooled rooms with shared *mandi* occupy the rustic front section of this friendly hotel behind a **grocery store**. Further back, 'Anda Dua Plus' has comfortable air-con rooms with private bathroom and breakfast included.

**Hotel Karya Tapin** (☎ 661-258; Jln Maduningrat 29; r incl breakfast 175,000-200,000Rp plus 10% tax; 🏠) Spotless rooms at this small hotel include high ceilings, TV, showers and homely touches. The location on a bustling side street has many *warung*.

**Kumala Island Resort** (☎ 708-2401; Pulau Kumala; r from 500,000Rp; 🏠) On the southern tip of Pulau Kamala – home to a kitsch amusement park – this hotel has comfortable, generic rooms with private balconies and fancier cottages.

**Hotel Lesong Batu** (☎ 663-499; www.kutaitartanegara.com/lesongbatu; Jln Panji 1; r incl breakfast 532,000-602,000Rp, ste 2,108,000Rp; 🏠) Rooms are appropriately enormous and opulent for a hotel that boasts a sultan's suite. Less expensively, there's a 1940s red Plymouth parked in the lobby.

## Eating

**Rumah Makan Tepian Pandan** (Jln Diponegoro 23; mains 10,000-20,000Rp; ☎ breakfast, lunch & dinner) A relaxed, open-air *warung* serving Kutai cuisine, a local spin on Indonesian standards, with a side dish of river views.

**Rumah Makan Banjar** (☎ 661-782; Jln Sudirman 62; meals 15,000Rp-25,000Rp; ☎ lunch & dinner) Family-run place has high and low tables and a cheerful atmosphere for savouring grilled fish and chicken.

**Resto Paralayang** (☎ 665-005; Jln Pahawan, Bukit Biru; mains from 20,000Rp; ☎ lunch & dinner) Décor and food are both special at Tenggarong's classiest restaurant, in a house with woven rattan walls and an open courtyard. Choose cushions on the floor or booths with embroidered *doyo* lampshades. Menu features Indonesian-style seafood.

Find *warung* along Jln Maduningrat and Jln Cut Nya Din, near Jln Sudirman.

## Getting There & Away

Kijangs to/from Samarinda (10,000Rp, 1½ hours) wait at Petugas bus terminal, 5km south of Tenggarong's centre. From here, take an *angkot* into town (2500Rp). *Ojek* cost 5000Rp. Kijangs from Petugas terminal also serve Kota Bangun (15,000Rp, two hours). In Samarinda, Tenggaraong Kijangs terminate at the end of *angkot* route G, on Sungai Mahakam's south bank.

Mahakam *kapal biasa* from Samarinda (20,000Rp, two hours) stop 2km north of town, with *angkot* (2,500Rp) to the town centre. Next stop upriver is Kota Bangun (40,000Rp, five to six hours).

## SUNGAI MAHAKAM

The 920km-long Sungai Mahakam provides easy access – by Kalimantan standards – to the natural wonders and traditional communities of southeast Borneo and beyond. Much of the riverbank, especially near Samarinda, bears scars of industrialisation and resource exploitation. Veering onto tributaries and small lakes transports travellers back into jungle and societies that resist the 21st century.

Passenger boats leave Samarinda daily at 7am. These *kapal biasa* are 4m wide and at least four times as long, comfortable, with an open lower deck for sitting. Sarongs or newspapers can mark out territory. A canteen serves mainly instant noodle variations. On the upper level, simple mattresses are laid across the floor for sleeping. If you're making an overnight journey, head directly upstairs to stake a claim. Bedding is surprisingly clean (usually), the atmosphere laid-back and friendly. In recent years, upgraded boat engines have slashed travel times.

Much of the year, *kapal biasa* terminate at Long Iram (120,000Rp, 18 hours), 409km from Samarinda. When the river is right, boats continue to Long Bagun, 523km upstream (350,000Rp, 36 hours) where rapids stop them. These volatile waters and the rough terrain around them shelter this section of the river from exploitation.

To explore further, charter a motorised canoe, usually called a *ces* (pronounced 'chess'). It's an 18-hour trip from Long Bagun to **Long Pahangai** through some of the most volatile portions of the river. Only attempt this stretch with seasoned local boaters. Running with the current back to Long Bagun takes six or seven hours.

*Ces* continue upriver to Long Apari, a focal point for cross-Borneo trips. From there it's about a three-day walk to the West Kalimantan headwaters of Sungai Kapuas at Tanjung Lokan.

On the lower Mahakam, it's easy to travel by *kapal biasa*. In the upper reaches, Bahasa Indonesia and/or guides are essential. Some travellers hire guides along the river, others take them from the start. (See p269 and p272 for information about guides and tour operators.) Expect to pay guides at least 150,000Rp daily (plus food, transport and accommodation). Even without a guide, Mahakam travel gets expensive beyond the *kapal biasa*, with charter rates from 100,000Rp per hour for a *ces* and 1,000,000Rp per hour for a speedboat. The cost of a guide may be offset by his ability to negotiate better deals on boat hires and other transport.

Some travellers complain of disappointing trips with cheap guides, but high prices don't guarantee quality. Discuss the trip and expectations with the guide – and see if they're someone you'd like at your side under sometimes fantastic, often difficult conditions.

Along the way, ask about village festivals and celebrations. In the face of modernisation, such events are the best opportunities to observe genuine traditional culture.

### Kota Bangun

The dusty entry point to Mahakam lake country, Kota Bangun is a transport interchange. Heading to or from Samarinda, travellers often elect the bus ride to/from Samarinda (20,000Rp, three hours) over seven to eight hours via *kapal biasa*. From Kota Bangun, bargain for a *ces* to ride the 'backroads' via Muara Muntai (250,000Rp, 1½ hours), Tanjung Isuy (450,000Rp, three hours), and Mancong (650,000Rp; six hours). From August to October waters may be too low for the trip. Maskur, a schoolteacher in Kota Bangun, speaks good English and will work as a guide.

To try spotting the critically endangered Irrawaddy dolphin (*Ocaella brevirostris*; *pesut* in Bahasa Indonesia), take a *ces* – never a speedboat for dolphins – to Muara Muntai via Danau Semayang and Sungai Pela. Dolphins are sometimes seen in these waters, but better dolphin-watching lies ahead at Maura Pahu (opposite).

Alternatively, charter a *ces* for about 450,000Rp and bring lunch for an excursion north. Motor about 1½ hours to Muara Kaman, the site of Kalimantan's first Hindu kingdom, with renowned fishing to the north. It's about 30 minutes through Kedang Kepala to Danau Siran. Enjoy abundant birdlife, monkeys and spectacular sunsets, but be warned: the losmen in Muara Kaman is dismal.

In Kota Bangun, **Losmen Muzirat** (☎ 081-2553-2287; Jln Mesjid Raya 46; s/d 20,000/40,000Rp), opposite the main mosque, has clean, basic rooms with shared *mandi* and brusque staff.

### Muara Muntai

Built on mud flats, Muara Muntai is a colourful market town in the heart of Mahakam lake country, with sturdy boardwalks for streets and many fine wooden buildings, such as the Bappeda (Agency for Regional Development) office straight ahead from the dock. Muara Muntai goes quiet during afternoon prayers but the boardwalks fill up after dark. That's especially true when the weekly night market takes place; appropriately, the day market also flops.

**Penginapan Adi Guna** (☎ 0541-205871, 081-5451-46578; r 50,000Rp) Has basic fan-cooled rooms

and large shared *mandi*. There's free flowing coffee and tea, best enjoyed on the balcony. To find it, follow the boardwalk from the dock and turn right.

To the left of the docks, the smaller **Penginapan Tiara** (☎ 081-3473-76794; s/d 30,000/50,000Rp) also offers simple fan-cooled rooms, shared *mandi* and balcony. It's less breezy than Adi Guna.

Reach Muara Muntai from Samarinda by *kapal biasa* (70,000Rp, 10 hours) or bus to Kota Bangun (20,000Rp, three hours) and *ces* from there (200,000Rp, two hours). Chartering a *ces* here for lake cruising costs about 500,000Rp per day.

### Tanjung Isuy

On the southwest shore of Danau Jempang, Tanjung Isuy is the Mahakam's first Dayak village. Don't expect traditional dress and tattoos, but mobile phones and motorcycles. The embracing of modern conveniences in this Banuaq Dayak territory remains largely skin deep, though, with community identity intact. Local life still means rising with the roosters, watching the river flow, and chatting on the front porch, catching the night breeze.

Four groups arrive by speedboat in Tanjung Isuy for an 'authentic' Dayak experience. Most mob the longhouse souvenir stalls, watch a pay-by-the-hour mix of Dayak dancing, and zoom away. Activity focuses on **Louu Taman Jamrout**, a longhouse vacated in the 1970s, and rebuilt by provincial authorities as a craft centre and tourist hostel.

Performances in Louu Taman Jamrout are certainly commercial, but they are also lively, rhythmic and fun for all. Aficionados and social anthropologists may find the combination of Kenyah, Kayan and Banuaq dance disconcerting, but it's unmistakably entertaining. Independent travellers can commission a dance for 350,000Rp.

The cruise between Muara Muntai and Tanjung Isuy crosses lush wetlands, shallow lakes and **Jantur**, a Banjar village built on a flooded mud flat. Jantur's **mesjid** (mosque), on a bend in the river, is accessible only by boat. The cemetery next door is the highest point in town, a proud 20cm above water level at the end of wet season. Bodies buried here must be anchored in their graves to prevent bobbing to the surface.

Tanjung Isuy has two good losmen. About 500m from the jetty, **Losmen Wisata** (Jln Indonesia Australia; s/d 35,000/50,000Rp) offers rooms with

double beds off a central dining area. The airy common space has wall-to-wall windows for superior views, and a long, conversation-inducing table. Just next door is **Louu Taman Jamrout** (Jln Indonesia Australia; per person 60,000Rp), where the Dayak performances are held. Both have shared *mandi*, mosquito nets, a roughly equal number of boosters, and can suggest the best of nearby *warung*.

*Doyo* weavings and *mandau* with carved handles (as well as a lot of junk) are available at reasonable prices at the craft centre next to Louu Taman Jamrout. Down the road toward the dock, a house across from the first intersection sells carvings and weavings.

Tanjung Isuy is not on the *kapal biasa* route from Samarinda. Chartering a *ces* from Muara Muntai (200,000Rp, 1½ to two hours) is the easiest way to get here. A public *ces* to Muara Muntai leaves daily in the early evening (next to 60,000Rp, depending on the number of passengers). You can charter a *ces* direct to Kota Bangun (450,000Rp, three hours), then catch a bus and be in Samarinda or Balikpapan that night. In dry season, Tanjung Isuy is 30 minutes by Kijang or *ojek* from Mancong.

### Muara Pahu

The Mahakam's confluence with Sungai Kedang Pahu is the top spot along the river to view *pesut*, the Irrawaddy dolphin species without the bottle nose of its saltwater cousins. An estimated 55 to 75 of these critically endangered species remain, mainly in this small section of wetland from Danau Semayang through the various tributaries to Muara Pahu.

Into the 1980s, *pesut* were common all along the Mahakam to Samarinda. They have been a completely protected species under Indonesian law since 1990 and are a provincial symbol for KalTim. But they suffer high mortality rates due to gill-net entanglement and, to a lesser extent, boat collisions. More long term, their habitat is threatened by pollution from speedboats and coal-carrying tugboats, chemical waste from mining, depletion of their prey through unsustainable fishing techniques, and sedimentation in lakes.

**Yayasan Konservasi RASI** (YK-RASI; Conservation Foundation for Rare Aquatic Species of Indonesia; www.geocities.com/yayasan\_konservasi\_rasi) fights to save the *pesut* see p281. It hopes to create a 70km conservation-area along the Mahakam and tributaries, centred on Muara Pahu, where YK-RASI has

opened the **Mahakam Information Centre** with a riverside veranda for dolphin-watching.

The centre arrange *ces* charters around Muara Pahu lasting from one hour to all day (100,000Rp to 450,000Rp), starting with Sungai Bolowan to the Kedang Pahu. Alternatively, Jintan is a black-water river leading into peat swamp. For long trips, bring lunch and plenty of water.

It's also possible to combine dolphin-watching with transport to Maura Muntai or Tanjung Isuy (300,000Rp) via Sungai Baroh, rich with birds and monkeys; to Melak (400,000Rp); and south to Dayak villages Damai or Lambing (500,000Rp). Trained boatmen go slow for wildlife viewing, so travel times vary.

*Kapal biasa* to/from Samarinda (80,000Rp, 12 hours) pass Muara Pahu in the early evening. **Pension Anna** (r 60,000Rp) has decent rooms.

## Mancong

Riverside jungle teeming with birdlife makes journeying to Mancong, a scenic highlight of Mahakam lake country, worth the time and money required. Trees along Sungai Ohong host proboscis monkeys, majestic hornbills soar above, dazzling kingfishers skim the water for prey, and ibis laze around docks hoping for handouts.

A village of about 500, Mancong resembles life on the Mahakam before logging, oil and coal became dominant. The forest still surrounds the village almost entirely. A two-storey **longhouse** is the grandest structure, rebuilt with government assistance in 1987 on the ruins of the 1930s original. The longhouse was abandoned as families built separate houses and is now reserved for folk dances and ceremonies. The dozen totems in front each signifies a buffalo slaughtered. Just one family lives in the longhouse, so it's among the cleanest, most orderly in Borneo. Overnight guests are welcome (60,000Rp per person; no bedding, food or electricity). Ask the family for permission to stay, or if no-one is inside, inquire at the souvenir shack by the jetty.

To visit Mancong, charter a *ces* from Tanjung Isuy (250,000Rp return) early in the morning. Ask the boater to go slowly to enjoy the scenery, lengthening the trip to about three hours each way. In the dry season, it's possible to travel to/from Tanjung Isuy by *ojek* (100,000Rp, 30 minutes).

## UPPER MAHAKAM Melak & Around

The early morning wail of 4WDs and slosh of mixing concrete drown out bird songs in Melak, far different from fishing villages along the route from Samarinda. Hosting a colourful market on Tuesdays, Melak is a good supply stop for trips further north. Areas surrounding Melak are the real reason to stop here.

The **orchid reserve** at Kersik Luway (16km southwest), particularly noted for black orchids, was badly damaged in the fires of 1997–98. Recovery remains slow. Prime season is around February, with scattered blooms year-round.

Tiny **Eheng** (30km southwest) remains a bastion of traditional tattoos and elongated ear lobes. It has a patched longhouse built in 1960 and housing 30 families, although they spend most of their time away, farming rice or collecting rattan and other forest products. They return Monday nights to gossip, gamble and get set for Tuesday's weekly market. Residents welcome visitors to join the fun or even spend the night, but Bahasa Indonesia is required. You'll need to pay for your stay (rates vary) provide your own bedding and food, plus gifts (see p35). Reach Eheng from Melak by minibus (12,000Rp, one hour) via Barong Tongkok. Chartering an *ojek* in Melak costs about 75,000Rp a day, a 4WD costs 300,000Rp.

Near Eheng, **Mencimai** has an excellent **museum** (admission by donation; ☎ 8am–2pm Mon–Fri) with explanations in English and Bahasa Indonesia of Banaq methods of shifting cultivation, collecting wild honey, trapping pigs (and monkeys), and producing *doyo*. It also displays antique *mandau*, rattan and other relics.

From Barong Tongkok, minibuses run south to Damai and Muara Lawa (22,000Rp, two to three hours) with an old rattan longhouse. Both villages have losmen.

In Melak, **Penginapan Setiawan** (☎ 0545-41437; Jln Dr Sutomo; r 50,000Rp) is the newest losmen with spacious rooms off a bright, open corridor. Tea, coffee and boiled drinking water flow freely. Rooms are older at **Penginapan Blue Safir** (☎ 0545-41098; Jln Dr Sutomo; r 50,000Rp) next door. About 100m nearer the jetty, **Warung Banjar** (Jln Dr Sutomo; mains 10,000Rp; ☎ lunch & dinner) serves great barbecued catfish with soup and rice.

## PRESERVING THE PESUT *Budiono*

As a child, I played in Balikpapan Bay's mangroves, always looking for colourful fish. Alarmed by forest destruction through timber companies' failure to practice selective logging and reforestation, plus illegal logging and lack of law enforcement, I chose to study Forestry Management, focused on conservation, at Mulawarman University in Samarinda.

Assisting with coastal dolphin research, I was fascinated by their intelligence and social behaviour. I got interested in Sungai Mahakam dolphins, too. After participating in *pesut Mahakam* research in 2000, I founded a local NGO with my wife, Danielle Kreb, who took her PhD on these dolphins. Through research and awareness campaigns, we try to help preserve the *pesut*.

I hope that responsible, sustainable ecotourism will increase local community and government awareness about dolphin conservation. Area residents welcome additional tourists; some try selling their handicrafts. We've trained local boatmen how to behave when dolphins approach; so far tourists approve of the way boatmen manoeuvre slowly after spotting wildlife.

I've also done bird surveys in Sungai Mahakam, lakes and wetlands since 2001. Birds appeal to me as dynamic, beautiful creatures. Unfortunately, many people like to capture birds. Our job is to explain that birds are legally protected and should be left in peace.

Another big problem we confront is river degradation from excessive logging, mining and plantations. Erosion and floods increase yearly. Poverty also grows due to land loss and decreasing natural resources such as fish.

Despite the problems, I'm optimistic. The government has started investing in alternative resource use for small communities and reforestation projects. These processes take time, and law enforcement remains sporadic. Meanwhile we may have more years of heavy flooding ahead, not so bad for dolphins...

*Budiono, founder of Yayasan Konservasi for Rare Aquatic Species of Indonesia (YK-RASI), lives in Samarinda.*

Souvenir shops around town sell rattan and *doyo* bags, hats, baskets and more for 25,000Rp to 50,000Rp, depending on size and quality, plus occasional *mandau* and other relics.

Boats leave daily to Samarinda between 11am and 2pm (120,000Rp, 15 hours, 325km). To/from Tanjung Isuy, charter a *ces* (500,000Rp, four hours).

The daily bus to Samarinda (100,000Rp, nine hours) is an exceedingly uncomfortable ride, much of it on unsealed roads. Minibuses operate between Melak and Tering (9,000Rp, one hour).

## Tering & Long Iram

In Sungai Mahakam's gold-mining country, **Long Iram** (120,000Rp, 24 hours from Samarinda) is often the last stop for river boats and travellers. It's a pleasant little village, with a handful of colonial buildings on a bend in the river, below rapids rendered impassable when water gets too high or too low.

From the village centre it's a stroll through market gardens or a short *ces* (60,000Rp, 40 minutes) to **Tering**, three settlements straddling the Mahakam. Walk north along Jln

Soewondo, turn right at the path to the police station and cross scenic bridges to **Danao Gap** (3km). Some residents of **Tering Lama**, a Bahau Dayak village on the northern bank, still sport traditional tattoos and elongated earlobes. The village also has four traditional wooden statues and a magnificent church at its eastern end.

To stay overnight in Long Iram, get dropped at the floating café on the east bank, climb to the main road, turn right and look for the tiny sign (opposite the two-storey shops) for **Penginapan Wahyu** (Jln Soewondo 57; r per person incl breakfast 70,000Rp).

Down the road, **Warung Lestari** has the best food on the Mahakam. Order whatever's on the stove.

## Datah Bilang

Datah Bilang is a Protestant community of Kenyah and Bahau Dayaks, who moved from the Apokayan Highlands in the 1970s. Some older women have traditional elongated earlobes and will charge 15,000Rp to 20,000Rp per photograph. **Long Hubung** (100,000Rp, 45 minutes) is another Bahau Dayak village with a basic **losmen** (r 50,000Rp).



Travellers with a thirst for back roads and good knowledge of Bahasa Indonesia can tackle Sungai Merah northeast into the highlands then cross to Tabang, a rare route that takes around six days. Trekking experience, equipment, food and a Kenyah or Punan guide are essential; ask around in Datah Bilang and expect to pay at least 250,000Rp per day. From Tabang, continue to Kota Bangun via Sungai Belayan (see right).

### Long Bagun to Long Apari

When conditions allow, *kapal biasa* from Samarinda reach **Long Bagun** (350,000Rp, 36 hours), a small settlement with an abandoned longhouse, a decent shop for supplies, and quite basic **Penginapan Artomorow** (r40,000Rp). Rapids and shallows that restrict access for large vessels have also protected forests to the east and dampened the impact of modernisation.

From Long Bagun, travellers can charter boats or trek through the forests. River rapids between Long Bagun and the next major settlement, **Long Pahangai**, are treacherous, and sometimes boating is not possible. When conditions allow, it's a four-hour longboat trip from Long Bagun to Long Pahangai, then another day to Long Apari. **Long Lunuk**, between Long Pahangai and Long Apari, is a good base to visit Kenyah villages. Alternatively, stay at **Tiong Ohang**, two hours upstream from Long Lunuk. **Long Apari**, the uppermost longhouse village on the Mahakam is spectacularly scenic. A boat from Long Lunuk takes five to six hours. From here, cross-Borneo trekkers veer toward West Kalimantan.

To see Sungai Mahakam from the top, fly to Data Dawai, an airstrip near Long Lunuk, with **DAS** (☎ 0541-736989; Block D, No 8, Jln Komplek Lembuswana, Samarinda) from Samarinda (184,000Rp). Check with DAS or travel agents for more options. From Data Dawai, work downriver to Samarinda, or trek overland to the Apokayan Highlands; see p285 for more information.

### SUNGAI KEDANG KEPALA

Sungai Kedang Kepala branches north from the Mahakam near **Muara Kaman** and has regular boat service. The trip from Samarinda to **Muara Wahau** takes three days and two nights, via Kenyah and Bahau villages: **Tanjung Manis**, **Long Noran** and **Long Segar**. The main attraction is seeing what few tourists see. Villages are isolated, and many inhabitants have moved

to more convenient locations. Nearby caves held 5th-century Sanskrit finds, now in Tenggarong's museum. To explore independently, charter a motorised canoe for 150,000Rp daily or a speedboat for 1,000,000Rp.

An alternative route from Samarinda to Berau goes north by boat from Muara Wahau to **Miau Baru**. Then try hitching rides to the Dayak village of **Merapun** (two hours). From Merapun, it's 12 hours on Sungai Kelai to Berau.

### SUNGAI BELAYAN

An adventurous yet cultural route follows Sungai Belayan, branching northwest from the Mahakam at Kota Bangun, to **Tabang**. Chartered longboats from Samarinda to Tabang (250,000Rp) take three days and two nights. A chartered *ces* from Kota Bangun to Tabang only takes about a day, but the convenience costs more than 1,000,000Rp.

Tabang can also be reached from the upper Mahakam (see p281). Find a guide at either end to trek through traditional rainforests of nomadic Punan Dayaks.

### BERAU

☎ 0554 / pop 52,000

So nice they named it twice, Berau is also called Tanjung Redep. At the confluence of Sungai Kelai and Segah forming Sungai Berau, it's visited by tourists solely as a transit point to Pulau Derawan. That requires an overnight stay coming and going, and Berau's relaxed, low-key character lets travellers enjoy the sentence.

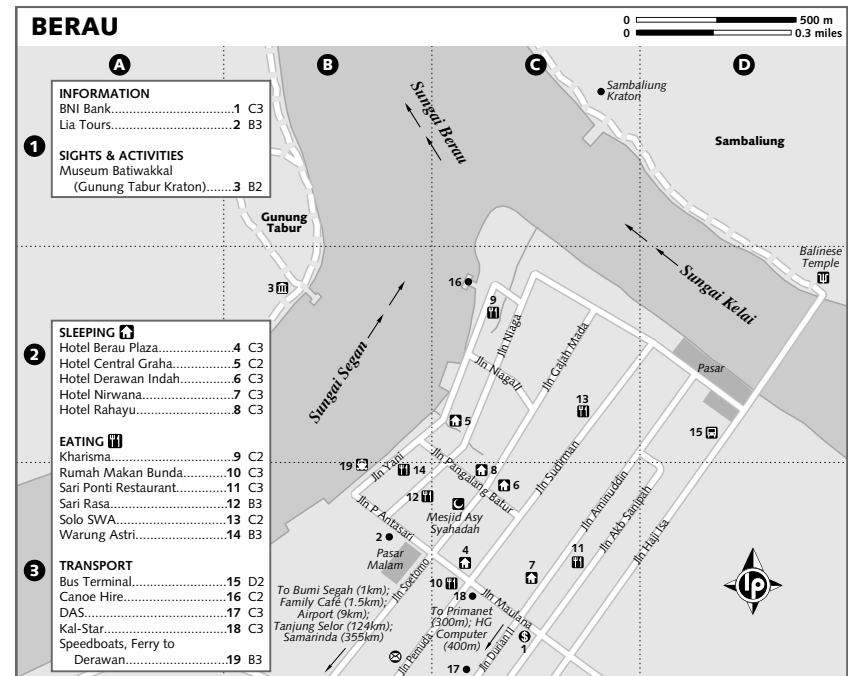
Technically, Tanjung Redep is the spit of land between Sungai Kelai and Segah, and that's where the action is. During the day, you won't find many surprises aside from clean streets and accommodating *angkot* drivers. At night, Jln A Yani comes alive with coffee and snack stalls lining the riverfront. Turning the corner onto Jln Antasari, fruit vendors and food stalls offer more substantial fare, leading to the night market on Jln Soetomo. Berau's who's who can tell visitors what's what.

### Information

Find ATMs along Jln P Antasari and Jln Maulana.

**BNI bank** (Jln Maulana) Foreign exchange.

**Lia Tours** (☎ 2707879; fax 2707283; Hotel Sederhana, Jln P Antasari) Dive resort and flight bookings.



**Primanet** (Jln Mangga II; per hr 6500Rp; ☎ 24hr)

Internet access with comfy pillows on the floor and air-con. Tell the *angkot* driver 'Jln Mangga Dua'.

**HG Computer** (Jln Mangga II; per hr 7,000Rp; ☎ 24hr)

About 100m from Primanet, HG offers both chairs or floor booths, air-con and a midnight to 6am discount to 6000Rp.

### Sights & Activities

Across Sungai Segah, **Museum Batiwakkal** (admission by donation; ☎ 8am-1pm Mon-Thur & Sat, 8-11am Fri) recounts the local sultanate's complex history with rival Sambaliung.

### Sleeping

Rooms usually include morning tea or coffee and cake; bearers will bang on the door until you take it.

**Hotel Central Graha** (☎ 22580; Jln A Yani; r 30,000-135,000Rp; ☎) Tidiest of Berau's cheap digs, Central Graha has spartan fan-cooled rooms with shared *mandi*, very comfortable air-con rooms, plus friendly staff and a riverfront location. Travellers wait for Kijangs to Tanjung Batu in its lobby, a good spot to swap road tales.

**Hotel Nirwana** (☎ 21893; fax 22506 Jln Aminuddin 715; s40,000-100,000Rp, d45,000-110,000Rp; ☎) 'The hotel with the Muslim atmosphere' (management's slogan despite the Buddhist name) has worn but clean rooms. Choose between fan and shared *mandi* upstairs, and fan or air-con with private *mandi* downstairs.

**Hotel Rahayu** (☎ 21142; cnr Jln Panglima Batur & Jln Gajah Mada; r70,000-130,000Rp; ☎) Relatively new, blindingly efficient and absolutely spotless, Hotel Rahayu offers great value in a central but quiet spot. Cosy rooms include private *mandi* or Western bath.

**Hotel Berau Plaza** (☎ 23111; Jln P Antasari; r150,000-190,000Rp; ☎) See beyond the inconsistent rooms and relish the funky charm, prime location, and staff that's warm and casual yet efficient. All rooms have air-con and private bathroom. Ask to see the pretty-in-pink VIP suite with chandelier.

**Bumi Segah** (☎ 24041; fax 21534; Jln Pulau Sampit 747; r incl breakfast 220,000-300,000Rp; ☎) Just outside of town via *angkot*, Berau's newest hotel has huge, fully featured rooms complete with amenities. A favourite with travellers from Berau Coal and the Nature Conservancy,

Bumi Segah represents a new milestone in carbon offsetting.

**Hotel Derawan Indah** (☎ 24255; Jln Panglima Batur 396; r incl breakfast 250,000-350,000Rp plus 21% tax; 🍴 🚿) A swimming pool across the parking lot and lighted tennis court on the roof make this modern hotel a hit with families. Richly endowed rooms include air-con, cable TV and Western bathrooms.

## Eating & Drinking

**Rumah Makan Bunda** (☎ 21305; Jln Antasari 5; mains 12,000-25,000Rp; 🍴 lunch & dinner) The menu includes the usual suspects plus Javanese favourites, but focus on fresh fish *lalapan* style with bonus side dishes. Ambience and tableware are miles beyond standard *warung*.

**Sari Ponti Restaurant** (☎ 23616; Jln Akb Sanipah; mains from 12,000Rp; 🍴 lunch & dinner) Chinese seafood stars, but there's chicken, pigeon, beef and a vegetarian menu, too. A family-run that place tries hard to please.

**Family Cafe** (Jln Pulau Sampit; mains 15,000-30,000Rp; 🍴 breakfast, lunch & dinner) Take the *angkot* to the big yellow sign, walk up the hill past the chicken coops, and land in a lily pond garden with a waterfall over fake rocks, flowering bushes and a variety of trees. It's the place to go for a leisurely afternoon or big night out in Berau, as long as you don't need beer: alcohol's not on the menu. Chicken, fish and vegetables are, Indonesian or Western style.

*Warung* along Jln A Yani and Jln Niaga serve economical Indonesian standards from early morning until late night. **Warung Astri** (Jln A Yani; meals 8000-17,000Rp) serves them with river views. **Sari Rasa** (Jln Niaga; meals 11,000-14,000Rp) offers breakfast favourite *nasi kuning* with chicken, egg, tempeh, and zesty tomato *sambal* all day.

Among night stalls along Jln Antasari, **Cafe Antasari** (mains 8000-13,000Rp; 🍴 dinner), opposite Hotel Berau Plaza, stands out for restaurant-quality fish and seafood done Chinese or Indonesian style. For self-catering, use **Solo SWA** (Jln Sudirman) or **Kharisma** (Jln A Yani).

## Getting There & Away

### AIR

**Kal-Star** (☎ 21007; fax 20279; Jln Maulana 45) offers daily flights (except Sunday) to Tarakan (317,500Rp), Tanjung Selor (180,000Rp), Nunukan (380,000Rp), Balikpapan and Samarinda. **Riau Airlines** (☎ 761-855-333; www.riau-airlines.com) flies daily to Balikpapan (500,000Rp).

**DAS** (☎ /fax 21260; Jln Durian I 26) also flies to Samarinda (498,000Rp).

### BOAT

Speedboats (*sepat*) to Pulau Derawan (three hours) wait off Jln A Yani. Negotiations start at 2,000,000Rp one way; anything under 1,000,000Rp is a bargain. Cheaper Derawan transport goes via Kijang to Tanjung Batu, or KM Tasmania I; see opposite for more information.

### BUS

The convenient **bus terminal** (Jln Hari Isa) is just south of the market on *angkot* routes. Buses over good roads to Tanjung Selor (50,000Rp, 3½ hours) are scheduled hourly from 7.30am to 10.30am but won't roll with fewer than 15 passengers. Buses to Samarinda (135,000Rp, 16 hours), over atrocious roads, are scheduled 14 times daily, from 10am to 5pm, subject to the same rule. Kijangs (Tanjung Selor 60,000 to 75,000Rp; Samarinda 175,000Rp) gather across from the terminal and demand a minimum of four passengers. Buy multiple seats to leave faster.

## Getting Around

Taxis to the airport (9km) cost 40,000Rp. Berau *angkot* (3,000Rp) drivers are Kalimantan's most compliant, breaking routes to reach your destination. River crossings by fan-tail canoe cost 3,000Rp; charters cost 50,000Rp per hour.

## PULAU DERAWAN & SANGALAKI ARCHIPELAGO

☎ 0551

Diving in the Sangalaki Archipelago richly deserves its world renown. But fabulous marine life – from majestic mantas winging through the brine to turtles and sea horses playing tag amid pier pilings – is not the best reason to visit Pulau Derawan. At least as much as places where people dress in beads and paint their faces, Derawan's island village recalls a bygone culture.

Sangalaki's inhabited island nearest the Borneo 'mainland', Derawan is a teardrop-shaped oasis of 125 households, mainly of Bajau people. It can be circled on foot in less than an hour. There are no cars, just a handful of motorcycles, and electricity only runs from dusk to dawn. Without TV and air-con to pull people inside during afternoons, they sit outside, catching and shooting the breeze. This

practice at being neighbours makes Derawan downright neighbourly for visitors.

Among the 30-odd other islands in the archipelago, **Nabucco** and **Maratua** also have accommodation. **Sangalaki** is home to rays, green turtles and a **Turtle Foundation** (www.turtle-foundation.org) monitoring outpost. **Kakaban** has an ecologically intriguing lake where jellyfish have lost their sting.

## Activities

Pulau Derawan's underwater activities are conducted from Derawan Dive Resort and Losmen Danakan. Individual local dives cost around US\$30, including tank and equipment hire; snorkelling gear costs US\$6 to hire per day. Dive trips to Pulau Sangalaki and other islands cost more. Village boats to dive sites cost around 500,000Rp, if transport isn't part of your package. They fish for dinner on the trip back.

## Sleeping & Eating

Losmen offer cakes with coffee, or tea with a sweet cake or bread in the morning, rather than full breakfast. Unfortunately, at the time of writing, **Sangalaki Dive Resort** (www.sangalaki.net) was closed.

**Losmen Ilham** (Pulau Derawan; r 40,000-45,000Rp) Small losmen has clean rooms with fans (when the electricity is on) and shared *mandi*. The attached *warung* serves Indonesian food (meals 8000Rp to 16,000Rp).

☎ **Losmen Danakan** (☎ 086-8121-6143; Pulau Derawan; r per person incl meals 75,000Rp) In the sea patois among Bajau, Bugis, Chinese and Indian traders in these waters, *danakan* means 'family'. Ibu Ridahi, Pak Kasino and welcoming staff make the name fit. Built over the water, this immaculate homestay features comfortable fan-cooled, all-wood rooms and shared *mandi*, some with Western toilets. Meals are simply lovely.

**Derawan Dive Resort** (☎ 0542-707-2615; www.divederawan.com; Pulau Derawan; 5-night package per person from US\$970; 🍴) Timber cottages have rustic charm. Packages include transfer from Berau and three dives daily.

More accommodation options:

**Penginapan Derawan Lestari I** (Pulau Derawan; r 50,000Rp) Haji Ismail's simple losmen on stilts over the water resembles Danakan but falls short.

**Penginapan Derawan Lestari II** (☎ 081-3476-15894; Pulau Derawan; r 50,000-100,000Rp; 🍴) Clean, family-home option with air-con nightly.

**Maratua Paradise Resort** (www.borneo.org; Pulau Maratua; 4-night package per person from US\$855; 🍴) Packages include beach chalet accommodation (US\$15 extra for stilt cottages), island transfers and four dives daily.

**Nabucco Island Resort** (☎ 0542-593635; www.nabucco-island.com; Pulau Nabucco; d incl meals per person €60; 🍴) The rate covers cottages over the surf only, without dives or transfers to this isolated, indulgent resort. The manager has a soft spot for backpackers and may give discounts.

A handful of *warung* on Pulau Derawan offer simple meals and snacks; a few sell warm beer out the back door. Bring fruit from Berau or Tarakan for variety. Tanjung Batu, a fishing village, has a couple of *warung* and **Losmen Famili** (r 30,000Rp) for rooms with shared *mandi* (no fan), in case you're stuck waiting for a boat. We don't recommend Derawan Beach Cafe & Cottage. When we visited, there was a noisy, smelly generator, and we experienced less than courteous treatment.

## Getting There & Away

From Berau, the economy route to Derawan is a Kijang (50,000Rp, at least two hours) to Tanjung Batu, and a boat from there. Kijangs wait along the riverfront from 9am, but won't leave with fewer than five passengers, which often means departing midafternoon. Book in advance at Central Graha Hotel (p283) and get picked up at your hotel when the Kijang is ready to go. At Tanjung Batu, hire a speedboat (*sepat*; 200,000Rp, one hour) to Pulau Derawan or try to negotiate a ride with a fishing boat. Stay close to Indonesians arriving with you and you may get lucky; at the very least, you can share the boat cost.

A direct speedboat from Berau can cost up to 2,000,000Rp (three hours). The owner of Derawan Beach Cafe and Cottage runs **KM Tasmania I** (☎ 081-2531-6153, 081-3465-62765), scheduled from Berau Saturdays at 10am, and from Derawan Sundays from the pier at Beach Café (80,000Rp, five hours). But it often doesn't leave Berau at all, due to insufficient passenger numbers.

From Derawan, losmen can arrange a village boat to Tanjung Batu (100,000Rp, 2½ hours). Leave early: Kijangs depart for Berau at 8am sharp.

## SUNGGAI KAYAN & APOKAYAN HIGHLANDS

Between Berau and Tarakan, **Tanjung Selor** guards the mouth of Sungai Kayan. Regular

longboats travel the Kayan to Long Bia or follow the fork west along Sungai Pujungan as the Kayan branches south. A long section of rapids – Kalimantan's wildest white water – shelters the Kayan's Apokayan Highlands' headwaters from boats, and most loggers, too.

**Kayan Mentarang National Park** follows the border with Sarawak from the Kayan's headwaters to KalTim's northwest corner. This 1.36 million-hectare park is the largest forest area in Southeast Asia, a storehouse of global biodiversity – new species of plants and even animals are discovered regularly – and the centrepiece of WWF's Heart of Borneo initiative to protect contiguous forests in Indonesia, Malaysia and Brunei.

There's fabulous trekking in the Apokayan Highlands. You can cross overland with a guide from Long Ampung to the Mahakam headwaters in about a week. Guides based in Samarinda or Balikpapan lead easy or vigorous treks of various lengths to Dayak longhouses and pristine forests. The landscape and the culture are linked, and each worth exploring. Despite poor soil quality, Dayak farmers have raised rice here for centuries, using traditional techniques and varieties adapted to local conditions.

WWF helped organise the Hulu Pujungan Ecotourism Committee, branded **Borneo Ecotourism** ([www.borneo-ecotourism.com](http://www.borneo-ecotourism.com)). This community initiative gives local (mainly Kenyah) communities in the upper Pujungan a stake in preservation efforts while nurturing traditional culture and sustainable tourism. The enterprise offers homestays, boat transport from Long Pujungan, and tours. From **Long Jelet**, it runs day trips to Batu Ului and U'ung Melu'ung waterfall, a moderate two-day trek to 70m Sungai Bum waterfall and ancient burial caves, and a rugged five day climb into Apokayan through the Apo Napu high pass to Datu Dian, returning via Sungai Kat. For details, check [www.borneo-ecotourism.com](http://www.borneo-ecotourism.com) or contact the **WWF office in Malinau** (☎ 0551-43144; [km@indo.net.id](mailto:km@indo.net.id)).

**Kal-Star** ([www.kalstaronline.com](http://www.kalstaronline.com)) flies to Tanjung Selor daily except Sunday from Balikpapan (761,000Rp) via Berau (220,000Rp). **DAS** (☎ 736989; Block D, No 8, Jln Komplek Lembusuana, Samarinda) flies to Long Ampung (206,000Rp, five times weekly) and Data Dawai (184,000Rp, twice weekly) from Samarinda. Check with DAS in Samarinda for updates. **Missionary Air Fellowship** (MAF; ☎ 0551-22904; fax 0551-23590)

flies from Tarakan; contact well in advance for arrangements.

## LONG BAWAN

In KalTim's northwest corner, Long Bawan is the launch point to explore the Hulu Krayan (not Kayan) end of **Kayan Mentarang National Park**, near the Sabah border. To ensure confusion for travellers, there's a different Sungai Kayan up here, unrelated to the Kayan further south. Get the landscape sorted at **Penginapan Agung Raya** (☎ 086-8121-05064; 60,000Rp), a small, clean losmen.

A guide (100,000Rp per day) is essential for trekking here; porters (80,000Rp per day) are helpful. Ask **Penginapan Agung Raya** to contact Alex Balang, who speaks English. Village homestays run 60,000Rp to 90,000Rp including meals. Motorised canoe hire (200,000Rp per hour) is the biggest expense.

The Krayan Hulu Ecotourism Committee organises treks from Long Bawan south to Long Layu and Long Rungan, a heath forest with many orchid species. The trek takes about five days. For details and to find the committee's representative in Long Bawan, contact **Borneo Ecotourism** ([www.borneo-ecotourism.com](http://www.borneo-ecotourism.com)), or the **WWF office in Malinau** (☎ 0551-43144; [km@indo.net.id](mailto:km@indo.net.id)).

Elevation makes it difficult to penetrate this area by river, so the best access is by air. **DAS** (☎ 0551-21248) flies from Tarakan via Nunukan to Long Bawan (342,000Rp). **Missionary Air Fellowship** (MAF; ☎ 0551-22904; fax 0551-23590) flies from Tarakan. Book as far ahead as possible for either.

## SEBUKU SEMBAKUNG NATIONAL PARK

Indonesia's newest national park, Sebuku Sembakung is Kalimantan's only elephant habitat. The 400,000-hectare protected area along KalTim's north border with Sabah is also in WWF's Heart of Borneo initiative.

Sebuku Sembakung has six types of forests, from tidal swamp to green hills with limestone outcrops. Elephants favour plains in the reserve's central lowland forest.

The park has no facilities for visitors. **Borneo Ecotourism** ([www.borneo-ecotourism.com](http://www.borneo-ecotourism.com)) or the **WWF office in Malinau** (☎ 0551 43144; [km@indo.net.id](mailto:km@indo.net.id)) can arrange visits. Access to the park is via Sungai Sembuku from Nunukan by *ces* (4,000,000Rp, one day). Pachydermophiles note that elephants are more easily sought (and more often seen) along Sabah's Sungai Kinabatangan (see p143).

## TARAKAN

☎ 0551 / pop 165,000

This clean island town on the Celebes Sea, the crossing point to and from Tawau in East Sabah, is a pleasant way to greet Indonesia or make a retreat. **THM Plaza**, a mix of traditional shops, *warung* and national chains at Jln Yos Sudarso and Jln Sudirman, marks Tarakan's centre, flanked by newer **Grand Tarakan Mall**. Down Jln Gajah Mada, popular **Gusher Plaza** (pronounced 'guesser') has Tarakan's only department store amid more shops, stalls and *warung*.

## Information

Travellers will find ATMs along Jln Yos Sudarso, Jln Sudirman, and at Gusher. Many businesses close on Sunday.

**Angkasa Express** (☎ 30288; fax 24848; Hotel Tarakan Plaza, Jln Yos Sudarso) Air and Pelni tickets; branches in Balikpapan, Samarinda and Surabaya.

**BNI bank** (Bank Negara Indonesia; Jln Yos Sudarso) Foreign exchange.

**Derawan Travel** (☎ 35599/fax 35799; Hotel Paradise, Jln Mulawarman 21) Ibu Mei is Tarakan's master of domestic flight connections.

**Haji La Tunrung Star Group** (☎ 21405; Jln Yos Sudarso 32; ☎ 7.30am-8pm) Moneychanging daily.

**Immigration office** (☎ 21242; Jln Sumatra) Information on visas and crossings to/from Malaysia.

**Perta Medika Hospital** (☎ 31403; Jln Mulawarman) **Post office** (Jln Yos Sudarso)

**Tourist office** (☎ 32100; Jln Sudirman 76, 4th fl; ☎ 8am-4pm Mon-Thu, 8-11am Fri) Good maps. The WWF representative in the government environmental department one floor above knows more about Sebuku Sembakung and Kayan Mentarang National Parks and surroundings.

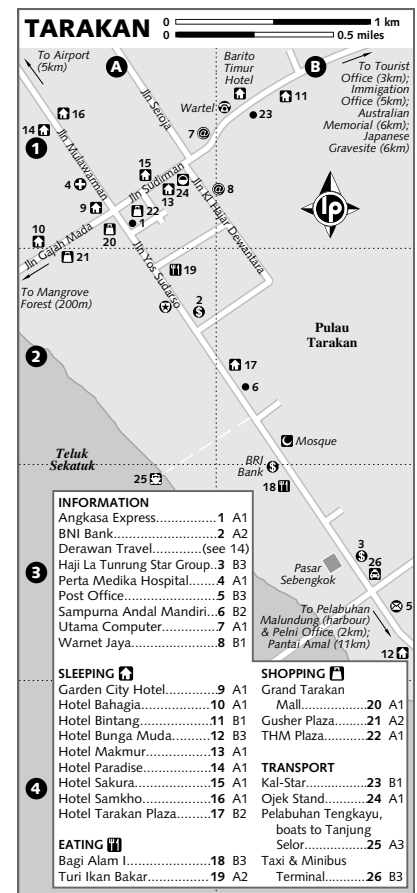
**Utama Computer** (Jln Sudirman 155; per hr 5000Rp; ☎ 9.30am-10.30pm) Internet access.

**Warnet Jaya** (Jln Kl Hajar Dewantara; per hr 5000Rp; ☎ 8am-11pm) Internet access.

## Sights

See two Borneo exclusives, proboscis monkeys and *ikan tempankul* – a fish that walks out of the water – at the **mangrove forest** (Jln Gajah Mada; ☎ 8am-5pm), 300m from the town centre. Spread over 9 hectares, with shaded boardwalks and benches, the mangroves also shelter macaques and many bird species.

Japanese and Australian forces clashed bloodily over Tarakan late in WWII. There's an **Australian memorial** (*kuburan Australia*) at the Indonesian military barracks. A **Japanese**



**gravesite** (*kuburan Jepang*) is in nearby hills, amid old bunkers.

**Pantai Amal** (11km) is a swimming beach that can be reached by minibus (3000Rp) or taxi (10,000Rp).

## Sleeping

Tarakan's budget options are limited but there's good midrange choice.

**Hotel Bunga Muda** (☎ 21349; Jln Yos Sudarso 7; r 55,000-132,000Rp; ☎) Ibu Ida runs this clean place between the harbours, featuring *wartel*, travel bookings and plenty of smiles. VIP rooms, the only ones with air-con, sleep up to four.

**Hotel Bahagia** (☎ 37141; fax 24778; Jln Gajah Mada; r 60,000-150,000Rp; ☎) Opposite Gusher Plaza, the 3rd-floor economy rooms at 'Hotel

Happiness' – watch your head climbing up – are worth the hike. The big, bright digs have shared bathrooms in Asian and Western styles. Higher-priced rooms include private Western bathrooms, breakfast and air-con, but some lack windows.

**Hotel Paradise** (☎ 22999; fax 32668; Jln Mulawarman 21; r incl breakfast from 100,000-155,000Rp, ste 275,000Rp; 🍷) Weathered on the outside, rooms inside these five levels of Paradise are well kept, all with air-con and Western bath. Oddly, there's an upper-floor discount despite the lobby lift.

**Hotel Makmur** (☎ 31988, 085-2465-70888; fax 23565; Jln Sudirman 18; s incl breakfast 140,000Rp, d incl breakfast 160,000-225,000Rp; 🍷) Snug, ultramodern standard rooms have hot-water showers, air-con, refrigerator, kettle, cable TV, but no window. Deluxe accommodations add windows and cushiony chairs.

**Hotel Sakura** (☎ 22730; s 80,000-120,000Rp; d 120,000-160,000Rp; 🍷) You can save across the street, at Makmur's budget cousin.

**Hotel Bintang** (☎ 33533; fax 35068; Jln Sudirman 20; r incl breakfast 150,000-205,000Rp plus 10% tax; 🍷) It looks small from outside, but Bintang ('star' in Bahasa Indonesia) shines with spacious rooms fitted out like higher-priced hotels. Haggle for high-floor discounts at this four-storey walk-up.

**Hotel Tarakan Plaza** (☎ 21870; fax 21029; Jln Yos Sudarso 1; r incl breakfast 225,000-300,000Rp; 🍷) Rooms at this newly renovated classic are all the same ample size with added features at higher prices. The Angkasa Express (see p287) travel office is here.

For high-rollers:

**Hotel Samkho** (☎ 35100; fax 35882; Jln Mulawarman 10; r from 237,000Rp plus 10% tax; 🍷) Plush business-class hotel with frequent 15% discounts.

**Garden City Hotel** (☎ 21133; fax 36633; Jln Mualwarman 15; r from 500,000Rp plus 10% tax; 🍷 🍷) Top-shelf business hotel. Pricy even with deep discounts.

## Eating

Fish is the dish in Tarakan. Stalls mushroom nightly, particularly on Jln Sudirman, many serving excellent *ikan* (or *ayam*) *lalapan*, grilled or fried, 10,000Rp to 15,000Rp, depending on fish size and variety. One of the best is about 500m north of THM Plaza, just beyond the Barito Timur Hotel. For fish more formally at twice the price, try **Turi Ikan Bakar**

or **Bagi Alam I** on Jln Yos Sudarso. *Warung* abound on Jln Seroja, and at THM Plaza and Gusher.

## Getting There & Away

### AIR

Batavia Air (770,000Rp), Mandala Airlines (589,000Rp) and Sriwijaya Air (678,000Rp) fly to Balikpapan, connecting to Jakarta, Surabaya and beyond. **Kal-Star** (☎ 51578, 25840; Jln Sudirman 9) flies twice daily except Sunday to Nunukan (230,000Rp), Berau (320,000Rp), and Samarinda (761,000Rp). **DAS** (☎ 21248) flies to Malinau (250,000Rp), Long Ampung (400,000Rp), Nunukan (200,000Rp) and Long Bawan (342,000Rp), Berau and Balikpapan. **Mission Aviation Fellowship** (MAF; ☎ 22904) offers limited scheduled and charter flights into the interior.

### BOAT

**Pelni** (☎ 51169; Jln Yos Sudarso) ships steam to Makassar (250,000Rp), Pantaloan (110,000Rp), Pare Pare (221,500Rp), Surabaya (365,000Rp) and beyond from Pelabuhan Malundung, the main harbour at the south end of Jln Yos Sudarso. Travel agents are generally more helpful than Pelni's office.

Morning ferries to Tawau in Sabah (180,000Rp, 3½ hours) depart daily except Sunday from Pelabuhan Malundung. *Indomaya* and *Tawindo Express* run on alternate days and are very similar; choose the day, not the boat. Immigration formalities are at the ferry terminal. Officials take your passport and return it, stamped for Malaysian entry, upon arrival in Tawau. It's also possible to cross into Sabah daily via Nunukan (150,000Rp, 2½ hours, Nunukan-Tawau 75,000Rp, 1¼ hours).

Eight boats run daily to Tanjung Selor (70,000Rp, 1½ hours) from Pelabuhan Tenggayu on Jln Yos Sudarso, opposite the post office.

## Getting Around

A taxi to/from Juwata Airport (6km) costs 35,000Rp. Alternatively, walk about 200m to the highway and catch an *angkot* (3000Rp). *Angkot* routes follow Jln Yos Sudarso, Jln Sudirman and Jln Gajah Mada. *Ojeks* gather on Jln Sudirman above THM Plaza and across from Gusher.

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