

Heart of Borneo (HoB) is an initiative of Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia and Malaysia based on the principles of conservation and sustainable development. The goal of HoB Initiative is to preserve and maintain the sustainability of Borneo's last remaining rain forests for the welfare of present and future generations. Conservation in the HoB area means improving management and governance of protected areas while documenting important biodiversity areas that are conserved by local communities. Outside conservation areas, sustainable development is pursued by best practices such as green ecotourism, small-holder agriculture, sustainable forest management, and sustainable farming.



FORMADAT (Forum of the Indigenous People of the Highlands of Borneo) is a community transborder organization established in 2004 that aims to increase awareness and understanding about the Highland communities, maintain cultural traditions and encourage sustainable development in the Heart of Borneo. FORMADAT was one of the winners of the Equator Prize in 2015.

For further information:

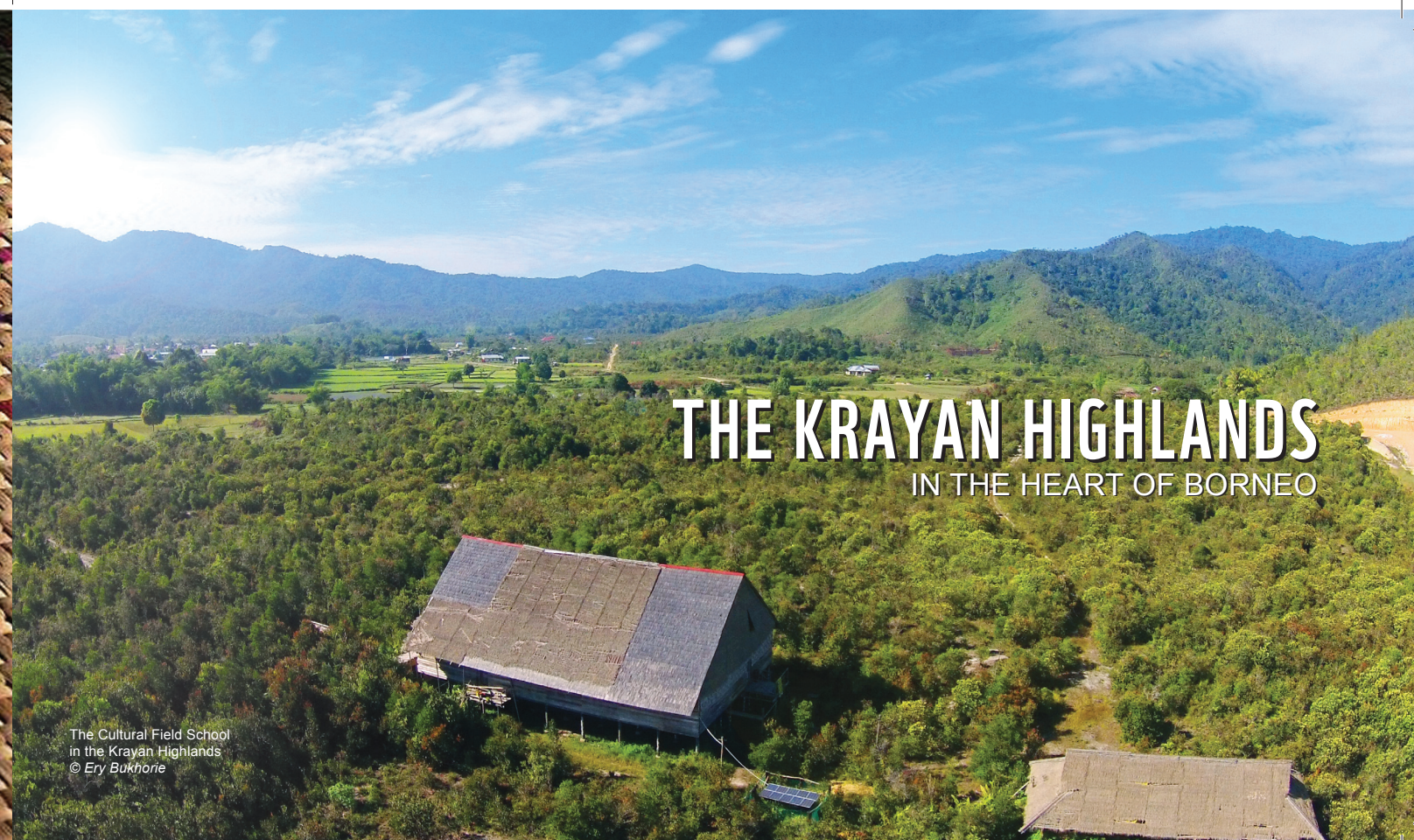
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www.borneo-ecotourism.com

FORMADAT KRAYAN
 formatat.ptdb@gmail.com

BORNEO JUNGLE SAFARI
 Lot 1396, 1st Floor Centerpoint II,
 Jalan Kubu 98000 Miri, Sarawak
 Tel : +6085 422595
 Fax : +6085 417984
 Email: sandytw@gmail.com



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THE KRAYAN HIGHLANDS

IN THE HEART OF BORNEO

The Cultural Field School
 in the Krayan Highlands
 © Ery Bukhorie



Unique Flora

Vast parts of the Krayan Highlands are covered by heath forest or locally known as *tana' payeh*. The unique flora that grows in this type of forest makes for exciting botanical encounters like the famous black orchid, several species of rhododendron of vibrant colors, pitcher plants, plants with medicinal properties, and much more.

Very close to the villages of Long Bawan, Lembudud and Terang Baru, easy walks can be organized to discover the hidden treasures of the remnant heath forest vegetation, a typical ecosystem of the Highlands of Krayan.



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Salt was one of the most valuable commodities traded out of the Krayan Highlands in the past. Salt production occurs throughout the year, but is more frequent during the less intensive spells of the rice agricultural cycle. The production of mountain salt is an important part of the historical and cultural heritage of the communities living in the Krayan Highlands in the Heart of Borneo. Salt is often given as gift to visitors and family members.



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Rich Cultural Traditions

A traditional construction not far from the village of Terang Baru, erected on land donated by a local family, hosts the Cultural Field School (CFS), a space for cultural celebrations and for learning traditional music and dances, and some antique skills like wood carving. Fine, colorful handicrafts made of bamboo and rattan are also produced by local women artisans.



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Enchanting Landscape

The Krayan Highlands in the Heart of Borneo offer enchanting views. Gentle slopes covered with dense forest and wide valleys interlaced with traditional paddies, gardens and fruit groves, create a unique and pleasant landscape. The Highlands are located at an altitude between 760 and 1,200 meters. Cool weather, especially at night, is also a nice break from the hot and humid climate of the lowlands of Borneo. People and nature seem to have worked together well to shape the landscape in beautiful and sustainable ways. Over the centuries, local Indigenous Peoples have transformed the bottom of the valleys in rice fields and created a self-sustained agricultural cycle integrated with water buffalos husbandry.

The Krayan Highlands in North Kalimantan lie right at the border with Sarawak and Sabah (Malaysia) and are divided into five sub-districts in the District of Nunukan, Indonesia. They form one geographical-eco-cultural landscape with the Highlands of Bario, Ba' Kelalan (Sarawak), and Ulu Padas (Sabah). Long Bawan is the biggest center and the main destination of flights from the coastal towns of Nunukan, Tarakan, and Malinau. The Krayan Highlands can also be reached by road from Ba' Kelalan (Sarawak) across the international border.



Legend:

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| ● Villages | ▬ Provincial |
| ▬ Heart of Borneo | ▬ Highlands |
| ▬ Rivers | ▬ National |
| ▬ Boundaries | ▬ Krayan Highlands |



Feeling at 'home': local hospitality and traditional cuisine

Spending a few days in the Krayan Highlands is an opportunity to live the life of the locals. Whether working in the rice fields with the host family, exploring the spring where local people have traditionally produced “mountain salt” or learning the art of handicraft-making with local women, visitors will be able to get a true glimpse into a different world where communities still live in harmony with nature and are proud of their cultural traditions.



© Edwin Meru / FORMADAT

If in the Krayan Highlands, make sure to savor the local cuisine and some special forest dishes. The diversity of local food plants and resources is not just used in the traditional cuisine but also a way to preserve the quality and variety of nutritional sources, and build resilience and adaptability to climate change.



© Edwin Meru / FORMADAT

When the forest fruit season comes (the main mast fruiting cycle in the tropical forest is on average every 5 years), local people organize festivals and tasting events to celebrate the abundance of fruit, a cultural and natural heritage of the Heart of Borneo. Some forest fruit varieties can only be found in the Krayan Highlands.

Salt making in Krayan

Unique about the Highlands is the high concentration of salt springs in the relatively flat alluvial valleys. Most of them are situated in low swampy areas, others flow from the foothills in the forest and mix with the water of the streams. Mountain salt originates from high salinity water that flows from deep underground. It was trapped there millions of years ago when the landscape of the Highlands was covered by sea.

Over time, local people have come to know those brine springs good for human consumption (*main*) and the salt licks (*rupan*) visited by animals. Through ingenuity and skills, local people have turned the high salinity water into salt and traded the product throughout the isolated interior of Borneo.



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