



A guide to the:

Nyaru Menteng Orangutan Sanctuary



Nyaru Menteng Orangutan Sanctuary

Focus: Orangutans

Location: Indonesian Borneo

Start Date: Set Start Dates - Please Enquire

Arrival & Starting Point: Palangkaraya

Founded in 1999, the Nyaru Menteng Orangutan Sanctuary has offered a lifeline to hundreds of orangutans found displaced or orphaned around Central Kalimantan. Over the years the sanctuary, founded by the Borneo Orangutan Survival Foundation (BOSF), has gone from strength to strength: from its humble beginnings caring for just a dozen orangutans, to one of the largest primate rescue projects in the world. The Great Projects are honoured to be a part of its story, welcoming the very first volunteer group through the centre's doors in 2018.

Today, Nyaru Menteng is home to approximately 280 orangutans and exists with the primary aim to rehabilitate those animals which have fallen victim to tragedies such as deforestation and the illegal pet trade. The sanctuary began releasing orangutans back in 2012, and so far, has helped over 400 orangutans find freedom once more – but with the increased urgency to offer help to Borneo's wildlife, the Nyaru Menteng Orangutan Sanctuary is now reaching out to others for assistance. This is where you come in!



Mass deforestation has seen much of Borneo's rainforest destroyed in favour of agricultural development. This eradication of land leaves orangutans vulnerable, with a lack of food and shelter forcing them to stray into unsafe areas such as palm oil plantations, where they are often killed or captured by humans. While these risks affect all orangutans, it is the youngest of the apes who suffer the most, as without a mother they are being stripped of the vital skills which they would learn in their early years. Without these foundations, orangutans are being deprived of a future in the wild. It is up to the sanctuary team, with the support of volunteers, to provide young orangutans with the best possible care in order for them to progress through each stage of rehabilitation.

The Nyaru Menteng Orangutan Sanctuary covers several different areas of protected land and is home to orangutans at various phases of rehabilitation. The project is surrounded by verdant rainforest and provides both the animals and the volunteers with a sense of authentic jungle life. When you're not taking part in vital orangutan conservation efforts, you'll have the opportunity to see Borneo's biodiverse surrounds on the hilltop trek or river cruises. Elsewhere, you'll have the chance to get a taste of the local culture by heading to a traditional night market!

The sanctuary has already established itself as a powerhouse of conservation and you can become a part of its story by joining this volunteer experience today!

Enrichment



One of your main tasks on this project is to prepare enrichment for the orangutans. Enrichment helps the orangutans to learn and improve certain natural behaviours, such as foraging and nest-building, which will help them to survive in the wild. In addition to aiding the orangutans' future survival, the enrichment items created by volunteers also help to improve their mental health and wellbeing: many of the orangutans to arrive at the sanctuary have suffered a great deal of trauma prior to being rescued, so mental stimulation helps to keep them happy and occupied. You could find yourself creating puzzle enrichment (such as leaf packages filled with treats), collecting nest-building materials or making fruit flavoured ice lollies! In addition to crafting enrichment items, you will lend a helping hand in the fruit store by sorting and weighing the fruits used for enrichment and feeding.

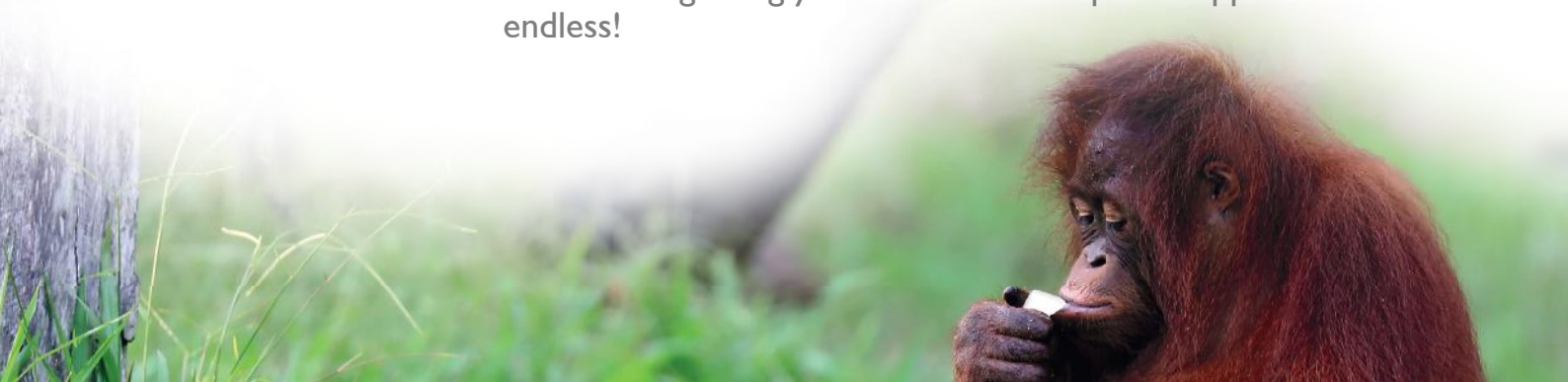
River Cruise

Nyaru Menteng is home to three huge islands, each of which provide a sense of freedom to those orangutans which are in their final stages of rehabilitation before release. Hop aboard a river cruise around the islands, witnessing the successes of enrichment and rehabilitation first-hand – after all, without the hard work of the project staff and volunteers, the orangutans may not have made it this far. In addition to observing the orangutans in these semi-wild conditions, you'll have the opportunity to learn about the project and its history as your project coordinator serves as a guide.



Orangutan Observation

Arguably the most rewarding part of your volunteer experience arrives at the end of your trip, when you'll have the chance to travel back out to the orangutan islands and get even closer to these great apes. There are approximately 70 orangutans resident on the islands, and you'll be in with a chance of seeing most of them as they head towards the feeding platforms. Here, you and the very knowledgeable technicians, will observe their behaviour making sure they are happy and healthy. The technicians are able to identify all the orangutans so this is a great opportunity for you to find out about your favourite characters and if their release is on the horizon! Make sure to bring along your camera as the photo opportunities are endless!



Hilltop Trek

Bukit Tangkiling is the perfect vantage-point for those wishing to observe the local landscape from above. Take a trek alongside your team to the top of the hill, and don't forget your camera – this is the perfect opportunity to snap a few images of the incredible view and land full with the relics of indigenous communities. On your way up the hill, you'll encounter old Dayak buildings and shrines, learning about their history as your guide shares their knowledge with you. While the tribes people no longer live in the area, today's locals still have their own unique traditions, especially when it comes to religion and burial – take the time to learn about them as you embark on this 30-minute trek!



Night Market

You'll spend your Saturday evenings at a traditional night market, where members of the local community head to purchase their weekly groceries. This is an excellent opportunity to immerse yourself in true Indonesian culture: a lack of tourists and an abundance of stalls offers a real insight into local life, make sure to taste the cuisine and grab a few souvenirs while you're there!



Itinerary

Orangutans are very susceptible to human illness and disease, so to ensure their safety, all volunteers must undergo a 5-day quarantine period. During this time, you will have access to limited areas of the centre, with restrictions being lifted after the quarantine period is over. Fear not, your first five days on the project will be spent completing an array of exciting activities, which you can learn about in the itinerary below! Please note, that the following itinerary is just a guide and may be subject to change during your stay. All activities are dependent on weather conditions and the requirements of the project at the time.

Day 1

You will fly into Palangkaraya Airport where you will be met by a project representative and transferred to the sanctuary (approximately a 40-minute drive). Upon arrival you'll be shown your accommodation and later that evening you will be given a full orientation by the volunteer coordinator.

Day 2

Your morning will begin with a river cruise, which will be your first opportunity to see the orangutan islands! After, you'll be shown around the sanctuary before taking a trip to the guest centre to see the great apes from behind a glass barrier. Then it's time to start your first activity, collecting materials for the orangutans to build nests with at night!

Day 3

Your volunteer group will be split into two teams: one group will work in the fruit store, while the other will help to create bamboo enrichment. You'll take a break before joining together again to finish making the enrichment items. In the afternoon, volunteers will grab their machetes and head off to collect nesting materials for the orangutans.

Day 4

Volunteers will be split into groups once again, completing the same activities as the day before but alternating the tasks (for example, if you worked in the fruit store on the previous day, you'll help create enrichment today). Then it's off to witness the breath-taking landscapes from the top of Bukit Tangkiling, learning all about the history of the local community as you go.

Day 5

For your last day of quarantine you'll work on enrichment in the morning, then the group will take a trip into town to purchase items for enrichment creation. It's also a chance to withdraw money and get any supplies you may need. You will then sit down for a leisurely lunch together before visiting a local tourist market.

Day 6

Now that the quarantine period is over, you'll have earned access to the remaining orangutan facilities! This morning you'll partake in enrichment making and later, you'll collect nesting materials. Finally, enjoy an evening meal alongside your volunteer group before spending the evening at leisure.

Itinerary

Day 7

Today is Saturday, a day for you to relax after a busy week. There is the option for you to take a trip to the local shop to buy snacks and soft drinks if you wish. In the evening, the whole group will head to a traditional night market, where you'll get a real taste of Indonesian culture...and food!

Days 8-9

In mornings, your group will take part in vital reforestation work in areas that have been impacted by forest fires. In the afternoons, you will be split into 2 groups again and alternate between working on enrichment and collecting nesting materials for the orangutans. As evening falls, you'll have time to unwind after what has no doubt been a busy 2 days.

Day 10

By now, you're probably fully in the swing of your routine, so today will be similar to those that came before it as you aid food prep and enrichment creation throughout the day. That's not all for today though, as you'll arrive back to the centre and experience the moment of a lifetime watching the baby orangutans return from jungle school to play in their playground!

Days 11-12

Over the next couple of days, you have the opportunity to observe the orangutans on the islands! The two volunteer groups will take it in turns to work on the usual daily tasks, then help the technicians observe the orangutans in their semi-wild conditions, making sure they are happy and healthy. Make sure to take your camera as there are sure to be some amazing photo opportunities!

Day 13

Sadly, your final day at the project has arrived. Enjoy a lie-in this morning before packing your things and bidding farewell to the project staff, your new-found friends and of course, the orangutans. You'll then transfer back to the airport for your flight home, or to commence your onward travel plans.



Accommodation

Volunteers will be staying in an authentic longhouse situated in the jungle surroundings of the sanctuary grounds. Rooms are based on a twin-share same sex basis with one double room available for couples (please note, this is on a first-come, first-serve basis) and each room comes complete with bed linen, a fan, and mosquito nets. All rooms have their own en-suite bathroom, fitted with a western toilet, sink and mirror. In the longhouse, there is a kitchen and communal area free for all volunteers to use, with Wi-Fi also available, but please bear in mind the signal may be intermittent! There is a free, regular cleaning service if you wish for your room to be tended to and there are also laundry services available, though these come at a small fee.



Food & Drink

Three meals per day, along with drinking water will be provided during your time on the project. Lunch and dinner will be prepared for you every day and will consist of traditional Indonesian food, such as rice, noodles, and fried vegetables. Breakfast, however, is prepared by volunteers, but the food, such as cereal, yoghurt, bread for toast and eggs is supplied. Vegetarians and vegans can be catered for but please let us know of any dietary requirements in advance so the appropriate food can be purchased. Snacks are not currently available at the sanctuary but can be purchased from the local shop which is approximately a 15-minute walk from your accommodation.

Beer is permitted and can be purchased at the sanctuary, though it may only be consumed at the volunteer accommodation.



What's Included

- Three meals per day
- Accommodation
- Airport transfers
- River cruise
- Hilltop trek
- Visit to the night market
- English-speaking project coordinator
- A donation to the project

Not Included

- Flights
- Vaccinations
- Visas
- Travel insurance
- Snacks
- Alcohol and soft drinks

Volunteer Reviews

Philip

"What impressed me most is the ambitious scale of the work, with so many orangutans to attend to in the nursery, forest school and pre-release islands."



Natasha

"The entire trip was such an enriching and rewarding experience, the memories of which I will cherish forever."



Nicki

"My favourite moment was when the young orangies came back after Jungle School and we were able to watch them playing on the jungle gym we had made for them - it was magical to see; a dream come true."





What Next?

Becoming a volunteer at the Nyaru Menteng Orangutan Sanctuary is simple, and you can help make a difference to orangutan conservation efforts in just a few simple steps...



Visit the website to select your start date and how long you would like to volunteer for.



Secure your place online by paying a deposit of £195. You'll have up to 60 days before your start date to pay your remaining balance.



Prepare for your trip and ask your dedicated travel expert any questions before packing your bags and heading off to Borneo!



Finally, have an incredible time and don't forget to send in or tag us in your photos!

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