

Taman Negara: The Oldest Rainforest in the World

Taman Negara National Park straddles the borders of three states – Kelantan, Terengganu and Pahang – in Peninsular Malaysia. A totally protected area of 4,343 sq km, Taman Negara is one of the world's oldest tropical rain forests. The diversity of its fauna and flora is a result of undisturbed evolution over 130 million years.

The park was established in Malaysia in 1938/1939 as the King George V National Park. It was renamed to Taman Negara after independence, which literally means "national park" in Malay.

The park has developed into a famous ecotourism destination in Malaysia. It is a particularly favourable destination for trekking, as the park's remarkable biodiversity is matched by a good network of jungle trails and the availability of expert guides. The park is also noted for fishing, especially along the upper reaches of the Tahan or Kenyam rivers, and for rafting the rapids of Sungai Tembeling.



Malaysia is one of the 12th mega biodiversity areas in the world and Taman Negara's tropical rainforest indeed is one of the world's most complex and rich ecosystems. The park is home to about 14,000 species of plants and trees more than any other forest in the world. There are more than 2,400 species of flowering plant, 200 species of mammals, 350 species of birds, 67 species of snakes, 55 species of frogs, 80 species of bat, 30 species of rats and 109 species freshwater fishes (15 species endemic to Taman Negara).

Peninsular Malaysia's highest mountain, Gunung Tahan (2,187 m), is located in Taman Negara, and climbing the mountain is an unforgettable experience. Due to the scarcity of water along the route, the journey must be done in two stages, and an experienced guide is compulsory. At least three days are required for the journey to the summit and back.



On the southern edge is Kuala Tahan, the park's headquarters, linked to the outside world by river. A three-hour river trip is the only overland route; an alternative is to take a flight from Kuala Lumpur to Taman Negara.

Photos: Tourism.gov.my, TR archive

www.geographia.com

www.tamannegara.org

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