

BRUNEI DARUSSALAM IN BRIEF

Brunei Darussalam is an independent country situated on the island of Borneo, Southeast Asia. The climate is wet and dry (tropical weather). Malay is the official language but English is widely used. Other languages include Chinese and its dialect variants and other indigenous dialects. Although the official religion is Islam, other faiths including Christianity and Buddhism are practiced.

Currency : Brunei dollar is on a par with the Singapore dollar, which is also accepted in Brunei. Banks, hotels and many department stores will cash traveler's cheques.

Visas : Austrian, German, Malaysian, Singaporean, British, Netherlands and New Zealand nationals are exempted from the requirement to obtain a visa for visits not exceeding 30 days. American passport holders can enter Brunei Darussalam for three months without visas. For nationals of Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Republic of Maldives, Norway, Oman, Philippines, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand and The Principality of Liechtenstein visas are waived for 14 days visits. Nationals of Australia are issued visas on arrival at the Brunei International Airport for visits no exceeding 30 days. All other visitors entering Brunei Darussalam must have visas obtainable from any mission abroad. These visas are normally issued for a two week stay but can be renewed in Brunei. Visitors must hold onward tickets and sufficient funds to support themselves while in the country.

Transportation : The airport is about 11 kms from the capital. Taxis, car rentals and buses are available

Clothing : Light clothing is advisable as the climate is generally warm and humid. Women are requested to dress modestly in keeping with local customs.

Health : Doctors provide private medical services at a nominal charge. There are a number of state health clinics and hospitals.

Credit cards : Hotels, department stores and other major establishments generally accept all internationally known credit cards.

Telephones : Overseas calls can be made from hotel rooms through the operator, or via international direct dialing (IDD). There are also coin and phone card operated public telephones.

Media : Radio Television Brunei has nightly news bulletins and a range of popular entertainment in both English and Malay. Cable network and Malaysia television programmes can also be received. There are three local daily newspapers namely : Borneo Bulletin (English), The Brunei Times (English), and Media Permata (Malay).

Food : For the adventurous, the food stalls offer Malay favourites, such as satay (barbecued meat on a skewer) and local dishes prepared with curry or coconut milk. Chinese, European and Indian cuisines are also available.

Customs and courtesy : Thoughtful visitors learn to appreciate the nation's devotion to Islam. In mosques, visitors should removed their shoes and should not pass in front of people at prayer. Never touch the Al-Quran. Women should ensure that her head, knees and arms are covered before entering mosques. Robes are provided at the entrance to the mosque.

Gifts, particularly food, are passed with the right hand. When sitting, the soles of the feet should not be pointed towards your companions.