



## PRESS RELEASE

### Ramadhan in Brunei Darussalam: A Fascinating Cultural Experience

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Brunei Darussalam, a small but vibrant nation on the island of Borneo, offers visitors a unique opportunity to immerse themselves in the Islamic traditions and cultural heritage during the holy month of Ramadhan.

Ramadhan is a sacred month in the Islamic calendar when Muslims around the world observe fasting from dawn till sunset. Brunei Darussalam, with its predominantly Muslim population, embraces this observance wholeheartedly. The atmosphere during Ramadhan is one of tranquillity, introspection, and devotion. It is important for visitors to understand that during this time, the pace of life slows down, and activities may be limited during the day.

#### **Stay adaptable with your plans**

Visitors will need to bear in mind that the usual routines and public activities in Brunei may be limited or scaled back during Ramadhan. Restaurants and places of interest may have limited operating hours. Therefore, visitors who are not fasting should remain flexible and embrace the opportunity to immerse themselves in the local culture in a more relaxed and observant fashion.

#### **Indulge in Iftar Feasts and Evening Markets**

One of the highlights of Ramadhan in Brunei is the lively markets, locally known as "Gerei Ramadhan" which starts at 2p.m onwards. These markets come alive with a plethora of mouth-watering delicacies and vibrant stalls selling a wide range of food, desserts and beverages. These markets offer a unique opportunity for visitors to interact with locals, sample authentic Bruneian cuisine, and engage in cultural exchanges.

#### **Embrace the Spirit of Community and Generosity**

Ramadhan is a time of heightened compassion and giving back to the community. Brunei Darussalam exemplifies this spirit by organizing communal activities, such as charity events and open iftar meals, where people from all walks of life come together to break their fasts. Visitors are often welcomed to participate in these gatherings, sharing in the sense of unity and receiving a warm and hospitable reception from the locals.

## **Private Dining Tips: Enjoying Meals Respectfully during Ramadhan**

Non-muslim visitors may find it challenging to dine in restaurants during the fasting period, as public dining is not allowed. However, there are still enjoyable ways to experience Brunei's culinary offerings. Visitors can savor local cuisine in private settings or enjoy meals in the comfort of their accommodations. It is also useful to be prepared with small snacks to sustain you during your journey. Consider lightweight options such as nuts, granola bars, or dried fruits that can easily fit into your bag and be enjoyed discreetly while on the move. By embracing these customs, travelers can maintain your energy levels while deepening their appreciation for Brunei's rich cultural heritage.

## **Visit serene and culturally rich destinations**

Exploring culturally rich destinations during Ramadhan in Brunei offers visitors a unique opportunity to delve into the country's heritage and traditions. Here are **top ten places to visit and activities to do during Ramadhan:**

### **1. Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Mosque:**

Take a moment to appreciate the architectural marvel and tranquility of this iconic mosque. Named after the architect of Modern Brunei and the 28th Sultan of Brunei, **Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Mosque is the** Brunei's most iconic and oldest mosque is the tallest structure in Bandar Seri Begawan at 52 metres, able to house 3000 worshippers and boasting a spectacular dome covered in pure gold.

When planning a visit to any mosques in Brunei, it is advisable to avoid arriving close to prayer times, as it may be challenging to explore the interior during these moments of devotion. Instead, consider timing your visit around the iftar, the breaking of the fast. This is when you'll witness the heartwarming sight of the community gathering in the mosque to share in the communal iftar, with food generously contributed by local members.

### **2. Explore Kampong Ayer:**

Discover the charming water village, known as the Venice of the East. Wander through the maze of wooden walkways, interact with friendly locals, and gain insights into their daily lives. While you are at it, consider visiting the Kampong Ayer Cultural and Tourism Gallery to learn more about the history and significance of this unique settlement. Operating hours during Ramadhan are from 8am to 2pm Mon – Sat, Closed on Friday & Sunday.

### **3. Discover the Beauty of Islamic Art**

Explore the fascinating world of Islamic calligraphy and art at the Islamic Calligraphy and Art Study Centre. Delve into the intricate art of calligraphy by participating in a Jawi writing workshop, where you can refine your calligraphy skills and learn the techniques behind this beautiful craft. The centre, housed within the Yayasan Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah (YSHHB), offers a captivating immersion into Islamic artworks and artifacts from around the globe. Whether you are Muslim or non-Muslim, you

are welcome to engage in this enriching experience, discovering the beauty and cultural significance of Islamic artistry.

#### **4. Discovering Brunei's Artisanal Heritage**

Explore the Brunei Arts and Handicrafts Centre to discover an array of locally crafted products made by skilled graduates from the centre. From intricate tenunan textiles to finely woven products and traditional Malay "songkok", the centre showcases a diverse range of handmade goods. Don't miss the chance to find unique souvenirs and support local artisans during your visit to the Brunei Arts and Handicrafts Centre.

#### **5. Go Museum Hopping:**

Immerse yourself in the rich culture and gain a better understanding of this unique country's fascinating heritage. From the Royal Regalia Museum's royal artifacts to the Malay Technology Museum's traditional skills, each museum offers unique insights into Brunei's past and its contributions to art and technology. Operating hours during Ramadhan are from 8 am to 2 pm Mon–Sat, Closed on Friday & Sunday.

#### **6. Visit the Balai Khazanah Museum:**

BKISHHB is a hall that stores Islamic heritage treasures of the personal collection of His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam with the aim to be the Islamic Knowledge Heritage Center through the promotion and management of scientific activities. BKISHHB is intended to be a Treasure Institution that collects, stores, preserves, conserves and exhibits Islamic heritage treasures scientifically. During the sacred month of Ramadhan, BKISHHB will unveil its special gallery featuring a revered relic—a strand of hair from the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). This extraordinary display offers visitors a unique opportunity to witness and pay homage to this cherished artifact, fostering a deeper connection to the Islamic faith and heritage. Operating hours during Ramadhan are from 8 am to 2 pm Mon–Sat, Closed on Friday & Sunday.

#### **7. Indulge in Local Cuisine**

Explore the lively evening markets, locally known as "Pasar Malam," where you can indulge in an array of delectable Bruneian cuisine, snacks, and desserts. There are also numerous "Gerai Ramadhan" stalls spread across the districts, ready to serve from as early as 2 p.m. These stalls provide a diverse selection of dishes, thoughtfully prepared to satisfy appetites in anticipation of iftar. Here you can find various culinary offerings, engage with local vendors, and immerse yourself in the lively atmosphere of these bustling marketplaces.

## **8. Do light recreational activities**

During Ramadhan, you will observe a slowdown in physical activity among the locals. However, as the late afternoon approaches, you will notice a surge in light activities such as trekking and jogging. Many people engage in these activities as they prepare for iftar. Consider engaging in light recreational activities such as hiking at Tasek Lama Recreational Park or taking a leisurely stroll through Taman Mahkota Jubilee Park. It is a great way to stay active while enjoying the serene atmosphere of these scenic spots.

## **9. Join iftar at Frame Brunei Darussalam**

Consider joining the locals as they gather near the "Frame Brunei Darussalam" closer to sunset to break their fast. It is a communal moment filled with warmth and togetherness. You'll also hear the adhan (call to prayer) resonating from the Omar Ali Saifuddien Mosque, signaling the time for iftar. It is a beautiful tradition that captures the essence of Ramadhan in Brunei, and being part of it offers a profound cultural experience.

## **10. Join Tarawih Prayers and Community Gatherings**

For muslim visitors, experience the serenity of the Tarawih prayer in the evening, as muslims devote themselves to worship and spiritual reflection. Consider attending Tarawih prayers at various beautiful mosques with its own distinct architecture, immersing yourself in the community as they come together to break their fast and share meals contributed by fellow worshippers. Many mosques also host religious talks and khatam events, offering opportunities for deeper spiritual engagement and connection with the local muslim community.

Non-muslim visitors are also welcome to participate in charity events and join in iftar meals at mosques and worship centers, fostering a cultural exchange and deeper appreciation of Brunei's traditions.

Ramadhan in Brunei Darussalam presents a distinctive cultural journey for all visitors, offering a deeper insight into Islamic faith traditions. While some non-Muslim visitors may encounter challenges due to certain limitations, those open to immersing themselves in local customs will discover invaluable rewards: insights into the community spirit, the warm hospitality of Bruneian people, and a richer understanding of the cultural tapestry.

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