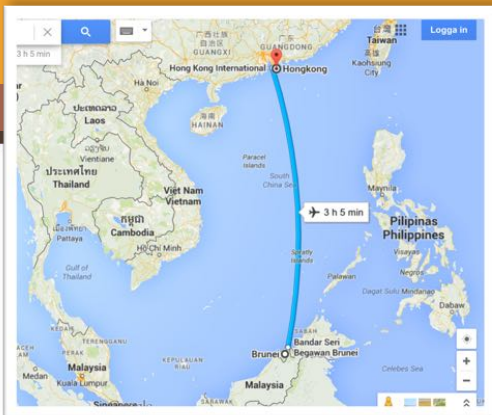


Brunei & Hong Kong



...A brief stop in the kingdom of Brunei...

October 2015



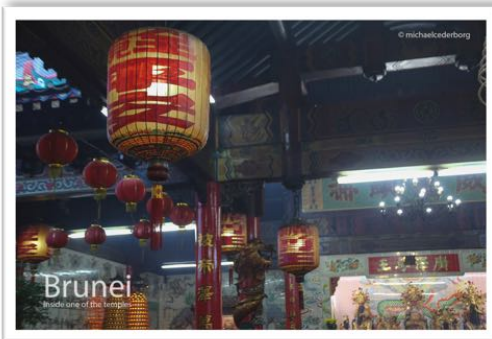
...With a stop-over in Hong Kong on route to Brunei...

...Flying with SAS newly restored 767 in business class it was travelling in style. Excellent service and able to sleep through the night. I flew in via Hong Kong (stop-over) to connect with my onward flight Royal Brunei for an additional 3-hour flight to Brunei.

Arriving relatively late, I made a taxi transfer directly to my hotel in the city: **The Radisson** in the city centre. A good value and location with walking distance to most major sights in the city. Having checked into this business hotel, I decided to take an evening stroll around the city to get my bearings.

A sovereign state situated on the north coast of the Island of Borneo in Southeast Asia. The country is completely surrounded by the state of Sarawak, Malaysia. Brunei gained its independence from United Kingdom only in 1984. The IMF claimed in 2011 that Brunei together with Libya (at the time) was the only two countries in the world with a public debt at 0% of its GDP.

Having checked the alternative and recommended restaurants – I settled on **Kaizen Sushi in the harbour area overlooking the water front**. An excellent choice it turned out. It got dark very quickly, so I had a bit of difficulties finding my way back to the hotel, although the city of Bandar Seri Begawan is a relatively small one.





Bandar Seri Begawan

A city tour and speedboat out to the swamps

On the second of my 3-day trip to this tiny Nation of Brunei, I had checked out options of taking the regular boat transport to the **isolated national park: Ulu Temburong**, where the rain forest is kept untouched as opposed to the rain forest on the other side of the border in Indonesia and Malaysia. This was as far as the “regular” boat transport would take me. I then hired a long-boat and continued upriver into a jungle-station where they had built a canopy walkway some 40 meters up over the rainforest floor.

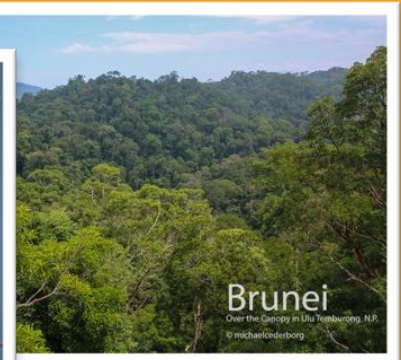
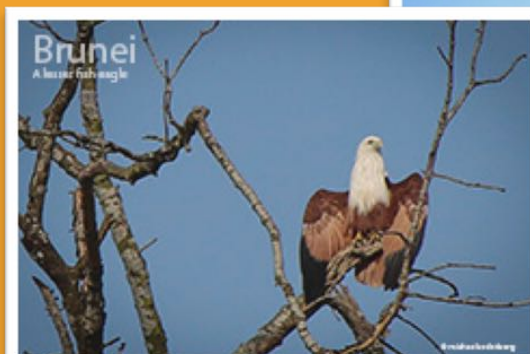
I took lunch and enjoyed a ½ day tour around the rain forest area. Surprisingly empty of tourists and very calm and tranquil visit indeed. Well back in the capital, I decided also to venture out in the archipelago outside the city to see the **Sultans palace: Istana Nurul Iman** – from the water front. I was not very mobile, as I had only 2 months earlier fallen down from a tree back home where I broke both my arms as well as one leg. I could feel I was far from fully recovered and struggled as a consequence when moving in and out of boats as well as walking on difficult jungle trails.

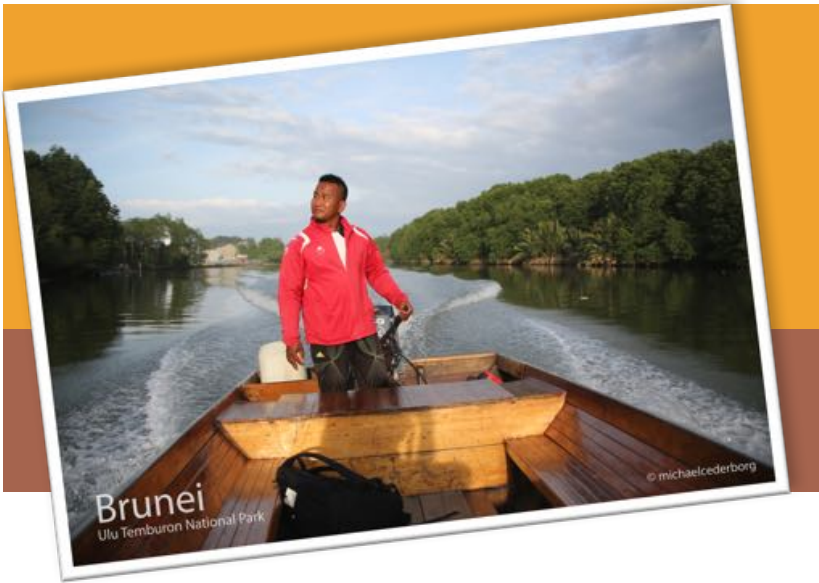
Nation of Brunei, Abode of Peace
Negara Brunei Darussalam (Rumi)
 نڬارا بروني دارالسلام (Jawi)




Flag Crest

Capital and largest city	Bandar Seri Begawan 4°53.417'N 114°56.533'E
Official languages	Malay ^[a]
Recognised	English ^[b]
Area	
• Total	5,765 km ² (2,226 sq mi) (172nd)
• Water (%)	8.6
Population	
• Jul 2015 ^[c] estimate	417,200 ^[c] (175th)
• Density	72.11/km ² (186.8/sq mi) (134th)
GDP (PPP)	2016 estimate
• Total	\$33.376 billion ^[c] (116th)
• Per capita	\$80,000 ^[c] (59 th)

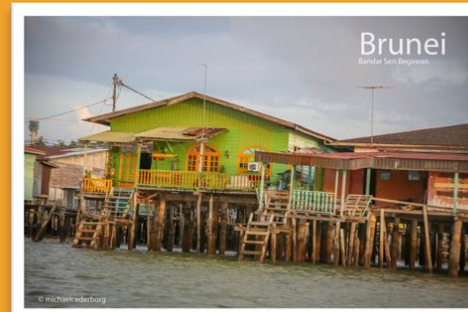
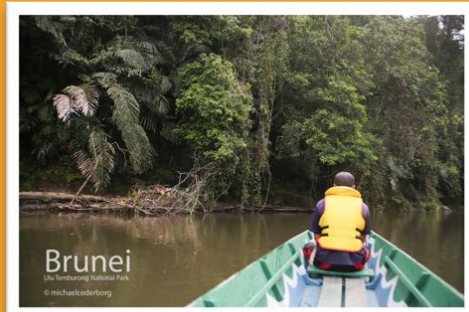
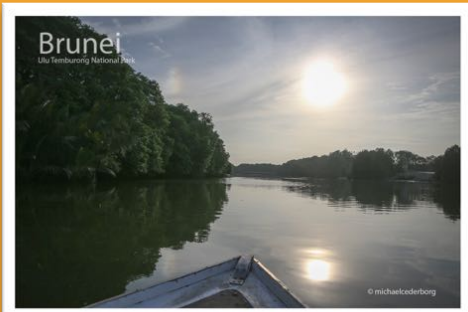
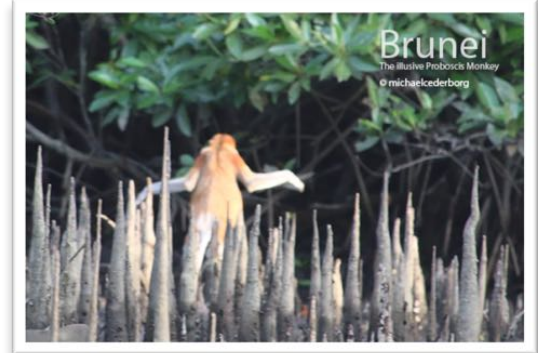
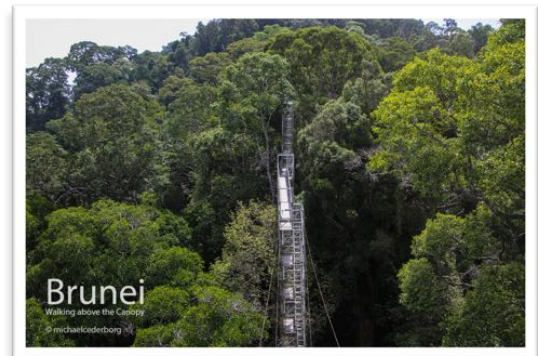




Proboscis monkey – a feature of Brunei.

On my third and last day in Brunei, and not yet having seen the illusive Proboscis monkey – which is synonymous with Brunei and its wildlife, I decided to hire a water taxi for half-a-day. We travelled back and forth in the archipelago trying to locate these very difficult to spot monkeys. It was only in the late afternoon, when we finally were lucky and spotted two different groups of monkeys. However, they are very shy and disappear as soon as they here the engine of a motorboat approaching. So, very difficult to get good photos of this monkey.

We also had a look at the village of Kampaung Ayer which is located in the water and is built on stilts. The houses are connected by gangways and walkways built of wooden planks only. Some 60,000 people are said to live in this village on the water. Made a stop also at the Omar Ali Saifuddien mosque – a great sight at sunset when the sun was reflected on the main cupola. All-in-all a very satisfying visit. However, 3 days are quite enough in this rather small kingdom.





Hong Kong



The bustling financial hub of East Asia

The main reason for this trip was a trade fair in Hong Kong this time. I then decided to make a detour for 3 days to Brunei since in the “neighbourhood”. **I stayed this time at the Lanson Place on Victoria Island.** Great place with super breakfast and a fantastic view staying on the 17th floor overlooking the skyline of Hong Kong.

Having been to Hong Kong on many occasions, first time back in 1979 and many times in the 90-ies when setting up office here to cover China before the “red-tape” with import/export licenses had been made easier for western companies – it is always great to come back to Hong Kong. My absolute favourite in East Asia.

