

= Kuching =

Kuching / ʔkuʔtʔʔʔʔ / (Jawi : ʔʔʔʔʔʔ , Chinese : ʔʔ ; pinyin : Gʔjìn) , officially the City of Kuching , is the capital and the most populous city in the state of Sarawak in Malaysia . It is also the capital of Kuching Division . The city is situated on the Sarawak River at the southwest tip of the state of Sarawak on the island of Borneo and covers an area of 431 square kilometres (166 sq mi) with a population about 165 @, @ 642 in the Kuching North administrative region and 159 @, @ 490 in the Kuching South administrative region ? a total of 325 @, @ 132 people .

Kuching was the third capital of Sarawak in 1827 during the administration of the Bruneian Empire . In 1841 , Kuching become the capital of Sarawak after Sarawak was ceded to James Brooke for helping the Bruneian empire in crushing a rebellion . The town continued to receive attention and development during the rule of Charles Brooke such as the construction of sanitation system , hospital , prison , fort , and a bazaar . In 1941 , the Brooke administration had a Centenary Celebration in Kuching . During World War II , Kuching was occupied by Japanese forces from 1942 to 1945 . The Japanese government set up a Batu Lintang camp near Kuching to hold prisoners of war and civilian internees . After the war , the town survived intact . However , the last Rajah of Sarawak , Sir Charles Vyner Brooke decided to cede Sarawak as part of British Crown Colony in 1946 . Kuching remained as capital during the Crown Colony period . After the formation of Malaysia in 1963 , Kuching retained its status as state capital and was granted city status in 1988 . Since then , the Kuching city is divided into two administrative regions managed by two separate local authorities . The administrative centre of Sarawak state government is located at Wisma Bapa Malaysia , Kuching .

Kuching is a major food destination for tourists and the main gateway for travellers visiting Sarawak and Borneo . Kuching Wetlands National Park is located about 30 kilometres (19 mi) from the city and there are many other tourist attractions in and around Kuching such as Bako National Park , Semenggoh Wildlife Centre , Rainforest World Music Festival (RWMF) , state assembly building , The Astana , Fort Margherita , Kuching Cat Museum , and Sarawak State Museum . The city has become one of the major industrial and commercial centres in East Malaysia .

= = Etymology = =

The name of " Kuching " was already in use for the city by the time Brooke arrived in 1839 . There are many theories as to the derivation of the word " Kuching " . It was perhaps derived from the Malay word for cat , " kucing " or from Cochin , an Indian trading port on the Malabar Coast and a generic term in China and British India for trading harbour . Some Hindu artefacts can be seen today at the Sarawak State Museum . However , another source reported that the Kuching city was previously known as " Sarawak " before the Brooke arrived . The settlement was renamed to " Sarawak proper " during the kingdom expansion . It was only in 1872 that Charles Brooke renamed the settlement to " Kuching " .

There was one unlikely theory based on a story on miscommunication . According to the story , James Brooke arrived in Kuching on his yacht " Royalist " . He then asked his local guide about the name of the town . The local guide thinking that James Brooke was pointing towards a cat , and said the word " Kuching " . However , ethnic Malays in Sarawak usually refer the name of a cat as " pusak " instead of the Malay word " kucing " .

Some source also stated that it was derived from a fruit called " mata kucing " (Euphoria malaiense) , a fruit that grows widely in Malaysia and Indonesia . There was also a hill in the city that was named after the fruit , which is called Bukit Mata Kuching . While as been written by a British woman to her son in the 19th century , it was stated that the name was derived from a stream of a same name , called " Sungai Kuching " or Cat River in English . The river was situated at the foot of Bukit Mata Kuching and in front of the Tua Pek Kong Temple . In the 1950s , the river became very shallow because of silt deposits in the river . The river was later filled to make way for roads .

There is another theory that Kuching actually means " Ku " (ʔʔ - Old and " Ching " ʔʔʔ - Well or " old well " (ʔʔ) in Chinese . During the Brooke administration , there was no water supply and water

@-@ borne diseases were common . In 1888 , an epidemic broke out which later was known as " Great Cholera Epidemic " . A well situated in the present day China Street in Main Bazaar helped to combat the disease by providing clean water supply . Due to increased demand for a water supply , the role of the well was later replaced by water treatment plant on the Bau Road .

= = History = =

Sarawak was part of the Bruneian Empire since the reign of first Brunei sultanate , Sultan Muhammad Shah . Kuching was the third capital of Sarawak , founded in 1827 by the representative of the Sultan of Brunei , Pengiran Indera Mahkota . Prior to the founding of Kuching , the two past capitals of Sarawak were Santubong , founded by Sultan Pengiran Tengah in 1599 , and Lidah Tanah , founded by Datu Patinggi Ali in the early 1820s .

Pengiran Raja Muda Hashimit later ceded the territory to a British adventurer , James Brooke as a reward for helping him to counter a rebellion . The rebellion was crushed in November 1840 , and on 24 September 1841 , Brooke was appointed as the Governor of Sarawak with the title of Rajah . It was not announced until 18 August 1842 , following Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin II 's ratifying the governorship , and requiring Brooke to pay an annual sum of \$ 2 @, @ 500 to the Sultan . Since that time , Kuching became the seat of the Brooke government .

The administration was later continued by his nephew , Charles Brooke . As an administrative capital , it became the centre of attention and development . Improvements included a sanitation system . By 1874 , the city had completed several developments , including construction of a hospital , prison , Fort Margherita , and many other buildings .

Charles Brooke 's wife write his autobiography , (My Life in Sarawak) , including his descriptions of Kuching :

The little town looked so neat and fresh and prosperous under the careful jurisdiction of the Rajah and his officers , that it reminded me of a box of painted toys kept scrupulously clean by a child . The Bazaar runs for some distance along the banks of river , and this quarter of the town is inhabited almost entirely by Chinese traders , with the exception of one or two Hindoo shops Groceries of exotic kinds are laid out on tables near the pavement , from which the purchasers make their choice . At the Hindoo shops you can buy silks from India , sarongs from Java , tea from China and tiles and porcelain from all parts of the world , laid out in picturesque confusion , and overflowing into the street .

The Astana (Palace) , which is now the official residence of the Governor of Sarawak , was constructed next to Brooke 's first residence . He had it built in 1869 as a wedding gift to his wife . Kuching continued to prosper under Charles Vyner Brooke , who succeeded his father as the Third Rajah of Sarawak . In 1941 , Kuching was the site of the Brooke Government Centenary Celebration . A few months later , the Brooke administration came to a close when the Japanese occupied Sarawak .

During the Second World War , six platoons of infantry from 2 / 15 Punjab Regiment were stationed at Kuching in April 1941 . The Regiment defended Kuching and Bukit Stabar airfield from being destroyed by the Japanese . Defence was mainly concentrated on Kuching and Miri . However , on 24 December 1941 , Kuching was conquered by the Japanese forces . Sarawak was ruled as part of the Japanese Empire for three years and eight months , until the official Japanese surrender on 11 September 1945 . The official surrender was signed on HMAS Kapunda at Kuching . From March 1942 , the Japanese operated the Batu Lintang camp , for POWs and civilian internees , 5 kilometres (3 @. @ 1 mi) outside Kuching .

After the end of World War II , the town survived and was wholly undamaged . The third and last Rajah , Sir Charles Vyner Brooke later ceded Sarawak to the British Crown on 1 July 1946 . During the Crown Colony period , the government worked to develop and improve the infrastructure on Sarawak . Kuching was revitalised as the capital of Sarawak under the British colonial government . When Sarawak , together with North Borneo , Singapore and the Federation of Malaya , formed the Federation of Malaysia in 1963 , Kuching kept its status as the state capital and was granted a city status on 1 August 1988 . On 29 July 2015 , Kuching was declared as " City of Unity " by One

Malaysia Foundation for racial harmony that existed in the city because of cross @-@ racial marriages , multi @-@ racial schools , fair scholarship distributions and balanced workforce patterns .

= = Governance = =

As a capital of Sarawak , Kuching plays an important role in the political and economic welfare of the population of the entire state as it became the seat of the state government where almost all of their ministries and agencies are based . The Sarawak State Legislative Assembly is located at the suburb of Kuching in Petra Jaya . There are 3 Members of Parliament (MPs) representing the three parliamentary constituencies in the city : Petra Jaya (P.194) , Kuching City (P.195) , and Stampin (P.196) . The city also elects eight representatives into the state legislature from the state assembly districts of Tumpong , Samarang , Satok , Padungan , Pending , Batu Lintang , Kota Sentosa and Batu Kawah .

= = = Local authority and city definition = = =

Kuching is the only city in Malaysia to be administered by two mayors , the city is divided into Kuching North and Kuching South . Each of these is administered by a mayor for Kuching South and commissioner for Kuching North . The current commissioner for Kuching North is Datuk Abang Wahap Abang Julai , who took over from Abang Atei Abang Medaan on 1 August 2011 while Dato ' James Chan Khay Syn became the new mayor for the Kuching South in 2008 after the sudden death of Chong Ted Tsiung . The city obtained a city status on 1 August 1988 , and since that it was administered by Kuching North City Hall (DBKU) and Kuching South City Council (MBKS) .

The city is defined within the borders of what is the Kuching District , formerly the Municipality of Kuching . With an area of 1 @, @ 868 @. @ 83 square kilometres , it is the most populous district in Sarawak . The area then subdivided into three sub @-@ districts , namely Kuching Proper , Padawan and Siburan . Kuching Proper included the city area and Padawan municipality , while Siburan and Padawan is a sub @-@ district . The combined area of Kuching North City Hall , Kuching South City Council , Padawan Municipal Council and the Samarahan District Council is known as Greater Kuching .

= = Geography = =

Kuching is located on the banks of the Sarawak River in the northwestern part of the island of Borneo . The limits of the City of Kuching include all that area in Kuching District containing an area approximately 431 @. @ 01 square kilometres (166 @. @ 41 sq mi) bounded from Gunung Lasak (Mount Lasak) in Muara Tebas to Batu Buaya (Crocodile Rock) in the Santubong peninsula following a series of survey marks as stated in the First Schedule of the City of Kuching Ordinance , 1988 . As a simplification of the legal statute , the Kuching city limits extend from the Kuching International Airport in the south to the northern coast of the Santubong and Bako peninsulas ; from the Kuching Wetlands National Park in the west to the Kuap River estuary in the east . The Sarawak River generally splits the city into North and South . The highest point in the city is Mount Santubong on the Santubong peninsula , which is at 810 @. @ 2 metres (2 @, @ 658 ft) above sea level , located 35 km north of the city centre . Rapid urbanisation has occurred in Greater Kuching and the urban sprawl extends to Penrissen , Kota Sentosa , Kota Padawan , Batu Kawah , Matang , Samarang , Siburan , Tarat , Kota Samarahan , Asajaya as well as Serian which is located about 65 km from Kuching .

= = = Climate = = =

Kuching has a tropical rainforest climate (Köppen climate classification Af) , moderately hot but very humid at times and receives substantial rainfall . The average annual rainfall is approximately 4

@, @ 200 millimetres (170 in) . Kuching is the wettest populated area (on average) in Malaysia with an average of 247 rainy days per year . Kuching receives only 5 hours of sunshine per day on average and an average of only 3 @. @ 7 hours of sunshine per day in the month of January (wettest month of the year) . The wettest times are during the North @- @ East Monsoon months of November to February and the city 's driest months are June through August . The temperature in Kuching ranges from 19 ° C (66 ° F) to 36 ° C (97 ° F) but the average temperature is around 23 ° C (73 ° F) in the early hours of the morning and rises to around 33 ° C (91 ° F) during mid afternoon but the heat index often reaches 42 ° C (108 ° F) during the " dry season " due to the humidity . This temperature stays almost constant throughout the year if it is not affected by the heavy rain and strong winds during the early hours of the morning which can bring the temperature down to 19 ° C (66 ° F) , but this is very rare .

= = Demography = =

The terms " Kuchingite " have been used to describe the people of Kuching , although it is not official . However , the simplest way to call the people of Kuching is only by " orang Kuching " , which means " people of Kuching " in English .

= = = Ethnicity = = =

The Malaysian Census 2010 reports that Kuching has a population of 325 @, @ 132 . The city population (North and South) consists of Malays (146 @, @ 580) , Han Chinese (120 @, @ 860) , Iban (28 @, @ 691) , Bidayuh (13 @, @ 681) , Non @- @ Malaysian citizens (7 @, @ 216) , other Bumiputras (3 @, @ 250) , Melanau (2 @, @ 078) , Indian (1 @, @ 626) and others (1 @, @ 140) . The Han Chinese are made up of Hokkien in the city areas and Hakka in the suburbs mainly . Other Han Chinese consist of Foochow (Fuzhou people) , Teochew , Hainan people , Cantonese people , Henghua people and others . Most of the Malays and Melanau are Muslim , the Chinese practised either Buddhism , Taoism or Christianity while the Iban and Bidayuh are mainly Christian with some of them still practised Animism . A number of Hindus , Sikhs and a small number of secularists also exist around the city .

A sizeable of non @- @ citizen are mostly coming from the Indonesian area of Kalimantan due to the state proximity with it and most of them consist of migrant workers . Since the British period , a small population of South Asian especially Pakistanis have exist around the city by running their business mainly in selling clothes and spices . Other migrants during the time also included those Bugis from the Dutch East Indies and other races from the neighbour Dutch Borneo . Interracial marriages among those of different ethnic backgrounds are common in Kuching , and the city itself is a home to 30 different ethnic groups .

= = = Languages = = =

Beside being the capital city of Sarawak , Kuching became a business and cultural centre for the Malays of Sarawak . The dialect of Malay spoken in Kuching is known as Bahasa Sarawak (Sarawakian Malay Language) , which is a subset of the Malay language . The dialect used in Kuching is a little different from the dialect used in Miri . Since the second largest population in the city is made up of Han Chinese , the Chinese language is also commonly used , particularly Hokkien , Hakka and Mandarin Chinese . Almost all residents are able to speak English . A number of special private schools that teach English for expatriates child can be found through the city .

= = Economy = =

Kuching is one of the main industrial and commercial centre for Sarawak . Many state @- @ level , national @- @ level and international commercial banks , as well as some insurance companies establish their headquarters and branches here . The economy is dominated by the primary sector

and currently by the tertiary @-@ based industry as the state government want to aim Sarawak to be transform into a developed state by 2020 .

There are 3 industrial areas in Kuching , namely Pending Industrial Estate (Mixed and Light Industries) , Demak Laut Industrial Park (Mixed , Light , and Medium Industries) , and Sama Jaya Free Industrial Zone (Hi @-@ Tech and electronics industry) . This is intended to boost the city 's commercial and industrial activity to making it a major growth centre in East Malaysia , as well for the BIMP @-@ EAGA (Brunei @-@ Indonesia @-@ Malaysia @-@ Philippines East ASEAN Growth Area) . Kuching hosted numerous national , regional and international conferences , congress and trade fairs , such as the Malaysia Global Business Forum , Tomorrow ? s Leaders Summit , International Hydropower Association (IHA) World Congress , ASEAN Tourism Forum , and Routes Asia Conference . Besides , Kuching was chosen as a permanent host for the biennial Asean International Film Festival and Awards (AIFFA) . These events are normally held at the Borneo Convention Centre .

Kuching Port Authority (KPA) , established in 1961 , started its operation at Tanah Puteh Port (Sim Kheng Hong Port) in 1975 with annual capacity of 350 @,@ 000 tonnes . Its operations has since been shifted to Pending and Senari terminals with annual capacity of 2 @.@ 9 million tonnes and 7 million tonnes respectively . KPA also controls Biawak Oil Jetty that handles petroleum products .

Historically , the Chinese have contributed to the city economy since their migration during the Brunei Sultanate period after the discovery of antimony ore and also during the Charles Vyner Brooke administration who encouraging the migration of the overseas Chinese to planting black pepper .

= = Transportation = =

= = = Land = = =

Roads in the city are under the jurisdiction and maintenance of either the two local councils , i.e. DBKU (Dewan Bandaraya Kuching Utara) and MBKS (Majlis Bandaraya Kuching Selatan) , or the state 's Public Works Department . Roads of the latter category are either state roads or federal roads .

Most major internal roads are dual @-@ carriageways and the city is linked by highways to other towns in Sarawak . These highways are mainly federal roads maintained by the national Public Works Department . The city also famous for a number of roundabouts including the oldest and largest one , known as Datuk Abang Kipali Bin Abang Akip Roundabout . The roundabout are usually landscaped and were efficient to handling traffic congestion . However , traffic lights are more commonly used now as the city traffic continues to rise .

As the city is located near the equator , potholes have the tendency to develop on the roads during the monsoon season , usually at the end of the year due to coinciding with winter in the northern hemisphere . Roads leading outside of the city to the interior are of a slightly lower quality but are now being upgraded . Highway routes from Kuching include :

1 ? 15 Kuching ? Serian Highway

Kuching Bypass

Kuching ? Kota Samarahan Expressway

Tun Salahuddin Bridge

Matang Highway

= = = = Public transportation = = = =

There are two types of taxi operating in the city , the main taxi is the red and yellow while the larger is painted in blue , which is more comfortable but expensive known as the " executive taxis " . In 2014 , a smartphone taxi booking application named " GrabTaxi " was launched and making the city

as the fifth area after Klang Valley , Cyberjaya , Putrajaya and Johor Bahru that have the applications . The main bus terminal is the Kuching Sentral , which just launched in 2012 . It is located in the south of the city , about 5 minutes away from the Kuching International Airport and 20 minutes from the city centre . The terminal serves a long @-@ distance destination to Brunei , Sabah and West Kalimantan in Indonesia . Another bus terminal is the Old Kuching Bus Terminal , it is still operating as some of the bus companies that supposed to use the new terminal are unwilling to use the facilities due to some ongoing disagreement . Other minibuses or vans services also available in the city .

== Water ==

Kuching , like most towns in Sarawak , has connections to other urban centres and settlements by water transportation . Between the banks of Sarawak River , near the city centre , many ' tambang ' (traditional roofed wooden sampan) can be seen carrying passengers from one riverbank to another . For those staying along the river banks , it is a short way to getting to the city @-@ proper . The wharf for express boats servicing transport to further areas such as Sibuan and Bintulu , is located in the east of the city at the Sim Kheng Hong Port (formerly known as the Tanah Puteh Port) in Pending .

== Air ==

Kuching International Airport (KCH) (ICAO Code : WBGG) is the main gateway for air passengers . The airport 's history dates back to the 1940s and today the airport has undergoing many major redevelopment . The airport terminal is listed as the fourth busiest airport in Malaysia according to total passenger movements in 2013 . Since 2009 , the airport has grown rapidly with an increasing number of passengers and aircraft movement . It is the secondary hub for Malaysia Airlines and AirAsia while became the third hub for MASWings , which serves flights to smaller towns and rural areas in East Malaysia .

== Other utilities ==

== Courts of law and legal enforcement ==

The current court complex is located in Petra Jaya . It contains the High Court , Sessions Court , and the Magistrate Court . Another courts of Syariah and native were also located in the city . The Sarawak Police Contingent Headquarters is located in Badruddin Street . There is only one district headquarters in the city , which is the Kuching District police headquarters located in Simpang Tiga Road . Kuching Prison Complex is located in Puncak Borneo Street . Temporary lock @-@ ups or prison cells are found in most police stations around the city .

== Healthcare ==

There are many types of health services in the city , such as the main public hospitals , public health clinics , other type of health clinics , mobile clinic , flying doctor service , village clinics and 1Malaysia clinic . The main hospital is the Sarawak General Hospital which is the oldest hospital since 1923 . Another hospital is Rajah Charles Brooke Memorial Hospital . Hospital Sentosa (Sentosa Mental Hospital) , which built with a half @-@ funded from the British Government was opened in 1958 , it provides psychiatric services for the entire state and known as the second oldest hospital in Sarawak after the main hospital .

Normah Medical Specialist Centre in Petra Jaya is the largest private hospital with (130 beds) in Sarawak . In addition , three other large private health facilities are Borneo Medical Centre with (120 beds) , Timberland Medical Centre with (100 beds) , and KPJ Healthcare with (75 beds) .

== Education ==

In the city , all schools under the National Education System (government education institution category) , are managed by the Kuching Combined Education Office (Pejabat Pelajaran Gabungan Kuching) . There are many government or state schools in and around the city . Like other Malaysian schools , schools in the city are divided into four levels of education ? pre @-@ school , primary , secondary (lower and upper) and post @-@ secondary (excluding tertiary) . Among the well @-@ established and prestigious boarding schools in the city is Sekolah Menengah Sains Kuching , which is located at Batu Kawa . Other secondary schools including some of the oldest and well known are St.Joseph , St.Thomas , St.Teresa and St.Mary as well as others like Sekolah Menengah Kai Chung , SMK Batu Lintang , and SMK Padungan . Kuching has 4 out of 14 Chinese independent schools in Sarawak . These are Chung Hua Middle School No. 1 (???????) , Chung Hua Middle School No. 3 (???????) , Chung Hua Middle School No. 4 (???????) and Batu Kawa Min Lit secondary school (?????) . There are also two international schools in Kuching namely Tunku Putra International School and Lodge International School . Other private schools in Kuching are Sunny Hill School and St Joseph Private Schools .

There are currently no public university campuses in Kuching , apart from the Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS) Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences building situated next to the Sarawak General Hospital . The Sarawak state government moved the last remaining public university campus (Universiti Teknologi MARA) from Kuching to Kota Samarahan in 1997 in a long @-@ term initiative to transform Kota Samarahan into an education hub . Kuching is home to two full @-@ fledged private university campuses : the Swinburne University of Technology Sarawak Campus , the only branch campus of Swinburne University of Technology outside Australia ; and UCSI University , Sarawak Campus which houses the Faculty of Hospitality and Management . A polytechnic and community college , both known as Politeknik Kuching Sarawak and Kolej Komuniti Kuching are also located in the city .

Other private colleges can be found through the city with most of the colleges are subsidiaries from universities and university colleges established in West Malaysia , such as SEGi College , Sarawak , Sunway College Kuching , Limkokwing Borneo , PTPL Sarawak , Wawasan Open University , Open University Malaysia , and Twintech College Sarawak . There are private institutions conducting franchised programmes from full @-@ fledged universities (apart from running their own courses) such as SATT College (conducting franchised programmes from Universiti Teknologi MARA) and the Institute of Dynamic Management , Sarawak (conducting franchised programmes from Universiti Tun Abdul Razak) . The International College of Advanced Technology Sarawak or ICATS is an institution created as the state government 's initiative to enhance technical and vocational training education among school leavers . The college was established from the former INTI College Sarawak facilities . Operated by a state @-@ owned subsidiary , ICATS focuses on producing human capital for the hi @-@ tech sector , especially for the development of the Sarawak Corridor of Renewable Energy .

== Libraries ==

The Sarawak State Library is the major information resource centre and provides information services for the public and private sectors . The library serves Kuching and its outskirts as the main depository of public records . In addition , it administers , monitors and facilitates the operations of 36 village libraries in the state funded by the National Library of Malaysia .

Other public libraries in Kuching include the DBKU City Library and village libraries such as in Bandar Baru Samariang , Kampung Samariang Lama and Taman Sepakat Jaya .

== Culture and leisure ==

== Attractions and recreation spots ==

=== Cultural ===

Kuching maintains several museums showcasing its culture and history . The Sarawak State Museum , is one of the finest museum in Asia and known as Kuching 's oldest and most historical building , which exhibits collections of the indigenous races in Sarawak . Directly opposite the Sarawak Museum is the Tun Abdul Razak Hall which serves as an exhibition venue and the office of the Sarawak Museum Department . While located right behind the hall is the Sarawak Islamic Museum .

Other museums in Kuching include the Chinese History Museum , the Kuching Cat Museum , the Sarawak Timber Museum and the Sarawak Textile Museum . Kuching is also home to the first ever planetarium in Malaysia , the Sultan Iskandar Planetarium which adjacent to the Kuching Civic Centre .

=== Historical ===

Interesting historical landmarks and sites of Kuching include The Astana (the former palace of the White Rajahs and currently the official residence of the Yang di @-@ Pertua Negeri of Sarawak) , and Fort Margherita .

The oldest street of Kuching is the Main Bazaar , a row of 19th @-@ century Chinese shophouses located along the Kuching Waterfront overlooking the Sarawak River . It offers the city 's best concentration of antique and handicraft shops . The Main Bazaar is part of Kuching 's old town , which also includes the Carpenter Street and India Street . The old Courthouse building , which sits in between Carpenter Street and India Street , has undergone major renovation and now houses the Sarawak Tourism Board complex . Some other interesting areas around the central business district include Padungan Street , which is the Chinatown of Kuching .

=== Leisure and conservation areas ===

A numbers of leisure spots and conserved areas can be found in Kuching . The Talang @-@ Satang National Park was established with the primary aim of conserving Sarawak 's marine turtle population . It covers a total area of approximately 19 @,@ 400 hectares (47 @,@ 938 acres) , and comprises all lands below the high tide marks on the respective islands . The park also comprises the coastline and sea surrounding four islands of the southwest coast of Sarawak ; Talang Besar , Talang Kecil off Sematan , and Satang Besar and Satang Kecil off Santubong , near Kuching . All these four " Turtle Islands " are responsible for 95 % of all the turtle landings in Sarawak and the park also includes the Tukong Ara @-@ Banun Island Wildlife Sanctuary , two tiny islets which are important nesting sites for colonies of bridled terns and black @-@ naped terns .

Damai , one of Sarawak 's main beach resort area , is located on the Santubong Peninsula , about 35 minutes drive from Kuching . The area has sandy beaches at the foot of an imposing jungle @-@ covered mountain . Damai features three world @-@ class resort hotels such as the Damai Beach Resort , Damai Puri Resort and Spa and One Hotel Santubong . Each resort has their own private beach , swimming pool and offers jet @-@ skiing , waterskiing , windsurfing , mountain biking , tennis , squash and fitness centres . There is also an international standard 18 @-@ hole golf course designed by the legendary Arnold Palmer located nearby . Other attractions include the Damai Central , Permai Rainforest Resort , Sarawak Cultural Village and the sleepy fishing villages of Santubong and Buntal with their excellent seafood restaurants . While for visitors who like adventurous activities , there is a trekking activity on Mount Santubong .

Aside from that , Damai is also one of the perfect places in Sarawak to see the Irrawaddy dolphin as the mammals can be spotted along the Salak River , Santubong estuary and at the Bako @-@ Buntal Bay . The Santubong Peninsula offers a few sites for bird watching with the BirdLife

International Organisation has registered the whole area on Bako @-@ Buntal Bay as an ' Important Bird Area ' . Between October and March , the Buntal River become an important wintering ground for bird migration . A numbers of birds that have been spotted by the Malaysian Nature Society (Kuching Branch) at Buntal including a variety of plobers , sandpipers , egrets , terns and other rare migrants , while resident birds including collared kingfisher , the white @-@ bellied sea eagle and brahminy kite .

Numerous natural attractions including National Parks , notably the Bako National Park and the Kuching Wetlands National Park as well as the Semenggoh Wildlife Centre which operates an orangutan orphanage and rehabilitation program . Also , available near Kuching are the Gunung Gading National Park and the Kubah National Park . Located about 40 @-@ minutes drive from Kuching is Santubong , a prominent beach resort area home to numerous world @-@ class beach resorts . Other beaches accessible nearby Kuching are the Lundu Beach and the Sematan Beach . The Borneo Highlands Resort is also nearby Kuching and offers a fresh and chilly highlands resort experience located 1000 @-@ metres above sea level .

= = = = Other sights = = = =

The Kuching Waterfront is a 2 kilometre long riverside esplanade stretching from the main hotel and commercial heartland of the city to downtown Kuching . Designed by Sydney architects , the waterfront landscaped is served with food stalls , restaurants , benches and offers an excellent views of The Astana , Fort Margherita and the New Sarawak State Legislative Assembly Building . The waterfront also features an observation tower , an open @-@ air theatre and musical fountains .

The Kuching Orangutan Murals are vital images of a wheelbarrow filled with eight young orangutans and another baby orangutan swinging from a pipe . It was painted by Ernest Zacharevic along Power Street in the city on 27 April 2014 . This latest mural is painted in Zacharevic 's usual interactive style , with an actual wheelbarrow sliced into half and secured to the wall to enable the public to take selfies while holding onto the handle . On the other hand , the baby orangutan was painted over a nail on the wall , where people can ' place ' items in its hand .

= = = = Shopping = = = =

Kuching features a number of shopping malls . These include VivaCity Megamall , The Spring , Boulevard Shopping Mall , Plaza Merdeka , CityONE Megamall , Kuching Sentral , Emart Lee Ling , Emart Batu Kawa , EG Mall , Giant Petra Jaya Mall , Giant Tabuan Jaya Mall , Giant Kota Padawan Mall , Sarawak Plaza , Tun Jugah , Riverside Shopping Complex , Genesis Parade , Green Heights Mall , Wisma Saberkas and many more . More shopping malls are set to open in the city as construction continues . The Satok Weekend Market is located at Medan Niaga Satok and operated in Saturdays and Sundays . A varieties of vegetables and fruits can be found there including other handicrafts , forest produce (such as wild honey) , orchid plants and a whole range of local snacks and delicacies .

= = = = Entertainment = = = =

There are four cinemas located around the city with most of its located inside shopping malls buildings . Most of the cinemas are owned by either Golden Screen Cinemas , MBO Cinemas , Lotus Five Star , Star Cineplex and TGV Cinemas .

= = = Music = = =

Since 1997 , Kuching has been host to the Rainforest World Music Festival (RWMF) , an annual music festival which brings performers and spectators to the region from all over the world . Hosted by the Sarawak Cultural Village near the Mount Santubong , the festival is now one of the largest

musical events in Malaysia . RWMF had been voted as Top 25 Best International Festivals by the British @-@ based magazine Songlines .

= = = Radio stations = = =

Several national radio stations have their office in the city , this include [RedFM (9 @.@ 19 MHz)] Hitz FM Sarawak (95 @.@ 3) , Era FM Sarawak (96 @.@ 1) , TEA FM (102 @.@ 7) and MY FM Sarawak (96 @.@ 9) .

= = International relations = =

Several countries have set up their consulates in Kuching , including Australia , Brunei , China , Denmark , France , Indonesia , Poland and the United Kingdom .

= = = Sister cities = = =

Kuching currently has eight sister cities :