

The Telegraph

# Travel | Destinations



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## Bunga Raya Island Resort & Spa

Gaya Island, Malaysian Borneo, Malaysia [View on a map](#)



Rooms from  
**£245** per night

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Rates provided by [Booking.com](#)

**8/10**

Telegraph expert  
rating

"Serving as a halfway house between the turquoise ocean and the steamy rainforest, Bungaraya is a tropical hideaway of stilted lodges and secluded inlets. The sand is soft and the breeze is cool – and it's just 30 minutes from the city of Kota Kinabalu."

By [Simon Parker](#), TRAVEL WRITER

**9/10**

### Location

The contrast between vivacious rainforest and cobalt ocean is mesmerising from dawn until dusk – and while there may be the odd plastic bag washed into this tranquil bay, this is an otherwise pristine paradise. On its doorstep, the South China Sea crashes against the resort's private beach and the city of Kota Kinabalu is just half an hour away by speedboat.

8/10

## Style & character

Private infinity pools, open-air bars and a pristine, floury sand beach – this resort is an isolated and intimate refuge. It could, in parts, do with a spruce and a lick of paint, but that doesn't detract from the tropical charm of the place. Inside and outside areas merge seamlessly and there's a genuine feeling of nature being right on the doorstep.



8/10

## Service & facilities

Kayaks, stand-up paddleboards and snorkels are ready to use, should you wish to explore the bay and there's a series of zip lines and hiking trails within the jungle behind the property. Located on the beach, the gym is well equipped with cardio machines and free weights, and there are also daily Pilates classes. The staff are friendly, polite and not overbearing and there's an all round feeling of barefoot, informal unpretentiousness.

- ✓ Bar
- ✓ Fitness centre
- ✓ Pool
- ✓ Room service
- ✓ Wi-Fi
- ✓ Beach
- ✓ Laundry
- ✓ Restaurant
- ✓ Spa

**8**/<sub>10</sub>

## **Rooms**

Designed to look and feel like high-end versions of local homes, the resort boasts 48 ironwood villas that are perched on stilts. This added height allows the ocean breeze to wash over the varnished verandahs and into high ceiling bedrooms.

Inside they're sophisticated and spacious, with crisp white bed sheets and marble countertops. Bathrooms are large and tiled throughout in local stone, with vast walk-in showers. The eight plunge pool villas, right on the beach, are particularly popular among honeymooners.

**8**/<sub>10</sub>

## **Food & drink**

The food is of a decent standard across the board and is served in an informal style, either at one of the resort's two restaurants or by the poolside. The seafood is largely exceptional – with the large local prawns acting as the succulent showstopper. Living up to the standards of many other properties within the Preferred Hotels brand, wine is taken very seriously here – with over 4,000 bottles of the stuff crammed into the cellar.

Breakfast is reasonable, but not extraordinary: there's an egg station, cold meats, cheeses and juices.

**8**/<sub>10</sub>

## **Value for money**

Villas from MYR 1,100 (£200) in low season, and from MYR 1,500 (£274) in the high seasons around Christmas and Chinese New Year. Free Wi-Fi, but it's not great.

## **Access for guests with disabilities?**

This would be an extremely hard property to contend with for people with serious disabilities, unfortunately.

## Family-friendly?

There are eight villas designed especially for families and three of them overlook the swimming pool, allowing parents to relax on the verandah while keeping an eye on their children.

📍 Polish Bay, Gaya Island, Tunku Abdul Rahman Park, Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia.

00 6 088 380 390

[bungarayaresort.com](http://bungarayaresort.com)

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