The Mulu National Park is an eco-tourism haven for nature lovers.

When Mulu National Park is mentioned, images of massive fascinating caves and stunning rock formations immediately come to mind. I’m not much of an expert on caves, but a trip to the Mulu National Park, in Sarawak comes as an instant enlightenment. A whole string of superlatives cannot do justice to the unsurpassed cave system to be found at Mulu, opening a striking window into nature’s most hidden splendours.

Mulu’s impressive canyons, untamed rivers, serene rain forests, imposing mountains, spectacular limestone pinnacles and magnificent caves rank among the world’s most outstanding scenery.

The largest park in Sarawak, the Mulu National Park spans 544 square kilometres. The Mulu National Park has been designated a World Heritage site by UNESCO in November 2000 for its natural beauty and the world’s largest cave system with its amazingly rich bio-diversity.

*Indeed this recognition has increased the number of tourist to Mulu and there
Swirling formations of bats, take to the skies forming a winding, twisting "ribbon."

The other two caves open to visitors are accessible only by boat. From the longboat landing, Gua Angin (Wind Cave) is just a short stroll. The main feature of this striking cave is its huge King's Chamber - somewhat reminiscent of the pyramids. It gives the impression of the roof falling on your head. The grown-up stalagmites fuse with the stalactites dropping from the roof connecting so intimately.

Clearwater Cave is the last one generally open to the public. A roller-coaster track leads through this cave, with its three giant entranceways and a clear-as-the-sky subterranean steam running the length of the lowest chamber.

OTHER ATTRACTIONS AT MULU
If there is a place where nature begins, then Mulu is at the heart of it. A brisk walk on the nature's trail while enjoying the crisp morning breeze can be very invigorating indeed.

At Mulu, there is fun and adventure for the whole family, and the more daring can opt to navigate rapids, go on guided tours to adventure caves, mountain biking, rock climbing, kayaking and much more.

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Besides the caves, the network of
rivers that snake through the national
park, are by themselves, fascinating.
The many riverine settlements populat-
ed mainly by the Barawan, Kayan,
Penan and Punans, is another must-see
for tourists on their way to the caves
upriver. It is interesting to learn the
lifestyle of these minority ethnic groups
- the wooden huts, rustic landscapes,
slow-pace of living, their language,
physical appearance and rich customs.

Mulu is a rich diverse playground
for those interested in nature. The sheer
abundance of wildlife at Mulu National
Park amazes the visitor. Over 20,000 ani-
mal species have been discovered in the
park, as well as 3,500 plant species and
more than 8,000 types of fungus - and
more are being found every year. Discover
100 kinds of butterflies and at least 450
species of birds along your way through
the national park.

Another attraction at Mulu is the climb
to the summit of Gunung Mulu (2,376
metres) - the toughest organised trek in
the park. It requires a high level of fitness
and a sense of adventure. The trek is usu-
ally done as a four-day hike, but experi-
enced trekkers can do it in less.

The famous Pinnacles at Mulu consist
of a series of 45 metre high, razor-sharp
limestone spikes that tower above the
surrounding vegetation, mid-way up the
slopes of Gunung Api. The trek to view
them is one of the most popular in the
park. But be warned, the Pinnacle Summit
Trek is a tough and challenging one.

The world’s longest tree-based
canopy walk at 480 metres in length,
may take you approximately an hour to
cover the distance and at same time
enjoy the serenity of the tropical jungle
from 20 metres above the ground, pac-
ing stealthily on the tree-top.

Another attraction of Mulu, the Head-
hunter’s Trail is a great way of entering
or leaving Mulu National Park. The trek
combines upriver travel, jungle trekking
and an overnight stay at an Iban long-
house. The trail itself follows the route
taken by Kayan headhunting parties
who paddled up the Melinau River to
the Melinau Gorge. They then dragged
their longboats through the forest for 3
kilometres until they reached the banks
of the Terikan River, where they
launched headhunting raids against the
people of the Limbang area.

To the visitor, a simple walk along a
forest path is an individual journey of
discovery. But it’s the caves that attract
most visitors to Mulu and gets the most
publicity. It is indeed a pity that, aside
from the magnificent caves, these other
attractions have not been given due
publicity locally and internationally. Mulu
has much more to offer than just caves
and rocks. Indeed a visit to Mulu is a
captivating experience.
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