

The National Museum of Brunei Darussalam

History

Established in 1965, the National Museum of Brunei Darussalam is the first permanent building of the Museums Department. The construction of the building commenced in 1970. Officially opened on 29 February 1972 by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II of United Kingdom, the museum has been the keeper of the country's heritage.

The imposing building stands on a hill top commanding a picturesque view of the Brunei River. Its ornate engraving and patterns are based on traditional Malay designs inspired by the Tomb of Sultan Bolkiah, the fifth Ruler (1473-1521 A.D.) of the Brunei Sultanate. Exhibits of artifacts and specimens demonstrate the research interest of Museum staff in such diverse areas as Archaeology, Ethnography, History and Natural History. As a cultural and educational showcase for Brunei Darussalam, the Brunei Museum attracts both local and foreign visitors.

Widely known as one of the region's most beautiful structures, the Brunei Museum boasts six impressive galleries – Islamic Art Gallery, archaeology and History Gallery, Brunei Traditional Cultures Gallery, natural History Gallery, the Brunei Shipwreck Gallery, and Brunei Shell Petroleum's History and Petroleum Industry Gallery.

The Islamic Art Gallery

The gallery depicts the collection of His Majesty the Sultan and the Yang Di-Pertuan of Negara Brunei Darussalam. The collection comprises a wide range of objects covering the artistic production of the various Islamic regions from the transitional and early Islamic periods to the late 19th century. The objects cover all aspects of religious and daily life.

The History and Technology of Brunei Darussalam's Petroleum Industry Gallery

The state's main industry is presented in this gallery – petroleum. Through interactive and visually stimulating exhibits, visitors learn about the history of oil in Brunei Darussalam, the geology of Brunei waters, Brunei Shell Petroleum's oil wells, and the processes involved in oil exploration, procurement, processing and exportation.

Natural History Gallery

The gallery features a wide range of natural history research and collection which provide vital information that helps us understand our surroundings and our place in it. The majority of collection are fauna (stuffed mammals, birds, fish, reptiles and insects) and flora. Some of the exhibits are presented in the form of diorama techniques to create a realistic atmosphere of their natural habitat.

Brunei Traditional Cultures Gallery

The gallery comprises exhibits on the customs of the Brunei Malays who are Muslims connected to three important stages of their lives – birth, adolescence and wedding. There are also collections of artifacts on the Malay traditional life style, such as brassware, wooden utensils, headgears and weaponry. It also displays traditional games of the country.

Archaeology and History Gallery

The Gallery provides insight into the history of the country, from prehistoric time to Southeast Asian migration, the discovery of Brunei, early trade, Brunei Sultanate and the arrival of Europe powers. The exhibits include documents, artifacts, manuscripts, tombstones and photographs that explain the country's history and cultural traditions. The historical events displays use the chronological order of the Sultanate's rulers as a framework.

The Brunei Shipwreck Gallery

The gallery showcases the first major underwater archaeological discovery in Brunei Darussalam, the Brunei Shipwreck, which is one of the few examples of still-intact wrecks that was investigated by systematic methods of underwater excavation. The wreck had been undisturbed since its sinking more than 500 years ago. The Gallery exhibits comprise ceramics, beads, glass, lithic finds and metals recovered from the wreck.

Temporary Exhibitions

Temporary or special exhibitions which are usually held at the foyer of the building consisted of currently projects, paintings and other works of art. In 2000 the gallery exhibits 'Sunken Treasure' which highlighted the selected artifacts from the Brunei Shipwreck and attracted interest from locals and tourists.

Address and Information for visitors

Brunei Museum is located at Kota Batu, about 5 km from Bandar Seri Begawan, the capital of Brunei Darussalam. The museum is reachable by public transport. Admission is free.

Visiting Hours

Sunday – Thursday : 09.00 am – 05.00 pm

Friday : 09.00 – 11.30 am
02.30 – 05.00 pm

Saturday : 09.45 am – 05.00 pm

Contact

Education Services Officer cum The Manager of Brunei Museum

Tel: (673) 222 3235
