

Gunung Ulu Sepat

Our First G7

By: Mr. Kamil Amri Kabir and Mr. Mohammad Suhaidi Sha'ari

Gunung Ulu Sepat is the seventh highest mountain in Peninsular Malaysia, officially classified as a "G7" mountain (referring to peaks over 7,000 feet). Despite its ranking, climbing this mountain requires a significant time commitment: three days and two nights. It is not easily accessible, with the trailhead located in Hutan Belum.

We travelled in a four-wheel drive from Bawong Sentral Sungai Siput to Kampung Lelar, a journey that took approximately four hours covering both paved roads and off-road tracks. Along the way, we had the chance to observe the daily life of the Orang Asli community.

At Kampung Lelar, our Malim Gunung (mountain guide) conducted a safety briefing and introduced the group. Before setting off, he reminded us to stay in groups of at least three and to remain alert, as Malayan Tigers and Black Panthers had recently been sighted in the area. We were also advised to be aware of elephant habitats and to pray for a safe journey. After all, this is their home, not ours.

Our hike began with a five-hour trek to Kem Kulim (815 metres), followed by Kem Sungai Lenweng (1,082 metres), which served as our base camp. We stayed in a bamboo shelter with separate toilet and shower facilities. Water from the nearby river was refreshingly cold. After resting and preparing our gear, we turned in early for the summit attempt the next morning.

On day two, the trail grew steeper, taking us past False Peak (1,940 metres) and up to Simpang Ulu Sepat (2,150 metres). Gunung Ulu Sepat lacks expansive viewpoints, so we stopped whenever we found one and took photos. We reached the summit at approximately 2:00 pm, drenched and covered in mud from the very wet trail. We paused for lunch and some quick photos before upon reaching the summit.



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The way down posed a new set of challenges. Heavy rain began to pour, the temperature dropped significantly, and visibility was reduced. We slowed our pace, donned our raincoats, and carefully made our way back. Thankfully, we reached our shelter before 7:00 pm. During the descent, we encountered a group of female veteran hikers from Penang. Age, truly, is just a number; they were remarkably fast! Climbing Gunung Ulu Sepat was a tough but profoundly rewarding experience. It reminded us of the delicate balance between human perseverance and the grandeur of nature. As we descended with memories of challenging trails and breathtaking, albeit fleeting, vistas, we were reminded of the words of John Muir:

"In every walk with nature one receives far more than he seeks".

Indeed, the mountain offered not just a physical challenge, but also a spiritual and introspective journey. As expressed in the Quran:



"And the Earth, We spread it out, and cast therein firmly set mountains and We have made to grow therein of all beautiful kinds – giving insight and a reminder to every servant who turns [to Allah]" (Quran 50:7-8).

The sheer magnificence of Ulu Sepat and the resilience of the people we met along the way, served as a powerful reminder: no matter the trials life throws at us, the spirit of adventure and the pursuit of passion remain timeless – a testament to the strength we find within ourselves and the natural world.

References:

Gunung Bagging. (2025). Gunung Ulu Sepat. <https://www.gunungbagging.com/ulu-sepat/>

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