Shan Yuan meets the famous — and venomous — inhabitants of Komodo National Park

There is just something about the Komodo dragon that draws nature enthusiasts to Indonesia. Wu Shangyuan, the author, was no exception.

When we arrived in Labuan Bajo, a town on the eastern side of the island of Flores, we knew that the Komodo Islands would be the highlight of our trip.

The Komodo dragon, the largest lizard in the world, is native to the islands of Komodo, Rinca, and Padar.

During our trip at Komodo, we noticed that the two guides in our group were armed with long walking sticks — forked at the end and raising its head.

We caught our first glimpse of a mighty Komodo dragon that I made its habitat on the Indonesian island of Komodo one of my must-see destinations.

When we arrived in Labuan Bajo, we spent our first day there — a full-day tour with six stops, including Padar Island (about 1.5 hours away by boat from Komodo National Park), and Rinca Island, where sightings of these creatures are known to be plentiful.

We were lucky to witness that on our first day. We caught a rare sighting of a mighty Komodo dragon that I made its habitat on the Indonesian island of Komodo one of my must-see destinations.

Wu Shangyuan meets the famous — and venomous — inhabitants of Komodo National Park

**Views of the majestic mandatory photo everyone takes with the Komodo dragon:**

**Far left:** A rare sighting of a mighty Komodo dragon, building its nest alongside a scrubfowl.

**Left:** A jetty extends fromтори Menjerite, where visitors can hop off boats to snorkel in the clear turquoise waters.

**Below:** Pink Beach, one of the seven beaches with pink sand in the world.

More memorable.

One of the places we visited was Padar Island, where sightings of these creatures are known to be plentiful. We were lucky to witness that on our first day. We caught a rare sighting of a mighty Komodo dragon that I made its habitat on the Indonesian island of Komodo one of my must-see destinations.

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CONTINUED FROM D7

Another beautiful sandy paradise we visited was Taka Makassar (above), a sandbar that seemed to rise miraculously from the waters, splitting the turquoise sea with a strip of white sand — perfect for sunbathing.

Also noteworthy was Mafia Point, where we could observe dolphin life patterns to swim with manta rays, longfinning mackerel among so dorado and look softies with them on Go Pro camera. We know it may sound too good to be true, but we had a wonderful time getting to know more about wildlife and looking at the beauty of Mother Nature.

GETTING THERE

When you fly from Singapore to Labuan Bajo, be prepared for connections in Jakarta or Surabaya, with a two- to four-hour layover.

Traveler’s tips

When encountering the Komodo dragon, do not make sudden movements or use sticks to prod it. It might seem lazy, but it can strike suddenly and fatally when provoked.

Be sure to look for half-day tours that offer a visit to nearby islands where you will see thousands of flying foxes take flight to Flores island in search of food.

You may want to plan a trip soon as the Indonesian government may be closing off Komodo island for a year in 2020 to start a conservation programme.

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PHOTO: WU SHANGYUAN

On a dragon’s trail

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