

13 night fully escorted soft adventure tour incorporating Port Moresby, Wewak, Sepik River, Madang, Simbai, Mt Hagen, Goroka, Rabaul (Mask Festival) and Duke of York Islands.

This unique and exciting tour program focuses on tribal culture and features bona fide village experiences and private traditional dancing performances in full costume at every destination en-route.

The two week itinerary connects with flights from Singapore - perfect for visitors from Europe and Asia - and is specially designed to finish with the Mask Festival in Rabaul.

Ecotourism Melanesia is the only local tour company offering this type of open sign-up soft adventure tour that offers very close encounters with local people in their home villages and their age-old cultures which they still perpetuate to this day through their beliefs and ceremonies, dances, dramas and fine arts.

In the small group situation the program is not only special but flexible and the tour guide is at liberty to vary the itinerary if unexpected opportunities arise such as the chance to attend a Sepik skin-cutting ceremony or a highlands wedding or funeral ceremony.

This kind of escorted soft adventure program is purposely designed for independent travellers who may not normally join group tours. Independent travel in PNG is expensive due to the high overhead costs of remote area transport (boats, charter flights, four wheel drive hire) that are formidable if not shared.

The small group format also affords private cultural performances and visits to out of the way locations like Simbai, Kairiru Island and Yamok village that are uneconomical to arrange for independent travellers.



NB In recent years government funding for the “National” Mask Festival has dwindled and the organising committee can no longer afford to fly cultural groups in from other regions. Accordingly the festival is slowly morphing from a national festival to a regional festival featuring mainly the mask cultures of the New Guinea Islands region (Rabaul, Kavieng, Bougainville, Manus) and is now being referred to as the “Rabaul Mask Festival” - at least as a working title until a new official name is decided - because the festival always takes place in Rabaul (or actually in Kokopo, the “new Rabaul” that sprang up an hour’s drive from old Rabaul after the 1996 volcanic eruption).

Fortunately for our tour group members, mask cultures of other regions of PNG will be seen at other stops on the itinerary including examples of the three major genres of masks: ancestor masks, spirit masks, and tumbuan masks.

Ancestor masks are designed to resemble or represent humans and often have holes in the eyes as a distinguishing feature. Small masks can be worn on the head during dances or ceremonies while other are mounted in homes and men’s houses to represent ancestors. These are common in many provinces.

Spirit masks represent non-human beings and are often designed to be mounted on walls and gables to protect the occupants of a home. These are common in the Sepik and Ramu river basins.

Tambuans are also a type of spirit mask but are larger in size and designed to be worn over the head and shoulders, or the whole body, during performances of dances and mime that illustrate goings-on in the spirit world. These are common around Rabaul and the Sepik area. Goroka’s mud man helmets are also tambuans.



ADVISORY NOTES:

1. *This is a “wet foot” soft adventure tour that involves climbing in and out of small boats and motor canoes, some squelching in mud, some scrambling up riverbanks and sleeping in basic huts without electricity so some physical agility and mental resilience is required.*
2. *Being a remote area tour we advise there is HIGH likelihood of MINOR itinerary disruptions and changes (ie the itinerary may not run exactly to schedule and daily activity times and travel times are indicative only) and MODERATELY HIGH potential for MAJOR itinerary disruption due to potential WEATHER impact on flights, boat travel and unsealed road travel. This COULD mean possibly having to skip one of the destinations in the itinerary in order to make up time lost due to weather disruptions.*
3. *This is a unique small group tour program originally designed and operated by Ecotourism Melanesia and not offered by any other tour company. The tour price includes a tour development levy to recoup our outlays on designing, reconnoitring, organising and monitoring this remote area program, plus a share of the group leader’s travel costs and various other hidden costs like local permits and insurances, off-season retainers for local guides, air-freighting of gear and supplies from Port Moresby and so on.*

TOUR ITINERARY

<p>Day 1 – Sun 2 July</p> 	<p>AUSTRALIA / PORT MORESBY / WEWAK (travel day)</p> <p>On arrival at Port Moresby airport, pass through passport control and customs checks. After exiting the Arrivals Hall you will be met by staff from Ecotourism Melanesia holding a sign with your name. (If you do not see anyone waiting for you, please wait at the Avis Rent A Car desk and our tour staff will meet up with you there. Before leaving the international terminal we will help you check in your luggage for your follow-on flight to Wewak.</p> <p>A complimentary city tour is available if you have time between flights and if you feel up to it. The city tour may include a familiarisation drive around the city and</p>
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a visit to the Bomana War Cemetery, Adventure Park zoo and National Orchid Gardens.

Alternatively if you are feeling overtired from your long haul flight we can arrange a day-room at one of the hotels for you to take a nap (extra cost) or leave you at the poolside of one of the hotels (no cost) where you can recline and snooze in a deck chair while ordering drinks and snacks from the bar. Lunch is not included today as some tour group members may have lunch on flights arriving from Australia. Lunch is available from various outlets at the airport or en-route during your city tour.

14:00 Drop off at the domestic terminal for security screening and boarding your domestic flight. Here you will meet up with your tour escort and other members of the tour group.

15:10 Air Niugini flight PX126 departs Port Moresby for Wewak via Madang, (aircraft: Fokker F100 jet with 98 seats)

17:20 On arrival in Wewak, transfer by hotel shuttle to your hotel

Overnight 3 star hotel, Wewak – includes set-menu dinner and breakfast.

Day 2 – Mon 3 July

WEWAK / SEPIK RIVER (touring day)



06:00 Breakfast and check out (large bags may be stored at reception overnight) and collect boxed lunches from the kitchen.

06:45 Transfer by hotel shuttle to Wewak airport.

07:30 MAF light aircraft charter departs for Timbunke airstrip on the Middle Sepik. (Two flights may be required if you are a large group).

08:00 On arrival at Timbunke, meet up with our local Sepik guide with one or more motor canoes and commence a full day exploring the crocodile cult villages of Tambanum, Kaminabit, Kanganaman, Palimbe and Korogo. At each stop you will be able to walk around the village, enter the men’s spirit house, hear local guides talk about life along the river and especially the crocodile animist religion. Some men will show you the “crocodile skin bumps” on their backs and some young men who have recently been initiated may show you their fresh scars.

At Kaminabit there will be a stop at Bowie’s Art House, a little shop where an excellent range of genuine Sepik artefacts and handicrafts is available at bargain local prices.

By late afternoon arrive at Korogo village, the last of the crocodile cult village, for overnight. Overnight 1 star village guest house, Korogo – includes local style dinner and breakfast and bottled water.

NOTE: The weather in Rabaul, Wewak and Madang will be hot tropical (daily 30 degrees Celsius and humid) with some possibility of rain.

<p>Day 3 – Tue 4 July</p>  	<p>SEPIK RIVER / WEWAK (travel day)</p> <p>07:00 Breakfast 08:00 A cultural group from nearby Yamok village will arrive and give a performance at Korogo. Yamok is recognised as having the best “sing-sing” groups in the Middle Sepik area including dances with full body masks (“tumbuans) as per picture at left. 09:00 Depart Korogo by motor canoe further upstream to Pagwi mission, the road-head from Wewak. 10:00 Transfer to a bus at Pagwi and commence the 5 hour road trip to Wewak. Stop at a roadside market to buy your own bananas and other fruits for lunch. 15:00 Arrive in Wewak in time to cool off in the hotel swimming pool before dinner. Overnight 3 star hotel, Wewak – includes set-menu dinner and breakfast.</p>
<p>Day 4 – Wed 5 July</p>  	<p>WEWAK / MADANG (touring day)</p> <p>06:00 Breakfast and check out 06:30 Transfer by hotel shuttle to Wewak airport 08:05 PNG Air flight CG1575 departs Wewak for Madang 09:00 On arrival in Madang, transfer to the hotel for check in then continue to Hobe Village for village tour, Madang-style sing-sing performance and local style lunch. 13:00 From Hobe, see the rest of Madang including the cultural museum and visitors centre, the main market, handicraft markets, foreshore with old WW2 guns and Coastwatchers lighthouse. 16:00 Take a one hour boat ride through the island of the Madang Lagoon with a stop at Pig Island for half an hour’s snorkelling if you have brought your swimming gear with you. Our guide will be carrying a couple of mask and snorkel sets. Overnight 3 star hotel, Madang – includes set-menu dinner and breakfast.</p>
<p>Day 5 – Thu 6 July</p> 	<p>MADANG / SIMBAI (touring day)</p> <p>06:00 Breakfast and check out. 07:00 Transfer to Madang. 08:00 MAF flight departs Madang for Simbai (7 seat aircraft). Flight time is 45 minutes. On arrival at Simbai airstrip, meet up with our local Simbai guide with some porters to help carry your bags. From the airstrip it is a 30 minute walk to the Kalam Guest House. At the guest house you will be welcomed by a traditional Kalam tribal sing-sing procession with men wearing their trademark head-dresses decorated with iridescent green beetle shells and women wearing animal furs and orchid stem necklaces. As they dance and sing they beat small hand drums fashioned from small hollowed logs with a lizard or mammal skin stretched over one end.</p>



After the sing-sing you will be able to inspect and photograph the individual performers with their costumes and body decorations.

Lunch is served at the guest house and will feature local fruit and vegetables including sub-tropical varieties of banana, yam and sweet potato. Starchy vegetables are usually served with cooked greens such as watercress and long beans, or salad vegetables like tomato and cucumber.

Adjacent to the guest house is the tribal museum which is a local style hut housing a collection of Kalam tribal artefacts, some of which are quite old and rare, representing the tribal history and culture. Your guide will explain the historical and ritual significance of the pieces on display which include everyday utensils, weapons, musical instruments, head dresses, nose pieces, traditional clothing, shell money for making bride price payments, and heirloom ornaments. One hour's walk from the guest house brings you to the hamlet of Wechenrau where you will visit with a family and see how they live in traditional style yet within easy reach of the Simbai government station where they can sell produce at the little market and buy consumer items like rice and kerosene. Villages further afield are too far to walk to the market thus more self-sufficient. Overnight 1 star accommodation at Kalam Guest House, Simbai - includes local style meals and bottled water.

Day 6 – Fri 7 July

SIMBAI / MT HAGEN (touring day)



08:00 Wait at Simbai airstrip for the MAF flight to arrive from Mt Hagen. On arrival back at Mt Hagen airport commence a day's sightseeing around Mt Hagen and the Waghi Valley including the city market (biggest in PNG), a coffee plantation and Moika village which is a typical "cluster" village.

There will be a lunch stop before or during the tour depending on timing, at one of the city hotels. Mid-afternoon head out the scenic Nebilyer Valley to Magic Mountain Nature Lodge which offers individual bungalows fitted out as motel rooms inside, amidst beautiful orchid gardens.



Check in at the lodge then continue down the road to Kumul birdwatching Lodge for a late afternoon birding walk through the protected forest, then return to Magic Mountain. Overnight 2 star accommodation, Magic Mountain Nature Lodge, Mt Hagen – includes set-menu dinner and breakfast

Day 7 – Sat 8 July

MT HAGEN

This morning walk 30 minutes downhill from Magic Mountain to nearby Paiya village, a typical dispersed village where the homes are scattered across a wide area with the nearest neighbours 200 metres from each other. Villagers here normally gather for meetings and ceremonies at the sing-sing ground where



there is also the ancestors' skull house, the men's culture house and the chief's home.

The chief himself will meet you with his three wives in tow, and you will be able to see demonstrations of wig-making and the local courtship ritual. A dance group will perform a highlands sing-sing and a traditional style lunch will be served: meat and vegetables wrapped in banana leaves and roasted in a shallow pit under a pile of red-hot rocks. Mid-afternoon, local guides will lead you on a nature walk in the biodiverse moss forest around Magic Mountain which has a wide variety of mosses, lichens, worts, fungi, ferns and wild orchids. Native birds including birds of paradise are active in the late afternoons and can be viewed and photographed if not disturbed by human noise. Birds in this area are understandably nervous as they are hunted by locals for their feathers! Late afternoon, transfer by road to Mt Hagen town and check into overnight accommodation. Overnight 2 star accommodation, Magic Mountain Nature Lodge, Mt Hagen – includes set-menu dinner and breakfast

Day 8 – Sun 9 July

MT HAGEN / GOROKA (travel and touring day)



07:30 breakfast and check out of your room

08:30 depart Mt Hagen by private tour bus to Goroka

The Highlands Highway takes you east, passing first through the market gardens, coffee and tea plantations of the Waghi Valley. This valley is often called the "food bowl" of PNG because of the intensive agricultural activities and in fact at the village of Kuk near Mt Hagen archaeologists have found evidence that the area has been planted with food crops for thousands of years.



From the Waghi Valley the highway passes through the small towns of Kudjip and Minj then climbs into the alpine Chimbu Province with its precipitous ravines and steep mountainsides amazingly covered in furrowed gardens with people working away in them... one foot uphill and one foot downhill to steady themselves.

10:00 Stop at Mindima village in the Chimbu province to see the village boys perform the ghoulish but slightly corny "skeleton dance"

12:00 PNG's highest peak, Mt Wilhelm, passes us slowly on our left as we wind our way to Kundiawa town, capital of Chimbu, for a lunch stop at the hotel (included).



One hour further on we come to the "snake village" where the people keep a variety of native pythons and other non-venomous snakes in semi-captivity for visitors to see and handle. There are also some poisonous species like the Papuan black and the taipan kept in cages. The taipan is the most venomous snake in PNG. If we are travelling on time we will make a stop here. If you are not a "snake person" you can huddle in the mini-bus ☺

14:00 Stop at the Chimbu Snake Village to see how the local keep snakes as pets with little fear.



From the snake village, continue another hour minutes to the peak of the Daulo Pass, a high altitude biodiversity hotspot where the road winds through swirling mists past giant tree ferns and trickling waterfalls. Local children sell flowers on the side of the road here. If we still have adequate daylight and fine weather we will leave our vehicle at the road side and some local villagers will lead us on a walk through the ancient moss forest. The moss forest is populated by flowering



and non-flowering trees and ferns which form a substrate for the growth of a wide variety of saprophytic native orchids, green mosses and colourful fungi, lichens, liverworts and leafy epiphytes: real “Lord of the Rings” stuff. Birds of paradise also frequent this area.

From the Dauilo Pass the road descends through the fertile Asaro Valley and finally into Goroka town.

15:00 Arrive in Goroka and check in at your hotel followed by a guided walk to the handicraft market and shops in order to stretch your legs. Overnight 3 star hotel, Goroka (includes set-menu dinner and breakfast)

Day 9 – Mon 10 July

GOROKA (touring day)



07:30 Breakfast

08:00 Depart hotel for full day sightseeing around Goroka beginning with a short tour of the coffee factory (coffee is the mainstay of the PNG highlands economy), a look through the Eastern Highlands (McCarthy) Cultural Museum and a stop at the busy Goroka market.

10:00 Depart Goroka town 30 minutes’ drive to Asaro village to see a private performance of the Asaro mud-men – a little corny but highly entertaining and great photography. Coconut drink and sweet Highlands bananas are served as a mid-morning snack.



12:00 Continue 30 minutes further out of town to a typical highlands roundhouse cluster village where the people typically wear a mixture of traditional and western clothes. Here you will be welcomed by a traditional dance and song (sing-sing) then move around the village going house to house meeting a number of families who will each demonstrate for you one of their daily survival skills, possibly including planting coffee blocks, planting vegetable gardens, making fire without matches, wrapping bananas for ripening, weaving useful items from leaves and string, using bows and arrows to hunt game and ward off tribal enemies, making hand drums from hollow logs, and cooking food under hot stones.



13:00 Watch as the villagers uncover layers of leaves on their fire pit and take out lengths of blackened bamboo which have been stuffed with chicken and vegetables, now deliciously dry-roasted with a smoky bamboo flavour after 4 hours under hot stones. Pull the food morsels out of the hollow bamboo nodes yourself and eat with your fingers. Lunch is served with bottled water.

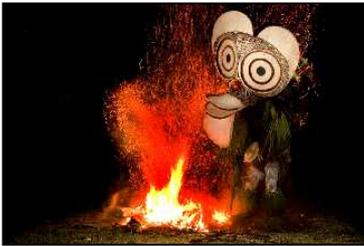
14:00 Depart from the village and return to Goroka town.

15:00 Comfort stop at hotel.

16:00 Scenic drive out the Bena Bena Road. The unsealed back road twists and turns through hills and valleys, passing over creeks with little bridges. There may be impromptu stops at little villages to shake hands with local people and pose for photographs, buy bananas and peanuts from little markets and see ladies weaving bilum bags at roadside stalls.

17:30 Return to hotel. Overnight 3 star hotel, Goroka (includes set-menu dinner and breakfast)

<p>Day 10 – Tue 11 July</p>  	<p>GOROKA / PORT MORESBY / RABAUL (travel day)</p> <p>07:00 Breakfast and check out of your room. 07:30 Transfer by hotel shuttle to Goroka airport. 09:35 Air Niugini flight PX961 departs Goroka for Port Moresby (aircraft: Dash 8 Q400) 10:45 On arrival in Port Moresby, check in for with your connecting flight to Rabaul then transfer on our local tour bus to a lunch venue (included) followed by quick tours of the national museum and parliament house. 14:00 Return to the airport too wait for boarding call at 14:45 15:15 Air Niugini flight PX74 departs Port Moresby for Rabaul (aircraft: F100 jet) 16:40 From Rabaul’s Tokua airport, transfer to your accommodation at Kokopo (New Rabaul) and settle in before dinner. From where you are staying you may be able to see the continuous ash cloud emanating from the active “baby” volcano, Tavurvur, in the distance at Old Rabaul. Overnight 3.0 star accommodation, Kokopo – includes set-menu dinner and breakfast.</p>
<p>Day 11 – Wed 12 July</p>   	<p>RABAUL (festival and touring day)</p> <p>04:30 Rise early and have coffee and biscuits in your room. 05:00-05:30 Our tour bus will pick you up at your accommodation and transport you to Kokopo Beach to witness the “Kinavai” – the arrival of the “spirits” that will preside over the festival. At 06:00 as the sun rises, witness the canoes carrying the <i>dukduk</i> and <i>tumbuan</i> “spirits” arrive on the shore. The figures dance on the beach and disappear. They will reappear at the festival later in the morning. 06:30 Return to your hotel for breakfast. 08:30 Transfer to the festival venue at Kokopo and settle into your seat for the first day of the Festival: a combination of static culture displays and dance performances. There will also be many stalls and displays with local foods and handicrafts available for sale. Our local guides will interpret the performances for you and will be available to accompany you around the festival grounds and explain local culture and foods to you. 12:30 Transfer back to your hotel for lunch. 13:30 Board the bus for a half day tour of the Kokopo district including the Kokopo Museum, the Bitapaka War Cemetery, the ruins of “Queen Emma’s” homestead, and the inland foothills of the Baining range with views of the coast. 17:30 Arrive back at your hotel to freshen up and have dinner. 19:00 Transfer to the festival venue if there is any evening program. Overnight 3.0 star accommodation, Kokopo – includes set-menu dinner and breakfast</p>

<p>Day 12 – Thu 13 July</p> 	<p>RABAUL (festival and touring day)</p> <p>07:30-08:00 Pick-up for transfer to the second day of the National Mask Festival. 12:00 Depart from the festival grounds and return to your hotel for lunch and freshen up (the group may negotiate with our guide to travel to another venue for lunch such as the Ralum Country Club but all meals are pay-as-you-go). 14:00 Commence a half day tour of Rabaul district including the volcanic caldera of Simpson Harbour and some of the relics left by the Japanese garrison in World War 2. 17:30 Arrive back at your hotel to freshen up and have dinner. 19:00 Transfer to Gaulim village to witness the Baining Fire Dance. Overnight 3.0 star accommodation, Kokopo – includes set-menu dinner and breakfast</p>
<p>Day 13 – Fri 14 July</p>  	<p>RABAUL (festival and touring day)</p> <p>08:00 Pick-up for transfer to the third day of the National Mask Festival. If you prefer to skip the third day of the festival an alternative snorkelling excursion is offered. 12:30 Lunch (venue to be advised depending whether the group has gone to the festival, gone snorkelling, or both). 13:30 Afternoon boat excursion to the Pigeon Islands and Duke of York Islands for a walk-around village tour. (If the festival program does not continue into a third day or if there is lack of interest in attending, a full day boat excursion may be planned, stopping first at the Pigeon Islands for snorkelling and picnic lunch then continuing to the Duke of York Islands). 17:30 Arrive back at your hotel to freshen up and have dinner. 19:00 Transfer to the festival venue if there is any evening program. Overnight 3.0 star accommodation, Kokopo – includes set-menu dinner and boxed breakfast.</p>
<p>Day 14 – Sat 15 July</p> 	<p>RABAUL / PORT MORESBY / AUSTRALIA (travel day)</p> <p>05:00 Coffee and biscuits in your room again then transfer to Rabaul airport. 07:00 Air Niugini flight PX275 departs Rabaul for Port Moresby, (aircraft: Fokker F100 jet) 08:20 on arrival in Port Moresby, transfer to the Airways Hotel for a final breakfast together. Our staff will then assist you with your onward flight or accommodation check-in.</p> <p>NB If you have no particular need or wish to get up at 5 am this morning we can book you on a later flight to Port Moresby PX253 departing 12:45 arriving 14:05 in which case we will cover your breakfast at the hotel in Kokopo.</p> <p>END OF TOUR ARRANGEMENTS</p>

PRICES

Tour	Price per person, twin share in AUD
13 Night core tour – includes land and PNG domestic air	\$12,800
Air ex Brisbane from	\$550*
Air Ex Sydney from	\$760*
Air ex Cairns from	\$400*

TOUR NOTES

NB The Rabaul sector of this itinerary is based on previous year Festival programs. Any changes in the program announced at short notice are beyond our control. We will do our best to be flexible with the tour itinerary so that you see as much as possible during your time in Rabaul but we cannot accept claims for refund due to “disappointment” if any events are cancelled or inconveniently scheduled during our other planned excursions. Further, due to limited logistical capacity the group must move around together under the leadership of the guide. If you wish to diverge from the group at any point, you will be responsible for arranging your own independent transport (eg taxi or hire car).

PACKAGE INCLUSIONS

-) Optional International economy airfares as specified above
-) Domestic flights Port Moresby-Wewak-Madang-Simbai-Mt Hagen / then Goroka-Port Moresby-Rabaul-Port Moresby
-) 3 star accommodation (hotel room) with set-menu dinners and breakfasts at Wewak, Madang, Goroka, Rabaul (Kokopo)
-) 2 star accommodation (lodge cabin) with set-menu dinners and breakfasts at Mt Hagen
-) 1 star accommodation (village hut with camp bedding) with local style dinners and breakfasts at Sepik River and Simbai
-) Sightseeing and cultural excursions including and bottled water and lunch at Sepik River, Madang, Simbai, Mt Hagen, Goroka, Rabaul as per itinerary or similar, as prevailing circumstances permit
-) Private tribal sing-sing performance at Sepik River, Madang, Simbai, Mt Hagen, Goroka
-) Light aircraft charter from Wewak to Sepik River (or alternative overland transport if air travel not possible)
-) Overland transfers from Sepik River to Wewak, Mt Hagen to Goroka including bottled water and lunch
-) Festival entry passes and interpretive guides at Rabaul Mask Festival
-) Port Moresby airport assistance on arrival and departure

Throughout the tour:

- services of a full time tour leader
- all fees and gratuities for local villages, guides, demonstrators and helpers
- all airport-hotel transfers
- all long-haul road travel by late model mini bus or four wheel drive vehicle with bottled water on board and two seats per passenger for comfort
- all water travel by open speed boat, skiff or motor canoe with life vests supplied
- various additional gear that may be required for your safety and comfort in remote areas such as mobile satellite phone, tropical first aid kit, mosquito nets, supplementary food supplies
- daily coordination of flights and arrangements by our Port Moresby office
- 24 hour assistance from tour operator's Port Moresby office

EXCLUSIONS

- Travel insurance (mandatory). We can arrange this for you.
- meals, bar drinks and bottled water not stated
- tips (not expected, and only appropriate for exceptional service)
- souvenirs and items of a personal nature
- visas and visa assistance
- airline excess baggage charges
- medication
- personal items such as hat and sunscreen.

TOUR NOTES

ABOUT WEWAK

Wewak town (population around 50,000) is the jumping-off point for the Sepik River and the Wewak Islands. A smaller town than Madang, Wewak is less tourist-oriented and the local economy is mainly based on commercial fishing. There are three good hotels and a number of smaller motels and guest houses. From Wewak there are two roads leading to the Sepik River (one to Pagwi on the Middle Sepik and one to Angoram on the Lower Sepik) and charter aircraft operate from Wewak airport to airstrips along the river at Ambunti (Upper Sepik), Timbunke (Middle Sepik) and Karawari (a tributary of the Sepik). From the Wewak waterfront open speed boats travel less than an hour to the offshore Wewak Islands, Muschu and Kairiru.

ABOUT SIMBAI

Simbai is an isolated district in the highlands. It is located approximately halfway between Mt Hagen and Madang. Administratively the area falls within the Madang Province but culturally the people of the Simbai area are more similar to the highlands tribes than the coastal peoples of Madang. The area surrounding Simbai airstrip – the Simbai River valley to the east and the Kaironk River valley to the west – is populated by the Kalam tribe. Archaeological digs in this area indicate that the Kalam people have occupied the Simbai area continuously for more than a thousand years. The dialect spoken by the people here is one of PNG's most unusual languages, characterised by glottal stops. The traditional culture here is also unique among Papua New Guinea's eight hundred tribes. Native houses have a trademark irregular hexagon shape, men's initiation ceremonies feature

nose-piercing and pig-killing, and on special occasions the initiated men wear huge cane-framed head dresses – the largest in Papua New Guinea – decorated with animal skins and the exoskeletons of thousands of luminescent green beetles collected from the forest. Just an hour's walk from the airstrip brings you to primitive villages where time has stood still and the local people still live in grass huts, still wear traditional dress and still hunt game and harvest fruit and vegetables from the forest for their diet.

ABOUT MADANG

Madang is the capital of Madang Province and is a town with a population of around 27,500 people, situated on a peninsula on the north coast of Papua New Guinea. It was first settled by the Germans in the 19th century and was originally called Friedrich-Wilhelmshafen. The majority of the country's Cocoa and Copra is produced on Kar Kar Island.

ABOUT GOROKA

Goroka is the capital of the Eastern Highlands Province of Papua New Guinea. It is a town of approximately 19,000 people (2000), 1600m above sea level. It has an airport (in the centre of town) and is on the "Highlands Highway", about 285 km from Lae in Morobe province and 90 km from the nearby town of Kainantu also in the Eastern Highlands. Other nearby towns include Kundiawa in Simbu Province and Mount Hagen in Western Highlands Province. It has a mild climate, known as a "perpetual Spring". Coffee is a common cash crop in the area; smaller industries include trout farms, pigs, bee keeping and food gardens (broccoli, kau kau {sweet potato}, carrots, ginger and peanuts are examples of produce that grow well here; nearby Bena Bena is known for its pineapples).

ABOUT MT HAGEN

Mount Hagen is the third largest city in Papua New Guinea, with a population of 46,250. It is the capital of the Western Highlands Province and is located in the large fertile Wahgi Valley in central mainland Papua New Guinea, at an elevation of 1,677 m (5,502 ft). The city is named after the old eroded volcano Mount Hagen, located about 24 kilometres (15 mi) to the north-west. The volcano was named after the German colonial officer Curt von Hagen (de) (1859-1897).

ABOUT RABAU/KOKOPO

Rabaul is a township in East New Britain province, on the island of New Britain. Rabaul was the provincial capital and most important settlement in the province until it was destroyed in 1994 by falling ash of a volcanic eruption.

During the eruption, ash was sent thousands of metres into the air and the subsequent rain of ash caused 80% of the buildings in Rabaul to collapse. After the eruption the capital was moved to Kokopo, about 20 kilometres (12 mi) away. Rabaul is continually threatened by volcanic activity due to having been built on the edge of Rabaul caldera, a flooded caldera of a large pyroclastic shield.

Rabaul was planned and built around the harbor area known as Simpsonhafen [Simpson Harbour] during the German New Guinea administration which controlled the region between 1884 and formally through 1919. From 1910 Rabaul was the headquarters of German New Guinea until captured by the British Empire during the early days of World War I. It became the capital of the Australian mandated Territory of New Guinea until 1937 when it was first destroyed by volcano.

During World War II it was captured by the Japanese in 1942, and it became the main base of Japanese military and naval activity in the South Pacific. Settlements and military installations around the edge of the caldera are often collectively referred to as Rabaul despite the old town of Rabaul itself being reduced to practical insignificance by the volcanic eruption in 1994.

As a tourist destination, Rabaul is popular for its volcanoes, scuba diving and for snorkelling sites, spectacular harbour and other scenery, World War II history, flora and fauna, and, of course, the fascinating and colourful cultural life of the Tolai people. Before the 1994 eruption, Rabaul was a popular commercial and recreational boating destination; fewer private small craft visit now, but 10-12 cruise ships visit Rabaul each year, including the Queen Elizabeth, carrying up to 5000 passengers. Tourism is a major industry in Rabaul and East New Britain generally.

After the double eruption in 1994, the administration capital was moved to Kokopo, and a new airport was built at nearby Tokua. From what was a small settlement of 3000 people, it now has a population of over 20,000 inhabitants of varying nationalities.

GENERAL TOUR NOTES

1. Prices are quoted in Australian Dollar and are correct at the time of printing this document (21 Oct 16). They are subject to currency fluctuations and may need to be re-quoted if large variances occur with the USD and PGK rates. PNG Holidays **WILL NOT** be liable for changes in price due to the above and the rate is not guaranteed until paid in full. A final invoice with the amended total will be given to you by the payment due date.
2. Hotel accommodation. Hotel rooms in the towns transited on this tour are generally of three star standard. Hotel and resort rooms all have private bathrooms, TV and air-conditioning (except in the highlands), unless otherwise specified. While we endeavour to book you into the hotels stated in the tour itinerary, in cases where specified hotels are fully booked by the time we receive your tour deposit we may have to book you into alternative accommodation. In this situation we strive to book you into the next-best available accommodation and we apologise in advance for any disappointment. No compensation or partial refunds or discounts can be paid or allowed on the basis of the perceived quality of hotel rooms provided for you while on this tour because the wholesale rates offered to us by the higher quality tourist hotels are similar to the non-commissionable rates we have to pay lesser quality motels when the tourist hotels are full.
3. Extras. Bar drinks, between-meal snacks, any meals not included in the package, and other extras at hotels can be paid for in cash or with credit card direct to the hotel or restaurant.
4. Safety and security. Papua New Guinea is sometimes portrayed as a dangerous destination, but although street crime is a concern in some urban areas and tribal fights are prevalent in some parts of the Highlands, the vast majority of the country, especially the rural areas, is safe and welcoming. It is very uncommon for a tourist to be a victim of crime in PNG because tourists do not usually visit areas where crime or tribal violence are prevalent. Nevertheless, PNG Holidays takes the safety and security of our visitors seriously and all tours we offer involve destinations that we rate as safe.
5. Climate and clothing. In the Highlands areas like Goroka, Simbai and Mt Hagen, the days are generally warm and sunny with moderately cold nights and mornings. Coastal towns of Wewak, Madang, Port Moresby, Rabaul, and the Sepik region will be hot and humid. We suggest visitors pack clothes made predominantly of cotton which will allow an evaporative cooling effect in hot humid areas. Pack a sweater or warm jacket for wearing in the

Highlands in the evenings. Recommended sleeping attire is light track pants and sweat shirt or similar. Papua New Guinea is a conservative country and brief or revealing clothing worn by foreigners is frowned upon.

6. Packing suggestions. We suggest that your packing list include: rain poncho, a small bath towel, your favourite soap in a leak-proof container, a one-litre water bottle, a small first aid kit. We recommend valuable personal items (camera, travel documents etc) be packed in zip lock plastic bags to protect them from the wet. Suitable footwear for this tour includes tennis shoes/sneakers, and a pair of sandals/thongs/flip flops. Bring plenty of spare batteries for your digital camera because batteries seem to go flat more rapidly in the humid climate and are not obtainable in all stores here. Power outlets are the same as in Australia.

7. Baggage – scheduled flights. The free baggage allowance on scheduled domestic flights is 16 kg and the carry-on limit is 5 kg. Naturally you can check more baggage if you are prepared to pay the excess baggage rate which is approximately PGK8 per kilogram Port Moresby to Goroka. Due to narrow-body turbo-prop aircraft operating some scheduled flights, large carry-on items may be taken off you and stored in the hold even if the weight is under the carry-on limit. Liquids are permitted in both checked baggage and carry-on for domestic flights but pressurised aerosol spray cans are not permitted on any domestic flights in PNG either in checked luggage OR carry-on. Bring pump-action sprays or roll-ons. When flying out on your international flight, pack all gels, lotions and other liquids in your checked baggage as carry-on luggage will be hand searched and liquids including water bottles will be removed. If you have liquids that you need during the flight, declare them, to airline staff at check-in.

8. Meals - If you are on a gluten free diet or require other special food just let us know in advance and we will do our best to accommodate you.

9. Water. Town water supplies in Papua New Guinea are treated and officially rated as safe to drink. In the villages, drinking water is usually collected in rainwater tanks or carried in containers from clean water sources. However to prevent discomfort from drinking from a different water supply every day as you progress through your tour, we recommend you drink bottled or boiled water, or use water purification tablets.

10. Visas. Tourist visas are available on arrival at Port Moresby airport for citizens of designated countries including Australia, New Zealand, the USA, Canada and Northern and Western European countries; Please note your passport must have at least 6 months validity left on it in order to be issued a PNG visa. Passport-holders of central and eastern European countries, Middle Eastern countries, African and Caribbean countries must normally apply for a visa at least 6 weeks in advance, from a PNG embassy or high commission (London, Brussels, Washington DC, Canberra, Singapore, Manila) or through the Australian diplomatic mission in other countries.

11. Money. The best way to obtain PNG currency is by withdrawing a credit card cash advance on arrival. Automatic teller machines operated by major banks in PNG will accept MasterCard and Visa Card but there is an ATM withdrawal limit of PGK2000 (about USD\$1040) per day. Larger amounts can be withdrawn over the counter in bank branches located in major towns. The currency exchange booths at Australian and Asian airports usually have PNG Kina currency in stock (banks and currency exchange booths in the city centres may not), but don't change large sums of money before arrival in PNG because the exchange rate for purchasing PNG kina is better there.

12. Health. Malaria is prevalent throughout the coastal and wetland areas in PNG. We recommend you visit a tropical health GP a few weeks prior to departure to start a course of anti-malarial tablets. Your GP will also advise if there are any other possible health issues or recent outbreaks.