

SIMBAI TREKKING PACKAGE FOR INDEPENDENT TRAVELLERS

3, 5 or 7 nights (1 night Madang or Mt Hagen, 2, 4 or 6 nights Simbai villages)

This package involves 5 days of challenging trekking through rugged terrain to primitive villages in the Simbai Valley, a remote part of the Highlands with no roads in or out and only light aircraft links to Mt Hagen and Madang. The people of the Simbai district belong to the Kalam tribe. Archaeological digs have shown that this area has been continuously inhabited for many thousands of years. However despite small planes flying daily into the airstrip at Simbai to pick up coffee bags and drop off government officials, the Kalam people have very few outside visitors. They continue living traditional subsistence lifestyles in their distinct hexagonal-shaped huts grouped into small family hamlets. They hunt, gather and plant garden plots sufficient for their needs. While other parts of PNG have become westernised over the past century of colonisation, the unique culture of the Kalam people has survived intact. Their colourful appearance rivals the Huli Wigmen of Tari. Their traditional dress includes grass loincloths, necklaces made from the threaded nodes of yellow orchid stalks, large nose ornaments made of bone, shell or cassowary quills threaded through their pierced nose septums, lizard-skin drums to dance with and - the coup de grace - huge cane framed head-dresses covered with animal furs and inlaid with the shells of thousands of iridescent green beetles. A focal point of the Kalam tribal culture is the annual initiation of boys into manhood who occurs during the Kalam Culture Festival each September. Prior to the initiation each boy crafts his own headdress and wears it for the first time at his initiation. Each boy-man then continues to wear the same head dress on ceremonial occasions throughout his adult life. During the initiation festival each boy will kill a pig in public to show that he is now a man. Our Simbai trekking package involves very rewarding walking, with spectacular mountain scenery, a plethora of wild orchids and other exotic flora growing at the sides of the walking trails, and regular sightings of birds of paradise and native mammals (possums, cuscus, tree kangaroos). You'll also enjoy candid encounters with the mountain people in their little hamlets and along the walking trails as they go to and from their gardens and hunting areas. Your chances of meeting another tourist out here are nil.

Your first night in Simbai will be at the Kalam Guest House, a basic but comfortable local-style lodge where you will learn about Kalam tribal culture before heading off into the remote villages next day. The five days of village-to-village trekking is broken up into two sectors. The first three days walking is an anti-clockwise circular route east of Simbai across mountain ridges from Simbai to Waim and Sambu villages, spending one night in each village and arriving back at Simbai by a different route. The second sector is a two-day one-way trek west from Simbai through the Kaironk River Valley to the Dusin mission station, criss-crossing the river many times, straddling many pig fences and scrambling up and down some steep spurs.

The trekking involves around 6 hours of walking daily, broken up with as many stops as you want. There is no rush and you can walk at your own pace, but don't attempt this itinerary unless you are physically fit and a capable hiker. There are no short cuts to the exit point at Dusin and if you don't keep up with the itinerary you might miss your flight out. You will be accompanied on the trek by our local guide who lives at Simbai, and a couple of porters who will help carry your personal backpack, some food supplies and some camping gear including lanterns and sleeping bags. We can supply a sleeping bag for you on request or you can bring your own. There won't be any mattresses in the villages: you'll be sleeping local-style on woven mats with only the padding in your sleeping bag to provide a little comfort. The meals during the trip will be a mixture of local food and camp food. Let us know if there is anything that you can't or won't eat. Pure mountain spring water is supplied for drinking. See the trip notes at the end of this itinerary for a suggested packing list. Simbai is accessible by air from Madang or Mt Hagen and it is possible fly in and out of either town, or fly in from Madang and fly out to Mt Hagen or vice versa. The

package price includes return airfares from Port Moresby. The package can also be shortened to 5 nights or 3 nights as required.

PACKAGE COST: (per person)

Prices in AUD	Sole Trekker	2 - 3 Pax	4 - 5 Pax	6 or more
Standard 7 night package	\$2915	\$2400	\$2300	\$2115
5 night package Simbai to Waim / Sambai*	\$2679	\$2200	\$2070	\$1975
4 night package Simbai to Dusin**	\$2540	\$2020	\$1880	\$1795
Add PNG Domestic flights	\$470			
Add International and Domestic Flights ex BNE	\$995			
Add International and Domestic Flights ex CNS	\$895			

Please note: Prices are correct as of 12 November 2013, are subject to change without notice and are not final until paid in full.

*Includes 1 night Madang or Mt Hagen, 2 nights Kalam Guest House, 2 nights villages, 3 days trekking

**Includes 1 night Madang or Mt Hagen, 1 night Kalam Guest House, 2 nights villages, 2 days trekking

PACKAGE INCLUSIONS (STANDARD 7-NIGHT PACKAGE):

- International flights from Brisbane or Cairns as stated above (as required)
- Port Moresby – flight to Madang or Mt Hagen (as required)
- Madang or Mt Hagen – 1 night 3 star hotel accommodation (room only, free airport transfers)
- Madang or Mt Hagen - light aircraft travel in and out of Simbai / Dusin
- Simbai – arrival day traditional welcome, tribal sing-sing, visit to tribal museum, orchid gardens and local village
- Simbai – English-speaking local guide
- Simbai - 2 nights single or twin-share accommodation at Kalam Guest House (1 star) including meals
- Simbai - 4 nights and 5 days village to village trekking with overnights in village huts, local-style meals supplemented with some camp food, basic camping gear including sleeping bag, sufficient porters to carry your personal baggage (limit 15kg) plus the food and other gear we supply, village gratuities
- Simbai - local goodwill. Our partner has made a significant investment in establishing this trekking route and building good relationships with the Simbai community. No other tour companies are currently operating treks in the Simbai area.

Throughout the tour we provide:

- daily guide and assistant guide or driver i.e. 2 staff to accompany you or your group at all times
- all fees and gratuities for local villagers, demonstrators and helpers
- all airport/hotel transfers
- all road travel by late model mini bus or four wheel drive vehicle with bottled water on board (unless otherwise specified)
- all water travel by open speed boat, skiff or motor canoe with life vests supplied and bottled water on board (unless otherwise specified)
- 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 net, life vest, tropical sleeping bag, supplementary food supplies (we may ask you to carry such items with your personal baggage from Port Moresby to your destination and if this incurs any excess baggage penalty we will pay the charges)
- daily reconfirmation of flights and arrangements coordinated by our Port Moresby representative
- 24 hour assistance from our Port Moresby rep.

EXCLUSIONS:

- Hotel meals and bar drinks
- tips (not essential, but appreciated for exceptional service)
- souvenirs and items of a personal nature
- Personal items. Bring your own favourite munchies, favourite bath soap, favourite toilet paper, small quick-dry towel, personal medications and first aid kit, personal hygiene requirements, brimmed hat or cap, “amphibious footwear” (sandals or quick-dry canvas shoes for crossing streams), walking shoes or boots, insect repellent, sunscreen, personal flashlight. See also trip notes at the end of this itinerary.

ITINERARY FOR STANDARD 7-NIGHT PACKAGE

DAY 1: PORT MORESBY / MADANG OR MT HAGEN

Arrive Port Moresby and connect through to Madang or Mt Hagen. Hotel shuttle bus will meet you at the airport and transfer you to the hotel. Enjoy an exploratory walk around the area near the hotel. Overnight Hotel, Madang or Mt Hagen (room only).

DAY 2: MADANG / MT HAGEN TO SIMBAI

0700 Check in at the Island Airways terminal at Madang airport or the MAF terminal at Mt Hagen airport for your light aircraft flight to Simbai (your ticket will be available for collection at the check-in counter). On arrival at Simbai airstrip you will be met by our local guide and a traditional “welcome committee” and some extra guys to help carry bags. From the airstrip it is a half hour walk to the Kalam Guest House where you can settle in to your accommodation before commencing your exploration of the Simbai station area. The Kalam Guest House is situated at Nugent village which is also half an hour’s walk from the Simbai “station”. The station is a small town (local government office, school, clinic and a few little shops) that is not very interesting and is not worth a visit if you have come here to see the traditional culture. Due to possible late arrival if your flight is delayed by weather or

flight scheduling, tonight is a compulsory overnight at Simbai (Kalam Guest House) and it will not be possible to commence trekking today. At Simbai today your guide will introduce you to the Kalam tribal culture including:

- a visit to the tribal museum (a hut which has an awesome display of traditional artefacts, bride price money and other heirlooms)
- a visit to the native orchid gardens with many exotic local species
- a visit to a nearby hamlet (Nugent or Wenchrau)
- a demonstration of making initiation head-dresses
- a full scale Kalam tribe sing-sing featuring the green beetle-shell headdresses.

Overnight Kalam Guest House (single or twin share)

TOUR NOTE: ABOUT KALAM GUEST HOUSE

Kalam Guest House is a rustic but clean and comfortable facility built in local style, operated by the local community. There is an outdoor bathroom with a drum of rain water for bathing and flushing. Well prepared local style meals are served based on fresh local produce, prepared by local ladies. The rooms have bedding provided although you may prefer to sleep in your sleeping bag. Bring your own small towel.

TOUR NOTE: ABOUT SIMBAI

Simbai is an isolated government station 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 station – 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 have yielded samples of lapita indicating that occupation of this area by the Kalam people goes back thousands of years. The dialect spoken by the Kalam people is one of PNG's most unusual languages, characterised by glottal stops. The traditional culture is also unique among Papua New Guinea's thousand-odd 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 exotic head-dresses – the largest in Papua New Guinea – decorated with animal skins and furs, and the exoskeletons of hundreds of luminescent green beetles. Just a few minutes walk from the government station brings you into satellite villages where 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.

DAY 3: SIMBAI TO WAIM

After breakfast, commence walking with your guide and porters in a south easterly direction towards Waim village, approximately 4 hours hiking through open grasslands and forested areas with waterfalls - a beautiful experience of nature with many photo opportunities. The terrain is undulating but not difficult. On arrival at Waim you will watch (and join) the village people preparing food to be cooked in an earth oven. The whole village is involved in preparing a small traditional feast in honour of your visit and you will enjoy interaction with children, old people and everyone in between. When the food is ready you will sit on the ground with the locals and share the meal with them. Everything is rather primitive at Waim but that, of course, is what you have come to see. Tonight you will sleep rough with the village people at Waim. At night it will be pitch black and you will gain an appreciation of how your own ancestors lived as "primitive man". Overnight village huts, Waim village. Your guide and porters will

set up sleeping arrangements – your choice of home stay billet or sleeping in the visitors hut. Drinking water, additional foods and camping gear (lanterns, insect nets) will be carried by your porters.

DAY 4: WAIM TO SAMBI

After a breakfast of pancakes and leftovers from yesterday (!), hike northeast from Waim about 6 hours to Sambai village. The hiking today is more difficult with a number of ridges to conquer.

TOUR NOTE: WALKING AROUND SIMBAI

Walking in the Simbai area is characterised by chance encounters with mountain people going to and from their gardens and hunting grounds. You will also stop and visit with them in their bush huts in little family hamlets situated along the main walking tracks. People in the Simbai area wear a mixture of traditional dress and well-worn Western clothing (there is virtually no place in Papua New Guinea that has not yet been invaded by the T-shirt). Here in the mountains traditional clothing - known as ass-grass in Pidgin - doesn't offer much comfort from the cold and imported second-hand clothes were quickly embraced when they became available. However, if locals know you are coming they will insist on wearing their traditional finery as a matter of cultural pride. Sambai village is similar to Waim but even more remote and only very small numbers of visitors (less than 50) have been brought here over the past few years. Overnight village hut, Sambai village. A selection of local food and camp food will be offered for dinner.

DAY 5: SAMBI TO SIMBAI

Around 6 hours walking today, along mountain paths in a westerly direction from Sambai back to Simbai. This is a different route and does not pass through Waim again. Overnight Kalam Guest House, Simbai

DAY 6: SIMBAI TO AINONK

From Simbai, trek north-west into the Kaironk River valley. The hiking in this direction is considerably more difficult with many steep spurs to scramble up and down, many pig fences to straddle and many river crossings and tributary streams to splash through or even wade through. Bring sandals or old sneakers for the water crossings. Your guide has instructions not to take you across rivers with strong currents or water deeper than your waist. While hiking through the Kaironk River Valley you will pass through a variety of habitats including grassland, woodland and marsh. Some river crossings may be required, depending on the route taken. Overnight village hut, Ainonk village. A selection of local food and camp food will be offered for dinner.

DAY 7: AINONK TO DUSIN

Another day of challenging hiking through the Kaironk River valley, including a stop at Womuk village where archaeologists have been visiting occasionally over the past 20 years to excavate a rich lapita site. Dusin village is at the end of the valley, located on a ridge overlooking the river. Dusin is the end of the line, the last village in the valley. From Dusin the Kaironk River turns south and passes through rugged steep gorges before gushing out into the Jimi Valley of the Western Highlands and emptying into the Jimi River. The climb to Dusin is very steep. Overnight village hut, Dusin village.

DAY 8: DUSIN TO MADANG OR MT HAGEN

After breakfast, wait at the airstrip for your flight to Madang or Mt Hagen. Taking off from Dusin airstrip is one of those heart-in-your-mouth experiences as it is a one way strip on the side of the mountain and you literally take off

over the edge of a cliff. Don't worry we won't charge you extra for the thrill factor ☺ After farewelling you on your white-knuckle flight your guide and porters will walk back to Simbai, covering the return distance in half the time of course. On arrival at Madang or Mt Hagen, check in for your connecting flight to Port Moresby, or continue other arrangements.

TRIP NOTES:

1. Availability. The standard package itinerary (7 nights) may commence and conclude any day of the week except Sunday because flights to and from Simbai do not operate on Sundays. Charter flights from Simbai to Timbunke are also not available on Sundays.
2. The weather at Simbai will be warm by day (20-25 Celsius) and cool at night (10-15 Celsius). Please bring a sweater and warm underwear, and a rain poncho.
3. Accommodation at village guest houses and huts at Simbai is basic but comfortable. The guest houses are built in local style with bush materials. Each twin room has two single beds with rubber mattress. You may sleep in your sleeping bag and some extra blankets will be provided by the guest house. A pillow and mosquito net is also provided. There are no malaria mosquitoes at Simbai due to the high altitude (Anopheles species do not breed above 300m) but there are other species of mosquito and other bugs.
4. Food at village guest houses and home stays will be local style based on local produce and may be dry-roasted wrapped in leaves under hot stones in the fireplace, or boiled in water. Additional food supplies will be provided by your guide at Simbai or given to you by our representative to carry with you from Port Moresby.
5. Water. Some bottled water will be supplied at Simbai. If this runs out you can ask your guide to organise boiled and cooled water to refill the bottles, or you can refill directly from pure mountain springs with negligible risk of illness. Bring your own water purification tablets if you insist, but remember this is a pristine, lightly populated area where water supplies are not polluted.
6. Toilet facilities in the rural areas will be an out back pit latrine specially made for guests...sit down variety at Kalam Guest House and squat variety in the villages. Bathing will be in an outdoor bathroom (bucket of water and scoop – water will be heated for you at Kalam Guest House only).
7. Baggage. There is a limit of 10kg per person for this trip, partly because of the load limits on the light aircraft and partly because of limited carrying capacity of the porters. Pack your personal gear into a rucksack that can be carried by a porter or a duffel bag that can be stuffed or repacked into one of our own company backpacks which are kept at Simbai. Leave extra baggage in Port Moresby or Madang – your hotel or our Port Moresby representative office will store it for you.
8. Warnings. Simbai is a remote area where there are no hospitals and the availability of medical care is very limited. Medical evacuations may be difficult to arrange. This tour involves challenging hiking requiring a good level of fitness.
9. Tour variation. Due to prevailing weather conditions there is a chance that some aspects of this tour will have to be modified at short notice. Airfields in this area are mainly grass strips which cannot be used after heavy rains and this may prevent flying in or out on schedule. Rains may also cause localised flooding in some riverside villages

rendering them unsuitable for visitors. Accordingly this tour may be modified at short notice by (i) rearranging the specified destinations, (ii) substituting different villages not specified in the above itinerary. Such variations to the advertised itinerary will be at the discretion of the local tour operator in accordance with safety considerations and operational limitations.

10. Personal gear. For this trip we suggest you pack personal items in zip lock plastic bags to protect them from rain and canoe wake splash. Personal gear should include three or four changes of clothes, light hiking boots, plastic sandals for wearing in the canoe (shoes may get wet). Four pairs of cotton/wool blend hiking socks, a pair of light tracksuit pants or sarong to sleep in, hat with wide brim to keep sun and rain off your face, waterproof torch with spare batteries, rain poncho, quick-dry towel, your favourite soap in a leak-proof container, two rolls of your favourite toilet paper, a two-litre water container to carry with you, and your personal first aid kit. Your personal first aid kit will contain Band-aids, wound dressings, antibiotic cream (not antiseptic) for applying to cuts and scratches, anti-malarial tablets, anti-diarrhoea tablets, paracetamol, Deep Heat or other muscle liniment and the all-important insect repellent (some visitors say "Rid" is more effective). For sleeping, a woven mat or rubber mattress and mosquito net are provided at each destination in this tour but you should bring your own tropical sleeping bag, empty quilt cover or a bed liner of the type used at youth hostels.