



Ecotourism Melanesia

Discover Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands

EM15C TUFU FJORDS HIKE AND PADDLE 4 NIGHTS (MON-FRI) **SOFT ADVENTURE PACKAGE FOR INDEPENDENT TRAVELLERS** 4 nights ex-Port Moresby (1 night Tufi Resort, 3 nights villages)

INTRODUCTION



This package enables visitors to experience of the beautiful villages of the Tufi district of Oro (Northern) Province - without doubt PNG's number one all-rounder destination - by taking short scenic hikes and outrigger canoe trips between villages. Tufi is an oasis isolated from the rest of PNG because there are no road links, and offers amazing scenery, friendly and safe traditional villages with exotic sing-sing culture, stunning water clarity for snorkelling and scuba diving, a network of footpaths joining the villages that is perfect for hiking, a variety of bird, animal and marine life and best of all a lovely little resort at the central hub - Tufi township - which makes a perfect base for exploring the district.

The Tufi district is famous for its Nordic-type fjords. The breathtaking topography is dominated by some 25 fjords which penetrate deep into the coastal landscape. The fjords were created more than 10,000 years ago when nearby Mt Trafalgar (now extinct) erupted and sent waves of molten lava down into the sea which solidified into fingers of igneous rock separated by narrow incursions of sea water - the fjords.

Many of the fjords feature sheer basalt cliffs. The protected waters have encouraged nature to create numerous sheltered white sandy beaches perfect for swimming, and pristine fringing reefs offer excellent snorkelling. The water clarity is stunning and scuba diving is a major attraction for visitors to the area.

The world's largest butterfly, the Queen Alexandra's Birdwing, can be found in the Tufi area.

The people of the Tufi area have a rich cultural heritage that is nurtured and treasured. One of the most memorable experiences for visitors is witnessing a sing-sing featuring bare-chested dancers with intricate facial tattoos, adorned with traditional tapa (bark) loincloths and spectacular feather headdresses.

Villagers in the Tufi district are quite experienced at hosting visitors in village guest houses. Typical daily activities at village guest houses here include swimming, snorkelling, line fishing or spear-fishing, exploring the fjords and mangrove labyrinths by paddling outrigger canoes, scenic hiking along the spines of the fjord spurs, or relaxing in the shade on a quiet beach. A map of the Tufi area is on our website.

Tufi Resort is a boutique adventure resort located on the site of the colonial era district administrator's residence and now offers a range of aquatic activities including scuba diving (if you have your scuba ticket), snorkelling, fishing and kayaking, as well as hiking, village tours and bird-watching. Scheduled flights to Tufi only operate on Monday mornings, Wednesday afternoons and Friday afternoons and the resort doubles as the local agency for the airline.

This soft adventure package includes at least one night at the Tufi Resort (due to flight schedules) while the rest of the accommodation is in Spartan but clean and comfy local style leaf houses with some delicious village food. The walking difficulty is 2 or 3 on a scale of 1-5 with no walks longer than 3 hours.

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PACKAGE COST

	Group of 1	Group of 2-3	Group of 4-5	Group of 6+
Ground package (per person)*	USD 2150	USD 1550	USD 1300	USD 1200
Single room supplement**	N/A	USD 200	USD 200	USD 200
Airfare POM-TFI-POM Return fare per person	USD 390	USD 390	USD 390	USD 390

* Based on twin share plus one triple room for odd-numbered groups

** Optional single supplement for single room

Prices subject to change.

PACKAGE INCLUSIONS

- Port Moresby - airport check-in assistance by Ecotourism Melanesia staff
- Tufi - arrival meet and greet by Tufi Resort staff
- Tufi - 1 night deluxe room at Tufi Resort including main meals
- Tufi - half day activity at Tufi Resort as per choice in itinerary
- Tufi - scenic boat transfer to Jebo Beach (or available alternative)
- Tufi - 3 nights village guest house accommodation including local style meals (as per itinerary, or alternative villages if specified villages not available)
- Tufi - village sing-sing performance
- Tufi - daily village activities as per itinerary suggestions, daily local guide, daily hiking porters and paddlers, access to village beaches, reefs and nature sites, use of outrigger canoes, gratuities for demonstrators and other helpers

EXCLUSIONS

- Any additional activities not offered in the itinerary
- Snacks and bar drinks at Tufi Resort
- Excess baggage charges



ITINERARY

DAY 1: MONDAY



PORT MORESBY / TUFU RESORT

05:00 Check in at Port Moresby domestic airport.

06:15 Air Niugini flight PX852/855 departs Port Moresby for Tufu via Popondetta (aircraft: Dash 8)

Tufu Resort staff will meet you on arrival at Tufu. It is a short walk from the airfield to the resort and your bags will be transported by tractor and trailer. Check in at Tufu Resort www.tufidive.com and take a nap, a swim in the pool or a walk around the area before lunch.

13:00 This afternoon a half day activity at Tufu Resort is included in your trip package. Available choices are:

1. A two-tank scuba diving excursion by motor boat (shared with other divers staying at the resort) to a reef or wreck dive site, including air tanks dive gear hire and dive master. (Scuba diving requires current open water diving qualification and DAN insurance).
2. A two-tank scuba dive over the excellent "house reef" in front of the Tufu which almost always offers clear, calm water over a pristine reef protected by the resort.
3. Unlimited snorkelling over the house reef (watch out for spiny sea urchins around the jetty pylons)
4. Unlimited self-paddle kayaking around the fjords
5. A private fishing excursion by small boat with a resort guide. The calm water fjords offer safe reef or estuarine fishing. Includes fishing gear.
6. A hike around the perimeter of the main Tufu Fjord, following the footpaths along the cliff tops and spurs, with a guide from the Resort, passing through a number of small hamlets

Note that there is NO BEACH in front of Tufu Resort - it is situated on a cliff overlooking Tufu Fjord (Tufu Harbour) with great views and a nice snorkelling reef down below, but no beach.

If you are not feeling so active, take a relaxed stroll around the Tufu "station" township with or without a resort guide (there are about 100 houses, a couple of little shops and a few provincial government offices but only the resort has reliable electricity, spend some time in the resort pool or library, or relax on the deck overlooking one of the world's best views - Tufu Fjord.

Overnight deluxe room, Tufu Resort (includes all meals)

DAY 2: TUESDAY



TUFU RESORT / JEBO VILLAGE

09:00 After breakfast one of the resort motor launches will transfer you south along the coastline from the resort to the first village where you will overnight. This will be a "scenic transfer" at a leisurely pace with short forays up some of the fjords to see waterfalls, basalt cliffs and pretty beaches along the way.

On arrival at white sandy Jebo Beach you will be welcomed by your local village hosts and escorted to your accommodation at **Jebo Beach Bungalow**. Here you will sleep in a bungalow either on the beach or in tiny Jebo village (only about 6 houses) situated on a rise overlooking the beach. You can expect to get sand in every nook and cranny of your body and belongings here ☺.

After settling in to your bungalow, spend the rest of today with your village hosts trying out village life and some of the activities available here.

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Typically your village hosts may be reluctant to organise or suggest particular activities in case they may not be to your liking so you will probably have to take the initiative on Thursday evening after dinner and say: "Here's what we would be interested in doing today: ..." and your hosts will bend over backwards to make it happen for you.



- walk around the village with your local host, meeting the villagers and seeing what they are doing
- enjoy some time on Jebo Beach - sitting in the shade of a coconut palm, swimming or lounging in the water (use plenty of sunscreen)
- snorkel over the colourful reef in Urumanoa fjord just a few minutes walk from Jebo (BYO mask and snorkel or hire them from the Resort)
- paddle a native outrigger canoe (by yourself or with a local boy or girl on board to help) right up the Urumanoa Fjord where you'll be able to paddle right up close to sheer basalt cliffs towering above you - some covered in jungle creepers, and see little waterfalls trickling over the edges of the fjord spurs into the water below. (This activity takes 1 to 2 hours depending how far up the fjord you go and how fast you paddle and how many waterfalls you stop and shower under).
- take a longer paddle north from Jebo and explore the mangrove labyrinth at Hardy Point (2 hours round trip)



In the late afternoon, perhaps join in the daily village volleyball match, observe your dinner being prepared in a "bush kitchen" and watch the sun go down in a blaze of glory. There is no electricity in these villages and dinner will be served by lamplight in your guest house. Your hosts will be happy to sit and eat with you at your invitation, otherwise they will respect your privacy at dinner.



Overnight village guest house, Jebo beach - includes local style meals (typically seafood with rice and vegetables for dinner, tropical fruit and fresh scones for breakfast and fried or baked fish for lunch), clean bedding with mosquito net, outdoor latrine, camp shower with soap and towel)



NB At Jebo Beach the water is shallow, calm and protected, perfect for wading and shallow bathing BUT there are occasional small sting-rays hiding in the sand so splash around a bit when you enter the water to scare them off and they will be gone for the rest of the day. Also please note that Jebo Beach is a community beach so racy swimwear must not be worn. Swimming trunks or surf shorts for men (no Speedos) and a one-piece bathing costume or shorts-and-top or shorts-and sarong for ladies is appropriate.

DAY 3: WEDNESDAY



JEBO / OROTOABA

After breakfast your hosts from Jebo will "escort" you for the one hour uphill hike (yes, it's huff and puff) to Orotoaba (pronounced *oro-twaba*), one of the largest villages in the Tufi District with about 30 houses. At Orotoaba there are panoramic views of the Tufi coastline and on a clear day you can see Goodenough Island. The village is perched on a spur overlooking Ibura Fjord which is deep enough for small ships to anchor inside and has hidden waterfalls which you can get to if you are able to descend the steep paths.

Being a large village there is always something happening at Orotoaba - women having choir practice, youths playing volleyball, kids chasing each other around. Your accommodation is smack bang in the middle of the village so you won't get much peace and quiet here what with roosters crowing at 5am and people clattering pots and kettles, hammering nails etc at all times of the day and night.

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Spend the day at Orotoaba learning more about the Tufi culture and lifestyle. Here is a menu of possible demonstrations and activities at Orotoaba which you might like to select from:

- See demonstrations of local art and handicrafts. You may be pleased to hear that there is no tradition of wood carving here - ie no annoying carvers trying to sell you endless polished carvings of dolphins and turtles ☺. The best souvenir buy here is *tapa cloth* which is not made for tourists at all but is an everyday village material made by soaking and beating the bark of the mulberry tree which grows endemically in this area. Depending on its purpose a square of tapa cloth is then cut and stitched by hand into its required shape and decorated by painting with clay based ochre paints in traditional line-and-dot designs (see example at left) which are absolutely unique to the Tufi area. Square cut tapa cloth is used for all kinds of purposes including tablecloths, curtains, sleeping mats, floor and wall coverings. Women who have hand sewing machines use softer more flexible tapa cloth to stitch up traditional style clothing (“bilas”) which means aprons for men, skirts for ladies and more modern style accessories such as caps and handbags. The latter are highly sought-after by Papua New Guinean from other provinces. A well painted square of tapa cloth taken home and framed under glass makes an excellent memento from PNG. (If taking into Australia, spray the cloth with Morstein at least 24 hours before travel, wait a few hours and shake out any dead bugs then wrap it in Glad Wrap and declare it to Quarantine on arrival and there is a 90% chance it will pass inspection). If you are particularly interested in tapa cloth making your hosts will be pleased to show you the whole process including plucking the bark from the tree, soaking, beating and drying, cutting, sewing and painting.

- Facial tattooing of married women is still practiced in Tufi villages. It’s hard not to stare when you see a tattooed Tufi woman for the first time because the tattooing is so strikingly bold - the line-and-dot patterns are similar to those used on tapa cloth and cover almost the whole face. The facial tattooing is beautiful in its own way because it denotes a woman who is proud of her culture, proud to be married, and is obviously highly respected in her community. However educated young Tufi girls who travel afar to attend high schools in Popondetta, Port Moresby, Lae and Alotau are increasingly refusing to be tattooed when they marry because they realise that the practise is unique to Tufi and makes Tufi women stand out in the crowd in other parts of PNG and they do not want to endure the stares. A tattooing demonstration will be arranged for you on request but of course a marking pen will be used, not real needles and ink.

- Another interesting local tradition that your hosts will be happy to demonstrate for you is the manufacture of clay pots for cooking. Unlike other parts of PNG where rounded sedimentary river stones are commonplace and used for heating food wrapped in leaves and tossed into a pit of hot stones, in the Tufi area the volcanic rocks do not have the same heat-keeping properties and are not used for cooking so clay pots are moulded by hand and food is cooked in the pots either over a live fire or covered in hot coals and left to simmer or roast. The use of clay pots for cooking is not widespread throughout PNG so is somewhat of a claim-to-fame at Tufi and other clay pot capitals like Zumin in Morobe and Aibom in the Sepik River. However the clay cooking pots used at Tufi are generally too large and fragile to be carried home as souvenirs as the clay is not hard-fired in a kiln and is easily broken if dropped.

- Tufi is absolutely the home of the world’s largest butterfly - the Queen Alexandra’s birdwing - and the species does frequent the forest and vegetable gardens around Orotoaba in the right season after the chrysalis hatches from its habitat which is the underside of the leaves of the *Aristolochia schlechteri* vine that grows wild in the Tufi area. There are also many other species of butterflies, birds, insects and small lizards common in the undergrowth here if you know where to look. However the fjord spurs are largely bare of vegetation because the solidified



lava has only a thin layer of topsoil - mainly just organic detritus - that can only support grass and vines so larger trees that support larger animals are mainly found in copses of vegetation in between the fjord spurs, or further inland from Orotoaba where there are more extensive lowland alluvial rainforests.

- Go for a late afternoon or early morning hike to see birds of paradise - there is a known nesting spot of a flock of Raggiana birds of paradise about 30 minutes walk inland from Orotoaba and the birds are most active with full displays early morning and late afternoon



After dinner tonight the Orotoaba village cultural group will begin to crank up some traditional chanting and singing before performing a sing-sing (traditional dance accompanied by singing) by the light of a bonfire in the “village square”. Most of the village population will gather to watch this performance which is mounted especially for you - and poke fun at any of their fellow villagers who make mistakes with the singing or dancing (which neither you nor I would notice of course). The dancers will wear elaborate costumes featuring huge head-dresses adorned with bird of paradise feathers, body paints, home made tapa cloth aprons, and hand held “kundu” drums made of hollow logs with lizard skins stretched across the ends.

Overnight village guest house, Orotoaba village - includes local style meals (typically seafood with rice and vegetables for dinner, tropical fruit and fresh scones for breakfast and fried or baked fish for lunch), clean bedding with mosquito net, sit-down latrine, camp shower with soap and towel)

DAY 4: THURSDAY



OROTOABA / BAGA

After breakfast your hike and paddle to Baga. From Orotoaba it is a 2 hour mainly downhill hike with your hosts to Bauwame via Barabara (see map). <http://www.em.com.pg/EMIMAGES/provinces/Oro/mapofTUFI.jpg> An outrigger canoe and paddlers will be waiting for you at Bauwame to paddle you twenty minutes across the Amuian Fjord to Baga. They may even launch a home-made sail if there is a puff of wind.



The guest house at Baga is situated within a small family hamlet a short walk inland from the waterside. There is a nice waterfall with swimming hole in the forest right behind the guest house and there are several white sand beaches a short distance away, with some good snorkelling spots.



There are some great activities available at Baga for this afternoon:

- Take an outrigger safari into the majestic Amuian Bay where the virgin rainforest gradually closes in on the steep shores. If you enter the small side bay and walk up through the forest you’ll be rewarded with the highest waterfall in the area, dropping into a big swimming pool.
- Sago is the staple food in the Tufi coastal area and your hosts will be happy to demonstrate for you how it is made from go to whoa. The pith is scraped out of a chopped-down sago stand (“tree”), the starch is then “washed” out of the coarse fibre and dried as crude flour which is stored in this raw form until used to cook a variety of different dishes such as sago pancakes and sago gel pudding. Of course this is totally different from the highly refined white pellets of sago sold in Western supermarkets. Unfortunately the raw sago used as a staple food in PNG coastal areas is high in fibre but low in nutrients so people who eat a lot of sago every day feel “full” but are not getting very good nutrition in their diet.

Overnight village guest house, Baga village - includes local style meals (typically seafood with rice and vegetables for dinner, tropical fruit and fresh scones for breakfast and fried or baked fish for lunch), clean bedding with mosquito net, sit-down latrine, camp shower with soap and towel)

DAY 5: FRIDAY

BAGA / TUFI RESORT / PORT MORESBY

After breakfast at Baga, you will paddle 90 minutes from Baga to Tufi Resort on a large outrigger canoe. If the wind is right a crude sail may be set (often the sail is just a patchwork of old rice and flour bags!) otherwise you and your hosts will take turns at the paddles. The route will cross the mouth of the Feiaba Fjord and pass Komoa Beach then directly into the Tufi Harbour Fjord. If it's windy and the water is too rough for paddling you may instead have to walk overland to the Tufi Harbour Fjord (2 hours) then make a short canoe crossing across the calm fjord to the resort. Your hosts will leave you at Tufi and paddle home.

12:00 Lunch at Tufi Resort (included) followed by free time at the Resort (relax with a drink on the deck overlooking the fjord, take a dip in the pool, browse the Resort library, take a walk around the township etc)

13:00 Check your bags at the airline desk at the Resort. Resort staff will later walk with you to the airfield.

14:15 Air Niugini flight PX854/857 departs Tufi for Port Moresby via Popondetta, arriving 15:50 (aircraft: Dash 8)

Ecotourism Melanesia staff OR your hotel shuttle driver will meet and assist you on arrival.

TOUR ENDS

TOUR NOTE: Payment for services at the village

*Note that that any of the village experience activities offered or suggested in this itinerary are **included** in your package (unless otherwise stated) and there is no need for you to pay extra at the village to see or participate in any of the suggested activities. If any local person asks you for direct payment for any of the suggested activities please refer them to Tufi Resort or Ecotourism Melanesia for settlement. It does not happen often but occasionally people get confused over who is picking up the tab. If you propose to undertake any activities not listed in this package (eg local language lessons or fossil fossicking) please either clear this with Ecotourism Melanesia in advance or be prepared to pay-as-you-go at the village for services provided by the locals.*

TRIP NOTES:

1. **Wet weather.** Tufi is subject to regular rainfall even during the dry season (April to November), though most rain falls at night. If the weather is wet during your stay you may not be able to complete all the activities described in this itinerary.
2. **Bedding.** The village guesthouses will provide clean bedding for you. Alternatively you may choose to bring your own tropical sleeping bag or a bed liner of the type used at youth hostels, or an empty quilt cover that you can sleep inside (we can lend you one if you require). Your sleeping bag or sheet will also protect you from mosquitoes although mosquito nets are also provided at the village guesthouses.
3. **First aid.** On request, Ecotourism Melanesia will provide you with a tropical first aid kit to take with you to Tufi and return to us afterwards. This will include emergency treatment for malaria, anti-diarrhoea medication and oral rehydration salts, topical antibiotic, wound dressings, bandages.
4. **Bathing.** At the village guest houses you have the option of bathing Asian-style by scooping water over yourself from a drum of water inside a closed-off outside bathroom, or walking down to the stream and bathing with your clothes on, usually in front of other people. Males may bathe in shorts, ladies should bring a sarong or quick-dry shorts and top to wear for bathing.
5. **Guides and helpers.** While staying in the villages and going on hikes, you will be accompanied most of the time by a village guide or helpers arranged by the operator of the village guest house. These guides / helpers are often your host's own family members. Your guides/helpers will show you around, paddle the canoe for you, help you communicate with any village people who don't speak English, and accompany you on hikes and walks. There is no need for you to make any direct payment to these guides and helpers as they are paid a daily fee by the operator of the village guest house. However if you wish to reward exceptional service from a particular individual you are welcome to do so (ie pay a tip) but please be discreet so as not to cause disputes. If a guide or helper asks you for a gratuity you should politely say that you will talk to the guest house operator about it first. If you would like to take any gifts to the villages, clothing is the best type of gift to take because clothing is difficult to obtain in the rural areas. Large size T-shirts are a sure bet as they can be given to both males and females of various builds. Other suitable gifts include caps, small flashlights, soap, cooking spices and pens and pencils for the children to use in school. Don't take balloons, candy or breakable toys. The best gift for the village school or church is a cyclinder with a few maps or wall charts / posters on various topics that can be mounted and viewed by everyone (and not stolen so easily as a book).
6. **Food.** The food that will be offered to you at the village guest houses will be freshly harvested vegetables and seafood, possibly some chicken or pork. If you are a fresh food fan, you will be very happy. There is no electricity in the villages and leftover food is given to the village animals at the end of the day and not kept for the next day. If you feel the village diet may be too bland for you, you are welcome to bring additional favourite food items with you - village people will not be offended. Dehydrated packet pasta, tinned meats, baked beans etc that you bring with you can be prepared for you by your hosts and served with your meal.
7. **Drinking water** in the villages comes from clean fjord springs and is safe to drink. If you have any concerns you can ask your hosts to boil and cool water for you to drink, or drink only coconut juice which is abundant. Bottled water is not provided at the villages.
8. **Safety.** There is only a very basic government clinic at Tufi. If you fall critically ill, a charter flight must be arranged to evacuate you, at an approximate cost of PGK 10,000. If a decision is made to evacuate you, either you or your medical/travel insurer will be responsible for the cost of this exercise. Accordingly we strongly advise that you take out medivac insurance cover for the duration of your tour. Most of the villages around Tufi now have mobile phone contact with the Tufi Resort and can call for help in an emergency.
9. **Malaria.** Malaria is prevalent in all parts of Papua New Guinea including Tufi. If you have recently arrived in the country you are unlikely to fall ill with malaria during your week at Tufi because the incubation period for malaria is a minimum of seven days after you are bitten by the mosquito. We recommend taking malaria prophylaxis (preventive medication) during your visit to PNG and we recommend that you carry a course of treatment home with you when you leave PNG. On your return home, you should immediately suspect malaria if you feel unwell in any way, and be sure to inform your doctor that you have been in a malarial area.