



Ecotourism Melanesia

Explore Papua New Guinea and the South Pacific

EM208R 2024 MT HAGEN SHOW ROAD TOUR 10 nights WED14AUG - SAT24AUG 2024
Core tour 10 nights Mt Hagen (5 nt) Goroka (2 nt) Madang (3 nt) USD 5825 pp + flights
Optional Sepik River extension 3 nights 24-27AUG USD 1700 pp + flights

This is an escorted sign-up (open) tour for solo travellers and couples - includes accommodation with half board, daily excursions and our experienced local tour leader to manage all arrangements.

This ten night escorted tour program is designed for independent solo travellers and couples requiring shared, managed arrangements for attending the Mt Hagen Show (also called the Mt Hagen Festival) and seeing some more of mainland New Guinea after. The tour offers a selection of accommodation options at Mt Hagen - subject to availability at the time of booking - and comfortable tourist hotels in the other towns. In Mt Hagen there are organised excursions to the Show, the Paiya Sing-sing and other attractions. In the other towns there will be a variety of excursions to villages and other cultural and nature sites. During the tour you will share a bus, guide and attraction seating or walking with others in the tour group, but in the evenings there are options to dine alone and have time to yourself if you wish.

The Mt Hagen Show is Papua New Guinea's largest cultural extravaganza with its origins in colonial days when Australian administrators sought to reduce tribal fighting by promoting inter-marriage and channelling inter-tribal rivalry into positive forms of competition. Major sing-sing events like the Mt Hagen Show and Goroka Show became opportunities for tribes to gain status without bloodshed, by competing in the dance arena instead on tribal battlefields. The Mt Hagen Show today is still a competition, with tribal groups vying for sizeable cash prizes and of course the honour and glory that first prize at the "Hagen Show" brings to one's tribe. Local crowds of up to 50,000 people throng the show grounds during the course of the weekend, flocking in from the Highlands as well as Madang and Lae which have road access to Mt Hagen. In contrast, less than 300 overseas visitors attend each year's Mt Hagen Show, so it is definitely a "local" festival and not a tourist show, although tourists are given special viewing areas and have blanket permission to enter the performance arena to take close-up photos and videos of the dancers.

Apart from the Show itself, there is also another, private sing-sing held on the day before the Show, at Paiya Village about half an hour's drive out of town. This event is a photographer's dream, with an authentic natural backdrop (no visual pollution from big crowds, fences or advertising signs), and opportunities for portrait and group photography before and after each group perform.

Other highlights of this road tour include:

- Full day scenic road transfers from Mt Hagen to Goroka and Goroka to Madang with stops at villages and natural attractions
- Performances of the Omo Masalai skeleton dancers and the Asaro Mudmen at their home villages
- Nature walks in the Dauilo moss forest biodiversity hotspot and the Madang rainforest.
- Visits to traditional villages around Goroka and Madang
- Optional extension to the mysterious Sepik River and jungle hike to abandoned WW2 naval guns on Muschu Is.



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TOUR COST

	Budget accom option	Standard accom option Mt Hagen: 2.5 star motel Goroka / Madang / Wewak: all 3.5 star hotel - <i>includes breakfast & most lunches</i>	Premier accom option	Deluxe accom option
CORE TOUR 10 NIGHTS ground package per person twin share	Not available	USD 5825 pp Single supplement USD 1300	Not available	Not available
SEPIK RIVER EXTENSION 3 NIGHTS ground package per person twin share – 3 nights Wewak		USD 1700 pp Single supplement USD 425		
Internal air CORE TOUR POM-HGU MAG- POM flat rate package		USD 600		
Internal air CORE TOUR + SEPIK EXT. POM-HGU MAG-WWK WWK-POM flat rate package		USD 900		

BOOKING NOTES:

- Places on the tour are subject to room availability at the time of booking. We do not block-book hotel rooms.
- Mt Hagen has less than 300 tourist-quality hotel and motel rooms and most properties capitalise on this shortage of rooms during the Show weekend by charging peak-season rates. This contributes to the high cost of this package.
- Rates include breakfast and most lunches - pay as you go for hotel dinners.
- Star ratings are an approximate guide only and are not based on any published star rating system.
- Purchase of internal airfares from us is mandatory to ensure all members of the group are booked on the same flights and to give us direct control over rebooking of flights in the event of itinerary disruption
- Tour prices are subject to change at any time prior to final payment if there is a major weakening of the PGK.
- For trip modifications and extensions please enquire.
- To book a place on this tour please e-mail a copy of your passport photo page and your request to ecotourism.melanesia@gmail.com We will then send you an availability confirmation and a quote.
- 25% deposit for ground package and 100% of internal airfares is required to book this tour. 75% balance of ground package is due 6 weeks before arrival. Our normal terms and conditions apply (see page 2 of your quote).
- An early-bird discount may be available if you pay in full at the time of booking - please enquire.

TOUR INCLUSIONS

- Port Moresby - meet and greet, assist with arrival connection
- Mt Hagen - meet and greet, transfer to accommodation
- Mt Hagen - five nights 2.5 star accommodation and breakfast
- Mt Hagen - complimentary familiarisation tour of Mt Hagen for early arrivals
- Mt Hagen - full day tour of Mt Hagen and surrounds with village stop including lunch
- Mt Hagen - full day excursion to Paiya village private sing-sing including lunch
- Mt Hagen - two days excursions to the Mt Hagen Show with tourist pass, light lunch and bottled water
- Mt Hagen - scenic road transfer to Goroka with village stops and lunch
- Goroka - two nights 3.5 star accommodation with breakfast
- Goroka - full day town and village tour with lunch
- Goroka - scenic road transfer to Madang with lunch
- Madang - three nights 3.5 star accommodation
- Madang - half day town tour and half day harbour and lagoon boat tour with lunch (optional snorkelling)
- Madang - full day seaside village and rainforest hike trip with lunch
- Internal airfares as quoted
- Port Moresby - airport assistance and farewell
- all fees and gratuities for local guides, helpers, village demonstrators
- accompanying company tour leader to escort and manage daily arrangements
- 24-hour back-up assistance from our office in Port Moresby

SEPIK RIVER EXTENSION 3 NIGHTS INCLUSIONS

- Wewak - three nights 3.5 star accommodation (or optional two nights Wewak and one night village at Sepik River)
- Wewak - full day Sepik River trip with lunch
- Wewak - full day Wewak Islands trip with lunch (or optional second day on Sepik River instead)
- accompanying local guide

EXCLUSIONS

- hotel dinners (pay as you go)
- bar drinks including bottled water at your hotel (pay as you go)
- tips (not expected, and only appropriate for exceptional service)
- souvenirs and items of a personal nature

TOUR ITINERARY

DAY 1: WED 14 AUG 2024



ARRIVE MT HAGEN

Arrive Mt Hagen by air from Port Moresby. For available flights see

www.airniugini.com.pg and www.pngair.com

A guide from Ecotourism Melanesia will meet you on arrival in Mt Hagen and transfer you to your accommodation to settle in. Lunch today is not included in the package. You can buy something at Port Moresby airport or at your hotel in Mt Hagen on arrival.

14:00 Pick up from your accommodation for a familiarisation drive around Mt Hagen.

Overnight Mt Hagen includes breakfast

DAY 2: THU 15 AUG 2024



MT HAGEN (full day Mt Hagen area excursion)

Commence today's touring with a drive out the Kuminga back road past peri-urban villages, roadside markets, market garden plots and coffee plantations to Mt Ambra which offers scenic views of Mt Hagen then around the back of the airport past the Show Grounds to the Highlands Highway and east to Kindeng farming community.

Here you'll have candid opportunities to mingle and chat with local people engaged in small scale agricultural activities such as marketing gardening, fish farming and raising livestock. Families from a number of different areas of the highlands have settled at Kindeng which makes it quite a diverse community.

From Kindeng you'll drive back into town and turn south on the Kum Road out to Rondon Ridge for a guided walk through the magnificent orchid gardens and adjacent forest reserve. The Raggiana bird of paradise is common in this area and there is a good chance of seeing or at least hearing one in the wild (they have a very loud call).



After a lunch stop (TBA) visit Moika or Ogelbeng village and take a walking tour of the village and gardens, go inside a family hut, meet local people and children doing their everyday thing and photograph some villagers in full costume and body paint. You'll also see a display of tribal "treasures" which have been passed between families for generations for the settlement of marriages and conflicts, including "moka kina" mother of pearl, cowrie shells transported from the coast, animal bones and teeth, brilliant bird feathers (and even sun-dried whole birds!), stone and shell "money".

Return to the hotel before the afternoon rain begins..

Overnight Mt Hagen includes breakfast only



NB If you have a particular interest in birds you may wish to buy a copy of "Birds of New Guinea", available in Port Moresby from major hotel gift shops.

DAY 3: FRI 16 AUG 2024



MT HAGEN (Paiya village sing-sing)

07:00-07:30 Pick up at your accommodation for the scenic drive through typical highlands countryside to Paiyakona (Paiya) village where a private sing-sing performance for overseas visitors is held the Friday before each Mt Hagen Show. Arriving before the sing-sing commences you can watch the performers adorning themselves with feathers, shells and ochre paints in preparation for dancing. The performers will be happy to show and tell about their traditional dress (“bilas”) and pose for photographs without expecting payment. About 10 different dancing groups will perform, mainly from the Highlands, including the Huli wigmen, the Melpa tribe stompers and the Enga tribe with their wide black wigs. Some of the groups will also perform at the Mt Hagen Show on the weekend.

The Paiya sing-sing includes a “mumu” lunch cooked under hot stones at the sing-sing grounds, and a tour of the cultural displays at Paiya village including the men’s spirit house and the ancestors’ skull house which really is an ossuary full of dozens of skulls. Some traditional customs like courtship ritual and mourning rites may also be demonstrated.

The advantage of attending this private sing-sing in addition to the Mt Hagen Show itself is the village environment which makes the experience more authentic, the smaller crowd from just the one village area is easy to socialise with, and the photography in the bush setting without buildings, fences and advertising signs in the background is much more rewarding.

If the afternoon rains hold off after the sing-sing your tour bus will drive you further west along the Highlands Highway as far as the border between Western Highlands and Enga Province, then return to Mt Hagen. On the outward drive please note any photo stops you’d like to make on the way back and notify the guide or driver.

Overnight Mt Hagen includes breakfast

DAY 4: SAT 17 AUG 2024



MT HAGEN (Mt Hagen Show)

07:00-07:30 Pick up at your accommodation for the 30 minute drive to the show grounds. Our staff will have already been out there earlier in the morning to set up a marquee and chairs for you. Arriving before the start of the show, you’ll be able to walk among the performers and capture some candid photos as they apply their face paint and body decorations.

The program usually begins around 09:00am with half an hour of speeches followed by a grand parade with all participating cultural groups marching around the arena several times. The rest of day will loosely follow a printed schedule of individual group appearances, usually with three or four different groups performing in different areas of the arena at the same time because with 80-100 different cultural groups attending each year there are too many to fit in a weekend program if performing one by one. Tourist pass holders are permitted to enter the arena to take close-up photographs but do try to avoid getting in the way of other tourists’ cameras. We will have extra guides on hand to describe and explain the dances for you and accompany you around the arena (and side shows) if you need help with your camera gear etc.

Bottled water and a supply of fruit and bakery snacks is supplied for lunch today (fresh lunches cannot be delivered because of the crowd and traffic gridlock outside the show ground gates by mid-morning).

Mid-afternoon as the daily downpour looms, your group will pack up and depart the show before the end of the program in order to beat the exit chaos in the carpark and street outside. Drop off at your accommodation.

Overnight Mt Hagen includes breakfast

DAY 5: SUN 18 AUG 2024



MT HAGEN (Mt Hagen Show)

07:00-07:30 Pick up at your accommodation for the second day of the Show which will feature different cultural groups from yesterday and of course the judgment and prize-giving at the end of the day. However your group will again leave a little early to beat the crowds and avoid getting stuck in gridlocked traffic and doused by afternoon rains. If there is time remaining in the afternoon and the weather stays dry your guide may offer a short excursion.

Overnight Mt Hagen includes breakfast

DAY 6: MON 19 AUG 2024



MT HAGEN / GOROKA (private bus trip with village stops)

08:00 Check out of the hotel and load your bags in our charter bus for 08:30 departure to Goroka. Normally the drive takes 4 hours but today's transfer will take the whole day with sightseeing and lunch stops en route.

The Highlands Highway runs east from Mt Hagen, 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 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, one foot downhill" as the locals sometimes joke.

The first stop late morning will be at Mindima village in the Chimbu province to see the villagers of the Omo Masalai tribe perform their ghoulish but slightly comical "skeleton dance" and a demonstration of their local courtship ritual.

Back on the highway PNG's highest peak, Mt Wilhelm, comes in to view on the left as the bus winds its way to Kundiawa town, the "capital" of Chimbu, for a lunch stop at the Mt Wilhelm Hotel (included).

One hour further on brings you to the "snake village" where the local people have a strange affinity for snakes and like to keep them as pets, although the poisonous ones stay in cages ☺ . You'll see the locals showing off their pythons and tree snakes and have a turn at handling them if you wish. If you are not a "snake person" you can cower in the bus ☺

From the snake village, continue another hour 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 it's not raining by this time you will be able to take a guided walk through the ancient moss forest which 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. Birds of paradise also frequent the area.

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

16:00 (approx) On arrival in Goroka you will be checked in at your accommodation and have some time to rest and settle in before dinner.

18:30 Bus transfer to dinner (Bird of Paradise Hotel, Pacific Gardens Hotel, Goroka Steak House or Mandarin Chinese Restaurant, pay as you go)

Overnight Goroka (includes breakfast)

DAY 7: TUE 20 AUG 2024



GOROKA (full day town and villages tour)

07:00 Breakfast at the hotel

08:00 Meet up with your guide at reception and commence some sightseeing around Goroka town including:

- Mt Kiss lookout (see most of Goroka town and the adjacent Asaro Valley)
- JK McCarthy Museum of Highlands Culture (if open)
- fresh produce market (vegetables, pigs, chickens)
- handicrafts market (woven bilum bags are the best buy)

Later drive 30 minutes out of town to the Asaro Valley, home of the famed Asaro mud men. Here you will be treated to a private mud men performance - a little corny but a lot of fun and great photography. The Asaro people have long had a tradition of crafting fierce looking clay helmets worn during tribal fights in the old days to frighten the enemy. The helmets are also worn for traditional dancing and drama performances demonstrating how their ancestors confronted enemy tribes wearing their scary mud helmets, their bodies smeared with grey mud, looking like evil ghosts. After the dance (or "prance") you'll be shown how the clay helmets are made, and you'll have an opportunity to try one on yourself. An added bonus will be a cane-swallowing ritual performed by men from the Bena tribe. Lunch (if you can stomach it) will be served at your guide's home at Asaro - meat and vegetables roasted in bamboo

From Asaro, drive 30 minutes further to a local village where the people live an even more traditional lifestyle in round huts made of bush materials. The village is a typical rural highlands community with smoky cooking fires and pigs wandering around. At the village you'll be welcomed by locals in traditional dress and walk by a number of homes to see locals engaged in different daily chores and activities including cooking, house building, making and using bows and arrows, weaving "bilum" string bags, fashioning "kundu" hand drums from hollow logs and a special demonstration of funerary rites. On the land around the village you'll see people engaged in vegetable gardening (the highlands climate is perfect) and tending their coffee crops. Organic coffee grown on smallholder blocks is the major local cash crop.

17:30 Return to hotel

Overnight Goroka includes breakfast



DAY 8: WED 21 AUG 2024



GOROKA / MADANG (scenic road transfer)

07:00 Breakfast in the hotel and check out

08:00 Check out and meet up at reception to make an early start on the bus ride to Madang. A packed lunch and plenty of bottled water is arranged by the guide. The trip takes 8 hours, initially a downhill gradient through scenic villages and countryside along the remainder of the mountainous Highland Highway, passing through the rural towns of Henganofi and Kainantu (toilet stops) and crossing the majestic Yonki hydroelectric dam before descending through the steep winding Kassam Pass into the wide flat Ramu River Valley. Twisting down the hairpin bends of the Kassam Pass - which is occasionally blocked by landslides so no yodelling please ☺ - you may notice the change in temperature and humidity as you pass through the thermal inversion layer from the dry, cool air of the highlands to the moist, warm air of the coastal tropics.

Making a left turn onto the Ramu Highway, the drive transitions into a smoother and faster run for the remaining 3 hours down to Madang, passing by many kilometres of sugar cane farms and other agricultural ventures. The final leg into Madang town becomes more crowded with many roadside hamlets, markets and smallholder blocks, with occasional glimpses of the Bismarck Sea visible to the right.

On arrival in Madang town, check in at your hotel and if there is any spare time you can explore the hotel gardens and take a walk around the foreshore area near the hotel.

Overnight Madang includes breakfast

DAY 9: THU 22 AUG 2024



MADANG (town and lagoon tour)

07:00 Breakfast at the hotel

08:00 Commence today's exploring of Madang town and surrounds.

First up see a fine array of Madang handicrafts at the Madang Resort carver's hut and orchid gardens then stop at the town centre for a browse through the fresh produce market. A poke around in a typical Chinese store is also a must! Also in the town centre you will see Madang's resident flying fox colony, a love-them-or-hate-them crowd of noisy bickering creatures that inhabits a copse of trees in the town square.

Down on the foreshore, stop at the Coastwatcher's Lighthouse, Machine Gun beach, and the lovely tidal lily ponds of the Madang inlet and the Gold Club lily ponds. The Coastwatchers Memorial Lighthouse flashes the Madang harbour signal out to sea at night and is an iconic feature of Madang - somewhat resembling a life-size space rocket - located next to "Machine Gun Beach", a sheltered swimming beach featuring a number of wartime artillery relics

Further out of town, stop at the Madang culture museum (toilets available) and the pretty Balek Grotto (see left) which is a cold water sulfur spring where you can feed turtles and eels - the site was used for some scenes in the Pierce Brosnan film *Robinson Crusoe*. You can take a short walk through the surrounding tropical gardens and patch of rainforest where you may come across birds and other fauna.

12:30 Lunch at the hotel (included)

1:30 Board a motor boat owned by the hotel for a sightseeing and snorkelling excursion in the Madang lagoon.

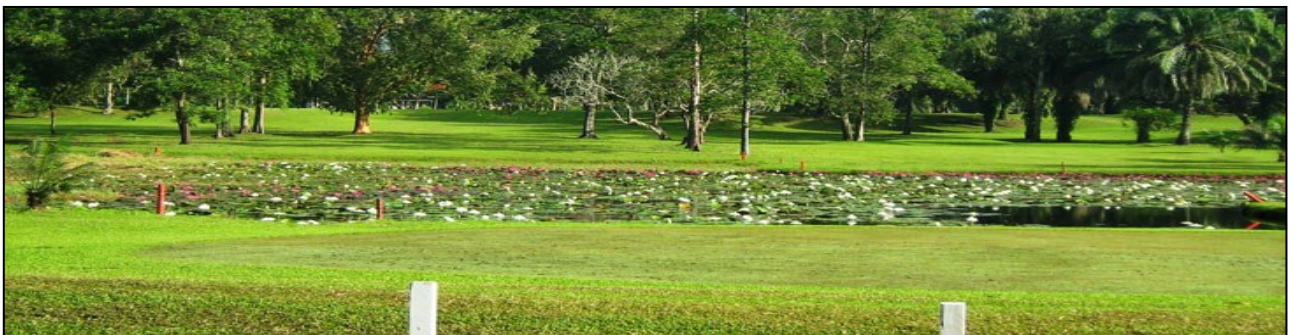
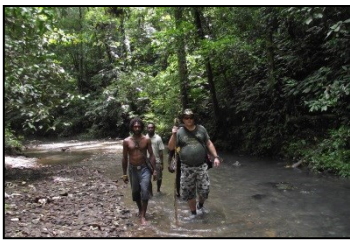
The tour will take in the Madang inner harbour and port with its sheltered waterways and tidal lagoons and also the giant outer Madang Lagoon which has many small islands, some inhabited by village communities while others are home to birds and crabs only.

Stops will include Alexishafen (German mission station occupied by the Japanese in WW2 then destroyed and rebuilt by the Allies) and Pik Island, a lovely place to swim and snorkel over the colourful reef (mask/snorkel supplied).

Overnight Madang includes breakfast



DAY 10: FRI 23 AUG 2024



MADANG (seaside village and rainforest bat cave excursion)

07:00 Breakfast

08:00am Commence today's tour with a drive out of town past the airport and turn off at the side road up Nobnob ridge to the Nobnob lookout which offers panoramic views of the Madang coastline - Madang town and lagoon to the south east and Karkar Island to the north.

Back on the main road, drive further out the North Coast road to Rempi Lagoon, a picturesque coastal lagoon protected by a line of tiny islands running parallel to the beach. More of the *Robinson Crusoe* movie was shot here at Rempi Lagoon and in the adjacent rainforest on shore. On arrival at Wargidan village the locals will welcome you then paddle you out to the little islands in a native dugout canoe and you can do some exploring then paddle back to shore again. Don't hesitate to ask for your turn with the paddle, it's great fun even if you go around in circles 😊 The local dugout canoes have stabilising outrigger arms which prevent them from tipping over. And wherever you see a flash of brilliant colours in the water you can jump out with a mask and snorkel for a spot of reef snorkelling.

Back at Wargidan village a local style seafood lunch is prepared for you with some fish barbequed under hot stones or coals and some local vegetables cooked with coconut and seafood in traditional clay pots.

After lunch, say farewell to the lagoon and head inland 20 minutes drive to the Warwin Creek rainforest. Here a 2 hour hike through the pristine rainforest awaits you if you enjoy reasonable physical fitness. There is a steep descent to the creek at the start and a steep climb out of the gully at end, with most of the hike following the verdant creek itself - the walking track crosses the creek many times so you will be up to your ankles or knees in water a lot of the time and your shoes will get thoroughly soaked but fortunately there are no leeches or other nasties in the creek as it is quite fast-flowing. The hike includes a foray into a limestone cave with stalactites and a small stream running through it. The cave is inhabited by thousands of tiny bats which feed off insects. You may even spot a small python lying in wait for a hapless bat. Your guide will provide flashlights for exploring the cave. Further downstream from the cave is a lovely swimming hole with a series of pretty cascades where you can jump in for a fun swim before completing the hike by climbing back up to the road. (If you are not a good hiker, a shorter forest walk on flat ground is available, skipping the creek and the bat cave.)

Late afternoon, drive back to the hotel in time to catch the tropical sunset before dinner.

Overnight Madang includes breakfast

DAY 11: SAT 24 AUG 2024



MADANG / PORT MORESBY / FLY OUT or extend to Sepik River

05:00 Early breakfast, check out and transfer to Madang airport for your flight to Port Moresby: **PX111 departs 0650 arrives 0750**

OR if you are taking the Sepik extension you can sleep a bit longer and transfer to the airport at 08:30 for your flight to Wewak: **PX128 departs 1125 arrives 1215**

On arrival in Port Moresby you will be met by staff from Ecotourism Melanesia and assisted to connect with your onward flight or other arrangements.

End of core tour package.

SEPIK RIVER EXTENSION 3 NIGHTS (minimum 4 bookings to operate)

DAY 11: SAT 24 AUG 2024



MADANG / WEWAK

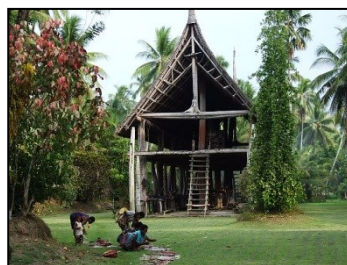
PX128 departs Madang 1125 arrives Wewak 1215

On arrival in Wewak you will be met by the hotel shuttle and our local guide for transfer to the hotel in time for lunch. *Lunch today is not included, please pay for your own lunch at the hotel.*

14:00 After lunch our local guide will take you for a drive around Wewak town area then 14km west of Wewak town to Cape Wom (Wom Beach) which is the site of the Wom Memorial Park, the location of the official Japanese WW2 surrender in New Guinea. At Wom are also the overgrown remains of the Wom WW2 airstrip, some caved in Japanese tunnels, and some preserved field guns.

Overnight Wewak includes breakfast

DAY 12: SUN 25 AUG 2024



WEWAK (Sepik River day trip)

05:00 Early breakfast in room

06:00 Pick up and road transfer 4 hours to Timunke OR Pagwi on the Middle Sepik (depending on road conditions).

10:00 On arrival at the river, board a motorised canoe and travel 30 minutes upstream to upstream to Kaminabit or downstream to Korogo.

After a village stop at Kaminabit or Korogo, continue upstream or downstream to today's destination - Kanganamun village which boasts the largest Spirit House on the Sepik. The Spirit House is packed with artifacts - some are made for sale while others are tribal heirlooms not available for sale. At the Spirit house you'll hear local guides talk about life along the river and especially the crocodile animist religion. Some men may show you the "crocodile skin bumps" on their backs and some young men who have recently been initiated may show you their fresh scars. Here at Kanganamun Spirit House you will also hear flute and drum players perform and a local style lunch will be served.

After lunch, take a walkaround tour of the village then motor back down or up river to the road head and transfer to your waiting vehicle for the drive back to Wewak, arriving at the hotel in time for late dinner.

Overnight Wewak includes breakfast

TRIP NOTE:

If enough members of the group are interested, it is possible to overnight at Kanganamun village and spend another day at the Sepik River instead of returning to Wewak and taking the next day trip to Wewak Islands. This would be at the same cost but will have to be a whole-group decision and decided in advance of arrival in PNG so that arrangements can be made.

Note that accommodation at Kanganamun village guest house is VERY basic, similar to camping ie sleep in sleeping bags, sponge bath with a bucket of water, outhouse pit toilet.

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DAY 13: MON 26 AUG 2024



WEWAK (day trip to the Wewak Islands)

07:00 Breakfast

07:30 Meet up at the lobby and walk down to the town beach with our guide to board a “banana” boat (large dinghy) for a 45 min ride to Sup (“soop”) Beach on the eastern side of Muschu Island. Here you’ll be welcomed with a coconut drink (the whole island is covered in plantations) and take a walking tour of Sup village. Then you will be given a choice of activities: either enjoy some beach time and relax in the shade under overhanging trees or in a waterside bungalow, or take a three hour round trip steamy jungle hike to see “the “Guns of Muschu” (see note below).

After a fish lunch the boat tour then continues across to the south side of Kairuru Island to see the catholic mission at St John and the hot springs at Victoria Bay.

17:00 return to Wewak

Overnight Wewak includes breakfast

TRIP NOTE:

Muschu is a lush tropical island around 15 km by 5 km, around five kilometres offshore from Wewak at its closest point. Low and flat, the island is covered in coconut plantations and marshy jungle, and fringed with beautiful white sandy beaches and colourful coral reefs. There are only a few villages. The island was occupied during WW2 by Japanese navy units who planted extensive vegetables on the western side of the island to grow fresh food to supply to their ships, submarines and the thousands of men in their garrison at Wewak. In September 1945 when the Imperial forces surrendered, the Australian army kept up to 10,000 Japanese prisoners of war on the island until they were repatriated to Japan in 1946.

On the eastern coastline of Muschu, facing the direction from which any allied sea invasion would supposedly have come, there are the remains of beach defences and on high ground inland from Sup Point a pair of large 140mm (5.5 inch) naval guns - never even test fired during the war for fear of revealing their hidden position to allied coast watchers - are still there pointing out to sea as they are too heavy to be removed. For more information about Muschu Island’s role in WW2 see www.gunsofmuschu.com

St John Catholic Mission on the south side of Kairuru Island was occupied by the Japanese navy during the war with over 3,000 personnel based there supporting submarines and seaplanes. Although there are few visible relics remaining, the coastline around St John is riddled with caves and tunnels dug by the Japanese to shelter from continuous allied bombing. Even in recent years, hidden caves with fuel drums and human remains have been uncovered.

DAY 14: TUE 27 AUG 2024



WEWAK / PORT MORESBY

05:00 Early breakfast and check out of In-Wewak Boutique Hotel

06:00 Transfer on the hotel shuttle to Wewak airport for your flight to Port Moresby

07:40 flight PX141 departs Wewak for Port Moresby arriving 09:00

On arrival in Port Moresby you will be met by staff from Ecotourism Melanesia and assisted to connect with your onward flight or other arrangements.