



Ecotourism Melanesia

Papua New Guinea & the South West Pacific

EM209R 2024 GOROKA SHOW ROAD TOUR 8 nights from WED11SEP-THU19SEP 2024
Core tour 8 nights Mt Hagen (2 nt) Goroka (3 nt) Madang (3 nt) **USD 4750 pp + flights**
Optional Sepik River extension 3 nights 19-22SEP **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.

The Goroka Show (also incorrectly called the Goroka Festival) is partly an agricultural show and partly a highlands sing-sing. Since colonial days the people of the Eastern Highlands have come together once a year to display samples of their best crops and livestock, and to show off their most colourful and energetic dance traditions. The pride of each tribe is vested in its dancing groups which vie for attention and prominence on the dance ground - often there are several groups performing at once in different corners of the sing-sing arena. Sparks fly occasionally as jealousy and the quest for first prize fuels competition between tribal groups. At the end of the Show, judges award prizes to the best performing groups. Cash awards have now taken the place of pigs.

This program offers independent solo travellers and couples the convenience of shared, managed arrangements for attending the Show and also adds some customised sightseeing around Mt Hagen, Madang and, optionally, Wewak and the Sepik River. The Goroka sector offers a selection of accommodation options - subject to availability at time of booking - and escorted excursions to the Goroka Show and associated attractions. 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.

Traditionally the Goroka Show runs Saturday and Sunday on the weekend closest to Independence Day (16th September each year). Our tour begins on the Wednesday before the Goroka Show weekend with your arrival in Mt Hagen in order to do some sightseeing around Mt Hagen and attend the famed Paiya village sing-sing on the Thursday. 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.

On the Friday the group will transfer by bus from Mt Hagen to Goroka with some interesting stops en route at the Omo Masalai skeleton tribe village, the Chimbu snake village and the Daulo Pass moss forest. Travelling into Goroka by road also avoids the flight chaos that plagues PNG on the Friday before each Independence holiday weekend (which typically sees many flights overbooked, cancelled and delayed) and ensures you arrive in time for the Show.

Other highlights of this tour that are best experienced in a group format like this include:

- Full day scenic road transfer Goroka to Madang
- Nature hike in Madang rainforest.
- Visit traditional villages in both highlands, coastal and riverine areas
- 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.



TOUR COST

	Budget accom option	Standard accom option Goroka: 2.5 star motel Mt Hagen/Madang/Wewak all 3.5 star hotel - <i>includes breakfast & most lunches</i>	Premier accom option	Deluxe accom option
CORE TOUR 8 NIGHTS ground package per person twin share	Not available	USD 4750 pp Single supplement USD 1180	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 availability of rooms at the time of booking. We do not block book hotels.
- Goroka has less than 200 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.
- Single supplement 25% includes sole occupancy and two seats on the tour bus and compensates us for loss of twin share revenue on the tour given that we only have limited rooms available.
- Star ratings are an approximate guide only and are not based on any published star rating system.
- Package prices are subject to change at any time prior to final payment if there is a major weakening in the PGK.
- To book a place on this tour please e-mail your request to ecotourism.melanesia@gmail.com We will then send you an availability confirmation and a quote. We will require a 25% deposit to hold your booking and secure your preferred accommodation, plus the amount in full of any flights you request us to purchase on your behalf. 75% balance of the ground tour package is due 6 weeks before arrival. Our normal terms and conditions apply (see page 2 of your invoice). An early-bird discount may be available if you pay in full at the time of booking - please enquire.

CORE TOUR 8 NIGHTS PACKAGE INCLUSIONS

- Port Moresby - meet and greet, assist with arrival connection
- Mt Hagen - meet and greet, transfer to accommodation
- Mt Hagen - complimentary afternoon sightseeing tour for early arrivals
- Mt Hagen - two nights accommodation and breakfast as per selected accommodation option
- Mt Hagen - full day excursion to Paiya village private sing-sing including lunch
- Mt Hagen - scenic road transfer to Goroka with sightseeing stops and lunch
- Goroka - three nights selected accommodation
- Goroka - two half day excursions to the Goroka Show with tourist pass, boxed lunch and bottled water
- Goroka - two afternoon excursions to local villages / attractions
- Goroka - scenic road transfer to Madang with boxed lunch
- Madang - three nights selected 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 trip with lunch
- 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 accommodation and breakfast at In-Wewak Boutique Hotel
- 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

- domestic airfares (arrange your own or we can supply at quoted cost)
- 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

ITINERARY

DAY 1: WED 11 SEP 2024



ARRIVE MT HAGEN

Arrive Mt Hagen by air from Port Moresby. For available flights see www.airniugini.com.pg and www.pngair.com
Your guide 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.
13:30 A complimentary sightseeing tour of Mt Hagen town is available for those who have arrived in Mt Hagen on a morning flight.

Overnight Highlander Hotel, Mt Hagen includes breakfast

DAY 2: THU 12 SEP 2024



MT HAGEN (Paiya sing-sing and Magic Mountain)

08:00 Depart the hotel for a scenic drive out through typical highlands countryside to Paiyakona (Paiya) village where a private sing-sing performance for overseas visitors is held the Thursday before each Goroka Show. Arriving before the sing-sing commences you will be able to 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 Goroka Show on the weekend.

The Paiya sing-sing includes a local style lunch 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 Goroka 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 Highlander Hotel, Mt Hagen includes breakfast



DAY 3: FRI 13 SEP 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 enroute.

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 huddle 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 2.5 star motel accommodation, Goroka includes breakfast

DAY 4: SAT 14 SEP 2024



GOROKA (Goroka Show + village excursion)

07:00 Breakfast

07:30-08:00 Pick up from your accommodation for transfer to the show grounds in time to photograph some of the performing groups getting dressed then settle into your seat ready for the start of the sing-sing program around 09:00.

The tourist seating has good views of the performance area and your tourist pass (provided as part of your tour package) gives you blanket permission to enter the performance area if you wish to take close-up photographs. Special toilets for tourists are situated nearby.

A number of our guides will accompany our group today to interpret the performances for you. Bottled water is supplied.

12:00 A boxed lunch is served at the show ground (eg pizza or Chinese).

14:00 Depart from the Show grounds and head straight to a local village about 45 minutes drive out of town. This is a typical semi-rural highlands village with round huts made of bush materials, smoky cooking fires and pigs and chickens wandering around. At the village some traditional-style food is available for tasting and you'll see local people engaged in a variety of typical daily activities. Many of the locals grow organic coffee on smallholder blocks for their income.

17:30 Drop off at your accommodation.

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

NB The Bird of Paradise Hotel is closed for a private function (the Show Ball) on the Saturday evening of the Show weekend.

Overnight 2.5 star motel accommodation, Goroka includes breakfast

DAY 5: SUN 15 SEP 2024



GOROKA (Goroka Show + Asaro Mudmen)

07:00 Breakfast

07:30-08:00 Pick up from your accommodation for the second day at the Goroka Show as per yesterday.

14:00 Depart from the Show grounds and drive 30 minutes out the Highlands Highway through the Asaro Valley to Asaro village to see a performance of the Asaro mudmen in their home environment. Yes it's staged just for you and it's a little corny but it's brilliant entertainment and fantastic photography in the forest setting without the festival crowds and fences in the background.

17:30 Drop off at your accommodation.

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 2.5 star motel accommodation, Goroka includes breakfast



DAY 6: MON 16 SEP 2024



GOROKA / MADANG (scenic road transfer)

(Public holiday today for Independence Day celebrations - your guide may give you the option of a later departure to Madang in order to watch the Independence Day parade in Goroka first)

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 Resort Hotel, Madang includes breakfast

DAY 7: TUE 17 SEP 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.

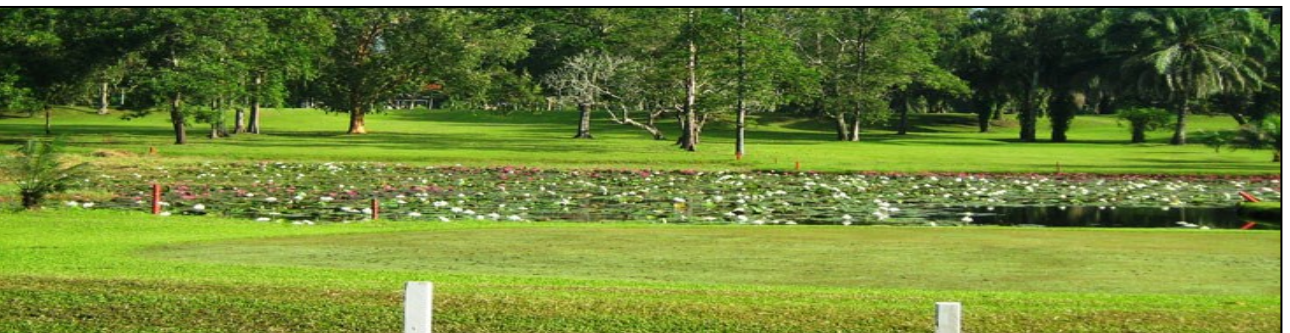
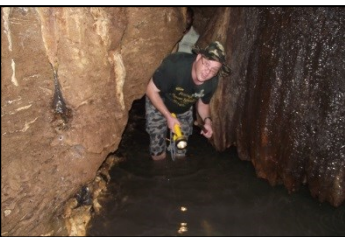
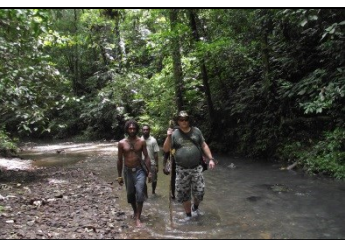
The tour will take in the Madang inner harbour and port with its sheltered waterways and tidal lagoons and also the giant outer Madang Lagoon which has many small islands, some inhabited by village communities while others are home to birds and crabs only.

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 Resort Hotel, Madang includes breakfast



DAY 8: WED 18 SEP 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 Resort Hotel, Madang includes breakfast

DAY 9: THU 19 SEP 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 1025 arrives 1115**

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 (minimum 4 bookings to operate)

DAY 9: THU 19 SEP 2024



MADANG / WEWAK

PX128 departs Madang 1025 arrives Wewak 1115

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.

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 In-Wewak Boutique Hotel, Wewak (includes breakfast)

DAY 10: FRI 20 SEP 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 - Kanganaman 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 Kanganaman 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 In-Wewak Boutique Hotel, Wewak (includes breakfast)



TRIP NOTE:

If enough members of the group are interested, it is possible to overnight at Kanganaman 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 Kanganaman village guest house is VERY basic, similar to camping ie sleep in sleeping bags, sponge bath with a bucket of water, outhouse toilet.



DAY 11: SAT 21 SEP 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 In-Wewak Boutique Hotel, 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 12: SUN 22 SEP 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.