



# Ecotourism Melanesia

Discover Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands

## EM17 TUFU WEEKENDER 3 NIGHTS

### SOFT ADVENTURE PACKAGE FOR INDEPENDENT TRAVELLERS

3 nights ex-Port Moresby (2 nights Tufi Resort, 1 night village guest house)

#### INTRODUCTION



This Weekender package enables visitors to experience an overnight and a full day in one of the beautiful villages of the Tufi district of Oro (Northern) Province - without doubt PNG's number one all-rounder destination for visitors.

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, Queen Alexandra's Birdwing, is found in sweet potato gardens around Tufi. 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 coloured feather headdresses. Villagers in the Tufi district are 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. There is a map of Tufi 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.

Our Tufi Weekender package includes compulsory Friday and Sunday nights at the Tufi Resort (due to flight schedules) while the Saturday night and all of Sunday is spent at one of the local villages offering an amazing cultural immersion experience, some soft adventure activities and accommodation in a Spartan but clean and comfy local style leaf house with some delicious village food.

The ground package cost includes three nights accommodation, all meals, local guides and all the activities suggested in the itinerary that you can manage.

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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 1950   | USD 1300     | USD 1150     | USD 950     |
| Single room supplement**       | N/A        | USD 250      | USD 250      | USD 250     |
| Airfare supplement POM-TFI-POM | USD 330    | USD 330      | USD 330      | USD 330     |

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

\*\* Optional single supplement for single room

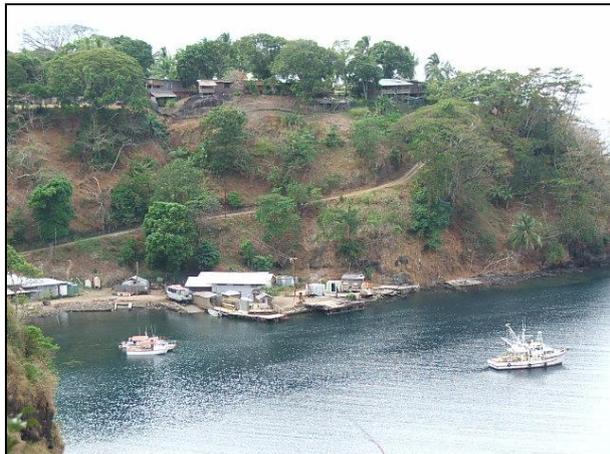
Prices subject to change but otherwise valid till end 2022

## PACKAGE INCLUSIONS

- Port Moresby - airport check-in assistance by Ecotourism Melanesia staff
- Tufi - arrival meet and greet by Tufi Resort staff
- Tufi - 2 nights deluxe room accommodation 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 - 1 night village guest house accommodation including local style meals
- Tufi - village sing-sing performance
- Tufi - full day village activities as per itinerary options including and local guide, access to beaches, reefs and nature sites, use of outrigger canoe, gratuities for demonstrators, paddlers and other helpers
- Tufi - motor boat transfer back to Tufi Resort

## EXCLUSIONS

- Airfare to Tufi and return (pay supplement)
- Any additional activities not offered in the itinerary
- Snacks and bar drinks at Tufi Resort
- Excess baggage charges



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## ITINERARY

### DAY 1: FRIDAY



### PORT MORESBY / TUFI RESORT

13:00 Check in at Port Moresby domestic airport.

14:45 Airlines PNG flight CG1674 departs Port Moresby for Tufi via Popondetta, arriving 16:20 (aircraft: Dash 8-300)

Tufi Adventure Resort staff will meet you on arrival. It is a short walk from the airfield to the resort and your bags will be transported by tractor and trailer. Check in at Tufi Resort [www.tufidive.com](http://www.tufidive.com)

Overnight Tufi Resort (3 star deluxe room, includes main meals).

### DAY 2: SATURDAY



### TUFI RESORT / JEBO BEACH

This morning a half day activity at Tufi 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 Tufi 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 Tufi 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 Tufi Resort - it is situated on a cliff overlooking Tufi Fjord (Tufi 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 Tufi "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 - Tufi Fjord.

13:00 After lunch 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. This package allows a choice of accommodation:

(1) **Jebo Beach Bungalow.** Here you will sleep in a bungalow on the beach, or on the hill behind the beach about 200m away in tiny Jebo village (only about 6 houses). The beach is just a few steps from the bungalow - the water is shallow, calm and protected, perfect for wading and shallow bathing. There are occasional small sting-rays hiding in the sand so splash

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around a bit when you enter the water, to scare them off and they will be gone for the rest of the day. Please note that Jebo Beach is a community beach and 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.

(2) **Orotoaba Village Guest House.** Orotoaba village (pronounced *orotwaba*) is a 45 minute hike uphill from Jebo Beach. It is 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 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. Of course, this is exactly what you have come to see if you are the type of traveller who selects Orotoaba for your overnight ☺.

Regardless of which guest house you sleep in you will still be able to tour both villages and experience any activities available at either village.

After settling in to your guest house the remainder of the afternoon will be spent strolling around the village with your hosts to meeting the people, maybe joining in a late afternoon volleyball match, enjoying a dip in the warm sea water off Jebo Beach, observing your dinner being prepared in a "bush kitchen" and watching 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. After dinner the 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 on the beach or 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, (Jebo or Orotoaba) - 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)

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## DAY 3: SUNDAY



## JEBO BEACH / TUFI RESORT

Spend most of today at the village enjoying the range of activities available. 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 Saturday evening after dinner and say: "Here's what we would be interested in doing tomorrow: ..." and your hosts will bend over backwards to make it happen for you.

Here is a menu of activities generally available at Jebo and Orotoaba depending on the weather:

- early morning bird watching - there is a known nesting spot of a flock of Raggiana birds of paradise about 30 minutes walk inland from Orotoaba - the birds are most active early morning and late afternoon
- if you are a churchgoer, or even if you are not, the locals will be delighted to welcome you at their church service on Sunday morning. Most villages in this area have an Anglican (Episcopalian) church and there are also a few little Catholic and United (Wesleyan) Church congregations. Some parts of the service may be conducted in English, other parts in Pidgin, and other segments like the sermon may be in local dialect. The people sing traditional hymns with glorious Melanesian harmonies - there is no organ! - and there are sometimes special items presented by the children and youth.
- walk around the village with your local host, meeting the villagers and seeing what they are doing - this is best done after church is out so as not to cause a distraction to those in church
- 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 (mask and snorkel is provided by Ecotourism Melanesia or the village guest house)
- 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 before turning into the Ibura fjord and paddling to the canoe tie-up point directly below Orotoaba, leave the canoe and scramble up the steep path to the village - this is a difficult climb which even mountain goats would find tough so don't attempt this unless you are a confident climber - the villagers make it look easy but they know all the foot-holds by heart. (2 hours one way Jebo to Orotoaba)
- paddle with locals at the helm north from Jebo to Tainabuna or south to Sinepara then leave the canoe and hike with a guide across the fjord spurs to Orotoaba, passing through various small villages and capturing excellent views (4 hours activity, medium difficulty hiking but no steep climbs)
- 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 Mortein at least 24 hours before

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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.

- 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.

- 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 and starch but low in protein and other nutrients so children who eat a lot of sago every day feel “full” but are not getting a balanced diet.

- 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.

- if you are interested in traditional fishing practices the local boys will be absolutely delighted to take you out in their canoes and show you how they fish with hand lines over the reef for snapper and coral trout, and how they skin dive with home-made spear guns using bamboo slivers or sharpened umbrella spokes as spears. Naturally they will also be thrilled to give you a turn. If you happen to arrive armed with a couple of waterproof flashlights and batteries you will be virtually guaranteed charcoal lobster for breakfast or lunch after the boys spend a few hours night diving out on the reef.

- 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.

17:00 Pickup at Jebo Beach and transfer direct back to Tufi Resort by motor launch.

Overnight Tufi Resort (3 star deluxe, includes dinner and breakfast).

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## DAY 4: MONDAY



### TUFI / PORT MORESBY

07:00 Check your baggage at the airline counter located within the resort then walk to the airstrip.

08:35 Airlines PNG flight CG1673 departs Tufi for Port Moresby via Popondetta, arriving 10:10 (aircraft: Dash 8-300)

#### ***TOUR NOTE: Payment for services at the village***

*Note that all of the activities offered in the itinerary are included in your package 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 is asking for direct payment from you for any of the activities offered in this itinerary 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 the itinerary (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.*

**See other trip notes next page.**

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## TRIP NOTES:

1. **Logistical constraints.** Due to the late arriving flight on Friday afternoon and the early departing flight on Monday morning it is only possible to have one night in the village guest house on this package.
2. **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.
3. **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. Your sleeping bag or sheet will also protect you from mosquitoes although mosquito nets are also provided at the village guesthouses.
4. **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.
5. **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.
6. **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).
7. **Food.** The food that will be offered to you at the village guest house 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.
8. **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 village. You may take your own supply with you if you wish (bring from Port Moresby or purchase from the bar at the Tufi Resort).
9. **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.
10. **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 medicine) during your visit to PNG and we recommend that you take a course of presumptive treatment home with. After your trip to PNG 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.

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