



# Ecotourism Melanesia

Discover Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands

**EM20 - SOGERI JUNGLE VILLAGE TREKKING** - guided hiking for independent travellers  
Choose from 2 days/1 night, 3 days/2 nights, 4 days/3 nights, 5 days/4 nights or 6 days/5 nights itineraries

## INTRODUCTION

This trekking program in the rainforested foothills of the Owen Stanley Range inland from Port Moresby offers a choice of walk durations. The shortest is a one day hike from Sogeri to the first village and return. The longest is a 6 days/5 nights south-easterly trek from Sogeri township on the cool Sogeri Plateau down to the Kemp Welch River near the township of Kwikila in the Rigo district. In between are itineraries for 1, 2, 3 or 4 nights, offered either by backtracking part of the route or by exiting the jungle by another route. The walking is challenging (think: muddy trails, slippery rocks, many creek crossings) but most of the route is either flat ground or net downhill gradient. Each day the trekking progresses from one jungle village to the next, initially following the Unoa Creek valley downstream and descending from about 500m altitude at Sogeri to less than 50m at Kwikila.

The vegetation at the higher starting altitude is cool sub-montane forest which soon gives way to steamy tropical lowlands jungle and finally light bushy scrub on the Rigo plains. Much of the walking is under the forest canopy without too much burning sun. The last day of the 5 night trek involves a ride down the Kemp Welch River on a raft or dinghy to Kwikila and finishes with a one hour drive back to Port Moresby. Fortunately the villages along this route are suitably spaced for a half day of walking each day, allowing time for resting up during the daily late afternoon downpour and learning something of the traditional culture and subsistence lifestyle of the hardy Koiari bush people. Despite the tough walking (often 4 out of 5 difficulty level), limiting the daily hiking to half a day duration makes the trek achievable and enjoyable for experienced bushwalkers.



The village people en route are shy but welcoming and generous people, some of whom may have had limited contact with westerners before. English is spoken by some of the villagers who have a primary school education. Others may speak only *Motu*. Unlike commercialised treks such as the Kokoda Track which involve lugging all camp food and gear with a huge train of carriers, our eco-trekking approach here is to leave as small a footprint as possible, walking light by sleeping rough in village huts (no tents) and eating jungle food provided by villagers along the way. This puts more cash into the pockets

of the local people, who have very few other ways to earn money in their isolated villages that are impossibly isolated from city produce markets. For most of the trekking you'll eat whatever the villagers have on hand which will be lots of fresh vegetables, tropical fruit and the occasional bit of game meat. To avoid carrying and discarding dozens of empty drink bottles, we'll supply drinking water from pristine mountain springs, sterilised if you wish by boiling, chemical tablets or U/V steriliser. Bathing is in the creeks and toilets are basic pit latrines at the villages or poop-and-bury stops along the walking routes. Don't worry you'll cope ☺

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## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Koiari bush people are an inland tribe native to the Central Province of Papua New Guinea. Their tribal lands extend to the north and south of Sogeri, their district headquarters.

To the east, Koiari lands are bounded by the Owen Stanley mountain range - on the other side of the range are the lands of the Orokaiva people of Oro Province, with whom they Koiari people have friendly relations because there is little competition for resources between two tribes separated by mountain peaks.

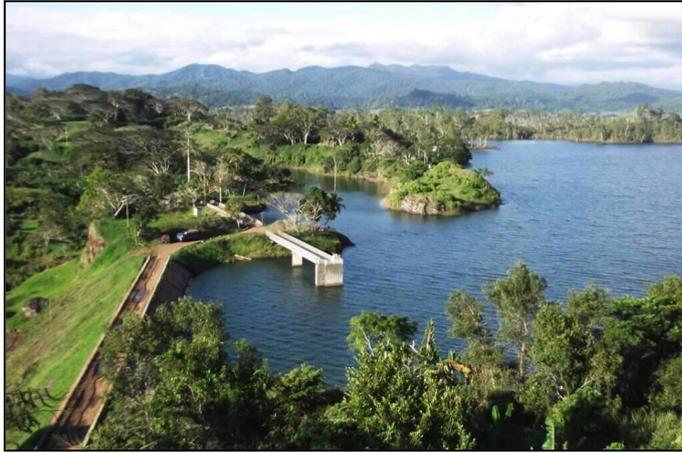
To the west, Koiari lands are bound by the coastal strip inhabited by the Hiri Motu people who largely live in stilt villages over the water. Much of the coastal strip has now been subsumed by the City of Port Moresby, surrounding developments and peri-urban shanty towns where poor immigrants from other provinces settle. The coastal Hiri Motu people and the inland Koiari bush people speak the same language, Motu, which is one of PNG's three official languages and is also widely understood by people from other provinces. (The other two official languages are English and *Tok Pisin* (Pidgin English)). The daily greeting in Motu is "Oi namo?" (are you okay?), to which the normal reply is "Lau namo" (I'm okay).

North of Sogeri, Koiari lands extend as far as Mt Victoria and almost to Kokoda town. The northern Koiari landscape and economy is dominated by the Kokoda Track and the associated trekking tourism industry. There is some small scale gold mining and, unfortunately, logging of sub-montane forest by Asian forestry companies holding dubious logging permits.



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The southern Koiari landscape is dominated by the Sirinumu Reservoir, a huge artificial lake created in 1963 when the Upper Laloki River was dammed by the Australian colonial administration in order to create a gravity-flow water source to drive the hydro-electric power stations built further down-river as well as a drinking water reservoir for Port Moresby city. While some villages and gardens had to be relocated for the flooding of the Upper Laloki River valley and surrounding lands, the land-owners were well compensated and the overall benefit from the reservoir to both city dwellers and the Koiari people has been significant. The lake has attracted water birds new to the area,

and is now stocked with freshwater fish for the villagers to catch. There are even some fish farms operating in protected nooks of the lake. Some of the villages closer to Sogeri now have electricity connected. Royalty payments from both the electricity company and the water company have been distributed to the Sirinumu area landowners and have also been used for community projects. However on the far (southern) side of Lake Sirinumu there is a vast tract of untouched sub-montane jungle where there has been hardly any development since pre-colonial days, despite being only 20 minutes from the capital city by helicopter. Here there are isolated villages that still have no road access, no airstrip and the only way in or out is by following footpaths and river beds north to Sogeri or south to Kwikila township. Indeed development in these jungle villages has been limited to whatever the men and women can carry in or out on foot, and thus you may be amazed to see village churches sporting long sheets of roofing iron!



Despite thousands of tourists trekking the Kokoda Track in the northern Koiari forests every year, the southern jungles have remained untouched, with only local people and the occasional intrepid health worker plodding the footpaths in and out. The landowners here are firmly against logging and have so far managed to keep the greedy loggers out despite occasional attempts to bribe one landowner to convince the others. Tourism has never been explored in this area before due to preoccupation with the Kokoda Track which stretches out northwards from Sogeri without much impact on the southern Koiari bush people at all apart from the few who gain work as trekking carriers during the peak tourist season April to September.

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## TREK HISTORY

Ecotourism Melanesia had several purposes for commencing small-scale eco-trekking in southern Koiari lands as a new tourism experience in PNG:

1. To meet continuing steady demand from overseas visitors for guided village-to-village walks in rural areas among traditionally-oriented people not yet jaded by tourism or other development activities. (There are of course plenty of places in PNG where you can walk between villages but some are not safe, some are logistically difficult to get to and uneconomical to organise, and some require a lot of travel time and cost just to fly out to the starting point in another province... however - bingo! - we found an ideal rural trekking location right on Port Moresby's doorstep).
2. To provide a livelihood for one of our former employees, Andrew, who lives at Boredabu, the first village on the far side of Lake Sirinumu. He and his wife Honey have relatives and "wantoks" in all the villages along the trekking route which has facilitated a happy agreement between all concerned to begin hosting small numbers of walkers through the southern Koiari forests. Andrew and Honey will arrange and manage each trip, and where possible also personally guide each trek.
3. To put money in the pockets of the village people en route in as many ways possible eg by paying local guides, paying village entry fees, paying for shelter, paying for local food both cooked and uncooked, paying for village entertainment and paying for materials and help for building rafts.

After scouting the route with our operations manager in early 2018, Andrew and Honey welcomed the first overseas trekkers, a honeymoon couple from Switzerland, to walk the route in July 2018. They really enjoyed the trek and have offered to provide recommendations to other hikers: Mr Lorenzo Giarré [Lorenzo@giarre.org](mailto:Lorenzo@giarre.org) Not long afterwards the next walker, an intrepid Englishwoman tackled the route and was likewise thrilled and would like to promote it to others: Ms Victoria Barclay [vic@victoriabarclay.co.uk](mailto:vic@victoriabarclay.co.uk)



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## TREK FEATURES

How does this Koiari jungle villages trekking differ from the Kokoda Track?

1. You walk on your own or in your own small group with our village guides, not with a group of strangers and not with a foreign guide. And there is a female guide too.
2. You get a candid experience of local village life, forest and wildlife in an undeveloped area, unlike Kokoda Track which is traversed by up to 20,000 walkers each year including tourists (5000) plus many thousands of carriers and local people trudging between Popondetta/Kokoda and Port Moresby. The local people in the Kokoda Track villages hardly even look up any more when trekkers pass through.
3. There are no WW2 relics or historical monuments EXCEPT for the aircraft wreck on the way to the second village. There is some old rock art to be seen on the 4 night trip EM20E.
4. You get a challenging walking holiday featuring a variety of terrains, gradients and walking surfaces but the trek has a nett downhill gradient and does not have the same gruelling steep climbs and descents as the Kokoda Track.
5. There is no team of porters to carry all your food and camping gear. You carry your own small 10kg pack with your clothes and essentials and our guides will carry other basic necessities like first aid kit and wet weather gear.
6. Most food on this trip will be supplied by the village people en route, unlike the Kokoda Track where there are now so many trekkers the villages cannot feed them all so Kokoda trekking groups have to bring all their own food (usually army ration packs imported from Australia).
7. The environment on this trek is absolutely untouched, unlike the Kokoda Track which now has footbridges, public toilets, airfields and cleared camping grounds. We aim to keep it pristine by managing the trekking here in a way that causes minimum impact on the beautiful forest and also causes minimum disturbance to the traditional lifestyle of the people living here.
8. We aim to put money in the pockets of the village people en route in as many ways as possible eg by paying village entry fees, paying for shelter, paying for local food both cooked and uncooked, paying for village entertainment - as opposed to Kokoda Track walking groups which bring all their own food and camp in tents.



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## EM20 TREKKING ITINERARY VARIATIONS

### **EM20A**

1 day hike Sogeri to Boredabu (6 hours walking) and return same day by boat/car

### **EM20B**

2 days / 1 night hike Sogeri to Boredabu (overnight) and hike back to Sogeri next day

### **EM20C**

3 days / 2 nights hike Sogeri to Boredabu (overnight) to Anadabu (overnight) and return to Sogeri on Day 3

### **EM20D**

4 days / 3 nights hike Sogeri to Boredabu (overnight) to Anadabu (overnight) to lawarere (overnight) and pick up at Mororo Plantation on Day 4

### **EM20E**

5 days / 4 nights hike Sogeri to Boredabu (overnight) to Anadabu (overnight) to Avitana (overnight) to Lonidairi (overnight) and pick up at Gomore on Day 5

### **EM20F**

6 days / 5 nights hike Sogeri to Boredabu (overnight) to Anadabu (overnight) to lovei (overnight) to Medeme (overnight) to Kwale (overnight) and pick up at Kwikila on Day 6

## PRICING PER PERSON

	Group of 1	Group of 2	Group of 4	Group of 6+
<b>EM20A</b> 1 day Sogeri-Boredabu return	USD 720	USD 450	USD 315	USD 270
<b>EM20B</b> 2 days / 1 night Sogeri-Boredabu return	USD 975	USD 610	USD 425	USD 365
<b>EM20C</b> 3 days / 2 nights Sogeri-Anadabu return	USD 1825	USD 1400	USD 1020	USD 935
<b>EM20D</b> 4 days / 3 nights Sogeri to Mororo	USD 2210	USD 1660	USD 1235	USD 1060
<b>EM20E</b> 5 days / 4 nights Sogeri to Gomore	USD 2765	USD 2165	USD 1485	USD 1315
<b>EM20F</b> 6 days / 5 nights Sogeri to Kwikila	USD 3270	USD 2380	USD 1655	USD 1400
Extra night Boredabu (incl meals, activities)	USD 100	USD 100	USD 100	USD 100

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**TREK MAP (may be enlarged in PDF reader to show more detail)**



NOT TO SCALE  
HEIGHTS IN FEET

● = pass-through villages / waypoints		Road
● = villages used for overnight stops		Foot track or walking route
● = river confluence / junction		

**TREK ITINERARY EM20A - 1 DAY HIKE SOGERI TO FIRST JUNGLE VILLAGE AND RETURN BY BOAT/CAR**  
(walking difficulty 3/5)

Pick up at your hotel at 7am and drive with our staff driver/guide 1 hour inland and up the winding road through the scenic Rouna Gorge to tiny Sogeri township on the Sogeri Plateau, a green oasis of fertile farmland and forested mountains 500 meters above the steamy coastal heat of Port Moresby. The climate here is temperate, the terrain is scenic and the local people are friendly and welcoming. Late afternoon rains are common so it's good to start day-hikes early and arrive before the daily downpour.



At Sogeri our driver will introduce you to your Koiari guides who will be waiting for you on the roadside. The walk to Boredabu village will take 5 to 6 hours, following the old Eilogo Road which is basically a bush track that only four wheel drive vehicles and large lorries can negotiate most of the year due to the soft soil and clay surface which rapidly turns to mush whenever it rains. The track skirts around the eastern shore of Lake Sirinumu passing through a range of terrains including rolling grassy hills with lovely mountain views, light rainforest jungle, shady plantations of rubber trees, swampy gullies and village gardens. You'll meet a few local people walking to and from Sogeri or their gardens - there is only one large village to walk

through (Ogotana) before reaching Boredabu but there are also a number of small family-sized hamlets. The people plant produce gardens or tend small blocks of rubber trees.

Our driver will bring sandwiches from Port Moresby for you and your guides to eat for lunch along the way, and bottled water is provided.

Mid-afternoon you'll arrive at Boredabu and hopefully have time for a refreshing swim in the creek and a quick tour around the village before the afternoon rain shower. A refreshing coconut drink and some fresh fruit is provided for an afternoon snack and then you need to get moving back to Sogeri. There will not be enough time to walk back all the way to Sogeri so you'll walk only 1 hour along a different track to the small lakeside hamlet of Forokota (which the locals jokingly mispronounce as "Four Quarter") where a motor boat has been organised to take you on a short cut across the lake (30 min) to the Dam wall where our car will be waiting to drive you back to Port Moresby arriving in time for dinner at your hotel. Umbrellas and rain poncho's are provided for the journey back because odds-on it will rain.



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**TREK ITINERARY EM20B - 2 DAYS / 1 NIGHT HIKE SOGERI TO FIRST JUNGLE VILLAGE AND RETURN**  
(walking difficulty 3/5)

**Day 1 - Road transfer Port Moresby to Sogeri then hike to first jungle village "Boredabu"**

Pick up at your hotel at 7am and drive with our staff driver/guide 1 hour inland and up the winding road through the scenic Rouna Gorge to tiny Sogeri township on the Sogeri Plateau, a green oasis of fertile farmland and forested mountains 500 meters above the steamy coastal heat of Port Moresby. The climate here is temperate, the terrain is scenic and the local people are friendly and welcoming. Late afternoon rains are common so it's good to start day-hikes early and arrive before the daily downpour.



At Sogeri our driver will introduce you to your Koiari guides who will be waiting for you on the roadside. The walk to Boredabu village will take 5 to 6 hours, following the old Eilogo Road which is basically a bush track that only four wheel drive vehicles and large lorries can negotiate most of the year due to the soft soil and clay surface which rapidly turns to mush whenever it rains. The track skirts around the eastern shore of Lake Sirinumu passing through a range of terrains including rolling grassy hills with lovely mountain views, light rainforest jungle, shady plantations of rubber trees, swampy gullies and village gardens. You'll meet a few local people walking to and from Sogeri or their gardens - there is only one large village to walk through (Ogotana) before reaching Boredabu but there are also a number of small family-sized hamlets. The people plant produce gardens or

tend small blocks of rubber trees. Our driver will bring sandwiches from Port Moresby for you and your guides to eat for lunch along the way, and bottled water is provided.

Mid-afternoon you'll arrive at Boredabu and hopefully have time for a refreshing swim in the creek before the afternoon rain shower. You'll "check in" at the little guest hut where trekkers overnight, and your guide will waltz you around the village to meet some of the 300 people living here.

A refreshing coconut drink and some fresh fruit is provided for an afternoon snack and later in the evening there will be a hot meal based on coconut rice with local vegetables and possibly some chicken or fresh tilapia fish from the lake. Boredabu is the last village with relatively easy access to shops so this is probably the last place that you will be served rice or tinned food. There is intermittent electricity connected to the village and a rainwater tank outside your hut for showering, with a guest toilet out back (a long drop with "thunder box" to sit on). Bedding provided is a mattress on the floor with clean sheets and pillow, all covered by a mosquito net, and if the power is on an electric fan will keep you cool as you sleep.

Overnight guest hut, Boredabu Village (includes food and boiled water)

**Day 2 - Hike (or boat/car) back to Sogeri and road transfer back to Port Moresby**

This morning after breakfast commence the return hike to Sogeri with your village guides, arriving early afternoon. The guides will carry some snacks and our driver will bring some lunch for you from Port Moresby. Board the vehicle for the return drive to Port Moresby arriving by 5pm.

Alternatively you may wish to spend the whole morning in the village and return by boat and car instead.

In this case you could use the extra time at the village to visit the village primary school (where the students will be excited to greet you and sing a welcome song for you and show you around their classrooms), and take a walk along a jungle path to the gardens to see the types of vegetables and fruit grown here for home consumption and for market sale. The Sogeri Plateau is a perfect climate for growing a wide range of both tropical and temperate varieties of fruit and vegetables. Pineapples grow especially well here and are farmed by hand and taken to Port Moresby markets where a jumbo-sized pineapple can sell for PGK50 (USD15). The demand for quality local fresh fruit and vegetables in Port Moresby is very high. Time also to cool off with a swim in the creek then have lunch before hiking 1 hour along a different track to the small lakeside hamlet of Forokota. A motor boat will take you from here on a short cut across the lake (30 min) to the dam wall where our car will be waiting to drive you back to Port Moresby. Umbrellas and rain poncho's are provided for the journey back because odds-on it will rain.

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**TREK ITINERARY EM20C - 3 DAYS / 2 NIGHTS HIKE SOGERI TO TWO JUNGLE VILLAGES AND RETURN**  
(walking difficulty 3/5)

**Day 1 - Road transfer Port Moresby to Sogeri then hike to first jungle village "Boredabu"**

See details in EM20B above

**Day 2 - Hike to second jungle village "Anadabu"**

After a breakfast of fried bananas, fried sweet potato chips or similar you will depart Boredabu around 8am, taking 4-5 hours of moderately difficult walking (3/5) along a well trodden footpath to reach Anadabu village by lunchtime. The first part of the walk is a challenging descent from the Sogeri Plateau (500m), on which Boredabu is situated, down a steep gully to the Unoa Creek below. The footpath then follows the creek downstream on a more gradual slope in a generally south east direction all the way through to Anadabu.

*\*About ¾ of the way to Anadabu there is an optional detour off the main track into the bush to visit to the scene of a WW2 plane crash. This adds about 90 min to the walking time to Anadabu and is only worth it if you are a WW2 history buff or aviation enthusiast because the plane disintegrated on impact and broke into pieces. A local man has collected all the small parts scattered over a wide area and piled them up into a heap of twisted bits of metal. The aircraft is known to be American but the circumstances of the crash are not known. Local information is that upon discovering the wreck during the war, villagers buried the the pilot at the site and his remains were later recovered by military authorities but apparently the site has not been visited by outsiders again since that time so the wreck may not be officially catalogued.*



Boredabu and Anadabu are of course next-door neighbours and the people know each other very well. The Anadabu villagers have to walk via Boredabu every time they travel to Sogeri or Port Moresby. Indeed there are many links between the two villages: extended family, inter-marriage, church fellowship, sports competition and social occasions like fundraising fetes.

At Anadabu you'll be accommodated in the home of Honey's sister who married an Anadabu man and settled here.

You will notice that Anadabu is actually divided into two halves with about 10 minutes' walk between each half.

This is due to villagers' preference to build their homes closest to the church they attend - at Anadabu the two church denominations are United (Wesleyan/Methodist tradition) and the Seventh-Day Adventists (SDA).

In these isolated villages there are short church services every morning and every evening, which are reasonably well attended as there is not much else to do here 😊.

Spend the afternoon with the people of Anadabu (population 200) and see how they survive in a jungle village with no road in or out.

Overnight village hut, Anadabu village (includes all food and boiled water)



**Day 3 - Hike back to Boredabu then transfer by boat and car to Port Moresby**

After breakfast hike 6 hrs back to Boredabu (uphill) and have lunch there then walk 1 hour down to Forokota on the water's edge and cross the lake by motor boat to the dam where our car and driver will be waiting for you. Transfer 1 hour back to Port Moresby arriving at your hotel in time for dinner.

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**TREK ITINERARY 20D - 4 DAYS / 3 NIGHTS CIRCULAR HIKE SOGERI TO THREE JUNGLE VILLAGES AND EXIT AT MORORO PLANTATION**  
(walking difficulty 4/5)

**Day 1 - Road transfer Port Moresby to Sogeri then hike to first jungle village “Boredabu”**  
See details in EM20B above

**Day 2 - Hike to second jungle village “Anadabu”**  
See details in EM20C above

**Day 3 - Hike to third jungle village “lawarere”**

From Anadabu the foot-track splits three ways: to the left a challenging cross country hike takes you through wild uninhabited territory through to the Didord Creek valley and up to lawarere Village and Maroro Plantation, (2) to the right an easier, downhill trek route takes another 2 nights to exit you via Avitana to the Magi Highway and (3) straight ahead the foot track continues south-east following the Unoa Creek for another 3 nights exiting down the Kemp Welch River at Kwikila township.



Today you'll be taking the road less travelled and hacking your way through jungle to get to lawarere. You'll be making an early start for up to 8 hours challenging bushwalking through thick jungle forest with footpaths undefined at times due to not many locals traversing this route (it's quicker/easier for them to walk out via other routes). The first half of the easterly sector of today's hiking involves a steep climb over a ridge then down to the Aieme River. Although this is the same watercourse that goes right up to lawarere it is not possible to follow the river at this point because it is very meandering and boxed in by steep sided gullies. After crossing Aieme River there is another steep climb across the north shoulder of the un-named range marked 2251 feet on your map and then down into the Didord Creek valley where you'll take a left turn and follow the

creek north west (downstream) to its confluence with Aieme River which you'll then follow upstream from here to lawarere. Luckily, your guide knows the way!

Aieme Creek (as it is known further upstream) is a wider water course running through more open terrain but you will still have to criss-cross the water at various points where the footpath peters out, and walk along sand banks on the inside of the bends. As you get closer to lawarere where the people are making their gardens there are wider, clearer footpaths which make for faster easier walking for the last hour right through to the village. There will be multiple tributary creek crossings today, the usual muddy/slippery patches and since this route is not frequently used by locals the foot track may be overgrown and impassable in places, requiring detours and some hacking through the undergrowth with machetes. Accordingly we score today's walking as a 4.5 out of 5 for difficulty with some risk of walking in the dark before arriving at the destination if walking conditions are more difficult than expected (or if you are limping ☺). Head-lamps are supplied but if you feel this sector will be too difficult for you, your guides will be happy to walk you out from Anadabu back to Boredabu for one night then down to Port Moresby the next day.

Overnight village hut, lawarere Village (includes all food and boiled water)

**Day 4 - Hike to Mororo Plantation and road transfer back to Sogeri and Port Moresby**

Departing lawarere after breakfast and probably trailing a group of excited village kids, follow the well-used footpath to the road head at Mororo, a plantation which has been growing rubber trees since colonial days. Our pickup vehicle will aim to be waiting for you at Mororo by 10am but if you don't see any welcome wagon when you stumble out of the last bit of jungle, don't panic as it won't be far away. With any luck you'll then have a straightforward drive back to Port Moresby, arriving in time for late lunch at your hotel.

## TREK ITINERARY 20E - 5 DAYS / 4 NIGHTS ONE WAY HIKE SOGERI TO FOUR JUNGLE VILLAGES AND EXIT AT GOMORE

(walking difficulty 4/5)

### **Day 1 - Road transfer Port Moresby to Sogeri then hike to first jungle village “Boredabu”**

See details in EM20B above

### **Day 2 - Hike to second jungle village “Anadabu”**

See details in EM20C above

### **Day 3 - Hike to third jungle village “Avitana”**

From Anadabu the foot-track splits three ways. To the south east the foot track continues along the Unoa Creek for another 3 nights finishing with a boat or raft ride down the Kemp Welch River to Kwikila township. To the east takes you through wild uninhabited territory through to Mororo Plantation right at the foot of the Owen Stanley Range. Today you'll be turning west and starting the day's hiking with a steep climb out of the Unoa Creek valley up and over Mount Dundas (600m) and down into the next valley which is the Wuhirogo Creek valley. Following the watercourse on a blessedly downhill gradient for the rest of the day brings you to Avitana village for overnight.

Most of today's walking is through tropical rainforest jungle gradually losing height from 600m at the top of the range down to around 400m at Avitana. The footpath is not well trodden because the Avitana villagers normally walk out to Port Moresby via the Magi Highway to the south which is an easier downhill walk than climbing Mount Dundas and the Unoa Creek Gully to Boredabu and Sogeri.

*\*Along the way to Avitana and just off the main trail there is a rock shelter with preserved rock art. The designs are said by villagers to be “very old” but the actual age is unknown as local lore says the rock art has just “always been there”. Whether this means hundreds of years - or thousands - we don't know. We believe the site has not yet been catalogued by the national museum and our guides are hesitant to publicise the existence and location of the rock art in case it is vandalised. An Avitana man looks after the site but it is not “guarded”.*

Avitana village (pop 300) has a main cluster of huts around a red clay “village square “ of the type typical of villages in this area, next to the Wuhirogo Creek, and a satellite hamlet half a kilometre further upstream where the best garden lands are.

Overnight village hut, Avitana Village (includes all food and boiled water)

### **Day 4 - Hike to fourth jungle village “Lonidairi”**

The first half of today's walking continues following the Wuhirogo Creek downhill through thick rainforest for about 3 hours, gradually losing about altitude until the creek valley opens out onto the more sparsely vegetated undulating terrain under 200m in altitude which is typical of the rural Rigo plains. You'll leave the creek and follow a foot track up and down a number of small hills and ridges through intermittent grasslands and patchy light forest for another two hours to reach Masumadobu village then a last half hour to Lonidairi.



There is a four wheel drive track coming up from the Magi Highway that goes as far as Masumadobu. The track is only open to vehicles during the dry season, and even then only large lorries with long wheel base can make it through.

Otherwise unremarkable, Lonidairi's main claim to fame is hosting the annual southern Koiari village volleyball tournament ☺ They take their volleyball seriously in these parts (contact sports are discouraged because nobody wants to carry

injured players out of the jungle on a stretcher!) and you'll notice each and every village you walk through has a grassy or red-earth volleyball court, usually with a net that has seen better days or, in desperation, a single strand of rope strung between the poles!

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### Day 5 - Hike to Magi Highway and road transfer back to Port Moresby

The 6 hours hiking today will follow the vehicular track from Lonidairi via Gobiua all the way down to the Magi Highway at Gomore, a large roadside village. The clear walking path will enable a fast walking pace (if you are not exhausted by now ☺ ) and with a few rest stops you'll reach the highway by mid afternoon. The terrain on this last day is mainly open grassy hills and flats with light scrub. The road/track meanders around any high ground rather than up and over.

*NB At this lower altitude, ground snakes can sometimes be encountered sunning themselves on the road. Snakes can feel vibrations in the ground so tapping the ground with your walking stick as you walk along will usually alert them of your approach and send them scurrying into the bush and you may never see one. If you do come across a snake don't panic and don't try to kill it - just back off and let it run away. Most Rigo snakes are venomous, but bites on adult victims are rarely fatal so if you do step on a snake and get bitten, just bandage the bite area tightly and get to hospital as soon as possible. Most bites occur on the ankles and shins so wearing long gaiters made of tough leather ("snake gaiters") could be a good idea - gaiters also keep dirt and grass seeds out of your boots and protect your legs from grass cuts and undergrowth scratches if you are hiking in short trousers.*

If you are tiring and don't want to walk the full distance to the pick-up point at Gomore you can ask for our pickup car to drive up the track to meet you, but if the weather is wet and the track is boggy this may not be possible. If we don't hear otherwise from your guide we'll assume a 3pm pick-up at Gomore and the car will leave Port Moresby at 1pm, so let us know in the morning if you want to be picked up earlier. (NB From Boredabu to Masumadobu you will be out of normal mobile phone range but your guide will carry a mobile satellite phone for emergency communication).

Our "welcome wagon" will bring cold drinks and a boxed lunch for you so that's something to look forward to as you complete the last few kilometres of your expedition through Koiari territory. Drop off at your hotel in Port Moresby by 6pm.



## **TREK ITINERARY EM20F - 6 DAYS / 5 NIGHTS ONE WAY HIKE SOGERI TO FIVE JUNGLE VILLAGES AND EXIT AT KWIKILA**

(walking difficulty 4/5)

### **Day 1 - Road transfer Port Moresby to Sogeri then hike to first jungle village “Boredabu”**

See details in EM20B above

### **Day 2 - Hike to second jungle village “Anadabu”**

See details in EM20C above

### **Day 3 - Hike to third jungle village “lovei (love)”**

From Anadabu the foot-track splits three ways:

- to the east takes you into wild uninhabited territory through to the Didord Creek valley, doubling back to Sogeri via the Mororo Plantation
- to the west a climb over Mt Dundas takes you down into the Wuhirogo Creek Valley and down to the Magi Highway and
- straight ahead the track continues south-east following the north bank of Unoa Creek, a challenging half day “road-less-travelled” walk through thick jungle down to lovei (love) village.



One hour into the walk you pass through the small hamlet of Maiana, another hour brings you to the confluence of Unoa Creek and Aieme River, followed by another three hours to lovei. Although the foot track continues a nett downhill gradient, there are multiple tributary creek crossings, the usual muddy/slippery patches and since this route is not frequently used by locals the foot track may be overgrown and impassable in places, requiring detours and some hacking through the undergrowth with machetes. Accordingly we score today’s walking as a 4.5 out of 5 for difficulty.

On arrival at lovei, settle in with the host family and enjoy a swim in the Aieme River. lovei is about the most isolated village in the southern Koiari lands as it is two days walk from the nearest highway or navigable river. Overnight village hut, lovei village (includes all food and boiled water)

### **Day 4 - Hike to fourth jungle village “Medeme”**



Only 3-4 hours to the next village today but still challenging walking (4/5) as the foot track leaves the Aieme River and diverts inland two hours through lowland forest before crossing the river at the small hamlet of laudobu and skirting the west bank for another hour into Medene village. Medeme is the southern boundary of the Koiari tribal lands - the next villages will be people of the Rigo district. Arriving early at Medeme allows time for an optional bamboo raft building activity. If the river water level is sufficient you will be able to raft part of the way to Kwale tomorrow while will be a fun break from the walking. Village boys at Medeme will help with cutting bamboo in the bush and building two or more rafts depending on your group size. Overnight village hut, Medeme Village (includes all food and sterilised water)

### **Day 5 - Hike or raft to fifth jungle village “Kwale”**

From Medeme, leave the Aieme River and strike out inland in a south easterly direction climbing a ridge to an open plateau and follow this ridgeline through to the Kemp Welch River. There is a change of vegetation to light scrub and there is no established foot track so you will have to pick your way through the terrain following the

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compass till you sight and strike the River near Kwale School. Ground snakes and goannas are more common in this more open sunny ground so keep a lookout for sunbathing reptiles and make plenty of “noise” as you walk through the undergrowth so give them plenty of time to escape and avoid startling or stepping on one.



Alternatively, launch your bamboo rafts at Medeme and drift downstream with the current to the easterly bend of the river at the point on our walking track map marked with a red “x”. At this point, abandon the rafts and hike due east cross-country over a small spur to Kwale. The village boys from Medeme will assist you with floating the rafts and then walk with you to Kwale before walking home overland - a bit of excitement for them! If your rafts are floating well, your guides will bring your backpacks on the rafts as well but if there is any risk of backpacks ending up in the river the packs will be carried overland separately by some of the village boys. The Aieme River is not deep unless flooded (and you won’t be rafting in that case) so even if your raft does sink or capsize you will probably be able to

stand on the river bottom and wade to the bank but life jackets will be provided nonetheless, as a safety precaution. Of course, another option is to skip the raft building and simply body-float downstream using your life jacket for buoyancy while your backpacks are carried overland by porters.

Kwale primary school is located on a bend in the Kemp Welch River. The school serves a number of villages in the vicinity and you will be hosted here by the head master or church pastor with enthusiastic welcome from the students.

Overnight in a classroom or vacant teacher’s house at Kwale School (includes all food and boiled water)

#### **Day 6 - Motor boat from Kwale to Kwikila and road transfer back to Port Moresby**

The Kemp Welch River is a major inland watercourse which is navigable many kilometres into the inland foothills of the Owen Stanley Range and is an important transport conduit for the Rigo people. Motorised dinghies and paddle canoes ply the river ferrying inland people down river to the highway at Kwikila township, carrying their vegetables to market there and onwards in Port Moresby.

Your guides will hire a dinghy at Kwale to take you downstream and disembark on the riverbank at the Kwikila Secondary School where our “welcome wagon” will meet you and transfer you back to Port Moresby with cold drinks and a boxed lunch on board. Alternatively if the water level of the river is unsuitable for disembarking at Kwikila, the dinghy may leave you at Boregaina, a large village further upstream with a better tie-up area and our car will pick you up there.

From Kwikila the driving time to Port Moresby is about 90 minutes with drop-off at your hotel by mid afternoon.



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## **PREPARATION AND PACKING**

### **You pack and bring:**

1. 40L waterproof backpack packed with maximum 10kg of gear
2. Waterproof flashlight with spare batteries
3. Malaria medication as prescribed by your doctor
4. Other personal medications and first aid requirements especially for foot care
5. Hot/cold drink bottle 1L
6. Nylon rain poncho (not PVC)
7. Inflatable pillow
8. Quick-dry mini bath towel
9. Walking hat and sweat towel
10. Traveller's pack of Kleenex tissues (for wiping glasses, camera lens etc)
11. Snap-lock or sip-lock plastic bags for dry storage of small items like above tissues (bear in mind that at some stage your entire pack is likely to get soaking wet despite wearing a rain poncho)
12. Battery operated personal fan
13. Sunscreen and mosquito repellent
14. Your digital camera with spare batteries
15. Comfortable walking boots with gators
16. 3 pairs of thick hiking socks
17. 3 changes of underwear
18. 2 pairs of walking shorts
19. 1 pair of walking long trousers
20. 3 walking shirts
21. Copy of your travel insurance certificate and claims hotline number in case medical evacuation is required (do not bring your passport or other original documents which may get wet and damaged - store at hotel or our office)

### **We supply:**

1. Road transfers to and from the trek starting and finishing point
2. Local style food supplemented with some camp food
3. Experienced local guides
4. A few porters to carry group gear but you will carry your own gear pack
5. First aid kit including antibiotics,
6. Mobile satellite phone and hand-held GPS
7. Management of medevac arrangements if emergency medical evacuation is required (you pay if you are not insured)
8. Water sterilising tablets and/or ultraviolet steriliser
9. Additional bottles for storing boiled or sterilised water
10. Camp pad or mats for sleeping on and tropical sleeping bags (side-sewn sheet) for sleeping in and mosquito nets for sleeping under
11. Tea, coffee, powdered milk and artificial sweetener for hot drinks
12. Basic camp cutlery and crockery
13. Soap and toilet rolls
14. Umbrellas, life jackets, ground sheets/tarpaulins
15. Kerosine or battery lanterns for group lighting
16. Machetes for cutting undergrowth
17. Small practical gifts for villagers en route eg vegetable seeds, medical supplies,
18. A list of things that you need to pack.