



Ecotourism Melanesia

Explore Papua New Guinea and the South Pacific

EM209W 2024 GOROKA SHOW WEEKENDER 5 nights WED11-MON16 SEPTEMBER 2024 Mt Hagen (2 nts) and Goroka (3 nts)

Escorted sign-up (open) tour for solo travellers and couples - includes accommodation, excursions and some or all meals and our experienced local tour leader to manage all arrangements.

This five night escorted tour program is designed for independent solo travellers and couples requiring shared, managed arrangements for visiting the Goroka Show. The tour offers a selection of accommodation options - subject to availability at time of booking - and escorted excursions to the Goroka Show and other attractions. For the excursions you will share a bus, guide and Show seating with others in the tour group, but after dinner each night you will have time to yourself and may be staying at different accommodation from the others on the tour.

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.

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 Show weekend with your arrival in Mt Hagen in order to first do some sightseeing around Mt Hagen and attend the famed Paiya village sing-sing on the Thursday. On the Friday the tour 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 in to Goroka by road also avoids the flight chaos that plagues PNG on the Friday before each Independence holiday weekend (often there are flights overbooked, cancelled and delayed) and ensures you arrive in time for the Show.

On the Saturday morning and Sunday morning our guides will take you to the traditional sing-sing performances in the main arena at the Goroka Show while other attractions also take place on the sidelines including the Mr Goroka Show bodybuilding competition, the Miss Goroka Show beauty pageant and of course sideshow alley. The churches, charities, health and environmental organisations will also set up stalls to spruik their messages with megaphones and theatre groups performing comedy skits.

At lunchtime the gates are opened to the public for free entry and the show ground becomes very crowded so this is our cue to exit. After a box lunch at the show grounds our guides will take you on village excursions. (However if you prefer to skip the excursions and spend the whole day at the Show we can arrange a guide to stay back with you).

As you pass through Port Moresby airport on arrival and departure, our staff will meet and assist you with your flight connections and/or other arrangements.



ECOTOURISM MELANESIA LTD

TOUR COST

	Budget accom option Mt Hagen: 2.5 star motel Goroka: 2 star motel <i>includes light breakfast & tour lunch</i>	Standard accom option Mt Hagen: 3 star hotel Goroka: 2.5 star motel <i>includes hot breakfast & tour lunch</i>	Premier accom option	Deluxe accom option
Tour cost per person twin share 5 nts hotel, 4 days touring	USD 2600 pp	USD 2850 pp	Not available	Not available
Single supplement (own room, two seats on bus)	USD 650	USD 710		
Internal air (optional extra) POM-HGU + GKA-POM flat rate	USD 600	USD 600		

BOOKING NOTES:

1. Places on the tour are subject to availability of rooms at the time of booking. We do not block book hotels.
2. Goroka has less than 200 clean hotel and motel rooms and most properties capitalise on this shortage of rooms during the Show weekend by charging inflated rates. This contributes to the high cost of this package.
3. 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.
4. Star ratings are an approximate guide only and are not based on any published star rating system.
5. Tour prices are subject to change at any time prior to final payment if there is a major loss in the exchange rate.
6. For trip modifications and extensions please enquire.
7. To book a place on this tour please e-mail a copy of your passport photo page and your request to ecotourism.melanesia@gmail.com. We will then send you an availability confirmation and a quote. We will require a 25% deposit to hold your booking and secure your preferred accommodation. 75% balance 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.

GROUND TOUR PACKAGE INCLUSIONS

- Port Moresby - meet and greet, assist with arrival connection
- Mt Hagen - meet and greet, transfer to accommodation
- Mt Hagen - complimentary afternoon tour of Mt Hagen town for early arrivals
- Mt Hagen - 2 nights accommodation as per selected option
- Mt Hagen - full day excursion to Paiya village private sing-sing including lunch
- Mt Hagen - private bus transfer to Goroka with sightseeing stops and lunch
- Goroka - 3 nights accommodation as per selected option
- Goroka - two morning excursions to the Goroka Show with tourist pass
- Goroka - two afternoon excursions to local villages and Asaro mud men, includes lunch
- Goroka - departure transfer to airport and check-in assistance
- Port Moresby - assist with departure connection
- Mt Hagen/Goroka - all fees and gratuities for local villagers, local guides and helpers
- Mt Hagen/Goroka - on-site company tour leader to escort and manage daily arrangements
- 24-hour backup assistance from our office in Port Moresby

EXCLUSIONS

- Domestic airfares (arrange your own or we can supply at quoted cost)
- 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
- Travel insurance (mandatory)

TOUR 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

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

13:30 A complimentary familiarisation tour of Mt Hagen town is available for those who have arrived on a morning flight.

Overnight Mt Hagen as per selected accommodation option, includes breakfast

DAY 2: THU 12 SEP 2024



MT HAGEN (Paiya village sing-sing)

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

The advantage of attending this private sing-sing in addition to the 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 Mt Hagen as per selected accommodation option, 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 en route.

The Highlands Highway runs east from Mt Hagen, passing first through the market gardens, coffee and tea plantations of the Waghi Valley.

This valley is often called the “food bowl” of PNG because of the intensive agricultural activities and in fact at the village of Kuk near Mt Hagen archaeologists found evidence that the area has been planted with food crops for thousands of years. From the Waghi Valley the highway passes through the small towns of Kudjip and Minj then climbs into the alpine Chimbu Province with its precipitous ravines and steep mountainsides amazingly covered in furrowed gardens with people working away in them... “one foot uphill, one foot downhill” as the locals sometimes joke.

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

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

One hour further on brings you to the “snake village” where the local people have a strange affinity for snakes and like to keep them as pets, although the poisonous ones stay in cages ☺ . You’ll see the locals showing off their pythons and tree snakes and have a turn at handling them if you wish.

If you are not a “snake person” you can 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 settle in before dinner.

18:30 Bus transfer or walk to dinner venue (Bird of Paradise Hotel, Pacific Gardens Hotel, Goroka Steak House or Mandarin Chinese Restaurant)

Overnight Goroka as per selected accommodation, includes breakfast

NOTE: Please note that some of the smaller motels and lodges are alcohol free properties.

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 09:00am.

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.

Our guides will accompany your group to interpret the performances for you and assist you in any way. Bottled water is supplied.

13:00 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 served 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, depending on availability)

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

Overnight Goroka as per selected accommodation, 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.

13:00 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 or walk to dinner (Bird of Paradise Hotel, Pacific Gardens Hotel, Goroka Steak House or Mandarin Chinese Restaurant)

Overnight Goroka as per selected accommodation, includes breakfast

DAY 6: MON 16 SEP 2024



DEPART GOROKA (Independence Day public holiday)

Depart Goroka by air or other arrangements. Your guide will farewell you at Goroka airport and our Port Moresby staff will meet and assist you with your connection in Port Moresby. If you are booked on an afternoon flight our Goroka guides will be happy to accompany you on a walking tour of the town area including the cultural museum and the fresh produce market to pass the time.

END OF TOUR PROGRAM (extensions to other destinations are available)