



Ecotourism Melanesia

Discover Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands

ITINERARY FOR TOUR EM10A 2010

WALK THE KOKODA TRACK - NORTH TO SOUTH

13 nights package - "The Full Kokoda"

(1 night Port Moresby, 1 night Buna/Gona, 1 night Popondetta, 1 night Kokoda, 8 nights trekking, 1 night Port Moresby)

Special features of this package:

- comprehensive itinerary includes all major battlefield sites from the Kokoda and Buna campaigns
- north-south itinerary follows the direction of the Japanese invasion from Buna/Gona through to Ioribaiwa Ridge where they turned back
- our exclusive engagement of local military historian Mr Maclaren Hiari MBE makes the battlefield tours around Buna, Gona and Kokoda come alive for you,
- pre-trek tours around Buna also allow time for acclimatising before trekking
- overnight at Kokoda enables visits to all memorials, museum and battle sites
- first day's trekking to Deniki only 3 hours
- maximum 6 hours walking each day at moderate pace - plenty of time for slow walkers to catch up each day
- no walking in the dark
- 5 overnights in villages featuring fresh local food, 4 overnights at campsites
- side trip to Myola grasslands
- no flying in small planes
- group size 8-12 for open treks, 10-20 for private groups

This is an unhurried trekking tour that follows the history of the Kokoda and Buna campaigns. After visiting the Bomana War Cemetery in Port Moresby you'll fly across to Popondetta by commercial flight (40-seat Dash 8 airliner) and tour the beach-head battlefields at Buna and Gona where the Japanese first landed in July 1942 and were cornered 5 months later by Australian and U.S. troops after retreating from the Kokoda Track. Our tour will stop at Awala where the first resistance from Papuan forces was recorded, cross the Kumusi River where Japanese General Horii and his white horse drowned, and continue up to Kokoda where the prized airstrip changed hands several times during the campaign. Commencing the trek from Kokoda with only 3 hours hiking on the first day to get your legs in, our trek leader maintains a slower than normal trekking schedule based on a maximum of 6 hours walking each day with plenty of rest stops to "smell the roses" and take in the points of interest along the way. This package is particularly suitable for walkers wanting an enjoyable holiday experience rather than just "doing Kokoda". The moderate hiking pace appeals to older walkers, family groups and those who want to soak up the historical and cultural atmosphere en route, but still requires good physical fitness.

TOUR COST

| Select your preferred accommodation for the 2 nights in Port Moresby* | BUDGET Ponderosa Hotel Old wing (2 star approx) | MID-RANGE Ponderosa Hotel New wing (3 star approx) | DELUXE Gateway Hotel Premier room (3.5 star approx) | EXECUTIVE Airways Hotel Fountain wing (4 star approx) |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| 13 nights trek package per person, twin share (or willing to share) | AUD 3,414 | AUD 3,494 | AUD 3,584 | AUD 3,674 |
| Single supplement (own room for 2 nts Port Moresby and single tent for trekking) | AUD 180 | AUD 260 | AUD 350 | AUD 440 |
| Extra night Port Moresby (per room, single or double/twin) | AUD 80 | AUD 160 | AUD 250 | AUD 340 |

* Star ratings are an approximate guide to the standard of the room fittings only, not the entire hotel. For hotel information see the Trip Notes at the bottom of this itinerary.

NB If you are a lone traveller booking on an open trek and you select "willing to share" at a hotel that has no other person of the same sex seeking to share, you will either have to pay the single supplement for single room or switch to another hotel which has a share room available.

TOUR INCLUSIONS

- Port Moresby - meet and greet and city familiarisation tour, all transfers
- Port Moresby - welcome "mumu" dinner
- Port Moresby - two nights hotel accommodation (choice of budget, mid-range or deluxe) room only, twin-share unless you pay a single supplement for own-room.
- Port Moresby - visit to Bomana War Cemetery and Schwimmer Drome war relics display
- Port Moresby scheduled or charter flight to Popondetta with packed lunch
- Popondetta - guided tours of battlefields at Buna, Sanananda, Gona (subject to weather and other logistical limitations) including transport by road and boat, village entry fees, landowner access fees, expert historical guide
- Popondetta - overnight village guest house accommodation at Buna or Gona - includes welcome singing, meals and bottled water
- Popondetta - one night 2-star hotel accommodation at Comfort Inn or alternative (room only, twin-share, single supplement possible if extra room available)
- Popondetta - road transfer to Kokoda with stop at Awala village
- Kokoda - one night guest house accommodation - includes meals and bottled water
- Kokoda - guided battlefields walking tour
- Kokoda Track - 9 nights trekking with overnights in village guest houses / trekkers huts or camping under tarpaulins/in tents, includes guest house and campsite fees
- Kokoda Track - basic group camping equipment including lamps, ropes, tarpaulins and ground sheets, axe and machete, cooking utensils, camp crockery and cutlery
- Kokoda Track - safety equipment including mobile satellite phone, VHF radios, tropical first aid kit
- Kokoda Track - 9 nights trek meals including billy tea breakfasts (damper/pancake/porridge), packed dry lunches (crackers, tinned fish or meat, cheese, dried fruit), cooked dinners (tinned stew, pasta dishes and/or fresh village vegetables). Main meals only, bring your own snack food if required.
- Kokoda Track - PNG national trek leader / guide (first aid qualified) and sufficient porters to carry all food, equipment and up to 10 kg of each trekker's personal gear. You should plan to carry a day pack with up to 5 kg of your personal gear and give another 10 kg of your gear to one of our porters. [If you would like your own dedicated personal porter to carry up to 15 kg of your personal gear so that you will not have to carry a day-pack the additional cost is A\$500.]
- Kokoda Track - trekking permit and site access fees charged by landowners along the main route of this itinerary (but pay as you go to visit any privately-owned historical sites or village museums)
- Kokoda Track - picnic or barbeque lunch on arrival at Owers Corner
- Kokoda Track - road transfer from Owers Corner to Port Moresby
- Port Moresby - farewell dinner with porters (no alcohol please)
- monitoring of trek by our Port Moresby office using VHF radio and/or satellite phone
- coordination of emergency situations and evacuations
- souvenir Kokoda Track polo shirt, walker's certificate, and maps
- applicable local taxes
- contribution to other overhead expenses such as recruitment and preparation of porters, accommodation and health care for porters while in Port Moresby, repatriation of porters to Kokoda if required, flying food supplies into Kokoda and Efogi, maintenance of equipment, cost of retaining handling agents in Popondetta and Kokoda, staff training, donations to village development projects, maintaining public liability insurance and licensing and accreditation with Kokoda Track Authority

TOUR EXCLUSIONS

- food and drink other than the meals stated in the itinerary
- bottled water, water purification tablets and other water-related items not specified in the itinerary and other written information provided (see trip note below on drinking water)
- camp bedding (see trip note below on sleeping gear)
- items of clothing or footwear
- any other equipment not specified in the itinerary and other written information provided, such as personal water bottle, umbrella, rain poncho
- souvenirs, gifts and tips
- items of a personal nature
- bar drinks and snacks
- telephone calls
- cancellation fees
- visa fees
- medical evacuation costs

ITINERARY

NB Private groups only may opt to skip the Buna/Gona/Popondetta sector and instead fly in from Australia on Day 3, overnight in Port Moresby then fly to Kokoda by scheduled flight on Thursday morning, arriving in time to commence trekking to Deniki on the same afternoon. This abbreviated version of EM10A is charged at the same rate as EM10B. Individual travellers joining an open trek may only book this option if there are still a minimum of 8 pax taking the Popondetta sector to make it viable.

DAY 1:

PORT MORESBY

Arrive Port Moresby on your flight from Australia. Both Air Niugini/Qantas (codesharing) and Pacific Blue/Airlines PNG (codesharing) have flights arriving today. See www.airniugini.com.pg and www.apng.com for best prices and best seat availability.

On arrival at Port Moresby international airport you will be met by staff from Ecotourism Melanesia and we will transfer you to your hotel for check-in. After allowing you some time to freshen up, our staff will take you on a familiarisation tour around Port Moresby city.

After the tour we will drop you back at the hotel for some leisure time, then at 7:00pm we will pick you up from the hotel again and bring you to our company compound in Boroko for an informal welcome dinner to give you an opportunity to get to know our staff and the other trekkers. If you are booked on an open trek this might be your first chance to meet the other people you will be walking with.

If the weather is fine, dinner will be served outdoors, a local-style "mumu" meal where fish, chicken and vegetables are wrapped in banana leaves and roasted under hot stones in a fireplace in the ground. After dinner we will show a short video about Port Moresby and the Kokoda Track during 1942, update you on logistics for your impending trek, and allow time for questions. By 10:00pm you will be back at your hotel to settle in for the night.

Overnight hotel, Port Moresby (room only, twin share - please pay cash or card for your breakfast and all drinks and extras).

Note 1: If you are arriving on a morning flight we can take you for additional sightseeing, souvenir shopping etc to fill up this day, or leave you to relax at your hotel, according to your preference.

Note 2: There are ATMs at the airport terminal where you may withdraw cash with your credit card. During the familiarisation tour the bus will stop on request at a supermarket to purchase any last minute items you require (supermarkets do accept credit cards for payment of goods but no cash out).

DAY 2:

PORT MORESBY - POPONDETTA - BUNA

Rise and shine at around 7:00am this morning. Hotel breakfast is pay-as-you-go (ie not included in your tour package). You can either order a room service breakfast or have breakfast in the restaurant.

At 8:00am check out of your hotel room, fix up your room tab and arrange with the reception to store any baggage that you will not be taking with you on the trek.

NOTE

Most hotels have a secure storage room for baggage and they will keep your bags under lock and key until you return if you will be staying there again after returning from your trek. Make sure your bags are clearly labelled with your name. Safety deposit boxes are available at the Gateway and Airways hotels only for valuables such as passport, tickets and excess cash - alternatively you can carry your papers with you on the trek in a waterproof wallet, but if your passport becomes water-damaged you may be refused entry back into Australia ☹

Storage of luggage and travel documents is also available at our office on the basis of "all care taken but no responsibility".

At 8:30am approx our tour guide and transfer bus will pick you up at your hotel together with your trek baggage and first take you to the airport to check in for the Popondetta flight and get your boarding passes before driving you 15 minutes out of town to the **Bomana War Cemetery**. Here you will have about 1 hour to wander among the graves and sign the visitors book. There is no rush and you will have time to look for any specific graves although it would be helpful if you have the plot location handy (try the websites of the Australian War Memorial or the Australian Office of War Graves).

NOTE

Bomana War Cemetery is the final resting place of most of those 600 Australian soldiers who gave their lives along the Kokoda Track. They were originally buried in temporary graves along the Track and their remains were later re-interred at Bomana. There are almost 3,000 graves at Bomana. Apart from Kokoda Track casualties, many of these troops were killed in other battles including Buna, Gona and Milne Bay. There are also some graves of British servicemen killed at Singapore and a smattering of graves of servicemen and women from other Commonwealth countries. There are no US or Japanese soldiers buried at Bomana, all US and Japanese remains found have been repatriated. (In 1942, the territories of Papua and New Guinea were Australian soil so it was considered appropriate to bury Australian soldiers here). The beautifully manicured lawns and monuments at Bomana War Cemetery contrast starkly with the wild unforgiving jungle of the Kokoda Track. During your trek you will walk over the very spots where many of these young men fell in 1942. As you wander among the graves at Bomana one fact that will strike you is the young ages of the fallen as stated on the headstones: 19, 20, 21, 22 - one lady who visited commented that her son who is the same age is still playing Nintendo and borrowing Mum's car - would the young people of today's generation be able to go off to war as bravely and selflessly?

Departing Bomana at 10:30am, another 10 minutes drive brings you to the **Schwimmer Drome war relics display**. Here you'll meet Thomas Auhava, an enterprising local who has amassed a huge backyard collection of WW2 paraphernalia. He started out digging up bits and pieces in his own vegetable garden, and after doing some research found out that his house is located on top of an old WW2 bomber airfield. He began encouraging his neighbours to likewise begin digging up their gardens and selling their findings to him. Thomas now has PNG's largest private collection of war relics but it is not well known so he doesn't get many visitors. Thomas's family will put on some light entertainment and serve fresh young coconuts during your visit. First you drink the juice through a hole in the top and then break open the soft shell and eat the delicious jelly-like meat inside - a complete meal in one fruit. Thomas is a walking encyclopaedia on Port Moresby's wartime history and will be happy to answer any questions.

Departing Schwimmer Drome at 11:30am, by 12:00 you will arrive back at the domestic terminal and proceed through to the departure lounge in time for boarding. The flight is usually called at about 12:30 in time for 12:55 departure. At the airport we will provide a packed lunch for you to eat either in the departure lounge or on the plane, as the short flight to Popondetta is a non-catering service.

Note:

One of our company staff will travel with you on the flight to Popondetta and lead the tour as far as Kokoda where responsibility for the group will be handed over to our trekking guide who is based at Kokoda.

Popondetta's modern-day airport is located at Girua, about 20 minutes drive out of town. Girua was a huge airfield complex during the war. The current runway is built on top of a wartime bomber strip and if you study the terrain during the landing approach you will be able to discern the outlines of other overgrown wartime airstrips in the vicinity.

Waiting for you at the airport is Maclaren Hiari MBE who will be your local historical guide for the Popondetta and Kokoda areas. Maclaren is a retired

history academic and is the founder of the Kokoda-Buna Historical Foundation. He is a walking encyclopaedia on the Kokoda and Buna campaigns.

After collecting your bags you will board a local style passenger truck known as a PMV (bench seats in the back with tarp-covered frame on top) for a journey via the old wartime airfield complex to the seaside village of Buna. En route to Buna you will be shown the graves of missionaries murdered by the invading Japanese, and the spot where the famous photo of Dick Whittington limping along with his fuzzy wuzzy angel Raphael Oimbari was taken.

On arrival at **Buna** you will be treated to a traditional welcome, another cool coconut drink and tropical fruit for refreshment before strolling through the village and adjacent battlefield areas and inspecting displays of war relics collected from this area, as Maclaren explains how it all happened.

Overnight village guest house, Buna (twin-share or multi-share accommodation, includes local-style dinner and breakfast)

Note 1: Buna, Sanananda and Gona are the beach-head villages where the Japanese first landed in July 1942 before marching up to Kokoda. The invading Japanese troops slaughtered many native people and white missionaries and plantation staff living in the Popondetta area. Five months later the Japanese survivors from the Kokoda Track were cornered back at Buna and Gona (but got no sympathy from the locals) and there were many bloody battles here as the Japanese desperately defended themselves with dwindling supplies while waiting to be rescued by ships that never came. Many more Japanese, Australian and later American servicemen perished in the battles around Buna, Gona and Sanananda than were killed on the Kokoda Track. This is often overlooked because the beach-head battles are not as famous as the Kokoda Campaign. Many visitors state that overnighting in the village guest house at Buna or Gona is the highlight of their Kokoda trekking tour. These coastal villages receive fewer visitors than the main Kokoda Track and they have much better food resources, better quality guest house accommodation and a very warm welcome in store for you. Interaction with the village people here is high quality and the traditional sing-sings they perform are vibrant and authentic.

Note 2: For logistical reasons such as non-availability of accommodation at Buna or closure of the road to Buna (it can get very boggy during wet weather), it may occasionally be necessary to overnight at Gona village tonight instead, and visit Buna and Sanananda tomorrow, travelling by motor dinghy along the beach instead.

DAY 3:

BUNA - SANANANDA - GONA - POPONDETTA

Thanks to those annoying village roosters you will rise early this morning and be having breakfast by 6:00am. By 8:00am you will be on the beach climbing into a motorised dinghy (these are known locally as “banana boats” for their curved shape) and thence following the coast about 10 minutes ride to Sanananda. There is no coastal road joining Buna and Gona (Sanananda is in the middle) so the people normally travel by motorised dinghy which buzzes along the shoreline just fifty metres from the beach, in the same shallow water that the Japanese ships (and later American landing barges) came aground in 1942. Each dinghy seats about eight people and is powered by an outboard motor driven by a village water taxi operator. Life jackets are available if you would like to wear one.

After a stop at **Sanananda** to view war relics and hear Maclaren’s explanation of the battle actions here, you’ll continue another 10 minutes by boat to **Basabua**, the site of the first Japanese landings, and **Gona** village where the old Gona Anglican Mission once stood. Now, only a large bullet-holed wooden cross still stands to mark the old Mission site. The murder of the missionaries by the Japanese invasion forces is a grisly story that is difficult to listen to. Two of the missionary graves are located near Girua airport and you may have seen them on arrival yesterday, before heading to Buna. At the time of writing there is still one surviving fuzzy

wuzzy angel, Solomon, living at Gona, whom you may be privileged to meet.

Lunch and some entertainment is ready for you at a village guest house at either Basabua or Gona (we go turn-about to spread the business around a bit). A short visit to one of the village schools might also be arranged, and you may even get to hear the kids sing their national anthem.

After lunch you'll board a passenger truck which has come round the long way via Popondetta (or Pops as it is affectionately known in local circles).

On arrival in **Popondetta** you'll check in at the only local hotel, the Comfort Inn, and then take a walk to the **Popondetta Memorial Park** where there are excellent information plaques about the beach-head battles at Buna, Gona and Sanananda. There will also be an opportunity to pop into the local supermarket and chemist for any last-minute needs.

Overnight Comfort Inn, Popondetta (room only, twin share - please pay cash or card for your dinner, breakfast and all drinks and extras).

NOTE:

Comfort Inn Popondetta (formerly known as Lamington Lodge Hotel), is only a 2.5 star establishment similar to a budget motel in Australia but has a good restaurant offering a typical bistro menu such fish and chips, steak and salad, roast of the day, pizza and pasta. If there are enough guests staying in the hotel they usually put on a 3-course buffet as well. Expect to pay about PGK65 = A\$30 per person for dinner and a couple of drinks. Breakfast is continental or a la carte. Single supplement @ \$150 may be arranged if the hotel has enough rooms available.

DAY 4:

POPONDETTA - AWALA - KOKODA

Enjoy a little sleep-in this morning and aim to rise about 08:00am, have breakfast, check out and be ready to board your PMV at about 09:00am. From Popondetta the road north towards Kokoda passes through oil palm plantations, light forest and grasslands, with many river crossings. Most bridges were washed out by the floods caused by a cyclone in November 2007 and these are only gradually getting re-built so there are some rivers that still have to be forded - great fun, unless the engine dies mid-stream! The road is sealed about half way to Kokoda but is bumpy the rest of the way (especially fording the rivers) and you may want to sit on your rolled-up rubber sleeping mat or sleeping bag to save yourself a few jolts.

The drive to Kokoda normally takes about 3 hours but you may be delayed by river crossings and the group will definitely be making a stop about half-way to visit the village of **Awala**. (There are toilets available here but all other toilet stops will be on-demand only and will be go-behind-a-tree jobs).

Awala is the site of the first resistance against the Japanese when a platoon of Papuan infantry led by a white Australian commander engaged the Japanese in an exchange of gunfire with no casualties. On arrival at Awala you'll be given some refreshments and sit down to watch a re-enactment of the Awala engagement performed by the local primary school students dressed up as soldiers. This is all great fun and is followed by a short hike led by a thousand village kids to the actual site of the engagement in nearby bushland.

Back on board your vehicle you will continue the drive to **Kokoda** arriving about 1:00pm. You'll settle in at the hospital guest house which has 6 twin-share bedrooms, flush toilets and solar hot water and should be able to accommodate everyone unless we have a big group in which case you will draw straws for who has to sleep in tents outside on the lawn. Your trekking guide and porters will be eagerly awaiting your arrival and will gather round to say hello and welcome you.

Late lunch is served at the hospital guest house and then our historical guide Maclaren will lead you on a tour of the Kokoda "station" area which is located on a plateau about 20 metres above the surrounding land. You'll see the district office which is still at its original location, inspect the cenotaph where there are various memorials, and look through the little museum. Maclaren will brief the group as you go, showing what-happened-where and helping you visualise the advances and retreats which caused Kokoda station to be over-run by the Japanese and later retaken several times by the Australian forces in 1942. The museum has a very authoritative account of the Campaign and we suggest you photograph the text and photographs on display so that you can read them in detail on your computer screen when you return home.

Overnight Kokoda Memorial Hospital guest house (includes catered lunch, dinner, breakfast and lunch).

DAY 5:

TREKKING FROM KOKODA TO DENIKI (3 hours walking, plus stops)

This morning you can take some time to do some more looking around Kokoda before you start trekking. Our guide and porters will escort you on a walk down to the creek and the market, along part of the airfield runway and back up to the hospital but via a different route. From the airfield if the weather is clear you will be able to see Deniki, the place where you will be sleeping tonight.

After an early lunch at the guest house (or carry lunch with you if you are not hungry yet), it's time to kit up and start walking.

NOTE ON PACKING OF YOUR GEAR

During kit-up you will give up to 10 kg of your personal gear to one of our porters who will carry this in his backpack along with another 10 kg of our company equipment and food supplies. In addition you should plan to carry a day-pack with no more than 5 kg of your most personal items (camera, medication, water bottle etc). You may wish to purchase a day pack containing a water bladder so that you won't have to carry a water bottle.

The 10 kg of gear you plan to give to your porter to carry should be packed into a soft drawstring bag like a laundry bag or army-style top-loading soft duffel bag that can easily be fed into the top opening of your porter's top-loading hiking pack, on top of the group food and equipment that he is carrying in the bottom half of his pack. This drawstring bag does not need to be lockable because your porter will guard your belongings with his life, and you will carry any valuables with you in your day-pack. For the flight from Port Moresby to Popondetta and the journey through to Buna and Kokoda you should pack your drawstring bag into a large zip-up sports bag with padlock, and check this whole caboodle in as checked baggage for the flight to Popondetta, while you carry your small day-pack on the plane as hand luggage.

At Kokoda, after packing your drawstring gear bag into your porter's backpack, you can give your empty zip-up sports bag to our company rep who accompanied you from Port Moresby and he/she will take it back to Port Moresby with him/her on the plane and hand it over to you again when you finish the trek. Occasionally the airline baggage handlers in Port Moresby do pinch things from passengers luggage, which is why a small padlock on your sports bag zip is necessary, and make sure to carry any valuables like camera and money in your day-pack as hand luggage.

After kit-up your trekking guide will give a briefing on walking protocols and safety procedures before you strike out from Kokoda, up the Kokoda Track proper. You first pass through plantations and the satellite villages of Kovel and Hoi before the ground turns seriously "up" and you begin the climb to Deniki. Today's hike from Kokoda to Deniki takes just 3 hours, making for an easy first day's walking to "get your legs in", and plenty of opportunities to stop and adjust your footwear, clothing or pack until you get a good system going. Rest stops can be as frequent as you wish - there is plenty of time to arrive at Deniki before dark even for very slow walkers - and your porters will encourage you, cut a walking stick for you, and even give you a leg-up or a push from behind whenever you seem to need a bit of help. From Kokoda to Hoi there are plenty of piped water supplies

for refilling your water bottle, then no water from Hoi until Deniki. Note that just after Hoi village at the end of the "flat" ground there is a 20 minute climb up a seemingly impossible slope. This is one of the steepest gradients along the Kokoda Track and is NOT typical of the walk so don't be discouraged by this nasty challenge right at the beginning of the trek. God just put it there to scare you.

By 4:00pm you will arrive at Deniki, a now abandoned village site. This is the location which Australian forces withdrew to when the Japanese first pushed into Kokoda. There is a panoramic view of the Kokoda valley from here. A couple of local families have built trekker's huts ("guest houses") here and you will overnight in one of these. You'll have plenty of time to enjoy the view and set up your bed before dark.

Overnight trekkers hut, Deniki (dinner will be cooked food carried from Kokoda)

DAY 6:

TREKKING FROM DENIKI TO ISURAVA MEMORIAL (5 hours walking, plus stops)

After a billy tea breakfast at dawn you will do some serious climbing from Deniki for four hours, until you reach the present day site of Isurava village. After taking an hour's rest stop here for early lunch, continue on for another hour of much easier walking to the Isurava memorial, at the wartime location of Isurava village. By early afternoon the morning fog will have cleared and you should enjoy good views of the battlefield area, the memorial and the surrounding valley.

NOTE

The memorial cenotaph inscribed with the four virtues of mateship, courage, endurance and sacrifice was opened by Australian Prime Minister John Howard in 2002 to commemorate 60 years since the Battle of Isurava which took place over four days 26-29 August 1942. During this battle Private Bruce Kingsbury VC heroically charged the advancing Japanese and was killed by a sniper. Near the memorial you will see a plaque at the site where he is believed to have fallen. He is now buried in the Bomana War Cemetery with most other Australian soldiers who fell during the Kokoda campaign. There are no graves at the Isurava battlefield, or anywhere else along the Track. The area has been carefully searched by recovery teams and all human remains have been reinterred at Bomana. There are a number of informative plaques at the Isurava battlefield site and you'll have plenty of time to survey the scene and take photographs of the memorial (all the stonework was lifted in by chopper).

Overnight trekkers hut, Isurava memorial (camp food)

DAY 7:

TREKKING FROM ISURAVA MEMORIAL TO TEMPLETONS CROSSING #2 (6 hours walking, plus stops)

From the memorial it is a two hour walk to Alola village. As you exit the village you can take a short side trip to see the Maiaka waterfall, then continue walking 2 hours to the Eora Creek crossing, site of the now-abandoned Eora village where there was a major battle and the fallen were buried for less than 12 months in a temporary cemetery. Take a one hour rest stop here and have lunch.

Continue climbing through heavily forested areas another 2 hours, plus a few rest stops, to Templetons Crossing #2. Actually there are two Templeton's Crossings, the southernmost is number 1 and the northernmost where you will camp tonight is number 2.

Arriving at Templeton's Crossing #2 by mid afternoon you will have time for a snooze, a cup of tea and a poke around the area before nightfall. Rug up for the cold night ahead. There is no village here so apart from any other trekking parties you will have the place to yourselves. You will sleep

on the floor in the bare trekkers hut unless the owner does not turn up to unlock it (or unless another trekking party has arrived first and bags'd it) in which case your porters will erect tents. Some groups prefer for the porters to use tarpaulins to form a large fly tent for the whole group to bunk in together sardine-style on a ground sheet underneath, instead of pitching the small dome tents which can leave you dripping with condensation by morning in this dew-prone location.

Dinner here will be hot camp food and after dinner entertainment will be tall stories from other trekkers and ukulele serenades from your porters around the camp fire.

Overnight trekkers hut, Templeton's Crossing #2 campsite (camp food)

DAY 8:

TREKKING FROM TEMPLETONS CROSSING #2 TO MYOLA JUNCTION (6 hours walking, plus stops)

After your first 2 hours climbing today you will reach Templetons Crossing #1 also known as First Crossing. There is not much to see here so after a rest stop you'll continue on the next 2 hour leg to the top of Mt Bellamy, the highest point of the Kokoda Track. There is a clearing in the forest called Kokoda Gap which has good views, and then there is a downhill stretch for the last 2 hours to Myola Junction. This is the intersection of the main Kokoda Track and the side track that goes to Myola. There is no village here but a couple of good trekkers huts operated by locals from Naduri.

Overnight trekkers hut, Myola Junction (camp food + village food)

DAY 9:

TREKKING FROM MYOLA JUNCTION TO EFOGI (6 hours walking, plus stops)

First up this morning there is a side-trip to the lookout at the edge of the Myola grasslands. This is a one-hour walk from the junction.

NOTE

The Myola grasslands were originally thought to be a dry lake bed and the name Lake Myola stuck for a while but is no longer used. It is now recognised that it is just an area of open grassland with the Eora Creek running through it. Photographs from 1942 show the demarcation between the grasslands and the surrounding wooded areas to follow almost exactly the same contour as today. Failure of the forest vegetation to overgrow the grasslands over the past 70 years suggests there is an abrupt change in the soil substrate that cannot support forest growth.

The open, flat grasslands of Myola were used as a supply drop zone by the Allied military forces during the Kokoda campaign but much of the food and ammunition dropped (or "biscuit bombed") never reached the troops because boxes disintegrated on impact or were lost in the undergrowth (or in the water if the creek was in flood). Accordingly there is still a huge amount of live ordnance scattered around the Myola grasslands that PNG and Australian army bomb disposal squads make efforts to remove from time to time. A small airstrip was built on the far side of the grasslands near the small village of Myola during the war but is now disused.

After taking in this fascinating vista, you'll retrace your steps towards the Junction but after only half an hour along the path you will turn off to the left to the village of Naduri (also known as Naduli or Nadunumu), about three hours walk from the turnoff. a good place for your lunch stop, thence onward another 2 hours via Launumu village (Efogi 2) to Efogi proper, also known as Efogi 1.

NOTE

Some distance into the bush off the path from the junction to Myola grasslands is the over-rated site of an American aircraft crash. The truth of the matter is that the plane disintegrated on impact and the wreckage consists of nothing more than hundreds of small unidentifiable bits and pieces spread over a wide area so it is not really worth taking the side trip into the scrub - and paying the site fee to the landowner - to see it.

Overnight village guest house, Efogi (village food)

DAY 10:

EFOGI TO MANARI

(6 hours walking, plus stops)

From Efogi 1 it will take 2 hours to climb **Brigade Hill**, stopping to read the memorial plaque and survey the battlefield, then 4 hours of mainly steep descent to **Manari** (Menari) village.

Overnight village guest house, Manari (village food).

DAY 11:

TREKKING FOM MANARI TO NAORO

(5 hours walking, plus stops)

After climbing a steep saddle you will descend and pass through a number of river crossings and abandoned village sites before climbing halfway up the **Maguli Range** to the new site of **Naoro** village.

Overnight village guest house, Naoro (camp food and village food).

DAY 12:

TREKKING FROM NAORO TO UA-ULE CREEK

(6 hours walking, plus stops)

A challenging walk today (take lots of rest stops and keep your fluids up) arriving mid afternoon at **Ua-Ule Creek** (pronounced "wah-ooley") where there is a shady waterhole in the creek great for swimming and relaxing. There is no village here but there is a trekkers hut operated by a family from **Ioribaiwa** village.

Overnight trekkers hut, Ua-Ule Creek (camp food).

DAY 13:

TREKKING FROM UA-ULE CREEK TO OWERS CORNER

(6 hours walking, plus stops)

This morning there is a long and challenging climb up **Imita Ridge**, down the **Golden Stairs** to **Goldie River** where you can have a cool swim, then a final steep climb to **Owers Corner**, arriving around 1:00pm. The **Ecotourism Melanesia** welcome wagon will meet you at **Owers' Corner** with a barbeque (or something else if it's raining) and an esky of cold drinks.

After a victory chant we load up the waiting vehicle for the two hour drive across the rolling downs of the **Sogeri Plateau** and down the picturesque **Sogeri Gorge** to **Port Moresby**.

NOTE

Commonly mis-named "Owen's Corner" this hillock now turned into a pleasant picnic park is named after Lt Noel Owers spelled with an "r". Lt Owers surveyed the road from McDonald's Corner to Owers Corner in 1942.

If time allows and you would like to stop again at the **Bomana War Cemetery** this will be possible as it's on the way. Visiting the War Cemetery is much more meaningful when you are fresh from walking the Track, however many groups find they are just too tired to make the stop and want to head straight for the hotel. This is why we take you to visit **Bomana** when you first arrive in **Port Moresby** so that you won't miss out if you're too zonked to make the stop there after completing your trek.

On arrival in **Port Moresby** you will be dropped off at your hotel. This is usually about 4:00pm.

At 7:00pm after everybody has had time to get cleaned up and relax a little, we will pick you up from your hotel and again bring you to our company

compound for an informal farewell function. Here you will spend a final couple of hours with your porters over some dinner, plenty of laughs about who fell in the creek, and a farewell song on the ukulele. We will have a laptop computer or multimedia projector set up if you would like to show some of your digital photos taken on the trek.

During the evening your guide will present you with your certificate for completing the walk, and your commemorative polo shirt that you will wear back home like a badge of honour. The logo on your shirt reads "Kokoda Track, Papua New Guinea, Mi inapim pinis". In local PNG pidgin this equates to "been there, done that". If you wish to say a few words, or present a gift to your favourite porter, this would be the appropriate time.

By 10:00pm we will call it a night and you will have an opportunity to say farewell to your porters before you are transferred back to your hotel. Your porters will be staying at our company compound for a few nights until they return to Kokoda. Some of them may be walking back with the next south-north trekking group and some of them may be travelling home by air.

Overnight hotel, Port Moresby (room only, twin share - please pay cash or card for your breakfast and all drinks and extras).

NOTE

Please note that we only cater a small amount of alcohol for trekkers at the Owers Corner BBQ and farewell dinner. We ask that you respect our policy that porters not drink alcohol before, during or after treks. Please don't give alcohol (or cigarettes) as a parting gift or shout them for drinks at your hotel. In the past before introducing this policy we had problems here at our company compound when porters returned from the hotel after drinking with trekkers. We like our porters to get early nights and plenty of rest before walking back to Kokoda with the next group.

DAY 14:

FLY OUT TO AUSTRALIA

Rise at your preferred time this morning. Breakfast at the hotel is again pay-as-you-go. When checking out of your room please ensure that any food, beverage and extras charges on your room account are settled.

Today you can make your own arrangements with the hotel reception for the hotel transfer bus to take you to the international terminal to check in for your flight. If your departure time is at a reasonable hour, your guide and porters will probably come to the airport to see you off.

Tour ends.

TRIP NOTES:

1. **Our itinerary.** Our North-South trek is suitable for walkers with good physical fitness who have undertaken some prior training in preparation for this trek. This walk is sensibly paced with early morning starts, allowing extra time in the afternoon for slower walkers to complete each daily sector. Faster walkers may arrive earlier at each village than estimated in our tour itinerary, but will not be allowed to proceed any further on the same day. On our tour, trekkers must sleep at the specified village or campsite each day. The trek leader/guide may however elect to vary the itinerary en route in consideration of local conditions such as weather and the availability of guest house accommodation due to the number of other trekking groups in the area.
2. **Equipment** supplied by Ecotourism Melanesia includes cooking and eating utensils, camping lanterns and torches, tents if required, general trekking gear like machetes and ropes, two-way radio, satellite phone and comprehensive first aid kit.
3. **Porterage.** Your trek package includes 10 kg of personal porterage. This means you can give up to 10 kg of your personal gear to one of our porters to carry. Some other trekking companies distinguish between food porters who carry only group supplies and personal porters who carry only trekkers' personal gear. However the problem with such a system is that during the trek the food porters' packs get lighter as food is used up,

while the personal porters' packs don't lighten at all (in fact they may get heavier if the clothes etc they are carrying get wet). Ecotourism Melanesia operates a more equitable portering system whereby each porter carries a combination of trekkers' personal gear and group supplies. In addition to the 10 kg of gear that you give to one of our porters at the start of the trek, you should plan to carry up to 5 kg in your own day-pack. *Thus you should bring a total maximum 15 kg of personal gear for the trek.* (You can store additional clothing etc in a suitcase or bag at the hotel in Port Moresby while you are on the trek).

Bring only the bare essentials on the trek. Many trekkers make the mistake of packing too many changes of clothes and too many things that you "might" need but probably won't (like the latest Tom Clancy mega-novel or an extra pair of hiking boots). In your day-pack, pack stuff that you will want access to while walking along (camera, toiletries, munchies, water bottle) and pack your 10 kg of other gear (clothing, sleeping bag etc) into a drawstring duffel bag carried in a zip-up sports bag as far as Kokoda. At Kokoda your drawstring bag will be transferred into one of our porters' backpacks and your zip-up carry bag will be brought back to Port Moresby by air with our one of our staff, or can be donated to somebody at Kokoda if is just a cheapie. NB There will be a weigh-in at Kokoda and the 10 kg portering limit will be strictly enforced. Anything over 10 kg you will have to carry yourself.

If you do not wish to carry a day-pack at all and you would like a porter to carry all of your personal gear (up to 15 kg) you must book an extra personal porter in advance. An extra personal porter costs AUD\$500 including the porter's wages, the cost of accommodating him in Port Moresby for a few days and a plane ticket back to Kokoda. If you require a dedicated personal porter this extra cost will be added to your invoice and must be paid in advance. It is very difficult to organise an extra porter after the trek has started so please think carefully about whether you can carry your own day pack with up to 5 kg of gear or whether you need to book an extra porter to carry everything for you. If you opt for a personal porter you can either bring your gear in your own 70-90 litre backpack for our porter to carry (top-loading packs are better for this type of trekking) or you can still bring your gear in a duffel bag that we can pack into one of our company backpacks.

4. Suggested packing list

- three shirts or tops (cotton is best)
- one long-sleeved light sweater or windcheater (for wearing around the campsite at night and for sleeping in)
- two pairs of bottoms (jeans, army trousers, drill shorts)
- four changes of underwear
- light hiking boots (must be worn-in and NOT brand new)
- 2 pairs of thick woollen hiking socks (or cotton/wool blend but NOT nylon/acrylic/polyester)
- small waterproof torch with spare batteries
- rain poncho (not rain coat, it won't fit your day pack underneath - you can buy a hiking poncho from any camping gear shop - don't skimp on a PVC one, buy a good quality nylon one)
- lightweight half-size bath towel (quick-dry type - even just a small hand towel is enough to dry yourself)
- half a bar of soap in a leak-proof container
- one roll of toilet paper (wrap it in a freezer bag or shopping bag to keep it dry)
- personal water bottle (1.5 or 2 litre) to carry in your day pack. Many trekkers recommend a "bladder" built into your daypack which enables you to take frequent sips as you walk along, while others say bladders are overkill and the bladder water is always at body temperature and unrefreshing. No need to spend a lot - many trekkers just walk with an old 2 litre cordial bottle tied on to the back of their day pack and say this is just as good as any expensive insulated bottle.
- a small personal first aid kit (see below)
- lightweight slippers or tennis shoes (for moving around campsites while your boots are drying by the fire, or for crossing streams without soaking your hiking boots)
- sleeping bag and mat (see below)

TIP: Don't bring big heavy reference books about the Kokoda campaign that you won't have time to read while trekking anyway.

TIP: The weather will be generally warm in the day time and cold at night.

TIP: Don't bring pyjamas - just sleep in whatever dry clothes you have. At each village or campsite you can wash dirty clothes and dry them overnight by the campfire while you sleep in your clean change.

TIP: Don't bring a big hat. Most trekkers recommend a terry-towelling hat with small floppy brim that will soak up sweat, or a bandanna to tie round your head. Most of the trek involves walking under the shade of trees and a wide brimmed hat is not necessary and will just get in the way.

TIP: Apart from your small bath towel bring a sweat towel for wiping your face and arms as you trek.

TIP: Bring spare batteries for your digital camera because batteries seem to go flat more rapidly in the humid climate and there will be nowhere to buy them along the way.

TIP: Ladies (and gentlemen) with long hair: we recommend you have your hair cut short, braided or tied before commencing the trek. Long untied hair will quickly get dirty and sweaty and can become a major

distraction and annoyance for you while walking. The ladies at our office, or off-duty housekeepers at your hotel are always happy to do hair braiding, or ask one of our local helpers at Popondetta or Kokoda. Alternatively, tie a bandanna around your head while walking.

5. **Sleeping gear.** To sleep ON you must bring your own roll-up or fold-up rubber sleeping mat or compact (very) lightweight roll-up or blow-up mattress. A few of the village guest houses provide foam rubber mattresses to doss down on but most are bare-floor only, and tents only have a fitted groundsheet. To sleep IN, bring a lightweight sleeping bag rated for 5 degrees. If it is hot dry weather with no mosquitoes we usually just rig a big tarpaulin as a big open-sided fly tent and everybody dosses down on a big ground sheet underneath, sardine-style (works well unless there are snorers...). NB Your sleeping bag and mat or mattress counts as part of your 10 kg portage allowance.

6. **Trekwear.** Most experienced Kokoda trekkers recommend wearing shorts because there are numerous points where you will wade knee-deep, thigh-deep or even waist-deep through running creeks. The Track is now sufficiently wide and cleared in most parts that you will be unlikely to be pushing through long grass or undergrowth and therefore unlikely to get grass cuts, bramble scratches or leeches on your legs (thank God, I hear you say). When wearing shorts with hiking boots, some trekkers say ankle-covers (gators) and/or shin-covers will be helpful for keeping water, mud and grass seeds off your boots while others snicker and say gators are overkill.

If your main hiking boots get very wet from wading through creeks you are in for some very uncomfortable walking with waterlogged feet. Bring a pair of sandals or cheap pair of slippers, boat shoes or tennis shoes that you can wear for the creek crossings or walking in the wet. Don't try to cross the creeks in bare feet as the bottom may have sharp stones and gravel, and the occasional broken bottle or rusty tin can.

7. **Bathing.** During the trek you will bathe in creeks and rivers or under public taps in villages, usually in front of other people. Bathing without clothes may offend others so we suggest male trekkers bathe in shorts and ladies should bring a sarong or quick-dry shorts and top to wear for bathing.

8. **Your personal first aid kit should include**

- *something to treat bites and scratches and inflamed skin* (eg Soov cream which contains anaesthetic)
- some *antibiotic powder* (not antiseptic - Dettol cream etc is useless for preventing infection in the tropical jungle, you have to hit skin wounds with antibiotics straight away).
- one strip (12 tabs) of *paracetamol or aspirin* for general pain relief
- *small nail clippers* for clipping off bits of skin from blisters etc (but don't pack the nail clippers in your hand luggage or the airport security will go bananas)
- something to prevent and treat chafing between the legs, eg petroleum jelly or lanoline/sorbolene cream
- *a small tube of sun protection cream* (most of the trek is under shade but there are clear patches, and the Buna/Gona battlefields area is very open)
- *blisters dressings*. Shoes rubbing skin off feet is probably the number one problem with long treks like this - forget about Band Aids and Leukoplast because they won't stick. Bring some extra-large Elastoplast fabric bandaids or a 1 metre length of Elastoplast fabric sticking plaster, the type that makes you scream when you pull it off, that's the only stuff that will keep a wad of gauze bandage firmly covering the spots where your skin has rubbed off. Strong sticking plaster is also good for closing deep cuts that would normally need stitches. Also a couple of gauze bandages that you can cut lengths of, to fold into wads to cover your blisters or pack wounds. If you wear light hiking boots that fit you well and have already been worn-in for a couple of weeks during your training, with thick woollen socks, you probably won't get blisters.

Spend some time on making your personal first aid kit as lightweight as possible - too many trekkers make the mistake of bringing a big tube of everything which is just dead weight. To reduce the size and weight of your first aid kit, squeeze out two thirds of each tube of cream and keep this in other containers at home, and pack only the squeezed tubes with remaining cream. Pack your little first aid kit into a toiletries bag together with your soap, shaving razor etc. Remember every other trekker will be carrying a little first aid kit and most of them won't use it much so there will be plenty of supplies available within the group if you run out. Your trek leader also carries a full first aid kit that you can tap into. A list of the contents of our trek first aid kits is available on our website. Also bring any medications that you might need for any specific medical conditions you suffer (eg if you are asthmatic, make sure you bring a Ventolin puffer). Last chance to buy medications will be in Popondetta.

9. **Guide and porters.** Your trekking party will include an English-speaking guide who has traversed the track many times before and knows the area intimately. In addition we provide sufficient porters to carry the equipment and supplies we provide plus 10 kg of your personal gear. Porters will not only carry gear but will also support you over difficult parts of the Track and carry you to the nearest airstrip if you slip and break

your leg. Porters enjoy helping visitors cross the Track and they appreciate the opportunity for employment that you are giving them so don't feel self-conscious about somebody else carrying your stuff.

10. **Food.** As an ecotourism company we want to maximise the benefits of tourism to the people living in the local area, so wherever possible we pay the village guest house operators to supply fresh fruit and vegetables for our trekkers. They in turn buy these fruit and vegies from other village people so there is a flow-on benefit. Our policy of supplying fresh food for dinner wherever available not only encourages local enterprise but gives you a wonderful opportunity to enjoy fresh tropical fruit like pawpaw, pineapple, watermelon, bananas, star-fruit, tamarillo, passionfruit, and seasonal vegetables including sweet potato, yam, pumpkin, taro, beans, corn and tomatoes. Some enterprising locals are now planting large food gardens to sell fruit and vegies to the village guest house operators or direct to trekkers from track-side stalls. Some villages are better at this than others, and the availability of fresh food also varies with seasonality and the number of trekking groups on the Track at the same time. If another large trekking group passes through a village just before your group, you may arrive to find that the village has been cleaned out and there are no fresh vegies available because the villagers didn't have time to go back to their gardens and harvest more food yet, or because the next crop is not ready for harvest yet, so our efforts to base the trek menu on local food can be a bit hit-and-miss sometimes. However we have good relationships with the particular village guest houses we patronise at Alola, Efogi and Menari so we can nearly always rely on a good feed of fresh local food at these stops.

Our porters always carry enough camp food to supplement or replace village food. Camp food dinners usually consist of tinned stew with rice, spaghetti with tinned Bolognese sauce, fried tinned ham with reconstituted dried peas and potato, Continental savoury rice or pasta, or whatever else we can source from Port Moresby's sometimes unreliable supermarkets. At the village guest houses along the Kokoda Track, vegetables are mainly plain-boiled in water or dry-roasted under hot stones or in the fire. The villages at this high altitude don't have coconuts for cooking in coconut cream as the coastal villages do. Not much meat is available in the villages along the Kokoda Track because (a) most of the villagers are Seventh-Day Adventists and do not eat pork for religious reasons, and (b) raising chickens on a scale big enough to feed trekking groups is difficult as there is no grain for chicken feed available (c) there are no beef cattle raised in the Kokoda Track area and no sheep farming anywhere in PNG.

Breakfast and lunch supplies are all carried by our porters. Breakfast each morning will be billy tea with hot porridge, toasted muesli, damper or pancakes. Lunch each day will consist of dry biscuits with tinned tuna or other meat, cheese stick, dried fruit or beef jerky. Of course, all empty tins and other hard rubbish is washed and packed into garbage bags and carried out by the porters for disposal at proper rubbish dumps in Port Moresby.

TIP: Most trekkers say that the food we provide is more than sufficient, but you are welcome to bring a stash of your favourite munchies to pop into your mouth while walking along. Avoid pure chocolate because it will melt in the tropical heat as you pass through Port Moresby and Popondetta. Trail mix, muesli bars, candy are great but be sure not to drop wrappers along the trail. Declare all food on arrival at the airport and as long as it's all packaged, processed food there should be no problems with the quarantine officers.

11. **Drinking water** along the Kokoda Track is collected from clean sources at camping sites and from rainwater tanks or piped supplies in the villages. None of our trekkers has ever reported any problems with water-related diarrhoea on the walk (or at least nobody has owned up to it!).

During the trek you must remember to refill your water bottle or bladder at every opportunity and drink as much as you can to avoid dehydration. Dehydration can creep up on you and knock you out with no warning. One minute you're walking along, next minute you're flat on the ground. Take frequent sips of water while walking. Don't follow your porters' drinking habits. Their bodies seem to need less water intake as they have grown up in this climate carrying sacks of sweet potatoes and firewood from their mountain gardens to their villages; their bodies are more resilient when walking in these tough conditions with heavy loads.

If perchance you get stuck at a village or camping site where there is no clean water available due to recent rains, the porters will boil water on the campfire and leave it to cool and settle, but so far since we first began running treks in 2004 we have never needed to do this. As a backup measure you can bring a few water purification tablets, but if you are really worried about water, there is a new product available in camping stores called Steripen. This is a penlight-sized U/V water steriliser that runs on AA batteries, you just stir it through a cup of water to sterilise it from any harmful bacteria. This might be a better alternative to water purification tablets if you are concerned about drinking water. Purification tablets make water taste awful.

12. **Fitness, safety, insurance and medical evacuation.** For legal reasons we require that you have a medical check-up including a cardiovascular fitness test before arriving in PNG (do this AFTER you are well into your training routine, not before) and supply a letter from your doctor to state that you are fit for 9 days challenging walking. You won't be allowed to commence the walk unless we have this document in our hot little hands first. However despite being certified fit and in good health, you must recognise that there is still

a possibility that you may suffer an injury or illness during your trek. Your guide will keep an eye on your condition during the trek and your porters will support and assist you with traversing difficult parts of the walk, but no matter how fit you are or how experienced a hiker you are there is always a chance you might slip on a mossy rock and break a bone. You may get a scratch that quickly gets infected and makes your arm or leg swell up. You may suffer a severe gastric reaction to something you eat. You may be overtaken by dehydration and collapse.

If you fall ill or have an accident while on the Kokoda Track we have a contingency plan in place. Our trek leader carries both a VHF radio and a mobile satellite phone for contacting our Port Moresby office, from where we can discuss your condition with a doctor and obtain advice on how to manage your situation. We will also contact your travel insurer and obtain their advice on what level of assistance they will provide under the terms of your travel insurance policy.

If your condition is not life threatening but sufficient to prevent you from continuing the walk (eg you have sprained an ankle or have an infected toe that you can't walk on) you will probably be assisted or stretchered by your porters to the nearest airstrip and - in consultation with your insurance company - we will arrange earliest pickup by any scheduled or charter flight that is due to fly your way within the next few days. Usually your insurance company will meet any additional cost involved, which is usually just a seat on somebody else's flight. Insurance companies often will not authorise dedicated medivac charter of a plane or helicopter just for a sprained ankle, so you can expect to endure some degree of discomfort and frustration for a day or three while waiting for non-urgent evacuation by scheduled flight.

If you are in severe pain or your condition otherwise requires immediate evacuation, your insurance company will arrange earliest pickup by a dedicated (ie just for you) fixed-wing aircraft or helicopter, depending on where you are and what charter aircraft are available. If your condition requires in-flight treatment a flight nurse and/or doctor will be on board the aircraft to begin immediate treatment when you are picked up. If your condition does not require in-flight medical treatment there will only be a pilot and one of our company staff on board, and we will transport you to a private clinic here in Port Moresby when you arrive, for treatment.

If you wish to voluntarily withdraw from the trek at any time because you feel you are not coping with the walking and fear you may cave in if you keep going (and then become a problem for everybody else) you should advise your guide that you wish to discontinue walking. Your guide will then discuss the situation with you and first determine whether a bit of emotional first aid (encouragement) might fix you up or whether another option is for you to stay back at one of the villages with your porter and have one or two rest days before continuing the walk with just your porter. However if you and your trek leader both agree that flying out is the best option, he will arrange through our office for the first available passing flight to divert to the airstrip where you are waiting and pick you up. It's important to note that flying out voluntarily must be at your own cost. Your travel insurer will not cover it. Flying out may be as cheap as \$100 for a seat on the weekly flight to Menari and Efogi every Friday, \$1000 to divert another aircraft flying past, or \$3,000 to charter your own helicopter to fly in to wherever you are, airstrip or no airstrip.

Sometimes we also come up against situations where our trek leader can see that somebody is on his/her last legs and not coping with the trek despite his/her own insistence that he/she is OK and wants to keep walking. In these circumstances the trek leader has the right of veto and will insist that, before you become a medivac case, you either (a) withdraw from the trek and make arrangements to fly out at your own cost or (b) stay back at a village with one of the porters and take a rest day to regain some strength before continuing the walk. If this happens to you, you will complete the trek one or two days after the rest of the group and probably have to reschedule your international flight, but any flight rebooking penalties will probably cost less than evacuating yourself from the Track.

Normally when a trekker requires medical or voluntary evacuation, the trek leader will leave the head porter or another responsible porter to stay with you at the village airstrip until your aircraft arrives, then fly out with you to Port Moresby. The rest of the trekking group must keep walking so that they can arrive in time to catch their international flights. If your condition is serious the trek leader will leave his satellite phone with you so that you keep in direct contact with our Port Moresby office until your transport arrives.

Bear in mind that charter aircraft based in Port Moresby (both fixed-wing and helicopters) which are engaged by aeromedical retrieval companies for evacuation flights (medivacs) are often on hire to mining companies during the day and may be some hours away from Port Moresby when a medivac call comes through. By the time an aircraft is recalled to Port Moresby from a distant mining site to pick up a medical crew and refuel, it may be too late in the day to fly to a remote Kokoda Track airstrip which has no runway lights. Dusk arrives early along the Kokoda Track because of mountain shadows, and aircraft are not allowed to land at a remote airstrip unless they are assured of being able to take off again by last light. (Well, they can land but if they are still on the ground at last light they have to wait overnight till dawn before they can take off again).

Accordingly even if you are seriously ill or injured you may not necessarily be airlifted out immediately. In particular, if you request medical evacuation after noon on any day there is a 50% chance that you may have to wait until next morning before an aircraft can get in to pick you up. This is a risk you must accept when

deciding to walk the Kokoda Track. It is one of our terms and conditions that you must sign our trekking contract and disclaimer acknowledging that medical assistance, including medical evacuation, is provided "at the cost of the trekker and/or the trekker's insurer".

You can buy a travel insurance policy over the counter from any travel agent or airline office in Australia for about \$200, or from various insurers' websites (eg www.covermore.com.au). Once you have purchased your travel insurance policy please e-mail us the details including name of insurer, your policy number, and the emergency phone number given on the policy document (ie the number to call if you need urgent help from the insurer - make sure it is a direct line number and not a 13 number or 1800 number because we cannot ring these Australian freecall numbers from here in PNG).

Sorry to sound gloomy, but a small percentage of Kokoda trekkers do require some form of medical assistance or medivac, even the fit gung-ho types. How embarrassed was the Navy search and rescue helicopter pilot who broke an ankle bone at Ua-Ule Creek and had to be ignominiously airlifted out by another rescue chopper! Can happen to anyone...

13. Training program. Which brings us to the next point, preparing yourself for the walk. Ten years ago the Kokoda Track mainly attracted experienced bushwalkers looking for a new challenge. More recently the Kokoda Track has become a focal point of Australia's developing cultural identity and is attracting more and more walkers interested in the role of Kokoda in Australia's wartime history. "Doing Kokoda" is even seen as a rite of passage for some Australians now, similar to visiting Gallipoli in Turkey. This means we now have many walkers coming through Kokoda who are not experienced bushwalkers and may be of dubious fitness. (Statistics tell us that one in two Australian adults is now overweight). Some of these walkers find the Kokoda Track to be an extremely difficult and distressing experience if they do not prepare themselves adequately. If you are not an experienced bushwalker and/or a person with a high level of fitness, we recommend that you commence a training program at least 8 weeks before the trek, consisting of daily walks at medium pace up and down moderately steep hills for at least 1 hour per day. If you have no hilly streets in your area, the next option is to climb up and down flights of stairs for the same period of time. When walking the Kokoda Track you will have plenty of opportunities to stop and rest whenever you are tired so you should stop and rest frequently while training too. On weekends if you have more time available, increase your training to 2-3 hours per day - an organised bushwalk in your area is a great substitute for walking up and down streets or stairs. Carry a water bottle with you while training, and practice taking frequent sips of water to prevent dehydration, which may not be such a danger in your home area but here in the humid tropics your newly-formed habit of drinking while walking will be a wise investment. After 2 weeks of training carrying nothing, you should start carrying a light day pack while doing your training, gradually increasing the weight up to about 5 kg if that is what you are planning to carry on the Kokoda trek. After doing your training if you are still not 100% confident you can carry a 5 kg day pack 5 hours a day for 9 days on the Kokoda Track itself then you should book a dedicated personal porter... do not take the risk of exhausting yourself and having to be flown out by medivac chopper.

14. Malaria. Before arriving in PNG you must see your doctor or traveller's medical centre for anti-malaria prophylaxis (preventive medication), which you will take during your time in PNG. No anti-malaria medication is 100% effective against malaria but taking something is better than not taking anything. Your chances of being bitten by a malaria mosquito somewhere along the Kokoda Track is not high because *Anopheles* mosquitoes do not breed at altitudes above 300m but Port Moresby, Popondetta and Kokoda station are malaria-prone areas. If you are taking effective anti-malaria prophylaxis your chances of actually contracting malaria even in a malarial area are quite low (but not zero). There are a number of recommended medications that can be taken weekly (eg Larium) or daily (eg Doxycycline) that kill malaria parasites as soon as they enter your bloodstream from a mosquito bite. Doxycycline is actually an antibiotic and it was only in recent years that it was discovered that doxycycline is also an effective anti-malaria medication. The advantage of taking daily doxycycline to prevent malaria, if you can be sure to remember to take it every day, is that your blood remains saturated with a broad-spectrum antibiotic and this also prevents cuts and scratches from becoming infected, and may stave off chest coughs and other internal infections.

If your doctor suggests you take chloroquine as anti-malaria medication please query this because nowadays many strains of malaria in PNG are resistant to chloroquine and it is not recommended as an anti-malaria medication for tourists.

Even if you are infected with malaria you are unlikely to fall ill during your trek as the incubation period for the malaria parasite is usually a minimum of seven days so even if you get bitten by a malaria mosquito on your first day here you are unlikely to experience malaria symptoms until you are back at home. Thus, if you fall ill after returning home please don't try to "sleep it off", you must go to the doctor and state that you have been in PNG and may have malaria. Malaria symptoms include body aches and pains, diarrhoea, headache, high temperatures, fever and chills - feeling cold while your body is actually hot. In other words, malaria symptoms are very similar to flu symptoms and easily mistaken, so be aware.

Presumptive treatment for malaria (artemether tablets) will be carried in the guide's first aid kit on your

trek. If you experience any of the symptoms mentioned above, even if you think it is not malaria, please inform your guide and commence a course of presumptive treatment for malaria. The only way to correctly diagnose malaria is with a blood test and since this will not be available while out in the bush you will have to err on the side of caution and presume that your symptoms are caused by malaria and take the treatment. If it turns out the symptoms are not really caused by malaria, but by flu or something else, the presumptive treatment won't hurt you.

15. Visas. You can apply for a tourist visa on arrival at Port Moresby airport. The cost is currently PGK100 (about \$45), and must be paid in local currency. Getting your tourist visa issued is quick and easy if you have an Australian passport and a copy of this tour itinerary handy to show the immigration officer. Please note your passport must have at least 6 months validity left on it in order to be issued a PNG visa. If you are not a citizen of Australia, New Zealand, Great Britain, Canada, or the USA please contact us for special advice on visas. We do not recommend that you send your passport to a PNG diplomatic mission in Australia to get your visa because occasionally passports go missing in the mail.

16. Money. You should change about AUD\$200 to PNG Kina at a bank or currency exchange booth in Australia before departure to pay for your tourist visa on arrival and to pay for any bar drinks etc on your first day in Port Moresby. If you are just coming in to do the Kokoda trek and straight out again you won't need much more than this anyway, especially if you have a credit card to pay for hotel extras. Just carry about PGK100 (AUD\$45) in coins and small notes with you on the Kokoda Track to buy fruit and the occasional warm can of Coke from village markets. Get this change from the airport bank or a supermarket on your day of arrival.

The Travelex currency exchange booths at major Australian airports including Brisbane and Cairns do not always have PNG Kina currency in stock, but even if they do, don't change large sums of money there because the exchange rate for changing AUD\$ to kina is better here in PNG than in Australia. If you will need more than \$200 to spend here, wait till you arrive in Port Moresby and use your credit card to get a cash advance in PNG kina from an automatic teller machine. There are ATMs at the airport that accepts Visa/Mastercard, and other ATMs around the city. You can also exchange AUD cash over the counter at the airport banks.

If you happen to arrive without any PNG Kina in your pocket to pay for your tourist visa, you can exchange some AUD cash to PNG currency at the bureau-de-change in the Customs area to pay for your visa. The immigration officer will allow you to pass through the barrier, go to the bureau-de-change to exchange your money and come back to the immigration counter to pay for your visa, or at a pinch may allow you to go out into the main terminal area to use an ATM and come back and pay for your visa. They know you won't abscond without your passport!

17. Gifts and tips. Giving gifts and tips to porters, village people etc is not expected but visitors usually ask us "what makes a good gift?" so this information is provided accordingly. For porters, most trekkers find that there are usually one or two porters that they take a shine to during the trek - the one who carries your stuff or the one who pulls you out of the creek etc - and they would like to leave them with a gift or a tip or both. For gifts, something they can use back in their village or things that they can use on future treks make good gifts, eg small waterproof torches that take 2 x AA batteries, hiking socks, T-shirts, cheap sports watches. At the end of the trek you are also welcome to give the porters anything you don't want or need to take home with you (eg your torch or even your used, smelly and dirty items of clothing, towels, socks, shoes, first aid items the porters come from poor families and they gratefully accept anything in any condition). We pay our porters above-average local wages but if you would really like to give a tip then we suggest no more than PGK100 (about A\$45) otherwise it could cause dissention among the other porters who might feel that they also worked hard on the trip. Sometimes trekkers pool their tips and give them to the guide and he distributes the money evenly to all porters.

18. Village donations. If you would like to contribute something to the villages you pass through then we suggest you bring useful things to give to the village schools - this is a way of ensuring your contribution benefits all families in the village. Don't bring toys, balloons etc for the kids - they have had enough of that. Suitable donations to village schools include: wall maps (The World, Pacific Ocean, Australia, Europe, Africa etc), wall posters (eg animals, plants, machines, famous people, illustrated alphabet or numerals), small reference books (eg pocket dictionary, thesaurus, slimline atlas, fact books) or children's paperback novels with basic reading level (eg Enid Blyton etc). Writing and drawing materials like crayons, pencils, pens, maths sets are also helpful. Don't bring paper or exercise books as they already have adequate supplies of these. Just bring a couple of items at most (to give to ONE school only - you can't help everybody) otherwise our trek weight will increase dramatically. Donated items should be given to the school head teacher in the village of your choice, not to individual children - this way all of the kids will have access to the materials. Village schools along the Kokoda Track (Naoro, Menari, Efogi, Kagi, Alola) only cater for Year 1 to Year 6 whereas primary schools at Kokoda, Awala, Gona and Buna go up to Year 8. The only high schools are at Popondetta and Kokoda but you will not be visiting any of these. Ecotourism Melanesia is currently

formulating a scheme to provide sustained assistance to the school and clinic at Menari village so if you would like to make any cash donations or organise some fundraising back at home we will be happy to funnel your donations into school supplies and medical supplies for Menari that we will personally purchase in Port Moresby and deliver to the village. A systematic way of helping the communities along the Kokoda Track is to donate to the Kokoda Track Foundation www.kokodatrackfoundation.org

19. Hotels in Port Moresby. These days there is a serious shortage of accommodation in Port Moresby. Many hotels have a full house during the week and operate at 80-90% capacity on weekends. It is essential to book your trek early so that we can place deposits for your hotel accommodation immediately.

Due to the hotel room shortage there is also a chronic problem of *overbooking* at some hotels and in the past our trekking groups have been inconvenienced on a number of occasions, arriving to find that confirmed rooms had been given away to other guests who arrived earlier in the day. For 2010 we have decided to accommodate our trekking groups at hotels which have better room availability and less mix-ups. Our cornerstone hotel for 2010 will be the Ponderosa Family Hotel which is a quiet, lesser-known hotel that has not yet been "discovered" by any other major trekking companies and does not experience congestion during peak trekking periods like Anzac Day.

The *Ponderosa Family Hotel* is located in the quiet Henao Drive residential area at Five Mile. The hotel was formerly Air Niugini's single quarters for flight attendants. The single quarters have now been turned into budget accommodation while a brand new wing of flash mid-range hotel rooms has been built at the back. The *budget rooms* are small and well worn but very clean with ensuite bathroom, TV, tea/coffee and fridge. Linen is white bleached and beds expertly made. There is no aircon but fan only, and no in-room phone (calls can be made at the reception desk). Twin beds or double are available.

The *mid-range hotel rooms* are less than 3 years old, very spacious and well-appointed. Each unit has two double beds as well as nice sitting furniture, a spotless ensuite bathroom with latest fittings, and a little balcony with chairs overlooking the gardens. There are in-room phones, flat screen TVs and split-system airconditioning.

The Ponderosa has a restaurant and bar but no nightclub and is therefore quiet at night. There are no shops nearby so self-catering is only possible if you stop at a supermarket on your way there. The hotel has a spacious carpark which we find convenient for manoeuvring our tour vehicles, and they have a nice shuttle bus for airport transfers. However the Ponderosa has no swimming pool and no internet access for guests.

The *Gateway Hotel* www.coralseahotels.com.pg is located right at the airport and is a favourite for business travellers. The hotel often has a full house. Rooms are tastefully decorated with local art and recently refurbished. There are two restaurants, two bars, 24 hour room service and takeaway pizza. Facilities include a swimming pool and free internet cafe for guests. Rooms have one queen bed or a queen and a single for twin occupancy.

The *Airways Hotel* www.airways.com.pg vies with the Crowne Plaza Hotel for the title of Port Moresby's premier hotel. Also located at the airport, this boutique hotel features uniquely decorated rooms and it is silver service all the way from complimentary fruit juice at reception on arrival through to nightly bed turn-down. There are three restaurants with fine dining, café or buffet options and several stylish bars. The popular Poolside Brasserie offers panoramic views of the airport runways, surrounding hills and Bootless Bay. Airways Hotel has a swimming pool, spa and massage service, snooker room, sports club, hair salon and a fully equipped business centre with internet.