



Ecotourism Melanesia

Discover Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands

ITINERARY FOR TOUR EM10C 2010

WALK THE KOKODA TRACK

7 nights package - "Fast Kokoda"

(1 night Port Moresby, 6 nights trekking)

Special features of this package:

- fast trek for very fit walkers
- private group bookings only, minimum 10 pax
- 7 nights itinerary Sunday to Sunday minimises time away from work, study etc
- your choice of north-south or south-north walking direction
- flexible itinerary adjusted daily based on group walking progress
- no walking at night
- trek leader for fast treks is John Hunt Hiviki, former Kokoda Challenge record holder (crossed the Track barefoot in less than 24 hours)

This trek package is aimed at very fit individuals who have previously undertaken sustained physical challenges and can cope with the rigours of fast walking and climbing over long days. Walking begins with 6 hours on the first day and then 9-10 hours a day thereafter. Our trek leader prefers pre-dawn starts, aiming to arrive mid- to late afternoon at the next overnight stop. The itinerary is flexible and the trek leader in consultation with walkers may decide to vary the suggested overnight stops in the light of the group's daily progress. Due to the tight walking schedule it is important that the group is not slowed down by less capable walkers and therefore group organisers must be very selective when organising a group for a fast trek.

TOUR COST

Select your preferred accommodation for the 1 night 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)
7 nights trek package per person, twin share (or willing to share)	AUD 2,843	AUD 2,883	AUD 2,928	AUD 2,973
Single supplement (own room for 1 nt Port Moresby and single tent for trekking)	AUD 140	AUD 180	AUD 225	AUD 270
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 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 - one night hotel accommodation (choice of budget, mid-range or deluxe) room only, twin-share unless you pay a single supplement for own-room
- Port Moresby - road transfer to or from Owers Corner with stop at Bomana War Cemetery
- Kokoda Track - 6 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 - 6 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, site access fees and village "museum" fees
- Kokoda - private charter flight to or from Port Moresby
- 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, flying porters from Kokoda if required, accommodation and health care for porters while in Port Moresby, flying food supplies into Efogi and Kokoda, maintenance of equipment, cost of retaining handling agent in Kokoda, staff training, donations to village development projects, maintaining public liability insurance and licensing and accreditation with Kokoda Track Authority

TOUR EXCLUSIONS

- hotel meals and any other food and drink not stated in the itinerary or tour inclusions as "included"
- 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
- evacuation costs

ITINERARY FOR NORTH-SOUTH FAST TREK

For full details of sightseeing and logistics see itinerary for EM10A "The Full Kokoda" (north-south trek).

DAY 1: SUNDAY	Arrive Port Moresby and overnight hotel
DAY 2: MONDAY	Visit Bomana War Cemetery, drive to Owers Corner and hike to Ua-Ule Creek
DAY 3: TUESDAY	Hike from Ua'Ule Creek to Naoro
DAY 4: WEDNESDAY	Hike from Naoro to Efogi
DAY 5: THURSDAY	Hike from Efogi to Templetons Crossing #1 via Kagi or Naduri
DAY 6: FRIDAY	Hike from Templetons Crossing #1 to Isurava memorial
DAY 7: SATURDAY	Hike from Isurava memorial to Kokoda
DAY 8: SUNDAY	Morning charter flight to Port Moresby and connect with afternoon flight to Brisbane or Cairns

ITINERARY FOR SOUTH-NORTH FAST TREK

For full details of sightseeing and logistics see itinerary for EM10B "Basic Kokoda" (south-north trek).

DAY 1: SUNDAY	Arrive Port Moresby and overnight hotel
DAY 2: MONDAY	Morning charter flight to Kokoda and hike to Isurava
DAY 3: TUESDAY	Hike from Isurava via Isurava memorial to Templetons Crossing #2
DAY 4: WEDNESDAY	Hike from Templetons Crossing #2 to Myola Junction
DAY 5: THURSDAY	Hike from Myola Junction via Kagi or Naduri to Efogi
DAY 6: FRIDAY	Hike from Efogi to Naoro
DAY 7: SATURDAY	Hike from Naoro to Ua'Ule Creek
DAY 8: SUNDAY	Hike from Ua'Ule Creek to Owers Corner. Road transfer to Port Moresby and connect with afternoon flight to Brisbane or Cairns.

TOUR NOTES:

- 1. Our itinerary.** *Our Fast Trek is only suitable for walkers with very good physical fitness who have previously undertaken similar challenging walks or runs. The itinerary features pre-dawn starts, aiming to arrive late afternoon at the next overnight stop. The itinerary is flexible and the trek leader in consultation with walkers may decide to vary the overnight stops according to the group's daily progress. Due to the tight walking schedule it is important that the group is not slowed down by less capable walkers and therefore group organisers must be very selective when accepting individuals for the group.*
- 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 portorage. 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. At kit-up your drawstring bag will be transferred into one of our porters' backpacks. NB There will be a weigh-in at kit-up and the 10 kg portorage 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 A\$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 our porters 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 (trek leader) 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 some of 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 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. Snack foods will count as part of your 10 kg portage allowance unless you carry them in your day pack.

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 **6 days fast trekking**. 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 as you walk and your porters will support and assist you with traversing difficult parts of the track, 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 plane. 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 or somebody else's charter flight.

If your condition is potentially life-threatening and 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 by air.

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. The trek leader will leave his satellite phone or VHF radio 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 walking with one of our groups a few years back - he 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 do not sign up for the Fast Trek. If you are not already undertaking a rigorous daily fitness regime then at the very least you should 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 **10 hours a day for 6 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, Manari, 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 Manari 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 Manari 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.