



Ecotourism Melanesia

Discover Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands

EM206 2010 TUFU CULTURE FESTIVAL & PAPUAN GULF MASK FESTIVAL TOUR - 11-24 JUNE
13 nights Tufi, Kerema, Mt Hagen, Simbai, Madang
(escorted small group tour minimum 8 maximum 16 people)

This is an off-the-beaten-track tour for culture-philes, an opportunity to meet three contrasting tribal cultures and artistic peoples of Papua New Guinea that the rest of the world has forgotten ... or perhaps never discovered in the first place.

Two of these locations - Kerema and Simbai - rarely receive visits from tourists or outsiders and this provides a unique opportunity to study traditional lifestyles that have not been modified for tourist consumption as well as witnessing a concentrated display of their traditional dress and cultural icons such as dance masks and head-dresses during these festivals and sing-sings.

The Tufi Culture Festival is less than 10 years old and was established as a means of keeping the Tufi culture alive while attracting more tourists to stay in the village guest houses scattered along the coast.

Village groups from throughout the Tufi district put on their best displays of dancing, handicrafts and traditional activities like making sago. Colourful and exquisite tapa cloth and bird of paradise feathers are the trademark traditional dress of the Tufi people. Less than 100 overseas and local tourists make it to Tufi for the culture festival every June. For more information on Tufi go to our web site www.em.com.pg and follow the links to "PNG TOURIST INFORMATION" then "Oro Province" and "Tufi".

The Papuan Gulf Mask Festival started in 2004 as a means of preserving the mask culture of the people of the Gulf of Papua. Photographs taken by explorers and ethnographers in the early 1900s indicate a vibrant and unique mask culture but this had all but disappeared by the 1990s. The National Cultural Commission mooted and sponsored the establishment of an annual festival to encourage mask makers to pass on their skills and knowledge to the next generation. Although the festival has been running for several years, it has only had a local audience of villagers from the Gulf region and it has not been picked up by any tour companies yet.

Ecotourism Melanesia is the first inbound tour operator to include this festival on a tour program and 2010 will be our first tour group to attend the festival - and probably the first tour group to visit Kerema - ever!

Our visit to Simbai does not coincide with a festival (their tribal festival is in September following the Goroka Show) but the indigenous culture of Simbai is easy to experience at any time without the need for a festival. This fascinating exotic tribe live traditional lifestyles in little family hamlets in the Simbai Valley, and visiting them is like walking through a living museum of primitive Man. For more information on Simbai and the Kalam tribe go to our web site www.em.com.pg and follow the links to "PNG TOURIST INFORMATION" then "Madang" and "Simbai".

TOUR COST: PGK 14,900 per person, twin-share, 13 nights, includes internal air

Single supplement is not available due to limited number of rooms in the rural guest houses and hotels featured on this tour.

Truncated tour options

1. Day 1 to Day 6 only (ie Tufi sector only) PGK 6,500 per person twin share. Single supplement not available.
2. Day 6 to Day 13 only (ie skip Tufi sector) PGK 10,600 per person per person twin share. Single supplement not available.

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To convert the tour cost to other currencies, use the current exchange rate listed on our website home page or contact us for a quote. The tour price is subject to change. However clients paid-in-full are protected against any price rises.

TOUR INCLUSIONS (13 nights):

- All domestic air travel (by charter or scheduled flights at our discretion) Port Moresby-Tufi-Port Moresby-Kerema-Mt Hagen-Simbai-Madang-Port Moresby. Tickets and charter vouchers are supplied on arrival or carried by the tour leader.
- meet and greet at Port Moresby airport, plus short city tour if time available
- tour information kit including destination information, maps and souvenir polo shirt
- 4 nights multi-share accommodation at Tainabuna Village Guest House, Tufi - including boat transfers, local-style meals, freedom of the village and all non-motorised activities, impromptu cultural performances and demonstrations (single supplement not available)
- 2 half-day excursions by motor boat to Tufi Culture Festival, including entry pass and gratuities
- 1 full day fjord tour including village stops and barbeque lunch
- 1 night twin-share or multi-share standard bungalow at Tufi Dive Resort including 3 meals (single supplement *may* be available)
- Return motor boat transfers from Kerema airfield to Toare Village
- 2 nights twin-share basic accommodation at Toare Village Guest House (1 star standard) - including local-style meals and bottled water (single supplement not available)
- 2 days attendance at Papuan Gulf Mask Festival, including entry pass and performer gratuities
- Admission to Kerema Cultural Centre (if operating and open at the time)
- 1 night twin-share room at Hotel Kerema (2 star standard) (or alternative) - includes set-menu dinner and breakfast (single supplement not available)
- 1 night twin-share premier room at Highlander Hotel, Mt Hagen (or alternative) - room only (single supplement available)
- excursion to Paiya village and Magic Mountain including lunch
- 3 nights twin-share or multi-share accommodation at Kalam Guest House, Simbai (1.5 star) including local-style meals and bottled water
- 3 days village culture tours and hiking at Simbai including sing-sing performance and village gratuities
- 1 night twin-share standard bungalow at Jais Aben Beach Resort, Madang - room only (single supplement available)
- Non-motorised, non-diving activities at Jais Aben Beach Resort
- Optional Madang town tour
- Ad hoc sightseeing or shopping in Port Moresby on departure day
- check-in assistance and farewell for international flight
- all transfers throughout the tour
- company tour leader to escort tour throughout
- first aid kit and mobile satellite phone carried by tour leader
- daily tour coordination and monitoring by our office in Port Moresby
- 24-hour emergency support from our office in Port Moresby

TOUR EXCLUSIONS:

- international airfares
- tips (not essential, but appreciated for exceptional service)
- souvenirs and items of a personal nature
- bar drinks
- visa fees
- any meals, drinks or activities not stated as included in the tour package
- bottled water, except where stated as included in the tour package
- excess baggage charges

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EM206 ITINERARY

DAY 1: FRI 11 JUNE 2010

PORT MORESBY / TUFU

Flights arrive today from Singapore, Brisbane and Cairns.

NB International airline schedules may change over time so please check airline websites or agents for latest information.

www.airniugini.com.pg or www.apng.com

On your arrival at Port Moresby airport, look for somebody holding a sign with your name when you exit the Customs Hall. Ecotourism Melanesia staff will greet you with a smile and a surprise gift ☺ .

If you arrive on a morning flight our staff will take care of you for the day with some private sightseeing around Port Moresby and an opportunity for you to stop at a cafeteria or restaurant for lunch.

15:00 As a group we check in at the charter terminal for our flight to Tufu. This may be your first opportunity to meet the other travellers joining you on the tour.

16:30 We arrive at Tufu airfield adjacent to the Tufu government "station" (about 50 houses, a couple of little shops and a few provincial government offices) and the Tufu Resort. If time allows we can stop at the resort for a quick drink by the pool and enjoy the stunning fjord views before continuing down to the waterfront to board our speed boat for a 20 minute transfer to the south of Tufu to Tainabuna village.

Tufu is a visually stunning area of PNG with unique fjordland geography. The fjords were created thousands of years ago by fingers of lava running into the seas from an erupting Mt Victory. The people of this area are culturally rich with exotic traditional dress and energetic customary dances. The coral reefs around Tufu are pristine and easily accessible.

Tainabuna is a tiny village with just a few families, one of which has built a guest house large enough to accommodate groups. The guest house sits on a spit of beach apart from the main village and is open to cool sea breezes. Large trees overhang the beach, perfect for relaxing on the shaded sands. Bliss. You'll fall in love with this place. The sheltered fjords are wonderfully safe (no sharks, marine stingers or sea snakes), the water is calm and warm (no dangerous currents or sink-holes) and flora and fauna both above and below the waterline is spectacular.

After a welcome from the owners and a brief tour of the guest house facilities we will be just in time to view the sun set over the fjords, coconut drink in hand... magic!

19:00 Dinner - lots of seafood and local vegetables washed down with coconut juice. After dinner our hosts will demonstrate some of their local dances, songs and customs. All by the light of Tilly lamps and the bonfire - no electricity here.

Overnight Tainabuna Village Guest House (twin-share dormitory-style accommodation, sand floor, bedding and mosquito net supplied, bathe in nearby stream, washbasin with jug of water in room, sit-down outhouse toilets,

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complimentary fruit, coconut juice and tea/coffee available 24 hours, all meals and activities included, single supplement not available).

DAY 2: SAT 12 JUNE 2010

TUFI (culture festival)

06:00 Optional morning beach walk.

07:00 Tropical breakfast.

07:30 We board our open speed boat for a 30-min transfer to Kofure Village, the host village for the Tufi Culture Festival, which is located to the north of Tufi station.

There will be a full day program of cultural performances, demonstrations of traditional cultural practices, and preparation and serving of traditional foods.

14:00 We return to Tainabuna in time for some walking, paddling, fishing, snorkelling or napping in the afternoon. Scuba diving organised by Tufi Resort *may* be possible if you have your dive ticket (extra cost).

19:00 Dinner

Tonight is choir night and the village people will sing some of their traditional and religious songs. The use of Melanesian harmony in their singing is beautiful. The children are delightful when they sing and do actions.

Overnight Tainabuna Village Guest House

DAY 3: SUN 13 JUNE 2010

TUFI (culture festival)

06:00 Optional morning beach walk.

07:00 Tropical breakfast.

Today we respect the village people's tradition of religious attendance by laying low until church is out. We are of course welcome to attend the morning service with our hosts: the Anglican (Episcopalian) Church is the dominant denomination here.

Otherwise, sleep in, laze on the beach, take a swim, sip tea and nibble on fruit, or climb to the ridge top for some morning photography. Scuba diving organised by Tufi Resort *may* be possible if you have your dive ticket (extra cost).

11:00 Transfer by speed boat to Kofure Village for an afternoon of activities at the Tufi Culture Festival.

17:00 Boat transfer back to Tainabuna.

19:00 Dinner

NB This program is subject to change in accordance with the Culture Festival activities.

Overnight Tainabuna Village Guest House

DAY 4: MON 14 JUNE 2010

TUFI (free day at Tainabuna village) - QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY PUBLIC HOLIDAY

Today while other visitors are making their way back to Port Moresby we will continue enjoying this delightful little slice of paradise.

Available activities:

- walking tour of Tainabuna village and surrounds
- paddle your own outrigger canoe around the sheltered inlet
- walk along the beach, partly shaded by overhanging trees
- snorkel on the fringing reef (masks and snorkels are supplied)
- line fishing from a canoe (great fun at night too)
- relax on the shaded beach right outside the guest house door
- sun yourself in a chair

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- sit in the breeze-house up on the lookout point and watch canoes and boats pass by on their way to/from Tufi
 - go for a hike up on the ridges between the fjords (rainforest, grasslands, birds and butterflies, great views of the coast, pass through hamlets and greet the locals)
 - let the experts paddle you on a canoe ride up the fjord to see basalt cliffs and cascading waterfalls
 - if you have your scuba diving ticket we can arrange with Tufi Dive Resort to pick you up and take you out diving today (extra cost).
- We're confident you will rate today as the most enjoyable day of the trip.

Overnight Tainabuna Village Guest House

DAY 5: TUE 15 JUNE 2010

TUFI (fjord tour and overnight Tufi Resort)

06:00 Optional morning beach walk.

07:00 Tropical breakfast.

08:00 A motor boat from Tufi Resort will pick up our group at Tainabuna for a full day tour of the southern Tufi coastline. This will include:

- scenic cruising in the fjords (waterfalls, escarpments etc)
- visit Uiaku village and see the production of traditional clay pots and tapa cloth
- hike to hilltop Orotoaba village for expansive views of the coastline
- snorkelling stops with reef commentary by dive master
- beach barbeque for lunch.

On the way back we will stop at Tainabuna to pick up our luggage and continue northwards to Tufi Resort for overnight.

Tufi Resort is a small, boutique dive resort but non-divers are well catered for. The resort is the only place around Tufi that has electricity. The resort has a fully stocked bar and plenty of comfortable deck chairs with panoramic views and wickedly refreshing sea breezes. There is also a small freshwater swimming pool and a great library of books and videos about Papua New Guinea. The only downside of Tufi Resort is that there is NO BEACH in front of the resort - it is situated on a cliff overlooking the fjords with great views, and a nice reef down below, but no beach only mangroves and rocks. You have to travel 10 minutes by motor boat to get to the nearest beach.

In the late afternoon, we relax at the resort or you may wish to swim or snorkel on the house reef.

19:00 Dinner

Overnight Tufi Resort (twin-share standard bungalow, includes all meals, single supplement available)

DAY 6: WED 16 JUNE 2010

TUFI / KEREMA

07:00 Breakfast

08:00 Check out of the resort and walk down to the airstrip

08:30 Depart Tufi on our charter flight direct to Kerema (flight may operate via Port Moresby for operational reasons).

Kerema is a sleepy little one-horse town that nobody noticed much until it

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made headlines in May 2008 when a major bank heist took place here. The entire holdings of the town's only bank were cleaned out by a well-organised gang that subsequently escaped to Port Moresby and were later caught.

10:00 At Kerema airport we are greeted by our hosts from Toare village who will take us for a walk through the town centre (you may wish to grab a few things from the shops) then down to the foreshore where an open speed boat is waiting.

12:00 Water transfer from Kerema town to Toare Village (30 minutes).

On arrival at Toare we check in at the village guest house and have lunch.

In the afternoon our hosts will show us around. Toare is also a coastal village, but unlike Tainabuna is it located on a black sand beach with mangrove labyrinths nearby. The inland is low and swampy, dominated by stands of sago palm which yield the local food staple, sago starch.

After exploring the village environment before sundown, when the mosquitoes come out and we will take refuge in the guest house where the smoke from the cooking fires keeps insects at bay.

Overnight Toare Village Guest House (twin-share dormitory-style accommodation, bark floor, bedding and mosquito nets supplied, bathe in nearby stream or outdoor rainwater tank shower, washbasin with jug of water in room, sit-down outhouse toilets, complimentary fruit, coconut juice and tea/coffee available 24 hours, all meals and activities included).

DAY 7: THU 17 JUNE 2010

KEREMA (Papuan Gulf Mask Festival)

06:00 Optional morning walk on the beach

07:00 Tropical breakfast

08:00 Day 1 of the Papuan Gulf Mask Festival. This will be only the 6th time this festival has been held in recent times. Some government officials will attend and there will be some speeches to welcome visitors and open the event, then performances will get under way.

Most of the mask dances and tumbuan dances will take place on the black sand beach. A variety of rarely-displayed Papuan masks will be displayed and used in dances. There will be ample opportunities to mingle with dancers, mask makers, old people who know the traditional legends and young people who are also enjoying them for the first time. It is unlikely that any other tourists will be in attendance: only our group.

At lunchtime we return to the guest house for lunch and rest.

The festival continues in the afternoon. Apart from the mask displays there will also be sports events, choirs and string bands, children's activities and displays of traditional activities like making sago. You can circulate around these activities, talk with individuals artisans and performers about their dances, masks and village traditions, or take a bush walk or beach walk (followed by a parade of village kids longer than the tail of Halley's Comet, no doubt...)

Overnight Toare Village Guest House

DAY 8: FRI 18 JUNE 2010

KEREMA (Papuan Gulf Mask Festival)

06:00 Optional morning walk on the beach

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07:00 Tropical breakfast
08:00 Day 2 of the Papuan Gulf Mask Festival.
12:00 Return to guest house for lunch, pack up and check out.
13:30 Depart Toare Village by speed boat for Kerema town.
14:30 Visit Kerema Cultural Centre to view displays of Papuan Gulf cultural artefacts
16:00 Check in at Hotel Kerema and take a late afternoon stroll around quiet Kerema town (well, if it's payday it may not be totally silent...)

Overnight Hotel Kerema - or alternative - (twin-share budget room, includes dinner and breakfast, single supplement not available)

DAY 9: SAT 19 JUNE 2010

KEREMA / MT HAGEN (village experience and nature tour)

06:30 Breakfast and check out of hotel.
07:00 Walk down to the to airport terminal and check in for Mt Hagen flight
08:15 Airlines PNG flight departs Kerema for Mt Hagen via Kikori and Wabo.
10:30 On arrival we claim our baggage and transfer direct to Paiya, a typical western highlands village. We'll be privileged to visit the skull house where the villagers keep their ancestors bones, and see demonstrations of Melpa tribe cultural practices such as courting behaviour, wig-making and tribal initiation. We'll also meet the chief and his three wives. A traditional-style highlands lunch is served and we will watch a Melpa tribe sing-sing.

A short distance further on from Paiya is Magic Mountain, a peak which got this name because it is said to look the same no matter from which direction you view it. Up on Magic Mountain we'll take a nature walk and local guides will introduce us to some native botany of the highlands.

On the way back to Mt Hagen we'll stop at a bird-watching site where we expect to be able to view the raucous Raggiana bird of paradise which is active in the late afternoons.

Overnight Highlander Hotel, Mt Hagen (twin share, room only).

DAY 10: SUN 20 JUNE 2010

MT HAGEN / SIMBAI

08:00 We check out from the hotel and transfer to the Mt Hagen airport.
09:00 Our charter flight departs for Simbai, a 45-minute flight north of Mt Hagen.

On arrival at Simbai airstrip we will be met by local guides with plenty of helpful hands to carry our bags for the 30 minute walk to the Kalam Guest House, a basic but comfortable facility built in local style.

Simbai government station is the district headquarters. It is just a remote outpost, not a town. There is a two-man district office, a primary school, a small trade store, a couple of little churches, and a dozen prefabricated houses for the small number of provincial government staff, local missionaries and school teachers. Thirty to sixty minutes walking time from the "station" are the first Kalam tribal villages, constructed of bush materials. More villages are located deeper in the surrounding hills. The village people live subsistence lifestyles: hunting, gathering and gardening. Apart from a few coffee plots there is very little commercial agriculture here because there is no vehicular access for transporting crops out.

For more information on Simbai and the Kalam tribe go to our web site www.em.com.pg, click on "PNG TOURIST INFORMATION" at the bottom of the left hand menu bar then follow the links to "Madang" then "Simbai".

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The weather at Simbai will be warm by day (20-25 Celcius) and cool at night (10-15 celcius).

After checking in at the guest house we will begin a program of village tours and cultural activities. Today we expect to:

- visit the Kalam tribal cultural museum (a quaint display of tribal artifacts including weapons, elaborate head-dresses, bride price ornaments, traditional gardening and cooking implements, and nose pieces)
- visit the exotic orchid gardens where wild orchids and other native flowers are in bloom
- visit a local hamlet not far from the guest house and meet locals going about their daily business
- sit with initiated men and hear them explain the importance of their tribal head-dresses and explain how these are made
- witness a Kalam tribal sing-sing with head-dress parade

Overnight Kalam Guest House (twin share - includes all meals - single supplement not available).

Kalam Guest House is built in traditional style with bush materials - each room has two beds with rubber mattresses, pillow and bed covers, protected by an insect net. The rooms have a table and chair and somewhere to hang your towel and clothes. Toilets are outdoor pit latrines and showering involves scooping water over yourself from a drum of rain water in an enclosed outdoor bathroom.

DAY 11: MON 21 JUNE 2010

SIMBAI (Waim village experience)

Today's activity involves hiking 2 hours to a more remote village south of Simbai (Waim) for a full day village experience focused on the preparation of a traditional feast. The hike passes through open grasslands and forested areas with waterfalls - a beautiful experience of nature with many photo opportunities. The terrain is undulating but not difficult. At Waim we will watch (and join) the village people preparing food to be cooked in an earth oven for our lunch. A pig will be slaughtered and butchered before our eyes although the locals will not be offended if we stick to the vegetables when it comes time to eat! The whole village is involved in preparing this traditional feast and we rub shoulders with children, old people and everyone in between. When the food is ready we will sit on the ground with the locals and share the meal with them. Everything is rather primitive at Waim but that, of course, is what we have come to see.

Mid-afternoon we hike another 2 hours back to the guest house at Simbai. (If you are unable to hike today, alternative activities will be arranged for you closer to the guest house).

In February 2008 we brought a three-person film crew to Waim from the Irish TV travel show "No Frontiers". You can view their PNG footage online at www.rte.ie/travel/nofrontiers/20080323_papuanewguinea.html

Overnight Kalam Guest House, Simbai (twin share, includes all meals)

DAY 12: TUE 22 JUNE 2010

SIMBAI (hiking in the Kaironk River valley)

Today's program will involve a full day of quite challenging hiking - this time in an easterly direction towards the Kaironk River valley. The terrain on this side of Simbai consists of steep ridges and we will be doing quite a bit of

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scarping up and down hillsides to get to remote little hamlets. The village people will not know we are coming and we will enjoy chance encounters on footpaths with people on the way to and from their gardens, as well as surprising family groups in their little hamlets. Europeans are not seen very often in this area and we will be the centre of attention when we pass through each little village.

"Dr Livingstone, I presume?"

We will be crossing streams and the Kaironk River several times today, climbing pig fences and straddling fallen trees across our path, so be prepared for anything.

Overnight Kalam Guest House, Simbai (twin share, includes all meals)

DAY 13: WED 23 JUNE 2010 SIMBAI / MADANG

This morning we will fly by charter aircraft from Simbai to Madang.

From Madang airport we will take the scenic route via Madang town and foreshore through to Jais Aben, a mid-range beach resort located twenty minutes drive out of town.

After lunch at the resort we will offer a choice of activities in the afternoon: water activities at Jais Aben or a sightseeing tour of Madang.

From Jais Aben it is a short paddle by canoe or kayak to mangrove labyrinths and offshore islands. There is a pretty little beach for paddling and swimming and a motor boat available for a snorkelling trip to the lagoon reef. There is also a swimming pool with sun chairs for relaxing. Scuba diving is available if booked in advance. All activities at Jais Aben except scuba diving are included in your accommodation package.

Alternatively, an afternoon tour is offered will including the Madang produce market, handicrafts markets, war memorials and lighthouse, Alexishafen colonial cemetery and the NobNob lookout.

Overnight Jais Aben Resort, Madang (standard twin share bungalow, room only)

DAY 14: THU 24 JUNE 2010 MADANG / PORT MORESBY / FLY OUT

Today we depart Madang on a morning flight to Port Moresby which connects with afternoon flights to Cairns, Brisbane and Singapore.

OR extend to Sepik River

If you have time in Port Moresby between flights Ecotourism Melanesia vehicles and drivers are available for your last-minute touring, souvenir shopping or errands before we farewell you at the airport. Places you might like to visit:

- the national museum (mainly cultural displays and takes about 1 hour to look through)
- the PNG Art artifact showroom (okay it's a tin shed) which has the largest range of artifacts, arts and crafts from all over the country. They will fumigate, pack and ship your goods overseas so you can avoid carrying stuff with you on the plane if you wish. Especially important if you are travelling to Australia where non-fumigated artifacts may be confiscated and destroyed by

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Quarantine officers.

- the rare books section of the University bookshop which has several cabinets of out-of-print goodies scoured from the internet including Papua New Guinea biology, anthropology, ethnomusicology, geology, sociology and modern history. Expect to pay K200-K300 per out-of-print volume.
- the Bomana War Cemetery which is mainly of interest to Australians. Almost 3400 graves of mainly Australian servicemen killed in action in World War 2, including 600 on the infamous Kokoda Track.

TOUR ENDS

TRIP NOTES:

1. **Conditions.** The general terms and conditions applicable to this tour are those specified on your invoice and on the Booking page of our website.
2. **Change of itinerary.** Destinations are subject to change in response to local conditions. Where travel to a specified destination is contraindicated by local conditions, travel to an alternative destination of similar value with similar activities will be provided where possible, but claims for partial refunds based on quality of substitute activities will not be accepted.
3. **Hotel accommodation** in the towns transited on this tour is generally of three star standard. Hotel and resort rooms all have private bathrooms, TV and air-conditioning (except in the highlands), unless otherwise specified. Hotel accommodation in Papua New Guinea towns is very limited. While we endeavour to book you into the hotels stated in the tour itinerary, in cases where specified hotels are fully booked by the time we receive your tour deposit we may have to book you into alternative accommodation. In this situation we strive to book you into the next-best available accommodation and we apologise in advance for any disappointment. Book early ! No compensation or partial refunds or discounts can be paid or allowed on the basis of the quality of hotel rooms provided for you while on this tour because the wholesale rates offered to us by the tourist hotels specified are similar to the non-commissionable rates we have to pay lesser quality guest houses when the tourist hotels are full.
4. **Single supplement.** All accommodation included in the tour package quoted is twin-share. On payment of a single supplement we will arrange single occupancy for you in those hotels with sufficient capacity. The single supplement charge is a flat rate and covers the cost of the extra room and our service fee for the additional arrangements. If you are travelling alone and you do not pay the single supplement you will be roomed on willing-to-share basis with another member of your group of the same gender.
5. **Group size.** The maximum group size for this tour is 16 people plus 1 tour escort (Ecotourism Melanesia staff) due to charter aircraft capacity limits. Where the number of bookings for the tour exceeds this maximum, two parallel tour groups may be operated. Where the number of confirmed bookings for this tour is less than 8 at the booking deadline of two months before the tour, the tour may at our discretion be cancelled and deposits refunded OR alternative customised (ie unescorted) arrangements to an equivalent value may be offered.
6. **Extras.** Between-meal snacks, any meals not included in the package, and other extras at hotels can be paid for in cash or with credit card direct to the hotel or restaurant.
7. **Safety and security.** Some activities on this tour may require water travel in local boats and native canoes that may not be carrying a full set of safety equipment. We do provide life jackets but if you require a special fitting you should bring your own. Individuals who cannot swim are advised against taking tours involving open water travel in small craft. Light hiking activities on this tour require an average level of fitness. Papua New Guinea is sometimes pictured as a dangerous destination, but although street crime is a concern in some urban areas and tribal fights are prevalent in some parts of the Highlands, the vast majority of the country, especially the rural areas, is safe and welcoming. It is very uncommon for a tourist to be a victim of crime in PNG because tourists do not usually visit areas where crime or tribal violence are prevalent. Nevertheless, Ecotourism Melanesia takes the safety and security of our visitors seriously and all tours we offer involve destinations that we rate as safe.

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8. **Climate and clothing.** Coastal and lowland areas of Papua New Guinea, including the Sepik River, Wewak, Madang, Tufi and Port Moresby are perpetually warm-to-hot with high humidity. Nights are cooler but still humid. In the Highlands areas like Goroka, Mt Hagen and Simbai the days are generally warm and sunny with moderately cold nights and mornings. We suggest visitors pack clothes made predominantly of cotton which will allow an evaporative cooling effect in hot humid areas. A battery operated personal fan is useful when travelling in rural areas without electricity. Pack a sweater or warm jacket for wearing in the Highlands in the evenings. Recommended sleeping attire is light track pants and sweat shirt or similar. Papua New Guinea is a conservative country and brief or revealing clothing worn by foreigners is frowned upon.

9. **Packing suggestions.** We suggest that your packing list include: a small flashlight with spare batteries, rain poncho, a small bath towel, your favourite soap in a leakproof container, two rolls of your favourite toilet paper, a one-litre water bottle, a small first aid kit. We recommend valuable personal items (camera, travel documents etc) be packed in ziplock plastic bags to protect them from the wet (rain, sea spray). Suitable footwear for this tour includes boat shoes/tennis shoes/sneakers, and a pair of sandals/thongs/flipflops. Bring spare batteries for your digital camera because batteries seem to go flat more rapidly in the humid climate are not obtainable in all stores here.

10. **Accommodation in rural areas.** Village guest houses offer very basic accommodation in village-style huts accommodating two to four people per room. Bedding consists of rubber mattresses which will have clean sheets (or sleeping bag) and pillows, set up under mosquito nets. Sometimes beds are made on a woven mat on the floor, sometimes on a raised bed frame. Lighting is provided by kerosene pressure lamps and flashlights. There is usually an outdoor bathroom and toilet - the toilet will usually be a sit-down pedestal over a pit latrine and the outdoor shower will consist of a screened-off area of grass or pebbles with a drum of water that you can use to scoop water over yourself. In some villages there is a nearby stream that you can bathe in. When bathing in public places such as a stream it is appropriate to bathe in your clothes and change into dry gear once back inside your room. Male visitors may bathe in shorts. Ladies should bring a sarong or quick-dry shorts and top to wear for bathing.

11. **Meals.** At village guest houses and rural lodges local-style food is served consisting of a variety of fresh fruit and fresh vegetables cooked in coconut milk, plain boiled or baked in banana leaves under hot stones (known locally as mumu). For breakfast they provide tea with fresh scones or pancakes, and fruit. At village guest houses and small hotels where there is limited menu choice, or where set-menu meals are provided, these are included in the tour package. At larger hotels where a varied menu is available, lunches and dinners are usually not included in your tour, in order to give you some freedom of choice. Such hotel meals may be paid for in cash or by major credit card. Your tour itinerary clearly states which meals are included in your tour package price, and which meals which are pay-as-you-go (PAYG).

12. **Water.** Town water supplies in Papua New Guinea are treated and officially rated as safe to drink. In the villages, drinking water is usually collected in rainwater tanks or carried in containers from clean water sources. However to prevent discomfort from drinking from a different water supply every day as you progress through your tour, we recommend you either drink bottled water, carry and use water purification tablets, or drink boiled water. There is also a battery-operated product called Steripen that some visitors have highly recommended - it uses UV radiation to kill bacteria in any cup of water. You may be able to buy this from camping stores. Village guest houses should routinely offer you drinking water that has been boiled and cooled. In the villages you can also ask for coconut water from young coconuts which is always sterile and safe to drink.

13. **Visas.** Tourist visas are available on arrival at Port Moresby airport for citizens of designated countries including Australia, New Zealand, the USA, Canada and western European countries. The cost is PGK100 which must be paid in local currency. There is a bureau-de-change in the Customs area and immigration officers will allow you to walk over and exchange your money prior to paying for your visa if necessary. Getting your tourist visa issued will be quick and easy if you have a copy of your 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. Please check your passport to make sure the expiry date is at least 6 months away from the time you plan to enter PNG. Passport-holders of central and eastern European countries, Middle Eastern countries, African and Caribbean countries must normally apply for a visa at least 6 weeks in advance, from a PNG diplomatic mission (ie London, Brussels, Washington DC, Canberra, Singapore, Manila). However we can usually arrange for visas for passports from these other countries to be issued on arrival to avoid the risk of sending your passport away. For assisting with visa matters we do charge an additional fee of PGK 500.

14. **Money.** The best way to obtain PNG currency is by withdrawing a credit card cash advance on arrival. Automatic teller machines operated by major banks in PNG will accept Mastercard and Visa Card but there is

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an ATM withdrawal limit of PGK2000 (about USD\$800) per day. Larger amounts can be withdrawn over the counter in bank branches located in major towns. There are now ATMs located at Port Moresby airport that you can access on arrival. The Travelex currency exchange booths at major Australian airports including Brisbane and Cairns usually have PNG Kina currency in stock (banks and currency exchange booths in the city centres may not), but don't change large sums of money there because the exchange rate for purchasing kina is better here in PNG.

15. **Costs.** To give you an indication of the costs of hotel meals, at hotels in Port Moresby fish and chips costs USD\$8, a medium pizza is USD\$10, T-Bone Steak is USD\$15 and a local beer is USD\$3.

16. **Health.** The major health risk in PNG is malaria. Preventive medication must be taken while visiting PNG (see information below). Minor health risks for which tourists are advised to update their vaccinations include typhoid, cholera and hepatitis B. Your personal first aid kit should include fabric sticking plasters (eg Elastoplast, not plastic strips), paracetamol, treatment for insect bites (eg Stingose or Calamine lotion/cream), antibiotic cream or powder (not antiseptic - Dettol etc is useless for preventing infection in the tropics, you have to hit skin wounds with antibiotics straight away - ask your doctor to prescribe it for you, eg tetracycline ointment), and prickly heat powder.

There are hospitals and doctors available in all major towns in PNG which can provide urgent medical care, but when visitors require serious medical attention we would normally contact their travel insurer to arrange a medical evacuation to Australia - this can be accomplished in a matter of hours as there are several medivac companies operating in PNG that are on 24 hour standby with fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters. However availability of medical care in some rural areas visited as part of your tour is limited and medical evacuations may be difficult to arrange in some locations. You must be aware of this risk especially if you have a pre-existing health condition that may flare up and require medical attention. While we are on-tour our office in Port Moresby is on 24-hour alert to provide assistance but we cannot guarantee to be able to obtain 24-hour attention from other service providers.

17. **Malaria.** Before arriving in PNG you must see your doctor or traveller's medical centre for anti-malaria 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. If you are taking effective anti-malaria medication your chances of actually contracting malaria are quite low (but not zero). There are a number of recommended anti-malaria medications that can be taken weekly (eg Lariam) or daily (eg Doxycycline). Doxycycline is actually an antibiotic and it was only in recent years that people discovered, quite by accident, 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 that might otherwise spoil your vacation. If your doctor suggests you take chloroquine as anti-malaria medication please query this because nowadays much malaria in PNG is resistant to chloroquine and it is not recommended as an anti-malaria medication for visitors.

Even if you are infected with malaria you are unlikely to fall ill during your visit here as the incubation period for the malaria parasite is 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 you must seek immediate medical treatment and inform the doctor that you have been in PNG. Early malaria symptoms include body aches and pains, diarrhoea, headache, high temperatures and general "sick" feeling. Symptoms are almost identical to flu. As the illness advances without treatment you will experience fever and chills (feeling cold while your body is actually hot). The only way to correctly diagnose malaria is with a blood test. If laboratory facilities are not available, health workers in PNG generally treat patients presumptively. In your country, your doctor or hospital will probably insist on waiting for a blood test result before treating you and you might suffer for up to 24 hours before beginning treatment. Pharmacies in small towns in your home country may not stock medications for malaria and other such "exotic" illnesses. Therefore we recommend you either treat yourself with a presumptive course of malaria when you leave PNG, or take a box of the pills home with you and take them presumptively if you fall ill.

The medication recommended by the World Health Organisation for presumptive treatment of malaria in Papua New Guinea is a combination of artemether and Fansidar tablets. This treatment is available over-the-counter from pharmacies (five days artemether with Fansidar on the third day). Artemether has no known side effects or interactions with other medications so there is no harm done in taking the presumptive treatment if your symptoms are not caused by malaria. If you are female and you may be pregnant, some anti-malarials will not be suitable for you.

The Papuan Gulf area is renowned for mosquitoes: be prepared with insect repellent and anti-malaria medication.

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