



Ecotourism Melanesia

Discover Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands

EM208 GOROKA COFFEE FESTIVAL TOUR - 25 MAY TO 07 JUNE 2010
13 nights Lae, Goroka, Mt Hagen, Simbai, Madang
(escorted small group tour minimum 8 maximum 16 people)

The Goroka Coffee Festival is primarily an agricultural show which aims to promote the coffee industry in the Papua New Guinea Highlands. Coffee growers display their produce - freshly picked red coffee cherries, dried black coffee beans, ground and packaged coffee - and provide an opportunity to taste the finished product. Buyers and representatives of coffee outlets like Starbucks attend the Show to form relationships with local grower cooperatives in order to assure their supplies of organic coffee from community-owned sources. Various environmental organisations mount sustainable agriculture displays and equipment dealers hawk their machines.

Other agricultural produce from the Highlands is also shown - cocoa, fruit jams, market vegetables, honey - and various non-agricultural cottage industries (weaving, cooking) mount displays of their activities. It's a big day out for the locals in Goroka and surrounding provinces and an excellent opportunity for visitors to rub shoulders with ordinary Papua New Guineans from many walks of life.

But the main attraction for many visitors at the Goroka Coffee festival is the sing-sing competition, which for Goroka is the second biggest cultural performance of the year, only slightly smaller than the Goroka Show sing-sing in September. The Goroka Coffee Festival sing-sing will feature a large variety of cultural groups from all over the Highlands and some coastal areas including Lae, Madang and the Sepik.

This escorted tour combines the earthy coffee festival with the natural and cultural highlights of Lae, Mt Hagen, exotic Simbai and beautiful Madang.

TOUR COST: PGK 12,700 per person, twin-share, 13 nights, includes internal air
Single supplement is PGK 1950 surcharge (guaranteed single room for 1 night Lae, 4 nights Goroka, 2 nights Mt Hagen, 3 nights Madang plus possible single room at Simbai if available).

Truncated tour option

1. Day 1 to Day 9 only (ie skip Simbai and Madang) - PGK 7,900 per person twin share. Single supplement is PGK 1450 (guaranteed single room for 1 night Lae, 4 nights Goroka, 2 nights Mt Hagen).

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.

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TOUR INCLUSIONS (13 nights)

- meet and greet at Port Moresby airport
- tour information kit including welcome gift, souvenir polo shirt, maps, destination information
- scheduled domestic flights Port Moresby to Lae and Madang to Port Moresby
- meet and greet at Lae airport, transfer to hotel
- 1 night twin-share premier room at Melanesian Hotel, Lae (room only)
- half day tour of Lae including Rainforest Habitat and Lae War Cemetery. Lunch not included.
- road transfer from Lae to Goroka
- 4 nights twin-share premier room at Bird of Paradise Hotel or Pacific Gardens Hotel in Goroka (as available at time of booking).
- 1 half-day tour of Goroka town
- 1 full-day village tour ex-Goroka including lunch
- 2 days attendance at the Goroka Coffee Festival including transfers, tourist passes, tourist seating, local guides, packed lunch with bottled water
- road transfer from Goroka to Mt Hagen
- 2 nights twin-share premier room accommodation at Highlander Hotel, Mt Hagen
- 1 full-day village and nature tour ex-Mt Hagen including lunch
- Mt Hagen airport transfer
- charter flight from Mt Hagen to Simbai
- 3 days culture tours around Simbai including all gratuities
- 3 nights twin or multi share accommodation at Kalam Guest House, Simbai including all meals.
- charter flight from Simbai to Madang
- 3 nights standard twin-share accommodation at Jais Aben Beach Resort, Madang, including non-diving water activities
- optional half day tour of Madang town
- optional full day village and nature tour ex-Madang
- optional full day North Coast tour ex-Madang
- ad hoc shopping or sightseeing in Port Moresby on last day of tour
- departure check-in assistance and farewell at Port Moresby Airport
- all fees and gratuities for local villages, guides and helpers
- 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
- any meals not specifically stated as included, or meals described as "pay as you go"
- bottled water (except where stated as provided)
- bar drinks
- tips (not expected, and only appropriate for exceptional service)
- souvenirs and items of a personal nature
- visa fees and assistance
- excess baggage charges

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ITINERARY

DAY 1: TUE 25 MAY 2010

PORT MORESBY / LAE

Arrive Port Moresby early morning from Singapore (Air Niugini) or Cairns (Airlines PNG) and connect through on a morning flight to Lae. (If you are flying in from other ports you need to arrive on Monday 24 May and have a transit night in Port Moresby).

On arrival in Port Moresby Ecotourism Melanesia staff will greet you with a smile and a surprise gift ☺ and you will be transferred to check in for your connecting flight to Lae departing approximately 09:30.

NB Your domestic air tickets are provided by Ecotourism Melanesia as part of the tour package and will be delivered to you on arrival or e-mailed in advance.

On arrival at Lae airport you will be met by your tour escort and transfer 1 hour by road to Lae city and check in at your hotel.

After lunch at the hotel (pay-as-you-go) and a short nap if you need one, your group will take an afternoon tour of Papua New Guinea's second city.

The main attraction in Lae is The Rainforest Habitat, a huge aviary and quasi-zoo which showcases PNG's native plants and animals. We will spend several hours here with nature guides to introduce us to specific animal species and of course PNG's magnificent flowering orchids. We'll also visit the Lae War Cemetery where mainly Australian servicemen killed in action in WW2 are buried, and the Amelia Earhart memorial. Amelia's plane went missing after taking off from Lae in an attempt to be the first woman pilot to fly solo across the Pacific.

Overnight Melanesian Hotel, Lae (twin-share premier room, accommodation only - single supplement available).

Pay-as-you-go for meals today. All urban hotels on this tour accept cash in local currency, or credit card.

The weather in Port Moresby and Lae will be warm tropical (maximum 30 degrees Celcius and humid) with slight possibility of rain.

DAY 2: WED 26 MAY 2010

LAE / GOROKA

Today we will experience the other great advantage of visiting Lae which is the highway to Goroka that enables us to avoid the flight chaos that will precede the Goroka Coffee festival.

Goroka airport has a short runway and only the smaller Dash-8 aircraft can land there. There just aren't enough seats available for the large influx of visitors for festivals and the airline tends to overbook flights which means that even people who have a confirmed ticket don't necessarily get a seat on the flight they are booked on. There are also weather problems at Goroka which result in regular flight cancellations due to heavy cloud. Accordingly we are programming this escorted group tour to arrive and depart from Goroka by road in order to reduce the risk of having the tour group split up or stranded by flight chaos.

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Around 08:00 we depart Lae by airconditioned minibus, first running along the Ramu Highway which joins Lae and Madang. After driving 2 hours through the humid Markham Valley which is dotted with rice and cattle farms we turn off the Ramu Highway onto the Okuk Highway to Goroka. As we climb out of the valley we pass through the thermal inversion layer which is signalled by a marked drop in the humidity and temperature as we enter "the highlands". Another 3 hours drive from the turn-off brings us to Goroka, arriving at our hotel in time for late lunch (pay-as-you-go).

After lunch, we take a half day tour of Goroka town and environs including (as time allows) the University of Goroka (a small teacher training institution), Mt Kiss scenic lookout, JK McCarthy Highlands Culture Museum, Raun Raun Drama Theatre, Goroka Coffee factory, and the handicraft market (an opportunity for first options on artifacts brought in for sale during the Goroka Show period, before the main crowds of tourists arrive).

Overnight Bird of Paradise Hotel or Pacific Gardens Hotel, Goroka (twin share, premier room, room only - single supplement available).

Pay as you go for meals - very good quality food is served at these hotels and prices are very reasonable.

The weather in Goroka will be cold at night (5-10 degrees Celcius) and pleasant during the day (20-25 degrees). There is a moderate chance of rain.

DAY 3: THU 27 MAY 2010

GOROKA (village experience)

Today's activity is a full day highlands village experience.

A scenic drive 90 minutes from Goroka brings us to Kemase, a rural village. Here, the local people farm the land to support themselves with food, and grow cash crops such as coffee and market vegetables to raise income to buy clothing and other needs, and pay school fees for their children.

On arrival at the village you will receive a traditional welcome and meet the village people. A small crowd of enthusiastic "guides" will show you around the village, including private homes, the village school, village church, and important village artifacts such as bride price ornaments and traditional money. You will be taken to the village gardens and shown how yams and other staple vegetables are cultivated. The spiritual connection between the village people and their gardens will be explained to you: the locals believe that people's behaviour affects the growth of the garden crops.

Near the village is a spooky gorge populated by large boulders. The people believe the boulders are the spirits of the dead. It is forbidden to speak while walking among the boulders. In the gorge is a burial cave where the bones of ancestors are displayed. Children dressed in traditional costume as a sign of respect for the ancestors will guide you into the cave. The caves were also used as a hiding place during tribal fights in the past. A demonstration of tribal fighting with spears and "bunara" (bow and arrow) will be performed.

At the end of the gorge is a feasting ground where the village people usually gather for special occasions. Here your lunch has been prepared: chicken and vegetables stuffed into bamboo nodes and roasted under hot stones, with fresh

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fruit on the side.

After lunch we walk back to the village by a different scenic route and drive back to Goroka town, having made a gamut of new friends whom we will surely bump into again at the Goroka Coffee Festival tomorrow.

Overnight hotel, Goroka (twin share, room only - single supplement available).

DAY 4: FRI 28 MAY 2010

GOROKA COFFEE FESTIVAL

At 8.00am we depart the hotel for the festival grounds for an early arrival to take a look at the stalls and displays and settle into the grandstand in time for the sing-sing performances. The performances will finish around 3pm.

The tourist grandstand has good views of the performance area and your tourist pass (provided as part of your tour package) gives you blanket permission to enter the performance area if you wish to take close-up photographs. Special toilets for tourists are situated near the grandstand.

A number of our guides will accompany our group in the grandstand today to interpret the performances for you. A packed lunch and bottled water is supplied as part of your tour package today but guides can also run errands for you to buy drinks and snacks in the show grounds.

Late afternoon, we return to the hotel.

Overnight hotel, Goroka (twin share, room only - single supplement available).

DAY 5: SAT 29 MAY 2010

GOROKA COFFEE FESTIVAL

Second day at the Goroka Coffee Festival.

Overnight hotel, Goroka (twin share, room only - single supplement available).

DAY 6: SUN 30 MAY 2010

GOROKA / MT HAGEN

This morning we travel by road to Mt Hagen and check in for two nights at the Highlander Hotel. The road transfer along the Highlands Highway takes about 6 hours but the drive is very scenic and is said to be one of the world's remarkable road journeys. You'll note the interesting juxtaposition of roadside villages with thatched huts opposite truck stops bristling with hawkers and prostitutes.

The first part of the journey is the steady climb overlooking Goroka town and the Asaro Valley up to the Daulo Pass, a biodiversity hotspot often covered in cloud that appears as fog you drive through. The staggering size and greenness of the ferns and flowering trees that grow right on the roadside is impressive.

From Daulo Pass we enter the Chimbu Province with its precipitous ravines and steep mountainsides amazingly covered in furrowed gardens with people working away in them... one foot uphill and one foot downhill to steady themselves. PNG's highest peak, Mt Wilhelm, passes us slowly on our right as we snake our way through the Chimbu province.

After a coffee and comfort stop at a hotel in the Chimbu capital of Kundiawa (known locally as "cowboy town" ... we'll explain later...), we continue in a westerly direction towards the small town of Minj on the border of Chimbu and Western Highlands provinces for another comfort stop then descend through the Waghi Valley tea and coffee plantations to Mt Hagen which is PNG's third most

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populous town.

Lunch today is BYO (bring-your-own). You can bring something with you from the hotel in Goroka (eg cold pizza or ask the reception the night before for a packed lunch) or pick up some take-out or bakery goods from the supermarket opposite the hotel which opens at 7.00am. It's also possible to buy cooked food from barbeque stalls on the roadside along the highway (fried sweet potato and barbequed corn is a good choice, but you might want to skip the sheep tongues and other "meats") or grab a toasted cheese sandwich or take-away fish and chips at the hotel in Kundiawa. A supply of bottled water will be provided on the bus.

Overnight Highlander Hotel, Mt Hagen (twin share, room only - single supplement available).

DAY 7: MON 31 MAY 2010

MT HAGEN (village experience and nature tour)

Today we'll drive about 30 minutes out of town to Paiya Village where we will tour a typical Western Highlands village. We'll be privileged to visit the skull house where they 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 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. Some of the local plants will be served up as a vegetarian lunch, with a little chicken on the side for the omnivores among us. Don't be surprised if you see your plate laden with strawberries, cantaloupe and other temperate-climate delicacies plucked fresh from the ground. Just about anything will grow in the fertile 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 - single supplement available).

DAY 8: TUE 01 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

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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".

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 9: WED 02 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).

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

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DAY 10: THU 03 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 scarpering 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.

(If you are unable to hike today, alternative activities will be arranged for you closer to the guest house).

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

DAY 11: FRI 04 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 (pay as you go) we will take a sightseeing tour of Madang including the the Madang main market, Krangket fish market, handicrafts hut at the Madang Resort, war memorials and lighthouse, parks and gardens. The tour will not take up the whole afternoon so there will be some time to relax at the resort as well.

Overnight Jais Aben Resort, Madang (standard twin share bungalow, room only - single supplement available) www.jaisaben.com

DAY 12: SAT 05 JUNE 2010

MADANG (village tour)

Today we will again offer a choice of activities:

- water activities
- a village tour, or
- relaxing at the resort.

If you are into water activities there is plenty to do at Jais Aben. From the resort 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 or fishing 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 tour package.

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For those members of the group who prefer to stay dry we will take an excursion to Hobe Village for a village experience and forest nature walk. Hobe is located about 45 minutes drive inland from Madang town. It is a traditional village on the edge of a tropical rainforest full of birds. The tour includes sing-sing entertainment, a traditional-style tropical lunch and a guided nature walk through the rainforest with bird-spotting.

Overnight Jais Aben Resort, Madang (standard twin share bungalow, room only - single supplement available) www.jaisaben.com

DAY 13: SUN 06 JUNE

MADANG (North Coast Road tour)

Today we again offer a choice of:
- water activities at Jais Aben, or
- touring.

If you are a scuba diver, remember that you will have to stay above the waterline from midday today because you will be flying in a pressurised aircraft tomorrow morning.

Today's tour will be a foray along the North Coast Road from Jais Aben to Bogia. The road is sealed and smooth most of the way. First stop will be Alexishafen, a small satellite township north of Madang where the German colonial administration was based at the turn of the century. There is an old German cemetery here, an even older catholic mission, and a World War 2 airstrip built by the Japanese and later commandeered by the Americans.

Further along, the road hugs the coast passing through coconut plantations and rainforest interspersed with villages, church missions, bridges over streams, beaches and ocean views. At Karim village we will stop and see the turtle nesting beach. There are many picturesque beaches and swimming spots along the coast including the Hole in The Wall, a naturally formed swimming pool in the sea. We can stop as many times as we like at villages and beaches for swimming, photographs and chatting with the locals. Lunch today will be fruit and baked fish from roadside stalls so bring along some small change.

As we round Cape Gourdon just past the Malala Catholic Mission, the Manam Island volcano will come into view with its vast column of rising ash and steam. If time and weather allow, we will continue to Bogia which will afford a closer view of Manam Island. There are now settlements of Manam Islanders on the coast near Bogia following their evacuation during an eruption of the volcano a few years back.

From Bogia or other turnaround point we will take fast run (2.5 hours) back to Jais Aben in time to catch the sunset from the comfort of a poolside deck chair.

Overnight Jais Aben Resort, Madang (standard twin share bungalow, room only - single supplement available) www.jaisaben.com

DAY 14: MON 07 JUNE

MADANG / PORT MORESBY / FLY OUT

Today we depart Madang on flight PX149 at 08:30 which arrives in Port Moresby at 09:30. This flight connects with afternoon flights to Cairns, Brisbane,

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Singapore and Hong Kong.

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 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

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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 are 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.
- 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

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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 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

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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.

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