



# Ecotourism Melanesia

Discover Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands

## EM32 - MAINLAND NEW GUINEA CULTURE TOUR

FOR INDEPENDENT TRAVELLERS AND SMALL GROUPS

9 nights Goroka, Madang, Simbai, Wewak, Kairiru Island, Sepik River

*EM32 is a semi-escorted package for mid-range independent travellers keen to experience the contrasting traditional cultures of Papua New Guinea. The itinerary features a number of semi-remote areas where people still practise traditional lifestyles albeit with a few Western imports like gardening tools and kerosene lamps. Accommodation on this tour is a blend of 3-star hotels and quaint village guest houses that offer basic but comfortable facilities and unbeatable opportunities to observe village life in situ. Local guides will coordinate your excursions and activities at each destination and accompany you as you explore this fascinating country. Our office in Port Moresby will monitor your itinerary, keeping in touch with you as you travel, and we are only a satellite phone call away if you need assistance.*

**PACKAGE COST\*:** (per person, ground content plus charter air only)

Group of 1	Group of 2	Group of 4	Group of 6+
PGK 24,700	PGK 15,200	PGK 10,500	PGK 9,300

*\*These rates are quoted in our local currency PNG Kina (PGK). To calculate package quotes in other currencies, use the exchange rates shown on our website home page [www.em.com.pg](http://www.em.com.pg)*

*\*\*based on triple share*

*\*\*\*odd-numbered larger groups are based on twin shares plus one single*

### PACKAGE INCLUSIONS (9 nights)

- Port Moresby - meet and greet, airport assistance
- Port Moresby - welcome folder with destination information, maps and itinerary confirmation or vouchers
- Goroka - 2 nights twin premier room at Bird of Paradise Hotel (or equivalent) - room only
- Goroka - half day culture tour
- Goroka - full day village experience including sing-sing and lunch
- Goroka - private road transfer to Madang by airconditioned four wheel drive vehicle or minibus
- Madang - 1 night twin premier room at Coastwatchers Hotel (or equivalent) - room only
- Madang - return light aircraft flights to Simbai with Island Airways or MAF (freight and fares flights)
- Simbai - 2 nights twin room at Kalam Guest House including set-menu meals (OR 1 night Kalam Guest House and 1 night Waim village hut with camp food and equipment)
- Simbai - 2 days village tours / cultural program with lunches
- Madang - half day Madang culture tour with lunch
- Wewak - 2 nights standard twin room at In-Wewak Boutique Hotel, room only
- Wewak - return boat transfers to Kairiru Island
- Kairiru Island - 1 night basic accommodation at Polen Guest House including set-menu meals
- Kairiru Island - village tour and cultural program
- Wewak - return road transfers to Sepik River by airconditioned four wheel drive vehicle or minibus
- Sepik River - 1 night village hut accommodation with camp food and equipment
- Sepik River - 2 x half day village tours (Yamok and Kanganaman) including motor canoe transport, lunch and admission to Haus Tambarans
- All destinations - experienced English-speaking local guide every day
- All destinations - all gratuities for guides, helpers, village hosts
- All destinations - daily tour monitoring and reconfirmation of arrangements by our Port Moresby office
- All destinations - loan of local mobile phone and/or satellite phone to carry with you in case of difficulties

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- All destinations - 24-hour phone assistance 340 5066 or 7686 8917

#### EXCLUSIONS:

- domestic airfares Port Moresby-Goroka, Madang-Wewak and Wewak-Port Moresby
- any meals not specified as included
- snacks and bar drinks
- excess baggage charges
- visa fees
- personal items. Bring your own favourite munchies, favourite bath soap, favourite toilet paper, small quick-dry towel, personal medications and first aid kit, personal hygiene requirements, brimmed hat or cap, "amphibious footwear" (sandals or quick-dry canvas shoes for crossing streams), walking shoes or boots, insect repellent, sunscreen, personal flashlight. See also trip notes at the end of this itinerary.

#### GENERIC ITINERARY

##### DAY 1:

##### PORT MORESBY / GOROKA

08:00 Check in at Port Moresby airport for Air Niugini flight PX960 to Goroka.

09:20 Air Niugini flight PX960 departs Port Moresby for Goroka (Dash 8 aircraft).

10:30 On arrival in Goroka, our local guide will meet you and transfer you by private vehicle to your hotel to check-in and have lunch (pay as you go).

13:00 Commence your half day cultural tour of Goroka district including:

- artifact market. See a wide variety of local handicrafts and artifacts. Watch artisans at work weaving, carving and painting and hear the old men playing their bamboo jew's harps and flutes.

- JK McCarthy Museum of Highlands Culture

- Raun Raun Open-Air Theatre with brief drama performance by young local actors

- Asaro village, home of the famed mudmen. The village is 30 minutes drive out of town. See a display of mud helmets, watch potters making new helmets, see a demonstration of the mud man dance.

Late afternoon, your guide will drive you back to your hotel.

Dinner tonight is pay as you go (PAYG). The hotel has two restaurants and a pizzeria, plus there is a modest Chinese eatery (Mandarin Restaurant) across the street. Groceries for self-catering can be purchased from the small supermarket opposite the hotel.

Overnight Bird of Paradise Hotel (3 star premier twin share room, room only)

*Alternative hotel: Pacific Gardens Hotel*

##### DAY 2:

##### GOROKA (village experience)

Departing from your hotel after breakfast with your local guide, drive out of town to a typical highlands village and spend the day with the local people learning about their rural village lifestyle.

In the Goroka area we use a number of different villages for tourist visits so that each visit is novel for the village people and this also enables us to spread the benefits of tourism around to several local communities.

In general you will have to walk a short distance from the road to get to the village, possibly crossing a stream or two (over a foot bridge or wading).

Upon your arrival at the village there will be considerable excitement especially from the children, and you will be welcomed with a traditional sing sing (dance). If you don't mind, your face will be marked with clay ochre in a

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tribal design that will signify your status as a welcome guest in the village. After the welcome, the village people will be keen to show you around their patch, beginning with a tour of the village houses (a round design that retains heat on cold nights), church and school. Locals will welcome you into their smoky homes; a cooking fire generally burns in the centre of each hut night and day.

The highlands people are skilled farmers and village life revolves around the food gardens and cash crops that they grow to feed themselves and to derive some cash income. The villagers will proudly lead you through their garden areas showing you what they are growing, how they harvest and how they consume or market their vegetable crops.

Lunch today will be a selection of local foods cooked in traditional style: baked under hot stones wrapped in leaves or roasted inside the nodes of a length of jumbo-sized bamboo. A selection of sub-tropical fruits will also be served.

Bananas, pineapples, pawpaws (papayas), passionfruits and even strawberries are common around Goroka. Bottled water is supplied for drinking.

After lunch your hosts will lead you on a short walk into the forest or grasslands adjacent to the village to show you some of the wild plants they use for various purposes including as medicines, for house building, for fashioning traditional costumes and body decorations ("bilas"), weaving mats, making adzes and other implements, and even for crafting weapons such as spears and bows-and-arrows. Not many large animals are foolish enough to live close to the village in case they end up on the dinner table so you are unlikely to see any wallabies, possums, cuscus or cassowaries during your walk but plenty of flowering and non-flowering plants, insects such as butterflies, and some smaller varieties of birds that don't attract the attention of the village hunters.

At some point during the day the village people will also be proud to show you some of their "bride price" treasures. Payment for brides is still common in the highlands. The bride price is actually a gift from the groom's clan to the bride's clan to promote goodwill and harmony between the two clans after the marriage. Some part of the bride price is usually paid with pigs but various types of traditional money are also transacted. Bride price money usually consists of necklaces, arm bands and head-dresses woven from natural string rolled from plant fibres ("bush rope") and adorned with bird of paradise feathers and shells or pieces of shell traded from the coast. Although these artifacts may appear crudely fashioned to outsiders they do in fact hold immense value once they have been traded from clan to clan over a number of years and become part of the tribal history. (Please do not offer to buy bride price artifacts that you see in the village as this may cause offence.)

Late afternoon, your guide will drive you back to your hotel.

Overnight Bird of Paradise Hotel (3 star premier twin share room, room only)  
*Alternative hotel: Pacific Gardens Hotel*

### DAY 3:

#### GOROKA / MADANG

07:30 After an early breakfast, check out of the hotel and depart by private vehicle driven by our guide along the main highway to Madang. The drive is very scenic, passing by many roadside villages, mountain peaks and scenic vistas. A place of interest en route is the huge Yonki Dam which supplies hydro-electric power to Goroka, Lae and Madang. As you descend from the Yonki Dam through the Kassam Pass (constructed in the 1950s) down into the Ramu River Valley (right to Lae, left to Madang) you will notice a sudden rise in temperature as you pass through the inversion layer between the cool highlands and the tropical lowlands.

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The drive from Goroka to Madang takes 5 to 6 hours depending on road conditions. You should arrive in Madang in time for a late lunch but you can also buy fresh fruit at roadside stalls en route. Your guide will bring bottled water for the trip and will make toilet stops as required.

On arrival in Madang town, check in at your hotel and have lunch (pay as you go). Your guide from Goroka will farewell you at this point and return to Goroka.

in the afternoon we suggest a stroll along the foreshore. This is a great way to meet the locals, see some World War 2 relics along the Madang beach front and get some fresh sea air. The Madang foreshore parklands are safe for walking around on your own but you are also welcome to ask our guide or one of the hotel staff to walk with you. Just opposite the hotel is the Coastwatchers Memorial Lighthouse at Kalibobo Point which of Madang's well known icons.

Overnight Coastwatchers Hotel, Madang (3 star premier twin share room, room only)

*Alternative hotel: Madang Lodge Hotel*

#### DAY 4:

##### MADANG / SIMBAI

06:30 Transfer by hotel shuttle bus to the Island Airways terminal at Madang airport (please arrange this transfer yourself with the hotel reception the night before).

07:00 Check in at Madang airport for your light aircraft flight to Simbai (the hotel will transfer you and your ticket will be available for collection at the Island Airways check-in counter). Aircraft: 5 seater Cessna 206

*NB Simbai flights do not operate on a fixed schedule - departure and arrival times are flexible to meet the needs of passengers and cargo customers at various remote airstrips around the Madang province, and therefore you may need to be patient if the aircraft has to do a run to another airstrip and back before doing the Simbai run. Unless the weather is really bad, the Simbai flight always operates Mon-Sat but you may have to wait.*

On arrival at Simbai airstrip you will be met by our local guide with a few extra guys to help carry bags. From the airstrip it is a 30 minute walk to the Kalam Guest House.

At the guest house a welcome sing-sing is prepared for you. Unique at Simbai are the huge framed head-dresses worn by the men for ceremonial occasions and sing-sings. After the sing-sing you will be able inspect the head-dresses and see how they are covered with animal furs and the iridescent green shells of thousands of forest beetles.

Later your guide will take you to visit the nearby Kalam tribal museum, a hut containing displays of tribal artifacts, and walk to Wenchrau, a little hamlet near the guest house where you can visit with the locals and see their rather primitive lifestyle.

Overnight Kalam Guest House, Simbai (includes local style meals).

*For information on Simbai and the Kalam tribe go to our website [www.em.com.pg](http://www.em.com.pg), click on "TOURIST INFO BY PROVINCE" then follow the links to "Madang" and "Simbai - home of the Kalam tribe"*

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## DAY 5:

### SIMBAI (village experience)

Today your guide will give you a choice of activities depending on your interests and your hiking ability.

If you are fit to walk for about 6 hours round trip (3 hours there and 3 hours back) you will be offered a scenic hike through rainforest to Waim, a more remote village where the locals live a subsistence lifestyle based on hunting, gathering and gardening.

The hike alone is worth the trip - beautiful countryside and spontaneous opportunities to interact with locals you meet along the path.

Waim is a very traditional village made only of bush materials. Sit with the village women as they prepare traditional foods, and let the men show you their "bride price" heirlooms, and proudly demonstrate how they make their trademark green beetle shell head-dresses.

Around 2pm, after a village-style lunch, commence the walk back to Simbai.

There is also an option to walk to Waim on Day 4, spend the night in the village (sleep in your sleeping bag on a mat on the floor of a hut) and walk back to Simbai today, either the same way or via a more challenging, mountainous route. Don't attempt this alternative return route unless you are an experienced trekker as it involves about 8 hours hard walking and scrambling up some steep ridges.

If you are not much of a hiker you can skip the excursion to Waim and instead fill today with activities that only involve short walks from the guest house with your guide:

- tour the Simbai government station (including a visit to the school if it is a school day or the church if it is Sunday)
- walk to some of the small hamlets close to the guest house and visit with the locals
- visit the Justin Tkatchenko orchid gardens, named after a Russian-Australian TV gardener from Port Moresby who opened the gardens some years ago. A wide range of endemic orchid species which have exquisite coloured flowers when in bloom but are nothing more than just a bunch of green vines and leaves when not in bloom - cross your fingers!

Overnight Kalam Guest House, Simbai (includes local style meals).

## DAY 6:

### SIMBAI / MADANG / WEWAK

After breakfast, walk to the airstrip and wait for today's light aircraft flight to Madang. You can expect to arrive at Madang airport anywhere between 9am and 12 midday.

On arrival in Madang our local guide will meet you and take you on a cultural tour of Madang. Depending on the time available this may include:

- Hobe village, a traditionally-oriented village just a short drive from town. The children will perform their butterfly dance for you and a local-style lunch will be served.
- Madang Cultural Centre which has displays of tribal artifacts from the Madang province
- Madang handicraft and artifact market
- Historical markers, war memorials and places of interest.

15:30 Arrive back at Madang airport and check in for flight PX126 to Wewak.

17:00 Flight PX126 departs for Wewak.

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17:45 on arrival at Wewak airport, collect your luggage and board the hotel shuttle bus.

Overnight In-Wewak Boutique Hotel (3.5 star standard twin-share room, room only)

#### DAY 7:

#### WEWAK / KAIRIRU ISLAND

08:00 After breakfast, meet up with our local guide at reception, check out of the hotel and take a walk down the hill from the hotel to the foreshore where you will board an open speed boat for a 30 minute boat ride to beautiful Muschu Island.

*Muschu is a luscious tropical isle, flat and low and covered in coconut plantations and light rainforest. The island is fringed with beautiful white sandy beaches and colourful coral reefs.*

Spend about 2 hours at Muschu Island, enough time for some swimming and snorkelling, beachcombing or a stroll through the plantations. Snorkelling masks are provided. Bottled water and fresh drinking coconuts are included.

Late morning, depart Muschu and continue further offshore to Kairiru Island. Kairiru Is a dormant volcanic island with mountainous interior and small crater lake at the top. The island takes about 1 hour to circumnavigate by speed boat, but today you will travel around only the east side of the island to get to Shagur village on the seaward (north) side of the island. From Shagur you cannot see the PNG mainland - only the Bismarck Sea (next stop: Micronesia!).

At Shagur village the people will await you with an enthusiastic traditional welcome and a tropical feast for lunch.

*Shagur village is literally a tropical paradise situated in luscious green rainforest. The houses are all traditional style, made of bush materials only. This contrasts with the inland areas of the Sepik River where the topography is fairly flat and dry, despite the presence of the watercourse, and cultural entertainment is not as energetic due to the more regular tourist visits. As Ecotourism Melanesia is currently the only tour company arranging visits to Shagur, the number of visitors coming here is small and each visit is special for both the village people and the visitor. The people here have a well-prepared repertoire of bona fide cultural dances, songs and drama to perform for visitors - one of the best village cultural experiences anywhere in PNG.*

After lunch, take a familiarisation walk around the village and a half hour hike to the waterfall for a refreshing splash.

Beginning mid-afternoon and continuing into the evening, enjoy a program of traditional singing, dancing and drama skits portraying the island legends - be prepared to split your sides over some great slapstick comedy even if you can't understand a word of what's going on!

Dinner tonight will be a traditional-style "mumu" where food is wrapped with coconut cream in banana leaves and slow-cooked in under hot stones.

Overnight Polen Guest House, Shagur village, Kairiru Island (basic twin or multi-share accommodation - all bedding and netting supplied - includes meals).

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## DAY 8:

### KAIRIRU ISLAND / WEWAK / SEPIK RIVER

A lot of travelling today, so start with an early breakfast at 6.00am then depart Shagur at 7:00am by open speed boat for Wewak. This time skirt the eastern coast of Kairiru Island and make a brief stop at the hot springs at Victoria Bay.

By 9:00am your boat will come ashore on the beach in front of the Windjammer Beach Hotel which is a convenient place to rendezvous with your waiting vehicle. The hotel bar will be open by this time so you can have quick beer and a bowl of fries if you wish. By 10:00am commence your 4-hour drive from Wewak to the Sepik River.

The road from Wewak to Pagwi on the Sepik River is bitumen sealed most of the way and quite a pleasant journey. First you climb steep winding curves from the steamy coastal strip to the cool forests of the undulating Prince Alexander Range. Two hours into the trip you will stop at a roadside market for a lunch of tropical fruits, cooked vegetables and delicious green coconuts to drink (pay as you go).

Back on the road, you will soon see fleeting views through the trees of the Sepik plains, with the river itself a fuzzy brown ribbon on the horizon. Descending onto the savannah grasslands of the Sepik basin, pass through a number of villages before arriving at Pagwi (Murui) mission station on the Middle Sepik by early afternoon.

At Pagwi, transfer with your guide to your waiting motor canoe and head down-river approximately one hour to the Korogo Fishing Lake, an ox-bow lake formed by a cut-off river bend. Here, leave your canoe and walk for an hour through light rainforest to Yamok village. In the past, Yamok was a riverside village but changes in the course of the Sepik River over the past century have now left Yamok well inland. The hike to Yamok is easy walking, mainly flat ground, and mud will be the only inconvenience if the ground is wet but this is the dry season. Porters will hump your bags and our other supplies so you won't have to carry anything. Visiting Yamok is well worth it as this village is probably the most beautiful on the Sepik and has seven Haus Tambarans (mens spirit houses) - one for each village clan - which is more than any other Sepik village. Very few tourists visit this village because it is off the main river.

On arrival at Yamok, there will be a welcome sing-sing and then you can tour the village before nightfall. Special permission will be given for any women in your tour party to enter a couple of the spirit houses, which are off-limits to the local women.

Overnight village guest house, Yamok (includes meals).

*A supply of dry groceries - flour, sugar, biscuits, coffee/tea etc - will be supplied by the tour company to supplement food provided in the villages, plus an adequate supply of bottled drinking water. Accommodation will be twin-share or dormitory style in village guest houses built in native style. Sleeping sheets, inflatable mattresses and mosquito nets are supplied. We strongly suggest you bring your own battery-operated personal fan to cool yourself when sleeping under mosquito nets.*

## DAY 9:

### SEPIK RIVER / WEWAK

This morning hike back to the Korogo Fishing Lake, board your waiting motor canoe and continue motoring downstream to Kanganaman village, about an hour's ride.

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At Kanganaman, tour the riverside part of the village then walk inland 20 minutes to see the largest spirit house on the Sepik which has many sacred artefacts. Sitting in the cool shade under the Haus Tambaran your guides will introduce you to the "crocodile cult" practised in this area and some of the initiated men will play their bamboo flutes and log drums for you.

*Crocodiles play a major part in the cultural heritage of the Middle Sepik people. Crocodiles are animal totems symbolising strength and power. In the Middle Sepik crocodile cult villages of Yentchen, Palembangi and Kanganaman, the attributes of the crocodile are so envied that the men even try to make themselves look like crocodiles. The initiation of boys into adulthood involves a painful scarification ritual during which dozens of small cuts are made all over the back from shoulders to hips, and pockets of skin are lifted away from the flesh. Upon healing, this leaves raised scars that resemble the bumpy back of the crocodile. Such initiations are carried out in secret only once or twice a year and outsiders are not normally allowed to witness the cutting ceremony.*

12:00 Lunch at Kanganaman village guest house (a selection of Sepik River staples including smoked fish, sago and yam).

13:00 Depart Kanganaman by canoe for Pagwi.

14:00 Arrive Pagwi and transfer to waiting vehicle.

18:00 Arrive at Wewak in time for dinner at the hotel.

Overnight In-Wewak Boutique Hotel (3.5 star standard twin-share room, room only)

#### DAY 10:

##### WEWAK / PORT MORESBY

05:00 Check out of the hotel and transfer by shuttle bus to Wewak airport. (NB The hotel restaurant does not open for breakfast until 07:00. You can request bread and a toaster to make your own tea and toast in your room before departure, or you can wait and have a late breakfast at the Airways Hotel or Gateway Hotel on arrival in Port Moresby - or both!)

**06:10 Air Niugini flight PX125 departs Wewak for Port Moresby (via Madang)**

08:20 On arrival in Port Moresby, Ecotourism Melanesia staff will be on hand to assist you with your onward connection or other arrangements, and to collect from you any equipment and any feedback about the trip.

End of tour package.