



Ecotourism Melanesia

Discover Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands

EM40A - TASTE OF PNG PACKAGE FOR INDEPENDENT TRAVELLERS AND UNESCORTED SMALL GROUPS 6 nights ex-Asia (1 night Goroka, 3 nights Madang, 2 nights Rabaul).

This robust itinerary features three of PNG's easily accessible destinations with contrasting scenery, culture and natural and historical attractions:

Goroka - scenic highlands terrain and exotic tribal culture.

Madang - pretty coastal scenery, peaceful seaside villages and tropical rainforest

Rabaul - WW2 Japanese occupation history and active volcano

The package includes local guides to accompany you daily for all activities.

This package tour may commence any day of the week.

PACKAGE COST*: (per person, twin share, does not include airfares)

Group of 1	Group of 2	Group of 3	Group of 4+	Group of 6+	Group of 8+	Group of 10+
PGK 19,171	PGK 11,529	PGK 8,814**	PGK 8,171***	PGK 7,707***	PGK 7,314***	PGK 7,250***
<i>Single supplement</i>	PGK 2700	PGK 2700	PGK 2700	PGK 2700	PGK 2700	PGK 2700

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

***based on triple share*

****based on twin share plus one triple for odd-numbered groups*

PACKAGE INCLUSIONS (STANDARD 6 NIGHT PACKAGE):

- Port Moresby - meet, greet and assist
- Port Moresby - welcome kit with arrival gift, destination information, maps and souvenir polo shirt
- Goroka - 1 night premier room at Bird of Paradise Hotel (or equivalent) - room only, twin share
- Goroka - half-day Goroka district tour as described in itinerary, including lunch
- Goroka - half day Kemase village experience, including lunch
- Goroka to Madang road transfer, with driver and guide
- Madang -3 nights premier room at Coastwatchers Hotel (or equivalent) - room only, twin share
- Madang - two full day tours as described in itinerary, including lunches
- Rabaul - 1 night deluxe room at Rabaul Hotel (or equivalent) - room only, twin share
- Rabaul - 1 night standard room at Rapopo Plantation Lodge (or equivalent) - twin share, includes dinner and breakfast
- Rabaul - optional Kabaira beach trip on arrival (if time available)
- Rabaul - full day tour as described in itinerary, including lunch
- Local guide daily at each destination
- All airport transfers throughout the tour
- All taxes and gratuities
- Daily tour monitoring and reconfirmations from our Port Moresby office
- 24-hour telephone assistance (ph 686 8917)

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EXCLUSIONS:

- Airfares
- Meals not specified as included
- Snacks and bar drinks
- Excess baggage charges
- Visa fees
- Personal items and souvenirs
- Tips. Tipping is not customary or expected in PNG and all individuals assisting in the provision of services for your tour are compensated adequately by Ecotourism Melanesia. However if there is somebody you would like to reward for exceptional effort you are welcome to offer a tip. Suggested amounts: PGK5 for an enthusiastic bellhop up to PGK20 for a tour guide who goes that extra mile.

GENERIC ITINERARY

DAY 1:

PORT MORESBY / GOROKA

Arrive from Asia on early morning flight.

Ecotourism Melanesia staff will meet you on arrival (look for somebody holding a sign with your name on it when you exit the Customs Hall, otherwise wait by the Avis Rent A Car counter and our guide will find you there).

First up our guide will help you check in for your connecting flight to Goroka and then take you up to the Airways Hotel for a tropical buffet breakfast, returning to the airport in time to board your flight.

09:15 Air Niugini flight PX960 departs for Goroka.

10:25 You will be met on arrival in Goroka by our local guide – look for somebody holding a sign with your name. The guide will transfer to your hotel for check-in. The hotel is only a two minute drive from the airport.

11:30 Make an early start to your half day tour of Goroka and district. A packed lunch is provided to eat en route.

The half day tour begins with a familiarisation drive around Goroka and surrounds, then you'll stop and visit the JK McCarthy Museum of highlands culture, and the Raun Raun drama theatre where you will be treated to a short performance of a social awareness skit on HIV/AIDS or domestic violence. Venturing further out of town you'll pay a visit to a smallholder coffee block and learn how coffee underpins the rural economy in the highlands. Continuing northwest along the Highlands Highway and up a series of steep hairpin bends brings you to the Daulo Pass, a high-altitude biodiversity hotspot. Visible from your vehicle through the swirling mists is a magnificent variety of flowering trees and non-flowering ferns and palms, bubbling brooks and tiny waterfalls. Children sell fresh flower garlands on the roadside. A little further is the rugged high-montane terrain of the Chimbu Province featuring amazing vegetable gardens growing on impossibly steep ridges. Descending by the same route to the Asaro Valley you will make a stop at Asaro village, home of the famed Asaro mudmen. These people have a tradition of crafting fierce looking clay helmets worn during tribal fights in the olden days to frighten the enemy. The helmets are also worn for traditional dancing and drama performances demonstrating how their ancestors stalked enemy tribes. You'll be shown how the clay helmets are made and used, and you'll be treated to some dance and drama.

18:00 Return to hotel

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Overnight Bird of Paradise Hotel, Goroka (premier room, accommodation only).

NB Dinner and breakfast at this hotel are not included in the tour package (ie these meals are pay-as-you-go or PAYG - the hotel accepts major credit cards, travellers cheques and local currency). The hotel has two eateries - a bistro/pizzeria with daily specials and a formal restaurant with a la carte dining on weekdays and a full buffet on weekends. There is a good Chinese restaurant across the street. Groceries for self-catering can be purchased from the small supermarket opposite the hotel which closes at 18:30.

DAY 2:

GOROKA (VILLAGE EXPERIENCE) AND DRIVE TO MADANG

07:00 Breakfast and check out of the hotel.

08:00 Today you will travel by road from Goroka to Madang, stopping en route for a highlands village experience.

After heading south along the busy Highlands Highway for half an hour your vehicle will turn off the main road and follow a rural feeder road for another hour to Kemase 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 be treated to a traditional welcome (have your camera ready!) and meet the village people. A small crowd of enthusiastic "guides" will show you around the village: their homes, the village school, village church and of course the all-important pig pens and vegetable gardens. Valuable tribal artifacts traded for bride price and paraded during sing-sings will be brought out for you to examine. 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: there are many superstitions regarding the effect of people's behaviour on the growth of the garden crops. Near the village is an interesting gorge populated by large boulders that the people believe have spiritual properties. 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 feasts. Here your lunch has been prepared, meat and vegetables stuffed into bamboo nodes and roasted under hot stones, with fruit on the side.

After lunch you will farewell the villagers and drive back to the main road, turning towards the Ramu Highway which will take you through to Madang. The drive is very scenic, passing through many roadside villages, mountain passes, wide valleys and the Yonki Dam hydro-electric complex. At one point you will notice the sudden rise in temperature as you pass through the inversion layer between the cool highlands and the tropical coastal lowlands. There will be comfort stops en route and opportunities to buy fruit and cooked foods from roadside stalls.

From Kemase to Madang the drive takes about 5 hours and you will arrive in Madang early evening. Your driver and guide from Goroka will assist you to

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check in at your hotel and then farewell you. (They will overnight with relatives in Madang and return to Goroka tomorrow).

Overnight Coastwatchers Hotel, Madang (premier room, accommodation only).

DAY 3:

MADANG (TOWN AND HARBOUR SIGHTSEEING)

An early stroll along the foreshore adjacent to the hotel is great way to start today. Just near the hotel is one of Madang's landmarks, the Coastwatchers Lighthouse at Kalibobo Point. Also nearby are the Madang golf links with attractive gardens and lily ponds. Along the foreshore reserve you will come across rusting World War 2 artillery pieces and children swimming in the sea.

08:00 Our local Madang guide will meet up with you at the hotel reception. Today's activity is a full day of sightseeing including a visit to the small islands in the harbour with an opportunity for some swimming and snorkelling - bring a change of clothes and plenty of sunscreen.

In the morning you'll tour Madang town, stopping at various points of interest including:

- Town market (fresh produce and handicrafts)
 - Town centre flying fox colony
 - Bilbil Pottery Village
 - Balek Sulfur Cave
 - parks, gardens and war memorials
- (A picnic lunch is provided during the tour today.)

In the afternoon your guide will take you exploring the myriad of islands in Madang Harbour by local-style "banana boat" - a large fibreglass canoe with outboard motor (life jackets are provided but the harbour waters are calm). Populated islands include Krangket Island and Siar Island but smaller islets are uninhabited. After visiting one of the villages on the islands you'll be taken to a quiet island beach where you can take a swim, and snorkel on the reef. (Basic snorkelling equipment is provided but our guide may not be trained in lifesaving so you would enter the water at your own risk). There are no poisonous jellyfish, stingrays or other dangerous marine life in this location.

17:30 Return to Madang town in time to witness the nightly flying fox migration. Flying foxes are unique to Madang. Similar colonies are not found in other PNG towns.

Overnight Coastwatchers Hotel, Madang (premier room, accommodation only).

DAY 4:

MADANG (NATURE AND CULTURE ECO-TOUR)

07:00 Today you will make an early start to a very full eco-tour out the North Coast Road. Accompanied by your local guide and a hamper of bottled water and fruit, your tour vehicle (four-wheel drive or 15-seater minibus) will first travel 30 minutes out of town along the main road before turning off to the Kau Wildlife Management Area.

Kau WMA is an area of natural rainforest that has been undisturbed by development. In the 1960s many forest areas of Madang were heavily logged by foreign timber cutters but the Ditipa clan at Kau refused to sell out. Clan

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leader Kiatek resisted cash-for-logs and intense political pressure, and became a vocal anti-logging campaigner. To this day Kau remains pristine and although Kiatek is now deceased his sons support his legacy and operate the forest as a wildlife management area under government protection. The WMA features a huge variety of tropical flora and fauna including many species of rainforest birds, butterflies, exotic beetles and huge stick insects. Apart from every imaginable shade of green, the flora includes patches of bright red and orange gingers and many species of wild orchid. Bird species include some unusual species like the long tailed buzzard and the spot winged monarch, plus several different kinds of bird-of-paradise.

At Kau you'll be taken on a one hour nature walk through the rainforest by Kiatek's sons and their family members. They will talk to you about the forest and its inhabitants, demonstrating traditional uses for various plants as food and medicine. You'll stop at a number of bird-watching hotspots and hopefully identify several species. There is also a good scenic lookout at Kau from where you can see up and down the coastline.

Moving on from Kau you'll make a brief stop at Alexishafen, a catholic mission established in 1896 when Madang was the administrative centre of German New Guinea. Here there is a colonial cemetery with some fascinating headstones and a World War 2 airstrip that was operated by the Japanese. There are still a number of aircraft wrecks scattered around the strip, mainly parked Japanese planes that were destroyed by allied bombing.

From Alexishafen, you'll continue another 30 minutes along the north coast road to Udisis village, a coastal village which has a number of interesting ecotourism attractions. On arrival, lunch is ready for you at the village guest house. There will be plenty of fish, fruit and vegetables cooked in local style, and freshly opened coconut juice to drink. After lunch the rest of the afternoon is spent at Udisis before returning to Madang.

The people at Udisis village have made a conscious decision to make their village tourist-friendly to enable visitors to experience the natural and cultural attractions of their place during a short day trip. While you are seated for lunch the Wadug Theatre Group will perform for you. This group consists of village youth who have researched the very old traditions of their area and produced a dance and drama routine that showcases the old culture. Their costumes are 100% traditional with not a skerrick of raffia or cloth, and apart from custom dancing they also role-play traditional activities such as courtship behaviour, bride price payment and wedding ceremony, and the initiation of boys into manhood. You'll learn about the tribal traditions and also have a lot of laughs as the youth portray the funny side of their ancestors' ways. After the cultural performance you'll be taken on a walking tour of the village, and if time allows you can also take an optional rainforest walk to the Yaimat Cave (similar to Mudug cave) and the Berun Bridge, a natural limestone formation like a bridge. Late afternoon bird watching is also very good here. If you skip the rainforest walk you can opt to depart from Udisis a little earlier and make a stop for a swim or snorkel in the sea at the Hole In The Wall on the way back to Madang. The Hole In The Wall is a large natural tidal pool adjacent to a fringing reef. If you duck-dive down the side of the tidal pool you will come to a big hole that connects the tidal pool to the open sea. You can swim through the hole and surface outside the tidal pool.

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18:00 Return to Madang town (1 hour drive).

Overnight Coastwatchers Hotel, Madang (twin premier room, accommodation only).

DAY 5:

MADANG / RABAUL

Check out of your hotel - the hotel shuttle bus will transfer you to the Madang airport and our local guide will be there to assist you with check-in for your **Air Niugini flight from Madang to Rabaul**.

NB Although the current airline schedule offers daily connections from Madang to Rabaul - usually via Port Moresby - on some days there is a morning connection that gets you to Rabaul by lunchtime (Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays) while on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays there are only afternoon connections available. Once a week on Tuesday mornings only there is a direct flight from Madang to Rabaul. If your travel plans are flexible you may wish to plan your arrival in Papua New Guinea such that Day 5 of this program will be a day with a morning connection to Rabaul.

If you are taking a later flight out of Madang, your guide will offer you a morning activity prior to transferring to the airport (for example a visit to local orchid gardens, a drive up to Nobnob scenic lookout, or a swim and snorkel at Jais Aben beach).

On arrival at Rabaul airport you will be met by our local guide and transfer 90 minutes by the scenic coast road to old Rabaul town and check in at the Rabaul Hotel (formerly the Hamamas (Happy) Hotel before it was buried in volcanic ash in 1994).

After the volcanic eruptions in 1994 Rabaul's original airport on the Matupit peninsula - right at the foot of one of the erupting cones - was covered in lava and ash. A new airport was built at Tokua plantation, about 90 minutes drive along the coast from old Rabaul town, which was considered at the time to be a safe distance from future volcanic activity. Locals say the long trip from Rabaul to the new airport is an inconvenience, but the distance from the danger zone keeps the airport open most of the time. Although Mt Tavurvur has continued grumbling and spewing smoke, ash and the occasional shower of hot rocks for the past 15 years, prevailing winds tend to blow the ash clouds away from Tokua. Occasionally abnormal wind patterns drive ash clouds to the south east towards Tokua and the airport is closed for a few days, because ash can damage jet engines if ingested. However this only occurs a few times a year.

If you have arrived on a morning connection an additional activity will be provided for you this afternoon. This will be a choice between
(i) a beach trip to Kabaira Beach (swimming, snorkelling, beach walking),
(ii) a walking tour of old Rabaul town (markets, classic Chinese shops etc), or
(iii) a volcano hike.

The volcano hike involves an hour of trudging through an ash-covered "moonscape" that surrounds the still-active "baby" volcano whose crater lip stands less than 100m above sea level. You won't actually be able to climb the cone and look into the crater (it's too dangerous) but from an eyebrow-

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raisingly close vantage point near the base of the cone our guide will explain the inner workings of the volcano and describe the most recent eruption in 1994 and subsequent volcanic activity. The lecture will surely be punctuated just 200 metres away by enormous puffs of black smoke pumping out of the cone, accompanied by low frequency rumbling noises and showers of sparks which are in fact fist-sized droplets of molten lava that cool and solidify as they are shot out of the cone and fall to earth as clods - and the occasional boulder - of igneous rock. (Bear in mind that according to volcanologists the continuous release of matter and energy is a good sign that the caldera is venting pressure rather than retaining it. It's when an active volcano falls silent that we should get worried, in case it is building up for a big bang.) Although you will be a safe distance from all the excitement, wear a hat or bring an umbrella to protect yourself from ashfall, and make sure your insurance is current!

You'll also be shown places where megapode birds lay their eggs in the warm earth near the volcano, and possibly see nesting chicks. You are going to get very dirty if you undertake this hike.

(Latest time this tour can depart from the hotel is 2pm).

Overnight Rabaul Hotel (twin share deluxe room, accommodation only).

DAY 6:

RABAUL (SIGHTSEEING)

Today's program is a full day of sightseeing, focusing on Rabaul's fascinating colonial and wartime history and volcanic backdrop with its star attraction: Mt Tavurvur, an active volcano less than a kilometre from the centre of Rabaul town. The tour begins at Rabaul, proceeds along the coast and concludes at Tokua. During the day while you are on tour, your baggage will be transferred to Rapopo Plantation Lodge near Tokua, ready for your arrival in the late afternoon. A picnic lunch is provided during the course of today's tour. Unlimited bottled water and fresh fruit is available on your tour vehicle.

Rabaul and district is perhaps the most interesting sightseeing destination in PNG. There is a nice mix of natural, historical and cultural attractions. First up will be a visit to the old Rabaul airport on Matupit peninsula (also called Matupit Island but it is actually joined to the mainland by an isthmus).

Near this location is Admiral Yamamoto's bunker. Yamamoto was commander of naval forces in the Rabaul and Solomon Islands theatres in 1942-1944 until he was killed in an air crash in south Bougainville. The bunker in Rabaul was his operations headquarters, constructed underground with protective concrete ramparts at ground level to protect from allied bombing. The bunker survived the war but was completely buried in ash in 1994. It has since been partly excavated.

On a ridge above the township, the volcano observatory has commanding views of Simpson Harbour which is a volcanic caldera. Various vents around the perimeter of the harbour can all be observed from this vantage point. There is Mt Tavurvur (known as the "baby" - still active), Mt Kombiu (the dormant "mother") and Vulcan, a minor vent which blew spectacularly in 1994 but is now quiet.

Just out of town is the Japanese submarine base, a sheltered cove where subs were based and serviced during WW2. There are no sub wrecks to be seen, only the remains of the concrete pens.

Progressing south-east down the coast, stops are made at the Japanese barge tunnels and the Japanese cemetery. The barges based at Rabaul were used for

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*unloading supply ships and transferring troops. To protect the barges from bombing, tunnels were dug into the cliffs and the barges were winched up into the tunnels and 'garaged' there when not in use
Your tour guide will also show you gun emplacements, observation posts and the site of Japanese army barracks.*

En route to Kokopo you will stop at a local village to learn about the traditional culture of the Rabaul area which is inhabited by the Tolai people. The area is quite westernised these days due to agricultural development and there are no bush-material villages left in the Rabaul area but traditional dancing and customs such as the payment of bride price still prevail.

At Kokopo, a new town where many businesses relocated after the 1994 eruption, you'll stop at the Kokopo Museum which has cultural and historical displays including a range of WW2 relics collected from all over the Rabaul district.

Further inland from Kokopo is the Bitapaka War Cemetery where the first Australian servicemen killed in the Great War (WW1) were buried following armed conflict with German colonial forces at Rabaul after war was declared.

17:00 Check in at the Rapopo Plantation Resort near Tokua, which is located on the beach with opportunities for beach-walking and swimming before dinner.

19:00 Dinner tonight is an island-style buffet. Entertainment by a group of Baining Fire Dancers is provided for group bookings only.

Overnight Rapopo Plantation Lodge (twin share room, includes dinner and tropical breakfast)

DAY 7:

RABAUL / PORT MORESBY

Transfer to Rabaul airport at nearby Tokua for your flight to Port Moresby, connecting with your international flight. Ecotourism Melanesia staff will meet and assist you at Port Moresby and provide you with a packed lunch while waiting for your connecting flight (catering is not available at the international terminal). If you have several hours between flights we will be happy to take you sightseeing or souvenir shopping.

TOUR ENDS

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