



Ecotourism Melanesia

Promoting sustainable community-based tourism in the South West Pacific

DETAILED ITINERARY FOR:

LOWER SEPIK ARTIFACTS TOUR - 7 DAYS 6 NIGHTS (TOUR CODE EM03b)

Tour departs Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday. Includes all meals.

This tour features two overnights in Wewak town, three nights in Lower Sepik villages and one night on Muschu Island. The Sepik and Keram River Region is steeped in rituals, ceremonies and strong traditional culture that has resisted the onslaught of western civilisation. In this area are the most prolific cultural artisans in PNG with a wide range of carved and woven artifacts available including all manner of masks, figurines, weapons, domestic utensils, traditional costume, pigs tusk jewelry and traditional money. The Keram River, a tributary of the Sepik, is particularly renowned for its beautiful carved storyboards, masks and miniature canoes produced by the master carvers of Kambot, Chimondo and Bobten. This is one of the areas we specialize in sending people who want a true taste of PNG adventure. The villages we visit have the most welcoming of peoples and one can walk around freely and safely. There will plenty of opportunity for walking through the jungle, seeing wild orchids, beautiful birds, catching fish for the evening meal, buying carvings, and experiencing that feeling that you are on a different planet. No problems with drinking water. Our guides are English speaking from the area, totally trustworthy and friendly.

Day 1

Depart Port Moresby at 3.40pm on Air Niugini flight PX126 to Wewak arriving at 5.45pm (via Madang). You will be met at Wewak airport by local tour operators Last Frontier Arts and transferred to the Seaview Hotel, a budget style hotel where the room décor is a little tired but the food is good. A set-menu dinner is included in your tour. After dinner and a great view of the sun sinking over Wewak Bay your tour operators will brief you on Sepik culture and your impending Sepik adventure. Last Frontier Arts will also be able to keep safe any luggage you don't wish to take with you to the rural areas. Overnight Seaview Hotel.

Day 2

After an early breakfast you will travel four hours by road to Angoram, a small river town on the Lower Sepik. Here you will transfer to a motorised canoe and travel upstream several kilometres to the beautiful village of Chimondo which has a cultural centre displaying a variety of local artifacts. Local fruit and cooked foods are available for purchase in the village in addition to the cut lunch you will carry with you from the Seaview Hotel. From Chimondo you will journey up the Keram River, a tributary of the Sepik, to the village of Kambot, the home of the "storybook". A storyboard is a carved wooden plaque - some of them several metres long - depicting village life and local legends. These are only made in this particular area of the Lower Sepik. At Kambot you will visit the Haus Tambaran (men's spirit house) and the Carving Haus where storyboards and a wide range of other artifacts are available for purchase direct from the artisans. Overnight village guest house, Kambot.

Day 3

Depart Kambot by motorised canoe, travelling further up the Keram River to the beautiful village of Bobten. Here again there will be further opportunity to buy artifacts, different in style to those from other villages. After a village lunch the canoe will take you further up the Keram River to Pushyten village where you will overnight in a basic village hut.

Day 4

Rising early in the morning you will enjoy a wonderful dawn chorus of birds before departing Pushyten and travelling down river back to Kambot where a cultural dance group will perform for you and you will have last opportunities to collect story boards and other artifacts. Overnight at village guest house, Kambot.

ECOTOURISM MELANESIA LTD

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Day 5

This morning your motorised canoe will transport you back downriver to Angoram. You should have time to visit a crocodile farm at Angoram before you begin your road journey back to Wewak, arriving at the Seaview Hotel in time for dinner.

Day 6

After breakfast your host for today will meet you at reception and you will walk down to the waterfront where a motorised dinghy will be waiting to transport you out to Muschu Island, just forty minutes offshore from Wewak. This is an extremely pretty island consisting of tropical rainforest surrounded by beautiful white sandy beach. There are several small villages on the island. You can spend the day exploring the island, relaxing in the shade or undertaking water activities. There is good snorkelling just off the waters edge, with a great variety of fish among the hard and soft corals, good fishing and the chance of catching lobsters at night. Your tour includes walking, swimming and snorkelling galore. At extra cost (about USD\$20 per hour) you can hire a boat and driver to take you fishing or sightseeing to nearby islands.

You will stay overnight at the Sup Village Guest House which offers simple accommodation in traditional village style huts. (Improved village guest house)

Day 7

During the morning you will continue to enjoy the delights of Muschu Island. An early morning walk through the rainforest or along the beach is suggested. After lunch you will be transported back to Wewak town. You will be met on arrival and transferred to the airport for your 5.40pm flight PX141 to Port Moresby, arriving 7.00pm.

TOUR NOTES

1. **Warnings.** The Sepik River is a remote area where there are no hospitals and the availability of medical care is very limited. Medical evacuations may be difficult to arrange. The Sepik River area is renowned for mosquitoes: be prepared with preventive measures (repellent, bednet) and anti-malaria medication. Some activities on this tour require water travel in native canoes that do not carry safety equipment. Individuals who cannot swim are advised against taking this tour. This tour involves light hiking requiring an average level of fitness.
2. **Tour variation.** Due to prevailing weather conditions there is a 50% chance that some aspects of this tour will have to be modified at short notice. Rains may cause localised flooding in some riverside villages rendering them unsuitable for visitors. Accordingly this tour may be modified at short notice by (i) rearranging the specified destinations, eg visiting Muschu Island first and then the Lower Sepik (ii) substituting different river villages not specified in the above itinerary (iii) substituting inland villages such as Wosera when riverside villages are inaccessible. Such variations to the advertised itinerary will be at the discretion of the local tour operator Last Frontier Arts in accordance with safety considerations and operational limitations.
3. **Climate.** The Sepik area is always hot and humid. Only rainfall provides some variation in the weather. We suggest you pack several changes of all-cotton quick-drying clothes, and a battery operated personal fan.
4. **Personal gear.** For this tour visitors may wish to pack personal items in garbage bags or ziplock plastic bags to protect them from the wet, especially your camera and Mars bars. Personal gear includes three or four changes of clothes, light hiking boots (don't go overboard - it isn't Mt Everest) with 4 pairs of cotton/wool blend hiking socks, a pair of light tracksuit pants or similar to sleep in, waterproof matches, hat with wide brim to keep sun and rain off your face, waterproof torch with spare batteries, rain poncho, quickdry towel, your favourite soap in a leakproof container, two rolls of your favourite toilet paper, a one-litre water bottle to carry with you, and your personal first aid kit. Your personal first aid kit will contain Band-aids, blister dressings, antibiotic cream for cuts and scratches, antimalarial tablets, paracetamol, Deep Heat or other muscle linament and the all-important insect repellent. Some visitors trekkers say "Rid" is more effective. For sleeping, clean sheets and mosquito net are provided at each destination in this tour.
5. **Bathing.** During this tour you will bathe in creeks and rivers, usually in front of other people. Bathing without clothes may offend your hosts. Male visitors may bathe in shorts. Ladies should bring a sarong or quick-dry shorts and top to wear for bathing.

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