



Ecotourism Melanesia

Discover Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands

ITINERARY FOR TOUR EM10A 2009

WALK THE KOKODA TRACK - NORTH TO SOUTH

11 nights package - "The Full Kokoda"

(1 night Port Moresby, 1 night Buna, 1 night Kokoda, 7 nights trekking, 1 night Port Moresby)
PGK7400 per person

This is a relaxed pace trekking tour that follows the history of the Kokoda Campaign starting with the beach-heads at Buna and Gona where the Japanese first landed, stopping at Awala where the first resistance from Papuan forces was recorded and continuing up to Kokoda where the prized airstrip changed hands several times during 1942. Commencing the trek with only 3 hours hiking on the first day to get your legs in, our team leader sets a moderate walking pace with 4 to 6 hours walking each day with plenty of rest stops to smell the flowers and take in the points of interest along the way. This package is particularly suitable for older walkers, lady trekkers, and those who want to soak up the historical atmosphere en route.

DAY 1: MONDAY

PORT MORESBY

Arriving flights today are:

Air Niugini PX91/QF379 from Cairns arrives at 8:25am

Airlines PNG CG101 from Cairns arrives at 8:55am

Air Niugini PX2/QF313 from Sydney arrives at 11:25am

Air Niugini PX6/QF351 from Brisbane arrives at 12:30pm

Airlines PNG CG201 from Brisbane arrives at 12:45pm

Air Niugini PX93/QF381 from Cairns arrives at 1:25pm

On arrival at Port Moresby international airport you will be met by staff from Ecotourism Melanesia and we will transfer you to your hotel for check-in. After allowing you some time to freshen up, our staff will take you on a 1-hour familiarisation tour of the city, pointing out major landmarks and points of interest relevant to Port Moresby's wartime history.

After the tour we will drop you back at the hotel for some leisure time.

At 6.00pm we will pick you up from the hotel again and bring you to our company compound in Boroko for an informal barbeque dinner to give you an opportunity to get to know our staff and the other trekkers. (If you are booked on an open trek this might be your first chance to meet the other people you will be walking with).

After dinner there will be a 1-hour slide show and briefing about the Kokoda Campaign and the trek you are just about to undertake, with time for questions.

By 9.00pm you will be back at your hotel to settle in for the night.

Overnight hotel, Port Moresby (room only, twin share - please pay cash for all drinks and extras and only charge your breakfast to your room account).

Note 1: If you are arriving on a morning flight we can take you for additional sightseeing, souvenir shopping etc to fill up the day, or leave you to relax by the hotel pool, according to your preference.

Note 2: There are ATMs at the airport terminal where you may withdraw cash with your credit card. During the drive around town our driver will stop on request at a supermarket to purchase any last minute items you require (supermarkets do accept credit cards for payment of goods but no cash out).

Note 3: Hotel accommodation in Port Moresby on Day 1 and Day 11 is twin share and if you are booked on an open trek you may have to share a twin room with a stranger of the same sex. Soon you will be sharing village guest houses or tents with these "strangers" so you will be thrown together sooner or later anyway. But if you specifically want your own single room for the two hotel nights we can arrange this for an extra charge of \$200 x 2 nights = \$400.

DAY 2: TUESDAY

PORT MORESBY - POPONDETTA - BUNA

Rise and shine at around 7am this morning. Breakfast is included in your tour package and you can either order a room service breakfast or have breakfast in the restaurant [just charge your breakfast to your room and we will pick up the tab - your choice of continental breakfast (cereal or fruit and toast), or full hot breakfast (cereal, toast and eggs/bacon or whatever) plus juice and tea/coffee].

At 8.00am check out of your hotel room and arrange with the reception to store any baggage that you will not be taking with you on the trek.

Note: The hotel has a secure storage room for baggage and they will keep your bags under lock and key until you return to have your last night here next week. Make sure your bags are clearly labelled with your name. Safety deposit boxes are also available at reception for valuables such as passport, tickets and excess cash - alternatively you can carry your papers with you on the trek in a waterproof wallet, but if your passport becomes water-damaged you may be refused entry back into Australia ☹

At 8.30am we will pick you up at the hotel together with your trek baggage and first take you to visit the Bomana War Cemetery and the Schwimmer Drome war relics display before arriving at the domestic terminal at 11.00am to check in for your flight to Popondetta which departs at 1255. After checking in and getting your boarding pass, we will provide a packed lunch for you to eat in the departure lounge while waiting for your flight to be called (the short flight to Popondetta is a non-catering service). One of our tour guides will travel with you on the flight to Popondetta and escort you as far as Kokoda where responsibility for the group will be handed over to our trekking guide who is based at Kokoda.

Note: Bomana War Cemetery is the final resting place of most of those 600 Australian soldiers who gave their lives along the Kokoda Track. They were originally buried in temporary graves along the Track and their remains were later re-interred at Bomana. There are almost 3,000 graves at Bomana. Apart from Kokoda Track casualties many of these troops were killed in other battles including Buna, Gona and Milne Bay. There are also some graves of British servicemen killed at Singapore and a smattering of graves of servicemen and women from other Commonwealth countries. There are no US or Japanese soldiers buried at Bomana, all US and Japanese remains found have been repatriated. (At the time of the war, Papua was Australian soil and that is why it was considered appropriate to bury Australian soldiers here). The beautifully manicured lawns and monuments at Bomana War Cemetery contrast starkly with the wild unforgiving jungle of the Kokoda Track. During your trek will walk over the very spots where many of these young men fell in 1942. As you wander among the graves at Bomana one fact that will strike you is the young ages of the fallen as stated on the headstones: 19, 20, 21, 22 - one lady who visited commented that her son who is the same age is still playing Nintendo and borrowing Mum's car - would the young men of today's generation be able to go off to war as bravely and selflessly?

Popondetta's modern-day airport is located at Girua, about 20 minutes drive out of town, which was a huge airfield complex during the war. The current runway is built on top of a wartime bomber strip and if you study the terrain during the landing approach you will be able to discern the outlines of other overgrown wartime airstrips in the vicinity.

On arrival we board our local style passenger truck (bench seats in the back with tarp-covered frame on top) for a journey via the old wartime airfield complex to the seaside village of Buna. En route to Buna you will be shown the spot where the famous photo of Dick Whittington limping along with his fuzzy wuzzy angel Raphael Oimbari was taken.

On arrival at Buna you will be treated to a traditional welcome, a cool coconut drink and tropical fruit for refreshment before strolling through the village and adjacent battlefield areas and inspecting displays of war relics collected from this area.

Overnight Buna Village Guest House (twin-share or multi-share accommodation, includes dinner and breakfast)

Note 1: Buna, Sanananda and Gona are the beach-head villages where the Japanese first landed in July 1942 before marching up to Kokoda. They slaughtered many native people and white missionaries and plantation staff living in the Popondetta area. Six months later the Japanese survivors from the Kokoda Track were cornered at Buna and Gona and there were many bloody battles here as the Japanese desperately defended themselves with dwindling supplies while waiting to be rescued by ships that never came. Many more Japanese, Australian and later American servicemen perished in the battles of Buna and Gona than were killed on the Kokoda Track. This is often overlooked because the battles at Buna and Gona are not as famous as the Kokoda Track.

Many visitors state that overnighiting in the village guest houses at Buna or Gona is the highlight of their Kokoda trekking package. These coastal villages receive many fewer visitors than the main Kokoda Track villages and they have much better food resources and better quality guest house accommodation. Interaction with the village people is of a higher quality and a traditional sing-sing is usually performed.

Note 2: For logistical reasons such as flight delay, non-availability of accommodation at Buna or closure of the road to Buna, it may occasionally be necessary to skip Buna village and transfer direct to Gona, or overnight in Popondetta town and make a visit to Gona the next morning before heading up to Kokoda. In this event we offer such alternative arrangements in place of the original program and no part-refund or compensation is offered.

DAY 3: WEDNESDAY

BUNA - SANANANDA - BASABUA - GONA - POPONDETTA - AWALA - KOKODA

Quite a lot of travelling today but broken into chunks.

Thanks to those annoying village roosters you will rise early this morning and be having breakfast by 7am. By 8am we will be on the beach climbing into open water taxis (known locally as banana boats for their curved shape) and thence following the coast about 10 minutes ride to Sanananda. (There is no coastal road joining Our water taxis chug along the shoreline just fifty meters from the beach in the same shallow water that the Japanese ships (and later American landing barges) came aground in, during 1942. (Each water taxi seats about six people and is powered by an outboard motor driven by a village water taxi operator. Life jackets are available if you would like to wear one.)

After a brief stop at Sanananda to view war relics and hear Maclaren's explanation of the significance of battle actions at Sanananda, we continue another 10 minutes by boat to Basabua, the site of the first Japanese landings, and Gona village where the old Gona Anglican Mission once stood. Now, only a large bullet-holed wooden cross still stands to mark the old Mission site. The murder of the missionaries by the Japanese invasion forces is a grisly story that is difficult to listen to. Two of the missionary graves are located near Girua airport and were hopefully shown to you after arriving yesterday, before heading to Buna (please remind our guide if he forgets!). Lunch and some entertainment is ready for us at a village guest house at either Basabua or Gona (we go turn-about to spread the business around a bit). A short visit to one of the village schools will also be arranged, and you may even get to hear the kids sing their national anthem.

After lunch we board our passenger truck which has come round the long way via Popondetta, and drive into Pops Town (or Cowboy Town) as it is affectionately known in local circles.

On arrival in town we visit the memorial park where there are excellent information plaques about the beach-head battles at Buna, Gona and Sanananda. There will also be an opportunity to pop into the local supermarket and chemist for any last-minute needs.

From Popondetta the road north towards Kokoda passes through oil palm plantations, light forest and grasslands, with many river crossings. Most bridges were washed out by the floods caused by a cyclone in November 2007 and these are only gradually getting re-built so there are some rivers that have to be forded - great fun of course unless the engine dies mid-stream! The road is sealed about half way to Kokoda but is bumpy the rest of the way (especially crossing the rivers!) and you may want to sit on your rolled-up rubber sleeping mat or sleeping bag to save yourself a few jolts. The drive to Kokoda takes about 3 hours but we will make a stop about half-way to visit

the village of Awala and there will be a toilet stop here. All other toilet stops will be on-demand only and will be go-behind-a-tree jobs.

Awala is the site of the first resistance against the Japanese when a platoon of Papuan infantry led by a white Australian commander engaged the Japanese in an exchange of gunfire with no casualties. On arrival at Awala we'll be given some refreshments and sit down to watch a re-enactment of the Awala engagement performed by the local primary school kids dressed up as Japs and Papuans. This is all great fun and is followed by a short hike led by a thousand village kids to the actual site of the engagement in nearby bushland.

Back on board our vehicle we continue the drive to Kokoda arriving about 5pm.

We settle in at the hospital guest house which has twin-share bedrooms, flush toilets and solar hot water - unless we have a big group in which case some of us will be outside in tents on the lawn.

As we arrive our Kokoda guide and porters will gather round to say hello and welcome us and share dinner with us at the guest house.

Overnight Kokoda Memorial Hospital guest house (includes dinner and breakfast).

DAY 4: THURSDAY

TREKKING FROM KOKODA TO DENIKI

This morning we take time to look around Kokoda before we start trekking. Our guide and porters will escort you around the Kokoda "station" area which is located on a plateau about 20 metres above the surrounding land. We walk to the district office - still on its original location - and inspect the cenotaph where there are various memorials, and the little museum. Our historical guide Maclaren will brief the group as we go, showing what-happened-where and helping you visualise the advances and retreats which caused Kokoda station to be over-run by the Japanese and later retaken several times by the Australian forces in 1942. The museum has a very authoritative account of the Campaign and we suggest you photograph the text and photographs on display so that you can read them in detail on your computer screen when you return home.

From the station we walk down to the creek and the market, along part of the airfield runway and back up to the hospital but a different path. (From the airfield if the weather is clear you will be able to see Deniki the place where you will be sleeping tonight.)

After an early lunch at the guest house it's time to kit up and start walking to Deniki which just 3 hours walking, making for an easy first day's walking to "get your legs in".

During kit-up you will give up to 8kg of your personal gear to one of our porters who will carry this in his backpack along with another 10kg of our company equipment and food supplies. In addition you should plan to carry a day pack with no more than 5kg of your most personal items (camera, medication, water bottle etc).

The gear you give to your porter should be packed into a soft bag like an old sleeping-bag cover or heavy duty garbage bag. For the trip from Port Moresby to Buna and on to Kokoda you should plan to carry a duffel bag, large sports bag or other type of soft zip-up bag containing your garbage bag of stuff that you are going to give to the porter, plus your small day pack of self-carry stuff. Just before you leave Kokoda for Deniki you can give your empty duffel bag or sports bag to our company guide who came with you from Port Moresby, and he/she will take it back to Port Moresby with him/her and hand it back to you when you arrive. Alternatively you can just use a cheap disposable bag (like a plastic zip-up Hong Kong shopper ("rainbow bag")) to carry your gear from Port Moresby as far as Kokoda and the bag can be disposed of at Kokoda or if it is very light it can be squeezed up and carried through in the porter's backpack.

After kit-up your trekking guide will give a short briefing on walking protocols and safety procedures before you strike out from Kokoda, up the Kokoda Track proper, first passing through plantations and the satellite villages of Kovel and Hoi before the ground turns

seriously “up” and you begin the climb to Deniki.

After the initial objections from your calf muscles you will fall into a steady climbing footslog, reminding yourself that the first day is always the hardest and from tomorrow onwards it gets easier (well, psychologically anyway!). Rest stops can be as frequent as you wish - there is plenty of time to arrive at Deniki before dark even for very slow walkers - and your porters will encourage you, cut a walking stick for you, and even give you a leg-up or a push from behind whenever you seem to need a bit of help. Carry 2 litres of water with you today as there is nowhere to get water after leaving Hoi village: porters will help carry your extra water.

By 4pm or 5pm you will arrive at Deniki, a now abandoned village site. This where Australian forces withdrew to when the Japanese first pushed into Kokoda. There is a panoramic view of the Kokoda valley from here. A couple of local families have built trekker’s huts (“guest houses”) here and you will overnight in one of these.

Overnight Deniki trekker’s hut (village food)

DAY 5: FRIDAY

TREKKING FROM DENIKI TO ALOLA

After a billy tea breakfast at dawn you will do some serious climbing from Deniki for another two hours until you reach the present day site of Isurava village. After resting here, continue on for another hour to the Isurava memorial, at the wartime location of Isurava village where the Battle of Isurava took place over four days 26-29 August 1942. By mid-morning the early fog should have cleared and you should enjoy good views of the battlefield and nearby valley. The memorial cenotaph inscribed with the four virtues of mateship, courage, endurance and sacrifice was opened by Australian Prime Minister John Howard in 2002 to commemorate 60 years since the Battle of Isurava during which Private Bruce Kingsbury VC heroically charged the advancing Japanese and was killed by a sniper. Near the memorial you will see a plaque at the site where he is believed to have fallen. He is now buried in the Bomana War Cemetery with all other Australian soldiers who fell during the Kokoda campaign. There are a number of informative plaques at the Isurava battlefield site and you’ll spend about an hour here surveying the scene and taking photographs of the memorial (all the stonework was lifted in by chopper). You’ll probably encounter other trekking groups here as there is also a guest house and camp ground here. Another 45 minutes walking from the battlefield will bring you to Alola village, arriving mid day or early afternoon with plenty of time for a side trip to the Maiaka waterfall and enjoying the ambience of the village environment.

Overnight Alola village guest house (village food and camp food)

DAY 6: SATURDAY

TREKKING FROM ALOLA TO TEMPLETONS CROSSING #1

Five hours walk from Alola is Templeton’s Crossing. Actually there are two Templeton’s Crossings, the southernmost is number 1 and the northernmost is number 2. Today you’ll trek through heavily forested areas via Eora Creek Crossing and Templeton’s number 2 and sleep at Templeton’s Crossing number 1. Arriving at Templeton’s Crossing No 1 by early afternoon you will settle into the trekker’s hut and have plenty of time for a snooze, a cup of tea and a poke around the area before nightfall. Rug up for the cold night ahead. There is no village here so apart from other trekking groups (if any) you will have the place to yourselves. You

will sleep on the floor in the bare trekkers hut unless the owner does not turn up to unlock it in which case the porters will erect canvases to form a large fly tent and the whole group will bunk in underneath. Dinner here will be hot camp food and after dinner entertainment will be tall stories from other trekkers and ukelele serenades from your porters around the camp fire

Overnight Templeton's Crossing No 1 campsite (camp food)

DAY 7: SUNDAY

TREKKING FROM TEMPLETONS CROSSING #1 TO KAGI

By mid morning today you will have reached the top of Mt Bellamy, the highest point of the Kokoda Track, and then there is a long downhill stretch to Kagi village. Kagi is one of the larger villages along the Kokoda Track and the guest house has a collection of war relics.

Note: If your group is walking well and you have time to spare, your guide can take you on a 2-hour side-trip to the scenic lookout over Myola. Further along is a junction in the track with the right turn going to Kagi and the left turn to Myola (sometimes called Lake Myola because it was originally thought to be a dry lake bed but in fact it is just an area of open grassland with the Eora Creek running through it). Myola was the area proposed to be used as a food drop zone by the Australian military forces during the Kokoda campaign but most of the food dropped (or "biscuit bombed") never reached the troops because boxes disintegrated on impact or were lost in the undergrowth (or water if the creek was in flood). In the past some of our groups took an extra day and walked right in to Myola but it became the consensus of opinion that apart from the open grassland there is not much to see at Myola that you can't see from the lookout on Mt Bellamy. There is a small village at Myola - just a few houses - and in the past there was a good guest house there but this is now closed due to an ongoing land dispute between two families. Thirty minutes walking along the trail towards Myola is the much-vaunted site of an American aircraft crash but the truth of the matter is that the plane disintegrated on impact and the wreckage consists of nothing more than hundreds of small unidentifiable bits and pieces spread over a wide area so it is not really worth the extra hour's round trip to see it. To boot, the local landowner usually charges a sightseeing fee if you go there.

Overnight Kagi village guest house (village food and camp food).

DAY 8: MONDAY

TREKKING FROM KAGI TO MENARI

A full day's trekking today, firstly two hours of steep descent and climb to get to Efogi, and then continue on to climb Brigade Hill, stopping to read the memorial plaque and survey the battlefield, and descend to Menari village.

Overnight Joe Alai's village guest house, Menari (village food).

DAY 9: TUESDAY

TREKKING FOM MENARI TO NAORO

After climbing a steep saddle you will descend and pass through a number of river crossings and abandoned village sites before climbing halfway up the Maguli Range to the new site of Naoro village.

Overnight Naoro village guest house (village food and camp food).

DAY 10: WEDNESDAY

TREKKING FROM NAORO TO UA-ULE CREEK

A long walk today, arriving mid afternoon at Ua-Ule Creek (pronounced "wah-ooly") where there is a shady waterhole in the creek great for swimming and relaxing. There is no village here but there is a guest house operated by a family from a nearby village.

Overnight Ua-Ule Creek guest house (village food and camp food).

DAY 11: THURSDAY

TREKKING FROM UA-ULE CREEK TO OWERS CORNER - ROAD TRANSFER TO PORT MORESBY

This morning there is a long and challenging climb up Imita Ridge, down the Golden Stairs to Goldie River where you can have a cool swim, then a final steep climb to Owers' Corner, arriving around noon. The Ecotourism Melanesia welcome wagon will meet you at Owers' Corner with a sausage sizzle (or something else if it's raining!) and an esky of cold drinks then we load up the waiting vehicle for the one hour drive down the picturesque Sogeri Gorge to Port Moresby.

Note: Commonly mis-named "Owen's Corner" this hillock now turned into a pleasant picnic park is named after Lt Noel Owers spelled with an "r". Lt Owers surveyed the road from McDonald's Corner to Owers' Corner in 1942.

If time allows and you would like to stop again at the Bomana War Cemetery this will be possible as it's on the way. Visiting the War Cemetery is much more meaningful when you are fresh from walking the Track, however many groups find they are just too tired to make the stop and want to head straight for the hotel. This is why we take you to visit Bomana when you first arrive in Port Moresby so that you won't miss out if you're too zonked to make the stop there after completing your trek.

On arrival in Port Moresby you will be dropped off at your hotel. This is usually about 3pm or 4pm.

At 7pm after everybody has had time to relax a little and get cleaned up, we will pick you up from the hotel and again bring you to our company compound. Here you will spend a final couple of hours with your porters over some dinner, a few drinks, plenty of laughs about who fell in the creek, and a final tune on the ukelele. We will have a multimedia projector set up if you would like to show some of your digital photos taken on the trek.

During the evening your guide will present you with your certificate for completing the walk, and your souvenir polo shirt which you will wear back home like a badge of honour. The logo on your shirt reads "Kokoda Track, Papua New Guinea, Mi inapim pinis". In local PNG pidgin this equates to "been there, done that". If you wish to say a few words, or present a gift to your favourite porter, this would be the appropriate time.

At 9pm we will call it a night and you will have an opportunity to say farewell to your porters before you are transferred back to the hotel. Your porters will be staying at our company compound for a couple of nights until they return to Kokoda. Some of them may be walking back with the next south-north trekking group and some of them may be travelling home by air.

Please note that we only cater a small amount of alcohol at the closing function. We ask that you respect our policy that porters not drink alcohol before, during or after treks by not inviting them to go back to your hotel for drinks. In the past we had a few occasions where some porters became difficult to manage after having too much to drink and we would like to avoid any recurrence of this while they are here in Port Moresby under our care. The porters need two good nights sleep before walking back to Kokoda.

DAY 12: FRIDAY

FLY OUT TO AUSTRALIA OR TAKE EXTENSION PACKAGE TO

- LOLOATA ISLAND
- TUFU
- RABAUL / KAVIENG
- GOROKA / MADANG
- TROBRIAND ISLANDS / ALOTAU

- WAU / SALAMAUA
- WEWAK / SEPIK RIVER
- TARI / MT HAGEN

Rise at your preferred time this morning. Breakfast is included in your tour package (same arrangement as for Day 2).

When checking out of your room please ensure that no other charges apart from accommodation and breakfast are left on your room account (accommodation and breakfast will be met by Ecotourism Melanesia).

Make your own arrangements with the hotel reception for the hotel transfer bus to take you to the international terminal to check in for your flight. If you require any additional transport for some souvenir shopping, sightseeing or errands, Ecotourism Melanesia will be happy to assist you, just let us know the night before.

Outgoing flights today are:

- Air Niugini PX90/QF384 to Cairns departs 9:25am (check in at 8:00am)
- Air Niugini PX3/QF350 to Brisbane, departs 10:00 (check in at 8:30am)
- Air Niugini PX1/QF312 to Sydney, departs 1.30pm (check in at 12:00 noon)
- Airlines PNG CG200 to Brisbane departs 2.00pm (check in at 12.30 pm)
- Airlines PNG CG100 to Cairns departs 5:00pm (check in at 3.30pm)
- Air Niugini PX98/QF382 to Cairns, departs 6:25pm (check in at 5.00pm)

TOUR INCLUSIONS

- meet and greet and city familiarisation tour on arrival (Ecotourism staff)
- all meals from dinner on Day 1 to breakfast on Day 12.
- visit to Bomana War Cemetery and Schwimmer Drome war relics display
- two nights Port Moresby in 3-star hotel accommodation - or better - with breakfast (hotel accommodation twin-share unless you pay a single supplement of \$400).
- scheduled or charter flight from Port Moresby to Popondetta with packed lunch
- brief guided battlefields tours of Buna, Sanananda, Gona, Awala and Kokoda (subject to weather and other logistical considerations) including transport by road or water
- overnight village guest house accommodation at Buna (or alternative accommodation in Popondetta or Gona if there is a problem getting to Buna) - includes meals and bottled water
- road transfer from Popondetta to Kokoda
- overnight guest house accommodation at Kokoda - includes meals and bottled water
- brief battlefields tour at Kokoda
- 7 nights trekking along the Kokoda Track with overnights in village guest houses / trekkers huts if available (or camping under tarpaulins/tents if huts not available)
- basic group camping equipment including lamps, tropical first aid kit, ropes, tarpaulins and ground sheets, axe and machete, cooking utensils, camp crockery and cutlery
- 7 nights trek food including billy tea breakfast, packed dry lunches, cooked dinner (village food and/or camp food)
- 1 trek guide and sufficient general porters to carry all food, equipment and up to 8 kg of each trekker's personal gear. You should plan to carry a day pack with up to 5 kg of your personal gear and give another 8 kg of your gear to one of our porters. [If you would like your own dedicated personal porter to carry up to 16 kg of your personal gear the additional cost is A\$500. However we really think you should be able to get by with just 8 kg of gear.]
- trekking fees charged by local authorities and landowners along the main route of this itinerary (but pay as you go for optional stops at privately-owned historical sites off the main path)
- picnic or barbeque lunch on arrival at Owers Corner
- road transfer from Owers Corner to Port Moresby with optional stop at Bomana War Cemetery
- farewell presentation dinner with porters
- monitoring of trek by our Port Moresby office using VHF radio and/or satellite phone where possible
- coordination of emergency situations and evacuations
- souvenir Kokoda Track polo shirt, walker's certificate, and maps
- applicable local taxes

TOUR EXCLUSIONS

- food and drink other than the meals stated in the itinerary and other written information provided

- bottled water, water purification tablets and other food-related items not specified in the itinerary and other written information provided (see tour note below on drinking water)
- any equipment not specified in the itinerary and other written information provided, such as personal water containers
- souvenirs, gifts and tips
- items of a personal nature
- bar drinks and snacks
- telephone calls
- cancellation fees
- camp bedding (see tour note below on sleeping gear)
- items of clothing or footwear

TOUR NOTES:

1. **Our itinerary.** Our North-South trek is suitable for walkers with good physical fitness who have undertaken some prior training in preparation for this trek. Our itinerary has been tried and tested with many groups of different ages and walking speeds. Our walk is sensibly paced with early morning starts on most days, allowing extra time in the afternoon for slower walkers to complete each daily sector. A group of fast walkers may arrive earlier at each village than estimated in our tour itinerary, but will not be allowed to proceed any further on the same day. On our tour, trekkers must sleep at the specified village or campsite each day. The trek guide, however, may elect to vary the itinerary en route in consideration of local conditions such as weather and the availability of guest house accommodation due to the number of other trekking groups in the area.

2. **Equipment** supplied by Ecotourism Melanesia includes cooking and eating utensils, camping lanterns and torches, tents if required, two-way radio, satellite phone and tropical first aid kit.

3. **Porterage.** Your trek package includes 8kg of porterage. This means you can give up to 8kg of your personal gear to one of our porters to carry. Some other trekking companies distinguish between food porters who carry only group supplies and personal porters who carry only trekkers' personal gear. However the problem with such a system is that during the trek the food porters' packs get lighter as food is used up, while the personal porters' packs don't lighten at all (in fact they may get heavier if the clothes etc they are carrying get wet). Ecotourism Melanesia operates a more equitable portering system whereby each porter carries a combination of trekkers' personal gear and group supplies. In addition to the 8kg of gear that you give to one of our porters at the start of the trek, you should plan to carry up to 5kg in your own daypack. Thus you should pack a total maximum 13kg of personal gear for the trek. (You can store additional clothing etc in a suitcase or bag at the hotel in Port Moresby while you are on the trek). Bring only the bare essentials on the trek, many trekkers make the mistake of packing too many changes of clothes and too many things that you "might" need but probably won't (like the latest Tom Clancy mega-novel or an extra pair of hiking boots). Pack stuff that you will want access to while walking (camera, toiletries, munchies, water bottle) in your day pack and your 8 kg of other gear (clothing, sleeping gear etc) into a separate duffel bag or overnight bag for transporting it as far as Kokoda. At Kokoda your 8 kg of porterage will be transferred into one of our porters' backpacks and your carry bag will be brought back to Port Moresby by air with our escort staff, or donated to somebody at Kokoda if it is just a cheapie or a disposable.

4. Packing list

- three changes of clothes (warm days, cold nights - remember that you may get soaking wet if it rains, and forget about pyjamas - you will sleep in whatever dry clothes you have)
- light hiking boots with 3 pairs of cotton/wool blend hiking socks
- small waterproof torch with spare batteries
- rain poncho (not rain coat, it won't fit your day pack underneath - you can buy a hiking poncho from any outdoors shop like Aussie Disposals - don't skimp on a PVC one, buy a good quality nylon one)
- lightweight quick-dry bath towel - just a small hand towel is enough to dry yourself with
- one bar of soap in a leak-proof container
- a roll of toilet paper (wrap it in a large freezer bag or shopping bag to keep it dry)
- water bottle (1.5 or 2 litre) to carry in your day pack - many trekkers recommend a "bladder" which enables you to take frequent sips as you walk along, while others say bladders are overkill and everybody survived just fine with empty cordial bottles in the past...)
- your personal first aid kit (see below).

TIP: Don't bring a big hat, most trekkers recommend a terry-towelling hat with small floppy brim that will soak up sweat, or a bandanna to tie round your head. Most of the trek involves walking under the shade of trees and a wide brimmed hat is not necessary and will just get in the way.

TIP: Apart from your small bath towel bring a sweat towel for wiping your face and arms to refresh yourself as you trek.

TIP: Bring spare batteries for your digital camera because batteries seem to go flat more rapidly in the humid

climate and there will be nowhere to buy them along the way.

TIP: Ladies (and gentlemen) with long hair: we recommend you have your hair cut short or braided before commencing the trek.

5. **Sleeping gear.** To sleep ON you must bring your own roll-up or fold-up rubber sleeping mat or compact (very) lightweight roll-up or blow-up mattress. Some of the village guest houses provide foam rubber mattresses to doss down on but this can't be guaranteed. (We always book village guest houses in advance but sometimes our group arrives to find another group that didn't book has gotten there earlier and the proprietor has given them the beds which leaves us outside in tents. Grrr.). To sleep IN, bring a lightweight sleeping bag rated for 5 degrees. Your sleeping bag will also protect you from creepy crawlies (in the village guest houses there may be the odd cockroach or beetle). If you are not sleeping on a guest house mattress you will be putting your sleeping mat down on the bare wooden floor of the hut. If we are unlucky in the guest house department your porters will set up one or two-man tents for you to sleep in, or if it is hot dry weather with no mosquitoes we usually just rig a couple of tarpaulins as a big open-sided fly tent and everybody dosses down on a big ground sheet underneath.

6. **Trekwear.** Most experienced Kokoda trekkers recommend wearing shorts because there are numerous points where you will wade knee-deep, thigh-deep or even waist-deep through running creeks. The Track is now sufficiently wide and cleared in most parts that you will be unlikely to be pushing through long grass or undergrowth and therefore unlikely to get grass cuts, bramble scratches or leeches on your legs (thank God, I hear you say). When wearing shorts with hiking boots, some trekkers say ankle-covers (gators) and/or shin-covers will be helpful for keeping water, mud and grass seeds off your boots while others snicker and say gators are over-kill.

Part of the trek involves wading through creeks. If your main hiking boots get wet doing this you are in for some very uncomfortable walking. Bring a pair of sandals or cheap pair of canvas tennis shoes that you can wear for the creek crossings or walking in the wet, then tie them on to the back of your pack to drip dry as you walk along, and leave them by the camp fire at night to really dry out. Don't try to cross the creeks in bare feet, the bottom may have sharp stones and gravel, and the occasional broken bottle or rusty tin can.

7. **Bathing.** During the trek you will bathe in creeks and rivers or under public taps in villages, usually in front of other people. Bathing without clothes may offend others so we suggest male trekkers bathe in shorts and ladies should bring a sarong or quick-dry shorts and top to wear for bathing.

8. **Your personal first aid kit should include**

- *something to treat bites and scratches and inflamed skin* (eg Soov cream which contains anaesthetic)
- some *antibiotic powder* (not antiseptic - Dettol cream etc is useless for preventing infection in the tropical jungle, you have to hit skin wounds with antibiotics straight away).
- one strip (12 tabs) of *paracetamol or aspirin* for general pain relief
- *small nail clippers* for clipping off bits of skin from blisters etc (but don't pack the nail clippers in your hand luggage or the airport security will go bananas)
- something to prevent and treat chafing between the legs, eg petroleum jelly or lanoline/sorbolene cream
- *a small tube of sun protection cream* (most of the trek is under shade but the last day from Imita Ridge to Owers Corner is more exposed)
- *blisters dressings* (shoes rubbing skin off feet is probably the number one problem with long treks like this - forget about Band Aids and Leukoplast because they won't stick, bring a small roll of Elastoplast fabric sticking plaster or Snowflake zinc oxide plaster, the type that makes you scream when you pull it off, that's the only stuff that will keep a wad of gauze bandage firmly covering the spots where your skin has rubbed off and blisters are developing (this strong sticking plaster is also good for closing deep cuts that would normally need stitches). Also a couple of gauze bandages that you can cut lengths of, to fold into wads to cover your blisters or pack wounds. (If you wear light hiking boots that fit you well and have already been worn-in for a couple of weeks, with thick woollen socks, you probably won't get blisters.)

Spend some time on making your personal first aid kit as lightweight as possible - too many trekkers make the mistake of bringing a big tube of everything which is just dead weight. Your trek guide carries a tropical first aid kit with adequate supplies for the group, so your personal kit should be more tuned to your individual needs (eg if you are asthmatic, make sure you bring a Ventolin puffer, and so on). To reduce size and weight of your first aid kit, squeeze out two thirds of each tube and keep this in other containers at home, and pack the tubes with remaining ointment to take with you. Pack your little first aid kit into a toiletries bag together with your soap, shaving razors etc. Remember every other trekker will be carrying a little first aid kit and most of them won't use it much so there will be plenty of supplies available within the group.

9. **Guide and porters.** Your trekking party will include an English-speaking guide who has traversed the track many times before and knows the area intimately. In addition we provide sufficient porters sufficient to carry the equipment and supplies we provide plus 8kg of your personal gear. Porters will not only carry

gear but will also support you over difficult parts of the Track and carry you out if you slip and break your leg. Porters enjoy helping visitors cross the Track and they appreciate the opportunity for employment that you are giving them so don't feel self-conscious about somebody else doing the work.

If you do not wish to carry a day pack at all and you would like a porter to carry all of your personal gear (up to 16kg) you must book an extra personal porter in advance. An extra personal porter costs AUD\$500 including wages and the cost of accommodating the porter in Port Moresby for a few days and flying him/her back to Kokoda. This money is paid to Ecotourism Melanesia in advance, in addition to the normal trek package cost.

It is very difficult to organise an extra porter after the trek has started so please think carefully about whether you can carry your own day pack with up to 5kg of gear or whether you need to book an extra porter to carry everything for you.

10. Food. Some trekking companies fly in all their food and equipment from Australia and contribute very little to the micro-economy of the local villages. As an ecotourism company we want to maximise the benefits of tourism to the people living in the local area, so wherever possible we pay the village guest house operators to supply fresh fruit and vegetables for our trekkers. They in turn buy fruit and vegies from other village people. Our policy of supplying fresh food for dinner wherever available not only encourages local enterprise but gives you a wonderful opportunity to enjoy fresh tropical fruit like pawpaw, pineapple, watermelon, bananas, star-fruit, tamarillo, passionfruit, and seasonal vegetables including sweet potato, yam, pumpkin, taro, beans, corn and tomatoes.

Some enterprising village people are now planting large food gardens to sell fruit and vegies to the village guest house operators or direct to trekkers from track-side stalls. Some villages are better at this than others, and the availability of fresh food also varies with seasonality and the number of trekking groups on the Track at the same time. If another large trekking group passes through a village just before your group, you may arrive to find that the village has been cleaned out and there are no fresh vegies available because the villagers didn't have time to go back to their gardens and harvest more food yet, or because the next crop is not ready for harvest yet, so it's a bit hit-and-miss sometimes. Your porters carry spare camp food supplies in case of such eventuality.

Along the Kokoda Track, vegies are mainly plain-boiled in water or dry-roasted on hot stones or in the fire as they don't have coconuts at this high altitude for stewing food in coconut milk, as the coastal villages do. We usually supplement the village food with some savoury rice, pasta or tinned food carried in by our porters. (Of course, all our hard rubbish is carried out again too and disposed of at proper rubbish dumps at the end of the trek).

Not much meat is available in the villages along the Kokoda Track because (i) most of the villagers are Seventh-Day Adventists and do not eat pork for religious reasons, and (ii) raising chickens on a scale big enough to feed trekking groups is difficult as there is no chicken feed available. (There are no beef cattle raised in Kokoda Track villages and no sheep farming anywhere in PNG).

Lunch each day will be packed dry rations (eg dry biscuits with a small tin of baked beans or tuna, cheese stick or muesli bar, dried fruit). Breakfast will be billy tea with hot porridge or damper.

TIP: Most trekkers say that the food we provide is more than sufficient, but you are welcome to bring a stash of your favourite munchies to pop into your mouth while walking along. Avoid pure chocolate because it will melt in the tropical heat as you pass through Port Moresby and Popondetta. Trail mix, muesli bars, candy are great but be sure not to drop wrappers along the trail. Declare all food on arrival at the airport and as long as it's all packaged, processed food there should be no problems with the quarantine officers.

11. Drinking water along the Kokoda Track is collected from clean sources at camping sites and from rainwater tanks in the villages. None of our trekkers has ever reported any problems with drinking water; nobody has ever had diarrhoea on the Track (or at least nobody has owned up to it!). During the trek you must remember to refill your water bottle or bladder at every opportunity and drink as much as you can to avoid dehydration. Dehydration can creep up on you and knock you out with no warning ... one minute you're walking along, next minute you're flat on the ground. Take frequent sips of water while walking.

If perchance you get stuck at a village or camping site where there is no clean water available due to recent rains, the porters will boil water on the campfire and leave it to cool and settle, but so far in running treks since 2004 we have never needed to do this.

As a backup measure you can bring a few water purification tablets.

If you are really worried about water, there is a new product available in camping stores called Steripen which is a penlight-sized U/V water steriliser that runs on AA batteries, you just stir it through a cup of water to sterilise it from any harmful bacteria. This might be a better alternative to water purification tablets if you are concerned about drinking water.

12. **Safety and insurance.** We like you to supply a letter from your doctor to state that you are fit for 7 days strenuous walking, and this might be a good opportunity to also have a medical check-up to confirm that all is well. However despite being fit and in good health, you must recognise that there is every possibility that you may suffer an injury or illness during your trek. Your guide will keep an eye on your condition during the trek and your porters will support and assist you with traversing difficult parts of the walk, but no matter how experienced a hiker you are there is always a chance you will slip on a mossy rock and break a leg or arm. You may get a scratch that quickly gets infected and makes your arm or leg swell up. You may suffer a severe gastric reaction to something you eat.

If you fall ill or have an accident while on the Kokoda Track we have a contingency plan in place. Our guide carries both a VHF radio and a mobile satellite phone for contacting our Port Moresby office, from where we can arrange for a medical evacuation. If you require medical assistance along the Kokoda Track we are going to call in a fixed-wing aircraft or helicopter to airlift you to Port Moresby without hesitation, because for legal reasons our guide cannot allow you to keep on walking if at any point he believes you are not in a fit condition to do so. The cost of airlifting you out to Port Moresby will be about AUD\$2000 depending on where you have to be retrieved from, and it is one of the terms and conditions that you must sign our trekking contract and disclaimer acknowledging that medical assistance, including medical evacuation, is provided "at the cost of the trekker and/or the trekker's insurer". Most standard travel insurance policies include medical evacuation cover (check to make sure at the point of sale). You can buy a travel insurance policy over the counter from any travel agent or airline office in Australia for about \$200, or from various insurers' websites (eg www.covermore.com.au). Once you have purchased your travel insurance policy please e-mail us the details including name of insurer, your policy number, and the emergency phone number given on the policy document (ie the number to call if you need urgent help from the insurer - make sure it is a direct line number and not a 13 number or 1800 number because we cannot ring these Australian freecall numbers from here in PNG).

Sorry to sound gloomy, but a small percentage of Kokoda trekkers do require some form of medical assistance or medivac, especially those who are un-fit or ill-prepared for the walk but even the fit, gung-ho types. How embarrassed was the Navy search and rescue helicopter pilot who broke an ankle bone at Ua-Ule Creek and had to be ignominiously airlifted out by another rescue chopper ! Can happen to anyone...

13. **Training program.** Which brings us to the next point, preparing yourself for the walk. Ten years ago the Kokoda Track mainly attracted experienced bushwalkers looking for a new challenge. More recently the Kokoda Track has become a focal point of Australia's developing cultural identity and is attracting more and more walkers interested in the role of Kokoda in Australia's wartime history. "Doing Kokoda" is even seen as a rite of passage for some Australians now, similar to visiting Gallipoli in Turkey. This means we now have many walkers coming through Kokoda who are not experienced bushwalkers and may be of marginal fitness. Some of these walkers find the Kokoda Track to be an extremely difficult and distressing experience if they do not prepare themselves adequately. If you are not an experienced bushwalker and/or a person with a high level of fitness, we recommend that you commence a training program at least 8 weeks before the trek, consisting of daily walks at medium pace up and down moderately steep hills for at least 1 hour per day. If you have no hilly streets in your area, the next option is to climb up and down flights of stairs for the same period of time. When walking the Kokoda Track you will have plenty of opportunities to stop and rest whenever you are tired so you should stop and rest frequently while training too. On weekends if you have more time available, increase your training to 2-3 hours per day - an organised bushwalk in your area is a great substitute for walking up and down streets or stairs. Carry a water bottle with you while training, and practice taking frequent sips of water to prevent dehydration, which may not be such a danger in your home area but here in the humid tropics your newly-formed habit of drinking while walking will be a wise investment. After 2 weeks of training carrying nothing, you should start carrying a light day pack while doing your training, gradually increasing the weight up to about 5 kg if that is what you are planning to carry on the Kokoda trek. After doing your training if you are still not 100% confident you can carry a 5 kg day pack 5 hours a day for 7 days on the Kokoda Track itself then you should book a dedicated personal porter... do not take the risk of exhausting yourself and having to be flown out by medivac chopper.

14. **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. Your chances of being bitten by a malaria mosquito somewhere along the Kokoda Track is not high because mosquitoes do not breed at altitudes above 300m but Port Moresby, Popondetta and Kokoda station are malaria-prone areas. If you are taking effective anti-malaria medication your chances of actually contracting malaria even in a malarial area 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, that doxycycline is also a very 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.

If your doctor suggests you take chloroquine as anti-malaria medication please query this because nowadays many strains of malaria in PNG are resistant to chloroquine and it is not recommended as an anti-malaria medication for tourists.

Even if you are infected with malaria you are unlikely to fall ill during your trek as the incubation period for the malaria parasite is usually 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 please don't try to "sleep it off", you must go to the doctor and inform him/her that you have been in PNG. Malaria symptoms include body aches and pains, diarrhoea, headache, high temperatures, fever and chills - feeling cold while your body is actually hot. In other words, malaria symptoms are very similar to flu symptoms and easily mistaken, so be aware.

Presumptive treatment for malaria (artemether tablets) will be carried in the guide's first aid kit on your trek. If you experience any of the symptoms mentioned above, even if you think it is not malaria, please inform your guide and commence a course of presumptive treatment for malaria. The only way to correctly diagnose malaria is with a blood test and since this will not be available while out in the bush you will have to err on the side of caution and presume that your symptoms are caused by malaria and take the treatment. If it turns out the symptoms are not really caused by malaria, but by flu or something else, the presumptive treatment won't hurt you.

15. Visas. You can apply for a tourist visa on arrival at Port Moresby airport. The cost is PGK100 (about \$45), and must be paid in local currency. Getting your tourist visa issued will be quick and easy if you have a copy of this 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. If you are not a citizen of Australia, New Zealand, Great Britain, Canada, or the USA please contact us for special advice on visas.

We do not recommend that you send your passport to a PNG diplomatic mission in Australia to get your visa because occasionally passports go missing in the mail.

16. Money. You should change about AUD\$200 to PNG Kina at a bank or currency exchange booth in Australia before departure to pay for your tourist visa on arrival and to pay for any bar drinks etc on your first day in Port Moresby. If you are just coming in to do the Kokoda trek and straight out again you won't need more than this anyway. Just carry about PGK50 (AUD\$20) in coins and small notes with you on the Kokoda Track to buy fruit and the occasional warm can of Coke from village markets. Get this change from the airport bank or a supermarket on your day of arrival.

The Travelex currency exchange booths at major Australian airports including Brisbane and Cairns always 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 changing AUD\$ to kina is better here in PNG than in Australia. If you will need more than \$200 to spend here, wait till you arrive in Port Moresby and use your credit card to get a cash advance in PNG kina from an automatic teller machine. There is an ATM at the airport that accepts Visa/Mastercard, and other ATMs around the city.

You can also exchange AUD cash over the counter at the airport banks located outside the international terminal.

If you happen to arrive without any PNG Kina in your pocket to pay for your tourist visa, you can exchange some AUD cash to PNG currency at the bureau-de-change in the Customs area to pay for your visa. The immigration officer will allow you to pass through the barrier, go to the bureau-de-change to exchange your money and come back to the immigration counter to pay for your visa.

17. Gifts and tips. Giving gifts and tips to porters, village people etc is not expected but visitors usually ask us "what makes a good gift?" so this information is provided accordingly. For porters, most trekkers find that there are usually one or two porters that they take a shine to during the trek - the one who carries your stuff or the one who pulls you out of the creek etc - and they would like to leave them with a gift or a tip or both. For gifts, something they can use back in their village or things that they can use on future treks make good gifts, eg small waterproof torches that take 2 x AA batteries, hiking socks, T-shirts, cheap sports watches. At the end of the trek you are also welcome to give the porters anything you don't want or need to take home with you (eg your torch or even your used, smelly and dirty items of clothing, towels, socks, shoes, first aid items the porters come from poor families and they gratefully accept anything in any condition). We pay our porters above-average local wages but if you would really like to give a tip then we suggest no more than PGK100 (about A\$40) otherwise it could cause dissension in the group. Sometimes trekkers pool their tips and give them to the guide and he distributes the money evenly to all porters.

18. Village donations. If you would like to contribute something to the villages you pass through then we suggest you bring useful things to give to the village schools - this is a way of ensuring your contribution benefits all families in the village. Don't bring toys, balloons etc for the kids - they have had enough of that. Suitable donations to village schools include: wall maps (The World, Pacific Ocean, Australia, Europe, Africa etc), wall posters (eg animals, plants, machines, famous people, illustrated alphabet or numerals), small

reference books (eg pocket dictionary, thesaurus, slimline atlas, fact books) or children's paperback novels with basic reading level (eg Enid Blyton etc). Writing and drawing materials like crayons, pencils, pens, maths sets are also helpful. Don't bring paper or exercise books as they already have adequate supplies of these. Just bring a couple of items at most (to give to ONE school only - you can't help everybody) otherwise our trek weight will increase dramatically. Donated items should be given to the school head teacher in the village of your choice, not to individual children - this way all of the kids will have access to the materials. Village schools along the Kokoda Track (Naoro, Menari, Efogi, Kagi, Alola) only cater for Year 1 to Year 6 whereas primary schools at Kokoda, Awala, Gona and Buna go up to Year 8. The only high schools are at Popondetta but you will not be visiting any of these. Ecotourism Melanesia is currently formulating a scheme to provide sustained assistance to the school and clinic at Menari village so if you would like to make any cash donations or organise some fundraising back at home we will be happy to funnel your donations into school supplies and medical supplies for Menari that we will personally purchase in Port Moresby and deliver to the village. (Other trekking companies are targeting assistance towards other villages such as Kagi and Efogi).