



# Ecotourism Melanesia

Discover Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands

## EM206 2013 **TUFI CULTURAL FESTIVAL TOUR** 07-20 JUNE

13 nights Tufi, Mt Hagen, Simbai, Sepik River

Fully escorted sign-up soft adventure tour, group size minimum 6 maximum 8 pax.

The **Tufi Cultural Festival** is a celebration of the traditional culture of the Tufi people which is very strongly adhered to despite some modernisation. The festival is a kaleidoscope of bird of paradise plumes, dot-painted tapa cloth and the intricate facial tattoos that adorn the married women of this area. The Tufi people rival the better known Huli wig men and Asaro mud men for the exotica of their costumes and dance performances. The festival is an annual event aimed at perpetuating the culture among the younger generation as well as attracting visitors to join the celebrations.

Tufi of course is the absolute jewel in Papua New Guinea's crown - a one stop shop for authentic traditional culture, magnificent fjordland scenery, an amazing diversity of geographical attractions and adventure activities, the home of the world's largest butterfly and flocks of brilliantly coloured but understandably nervous birds of paradise ☺

From Tufi the tour group moves on to Mt Hagen where the itinerary includes eco-tours featuring the Paiya village skull house, the Magic Mountain moss forest and orchid gardens, and a highlands sing-sing.

From Mt Hagen there is a side trip to exotic Simbai for two days village-to-village trekking then a direct flight to Wewak for a three night motor canoe safari down the mystical Sepik River staying in bamboo huts among the river people.

*NB This is a "wet foot" tour that involves climbing in and out of small boats, some walking in sand and mud, some challenging trekking and a several nights in basic huts without electricity. Above-average physical fitness is required for some activities, although alternatives are provided.*

*Note that this is a unique small group tour program originally designed by Ecotourism Melanesia and not offered by any other tour company. The tour price includes a tour development levy to recover our outlays on designing, reconnoitring, organising and monitoring the tour, and a share of the tour escort's travel costs.*

**CORE TOUR COST: PGK 15,300 per person (13 nights)**

**based on twin-share or willing to share, includes internal air and most meals.**

Single supplement is 20% surcharge (guaranteed single room at hotels and lodges, good possibility but no absolute guarantee of single accom in the village guest houses on the Sepik River).

*To convert the tour cost to other currencies, use the current exchange rates listed on our website home page or contact us for a quote. The tour price is subject to change. However clients paid-in-full are protected against any price rises.*

### CORE TOUR INCLUSIONS (13 nights):

- Port Moresby - meet, greet and assist
- Port Moresby - return domestic flight to Tufi
- Tufi - 3 nights 1 star village guest house accommodation including local style meals
- Tufi - open motor boat transfers between Tufi and village guest house, as required
- Tufi - one day attendance at the Tufi Cultural Festival (does not include lunch - pay as you go)
- Tufi - one day exploration activities ex-village guest house (outrigger canoe trip, hiking, snorkelling etc)
- Tufi - use of masks and snorkels
- Port Moresby - domestic flight to Mt Hagen with boxed lunch
- Mt Hagen - 2 nights 2.5 star accommodation at Magic Mountain Nature Lodge - twin share bungalow including set-menu meals and transfers, bottled or boiled water
- Mt Hagen - half day Paiya village cultural tour with sing-sing
- Mt Hagen - half day local walking excursion ex Magic Mountain
- Mt Hagen - return domestic flight to Simbai/Dusin
- Simbai - 1 night 1.5 star accommodation at Kalam Guest House, Simbai including meals and clean drinking water
- Simbai - welcome sing-sing procession, tribal museum entry, orchid garden entry and Wechenrau hamlet visit
- Simbai - 2 days 2 nights hiking trip to Dusin via the Kaironk River Valley with accommodation in village huts - includes carriers and camp-style food, drinking water, basic camping gear, village gratuities
- Mt Hagen - domestic flight to Wewak
- Wewak - 2 nights 3.5 star accommodation at In-Wewak Boutique Hotel (or alternative if unavailable) - room only, pay as you go for a la carte meals and extras [www.in-wewak.com](http://www.in-wewak.com)
- Wewak - group transfer by private bus or four wheel drive vehicle to the Sepik River (2 bus seats per person)
- Sepik River - 3 nights 4 days motor canoe safari tour with village guest house accommodation including clean bedding and mosquito nets, mixture of camp-style and local-style meals, bottled or boiled water, village tours and demonstrations, plus associated costs.
- Sepik River - group transfer by private bus or four wheel drive vehicle to Wewak (2 bus seats per person)
- Wewak - domestic flight to Port Moresby
- Port Moresby - departure check-in assistance
- Throughout the tour - bottled water on board all tour vehicles
- Throughout the tour - all fees and gratuities for local villages, guides and helpers
- Throughout the tour - all airport/hotel transfers
- Throughout the tour - services of full time tour escort from Ecotourism Melanesia
- Throughout the tour - tropical first aid kit and mobile satellite phone carried with the tour leader
- Throughout the tour - 24-hour tour monitoring and emergency assistance from our Port Moresby office

### TOUR EXCLUSIONS

- international airfares
- bottled water (except where stated as provided)
- hotel meals and any other meals stated as not included, or described as “pay as you go” or “buy your own”
- tips (not expected, and only appropriate for exceptional service)
- souvenirs and items of a personal nature
- bar drinks
- visa fees and visa assistance
- excess baggage charges (your free allowance on scheduled domestic flights is 16kg + 5 kg and you can check in additional kilos at your own cost)
- Personal items. Bring your own quick-dry bath towel, personal medications and first aid items, personal hygiene requirements, brimmed hat or cap, “amphibious footwear” (sandals or quick-dry canvas shoes), insect repellent, sunscreen, personal flashlight, battery-operated personal fan. NB Aerosol cans are not permitted on domestic flights in PNG so bring roll-ons or pump-action sprays.

## ITINERARY

DAY 1: FRI 07 JUNE 2013

### PORT MORESBY / TUFU

Arrive Port Moresby and connect through to Tufi.

See [www.airniugini.com.pg](http://www.airniugini.com.pg) and [www.qantas.com.au](http://www.qantas.com.au) and [www.apng.com](http://www.apng.com) for details of international flights arriving today from Cairns, Brisbane and Singapore (flights from Singapore depart the day before and arrive early morning in Port Moresby).

On arrival in Port Moresby Ecotourism Melanesia staff will greet you with a smile and a welcome gift ☺ and you will be assisted to check in for your connecting flight to Tufi.

If you arrive on an early flight we will be happy to take you on a complimentary tour of the city to fill in some time, and an opportunity for you to stop at a cafeteria or restaurant for lunch.

13:30 As a group we gather at the airport terminal for our flight to Tufi. This may be your first opportunity to meet the other travellers joining you on the tour.

**14:45 Airlines PNG flight CG1672 departs Port Moresby for Tufi via Popondetta (aircraft: Dash 8-200 turboprop with 36 seats)**

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

16:10 We arrive at Tufi airfield adjacent to the Tufi government “station” (about 50 houses, a couple of little shops and a few provincial government offices) and the Tufi Resort. If time allows we can stop at the resort for a quick drink by the pool and enjoy the stunning fjord views before continuing down to the waterfront to board our speed boat for a 20 minute transfer to the south of Tufi to Baga village.

#### **ABOUT TUFU**

*Tufi is a visually stunning area of PNG with unique fjordland geography. The fjords were created thousands of years ago by fingers of lava running into the seas from an erupting Mt Victory. The people of this area are culturally rich with exotic traditional dress and energetic customary dances. The coral reefs around Tufi are pristine and easily accessible.*

#### **ABOUT BAGA VILLAGE GUEST HOUSE**

*Baga is a tiny village with just a few families, one of which has built a guest house large enough to accommodate small groups. The guest house sits on a spur overlooking the Amuian Fjord. There is a nice swimming hole in the forest right behind. From the guest house you can take an outrigger safari into the majestic Amuian Fjord where the virgin rainforest gradually closes in on the steep shores. If you enter the small side bay and walk up through the forest you'll be rewarded with the highest waterfall in the area, dropping into a big swimming pool. There are three white sand beaches a short distance from the guest house and there are many good snorkeling spots.*

After a welcome from the owners and a brief tour of the guest house facilities we will be just in time to view the sun set over the fjords, coconut drink in hand... magic!

19:00 Dinner - lots of seafood and local vegetables washed down with coconut juice. After dinner our hosts will brief us about their local culture and lifestyle

and perhaps offer a few songs... all by the light of Tilly lamps and the bonfire, as there is no electricity here.

Overnight Baga Village Guest House (twin-share dormitory-style accommodation, sand or bamboo floor, clean bedding and mosquito net supplied, bathe in nearby stream, washbasin with jug of water in room, sit-down outhouse toilets, complimentary fruit, coconut juice and tea/coffee available 24 hours, all meals and activities included).

**DAY 2: SAT 08 JUNE 2013**

**TUFI (cultural festival)**

06:00 Optional morning forest and waterfall walk, or take a dip in the swimming hole.

07:00 Tropical breakfast.

07:30 We board our open speed boat for a 30-min transfer to Kofure Village, the host village for the Tufi Cultural Festival, which is located to the north of Tufi station.

There will be a full day program of cultural performances, demonstrations of traditions, and preparation and serving of local foods. Pay for your own lunch today, from the food stalls at the festival.

16:00 We return to Baga in time for some late afternoon walking, paddling, snorkelling or napping.

19:00 Dinner

Tonight is choir night and the village people will sing some of their traditional and religious songs. The use of Melanesian harmony in their singing is beautiful. The children are delightful when they sing and do actions.

Overnight Baga Village Guest House

**DAY 3: SUN 09 JUNE 2013**

**TUFI**

06:00 Optional morning beach walk.

07:00 Tropical breakfast.

Today we respect the village people's tradition of religious attendance by laying low until church is out. We are of course welcome to attend the morning service with our hosts: the Anglican (Episcopalian) Church is the dominant denomination here. If church is not your thing you can sleep in, laze on the beach, take a swim, sip tea and nibble on fruit, or climb to the ridge top for some morning photography. A scuba diving excursion organised by Tufi Resort may be possible if you have your dive ticket (extra cost) - the resort will pick you up at Baga on the way out to the reefs.

After lunch there will be an organised outrigger safari into the Amuian Fjord to explore the waterfalls, reef bommies, secluded beaches and overhanging rainforest which hosts many birds and small mammals. The world's largest butterfly, the Queen Alexandra Birdwing, is native in this area too.

If time allows our hosts will also lead a hike to the top of the spur overlooking the fjord, which offers panoramic views of the Tufi coastline.

19:00 Dinner

*Tonight it is the visitors' turn to come up with any entertainment for our hosts... no TV here!*

Overnight Baga Village Guest House

**DAY 4: MON 10 JUNE 2013**

**TUFI / PORT MORESBY / MT HAGEN (village tour)**

06:00 Early breakfast and pack up.

06:30 Depart Baga by open speed boat for Tufi station.

07:00 Check in at Tufi Resort which is also the airline agency.

**08:35 Airlines PNG flight CG1673 departs Tufi for Port Moresby via Popondetta (aircraft: Dash 8-200 with 36 seats)**

10:00 On arrival in Port Moresby we check in for our connecting flight to Mt Hagen and grab a boxed lunch delivered to the airport by Ecotourism Melanesia staff.

**12:15 Air Niugini flight PX184 departs Port Moresby for Mt Hagen (aircraft: Fokker F100 jet with 98 seats)**

13:15 On arrival in Mt Hagen we are met by our local guide and transfer 45 minutes via Mt Hagen town and out the other side into the picturesque Nebilyer Valley and up the lower slopes of Mount Hagen (the mountain) to Magic Mountain Nature Lodge.

After checking in at the lodge we transfer a short distance down the mountain to nearby Paiya (Paiyakona) cultural village where we will meet the chief and his three wives and see displays of Western Highlands village culture including a men's ceremonial house, an ancestors skull house and demonstrations of traditional wig-making and the courtship ritual "tanim het" (turnim head). The highlight of the village tour will be a sing-sing performance featuring both men's and women's dances. (In the highlands, men and women never dance together in one group).

Overnight Magic Mountain Nature Lodge (2 star, twin share bungalows, includes set-menu meals)

*See accommodation description in the trip notes at the end of this itinerary.*

**DAY 5: TUE 11 JUNE 2013**

**MT HAGEN / SIMBAI**

05:00 Breakfast

06:00 We transfer 45 minutes to Mt Hagen airport

07:00 Check in at MAF terminal.

**08:00 MAF (Missionary Aviation Fellowship) flight departs Mt Hagen for Simbai (aircraft: DH6 Twin Otter with 18 seats)**

08:30 On arrival at Simbai airstrip we will be met by our local Simbai guide with some helping hands carry our bags. From the airstrip it is a 45 minute walk to the Kalam Guest House.

**ABOUT SIMBAI FLIGHTS**

*Simbai flights do not operate on a fixed schedule. MAF operates regular flights on Tuesdays and Fridays, subject to weather. If Simbai is foggy early in the morning the flight to Simbai will operate later in the morning when the fog has lifted. On some days Simbai is crystal clear first thing in the morning and the flight to Simbai will be early. Unfortunately the weather and therefore the flight times cannot be predicted in advance so all we can do is get to the airport early and be prepared to fly either first-up or later. Unpredictable weather potentially delaying flights in and out of Simbai is one of the reasons why other tour companies do not offer this destination to their tour groups, who are often on tight schedules. This works in our favour as the small visitor numbers creates minimal impact on the Simbai culture, leaving it well preserved for us to enjoy, and we will not have to share your experience of this exotic tribe with other tourists. Almost all visitors to Simbai say it was the absolute highlight of their trip to Papua New Guinea and is not to be missed. Ecotourism Melanesia considers the 10% risk of flight disruption*

*acceptable and manageable.*

#### **ABOUT SIMBAI**

*Simbai is an isolated district in the highlands. It is located approximately halfway between Mt Hagen and Madang. Administratively the area falls within the Madang Province but culturally the people of the Simbai area are more similar to the highlands tribes than the coastal peoples of Madang. The area surrounding Simbai airstrip - the Simbai River valley to the east and the Kaironk River valley to the west - is populated by the Kalam tribe. Archaeological digs in this area indicate that the Kalam people have occupied the Simbai area continuously for more than a thousand years. The dialect spoken by the people here is one of PNG's most unusual languages, characterised by glottal stops. The traditional culture here is also unique among Papua New Guinea's eight hundred tribes. Native houses have a trademark irregular hexagon shape, men's initiation ceremonies feature nose-piercing and pig-killing, and on special occasions the initiated men wear huge cane-framed head dresses - the largest in Papua New Guinea - decorated with animal skins and the exoskeletons of thousands of luminescent green beetles collected from the forest. Just an hour's walk from the airstrip brings you to primitive villages where time has stood still and the local people still live in grass huts, still wear traditional dress and still hunt game and harvest fruit and vegetables from the forest for their diet.*

#### **ABOUT KALAM GUEST HOUSE**

*Kalam Guest House is a rustic but clean and comfortable facility built in local style, operated by the local community. The guest house has ten twin rooms with clean bedding supplied. The bathroom, which has running water and a flush toilet, is shared but it is unlikely that there will be any other guests staying apart from yourself and/or your tour party. Electricity is supplied by a small generator. Well prepared local style meals are served based on fresh local produce. In front of the guest house is a large open area that the locals use as a meeting place and sing-sing ground.*

On arrival at the guest house we will be welcomed by a traditional Kalam tribal sing-sing procession with men wearing their trademark head-dresses decorated with green beetle shells and women wearing animal furs and orchid stem necklaces. As they dance and sing they beat small hand drums fashioned from small hollowed logs with a lizard or mammal skin stretched over one end creating a tympanic membrane.

After the sing-sing we will be introduced to the performers who will show us their costumes and body decorations, describe how they are made and applied, and talk about their ritual significance.

Lunch is served at the guest house and will be our first opportunity to sample some local fruit and vegetables grown here including sub-tropical varieties of banana, yam and sweet potato. Starchy vegetables are usually served with cooked greens such as watercress and long beans, or salad vegetables like tomato and cucumber.

After lunch our guides will take us exploring in the vicinity of the Kalam Guest House. Adjacent is the Kalam Tribal Museum which is a local style hut housing a collection of tribal artifacts, some of which are quite old and rare, and represent a microcosm of the Kalam tribal history and culture. Your guide will explain the historical and ritual significance of the pieces on display which include everyday utensils, weapons, musical instruments, head dresses, nose

pieces, traditional clothing, shell money for making bride price payments, and heirloom ornaments.

Also nearby are the Simbai orchid gardens, lovingly tended by community volunteers, displaying a full range of wild and cultivated orchids which grow prolifically in the Simbai climate. Orchids play an important part in the lives and rituals of the Kalam people, not only for their floral beauty (the flowers are exquisite but each plant may only bloom every two or three years) but the usefulness of their stems which when dried are hardy and hollow, useful as straws for sucking food and water, and for threading necklaces.

A little further afield is the hamlet of Wechenrau where we will visit with a local family and learn something of their very basic lifestyle which they pursue only 30 minutes flying time from the modern town of Mt Hagen.

Overnight Kalam Guest House, Simbai (basic twin room, includes meals and bottled or boiled drinking water)

#### DAY 6: WED 12 JUNE 2013

#### SIMBAI / AINONK

This morning we commence a two-day one-way trek from Simbai through the Kaironk River Valley to the Dusin mission station. The trekking involves 6 hours of challenging walking each day for 2 days including rest stops. There is no rush and we can walk at our own pace, but good physical fitness is required to make the distance.

*There are no short cuts to the exit point at Dusin and if you don't keep up with the itinerary you might miss the flight out. Therefore if you don't have the fitness for two days of challenging hiking you will be able to stay back at Simbai and undertake shorter walks to hamlets in the Simbai area, accompanied by one of the local guides. On Friday the flight to Mt Hagen will stop at both Simbai and Dusin so it will be no problem for you to rejoin the others who are walking through to Dusin.*

The two day trek strikes out north-west into the Kaironk River Valley. The hiking in this direction is quite difficult (level 4 on a scale of 1 to 5) with many steep spurs to scramble up and down, many pig fences to straddle and many river crossings and tributary streams to splash through or even wade through. Bring sandals or old sneakers for the water crossings. While hiking through the Kaironk River Valley you will pass through a variety of habitats including grassland, woodland and marsh. Some river crossings may be required, depending on the route taken. Your guide has instructions not to take you across rivers with strong currents or water deeper than your waist.

This is very rewarding walking, with spectacular mountain scenery, a plethora of wild orchids and other exotic flora growing at the sides of the walking trails, and regular sightings of birds of paradise and native mammals (possums, cuscus, tree kangaroos). You'll also enjoy candid encounters with the mountain people in their little hamlets and along the walking trails as they go to and from their gardens and hunting areas. Your chances of meeting another tourist out here are about nil. You will also stop to visit them in their bush-material huts in little hamlets situated along the main walking tracks. People in this area wear a mixture of traditional dress and well-worn Western clothing (there is virtually no place in Papua New Guinea that has not yet been invaded by the T-shirt). Here in the mountains traditional clothing (known as ass-grass in Pidgin) didn't offer much comfort from the cold and imported second-hand

clothes were quickly embraced when they became available. However, if locals know you are coming they will insist on wearing their traditional finery as a matter of cultural pride.

Overnight village hut, Aionk village. A selection of local food and camp food will be offered for dinner. Basic camping gear is supplied. Bring your own sleeping bag or we can lend you one.

#### DAY 7: THU 13 JUNE 2013

##### AINONK TO DUSIN

Another day of challenging hiking through the Kaironk River valley, including a stop at Womuk village where archaeologists have been visiting occasionally over the past 20 years to excavate a rich lapita site.

Dusin village is at the end of the valley, located on a ridge overlooking the river. Dusin is the end of the line, the last village in the valley. From Dusin the Kaironk River turns south and passes through rugged steep gorges before gushing out into the Jimi Valley of the Western Highlands and emptying into the Jimi River.

Overnight village hut, Dusin village.

#### DAY 8: FRI 14 JUNE 2013

##### DUSIN / MT HAGEN

Depending on the weather, the MAF aircraft should arrive from Mt Hagen to uplift us any time between 09:00 and 12:00

**MAF scheduled flight departs Dusin for Mt Hagen (aircraft: DH6 Twin Otter).**

On arrival at Mt Hagen we are met and transferred to Magic Mountain Nature Lodge which is now familiar territory for us.

After lunch, a choice of 3 afternoon walks is offered and the group may split accordingly:

(a) a walk through the moss and orchid forest around Magic Mountain (which is a lesser peak at the base of Mount Hagen) with opportunities to see native birds

(b) a scenic walk from Magic Mountain along the sealed road heading towards Enga Province, stopping at roadside hamlets to chat with locals engaged in tending their gardens and animals. For several kilometres past Magic Mountain the terrain and villages are very picturesque and make for excellent photography. Walk as near or as far as you like and the lodge vehicle will pick you up and drive you back to the lodge.

(c) a downhill hike down the Paiyakona valley through montane forest to the high waterfall at the bottom of the valley where you can take a frosty dip and then return to the lodge by car. 2 hours fast walk or 3 hours slow walk.

*For all walks you will be accompanied by a guide from the lodge. If you have limited fitness we recommend walks (a) and (b) because these can be cut short if you get tired whereas for walk (c) once you start walking you are committed until you reach the waterfall pickup point.*

Overnight Magic Mountain Nature Lodge (2 star, twin share bungalows, includes set-menu meals)

**DAY 9: SAT 15 JUNE 2013****MT HAGEN / WEWAK**

09:00 From Magic Mountain we will head back towards Mt Hagen town stopping first at Moika village for another village tour, but different. Moika is a cluster village with the houses built in close proximity, in contrast to Paiya village which is a dispersed village where the families live on large plots of garden land at least 200 metres from their nearest neighbours. We will have an opportunity to go inside some of the houses and see the communal garden plots behind the village, plus an excellent native flower gardens

11:00 An optional short stop at the Mt Hagen market, the largest fresh produce market in the highlands with a huge selection of tropical, sub-tropical and temperate climate fruit and vegetables. Saturday is the busiest day. Occasionally the market can be overcrowded and unstable (a melee can quickly erupt when vendors squabble with each other and the crowd takes sides) so we will only go in if the market is quiet.

11:30 Lunch stop at the Highlander Hotel in Mt Hagen (pay as you go)

12:30 Depart Highlander Hotel for the airport

13:00 Check in for our flight to Mt Hagen

**14:25 Airlines PNG flight CG1622 departs Mt Hagen for Wewak (aircraft: Dash 8-200 with 36 seats)**

15:10 On arrival in Wewak we transfer on the hotel shuttle to our accommodation at the In-Wewak Boutique Hotel.

After check-in, spend the rest of the afternoon enjoying this delightful plantation style hotel. Swim in the pool, relax with drinks on the breezy plantation verandah with expansive views of the Bismarck Sea and Wewak Islands, or snooze in your comfortably air-conditioned room.

Overnight In-Wewak Boutique Hotel, Wewak (3.5 star twin share, room only, pay as you go for meals and extras)

**DAY 10: SUN 16 JUNE 2013****WEWAK / SEPIK RIVER (Pagwi to Kanganamun)**

08:00 After breakfast we check out of the hotel and depart by private four wheel drive vehicle to Pagwi, our jumping-off point on the Sepik River. The road from Wewak to Pagwi is bitumen sealed most of the way and quite a pleasant journey. First we climb steep winding curves from the steamy coastal strip to the cool forests of the undulating Prince Alexander Range. Two hours into the trip we stop at a roadside market to buy tropical fruits, cooked vegetables and delicious green coconuts to drink (pay as you go).

Back on the road, we soon see fleeting views through the trees of the Sepik plains, with the river itself a fuzzy brown ribbon on the horizon. Descending onto the savannah grasslands of the Sepik Basin, we pass through a number of villages before arriving at Pagwi “station” on the Middle Sepik by early afternoon.

At Pagwi we board our waiting motor canoe and head down-river approximately one hour to Kanganamun, one of the Middle Sepik crocodile cult villages. After we settle into the village guest house we take a familiarisation walk around the village, stopping at the Haus Tambaran (men’s spirit house) where the curator will show us the tambu artifacts and explain the traditions of the crocodile cult. (See trip notes at the end of this itinerary).

Overnight village guest house, Kanganamun (1 star village hut, includes meals and drinking water).

*A supply of dry groceries - flour, sugar, biscuits, coffee/tea etc - will be supplied by the tour company to supplement food provided in the villages, plus*

*an adequate supply of drinking water. Accommodation will be twin-share or dormitory style in the village guest hut. Tropical sleeping bags and mosquito nets are supplied. We strongly suggest you bring a battery-operated personal fan to cool yourself when sleeping under your mosquito net.*

**DAY 11: MON 17 JUNE 2013**

**SEPIK RIVER (Kanganamun to Chambri Lakes)**

This morning we cross the river to Palimbe, a village situated behind a vast field of water lilies and boasting several large spirit houses. From Palimbe we continue downstream via an off-river channel and into the Chambri Lakes, visiting the village of Aibom famous locally for its clay pots used as cookware, and Kirimbit where we will stay overnight.

Today's travel will include hot afternoon sun (and/or rain !) so wear long sleeves, plenty of sunscreen, a hat, sunglasses and even hold an umbrella to keep the sun off you. Beware also of the sun's reflection off the water which can burn you under your chin.

Overnight village guest house, Chambri Lakes (1 star village hut, includes meals and drinking water).

**DAY 12: TUE 18 JUNE 2013**

**SEPIK RIVER (Chambri Lakes to Kundima)**

Departing Chambri Lakes after breakfast we continue motoring down the main Sepik River with your guide, stopping at the villages of Mindibit and Angriman to see their distinctive artifact carving styles (moon-faced figurines at Mindibit and long-faced masks at Angriman). Around lunchtime we arrive at Tambanum, the largest village on the Sepik River and locally renowned as "the carving factory of the Sepik" (see trip notes).

As we walk through village (about 30 minutes walk from one side to the other) the village people will come out of their houses to say hello and answer any questions we may have about the decorations and wares displayed on and under their homes. Our guide will arrange a visit to one or two of the house tambarans and some smoked fish and bananas for lunch.

From Tambanum it is another ninety minutes downstream by motor canoe to the confluence of the Sepik and Yuat rivers. Most tourists exploring the Sepik by motor boat or small cruise vessel don't venture up the smaller tributaries like the Yuat River but this is where you get to see a quieter side of the Sepik Basin, off the "main drag".

Half an hour up the Yuat River - now moving at a slower pace motoring upstream against the flow of the river current - brings us to Kundima village, located on a bend in the river with a large sand bar. Every evening locals gather on the sand bar to socialise, play scratch matches of soccer and volleyball that we will be welcome to join in.

Tourists never stay at Kundima and there is no village guest house but an empty hut is provided for us to sleep in. We will set up our mosquito nets and bedding on the floor - sorry no single supplement here and snorers will be banished to the corner ☺ and locals will provide some village food for dinner to supplement our camp rations. The staple food here is sago cooked 20 different ways. Fresh sago starch has a moist consistency and orange/tan colour, very different from the desiccated white pellets of pearl sago you might buy in the supermarket back home. Fresh sago dough can be baked as damper in hot coals, fried in hot oil to make thick heavy pancakes, or boiled to make a purplish gel. Locals at Kundima sometimes eat their sago dishes

with a plate of sago grubs on the side for extra protein, fried in oil or simmered in coconut milk. The fat sago grubs have a nutty taste and are similar to the “witchetty” grubs consumed by Australian aborigines. (It’s OK nobody will mind if you suddenly turn vegetarian today ☺ )

Bathing will be in the river and there will be a camp toilet (you’ll survive).

Overnight camping at Kundima village, Yuat River

#### **DAY 13: WED 19 JUNE 2013 SEPIK RIVER / WEWAK**

07:00 First up this morning is a sago-making demonstration. All along the Sepik River for the past 2 days you will have seen locals washing sago pith at rickety little tables perched at the waterside and now is the time to get a close-up view of how it works.

08:00 From Kundima we retrace our route down the picturesque Yuat River to its junction with “Wara Sepik”. You are now on the Lower Sepik. Travelling downstream with the current our canoe will pick up speed and two hours after leaving Kundima we will arrive at Angoram township, “capital” of the Lower Sepik. We have time to take a walk around the Angoram market for some fresh fruit to eat for lunch on the way to Wewak then say farewell to our canoe crew who will head back to Pagwi.

11:00 Our group will board our waiting vehicle and hit the road. Driving time to Wewak will be about 2 hours.

13:30 We arrive in Wewak in time for late lunch at the hotel.

Free afternoon in Wewak: walk down to the fresh food and handicraft market, relax with drinks on the breezy plantation verandah, or snooze in your comfortably air-conditioned room.

Overnight In-Wewak Boutique Hotel, Wewak (3.5 star twin share, room only, pay as you go for meals and extras)

We suggest an early night after dinner this evening due to the early rise tomorrow morning.

#### **DAY 14: THU 20 JUNE 2013 WEWAK / PORT MORESBY / FLY OUT**

03:45 Rise and shine, check out of your room. The hotel restaurant does not open for breakfast until 07:00 but you can request a plate of fruit or bread with toaster the night before, to have with tea or coffee in your room when you wake.

04:15 The hotel shuttle bus departs for Wewak airport. Passenger check-in usually opens at 04:45. The aircraft has overnighted at Wewak and the pilots have probably stayed at the same hotel as yourself, and will probably travel to the airport on the same shuttle, so don’t worry you won’t miss the flight.

**06:10 Air Niugini flight PX125 departs Wewak for Port Moresby via Madang (aircraft: Fokker F100 with 98 seats)**

08:20 On arrival in Port Moresby, Ecotourism Melanesia staff will assist you to check in for your onward flight. A complimentary brief city tour is available if you missed out on Day 1 and if time allows before your flight.

