



# Ecotourism Melanesia

Discover Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands

**EM207 2014 GOROKA SHOW AND KALAM CULTURE FESTIVAL TOUR 12-22 SEPTEMBER 2014**  
**10 nights Goroka, Mt Hagen, Simbai, Madang**  
(escorted small group tour maximum 8 people + guide)

The Goroka Show is partly an agricultural show and partly a highlands sing-sing. Since colonial days the people of the eastern highlands have come together once a year to display samples of their best crops and livestock to compete for prizes, and to show off their most colourful and energetic dance traditions. The pride of each tribe is vested in its dancing groups which vie for attention and prominence on the dance ground - often there are several groups performing at once in different parts of the arena. Sparks fly occasionally on the field as jealousy and competition fuel conflict between tribal groups. At the end of the Show, judges award prizes to the best dancing groups: cash awards have now taken the place of pigs and brides.

The Kalam Culture Festival is a local festival attended by only a few privileged outsiders. Once a year the people of the Kalam tribe around Simbai in the highlands come together to resolve disputes, pay bride price and other compensation payments (usually in the form of pigs), pierce the nose septums of pubescent boys to initiate them into manhood, and feast and celebrate together the traditions of their tribe.

**TOUR COST: PGK 14,550 per person, 10 nights, twin-share, includes internal air and many meals**  
(based on 2 ½ star budget motel accommodation for the 3 nights in Goroka).

Upgrade accommodation for 3 nights in Goroka to 3.5 star (Pacific Gardens Hotel or Bird of Paradise Hotel): please enquire

Single supplement: please enquire.

*To convert the tour cost to other currencies, please contact us for a quote. The tour price is subject to change. However packages paid-in-full are protected against any price rises.*

## **TOUR INCLUSIONS (10 nights)**

- Port Moresby - airport meet and greet
- Port Moresby - tour information kit including welcome gift, souvenir polo shirt, maps, destination information
- Port Moresby - scheduled domestic flight to Goroka
- Goroka - airport meet and greet, transfer to hotel
- Goroka - 3 nights twin-share 2-star budget motel accommodation, includes light breakfast only
- Goroka - half day tour of Goroka town with fruit and bottled water
- Goroka - 2 x half day escorted excursions to the Goroka Show with entry pass, fruit and bottled water
- Goroka - half day excursion to Akameku village (or similar) with local style lunch and bottled water
- Goroka - half day excursion to Daulo Pass moss forest (or similar location) with packed lunch and bottled water
- Goroka - road transfer to Mt Hagen with fruit and bottled water
- Mt Hagen - 2 nights 3.75 star twin share accommodation at Highlander Hotel (premier room, room only)
- Mt Hagen - full-day village and nature tour including lunch

- Mt Hagen - charter flight from Mt Hagen to Simbai (PAC750 or Cessna C208 Grand Caravan)
- Simbai - 3 days village culture tours and attendance at the Kalam Culture Festival, Simbai including all entry fees and gratuities
- Simbai - 3 nights 1-star twin-share accommodation at Kalam Guest House, Simbai including local style meals and boiled drinking water
- Simbai - light aircraft flight from Simbai to Madang (Cessna 206)
- Madang - airport meet and greet, transfer to hotel
- Madang - 1 night 3.5 star accommodation at Coastwatchers Hotel (premier room, room only)
- Madang - 1 night 3.5 star accommodation at Jais Aben Resort (deluxe bungalow, room only)
- Madang - half day town and village tour
- Madang - full day Alexishafen and Rempy Lagoon tour including local style lunch
- Madang - scheduled domestic flight to Port Moresby
- Port Moresby - ad hoc shopping or sightseeing on last day of tour
- Port Moresby - departure check-in assistance and farewell at airport
- Throughout the tour we provide:
  - services of a full time tour leader
  - all fees and gratuities for local villages, guides, demonstrators and helpers
  - all airport/hotel transfers
  - all road travel by late model mini bus or four wheel drive vehicle with bottled water on board (unless otherwise specified)
  - various additional gear that may be required for your safety and comfort in remote areas such as mobile satellite phone, tropical first aid kit, mosquito net, life vest, sleeping bag, supplementary food supplies (we may ask you to carry such items with your personal baggage from Port Moresby to your destination and if this incurs any excess baggage penalty we will pay the charges)
  - daily reconfirmation of flights and arrangements coordinated by our Port Moresby office
  - 24 hour assistance from our Port Moresby office (phone 7700 5066, 7204 6950 or 7686 8917)

## TOUR EXCLUSIONS

- International airfares
- meals, bar drinks and bottled water at hotels except where stated
- tips (not expected, and only appropriate for exceptional service)
- souvenirs and items of a personal nature
- visa fees and visa assistance
- airline excess baggage charges (the free allowance on Air Niugini is 16kg + 5 kg). Excess baggage over this allowance cannot be carried on the charter flights at all.
- Personal items. Bring your own personal medications and first aid kit, personal hygiene requirements, brimmed hat or cap, “amphibious footwear” (sandals or quick-dry canvas shoes), insect repellent, sunscreen, battery-operated personal fan. Please note that pressurised aerosol spray cans are not permitted on domestic flights in PNG - bring pump-action sprays or roll-ons.

## ITINERARY

### DAY 1: FRI 12 SEP 2014

#### PORT MORESBY / GOROKA (half day tour of Goroka)

On arrival at Port Moresby airport from Singapore or Australia you will be met by staff from Ecotourism Melanesia who will assist you to check in for your connecting flight to Goroka.

08:50 Air Niugini flight PX960 departs Port Moresby for Goroka (aircraft: Dash 8-400 turboprop with 70 seats)

10:00 You will be met on arrival in Goroka by your tour escort who has gone ahead to finalise tour arrangements. Look for somebody holding a sign with your name. The guide will drive you 5 minutes to your hotel, assist you to check in and then

bring you to the lunch venue.

12:00 Lunch at the Bird of Paradise Hotel with other Ecotourism Melanesia clients joining the Goroka Show program (pizza and pasta or light buffet - not included).

13:00 We commence a half day group tour of Goroka travelling by bus or four wheel drive vehicle. First stop is a drive up to the Mt Kiss lookout from where you will be able to see most of Goroka town and the adjacent Asaro Valley, to get your bearings. Next stop is a 30-minute visit to the JK McCarthy Museum of Highlands Culture which has informative displays of highlands artifacts, traditional dress and customs, then on to the Goroka handicrafts market (30 min) where a variety of cultural artifacts and made-for-sale arts and crafts are displayed for sale including the colourful woven string bags called billums. Another stop will be made at the Goroka fresh produce market where you will see a wide range of sub-tropical fruit and vegetables for sale by villagers squatting on the ground or at tables. Bring a few coins with you to buy some ripe bananas or some of the exotic fruits like Pomelo (giant grape fruit) or Lualau (bell fruit / malay apple). If time allows your guide may also be able to take you to the Niugini Fruit Company at West Goroka where local wildfruit hand-picked by villagers is used to produce PNG's only local jam, hand cooked in vats over an open fire.

Overnight Goroka (2.5 star budget motel - includes light breakfast only)

#### **TOUR NOTE**

*Goroka's two best hotels (Pacific Gardens Hotel and Bird of Paradise Hotel) are usually fully booked out for the Show weekend 9 months in advance. We do not block-book these hotels on speculation because loss of deposit will apply if the tour group does not fill. Therefore we book the group at a budget motel and offer the deluxe hotels as an upgrade if they still have a room available for you at the time you are ready to book and pay your deposit.*

*The budget motel offers clean and comfortable accommodation. You will be bussed to one of the deluxe hotels to take your dinners there if you wish.*

#### **DAY 2: SAT 13 SEP 2014**

##### **GOROKA (Goroka Show + Akameku village)**

08:00 We will transfer by mini bus from our accommodation to the show grounds in time to settle into our seats before the commencement of the sing-sing performances around 09:00.

The tourist enclosure has good views of the performance area and your tourist pass (provided as part of your tour package) gives you blanket permission to enter the performance area if you wish to take close-up photographs. Special toilets for tourists are situated nearby.

A number of our guides will accompany our group today to interpret the performances for you. Fruit and bottled water is supplied for you at the Show.

13:00 Depart from the Show grounds and head straight for Akameku village about 45 minutes drive out of town. Akameku is a typical semi-rural highlands village with round huts made of bush materials, smoky cooking fires and pigs wandering around free.

At Akameku a traditional-style *mumu* 'lunch is ready for you. Meat and vegetables has been wrapped in banana leaves or stuffed into the nodes of giant bamboo stalks and cooked in a pit under hot coals or hot stones. The food has taken about 2 hours to slow-cook this way and when it comes out of the "oven" it has a delightful smoky barbeque flavour.

At Akameku you'll see local people engaged in a variety of daily activities such as market gardening, harvesting, food preparation, billum weaving, hunting wild pigs

with bows and arrows, and tending their coffee crops. Organic coffee grown on smallholder blocks is the major cash crop in the highlands.

Also at Akameku you have the option to take a 1 hour round-trip hike through high montane forest (different from the moss forest at Dauilo) to the nearby river and waterfall. This forest is populated by birds and tree mammals such as cuscus which can sometimes be seen peeping out of their hiding places, understandably wary of bows and arrows. Mid to late afternoon like this is the time of day when the raucous Raggiana bird of paradise is most active: the bird is relatively easy to spot in the trees as it flutters from tree to tree emitting a loud distinctive cackle. There are known nesting spots along the forest paths near Akameku. Wild animals including birds of paradise are plentiful in PNG and are not protected by law but locals at Akameku have preserved the area of forest nearest the village for visitors to enjoy.

17:30 Drop off at your accommodation.

Overnight Goroka (2.5 star budget motel - includes light breakfast only)

### **DAY 3: SUN 14 SEP 2014**

#### **GOROKA (Goroka Show + Dauilo Pass)**

Second day at the Goroka Show as per yesterday.

13:00 We depart from the Show grounds and drive 1 hour out the Highlands Highway through the Asaro Valley to the Dauilo Pass. A packed lunch is provided to eat on board the bus.

The Dauilo Pass is a high altitude biodiversity hotspot where the highway winds through swirling mists past giant tree ferns and trickling waterfalls. Near the peak of the pass, we will leave our vehicle at the road side and some locals, who live a rather cold existence way up here, will lead us on a 30 to 60 minute walk through the moss forest. The forest is populated by flowering trees and tree ferns which form a substrate for the growth of a wide variety of saprophytic native orchids, green mosses and colourful fungi, lichens, liverworts and leafy epiphytes. Real "Lord of the Rings" stuff.

Local children sell flowers on the side of the road here.

17:30 Return to accommodation.

Overnight Goroka (2.5 star budget motel - includes light breakfast only)

### **DAY 4: MON 15 SEP 2014**

#### **GOROKA / MT HAGEN**

This morning we travel by road to Mt Hagen and check in for two nights at the Highlander Hotel. The road transfer along the Highlands Highway takes about 6 hours but the drive is very scenic and is said to be one of the world's remarkable road journeys.

The first part of the journey is the steady climb overlooking Goroka town and the Asaro Valley up to the Chimbu Province with its precipitous ravines and steep mountainsides amazingly covered in furrowed gardens with people working away in them... one foot uphill and one foot downhill to steady themselves. PNG's highest peak, Mt Wilhelm, passes us slowly on our right as we snake our way through the Chimbu province.

After a coffee and comfort stop at a hotel in the Chimbu capital of Kundiawa - (known locally as "cowboy town" - we'll explain later) we continue in a westerly direction passing through the small towns of Minj and Kudjip before descending

through the Wahgi Valley tea and coffee plantations to Mt Hagen. Mt Hagen is PNG's third largest town after Port Moresby and Lae. On arrival at the Highlander Hotel we check in and have late lunch at the poolside bistro (pay as you go).

Overnight Highlander Hotel, Mt Hagen (room only)

#### DAY 5: TUE 16 SEP 2014

##### **MT HAGEN (village experience and nature tour)**

Today we'll drive about 30 minutes out of town to Moikap where we will tour a typical Western Highlands cluster village.

Further up the road is Paiyagona (Paiya), a dispersed village with a skull house where they keep their ancestors bones. Here we will also see a demonstration of Melpa tribe cultural practices such as courting behaviour, wig-making and tribal initiation. We'll also meet the chief and his three wives ☺

A short distance further on from Paiya is Magic Mountain, a peak which got this name because it is said to look the same no matter from which direction you view it. Around Magic Mountain we'll take a nature walk and local guides will introduce us to some native botany of the highlands. Late afternoon is also a good time to spot the raucous Raggiana bird of paradise.

Includes fruit platter for lunch at Magic Mountain Nature Lodge.

Overnight Highlander Hotel, Mt Hagen (room only)

#### DAY 6: WED 17 SEP 2014

##### **MT HAGEN / SIMBAI (orientation walk)**

08:00 We check out from the hotel and transfer to the Mt Hagen airport.

09:00 Our charter flight departs for Simbai, a 45-minute flight north of Mt Hagen. On arrival at Simbai airstrip we will be met by local guides with plenty of helpful hands to carry our bags for the 30 minute walk to the Kalam Guest House, a basic but comfortable facility built in local style.

Today is the preparation day for the Kalam Culture Festival, an important opportunity for you to observe the village people going about preparatory tasks such as collecting firewood and leaves for wrapping food in the earth oven, harvesting food from their gardens (sweet potato, yam, bananas), preparing the food for cooking, and sorting out their traditional dress which involves cutting fresh flowers, collecting fresh bird feathers for decoration, and repairing broken head-dresses. The traditional head-dresses and helmets worn by the young men at initiation are very elaborate and require a lot of care.

There will also be opportunities today for walking through the hamlets around Simbai, visiting the orchid gardens and vegetable gardens, and inspecting the Kalam tribal culture museum.

*Simbai government station is the district headquarters. It is just a remote outpost, not a town. There is a two-man district office, a primary school, a small trade store, a couple of little churches, and a dozen prefabricated houses for the small number of provincial government staff, local missionaries and school teachers. Thirty to sixty minutes walking time from the "station" are the first Kalam tribal villages, constructed of bush materials. More villages are located deeper in the surrounding hills. The village people live subsistence lifestyles: hunting, gathering and gardening. Apart from a few coffee plots there*

*is very little commercial agriculture here because there is no vehicular access for transporting crops out.*

Overnight Kalam Guest House (twin share - includes all meals).

*Kalam Guest House is built in traditional style with bush materials - each room has two beds with rubber mattresses, pillow and bed covers, protected by an insect net. The rooms have a table and chair and somewhere to hang your towel and clothes. Toilets are outdoor pit latrines and showering involves scooping water over yourself from a drum of rain water in an enclosed outdoor bathroom.*

## DAY 7: THU 18 SEP 2014

### **SIMBAI (Kalam Culture Festival)**

Today we attend various activities of the Kalam Culture Festival. During the course of the day you may float back and forth between the guest house and the festival ground. Simbai is perfectly safe for you to wander around without an escort although locals will be horrified to see you walking around alone (they will think they have failed in their hospitality if no one is with you) so don't be surprised if somebody sidles up and tags along with you to "guide" you if you strike out on your own. They will not expect any payment for showing you around - Simbai is a non-commercial place where culture and hospitality reign and money is of secondary importance.

A light lunch is provided at the festival venue.

*The Kalam Culture Festival is held in the third week of September with the highlight being the initiation of young boys between 12-15 years by nose piercing ("sutim nus" or shootim-nose). The festival traditionally features pig killing, bride price payments, debt settlement, feasting, dancing and singing. This is not a show put on for tourists (there are no tourists - yet), it is a genuine cultural phenomenon when all the surrounding village people flow into Simbai station for the occasion. Visitors simply stand and watch in amazement as initiated Kalam men parade around the station with their huge head-dresses decorated with bright green beetle exoskeletons.*

*Most of the festival activities are informal and do not run to a fixed schedule. You will be free to move around on your own or with a local guide in tow, mixing freely with the local people attending the event. There will be a few other visitors around but not many, probably less than 20 apart from our group.*

*The day's festival program will be a mixture of organised (or disorganised) and impromptu activities. Dance performances and nose-piercing ceremonies may be scheduled for particular times (and may or may not occur at those times!) and bride price and compensation payments may take place without notice. Bear in mind that the festival is a local cultural phenomenon that we have the privilege to observe, and is not staged for our benefit so we cannot expect the program to run with our Western concept of punctuality.*

*And the fact that this festival is a bona fide cultural event is, of course, the reason why we have come to witness it!*

*The first activity of the festival on the Thursday morning will be the pig killing ritual which is part of the initiation of boys to become men. The ceremony involves clubbing a number of pigs to death and these are later butchered and cooked in the earth oven. This is not a sight for the squeamish so we suggest you give it a miss if you think you might find it disturbing or if it might put you off your pork chops. The pigs' heads are cooked separately from the other meat*

*overnight and taken out of the earth over the next day - this is part of the initiation ritual. Nose-piercing of initiates also takes place today - a sharp stick or cassowary quill is used to pierce the septum of the nose to enable a nose piece or nose ornament to be worn.*

In the evening we join the locals for a traditional feast. This will include a range of local vegetables stewed in coconut milk or roasted in banana leaves under hot stones in a shallow pit in the ground (this is called a "mumu"). You may also be offered a meat dish which may be locally raised chicken or game meat hunted from the forest (kangaroo, cassowary or possum). Your hosts will not be offended if you sample only those foods that appeal to you. There will also be plenty of fruit such as bananas, pineapples and oranges.

At night there will be a bonfire with traditional story telling where the elders will remind the younger generation of their heritage.

Overnight Kalam Guest House (twin share - includes all meals).

#### **DAY 8: FRI 19 SEP 2014**

##### **SIMBAI (Kalam Culture Festival)**

Second day at the Kalam Culture Festival.

Be prepared for some of yesterday's activities to be deferred till today, or vice-versa (flexible program), and be prepared for rain to wash out the program for a few hours at a time. This is when we will sit in the guest house and have hot tea and scones and chat to the locals while waiting for the rain to clear and the festival program to continue.

By this time the initially shy locals will have warmed up to our presence and will begin inviting us individually or in twos and threes to accompany them to their houses around the "station" or nearby villages. You are welcome to "disappear" with locals for individualised looking around - grateful if you could let our local tour guide know when and with whom you are going so that we can keep track of everybody.

Overnight Kalam Guest House, Simbai (twin share, includes all meals)

#### **DAY 9: SAT 20 SEP 2014**

##### **SIMBAI / MADANG (half day town and village tour)**

This morning we will fly by charter aircraft from Simbai to Madang.

On arrival in Madang we will check in at our hotel in time for late lunch (pay as you go).

After lunch at the hotel we offer a tour of Madang town including the fresh food and handicraft markets, war memorials and lighthouse and a stop at Hobe, a delightful little village on the edge of the rainforest, with time for a forest walk and a performance of the "butterfly dance" by the village kids.

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

#### **DAY 10: SUN 21 SEP 2014**

##### **MADANG (Rempi Lagoon tour)**

08:00am Check out of the Coastwatchers Hotel and load your luggage onto the tour vehicle. (An earlier start is available if you prefer).

Your guide will drive you north out of town past the airport, and the first stop will be a side trip up Nobnob ridge to the Nobnob lookout which offers panoramic

views of the Madang coastline: Madang town and lagoon to the south east and Karkar Island to the north.

Back on the main road, turn off to the right this time and drive through a coconut plantation filled with parrots to get to Nagada Inlet, the site of Jais Aben Resort where you will be staying tonight. Check in to your room and leave your luggage. Most of tomorrow will be set aside for you to enjoy the little beach and warm waters of the Nagada Inlet.

From Jais Aben our guide will drive you further out the North Coast road to Madang's only satellite township, Alexishafen, Spend some time looking around the old German catholic mission at Alexishafen (see destination notes below) then continue another 30 minutes drive along the north coast road to Rempi Lagoon. The picturesque shallow lagoon is protected by a line of tiny islands running parallel to the beach. Much of the Pearce Brosnan film *Robinson Crusoe* was shot here at Rempi Lagoon and in the adjacent rainforest on shore. On arrival at Rempi village some locals will paddle you around the lagoon and out to the little islands in a native dugout canoe and you can get off on one of the islands and take a walk right around in just a few minutes then paddle back to shore again. On one of the islands you can run along the same beach where Pearce Brosnan and Man Friday chased crabs in the movie. Don't hesitate to ask for your turn with the paddle, it's great fun paddling even if you go around in circles 😊 The local dugout canoes have stabilising outrigger arms which prevent them from tipping over. And wherever you see a flash of brilliant colours in the water you can jump out with a mask and flippers for a spot of reef snorkelling. There is good new coral growth in the lagoon. Back at Rempi village a local style seafood lunch is prepared for you, some fish barbecued under hot stones or coals and some local vegetables cooked with coconut and seafood in traditional clay pots.

By mid afternoon you will say farewell to the lagoon and head inland 10 minutes drive to the Sempi rainforest. Here your guide will lead you on a 90 minute jungle hike with stops at:

- the creek where the Robinson Crusoe jungle camp scenes were filmed
  - the Sempi bat cave (walk in with flashlights and see thousands of bats, stalactites and a small creek running through the cave)
  - limestone cascades (waterfall) where you can jump in to cool off
  - bird watching spots where you can see huge colourful hornbill birds in the wild, and sometimes the raucous Raggiana bird of paradise in the late afternoons.
- Depending on your walking ability the jungle hike can be shortened to 30 minutes (Robinson Crusoe site only) or lengthened to 1 hour including the bat cave, 90 minutes including the waterfall or 2 hours including the bird watching. Late afternoon, drive back to Jais Aben Resort.

Overnight Jais Aben Resort, Madang (deluxe room, room only).

## DAY 11: MON 22 SEP 2014

### MADANG / PORT MORESBY / FLY OUT

Today we depart Madang on a morning flight to Port Moresby that connects with afternoon flights to Cairns, Brisbane, Singapore and Hong Kong (the Madang-Port Moresby flight is included in your tour package).

If you have time in Port Moresby between flights Ecotourism Melanesia vehicles and drivers are available for your last-minute touring, souvenir shopping or errands before we farewell you at the airport. Places you might like to visit:

- the national museum (mainly cultural displays and takes about 1 hour to look

through)

- the PNG Art artifact showroom (okay it's a tin shed) which has the largest range of artifacts, arts and crafts from all over the country. They will fumigate, pack and ship your goods overseas so you can avoid carrying stuff with you on the plane if you wish. Especially important if you are travelling to Australia where non-fumigated artifacts may be confiscated and destroyed by Quarantine officers.

- the rare books section of the University bookshop which has several cabinets of out-of-print goodies scoured from the internet including Papua New Guinea biology, anthropology, ethnomusicology, geology, sociology and modern history. Expect to pay K200-K300 per out-of-print volume.

- the Bomana War Cemetery which is mainly of interest to Australians. Almost 3400 graves of mainly Australian servicemen killed in action in World War 2, including 600 on the infamous Kokoda Track.

**TOUR ENDS**

See [GENERAL TRIP NOTES](#) next page

## GENERAL TRIP NOTES

### 1. Conditions of purchase.

The general terms and conditions applicable to this tour are those specified on your invoice and on the Booking page of our website.

### 2. Change of itinerary.

Destinations are subject to change in response to local conditions. Where travel to a specified destination is contraindicated by local conditions, travel to an alternative destination of similar value with similar activities will be provided where possible, but claims for partial refunds based on quality of substitute activities will not be accepted.

### 3. Hotel accommodation

Hotel rooms in the towns transited on this tour are generally of three star standard. Hotel and resort rooms all have private bathrooms, TV and air-conditioning (except in the highlands), unless otherwise specified. Hotel accommodation in Papua New Guinea towns is very limited. While we endeavour to book you into the hotels stated in the tour itinerary, in cases where specified hotels are fully booked by the time we receive your tour deposit we may have to book you into alternative accommodation. In this situation we strive to book you into the next-best available accommodation and we apologise in advance for any disappointment. No compensation or partial refunds or discounts can be paid or allowed on the basis of the perceived quality of hotel rooms provided for you while on this tour because the wholesale rates offered to us by the higher quality tourist hotels are similar to the non-commissionable rates we have to pay lesser quality motels when the tourist hotels are full.

### 4. Single supplement.

All accommodation included in the tour package quoted is twin-share. On payment of a 20% single supplement levy and subject to availability, we will arrange single occupancy for you at the hotels and village guest houses on this tour. Single accommodation will not be available for those nights designated as multi-share or camping, where even twin-share privacy is not available. The single supplement charge is a flat rate and covers the cost of the extra rooms and our service fee for the additional arrangements. If you are travelling alone and you do not pay the single supplement, or if single supplement is not available, we will room you with another member of the tour group of the same gender. Smoking won't be allowed in any of the hotel or guest house rooms on this tour.

### 5. Group size.

The maximum group size for our small group tours is 8 people plus 1 tour escort (Ecotourism Melanesia staff) due to charter aircraft capacity limits. Where the number of bookings for any tour exceeds this maximum, two parallel tour groups may be operated. Where the number of confirmed bookings for any escorted tour is less than 6 at the booking deadline of two months before the tour, the tour may at our discretion be cancelled and deposits refunded OR alternative customised (ie unescorted) arrangements to an equivalent value may be offered.

### 6. Extras.

Bar drinks, between-meal snacks, any meals not included in the package, and other extras at hotels can be paid for in cash or with credit card direct to the hotel or restaurant.

### 7. Safety and security.

Some activities on this tour may require water travel in local boats and native canoes that may not be carrying a full set of safety equipment. We do provide life jackets but if you require a special fitting you should bring your own. Individuals who cannot swim are advised against taking tours involving open water travel in small craft. Light hiking activities on this tour require an average level of fitness. Papua New Guinea is sometimes portrayed as a dangerous destination, but although street crime is a concern in some urban areas and tribal fights are prevalent in some parts of the Highlands, the vast majority of the country, especially the rural areas, is safe and welcoming. It is very uncommon for a tourist to be a victim of crime in PNG because tourists do not usually visit areas where crime or tribal violence are prevalent.

Nevertheless, Ecotourism Melanesia takes the safety and security of our visitors seriously and all tours we offer involve destinations that we rate as safe.

#### **8. Climate and clothing.**

Coastal and lowland areas of Papua New Guinea, including the Sepik River, Wewak, Madang, Tufi and Port Moresby are perpetually warm-to-hot with high humidity. Nights are cooler but still humid. In the Highlands areas like Goroka, Mt Hagen and Simbai the days are generally warm and sunny with moderately cold nights and mornings. We suggest visitors pack clothes made predominantly of cotton which will allow an evaporative cooling effect in hot humid areas. A battery operated personal fan is useful when travelling in rural areas without electricity. Pack a sweater or warm jacket for wearing in the Highlands in the evenings. Recommended sleeping attire is light track pants and sweat shirt or similar. Papua New Guinea is a conservative country and brief or revealing clothing worn by foreigners is frowned upon.

#### **9. Packing suggestions.**

We suggest that your packing list include: a small flashlight with spare batteries, rain poncho, a small bath towel, your favourite soap in a leakproof container, two rolls of your favourite toilet paper, a one-litre water bottle, a small first aid kit. We recommend valuable personal items (camera, travel documents etc) be packed in ziplock plastic bags to protect them from the wet (rain, bow spray). Suitable footwear for this tour includes boat shoes/tennis shoes/sneakers, and a pair of sandals/thongs/flipflops. Bring plenty of spare batteries for your digital camera because batteries seem to go flat more rapidly in the humid climate and are not obtainable in all stores here.

#### **10. Baggage - scheduled flights**

The free baggage allowance on scheduled domestic flights is 16kg and the carry-on limit is 5kg. Naturally you can check more baggage if you are prepared to pay the excess baggage rate which is approximately PGK8 per kilogram Port Moresby to Mt Hagen and PGK10 per kilogram Port Moresby to Wewak. Due to narrow-body turbo-prop aircraft operating some scheduled flights, large carry-on items may be taken off you and stored in the hold even if the weight is under the carry-on limit. Liquids are permitted in both checked baggage and carry-on for domestic flights but pressurised aerosol spray cans are not permitted on any domestic flights in PNG either in checked luggage OR carry-on. Bring pump-action sprays or roll-ons. When flying out on your international flight, pack all gels, lotions and other liquids in your checked baggage as carry-on luggage will be hand searched and liquids including water bottles will be removed. If you have liquids that you need during the flight, declare them, to airline staff at check-in.

#### **11. Baggage - charter flights**

On charter flights there is a strict 21kg total baggage limit per person - it is not possible to check and pay for excess baggage. The total uplift weight of the 9-seater PAC750 charter aircraft that we use for our escorted small group tours is 1000kg and we allow an average of 100kg for each of the 9 passengers (8 tourists + our tour guide) including each person's personal baggage. Some passengers and their bags will weight a bit over, some a bit under so assuming a total of 900kg for the passengers and their bags that leaves us with only a tight 100kg for the camping gear and food. Sorry but you will have to leave your kitchen sink behind.

#### **12. Accommodation in rural areas.**

Village guest houses offer very basic accommodation in village-style huts accommodating two to four people per room. Bedding consists of rubber mattresses which will have clean sheets (or sleeping bag) and pillows, set up under mosquito nets. Sometimes beds are made on a woven mat on the floor, sometimes on a raised bed frame. Lighting is provided by kerosene pressure lamps and flashlights. There is usually an outdoor bathroom and toilet - the toilet will usually be a sit-down pedestal over a pit latrine and the outdoor shower will consist of a screened-off area of grass or pebbles with an overhead pipe or drum of water that you can use to scoop water over yourself. In some villages a nearby stream is used for bathing. When bathing in public places it is appropriate to bathe in your clothes and change into dry gear once back inside your room. Male visitors may bathe in shorts. Ladies should bring a sarong or quick-dry shorts and top to wear for bathing.

#### **13. Meals.**

At village guest houses and rural lodges local-style food is served consisting of a variety of fresh fruit and

fresh vegetables cooked in coconut milk, plain boiled or baked in banana leaves under hot stones (known locally as *mumu*). For breakfast they provide tea with fresh scones or pancakes, and fruit. At village guest houses and small hotels where there is limited menu choice, or where set-menu meals are provided, these are included in the tour package. At larger hotels where a varied menu is available, lunches and dinners are sometimes not included in your tour, in order to give you some freedom of choice. Such hotel meals may be paid for in cash or by major credit card. Your tour itinerary clearly states which meals are included in your tour package price, and which meals which are pay-as-you-go (PAYG).

If you are on a gluten free diet or require other special food just let us know in advance and we will do our best to accommodate you.

#### 14. **Water.**

Town water supplies in Papua New Guinea are treated and officially rated as safe to drink. In the villages, drinking water is usually collected in rainwater tanks or carried in containers from clean water sources. However to prevent discomfort from drinking from a different water supply every day as you progress through your tour, we recommend you drink bottled or boiled water, or use water purification tablets. In order to reduce littering the villages with plastic bottles we usually ask village guest houses to supply drinking water that has been boiled and cooled, that we can use to refill our water bottles. In the villages you can also ask for fresh coconut juice which is always sterile and safe to drink.

#### 15. **Visas.**

Tourist visas are available on arrival at Port Moresby airport for citizens of designated countries including Australia, New Zealand, the USA, Canada and western European countries. The cost is PGK100 which must be paid in local currency. There is a bureau-de-change and automatic teller machine in the Customs area where you can change money to pay for your visa. Getting your tourist visa issued will be quick and easy if you have a copy of your 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. Passport-holders of central and eastern European countries, Middle Eastern countries, African and Caribbean countries must normally apply for a visa at least 6 weeks in advance, from a PNG embassy or high commission (London, Brussels, Washington DC, Canberra, Singapore, Manila) or through the Australian diplomatic mission in other countries.

#### 16. **Money.**

The best way to obtain PNG currency is by withdrawing a credit card cash advance on arrival. Automatic teller machines operated by major banks in PNG will accept Mastercard and Visa Card but there is an ATM withdrawal limit of PGK2000 (about USD\$900) per day. Larger amounts can be withdrawn over the counter in bank branches located in major towns. The currency exchange booths at Australian and Asian airports usually 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 before arrival in PNG because the exchange rate for purchasing PNG kina is better here.

#### 17. **Costs.**

To give you an indication of the costs of hotel meals, at hotels in Port Moresby fish and chips costs USD\$10, a medium pizza is USD\$15, T-Bone Steak is USD\$20 and a local beer is USD\$4.

#### 18. **Health.** The major health risk in PNG is malaria. Preventive medication must be taken while visiting PNG (see information below). Minor health risks for which tourists are advised to update their vaccinations include typhoid, cholera and hepatitis B. Your personal first aid kit should include fabric sticking plasters (eg Elastoplast, not plastic strips), paracetamol, treatment for insect bites (eg Stingose or Calamine lotion/cream), antibiotic cream or powder (not antiseptic - Dettol etc is useless for preventing infection in the tropics, you have to hit skin wounds with antibiotics straight away - ask your doctor to prescribe it for you, eg gentamycin ointment), and prickly heat powder.

There are hospitals and doctors available in all major towns in PNG which can provide routine medical care, but when visitors require urgent medical attention we would normally contact their travel insurer to arrange a medical evacuation to Australia - this can be accomplished in a matter of hours as there are several medivac companies operating in PNG that are on 24 hour standby with fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters. However availability of medical care in some rural areas visited as part of your tour is limited and medical evacuations may be difficult to arrange in some locations. You must be aware of this risk especially if you

have a pre-existing health condition that may flare up and require medical attention. While we are on-tour our office in Port Moresby is on 24-hour alert to provide assistance but we cannot guarantee to be able to obtain 24-hour attention from other service providers.

#### 19. **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. If you are taking effective anti-malaria medication your chances of actually contracting malaria are quite low (but not zero). There are a number of recommended anti-malaria medications that can be taken weekly (eg Larium) or daily (eg Doxycycline). Doxycycline is actually an antibiotic and it was only in recent years that people discovered, quite by accident, that doxycycline is also an 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 that might otherwise spoil your vacation. If your doctor suggests you take chloroquine as anti-malaria medication please query this because nowadays much malaria in PNG is resistant to chloroquine and it is not recommended as an anti-malaria medication for visitors.

Even if you are infected with malaria you are unlikely to fall ill during your visit here as the incubation period for the malaria parasite is 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 you must seek immediate medical treatment and inform the doctor that you have been in PNG. Early malaria symptoms include body aches and pains, diarrhoea, headache, high temperatures and general "sick" feeling. Symptoms are almost identical to flu. As the illness advances without treatment you will experience fever and chills (feeling cold while your body is actually hot). The only way to correctly diagnose malaria is with a blood test. If laboratory facilities are not available, health workers in PNG generally treat patients presumptively. In your country, your doctor or hospital will probably insist on waiting for a blood test result before treating you and you might suffer for up to 24 hours before beginning treatment. Pharmacies in small towns in your home country may not stock medications for malaria and other such "exotic" illnesses. Therefore we recommend you either treat yourself with a presumptive course of malaria when you leave PNG, or take a box of the pills home with you and take them presumptively if you fall ill.

The medication recommended by the World Health Organisation for presumptive treatment of malaria in Papua New Guinea is a combination of artemether and Fansidar tablets. This treatment is available over-the-counter from pharmacies (five days artemether with Fansidar on the third day). Artemether has no known side effects or interactions with other medications so there is no harm done in taking the presumptive treatment if your symptoms are not caused by malaria. If you are female and you may be pregnant, some anti-malarials will not be suitable for you.