

Reef & Rainforest



Papua New Guinea's Mask Festival with Sepik River Canoe Safari

Group Tour led by Local guides

06 – 16 July 2020



Papua New Guinea's Mask Festival and Sepik River Canoe Safari

ITINERARY IN BRIEF

This 11 day / 10 night itinerary focuses on two unique locations and is perfect for those with limited time who want a taste of the cultural variety in PNG. The group will commence with a visit to Rabaul to witness the annual Mask Festival, an extravaganza of local colour, dancing and ritual performance, where tribes from outlying islands come together to meet and compete in various canoe and dance festivals culminating in the iconic Baining Fire Dance. We combine this with a visit to some seldom-visited villages along the Sepik River by motorised canoe, with a two night stay in a river settlement for a truly authentic taste of village life and culture. A concise itinerary taking you well off-the-beaten-track and seeing some of PNG's most interesting tribes.

- 06 Jul Depart SINGAPORE on Air Niugini flight to PORT MORESBY.
- 07 Jul Arrive PORT MORESBY. Met and assist with connection to RABAUL. Met and tfr to hotel. Rest of the day at leisure. O/n KOKOPO BEACH BUNGALOWS, (RO).
- 08 Jul Early morning departure by foot for the Kinavai ceremony. Return to the hotel for breakfast and then depart for a Volcano town tour, including a visit to the foot of Mt Tavurvur and Volcanological Observatory. Later visit the Mask festival venue. O/n KOKOPO BEACH BUNGALOWS, (B).
- 09 Jul Full day spent at the Mask Festival. Evening departure by bus to Kainagunan Village for the Baining Fire dance performance. O/n KOKOPO BEACH BUNGALOWS, (B).
- 10 Jul Early morning boat trip for Dolphin watching. After breakfast visit a village near kokopo and enjoy the local fresh cuisine cooked by heated stone for lunch. Afternoon at leisure. O/n KOKOPO BEACH BUNGALOWS, (BL).
- 11 Jul Catch AIR NIUGINI flight to PORT MORESBY. Connect with AIR NIUGINI flight to WEWAK. Tfr to the hotel. O/n IN WEWAK BOUTIQUE HOTEL, (B).
- 12 Jul Morning tfr by road to PAGWI (c.4 hours) then tfr to motorised dugout canoe and commence Sepik river Canoe Safari. O/n WAGU GUEST HOUSE, (BLD).
- 13 Jul Early morning visit to the rainforest to see the Lesser Bird of Paradise. Later visit Wasukuk area including Meno and Tonginmjam. O/n WAGU GUEST HOUSE, (BLD).
- 14 Jul Return to Pagwi by canoe and tfr by road to Maprik for mini cultural show. Later transfer to Wewak. O/n IN WEWAK BOUTIQUE HOTEL, (BL).
- 15 Jul Tfr to the airport. Catch AIR NIUGINI flight to PORT MORESBY. Met and visit the Adventure Park. O/n STANLEY HOTEL AND SUITES, (B).
- 16 Jul Early morning visit to Varirata National Park to see Ragianna Bird of Paradise. Return to the hotel for Breakfast. Later transfer to the airport and catch Air Niugini flight to Singapore



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GROUP ITINERARY

PAPUA NEW GUINEA'S MASK FESTIVAL WITH SEPIK RIVER CANOE SAFARI

- 06 Jul Depart SINGAPORE on AIR NIUGINI flight to PORT MORESBY.
- 07 Jul Arrive PORT MORESBY. Met on arrival at the airport and assisted with connection to AIR NIUGINI flight to RABAUL. Met on arrival at the airport and transfer to the hotel. Rest of the day at leisure. O/n [KOKOPO BEACH BUNGALOWS, \(B\)](#). Kokopo Beach Bungalow Resort is situated at Blanche Bay in the town of Kokopo in the province of East New Britain overlooking the beautiful Duke of York Islands with views to the Rabaul volcanoes. Kokopo town has grown rapidly since 1994 when the eruptions of Tavurvur and Vulcan destroyed a large

Accommodation is in comfortable air-conditioned bungalows. The bungalows have private bathrooms and balcony (some with sea views) and mini bar and TV. Other facilities include a lagoon swimming pool, a treetop bar, conference centre, gift shop with locally made crafts.



The hotel has a bar and a restaurant built in traditional PNG hauswin style and overlooks the view of the ocean and surrounding islands. A range of optional excursions can be arranged at the lodge including: cultural and historical tours of the New Britain peninsula. Excursions can be arranged to the active Mt Tavurvur, which continues to release, steam clouds and hiking, mountain climbing, snorkelling and caving. An abundance of bird life can be seen on the island, notably the Melanesian megapode. It lays and incubates its eggs in volcanic ash mounds, which are often dug up as a traditional source of food for the locals. The young are unusual in that they are born fully able to fend for themselves.



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08 Jul

Over the next two days you will experience one of Papua New Guinea's great cultural festivals, the RABAUL MASK FESTIVAL.

In the early morning visit a nearby beach on foot and witness the arrival of Tubuan Spirit by boat. This is Kinavai

Ceremony, the start of Mask Festival. This is a

sacred initiation ceremony by Tubuan Society of Tolai tribe, and you will see the Tubuan mask Dancers approaching by boat to the shore. Tubuan Society is a secret society kept by generations to generations by Tolai tribesmen. They worship "Tabu" the Shell Money as treasure, and the social power of the man is measured by how much Tabu you own. It is believed that Tubuan is the female spiritual figure of the ancestor of the Tolai tribe who are originated in neighbouring New Ireland, and Dukduk is Tubuan's son. Tubuan has staring eyes with crescent shaped mouth, while Dukduk is faceless and taller than Tubuan. You will not be able to know the detail of the society unless you join the secret society, but you can touch a bit of their culture during the festival.



Return to the hotel for breakfast and then depart the lodge for a tour of the volcano, including a visit to the foot of Mt Tavurvur, tasting of Wild fowl egg heated by the volcanic hot spring and volcanological observatory.



Spend the rest of the day visiting the mask festival show ground in Kokopo town where you will see different Mask cultures from East New Britain, West New Britain, New Ireland, Bougainville, and depending on the year, some Mask tribes all the way from Sepik & Highlands perform. O/n KOKOPO BEACH BUNGALOWS, (B).

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09 Jul

After breakfast, pick up from the hotel and visit the Mask Festival Venue. During the festival, you can use the courtesy stall with shade, cold towels etc. You can go back and forth using the courtesy shuttle, as desired. In the evening, depart the hotel to visit



Kainagunan Village for the famous Baining Fire Dance. The Baining people live in the mountains out of Rabaul and are famous for their customary fire-dancing. The original resident of Rabaul was chased away by the intruder from neighbouring island – the Tolai Tribe – and they live deep in the mountains at the base

of a huge natural limestone cliff. Before a fire-dance the young men must begin secret preparations up to one month before we arrive. As the sunlight disappears, a large bonfire is lit and the fire-dancers begin. The band pumps out a hypnotic chant while the dancers run



through the fire in a trance, kicking hot logs and showering red coals into the night. As you return to the hotel, the ceremony will continue until the very early hours of the morning or until every burning ember is extinguished because for the Baining people, the act of fire-dancing is a sacred custom that must be followed according to tradition, not just a tourist attraction. O/n KOKOPO BEACH BUNGALOWS, (B).

10 Jul

Early morning (c 6am) pick up from the lodge for a boat trip to see dolphins. Pods of dolphins are spotted along the coast, approximately 15 minute boat ride from kokopo. The boat has a net offering the opportunity to join the dolphins in the water. Return to the hotel for breakfast. Later, pick up from the hotel and visit a village near Kokopo where you will enjoy the local fresh cuisine cooked by heated stone for lunch. Afternoon at leisure. O/n KOKOPO BEACH BUNGALOWS, (B).

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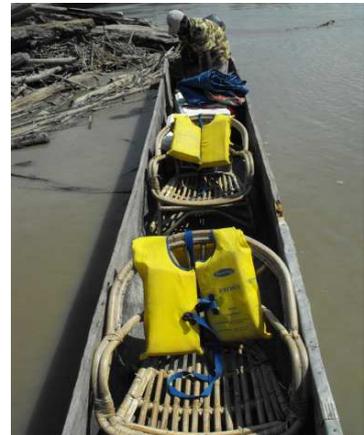
11 Jul

Early morning pick up from the hotel and transfer to the airport. Catch AIR NIUGINI flight PX275 at 0650 to PORT MORESBY, arriving 0810. Met on arrival at the airport and assisted with connect to AIR NIUGINI flight PX140 at 0900 to WEWAK, arriving 1020. Met on arrival at the airport and transfer to the hotel. Rest of the day at leisure. O/n IN WEWAK BOUTIQUE HOTEL. Situated on Wewak Hill overlooking the beautiful Bismarck Sea. Accommodation in room with private bathroom, air conditioning and satellite TV. Facilities at the hotel include resort style pool, Cocoa Cafe & Vanilla Room Restaurants for meals.



12 Jul

After Breakfast, depart Wewak by private vehicle to Pagwi. The drive will take you over the Prince Alexander Ranges through to Passam, Kubalia, Yangoru, Hayfield /Maprik, Wosera to reach Pagwi. Most of the road is sealed, there is a one hour of the drive, which is on a dirt road. From Pagwi station you will start Motorised Canoe Safari Trip and travel to Wagu. village to overnight in the village guest house. Wagu Lake is the gateway to the Hunstein Range Wildlife Management area and WWF tries to preserve the vast Rainforest and its inhabitants.



O/n WAGU GUEST HOUSE, (BLD). Accommodation is in a basic village hut but has common toilet, cold water shower adjacent to the main accommodation building. For a humid night, battery operated personal fan may be useful to get cool air.



13 Jul

Early morning visit to the nearby forest to see the Lesser Bird of Paradise. Next you will head to the Wasukuk villages and visit the Haus Tamaran in Meno, where you will also enjoy a traditional sing sing. Finally you will visit Tongijamb village, which has the best Haus Tambaran in the area. Return to Wagu. O/n WAGU GUEST HOUSE, (BLD).



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14 Jul Early morning departure from the lodge to Pagwi. Change to road transfer and visit Maprik. The village has distinctive Maprik style Haus Tambarn and you will enjoy a mini culture show there. Continue by road to Wewak and transfer to the hotel. O/n IN WEWAK BOUTIQUE HOTEL, (BL).

15 Jul Early morning pick up from the hotel and transfer to the airport. Catch AIR NIUGINI flight to PORT MORESBY. Met on arrival at the airport and depart for a trip to the adventure park, which has the largest orchid garden in PNG and a large aviary with several species of Birds of Paradise. Later, transfer to the hotel. O/n STANLEY HOTEL, (B) The hotel offers comfortable accommodation in rooms with private bathroom. Facilities at the hotel include a swimming pool, gym, spa, restaurant and bar. NOTE: It is advisable to keep to the hotel compound, and not to venture into town at any time without an escort.).



16 Jul Early morning pick up from the hotel and transfer by road to VARIRATA NATIONAL PARK for birdwatching. Depart the city and head for the Sogeri Plateaux, located approximately 600 metres above sea level. Keep your fingers crossed for a sighting of the raggiana bird of paradise which can be seen here. Return to PORT MORESBY and transfer to the airport. Catch AIR NIUGINI flight to SINGAPORE.

Number of Participants: Minimum 4, Maximum 10 pax

Price: £4,695 per person

Single Supplement: £845 per person

NB: Single Supplement is Single room EXCEPT during the SEPIK VILLAGE stay, which will be on a twin share basis. Single rooms may be possible subject to availability. Please Enquire.

To include: Return International flights from Singapore with Air Niugini, domestic flights, accommodation, transfers, meals as described, all tours and excursions as stated, site fees, mask festival tickets, transportation with experienced driver, services of various local guides, government taxes, service charges.

Excludes: International flights to Singapore, meals not described and personal costs such as drinks, laundry, telephone, Visa fees (if applicable)



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IMPORTANT NOTES TO ACCOMPANY THE ABOVE ITINERARY

NB: Visas are required for travel. If you wish to arrange your visa before arrival, please contact the PNG High Commission. It is currently possible to obtain a visa on arrival, free of charge.

NB: All itineraries are subject to change without notice to take into account possible airline flight schedule changes which can take place before departure date or during the tour, and other operational factors.

NB: Due to high demand of accommodation in Rabaul during the mask festival it may be necessary to change the hotel booking to an alternative of similar / higher standard.

NB: The quoted price for the above itinerary is based on current airline fares (both international and domestic), fuel surcharges and flight taxes. These (and other tour costs) may be subject to unanticipated increases beyond our control at short notice, either before or after you have booked the tour, in which case the price would need to be revised accordingly.

NB: This tour involves some travel in remote areas. This adds to the adventure and increases the opportunity to enjoy a true wildlife experience. However, due to terrain, weather, road conditions, and other factors beyond our control, some elements of the tour may have to be altered. Times of some activities may need to be changed or even cancelled due to the conditions. If an activity is cancelled it will usually be replaced with an alternative activity that is more appropriate for the conditions. Advance notice will be given for any changes where possible, although at times changes may need to be made whilst the tour is in progress.

NB: Prices are based on a specific airlines and specific economy seating classes. Flights are booked on an ad hoc basis and so early booking is recommended to take advantage of the cheapest fare availability. Prices may rise if a more expensive seat class needs to be booked. Please call for information on price variations for using alternative airlines or for seat upgrades.

NB: It is a condition of booking that full travel insurance including Emergency Medical Repatriation is taken out by each person travelling. Your insurance cover must also include Missed Departure and/or Missed Flight Connection for both outbound and return flight sectors (such cover might be subject to a small additional premium – please confirm with your insurers). We ask that you send us a photo/fax/electronic copy of your policy document together with the 24hr medical assistance telephone number issued by your insurer.

NB: Clients must be aware that hotels, lodges and resorts as well as suppliers of tours and excursions used in this itinerary might not comply with European standards of health and safety. For instance, balconies may not be entirely child-safe or may be low in height, so always ensure children are kept away from balconies and do not go near them when intoxicated or unwell; swimming pools may not display depths, so never dive into a pool without checking depth first; vehicles may not always have safety belts fitted - contact our representatives if so, and refuse to travel; public areas might not be well lit, so take extra care and use a torch. Clients must be vigilant and take extra care for their own safety, as they may well be travelling to remote and primitive locations where high quality standards of safety may not be present.

NB: Before and after booking, clients must familiarise themselves with current UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) travel advisories so as to satisfy themselves as to the suitability of the destination(s) to be visited in this itinerary. All decisions relating to the tour will be based on UK FCO advisories, and not those of any other countries' governments. In the event of any emergency or other problem encountered in the destination, it is advisable if appropriate to contact the local UK Embassy, High Commission or Consulate for assistance. The FCO in London also has dedicated telephone call centres: Crisis Management Dept - 0207 008 5335 (during UK office hours), and Global Response Centre - 0207 008 1500 (out of UK office hours).

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