

# PAPUA NEW GUINEA

## DETAILED ITINERARY

## RABAU MASK FESTIVAL

May 12/25



Photo: © Donald Whiteley

Papua New Guinea is like no other place on Earth - culturally rich and geographically remote, with some of the most stunning scenery anywhere.

From the rugged mountains to the coastal islands, this journey is an adventure of a lifetime. We meet and learn about some of the tribal people of this land including the Asaro Mudmen, the Wahgi, the Simbu, the Kaguel and the Melpa. Our adventure includes many village visits so that we can really meet the people and experience their way of life.

Spend 3 nights in the remote town of Tari, where we'll immerse ourselves in the rich culture of the Huli Wigmen. Witness firsthand the intricate process of crafting the iconic wigs, as local artisans share their traditions and history. For nature enthusiasts, Tari offers an incredible array of birdlife, providing excellent opportunities for birdwatching in this pristine environment.

Our June departure features the annual Rabaul Mask Festival as many of the tribes from all over PNG display

### FACTS & HIGHLIGHTS

- 21 land days • Maximum 16 travelers • Start and finish in Port Moresby • All meals included • Includes 5 internal flights • Visit some of the most remote and fascinating tribal cultures on Earth! • Encounter the Asaro Mudmen, the Wahgi, Simbu, Kaguel and Melpa tribes of the Highlands
- See the mystical Baining Fire Dance at night • Explore Rabaul including 2-day Mask Festival • Visit the remote town of Tari and the Huli Wigmen • Search for the spectacular Birds of Paradise • Snorkel with dolphins; this is unlike any other dolphin experience

### DEPARTURE DATES & PRICE

**Jun 25 - Jul 15, 2025 - \$12995 USD**

Price includes \$2800 USD of domestic air cost.

### Activity Level: 2 - 3

**Comfort Level:** 2 days over 8,000 feet. Local roads can be rough and wet. Travelers must be flexible and prepared for day-to-day changes. Some areas are very primitive.

**ACCOMMODATIONS** Comfortable accommodations with private bathrooms

# ELDERTREKS



SMALL GROUP  
**EXOTIC ADVENTURES**  
FOR TRAVELERS 50 PLUS

their own tribal dances, along with masks, giving mystical and an almost hypnotic experience. In the province of East New Britain, we also visit a local village, learning about their culture, including the preparation of lunch. We enjoy lunch with the villagers before returning to our lodge in the afternoon. We have an opportunity to snorkel with dolphins in a unique way that is unlike anything you have experienced before. We will also visit the original inhabitants of the region to experience the mystical Baining Fire Dance.

Papua New Guinea is one of the most culturally interesting places on Earth, with many of its tribal people following a traditional lifestyle. This adventure has been designed to experience the villages and people of Papua New Guinea. As much of the interior of the country has no roads or impassable ones, we maximize our time by flying from location to location and flight schedules frequently change. While we endeavor to do/see everything listed in the itinerary, it is common for changes to occur to the itinerary for things that are beyond our control. Travelers must be prepared for changes to this program, either before your journey starts or during the trip itself.

---

## **DAY 1 ARRIVE IN PORT MORESBY**

We will meet on arrival at Port Moresby airport and transfer to our hotel. We gather this evening for our orientation meeting and dinner.

Overnight in Port Moresby.

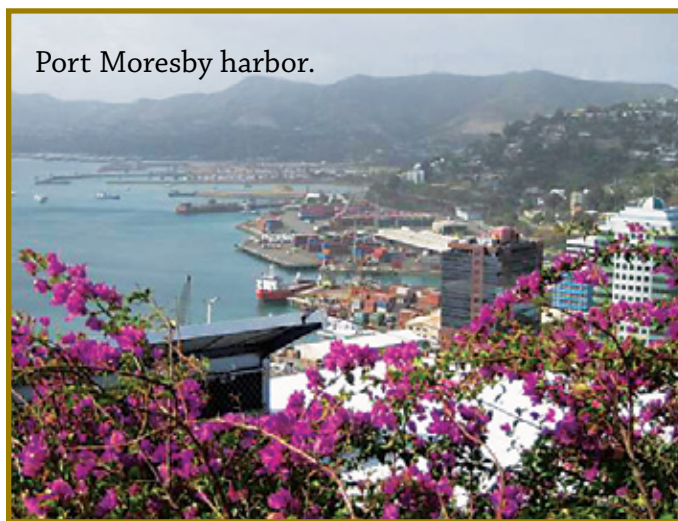
---

## **DAY 2 PORT MORESBY NATURE TOUR**

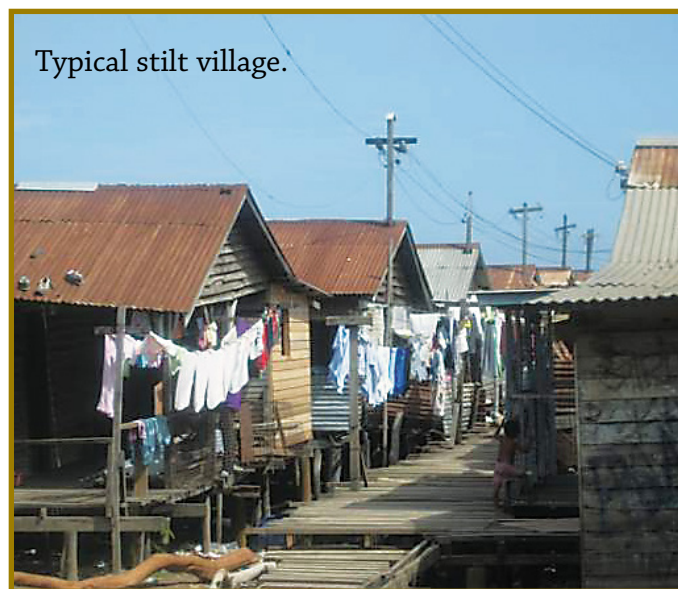
Embark on a scenic drive up the Sogeri Plateau to Variarata National Park, where you'll have the chance to spot native plants and, with a bit of luck, witness the breathtaking courtship displays of the Birds of Paradise in the wild. Enjoy panoramic views of Port Moresby and the Coral Sea before heading to Adventure Park for a leisurely lunch. Explore the



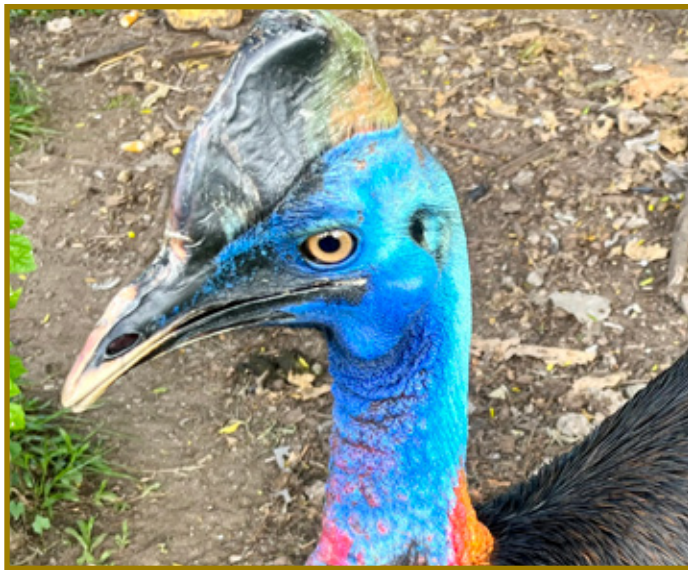
Port Moresby harbor.



Typical stilt village.









park's stunning orchid garden and diverse wildlife, including more Birds of Paradise. We may also visit the poignant Bomana WWII War Cemetery, adding a touch of history to your journey.

Overnight in Port Moresby.

---

### **DAY 3 FLIGHT TO TARI**

Catch an early morning flight from Port Moresby to Tari, a remote town with a population of around 15,000, nestled at an altitude of 5500 ft/1,670 meters. Upon arrival, you'll check in at your lodge, where you'll have some free time to relax and explore the stunning surroundings.

Overnight in Tari.

---

### **DAY 4 CULTURE OF TARI REGION**

Discover the rich culture of the Huli Wigmen on this immersive tour. Visit traditional wigmaker villages, where local artisans will demonstrate the intricate process of crafting the iconic Huli wigs. Learn about the cultural significance of the wigs and gain insight into the fascinating history and traditions of the Huli people, renowned for their vibrant and distinctive appearance.

Overnight in Tari.

---

### **DAY 5 TARI REGION SIGHTSEEING**

Enjoy a scenic tour of the Tari region, visiting a nearby waterfall, a lush orchard garden, and various cultural centers. For nature enthusiasts, there's an opportunity for birdwatching, with early mornings and late afternoons offering the best chances to spot local species in their natural habitat.

Overnight in Tari.

---

### **DAY 6 SCENIC DRIVE TO MT HAGEN**

Embark on a long yet breathtaking drive from Tari to Mt Hagen. Enjoy the stunning landscapes along the way as you make your way to this serene and picturesque lodge nestled in the heart of Papua New Guinea's highlands.

Overnight at Mt Hagen.

---

### **DAY 7 MT HAGEN; SPECTACULAR WARE DANCE**

After an early breakfast we depart for a tour in the Tambul District, one of the highest areas in the Highlands. We visit Alkena village, which is the origin of the most spectacular and colorful dance in the province called the Ware Dance. We spend the rest of the day at the village witnessing other performances such as the Welcome Dance and other traditional activities.

Overnight in Mt Hagen.

---

### **DAY 8 VISIT TO BANZ FOR SINGSING**

Today we experience the vibrant cultural celebration of a traditional singsing in Banz. We'll witness the rich music, dance, and colorful attire as local tribes come together to showcase their unique customs and heritage in this lively, unforgettable event.

Overnight in Mt. Hagen.

---

### **DAY 9 TO GOROKA - MINDIMA VILLAGE - COURTSHIP CEREMONY**

This morning we depart Mt Hagen and head to Goroka. Upon arrival, we visit the village of Mindima where we witness the colorful Courtship ceremony. At each village, we have the opportunity to purchase tribal jewellery, head dresses and other traditional carvings or artifacts made by the villagers.

Overnight in Goroka.









Asaro mudmen



## DAY 10 GOROKA - ASARO MUDMEN

This morning we visit Asaro village to meet the famous Asaro Mudmen who traditionally covered themselves in mud before raiding nearby villages. The legend of the Mudmen says that the tribe was attacked and forced to flee their village. To hide, they jumped into the Asaro River. When they emerged at twilight from the river, covered in mud, the attacking tribe saw them and thought they were spirits and fled the area. While in the village we may be able to watch an eerie performance of the Mudmen, which is a production of mime. We also may see a local artist making an actual mudmask.

After lunch, we visit the JK McCarthy Museum and the Raun Raun Theater

Overnight in Goroka.

## DAY 11 GOROKA TO MADANG

Madang province has many of the country's highest peaks and a broad ethnic diversity. Madang has been labeled "the prettiest town in the South Pacific" due to its palm-rimmed beaches, offshore islands, and lovely parks, all set

against a rugged mountain backdrop. We have a full day of driving today, with several interesting stops along the way including an arts and crafts center and Yonki Hydro Dam. We will enjoy lunch en route at a sugar plantation. Overnight in Madang.

## DAY 12 MADANG ISLAND EXCURSION

We start our day with a short boat ride to a nearby island, where we can enjoy snorkeling and swimming in crystal-clear waters. After lunch, embark on another boat ride to the island of Panudau, where we'll experience vibrant traditional dances. Time permitting, we may also explore the town of Madang, soaking in its local charm and beauty.

Overnight in Madang.

## DAY 13 MADANG TO PORT MORESBY

Today we fly back to Port Moresby and check into our hotel, where we can relax and store any purchases and souvenirs in their 'checked luggage' storage.

Please Note: Papua New Guinea is perhaps the greatest



tribal experience on Earth. However, it is also a place where expecting the 'unexpected' is a practical attitude to have while traveling to PNG. It is not a destination you want arranged by just any travel company. ElderTreks has almost 30 years of experience traveling to West Papua and PNG. ElderTreks has included a buffer day in between each segment of our itinerary on purpose as flights can often be delayed or cancelled. It also gives our group time to reorganize and store any luggage not necessary for the next segment of our adventure. With this extra day, the impact of anything unexpected can be minimized. PNG is unlike any other destination on Earth, both in its challenges and its rewards!

Overnight in Port Moresby.

#### **DAY 14 FLY TO RABAU**

Today we fly to Rabaul on East New Britain province in the northeast of PNG. Upon arrival we check into our

charming and comfortable resort with beautiful views of the ocean and nearby volcanos.

Overnight in Rabaul (actually in lesser known Kokopo, after the 1994 Rabaul volcano eruption).

#### **DAY 15 RABAU; KOKOPO & GAZELLE PENINSULA**

Explore the stunning Gazelle Peninsula with a scenic drive to Rabaul, located about 30 km from Kokopo. Once the capital, Rabaul was nearly destroyed during the 1994 volcanic eruption, but remnants of its fascinating history remain. Visit active volcanoes, hot springs, and WWII-era sites from the Japanese occupation. Enjoy lunch at the iconic Rabaul Hotel before returning to Kokopo for a relaxing end to our day.

Overnight in Rabaul.



Baby in bilum bag



## **DAY 16 RABAU; SNORKEL WITH DOLPHINS; VILLAGE VISIT & TRIBAL COOKING LESSON**

Today we have an early start as we set out by boat to a place where dolphins congregate every morning. Snorkel gear and wetsuits are provided before we set out by boat. We will slowly be towed by our boat to see the dolphins up close providing a dolphin experience unlike anything you have experienced before.

We return to our resort for breakfast before setting out for our village visit to learn about their culture and way of life. We can help in the preparation of lunch before enjoying lunch with the village. In the afternoon, we return to our resort.

Overnight in Rabaul.

## **DAY 17 RABAU MASK FESTIVAL**

The Festival begins at dawn with the haunting arrival of the Kinavai. The Kinavai represents the arrival of the feared 'tubuans' amidst the chanting and beating of kundo drums by elders and initiated young men on the canoes, marking the beginning of the Festival. This is the only time 'tubuans' can appear. The tubuan is a masked

figure with a conical headdress and spherical leafy dress, which is believed to embody the soul of the deceased.

Dance groups perform throughout the day and you will witness an amazing assortment of colors, songs and instruments throughout the entire day. Each clan has a unique beat and each culture has distinct dances on show.

Overnight in Rabaul.

## **DAY 18 RABAU MASK FESTIVAL**

Traditional masks will be on full display during the festival and during the dance performances, brought over from New Ireland province and other parts of Papua New Guinea. Many of these masks are regarded as sacred. The schedule of performances happens throughout the day in a spectacle of music, song, dance, tradition and beliefs, all shrouded behind the mystic beauty of their masks!

Overnight in Rabaul.









## **DAY 19 RETURN FLIGHT TO PORT MORESBY - BOAT TO LOLOATA ISLAND**

We say goodbye to Rabaul and East New Britain for our flight back to Port Moresby. Upon arrival, we will transfer to the dock for Loloata island where we catch our ferry to this neighboring island.

Loloata is a small island not far from Port Moresby and a perfect place to enjoy, relax and reflect on the amazing experiences and memories from your PNG adventure.

Dinner and overnight on Loloata Island.

## **DAY 20 LOLOATA ISLAND**

Today we have a relaxing day to do nothing but enjoy looking out at the ocean, go swimming, snorkelling or even take a hike on the island with great views. Keep

an eye out for the impressive looking Victoria crowned pigeon and the adorable wallabies, the smaller cousin of the kangaroo.

Tonight we have our Farewell Dinner.

Overnight on Loloata Island.

## **DAY 21 DEPART PORT MORESBY**

We say a fond farewell to this fascinating and beautiful country as we transfer by boat and bus to the airport for your departure flight.



Tambuli dancers.







## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

### 1. HOW BIG ARE THE GROUPS?

Each group is limited to 16 participants. Small groups are an important ingredient in adventure travel. They allow for more interaction and more personalized service throughout the itinerary.

### 2. WHAT IS INCLUDED IN THE TOUR PRICE?

All accommodations throughout; all meals, starting with dinner on day 1 and finishing with breakfast on departure day (i.e. the last day of the ElderTreks tour); bottled drinking water throughout the trip; all internal transportation; airport transfers on day 1 and departure day (i.e. the last day of the ElderTreks tour); all day trips and entrance fees as outlined in the itinerary; tips for hotels (porterage), national guide, bus driver, restaurants and spot guides; services of a trip leader.

### 3. WHAT IS NOT INCLUDED IN THE TOUR PRICE?

International flights, tips to ElderTreks tour leader, alcoholic drinks, visas and travel insurance.

### 4. ARE THESE “EDUCATIONAL” TOURS?

Yes, in the broadest sense of the word, “educational”. We visit museums, national parks and reserves and have talks and discussions on many aspects of history, culture and nature. But this is only a portion of the educational experience. We believe that it is equally educational to meet local people on a non-commercial basis, visit their homes and even try to learn a few words in the native language. Sometimes the most “educational” moments can be wandering through a local market of a small town.

### 5. HOW DO WE TRAVEL DURING THE TOUR?

All local transportation is included in the land price of the trip. We travel by domestic flights, micro-bus, 4 wheel drives, wooden canoe, motorized longboats and by foot.

### 6. WHAT ARE OUR ACCOMMODATIONS LIKE?

Accommodation in Port Moresby, Mt. Hagen, Goroka, and Madang are in hotels that range from 2 star to 4 star and each room has private toilet and bathroom facilities.

### 7. WHAT ABOUT THE WEATHER?

Papua New Guinea is south of the equator, so when it's summer in the Northern Hemisphere, it's winter there. From April to November, the days are generally in the 80°F-90°F (26°C-32°C) with nights in the 70°F (21°C). It's always warm and humid, with a chance of rain. The farther inland and higher in elevation you go, the cooler it will be, especially at night.

### 8. WHEN IS PAYMENT DUE?

A non-refundable deposit of \$500 USD (plus insurance if you require it) is due at time of booking and will reserve your place on the tour. Payment of the full land cost is due 120 days before departure. Cancellation charges are applicable and are outlined in the “Terms and Conditions” section of our brochure.

### 9. IS MEDICAL INSURANCE REQUIRED?

Insurance coverage is not included in the cost of your trip. Please note that medical insurance is not required for this adventure but is recommended. ElderTreks offers comprehensive travel insurance and we are happy to provide you with a quote if you call our office. If you are purchasing insurance elsewhere, please ensure you provide the details to ElderTreks as soon as possible.

*\*Please note those travelers with pre-existing medical conditions must take out travel insurance at the time of deposit*

### 10. WHAT SHOULD I TAKE ON THE TOUR?

There is a detailed “What to Take” list in our Trip Kit, which we will send to you after you have booked the trip.

### 11. WHAT MEALS ARE INCLUDED?

All meals during the itinerary are included, starting with dinner on day 1 and finishing with breakfast on departure day. We eat a variety of local foods prepared in a wide range of settings.

### 12. CAN YOU ARRANGE MY FLIGHTS?

We would be happy to take care of your air arrangements. ElderTreks offers personalized flight itineraries — not group flights. Stop over en route, come in a few days early, or extend your stay. Call us for a customized itinerary.

### 13. WHAT IF I WOULD LIKE MORE INFORMATION?

If you have any further questions about the adventure, please call our office for more details. A Trip Specialist will be happy to answer your questions. A Trip Kit containing further details on the destination will be sent to you once you have booked the trip.



















