

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

DETAILED ITINERARY

A TRIBAL ODYSSEY

Dec 27/23



Singing Festival is an exhibition of diverse tribal cultures.

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, the Melpa and the fascinating Trobriand Islanders. Our adventure includes many village visits so that we can really meet the people and experience their way of life.

We explore the Sepik River by wooden canoe and spend 3 nights on Kiriwina Island (part of the Trobriand Islands), where people live a traditional lifestyle. Throughout our journey, we encounter amazing birdlife, lush flora, stunning scenery and some of the most fascinating tribal people on Earth.

Our August (Mt. Hagen festival) and September (Goroka festival) departures both feature a two-day spectacular "singsing" - a traditional song and dance festival, complete with traditional tribal clothing and body decoration, where the tribes come from all over Papua New Guinea.

FACTS & HIGHLIGHTS

- 21 land days • Maximum 16 travelers • Start and finish in Port Moresby • All meals included • Includes 5 internal flights • Encounter the Asaro Mudmen, the Wahgi, Simbu, Kaguel, Melpa and Trobriand Islanders tribes • Mt. Hagen 'singsing' festival (Aug dep) • Goroka 'singsing' festival (Sep dep) • Visit the remote Trobriand Islands • 3-day Sepik River adventure by wooden canoe

DEPARTURE DATES & PRICE

****Jun 26 - Jul 16, 2025 - \$12995 USD**

***Aug 13 - Sep 02, 2025 - \$12995 USD**

Price includes \$1400 USD of domestic air cost.

*Mt. Hagen Singing Festival

**Mask Festival - see page 3 for itinerary

Activity Level: 2 or 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 On the Sepik river, we have 2 nts. in basic dormitory accommodations (tribal longhouses) with limited bathing and toilet facilities. Trobriand Island accommodation is basic with private facilities.

ELDERTREKS



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

Please Note: 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. In order to do this, we visit a number of local villages and we have 2 overnights in one village. There are overnight stays where the accommodation is very basic; it can be dormitory style and have no fans/air conditioning and very limited facilities. 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. Traveler must be prepared for changes to this program, either before your journey starts or during the trip itself.



DAY 1 ARRIVAL 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.

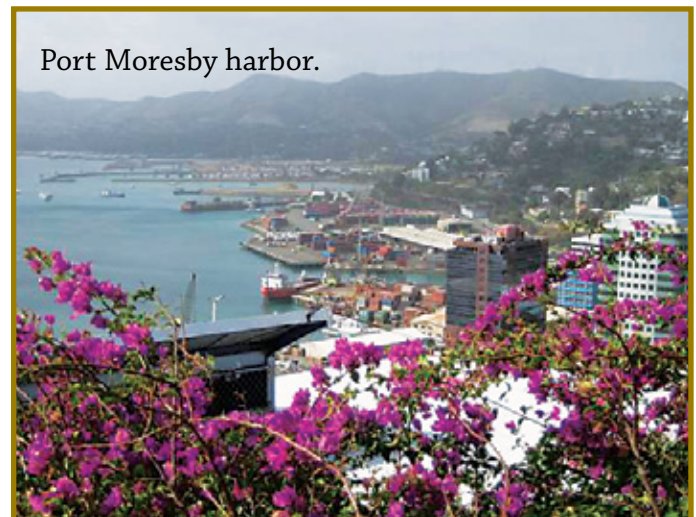
DAY 2 PORT MORESBY TO MT. HAGEN

This morning we depart for the airport for our domestic flight to Mt. Hagen. Upon arrival, we will check into our hotel and enjoy a tour of Mt. Hagen. We will have the opportunity to visit Paiakona village for some pre-show entertainment before the Mt. Hagen Cultural Show officially begins.

Overnight in Mt. Hagen.

DAYS 3-4 MT. HAGEN CULTURAL SHOW

A yearly event in Papua New Guinea, the Mt. Hagen Cultural Show is one of the best shows in Papua New Guinea to witness some of the amazing traditional dances and tribal attire from over 40 different tribal groups. An early morning wake-up call gets us to the show grounds



Port Moresby harbor.



Typical stilt village.

JUNE DEPARTURES

Follow this order due to Mask Festival.

DEPARTURE DATES & PRICES

Jun 26 - Jul 16, 2025 - \$12995

- Day 1: Port Moresby arrival
- Day 2: Port Moresby, to Madang
- Day 3: Picnic Island, local village
- Day 4: To the Eastern Highlands
- Days 5-6: Goroka Singing Festival
- Day 7: Goroka Sites
- Day 8: To Mt. Hagen
- Day 9: Mt. Hagen Sites
- Day 10: To Kumul Lodge
- Day 11: Fly to Wewak
- Day 12: Sepik River Excursion
- Day 13: Sepik River
- Day 14: To Wewak
- Day 15: To Port Moresby
- Day 16: Port Moresby, City Tour
- Day 17: Fly to the Trobriand Islands
- Day 18: Kiriwina Island, Trobriand Islands
- Day 19: Kaibola Village
- Day 20: Fly to Port Moresby
- Day 21: Depart Port Moresby

to see the preparations before the formal show begins. We see the performers preparing their traditional clothing and body decorations and practicing for their dances. We spend the next two days at the Mt. Hagen Arena taking in the “singsing” performances. Overnight in Mt. Hagen.

DAY 5 IN SEARCH OF BIRDS OF PARADISE, TAMBUL VILLAGE

Today we travel along the shadow of Mt. Hagen, to an area well known for its bird watching. In addition to the birds of paradise (75% of the birds of paradise species can be seen here), you may also spot the crested berrypecker, white winged robin, tit berrypecker, brown sicklebill and bibbon tailed astrapia. We will take a walk through the forest, bird spotting and looking for the beautiful mountain orchids that can be found here. We take a scenic drive to Wapenamanda in Enga province, the highest and most rugged province in Papua New Guinea.

We also visit the small village of Tambul, and if time allows, the local market. Should the local school be open we will spend some time visiting with the local school children. Overnight in Mt. Hagen.

DAY 6 MT. HAGEN TO GOROKA

This morning we depart for a full day tour to Goroka, via the huge Waghi Valley. Enroute we stop at Avi for a brief visit to their orchid gardens. Further along, at the village of Mindima, we witness the Courtship and Bride Price ceremony. After lunch we continue to Goroka, stopping for a view of the breathtaking scenery at Daulo Pass.

Overnight in Goroka.

DAY 7 GOROKA SITES

Goroka is the capital of Eastern Highlands province and we will spend the day exploring some of the interesting sites, including the JK McCarthy Museum and the Raun Raun Theater. We will walk to the lookout at Mt. Kiss for some amazing views of the surrounding mountains and valleys. We then 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.

Overnight in Goroka.

DAY 8 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 enroute at a sugar plantation.

Overnight in Madang.

DAY 9 MADANG

This morning we visit the Madang local market, Kalibobo light house, and Madang Museum and Arts Gallery. This afternoon we visit the Balek Wildlife Sanctuary, home of an interesting sulphur creek pouring out of a limestone formation. The creek is filled with turtles, eels and fish. The



Life on Sepik River.

creek is said to cure illnesses by the local people. The park also has a variety of tropical trees and plants, hot springs and sulphur caves. Following our visit to the sanctuary, we visit the local Haus Tamburan (Spirit House) for a traditional dance ceremony.

Overnight in Madang.

DAY 10 FLY TO WEWAK

After some free time this morning, we transfer to the airport this afternoon for our flight to Wewak. On arrival in Wewak, we transfer to our hotel for check-in and dinner this evening.

Overnight in Wewak.

DAY 11 TO SEPIK RIVER

This morning we drive to Pagwi on the Sepik River. The drive can take between 5 and 6 hours as we visit markets and viewpoints along the way. Arriving in Pagwi, we board motorized dugout canoes and travel down river to Palimbe village, home of the crocodile cult, and set up for our next two nights in the village.

On the Sepik River we will be spending 2 nights in basic dormitory accommodation (bush or tribal longhouses) with limited bathing and toilet facilities. Each person will have a foam mattress with sheets and a pillow with pillowcase as well as a mosquito net.

Overnight in Kanganamun village.

DAY 12 SEPIK RIVER EXCURSION

Today, we will travel by dugout canoes along the Sepik River and its tributaries. Before heading out, we explore a Palimbe village and see their beautiful hand-carved totem pole.

We will stop at stilted villages to learn about the local way of life, see their Haus Tamburan where rituals and initiations take place and as much as possible, try to meet with the villagers. We visit Aibom village - known for its clay pot makers, and Kanganamun village to meet the people and see how they fish, make sago and build their canoes.

Overnight at Kanganamun village.



Baby in bilum bag

DAY 13 SEPIK RIVER, RETURN TO WEWAK

This morning we visit another village and Haus Tamburan before arriving in Pagwi, a small scattering of houses, where we disembark from our canoes and continue by road to Wewak.

Overnight in Wewak.

DAY 14 DEPART WEWAK, LOLOATA ISLAND

After breakfast we will transfer to the airport for our late morning flight to Port Moresby. Upon arrival we transfer to the Loloata Island Resort for lunch. In the afternoon you have the opportunity to snorkel or just relax at the resort.

Overnight on Loloata Island.

DAY 15 FLY TO KIRIWINA ISLAND, TROBRIAND ISLANDS

After an early breakfast, we fly to the island of Kiriwina, in the Trobriand Islands. The Trobriand Islanders have a fascinating and rich culture and a unique feature of these islands is the importance of yams. The crop is an indicator of how well the producer is at gardening and there is a yearly festival held to show off the best of the yams grown that season.

Overnight in Kiriwina.

DAY 16 KIRIWINA ISLAND, TROBRIAND ISLANDS

The label of a “free love society” has been placed on the islands, but the sexual practices of these people have been misunderstood. The society does encourage free choice and “casual encounters” as the norm for teenagers, however, people are encouraged to settle down to married life. The belief in this society is that all children are in spirit form until they enter a woman through her head and then are born. In addition to spending time with the villagers, we also explore the island including its beautiful beaches, WWII relics and nearby caves. Our time on Kiriwina Island is flexible so that we can explore according to the group’s interests and local events.

Overnight in Kiriwina.

DAY 17 KAIBOLA VILLAGE, TROBRIAND ISLANDS

This morning we leave the lodge and drive to Kaibola village where we will enjoy a swim, walk on the beach or snorkel. We will have time to relax at our hotel in Kiriwina in the afternoon.

Overnight in Kiriwina.





Mesmerizing mask dance.

DAY 18 RETURN TO PORT MORESBY

This morning you can relax before our flight to Port Moresby. On arrival in Port Moresby you have the rest of the afternoon at leisure before dinner this evening.

Overnight in Port Moresby

DAY 19 PORT MORESBY CITY TOUR

Today we embark on a city tour of Port Moresby that includes the National Museum, Botanical Gardens, an outside view of Parliament House and a visit to Hanuabada village, one of the only two remaining stilt villages in the area. The village is populated by the Motuan people, who are the original native people in the Port Moresby area.

Overnight in Port Moresby.

DAY 20 VIRIRATA NATIONAL PARK

This morning we drive Varirata National Park. The park provides the opportunity to view the Raggiana birds of paradise and enjoy the wonderful views of Port Moresby and the surrounding area. We also spend time at Rouna Falls and the Romana WWII cemetery before enjoying our farewell dinner tonight.

Overnight in Port Moresby.

DAY 21 DEPART PORT MORESBY

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



Tambuli dancers.



Chief's storage house.

Ritual masks inside the Spirit House.



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, Madang, Wewak and in the Trobriand Islands are in hotels that range from 2 star to 4 star and each room has private toilet and bathroom facilities. On the Sepik River we will be spending 2 nights in basic dormitory accommodation (tribal longhouses) with limited bathing and toilet facilities. Each person will have a foam mattress with sheets and a pillow with pillowcase as well as a mosquito net. Single supplement rooming requests cannot be accommodated on the Sepik River nor in the Trobriand Islands.

Please note that for our journey on the Sepik River, large suitcases cannot be accommodated; please bring a small overnight bag for these two nights.

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 80-90°F (26-32°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.



Asaro mudmen







