

*it's in our nature to explore*

# PAPUA NEW GUINEA HIGHLAND CULTURES

**There are no foreign lands. It is the traveller only who is foreign.**

*Robert Louis Stevenson*

Each day of this expedition will reveal yet another aspect to the wonderful cultural diversity of Papua New Guinea and the breathtaking scenery unique to this remote land. This is still a land of magic and spirits despite the best efforts of colonial missionaries over the centuries. A land of 800 languages, the cultural diversity will take your breath away. Whether it is the mysterious art of the Sepik, the fearsome Mudmen of Asaro and their mud "helmets" or the feathered headdresses of a Tufi tribesman, this land never fails to astonish. From volcanic tropical fjords and the flooded crater that is Rabaul's Simpson Harbour to pristine white sand beaches, the beauty of PNG is wonderfully varied. And along the way are friendly villagers, world-class diving and snorkelling and a region redolent in wartime history.

## **RABAUL, PAPUA NEW GUINEA**

*- embark and overnight on board*

Latitude: 4°12'S | Longitude: 152°10'E

The tropical port town of Rabaul has always been famous for its spectacular setting at the eastern end of the island of New Britain. Nestled on Simpson Harbour, the township is surrounded by six volcanoes providing a sensational backdrop for your overnight stay aboard *Orion*. After embarkation you'll have time to settle in before joining the expedition team this evening on an encounter with the surreal Baining Fire Dancers. Elaborate costumes and their trance-like dance

will leave you with an unforgettable start to your voyage. In the morning we have a full day to explore the town that was the focus of fierce battles during World War II. The steep surrounding coastal cliffs are riddled with tunnels filled with relics. Explore Admiral Yamamoto's bunker and touch the wreck of a Japanese Betty Bomber for intimate reminders of the Japanese presence. The Volcano Observatory affords panoramic views of the harbour but a helicopter flight is the ideal way to take in the scale of the 1994 eruptions that destroyed two-thirds of Rabaul. You'll fly over empty streets and what was the town's municipal swimming pool – now just an outline of blue ceramic tiles, the pool filled with ash. Our departure from Rabaul will see us sail past the Beehives, volcanic plugs from the crater that formed Simpson Harbour.

## **SEPIK RIVER, PAPUA NEW GUINEA**

*- wet landing*

Latitude: 3°52'S | Longitude: 144°34'E

The meandering Sepik River is the longest river in PNG and for years has been a major trading artery linking the coast and the interior. *Orion* takes position today at the mile-wide river mouth nearby the small village of Watam. The dense vegetation and swampland to be seen along the river's edge is home to many species of birds. Our visit to the village will give you an insight into a way of life that very few outsiders have witnessed. With no roads, phones, electricity or luxuries to be had, the open and happy outlook of the villagers will

touch you. A "dragon" dance welcomes us ashore, punctuated by singing and lots of laughter, as we are all marked with a red ceremonial mark on our cheek.

## **MADANG, PAPUA NEW GUINEA** – *dry landing*

Latitude: 5°12'S | Longitude: 145°50'E

It's well worth getting up early this morning for *Orion's* approach to Madang through the spectacular Dallman Passage. Madang itself is a lovely town set on a peninsula characterised by lush gardens and magnificent vistas of tropical seascapes, islands and inlets. The market has masses of colourful produce, shell jewellery, woven bags (bilums) from the highlands, carvings and bilbil clay pots which are a local specialty. Weathered headstones in the cemetery are reminders of colonial times and we have the chance to visit nearby villages and attend a "sing sing". Scuba divers enjoy easy access to dive sites just off-shore which encompass wartime wrecks, pelagic marine life, reef-filled shallow lagoons and drift-diving off deep drops. But, for an unforgettable experience, take a charter flight to the highland outpost of Goroka for an encounter with the fearsome Mudmen Warriors of Asaro who'll appear through a haze of smoke and perform war dances.

## **TAMI ISLANDS, PAPUA NEW GUINEA**

*- wet landing*

Latitude 6°45'S | Longitude 147°53'E

The beautiful Tami Islands are a quiet, simple, island idyll. Tami comprises four atolls, including one that's barely more than a white sandy beach. There are two main villages on the two large islands that face each other across the cove which is filled with reef and deepens to a volcanic pit at its centre. Drumming and dancing herald a day ashore where you may explore the village for intricate carvings and souvenirs or walk with *Orion's* Expedition Team to inspect native produce gardens. You won't want to leave after swimming and snorkelling above the myriad corals that form the extensive reef.

## **TUFI HARBOUR, PAPUA NEW GUINEA**

*- wet landing*

Latitude: 9°4'S | Longitude: 149°17'E

The magnificent coast around the north of the mainland is a well-kept secret. Over 30 fjords are carved into the shoreline, one of which is *Orion's*

anchorage point today. You'll be surrounded by dense rainforest above sheer basalt walls and sandy white beaches which meet coral reefs – a perfect spot for swimming, snorkelling and scuba diving. Cruise along the coast and climb aboard an outrigger dugout canoe which will glide along a river and through mangrove forests for a village visit. Local guides lead us on a guided walk to the spectacularly scenic Suicide Point and along the way is a chance to see the huge Blythe's hornbill and the world's largest butterfly – the Queen Alexandra's Birdwing with a wingspan of up to 30cm. A fishing trip not only provides excellent opportunities for bill fish, wahoo, Spanish mackerel, giant barracuda, giant trevelly and yellow fin tuna, but also the chance for some superb snorkelling.

### FERGUSSON ISLAND, PAPUA NEW GUINEA

– wet landing

Latitude: 9°31'S | Longitude: 150°41'E

On Fergusson Island, the islanders still follow ancestral traditions and cook meals in pools of boiling water. Our landing will be made at isolated Dei Dei Village and after a short walk through the bush a network of hot springs is revealed. Your local guides will show you abundant steam vents, a bubbling creek and numerous boiling pools in a stunning landscape surrounded by pre-historic tree ferns and pandanus.

### SAMARAI & KWATO ISLANDS, PAPUA NEW GUINEA – wet landing

Latitude: 10°36'S | Longitude: 150°39'E

In the early 1900's tiny Samarai Island was the thriving colonial capital of the territory of Papua and the town's streetscape carries reminders of those bygone, halcyon days. Today Samarai has the appearance of a ghost town with the remnants of the great colonial period slowly decaying away. Back then it was described as one of the most beautiful places in the South Pacific.

Just 3 kilometres west of Samarai is Kwato Island where European traders broke their journey en route to the South Pacific in search of gold and to trade in mother of pearl, sandalwood and sea cucumbers (beche de mer). In 1891 the Reverend Charles Abel founded a church and mission here and he is best remembered for his theory that the game of cricket would have a civilising influence

over the tribes. The sweeping view from the impressive stone church at the top of the hill is well worth the climb.

### MILNE BAY, PAPUA NEW GUINEA – dry landing

Latitude 10°18'S | Longitude 150°27'E

Alotau, the capital of Milne Bay Province, is located at the eastern tip of mainland Papua New Guinea. Many of the population still rely on the sea for their livelihood and the busy harbour and nearby market are focal points for the town. Cargo movements drive harbour activity, and there's an array of colourful vessels to be seen, ranging from tiny canoes to well-equipped dive and charter boats. This morning sees your final warm PNG welcome, with dancers in local costume.

Explore Alotau and meet the townsfolk at the markets where you'll find an eye-opening array of tropical produce, seafood and crafts. On the foreshore is the new gleaming black Australian War Memorial commemorating the Battle of Milne Bay in 1942. This battle saw the tide of the Pacific war turn with Australian forces inflicting upon the Japanese army their first significant defeat on land. Relics are everywhere, from abandoned airfields to landing barges overgrown by jungle.

### CAIRNS, AUSTRALIA – disembark

Latitude 16°55'S | Longitude 154°46'E

Cairns is the end of our expedition and the region is internationally recognised for world-class attractions, superb natural features and friendly north Queensland hospitality. It is the focal point for the magnificent Great Barrier Reef Marine Park and is surrounded by World Heritage listed rainforests. Visitors enjoy browsing at indigenous art galleries, shopping at the night markets and dining out on multicultural cuisine in the many restaurants along the esplanade

### 11 Night PNG Highland Cultures

Day 1	Optional charter flight from Cairns Rabaul (overnight on board)
Day 2	Rabaul, PNG
Day 3	at sea
Day 4	Sepik River, PNG
Day 5	Madang (for Goroka), PNG
Day 6	Tami Islands, PNG
Day 7	Tufi Harbour, PNG
Day 8	Fergusson Island, PNG
Day 9	Samarai & Kwato Islands, PNG
Day 10	Milne Bay, PNG
Day 11	at sea
Day 12	Cairns, Australia

2008: March 15, April 5, September 22\*, October 3  
\*Operates in reverse

### Expedition Fares

Ctgy	Type	11nt Mar/Apr	11nt Sep/Oct
B	Stateroom	\$ 7,920	\$ 8,315
A	Stateroom	\$ 9,190	\$ 9,655
JS	Junior Suite	\$10,930	\$11,470
DS	Deluxe Suite	\$11,970	\$12,565
BS	Balcony Suite	\$14,280	\$14,990
OS	Owners' Suite	\$16,590	\$17,415
One way charter flight		\$ 550	\$ 550



### Expedition Fares – per person in Australian Dollars

Early Booking Rewards are offered on a "First-in, best-dressed" basis - refer to page 5