



Ecotourism Melanesia

Papua New Guinea & the South West Pacific

EM50B CLASSIC “SEE PNG” TOURING PROGRAM - STANDARD PACKAGE (3 STAR)

Soft adventure itinerary for independent travellers and private groups

- 10 nights core tour Port Moresby (1 nt), Wewak/Sepik River (3 nt), Madang (2 nt), Goroka (2 nt), Mt Hagen (2 nt)
- optional extra nights at Sepik River
- optional extra night at Wewak with day trip to Yuo Island, Muschu Island or Kairiru Island
- extra nights available at other stops with extra touring
- abbreviated tour options

This flexible go-anytime private touring itinerary features a number of PNG’s contrasting destinations with varied natural, cultural and historical attractions:

- Port Moresby - vibrant modern city with melting pot of people from all over PNG
- Wewak/Sepik River - riverside stilt villages, animist religion, exotic carvings
- Madang - pretty coastal scenery, seaside villages and rainforest, German colonial history
- Goroka - scenic highlands terrain, biodiverse forests, mountain villages, mud men
- Mt Hagen - colourful sing-sings, coffee plantations and market gardens

This “standard” version of the tour program includes clean and comfortable 3 star accommodation with hot breakfast, mini bus or utility car - eg Toyota Hilux double cab - for road transfers (may not be air-conditioned), daily excursions including a variety of cultural experiences (but no “sing-sings” or traditional dance performances) and some lunches in the villages.

The tour program is privately guided by our expert local guides at each destination who will arrange and manage each day’s activities for you but the guide does not fly with you or stay with you at the hotel.

NB This is not a trekking package but some walking and clambering is required to see everything on the itinerary. The tour is not suitable for travellers with limited mobility unless modified and re-quoted accordingly.



STANDARD (3 STAR) PACKAGE COSTS: all prices per person***

	Group of 1	Group of 2	Group of 4	Group of 6+
CORE PACKAGE 10 NIGHTS LAND ONLY 1 night Port Moresby, 3 nights Wewak, 2 nights Madang, 2 nights Goroka, 2 nights Mt Hagen 3 star accom with breakfast, private excursions & transfers, most lunches	USD 11120	USD 6715	USD 4615	USD 4010
Single supplement 10 nights single room	----	USD 700	USD 700	USD 700
Airfare supplement 10 nts ** POM-WWK-MAG + HGU-POM	USD 750	USD 750	USD 750	USD 750
Extra night Sepik River with full day village touring by motor canoe	USD 890	USD 490	USD 350	USD 300
Extra night Wewak with full day Island tour (or overnight on island)	USD 650	USD 350	USD 190	USD 150
Extra night any town - 3 star accom with breakfast only	USD 165	USD 95	USD 95	USD 95
Extra night any town with breakfast and extra day of private touring	USD 650	USD 375	USD 200	USD 180
ABBREVIATED ITINERARY 3 NIGHTS 1 night Port Moresby, 2 nights Madang	USD 3270	USD 1860	USD 1345	USD 1215
ABBREVIATED ITINERARY 3 NIGHTS 1 night Port Moresby, 2 nights Goroka	USD 2665	USD 1935	USD 1380	USD 1230
ABBREVIATED ITINERARY 3 NIGHTS 1 night Port Moresby, 2 nights Mt Hagen	USD 2940	USD 1560	USD 1095	USD 920
ABBREVIATED ITINERARY 4 NIGHTS 1 night Port Moresby, 3 nights Wewak/Sepik	USD 3545	USD 1885	USD 1220	USD 995
ABBREVIATED ITINERARY 5 NIGHTS 1 night Port Moresby, 2 nights Madang, 2 nights Goroka	USD 6485	USD 3670	USD 2590	USD 2295
ABBREVIATED ITINERARY 5 NIGHTS 1 night Port Moresby, 2 nights Goroka, 2 nights Mt Hagen	USD 5580	USD 3570	USD 2500	USD 2145
ABBREVIATED ITINERARY 6 NIGHTS 1 night Port Moresby, 3 nights Wewak/Sepik, 2 nights Madang	USD 5885	USD 3270	USD 2250	USD 2015
ABBREVIATED ITINERARY 7 NIGHTS 1 night Port Moresby, 2 nights Madang, 2 nights Goroka, 2 nights Mt Hagen	USD 9405	USD 5305	USD 3695	USD 3210
ABBREVIATED ITINERARY 8 NIGHTS 1 night Port Moresby, 3 nights Wewak/ Sepik, 2 nights Madang, 2 nts Goroka	USD 9100	USD 5130	USD 3520	USD 3095

* All lunches are included on transfer and touring days - refer to tour itinerary. If you'd like something different from what is provided, this will be at your own extra expense.

** Flat rate economy fare quote. We are a ground operator not an airline agency, but for your convenience we purchase tickets in your name from the airlines. Alternatively you may arrange your own airfares but we prefer to supply so that we can maintain authority over your tickets and re-book or re-ticket you 24/7 if there are any flight cancellations or if any urgent changes to your itinerary are required during the tour.

*** Prices subject to change prior to purchase.

EM50B CORE TOUR 10 NIGHTS - STANDARD PACKAGE (3 STAR) LIST OF INCLUSIONS

- Port Moresby - airport arrival meet and greet and assist, transfer to hotel
- Port Moresby - half day private city tour
- Port Moresby - 1 night 3 star accommodation with hot breakfast
- Port Moresby - airport transfer, departure check-in assistance
- Wewak - airport meet and greet, hotel transfer and half day private town tour
- Wewak - 2 nights 3 star accommodation with breakfast
- Wewak - return road transfers to Sepik River by standard car or van with boxed lunch.
- Sepik River - motor canoe hire and fuel, 2 half days of village tours with guided walking tours
- Sepik River - 1 night 1 star camp-style accommodation at village guest house or homestay with a mix of local style and camp style food and bottled water, camp shower and latrine
- Wewak - airport transfer, departure check in assistance
- Madang - airport meet and greet, transfer to hotel
- Madang - 2 nights 3 star accommodation with hot breakfast
- Madang - full day private town and lagoon tour by car and motor boat. Lunch not included.
- Madang - full day private seaside village excursion including north coast road scenic drive, traditional flower lei welcome, freedom of the village and beach, village lunch, dugout canoe paddling excursion in the lagoon, Warwin Creek rainforest bat cave hike (meet some villagers in costume for photos but no organised culture demonstrations or sing-sing performances are included)
- Madang - full day road transfer to Goroka with bottled water and lunch (or on certain days of the week a light aircraft flight may be available, with extra half day sightseeing on arrival in Goroka)
- Goroka - 2 nights 3 star accommodation with hot breakfast
- Goroka - full day private town and village tour including markets and cultural museum, Asaro mud men village (entry to village and cultural centre, small mud man display and photo session, meet some mud men, and Kenadi rural village (village entry and walk-around tour, meet some villagers in costume for photos but no culture and lifestyle demonstrations or sing-sing performance included).
- Goroka - full day road transfer to Mt Hagen with stops at Daulo Pass (guided moss forest walk), Snake Village (village entry and walk-around, see villagers handling snakes), Kundiawa town (pay for your own lunch), Mindima skeleton village (village entry and walk-around, meet some skeleton men for impromptu photo session but no but no organised demonstrations or dance performance included), Kendeng farming community (entry and walking tour of cottage industries and market gardening).
- Mt Hagen - 2 nights 3 star accommodation with hot breakfast
- Mt Hagen - full day private town and village tour including city and surrounds, a Melpa tribe village (village entry and walk-around, gardens, meet some villagers in costume for photo session but no sing-sing performance included), afternoon guided forest nature walk. Lunch not included today.
- Mt Hagen - departure airport transfer and airport assistance
- Port Moresby - airport assistance and farewell

- **Throughout this tour program, we include:**
 - (i) services of an experienced local driver/guide with mobile or satellite phone
 - (ii) all transfers by non-air conditioned standard car or mini bus with bottled water, umbrellas
 - (iii) any tips/gratuities due to local villages, guides, drivers, demonstrators and helpers
 - (iv) basic safety equipment eg seat belts for cars, life vests for motor boats
 - (v) daily reconfirmation of flights and arrangements coordinated by our Port Moresby office
 - (vi) 24 hour emergency backup from our Port Moresby office

ITINERARY EM50B CLASSIC “SEE PNG” PRIVATE TOUR PROGRAM - STANDARD PACKAGE

DAY 1:



PORT MORESBY (half day city tour)

On arrival at Port Moresby airport, pass through passport control and customs checks. After exiting the Arrivals Hall you will be met by staff from Ecotourism Melanesia holding our sign. (If you do not see anyone waiting for you, please wait at the Vodaphone sales outlet and our staff will meet up with you there). Our local phone contact number is 7204 6950). Our staff will assist you to transfer to your hotel. If arriving on an early flight your room may not be ready and you may have to pass some time having breakfast in the restaurant, snoozing in an armchair in the lobby or resting in a deck chair at the poolside until your room is ready.

12:00 Lunch in the hotel (included)

13:00 Our Port Moresby guide will pick you up and take you for a private afternoon tour of Port Moresby possibly including a familiarisation drive around the city, a visit to the national museum (if open), the parliament house (if open) and an urban over-water stilt village.

Overnight 3 star accom, Port Moresby - includes breakfast



PORT MORESBY / WEWAK (half day town tour)

06:00 Breakfast and check out (large bags may be stored with our guide at our office or at your hotel if you will be returning there).

07:00 Our driver/guide will transfer you to the domestic terminal in time for bag drop, security screening and boarding.

09:05 Air Niugini flight PX120 departs Port Moresby for Wewak (direct)

10:25 On arrival at Wewak airport, collect bags and meet up with our local guide who will be holding a sign or will approach you. Transfer by hotel shuttle or guide's car to your hotel.

12:00 Lunch at your hotel (included)

13:00 The local guide will take you for an afternoon tour of Wewak town and surrounds possibly including:

- an orientation drive around the town passing through shopping areas, residential areas and urban villages
- a stop at the main market (fresh produce, souvenirs, locally made clothing, handicrafts/artifacts)
- a stop at the Japanese war memorial at Mission Hill ... a major defensive lookout position of Imperial forces in WW2. There are some well preserved gun emplacements and relics of military hardware
- a drive 15 minutes out of town to the Allied cenotaph memorial at Cape Wom, the former allied field headquarters where a Japanese General surrendered his sword to an Australian General to signify an end to the Pacific War on 13 Sep 1945. The Cape Wom area has a lovely long grey sand beach which is suitable for swimming.



Overnight New Wewak Hotel, Wewak - includes breakfast

DAY 3:

WEWAK TO SEPIK RIVER (overnight excursion by road and motor canoe)



06:00 Breakfast and collect your boxed lunch (included) from reception
07:00 Meet up with your guide in the hotel lobby and board your waiting bus or four-wheel-drive car to the Sepik River. Your drop off point will be either Pagwi, Timbunke, Kanduanam or Pagwi depending on weather, road conditions and the prevailing local situation at the time. All the roads from Wewak to the Sepik River are unsealed most of the way and quite bumpy. On arrival at the road head you will clamber into a waiting motor canoe and head either down-river or up-river to the first village which may be Korogo, Kaminabit, Tambanum, or Moim depending which jumping off point you have arrived at. Spend today and tomorrow visiting a number of villages of the Middle Sepik region. Very few tourists visit this area due to the lack of conventional accommodation. At each village your guide will take you on a walking tour of the village to meeting local people at their huts doing their usual late afternoon chores - chopping firewood to smoke fresh fish and cook sago for dinner before it gets dark (there is no electricity here and most people can't afford kerosene for lamps). You'll visit one or more men's spirit house and see artisans at work carving weaving and sculpting.

NB Much of today's canoe travel will be in blazing hot sun (and/or rain !) so wear long sleeves, plenty of sunscreen, a hat, sunglasses and even hold an umbrella to keep the sun off you. Beware also of the sun's reflection off the water which can burn you face and neck.

Overnight village guest house or village home stay - Sepik River

Includes a mix of local style food (fresh fish, vegetables and tropical fruit) and camp style food (eggs, crackers, tinned meat/fish), bottled water, clean camp-style bedding, bucket shower). Very basic accommodation but you'll cope for one night and the in-situ cultural experience is well worth it.



DAY 4:

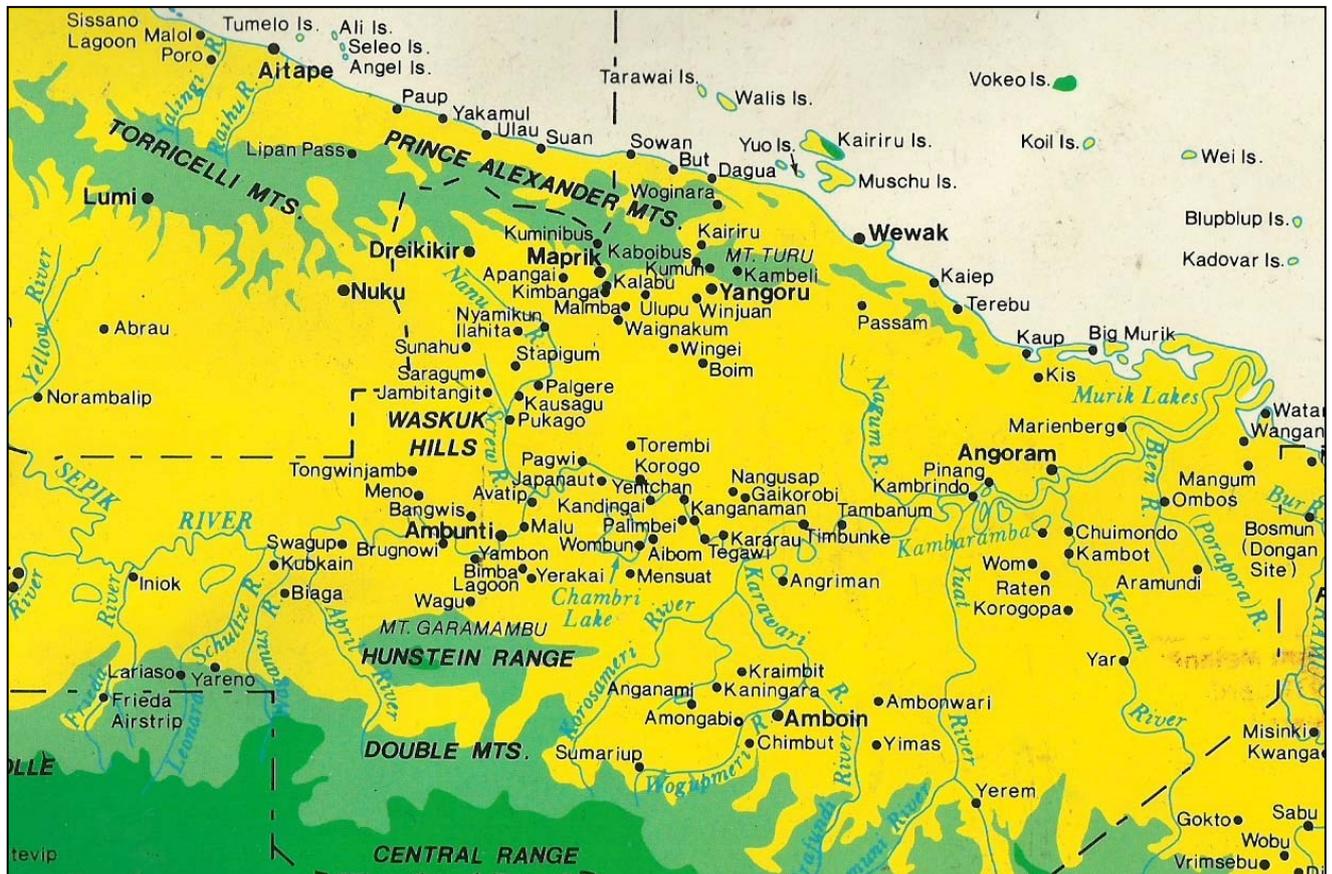
SEPIK RIVER TO WEWAK (by motor canoe and road)



Visit another village this morning then head upstream or downstream to the road head to rendezvous with your vehicle and commence the four hour drive back to Wewak.
 19:00 Arrive back at the hotel in time for dinner. (If you're going to be late we'll call ahead and ask the kitchen to keep dinner for you).

Overnight New Wewak Hotel, Wewak - includes breakfast

NB The Sepik River leg of the itinerary is deliberately vague because we need to maintain flexibility. The Sepik River is a very changeable environment both physically and socially and we can only offer routes and village that are possible at the time of your visit. Sometimes we even have to switch planned routes at the last minute because of changes in the situation on the ground. For example each access road to the river goes through an annual cycle of deterioration followed by maintenance (or lack thereof) and it's rare for all four access roads to be passable at the same time. Heavy rain may suddenly close a road that was open yesterday. The river itself changes course from year to year, especially the minor channels or "shortcuts" across S bends, and this affects navigability and travel times. The social situation in the Sepik River basin is also quite unpredictable: there are often village disputes, political rallies, funerals and other local events that we have to steer around to avoid possible complications during your trip. So it's difficult to guarantee at the time of booking exactly which route you will take and which particular villages you will visit when it comes time for your visit. What we DO promise is that we will provide the best possible arrangements for you in the prevailing circumstances ☺



OPTIONAL EXTRA NIGHT SEPIK RIVER TOURING

DAY 3:



SEPIK RIVER DAY TRIP (core tour Day 3)

16:00 instead of returning by road to Wewak, motor upstream to Timbunke or Kaminabit and overnight here with your guide. Basic accommodation with flush toilet, some electricity overnight for lights and charging devices. **Overnight Sepik River (includes camp food and local style food with bottled water).**

DAY 3A:



OPTIONAL EXTRA FULL DAY AND OVERNIGHT SEPIK RIVER (village tours)

08:00 Tour Kaminabit, the first of the “crocodile cult” villages (Iatmul tribe). At Kaminabit you can visit Bowie’s Art Center, a little hut where an excellent range of handicrafts and genuine artifacts from all over the Sepik Basin is available at good prices.

From Kaminabit one more hour upstream brings you to Kanganaman village which boasts the largest Spirit House on the Sepik where you will also hear flute and drum players perform under the spirit house.

Later, scoot across the river, leave the canoe and walk 30 minutes walk inland from the river to Palimbei village which has two lovely Spirit Houses packed with artifacts - some are made for sale while others are tribal heirlooms not available for sale. (Your lunch today is a packed lunch with local fruit).



15:00 Depart Palembei for the walk back to the canoe and two hours fast run downstream to the road head.

Note: At each of the villages today you will be able to walk around the village, enter the men’s spirit houses, listen to local guides talk about life along the river and especially the crocodile animist religion. Some men will show you the “crocodile skin bumps” on their backs and some young men who have recently been initiated may show you their fresh scars.



17:00 Rendezvous with your vehicle and commence the three hour drive back to Wewak - it often rains in the late afternoon so if the “daily deluge” begins earlier than expected you are welcome to request an earlier return to Wewak.

20:00 Arrive back at your hotel in time for late dinner.

Overnight 3 star accom, Wewak - includes hot breakfast



OPTIONAL EXTRA NIGHT WEWAK WITH DAY TRIP OR OVERNIGHT TO YUO ISLAND, MUSCHU IS OR KAIRIRU IS

DAY 4B:



OPTIONAL EXTRA NIGHT WEWAK WITH DAY TRIP TO YUO ISLAND

07:00 Breakfast

07:30 Meet up with our guide at the lobby and walk down to the town beach to board your motor boat for a 45 min ride to tiny Yuo Island, one of the offshore group of Wewak Islands.

You Island is a tropical paradise surrounded by beach, with two small villages and some colonial mission ruins in the interior. The cooler morning hours are the best time to enjoy this lovely island, so after an initial welcome and coconut drink there will be an organised hike around the island which will take about 2 hours with stops along the way to look at things and meet local people.

After lunch at the little guest house (yes there will be lots of fish!) you'll be set free to enjoy the island on your own for the rest of the day - walk along the beach, paddle a dugout canoe, swim in the warm waters, play games in the sand with the village kids who will welcome your company because not many visitors come here.

Masks are available for snorkelling over the coral reef. Sitting or napping in the shade of an overhanging tree is another way to enjoy the beach.

The guest house on the beach also has chairs to sit on, and your guide can even arrange a nap inside one of the cool rooms of the bush material guest house if you are feeling tired.

16:30 Depart Yuo Island by motor boat for Wewak

17:30 The hotel shuttle will pick you up at the beach for a short drive back to the hotel.

Overnight New Wewak Hotel, Wewak - includes breakfast

NB It's also possible to overnight at the village guest house on the island as long as you are not departing on an early flight the next day



DAY 5:

WEWAK / MADANG (full day town and lagoon tour)



06:00 Breakfast and check out.

06:30 The hotel shuttle will transport you to the airport and the driver will assist you with checking in for your flight to Madang.

08:00 (approx) Flight departs Wewak to Madang

On arrival in Madang, our local Madang guide will meet you and transfer you by private car to your accommodation for check-in then immediately commence today's touring, which will be an exploration of Madang town and lagoon including carver's hut, orchid gardens and seaside boardwalk then further afield to the town shops (a poke through a typical South Pacific Chinese general store is a must!), the fresh food and handicraft market, the flying fox trees in the town square, the Coastwatcher's Lighthouse, Machine Gun beach, the lovely tidal lily ponds and the Madang culture museum (if open).

Further out of town you'll visit the pretty Balek Grotto, a cold water sulfur spring where you can feed turtles and eels. The site was used for some outdoor scenes in the Pierce Brosnan film *Robinson Crusoe*. You can take a short walk through the surrounding tropical gardens and patch of rainforest where you may come across birds and other fauna.

At a convenient point during the tour, the guide will stop at your hotel or another suitable eatery for you to have your lunch (not included).

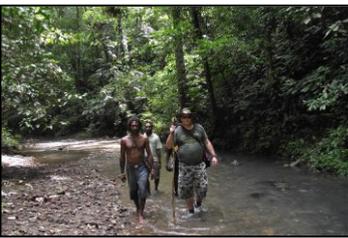
Later in the afternoon your guide will take you on a banana boat (small motorised skiff or fibreglass dinghy) for a sightseeing and snorkelling excursion in the Madang lagoon.

First explore the Madang inner harbour and port with its many sheltered waterways and tiny tidal lagoons and then the giant outer Madang Lagoon which has many small islands, some inhabited by village communities while others are home to birds and crabs only.

Stop at Pik Island to swim, or snorkel over the colourful reef (mask/snorkel supplied).

Overnight 3 star accom, Madang includes breakfast

DAY 6:



MADANG (seaside village and rainforest excursion)

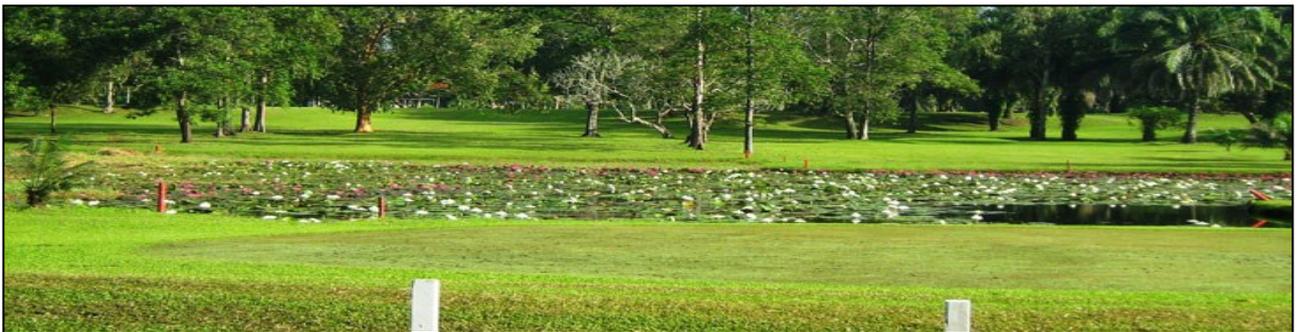
08:00am Commence today's guided touring with a drive out of town past the airport and turn off at the side road up Nobnob ridge to the Nobnob lookout which offers panoramic views of the Madang coastline - Madang town and lagoon to the south east and Karkar Island to the north.

Back on the main road, drive further out the North Coast road and turn off to the historical Alexishafen Catholic mission which during WW2 was occupied in turn by both the Japanese and the Allies, with all original mission buildings destroyed and later rebuilt. There are many war relics to be seen here, and the old mission cemetery.

Continue another 20 minutes drive out the north coast road to Rempi Lagoon, a picturesque coastal lagoon protected by a line of tiny islands running parallel to the beach. More of the *Robinson Crusoe* movie was shot here at Rempi Lagoon and in the adjacent rainforest on shore. On arrival at Rempi village the locals will welcome you then paddle you out to the little islands in a native dugout canoe and you can explore the tiny islands - walk around one in just a few minutes - then paddle back to shore again. 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.

Back at Rempi village a local style seafood lunch is prepared for you (included), some fish is barbequed under hot stones or coals and some local vegetables cooked with coconut and seafood in traditional clay pots. After lunch, say farewell to the lagoon and head inland 10 minutes drive to the Warwin Creek rainforest. Here a 2 hour hike through the pristine rainforest is available if you enjoy reasonable physical fitness. There is a steep descent to the creek at the start and a steep climb out of the gully at end, with most of the hike following the verdant creek itself - the walking track crosses the creek many times so you will be up to your ankles or knees in water a lot of the time and your shoes will get thoroughly soaked (fortunately there are no leeches or other nasties as the creek is quite fast-flowing). The hike includes a foray into a limestone cave with stalactites and a small stream running through it. The cave is inhabited by thousands of tiny bats which feed off gnats and other insects in the cave. You may also spot the occasional small python lying in wait for a hapless bat. Your guide will provide flashlights for exploring the cave. Further downstream from the cave is a lovely swimming hole with a series of pretty cascades where you can jump in for a fun swim before completing the hike by climbing back up to the road. (If you are not a good hiker, a shorter forest walk on flat ground is available, skipping the creek and the bat cave.) Late afternoon, drive back to your accommodation in time to catch the tropical sunset before dinner.

Overnight 3 star accom, Madang includes breakfast



DAY 7:



MADANG / GOROKA (full day scenic road transfer)

07:00 Breakfast and check out then board your private bus for the 8 hour scenic drive to Goroka, with stops.

The first half of the journey follows the flat coastal highway with Astrolabe Bay on the left and many roadside villages with market stalls to your right. The road passes through some delicious patches of tropical jungle but these soon give way to the open ground of the Transgogol, a wide river plain enveloping the Gogol and Nuru Rivers and their mess of tributaries which dump mud everywhere during the wet season. Fortunately however the mud is nutritional volcanic soil from upstream and much of the Transgogol floodplain has been planted with hardy oil palms that cope well with floods. The highway loosely follows the Nuru River south west for fifty kilometres through hilly terrain as far as Usino where the river peters out and the highway takes a wide bend through 90 degrees to follow the Ramu River valley south east towards Lae. The Ramu Valley is an agricultural wonderland with farms galore. Sugar cane fields, cattle grazing country. Shortly after the Ramu Sugar Factory the highway crosses the Ramu River for the first time and enters the Morobe Province for about 10 kilometres until the highway forks with one prong heading straight down to Lae and the right turn taking you up through the precipitous Kassam Pass to the Yonki Dam. As your bus climbs up into the PNG Highlands you may notice the change in atmosphere as you pass through the temperature inversion layer from the steamy coastal tropics to the cool dry air of the highlands. Lunch today will be a boxed lunch provided by your hotel and you are welcome to stop the bus at any point to buy any goodies you see at roadside markets.

The bus will make a lunch stop at the Yonki Dam where you can eat your packed lunch (if you have not already devoured it in the bus!). Apart from the lunch stop your guide will schedule a few other toilet stops during the journey but don't expect anything flash (or flushing). ☺

16:00 On arrival in Goroka settle into your accommodation then your guide will lead you on a leg-stretching walk around the nearby streets to check out any lingering markets and visit a shop for any needful things.

Overnight 3 star accom, Goroka - includes breakfast



DAY 8:



GOROKA (full day town and villages tour)

07:00 Breakfast at your accommodation then meet up with your guide at reception and commence a morning of sightseeing around Goroka town by car including:

- Mt Kiss lookout (see most of Goroka town and the adjacent Asaro Valley)
- JK McCarthy Museum of Highlands Culture (if open)
- fresh produce market (vegetables, pigs, chickens)
- handicrafts market (woven bilum bags are the best buy)
- Goroka coffee factory

Depending on time available and the weather today, lunch (included) will either be a packed take-out meal to eat on the run (eg fried noodles or sandwiches) or a quick stop for a sit-down lunch.

Later drive 30 minutes out of town to the Asaro Valley, home of the famed Asaro mud men. Here you will be treated to a small private mud men display - a little corny but a lot of fun and great photography. The Asaro people have long had a tradition of crafting fierce looking clay helmets worn during tribal fights in the old days to frighten the enemy. The helmets are also worn for traditional dancing and drama performances demonstrating how their ancestors confronted enemy tribes wearing their scary mud helmets, their bodies smeared with grey mud, looking like evil ghosts. After the dance (or "prance") you'll be shown how the clay helmets are made, and you'll have an opportunity to try one on yourself.

From Asaro, drive 30 minutes to another village where the people live in round huts made of bush materials. The village is a typical rural highlands community with smoky cooking fires and pigs wandering around. At the village you will walk by a number of homes to see locals engaged in different daily chores and activities. On the land around the village you'll see people gardening (the highlands climate is perfect) and tending their coffee crops. Organic coffee grown on smallholder blocks is the major local cash crop.

Your visit is "sustainable community-based tourism" at its best. Meet some villagers in costume for photos but no organised culture demonstrations or singing performance included.

Overnight 3 star accom, Goroka - includes breakfast



DAY 9:



GOROKA / MT HAGEN (full day road transfer with stops)

07:30 Breakfast and check out then meet up with your guide at reception and commence a full day road transfer to Mt Hagen with stops at Daulo Pass, “snake village”, Kundiawa town and Mindima “skeleton tribe village”. From the hotel it is a one hour drive up the scenic Highlands Highway to Daulo Pass, a high altitude biodiversity hotspot where the highway curls through swirling mists past giant tree ferns and trickling waterfalls. Near the peak of the pass, you will leave your vehicle at the road side and a village guide will lead you on a 30 minute walk through the moss forest, still enveloped in morning fog and dripping with condensation. 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. From Daulo the highway continues climbing in a westerly direction, across the border into Chimbu (Simbu), an alpine province where the people are jokingly said to have one leg longer than the other to enable them to work in their gardens on the steep hillsides. One of the first Chimbu villages encountered is the “snake village” where locals have a penchant for keeping snakes in cages as pets and, yes, taking them out of their cages to play with them. Some of the snakes are venomous so it seems like a rather risky pastime to us. You’ll have an opportunity to watch the people handling their snakes and talk to them about their unusual pets, or, if serpents are not your thing, you can cower in the tour vehicle ☺

Around noon, stop at the “pub” (hotel) in Kundiawa town for lunch (not included) - there is a basic short-order menu available including toasted sandwiches, fish and chips, roast chicken with salad, curry chicken etc. One hour’s drive further west brings you to Mindima village. The people here are of the Omo Masalai tribe and, like the Asaro mud men, have a tradition of painting their bodies with clay to frighten their enemies. But the Mindima version of clay body painting is all about skeleton art. Both men and women paint macabre skeleton designs on their bodies and even have a number of dances to go with the image.

The Mindima skeleton dancers are very popular at the Mt Hagen and Goroka Shows (festivals) each year and often walk away with the top prizes in the sing-sing competitions. Today you’ll meet some tribespeople in costume for some great photography but a full dance performance is not included in this “standard” version of the EM50 tour package.

Back on the highway you’ll soon cross the border into Jiwaka, a rather nondescript province that is bisected by the Wahgi River valley. Here in Jiwaka you’ll make a final stop at Kindeng community which is the home of our Mt Hagen guide and have a candid opportunities to mingle and chat with local people engaged in everyday activities including tending their gardens and fish ponds (freshwater trout). Families from a number of different areas of the highlands have settled at Kindeng which makes it quite a diverse community.

From Kindeng the highway crosses into Western Highlands province and on to Mt Hagen city less than an hour away. Your guide from Goroka will help you settle in at your accommodation in Mt Hagen and then either hand you over to the care of our Mt Hagen local guide or, sometimes, continue as your guide in Mt Hagen. Allowing time for highway delays like landslides, water over the road and the occasional road block set up by local people with various grievances, no further activities are planned today.

Overnight 3 star accom, Mt Hagen - includes breakfast

DAY 10:



MT HAGEN (full day town and villages excursion)

08:00 Pick up at your accommodation and commence your Mt Hagen day tour with a city sights circuit with stops and views at the shops, city market and a drive around the Kuminga back road to see rural agri-farms, coffee and tea plantations, peri-urban villages, roadside markets and the airport. Stop for an early lunch (not included) at your hotel or other outlet recommended by your guide eg Kofi Cave or The Sweetspot or Mt Hagen Club where the local expat community hangs out.

Back on the road, drive out of town to visit Moika or Ogelbeng, a typical village of the Melpa people who are the native tribe of the Mt Hagen area. Take a walking tour of the village huts and gardens, meet local people doing their everyday thing, Meet some villagers in costume for photos but no organised culture demonstrations or sing-sing performance.

From the village you'll then take a meandering drive out to a protected forest area for a guided nature walk to hopefully see birds and some other wildlife in the natural habitat.

Late in the afternoon is a good time to spot large Raggiana birds of paradise jumping from branch to branch displaying to females but other species of bird-of-paradise are shyer, smaller in body size and much harder to spot. Possums and cuscus may be seen plus the usual plethora of macro-insects and small reptiles like skinks.

18:00 Depart forest area for the return drive to Mt Hagen

Overnight 3 star accom, Mt Hagen - includes breakfast



DAY 11:

MT HAGEN / FLY OUT

Depart Mt Hagen on the first flight of the day.

Our Port Moresby staff will meet you on arrival to assist and farewell you on your international flight connection or further trip extension to Alotau, Rabaul, Tufi or Port Moresby.

ECOTOURISM MELANESIA LTD