Papua New Guinea

THE LAND OF THE UNEXPECTED

Welcome to Papua New Guinea.

It is a fascinating land and up until now a little known country on the tourist map. This means we are still an unspoiled country, the people are natural and friendly and untouched, to a large degree, by the more negative side of tourist commercialization. A destination waiting, for many, to be discovered. One of the last great frontiers of the world. Over the years many thousands of people from all over the world have chosen Papua New Guinea as their holiday destination for many reasons. We have some of the best game fishing in the world. We have some of the most dramatic scenery in the world dotted with thousands of villages, their dwellers living the same type of existence has their ancestors thousands of years ago. We have one of the greatest rivers in the world, the mighty Sepik which snakes from the Bismarck Sea inland for two thousand kilometers and is a voyage of true adventure. We have culture and tradition with annual shows with such a kaleidoscope of colorful body decoration and headdresses, dances and sing sings, it would be impossible to compare anywhere in the world and much much more. And amongst our visitors every year are those curious to know the important part the country played in the Pacific War. This again is a fascinating aspect of a fascinating country. Papua New Guinea is a land of immense diversity. No two provinces are alike in the astounding complexity of this country's people. Known as the Land of a Thousand Cultures, there are well over 800 distinct languages spoken throughout the country. Towering mountain peaks, lush, fertile valleys, golden beaches, sparkling coral islands, Papua New Guinea is a country of wild beauty, of breath taking landscapes, of fascinating flora and fauna. It is a place of drama, solitude and sophistication and recognized internationally as one of the premier dive locations in the world.

PRE-HISTORY

It is probable that the first human settlers reached Papua New Guinea by island-hopping down the Indonesian archipelago from mainland Asia some 100,000 years ago. Although Papua New Guinea was never physically linked to a land mass in the west, human migration would have been relatively easy due to lower sea levels caused by an ice age. The first European sighting of Papua New Guinea on record took place in 1512 when two Portuguese explorers sailed by. The first landing was also Portuguese. Jorge de Meneses named the country, Ilhas dos Papuas, Land of the Fuzzy Hairs. In the following centuries various European explorers sailed past, but inhospitable country and savage warriors kept them from seriously considering a permanent landing. Finally, in 1660, the Dutch decided to claim the territory, which they named New Guinea. It wasn't until the 1870s that the inevitable traders, adventurers and missionaries

arrived. At the end of the century, the country had been divided into three zones, Dutch, German and British. In 1906, British New Guinea became known as Papua and the administration was taken over by Australia. In 1920 the League of Nations handed control over to Australia as the Territory of Papua and New Guinea. Progress towards independence escalated in the 1960's and in 1973 internal self-government came into effect. On September 16, 1975, full independence was declared, and the country became known as Papua New Guinea.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Mountains and Valleys

From its rugged mountains and its low lying swamps to steaming volcanoes and coral atolls, PNG is a country of great geographical diversity. Located wholly within the Tropics, just south of the Equator and 160km to the north of Australia, PNG has a land mass of about 461,700 sq km. Slightly smaller than Thailand or Spain and slightly larger than California, our country encompasses the eastern part of New Guinea Island, the second largest island in the world, plus some 600 other islands, atolls and coral reefs. A central core of mountains, the Owen Stanley Range, runs east to west rising steeply from the coastal plains. From its highest peak, 4,500 meters high Mt Wilhelm, and from dozens of other peaks, great rivers like the Sepik and Fly begin their journey to the sea.

Population

There are nearly 5.2 million people living in the many islands of Papua New Guinea. There are mostly Melanesians with dark, fuzzy hair and friendly smiles. The overall population density is very low, but nearly a third of the population live in the highlands. Government System Papua New Guinea is a stable, democratic and independent nation that is a member of the British Commonwealth. The head of Government is the Governor General appointed by the Queen and the country is governed by a West Minister-Style Parliament. Economy Papua New Guinea has a vibrant and multifaceted economy with two distinct systems operating side by side: The traditional non-monetary barter economy existed long before colonization began. Coexisting with this is a modern economy consisting of mining, petroleum, fishing forestry and agriculture.

Currency

Papua New Guinea's unit of currency is the Kina which is divided into 100 toea. There are K50, K20, K10, K5 and K2 notes and a K1 coin.

Communication:

Modern satellite communication has brought the world much closer to Papua New Guinea at the touch of a few buttons. Only in the most remote areas is a radio telephone service in use. The modern internet service has provided a much more effective communication system.

Electricity

Papua New Guinea's electricity supply is 240 volts AC 50 Hz. Some hotels have 110 volts outlets for shavers and hair dryers.

Dress

Dress informal and casual with sports and open neck shirts worn throughout the year along with traditional items of apparel: Thongs, sneakers and sand shoes are not allowed in some bars and restaurants. In the Highlands, sturdy walking shoes are recommended, as is a sweater or jacket for cool evenings. Shopping Surprises From modern department complexes to quaint little stores there are plenty of places to spend your money. In artifact shops you may try your hand at bargaining but be gentle! Remember that Saturday is a half day for most shops and virtually every place is closed on Sunday.

Customary Regulations

Standard customs concessions for travelers apply to the following goods. . 200 cigarettes or 50 cigars 250 grams of tobacco . One liter of spirit . A reasonable amount of perfume We value your visit but please don't bring drugs, obscene literature or video tapes, firearms or weapons. Food items, seeds, spices, live or dry plants, animals, animal

products and equipment as well as biological specimens such as cultures and blood, need special documentation before they can be imported. Stay Healthy Water quality is within World Health Organization standards in most towns. Bottled water is available. However, in rural areas it's advisable to boil water at all times. Malaria is common in Papua New Guinea. You should start taking anti-malaria tablets two weeks before arrival, continue during your stay in PNG and for four weeks after departure. Prevention is effective and easy: use insect repellent and wear long-sleeved shirts, long trousers and shoes or boots in the evening when mosquitoes are more active.

Visa Ease

A 60 day tourist visa is available on arrival at Port Moresby at a cost of K25. To obtain a visa before you enter the country costs K10. You will need valid travel documents, sufficient funds for your stay in our country and an airline ticket with a confirmed outbound flight before the expiry date of your visa. As some restrictions apply to travelers from several Asian, Eastern European and African countries, please confirm your status with any PNG Embassy or the nearest Australian Consulate or the PNG representative office (which are located in the capitals of most countries) as to the visa requirements before traveling to PNG.

Weather and Climate

Papua New Guinea's climate is generally warm to hot in coastal area and in the Highlands. Weather patterns vary greatly because of mountain and valley configurations influencing prevailing air streams. While many regions attract heavy annual rainfall, Port Moresby is comparatively dry with an average rainfall of 120 mm per year Temperatures on the coast vary between 20 and 30 degrees centigrade all year round, and in the Highlands the temperature can reach 20 degrees, but can be very cold at night.

Language

There are over 800 distinct languages in Papua New Guinea. Pidgin and Hiri Motu are the two most widely used, but English is the official langue of education, business and government.

Arts and Crafts

Papua New Guinea's art forms are as diverse as they are distinctive. In a country where language varies from village to village, it can be expected that artistic expression will differ in style just as dramatically. Pottery, weapons, carvings, basket work, musical instruments are produced by different people in different places, according to their traditional skills and beliefs. Papua New Guinea artifacts and handicrafts can be purchased from individual artists and retail outlets in towns and village. Masks in Papua New Guinea are mainly used as decoration. They are found mostly along the Sepik River, but also in other parts of the country. The Chambri Lake masks feature elongated designs with incised brown and white patterns finished in glossy black. At Korogo the masks are made from wood and clay decorated with shells, hair and pig's teeth. Murik Lake masks arealmost African in appearance, and in Maprik they are woven from cane or rattan. Masks arealso carved at Kiwai Island, near Daru on the southern coast. Malangan masks are carved in New Ireland. Drums are the principal musical instruments. There are two main types, the large garamuts made from a hollowed tree trunk and the smaller kundus which are shaped like an hour glass with a snake or lizard skin stretched over one end. Other instruments include bamboo flutes and pottery whistles and jews harps from the highlands. Story boards made on the Keram River, a tributary of the Sepik, are a modern version of the fragile bark carvings villagers used to make. The boards illustrate incidents of village life in raised relief. In the Gulf Province, Gope boards are believed to possess the spirits of powerful warriors, or to act as guardians of the village. Before hunting or war expeditions, the spirits were called upon to advise and protect the men. Baskets - Buka baskets and trays from Bougainville Island are among the finest in the Pacific. Coarser baskets are also found in the Southern Highlands. Trobriand Islanders carve beautiful walking sticks, stools and tables, often inlaid with mother of pearl. Shell jewellery is very popular in the coastal towns, particularly Madang and Rabaul, Papua New Guinea is also known for its black coral and turtle shell jewellery. Tapa cloth, made from tree bark, is exclusive to the Northern Province.

Flora and Fauna

A great percentage of Papua New Guinea's land mass is covered with a dense blanket of rain forest-an exotic tangle of vines, creepers, flowers, plants and trees. Wild orchids blaze from the green background of rain forest canopy. Papua New Guinea has a greater number of orchid species than any country in the world. Bird life proliferates in the forests of Papua New Guinea, including the many species of the famous Bird of Paradise. Of the 43 known species of Birds of Paradise, 38 are found in Papua New Guinea. These brilliantly colored birds perform bizarre ritualistic and mating dances, and were hunted by early traders for their feathers.

WELCOME