

KAYAK EXPEDITION NOTES AND ITINERARY

These notes will give you a brief idea of what you may experience on this new and remote voyage. Our emphasis is on exploring pristine landscapes and visiting sites of cultural interest. **However we stress that this is an expedition style cruise. Our adventures and daily program may be influenced by the changeable weather and sea conditions of the region.** We'll delight in taking advantage of spontaneous opportunities and there is always an element of the unexpected. We ask you to join us in the spirit of expedition cruising as we discover this extraordinary country with you.

Our journey is a ship-based exploration of the Eastern New Guinea coastline and islands of the Bismark Archipelago. Papua New Guinea's spectacular terrain combined with a lack of suitable infrastructure makes travel to most areas difficult except by air and sea. We believe travel by expedition ship is the safest, most efficient and enjoyable way to unlock the secrets of one of the world's last wilderness frontiers.

Using our mother ship as a floating base camp, we hope to paddle two times a day, spending as much time on the water as possible. We will normally leave the ship immediately after breakfast for the first paddle of the day, and then often after lunch we will have time for a second paddle before returning to the ship for dinner. Most paddles range from two to four hours. We endeavour to have at least one extended paddle where we are away from the ship for most of the day. The flexibility of kayaking with a small private group ensures our own unique experiences, quite different from those encountered by the other passengers on board. However, we have the option to forego paddling and join the other passengers for shore excursions or zodiac cruises on any given day.

A largely undiscovered paradise, Papua New Guinea is slowly opening its arms to the world. Travellers who are privileged enough to visit will discover a wealth of magnificent tropical scenery and cultural diversity. We'll aim to visit active volcanic islands and walk through pristine rainforest alive with unique wildlife. Our fleet of kayaks and zodiacs will enable us to search out the myriad of hidden bays and striking coral reefs that abound in this area. Papua New Guinea's warm waters hold more aquatic species than anywhere on the planet – snorkeling magical reefs off white sandy beaches and isolated atolls will give us the chance to learn more about this incredibly diverse marine ecosystem.

With over 800 languages and 1,000 distinct cultures, Papua New Guinea is the most culturally diverse country on earth. Our visits to remote coastal and island villages will give us a genuine insight into a traditional lifestyle that has changed little in centuries. From visiting the small villages on the mighty Sepik River to being greeted by a flotilla of outrigger canoes, our experiences with the smiling people of Papua New Guinea are sure to be rewarding.

EXPERIENCE REQUIRED

To ensure you have safe, enjoyable paddles you should be comfortable with swimming and have an adventurous attitude. Ideally this should not be your first sea kayaking experience. The trip is suitable for beginners to experts and conducted in warm water. However, we have very little opportunity for instruction before we commence paddling, therefore, we highly recommend that you have done some kayaking recently or receive some tuition.

Try to rent a kayak locally before leaving home if you would like some additional experience, or seek out a local operator for some paddling tuition. We often begin our first paddling session from the shore and after that will be launching directly from the ship. You should be comfortable paddling on seas that could have up to a 1/2 metre swell and some current. The water surface will vary from calm to wind chop. Your guide will assess your ability on the initial paddle and, if you have insufficient experience, he or she may not allow you to participate in rougher conditions. Our paddling excursions will not involve camping out.

We'd be happy to talk to you about your ability and may be able to advise you on how to obtain the necessary experience before your trip. Paddling numbers are limited and berths fill fast so it is essential you book early.

Please Note: Along with your voyage booking form we require all participants to complete our "Sea Kayak Booking and Experience Form" and return it to us immediately to secure your spot in the sea kayaking group.

ITINERARY –ALOTAU TO RABAU

Day 1 – Embark Alotau

Flanked by mountain ranges on each side, *Marina Svetaeva* steams out of the peaceful harbour town of Alotau into picturesque Milne Bay to begin our adventure. The tranquil isles of Milne Bay province are made up of dramatic volcanoes and coral atolls where ancient traditions flourish. Kayakers will attend a briefing on board and set up their kayaks.

Day 2 – Goodenough Island

One of the most steeply sided islands on the planet, Goodenough's volcanic slopes rise sharply up from the fertile coastal plains culminating in a summit that sits at over 2,500 metres. Mysterious legends and sorcery form a part of everyday life on Goodenough – the yield of the numerous yam crops are said to be under the power of a large painted stone in the middle of the island. We will begin our paddling adventures, weather permitting along this remote coastline.

Day 3 – Tufi

The dramatic fjords of Tufi are a breathtaking sight. Often rising to more than 100 metres, the sheer walls of these natural wonders are covered in dense forest alive with birds and numerous waterfalls cascading directly into the sea. Greeted by outrigger canoes and a welcome dance, the local people will share with us some of their ancient tribal customs. We hope to walk through the rainforest, home to the world's largest butterfly and paddle the clear waters of Tufi's famed outer reefs. There is more spectacular paddle options alongside cliffs, or exploring mangrove creeks with very good snorkeling.

Day 4 – Lababia

We visit the picturesque village of Lababia, whose inhabitants are custodians to one of the most important conservation areas in PNG – the Kamiali wildlife management area. Led by local guides, we hope to take a rainforest walk along the David Suzuki Trail. With luck we may see some of the prolific birdlife resident here including hornbills, parrots, palm cockatoos and the striking Raggiana bird of paradise. The high rainforest mountains provide a great backdrop for our paddling excursions.

Day 5 – Tami Islands

The stunning tropical setting of these pristine coral atolls will make for some exciting explorations. The islands inhabitants are famous for their intricately carved wooden bowls. Their peaceful fishing villages are beautifully located on a well-protected lagoon between the two main islands. Premium paddling and snorkeling with a very high "Wow" factor.

Day 6 – Karkar Island

Today we plan to visit the remarkable Karkar Island. Dominated by an active volcano that rises over 1800 metres, Karkar is one of the most fertile places in PNG and has a thriving copra industry. We'll cruise along a myriad of superb black sand beaches that surround the island.

Day 7 – Sepik River

The Sepik is one of the world's great river systems and culturally one of the most fascinating parts of PNG. Village life remains virtually unchanged from when first contact was made by German explorers in the late 1800's. We will travel upstream from the mouth of this mighty river to explore the lower Sepik region. Visiting some of the small villages that line the riverbank, we may have the chance to appreciate and purchase some artworks of the famed master carvers of the Sepik. The current of the Sepik makes paddling difficult so on this day we may choose to climb aboard a zodiac.

Days 8-9 – Admiralty Islands

We spend two days exploring the remote Admiralty Islands, a scattering of low-lying atolls and 18 islands, most of which are uninhabited. Only a handful of expedition ships have ever visited here and we will spend our time in search of pristine coastlines and the unique culture of the area. We hope to visit a number of traditional villages and with the help of our anthropologist, learn more about the rich maritime traditions of the local people. These volcanic islands are covered in lowland tropical rainforest and, due to their isolation from other

PAPUA NEW GUINEA-ALOTAU to RABAUL
10 April – 20 April 2009

landmasses, contain many endemic plant species. The islands are home to a number of endemic bird species including the Manus fantail, superb pitta and the Manus hawk owl.

Day 10 – Tingwon/Tsoi Islands

Depending on weather conditions, we will either visit the idyllic Tsoi islands that lie off the northern coastline of New Ireland, or picturesque Tingwon Island located west of New Hanover. We will paddle and snorkel the island's crystal clear lagoons and pristine reefs and hope to encounter some of the exceptionally diverse marine animals that frequent these waters. Amid the white sand beaches and coconut palms, we hope to visit some of the villages on these remote islands rarely seen by outsiders.

Day 11 – Rabaul

We awake to the eerie volcanic surrounds of Simpson Harbour in Rabaul. Ringed by six volcanic peaks, some of which are still active, Rabaul has one of the most beautiful natural harbours in the Pacific. Our voyage ends today with fond farewells to the crew and fellow adventurers.

GENERAL INFORMATION

HIGHLIGHTS OF 'PAPUA NEW GUINEA-ALOTAU TO RABAUL'

- Superb kayaking in one of the most remote and unexplored regions in the world.
- Visits to traditional villages where welcoming locals offer a glimpse of their traditional lifestyle.
- Snorkelling crystal clear waters on coral reefs alive with marine life.
- The chance to visit the legendary Sepik River, home to some of the most famous artists in the Pacific.
- Exploring the unique fjords of Tufi.
- Wildlife opportunities – prolific birdlife (hornbills, parrots, cockatoos, birds of paradise), dolphins, whales and dugongs.

This Tour Includes

- Transfers to the ship from the group hotel.
- Ship's accommodation. All public areas are open to all passengers.
- All meals on board ship.
- All shore excursions from the ship including Zodiac excursions.
- Lectures, videos, slide and film shows and guide services.
- Medical services. There is a resident medical officer and well-equipped clinic on board.
- Port taxes, port charges and landing fees imposed by government authorities.
- Kayak guide, kayaks, paddling and rescue equipment.

This Tour Does Not Include

- Air transport and airport transfers before and after the voyage.
- Excess baggage on any air flights.
- Visa, passport and vaccination charges and airport departure taxes.
- Hotels and meals not included in ship cruise itinerary.
- Optional excursions not included in ship cruise itinerary.
- Tips on board for crew and service personnel.
- Laundry, postage, personal clothing, medical expenses, personal travel insurance and items of a personal nature such as bar charges, wine and phone calls.
- Emergency evacuation charges.

09/01/09 AB

