

KAYAK EXPEDITION NOTES AND ITINERARY

These notes will give you a brief idea of what you may experience on this voyage. Our emphasis is on personal contact with the environs 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. As this is our first venture into Papua New Guinea, 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 islands of the Bismarck and Solomon seas as well as the east coast of the main island of New Guinea. Papua New Guinea's spectacular terrain combined with a lack of suitable infrastructure makes travel to most areas difficult except by air or sea. We believe travel by small ship is the safest, most efficient and enjoyable way to unlock the secrets of one of the world's last great frontiers.

Using our mothership 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. PNG's warm waters hold more aquatic species than anywhere on the planet - snorkelling 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 witnessing colourful sing sings to appreciating the intricate art of the master carvers of the lower Sepik River, 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 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, so we highly recommend that you have done some kayaking recently or had 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 so 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 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 – RABAU to ALOTAU

Day 1 - Embark Rabaul

This afternoon you will be met at your hotel and taken to our trusty ship, Marina Svetaeva. Your luggage will be transferred to your cabin. Surrounded by six volcanic peaks, we cruise out of stunning Simpson Harbour and into the Bismarck Sea as we head west along the New Britain coast.

Marina Svetaeva is not a luxury ship, she is homely and strong, built to be a working vessel and refitted to a comfortable passenger standard. The mood on board is definitely casual. At sea we are totally self-sufficient. The days flow by while we travel snugly in our cocoon. A favourite pastime on board is to stand on deck or on the bridge, watching for seabirds, absorbing the dramatic scenery.

Day 2 - Kimbe Bay

With over 70% of all coral species in the Indo/Pacific region found here, Kimbe Bay is recognised as one of the world's most diverse marine environments. We will snorkel the exceptionally clear water of the bay's pristine reefs and hope to visit some of its idyllic islands, including the thermal geysers of Pangula Island.

Day 3 – Witu Islands

Today we hope to explore this enchanting island chain, home to a rich array of aquatic life and spectacular rugged scenery. We visit remarkable Garove Island. Once an active volcano, the cone is now flooded with water 300 metres deep. Entering through the narrow jungle covered walls of the caldera promises to be an unforgettable experience. We also hope to visit some of the villages on this remote island group and gain an insight into their traditional way of life.

Day 4 – Karkar Island

This morning we rest up and enjoy life on board Marina Svetaeva as she steams across the Bismarck Sea toward Karkar Island. From the comfort of the bridge or on the outer decks, join our naturalist in identifying seabirds. Our little team of expert lecturers will host entertaining talks on Papua New Guinea's unique natural history and vibrant mix of cultures.

After lunch, we plan to visit Karkar Island. Dominated by an active volcano that rises over 1,800 metres, Karkar is one of the most fertile places in PNG and has a thriving copra industry. We will kayak along the myriad of superb beaches that surround the island and hope to land and spend time with the Karkar Island people.

Days 5 – 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.

Today 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. Reputed to be among the finest artists in the Pacific, these skilled craftsman base their work on a complex web of spiritual beliefs and totems.

Day 6 – Bagabag Island

If all goes well we awake to the dramatic scenery of delightful Bagabag Island, home to small communities surrounded by magnificent steep hills covered in dense forest and coconut trees. The islands rich blue waters and sheltered bays are ideal for swimming and snorkelling. We will take our kayaks and explore this little visited island.

Day 7 – 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 and we hope to visit their peaceful fishing villages, beautifully located by a well-protected lagoon between the two main islands.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA – RABAUL to ALOTAU
20 April – 30 April 2009

Day 8 – Lababia

We visit the picturesque village of Lababia, whose inhabitants are custodians to one of the most important conservation areas in PNG - the 47,000 hectare 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.

Day 9 – Tufi

The dramatic fjords of Tufi and Cape Nelson 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.

This morning we have the opportunity to visit some of the small communities in this area. Maybe greeted by outrigger canoes and a welcome dance, the local people will share with us some of their ancient tribal customs. We hope to take a walk through the rainforest, home to the world's largest butterfly, and explore the clear waters of Tufi's famed outer reefs, looking out for dolphins on the way.

Day 10 – Goodenough Island

The lofty mountains of the D'Entrecasteaux archipelago should come into view early this morning as we enter into Milne Bay Province. We will endeavour to explore rarely visited Goodenough Island, one of the most steeply sided islands on the planet. Steep volcanic slopes rise sharply up from the fertile coastal planes culminating in a summit that sits at over 2,500 metres.

Perhaps more than anywhere in Papua New Guinea, the power of the occult is feared and respected in the D'Entrecasteaux group. Mysterious legends and sorcery form a part of every day 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.

Day 11 – Alotau

This morning we will arrive at the laid-back coastal town of Alotau, capital of Milne Bay province. As our journey draws to an end, we will have time to reflect on the amazing experiences we have shared, before we bid each other farewell.

GENERAL INFORMATION

HIGHLIGHTS OF 'PAPUA NEW GUINEA – RABAUL to ALOTAU'

- Visits to traditional villages where welcoming locals offer a glimpse of their traditional lifestyle
- Experiencing the visual richness and contrasting cultures of each region
- Snorkelling crystal clear waters on coral reefs alive with marine life
- Exploring the unique fjords of Tufi
- Visits to remote volcanic islands ripe for exploration
- The chance to visit the legendary Sepik River, home to some of the most famous artists in the Pacific
- Wildlife opportunities – prolific birdlife (hornbills, parrots, cockatoos, birds of paradise), dolphins, whales, dugongs and the rich marine life of the coral reefs

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.
- The use of Zodiacs for shore excursions, but excludes entry fees and other optional expenses at historic sites, towns and villages.



PAPUA NEW GUINEA – RABAU to ALOTAU
20 April – 30 April 2009

- 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 to and from the ship.
- Excess baggage on any air flights.
- Visa, passport and vaccination charges and airport departure taxes.
- Hotels and meals not included in ship cruise itinerary.
- Tips on board for crew and service personnel.
- Optional excursions not included in ship cruise itinerary.
- 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.

29/5/08