

# PAPUA NEW GUINEA SEA KAYAKING

## QUESTIONS MOST OFTEN ASKED

The experience of kayaking in the tropics, gliding over stunning coral reefs is guaranteed to open your “marine” eyes. Our kayaks are ideal to fit in with the locals, often paddling in their own dugouts, and to seek out the best snorkeling sites. Equally exciting are short excursions up small rivers or creeks into tropical jungle, rainforest or mangroves where we have the chance to view hornbills, palm cockatoos and other exotic birds.

Our excursions from the ship and shore landings are selected for cultural, wildlife and scenic value. Cruising in our own private group of about 6 to 12 paddlers, we will generally visit the same sites as the Zodiacs but be more independent and perhaps access areas not appropriate for Zodiacs. If the ship’s schedule allows, it may be possible to do an extended day trip, taking our lunch with us.

***If you intend to participate in the sea kayaking option on this voyage, please complete and return the Sea Kayaking Booking Form appended to this document as soon as possible. This is necessary to confirm your participation in the sea kayaking option. Note that spots are limited.***

### **How experienced do you have to be?**

This trip is open to Intermediate paddlers or Beginners who have an adventurous spirit AND WHO ATTEND SOME KAYAK LESSONS BEFORE THE TRIP. We highly recommend you paddle regularly as it will greatly enhance your enjoyment of the trip. You do not have to be an expert or know how to roll. However, you should be reasonably fit and comfortable swimming in deep water. You should also recognize that the weather will influence what we can and can't do. Try to rent a kayak locally before leaving home if you feel you need some additional experience or seek out a local operator for some paddling tuition. We could be paddling in winds and will not have much opportunity to instruct before our first paddle. We often begin our first paddling session from the shore and after that will be launching directly from zodiacs. SO it is important that you practise getting in a kayak from a wharf or pier in deep water.

***Even if your experience is limited, we'd encourage you to call us to discuss your suitability. There is often ample time to gain some experience before you depart. We may be able to recommend a reputable sea kayak operator in your area for some tuition prior to the trip. Your guide will assess your ability on the initial paddle.***

### **Is there a minimum age?**

Kayakers should generally be aged 16 or over at the time of the trip. We may consider children aged 14-15 in exceptional circumstances depending on their size and kayaking experience. This is entirely at the discretion of Aurora Expeditions.

### **Will there be a guide?**

Yes, there will be an experienced kayak guide on the ship who accompanies all the kayak excursions. In addition there will be a Zodiac inflatable rubber boat in radio contact nearby.

### **What kind of kayaks do we use?**

We generally use 16 & 17 ft. Prijon plastic double and single kayaks. These are hard shelled, and well suited for day trips and launching quickly from the ship. The guide will paddle a single kayak and any other use of singles will be at the guides discretion and is influenced by the group numbers and individual abilities.

### **How stable are they?**

The kayaks are quite stable and for our first paddle we start in shallow water along shore where you can gain a feel for them. Once familiar with your craft, we then launch from the ship in deep water.

### **Can they tip over?**

Yes – it is possible but unlikely. In the event of a capsize we would self-rescue by righting the kayak, pumping it out, and re-entering it with the guide's help, or maybe using a Zodiac for support. It only takes a few minutes to pump out enough water for the people to re-enter. The water is warm so a capsize can be a welcome relief!

### **Can the kayaks sink?**

No, the kayaks have separate compartments with bulkheads, so they can float with the cockpit full of water.

### **How do we get into the kayaks from the ship?**

Generally the kayaks will be taken off the ship on a zodiac to shore or to a 2<sup>nd</sup> zodiac which can be tied alongside and enable us to enter.

### **Will there be surf and swell?**

We are not likely to be doing surf landings but could be paddling in a small swell or wind chop. We can paddle in up to 15 knot winds. If the winds are too strong and we can't find sheltered paddling, we will join the shore party in the Zodiacs.

### **Can I carry anything in the kayak?**

Yes, you will be supplied with a dry-bag for extra clothing, binoculars and anything you want to keep waterproof. You should also carry a water bottle. You are welcome to bring along your own 5-10 litre dry bag for personal things.

### **Can I bring my camera?**

Yes, but we highly recommend a waterproof or disposable camera, or waterproof housing for use in the kayak. Onshore you are welcome to use an SLR camera but will need to provide a waterproof case or bag for it. Pelican cases are highly recommended for good cameras, but a small dry-bag with a t-shirt wrapped around the camera may suffice for smaller cameras. The kayak hatches are not large and will not take a Pelican case larger than the 1400 model. However, you may be able to strap a larger Pelican case onto the back deck of the kayak.

### **How long will we paddle for?**

The paddling time varies, depending on how long the ship spends at each spot and how much the group wants to paddle. Generally each excursion will be 2 to 4 hours, but we may be out for up to 6 hours. We would expect to have 8 to 10 paddling excursions during the New Guinea voyages. We may go out twice in one day and if we are out for more than two hours we will endeavour to get out on shore and stretch our legs.

**How far will we paddle?**

It depends on the weather but outings can range from 5 to 15 km. On average we aim to paddle about 8-10 km per session. We would only paddle further if the ship is moving to meet us. We will not be aiming to paddle big distances, but will seek out the most interesting things to view. We carry radios and are in constant contact with the ship.

**Do we need any special clothing and equipment?**

We would highly recommend you bring your own snorkeling equipment and in particular, mask and snorkel. A good sun hat is needed and additional clothing suggestions are given in our kayak clothing and equipment list at the end of this document. All kayaking and safety equipment is supplied. Please pay particular attention to the footwear suggestions.

**How big is the group?**

We limit the group size to a maximum of ten to twelve kayakers plus your guide.

**What if it gets too windy while we're paddling or if I get tired?**

We will be in radio contact with the ship and Zodiacs. If the weather appears to be changing we will head back to the ship or to shore if need be. The ship's captain, expedition leader and kayak guide will all maintain close contact to ensure a safe paddling experience. If someone needs to return to the ship a Zodiac can be called.

**How do we get back aboard the ship?**

In calm seas we generally unload from the kayaks to a Zodiac that is tied to the gangway. In adverse conditions we may load into Zodiacs from shore and transport the kayaks back to the ship.

**Is the wildlife dangerous?**

There are sharks, rays and some poisonous fish in the area. They are not a problem in the kayaks and your guide will brief you at the beginning of the trip on local marine hazards. As a general rule though, avoid touching any shells or coral in the inter tidal zone or underwater. Shallow water with muddy or sandy bottoms can have resident rays so walk slowly and be aware.

## TROPICAL KAYAKING CLOTHING AND EQUIPMENT

In addition to the general voyage clothing list, we have specific clothing requirements for paddling in Tropical Regions. Read both lists carefully and if you have any questions please contact us. As we may not paddle every day you also need to be prepared for shore landings by Zodiac.

The air temperature in **Papau New Guinea** in winter months is generally in the low 30's but can range from 25°C to 39°C. The water temperature is in the mid to high 20's. The air is humid and although a breeze may feel cool, you need to stay hydrated in this environment.

**\*\*Note:** Malaria and Dengue Fever is endemic in this area so a few precautions are in order. Do consult your physician well in advance of the trip for appropriate malarial prophylaxis, Bring an insect repellent with DEET and a lightweight long sleeve shirt you can paddle in. Shoes / sandals should be worn on shore or when walking in shallow water at all times.

### **Kayaking**

All kayaking equipment will be provided: paddles, life jackets, kayaks, and safety gear. We supply one 20 litre dry bag for spare clothing while you are paddling.

We use stable plastic double and single kayaks. We will customise them aboard ship and familiarise ourselves with them before paddling. The kayaks have bulkheads and waterproof hatches and we supply dry bags to carry some spare clothing on our day trips.

**Dry bags** can be used for cameras but salt water is absolutely fatal in destroying cameras and lenses. If you wish to guarantee your camera will be 100% waterproof we recommend a Pelican case. These have a rubber seal and can be kept on the deck of the kayak providing they are not too large. The pelican 1400 case is about the largest size that will easily stow on the kayak but a 1300 size is more suited. Throwaway waterproof cameras or more expensive waterproof cameras are a good option for paddling and then you can keep your better camera stored in a dry bag or Pelican case until on shore. Zip lock bags are not a good alternative for SLR cameras but may suffice for small point-and-shoot cameras if they are double bagged.

**Waterproof jacket** – A lightweight spray jacket or waterproof jacket is a good idea as it can rain in the tropics and combined with wind, can feel quite cool.

**Thermal underwear** – A lightweight thermal top is a good idea for a rainy occasion.

**Socks** - Lightweight socks (2 pairs). You should bring several pairs of socks. Sand can be irritating and also they are good for insect protection if we were to paddle at dawn or dusk.

**Footwear** – 1 pair of running shoes (recommend to get away from wet thongs and sand). Reef shoes for paddling or a good fitting pair of sandals that attach solidly.

**Headgear** – A hat that covers your neck and has some tie-down strings. It is very important you have sun protection (+30) for your face.

**Hands** - Lightweight cycling gloves can ease blistering if you are not used to paddling

**Swimsuit** – In addition to a swimsuit, a lycra sun top is useful for snorkeling.

**Waterproof sunscreen blackout and lip balm** - A skin moisturiser is useful in the evenings as the wind can cause chapped skin quite quickly.

**Sunglasses** with side visors and tie or string for attaching them to prevent loss.

**Water bottle** – 1-2 litre

**Lightweight Shirt** - 1 long sleeve lightweight synthetic shirt. This is highly recommended for sun protection while paddling. Cotton is not very suitable for paddling as it gets stiff with salt and can irritate the skin. A lightweight capilene or polypropylene but often a loose tropical shirt is better with the option to roll up the sleeves.

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## SEA KAYAKING BOOKING FORM

To ensure you have safe, enjoyable paddles you should try and do some paddling before the trip and have an adventurous attitude. You do not need to be an expert or know how to roll. However, you should be active, reasonably fit and be comfortable swimming as we may try and snorkel from our kayaks. We have little opportunity for practise before we commence paddling, so we highly recommend that you have done some kayaking recently. Our guide will provide assistance and tuition if required.

**Please read our Q&A for more information on the kayaking.**

Please note that on your initial paddle your guide will assess your ability and, if you have insufficient experience, they may not allow you to participate in rougher conditions. However the water is warm and in general quite sheltered. If your experience is limited, we'd encourage you to call us to discuss the options to gain a little experience prior to joining the trip. There is often ample time to gain experience before you depart. We may be able to recommend a reputable sea kayak operator in your area for some tuition prior to the trip.

**\*\* Please fill in this booking form accurately and return it to us as soon as possible. This is required to confirm your spot. \*\***

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Trip Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Departure Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### SEA KAYAKING EXPERIENCE

1. Have you paddled sea kayaks? \_\_\_\_\_ Whitewater kayaks? \_\_\_\_\_ Surf ski? \_\_\_\_\_

2. Have you paddled in single kayaks? \_\_\_\_\_ Double kayaks? \_\_\_\_\_

3. Do you have your own sea kayak? \_\_\_\_\_

4. Would you call yourself a: Beginner \_\_\_\_\_ Intermediate \_\_\_\_\_ Expert \_\_\_\_\_

5. Have you done any sea kayak courses? Please list them outlining when and where.

\_\_\_\_\_

6. Have you paddled in open ocean waters - ie. outside harbours and estuaries? Where? Please indicate what type of paddling you have done.

\_\_\_\_\_

7. Have you paddled in windy conditions ie. 10-15 knot winds or more? \_\_\_\_\_

9. How many times (approximately) have you paddled in the last two years?

0 times \_\_\_\_\_ 1-5 times \_\_\_\_\_ 6-20 times \_\_\_\_\_ 20 times \_\_\_\_\_

**Please let us know your height and weight so we may ensure the kayaks are appropriate.**

Height: \_\_\_\_\_ Weight: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_