

General Information On Papua New Guinea

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS: A 60-day Tourist Visa is available on arrival in Port Moresby at a fee of K100.00. To obtain a visa before you enter the country costs K75.00. You will need travel documents, sufficient funds for your stay in the country and airline ticket with confirmed outbound flights before expiry date of your Visa. As some restrictions apply to several Asian, Eastern European and African countries, please check with the nearest Papua New Guinea Mission or the nearest Australian mission, which is allocated in each country for visa requirements before traveling to the country.

AIRPORT: Jackson's International Airport is the gateway of Papua New Guinea, situated about 8km away from the main town center of Port Moresby. Mt Hagen Provincial Airport has been declared International Port of entry because of the mining activities in Highlands provinces.

AIRPORT FACILITY TAX: A K30.00 fee is payable by all departing international passengers at the Duty Free Shop located on level 1 of the International Terminal.

CUSTOMS & QUARANTINE: Adults over 18 have a general allowance of new goods to the value of K250 and are allowed duty free:

- 200 cigarettes or 50 cigars or 250 grams of tobacco
- One litre of alcohol.
- A reasonable amount of perfume.

Drugs, pornographic literature or video tapes, firearms and weapons are prohibited. Food items, seeds, spices, live or dry plants, animals, animal products and biological specimens such as cultures and blood need special import approval.

CURRENCY: PNG Kina. Daily exchange rates are listed in banks, newspapers and hotels. Papua New Guinea's unit of currency is the Kina which is divided into 100 toea. Exchange your money at Jackson's Airport or in banks, which are open from 9.00am to 3.00pm Monday - Thursdays and 9.00 - 4.00pm on Fridays. Credit cards are accepted in leading hotels and shops.

There are K50, K20, K10, K5 and K2 notes and a K1 coin. Travellers cheques and international credit cards are accepted in major hotels and restaurants.

VALUE ADDED TAX (VAT)

All transactions within hotels, restaurants and bars are subject to 10% tax which is included in published prices.

CREDIT CARDS: Hotels, restaurants, shops, rental car companies, cruise operators and travel agents accept most major credit cards including Amex, Diners, Master cards and Visa Cards.

GEOGRAPHY: Papua New Guinea lies entirely within the tropics, just south of the Equator and 160km to the north of Australia. With a total land mass of about 473.189sq.km, the 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 peaks, 4500 metre high Mt Wilhelm and from downs of other peaks, great rivers like the Sepik and Fly River begin their journey to the sea. Below the mountain chain, fertile coastal plains, flooded delta regions and mangrove swamps exist alongside broad sandy beaches, colourful sheltered bays and dense rainforest.

POPULATION: Papua New Guinea has a total population of almost 5.5 million comprised mainly of Melanesian race with dark skin, fuzzy hair and friendly smiles.

LANGUAGE: There are more than 800 distinct languages. Melanesian Pidgin and Hiri Motu are the two most widely used, but English is the official language in education, businesses and government circles.

COUNTRY'S INDEPENDENCE: The country fully independent since September 16, 1975 has a freely elected democratic government. Papua New Guinea became the 142nd member of the United Nations on October, 10, 1975 and is also a member of the British Commonwealth.

OUR ECONOMY: Papua New Guinea has a vibrant and multifaceted economy with two distinct systems operating side by side. The vast majority of our people live in a traditional, non-monetary barter economy that existed long before European colonization began. Co-existing with this is modern economic system based on mining, petroleum, fishing, forestry and agriculture. Our main exports are gold, copper, oil, coffee, tea, copra, oil palm, forest and marine products.

AIRLINES: International - Air Niugini and Qantas.
Domestic - Air Niugini, Airlink, Airlines of PNG, Islands Nationair, Trans Niugini Airways, MAF, Regional Air.

BUSINESS HOURS: Commercial Firms: Monday to Friday - 8.00am - 4:30 or 5.00pm. Saturday 8.00am - 12.00 noon.

Government Hours: Monday to Friday - 7.45am - 4.06pm.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS: Throughout the year there are festivals and shows being held around the country. Please check with the Tourism Promotion Authority for a list of festivals and dates.

CLIMATE: Warm to hot and humid throughout the year. There is a rainy season, which varies from province to province, however, in general, it's driest from May to December. The air is clean; watch out for sunburn, particularly in the Highlands, even on overcast days.

DRESS: Informal and casual with shorts and open neck shirts worn throughout the year along with traditional items and apparel: ramis. Sulus, laplaps and kolos. Thongs, sneakers and sandals 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. Female dress should always be modest.

ELECTRICAL VOLTAGE: Electrical current on the national grid is 40 volts. AG 50 hzs. Some hotels provide 110 volt outlets in guest rooms for shavers and hair dryers.

NIGHTLIFE: Usually very quiet. Home, entertainment is popular. Major hotels provide their own entertainment. The capital, Port Moresby, offers the variety of entertainment and nightlife of most major cities.

HEALTH REGULATIONS: Certification or vaccination against yellow fever or cholera is requiring for travelers over one year of age coming from or through infected areas. Malaria is the only serious health risk. Visitors are strongly advised to consult your local doctor or tropical disease clinic to commence anti-malarial preparations before arrival. Water quality is within World Health Organization standards in most towns. Bottled water is available. In rural areas it is advisable to boil water at all times.

FOOD/RESTAURANTS: You won't go hungry in Papua New Guinea. Western cuisine is available in hotels, restaurants, guesthouses, lodges and village resorts. Port Moresby has many Asian and European restaurants. For something different try a traditional 'mumu' of roast pork, sweet potatoes, rice and greens.

HANDICRAFTS/SOUVENIRS: One of the many pleasant surprises of Papua New Guinea is the wide range of art forms in diverse styles. Among the many tempting souvenirs you will encounter are: -

- Bilums - string bags made from natural fibre.
- Masks - woven from cane or rattan: made of wood and clay and decorated with shells, hair and pig's teeth or incise with brown and white patterns and finished in glossy black.
- Wooden bowls - bowls fashioned from prized local timbers, including ebony. Carved walking sticks, stools and tables are often inlaid with mother of pearl.
- Baskets/Trays - Many different patterns and styles can be found. Those from Bougainville are regarded as some of the finest in the Pacific.
- Drums - the most common musical instrument in Papua New Guinea: those made from a hollow tree trunk are called Garamuts while the smaller Kundu is shaped like an hour glass and has snake or lizard skins sketched over one end.
- Story Board - made on the Karam River, they illustrate in raised relief incidents of village life.
- Spirit Boards - act as guardians of the village with those from the Gulf Province believed to possess the spirits of powerful warriors.

We want to keep our cultural heritage intact, so items made before 1960 are restricted exports. National Museum Staff must inspect them before an export permit can be considered. Export of Bird of Paradise plumes as well as stone artifacts - except stone axes - is prohibited.

SHOPPING: 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 shop is closed on Sunday.

MEDICAL SERVICES: Dental, doctors and hospital services are available in all major centers. Medical clinics and aid posts are found in remote areas and several hospitals are privately owned.

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS: New Year's Day - 1st January, Good Friday, Easter Monday, Queens Birthday - 13th June, Remembrance Day - 21st July, Independence Day - 16th September, Christmas Day - 25th December, Boxing Day - 26th December.

RELIGION: Local traditional beliefs and ceremonies are maintained in remote areas; however, Christian influence is predominant.

SPORTS & RECREATION: Play golf, tennis and squash or go fishing, diving, snorkeling, hunting and trekking. Check with Air Niugini, your travel Agent or the PNG Tourism Promotion Authority for venues. Touch Football is also very popular around the country.

TELECOMMUNICATION: Papua New Guinea has modern satellite communications, which have brought the world closer at the touch of a few buttons. ISD and STD dialing are available in most parts of the country. Telex and Facsimile services are also readily available except in very remote areas where high frequency radios are in use.

TIME ZONE: PNG is 10 hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT).

TIPPING: Visitors to the country are guest and hospitality is an honour in our Melanesian culture. Tips are neither expected nor encouraged.

TRANSPORTATION: Transportation is mostly by air across PNG. A good network of roads connects the Northern zone and the Highlands region. Hire and rental cars, local boats and ferries, taxis in larger towns, plus local buses. There is no road link between the northern zone and the capital, Port Moresby because of the rugged nature of the terrain.

WATER SUPPLY: All towns have reticulated water, and all remote areas offer good drinking water.