

PNG — Sepik & Morobe

Dates:

Saturday, 12th May to Friday, 25th May, 2007

14 days

Cost: \$6600 + **

Style: Live aboard

Start and Finish: Cairns

Experience the rich diversity of Melanesian cultures in PNG from the Sepik to the highlands. Appreciate sing-sings and wonderful artefacts. The Sepik region is an immense grassland reserve, drained by one of the world's greatest rivers. The river is this region's Congo, with an amazing Melanesian culture, which produces world famous artefacts. The people along the 1126 kilometre river maintain a very traditional life which depends heavily on it for transportation, water and food. This safari coincides with the spectacular Biang Ngayam Festival in Lae which presents a variety of stunning dances and displays.

Day 1, Saturday, 12th May: Join Air Nuigini flight PX093 Departing Cairns at 12.00 noon and arriving at Port Moresby 1.25 pm. Clear Customs and depart Port Moresby on PX126 at 3.40 pm. Arrive Wewak arriving at 5.45 pm. Board the "Miss Rankin" and after dinner set off for nearby Muschu Island.

Day 2, Sunday, 13th May: Wake up at the pretty coral cay of Muschu where beautiful white sandy beaches surround a tropical rainforest. There is good snorkelling just off the waters edge, with a great variety of fish among the hard and soft corals, good fishing and the chance of catching lobsters at night. Return to see Wewak in daylight including the War Memorial and after dinner set off to cruise to Sepik River.

Day 3, Monday, 14th May: We enter the mighty Sepik about dawn and travel up this mighty river, collecting fish and crabs from villagers on the way to the District Administration Centre of Angoram to go ashore. Later move up river to anchor off Kambarambaba No2 Village.

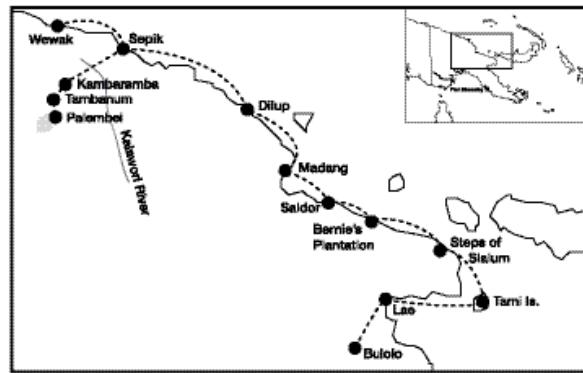
Day 4, Tuesday, 15th May: Visit both Kambarambaba villages, one beside the river and the other where huts in stilts are perched over a lake. Both are experiencing enormous population pressure. Previous GO BUSH safaris in cooperation with other Australian groups have engaged in an absorbing community development project of helping the schools and established strong links with both villages.

Day 5, Wednesday, 16th May: Visit two villages famous for their arts and crafts. People from the Middle Sepik are most noted for their masks and intricate wooden carvings. Tambanum has one of the best arrays of artefacts. Browse this market and/or have your face painted to the patterns of a distinctive mask. Experience a sing sing at Kaminambit with the music created by long flutes and lime gourds.

Day 6, Thursday, 17th May: Visit the wonderful village of Palembi, a beautifully laid out (and once fortified) village famous for its garamut drummers and which has an incredible array of artefacts stored in their two spirit houses (Haus Tambarans) very and then return down river to branch off up the Karawari River

Day 7, Friday, 18th May: Explore the Karawari River, one of the major tributaries of the mighty Sepik River. Like the Sepik this less visited river is rich in culture; totemic carvings, magic and traditional ways of living are still very much intact.

Day 8, Saturday, 19th May: Continue the cruise down river collecting mud crabs on the way. The huge swamps of sago and nipa palms flank the riverbanks. We leave the river in daylight to pass Mannum Island with its active volcano of before sunset on our way to Madang.



PNG Sepik & Highlands

Day 9, Sunday, 20th May: Cruise into Madang, PNG's most picturesque larger town. Visit the sulphur springs and gardens, Bil Bil village for pottery then along the sea front to the Coastwatchers monument. Stroll around town and the market (very safe).

Day 10, Monday, 20th May: Take tour of a working coconut and cocoa plantation at Sidor. Lunch at the house set atop a lime stone ridge with uninterrupted 180 degree views of the Bismarck Sea and its many islands.

Day 11, Tuesday 21st May: Follow beside the Finisterre Ranges, which tower to 13,000 feet straight out of the sea. At beautiful Tami Islands visit a village, snorkel or shop for some wonderful hand-crafted wooden bowls.

Day 12, Wednesday, 23rd May: From Lae take a bus to explore some of the Morobe Highlands by taking an overnight trip to the old gold-mining town of Bulolo which subsequently became a timber town. Visit Butterfly Farm and Wau Ecology Institute.

Day 13, Thursday, 24th May: Return to explore Lae, PNG's second largest city. Discover more of the fauna from around at the excellently presented Rainforest Habitat. Visit the War Memorial and the interesting top town market. Finish the day at the Morobe Cultural Festival with dozens of traditional dancing troupes and presentations from around PNG. Followed by our last night party aboard the "Miss Rankin".

Day 14, Friday, 25th May: Catch Air Nuigini flight from PX101 Departing Lae 7.15 am and Arriving Port Moresby at 8.00 am to transfer to PX 090 arriving Cairns 10.50 am.

**** "Miss Rankin" is not a luxury vessel. It is air-conditioned throughout and everyone uses the very pleasant saloon on the upper deck. It has four deluxe cabins with ensuites for which an extra \$500 is charged. Other passengers sleep in inside cabins bunk beds and used shared facilities.**

A deposit of \$600 is required and a non-refundable instalment of \$2000 to cover advance purchase of air fares must paid by 30th January.