

Middle and Upper Sepik River Cultural Tour

5 nights and 6 days



PRICE

Per person: 2 upwards

\$1250 USD

Per person: 1 person

\$2410 USD

Included: costs include accommodation, all meals from lunch on day 2 to lunch on the penultimate day, transfers on the river, motorised boats and vehicles, tours, cultural activities, admission tickets, and services of a tour leader, cook, and canoe captain who will travel with you.

Excluded: domestic airfares, items of a personal nature i.e. alcohol beverages and laundry services etc.

Domestic flights: We can book your domestic flights on Air Niugini or PNG Air. Port Moresby – Wewak Return flights costs around \$425 USD per person depending on when booked.

25% deposit required to book, balance due 30 days before departure.

Itinerary

Day 1 Fly from Port Moresby to Wewak

On arrival at the airport, you will be met by staff from In Wewak Boutique Hotel and transferred to the hotel. Meals are not included as they offer a wide range of meals and the only meal plan we can pre-order is the full breakfast and three-course dinner, which is often too much food for most people.

Day 2. "Wewak to Pagwi – Palembang – Kangananman

Early an after breakfast, you will leave for Pagwi (5 hours' drive from Wewak to Pagwi), with packed lunch along the way arriving at Pagwi and boarding the waiting canoe to travel to Palimbei. You will visit the biggest *Haus Tambaran* (Spirit House) along the Sepik River. Permission will be granted to women in the to visit the men's exclusive 'Spirit House'. Have dinner cooked by your crew. Night at Kugun guest house.

Day 3 Middle Sepik Tour

Full day tour of Kangananman, Kaminabit and Palembang. Today you will visit more spirit houses, encounter the scarified "Crocodilemen" and learn more about the different customs in these latmul villages along the Sepik River. Overnight at the village guest house.

Day 4 Full day tour of Chambri Lakes, Aibom – Wagu

You will do a tour to Aibom in the Chambri lakes, with cultural tours, meeting carvers and women at work fishing, giving a rare insight into this traditional way of life that is still in existence today. Aibom is home to the best pots in the Sepik. After lunch, you will move upstream to Wagu Village to see if there is a chance to join in the crocodile hunt with the village. Overnight in the village guest house.

Day 5 Bird watching and Middle Sepik – Pagwi - Wewak

Pre-breakfast Lesser Bird of Paradise viewing. After breakfast, you will be transferred from Wagu to Pagwi. En route there are great opportunities for bird spotting and photography. Once in Pagwi, you will board your waiting vehicle and you will be transferred to Wewak.

Day 6 – Transfer to the airport.

THE MIGHTY SEPIK RIVER

The Sepik River stretches from Telefomin in Sandaun Province to its outlet into the Bismarck Sea at Kopar village. There are many villages and hamlets in this culturally and environmentally rich area. The largest local animal is the wild pig - which is tamed and kept in the villages for use at cultural gatherings and compensation ceremonies. There are many other natural animal inhabitants, such as snakes, lizards, bandicoots, rats and above all birds. Many of the village songs and dances centre on indigenous animals and birds - the largest of which is the angry-looking flightless cassowary, a relative of the emu and the second heaviest bird on the planet.

The Middle Sepik is the last remaining area where the crocodile skin cutting initiation is still practiced. The villages in this region are more accessible and not so far apart in terms of travel time than on the more remote Upper Sepik. These villages have stood firm against the invasion of Christianity. They still retain their Haus Tambarans and practice their traditional customs including the initiation and scarification of young "crocodile men". Also, the villages are home to famous artists and their sought-after birds' head carvings.



The Upper Sepik villages are widely spread out with many taking a full day by motor canoe to reach. Therefore, a lot more fuel is required and consideration must be given for canoe time for the comfort of visitors (long days in canoes under the fierce sun can cause acute sunburn etc.).

In the Lower Sepik region the river is wide, with only wild sugar cane growing along the banks, and not so pretty or interesting. The highest cost components are the vehicle transfers to and from the river and the very high cost of fuel, sadly, both are beyond our control.



All the villages included in our expeditions are carefully chosen to offer a wide variety of distinctive cultural styles; including their extensive carved artifacts, both displayed and for sale, providing our visitors with interesting cultural contrasts and experiences. Witnessing daily activities, like the carving of artifacts, making a Morata house roof out of sago palms, the long, daily, task of sago production (sago is a staple Sepik starchy food which requires lengthy processing), fishing and so on, is encouraged.



All expeditions start and end with a night at the In Wewak Boutique Hotel. It is only a few years old, very well managed and maintained, with good security – it has high standards throughout. The views are great, the pool is cooling, the rooms are all clean, airy and comfortable and the food and ambience is pleasant.

Whilst on the expeditions, guests are accommodated in village guesthouses where facilities are very basic: the expedition company provides all a mattress, clean bedding, and mosquito nets. Toilet facilities are simple – most often a “long drop” - a hole in the ground - serves as the toilet inside a bamboo cubicle – but these toilets are reserved for guests and not used by the whole village. Washing/showers is either in the Sepik River (villager style), or two buckets of water and scoop in a bamboo private cubicle under the skies. Visitors will experience life like a villager - BUT with “washing machine cleaned sheets” and all bedding items, crockery and utensils brought in, plus their own toilet and washing areas.