



PAPUA NEW GUINEA: MOUNT HAGEN FESTIVAL - A LUXURY SMALL GROUP JOURNEY (2025)

Experience intimate, once-in-a-lifetime access to vibrant tribal cultures that have remained unchanged for centuries.

Small Group Journeys, Luxury Small Group Journeys



Australia, New Zealand & South
Pacific, Papua New Guinea



13 days from AU\$30,755 pp



16 Guests

Journey Overview

Experience intimate, once-in-a-lifetime access to vibrant tribal cultures that have remained unchanged for centuries, cruising an exotic river and exploring one of the most remote corners of the globe on a scenic journey that culminates with the spectacular celebration of the Mount Hagen Cultural Show.

Journey Highlights

- Enjoy two days at the world-renowned Mount Hagen Cultural Show as nearly 100 tribes gather to honour their heritage with a dazzling spectacle of song, dance, pageantry and tradition
- Take a three-night cruise on the Karawari River, winding past unspoiled villages where everyday life revolves around the river, and marvelling at the diverse landscapes, pristine rainforests and exotic birdlife of the Sepik Region
- Relish intimate interactions with distinctive cultures spanning the lowlands of the Sepik Region and the highlands of Mount Hagen, including the flamboyant Huli Wigmen, whose dances and songs are fashioned after the mating rituals of the bird of paradise



Itinerary

Day 1: Arrive Brisbane, Australia

Arrive in Brisbane, where you are met and transferred to your hotel. Refresh from your travels and prepare for the exciting journey ahead. This evening, enjoy a welcome dinner served at the hotel.

Hyatt Regency Brisbane | Meals: D

Day 2: Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea | Island Gateway

Fly to Papua New Guinea, an island chain of undisturbed Indigenous tribes and sweeping natural beauty. Arrive in Port Moresby and visit the Port Moresby Nature Park, where you are introduced to the nation's distinctive cultures and hundreds of rare native animal species, including tree kangaroo. Transfer to your hotel nestled in a lush botanical garden.

Airways Hotel | Meals: BLD

Day 3: Port Moresby | Varirata National Park

Early this morning, head out to the Sogeri Plateau and Varirata National Park. En route, visit the Bomana War Cemetery, the largest World War II cemetery in the Pacific, where those who lost their lives fighting on Bougainville Island and the former territory of Papua are buried. Continue on a scenic drive to the countryside and the Sogeri Plateau, which is almost 610 metres above sea level. This is a great viewing point and offers an excellent opportunity for birdwatching. Along the way, you might spot local wildlife including wallabies, bandicoots, cassowaries and deer and take in stunning views of Rauna Falls, the Laloki River and Varirata National Park.

Airways Hotel | Meals: BLD

Day 4: Mount Hagen | Cultures of the Highland People

Fly to Mount Hagen. Upon arrival, embark on a visit to the highlands area, stopping at a local settlement of the iconic Huli tribe. These highland people are admired for the practice of bilas (elaborate body decoration), face painting and colourfully-decorated wigs of feathers, flowers and moss. Visit another local village before transferring to your lodge for the evening.

Rondon Ridge | Meals: BLD

Day 5: Mount Hagen | The Melpa People

Continue your explorations of the gorgeous highlands area of Mount Hagen in the fertile Wahgi Valley. Take a moment to admire the surrounding area filled with mountain ranges, covered with lush tropical rainforest, rugged limestone bluffs and valleys dotted with small traditional farming communities. Then, discover the traditions and customs of the Melpa People. First contact with the Melpa was made in the mid-1930s. Visit local villages where the villagers will share their fascinating tribal traditions, such as the rites of widowed women, the ceremonies surrounding marriage and funerals, the traditions of tribal warfare and the day-to-day life of the Melpa people.

Rondon Ridge | Meals: BLD

Day 6: Sepik Region | Secluded Riverine Wilderness

This morning, board your charter flight to a private airstrip secluded deep within the riverine wilderness of the Sepik Region. Upon arrival, transfer by small boat to your lodge, where you are greeted with lunch. After settling in, embark on a river safari exploring the Karawari, a remote tributary of the mighty Sepik. This region is one of the most remote and unspoiled destinations in all of Papua New Guinea. Here, the river is central to daily life, with men paddling narrow dugout canoes full of goods for trade, women fishing or making meals and children joyfully splashing along the river bank. Watch for examples of tribal art on display; each village boasts a unique style and every villager is an artisan. Notice there are no roads or shops — the people live completely off the land and river, weaving baskets for catching fish and gathering their staple food, the sago palm. This afternoon, visit a nearby village to learn how this vital resource is harvested and prepared for consumption by local tribal members.

Karawari Lodge | Meals: BLD

Day 7: Sepik Region | Cast off for Adventure

Today, board Sepik Spirit, your floating home for the next three nights. Settle into life aboard this three-level, 30-metre river cruiser. Onboard amenities include a lounge, dining room, bar, screened-in observation deck, air conditioning and nine comfortable cabins with en suite bathrooms. Your riverboat home is an oasis in this remote jungle, affording an exceptional vantage point on the riverine wilderness around you. After lunch on board, embark on your voyage of discovery along the Karawari River.

'Sepik Spirit' | Meals: BLD

Day 8: Sepik Region | Villages of Black Water Lake

After breakfast aboard, disembark for a full-day excursion to the remote villages of Black Water Lake. Bask in your warm island welcome as you observe a way of life that has remained largely unchanged for centuries. Learn about the local rituals, warfare, ceremonies and ancestral beliefs, visiting the various houses of the village. Browse tribal handicrafts such as masks, flutes and spirit figures in the villages' low-pressure markets. Relax with a picnic by the forested banks of the Karawari River, watching as local men gather on their clan's bench, children paddle canoes to school and women fish with hand lines.

'Sepik Spirit' | Meals: BLD

Day 9: Sepik Region | Tribes of the Mumeri & Mindimbit

Disembark onto the banks of Mumeri, a remote village whose people have preserved their ancestral traditions for centuries. Take in the same warm village welcome enjoyed here by pioneering anthropologist Margaret Mead over 80 years ago. Next, cruise to the confluence of the Krosmeri and Karawari rivers, where you rendezvous with Sepik Spirit for lunch. Continue on to visit the village of Mindimbit, taking in the spectacular carvings and elaborate coming-of-age rituals of the locals. Rejoin Sepik Spirit for your final night aboard, enjoying a relaxing Scenic Sundowner as you cruise back toward Karawari.

'Sepik Spirit' | Meals: BLD

Day 10: Mount Hagen | Voices of the Sing Sing Festival

This morning, fly by private charter to Mount Hagen. On approach, watch the mountains rise and then fall away as you descend into the verdant Wahgi Valley. Upon arrival, enjoy the first of two days at the Mount Hagen Cultural Show, a festive gathering of more than 50 coastal, lowland and highland tribal groups. Gain insider access to a privileged experience few travellers can claim as you immerse yourself in a festival of the locals, for the locals — a bold, joyful proclamation of tribal pride.

Rondon Ridge | Meals: BLD

Day 11: Mount Hagen | Spectacular Cultural Show

Enjoy another day experiencing the sing sing festival. Marvel as the participants engage in sing sings, lively ancestral songs and dances displaying their diverse and distinctive cultural heritages. Witness an unmatched spectacle of colour, music and motion as heirloom feathered headdresses, brilliantly painted faces and dyed grass skirts weave to the driving beat of traditional drums and the rousing voices of the tribesmen. Lose yourself in the sights and sounds of the rollicking festival, gaining a deeper insight into the enduring traditions that help define this unique corner of the world. This afternoon, return to Port Moresby.

Airways Hotel | Meals: BLD

Day 12: Brisbane, Australia | A Parting Glimpse

Today, fly to Brisbane. Tonight, enjoy a farewell dinner and recap your amazing experience with your fellow travellers.

Hyatt Regency Brisbane | Meals: BD

Day 13: Depart Brisbane

After breakfast, you are transferred to the airport for your departure.

Meals: B

Journey Details

Internal Air Included: Brisbane/Port Moresby/Mount Hagen/Sepik Region/Mount Hagen/Port Moresby/Brisbane
Minimum age is 10 years.

First group event: welcome dinner at 6:00 p.m. on Day 1.

Last group event: farewell dinner at 6:00 p.m. on Day 12.

Departures are guaranteed to operate with a minimum of 8 guests.

Program Note: Travel in this remote region entails lodging in basic accommodations and active elements such as walking over steep, uneven jungle terrain.

Included with every Luxury Small Group Journey

- English-Speaking Resident Tour Director® and Local Guides
- Hand-Selected Luxury Accommodations
- Airport Meet and Greet with Private Transfers
- Travelling Bell Boy® Luggage Handling
- Full Breakfast Daily; Select Lunches and Dinners
- Traveller's Valet® Laundry Service
- Internet Access
- Entrance Fees, Taxes and All Gratuities Except Resident Tour Director
- 24/7 A&K On-Call Support
- Guaranteed Departures with Just Two Guests

Customise this Journey

Talk to one of our expert Journey Designers or your travel agent about booking this tour as a private journey for your own small group with family or friends. Or, if you would prefer to travel privately, find out more about creating the perfect bespoke Tailor-Made Journey based on this itinerary.

Map



Dates & Pricing

Prices are in AUD, per person, based on double occupancy

Aug 7, 2025 - Aug 19, 2025

Price	Single Supplement	Internal Air (From)	Availability
AU\$30,755 pp	AU\$9,175	Included	Call for Availability

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