



## Kokoda Journeys

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### What sort of assistance do you provide with preparation?

Considering the unique and challenging nature of the Kokoda Track; we believe that it is important to focus on a thorough preparation process both physically and mentally. We provide a 6 month preparation program, including a specific physical conditioning prescription, group preparation walks and a team expedition weekend prior to the trip.

We like to think of our approach as a 6 month journey which begins with the pre-trek preparation phase and culminates in the 9 day trek. Even after the trek we provide a compilation DVD of photos and a reunion event. Many of our clients are life long friends now and continue to be involved in our Free Spirit Adventures Club and other adventures.

#### What size groups do you take?

We take a **maximum of 15** people on all of our treks. Small groups are better for the environmental and social impact on the communities along the track, group dynamics are much better and you can be assured of optimal service and attention to your individual safety.

#### How many days do you allow for the trek?

We have taken a group across the track in 6 days but we usually follow a 9 Day trek itinerary which gives you plenty of time to do the trek at a sensible pace and still have time to take in the scenery, explore villages, get to know the locals and pay our respects to those who fought in the Kokoda campaign. We allow time for side trips to sites of historical significance and flexibility for unexpected delays due to bad weather or illness.

#### What sort of food do you provide during the trek?

Food is an important part of the trekking experience. We provide fresh, nutritious and tasty meals prepared by our talented cooking crew.

- *Breakfast* – cereal, fruit, damper, juice, tea & coffee
- *Lunch* – Picnic style eg; Dry biscuits, cheese, cold meats, tuna, sardines, spreads, tea & coffee, juice, noodles, pita bread, fruit, nuts etc
- *Dinner* – pre-dinner soup, pasta, rice, chicken, fish, curries, stew, fresh local vegetables etc
- *Beverages with every meal* - juices, tea, fresh brewed PNG coffee, hot chocolate

#### Where do you stay before and after the trek whilst on the way in and out of Pt Moresby and how much should I budget for accommodation and meals?

**We stay at Cairns Colonial Club Resort on the way to PNG & Loloata Island Resort** after the trek. (Includes all meals on Loloata Island) \* 2011 Price \$440 for the 2 nights.

*\*Meals would normally cost about \$150-\$200AUD at hotels in Pt Moresby*

### Do I need an entry visa to get into PNG?

Yes, a PNG entry visa can be purchased on arrival at Pt Moresby airport for 100Kina (approx \$50 AUD) It only takes a couple of minutes and saves you sending your passport to Canberra. If you would prefer to obtain your visa from the PNG High Commission in Canberra prior to your trip, please allow at least 2 months and refer to the following website; [www.pngcanberra.org](http://www.pngcanberra.org)

### What flights do I need to book to and from PNG and what is the price of the airfares?

The following flights are the best combination of flights that connect with each other and allow time for clearing immigration & customs. They include domestic connections from Adelaide to Cairns, returning via Brisbane and international flights between Cairns and Pt. Moresby, returning to Brisbane.

#### The Best Flights

##### Flights to PNG

Adelaide to Cairns – overnight in Cairns

Next day is a short flight from Cairns to Pt. Moresby

##### Return Flights

Pt Moresby - Brisbane

Brisbane - Adelaide

*\*Prices are subject to change due to currency fluctuations & fuel surcharges- Airfares usually total approx \$950*

### What travel insurance do I need?

We recommend Covermore Travel Insurance (approx \$100 – 140, depending on age and medical history) Travel insurance is a mandatory requirement for trekking the Kokoda Trail.

We recommend taking out travel insurance at the time of full payment and ticketing as the policy will cover you from the date of issue for any non refundable change and/or cancellation fees due to unforeseen circumstances. The discounted airfares are non refundable and change fees apply if amendments are required. It is a fully comprehensive policy and includes medi-vac which is a requirement for trekking the Kokoda. The policy gives you 100% cover with no excess payable.

### How do I make my travel arrangements?

All of our PNG Travel is booked through our Travel Manager - Andrea Turner

Licensed Travel Agent # TTA 198473

Andrea has extensive experience in the airline & adventure travel industry and is a Kokoda specialist.

She has a great attitude and is a positive problem-solver. Andrea has walked the Kokoda Trail and is a preferred agent for Air Nuigini and PNG accommodations.

**For personalized service and best deals for airfares and travel insurance, Contact:**

[andreat@travelmanagers.com.au](mailto:andreat@travelmanagers.com.au) **Mobile:** 0414596945

### Do I need a personal porter and how much do they cost?

We recommend getting a personal porter as it helps the local economy and helps you get through the trek with less risk of injury or illness. You'll enjoy the journey more and be very well supported.

**Personal Porter Fee:** \$650 (covers wages, transport, food & insurance)

### Is tipping porters expected and if so, how much should I tip?

Tipping is not mandatory but you will definitely want to tip your porter or give them a gift at the completion of the trek to show your appreciation for their hard work and valuable support throughout the journey.

How much you tip is up to your discretion but as a guide average tipping would include a \$80kina contribution to the group staff pool ( Group guides, cooks & porters that carry food and camping equipment) and 80kina or a gift of your choice for your personal porter.

### How much should I budget for incidental spending?

For discretionary spending on incidentals in Pt Moresby and on the track we recommend to bring an extra 100Kina (\$50AUD) in case you wish to purchase extra fruit, soft drinks etc or to donate \$5-10Kina for incidentals such as photo with Fuzzy Wuzzy or visiting village museums where landowners may ask for a small visitation fee (usually \$10Kina)

### What safety precautions do you take?

We take the safety and welfare of our trekkers and staff very seriously, so much so that we pay particular attention to preparing people properly for the physical, mental and emotional demands of the trek and educating them about how to prevent illness and injury whilst on the trek.

- ❖ We require **mandatory medical clearances** which are not just a letter signed by your doctor. We ask your doctor to check for specific medical conditions that may be of concern on the Kokoda Track.
  
- ❖ We also require all of our trekkers to participate in what we call a **'Remote Adventure Preparation Program'** which includes:
  - A 12 week **'Kokoda Specific' conditioning** prescription
  - Monthly **group preparation treks**
  - **Pre-trek Expedition Weekend** which tests their physical, mental & emotional preparedness for the trek. (this is the best way to test that a person is medically fit and physically ready to tackle Kokoda conditions) We know all of our trekkers personally prior to the trek and they are confident in their ability to complete the trek successfully.
  
- ❖ We provide an **experienced Australian Guide with Wilderness First Aid & Remote Area Emergency Response qualifications** – including advanced CPR skills updated annually. Our Principal Australian Guide has 25 years experience in physical and outdoor education, exercise physiology, sports injury prevention and treatment qualifications.
  
- ❖ Having completed 17 treks so far, we have taken over 200 people over the track in both directions and all conditions, ageing from 14 to 74 years of age , with a **100% success rate** – no medivacs
  
- ❖ **Our PNG Guides also have first aid qualifications and emergency training, including river crossing safety & emergency evac procedures.**
  
- ❖ **We have reliable Emergency Communications** including a Satellite Phone connection to 24hr Doctor support & VHF Radios at the front and back of the trek group that link to the village radio network and Kokoda Track Authority in Pt Moresby.

## PNG Commercial Tourism License Requirements

In 2010 new regulations were announced for trekking providers operating on the Kokoda Track. Free Spirit Adventures partners with Getaway Trekking PNG who have been operating on the track for several years and are a locally registered trek operator. Together we comply with all of the new regulations and provide what we believe to be a high quality/value for money service.

### 1. Legal Requirement to work with a PNG Registered Company

We partner with Getaway Trekking PNG which is a PNG registered company with offices in Pt Moresby, Cairns and Melbourne. Together we employ PNG Guides, cooks, porters & drivers.

### 2. First Aid Qualifications & Medical Kits

Our guides are comprehensively trained in Wilderness first Aid & Remote Area Emergency Response procedures and we carry a comprehensive group medical kit.

### 3. Insurance

Our partner – Getaway Trekking PNG is fully covered with Public Liability Insurance.

### 4. Communications

Our Guides carry a VHF radio linked to the village radio network and Kokoda Track Authority, as well as a Satellite Phone with a speed dial connection to Australian & Pt Moresby office , 24hr doctor support, Pt. Moresby Hospital and medivac helicopter.

### 5. Group Size

Our maximum group size is 15. This ensures the safety and quality of your experience and has less impact on village infrastructure.

### 6. Trekking Permits

All visitors to the Kokoda Track must hold an official 'Kokoda Track Authority' (KTA) Trekking Permit. An official KTA Trek permit for every trekker is included in our package.

### 7. Respect for Culture & Landownership

We respect the cultural values of landowners along the track, including their religious and social values related to the Sabbath, alcohol, modesty etc. We have many friendships with landowners along the trail, including those who are the caretakers of many of the military sites of significance and those who live in some of the more remote villages. Having a good rapport with landowners is a real plus.

### 8. Porter Welfare

We ensure that maximum pack weight for porters does not exceed 25kgs and in most cases is on average about 20kgs or less.

We abide by the principles of the International Porter Protection Group (IPPG); supplying good quality food, equipment and accommodation for our porters and transport for them back to their homes after the trek.



The Kokoda Track Foundation  
GOLD TREK OPERATOR PARTNER

## Kokoda Trek Regulation & Prices

From 2010 all Kokoda Trek Operators have to comply with these new conditions for operating under a *Commercial Tourism License*. (see compliance criteria above) Except for a small minority who have taken advantage of a lack of regulation up until recently; the majority of long term operators (5 years+) already comply with the regulations and are well established and experienced.

In fact most Kokoda Trek operators provide an equally good quality service. We have worked with a number of different logistics providers over the last 9 years and can say that the quality of service from the local PNG guides and porters is equally good who ever you go with. The main difference between companies is the quality of transport, hotels, food, logistical support, preparation support, safety training & communications and ratio of resources to demand based on the number of treks they run.

This explains the wide range of price variation between some tour companies. The number of trekkers who visit Kokoda each year has grown significantly since we started trekking there 9 years ago. Thus demand has increased significantly as has the number of tour operators. In an attempt to differentiate themselves from other operators most trekking companies will vary the quality of inclusions in their package to reduce the cost or add value. It is therefore difficult to compare apples to apples.

**Prices can vary anywhere from \$2500 - \$7000+, depending on what is included in the package.**

Most of the *budget operators* will use the services of local guides who do not have a comprehensive understanding of the military history and are not qualified in wilderness first aid and remote area emergency response skills. They may also use lower quality accommodation and transport arrangements or pay their staff lower wages. Some will even reduce costs by not providing guides with sat phones or radios that work and will rarely provide adequate training in first aid, hygiene, history, safety.

The *more expensive operators* provide a higher quality service, high quality accommodation, and all the gear and trimmings of a gold class service.

**You can guarantee that you'll always get what you pay for.**

**The choice** then comes down to the quality of service you expect, the inclusions that you want in the package or would prefer to pay for separately and the style of trek you are looking for.

*See below for 10 reasons why people choose Free Spirit Adventures*

## 10 Reasons Why People Choose Free Spirit Adventures as a preferred provider of Kokoda Track Journeys

1. A local operator who you can meet with face to face, have a personal conversation with and train with, so we can provide advice throughout your preparation and know your capabilities.
2. A genuine wilderness experience where you have time to take in the beautiful sights, sounds and smells of the PNG jungle, together with the culture and spirit of its people.
3. A thorough understanding of the military history – where, when and how things took place – and the time to reflect and pay respects to those who served there.
4. Traveling with a group of people you know and trust; having met everyone and forged friendships with them before the trek.
5. Being guided by an experienced and highly qualified Australian guide who knows you well, will be aware of your strengths and weaknesses and will be willing to do what ever it takes to ensure that you have a fun , enjoyable, safe and successful trek.
6. Having the opportunity to be guided not only on the track but through a pre-trek program that will thoroughly prepare you for the unique demands of this remote adventure experience – so that you have the utmost confidence in your readiness to take it in your stride and enjoy the journey.
7. A style that's not too 'gung ho' but at the same time professional and organised. A guide with a sense of humour and the ability to stay calm under pressure and deal with unexpected circumstances. (most guides have these qualities)
8. A package that includes good quality accommodation in a relaxing and secure location with all delicious meals provided.
9. Trek food that is fresh, hygienically prepared and interesting.
10. Local guides and porters who have many friends in villages along the way, love to sing and love to serve and share their culture with you.

If safety, enjoyment, quality of service and value for your investment of time and money is a priority for you, we'd love to have you join one of our treks.

If you have further questions, please give us a call, send us an email or drop in for a chat.

We look forward to sharing a memorable adventure with you.

*Wayne Enright*  
*Free Spirit Adventures*