



Milne Bay Ecotourism

Visitor Information Guide



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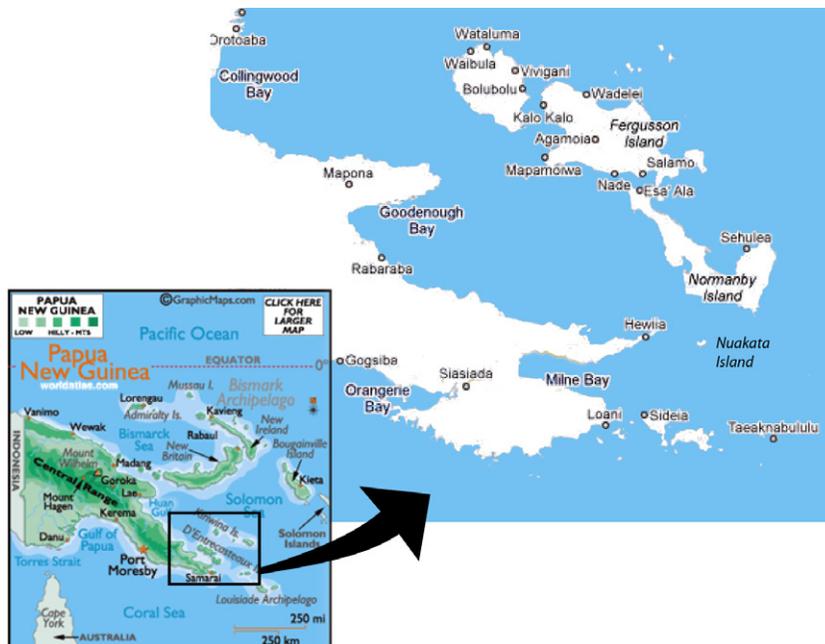
Introduction

MILNE BAY is one of the world's great cultural and biological diversity hotspots. Travel to Milne Bay offers insights into local culture and language, experience with marine and terrestrial wildlife like snorkelling and bird watching, outdoor sports, trekking, artefacts, stories about World War II history, and simple relaxation.

Along with the beauty and richness of life, there are challenges to travelling in this extremely remote location.

This information guide is intended to provide you with interesting and useful information to help you have the best possible holiday in Milne Bay.

It is important to travel responsibly, which means respecting the local culture and environment as you travel and gain experiences. We have included tips on how to achieve this balance of tolerance and well-being.



All about Milne Bay

MILNE BAY PROVINCE

MILNE BAY is Papua New Guinea's (PNG's) eastern most province and consists of about 600 islands of which 160 are inhabited. The Milne Bay province abounds with natural and cultural attractions; the whole region is a biodiversity hotspot. As part of the coral triangle and the meeting place of the Solomon and Coral Sea, the marine life is among the best in the world. The area also has a complex and ancient cultural heritage, which enhances visitor experience.

Alotau has been the capital of Milne Bay Province since 1968 (previously the capital was on Samarai Island). Alotau is surrounded by the Owen Stanley Ranges, a rainforest covered landscape which the Kokoda track crosses further inland. Alotau has various meanings including 'safe place' or 'bay of views' in the Suau language. The city has a commercial centre with industry and government services including schools, fire station, police station and a hospital. Market places sell hand woven baskets and other local handicrafts. It is peaceful and easy to get around Alotau with little development outside of the town centre and a relaxed pace of life.

To experience the majesty of Milne Bay, we recommend a visit to local Island Guest Houses. Tours can be arranged through Napatana Lodge and Mombi Onesimo (PNG Nature Tours, contact information provided in the useful resource section at the end of this information guide).

Some of the popular islands to visit in Milne Bay are:

- ❖ D'Entrecasteaux Island group (Normanby, Fergusson, Goodenough)
- ❖ The Trobriand Islands
- ❖ Samarai Island
- ❖ Nuakata Island
- ❖ Woodlark Island



NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

THE MILNE BAY PROVINCE is a biodiversity hotspot and is home to an incredible variety of natural environments, which offer exciting and new experiences. The area caters to many interests including bird watching for endemic bird of paradise species, snorkelling on world class reefs, trekking through pristine rainforest, and viewing hot springs and geysers. Milne Bay is home to many endemic orchid species, which can be seen across the region.



Normanby Island is excellent for bird watching, with a large number of endemic bird species, including Goldie's Bird of Paradise. Nuakata Island offers sensational snorkelling and diving opportunity. National Geographic awarded Milne Bay as a top snorkelling and diving destination in the world. Fergusson Island is known for cascading waterfalls and gushing hot geysers.

At each destination in Milne Bay, you will be surrounded by wildlife and stunning scenery. Dolphins and flying fish follow dinghies out to the islands, butterflies and birds are abundant, while at night, cus cus and flying foxes can be spotted in the rainforest canopy.

CULTURE

A VISIT TO Milne Bay offers the opportunity to experience a vibrant and welcoming local culture. As a tourist, you will be 'adopted' into the family that is caring for you. The area is characterised by many different cultures that maintain complex and strict traditional practices that ensure personal accountability for actions. The adherence to cultural norms ensures that the region is peaceful and stable. Many of the islands in the province are matrilineal, whereby women own the land and play a strong role in the community. Every village has its own atmosphere and cultural practices vary, so feel free to ask what is appropriate when you arrive.



Activities on the islands such as visiting ancestral skull caves, traditional dance performances and basket weaving allow you to enjoy the local culture firsthand. It is fascinating to experience this lifestyle and it is also a privilege. Respecting the local culture is key to travelling responsibly in Milne Bay.

The giving of gifts is a cornerstone of cultural bonds and while it is not expected, it builds relations. As a visitor, you could bring bags of flour, sugar and rice when you go out to the islands. In addition, if your arrival is unexpected, you have food that can be cooked straight away. Most locals chew betel nut with lime (ground coral) and mustard (a local plant). While you may not wish to partake in chewing, buying these goods at the local market and sharing them with locals is a great way to make friends where you stay.

Useful tips for your trip:

- ❖ Always ask upon arrival what is and is not culturally appropriate.
- ❖ Do not go anywhere uninvited – the villages are people's homes, not a tourist attraction.
- ❖ Hire a guide to help ensure you respect local culture.

RELIGION

RELIGION plays a central role in local culture. Approximately 96% of Papua New Guineans are Christian who attend church services regularly on Sundays. There are also many Seventh Day Adventists who attend church on Saturdays. Christian missionaries of various denominations began coming to Milne Bay from the 1700's to convert the local people. By the late 1800's, the local people began to adopt Christian belief systems. Dr William Bromilow was one of the first missionaries to arrive and began his teachings on Dobu Island. The bible was translated into the Dobu language, which was then used to convert people in nearby areas. Dobu is now the most widely spoken language in Milne Bay. If you would like to attend church while travelling, the Guest House owners are more than happy to let you join them. Of course, church attendance should in no way be considered a tourist attraction, as this would be offensive to your hosts.

Prior to the arrival of Christianity to Milne Bay, local people held traditional beliefs and worshipped their own gods. The traditional beliefs have been merged with Christian beliefs in some cases, or have been eradicated by the Christian doctrine. For example, cannibalism has ceased since the community adopted Christian views. Locals say that life in Milne Bay is peaceful compared to the warring tribal and clan-based culture that had previously existed.

WAR HISTORY

MILNE BAY was the site of a significant battle in 1942 between the Allied troops and the Japanese during WWII. Remnants of this turbulent time can be seen all over the region, such as shipwrecks and trenches. Nuakata Island Guest Houses offer hikes and snorkelling tours to some these fascinating sites. If you would like to learn more about this part of Milne Bay history, we recommend the book 'Milne Bay 1942' by Richard Reid.

LANGUAGE

THERE ARE OVER 800 official languages still in use in PNG as well as dialects, making it the most linguistically diverse place on earth. There are at least 55 languages spoken in the Milne bay, with huge diversity between languages. English is widely spoken throughout the province and all Guest House owners and operators have a good understanding of English. The main local languages are Tawala, Suau, Dobu, Wedau, Tok Pisin and Motu. The Dobu language is spoken on Normanby and Fergusson Island. The Auhelawa language is spoken on Nuakata Island.



Language is a big part of cultural identity. If you want to try a few exchanges, refer to the language appendix for some basic language. The local people will love it!

Milne Bay Ecotourism Experience

COMMUNITY-BASED ECOTOURISM

TO PRESERVE both human and natural heritage, the Milne Bay Province was visionary in its establishment of community-based ecotourism in 2005. This was necessary because PNG's natural heritage is threatened by logging, mining, and other destructive practices. Community-based ecotourism offers a realistic opportunity to protect biodiversity and support local conservation and culture, while empowering the local people to improve their quality of life. By staying in the island Guest Houses you are helping communities to achieve this goal.

Two people and their families were key to the launch of community-based ecotourism in the Milne Bay Province: Gretta Kwasnicka Todurai (Napatana Lodge) and Mombi Onesimo (PNG Nature Tours). Community-based ecotourism in Milne Bay was founded in Sewa Bay, Normanby Island at Saidowai Guest House.

ISLAND GUEST HOUSES & ATTRACTIONS

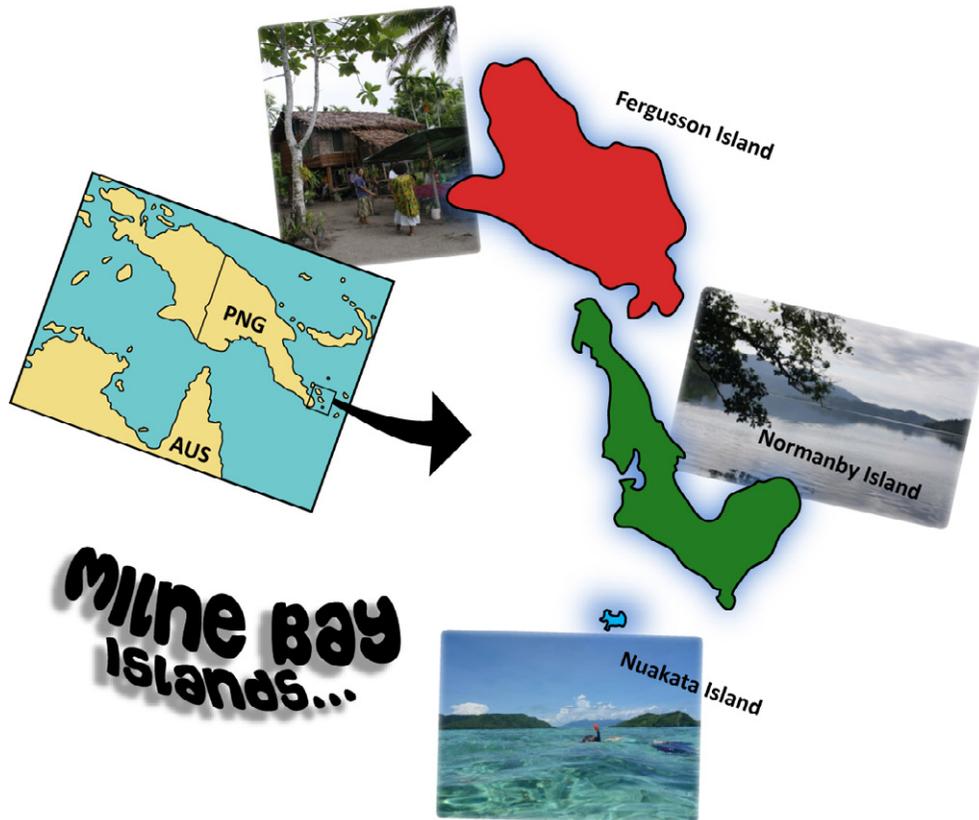
LOCALLY OWNED Guest Houses across several islands are working together to provide a network of ecotourism destinations. Currently there are seven Guest Houses to choose from, located on three islands (Normanby, Fergusson, Nuakata). All of the Guest Houses work with Napatana Lodge and PNG Nature tours. Check out the individual brochures on the website for more information about the village Guest Houses and the experiences they offer.

There is also a diving operation which offers excellent community-based diving tours (www.explorepng.com).

Normanby Island

VILLAGE LIFE Saidowi Guest House is set in the middle of a small village in peaceful Sewa Bay. Locals welcome you to experience village life with them and have a go at traditional skills, such as weaving. There is a stunning view into the Bay and lush rainforest surrounds the village. This is the founding place of ecotourism on the islands.

FOREST LIFE Sibonai Guest House is nestled in the rainforest where the sounds of the jungle will entertain you for hours. Hike through dense pristine rainforest to see the endemic Goldie's Bird of Paradise and other impressive flora and fauna. There are cool natural pools and streams to relax in after a day of hiking.



Fergusson Island

HOT SPRINGS DeiDei Guest House hosts world famous hot springs just a short walk from where you will be staying. Guides will cook your lunch in boiling pools while you gaze at spurting geysers or bathe in thermal streams. A visit to Budoya market will showcase a delicious range of local produce.

BEACH LIFE Waluma Guest House is a beach-front location with crashing waves and beautiful views. The local dance and theatre group provides top performances after a day of hiking, canoeing, snorkelling and relaxing. Ocean hot springs just offshore provide a unique swimming experience.

MANGROVE LIFE Gomwa Guest House is sheltered among mangroves that abound with birds, dugongs, and crocodiles. Hike to a rugged waterfall and swim in the cool waters. Wander past impressive gardens where the local people are growing their food, including yams, pineapples, taro, paw paw and coffee.

Nuakata Island

ISLAND LIFE Gadoa Guest House offers a relaxing and idyllic tropical island get away with world class snorkelling, excellent fishing and fantastic views from the mountain tops across the ocean. Take a day trip to uninhabited Bwelama Island where you can go bushwalking, relax on the sandy beach or snorkel on the stunning reef.

MARINE LIFE Bomatu Guest House is a beautifully handcrafted traditional Guest House with an excellent dance troupe and access to Daiwali Island for a day trip. Hiking to the skull and bat caves through rainforest offers a beautiful day of culture and wilderness. Snorkelling is sensational around the Guest House and on Daiwali Island.

All Guest Houses are traditionally built out of bush materials. There is no running water or electricity. The Guest Houses provide bucket washing and dug-out toilet facilities with simple but clean sleeping arrangements. A generator is available at DeiDei Guest House and Waluma Guest House for use at night. *For more information about the Guest Houses and the attractions, please refer to the online pdf brochures.*

Things to know before you go

HOW TO GET TO MILNE BAY



MILNE BAY can only be reached by air or sea due to the rugged terrain surrounding the province. Fly to the capital of Milne Bay, Alotau (Gurney airport) via Port Moresby (Jackson airport). Airlines PNG and Air Niugini both offer flights between Port Moresby and Alotau. Check with your travel agent for specials. If you are flying from Cairns it is about 2hrs to Port Moresby; it is about 1.5 hours from Pt Moresby to Alotau. You will need a few hours in between flights from Port Moresby to Alotau. If you are an international traveller, you will need to transfer from the international airport to the domestic airport (a short walk). Delays are common so bring a good book. There is a café in the international airport that serves meals.

Time Zone: GMT +10 hours.

Airlines:

- ❖ Air Niugini: www.airniugini.com.pg
- ❖ Airlines PNG: www.apng.com.

VISAS

VISAS are required to enter PNG. Visas can be purchased upon arrival by nationals of most countries, including UK, New Zealand, Australia, USA Japan and most western European countries. However it is best to check if a visa is required before departure with your nearest PNG embassy. A tourist visa costs K100 (accurate as at 2010). Make sure you have the exact money to avoid any delays; there is an ATM available in arrivals to withdraw Kina. The visa entitles you to 60 days of travel. Work is prohibited and proof of a return ticket is necessary to obtain a visa. For further information refer to the following website:

<http://www.pngcanberra.org/visas/visitor.htm>

MONEY & CURRENCY

THE LOCAL CURRENCY is Kina (PGK) written as K10. Money can be exchanged at Jackson airport or withdrawn from the ATMs in Alotau. There are two banks in Alotau (Westpac and Bank of South Pacific) that offer money exchange (bank hours are usually 9am-3pm) and ATM facilities. Many businesses in Alotau offer credit card services and cash is accepted everywhere.

If you leave Alotau, take all money that you will require; there are no banks or facilities on the islands. It is essential that you budget your trip prior to departure. Talk to your tour operator or local contact for current pricing. Take small notes and coins as there are no facilities to change big notes.

Currency converter website: www.coinmill.com.

TELECOMMUNICATION

ALOTAU has mobile phone reception, landlines and internet access. Internet can be unreliable. Napatana Lodge offers wifi internet service, as do many hotels in Alotau. There are several internet cafes available as well. It is useful to buy a PNG simcard in Alotau: Bmobile offers good service in Alotau and Digicel offers better service for the islands.

None of the village Guest Houses have landlines. Fergusson Island will have mobile reception by November 2010. Nuakata Island has mobile phone reception at certain points, and is unreliable. Ask Guest House owners for the right spot.

POLITICAL STABILITY & SAFETY

Most government associations and health organisations are obliged to inform you about the risks of travel to PNG. Also be informed that there is a thriving tourism industry that operates in an overall safe environment. The Milne Bay Province is widely considered the safest province in PNG. Some issues exist with crime and safety but this varies between provinces. Port Moresby is considered a dangerous city, so arrange a same-day connecting flight to Milne Bay (Alotau). Avoid exploring the surrounding area of the airport, unless you have arranged to be picked up and escorted to locations. There are security guards that will ensure your safety inside the airport at Port Moresby.

Milne Bay is isolated from other provinces and has a predominately matrilineal culture. Many issues related to crime and 'rascals', are not so prevalent in Milne Bay. However, some precaution must be taken. Listen to local advice about where and when to go. Basic common sense – do not walk around alone at night or venture into unfamiliar areas – will prevent most incidences.

HEALTH

AS VISITORS, your immune systems are unlikely to be adapted to local conditions. PNG and Milne Bay have a range of diseases and health issues that must be taken seriously, so see your physician before you depart. Vaccinations including Typhoid, Hepatitis A and Hepatitis B may be necessary. Malaria is a major issue in Milne Bay. Talk to your doctor about the best prevention option for you. The regular use of insect repellent is the best strategy to avoid being bitten. Look after any cuts or injuries very carefully (with antiseptic cream) as infection occurs easily.



Comprehensive travel insurance is a must in case of any emergencies. It is important to make sure that you are covered for the activities you wish to undertake, such as diving, trekking or snorkelling. Private hospitals in PNG will expect cash up front so be prepared for this if you need to go for any reason.

On a positive note, with adequate preparation and thought, you will have a safe trip. We provide general information that our group has found beneficial for travel in PNG but please note that everyone is responsible for their own health!

For further information about what to consider when travelling to PNG, check out the website: www.smarttraveller.gov.au.

Hospital facilities and pharmacies

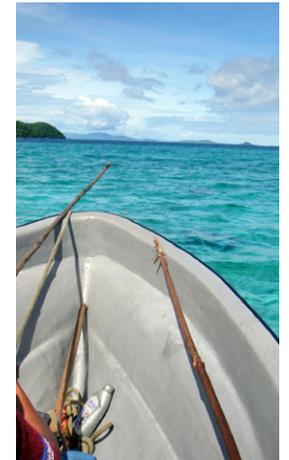
Alotau has one hospital and two pharmacies, as well as a clinic in East Cape, where treatment and supplies can be purchased. The hospital is one of the best provincial hospitals in the country with well trained doctors and nurses, however supplies can be short. Therefore it is essential to come completely prepared before arriving in PNG, with a full first aid and medical kit in case of any emergencies. These are best obtained from your travel doctor in your country of origin.

WHEN TO TRAVEL & CLIMATE

THE CLIMATE of Milne Bay is hot and tropical, with high humidity and 25-35°C temperatures during the day. The mainland and the islands can experience quite different weather patterns due to differences in topography throughout the region.

October to February is the hot and dry season and the most favourable time of year for travel. Seas are calm and storms unlikely. This is important if you wish to travel to the islands, as dinghy rides are the only means of transport and may be dangerous in rough seas. Fresh produce is most abundant at this time and the variety of tropical fruits is phenomenal; pineapples are lush!

March to October is the cool and wet season with strong winds; therefore storms and rough seas are likely. July to September is the highest rainfall period so rainstorms are frequent and severe.



WHAT TO EXPECT

MILNE BAY is not your average holiday destination in terms of environment, culture and infrastructure. Local people are friendly, polite and helpful and their culture unique and complex. You will be overwhelmed by kindness and generosity along with the breathtaking environment. The pace of life is relaxed, so be prepared for some things to take longer than you expect.

On the islands there are few facilities and general amenities are sparse. There is no running water or electricity, unless a generator is available (usually only for a few hours a day). There are no telecommunication systems. Transport methods are limited to walking, dinghy and paddling canoe. A reasonable level of fitness is required to undertake most activities; however, there are also a range of Guest House-based activities. In many of the Guest Houses you will be within a village so there will be people and children around most of the time. This may be a little overwhelming but the local people are polite, friendly and interested in meeting you.

Once you get to Milne Bay

TRANSPORT - IN & AROUND MILNE BAY

UPON ARRIVAL to Milne Bay (Gurney airport) you will need to get to Alotau town centre, 12 kilometres away. There are local taxis (cost about K30). You may wish to arrange an airport pick up through your local accommodation (Napatana Lodge offers this service).

To travel to the islands from Alotau, you first travel to East Cape on a PMV (public motor vehicle) (cost about K8.50 per person; you can rent the whole bus for K250). The ride takes about 1.5 hours and pick up is from the front of Masurina Business Lodge. It is best to get there early to ensure a seat and to get to East Cape early (by 10am) to arrange a dinghy.

From East Cape you will need to take a dinghy to the islands. Clearly state your destination and ask the dinghy drivers if and when they are departing for this destination. The frequency of dinghy departures depends on your destination, how many other people are travelling, and the chosen day of travel. Going to Salamo (main port for Fergusson Island) most dinghies depart Eastcape on Thursdays and Fridays. Most return on Mondays.

Avoid catching dinghies in the late afternoon as you may be out on the open sea at night. Also do not get on dinghies that appear over loaded as this can cause capsizes. Sundays are not a good day to travel as it is a day of rest, so plan your days of travel around this fact. Make arrangements with local guide, Napatana Lodge or PNG tours if you would like assistance.

It is useful to take fuel with you when you travel to the islands, because fuel purchase can be challenging to arrange and more expensive once out on the islands. Purchase plastic containers of fuel (20L containers) in Alotau and take it on the PMV with you to East Cape, and then to the islands. Bringing your own fuel provides more freedom to travel.



Useful tips for your trip:

- ❖ Take approximately 60 litres of fuel with you to the islands.
- ❖ Hire a guide to assist with organising transport (easier and less waiting time).
- ❖ Sundays are considered a day of rest, so it is not advisable to plan travel on Sundays within Milne Bay.
- ❖ Plan your trip ahead of time, arrange dingy travel 2 days in advance.
- ❖ Always depart as early as possible.

GENERAL FACILITIES IN ALOTAU

ALOTAU is a harbour town with a variety of attractions and shops. Some useful facilities available in Alotau include:

- ❖ Local markets
- ❖ Public transport
- ❖ Taxis
- ❖ Liquor shop (open Monday to Thursday)
- ❖ Bank
- ❖ ATM
- ❖ Pharmacy
- ❖ Hospital
- ❖ Internet access (at selected businesses)
- ❖ Post Office
- ❖ Supermarkets
- ❖ Hardware store
- ❖ Cafes
- ❖ Clothing and souvenir shops.

Note: As Sunday is a day of rest and religious worship, all shops are closed on Sundays and transport is difficult to arrange.

FOOD, DRINK AND EATING OUT

In Alotau

ALOTAU has a good range of food and drink options. The local market, open every day, boasts a variety of local produce ranging from delicious tropical fruits to live crabs and betel nut. There are small cafes in town where local and western meals are available at reasonable prices. These are only open during the day.

There are four supermarkets that offer a range of packaged food as well as some fresh food, which are open during normal business hours. Some supplies that you may want to take to the islands include tea, coffee, sugar, salt, toilet paper, cookies/chips/snacks, spices or personal care products. Do not feel shy about bringing foods that you will need! Local foods are quite different from what you are used to.

For dinner there are lodges and hotels that offer upmarket dining, both western and local cuisine. Hotel meals are more expensive but offer a higher quality than the average eatery.

Drinking water

THE TAP WATER in Alotau is safe to drink according to WHO standards (the water is treated with chlorine). On the islands, Guest Houses use rainwater or water from wells, which should be boiled before consumption. This is common practise in the Guest Houses. We suggest that you bring a water filter or purification tablets with you, just in case boiled water is not available. Upon arrival, ask your Guest House manager to boil water for you every day.

Local people do not drink nearly as much water as visitors so bring a drink bottle with you and make sure you request plenty of drinking water as it takes time to prepare. If you are very thirsty and there is no clean water, ask for a fresh coconut, which can be quickly and easily prepared for drinking.

On the Islands

LOCAL ISLAND FOOD is produced organically in gardens or is caught in the surrounding area. The cuisine is mostly vegetarian with fish and other seafood caught on the day. Fish supplies can be low. The local staples are starchy root vegetables such as taro, yam, sweet potato, and tapioca. Local greens are provided with most meals, like ibika, pumpkin tips and tulip. All meals are cooked over the fire, which gives them a lovely flavour — but cooking times are longer (about five hours), so give plenty of notice if you require a meal.



The tropical fruits at different times of the year are amazing, with the largest variety available from October to March. Common fruits include banana, mango, guava, pineapple, and passionfruit.

The availability of foods depends on the season and location. Some dietary requirements can be catered for. Please mention any dietary restrictions as soon as possible – and again immediately upon your arrival to the village. There are no spices (salt is only used sometimes) so you will need to bring any additional flavouring that you may want.

We suggest that you bring snacks with you as the time between meals will probably be longer than what you are used to. Don't be shy about this. In most cases, your culture will be very different from the one you are visiting. Make sure that you have whatever you need to have a pleasant stay. These villages are very, very remote, which is an extraordinary opportunity – but do travel prepared for your needs. The communities are subsistence communities with a different understanding of cuisine.



ACCOMMODATION IN ALOTAU

THERE ARE VARIOUS OPTIONS for accommodation in and around Alotau depending on the experience you desire and your budget. Napatana Lodge, one of the ecotourism pioneers in the region, offers reasonable prices for a high standard of accommodation close to the town centre (www.napatanalodge.com).

There are local Guest Houses that offer a genuine local experience, which are generally further out of town, but less expensive. A local and family run Guest House just out of Alotau is Bibiko Farm (www.bibikofarm.com). Just across the bay in Alotau is another excellent ecotourism accommodation Ulumani – Treetops Rainforest resort which offers a cultural experience (www.pngbackpacker.com)

On the islands you will have the opportunity to stay in a local style Guest House in a village setting. This is the best way to experience the local culture and environment.

For more information on where to stay and what to do in Alotau:

- ❖ www.pngtourism.org.pg
- ❖ www.milnebaytourism.gov.pg

WHAT TO WEAR

LOOSE COTTON is recommended for the hot and humid climate in Milne Bay. Do not wear revealing clothing as this is culturally inappropriate.

- ❖ Ladies: cover to below the knee; breasts and shoulders should be covered.
- ❖ Gentlemen: t-shirts and long shorts.

Swimming in bathers is only appropriate if you have permission from the local people and your guide. It is best to swim in board shorts and a t-shirt over your swim wear. There is definitely no nude or topless sunbathing allowed, as this is culturally inappropriate.

WHAT TO BRING

DUE TO THE REMOTENESS of many locations it is important to be prepared when travelling in Milne Bay, especially if you travel to the islands. While it is unlikely that you will have any problems, it is always better to be prepared for any possible situations. If you are travelling to the islands bring any medication you require, water proofing (plastic covers) for your backpacks and any for smaller items that need protection. A water proof camera is best. Any electronic gear is unable to be recharged on the islands; bring any necessary tools or replacement batteries. It is best to pack minimally and practically.

As well as appropriate clothing and general personal items, we list some items below that will make your journey easier and more enjoyable.

Health and Safety (essential):

- ❖ Full medical kit (incl. panadol, antibiotics, malaria treatment, Aquaeear)
- ❖ Full first aid kit (incl. water proof bandaids, prickly heat, antiseptic, antibiotic cream, tweezers, scissors)
- ❖ Insect repellent
- ❖ Mosquito net (insect repellent embedded)
- ❖ Water filter/purification tablets
- ❖ Sun protective wear (hat, sunglasses, long loose clothing)
- ❖ Sturdy footwear (croc's are also useful because of the humidity)
- ❖ Torch or night light (with replacement battery)

Activities

There are a range of activities available that require gear. A general list of what you may need:

- ❖ Binoculars (wildlife watching)
- ❖ Snorkelling gear
- ❖ Fishing gear
- ❖ Swim wear
- ❖ Lightweight tent
- ❖ Walking stick (steep ascents)



WHAT TO BRING (CONTINUED)

Transport

We recommend that you take approximately 60 litres of fuel to the islands with you to ensure freedom of movement, be it to other destinations around the island, activities, mainland return trip, or in case of emergency. It is easy to organise fuel containers in Alotau through your Guest House or at the local fuel station.

Food and Drink

This depends entirely on personal tastes and needs. You may be happy to eat only local foods (which are delicious!) but just in case, these are some suggestions:

- ❖ Snacks (biscuits, sweets, crackers)
- ❖ Rice
- ❖ Tea
- ❖ Coffee
- ❖ Spices
- ❖ Salt and pepper
- ❖ Sauces (tomato, chilli, soy)
- ❖ Milk powder
- ❖ Flour.

Gifts for Guesthouse family

Gifts for the guesthouse are an excellent way to build relations and show your appreciation: Here is an itemised list of customary gifts that are appreciated:

- ❖ Bags of rice
- ❖ Bags of sugar
- ❖ Bags of tea
- ❖ Coffee
- ❖ Flour
- ❖ Powdered milk (important for babies)
- ❖ Betel nut



PRICING & COSTS

IT IS IMPORTANT to make a budget before setting out for the islands as there are no ATM facilities once you leave Alotau. Inform your guide and/or Guest House of your budget and design an appropriate itinerary.

We recommend a base budget of approximately K150 per day for accommodation, food and activities. Always check with the Guest House managers about the prices and how much activities will cost before you take part in anything or agree to any entertainment. It may not be obvious that you are being offered an experience that costs money and it is easy to spend more than you plan.

Prices accurate in 2010; please contact local businesses for current pricing and costs:

PMV

- ❖ Alotau – Eastcape K8.50 (To hire the entire bus K250).

Dinghies

Public:

- ❖ Nuakata Island takes about 45mins and costs K20.
- ❖ Salamo (Fergusson Island) takes about 3 hours and costs K60.
- ❖ Sewa Bay (Normanby Island) takes about 2 hours and costs K30.

Private:

- ❖ Chartered from Eastcape approx K350.

Island Guest Houses

- ❖ Standard accommodation costs are K50 per person per night.
- ❖ Food K10 breakfast, K15 lunch, K20 dinner.
- ❖ Any activities undertaken through the Guest Houses have additional costs ranging from K10 to K100.

Prices vary between Guest Houses for accommodation, food and activities, but to ensure an adequate budget base your spending on these prices.

Useful resources

ALL PRICES and information were based on figures at the time of writing in 2010. Check with local business and organisations for current information. We have included websites that may be useful.

More information about what to do in Milne Bay:

- ❖ www.pngtourism.org.pg
- ❖ www.milnebaytourism.gov.pg

Visa:

- ❖ <http://www.pngcanberra.org/visas/visitor.htm>

Health:

- ❖ www.smartraveller.gov.au

Accommodation:

- ❖ www.napatanalodge.com
- ❖ www.bibikofarm.com
- ❖ www.pngbackpacker.com
- ❖ www.pngnaturetours.com

Diving:

- ❖ www.explorepng.com

Books on culture, nature and history in PNG and Milne Bay:

- ❖ *My Early Childhood in Niugini* by Sir Paulias Matane
- ❖ *Travels Through the Bible Lands* by Sir Paulias Matane
- ❖ *Under the Mango Tree* by Diana Frank
- ❖ *The Crocodile* by Sir Vincent Eri
- ❖ *My Mother Calls Me Yaltep* by Sir Ignatius Kilage
- ❖ *A Thousand Coloured Dreams* by Josephine Abaijah
- ❖ *At the Cross Road*, a collection of short PNG stories
- ❖ *Birds of New Guinea* by Bruce Beehler, Thane K Pratt and Dale Zimmerman
- ❖ *Milne Bay 1942* by Richard Reid.

Language appendix

THE LOCAL PEOPLE will be surprised and impressed when you greet them in their language!

The words are pronounced as they are spelled.

The **Dobu** language is widely spoken in Milne Bay, especially on Fergusson and Normanby Island. These are some useful words/sayings:

English	Dobu
Good morning	<i>Gona gona boboana</i>
Good afternoon	<i>Asinuwa nuwa boboana</i>
Goodnight	<i>Boi boi boboana</i>
Thankyou	<i>Kagutoki sinabuana</i>
Goodbye	<i>Kaiyon / taitaiyo</i>
Water	<i>Bwasi</i>
Food	<i>Kai kai</i>

On Nuakata Island the language spoken is the **Auhelawa** language. These are some useful words/sayings:

English	Auhelawa
Good morning	<i>Mala tom tom na mwana mwana</i>
Good afternoon	<i>Lavi lavi na mwana mwana</i>
Goodnight	<i>Boniyai na mwana mwana</i>
Thankyou	<i>Yauwedo Molaena</i>
Goodbye	<i>Kaiyon</i>
Water	<i>Bwahi</i>
Food	<i>Aiai</i>
Yes	<i>Ehe</i>
No	<i>Nigele</i>

HOW TO TRAVEL RESPONSIBLY IN MILNE BAY

To ensure you have a happy, safe and responsible trip in Milne Bay we recommend you hire a guide that will help you respect the local culture and limit your environmental impact.

The following golden rules for ecotourism have been provided by Conservation International (www.conservation.org).

As a traveller, you will have an impact on the environment and culture of the place you are visiting. Here are some rules of thumb to make this impact positive!

Keep these Golden Rules in mind when you travel:

- ❖ **Learn about your destination before you get there.** Read guidebooks, travel articles, histories, and/or novels by local authors and pay particular attention to customs such as greetings, appropriate dress, eating behaviours, etc. Being sensitive to these customs will increase local acceptance of you as a tourist and enrich your trip.
- ❖ **Follow established guidelines.** Ask your ecotour operator, guide and /or the local authorities what their guidelines are for limiting tourism's impact on the environment and local culture. Staying on trails, packing up your trash, and remaining set distances away from wildlife are a few ways to minimize your impact in sensitive areas.
- ❖ **Seek out and support locally-owned businesses.** Support local businesses during your ecotravels to ensure maximum community and conservation benefit from your tourist dollars.

PREPARING THE VISITOR INFORMATION GUIDE

This guide was part of an ecotourism research project carried out by Flinders University.

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