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# PNG EXPEDITION FOLLOWS 60,000 YEARS OF CULTURE & TRADE

*Venturing far off the beaten track into Papua New Guinea's heartland, a new expedition promises in-depth cultural immersion for adventurous travellers following the age-old trading routes of PNG's colourful tribal groups.*





Image Fiona Harper

PNG has long held a fascination for adventurous travellers interested in culturally diverse destinations. Spanning 60,000 years of human history, the *Voices on the Wind: 60,000 Years of Culture & Trade* expedition is led by archaeologist Dr Ben Shaw who is credited with discovering the earliest known village in PNG during 14 years researching PNG's culture and customs. Insider access to the most unforgettable local experiences have been curated, including a world first where two communities, who are part of the ancient Kula Trading Ring exchange system, will conduct negotiations and a Kula ceremony on Dobu island.

This is the first time Arcadia Expeditions have ventured into PNG's most fascinating regions – the Sepik River, the Highlands and the Coral Sea.

Travel Play Live spoke with David Mannix, Managing Director of Arcadia Expeditions to find out more about how the expedition came together and what travellers can expect from a PNG visit.



## CAN YOU ELABORATE ON THE INSPIRATION BEHIND THIS EXPEDITION?

I've been lucky enough to travel throughout PNG a few times, researching itineraries for a previous travel company I was working for, and I was absolutely blown away by what I saw on each occasion. What has always bewildered me is that, despite being our closest neighbour, most Australians know very little about PNG and the wealth of incredible experiences available to travellers.

My biggest motivation in creating this trip for my company Arcadia Expeditions was to allow curious travellers to meet the wonderful people of PNG, to give them the opportunity to participate in once-in-a-lifetime cultural and intellectual exchanges with a diverse variety of tribal peoples. By travelling in a small group of no more than 12, and taking a deep dive into three very different cultures (river, highlands and island), we hope our travellers can gain an authentic insight into what is the most culturally diverse country on the planet.





Image Fiona Harper

## WHAT'S YOUR ADVICE FOR TRAVELLERS WHO HAVEN'T VISITED PNG AND ARE UNSURE IF IT'S FOR THEM?

Understandably some people are wary of PNG. It still remains one of the last frontiers for adventurous travellers and with that comes uncertainty of what it will be like. PNG historically has had a reputation for being unsafe, yet this is only in certain regions of the country and very rarely aimed at tourists. For travel companies with a network of contacts throughout the country, as we have, trips can be conducted in a safe and comfortable manner.

Perhaps the greatest memory people have when visiting PNG, myself included, is just the overwhelming number of smiling faces you come across each day. Any concerns people have when they arrive into PNG is quickly dispelled when they see how warm and friendly the local people are.





Image Fiona Harper

## WHICH PARTS OF THE VOICES ON THE WIND EXPEDITION ARE YOU MOST EXCITED ABOUT?

The experience I'm most excited about is the two days we spend on Dobu, an idyllic tropical island in the Massim Archipelago. Here we have curated a world first for our group – witnessing a Kula Trading Ring negotiation and ceremony. For over 1,000 years, islands in this area have exchanged particular Kula valuables as a way keeping distant communities connected. During these complex negotiations, social prestige can be won or lost.

The father of modern anthropology, Bronislaw Malinowski, first brought this to the world's attention back in the 1920's. This custom still survives today and we have arranged for two trading communities to meet during our visit. We will spend our days mingling with local families, witnessing negotiations so that we can understand the nuances of the exchange and finish with a traditional feast and sing-sing with the villagers. It doesn't get any more immersive than that!





Image Fiona Harper

## WHAT TYPE OF TRAVELLER DOES AN EXPEDITION OF THIS NATURE APPEAL TO?

Our PNG expedition is for the intellectual curious traveller that is looking for something different. At Arcadia, each of our itineraries are woven together by a narrative, a story that we believe should be told. We bring in the very best experts to bring that story to life – in this case, Dr Ben Shaw, a renowned archaeologist who has been conducting research in PNG for most of his career.

We think the type of traveller who will enjoy this trip the most will not be afraid to get their hands dirty and to be OK with being off the tourist trail in remote places. Whilst we stay in some of PNG's most luxurious lodges throughout our trip, this is still very much an expedition and there will be times when our clients will have to 'rough it' a little in the more isolated locations on the itinerary, such as the Sepik River, where we stay in the guesthouses of local villagers. We are big believers that the best travel experiences happen outside of your comfort zone, but our team will be there every step of the way to ensure our clients are safe, comfortable and experiencing a journey that will enrich their lives.

**More information:** [Arcadia Expeditions](#)

