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PLAN YOUR TRIP

YOUR PLANNING TOOL KIT

Photos, itineraries, lists and suggestions
to help you put together your perfect trip

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UNDERSTAND PNG

GET MORE FROM YOUR TRIP

Learn about the big picture, so you
can make sense of what you see

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THIS EDITION WRITTEN AND RESEARCHED BY

Regis St Louis
Jean-Bernard Carillet, Dean Starnes

➤ **Every listing is recommended by our authors, and their favourite places are listed first**

➤ **Look out for these icons:**



Our author's top recommendation



A green or sustainable option



No payment required

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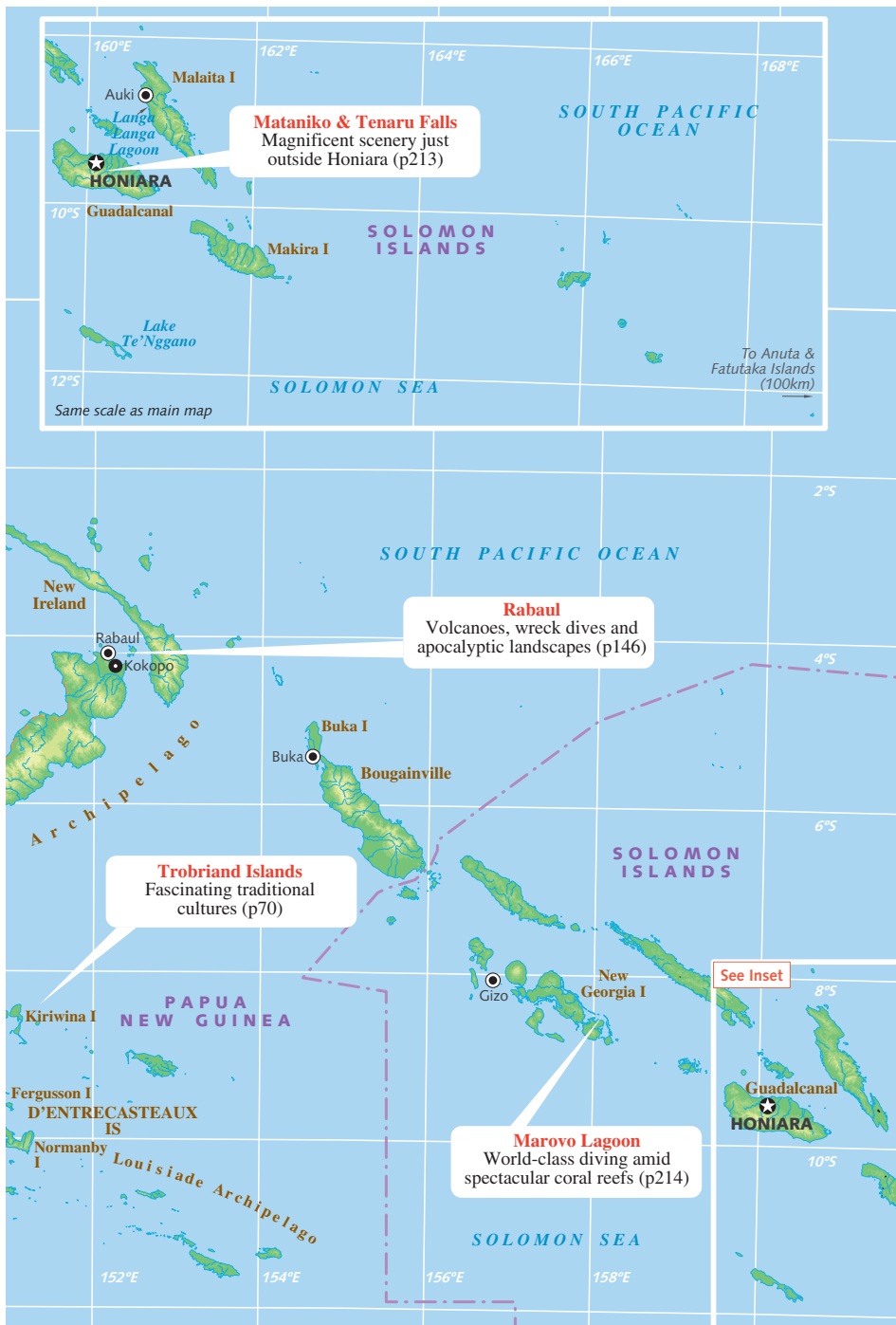
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› Papua New Guinea & Solomon Islands



Top Experiences >





OUR STORY

A beat-up old car, a few dollars in the pocket and a sense of adventure. In 1972 that's all Tony and Maureen Wheeler needed for the trip of a lifetime – across Europe and Asia overland to Australia. It took several months, and at the end – broke but inspired – they sat at their kitchen table writing and stapling together their first travel guide, *Across Asia on the Cheap*. Within a week they'd sold 1500 copies. Lonely Planet was born.

Today, Lonely Planet has offices in Melbourne, London and Oakland, with more than 600 staff and writers. We share Tony's belief that 'a great guidebook should do three things: inform, educate and amuse'.

OUR WRITERS



Regis St Louis

Coordinating Author; Port Moresby; Central, Oro & Milne Bay Provinces; Island Provinces

A big fan of off-the-beaten-path travel, Regis has fallen hard for the tropical islands and remote villages of Papua New Guinea. On this trip, he took over a dozen flights hopping across the New Guinea Islands, walked a long stretch of the Kokoda Track and took countless banana boat rides across often-rough seas. He also celebrated with Alotau residents at the magnificent Milne Bay Canoe and Kundu Festival, lingered on deserted islands in Kimbe Bay and caught an impromptu *singsing* at the paramount chief's village in the Trobriands. A longtime travel writer, Regis has contributed to over 30 Lonely Planet titles. He lives in Brooklyn, New York.

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Jean-Bernard Carillet

Solomon Islands Paris-based journalist and photographer Jean-Bernard is a die-hard island lover and diving instructor. He has clocked up numerous trips to the South Pacific, including four assignments to the Solomon Islands. On this research gig he searched for the best dive sites, the most thrilling adventure tours and the best value accommodations. His favourite experiences included swimming with dugongs off Tetepare Island, diving the reefs around Kicha Island

and crossing Marovo Lagoon by boat. Jean-Bernard has contributed to many Lonely Planet titles, in French and in English, and coordinated Lonely Planet diving guides. He also writes for travel and dive magazines.



Dean Starnes

Morobe & Madang Provinces, The Highlands, The Sepik Dean first visited PNG in 2007 when he worked on the 8th edition of this guide and has been bidding his time until he could return ever since. No stranger to off-the-map travel (he has also worked on Lonely Planet guides covering Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kyrgyzstan, Burundi and Mongolia), he finds the cultural diversity, genuinely hospitable people and rugged scenery hard to beat. When he's not

writing for Lonely Planet, Dean lives in New Zealand with his wife and his wife's cat (the cat's not thrilled about that arrangement). His website, www.deanstarnes.com, features photography and stories about his wayfaring ways.

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OVER MORE PAGE WRITERS

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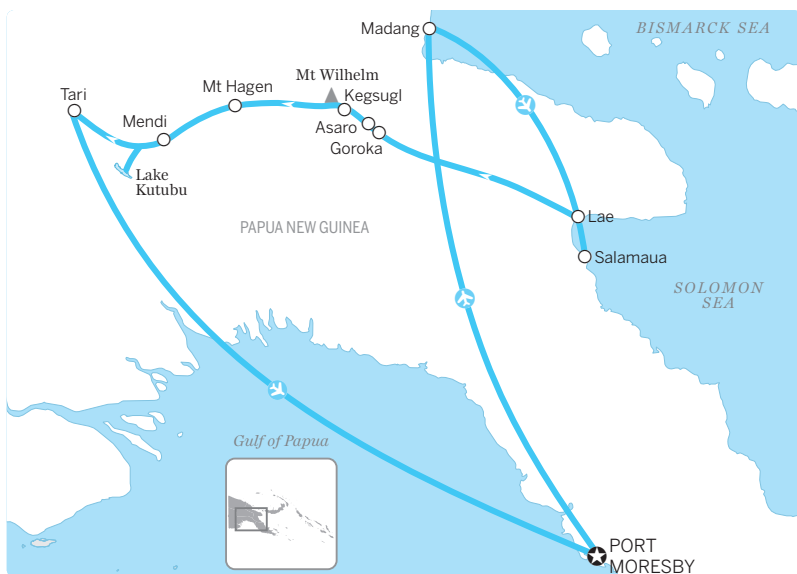
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Peter FitzSimons Peter writes for the *Sydney Morning Herald* and the *Sun-Herald*. He has played for the Wallabies, written 18 books and was Australia's best-selling nonfiction author in 2001 and 2004, the latter with his book *Kokoda*. Married to television presenter Lisa Wilkinson, Peter has three children and lives in Sydney.

Tim Flannery Tim is a scientist, explorer and writer. He has written several award-winning books including *The Future Eaters*, *Throwim Way Leg* (an account of his work as a biologist in New Guinea) and *The Weather Makers*. He lives in Sydney where he is a professor in the faculty of science at Macquarie University.

itineraries

Whether you've got six days or 60, these itineraries provide a starting point for the trip of a lifetime. Want more inspiration? Head online to lonelyplanet.com/thorntree to chat with other travellers.



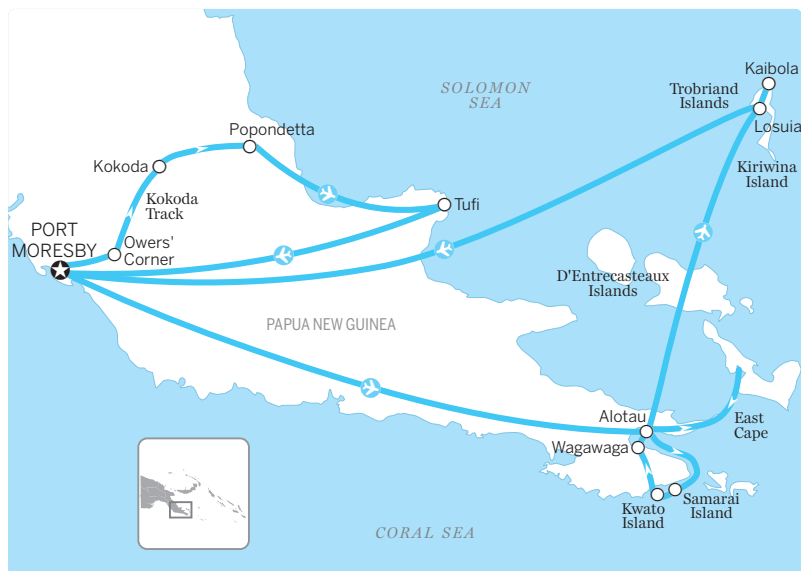
Two Weeks

Mainland Odyssey

Spend a day taking in the highlights of **Port Moresby** before flying up to pretty **Madang**. Spend a couple days diving or snorkelling and exploring nearby islands before going down to **Lae** for a look at the Rainforest Habitat and the picturesque village of **Salamaua**, one hour south. Next, take a bus up the Highlands Hwy to **Goroka** and see the Goroka Show, or visit the mudmen of **Asaro** just northwest of Goroka.

Continue up to **Kegsugl** – Betty's Place is a good base – for the amazing climb up **Mt Wilhelm**. After enjoying the view of both coasts, make the descent for travel onward to **Mt Hagen**, enjoying the spectacular scenery and a game of Highlands darts. If there's no clan warfare, continue along the highway to **Tari** via **Mendi** and stunning **Lake Kutubu**, but if the feisty Southern Highlanders are fighting you'd better do this leg by aeroplane – the beautiful Tari Basin is worth it. Don't miss the Huli Wigmen.

From Tari fly back to **Port Moresby** and, if time allows, spend a final day relaxing on Loloata Island.



Three to Four Weeks

Eastward Wander

Enjoy the relative comforts of **Port Moresby** before taking on one of PNG's most memorable – and challenging! – treks: the famous **Kokoda Track**. Get a feel for the challenges faced by the troops by walking for days along this rugged path, traversing chilly streams, visiting old bunker installations and war memorials and stopping at remote villages along the way. Take the classic route from **Owers' Corner**; afterwards, spend a day relaxing in the peaceful settlement of **Kokoda**. From there catch a PMV to **Popondetta** and fly on to **Tufi**, a stunning area of pretty coastline and steep fjord-like *rias*, with a lush, mountainous interior. Treat yourself to a couple nights at the Tufi Resort. Go diving or snorkelling, fish for your dinner, and explore the area by boat and kayak. From here spend a few nights in one or more of the village guesthouses in the area. Accommodation is rustic, but the setting is fantastic – white sand beaches, swaying palms, coral reefs at your doorstep, with guides who can lead you to waterfalls or on birdwatching expeditions.

Afterwards, fly from Tufi back to Port Moresby and on to **Alotau**, gateway to the idyllic beauty of Milne Bay. Spend a day taking in the market, the harbour and fine views from Top Town. Then catch an afternoon boat out to the colonial-era capital of **Samarai Island** and nearby **Kwato Island** – the bungalows of Nuli Sapi make a fine base for exploring the area. Afterwards, head back to Alotau and over to **Wagawaga**. Visit waterfalls, go for a dugout canoe trip on the Dawadawa River and enjoy serene views from Ulumani Treetops Lodge. Afterwards, cross back to Alotau, load up on provisions and fuel and head up to **East Cape** then by boat for an adventure exploring the **D'Entrecasteaux Islands**. Birdwatching, rain-forest walks, pretty beaches, coral reefs and peaceful villages are all part of the allure of this little-visited region.

For the final leg of the journey, fly from Alotau up to Losuia on **Kiriwina**, the largest of the Trobriand Islands. Spend three days visiting traditional villages, learning about yam power and magic and perhaps catching a *singsing* or a festive cricket match. Stay at least one night in a village; **Kaibola**, perched near a picturesque beach is a good option. From Kiriwina it's an easy flight back to Moresby.



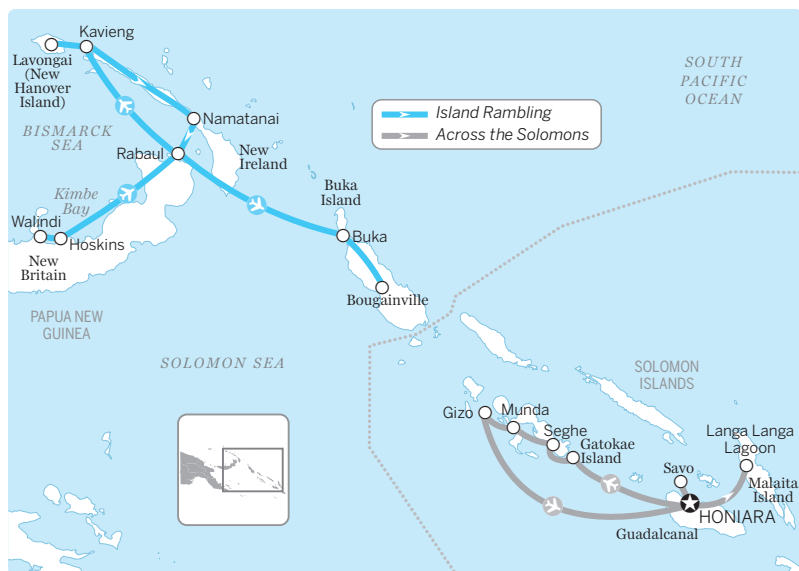
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REINHARD DIRSCHNER/GETTY IMAGES ©

» (above) Children making their way to school on a once-a-month traditional day on Kiriwina Island (p70)

» (left) The diving in Papua New Guinea is world renowned (p25)



Three Weeks Across the Solomons

World-class diving, virgin waves and idyllic island retreats: the Solomon Islands is a place for adventurers. Start your journey in **Honiara**. Take in the market, the wharf and national museum, then tack on a tour of the battlefields and pretty beaches outside the capital. Next take a boat to **Savo**, a volcanic island with boiling hot springs, a massive megapode field and pretty, tropical scenery. Spend a few days unwinding here before boating back to Honiara and catching an onward flight to **Gatokae Island**, which provides access to South Marovo Lagoon, a great setting for snorkelling, swimming and simply soaking up the tropical beauty. Catch a boat up to the north end of the lagoon for a stay in one of the pristine ecolodges, then continue by plane from **Seghe** to **Munda**, a fine base for diving, surfing and bushwalking in New Georgia. From here continue west by boat to **Gizo**, a first-rate diving and up-and-coming surfing spot. Fly back to Honiara, then catch a boat to **Langa Langa Lagoon** for a blissfully relaxing night or two on scenic **Malaita Island**.

Three Weeks Island Rambling

A world away from the Highlands, the steamy island provinces are a fantastic destination for surfers, divers, bush walkers and those wanting an idyllic Robinson Crusoe-type getaway at the ends of the earth. From Moresby fly up to **Hoskins**, and spend a couple of days exploring Kimbe Bay at **Walindi**: diving or snorkelling, birdwatching, bushwalking and soaking in hot springs. Afterwards, fly to **Rabaul**. There, visit Matupit Island to check out belching Tavorvur, the volcano that buried the Pacific's prettiest city, before getting under the water at the WWII-era Submarine Base. Treat yourself to one of Kokopo's pretty resorts – or sleep in the thick of the apocalyptic streetscape at the Rabaul Hotel. Fly on to **Kavieng**, where you can get your fill of surfing or diving, before heading toward **Lavongai** for a remote tropical island getaway. Afterwards, work your way down the Boluminski Highway, stopping at pretty guesthouses (like Dalom) along the way. Continue to **Namatanai** for the boat back to Rabaul and onward flight to **Buka** for a visit to pretty islands in the area. Then continue across to **Bougainville** for a ramble through a beautiful mountainous island with enormous DIY ecotourism potential.

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