



The Highlands

POP 1.9 MILLION / AREA 62,500 SQ KM

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Why Go?

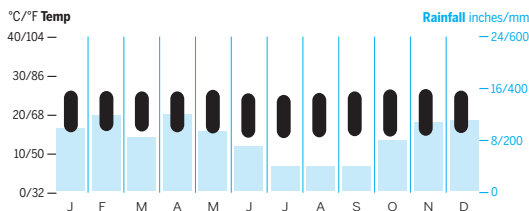
When European explorers made it into Papua New Guinea's rugged interior in the 1930s, they didn't find the unbroken tangle of mountains they had expected. Instead they stumbled into broad, heavily cultivated valleys lined with saw-tooth mountains and home to a million-plus people.

Today many aspects of traditional highland culture remain, and clan and tribal loyalties still run deep. During the region's celebrated Highland shows, Western *sekonhan klos* (second-hand clothes) are exchanged for flamboyant feathers, shells, wigs and skins. Massive investment in the natural gas fields near Tari will undoubtedly bring change but, until then, only in the wild dreams of an anthropologist will you see such a gathering of tribes.

The rugged mountains first climbed by early explorers are now accessible and those with determination can conquer even Mt Wilhelm, the tallest of them all. From its craggy summit, it's easy to understand why Highlanders love their land as fiercely as they do.

When to Go

Goroka



Year-round The area's high altitude ensures a 'perpetual springtime', with fresh veggies and low humidity.

May–Nov The dry season sees an easing of rain, although heavy showers are still possible.

Aug–Sep Tourism ramps up as travellers arrive for the Highland shows.

