



# Kokoda to Coast Package

## Frequently Asked Questions

### How does your package differ from most other Kokoda trek packages?

Our trek itinerary takes us all the way to the north coast of the Oro Province where the Kokoda campaign ended. You will have the option to spend an extra two – three days exploring the northern beaches of Buna, Sanananda and Gona. More Australians died on the north coast than on the Kokoda Trail itself and yet only a few trekking companies go there. To experience the full military history and traditional culture of PNG we believe it's a bonus to take our clients all the way to the coast where they can meet and spend time with the families of their porters and see the full picture. We also provide a unique pre-trek 'Remote Adventure Preparation Program' and club benefits.

### 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 full Kokoda to Coast experience. Even after the trek we provide a compilation of photos & video, an optional photobook 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?

**Our average group size is 10-15.** 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 and well-being.

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

We can take groups across the track in 6-9 days but we choose to follow a 9Day 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. We can extend the trek if you would like to do it at a slower pace.

### 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 & cleaned local veggies/fruit if available
- *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 pre-trek and can stay at the Gateway Hotel Pt Moresby on the way home or Sanananda on the coast with flights home from there. Depending on where you stay, standard of accommodation chosen and sharing arrangements, cost can vary from \$100 - \$400.

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

Yes, but recent changes to the rules allow us to get visas on arrival in PNG without cost.

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

We prefer you to book flights through our Travel Manager to ensure that you have the right flights and connections that marry up with our ground transport. We will provide details of flights once your dates are confirmed.

### The following flights are usually the ones we use.

#### Flights to PNG

Home city to Cairns – overnight in Cairns

Next day is a short flight from Cairns to Pt. Moresby in the early morning.

#### Return Flights

Popendetta to Pt Moresby (We fly out from the coast which is safer/more reliable and gives us the opportunity to have a cultural experience with our porter's families)

Afternoon flight from Pt Moresby – Brisbane, Sydney or Cairns – Home city (avoid morning flight in case of delays) *\*Prices are subject to change due to currency fluctuations & fuel surcharges- Airfares usually total approx \$900 - \$1200, depending on your home city.*

## What travel insurance do I need?

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.

We recommend Covermore or QBE Travel Insurance (approx \$120 – 150, depending on age and medical history) It is a fully comprehensive policy includes medi-vac which is a requirement for trekking the Kokoda Trail.

## How do I make my travel arrangements?

All of our PNG Travel is booked through our Travel Manager at Flight Centre Adelaide.

They have extensive experience in the airline & adventure travel industry and provide us with personal service.

## 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:** \$725 (this fee will increase to \$750 soon)

(incs porter's pack 120L, wages, flights, accommodation in Moresby, road 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 end 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 general guide, most trekkers will make an average tip of 100kina contribution for the trek which is divided equally among personal and group porters at the end of the trek. Some trekkers also give their personal porter a gift of their choice in addition to or instead of a monetary tip. You may also like to budget for a tip at the northern beaches or for a carved trek pole.

## 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 100 - 200Kina (\$50-100AUD) in case you wish to purchase extra fruit, soft drinks etc or to donate 10Kina for incidentals such as visiting village museums where landowners may ask for a small visitation fee (usually \$10Kina) There are also village markets at the coastal villages.

## 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 and paying attention to group dynamics.

- ❖ 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 encourage all of our trekkers to participate in our '**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 over 30 treks so far, we have taken over 300 people over the track in both directions and all conditions, ageing from 12 to 75 years of age , with an **excellent success rate**.
- ❖ Our PNG Guides also have **first aid qualifications and emergency training**, including river crossing safety & emergency evacuation procedures.
- ❖ **We have reliable Emergency Communications** including a Satellite Phone connection to 24hr Doctor support.
- ❖ When we stay in guesthouses we use **moszie nets** and reinforce **anti-malarial practices**
- ❖ We also follow **strict protocols for food preparation and water treatment** and access points

*\*Our Risk Management Plan and Evac protocols are available on request*

## **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 & Adventures 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 & Adventures 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 & Adventures is fully covered with Public Liability Insurance for the Kokoda track and we also have public liability insurance with 20million cover.

### **4. Communications**

Our guides carry a Satellite Phone with a speed dial connection to Australian & Pt Moresby office , 24hr doctor support, Pt. Moresby Hospital and medivac helicopter. We also carry a GPS enabled Trek Tracker which provides regular updates on our position.

### **5. Group Size**

Our average group size is 15-20. 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 22kgs 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 (10 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 10 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 more than 10 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 \$3000 - \$6000+, 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. Some do shorter itineraries at a lower cost or may 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

1. Experienced and highly qualified Australian guides who you can meet face to face, have a personal conversation and train with before the trek so they know your capabilities and individual needs. Guides with a sense of humour and the ability to stay calm under pressure and deal with unexpected circumstances, with a style that's not too 'gung ho' but at the same time professional and organised, ensuring that you have an enjoyable, safe and successful trek.
2. Guides with qualifications in outdoor guiding, health and fitness preparation, advanced wilderness first aid and, more importantly, experience in wilderness medical scenarios and remote area emergency response, backed by a well organised risk management plan and emergency medical assistance protocols.
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. Our unique Adventure Preparation Program facilitated by your guide, will prepare you for the unique demands of the Kokoda trek, so that you have the utmost confidence to take it in your stride and enjoy the journey.
5. Traveling with a group of people you know and trust; having met everyone and forged friendships with them before the trek during the preparation program.
6. 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.
7. A package that includes the entire coast to coast journey over a comfortable time frame with good quality pre & post trek accommodation in a relaxing and secure location.
8. Trek food that is fresh, hygienically prepared and interesting.
9. 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.
10. We also give back to the communities we visit by supporting initiatives including health, education, micro-business, solar lights, teacher education and more.

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 & Gabrielle Enright*  
*Free Spirit Adventures*