

A group of hikers, seen from behind, are ascending a steep, lush green trail in a dense jungle. They are wearing blue backpacks and dark clothing. The trail is heavily covered in vines and dense foliage. Tall trees with hanging vines are visible in the background, creating a misty atmosphere.

epic png

The Kokoda Trail



TRIP HIGHLIGHTS

Papua New Guinea is a young nation, but has endured a colourful and, at times, bloody history.

The Kokoda Track is one of many walking tracks that existed long before Europeans came into this part of the world.

During the course of World War II, the Japanese decided to use this trail as a means of launching a ground attack against the Australians in Port Moresby.

On this trek, we set out to explore the complete route of the campaign starting from Kokoda Station to Ower's Corner (Japanese Advance).



In completing the track we would have trekked across the central spine of Papua New Guinea, having seen all the main battle sites and also gained an appreciation of the rugged beauty of the region, as exemplified by the Owen Stanley Ranges.



BRIEF ITINERARY

Day 1	ARRIVE PORT MORESBY
Day 2	KOKODA – ISURAVA
Day 3	ISURAVA – TEMPLETON’S CROSSING II
Day 4	TEMPLETONS CROSSING II – DIGGERS CAMP
Day 5	DIGGERS CAMP – EFOGI
Day 6	EFOGI – NAORO
Day 7	NAORO – VA’ULE CREEK
Day 8	VA’ULE CREEK – OWERS’ CORNER – PORT MORESBY
Day 9	DEPART PORT MORESBY

***** Please note: The night stop locations in this itinerary are indicative only. Where night stops are taken will be dictated by the physical condition of the trekking party and the condition of the track itself.***



DETAILED ITINERARY

DAY 1 - DEPART AUSTRALIA FOR PORT MORESBY, PAPUA NEW GUINEA

This morning you connect with your international flight to Port Moresby.

On arrival in Port Moresby, after immigration and customs have been cleared, you will be transferred to the Hilton Hotel.

After settling into your accommodations, you will be briefed in detail on the journey ahead. Also performed will be a final kit check to ensure all is “good to go”.

This evening you enjoy a group dinner prior to setting off on the track.

Overnight – Hilton Hotel – Deluxe Twin Share – Dinner, bed & breakfast basis



DETAILED ITINERARY

DAY 2 – FLY TO KOKODA & WALK TO ISURAVA – 8 hours walking

At approximately 7.30 am, you are transferred to the airport to connect with your private charter aircraft for the 25 minute flight to Kokoda ***weather permitting*. This is a single engine aircraft with a flight time of around 25 minutes.

On arrival in Kokoda you walk for 20 minutes from the airstrip to Kokoda Station where you meet your local trekking team and are introduced to your personal porters and food porters. You spend about 30 minutes here looking around the War Museum and other memorials, hospital, and other attractions in and around the village. You will be shown battlefield maps and provided with an overview of the WWII campaign fought in the area.

You commence your first day of trekking as you head to Isurava village. On the way you travel through Deniki village which was the first village the 39th Battalion were forced to retreat to after Japanese forces occupied Kokoda. The journey to Deniki from Kokoda commences with a nice flat walk, passing through rows of palm oil and rubber tree plantations.

You pass through Kovel and Hoi village along the way and, after the final crossing at Hoi you commence your first steep ascent up the Owen Stanley Range to 1000 meters above sea level. You follow the ridge around to Deniki, which sits at about 900 metres above sea level.

At Deniki you are greeted with spectacular views across Kokoda Valley. The trek to Alola commences with a 2-2½ hour walk to Isurava village. You pass through a number of choko gardens planted by Deniki and Isurava villagers, as well as a number of good water holes where you can fill up your water bottles or camebaks; always be sure to ask your trek leader or your personal porters about where are the best fill-up points. Isurava is located at 1100 metres above sea level. The village has been relocated several times since World War II, but now sits in a very tranquil location with good access to water and sunshine - very important for the local villagers and their gardens.

You will push onward to the Isuarava Memorial site one of the significant World War 11 battle and now one of the most – sacred sites along the trail. You overnight at the guesthouse or you can put your tents up.

Overnight – Isurava Village – Camp Site – All meals



DETAILED ITINERARY

DAY 3 - WALK TO TEMPLETON'S II

The trek to Templeton's Crossing II commences with a 45-60 minute hike to the famous battleground and now memorial ground – the Isurava Battlefield. Here you enjoy a good break and have the opportunity to see the battlefield and its surroundings.

This memorial was built by the Australian Federal Government and is maintained by the Australian War Graves Department. The four pillars encapsulate the battle along the Kokoda Track with the four words - 'Courage, Sacrifice, Mateship and Endurance'. These are four words we are sure to take on board with you for the remainder of your journey to Owers' Corner.

This battle is attributed to the heroics of Private Kingsbury, a real estate agent from Victoria who was enlisted to fight in New Guinea with the 2/14th Infantry Battalion. His heroics at Isurava earned him a Victoria Cross when he was said to have held off an onslaught of invading Japanese soldiers with his Bren gun. This event was enough to give the retreating Australian troops enough time to escape from total annihilation and the opportunity for the reinforcement troops to arrive. The unfortunate death of Private Kingsbury occurred on the rock when he was struck in the head by a Japanese sniper. His story is one of the many legends that we will encounter throughout our journey along the Kokoda Track.

Following your break at Isurava you continue for 1½-2 hours to the village of Alola. This is a beautifully located village that sits on the mountainside overlooking Iora Valley and Auberi. At the time when the Australian troops commenced their retreat of Isurava, they decided to split up with one party trekking across Iora Creek to Auberi and the other following the ridge down to Alola. This split was planned to act as a diversion for the Japanese and to place the Australian troops at the best vantage points across the valley.

You continue the trek to Templeton's crossing which takes roughly 5 hours. This leg of the walk passes through beautiful and lush rainforest and is complimented by a multitude of creeks and rivers that feed straight out of the mountain springs. You commence with a 30-minute steep descent down to the first river crossing, followed by a number of ascents and descents, which follow the ridge around to Iora Creek, where you enjoy a short break and get to refresh yourselves in river.

During the war, Australian troops suffered a high number of fatalities at Iora Creek. The Australian supply and storage facility was located at Templeton's Crossing. It was also a burial ground where Australian soldiers from the Battle of Iora Creek were laid to rest.



DETAILED ITINERARY

At your cooperative guesthouse the burial ground is marked by iron rods symbolising each individual soldier or body found at the site. These bodies were removed at the end of the war and relocated to Bomana War Cemetery.

The walk from Iora Creek to Templeton's Crossing will take approximately 2½ to 3 hours depending on the speed in which you trek. Upon arrival into Templeton's Crossing II, you settle into your guesthouse, and can treat yourselves to a refreshing swim in the fast-flowing Iora Creek.

Overnight – Templeton's II – Camp Site – All meals



DETAILED ITINERARY





DETAILED ITINERARY

DAY 4 - WALK TO DIGGERS CAMP

Today is by far one of the hardest days of trekking you will face on the track.

A tough day of trekking is ahead of you today as you climb to the highest point of the trek at Mount Bellamy. Mount Bellamy is 2200 metres above sea level and provides some spectacular views across the Owen Stanley Ranges. The track towards Digger's Camp can sometimes be one of the more difficult legs, especially in wet conditions. It is not too steep but can be muddy and slippery. Be sure to stay close to your personal porter and follow his every step.

At Digger's Camp you are accommodated at the local village guest house for your camp for the evening. The camp site is set in amongst lush rainforest and is just over 2000 metres above sea level, so it can get very cold if it is raining.

Afterwards you will drop your bags and take a quick walk to Myola, which is a beautiful flat plain of grassland with little creeks flowing through. During the war, Australian troops had utilised Myola's airstrip to drop in supplies. When making their advance to Port Moresby the Japanese completely missed Myola, which probably played a significant role in the ultimate chain of events. There were once many aircraft remains scattered around Myola, but since the war local villagers have salvaged much of what was left for scrap metal.

You will make your way back from Myola to Diggers camp where you will enjoy a nice cold dip in the river before dinner.

Overnight - Diggers Camp - Camp Site - All meals



DETAILED ITINERARY

DAY 5 - WALK TO EFOGI VILLAGE

You start off this morning heading towards the northern face of Mount Bellamy, where spectacular views can be shared looking over to the villages of Naduri, Kagi, Brigade Hill, and Nauro and, in the distance, Imita Ridge.

The leg down to Naduri is a long and steady descent and you will be exposed to the harsh sun as the majority of this sector passes through open Kunai grassland. Be sure to have your hat and sunscreen on hand and it is also recommended that you wear a long sleeve shirt. You have a short break at Naduri and then commence the trek down the ridge towards Efogi I. The descent will take up to 1½ hours and is very steep and slippery. The climb up to Efogi I is also very steep and slippery.

You enjoy a well-deserved rest upon reaching Efogi I. The local village will have on display a range of their local fruits and other types of food. It is a good idea to carry some small change with you so that you can purchase some of their produce, all of which is organically grown.

After the break at Efogi I, you continue your trek down to Efogi II, which involves a one-hour descent. This leg is relatively short but will be exhausting and energy sapping as it will be the middle of the day and there isn't a lot of canopy protection. Make sure you're hydrated and have good sun cover protection.

Our arrival into Efogi II, you are greeted by the local village and accommodated at a guesthouse owned by the Siosi family. Efogi II is the largest of the Koiari villages along the trail with an estimated population of 400-500 people. The elementary school has more than 150 students. The kids of Efogi are a lively bunch with plenty of vibrant energy.

Overnight – Efogi Village – Camp Site – All meals



DETAILED ITINERARY





DETAILED ITINERARY

DAY 6 - WALK TO NAURO VILLAGE

This morning you start early by climbing up and walking along Mission Ridge to Brigade Hill (also known as Butchers Hill due to the number of soldiers killed during the battle from both sides), which together with Isurava is one of the most sacred sites of the Kokoda Trail. Brigade Hill was the site of one of the most horrific battles of the campaign in the Owen Stanley Range. Vastly outnumbered, the Australians were forced into a fighting withdrawal; ambushing, delaying and frustrating the enemy as best they could. The commanding officer chose Brigade Hill as the best site to make the delaying action.

In September of 1942 the Australians made an extended line attack at Brigade Hill under withering Japanese fire. Outnumbered six-to-one they suffered horrific casualties but did not manage to withhold the enemy. They disengaged and retreated to Menari. The Battle of Brigade Hill and subsequent withdrawal cost the Australians sixty men killed in action and two deaths from wounds.

On the 7th October 1942 the Australians once again advanced up the track from Menari to reoccupy Brigade Hill. As they advanced the smell of death surrounded them. Two platoons were deployed to recover the dead bodies. Ninety-nine Australian bodies were found and buried. Their graves were marked by crosses made of saplings. The Brigade Hill War Cemetery today still has sticks placed in the ground to mark the site of the original graves. Most of the bodies have since been reinterred at the Bomana Cemetery. Ten men from the Battle of Brigade Hill and seven from the Battle of Mission Ridge are not recorded among the burials at Bomana War Cemetery.

After a quick break at Brigade Hill you head down the back of Mission Ridge for about 2 hours - this is a steep and sometimes very slippery path to walk. At the bottom of the valley is a beautiful waterway and from there it's a 40-minute climb to Menari village. At Menari you are welcomed by the local villagers including one of the three last remaining Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels, Faole Bokoi, who is the father of our cooperative partner, Saii Faole. Faole is a lovely old man and is more than willing to share a few yarns about his time during the war and his involvement with the Kokoda campaign. You will be having lunch here before you set up for the afternoons march.

You set off after lunch by initially climbing up to the top of Menari Ridge. This is a steep climb should take approximately 1½ hours to get to the top and once again there are some spectacular views towards Nauro and looking back towards Brigade Hill. Mentally, this point is a great psychological boost as from here on you should feel as though you have 'broken the back' of the Kokoda Track.



DETAILED ITINERARY

After a short break at the top of Menari Ridge you then trek down the back, which is an extremely steep and sometimes slippery walk that should take about an hour.

At the base of Menari Ridge you enter Nauro Valley, where you pass through Agu Logo campsite and then cross the mighty Brown River. This section can be swampy and unpleasant during the rains, but for most trekkers it should be a more comfortable walk.

At Nauro you are accommodated at a guesthouse which is situated at Old Nauro near the original airstrip. There is a pleasant stream to wash and bath in and a nice sitting area to relax under and enjoy a warm campfire. There are mosquitoes in this area, so be sure to wear insect repellent.

Overnight – Nauro Village – Camp Site – All meals



DETAILED ITINERARY





DETAILED ITINERARY

DAY 7 - WALK TO VA'ULE CREEK

This morning you start your day by tackling the Nine False Peaks to the top of Maguli Ridge. This involves roughly 2½ to 3 hours of serious uphill trekking.

You pass by New Nauro Village and have a quick recovery break before pushing on to Maguli Ridge. From here you commence your first of many descents, with your first break being at Jap's Ladder. You have a good rest at Jap's Ladder and then continue your march down towards Ofi Creek (approximately 2 hours).

At Ofi Creek you plan to have another break and then continue to loribaiwa. It was here at loribaiwa that the Japanese troops were turned back.

From loribaiwa you will be able to see quite clearly Imita Ridge, which is less than 12 kilometres away, and in the background (if lucky and only on clear days) you may be able to see Port Moresby.

From loribaiwa your journey continues down a steep slope that leads to Va'ule Creek. At the base of the loribaiwa Ridge you make your way across a myriad of river and creek crossings (nine in total) until you reach Va'ule Creek and set up camp for the night.

Overnight - Va'ule Creek - Camp Site - All meals



DETAILED ITINERARY

DAY 8 – COMPLETE THE KOKODA TRACK AT OWER'S CORNER

Today you conclude the trek. You begin by crossing Ua'ule Creek's 14 crossings, so expect wet boots from the start. Your last hard grind is up the back of Imita Ridge, which takes up to 1 ½ hours to climb, where you stop and learn the significance of this section of the track. At Imita Australian troops were told that there was to be no further withdrawal beyond Imita Ridge and they had no other option but to succeed with their mission.

From here you descend parallel to the famous 'Golden Stairs' to Goldie River. These steps were cut into the slopes of Imita and were aptly named "The Stairway to Hell". They were made by Australian Army engineers and Papuan labourers and formed by logs held into position by stakes, but the diggers were unappreciative as the steps held rain and putrid mud on their top side. Their uneven height and width were responsible for sending many diggers back down the hill on their backsides.

After a good break and recovery at the summit of Imita Ridge you head downhill towards your campsite at Goodwater. Today is a long day of trekking and a good example of why trekkers must be sufficiently prepared mentally and physically to take on this arduous and testing walk. You make your final push to Owers' Corner. From Goodwater you travel onto Goldie River which takes close to 3 hours. From Goldie River you climb your final hill towards Owers' Corner. After a short 30-minute climb up to the top, you can finally say that you have completed the Kokoda Track!

Here you are met and start the drive to Port Moresby stopping en-route at the Bomana War Cemetery. It is here that the reality of the sacrifice made by so many young men will really make an impression. The Bomana War Cemetery was established in 1942 by the Australian Army for those killed in air raids or who died from wounds in army hospitals or medical posts located in the area. All Australians who fell on the Papuan and Bougainville battlefields were re-interred at Bomana from 1944 onwards. The cemetery contains 3779 burial sites and is the largest in the Pacific. There are 701 unidentified graves.

This evening back at the Holton you celebrate your achievement this evening with a dinner at the Hotel.

Overnight – Hilton Hotel – Deluxe Twin Share – Bed & breakfast basis



DETAILED ITINERARY

DAY 9 - DEPART PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Today you bid farewell to PNG.

You are transferred to the airport where you board your flight back to Australia.

END OF ARRANGEMENTS

