



BUSINESS TRAVEL GUIDE TO PORT MORESBY

Some practical tips and advice for the business traveller.

PORT MORESBY'S NEW HARBOUR CITY DEVELOPMENT IS STARTING TO TAKE SHAPE.

CLIMATE

With the exception of the cooler Highlands, PNG has a warm tropical climate. The wet season in Port Moresby is from December to April.

COMMUNICATIONS

Internet: Web access in Port Moresby has improved immensely over the past three years. All the Port Moresby hotels below now provide a fast-speed internet service. In other urban centres you will still be relying on dial-up, though this is set to improve soon.

Mobile: Roaming is possible in PNG but it is costly. It is also possible to buy a local SIM card (about US\$32/A\$35) and pre-paid credit. Mobile coverage has been improving since the advent of competition, although reliability remains a problem.

Landlines: Service is inconsistent outside Port Moresby; rates for domestic calls are fairly modest.

ELECTRICITY

The current in PNG is 240V AC 50Hz using Australian-style plugs.

GETTING TO PNG

National flag carrier Air Niugini has direct flights between Port Moresby and Australia (Brisbane, Cairns, Sydney), the Solomon Islands and an increasing number of Asian destinations (www.airniugini.com.pg).

Airlines PNG flies from Cairns (www.apng.com) and operates a codeshare with new entrant Virgin Blue on the Brisbane route (www.virginblue.com.au).

GETTING AROUND

As a general rule in PNG you need to plan your travel carefully.

Taxis: The two premium taxi services in Port Moresby are Red Dot (tel +675 311 3257) or Scarlet Taxis (tel +675 323 4266). At night, drivers with these two services are accompanied by a security guard. There are no taxis in Lae.

Car hire: Deal with one of the international names and ask them to provide a driver (around K400). With the poor state of roads, 4WDs/SUVs are commonplace.

Airport transfers: Upon arrival/departure in Port Moresby, any of the hotels listed below will provide a complimentary transfer.

Domestic flights: Travelling within PNG often means taking an internal flight. There are regular services from Port Moresby to Lae,

the other major business centre. While the price of domestic fares has fallen, they are still on the high side. Air Niugini (see above) now offers passengers the chance to book online but make sure you print out a copy of your receipt to show at the check-in counter. Meanwhile, competitor Airlines PNG is beefing up its domestic services. The domestic terminal at Port Moresby's Jackson's International Airport can be chaotic.

HEALTH

Serious medical conditions typically require treatment outside of the country. Individuals travelling to PNG should thus ensure they have adequate health cover (the cost of medical evacuation alone can reach US\$30,000), while foreign companies operating in PNG should have a comprehensive health plan in place.

AustAsia Pacific Health Service provides a range of health services, ranging from pre-employment medical checks, executive check-ups and emergency healthcare (www.webbpacific.com.au).

There is a malaria risk in Port Moresby although many expats based there do not take anti-malaria medication. If you are leaving urban areas, however, you should seek medical advice. In any case, bring strong insect repellent and use liberally if outdoors at night.

MONEY

PNG's currency is the Kina. Both ANZ and Bank South Pacific have branches at Port Moresby's international airport. ATMs are located around Port Moresby, Lae and other urban centres.

SAFETY

While the situation is not as bad as portrayed by some overseas media, you should take sensible precautions, especially at night.

TIME ZONE

PNG has a single time zone, 10 hours ahead of UTC/GMT.

VISAS

All foreign visitors to PNG require a visa and business travellers theoretically require a business visa. These can be obtained on arrival (K100 for one month, K500 for one year) but you should have a letter from your local 'sponsor' to explain the purpose of your business.

EATING, DRINKING, SOCIALISING IN PORT MORESBY

Restaurants (see also hotels below):

Asia Aromas: In the Steamships arcade, CBD. A Port Moresby institution serving excellent Thai and Chinese food. You should make a reservation at lunchtime.

Daikoku or Ichizen: Japanese food at the Andersons Complex (see below) and the Steamships Arcade (CBD) respectively.

Palazzo: at the Lamana Hotel, Waigani. Excellent steaks, pizzas and Indian cuisine. Ideal for a quick business lunch (buffet option) or more formal dinner.

Royal Papua Yacht Club: Relaxed, spacious and open to non-members. Comfort food, draught beer and an open-plan bar area showing sport on large screens.

Cafés/snacks: One striking feature of the Port Moresby CBD is the lack of street cafés—a symptom perhaps of the security situation. The coffee shop at the Crowne Plaza Hotel is a popular daytime option.

Among the expat community a lot of socialising is done at private homes and clubs. However, popular bars include Pondo Tavern at the Crowne Plaza, Ozzie Bar at the Ela Beach Hotel and the Junction Tavern (Holiday Inn).

For more information, it is worth keeping an eye on the *Post-Courier* newspaper for any special events and the *Port Moresby: Gateway to Papua New Guinea* tourist magazine.

Supermarkets: Most expats go to the comparatively well-stocked Boroko Food World, Boroko. SVS Foodland Harbour City (formerly Andersons) is another option, located just outside the CBD. You can also get a local SIM card for your phone here, use an ATM and eat Japanese food.

HOTELS

Airways Hotel

Generally regarded as the best hotel in PNG, Airways is contained within a large, secure compound next to the main airport, 15 minutes from 'Town'. Elegant rooms and a luxurious gym and racquet club combine with friendly, efficient service. The complex also houses long-stay apartments popular with expats. Among an attractive selection of bars and restaurants, Bacchus offers PNG's best fine dining experience. A new wing opening in 2009 will raise the bar even higher. Tel +675 324 5200, www.airways.com.pg.

Crowne Plaza

Upmarket rooms and suites in the heart of the CBD. Decent gym, business centre, undercover parking, thriving café and Mediterranean restaurant. Tel +675 309 3329.

Holiday Inn

Located in the Government district of Waigani. Tel +675 303 2000.

Lamana Hotel

Also in Waigani, this modern hotel's facilities include the popular Palazzo restaurant (see above), business centre, conference facilities and PNG's most trendy nightclub, the Gold Club. Tel +675 323 2333.

Ela Beach Hotel and Whittaker Apartments

The hotel has been renovated by Coral Sea Hotels and also offers serviced apartments. The Ela Beach area is on the fringe of the CBD. Tel +675 321 2100.

Lae International Hotel, Lae

Lae's best hotel. Although the rooms could do with renovating, the hotel has a lot going for it, with a secure, central location, pleasant grounds, cable TV and several good dining options capped off with good service. Tel +675 472 2000, www.laehotel.com.pg.

Other urban centres

For business-standard hotels in other urban centres, try the Coral Sea Hotels website at www.coralseahotels.com.pg.

THINGS TO DO AROUND PORT MORESBY

Botanical Gardens, Waigani

This is worth a visit even if you only have an hour to spare. Follow the boardwalk trail through the jungle and see wild orchids and displays of wildlife, including the iconic tree kangaroo and cassowary.

Loloata Island Resort

A small resort in Bootless Bay, 20km from Port Moresby. Offers diving, snorkelling, fishing. Transfers provided. Tel +675 325 8590, www.loloata.com.

Port Moresby Golf Club, Waigani

A round of this well-maintained course, next to Parliament Haus, costs about K100 and clubs can be hired.

Port Moresby Road Runners

A friendly group of expats and locals set off from a different destination each Saturday afternoon. Check the Friday press for details. ■

TUFI DIVE RESORT



The upmarket Tufi Dive Resort is located on the north-eastern coast of PNG. The colonial style resort offers fully air-conditioned bungalows, a lounge, bar and a library along with a newly

refurbished conference centre. However, it is the relaxed atmosphere, friendly staff and views of the picturesque waters of Cape Nelson that make the Tufi Dive Resort an ideal place to stay.

Diving is certainly the main attraction, with water temperatures of 26–29°C and visibility of more than 30 metres all year round. Diving equipment is available for K50 per half day. Divers will experience a pristine environment filled with spectacular marine life and classic World War II wrecks. Specialty charter dives can take you to see the famous Dutch cargo ship, the *S Jacob*, or the intact B-17 bomber, the *Blackjack*.

A wide range of other adventure activities and cultural tours are also on offer, including butterfly watching (the region is home to the world's largest butterfly).

Rooms cost K225–370 (US\$77–126) per person all-inclusive and a return flight from Port Moresby to the adjacent Tufi airstrip will cost around K980 (US\$335). Tel +675 323 3462, www.tufidive.com.

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