

Coral Sea Kayaking

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CORAL SEA KAYAKING BEYOND BORDERS

The Forgotten Islands Of The Louisiade Archipelago

The Louisiade Archipelago is situated between Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands. Within the Louisiades lie a chain of atolls called the Calvados Islands. This chain is our kayaking objective and an awe-inspiring place to paddle. These islands feel isolated, like a place time forgot. The native people still live in grass huts, relying on a subsistence lifestyle of fishing and farming. They travel by dugout canoe and sailing outriggers and are some of the friendliest people you could ever meet. If the charm of these people is not enough, the islands themselves offer just rewards for the adventurous traveller. The Louisiades is a remote island chain some 200km east of the Papua New Guinea mainland. Its geographical isolation has helped to preserve its rich Melanesian culture.

In the eastern end of the archipelago the islands are larger and more volcanic geologically but as you travel west through the chain the islands shrink to idyllic little atolls surrounded with amazingly vibrant fringing reefs bordered by deep blue sea trenches. The Louisiades is rich and teeming with sea life from small colourful reef fish to large pelagic species and marine mammals.

Coral Sea Kayaking is committed to sustainable and sensitive tourism development in these islands. The Calvados Islands have hardly been visited by tourists and some of the islands and villages have never had contact with

westerners. Through small group conscientious travel we hope to minimise our impact and only have a positive influence on the local indigenous culture. We believe that through Sea Kayak tourism, we can stimulate the development of aid projects which will help to supply essential basics like healthcare to the friendly people of the Louisiades. Through ongoing support in conjunction with the local community's goals and desires we can help to improve living standards so that the fundamentals like education, healthcare and reliable drinking water are a mainstay within these beautiful communities.

As idyllic as the islands might sound, this destination is remote and arguably one of the world's last great sea kayaking frontiers. It is a true expedition and only for the adventurous soul. As a member of the expedition team you will be required to chip in and help out to make this expedition a success.

This expedition is geared towards fit outgoing adventurous people. You do not need to be an experienced kayaker but it does help. You will be required to be physically active all day in a tropical environment and to work together in a team dynamic. Like many remote travel destinations travel in Papua New Guinea can sometimes be rough so requires an open mindset and a robust personality. We also require participants to be water confident, strong swimmers and have some third world travel experience.

WEATHER IN THE LOUISIADES

Generally speaking because the Calvados islands are mostly low lying atolls they have their own micro climate and are unrelated to the weather at Misima Island (Misima often catches rain due to its Mountainous topography). The Calvados chain is mostly dry and sunny. During most of the year a south-easterly trade wind blows which helps us along when travelling east to west in our kayaks. Most commonly we will encounter a following sea as the south-easterlies pushes us west to Panasia Island. We can expect day time temperatures of between 25 -30 degrees Celsius.

TRAVEL IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Although Papua New Guinea is notorious as a place troubled with crime, corruption and hostilities the Louisiades is a different matter altogether. The people are genuinely friendly, welcoming and very trustworthy and go out of their way to help 'Dim Dims' (the local name for white people). After many trips to this region we have never encountered any hostility from the locals or been worried about our safety, we have only encountered kindness and an enriching cultural experience.

This is not the case in Port Moresby, although it has improved recently Port Moresby is still considered a potentially dangerous place for the naive traveler and we strongly don't recommend walking the streets, especially at night. Our itinerary usually demands that we spend one night in Port Moresby due to the flight schedule, but this is generally a safe and enjoyable experience. You will be in a pre-arranged hotel within a compound and you will travel preferably as a group from the airport in a hotel minivan. Generally on the following morning you return to Jackson International Airport for the short flight to Australia.

FLIGHTS

Coral Sea Kayaking does not cover flight costs for the Expedition. We choose to do this because most people will fly from different locations, may want to use frequent flyer points or have access to cheaper deals than what CSK can arrange. We will advise which flights are most suitable for the Cairns - Port Moresby, Port Moresby - Misima Island return so that most expedition members are travelling together. Current flight costs ex Cairns/ Brisbane to Misima return are approximately \$1400 AUD (flight costs are subject to constant change). Alternatively participants can fly direct from their nearest capital city to Port Moresby instead of routing through Cairns, This is often cheaper and more convenient.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

Coral Sea Kayaking insists that **all** participants on the expedition have travel insurance that covers at a minimum: comprehensive medical and trip cancellation.

PRE-DEPARTURE MEETING MISIMA ISLAND.

Your guides will run a comprehensive pre-departure briefing once all participants have arrived into Misima Island. This briefing is usually conducted at the Misima Guest House and will outline the paddle plan, gear packing and any other relevant information as well as answer questions and concerns that participants have. At this briefing participants will be provisioned with their folding double kayaks, paddling gear and camping equipment. Customers will be sent a packing list and info about all the equipment associated with the expedition. Alternatively if the entire group is flying from Cairns, Australia then a pre-arranged briefing can be conducted in Cairns. Cairns briefings are usually held at the Reef Palms Resort 41/47 Digger Street, Cairns at 5:00pm the evening before departure.

Sometimes participants will be required to fly with some expedition equipment and dry food provisions. This will be arranged by Coral Sea Kayaking prior to the trip and will depend on participants flight schedule and baggage allowance. Air Niugini has an international baggage allowance of 30kg plus 10kg extra for sporting goods. We do ask that participants are considerate about the amount of personal gear they travel with. Due to the tropical nature of the expedition we encourage people to travel light.

OUR CRAFT OF CHOICE

Due to the impossibility of accessing modern hard-shell kayaks in the Louisiades we instead choose to use folding kayaks. The model we prefer to use is the Incept K50

<http://www.incept.co.nz/products/k50-pacific>

The K50 is a high quality made inflatable sea kayak and a world leader in its design and features. It paddles surprisingly fast and has sufficient storage space for an extended expedition trip. It folds up and fits inside a backpack and its dry weight is 25kg. This kayak has opened the door of possibilities for exploratory sea kayaking due to the fact that it easily fits inside a bag and you can catch an airplane, bus or boat with it.

IN COUNTRY MEDICAL CONCERNS

We ask that all customers are fit and healthy for this expedition with no injury or illness that could restrict their involvement in the everyday activity of a sea kayak expedition. The Louisiades is a lengthy medivac to definitive medical care. In serious cases a helicopter will be dispatched from Australia or Port Moresby. Guides carry appropriate expedition medical kits and comms (Satellite phone, beacon).

Malaria is present on some of the islands and we recommend customers take appropriate prophylactic medication precautions. Although in the past expeditions some participants have happily chosen not to be on malaria meds and have been fine. Mosquitos are rare in the islands.

OTHER THREATS.

The calvados islands unlike other parts of PNG has very few harmful marine animals. The local inhabitants report that crocodiles are not a threat and are not found in the atolls, they also report that Box Jellyfish are not found in the region.

EXPEDITION FOOD

On this expedition we source most of our food and provisions from local markets on Misima Island. Due to the limited choice of food supplies at Misima Island we mostly eat a Melanesian diet like the locals. We also fish and trade for fruit/Vegetables as we paddle through the islands. The traditional Melanesian diet is very healthy and is centered around seafood and root vegetables like; taro, cassava, yams and plantain and of course plenty of coconuts!. We bring some dehydrated meals from Australia plus spices and flavourings to keep the meals tasty. All meals during the paddling trip are supplied by Coral Sea Kayaking. Hotel breakfasts at Misima Guest House are also provided, but Hotel dinners and other food during transit are at the cost of the customer.

BASIC TRAVEL ITINERARY

As with any sea kayaking expedition we are at the mercy of the weather and so when dealing with something as dynamic as the sea on a daily bases we ask our customers to be dynamic individuals regarding the flexibility mother nature often demands in the itinerary. Rest assured though that your guides are out there to give you the best and safest experience possible.

The Itinerary below is only a rough plan and is subject to change due to group dynamics, weather, unforeseen delays and other situations that may cause alterations in travel plans. Paddle distances vary each day but you can expect paddle distances to range between 8 - 20km per day.

PADDLE TO PANASIA. CALVADOS ISLANDS

10 day tour (group meets at Misima island, tour ends Misima island)

Day 1.

AM flight to Misima Island. Spend the afternoon exploring Misima Island, buying provisions and gear prepping as well as a group briefing to discuss the paddle plan. That night stay at Misima Guest House.

Day 2.

Motor boat ride into the eastern end of Calvados Islands (approx. 2 hours)
Unload gear, setup camp, rig kayaks and spend the afternoon getting acquainted with your craft and exploring Paradise cove.

Day 3 – 9

Paddle west through the Calvados islands, camping on Idyllic atolls, snorkelling vibrant coral reefs and visiting indigenous villages.

Points of interest we potentially will visit and Islands we may camp at include:

- Paradise Cove (great snorkelling)
- Panaumala Island (Panaumala village visit)
- The Blue Lagoon
- Gilia Island / Sam's place (visit a traditional coral/shell jeweller and have a traditional feast)
- Manta ray point / Liawan Island (hopefully snorkel with Manta rays)
- Pananiu Island / Alfie's place
- Motorina Island / Motorina Elementary school visit
- Panarora Island (great snorkelling on the edge of a drop off)
- Spire Island (great snorkelling on the edge of a drop off)
- Utian Island / Brooker Village (village tour, cultural lunch and cultural dance performance)
- Panatawal Island
- Panorama Island (great snorkelling in lagoon)
- Panasia Island (amazing limestone caves, skull cave)

Day 10.

Panasia Island to Misima Island. Roll up our kayaks and pack gear onto traditional Sailau sailing outrigger and sail back to Utian Island for lunch at the Utian women's club. Motor boat pick up at Brooker village, transport back to Misima (2-3 hours, motor boat). Stay at Misima Guest House that night.

Day 11.

Spend the morning exploring Misima Island before a midday flight back to Port Moresby (Day 11 is considered a travel day and not part of the expedition Itinerary)

Trip Cost: \$4200 AUD (\$900 deposit when booking)

Trip includes:

- All Kayaking and expedition equipment
- Camping Equipment
- All meals excluding Hotel meals.
- All on tour transfers excluding flights
- Professional kayak guides
- 2 Nights glamping accommodation at Misima Island
- Camping fees
- Trading goods
- Traditional feast/ cultural dance display
- And so much more

Due to high costs in running this expedition we require a minimum number of 8 customers for this trip to go ahead. Our Maximum number is 10 people.

Please don't hesitate to contact our office for more information and booking forms.

We hope you will join us on this amazing journey through the Louisiade Archipelago 😊