



# The Kokoda Track Challenge

## Pre-Trip Dossier

Welcome to RAW Challenges..... we hope that you enjoy exploring the world as much as we do. The Kokoda Trail area was the scene for bitter fighting between Australian and Japanese armies during the early days of the World War II. Nowadays it is one of the world's great treks, linking the southern and northern coast of Papua New Guinea, through 90km of rugged mountain countryside, rainforest, jungles of fern, orchids, birds and clean mountain streams which all tumble into steep valleys.

The unspoiled villages throughout the Kokoda Trail will welcome you and the Koiari and Orokaiva people will greet you with smiles, welcoming you into their lives. For the keen adventurer, this is an amazing and sometimes moving challenge.



## Itinerary

### Day 1 Port Moresby

Early morning flight to Port Moresby. You will be met in the arrivals hall by the group leader and transferred to our start hotel. There are no planned activities, apart from our 6pm group meeting and dinner. Your RAW Challenges leader will go through the next days of trekking the Kokoda Track.

*Meals included: dinner*

### Day 2 Kokoda

You depart Port Moresby on an early morning flight to Kokoda. At your arrival, walk across the airfield to Kokoda village. You will be introduced to your local trek guide and porter/s, who will accompany you on a brief walking tour of Kokoda township, including the Kokoda museum, and Fuzzy Wuzzy Angel memorial. At 10am, you will begin your trek, ascending relatively easy slopes from Kokoda township to Isurava village, arriving in the afternoon (approx. 7 hours walking). You will be accompanied on your trek by our guide and one or more porters (carriers) who will carry camp food and equipment.

*Meals included: breakfast, lunch and dinner*

### Day 3 Isuvara

After a billy tea breakfast with fruit and scones at Isurava village you will hike 30 minutes to the Isurava ANZAC war memorial. This was opened by Australian Prime Minister John Howard in August 2002 to commemorate 60 years since a ferocious four day battle was fought there in 1942. After some photography in hopefully fine morning sun you will continue your day's hike; descending and ascending a number of steep gorges to the Iora Creek campsite, arriving mid to late afternoon. Overnight camping at Iora Creek.

*Meals included: breakfast, lunch and dinner*

### Day 4 Bella

Hike from Iora Creek to Bella – long ascents and descents with swampy sections today. Overnight camping at Bella.

*Meals included: breakfast, lunch and dinner*

### Day 5 Kagi

Hike from Bella to Kagi. Today you will ascend Mt Bellamy, the highest point of the Kokoda Track. Good views at the Kokoda Gap Lookout. We spend the night in our purpose built guest house.

*Meals included: breakfast, lunch and dinner*

### Day 6 Menari Village

Today you will hike from Kagi to Menari village. During the morning you will climb Brigade Hill and then begin a long steep descent to Menari village. You will sleep well tonight. Overnight village guest house.

*Meals included: breakfast, lunch and dinner*



### Day 7 Naoro Village

Hike from Menari to Naoro village. After climbing a steep saddle you will descend and pass through a number of river crossings to Naoro village. Overnight village guest house.

*Meals included: breakfast, lunch and dinner*

### Day 8 Wa-ule Creek

Hike from Naoro to Wa-ule Creek. Climbing through open grasslands you will mount the Maguli Range and take a long steep descent to Ofi Creek and Wa-ule Creek campsite. Overnight camping.

*Meals included: breakfast, lunch and dinner*

### Day 9 Ower's Corner

Hike from Wa-ule Creek to Ower's Corner. There are a number of river crossings and a long steep climb up Imita Ridge. The descent on the other side of the ridge is known as The Golden Stairs which leads down to Goldie River. After wading through the river the Kokoda Track then concludes with a final steep ascent to Owers Corner. You will arrive at Owers Corner in the early afternoon and will be met by a 4WD vehicle with a picnic lunch and cold drinks that you will share with your guide and porters. After dropping off your guide and porters at Sogeri township you will be driven down the picturesque Sogeri Gorge to Port Moresby via Bomana Cemetery and dropped off at your accommodation.

Tonight we gather for farewell meal to celebrate our completion of one of the world's most famous walks and reminisce about the adventure together.

*Meals included: breakfast and lunch* (dinner at your own expense)

### Day 10 Flight home

Transfer from hotel to your departing flight home or next destination in PNG.

*Meals included: breakfast*

### Joining & Finishing Point

The Hideaway Hotel

Six Mile

Port Moresby

Papua New Guinea

Upon arrival at Jackson International Airport our local leader will be waiting in the arrival hall to transfer you to your hotel.

### Group Size

Maximum of 20 travellers per group

### Accommodation

Camping, local guest huts and hotels. On our trek you will sleep in village guest houses for half the nights along the Track. The other nights involve camping in locations where there are no villages (bush camps). We also supply a portable shower tent so you can either wash in the rivers



without soap or in our shower with soap which is kept away from water courses. We supply the soap. We can even provide a hot shower anywhere along the Track.

### Meal Inclusions

8 dinners, 8 lunches, 9 breakfasts

Our food includes coconut milk curries, vegetarian pastas, fried rice, prawn crackers, damper etc. We use no rehydratable vegetables and we don't supply baked beans, just delicious and nutritious meals.

### Transport

Private bus, trekking, flight, walking.

### Physical Rating

Activities include extended treks of 8 or more hours a day and over steep terrain. Even if you're in excellent shape. This trip provide plenty of challenges.

### Culture Shock Rating

You're out there in Asia! You are likely to be exposed to the elements and/or altitude, stay in very basic lodgings for extended periods, travel in whatever means of transport is available and basically take it as it comes, whatever comes! It can be tough.

### Visas

Please note that visas are the responsibility of the individual traveller. The visa requirements for your trip vary depending on where you are from and where you are going. We keep the following information up to date as much as possible, but rules do change. It is important that you check for yourself.

If you would like someone to take the hassle out of your visa application please visit the following website: [www.visalink.com.au](http://www.visalink.com.au)

It is your responsibility to arrange visas before you travel.

All visitors to PNG require a Tourist Visa, which is valid for 60 days. You will need a valid passport, proof of sufficient funds for your stay and an onward airline ticket with confirmed bookings. This can be done directly with the PNG Consulate or through your travel agent.

High Commission of Papua New Guinea, Canberra

Street Address

39-41 Forster Crescent

Yarralumla, ACT 2600

Postal Address

P.O. Box E6317

Kingston, ACT 2600

Tel: (02) 6273 3322

<http://www.pngcanberra.org/>



For Australian citizens, a visa should be obtained prior to arriving in PNG. The Visa costs AUD \$35 and takes approximately 3 days to process. Visas are obtainable on arrival but this is discouraged by PNG Immigration and can cause long delays at the airport. Ensure your passport is valid through to your return date home.

Hotel accommodation details (you will need to include in your Visa application):  
The Hideaway Hotel in Port Moresby

## Important Notes

1. A high level of physical preparation is essential, as you will be walking up to eight hours per day, occasionally on narrow or little-used tracks. Altitudes may exceed 2100 metres on some days and the trip involves camping. This is a challenging trekking trip, with extensive uphill and downhill sections. A high level of fitness is required, although you do not have to be super fit or an Olympic athlete! Most people can complete the track with adequate training, guide and willpower. You should spend some months training beforehand, using stairs rather than lifts (elevators) wherever possible. At weekends, walks on hilly trails while carrying your pack are strongly advised.
2. During this adventure you will be passing through a number of different climatic zones, from hot and humid coastal areas, to quite high mountain areas where conditions may be considerably colder, especially at night. Although this walk is scheduled during the dry season, there is a strong possibility of some rain at times during this trek.
3. A local porter will share the luggage of two travellers (roughly 12 kg in total). If you choose to take a backpack weighing around this weight, its best to pair off with another passenger to take it in turns to carry one backpack. As you will be carrying your own personal gear at some stage of the trek, you should try to travel as lightly as possible. Your pack should weigh no more than 12 kg. When you start training you should commence with less weight than this and slowly build up.
4. If you choose not to carry any luggage at all you do have the option of hiring a **personal porter** for around \$600 AUD on top of the trip price, which includes the cost of a domestic air ticket for the porter. **This service needs to be pre-booked** when booking your tour, but you pay for it locally when you arrive in Port Moresby. Many people take this option because it allows them more freedom to enjoy the scenery and provides the opportunity to develop a close friendship with someone from another culture - as well as providing valuable work for local people who need it!
5. Please note that certain parts of the track open and close throughout the season, and villages move!. Our overnight location will change according to the season and the group dynamic.
6. Please note this RAW Challenge is operated by our experienced local partners.

## Physical Preparation

For the trek on this trip the general rule is you will need to be very fit and the more preparation you have done for it, the more you will enjoy it. You will be walking at altitudes of up to approxi-



mately 2100 metres above sea level and it will be demanding trekking. You will be walking with your day pack, with the possibility of extreme variations in temperature.

For a fitness program & advice click here: <http://RAWchallenges.com/guide-to-trekking.php>

Build up your base endurance by long and frequent hikes which will ensure that you are in peak condition for the challenge. You can also mix this up by taking other forms of regular exercise which you currently do such as yoga, spinning classes, biking and swimming.

### What To Take

On top of the list below, we recommend you bring a fresh set of clothes to leave in Port Moresby during the expedition, so you can change into them when you return from the Track.

#### 1. Personal Gear

You will carry your own personal backpack most of the way so only bring the bare essentials. You should pack your personal gear into a medium size lightweight pack (preferably waterproof with an internal frame).

We recommend you pack your personal items into 'dry sacks' (available from camping/outdoor stores) to protect them from the wet, especially your camera, toilet rolls and snacks. A cheaper option is to use garbage bags or 'zip lock bags': while good, these options are not as robust and can tear easily.

#### 2. Sleeping Gear

To sleep ON, you will be supplied with foam sleeping mats. These are usually adequate but if you want more comfort, then a thin inflatable mattress will do. To sleep IN we suggest you bring a tropical rated sleeping bag or a bed liner of the type used at youth hostels, together with a lightweight blanket of the type they provide on airline flights. Night temperatures may go down to 10-12 degrees Celsius at some campsites. Your sleeping bag or sheet will also protect you from mosquitoes and other insects while sleeping.

#### 3. Track Wear

Most experienced Kokoda trekkers recommend wearing shorts because there are numerous points where you will wade knee-deep or thigh-deep through running creeks. The Track is now sufficiently wide and cleared in most parts that you will be unlikely to be pushing through long grass or undergrowth and therefore unlikely to get grass cuts or vine scratches on your legs. Leeches were a problem in the past when there were less trekkers and the Track was more overgrown but these days you are unlikely to have enough contact with wet undergrowth to pick up any leeches on your exposed skin.

#### Luggage Allowance (12kg per person)

Each trekker is allocated a luggage allowance of 12kg. Flights from Port Moresby are done in small planes and all items are weighed before take off, this includes passengers. As a result the allowance has been put in place to prevent delays in airline administration, repacking, increasing or decreasing fuel loads, etc. Personal luggage that exceeds the 12kg limit may potentially incur

airline excess baggage charges; currently this is charged at a rate of AUD \$10.00 per kilo. If this eventuates then fees will be passed onto individual trekkers.

## What to pack (suggested list):

### Travel Documents:

- Passport (with photocopies) and PNG visa
- Travel insurance (with photocopies)
- Airline tickets
- USD cash and travellers cheques
- Credit card

\*\* Tip: use a money belt for security (put documents inside a plastic bag)

### Personal Items

- First Aid kit (see the health section)
- Water purification tablets (enough for 4 litres of water per day)
- High factor sunscreen
- Tropical strength insect repellent
- Sunglasses
- Toiletries (biodegradable)
- Two rolls of your favourite toilet paper
- Watch or alarm clock
- Ear plugs (in case room mate snores!)
- Plastic bags for wet or dirty clothing
- Wet wipes or antiseptic hand gel

### Clothing

- 3 T-shirts and 1 long sleeve (lightweight quick drying fabric)
- 1 long sleeve cotton shirt (to sleep in)
- 1 pair of light weight quick drying long pants
- 2 pairs of light weight quick drying shorts (can be substituted with 2 pairs of 'zip off pants')
- 4 pairs of underwear
- 4 pairs of cotton/wool blend hiking socks (*inner lining socks help reduce blisters*)
- 1 lightweight thermal jacket/polar fleece
- Lightweight rain poncho or jacket
- Wide brimmed hat to keep the sun and rain off your face
- Pair of sport sandals (with grip) or comfy shoes to relax in and to wear around camp & villages
- Small towel
- Bathers (if shorts are unsuitable to swim in)

### Trekking Equipment

- 2 x one litre water bottles (porters will carry extra water) or 'CamelBak' hydration pack
- Day pack for carrying items when walking
- Comfortable walking boots - with good grip and ankle support



- Gaiters (sock/leg protector) - just above ankle length is sufficient
- Walking pole (optional) - *local porters can make you a walking pole from the jungle*
- Inflatable sleeping mat (Thermal foam sleeping mat is provided)
- Two season sleeping bag

**Optional:**

- Favourite snacks for energy boost e.g. 'PowerBars', sports gel (a concentrated carbohydrate that delivers immediate energy when you feel tired or flat), dried fruit or nuts
- Small pillow
- Mozzie clicker
- Wetsuit shoes/booties (for wearing while swimming and crossing rivers and creeks)
- Beanie (if you feel the cold)

\*\*\*Please refer again to our Trekking guide on the Home page for more details on walking

**Other Suggestions:**

- Camera
- Adapter for recharging digital camera
- Spare batteries
- Reading / writing material
- Penknife (put in main luggage at airport)
- Waterproof torch or headlamp incl. spare batteries
- Photos of family or postcards of home (great way to have fun with locals you meet)
- Phrasebook, map and Lonely Planet guide
- Small padlock for securing your luggage during flights

**Travel Insurance**

*Travel insurance is compulsory for all our trips.*

We strongly recommend that you take out insurance the moment you register for a trip as you are then covered should you not be able to go in the event of illness or accident. Please send these details (name of insurer, policy number and their 24 hour emergency contact number) to RAW Challenges prior to departure.

We require that, at a minimum, you are covered for medical expenses including emergency repatriation. We strongly recommend that the policy also covers personal liability, cancellation, curtailment and loss of luggage and personal effects.

When travelling on a group trip, you will not be permitted to join the group until evidence of travel insurance and the insurance company's 24 hour emergency contact number has been seen by your leader. If you have credit card insurance your tour leader will require proof of purchase of the trip (a receipt of credit card statement) with a credit card in your name. Contact your bank for details of their participating insurer, the level of coverage and emergency contact telephone number.

Our preferred insurance company is CoverMore as they provide an excellent service. You can apply on line directly by clicking on this link:

<https://b2c.covermore.com.au/index.jsp?alpha=AAV0231> to apply



## Health

All RAW travellers need to be in good physical health in order to participate fully in the group travel experience. If, in the opinion of our group leader, any traveller is unable to complete the itinerary without undue risk to themselves and/or the rest of the group, RAW reserves the right to exclude them from all or part of a trip without refund.

Please let us know of any medical conditions on the registration form and if you are currently taking prescription medicine as it is important that our leader is aware of your circumstances.

We therefore ask that you read the itinerary in these trip notes thoroughly and then realistically self-assess your physical ability to complete the trip as described. Please consult with your doctor if you have any doubts.

There are no specific health requirements for entry into PNG. However, you should consult your doctor or travel clinic for up-to-date information and prescriptions for vaccinations and anti-malarial requirements. We would suggest that you are up to date with immunisation protection against typhoid, polio, tetanus and hepatitis. These countries are also a low risk malarial area and we recommend that you take a course of suitable malarial prophylactics. As some vaccinations require a course over weeks or months, contact your doctor as early as possible prior to departure. Generally, six to eight weeks' notice is adequate.

We recommend that you carry a First Aid kit as well as any personal medical requirements (such as a spare pair of prescription glasses). Please be aware that for legal reasons our leaders are prohibited from administering any type of drug including headache tablets/antibiotics etc. Your first aid kit should include:

- *headache tablets*
- *diarrhoea treatment (both a blocker to bring relief from the symptoms and an antibiotic)*
- *band-aids & blister pads*
- *antiseptic for cuts & scrapes*
- *lip balm*
- *foot powder*
- *deep heat or other muscle linament*

Given the physical nature of this challenge we strongly advise bringing some sachets of an oral rehydration solution (available at chemists) as this aids recovery following activity and dehydration and also helps replace lost body salts should you suffer from 'gastro'. Just add a sachet to your water bottle each day. Please scroll down for information on dehydration.

If you are 65 years or older a completed Medical Certificate is required. Please fax this through to 03 9597 0797 prior to departure.

## Womens Health

On top of the normal health consideration, women are advised to bring a tube of Canestan and



tampons. The Canestan is used for the treatment of thrush (which can be very painful if left untreated) and can be applied to both internal and external thrush. Thrush can be caused by the warm humid conditions encountered on the Track. The tampons are used to apply the Canestan internally.

### Money Exchange

Currency exchange rates often fluctuate. For the most up to date rates (\$1 AUD = 2.35 Papua New Guinea Kina (PGK)) please refer to the following website: <http://www.oanda.com/convert/classic>

For security reasons it is advisable to take most of your money as travellers cheques. The easiest cheques to change are Thomas Cook or American Express in US currency. Some money should be taken as US or AUD \$ cash. There are only a handful of ATMS in Port Moresby, servicing most international cards.

When changing money try and get a mix of denominations (your leader will advise you on this). Keep smaller notes with you when on the trek as it can be difficult to change larger notes once out of the city.

### Spending Money

Every traveller is different and therefore spending money requirements will vary. Some travellers may drink more than others while other travellers like to purchase more souvenirs than most. Please consider your own spending habits when it comes to allowing for drinks, shopping and tipping.

Any tip that you wish to give to your local guides or leader in recognition of excellent service is always appreciated. We recommend approx. US\$30 to go into a kitty to be distributed to the local team at the end of the trip. Usually we do this on the last night at the celebration dinner.

### Emergency Funds

Please also make sure you have access to an additional USD\$400, to be used when unforeseen incidents or circumstances outside our control (eg. a natural disaster, or an outbreak of bird flu) necessitate a change to our planned route. This is a rare occurrence but it is well worth being prepared!

### Keeping In Touch - communication while on the road

If you need to be contacted while travelling we recommend that you set up an email address that can be accessed on the road. Email cafes are commonplace throughout the regions we visit. If someone wishes to contact you in an emergency we recommend that they refer to our Emergency contact. We don't recommend that family and friends try to contact you through hotels, as they are subject to change and the reception staff may not speak English.

### Emergency Contact

In the case of a genuine crisis or emergency, please call RAW Challenges Melbourne Office. Tel: +61 3 9597 0799. Outside of office hours please call 0413 703 632.

### Your Fellow Trekkers

As you travel on a group trip you will be exposed to all the pleasures and maybe some of the frustrations of travelling in a group. We ask you to be understanding of the various needs and preferences of your group - patience with your fellow travellers is sometimes required for the benefit of everyone's travel experience.

Remember too that you have responsibilities to the group. If you are requested to be at a place at a certain time, ensure that you don't keep the rest of the group waiting. We have found time and time again that the very best trips we operate are those where the dynamics within the group work well - this takes just a little effort on your part.

### Group Leader

All RAW group trips are accompanied by one of our group leaders. The aim of the group leader is to take the hassle out of your travels and to help you have the best trip possible. They will provide information on the places you are travelling through, offer suggestions for things to do and see, recommend great local eating venues and introduce you to our local friends.

While not being guides in the traditional sense you can expect them to have a broad general knowledge of the countries visited on the trip, including historical, cultural, religious and social aspects. We also use local guides where we think more specific knowledge will add to the enjoyment of the places we are visiting - we think it's the best of both worlds.

### A Couple Of Rules

Illegal drugs will not be tolerated on our trips. Possessing or using drugs not only contravenes the laws of the land but also puts the rest of the group at risk. Smoking marijuana and opium is a part of local culture in some parts of the world but is not acceptable for RAW travellers. RAW's philosophy of travel is one of respect towards everyone we encounter, and in particular the local people who make our destinations such special places. The exploitation of prostitutes is completely contrary to this philosophy. Our group leader has the right to expel any member of the group if drugs are found in their possession or if they use prostitutes.

### Local Dress

When packing be aware of the dress standards. We will be spending a lot of time in the more conservative rural regions of PNG. Please remember that as visitors to someone else's home it is our responsibility to fit with the local customs by wearing appropriate clothing (irrespective of what other travellers are wearing).

### Safety

Many national governments provide a regularly updated advice service on safety issues involved with international travel. We recommend that you check your government's advice for their latest travel information before departure.

We strongly recommend the use of a neck wallet or money belt while travelling, for the safe-keeping of your passport, air tickets, cash and other valuable items. Leave your valuable jewellery at home - you won't need it while travelling.

Many of our hotels have safety deposit boxes, which is the most secure way of storing your valuables. A lock is recommended for securing your luggage.

Your leader will accompany you on all included activities however during your trip you will have some free time to pursue your own interests, relax and take it easy or explore at your leisure. While your group leader will assist you with the available options in a given location, please note that any optional activities you undertake are not part of your RAW itinerary, and RAW makes no representations about the safety of the activity or the standard of the operators running them. Please use your own good judgment when selecting an activity in your free time.

Please also note that your group leader has the authority to amend or cancel any part of the trip itinerary if it is deemed necessary due to safety concerns.

### Dehydration

Dehydration is the biggest risk when undertaking a physical challenge such as trekking over undulating terrain. It is so important to be aware of your fluid intake especially at altitude and to constantly drink water throughout the day (even when you do not feel thirsty). Symptoms of mild dehydration include:

- flushed face
- extreme thirst, more than normal or unable to drink
- dry, warm skin
- cannot pass urine or reduced amounts, dark, yellow
- dizziness made worse when you are standing - weakness - cramping in the arms and legs
- sleepy or irritable
- headaches
- dry mouth, dry tongue; with thick saliva

The simplest way of monitoring your fluid intake is by checking the colour of your urine. If it is clear or slightly yellow you are well hydrated but once it is a dark yellow you are in the danger zone and need to increase your fluid intake immediately. Ensure that you bring some Gastrolyte sachets as these help your recovery after trekking with the replacement of electrolytes. Gastrolyte is also the recommended treatment for dehydration caused by diarrhoea ('gastro').

### RAW Challenges Newsletter

We have a free email newsletter full of travellers stories and experiences as well as news on new trips that we are running. Please send us an extract from your travel journal at the end of the trip.

We would also love to receive any photos after the event as we are starting to build up a travellers album for each of our destinations on our website. We need resolution of around 1MB. Please could you send a CD to: RAW Challenges Photo album, 2/24 Bay Road, Sandringham, VIC 3191.

### HAVE AN AMAZING ADVENTURE!

*The information in this trip dossier has been compiled with care and is provided in good faith. However it is subject to change, and does not form part of the contract between the client and RAW Challenges.*