



PICTURES: PORT MORESBY NATURE PARK & PNG TOURISM PROMOTION AUTHORITY



The National Museum and Art Gallery (far left); a bird of paradise at the Port Moresby Nature Park (left and below); APEC Haus at Ela Beach (opposite).

7 WEEKEND ACTIVITIES IN PORT MORESBY

Fiona Harper reports that it's worth lingering in the capital, which has attractions ranging from birdwatching to diving.

Travellers intent on experiencing Papua New Guinea's unique customs, landscapes and marine wonderlands often transit through Port Moresby thinking there's no reason to linger.

But the truth is the multicultural city has much to offer. As the natural hub of PNG's immense cultural heritage wheel, the city is home to markets, museums and galleries housing world-renowned exhibits.

Lush tropical gardens and rainforests are in abundance. So too the unique wildlife, which lures naturalists from across the globe.

1 PORT MORESBY NATURE PARK

Spread across 12 hectares of parkland, about 10 kilometres north of Jacksons International Airport, the nature park is inhabited by more than 350 native animals amid a stunning collection of tropical flora.

The nature reserve was once the National Botanical Gardens before being transformed into a nature park, housing some endemic

species, such as the rahianna bird of paradise.

Gardens include the Rainforest Retreat and Palm Corridor, creating natural tropical backdrops for a traditionally carved yam house, totem poles, war canoes and periodic cultural presentations.

There are five bird aviaries, promising a delightful journey into the avian wonders of this region. Apart from the elusive bird of paradise, visitors can see cassowaries, Papuan lorikeets, cockatoos, parrots and much more.

The park is open daily 7 from 9am to 4pm.

portmoresbynaturepark.org

2 NATIONAL MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY

Papua New Guinea's National Museum and Art Gallery is a significant cultural precinct housing tens of thousands of artefacts and artworks representing PNG's diverse cultural traditions.

There are actually four museums that come under the National Gallery umbrella: Waigani, Haus Independent Museum, J.K. McCarthy Museum and Kokoda Track Museums.

Collections represent the 22 PNG provinces, with objects dating back as far back as the 1800s. Waigani is adjacent to the National Parliament House on Independent Hill and exhibits cultural artefacts, archaeological finds, photographs and contemporary artworks.

museumpng.gov.pg

3 BOMANA WAR CEMETERY

The war cemetery is managed by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission and commemorates those who fought in battles of the former Territory of Papua and on Bougainville Island. The cemetery is the final resting place for almost 4000 men and women, 699 of whom remain unidentified.

Additionally, the cemetery is the site of the Port Moresby Memorial, which commemorates almost 750 courageous Australian Army and Papua New Guinea soldiers, along with Australian Navy and Airforce personnel who lost their lives in Papua battles and have no known graves.

The cemetery is on the road to Owers' Corner, which marks one end of the Kokoda Trail.



4 DIVING

Port Moresby may not be the first place you think of when arranging a tropical dive holiday. But the waters surrounding the city are worthy of blowing some bubbles.

Port Moresby's location on a headland jutting into Fairfax Harbour means there's plenty of opportunity to explore marine wonderlands, whether within the harbour or offshore around Nateara and Sunken Barrier reefs.

Nutrient-rich waters are washed in from the Pacific Ocean, creating bio diverse habitats and ecosystems. Look for the uber-cute pygmy seahorse hiding among gorgonian sea fans or dive on the wreck of the 65-metre Japanese former liquified gas carrier Pacific Gas at Horseshoe Reef.

5 NATIONAL ORCHID GARDENS

Located within the grounds of the Adventure Park, the National Orchid Garden houses the largest collection of orchids in the



Southern Hemisphere, including hybrid and pedigree species, many of which are native to PNG. They are on display year-round (peak flowering season is from December to April).

Camilla dendrobium is a species named following the 2012 Royal visit by (as they were then known) Prince Charles and Duchess Camilla, and a section of garden is named after former PNG First Lady Veronica Somare, a keen orchid gardener.

6 HARBOURSIDE

Port Moresby's Harbourside precinct is a lively waterfront promenade of restaurants, cafes and a monthly market with live music

and where you can pick up locally made handicrafts. Harbourside has a relaxed vibe with outdoor seating on the deck (go there for sunset) overlooking the water or indoors where views are framed by floor-to-ceiling glass. Tuck into house specialties like lamb rack at Akura, seafood platters at Alibi Bar & Grill, spicy Indian curries at Tandoor on the Harbour or Asian flavours of the Orient at Asia Aromas.

7 ELA BEACH

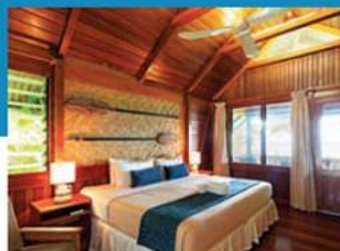
Ela Beach is a picture-perfect kilometre-long strip of white sandy beach on the western shore of Walter Bay. With landscaped parklands, a Remembrance Park and sports facilities, the beach's most striking landmark is APEC Haus, a meeting centre built to accommodate world leaders attending the 2018 APEC Summit. The building's sculptural roof is inspired by traditional Motuan *lakatois*, the sailing canoes used during the Hiri trade between the people of Central and Gulf provinces in exchange of clay pots and sago. ■



Kokopo Beach Bungalow Resort is the place to stay when you are in Kokopo. Ideally located in the heart of Kokopo with panoramic views of islands and volcanoes, and access to your own private beach.

We offer:

- Quality Accommodation
- Family Friendly Safe Environment
- Multi-cuisine Restaurant
- Swimming Pool
- Bar and Lounge On Site
- Competitive Rates
- Currency Exchange
- Wifi
- 24 Hour Security On Site
- Airport Transfers
- Car Rentals
- Land & Marine Tours
- Kayaks and Stand Up Paddle Board Hire



Kokopo Beach Bungalow Resort

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

T: + (675) 982 8788 . M: (675) 7122 7688 . E: reservations@kbb.com.pg . www.kbb.com.pg

