

Cultures and Customs of Papua New Guinea

Papua New Guinea is one of the world's least studied countries, both culturally and physically, due to its remote location and isolation. This means that its cultural life and customs have been allowed to flourish for millennia without being corrupted by foreign influences. And, with an estimated 750 tribes residing here, it has more than simply well-preserved culture; it has a wonderful richness of it, with hundreds of varied tribal traditions and rites that are both very local and completely unique.

Despite the fact that most of Papua New Guinea remains undiscovered and unexplained, it is feasible to meet and learn about some of the tribes on New Guinea and the adjacent islands. The Highlands are an excellent location for tribal encounters and are home to some of PNG's most resilient cultures. You can take part in a traditional mumu feast, where food is wrapped in banana leaves and grilled over hot stones, or watch a sing song, a performance created to allow neighboring villages to peacefully exchange their customs.



Highlights of Papua New Guinea Culture

Asaro "Mudmen":

The men of the Asaro tribe are known as 'Mudmen,' because they cover themselves in mud and wear ghastly clay masks studded with pigs' teeth and shells. The mud and mask combination made the men look like spirits or ghosts, which terrified their enemies and gave the Asaro a fearsome advantage. There are various origin myths surrounding this tradition, but they all center on the mud and mask combination making the men look like spirits or ghosts, which terrified their enemies and gave the Asaro a fearsome advantage. The Asaro people started the mud mask practice, but numerous tribes in the Eastern Highlands have recently copied it for commercial gain.



GOROTA SHOW:

In September, Goroka, the capital of the Eastern Highlands Province, hosts the longest-running tribal gathering and cultural event in Papua New Guinea. It's an annual event started in the 1950s by Australian patrol officers with the goal of bringing isolated and traditionally feuding tribes together in a peaceful setting. More than a hundred tribes are now taking part, putting on shows of sing sings – traditional songs, dances, and ritual performances – and donning amazing and colorful ethnic garb.

Warwagira & National Mask Festival:

This yearly festival, which began in 1995 and is celebrated in July, honors the Tolai, Baining, and Sulka people of East New Britain Province by celebrating their unique mask traditions. It's a cultural spectacular in Kokopo that includes cultural dancing, ritual performance, and storytelling, as well as a range of arts and crafts. The Kinavai is the opening ritual, which features the Tolai Tubuans and Duk-Duks (masked spirits) rising from the sea mist at dawn. The customary Tolai shell money trades that herald the festival's start may also be seen.

Fun Facts About Papua New Guinea

Longest river in the country:

- 1. River Sepik**

The Sepik is PNG's longest river, stretching **1,200** kilometers from the West Papuan border to the Bismarck Sea west of Madang. Wewak is the starting point for river exploration, which is normally done in a motorized longboat. Around every corner, villages with stilt dwellings await, where rites are performed in haus tambarans (spirit houses). You can meet the Crocodile Men of the Chambri tribe, who use skin scarification as an initiation process for boys, leaving 'crocodile' scars on their skin to signify their passage into manhood. Crocodiles,

according to legend, developed from men, and these creatures are revered to the Chambri.

2. Did you know that Papua New Guinea has 851 languages?

According to government figures, the country has 851 different languages.

Tok Pisin, an English-based creole with German-linguistic characteristics, is the most widely spoken language. There is also an official sign language in the country.

3. PNG is home to one of the world's very few poisonous birds

The hooded pitohui bird, which is native to Papua New Guinea, can be found there. The hooded pitohui bird, on the other hand, is one of the world's few deadly birds.

As a result, hunters are wary of destroying the birds, which eradicate numerous parasites and are beneficial to the ecosystem. Hunters adore these birds' distinct traits.

You're unlikely to come across one by accident, so there's no need to be concerned, but it's interesting to know about!



References

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