



Mystery of
melanesia
heli flights



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experience*



Minimum passenger numbers
(4) are required for flights to
proceed. Some flights are subject
to maximum passenger numbers.

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THE MYSTERY OF MELANESIA FLIGHTS

Direct from the deck of True North

Welcome to the North Star Cruises exploration cruise of Bougainville Island. We are very excited to be exploring this part of Papua New Guinea with you. We have a selection of flights that are sure to leave you with amazing memories of Papua New Guinea. As this is our discovery cruise all flights are subject to change and new flight opportunities may be added to the itinerary as we go.

Deboyne Island 30 min

The Deboyne Islands are a group of reefs and islands to the north of the Louisiade Archipelago and include Panaeati, Panapompom, Brooker and Ware Islands. During World War II, the islands were used as a seaplane outpost by the Imperial Japanese Navy. This flight takes us over the Redlick Islets, Panapompom, Torlesse, and Panaeati Islands. You will see an outer fringing reef encompassing many shallow lagoons, and islands that rise up a couple of thousand metres from the seafloor. These islands are a truly awesome spectacle from above.

Panasia Island 45 mins

Part of the Calvados Chain, Panasia Island is an absolute treasure of the Louisiade Archipelago. It is a rugged limestone island with white sandy beaches perched amongst a scattering of reef systems that are riddled with marine life. This flight takes us along a stunning part of the Calvados Chain that features an intricate reef system with deep winding channels interspersed with a scattering of islands such as Gulowa and Motorina. This part of the Calvados Chain is a must see from the air.

Trobriand Island 30 min

The Trobriand Islands are a 450-square-kilometre archipelago of coral atolls that consist of four main islands, the largest being Kiriwina Island, and the others being Kaileuna, Vakuta and Kitava. They are low lying islands fringed by reef and shallow lagoons. Villages are located primarily along the coast with the inner regions being cultivated for fruit and vegetables. This flight will circumnavigate the main island providing a unique perspective of Trobriand life from above.

Woodlark Island 45 min

This flight is a first for us as we have not ventured here before. The island stretches roughly 75km by 35km and rises to a meagre 790ft. The island is volcanic in origin and has hosted gold mining activities from the 1800s up until today. The USAAF constructed two airstrips here during WW2 and these are still used today. Our flight will take us into the centre of the island to view the current gold mining operations and along the coast to Woodlark Airfield at Guasopa Bay.

Mt Bagana and Mt Balbi 50 min

Our adventure begins today in the wilds of Bougainville. Our flight departs the east coast of Bougainville and heads for the lofty heights of Mt Bagana, an active volcano sitting at 5740ft in the Emperor Range. Alongside Mt Bagana is the crater lake of Billy Mitchell volcano which measures 2km across. From here we fly north along the Emperor Range to the highest point on Bougainville, Mt Balbi volcano. It sits at 8907ft and features five spectacular craters, one of which is a lake. From here we fly down the mountain and along the coast to join the boat.

Bougainville Heli-picnic

Until now an activity we have enjoyed only in the Kimberley, we are very excited for the first time to offer this experience in Papua New Guinea. Board the helicopter for a flight over the lush Bougainville landscape before arriving at a secluded location. Be greeted by our friendly crew and locals as they show you around your paradise home for the day. Have a massage under a waterfall, loll about in a swimming hole or do some laps, catch up with Agatha Christie under a shady tree, or indulge in an ice cold beer or wine as you take in the breathtaking scenery. Enjoy a barbeque lunch you won't forget as the chefs have brought their talents to the jungle. Once you've worn yourself out from whatever activity took your fancy, it's all aboard the helicopter to take in some more of the countryside as we head for the True North.

Buka Island 40 min

Buka is a relatively flat island some 52km long, and 18km wide. It is separated from Bougainville by the Buka Passage, a narrow, deep and very fast flowing tidal channel about 200m wide. The east coast is characterised by a coastal cliff that rises close to the ocean, leaving only a narrow and rocky beach. A coral reef rings the entire island and it spreads out into lagoons on the west coast. This flight will circumnavigate the island and take in views of the northern end of Bougainville.

Panguna Mine and Mt Taraka 45 min

The Panguna mine is a large copper mine located in the Crown Prince Range of Bougainville. Panguna represents one of the largest copper reserves in Papua New Guinea and in the world having estimated reserves of 1 billion tonnes of ore grading 0.34% copper and 12 million oz of gold.

Negative aspects of the mine led to an uprising in 1988 led by Francis Ona, a Panguna landowner and the Commander of the Bougainville Revolutionary Army which caused civil war in Bougainville and led to the closure of the mine.

This flight will start from our anchorage near the town of Kieta where we will fly into the Prince Crown Range to view the Panguna mine site. These parts of Bougainville are known as a closed area and not open to visitors. After viewing the mine we will fly south along the range to Mt Taraka at a height of 7280ft, assuring us stunning views of the mountain and crater lake. From here we fly down the mountainside to the northeast coast with views of the Solomon Islands in the distance. Following the reef fringed coast we head back to Kieta and the True North.

