

KOKODA TRACK CODE OF CONDUCT 2009

VISION

The Kokoda Track will be a premier tourism destination providing a world-class opportunity to experience the historical, environmental, cultural, social and adventure features of PNG, in a sustainable manner.



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TOUR OPERATORS AGREE TO:

Adhere to Kokoda Track Authority (KTA) rules, guidelines and procedures: for the orderly and sustainable conduct of trekking operations on the track, including any limitations on number of trekkers and trekking companies, and regarding payment of fees.

Promote sustainable tourism on the Kokoda Track: work in partnership with the PNG Government to manage the sustainable operation of the trekking industry.

Promote the unique heritage of the area, especially its military history, environmental and cultural values: demonstrate a significant understanding of the special environmental, historical and cultural features of the Kokoda Track and impart this knowledge to tourists. Encourage trekkers to be respectful of the military history of the Kokoda Track, and strengthen the unique bonds that have been forged between Australians and Papua New Guineans as a result of this shared military history.

Promote responsible tourist behaviour: respect the values and culture of local communities along the Track and ensure trekkers are made aware of local customs and traditions. Encourage trekkers, porters and guides to: only use designated bathing areas; wear appropriate clothing; not take photographs of people without asking for permission; not use offensive language; use alcohol responsibly; respect local religious observances; and leave war relics in situ.

Minimise impacts on the natural environment through best practice including:

- Taking out all rubbish and disposing of it responsibly.
- Using designated latrine facilities where available, or otherwise using environmentally appropriate human waste disposal practices.
- If soap is used when washing in local waterways, ensuring it is bio-degradable.
- Discouraging the unsustainable use of natural resources, e.g. the unsustainable clearing of trees for campsites or fuel.
- Only use designated campsites and fire places, agreed by the landowners and authorised by the KTA.
- Not allowing the taking of flora and fauna.
- Ensuring individual trekking parties do not exceed the carrying capacity of the Track at any one time, as determined by the KTA.
- Monitoring and advising the KTA of any adverse impacts on the environment, culture or other emerging problems.

Support local communities: where possible, purchase food, equipment and other resources, such as porter and carrier services, locally. Work within the coordination provided by the KTA and in collaboration with relevant government (national, provincial and local-level) and non-government organisations to support education, health, sporting and other initiatives designed to enhance the well-being of local communities. Provide the KTA with full and transparent reporting on the resources provided and how they have been used.

Promote excellence: ensure tourists are provided with opportunities that take full account of their desired tourist experience. Operate at all times with professionalism and integrity, including ensuring that all promotional material is accurate, avoids misleading claims and complies with relevant consumer protection legislation, and all appropriate insurances are carried for a Kokoda-style trip. Respect the use of the track by others and share ideas on ethical standards of business practice with other tour operators and travel agents.

Duty of care to clients:

- Ensure that group leaders have appropriate levels of experience, that trekking parties include a wilderness first aider or similar, and that all trekking groups are equipped with appropriate first aid supplies and appropriate communication equipment.
- Require all trekkers to provide to the tour operator details of next of kin, appropriate medical clearances and evidence of travel insurance¹.

Exercise appropriate duty of care to staff:

- Treat local staff at all times with respect and dignity.
- Provide staff with required training to ensure their safety and build their skills.
- Adhere to agreed minimum standards for pay, equipment and other conditions for staff including: minimum wage of 50K per day (to be paid not more than 4 day after the end of a trek); maximum carrying load that is within each individual's physical abilities and does not exceed 20kg for porters and all other workers, (consistent with international standards for porters as outlined by the International Porter Protection Group²); supply of minimum equipment: food, shelter, blanket/sleeping bags, proper bushwalking backpack and a torch; appropriate accommodation and a return flight at the end of each trek.
- Encourage responsible pre- and post-trek behaviour by all staff and trekkers, including discouraging excessive alcohol consumption amongst staff and trekkers.

Tour operators also agree that compliance with this Code of Conduct should be monitored by the KTA and annually reviewed to ensure that it remains relevant, effective and up to date.

¹ Encourage Australian trekkers to also provide their details to DFAT's Smart Traveller.
² <http://www.ippg.net/index.html>

KOKODA

Guidelines for Trekking the Kokoda Track (Trail)

1. It is a legal requirement that prior to trekking, all trekkers have a valid Trek Permit obtained from Kokoda Track Authority (KTA) or through your Travel Agent or Tour Operator.
2. Trekkers commencing their trek may visit the Kokoda Track Offices at 1st Floor Brian Bell Plaza, Boroko to purchase your Trek permit if no prior arrangement is made. Trek Permits are to be carried by Trekkers or Group Leader and may be inspected by a Ranger. Trekkers found without Kokoda Track Authority permits may be required to pay a K100 fine in addition to paying the required Permit Fee.
3. Individual Trekkers or Groups should be accompanied by a recognized Guide from the Kokoda Track area, and if required, porters from the Kokoda Track villages. This is a safety measure to protect people from becoming lost and assisting in case of injury, ill health and advising on war history, eco-tourism interests and general information.
4. Your trek can be monitored by radio transceivers located in each village along the Track. Some Guides may carry a handheld radio for additional communication with their base in Port Moresby or Kokoda, other villages and Kokoda Track Authority. It is also recommended to carry a satellite phone for use in time of emergency. KTA is contactable by radio at "KTA Base", or by phone at (+675) 323 6165, or Kokoda 329 7411.
5. Please utilise the latrine facilities provided along the Track, if you need to go elsewhere ensure that you are at least 50m away from any water courses and bury the waste.
6. Overnight in village guesthouses is welcome. Ensure Guest House fees are paid in cash and obtain a receipt. Up to K20.00 per night is the recommended fee for trekkers and sometimes K5.00 for guides and porters. No credit facilities are available. Meals are a separate cost.
7. Bush campsites are available in numerous locations but trekkers may be requested to pay the landowners an overnight fee up to a maximum of K20.00 per trekker. Guest house, bush campsite accommodation and food for meals are normally paid by the Tour Group Leader or Guide.
8. Please pay villagers for any fresh vegetables and fruits they are happy to supply. Other food items are limited.
9. Please respect the culture and religion of the communities. Seventh Day Adventist is the predominant religion and people observe prayer daily between 5.00 pm and 6.00 pm, and their Sabbath from 5.00 pm Friday to 6.00 pm Saturday. Do not put requests to the communities at these times. You are welcome to join their church services.
10. Trekkers should be medically fit and have medical insurance coverage and also carry basic first aid supplies. Your Guide should have a First Aid Kit for medication of the group of trekkers and porters if required.
11. Do not litter the Track, village, guesthouse or campsite areas. Please burn waste and bury or carry non-combustible waste to trek end for disposal.
12. Do not deface or damage memorials, trees or buildings. Do not remove war relics. It is an offence to carry live or spent ammunition on aircraft.
13. The Trek Permit Fee paid by all trekkers is for funding community infrastructure projects and their maintenance, together with the maintenance and upgrading of the Track facilities such as walking track and creek/river crossings, radio communication, signage, memorials, airstrips, etc. It is not for paying Trekkers' personal expenses of guesthouse, campsite, food, cultural performances, village museums or scenic attractions.
14. The Kokoda Track Authority accepts no liability for any injury or loss sustained by trekkers and their guides and porters on the Kokoda Track.