

Best of Papua New Guinea

New Britain and New Ireland Further adventures in the new world

For such a large country, Papua New Guinea (PNG) only has a small number of resorts spread out over great distance. While it means you need to fly between the resorts, it also means that you will never see another dive boat on your dive site. With only 10,000 tourist visitors per year, any site you are on will have had very few divers on it. Most visitors to PNG will come for at least two weeks, and a combination of New Ireland Province and West New Britain provides divers with a chance to experience some very different diving in the heart of the Coral Triangle, the most bio-diverse marine environment on the planet.

NEW IRELAND AND LISSENUMG ISLAND

Two hours' flight northeast of the capital city, Port Moresby, lies New Ireland province. Twenty minutes boat ride from Kavieng airport, a nudibranch-shaped island sits in the Bismarck Sea's clear azure waters. If you picture a small and private tropical island with a white sand

beach, tall palm trees, beautiful flowers, and magnificent sunsets, surrounded by some of the world's best coral reefs then you are imagining Lissenung Island Resort. Nestled amongst natural surrounds, traditionally-built bungalows accommodate a maximum of 14 guests. Forget your high heels, suits and ties; barefoot, tropical attire is the dress code here.

New Ireland diving is a mixture of coral-festooned drop-offs, passes, walls, and pelagics with a large handful of WWII plane wrecks thrown in. 'Deep Pete' is a Japanese float plane sitting on a white sandy bed at 38 metres, covered in fish, three Jakes sit upright in the shallower waters around Kavieng, as do the remains of an Australian Air Force Catalina flying boat, and the B25 'Stubborn Hellion' lazies in 11 metres down out in the mangroves. On an incoming tide, Albatross Passage is fish frenzy, everything from glassfish to three-metre grey and silvertip sharks turns up for a snack. Kabin II is a great wall for both macro and wide angle, and there are another 35 sites to explore.

WEST NEW BRITAIN AND WALINDI PLANTATION RESORT

Two forty-minute flights and a 45-minute drive west of New Ireland is Walindi Plantation Resort nestled on the shore of Kimbe Bay. Max and Cecilie Benjamin and their staff have been proudly showing off Kimbe Bay's rich, vibrant, and immensely colourful reefs to visiting divers for over 25 years. Walindi is a photographer's paradise and the guest book reads like a Who's Who in the world of sport diving and underwater photography. The resort has also been voted to have the "best diving from a resort anywhere in the world" by dive magazine reader surveys.

Why? The coral reefs around Walindi are extraordinarily rich and are home to an incredible 413 species of hard coral, over half the total world species, making Kimbe Bay the "Coral Capital of the World". From the reef tops to forty metres down, the corals are stunning, and out of the forty-something dive sites here, you can dive a different sea mount

every morning and see schools of barracudas, big-eye trevally and often encounter a shark or three. But it's not just about the big stuff; all that coral is home to a plethora of tiny critters from pygmy seahorses to squat lobsters and mosaic boxer crabs.

Spread along the beachfront and surrounded by rainforest gardens, 12 spacious, traditional, thatched bures with hardwood floors provide luxurious accommodation or eight Plantation House rooms sharing a common verandah area in a two separate buildings offer a budget option for cost-conscious travellers.

Papua New Guinea is called the land of a million different journeys with, in the opinion of many experts, the world's best diving, plus cultural trips, Highland sing-sings, bird watching, and trekking. Using its expertise and local knowledge, Best of PNG endeavours to create the perfect one for every client, matching the right resorts to individual and group desires. It organises all internal travel arrangements and Port Moresby stop-overs as well as flights from regional international airports, taking the hassle out of travel at no extra cost.

“I am hard pressed to think of anywhere on Earth that has this combination of vibrant health, diversity and beauty”

Professor Charles Veron on the reefs of Kimbe Bay (March 2008).

PHOTO: DAREK SEPIOLO

To find out more...

Contact Best of PNG
Tel: 07713 342 729
www.bestofpng.com
Email: cb@bestofpng.com

