



**BIRDING TOUR WEST PAPUA:
GENERAL INFORMATION**



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Important Information:

1. In any reading you may have done on visiting West Papua you may have seen reference to a requirement for a Surat Jalan (police clearance) for visiting there. This is no longer required. However, please note that immigration officers at your first point of entry into Indonesia are not always well-informed about West Papua and can be sensitive about this province, so if possible don't even mention you are going there.
2. Phone service (and therefore mobile internet, etc.) is not widely available, particularly in the forest and on the mountains, and we do not have a satellite phone.
3. Make your luggage as light as possible, most domestic flights only allow 20kg of checked-in luggage per person.
4. West Papua is one of the most remote and undeveloped areas within Indonesia, so remember that you are visiting a developing country and will be camping/staying in the most remote areas, where there are no proper sanitation facilities. Expect many things to be very different to what you might expect from home.
5. In Indonesia the power sockets are of type C and F. The standard voltage is 230 V and the standard frequency is 50 Hz. See here: <https://www.power-plugs-sockets.com/indonesia/>

Accommodation:

When you stay in the village in the Arfak mountains (ca. 1,400m/4,500ft), it's extremely basic with limited electricity for a few hours in the evening and limited or no proper showers – you can get heated water in a bucket when you need it, though. "Facilities" such as rooms, beds, etc. are exceptionally basic (even in the village) with four rooms, each with two benches. Then, when you hike up the mountains, you camp (2,200m/7,000ft) on a platform with a tarp roof and mosquito net, and it gets even more basic than in the village - with rustic pit toilets, etc. You can leave luggage you don't want to cart up the mountain behind in the village, so please ensure you have a small bag to take some clothes to the camp site. You can tip the villagers for this service at your discretion (they also do a lot of other hard work for the group, e.g. heating water, making meals, etc.). You can get large suitcases carried up for you if you want - but if you prefer to leave stuff in the village that is also OK and recommended. There is a nominal charge for porters to carry day packs and other belongings, and this can be booked a day or two before when you first arrive in the village (you do spend nights either before or after the trek up the mountains in the village at a lower altitude).

In Waigeo we will stay in a resort by the beach the whole time. Each room has a mosquito net, and the facilities are of a much higher standard than in the mountains, with electricity on all of the time and showers in each room. We usually stay at a dive resort, and the snorkeling straight off the resort is excellent. Masks and fins are available for hire.

Accommodation in Sorong and Manokwari is in comfortable hotels with good facilities. Wi-Fi is available here. Hotels have swimming pools, good restaurants, and excellent rooms.

Meals:

In the tourist areas most types of food and drink will be available, but meals will become simpler

as we move into the forest areas. We can accommodate vegetarians and special dietary needs if we know in advance. Most meals are based around rice and fish, noodles, and a few vegetables. Due to the lack of refrigeration dairy products are not common. We suggest you bring your favorite snacks or protein bars to supplement your diet (and it's fun to share things with the local people, but we suggest you don't give candy to the local children). Note that alcohol is generally not available around Manokwari and in the Arfak Mountains (except at great cost) but is available at a reasonable cost in Sorong and Waigeo.

Please remember to give us your dietary preferences. Are you vegetarian? Can you eat spicy food?

Currency:

Currency exchange is only available in Makassar and Jakarta, but ATMs are available in every town, but not all foreign cards will work in all machines. Traveler's cheques are not accepted in most banks or stores in Indonesia, and we don't recommend the use of credit cards except in major hotels or larger stores. Plan on either using your ATM card for money (ideally bring two), and bring American money, preferably \$100 bills. But note: **Any bills dated 1996 or 1999 will not be accepted anywhere in Indonesia due to counterfeiting problems in the past.** The highest rate they will accept is the newest edition of \$100 bills. Allow at least several weeks for your bank to obtain these for you. Also throughout Indonesia people will not accept bills that are worn or ripped. A rip of only 1/16th of an inch can make a bill unusable.

Some Items to Bring:

1. Field Guide, see here: <https://www.birdingecotours.com/field-guides-to-australasia-and-oceania-what-to-take-into-the-field/> for some guidance.
2. Binoculars and camera.
3. Sunscreen, hat (wide-brimmed for open-areas, e.g. the beach, and baseball-style cap for forest birding - so as to not block visibility for people behind you on a trail!), and insect repellent – conditions are likely to be swampy, hot, and humid, and mosquitos are prevalent, particularly in the lowlands.
4. Anti-Malaria tablets – West Papua is a high-risk malaria area.
5. Leech socks – useful, particularly if it is wet.
6. A small first aid kit, contents should include hand sanitizer, blister bandages, antibiotic cream, anti-itch cream, any prescription drugs required, aspirin, ibuprofen and/or paracetamol, anti-diarrheal (e.g. Imodium), cyclizine (e.g. Valoid), and ciprofloxacin antibiotic for gastrointestinal upset. Most of these are available at pharmacies in West Papua, but it saves time if you bring them with you.
7. Footwear – a matter of personal preference. Rubber boots can help in muddy conditions and dry out quickly but often lack suitable ankle support, which would be given by walking/hiking boots (which we recommend).
8. Walking stick – linked to the above, a walking stick can help provide additional balance on steep/slippery/wet terrain. **A walking stick is compulsory for anyone who is unsteady walking, as we feel this is a safety issue; we don't want anyone slipping on the trails. Please discuss with us if you are unsure whether you will need one or not.**
9. Quick-dry clothes - consider a long-sleeved shirt over a T-shirt for protection against sun

and mosquitos.

10. Clothes – should be dull/dark for birding, as these are less likely to disturb the birds we will be searching for. Some warm clothes would be useful as temperatures may drop to 10-12 °C (50-54 °F) overnight.
11. Rain jacket/coat and umbrella.
12. Bathing suit/swimming shorts, mask and snorkel for optional swimming during free time (though note that snorkeling equipment can be hired).
13. A small hand towel or wash cloth can be handy for cleaning and drying things when in the rainforest. Not essential but handy.
14. A day pack suitable for carrying essential personal items such as field guide, bottles of water, snacks, camera, etc.
15. A dry bag to keep valuable documents such as passports, cell phones, wallets etc., as well as cameras if there's rain.
16. Torch (flashlight) and/or headlamp, and spare batteries – we will be camping at some locations with no electricity, so this is essential. Also needed for times when electricity is turned off at night.
17. Power bank (portable power supply) – essential if you want to charge items while camping, as there will be no electricity in some areas – e.g. higher up in the Arfak mountains.