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Route a4

NOTES on PAPUA NEW GUINEA

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The Pacific Ocean Map also provides links to 'The Pacific Crossing Guide' and the other RCC Pilotage Foundation publications and web guides available to help plan a voyage in the Pacific Ocean.

For text version, see below

For interactive Google Map



version, click on pin.

To return to text version, press 'back' button on your browser.

CONTRIBUTORS

The Pilotage Foundation is extremely grateful to the following who have provided information which is now available for the benefit of others;

David Mitchell,	<i>Ondarina</i> on passage from Solomon Islands to Hong Kong in October 1999 and additional information in 2001.
Mary and Terry Iverson	<i>Valkyrie</i> on passage from Philippines to New Zealand in 2001

1. Area

Papua New Guinea stretches from about 141°E to 156°E and 01°S to 12°S. The country is on the edge of the Indo-Australian and Pacific plates and suffers from volcanic eruptions and tsunami waves, both of which have had devastating effects on people and property. The mainland, the eastern part of the world's second largest island, comprises 82% of the land surface with the remainder coming from the outer islands. The main group of islands lie in a crescent, looking like the rim of a massive crater, which encircles the Bismarck Sea, from the Hermit Islands in the west to New Britain, with its lesser islands, in the S.E. The Louisiade Archipelago is scattered off the east end of Irian Jaya and Bougainville is physically part of the Solomon Islands. The volcanic birth of most islands can make anchoring impossible. At Lihir Island (03° 07'S 152° 36'E), the weight of the volcano has sunk the south side and raised the north shore so that there is a 30m coral cliff. Some lagoons have developed, notably at Kavieng and Lorengau, which make excellent areas to explore with protected anchorages, and wreck and wall dives. Cosy anchorages exist on some islands. The atolls of Hermit Islands (01°32'S 145°04'E), Nuguria (03°26'S 154°37'E) and Tauu in the Mortlocks (04°47'S 156°56'E) are worth a week each. Nissan Island in the Green Islands (04°30'S 154°12'E) looks inviting from the chart.

- 1.2 P.N.G. has a rich variety of fauna and flora but has been severely logged in the past 15 years, endangering 122 animal species with extinction.
- 1.3 The south side of the mainland is only 70 nautical miles from Cape York, Australia. The mountains were the setting for desperate fighting during WWII as the Australians fought to check the Japanese advance. There are many relics of the war scattered throughout the country and, in particular, on the islands.
- 1.4 The diving and snorkelling on the islands is world class.

2. Security

The country has a well-earned reputation for poor security.

If you want to explore the mainland, which has so much to offer in terms of people and topography, you should consider leaving your yacht somewhere secure, perhaps Lihir is the only place, and flying to the mainland. The smaller, outer islands seem more friendly. Seek local knowledge about which ones are best to visit and which should be avoided. The Louisiade Archipelago was reported to be a wonderful cruising area.

3. Reasons for visiting

A yacht passing from Singapore to Australia must go around the north of the country to avoid the Torres Strait and anyone coming from or going to the Philippines will at the very least want to stop for fuel.

4. Source of information

4.1 Charts: Bougainville	Aus 399, 3994
Ward Hunt Strait to St George’s Channel	Aus 432
Bougainville – North Cape, New Ireland	Aus 461
Gazelle Peninsular and St George’s Channel	Aus 397
Simpson Hbr., Kokopo Hbr. and approaches	Aus 680
Passages New Ireland to New Hanover	Aus 666
North Cape, New Ireland to Wuvulu Islands	Aus 462
- west of Admiralty Islands	
Louisiades	Aus 568
Port Moresby to Cape Deliverance	Aus 429
Bonvouloir to Woodlack Island	Aus 383

4.2. **Cruising Guides:** I am not aware of any.

4.3. *Lonely Planet* – Papua New Guinea – a useful shore guide and includes references to dive spots. Dive shops will have a fax and may be connected to the Internet and will be a useful source of up-to-date information.

4.4 **Websites:** www.lonelyplanet.com for latest shore information. Try South Pacific Tourism Organisation: www.spto.org/.

5. Background.

- 5.1. **Medical:** P.N.G. is a high-risk malaria country. Pharmacies in state capitals are quite well stocked. Go to the hospital if you want something special although there is no guarantee that the hospital will have it.
- 5.2. **Money:** Do not expect ATMs. but the banks in state capitals will normally give a cash advance on Visa– Rabaul and Kokopo, New Britain; Kavieng, New Ireland; Lorengau, Manus Island, Admiralty Islands.
- 5.3. **Post:** Airmail from Australia and New Zealand takes about a week, two to eight weeks from Europe and U.S.A. *Post restante* airmail is held for four weeks, registered for eight weeks. Clearly mark the envelope with the name of the person followed by the boat name. Search under both. Internal mail is poor and most people use the fax. Telekom will send and receive faxes but so will hotels and dive operators for less.
- 5.4. **Supplies:** A good supply of staples – by developing world standards – is available in state capitals. Stock up if visiting smaller islands with the exception of Lihir. **Fruit and vegetables:** Although a small market remains in Rabaul, the principal market has moved to Kokopo, which has become the de facto capital of New Britain. All other entry ports have daily markets although Friday (a traditional pay-day) markets may be better. The market at Manus is the best on the outlying islands. **Diesel:** This is available at all entry ports, from a jetty. Drums or by bowser. Beware, often, the bowser will have no fuel control valve at the receiving end, nor a meter at the bowser end. Fuel is ordered and paid for in advance. The cheapest fuel is at Kavieng, New Ireland. **Petrol** comes in drums; check if it has been mixed with two-stroke. **Paraffin (kerosene):** this is normally available at most major centres. **LPG:** Sorry, no information. **Water:** Water must be treated with caution. At Lihir it is drinkable if coming from the R.T.Z. mine source.
- 5.5. **Internet:** This is in its infancy and you are unlikely to find public access on the islands. Your best bet is to try the tourist business such as ex-pat run resorts, charters and dive operators.
6. **When to visit**
PNG is safe to visit at any time. As most yachts will be transiting the country, the ultimate port will dictate their time of passage. The climate is affected by the ITCZ, which moves south in October – November and brings NW winds, calms, squalls and thunder. SE trades affect the south of the country but the very north is so close to the equator that the winds can be very light requiring endless motoring. Cyclones track west through the Torres Strait, but the north of the country is unaffected.
7. **Recommended approach routes.**
- From the east:** The route from the Solomon Islands goes north or south of Bougainville. The choice of entry is Rabaul, New Britain or Lihir Island. Bourgainville, in 2002, appeared to remain out-of-bounds.
- From the southeast:** from the Louisiade Archipelago, you can go direct to Rabaul or come in via Gizo although this may entail a beat to Gizo.
- From the west:** Yachts coming from Singapore have a choice of travelling via Indonesia and around Irian Jaya, checking in at Vanimo, and then heading across to the Admiralty

Islands. The alternative route is via the Philippines. In this case, it is important to keep up the west side of Palawan before cutting across to Cebu, exiting north of Mindanao through the Suragio Strait – watch the currents – and then to Lorengau for fuel and to check in. Kavieng is a better fuelling stop.

8. **Entry ports.**

The most easterly port is on Lihir Island, east of New Ireland; the most westerly is Lorengau, Manus, Admiralty Islands; the most spectacular is Rabaul, New Britain; Kavieng, New Ireland. Port Moresby, Medang, Wewak and Vanimo on Irian Jaya are also entry ports. One person normally handles customs and immigration and there is no payment until clearing out of the country. It is necessary to clear in and out of any entry port visited, but this is handled speedily and simply. Visiting outlying islands without clearing in can lead to a hefty fine or refusal of entry.

9. **Formalities.**

9.1 **Visa:** a visa is required and arriving without can entail a visit to Port Moresby or handing over your passports for the official to send to Port Moresby and the process can take six weeks. Passports have been lost. This is a new requirement so get one in advance if you want to cruise. Consulate in Canberra, Australia.

9.2 **Special requirements:** none.

10. **Officialdom.**

One official does the lot. He will have an office ashore so do not expect him to call, as he will probably not have a boat. When the official is there, the procedure is simple. The problem is that he may not be there, so the choice is read a book and wait or go and come back.

11. **Marinas, berths.**

No, not here. Anchoring is normally on sand and visibility is fantastic. The mainland appears to be the only place where someone has to be on board the whole time.

12. **Locals.**

98% of the population are Melanesian. The remainder are Micronesian, Polynesian and Chinese and ‘whites’ the latter group being engaged in business and tourism. 66% are Christians, but on the outer islands this rises to about 100%. Like the Solomon Islands, there are many languages and dialects. English is the official language but *pidgin* is used extensively. The local *pidgin* is a different dialect to the *pidgin* spoken in Vanuatu or the Solomon Islands. The *Lonely Planet - Pidgin phrasebook*, ISBN: 1741045975 / 9781741045970 is useful and fun. ‘Em kristain stua. I nogat drink. Smok samting.’ We do not stock drink or tobacco products.’

Local customs

13.1 **Tourism** is but a fledgling industry so dress modestly.

13.2. **When visiting** an island or village for the first time pay your respects to the village Chairman (*chief*) as soon as possible. Whereas a village chief in the Solomon Islands is hereditary, chairmen are elected. Not to do this may cause offence and in the Hermit Islands a yacht was ordered out of the atoll for not coming ashore and then diving without asking permission. Some one will act as your guide. A gift may be a good idea, some cigarettes, rice or sugar.

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**PORT – LIHIR
PAPUA NEW GUNIEA**

03° 07'S 152° 39'E

Flag PNG

**Currency Kina
chart Aus 461**

1 General

Rio Tinto Zinc (R.T.Z.), who has made a small boat harbour within their treatment works, operates the gold mine on Lihir. As the treatment process works on a 24-hour basis, the anchorage is noisy. The mine staff are incredibly kind and, if asked, will offer to show people around the mine and perhaps help with repairs, if their workshops can handle them and when time permits. The open cast mine is going down inside an extinct volcano. The heat alone generates endless technical problems such how to handle the scalding steam, boiling water and a temperature on the mine floor of 150°F.

2 Approach and entry

The entrance to the harbour lies between two stonewalls marked by red and green post which flash at night. By day, the tall white chimney amongst the works can be seen for miles and this can be used as a leading mark when finding the gap in the seawall. It is difficult to identify the lights at night against the backdrop of fierce floodlighting. There are no leading lights, so ignore all the white lights, which appear neatly over the top of each other. The company wharf lies immediately beyond the sea wall. The non-stop circle of barges dumping over-burden in the bay can be off putting but should not be a problem unless you over-shoot the entrance. The depth shelves almost vertically from about 100m to 4m in the entrance. Once past the entrance, turn sharply to starboard and anchor where space allows. The harbour is within the 'hard hat' area of the mine, so follow company policy. Keep a low profile if not wearing a hard-hat and proper shoes.

3 Radio and formalities

'Loss Control' runs the security and safety on the mine and is manned 24hrs. Call 'Loss Control' on CH 16 and report in. 'Loss Control' will report your arrival to customs and immigration who may come out to the yacht – even though it is anchored only 20m from the tiny jetty. Do not go ashore without consent from 'Loss Control' whose office is located at the fire station by the main entrance. Immigration and customs is near by.

4 Facilities

Water is available from a tap. Diesel can come in a bowser and there is a water truck, if needed. Both require moving to a jetty a few miles to the north. There is a bank, market and two supermarkets near the jetty. There is no public transport but it is easy to get a lift. Members of the staff may invite crews diving, swimming and to barbecues.

5 Communication

There is an airfield with regular, expensive, flights to Port Moresby.

6 Locals

The mine working dominates life on the island. Priority is given to recruiting and training islanders. R.T.Z. appears aware of how it has changed life on the island from trading and self-sufficiency to total dependency on a monetarist society. The problems may come when the mine is worked out.

SCROLL DOWN TO NEXT PAGE

Chart Aus 462

1 General

Manus is the capital of the Admiralty Islands and its people have a reputation of being the best educated in PNG, producing many of the country's leading political thinkers and businessmen. The lagoon is large and held about six hundred ships at anchor before the invasion of the Philippines.

2 Approach and entry formalities

The west-going current can run at over one knot making timing of landfall tricky. The east entrance to the lagoon is lit but on the east side only; the west side is marked by a wrecked landing craft. But after that, there are no lights so a night approach is not recommended without local knowledge. The anchorage off Lorengau is on sand and mud. Whilst some shelter can come from a small island, the little bay is open to any wind from the north. In a northerly wind, or any wind, a lovely, sheltered anchorage is available off the west side of Hawii, the island on the starboard side of the east entrance. There is depth of about 5–6m off the SW corner on sand and grass, and 3.5m off the NW on white sand. Go ashore at the earliest moment and find the island Chairman to ask for permission to anchor. He will organise for a boat to take you to Lorengau, for a small charge. The customs and immigration office is in the local government complex to the east of the landing beach.

3 Facilities

Probably the best facilities of any island capital, including market, post office, bank, supermarket, hardware store and hotel. Be careful if considering refuelling as the water off the jetty looked shallow.

4 Communication

There is an airfield with internal flights to Port Moresby.

5 Locals

The islanders appear the friendliest people of P.N.G. Many of the women carry tattoos on their forehead, the style dictated by their village. People may approach you to ask you questions about where you are from and to practise their English.

PORT – PORT SIMPSON, RABAU, NEW BRITAIN 04° 11'S 152° 10'E
PAPAU NEW GUINEA G.M.T. + 10

Chart Aus 680
Approach Aus 680

1. General

Mt. Turville and Mt. Vulcan erupted, burying Rabaul under 2-3m of stones and ash. The old town, on the east side of the bay, is a wasteland of black ash, rusting metal and broken buildings. Three hotels and the yacht club are the only ones rebuilt. The town on the back of the port on the north shore has been rebuilt. Mt. Turvuvur vents with varying frequency, emitting yet more volcanic ash, so some yachts anchor off the beach at Kokopo, Blanche Bay and catch a number 1 PMV bus around the bay when checking in. Most of the inhabitants of Rabaul were evacuated to Kokopo, 10 km around the bay, which has become the de facto capital. It offers more stores and places to eat out and a larger market. There are plenty of WW11 sites to visit. Call in at the East New Britain Tourist Bureau – a small room in the street leading up to the Taklam Guesthouse and Chopsticks Restaurant – to see if there is a feast or sing-sing in a nearby village. The mini-bus service is excellent, cheap and fun. The bus stop in Kokopo is above the water taxi landing beach, near the post office.

2. Approach and entry.

Simpson Harbour (Rabaul) remains New Britain's main port so is buoyed and there are leading marks. Whether approaching from the northwest or southeast, the towering cones of Mt. Toyambatar (North Daughter) and Turangunam (South Daughter) are visible well off. There are two hazards, a shallow, unbuoyed reef extending from the southwest tip off Matupit Island, and the buoyed Beehive rocks in the centre of the harbour. The leading marks clear both these hazards. The marks are situated behind the right hand white port shed, the leading mark on top of a tall white tower. The back mark is on the hill.

3. Radio.

The harbour authorities monitor Ch 16 but it is not necessary to call them when anchoring or leaving. The Rabaul Yacht Club monitors Ch 84 during office hours.

4. Anchoring and mooring.

Anchor on the east side off the Rabaul Yacht Club jetty – look for the old starting tower and flagstaff and a rebuilt hotel – or pick up a vacant mooring that should have been re-layed by now. Anchorage in 9m, mud (ash) in the northeast corner off a concrete loading ramp belonging to Blakes, Cocoa Traders.

5. Formalities.

You will have to report to the Boarding Officer whose office is on the first floor of the left white port shed, in the Harbour Commission compound. He will handle all aspects of entry. Check out before leaving. The office closes at 1500.

6. Facilities

As a major port there are facilities for most repairs. There is no slip but a crane can lift out up to 30 tons. Allan Jameson, former Commodore of the RYC, has lived in PNG since 1971 and is a fund of information on supplies, anchorages and dive sites (tel. 982 2574 or rabaulbattery@global.net.pg). His office, Rabaul Battery Service, is opposite the police station. The yacht club will accept mail: Rabaul Yacht Club, PO Box 106, Rabaul, New Britain, PNG. The yacht club has showers. The expats. used to congregate at one of the rebuilt hotels but may now favour the yacht club. **Fuel** from the jetty to west of white sheds, organise in advance from Mobil or Shell whose white tanks are obvious on the west end of the main wharf area.

7. Communications.

Rabaul's airport is under 2m of ash. Tokua airport, about 20km east of Kokopo and 40km from Rabaul serves the town with internal flights. Take a number 1 PMV to Kokopo and change or take a taxi – agree the cost first.

8. Security.

The police station is opposite Rabaul Battery Service, on the main road one in from the harbour road and up from Mobil and Mobil. Take sensible precautions.

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