

Vanuatu - Rainforests and Volcanoes

Islands of magic, active volcanoes and crystal-clear waters...

Trip Length: 14 days / 14 nights

April / May 2022

Maximum 8 adventurers



6 guests \$3250, 8 guests \$2990, 10 guests \$2900, 11 guests \$2800 AUD / person / twin share
(2019 prices quoted. 2022 prices to be confirmed)

Included meals marked each day. B = Breakfast, L = Lunch, D = Dinner

Join us to explore some of Vanuatu's eighty-plus remote and rugged islands. This paradise captivates your heart and your dream can become a reality. It's a country full of adventure and cultural experiences.

Multi-day walks on beautiful Malekula Island, the second largest of the Vanuatu nation, and volcanic Ambrym Island will have you sharing the infectious fun and adventure of your local guides. Amid all their enthusiasm to impart their love of life and their country, their first priority is our safety and enjoyment. We'll strive to reach the top of one of the archipelago's many volcanoes; comb deserted beaches; absorb the ancient culture of the Melanesian people, and of course snorkel along the reefs.

This will truly be an adventure in paradise - and the islands are on our doorstep!

Day 1. Monday Arrive in Port Vila, hotel accommodation

Transfer from Port Vila Airport to your hotel and meet up with your fellow travellers and **Take A Walk** guide for a briefing. Dinner is not included but there's a supermarket, and several restaurants nearby, so plenty to choose from.

Day 2. Tuesday Port Vila to Norsup, Malekula Island - Small Nambas Tour (B,L,D)

Tour duration 2 (plus) hours, easy, bungalow accommodation

From Port Vila we will fly to Norsup, Malekula Island, arriving at 8 am. Bislama is their local language, just one of 30 dialects spoken in Malekula alone. We will be met at the airport and take a short walk along the road to our bungalows. Our luggage is transported by truck. After settling into our bungalows, we gather in the welcome hut for a snack before being transferred to the Small Nambas territory at Rano, a community of sharing, dancing and singing. After a welcoming ceremony to the hypnotising beat of the tam-tams, and presentation of salu-salu to us, the honoured guests, we'll witness the colour, movement, energy and life of the Namagi dancers. The Namagi is an important ceremony. We'll see the men's wind dance, a tale of sea journeys, killing and retribution; the women's flower dance, performed during the time of preparation for the Namagi, and the men's dance, giving thanks and honour to the dead chief. We'll see the ancient way of making fire; how these people make food bowls, toys, baskets, mats and thatched roofing; discover the meaning of their sand drawings, and all this before we taste their traditional food and refreshments for lunch. After they call the spirits into the nalnal (war club), and the men and women dance together offering the best wishes to the new chief, we can get caught up in the rhythm and excitement and join in the public dancing.

This tour is a unique opportunity to discover the fascinating culture and traditions of the Nemi Gortien Ser (Spirit of Unity) people. Then it's back to our bungalows, dinner and preparation for the Man Bush Trail that starts the next day.

(We will be able to store excess gear at the bungalows while on our four-day walk.)

Learning the art of mat weaving



Day 3. Wednesday Man Bush Trail (B, L, D)**Drive time 3 hours (plus), four day hike, strenuous, local housing and bush shelter accommodation**

We will be driven in a truck down the east coast, from Norsup to Unua. On the way we will visit a local cocoa and copra plant where we will see the production of one of Vanuatu's main industries. Our guide will explain the processes before we head off to visit a school built by the Australian government. Once we reach Unua we will be welcomed and treated to a traditional lunch before beginning our guided trek through the jungle interior of Vanuatu's fabled Malekula Island. From the coast we'll walk across the mountainous interior to the west. Our Man Bush guide will introduce us to bush-life and stories, and we will be welcomed into villages still practicing many traditional customs. Porters will carry our personal sleeping bags, tents, mats and belongings.

Note: Sections of the trail pass through rugged bush country and through rivers. You will need suitable footwear for river crossings, preferably

boots or hiking sandals that you won't have to change at every crossing. Hiking times are approximate and will depend on the ability of the group.

Unua to Melken, hiking 1.5 - 2 hours, ascent 10 m, local house accommodation

We'll hear stories of local customs as we climb the ridge to our first bush camp set amongst dense vegetation.

Day 4. Thursday (B, L, D)**Melken to Mt Laimbele, hiking 7 hours, ascent 650 m, descent 170 m, bush shelter accommodation**

Today we walk through beautiful forest and up to Mt Laimbele, where if the weather permits we may see the awesome glow from the volcanoes of Ambrym. Bush tucker will be the fare of the day as we climb to our bush shelter. It is a handmade bush hut and we will be sleeping on our mat on the ground.

Day 5. Friday (B, L, D)**Mt Laimbele to Lebongbong, hiking 8 hours, ascent 380 m, descent 607 m, guesthouse accommodation**

Keep an eye out for the birdlife, and we may even spot some wild cattle as we follow the undulating ridgeline to the village, one of the last hill tribe villages in the area. We reach our guesthouse in the afternoon ready to enjoy some special, seasonal Man Bush food. Nesowong is a dish made from bush banana, water taro and coconut milk. We may even get to try some Man Bush ice cream.

Day 6. Saturday (B, L, D)**Lebongbong to Lawa, hiking 9 - 10 hours, ascent 600 m, descent 1140 m, guesthouse accommodation**

There is a long and steep descent today and highlights along the way include visits to a spring in a cave, nakamal (a traditional meeting place in Vanuatu, used for gatherings, ceremonies and drinking kava), and a massive waterfall. Big banyan trees feature along the trail. We'll complete our trek at the village of Lawa where we can swim, shower, relax on the white and grey stone beach and watch the sunset.

Day 7. Sunday (B, L, D)**Lawa to Norsup, bungalow accommodation**

Before lunch we have time for relaxing and snorkelling, then we'll transfer by boat up the west coast of Malekula to Lambubu jetty, then by truck back to our bungalows at Norsup.



Climbing a Huge Banyan Tree

Day 8. Monday (B, L, D)

Nanwut Day Tour on Uri Island, full day, bungalow accommodation

We will be driven to Lakatoro wharf where our guide will meet us and take us across to Uri Island, a great place to relax. There's the white coral-sand beach and beach-side hammocks, or we can opt to go snorkelling, or paddling in traditional outrigger canoes, or see the locals weaving pandanus into baskets and mats. It will be late afternoon when we get back to our bungalows at Norsup.

Day 9. Tuesday (B, L, D)

Norsup to Ambrym Island, guesthouse accommodation

We transfer to the airport for our 12 noon flight to Craig Cove, Ambrym Island. We have a free afternoon so after lunch we walk to the local shops to buy water, then pack for the next leg of our trip.

Day 10. Wednesday (B, L, D) Volcano Cross Over Trek, Ambrym Island

Four day hike, strenuous, tent accommodation

Our walk takes us from Port Vato, across the volcanic ash plane to visit Mt Benbow and Mt Marum volcanoes. A highlight of the trek is staying a night at East Camp to see the volcanoes' glow in the night sky. Porters will carry packs, personal sleeping bags, mats and tents. Endu Village is where we finish this hike and get to experience the village life and sleep in a bed.

Hiking 5 hours to West Camp (720 m), strenuous, tent accommodation

Note: Hiking times are approximate and will depend on the ability of the group.

After a 50 minute drive from our accommodation in Craig Cove we reach Port Vato, the start of our trek. Then it's an easy walk through local gardens, coconut trees, and forest before coming to a large, dry river bed with hard black sand (flat but without shade). We follow this to the base of large cliff. After lunch there is steep climb along the river bed to a walking track leading uphill through the forest. We then follow the narrow river through spectacular scenery (we may get our feet wet), to a short, steep, sandy dune that leads to the ash plain and West Camp. From here we have views of the vast ash plain and volcanic scenery.

Day 11. Thursday (B, L, D) Mt Benbow (1020 m) and back to West Camp

Hiking 5 hours return, strenuous

Camp, tent accommodation

We will walk across the open ash plain, where sparse moss-like vegetation grows, and past scoria left from lava flows of a previous eruption. Then it's up a steep, narrow ridge to the edge of the main crater of Mt Benbow. We retrace our steps to camp where our local guides prepare dinner.



Crossing the ash plain on our way to Mt Benbow

Day 12. Friday (B, L, D)

West Camp to Mt Marum Volcano and East Camp

Hiking 3-4 hours to Mt Marum Volcano (950 m), Hiking 1 hour to East Camp, tent accommodation

We begin with an easy walk across the ash plain through a desert-like landscape of sparse green mosses and grasses. If the weather is fine we'll have spectacular views of Mt Benbow and Mt Marum billowing plumes of smoke. After passing 'rivers of scoria', lava flows from previous eruptions, we'll walk around a newly created volcanic landscape of fresh lava flows and a hot water lake before arriving at East Camp for the night. Here, we can enjoy the crimson glow of Mt Marum.

Day 13. Saturday (B, L, D)

East Camp to Endu Village, bungalow accommodation

Hiking 5-7 hours

Endu Cultural Tour, duration approximately 1 hour

An undulating walk across mountainous terrain leads us to an old ash plain, spotted with bushes and grass. Before entering the fern forest ahead, look behind - the view to Mt Marum is stunning! After following a bush trail it is time to say goodbye to Marum. From here there is a two hour descent. We finally arrive at a beautiful beach. After walking along the soft, sandy beach, we'll be met by our vehicles for transfer to Endu Village.

There's the opportunity to take a short walk for another interesting and enlightening tour by the local people where you'll discover the fascinating culture of South-East Ambrym. After a traditional welcome from the village warriors, we will watch the energetic dancing, accompanied by ancient chanting and singing. Demonstrations of traditional skills like trapping and snaring wild bush game, help us understand how these people have lived. We'll watch women cook in their traditional style, learn about the men's carving techniques, and even how to make some local medicine.

Day 14. Sunday (B)

Transfer to Ulei Airport and fly back to Port Vila. Tour ends



Sharing the Local Fare along the Track

What's Included in Vanuatu

- Local guides
- All vehicle and boat transport
- Camping gear (bush shelters, tents, sleeping mats, all cookware and camp kitchen implements)
- All accommodation as listed on a twin share basis (8 x nights bungalow or local house, 1 x night bush shelter, 3 x nights tents)
- Meals as listed (**B,L,D**)
- National park entry fees

What's Not Included in Vanuatu

- Permits and camping fees
- International flights from your departure country to Port Vila and Port Vila to your destination
- Airport transfers arrival and departure day
- Internal flights from Port Vila to Malekula, Malekula to Ambrym, Ambrym to Port Vila
- All internal airport departure taxes (Port Vila, Norsup, Ulei)
- Any accommodation prior to or after the tour dates and days 1 and 14
- Requested single supplement cost
- All personal trekking equipment (including backpacks, sleeping bags, liners and pillows)
- Meals other than those listed
- Trail snacks
- Personal bottled water
- Cost of optional activities; eg snorkelling or hiring out-rigger canoes on Uri Island.
- Compulsory travel and accident insurance
- Cash for extra expenses, personal alcohol, tips for guides and other services.

Road Transport Vanuatu Style



Other General Information

There are no ATMs in Malekula or Ambrym islands

Minor changes may be made along the way due to factors such as weather conditions, road or park closures, or permits being unavailable. This is left to the discretion of our on-the-ground guides and **Take A Walk** leader.

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*Lukim yu
(See you later)
Bislama Language*