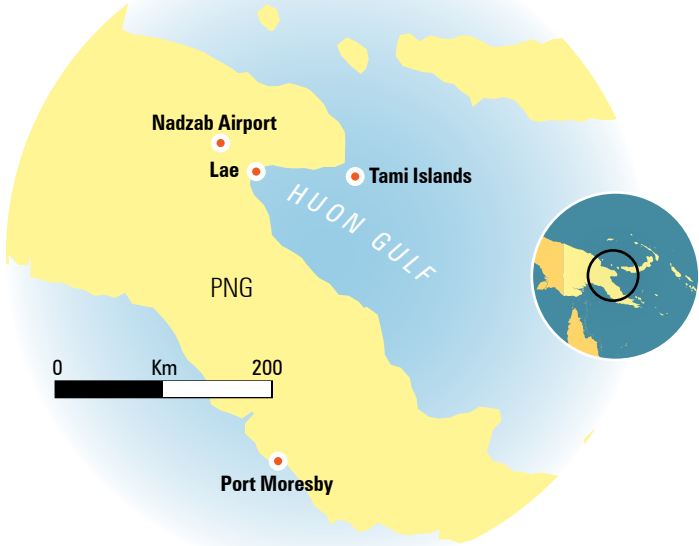




Lae resident *Marisa Howden* offers an insider's guide to the nation's industrial capital, revealing the city's must-do activities and top attractions.



PICTURES: HELEN TAYLOR

Only a 45-minute flight from Port Moresby, Lae is Papua New Guinea's second-largest city and the industrial hub of the nation. Unfortunately, Lae can often be viewed as a dangerous place to travel to, which is a shame as there are so many wonderful things to see and do that it's well worth visiting while in PNG. As long as you remain aware and avoid driving in certain areas and alone at night, it's no different to any other city. Lae offers a lifestyle full of excitement and adventure, as well as unrivalled natural beauty – you just have to know where to look to find it. Luckily, you have my 12 must-do activities to get you going.

**Show-stopper ... scenes from the Morobe Show, one of the main attractions of Lae.**

**1** The Morobe Show is Lae's premier event and is on October 24–25. It showcases the agricultural, industrial, commercial and cultural aspects of the Morobe Province. Attend on the Sunday, when traditional dancing groups or *sing sings* will offer a rare opportunity to see into many of PNG's 800+ cultures. It's one of PNG's only cultural shows where nearly all of the country's 22 provinces are illustrated through spectacular costume, song and dance. See [morobeshow.org.pg](http://morobeshow.org.pg).

**2** Located on a quiet isthmus just an hour outside Lae is Salamaua – a true gem of PNG. Once the capital of the Morobe Province and a strategic base for Australia during World War 2, it now consists of local villages and holiday houses mostly owned by expats. Excellent snorkelling and diving can be found in the harbour, so be sure to bring your mask and snorkel. Banana boats leave daily from Voco Point (near the Lae Yacht Club).

**3** A round of golf at the Lae Golf Club is a great way to get out among the town's beautiful surrounds while you try your hand at one of PNG's better courses. The club has undergone significant changes in recent years with the addition of many bunkers and trees. It is now more challenging and hosts the annual Morobe Open, which is part of the North Queensland professional tour. ➤







Bird's-eye view ... an aerial perspective of Lae (above); scenes from Tami Islands (this page and following page).



4 Nestled along the beautiful Lae harbour foreshore, just a few minutes from town, is the Lae Yacht Club, which enjoys stunning views and excellent facilities. The restaurant has an extensive menu and is a great place to unwind over a few cold SPs while gaining a local's perspective on life in the city. See [laeyachtclub.com](http://laeyachtclub.com).

5 About 40 minutes from Lae via boat is the beautiful Bisama Waterfall. A scenic walk through lush rainforest and neighbouring villages will lead you the refreshing watering hole. Transfers can be arranged from Voco Point but we recommend finding a local guide through your hotel or the Lae Yacht Club to escort you and assist with landowner negotiations.

6 The National Botanical Gardens in Lae were once recognised as one of PNG's most diverse and spectacular gardens. Maintenance issues have resulted in the grounds being closed in recent years, but through local businesses and the PNG Forest Research Institute, the gardens have undergone a major clean up and are once again open for public use. A stroll through the gardens will reveal 400+ plant and wildlife species.

7 Fishing the Huon Gulf outside Lae is like nothing else. Over 600 species of fish have been officially tagged or caught in the past year and include everything from 150-kilogram billfish to pelagics like mackerel, wahoo and mahi mahi. See [lgfcpng.com](http://lgfcpng.com).



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8 If you're looking for a place to relax, look no further than poolside at Lae International Hotel. Lounging around the new pool is the perfect way to cool down from Lae's typically humid weather and is even better when enjoyed with a few cocktails. If you get hungry, try one of the curries from the Indian menu – it'll be sure to put the heat back in you! There's a PGK20 entry for non-hotel guests. See [laeinterhotel.com](http://laeinterhotel.com).

9 Two hours from Lae by boat are the Tami Islands. A haven for fishermen and divers, Tami is abundant with lively corals and reef fish. A small guesthouse is available and private charters can be organised through a handful of local boats. See [lgcpng.com](http://lgcpng.com).

“Excellent snorkelling and diving can be found in the harbour, so be sure to bring your mask and snorkel. Banana boats leave daily from Voco Point.

10 If you're up for a bit of adventure, head out to Nine Mile and visit the Mainland Holdings Crocodile Farm, one of the largest commercial producers of crocodile skins in the southern hemisphere. Hold a baby croc fresh from its incubator and watch the older ones scramble for lunch. If you're lucky, they may even take you into the pen with their full size, mature-aged crocs (warning – not for the faint hearted). See [tablebirds.com.pg](http://tablebirds.com.pg).

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12 Lae essentials

11 Lae is home to the Papua New Guinea University of Technology, which houses the Matheson Library – the largest technological library in the South Pacific. ‘Unitech’, as the university is known, has a small public exhibition of rare and valuable artefacts, as well as a rainforest habitat with birds, snakes and tree kangaroos on display. See [unitech.ac.pg](http://unitech.ac.pg).



Street scene ... Lae is PNG’s second-largest city.

12 A trip to Lae is not complete without a visit to the town’s main markets. Abundant with fresh local produce and full of characters, it’s a great place to become familiar with Papua New Guinean way of life. Many of the vendors travel great distances to sell their flowers, meat, fruit and vegetables at the markets each day and always welcome new faces. The markets are generally safe to visit on your

own but liaise with your hotel concierge if you’d like to arrange an escort. ■

✚ **Air Niugini flies daily from Port Moresby to Lae.**  
See [airniugini.com.pg](http://airniugini.com.pg).

**NEED TO KNOW  
GETTING THERE**

Nadzab Airport is 40 kilometres from Lae. If your hotel doesn’t provide a transfer, they can be arranged through Guard Dog Security ([guarddogsecuritypng.com](http://guarddogsecuritypng.com)) or G4S Security ([g4s.com.pg](http://g4s.com.pg)).

**MORE INFORMATION** [lcci.org.pg](http://lcci.org.pg).



WHERE TO STAY

**LAE INTERNATIONAL HOTEL**  
Lae’s premier hotel, offering fully serviced facilities, including newly renovated rooms, two restaurants, bar, conference and banquet halls, a gym and pool. See [laeinterhotel.com](http://laeinterhotel.com).

**MELANESIAN HOTEL**  
This is an iconic hotel in the heart of Lae. The city centre is easily accessible and the hotel has pleasant rooms with harbour views. A gift store and hairdresser is available on site, as well as a contemporary restaurant offering everything from pizza and steak to Asian and roast buffets. See [coralseahotels.com.pg](http://coralseahotels.com.pg).

**LAE CITY HOTEL**  
One of the newest hotels in town, with modern rooms and a 24-hour concierge service. Located in the main Top Town area, it also has an excellent cafe and restaurant serving Western and Asian cuisine. See [laecityhotel.com](http://laecityhotel.com).

**LAE TRAVELLERS INN**  
This is an affordable option, offering clean and comfortable rooms. Just a few minutes from the centre of town, the Lae Travellers Inn also has full conference facilities and a small restaurant. Contact [manager@lti.com.pg](mailto:manager@lti.com.pg).

**CROSSROADS HOTEL**  
The 45-room hotel at Awilunga Estate, 9 Mile has a Japanese-themed teppanyaki restaurant with Asian/Western fusion menus, full bar service, a well-equipped gym, WiFi and complimentary transfers to Lae City and Nadzab Airport. See [hornibrook.com.pg/crossroads](http://hornibrook.com.pg/crossroads).



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