**Bismarck Archipelago (Papua New Guinea)**

Definition: **Bismarck Archipelago** from *The Macquarie Dictionary*

1. A group of islands in the south-western Pacific, north-east of New Guinea and forming part of PNG, including the Admiralty Islands, New Hanover, New Ireland and adjacent islands.

**Summary Article: Bismarck Archipelago**
*From The Hutchinson Unabridged Encyclopedia with Atlas and Weather Guide*

Group of over 200 islands in the southwest Pacific Ocean, part of Papua New Guinea; area 49,660 sq km/19,200 sq mi. The largest island is New Britain. Coconut fibre, copra, cotton, rubber, coffee, tortoiseshell, trepang (sea cucumbers), mother-of-pearl, and fruit are the chief products. The population is mostly Papuan.

**History** Their former name was New Britain Islands. The English explorer and navigator William Dampier landed on them in 1699, and in 1885 Britain assigned them to the German sphere of influence, under which cotton plantations were started. In September 1914 they were occupied by Australia and administered as a UN Trust Territory until independence in 1975, when the Bismarck Archipelago became a part of Papua New Guinea. The islands were occupied by Japan during World War II.

**Physical** The principal islands are New Britain, formerly called Neu-Pommern (area 38,850 sq km/15,000 sq mi), and New Ireland, formerly called Neu-Mecklenburg (area 7,769 sq km/3,000 sq mi), separated from each other by St George's Channel; Dampier Strait separates New Britain from New Guinea. Lavongai, formerly Neu-Hannover (area 1,372 sq km/530 sq mi), lies off the northwestern extremity of New Ireland, from which it is separated by a complex system of reefs. The archipelago includes Duke of York Island, the Admiralty Islands, and 100 smaller islands. The archipelago, which is of coral and volcanic formation, is mountainous and well wooded. The soil is very fertile.

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