



A 'CENTRE TERRE' EXPEDITION
PAPUA NEW GUINEA
JANUARY-MARCH 2026



DESTINATION MAYANG 2026

For 40 years, the resurgence of Mayang – one of the largest on the planet – has jealously guarded its secrets. A team of cave explorers and scientists from the french association 'Centre Terre' is taking on this extraordinary challenge by embarking on a three-month long, intense expedition into the virgin forest of the Nakanai Mountains.

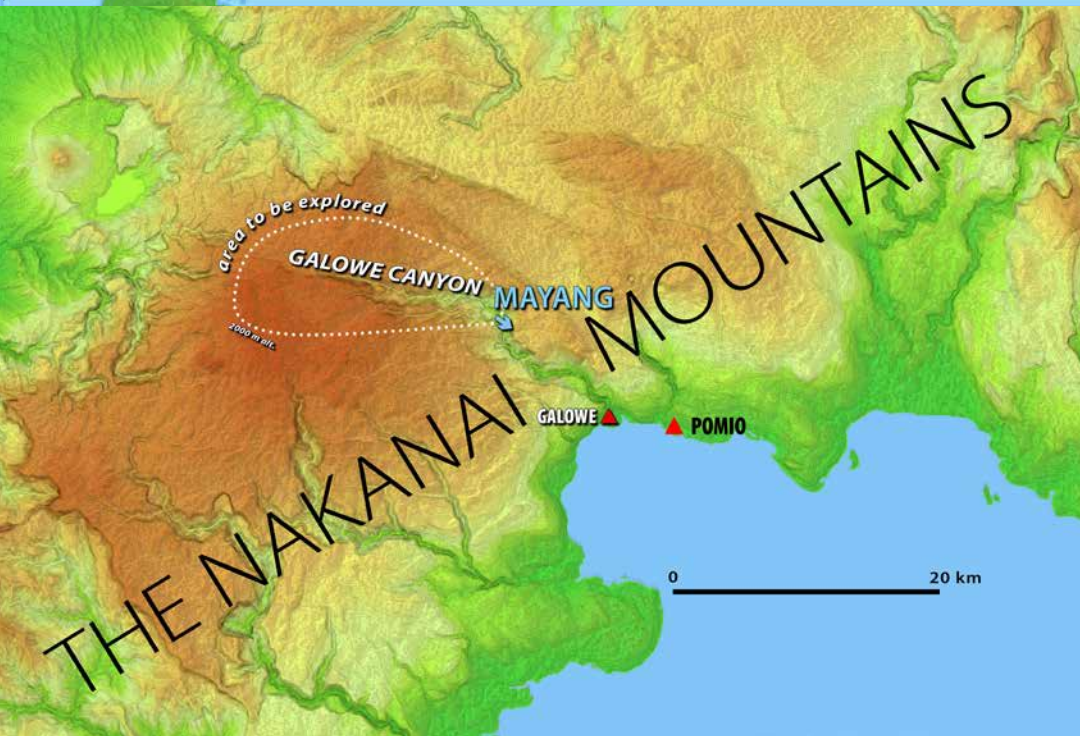


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French
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caving
expedition

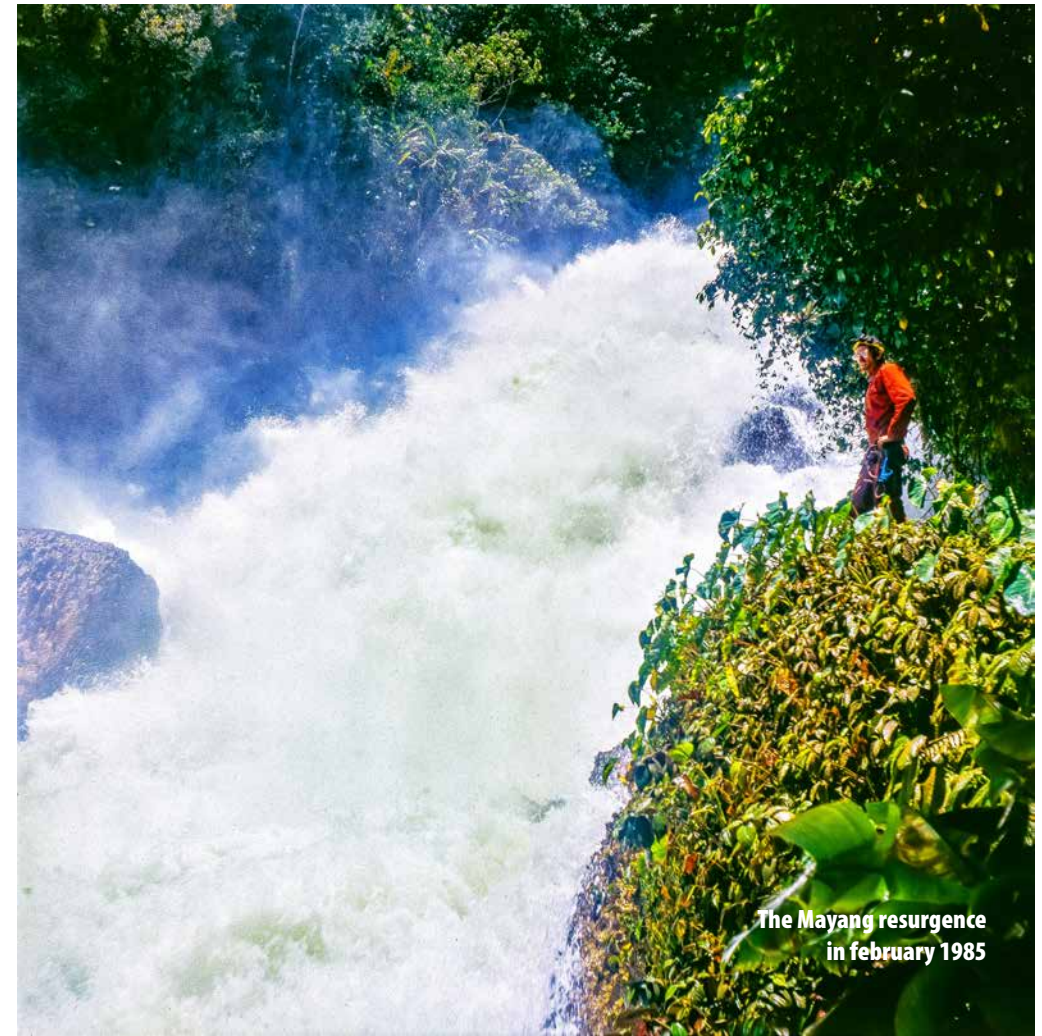




MAYANG 2026: A CHALLENGE...

Discovered in 1984 during a helicopter survey of the Galowe gorges, and physically reached by foot the following year, the Mayang resurgence – one of the largest on the planet with 20 to 30 cubic meter of water per second – remains a mystery. No-one has yet explored the passages where one of the world's biggest underground rivers flows. The multidisciplinary team is going to use all its resources in this scientific investigation of an exceptional biome where everything is linked: geology, hydrogeology, biology, and even the ancient relationship between Man and the caves.

...AT A SCIENTIFIC AND HUMAN LEVEL



A multidisciplinary geographical expedition to a fantastic virgin land

What does the underground river of Mayang conceal? A giant flow and stunning underground landscapes, no doubt.

Discovering

Throughout the expeditions organized by 'Centre Terre', we have revealed to science and the public many unknown territories, both underground and on the surface:

marble glaciers in Chilean Patagonia, decorated caves in Borneo and Chile, as well as other archaeological remains and many significant caves...

The primary goal of this new expedition is to discover and explore caves in **a remote area of the Nakanai Mountains**, virtually untouched by man. The discovered and explored caves, including the submerged ones, will lead the team farther above, deep into, and below the massif, towards the famous source of Mayang.

Five previous expeditions have tried in vain to unravel the mystery of this raging and impressive source, often referred to as Mayang, but also the Mysterious, the Inaccessible, the

Indomitable, or the Mythical.

The team's tireless work and unparalleled field experience make 'Centre Terre' optimistic about this project.

Mayang attracts as much as it intrigues.

Since its discovery in 1984, it has held a special place in the minds of cavers, who dream of finally unlocking its secrets.

To achieve results, this new expedition will require its teams to cross particularly difficult areas of primary forest, made even more difficult by the devastating storm that violently struck in 1997, leaving behind felled trees, forming a real Mikado, and soils favorable to the rapid regrowth of young bamboo. A vegetal maze that teams will have to overcome with machetes.

In addition, a potential underground breakthrough of more than 1,000m is a real possibility!

The formidable exploration terrain targeted by the Mayang 2026 expedition spans over 85 square kilometers of rugged karst massif, split in two by the Galowe gorges, and receiving more than 10 meters of annual precipitation... Ranging between 500 and 2,000 m of altitude, this primary forest, virtually untouched by man, holds an intact and rich biosphere, whose inventory will support the Nakanai Mountains' nomination as a UNESCO World Heritage site.



Exploring & studying

About ten scientists will take part in the expedition, and collaborations with various French, local, and international universities will be established.

In the life sciences, the biodiversity inventory carried out on the surface given the logistical access to uncharted territories at altitudes of between 500 and 2,000 metres, will enrich the Nakanai's fragmented inventories.

Underground, the biospeleologists of the team will open a virtually unexplored field of investigation, both at the cave entrances and in their depths, as well as in the underground waters.

In earth sciences, geologists and hydrogeologists will conduct studies on the structure of the karst massif, the history of its formation, and the underground water flows that feed Mayang.

And when it comes to ethnoarchaeology, the prospecting of cave entrances will refine knowledge of human interactions with the Nakanai caves.

These studies will provide essential data to the Papuan authorities to adopt better protection measures, and promote an eventual Unesco World Heritage nomination.





Sharing

One of Centre Terre's particularities lies in its ongoing commitment to sharing its discoveries. Since its creation, the association has sought to make its scientific findings and explorations accessible to as many people as possible, and to raise global awareness of the importance of preserving these natural treasures, particularly through mainstream documentaries.

During the Mayang expedition, we will share our adventures live from our base camps, via our website and social media. Team members will provide updates, photos, videos, and captivating accounts of their discoveries and experiences, allowing the public to follow our progress in real-time.

The website www.centre-terre.fr provides everyone with a wealth of valuable information: detailed reports of our past missions, specialized books, documentary films, educational resources for schools, and an impressive photo bank. This platform aims not only to inform but also to inspire and educate future generations about the need to protect these fragile and unique ecosystems.

Thanks to this approach of transparency and sharing, 'Centre Terre' hopes not only to deepen scientific knowledge about the Nakanai mountains and their vast networks of caves and underground rivers but also to create awareness of the importance of their conservation.

French Ministry of National Education Accreditation

'Centre Terre' has also been accredited by the Ministry of National Education for its educational programs implemented during each expedition since 2008.

Following each expedition, we publish a number of articles in scientific journals, specialized reviews and mainstream magazines. A full report is published in the year after our return.

centre-terre.fr



A great science and exploration documentary on television...

Our film crew will produce a new, wide audience movie, following our previous documentaries that boast excellent ratings and reviews. When combined with other media produced, such as specific videos or photos, they represent excellent display tools for our partners while forming high quality educational content.



The 'Centre Terre' Mayang 2026 team

Founded in 1993 to explore the Lost Chasm of Papua, on the large island of New Guinea, the 'Centre Terre' association then focused, from 1995 to 2023, on isolated limestone islands in the vast archipelago of the Chilean Patagonia. With a team of about a hundred cavers and scientists, 'Centre Terre' has experienced members in logistics, safety, and dealing with difficult terrains and conditions. Most of them have previous experience in the Nakanai mountains...



Bernard Tourte
Expedition leader
Chairman of Centre Terre



Franck Bréhier
Scientific leader,
Biospeologist, caver, diver



Christophe Rognon
Geologist, Hydrologist
caver, diver



Didier Lamotte
Archeologist
caver



Laurent Mestre
Logistics,
dive coordinator, caver



Michel Philips
Treasurer,
caver, diver



Natalia Morata
Caver



Kateryna Medvedieva
Photographer
Caver



Serge Caillaud
Photographer
Caver



Lionel Ruiz
Equipment manager
Caver



Arthur Villain
Doctor,
mountaineer, caver



Jessica Morin-Buote
Nurse
Caver



Denis Morales
Caver



Roman Hapka
Archeologist, caver



Jérémie Prieur-Drevon
Caver, diver



Mehdi Boukhal
Caver, diver



Sylvain Boutonnet
Caver



Nicolas Fouilland
Caver



Florian Rives
Caver



Olivier Guérard
Caver



Carlos Placido
Caver, diver



Jean-Marc Honiat
Caver



Yann Auffret
Caver



Anthony Geneau
Caver



Luc-Henri Fage
Director, caver

The scientific team will be strengthened by Australian and Papuan researchers in archaeology, ethnology, botany and biology, and collaborations with specialised laboratories.

Centre Terre technical and scientific support team



Benjamin Lans
Cartographer



Fabien Hobléa
Karstologist



Richard Maire
Karstologist



Marie Éveillard-Buchoux
Geographer, Naturalist



David Meunier
Webmaster, Treasurer



Amandine Laborde
Geologist



Charlotte Honiat
Paleoclimatologist



Protecting

Even before our first steps on these little-known lands, we felt the extent of their richness and incredible fragility. Being among the pioneers who explored and studied them confers upon us an immense responsibility, and every action must be carefully considered to minimize our impact. But it is not only about the present, it is the future of this natural and cultural heritage that we must passionately preserve.



The majestic Nakanai Mountains are part of the "sublime karsts of Papua New Guinea" listed on the tentative list of World Heritage sites. Dominated by an extraordinary chain of volcanoes, this region is home to immense networks of caves and underground rivers that constitute an invaluable wealth. The 'Centre Terre' team, with its expertise, is fervently committed to the Mayang 2026 mission, to enrich this knowledge and protect this natural treasure for future generations.

BECOME A PARTNER OF MAYANG 2026

The members of 'Centre Terre' are all volunteers, investing time and money to fulfill their passion. We are not paid, in any way, for our research and discoveries.

If we do it with such enthusiasm, it's because we are humbly aware that we are working towards the understanding of a unique heritage, a true natural wealth of humanity that our contribution helps to make more widely known and recognized by all. Many support each of our expeditions financially or in kind with essential gear & supplies, and we thank them! This year again, in order to

successfully carry out our Mayang 2026 expedition, we need you.

Individual, companies, institutions, if the words exploration, discovery, sharing, and preservation resonate with you, if these values are dear to your heart, don't hesitate to take action.

Contact us and join our adventure. Our expeditions, widely publicized, benefit from strong visibility within a large audience.

As a partner, you can take advantage of this visibility by associating yourself with our actions or even asking for customized requests, ask us how!



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<https://centre-terre.fr>

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