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Tour Notes

Guyana and Suriname Revealed

Tour Duration – 14 Days



Tour Rating

Fitness ●●●○○ | Off the Beaten Track ●●●●● | Culture ●●●○○ | History ●●○○○ | Wildlife ●●●●●

Tour Pace

Busy

Tour Highlights

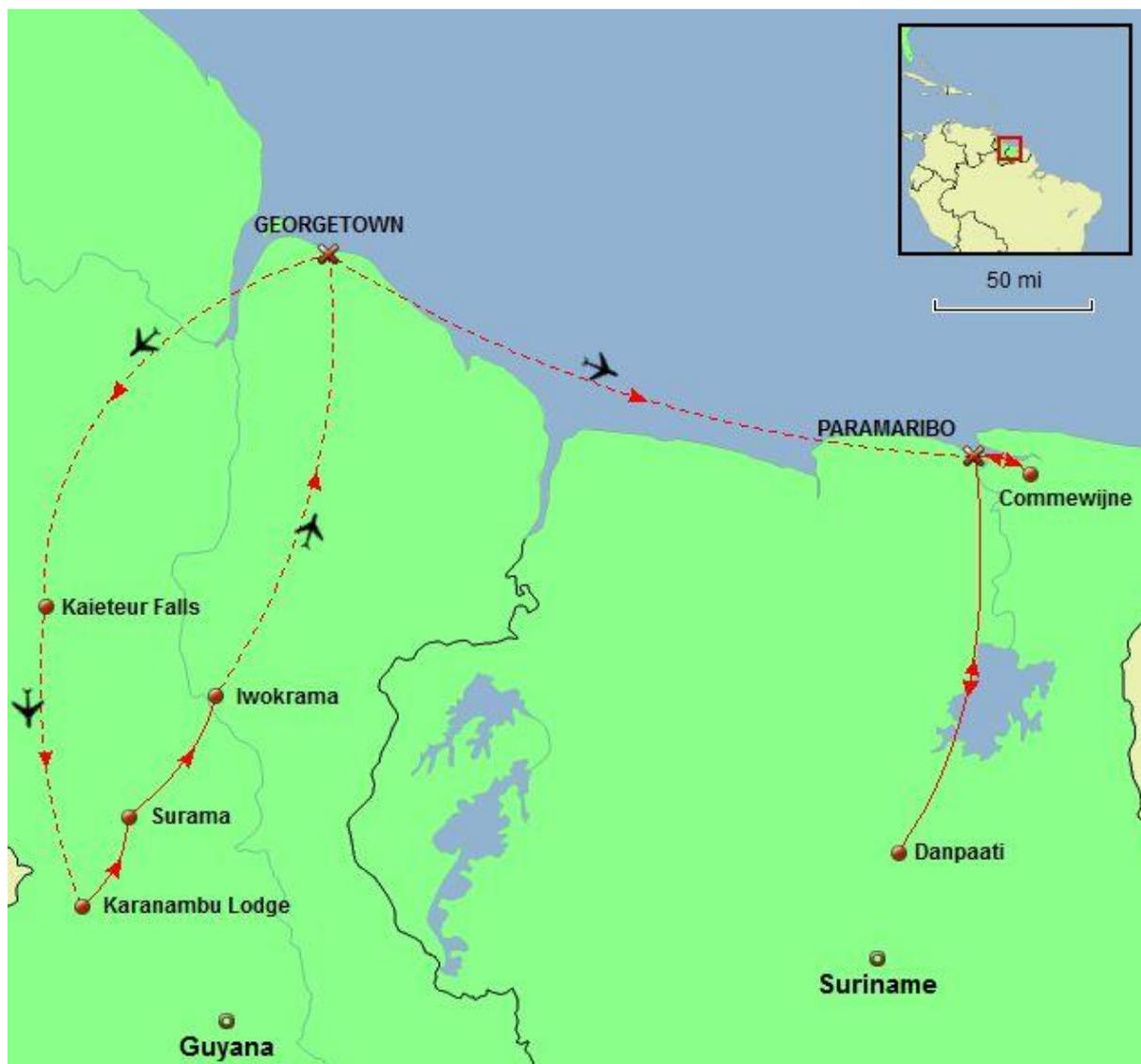
- ✓ The flight over Kaieteur Falls, the highest free-falling waterfall in the world
- ✓ The varied landscapes and natural beauty of Karanambu with the opportunity to spot Giant River Otters and Giant Anteaters.
- ✓ The pristine rainforest of Iwokrama
- ✓ Meeting the local Maroon people in Suriname





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Tour Map Guyana and Suriname Revealed



Tour Essentials

- Accommodation:** Simple but comfortable lodges and hotels
Included Meals: Daily breakfast (B), plus lunch (L) and dinner (D) as shown in the itinerary
Group Size: Maximum of 8 (you may be joined by travellers from companies other than Undiscovered Destinations)
Start Point: Georgetown (Guyana)
End Point: Paramaribo (Suriname)
Transport: 4WD, motorboats and domestic flights
Countries Visited: Guyana and Suriname



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Guyana and Suriname Revealed

The small South American country of Guyana rarely features on most people's travel plans, but discerning travellers are coming to recognise it as one of the premier wildlife destinations on our planet. Brought into the spotlight by the BBC's 'Lost Land of the Jaguar' series, Guyana offers unique opportunities to spot incredible wildlife such as Tapir, Giant River Otters, Caiman and of course the Jaguar itself. On this trip we head to Karanambu Lodge with its landscape ranging from savannah to wetlands to forest where we take trips on the river, look for birds, monkeys and Giant Anteaters, and experience the overwhelming hospitality that characterises this part of the country. We travel deep into the rainforest to Iwokrama – one of the best places for spotting these cats – and gain a unique perspective of the forest from its amazing canopy walkway, as well as visiting the Amerindian village of Surama to learn more about the lives of Guyana's indigenous people. In neighbouring Suriname, we explore the unique capital of Paramaribo with its superb colonial architecture, and look for freshwater dolphins on the river. We also visit old plantations for an insight into the country's history, and visit Maroon villages more reminiscent of Africa than South America. Guyana and Suriname are unique within Latin America and an absolute delight to explore.

Tour itinerary notes

While our intention is to adhere to the day-by-day itinerary as printed below, a degree of flexibility is built in. Overnight stops may vary from those suggested and on occasions alternative accommodation, of a similar standard to that named below, will be used.

Tour Guide

Our guides are a key strength, chosen for their knowledge of and passion for the areas in which they work. All of our guides are carefully hand-picked, and are not just passing through these countries, but are usually locally born. Unlike some companies it should be noted we do not send a guide or tour leader from Undiscovered Destinations in the UK as we have every confidence in our locally appointed representative who is responsible for operating the tour on our behalf. On this tour you will have a different guide in each location instead of the same guide throughout.

Itinerary

Day 1: Arrival in Georgetown

Arrive in Georgetown, Guyana's capital and transfer to your hotel. Overnight at Grand Coastal Hotel or similar. No meals nor guided arrangements included today.

Georgetown

Located on the coast, Georgetown is Guyana's largest city and has a distinctly Caribbean feel to it, interspersed with its colonial British, French and Dutch heritage. The city was founded in the 18th century but did not become the capital until it was captured by the French in 1782, only to fall into British hands thirty years later. It owes its existence to the fertility of its soil – early settlers found this to be an ideal region for establishing plantations and reclaimed what had been floodplains through the building of dykes and canals. Georgetown's streets are laid out in a grid pattern and contain many interesting historic buildings dating back to the 19th century, as well as some colourful markets.

Day 2: Georgetown - Kaieteur Falls (Domestic Flight)

Take a scheduled flight over the Demerara and Essequibo Rivers and hundreds of miles of unbroken tropical rainforest to visit the famous Kaieteur Falls, the world's highest free-falling waterfall, where the Potaro River drops 741 feet into the gorge below. Afterwards we return to Georgetown for the evening. Overnight at Grand Coastal Hotel or similar. (B)



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Note: On occasion the visit to Kaieteur Falls may need to be re scheduled.

Kaieteur Falls

Kaieteur Falls is a spectacular site, five times higher than Niagara Falls, and one of the most powerful waterfalls in the world. First seen by Europeans in 1870 it was known to indigenous people before this – the legend is that it was named after Kai, a great chief of the Patamona tribe, who canoed over the falls to save his tribe. Although there are taller and wider falls, Kaieteur's distinction comes from its combination of both volume of water and height.

Day 3: Kaieteur Falls - Karanambu Lodge

Transfer to the airport for a flight over the Demerara and Essequibo Rivers and hundreds of miles of tropical rainforest to land at Lethem, from where we will transfer by vehicle to Karanambu Lodge, which was established by the late Diane McTurk. Towards the evening we take a boat out on the river to look for Giant River Otters and other species. As dusk falls we continue by boat to the ponds to see the giant Amazonia Regis water lily which blooms at this time of day. On the boat ride back a spotlight will be used to search for Black Caiman and other night animals. Overnight at Karanambu Lodge. (BLD)

Note: Please read the notes on luggage under "Preparing for your Tour".

Karanambu Lodge

Karanambu Lodge is situated where the north savannah grassland, swamp and flood forest meet on the Rupununi River and the horse flats stretch towards the Pakaraima Mountains and into Brazil. The settlement has the flavour of an Amerindian village, with its clay brick and palm thatched cabanas set in a compound between the bush and the open range. The lodge accommodates guests in five cabanas with verandas; twin bedded rooms and en-suite bathrooms. Meals are served around a large dining table in the open hammock-swagged living room of the main ranch house. Outstanding tropical freshwater fish and teeming bird life abound. The area is also a last refuge for the Giant River Otter and the river is home to Black Caiman and the huge Arapaima, the world's largest fresh water fish.

Day 4: Karanambu

This morning we travel out to an area of rolling grassland which is home to a population of Giant Anteaters. There is a good chance of seeing some of these remarkable looking creatures. During the afternoon you can explore the area around the river to glimpse some of the many birds, and in the evening, walk along the airstrip to search for some of the seven species of Nightjar which live there. Overnight at Karanambu Lodge. (BLD)

Day 5: Karanambu - Surama

Take a slow boat journey along the Rupununi River and on reaching Ginep Landing we transfer by vehicle to the Amerindian village of Surama. We take a tour through the village to learn about the local way of life, visiting the local school, the medical centre, the church and some of the village houses. Tonight, enjoy an educational walk to observe wildlife and experience the mystique of the forest after dark, accompanied by our local guides. Overnight in the basic accommodation of Surama Eco-Lodge. (BLD)

Surama

Surama is a small Makushi village on the savannah with inhabitants still following time-honoured traditions and relying on the jungle for their livelihood. This isolated and idyllic location offers an escape from the concrete jungle to a serene and peaceful existence with nature. Dawn hikes, led by Surama guides across the savannah and up Surama Mountain, reveal a multitude of birds and fantastic vistas. The guides have lived their entire lives in the rainforest, and have an incredible understanding of nature and how to utilise its resources.



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Day 6: Surama Mountain

Rise before dawn and walk across the savannah in the cool morning air to climb Surama Mountain. This is not a technical climb but can be arduous, and for those who prefer not to undertake it the local guides will arrange alternative activities. After lunch back at the village we set off to walk the three miles to the Burro Burro River for a canoe trip, hoping to spot Giant River Otters, Tapir and Spider Monkeys amongst other wildlife. Return to the village for sunset. Overnight in the basic accommodation at Surama Eco Lodge. (BLD)

Day 7: Surama - Iwokrama

Depart Surama by vehicle looking out for the myriad of bird species that frequent the forest edge and transfer to a trail in the hope of seeing one of Guyana's most spectacular birds, the Guianan Cock-of-the-Rock. We continue to the Iwokrama Canopy Walkway, 30 metres above the ground, for a different perspective of the forest. We will also spend time exploring the clearing around Atta Lodge, where you will have an excellent chance of spotting the Crimson Fruit Crow, and Black Curassow. Overnight at Atta Rainforest Lodge. (BLD)

Iwokrama

Iwokrama Forest covers nearly a million acres and is home to a bewildering array of different species. Its name means 'place of refuge' in the language of the Makushi Amerindians, who retreated here to avoid the predations of the slave trade. Iwokrama was established as a centre for the study of the rainforest and has been set aside to promote sustainable tourism within the region. Wildlife here includes Jaguar, Caiman, Howler and Spider Monkeys, rodents such as Pacas and Agoutis, and Peccaries among numerous other species. The birdlife here is equally spectacular, with Toucans, Macaws, Hummingbirds and the sought after Guianan Cock-of-the-Rock. The forest is in the homeland of the Makushi people, who have lived here and used the forest for thousands of years. Although the forest around Atta Rainforest Lodge is excellent for birds, the major attraction here is a 154-metre-long canopy walkway which is only 750m from the lodge. The walkway has four platforms, the highest of which is over 30 metres above the ground, and these will allow us the opportunity to spot a range of canopy species, many of which we would struggle to see well from the forest floor.

Day 8: Iwokrama – Georgetown (Domestic Flight)

Our day starts with the dawn chorus from the canopy walkway where we may see Red Howler Monkeys and Black Spider Monkeys. Afterwards we will travel by vehicle along one of the best trails for seeing Jaguar. Sightings cannot be guaranteed but if you are very lucky you may see one of Guyana's most elusive creatures. On arrival at the airstrip at Lethem we will take the flight back to Georgetown and on arrival take a city tour of Guyana's capital including visits to St George's Cathedral, Stabroek Market and the Botanical Gardens and zoo. Overnight at Grand Costal Inn or similar. (B)

Day 9: Georgetown – Paramaribo (Domestic Flight)

Transfer to the airport for the flight to Paramaribo, the capital of neighbouring Suriname and transfer to your hotel. We take a walking tour of the capital which is a UNESCO World Heritage Site with beautiful architecture, interesting markets and historical buildings. We will transfer to the pier for our Sunset Dolphin cruise on the Suriname River to look for freshwater dolphins, which can often be spotted in groups of up to twenty. Overnight at Eco-Resort Inn or similar. (B)

Paramaribo

Suriname's capital looks rather out of place in South America – an unusual collection of architecture that often has you wondering exactly where you are. Located on the banks of the Suriname River, Paramaribo (Parbo to the locals) changed hands a few times between the Dutch and the English in the early days of their involvement in the region, but was under Dutch control from 1815 until the end of colonial rule in 1975. Evidence of this heritage can be seen in the city's historic district (a UNESCO World Heritage Site), where wooden houses with elaborate and elegant facades line the streets close to the old Fort Zeelandia.



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Elsewhere African markets vie for space with mosques and Hindu temples and buildings sport Chinese script, all of these reflecting the unique ethnic make-up of the capital and of Suriname itself. On street corners and open-air bars look out for a man sitting with caged birds – a popular pastime in Suriname is entering birds in to singing competitions. The population of the city is just 250,000, giving it rather an intimate feel, and the historic inner city is a fascinating place to wander round, with stunning old wooden churches and whitewashed mansions lining the streets.

Day 10: Paramaribo – Danpaati

We head south from Paramaribo by road to Atjoni, and then travel by motorised boat along the Upper Suriname River to Danpaati River Lodge which is situated on an island in the middle of the rainforest. We pass Maroon villages through breath-taking scenery. On arrival we can swim in the pool or the river and relax in the forest surroundings. In the evening we head out on the river in search of Caiman lying on the river banks. Overnight at Danpaati River Lodge or similar. (BLD)

The Maroons

The Maroon people are the descendants of former runaway slaves who fled the colonial plantations from the end of the 17th century onwards, for a better life in the interior. Most settled alongside rivers, some crossing into French Guyana and customs that they had brought with them from Africa remain largely free from outside influences. A visit to Maroon villages presents an utterly different side of Latin America that is rarely encountered by travellers

Day 11: Danpaati

Today we will visit one of the twelve villages that are affiliated with Danpaati to learn about the customs and culture of the local Maroon groups. In the afternoon we take a forest walk and learn about the traditional medicinal uses of the plants here. The rest of the day is at leisure with the opportunity to take a dugout canoe around the island or try some fishing. Overnight at Danpaati River Lodge. (BLD)

Day 12: Danpaati - Paramaribo

This morning is at leisure until lunch, and in the afternoon, we depart by dugout canoe for Atjoni and continue by road to Paramaribo. Overnight at Eco Resort or similar. (BL)

Day 13: Paramaribo - Commewijne Plantations

Today we head to the Commewijne district to the east of Paramaribo across the Suriname River. The tour takes us along the former colonial plantations, most of which are now abandoned. We make a stop at plantation Peperpot where the old coffee and cocoa factory, deputy-director's house and the old office are located. This former plantation is one of the oldest in the history of Suriname. Peperpot was established by the English and already existed before Suriname was conquered by the natives from Zeeland under the command of Abraham Crijnssen in 1667. This is one of the last plantations still in its original condition. Peperpot is renowned for the many birds which can be spotted. From here we make a stop at the mini-museum of Marienburg, a former sugar plantation, before enjoying a delicious lunch in a typical Javanese restaurant (warung) in Tamanredjo. We then continue to the confluence of the Commewijne and Suriname Rivers at Nieuw Amsterdam. Here we will visit the outdoor museum of Fort Nieuw Amsterdam, with its large fortress which was built as a defence for the crop fields that were situated along the upper parts of both rivers. Overnight at Eco-Resort. (BL)

Day 14: Commewijne – Paramaribo – Departure from Suriname

After breakfast, we return back to Paramaribo. Time at leisure until your transfer to the airport for your onward flight. (B)



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Inclusions and Exclusions

Inclusions:

Arrival and departure transfers if arriving on the first day of the tour and departing on the last day of the tour
Ground transport throughout
Domestic flights as shown in the itinerary
All accommodation
Services of English-speaking local guides - you will have a different guide in each location instead of the same guide throughout
Meals as listed (B – Breakfast, L – Lunch, D – Dinner)
Entrance fees for sites listed as part of the itinerary

Excluded:

International flights
Any airport taxes
Travel Insurance
Visas
Drinks
Tips (Discretionary)
Expenses of personal nature

Important Information

Foreign Office Travel Warnings

We constantly monitor the advice posted by the British Foreign, Development and Commonwealth Office (FCDO). In particular we will always advise clients of any travel warnings. At present there are no warnings against travel to Guyana or Suriname. Please feel free to contact us should you have any specific concerns or would like to know in detail what measures are being taken to ensure visits remain trouble free and without incident.

It should be noted that this information applies to British citizens. Other nationals are asked to check the current position of their respective government.

Accommodation and Meals

Hotel Check-in Times

On this tour the check in time for most hotels is between 4-5pm. Please note that the price of your tour does not include guaranteed early check-in. Therefore please advise us if you would like to ensure that your room is available for an earlier arrival. This is particularly relevant on the first day of the tour and for early morning arrivals. One option is to pre-book and pay for an extra night at the beginning of your tour which will guarantee your accommodation is available irrespective of what time you arrive. Please contact us for information and costs.

It should also be noted that on many of our tours we have set-aside Day 1 of the itinerary as an 'arrival day'.



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For this reason and because tour participants are likely to be arriving at different times, and often from different countries, guided sightseeing or other activities are not included. If you are arriving early or before the start date of the tour and would like to organise some extra arrangements on a private basis please contact us.

Accommodation Rating

On this tour you will be staying in simple but comfortable accommodation. Surama Eco Lodge is rather rustic. Rooms will be en-suite, with private bathroom and you will find your hotel has a restaurant and/or bar.

Single Travellers

We welcome solo travellers and single rooms will be allocated subject to the applicable tour supplement. Please note that on occasions you may not always be allocated a double or twin room, as some hotels have designated single rooms. These may be smaller in size. However, the supplement payable takes this into consideration.

Food & Drinks

The daily meal basis is shown in the tour itinerary; Breakfast (B), Lunch (L) and Dinner (D). Please note that lunch may be a picnic. Drinks are not included and will be payable locally in cash.

Dietary Requirements

If you have any special dietary requirements you must notify us at the time of booking. While we will make every effort to cater for you, we cannot guarantee that this will be possible.

Budgeting for your Tour

You will need some extra money to cover meals and drinks not included in the tour price, any optional sightseeing, souvenirs and items of a personal nature such as laundry.

Food

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Guyana

Lunch £6 / Dinner £11

Suriname

Lunch 5 Euros / Dinner in restaurant 8-15 Euros, in hotel 20-25 Euros

French Guiana

Lunch 15-20 Euros / Dinner in a restaurant 30-35 Euros, in a hotel 40 Euros

Drinks

The prices for drinks can vary greatly depending upon location and the prices detailed below are an average guide. In general you would expect that drinks purchased in a supermarket or local bar to be less expensive, whilst drinks in an upmarket bar or restaurant may be more expensive.

Guyana

Bottle of beer (Imported) 2 Euros / Water (1.5L) 0.80 Euros

Suriname

Bottle of beer (Imported) 1.15 Euros / Water (1.5 L) 0.90 Euros





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French Guiana

Bottle of beer 3 Euros / Water (0.33 L) 1.75 Euros

Tipping – Guide and Drivers

Tipping is common practise in South America. If your local guide has been helpful then you could think about tipping. This amount can obviously be left to you. When tipping a driver, a guide or hotel staff a few dollars will always be gratefully received.

Foreign Exchange - Guyana

ATM Availability: Available in Georgetown but not reliable.

Credit and Debit Card Acceptance: Credit and debit cards are not widely accepted for payments, even in larger towns and cities, and they are not accepted at the lodges

Local Currency: Guyana dollar

Recommended Currency for Exchange: US Dollars

Where to Exchange: The best place to exchange money is in Georgetown

Foreign Exchange - Suriname

ATM Availability: Available in Paramaribo and a small number of places outside the capital.

Credit and Debit Card Acceptance: Credit and debit cards are not widely accepted

Local Currency: Suriname dollar

Recommended Currency for Exchange: US Dollars

Where to Exchange: The best place to exchange money is in Paramaribo

Foreign Exchange – French Guiana

ATM Availability: Widely available

Credit and Debit Card Acceptance: Credit and debit cards are widely accepted

Local Currency: Euro

Recommended Currency for Exchange: Euro

Where to Exchange: The best option is to arrive with Euros

Joining your Tour

Flight Information

Our advertised prices do not include the cost of international flights. Please contact us if you would like a quotation to book a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Joining Your Tour Abroad

For customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements airport transfers are included if arriving on the first day of the tour and departing on the last day of the tour. In order that the transfer can be arranged please ensure that you advise us of your flight information once available. Please advise the date, time and flight number for your arrival/departure. If we have not been advised of this information at least 2 weeks before travel, then you will be required to make your own way to the hotel on Day 1 of your tour.

Travel Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Undiscovered Destinations that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country and be valid for the entire duration of your holiday.



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Visa Information

Visas for Guyana are not required by many nationalities, including UK and US citizens, and citizens of some European countries. However, we recommend that you check with your nearest embassy for the most up to date details.

For Suriname we are usually able to arrange for you to obtain the visa once you arrive in Guyana; you need to bring US\$55 in cash and two passport photos with you to enable us to do this. However, as regulations can change, and it may not be possible for all nationalities, it is essential that you check with us if you intend to do this.

Passports

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, valid for at least six months after the date of return to your country.

We strongly advise that your passport contains a minimum of two blank pages, as this may be a requirement of the local immigration authorities. In addition certain countries will stipulate that the two blank pages are opposite each other. If you are unable to meet these requirements you may be refused boarding by your airline or denied entry by the immigration authorities.

For specific information about the requirements for your destination please check with the country's embassy or consulate. Alternatively UK citizens can visit www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice

Vaccinations & Protection

As with travel to most parts of Latin America, we strongly recommend that you contact your doctor's surgery or a specialist travel clinic for up-to-date information, advice and the necessary vaccinations. For a visit of less than one month, almost certainly you will be advised to have immunisations against the following: Diphtheria and Tetanus, Hepatitis A, Typhoid, Meningitis. The use of a DEET-containing insect repellent is highly recommended, and we recommend that you take professional advice about malaria prophylactics.

You will need proof of Yellow Fever immunisation when entering Suriname from Guyana.

The legal status and regulation of some medicines prescribed or purchased in your home country can be different in other countries. If you're travelling with prescription or over-the-counter medicine, read this guidance from NaTHNaC on [best practice when travelling with medicines](#). For further information on the legal status of a specific medicine, you'll need to contact the embassy, high commission or consulate of the country or territory you're travelling to.

Preparing for your tour

Climate

As Guyana and Suriname are situated just above the equator, they enjoy year round warm temperatures with an average in the high twenties (Celsius), with high humidity. It is cooler at the coast than in the interior. The interior experiences two wet seasons – the main one from May to September and shorter rains in December.

Clothing

When it comes to clothing it is usually recommended that lighter clothes are worn through the day, and warmer ones at night.



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A hat is also advised to be worn through the day to protect from the sun, along with at least one piece of waterproof clothing for any days that the weather may be wet or windy. Guyana and Suriname are warm all year round and so there is no need to bring a lot of heavy clothing, although a light fleece or something similar may be appreciated. It is a good idea to bring some long trousers and long sleeved shirts to avoid being bitten by insects.

Equipment

Suncream/sunblock is a must – please ensure you bring enough as it may not be available locally. Insect repellent, including a bite spray will also be useful to have. You should also bring binoculars if you have them – these will greatly enhance your wildlife viewing.

Footwear

Footwear is a main priority on this tour. Comfortable walking shoes/boots are recommended and lighter shoes or sandals can be worn when transferring between destinations.

Luggage on tour

Passengers travelling on internal flights within Guyana are allowed a total free luggage allowance of 20lbs/9.1kgs per person. If this is exceeded charges will apply, but the additional baggage allowance can only be confirmed by the airline, on the day of travel. If you wish to ensure that you are able to travel with extra luggage you can consider purchasing an additional seat on the aircraft.

Passengers travelling on Gum Air flights between Guyana and Suriname are allowed a total free luggage allowance of 33lbs/15kgs. If this is exceeded charges will apply, but the additional baggage allowance can only be confirmed by the airline, on the day of travel. If you wish to ensure that you are able to travel with extra luggage you can consider purchasing an additional seat on the aircraft.

Electric Supply & Plugs

Plugs are generally of the three pin, American style plugs. We recommend that you bring a multi-adapter to cover all eventualities.

Tour Itinerary Versions

Please ensure that you have an up-to-date copy of these tour notes immediately before you travel, as from time to time our itineraries may be amended, either for operational reasons or in response to feedback from customers. You will be informed of any major changes to your tour but small changes may just be added to these tour notes. These tour notes were updated on 4th February 2021.