



Guyana, Suriname and French Guiana

Blue Dot Travel

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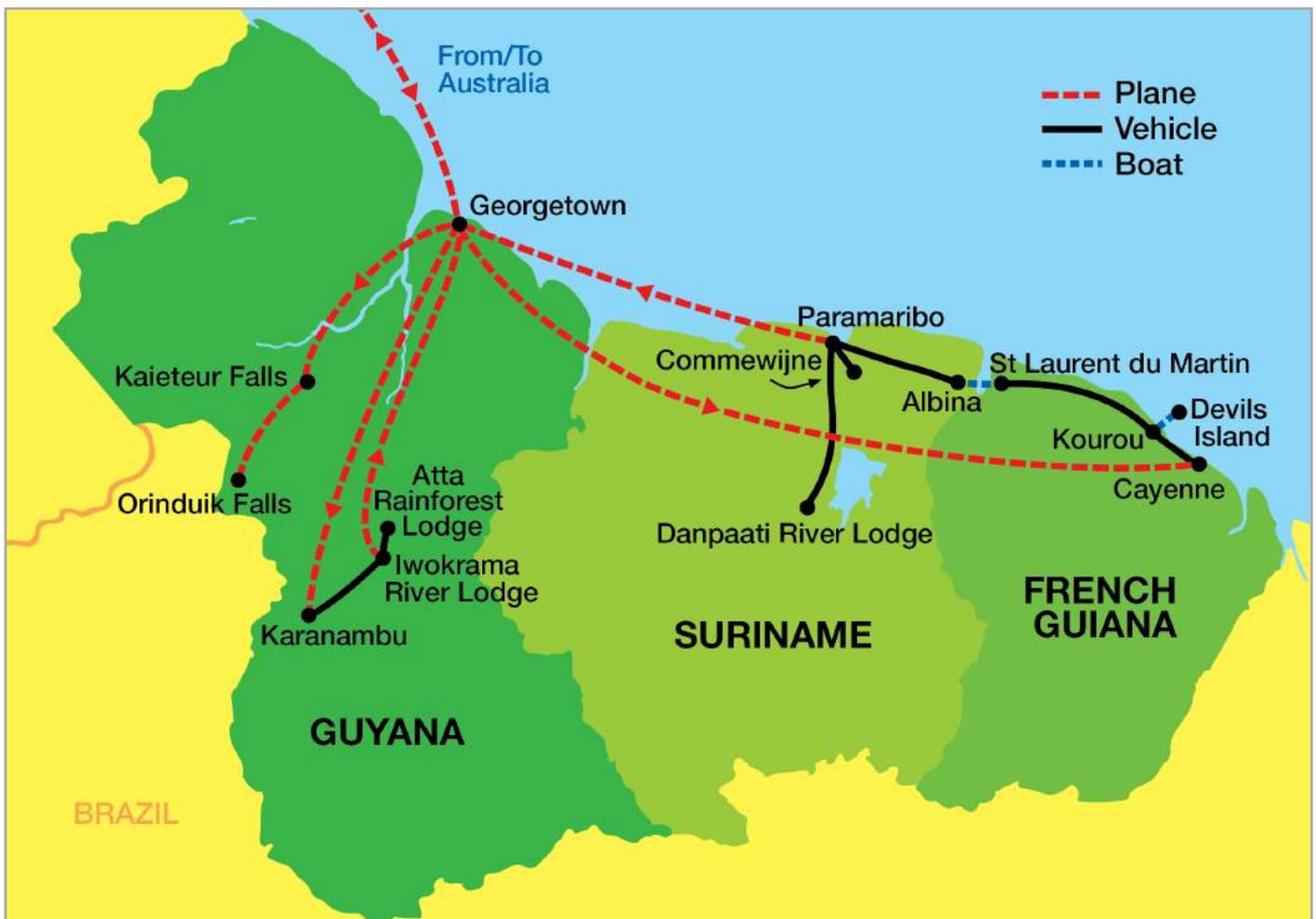
GUYANA, SURINAME AND FRENCH GUIANA

We wouldn't normally introduce three counties with a description of where they are on a map of the world. With these three however, it's necessary because even the savvy travellers amongst us can struggle to accurately name their location. For the record, they sit on the Atlantic coastline of South America in the north, between Venezuela and Brazil.

If you are after something a little different, somewhere that your peers are highly unlikely to have travelled to and somewhere that offers a rich cultural experience different to most, then these three destinations may be just the answer. They each provide indigenous culture with Amerindian history, along with colonial history - mainly Dutch, French and English. African slave labour was used across the region and a strong Indian influence is evident resulting from the plantations of sugar and other crops. Add the distinctly Caribbean feel and you have a melting pot of people, like no other. Plus being in the Amazon basin, they have tropical rainforests, pristine rivers and wildlife unique to the region.

Collectively, they are often referred to as "The Guianas". Suriname was formally Dutch Guiana, French Guiana is still a region or department of France (and technically, not a country) while Guyana itself was a British colony up until 1966. They are all relatively small countries – each substantially smaller than Victoria - with small populations.

Visit The Guianas for a truly unique cultural experience and bragging rights second to none!



Day 1
Depart Australia

Depart Australia for Los Angeles. Connect to your flight for either Miami or Panama City where you will overnight. (Flights to be advised and costed).

Day 2
WELCOME TO GUYANA

After breakfast transfer back to the airport for your flight to Georgetown. Arrive at Cheddi Jagan International Airport around midday and transfer to Cara Lodge. Cara Lodge was built in the 1840's and originally consisted of two houses. It has a long and romantic history and was the home of the first Lord Mayor of Georgetown. Many dignitaries have visited the property over the years including King Edward VII who stayed at the house in 1923. Others included President Jimmy Carter, HRH Prince Charles, HRH Prince Andrew, Mick Jagger and recently, Prince Harry. Dinner is at the lovely hotel and the evening will include a local guest speaker who will provide a presentation on the Guyanese culture. *B/D*

Day 3

After breakfast, transfer a short distance to the Eugene F. Correia International Airport for a chartered flight over the Demerara and Essequibo Rivers and hundreds of miles of unbroken tropical rainforest to land at Kaieteur Falls where we will spend about 2hrs. Kaieteur supports a unique micro environment with Tank Bromeliads, the largest in the world, in which the tiny Golden frog spends its entire life and the rarely seen Guiana Cock-of-the-rock nesting close by. Re-

boarding our plane, your flight now continues on to Karanambu Airstrip where we'll transfer to Karanambu Lodge. Karanambu, a 110-square mile former cattle ranch, was the home of the late Diane McTurk, conservationist and a world-

renowned expert on giant otters. Karanambu is located in the North Rupununi, a region of south-western Guyana known for its expansive wetlands and savannah, as well as its biological and cultural diversity. The North Rupununi of Southern Guyana is an extraordinary natural and pristine area. The landscape is an integration of four ecosystem types: wetlands, savannahs, rivers, and forests. The number of species found here is amazing. There are at least 600 species of fish, along with 600 species of bird, and over 200 species of mammals. This region is rich in history, too. The North Rupununi is the homeland of the Makushi and earlier peoples dating back almost 7,000 years ago. Late in the afternoon we will travel by boat to look for wild Giant River Otters and as dusk falls to the ponds to see the giant Amazonia Regis water lily, bloom at dusk. On the return trip we will spot Black Caiman, birds and other creatures of the night. Overnight at Karanambu Lodge. *B/L/D*





Day 4

This morning we have an early start to reach an area of rolling grasslands, which is home to a population of giant anteaters, also

known as the ant bear. Though giant anteaters live in overlapping home ranges they are mostly solitary except during mother-offspring relationships. Mother anteaters carry their offspring on their backs until weaning them. We'll return to the lodge for lunch and then later in the afternoon there's evening visit to a nearby pond to look for hundreds of Ibis, Anhinga, Heron and Egret. We'll also hope to find such species as Spotted Puffbird, Striped Woodcreeper, Pale-bellied Tyrant-Manakin, Golden-spangled Piculet, Bearded Tachuri and Capuchinbird. A feature bird for the area is Agami Heron. Overnight at Karanambu Lodge. **BLD**

Day 5

Two options this morning; there's time to travel out to search the savannah again or, we'll explore the Rupununi River in search of wild Giant River Otters, Black Caiman and Arapaima, making a boat journey along quiet stretches of river. Then we'll return to the lodge for breakfast before departure. From Karanambu we take a boat trip on the Rupununi River to Ginep Landing. Depending on the river level, this trip offers an excellent opportunity to much wildlife. There's a rainforest walk planned before transferring to the Iwokrama Canopy Walkway. The Iwokrama Canopy Walkway is situated at Mauisparu, near the southern boundary of the Iwokrama Reserve in central Guyana. The walkway has four suspension bridges leading to three platforms, the highest of which is over 30mts above the ground. These will allow great vantage points for canopy species, many of which you would struggle to see well from the forest floor. We'll arrive at the Atta Rainforest Lodge just a short walk from the Canopy Walkway. Overnight at Atta Rainforest Lodge. **B/L/D**

Day 6

Before dawn we will return to the canopy where we will spot many birds and the Red Howler Monkeys and Black Spider Monkeys. During the day we will interact with locals and take nature walks for more wildlife spotting. Night walks are also possible and something interesting or new always seems to pop up including the occasional jaguar (panthera onca) along the transnational road near the lodge. Overnight at Atta Rainforest Lodge. **B/L/D**

Day 7

Welcome the dawn chorus from the canopy walkway. After a walk we'll return to the lodge for breakfast before departure to the next destination. We'll transfer by 4 x 4 along the trail that is one of the best places to see the elusive Jaguar. The Iwokrama forest is rapidly gaining an international reputation for its healthy jaguar populations that seem not to be troubled by the appearance of curious humans. No promises, but many have been lucky! This road is the only north – south access in Guyana and links the country to Brazil. Even so traffic is only very occasional and wildlife is often seen along the road, such as Agouti,

Tayra, Puma, Tapir and Black Curassow. The journey concludes at the Iwokrama River Lodge. The Iwokrama Rainforest is a vast wilderness of one million acres. This protected area was established in 1996 as the Iwokrama International Centre for Rainforest Conservation and Development. The Iwokrama Forest is in the heart of one of four last untouched tropical forests of the world - The Guiana Shield of North-Eastern South America. Iwokrama was established as a living laboratory for tropical forest management because the unsustainable utilisation of these forests will result in the extinction of half the world's plant and animal species and unknown changes to global climate. This is a protected area with a difference - the full involvement of people. Iwokrama is exceptional among conservation organizations because it joins with local people in every aspect of its work. We'll explore the trails around the lodge with an Iwokrama Ranger. Iwokrama is home to many bird species and mammals. After dark we'll set out on the river, in hope of finding one or another of its four species of caiman, and listen for night birds such as Spectacled Owl, White-winged Potoo, Rufous Potoo, Long-tailed Potoo, Zigzag Heron or Blackish Nightjar. Overnight at Iwokrama River Lodge. **BLD**

Day 8

Making an early start, we'll embark on the Essequibo and circumnavigate nearby Indian House Island, before returning to the River Lodge for breakfast. We'll leave the lodge by boat for the hike to Turtle Mountain. A well maintained trail winds through the forest before an exhilarating climb up the mountain to its summit at 935ft (approx. 360m). It takes 1 3/4hrs to walk up the mountain, but the effort is more than worth it for the breathtaking views over the forest canopy when you get there and chances of Green Aracari, White Bellbird or a fly-by of one of five types of eagles. This trail is also a great location for seeing Black Spider Monkey and Red Howler Monkey and if you are very lucky



even a Jaguar. (For those who feel this might be too strenuous you can take an alternative boat trip to Stanley Lake to search for Giant River Otters and Black Caiman). In the afternoon we'll set out on a boat trip to visit Kurupukari Falls to see the Amerindian petroglyphs (dependent on the water level). Overnight at Iwokrama River Lodge. **B/L/D**

Day 9

Today starts with breakfast at the lodge before being collected from Iwokrama River Lodge and transferred to Fair View for our flight to Georgetown over hundreds of miles of tropical rainforest to. Later this afternoon, we will take a tour through the heart of the city to the Stabroek Market area. Here you will join the afternoon commuters using the old ferry to board the river taxi's which is used to cross the Demerara River. The river taxis are an alternative route to using the Demerara Harbour Bridge. As you slowly cruise along the bank of the Demerara River your guide will give you a brief history and facts of the famous buildings along the waterfront. Some of the Ports have been greeting commuters through the years. We then continue

our trip to see the Demerara Harbour Bridge, once the longest floating bridge in the world at a total length of 1,851m long. Return to the ferry and continue transfer to the West Ruimveldt area where our host, guide and culinary master, Chef Delvin Adams will greet you as you enter the Backyard Café for dinner. This as the name suggests, is a backyard that Chef Delvin has turned into an exclusive little hidden gem of a restaurant. Try not to bang your head on the passion fruit hanging overhead from the arbor. Overnight at Cara Lodge. *B/D*



Day 10

This morning, we'll take a tour of Georgetown the chief port, capital and largest city of Guyana. It's situated on the right bank of the Demerara River

Estuary. It was chosen as a site for a fort to guard the early Dutch settlements of the Demerara River. The city of Georgetown was designed largely by the Dutch and is laid out in a rectangular pattern with wide tree lined avenues and irrigation canals that criss-cross the city. Most of the buildings in the city are wooden with unique architecture dating back to the 18th and 19th centuries. For the most part the buildings have Demerara shutters and designed fretwork which trim eaves and windows. Main Street, Georgetown provides several excellent examples of old colonial homes, a prime example of which is the State House, built in 1852. The State House is set in large gardens and is painted green and white and has hosted many visiting dignitaries. Return to the hotel to grab our luggage for 1100hrs transfer to Eugene F. Correia International Airport for your GumAir flight to Paramaribo. There are plenty of restaurants across the road from our hotel so we have left dinner for your own choice tonight. Overnight at Royal Torarica in a Standard Room. *B*

Day 11

WELCOME TO SURINAME

Paramaribo, the capital city of Suriname, has been placed



on the UNESCO "World Heritage" list of historical monuments since 2002. We'll take a guided tour, by car and on foot, along the most prominent historic locations. You'll receive extensive information about

the former "Fort Zeelandia", the Presidential Palace, the Independence Square and many other monuments. The monumental buildings are a true representation of the colonial history of Suriname. After a stroll past the Waterkant, along the bank of the Suriname River and through the Palms Garden, you will also enjoy other interesting sites such as a mosque right next to a synagogue. We will also take you on the Commewijne River past old Dutch colonial plantations of which some are still active. You will visit the Nieuw Amsterdam museum;

Marienburg, the oldest sugar-cane plantation in Suriname; Rust en Werk; the Thilapia fishery and Agricultural projects in Alkmaar, Katwijk and surroundings. You will see fishermen in the area pull in their shrimping and you will visit the fish-smokery. There's a lovely lunch planned at Plantation Frederiksdorp. We continue our tour to the pier at Leonsburg where we will be picked up for the Sunset Dolphin tour. Normally we see them swim by in groups of up to 20. Sometimes they're very curious and if we are lucky they will jump and play close to the boat. After the sun has set we will get back on board, pour a drink and slowly make our way back to Leonsberg before driving back to the hotel. *B/L*

Day 12

After breakfast we depart Paramaribo and travel south towards where our nature and cultural adventure awaits. After traveling a distance of approximately 190 km we'll arrive at the village of Atjoni. At the port of Atjoni we'll take a dugout canoe, where our skilled personnel will navigate their way up the Upper Suriname River, which is famous for its breathtaking rapids. (Hat, sunscreen, sun glasses and rain jackets are a must as the dug-outs are not covered). On your first night the guide will provide information about the Saramaccan culture. We will overnight at the lovely Danpaati River Lodge. *B/L/D*

Day 13

Today we will visit one of the 12 villages that are affiliated with Danpaati. In the afternoon, we will discover the secrets of the rainforest during our walk in the woods. Afterwards you could choose to enjoy a massage, a combination of traditional and Western techniques or you can explore the island. Our day comes to an end with an exciting cruise on the river, looking for alligators lying on the riverbanks. *B/L/D*

Day 14

This morning we still have some time to enjoy the beautiful surroundings. After lunch we will say goodbye to the staff, we depart by dugout canoe from Danpaati to Atjoni. From Atjoni we will continue our journey back to Paramaribo by vehicle. Suriname has an interesting cultural mix and a large Javanese population. After the abolition of slavery, the plantations in Suriname needed a new source of labor. In 1890, the influential Netherlands Trading Society, undertook a test to attract Javanese contract workers from the Dutch East Indies. Until then, primarily Hindustani contract workers from British India worked on the Suriname plantations as field and factory workers. The Javanese were recruited to work on plantations and then they branched off in opening restaurants. This evening we will enjoy this cultural diversity. Return to your hotel. Overnight at the Royal Torarica. *B/L/D*

Day 15

We'll depart by bus around 8.00hrs from Paramaribo, over the East-West connecting road to Albina. The trip takes approx. 3hours. On the way, the guide will provide information on the history of the area and interesting places along the route. During the stop at Stolkertsijver you enjoy a light snack (sandwich and a drink). Upon reaching Albina we will board a dugout canoe and continue the trip through the large estuary of the Marowijne River to Christiaankondre. Depending on the tide the boat trip takes approximately 1hr and 15 minutes. Galibi is the collective name for two Amerindian villages Christiaankondre and

Langamankondre. In the slavery period, the first indigenous people settled in this area. With 750 inhabitants, Galibi has in the meantime developed into a rather large community. After our arrival, lunch is served and you can relax or enjoy a stroll on the beach. This afternoon we will go for a walk in the village with the opportunity to purchase souvenirs. After dinner, the boat takes you back to Babusanti. There you can see how the enormous sea turtles dig a hole in the sand to lay their eggs. Your overnight stay is in the holiday lodge at Christiaankondre. Overnight at the holiday lodge.

B/L/D

Day 16

WELCOME TO FRENCH GUIANA

This morning we will have another stroll on the beach in the hopes of seeing turtles nesting. Return to the village before departure for Albina border station. Formalities here rarely take more than a few minutes, and soon we find ourselves in Piaka canoe crossing the Maroni River headed for French Guiana or "Guyane" as it is frequently (and confusingly) called locally. Arrival at St. Laurent du Maroni is relatively uncomplicated and our French guide will be on hand to help us navigate the usual customs and immigration formalities. French Guyana is a Department of France, so technically you have entered the EU upon landing here. And, evidence of this connection to the "1st world" is immediately evident: every car seems to be a late-model Mercedes, Volkswagen or Peugeot, the roads are in near perfect condition, espresso coffee is on tap nearly everywhere, and the Euro is the currency of choice. We will take a quick tour of Saint Laurent Du Maroni and Camp de la Transportation where we will make a brief visit to the well-preserved Transportation Center. The facility once served as the transit point for slaves and indentured servants imported from overseas and destined for plantations throughout South America and the Caribbean. Lunch is at a local restaurant Le Goelette before we continue on to Cayenne. We'll overnight at the Royal Amazonia Hotel and Resort. *B/L*

Day 17

After breakfast at the hotel, we will do a city tour of Cayenne, which is the administrative and commercial center of French Guiana. At the same time, it is a typical creole town with about 50,000 inhabitants, half of the entire population of the country. The Fort Cépérrou, the Place Léopold Heder, the hotel of the Jésuites, the Place de Grenoble, the Place des Palmistes, the colonial hospital, the Franconie Museum, the town hall and the city center are the gems of Cayenne. We will also visit the traditional market, full of exotic odors, as well as an opportunity for shopping. Lunch is at a local restaurant and then in the afternoon we'll transfer to the landing where you will board a pirogue (dugout canoe) which will take you up the Kaw River. Continue to Wapou creek which gradually extends into flooded areas of the primeval forest—with remarkable species, noises and calls you guide will help you identify. The Kaw marshes are one of the last shelters in South America for the black caiman, the largest of all species. Permanently hunted for its hide and meat, this reptile descended from the dinosaurs still lives in peace in the most inaccessible reaches of the reserve. A specialist will take you on a quest for this mythical animal and its cousins—red caimans (aka Cuvier's dwarf caimans) and spectacled caimans. Return to the landing, pickup by vehicle and transfer back to the hotel, Royal Amazonia. *B/L*

Day 18

What is commonly referred to as "Devils Island" is really a triangle of three islands - Îles du Salut, or the Salvation Islands - seven miles off the coast of Kourou. After breakfast at the hotel, we set sail aboard a fine motorised catamaran towards our first stop, Île Saint-Joseph. The islands played a central role in French history as far



back as 1792 when they were first employed as a transit point, first for explorers, then slaves and later for political prisoners. Île Saint-Joseph is the southernmost island and is home to the most striking incarceration facilities that made up this notorious penal colony. Île Royale is the site of the oldest buildings on the islands, featuring an old church, administration buildings, officers' quarters, and today, a good restaurant and lodging facilities. Ironically, the actual Île du Diable (Devil's Island) is inaccessible to visitors due to dangerous shoreline conditions. This is the island where the prison's best-known occupant, Alfred Dreyfus, was famously secluded. Your tour begins on Île St. Joseph which can be easily circumnavigated on foot in less than two hours. The prison buildings here are quite well preserved, and you can meander at will through the cell blocks, dormitory buildings, and other structures while taking photographs or simply soaking in the powerful ambience. The countless scenes of nature slowly but relentlessly reclaiming the land here are really quite remarkable... you'll lose count of how many tree roots you see growing out of one cell door and curving around to enter an adjacent cell. Return to Kourou by catamaran and transfer to Cayenne and your hotel for dinner at the hotel.

B/L/D

Day 19

After breakfast transfer to the Center Spatiale Guyanaise (Guyana Space Centre) for a tour. Launch schedules are a closely-held secret so our schedule today may be amended on short notice. The usual tour includes a motor coach tour which crisscrosses the centre's mammoth facility, including stops at various assembly buildings and control centres. The entire tour is offered in French, but your guide will supply translations as often as possible. After the Space Centre tour we will make our way to the animal's park in Macouria. ways of life, eating habits, and breeding rituals. Continue the transfer back to Cayenne. *B/L*

Day 20

Today you will transfer to the airport for your flight home. All flights are still to be determined however, likely to be via Georgetown and then Miami or Panama City. *B*

Day 21

In transit.

Day 22

Arrive back in Australia.