

Guyana is virtually untouched by tourism, and is the only country in South America where English is the first language and cricket the national sport.

Dubbed South America's "Final Frontier", it is one of the least visited corners of the planet.

From the point of view of eco-tourism, the country boasts enormous potential with vast areas covered by virgin rainforest, savannah and ancient tablelands over which fall the stunning Kaieteur Falls.

For wildlife enthusiasts and birders, Guyana is unrivalled. The forgotten corner of the Amazon basin, its rainforests are brimming with wildlife such as jaguar, giant otter, tapir and over 800 species of bird.

Culturally it is where Latin America meets the Caribbean, with an intriguing mix of Afro-Caribbean, Amerindian, European and Asian influences.

**Electricity: 220V, 100Hz**

**Time Zone: GMT/UTC -4**

**Dialling Code: 592**

## **Climate**

### **Festival Calendar**

The national celebrations marking **Republic Day** (February) last about a week and is the most important cultural event of the year. Hindu and Muslim religious festivals are also celebrated and include **Phagwah** (early March) and **Divali** (November).

### **Currency**

The Guyanese Dollar (G\$), divided into 100 cents is the official currency. Notes are in denominations of G\$1000, 500, 100 and 20. Coins are in denominations of G\$10, 5 and 1. US Dollars are also widely accepted throughout Guyana.

Banks offer exchange facilities and bureaux de changes offer free conversion of currencies.

American Express, Visa, MasterCard and Diners Club enjoy limited acceptance at certain hotels and shops.

### **Visas**

30-day visas are granted at the borders to most nationalities. Passport validity for at least 6 months beyond intended stay and an onward ticket are also required.

Please check with your local embassy or consulate for the most up-to-date visa requirements for your particular country.

## **Health**

### **Best time to go**

The best time to visit Guyana may well be at the end of either the rainy season, in late January or late August, when the discharge of water over Kaieteur Falls is greatest. Some locals recommend mid-October to mid-May, which may be wet, but not as hot. If you want to travel overland to the interior, we would recommend the dry seasons.

### **Upon arrival**

### **Food and drink**

Drink only bottled water. Pasteurised milk is widely available. Avoid dairy products that are likely to have been made from unboiled milk. Avoid street food vendors and the cheaper restaurants.

**What to eat**

The food in hotels and restaurants reflects the range of influences on Guyanese society. From India you will find curries, especially mutton, prawn or chicken, and from Africa you can enjoy dishes such as foo-foo (plantains made into cakes) and metemgee (edows, yams, cassava and plantains cooked in coconut milk and grated coconut). Portuguese garlic pork and Amerindian pepperpot are also specialities. On the menus of most restaurants one may find chicken, pork and steak and, most of the time, shrimp. The best Chinese food in the country can be found in Georgetown.

**What to drink**

It is best to drink bottled water in Guyana. Local rum, known as Demerara rum, is Good. The local beer is Banks.

**Highlights**

**Georgetown:** The 19th-century wooden houses supported on stilts and charming green boulevards laid out along the lines of the old Dutch canals give the capital a unique character. Some of the more impressive wooden buildings dating from the colonial past include the City Hall, St George's Cathedral, the Law Courts and the State House. The Botanical Gardens, covering 120 acres (48.6 hectares), has a fine collection of palms, orchids and lotus lilies. Nearby is the new Cultural Centre, which contains what is probably the best theatre in the Caribbean. Also worth visiting is the Natural History Museum, which contains an up-to-date display of all aspects of Guyanese life and culture, and the Walter Roth Anthropological Museum.

**Hotels****Flights****Insurance**