



GUYANA GENERAL INFORMATION



We will visit a Guianan Cock-of-the-Rock lek on our Guyana birding tours.

Guyana possesses an impressive country list of 788 bird species with a significant number of these species being endemics, or near-endemics shared with neighboring northwest Brazil, Suriname, and French Guyana. Our set departure tour is focused on finding many of these endemics and specials, while also uncovering the exciting wildlife and untouched landscapes of this remote country. We are also able to put together custom and private Guyana birding tours. Some of the exceptional birds we hope to find on our bird tours of Guyana include **Capuchinbird, Black and Crestless Curassows, Grey-winged Trumpeter, Red Siskin, Sun Parakeet, Black Nunbird, Crimson Fruitcrow, Spotted Antpitta, Harpy Eagle, Red-fan Parrot, Guianan Trogon, Guianan Toucanet, Guianan Red Cotinga, Guianan Cock-of-the-Rock, Pompadour Cotinga, Red-and-black Grosbeak**, and many more!

ARRIVAL INFORMATION

Our tour will start in the city of Georgetown, at Georgetown Guyana Cheddi Jagan International Airport (GEO) which can be reached by flights from most major airports from the US (New York and Miami) and UK (with a connection in Barbados). You may wish to consult your travel agent to book the most convenient flight, but please contact us if you need any guidance. Your tour leader will be waiting for you at Georgetown Airport with the Birding Ecotours logo displayed, and will then transfer you to your hotel. Please remember to keep your luggage tags, as they are required to exit the terminal at the Georgetown Airport. Please be aware that most international flights arrive in Georgetown around midnight. For this reason, many participants prefer to arrive a day earlier than the official tour starting date.

When filling out the customs declaration form, or when asked for the address you are staying at, please use the hotel address below:

Cara Lodge, 294 Quamina St, Georgetown, Guyana. Telephone: +592 225 5301

PASSPORT AND VISAS

To enter Guyana, you will need a valid passport that will not expire within 90 days of your arrival in Guyana. However, some international flights require a passport that is valid for at least six months from your departure to Guyana. It would be best to follow the latter to be on the safe side. Visas are not required for citizens of the USA, Canada and the United Kingdom. Citizens of any other country should check with their local Guyana consulate about any requirements needed to enter Guyana.

It is always a good idea to make a copy of your passport and keep it somewhere separate from your actual passport. Having a spare copy will make securing a new passport easier in case you should lose your passport while on tour.

MEDICAL AND TRIP CANCELLATION INSURANCE

As referenced in our standard [Terms and Conditions](#), we strongly recommend that you purchase a comprehensive trip cancellation insurance to protect against unexpected events that might cause delays and interruptions to travel. This insurance should also cover illness, medical issues, accidents, repatriation, loss of luggage or any valuable items, etc.

MEDICAL CONDITIONS

Please make sure you are suitably covered with comprehensive medical insurance in the instance of any emergency while on any of our Guyana birding tours. Without insurance, the cost of medical care is likely to be very high. As detailed in Birding Ecotours' general [Terms and Conditions](#), when signing up for this tour, we require you to notify us of any medical conditions that we should be aware of. The sort of things we should know about include, but are not to be limited to, any walking/mobility issues, diabetes, epilepsy, food and medicinal allergies, heart conditions, and long-term illnesses etc.

Some of the places we travel to are very remote and will not have many nearby medical facilities. In the case of medical treatment being required, this might necessitate flying back to the capital - the costs for these arrangements can be expensive (requiring extra flights etc.).

HEALTH

Please consult your local travel clinic or doctor regarding vaccine requirements before your tour to Guyana. We recommend doing this about two months prior to the tour start date so that any vaccine courses can be completed in time. There are no vaccination requirements to enter Guyana, although some are recommended. Yellow fever vaccination proof may be required if you come from a country with a proven risk of yellow fever. Please refer to the CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) website [here](#) for further information on vaccines and how to stay healthy in Guyana.

Everyone visiting Guyana should be up to date with standard vaccinations and boosters, like Diphtheria-Tetanus-Polio and yellow fever. Most people should be vaccinated for Hepatitis A, Polio, Tetanus, and Typhoid. Some people should be vaccinated for Cholera, Hepatitis B, and Rabies.

Malaria is low-risk throughout most of Guyana. Other insects can cause Dengue (especially during the rainy months), Zika, Chikungunya, and Leishmaniasis, which are recorded in the country, and although not very common, are all worth being aware of. Insect repellent with a high DEET content is highly recommended for most of the areas we visit in Guyana (DEET works against both ticks and mosquitoes).

Most people visiting Guyana do not experience any problems at all. But we of course strongly recommend you take note of the advice given by the [CDC](#), a travel clinic, or your family doctor.

Again, please let us know about any medical conditions you may have, such as diabetes, asthma, allergies, heart conditions, or knee problems, also including phobias or anything you think we should know about in order to take care of you so that you can have an enjoyable and stress-free trip.

INSECTS

Mosquitoes and other insects are present throughout the trip. We recommend that you wear loose-fitting long pants and long-sleeved shirts and keep insect repellent handy. Spraying your feet, socks, shoes, and the lower portion of your pants with insect repellent will help reduce chigger bites. Chiggers are burrowing mites that are frequently encountered in southern USA, although residents of the UK and other countries may not be familiar with them. They are relatively harmless but can be a real nuisance and are

abundant in the cattle pastures of Guyana. Spraying your trousers, socks, shoes, and waistline with a repellent containing Deet (N, N-Diethyl-meta-toluamide) is a good deterrent. Applying anti-itch cream is about all you can do for them once the redness and itching begins, although a swim in saltwater may also calm these effects.

SAFETY IN THE BUSH

While in the field remember that, although rarely encountered, there may be venomous snakes around, not to mention numerous ants, wasps, and bees etc.

Do not walk in sandals into the forest or secondary growth, especially at night, and take a flashlight along at night if you cannot easily see where you are stepping. We strongly recommend you do not walk away from the group or walk off forest trails.

It is strongly recommended to not walk by yourself at Atta and Iwokrama, especially at night, or at dawn or dusk, as Jaguars and Pumas (which are not easy to spot) are more active at those times.

FOOD AND WATER

We normally have all our meals at the lodges and hotels where we stay. If you have any dietary requirements or food allergies, please let us know when you book the tour, so we can advise whether it will be suitable for you and make sure we can notify the people who will be preparing meals ahead of time.

Guyana is not a gourmet destination and most of the meals are “homemade dishes” which include meat (beef, chicken or pork), rice, manioc or cassava and vegetables. In the city people can choose international food, but in the more rural and remote locations of Guyana where we spend most of the time, the food is simple but still tasty and unpretentious. There is a strong Indian influence in Guyana cuisine.

Tap water is not safe to drink in Guyana. Please only drink bottled water and filtered water provided by the lodges or by your tour guide. We provide all bottled water in the vehicle, however the more expensive bottled water in restaurants and in your rooms, is for your own account, but all lodges provide water containers that are safe to drink from. Please bring a reusable water bottle to help us reduce the amount of plastic waste generated during the tour.

Drinks, including soft drinks, fruit juices, alcoholic beverages, and beer are not included in the tour price. Please note that some lodges and restaurants might charge you a fee if you open your own bottle of wine, if it is not purchased in the restaurant.

Coffee and tea are commonly found across the country but are usually not of the taste/standard familiar in the West, so if you have preferences for hot drinks, it would be worth bringing your own supply with you. Note that getting fresh milk is not possible on most of the tour, but powdered milk or UHT should be possible in most places.

CURRENCY AND MONEY

Guyana uses the Guyanese dollar (G\$) with notes representing G\$20, G\$50, G\$100, G\$500, G\$1,000, and G\$5,000. The exchange rate of the Guyanese dollar to the American dollar is roughly 1 USD = 200 GYD (September 2023).

We recommend carrying US dollars, although please do not bring US dollar bills that are damaged in any way (broken tips and edges, ink marks, pieces of tape, etc.). Most institutions and people do not accept US dollars that show this kind of damage. We recommend you bring US dollars or draw cash at the airport ATMs, as we cannot spend precious birding time looking for financial institutions to make these transactions.

Your holiday is an almost-all-inclusive tour, so you only need money to cover personal expenses such as drinks, laundry service, internet access, bar expenses, souvenirs and gifts you want to take home, or any non-mandatory gratuities you would like to give to any person who you think has provided exceptional service.

ATM MACHINES

ATMs are only available at the international airport when you arrive in the country. Please take note that several international flights land in Georgetown late in the evening when exchange houses are closed and it might be difficult to exchange money later in the tour. Most of the lodges accept US\$, and credit cards are only accepted in the city hotels, but the lodges in the remote countryside accept cash only.

ELECTRICITY

Guyana uses 240V and the plugs are ITA Type A/B. Adaptors are needed for overseas appliances unless you come from the United States. A surge protector is strongly recommended, as is a universal adaptor, to help charge your electrical devices.

Due to high humidity in the Guianan rainforests, we advise you to keep your electronics in original cases with tiny bags of silica.

CRIME AND SAFETY

Rural Guyana is safe for most of the tour, but Georgetown has a reputation for street crime. We ask you to take special care of your belongings.

A few simple security measures that are important to remember: do not leave the hotel on your own, do not arrive at the airport displaying your optics and other valuables such as expensive watches, do not use mobile phones in crowded areas, and keep a copy of your passport. If you arrive late in Guyana at the beginning of the tour, phone us and we will do our best to send someone to pick you up at the airport and/or organize a taxi for you. Please do not take any taxis outside the airport.

ACCOMMODATION

We always try to include the best accommodation available on our tours to give our clients the best experience possible. The accommodation we use are considered comfortable, but not luxurious. Guyana is remote and underdeveloped and there are limited options for ecotourism accommodation. The lodges we use provide the best birding and wildlife experiences, and in most cases the lodges provide basic amenities which include private rooms with private bathrooms. Electricity is generally uninterrupted unless there are unscheduled blackouts. There will be air conditioning in the capital, and elsewhere rooms will have fans. Hot showers are not available in the lodges which is usually not a problem after spending the day in temperatures that reach 91°F (33°C).

Most (but not all) remote lodges have Wi-fi available, but this may be charged as an extra cost.

The price of our tour is per person sharing a twin bedroom. Most of our clients, even some couples, prefer to have their own bed to sleep better after long days out birding. The standard matrimonial or double bed in Latin America is the normal double bed size, which might be too small for some people. Bedrooms with queen/king-size beds are not available on this tour.

Do not keep food in your room, unless it is necessary, such as if you are diabetic, and then please ensure you store any snacks in appropriate plastic containers. The smell of food might attract vermin near your room. It is better to leave your snacks with the kitchen staff or in our vehicle. All rooms have mosquito nets.

LAUNDRY

Most of the lodges offer laundry facilities which are not included in the tour price, for those wanting to travel light.

CLOTHING

Long pants and long-sleeved shirts are best to deter any insects and to provide protection against minor scratches from vegetation. Modern, lightweight outdoor clothes are very comfortable and dry quickly. A lightweight fleece will keep you warm on early morning boat trips which can be chilly. Shorts and T-shirts are also useful.

Light-weight hiking boots will be invaluable, preferably waterproof Gore-Tex boots. Rubber boots are always an option, and some lodges may provide these if available. Sandals are useful around lodges and beaches but should not be worn on the forest trails.

As for wet weather gear, an umbrella or poncho, whichever you feel is more practical, will both work well. Rain suits can be quite uncomfortable in the lowlands, where it is hot and humid, and even though we run our trips in the “dry” season, please note that Guyana can experience rain at any time of year.

WHAT TO BRING: OTHER ITEMS

Do not forget: Binoculars, camera, field guide, flashlight (torch – e.g. headtorch), spare batteries, power bank, converter plugs, plug adaptors, chargers, prescription drugs (please bring the generic names for these drugs with you), toiletries, prescription glasses (and a spare pair), insect repellent, sunscreen, sunglasses, alarm clock, money pouch, hiking poles/walking sticks, suggested medical kit (see [here](#)), and daypacks.

Our tour leader will have a communal telescope for use during the tour, The communal scope will allow everyone opportunities to look at birds briefly on a rotation basis. If you like to “digi-scope/phone-scope”, or you would like to take prolonged scope views of the birds, please bring your own scope to do so, as the communal scope will be for everyone to look at the birds and not for photography.

Some additional items to remember to bring include important travel documents, passport, cash (or ATM/credit cards to draw money), proof of vaccinations, and your travel or health insurance cards – photocopies of all can be carried by the tour leader in case of emergency.

Bringing a couple of differently colored pens along with a 12-inch (30 centimeter) ruler can make the checklist session easier to follow.

Please refer to the tour-specific documents for further information of items to bring on the individual tours. Additional details on what to bring on a birding tour can be seen on our informative blog post [here](#).

PACE, DIFFICULTY AND STYLE

Guyana is 'old-school' birding with no bird feeders, lighting bug traps or water pools where we might normally (in other neotropical countries) spend time waiting for birds to come eat/drink. We must rather look for birds in their natural habitat. It involves walking along forest trails and along some dirt roads looking for as many birds as we can find. Several forest birds can be difficult to see, but with the help of knowledgeable guides we will do our best to show you them, even the most secretive species, however photography of some of the more skulking species is not guaranteed and is not the priority of this tour.

We will walk an estimated three and a half miles (five kilometers) per day and in most cases, trails are rough with uneven terrain. Participants should be fit and able to do this without difficulty, including being able to climb 120 steps (up and down) to reach the canopy walkways and suspension bridges to reach canopy platforms located 80 feet (25 meters) above the forest floor. Please take note of this in case you suffer from vertigo.

We will have daily predawn starts, and will be out birding and driving in the morning with a short break after lunch and then continue birding in the afternoon. Midday breaks will not be possible when changing accommodations. We will take a few boat trips to explore rivers during the trip, and we will deal with bad roads and some long drives in the remote countryside. Participants should be fit and have enough stamina to deal with these conditions.

We ask you to please be patient and understand that Guyana is a developing country that is relatively new to the ecotourism industry with a very small number of businesses and a couple of local communities running the entire industry. Some issues that can be experienced include unscheduled blackouts at the accommodation, mechanical problems with some vehicles, flight delays, or some birding hotspots that may have disappeared due to a natural fire or deforestation. Birding Ecotours will do its best to fix any potential issues and provide the fastest solution to any unforeseen challenges that may occur.

There are no high elevation locations on this trip, therefore altitude sickness should not be a problem, as we will be birding in a lowland country.

WEATHER

The weather will be hot and humid reaching 91-95°F (33-35°C) throughout the trip. Although we run our Guyana birding tours during the dry season, there is still a chance of rain on this tour.

PLANES AND LOCAL FLIGHTS

Depending on the size of our fixed groups, or for private tours, we will take small single-engine passenger planes or twin-engine propeller planes. Please note that sometimes

weather can cause flights in rural Guyana to be postponed, and delays on arrival and departure may occur.

We will fly from Georgetown to the Kaieteur Falls and to Surama Eco-Lodge on a charter flight (as described above). The ground fixers will ask for your individual body weight before we board the plane. To return to Georgetown from Letham we will take a commercial flight where there are luggage restrictions - any extra fees from this are not included in the tour price.

TOUR VEHICLES & SEAT ROTATION

For our Guyana birding tour we will mostly use a large van, to ensure each participant has their own window, unless the group is very small in which case, we will use a smaller van. Either way, at Birding Ecotours we follow a seat rotation policy on all set departure tours. This will ensure everybody has equal opportunities throughout the tour. Unfortunately, motion sickness will not excuse you from our seat rotation policy and thus if you are prone to motion sickness, you should ensure you bring the necessary medication. We also require that you are fit and flexible enough to maneuver yourself to the back of the vehicle. Tour participants should also be mindful of the extra equipment they bring into the general seating area of the vehicle (rather than the luggage section) and should ensure they do not clog up the general thoroughfare or extra seats with camera equipment, tripods, etc. from a comfort and health and safety point of view.

BOOKS

Sadly, to date, Guyana lacks a proper bird field guide. We recommend the following books to help you during your birding trip to Guyana:

Birds of Venezuela – David Ascanio (2021), Helm Edition.

Birds of Northern South America: An Identification Guide, Vol: 2 – Robin Restall (2007), Helm Edition.

Guyana: Bradt Travel Guide – Kirk Smock (2018). Bradt Travel Guides.

Guyana Travel Guide: An ultimate travel guide to Guyana – Annie Priest (2023), Independently published.

