

SOUTH AMERICA · WILDLIFE · CULTURE · OFF THE BEATEN PATH · HISTORY · FOOD



Suriname

Suriname is South America's smallest country and one of its least visited: Paramaribo's UNESCO-listed wooden old town has a mosque and synagogue side by side, and beyond the coastal strip lies near-unbroken rainforest. Take a boat up the Suriname River to Maroon villages, fly into the Central Suriname Nature Reserve, or watch leatherback turtles nesting at Galibi.

i Before you go, read the UK government's travel advice for Suriname and entry requirements (visas, passport validity). Last updated by FCDO 10 December 2025.

CAPITAL Paramaribo	CURRENCY Surinamese dollar (SRD) £1 ≈ SRD 50.30	LANGUAGE Dutch, Sranan Tongo Sarnami Hindustani, Javanese	BEST TIME Aug–Nov, Feb–Mar
DAILY BUDGET £40–£180 ££ Moderate	PLUGS Type A, B, C, F 127V · adapter needed	FLIGHT FROM LONDON 13h via Amsterdam ~£750–£1,250 return	TIME ZONE UTC-3 standard time

Suriname's population of around 600,000 is one of the most diverse anywhere: descendants of enslaved Africans and Maroons, Hindustani and Javanese indentured workers, Chinese, Indigenous peoples and Dutch settlers, with Dutch as the official language and Sranan Tongo the street lingua franca. Almost everyone lives along the coast, and more than 90% of the country is forest. A typical trip spends a few days in Paramaribo, cycles the old plantations of Commewijne, then heads into the interior on a packaged lodge trip, by road and dugout up the Suriname River or by light aircraft to Raleighvallen. In season, add the turtle beaches near Galibi.

Travel here feels like nowhere else in South America. Paramaribo is relaxed and easy, with excellent, cheap food from roti shops, Javanese warungs and Chinese restaurants, and English is fairly widely understood. The interior is a different matter: there are few roads, so trips are organised through tour operators, and multi-day packages are the main expense. Crowds are almost non-existent, except at Dutch holiday times. It suits wildlife watchers, curious food lovers and anyone interested in cultural history. Visitors are often surprised by the Dutch feel of the capital, by driving on the left, and by how strongly Maroon traditions survive upriver.

Top 5 highlights

- 1

ARCHITECTURE

Paramaribo's historic centre

Paramaribo's UNESCO-listed centre is a grid of Dutch colonial wooden buildings, crowned by the soaring Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul. Nearby stand Fort Zeelandia on the river and the Keizerstraat mosque beside the Neveh Shalom synagogue.
- 2

NATURE

Central Suriname Nature Reserve

This UNESCO-listed wilderness covers 1.6 million hectares of pristine rainforest. Fly to the Raleighvallen rapids, then climb the granite dome of the Voltzberg for views over an unbroken canopy alive with monkeys and macaws.

3

CULTURE

Upper Suriname River

Beyond the road's end at Atjoni, motorised dugouts carry visitors upriver to Saamaka Maroon villages and riverside lodges, with rapids to swim in, forest walks and traditions rooted in West Africa.

4

WILDLIFE

Galibi Nature Reserve

Near the mouth of the Marowijne River, the beaches of the Galibi reserve host nesting leatherback, green and olive ridley turtles, mainly from April to August; visits are based in Indigenous Kalina villages.

5

HISTORY

Commewijne plantations

Across the river from Paramaribo, flat cycle routes link former plantations built on enslaved labour, such as Peperpot and Marienburg, with the open-air museum at Fort Nieuw Amsterdam; look for Guiana dolphins where the rivers meet.

Biggest cities

LARGEST CITY

Paramaribo

≈ 250,000 people

The capital's UNESCO-listed core of white-painted wooden mansions, Fort Zeelandia and the Waterkant riverfront is a delight on foot, with superb street food and markets.

2ND LARGEST CITY

Lelydorp

≈ 20,000 people

A growing satellite town south of Paramaribo on the road to the international airport, with little to see beyond its markets and roadside food stalls.

3RD LARGEST CITY

Nieuw Nickerie

≈ 13,000 people

The western rice-growing town near the Guyana border is a sleepy, orderly place, useful for birdwatching at the Bigi Pan wetlands and the crossing to Guyana.

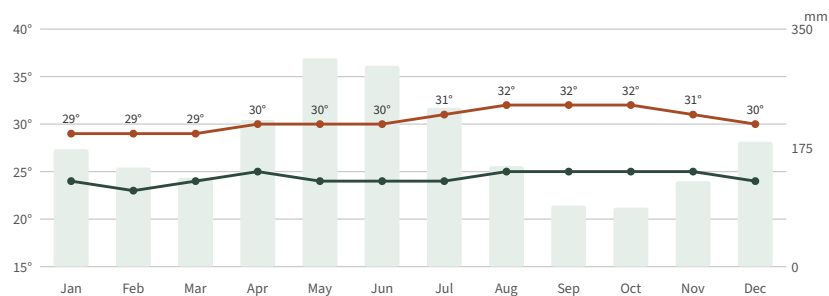
Ranked by urban-area population where available. Figures are rounded estimates, and sources define city limits differently, so rankings of similar-sized cities can vary.

When to go to Suriname

Best time: **Aug–Nov, Feb–Mar.**

**Average climate in Paramaribo**

— High °C
 — Low °C
 ■ Rain (mm)



Festivals & events

Mar	Phagwa The Hindu spring festival of colours brings crowds to Paramaribo's squares and temples, where everyone is doused in coloured powder and water to music and drumming.
Jul	Keti Koti Emancipation Day on 1 July — 'cut chains' in Sranan Tongo — marks the 1863 abolition of slavery with music, traditional koto dress and festivities across Paramaribo.
Dec	Owru Yari On New Year's Eve, Paramaribo's Waterkant and Domineestraat fill with street parties, and businesses compete to set off the longest pagara, huge red strings of firecrackers.

How much does Suriname cost?

SHOESTRING £40 per person / day ≈ SRD 2,012 hostels, street food, buses	MID-RANGE £90 per person / day ≈ SRD 4,527 3-star hotels, restaurants, some taxis	COMFORTABLE £180 per person / day ≈ SRD 9,053 4-star+, guided trips, private transfers
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Estimates per person per day, excluding flights. Prices vary by season and city.

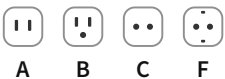
Food to try

Pom A Creole oven bake of grated pomtajer root layered with citrus-marinated chicken, served at birthdays and stuffed into the famous broodje pom sandwich.	Roti Hindustani-Surinamese flatbread served with curried chicken, potato, long beans and a boiled egg — tear and scoop with your hands.	Saoto soep Javanese-Surinamese chicken broth with bean sprouts, shredded chicken, fried potato sticks and a boiled egg, sharpened with lime and sambal.
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Getting around

Private minibuses run from Paramaribo's central stations along the coastal East-West Link to Nieuw Nickerie and Albina, leaving when full. There are no railways. The interior is reached by road and motorised dugout or by small plane from Zorg en Hoop airport, almost always as part of an organised trip. Taxis are unmetered, so agree fares first; car hire means driving on the left.

Practical information

PLUGS & VOLTAGE  127V — bring a UK-to-A/B/C/F adapter	DIALLING CODE +597
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EMERGENCY NUMBERS Telephone: 115 (ambulance, fire, police) or: Ambulance: 113 Fire: 110 Source: FCDO “Getting help”	TIME ZONE UTC-3 (standard time)
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TAP WATER

Varies — bottled or filtered is safer

DRIVING

On the left

TIPPING

Around 10% in sit-down restaurants if service isn't included; round up taxi fares and tip interior guides, boatmen and cooks at the end.

ETIQUETTE

Remove shoes in mosques and Hindu temples. In Maroon and Indigenous villages, ask before taking photos, follow your guide's lead on local customs, and dress modestly.

MAIN AIRPORTS

Johan Adolf Pengel International Airport (PBM), Paramaribo

Visas & entry for Suriname

Shown for a British passport.

No visa needed

You can visit Suriname without a visa for tourism for up to 90 days. You must pay an entry fee of 54 US dollars before you travel.

To stay longer (to work or study, for business travel or for other reasons), you must get a visa and meet the Suriname government's entry requirements.

From the UK government's FCDO entry requirements for British passport holders — read the full page for passport validity, permits and exceptions.

Health & vaccinations



See a travel health nurse, GP or travel clinic **6–8 weeks before you go**. Make sure routine UK vaccinations (such as MMR and diphtheria-tetanus-polio) are up to date.

RECOMMENDED FOR MOST TRAVELLERS

Hepatitis A

Tetanus

Typhoid

Yellow fever

SOMETIMES ADVISED — DEPENDS ON YOUR TRIP, ACTIVITIES AND HEALTH

Chikungunya

Dengue

Hepatitis B

Rabies

YELLOW FEVER CERTIFICATE

A yellow fever certificate is only required if you arrive from (or transit through) a country with yellow fever risk — not if you fly direct from the UK. There is a risk of yellow fever in parts of the country — vaccination may be advised.

MALARIA

No malaria risk

Source: TravelHealthPro (National Travel Health Network and Centre), checked 21 October 2026. This is a summary, not medical advice.

Public holidays in Suriname

The next 12 months. Banks, offices and some sights may close, and transport and hotels get busy around these dates.

Sun 8 Nov 2026	Diwali
Wed 25 Nov 2026	Independence Day
Fri 25 Dec 2026	Christmas Day
Sat 26 Dec 2026	Second Day of Christmas
Fri 1 Jan 2027	New Year's Day
Sat 6 Feb 2027	Chinese New Year
Tue 9 Mar 2027	Eid al-Fitr (date may shift)
Mon 22 Mar 2027	Holi
Fri 26 Mar 2027	Good Friday
Mon 29 Mar 2027	Easter Monday
Sat 1 May 2027	Labour Day
Sun 16 May 2027	Eid al-Adha (date may shift)
Thu 1 Jul 2027	Day of Freedoms
Mon 9 Aug 2027	Indigenous People Day
Sun 10 Oct 2027	Day of the Maroons

National holidays only. Dates based on lunar calendars can move by a day or two depending on official announcements.

Useful phrases in Dutch

ENGLISH	DUTCH	SAY IT
Hello	Hallo	<i>HAH-loh</i>
Thank you	Dank u wel	<i>DAHNN ew vel</i>
Please	Alstublieft	<i>AHL-stew-bleeft</i>
Excuse me	Pardon	<i>par-DON</i>
How much is this?	Hoeveel kost dit?	<i>hoo-VAYL kost dit</i>

Know before you go

From the UK, the simplest route is via Amsterdam, which has direct flights to Paramaribo; the airport is about 45 km south of the city, so pre-book a transfer.

Bring US dollars or euros in cash and change them at official cambios; many hotels and tour operators quote prices in foreign currency, and the Surinamese dollar can fluctuate sharply.

Book interior trips with an established operator at least a few days ahead; departures depend on minimum numbers, and flights to remote airstrips can be cancelled by weather.

Visa, health and safety rules change. Before you book or travel, check the FCDO travel advice (gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice) and TravelHealthPro (travelhealthpro.org.uk). Costs are estimates. © 2026 Pick My Trip.