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Holidays in Guyana

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Dear Colleagues,

Can it be that the holidays are almost upon us once again? I don't know about you, but some years I find myself behind in my holiday planning and am scrambling for ways to make the season special. Well, should you find yourself in a similar situation, might I suggest a holiday visit to Guyana? The Christmas season in this South American country is always fun and festive—not to mention warm! Read on, learn more about how the holidays are celebrated in Guyana, and picture yourself there.

Warmly,

Jane Behrend

Lead Representative, North America

PS—Be sure to check out this month's video, which includes some truly breath-taking footage of Guyana's Mount Roraima and Guyanese festivals.

PERSON OF THE MONTH: CAPTAIN GERRY GOUVEIA

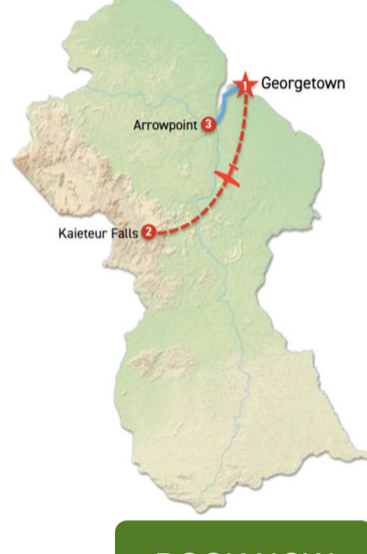


Conceivably, Gerry Gouveia could begin every sentence with "This is your Captain speaking..." Of course, he doesn't, but with over 40 years of experience in the aviation industry, he has said those words plenty of times. A former Military Officer who served as Chief Pilot of the Air Corps of the Guyana Defence Force (GDF), Gerry is a veteran airline pilot, entrepreneur, civil society leader and philanthropist. Twenty-five years ago, Gerry and his wife Debbie founded [Roraima Airways](#), where they — and now their two sons -- are piloting visitors into the Guyanese pristine inland region.

FEATURED ITINERARY

TASTE OF GUYANA TOUR

This 3-day trip from Roraima Tours provides a great introduction to some of Guyana's favourite attractions and experiences, including Georgetown, Kaieteur Falls and Arrowpoint Nature Resort.



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THE HOLIDAY SEASON IN GUYANA



If you are feeling the need to replace a white, chilly Christmas with a warm, tropical one with plenty of festivities and outdoor activity, put a Christmas in Guyana at the top of your wish list.

In many respects, Christmas in Guyana is like Christmas in North America. Carols are sung. Trees are decorated. Parties are planned, and church services attended. Children sit on the lap of Father Christmas in department stores, whispering their gift lists into his attentive ear.

However, some aspects of Christmas celebrations are unique to Guyana. Before halls are decked, serious house cleaning and repair work takes place. Curtain cleaning and floor scrubbing are *de rigueur*.

Families soak fruit in rum for days in preparation for baking the traditional "Black Cake." Other popular Christmas traditions in Guyana include garlic pork, peppercorn and ginger beer.



As in many other parts of the world, the day after Christmas, December 26, is Boxing Day in Guyana. This day commemorates the Christian martyr, St. Steven. In Guyana, locals take part in rugged sports and games, while friends and relatives dine on leftover turkey, and exchange boxed gifts.

While Guyana has a substantial Christian population, people of all religions and ethnic backgrounds take part in the holiday celebrations. This spirit of inclusion is very much in keeping with the Guyana national motto: "One people. One Nation. One Destiny."

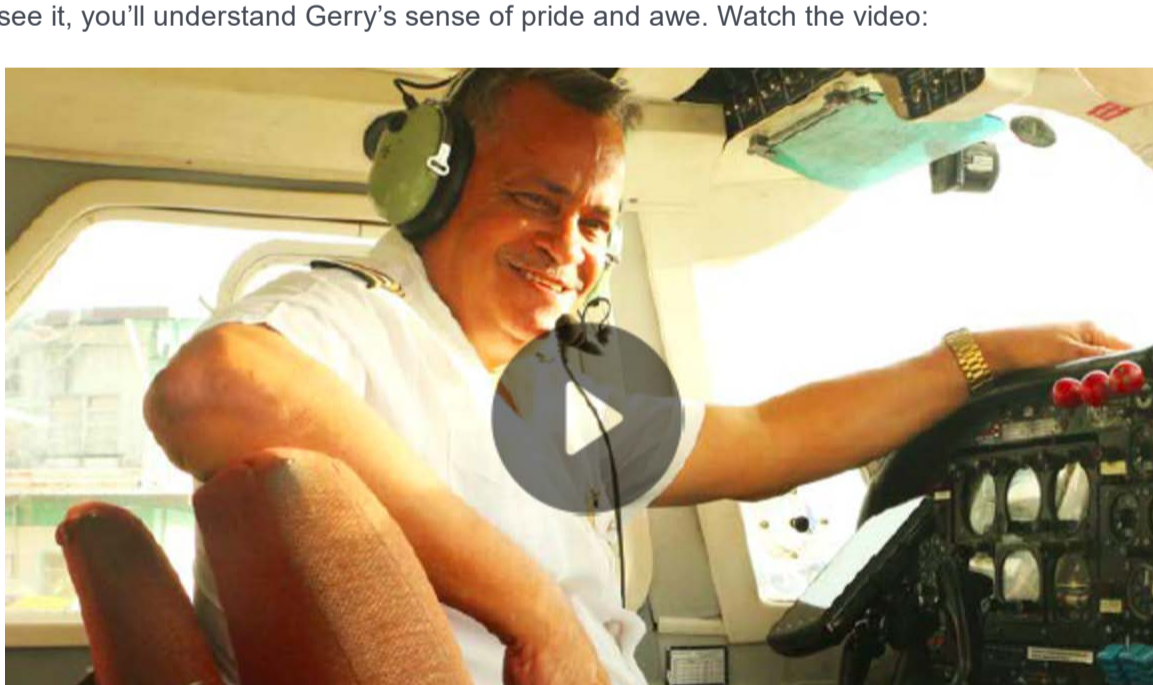
That spirit is also celebrated in grand style on Mashramani, known as "Mash", one of Guyana's biggest celebrations. On that day, February 23rd, Guyana's Republic Day, you can encounter a loud and colourful conflagration of parades, costume competitions, music, masquerade parties and dancing in the streets.



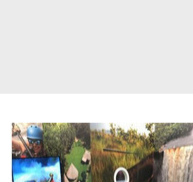
Holidays in Guyana are a great opportunity for visitors to see the country through the eyes of its people and take part in exciting and unique celebrations. So plan your next vacation around a Guyanese holiday.

VIDEO OF THE MONTH

Gerry Gouveia's love for his native Guyana comes through loud and clear in this short video. Gerry celebrates the Guyanese people, landscapes, wildlife, and the cascades at Orinduik. However, as an experienced airline pilot, he is particularly taken with Mount Roraima. This video includes breath-taking aerial footage of Roraima, one of the tallest *tepui* (table-top) plateaus in South America. Once you see it, you'll understand Gerry's sense of pride and awe. Watch the video:

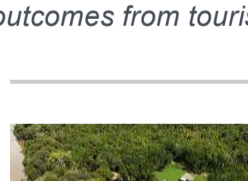


GUYANA IN THE NEWS



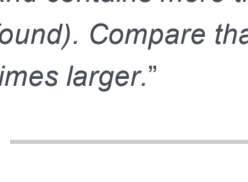
The Guyana Chronicle reported that Guyana was awarded Silver Place in **'Best of Adventure'** from the International Travel & Tourism Awards.

"Guyana had expended considerable effort in recent years, not only to develop new and innovative eco-friendly tourism products as a part of the national Green State Development Strategy, but also to incorporate sustainable tourism best practice into all aspects of its strategy, including programming while educating the world about its deep commitment to maximising the positive socio-economic and conservation outcomes from tourism." says Brian T. Mullis, Director of the Guyana Tourism Authority.



The Guardian US explains how a community-run wildlife tour in Guyana shows how tourism can help **preserve a remote rainforest**.

"The Guyanese jungles are part of the Guiana Shield, a vast region of north-east South America, a biodiversity hotspot that is separate from the Amazon and contains more than 1,000 bird species and 269 known amphibians (more are constantly being found). Compare that with around 700 birds and 85 amphibians in all of Europe, which is almost four times larger."



An article in **Reader's Digest** described what it's like to **swim with a manatee in the wild**.

"There is no gentler giant than a manatee. I was excited but a bit leery of the opportunity to get up close and personal with one in the wild at a pond in the Botanical Gardens in Georgetown, Guyana ... We were immediately giggling like five-year-olds, amazed to see them, with their funny snouts, whiskers, and flippers... They were slow-moving—think sea cow, but gracious."

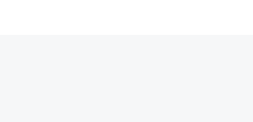


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