

Guyana Nature Experience 2015

This classic group adventure takes in many of the highlights of Guyana: visit Kaieteur and Orinduik Falls before travelling to Iwokrama for jungle hikes, boat trips, the Iwokrama Canopy Walkway, and the chance to see the elusive jaguar. Stay in the Makushi village of Surama before going into the savannahs in search of giant river otters, giant anteaters and black caiman.

Guyana Nature Experience Main Tour

- Saturday** Arrive in Guyana. Transfer to Georgetown. Guests are met and transferred to Cara Lodge in Georgetown. Built in the 1840s and originally consisting of two houses, the hotel is one of the oldest wooden buildings in Georgetown. It has a long and romantic history associated with it and was the home of the first Lord Mayor of Georgetown. Over the years it has hosted many dignitaries including George V who stayed at the house in 1923 and planted the sapodilla tree in the front garden to mark the occasion. Overnight at Cara Lodge.
- Sunday** Breakfast at the hotel, transfer to the in-town airport at Ogle Aerodrome for schedule flight over the Demerara and Essequibo Rivers and hundreds of miles of unbroken tropical rainforest to land at Kaieteur Falls, the world's highest free-falling waterfall. At 228 meters, Kaieteur is nearly five times the height of Niagara Falls. Here we hope to find White-chinned and White-tipped Swifts swirling over the gorge, and the astonishingly colorful Guianan Cock-of-the-Rock (see description and conditions below). Overnight at Cara Lodge. BL



- Monday** 0700hrs transfer to Ogle Airstrip for a flight across the rainforest to Annai. Breakfast at Rock View Lodge and then transfer by 4x4 vehicle or 4x4 Bedford Truck (converted with forward facing seats and canopy) to 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. From research to business, Iwokrama ensures local economic and social benefits from forest use and conservation. The Forest is in the homeland of the Makushi people, who have lived here and used the forest for thousands of years. People are a vertical part of the ecosystem. The success of Iwokrama relies on the ownership of local people and the combined skills of specialists and communities. Iwokrama does what so many International conventions have acknowledged as best practice. It has begun conservation locally and integrated conservation into national development. Afternoon free to explore the trails around the river lodge with an Iwokrama Ranger.

Iwokrama is home to many bird species including Capuchinbird, Black Nunbird, Chestnut-rumped Woodcreeper, Amazonian Antshrike, Brown-bellied Antwren, Spot-tailed Antwren, Todd's Antwren, Spotted Puffbird, Guianan Cock-of-the-rock, Green Aracari, Guianan Toucanet, Guianan Red Cotinga, Pompadour Cotinga, Rufous-crowned Elaenia, Bronzy Jacamar, Chestnut & Waved Woodpecker, Gray Antbird, and Strong-billed Woodcreeper. Three other Neotropical species in the Iwokrama forest of high interest are White-winged Potoo, Rufous Potoo, and Rufous-winged Ground-cuckoo. Finally, after dark, we'll set out on the river, in hopes of finding one or another of its four species of caiman, and listen for

nightbirds such as Spectacled Owl, White-winged Potoo, Rufous Potoo, Long-tailed Potoo, Zigzag Heron or Blackish Nightjar. You may see one or another of the four species of caiman, and most certainly snakes including Cox boa, tree frogs and if lucky maybe some mammals. Maybe even a puma or capybara. Overnight at Iwokrama River Lodge. BLD



Tuesday Making an early start we will embark on the Essequibo and circumnavigate Indian House Island giving us a chance for dawn song on the river including five species of Tinamou, Marbled Wood-Quail, Band-rumped Swift, White-banded and Black-collared Swallows, and Guianan Streaked-Antwren before returning to the River Lodge for breakfast. After breakfast, you will leave the river lodge for the journey to Turtle Mountain, and 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 we are very lucky even a Jaguar. This pristine forest offers huge buttress trees and the endemic Greenheart, a highly sought after hardwood. Return to the River Lodge for lunch. As the afternoon cools you set out on a boat trip to visit Kurupukari Falls to see the Amerindian petroglyphs (dependent on the water level). Continue by boat for a refreshing drink at Michelle Island overlooking the rapids (clients to pay for own drinks). Return to the lodge. Overnight at Iwokrama River Lodge. BLD

Wednesday At dawn take a wildlife walk with an Iwokrama Ranger close to the River Lodge. After breakfast we will transfer you 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! Along the road, we will watch for the myriad of bird species that frequent the forest edge, including Crimson and Purple-necked Fruit-crow, Crimson Topaz, Green Oropendula,

Spotted and Guianan Puffbird, Scarlet and Red-and-Green Macaw, Blue-cheeked and Orange-winged Parrot and Gray-winged Trumpeter. 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 Canopy Walkway where we can bird watch from the vantage of 30 Metres up in the canopy. Painted Parakeet, Rufous-throated Sapphire, Guianan Puffbird, Green Aracari, Waved Woodpecker, Pygmy Antwren, Guianan Streaked-Antwren, Dusky Purpletuft, Purple-breasted Cotinga, Guianan Toucanet, Pompadour Cotinga, Buff-cheeked Greenlet, Caica Parrots, and a host of crown specialists may come within our view. From this tree top vantage you can sometimes see Red Howler Monkeys and Black Spider Monkeys. The trails also have an interpretative walk with the trees named and you can learn about their varied uses in the Macushi culture. Deer and agouti are also regular visitors to the lodge. As dark falls on the Canopy Walkway, we will hope to see the White-winged Potoo. Overnight at Atta Rainforest Lodge. BLD



Thursday Although the forest around Atta Lodge is excellent for birds, the major attraction here is a 154 metre long canopy walkway which is only 750m from the lodge. The walkway has four platforms, the highest of which is over 30 metres above the ground, and these will allow us to get great looks at a range of canopy species, many of which we would struggle to see well from the forest floor. Amongst the likely highlights are Painted, Brown-throated and Golden-winged Parakeets, Caica Parrot, Guianan Puffbird, Waved and Golden-collared Woodpeckers and Spot-tailed, Todd's and Ash-winged Antwrens. The walkway is also an excellent place to look for various species of cotinga including the poorly known and range-restricted Dusky Purpletuft and if there are any suitable fruiting trees nearby, we stand a good chance of seeing this bird, as well as the

more widespread Purple-breasted Cotinga. Another area where we will want to spend some time is the clearing around the lodge, as this is one of the best places to see another of Guyana's "must see" birds, the Crimson Fruitcrow. This species is seen here on a reasonably regular basis, as it often comes to feed in some of the nearby trees. The clearing is also a reliable site for Black Curassow as there is a family party which has become habituated to people and regularly passes through the clearing. With reasonable luck, we should be able to add this bird to the impressive list of species we hope to see around the lodge and walkway. During our two nights stay, another of our major targets will be the poorly known White-winged Potoo which, after dark, can be found both around the lodge and at the walkway. Overnight at Atta Rainforest Lodge. BLD

Friday

Welcome the dawn chorus from the canopy walkway. Short-tailed Nighthawks settle in for the day, Swifts take to the sky, White throated and Channel-billed Toucans yodel, and Barred Forest Falcons call. The unusually timid Black Curassow can also be seen as at least one family party has become habituated and regularly feeds in the clearing of Atta Rainforest Lodge. After breakfast travel by 4x4 vehicle or 4x4 Bedford Truck (convert with forward facing seats and canopy) to a trail in the Iwokrama Forest to hopefully see the amazingly brilliant Guianan Cock-of-the-rock.



This trail is through interesting forest and the guides can show the use of the plants. Continue your trip onto the Amerindian village of Surama. The village of Surama is situated in a small savannah, deep in the rainforest

and surrounded by forest clad hills. It was here that Charles Waterton passed through in 1812 in search of the secrets of the useful Wourali poison known as Curare. Waterton was so stunned by this spot that he wrote in his memoirs "The finest park that England boasts falls short of this delightful scene". Surama's inhabitants are mainly from the Macushi tribe and still observe many of the traditional practices of their forebears. On our arrival, we will receive a warm welcome from the local people and will be shown to our basic accommodation. Your guide will take you on a tour of the village. Visit the local school, medical centre and church along with some of the village houses. As the afternoon cools a local guide will escort you for a short walk on trails to observe the forest and bird life. See the forest through the eyes of your indigenous guide and learn about the medicinal plants and their uses in the Amerindian culture. Tonight enjoy an educational walk to observe wildlife and experience the mystique of the forest after dark. Overnight at Surama Eco-Lodge. BLD

Saturday Rise before dawn for a walk across the savannah and then the exhilarating climb up Surama Mountain in the cool morning air. This is the best time to observe bird life along the trail. Breakfast will be served at a lookout point which affords incredible views across the village and savannah to the Pakaraima Mountains. Return to village for lunch and then take a three mile walk across the savannah and through the rainforest to the Burro Burro River. Your guides will then paddle you on the Burro Burro River for opportunities to observe Giant River Otters, Tapir, Tira, Spider Monkeys and many more species. Return to village for sunset. Overnight at Surama Eco Lodge. BLD



- Sunday After breakfast depart Surama by 4x4 vehicle or 4x4 Bedford Truck for Rock View Lodge at Annai. The road travels through the savannah and the foothills of the Pakaraima Mountains with excellent opportunity for savannah birding. Jabiru Stork are often seen along this stretch of road. Eventually we reach the Rupununi and Annai, its northernmost community. The Rupununi Savannah is to Guyana what the Gran Sabana is to Venezuela, an extensive area of grassland with termite mounds and scattered or riparian woodland. It differs in that much of it is devoted to cattle raising, though the large ranches are not very productive. Indeed, one can travel for hours without seeing a domestic animal of any sort. Needless to say, the birdlife here is markedly different from that of the rainforest. Rock View Lodge is located where the savannah meets the forest-covered foothills of the Pakaraima Mountains. With its tropical gardens and flowering trees, the lodge resembles an oasis in the savannah, and attracts many species of birds, particularly nectar feeders and frugivores. Nearby patches of light forest are home to certain ant birds and flycatchers, and of course the grasslands support an avifauna of their own. Overnight at Rock View Lodge. BLD
- Monday At dawn take a hike in the foothills of the Pakaraima Mountains on the Panorama Trail where you might see Cinereous Mourner, Finsch's Euphonia, Reddish Hermit, Rufous-bellied Antwren, Green-tailed and Yellow-billed Jacamar. The views across the savannah and villages as the sun rises are spectacular. Today you can visit a nearby Amerindian village. Enjoy an explanation and demonstration of traditional cashew nut roasting. Finish the day with drinks around the pool. Overnight at Rock View Lodge. BLD
- Tuesday After breakfast transfer by 4x4 vehicle or 4x4 Bedford Truck along the road through the savannah and at the foothills of the Pakaraima Mountains. Jabiru Stork and Toco Toucan are often seen along this stretch of road, as are Red Howler and Spider Monkey. From Ginep Landing we take a boat trip on the Rupununi River to Karanambu Lodge. Depending on the river level, this trip offers an excellent opportunity to look for Giant Otters as there are several family groups which live along this stretch of the Rupununi River. The journey ends at Karanambu Lodge, the home of Diane McTurk, widely known for her work in rehabilitating orphaned, giant river otters. Diane and her otters have appeared on National Geographic, Jeff Corwin Experience, Really Wild Show (BBC) and the Calgary's "Zoo World". Karanambu has a long history of visiting naturalists and Diane's father, Tiny McTurk, has welcomed David Attenborough and Gerald Durrell (Three Singles to Adventure). 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 *Victoria Regis* waterlily, bloom at dusk. On the return trip we will spotlight for Black Caiman and birds and creatures of the night. Overnight at Karanambu Lodge. BLD



Wednesday This morning we can bird or look for wildlife around the environs of the Lodge. If you are interested in birdwatching you can explore woodland patches or gallery forest along the river where we'll 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

Thursday This morning travel out onto the savannah to search for a Giant Anteater. After breakfast explore the Rupununi River in search of wild Giant River Otters, Black Caiman, Arapaima and bird watching along the way whilst being transferred by boat to the Amerindian village of Yupukari and Caiman House. Caiman House is the hub of several participatory development projects, including the introduction of classroom libraries in all three village schools and an internet-enabled public library. Visitors may have the opportunity to meet local craftspeople, including the furniture builders at Yupukari Crafters, a nonprofit venture to create village jobs and generate income to sustain educational development.

Tonight enjoy a foray on the Rupununi River from Caiman House Field Station. As a guest you have the unique opportunity to support and participate in an ongoing field study of the Black Caiman (*melanosuchus niger*), the largest member of the alligator family and an endangered species. Guests will observe the capture from a separate boat, but will be offered the opportunity to assist in data collection. Caiman are weighed, measured, sexed and tagged before being released back into the river. The research has already discovered interesting information on caimans' nests that was previously unknown. During periods of high water it is difficult to capture Caiman so you will have another chance to enter the nocturnal world of the Rupununi River and associated gallery forests which offer an experience, and world of wildlife entirely different than those viewed on a day trip. Skilled guides will expertly escort visitors to meet elusive denizens of darkness by outboard powered boats, while interpreting the sights, and sounds of Guyana after dark. Just after

darkness settles on the River many creatures emerge such as black caiman (to over 12 feet), spectacled caiman, tree boas, iguanas, frogs, and many fish species(i.e arrawana, piranha). Sleeping birds (kingfishers, small perching birds) nightjars, potoos, Boat-billed Herons and other aquatic birds, bats, (harmless) spiders, insects, moths, and more can be closely approached in way not possible during the hours of light. Less likely, but not rare inclusions for night viewing include possums, tree dwelling rodents, capybara and sleeping monkeys (esp. squirrel monkeys) amongst other mammals. Few nights pass without some unusual offering. Overnight at Caiman House. BLD



Friday This morning we will have some time to visit the village, to learn about their way of life. Or go birdwatching in search of the many good savannah, gallery forest and river-edge birds found in the Caiman House area including Pinnated Bittern, Green-tailed Jacamar, Black-chinned Antbird and Capuchinbird. After breakfast take a flight back to Georgetown. Enjoy an afternoon Georgetown City Tour (see description below). Overnight at Cara Lodge. B

Saturday Transfer to the airport for your departing flight. B

Scheduled Departure Rack Rate: US\$ 4,990.00 per person (minimum 2 persons to operate the trip, maximum of 10 persons).

Single Supplement Rack Rate: US\$ 675.00

Tour can also be sold on a Non scheduled departure basis.

Non Scheduled Departure Rack Rate: US\$ 5,607.00 per person (minimum of two persons to operate the trip).

Single Supplement Rack Rate: US\$ 675.00

Please note single supplement is for a single room (where available), but as part of a group with a minimum of 2 pax. Not for a single traveller on trip alone. Rate for a single traveller can be provided on request.

Rate Includes:

- airport transfers
- double or twin accommodation
- meals as listed
- limited local bar at Karanambu Lodge
- all road and river transfers
- internal flights in Guyana
- activities as described
- local guides
- VAT
- Kaieteur National Park fee
- Iwokrama Forest User Fee
- Iwokrama Canopy Walkway fee

Not Included :

- items of a personal nature
- alcoholic drinks except where mentioned above
- departure tax
- international flights
- visa

Dates for 2015: Please note tour generally starts on a Saturday except where mentioned below.

31st January – 14th February 2015
8th – 22nd February 2015 – starts on a Sunday
7th – 21st March 2015
18th April – 2nd May 2015
19th – 30th May 2015 – tour starts on a Tuesday
1st – 15 August 2015 – tour starts on a Friday
5th – 19th September 2015
3rd – 17th October 2015
21st November – 5th December 2015
5th – 19th December 2015

Note: Passenger/s traveling on internal flights in Guyana are allowed a free baggage allowance of 20lbs/9.1KG exceeding this weight passenger/s will incur a cost of GY\$150.00 equivalent to US\$ 0.77cents per pound.

Disclaimer: Please be advised all tour operators and customers must provide us with body weights of passengers booked to travel on tour to Guyana for all internal flights. Failure to provide us with this information or the incorrect information can cause delays to flights and inconvenience to other passengers and in some cases either passengers and/or luggage being taken off the flight. To ensure a holiday that is enjoyable and hassle free, it is imperative that passengers provide us with this information. We appreciate some people are sensitive about providing their body weights, but all customers and their baggage are weighed at check-in. This is procedure by the airline so as to ensure that the weight of the

load is within the payload limit for the aircraft, and neither they nor Wilderness Explorers will compromise on safety. All passengers are subject to removal of themselves or luggage from the flight if over the weight they provided and/or over the baggage allowance. Passengers are advised to provide a body weight with clothing similar to that which they would expect to travel in on the flight. Wilderness Explorers cannot be held responsible for any passenger denied boarding or luggage not transported if they are over the weight provided. Weights supplied are provided to the airline in advance to ensure the flight is within the allowable payload.

Georgetown City Tour

Georgetown the chief port, capital and largest city of Guyana is 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.

During your visit to Georgetown there are a number of interesting sights that should not be missed: the most famous being St. George's Cathedral. The Cathedral is one of the world's tallest free standing wooden buildings and was consecrated on 1892. The foundation stone was laid on November 23, 1890 and the building was designed by Sir Arthur Bloomfield. The story of the cathedral is told on the interior on tablets and memorials of a historical and sentimental nature: it is the tale of the history of Guyana in general and of the Diocese in particular.



At the beginning of the Avenue of the Republic stands the Public Library housed in the Carnegie Building. Other historic buildings along this promenade are the Town Hall, a splendid example of Gothic architecture, and further along are the Victoria Law Courts and St. Andrews Kirk. St. Andrew's is the oldest surviving structure of any church in Guyana.

The Famous Stabroek Market, once described as a “bizarre bazaar”, contains every conceivable item from house hold goods and gold jewellery to fresh meat and vegetables brought to town on the river daily. The clock tower can be seen for miles around and is a famous landmark.

No trip to Georgetown would be complete without a visit to the Botanical Gardens and zoo. The Botanical Gardens houses one of the most extensive collections of tropical flora in the Caribbean and are laid out with ponds, canals, kissing bridges and bandstand. Over 100 species of Guyanese wildlife can be observed at the Zoo including a wide variety of tropical fishes and birds.



The National Museum which contains a broad selection of our animal life and heritage should not be missed, nor the Walter Roth Museum of Anthropology, which explains Amerindian history and life style.

The tour will include walking along the Avenues with an experienced guide who will give you the history, rumour and facts on Georgetown and its citizens. The group will be accompanied at all times by a vehicle, which will be used for travel between areas of interest. Along the way visitors will sample local exotic fruits, snacks and refreshments. During the tour there is always the opportunity to purchase that unusual gift or unique Guyanese handicrafts, or for the daring the chance to delve into the gold and diamond market.



Kaieteur Falls

The Kaieteur Falls which was first seen by a European on April 29, 1870 is situated in the heart of Guyana on the Potaro River, a tributary of the Essequibo. The water of Kaieteur, one of the world's natural wonders, flows over a sandstone conglomerate tableland into a deep gorge - a drop of 741 feet or 5 times the height of Niagara Falls.

There are no other falls in the world with the magnitude of the sheer drop existing at Kaieteur. Amerindian legend of the Patamona tribe has it that Kai, one of the tribe's chiefs (after whom the falls is

named), committed self sacrifice by canoeing himself over the falls. It was believed this would encourage the Great Spirit Makonaima to save the tribe from being destroyed by the savage Caribishi.



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. The lucky visitor may also see the famous flights of the Kaieteur Swifts or Makonaima Birds which nest under the vast shelf of rock carved by the centuries of water, hidden behind the eternal curtain of falling water.

The Guyana Nature Experience includes a trip to Kaieteur Falls. Sometimes this trip may include an extension to Orinduik Falls or Baganara Island Resort, at no additional cost.