

SURINAME

**Country Dialling Code (Tel/Fax): ++597**

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Capital: Paramaribo, **Time:** UTC-3 (2 hours ahead of Washington, DC during Standard Time)

Background: First explored by the Spaniards in the 16th century and then settled by the English in the mid-17th century, Suriname became a Dutch colony in 1667. With the abolition of slavery in 1863, workers were brought in from India and Java. Independence from the Netherlands was granted in 1975. Five years later the civilian government was replaced by a military regime that soon declared a socialist republic. It continued to exert control through a succession of nominally civilian administrations until 1987, when international pressure finally forced a democratic election. In 1990, the military overthrew the civilian leadership, but a democratically elected government - a four-party New Front coalition - returned to power in 1991 and has ruled since; the coalition expanded to eight parties in 2005.

Location: Northern South America, bordering the North Atlantic Ocean, between French Guiana and Guyana

Map References: South America

Area: total: 163,270 sq km, land: 161,470 sq km, water: 1,800 sq km

Climate: tropical; moderated by trade winds

Terrain: mostly rolling hills; narrow coastal plain with swamps

Natural Resources: timber, hydropower, fish, kaolin, shrimp, bauxite, gold, and small amounts of nickel, copper, platinum, iron ore

Population: 475,996 (July 2008 est.)

Nationality: noun: Surinamer(s), adjective: Surinamese

Ethnic Groups: Hindustani (also known locally as "East Indians"; their ancestors emigrated from northern India in the latter part of the 19th century) 37%, Creole (mixed white and black) 31%, Javanese 15%, "Maroons" (their African ancestors were brought to the country in the 17th and 18th centuries as slaves and escaped to the interior) 10%, Amerindian 2%, Chinese 2%, white 1%, other 2%

Religions: Hindu 27.4%, Protestant 25.2% (predominantly Moravian), Roman Catholic 22.8%, Muslim 19.6%, indigenous beliefs 5%

Languages: Dutch (official), English (widely spoken), Sranang Tongo (Surinamese, sometimes called Taki-Taki, is native language of Creoles and much of the younger population and is lingua franca among others), Caribbean Hindustani (a dialect of Hindi), Javanese

Economy: The economy is dominated by the mining industry, with exports of alumina, gold, and oil accounting for about 85% of exports and 25% of government revenues, making the economy highly vulnerable to mineral price volatility. The short-term economic outlook depends on the government's ability to control inflation and on the development of projects in the bauxite and gold mining sectors. Suriname has received aid for these projects from Netherlands, Belgium, and the European Development Fund. Suriname's economic prospects for the medium term will depend on continued commitment to responsible monetary and fiscal policies and to the introduction of structural reforms to liberalize markets and promote competition. In 2000, the government of Ronald VENETIAAN, returned to office and inherited an economy with inflation of over 100% and a growing fiscal deficit. He quickly implemented an austerity program, raised taxes, attempted to control spending, and tamed inflation. These economic policies are likely to remain in effect during VENETIAAN's third term. Prospects for local onshore oil production are good as a drilling program is underway. Offshore oil drilling was given a boost in 2004 when the State Oil Company (Staatsolie) signed exploration agreements with Repsol, Maersk, and Occidental. Bidding on these new offshore blocks was completed in July 2006.

Industries: bauxite and gold mining, alumina production; oil, lumbering, food processing, fishing

Currency: Surinam dollar (SRD)

Waterways: 1,200 km (most navigable by ships with drafts up to 7 m) (2005)

Ports and Harbors: Paramaribo, Wageningen

Airports: 50 (2007)

Visa: Valid Passport, Passport must be signed and valid for 6 months from the date of intended travel, Photocopy of your valid return ticket (if you have one), One completed Application form, Business Letter for business visa, One (1) recent passport photo, or children under 18 years, a letter of consent by parents or legal guardian

Health: If you're planning on a trip to the interior then it is wise to have vaccinations for yellow fever, cholera, tetanus and hepatitis A. Malaria prophylaxis should also be taken; it is preferable to take your own rather than rely on obtaining them in Suriname. Mosquitos can be, at certain times, be ferocious. Taking a mosquito net into is advisable. HIV/AIDS is also prevalent. Drinking water is safe in Paramaribo, but ask first before drinking water in outlying areas. Swimming can also be hazardous because of poisonous fish. Again, ask first before swimming.

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<http://book.bestwestern.com/bestwestern>

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HOTEL KRASNAPOLSKY, Domineestraat 39, Paramaribo-Suriname, tel. (597) 47 50 50, fax. (597) 42 01 39, www.krasnapolsky.sr

HOTEL LA PETITE MAISON, Waterkant 4, Paramaribo, Suriname, South America, Phone: (+597) 475466, Fax: (+597) 475477, info@hotellapetitemaison.com, <http://www.hotellapetitemaison.com>

HOTEL PARAMURU, T: +597 411019, info@paramuru.com, <http://www.paramuru.com>

HOTEL RESIDENCE INN PARAMARIBO, Anton Dragtenweg 7, Phone: 597-472387, Fax: 597-424811, Email: info@resinn.com, <http://www.resinn.com>

HOTEL ZEELANDIA SUITES, Kleine Waterstraat 1a, Paramaribo-Suriname, South America. Phone: + (597) 424631, Fax: + (597) 424790, <http://www.zeelandiasuites.com>

NATURE RESORT KABALEBO, dr. sophie redmondstraat 198, telephone (00597) 42.65.32, fax (00597) 42.19.68, paramaribo, suriname info@kabalebo.com, <http://www.kabalebo.com>

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THE GOLDEN TRULY HOTEL & CASINO, Jozef Israelstraat 43, PO Box 13575, Paramaribo, Suriname, South America, PHONE (597) 454249, FAX (597) 457117, Reservations@thegoldentrulyhotel.com, <http://www.thegoldentrulyhotel.com>

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