TOUR CODE

GY1

ADVENTURESABROAD

GUYANA, SURINAME & TRINIDAD

'Land of Many Waters'

13 days

Updated 11/12/2013

Day 1 *Arrive in Guyana*

Today we arrive in Georgetown, capital of South America's only English speaking country.

Guyana's capital city lies on the coast, protected by a sea wall and an elaborate drainage system designed by the Dutch. Built mostly of wood, Georgetown is an architectural wonder with many of its buildings dating back to the 16th and 17th centuries. Called the garden city due to its wide tree lined avenues, Georgetown is a little piece of the colonial past in a modern world.

Overnight in Georgetown. Meal plan: Dinner, if required.

Day 2 *Georgetown: City Tour - Baganara*

Early this morning we will have a brief tour of Georgetown's principal sights. We start at the Seawall and learn about the working of the sluice gates. We then drive to the historical center and view St George's Cathedral, one of the world's tallest free standing wooden buildings, and the Parliament building, completed in 1833. We continue to the Botanical Gardens and the Zoo and finish with the Hibiscus Craft Market and the Post Office. (Depending on timing and schedules, Georgetown sightseeing may occur at a different point in our tour). We also see the Victorian Law Courts and Town Hall, as well as the historic Starbroek Market.

We depart Georgetown and travel to Baganara Resort. Pre-eminent among the three hundred and sixty-five islands in the mighty Essequibo is this wonderful little paradise with one hundred and eighty-seven acres of lush green foliage and colourful tropical flowers. This is the gateway to the unspoilt rainforest of Guyana and the junction where the great Essequibo and Mazaruni Rivers meet.

This evening, as the sun sets, we make an excursion up the Essequibo River by motor boat to Parrot Island. As the warm tropical day ends, myriad stars of the equatorial zone appear and thousands of Amazonian parrots arrive to roost for the night. We will walk on the edges of this mangrove island listening to the sounds of these intelligent birds preparing for the night. The flocks of parrots arriving at twilight is unforgettable.

Overnight at Baganara Resort. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 3 *Baganara Resort: Bartica, Marshall Falls, and Parrot Island*

We rise early this morning for a pre-breakfast nature walk. Our walk takes us through the humid swamp forests that cover much of Baganara Island. This is a perfect opportunity to identify some of the region's numerous tree species and watch for some of the more than 200 bird species recorded in the surrounding area.

After breakfast you can take a swim in the warm, clean waters of the river, or perhaps the soft sand beaches that surround the island. Kayaks are available for those wishing to explore the river on their own; alternatively, you may

choose to curl up in a hammock and relax. Later today we board a motorboat and take an exciting journey to the town of Bartica. An Arawak word meaning "red clay", it is home to many people who work the mighty rivers. The Mazaruni has many granite quarries -- the stone is sent all over the Carribbean. The Cuyuni leads to Venezuela and has numerous gold, silver, diamond and bauxite mines. An isolated nearby island is still the site of Guyana's largest prison, continuously used since built by the Dutch several centuries ago.

*Cuyuni and Mazaruni river cruises may be replaced by other sightseeing if water levels are not high enough.

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Overnight at Baganara Resort. Meal plan: Breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Day 4 *Baganara - Kaieteur Falls - Georgetown*

An aircraft will pick us up at Baganara for our day tour of the Kaieteur Waterfall. Kaieteur thunders over a precipice, plummeting 224 m (741 feet), making it the longest single drop waterfall in the world. This is Guyana's trademark and one of the most impressive and beautiful sights in Guyana, a solid column of water in a perpendicular drop into cascading foam and spray over the great boulders at the foot of the cliff, producing breathtaking rainbows across the gorge (hopefully the weather will be clear!). The aircraft circles the falls, giving views to both sides of the plane, and then lands nearby. We walk through a tropical gorge, stopping at a number of viewpoints, before reaching the very edge of the top of the Falls. There are many legends of Kaieteur, but the most enduring tells of a great old chieft of the Patamona tribe whose name was Kaie. To save his people from being destroyed by the savage Caribishi, Kaie sacrificed himself to the Makonaima, the Great Spirit, by canoeing himself over the falls.

We then fly back to Baganara for lunch before proceding by plane back to Georgetown. The flight provides breathtaking views of the endless canopy of tropical rain forest sliced by huge rivers, and Georgetown's location, at the mouth of the Essequibo.

Overnight in Georgetown. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 5 *Georgetown, Guyana - Paramaribo, Suriname*

We have an early morning start, setting out by road to the Corentyne River which forms the border between Guyana and Suriname. We pass through the mainly agricultural areas crossing the Berbice River by ferry before arriving at Moleson Creek, where we join a second ferry to cross to Southdrain on the Suriname border. We continue on to Paramaribo and check in to our hotel. (This is a long though interesting journey. Possible lengthy waits at the ferry crossing requires patience.)

Paramaribo originated in the 17th century around an old trading post and Fort Willoughby, which was renamed Fort Zeelandia after the Dutch conquered it in 1667. The Dutch made the settlement near the fort the colony's capital, calling it Nieuw Middelburg. This name for the new capital has never been accepted. The popular name for the capital is still 'foto,' derived from 'fort.' Some months later, the British took over the fort again, but under the Peace of Breda, Suriname became a Dutch colony again. The name Paramaribo is derived from 'Paramurubo,' the name of an old Arrawak village, which means 'city of parwa blossoms.'

Overnight in Paramaribo. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 6 *Paramaribo: City Tour*

This morning we have a tour of this historic capital.

Sights in Paramaribo include: The Central Market where you can find tropical fruit and vegetables galore; here one can meet a cross-section of Suriname's ethnically-diverse population. The Palm Garden, which is behind the Presidential Palace, is famous for its stately palm trees. Waterfront / Independence Square is the centre of activity during national holidays. There are also several foodstands along the Waterfront. The historic Fort Zeelandia has been turned into a museum, which highlights Suriname's history and arts.

This afternoon you will have some free time to explore independently in this charming colonial atmosphere.

Overnight in Paramaribo. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 7 *Paramaribo - Kabalebo Jungle Resort*

Today we fly to the Kabalebo Nature Resort, a luxurious lodge lying in one of the most beautiful areas of Suriname, deep in the untouched (and malaria free) Amazon jungle.

Within a range of hundreds of kilometers, you will see nothing except for the flora and fauna of the splendid Amazon rainforest. Where playful monkeys leap through the treetops, the colourful parrots glide above your head and unusual fish leap and quickly swim away down a secluded creek...

Besides the numerous unusual birds, colourful butterflies and many dazzling types of fish, you may also come across a member of the cat family, the jaguar. You may spend hours on exploratory trips together with your guide. But you may also see many animals even if you decide to remain in the vicinity of the lodge.

Overnight at Kabalebo Jungle Resort. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 8 *Kabalebo Jungle Resort*

Nature Resort Kabalebo lies in one of the most beautiful pieces of jungle in Suriname. Because no people live in the wide surroundings, pure untouched nature is found here.

During our time at the resort, we will have a jungle walk during which we will become acquainted with the extensive flora and fauna of the Amazon forest. Our guide will tell us about the animals making their home in this area, the medicinal qualities of the plants or acquaint you with the colourful beauty of the jungle flowers.

During the hike, you are introduced to the numerous inhabitants of the rainforest. From plants with medicinal qualities to the many brightly coloured birds found up in the tree tops.

Balance of the day for optional activities.

Kabalebo Jungle Resort. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 9 *Kabalebo - Paramaribo: Commewijne River Cruise*

This morning there are opportunities for option activities at Kabalebo. Stable kayaks are available (single and two-person); good hikers might consider a walk up Misty Mountain, or you may choose a more leisurely jungle walking option. Alternatively, you can enjoy the grounds and the swimming pool. After lunch we fly back to the capital.

Later this afternoon we have a cruise on the Commewijne River, directly opposite Paramaribo. Our tour will take us along the river, past former colonial plantations of which most are abandoned and no longer active. A visit to the open-air museum at Nieuw Amsterdam and Marienburg, the oldest former sugar plantation in Suriname, will carry you back in time. The agricultural projects in Alkmaar, Katwijk and surroundings will offer you a view on how the plantation industry transformed itself in modern times. The river which takes in a dominant place in Commewijne, provides a way of earning a living to many fishermen in the area.

Overnight in Paramaribo. Meal plan: Breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Day 10 *Paramaribo, Suriname - Port of Spain, Trinidad*

Today we fly from Suriname to Trinidad, a romantic island, home of calypso and the steelband with a wonderful blend of blue-green waters, golden sands and lush tropical jungles.

On arrival we will have an orientation tour. We visit the capital, Port of Spain, where gingerbread-style houses are found side-by-side with a variety of modern structures. The seven grandest examples of colonial Victorian houses lie in a row along St Clair's border with the Savannah. Known as the 'Magnificent Seven', the houses are each in a different style but vie to outdo each other in form and decoration.

We visit the nearby Botanical Gardens. Later we see the impressive President's Residence; the leafy suburbs of St Ann's lie behind. We will view the Red House (Parliament), the Hall of Justice, and Woodford Square. The garden in the square is the setting for open-air political debate: the topic of the day is written on a blackboard each morning. The Woodbrook area is dotted with restaurants and bars, many of which are in small 'gingerbread' houses, fringed with fretwork and delicately painted.

Then it's a short drive to Lady Young Lookout for an excellent panoramic view of Port of Spain. We'll head for Santa Cruz Valley with its endless cocoa and coffee plantations. The drive through this valley is approximately 20 minutes and from here we continue along the scenic North Coast Road where we will take in a panoramic view of the Caribbean Sea at Maracas Lookout. On reaching Maracas Beach, Trinidad's most beautiful and popular, you can swim, sunbathe or relax before returning to the hotel (changing facilities are available).

Overnight in Trinidad. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 11 *Trinidad: Central Trinidad & Caroni Nature Sanctuary*

This morning our island tour takes us through the plains of Central Trinidad, vast mangrove swamp and rice fields. Trinidad being a mixed society, of all different races; we will see many Hindu flags in front of private residences and Hindu temples and hear about their significance. We also visit the remarkable Sadhu Hindu Temple, built under great sacrifice out in the sea. We visit the lively and colourful Chaguanas fresh produce market and busy bazaar street with a break for lunch and shopping.

We then continue to the the Caroni Nature Sanctuary, a mangrove swamp covering an area of 40 square miles at Trinidad's North West Coast. We board a large flat-bottomed boat and slowly travel along the beautiful peaceful waterways and lagoons admiring the bizarre beauty of the landscape and a variety of birds and other wildlife. The most astounding among these birds is the scarlet ibis, a large bright red bird feeding and nesting here. This tour is world

renowned among ornithologists as it offers the observer an opportunity to see this rare protected bird with very little effort.

After this relaxing boat ride we return to the main landing and make our way back to Port of Spain (all nights in Trinidad are spent at the same hotel).

Overnight in Trinidad. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 12 *Trinidad: Asa Wright Nature Centre*

Today we drive to the Asa Wright Nature Centre, home to hundreds of species of birds, as well as other local flora and fauna. The AWNC is a "Not-for-Profit" Trust established in 1967 by a group of naturalists and bird-watchers to "protect part of the Arima Valley in a natural state and to create a conservation and study area for the protection of wildlife and for the enjoyment of all."

Our guided walk will explore the Discovery Trail and conclude on the verandah. Colourful birds like the brilliant green shining Honeycreepers and the Jacob Hummingbirds visit the nearby feeders just below the verandah. This is one of the best places for birding in the tropics. The original estate house of the former coffee-cocoa-citrus plantation has been beautifully remodeled over the years as a comfortable headquarters where guests gather to watch the incredible birdlife from the verandah.

Return to our hotel.

Overnight in Trinidad. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 13 *Departure*

Departure from Trinidad.

BON VOYAGE!! Meal plan: Breakfast.