

Touring Georgetown

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. Set amidst large gardens, the State House painted in green and white, has hosted many visiting dignitaries through the years.

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.

Located on Main Street, the Walter Roth Museum of Anthropology is the first museum of anthropology in the English-speaking Caribbean. It was founded in the year 1974 with the collections of Guyanese Archaeologist, Dr. Denis Williams. An ethnographic collection of the Wai Wai, one of the nine indigenous tribes found in Guyana, was presented to this Museum in 1991 by Guyanese Cultural Anthropologist, Dr. George P. Mentore. The Museum's collections also include excavated artefacts from all of the ten Administrative Regions of Guyana.

At the beginning of the Avenue of the Republic stands the **National 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. Its grounds were 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.

Castellani House, the home of the National Gallery of Art, this large wooden building was designed by Cesar Castellani. It was once the residence of the Director of Agriculture in 1888. In 1965 the building was converted as the official residence by Mr. Linden Forbes Sampson Burnham, then Prime Minister of British Guiana. In 1993 the inaugural collection of the Art Gallery was held. Address: Vlissengen Road & Homestretch Avenue, Georgetown. Tele: (592) 225 0579, 225 6638, Fax: (592) 225 5078. Opening Hours: Monday to Friday 10:00hrs to 17:00hrs, Saturday 14:00hrs-18:00hrs. Admission: Free

To end your perfect day, with a stroll across the **Demerara Harbour Bridge** is the 5th longest floating bridge in the world, which connects the East and West Banks of the Demerara River and enjoy the scenic view of the birds preparing to nest against the backdrop of the setting of the afternoon's sun.

So whether you choose to use a local tour guide or to explore on your own, be sure to visit these key spots along the way.