JOURNEY
LATIN AMERICA



DISCOVERY GROUP TOURS

COQ OF THE ROCK: TRAILBLAZING THE GUIANAS

16 days from **£5,917pp**

GUYANA / THE INTERIOR / GEORGETOWN AND KAIETEUR FALLS / BRAZIL / RIO DE JANEIRO / SURINAME / FRENCH GUIANA



WITH OVER 40 YEARS EXPERIENCE, NO-ONE KNOWS LATIN AMERICA LIKE WE DO

EXPERIENCE SOMETHING EXTRAORDINARY

WHY US

We are the UK's No.1 specialist in travel to Latin America and have been creating award-winning holidays to every corner of the region for over four decades; we pride ourselves on being the most knowledgeable people there are when it comes to travel to Central and South America and passionate about it too.

OUR JOURNEY

As our name suggests, we are single-minded about Latin America. This is what sets us apart from other travel companies – and what allows us to offer you not just a holiday but the opportunity to experience something extraordinary on inspiring journeys throughout Mexico, Central and South America.

WE LOVE LATIN AMERICA

- A passion for the region runs through all we do
- All our Consultants have lived or travelled extensively in Latin America
- Up-to-the-minute knowledge underpinned by 40 years' experience

TRAVEL WITH CONFIDENCE

- Fully bonded and licensed
- ATOL-protected
- On your side when it matters
- Book with confidence, knowing every penny is secure

THE REAL LATIN AMERICA

- Our insider knowledge helps you go beyond the guidebooks
- We hand-pick hotels with character and the most rewarding excursions
- Let us show you the Latin America we know and love

OVERVIEW & OUTLINE ITINERARY

This trail-blazing holiday follows a unique itinerary through the three Guianas. The remoteness and the nature of the wilderness terrain makes it a route difficult to negotiate independently, so travelling with a small escorted group is the ideal way to make progress across the borders and visit off the beaten track, extraordinary places.

DAYS 1	**Arrive in Rio de Janeiro**
DAY 2	**Spend the day exploring this epic city.**
DAY 3	**Fly to northern Brazilian city of Boa Vista.**
DAYS 4-5	**Drive to the Guyana border and continue to Atta.**
DAYS 6-7	**Drive to Annai and the Rockview Lodge.**
DAY 8	**By light aircraft to Georgetown.**
DAY 9	**Explore Georgetown.**
DAY 10	**By bus and ferry to Paramaribo, Suriname.**
DAYS 11-12	**Excursion of Suriname and Crommewijne river.**
DAY 13	**Bus and boat to Kourou, in French Guiana.**
DAY 14	**Excursion to Iles du Salut, and the erstwhile penal colony.**
DAY 15	**Excursion to the Centre Spatial; drive to Cayenne.**
DAY 16	**Depart for international flight or extension.**
	UK clients arrive home the following day.

ITINERARY

This is a trip which emphatically goes off the beaten track, taking in some of the rarely-visited highlights of Suriname and the Guianas. You won't find a group tour like this offered by anyone else: the logistics of researching and organising such a trip are daunting but as South America experts we relished the challenge. You'll scramble through dense jungle; surround yourself with wildlife in a rainforest canopy and drive through sweeping savannah punctuated by ancient sandstone plateaux.

You'll stay in sweltering frontier settlements; visit the French space station and an old penal colony; take boat rides down jungle-fringed rivers and lap up the atmosphere of colonial towns and brash, bold capital cities. You'll have to be prepared for delays, for things not going quite to plan, but you'll be rewarded by an unforgettable trip.

DAYS 1

Arrive in Rio de Janeiro



Day time flight to Rio de Janeiro, the most romantic, intriguing and beautiful city on the continent. Sumptuous apartments overlook the sparkling bays against the backdrop of half-built slum dwellings, favelas, which cling precariously to the hillsides. Rio has an awesome bay-side location among near-vertical granite mountains.

Here, tropical foliage swoops down to white-to-toffee coloured sandy beaches in turn battered by the huge waves of Atlantic surf. The drive into the city gives a fleeting glimpse of the docks and commercial centre as you head towards the magnificent stretch of sand at Copacabana; your hotel is a couple of blocks inland from the beach.

DAY 2

Spend the day exploring this epic city.

On your full day there is a tour to familiarise yourself with this most iconic of cities. As part of this, you'll board a steep rack-and-pinion railway which glides up through tropical Tijuca National Park, the largest urban forest in the world dripping with fruit and flowers, to reach the summit of Corcovado Mountain. Here the famous 40m art deco Christ the Redeemer statue soars above the city, arms outspread benevolently. On a clear day, the views over the city and out across the ocean and outlying islands are stupendous.

We also include a trip to Pão de Açucar (Sugar Loaf Mountain). Ride the cable-car up the twin granite mountains protruding from the ocean and enjoy the magnificent views back over the beaches, Botafogo Bay with its bobbing yachts and into the mountains beyond. There's a lovely (and safe) nature walk round the foot of the mountain, or you could pop for a beer into the nearby villagey quarter of Urca, leafy home of artists and TV stars.

DAY 3

Fly to northern Brazilian city of Boa Vista.

Today we fly to the northern city of Boa Vista (due to current flight schedules this may involves changes). There's a frontier-town feel to Boa Vista, and its population has grown from 55,000 inhabitants in 1975 to a quarter of a million today. Spend the night in Boa Vista.

DAYS 4-5

Drive to the Guyana border and continue to Atta.



Depart by bus for Guyana, crossing the newly-constructedTakutu River Bridge. Brazil drives on the right and Guyana on the left, and there's a nifty little crossover bridge to cope with this idiosyncrasy.

Continue into the Iwokrama, with stops in the forest along the way. Jaguars, jaguarundi, tayras, as well as striking bird life, including the coq of the rock, and the harpy eagle, are often seen among the trees. Spend 2 nights at the Atta Camp, a block of eight small cabins. From here there is access to a fantastic canopy walkway, built out from a steep escarpment, which gives access to the creatures of the forest

DAYS 6-7

Drive to Annai and the Rockview Lodge.



Travel along an unpaved roads to Annai, which lies on the edge of the transition zone between the savannah and the Iwokrama forest reserve. This small village is a mixture of brick and wattle-and-daub cottages, all thatched with palm fronds. There are no roads or even tracks, just grassy thoroughfares between cottages, shops, school and church. They speak English here, as elsewhere in Guyana, and people are friendly and welcoming. 2 nights' accommodation is in Rock View, a comfortable lodge, from which you can enjoy the beauty of the savannah, and explore the beguiling settlement.

DAY 8

By light aircraft to Georgetown.



Fly north to the capital Georgetown with an included excursion to Kaieteur Falls en route. We fly to the small airstrip at the top of the falls. The pilot usually does a fly-past first, to give some perspective on the Potaro river and the canyon below the falls. There's no tourist infrastructure, just a tiny settlement of 3 huts, one of which serves as an airport lounge.

On arrival there is an easy walk and then a scramble in a loop through the rocky forest, past copses of giant bromeliads – home to microscopic frogs – to a number of viewpoints. The first, at around 200m from the cataracts, gives a face-on view of a prodigious quantity of water, which is stained chestnut brown with tannins. At the third viewpoint you are literally on the edge of the falls, on a rock platform less than a metre away from the torrent as it plunges 226m into the canyon. Most people inch towards the rock's lip on their bellies. Some prefer to stand well back.

Continue onto Georgetown in the same plane.

DAY 9

Explore Georgetown.

During the 18th and 19th centuries, the Guyanas swapped hands between the European sea powers. The city still shows an interesting amalgam of cultural heritage, its population mostly a mixture of African and Asian descent, commingled with wai-wai Amerindians from the south. Its architecture too is a fusion of Dutch and colonial Brazilian, with the latter predominant.

There's plenty to see here: riverside Stabroek market is fun, bustling and chaotic; there are manatees and lots of birds in the botanical gardens; and the legendary Bourda Cricket Ground.



DAY 10

By bus and ferry to Paramaribo, Suriname.

Departing Georgetown by minibus along a coastal road wending eastwards towards the Corentyne river, which forms the frontier between Suriname and Guyana; a region of sugarcane and rice plantations, threaded by canals (built by the Dutch to drain the low-lying land, and to access the cane for market).

Cross the estuary by ferry and continue by road, hugging the coast to Paramaribo. Suriname was Dutch territory, and modern-day Paramaribo has inherited not only the language, and the attractive clapboard architecture, but also its melting pot of cultures. Thousands of indentured labourers were shipped in from the Dutch East Indies to work the plantations, and they brought their Indonesian cuisine with them, as well as their religion: mosques are a common sight, and the largest in Paramaribo is right next to the synagogue.

DAYS 11-12

Excursion of Suriname and Crommewijne river.

There is an included excursion on the Suriname and Crommewijne river. You will spot local seabirds en route to visit one of the former plantations and the open air museum at New Amsterdam, which will give you a fascinating insight into Suriname's former colonial history. Spend the rest of the time at leisure.



DAY 13

Bus and boat to Kourou, in French Guiana.

Depart by bus towards Albina, and another river border, the Caroni. From here shuttle canoes make the short trip across to St Laurent, in French Guiana, once the receiving station for new inmates bound for the notoriously brutal penal colony maintained by France until the mid-20th century. Continue on a smart paved road to Kourou.

Guiana is a département of France. They send deputies to parliament, the currency is the euro, its citizens are members of the EU and enjoy the full protection of the French labour law. It's expensive: lots of things are imported from France. Kourou is home to many of France's top scientists and astrophysicists, because this is the base of the Ariane space rocket programme.

DAY 14

Excursion to Iles du Salut, and the erstwhile penal colony.



Full-day excursion to the former penal colony on the Iles du Salut. The archipelago lies about an hour out into the Caribbean and consists of 3 islands: Ile Royale, Ile St Joseph and Devil's Island. The cells, guards' quarters and administration blocks on Ile Royale have been converted into accommodation and dining facilities, and there's an excellent small museum that recounts the history of the place, and the privations that both the convicts and the guards had to endure. There's a small church, the remains of a hospital, and a cemetery with memorials to the prison staff. At Ile St Joseph work is underway to clear the jungle from many more of the prison cells.

DAY 15

Excursion to the Centre Spatial; drive to Cayenne.



A morning excursion to the Centre Spatial, where there is a fascinating museum, and there may be an opportunity for a tour of the space centre itself. Depart by road for Cayenne, French Guiana's main city. It's a hotchpotch of building styles, some glorious belle époque, others more modern and on the shabby side. This is a pleasant place to spend some time; sipping a cold drink in one of the bars in the Place des Palmistes, you could almost be on the Riviera. The busy market is worth a visit, and there is a footpath up to the remains of the old fort that overlooks the town.

DAY 16

Depart for international flight or extension.

UK clients arrive home the following day.

INCLUDED EXCURSIONS

- Rio de Janeiro: city tour including Sugarloaf and Corcovado Mountain
- Excursions at Rock View and Atta
- Kaieteur Falls
- Georgetown: city tour
- Paramaribo: river cruise
- Kourou Space Station
- Iles du Salut

ESSENTIALS

The Coq of the Rock Journey is guaranteed to be a thrilling off-the-beaten track adventure, and will take you to places where very few other tourists visit. However, it's important from the outset to be fully aware of the nature of the trip.

Although we've run the trip more than a dozen times, transport; accommodation and infrastructure do still present a number of practical difficulties. Things do go wrong; short bus rides will turn into marathons; border crossings and immigration bureaucracy will frustrate. Air and land transport is intended for local people, who often don't have the rigid timetables we are accustomed to live by in our world.

On top of this, it is hot and some of the days have early starts and long days of travel, so there will be some tiring days, but this is part of the nature of travel in such an undeveloped region. Accommodation is no frills in some areas, and 'day-to-day' itineraries do occasionally have to be seen as a guide to intentions rather than cast-iron promises of what the future holds: the best example of this being the European Space Centre, which we aim to visit on every trip, though in the event of a launch schedules can change at a moment's notice, and are completely beyond our control.

We've considered making the trip more comfortable, however we feel that by doing so we risk losing some of what makes the trip memorable: that heady mix of excitement and adventure in visiting an area so few get to experience. If you don't relish that, please don't book this trip.

On this tour, you'll be accompanied from start to finish by one of our exceptional Journey Latin America tour leaders. From the moment you land in Latin America until the day the tour ends they will deal with all the practicalities, expertly adapting to the circumstances and individual needs of the group. Rather than different guides in different cities, your leader will get to know the group and keep you informed and entertained as you go.

To find out more about how our group tours including group sizes, solo travellers and why to choose us. Please click **here**.

TRAVELLING ALONE

There is no extra cost for single travellers who are willing to share a room. You will be accommodated with another same-sex member of the group who is also travelling solo. For single travellers who wish to have their own room there are a limited number of single rooms available, which carry a surcharge but you may be asked to share for a few nights when the accommodation is particularly restricted.

TRANSPORT

2 flights; 5 land journeys (longest 13 hrs but this includes one of the ferries and the border formalities); 2 sea crossings; 2 river ferries.

ACCOMMODATION

For this tour we aim to use good quality, value-for-money accommodation, in a mix of larger more modern, smaller family run hotels and lodges. All the properties we use are well maintained and rooms will have a private bathroom.
The focus of these trips is on getting outside, seeing the sights, and experiencing local restaurants and cafes, therefore a few hotels may not have evening dining facilities.

- Rio de Janeiro: Windsor Copa
- Boa Vista: Hotel Uiramutam
- Guyanese Interior: Rock View and Atta Lodge
- Georgetown: El Dorado Inn
- Paramaribo: Eco Torarica
- Kourou: Hotel Atlantis
- Cayenne: Hotel Amazonia

These hotels are subject to change and are dependent on availability. Address and contact details will be sent out with your final documents.

MEALS

Breakfast daily; full board days 4,5,6 and 7.

SUMMARY OF NIGHTS

16 days, 15 nights: Rio de Janeiro 2, Boa Vista 1, Atta rainforest 2, Rock View 2, Georgetown 2, Paramaribo 3, Kourou 2, Cayenne 1.

OPTIONAL EXCURSIONS

Due to the nature of this tour there are a only a handful of optional excursions available.

MONEY

Take cash in US$ (and for French Guiana, euros) up to the total limit your insurance will allow. Travellers' cheques are difficult to cash. ATMs which give access to cash are available in cities, but it's worth having plastic for both Visa and Mastercard. Tell your bank in advance where and when you're going. We recommend a daily budget of $35-40 USD per person per day to cover the cost of meals and daily expenses including tips and taxes.

VISAS

British passport holders (and almost all others) will need an e-visa for Suriname. We will send details of how to apply nearer the date of travel.

Holders of a full British passport do not require a visa for the other countries, although passports must be valid for at least 6 months after the trip begins. Clients with a different nationality enquire or check with the relevant consulate.

APIS and ESTA – important flight information:
ESTA – if flying to the US, or via the US you will need to fill in your application to ESTA online.
This costs $14 per person. This must be done by you personally.

Passports must also be machine-readable (MRP). Avoid locking suitcases if transiting the USA, as their customs authorities retain the right to break into them.
APIS – Many countries now oblige airlines to provide additional information about passengers prior to the flight departure. This Advance Passenger Information (APIS) must be supplied to us promptly in order to issue tickets and avoid fare increases. We will provide the airlines with the relevant details if we are booking your international flights. If the information is not provided you may be denied boarding.

INSURANCE

Travel insurance is essential. Details of our recommended policy can be found on our Travel Insurance page.

CLIMATE

The Journey enters 4 countries, but we travel within a fairly thin band between 10 and 5 degrees N of the equator. So it's tropical, i.e. hot and humid throughout. Along the Caribbean coasts of Guyana, Suriname and French Guiana, October is statistically one of the driest months in the year.

Cayenne's annual rainfall is over 3,600mm, but October's is 74mm – i.e. only 1/60 of the yearly total. But it's all tropical – it can rain anytime, often in short and very heavy bursts.

VACCINATIONS

Preventative jabs or tablets are recommended for: malaria, typhoid, polio, tuberculosis, tetanus and hepatitis A. Consult your local GP, or health clinic – he or she will probably refer you to the NHS fitfortravel website.

Take precautions against being bitten -by applying insect repellent, especially in the evenings out of cities. A valid yellow fever certificate or official doctor's note stating why you cannot be vaccinated must be produced when crossing some borders, so it is essential that these are carried. There are several brands of gel or foam which can be used for washing your hands where no clean water is available.

CLOTHING AND SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

Clothing should be casual and comfortable – plenty of light cotton (or light-weight wicking fabric which controls perspiration and dries quickly). Light colours are beneficial against sun and bugs. Dark clothes attract mosquitoes.

For wildlife viewing, the best colours to wear are pastel tones, like brown, beige and green, which don't highlight your silhouette in the landscape and camouflage you in foliage. Avoid strong colours like yellow, bright blue and red.

Shorts and short-sleeve shirts should be avoided in the evenings, especially away from cities. Air-conditioning in rooms and restaurants is the closest you'll get to being cold, so a light sweater or "layers" will suffice.

Other items worth packing are: Swim suit and towel, sun hat, trainers, lightweight raincoat, Insect repellent, sun tan lotion, sunglasses and torch.

For some excursions to the jungle and/or local flights you may be restricted to a maximum baggage allowance of 10kg (owing to limited space on light aircraft). In addition, some of the mini buses we use have limited baggage space.

A backpack or soft holdall (ideally with some degree of waterproofing) is the most comfortable way to carry your belongings, along with a small day-use backpack (25-40l capacity).

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GET IN TOUCH WITH US...

Our friendly, knowledgeable team of travel experts are always happy to chat about holiday ideas and share helpful advice. Give us a call today and begin planning your perfect trip to Latin America.

0208 747 8315

OPENING HOURS

Monday – Friday: 9am – 6pm
Saturday & Sunday: Closed

SEND US AN EMAIL

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