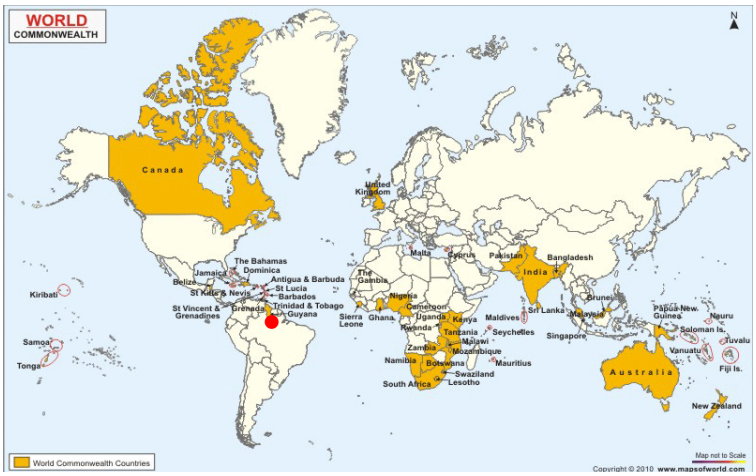
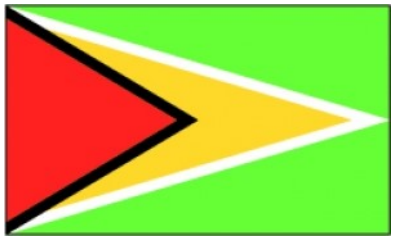
Guyana

Joined the Commonwealth 1966 – visited by the Queen in 1994





Guyana is a South American nation bordering the Caribbean Sea

Pop: (2012) 795,000 Capital: Georgetown Area: 214,970 sq km

Much of Guyana's coastal belt is below sea level yet this is where 90% of its population lives and where the important cash crops of sugar and rice are grown. A series of dykes and canals protects the land from the sea. The hilly and remote interior is covered with dense tropical rainforest (77% of the land area) and is among the most ecologically valuable and best preserved in the world. Savanna grassland is found in the far south.

Guyana is a land of many massive rivers such as the Demerara (which gives its name to the sugar grown in the region) and the Essequibo. These are not easily navigable, so contact with the interior is mainly by air. This area is important for gold, diamonds and bauxite mining.

The tropical climate brings high temperatures and humidity. Wildlife includes tapirs, jaguars and ocelots while the giant anaconda (water boa) is found in the rivers. Tourism is not yet well established.

St George's Cathedral, Georgetown, one of the highest wooden churches in the world at 43.5m, was completed in 1899