

TRAVELERS' GUIDE
FRENCH GUIANA TRIPS

VISIT TO THE LAND OF
WATER AND SPACE

GUIDED TOUR OF FRENCH GUIANA & EUROPE'S SPACEPORT



YOUNG ESA
NEWCOMERS & SOCIAL EVENTS

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1. WHO LIVES IN FRENCH GUIANA?

When we go to the street market in Cayenne, we will probably witness the richest ethnic diversity of our entire trip. If we pay good attention to the languages spoken around us, within a couple of hours we can easily hear Creole (the Guianese and Haitian varieties), Portuguese, Mandarin, Hmong (spoken by those who immigrated from Laos), Spanish, Dutch and its derived Maroon dialects, and of course French, the official language. Those speaking all these languages are not tourists but locals who have settled in the area over the course of history. Languages more difficult to hear are the American Indian ones, since that group today represents less than 4% of the population and tends to live in its own villages, away from the larger towns.

Although we will be paying our purchases in Euros, we will not feel at all in Europe. The majority of the population has never been to continental Europe, and only half of them were born in French Guiana. Today's largest immigrant groups come from Brazil, Suriname and Haiti. The population has doubled in the past 20 years, reaching today 300.000 inhabitants, plus an undetermined number of non-censored immigrants.

The population is very young (almost half is under the age of 25) and the fertility rate is 3.6, doubling that of metropolitan France. Nevertheless, French Guiana, with a surface area about that of Portugal, remains scarcely populated with an average of less than 4 inhabitants per square kilometre. Since half of the total population lives in Cayenne and its suburbs, we will have the impression of a highly populated area, compared with the rainforest and river areas.

French Guiana has more than 1000 km of natural river borders with its neighbours Suriname and Brazil. Despite the high rates of regional migration, there is no road bridge connecting to the western neighbour of Suriname. The first bridge connecting to Brazil was built in the late 90's over the Oyapock river but remained closed to only be inaugurated in 2017.

The main economic partner remains metropolitan France, with its government providing significant subsidies and giving employment to many civil servants. The largest single employer in French Guiana is the City of Cayenne, with almost 1.500 employees for a population of some 60.000. The main economic sectors are fishing, timber, gold mining and the Space Centre in Kourou, which employs close to 1.500 people and represents almost 20% of the economy.

You can read more on:

- The history and economy of French Guiana [here](#)
- On the daily news (in French) [here](#) or watch the TV news [here](#)

2. CULTURAL AWARENESS

When visiting French Guiana, despite being a French territory, cultural preparedness is essential. This region offers a unique blend of indigenous, African, and European influences. Participants should understand local behaviours may differ significantly from Western norms. Flexibility and tolerance are crucial, as not all customs align with our expectations.

Light clothing is culturally accepted both for women and men.

Embrace your cultural sensitivity!!

3. WHO LIVES AT THE SPACEPORT?

In fact, no one is supposed to “live” on the Guiana Space Centre (CSG)’s premises, although some operations such as launch countdowns require some employees to work at odd times in the night or during weekends.

Most of the 1500 employees of CSG live in Kourou, and some in other towns such as Cayenne or Sinnamary. The largest employers are CNES and Ariane Group/Arianespace, but there are a total of over 20 different employers from ESA Member States. The ESA Office at CSG employs some 10 people.



For safety reasons, CSG occupies since the 1960's a large area of almost 700 square Kilometres with restricted access. This has favoured a high biodiversity of fauna and flora that is regularly monitored by specialized research groups. It is not uncommon to spot this snake or these jaguars when driving across CSG. Many animals show more

activity at night, as you can see on this [video composition of night cameras](#) inside the Spaceport.

July 2024 saw the successful maiden launch of Ariane 6, and September saw the launch of ESA's Sentinel 2C with a Vega vehicle.

The recent launch of Vega-C carried ESA's Sentinel 1-C spacecraft for Europe's Copernicus Earth Observation constellation. See some reports and videos [here](#).

New projects are underway to maintain the spaceport as a state-of-the-art facility and to increase its safety and sustainability.

One of them involves the production of "green hydrogen" with a new photovoltaic farm and a biomass power plant. A completely new mission control centre is also under construction, with a more centralized and digital operations coordination network. A new launch complex is being customised for microlaunchers such as [PLD's Miura 5 launcher](#). The former Soyuz launch complex is repurposed to launch [Maia Space vehicles](#).

More on everyday life at CSG is published regularly on the [Spaceport's website](#).

4. WEATHER AND CLIMATE



During the day: **Warm (+27 to +32° C)**. At night, **always above 24° C**.

Always humid (around 90%).

Daily showers are to be expected during the rainy season from December to February, and heavier rain from April to July.

It is **highly recommended to wear sun protection and a sun cap** when staying in the sun for extended periods and especially when on the water (river canoe, boat to Devil's islands).

5. HEALTH AND WELL BEING

Having organised more than 20 group trips to French Guiana, we know that travellers may occasionally feel unwell. The most common symptoms are:

- **Fatigue** and adaptation to the local climate (hot and humid with up to 30 deg. Celsius and 90% humidity): best prevention is to **drink water** and try to sleep at least 7 hours per night. Dress with comfortable clothes: **cotton, linen or "quick dry"** are good options. It is not recommended to wear jeans. Flowy, loose clothes keep you fresher than those sticking to your skin. "Tank tops", shorts and polo or T-shirts are also good options.
- **Sunburn**: wearing a hat and using sunscreen when outdoors, especially when on the water, are the best preventive measures.
- **Traveller's diarrhoea**: Fortunately, it usually isn't serious in most people — it's just unpleasant. Make sure that you drink bottled water and eat well-cooked dishes.
- **Sore throat** sometimes caused by the air conditioning in the vans or hotels: consider packing "Propolis" pills. Our travel pharmacy will also have some.

Compared to the above risks, those caused by mosquitoes or other tropical animals are very low. Concerning Malaria prophylaxis, most doctors do **not** prescribe any. **We recommend that you ask your doctor or your travel vaccination centre** and mention the regions of French Guiana that you will be visiting, which are all along the coast and far from the borders with Brazil or Suriname: a) Cayenne, b) Roura, c) Kourou, d) Salvation Islands (also called Devil's Islands.)

If you wear contact lenses, note that related hygiene precautions are even more important in a hot and humid climate:

- Wearing lenses can cause eye infection (conjunctivitis, etc.)
- Wash your hands with soap and water and dry them with a towel before touching contact lenses.
- Clean the lenses according to the manufacturer's instructions with a cleaning solution.
- Rub contact lenses with clean fingers, then rinse with solution before dipping them.
- Do not rinse or store contact lenses in water (tap water or water sterile).
- Do not shower, swim, use a hot tub, or do anything where water comes into contact with the eyes when wearing lenses.
- Do not sleep with daily lenses.
- Never place contact lenses in the mouth to moisten them. Saliva is not a sterile solution.

Please read the section below on **Preventing mosquito bites**, with important information.

If you experience fever in the first months after returning from your trip, you should advise your doctor that you have been to French Guiana, so that the appropriate malaria test can be prescribed.

Another risk not to be overlooked in French Guiana is that of road accidents, mostly caused by drunk driving at night or during weekends.

Travel insurance is required due to the remoteness of French Guiana. It ensures coverage for medical needs, emergency evacuation, and unexpected travel disruptions.

Comprehensive and reliable travel insurance can be purchased online from AXA, Allianz or similar insurance companies. The appropriate time for your purchase is immediately before cancellation fees start.

6. DRINKING WATER

- **In urban areas and hotels, water from the tap is safe unless otherwise indicated. Nevertheless, we advise to only drink bottled water.**
- **Your refillable bottle is an important item in the packing list. The tour guides will provide sufficient water tanks in the vans for as many refills as needed.**

7. PREVENTING MOSQUITO BITES

Although there is a very low risk of Malaria, Dengue or Zika, and there are very few mosquitoes at most of the places visited, it is always safe to prevent mosquito bites.

At sunset and sunrise, use mosquito repellent and wear long pants and long sleeves. **A small-size spray of “tropical” repellent will suffice for the entire trip.**

On exceptional excursions such as wildlife watching on Guatemala road, double pants may be helpful for extra protection. White fabric colours tend to be less attractive to mosquitoes than dark ones.



8. DRIVING



If you have volunteered as a driver or a navigator/co-pilot, please read this section carefully.

Based on the list of volunteers, confirmed drivers and co-pilots will receive a detailed briefing a few weeks before the trip. The briefing will include the items described in this section.

Drive safely and always respect the speed limits- there are hidden radars!

Whenever you see a sign indicating the start of an urban area with the name of the town, your speed should not exceed 50 km/h. Speed limit on interurban roads is 80 km/h.

Rental contract signature at your arrival can take some time. To shorten this time, a copy of your drivers' license will be forwarded to our car rental company in French Guiana. To speed things even further, we suggest that you delegate to a friend the collection of your luggage upon arrival (you may send them a picture of your luggage for easier recognition in the WhatsApp group). This will allow you to go straight through customs and start the car rental procedures while the group is collecting the luggage.

A good app to have local maps available even without cellular network is <https://maps.me> - **We recommend that you all install it on your smartphone.**

Main Drivers: when receiving the keys to your vehicle at the airport, you will be asked to sign a contract as driver and to show your driver licence and credit card.

Please check the state and take pictures of your vehicle before letting your passengers in, including the state of the spare tire (an important item in French Guiana!), and let us know if you see any damage.

Please drive with extreme care, included when parking. **Please** always respect the speed limits! We had unpleasant surprises in the past, with speeding fines being sent weeks or even months after our trip.

You will only get one key - please take good care of it, especially when packing and unpacking and when boarding canoes / sleeping in the forest etc.

At each group departure, please **check the number of passengers and give us a sign with the total number of people in your vehicle**, so that we know we are not leaving anyone behind.

When arriving at any given destination, please make sure all your passengers have understood when and where to meet for the next ride.

For some specific departures, we will have to check that everyone is properly dressed, has returned the hotel keys, or is carrying their ID document. We will be reminding you of the details in due course!

We will send you separately the Google Maps coordinates of each destination.

Each van will get bottled water, so that passengers can refill their own bottles.

Please let your tour guide know if you are running short of water, or short of fuel.

Most of our driving routes will be within cellular network coverage. For the roads without coverage, we will pay special attention to watch the vehicle behind us and make sure we do not “loose” it.

The vehicles should be clean and with full tank when returned at the airport.

Drive safely and always respect the speed limits (50 km/h in urban areas, and 80 km/h elsewhere)- there are hidden radars!



Source: <https://la1ere.francetvinfo.fr/Amiet>

Accident mortel du 4 août 2023 sur la RN1, les secours en action - ©Guyane la 1ère

Partager :



La vitesse, l'alcool et les stupéfiants sont toujours les causes principales des accidents de la route en Guyane. Pour cette année 2023, il n'y pas eu de véritables améliorations par rapport à l'année dernière et on déplore le décès de 30 personnes.

Catherine Lama - Publié le 21 décembre 2023 à 13h49

9. EATING AND DRINKING



Here is a brief description published by worldtravelguide.net that we think is quite accurate:

You can eat well in French Guiana, with a wide range of culinary options on offer, which combines local and international cuisine and reflects the country's diverse cultural mix.

Unsurprisingly, French food predominates, particularly bread and pastries, with some excellent patisseries in Cayenne. Other influences include Vietnamese, Chinese, Creole and Indonesian. Fish and seafood are plentiful, and exotic game from the forests is popular in traditional stews (see below). As elsewhere in South America, typical staples are rice, beans, yucca and sweet potatoes.

Rum and locally produced firewater called *tafia*, are the favoured spirits, with light lager the most popular beer. French wine is also available, though very expensive.

Specialties:

Bouillon d'aoura: Smoked fish, crab, prawns, vegetables and chicken, served with aoura, the fruit of savanna trees.

Forest game: A wide range of animals, including collared peccary, paca and tapir are hunted as game. These are usually eaten as a fricassee and are accompanied by rice and kidney beans.

Couac: Grated and dried yucca, served as a side dish.

Boucanage: Meat or fish cooked in banana plant leaves.

Blaff: Spicy fish chowder, often eaten at breakfast.

Ti' Punch: A traditional aperitif of lime, sugar cane syrup and rum usually accompanied by cod rolls and black pudding.

Planter: Rum cocktail, mixed with sugar and fruit juice.

Kalou: Spicy dish of smoked fish, with collard greens.

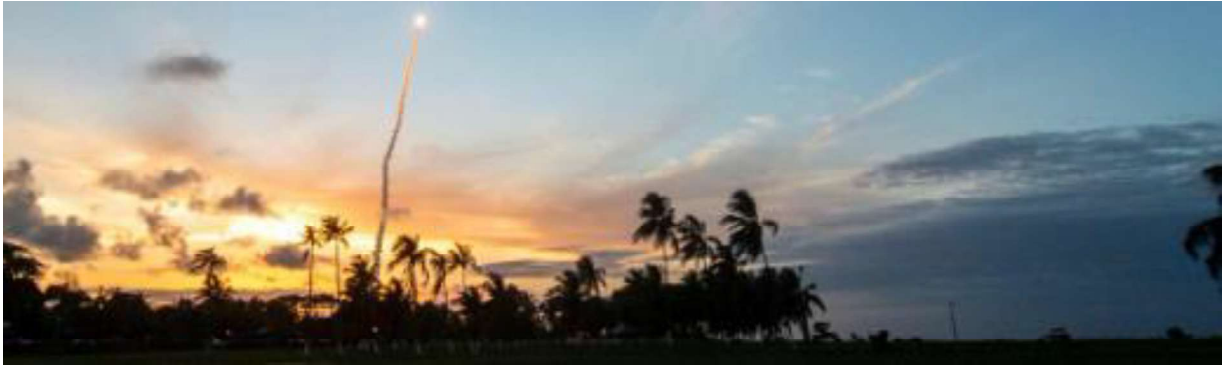
Roti: Bread, fried in oil and eaten dipped into stews.

Doku: Creamy dessert made of mashed corn, with cinnamon and brown sugar.

You will have the occasion to discover different fruits and tastes at the local markets!

The local restaurants are not the best prepared for vegetarian and vegan cuisine, but they do try to accommodate our requirements as you indicated in your online questionnaire. We thank you in advance for your flexibility and understanding if menu choices are limited in some locations, especially in remote areas of the forest.

Please read the Drinking Water section above with important information.



10.LANGUAGES

All travel information, briefings and guided tours will be in English. Occasionally, our guide will speak French and we will arrange for translation. The official language in French Guiana, including at the Spaceport, is French.

11.TIME-ZONE

During the European Summer Time (CEST), local time in French Guiana (UTC-3) is 5 (five) hours behind Central Europe (CEST = UTC+2).

During the European Winter time (CET), local time in French Guiana (UTC-3) is 4 (four) hours behind Central Europe (CET = UTC+1).

GETTING READY FOR YOUR TRIP



12.IMPORTANT THINGS TO DO

To be allowed onboard the flight to Cayenne, **you will be required to show a proof of vaccination against Yellow Fever**. Unless you were already vaccinated once (in which case it is valid for your lifetime), you should plan to take the vaccination at the latest 10 days before your trip. It is highly advisable that you check if you need any vaccination refresher (tetanus, hepatitis B or other).

Regarding the risk of Malaria, your vaccination centre may ask you details on the regions of French Guiana where you will be staying. These will all be along the coast and are “low Malaria risk areas”: Kourou, Cayenne, Roura and Devil’s Islands. For this region, doctors do **not** recommend taking any Malaria prophylaxis to most travellers. In any case, **it is your doctor who can best advise you**.

We recommend that you start now making an appointment with a travel vaccinations centre and schedule your vaccination against yellow fever (see more details in the following section).

Remember that you should **arrive in Paris the day before your flight to Cayenne**, to make sure that you do not miss your overseas flight. Convenient hotel options at Orly Airport are suggested in the following section.

Your ticket to Paris and your accommodation for the night prior to your flight to Cayenne are of your responsibility.

Your ticket includes allowance for one check-in suitcase of up to 23 kg, plus one carry-on bag of up to 12 kg. We recommend that you try to pack lightly but sufficiently, as we will be changing accommodation (i.e. packing and packing again) as many as four times during the trip!

13. COMPULSORY DOCUMENTS & VACCINES

Please note that French Guiana is part of the European Union but is NOT part of the Schengen area. Special rules apply to visitors, as follows:

A. Visa, Passport, National ID Card: Nationals of the European Union or the European Economic Area (EEA) traveling to French Guiana for tourism purposes and staying less than 90 days do not need a visa. Citizens of the European Union can enter French Guiana with a valid **passport, or a valid National Identity Card issued less than 10 years before the date of travel. For more details and for non-EU or non-EEA citizens, please check:** <https://www.service-public.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/F10610?lang=en>

B. Certificate of vaccination against yellow fever (as a hard copy or a scan in your smartphone). If you do not have this vaccination yet, you should take it at the latest 10 days before your travel. Please contact a travel vaccination centre near your home. The vaccination is valid for your entire life independently of the date when you were vaccinated. You will be requested to show your international vaccination card when checking in for your flight at Orly Airport.

If you are in the Leiden area, these two centres specialize in travel vaccinations:

- LUMC Vaccinatiepolikliniek: <https://www.vaccinatiepolilumc.nl/afspraken-maken/>
- GGD Vaccinaties op reis: <https://www.ggdreisvaccinaties.nl/land/frans-guyana>

C. Routine vaccines: Make sure you are up to date on routine vaccines before your trip. For more information, visit https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/french-guiana?s_cid=ncezid-dgmq-travel-single-001

COVID vaccination is recommended, to reduce the risk of having to cancel or to interrupt your trip.

D. Electronic flight ticket: you will receive your tickets by email about one week before departure. You can then check-in online if you wish.

E. Means of payment: please check with your bank that your credit card will be operating in French Guiana. Some 400 Euros in cash should be sufficient for your “own expense” meals, extra drinks and a few souvenirs.

F. Travel Insurance: a good policy should cover overseas medical costs including repatriation, cancellation costs, travel delays, luggage and personal items protection.

14.GETTING TO PARIS



Joining the group in Paris:

- To avoid missing the flight to Cayenne, it is strongly recommended that all travellers plan for an arrival to Paris on the **day before** the flight to Cayenne.

Joining from North America:

- Although counterintuitive, traveling via Paris is faster and cheaper than via the Caribbean.

Staying in Paris:

- It is strongly advised to arrive to Paris on the day before your flight to Cayenne.
- Two hotels are conveniently located directly at the Orly airport, at walking distance from Terminal 4:
 - Hotel IBIS Orly Airport at Coeur d'Orly - F-93310 Orly -E-mail: H1413@accor.com - <https://all.accor.com/hotel/1413/index.en.shtml>
 - Hotel IBIS Budget Orly Airport - F-93310 Orly - E-mail: H6917@accor.com <https://all.accor.com/hotel/6917/index.en.shtml>

When should I book my travel to Paris?

We recommend booking your travel to Paris once you have paid the full balance for your French Guiana trip.

When should I purchase travel insurance?

We strongly recommend purchasing comprehensive travel insurance as soon as cancellation fees start to apply. This ensures you are protected from the early stages of your booking.

Please refer to the Terms & Conditions on our website for details regarding cancellation fees.

15. WHAT SHOULD I PACK?



Baggage: the flight tickets include free carriage of one piece of checked baggage of **max. 23 kg**, and one piece of hand baggage of max. 12 kg (dimensions up to 55 x 35 x 25 cm).

The program does not include long walks with all the luggage. Thus, a suitcase or a large travel backpack (40/60L) are both OK.

In addition to items A. to E. listed above, the following items are highly recommended:

- Your **European Health Insurance Card**, if you have one – see more information here:
<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=559&langId=en&videoId=2805&furtherVideos=yes>
- A few **FFP-2 facemasks**. These might be needed during the long-haul flights and in other occasions.
- A **re-fillable bottle for water (75cl to 1 liter capacity)**. **Isotonic** powder to rehydrate when needed.
- **Extra food for the flight Orly-Cayenne**, as the onboard snack may be too light for some people.
- Your smart phone and charger; your camera and charger. A power pack battery will be helpful in the forest.
- **Light clothes for hot and humid weather:** cotton, linen or "quick dry" are good options. Flowy, loose clothes keep you fresher than those sticking to your skin. "Tank tops", shorts and polo or T-shirts are also good options. One set per day is an advised minimum. Hiking or linen pants are a good option. **Shorts are fine for most of the activities, except for forest walks or the Spaceport visit.**
- In addition, **three sets of evening attire (with long sleeves and long pants) for the entire trip.**
- **Dress code when visiting the Guiana Space Centre:** for safety reasons, **men and women must wear long pants and closed shoes (no sandals, no skirts).** There will be no need for formal or business attire anytime.
- **Note that there will NOT be an opportunity for laundry during the stay.**
- Note that while most hotels will have hair dryers, forest camps do not nor do they have sufficient electric power for a hair dryer.

- A small backpack for personal items during visits and during the rainforest stays: we'll leave the bulk of our luggage at a base camp. **A 20 liter backpack will be sufficient as the longest overnight stay in the forest will be 48 hours long.**

Packing list for rainforest days:

Note that:

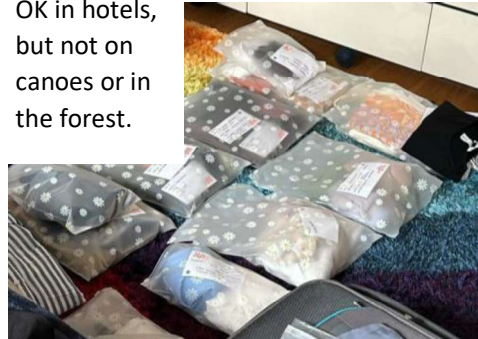
- Hammock, blanket, and mosquito net are provided by the organizers.
- Accommodation throughout the trip includes access to toilets and showers every day, including in the forest lodges, but tap water is not potable outside of the urban areas.
- Sufficient clothes for **48 hours** in the forest without access to your main suitcase.
- Basic toilet items and two small towels (**quick dry towels** are a good option).
- **Sun protection (cap, cream, sunglasses).**
- **A light raincoat. When on a canoe, your raincoat should cover also your small backpack.**
- **Mosquito repellent - recommended brands are "Cinq sur Cinq" or "DEET". However, check with your local pharmacist.**
- **Resealable plastic bags** such as **these**, to keep your clothes, camera etc dry in case of heavy rain or during canoeing trips. For your phone, **waterproof cases** are always safe.
- **Ear plugs** in case that you may find the forest noises (birds, monkeys, rain) uncomfortable for sleeping.
- Preventive and curing **medication for sea sickness** or dizziness. Motion sickness patches are a good option for boat activities. If you are sensitive to sore throat, consider packing "Propolis" pills.
- Binoculars can be helpful for bird watching.
- A simple **headlamp is highly recommended** for night walks in the forest, and for walking around the camps at night. See an example **here**.
- A swimsuit. A pair of long pants. Closed sports shoes, long socks and long pants will be needed for forest walks. During water activities such as canoeing or kayaking, swimsuit or shorts are both OK.
- Heavy boots will **not** be needed. Snorkelling gear is **not** used as the waters are not transparent.
- **Walking sandals or shoes that hold well to your foot and can go in the water. Indispensable for canoeing and river activities.** See examples **here** and **here**.
- **Flip flops or divers shoes are to be avoided on canoes or in the forest.**



Consider **packing your daily outfits in the resealable bags beforehand**. This will allow you to save time when packing and unpacking for the days without the main luggage.



OK in hotels,
but not on
canoes or in
the forest.



16. OUR FLIGHT ITINERARY



Departure from Paris Orly is on a Thursday, and arrival back in Paris on a Saturday morning, thus including 9 days and 8 nights in French Guiana. To avoid missing your intercontinental flight, it is **strongly recommended** that you plan for an arrival to Paris on the day before the flight to Cayenne.

On your return trip back home, it is safe to plan for a four-hour time of transit between your landing in Orly and your connecting train or flight from a different station in Paris.

Your flight tickets will be emailed about one week prior to travel.

A standard onboard meal plan is included with your ticket. You may order a special onboard meal at the latest 4 working days before your flight. If you want to order a vegetarian or another type of meal, Air Caraïbes special meals have an extra cost and are described here: <https://www.aircaraibes.com/en/before-travel/special-requests/meals>

You can place your meal order only until 4 working before the flight, and not afterwards, by sending an email to <frenchguianatrips.2020@gmail.com> with your desired meal.

It is NOT compulsory to check in online, and there is no extra charge if you check in at the airport.

Check-in online is possible from 47 hours before your flight but make sure that you print your baggage tag only at the airport when you drop-off your luggage at the counter. Alternatively, you can just do the check-in at the airport and print your baggage label there.

17.OUR PROGRAM OF ACTIVITIES

We are currently finalising the program and confirming reservations with several service providers, but we can already confirm that the program may include:

A one-to-two day AMAZONIAN RAINFOREST experience

Discovery of the primary forest on the Kaw mountain range, the Kaw Wetlands natural reserve and the Hmong village of Kaw.

Activities may include canoeing, swimming, sleeping in hammocks, fishing, forest walks, stargazing the unique equatorial night sky, observation of the wildlife during daylight and at night. When sleeping in hammocks, you will be in large groups under one roof, and not isolated.

Canoeing tour of the Kaw wetlands with its rich and diverse fauna and flora.

Visit of the traditional Sunday Market at Cacao, a South-East Asian village. Several thousand Hmong refugees left Laos in the 1970s and settled in French Guiana, where they found very similar climate and soil conditions to continue their agricultural occupations.

[For the overnight stays in the forest or wetlands, our main luggage will remain at a hotel or inside our vehicles in a safe car park.](#)

A full-day excursion to DEVIL's ISLANDS

Visit of Saint Joseph and Royale islands, with remnants of the penal colony where convicts were sent from the mid-19th to the mid-20th century. The Penal Colony inspired the Papillon novel and films. Today, the three islands belong to the Spaceport and host a launcher tracking facility. Opportunity for swimming, coconut eating and wildlife observation.

A one to one-and-a-half days visit of the GUIANA SPACE CENTRE (CSG), EUROPE'S SPACEPORT

The visit is sponsored by ESA, CNES and Arianespace. It includes briefings by officials at Jupiter Mission Control Centre. Depending on the day's operations and access restrictions, the guided tour may include the Ariane and Vega launch sites, a view of a launch vehicle or a spacecraft being processed for launch, the BEAP test stand for solid rocket motors, the Galliot Telemetry Station or the ESA-ESOC ground station at Diane.

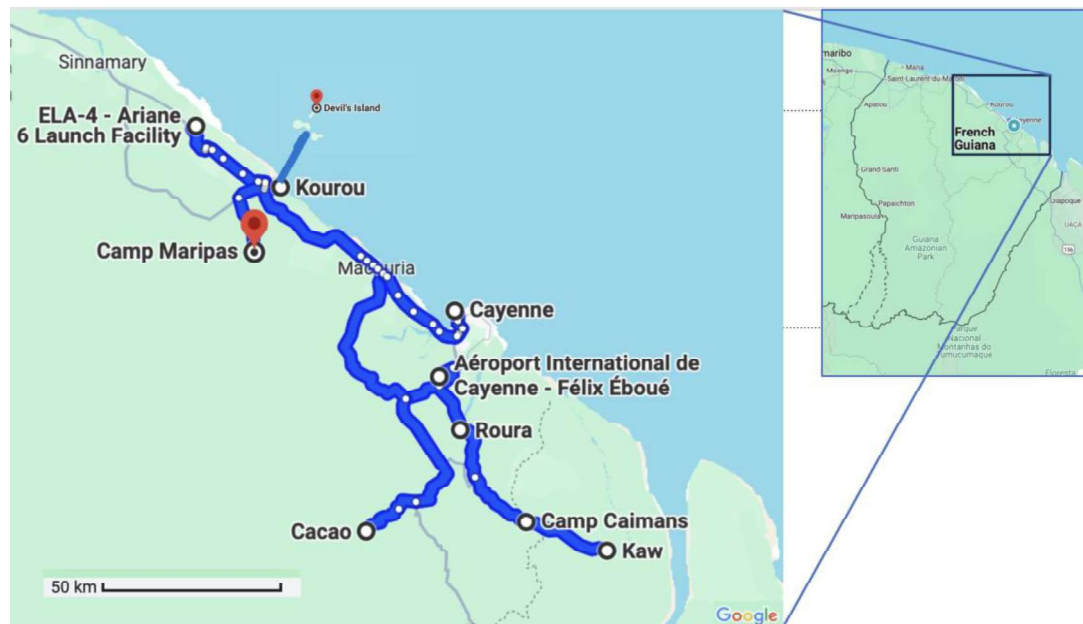
The programme includes opportunities for exchanges with colleagues working at the Spaceport.

A visit to downtown CAYENNE

The capital city of French Guiana, with its colonial centre, street market and souvenir shops.

The programme includes briefings on the living and working conditions in French Guiana, on the history of the Penal Colony and on the natural features of the visited places.

The following map indicates some of the locations that might be used during our tour.



Source: Google Maps. May 2024.

20 km

18.SLEEPING IN HAMMOCKS

Hammocks, blankets, and mosquito nets will be provided by the trip organizers. Laying on top of your blanket (i.e. the blanket placed between the hammock and you) is a good trick to avoid getting cold in the early hours of the morning.

Long pyjama pants and socks may also be necessary on some nights. If more comfortable for you, you may carry an inflatable pillow for hammock nights.

When sleeping in hammocks, you will be in large groups under one roof, and not isolated.

19.MONEY

The currency in French Guiana is the Euro. Major credit cards are accepted at hotels and large shops, but not in smaller shops and restaurants. **You will need some cash for a few “own cost” meals, your drinks at some meals, and small items like souvenirs. For these expenses, some 400 Euros in cash should be sufficient.**

Make sure you **check with your bank that your credit/debit card will work in French Guiana.** You may need to unblock it for international travel.

20. POWER SUPPLY

230 V, 50 Hz, like in most European countries.

[Plugs and sockets are the same as in France.](#)



21. TAKING PICTURES and FLYING a DRONE



You may take pictures anywhere, including inside the Spaceport, unless otherwise specified. As anywhere else, please ask foreign people for permission before taking a picture of themselves or their property. If you take a drone with you, make sure to ask for permission to use it on the properties, as flying drones may be restricted in certain areas.

The use of drones is possible on many locations, but you should check with your guides or hosts before using your drone. Their use is prohibited in urban areas, at the Spaceport, on Devil's Islands and at the Kaw wetlands natural reserve.

22. COMMUNICATION

Telecommunications in urban areas are of excellent quality. If your mobile phone has **roaming service**, you will probably be able to use it in French Guiana, but it is worth **checking with your phone company before your trip**. Most hotels have Internet service. Cabins and lodges 13 in the forest do not have cellular nor internet access, although they use satellite phones for emergency situations.

A few weeks before the trip, as soon as every traveller is fully confirmed, you will be invited to join a dedicated WhatsApp group to facilitate coordination prior and during the trip.

23. HOW TO BE REACHED WHILE IN FRENCH GUIANA?

Your mobile phone is the best option. Before your departure, please make sure with your phone operator that you have roaming service in French Guiana. The phone of the hotels where the group will stay, will be communicated to you in due course. While in the rainforest stays, the mobile network will most probably not be available.

24. EMERGENCIES AND PERSONAL SECURITY

A list of emergency phone numbers will be distributed on Day 1. We recommend that you purchase travel insurance to cover the risks of trip cancellation or postponement and providing remote medical advice during the trip.

While in French Guiana, it is advised to always remain with the group, especially at night, and not to exhibit expensive items or jewellery.

We strongly discourage you from walking alone in an area where you are unfamiliar, especially at night

Valuables and travel documents should not be left unattended inside the vehicles.

25. FIND OUT MORE

- ESA publications on the Guiana Space Centre: https://www.esa.int/Enabling_Support/Space_Transportation/Europe_s_Spaceport
- CNES website on the Guiana Space Centre: <https://centrespatialguyanais.cnes.fr/en>
- Arianespace facilities at the Spaceport: <https://www.arianespace.com/the-guiana-space-center/>
- Korpershoek, Karlijn: [How a Jungle Prison Became a Famous Spaceport ”](#) Supercluster, June 2023.
- The bridge between Brazil and French Guiana (in French). 2012: <https://vimeo.com/43175112>
- Kourou by drone, 2019: https://www.facebook.com/ville.kourou/videos/973527513032846/?story_fbid=2871216406256957&id=210636342314990&scmts=scwspstd

Previous Young ESA trip's videos:

- Young ESA teaser 2017 (1min 15"): <https://youtu.be/74YYTMKKLTU>
- Documentary on the October 2018 trip (23min): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d3qMDNRBVw>
- Documentary on the February 2022 trip (17min): [16min-documentary-FrGuiana-FEB2022.mov](#)
- Impressions from the September 2022 trip- (3min): [3min- Impressions- FrGuianaTrip-SEPT2022-V2.mov](#)

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