**Suriname Facts and Culture**

* [Family:](http://www.countryreports.org/country/Suriname/family.htm) For some groups child care is handled by one parent at a time. Children spend the first five to six years with... [More](http://www.countryreports.org/country/Suriname/family.htm)
* [Fashion:](http://www.countryreports.org/country/Suriname/fashion.htm) The Javanese women wear sarongs as they would in Indonesia. The creole women wear the traditional kotomisse, with an angisa... [More](http://www.countryreports.org/country/Suriname/fashion.htm)
* [Visiting:](http://www.countryreports.org/country/Suriname/visiting.htm) To not be considered rude, anyone visiting a friend is expected to visit everyone they know in the same neighborhood. [More](http://www.countryreports.org/country/Suriname/visiting.htm)

**Suriname Facts**

Suriname stats

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Capital  | Paramaribo  |
| Government Type  | constitutional democracy  |
| Currency  | SRD  |
| Population  | 566,846  |
| Total Area  | 63,251 Square Miles163,820 Square Kilometers  |
| Location  | Northern South America, bordering the North Atlantic Ocean, between French Guiana and Guyana  |
| Language  | Dutch (official), English (widely spoken), Sranang Tongo (Surinamese, sometimes called Taki-Taki, is native language of Creoles and much of the younger population and is lingua franca among others), Hindustani (a dialect of Hindi), Javanese  |

Map of Suriname



**Suriname Geography**

**Terrain and geography**

Suriname lies on the northeast coast of South America, bordered by French Guiana in the east, Brazil in the south, and by Guyana in the west. Most of the country's 220-mile shoreline on the Atlantic Ocean consists of mud flats and mangrove swamp. Parts of Suriname's boundaries with French Guiana and Guyana are in dispute.

Suriname has a land area of 63,000 square miles (163,000 sq. km.). Most Surinamers, however, live in the 1,900-square-mile narrow coastal plain about 50 KM wide in and around the major population centers of Paramaribo (250,000), Moengo and Nieuw Nickerie (38,000).

Suriname's coastal area is mostly flat. Hills and low mountains reach a maximum height of about 4,000 feet (1,230 meters) in the heavily forested interior. Between these two zones lie the savanna lands, 30-40 miles wide. Large rivers and streams flow through Suriname from south to north, emptying into the Atlantic Ocean. Although they provide major transportation routes between the coast and the interior, the number of rivers has proved a historical hindrance to east-west land transportation.

**Geography - note**

smallest independent country on South American continent; mostly tropical rain forest; great diversity of flora and fauna that, for the most part, is increasingly threatened by new development; relatively small population, mostly along the coast

**Suriname Geography**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Geographic Location  | South America  |
| Total Area  | 63,251 Square Miles163,820 Square Kilometers  |
| Land Area  | 60,232 Square Miles156,000 Square Kilometers  |
| Water Area  | 3,019 Square Miles7,820 Square Kilometers  |
| Land Boundaries  | 1,058 Miles1,703 Kilometers  |
| Irrigated Land  | 198 Square Miles512 Square Kilometers  |
| Border Countries  | Brazil 597 km, French Guiana 510 km, Guyana 600 km  |
| Coastline  | 240 Miles386 Kilometers  |
| Geographic Coordinates  | 4 00 N, 56 00 W  |
| Terrain  | mostly rolling hills; narrow coastal plain with swamps  |
| Highest Point  | 1,230 Meters  |
| Highest Point Location  | Juliana Top 1,230 m  |
| Lowest Point  | -2 Meters  |
| Lowest Point Location  | unnamed location in the coastal plain -2 m  |
| Natural Resources  | timber, hydropower, fish, kaolin, shrimp, bauxite, gold, and small amounts of nickel, copper, platinum, iron ore  |
| Time Zone  | UTC-3 (2 hours ahead of Washington, DC during Standard Time)  |

**Weather and Climate**

**Climate and Weather**

Suriname's climate is tropical, hot and humid year-round. Daytime temperatures in Paramaribo average 75°F to 90°F. Temperatures in the interior, not moderated by the steady coastal breezes, are generally higher.

Seasons are distinguished mainly by more or less rain, with annual rainfall averaging 87 inches. Indeed, locals will tell you that the four seasons of Suriname are: 1) Little Rainy Season (December to February); 2) Little Dry Season (March to April); 3) Big Rainy Season (May to August); and Big Dry Season (September to November). The hottest months of the year are September and October when temperatures average 90 ï¿½F (32 ï¿½C). Suriname lies outside hurricane and earthquake zones. Parts of Paramaribo experience heavy flooding. Isolated flooding occurs on some city streets and in low-lying areas of Paramaribo for up to 24 hours at a time.

**Suriname Environmental Issues**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Climate  | Suriname's climate is tropical, hot and humid year-round. Daytime temperatures in Paramaribo average 75°F to 90°F. Temperatures in the interior, not moderated by the steady coastal breezes, are generally higher. Seasons are distinguished mainly by more or less rain, with annual rainfall averaging 87 inches. Indeed, locals will tell you that the four seasons of Suriname are: 1) Little Rainy Season (December to February); 2) Little Dry Season (March to April); 3) Big Rainy Season (May to August); and Big Dry Season (September to November). The hottest months of the year are September and October when temperatures average 90 ï¿½F (32 ï¿½C). Suriname lies outside hurricane and earthquake zones. Parts of Paramaribo experience heavy flooding. Isolated flooding occurs on some city streets and in low-lying areas of Paramaribo for up to 24 hours at a time.  |
| Terrain  | mostly rolling hills; narrow coastal plain with swamps  |
| Natural Resources  | timber, hydropower, fish, kaolin, shrimp, bauxite, gold, and small amounts of nickel, copper, platinum, iron ore  |
| Natural Hazards  | NA  |
| Irrigated Land  | 198 Square Miles512 Square Kilometers  |
| Environmental Issues  | deforestation as timber is cut for export; pollution of inland waterways by small-scale mining activities  |
| Environment - International Agreements  | party to: Biodiversity, Climate Change, Climate Change-Kyoto Protocol, Desertification, Endangered Species, Law of the Sea, Marine Dumping, Ozone Layer Protection, Ship Pollution, Tropical Timber 94, Wetlands, Whaling signed, but not ratified: none of the selected agreements  |

**Suriname Population Details**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Population  | 566,846  |
| Population Growth Rate  | 1.15%  |
| Urban Population  | 69.7%  |
| Population in Major Urban Areas  | PARAMARIBO (capital) 278,000  |
| Nationality Noun  | Surinamer(s)  |
| Nationality Adjective  | Surinamese  |
| Ethnic Groups  | Hindustani (also known locally as ""East Indians""; their ancestors emigrated from northern India in the latter part of the 19th century) 37%, Creole (mixed white and black) 31%, Javanese 15%, ""Maroons"" (their African ancestors were brought to the count  |
| Languages  | Dutch (official), English (widely spoken), Sranang Tongo (Surinamese, sometimes called Taki-Taki, is native language of Creoles and much of the younger population and is lingua franca among others), Hindustani (a dialect of Hindi), Javanese  |
| Rate of Urbanization- annual rate of change  |  |

**Suriname Medical Information**

Medical care, including emergency medical care, is limited in many areas and does not meet U.S. standards. There is one public emergency room in Paramaribo, and only a small ambulance fleet providing emergency transport with limited first response capabilities. The emergency room has no neurosurgeon, and other medical specialists may not always be available. In general, hospital facilities are not air conditioned, although private rooms with individual air conditioning are available at extra cost and on a space-available basis. Emergency medical care outside Paramaribo is limited, and is virtually non-existent in the interior of the country.

The yellow fever vaccine is recommended for all travelers over 9 months of age. Rabies risk is present; all dog and bat bites or scratches should be taken seriously and post-exposure prophylaxis sought. Insect precautions are recommended. Due to the presence of Schistosomiasis in some of the freshwater bodies, avoidance of freshwater exposure is recommended.

**Suriname Health Information**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Health Expenditures (% of GDP)  | 5.3%  |
| Death Rate/1,000 population  | 6.15  |
| Obesity- adult prevalence rate  | 25.1%  |
| Hospital Bed Density/1,000 population  | 3.1  |
| Physicians Density/1,000 population  | .91  |
| Infant Mortality Rate/1,000 population  | 27.99  |
| Infant Mortality Rate- Female/1,000 population  | 23.21  |
| Infant Mortality Rate- Male/1,000 population  | 32.54  |
| Underweight - percent of children under five years  | 5.8%  |
| Total Fertility Rate  | 2.04  |
| Contraceptive prevalance rate (female 15-49)  | 45.6%  |
| Maternal mortality rate per 100,000 live births  | 130  |
| HIV Adult Prevalence Rate  | 1%  |
| HIV Aids Deaths  | 100  |
| HIV Aids People Living With  | 3,700  |
| Drinking Water Source: unimproved  | 4.8%  |
| Drinking Water Source - percent of rural population improved  | 88.4%  |
| Drinking Water Source - percent of urban population improved  | 98.1%  |
| Sanitation Facility Access: unimproved  | 19.7%  |
| Sanitation Facility Access - percent of urban population improved  | 88.4%  |
| Sanitation Facitlity Access - percent of rural population improved  | 61.4%  |
| Major Infectious Diseases - degree of risk  | very high  |
| Food or Waterborne Disease (s)  | bacterial and protozoal diarrhea, hepatitis A, and typhoid fever  |
| Vectorborne Disease (s)  | dengue fever and malaria  |

**Suriname Crime**

**Crime Information**

Criminal activity throughout the country has shown a slight increase since September 2010 and travelers, including U.S. citizens, may be viewed as targets of opportunity. Burglary, armed robbery, and violent crime occur with some frequency in Paramaribo and in outlying areas. Pick-pocketing and robbery are common in the major business and shopping districts of the capital. Visitors should avoid wearing expensive or flashy jewelry and should not display large amounts of money in public.

There have been several reports of criminal incidents in the vicinity of the major tourist hotels. Night walks, outside the immediate vicinity of the hotels, are not recommended, especially if you are alone. Visitors should specifically avoid the Palm Garden area (“Palmentuin” in Dutch) after dark, as there is no police presence and it is commonly the site of criminal activity.

Theft from vehicles is infrequent, but does occur, especially in areas near the business district. Drivers are cautioned not to leave packages and other belongings in plain view in their vehicles. There have been a few reports of carjackings within Paramaribo, mainly in residential areas. When driving, car windows should be closed and doors locked. The use of public minibuses is discouraged, due to widespread unsafe driving and poor maintenance. Taxis in Suriname are not clearly identified; they do not display the “Taxi” sign. As there are no meters in the taxis, you should verify the price before entering the taxi. The Embassy recommends that you use hotel concierge taxis.

Travel to the interior is usually trouble-free, but there have been reports of tourists being robbed. Police presence outside Paramaribo is minimal, and banditry and lawlessness are occasionally of concern in the cities of Albina and Moengo, and the district of Brokopondo, as well as along the East-West Highway between Paramaribo and Albina, and the Afobakka Highway in the district of Para. There have been reports of attempted and actual carjackings committed by gangs along the East-West Highway. If you plan on traveling to the interior, you are advised to make use of well-established tour companies for a safer experience.

Don’t buy counterfeit and pirated goods, even if they are widely available. Not only are the bootlegs illegal in the United States, you may be breaking local law.

**Suriname Penalties for Crime**

**Criminal Penalties**

While you are traveling in Suriname, you are subject to its laws even if you are a U.S. citizen. Foreign laws and legal systems can be vastly different than our own. In Suriname you may be taken in for questioning if you don’t have your passport with you. In some places, it is illegal to take pictures of certain buildings, particularly government buildings. In some places driving under the influence could land you immediately in jail. If suspected of driving under the influence and caught in an accident, the Surinamese Police may not be able to measure the alcohol level on the scene; they will take you to the nearest medical center to measure blood alcohol content. You will be held by the police for up to six hours until the results of your blood alcohol content are determined.

There are also some things that might be legal in the country you visit, but still illegal in the United States. You can be prosecuted under U.S. law if you buy pirated goods. Engaging in sexual conduct with children or using or disseminating child pornography in Suriname is a crime, which is also prosecutable in the United States. If you break local laws in Suriname, your U.S. passport won’t help you avoid arrest or prosecution. It’s very important to know what’s legal and what’s not where you are going.

Based on the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations, bilateral agreements with certain countries, and customary international law, if you are arrested in Suriname, you have the option to request that the police, prison officials, or other authorities alert the nearest U.S. Embassy, which for Suriname is located in the capital city, Paramaribo.

**Suriname Life Expectancy**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Life Expectancy At Birth  | 71 Years  |
| Life Expectancy At Birth- Female  | 73 Years  |
| Life Expectancy At Birth- Male  | 69 Years  |
| Median Age (female)  | 28 Years  |
| Median Age (male)  | 27 Years  |
| Median Age  | 28 Year |

**Suriname Literacy**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Predominant Language  | Dutch (official), English (widely spoken), Sranang Tongo (Surinamese, sometimes called Taki-Taki, is native language of Creoles and much of the younger population and is lingua franca among others), Hindustani (a dialect of Hindi), Javanese  |
| Literacy Definition  | age 15 and over can read and write  |
| Literacy Female  | 84.1%  |
| Literacy Male  | 92.3%  |
| Literacy Total  | 89.6%  |

**Suriname Education**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Literacy - female  | 84.1%  |
| Literacy - male  | 92.3%  |
| Literacy - total population  | 89.6%  |
| Literacy Definition  | age 15 and over can read and write  |
| School Life Expectancy - female  | 13 Years  |
| School Life Expectancy - male  | 11 Years  |
| Total School Life Expectancy - (primary to tertiary)  | 12 Years  |

**Suriname Government**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Capital Name  | Paramaribo  |
| Country Name  | Suriname  |
| Local - Long  | Republiek Suriname  |
| Full Country Name  | Republic of Suriname  |
| Local - Short  | Suriname  |
| Government Type  | constitutional democracy  |
| Capital - geographic coordinate  | 5 50 N, 55 10 W  |
| Capital Time Difference  | UTC-3 (2 hours ahead of Washington, DC during Standard Time)  |
| National Holiday  | Independence Day, 25 November (1975)  |
| Constitution  | ratified 30 September 1987; effective 30 October 1987  |
| Legal System  | civil law system influenced by Dutch civil law; note - the Commissie Nieuw Surinaamse Burgerlijk Wetboek completed drafting a new civil code in February 2009  |
| Suffrage  | 18 years of age; universal  |

**Suriname Government and Politics**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Government Executive Branch  | chief of state: President Desire Delano BOUTERSE (since 12 August 2010); Vice President Robert AMEERALI (since 12 August 2010); note - the president is both the chief of state and head of government head of government: President Desire Delano BOUTERSE (since 12 August 2010); Vice President Robert AMEERALI (since 12 August 2010) cabinet: Cabinet of Ministers appointed by the president elections: president and vice president elected by the National Assembly or, if no presidential or vice presidential candidate receives a two-thirds constitutional majority in the National Assembly after two votes, by a simple majority in the larger United People's Assembly (893 representatives from the national, local, and regional councils), for five-year terms (no term limits); election last held on 19 July 2010 (next to be held in 2015) election results: Desire Delano BOUTERSE elected president; percent of vote - Desire Delano BOUTERSE 70.6%, Chandrikapersad SATOKHI 25.5%, other 3.9%  |
| Legislative Branch  | unicameral National Assembly or Nationale Assemblee (51 seats; members elected by popular vote to serve five-year terms)elections: last held on 25 May 2010 (next to be held in May 2015)election results: percent of vote by party - Mega Combination 45.1%, New Front 27.5%, A-Com 13.7%, People's Alliance 11.8%, DOE 1.9%; seats by party - Mega Combination 23, New Front 14, A-Com 7, People's Alliance 6, DOE 1  |
| Judicial Branch  | Cantonal Courts and a Court of Justice as an appellate court (justices are nominated for life); member of the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ)  |
| Regions or States  | 10 districts (distrikten, singular - distrikt); Brokopondo, Commewijne, Coronie, Marowijne, Nickerie, Para, Paramaribo, Saramacca, Sipaliwini, Wanica  |
| Political Parties and Leaders  | A-Combination (a coalition that includes the General Liberation and Development Party ABOP [Ronnie BRUNSWIJK], and SEEKA [Paul ABENA]); Basic Party for Renewal and Democracy or BVD [Dilip SARDJOE]; Basic Party for Renewal and Democracy or PVF [Soedeschand JAIRAM]; Democratic Union Suriname or DUS [Japhet DIEKO]; Mega Combination Coalition (a coalition that joined with A-Combination and the PL to form a majority in Parliament in 2010 - includes the National Democratic Party or NDP [Desire BOUTERSE] (largest party in the coalition), Progressive Worker and Farmer's Union or PALU [Jim HOK], Party for National Unity and Solidarity of the Highest Order or KTPI [Willy SOEMITA], DNP-2000 [Jules WIJDENBOSCH], Union of Brotherhood and Unity in Politics BEP [Caprino ALENDY], and New Suriname or NS [Nanan PANDAY]); National Union or NU [P. VAN LEEUWAARDE]; New Front for Democracy and Development or NF (a coalition made up of the National Party of Suriname or NPS [Runaldo VENETIAAN], United Reform Party or VHP [Ramdien SARDJOE], Democratic Alternative 1991 or DA-91 - an independent, business-oriented party [Winston JESSURUN], Surinamese Labor Party or SPA [Siegfried GILDS]); Party for Democracy and Development in Unity or DOE [Carl BREEVELD]; Party for the Permanent Prosperity Republic Suriname or PVRS [NA]; People's Alliance, Pertjaja Luhur's or PL [Paul SOMOHARDJO](includes D-21 [Soewarta MOESTADJA] and Pendawa Lima [Raymond SAPEON], which merged with PL in 2010)note: BVD and PVF participated in the elections as a coalition (BVD/PVF) in the most recent elections, but separated after the election  |
| International Law Organization Participation  | accepts compulsory ICJ jurisdiction with reservations; accepts ICCt jurisdiction  |
| International Organization Participation  | ACP, AOSIS, Caricom, CELAC, FAO, G-77, IADB, IBRD, ICAO, ICRM, IDB, IFAD, IFRCS, IHO, ILO, IMF, IMO, Interpol, IOC, IPU, ISO (correspondent), ITU, ITUC, LAES, MIGA, NAM, OAS, OIC, OPANAL, OPCW, PCA, Petrocaribe, UN, UNASUR, UNCTAD, UNESCO, UNIDO, UPU, WHO, WIPO, WMO, WTO  |
| Politicial Pressure Groups and Leaders  | Association of Indigenous Village Chiefs [Ricardo PANE]; Association of Saramaccan Authorities or Maroon [Head Captain WASE]; Women's Parliament Forum or PVF [Iris GILLIAD]  |

**Suriname Economy Data**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| GDP - Gross Domestic Product  | $7,120,000,000 (USD)  |
| GDP - official exchange rate  | $5,009,000,000 (USD)  |
| GDP - real growth rate  | 4.7%  |
| GDP Per Capita  | $12,900.00 (USD)  |
| GDP by Sector- agriculture  | 8.9%  |
| GDP by Sector- Industry  | 36.6%  |
| GDP by Sector- services  | 54.5%  |
| Population Below Poverty Line  | 70%  |
| Inflation Rate  | 6.4%  |
| Labor Force  | 165,600  |
| Labor Force By Occupation- agriculture  | 8%  |
| Labor Force By Occupation- industry  | 14%  |
| Labor Force By Occupation- services  | 78%  |
| Unemployment Rate  | 9.5%  |
| Fiscal Year  | calendar year  |
| Annual Budget  | $392,600,000 (USD)  |
| Budget Surplus or Deficit - percent of GDP  | -2.3%  |
| Taxes and other revenues - percent of GDP  | 16.5%  |
| Major Industries  | bauxite and gold mining, alumina production, oil, lumbering, food processing, fishing  |
| Industrial Growth Rate  | 6.5%  |
| Agriculture Products  | paddy rice, bananas, palm kernels, coconuts, plantains, peanuts; beef, chickens; forest products; shrimp  |
| Currency Code  | Surinamese Dollar (SRD)  |
| Child Labor - % of children ages 5-14  | 6%  |
| Child Labor - # of children ages 5-14  | 6,094  |
| Commercial Bank Prime Lending Rate  | 12%  |

**Suriname Economy**

**Economic Overview**

The economy is dominated by the bauxite industry, which accounts for more than 15% of GDP and 70% of export earnings. Suriname's economic prospects for the medium term will depend on renewed commitment to responsible monetary and fiscal policies and to the introduction of structural reforms to liberalize markets and promote competition. The government of Ronald VENETIAAN has begun an austerity program, raised taxes, and attempted to control spending. However, in 2002, President VENETIAAN agreed to a large pay raise for civil servants, which threatens his earlier gains in stabilizing the economy. The Dutch Government has agreed to restart the aid flow, which will allow Suriname to access international development financing. The short-term economic outlook depends on the government's ability to control inflation and on the development of projects in the bauxite and gold mining sectors.

**Suriname Exports**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Exports  | $1,391,000,000 (USD)  |
| Major Exports  | alumina, crude oil, lumber, shrimp and fish, rice, bananas  |
| Top Export Partners  | US 25.7%, Norway 20.4%, France 8.3%, Trinidad and Tobago 6.5%, Canada 6.1%, Iceland 6.1%, Netherlands 5.7%  |

**Suriname Imports**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Imports  | $1,297,000,000 (USD)  |
| Major Imports  | capital equipment, petroleum, foodstuffs, cotton, consumer goods  |
| Top Import Partners  | US 22.7%, Netherlands 16.1%, China 12.3%, Trinidad and Tobago 11.4%, France 7.6%, Japan 6%, Netherlands Antilles 4.5%  |

**Suriname Flag**

The golden star is a symbol of the golden future that can be achieved through unity. The green stands for the fertile land, the white for justice and freedom, and dthe red for progress in the struggle for a better life.

**Suriname Flag Description**

five horizontal bands of green (top, double width), white, red (quadruple width), white, and green (double width); there is a large, yellow, five-pointed star centered in the red band

TRANSLATE



Suriname flag



|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Anthem Lyrics English  | Rise country men, rise The soil of Suriname is calling you Where ever our ancestors came from We should take care of our country We are not afraid to fight God is our leader Our whole life until our death We will fight for Suriname  |

**Suriname Interesting Facts**

* African slaves were brought to Suriname to work on the coffee and sugar plantations.
* Eighty percent of Suriname is covered with tropical rainforest.

**History of Suriname**

Arawak and Carib tribes lived in the region before Columbus sighted the coast in 1498. Spain officially claimed the area in 1593, but Portuguese and Spanish explorers of the time gave the area little attention. Dutch settlement began in 1616 at the mouths of several rivers between present-day Georgetown, Guyana, and Cayenne, French Guiana.

Suriname became a Dutch colony in 1667. The new colony, Dutch Guiana, did not thrive. Historians cite several reasons for this, including Holland’s preoccupation with its more extensive (and profitable) East Indian territories, violent conflict between whites and native tribes, and frequent uprisings by the imported slave population, which was often treated with extraordinary cruelty. Barely, if at all, assimilated into European society, many of the slaves fled to the interior, where they maintained a West African culture and established the five major Bush Negro tribes in existence today--the Djuka, Saramaccaner, Matuwari, Paramaccaner, and Quinti.

Plantations steadily declined in importance as labor costs rose. Rice, bananas, and citrus fruits replaced the traditional crops of sugar, coffee, and cocoa. Exports of gold rose beginning in 1900. The Dutch Government gave little financial support to the colony. Suriname’s economy was transformed in the years following World War I, when an American firm (ALCOA) began exploiting bauxite deposits in East Suriname. Bauxite processing and then alumina production began in 1916. During World War II, more than 75% of U.S. bauxite imports came from Suriname.

In 1951, Suriname began to acquire a growing measure of autonomy from the Netherlands. Suriname became an autonomous part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands on December 15, 1954, and gained independence on November 25, 1975.

Most of Suriname’s political parties took shape during the autonomy period and were overwhelmingly based on ethnicity. For example, the National Party of Suriname found its support among the Creoles, the Progressive Reform Party members came from the Hindustani population, and the Indonesian Peasant’s Party was Javanese. Other smaller parties found support by appealing to voters on an ideological or pro-independence platform; the Partij Nationalistische Republiek (PNR) was among the most important. Its members pressed most strongly for independence and for the introduction of leftist political and economic measures. Many former PNR members would go on to play a key role following the coup of February 1980.

Suriname was a working parliamentary democracy in the years immediately following independence. Henk Arron became the first Prime Minister and was re-elected in 1977. On February 25, 1980, 16 noncommissioned officers overthrew the elected government. The military-dominated government then suspended the constitution, dissolved the legislature, and formed a regime that ruled by decree. Although a civilian filled the post of president, a military man, Desi Bouterse, actually ruled the country.

Throughout 1982, pressure grew for a return to civilian rule. In response, the military ordered drastic action. Early in December 1982, military authorities arrested and killed 15 prominent opposition leaders, including journalists, lawyers, and trade union leaders.

Following the murders, the United States and the Netherlands suspended economic and military cooperation with the Bouterse regime, which increasingly began to follow an erratic but generally leftist-oriented political course. Economic decline rapidly set in after the suspension of economic aid from the Netherlands. The regime restricted the press and limited the rights of its citizens.

Continuing economic decline brought pressure for change. During the 1984-87 period, the Bouterse regime tried to end the crisis by appointing a succession of nominally civilian-led cabinets. Many figures in the government came from the traditional political parties that had been shoved aside during the coup. The military eventually agreed to free elections in 1987, a new constitution, and a civilian government.

Another pressure for change had erupted in July 1986, when a Bush Negro (aka Maroon) insurgency, led by former soldier Ronnie Brunswijk, began attacking economic targets in the country’s interior. In response, the army ravaged villages and killed suspected Brunswijk supporters. Thousands of Bush Negroes fled to nearby French Guiana. In an effort to end the bloodshed, the Surinamese Government negotiated a peace treaty, called the Kourou Accord, with Brunswijk in 1989. However, Bouterse and other military leaders blocked the accord’s implementation.

On December 24, 1990, military officers forced the resignations of the civilian President and Vice President elected in 1987. Military-selected replacements were hastily approved by the National Assembly on December 29. Faced with mounting pressure from the U.S., other nations, the Organization of American States (OAS), and other international organizations, the government held new elections on May 25, 1991. The New Front (NF) Coalition, comprised of the Creole National Party of Suriname (NPS), the Hindustani Progressive Reform Party (VHP), the Javanese Indonesian Peasant’s Party (KTPI), and the Surinamese Workers Party (SPA) were able to win a majority in the National Assembly. On September 6, 1991, NPS candidate Ronald Venetiaan was elected President, and the VHP’s Jules Ajodhia became Vice President of the New Front Coalition government.

The Venetiaan government was able to effect a settlement to Suriname’s domestic insurgency through the August 1992 Peace Accord with Bush Negro and Amerindian rebels. In April 1993, Desi Bouterse left his position as commander of the armed forces and was replaced by Arthy Gorre, a military officer committed to bringing the armed forces under civilian government control. Economic reforms instituted by the Venetiaan government eventually helped curb inflation, unify the official and unofficial exchange rates, and improve the government’s economic situation by re-establishing relations with the Dutch, thereby opening the way for a major influx of Dutch financial assistance. Despite these successes, the governing coalition lost support and failed to retain control of the government in the subsequent round of national elections. The rival National Democratic Party (NDP), founded in the early 1990s by Desi Bouterse, benefited from the New Front government’s loss of popularity. The NDP won more National Assembly seats (16 of 51) than any other party in the May 1996 national elections and in September 1996, joined with the KTPI, dissenters from the VHP, and several smaller parties to elect NDP vice chairman Jules Wijdenbosch president of a NDP-led coalition government. Divisions and subsequent reshufflings of coalition members in the fall of 1997 and early 1998 weakened the coalition’s mandate and slowed legislative action.

In May 1999, after mass demonstrations protesting poor economic conditions, the government was forced to call early elections. The elections in May 2000 returned Ronald Venetiaan and his coalition to the presidency. The NF ran its campaign on a platform to fix the faltering Surinamese economy. But while the Venetiaan administration has made progress in stabilizing the economy, tensions within the coalition and the impatience of the populace have impeded progress.

Relations with the Dutch have been complicated by Dutch prosecution of Desi Bouterse in absentia on drug charges, and legal maneuvering by Dutch prosecutors trying to bring charges relating to the December 1982 murders. (A Dutch appellate court in 2000 found Bouterse guilty of one drug-related charge; the decision was upheld on appeal.) A key component of the relationship is the 600 million Dutch guilders (Nf.) remaining from Nf. 2.5 billion promised for development at independence. The disposition of the funds was a matter of much discussion during recent Dutch cabinet-level visits intended to lay the groundwork to restart the flow of guilders, which the Dutch stanched in response to irresponsible spending by the Wijdenbosch administration. The parties are at odds over the control of the funds, and needed aid has not flowed to the country.

In August 2001, the Dutch provided a triple-A state guarantee to enable the Surinamese Government to receive a 10-year loan from the Dutch Development Bank (NTO) for the amount of Euro 137.7 million (U.S. $125 million). The loan has an interest rate of 5.18% per year and was used to consolidate floating government debts. U.S. $32 million of the loan was used to pay off foreign loans, which had been taken under unfavorable conditions by the Wijdenbosch government. The remaining 93 million of the loan was used to pay off debts at the Central Bank of Suriname. This enabled the Central Bank to strengthen its foreign currency position according to the IMF standards to the equivalency of 3 months of imports.

In the national election held on May 25, 2005, the ruling NF coalition suffered a significant setback due to widespread dissatisfaction with the state of the economy and a public perception that the NF had produce few tangible gains for the country. The NF won just 24 seats, falling short of a simple majority in the National Assembly, and immediately entered into negotiations with the Maroon-based “A” Combination and the A-1 Coalition to form a working majority. Desi Bouterse’s NDP better than doubled its representation in the National Assembly, winning 15 seats. Bouterse, who had placed himself as the NDP’s declared presidential candidate, withdrew from the race days before the National Assembly convened to vote for the next president and tapped his running mate, Rabin Parmessar, to run as the NDP’s candidate. In the National Assembly, the NF challenged Parmessar’s Surinamese citizenship, displaying copies of a Dutch passport issued to Parmessar in 2004. After two votes, no candidate received the required two-thirds majority. The presidential race will therefore be decided by a special session of the United People’s Assembly in August 2005.

**Suriname History Timeline**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Suriname Year in History | Suriname Timeline |
| 1498  | **Christopher Columbus sights the coast of Suriname.**Christopher Columbus sights the coast of Suriname.  |
| 1593  | **Spanish explorers visit the area and name it Suriname.**Spanish explorers visit the area and name it Suriname, after the country’s earliest inhabitants, the Surinen.  |
| 1651  | **First permanent European settlement in Suriname.**First permanent European settlement in Suriname, established by the British at Paramaribo by Lord Francis Willoughby.  |
| 1667  | **British cede their part of Suriname to the Netherlands .**British cede their part of Suriname to the Netherlands in exchange for New Amsterdam (later called New York City).  |
| 1682  | **Coffee and sugar cane plantations established and worked by African slaves.**Coffee and sugar cane plantations established and worked by African slaves.  |
| 1799  | **British rule reimposed.**British rule reimposed.  |
| 1804  | **British rule reimposed.**British rule reimposed.  |
| 1863  | **Slavery abolished.**Slavery abolished.  |
| 1975  | **Suriname becomes independent.**Suriname becomes independent with Johan Ferrier as president and HenkArron, of the Suriname National Party (NPS), as prime minister; morethan a third of the population emigrate to the Netherlands.  |
| 1985  | **Ban on political parties lifted.**Ban on political parties lifted.  |
| 2004  | **Suriname dollar replaces guilder.**Suriname dollar replaces guilder. Government says move aims to restore confidence in economy.  |
| 2006  | **Flooding, caused by torrential rain, leaves more than 20,000 people homeless.**Flooding, caused by torrential rain, leaves more than 20,000 people homeless.  |

**Suriname Holidays and Events**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Display Date | Title |
| November 25th  | **Independence Day** |

**Suriname Meals and Food**

Recipes from Suriname

* [Bami - Main Dish](http://www.countryreports.org/country/Suriname/recipe/bami.htm)
* [Chicken masala (murgi talkari) - Main Dish](http://www.countryreports.org/country/Suriname/recipe/chicken-masala-%28murgi-talkari%29.htm)
* [Saoto (Soto Ayam) - Soup](http://www.countryreports.org/country/Suriname/recipe/saoto-%28soto-ayam%29.htm)

**Suriname Recipes and Diet**

Suriname food and meal customs

**Diet**

Rice is a staple food along with cassava, sweet potatoes, plantains, chicken and seafood. Favorite meals include *Moksie alesie* (a creole rice dish with chicken, white beans, tomatoes, peppers and spices), *bami* (a noodle dish mixed with a dark sauce, fried chicken and a hot pepper mixture), *saoto* ( chicken soup) and *poffertjes* (tiny dutch pancakes)
*Pom* or *Pomtajer* is a root of the cassava family. It is ground into a mush and mixed into a casserole with fried chicken and baked in the oven. It is usually eaten with rice and is very popular during special occasions

**Suriname Languages**

**Languages**

Dutch (official), English (widely spoken), Sranang Tongo (Surinamese, sometimes called Taki-Taki, is native language of Creoles and much of the younger population and is lingua franca among others), Hindustani (a dialect of Hindi), Javanese

**Language Translations:**

**Greetings in Dutch**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Do you speak English? | Spreek jij Engels? |
| Excuse me | Excuseer mij |
| Fine / Good | Goed |
| Good afternoon | Goedenmiddag |
| Good evening | Goedenavond |
| Good morning | Goedenmorgen |
| Good night | Goedenacht |
| Goodbye | Tot ziens |
| Happy New Year! | Gelukkig Nieuwjaar! |
| How are you? | Hoe gaat het met jou? |
| I'm pleased to meet you | Aangenaam kennis met je te maken |
| Merry Christmas | Vrolijk Kerstfeest |
| Please | Alstublieft |
| See you later | Tot ziens |
| Thank you | Dank je wel |
| Welcome | Welkom |
| Yes / No | Ja / Nee |
| Hello | Hallo |

**Days in Dutch**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Sunday | Zondag |
| Monday | Maandag |
| Tuesday | Dinsdag |
| Wednesday | Woensdag |
| Thursday | Donderdag |
| Friday | Vrijdag |
| Saturday | Zaterdag |

**Months in Dutch**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| January | Januari |
| February | Februari |
| March | Maart |
| April | April |
| May | Mei |
| June | Juni |
| August | Augustus |
| July | Juli |
| September | September |
| October | Oktober |
| November | November |
| December | December |

**Colors in Dutch**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| White | Wit |
| Black | Zwart |
| Red | Rood |
| Green | Groen |
| Blue | Blauw |
| Yellow | Geel |
| Orange | Yellow |
| Pink | Roze |
| Purple | Paars |

**Numbers in Dutch**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| One | één |
| two | twee |
| three | drie |
| four | vier |
| five | vijf |
| six | zes |
| seven | zeven |
| eight | acht |
| nine | negen |
| ten | tien |
| eleven | elf |
| twelve | twaalf |
| thirtheen | dertien |
| Fourteen | veertien |
| Fifteen | vijftien |
| sixteen | zestien |
| seventeen | zeventien |
| eighteen | achttien |
| nineteen | negentien |
| twenty | twintig |
| twenty-one | eenentwintig |
| twenty-two | tweeëntwintig |
| twenty-three | drieëntwintig |
| twenty-four | vierentwintig |
| twenty-five | vijfentwintig |
| twenty-six | zesentwintig |
| twenty-seven | zevenentwintig |
| twenty-eight | achtentwintig |
| twenty-nine | negenentwintig |
| thirty | dertig |
| thirty-one | eenendertig |
| fifty | vijftig |
| one hundred | honderd |
| five hundred | vijfhonderd |
| one thousand | duizend |

**Seasons in Dutch**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Winter | Winter |
| Fall | Herfst |
| Spring | Lente |
| Summer | Zomer |

**Suriname Clothing and Fashion**

The Javanese women wear sarongs as they would in Indonesia. The creole women wear the traditional *kotomisse*, with an *angisa* or  handkerchief.

**Dating, Family and Children Suriname**

**Family and Children**

For some groups child care is handled by one parent at a time. Children spend the first five to six years with their mother and then they can be given to their father or another relative for child rearing.

**Suriname Gestures and Greetings**

**Visiting**

To not be considered rude, anyone visiting a friend is expected to visit everyone they know in the same neighborhood.

**Suriname Church and Religion**

An estimated 27 percent of the inhabitants traced their ancestry to the Indian subcontinent, another 18 percent identified themselves as Creoles of African descent, 15 percent claimed Indonesian ancestry, and 15 percent were of maroon descent, or descendants of escaped slaves. Smaller percentages of the population claimed Chinese, Amerindian, Portuguese, Lebanese, or Dutch descent.

40.7 percent of the population was Christian, including Roman Catholics and other Protestant groups--among them Moravians, Lutheran, Dutch Reformed, evangelical, Baptist, and Methodist; 20 percent was Hindu, 13.5 percent was Muslim, 3.3 percent followed indigenous religions, 15 percent claimed to not know their religion, 4.4 percent claimed no faith, and 2.5 percent declared other, unspecified faiths. Indigenous religions were practiced by the Amerindians and the Afro-descendant maroon populations. The Amerindians, concentrated principally in the interior and to a lesser extent in coastal areas, practiced shamanism, a worship of all living things, through a medicine man, or piaiman. Maroons, who inhabited the interior, worshiped nature through a practice that had no special name, and they also worshiped their ancestors through a rite called wintie. Citizens of Amerindian and maroon origin who classified themselves as Christian often simultaneously followed indigenous religious customs, which was known to and accepted by their Christian church leaders. There were small numbers of Baha'is and Buddhists. There were also other groups, such as the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons) and the World Islamic Call Society.

Many political parties had strong ethnic ties, and members tended to adhere to or practice one faith. For example, within the governing coalition, the majority of members of the mostly Creole National Party of Suriname were Moravian, members of the mostly ethnic Indian United Reformed Party were Hindu, and those of the mostly ethnic Javanese Pertjaja Luhur Party tended to be Muslim. However, parties had no requirement that political party leaders or members adhere to a particular religion.

There was no direct correlation between religious affiliation and socioeconomic status; however, those who practiced indigenous religions in the small villages of the interior generally had a lower socioeconomic status. With the exception of those following indigenous practices, religious communities were not concentrated in any particular region of the country.

The constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respected this right in practice. The Government at all levels sought to protect this right in full and did not tolerate its abuse, either by governmental or private actors.

There are five holy days that are celebrated as official holidays: Holi Phagwa (Hindu), Good Friday (Christian), Easter Monday (Christian), Eid al-Fitr (Muslim), and Christmas (Christian). Citizens of all faiths tended to celebrate these holidays.

The Government does not establish requirements for recognition of religious faiths, nor are religious groups required to register with the Government.

Aside from the standard requirement for an entry visa, foreign missionaries face no special restrictions.

The government education system provides limited subsidies to a number of public elementary and secondary schools established and managed by various religious organizations. While the teachers are civil servants and the schools are public, religious groups provide all funding with the exception of teachers' salaries and a small maintenance stipend. Religious instruction in public schools is permitted but not required for all students. Schools offer religious instruction in a variety of faiths.

Parents are not permitted to home school their children for religious or other reasons; however, they may enroll their children in private schools, many of which have a religious affiliation. Students in public schools are allowed to practice all elements of their faith, including wearing head scarves, crosses, or yarmulkes.

Bottom of Form

**Suriname Sport and Recreation**

Soccer is the most popular sport. Another popular sport is swimming.