

TRAVEL GUYANA

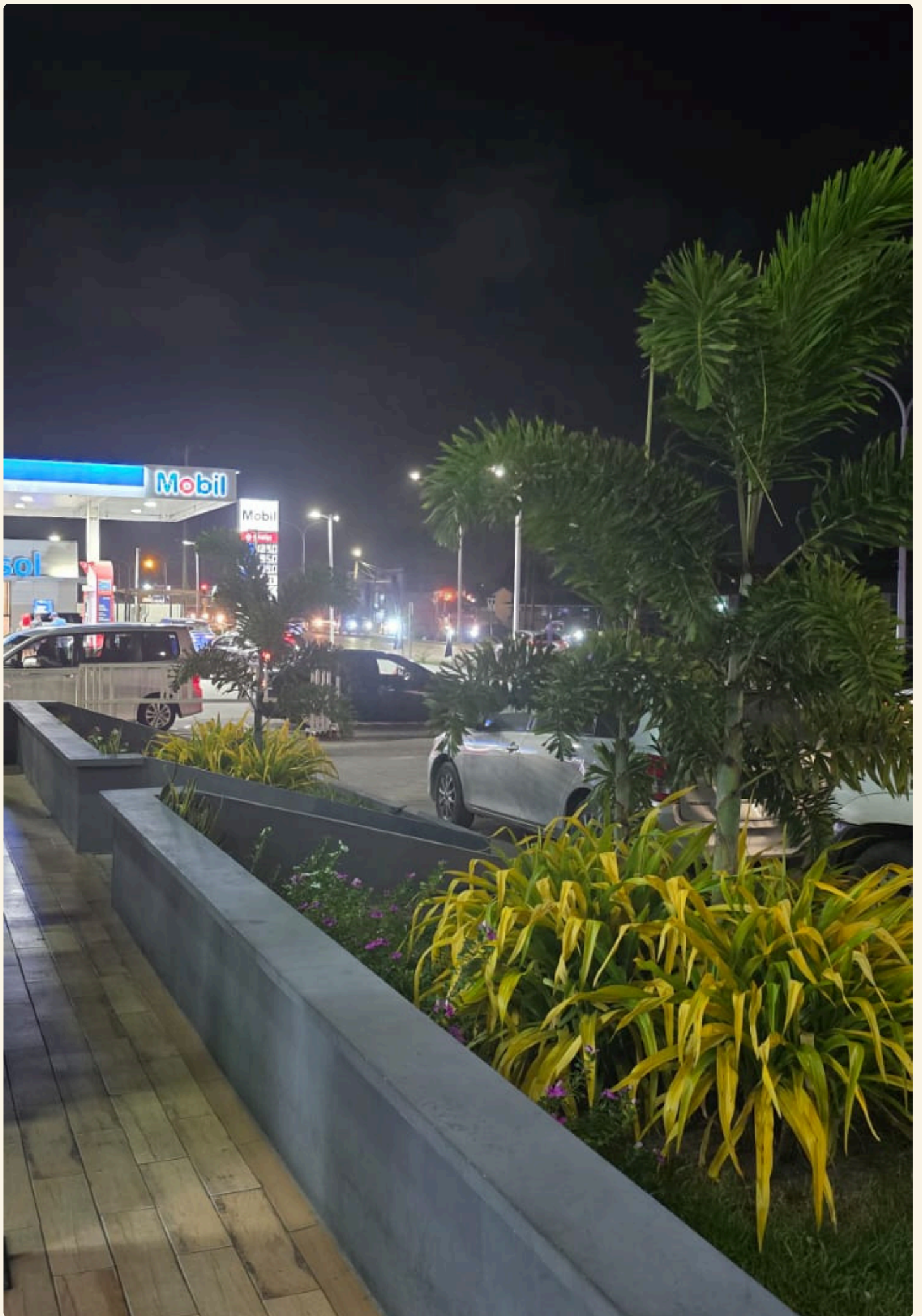
Festivals, Frolic and Faith



MASHRAMANI 2025
THAG'S ROLE IN GUYANA
KITE FLYING AT EASTER
RAMADAN 2025



First Quarter | 01042025



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TRAVEL GUYANA

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WELCOME TO TRAVEL GUYANA

EDITOR'S LETTER



Dear Readers,

With Mashramani celebrations behind us, we now enter a season rich with fasting, prayer, and vibrant festivities. In this issue, we delve into the heart of our culture, bringing you stories that embody the pride of being Guyanese.

We explore the diverse culinary traditions observed during Ramadan and Lent—dishes that nourish both body and soul. From the sweet indulgence of Shrove Tuesday pancakes to the cherished cross buns of Good Friday, we savour the flavours that make this time special.

Our feature on the Travel and Hospitality Association of Guyana highlights the dynamic growth within the industry. Additionally, we examine how affiliate marketing is elevating our tourism sector in the digital realm.

Our esteemed columnist, Kenneth Shivdyal, shares his insights on the ever-evolving industry and its trajectory in Guyana.

Easter in Guyana is synonymous with kite flying. We capture the joy and communal spirit that paint our skies with vibrant colours. Furthermore, we embark on a journey with Donald Transportation Service, uncovering the adventures awaiting in Suriname, Cayenne, and Brazil.

Finally, we celebrate the winners of this year's Mashramani competitions, honouring the creativity and passion that define our national festival.

Let's walk through these pages together and embrace the unique and wonderful essence of Guyana.

Warm regards,

A stylized, handwritten signature in white ink on a dark green background. The signature appears to read 'Russell'.

Editor-in-Chief

Travel Guyana Magazine

GUYANA, A LAND OF UNTAMED BEAUTY



For more information about Guyana
visit www.travelguyana.co



A close-up photograph of several layers of green lettuce leaves. The leaves are vibrant green with prominent veins and a slightly ruffled texture. The lighting is bright, highlighting the freshness of the vegetable.

DEPARTMENTS

Your Trusted Gateway to Suriname, Cayenne, and Brazil

Donald Transportation Service - A Legacy on Wheels



For travellers seeking a reliable and stress-free journey across the borders of Guyana into Suriname, Cayenne (French Guiana), and Brazil, **Donald Transportation Service** stands as a beacon of trust, safety, and efficiency. With a fleet of ten well-maintained buses, experienced drivers, and over four decades in the transportation business, this company has cemented its reputation as one of the most dependable travel providers in the region.

A Legacy on Wheels

Donald Shepherd, the man behind this thriving business, always had a passion for transportation. His journey began humbly in 1991 as a taxi driver in Guyana, navigating the busy streets and learning the trade firsthand. In 1999, he expanded his horizons and started servicing the Guyana–Suriname route. What started with a single bus has grown into a full-fledged transportation enterprise, with Shepherd at the wheel, quite literally, as he still enjoys driving while his wife manages bookings and operations.

Seamless Travel Experience

Donald Transportation Service offers daily trips to Suriname... This service can be found and booked online at www.getyourguide.com and other trips can be found on www.travelguyana.co. The company takes the hassle out of travel by picking up passengers from their preferred locations between 3 AM and 4 AM before heading to the Moleson Creek ferry terminal for the crossing into Suriname.

No longer do travellers need to jostle for seats at a crowded bus park—Shepherd and his team provide a smooth, pre-arranged service with punctuality at its core.

Beyond the daily trips, the company also organizes guided tours for adventurers eager to explore the region.

- Suriname (5 Days): A vibrant mix of colonial charm and modern city life, Suriname offers a unique cultural experience. Donald Transportation Service owns fully furnished apartments with cooking facilities, ensuring a home-away-from-home experience for travellers.



- Cayenne (7 Days): As the capital of French Guiana, Cayenne is a fascinating blend of European influence and tropical flair. The tour includes stays at carefully selected hotels and guesthouses.

- Brazil (7–10 Days): Whether you're venturing into the Amazon or soaking up the energy of bustling border towns, the Brazil tour offers an unforgettable journey. Like in Cayenne, accommodations and meals are fully arranged.

Travel Considerations

For non-Guyanese travellers, visas are required for Suriname, Cayenne, and Brazil. Donald Transportation Service ensures that clients are well-informed about the necessary paperwork and procedures to make their journeys as smooth as possible.

Especially for Cayenne, Donald's Transportation Service will process your visa requirements at a cost of

More Than Just a Business

What makes Donald Service truly special is its family-oriented approach. Unlike impersonal tour operators, Shepherd and his team provide a warm, Guyanese-style hospitality, making passengers feel at ease from the moment they step on board.

Whether you're a business traveller, an adventurer, or a first-time explorer, this service promises not just a trip, but a memorable travel experience.

So, if you're planning your next cross-border adventure, look no further. With **Donald Transportation Service**, you're in safe hands—on the road and beyond.

SSIGNAL PRODUCTIONS: KEEPING GUYANESE MUSIC AND FILM ALIVE — NO MATTER WHAT

Ever heard the saying, “If you want something done right, do it yourself”? Well, that pretty much sums up the philosophy of Bonny Alves and Charmaine Blackman-Alves. These two have been the backbone of Ssignal Productions, a powerhouse in Guyanese music and film, fighting to keep the industry moving forward—despite the many, MANY roadblocks that come with the territory.

For years, they’ve been championing local talent, creating platforms, and pushing for fair recognition. Whether it’s calypso, reggae, jazz, or filmmaking, Ssignal Productions has been all about giving Guyanese artists a real shot at success. And while the entertainment scene in Guyana has its fair share of challenges (like every industry, right?), Bonny and Charmaine are proving that persistence, passion, and a little bit of rebel energy go a long way.

Ah, calypso. It’s a genre that’s deeply rooted in storytelling, social commentary, and cultural pride. But let’s be real—over the years, a few cracks have started to show in how calypso competitions are run. There have been whispers (and sometimes loud protests) about how things are judged, who gets the spotlight, and whether the system truly rewards the best talent. Some artists feel like they’re walking into a match where the score is already set. Others worry that speaking up about these issues means fewer opportunities down the line. And then there’s the issue of remuneration—a fancy word for saying, “Artists need to get paid fairly for their craft.”

So, how do we fix it? Bonny and Charmaine believe in solutions, not just complaints. The key is more transparency, structure, and promotion. Calypso needs to be played on radio, social media, and TV all year round—not just at competition time. Investing in music videos, live performances, and media promotions can help artists gain more recognition beyond competition nights. A fair and clear judging process, where artists get constructive feedback and judging panels are diverse and experienced, would make competitions more exciting and respected. At the end of the day, it’s all about building a stronger system where everyone feels like they have a fair shot—because Guyana is **PACKED** with talent, and that talent deserves to shine.

If you’ve ever watched an international music competition and thought, “Guyana has artists just as good as these folks”, you’re not alone. Bonny and Charmaine have been thinking the same thing—but instead of just talking about it, they’re making things happen. Since the days of Yoruba House in 1996, they’ve been training, producing, and pushing local artists. They’ve worked with names like Lisa Punch, Jackie Jaxx, Diana Chapman, Quincy Lacon (Ego), Ivelaw Campbell (Granny Ivy), and Ron Reynolds (Kunchy)—all with the goal of putting Guyanese talent on the map.



Their company, Ssignal Productions, isn’t just about music, though. It’s also a key player in Guyanese film. So far, they’ve produced 16 films—with little to no budget, but a whole lot of passion. The themes? Guyanese life, culture, and issues that actually matter. Still, it’s an uphill battle. Unlike places like Jamaica, where the government actively invests in the creative industry, Guyanese artists often have to hustle hard for funding. But Bonny and Charmaine aren’t waiting for a magic cheque to appear—they’re making moves with or without big backing.

Despite the challenges, Ssignal Productions isn’t slowing down. This year, they’re launching two new artists, promoting existing talent, and continuing to use every available media platform to get Guyanese entertainment out there. They’re also keeping live music alive with two signature concerts: the Emancipation Jazz and Soul Concert, now in its 12th edition, set for August 10th, and The Phenomenal Woman Concert, held on the first Sunday in April. And if you love live music, you can catch them every Friday and Saturday at the Ramada Princess Hotel, where they have a residency bringing smooth vibes to the Guyanese nightlife scene.

At the heart of it all, Bonny Alves and Charmaine Blackman-Alves are about one thing: making sure Guyanese artists get the respect, recognition, and opportunities they deserve. The road hasn’t been easy, and there’s still a lot of work to do—but Ssignal Productions is proving that local talent doesn’t need to wait for permission to shine. Through music, film, and live performances, they’re keeping the heartbeat of Guyanese entertainment strong—and for that, we salute them. Want to support? Share their music, go to their shows, and keep the conversation going. Because when local artists win, Guyana wins.

One a Penny, Two a Penny Hot Cross Buns

Easter in Guyana brings with it the cherished tradition of baking cross buns—a practice steeped in history and community spirit. This tradition dates back to 1361 when a monk named Thomas Rockliffe, a monk at St. Albans Abbey in England, began distributing buns marked with a cross to the poor on Good Friday, embodying themes of sharing and remembrance. Guyana, once an English colony, has maintained this tradition even after its independence from Britain.

To delve deeper into this custom, I sat down with Joycelyn Rockliffe (no relation to Thomas), a seasoned Georgetown baker renowned for her delectable cross buns that have graced Easter tables for over four decades. Her beautiful and ebullient personality goes into everything she touches and it was a joy to watch her as she worked.

The Significance of Cross Buns

"Cross buns ain't just sweet bread," Auntie Joycelyn began, her hands deftly kneading dough as we spoke. "They symbolize the crucifixion of Jesus Christ—the cross on top reminds us of His sacrifice."

Crafting the Perfect Cross Bun

Auntie Joycelyn was generous enough to walk me through her time-honoured process:

- **Activate the Yeast:** "First, I dissolve a packet of active dry yeast in warm milk with a pinch of sugar. Let it sit until it's frothy—that's how you know the yeast is alive and kicking."
- **Prepare the Dough:** "In a big bowl, I mix all-purpose flour, a bit of salt, and spices like cinnamon and nutmeg. Then, I cut in some butter until the mixture feels like breadcrumbs."
- **Combine Ingredients:** "I add the yeast mixture, and sometimes a handful of raisins for extra sweetness. Knead it all together until the dough is smooth but still a bit sticky."
- **Let It Rise:** "I place the dough in a greased bowl, cover it with a damp cloth, and let it rest until it doubles in size. This can take about two hours, depending on the weather."



- **Shape the Buns:** "Once risen, I punch down the dough, divide it into equal pieces, and shape them into buns. I place them on a baking tray, leaving space for them to expand."
- **Add the Cross:** "For the cross, I make a cut across the top in the shape of a cross, and then they're ready for the oven."
- **Bake and Glaze:** "I bake them until they're golden brown. While they're still warm, I brush them with a sugar glaze to give them that nice shine."

A Labour of Love

For Auntie Joycelyn, baking cross buns is more than a culinary Endeavor; it's a heartfelt ritual that connects her to her faith and community. "Every Easter, people from all over come to get my buns. It's a joy to see families enjoying them together," she shared with a warm smile.

As I left Auntie Joycelyn's home, the enticing aroma of freshly baked cross buns lingered in the air—a testament to a tradition that continues to unite and nourish the Guyanese spirit.

The Delicious Indian Sweetmeats



Indian sweetmeats hold a cherished place in the celebrations of both Ramadan and Phagwah (Holi), serving as delightful symbols of festivity and cultural heritage.

Ramadan Sweets

During Ramadan, after the day's fast, families often indulge in traditional Indian sweets that provide both energy and satisfaction. Some popular choices include:

- **Gulab Jamun:** Soft, deep-fried dumplings made from milk solids, soaked in a fragrant sugar syrup.
- **Sheer Khurma:** A rich vermicelli pudding cooked with milk, dates, and nuts, often enjoyed during Eid festivities.
- **Barfi:** A dense, milk-based confectionery, sometimes flavoured with fruits or nuts, offering a melt-in-the-mouth experience.

Phagwah (Holi) Sweets

Phagwah, known globally as Holi, is celebrated with an array of sweet treats that add to the festival's exuberance:

- **Gulab Jamun:** This beloved sweet transcends festivals, making it a staple during Phagwah as well.
- **Ghee Parsad (Mahamboug):** A Guyanese variation of the traditional Indian sweet, this semolina-based dessert is rich in ghee and holds significant cultural importance during Phagwah.
- **Mithai:** Known for its crunchy texture and sweet flavour, this treat is commonly prepared during Phagwah celebrations in Guyana.

These sweetmeats not only satisfy the palate but also reinforce cultural bonds, making them integral to the festive experiences of Ramadan and Phagwah.



KITE FLYING AT EASTER

As the Lenten season concludes, the skies over Guyana burst into a kaleidoscope of colours, heralding the nation's beloved Easter tradition: kite flying. This vibrant custom transforms the horizon into a dynamic tapestry of soaring kites, each a testament to the country's rich cultural heritage and communal spirit.

In the weeks leading up to Easter, the anticipation is palpable. Streets and markets buzz with activity as vendors display an array of kites, from the classic "caddy old punch" to intricate star-point designs. Families and friends gather to craft their own kites, infusing personal flair into each creation. Anthony Higgins, a seasoned kite maker with over four decades of experience, captures this sentiment: "There's a unique joy in making kites, a tradition that brings us all together."

Easter Monday serves as the pinnacle of these celebrations. Open fields, beaches, and the iconic seawalls become canvases for this aerial artistry. The air resonates with the hum of "singing engines," kites equipped with taut strings that produce melodious sounds as they dance with the wind. This symphony of sights and sounds embodies the exuberance of the season, drawing both participants and spectators into the festive fold.

Beyond the sheer joy of flight, kite flying in Guyana holds profound symbolic significance. For many, the ascent of kites mirrors the resurrection of Jesus Christ, embodying themes of hope and renewal central to Easter. This intertwining of faith and festivity underscores the depth of the tradition, making it a cherished aspect of Guyanese identity.

The communal nature of this practice fosters unity across the nation's diverse populace. Regardless of background or belief, individuals come together, sharing in the simple yet profound pleasure of guiding kites into the heavens. This collective experience not only strengthens social bonds but also bridges generational divides, as elders pass down the art and stories of kite flying to younger enthusiasts.

In essence, Easter kite flying in Guyana is more than a seasonal pastime; it is a vibrant expression of cultural pride, spiritual reflection, and communal harmony. As kites of all shapes and sizes grace the skies, they carry with them the shared aspirations and enduring spirit of the Guyanese people.

DR. SONIA NOEL, A DISTINGUISHED GUYANESE FASHION DESIGNER



Dr. Sonia Noel, a distinguished Guyanese fashion designer, has been a transformative figure in the Caribbean's creative landscape for over 25 years. Her journey began in Bartica, where, as a child, she crafted garments from newspapers, showcasing an early flair for design. This passion led her to establish Sonia Noel Designs, celebrated for integrating Caribbean aesthetics with contemporary fashion. Beyond design, Sonia founded pivotal events like Guyana Fashion Weekend and the Women in Business Expo, fostering platforms for emerging talents.

As an author and John Maxwell-trained coach, she champions personal development and empowerment. Her philanthropic efforts, including the Sonia Noel Foundation, underscore her dedication to societal upliftment. Internationally recognized, Sonia continues to represent Guyana on global stages, exemplifying the nation's rich cultural heritage.



A close-up photograph of several layers of green lettuce leaves. The leaves are vibrant green with prominent veins and a slightly ruffled texture. The lighting is bright, highlighting the freshness of the vegetable.

Quarterly Column



CREATING UNFORGETTABLE MEMORIES

PIONEERING A NEW CHAPTER IN CARIBBEAN TOURISM FROM KENNITH SHIVDYAL

Imagine a Caribbean known not just for its sun-soaked beaches but as a vibrant canvas where every visitor actively participates in creating unforgettable memories. This vision is not just a dream but a burgeoning reality in destinations like Guyana, where tourism is being reimagined to offer more than the conventional vacation experience.

Guyana: A Trailblazer in Creative Tourism

In the lush landscapes of Guyana, tourism has evolved beyond the expected. This South American gem has spent the last three decades perfecting a model of travel that is as enriching as it is sustainable. Here, tourists don't just pass through; they dive deep into the heart of local culture and the environment. This transformative approach could be exactly what the Caribbean needs to keep pace with global travel trends that increasingly favour meaningful engagement over mere sightseeing.

A Global Shift Toward Deeper Experiences

Across the world, the appetite for travel is changing. Gone are the days when tourists were content to merely observe. Today, they seek to engage, interact, and create. Creative tourism answers this call by blending travel with active participation in local culture. Whether through music, art, festivals, or simple daily interactions, tourists are now co-authors of their travel experiences. Take, for example, the Border Market Tour led by Chef Delvin Adams in Guyana. This isn't just a market tour—it's an invitation into the heart of Guyanese life. Tourists meet the vibrant characters who define the local market scene, learn about their day-to-day lives, and help select ingredients that they later transform into delicious local dishes in Delvin's own kitchen.

Or consider the Toka Pottery Experience, where visitors get their hands dirty in the best way possible. They learn pottery from the ground up—literally—from digging up the clay to shaping it with age-old techniques passed down through generations. It's a hands-on lesson not just in pottery but in the cultural heartbeat of the Toka community.

The Caribbean's Creative Wave

The Caribbean, with its mosaic of cultures, is uniquely positioned to capitalize on this shift toward creative tourism. Initiatives sprouting up across the region showcase this potential beautifully. In Jamaica, the Art Street and Co-CREATE initiatives pull travelers into the vibrant local art scene.

Barbados tempts with culinary adventures that immerse visitors in the island's rich flavors, while Trinidad and Tobago offers an up-close experience of its famous Carnival culture through music and dance workshops.

These programs are more than just tourist attractions; they are a call to action for the Caribbean to weave these isolated initiatives into a comprehensive tapestry that spans the region. By linking the unique cultural offerings of each destination, the Caribbean can offer a holistic experience that reflects the diversity and vibrancy of the entire region. This integrated approach not only makes the Caribbean stand out in the global tourism market but also builds a sustainable model that promotes cultural exchange and economic growth.

Navigating Challenges

However, integrating creative tourism comes with its hurdles. Significant investment is required to develop the infrastructure and training needed to support these immersive experiences. Communities must find ways to preserve their cultural integrity while opening up to an influx of visitors—a delicate balance between showcasing their heritage and turning it into a commodity.



Additionally, the intimate nature of these experiences means they don't always scale easily, posing a challenge for destinations that rely on large numbers of tourists to boost their economies. Yet, solutions can be found by reshaping our thinking and considering the Caribbean as a unified region in the global tourism scene. By combining regional expertise and leveraging tested models, the Caribbean can co-create and pioneer a new model of travel that addresses these challenges.

A Vision for Tomorrow

As Guyana continues to lead by example with its innovative approach to tourism—garnering international acclaim in the process—it stands ready to mentor its neighbors through the transition to more immersive and meaningful travel experiences. The Caribbean is on the brink of a tourism revolution, one that promises to redefine what it means to visit the region.

By embracing creative tourism, the Caribbean is not just opening its doors to a new kind of traveler but is also setting the stage for a more sustainable, culturally rich, and interconnected future. This isn't just a new chapter in Caribbean tourism—it's a vibrant new narrative that invites everyone to be part of the story.

A close-up photograph of several layers of green lettuce leaves. The leaves are vibrant green with prominent veins and a slightly ruffled texture. The lighting is bright, highlighting the freshness of the vegetable.

FEATURES



MASHIN' IT UP

Mashramani 2025 was nothing short of a cultural spectacle, a pulsating, high-energy explosion of colour, music, and revelry that left Guyana breathless. Under the theme Expressing Our Culture and Creativity as One Guyana, this year's celebration wasn't just bigger—it was better, bolder, and more finely tuned than ever before. From the moment the first note of chutney music echoed across Sheldon, to the last wave of a sequined hand as the grand float parade wound down, Mashramani was an unstoppable force of creativity and national pride.

The competitions, a staple of the season, were a runaway success. Chutney lovers packed Sheldon to capacity, swaying to the hypnotic beats of Tassa drums and high-energy performances that sent the crowd into a frenzy. Over in Linden, the Soca Monarch stage crackled with raw energy as artists fought for supremacy, their anthems of freedom and celebration ringing through the town.

Main Street pulsed with the rhythm of calypso, where sharp-witted lyrics and biting social commentary found their home. At the 1823 Monument site, dancehall took center stage, with basslines vibrating through the air, while Kingston Beach became a paradise of rhythm as steelpan orchestras competed for glory under the golden glow of the setting sun.

But it was the grand parade through the streets of Georgetown that stole the show. With an estimated 90,000 revellers flooding the route, it was a spectacle of epic proportions. The air shimmered with the heat of the day and the infectious energy of the crowd, a sea of feathers, sequins, and glitter moving to the infectious beat of the road DJs.

The first floats rolled out at 11 a.m., with the last glittering convoy bringing up the rear just after 7:15 p.m. A total of 27 bands made their mark on the streets, their elaborate designs and dazzling colours capturing the imagination of thousands. Party trucks, the lifeblood of the parade, kept the energy sky-high, with Decoded Carnival leading the charge with a staggering eight trucks, followed by Hits and Jams with three, Pulse with two, and Massy and Scooby Doo Sundays adding to the carnival chaos with their own rolling sound systems.

It was, in a word, organized. A triumph. City Hall, which had taken charge of vending spots, ensured not just one but two rounds of cleaning to keep the capital from descending into total post-party disarray. And while revellers danced, drank, and drenched themselves in the magic of Mash, an army of designers, coordinators and organizers worked around the clock to make it all possible.

The demand for bigger, brighter, more elaborate costumes pushed creativity to its limits, but as the final floats rolled down the road, it was clear: they had triumphed. The costumes were jaw-dropping, intricate, and infused with a level of artistry that elevated this year's celebration to new heights.

A first-time visitor from Colombia, found himself mesmerized by the steelpan competition, the hypnotic, metallic harmonies drawing him deeper into the festivities. Another visitor from the United States was struck by the sheer community of it all—how every single person, whether mashin' or watching from the sidelines, was part of something bigger, something uniquely, unmistakably Guyana.

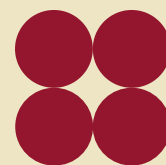
Andrew Tyndall, Director of National Events, the man in charge was pleased with the end result and is committed to making the festival bigger and better next year.

Mashramani 2025 was proof that Guyana's national festival was not just alive, but thriving. Bigger, better, and more intoxicatingly vibrant than ever, this year's celebration had set a new standard. And as the last echoes of the music faded into the night, one thing was certain: Mashramani was not just an event—it was an experience, a feeling, a living, breathing testament to the soul of Guyana.



2025 MASHRAMANI SONG COMPETITION

OFFICIAL RESULTS



2025 MASHRAMANI SONG COMPETITIONS OFFICIAL RESULTS

ADULT SOCA MONARCH
 Winner: Diana Chapman
 2nd: OKC
 3rd: Omalah Hall
 4th: Vintayge & Chavez Sital
 Best New Comer: Chavez Sital

JUNIOR SOCA MONARCH
 Winner: Kyra
 2nd: Simeon Raywaram
 3rd: So Hype
 Best New Comer: Tonio GY

CHUTNEY MONARCH
 Winner: Vicadi Singh
 2nd: OKC & Sonia Singh
 3rd: Arijit Singh
 4th: A W Lyrical
 Best New Comer: Simon Naidu

DANCEHALL MONARCH
 Winner: Carlvn Burnett
 2nd: Alabama & Lil Saint
 4th: Crenity
 Best New Comer: Carlvn Burnett

ADULT CALYPSO MONARCH
 Winner: Ego
 2nd: Young Bill Rogers
 3rd: Vinel Hinds
 4th: OKC
 Best New Comer: Vinel Hinds

JUNIOR CALYPSO MONARCH
 Winner: Kenisha Fraser
 2nd: Simeon Raywaram
 3rd: Deanna Hinds
 Best New Comer: Kenisha Fraser

STEEL BAND RESULTS
YOUTH BAND
 Winner: West Demerara Steel Orchestra
 2nd: Berbice High Steel Orchestra
 3rd: GSTI Buxton Steel Orchestra

LARGE BAND
 Winner: Kunjaz Steel Orchestra
 2nd: Ansa Mcal Parkside Steel Orchestra
 3rd: Guyana Police Force

2025 MASHRAMANI COSTUME AND FLOAT PARADE OFFICIAL RESULTS

FLOAT - NON COMMERCIAL
 1st: Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport
 2nd: Ministry of Public Works
 3rd: Ministry of Housing & Water- CHPA

DESIGNER
 Neilson Nurse
 Jermaine Brooms
 Jermaine Brooms

FLOAT COMMERCIAL
 1st: GUYOIL
 2nd: Heritage Band

Samuel Ince
Neilson Nurse

REGIONAL COMPETITION
 1st: Regional Democratic Council, Region 5
 2nd: Regional Democratic Council, Region 4
 3rd: Regional Democratic Council, Region 10

Sign Arts
Trevor Alfred
Cordell Williams

ROAD MARCH WINNER
 Omalah Hall- Breakway

DESIGNER OF THE YEAR
 Maxi Williams & Neilson Nurse

2025 MASHRAMANI COSTUME AND FLOAT PARADE OFFICIAL RESULTS
SEMI-COSTUME BANDS

LARGE BANDS
 1st: Ministry of Agriculture

DESIGNER
 Olypia Small- Sonaram

MEDIUM BANDS
 1st: Office of the Prime Minister

Olypia Small- Sonaram

SMALL BANDS
 1st: Regional Democratic Council, Region 5

Sign Arts

KING OF THE BAND
 1st: Ministry of Amerindian Affairs
 2nd: Ministry of Education
 3rd: Office of the Prime Minister

Maxi Williams
Neilson Nurse
Olypia Small- Sonaram

QUEEN OF THE BAND
 1st: Ministry of Agriculture
 2nd: Ministry of Amerindian Affairs
 3rd: Region Democratic Council, Region 4

Olypia Small- Sonaram
Maxi Williams
Trevor Alfred

FEMALE INDIVIDUAL
 1st: Ministry of Amerindian Affairs
 2nd: Ministry of Agriculture
 3rd: Ministry of Housing & Water - CHPA

Maxi Williams
Olypia Small- Sonaram
Jermaine Brooms

MALE INDIVIDUAL
 1st: Ministry of Amerindian Affairs
 2nd: Ministry of Human Service and Social Security
 3rd: Ministry of Agriculture

Maxi Williams
Maxi Williams
Olypia Small- Sonaram

2025 MASHRAMANI BRIGHT- GUYANA COMPETITION OFFICIAL RESULTS

NON COMMERCIAL- Decorated Building
 1st: Office of the Prime Minister
 2nd: Ministry of Labour

COMMERCIAL - Decorated and Illuminated Building
 1st: Guyana Water Inc

NON COMMERCIAL- Decorated and Illuminated Building
 1st: Ministry of Housing and Water- Central Housing and Planning Authority

RESIDENTIAL- Decorated and Illuminated Building
 1st: Vibert and Alexander Belle

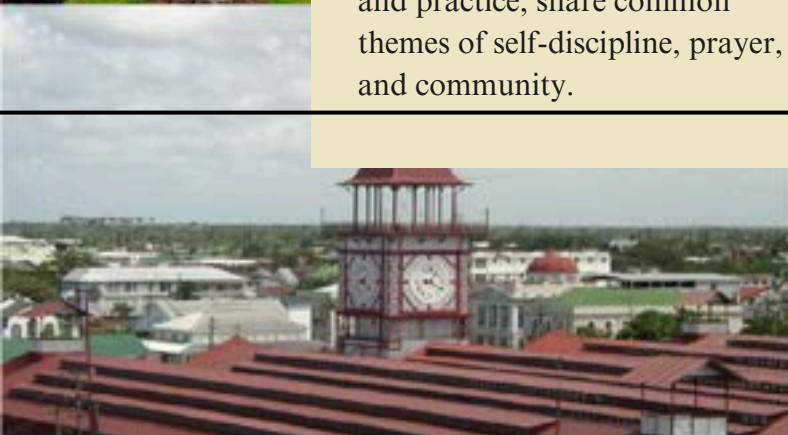
RESIDENTIAL- Best Parapet
 1st: Vibert and Alexander Belle

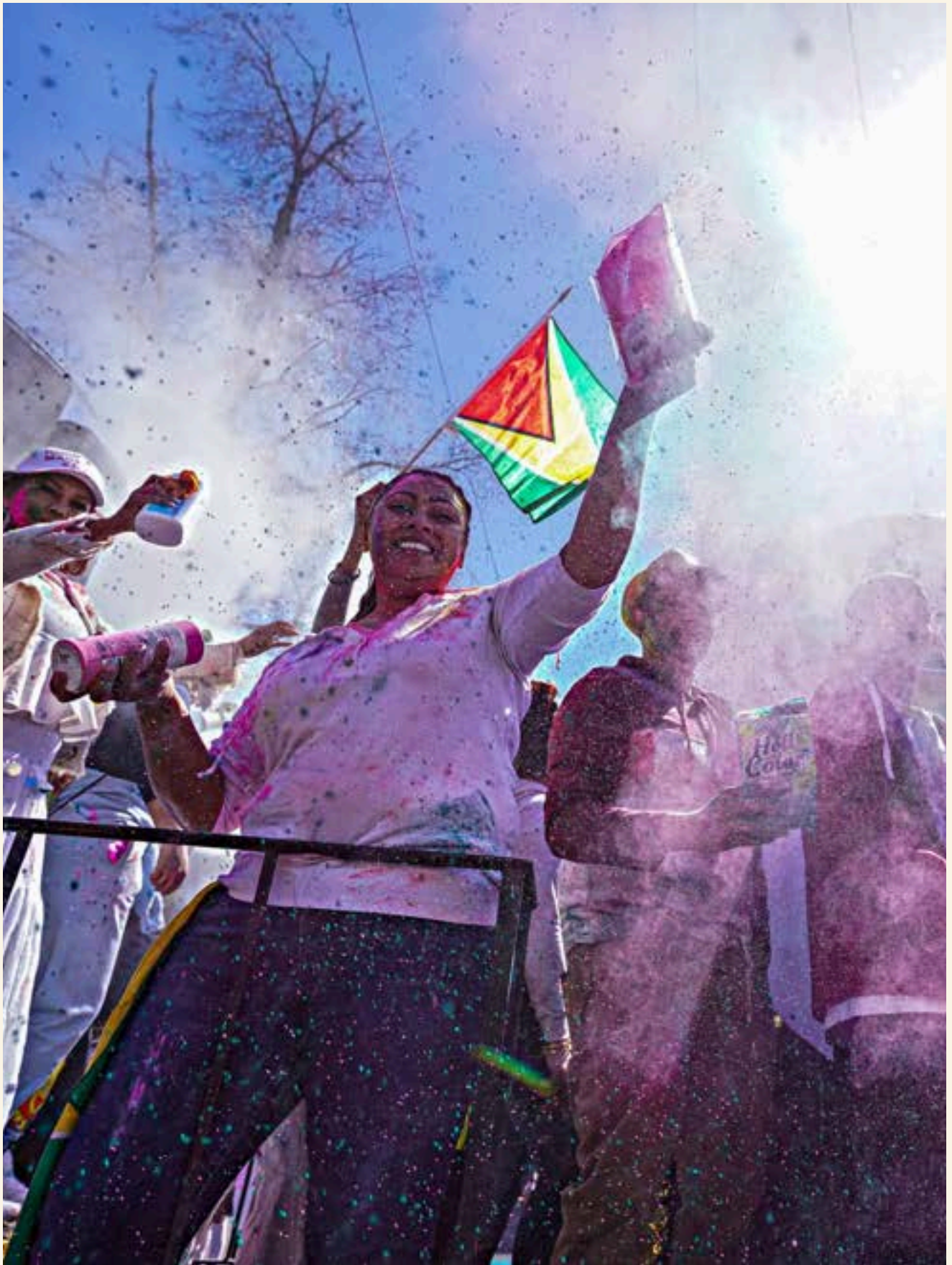




Faith in Action

Following the exuberant celebrations of Mashramani in February, Guyana transitions into a period of spiritual reflection as both Muslims and Christians observe their respective fasting traditions: Ramadan and Lent. These periods, though distinct in origin and practice, share common themes of self-discipline, prayer, and community.







PHAGWAH

The morning of March 14, 2025, dawned with a deceptive calm, a quiet that belied the impending explosion of colour and joy that is Phagwah in Guyana. Much like the anticipation of Christmas morning, this day is eagerly awaited by young and old alike. In homes across the country, the early hours are dedicated to preparing sweetmeats and traditional dishes, ensuring that all can fully partake in the day's exuberant festivities.

Phagwah, also known as Holi, is a festival that has transcended its Hindu origins to become a national celebration embraced by all Guyanese. It symbolizes the arrival of spring and the victory of good over evil, themes that resonate universally.

Communities come alive as people gather in the streets, armed with water balloons, buckets, and an array of coloured powders. Laughter fills the air as revellers playfully drench each other, erasing distinctions of age, gender, and social status in a vibrant display of unity.

The celebrations are not confined to individual neighbourhoods. Events like the Guyana Hindu Dharmic Sabha's 'Rang Rasiya' Mela, held on March 8 at the Dharmic Rama Krishna School tarmac, draw large crowds eager to enjoy cultural performances, music, and a variety of culinary delights. Such gatherings exemplify the festival's ability to bring together diverse segments of society in joyous camaraderie.

As the day progresses, the initial calm is replaced by a riot of colours and sounds. Traditional songs, known as chowtaals, echo through the streets, accompanied by the rhythmic beats of drums. The air is thick with the sweet scent of delicacies like gujiya and pholourie, tempting passers-by to indulge. Children and adults alike are transformed into walking canvases, each hue telling a story of shared moments and spontaneous encounters. Phagwah in Guyana is more than a festival; it is a testament to the nation's rich cultural tapestry and its enduring spirit of inclusivity.

It is a day when the barriers that often divide us are washed away in a sea of colour, leaving behind a vivid reminder of our shared humanity.

As evening falls and the colours begin to fade, the sense of unity and joy lingers, a poignant reminder of the power of celebration to bring people together. Phagwah is not just a day of revelry; it is a vibrant affirmation of Guyana's collective identity and the enduring bonds that connect its people.

LENT

Lent is a 40-day period of penance and fasting observed by Christians, commemorating the time Jesus spent fasting in the wilderness. It begins on Ash Wednesday and concludes on Holy Thursday. During Lent, Catholics aged 18 to 59 are required to fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, meaning they may eat one full meal and two smaller meals that together do not equal a full meal. Additionally, Catholics aged 14 and older must abstain from meat on Ash Wednesday, Good Friday, and all Fridays during Lent.

Fasting Traditions: Similarities and Differences

Both Ramadan and Lent emphasize spiritual growth through fasting, prayer, and almsgiving. However, the practices differ in several ways:

- **Duration and Timing:** Ramadan lasts for one lunar month (29 or 30 days), with fasting observed daily from dawn to sunset. Lent spans 40 days, not including Sundays, with specific days designated for fasting and abstinence.
- **Fasting Requirements:** During Ramadan, Muslims fast daily from dawn to sunset, abstaining from all food and drink. In contrast, during Lent, Catholics fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, and abstain from meat on all Fridays.
- **Spiritual Focus:** Both periods encourage increased prayer, reflection, and charitable acts. Ramadan places a strong emphasis on community, with communal prayers and shared meals, while Lent focuses on personal penance and preparation for Easter.

Conclusion of the Fasting Periods

The end of these fasting periods is marked by significant religious celebrations:

- **Eid al-Fitr:** At the conclusion of Ramadan, Muslims celebrate Eid al-Fitr, the "Festival of Breaking the Fast," with communal prayers, feasting, giving of gifts, and acts of charity.
- **Easter:** Lent culminates in Holy Week and the celebration of Easter Sunday, commemorating the resurrection of Jesus Christ. This period is marked by special church services, feasting, and various cultural traditions.

These observances highlight the rich tapestry of faith and tradition in Guyana, showcasing the country's multicultural essence and the fostering of unity through diversity.





RAMADAN

Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic lunar calendar, during which Muslims worldwide fast from dawn to sunset. In 2025, Ramadan is expected to begin around March 1 and conclude around March 30, depending on the sighting of the moon.

The daily fast, known as sawm, involves abstaining from food, drink, smoking, and marital relations during daylight hours. The fast is broken at sunset with a meal called iftar, traditionally starting with the consumption of dates, followed by a larger meal. The pre-dawn meal before the fast begins is called suhur.

The Heartbeat of Guyana's Tourism

THAG's Role in Shaping an Unforgettable Destination



For over 30 years, the Tourism & Hospitality Association of Guyana (THAG) has been the engine driving Guyana's tourism industry forward. Think of THAG as the ultimate hype team for everything that makes Guyana magical—from lush rainforests and roaring waterfalls to the warmth of our people and the vibrant energy of our cities. This powerhouse of tourism not only amplifies the voices of local businesses but also provides members with tools to thrive, even when the industry faces tough times.

Bringing Guyana to the World

Ever flipped through *Explore Guyana* magazine? If not, you're missing out! THAG's flagship publication is a one-way ticket to discovering the best of Guyana. Whether you're grabbing a copy at the airport, flipping through it in a hotel lobby, or seeing it showcased at international travel expos, this magazine does more than just promote—it inspires. With stunning visuals and immersive storytelling, *Explore Guyana* invites travellers to dive into the wonders of "The Land of Many Waters."

Stronger Together: THAG's Power Partnerships

Tourism doesn't grow in isolation. That's why THAG teams up with key players to elevate Guyana's industry. Its biggest ally? The Guyana Tourism Authority (GTA)—a partnership that keeps public and private sector efforts aligned for maximum impact.

But that's not all. Through collaborations with Catalyste+ (a Canadian training initiative), ActionInvest, and the Protected Areas Commission, THAG ensures its members get top-tier training, business support, and sustainability resources. The goal? A tourism industry that not only flourishes but does so in a way that respects and protects Guyana's incredible natural treasures.

Sustainability with a Heart

Sustainability isn't just a buzzword for THAG—it's a mission. The association is committed to tourism that uplifts communities, preserves the environment, and creates top-tier visitor experiences. Case in point: the Essequibo Circuit Project. Supported by GTA and Compete Caribbean, this initiative is putting Essequibo's hidden gems on the map, culminating in the launch of Discover Essequibo—a one-stop online hub showcasing the region's attractions.

And because tourism's future depends on the next generation, THAG introduced SWIFT (Student Work and Internship for Tourism), a hands-on program that connects students with real-world hospitality experiences. Two-week internships and school outreach sessions are igniting a new wave of tourism enthusiasts, ensuring fresh talent keeps the industry dynamic and innovative.

The Future is Bright (and Busy!)

The future of Guyana's tourism? Pure fire! With eco-lodges, sustainable retreats, and community-driven experiences on the rise, Guyana is quickly becoming a must-visit destination. The country's accommodation scene is booming, with seven new hotels set to open by 2025—and more in the pipeline.

Air travel is also leveling up. Soon, direct flights from Toronto, Houston, Miami, New York, and London will make getting here easier than ever. And with new connections to Grenada, St. Lucia, and Rio de Janeiro, Guyana is stepping into the spotlight as a global tourism hotspot.

Events That Set the Bar High

No tourism calendar is complete without THAG's signature events, each designed to celebrate and uplift the industry:

THAG President's Annual Awards Dinner & Auction – A night of glitz, glamour, and recognition for tourism's finest. In 2023, President Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali graced the stage with his insights. In 2024, First Lady Arya Ali took the mic, celebrating her Beautification Project and its synergy with THAG's vision for a more inviting Guyana.

Guyana Restaurant Week – A 10-day food fiesta where top restaurants roll out exclusive prix-fixe menus. Think bold flavours, innovative dishes, and a chance for chefs to test out new creations before adding them to their menus. Explore, eat, repeat!

Tapas, Rum & Wine – The newest kid on the block! This event blends culinary artistry with fine wines and premium spirits, serving up delicious bites in an interactive, social setting. It's all about good food, good drinks, and even better vibes.

The Heart of Tourism

At its core, THAG is more than an organization—it's a movement. A movement that champions tourism, inspires adventure, and ensures that Guyana remains one of the most unforgettable destinations in the world. With people, sustainability, and innovation at its heart, THAG isn't just keeping the industry alive—it's making it thrive.

So, whether you're a local business, an aspiring tourism professional, or a traveller eager to explore, know this: the best of Guyana is yet to come—and THAG is at the heart of it all, making sure of it happens!

2025 UPCOMING LIST OF EVENTS

Date	Event	Venue
April 1	Eldorado Cocktail competition	Herdmanston Lodge
April 7-12	Eldorado Cocktail competition	Herdmanston Lodge
April 12	Games Fest 2025	Marriott Hotel
April 19-20	Rupununi Rodeo	Lethem Rodeo Ground
April 27	Circuit Racing Series – Round 1	South Dakota Circuit
May 4	Elite Kayaking Inter School Competition	Linden- Watooka Guest House
May 11	Dakota 100 Endurance Series – Round 2	South Dakota Circuit
May 17	May Blossom – Jewels	National Cultural Centre
May 21	Touchdown	Guyana National Stadium
May 22	Stingingnettle	National Park
May 23	Stink & Dutty Jouvert	Marriott Beach Front
May 24	Baderation	Guyana National Stadium
May 25	Soca & wine	Guyana National Stadium
May 26	Kool out	Guyana National Stadium
June 1	Drag Racing Series – Round 2	South Dakota Circuit
June 20-29	Guyana Restaurant Week	Participating Restaurants
June 22	Brush Bubbles & Poetry	Promenade Gardens
July 6	Circuit Racing Series – Round 2	South Dakota Circuit
July 8-18	Global Super League Season 2	Guyana National Stadium
July 12	Indigenous Imagination 3 – Exhibition	Black Magenta
July 19	Fairre of the Ages is a Renaissance Fair/Festival	Promenade Gardens
July 20	Elite Kayaking National School Kayaking Competition	Linden- Watooka Guest House
July 26	Blue Berry Hill Village Day	Felspar Avenue (Multi Road)
July 26	Pan Jazz	Parc Rayne
August 9	Indigenous Imagination 3 Fashion Show	University of Guyana
August 17	Guyana Cup	Rising Sun Turf Club
August 24	Jamzone	Splashmins
August 24	Annual Dirtbike & Quad Race	Mainstay
August 31	Dakota 100 Endurance Series – Round	South Dakota Circuit



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