

## **A Simple Description of Guyana**

The Co-operative Republic of Guyana is a country on the northern coast of South America that is culturally part of the Anglophone Caribbean. Guyana has been a former colony of the British, Dutch and for a brief period, the French. It is the only country of the Commonwealth of Nations on mainland South America, and is also a member of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), which has its secretariat headquarters in Guyana's capital, Georgetown. Guyana achieved independence from the United Kingdom on 26 May 1966 and became a Republic on 23 February 1970.

Historically, the region known as "Guayana" was the large shield landmass north of the Amazon River and East of the Orinoco River. Five sub-regions were carved out of the landmass by colonial powers in the late 17th and early 18th century: Spanish Guiana, Portuguese Guiana, British Guiana, Dutch Guiana, and the present French overseas department of French Guiana.

Historic Guyana is made up of three Dutch colonies: Essequibo, Demerara and Berbice. Modern Guyana is bordered to the east by Suriname, to the south and southwest by Brazil, to the west by Venezuela, and on the north by the Atlantic Ocean.

With an Area 83,012 sq mi (215,000 km<sup>2</sup>), Guyana is the third-smallest independent country on the mainland of South America (after Uruguay and Suriname). Its population is approximately 770,000. It is one of the five non-Spanish-speaking countries on the continent, along with Brazil (Portuguese), Suriname (Dutch), the Falkland Islands (English) and French Guiana (French).