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Dear Friends,

Not surprisingly, COVID-19 continues to be the big story in Guyana tourism. The country is still closed for international arrivals but hopes to reopen soon. I don't have a crystal ball to tell you exactly when that will be, but we know travel will happen again and Guyana will be ready to welcome you all. These are not typical times and this is not your typical monthly newsletter. Guyana has a Tourism Resiliency Plan. One that they are currently rolling out and updating as the situation changes. We have highlighted some points below that we thought you might find interesting. We've also highlighted some of the new protocols our tourism industry is implementing to reassure visitors of how much we value their health and safety.

There is, however, another big piece of news coming out of Guyana; Carla James has been named to be the new Director of the Guyana Tourism Authority. She will replace Brian T. Mullis, who is completing his tenure at the end of April. Carla has been with the GTA for 16 years and is uniquely qualified to lead it through these difficult times. She's also the first Indigenous woman to hold the position and a source of pride to so many. It has been an honor and a pleasure to work with Brian during his time at the helm. We wish him and his family the best as they plan their return to the US, and we look forward to working with Carla in years to come.

All the best,

Jane Behrend
Lead Representative, North America

UPCOMING WEBINARS

April 30. Iwokrama River Lodge: Revive your senses in Guyana | [Register Here](#)

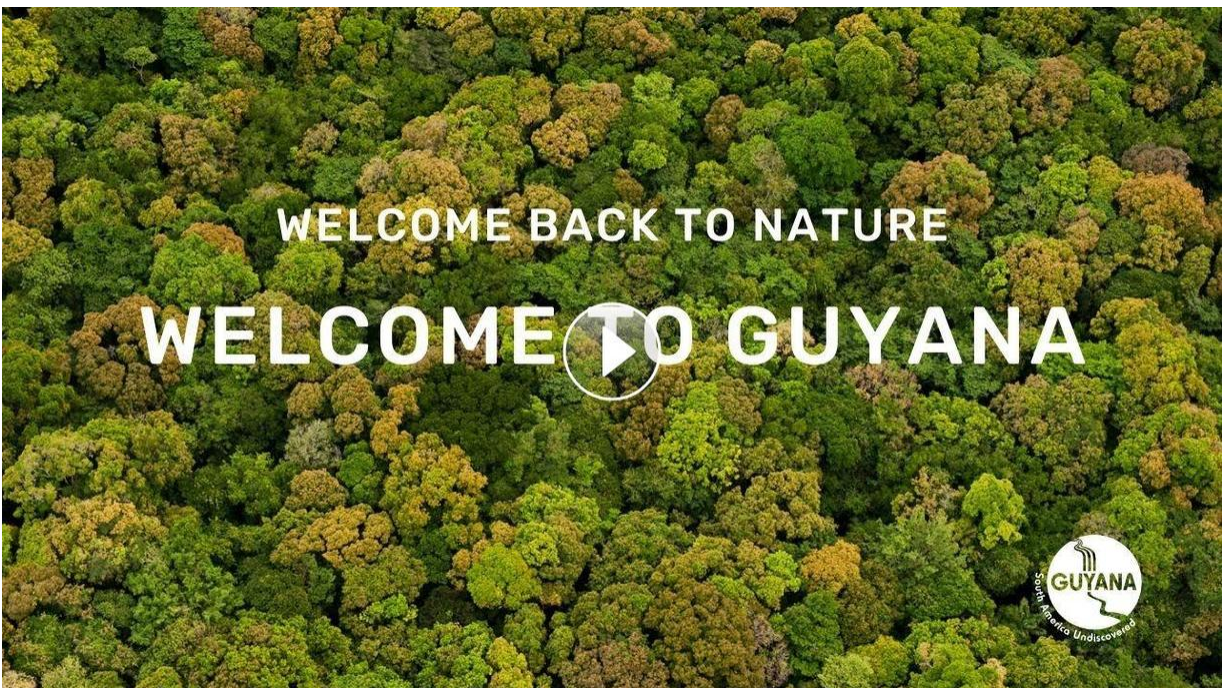
May 14. The South Rupununi Circuit with Wilderness Explorers | [Register Here](#)

May 21. Guyana Undiscovered | [Register Here](#)

VIDEO OF THE MONTH

Sadly, during this COVID-19 pandemic, we can only dream of spectacular travel. To those who can dream there is no such place as far away. Here's a short video to feed your dreams of Guyana. It encourages us all to slow down, appreciate the gifts we have and look forward to the life-affirming experiences yet to come.

When this is all over, we will be here waiting for you. Waiting to say: Welcome back to nature. Welcome to Guyana. Enjoy the video!



PERSON OF THE MONTH: CARLA JAMES



For the past 16 years, the refrain, “Ask Carla” has been a familiar one in the Guyana travel and tourism sector. Carla James has an unmatched knowledge of all aspects of tourism in Guyana, so very few were surprised when, earlier this month, it was announced she would be the next Director of the Guyana Tourism Authority. Carla’s appointment is a historic one. She will be the first Indigenous woman to assume the Director role. Carla is a proud Akawaio, a native of Kamarang Village, and a source of inspiration to all those seeking to shatter glass ceilings.

MAKING THE EFFORTS TODAY TO PREPARE FOR TOMORROW

This is normally the point in the newsletter where we share a special Guyana itinerary with you. However, since international travel is off the table for a little while longer, we thought we’d use this space to let you know how we’re dealing with the crisis here in Guyana.

The aggressive level of responsiveness in Guyana—including closing our airports to international flights on March 18, and practicing social distancing—has minimized the impact of COVID-19 here. To date, there are only 67 confirmed cases in the entire country.



The GTA has issued extensive hygiene and sanitation protocols for domestic lodging providers, transportation service providers and restaurants to meet what will be visitors’ elevated expectations. These protocols cover: Purchasing appropriate cleaning products; Training staff, Room cleaning, Cleaning public spaces; Monitoring and managing staff and guest health; Maintaining record; Managing outside visitation; Dining; Transportation services.



Travel providers on the ground here are creating new, often shorter itineraries, and making pricing and cancellation policies as attractive as possible.

We’d also like to share some of our thoughts of what international travel is going to look like on the other side of the COVID-19 pandemic. Many of these point to Guyana becoming an increasingly desirable destination for people seeking these things.

More people are going to seek out less-travelled destinations that are free from crowds, perceived to

be safe, and known to be clean, green and pristine.

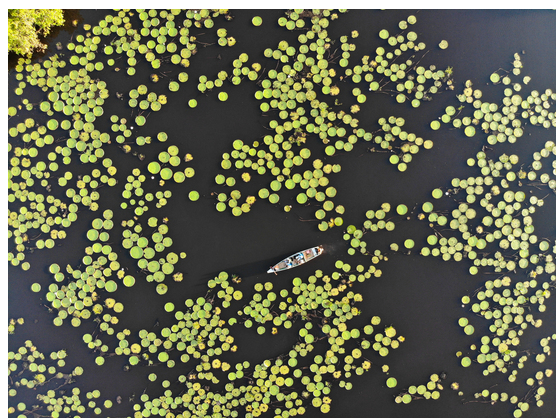
Destinations that are leaders in sustainability and that provide visitors with opportunities to positively impact the people and places they visit (e.g., benefit entire communities, protect wildlife) are going to increasingly popular.

Demand for small group and private travel experiences will increase. The adventure travel market will likely lead the charge back, and begin travelling as soon as it is relatively safe to.



As you can see, the Guyana tourism industry is very busy taking steps to ensure that when the world is ready to travel again, we will be ready to welcome them.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE GUYANA TOURISM RESILIENCY STRATEGY AND SUPPORT PLAN



As a part of its response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Guyana Tourism Authority (GTA) has developed an extensive Resiliency Strategy & Tourism Sector Support Plan. While the findings and recommendations of the plan are primarily directed to Guyana's domestic tourism stakeholders, there are certain elements that will be of interest to North Americans hoping to visit Guyana in the future.

- The GTA is providing local stakeholders with a steady flow of communications that include regular updates, guidance and insights.
- Rescheduling FAM trips and other activities
- Advocating to the local sector for a price freeze on 2020-2021 prices and the need to have their rates ready for you upon request.
- Developing virtual tours, online experiences, and new itineraries for millennials and more adventurous travellers.
- Developing online trainings on topics that include increasing the flexibility of booking and cancellation policies; encouraging clients to postpone their visits as opposed to cancelling; increasing the rigour of health, hygiene, and sanitation standards; and keeping clients engaged as much as possible.
- Investing more in sustainable destination management and product development to inspire and prepare for the new norms.
- Making recommendations to the Ministry of Finance and policymakers to help support the Guyana tourism sector through the crisis.



Updated information on the Guyana Travel Advisory can be found on our website [here](#) or on the GTA's [Facebook page](#).



April 2020

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