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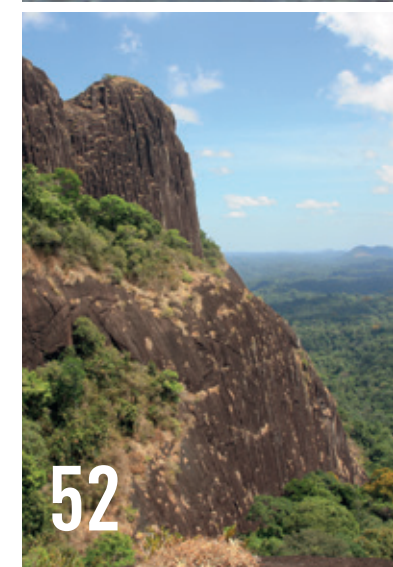
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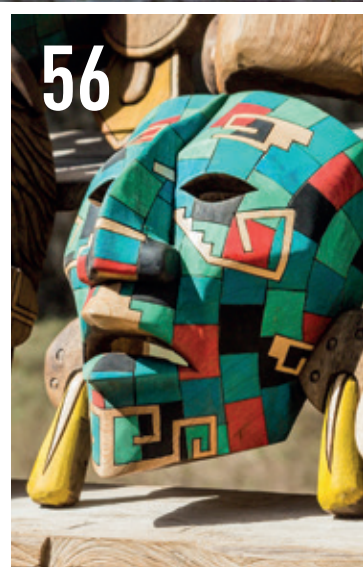
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# E

## EDITORIAL



Editor & Publisher  
**SYLVIE DUTOIT**  
[info@popular-places.com](mailto:info@popular-places.com)



A dramatic hideaway nestled in the heart of our Surinamese rainforest. Captivating destinations resorts that blends smoothly with its natural surroundings. Situated on the mystical Rivers of Suriname, each villa, or lodge enjoys the embrace of the lush rainforest and offers stunning views from private balcony of the breathtaking jungle. Reconnect with nature, rekindle your spirit and reignite your soul in this serene natural haven.

Most people visit Suriname's inland destinations as part of an organized tour. In such cases, all transport will be arranged for you, often including boat trips and 4x4 road tours. Individual travel is increasingly possible along the rivers, as villages discover the financial benefits of receiving guests. Some stretches can be explored individually without too much effort. Once at your destination you will be handed over to the local transport options - and those are usually quite limited. Often you will only be able to move on foot or by boat. Boat taxis run irregularly between some villages. Never forget where you are however: the jungle is wide and far. Even for shorter hikes into the forest to find a water fall or other sight it's advisable to hire a guide.

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RESORTS & LODGES / TOUROPERATORS



# CONSERVING THE 'GREEN GOLD'

TEXT - IWAN BRAVE | PHOTOGRAPHER - REDD+



Suriname is proud to be the most forested country in the world. 93% of its territory is covered by primarily pristine forest with a very high biodiversity. As part of the Guyana Shield which borders the Amazon, the Surinamese forest is of global importance for the ecosystem services. It is also of primary importance to combat climate change of which deforestation is one of the main causes. Through conservation of its forest, Suriname is able to earn 'carbon credits' for sustainable economic developments.

Through global industry, agriculture, transport, consumption and deforestation, large amounts of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) remain in the atmosphere. This 'extra blanket' causes global warming and thus climate change. Trees (and plants) have the crucial task to take up CO<sub>2</sub> during the day. Due to large-scale deforestation, an enormous carbon storage capacity gets lost, releasing CO<sub>2</sub> as 'greenhouse gas'.

Of the global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, 20 percent comes from deforestation, in particular in South America, South-east Asia and Africa. The annual deforestation in Suriname which is 0.05 percent, is 'relatively low'. It is, however, still an alarming doubling, in comparison to 2009 with 0.02 percent. In Suriname, mining is the cause of 73% of deforestation whereby small-scale, uncontrolled gold mining has the greatest impact on the environment. The increasing timber production causes 'forest degradation'.





## REDD+ PROGRAM

Suriname is a member of the UN Climate Change Convention. In 2008, the agreement was made to drastically combat deforestation. A particular appeal was made therewith on forested countries to protect and sustainably manage their forest as much as possible. Suriname's 15.2 million hectares forest represents nearly 1 percent of the total global tropical forest. Through conservation of its forest, Suriname can make a considerable contribution in the fight against climate change.

The REDD+ Program of the UN was established in 2005 to promote the reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. It stands for 'Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation'. The '+' stands for 'additional reduction' of CO<sub>2</sub> through sustainable forest management. Countries that exploit sustainable economic activities which also benefit the local indigenous and tribal communities, can be eligible for financing. REDD+ is not against mining, timber exploitation or opening up of land. It is about a balance between nature conservation, economic growth and social development, with a minimal negative impact on the environment.

## CARBON CREDITS

REDD+ is implemented in over 60 countries. Suriname also advocates conservation of the 'green gold'. With the internationally earned 'carbon credits', other sustainable economic developments can be stimulated, such as a flourishing ecotourism and economic diversification. However, the growth of the Surinamese economy is as yet largely dependent on the extraction industries. This therefore poses to be a true challenge. REDD+ implementation is included in the government's National Development Plan (OP) 2017-2021.

In 2014, Suriname received funds from the World Bank for 'readiness'. The REDD+ Readiness Program is being implemented by the National Institute for the Environment and Development in Suriname (NIMOS), which has established a Project Management Unit for this purpose. "This is a business opportunity which we must make use of. We will be able to finance certain development goals", says Cedric Nelom, acting general manager of NIMOS.

The REDD+ Program has three phases: readiness, implementation and results-based. Suriname has almost completed the readiness phase. Amongst others, a National REDD+ Strategy was formulated. Also, the 'reference level' of national CO<sub>2</sub> emissions is established as a starting point for the calculation of carbon credits.

"The National REDD+ Strategy encompasses which developments are important within the scope of sustainable forest management and to combat deforestation and forest degradation", says Sandra Bihari, project coordinator of the REDD+ Program. "It indicates our long term ambitions and which implementation capacity is required to achieve these. As such, the National REDD+ Strategy is a tool for a sustainable and diversified economy." The strategy is formulated with wide engagement of the government, civil society, business community, technical institutions and the indigenous and tribal communities.

## THE FOUR STRATEGIC LINES

The national REDD+ strategy comprises of four strategic lines. The first: 'continue being a high forest cover and low deforestation country and receive a financial compensation for this'. The second: 'sustainable forest management with early participation of various stakeholders, strict monitoring, control and supervision'. Concrete proposals were made for renewal of environmental legislation. It also regards capacity strengthening of institutions responsible for forest monitoring, control and enforcement, and of the local communities who are dependent on forests.

The Foundation for Forest Management and Production Control in Suriname (SBB), responsible, within REDD+, for the National Forest Monitoring System, is one of these institutions. Since 2012, SBB has a Forest Carbon Monitoring Unit. By using nearly real-time monitoring and satellite images, deforestation can be almost immediately detected. In the meantime, SBB has produced five deforestation maps. "With these, we are able to show all stakeholders the actual situation", says Rene Somopawiro, manager Research and Development.

The third strategic line: 'a new coherent legislation and planning for sustainable land use which should lead to an improved land management and forest protection'. The fourth: 'forest conservation, reforestation and scientific research and education in the area of sustainable forest management'.



## HFLD COUNTRY

# G

## GREEN GOLD

Suriname is an HFLD (high forest cover, low deforestation) country. During the Climate Conference in Bonn, the country confirmed that it will maintain this status. The Paris Climate Agreement compels countries to approach and adjust the drivers of climate change. A draft Environmental Framework Act is currently being discussed in the Surinamese Parliament. This regards a coherent environmental legislation as worked out by NIMOS, in collaboration with amongst others, relevant ministries and the Environmental Coordination Unit of the Office of the President.

"Suriname should be done with its role as a raw material supplier", says Winston Lackin, head of the Environmental Coordination Unit. "We practically earn nothing with this. End products, on the other hand, mean added value, employment and technology for the country. We also see diversification of our economy with regard to the environment." Almost all countries that have signed the Climate Agreement, have formulated a 'Nationally Determined Contribution' (NDC). Lackin: "The Climate Agreement shall take effect in 2020 and the NDC's are commitments. Each country must report every five years, otherwise you will not receive funds from the environmental treaties."



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F

PLANTAGE RESORT  
FREDERIKSDORP

# PLANTATION HISTORY COMES ALIVE

TEXT & PHOTOGRAPHER - ACCESS SURINAME TRAVEL



Enter the world of Plantage Resort Frederiksdorp. The beautifully situated plantation estate in district Commewijne, Suriname is a tropical pearl surrounded by other plantations, fishing villages, sea beaches, mangrove forests and beautiful wetland nature reserve.

Plantation of Frederiksdorp was founded around 1747 by Johan Friedrich Knöffel, a Prussian settler. It was known for the beautiful housing construction and agricultural development and was referred to as 'a jewel for the colony'. The area was recently restored to become Plantage Resort Frederiksdorp. Several of the colonial buildings have been renovated to their original 18th century style while the historical estate has been expanded with luxury cabanas, set in a luscious garden with fruit trees and water features. Because of its strategic location across from Paramaribo, the capitol of Suriname, Plantage Resort Frederiksdorp is the perfect base for a one-day visit as well as a multi-day stay.



# F

PLANTAGE RESORT  
**FREDERIKSDORP**

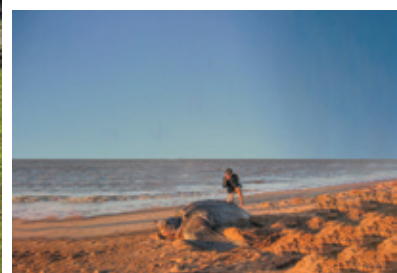
Suriname has numerous picturesque locations of which Commewijne is famous for its 18<sup>th</sup> century plantations. It is also home to Fort Nieuw Amsterdam, located at the estuary confluence of the Suriname- and Commewijne river, where the history of Suriname's plantation life and slavery are made visible.

The plantation as well as the surrounding area offer a wide range of leisurely and adventurous activities making a multi-day stay a must. Highly skilled guides expertly navigate guests through the historical sites and various ecosystems, each of which harbors its own special collection of flora and fauna, while the sea-turtle tour and the dolphin tour are a once in a lifetime experience.

Plantage Resort Frederiksdorp is the perfect place to completely unwind from the rush of everyday life while enjoying the local cuisine, nature and culture.

Welcome to the world of Plantage Resort Frederiksdorp.


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# O

PURE  
OXYGEN

## ‘TRULY THE BEST KEPT SECRET IN PARAMARIBO’

TEXT & PHOTOGRAPHER - OXYGEN RESORT



Oxygen Resort spoils her guests with authentic Surinamese hospitality, comfort and a slice of pure nature in the middle of Paramaribo. Hidden among tropical plants and surrounded by green pastures, you experience total tranquility.

### PURE OXYGEN

“When you throw open the doors of your apartment in the mornings, you are greeted by the unique forest smell. You breathe in pure oxygen”, says Lilian Wolf who has been a regular guest of the resort for about 10 years now. She remembers the start of ‘Oxygen and Moments’ well. There were only four simple, smaller apartments with a shared kitchen, right next to the home of the founders Diana Gummels and Andy Lijkwan (deceased). “It was as though you were coming to stay with them. Despite the substantial expansion, the warm homely atmosphere hasn’t changed one bit. The staff knows me and knows exactly how I like my coffee.” Even her friends like to come here to drink a cup of coffee in one of the larger cabanas near the pool. “I don’t have to go anywhere else anymore, I entertain myself right here on the resort. In the early mornings, I take a walk and after that I swim a few laps. Furthermore, I have fun with the other guests. Here, I enjoy the old memories and make new ones!”



## FAMILY ATMOSPHERE

Oxygen Resort currently consists of 48 apartments. C-types, smaller apartments with shared kitchen, B-types, very spacious studios with kitchenettes, 2- and 3-bedroom apartments and separate bungalows. The resort facilities include a gym, conference room and yoga space. Twice a week, guests can enjoy a free yoga class, and planned for the near future are other monthly events such as: a movie night, a karaoke night as well as other theme nights. Also possible are fun volleyball games, which often involve a little friendly competition between the guests and the staff. "One of our strongest features is the family atmosphere, which is something we continually strive to improve upon. The number of returning guests is very large. We also have many expats living on the resort and a number of guests who spend several months here during the winter time."

## HEALTH AND WELLNESS

In the vacation months June and July, the resort is usually filled with families with children. Oxygen is perfectly suited for children because of the two pools, the ping-pong table, mini playground and the small paths that take them safely throughout the premises. There are also plans for additional health and wellness features. The establishment of a botanical garden with fruit trees and orchids is already being executed. There are also ideas involving a massage hut. "Oxygen Resort is actually already complete, we just want to fine-tune everything according to the wishes of our guests", says Gummels.

## PERSONAL TOUCH

General manager Cedric Menig talks about the plans for a more extensive laundry service. "We are not a hotel. Nevertheless, we would still like to meet the need of our guests to have their laundry done. We are going to provide laundry services once a week, which will be included in the price. In addition to this, we will expand our laundromat. Guests are allowed to do their own laundry at all times, without the usual coins." The apartments are cleaned twice a week by reliable and well-trained cleaning staff. As it turns out, most of the employees have been working at Oxygen for many years. "Employee turnover is small and evaluation has shown that some of them actually prefer to be at Oxygen Resort rather than at home", laughs Cedric.

## BEST STEAKS AND CHEESECAKE

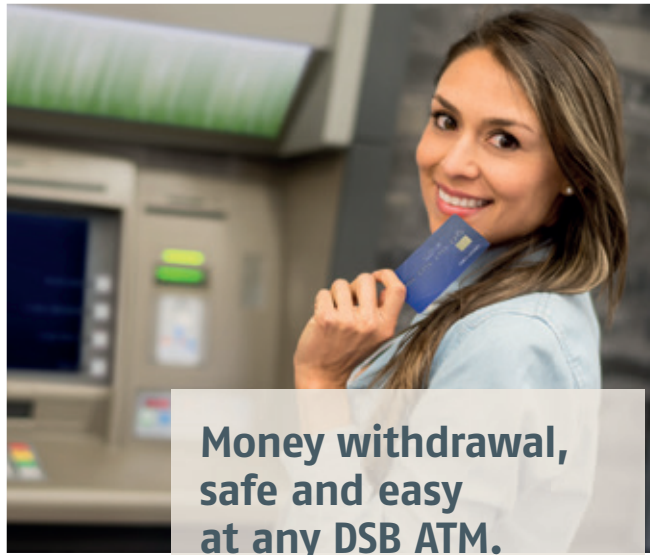
In 2012 Andy Lijkwan expanded the resort with what had always been his dream: a top restaurant, serving international cuisine. For over seven years now and under new management, 'Moments' is the place where you can order the best steaks, and the most delicious cheesecake in Paramaribo. In the restaurant, guests from the resort and locals out for a good meal all come together to enjoy the food and the ambiance. The restaurant is indeed a great spot for nice gatherings as well as for professional networking.



## SURINAMESE PRIDE

While enjoying a refreshing glass of ginger beer, businesswoman Monica Ramadhin of 'Tui at Home', says that her first experience at Oxygen Resort is excellent. "I feel great pride for the owner. I studied Hospitality in the Netherlands and have always wanted to do something for Suriname with regards to tourism. But she has actually done that. The combination of an eco-resort; with sustainable use of the environment in the sense of doing your own laundry, banning the use of straws and providing work to loyal employees. And on top that she offers the guests a real piece of Surinamese life. **Magnificent!**"





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Q

QUEENS

TEXT &amp; PHOTOGRAPHER - QUEENS HOTEL



# “EXPERIENCE THE HOSPITALITY”

Queens Hotel is a warm 3-star plus hotel with a prime location in the tourist and entertainment center of Paramaribo. The Hotel is surrounded by several Restaurants, Bars and Clubs. Sightseeing sites such as Palmentuin, Historical buildings, the Independence Square and down-town Paramaribo are all walking distance.

The lobby has a business center with two computers, comfortable sofas and complementary coffee, tea and water. Our reception is 24/7 at your service to make your stay as enjoyable and relaxed as possible.

The room rates include a welcome drink, breakfast buffet and use of our gym and pool. As guests of Queens Hotel we also offer you a 10% discount on one of our restaurants LQD Pool & Lounge Bar or The Garden.

For those seeking a homely environment with personal service, Queens Hotel is the perfect choice of a supreme stay in Suriname. Our friendly staff will make you feel at home and your stay at Queens Hotel will be one of a kind.



## THE ROOMS

We have 30 spacious rooms and they are all equipped with a king-size bed or two queen-size beds, air conditioning, safe, hot and cold water, wardrobe, desk, telephone, television, coffee maker and each have a private balcony.

## THE SUITES

Since December 2018 we have 2 new suites which have one or two bedrooms with a king-size bed which can accommodate up to 2-4 persons, a spacious bathroom, separate living room with windows that can be opened for some fresh air and a kitchen area equipped with refrigerator, electric water kettle for coffee or tea, microwave and cooking options.





Q  
QUEENS

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LQD (pronounced as Liquid) is the Pool, Restaurant & Lounge Bar located at Queens Hotel; where people can unwind, relax and dine various meals and enjoy our cocktails. Our stunning Pool is surrounded with comfortable chairs and tables, a beautiful Cabana and gorgeous plants that give you a peaceful feeling. LQD does not only provide food & beverages for hotel guests, but is also open for non-hotel guests.

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### Coppename

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### De Natuurdrogist

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### Pour Toi

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Abraham ph  
Samsonstraat 14a

# D

## DOMBURG

### LAARWIJK PLANTATION

TEXT - DON JULIO | PHOTOGRAPHER - FRANK OOSTERLEN

From cozy and hectic Paramaribo we depart in our colorful 'Don Julio on the River' and sail down the splendid Suriname River to the picturesque village of Domburg, located in the Wanica district.

During this almost one and a half hour lasting trip, we sail past some special Surinamese points of interest. We get past a silent witness of WWII history, the wreck of the German merchant ship. Goslar, and sail under the famous Jules Wijdenbosch Bridge, also called "Bosje" bridge, past the former coffee plantation Peperpot.



# D

## DOMBURG LAARWIJK PLANTATION

All of this of course over delicious drinks and a Surinamese delicacy. Once arrived in the friendly Javanese village of Domburg, known for its lively village square with its lush mahogany trees, delicious Javanese cuisine, the soothing view of the river and the many sailing ships mooring here, we go ashore where you can comfortably simmer down.

From here we sail a further fifteen minutes to one of the many special plantations which Suriname is rich with...beautiful Laarwijk. This former sugar plantation is located in the Commewijne district. Here you will find a few legacies of colonialism such as sluices and the unique irrigation structures.



“WE STEER THE BOAT, WE DON’T ALTER THE RIVER.”

J. Earp



# D

## DOMBURG

LAARWIJK PLANTATION

The local guide who knows everything about this extraordinary plantation will take you on a trip down memory lane and tell you all about this exceptional historical site. After a stroll of about an hour we conclude the visit with an on the spot serving up of a delicious Javanese-Surinamese meal. After you have recomposed yourself from all accumulated impressions and remarkable stories, we leave for the boat to set course for the city.



The **six-banded armadillo** (*Euphractus sexcinctus*), also known as the **yellow armadillo**, is an armadillo found in South America. The six-banded armadillo is typically between 40 and 50 centimeters (16 and 20 in) in head-and-body length, and weighs 3.2 to 6.5 kilograms (7.1 to 14.3 lb). The carapace (hard shell on the back) is pale yellow to reddish brown, marked by scales of equal length, and scantily covered by buff to white bristle-like hairs.

TEXT - POPULARPLACES | PHOTOGRAPHER - ONDREJ PROSICKY

The forefeet have five distinct toes, each with moderately developed claws. Six-banded armadillos are efficient diggers and form burrows to live in and search for prey. The armadillo is alert and primarily solitary. An omnivore, it feeds on insects, ants, carrion, and plant material. Due to their poor eyesight, armadillos rely on their sense of smell to detect prey and predators. The six-banded armadillo inhabits savannahs, primary and secondary forests, cerrados, shrublands, and deciduous forests. Fairly common, its range spans from Brazil and southern Suriname in the northeast through Bolivia, Paraguay, and Uruguay into northern Argentina in the southeast. The International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) classifies it as least concern, and there are no major threats to its survival.

# B

## SIX-BANDED ARMADILLO

A scenic view of a lake with a wooden dock extending into the water. Two people are standing on the dock, looking out at the water. A large palm tree is in the foreground on the right side. The sky is blue with white clouds. The background shows a dense line of green trees across the lake.

# K

KATWIJK

# PLANTAGE KATWIJK, ... FROM THE PAST, INTO THE PRESENT AND ON TO THE FUTURE

TEXT - ADA KORBEE | PHOTOGRAPHER - READYTEX NV/PLANTAGE KATWIJK



While driving along the narrow dirt road, on the last leg of the trip towards plantage Katwijk, one can't help but wonder what this area looked like, and felt like, around the second half of the 18th century when the plantation's rich history was just beginning to unfold. The peaceful tranquility that currently characterizes this rural part of district Commewijne, must surely be in stark contrast to the hustle and bustle that took place here in those colonial days marked by slavery and indentured labor, when the plantations in Suriname still flourished.

Historic records reveal many fascinating facts and anecdotes about this beautiful plantation situated on the left bank of the Commewijne River. It all starts in 1746 when the 13-year-old Alida Maria Wossink, by a gift from Governor Mauritius, becomes its first owner. She would however, be far from the last; the plantation would change hands many times throughout history. And while coffee was one of its most important crops from early on, fluctuating dynamics in the world markets would inspire changes there as well. Bananas, cocoa, sugarcane and cotton would at one time or another all sprout from the soils of plantage Katwijk. And when, around the beginning of the 20th century, most plantations in Suriname could no longer sustain their coffee crops, most of them transitioned to citrus. Katwijk was the only plantation that, in addition to its citrus crops, also maintained its coffee crops, and still does so today.

When Nagib Nouh-Chaia purchased the Katwijk plantation in 1974, the main crops were coffee, citrus and vegetables. Export, although no longer profitable, was still the main focus. Nouh-Chaia decided to concentrate instead on production solely for local markets and on the 'tree to table' process of producing coffee ready for consumption, under the brand name KW coffee. Of course, the plantation looked quite different by then. In over two centuries much had transpired on this 320-hectare plot of land along the Commewijne River. Certain remnants and indeed many stories, either written or told, do allude to the colonial splendor that was once part of plantage Katwijk. It is said for instance, that on the other side of the tamarind lined lane that currently leads to the main house by the river, there once stood a beautiful plantation home surrounded by ornate gardens, with among them, a family burial plot. The only traces left behind are the house's brick water reservoir, and elsewhere on the property, the abandoned gravestones of Mr. and Mrs. Swaen, who owned the plantation around the early 1800's.







# K KATWIJK

A more tangible reminder of the past, is the old director's house, which although run-down, still possesses a definite, albeit eerie, quality of charm and beauty. This house, which is suspected to have been part of the plantation right from the start, was alternately inhabited by various directors, overseers and managers. The old coffee drying floors, the adjacent buildings and old coffee barn, are part of the coffee production process even today. Early in the 20th century one of those buildings, probably the coffee barn – although it was at that time a cocoa barn – housed a hospital, the only in that region of Commewijne. In later years, around the time of the second world war to be exact, that same building was also used to incarcerate prostitutes who had been removed from the streets of Paramaribo.

With its rich history, the intriguing stories, and all of the trials and tribulations experienced in the agricultural endeavors throughout the years, plantage Katwijk's latest management team consisting of siblings Monique and Joseph Nouh-Chaia, chose to set out on a new path of development. Agriculture would remain important, but diversification would be necessary to keep the business up and running. Taking advantage of its scenic location along the Commewijne River and the upward trend in tourism-related activities in the district of Commewijne, tourism was an obvious and promising choice for Katwijk. The first steps were taken in 2013 when plantage Katwijk added guided tours to its product range. Since then guests can enjoy informative tours along the citrus and the coffee crops, the processing facilities, as well as the most interesting historical spots on the plantation. Tours are concluded at the main house where guests can enjoy the river view and the cool breeze, and of course a delicious cup of freshly brewed KW coffee. In 2018 this spacious house by the river, named 'Huis Evelyne', was completely renovated, and it is currently available for rent to guests who want to enjoy a few relaxing days in this beautiful environment.

As various other buildings on the property are also being renovated, and the coffee crops, the citrus crops and the processing facilities are going through a rehabilitation process as well, things are moving in the right direction. At the same time, the immense amount of acreage still available for development has inspired a new business plan designed to attract new investors and entrepreneurs to the area. Fifty 3-hectare plots are currently available for rent by third parties. Entrepreneurs are welcomed to rent the space for various purposes including agriculture, education, research and tourism.

The plans and potential when it comes to the future of plantage Katwijk are limitless. And while solid and profitable business operations are key to the sustainability of the plantation, the owners also welcome community-based initiatives. Subjects such as education, research, cultural heritage, holistic initiatives, artist opportunities and much, much more, are often discussed while brainstorming about the future of plantage Katwijk. Indeed, the story of plantage Katwijk is forever evolving. From the past, into the present and on to the future.

**Visit plantage Katwijk and let its story inspire you too....**



# METS NV

TEXT & PHOTOGRAPHER - METS NV



METS NV is a professional tour operating company and travel agency in Suriname, with 57 years of experience. So we are experts in what we do! We currently manage two jungle lodges in the hinterland of Suriname, both with their own accommodation facilities. In the rural area, we have one recreation park, located in the Para District.

As tour operator, we offer several of our own tour packages which we try to tailor as much as possible to the needs and wishes of our clients. Additionally, we also offer tours from our partners. As travel agency, we make reservations for various trips abroad, in particular to Miami, New York, Curacao, Aruba, the Netherlands, Santo Domingo and Belem.

Providing our professional services already starts at the reservations for a tour. At our sales office, you will get all information about the tour you wish to participate in. Our staff will readily tell you all you need to know about the procedure of the tour. METS NV distinguishes itself from other tour operators in the manner in which the tours are conducted.

We strive for that extra bit of comfort and convenience by offering you a flight of approximately 50 minutes, instead of a tedious boat trip of 1 to 2 days, depending on the tour of your choice. We do not want you to miss out on anything during our exclusive nature and cultural tours. The tour experience of both jungle lodges Awarradam and Palumeu is cultural diverse. Awarradam is situated along the Upper Suriname River and lies upstream, past the furthest located Saramaccan Maroon villages. You will meet the local people who have been living here for over three centuries according to the West-African tradition. The jungle lodge at Palumeu is built in the living area of the first inhabitants of our beloved country, the Trio and Wajana Amerindians. They are also the first inhabitants of the Amazon rainforest.



## JUNGLE EXPEDITIONS

Apart from the relatively peaceful tours, you can also choose to go on an adventurous jungle expedition, the Kasikasima Jungle Expedition or the Gran Rio Jungle Expedition. Both are the most breathtaking jungle trips for adventurers. From the lodge at Palumeu you will experience an intriguing boat trip over magnificent rapids to the impressive and mysterious Mount Kasikasima, a true must for adventurers. After an intensive climb, you will enjoy a breathtaking view over the majestic canopy of the Amazon.



The Gran Rio Jungle Expedition departs from Awarradam. It is all about going back to basics while you will fully experience the impressive nature. During this wildlife trip, you sleep in hammocks. The open hut in the pristine natural surroundings provides an unforgettable overnight stay under the stars. Meals are prepared on a wood fire, giving them that delicious smoky taste which you will not experience anywhere else. If you manage to catch any fish, you get the opportunity to prepare this yourself! Naturally, there is a great chance of spotting wild animals in these surroundings and the flora and fauna are simply indescribable. You will find yourself in an entirely new world!

## CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Corporate social responsibility is embedded in our operational management. Both at Awarradam and Palumeu, local people are fully in charge of the management and maintenance of the lodges. Together with local entrepreneurs, they receive regular training and guidance in their work, to make your experience unforgettable.

In addition to all this, METS NV also contributes financially to the village treasury and helps out senior citizens of the surrounding villages. METS NV also facilitates in social projects such as supporting the local primary school. We offer free transportation for teachers, make small renovations and intervene in obtaining sponsoring for the villages.

## COLAKREEK

Colakreek is a recreation park, situated in the beautiful savanna area in the Para District. It is located merely 5 minutes from the international airport and is therefore also excellent as a holiday destination. The nature swim resort is ideal for both children and adults and offers the opportunity to relax in the refreshing dark-colored waters of the creek. Companies and organizations often rent the recreation park for their family days or company festivities. Holding a conference in an informal setting is also possible at Colakreek.

METS NV has over 50 years' experience with tourism and is therefore the pioneer in Suriname in various areas. We develop nature resorts whereby we work together with and involve the surrounding communities in the projects. Our tour guides are professionally trained, safety measures are implemented and the tour packages and products are tailored to the needs of our clients. All this gives us reason to proudly say:

**METS, a guaranteed success!**

# G

## GIANT OTTER



### Conserving the Giants of the Amazon

This South American otter is the world's largest, at some 6 feet long. It lives only in the rivers and creeks of the Amazon, Orinoco, and La Plata river systems.

### Aquatic Adaptations

These huge members of the weasel family swim by propelling themselves with their powerful tails and flexing their long bodies. They also have webbed feet, water-repellent fur to keep them dry and warm, and nostrils and ears that close in the water.

### Hunting for Fish

Fish make up most of the giant otter's diet. They hunt alone or in groups, sometimes using coordinated efforts, and must be successful often to meet their daily intake quota. Each animal may eat six to nine pounds of food per day. Fish are supplemented by crustaceans, snakes, and other river creatures.

### In Danger for Decades

These impressive creatures have been threatened with extinction for seven decades. In Peru, they are considered in danger, the IUCN identifies the species on their Red List. From 1946 until the 1970s, river otter furs were considered highly fashionable in Europe. The overwhelming hunting and sale to which it was exposed killed off its population in some countries and Peru was one of the largest providers of river otter furs. **Today, they are no longer hunted for their fur but face other threats like mining and logging that put their habitats at risk.** Directly or indirectly, humans continue to be their biggest predators.

TEXT - POPULARPLACES | PHOTOGRAPHER - ONDREJ PROSICKY



# M

# MEXICO

TEXT - POPULARPLACES



@SOFT\_LIGHT69

# M

## MEXICO



# THE BRILLIANT RUINS OF CHICHÉN ITZÁ

Cenote Ik-Kil is located at a close distance to the Mayan ruins of Chichen Itza, on the highway to Valladolid. It is arguably one of the most beautiful cenotes of Mexico.

In order to reach the water you have to climb down 26 meters. The water is 40 meters deep while its diameter is 60 meters. Compared to other cenotes found in Mexico, Ik Kil has many facilities for visitors including a restaurant on site and even cottages where one can spend a few relaxing days. The waters of Ik Kil were considered sacred by the Mayans who performed here human sacrificing to their rain god. Spanish records report that young female victims were thrown alive into these cenotes, as sacrifices to the Maya rain god thought to live in its depths. Archaeologists have since found their bones, as well as the jewelry and other precious objects they wore in their final hours.





## EL CASTILLO, CHICHEN ITZÁ

El Castillo, also known as the **Temple of Kukulcan** (or sometimes **Kukulcan**), is a Mesoamerica step-pyramid that dominates the center of the Chichen Itza archaeological site in the Mexican state of Yucatán. The building is more formally designated by archaeologists as Chichen Itza Structure 5B18. Built by the pre-Columbian Maya civilization sometime between the 9th and 12th centuries CE or AD, El Castillo served as a temple to the god Kukulcan, the Yucatec Maya Feathered Serpent deity closely related to the god Quetzalcoatl known to the Aztecs and other central Mexican cultures of the Postclassic period. The pyramid consists of a series of square terraces with stairways up each of the four sides to the temple on top. Sculptures of plumed serpents run down the sides of the northern balustrade. Around the spring and autumn equinoxes, the late afternoon sun strikes off the northwest corner of the pyramid and casts a series of triangular shadows against the northwest balustrade, creating the illusion of a feathered serpent "crawling" down the pyramid. The event has been very popular and is witnessed by thousands of visitors at the spring equinox, but it is questionable whether it is a result of a purposeful design, because the light-and-shadow effect can be observed, without major changes, during several weeks around the equinoxes. Each of the pyramid's four sides has around 91 steps which, when added together and including the temple platform on top as the final "step", may produce a total of 365 steps (the steps on the south side of the pyramid are eroded) (which is equal to the number of days of the Haab' year). The structure is 24 m (79 ft) high, plus an additional 6 m (20 ft) for the temple. The square base measures 55.3 m (181 ft) across.

The layout of Chichen Itza site core developed during its earlier phase of occupation, between 750 and 900 AD. Its final layout was developed after 900 AD, and the 10th century saw the rise of the city as a regional capital controlling the area from central Yucatán to the north coast, with its power extending down the east and west coasts of the peninsula. The earliest hieroglyphic date discovered at Chichen Itza is equivalent to 832 AD, while the last known date was recorded in the Osario temple in 998.

Chichén Itzá was more than a religious and ceremonial site. It was also a sophisticated urban center and hub of regional trade. But after centuries of prosperity and absorbing influxes of other cultures like the Toltecs, the city met a mysterious end.

During the 1400s people abandoned Chichén Itzá to the jungle. Though they left behind amazing works of architecture and art, the city's inhabitants left no known record of why they abandoned their homes. Scientists speculate that droughts, exhausted soils, and royal quests for conquest and treasure may have contributed to Chichén Itzá's downfall.

M  
MEXICO



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