



# Suriname



**Background** The Spaniards first explored Suriname in the 16th century, and the English then settled it in the mid-17th century. Suriname became a Dutch colony in 1667. With the abolition of African slavery in 1863, workers were brought in from India and Java. The Netherlands granted the colony independence in 1975. Five years later, the civilian government was replaced by a military regime that soon declared Suriname a socialist republic. It continued to exert control through a succession of nominally civilian administrations until 1987, when international pressure finally forced a democratic election. In 1990, the military overthrew the civilian leadership, but a democratically elected government -- a four-party coalition -- returned to power in 1991. The coalition expanded to eight parties in 2005 and ruled until 2010, when voters returned former military leader Desire BOUTERSE and his opposition coalition to power. President BOUTERSE ran unopposed in 2015 and was reelected. Opposition parties campaigned hard against BOUTERSE in the run-up to the 2020 elections, and a multi-party coalition led by Chandrikapersad SANTOKHI's VHP and Ronnie Brunswijk's ABOP was installed.

**Capital** name: Paramaribo

**Government type** presidential republic

**Area** total : 163,820 sq km  
land: 156,000 sq km  
water: 7,820 sq km

**Climate** tropical; moderated by trade winds

**Natural resources** timber, hydropower, fish, kaolin, shrimp, bauxite, gold, and small amounts of nickel, copper, platinum, iron ore

**Population** total: 646,758 (2024 est.)

**Population growth rate** 1.07% (2024 est.)

**Ethnic groups** Hindustani (also known locally as "East Indians"; their ancestors emigrated from northern India in the latter part of the 19th century) 27.4%, Maroon (their African ancestors were brought to the country in the 17th and 18th centuries as slaves and escaped to the interior) 21.7%, Creole (mixed White and Black) 15.7%, Javanese 13.7%, mixed 13.4%, other 7.6%, unspecified 0.6% (2012 est.)

<b>Religions</b>	Protestant 23.6% (includes Evangelical 11.2%, Moravian 11.2%, Reformed 0.7%, Lutheran 0.5%), Hindu 22.3%, Roman Catholic 21.6%, Muslim 13.8%, other Christian 3.2%, Winti 1.8%, Jehovah's Witness 1.2%, other 1.7%, none 7.5%, unspecified 3.2% (2012 est.)
<b>Languages</b>	Dutch (official), English (widely spoken), Sranang Tongo (Surinamese, sometimes called Taki-Taki, is the native language of Creoles and much of the younger population), Caribbean Hindustani (a dialect of Hindi), Javanese
<b>Executive branch</b>	chief of state: President Jennifer GEERLINGS-SIMONS (since 16 July 2025) head of government: President Jennifer GEERLINGS-SIMONS (since 16 July 2025)
<b>Legislative branch</b>	legislature name: National Assembly (Nationale Assemblee)
<b>Diplomatic representation in the US</b>	chief of mission: Ambassador Jan Marten Willem SCHALKWIJK (since 19 April 2022)
<b>Diplomatic representation from the US</b>	chief of mission: Ambassador Robert J. FAUCHER (since 31 January 2023)
<b>Economic overview</b>	upper middle-income South American economy; new floating currency regime; key aluminum goods, gold, and hydrocarbon exporter; new IMF plan for economic recovery and fiscal sustainability; controversial hardwood industry
<b>Real GDP (purchasing power parity)</b>	\$12.316 billion (2024 est.) \$11.976 billion (2023 est.) \$11.68 billion (2022 est.)
<b>Real GDP per capita</b>	\$19,400 (2024 est.) \$19,000 (2023 est.) \$18,700 (2022 est.)
<b>Exports</b>	\$2.793 billion (2024 est.) \$2.533 billion (2023 est.) \$2.6 billion (2022 est.)
<b>Exports - partners</b>	Switzerland 49%, UAE 28%, Guyana 5%, USA 4%, France 3% (2023)
<b>Exports - commodities</b>	gold, fish, refined petroleum, wood, tobacco (2023)
<b>Imports</b>	\$2.571 billion (2024 est.) \$2.203 billion (2023 est.) \$2.342 billion (2022 est.)
<b>Imports - partners</b>	USA 22%, China 12%, Netherlands 11%, Trinidad & Tobago 9%, Guyana 8% (2023)
<b>Imports - commodities</b>	refined petroleum, ships, excavation machinery, trucks, tobacco (2023)

## Population Pyramid

