



## CRUISING NOTES FOR THE GUYANAS

### Degrad des Cannes (Cayenne, French Guiana)

The approach to Degrad des Cannes is extremely well buoyed and lit (pairs of green and red buoys), so arrival at night and low tide is no problem. Contrary to what has been written elsewhere, we found the information in the C-maps to be accurate.

You will easily see the little marina to the West of the commercial harbor. The marina is small and overcrowded. If you are lucky you can get alongside one of the yachts at the outer pontoon. We were told that these spots were bumpy at incoming tide but had no problem during our stay. Normally, you need to anchor just behind the marina. Holding in the river is reported to be very poor; try to set your anchor in line of the marina.

Officials in Degrad seem very relaxed about formalities. If you have the time, go and see the harbour master in the commercial harbour. In theory, you should also ask for customs but in practice they don't bother about yachties.

There are no buses from the marina and the next road to hitchhike is about 2km away - it is then another 3km to the first shop. If you try your French you may get a lift from the local yachties. One yacht rents out a car at 15 euros per day. You will also see some washing machines on the pontoons; if you ask around you may be able to use them.

There are nice places to visit from the marina: further up the river you can anchor and explore the jungle by dinghi, and there is an island full of monkeys at the entry. Cayenne is worth a half-day visit.

### Kourou (French Guiana)

The approach is very well buoyed and lit (pairs of green and red buoys), and the channel can be navigated at night and low tide. Except for the first buoy, information on C-map is accurate. All transit yachts seem to anchor on the North shore at the "marina" 1.5 miles upriver. The anchorage can get somewhat crowded, so in order to avoid the channel you may need to move quite a bit further up. During our stay, the anchors of several yachts slipped in the strong current.

Tie your dinghy to the fishermen's pontoon. You can get fresh water from the marina pontoon either using jerry cans or mooring temporarily at the moorings of the cats that leave for the iles du salut during the day.

The old part of the village starts right at the marina. There are a couple of bars and restaurants as well as a fish market (halle aux poisons) within easy walking distance. The street leading off the fish market is called "Avenue du Général de Gaulle". Half way down this street you will find customs on your left. We would recommend that



you do the formalities with them as they are friendly, the process is quick and painless, and the clearance may be useful when you reach the Caribbean. At the end of Avenue de Gaulle you will see to the town hall ("Mairie") where you can get a free map. Behind the building opposite the Mairie is a branch of BNP Paribas with an ATM accepting Maestro and major credit cards. On Tuesdays, Fridays and Saturdays there is a fruit and vegs market in the Diamant area. Internet access is expensive; try the internet shop opposite the Gendarmerie behind avenue de France. You can also get free internet access at the Mediathèque (at the little lake; bring a passport with you for registration) but their computers have no slots for memory sticks. At avenue de France you will also find a decently priced Laundromat (we paid 0.77 euros per kilo wash and dry).

In the zone industrielle (can be reached by hitchhiking or by dinghy; best stop on your way back from the space center) there is a Leader price supermarket - probably the best supermarket in town - as well as a medium-sized ship chandler (Nautic Auto Caraïbes, 0594 32 50 65, n.a.c.kourou@wanadoo.fr). Apparently, it is possible to have spares shipped from France within 4-5 days. Non-EU yachts may get them VAT-free but still need to pay a local tax of approximately 15 percent.

At the space center you can do a guided tour (free, starting at 8am and 1pm, booking required on 0594 32 61 23) and/or a visit to the museum. The tours are in French only and children below the age of 8 years are not admitted. The museum is not really worth the 6 euros admission fee.

### Iles du Salut (French Guiana)

Most yachts anchor in the South Bay of the Ile Royale. Holding is very good. In fact, we were not the only yacht having difficulties getting our anchor out of the heavy mud. The anchorage becomes very uncomfortable when the wind turns East. It may then be better to seek shelter behind the Ile Saint-Joseph

The iles du Salut became famous by Henri Charrière's book "Papillon". Prison cells can still be visited and a museum can be found in the "Maison du directeur" (closed on weekends). There is also a hotel/restaurant on Ile Royale selling highly alcoholic punches.

### Domburg / Paramaribo (Suriname)

You can anchor directly at the waterfront of Paramaribo if you previously ask for directions and permission from "MAS" on channel 12. However, the anchorage is not very safe and quite uncomfortable. That's why most yachts motor 10 miles further upriver and anchor at Domburg. The place is run by Dutch yachties of which not all give you the feeling of being welcome. One friendly yachtie is "Andre" (the old two-master just before the little pontoon). He has put out some moorings; use them if they are available because there is quite a bit of debris floating down the river.

Getting ashore was difficult during our stay. Apparently, they have built a new pontoon since then.

If you stay for only a few days you may get away without formalities. However, the maritime police controls the anchorage from time to time and you will be requested to



get a visa (at 30 USD per person) if you stay for more than a week. Boats caught without the required documentation did not have to pay a fine.

There are limited facilities in Domburg: a few Chinese shops (they change small amounts of money), several bars, internet (in the post office) and a petrol station. We were told that the hairdresser works very quickly but the results are, well, accordingly. Buses to Paramaribo run from 5 am to 9:30 pm and it takes about 30 minutes to get into town. About 5 km before Paramaribo you can see a Jotum add on the right – there is a (overpriced) ship chandler. The market in Paramaribo is very good. Foreign credit cards are very rarely accepted; the only ATMs that worked for us were those of RBTT.

It is possible to get your yacht out of the water in Domburg. However, hauling out and storing on dry is significantly more expensive than in Trinidad or Grenada.