

SHELL BEACH OF GUYANA



SHELL BEACH PHOTOS BY MARCO FAROUK BASIR

By Dmitri Allicock - for Guyanese Online

Guyana's 285 miles Atlantic coast is not famous for beaches. The coastal plain is made up largely of alluvial mud swept out to sea by the mighty Amazon, carried north by ocean currents, and deposited on the Guyanese shores. The rich clay of great fertility, this mud overlays the white sands and clays formed from the erosion of the interior bedrock and carried seaward by the rivers of Guyana.

Several rivers flow north from the rain forests to the ocean, and one entices beach goers. The enormous Essequibo River is South America's third largest. As it nears the Atlantic, the mouth widens to 20 miles, and hundreds of islands dot the river landscape. Silt carried on these rivers that drain into the Atlantic Basin, keeps the water off Guyana a brown churning mass of sandbars and mud. Mud flats continue up to 24 kilometers (15 miles) offshore before navigation is considered free.

Nestled in the remote Northern, Barima- Waini region of Guyana, between the Pomeroon and Waini Rivers, is the natural unique wonder called **Shell Beach**. Shell Beach was named for the collection of tiny shells which complement its fine brown sand. Shell beach sits on the border of Guyana and Venezuela and in the county of Essequibo.

Shell beach is more famous for its population of turtles than human visitors. Shell Beach is not only one of the most beautiful spot in Guyana; it is an important nest site for four of the eight sea



turtle species - the Olive Ridley, Hawksbill, Green and Leatherback. Shell Beach extends for approximately 140km or 87 miles.

These turtles used to be slaughtered for their meat and eggs but are now part of a non-governmental conservation program. Kanuku Mountains in Region Nine and Shell Beach in Region Both were added to Guyana's list of protected areas in October 2011 by the Guyana Government. The two now join the Kaieteur National Park, the Iwokrama Forest Centre and the Konashen District as legally protected areas. The Protected Areas Bill was passed in July, 2011 and provides for the establishment of a Protected Areas Commission which will be responsible for implementing the provisions of the Act. Local administrative bodies in the protected areas will be responsible for executing the tasks set by the central body.



Getting to Shell beach is quite a challenge. The daylong trip requires a bus from Georgetown to Parika, boat across the Essequibo to Supernaam, bus to Charity and finally a 5-hour speedboat ride to Shell Beach. This 5-hour boat ride involves navigating 'the river of 99 turns' and is unforgettable for the still black water and the pristine untouched banks.

Watching the Sunset over the Atlantic whilst drinking coconut water around a camp fire surrounded by the natural world and a chance to catch a glimpse of the rarest sea turtles makes the trip worthwhile. Swimming in the clear blue Atlantic in one of the few spots available where

the true color of the ocean is preserved.



Leatherback Turtle laying eggs on Shell Beach



Ranger helps injured turtle on Shell Beach



SHELL BEACH WITH AMERINDIAN'S DWELLINGS



SUN SET AT SHELL BEACH