

Is Modern Guyana Losing Its Cultural Roots?

Ginella Connelly

Guyana is known as the land of many waters, rainforest, and remarkable diversity, a place that has always been proud of its artistic arrangements. With the mixture of the six ethnic groups, from the beating of the African drums to the delicate artistry of Indian mehndi, from the Indigenous customs to European influences, from the creative arts of the Chinese to the tasty treats of the Portuguese. A blend of specular culture woven from many threads. But lately, questions are rising: are those threads beginning to fray?

The Guyana that we once knew, full of traditions and culture, is slowly being taken over by the influence of global trends. Cultural food is being replaced by fast food, family get-togethers are being replaced by WhatsApp calls, international music dominates local and patriotic songs, and the younger generations would rather social media than folk performances. While modernization produces convenience and modernization, it risks collapsing the unique heritage and cultural practices that Guyana was once known for.



The older generation has held on to the traditions that they know and love, the folk songs, the storytelling, the festivals, and the soul foods that once brought Guyanese together, yet the younger generations see it as boring and outdated in this new digital era. This difference has widened the gap between the older and younger generations, where cultural heritage is admired but rarely practiced.

Still, Guyana's culture is very much alive and evolving. Cultural practices like Mashramani continue to bring people from all directions, and religious holidays like Diwali and Phagwah remain vibrant and continue to grow bigger by the year. Yet it still stands as a challenge in balancing modern life while preserving Guyanese roots.



Modern Guyana lies at an intersection. Straying away from its culture would be to lose its soul. Our culture is not stationary; it continues to grow and transform bigger and better. With the absence of the younger generation to work and keep the tradition alive, it can slowly fade, leaving the daunting question: will Guyana allow its traditions to fade, or will it actively nurture them, passing down the torch to future generations?