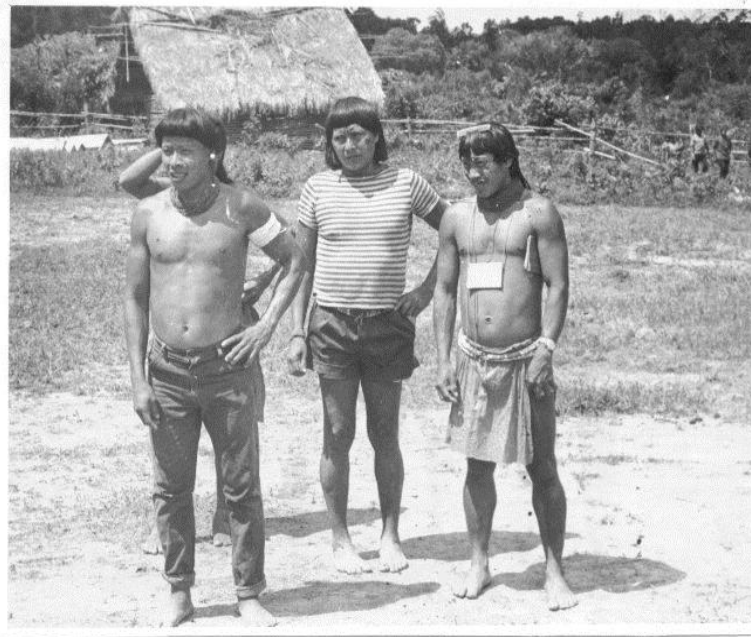


**DICTIONARY**  
**OF THE**  
**GUYANESE**  
**AMERINDIANS**

**AND OTHER SOUTH AMERICAN NATIVE TERMS**

**An A-Z Guide To Their Anthropology,  
Cosmology, Culture, Exploration,  
History, Geography, Legend, Folklore  
and Myth**



**Compiled and Edited by**  
**Lal Balkaran**

At long last – here is an indispensable reference tool on Guyana’s Amerindians containing over 5,000 entries. As the title indicates, it is a comprehensive A-Z compendium defining and explaining those unique notions relating to their anthropology, acculturation, belief systems, cosmology, ethnobotany, ethnography, ethnology, ethnohistory, religion, exploration, history, geography, folklore, legend, music, myth and politics including other South American native terms. For instance, words like quinine, curare, coca, *pepperpot*, *cassareep*, hammock, cannibal, barbecue, buccaneer, ‘Amerindian’ itself, *kanaima*, *peaiaman*, shaman, *maloco*, *balata*, *pegall*, *corial*, *woodskin*, *paiwari*, *parakari*, the syncretic Alleluia Indian religion, and thousands of others are all explained. And there is more!

Amerindians have a unique relationship with the forces of nature, the cosmos, the environment, the forests, rivers, mountains, animals, plants, trees and people of other races. Colourful stories have been woven to explain all of these including: creation myths; reason for animals; the forces of nature; the different Indian tribes and races of mankind; the songs and plumage of birds; shapes of boulders and mountains; origin of strife; trees and many other natural phenomena. Rare legends of Roraima, Shiriri, Kanuku, Essequibo and the more common Kaieteur and El Dorado are all here in this excellently compiled guide. The book also profiles Amerindian organisations and many who defended and promoted Amerindian cause over the years including:

- The early explorers and missionaries – Keymis, Gravesande, Brett, Schomburgks, Hilhouse, Waterton, Cary-Elwes, MacLintock, Peberdy, and McKenna;
- Early anthropologists – Brett, Im Thurn, and Roth;
- Amerindian ‘Who’s Who’; – Stephen Campbell, John Bennett, Basil Rodrigues, George Simon, Stephanie Correia, David Campbell, and others;

There is also a Time Chart of major Amerindian-related events from 11000BC right up to 2001AD. Added to that are three maps and sixteen appendices. As a bonus, there are twenty two photographs showing the various faces and scenes of the current nine Guyanese Amerindian tribes – *Ackawaois*, *Arawak*, *Arekuna*, *Carib*, *Macushi*, *Patamona*, *Wai Wai*, *Wapishana* and *Warrau*. This is the first time that such broad-based information has been carefully researched and accumulated in a single volume. Indeed, it represents value for money well spent.

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## SAMPLE ENTRIES

### ALLELUIA INDIANS

An Amerindian religion that started in the 1870s blending Amerindian animistic belief systems with elements of Christianity. This syncretic mixture resembles, to some extent, Macumba of Brazil and Santería of Cuba, both these sects blending elements of Christianity with West African beliefs. Alleluia is now known as the Areruya Church and was started by a Macushi named Pichiwöng (Pisiwöng, Bichiwöng) who lived near the Kanuku mountains in the 1870s...

### BABRACOT

The *babracot* is a kind of wooden grill. Used by Indians throughout South America, it consists of a small stage of green sticks built some two feet above an open fire. Early Spanish settlers observed Taino Indians from Hispaniola using a similar wooden grill they called *barbacoa*, a term which the Spanish quickly borrowed and corrupted into ‘barbecue’.

### RORAIMA, MOUNT

Arekunas call it *Roroyima*, a word that means ‘Mother of the Great Waters’. Other Venezuelan Indians name it *Loloima* and *Dodoima*. According to Venezuela’s Pemón Indians, the correct name of Mt. Roraima is *Roroima* where *roro* means bluish-green and *ma* means big. The Makiritare Indians of Venezuela say that the mountain is the remains of a giant sacred tree, felled by mythical animals in order to create the cassava and all other fruits...

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21. *Macushi* boys practicing archery
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**Praise received for *Dictionary of the Guyanese Amerindians***

... a valuable reference book on the subject

- Dr. John Hemming, a former Director of the Royal Geographical Society and world-renowned author of several books on the conquest of Peru, Brazil's Amerindians, and El Dorado.

*A very useful study and a good read. Lal Balkaran is to be commended for his zeal and industry. We wish him well and are proud to be associated with this excellent production.*

- Tony Montfort - Jesuit Missions, London, England

*This well researched and convenient Guide to the history and culture of the Guyanese Amerindians restores awareness of a long forgotten people, and invests them with the respect and dignity they deserve.*

- Dr. Frank Birbalsingh, Professor, York University, Canada.

*This book provides easy information for anyone who wants to learn about the Amerindians of Guyana, and furnishes enough background data for the serious researcher who may want to indulge in more in-depth research into the history and culture of these proud people.*

- Dr. Odeen Ishmael, Ambassador of Guyana to the United States of America.

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### **Brief Profile of the Author**

Lal Balkaran is an internal auditor by profession and an author who has written several books and articles on a diverse range of subjects including management, business, third world issues, corruption, travel, education and music, published in various periodicals from around the world. His very first job since leaving high school in 1970 was that of a primary school teacher among the *Wapishana* Amerindians in his native Guyana between 1970-75, a defining moment for him ever since. As a result of those years, he developed a profound interest in Guyana's Amerindians in particular and their South American counterparts in general, accumulating a wealth of rare material relating to these indigenous peoples over the years. This guide is the result of that collection, interest and years of research on the subject. Through this book, Mr. Balkaran has made more than a useful contribution towards a greater understanding of Amerindians in Guyana.

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