

BOKANA TRAVEL

ARUBA · CARIBBEAN

TRAVEL GUIDE 2026

# ARUBA

Under two hours from Bogotá, Aruba gives you white-sand beaches, a desert national park and dry weather most of the year. Colombians need no visa.

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THE ESSENTIALS

# ARUBA: STEADY SUN, STEADY WIND, TURQUOISE SEA

Aruba sits about 25 km (16 mi) off Venezuela's Paraguaná Peninsula and is an autonomous country within the Kingdom of the Netherlands. If you're expecting Caribbean jungle, the landscape will surprise you: cactus, volcanic rock and dry hills. The wind-battered north coast is a sharp contrast to the gentle beaches of the west, where the water is clear enough to see the bottom several meters down.

It's an easy trip from Colombia: short direct flights, US dollars accepted almost everywhere, safe tap water, and locals who speak Papiamento, Dutch, English and Spanish. The island also sits outside the main hurricane belt and gets little rain, so it's a dependable bet for a vacation in any month.

### WHERE IT IS

Southern Caribbean, off the coast of Venezuela; an autonomous country within the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Capital: Oranjestad.

### GETTING THERE

Direct from Bogotá in about 1 h 50 min to 2 h (Avianca daily, plus seasonal Wingo and LATAM flights). Wingo also flies direct from Medellín, Cali and Barranquilla, depending on the season.

### WEATHER

Semi-arid and warm year-round: highs of about 27 to 32 °C (81 to 90 °F), a constant trade-wind breeze and around 450 mm (18 in) of rain a year, mostly from October to December.

### DOCUMENTS

No visa: valid passport, online ED Card with the USD 20 Sustainability Fee, return ticket, accommodation booking, proof of funds and yellow fever vaccination.

### MONEY

Aruban florin (AWG), pegged to the US dollar (about AWG 1.79 per USD). Dollars are accepted almost everywhere and Visa and Mastercard are widely used; some shops won't take USD 50 or 100 bills.

### LANGUAGE

Papiamento and Dutch are official; almost everyone also speaks English and Spanish.

### TIME ZONE

One hour ahead of Colombia (UTC-4, no daylight saving time).

### PLUGS

Types A and B, same as Colombia; about 120 V and 60 Hz. You won't need an adapter.

DON'T MISS

# HIGHLIGHTS

## 01
### EAGLE BEACH AND THE FOFOTI TREES

Aruba's widest beach, with fine sand and a laid-back feel. Its fofoti trees, bent southwest by the wind, are the island's classic photo; many people mistake them for divi-divi trees. Go at sunset.

## 02
### PALM BEACH

The strip of high-rise hotels, restaurants and water sports, with calm water that's ideal for swimming or paddleboarding. A good base for groups who want everything within walking distance. Get there early if you want the beach less crowded.

## 03
### ARIKOK NATIONAL PARK

About 20% of the island is national park: caves with Indigenous petroglyphs, dunes, wild coastline and the Conchi natural pool, reachable only by 4x4, on horseback or on foot. Rangers close it when the sea is rough.

## 04
### BABY BEACH AND SAN NICOLÁS

At the island's southeastern tip, Baby Beach is a shallow lagoon sheltered by a breakwater, perfect for kids and easy snorkeling. On the way back, walk the murals of San Nicolás, Aruba's street-art district.

## 05
### ORANJESTAD

The capital mixes pastel Dutch-style facades, pedestrian plazas, Fort Zoutman and the Willem III Tower. Walk it in the morning or late afternoon to avoid the strong midday sun.

## 06
### SNORKEL THE ANTILLA WRECK

A 122 m (400 ft) German freighter scuttled by its own crew in 1940 off Malmok. It's one of the largest shipwrecks in the Caribbean, and part of it sits near the surface, visible with a snorkel on calm days.





PLAN YOUR TRIP

# WHEN TO GO

Aruba works year-round. February to May is the driest, most pleasant stretch, though prices climb in December, January and Holy Week with demand. June to September is hotter and the trade winds blow hard, ideal for kitesurfing. October to December brings a bit more rain, usually in short showers. Hurricane season rarely hits the island directly.

| JAN | FEB | MAR | APR | MAY | JUN | JUL | AUG | SEP | OCT | NOV | DEC |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

BEST

### FEB – MAY

The best time to go.

GOOD

### JAN · JUN – SEP

A good time, with a catch on weather or crowds.

RAINY

### OCT – DEC

More rain: keep plans flexible.

## WHAT YOU NEED TO TRAVEL

For Colombian passport holders: no visa is required for tourism in Aruba since December 3, 2015. You can stay up to 30 days per visit, and the stay can be extended. Before you fly, fill out the online ED Card and pay the Sustainability Fee. Traveling on another passport? Requirements differ, so message us and we'll check yours.

- Colombian passport valid for your entire stay.
- ED Card (embarkation and disembarkation card) completed before your trip, only on the official portal edcardaruba.aw. It's mandatory for every traveler, including children and infants. The form itself is free.
- Sustainability Fee of USD 20 per person aged 8 and over, paid by credit card when you fill out the ED Card. It's charged once a year (if you return in the same year, request a refund from AWSS).
- Return or onward ticket.
- Confirmed accommodation booking, or a letter of guarantee if you're staying with family or friends.
- Proof of funds: the Aruba Tourism Authority mentions USD 75 to 150 per person per day depending on the type of accommodation, in cash or by card.
- Yellow fever vaccination at least 10 days before travel, since Colombia is listed as a country with risk of transmission.
- Travel insurance with medical coverage: recommended, not required.

Checked in September 2026 with Aruba Tourism Authority: travel requirements for Colombians. Rules change, so confirm with the official source before you travel, or message us and we'll help.

WHAT WE'D TELL A FRIEND

# BOKANA TIPS

### 1 Official portal only

Fill out the ED Card only at edcardaruba.aw. Plenty of copycat sites charge extra fees for the same form. The only legitimate payment is the USD 20 Sustainability Fee, made by credit card.

### 2 Oxybenzone-free sunscreen

Since July 2020, Aruba has banned the sale and import of sunscreens with oxybenzone to protect the reef. Bring a mineral, zinc oxide sunscreen and reapply often: the breeze fools you and the sun burns fast.

### 3 A car for the north coast

For Arikok and the Conchi natural pool you need a 4x4 or a guided tour; a regular car can't handle those dirt tracks. For the rest of the island a small car is enough. Roads are good and you drive on the right.

### 4 Pay in dollars, get florins back

You can pay for almost everything in dollars, but change usually comes in florins. Carry small bills: some businesses won't accept USD 50 or 100 notes. A 15 to 20% tip is customary.

### 5 Tap water

Tap water is safe to drink: it's desalinated and very high quality. Bring a reusable bottle and refill it at your hotel. You'll save money and plastic.

### 6 Start Arikok early

The park opens early, and from 10 a.m. the heat is intense with almost no shade. Go in first thing, and bring at least 2 liters (about half a gallon) of water per person, a cap and closed shoes for the rocks.

### 7 Let the wind guide you

West-coast beaches like Eagle, Palm and Arashi are calm. The north and east coasts have strong currents: enjoy them from land, and don't go in the water anywhere without a marked swimming area.

## TRAVEL MINDFULLY

Use oxybenzone-free sunscreen, which is also the law in Aruba. On Eagle Beach, respect the roped-off areas during sea turtle nesting season, roughly March to November: no lights or flashlights near the nests at night. In Arikok, stay on the marked trails.

WHERE TO EAT

# OUR RESTAURANT PICKS

Chosen for their food, their track record and what past diners say. Price: $ budget · $$ mid-range · $$$ splurge.

## ZEEROVERS $

Local fried fish, casual · Savaneta (south of the island)

★ **4.5** · 4,193 reviews on TripAdvisor

A fishermen's pier where Arubans have been eating the catch of the day for more than 30 years. It's the cheapest, most local way to eat seafood on the island.

**What diners love:** Reviewers love the very fresh fish and shrimp, generous portions and low prices for Aruba, plus the setting over the water. A few say the frying can go too far.

**Order:** Fried fish and shrimp with pan bati (a sweet cornmeal pancake)

Arrive before 11:30 a.m. to skip the line. Closed Mondays. Bring cash.

## EDUARDO'S BEACH SHACK $

Bowls, juices and plant-based food · Palm Beach, across from Playa Linda (Noord)

★ **4.8** · 1,739 reviews on TripAdvisor

A beachfront kiosk on the sand, serving Palm Beach for more than a decade. Breakfast or a light lunch without leaving the beach, with vegan options.

**What diners love:** The açaí bowls and smoothies get the most praise, along with fresh fruit and quick service. Reviewers warn it's hard to find and has few tables.

**Order:** The house açaí bowl

Opens at 7 a.m. Go early: by mid-morning there's a line.

## THE OLD CUNUCU HOUSE $$

Traditional Aruban · Noord, a few minutes from Palm Beach

★ **4.1** · 1,304 reviews on TripAdvisor

Set in a roughly 150-year-old country house (cunucu), it's one of the classic spots to try keshi yena and Creole stews.

**What diners love:** Reviewers highlight the keshi yena, the oxtail and goat stews, and the family atmosphere with live music. Some note uneven service and food.

**Order:** Keshi yena

If you want to try iguana soup, ask whether they have it that day.

## DRIFTWOOD $$

Seafood with Aruban seasoning · Downtown Oranjestad (Klipstraat 12)

★ **4.3** · 2,713 reviews on TripAdvisor

A downtown restaurant run by a fishing family with its own charters. A good pick for a dinner of fresh fish cooked local-style in the capital.

**What diners love:** Very fresh fish, friendly staff and fast service, even for groups and families. Some find it pricey for the portion size.

**Order:** Catch of the day with Aruban vinaigrette

Dinner only, Monday to Saturday from 5 p.m.

## CHARLIE'S BAR & RESTAURANT $$

Creole seafood, historic bar · San Nicolás

★ **4.1** · 650 reviews on TripAdvisor

A bar open since 1941 in San Nicolás, packed with objects left behind by visitors. A good way to finish a walk through the town's murals.

**What diners love:** People enjoy the old-bar atmosphere, the garlicky seafood, the ceviche and the fresh fish. There are occasional complaints about slow service.

**Order:** Ceviche or garlic shrimp

Pair it with a midday walk through the San Nicolás murals.

## PASSIONS ON THE BEACH $$$

Seafood and international, on the beach · Eagle Beach (Amsterdam Manor hotel)

★ **4.5** · 6,199 reviews on TripAdvisor

Dinner at tables on the sand of Eagle Beach with a sunset view. A good choice for a special night without leaving the hotel area.

**What diners love:** The sunset setting and attentive service get the most praise, with a calm mood of torches and soft music. Prices are high.

**Order:** Three-course sunset menu

Book a table on the sand several days ahead.

Ratings and review counts checked in October 2026; they change over time. Review summaries are our own. Hours and prices vary, so check before you go.

LOCAL FLAVORS

# WHAT TO EAT

## KESHI YENA

A Gouda or Edam cheese stuffed with stewed chicken or beef, olives, capers and raisins, then baked. The island's signature dish.

## PASTECHI

A fried, half-moon pastry filled with cheese, beef, chicken or tuna. The classic street breakfast, best with a coffee.

## PAN BATI

A slightly sweet cornmeal pancake served alongside soups, stews and fried fish.

## FUNCHI

A firm cornmeal side, similar to polenta, served with goat or fish stews.



BOKANA
TRAVEL

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# LET'S PLAN IT TOGETHER.

Join one of our groups on your own, or bring your people on a private trip.
Scan the code or message us.

**Chat with us on WhatsApp**

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## SOURCES

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