

Welcome to Aruba!

In this booklet you will find information on what you can expect to see on the island, information on the Parke Nacional Arikok, Aruba's National Park, and the amazing plants and animals that you can encounter there.



Dutch Caribbean protected areas

Island	Mgmt. Body	Protected area	Area and special features
Aruba	Fundacion Parke Nacional Arikok 	Parke Nacional Arikok	This terrestrial park was established in 2003. It is 3400 hectares and covers approximately 17% of the land area of Aruba. It includes the island's highest hill, Jamanota and protects various exotic cacti, around 50 species of tree and is the last refuge of the island's endemic rattlesnake, the 'cascabel'.
	Bonaire	STINAPA Bonaire 	Bonaire National Marine Park
Klein Bonaire			An uninhabited satellite island off Bonaire's western shore the island includes some of the most undisturbed vegetation on Bonaire and is an important stop over point for migrating birds and nesting grounds for endangered hawksbill and loggerhead turtles. It was declared a protected area in 2000.
Washington Slagbaai National Park			Established in 1969, it encompasses almost 17% (13,500 hectares) of the land area of Bonaire and includes Mount Brandaris, the island's highest point. A wide diversity of habitats can be found in the Park which provides a safe haven for the endemic parrot, flamingos and iguana.
Curaçao	CARMABI Foundation 	Curaçao Underwater Park	The Curaçao Underwater Park was established in 1983. The seaward boundary is the 60m depth contour and on the shore side the boundary is the high-water mark. The park covers a total surface area of 600 hectares on the leeward shore and includes pristine fringing reef.
		Christoffel Park	A protected wildlife reserve and garden covering 1,820 hectares. Mt. Christoffel is in the centre of the park, and is the island's highest point. The park contains rare and endemic flora and fauna.
		Shete Boca	Established in 1994 the Shete Boca covers approximately 470 hectares of coastline

Island	Mgmt. Body	Protected area	Area and special features
Saba	Saba Conservation Foundation	Saba National Marine Park	The Saba National Marine Park was established in 1987. It surrounds the island stretching from the high-water mark to a depth of 60m and includes coral pinnacles, the seabed and overlying waters. It covers 820 hectares.
		Saba's Hiking Trail system and Muriel Thissel Nature Park	Saba's terrestrial park is comprised of 35 Ha of land donated to the SCF by the Thissell family in 1999. This area is locally referred to as the sulphur mine. Other protected areas include the portion of Mt. Scenery above 550m (no dwellings can be constructed) and the 14 trails (public easements on private property).
St Eustatius	St Eustatius National Parks Foundation (STENAPA) 	Statia National Marine Park	The St. Eustatius National Marine Park includes the waters around the island from the high water mark to the 30m depth contour. It was designated in 1996 and is approximately 4,700 hectares including two actively managed no fishing zones.
		Quill and Boven National Park	Comprises a dormant volcano, the Quill, and Boven, an area of hills on the northern tip of St. Eustatius. The trails to, in and around the Quill have been open since 2000. It was established in 1997 and covers 540 hectares including lush secondary rain forest and almost all of the 482 wild plant species found on the island.
		Botanical Gardens	The Botanical Gardens cover an area of 5.3 hectares
St Maarten	Nature Foundation St Maarten 	St Maarten Marine Park	The Marine Park surrounds the entire Dutch side of the island from the coastal waters and beaches to the 60m depth contour. The Park covers approximately 5,200 hectares and includes mangroves, seagrass beds and coral reefs. The park is a major breeding area for marine birds such as the frigate and home to fish, turtles and conch.

Aruba, Dutch Caribbean

Location and size: Aruba is located in the heart of the southern Caribbean, 15 miles from the South American coastline. The island is 19.6 miles long, and six miles across at its widest point, with a total area of 70 square miles.

Climate: Aruba enjoys a sunny climate, making it a year-round paradise for residents and visitors alike. The average temperature is 82°F (28°C), with cooling trade winds and the rarity of tropical storms and hurricanes. Aruba lies outside the hurricane belt. Rainfall is very moderate, averaging about 16.1" (408.9 mm) per year.

Population: Aruba's population of about 120,000 inhabitants is made up of a broad international mixture of people. The modern Aruban is generally of mixed ancestry, claiming Caquetio Indian, African and European roots. Aruba's strong economy, excellent living conditions and prime weather continues to attract individuals from all over the world. Today, the island claims over 79 different nationalities.

Landscape: On the south and west coasts are miles of pristine white beaches that rank among the most beautiful in the world. The northeast coast, along the windward shore, is marked by its rugged landscapes and miles of pristine coastline. The interior is covered with numerous brush trees, a variety of cacti and dramatic rock formations. The island's most famous trees are the watapana, or divi-divi trees, all permanently sculpted into graceful, southwest-bending shapes by the constant trade winds.



Park profile: Parke Nacional Arikok

Arikok National Park is a natural area located at the north-eastern part of Aruba. That constitutes almost 18 percent of the island's land surface. It was designated a national park, to protect and preserve the flora, fauna, geology and historical remains present at the site. Nearly all of the plants and animals native to Aruba can be found within the park.

You will quickly realise that the natural landscape in Aruba is not one of a lush tropical forest. It is an area of stark natural beauty where the plants and animals are incredibly well adapted to survive the

harsh environmental conditions caused by drought and strong East trade winds, which are laden with salt spray. There are areas in the park, well hidden that allowed for some large tree species to survive. Moreover, the park is home to a large variety of cacti.

Besides various types of cacti the park is home to some 50 different species of trees, some of which are threatened with extinction. The most abundant animals in the park are birds and reptiles.

The Landscape: There is a great geological variety within the park. The main aspects are the rough hills of the volcanic Aruba lava formation, the mysterious rocks of the batholithic quartz-diorite/tonalite, and the limestone rocks from fossilized coral. Jamanota, Aruba's tallest hill 188 meters (617 ft) is part of the park, as well as the second largest, Arikok 176 meters (577 ft), from which the name of the park is derived. The eastern side of the park is riddled with grottos and caves, such as Fontein, Quadirikiri, and Baranca Sunu (Tunnel of Love). The line of the permanently wind-and-wave beaten North Coast is broken by several bays (boca's). Most of them are small yet impressive inlets at the mouth of dry river beds. Some of these bays are spectacular sights, adorned with white, sandy beaches and sand dunes, as is the case at Boca Prins and Dos Playa.



Fauna: The most abundant animals in the park are birds and reptiles. The birds are most active during the early morning hours and at sunsets. The birds are concentrated in wind-shielded, vegetated areas, for instance at Cunucu Arikok, located on the west side of Arikok Hill.

Arikok National Park is the habitat for several animal species only found in Aruba.

There are two bird species: the Aruban burrowing owl 'Choco' (*Athene cunicularia arubensis*), and the Aruban parakeet 'Prikichi' (*Aratinga pertinax arubensis*). There are two snake species: the Aruban rattlesnake 'Cascabel' (*Crotalus durissus unicolor*) is one of the rarest rattlesnake in the world, and the (Aruban) Baker's cat-eyed snake 'Santanero' (*Leptodeira bakeri*). There is also the Aruban whiptail lizard 'Kododo Blauw' (*Cnemidophorus arubensis*).

The largest animal in the park is the donkey. Like the goats that still roam the area, the donkey was imported by the European settlers. The donkeys that live in the park are descendents of these animals, and somehow adapted to the island environment. They live in small herds that are usually concentrated in the eastern part of the park.

Cultural and Historical components: There are a number of sites within the park that attest to the history of Aruba. The Caquetío Indians left rock paintings in Cunucu Arikok and Fontein Cave. The bird drawing in the park logo is a copy of one of these historical artistic expressions.

Former sorghum and bean fields tell the story of an

active yet challenging agricultural past. These so-called cunucus were also residential areas for the few families that worked the land. These families found ways to survive in the difficult conditions, and were able to erect their homes with materials found in the area. Two of these adobe houses have been restored and park rangers are learning many of the building techniques in order to preserve this unique Aruban mud-house. At Cunucu Arikok and near Rooi Dwars you can find these adobe houses.

Gold was found in Aruba in the early 1800's and traces of gold-mining are spread throughout the park region. The shafts and ruins of the largest gold mines at Miralamar are accessible and open for visits.

Practical information

Date established: 2003

Area: 32 square km / 7907 acres

Management body:

Fundacion Parke Nacional Arikok

Contact information

Parke Nacional Arikok

Santa Cruz 82a. Aruba

tel: (+297)585.1234

fax: (+297)585.1235

e-mail: info@arubanationalpark.org

Accessibility: Most of the attractions within the park can be reached by motor vehicles, like Cunucu Arikok, Boca Prins, Fontein and Miralamar. Some of these sites have parking lots, walking trails and benches. Moreover, these attractions are connected to each other by a 34 kilometer long hiking network.

Park Management: At the moment Arikok National Park has 43 employees. There are 8 office employees and 35 rangers.

Visitor's Centre: The visitors centre will be open in 2009 and has yet to be named.

Protected areas and Ramsar sites: The Parke Nacional Arikok is a National Park and protected area, owned by the government of Aruba. Spaans Lagoon is Aruba's RAMSAR site. This site is a conservation area owned by the government of Aruba. A narrow coastal inlet, fringed by tidal mudflats and mangrove swamps. The Spaans Lagoon is an important feeding and breeding area for wetland birds, and nursery area for various species of fish and crustaceans. Spaans Lagoon is Ramsar site no. 198.



Tourist information

Banks: Aruba Bank, Banco di Caribe, Caribbean Mercantile Bank (CMB), RBTT Bank.
Banking hours are Monday thru Friday from 8:00 or 8:30 AM to 3:30 or 4:00 PM.

Currency/Money: Travelers checks and major credit cards are welcome everywhere. The local currency is the Aruban Florin or Guilder (Afl.). US Dollars are universally accepted on the island.

Drinking water: There is no need to buy bottled water in Aruba, the island's tap water is pure and refreshing, distilled in one of the world's largest saltwater desalination plants. The plant responsible for both the desalination of water as well as the production of electricity is called WEB (Water and Electricity Bureau). Tours of the Balashi-based plant can be arranged by calling WEB at Tel. (297) 582-4700.

Electricity: Aruba rarely experiences power failures. The island functions on the North American voltage standard of 110 A.C. (60 cycles), the same as in the United States and Canada. The TV standard is NTSC so your home video camera will also play back on the hotel's TV sets or large screen projectors.

Medical facilities: For medical assistance ALL hotels have a doctor on call 24 hours a day; check with the front desk. Aruba has a first class hospital just a few

minutes from the hotel sector and an emergency room staffed 24 hrs. Tel. (297) 587-4300. Drug stores cannot fill a prescription from a Dr. not on the island but will advise you how to obtain one if necessary. One drug store in each district is open for 24 hours on a rotating basis for emergencies.

Dr. Horacio Oduber Hospital
Sasakiweg, Aruba.

Tel: (297) 587-4300 Fax: (297) 587-3348

Hotels have medical doctors and dentists on call. Appointments can be made through your hotel.

Shopping hours: Most stores and boutiques are located in Oranjestad, but excellent shops can also be found at the larger hotels and at the airport. Aloe is abundant in Aruba and skin care products are manufactured right on the island.

Stores on the main streets are open from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Saturday, although some are closed for lunch between noon and 2 p.m. Shops in the malls and shopping centers are open from 9:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. Some stores are open on Sundays and holidays when cruise ships are in port.

Cell Phone Services: Cellular roaming service and GSM capabilities are normal in Aruba. Please contact your local service provider about the features before traveling to Aruba.

Setar N.V. and Digicel have Kiosks and help desk at the arrival hall at the airport in order to provide more information.

Cellular phone rentals require that an individual show proper identification, such as a passport. A deposit is usually required.

Internet Access: The only Internet Service Provider in Aruba, the telephone company known as SETAR, provides dial-up access to non-residents and visitors. For more information please call SETAR Help Desk at 5834000 or visit website: <http://123.setarnet.aw>

Many hotels also provide dial-up capabilities for guests, either complimentary or for a small fee. Check with your selected hotel for more information.

There is several other Internet café's through out the island that provide access to the Internet for a fee of about \$5 an hour.

Aruba now also provides WIFI technology and has several hot spots throughout the island. Most of the hotel properties on the island now offer WIFI service at their properties. For more information, please contact the resort you are staying at or Setar N.V. at (297) 5825151. You can also visit their website at www.wifi-aruba.com

International Calls: Aruba offers several options to call internationally; you can use the land line, you will

have to dial the outside code and then the number. You can also call collect or use your credit card to place a phone call. You can place a collect call or credit card call at any of the blue phones located mostly at the lobbies of your hotel and also in the downtown area. The phones have instructions on how to place the calls.

It is highly advisable to purchase and use calling cards in order to make international phone calls. The calling cards can be obtained through out the island at gas stations, mini markets, supermarkets and at the various Setar teleshops. Cards, like the Ventaha usually vary between \$5, \$15, \$20 and \$30.



Diving in Aruba

Aruba earns its reputation as the wreck dive destination of the Caribbean with over half a dozen wrecks submerged in its waters. The Antilla, a German freighter -which at close to 400 feet long, is also the Caribbean's largest wreck- is by far the favorite, even among longtime, resident divers, who always seem to find something new at the site.

Aruba features a wide variety of diving instructors and operators:

Red Sail Sports
Tel (297) 586-1603
Fax (297) 586-6657

Dive Aruba
Tel (297) 582-7337
Fax (297) 582-1817

Aruba Pro Dive
Tel (297) 582-5520
Fax (297) 587-7722

Pelican Water Sports
Tel (297) 587-2302
Fax (297) 587-2315

De Palm Water Sports
Tel (298) 582-4400
Fax (297) 582-3012

Mermaid Sports Divers Aruba N.V.
Tel: (297) 587-4103

Unique Sports of Aruba
Tel (297) 586-0096
Fax (297) 586-0096

Jads Dive Center Aruba
Tel 297) 584-6070
Cel (297) 730-2110

Native Divers
Tel (297) 586-4763

Rainbow Runner
Tel (297) 583-1689

SEAruba Fly'n Dive
Tel (297) 588-1150
Fax (297) 594-0155

Aruba Water Sports Center
Tel (297) 586-6613
Fax (297) 586-0524

Dax Divers
Tel (297) 585-1270

Source of information: www.aruba.com Aruba Tourism Authority





Dutch Caribbean Nature Alliance

Safeguarding nature in the Dutch Caribbean



Kaya Italia #5 Phone: +599.717.5010
Kralendijk, Bonaire E-mail: info@DCNAnature.org
Dutch Caribbean Web: www.DCNAnature.org



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