



CURACAO

FEEL IT FOR YOURSELF

TRAVEL GUIDE

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WELCOME

BON BINÍ

A “dushi” welcome to an island that feels like summer year-round. Bursting with European-Caribbean culture, azure-blue bays, and vibrant pastel-colored historic buildings, there is no better place than Curaçao to explore and unwind.



WELCOME TO CURAÇAO

BON BINÍ

A warm hello to Curaçao, the largest of the ABC islands, which is a one-of-a-kind Caribbean destination that offers more than a typical getaway but an unforgettable experience.

Every moment here is a chance to indulge in over 35 stunning, secluded beaches, explore the unique flora and fauna, or embark on a culinary journey influenced by the island's distinct culture and history.

Curaçao's unique blend of European and Caribbean flair and rich heritage are reflected in the colonial buildings, plantation homes, forts, and museums. The capital, Willemstad, is one of the most iconic sights in the Caribbean to visit, and an acclaimed UNESCO World Heritage Site.

This island is truly better experienced than explained, and with strict health guidelines in place as well as ample space to roam and relax, Curaçao is ready to welcome you back. Get ready to immerse yourself in a world of vibrant color and energy.

We are excited to welcome you to Curaçao. Bon Biní!

For more information, visit us at curacao.com.

The island is home to 55 different nationalities, creating a melting pot of cultures and heritage.



15 FACTS ABOUT CURAÇAO

1. **Population:** 160,000.
2. **Location:** Southern part of the Caribbean Sea, on the outer fringes of the Hurricane Belt. Part of the ABC islands, Curaçao is located between Aruba and Bonaire, 60 km/40 miles north of Venezuela.
3. **Total Surface Area:** 444 sq. km/171 sq. miles, 60 km/38 miles long and 3 to 11 km/2 to 7 miles wide.
4. **Capital:** Willemstad, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.
5. **Four Languages Widely Spoken:** Papiamentu, English, Dutch, and Spanish.
6. **Curaçao is an autonomous country** within the Dutch Kingdom since October 10, 2010.
7. **Major industries** include tourism, oil, and offshore banking.
8. **Average Temperature:** 30°C/86°F year-round, with an average water temperature of 28°C/82°F.
9. **Religion:** Predominantly Roman-Catholic (80%); Others: Jewish, Protestant, and Muslim.
10. **Currency:** The Netherlands-Antillean Guilder, abbreviated as Nafl. or ANG. Fixed exchange rate of US \$1 = 1.77 Nafl.
11. **Tap water in Curaçao is of excellent quality** and can be drunk directly from the tap.
12. **The main voltage** in Curaçao is 110-130 Volt/50 Hz.
13. **Cars drive on the right side** of the street in Curaçao. The traffic rules are almost the same as in the US and Canada.
14. **Curaçao is on the Atlantic time zone** (GMT -4). This remains the same throughout the year.
15. **A “dushi” welcome for anybody** — Curaçao invites visitors of all races, orientations, and religions with a “live and let live” philosophy. The island has the most hotels and attractions with IGLTA memberships in the Caribbean.





OUR ISLAND

FLY OFF TO THE SUN

A sunny welcome to Curaçao — a place of picturesque beaches, adventure, and colorful culture in the heart of the Caribbean.



DUSHI CURAÇAO



CLIMATE

Located in the tropics, just 12° north of the Equator, Curaçao has a warm, sunny climate. The average temperature is about 30° C (in the mid 80° F). Cooling trade winds blow constantly from the east, picking up in the spring months. The rainy season, between October and February, is usually marked by short, occasional showers at night and sunny weather during the day. Total annual rainfall averages only 570 mm (22 inches). Curaçao is on the outer fringes of the Hurricane Belt making it a year-round destination.

CLOTHING

Since temperatures are warm throughout the year, light, casual tropical wear is recommended. When outdoors, protect yourself from the sun. If you plan on hiking in the countryside, wear sturdy shoes and long pants to protect your legs from the cacti and bugs.

DRINKING WATER

Not only is Curaçao's water safe to drink, it is of the finest quality. Since 1928, a seawater distillery has produced top quality drinking water for the island. It contains no chloride and little calcium, is tasteless, odorless and has a good bacteriological composition.

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY :

- Emergency 911
- Ambulance 912
- Curaçao Medical Center (+5999) 745-0000
- Politur (tourist police) (+5999) 735-0044



HEALTH SAFETY

Health always comes first with our “A Dushi Stay, the Healthy Way” set of guidelines to best protect our guests and our communities.

The number of COVID-19 infections in Curaçao has remained relatively limited much of this due, in part, to the close collaboration between The Curaçao Tourist Board with the Ministry of Public Health, Environment and Nature, and other government agencies’ commitment to reopening in a safe and controlled manner.

ON-ISLAND PCR TESTING LABS

While you are on-island, or in case you must return to a country where a negative test is required, COVID-19 testing is available at the following locations:

ADC

www.adcnv.com

Phone: (+5999)-434-5100

Lab de Med

www.labdemed.org

Phone: (+5999)-736-1030

MLS

www.mlscuracao.com

Phone: (+5999)-736-8455

MORE INFORMATION

For more information and updates on the guidelines in Curaçao, visit the official government website and the Curaçao Tourist Board Travel Advisory page: www.curacao.com/en/article/travel-updates.

LOCAL TRANSPORTATION

There are many ways to get around Curaçao — and you're never far from anywhere on an island that stretches 40 miles long and 10 miles wide.

CAR RENTAL

The best way to get to know the island is by renting a car to take you wherever you want to go, whenever you like. Car rental companies operate at Curaçao International Airport, including Hertz, Budget, Avis, and Alamo. Many have desks in the larger hotels, too. For longer rentals, ask about special weekly rates. A deposit will be required, therefore, make sure to bring a credit card. It is advisable to make reservations for a rental car in advance. An international driving license is not required, and a valid driver's license is sufficient.

TRANSFER SHUTTLES

Many hotels offer an airport transfer service. Some also offer regular shuttle services to the beach and downtown Willemstad, the capital. For excursions elsewhere on the island, ask about shuttles before booking your own transportation. Diving schools, for example, will usually offer a pick-up and drop-off service.





DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know that the Divi-Divi trees can help you tell the cardinal direction since they grow in a single direction being west?

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

For a real local experience, there are public buses, which the islanders call “konvoi”. Even though most visitors may not utilize them, they can make for a fun outing and offer a great way to mingle with locals. Major bus stations are located on the Waaigat in Punda and alongside the viaduct in Otrobanda (both in Willemstad). Most buses run hourly, whereas the service to Westpunt is every two hours. Reduced Sunday schedules apply. You pay your ticket in cash to the bus driver.

MINI-BUSES

Smaller mini-buses are handy and can be spotted by the word “BUS” on the license plate. They run all over the island with fares ranging from \$0.50-2.00, depending on your destination. Please note that mini-buses have no fixed schedule.

TAXI

Official taxis can be spotted by a sign on the roof and the letters “TX” on the license plate. Licensed taxi drivers wear an ID badge and have a sticker inside the car with information about the driver. Posted rates are valid between 6 am and 11 pm for a maximum of four passengers. A 25% surcharge applies after 11 pm. If the journey isn’t metered, make sure to agree on a price with the driver beforehand. Taxi stands can be found at the airport, near many hotels, and at the Brionplein in front of the Pontoon Bridge in Otrobanda in Willemstad. Or, download the 24-7 Taxi Curaçao app to order your taxi anywhere and anytime on the island with a fixed price.

LEARN

EXPLORE OUR BEGINNINGS

Curaçao's rich heritage, which still shapes the island today, can be explored in its colonial buildings, plantation homes, forts, and museums.





HISTORY

HERMENT / THE TOOLS

Fa traha un tambù mecher di hêrmint. Hêrmint pa kuba, kap, miñi polu, kirta, klifa i pa tiñi

To make the tambù you need the tools; tools to dig, chop, to measure the wood, cut, hammer nails and to paint.

DI KLABA BARI / STYLES

CURAÇAO'S HISTORY

The earliest inhabitants of Curaçao were Arawaks, who came from the South American mainland. European explorers first landed in Curaçao in 1499. Alonso de Ojeda, a lieutenant to Christopher Columbus, was so impressed by the physical stature of the islanders that he called it “isla de los gigantes” (island of the giants). Less than 20 years later, the name ‘Curaçao’ first appeared on a Portuguese map. The most likely explanation is that Curaçao was the name by which the inhabitants identified themselves.

Curaçao became Dutch territory in 1634. For much of the 17th and 18th century, Curaçao was the hub of the brutal transatlantic slave trade. Slavery was abolished in 1863. Decolonization came in 1954, when the Netherlands Antilles gained equal status within the Kingdom of the Netherlands. In 2010, the Netherlands Antilles was dissolved and Curaçao became autonomous within the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

Today the island is endearingly dubbed “Dushi Kòrsou” (Sweet Curaçao) by the locals.



PLANTATION HOUSES

In the second half of the 17th century, the Dutch divided up Curaçao's land amongst private landowners. On their plantations these new owners built large mansions ("landhuizen") for themselves and their families, complete with storehouses, stables, and quarters for house slaves. Small huts, known as "kunuku houses", were built for the field slaves and can still be seen on the island.

Today, about 85 historic plantation houses have been preserved. They can be found all across the island, usually on hilltops, to benefit from the island breezes and to be visible from afar. You can enjoy fine food, art, an evening of dancing, a good night's rest, or a stroll through a museum at one of the landhuizen of Curaçao.

DON'T MISS:

- **Landhuis Knip (or Kenepa)** – Museo Tula
- **Landhuis Dokterstuin** – Offering great local cuisine
- **Landhuis Chobolobo** – Curaçao Liqueur Distillery

FORTS

From the Dutch occupation of the island in 1634 right up to the end of World War II, Forts were built across vulnerable parts of the island. Nowadays, the Forts form an important piece of the island's history and the best preserved ones are brightly illuminated at night.

MAKE SURE YOU VISIT:

- **Fort Amsterdam** (1635)
- **Fort Beekenburg** (1703)
- **Rif Fort** (1828)
- **Fort Nassau** (1797)



DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know that some believe the name Curaçao originated from the Spanish “Corazon”, which the Portuguese then turned it into Curaçau or Curaçao?



CONNECT

THE ISLAND WAY

Curaçao is a melting pot comprised of 55 nationalities. Afro-Caribbeans make up the majority the island's population of 160,000 inhabitants. One result of the historic slave trade is a rich cultural heritage, embraced today by islanders and visitors alike. Afro-Caribbean traditions continue to shape Curaçao. Examples include the colorful language, Tambú music (Curaçao Blues), cuisine, visual arts, and spirituality.



PEOPLE AND CULTURE



LANGUAGE

The official languages of Curaçao are Papiamentu, Dutch and English. Papiamentu, the most widely spoken language, developed as slaves from different origins arrived on Curaçao from different lands. It emerged from African languages, Spanish, Dutch, French, Portuguese, English and Arawak. Unlike other Creole languages, Papiamentu is spoken through all levels of society. Dutch, Spanish and English are also widely spoken today. In general, visitors can easily get by in English.

HELPFUL PHRASES TO KNOW

Bon dia

Bon tardi

Bon nochi

Awe

Ayera

Danki

Bon

Dushi

Bon Biní

Kon ta bai?

Mi ta bon

Danki

Ayó

Kon ta bo nòmber?

Mi yama...

Mi nòmber ta...

Mi ta bini di...

Di nada

Te otro biaha

Hòmber

Muhe

Muchanan

Bon deea

Bon tardi

Bon nochi

Ahway

Ahyeeraa

Dahnkee

Bon

Dooshee

Bon Beenie

Contabye

Meetabon

Dahnkee

Ah io

Kontabo number?

Meeyama...

Meenumber ta...

Meeta beenee dee...

Deenada

Te otro biaha

Homber

Moohe

Muchanan

Good morning

Good afternoon

Good evening

Today

Yesterday

Thanks

Good

Kind, sweet, tasty

Welcome

How are you?

I'm fine

Thank you

Good bye

What is your name?

My name is...

My name is...

I come from...

With pleasure

Until next time

Man

Woman

Children

EATING

Influenced by its distinct culture and history, the island's culinary offering is as diverse as it is delicious, whether you're dining out or just grabbing something on the go at a food truck. Options range from Asian-Caribbean delicacies to Spanish, Italian, Chinese, Dutch cuisine. Willemstad is a major shipping hub, so markets and supermarkets are well stocked with imports from Europe and North and South America – making it easy to cater to every taste.

LOCAL FLAVOR

The diversity of the population is reflected in the local cuisine. The influence of Spanish rulers, Dutch merchants, Venezuelan and Indian contract workers, and Portuguese Jews have all left their mark on the island's culinary heritage. The highlight of the rich local cuisine are its delicious stews, like “karni stobá” (beef) or “kabritu stobá” (goat).

It doesn't get more authentic than having lunch in one of the food markets of Willemstad. Or try one of the excellent fish restaurants in the Koredor area where delicious fish is served fresh from the ocean for the local clientele.

SNACK BARS

Driving around Curaçao, you'll find small, essential shops everywhere along the way, usually with a bar and chairs outside where the locals stop for snacks. These are Curaçao's famous “snèks” (snack bars). Stop by for a coffee, a beer, and some tasty treats, like “pastechis” (savory pastries) or “Saté Ku Batata” (chicken skewer with fries). Prices are usually highly affordable. You can also often purchase everyday items like shampoo and cigarettes at the Snèks.





ISLAND-STYLE BARBECUE

Cook like the locals – with your feet in the sand and a dip into the Caribbean sea. You can pick up supplies for an authentic Curaçao beach barbecue at one of the island’s many supermarkets. Barbecuing is allowed on a couple of public beaches, including Daaibooi, Santa Cruz, San Juan, and Caracasbaai. Caracasbaai is the place to mix with the islanders in a relaxed, friendly atmosphere. The bay is one of the biggest around, and incredibly beautiful. As the sun sets on the rock wall, the fun kicks off with good music, laughter, and delicious aromas in the air. Palapas and picnic tables are available all day long. But if you want a sun lounger, come early or late in the afternoon when the crowd thins out a bit. You can set up your barbecue just three meters from the water – even under a palm tree, if you’re lucky. For the ultimate experience, cast a line and catch your own dinner!

LATE-NIGHT NIBBLES

Truk’i pan (literally “bread trucks”) are food stalls where the locals gather, usually after a night out, for a hot bite. With so many truk’i pans across the island, everyone has their favorite spot. Take one look at these humble caravans and you’ll probably wonder: do I dare? The answer is: yes, you do! You can’t beat a late-night snack at a good truk’i pan. Popular dishes include simply chicken and fries, steak and fries, and BBQ platters. Feel free to add a sandwich, soup, or salad to your order.



MUSIC

The music scene in Curaçao has really taken off in recent years. Local musicians are making a name for themselves as their following continues to grow.

CARNIVAL

Carnival is the main cultural event of the year on the island – a festive mix of music, theatre, street parties, art, culture, history and folklore. If you want a true glimpse of Curaçao and its people, this is the time to visit. Carnival season starts at the beginning of January and ends on Mardi Gras (the Tuesday before Ash Wednesday). The Grand Parade turns the streets and alleyways of Willemstad into one big street party. The climax of the festivities is the traditional burning of King Momo at midnight to wash away all the negativity of the past year.

TUMBA

The word ‘tumba’ derives from the Bantu and Mandinka word for drum. Tumba is of African origin, although the music has developed since it was introduced on the island in the 17th century. Nowadays, the Tumba is influenced by merengue, Afro-Caribbean rhythms and Latin jazz. Tumba plays a major role at Carnival time. Numerous artists compete to win the coveted title of Tumba King or Queen at the annual Festival of Tumba. The winner’s song becomes the official tumba or anthem of that year’s Carnival.

SEÚ

Seú music is the rhythm of Curaçao’s harvest festival. The original festivalgoers would parade through the fields doing a graceful dance called the ‘wapa’ to symbolize planting and harvesting. These days, the traditional parade proceeds through the streets of Willemstad on Easter Monday. More than 5,000 revelers of all ages take part.





TAMBÚ

Tambú, or Curaçao blues, began as an outlet for slaves to express their sorrow and frustration. Instruments are simple, common implements like the ‘tambú’ (drum), ‘kachu’ (cow horn), ‘agan’ (a piece of metal or ploughshare), and ‘chapi’ (hoe). The music is accompanied by hand clapping, usually by women, and African dancing with asymmetrical body movements and hip rotation. These days, tambú is popular throughout the island and even the younger generation is gripped by its music. The lyrics are often socially critical, indirect, filled with humor, double meanings and metaphors.

CONTEMPORARY MUSIC

The traditional sounds of Curaçao can still be heard in today’s contemporary music scene. While you’ll find plenty of local artists performing in bars and on beaches, others are becoming world famous. You can find internationally known Curaçaoan artists like Grammy Award winning percussionist Pernell Saturnino, mezzo-soprano Tania Kross, singer-songwriter Izaline Calister and pianists Wim Statius Muller, Rudy Plaate, and Randal Corsen performing from time to time at local venues or during the annual Curaçao North Sea Jazz Festival, which attracts music lovers from all around the world.

CURAÇAO NORTH SEA JAZZ FESTIVAL

Each summer, a local edition of Holland’s renowned North Sea Jazz Festival takes place in Curaçao, to the delight of locals and visitors alike. Three days full of music spotlight local and international artists. Previous years have seen the likes of Carlos Santana, Alicia Keys, Sergio Mendes, John Legend, Bruno Mars, Ruben Blades, Stevie Wonder, the late Prince, Usher and Enrique Iglesias. Who’s playing this year? Check their website for the latest listings.

www.curacaonorthseajazz.com

ART

Islanders certainly aren't afraid of a little color and this is carried on in local art. Willemstad's vibrant street art and life-sized murals let you experience Curaçao in a whole new way. Take a guided walking tour to discover the work of some of the island's most popular local artists. Museums and art galleries are scattered around the island, where, amongst others, **you can find exhibitions by the following artists:**

RECYCLING WITH YUBI

Yubi Kirindongo is an internationally known artist whose strikingly original creations come straight from the trash heap. Whether it's old car parts or remnants of industrial machinery, Yubi lives by the motto "One man's trash is another man's treasure." His home on the west side of Willemstad doubles as a private gallery/museum that you can visit by appointment only. You can also find his work in the Alma Blou Gallery and the Curaçao Museum.

NENA: QUEEN OF BEAUTY

The late artist and former Miss Curaçao Nena Sanchez took inspiration from the natural beauty of the island to create her brightly colored canvasses. Find her paintings in Landhuis Jan Kok overlooking the salt flats at Willibrordus and in her gallery in Punda.

FRANCIS SLING'S ART CAVE

One of Curaçao's most notable painters and artists, Francis Sling's art is a way of self-expression and exploration of human relationships. Art Cave, his colorful home, gallery, and workplace in Scharloo attracts locals and tourists alike. The atelier may have moved, but the gallery is still open for visitors who want to see more of his work or host an event there.





DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know that local specialties on the island include cactus soup, okra & seafood soup, and even iguana stew? Try it for yourself!

FULL FIGURES AT SERENA'S

“Chichi” is Papiamentu for the eldest female relative in the family - a big sister everyone looks up to. Chichi dolls are voluptuous clay sculptures, hand-painted with bright Caribbean designs. These very special souvenirs are uniquely Curaçaoan. If you're feeling creative, make your own at Serena's Art Factory.

LANDHUIS BLOEMHOF

Landhuis Bloemhof is a cherished cultural and historical venue in Curaçao, a meeting place for all art lovers. It features exhibitions, lectures, literary cafes and creative workshops. Visit the permanent exhibition of the work of the late May Henriquez who lived and worked here and stroll through the surrounding lush garden.

CATHEDRAL OF THORNS

The Cathedral of Thorns is a building-sized illuminated labyrinth on the island. It is designed to include today's world's religions and ancient nature-based religions. All visitors of the thorns are encouraged to walk through its corridors and embark on an artistic journey.

GALLERY ALMA BLOU

You can find the largest collection of works by local artists in this gallery. Alma Blou is the oldest and largest gallery in Curaçao, housed in the 17th-century plantation house Landhuis Habaai.





GET ACTIVE

ABOVE AND BELOW THE SEA

Whether you're in the mood to take on a new adventure, or in dire need of a lazy beach day, Curaçao has got you covered. With so much to do on the island, you'll be able to indulge in as many or as few activities as you like.



BEACHES

A full-page photograph of a tropical beach. The sky is blue with scattered white clouds. The ocean is a vibrant turquoise near the shore, transitioning to a deep blue further out. White waves are breaking onto a sandy beach. In the foreground, a large, circular thatched umbrella stands on the sand. Two people are sitting in lounge chairs under the umbrella. The overall scene is bright and sunny.

BEACHES

Curaçao is a land of deep-blue waters, over 35 sandy beaches, and gentle trade winds. Every beach has its own character, and most are protected by peaceful cliffs and coves, giving you ample space and privacy to stretch out and relax.

CAS ABAO

Cas Abao offers stretches of white sand, crystal clear waters, waving palm trees and gazebos to hide from the blazing sun. The beach combines a natural country setting with all the conveniences of a full service beach. Cas Abao is ideal for swimmers of all ages and its reefs are a paradise for snorkelers and scuba divers. There is a bar, restaurant, showers, massage facility, and dive shop.

DAAIBOOI BEACH

A small bay close to town, this beach allows for snorkeling along its rocky ledge and has a small fishermen's cove. Palapas provide adequate shade and there is also a snack bar that is open both during the week and on the weekend. To the west of the beach, a small trail leads into the countryside.

PLAYA KENEP A GRANDI/PLAYA KENEP A CHIKI

These two beautiful coves are among the island's most popular and beautiful beaches. Intimate Kenepa Chiki is partly shaded by manchineel trees. The snack bar is open on weekends.

Locals like to camp here during holidays.

Playa Kenepa Grandi (Groot Knip) has several shade palapas set back from the water and a large snack bar.

Admission is free.



SEA AQUARIUM BEACH/MAMBO BEACH

This beach is located next door to the Curaçao Sea Aquarium and Dolphin Academy. During the day it is the perfect place for children to play in the shallow water. You can find a variety of shops and several bars as well as facilities for different kinds of water sports. The beach is popular with families and young people at night, especially on the weekend when it is a very crowded hot spot. Concerts and movies are also held on the beach.

JAN THIEL BEACH

Lounge on a beach bed under a palm tree and enjoy the beautiful open bay, which has excellent diving and snorkeling. Jan Thiel Beach is located in an upscale residential area east of town. With a full service dive operation and a children-friendly semi-enclosed wading area and a small water park. Jan Thiel is the ideal beach for families. There's also a restaurant that serves sandwiches, snacks, and drinks on the beach.

KLEIN CURAÇAO

Don't be fooled by the name. Klein, or 'Little Curaçao,' is the longest and whitest beach around. Located eight miles off the southeast coast, you can reach this uninhabited island by boat in less than two hours. Explore the old lighthouse and stranded shipwrecks or just relax on the soft white sands. Transportation can be booked through diving schools or boat tour operators, who offer snorkeling, refreshments, and usually a barbecue or picnic lunch.

DID YOU KNOW?

Out of the 7 species of turtles, 5 of them live in the waters surrounding Curaçao. Popular spots for turtle sightings include Playa Lagun and Klein Curaçao.







WATER SPORTS

The gentle sea and trade winds make Curaçao ideal for all sorts of water sports. It's the perfect place to try your hand at wake boarding, water skiing, sailing, kayaking, canoeing, jet skiing, windsurfing, and kite surfing. Then there's the underwater world to explore. Curaçao is one of the most popular destinations for snorkeling and scuba diving.

DIVING

Once you've seen underwater Curaçao, you won't be able to stop talking about it. The natural treasures that lie just beneath the surface, are rare and remarkable. Crystal-clear waters offer outstanding visibility to explore healthy coral reefs, sloping walls and sunken shipwrecks. Curaçao features easy shore access to most dive sites. The sites are protected from strong currents and the waters are warm year-round. You can see pilot whales, dolphins, rays, sea turtles, lobsters under large corals and of course more colorful reef fish than you can imagine. The majority of dive sites are located along the calm, southwest coast. Advanced divers should head to the rugged north when conditions permit.

The Coral Restoration Foundation Curaçao is a non-profit organization dedicated to restoring coral reef systems and educating the public on the importance of the oceans. Since 2015, they have put more than 4,500 corals back on the reefs of Curaçao in dive sites such as: Ocean Encounters, Tugboat, Substation Breaker and Director's Bay.

SNORKELING

Curaçao also offers ample opportunities for snorkeling. Since the island has minimal rainfall, there are a few sediments in the ocean which makes the visibility of its waters excellent. Almost all of the snorkeling on the island is easily accessed from beaches. Snorkelers from all levels can safely enjoy the marvels of the underwater world. Top snorkeling spots include Klein Curaçao, Tugboat, Shipwreck, Playa Kalki, and Playa LARGU (known as Playa Piskadó).



WINDSURFING

On the southeastern coast, Spanish Water is a beautiful protected lagoon with an outlet to the sea - a favorite with water sports enthusiasts. It's the best spot for windsurfing on the island, with a school for lessons and rentals. On the north side of the lagoon, there are small bays and islands.

KITE SURFING

One of the best spots for kite surfers is St. Joris Bay. From beginners to pros, all are welcome. Lessons are available if you need them. The bay is actually a large lake, with a channel connecting it to the sea. The water is still and the wind blows landwards, so conditions are ideal. It also helps that the water remains shallow up to 40 meters from the shore. This is where the locals go to kite surf.

FLYBOARDING

If you've ever dreamed of flying, this extreme water sport is about as close as you can come. Try flying on water in the Jan Thiel area. Flyboarders use a water-powered jet pack to literally blast themselves out of the water. A long hose pumps water under pressure straight to your jet boots. Two smaller handheld jets provide some semblance of control as you rise to new heights, hovering up to 15 meters/50ft. above the surface.

SEABOB

Explore Curaçao's rich underwater world with the next generation of underwater scooters: The "SeaBob". A tour will take you on an exciting adventure to see the most beautiful spots on the island, including corals, sponges, fishes, turtles, and even shipwrecks.







DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know that more than 50 different new marine life species have been discovered in Curaçao?

LAND SPORTS

GOLF

The wonderful climate of Curaçao offers the perfect atmosphere to play golf. Enjoy a round or two at one of our fantastic golf courses.



- **Old Quarry Golf Course** boasts an 18-hole championship golf course in an unforgettable setting. Rated as one of Golfweek's Best Courses in the Caribbean & Mexico Designed by Pete Dye, Old Quarry Golf Course takes on the shape of the naturally contoured site overlooking the Caribbean Sea and the sheltered Spanish Water lagoon.
- **The Curaçao Golf & Squash Club** is an 18-hole course located in the center of the island, Emmastad. It is the oldest golf course in Curaçao with a lot of history, charm and character.
- **Blue Bay Golf** is an 18-hole course with spectacular views and its tropical vegetation along the fairways located in the beautiful Blue Bay area of the island.

OFF THE BEATEN TRACK

Explore the wild side of the island the exciting way: by ATV, quad-bike, buggy, or Jeep. Several companies offer off-road tours to discover Curaçao's rugged interior.

HIKING AND BIKING

Curaçao offers endless opportunities to explore the island's fierce natural beauty on foot or by bike. Various organizations offer great nature walks. Check online for an up-to-date schedule of where and when. Mountain bike trails run through the salt pans, the island's rugged north shore, the former plantations and much more. Sign up for a group tour from one of many organizers.



RECHARGE

TIME TO UNWIND

Curaçao's laid-back lifestyle presents the perfect opportunity to slow down, relax and recharge. Spoil yourself with the island's glowing sun, white sand, and sweet indulgence. Sprawl out on the beach, slip into the sea, or unwind in a spa.



RELAX

A couple is relaxing on a white lounge chair on a beach. The man is in the foreground, wearing a dark blue baseball cap with "BORN IN CANADA" written on it and a white towel draped over his shoulders. The woman is lying next to him, wearing a watch and a pink strap. In the background, a person is sitting in the shallow water, and the sun is setting over the ocean, creating a warm, golden glow. The word "RELAX" is written in large white letters at the top left.

PURE INDULGENCE

Pamper yourself with a massage, facial or body treatment at one of the island's many spas. Check with your hotel what facilities they offer.

You can either visit one of the many resorts with spas on site or you can get a massage in a spa hut right on the beach.

Spa huts are found close to the water and provide a truly unique experience with sweet exotics scents and the soothing sound of gentle waves.



YOGA

There are multiple yoga options throughout the island in studios, in nature and at the beach. If you're only staying for a short period you can join a drop-in class. You can choose mindful yoga, pilates, ayurvedic yoga massages, or even full moon yoga sessions. Places like Ashram Curaçao or The Space offer the perfect setting for some TLC.

THE HAPPIEST HOUR OF THE DAY

After a day in the hot sun, you'll be ready for refreshments. Happy Hours are popular at beaches, bars, and clubs throughout the island. Two-for-one is the usual offer. Ask any local to find out about the happy hour hotspots.

ALL ALONG THE BLVD

Shop 'til you drop into the sand. Curaçao Beach Boulevard, or BLVD, is the latest in seaside retail. It links Lions Dive with Mambo Beach and Cabana Beach. Lined with shops, restaurants, bars and entertainment, there's always something happening down on the BLVD.

JAN THIEL

Jan Thiel is buzzing. This area is home to several resorts, restaurants, bars, shops and a casino. After the sun sets you can enjoy live music, shows and entertainment here.

PISCADERA

This fishing village has become one of the main leisure areas of the island while maintaining its laidback atmosphere. In the area round Piscadera Bay you will find sports facilities, casinos, restaurants, a convention and trade center as well as the recreational area of Koredor.

FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

Curaçao hosts a wide variety of major festivals and events throughout the year, celebrating music, film, food, and more. There's the Curaçao North Sea Jazz Festival, Curaçao International Rotterdam Film Festival, Curaçao Pride, Curaçao Blue Seas Festival, and of course, Carnival. The best way to get to know the island and its people is at one of these festive gatherings. All events are planned with health safety as a top priority. Visit **curacao.com** for up-to-date details.

CASINOS

While you're here, try your luck at any of the Curaçao casinos around the island featuring over 2,000 slots and gaming machines and more than 70 table games. Casinos can be found in the downtown area and some major hotels around the island.

NIGHTLIFE

Dancing. Live jazz. Island music. Tropical beats. Karaoke. Take your pick of the island's night time entertainment, all with our visitors health safety in mind.





DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know that with a population of just around 160,000, the island is a top contributor of MLB players per capita — 15 Curaçao natives have played in the Major League.



EXPLORE

THE LAY OF THE LAND

The best way to delve into all that is Curaçao is to visit the capital city of Willemstad, but don't forget to explore the island's national parks and to spend a day at a secluded beach. No matter what you do, you'll find yourself immersed in a whirlwind of island culture, nature, and experiences.



AREAS



WILLEMSTAD

The lively capital is a UNESCO World Heritage. St. Anna Bay divides the city in two parts with Punda in the East and Otrobanda to the West. The two are linked together by the Queen Emma Bridge, known to locals as “The Swinging Old Lady”.

In the past, Willemstad was known as a trading port for products from the surrounding Spanish, French and British colonies. In total, the four districts of Punda, Otrobanda, Pietermaai and Scharloo are home to some 765 listed buildings.

PUNDA

Derived from “punta” in Spanish, Punda was established by the Dutch when they first occupied the Spanish-controlled island in 1634.

The new rulers built Fort Amsterdam to protect their colony. The city soon began to grow and today Fort Amsterdam serves as the center of government. Present-day Columbusstraat, Madurostraat, and Handelskade are where the Protestant Dutch merchants had their homes, shops, offices and warehouses. The basic layout of the area, with its grid of narrow streets, retains its original character. Handelskade is the familiar face of Willemstad. Its Dutch colonial architecture from the 17th and 18th centuries sports a uniquely Caribbean color scheme unlike anywhere else in the world.

THINGS TO DO IN PUNDA:

- **Lunch at the Old Market.** Sample local delicacies for local prices, alongside office workers on their lunch break at the Marshe Bieu or Old Market.
- **New Market.** The indoor New Market (or Marshe Nobo) on Waaigat-plein is where the islanders come to buy fresh fruit, vegetables, fish and handicrafts. Drop by daily before 2 pm to wander and enjoy a snack. Drink straight from a fresh coconut or sample the tropical fruit juices.
- **Mikvé Israel-Emanuel Synagogue (Snoa).** Built in 1732, this impressive building is the oldest synagogue in continuous use in the Western Hemisphere.
- **Shopping.** A mix of local shops and international brands line the streets. Don't miss the most photographed building in Punda: Penha Perfumery on Handelskade near Queen Emma Bridge. This remarkable yellow-colored building is an expert example of Dutch colonial architecture.
- **Punda Vibes.** Every Thursday evening Punda turns into a vibrant gathering place for all ages. Enjoy street theatre and live music, go for an art walk, do a dance, and watch the fireworks show over St. Anna Bay.







OTROBANDA

Otrobanda means “the other side” and was first settled in 1707 when they simply ran out of space in Punda. The buildings in the Breedestraat were constructed to mirror those in Punda, with commercial space downstairs and living quarters above. By 1774, Otrobanda had grown as large as Punda. In the 18th and 19th centuries, freed slaves began moving to the city and the spacious dwellings of Otrobanda were renovated into more modest living quarters and small shops.

With the establishment of its first working-class neighborhood, the city center took shape. In the 20th century, Otrobanda became an important cultural center for the emerging Afro-Caribbean middle class on the island. In contrast to Punda’s orderly grid, a maze of winding streets and alleyways give Otrobanda a more intimate feel.

Over the last few years community building projects, street parties and street art have revitalized the neighborhood, especially the Ser’i Otrobanda area.

THINGS TO DO IN OTROBANDA:

- **Walking tour.** A walking tour with a knowledgeable local guide is a great way to learn about the history and architecture of Otrobanda.
- **Curaçao Museum.** Housed in a listed building from 1853, this museum stands as the oldest in Curaçao. You’ll find work by local and international artists, a diverse collection of antique furniture from the 18th and 19th centuries, and a traditional Curaçaoan kitchen. In the sculpture garden there’s also a children’s village for kids to explore on their own.
- **Kurá Hulanda.** This small, but excellent museum traces the history of slavery in the Caribbean and celebrates the cultures of the West African regions that many slaves came from. Kurá Hulanda boasts the most comprehensive collection of African artifacts in the Caribbean.
- **Netto Bar** on Breedestraat has been making and serving ròm bèrdè (green rum) since 1954. The cozy bar fills up with locals and tourists in the afternoon.
- **Rif Fort.** Built in 1828, this waterfront fort has been transformed into an entertainment center and shopping area. Local musicians perform live on the weekends.

PIETERMAAI

Just like Otrobanda, Pietermaai was built at the beginning of the 18th century due to a lack of space within the Punda city walls. Originally a residential neighborhood, the area was named after the Dutch captain Pieter de Meij who settled in Curaçao in 1674. Today's Pietermaai is a trendy, bohemian neighborhood on the rise. Its lively art scene make it popular with students, tourists, and locals alike. Most of the monumental buildings have been restored into their original state and transformed into boutique hotels, restaurants, and bars.

THINGS TO DO IN PIETERMAAI:

Stroll through the Nieuwestraat, possibly the hippest street on the island. By day, the colorful pastel buildings that line the one-way street, light up the area. After sunset, the outdoor cafés fill up with sharp-dressed locals and tourists as the nightlife engine begins to rev up.







SCHARLOO

The Scharloo area was originally used for farming, then partly for shipbuilding. After a strong hurricane destroyed many of the villas of wealthy Jewish families in Pietermaai in 1877, they looked for a safer location and moved to Scharloo to build large mansions for their families. Most of these buildings have been beautifully restored and are being used as museums, a hotel, and offices. Scharloo is slowly but steadily becoming the creative district of Curaçao. Several innovative startups, eateries, and art galleries have settled in the neighborhood.

THINGS TO DO IN SCHARLOO:

- **Guided Tours.** A walking tour around Scharloo is probably the best way to experience this unique district and provides you more insight of how neighborhood revitalization is taking place. Discover the stunning architecture, meet the neighbors, and even enjoy spontaneous music performances along the way.
- **Street Art.** Colorful murals are turning Scharloo into an outdoor gallery. Life-size works of art from renowned local and international artists now grace the walls of the neighborhood. Admire them on Bitterstraat and Parke Leyba.
- **Hidden Lunchrooms.** If you want great coffee, a breakfast bagel, or local lunch make sure to stop at one of the lunchrooms in the neighborhood. Each with their own flair, all worth a try.
- **Maritime Museum.** The Curaçao Maritime Museum takes you on a discovery tour of more than 500 years maritime history of Curaçao. The story-line is illustrated through a permanent exhibition consisting of displays with authentic nautical charts, ship models and navigation equipment combined with audiovisual stations. In addition, the museum offers a harbor tour on one of the original harbor ferries.

THREE QUEENS: THE BRIDGES OF WILLEMSTAD

It is impossible to miss the three bridges when you take a walk through Willemstad. The three stately bridges of Willemstad are each named after a Queen of the Netherlands.

QUEEN EMMA BRIDGE

Also known as “The Swinging Old Lady”, this bridge was built in 1888 by Leonard Burlington Smith and was completely renovated in 1939 and 2006. Originally it was a toll bridge and individuals without shoes were permitted to cross the bridge without paying the toll. However, today, a toll is no longer applied and you can keep your shoes on. When the bridge swings open, two ferries spring into action to bring pedestrians across the water. The ferries are also free of charge.

QUEEN JULIANA BRIDGE

The Queen Juliana Bridge is an inseparable element of the Willemstad landscape. At 56 meters, it's the tallest bridge in the Caribbean – high enough for oil tankers to pass underneath and for visitors to enjoy breathtaking panoramas of St. Anna Bay, Punda, Otrobanda, and Schottegat. The four-lane, blue-and-yellow bridge took ten years to build and opened in 1974. If you're a thrill-seeker you can even rappel from this bridge under professional guidance!

QUEEN WILHELMINA BRIDGE

Queen Wilhelmina bridges the Waaigat, linking Punda with Scharloo. Built in 1928, it was originally a drawbridge, but became a fixed bridge when the wharf in the Waaigat was destroyed. In 2005, a new bridge was inaugurated.



DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know that they raise 2 different colored flags to indicate how long the Queen Emma Bridge will stay open? Orange if it is for a short period and dark blue for a long period.





BANDABOU

Bandabou (or countryside) is the rural, western part of the island. This is where you will find some of the most beautiful beaches of the island – as well as the national parks.

NATURE

- **Christoffel Park.** Hike up 372 meters/1,220 feet to the top of Christoffelberg, Curaçao's highest peak, to enjoy stunning views of this beautiful nature preserve. Get an early start to avoid the midday heat and don't forget your walking shoes and a water bottle. Set out on your own or take a tour by jeep, mountain bike, or on horseback. For an extra-special experience, there are occasional full-moon hikes, sunrise safaris, and you can even camp on the seaside of the park.
- **Shete Boka National Park.** Shete Boka lies on the western shore of the island, alongside Christoffel Park, and is home to a dozen 'bokas' or coves. Your visit starts at Boka Tabla, where white waves crash into an underground grotto. Stroll up to the limestone terrace for inspiring views of the waves breaking on the rugged north shore. Don't miss 'Pistolero' ravine where the waves echo like gunshots.
- **Hato Caves.** The Hato Caves were formed millions of years ago under the sea. During the Ice Age, water levels dropped and Curaçao was born. Covering 4,900 square meters/52,700 square foot, the cave complex is home to limestone formations, the famous Madonna statue, and a colony of rare long-nosed bats.
- **Flamingos on the Salt Flats.** From Willemstad, head towards Willibrordus to reach the salt flats where, with any luck, you'll find flocks of flamingos. Park alongside the road near Landhuis Jan Kok for excellent up-close views of these majestic pink creatures. You can also find flamingo colonies at the Sint Michiel and Jan Thiel salt flats.

CULTURE

- **Sunday Market.** For a truly local experience, visit the market in Barber on a Sunday morning. This is where the islanders meet to eat, shop, and mingle. Treats to purchase in store include bean cake and raisin bread. Or go for a full meal cooked on makeshift stoves. Watch for “sòpi di piska” (fish soup) and fresh “pika”, a spicy mix of onions and peppers.
- **Kas Di Pal'i Maishi.** Kas di Pal'i Maishi is an authentic slave house which once belonged to the Ascension plantation nearby. It is now an open-air museum that tells the story of the daily lives of liberated slaves. Make sure to stop here on your way to Westpunt for a wonderful historical tour about the resourcefulness of people who had close to nothing.
- **Museo Tula.** In 1795, a slave named Tula instigated a brave revolt against his Dutch masters at the plantation of Landhuis Kenepa. The slave rebellion and its brutal suppression by the landowners is the central story of this museum which is located at one of the most picturesque places on the island.



CHARRASCO
CHARRASCO



WIRI
*IRON
SCRAPER*



BANDARIBA

Bandariba means ‘east side’ and is the name of the eastern part of the island. Here you will find upscale tourist areas such as Jan Thiel and Mambo Beach and the desert-like countryside.

COUNTRYSIDE

- **Curaçao Ostrich Farm.** Take a safari tour at the largest ostrich farm outside of Africa to learn all there is to know about these oversized African birds. Dine by campfire, or enjoy lunch or dinner at the African-inspired Zambezi restaurant.
- **Aloe Vera Plantation.** Learn more about this amazing medicinal plant with a guided tour of the plantation. There’s also a small shop with homemade products.
- **Dinah’s Botanical Herb Garden.** Dinah Veeris is the “herb lady” of Curaçao. Pay a visit to her extensive botanical garden, Den Paradera, to hear colorful tales of the history and healing power of plants. She has a cure for almost every ailment, and if you’re lucky you may even get a song out of her. Pause for a drink and rummage through the shop.

UNDER WATER

The Underwater World of Sea Aquarium. The Curaçao Sea Aquarium is home to one of the largest collections of marine life in the Caribbean. At feeding time, you can reach out and touch stingrays, sea turtles, sharks, and other colorful fish. For a truly special experience, you can jump right in and snorkel or dive amongst the sea life. Or stay dry and keep an eye on all the colorful creatures from the windows of the Underwater Observatory Boat, museum, and theatre.

If you've dreamed of getting up close and personal with dolphins, the Dolphin Academy is a must. Children of all ages can meet and pet the dolphins. But the real show stoppers are the Snorkel Programme and Open Water Dive Course, where you go out to sea and swim with dolphins at one of Curaçao's finest coral reefs.

For a uniquely exciting - but safe and dry - way to explore the underwater world, look into Substation Curaçao, the only deep-sea submarine taking visitors to a depth of 320 meters under the sea. The Curasub takes up to four passengers and goes deeper than any scuba dive could ever go. It's not cheap, but it is the experience of a lifetime!

The newest attraction of the Sea Aquarium is the Ocean Lens, an underwater observatory. After wading down a set of stairs at a 5-meter depth, you will enter into a chamber with a large window overlooking the reef drop off in spacious, airconditioned comfort.

Blue Room Curaçao. Blue Room Curaçao is a submerged cave found in the cliffs of the western coast. This cave is one of the most famous snorkeling spots on the island, due its beautiful deep, blue light. There is plenty of room for you to swim between the water's surface and ceiling of the cave.



MUSEUMS

Children's Museum. This is in every way the youngest museum of Curaçao. Founded in 2017, this museum features numerous interactive exhibits where children learn through the power of play. Unlike a traditional museum, children are encouraged to touch, create, and manipulate. The museum is accessible for all children (ages 1-8) and their families.

Curaçao Museum. In this spacious museum, the geological history of Curaçao comes to life, displaying pre-Colombian Indian artifacts, professions the Afro-Curaçaoans practiced after the abolition of slavery and how that transformed their beliefs and mode of living. The Snipgallery also houses the cockpit of the “Snip”, the first KLM plane to cross the Atlantic Ocean in 1934.

Mongui Maduro Museum at “Rooi Catootje”. Landhuis Rooi Catootje, a typical Curaçao plantation house from 1735, is home to the Mongui Maduro Museum which tells the story of the last four owners of the former Plantation Rooi Catootje since Salomon Elias Levy Maduro bought it in 1853. Originally known as “Rust en Vrede” (Rest & Peace), the buildings name was changed into “Rooi Catootje” around 1830.

Curaçao Liqueur Distillery. Visit the Curaçao Liqueur Distillery at Landhuis Chobolobo to learn about the distillation process of the island's signature Blue Curaçao Liqueur, which is produced at this former plantation house (landhuis) turned distillery since 1896.



DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know the fragrant oils in the peels of the island's oranges serve as the base of Blue Curaçao Liqueur. They were originally brought here by the Spaniards, and then abandoned by them as a crop when the fruit turned bitter in the island's soil.



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