

# ARUBA

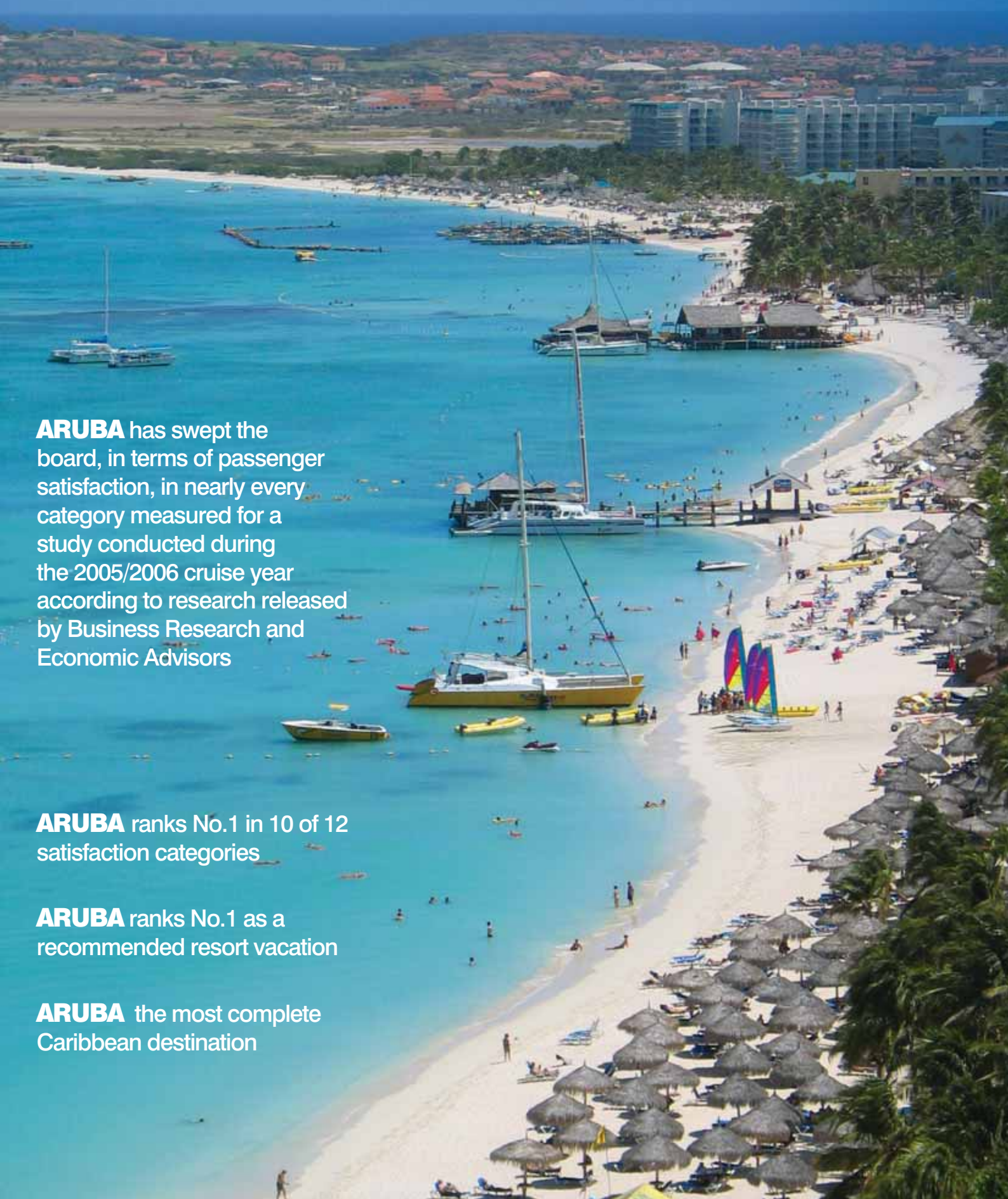
NO. 1 IN THE CARIBBEAN

**ARUBA** has swept the board, in terms of passenger satisfaction, in nearly every category measured for a study conducted during the 2005/2006 cruise year according to research released by Business Research and Economic Advisors

**ARUBA** ranks No.1 in 10 of 12 satisfaction categories

**ARUBA** ranks No.1 as a recommended resort vacation

**ARUBA** the most complete Caribbean destination



# ARUBA

An Island Built on Happiness



ARUBA PORTS AUTHORITY NV

[WWW.ARUBAPORTS.COM](http://WWW.ARUBAPORTS.COM)

# No.1 in the Caribbean

**B**usiness Research and Economic Advisors (BREA) was engaged by the Florida-Caribbean Cruise Association (FCCA) and participating cruise destinations and governments to conduct an analysis of cruise-related spending, as well as to capture destination satisfaction ratings of the passengers going ashore.

According to data provided by the CTO, during the 2005-2006 cruise year (May 2005 to April 2006), a total of 563,082 passengers arrived aboard cruise ships calling at Oranjestad. Of these, an estimated 478,620 (85%) disembarked and visited Aruba. Utilising additional data provided by the visiting cruise lines, we have estimated that 223,904 crew members were aboard the cruise ships and that 40%, or 89,562 crew members, disembarked and visited Aruba. These passenger and crew visits, along with additional expenditures by the cruise lines, generated a total of \$66.2 million (USD) in cruise tourism expenditures in Aruba during the 2005-2006 cruise year.

A separate passenger survey asked the passengers to rate their satisfaction with their destination visit along a number of parameters, as shown in the table below.

Aruba has swept the board, in terms of passenger satisfaction, in nearly every category measured according to surveys conducted by Business Research and Economic Advisors.

Aruba ranks No.1 in 10 of 12 satisfaction categories.

Aruba ranks No.1 as the resort vacation to recommend to family and friends.

Aruba ranks No.1 as the destination passengers are more likely to return to themselves.

## PASSENGER VISIT SATISFACTION, ARUBA

	Mean average rating (Caribbean)	Range of scores (Caribbean)	Aruba ratings	Aruba ranking
Initial shoreside welcome	7.2	5.4 - 8.0	8	1
Guided tour	8.2	7.0 - 8.7	8.5	2
Shopping experience	6.6	3.9 - 7.8	7.8	1
Historic sites/museums	7	5.3 - 7.8	7.6	4
Beaches	7.6	4.8 - 8.9	8.9	1
Friendliness of residents	7.7	5.4 - 8.5	8.5	1
Courtesy of employees	8.1	6.4 - 8.6	8.6	1
Variety of shops	6.8	4.0 - 8.0	8	1
Overall prices	6.5	4.0 - 7.4	7.4	1
Taxis/local transportation	7.4	5.5 - 8.1	8.1	1
Feeling of safety ashore	8.2	7.0 - 9.0	9	1
Visit met expectations	7.2	4.9 - 8.4	8.4	1
Recommend resort vacation 1		3.8 - 8.0	8	1
Likely to return for resort vacation 2		2.3 - 6.3	6.3	1

Scale is 1 to 10 with 10 being the highest score.

The mean scores can be interpreted as follows: Extremely Satisfied/Likely: 10-9; Very Satisfied/Likely: 8-7; Somewhat Satisfied/Likely: 6-5; Not Too Satisfied/Likely: 4-3; Not At All Satisfied/Likely: 2-1.

1 Recommend a resort vacation in Aruba to family or friends

2 Somewhat likely to return to Aruba themselves

The average age of the respondents was 54 years with 71% of the respondents being over 50 years old. Aruba passengers had an average household income of \$103,600 with 40% having over \$100,000 in household income.

Residents of the United States and the Canada accounted for 92% of the responding passengers.



# One happy Island



**G**eographically separate from other popular Caribbean cruise destinations and just 18 miles from the South American continent, Aruba is a marquis destination where reality truly meets expectations. According to the recent independent survey of cruise passenger preferences conducted by BREA, Aruba is the No.1 destination of choice in the Caribbean in 10 of the 12 categories surveyed. Furthermore Aruba was rated No.1 as a return visit resort and as a resort that would be recommended to friends for a visit.

It has been a long held view that the main attraction of Aruba has been its happy and friendly people. The mix of Dutch, Spanish, Arawak Indian and American influences that

has integrated the island population into 'One Happy Island' is reflected in the confidence the islanders have in reminding visitors of this fact on their car license plates.

One reason often cited for this 'One Happy Island' mood is that Arubans have work and regular incomes giving them financial stability. They are also caring by nature, and this is self-evident in the reception afforded visitors. Full employment means no street vendors, no desperation to sell, none of the other scourges of many tourist hot spots. It also contributes to Aruba being one of the safest places in the Caribbean. The issues of safety and full employment cannot be understated – the latter a result of the relative strength and wealth of the Aruban

economy in Caribbean terms. This prosperity has laid the foundations for the construction of an infrastructure that compares very favourably to that of the US or western European cities. Water you can drink straight out of the tap, a constant reliable supply of electricity, well-maintained paved roads, an expanding port network and modern five star hotels.

It is the underlying issues of people, safety and infrastructure that form the basis for visitors to enjoy the scenery and attractions of Aruba.

Aruba has beautiful attractions, an excellent variety of shops stocking everything from brand marks to souvenirs... excellent food and restaurants... beautiful nature including the beaches, the rock



formations, national park... cultural heritage with monuments and museum... a 4,000 year history... and evening entertainment.

The fact that 'downtown' Oranjestad – the capital – is only five minutes walk from the quayside, that US dollars are widely accepted, that education and awareness programmes are a key priority, that Aruba is outside the hurricane belt, and that the Ports Authority takes an open view of its tariffs structure, all play their part in contributing to the success of Aruba in attracting cruise tourism. And these many factors contribute to this 'One Happy Island' being rated so highly by cruise passengers.

Aruba is at the heart of the southern Caribbean, 19 miles long, and six miles across, with year-round sunshine with a wonderful mix of rugged and calm coastlines, a busy port for cruise ships, and most of all – happy people!

Cruise passengers can expect excellent facilities in Aruba – on disembarking they find a clean, modern terminal with shops, communications, and friendly, helpful advice at the information desk.

Close by are the island's many taxis, tour buses and car and jeep hire companies. And the centre of Aruba's capital Oranjestad is a safe, short walk away. The town is picturesque, with its Dutch colonial architecture and historic attractions.

The island's past is documented at Fort Zoutman and Willem III Tower. The oldest building in the country, this Dutch fortress now houses the Historical Museum of Aruba, where visitors can see objects including the National Anthem, "Aruba, dushi tera". Several other historic buildings add a flavour of the past, while art galleries such as the Maria Chapel showcase the work of contemporary local artists. Aruba's old windmill was first built in 1804 in Holland and then shipped to Aruba piece by piece.

On the northern coast midway down the island lie the abandoned Bushiribana gold mines that were at the centre of Aruba's gold rush during the nineteenth century.

One of the main attractions on the East Coast is the coral formation that used to include the Natural Bridge. However this collapsed in 2005 but you can still visit the 'baby natural bridge'. There are also strange geological formations of large diorite boulders are at Casibari and Ayo.

Surrounding Arikok Hill near the centre of the island is the Arikok National Park, which features some of the oldest Arawak drawings, as well as trails that showcase Aruba's great variety of plants and animals like the divi-divi and kwihi trees, rare and exotic cacti, aloe, tropical flowers, birds and iguanas.

The Guadirikiri cave is famous for

its two chambers where sunlight shines through and is the perfect location for photographers to test their skills. The Fontein cave is the most popular of the caves, as it is the only one that has Indian drawings on the ceilings, providing a real sense of island history

Northwest of the Spanish Lagoon, Balashi still preserves the ruins of an old gold smelting plant.

The Chapel of Alto Vista, the first chapel of Aruba, is a haven of tranquillity above the restless ocean. The chapel was built by locals and the Spanish, and is often referred to as the Pilgrim's church.

The northeast coast, along the Caribbean shore, is rugged and wild, but also has dramatic sand dunes like these at Boca Prins. A favourite pastime is to join the locals in dune sliding!

Cruise guests will definitely enjoy their day in Aruba. It's warm, clean and safe, and there is a diverse and exciting range of shore excursions and adventure options to choose from. These include ATVs, Quadracers, horseback riding along the northeast Coast, walking tours of Oranjestad taking in the picturesque houses, museums and the wide-screen theatre, and of course the various aquatic activities such as kite surfing, sailing, sea trekking, snuba, scuba, snorkel, and much more. Perhaps the best way to explore the island's interior is on a jeep tour – the desert terrain really puts cars



and drivers to the test.

Aruba's beaches are magnificent. On the south and west coasts are miles of pristine white beaches – among the most beautiful in the world – surrounded by calm blue seas. Of course, beautiful beaches offer more than relaxation – visitors can participate in a range of sea-based activities.

A trip in the Atlantis submarine reveals not only Aruba's varied marine life, but also sunken wrecks – a must for the adventurous!

Back on dry land Hooiberg looms prominently from the middle of the island; locals use it for a challenging workout! From its peak, on a clear day it's possible to see across to the coast of Venezuela.

Tierra del Sol, at the island's northwest tip, is Aruba's first world-class golf course. The 18-hole, par-71 course was designed by Robert Trent Jones II to take full advantage of its rugged natural surroundings

In Oranjestad the tall, multicoloured houses of Wilhelminastraat make a pretty backdrop to all kinds of shopping including an assortment of souvenirs, perfumes, jewellery and electronics.

Along the wharf, visitors browse in the marketplace for Aruban art and local handicrafts. And Oranjestad also offers the serious shopper plenty. The cruise quay is in walking distance of the fully renewed main bus terminal complex which incorporates a

variety of world-class stores such as Mont Blanc, Swarovski, Gem Stone International and Chanel Jewellery & Accessories. There is a complete food court which includes Mr Conga, a true Caribbean Entertainment and Island grill concept.

Louis Vuitton, Salvatore Ferragamo and a Jewellery Centre have been the most recent additions to the shopping scene in the capital. And in Oranjestad, you will also find the major shopping centres of Renaissance Mall and the Renaissance Marketplace.

Aruba has become a mecca for weddings and honeymooners since the law changed to permit visitors to wed on this romantic island. Couples are welcome to celebrate their wedding, honeymoon, or anniversary. Alternatively they can simply renew their vows in the unique tender atmosphere of Aruba.

For a special lunch ambience visit one of the many fine restaurants to be found on Aruba. Every kind of international cuisine is available, and there are exquisite light dishes to suit everyone. Some are a short walk from the cruise terminal and others are located in spectacular settings with beautiful views.

Carlos 'n Charlie's restaurant, Bahia, Mr Conga, and Mambo Jambo café become evening hot spots where dancing, singing and lively entertainment can be enjoyed before

the ship departs.

For stay-over guests in Aruba there is plenty to do, see... and eat! Dozens of restaurants offer every kind of international cuisine, from French to Italian to Thai. Savour the fresh local seafood. Or sample Aruban specialities – these are just a few!

Aruba offers many elegant world-class resorts, like the Westin, Radisson, Hyatt and Marriott but also has the more casual Caribbean lodging to offer, like the Divi resorts, Coconut Inn and La Cabana. Most are just a few minutes away from the beach and evening entertainment.

Aruba has eleven casinos where you can try your luck, and there's always somewhere to go dancing, view a spectacular show, or just have fun!

Aruba's modern Queen Beatrix International Airport can accommodate aircraft as large as the Boeing 747. The island is served by a number of airlines, and connections can be made to any part of the world.

Every year Aruba becomes even more popular with cruise vacationers, and today over half a million choose a cruise that includes a visit to Aruba. The results of the latest BREA study confirm the island's unique place in the Caribbean as the cruise passengers' choice of the most complete destination experience – the No.1 Caribbean destination in every way. Aruba, One Happy Island. 🌐



# Port and harbour developments



For the past several years, the management of the Port of Oranjestad has been implementing a master plan for its development, with the relocation of all commercial shipping activity to Port Barcadera as the key to separating cruise from other commercial port activities, and giving each their own infrastructure. All loose and bulk cargo was moved some years ago, but what remains to be relocated is the container terminal, which will be realised by 2009, although “we will see some physical changes by 2008 when the container terminal handling facility is moved” according to Alfonso Boekhoudt, Director of the Port.

“We also have approval for a development of the Oranjestad harbour that will be started in 2007 with work to the area right next to the main cruise terminal, which has been undergoing a major renovation since last year and is due for delivery on April 6, when the facility becomes operational.”

There are seven phases in all for the planned development to be completed, some more complex than others, with the smaller phases scheduled to be tackled first as they don't interfere with the container handling activity. The renovation or rebuilding of the port's other two cruise terminals is included in that activity. Boekhoudt said that, “by 2009, when we have moved the container terminal, we will be ready to develop the rest of the property, but basically work begins this year with the redevelopment plans for the Port of Oranjestad. We will have the new terminal building, and we will have commercial activities going on at the port side.

“When the rest of the property is redeveloped we will take care with the type of building we put up. The buildings we have are old warehouses, but when the whole new redevelopment begins these will be replaced with a new concept in the style of the local Dutch-Aruban architecture, that is much in evidence in our capital city. It will look different of course, but it will be a whole lot better than it is right now, functional though the existing buildings are”.

The capacity of the port to handle cruise ships is limited to receiving three very large vessels at the same

time, and two smaller ones, but even this level of activity requires the port to use the container terminal for additional berths. As Boekhoudt pointed out, this obviously means that when the container terminal has been moved out there will be no increase in capacity, simply a much more natural environment to berth a cruise ship – and there aren't any plans to increase capacity.

“We are going to stay with the same capacity” said Boekhoudt who added that all the other requirements to berth the very largest ships would be put in place when required: “our waters are deep enough to receive the Freedom class ships – although we need to do some minor adjustments on the port side to be able to dock them. We would also have to invest in new boulders to hold these big ships and we feel it would be wise to do some minor dredging at the exit of the channel, even though the channel is deep enough, simply as a precautionary measure.” However Boekhoudt eagerly awaits a commitment from the cruise line that they plan to bring these ships to Aruba in order to proceed with these investments.

As is the case with all forward thinking ports, its management not only likes to be able to offer cruise companies the right facilities for the berthing of their ships but they also seek to understand what their passengers are thinking when they come ashore. And so it was that a passenger survey undertaken last year highlighted the need to create some specific shopping areas in the new main terminal and these will be incorporate a broader range of products specially designed to cater to their stated requirements.

The port's other two terminals are in constant use – one is being used by Pullmantur for turnarounds for Blue Moon, a ship that carries 700 passengers – and the other is used whenever there is more than one very large ship docked. This terminal will be made ready for additional home porting activities because the port hopes to receive a final commitment from another brand that will begin turnaround operations at the beginning of the next season in September.

Home porting requires much more than a port of course and Boekhoudt

highlights the importance of hotel accommodation, local transportation, airlift and the airport as the critical ingredients.

Aruba's international airport is running at around 50% capacity at the moment although unsurprisingly the facilities are more stretched on Saturdays, which is the busiest day for incoming flights. And Americans have the added bonus of enjoying pre-clearance arrangements with US customs in addition to the existing of US immigration presence – a major benefit as around 60% of all departure capacity is dedicated to US based tourists.

Aruba has always acted cautiously over the development of extra hotel accommodation in the past for one very good reason: to protect the island's ‘One Happy Island’ culture. Nevertheless there has been a substantial increase in bed stocks over the past 10 years without it diluting the Arubanness of the island but it does remain a concern going forward as there will be a need for new hotel staff to be recruited from outside the island with the potential impact to Aruba's special quality.

In the end it will be a case of carefully managing the in-built capacity limits that guide the direction of Aruba's future development as a tourist resort for both land based visitors and those seeking to stay a few extra days before or after they take their seven day cruise.

The one day visitors who come ashore off cruise ships present a different challenge, even accounting for the fact that the cruise season is concentrated between September and April with arrivals reasonably well spread, as there are inevitably days when the numbers coming ashore stretches resources – especially transport and tour capacity.

With the outstanding ratings Aruba has received from cruise passengers visiting the island it is clear that the direction the government gives to tourist authorities and port management has done much to place Aruba as the most complete cruise destination in the Caribbean. There is a great deal to live up to from now on and perhaps and even greater challenge ahead for the ‘One Happy Island’ to manage and steer a course between growth and protecting the islands uniqueness. 🌐



# \$350 million in tourism investments impacts the airport, cruise and hotel sectors

**A**ruba's tourism industry is set to benefit from an enormous level of investment with over \$350 million scheduled to impact nearly every aspect of the travel industry. The changes to the tourism infrastructure include noteworthy upgrades at Queen Beatrix International Airport, the opening of a brand-new private jet terminal, significant development at the island's cruise facilities as well as expansion and renovation to many hotels and resorts.

#### ARUBA AIRPORT AUTHORITY

Investments totalling over \$35 million started at Queen Beatrix International Airport in 2006 and are underway through to 2010. This will deliver several improvements including:

- The opening of the first-ever private jet terminal (FBO) in January 2007. Here customs and immigration are available. A cafeteria, duty-free stores, hotel and car rental outlets will soon be available.
- Installation of four elevators.
- New central security area.
- Expanded runway and taxiway.

#### CRUISE TERMINAL FACILITY AND MARINA

- Renovations to the main cruise terminal are due for completion in April 2007.

- Former cargo areas will undergo multi-million dollar waterfront redevelopment expected to begin in late 2007. The area will be transformed into a waterfront marina to include residential, retail and commercial components.

#### HOTELS AND RESORTS

Aruba's hotels and resorts are benefiting by hundreds of millions in major investments.

- Occidental Grand Aruba – Finalised \$24 million in investments and reopened in May 2006 as the island's first luxury all-inclusive product.
- Westin Aruba Resort – Undertaking ten million in renovations, it has been officially reflagged from the former Wyndham Aruba.
- RIU Aruba Grand – The Spanish hotel chain purchased the Aruba Grand and closed it for a \$120 million facelift and expansion. When completed the hotel will open with 451 rooms, nearly triple the original 171 rooms.
- Radisson Aruba Resort & Casino opened its \$5.2 million, 13,000-square-foot oceanfront Larimar Spa in November 2006.
- Hyatt Regency Aruba Resort & Casino – After a \$40 million upgrade, the resort will boast a new lobby, upgraded rooms and more.

- Divi Resorts – Notable investments of well over \$50 million are being made by the Group throughout Aruba. Changes include new rooms, villas, a timeshare product and more.
- Bushiri Beach Resort – Spanish resort giant, Sol Melia is finalizing the purchase of the 153-room resort and has plans to expand the property to approximately 450 rooms.

#### NEW AIRLIFT

- Delta Airlines – New Sunday flight from JFK as of February 18.
- JetBlue Airlines – Daily, non-stop flights from New York's John F. Kennedy International Airport (JFK) and second Saturday, non-stop flight.
- Tiara Air and Insel Air – Daily regional connections.

#### LINEAR PARK

In the third and fourth quarter of 2007, groundbreaking is expected to begin on the longest linear park in the Caribbean. Aruba's Linear Park is expected to span 10 miles from the airport to Eagle Beach. The \$10 million project will include:

- Green zones
- Walking/jogging paths
- Oceanfront vistas. 🌐

# Aruba at a glance

## *Nature*

### **NATURAL BRIDGE**

Although the natural bridge collapsed in 2005 you can still visit the site and see the 'baby natural bridge'.

### **AYO ROCK FORMATIONS**

These huge quartz diorite boulders were shaped by nature some 90-95 million years ago.

### **ARIKOK NATIONAL PARK**

ANP is a 34 square kilometre natural, preserved area, almost one fifth of the island.

### **MIRALAMAR TRAIL**

The Miralamar gold mine complex is located in the terrain of the Arikok National Park.

### **FORTEIN CAVE**

Fontein is the only cave where indian drawings can be found.

### **CASIBARI ROCK FORMATIONS**

Visitors can climb to the top of these huge diorite boulders that are surrounded by tropical plants and trees.

### **HOOIBERG 541FT / 168M**

This hill is in the centre of Aruba. By climbing almost 600 steps you will reach the top, but there is a viewing tower at just one hundred steps.

### **BARANCA SUNU ALIAS TUNNEL OF LOVE**

Be adventurous and explore the 300ft tunnel. It became famous as the Tunnel of Love due to its heart shaped entrance.

### **LOURDES GROTTA**

This grotto carefully created in the natural limestone cave is a shrine to many pilgrims and is located at Sero Preto, San Nicolaas.

### **YAMANOTA 617FT / 188M**

This is the highest elevation of Aruba and is located in the vicinity of the Balashi Gold Mill Ruins and Miralamar gold mine complex.

### **BOCA PRINS**

Boca Prins white sand dunes are special. Dune sliding is a local pastime and can be fun and enjoyable for the adventurous and young at heart.

## *Museum and Art Galleries*

### **ARUBA NUMISMATIC MUSEUM**

Current Event – Aruba Numismatic Time line (1499 – present).

### **GASPARITO RESTAURANT-ART GALLERY**

Exhibitions of art and serves Aruban cuisine.

### **GALERIA ETERNO**

Art exposition of international and local artists.

### **SINFRA (SINT NICOLAAS FOUNDATION FOR THE ARTS)**

Exhibits of sculptures and paintings.

### **ACCESS ART GALLERY**

The Art Shop has a variety of crafts and designs for all tastes.

### **PLAZA CULTURAL**

Local artists and artisans sell their pottery, souvenirs and artwork.

## *Special Interest*

### **ALTO VISTA CHAPEL (1750)**

The Pilgrim's Chapel of Our Lady of Alto Vista was built in 1750.

### **FORT ZOUTMAN AND WILLEM III TOWER (1796)**

Fort Zoutman was built in 1796 and is the oldest building in Oranjestad.

### **CALIFORNIA LIGHTHOUSE**

This "faro" lighthouse is built on Hudishibana between the years 1914-1916 and named after the ship "California" sunk off the coast.

### **BALASHI GOLD MINE RUINS**

Built in 1899 and located close to "Spaans Lagoen" or Spanish Lagoon, and can be visited.

### **SANTA ANNA CHURCH**

St. Anne's church was constructed in 1776 and was rebuilt for the first time in 1831, and again in 1886, with the final renovation taking place in 1916. The church's stained glass windows date from 1932.

### **BUSHIRIBANA GOLD MILL RUINS**

The ruins are the remains of a gold melting furnace (1872) located in the vicinity of the natural bridge.

## *Golf*

### **TIERRA DEL SOL**

A par 71, 18-hole, 6811-yard golf course designed by Robert Trent Jones II and established in January 1995.

### **ARUBA GOLF CLUB**

Includes a 9-hole course with 20 sand traps and five water traps.

### **THE LINKS AT DIVI ARUBA**

A 9-hole golf course designed to

include six holes that either play over water or alongside the man-made lagoons.

### **JOE MENDEZ MINIATURE ADVENTURE GOLF**

Bubali, across from La Cabana. One has a miniature golf opportunity on two 18-hole courses.

## *Recreational Adventure*

Aquatic sports, horseback riding, Gotcha paintball survival games, Butterfly Farm, De Palm Island, Atlantis submarines and scuba diving or snorkelling in Aruba.

## *Beaches*

Inspiring white Beaches of Aruba

### **SECO DI COCO ALIAS PALM BEACH**

A seven-mile long white sandy beach is the reason many visitors come to Aruba again and again.

### **HADICURARI ALIAS THE FISHERMAN'S HUT**

Hadicurari is famous for windsurfers around the world.

### **RODGER'S BEACH**

Its waters are calm and one can view the small fisherman's boats and pelicans (pelicanus occidentales) as well as the refinery from the Beach.

### **BABY BEACH**

This is a popular shallow calm water beach and is a wonderful site to start your snorkelling experiences.

## *Shopping in Aruba*

Aruba offers a variety of top merchandise from handicraft to artwork, liquors, clothing, perfumery, jewelry, and more.

Shop in the main street "Caya G.F. (Betico) Croes", or the stores in the surroundings. One may visit the Aventura Mall, Seaport Village Mall, Seaport Marketplace, Dutch Crown Mall, Royal Plaza Mall, etc.

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