

Understanding the Port

Aruba may be the easiest do-it-yourself port in the Caribbean. Ships dock a short walk from downtown Oranjestad, taxis run on fixed government rates, the weather is almost guaranteed, and two world-class beaches sit minutes away. Your only real job is choosing which one.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

The Port Area

Ships dock at the edge of downtown Oranjestad. Shops and the Renaissance Marketplace are an easy walk, and a free streetcar typically loops downtown Mon–Sat.

Cash & Currency

The Aruban florin is official, but USD is accepted everywhere and cards are widely taken. No currency homework needed at this port.

Getting Around

Taxis charge fixed government rates, no meters. Public buses also run to the beaches. Eagle Beach is about 10 min; Palm Beach about 15.

GOOD

Oranjestad on Foot

Best for: Short stops, easy days, minimal logistics

- ✓ Colorful Dutch-Caribbean streets and shopping
- ✓ Renaissance Marketplace on the harbor
- ✓ Back at the ship whenever you want

Low effort, high reward.

BETTER

Beach Day (Pick Your Vibe)

Best for: Couples, families, beach lovers

- ✓ Eagle Beach: wide, calm, and famously beautiful
- ✓ Palm Beach: livelier, with water sports and bars
- ✓ Both an easy fixed-rate taxi from the pier

A focused beach plan delivers every time.

BEST

Island Explorer Day

Best for: First timers, adventure seekers, photographers

- ✓ Arikok National Park and the Natural Pool by jeep
- ✓ California Lighthouse and the rugged north coast
- ✓ The desert side most cruisers miss

Timing management required. Plan around all aboard.

Top Experiences to Consider

GOOD

Downtown & Harbor

Wander the pastel colonial streets, shop the marketplace, and enjoy lunch on the water. Everything is walkable, safe, and steps from the gangway.

BETTER

Eagle Beach or Palm Beach

Eagle Beach is the postcard: powder sand, turquoise water, and the famous windswept fofoti trees. Palm Beach adds beach bars, water sports, and energy. You cannot go wrong.

BEST

Arikok & the Natural Pool

Jeep and UTV tours cross Arikok National Park's desert landscape to the Natural Pool, a swimming hole ringed by volcanic rock on the wild coast. A completely different Aruba.

Where Staff & Travelers Recommend

Eagle Beach

Regularly ranked among the world's best beaches, and the closest famous beach to the pier. An easy ten-minute, fixed-rate taxi.

Arikok Natural Pool Tour

The favorite for repeat visitors who have done their beach days. Booking ahead is smart on busy port days.



Eagle Beach, Aruba



Oranjestad, Aruba

Key Considerations

This is the port to do on your own: taxis are fixed-rate, buses are simple, and the beaches are close. About those famous flamingo photos: they live on a private resort island, and the few day passes are released only the Saturday before each week and sell out fast. Treat it as a lucky bonus and keep a backup beach plan.

Aruba is a desert island: bring real sun protection, because shade is scarce and the trade winds hide how strong the sun is. Choose one plan, enjoy it fully, and save the other beach for your return trip.



Palm Beach, Aruba



The Natural Pool (Conchi), Arikok National Park



Flamingos, Renaissance Island, Aruba

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Port Orientation

FROM THE PORT (ORANJESTAD)

● Downtown Oranjestad	Walkable
● Renaissance Marketplace	Walkable, on the harbor
● Surfside Beach	~ 15 min walk south
~ 10 min by taxi	
● Eagle Beach	The famous fofoti trees
~ 15 min by taxi	
● Palm Beach	High-rise strip, water sports
~ 25 min by taxi	
● California Lighthouse	Northwest tip views
~ 30–40 min by tour	
● Arikok National Park	Natural Pool by jeep/UTV

DON'T FORGET

Confirm your all aboard time before you leave the ship.
Set a phone alarm. The ship will not wait for you.

Key Takeaway

Aruba is the Caribbean with the training wheels off: safe, simple, and sunny, with beaches that live up to the hype.

Skip the stress, grab a fixed-rate taxi, and spend your day on sand instead of logistics.

ETA will help you choose the right experience based on your travel style.

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Did You Know?

Outside the Hurricane Belt. Aruba sits outside the hurricane belt and is the sunniest island in the Caribbean, with only about 18 inches of rain a year.

One Happy Island. The phrase has been on the license plates since 1983, and the island works hard to live up to it.

Dutch, Actually. Aruba is a constituent country of the Kingdom of the Netherlands — 2026 marks 40 years of that status. Dutch and Papiamentu are the official languages.

Nature's Compass. The iconic divi-divi trees all point southwest, permanently bent by the trade winds. Follow them and you will find the leeward beaches.

Almost South America. Aruba lies just 15 to 18 miles off the coast of Venezuela.