

ARUBA



One Happy Island

4 December 2009

A DAY IN ARUBA: TOP TEN THINGS TO DO

Aruba is fast becoming one of the Caribbean's up and coming cruise destinations, with year-to-year visitors going up 32.9% in August and 51.2% in September 2009. The island is famous for its powder white sand beaches – but there's much more than meets the eye, so after a swim in the turquoise crystal waters, here are the top 10 things to do on your Aruban shore excursion:

1. **Get on an off-road Jeep adventure:** Discover Aruba's desert-like landscape tearing across rocky tracks and through cacti forests on the popular half-day Jeep safari – or go for the latest full throttle adventure experience, an off-road Tom Car tour. Explore the ruins of 18th Century Spanish gold mines, admire the beautiful natural bridges, take in magnificent views stretching as far as Venezuela – and after the dusty journey, cool down with a swim in the crystal clear waters of the Baby Beach.
2. **Discover Aruba's untouched environs in Arikok National Park:** Making up nearly 20 per cent of the island's total landmass, Arikok National Park is home to a number of indigenous species of wildlife, flora and fauna characteristic of Aruba's unique tropical desert climate, as well as historical sites such as the Fontein and Quadarikiri caves, which feature ancient Indian paintings. This summer the Park unveiled the results of a three-year £6.5 million infrastructure upgrade.
3. **Experience the best wreck diving in the Caribbean:** Aruba's waters are rich in exotic marine life and most of the island's dive sites lie along the protected western and southern coasts. Aruba has a reputation as THE wreck dive destination of the Caribbean: it has over half a dozen wrecks submerged in its waters, including the spectacular Antilla, a 400-foot German freighter which dates from World War II, which is the largest wreck in the Caribbean!

4. **Head for a picture perfect view at the California Lighthouse:** One of Aruba's scenic trademarks, the California Lighthouse was named after a ship called the Californian, which had received distress signals from the Titanic as she went down in 1912. The Californian's radio operator was off-duty at the time of the disaster and this small piece of bad karma perhaps sealed its fate, as it went down in rough seas off the Aruba coast a few years later. Today the ship is a popular dive site, while the area around the lighthouse is very popular for dune surfing.

5. **Enjoy an Ariba Aruba at the famous Charlie's Bar:** Head south to San Nicolas, Aruba's second largest city, for one of Aruba's oldest institutions. Charlie's Bar, encrusted with all kinds of memorabilia, opened in 1941 and has survived Nazi torpedoes AND several economic recessions... Here, try an Ariba Aruba, the island's best-known cocktail made with Coecoei (a crimson liquor unique to Aruba) – or quench your thirst with an icy bottle of Balashi, Aruba's very own beer.

6. **Discover Aruba's colourful marine life by submarine:** The Atlantis Submarine Tour is the most popular way to explore Aruba's kaleidoscope of exotic marine life. As you descend to a depth of 130 feet, you can explore Aruba's mysterious underwater realm of breathtaking vistas – and don't forget your camera to record your once-in-a-lifetime glimpse into an amazing world of brilliantly coloured coral reefs, home to sunken wrecks and teeming with a rainbow fantasia of tropical fish!

7. **Wander around the colourful capital – and treat yourself to some tax free shopping:** After a morning on the beach, make your way to the beautiful capital of Oranjestad, famed for its colourful colonial architecture. Take advantage of the island's duty-free status and pick up some great designer bargains – or just browse the plethora of shops and boutiques selling local handicrafts.

8. **Splash around at the biggest water park in the Caribbean:** Kids of all ages can have a splashing time at Morgan's Island Water Park, Aruba's wettest

and newest attraction – it opened less than a year ago! Morgan's Island is not just the largest water park in the Caribbean, but also in all of Latin America: its 28,000 square feet of fun offer attractions for aquatic adventurers, including a dual slide dubbed Dragon Revenge and the second tallest waterslide on the planet!

9. **Visit Aruba's tropical butterfly paradise:** Step into a tropical garden teeming with butterflies from around the globe and prepare to meet some of the world's most colourful creatures: a visit to Aruba's Butterfly Farm is an unforgettable encounter with nature in all its beauty and diversity – and a rare opportunity for photography. Observe the life cycle of these fascinating animals... arrive early and you will witness new butterflies emerging from their chrysalis and taking their very first flight!

10. **Taste Aruba's fine cuisine:** Food is simply exquisite, blending Aruba's culinary traditions with flavours of international cuisine. The many restaurants on the island cater for all tastes; freshly caught Caribbean fish is, of course, a speciality and a favourite dish, with traditional meals accented by native herbs and spices. Aruba has attracted a multitude of gastronomes and talented chefs, with food from almost every continent represented.

Aruba's main harbour is situated on the south-western end of the island, only a five-minute walk from the colourful downtown area of Oranjestad, the island's capital.

For more information on cruising in Aruba please go to the websites of Aruba Cruise Tourism www.arubabycruise.com and Aruba Ports Authority www.arubaports.com

For more information on visiting Aruba please go to www.aruba.com

-Ends-

NOTES FOR EDITORS:

- Latest cruise passenger figures

	2009	2008	Difference
July	15,456	14,490	+6.7%
August	18,494	13,910	+32.9%
September	18,098	11,971	+51.2%

- Cruise passenger numbers represent both actual passengers as well as crew members.

For media information please contact:

The Saltmarsh Partnership

Clair Horwood clair@saltmarshpr.co.uk 0207 902 2799

Tom Panagos tom@saltmarshpr.co.uk 0207 902 2794