

Willemstad, Curaçao

The island's name is said to be a colloquialism used by the indigenous people, the Caquetio Amerindian, to identify themselves. Curaçao is located in the south Caribbean, together with Aruba and Bonaire they form the ABC islands. The island is 38 miles long and 7 miles wide, totalling 171 square miles.

History

The first Europeans recorded were members of a Spanish expedition in 1499. Originally thought useless due to the poor soil and lack of precious metals, the island became a strategic cattle ranching area. The island's focus was shifted to trade and shipping during the Dutch colonization in 1634. The Dutch multiple forts were built around the island for protection. Several are still standing: Fort Amsterdam (1635), Fort Beekenburg (1703), Fort Nassau (1797), Waterfort (1826, in 1957 a hotel was built on top), Rif Fort (1828), Fort Piscadera (1704). Though the British occupied the island several times during the French Revolution, it was returned to the Dutch. In 2010 Curacao became a constituent country of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

Local Flavors

- Stobá - stew made with papaya, beef or goat
- Guiambo - soup made from okra and seafood
- Kadushi - cactus soup
- Pastechi - a breakfast pastry with fillings of cheese, tuna, ham, or ground meat.



Animals

Creatures endemic to Curacao include: Curacao White-tailed Deer, Curacao Barn Owl, and the Curacao Brown-throated Parakeet.

Internet Service

Wifi is available with a purchase at most restaurants, pubs, and coffee houses. Renaissance Mall has free wifi.

Cell Service

Widespread, fairly reliable.

Currency

The island uses the Antillian Guilder. USD is widely accepted. Major credit cards are widely accepted.



Driving

On the right side of the road. No cell phone use. No right turns on red.

Sites to See

Within walking distance:

- The cruise port is in the center of town, there's shopping, restaurants and car rentals nearby.
- Curaçao Sign
- Queen Emma Bridge - unique; located near the cruise port, this is a 551' long pontoon bridge for pedestrian use only. It swings open laterally for ship traffic.
- Bríón Square
- Kura Hulanda Museum

- Floating Market
- Curacao Maritime History Museum
- The Curaçao Museum
- Curaçao Rif Mangrove Park
- Statue Manuel Carlos Piar
- Handelskade
- Taxi Stand just outside the cruise port. Rates are based on destination rather than mileage.



Excursion or transportation needed attractions:

- Beaches
- Christoffel National Park
- Hato Caves
- Shete Boka National Park
- Curacao Sea Aquarium

