

CIA World Factbook–Style Country Report

Aruba (Country of Aruba)





Aruba

Official Name: Country of Aruba (Land Aruba / País Aruba)

Status: Constituent Country of the Kingdom of the Netherlands

Capital: Oranjestad

Largest City: Oranjestad

Population: Approximately 125,000

Area: 180 km² (69 sq mi)

Time Zone: UTC-4

Internet TLD: .aw

Calling Code: +297

Currency: Aruban Florin (AWG)

Executive Summary

Aruba is a highly developed Caribbean island located approximately 29 km (18 miles) north of Venezuela. Although geographically part of South America, politically it is one of the four constituent countries of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, exercising full autonomy over internal affairs while defense and foreign relations remain responsibilities of the Kingdom.

The island possesses one of the highest standards of living in the Caribbean. Tourism dominates the economy, supported by financial services, logistics, and petroleum storage activities. Aruba enjoys political stability, low violent crime by regional standards, and an advanced public infrastructure, making it one of the Caribbean's premier tourism and investment destinations.

Geography

Location

- Southern Caribbean Sea
- Approximately 29 km north of Venezuela
- Part of the Leeward Islands

Geographic Coordinates

- 12°30'N
- 69°58'W

Area

- Total: 180 km²
- Land: 180 km²
- Water: 0 km²

Coastline

- 68.5 km

Terrain

- Generally flat
- Low limestone hills
- Sparse vegetation
- White sand beaches along the western coast

Highest Point

- Ceru Jamanota

- 188 meters

Climate

- Tropical semi-arid
- Constant northeast trade winds
- Average annual temperature approximately 27°C (81°F)
- Lies outside the principal Caribbean hurricane belt

Natural Resources

- Beaches
 - Marine resources
 - Solar and wind energy potential
 - Limited limestone resources
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Environment

Major environmental concerns include:

- Freshwater scarcity
- Coastal erosion
- Coral reef protection
- Marine pollution
- Sustainable tourism management

Water is supplied primarily through seawater desalination.

Population and Society

Population

- Approximately 125,000

Nationality

- Aruban

Ethnic Composition

- Mixed Caribbean-European-Latin American heritage

Languages

- Dutch (official)
- Papiamentu (official)
- English (widely spoken)
- Spanish (widely spoken)

Religion

- Predominantly Roman Catholic
- Protestant denominations
- Growing religious diversity

Literacy

- Very high (near universal)

Life Expectancy

- Approximately 77 years
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Government

Government Type

- Parliamentary democracy
- Constituent country within the Kingdom of the Netherlands

Head of State

- King Willem-Alexander of the Netherlands

Representative of the Monarch

- Governor of Aruba

Head of Government

- Prime Minister

Legislature

- Unicameral Parliament
- 21 elected members

Legal System

- Civil law influenced by Dutch legal traditions
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Administrative Divisions

Aruba is divided into eight regions:

- Noord
 - Oranjestad East
 - Oranjestad West
 - Paradera
 - Santa Cruz
 - Savaneta
 - San Nicolas North
 - San Nicolas South
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Economy

Overview

Aruba possesses one of the Caribbean's strongest economies on a per-capita basis.

Major sectors include:

- Tourism
- Hospitality
- Financial services
- Shipping
- Petroleum storage and transshipment

- Construction

Tourism accounts for the majority of economic activity, with visitors arriving primarily from North America and Europe.

GDP (Official Exchange Rate)

- Approximately US\$3.6 billion

GDP (PPP)

- Approximately US\$4.35 billion

GDP Per Capita (PPP)

- Approximately US\$40,500

Economic Strengths

- Political stability
- Excellent tourism infrastructure
- Strong Dutch institutional support
- High living standards
- Modern telecommunications
- Advanced healthcare

Challenges

- Heavy dependence on tourism
- Dependence on imports
- Public debt
- Climate vulnerability
- Limited natural resources

Energy

Primary sources:

- Imported petroleum

- Wind energy
- Solar generation (expanding)

Aruba continues investing in renewable energy with the objective of reducing dependence on imported fuels.

Infrastructure

Airports

Queen Beatrix International Airport

Major gateway connecting Aruba with:

- United States
 - Canada
 - Europe
 - Latin America
 - Caribbean
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Ports

Primary commercial facilities include:

- Port of Oranjestad
- Cruise ship terminal
- Petroleum terminal

Cruise tourism forms a significant component of the island's economy.

Communications

Internet penetration is among the highest in the Caribbean.

Infrastructure includes:

- Nationwide mobile coverage

- Fiber-optic internet
 - Modern banking networks
 - Digital government services
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Military and Security

Aruba maintains no independent armed forces.

Defense responsibilities are carried out by the Kingdom of the Netherlands through:

- Dutch Caribbean Coast Guard
- Royal Netherlands Navy
- Royal Netherlands Marines
- Royal Netherlands Marechaussee

Local policing is provided by the Aruba Police Force.

Foreign Relations

As part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Aruba maintains strong ties with:

- Netherlands
- European Union
- United States
- CARICOM partners
- Latin American neighbors

The island also cooperates extensively on:

- Maritime security
 - Counter-narcotics
 - Disaster preparedness
 - Migration control
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Intelligence Assessment

Strategic Importance

Regional Significance: Moderate

Aruba occupies a strategically valuable location near the Venezuelan coastline and adjacent to major Caribbean shipping routes. Although small, its modern airport, deep-water port, and proximity to northern South America make it an important logistics hub for commerce, tourism, humanitarian operations, and regional security cooperation.

Security Outlook

Overall Risk Level: Low

Primary risks include:

- Regional narcotics trafficking
- Illegal maritime migration
- Economic dependence on tourism
- Climate-related disruptions
- Potential spillover effects from instability in neighboring Venezuela

No significant internal political instability is presently assessed.

Key Facts

Category	Information
Capital	Oranjestad
Population	~125,000
Area	180 km ²
Currency	Aruban Florin (AWG)
Government	Parliamentary Democracy
Kingdom	Netherlands

Category	Information
Highest Point	Ceru Jamanota (188 m)
Climate	Tropical Semi-Arid
Main Industry	Tourism
Official Languages	Dutch, Papiamentu

ATLAS Intelligence Assessment

Political Stability: Very High

Economic Stability: High

Security Risk: Low

Regional Strategic Value: Moderate

Natural Disaster Risk: Low (outside primary hurricane belt)

Overall Intelligence Assessment: Stable, prosperous Caribbean territory with strong governance, excellent infrastructure, and continuing strategic value due to its location near northern South America and major Caribbean maritime routes.

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