

Aruba

Overview:

Aruba is an island in the Southeast of the Caribbean Sea. It is a separate entity within the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

Territory:

Flat with a few hills; scant vegetation. Lowest point: Caribbean Sea 0 m Highest point: Mount Jamanota 188 m. A flat, riverless island renowned for its white sand beaches.

Location:

in the Caribbean Sea, north of Venezuela

Latitude and Longitude:

12 30 N, 69 58 W

Time Zone:

GMT -4

Total Land Area:

193

EEZ:

220

Climate:

Tropical marine; little seasonal temperature variation. Its tropical climate is moderated by constant trade winds from the Atlantic Ocean; the temperature is almost constant at about 27 degrees Celsius (81 degrees Fahrenheit)

Natural Resources:

NEGL; white sandy beaches

ECONOMY:

Total GDP:	
2002	1,940,000,000.00 USD

Per Capita GDP:	
2002	28,000.00 USD

% of GDP per Sector:			
	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary
2002	0.2%	33.3%	66.3%

% of Population Employed by Sector			
	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary

External Aid/Remittances:

\$26 million (1995); note - the Netherlands provided a \$127 million aid package to Aruba and Suriname in 1996

Growth:

Tourism is the mainstay of the small, open Aruban economy, with offshore banking and oil refining and storage also important. In addition, the reopening of the country's oil refinery in 1993, a major source of employment and foreign exchange earnings, has further spurred growth. Aruba's small labor force and exceptionally low unemployment rate have led to a large number of unfilled job vacancies, despite sharp rises in wage rates in recent years. Tourist arrivals declined in the aftermath of the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks on the US. The government now must deal with a budget deficit and a negative trade balance. Deficit spending has been a staple in Aruba's history, and modestly high inflation has been present as well, although recent efforts at tightening monetary policy may correct this. The sizes of the agriculture and manufacturing industries remain minimal.

Labour Force:	
2004	41,500

Unemployment	
Year:	Unemployment Rate (% of pop.)
2005	6%

Industry:

most employment is in wholesale and retail trade and repair, followed by hotels and restaurants; oil refining. tourism, transshipment facilities, oil refining

Niche Industry:

2003	770	770	0	0	716	0	0	0	0	0
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Official Currency:

Aruban Florin, pegged to USD

Banking and Insurance:

Number of Banks and Credit Unions: 11
 Number of Agricultural Credit Unions:
 Number of Insurance Companies: 22

Financial Services:

The Aruba Financial Center is the regulatory authority of the non bank financial sector. The Center is a government entity that incorporates all limited liability companies and issues permits for these companies. The Center also issues permits for companies that act as a legal representative and/or director of companies which ultimate beneficial owner does not reside in Aruba. The Center is an advisory body to the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs on policy matters regarding the non bank financial sector and drafts legislation in that respect.

Communications/E-Commerce:

Landline telephones in use: 37,100 (2002) Cellular telephones in use: 53,000 (2001) Aruba has a modern fully automatic telecommunications system. The only submarine cable is connected to Sint Maarten (Netherlands Antilles); the island has an extensive interisland microwave radio relay links. Internet hosts: 923 (2001) Internet users: 24,000 (2002)

Public Ownership:

In Aruba most of the land is owned by the Government, which land cannot be purchased but can be obtained on a long lease term. Duration of the long lease agreement is 60 years and can be renewed for another 60 years when expired. The fee is 6% of the value of the land per year. In order to obtain a parcel of land in long lease, the interested party must secure an option contract. Option is granted for a period up to 6 months and the fee due per year amounts to 50 percent of the costs of a long lease. Extension of the option period is possible up to a maximum of 5 years, dependent on the size of the project.

Land Use:

arable land: 10.53% (including aloe 0.01%) permanent crops: 0% other: 89.47% (2001) irrigated land: 0.01 sq km (1998 est.)

Agriculture/Forestry:

aloes; livestock;

Marine Activity:

Fishing:

Average annual capture of marine fish is 163 metric tons. It exports US\$264,000 fish and fisheries products. People employed in fishing and aquaculture in 2000 was 687.

Marine Life:

Aruba has a coastline of 107km. All its population is around the coast. It has one Marine/Littoral Protected Area and one Wetland considered of International importance.

Critical Issues:

Aruba, Bonaire and Curaçao are on the southern fringes of the hurricane belt. They are not outside the hurricane belt as many consider. History learns that roughly once every 100 years considerable damage is experienced by tropical cyclones passing over or just south of the islands.

JURISDICTIONAL RESOURCES

Capital:

Oranjestad

Political System:

Type: Parliamentary democracy. Independence: Part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. As a separate entity within the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Aruba has completely autonomy over its internal affairs. The Kingdom retains responsibility for defense matters, foreign affairs and the judiciary system on Aruba. Branches: Executive--monarch represented by a governor (chief of state), prime minister (head of government), Cabinet. Legislative--unicameral parliament. Judicial--Joint High Court of Justice appointed by the monarch. Subdivisions: Aruba is divided into eight regions--Noord/Tank Leendert, Oranjestad (west), Oranjestad (east), Paradera, Santa Cruz, Savaneta, Sint Nicolaas (north), and Sint Nicolaas (south). Governor general appointed for a six-year term by the monarch; prime minister and deputy prime minister elected by the Staten for four-year terms; election last held 28 September 2001 (next to be held by December 2005) Aruba is not considered part of the EU, but rather have the status of OCTs (overseas countries and territories).

Political Parties:

Aliansa/Aruban Social Movement or MSA Aruban Liberal Organization or OLA Aruban Patriotic Movement or MPA Aruban Patriotic Party or PPA Aruban People's Party or AVP People's Electoral Movement Party or MEP Real Democracy or PDR RED Workers Political Platform or PTT

Important Legislation:

On January 1, 1986 Aruba obtained its Status Aparte, becoming a separate entity within the Kingdom of the Netherlands, which now consists of The Netherlands, the Netherlands Antilles (Bonaire, Curacao, St.Martin, Saba and St.Eustatius), and Aruba. Aruba has its own constitution predicated on western democratic principles, with a Governor to form a 7-member Council of Ministers vested with executive powers and headed by a Prime Minister. Judicial powers lie with the Common Courts in Aruba in the Netherlands Antilles, and ultimately with the High Court of Justice in Holland.

Principal Taxes:

The main tax applied to individuals in Aruba is income tax, which is collected by employers under a 'PAYE'-style scheme along with social security contributions. Capital gains tax does not apply to individuals except on disposal of certain business assets. For taxation purposes, an individual is either resident or non-resident, and nationality is not a factor in determining tax status. Residence for tax purposes is determined by taking into account the location of an individual's permanent home, their habitual place of actual residence, and their centre of economic and social interest. The Aruba Exempt Company (AVV) is a new concept, introduced by Aruba in 1988. The purpose of the introduction of the AVV has been to increase the possibilities of the offshore companies in Aruba. The AVV is not intended for residents of Aruba. The AVV cannot participate in the economy of Aruba, therefore no transactions with onshore companies or residents are allowed.

Associated Power:
Kingdom of the Netherlands

Citizenship:
Citizens of Dutch Caribbean territories hold Netherlands passports.

Paradiplomacy:
Although Aruba conducts foreign affairs primarily through the Dutch Government, it also has strong relations with other Caribbean governments. Aruba is an observer in the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), an associate member of the World Trade Organization through the Netherlands, and is a full member of the Association of Caribbean States.

HUMAN RESOURCES

71,566 0-14 years: 19.9% (male 7,308/female 6,960) 15-64 years: 68.2% (male 23,736/female 25,068) 65 years and over: 11.9% (male 3,486/female 5,008) (2005 est.)

2005			
Island	Area (km sq.)	Population	% of Total Population
Aruba	193	96,207	100%

In 2000, the population density in Aruba was 529 inhabitants per square kilometre. 11.26 births/1,000 population (2005 est.) 6.57 deaths/1,000 population (2005 est.)

Population:	
Year	Resident Population

Age of Population:	0-14	15-24	25-49	50-64	65 and up
2005	21519	13,243	0	0	22,554

Migration:
Net migration rate in Aruba: 0 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2005 est.)

Crude Birth Rate:	
2005	11.26%

Life Expectancy:
total population: 79.14 years male: 75.8 years female: 82.65 years (2005 est.)

Crude Death Rate:	
2005	6.57%

Ethnicity:
mixed white/Caribbean Amerindian 80%

Class Division:

Languages:
Dutch (official), Papiamentu (a Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, English dialect), English (widely spoken), Spanish.

Religion:
Roman Catholic 82%, Protestant 8%, Hindu, Muslim, Confucian, Jewish.

Literacy:
97%

Education System:
At present the educational system consists of the following: Nursery Schools: in total 23 nursery schools have been established in Aruba. The schools were attended by some 2,385 pupils in 1994/95. Primary Education: This is given to children in the age-group of 6-12 years. At present there are 32 primary schools. These schools had more than 7606 pupils in 1994/95. Besides regular primary education, schools have been established for children with learning difficulties. Secondary Education: In total 23 schools for secondary education are available in Aruba, offering a variety of opportunities, such as Lower Technology Education (LTO), Education (HAVO), University Preparatory Education (VWO), Lower Home Economics Education (LHNO), and Lower Economic, Tourist Trades and Administrative Education (ETAO). In 1994/95 the schools were attended by 5608 students. Middle Level Professional Education (MBO): This includes the following types of education: Intermediate Technical Education (MTO), Intermediate Administrative Education (MAO), and Intermediate Tourist Trades Education (Aruba Hotel School). In total 3 schools for middle level professional education have been established in Aruba. These schools were attended by 655 students in 1994/95. Higher Education: In Aruba there are two institutes of higher education: the University of Aruba (UA) and the Teacher Trainee College (IPA). The UA offers at the moment only law and Finance and Economics Faculties. In 1994/95 a total of 137 students attended these faculties. The IPA is in the process of reorganization. It is the intention that the new IPA will train teachers, give refresher courses and conduct research. The IPA had 59 students for 1994/95. Study Abroad: Since the choice for higher education on the island itself is limited, many students are studying abroad. In 1994 some 72.2% of the students went to the Netherlands, and the rest mainly to the US.

Total Pre-schools:()	
Total Primary Schools	
First Level:	



Second Level:	
Third Level:	
Total Secondary Schools:	
Total Professional Schools	
Universities:	

Number of Schools per Island:										
	Pre-school		Elementary			High-school		Prof.	University	
	Pub	Priv	1	2	3	Pub	Priv		Pub	Priv
Aruba	27		37	9		2		4	1	

Students Enrolled:					
Year:	Pre-School	Elementary	High-school	Prof.	University
1994-95	2,385	7,606	5,608	655	137

Teachers							
Year	Pre-School	Elementary			High-School	Prof.	University
		1	2	3			

Medical Services:

Aruba has the Dr. Horacio Oduer Hospital, a medical facility equipped with reputable medical staff, 280 beds and modern equipment. The hospital, opened in 1976, is located across from Punta Brabu Beach, and is within walking distance of some of the hotel district. It functions as a general hospital with established ties to the U.S., Colombian, Venezuelan, Puerto Rican, and Dutch hospitals for specialized treatment and care. In unique cases where the island's own medical services do not cover the emergency, a patient can be quickly airlifted to nearby facilities (ie. in Curacao).

HISTORY AND CULTURE

History:

Discovered and claimed for Spain in 1499, Aruba was acquired by the Dutch in 1636. The island's economy has been dominated by three main industries. A 19th century gold rush was followed by prosperity brought on by the opening in 1924 of an oil refinery. The last decades of the 20th century saw a boom in the tourism industry. Historically, Aruba was part of the Netherlands Antilles, a six-island federation which also included Bonaire, Curacao, St. Marten, St. Eustatius and Saba. This island grouping, in turn, formed the Caribbean component of the Dutch Kingdom, a constitutional monarchy with the Queen of Holland having the dual role of head of state of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, as well as of the country of Holland. At a Round Table Conference (March 1983), all partners in the Kingdom (Holland, the Central Government of the Netherlands Antilles, and the governments of the individual islands) agreed to grant Aruba separate status within the Kingdom. As of January 1, 1986, the Kingdom consists of three partners: Holland, Aruba and the Netherlands Antilles (5 islands). Aruba will remain part of the Dutch Kingdom, but will have direct ties with Holland, no longer needing the Central Government of the Netherlands Antilles to manage its own affairs. As a result of this agreement, Aruba affairs, formerly under the jurisdiction of the Central Government of the Netherlands Antilles, (aviation, customs, immigration, communications and other internal and external matters) are now handled autonomously by Aruba. The Kingdom retains responsibility for defense and foreign affairs.

Referenda:

Self determination referendum held in 1977

Recent Significant Events:

Music, Dance, Handicraft and Patrimony:

The cultural festivities of the island are often linked to its history and background, although some Aruba's music and culture ceremonies are derived from other Caribbean islands. The music in hotels and at many of the festivals is calypso, soca, or reggea, often accompanied by the haunting timbre of steel bands. The small cultural show, featuring music, dance and costumes, as well as sampling of the local foods, is held on Tuesday evening. In San Nicolas, a street festival called San Nifete is held on Main St. every Friday evening, featuring music, a talent show, and local crafts and foods. The religions of Aruba reflect its faceted history and currents worldliness.

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