

escapade



Hanging out under a palapa. PHOTO: TIFFANY THORNTON/TELEGRAPH-JOURNAL

A waterproof read to take to the beach. PHOTO: TIFFANY THORNTON/TELEGRAPH-JOURNAL



ARUBA: ONE HAPPY ISLAND

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There is certainly a reason why the Island of Aruba is touted as “One Happy Island.” With its Azure blue water beaches, sunny skies and year round warm weather, you have the perfect paradise. The Dutch Island of Aruba is known for its hospitality, and is filled with a mix of cultural influences. Arubans are well versed in several languages, the most common being Papiamentu—the native tongue. You will

often hear the locals say, “You’re on island time now, slow it down.” With all the natural beauty around you, it’s hard to argue with that. Even the Island’s many iguanas hang around happily under the beach chairs, basking in the sun as the palm trees sway to their own tropical beat.

Where to Stay

The Hilton Aruba, formerly called the Aruba Caribbean, is steeped in history. At one time it was the first hotel on the

island. It recently went through a major renovation resulting in the perfect oasis getaway to spend your vacation at. From the time you walk through the open-air lobby with its beachy-vibe, you truly won’t want to leave. Drop your luggage off in one of the spacious modern rooms, grab your bathing suit and head poolside to either the passive pool (more for adult use), or the lively pool for the whole family to enjoy with its sandy

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Venturing into the Aruban outback. PHOTO: DEPALM TOURS/SUPPLIED

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A smiling iguana on One Happy Island. PHOTO: TIFFANY THORNTON/TELEGRAPH-JOURNAL



Aruba offers crystal blue waters and pristine beaches. PHOTO: ARUBA HILTON/SUPPLIED



Colourful island life shines on the boat display. PHOTO: TIFFANY THORNTON/TELEGRAPH-JOURNAL



Hanging out with the birds at Hilton Aruba. PHOTO: TIFFANY THORNTON/TELEGRAPH-JOURNAL

Aruba: One Happy Island

ARUBA →E1

drop off and lush gardens all around. You can even reserve your own cabana complete with a fan and a cooler filled with refreshing fruit and bottled water.

If it's the gorgeous beach you are longing for, be sure to score your own palapa. These funky seaside shelters are made of palm leaves and keep you out of the sun. You can even take a floating book along with you from the resort library. Yes, you can swim with the book, read it, swoosh it around and it will always be intact. If you are after a day of activities, set sail on a paddleboard or hit the kid's club area for a game of beach tennis.

Hanging Out With the Birds

The Hilton Aruba is home to several fine-feathered friends. Everyday you will find Victor Hernandez – a.k.a. the bird whisperer – hanging out with several colourful birds, from macaws to African greys. These talkative beauties have their own little sanctuary and are often found perched on the guest's shoulders under a mango tree, making for the perfect photo opportunity.

Dine on Deliciousness

When you're on island time, indulging in fresh local seafood paired with the perfect cocktail/mocktail is a must. Head on over to Gilligan's Seafood Shack. Just off the beach, this casual outdoor spot concocts the signature fruity infused Aruba Ariba. Pair it with the best grouper fish sandwich, fries and key lime tartar sauce.

If you are in the mood for fine dining, Sunset Grill is the place to be. From the time you walk in everything about this restaurant feels tropical. Grab a seat outside at one of the lovely candlelit tables and enjoy the Caribbean coastal breeze. Order up the large snapper grilled to perfection, flavoured with lemon, fresh herbs and olive oil. Live music takes place every night at the outdoor bar adjacent to Sunset Grill, so get ready to groove.

Off Road in Aruba

A little known fact is that Aruba isn't just sun and sand. The island's unique terrain is filled with desert tundra. The best way to see this wild coast is to hop on a safari style Jeep adventure with De Palm Tours. Head out into the Aruban outback past tall cacti and rugged topography. Get ready to hold on tight as the jeep rumbles across the remote landscape towards a natural pool formed by volcanic rock. The circular pool envelops a small area, which you need to hike down to in order to jump in. It's worth the walk for the epic view of ocean stretched out before you. The tour guides have snorkels on hand should you want to peek in at several colourful fish swimming below the surface.

Coconut Delight

One of the stops along the tour is at California Lighthouse, which was originally built to alert ships along the coast. It is one of the prime spots to crack open a coconut from the nearby stand and take in a spectacular sunset.

Aloe Factory and History

Before Aruba was known as "One Happy Island," it was called the "Island of Aloes" in the 1920s – and for good reason. Aruba produces more aloe than anywhere else in the world, and it is an integral part of the island's history. Take a tour of the Aruba Aloe Company, where they have been hand cutting Aloe since 1890. Explore the Aloe fields learning about the fantastic health care benefits along the way. Aloe Aruba has also created their own line of exceptional skincare like the Aloe Sunscreen, Body Lotion and Lip Balm.

Spa Relaxation

After a day of bumping around the Aruban back roads and traipsing through aloe fields enjoy some relaxation time at Eforea spa.

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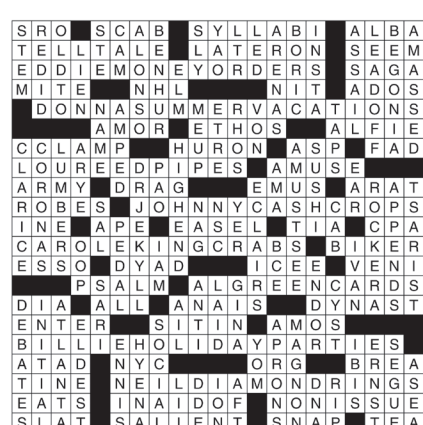
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