

A Natural Pool by Jeep, a Pirate Ship at Sunset — A 5-Day Aruba Itinerary

I-Journey Travel Guide

Aruba trades the typical Caribbean itinerary of rain-or-shine gambling for a dependable forecast and a short list of things worth doing well: a jeep safari across the cactus-studded interior of Arikok National Park to a natural swimming pool carved into the lava rock, a sunset sail on a replica pirate ship, and some of the best, least pretentious seafood in the Caribbean at a dockside fish shack in Savaneta. This five-day route splits its time between Eagle Beach's quiet, low-rise stretch and the island's wilder southeast.

DURATION

5 Days

BEST TIME TO GO

April – August

Aruba sits south of the Caribbean hurricane belt, so it's dry and sunny almost year-round; this stretch avoids the busier, pricier December–March high season.

FROM

\$1,390 USD / person

for 2 people

Day 1

Arrive & Eagle Beach

Fly into Queen Beatrix International Airport (AUA) and settle in on Eagle Beach, a quiet, low-rise stretch on the west coast best known for the two leaning divi-divi (fototi) trees that show up in half the postcards of the island.

Airport Transfer to Eagle Beach

~15 min drive · taxi, flat fare ~\$25 USD

Aruba's taxis run on a fixed, government-set fare chart by zone rather than a meter — confirm the price with the driver before you leave the airport curb. Most major hotels can also arrange a private transfer in advance.

Check-In — Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort

Check-in 3pm · from \$429 USD/night

An adults-only, eco-certified boutique resort directly on Eagle Beach, routinely rated among the top resorts in the Caribbean for its beachfront setting and quiet, no-kids, no-balconies-blocking-the-view layout.

Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort · +297 582 3300 · bucuti.com

Sunset at the Fofoti Trees

Evening · free

Eagle Beach's wind-bent divi-divi trees are the island's most photographed landmark — walk the sand north from the resort strip in the last hour before sunset, when the water turns from turquoise to gold.

Dinner — Driftwood Restaurant

Dinner · \$35–50/person

A long-running, family-run seafood spot in Oranjestad where the owners often fish the catch themselves — the whole fried red snapper is the move.

Driftwood Restaurant · +297 583 2515 · driftwoodaruba.com

Day 2

Oranjestad & Arikok National Park

A morning in the capital's pastel Dutch-colonial streets, then a full afternoon off-roading through Arikok National Park, which covers nearly a fifth of the island.

Oranjestad Stroll & Shopping

Morning · free

Wander the candy-colored Dutch-colonial facades along Caya G.F. Betico Croes and the waterfront Renaissance Marketplace before the day heats up — this is also the easiest spot on the island to find duty-free jewelry and local Aruba Aloe products.

ABC Aruba — Ultimate Safari Jeep Tour

Full day, depart ~8:30am · \$109 USD/person

A guided jeep caravan (you drive, they lead) across Arikok National Park's cactus-and-boulder interior to Conchi, a natural swimming pool enclosed by volcanic rock where waves break over the rim, plus the dunes at Boca Prins and a stop at Spanish Lagoon. Lunch and park entrance are included.

ABC Aruba Jeep Tours · +297 593 0063 · abc-aruba.com

Arikok National Park

Covered by tour · \$15 USD/person if visiting independently

Aruba's national park protects roughly 18% of the island, from limestone cliffs and sand dunes to the restored cunucu homestead at Cunucu Arikok — the \$15 entrance fee also covers the Natural Pool and the park's hiking trails if you'd rather self-drive in a 4x4 instead of joining a tour.

Dinner — Zeerovers

Dinner · \$15–25/person

A no-frills, wildly popular fisherman's shack on the docks in Savaneta: point at the catch of the day, it's weighed and fried to order, and you eat it at picnic tables over the water. Cash only, and it gets a line at peak hours.

Zeerovers · +297 584 7897 · facebook.com/zeeroversaruba

Day 3

Palm Beach & the Water

A beach-and-boat day along Palm Beach, the high-rise strip north of Eagle Beach, finishing with a sunset sail on a replica pirate ship.

Morning on Palm Beach

Morning · free (beach chairs ~\$15/day at most hotels)

Calmer and more sheltered than most Caribbean beaches thanks to the offshore reef, Palm Beach is lined with the island's big resort brands and is the easiest stretch of sand for paddleboarding or a first attempt at windsurfing.

De Palm Island Day Pass (optional)

Full day · from \$89 USD/person

A private, all-inclusive-style day island a short boat ride from the De Palm Pier, with a snorkel trail, water slides, and a buffet lunch — a good call if anyone in your group wants a lower-key, resort-style day instead of the jeep tour's dust and heat.

De Palm Tours · +297 582 4400 · depalm.com

Jolly Pirates — Sunset Sail & Snorkel

~2.5 hrs, depart ~2pm · \$69 USD/person

A relaxed sail on a wooden replica pirate ship with a stop to snorkel a shipwreck, a rope swing off the mast, and an open bar on the way back in as the sky turns orange over the water — Aruba's most-booked sunset cruise for a reason.

Jolly Pirates · +297 586 2010 · jolly-pirates.com

Dinner — Flying Fishbone

Dinner · \$45–70/person

Tables set directly in the sand in Savaneta, some close enough that the tide laps at your feet by the end of the meal — reserve ahead for a water-side table and order whatever's fresh off the daily catch board.

Flying Fishbone · +297 584 2506 · flyingfishbone.com

Day 4

California Lighthouse, Alto Vista & Baby Beach

A self-drive day covering both ends of the island: the wind-swept north coast in the morning, then the calm, reef-protected lagoon at the island's southern tip in the afternoon.

Rental Car Pickup

Full day · ~\$45–60 USD/day

A compact or small SUV is enough for today's paved roads; most agencies have counters at the airport or will deliver to your hotel. Rates are generally better booked a few days ahead in high season.

California Lighthouse & Alto Vista Chapel

Half day · lighthouse grounds free

The candy-striped California Lighthouse marks Aruba's rugged northwestern tip, where surf crashes against black volcanic rock; a short drive on, the small, bright-yellow Alto Vista Chapel sits alone on a hillside overlooking the sea — Aruba's oldest church site, rebuilt in 1952.

Bushiribana Gold Mine Ruins

~30 min stop · free

The crumbling stone walls of an 1870s gold-smelting works sit right on the coast — a quick, photogenic stop with good tide pools and crashing surf on the rocks below.

Baby Beach, Seroe Colorado

Afternoon · free

A shallow, almost entirely flat lagoon protected by an offshore reef at the island's southern tip — the easiest, calmest swimming on Aruba and popular with families, though it's a 40-minute drive from the Eagle/Palm Beach hotel strip.

Dinner — Papiamento Restaurant

Dinner · \$50–75/person

A romantic, candlelit courtyard set in a restored 19th-century cunucu (country) house in Noord, family-run for decades — the seafood-and-steak sizzling stone platters are the signature order.

Papiamento Restaurant · +297 586 4544 · papiamentoaruba.com

Day 5

Free Morning & Departure

A slow final morning before the flight home — Aruba's small enough that there's no need to rush the last few hours.

Free Morning — Eagle Beach or Last-Minute Shopping

Morning · free

One more swim off Eagle Beach, or a last pass through Oranjestad's shops for Aruba Aloe products and local Ponche Crema liqueur to bring home.

Transfer to Queen Beatrix International Airport

~15–20 min · taxi, flat fare ~\$25 USD

US-bound flights clear US Customs and Border Protection preclearance right at the Aruba airport, so budget extra time before departure — you land in the US as a domestic arrival.