

Curaçao

Volcanic Blowholes by Day, Pink Flamingos at Sunset

DURATION
5 Days

BEST TIME TO GO
January – April

Curaçao sits outside the main Caribbean hurricane belt, so it's a safe year-round visit, but January through April brings the driest weather and the steadiest trade-wind breeze. Temperatures hold near 82-88°F all year; September and October are the wettest and least crowded months.

FROM
\$950 USD / person
for 2 people, mid-range, flights + hotel + activities

Curaçao doesn't get the beach-postcard fame of Aruba next door, and that's part of its appeal: a UNESCO-listed waterfront of gabled Dutch townhouses in every color, a rugged northwest coast where the open Caribbean crashes through limestone blowholes, and a protected peak you can still climb before breakfast. This five-day loop mixes Willemstad's floating market and colonial streets with a day in Christoffel National Park, a morning on the reef, and an afternoon spent looking for wild flamingos.

Day 1

Arrival & Willemstad's Floating Market

Clear customs at Hato, then head straight into Punda and Otrobanda - the two historic halves of Willemstad, split by St. Anna Bay and tied together by a pontoon bridge that swings open for ships.

Arrival — Hato International Airport (CUR)

On arrival · CUR airport

Direct flights run from Miami, Newark, Atlanta, Toronto, and Amsterdam. US, Canadian, UK, and EU passport holders enter visa-free for tourist stays; departure tax is built into most return fares rather than collected at the gate.

Floating Market & Handelskade

Afternoon · free, self-guided

Venezuelan vendors sell fruit and fish from boats moored along the Punda waterfront, a tradition that predates the 1954 vendor exodus from Venezuela. Walk the Handelskade's row of gabled Dutch-colonial facades and cross the Queen Emma pontoon bridge, which swings open on hinges whenever a ship needs to pass through St. Anna Bay.

Check-In — Avila Beach Hotel

Check-in 3pm · from \$209 USD/night

An 18th-century former governor's residence turned beachfront hotel in the quiet Pietermaai district, a short walk from Punda - small private beach, on-site restaurants, and a calmer base than the resort strip for the first two nights.

Avila Beach Hotel | +5999 788 1949 | avilabeachhotel.com

Dinner — Plasa Bieu (Old Market)

Dinner · \$10-15 USD/person, cash preferred

A no-frills covered market in Punda where a handful of local cooks serve Curaçaoan comfort food - kabritu stoba (goat stew), karni stoba, funchi, and fried fish - straight off the stove at long communal tables.

Day 2

Christoffel National Park & Shete Boka

A full day on the rugged northwest side of the island: a sunrise climb up Curaçao's highest point, then an afternoon at a national park where the open Caribbean crashes through limestone blowholes.

Sunrise Hike — Mount Christoffel

Half day, park opens 6am · \$15 USD/person (ages 6-12 \$2)

A 2-3 hour round-trip scramble to the 372-meter summit of Curaçao's highest point inside Christoffel National Park, with views over the entire island and north to Venezuela on a clear day. Start at opening to beat the heat; the park's Savonet Museum (separate \$3 fee) covers the island's plantation history.

Christoffel National Park (CARMABI) | christoffelpark.org

Shete Boka National Park

1-2 hours · \$15 USD/person (ages 6-12 \$2)

Short walking trails link a string of "bokas" - inlets where the open sea forces itself through limestone caves and blowholes. Boka Tabla is the highlight: a collapsed sea cave where waves explode through an opening in the rock roof.

Dinner on Your Own — Jaanchie's Restaurant

Dinner, open noon-9pm · \$15-20 USD/person

A Westpunt institution since 1962, famous for sopi di yuwana (iguana soup) and cactus soup alongside more familiar grilled fish and garlic shrimp - worth the detour on the drive back from the park.

Jaanchie's Restaurant | +5999 864 0126

Day 3

Reef Diving & a Splurge Upgrade

Curaçao's reefs sit close to shore, so a two-tank boat dive still leaves time for an afternoon beach before switching hotels for the back half of the trip.

Two-Tank Boat Dive — Ocean Encounters

Half day, AM boat · from \$150 USD/person (certification required)

A morning boat dive to reef sites along Curaçao's protected south coast, known for healthy hard coral and easy drift dives in calm, clear water. Snorkelers can usually book a seat on the same boat; gear rental is extra.

Ocean Encounters | +5999 694 0025 | oceanencounters.com

Afternoon — Playa Kenepa Grandi (Grote Knip)

Afternoon · free, small parking fee

A cliff-backed cove on the west coast with some of the island's clearest water - climb the bluff on the north end for the classic overlook photo before wading in.

Check-In — Baoase Luxury Resort

Check-in 3pm · from \$737 USD/night

A splurge upgrade for the back half of the trip: 12 private villas and suites, each with its own pool or

Blue Curaçao Tour & Tasting — Landhuis Chobolobo

60 min guided tour · \$20 USD/person (Deluxe tour \$30)

The original Senior & Co. distillery, still operating out of a 17th-century landhuis, where the blue liqueur has been made from the same 1896 family recipe and the peel of the local laraha citrus. The guided tour ends with a tasting.

Landhuis Chobolobo | +5999 511 3526 | chobolobo.com

Free Evening — Mambo Beach Boulevard

Evening · free

A boardwalk of restaurants and beach bars built along Mambo Beach - an easy, low-key spot to watch the sunset before the last full day.

Day 5

Departure

A last beach morning before the flight out.

Free Morning — Cas Abao Beach

Morning · ~\$3 USD entrance fee

A calm, shallow bay with soft sand and good snorkeling just off the beach - a relaxed last swim before heading to the airport.

Airport Departure Transfer

~20 min from Willemstad · ~\$25-30 USD by taxi

Hato International is a short drive from both the Willemstad hotels and the west-coast beaches; build in at least two hours before an international flight.