

THE CARIBBEAN / DESTINATION GUIDE

Bonaire

Your island guide.



Marcreation / Unsplash

Reef days.
Room to breathe.

BEACHES · NATURE · STAYS · LOCAL KNOW-HOW

START HERE

An island, at your pace.

A practical companion to Bonaire: reef time, open landscapes and evenings with room to linger.

Choose your base, plan the water days, then leave space between them. Our suggested itineraries are designed to be rearranged around your group and the conditions.

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BONAIRE / BONEIRU

Bonaire is a public body of the Netherlands in the Caribbean. Papiamentu is a local language; Dutch, English and Spanish are also spoken. The currency is the US dollar; local time is UTC−4. [\[01\]](#) [\[05\]](#)

Save this guide for offline reading. Contents and numbered references are clickable; external links need an internet connection.

01 / BUDGET

Price overview & island fees

Compare the complete trip: accommodation, transport, activities and the payments that sit outside your booking.

\$ BUDGET	\$ MODEST	\$ MIDRANGE	\$ PREMIUM	\$ LUXURY
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Use these as broad spending levels, not fixed dollar bands or a quality score. A picnic, a shared excursion and a private charter create very different totals. Ask about taxes, equipment, meals, transfers and cancellation terms before comparing quotes.

Two different payments

The government's Visitor Entry Tax and STINAPA's Nature Fee are separate. A booking confirmation for one does not pay the other.

Visitor Entry Tax

The usual rate is **US\$75 for a non-resident aged 13 or over**. Lower rates and exemptions apply, including to children and some residents of other islands. Check your category on the official government portal and save the QR confirmation. [02]

STINAPA Nature Fee

The standard fee is **US\$40 per calendar year** for visitors using the marine park; it also covers Washington Slagbaai access. Exemptions apply. Children under 12 who scuba dive are not exempt; cruise passengers have a separate day rate. Check the official rules for your visit. [03] [15]

A USEFUL STARTING FIGURE

For an eligible adult paying both standard fees, allow US\$115 before your chosen activities. This is not a universal per-person charge. Rates checked on 6 October 2026; use the official links for your category and travel dates.

02 / ARRIVAL

Before you go

Sort out the documents and your first evening before choosing every excursion.

DOCUMENTS

Check each passport

Use NetherlandsWorldwide to check visa eligibility for every nationality in your party. Keep the accommodation address, return or onward booking and any required documents accessible. Check transit rules as well as the rules for Bonaire.

[04]

FLAMINGO AIRPORT / BON

Make arrival easy

Arrange the rental collection or transfer, using the actual flight number and accommodation address. Ask what happens after a delay. Decide whether you can buy groceries that evening or whether your host can arrange the basics.

ACTIVITIES

Ask what is included

For diving, ask about orientation, equipment, required experience and the schedule before flying home. For boat trips, confirm boarding, shade and the return time. Put at least one changeable day into a longer stay.

[12]

OFFICIAL PAYMENTS

Save your confirmations

Use tourismtax.bonairegov.com for the Visitor Entry Tax. Follow STINAPA's own links for the Nature Fee. Store the QR codes offline and keep the associated identification available. Avoid paying an unrelated intermediary just to reach a form.

[02] [03]

CHILDREN & GROUPS

Prepare the whole party

Check requirements when a child travels with one parent or another adult. Ask the airline what proof it needs. Share the arrival plan with everyone; one person's passport or payment confirmation does not cover an entire group.

[04]

PERSONAL ESSENTIALS

Keep the important things close

Carry essential medicines, documents and chargers in your hand luggage. Ask your insurer about your planned activities and emergency assistance. Keep copies and contact numbers somewhere you can reach without mobile data.

03 / WHERE TO STAY

Choose your base

Start with your everyday routes: meals, groceries, equipment and the places where you want to spend time.

AREA	A GOOD FIT FOR	PLAN AROUND
Central Kralendijk	Walking to dinner, town time and a varied stay.	Check the exact address and walking route; “Kralendijk” covers more than the compact waterfront.
Belnem	A southern base, apartments and independent days out.	Compare the room with transport costs. Check your grocery stop and evening food options.
Hato / north of town	A stay organised around the west coast and diving.	Ask about equipment storage, tanks, shore entry and arrangements for someone who does not dive.
Sorobon / Lac Bay	A stay centred on windsurfing and the lagoon.	Plan journeys to town and confirm the specific beach facilities and permitted activity zones.
Rincon / inland	Landscapes, local culture and a quieter daily rhythm.	Verify meal times, evening transport and the actual drive to the water activities you want.

Map your actual address before paying. A sea view does not guarantee a sandy beach, a step-free route or a suitable shore entry. [06] [14]

04 / BEACHES

Four shores, four different days

Choose for the entry, facilities and conditions. A beautiful photograph cannot tell you whether today's sea suits your group.

A NORTHERN COVE

1000 Steps

A limestone stairway leads down to this small, scenic cove. Expect a climb back up with whatever you carry. Visit for the coast itself, or ask a local operator whether the entry and conditions suit your snorkelling experience. It is not a step-free outing.

[07]

A SOUTHERN STOP

Bachelor's Beach

A compact coastal stop south of the airport, reached down steps. It is better treated as a short shore visit than a promise of a wide, fully serviced beach day. Assess the entry and available space when you arrive; keep your return transport straightforward.

[08]

LAGOON TIME

Sorobon / Lac Bay

This eastern lagoon setting is associated with windsurfing and an easy-going beach atmosphere. Confirm which facilities belong to your chosen operator, then ask where swimming is permitted. Keep clear of activity lanes and protected areas; shallow-looking water still needs supervision.

[09] [14]

ACROSS THE WATER

No Name Beach

The beach on uninhabited Klein Bonaire makes a different kind of day. Book both crossings and save the pickup instructions. Carry drinking water, food and sun protection rather than expecting shops or services. Ask about sea conditions and a suitable snorkelling plan.

[10] [11]

A BETTER BEACH BAG

Bring only what you need, carry rubbish back and leave shells and coral in place. Check your Nature Fee, but remember that it does not buy a water-taxi ticket, beach chair or guided activity. [03] [12]

05 / REEF DAYS

On and under the water

Build the day around one main activity and choose the operator before committing to the timetable.

DIVE WITH A PLAN

Shore diving

Arrange the required orientation with your dive operator. Confirm your entry and exit, recent closures and the current coral-disease precautions. Choose sites for your training and conditions. Plan the final dive around the appropriate interval before flying.

[12]

A DIFFERENT VIEW

Lac Bay and the mangroves

Compare a permitted guided kayak outing with a windsurfing lesson at Sorobon. These are different activities with different skill and equipment needs. Ask about the route, conditions and protected zones before choosing; keep mangrove channels and wildlife undisturbed.

[13] [14]

FIRST TIME HERE

Guided snorkelling

A guide can help match a site to your confidence, explain the reef and organise the return. Ask about flotation aids, group size and how to stop early. Seeing others enter is not enough to establish a suitable route for your own group.

ROOM TO EXHALE

A sail or coastal cruise

Compare time actually on the water, group size, shade, toilets and boarding arrangements. Check whether swimming, food and drinks are included, and agree the weather cancellation policy. Arrange the ride back before you leave the dock.

[13]



Bonaire's marine life. Observe without touching. Photo: Kris-Mikael Krister / Unsplash.

06 / ON LAND

Beyond the reef

Give the island's communities, history and landscapes a day of their own.

A PROPER PARK DAY

Washington Slagbaai

Set aside time for a park visit instead of squeezing it between other bookings. Check the current opening, route and vehicle rules with STINAPA, carry water and food, and follow ranger instructions. The park can close after heavy rain.

[15]

READ THE LANDSCAPE

The salt coast and huts

The coastal huts preserve evidence of the conditions endured by enslaved people who worked in the salt industry. Read the history alongside the landscape. View industrial and protected areas from permitted locations; do not treat the huts simply as colourful scenery.

[17]

A SLOWER TOWN HOUR

Kralendijk waterfront

Use a town morning to get your bearings, browse a few local shops and stop for lunch. Choose the actual walking route in daylight, then decide how you will return after dinner. It can be a whole outing, rather than a gap between bookings.

[06]

HISTORY & COMMUNITY

Rincon and Mangazina di Rei

Include a visit around Rincon and the Mangazina di Rei cultural stop. Check opening arrangements before driving, or choose a local guide for context. Leave room for a meal and conversation rather than making the village a hurried photo stop.

[16]

WATCH FROM A DISTANCE

Gotomeer

This northern saltwater lagoon is a place to look for flamingos. Bring binoculars or a zoom lens and remain at permitted viewing points. A wildlife stop works best without approaching, feeding or trying to make the birds move for a photograph.

[18]

AN EASY ALTERNATIVE

Donkey Sanctuary

Consider a sanctuary visit as a separate land-based outing. Check the operator's current opening and visitor instructions, especially before promising an animal encounter to children. Follow staff guidance on feeding and moving around the animals.

[16]

07 / FOOD & LOCAL LIFE

A taste of Bonaire

Plan a few meals deliberately and leave room to discover the rest.

TRY SOMETHING LOCAL

Ask about the day's cooking

Fish, stews and soups are part of the island's food culture. Ask what the kitchen is cooking that day, how it is prepared and what accompanies it. A local lunch can be a memorable part of a Rincon or Kralendijk visit.

[19]

KNOW YOUR TABLE

Dietary needs and children

Discuss allergies, ingredients and preparation directly with the restaurant. Check meal times, child portions and the journey home before reserving. A waterfront table is less appealing if it leaves your group without suitable food or a practical return ride.

KEEP THE TOTAL CLEAR

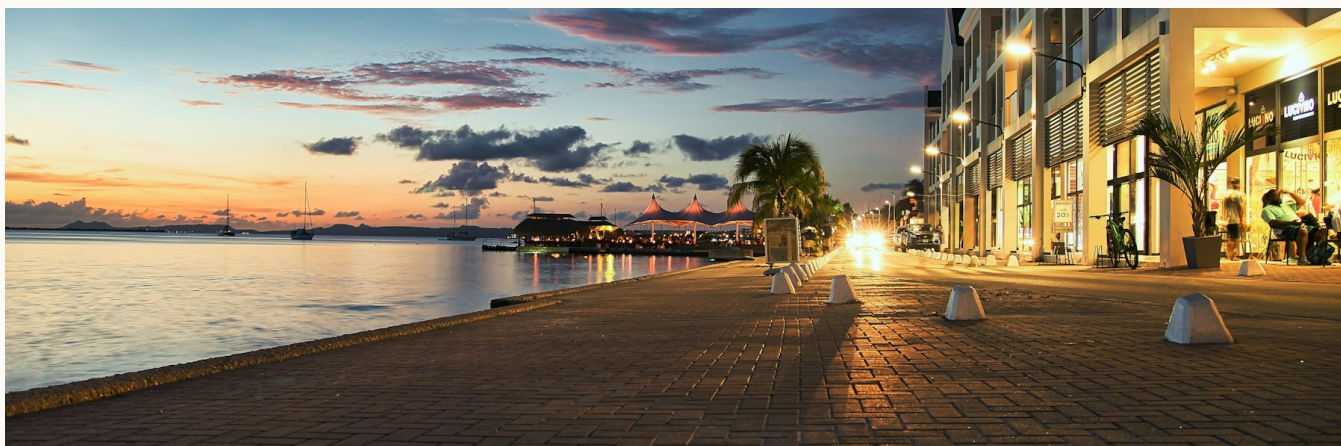
From casual lunch to occasion

Compare a takeaway, a simple seated meal and a special dinner as different purchases. Read the menu currency and check tax, service and drinks. Choose a few priority meals before booking activities around every evening.

TAKE HOME A STORY

Buy from local makers

Look for something you will use and ask who made it. Food, artwork and craft purchases have different customs rules; check what your home country allows. Photograph receipts and choose carefully packed items rather than taking natural souvenirs from the coast.



An evening on Bonaire's waterfront. Photo: Steve Phillips / Unsplash.

08 / TRANSPORT

Getting around, your way

Compare the week you will actually have: airport, groceries, meals, equipment and days out.

A rental car or arranged rides?

For several independent outings, price a rental against all the return journeys you would otherwise book. Add fuel, insurance choices, deposits and equipment requirements. A pickup can be useful for dive gear; it is not a requirement for every visitor. Confirm collection, late arrival and roadside assistance. [20]

A park visit needs its own checks

STINAPA recommends high-clearance vehicles for Washington Slagbaai. Rangers decide access according to conditions; the rental company must also allow your planned route. Do not assume a golf cart, scooter or e-bike may enter. Check current hours and last entry before setting out. [15]

Drive for the route, not the distance

Traffic keeps to the right. Carry your valid licence and follow local signs. Allow time for unfamiliar turns and safe stopping places. Inspect your vehicle at collection and record existing damage. Keep valuables and travel documents out of an unattended vehicle. [05]

Make the return part of the booking

For taxis and excursions, save the driver's number and agree the pickup point and time. Before a flight, allow for refuelling, vehicle return and the airline's check-in requirements. When combining islands, verify the service and baggage rules; do not assume there is a convenient ferry.

DO THIS BEFORE YOU PAY

Send the rental company or driver your real itinerary, group size and luggage or equipment needs. Ask for a total quote and permitted routes, not just a headline daily rate.

09 / WEATHER

Plan for the season

Separate rainfall averages, hurricane season and the conditions at your chosen water entry.

The wetter part of the year

KNMI research identifies **October-January** as the main rainy season for Bonaire, Aruba and Curaçao. Seasonal averages help compare dates; they do not predict which afternoon will be wet. Allow room to move a boat day or change a road outing after rain. [21]

Lower exposure does not mean no risk

The Caribbean hurricane season runs from **June through November**. Bonaire's southern location makes direct hurricane exposure lower than on more northerly islands, but storm effects and disruption are still possible. Check warnings for Bonaire and the airports used on your route. [22]

Keep a movable day

Our suggestion: schedule the main water outing before your final full day and leave one other day open. Ask the operator how rescheduling and refunds work. A bright sky at breakfast is not confirmation that every shore entry or boat route is suitable.

Have a land-based alternative

Choose a town lunch, a cultural visit with confirmed opening hours or a quiet afternoon near your accommodation. Check park access after heavy rainfall. Avoid trying to recover every missed booking by fitting two demanding outings into one day.

THREE SEPARATE CHECKS

Before booking: the seasonal pattern. Before the outing: the local forecast and warnings. At the site: current conditions, closures and the operator's advice.

10 / SHORT STAY

Three days, three island moods

Three full days on the ground. Add light arrival and departure days, and change the order when needed.

Day 1 / Get to know your coast

Settle into your base and work out the simple routes: breakfast, groceries and dinner. Choose a short, locally advised shore outing or guided snorkel session. Later, take time on Kralendijk's waterfront. Keep the evening near your accommodation while everyone finds their pace.

Day 2 / Make one water day count

Choose Klein Bonaire with a confirmed return crossing, or a dive or snorkel outing appropriate to your experience. Bring the supplies your operator does not provide. Keep the afternoon flexible and avoid pairing the day with a long drive simply to add another attraction.

Day 3 / Choose one side of the island

For a northern land day, combine a measured Rincon visit with a permitted Gotomeer viewpoint. Alternatively, plan a southern drive with the salt-coast history and a stop around Lac Bay. These are alternative routes: choose one rather than rushing both.

IF THE WEEKEND IS VERY SHORT

Use one base and one main outing per day. Keep Washington Slagbaai for a visit with enough time for its routes, entry conditions and daylight. Follow your dive operator's advice on the interval before flying.



Bonaire above water. Watch wildlife without approaching. Photo: Yara Kinds / Unsplash.

11 / ONE WEEK

A well-paced week

Seven full days, with time for repeat favourites. This is our suggested rhythm, not a fixed tour schedule.

01 Settle into your base

Find the useful everyday places and keep the first full day simple. Check your Nature Fee, activity bookings and transport.

02 One guided reef outing

Choose a dive or snorkel session that fits your experience. Let your operator advise on sites, closures and conditions.

03 Rincon and the north

Give local culture a proper stop, then add a permitted Gotomeer viewpoint if the day still feels comfortable.

04 A day for Klein Bonaire

Confirm both crossings and the meeting place. Bring the supplies you need and keep the evening free of a tight reservation.

05 The south, with context

Visit the salt-coast history thoughtfully and consider time around Lac Bay. Ask about the permitted activity zones.

06 Choose your longer outing

Make this a Washington Slagbaai visit with suitable transport, or another activity your group particularly wants. Keep the other choice for another trip.

07 Leave room to breathe

Use the day for a weather change, a favourite shore, gifts or rest. Check your flight plan and finish diving with the required interval before departure.

Seven full days are different from seven nights including flights. Add travel days separately and use the park's current opening calendar when arranging this order.

12 / EVERYDAY ESSENTIALS

Families, comfort and access

Choose the stay and daily rhythm for everyone in your group.

STAY COMFORTABLE

Ask about the actual route

Check room access, stairs, bathrooms and the path to the pool or sea. For boats, ask about boarding rather than relying on an “accessible” or “family friendly” label. Ask for current photographs or measurements when a feature is essential.

REST & SUPPLIES

Build in the quiet hours

Pack water, sun protection and a comfortable change of clothes. Choose an outing length everyone can enjoy. Confirm the correct child seat with your rental or transfer company rather than assuming that “child seat available” covers every age.

HEALTH NEEDS

Arrange personal care early

Bring enough essential medication for your trip and possible delays, with prescriptions where needed. Discuss personal travel-health questions with your clinician. Check that insurance fits the activities you intend to do and save its assistance number.

A FAMILY BEACH DAY

Make the facilities count

Shade, toilets, a manageable entry and a short return journey can matter more than a famous beach name. Check conditions on arrival and supervise children around water. Keep a simple land-based alternative for a day that does not suit swimming.

STAY CONNECTED

Save what you need offline

Download this guide, maps, accommodation instructions and contact numbers before leaving Wi-Fi. Check roaming charges before enabling mobile data. Ask your accommodation which sockets and voltage your room has; check your charger’s label.

MIXED INTERESTS

Plan for the non-diver too

Give everyone a workable day: transport, shade, food and something they want to do. A dive package can be excellent for one traveller while leaving another dependent on the same vehicle. Compare the whole day before choosing the accommodation.

13 / CONTACTS

Help when you need it

Keep the right numbers with you. Short emergency numbers below are for calls made locally on Bonaire.

AMBULANCE

912

For a life-threatening medical emergency. [24]

POLICE EMERGENCY

911

For urgent police assistance. [23]

HOSPITAL / GENERAL CONTACT

+599 715 8900

Fundashon Mariadal. This is the hospital's general contact, not a substitute for the ambulance emergency number. [25]

POLICE / NON-EMERGENCY

+599 715 8000

Korps Politie Caribisch Nederland, Bonaire. [23]

When you call

Give your exact location, the nearest recognisable landmark and a callback number. Follow the dispatcher's instructions. For a non-emergency medical visit, ask your insurer or accommodation for a currently operating clinic and call ahead.

Also save: your insurer, accommodation, rental assistance and the contact for each booked excursion. For lost documents, contact your own country's consular service through its official website.

14 / READY TO GO

Your departure checklist

Print this page or keep a copy on your phone. A little preparation leaves more space for the island.

DOCUMENTS & BOOKINGS

- ☐ Passport and visa / transit requirements checked for every traveller.
- ☐ Accommodation address, return booking and arrival instructions saved.
- ☐ Visitor Entry Tax category checked; confirmation saved offline.
- ☐ Nature Fee requirement checked; proof and identification ready.
- ☐ Transport, activity inclusions and change conditions confirmed.

IN YOUR BAG

- ☐ Essential medication, prescriptions and insurance assistance details.
- ☐ Sun protection, hat, refillable bottle and suitable footwear.
- ☐ Swimwear, rash guard and equipment agreed with your operator.
- ☐ Charger, suitable adaptor and offline maps / contact details.
- ☐ For boat days: water, food and the confirmed return instructions.

BEFORE THE FLIGHT HOME

- ☐ Final dive planned with the appropriate interval before flying.
- ☐ Rental return, fuel stop and airport check-in time confirmed.
- ☐ Souvenirs checked against your destination's customs rules.

KEEP EXPLORING

Find the five detailed Bonaire web guides, destination information and planning links at thecaribbeanbible.com/destinations/bonaire/.

REFERENCE DESK

Sources & editorial notes

Tap a title to open its source. Numbers in the guide refer to this list.

01 Government of the Netherlands — Bonaire's status

02 Bonaire government — official Visitor Entry Tax

03 STINAPA — Nature Fee and park FAQs

04 NetherlandsWorldwide — visa eligibility

05 Tourism Corporation Bonaire — visitor essentials

06 Tourism Corporation Bonaire — island map

07 Tourism Corporation Bonaire — 1000 Steps

08 Tourism Corporation Bonaire — Bachelor's Beach

09 Tourism Corporation Bonaire — Sorobon Beach

10 Tourism Corporation Bonaire — No Name Beach

11 STINAPA — Klein Bonaire

12 STINAPA — diving and reef-protection rules

13 Tourism Corporation Bonaire — watersports

14 Tourism Corporation Bonaire — Lac

15 STINAPA — Washington Slagbaai National Park

16 Tourism Corporation Bonaire — sightseeing

OFFICIAL INFORMATION FIRST

Government, park authority, tourism-board and care-provider links support the practical facts. Itineraries, comparisons and packing suggestions are our editorial planning advice. Fees and visitor rules can change; check the source for your travel dates.

REFERENCE DESK

Sources & editorial notes

Tap a title to open its source. Numbers in the guide refer to this list.

17 Tourism Corporation Bonaire — Slave Huts & Obelisks

18 Tourism Corporation Bonaire — Gotomeer

19 Tourism Corporation Bonaire — local cuisine

20 Tourism Corporation Bonaire — getting around

21 KNMI — rainfall patterns, including October-January

22 KNMI — hurricanes in the Caribbean Netherlands

23 Korps Politie Caribisch Nederland — police contacts

24 Primary Care Caribbean — urgent care / ambulance

25 Fundashon Mariadal — hospital contact

26 Marcreation / Unsplash — cover photograph

27 Steve Phillips / Unsplash — waterfront photograph

28 Yara Kinds / Unsplash — flamingo photograph

29 Kris-Mikael Krister / Unsplash — turtle photograph

30 Unsplash — photograph licence

About this edition

Research checked on 6 October 2026. This is researched travel guidance, not a claim that we personally inspected every place. Availability, prices, opening arrangements and local conditions can change. The linked official information should guide the final arrangements for your trip.

Photography: Marcreation (cover), Steve Phillips (waterfront), Yara Kinds (flamingos) and Kris-Mikael Krister (turtle), via Unsplash. Images are used under the Unsplash License. The Caribbean Bible logo follows the existing island-guide series.

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