

Aruba

(part of the Dutch realm)

Geography

Location: Caribbean, island in the Caribbean Sea, north of Venezuela.

Map references: Central America and the Caribbean.

Area:

total area: 193 sq km.

land area: 193 sq km.

Land boundaries: 0 km.

Coastline: 68.5 km.

Maritime claims:

territorial sea: 12 nm.

Climate: tropical marine; little seasonal temperature variation.

Terrain: flat with a few hills; scant vegetation.

Natural resources: negligible; white sandy beaches.

Land use:

arable land: 0%.

permanent crops: 0%.

meadows and pastures: 0%.

forest and woodland: 0%.

other: 100%.

People

Population: 65,974 (July 1995 est.)

Age structure:

0-14 years: 23% (female 7,377; male 7,726).

15-64 years: 69% (female 24,269; male 21,141).

65 years and over: 8% (female 3,223; male 2,238) (July 1995 est.)

Population growth rate: 0.65% (1995 est.)

Birth rate: 14.6 births/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Death rate: 6.17 deaths/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Net migration rate: -1.91 migrant(s)/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Infant mortality rate: 8.3 deaths/1,000 live births (1995 est.)

Life expectancy at birth:
total population: 76.56 years.
male: 72.89 years.
female: 80.42 years (1995 est.)

Total fertility rate: 1.82 children born/woman (1995 est.)

Nationality:
noun: Aruban(s).
adjective: Aruban.

Ethnic divisions: mixed European/Caribbean Indian 80%.

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

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

Labor force by occupation: most employment is in the tourist industry (1995).

Government

Names:

conventional long form: none.

conventional short form: Aruba.

Type: part of the Dutch realm; full autonomy in internal affairs obtained in 1986 upon separation from the Netherlands Antilles.

Capital: Oranjestad.

Administrative divisions: none (self-governing part of the Netherlands).

Independence: none (part of the Dutch realm; in 1990, Aruba requested and received from the Netherlands cancellation of the agreement to automatically give independence to the island in 1996).

National holiday: Flag Day, 18 March.

Constitution: 1 January 1986.

Legal system: based on Dutch civil law system, with some English common law influence.

Suffrage: 18 years of age; universal.

Flag: blue with two narrow horizontal yellow stripes across the lower portion and a red, four-pointed star outlined in white in the upper hoist-side corner.

Economy

Overview: Tourism is the mainstay of the Aruban economy, although offshore banking and oil refining and storage are also important. The rapid growth of the tourism sector over the last decade has resulted in a substantial expansion of other activities. Construction has boomed, with hotel capacity at record levels. Additionally, 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 less than 1% unemployment rate have led to a large number of unfilled job vacancies despite sharp rises in wage rates in recent years.

Transportation

Ports: Barcadera, Oranjestad, Sint Nicolaas.

Airports:
total: 2.