Aruba

Aruba Population
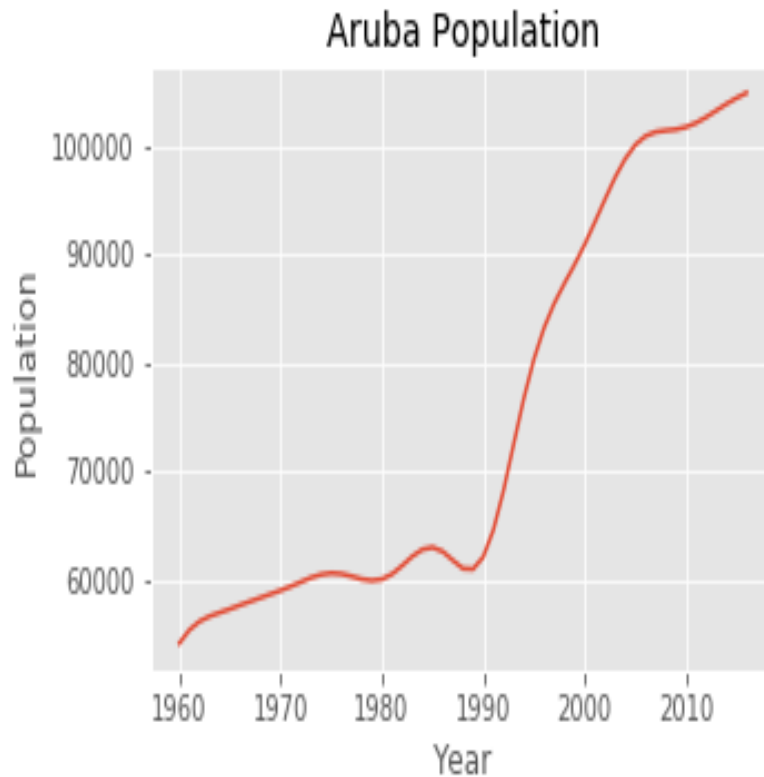

Aruba (■-ROO-b■; Dutch: [a■■ruba■], Papiamento: [a■ruba]) is an island and a constituent country of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in the southern Caribbean Sea, located about 1,600 kilometres (990 mi) west of the main part of the Lesser Antilles and 29 kilometres (18 mi) north of the coast of Venezuela. It measures 32 kilometres (20 mi) long from its northwestern to its southeastern end and 10 kilometres (6 mi) across at its widest point. Together with Bonaire and Curaçao, Aruba forms a group referred to as the ABC islands. Collectively, Aruba and the other Dutch islands in the Caribbean are often called the Dutch Caribbean. Aruba is one of the four countries that form the Kingdom of the Netherlands, along with the Netherlands, Curaçao, and Sint Maarten; the citizens of these countries are all Dutch nationals. Aruba has no administrative subdivisions, but, for census purposes, is divided into eight regions. Its capital is Oranjestad. Unlike much of the Caribbean region, Aruba has a dry climate and an arid, cactus-strewn landscape. This climate has helped tourism as visitors to the island can reliably expect warm, sunny weather. It has a land area of 179 km2 (69.1 sq mi) and is densely populated, with a total of 102,484 inhabitants at the 2010 Census. It lies outside Hurricane Alley. == Etymology == The name Aruba may have different origins: From the Spanish Oro huba which means "there was gold" From the Indian word Oruba which means "well-placed" From the Indian words Ora ("shell") and Oubao ("island") == History == Aruba's first inhabitants are thought to have been Caquetío Amerindians from the Arawak tribe, who migrated there from Venezuela to escape attacks by the Caribs. Fragments of the earliest known Indian settlements date back to 1000 AD. As sea currents made canoe travel to other Caribbean islands difficult, Caquetio culture remained more closely associated with that of mainland South America. Europeans first learned of Aruba following the explorations for Spain by Amerigo Vespucci and Alonso de Ojeda in the summer of 1499. Both described Aruba as an "island of giants", remarking on the comparatively large stature of the native Caquetíos compared to Europeans. Gold was not discovered on Aruba for another 300 years. Vespucci returned to Spain with stocks of cotton and brazilwood from the island and described houses built into the ocean. Vespucci and Ojeda's tales spurred interest in Aruba, and Spaniards soon colonized the

island. Because it had low rainfall, Aruba was not considered profitable for the plantation system and the economics of the slave trade. Aruba was colonized by Spain for over a century. Simas, the Cacique, or chief, in Aruba, welcomed the first Catholic priests in Aruba, who gave him a wooden cross as a gift. In 1508, the Spanish Crown appointed Alonso de Ojeda as its first Governor of Aruba, as part of Nueva Andalucía. Arawaks spoke the "broken Spanish" which their ancestors had learned on Hispaniola. Another governor appointed by Spain was Juan Martínez de Ampiés. A cédula real decreed in November 1525 gave Ampiés, factor of Española, the right to repopulate Aruba. In 1528, Ampiés was replaced by a representative of the House of Welser of Augsburg. The Netherlands seized Aruba from Spain in 1636 in the course of the Thirty Years' War. Since 1636, Aruba has been under Dutch administration, initially governed by Peter Stuyvesant, later appointed to New Amsterdam (New York City). Stuyvesant was on a special mission in Aruba in November and December 1642. The island was included under the Dutch West India Company (W.I.C.) administration, as "New Netherland and Curaçao", from 1648 to 1664. In 1667 the Dutch administration appointed an Irishman as "Commandeur" in Aruba. The Dutch took control 135 years after the Spanish, leaving the Arawaks to farm and graze livestock, and used the island as a source of meat for other Dutch possessions in the Caribbean. Aruba's proximity to South America resulted in interaction with cultures of the coastal areas more than a century after independence of Netherlands from Spain; architectural similarities can be seen between the 19th-century parts of Oranjestad and the nearby Venezuelan city of Coro in Falcón State. Historically, Dutch was not widely spoken on the island outside of colonial administration; its use increased in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Students on Curaçao, Aruba, and Bonaire were taught predominantly in Spanish until the late 19th century, when the British took Curaçao, Aruba, and Bonaire. Teaching of Spanish was restored when Dutch rule resumed in 1815. Also, efforts were made to introduce bilingual popular education in Dutch and Papiamentu in the late 19th century. During the Napoleonic wars, the British Empire took control over the island, between 1799 and 1802, and between 1804 and 1816, before handing it back to the Dutch. During World War II with the occupation of the Netherlands in 1940 the oil facilities in Aruba came under the administration of the Dutch government-in-exile in London, and Aruba continued to supply oil to the British and their allies. === Move towards independence === In August 1947, Aruba presented its first Staatsreglement (constitution), for Aruba's status aparte as an autonomous state within the Kingdom of the Netherlands. By 1954, the Charter of the Kingdom of the Netherlands was established, providing a framework for relations between Aruba and the rest of the Kingdom. In 1972, at a conference in Suriname, Betico Croes (MEP), a politician from Aruba, proposed a sui-generis Dutch Commonwealth of four states: Aruba, the Netherlands, Suriname and the Netherlands Antilles, each to have its own nationality. C. Yarzagaray, a parliamentary member representing the AVP political party, proposed a referendum so that the people of Aruba could choose whether they wanted total independence or Status Aparte as a full autonomous state under the Crown. Croes worked in Aruba to inform and prepare the people of Aruba for independence. In 1976, he appointed a committee that chose the national flag and anthem, introducing them as symbols of Aruba's sovereignty and independence. He set 1981 as a target date for independence. In March 1977, the first Referendum for Self Determination was held with the support of the United Nations; 82% of the participants voted for independence. The Island Government of Aruba assigned the Institute of Social Studies in The Hague to prepare a study for independence; it was titled Aruba en Onafhankelijkheid, achtergronden, modaliteiten en mogelijkheden; een rapport in eerste aanleg (Aruba and independence, backgrounds, modalities and opportunities; a preliminary report) (1978). At the conference in The Hague in 1981, Aruba's independence was set for the year 1991. In March 1983, Aruba reached an official agreement within the Kingdom for its independence, to be developed in a series of steps as the Crown granted increasing autonomy. In August 1985 Aruba drafted a constitution that was unanimously approved. On 1 January 1986, after elections were held for its first parliament, Aruba seceded from the Netherlands Antilles; it officially became a country of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Full independence was projected in 1996. After his death in 1986, Croes was proclaimed Libertador di Aruba. At a convention in The Hague in 1990, at the request of Aruba's Prime Minister, the governments of Aruba, the Netherlands, and the Netherlands Antilles postponed indefinitely its transition to full independence. The article scheduling Aruba's complete independence was rescinded in 1995, although the process could be revived after another referendum. == Geography == Aruba is a generally flat, riverless island in the Leeward Antilles island arc of the Lesser Antilles in the southern part of the Caribbean. It has white sandy beaches on the western and southern coasts of the island, relatively sheltered from fierce ocean currents. This is where most tourist development has occurred. The northern and eastern coasts, lacking this protection, are considerably more battered by

the sea and have been left largely untouched by humans. The hinterland of the island features some rolling hills, the best known of which are called Hooiberg at 165 meters (541 ft) and Mount Jamanota, the highest on the island at 188 meters (617 ft) above sea level. Oranjestad, the capital, is located at 12°19′N 70°1′W. To the east of Aruba are Bonaire and Curaçao, two island territories which once formed the southwest part of the Netherlands Antilles. This group of islands is sometimes called the ABC islands. They are located on the South American continental shelf and therefore geographically listed as part of South America. The Natural Bridge was a large, naturally formed limestone bridge on the island's north shore. It was a popular tourist destination until its collapse in 2005. === Cities and towns === The island, with a population of just over 100,000 inhabitants, does not have major cities. However, most of the island's population resides in or surrounding the two major city-like districts of Oranjestad (Capital) and San Nicolaas. Furthermore, the island is divided into six districts, which are: Noord Oranjestad (33,000 in 2006), divided in two districts Paradera San Nicolaas, divided in two districts Santa Cruz Savaneta === Fauna === The island of Aruba, being isolated from the main land of South America, has fostered the evolution of multiple endemic animals. The island provides a habitat for the endemic Aruban Whiptail and Aruba Rattlesnake, as well as an endemic subspecies of Burrowing Owl and Brown-throated Parakeet. The rattlesnake and the owl are printed on the Aruban currency. === Flora === The flora of Aruba differs from the typical tropical island vegetation. Xeric scrublands are common, with various forms of cacti, thorny shrubs, and evergreens. The most known plant is the Aloe vera, which has a place on the Coat of Arms of Aruba. === Climate === By the Köppen climate classification, Aruba has a hot semi-arid climate (Köppen BSh). Mean monthly temperature in Oranjestad varies little from 26.7 °C (80.1 °F) to 29.2 °C (84.6 °F), moderated by constant trade winds from the Atlantic Ocean, which come from the north-east. Yearly rainfall barely exceeds 470 millimetres or 18.5 inches in Oranjestad, although it is extremely variable and can range from as little as 150 millimetres or 5.91 inches during strong El Niño years (e.g. 1911/1912, 1930/1931, 1982/1983, 1997/1998) to over 1,000 millimetres or 39.37 inches in La Niña years like 1933/1934, 1970/1971 or 1988/1989. == Demographics == In terms of nationality, the population is estimated to be 82.1% Dutch, 6.6% Colombian, 2.2% Venezuelan, 2.2% Dominican, 1.2% Haitian, 0.1% unspecified. In terms of ethnic composition, the population is estimated to be 75% mixed European/Amerindian/African, 15% Black and 10% other ethnicities. The Arawak heritage is stronger on Aruba than on most Caribbean islands, and a quite big portion of Arubans who claim their ethnicity as Dutch possess Arawak blood. Although no full-blooded Aboriginals remain, the features of the islanders clearly indicate their genetic Arawak heritage. Most of the population is descended from Caquetio Indians and Dutch and to a lesser extent of Africans, Spanish, Portuguese, English, French, and Sephardic Jewish ancestors. Aruba is a home of Chinese, and Indo Caribbeans and Javanese, who descend largely from workers contracted from India and the island of Java in the former Dutch East Indies (modern Indonesia). Recently, there has been substantial immigration to the island from neighboring American and Caribbean nations, possibly attracted by the higher paid jobs. In 2007, new immigration laws were introduced to help control the growth of the population by restricting foreign workers to a maximum of three years residency on the island. Demographically, Aruba has felt the impact of its proximity to Venezuela. Many of Aruba's families are descended from Venezuelan immigrants. There is a seasonal increase of Venezuelans living in second homes. As Aruba has a little proximity to Colombia, Colombian residents and their children are found here. === Language === The official languages are Dutch and Papiamento. However, Dutch is the sole language for all administration and legal matters, Papiamento is the predominant language on Aruba. It is a creole language, spoken on Aruba, Bonaire, and Curaçao, that incorporates words from Portuguese, West African languages, Dutch, and Spanish. English is known by many; its usage has grown due to tourism. Other common languages spoken, based on the size of their community, are Portuguese, Chinese, German, Spanish, and French. In recent years, the government of Aruba has shown an increased interest in acknowledging the cultural and historical importance of its native language. Although spoken Papiamento is fairly similar among the several Papiamento-speaking islands, there is a big difference in written Papiamento. The orthography differs per island and even per group of people. Some are more oriented towards Portuguese and use the equivalent spelling (e.g. "y" instead of "j"), where others are more oriented towards Dutch. The book The Buccaneers of America, first published in 1678, states through eyewitness account that the natives on Aruba spoke Spanish already. Spanish became an important language in the 18th century due to the close economic ties with Spanish colonies in what are now Venezuela and Colombia, and several Venezuelan TV networks are received, and the fact that Aruba has a presence of Venezuelan and Colombian residents. The oldest government official

statement written in Papiamento dates from 1803. Around 12.6% of the population today speaks Spanish. Use of English dates to the early 19th century, when the British took Curaçao, Aruba and Bonaire. When Dutch rule resumed in 1815, officials already noted wide use of the language. Aruba has four newspapers published in Papiamento: Diario, Bon Dia, Solo di Pueblo and Awe Mainta; and three in English: Aruba Daily, Aruba Today and The News. Amigoe is a newspaper published in Dutch. Aruba also has 18 radio stations (two AM and 16 FM) and two local television stations (Telearuba, and Channel 22). Aruba is a polyglot society. Most of Aruba's population is able to converse in at least two of the languages of Papiamentu, Dutch, English, and Spanish. === Religion === Three-quarters of the population is Roman Catholic. === Regions === For census purposes, Aruba is divided into eight regions, which have no administrative functions: == Government == As a constituent country of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Aruba's politics take place within a framework of a 21-member Parliament and an eight-member Cabinet. The governor of Aruba is appointed for a six-year term by the monarch, and the prime minister and deputy prime minister are elected by the Staten (or "Parlamento") for four-year terms. The Staten is made up of 21 members elected by direct, popular vote to serve a four-year term. Together with the Netherlands, the countries of Aruba, Curaçao and Sint Maarten form the Kingdom of the Netherlands. As they share the same Dutch citizenship, these four countries still also share the Dutch passport as the Kingdom of the Netherlands passport. As Aruba, Curaçao and Sint Maarten have small populations, the three countries had to limit immigration. To protect their population, they have the right to control the admission and expulsion of people from the Netherlands. Aruba is designated as a member of the Overseas Countries and Territories (OCT) and is thus officially not a part of the European Union, though Aruba can and does receive support from the European Development Fund. === Politics === The Aruban legal system is based on the Dutch model. In Aruba, legal jurisdiction lies with the Gerecht in Eerste Aanleg (Court of First Instance) on Aruba, the Gemeenschappelijk Hof van Justitie van Aruba, Curaçao, Sint Maarten en van Bonaire, Sint Eustatius en Saba (Joint Court of Justice of Aruba, Curaçao, Sint Maarten, and of Bonaire, Sint Eustatius and Saba) and the Hoge Raad der Nederlanden (Supreme Court of Justice of the Netherlands). The Korps Politie Aruba (Aruba Police Force) is the island's law enforcement agency and operates district precincts in Oranjestad, Noord, San Nicolaas, and Santa Cruz, where it is headquartered. Deficit spending has been a staple in Aruba's history, and modestly high inflation has been present as well. By 2006, the government's debt had grown to 1.883 billion Aruban florins. Aruba received some development aid from the Dutch government each year through 2009, as part of a deal (signed as "Aruba's Financial Independence") in which the Netherlands gradually reduced its financial help to the island each successive year. In 2006, the Aruban government changed several tax laws to reduce the deficit. Direct taxes have been converted to indirect taxes as proposed by the IMF. A 3% tax has been introduced on sales and services, while income taxes have been lowered and revenue taxes for business reduced by 20%. The government compensated workers with 3.1% for the effect that the B.B.O. would have on the inflation for 2007. == Education == Aruba's educational system is patterned after the Dutch system of education. The Government of Aruba finances the public national education system. There are mostly public schools, and there are private schools, including the International School of Aruba and Schakel College. There are two medical schools, Aureus University School of Medicine and Xavier University School of Medicine, as well as its own national university, the University of Aruba. == Economy == Aruba has one of the highest standards of living in the Caribbean region. There is a low unemployment rate. The GDP per capita for Aruba was estimated to be $28,924 in 2014; among the highest in the Caribbean and the Americas. Its main trading partners are Colombia, the United States, Venezuela, and the Netherlands. The island's economy has been dominated by three main industries: tourism, aloe export, and petroleum refining (The Lago Oil and Transport Company and the Arend Petroleum Maatschappij Shell Co.). Before the "Status Aparte" (a separate completely autonomous country/state within the Kingdom), oil processing was the dominant industry in Aruba despite expansion of the tourism sector. Today, the influence of the oil processing business is minimal. The size of the agriculture and manufacturing sectors also remains minimal. The official exchange rate of the Aruban florin is pegged to the US dollar at 1.79 florins to 1 USD. Because of this fact, and due to a large number of American tourists, many businesses operate using US dollars instead of florins, especially in the hotel and resort districts. === Tourism === About three quarters of the Aruban gross national product is earned through tourism or related activities. Most tourists are from the United States (predominantly from the north-east US), the Netherlands and South America, mainly Venezuela and Colombia. As part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, citizens of the Netherlands can travel with relative ease to Aruba and other islands of the Dutch Antilles. No visas are needed for Dutch citizens,

only a passport, and although the currency used in Aruba is different (the Netherlands uses the Euro), money can be easily exchanged at a local bank for Aruban Florins. For the facilitation of the passengers whose destination is the United States, the United States Department of Homeland Security (DHS), U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) full pre-clearance facility in Aruba has been in effect since 1 February 2001 with the expansion in the Queen Beatrix Airport. United States and Aruba have had the agreement since 1986. It began as a USDA and Customs post. Since 2008, Aruba has been the only island to have this service for private flights. == Military == Defense on Aruba is the responsibility of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. The Netherlands Military forces that protect Aruba include the Royal Netherlands Navy, the Netherlands Marine Corps and the Netherlands Coastguard. There is also a small indigenous "Arubaanse Militie" (ARUMIL) of about platoon strength. All forces are stationed at Marines Barracks Savaneta. Furthermore, in 1999 the U.S. Department of Defense established a Forward Operating Location (FOL) at the airport. == Culture == On 18 March, Aruba celebrates its National Day. In 1976, Aruba presented its National Anthem (Aruba Dushi Tera) and Flag. Aruba has a varied culture. According to the Bureau Burgelijke Stand en Bevolkingsregister (BBSB), in 2005 there were ninety-two different nationalities living on the island. Dutch influence can still be seen, as in the celebration of "Sinterklaas" on 5 and 6 December and other national holidays like 27 April, when in Aruba and the rest of the Kingdom of the Netherlands the King's birthday or "Dia di Rey" (Koningsdag) is celebrated. Christmas and New Year's Eve are celebrated with the typical music and songs for gaitas for Christmas and the Dande for New Year, and ayaca, ponche crema, ham, and other typical foods and drinks. Millions of florins worth of fireworks are burnt at midnight on New Year's Eve. On 25 January, Betico Croes' birthday is celebrated. Dia di San Juan is celebrated on 24 June. Besides Christmas, the religious holy days of the Feast of the Ascension and Good Friday are holidays on the island. The holiday of Carnaval is also an important one in Aruba, as it is in many Caribbean and Latin American countries, and, like Mardi Gras, that goes on for weeks. Its celebration in Aruba started, around the 1950s, influenced by the inhabitants from Venezuela and the nearby islands (Curaçao, St. Vincent, Trinidad, Barbados, St. Maarten and Anguilla) who came to work for the Oil refinery. Over the years the Carnival Celebration has changed and now starts from the beginning of January till the Tuesday before Ash Wednesday with a large parade on the last Sunday of the festivities (Sunday before Ash Wednesday). Tourism from the United States has recently increased the visibility of American culture on the island, with such celebrations as Halloween and Thanksgiving Day in November. == Infrastructure == Aruba's Queen Beatrix International Airport is located near Oranjestad. According to the Aruba Airport Authority, almost 1.7 million travelers used the airport in 2005, 61% of whom were Americans. Aruba has two ports, Barcadera and Playa, which are located in Oranjestad and Barcadera. The Port of Playa services all the cruise-ship lines, including Royal Caribbean, Carnival Cruise Lines, NCL, Holland America Line, Disney Cruise Line and others. Nearly one million tourists enter this port per year. Aruba Ports Authority, owned and operated by the Aruban government, runs these seaports. Arubus is a government-owned bus company. Its buses operate from 3:30 a.m. until 12:30 a.m., 365 days a year. Small private vans also provide transportation services in certain areas such Hotel Area, San Nicolaas, Santa Cruz and Noord. A street car service runs on rails on the Mainstreet. === Utilities === Water-en Energiebedrijf Aruba, N.V. (W.E.B.) produces potable industrial water at the world's third largest desalination plant. Average daily consumption in Aruba is about 37,000 long tons (38,000 t). === Communications === There are two telecommunications providers: Setar, a government-based company and Digicel, both of which are privately owned. Setar is the provider of services such as internet, video conferencing, GSM wireless technology and land lines. Digicel is Setar's competitor in wireless technology using the GSM platform.|archiveurl=https://web.archive.org/web/20140619110741/http://www.mioaruba.com/products |archivedate=19 June 2014 }} == Places of interest == == Notable people == Xander Bogaerts, MLB shortstop of the Boston Red Sox Rachel Brathen, yoga teacher Betico Croes, political activist Henny Eman, first prime minister of Aruba Bobby Farrell, musician Dave Benton, Aruban-Estonian musician Jossy Mansur, editor of the Papiamento language newspaper, Diario Nelson Oduber, prime minister Sidney Ponson, MLB pitcher Fredis Refunjol, governor Julia Renfro, newspaper editor and photographer Jeannette Richardson-Baars, Deputy Police Commissioner Fred Jüssi, Estonian biologist, nature writer and photographer == See also == Bibliography of Aruba Central Bank of Aruba Index of Aruba-related articles List of monuments of Aruba Military of Aruba Outline of Aruba SS Pedernales == References == == External links == Aruba.com – official tourism site of Aruba Aruba at Curlie (based on DMOZ) Wikimedia Atlas of Aruba Aruba Esso News from the National Library of Aruba, openly and freely available in the Digital Library of the Caribbean