

Curaçao

TRAVEL GUIDE

Tripomatic



Overview

Curaçao is a small Caribbean island and a constituent country of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. It sits outside the Atlantic hurricane belt. Its capital combines Dutch colonial architecture with dry, cactus-studded countryside and calm, clear water close to shore. The pastel gabled houses of Handelskade line the harbor in the Historic Area of Willemstad. A short drive northwest leads to quiet coves, coral reefs close to shore, and the hiking trails of Christoffel National Park.

The island suits divers and snorkelers first, thanks to a fringing reef that starts just meters offshore. It also rewards travelers who like history and city walking. English and Spanish are widely understood alongside Dutch and Papiamentu, so getting around rarely needs planning. A rental car makes the most of a stay. The best beaches and viewpoints are spread along the coast, not concentrated in one resort strip.

When to visit

Curaçao is warm and sunny all year, and the trade winds keep most days breezy. The driest and most pleasant months are February to April. The short rainy season runs from October to December, with brief, heavy showers rather than all-day rain. The island lies south of the main hurricane track, so storms rarely disrupt a trip. Carnival, in the weeks before Lent, is the liveliest time to visit.

MONTH	CONDITIONS	DAY °C avg / max	NIGHT °C avg / min	
January	Good	27° / 28°	25° / 24°	Oppressive humidity · Windy · UV 9 (Very high)
February	Great	27° / 28°	25° / 24°	Oppressive humidity · Windy · UV 10 (Very high)
March	Great	27° / 28°	25° / 24°	21 sunny days · Oppressive humidity · Windy · UV 11 (Extreme)
April	Great	27° / 29°	26° / 24°	Oppressive humidity · Windy · UV 11 (Extreme)
May	Good	28° / 29°	26° / 25°	Oppressive humidity · Windy · UV 11 (Extreme)
June	Good	28° / 29°	26° / 25°	Oppressive humidity · Windy · UV 10 (Very high)
July	Good	28° / 29°	26° / 25°	Oppressive humidity · Windy · UV 10 (Very high)
August	Good	29° / 30°	27° / 25°	Oppressive humidity · Windy · UV 11 (Extreme)
September	Fair	29° / 30°	27° / 25°	Oppressive humidity · UV 11 (Extreme)
October	Poor	29° / 30°	26° / 25°	23 rainy days · Oppressive humidity · UV 10 (Very high)
November	Poor	28° / 29°	26° / 25°	25 rainy days · Oppressive humidity · UV 8 (Very high)
December	Fair	27° / 28°	25° / 24°	21 rainy days · Oppressive humidity · Windy · UV 8 (Very high)

Best months: February, March, April

Climate data: NASA POWER + Copernicus ERA5-Land and ERA5 · 1996–2025

Money & payments

Currency

CURRENCY

Cg
XCG

Cards widely accepted

Cash still matters outside Willemstad's restaurants and hotels — small beach bars, roadside food trucks, and local buses often take only cash. US dollars are accepted almost everywhere alongside the local currency, though change may come back in the local notes and coins. ATMs are common in Willemstad and near the larger resorts, less so on the quieter west coast, so withdraw what a full day trip needs before heading out.

Typical costs

Rough prices in touristic areas, per person

Hotel (double room, per night) mid-range hotel, double room per night	180 – 360 Cg
Dinner (mid-range restaurant) mid-range restaurant, per entree	27 – 55 Cg
Inexpensive meal casual local eatery	14 – 22 Cg
Local beer	5 – 11 Cg
Coffee	2 – 3.5 Cg
Water 0.5L bottle	2 – 3.5 Cg
Transit ticket one-way city bus fare, cash only	2 – 3 Cg

Tipping

Tipping follows US-style habits more than Dutch ones. Restaurant bills sometimes already include a service charge, which is a business cost rather than a tip for the staff. Check the bill before adding more on top. Tour guides on excursions such as diving trips or island tours are the exception — a tip there is genuinely expected, not optional.

Restaurant around 10%, cash preferred	Optional
Bar round up	Optional
Hotel a few Cg per bag or per day for housekeeping	Optional
Taxi round up the fare	Optional
Tour guide 10-15 USD equivalent per person	Expected

Electricity

Curaçao mixes US-style and European-style outlets. Older buildings often have 127 V type A/B sockets, while many hotels and newer buildings also wire in 220 V type F. Check the socket before plugging in. Bring a universal adapter rather than assuming one plug type covers the whole trip.

ELECTRICITY



Type A

ELECTRICITY



Type B

127 V · 50 Hz

Language

Dutch, Papiamentu, and English are all official languages, and Spanish is widely understood too thanks to the island's proximity to Venezuela. Government paperwork and legal matters are handled in Dutch, but in practice hotels, restaurants, and shops switch easily into English. Papiamentu, a Creole language blending Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch, and West African roots, is what most islanders speak at home. Even a few words are warmly received by locals.

Useful phrases

Hello	Bon dia
Thank you	Danki
Please	Por fabor
Goodbye	Ayó
Help	Yuda!
How much?	Kuanto e ta kosta?

Staying connected

A local prepaid SIM from Digicel or Flow costs more than on many neighboring islands, generally $20–30 for a basic data package. It's sold at the airport and in Willemstad. An eSIM bought in advance is often the simpler and cheaper option for a short stay. Coverage is reliable across the island, including along the west-coast beaches.

Safety & emergencies

Curaçao is one of the calmer Caribbean islands for visitors, and violent crime rarely touches tourists. The main risk is opportunistic theft — valuables left visible in a parked rental car, or a bag left unattended on the beach. Leave the glove compartment open and empty when parking at a trailhead or beach, and keep passports and cash in a hotel safe rather than a beach bag.

Emergency numbers

GENERAL EMERGENCY	POLICE	AMBULANCE	FIRE BRIGADE
911	911	912	911

Health

Tap water is safe to drink islandwide. It comes from seawater desalination rather than a natural aquifer, so it tastes a little flat — which is why many residents still choose bottled water. Pharmacies are well stocked in Willemstad and near the main resort areas, and English-speaking staff are common. No special vaccinations are required for most travelers, though routine immunizations should be up to date. The tropical sun is a bigger everyday risk than any illness — reef-safe sunscreen and plenty of water matter more than most people expect.

Visas & entry

Travelers from the EU, US, Canada, the UK, and many other countries can enter Curaçao visa-free for short stays, generally up to 90 days within a six-month period. A passport valid for the length of the trip is required. Curaçao is not part of the Schengen area, so a Schengen visa alone does not guarantee entry — check the specific requirement for your nationality. Travelers who do need a visa apply through a Dutch embassy or consulate well ahead of the trip.

> Visa and entry requirements change frequently. Verify current requirements with the official immigration authority or your country's embassy before travel.

Etiquette

Curaçao is relaxed about dress in general, but swimwear belongs at the beach or pool, not in town restaurants or shops. At Mikvé Israel-Emanuel Synagogue, men are asked to cover their heads — a kippah is provided at the entrance — and shoulders should be covered for both men and women. Greetings are warm and unhurried; a simple "Bon dia" opens most interactions well, even a quick one at a shop counter. Photographing the street art and colorful architecture around Punda, Otrobanda, and

Pietermaai is welcome, but ask before photographing people directly. Prices in shops and restaurants are fixed — bargaining is not part of the culture.

Holidays & opening hours

Public holidays bring Willemstad's shops and offices to a stop, though restaurants and hotels in tourist areas stay open. Carnival season, running for weeks before Lent, and King's Day are the liveliest stretches, with parades that can close streets in the historic center. Most shops close on Sundays outside the main tourist strips, and many businesses take a slower pace in the early afternoon heat.

Public holidays

Jan 1	New Year's Day
Apr 27	King's Day
May 1	Labour Day
Jul 2	Curaçao National Flag and Anthem Day
Oct 10	Curaçao Day
Dec 25	Christmas Day
Dec 26	St. Stephen's Day
Dec 31	New Year's Eve
movable — May	Ascension Day
movable — Feb/Mar	Carnival Monday
movable — Mar/Apr	Easter Monday
movable — Mar/Apr	Easter Sunday
movable — Mar/Apr	Good Friday
movable — May/Jun	Pentecost

Getting around

- **By rental car**: the most practical way to reach the west-coast beaches and Christoffel National Park, where public transport is thin. Roads are generally in good condition; book ahead in high season.
- **By taxi**: fares are fixed by zone rather than metered, so agree the price before getting in. Taxis are easy to find in Willemstad and at hotels, less so on the west coast.
- **By public bus**: Autobusbedrijf Curaçao (ABC) connects Willemstad to towns across the island cheaply, paid in cash on board or at terminal booths in Punda and Otrobanda; useful for the city itself, less so for reaching remote beaches on a schedule. Autobusbedrijf Curaçao (ABC)
- **On foot**: central Willemstad, including Historic Area of Willemstad, is compact and walkable, with the pedestrian Queen Emma Bridge linking the Punda and Otrobanda quarters across St. Anna Bay.

Driving

- **Getting around**: a rental car is the easiest way to reach the island's beaches and parks; book ahead during high season, since demand can outstrip supply.
- **Rules**: a valid driver's license from home is accepted for a short visit; seatbelts and child seats are mandatory, and drunk-driving limits are enforced.
- **Parking**: informal and usually free at beaches and trailheads; central Willemstad has metered and garage parking near the main squares.
- **Fuel**: stations are attended, not self-service, and take cash or card.

URBAN	RURAL	PETROL	DIESEL
60 km/h	70 km/h	Benzine	Diesel

Drive on the right

No motorway vignette needed

Curaçao has no toll roads or vignette system; all roads are free to use.

Food & drink

Curaçaoan food blends Dutch, Spanish, African, and Caribbean influences into what locals call Krioyo cooking. A typical day starts light — coffee and bread — and builds to a bigger midday meal, the traditional main meal of the day. Dinner is often lighter, or eaten later in tourist areas to match visitor schedules. Stews such as kabritu stoba (goat) and fresh grilled or fried fish are staples. They're usually served with funchi, a cornmeal side similar to polenta, and rice.

Street food is easy to find around Willemstad and at beach kiosks. Pastechi, a fried turnover filled with cheese or spiced meat, is the classic grab-and-go snack. Curaçao Liqueur Distillery is where the original Blue Curaçao liqueur is still distilled from the dried peel of the local laraha citrus. Amstel Bright, the everyday local beer, was brewed on the island using desalinated seawater until the brewery closed in 2005. It's now made under license in the Netherlands and shipped back, but it's still what most islanders order.

What to eat & drink

SNACKS & STREET FOOD

Pastechi
Fried pastry turnover filled with cheese, chicken, or minced meat.

DRINKS

Blue Curaçao
Orange-flavored liqueur distilled on the island from the dried peel of the local laraha citrus.

Amstel Bright
The everyday local beer; originally brewed on the island with desalinated seawater until the local brewery closed in 2005, now made under license in the Netherlands.

SIGNATURE DISHES

Keshi Yena
Edam or Gouda cheese shell stuffed with spiced chicken, raisins, olives and capers, then baked.

Kabritu Stoba
Slow-cooked goat stew with tomatoes, onions and local spices.

Funchi
Cornmeal polenta served as a side with stews and fried fish.

Curaçao – Plan Your Trip

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Where to explore

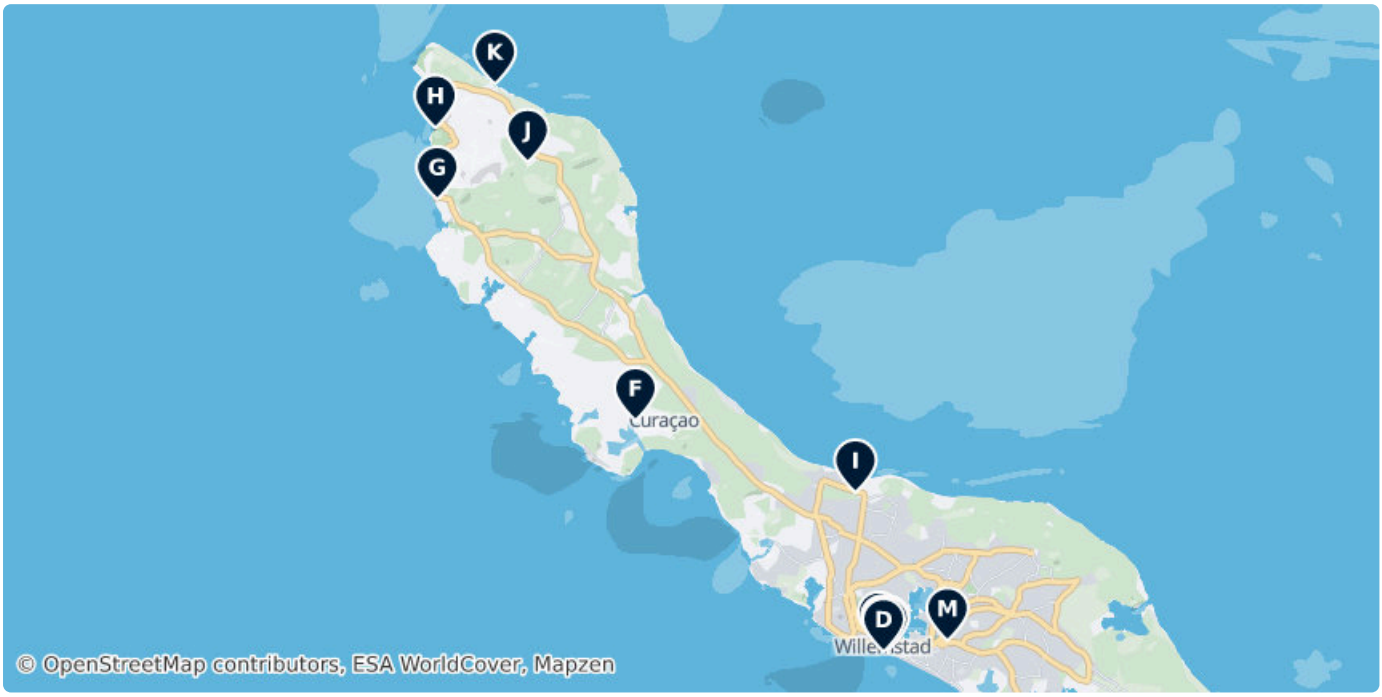
Willemstad's historic core splits into two quarters connected by the swinging Queen Emma Bridge. Punda is the old trading center, home to Historic Area of Willemstad, Mikvé Israel-Emanuel Synagogue, and the harborside Punda Floating Market. Otrobanda is quieter, known for street art and its own row of gabled houses. Pietermaai, just east of Punda, has become the island's nightlife and boutique-hotel district in a similarly restored historic quarter.

The west coast holds most of the island's best snorkeling beaches. Among them are Cas Abao Beach, Porto Marie Beach, Playa Lagun, and the twin bays of Kenepa Chiki (Kleine Knip) and Kenepa Grandi (Grote Knip). In the island's northwest, Christoffel National Park covers rugged, protected coastline and the island's highest hill. Trails wind through cactus scrub and past sea caves such as Boca Tabla.

On the east side, Jan Thiel and the Spanish Water lagoon form the island's beach-club and watersports scene, anchored by Jan Thiel Beach. Klein Curaçao is a small uninhabited island with a lighthouse and a shallow turquoise lagoon. It's a popular full-day boat trip from the south coast.

Curacao's Absolute Essentials

Explore the UNESCO-listed historic center of Willemstad, defined by 17th-century Dutch colonial architecture and the unique Queen Emma pontoon bridge. This selection features the 1634 Fort Amsterdam and the Western Hemisphere's oldest synagogue alongside natural landmarks like the Hato Caves and Christoffel National Park. From the turquoise waters of Grote Knip and Playa Lagun to the volcanic rock formations at Boca Tabla, these sites showcase the island's geological diversity and the heritage of the Punda floating market.





A Historic Area of Willemstad

The unique historical core is protected by UNESCO. No wonder - the narrow streets and colourful houses are so charming!

Willemstad, Curaçao (12.10802, -68.93703)



B Queen Emma Bridge

The Queen Emma Bridge is a pontoon bridge across St. Anna Bay in Curaçao.

Curaçao (12.10610, -68.93538)



C Handelskade

This promenade is probably the most photographed site on Curacao. Most charming during the night - just wander around and enjoy the powerful...

Windstraat, Willemstad, Curacao (12.10602, -68.93422)



D Fort Amsterdam

Fort Amsterdam is a fort located in Willemstad, Curaçao. It was constructed in 1634 by the Dutch West India Company and served not only as a...

Handelskade, Punda (12.10477, -68.93466)

+5999 434 8200



E Mikvé Israel-Emanuel Synagogue

The Mikvé Israel-Emanuel Synagogue, in Willemstad, Curaçao, is the oldest surviving synagogue in the Americas.

Hanchi Snoa, 0000 NA Willemstad, Curacao (12.10510, -68.93272)



F Flamingos

These Caribbean flamingos gather at the salt flats of Jan Kok and Saliña Sint Michiel to feed in the mineral-rich shallow waters.

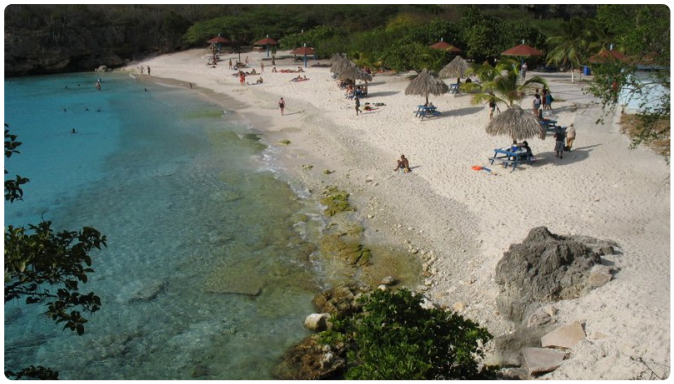
Kaminda San Willibrordus, Sint Willibrordus, Curacao (12.21384, -69.05463)



G Playa Lagun

Playa Lagun is a beach on Curaçao, located near the village of Lagún.

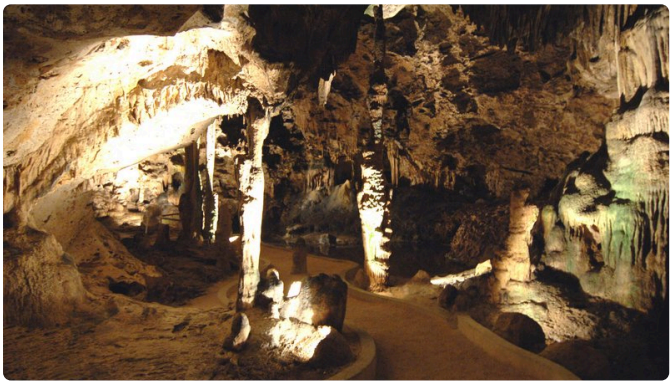
Lagun Bay Parking, Lagún, CW (12.31825, -69.15050)



H Kenepa Grandi Beach

Grote Knip is a beach on the Caribbean island of Curaçao, located at the western side of the island, between the villages of Westpunt and...

CW (12.35194, -69.15138)



I Hato Caves

Hato Caves are show caves, publicly accessible since 1991 and a popular tourist attraction on the Caribbean island of Curaçao.

CW (12.17978, -68.94832)

hatocaves.com



J Christoffel National Park

Explore the beautiful nature reserve on foot, horseback, or by car. Varied landscape and lots of wildlife to see!

Curaçao (12.33581, -69.10678)

christoffelpark.org



K Boca Tabla

A breathtaking natural monument.The sea cave formed by strong currents offers an amazing view. A beautiful place!

Curaçao (12.37266, -69.12259)

M Curaçao Liqueur Distillery

Housed in the 19th-century Landhuis Chobolobo, this distillery produces the authentic Curaçao liqueur using dried peels of the local Laraha orange.

Curaçao (12.10988, -68.90374)

Mo–Fr 08:00–17:00

chobolobo.com, +5999 461 3526

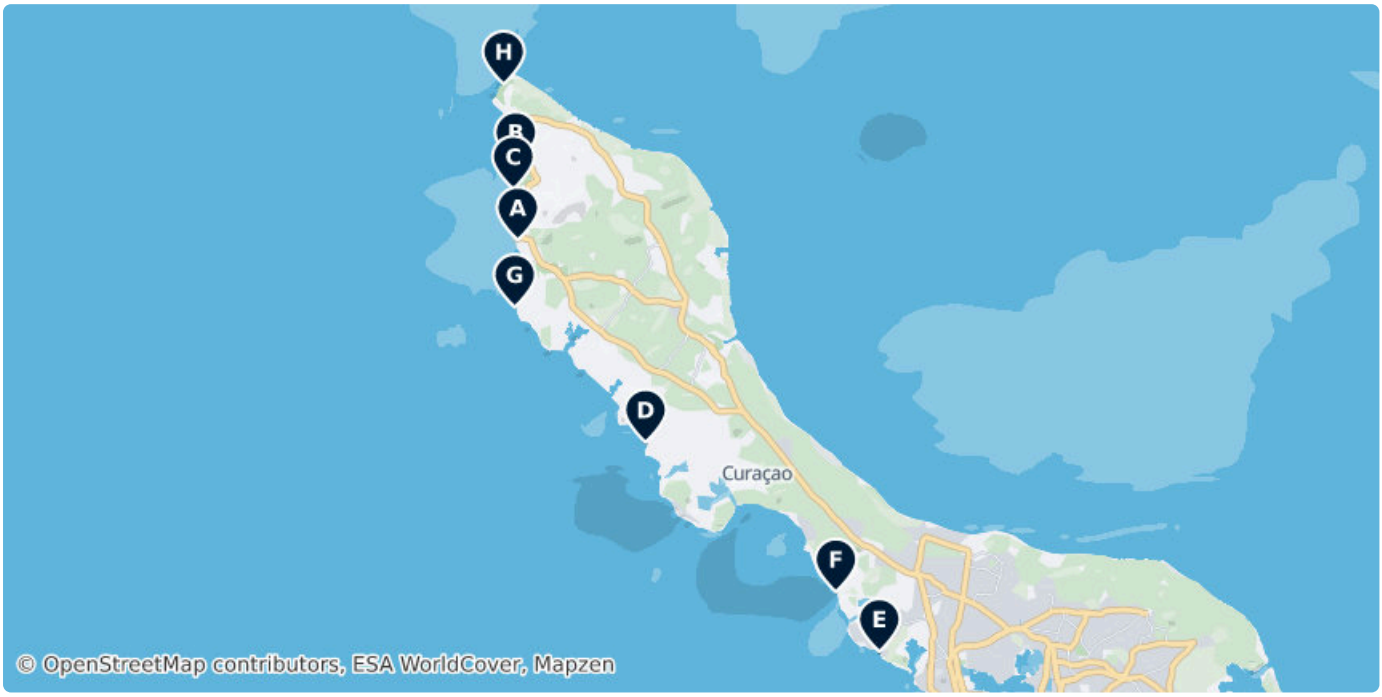
L Punda Floating Market

The boat fleet comes from Venezuela and fresh fish and fruits are for sale. Very authentic experience!

Sha Caprileskade, Willemstad, Curacao (12.10607, -68.93239)

Best Beaches of Curaçao

Curaçao's coastline features a diverse range of beaches, from the dramatic limestone cliffs of Playa Lagun and Grote Knip to the full-service resort sands of Cas Abao and Blue Bay. Most of these spots are located along the island's sheltered western coast, offering calm, turquoise waters ideal for snorkeling among coral reefs and sea turtles. While some locations like Kokomo Beach provide amenities like restaurants and diving centers, others like Boca Hulu and Playa Gipy remain rugged and secluded, requiring short hikes or boat access.

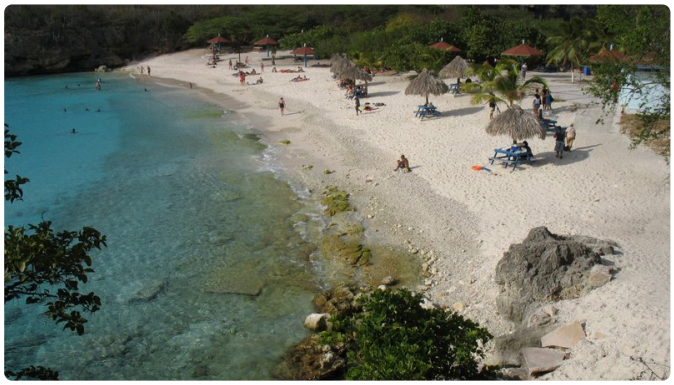




A Playa Lagun

Playa Lagun is a beach on Curaçao, located near the village of Lagún.

Lagun Bay Parking, Lagún, CW (12.31825, -69.15050)



B Kenepa Grandi Beach

Grote Knip is a beach on the Caribbean island of Curaçao, located at the western side of the island, between the villages of Westpunt and...

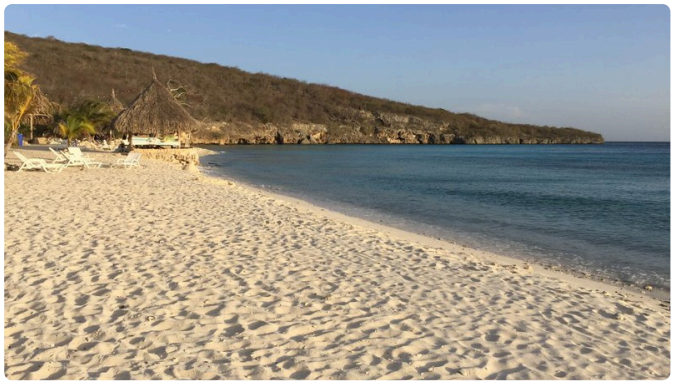
CW (12.35194, -69.15138)



C Kenepa Chiki Beach

Kleine Knip is a beach on the Caribbean island of Curaçao. It is located at the western side of the island, between the villages of Westpunt...

Westpunt, CW (12.34109, -69.15250)



D Cas Abao Beach

A popular beach club with bar, sport facilities rental and lifeguard. Come here for a pleasant experience!

CW (12.22784, -69.09199)

casabaobeach.com, +599 9 463 6367



E Blue Bay, Curaçao

Blue Bay is a beach on the Caribbean island of Curaçao, located close to the fishermen's village of Sint-Michiel to the north-west of...

Curaçao (12.13417, -68.98488)

F Kokomo Beach

Located at Vaersenbaai, this beach features a restaurant, bar, and professional dive center. It is characterized by its wooden swing set positioned in the shallow water.

CW (12.16096, -69.00473)

G Playa Hulu

A secluded, rugged beach near Santa Martha accessible via a steep cliffside staircase or by boat. It offers a remote setting with no commercial facilities.

Curaçao (12.28831, -69.15189)

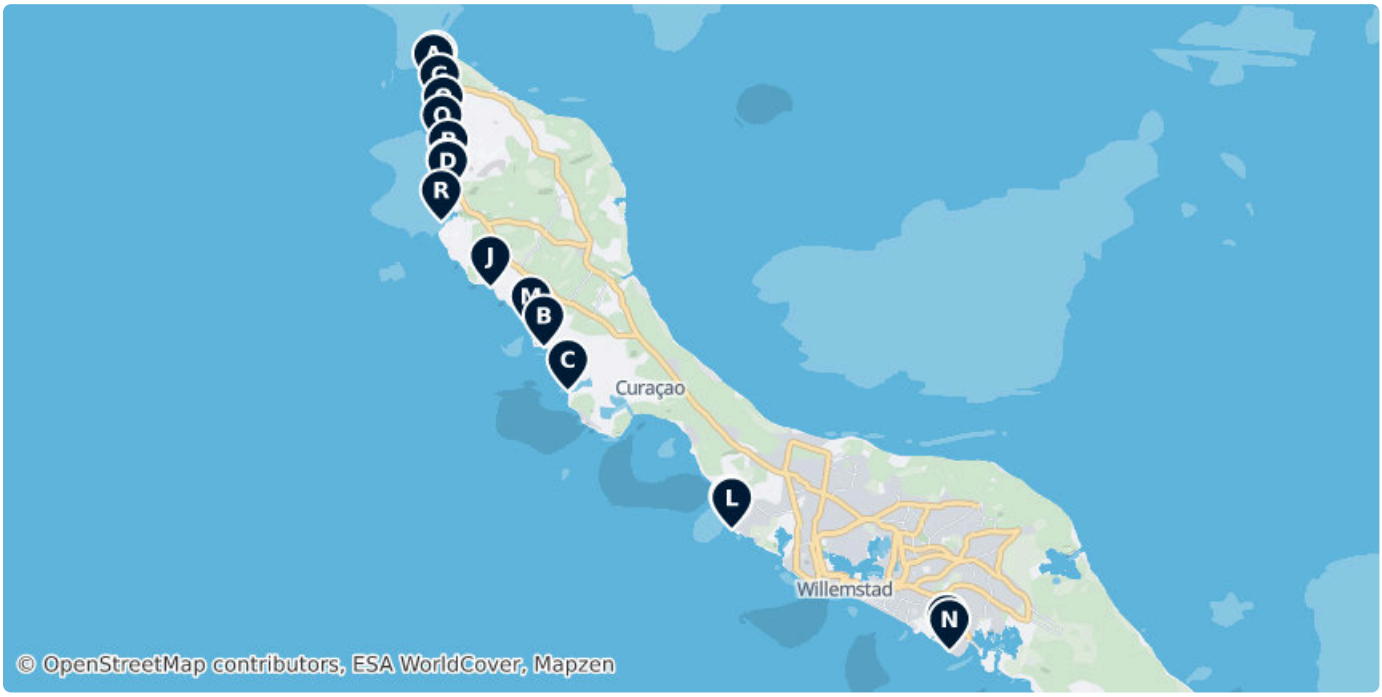
H Playa Gipy

Playa Gipy is a beach on the Caribbean island of Curaçao, located on the northern tip of the island, close to the village of Westpunt.

Westpunt, CW (12.38807, -69.15694)

Best Diving & Snorkeling Spots

Curaçao's coastline features over 60 shore diving and snorkeling sites characterized by steep walls and shallow coral reefs. This list includes the Mushroom Forest, where star corals have eroded into fungal shapes, and the Sunset Waters airplane wreck resting in 10 meters of water. Shore access is common at beaches like Playa Kalki and Playa Lagun, which is noted for frequent sea turtle sightings. The island's southern coast offers calm conditions and visibility often exceeding 30 meters.



A Playa Kalki

Known as "Alice in Wonderland," this site features a steep wall and massive coral formations accessible via a staircase from the beach.

Curaçao (12.37399, -69.15857)

B Playa Largu

A long, rocky beach with a healthy reef reachable from the shore, featuring various hard and soft corals.

Curaçao (12.23530, -69.09852)

dive-links.com/tauchplatz.php

C Daaibooi Bay

A shallow bay with a reef starting at 5 meters, home to sponges, brain corals, and small reef fish.

(12.21192, -69.08558)

dive-links.com/tauchplatz.php

D Lagun Blou

A resort area providing direct access to the reefs near Playa Lagun.

Curaçao (12.31732, -69.15077)

lagunblou.nl

E Playa Lagun

A narrow cove between high cliffs known for frequent sightings of sea turtles and green moray eels.

Curaçao (12.31813, -69.15088)

dive-links.com/tauchplatz.php

F Go West Diving

A full-service dive center at Playa Kalki offering boat trips to Watamula and Mushroom Forest.

(12.37510, -69.15734)

gowestdiving.com, +5999 864 0102

G Rancho El Sobrino

A resort and dive center in Westpunt providing guided tours and equipment rentals.

(12.36318, -69.15524)

ranchoelsobrino.com, +5999 670 8822

H Dive Center Scuba Do

PADI dive center at Jan Thiel Bay offering shore dives and boat trips to the East Point reefs.

(12.07673, -68.87966)

Mo–Su 09:00–17:30

divecenterscubado.com, +5999 7679300

I Jan Thielbaai

A bay with a reef drop-off close to shore, home to barracudas and parrotfish.

Curaçao (12.07667, -68.87960)

dive-links.com/tauchplatz.php

J Airplane Wreck (Sunset Waters)

The remains of a small aircraft resting on a sandy bottom at a depth of approximately 10 meters.

Curaçao (12.26694, -69.12766)

dive-links.com/tauchplatz.php

K Boka Sami

A fishing village bay with a reef featuring large sponges and schools of small fish.

Curaçao (12.13950, -68.99727)

dive-links.com/tauchplatz.php

L Snake Bay

A reef named for the numerous eels found here, featuring a mix of hard and soft corals.

Curaçao (12.13850, -68.99653)

dive-links.com/tauchplatz.php

M Playa Manzalina

A quiet beach offering shore access to a reef with diverse coral structures.

Curaçao (12.24542, -69.10560)

dive-links.com/tauchplatz.php

N Papagayo Beach

A beach area with a dive center and immediate access to a house reef.

Curaçao (12.07410, -68.87827)

O Grote Knip

A large beach with a reef accessible by swimming out from the surrounding cliffs.

(12.35143, -69.15321)

P Playa Jeremi

A secluded cove where the reef starts close to shore and features brain corals and sea fans.

(12.32842, -69.15055)

Q Kleine Knip

A beach with a reef located along the rocky cliffs on either side of the bay.

(12.34156, -69.15387)

R Mushroom Forest

Named for large mountainous star corals that have eroded at the base to resemble mushrooms.

(12.30181, -69.15434)

DATA SOURCES

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