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## **FAMILY FUN**

Sand castle building, shell hunting tours, art classes, Papiamentu language classes and merengue dancing are just some of the many activities offered at Aruba's resorts and hotels – most of which boast special kids' programs, deals and all-day camps. Resort fun is just the beginning, as families seeking something more than a traditional Caribbean experience will discover countless kid-friendly attractions and activities throughout the One happy island.

### **Attractions & Activities**

#### **Archeological Museum of Aruba**

Originally the old family home of well-known World War II hero Boy Ecury, the Archeological Museum of Aruba opened its doors in 1981 and has been dedicated to educating guests on the island's rich culture and history ever since. Extensively renovated in 2009, the museum's interactive activities and attractions bring Aruba's culture to life in a way that resonates with children and adults alike. The modern two-story building houses the areas devoted to Amerindian culture and archaeological finds from various digs around Aruba. The three periods of Amerindian habitation are documented: Pre-Ceramic period of 2500 BC – 1000 AD when semi-nomadic bands of Amerindians migrated from the South or Central American mainland; Ceramic Period of the Caquetio Indians, the hunters-fishers-gatherers who inhabited Aruba from 900 – 1515 AD until enslaved and taken to Hispaniola; and the Historic Period from 1515 – 1880 AD.

#### **Arikok National Park**

Sprawling across nearly 20 percent of the island's landmass, government-protected Arikok National Park is an exciting playground for families seeking something more than a traditional day on the beach. All ages alike rejoice as they venture the 20 miles of rugged and wild, desert-like terrain via ATV, Jeep Safari, horseback or foot. Tucked along the rugged northern shore, Arikok National Park is home to many hidden beaches, cacti, natural bridges and pools, historical cave paintings and indigenous flora and fauna including the Aruba rattlesnakes, burrowing owls and blue whiptail lizards. The park's visitor center provides an enriching overview of the land's culture, history and conservation efforts, and experts Julio Beaujon or Jimmy Mijer are eager to share Arikok's secrets and stories. Admission is free for children, as the park is invested in future generations, who will be the ones to take carry on conservation efforts.

### **Aruba Ostrich Farm**

Although Africa is the native land of the ostrich, the intriguing birds find Aruba's rugged landscape the perfect place to call home. Given every half hour, guided tours provide memorable experiences, educating guest on mating, rearing and feeding habits of the largest living species in the world.

### **Baby Beach**

Ranked No. 2 in the "Top 25 Most Beautiful Beaches in the World" by Trip Advisor, Baby Beach boasts crystal clear waters, pristine sand and one of the best snorkel spots on the island. Baby Beach offers extensive reefs, a colorful kaleidoscope of coral and tropical fish including parrotfish, blowfish, angelfish and squid, as well as an expansive swimming cove. Located on the opposite side of the high-rise hotel zone of Palm Beach, Baby Beach is tucked within nature, away from tourist foot traffic, and is perfect for family picnics at the covered cabana areas or for an open-air dining experience at Big Mama's and the outdoor snack bar.

### **Beach Tennis**

Known as the birthplace of beach tennis, Aruba beckons world-renown pros and amateurs alike to explore this competitive yet recreational sport. Simple to play, beach tennis is equally popular with families, who can reserve a court and paddle at MooMba Beach Bar & Grill for five dollars, or take it a step further by signing up for lessons with a local pro from Beach Tennis Aruba.

### **Bubali Bird Sanctuary**

More than 80 species of migratory birds find an oasis of lush vegetation within the Bubali Bird Sanctuary. The observation deck is the perfect spot for parents and their children to see herons, egrets, gulls, skimmers, coots, cormorants, numerous species of ducks and more up close. The dirt road entrance is located across from the big red windmill by the high-rise entrance.

### **Butterfly Farm**

Located at Palm Beach across from the Divi Aruba Phoenix Beach Resort, the Butterfly Farm is a wondrous tropical garden filled with butterflies from around the globe. Children delight as they discover the miracle of metamorphosis firsthand – especially in the morning hours when the most activity occurs – witnessing new butterflies emerging from their chrysalis and taking flight for the first time. Passionate butterfly experts provide 15 to 20 minute guided tours all day every day, revealing secrets of this fascinating species.

### **Catamaran Sailing and Snorkeling**

An array of sailing charters offer family-friendly catamaran sail and snorkel excursions, including lively music, open bars and snacks or light lunches. Families gear up with snorkel equipment and plunge headfirst into the turquoise waters, where they enjoy an array of colorful marine life. Among the most popular snorkel spots is the Shipwreck of the Antilla, which, at 400 feet, is the largest shipwreck dive in the Caribbean.

### **De Palm Island**

Families who want to take a break from the crowded beaches of Palm Beach, but still want to soak up the sun often opt for a day-trip to Aruba's only all-inclusive destination, De Palm Island. Providing exclusive island access and a perfect dose of action, visitors can plunge headfirst into island activities including SNUBA, Sea Trek Underwater Helmet Walk, snorkeling, banana boat rides and water parks. Adults kick back in a lounge chair at the island's private beach or relax with a massage overlooking the Caribbean Sea, while kids splash around in the water park or indulge in De Palm Island's unlimited food and beverage offerings.

### **Donkey Sanctuary**

Located just before the Ayo Rock formation the donkey sanctuary feeds and provides medical care to approximately 90 endangered animals. Families can stop by to help with the daily chores of feeding and caring for the donkeys – a great educational experience for children.

### **Windsurfing & Kite Surfing**

Thanks to highly favorable wind and water conditions and year-round pleasant weather, Aruba is the windsurfing capital of the world. Year-round, avid windsurfers slice the water and kite surfers play with the trade winds on this piece of paradise, most often on Hadicurari Beach (also known as Fisherman's Huts). Watersport operators and instructors in Aruba are plentiful, providing equipment rentals and lessons to everyone from youthful and older beginners to advanced sailors.

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