

who fled to Curaçao to escape the Spanish and Portuguese Inquisition).

English - Papiamentu

Good morning - Bon dia

Good afternoon - Bon tardi

How are you? - Kon ta bai?

I am fine. - Mi ta bon

Please - Por favor

Thank you - Danki

Bye - Ajo

NOTES

Horizontal lines for writing notes.



PORT EXPLORER & SHOPPING GUIDE

Willemstad CURAÇAO

GENERAL INFORMATION Willemstad, Curaçao is believed to have been named in honor of Dutch "Stadhouder" (meaning peace-keeper, head of state) Willem II, or Willem III, depending upon the historian. The city is the capital of the autonomous Netherlands Antilles; a group of five islands that include Bonaire, Saint Maarten, Saba and Saint Eustatius. Together they make up part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. The constitutional status of Curaçao, as it affects their political ties with the government of the Netherlands, has been and promises to continue to be under review.

Willemstad grew as a Dutch trading port beginning in the mid 1600s and prospered through the mid 1800s when Holland's abolition of the slave trade decimated the local economy. With the discovery of oil in neighboring Venezuela in the early decades of the 20th century, Willemstad and Curaçao have slowly developed into a vital center for the refining of petroleum.

Despite earlier political and social challenges; government, business and civic leaders worked together in efforts to build and maintain a thriving community for all the citizens of Curaçao. Willemstad is known for its colorful and picturesque colonial Dutch architecture, much of which dates back to the 18th and 19th centuries. In late 1997 this historic city of celebrated beauty earned the honor of selection as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

HISTORY As was the case with many of the islands throughout the Caribbean, when the Europeans arrived off the coast of Curaçao in 1499 it was inhabited by a branch of Amerindian Arawaks. The Indians were known as the Caiquetios, from which Curaçao derives its name. There is a bit of historical controversy as to whether the first European to reach this island was Spanish conquistador Alonso de Ojeda or the Italian navigator, also sailing under the banner of the Spanish Crown, Amerigo Vespucci. It mattered little to the peaceful Caiquetios. They were soon enslaved to work the new plantations. When farming proved unprofitable, the Arawaks of Curaçao were sold and shipped out to work the mines and plantations on the other islands of the European dominated Caribbean. On Curaçao and throughout the Caribbean, the Arawaks were soon decimated.

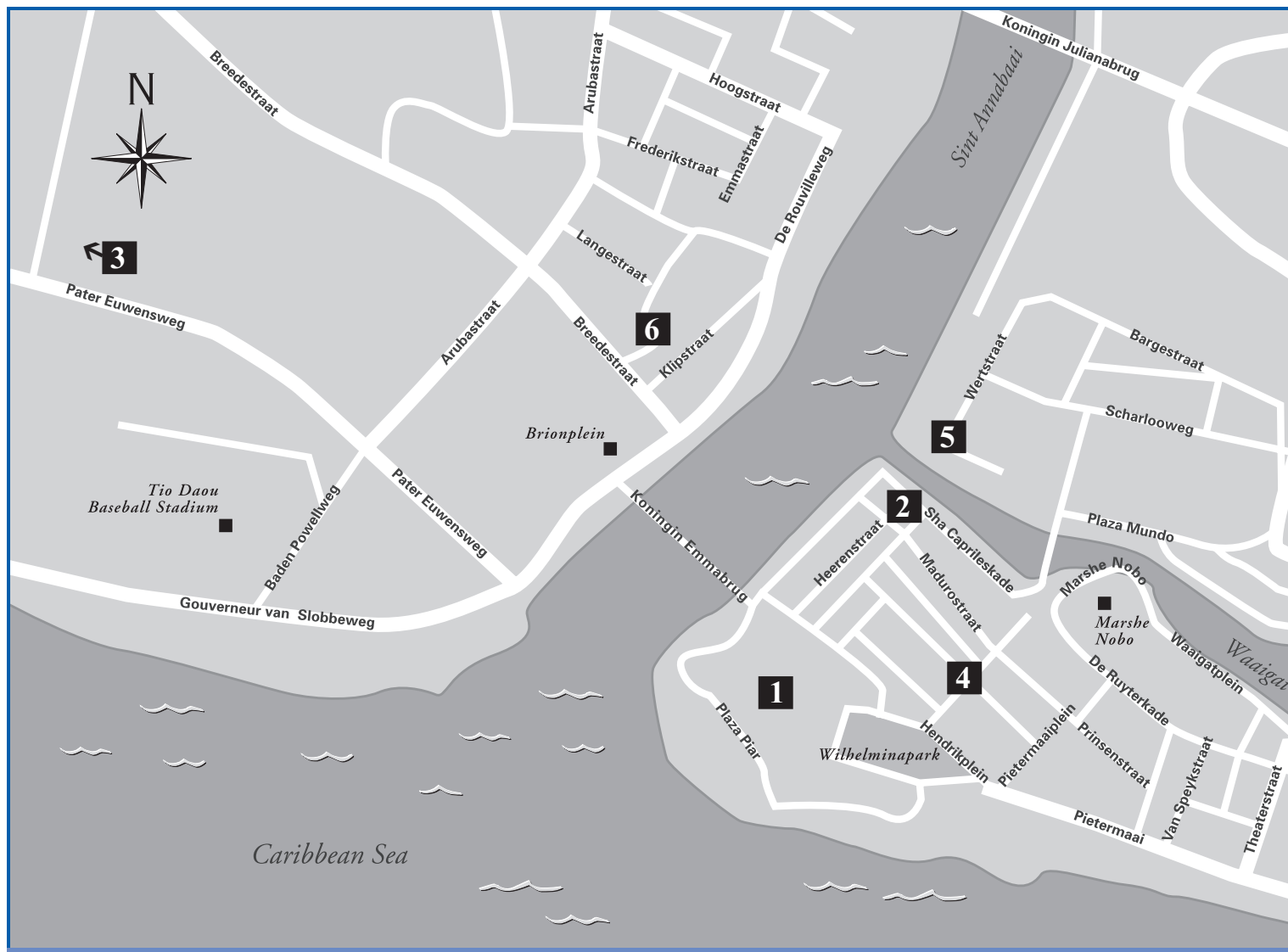
It did not take the Spanish long to determine there was nothing on Curaçao that interested them. They eventually packed up and sailed away. This allowed the Dutch West India Company to stake their claim to the island in the 1630s. As the earlier Spanish, the Dutch tried their hand at building plantations but the same poor soil and lack of adequate fresh water made growing conditions less than ideal. However, the Dutch West India Company saw potential in Curaçao where the Spanish had not. Willemstad was founded in 1634, and with its large natural harbor it quickly grew into a superb site through which to conduct international trade and commerce.

The first commodity that proved of great value to the Dutch was salt from the nearby island of Bonaire. Through Willemstad, the prized



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## PLACES OF INTEREST

mineral was shipped back to Europe to be used in food preservation. It was not salt that made the Dutch rich, however. It was the resulting effect of their relationship with the Spanish Crown and the word “asiento”. The term represented a contract between the Spanish monarchy and the West India Company. The contract allowed the Dutch to control much of the Caribbean slave trade out of West Africa. It is estimated that between 1670 and 1815, over a half million Africans passed through the Dutch slave market of Curaçao. In 1863 the Dutch abolished their slave trade and the economy of Curaçao collapsed. It would not recover until oil was discovered on the coast of Venezuela in the 1920s.

Curaçao eventually became, and remains to this day, an important international center for oil refinery.

### WILLEMSTAD PLACES OF INTEREST

**1 Fort Amsterdam** guards the harbor entrance and is the largest and best preserved of the eight fortifications built by the Dutch after they took the island from Spain in 1634. There were times, however, when the West India Company found it to their advantage to pay ransom to pirates rather than depend upon the fort to protect the town. Today the bastion is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and the office of Curaçao’s governor and the government of the Netherlands Antilles.

**2 The Floating Market** lining the harbor front is a colorful site where local vendors and fishermen together with many sailing in from neighboring Venezuela, tie their boats and open their quayside stalls for business. The selection of fruits, vegetables and seafood is fresh and delicious.

For a small city Willemstad has many museums. We have listed just a few.

**3 The Curaçao Museum** is the island’s largest. The museum displays beautiful pieces of art, antiques, artifacts and

maps, many of which date back to the 1700s. The grounds of the museum are a relaxing, quiet setting. It is located on Van Leeuwenhoekstraat (“straat” translates as street)

**4 The Jewish Cultural Historical Museum** is an integral part of the Mikvé Israel-Emanuel Synagogue, built in the 1730s. The Sephardic Jewish community came to Dutch Curaçao from Amsterdam and Brazil in the mid 1600s to escape the Roman Catholic’s Spanish/Portuguese Inquisition. The Jewish merchants of Curaçao played a vital role in the island’s economic growth. It is located at Hanchi di Snoa 29, Punda (The Point)

**5 The Maritime Museum** gives visitors a glimpse into Curaçao’s historic relationship with the sea. A few of the interesting displays include maps dating back to the 1500s, ship models, historic artifacts and documentary videos. A museum ferry takes visitors on a harbor tour. It is located on Van Brandenburgstraat

**6 The Kura Hulanda Museum** is located on the site of a former slave market. It tells the history of the African slave trade from the 1600s through the 1800s. Beginning in the kingdoms of western Africa, the museum follows the path of the slaves’ Atlantic crossing, often referred to as the “Middle Passage”, and continues on to their sale in Curaçao and distribution throughout the islands of the Caribbean and the Americas.

### Beyond Willemstad

The **Hato Caves**, located just north of Willemstad, have an eerily interesting collection of dripping stalactites and stalagmites. Petroglyphs (pre-historic rock carvings) date back 1,000 years before the arrival of the first Europeans. It was in these limestone caves that runaway slaves often sought shelter.

**SHORE EXCURSIONS** To make the most of your visit to Willemstad and the surrounding area we suggest you take one of our organized Shore Excursions. For information concerning tour content and pricing, consult your Shore Excursion Brochure or contact the Shore Excursion Desk. When going ashore, be advised to take with you only necessary items and secure any valuables onboard.

**LOCAL CUSTOMS** Bargaining: Prices are generally fixed. Local vendors may bargain.

Tipping: Restaurants add 10-15% service charge. The same percentage is appropriate for taxis.

Local Cuisine and Drink Specialties

The popular dishes of Curaçao are as varied and numerous as the more than 50 nationalities that are represented on the island. Dutch, Spanish, Indian, Chinese and Indonesian tastes have all been incorporated into the local cuisine known as “krioyo”. A few of the favorites include: Kabritu, a thick goat stew; Erwtén, a rich pea and pork soup; Sult, pig feet and ears pickled in a

pepper and onion brine; Pastechi, fried pastry filled with cooked meats and cheese; Yuana, a tasty iguana stew; Ayaka, spicy meat tamales wrapped in banana leaves and steamed.

Curaçao Liqueur is a popular aperitif that has been produced on the island since the late 1800s. The early Spanish settlers brought their famously delicious Valencia oranges to Curaçao in the early 1500s. The oranges did not grow well in the poor soil. Over the following centuries the trees were ignored, forgotten and left to grow wild. The bitter fruit of the tree is locally referred to as “laraha” and its peel has an aromatic scent that is used to produce Curaçao Liqueur.

**SHOPPING FACILITIES** The primary shopping district in Willemstad is known as Punda (from the Dutch word “punt” meaning point or tip). This is a historic part of the Old City and is now a pedestrian-only area. The colonial Dutch architecture is as colorful as it is beautiful. Punda has a wide selection of regional, national and international shops, boutiques, cafés and restaurants.

**LOCAL CURRENCY** The official currency in Curaçao and throughout the Netherlands Antilles is the Netherlands Antilles guilder (Symbol: NAfl, also known as the florin). Major credit cards are widely accepted. Many vendors will accept U.S. dollars in small denominations.

**POST OFFICE AND TELEPHONE FACILITIES** The closest Post Office is located in Punda (the Point), next to the Central Market at De Ruyterkade.

Dial the following access numbers to use a personal calling card:

AT&T: 001.800.872.2881

MCI: 001.800.888.8000

**TOURIST INFORMATION** A Visitors Information Center (CTB - Curacao Tourist Board) is also in Punda. It is located at the Pietermaaiweg.

**TRANSPORTATION** Willemstad is pedestrian friendly city. It is an easy and comfortable walk from the pier, across the famous Queen Emma Bridge and into Old Town. Car rentals and taxis are widely available. Agree with the driver on the taxi fare before the trip.

**LANGUAGE** Many of the people of Curaçao are multi-lingual. Dutch, Spanish and English are widely spoken. In March, 2007 “Papiamentu” was established as the official language of Curaçao.

Linguists and historians continue to debate over the origin of Papiamentu but it seems to have developed in the 1600s as a creole/pidgin language that combines Portuguese, Dutch, Spanish, West African, Arawak (indigenous Caribbean Indian) and Ladino (a Judaeo-Spanish language spoken by Sephardic Jews