



DUSHI BITES
CULINARY
MAGAZINE

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Aruba's melting pot

Our population of some 110,000 inhabitants is made up of a broad international mixture of people with over 90 different nationalities. This cultural diversity is reflected in Aruba's culinary melting pot. You will be able to find almost every ethnic cuisine imaginable, from Surinamese dishes to Chinese specialties and from Dutch snacks to Peruvian fare.

What we call typical Aruban food today has been mixed over the years with strong influences from a variety of regions – European, Caribbean and Latin American. Favorite local dishes include *pastechi* and *arepa* (deep fried snacks with filling), *keshi yena* (stuffed cheese), *pan bati* (flatbread/cornflour pancake) and *stoba* (stew).

Our small island is home to 300 restaurants, grills, snacks and eateries, providing you with a world of options and endless culinary exploration. Aruba offers fine dining, both indoors and al fresco, barefoot dining on the beach with your toes in the sand, as well as modest eateries and 'snacks' offering take-out and finger food.

Most restaurants in Aruba feature fresh fish and seafood dishes, no matter the type of cuisine. Ask for a 'catch of the day' if available, it will be the freshest fish and caught in Aruba's waters by local fishermen.

During the month of October Aruba celebrates its local cuisine with the annual 'Eat Local' event. Participating restaurants offer special menus at discounted pricing, featuring local dishes to promote Aruba's typical food specialties. Have a try as it is mouth watering good.

Wishing you a bon appetite and a most flavorful stay in Aruba!



“ The island's unique cultural diversity is reflected in Aruba's culinary melting pot. ”



Culinary events

Aruba's craft beer festival

In Aruba you can find craft beers and specialty beers in all sorts and sizes at various bars, restaurants, and even supermarkets (Superfood has an entire isle dedicated to craft beer, imported beers from Belgium, and other specialty beers).

Local brewery Balashi introduced two new specialty beers with funky Papiamentu names: 'Hopi Bon' and 'Hopi Stout,' in addition to their regular offerings like Balashi and Chill. Balashi is the only brewery in Aruba.

Six different beer varieties from the local Shoco Beer Co., who brews their craft beers in collaboration with a brewery in Kentucky certified by the Craft Brewers Association, are inspired by the island lifestyle and available exclusively in Aruba. This new beer brand makes annual donations to



causes that support nature and sustainability, such as Arikok National Park, and culture and art foundations.

For a taste of over 100 different kinds of craft beers and specialty beers in Aruba, visit Aruba's annual Craft Beer Festival. The next edition takes place Saturday, May 19, 2018. More information can be found on: facebook.com/craftbeerloversaruba and facebook.com/EatLocalAruba

Bartender's brawl

This exciting annual event features professional local bartenders competing in creating the best looking and best tasting craft cocktails. On a spectacular ocean front location the audience gets to vote for the winning cocktail. The bartender competition's tasting event also includes food samplings. A full cash bar is available as well.

Date: Saturday October 14, 2017

Time: 8pm - 11pm

Location: Renaissance Ocean Suites, on the beach

Ticket: \$50 includes admission, music, cocktails & hors d'oeuvres



Food truck festival

Are you ready for Aruba's Food Truck Festival? Take a bite at every "cuminda di truck", rolling kitchens from all over the island, brought to one central location for you to try and discover. You will be surprised what the streets of Aruba have to offer you! Delicious food, craft beers, desserts, live music and local art are all combined at this fun food festival. More information on <http://www.aruba.com/things-to-do/aruba-food-truck-festival>

Made in Aruba

Taste-Like-Buy Festival

Aruba's Best promotes authentic, local products that are made on the island, some 400 in total. This local organization is host to the "Taste-Like-Buy Festival", held every month between the Hyatt Regency and Barcelo Resort in Palm Beach. Here you can meet local farmers and taste their products varying from mango wine and hot sauce, to honey, syrups and Aruban jams and jellies.

All products are for sale, and the proud local creators are present to provide more information. The monthly festival usually takes place on a Monday or Tuesday evening from 6-10 pm and features live music, freshly prepared snacks and finger food and some 30 stands offering local products, as well as arts & crafts that are made in Aruba. Entrance to the Taste-Like-Buy Festival is free. Some of the local products can also be found at the weekly Caribbean Festival in San Nicolas, held every Thursday night with live music on the Main Street.



Visiting Aruba's vineyard Videira Melatti

Tucked between Aruba's nature reserve Spanish Lagoon and the Frenchman's Pass in an area called Burunbundu, Brazilian-born Luiz Melatti runs a 4 acres-vineyard. After he retired as a lawyer in his home country, he found Aruba an ideal, safe island to enjoy his pension. Yet sitting still was not for him, so in 2013 he sent some Aruban soil samples to his parents, longtime wine farmers in Brazil. They studied the soil and found it rich and suitable for wine grapes, so his parents sent Luiz roots of their Sauvignon Cabernet grapes. Meanwhile, Luiz found two local business partners and in 2014 Videira Melatti (Melatti's vineyard in Portuguese) was born. Drought, multiple pests and destruction by various insects and pigeons didn't make it an easy start for Luiz, yet he manages to harvest grapes three times a year, producing some 1,000 bottles of wine. His Sauvignon Cabernet is enriched with flavors of the pinot noir and Alicante grapes, both also grown on his Aruban vineyard. His wine label, Adore, is for sale as a souvenir and can be obtained at the Taste-Like-Buy Festival, or tasted at Screaming Eagle and Taste of Belgium. Future plans include opening the vineyard to visitors for tours and tastings. More information: videiramelatti.com.

Jimmy's Dragon Fruit Farm

Have you ever heard of dragon fruit? Ever tried it? This powerful cactus fruit, bursting with vitamins and antioxidants that speeds healing and boosts immunity is a favorite in Asia, especially Malaysia and China, where it is used in herbal medicine practice as well. James (Jimmy) Ramos, a local farmer in Aruba first heard of dragon fruit in a documentary on tv, some 20 years ago. He learned that dragon fruit can stand heat and drought, just what he was looking for to diversify his crop in Aruba. Then, 8 years ago, he found the typical cactus plant with its dragon fruits in the back yard of a neighbor of Chinese descent. He asked the man if

he could buy some of the cutting of the plant to make it give root in his own 'cunucu', farmland. Ever since, Jimmy has been growing his dragon fruits, up to five different types with a variety of colors (a yellow, white or red inside) and flavors. His spacious cunucu is now mainly focused on the dragon fruit, producing hundreds of kilos in the season from June to December. You can buy dragon fruit of 'Cununu di Jimmy' at Mi Boca Dushi, his eatery in Ponton, at \$10 per kilo. Gelattissimo Bistro uses his dragon fruit also in their homemade gelato. [Mi Boca Dushi Snack, Ponton 66, Oranjestad. Open from 6:15 am – 2 pm. Sunday 7:30 am – 2 pm.](#)



Vegetarian Delight

Typical local food in Aruba generally features an abundance of meat and fish, rice or fries and a side order like pan bati, funchi or Johnny cake and very little 'greens'. Still, the majority of restaurants in Aruba do feature at least one or two vegetarian dishes on their menu. Those looking for a healthy and hearty variety of vegetarian meals can turn to most hotel restaurants, Chinese, Surinamese and Indian restaurants for instance, or try some of these specialty restaurants that made vegetarian and vegan food into a culinary art, and even know how to turn the biggest meat lover to salads and veggies.



Yemanja

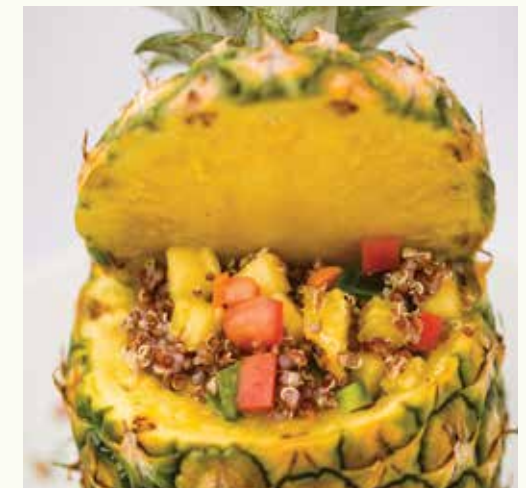
This elegant restaurant in the heart of downtown Oranjestad is famous for its woodfire grill and succulent steaks, where aromatic smells from the open kitchen will lure you in. Yet a more responsible way of using nature's sources and the treatment of animals is equally important to chef Joyce de Cuba-Husken as catering to the need meat and fish lovers. Therefore her menu is also known for an extensive choice of funky vegetarian and even vegan dishes. At Yemanja, Joyce tries to create such appealing vegetarian meals that even meat lovers will turn to a veggie-meal. Have a vegan superfood salad, or try the open faced Mediterranean Veggie Burger and a raw vegan snickers bar for dessert. Yum!

[Wilhelminastraat 2, Oranjestad. Open from 5:30 pm - 10:30 pm. Sunday closed.](#)

Elements

The adults-only, fine dining restaurant Elements offers sweeping ocean views over the Eagle Beach area and an appealing dinner menu with vegetarian and vegan dishes in addition to their international menu. By introducing perfectly sized healthy European portions, guests can be pleasantly satiated with nutritious protein servings complemented with wholesome carbohydrates and fresh vegetables. The menus feature certified organic ingredients and natural products, various vegetarian pastas, soups and salads as well as vegan quinoa stuffed in a pineapple, flamed with Caribbean rum. Who said vegan was boring?

[Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort, L.G. Smith Boulevard 55B, Eagle Beach. Open for dinner from 6 pm - 10:30 pm, daily.](#)





A Fisherman's Tale

It is a calm, breezy morning and the sun is still climbing its way up. At the far end of the Hadicurari Pier two local fishermen dressed in bright orange long sleeves are busy preparing a 2-level Hatteras 38 motor yacht for a fishing trip on open water.

Arthur (Tuy) Giel and his captain-for-the-day Chin Kelly, both seasoned local fishermen with some 40 years on the water, work their daily routine. Tuy had 3 days off between April and August, other than that you will find him on his boat.

From the age of 6 Tuy went fishing with his grandfather, a traditional fisherman by the name of Jan Jacobs. He went out every morning in the wee hours to catch his bait, before collecting his nets and head out in his canoba, a typical Aruban wooden barque. When his grandfather died, Tuy inherited his old boat and an eye-catching ring with a giant red ruby he still proudly wears today.

Tuy worked on the canoba for years fishing with nets, a heavy job, throwing and pulling the nets, snorkeling, swimming and diving. Physically it became a burden so he switched to a motor yacht some 15 years ago. Times changed too. Gone were the days when the entire family as well as friends and neighbors had to eat from his daily catch to survive.

Tuy nowadays shares his way of life and passionate fishing stories with those who want to join for a day of bottom fishing or deep sea fishing. He goes out every day to catch wahoo, dorado, kingfish, barracuda, and tuna. Tuy hunts for fresh lobster and octopus too, equipped with only a snorkel set, a small-hooked pole and a net. In the season he catches up to 200 lbs of fresh octopus in one morning.

Preparing the bait, setting up his five fishing lines, reeling them in at the right time, scouting the underwater world, cleaning the fish, and later-on dispatching it; the whole process is done with pleasure and true passion. If you're lucky you'll catch a beauty yourself; only once it happened to Tuy that all five of his lines caught fish at the exact same time, a magical moment that got him exposure in a fishing magazine.

His guests often become his friends and return year over year, or even invite Tuy to visit them abroad. You'll find Tuy's motor yacht called Go Get 'em, at the end of the Hadicurari Pier, the local fisherman's center, across the Marriott Surf Club and Moomba Beach. His fresh catch is often shared with his guests on the boat, with friends and family or he takes it straight to the Hadicurari restaurant or Nos Clubhuis, where it is prepared and served with a smile.



Tuy Giel



Chin Kelly

- 5 am get up and have breakfast
- 6 am prepare bait to bring to the boat
- 7 am arrive at hadicurari fishing pier
- 8 am boat Go Get 'em prepared, ready for departure
- 9 am bait is attached to five different fishing lines
- 10 am guests on board can catch their own fish
- 11 am caught barracuda and two octopus
- 12 noon cleaning the fish on the pier
- 12:30 pm enjoying our fresh catch at Nos Clubhuis
- 2 pm Chin and Tuy both leave for a 2nd trip on his canoba-style boat
- 6 pm return on the dock, end of the work day



Comfort Food in San Nicolas

Typical local food in Aruba generally features an abundance of meat and fish, rice or fries and a side order like pan bati, funchi or Johnny cake and very little 'greens'. Still, the majority of restaurants in Aruba do feature at least one or two vegetarian dishes on their menu. Those looking for a healthy and hearty variety of vegetarian meals can turn to most hotel restaurants, Chinese, Surinamese and Indian restaurants for instance, or try some of these specialty restaurants that made vegetarian and vegan food into a culinary art, and even know how to turn the biggest meat lover to salads and veggies.

Where to find local fresh fish in Aruba?

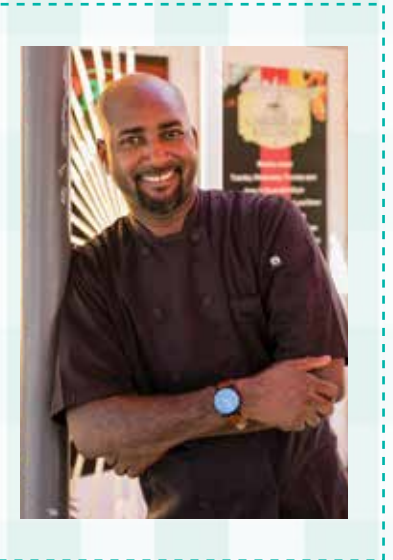
Although most restaurants offer a 'catch of the day' and have many fish and seafood items on their menu, not all fish comes from Aruban waters. If you want to make sure you are eating Aruban fish, ask for fresh wahoo, mahi-mahi (dorado), red snapper or barracuda – other types of fish are most likely imported. Local fishermen can be found offering (half)day trips on their fishing boats, as well as fresh fish at the Hadicurari Pier, at the dock of the harbor in downtown Oranjestad in front of the Renaissance Marketplace, and you can see fresh fish being brought in and prepared at Zeerovers, the local popular eatery in Savaneta.

You can bring your own catch to a restaurant of your choice and ask them to grill or fry it for you; most venues charge a small preparation fee (at Nos Clubhuis for instance they charge \$5 per person as an 'own catch fee'). Some hotels and other accommodations feature BBQ grills to prepare your own catch.

Suggested Restaurants

- Driftwood ✦
- Old Fisherman ✦
- Sea Salt Grill ✦
- Wacky Wahoo
- Nautical Club
- Nos Clubhuis ✦
- Zeerovers
- Red Fish ✦
- Marina Pirata
- The Buccanneer ✦
- Hadicurari ✦

Restaurants marked with a red star are participating in the Eat Local Restaurant Month



O'Neil Caribbean Kitchen

Local cuisine and Caribbean specialties

When entering the Main Street in downtown San Nicolas there is no way you could miss O'Neil Caribbean Kitchen, a cozy restaurant serving lunch and dinner. Owner O'Neil Williams was recruited in Jamaica 17 years ago to come work for a Jamaican specialty restaurant in Aruba, Jamaica Me Crazy. He then became chef at Promenade Restaurant, a now-defunct venue in San Nicolas. Two and half years ago, O'Neil decided to start his own restaurant at the Promenade San Nicolas location in the middle of the Main Street, called O'Neil Caribbean Kitchen due to a spelling mistake at the Chamber of Commerce. Favorites include curry chicken and curried goat, lamb chops, oxtail, stews, lobster and shrimp. His cuisine is a mix of Caribbean and Aruban influences with a Jamaican touch.

Located at Bernard van de Veen Zeppenfeldstraat 15, San Nicolas.
Open from 11 am – 8 pm;
On weekends till 10 pm,
Sunday till 5 pm.
Monday closed.



Grote Berg Snack

the journey of a special cake, Johnny Cake

Maribel Akins-Simons, an entrepreneurial mother of five, came to Aruba as a 19-year old from Grenada, as her own mother worked in San Nicolas at the time. Some 25 years ago she and her husband built their own house on a hill called Grote Berg (big mountain). Here, on their porch, they opened Grote Berg Snack, a take-out eatery that specializes in Johnny Cake and is said to be the very best. In Grenada known as 'roast bake' as they were made in traditional outdoor ovens, and in other English Caribbean islands called 'Journey Cake' as the cake made a long journey with the workers who walked to work, or would ride a donkey to get to work. In Aruba Maribel's delicious Johnny Cakes are served with melted cheese, ham and cheese, salt fish, and chicken. The dough, made of flour, sugar, salt, butter and baking powder is rolled, then fried, then stuffed and served. Finger-licking good. The Johnny cakes are \$2.50 to \$4 each.

Located on Grote Bergweg
17 in San Nicolas.
Open daily from 7 am – 3 pm.
Sunday closed.
Take-out only.



Grill Twenty One

Take-out specialties from the grill and BBQ

During the week Junior Mohamed oversees all incoming and departing flights at the Aruba Airport as a Air Traffic Control Supervisor; each weekend he transforms into a spirited grill master and BBQ chef.

Some three years ago he decided to turn his life-long passion for grilling into a business, on the driveway to his parents' garage. Located on one of the main roads leading through San Nicolas towards Baby Beach, his parents' house soon became an ideal and easy accessible spot for his Grill Twenty One.

Inspired by culinary tricks he learned from his father with Surinamese roots and from his father in law, Junior opened up shop with himself, his mom and wife running the show. Today, an average staff of 8 employees, most directly related to the family, run the full grill operation, producing hundreds of grilled take-out meals each weekend. His secret to success? Home-made dipping sauces, marinades and hot sauce, combined with excellent grilling and BBQ techniques.

Located at Pastoor Hendrikstraat 21,
San Nicolas. Open Friday and Saturday from 7 pm – 2 am;
Sunday from 11:30 am – 3 pm.

Boxed platters featuring ribs, chicken, wings, pork chop, coleslaw, johnny cake and fries, starting at USD \$10



Good Idea Snack & Saco de Felipe

Dinner in a brown paper bag (saco)

Maureen Richardson moved from Grenada in the English Caribbean to Aruba as a 25-year old mother of two young daughters. Her own mother had moved to Aruba in the '60-ies, blooming years of the Lago oil refinery when work in San Nicolas was up for grabs. After almost 3 decades of hard work in all kinds of kitchens, Maureen decided to start her own small 'snack', a take out service from her home in San Nicolas, literally a few doors down from her former employer, famous food stand 'Saco de Felipe'. Saco, meaning bag in Papiamentu, is take-out food, often fries, ribs, chicken and a Johnny cake, wrapped in a brown paper bag. Maureen sells both take-out boxes and the famous Saco for extremely modest prices. Mixed dinner boxes and sacco go for under \$10.

Located on Caya St. John 34, San Nicolas.
Open 7 days a week,
from 6:30 pm – midnights.
On weekends till 1 am.
Saco de Felipe, Caya St. Maarten, corner
Lagoweg, San Nicolas.





Explore Aruba's local dining scene

Let your taste buds go wild during Aruba's Eat Local Restaurant Month! Starting October 1st through October 31st 2017, the One Happy Island invites you to explore its extensive culinary heritage with locally inspired dishes.

Participating restaurants offer:

TWO-COURSE LUNCH

\$15

THREE-COURSE DINNER

\$30

THREE-COURSE DINNER

\$40



For an overview of all 70 participating restaurants, their menus and to book a table, please visit aruba.com/eatlocal.