

came by tanker ships from the rich oil fields of Venezuela straight to the largest refinery in the world, the massive complex in the coastal town of San Nicolas, on the Dutch island of Aruba.

On that night in February, 1942, Commander Hartenstein ordered his U-boat-156 to the surface. To his astonishment and that of his crew, there before them was the giant refinery, oblivious to “blackout” precautions, fully lit up against a dark sky. Many large tankers, filled to overflowing with gasoline bound for the British war machine, were tied to the pier and perfectly silhouetted by the bright lights of the refinery. This wasn’t shooting fish in a barrel...this was simply shooting the barrel. Commander Hartenstein gave the order to fire torpedoes. Within minutes several oil tankers were ablaze and sinking. Then it was the turn of Lieutenant von dem Borne and his deck-cannon crew. With the enormous oil tanks of the refinery now brilliantly lit by burning ships, directly in front of his cannon, million of gallons of precious fuel for the British war effort were about to go up in flame. Lieutenant von dem Borne gave the order ... “Fire!”

Over a year later and having by then sent many Allied ships and sailors to the bottom of the sea, Lieutenant von dem Borne’s submarine had come to the surface east of Barbados. Many of the crew were sunning and relaxing on deck when an American PBV Catalina suddenly ap-

peared from out of the clouds and successfully attacked U-156 before she could clear her decks and dive. When U.S. Navy ships arrived on the scene no one was found. All aboard U-156 were lost at sea...except for Lieutenant von dem Borne, by then a POW ashore in the French hospital on Martinique, still recuperating from the loss of his foot.

You see, Lieutenant von dem Borne and his deck gun crew had not destroyed the giant oil refinery on Aruba that night in early 1942. In fact countless millions of gallons of gas from Aruba fueled the Allies on land, sea and in the air throughout the entire war. If Aruba’s oil refinery had been destroyed that night the history of WWII...the history of the world may have been quite different. Lieutenant von dem Borne was wounded when he ordered his men to “Fire!” But it was his 105mm cannon which exploded ... not the giant oil storage tanks. The sub quickly cleared its decks and dove for cover. Soon hospitalized, later taken prisoner and eventually exchanged, the Lieutenant was the only member of U-156 to attack the Allies’ vital oil refinery in Aruba and survive the war...only because of the fact that he was hospitalized due to his haste and excitement to destroy the huge target. Lieutenant Dietrich von dem Borne neglected to order his gun crew to remove from the end of the cannon its protective, watertight “muzzle plug” before he gave the fateful command... “Fire!”



PLACES OF INTEREST

ORANJESTAD PLACES OF INTEREST

- 1** The **Access Art Gallery** holds a beautiful collection of modern works created by international, regional and local artists.
- 2** The **Schooner Market** is located along the city’s bustling waterfront. Colorful fishing boats and inter-island traders offer locals and visitors a wide variety of products and produce.
- 3** Fort **Zoutman** was built in the late 1700s. The fort’s lighthouse is known as King Willem III Tower. It was constructed in the mid 1800s and named in honor of Holland’s reigning monarch. The tower is now home to Aruba’s Historical Museum.
- 4** **Wilhelmina Park** graces the waterfront of Oranjestad. The park is named in honor of the much loved and highly respected Queen of The Netherlands who reigned from 1890 to 1948.

Beyond Oranjestad

- 5** **Arikok National Park** covers nearly 20% of Aruba. Visitors can tour the park on foot or on horseback. A protected sanctuary, the park is home to many natural wonders and historic sites which chronicle Aruba’s cultural identity.
- 6** The **California Lighthouse** is located on the northern tip of the island. Though not open to the public, the area and water surrounding the lighthouse are dramatically beautiful and well worth the visit.
- 7** **Palm Beach** and **Eagle Beach** are among the most popular and beautiful locations on an island which has many wonderful beaches.
- 8** The **Casibari Rock Formations** have been shaped and carved by nature’s tools of wind and time. Visitors can hike among the rocks and make their way to an elevated lookout point.
- 9** **Baby Bridge** is the 2nd largest natural bridge on Aruba. Wind, water and time have come together to carve this dramatic rock sculpture.
- 10** The **Quadiriki Caves** are carved into limestone cliffs and have petroglyphs created by ancient Amerindians known as the Arawak.

SHORE EXCURSIONS To make the most of your visit to Oranjestad 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, many with their colorful boats tied up along the waterfront, may bargain.

Tipping: Many restaurants add a 10-15% service charge. For taxis a 15% tip is appropriate.

LOCAL CUISINE AND DRINK SPECIALTIES As you might imagine, the seafood in Aruba is fresh and delicious. Snapper, grouper and mahi mahi are among the most popular fish. Here are some other favorite local dishes you might wish to try: Stoba di Cabrito combines potatoes, tomatoes, onions, green peppers and garlic with cubed goat meat then

simmered into a thick stew. Promenton Yenas are green Bell Peppers stuffed with macaroni, cheese and shrimp then baked. Funchi is a rich cornmeal polenta. Giambo is an okra and fresh fish gumbo.

Coecoei is local liquor distilled from the agave plant. It follows a recipe dating back centuries to the Amerindians. Coecoei seems to be nearly impossible to find anywhere other than Aruba. The liquor is used in many of the island’s most popular cocktails. Balashi Beer is locally brewed and has a fine reputation and loyal following.

SHOPPING FACILITIES The main shopping area is downtown, close to the pier, along the waterfront.

Many of the vendors along the dock offer a variety of locally made crafts and souvenirs. The upscale shops and boutiques in Oranjestad have an international flavor and offer clothes from top designers, fine jewelry, Dutch china, perfumes and hand-made lace. Seaport Village, Seaport Marketplace and the Royal Plaza Mall are within easy walking distance of the pier. They have a wide variety of interesting shops catering to visitors. Many of the shops in Oranjestad are “Duty Free” and merchants are always helpful in answering questions about policy and procedure.

LOCAL CURRENCY Aruba’s official currency is the Aruban florin (AWG). Major credit cards and traveler’s checks are widely accepted. Many vendors will accept U.S. dollars in small denominations.

POST OFFICE AND TELEPHONE The main Post Office in Oranjestad is located at #9 J.E. Irausquinplein. There is a branch office inside the Royal Plaza Mall on L.G. Smith Blvd., on the waterfront near the cruise ship terminal.

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

MCI: 800.888.8

TOURIST INFORMATION The Visitors Information Office in Oranjestad is located at 72 L.G. Smith Blvd.

TRANSPORTATION Taxis are widely available. They are licensed and regulated with reasonable rates. All taxis have (TX) on their license plates. Cars, scooters and bicycles are all available for rent. There is a dependable and inexpensive Public Bus system on the island. The main terminal in Oranjestad is downtown, near the waterfront. Privately owned Mini Buses travel throughout much of Aruba.

LANGUAGE The official language of Aruba is Dutch. English and Spanish are widely spoken. A local language known as Papiamentu is common. Linguists and historians continue to debate over its origin but it seems to have developed in the 1600s as a Creole/pidgin language which combines Dutch, Portuguese, Spanish, West African, Arawak (Amerindian) and Ladino (a Judaeo-Spanish language spoken by Sephardic Jews who fled to nearby Curaçao to escape the Spanish and Portuguese Inquisition).

English - Papiamentu - Dutch

Good morning - Bon dia - Goedemorgen

Good afternoon - Bon tardi - Goedenavond

How are you? - Kon ta bai? - Hoe gaat het?

I am fine. - Mi ta bon - Met mij gaat het goed

Please - Por favor - Alsjebliëft

Thank you - Danki - Dank u

Good Bye - Ajo - Tot ziens