Kralendijk (pronounced “Crawlendike”) downtown area viewed from our ship docked at the south pier.
Aruba, Bonaire, and Curacao are known as the “ABC” Dutch Caribbean, Netherlands Islands. Bonaire Island is 24 miles long, 3-7 miles wide and is located 50 miles north of Venezuela (map below).

Government of Bonaire
In 2010, Bonaire became part of the Netherlands as an “Autonomous Special Municipality” with the US dollar as the official currency. Inhabitants retain their culture and have the same rights as Dutch citizens including: Universal health care, improved education, improved training for teachers, social housing for low income individuals and families, clean water, improved safety and security, and the right to vote in parliamentary elections in the Netherlands.

CAVEAT
Information contained herein is believed to be accurate. PLEASE verify the information you use for your travel plans. Opinions expressed are my own. This port guide is protected by copyright law - see the last page of this guide for legal notices.

Tom Sheridan
Bonaire is an Outstanding Dive & Snorkeling Site = One of the Best in the World

Consider these facts: Bonaire is one of the world’s top diving destinations. The reef is easily accessible and the coral and abundant marine life are a magnificent sight.

- Located in the southern Caribbean, Bonaire is truly unique in the world. It’s as if this tiny island was made just for diving and snorkeling. From virtually any place on the leeward coastline, you can enter the beautiful Caribbean Sea and dive! With 86 dive sites, Bonaire has more unrestricted shore dive sites than any Caribbean island. Dive sites have steep walls, sloping drop-offs, exciting wrecks and a double reef system that will take your breath away.

Bonaire’s National Marine Diving Park is home to over 57 species of soft and stony coral, colorful sponges, and more than 350 species of fish. Dive sites accessed from the shore are marked with names on yellow stones. Please note that all users of the Marine Park must pay a Nature fee as admission.

(Source: Bonaire Tourist Office)

- Calm waters: the lee-side coastline has consistent 15 mph wind from easterly trade winds.
- Full infrastructure access to car/truck rental, dive instructors, guides, hotels, etc.
- Convenient access from the US, e.g. a round-trip flight from Miami is ~ 6 hours and $550.

Bonaire has IDEAL conditions for Coral Reef Health and Growth

Sunlight: Corals grow in shallow water where sunlight can reach them

Clear, clean water: Corals need clear water to allow sunlight through. Pollution and sediment is a major threat. Bonaire government is committed to pollution control to maintain a healthy reef system.

Saltwater: Corals need saltwater to survive and can’t live in areas where freshwater drains into the sea. Fortunately, there are no rivers on Bonaire island that can drain fresh water into the sea.

Warm water temperature: Reef-building corals require warm water conditions of 68–90° F. Bonaire has a year round air temperature range of 76 to 89° F.
The official tourist website for Bonaire is outstanding! See http://www.tourismbonaire.com/
The link for information on diving is http://www.tourismbonaire.com/bonaire-diving
Download a beautiful pdf map showing ALL of the dive sites, beaches, and tourist sites on Bonaire and Klein Bonaire (Little Bonaire) Island from http://www.tourismbonaire.com/includes/bonaire-dive-sites.pdf

GPS Coordinates
I provide GPS Coordinates for the main tourist sites and points of interest. You can use the coordinates with any Google or Microsoft Bing map format such as “road”, “satellite”, “birdseye”, “earth”, or “terrain” views to see details of the location at any map scale.

- Create your own travel maps to take with you for walking or driving tours. See my Google and Bing Map User guide on how to create maps http://www.tomsportguides.com/map-user-guide.html
- Program your hand held GPS, tablet, or phone with GPS coordinates from this guide so that you will always know where you are, where you are going, and the time to get there. For details and instructions, see my webpage http://www.tomsportguides.com/world-gps-maps.html

The format for GPS coordinates in this port guide is Degrees, Minutes, and Seconds shown as "ddd° mm' ss.ss" N ddd° mm' ss.ss" W
You can copy and paste GPS coordinates from this guide into Google or Bing maps.
You can also type the coordinates into Google maps without the symbols for degrees, minutes, and seconds. Replace the symbols with “spaces”: type letters, numbers and decimal points into the map.

For example: the North Pier in Kralendijk has GPS coordinates of 12°08′59.4″N 68°16′37.7″W
You can type 12 08 59.4 n 68 16 37.7 w into a Google map search box to find the location.

Where Cruise Ships Dock
Cruise ships dock in Kralendijk (pronounced 'Crawlendike'), the capital of Bonaire. There are two piers about 1100 feet apart in the center of the downtown area.
- North Pier also called “Town Pier” GPS 12°08′59.4″N 68°16′37.7″W
- South Pier GPS 12°08′48.6″N 68°16′38.3″W

A walking tour of Kralendijk: It’s a clean, picturesque, colorful town and an easy walk along the promenade (Kaya J.N.E. Craane) and the main street (Kaya Grandi), one block east of the shore. You’ll find shops, boutiques, restaurants, cafes, bars, dive shops, arts and crafts galleries, and more.
Map of Downtown Kralendijk

Water Taxi
Kantika di Amor

Best Cafes/Restaurants
A Gio's Gelateria & Caffe
B At Sea Restaurant
C Capriccio
D Cuba Compagnie
E It Rains Fishes
F Blue Garden Brazilian

Water Taxi
Good Return Bonaire

Shopping Mall

Harborside Mall

Municipal Stadium

San Bernardo Catholic Church

Stroll Kaya Grandi, the picturesque main street lined with colorful shops, cafes, and more!
Shopping
You’ll find name brand watches, designer jewelry, gemstones, colorful glass and sculptures, sunglasses, works of art in local, Cuban, and Mexican traditions, Cuban cigars, Caribbean music, T-shirts, clothing, wine and liquor from all over the world, etc.

Some of the Best Rated Restaurants and Cafes  See the websites for menus and prices

A  Gio's Gelateria & Caffe  GPS  12°09'07.0"N 68°16'37.3"W  http://www.gioscaribbean.com/
B  At Sea Restaurant  GPS  12°08'46.3"N 68°16'34.1"W  http://atseabonaire.com/
C  Capriccio  GPS  12°08'53.2"N 68°16'35.6"W  http://www.capricciobonaire.com/ristorante/
D  Cuba Compagnie  GPS  12°09'04.4"N 68°16'36.6"W  http://www.cubacompagniebonaire.nl/
E  It Rains Fishes  GPS  12°09'31.2"N 68°16'50.8"W  http://www.itrainsfishesbonaire.com/
F  Blue Garden Brazilian Grill & Pizza GPS  12°08'54.1"N 68°16'33.6"W  http://www.bluegardenpizza.com/

Water Taxi Docks

Water Taxi “Kantika di Amor” to Klein Bonaire  GPS  12°09'31.2"N 68°16'50.8"W
Hop on the “Kantika di Amor” the pier at the Kralendijk boulevard in front of “It Rains Fishes” restaurant. Everyone can hop-on without reservations.  $ 15 return trip http://www.watertaxikleinbonaire.com
NOTE: There’s a gorgeous “No Name” white sandy beach on Klein Bonaire for swimming and snorkeling. Take everything you need with you. There are no services on Klein Bonaire.
See http://www.tropicalsnorkeling.com/snorkeling-klein-bonaire.html

Water Taxi “Good Return Bonaire”  GPS  12°09'06.7"N 68°16'40.5"W
This is a large boat frequently chartered by Cruise Ships. It is used as a party boat, booze cruises, day cruises, sunset cruises, private parties, weddings, on board BBQ, etc.

Klein Bonaire (Little Bonaire) “No Name” Beach  GPS  12°10'06.7"N 68°18'20.3"W
Klein Bonaire is a small, flat, uninhabited island surrounded by dive sites. It’s popular for picnics, swimming, snorkeling, and hiking. The the beautiful, white sandy, “No Name” beach has outstanding coral reefs in shallow water with an abundance of colorful tropical fish.

Bus Tour of Bonaire
We took a 3 ½ hour tour of the island in a small, air conditioned bus. We pre-paid $ 39/person for the tour.

View from South Pier

Directions to the tour buses (see the view from South Pier above)
We disembarked our ship at the South Pier, turned left at the port security gate, and walked past the
Tours/Activities Booth. You’ll find tour buses along this area with people holding signs for different buses and selling tours. Our bus was parked at the intersection of Kaya J.N.E. Craane & Kaya Gilberto F. Croes.

**Our tour stopped at the following sites**

- 1000 steps dive and snorkeling site
- Landhouse Karpata
- Goto Meer (Lake) in Washington Slagbaai National Park
- Mangazina Di Rei Cultural Park
- Cabaje
- Salt Flats

As we entered the countryside, we noticed cactus used as fences around buildings and along the roads. (Photo right)

**1000 Steps Dive Site GPS 12°12′38.71″N 68°19′17.54″W**

It has 64 steep steps, but it seems like “1000” steps when you climb back up from the beach with your scuba tank and gear.

The steps are steep, be careful as you walk to the beach. (Photo Below)
Keep an eye out for birds, turtles, and manta rays.

We saw this bird in a tree (Photo at left). Apparently the bird had already eaten lunch so it was not interested in the lady snorkeling in the water.

**Landhouse Karpata GPS 12°13'10.48"N 68°21'5.95"W**

(photobelow)

It was an aloe plantation in mid-1800’s and important commercial center producing aloe, charcoal, and raising goats for food and skins. It also served as a small fort. There’s an oven where aloe was boiled down before export.

In 1980, the site was restored and opened by Queen Beatrix as an ecological center. The sea in front of it is a marine reserve.

**Historic Site of Landhouse Karpata (Photo Below)**

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**Flamingos**

There are six species of Flamingos in the world. The American Flamingo lives in the West Indies (including Bonaire), the Yucatan, and along the Galapagos Islands. One of the major reasons I took the bus tour was to see and photograph the flamingos at Goto Meer (Lake).
Taking Photos: Buses can’t stop along the road at Goto Meer for passengers to get out to photograph the flamingos. Hence, I was limited to taking photos through bus windows or opening the sliding window on my side of the bus. More importantly, the flamingos are a long, long way from the road next to the lake. I can see them in the distance, but I’m not close enough to take decent photos.

FORTUNATELY, our tour bus driver stopped near the entrance to the BOPEC (BOnaire PEtroleum Corp) that is wholly owned by Venezuelan oil company PDVSA BOPEC.

If you are renting a car or truck for a driving tour of Bonaire, please note this map and GPS coordinates for an excellent place to stop to get close to flamingos for photos. I don’t know if the flamingos are always at this location, but when they are, you can get close for photos.

Photo below taken at Entrance to BOPEC Fuel Storage  GPS 12°13'17.32"N 68°22'34.19"W
Photos of the inlet to Goto Meer (Lake) and birds taken at the same location as previous photo
Photos of Goto Meer (Lake) – Not close enough to photograph Flamingos
Map of Bonaire showing popular tourist sites

Bonaire has an arid climate, reminiscent of southwest USA desert with cactus and a few hills.
Nukove  GPS  12°14'26.8"N 68°24'43.7"W
Our tour bus did not stop at Nukove, but I include it in this guide because it is considered one of the most beautiful, small sites for diving and snorkeling. All you have to do is wade into the water and you’ll find yourself surrounded by colorful schools of fish circling the reef. You’ll see blue tangs, parrot fish and can relax on the small, white sand beach.

Onima Petroglyphs  GPS  12°14′57.33″N 68°18′37.69″W
Our tour bus did not stop here, but it is a unique and popular tourist site. If you touring in a rental car or truck, this would be a good place to visit.
For 500 years, Indians used limestone caves on Bonaire for shelter and created inscriptions on the ceilings and walls using reddish-brown pigment. It is believed they were Arawak Indians that came ashore at the small inlet of Boca Onima on the East side of Bonaire. It’s not clear what the inscriptions mean but they show the form of fish, spirals, and cross-hatched designs.

Rincón  http://www.rincon.nl/Rincon.nl/Bonbini.html  GPS  12°14′18.1″N 68°19′49.8″W
It’s the oldest town on Bonaire. Initially, it was used to house slaves from Africa. Today is is a colorful town with a Cultural Park. The Spanish selected this location for Rincón because it is far enough from the coast so that it's not visible to pirate ships sailing past Bonaire and could not be reached by their cannon.
Mangazina Di Rei Cultural Park   GPS  12°14'38.71"N 68°19'4.60"W
Mangazina di Rei is a learning centre inviting visitors to see, feel, and taste the Bonairean way of life. Information is provided on the geology, flora and fauna, and the history of the island. When we visited, local musicians were playing. We were invited to relax with refreshing drinks and taste authentic local food in the cafe. The area is large with flowers in bloom and animals in the park. Bonaire has more goats and donkeys than people. There is a special cultural program on the last Saturday of the month from 8 am to 2 pm.

The building dates back to 1824 when it was used by the dutch government to store provisions for slaves. It’s the second oldest stone building on the island. See [http://www.bonaireculturetours.com/](http://www.bonaireculturetours.com/)

View of the park from the terrace, flowers, and other plants (photos below)
Lush, colorful vegetation at the Cultural Park.

Butterfly Garden  GPS  12°12'06.6"N 68°15'44.7"W  www.butterflygardenbonaire.com

We did not stop at the Butterfly Garden. Here is the description from the website:
A meditative retreat in the countryside complete with koi pond, birds and more than a dozen species of colorful Central American butterflies. A star attraction is the open air KishiKishi lunch cafe with wonderful Caribbean dishes. Kaminda Lac 101, Kralendijk  Open Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday & Saturday  9-4:30 pm  Thursday open from 9 am 12.30 pm  Entrance fee $12 USD includes a soft drink

Flamingo International Airport (BON)  GPS  12°08'00.2"N 68°16'36.8"W
http://www.bonaireinternationalairport.com/  The airport is surrounded by colorful villas (photo below).
Donkey Sanctuary Bonaire  GPS  12°06'59.4"N 68°16'14.0"W  www.donkeysanctuary.org/
We did not stop at the Donkey Sanctuary. Here the description from the website
Originally brought by the Spanish for transportation and labor, donkeys have been part of the Bonaire landscape for over 500 years. The animals are now wild and live throughout the island. Donkey Sanctuary Bonaire helps provide food, water and medical services to those animals in need while providing a home to more than 400.  Kaya Ir. R. Statius van Eps (South of the airport )  Open daily between 10am-5pm Entrance fee $7 USD

Lac Bay  GPS  12°06'19.0"N 68°13'46.7"W
We did not stop at Lac Bay. It’s on the southwest, windward side of the island so it has steady trade winds making it a windsurfing and sailing mecca. Also, the land around the bay creates a range of wind conditions for beginner to expert skill level windsurfing and sailing. A sailing regatta is held in October and on every Sunday afternoon there’s a festive party with music, dancing, food stalls, and more.
Sorobon Beach on Lac Bay  GPS  12°05'29.6"N 68°14'11.0"W
Sorobon Beach is one of the best protected windsurfing locations in the Caribbean.

Cabaje  GPS  12°3'29.02"N 68°16'50.58"W
These small, huts were used as housing for the slaves who worked at the salt flats. Today, the work of the slaves has been replaced by huge earth moving machines.
During the process of evaporation of sea water to harvest the salt, the coloration of the ponds changes from clear, to green, to brown, to pink. For a technical explanation about why these color changes occur, see http://www.laplacitabonaire.com/about-the-pink-colors/ This website also has information about salt mining on Bonaire and local products you can purchase in Bonaire or over the internet.

**History of Salt Mining on Bonaire**

Historically, salt has been important for preserving meat and fish before refrigeration. Harvesting solar salt began in 1663 when African slaves were brought to Bonaire. The slave quarters were the small, stone buildings in Cabaje. In 1862, slavery was abolished and the salt mines were closed.

Salt harvesting was reinstated on Bonaire in the 1950’s. Cargill Salt Bonaire N.V. operates the salt production. Evaporation is effective due to the arid climate, warm temperatures, abundant sunshine, and steady trade winds, in Bonaire.

As produced, the salt crystals range in size and can be as large as a golf ball. Some of the large markets for the salt are water softening and treating roads in cold climates for snow and ice in the winter.

**Travel Options to Explore Bonaire**

**Self-Guided walking tours of Kralendijk**

It’s a perfect area to explore on foot. The shops, restaurants, tourist sites, etc. are densely packed in the downtown area near the cruise ships.

**Taxis**

Priced are fixed by the government. See: http://www.infobonaire.com/taxis/

**Water Taxis**

If you are interested in water based activities, take a water taxi or tour boat from the cruise dock area.

**Bus Tour of the Island**

I enjoyed our bus tour which I have described in this guide.

**Car or truck rental**

It seems to me that car/truck rental would be the best, most personal way to explore the island. There isn’t much traffic on the roads and the island is small. I believe you could find your way fairly easily. If you are planning to rent a car/truck, visit my webpage that explains which types of devices to use for mobile GPS mapping without need for WiFi or a cell phone connection, and how to enter GPS coordinates from this port guide into your mobile device. See http://www.tomsportguides.com/world-gps-maps.html
User Feedback Is Welcome

Goal
My guides are designed to help you plan a great cruise vacation by providing information such as where the ship docks, location of tourist sites, public transit, walking tour maps, things to see and do, travel issues unique to the port, etc. Knowledge of ports is important when planning shore excursions because you have to make many decisions and commitments long before your ship docks. I believe the information in this guide is accurate, however you are responsible to verify accuracy of the information that you use to plan your vacation.

Information on cruise ports frequently changes such as bus routes, admission fees to sites, rental car locations, etc. Cruise Critic is the best source for up-to-date, detailed information on travel details for shore excursions, reviews of cruise ships, etc. There are many knowledgeable people on Cruise Critic who are willing to share their expertise and travel experience. I highly recommend [www.CruiseCritic.com](http://www.CruiseCritic.com); it's free to join.

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Tom Sheridan