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BOUTIQUE HOTEL ARUBA

The taste of the Caribbean:

A delectable culinary journey through Aruba

Some say a picture is worth a thousand words. Others, who value firsthand experience, believe the same applies to certain life pleasures, especially food. Both sweet and savory flavors can transcend physical and imaginary borders and take us to places we didn’t know existed, from a street in New Orleans where Cajun French echoes in conversations to a local market on a small island in the Lesser Antilles. Not only is it an accessible gateway to a place’s culture, but it can also be an opportunity to create lasting memories that engage all the senses.

Aruba, known as the Happy Island of the Caribbean, is famous for its stunning beaches and diverse natural ecosystems. Like any other place, gastronomy is a key component of its rich cultural tapestry, shaped over thousands of years. The island boasts many dishes that stand out for its combination of indigenous, European, African and Latin American techniques, ingredients and secrets. But which stand out as the best starting point for a culinary journey? Let’s sail to discover the must-try dishes of Aruban cuisine.

Indulge in the staples that define Aruban cuisine

Fish, seafood, yucca, plantains, corn, and legumes are just a few of the essential ingredients that prevail in typical Aruba cuisine. These are often accompanied by spices such as garlic, cumin, turmeric, pepper, and sometimes a mild heat for an adventurous touch. From cheese-filled balls served at the bar to abundant soups brimming with plenty of meat and vegetables, these are the island delicacies you cannot miss.

CALA:

Cala: Who doesn't love snacks that can be eaten in one bite? Calas are deep-fried balls made from black-eyed peas, incorporating a nice kick from cayenne or Madame Jeanette peppers. Boasting a crunchy exterior and a fluffy interior, these are served steaming hot, fresh from the fryer.

- Type: Snack, appetizer, side dish.
- Flavor profile: Savory, with a touch of mild heat.
- Best time to enjoy: On a Friday night at the bar.

PASTECHI:

These light, flaky dough half-moons are a delightful treat, often enjoyed for breakfast. Their variety of fillings reflect the rich mosaic of cultures in Aruba, ranging from fish, chicken, and meat to cheese and vegetables. Easily found throughout the island, they make the perfect addition to a themed gastronomic tour.

- Type: Snack, appetizer.
- Flavor profile: Savory.
- Best time to enjoy: Early in the morning from a roadside vendor on your way to the beach.

KESHI YENA:

The origins of this beloved meal trace back to the slave trade that took place during the 17th and 18th centuries. At that time, servants and slaves would take the discarded cheese rinds and fill them with leftover meat and vegetables. They would then bake their creation, melting the cheese, typically Gouda or Edam, to perfection. Today, many establishments have given this classic a makeover by incorporating modern ingredients and techniques, such as hot sauces and avocado.

- Type: Main dish.
- Flavor profile: Savory, creamy, comforting.
- Best time to enjoy: As lunch at a local event or to replenish energy after strolling through the streets of Oranjestad.

PAN BATI:

A good meal should always be accompanied by something to dip or enjoy the last bites. Pan bati is perfect for that. Its preparation is quite simple and resembles that of a classic pancake. However, the difference lies in the use of cornmeal.

- Type: Side.
- Flavor profile: Neutral, with a slight sweetness in some variations.
- Best time to enjoy: Alongside a traditional breakfast or with soup.

BOLO DI CHUPETE:

The bolo di chupete is a sweet and moist cake that is a delight for cashew lovers. A must for family gatherings and special occasions, it never fails to captivate with its icing made of raw cashews, sweet condensed milk, and sugar. From time to time, a touch of almonds and a splash of rum add that special flair.

- Type: Dessert.
- Flavor profile: Sweet, fudgy, aromatic
- Best time to enjoy: After meals all year round.

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BOUTIQUE HOTEL ARUBA

An elevated dining experience with breathtaking views

End your culinary adventure in Aruba with a grand finale. Ocean Z Restaurant is the ideal place to experience the island's most sophisticated and sumptuous side. Its menu features international dishes that combine locally sourced ingredients with haute cuisine techniques.

Here, the perfect dinner starts with our signature cocktails and freshly made ceviche, followed by our seafood paella, known for its succulent socarrat. While you savor every bite, enjoy striking sunset views of the Caribbean and the soothing sound of waves crashing on the shore. A movie-like backdrop for a once-in-a-lifetime memory. Join us at Ocean Z Restaurant today.

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