

# ARUBA AND ITS PROMISE OF BEING A SUSTAINABLE TOURIST DESTINATION



Aruba wants to make itself the main island of the Caribbean, and to do this, the task of achieving sustainability has been taking the lead. By 2020, they will have the challenge of powering the island with 100% clean energy.

The main attractions of the destination, the cultural agenda that the island has, and its efforts to stick to sustainable principles through a global strategy that has united the public and private forces of Aruba were the ingredients that motivated DiarioTurismo to accept an invitation to discover one of the most paradise-like destinations of the world.

Tourism professionals from the island explained in detail what their action plan consists of, looking at the future that includes making inhabitants and tourists aware of the theme of sustainability. Johana Santiago, Communications Manager for Aruba Turismo, explained the reasons why sustainability at this destination has become fundamental.

“We want to contribute our grain of sand to the world. We live off of tourism and off of our natural resources, and it is this path that is going to allow us to prolong our work and preserve our island. What will it do for us to have some super pretty beaches, when sometime in upcoming years we can't use them anymore because in the necessary moment no one cared. For this reason, we have invested time, dedication, and also economic resources for this task,” she said.

Here's the proof: the Wind Mill Park Vader Piet that is already up and running, and the largest solar park of the Caribbean, located at the Aruba Airport whose construction is ending this year, 2014. With this framework, the interest of reducing the CO2 emissions of the island, and its dependence on fossil fuel energy, the promise is that the island starts to function in its totality from renewable energy, starting now, by 2020.

Another action focal point that is done annually is the Green Conference, with specialists from different places around the world that participate on a study panel, where the challenges and guidelines to keep improving on green themes are proposed for the island.

## **Receptive Culture**

In addition, at the social level, a special educational program called “My Commitment” was developed. All of Aruba's residents were asked to develop the knowledge of how to be good hosts to tourists, how to take care of their beaches, and understanding that the benefits that touristic activity brings to the community, considering that tourism is the main economic sector of the island.

The efforts of the Hotel Association of Aruba (Ahata) are added in as well which has, for 15 years, invested in remodeling and green parameter integration in its establishments, getting certifications like the Green Globe in many of its hotels.

In addition, work is being done to integrate tourists in annual events like the Aruba Reef Care Project, where tourists and the community unite in their passion for diving with an environmental

project to clean up the reefs.

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