

## BEACHES AND SITES AROUND WESTPUNT

It was a dark and stormy night.... No, this isn't the beginning of The Great American Novel. But, as you make your way through my ramblings hopefully you'll find these notes to be interesting beach reading. They are lightheartedly written around some facts combined with life in Curacao according to Sunshine in hopes that they'll help you enjoy your time on our island. These directions are from our house and Sol Food on the Weg Naar Playa Kalki in Westpunt. If you are staying here at Sunshine Getaway, at the Lodge, All West, Marazul, or Lagun it's pretty easy to figure them out. If you are staying elsewhere on the island, check a map to get your bearings. Westpunt is at the far west end of the island. Divers, it's not sacrilegious to get out of the water on occasion you know. For those who may be staying in Willemstad; Banda Bou (the West end) will feel like another island.

If you take a left from the house/Sol Food, a third of a mile down the street there is a parking lot on the left with stairs that lead down to Playa Kalki and Go West Diving dive shop. The staff is wonderfully fun & they teach all the PADI courses. The beach is very nice and this is one of Sunshine's favorite shore dives in Curacao, Alice in Wonderland. Helpful hint: Sometimes there is a little current when you reach the end of the bay. To avoid going that far, swim slower. LOL... OK then from the dock surface swim out to the left of the black buoy, descend to the reef, and head right. The normal action is to drift to the right before getting to the reef. By adding that ? I don't know.... 30+ yards to the left, unless you are a real speed demon, you won't go around the corner of the bay. David's favorite is Playa Largu at San Juan. A few other great shore dives are to the right and to the left of the dock in Westpunt Bay behind our house and in front of All West Apartments (did I mention turtles?), Shon Mosa at San Juan, Playa Hundu, and the wall to the right of Blue Bay- a 10 minute surface swim to the house on the cliff, but really really worth it. Go West Diving also rents kayaks and paddle boats. We have a list of the gear, air and boat dives (our favorites are Watamula, Alvin's Plane Wreck and Redhio). There is food available at Kalki beach and you can rent beach chairs.

The Lodge Kura Hulanda is above the beach. The Lodge has two restaurants. Both serve excellent meals, upscale with matching prices. Request to eat on the terrace for the view. You can also schedule a massage at the Lodge. As you look out at the ocean there is a cliff along the right side of the bay, this point is the most western edge of the island. Kayaking past this point can be rough and the currents unknown. There is an interesting cave just past the main set of rooms near the meditation garden. The Lodge has a sister in town, the Hotel Kura Hulanda. Plan a visit for an authentic feel of an old time square and to tour the slave museum. It is quite sobering, plan for a couple of hours.

After the parking lot and the hotel, the road will turn into a dirt road. If you are biking or jogging (maybe by that time, walking), you can take a right and make your way through the neighborhood and circle back to the house. The first left after you take this right will take you to the top of a hill near the sonar/tracking globes. As you near the globes, there is a path to the right. This leads to miles of trails David has cut through the brush. If you go straight from the hotel, maybe a mile, there is a right that will take you to the other side of that hill and the lighthouse. It does not look like a traditional NE lighthouse. Ask us for directions and a map of other trails to follow; David has cleared miles of technical mountain bike routes as well as a couple of other trails to hike for about 1 or more hours. You will need sneakers. He has formed a MTB bike club for the boys in Westpunt. [www.westpuntriders.com](http://www.westpuntriders.com) The club's MTB bikes are not quite good enough for rentals any longer but you can rent better ones at Dasia Sports in Willemstad. <http://www.dasiacuracao.com/> Interested in races? Let us know.

David has learned to weld! He has constructed 9 Frisbee Golf cages that are up on the hill overlooking both sides of the island. This disc golf course is a bit challenging; wind, thorns, and all. Go up past the ball field to the last house up and on the right, and park. Walk to the right of the house and slightly uphill. You will see the course and the north side of the island. We have discs for sale and rent at Sol Food.

On our road, continuing straight past the Lodge and bearing left whenever the road forks you can follow the signs to Watamula, 2 miles from house. The north side of the island has rougher seas and is not done as a shore dive. OK, there are some fanatical divers who do but..... Go West Diving goes to this site and the plane wreck nearby, by boat. Elvin's Plane Wreck is another of my favorite dive sites; not for the wreckage but for the reef. I highly recommend it. At Watamula if you walk to the left, you will see some painted trees. There is a very small private little cove hidden away, Playa Gepi. If you look across the beach from the cliff you may see some dark brown birds on the face of the opposite cliff, this is the nesting area of the Brown Boobys. If you walk straight in from the Watamula sign, to the right of the large boulder painted as the Curacao flag, there is a sink hole with water known as the eye of the island. Now... walk to the right about 10 to 20 yards, if you look up toward the lighthouse you will see a few larger rocks. Walk around this area and listen... you should hear air spouting from small holes; this is "the breath of Curacao". I think the island sounds like it is snoring. Can't hear it? Try about 10 feet from the shore line near a rather flat indentation. Don't give up, it breathes. Please lock your car and do not leave anything inside; either at Watamula or any place else on the island. Do not get out of the car and lock anything away in the trunk. While you personally will not be accosted, the "bad teenagers" may take advantage and break into a car if anything of value is left in plain sight and sometimes in the trunk. There's some debate on whether to lock or not, we lock. At Christmas and Carnival time there are more thefts especially at unsecured locations like the San Pedro/Hato Plains and Watamula. There are now guards at the beaches but only on weekdays until 5PM. If you are snorkelling in the bay on the weekends, you can leave your bags with us at the restaurant. Please do not leave anything in your car.

Back on the dirt road coming out from Watamula, take a left. This will now lead you east. You will come to an inlet. Most cars will not have the clearance to drive much farther. By bike, you could possibly ride the length of the island - with a detour on the road around Wacawa, the military training area. David has ridden from the East end of the island. By mountain bike standards it's an easy ride except for the thorny cactus & flat tires. Do not remove any thorns, most bikes have tubeless tires. Most probably the farthest you would go is Boca Tabla although the road does continue inside Christoffel Park. Before Shete Boca at one point on the ride (or hike) there is a right up a hill (you'll see the water towers above you to your left) that will take you past a few houses and out to the road, for a shorter ride (circle, to the house). In this area there is a man made water area that fed a local well. Westpunt did not have running water until the 1950s. There are a number of dams/wells in the area. At the 3<sup>rd</sup> Boca (mouth or inlet) just before the water tanks, I have a small cairn to mark one. As you walk in, you'll see the small structures in and to the right. About another mile hike will bring you to Shete Boca/Tabla. It is much easier to get to by car on the main road and a nice place to visit. It is our friend Judy's favorite place on the island. We have a map.

About halfway back from the hotel to the house, look up to the hills and you will see our Westpunt lady on her back. From the left you can see her knees, the small rise of her belly, her breasts, barely see her head, and then her arm stretched out to the sea. Humor me, you'll see her.

If you take a right from the house and a right at the ball field, you will come out to the main road. Jaanchie's is truly local food. There is no longer an ATM here. There are 2 in Barber and a few in Tera Cora. At all the ATMs on the island you can get either guilders or dollars. In the past there has been some trouble with stolen info from, somewhere? Please check your statements not only when you get home but again after a couple a months. If you take a left, it is the fastest route toward Willemstad; about 40 minutes.

Up the hill on the left you can buy the parrots and/or flamingoes made from old car tires. There is now another artist located on the right just before the gas station in Tera Cora. Shete Boca/Tabla is 3 miles from the house and a grand place to explore. The topography on the north side is totally different. The island was formed by volcanic action however the ground is mainly old coral beds from very long ago. There is a natural bridge, small caves, walking trails and a turtle sanctuary. During the day there is an entrance fee, 10 guilders, about \$6. On weekends the locals sell food. Boca Pistol is named because the force of the waves creates a spray that looks like it was shot from a pistol. There are seven (shete) bocas (mouths or bays) in this area and there have been occasions when the waves were high enough to deposit large rocks on the cliff. From the entrance walk straight ahead (next to the huge iguana) and down toward the sea. You will find a cave under the cliff. It's not only cool to see but in temperature. There are paths to walk (a long time) in both directions from the parking lot but you can drive as well. Drive to the right to get to Boca Pistol. If you drive to the left there is Boca Wardami where you can write your name with the rocks for a souvenir photo and there's an excellent chance for a close up photo of an iguana here. The natural bridge is on the other side of this boca.

Christoffel Park is a couple of miles further down the road at the Landhuis Savonet. This is where you will find more species of flora and fauna than anywhere else on the island including rare cottontail rabbits and the white tailed deer which, coming from New Hampshire, we find very amusing. You can drive and hike in the park. Curacao Actief takes guided hiking and biking tours through the park and the park offers moonlight hikes, tours to find the elusive white tailed deer, and sunrise and sunset excursions. But, they close at 4 PM and lock the entrance gates to the mountain so I would recommend getting there before 1:00. Christoffel is 1,400 feet high. It is not an easy hike and the last 50 yards to the top is tough. You can drive up a road that circles the mountain with a number of scenic lookout spots. There is a parking lot where you can leave your car for the hike to the top. At one point, you'll reach up to a tree for support. If the hike has been tough so far, go back and relax on a bench, it gets tougher. You'll need water and good shoes, not sandals as you'll be scrambling over some rocks but the view is amazing and worth it. The park is on both sides of the road; up the mountain and over by the sea on the North coast. It's quite warm in the afternoons – bring lots of water to drink. It is a nice place to see even without the hike. The car route has a number of look out views on each side of the mountain. There are old ruins, a copper mine and fantastic panoramic views. If you take the bus to Christoffel, see if you can hitch a ride up to the parking lot to begin the hike and another to come back to the road. If not, you'll double your hiking time. Please! Bring lots of water and, bring your empty bottles back. On the North side, there are a couple of hiking trails that bring you pass old wells and after the rains, a lot of orchids and mushrooms. You can drive very near and walk into to see Boca Grandi. If the seas are wild, it is very impressive. The Landhuis has recently been renovated. Whether or not you explore the mountain or coast, it is a nice museum to tour. There are a number of guided tours; including sunrise and a sunset tour - both are wonderful. There is also a small restaurant at the park. The park is now home to the Sea Turtle Conservation Curacao project, a wonderful learning center at the park.

Trio Penotti Restaurant is across the street. It has been a great addition to the area. They are closed on Mondays and open 5 to 9 with lunches Thursday through Sunday.

There is a bus that goes to town. The cost is 2.20 guilders; you need change in guilders. It is scheduled to leave every even hour, occasionally is a half hour late but often on time; Island Time. The bus stop sign says Bushalte. It leaves Otrobanda on the odd hour. You want the bus that says Westpunt. The Banda Bou and Lagun/Knip buses will not bring you into the village. Coming from town you might be lucky to see a van that says Westpunt. It costs 3.50 in guilders.

I would love to tell you there is a shooting range in Wacawa but it's for the Dutch Military. Less than 10 miles from the house is the town of Barber. There is a park next to the church with easy hiking trails called Hofi Pastor with an 800 year old Kapok tree; entrance fee of a few guilders. We have a book of hiking trails with a description of this and other trails on the island as well as the local bird book.

If you drive to the right of the church (next to the ball field), there is now a restaurant behind the church called Die Klosterkuche. They are open Tuesday thru Saturday 5 to 8 PM and sell a variety of pancakes. The ladies can also take you on guided hikes to Boca Patrick, and Ascension. Drive between the church and the ball field and turn left at the school. They also give guided walking tours to Boca Patrick and Boca Ascension. I can give you driving directions but the road is not easy for the very small cars with equally small tires.

Across from the church there is a main road that will actually take you across the island, toward the beaches. One of the first couple of buildings on the right is where they slaughter and sell goat meat and chicken. On Sundays there is a market in the morning including live music & the locals sell baked goods, plants, & food. This is a wonderful cultural experience. There is a new Sunshine mini market just past it that sells wonderful "cheesy bread". A half mile or so up the hill (key words, up the hill) there is a large green building on the right called Centro MM. These are the closest stores with a large variety of supplies; they have everything you might need, except a large variety of fresh produce and dairy products. In Barber, there is a gas station, 2 bakeries, 3 doctors, a drug store (botika) now across the street from the pump station, a bank and a BBQ across from the church on Sunday nights at The Fourth Of July snack. There is an ATM at the bank and another on the left after you pass the gas station. If one does not take your card, try the other.

Landhuis Dokterstuin is about a mile past Barber. They are open during the day for lunch but closed on Mondays. This is a wonderful place to try local food and view the landhuis. Continuing on the main road you will see signs for Ascension. It was where they housed the slaves who were sick. There are programs that run on the first Sunday of the month from 10AM to 2PM and the Landhuis is open to tour. Church services are said in Dutch and local artisans sell their goods as well as food. Our neighbor Wim (very tall Dutch man) sells wind chimes made from silverware and marbles. They have a small wandering band to serenade you while you relax. If you are here on the first Sunday, we highly recommend a visit. The crafts are nice including many oil and watercolour paintings, driftwood art, sculptures made from wood, and ornaments made from the calabash fruit. Check out the flags in front of the building; one waves in one direction and another flaps in the wind in the opposite direction. Really! It's the ghost. As you leave the parking lot you'll see the grave site of the mean land owner, they would not bury him within the property walls. Locals claim he haunts the area and is the reason for the lack of cell phone coverage and accidents in "the clove" where the road splits. He is buried outside the entrance on his

stomach with his head up on his hands to keep watch over the Landhuis. At night some still enter their gates backwards closing the gate as they enter to keep out the bad spirits. Hint! When you park, back into the space. No silly, not because of the ghost but because it will be easier to drive out when the parking lot is full. In December, the date is the evening of the first Friday.

Right before Ascension is Kas di Pal'i Maishi, house of corn. It's named for the corn stalked roofs and is a typical rural house. It belongs to the ancestors of one of the first freed slaves to be given owned land. It's a small museum and tours are given. They now sell food, perhaps with music on the weekends.

Across from Ascension there is another (great short cut) road that crosses the island. It comes out at the Bistro E'lanternu restaurant. Take a right to go to Cas Abou, or a left and then a right at Fontein; Green Living to go to St. Willibrordus, the flamingoes, Porto Marie, Karakter, and Daibooi.

Right after Ascension the road splits, immediately after it becomes one again take a left. There is parking on the north side for a hike to Boca Ascension. The gate has been open most days; if not you can hike in. The Queen gave this waterfront land to the local's (owner of the Kas di Pal'i Maishi) great-granddaughter on one of her visits to the island. We have had guests geocaching there. You might see large turtles in the water, maybe. Although you can see many migrating birds including osprey in the Fall. Lagun is a safer bet to see turtles and even better odds are behind the house in Westpunt Bay; sometimes up to a dozen turtles. Humpback whales have been to visit a few times and manta rays 6 times that I've seen or heard of being seen.) Please do not touch or disturb the turtles. They will swim very close to you.

After you come up the hill and see buildings, the 1<sup>st</sup> left will take you down to the windmills on the flats of San Pedro and the wall art by Yubi Kirindongo. Yes, you need to pay the landowner 8 guilders/\$5 to open the gate. Look past the farm animals – they also have a pet monkey and 2 peacocks. If you bear left after leaving the gate, you will come to Boca San Pedro, one of unfortunate places to view trash on the shore. This trash is not from our island but elsewhere in the Caribbean and carried on the currents only to land here. There are many groups who regularly clean the bays on the North side. There are new windmills and I'm not sure if they are placed in the same spots as the old ones. Look for a pull off in the cliffs on the right to see the wall art. There are also 2 large caves on the right. Pull in on the right just before the 4<sup>th</sup> windmill to see the largest cave, Kueba di Brua. Take a right just before the last windmill to see Kueba Boca San Antonio. There is a picnic table there. There are a couple white rocks marking these sites. This dirt road eventually comes out near the airport but in the winter months it might be quite muddy; go back to the farm to exit. Again, I am sorry to report is more of a rash of thefts at Christmas and Carnival time, please beware. The tour groups (Curacao Actief) will take you here.

If you stay on the main road driving east, you will pass a road that merges in from the right. This is the beach road that circles around from Westpunt. A new art gallery featuring sculptures large and small of creatures made from coconuts, palms, branches etc will be soon opening on the right (across from the lottery sales). The next town is Tera Cora. There is a gas station here. Yes, gas is over \$5 a gallon. You cannot charge but there is an ATM there. Remember to check your balances when you get home. Using US cash? \$20 equals 35 guilders. Nearby there is a Botika, 2 doctors' offices, a bakery, a tire place, but the grocery store, California has recently closed. If you've gone this far, another 7 miles or so to Centrum, L'Esperamos or Cost-U-Less will bring you to a bigger grocery store.

You'll soon see the sign for Restaurant Daniels. I always order the pancakes with bacon and apple cooked in the batter when I go for lunch but highly recommend all the pancakes. No, it's not on the menu but ask for it anyway. LOL – It's now on the menu. Yum. Once a month, usually on a Friday, they have an Indonesian buffet night.

Almost across from Daniels is a road that leads to St. Willibrordus. Habitat, Daibooi, Porto Marie, the flamingos, and Nina Sanchez's art gallery at Landhuis Jan Kok. There are 2 water slides for children at the new Kunuku Resort on the right. This road also connects to the road that I refer to as the beach road (at Fontein) by taking a right at the Williwood sign and the Williwood Toko.

Just past this turn is a small building on the right. Many years ago, a young couple was building a chapel on their property. As they were painting the murals on the walls, the wife mentioned that she thought she might be pregnant after many years of trying to conceive and it turned out she was. Afterwards, the chapel became a destination for those who wished to have children. It unfortunately has been repainted. A couple of miles further you'll find the rotary with the metal iguana near the airport.

Back in Westpunt;

From Jaanchie's if you take a right you will immediately see the painted octopus/small road (behind our house) that leads to the fishing boats and Playa Piskado/Grandi. The fishermen sell fish daily. There is local food, fish soup and chicken on the weekends at the fishermen's huts. Occasionally there is a DJ playing local music (sometimes a bit loudly) on Sunday afternoons. Everywhere the fishermen clean their catch - Boca Sami, Lagun, Westpunt, they throw the scraps back in the sea and the turtles come for a free lunch. This is another of my favorite dive sites. It is very possible to snorkel or dive with 8 or more of our resident turtles. Please do not touch the turtles. There are sometimes seahorses near dock and on the mooring lines of the boats and there is a metal statue of King Neptune out on the reef. From the water, snorkel to the right side of not only the dock but the buoys. You will be able to see our deck from the water. You'll snorkel over the sand and then see the reef, about 30 yards behind the last boat to the right. Turn around and you will be looking right up the boat ramp and when looking to the left, can see the dock/beach at the Lodge. Think of it as another treasure hunt. Neptune is at about 30/35 feet but can be seen snorkelling. This is a great marker to begin and end your dive. There are bottles stabilizing the lines of the boats moored in the shallows. Many of these are encrusted with coral and you can spot juvenile fish darting in and around them. In front of All West Apartments; the yellow building, there are shelf-like areas in front of the shoreline. You will see a large variety of aquatic life there. You could ask for Marcos or Grandi among the fishermen. Either may be willing to take you (hand line) fishing. Most tourists will leave them the fish as well as a payment. After the church you will see Playa Forti. You can have a drink, jump off the cliff and take some fantastic photos of Westpunt Bay. Almost across the street there is a left hand turn that leads up to the Westhill Bungalows and the new Punta West Bed and Breakfast. They have just begun to serve breakfast and dinner and have started a happy hour on Fridays at 5PM. Blue View Apartments has just opened a restaurant overlooking Playa Forti.

A couple of miles down this road you'll see the turn for Playa Knip. A knip is a green/red cherry like berry. It "kinda" reminds me of a plum with much less fruit around the seed. Landhuis Knip has a slave museum with information on Tula, the leader of the slave revolution and a very small restaurant for lunch. Entrance \$3. It is closed on Mondays. Ask

for a tour in English. It's very interesting and you'll learn more if you ask for a guided tour. The road is one way in so don't be concerned when you leave by a different road. You will first come to Klein (or little) Knip. It is a sweet little beach. I do like this dive but it is a long surface swim out to the reef. My profile is to go left more than 1/2 my air, veer toward the left until you cross a smaller patch of sand and then go left along the wall back to the beach. The snorkelling will be better here because of the rocks. I haven't been on the weekends but it appears that they may sell food. There are now beach chairs for rent.

At the end of the road is Knip which also is known as Playa Abou. It is picture perfect. You can jump from the cliff here as well. As a baby step, it is not as high as the one at Forti; start here and then go higher. They sell food and rent chairs here. The bathrooms may cost a couple of guilders. If you were to kayak from behind the house, I would estimate that it is a distance of approx. 2 miles but because of the cliffs and the bay you don't know that you are there until you are there. If you do not have a car, I'll tell you a short cut. About a half mile after you pass Rancho Sobrino you will see a trail to the right. If there are power lines above you, it's the right path. This will take you down a hill and to Knip/Playa Abou, about 3 miles from our house by foot.

Back on the main road, you'll go up and down a couple of roller coaster hills. If you look carefully, there is a sign on the right that says "spasm". Slow down, there is a bump in the road here. Playa Jeremi is the next beach that you will come to. Again it is small but very nice. Lock your car and do not leave any valuables inside even for a short while. Many like to snorkel at Jeremi. There is a hike across the street to the old Newtown landhuis and Seru Bientu.

Immediately after Jeremi you can take a right that will take you through the (very) small town of Lagun or continue to a stop sign and take a right, Lagun beach will be on your left. Discover Diving dive shop is on the left. They serve lunch and dinner now Monday through Sunday with live music one night a month. The snorkelling as well as the diving is wonderful here. This is the least expensive dive shop in the area. There may be a school of squid that you'll find quite near shore (check near the small buoy); green morays on both sides of the lagoon, occasionally a spotted eagle ray or two over the sand at the mouth of the bay and you can almost always spot a turtle or two very close to the shore. There is a small cave to the left. I would suggest snorkelling to the left and not having to fight the current on the way back. They rent chairs on the beach. Peter at Bahia Inn and Diving (on right above the beach) is building a new dive shop. I like to go left from the cove on our dives. Bahia Inn now serves dinner every night and snacks or lunch during the days. We often take divers for a twilight/early evening dive and emerge in time for dinner with the other diners watching for the dive lights.

Santa Cruz is the next beach. It is very pretty but the water can be murky so the snorkelling is not very good here. I'm not sure about the facilities. Juni, Captain Goodlife has a water taxi service. He will drop you off for a dive and then return to get you. Juni can also will take you out in his boat snorkelling to Playa Pretu, the beach with the black sand and the Blue Room. He also has kayaks to rent. It's at least a half hour paddle to the Blue Room, maybe a little longer if you hike. Look for the statue of Mary near the cave opening and a buoy where you can tie the kayak. You can buy beverages, fries and grilled items from the Captain. You can hike to the Black Sand beach. The path starts from behind the small phone booth just in front of Capt. Goodlife's.

Ryan De Jonge has guided kayak tours through the mangroves and out to the Blue Room.  
<https://www.facebook.com/Ryan-de-Jonghs-Kayak-Experience005-999-561-0813-131252130259872/>

As you drive East you will twice go under a canopy of trees. After the second natural tunnel, you will see on the left, two banners at the base of the steep driveway leading up to Klein Santa Marta Landhuis. It has been beautifully renovated into a bed and breakfast complete with dive shop, restaurant and is high enough to have a view of the ocean.

In the town of Soto, you'll see signs for Sunset Waters resort. It closed in July 2009. Take a right before the church. Landhuis Grote Santa Marta is on the right after you make the turn. This beautiful property is also open to the public. There is a working farm and tannery and they sell crafts made by the handicapped. There is also a small cafeteria. It is closed on Sundays. Not only is the Landhuis in great condition but it is lovely to spend some time walking around the grounds. On the road, almost to the end of the Landhuis property is a left hand turn. This will take you to the remote Playa Hundu dive site. This is one site where you can find staghorn, elkhorn and fan coral. It's another of my favorite dives. If you pass this turn and drive up, up, up the hill, you will see a small turn off on the right. From here you can see the fishing boats down in the Santa Marta Bay, Landhuis San Nichoas, and Christoffel Mountain. The road continues down to the abandoned Sunset Waters resort, a little spooky to explore and a calm area for children to swim. There are also yoga classes and massages in Soto with Yvonne Martin – Yoga Centrum Curacao. There is a climbing wall behind the school across from the church.

Further down is the turn for San Juan. If you come to the San Juan Snack, you've just missed the turn. The entrance is on private land and will cost 8 guilders/\$5 a car. There are a number of beaches here. They are all coral so you will need water shoes but almost always completely deserted. The snorkelling is also very good here. In 5 years, we have heard only a couple reports of petty theft at these beaches but if you go on the weekends, there is almost always someone else on the beach. Or, just don't leave anything in your car. After you turn off the main road and have driven a few minutes, you may think you are not on the right road, you may even question if it is a road, relax. After a few more minutes you'll come to a landhuis that is being renovated and a man standing by the side, pay him the 8 guilders. For an additional fee (5 guilders?), you can tour his house and property. As you drive along you are really going to wonder where I am sending you, relax. After a bit of up and downs on the dirt road you will see signs for the 3 beaches, really. Playa Langu is David's favorite shore dive. Shon Mosa is Andreas's favorite; you decide and let us know your opinion. There are no facilities or tanks here. At the last beach, Playa Largo, DO NOT drive down the beach and think you can easily turn around at the end. If you do, be prepared to lug large flat pieces of coral to place under your tires to get you unstuck – remember to put sunscreen on the back of your neck... Also the first turn to the right has a right hand turn that is quite steep. We wouldn't recommend driving down in small cars.

Driving East on the "beach road", you will see a long mango colored wall on the right that says Cas Abou. Cas Abou is a development with very grand houses. There is also access to a beach for a fee. Many think it's the prettiest on the island. The snorkelling is very good here but the restaurant is not as expansive as the one at Porto Marie, they charge more to get in; 10 guilders (\$6) a car (\$5.70), and 5 guilders to rent chairs. There is now a new dive site here, B Diving and Watersports. You can also get a massage. Just past the entrance to Cas Abou is E'Lanternu Restaurant on the left. It is closed on Tuesdays. The main road continues and connects with the road from the airport right before Tera Cora.

Before the main road (to the airport) you can take a right across from Green Living at Fontein to St. Willibrordus. At an intersection with the Willywood sign, there is a shallow

bay where you can see flamingos. Take a left and park on the right to see the pink birds. Almost across the street is Landhuis Jan Kok. It is Nina Sanchez's art studio and gallery. If you turn the opposite direction, the road heads to the shore. If you follow the signs for Coral Estates you'll come to the old Habitat hotel and its house reef. They are building condo like units for sale and rent. The restaurant Karakter is on the beach as well as a new dive shop, and a spa, The 8 Experience. Nearby, Daaibooi is a small unique beach, free but it is a very long swim out to the reef for a shore dive. Drive straight in front of the church to get to Porto Marie, one of the island's more popular beaches. There is dive shop, Porto Mari Sports and an entrance fee of 3,50 guilders (\$2) and a charge for the sun beds. Porto Marie has a double reef to dive and the snorkelling is good. I usually start to the right, go up over the top of reef and then follow along the side to the left and check out the sandy area for turtles and rays. Check out the map on the wall it has a lot of detail. They rent chairs there for 5 guilders, have a shower, a masseuse and have a nice restaurant. They also have pannekoekens, Dutch pancakes that are thicker than a crepe but much thinner than NE style pancakes.

I have yet to explore much of the area around St. Michael including Blauwbaai (but I love, love the wall dive), Vaersenbaai (which is now known as Kokomo Beach) and Bullenbaai. Our end of the island is called Banda Abou. It means the down side or the West side.

There are bugs on the island of Curacao. I put all of our food that is not sealed in zip lock bags, plastic containers and/or in the fridge. Sometimes there are little gnats at sunrise and dusk. The easiest solution is to wear long pants and shoes. If it's been raining, there are mosquitoes. We take our wet towels out of the bathroom and dry them on the line or on the porch to discourage the mosquitoes from enjoying the moisture of the bathroom. There are scorpions and centipedes on the island. Be careful when lifting any large rocks and if you take your shoes off in a rocky or wooded area shake them before you put them back on. I've heard of some being found in dive bags. The bats, lizards and dragonflies are our friends as they eat many many bugs. It's amusing to watch a gecko on the wall stalking and grabbing a moth or other bug. There are some restaurants that have mosquitoes at night. Play it safe and wear long pants. Here at the house you can sit and/or eat on the terrace or the deck. There is almost always a constant breeze that will keep the little monsters away. And of course there is also bug spray. The Aloe Farm sells one with both aloe and deet that does not smell too bad. It's for sale at most hotels, Centrum and other stores as well. The goats you'll see every where are owned by the locals. You might notice a cut in one of their ears or some kind of marking. They are let out in the morning and return each night, on a similar schedule to the parakeets you'll see flocking back to their nests. You'll mainly see the wild donkeys and rabbits on the uninhabited north coast. We live on an island; you might also see mice or rats. The dragonflies and bats are our friends; they eat the mosquitoes. Interesting trivia and something to look for: Goats tails go up and sheep (that look like goats) tails go down.

There is also something I'll call the P factor. If you can see or smell your urine, you are dehydrated. Sometimes it's a bother, but try to drink as much water as you can. If you get leg cramps or headaches, I told you so.

There is a lot to do and see on the island and we have a few brochures. Please let me know if you need any information. During the winter there are a lot of cruise ships. The busiest days in town are Wednesdays and Fridays. Also, many people from Willemstad come out to Banda Bou on the weekends so the beaches here are usually busy on Saturday and Sunday. I can see a schedule emerging... But, on Sundays, most stores are closed and the others close by 2 or 4PM.

In Westpunt, you can eat here at Sol Food on Friday, Saturday, & Sunday. We like to think of ourselves as friends with food. There's not much to do in Westpunt so it's fun to hang out and talk to other travellers and divers. And, we have pizza. The Lodge is a beautiful property. You can walk along the top of the cliff, see a sea created cave and relax in the meditation garden. They serve breakfast, lunch and dinner up in the restaurants, snacks and lunch down on the beach. Try to eat on the terrace but ask to see both menus as they are different. Jaanchie's serves local food; most of it is served as stew; iguana, goat, and chicken. They also have grilled fish and (well done) pork chops. At night, wear long pants, there are a lot of mosquitoes. Jaanchie himself is a one man show. Don't be in a rush, it may take a while if it is busy. Think of it as going for the experience. He also closes at 8PM. Landhuis Misje is up the hill on the left. Debbie has reopened for dinner, closed on Tuesdays. The restaurant across from the entrance to Landhuis Savonet at Christoffel is called Trio Penotti. It is open 5 until 10 and closed on Mondays. They are very reasonably priced and the staff is local and charming. Rancho Sobrino's has family fare meals. They now have a Wok Night. Blue View Apartments have recently opened a restaurant; lunch and dinner. Sometimes... they are closed on Tuesdays, sometimes on Wednesdays. Island time. Playa Forti has a nice view for a drink. Punta West up on the hill is serving breakfast and dinner with a happy hour on Fridays. The Chinese Restaurant across from Jaanchie's is an experience in ordering but I think it's more of a place to go for a cold beer and maybe dominoes. The people of Curacao eat a lot of French Fries and they load them with ketchup and mayonnaise. From our place, before you get to the parking lot and Lodge, take a right. The first house on the left, Pachi Kola sells local food on the weekends. There is a sign that says Krioyo. Often one of the families in town has a BBQ open to anyone for a very low price. On Sundays mornings (only) there is a house near the ball field where they make and sell bread for a guilder and a half apiece. They are wonderful if you can get them while they are warm. A religious man from Wacawa comes to Westpunt on Sundays and Tuesdays and sells door to door. I know, he's not that easy to find.... Edna at the town's Toko Kufe also has bread and food for sale on the weekends.

The 2 larger markets in Barber has not only bread but meat or cheese filled pastries on Sunday mornings..... Sometimes I drive there to get ice, hmmm. There is also a bakery on the road from Barber to Santa Cruz. Every night sometime between 6 and 8PM there is a van that goes beep beep beeping down the street. It then turns around and stops at a lot of houses to sell them rolls or a sticky bun of sorts. They cost a couple of guilders. There are snacks where you can get food down by the bay on Sundays, usually soups or stews of sorts. You can eat at the market on Sunday mornings in Barber and a BBQ at The fourth of July (really, that's the name) behind the bank on Sunday nights. There is a restaurant (literally) behind the church in Barber called Die Klosterkuche. It's open Tues. thru Sat. On the road across from the church, you will go around a small rotary. A half mile or so after there will be a handmade sign on the right directing you to Shelter Rock Paradise, a new restaurant serving local food. I haven't been yet, but friends have and give it a thumbs up. They are open for lunch and dinner. After noon the locals sell food on Sundays at Boca Tabla. Bahia Inn in Lagun is open for dinner and lunch; ask about special nights. We sometimes plan a night dive (in Lagun) to end around 7:30 and timed for dinner. You can get lunch and dinner at Discover Diving in Lagun so there is now another option for; instead of dinner and a movie, a night dive and dinner. DD has started live music once a month 5 to 8PM. Landhuis Kleine Santa Marta in Soto is open daily. There was a restaurant and butterfly garden a little before the turn off to St. Willibrordus called, go figure, the Butterfly Garden. Almost directly across from the entrance to Cas Abou is E'Lanternu restaurant (closed on Tuesdays). Just down and across the street street, two funky artists De Chickies, roast and sell chicken at their home on the weekends. Look for a

sign at the end of the driveway. This is very handy for those staying in Coral Estates or Habitat which now also has Karakter restaurant. There is another restaurant on the hill behind the church in Soto, Villa Monte but I haven't any info. Heading toward the airport, you can eat at Daniels or at De Buurvrouw (next to Relaxed Diving). All the beaches serve lunch or at least snacks and you can get food at the open landhuises. Two, Daniels and Dokterstuin are now restaurants. Dokterstuin serves local food at a decent price Tues. through Sun. 10AM to 4PM. Knip and Santa Marta serve lunch. There are small snack shacks with Chinese food everywhere. In Willemstad they sell loempias – giant spring rolls, my favorites are at Dushi Loempia; formerly known as Wa On, on Winston Churchill Weg (across from the Fire station) and now a second place on Caracasbaai Weg. Bella Italia behind Bloempot Mall in the Zuikertuintje Mall has homemade gelato ice cream, yummmmmmy. I can give you directions. I also have the name of a private chef who will prepare meals for larger families.

Things take a long time here. Please relax, enjoy the weather, scenery and your companions. If you can turn off the rush switch, you'll appreciate the time spent with your friends and family. Church at St. Peters in Westpunt is at 7PM on Friday & Saturday, 10AM on Sunday. It's Catholic. Sunday Mass in Lagun is at 8:00 AM. They do a lot of singing and church lasts well over an hour. and a half. The church is open during the day if you'd like to see inside or light a candle. If you'd like to check out a local dance step, Mazurka, there are lessons on Sundays from 1 to 3pm in a private home across from the community center. Visitors are welcome. The local PADI dive shop on the street is Go West Diving, [www.gowestdiving.com](http://www.gowestdiving.com) (phone number 864-0102) is very convenient. You can rent gear and air and they have 2 tank morning boat dives and one tank in the afternoon. Their snorkel trips are on Wednesday and Saturday afternoons. Ask about their sunset cruise. Most of the sites on the island can be reached as shore dives and are easy but the scheduled boat dives are quite special. Many locations have dive shops so it's not necessary to lug the tanks around unless you buy a shore diving plan. You also need to pay a user fee for the facilities if you do not rent the dive op's tanks. You can rent air for (\$6 to \$9 a tank) at Kalki, Lagun, Cas Abou, Porto Mari, and Coral Estates and there is the convenience to have lunch during your surface time at each of those sites as well. There are many dive ops who offer guided shore dives. You have the option of them picking you up or driving to the site to meet them. Eric's ATV, [www.curacao-atv.com](http://www.curacao-atv.com) (phone number 524-7418) from Willemstad tours the East end of the island. If you go out with Eric on the Northeast tour, I would suggest going to Hemingway's at the Lions Dive Resort (just across the parking lot from Eric's home base) for a drink afterwards. Why? So you can take a quick swim in the lagoon and then a shower (next to the stairs) to rinse off. The drink is enjoyable as well on the beach. Now you're presentable to go out around town. Prins - Curacao ATV Tour offers 1/2 and full day East and West end tours. [info@prinscarrental.com](mailto:info@prinscarrental.com) [www.curacaovatours.com](http://www.curacaovatours.com) They also have yeah, car rentals.

We have additional information about the Sea Aquarium/Dolphin Academy, Ostrich and Aloe Farms, Hato Caves, the Welzijn Fish Spa, Segway Tours and other tourist attractions in town as well as a good map. There is quite a lot of interesting art on the island of Curacao. Ask for a list of galleries and directions. Quite often there are exhibits and occasionally concerts. I have put together a tour of the West end landhuises for my girlfriends. Let me know if you'd like to see those "notes".

Please let us know if you have any questions about our apartment, Westpunt or Curacao. We'd like to help you make the most of your holiday on the island.

David and Sunshine

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OK, by request some in town suggestions; Slave Museum at the Kura Hulanda Hotel, Synagogue, Maritime Museum/Harbor Tour, Aloe Farm, Ostrich Farm, Bazbina Farm's Bee Encounter, Welzijn Fish Pedicure Spa, Eric's ATV tour, Curacao ATV tours, Hato Caves, Dinah Veeris' Herb Garden, cruising around on a Segway, dive or fish the east side with Niels of Dive or Fish Charter Curacao, horseback riding, windsurfing, kite boarding, stand up paddle boarding, boat and people watching by Sint Annabaai and maybe the Sea Aquarium or the Curacao Liquor distillery. The Curacao Winery and Vineyard has just opened in the Landhuis Hato next to the airport and The Curacao Brewery is open on Cas Cora Weg in Landhuis Grandbeeuw. Landhuis Brakkeput Mei Mei (767-1500), Vreedenberg - Primus Restaurant, Daniel (864-8400), Kleine Santa Marta, and Dokterstuin are restaurants, Landhuis Cas Cora is both a restaurant and organic farm; Brievengat is the location of many concerts. Landhuis Bloemhof (737-5775) and Habaai - Alma Blou (462-8896) have art galleries. Nena Sanchez's art gallery and studio is at the Landhuis Jan Kok in St. Willibrordus, Landhuis Ascension (864-1950) was used to house the sick slaves and is open on the first Sunday of every month with crafts and local food available. Landhuis Chobolobo (461-3526) houses the liquor distillery. Landhuis Groot Sta Marta is a working farm and has dolls made by the handicap. Landhuis Knip is a museum dedicated to Tula the leader of the slave revolution. It is closed on Mondays. Landhuis Savonet is a part of Christoffel National Park. It has recently been restored as a marvellous museum. Entrance 12.50 guilders with an audio guide; 9-4. There are dozens of other landhuisen. Some are private homes, some are offices, some are in disrepair and some, well I'm not sure if they are open to the public. Landhuis Jan Theil 747-0756 Landhuis Kortijn 737-5051 Landhuis Rooi Catootje (737-5119) houses the Maduro Bibliotheek en Museum. Like to dance? Mondays at Brakkeput Mei Mei. Tuesdays reggae at Ay Carumba. Wednesdays at Hooks Hut. Thursdays & Fridays at DeHeeren and Fridays at Asia De Cuba. Saturdays Salsa at De Kroeg at Waaigat, Friday & Saturdays at Bermuda. Sundays at Hemingway's and later at Mambo Beach – also on Saturdays.

Curacao is home to many artists – really can you blame them? Yubi Kirindongo is near the rotary by the airport. It is his art you will see at the main rotary and on the flats of San Pedro. Tanya Haynes is in Grote Berg. We have a few of her pieces and her portfolio here. Philippe and Giovanni Zanolino and Nena Sanchez are on the road to St. Willibrordus. Evelien Sipkes has workshops in Dokterstuin. She is also a private chef. Garrick Marchena has beautiful wall murals of children as angels around the island. I can try to explain how to see them. Other island artists include; Philip Rademaker, Militza Scoop, Carlos Blaaker, Hortence Brouwn, Jampito Landbrug, Marianne Cats, Annemieke Dicke, Marcel Van Duijneveldt, Ariadne Faries, Yvonne Van Gogh, Miriam Griffioen, Midzy Longuevergne, Ashley Mauricia, Tony Mosanto, Eddy Baetens, Marlies Schoenmakers, Marja Tukker, Ria Houwen and Herman Van Bergen, Alisa Anastatia, Hanneke Floor, Monique Harbers, Lia Krom, Tirzo Martha, Anna Oltheten, Suzet Rosario, Omar Sling, Avioantia Damberg, Ellen Spijkstra, Ellen Hoke, Ellen Elings, Ashley Mauricia, Krista van der Meijden, Moraine Paris, Lucia Schnog, Joke Piso, Nel-An van Eenennaam, Elsbeth Kooijman, Carlo Walle, Babette de Waele, Ans Mezas, and Merly Trappenberg. Besides at their galleries, you can find their artwork at Mon Art in the Rif Fort, Alma Blou in Landhuis Habaai or at Landhuis Bloemhof.

Remember; use sunscreen, drink plenty of water, apply bug spray or wear long pants in the evenings, don't leave anything in your car, lock your room, don't touch the turtles, check your credit card statements when you get home and again in a month or two, and enjoy our museums, colorful downtown, floating bridge, restaurants, countryside, hiking, biking, snorkelling, diving and relaxing! Hugs and fishes, Sunshine