

It's long been known as the perfect place for honeymooners. But now Aruba is fast becoming a haven for families. This safe, friendly and clean island is home to family-friendly programs and accommodations, including the Marriott Surf Club, scheduled to open in the summer of 2004.

In fact, let's put it this way: the only downside to spending time in Aruba is "Divi Hair." That refers to the Divi Divi tree - Aruba's natural compass that is always pointing in a southwesterly direction due to the trade winds that blow across the island from the northeast.

Other than the windblown hair, there is a wealth of activities for fun and frolic for families.

A stay at the Aruba Marriott Ocean Club -Marriott's current "owner-membership" resort is wonderful. It offers top shell accommodations and features Bon Bini Kids - a program for children that keeps them busy and happy with activities like sand castle building and making your own pizza.

Activities for Kids, Year-Round

Marriott Vacation Clubs (www.vacationclub.com) offers the concept of "ownership" of your vacation, which helps ensure its quality. Plus there is a great deal of flexibility because Marriott is teamed with Interval International (www.intervalworld.com) a timeshare exchange that lets owners go virtually anywhere in the world and take advantage of airlines, cruises, hotels, tours and more. Prices for ownership at Marriott's Aruba Surf Club vary by season and view, ranging from \$17,900 to \$68,100.

Activities for Kids, Year-Round

Plus, for families, the Aruba Tourism Authority (www.aruba.com) offers a program called "One Cool Family Vacation." The package offers a variety of programs and facilities for children and their parents, including qualified babysitting services, kids' and teens' day camp programs, and water and land activities for the entire family.

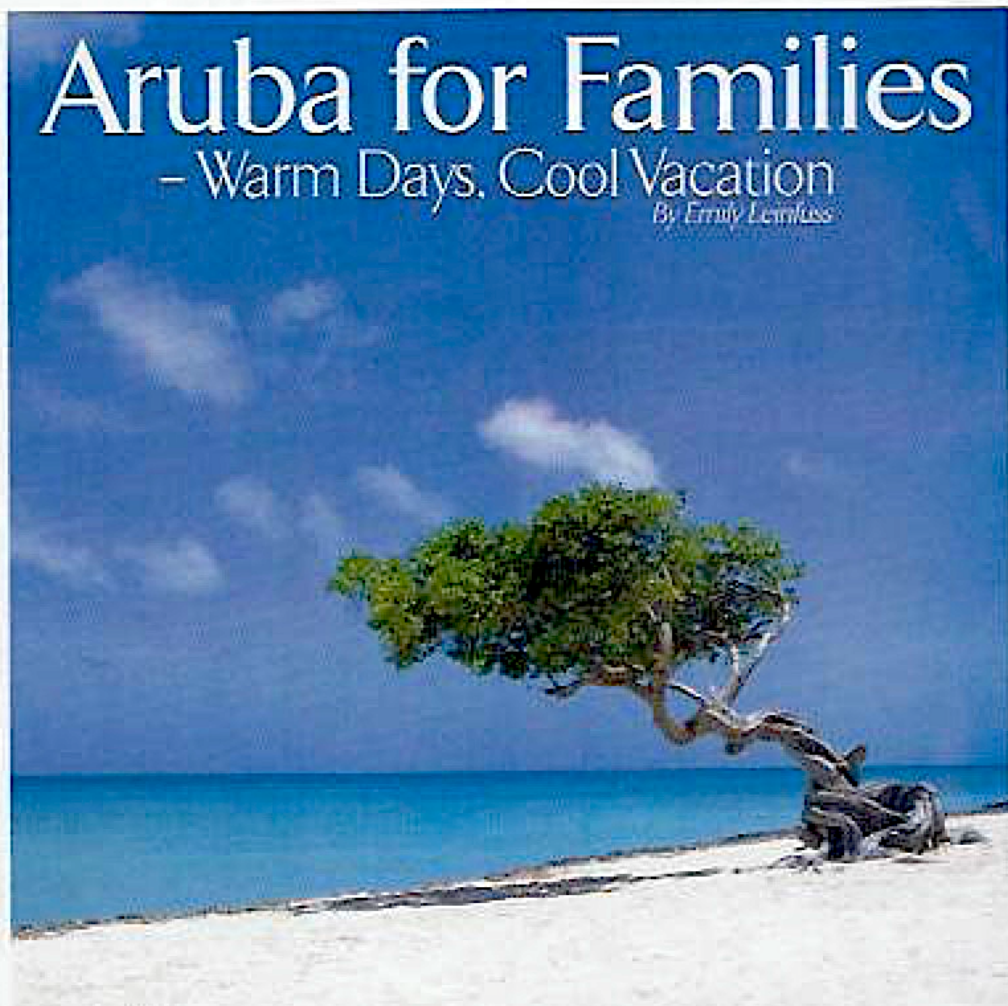
Here are some of the features:

- Tina Koochi Park, a playground for children in Oranjestad open from 4 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. daily.
- Kiborima Miniature Village and Park, a whole family adventure that features miniature versions of typical Aruban houses and buildings, along with exotic birds, animals and tropical plants.
- Butterfly Farm - Step into a tropical garden teeming with butterflies from around the globe. Tour guides will entertain with commentary on

Aruba for Families

- Warm Days, Cool Vacation

By Emily Levinson



The native Divi Divi tree

butterfly habits and the miracle of metamorphosis. Arrive early and witness new butterflies emerging from their chrysalis and taking their first flight. The butterfly farm is a rare opportunity for photography and a sure delight for visitors of all ages.

- Snuba. This mixture of snorkeling and scuba makes it easy for underwater explorers as young as 8-years old to safely observe the ocean.
- De Palm Tours. This full-service tour group offers 50% off its activities for children under age 12. Activities include jeep safaris, scuba, snuba, sunset sails and island tours.

Aruba offers something for everyone - pristine white sands, adventuresome overland safaris, dynamic water sports plus more than 20 dive sites with over 9 shipwrecks to explore. Most Arubans speak four languages: English, Spanish, Dutch and Papiamentu (the native language of Aruba). And the people make you feel good about being there. In fact, saying it in their native language Aruba makes you feel "bon bini" or welcome. ■



Fun for kids



Scuba and snuba observed in Aruba