Suggested places to dine:
In Palm Beach and downtown Oranjestad, there is a large selection of restaurants to choose from, offering a wide range of cuisines. If you want to try a taste of local cuisine, here are a few suggestions:
Linda's Pancake House (Palm Beach): Serves traditional Dutch pancakes all day.
Nos Clubhuis (Palm Beach): Offers authentic Aruban cuisine and sources ingredients as much as possible from local farms and fishing boats.
Local Store (Palm Beach): Fabulous burgers, wings, and our famous fried funchi can be enjoyed at this casual eatery house in a historic rum shop.
Ritz Aruba (Oranjestad): You could call it Aruban fast food. Local snacks like pastechis, Johnny cakes, and croquettes are served, as well as burgers, wraps, and a favorite Dutch treat—French fries with peanut sauce.
The Old Fisherman (downtown Oranjestad): A favorite local lunch spot, this restaurant features authentic homestyle Aruban cooking.

#3 SHOPPING, CULTURE, AND A LITTLE BEACH TIME

Aruba's port is centrally located in downtown Oranjestad. Our capital city is an exciting, bustling area of the island featuring world-class shopping and dining, historic Dutch colonial architecture, museums, and a heavy dose of local charm.

Navigating your way through downtown is easy—go by foot or take one of our trolleys, designed in San Francisco and utilizing clean energy sources (it's free of charge and you can hop on and off at several stops along the way).

Heading out of the cruise ship terminal, shoppers will delight in the endless opportunities to browse open markets, alfresco plazas, and indoor malls. Featuring everything from international designer brands to quaint, one-of-a-kind boutiques, Aruba's renowned shopping scene will intrigue even the most seasoned shoppers.

Renaissance Mall is home to elite luxury retailers like Cartier, Louis Vuitton, BCBG, David Yurman, Rolex, and Gucci, just to name a few. Duty-free perfumes and cosmetics, Cuban cigars, and beach and resort wear can also be found in this indoor/outdoor mall.

Renaissance Marketplace, anchored by the downtown marina, is just across the street from Renaissance Mall. Here, a lively atmosphere prevails in an alfresco venue that features an array of shops, restaurants, outdoor cafés, and an outdoor stage with live entertainment nightly. A state-of-the-art cinema complex and the Seaport Casino are also located here.

Royal Plaza, located across from the harbor and adjacent to the main bus terminal, has become an iconic landmark in downtown Oranjestad. Its signature pink-and-white Dutch Caribbean architecture houses two levels of shops—featuring anything from fine jewelry and perfumes to cigars and souvenirs—as well as restaurants and an alfresco nightclub.

Oranjestad's **Mainstreet**, also known as Caya Betico Croes, embraces its historical roots. Here, visitors can enjoy boutique shopping opportunities among the colorful Dutch colonial architecture. Authentic local and regional cuisine is prominently featured throughout this area. Culture seekers and shoppers will find that the trolley line runs past various points of interest, giving visitors a peek into our culture and heritage, as well as access to the shopping and dining in this historical area. If you see something that piques your interest, simply hop off—another trolley will pass by shortly so you can continue your journey.
Those on foot can enjoy a self-guided monuments tour by visiting sites like Fort Zoutman and Willem III Tower, the Water Tower, several historic churches, the Court House, and homes of historic and architectural significance.
End your day downtown with some relaxation at **Surfside Beach**; it's about a 15-minute walk from the port. There are beach and snack bars conveniently located here.

SO MUCH TO SEE AND EXPERIENCE WITH SO LITTLE TIME!

Make the most of our One happy island with three itineraries designed to maximize your visit to Aruba.

There are several four-wheel drive, van, bus, ATV, UTV, and even horseback tours with special trips around the island geared towards cruise ship passengers with limited time to enjoy the sights of Aruba.

Here, we have laid out three half-day itineraries to enjoy various highlights of this dynamic destination while making the most of your short time here.

#1 HIGHLIGHTS OF THE SOUTHERN SIDE

From the cruise ship terminal area, head south through bustling downtown Oranjestad, continue past the Queen Beatrix International Airport, and at the third roundabout (not counting the airport roundabout), take the road to the right. On this coastal road, the first highlight is Spaans Lagoen. Also known as **Spanish Lagoon**, the area is a protected wetland and is officially a part of Arikok National Park. Developing marine species live safely among the stilt roots of mangrove trees lining the lagoon until they are big enough to venture into the open sea. The lagoon leads inland to a salt pan surrounded by vegetation inhabited by a variety of bird species, including bananaquits, Aruban parakeets, herons, troupials, and common ground doves.

Just after Spaans Lagoen is an area called **Mangel Halto**. Mangel Halto gets its name from its welcoming mass of mangrove trees, which provide shade for peaceful picnics. Clearings among the mangroves lead to an inviting, shallow expanse of calm and refreshing turquoise water. Swimmers can wade out to explore the protected barrier reef.

Continuing along the coastal route, you'll pass through the quaint town of **Savaneta**. Savaneta is Aruba's earliest town, serving as the first capital until 1797. The oldest house in Aruba—a cas di torto, or mud hut, dating back some 150 years—is still standing within this historical town.

Also located in this sleepy fishing town is **Zeerovers**, a fisherman's wharf-cum-roadhouse promising a heavy dose of local flavor. A counter near the entrance sells fresh-caught fish to-go at local prices. Patrons can also have the fish prepared on the premises and then enjoy it on the waterside deck among the seasoned locals discussing the latest town news over a few ice-cold Balashi beers.
You still have interesting sites and beaches to conquer, so onward you go on the coastal road until it connects back to the main highway.

Continuing south, the highway leads to **San Nicolas**, Aruba's second largest city. The "Sunrise City" was once a boomtown, owing its success to the oil refinery (now closed) that it harbors. Back in the boom days, refinery workers recruited from the British Caribbean helped to develop San Nicolas' distinct Creole flavor and played a major role in shaping the island's beloved Carnival tradition. While in the heart of downtown San Nicolas, stop in at the Aruba Rum Shop or White Star for a cold beer. Rum shops are icons of local culture that have been around for decades, with the Aruba Rum Shop and White Star in San Nicolas among the oldest on the island. Just as they've always done, rum shops serve as local watering holes where lawyers, fishermen, and everyone in between discuss the events of the day, catch up on local politics, or just shoot the breeze in a rich atmosphere filled with years of history and culture.

Head further south out of San Nicolas towards the refinery into **Seroe Colorado**, the site of the former Lago colony where American refinery workers and their families once lived. A few residents still live in the bungalows overlooking **Rodger's Beach** and **Baby Beach**. Both of these beaches are tranquil spots to kick back and relax while soaking in the warm sun tempered by cooling trade winds. Baby Beach's shallow waters are ideal for snorkeling (snorkel equipment rentals can be found at JADS Dive Center at Baby Beach).

When you exit the Seroe Colorado area, a beautiful photo op can be had at the red **Seamen's Anchor** overlooking Boca Grandi Beach (a kitesurfing mecca). The anchor is a monument dedicated to all seamen. Charlie Brouns Jr. of Charlie's Bar in San Nicolas initiated the placement of the mammoth anchor, acquired from the Lago Oil & Transport Company, at the entrance of Seroe Colorado in 1985.

A perfect way to end your afternoon of sightseeing is a refreshing treat from the "coconut man" who sets up a stand along the Seroe Colorado road to serve coconut water from freshly cracked coconuts—an authentic island beverage! (You'll find him close to the anchor.)
If the timing is right, an amazing Aruba sunset can be enjoyed in the distance as you travel back down the main highway into downtown Oranjestad and to the cruise ship terminal.

Suggested places to dine or refresh yourself while on the southern side:

Zeerovers (Savaneta): Serves deep-fried fresh seafood.
La Granja (Savaneta): Serves roasted meats and Caribbean side dishes.
Gallo Rojo (San Nicolas): Offers freshly baked goods and sandwiches.
Pueblito Paisa (San Nicolas): Serves authentic Colombian dishes.
Kamini's Kitchen (Seroe Colorado): Authentic Trinidadian cuisine cooked by Kamini herself.
Rum Reef (Seroe Colorado): Serves refreshing island cocktails in a fabulous location overlooking Baby Beach

Unique photo ops:
Some of the world's most renowned street artists have come to Aruba to use the town of San Nicolas as a canvas, leaving behind amazing murals on our streets and buildings.

#2 GEMS OF THE NORTH COAST

Heading out of the cruise ship terminal, take a left on the main boulevard in downtown Oranjestad and follow north towards the high-rise hotel area, where many of the island's iconic sites and landmarks can be found.

The first stop is the **Bubali Bird Sanctuary**, where guests can catch many of Aruba's local and migrating birds out for a morning stroll. Located across from the RIU and next to The Marriot Courtyard Resort, the Bubali Bird Sanctuary has attracted many of the over 250 species of native and migratory birds on Aruba. This official nature preserve features two man-made lakes surrounded by lush wetland vegetation. An observation tower grants birdwatchers the opportunity to see blue herons, green herons, cattle egrets, snowy egrets, Caribbean coots, brown pelicans, Neotropic cormorants, numerous duck species, and much more.

Walk or take a quick drive just across the street for a visit to Aruba's **De Olde Molen**—an iconic landmark paying homage to Aruba's Dutch heritage. Originally built in the Netherlands in 1804, this windmill was shipped to Aruba in pieces and rebuilt in 1961. Back on the main boulevard, continue north to the first traffic light and make a right to head east on the Palm Beach Road (opposite direction of the high-rise hotel area), followed by a left at the next roundabout. Follow the blue street signs directing you to the **Alto Vista Chapel**.
You'll know you reached the chapel when you hit the winding road lined with the *Stations of the Cross.*

Early in the 18th century, a small group of Catholic natives settled an area to the northeast of the town of Noord. They would gather to pray high on a hill overlooking the north shore, and in 1750, the island's first Roman Catholic church—the Alto Vista Chapel—was built at this spot. The picturesque chapel now serves as a unique retreat where locals and island visitors can spend a moment or two of peaceful contemplation.
Follow the dirt road that leads down from the hilltop and skirts the coastline. The ruins that resemble a crumbled castle off in the distance are those of the **Bushiribana Gold Mill.** Aruba experienced a gold rush during the 19th century, with the discovery of gold on the island first documented in 1824. In 1874, an English mining company built the Bushiribana Gold Mill on Aruba's north coast in order to process the gold ore extracted from the hills nearby. A team of local masons was hired to assemble the old-fashioned mill using primitive cranes of wooden beams to lift the massive rocks into place. Today, locals and island guests can enjoy exploring inside the Bushiribana Ruins, which provide an excellent vantage point to quietly observe the surrounding rugged terrain and the stunning Caribbean Sea.

Continuing along the coastline trail for another ten minutes past the ruins will bring you to the **Natural Bridge.** Thousands of years of pounding waves and strong winds have slowly carved away at the limestone cliffs along Aruba's north coast to create eight natural bridges, the largest and most famous being the Natural Bridge, located near Andicuri Beach. Before collapsing in 2005, it was the most impressive structure of its kind in all the Caribbean. Even in its collapsed state, it still draws visitors, and there is a souvenir shop and cold refreshments to quench your thirst here as well.

Following the coastal dirt road back, continue on past Bushiribana Gold Mill Ruins and Alto Vista Chapel towards your final destination of the afternoon, the California Lighthouse. The **California Lighthouse** overlooks the area known as Hudishibana from its post at the top of a limestone plateau. The 100-foot-tall stone lighthouse was named after the steamship California that sunk in 1891 in the waters nearby. Visitors who make the short drive up the hill to the lighthouse will be rewarded with a spectacular panoramic view of the Caribbean Sea, battering against the rocky north coast and then settling into a calm stretch of turquoise as it wraps around the west coast. Off in the distance, the rolling white sandy hills of the California Dunes can be seen.

As you depart the California Lighthouse, follow the paved winding road that leads past Arashi Beach and through the beautiful residential neighborhood of Malmok, back to the high-rise hotel area, and eventually into downtown Oranjestad.