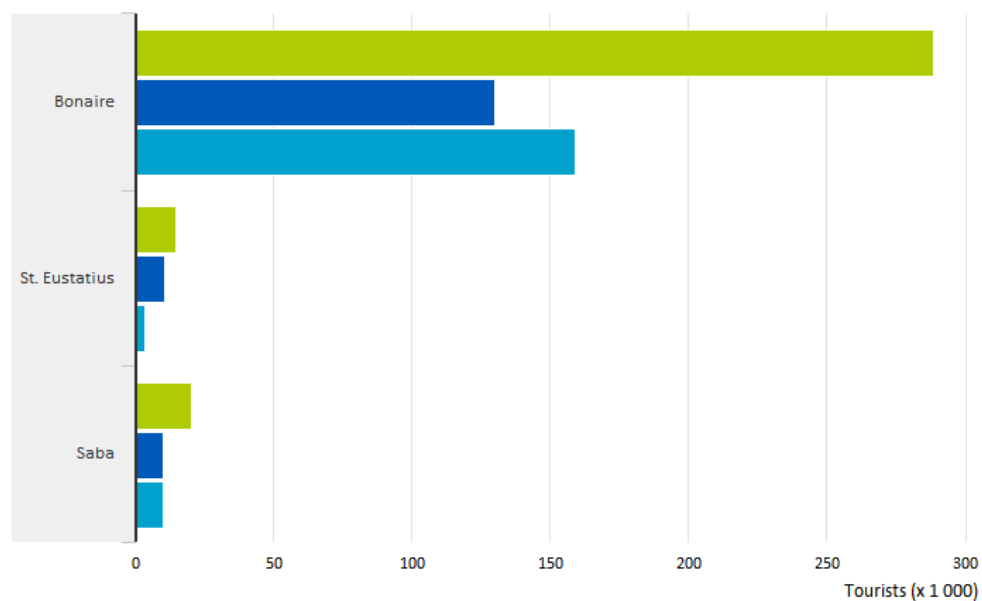


Tourism in the Caribbean Netherlands in 2014

The number of tourists flying into the Caribbean islands Bonaire, St Eustatius and Saba in 2014 was almost the same as in 2013. As they stayed for shorter periods on average on St Eustatius and Saba, the number of overnight stays of tourists arriving by air on these islands decreased in 2014. It seems that Bonaire, St Eustatius and Saba did not benefit from the growth in worldwide tourism in 2014. This was also true for the entire Caribbean region (IMF, 2014).

Although the shares differed per island, most tourists arriving by air in Bonaire, St Eustatius and Saba, in 2014 had the Dutch or American (including Puerto Rican) nationality.

Graph 1. Inbound tourism by air and by boat (including daytrips), 2014



■ Total
 ■ Plane
 ■ Boat



Alongside tourists who arrive by plane, tourists who arrive by boat are also an important driver for tourism on Bonaire and Saba, and to a lesser extent St Eustatius. For Bonaire cruise ship passengers are a very important factor: in 2014 more cruise ship tourists than tourists arriving

by air visited the island: 156 thousand and 130 thousand respectively. However, it is unclear how many passengers actually disembarked from the cruise ships to go ashore. Saba was visited by almost as many boat passengers as tourists by plane in 2014: 10.4 thousand and 10.3 thousand respectively. Over 60 percent of these boat passengers arrived on the two ferries which sail between St Maarten and Saba, although it is not yet possible to determine how many ferry passengers are residents and how many are tourists. For St Eustatius, relatively fewer tourists arrive by boat.

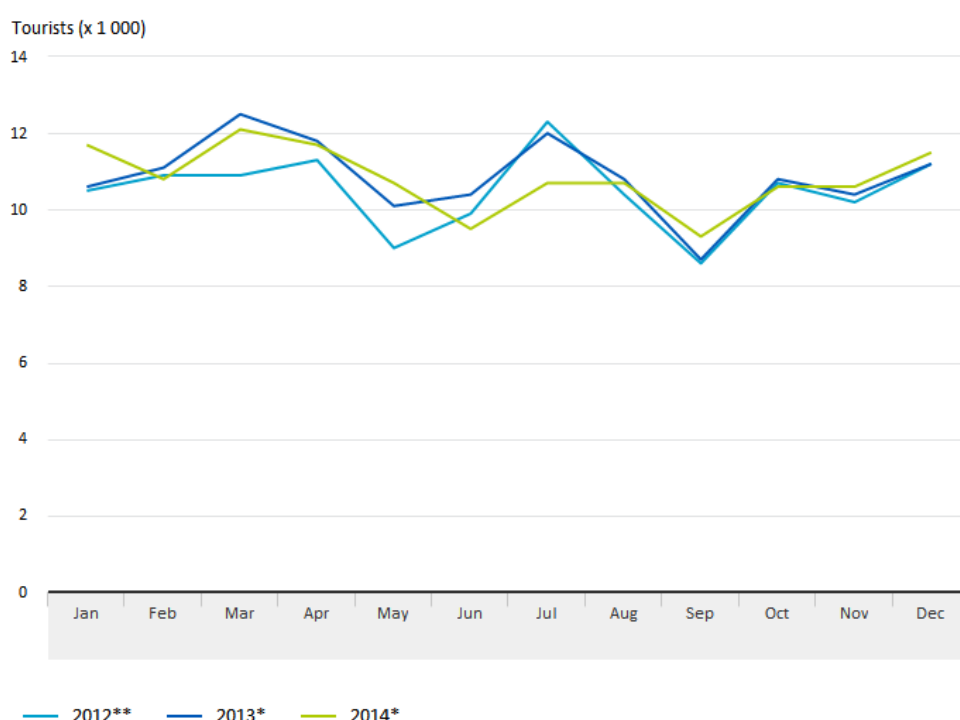
The data in this article are provisional and based entirely on registers available to Statistics Netherlands (see also the [methodological explanation](http://www.cbs.nl/nl-NL/menu/themas/vrije-tijd-cultuur/links/toerisme-caribisch-nederland-2012-2014-methodologische-toelichting.htm) (Dutch only): <http://www.cbs.nl/nl-NL/menu/themas/vrije-tijd-cultuur/links/toerisme-caribisch-nederland-2012-2014-methodologische-toelichting.htm>.

Bonaire

On average 11 thousand tourists a month arrive by air

In 2014, an average 11 thousand tourists per month travelled to Bonaire *by air*; for the whole of 2014 the number was approximately 130 thousand, around the same number as in 2013. Fewer tourists arrived by plane in June and July than in the same period in previous years, but this was compensated by more tourists arriving in other months of 2014.

Graph 2. Inbound tourism by air, Bonaire, 2012-2014

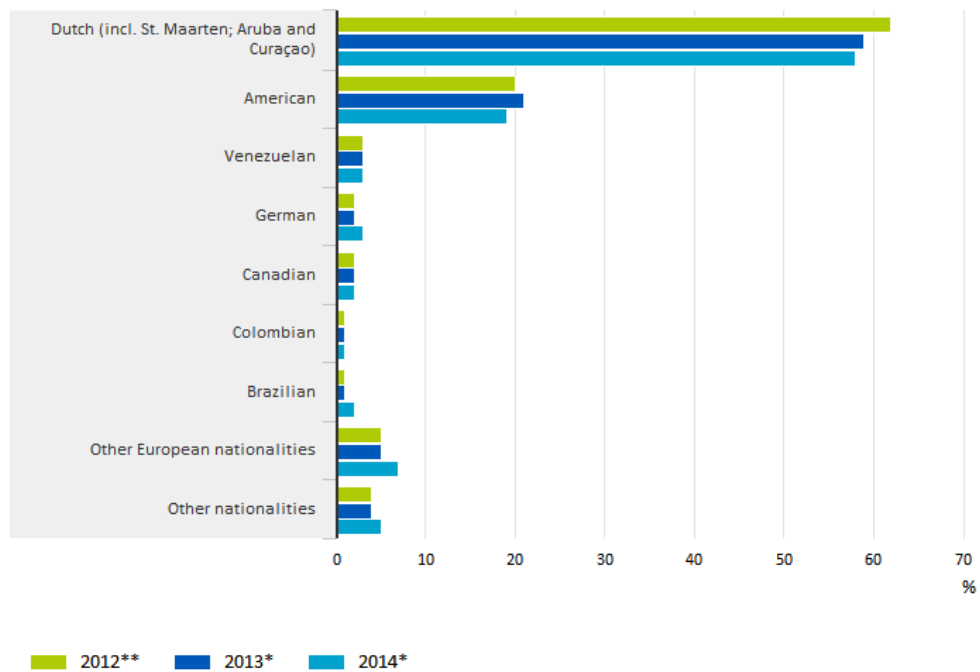


In 2014 most tourists arriving by air had the Dutch or American (including Puerto Rican) nationality. The share of Dutch tourists has decreased in the last three years.

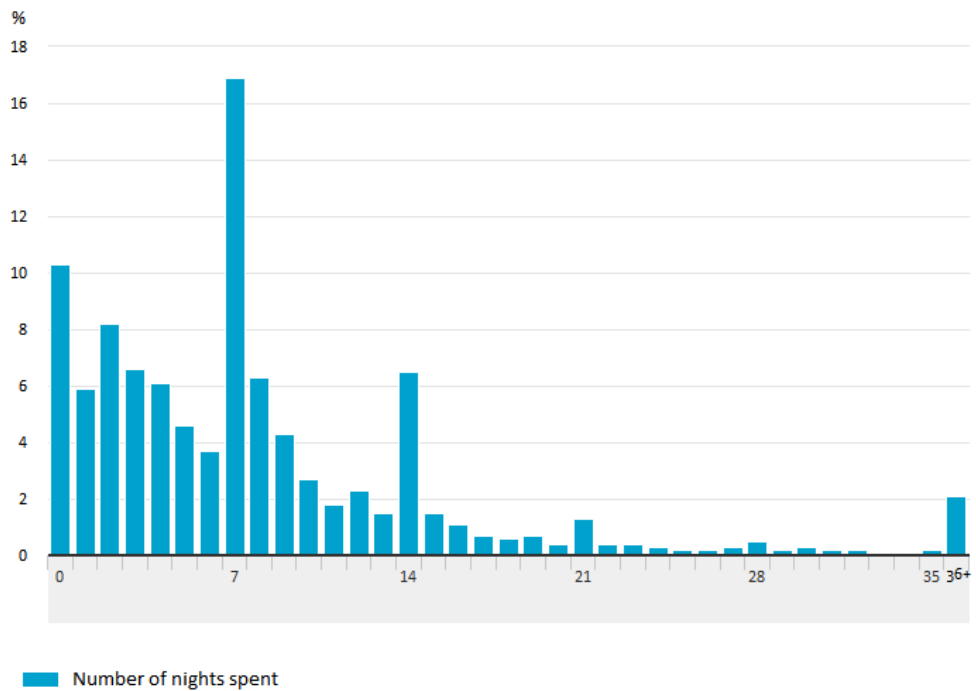
Over half of the tourists flying in stay one week or less

Day trippers accounted for 13.4 thousand of the approximately 130 thousand tourists who flew to Bonaire in 2014. More than half of the remainder staying for at least one night spent seven nights or less on the island, with the highest peak for seven nights. The average number of nights spent by this group of tourists was 9.1. This is similar to the 9.2 nights in 2013. The average length of stay for all tourists arriving by air, including day trippers, was 8.2 nights, both in 2013 and in 2014.

Graph 3. Inbound tourism by air and by nationality, Bonaire, 2012-2014



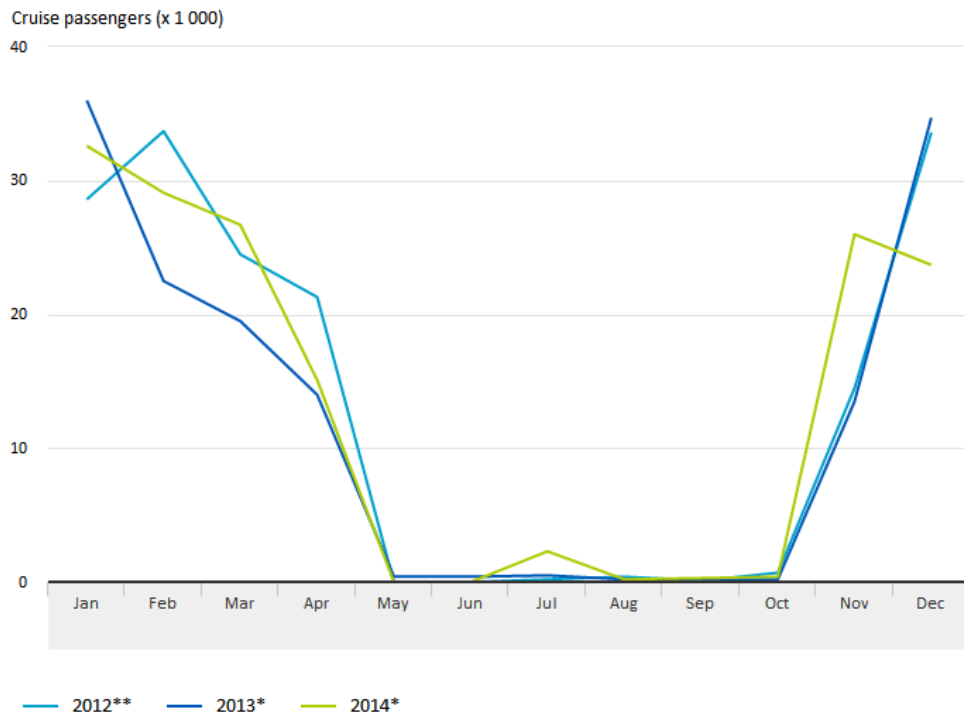
Graph 4. Inbound tourism by air and by length of stay (nights spent), Bonaire, 2014. Zero nights spent means a day trip



More cruise passengers than tourists arriving by air

Just as in previous years, in 2014 more tourists arrived on Bonaire by ship than by air. Most - 156 thousand - were cruise passengers. In 2012 and 2013, 158 thousand and 142 thousand cruise passengers respectively visited the island. In 2014 the average number of passengers per cruise ship was 1,200. Due to small changes in the composition of the cruise ships docking at Bonaire, this average is lower than the 1,500 per ship in 2013. If only comparable cruise ships are taken into account, the average number of passengers per ship in 2014 was similar to that in 2013. More cruise passengers arrived in November and fewer in December than in the same months in 2013. It is not known how many cruise passengers went ashore. The graph below clearly shows that the cruise industry is very seasonal: hardly any cruise ships come to Bonaire in the summer months because of hurricanes. The economic significance of the cruise industry is clearly smaller for Bonaire than that of tourists staying on the island. For example, most cruise ships only stay in Bonaire for one day. In addition, cruise passengers do not use accommodation on the island.

Graph 5. Number of cruise passengers, Bonaire, 2012-2014



The number of non-cruise ships - motor boats, yachts and other small vessels - that called at Bonaire in 2014 was relatively small: 850, with an average of 3.1 passengers per boat. These boats stayed for 12.7 nights on average. This relatively long length of stay is partly due to the fact that Bonaire has two well-protected harbours: the Harbour Village Marina and the smaller harbour at Plaza Resort. About 50 percent of these smaller vessels stayed in Bonaire for 10 days at the most.

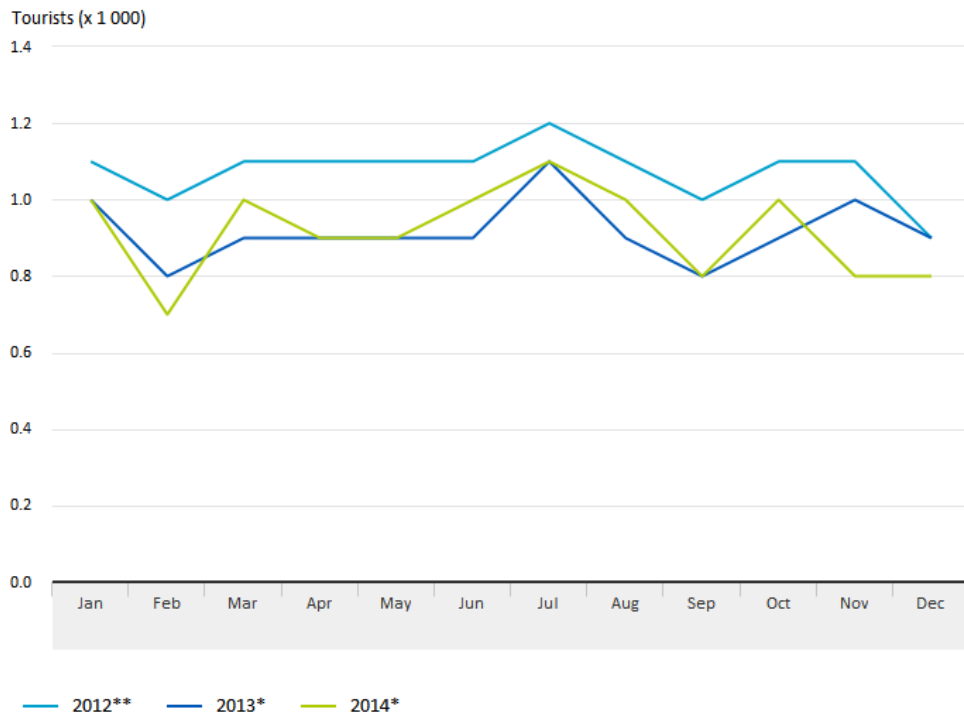
St Eustatius

On average 900 tourists per month arrive by plane

On average, about 900 tourists flew into St Eustatius per month in 2014, a total of nearly 11 thousand tourists. This is roughly the same as in 2013.

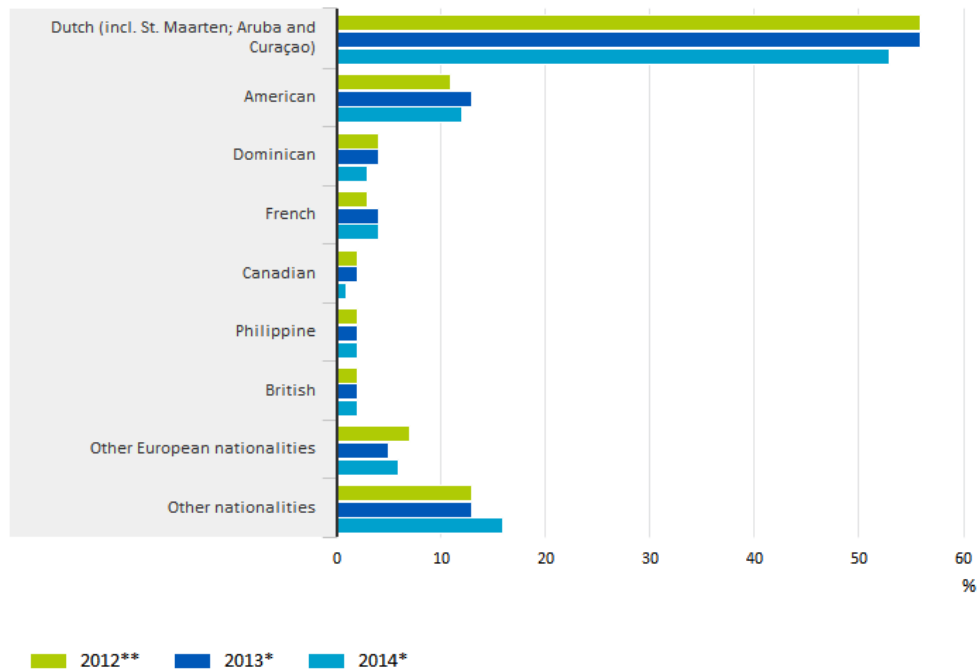
As for Bonaire and Saba, most tourists who flew into St Eustatius, had the Dutch or American (including Puerto Rican) nationality, although the share of American tourists is smaller in St Eustatius than in Bonaire and Saba.

Graph 6. Inbound tourism by air, St. Eustatius, 2012-2014



Most planes flew in from St Maarten, which operates as a major international hub for tourists going to St Eustatius and Saba. Passengers are carried by small aircraft with a limited capacity of around nineteen passengers.

Graph 7. Inbound tourism by air and by nationality, St. Eustatius, 2012-2014



Just over half of tourists arriving by plane stay up to 7 nights

Of the 11 thousand tourists who arrived by air, 2,200 were day trippers. For the remainder the length of stay peaked at 1 to 3 nights. Just over half of tourists who arrived by air and spent at least one night stayed on St Eustatius for seven nights or less. The average length of stay of this group in 2014 was 9.7 nights, one night shorter than the 10.7 nights in 2013. As a result, the total number of nights spent by tourists arriving on St Eustatius by plane decreased between 2013 and 2014. If the average number of nights is calculated for all tourists who arrived by air - including day trippers - the average length of stay was 7.8 nights in 2014 and 8.7 nights in 2013.

Boat passengers account for 3.7 thousand tourists

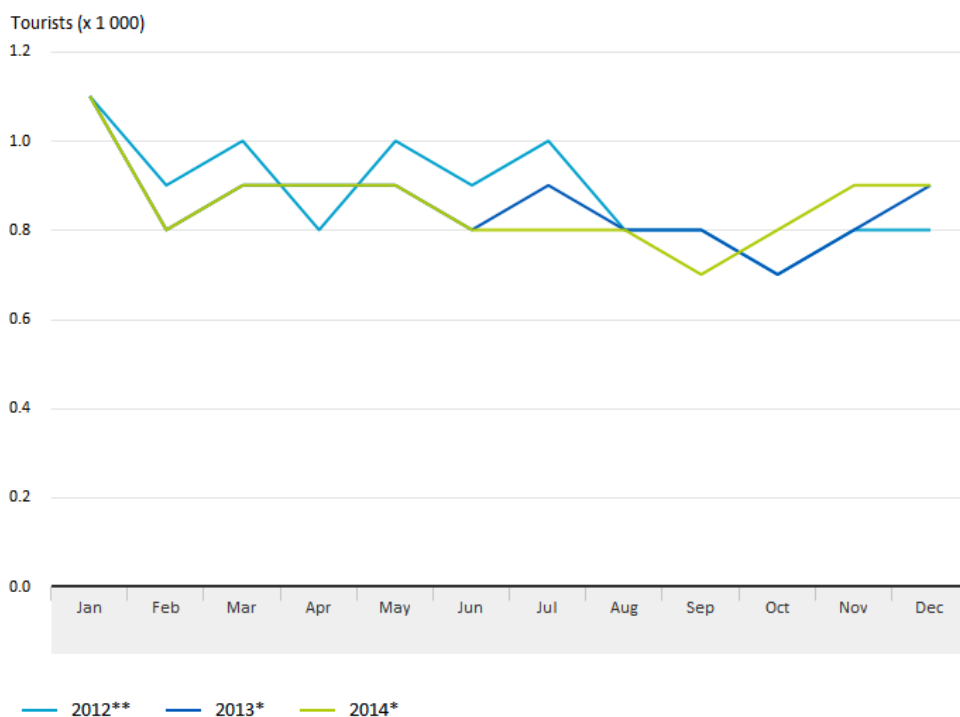
Large cruise ships cannot dock at St Eustatius, and the island does not have a protected harbour. However, it does have moorings for small vessels. The 650 small vessels visiting the island in 2014, including motor boats, yachts and a small cruise ship, carried 3.7 thousand tourists, an average of 5.7 passengers per ship. The boats stayed in St Eustatius for 2.6 nights on average. These are higher numbers than in 2013. The most common nationalities of the vessels were American, French and Dutch.

Saba

On average nearly 900 tourists per month arrive by plane

In 2014, an average of almost 900 tourists per month travelled to Saba by plane, bringing the total to 10,300 tourists. This number is comparable to that for 2013 and to the number of tourists travelling to St Eustatius by air in 2014. In Saba, too, most passengers arrived on small aircraft – around nineteen seats - from the international hub on St Maarten.

Graph 8. Inbound tourism by air, Saba, 2012-2014

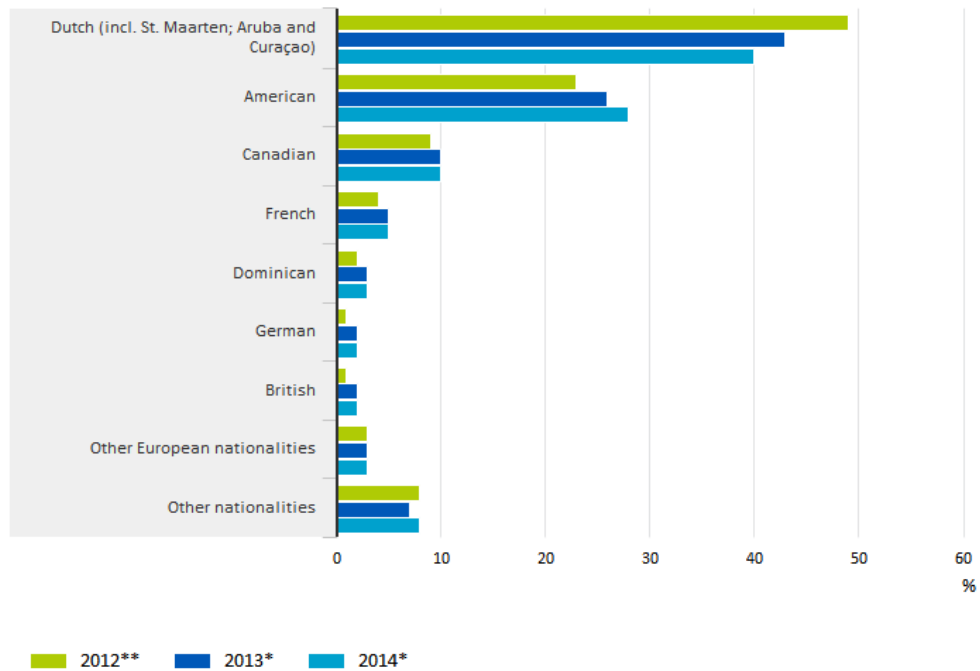


Dutch and Americans account for most foreign tourists arriving by air

On Saba, too, most tourists arriving by air in 2014 had the Dutch or American (including Puerto Rican) nationality. Through the years, the share of American tourists has been higher in Saba than in Bonaire and St Eustatius. Just as on Bonaire, the share of tourists with a Dutch nationality has decreased in the past three years.

Just over a fifth of the 10.3 thousand tourists who arrived on Saba by air stayed for only one day, a total of 2.4 thousand. The most popular length of stay for the other four-fifths was between 1 to 3 nights. The average length of stay for the latter group in 2014 was 6.9 nights, down from 7.6 nights. in 2013. The total number of nights spent by tourists arriving by air thus decreased. Calculated for all tourists who arrived by air - including day trippers -, the average length of stay was 5.3 nights in 2014 and 6.1 nights in 2013. Tourists stayed shorter on average on Saba than on Bonaire and St Eustatius.

Graph 9. Inbound tourism by air and by nationality, Saba, 2012-2014



Number of passengers by boat equal to the number of tourists by air

Like St Eustatius, it is difficult for large cruise ships to call at Saba. Neither does Saba have any protected harbours. However, two ferries connect Saba with St Maarten and there are anchorages for motor boats, yachts and other small vessels. A total 500 of these vessels called at Saba in 2014, carrying approximately 3.7 thousand tourists. An average of 7.4 passengers per vessel. The average length of stay was 2.1 days. The most common nationalities of the ships were American, French and British. The two ferries carried about 6.7 thousand passengers to Saba in 2014. However, it is not yet possible to determine how many of these ferry passengers are tourists and how many are residents. Neither is it known how long the tourists arriving by ferry stayed on Saba. It is expected that more information will become available on these subjects in the foreseeable future. Overall, approximately 10.4 thousand passengers, of whom a considerable share were tourists, arrived by ship in 2014. That is about the same as the number of tourists that arrived by air in that year.

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Tourist

Tourists are not only people who travel for leisure, but also people who travel for other purposes, e.g. business. Tourism includes daytrips as well as longer stays.

Dutch

Tourists with the Dutch nationality not only include Dutch people from Europe (international market) but also Dutch citizens from the islands Aruba, St Maarten and Curaçao (local market). Tourists from Bonaire, St Eustatius and Saba are seen as domestic tourists, and are not included in the figures. At the moment Statistics Netherlands is researching the possibility of using an extra (administrative) source so that it can publish the different Dutch groups of tourists separately.

Fewer tourists arrived by plane in June and July

This is consistent with the smaller number of passengers, including residents, who came to Bonaire by air in these months. This may be the result of a decrease in the number of flights of a local airline from May 2014. Another explanation could be the FIFA World Cup in the same period, which may have kept Dutch tourists home. However, the decrease in the number of tourists arriving by air was not reflected in the figures for St Eustatius and Saba.

Keywords

tourism, Bonaire, St Eustatius, Saba, cruise ships

Summary:

The number of tourists flying into the Caribbean islands Bonaire, St Eustatius and Saba in 2014 was almost the same as in 2013. Tourists arriving by boat are also an important driver for tourism on these islands.