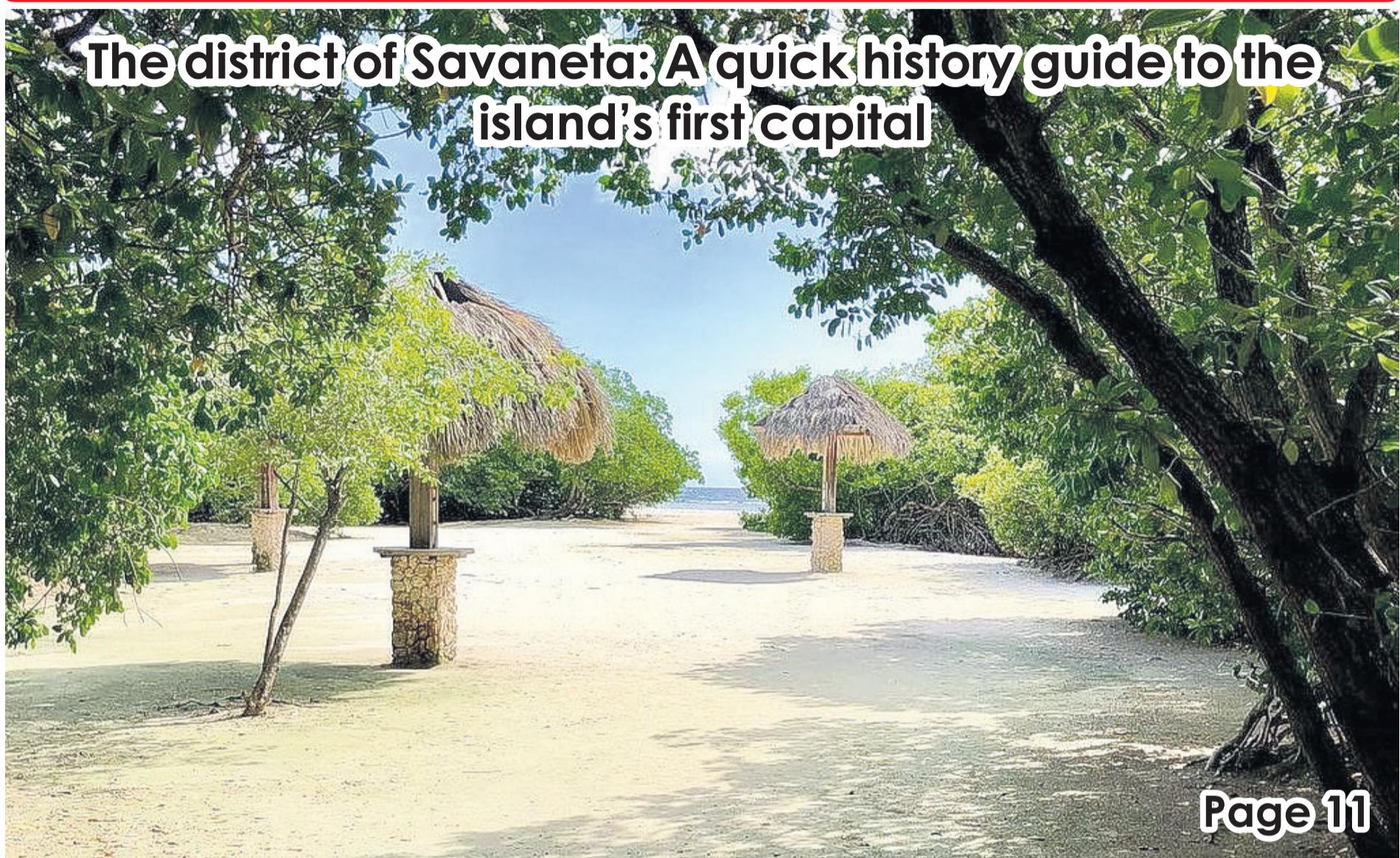


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## The district of Savaneta: A quick history guide to the island's first capital



Page 11

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## Tech is thriving in New York. So are the rents



New York, United States

It accounts for more than 200,000 jobs and has colo-

nized entire neighborhoods. In New York, the tech industry is driving local economic growth like never before --

but it is also widening the gulf between the haves and have-nots.

Ian Amit remembers moving to New York 25 years ago. Back then, "you could probably count the number of tech startups on two hands," says the CEO of cybersecurity firm Gomboc.ai.

A quarter of a century later, the professional organization Tech:NYC lists more than 2,000.

Every indicator shows that the tech footprint has "grown enormously" in the Big Apple, says Julie Samuels, president of Tech:NYC, who also points to the arrival of major employers in the sector.

The most visible among them is Salesforce, with its branded tower near Times Square. But the epicenter of New York tech lies elsewhere.

Once known as "Silicon Alley" -- a nod to California's Silicon Valley -- and centered around Broadway and 23rd Street, the hub has expanded to cover a vast area known as Midtown South that stretches from Chelsea to SoHo and includes the Meatpacking District.

At the heart of this network sits Google, which occupies no fewer than six buildings spanning several hundred thousand square meters. Like Meta, Microsoft, and Amazon, the Alphabet subsidiary has opted for charming old buildings rather than a gleaming tower.

### - Defying the doubters -

Amazon's withdrawal in 2019 -- under pressure from public opposition -- from a megaproject to build a second headquarters in Queens raised fears of a slowdown for New York tech. So did the rise of post-Covid remote work.

But the industry has done more than simply recover from both shocks.

Despite a recent softening of the tech job market, companies have leveraged the jobs crunch to enforce a return to the office.

Last year, new leases were signed for more than 700,000 square meters of office space in Midtown South -- a record, according to Peter Johnson of commercial real estate firm Avison Young. "Everything suggests this will continue, or at least hold at those levels," he says.

The demand is so strong that a growing number of companies are now venturing further south in Manhattan or even across the river to Brooklyn, among them Etsy and Kickstarter.

### - The place to be -

In Manhattan, amid majestic but modestly scaled historic buildings and far from the chaos and skyscrapers of the Midtown business district, "this is where companies want to establish their long-term headquarters," Johnson says.

More than in San Francisco, the tech capital of the world, "you're close to your custom-

ers" in other industries, notes Amit.

"Finance, healthcare, education -- everything is here." What's more, while startups long had to look to California for funding, dozens of private equity firms are now based in New York.

Beyond a desirable work environment, "the young, dynamic people that tech companies are trying to hire" are already here, Samuels adds.

This workforce can appreciate New York's charms all the more because the average hourly wage in tech is significantly higher than in any other sector -- including finance.

### - A double-edged sword -

"A big chunk of our high-end sales come from tech," observes Jay Batra of Batra Real Estate. "They definitely help developers get good prices, and it's very good for the real estate economy."

But that is yet another source of pressure on the housing market, with median rents in Manhattan climbing 40 percent over the past decade to about \$4,500 per month.

"We need to find a way to allow people who grew up here to stay here," acknowledges Samuels, "while also allowing people who want to come here to start a business or launch their career to do so. And that's not easy." The backlash has already reached City Hall: in 2025, democratic socialist Zohran Mamdani won the mayoral race on a promise to freeze rents on nearly one million apartments -- with many pointing to the tech industry for driving up the cost of living.

There are many contributing factors, but if forced to assign blame, "tech wouldn't be my first culprit," argues Amit.

"It's traditionally been finance," which accounts for more than 500,000 jobs in the city.

"New York has always been a big deal, and that draws very highly paid individuals and families who obviously create discrepancies. Tech just fits into that." □

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# No, George Washington didn't have wooden teeth. Yes, he led the Siege of Boston

By MICHAEL CASEY

Associated Press

**BOSTON (AP)**—More than a decade before he became the country's first president, George Washington was leading a critical campaign in the early days of the American Revolution. The Siege of Boston was his first campaign as commander-in-chief of the Continental Army and, in many ways, set the stage for his military and political successes — celebrated on Presidents Day. Following the Battles of Lexington and Concord, militias had pinned down the British in Boston in April 1775. The Continental Congress, recognizing the need for a more organized military effort, selected Washington to lead the newly formed army.

## The Siege of Boston and its significance

On this day 250 years ago, Washington would have been nearing the end of an almost yearlong siege that bottled up as many as 11,000 British troops and hundreds more loyalists. The British were occupying Boston at the time, and the goal of the siege was to force them out.

A critical decision made by Washington was sending Henry Knox, a young bookseller, to Fort Ticonderoga in New York to retrieve dozens of cannons. The cannons, transported hundreds of miles in the dead of winter,



A statue of George Washington on horseback is displayed at the Public Garden, Friday, Feb. 13, 2026, in Boston.

were eventually used to fire on British positions. That contributed to the decision by the British, facing dwindling supplies, to abandon the city by boat on March 17, 1776.

Historians argue that the British abandoning their positions, celebrated in Boston as Evacuation Day, rid the city of loyalists at a critical time, denied the British access to an important port and gave patriots a huge morale boost.

"The success of the Siege of Boston gave new life and momentum to the Revolution," Chris Beagan, the site manager at Longfellow House in Cambridge, a National Historic Site that served as Washington's

headquarters during the American Revolution. "Had it failed, royal control of New England would have continued, and the Continental Army likely would have dissolved."

## How the siege shaped Washington

The siege was also a critical test for Washington. A surveyor and farmer, Washington had been out of the military for nearly 20 years after commanding troops for the British during the French and Indian War. His successful campaign ensured Washington remained the commander-in-chief for the remainder of the revolution. Doug Bradburn, president of George Washington's Mount

Vernon, said Washington took the first steps to creating a geographically diverse army that included militiamen from Massachusetts to Virginia and, by the end of the war, a fighting force with significant Black and Native American representation. It was the most integrated military until President Harry S. Truman's desegregated the armed forces in 1948, he said.

Washington, a slave owner who depended on hundreds of slaves on his Mount Vernon estate, was initially opposed to admitting formerly enslaved and free Black soldiers into the army. But short of men, Washington came to realize "there

Associated Press

are free Blacks who want to enlist and he needs them to keep the British from breaking out" during the siege, Bradburn said.

Ridding Boston of the British also turned Washington into one of the country's most popular political figures.

"He comes to embody the cause in a time before you have a nation, before you have a Declaration of Independence, before you're really sure what is the goal of this struggle," Bradburn said. "He becomes the face of the revolutionary movement."

Commanding the military for more than eight years also prepared Washington for the presidency, Pulitzer Prize-winning military historian Rick Atkinson said. "Perhaps most important, it gave him a sense that Americans could and should be a single people, rather than denizens of thirteen different entities."

## Myths of Washington

His rise to prominence also led to plenty of myths about Washington, many which persist to this day.

One of the most popular is the cherry tree myth. It was invented by one of Washington's first biographers, according to George Washington's Mount Vernon, who created the story after his death. Supposedly, a 6-year-old Washington took an ax to a cherry tree and admitted as much when caught by his father, famously saying "I cannot tell a lie ... I did cut it with my hatchet." □

# Logan Paul's Pikachu Illustrator Pokémon card sells for record \$16.5M at auction

**NEW YORK (AP)** — Logan Paul has set a new world's record — for the auction price of a trading card. The wrestling and social media star's rare Pikachu Illustrator Pokémon card, a "Holy Grail" for collectors, sold for \$16.5 million Monday at Goldin Auctions after 41 days of bidding. Paul had purchased the card in 2021 for \$5.275 million, a Guinness record at the

time for a Pokémon card. He had added a diamond necklace and custom case and wore the card at WrestleMania 38 in 2022.

Guinness World Records adjudicator Sarah Casson was on hand Monday for the auction's closure, which was livestreamed on YouTube, and confirmed the price was a record not just for a Pokémon card, but

for any trading card sold at auction.

"Oh my gosh, this is crazy," said Paul, who placed the card around the neck of winning bidder A.J. Scaramucci, a venture capitalist and son of former White House communications director Anthony Scaramucci.

The card was designed by Atsuko Nishida for a 1998 contest. Only a few dozen



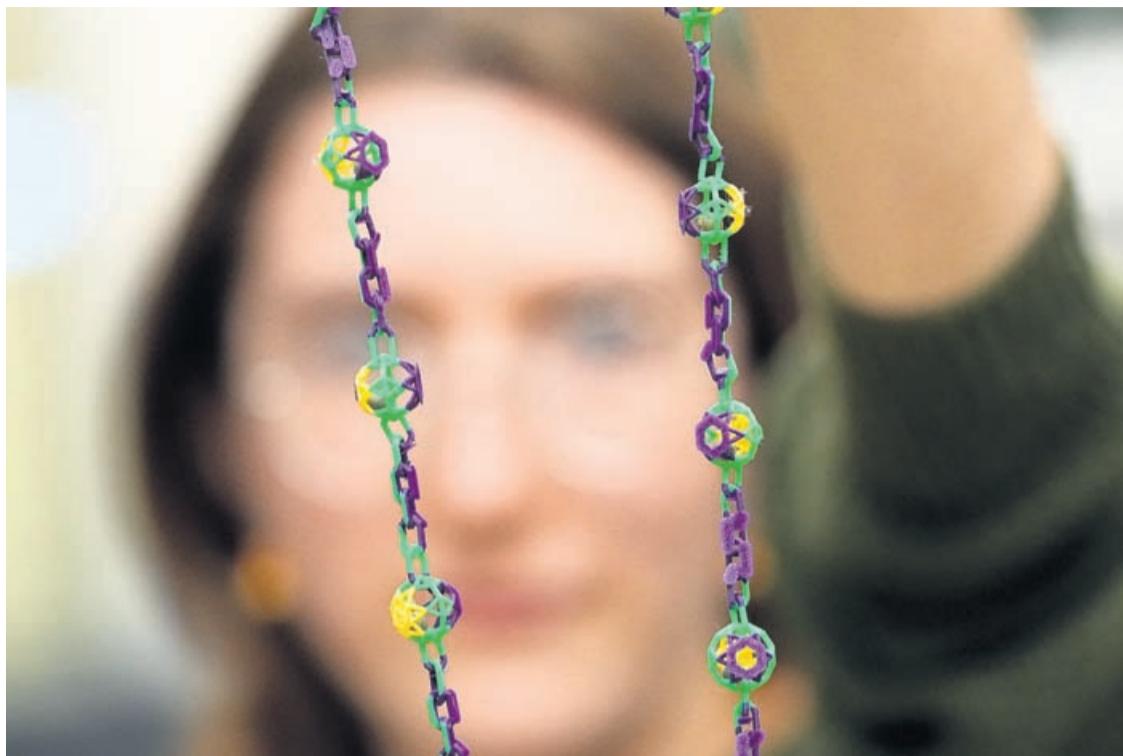
Logan Paul poses for a photo at the Tempo by Hilton Times Square on March 26, 2025, in New York.

Associated Press

are believed to exist, and Paul's card is believed the

only with a quality rating of 10. □

## Biodegradable Mardi Gras beads help make Carnival season more sustainable



Alexis Strain, graduate student in biological sciences at Louisiana State University, shows the biodegradable Mardi Gras beads they are developing, Jan. 27, 2026, in Baton Rouge, La.

Associated Press

By TRAVIS LOLLER and STEPHEN SMITH

Associated Press

**NEW ORLEANS (AP) —** It is Carnival season in New Orleans. That means gazillions of green, gold and purple Mardi Gras beads. Once made of glass and cherished by parade spectators who were lucky enough to catch them, today cheap plastic beaded necklaces from overseas are tossed from floats by the handful. Spectators sometimes pile dozens around their necks, but

many are trashed or left on the ground. A few years ago after heavy flooding, the city found more than 46 tons of them clogging its storm drains. The beads are increasingly viewed as a problem, but a Mardi Gras without beads also seems unfathomable. That is why it was a radical step when the Krewe of Freret made the decision last year to ban plastic beads from their parade.

"Our riders loved it because the spectators don't value

this anymore," Freret co-founder Greg Rhoades said. "It's become so prolific that they dodge out of the way when they see cheap plastic beads coming at them."

This year, beads are back, but not the cheap plastic ones. Freret is one of three krewes throwing biodegradable beads developed at Louisiana State University.

The "PlantMe Beads" are 3D-printed from a starch-based, commercially available material called poly-

lactic acid, or PLA, graduate student Alexis Strain said. The individual beads are large hollow spheres containing okra seeds. That is because the necklaces can actually be planted, and the okra attracts bacteria that help them decompose.

### 2.5 million pounds of trash

Kristi Trail, executive director of the Pontchartrain Conservancy, said plastic beads are a twofold problem. First, they clog the storm drains, leading to flooding. Then those that aren't caught in the drains are washed directly into Lake Pontchartrain, where they can harm marine life. The group is currently preparing to study microplastics in the lake.

The trend toward a more sustainable Mardi Gras has been growing for years and includes a small but growing variety of more thoughtful throws like food, soaps and sunglasses. Trail said there is no good data right now to say if those efforts are having an impact, but the group recently got a grant that should help them answer the question in the future.

"Beads are obviously a problem, but we generate about 2.5 million pounds of trash from Mardi Gras," Trail said.

### First algae beads, now PlantMe beads

Strain works in the lab of Professor Naohiro Kato, an associate professor of biology at LSU. He first got the idea to develop biodegradable beads in 2013 after talking to people concerned about the celebration's environmental impact. As a plant biologist, Kato knew that bioplastics could be made from plants and got curious about the possibilities.

The first iteration of the lab's biodegradable beads came in 2018, when they produced beads made from a bioplastic derived from microalgae. However, production costs were too high for the algae-based beads to offer a practical alternative to petroleum-based beads. Then Strain started experimenting with 3D printing, and the PlantMe Bead was born.

For the 2026 Carnival season, LSU students have produced 3,000 PlantMe Bead necklaces that they are giving to three krewes in exchange for feedback on the design and on how well they are received by spectators.

One funny thing, Kato said, is that people have told him they love how unique the PlantMe Beads are and want to keep them. □

## Obama shuts down alien buzz and says there's no evidence they've made contact

By The Associated Press

Former U.S. President Barack Obama said he did not see evidence that aliens "have made contact with us," after sending social media abuzz by saying aliens were real on a podcast over the weekend.

During a lightning round of questions with podcast host Brian Tyler Cohen, Obama was asked, "Are aliens real?"

"They're real," he answered, continuing: "But I haven't seen them. And, they're not being kept in Area 51."

On Sunday, the former

president released a statement on Instagram, appearing to clarify what he meant by his comments that have since gone viral. "I was trying to stick with the spirit of the speed round, but since it's gotten attention let me clarify.

Statistically, the universe is so vast that the odds are good there's life out there. But the distances between solar systems are so great that the chances we've been visited by aliens is low, and I saw no evidence during my presidency that extraterrestrials have made

contact with us. Really!" Secrecy around Area 51, a top-secret Cold War test site in the Nevada desert, has long fueled conspiracy theories among UFO enthusiasts.

In 2013, the CIA acknowledged the existence of the site, but not UFO crashes, black-eyed extraterrestrials or staged moon landings. Declassified documents referred to the 8,000-square-mile (20,700-square-kilometer) installation by name after decades of U.S. government officials refusing to acknowledge it.

The base has been a testing



Barack Obama talks to Julius Erving during the NBA All-Star basketball game Sunday, Feb. 15, 2026, in Inglewood, Calif.

Associated Press

ground for a host of top-secret aircraft, including the U-2 in the 1950s and later the B-2 stealth bomber. □

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The photo taken on February 11, 2026 shows a cocktail infused with Chinese medicinal herbs at a traditional Chinese medicine-themed cocktail bar in Shanghai.

## 'Punk wellness': China's stressed youth mix traditional medicine and cocktails

### Shanghai, China

In a softly lit Shanghai bar, graduate student Helen Zhao stretched out both wrists to have her pulse taken -- the first step to ordering the house special, a bespoke "health" cocktail based on traditional Chinese medicine.

"TCM bars" have popped up in several cities across China, epitomising what the country's stressed-out, time-poor youth refer to as "punk wellness", or "wrecking yourself while saving yourself".

At Shanghai's "Niang Qing", a TCM doctor in a white coat diagnoses customers' physical conditions based on the pulse readings, before a mixologist crafts custom drinks incorporating the herbs and roots prescribed for their ailments. Instead of shelves of alcohol, apothecary drawers stocked with ingredients like goji berries and angelica root line the walls, permeating the room with their scent.

"This bar is actually an opportunity for me," 26-year-old Zhao told AFP, describing her "typical young per-

son" lifestyle of late nights and junk food.

"I like having a drink after work anyway, and this way I can casually check if something is wrong with me, while also holding onto a bit of wishful thinking."

The bar's resident TCM practitioner, Ding, said the concept was not as contrary as it might seem.

"The combination of Chinese medicine and alcohol has a long history in TCM -- it was traditionally called medicinal wine," he told AFP. He emphasised though that the bar targeted health awareness rather than treatment.

### 'Have fun, reduce damage'

Against the backdrop of a sluggish economy, China's job market is highly competitive, and "996" culture -- working from 9 am to 9 pm, six days a week -- is a feature of many sectors.

A 2024 survey found that over 60 percent of young people consider themselves to be in a suboptimal health state. In recent years, reports of young employees allegedly dying from overwork

have spread online, triggering discussion around mental and physical health. In "Niang Qing", Cici Song, a 41-year-old white collar worker, told AFP she felt that late evenings were her "only real 'me time'".

"On the other hand, you want to take care of your body," she said, sipping an amber-coloured drink designed to improve her diagnosed "phlegm-damp constitution".

"So this is a kind of balance -- having fun while trying to reduce the damage."

The approach seems popular.

"Niang Qing" was founded by students from Shanghai University of Traditional Chinese Medicine only last year, but has already expanded to five locations across the country.

"We've noticed that many young people are actually very interested in TCM culture, but the ways to experience it might seem dull," said 22-year-old co-founder Wu Siyuan.

The idea of the bar was born "to let people experience TCM culture through entertainment".



People stand on a terrace of St Peter's basilica before a press preview of the exhibition "Beyond the Visible" project, in the Vatican on February 16, 2026.

## St Peter's Basilica gets terrace cafe, translated mass for 400th birthday

### Vatican City, Holy See

Visitors to St Peter's Basilica will be able to follow mass in 60 languages and enjoy a coffee on a newly opened terrace as part of plans unveiled Monday by the Vatican.

The changes, which also include a new real-time booking app to help regulate the crowds, are among several initiatives marking 400 years since the consecration of the world's largest church on November 18, 1626.

Currently access to the terrace of the basilica, the centre of global Catholicism located in Vatican City, is strictly limited.

"The entire terrace of the basilica will be accessible," compared with only one third of it today, Cardinal Mauro Gambetti, the basilica's Archpriest, told a press conference.

A current "refreshment area" will be approximately doubled to around 100 square metres, he said.

The Vatican had previously sought to play down reports of a cafe on the terrace, which had sparked anger about the potential commercialisation of a sa-

cred place.

Exhibitions will also be staged on the terrace, including for children, relating to the building's history, construction and maintenance.

Some 20,000 people a day visit the basilica, a jewel of Renaissance architecture, and managing the numbers is a major challenge. Opening up space on the terrace should help reduce crowds in the basilica "and foster greater contemplation inside", Gambetti said.

### Real-time monitoring

The Vatican also Monday launched a new app for liturgies in the basilica, which will allow pilgrims to follow mass by Pope Leo XIV in 60 languages via their smartphones.

Visitors will scan a QR code to access a dedicated web page providing real-time audio and text translations, using an AI-powered system developed by Rome-based firm Translated.

There will also be a new real-time booking system for access to the basilica, fuelled by a network of sensors that monitor how many people are inside.

## Paw patrol: Larry the cat marks 15 years at 10 Downing Street

**London, United Kingdom**

Larry the cat, the UK's most famous feline, marks 15 years on Sunday as the country's chief mouser patrolling the corridors of power around number 10 Downing Street.

Here are four things to know about the purr-fect puss who over the years has charmed his way into the hearts of some of the world's top politicians.

### Humble roots

Recruited to deal with a rodent problem, Larry arrived at the prime minister's official residence on February 15, 2011.

He was adopted from the renowned London animal shelter, Battersea Dogs and Cats Home, when he was believed to be about four years old. David Cameron was prime minister at the time.

Since then, the white and tabby cat, officially introduced on Downing Street's website as the "Chief Mouser to the Cabinet Office", has reigned supreme from the country's most photographed doorstep.

His official biography on the Downing Street website says apart from rodent control: "Larry spends his days greeting guests to the house, inspecting security defences and testing antique furniture for napping quality."



Larry the cat sits in front of a flower arch of Ukraine's national flower, sunflowers, erected outside Number 10 Downing Street in London to mark Ukrainian Independence Day on August 24, 2022.

### Six prime ministers

He has lived through six prime ministers, from Cameron to Keir Starmer, weathered the storms of Brexit, Covid-19, the chaos of "partygate," Liz Truss's 49 day whirlwind occupation, and the more orderly months under Rishi Sunak.

Nothing seems to ruffle his fur as this political veteran glides from crisis to crisis with feline calm, and the lick of a paw.

A media darling, Larry, who is now believed to be around 19, often steals the spotlight from visiting for-

ign leaders.

In December, he was on the doorstep to greet the Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky.

In January, he even sent a photographer stumbling on the red carpet after darting unexpectedly between his legs during a visit by Poland's president.

### Cat-fluencer

A whiskered influencer, Larry also boasts an X account @Number10cat followed by more than 877,500 fans.

Run by an anonymous user, Larry grumbles about getting caught in the rain

and sometimes takes catty swipes at politicians, notably UK Reform and the administration of US President Donald Trump.

His first months "in office" even inspired a book, "The Larry Diaries", published in 2011.

Larry now shares the No. 10 residence with JoJo and Prince, the Starmer family cats.

Prince, a Siberian, joined the household in 2024 after "negotiations" with Starmer's children -- who had wanted a German Shepherd dog. But there was a problem: "the only door out of our

new flat is bomb proof," Starmer told the BBC in 2024. "Therefore, getting a cat flap is proving a little bit difficult."

Larry's fans can relax though: he is considered a permanent civil servant, which means he gets to stay at Downing Street for good. Unlike prime ministers.

### Famous felines

Larry is not alone in being a feline companion to politicians.

On Saturday came sad news that Palmerston, a black-and-white cat, once mouser to the Foreign Office and "Diplocat extraordinaire", had passed away in Bermuda where he retired in 2020.

"Farewell old friend x," Larry posted on his X account, brushing aside rumours of rivalry between the pair.

Under former US president Bill Clinton, the black-and-white cat Socks took up residence in the White House from 1993 to 2001.

Once a stray, Socks became the star of several books and was often featured by the UK cartoonist Steve Bell in his daily comic strips.

And in Belgium, a rescue cat named Maximus has shot to social media stardom as the bearded sidekick and PR weapon of Prime Minister Bart De Wever.□



A bicitaxi rides in a street of Havana, on February 13, 2026.

### Havana, Cuba

A green revolution is taking place on the streets of Havana, but it's by necessity rather than design.

Faced with a severe fuel crisis, which intensified after the United States placed the island under a de facto oil

blockade last month, taxi drivers are ditching their cars and whisking passengers around on e-tricycles. "Because of the gasoline and oil situation, we've had to resort to this alternative," Eduardo Romano, a father of two, told AFP, while wait-

## In fuel-starved Cuba, the e-tricycle is king

ing for customers in a park in central Havana.

Cuba, already contending with years of crippling fuel shortages, has reached a breaking point after US President Donald Trump moved to starve the communist nation of oil.

The flow of crude from top ally Venezuela dried up after the US overthrow of its leader Nicolas Maduro and Trump has threatened tariffs on any other country stepping in to fill the breach.

To conserve energy, the government has announced a series of fuel rationing measures and slashed public transport.

As the days pass and fuel

supplies dry up, the number of taxis cruising the streets of Havana has dwindled.

The few drivers left fill up at an eye-popping \$5 per liter on the black market, which has led fares to triple.

"It's a difficult situation for people," said Romano.

Six- and eight-seater e-trikes, which cost around one third of a taxi fare, have become a lifeline for cash-strapped Cubans.

"Right now, tricycles are the kings of the road," Romano joked.

There's a catch, however. The vehicles have to be charged -- a constant headache in a city battling power outages of up to 12 hours a day, due to a lack of fuel for

generating stations.

Like the even more ubiquitous e-scooter, e-trike owners have to wait for the lights to come back on to start their engines -- or plug in at the home of a friend or relative endowed with a generator or solar panels.

### Two- and three-wheelers

The dearth of public transport is another nail in the coffin of the sputtering economy.

"There are people who have even had to quit their jobs because they can't afford transportation," said Ignacio Charon, a 48-year-old tire repair shop employee.

He has been inundated with customers wanting to have old bikes patched up.□

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## Origin of Papiamento- Aruba's native language

ORANJESTAD — Papiamento, Creole language of ABC (Aruba, Bonaire and Curacao) is from the Cape Verdean Creole family (Cape Verdean language) and was taken to the Caribbean in the 9th century by the Cape Verdeans of that time (slaves), experts in cane culture and sugar production, and who were hired by Jewish entrepreneurs who went to invest in this business in the Caribbean. Cape Verdeans taught this pre-industrial revolution technology (planting cane and producing sugar, which they had learned from Madeirans) to slaves from other African regions, and did so in their language, Cape Verde Creole (Cape Verdean language), hence the language implanted in Aruba, Bonaire and Curacao.

Unlike many interesting

stories, wanting to link Papiamento directly to Portuguese, Galician or Castilian (see Papiamento, on Wikipedia – Portuguese version and Spanish version, where the Portuguese and Spanish, each claim the direct origin of Papiamento), in fact, this is not true. Papiamento is not direct from Portuguese, Galician or Castilian, it is from the Cape Verde Creole family (Cape Verdean language). You can see this best when it's saying obscene words and offending someone, precisely as they say today in both ABC and Cape Verde islands. The obscene words kept the original, had no lexical influence either from Castilian or Dutch. Also the Papi Cristang of Malacca, the Patuá of Macau, and several creoles from the east (from Daman, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Philippines, Indonesia) and Africa

(Casamança, Guinea Bissau, Sierra Leone and Nigeria, these last two releases to the English), all originated in the Creole of Cabo Verde (Cape Verdean language), which was the French language spoken in Portuguese feitorias on the coast of Africa (from Senegal to Sierra Leone), and which was taken east by the thousands of cable – Verdeans (slaves, already Christianized and speaking Creole) who served as sailors and "slaves of arms" in Portuguese caravels, demanding the east. I don't know why the official history of Portugal usually omits this fact, which is in the chronicles of the quincentrist chroniclers, but which we never saw in the history of Portugal that we study from primary education to higher education. However, it has always been tried to deceive us, in colonial time,



that we were descendants of Viriato (Iberian hero in the fight against the Romans) and the pastors of the Hermini Mountains, but not much speaking of our black-African ancestry.

We Cape Verdeans understand each other very well with these Antillians and Easterns, whose language is from the same Creole family of Cape Verde (Cape Verdean language), speaking their Creole and we ours. Therefore, Papiamento

to, Papi Cristang, Patuá Macaense and the creoles, said of Portuguese origin, Daman, India, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, some locations in the Philippines and some places in Indonesia, are creoles of the language family Cape Verde Creole (Cape Verdean language) and indirectly the Galician-Duriense or Galician-Portuguese, a language that the people spoke in Portugal in the 6th and 7th century.

Source: Dushi Aruba

## Aruba's Bocas: home to the rarest fossil reefs on the planet!

(Oranjestad)—If you've been to the northern coast of Aruba already, you've probably noticed how the ground differs entirely from the sandy beaches on the southern part of the island. These hard surfaces, with sharp bumps and holes are actually fossilized coral reefs, of which its growth and changes can be traced back to the last glacial period.

On May 30 2023, geoscientists, Dr. Patrick Boyden from the Marum research faculty at the University of Bremen, Prof. dr. Alessio Rovere from the Ca' Foscari University of Venice and Prof. dr. Gianfranco Scicchitano, from the University of Bari Aldo Moro, presented their research on these fossilized coral reefs at the University of Aruba. Their focus for their research included studying the health and formation patterns of these coral reefs, and to investigate how these reefs have responded and can

respond to fluctuating sea levels or extreme weather, like hurricanes and tsunamis.

Through underwater and land surveillance, and 3D models of the reefs, they were able to narrow down when these formations started to take place. They were also able to track the fluctuation of sea levels

during the past hundred or even thousands of years, and the effects that this fluctuation has had on the coral reefs of the windward side of Aruba.

These findings can certainly put things into perspective. The ground on which we have walked many times on the northern part of the island hold such rich history, history that dates back to a time that most of us cannot even imagine. As the scientists themselves have pointed out, these fossilized reefs on the windward side are truly an incredible and rare remnant of geological

history, as they provide a clear view of how these reefs have formed.

This research is also important for the future of coral reefs on the island. By studying rising sea levels and climate impact on these coral reefs, we are able to take concrete action in protecting and preserving our coral reefs. So, if you are ever visiting one of the bocas or driving along the northern part of the island, please be conscious to help protect our natural historical remnant. Oh, and wear (coral-friendly) sunscreen! □



# Property Management

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[casagoaruba.com](http://casagoaruba.com)

Casago  
Aruba

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Our experienced property care team inspects your home after every stay.

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## Profits



We use advanced analytics to optimize pricing and maximize your earnings.

## Casago Aruba: Redefining Island Stays with Full-Service Property Management



Casago Aruba was born from a shared passion for elevating the island's tourism experience. Built on a strong foundation of service, hospitality, and a keen eye for quality, the Casago team—backed by over 16 years of experience in the vacation rental and hospitality industry—is on a mission to redefine what luxury and convenience look like for travelers visiting Aruba.

But Casago is more than just a vacation rental platform. It is a **full-service property management company**, offering seamless experiences



for both guests and homeowners alike. While travelers benefit from handpicked accommodations and personalized service, homeowners gain a reliable partner dedicated to the care and performance of their property.

### A Stay Tailored to You

Casago Aruba offers more than just stylish villas. Their curated portfolio includes a wide variety of **condos, homes, and villas** in different sizes to suit all types of travelers—from solo adventurers and couples to large families and groups. Every stay is backed by local expertise, with concierge support, 24/7 guest assistance, and an attention to detail that consistently exceeds expectations.

Whether you're here to relax on world-famous beaches, explore Aruba's cultural gems, or discover hidden corners of the island, Casago Aruba ensures your getaway is as smooth as it is memorable.

### A Partner for Homeowners

Behind the scenes, Casago offers a robust suite of property management services designed to help homeowners

maximize rental income while minimizing stress. Services include:

- **Promotion** through Casago's professional booking platform and expert local marketing strategies
- **Complete management** of check-ins, guest communication, cleanings, landscaping, pool maintenance, and repairs
- **Transparent maintenance** reporting, real-time reservation tracking, and on-site security monitoring
- **Full handling** of tax filings for both local and state requirements
- **Monthly property inspections** and full utility bill management
- **Strategic planning** to help homeowners increase profitability and keep their properties in top condition

This full-service model ensures that every home is maintained to the highest standard while giving property owners full peace of mind.

### Rooted in Community and Sustainability

What truly sets Casago Aruba apart is their commitment



to the local community and to sustainable practices. The team works closely with local businesses and artisans, promotes eco-conscious travel, and supports initiatives that contribute positively to the island's environment and economy.

As one of the fastest-growing vacation rental and property management companies on the island, Casago Aruba continues to expand its footprint—welcoming more travelers, partnering with more homeowners, and raising the standard of hospitality in Aruba. □

## Share your Aruba memories with us!

(Oranjestad)—We at Aruba Today love to hear from our readers. This is why we love our segment "Aruba to me", where we ask our readers to send in their message and pictures sharing what Aruba means to them.

What we also love is creating and sharing memories. This is why we would like to invite you, our lovely reader, to share your fond memories on the island with us. It could be a photo from the first time you visited the island to the pictures you took at that Carnival Parade you attended last week. All is welcome!

Tell us your stories and let us give you a shout-out in our next issue! □



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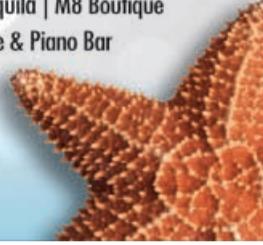
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Juan Valdez Café | Hungry Piranha - Pizza, Wings & More  
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Shalom Body & Soul Spa | Moments & Memories Jewelry  
Magnet Perfume Jewelry & Cosmetics | The Lazy Lizard  
Shalom Hair & Nails Bar | Twist of Flavors | Dunkin Donuts  
Treasure Cove | El Patio Tacos & Tequila | M8 Boutique  
Fusion Restaurant, Tapas, Wine & Piano Bar



## Infini Launches New Menu 14 Following Its Five-Year Anniversary Celebration



Infini has officially launched Menu 14, a special edition menu unveiled in celebration of the restaurant's five-year anniversary. The new menu revisits guests' favorite dishes from the past five years, blending nostalgia with fresh interpretations inspired by Infini's signature approach to modern gastronomy.

Infini stands for limitless possibilities, and Menu 14 perfectly embodies that philosophy. Crafted by Chef Urvin Croes, the menu celebrates innovation, creativity, and fearless exploration. Known for pushing boundaries through storytelling, technique, and flavor, Chef Urvin continues to redefine Aruba's fine dining scene. Infini's immersive chef's table concept invites guests to interact directly with the culinary team, transforming each dish into a chapter of an evolving narrative.

Before opening Infini, Chef Urvin honed his craft in Aruba's most prestigious hotel restaurants, rising from ap-

prentice cook to Sous Chef, and gaining international experience at the Michelin-rated Grand Hotel Karel V in Europe. His mission has always been to position Aruba as a leading culinary destination by reimagining local recipes with modern techniques and artistic precision. Dedicated to supporting local farmers and producers, Chef Urvin incorporates homegrown ingredients that reflect the island's rich food culture. His collaborations with these artisans are essential to Infini's distinctive culinary identity.

With numerous awards to his name—including being crowned the first-ever Iron



Chef Aruba—Chef Urvin remains grounded in his passion, curiosity, and love for sharing Aruba's story through food.

Menu 14 invites diners to taste, explore, and rediscover Infini's journey while looking forward to the limitless possibilities ahead. Reservations are highly recommended to experience this new chapter in Infini's evolving culinary story. □

## Fun facts about the Iguana!

**ORANJESTAD** — Colorful or camouflaged, you're bound to encounter a variety of lizards basking in the sun or scurrying on their way in our island. From the charming, friendly iguanas to the good-luck gecko Pega-Pega, you're bound to meet a few of these special residents during your visit.

Iguanas are easy to spot, as they are larger than

most other lizards and when young, have a bright green color that makes them stand out.

The iguanas usually found in Aruba are the Iguana, known as the green iguana, or locally as Yuwana. The Yuwana are a mostly herbivorous species, and can grow up to 2 meters in size, including the tail, making them one of the largest

in the iguana family. As you will see, despite their name, as they reach adulthood, the iguanas can take on a grey or blue tone instead of the bright green displayed by the young ones. In Aruba — as in the rest of the Kingdom of the Netherlands — the most usual color varies from green to lavender, black and sometimes a reddish brown.

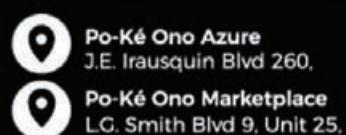
Yuwana is a protected species, as it is listed under Appendix II of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), meaning that international trade is regulated through the CITES permit system. In the past, Arubans used to eat a popular Yuwana soup, as it was believed to give strength and help restore health — probably due to the protein boost it



delivered. However, it is now illegal to catch, kill, buy or sell Yuwanas in Aruba, and this includes eating them! □



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## CAYA Introduces a Bold New Menu Celebrating Latin Caribbean Flavors



(Oranjestad)—CAYA, one of Aruba's most beloved dining destinations, continues to celebrate the vibrant essence of Latin Caribbean cuisine with an exciting new menu that beautifully balances tradition and innovation.

Nestled in a beautifully restored traditional Aruban Cunucu house, surrounded by lush tropical greenery, CAYA offers guests a dining experience that feels both authentic and contemporary. The restaurant's philosophy is simple yet profound: to create a space where the warmth of island hospitality meets the creativity of modern gastronomy.

The new menu reflects this vision with a series

of inspired dishes that showcase the diversity of Caribbean and Latin American flavors. From Cuba to Colombia, and from Aruba to Mexico, each plate tells a story rooted in heritage and reimagined through CAYA's modern lens.

Among the standout new appetizers are the **Tuna al Tamarindo**, featuring thinly sliced tuna sashimi served with tamarind leche de tigre, creamy avocado, marinated onions, radishes, cilantro, and crispy tortillas dusted with *tajín*; and the **Beef Stew Croquettes**, a playful nod to Caribbean comfort food, served with truffle and black garlic mayonnaise. Guests can also savor the **Beef and Pork Brochetas**, made with locally smoked bacon, Madam Jeannette peppers, local honey, and tenderloin, grilled to perfe-



tion and served with chimichurri espuma.

The main courses bring equal excitement. Highlights include the **Chilean Sea Bass**, pan fried and served with a smooth carrot and *ají amarillo* sauce, creamy garlic mashed potatoes, grilled paksoi and broccoli, hearts of palm, toasted cashews, and a fragrant lime leaf vinaigrette. Another showstopper is the **Duck and Rice**, a Caribbean interpretation of a Peruvian classic, featuring pan fried duck breast with aromatic green rice infused with local herbs, kombucha, and *ají amarillo*, finished with a pan fried egg and sarsa criolla.

Dessert lovers are in for a treat as well. The **Caribbean Black Forest** reimagines the classic with a tropical twist, featuring a rich brownie served with red fruit, coconut mousse, chocolate, and banana rum ice cream. The **Merengon Tropical** delights with sage panna cotta, mango and pineapple compote, mango sorbet, and citrus meringue.

Guests can also enjoy CAYA's new **Sabor Experience**, a limited time three course menu priced at \$79, allowing diners to explore an appetizer, main course, and dessert of their choice.

To complete the experience, CAYA hosts live music every Sunday from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., setting the perfect backdrop for an evening of island charm and culinary artistry.

CAYA continues to invite locals and visitors alike to experience the heart of Aruba, where Latin Caribbean heritage comes alive in every dish, every note of music, and every heartfelt welcome. □

## Dining in? Try making some local favorites!

### How to make "pan bati"

(Oranjestad)—If you're ever up for an Aruban snack, try making another Aruban classic appetizer called Pan Bati. Similar to a pancake both in appearance and cooking, this is a super easy meal that adults and children will both enjoy. Here's how to make it!

#### Ingredients:

2 cups of all purpose flour  
1 cup grams of fine cornmeal  
2 tbsp baking powder  
1 1/3 cup of milk  
1 pinch of salt  
2 tbsp of granulated sugar  
Oil for cooking

#### Instructions:

Add all the dry ingredients in a bowl

first, and stir until well mixed. Then add the milk and beat until reached a pancake-like consistency. If more moisture is needed, add some water until reached desired consistency.

In a hot pan with oil, pour in enough batter to cover the bottom of the pan. Just like pancakes, flip the pan bati when one side turns golden brown. When your pan bati is ready, place on a plate and cover with a clean kitchen towel.

Traditionally, pan bati is cut in triangle pieces, and is often eaten as a side dish with soup, fried fish or stews. However, it is also casually enjoyed with some butter and cheese on top! □



## The district of Savaneta: A quick history guide to the island's first capital

**(Oranjestad)**—Before Oranjestad became the island nation's capital, Aruba's first capital was the district of Savaneta. Here is where the cultural identity of Aruba was born, and from where the rest of the island developed into what it is today.

Savaneta is said to have been the first place where the Caquetio inhabitants first stepped foot on the island. Though there isn't hard evidence to back this up, but considering the legend of the Cacique Arua, it is believed that there were already movements on Aruba—and Savaneta—around 88 AD.

The Caquetios probably made their way to the island either from Venezuela, Colombia or other Caribbean islands in the region, but with good weather it was relatively easy for them to travel back and forth in their canoes. So, since the Caquetios discovered the island, Aruba found her first form of civilization.

It wasn't until 1499 when Aruba met another group of people who set foot on the island: the Spanish explorer Alonso de Ojeda. De Ojeda first took notice of Aruba off the coast of Venezuela, during his exploration of the Latin American country. This



was on August 9th, 1499. However, de Ojeda didn't actually sail to the island till 4 days later, on August 23rd, 1499. This was the beginning of the Spanish era on Aruba (1499-1636).

Alonso usually didn't stop at every island or land he saw, especially not in the Caribbean. He would often take notice of land from afar and continue sailing. However, Aruba was an exception. He had heard that there were "quebracho" (Kibrahacha) trees on the island, which were commonly used to produce dye or paint. But since these trees could not be found in Savaneta, he continued to search in the area of what is now known as Santa Cruz. The best way to transport the tree barks was via a route passing through Savaneta, and so the first road between



Savaneta and Santa Cruz was made.

### The Dutch colonial era (1636-1805)

During the 80-year war between The Netherlands and Spain, Dutch explorers and merchants began to travel to the ABC islands. Once they landed in Aruba, they deported the small Arawakan and Spanish community that was living on the island. This was the beginning of colonization of the ABC islands by the Dutch empire. Around the same, the West Indian Company

(WIC) was born. Bonaire and Curacao were mostly used for plantations, where the Dutch had transported slaves from Africa. Aruba, on the other hand, was mostly used to raise cattle and to house the haring factory. The Dutch had often forced the indigenous community to work for them.

In 1636, when the Netherlands won the war against Spain, the country surrendered the islands to the Dutch.

The Dutch administration appointed the island's first commander, an Irish man named N. Williams. Because the Dutch were interested in other Caribbean islands and countries in South America, they imported Dutch merchants and business men, all of whom resided in Savaneta. This way, Savaneta officially became the island's first capital.

However, at the end of the 18th century, the commander at the time, J.R. Lauffer, moved his office to what is now "Horse Bay" in Oranjestad. Because the highest office on the island moved away from Savaneta, the capital lost its title to what was called then Playa.

How Savaneta got its name The name Savaneta probably has a Spanish origin. It was said that when the

Spanish climbed a hill called Yara, they saw that the area was mostly open and had no big trees. In Spanish, such a land area is called a "sabana".

Because of its land surface, Savaneta was a great place to construct cattle farms. From here, the farmer culture on Aruba was born. Before the Aruban Gold Rush and the construction of the Refinery in San Nicolas, most residents were farmers, and Savaneta had many inhabitants that farmed fruits and vegetables. They also continued the tradition of raising cattle, like goat, sheep, pigs and horses. Savaneta was one of the first places on the island to have a general farming culture. From this culture, many other traditions were born, like the Dera Gay Holiday that we celebrate every year on June 24th.□

**Source: Historia di Savaneta (History of Savaneta) by Adolf "Dufi" Kock.**



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## CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS 37 Labor

1 Shaker fill 38 Peaceful

39—

5 Church feature 40 Added a

10 Inkling tariff to

11 Pierced 41 Incline

13 Brooklyn team

14 Rancorous

15 Sparkly stuff

17 Inventor Whitney

18 Members of the graduating class

19 Animal abode

20 CPR expert

21 Music genre

22 Sheriff's group

25 Polite chaps

26 Meter or liter

27 Feeding-time need

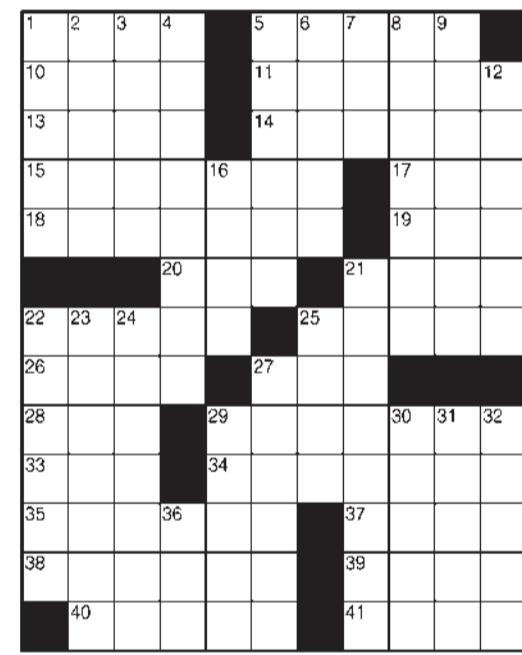
28 Skillet

29 Large cactus

33 Lupino of film

34 Animal, informally

35 Roadside eyesore



A X Y D L B A A X R  
is L O N G F E L L O W

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

2-27

## CRYPTOQUOTE

Q R M G D R M R Z Z E D R X W Z G O R

Z C T D , D C J R E D R X M Z G O R

F Y M N X M N F X S R Z Y G H W R R .

— N X J Y N A C L Y R

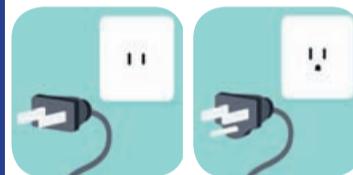
Cryptoquote: IT IS HARD TO FAIL,  
BUT IT IS WORSE NEVER TO HAVE TRIED TO  
SUCCEED.—THEODORE ROOSEVELT

## Cruise ship Schedule: Feb. 9 - 15 2026

			ARR	DEPT	BERTH
MON	09	MARELLA DISCOVERY 2	08.00	20.00	C 1
TUE	10	MAJESTIC PRINCESS SERENADE OF THE SEAS OASIS OF THE SEAS	07.00 08.00 08.00	18.00 23.00 23.00	B C I 1
WED	11	BRITANNIA CELEBRITY SILHOUETTE SEA CLOUD SPIRIT FREEWINDS	07.00 08.00 08.00 06.00	18.00 23.00 14.00 ****	B C I E 1
THU	12	MS RENAISSANCE CARIBBEAN PRINCESS CARNIVAL MAGIC	09.00 09.00 09.00	18.00 22.00 22.00	B C I 1
SAT	14	AIDAPERLA	09.00	21.00	C 1
SUN	15	NORWEGIAN PEARL FREEWINDS - Dept.	08.00 ****	17.00 22.30	C E -

## Helpful tips for your stay on Aruba

(Oranjestad)—When traveling to another country, especially for the first time, it is always better to be over-prepared than under-prepared. That is why we have a list of basic but important information that we think may come in handy to Aruba's visitors.



## Electrical power

Aruba generally operates on 110V to 127V supply voltage and 60Hz. There are also three types of outlets used on the island: type A with two flat prongs; type B with two flat and one grounding prong, and on occasion, type F with two round prong and two earth clips on the side. However, Type A is most commonly found in homes and establishments.



## Drinking water

The water that flows through the sinks of every house, hotels and other establishments is distilled and perfectly safe to drink. Aruba's drinking water exceeds WHO's international standards for water quality, so there is no need to buy bottled water from the store.



## Safety

Since February 2024, Aruba has been categorized as the safest country in the Caribbean by The Telegraph, and many tourist that visit have often told us how they feel safe to explore the island or walk around at night. However, rare incidents do occur, so keep yourself and your belongings safe.

## SUDOKU

To play sudoku, use logic to fill the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the numbers 1-9 only once. Puzzle difficulty increases from Monday to Sunday.

## King Classic Sudoku

		1		4	5	
1	4		7	5	8	6
8				6	7	1
3		9	8	2	6	5
5						
6	9				8	2
3	1		8	5	7	
8	7		2	1		
5		3	6		8	

Difficulty: ★★

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Difficulty: \*\*\*\*\*  
2/17

9	4	6	2	5	8	1	3	7
2	7	3	1	4	9	5	8	6
5	1	8	6	7	3	9	4	2
8	6	9	7	1	5	3	2	4
3	2	7	8	9	4	6	5	1
4	5	1	3	2	6	7	9	8
7	9	5	4	8	1	2	6	3
6	8	2	9	3	7	4	1	5
1	3	4	5	6	2	8	7	9

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## New world for users and brands as ads hit AI chatbots



A photo taken on February 26, 2024 shows the logo of the ChatGPT application developed by US artificial intelligence research organization OpenAI on a smartphone screen (L) and the letters AI on a laptop screen in Frankfurt am Main, western Germany.

### Paris, France

The introduction of advertisements and sponsored content in chatbots has spawned privacy concerns for AI users as brands scramble to stay relevant in a fast-changing online environment.

ChatGPT developer OpenAI began showing ads in chatbot conversations for free and low-cost users to start balancing its hundreds of billions in spending commitments with new revenue sources.

It swiftly came in for mockery from rival Anthropic, which has staked its reputation on safety and data security.

Anthropic's advertisement broadcast during last week's Super Bowl showed a man asking advice from a conversational AI, which then shoehorns advertising copy for a dating site into its otherwise relevant response.

OpenAI boss Sam Altman shot back that the clip was "clearly dishonest".

Beyond OpenAI, Microsoft has been running contextual ads and sponsored content in its Copilot AI assistant since 2023.

AI search engine Perplexity has been testing ads in the United States since 2024, while Google is also testing ads in the AI "overviews" its namesake search engine has been offering since last year.

### Data privacy

Google has repeatedly denied wanting to run ads in its Gemini chatbot, with Demis Hassabis -- head of the search giant's Deep

Mind AI arm -- saying that ads "have to be handled very carefully".

"The most important thing" in AI is "trust in security and privacy, because you want to share potentially your life with that assistant," he added.

OpenAI has sought to reassure users that ChatGPT's responses will not be modified by the ads, which are shown alongside conversations rather than being integrated into them.

It has also promised not to sell user data to advertisers. AI companies are "concerned that selling ads will scare away users," said Nate Elliott, an analyst with US data firm Emarketer. But "when it's free, you're the product. It's a risk we're all more or less aware of already," said Jerome Malzac of AI consultancy Micropole. "We accept it because we

find value in it." If that proves true, advertisers will be delighted to surf the AI wave as it crashes over the world's internet users.

### Game changer

"It's going to be a game changer for the entire industry," said Justin Seibert, head of Direct Online Marketing. "We're already seeing how high the conversion rates (interactions resulting in a purchase) are for people that are coming in from ChatGPT and the other LLMs (large language models)," he added.

AI assistants could account for up to two percent of the online advertising market by 2030, HSBC bank analysts suggested in a report.

Many brands are already prioritising visibility on the new channel, including US supermarket chain Target and software maker Adobe.

Beyond buying a spot on users' screens, companies are also pushing for their products to appear in chatbots' organic responses. The practice is known as GEO (Generative Engine Optimisation) -- an evolution of the Search Engine Optimisation strategy during the era of Google's dominance over the web.

"We identified 90 rules that can make sure the content you create is valued by AI and spread to the right places," said Joan Burkovic, head of French GEO startup GetMint.

The company already claims 100 clients, including fashion brand Lacoste.

Malzac highlighted techniques like including references to scientific papers, adding a "frequently asked questions" section to your website, and posting information that's structured and regularly updated, Malzac said.

"If your brand isn't referenced (by chatbots) it no longer exists" for some users, he warned. □

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Hospital 7:00 pm / 10:00pm  
Tel. 527 4000

##### San Nicolas

Imsan 24 hours  
Tel. 524 8833

#### PHARMACY ON DUTY

Oranjestad:  
del Pueblo: Tel. 582 1253  
San Nicolas:  
Seroe Preto: Tel. 584 4833

#### OTHER

Dental Clinic 587 9850  
Blood Bank Aruba 587 0002  
Urgent Care 586 0448  
Walk-In Doctor's Clinic  
+297 588 0539

#### EMERGENCY

Police	100
Oranjestad	527 3140
Noord	527 3200
Sta. Cruz	527 2900
San Nicolas	584 5000
Police Tipline	11141
Ambulancia	911
Fire Dept.	115
Red Cross	582 2219

#### TAXI SERVICES

Taxi Tas	587 5900
Prof. Taxi	588 0035
Taxi D.T.S.	587 2300
Taxi Serv. Aruba	583 3232
A1 Taxi Serv.	280 2828

#### TRAVEL INFO

Aruba Airport	524 2424
American Airlines	582 2700
Avianca	588 0059
Jet Blue	588 2244
Surinam	582 7896

#### AID FOUNDATIONS

Aruba Food Bank	Tel. 588 0002
FAVI- Visually Impaired	Tel. 582 5051
Alcoholics Anonymous	Tel. 736 2952
Narcotics Anonymous	Tel. 583 8989
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ARUBA TODAY NEWS

# A healthy Shohei Ohtani eyes the one major award he hasn't won — a Cy Young Award

By DAVID BRANDT

AP Baseball Writer

**GLendale, Ariz. (AP)** — Shohei Ohtani is a five-time All-Star, a four-time Most Valuable Player, a two-time World Series winner and a World Baseball Classic champion, giving him a sparkling baseball resume that no current player can touch.

The only major honor he hasn't won? A Cy Young Award.

Given his track record, it wouldn't be a surprise to see the two-way Japanese star add that trophy to his collection in 2026.

"I think it's fair to say he expects to be in the Cy Young conversation," Dodgers manager Dave Roberts said Friday. "We just want him to be healthy, make starts, and all the numbers and statistics will take care of themselves."

"But, man, this guy is such a disciplined worker and expects the most from himself."

Just 105 days after the Dodgers became MLB's first back-to-back champs in a quarter century — beating the Toronto Blue Jays in a thrilling Game 7 — Ohtani, Yoshinobu Yamamoto and the rest of the team's pitchers and catchers went through their first spring training workout at Camelback Ranch on Friday.

Ohtani is expecting to be



Los Angeles Dodgers pitcher Shohei Ohtani, of Japan, works out during spring training baseball Friday, Feb. 13, 2026, in Phoenix.

Associated Press

a full-time, two-way player for the first time since 2023. An elbow injury kept him off the mound for the 2024 season and he returned to pitching midway through last year, going 3-0 with a 4.43 ERA in the postseason to help the Dodgers capture their second straight World Series title.

Roberts said an injury-free offseason — where he could focus on rest, recovery and strength — should make him even more formidable on the mound this season.

"He just looks strong, but not too much mass," Roberts said. "Watching him throw,

watching him run, his body is moving well. I think he's in a sweet spot."

The 31-year-old Ohtani munched on breakfast and laughed with teammates in the clubhouse before his bullpen session, fully comfortable in what are now familiar surroundings. He's entering his third season with the franchise that has helped him blossom into the biggest baseball phenomenon in decades.

"I was finally able to have a normal offseason," Ohtani said. "Although the offseason was pretty short, I thought it was a good thing."

Ohtani said he arrived at Camelback Ranch at the beginning of the month and Friday's bullpen — which he said went well — was his third of the spring. The goal is to throw live batting practice next week before he leaves to join Team Japan in Tokyo, where it will be playing in the World Baseball Classic.

He won't be pitching for Japan in the WBC — focusing solely on his work at the plate.

Roberts said keeping Ohtani off the mound in the WBC was a collaborative decision that focused on his long-term health.

"As much as people think that he's not human, he's still a human being who has had two major surgeries," Roberts said. "He's got a long career ahead of him." The timeline and schedule of the WBC — Team Japan could be playing from March 6-17 on two different continents — makes Ohtani's preparation for the Dodgers' opening day game against the Arizona Diamondbacks on March 26 a challenge. Neither Roberts or Ohtani were sure what his throwing schedule would look like in Japan.

Roberts said he's sure Ohtani will want to be ready to pitch at the beginning of the season, but the team would be flexible.

"It's delicate," Roberts said.

"We'll know more in the next couple weeks and see where the progression is at. But for us, there's not going to be any timeline or end-line or finish line where he has to be ready."

The Dodgers enter the season as World Series favorites. They were big spenders on the free agent market once again, landing four-time All-Star outfielder Kyle Tucker on a \$240 million, four-year deal that further exacerbated the divide between baseball's haves and have-nots. Los Angeles also nabbed star reliever Edwin Díaz on a \$69 million, three-year deal. □

Los Angeles Angels' Mike Trout stands on the field before a baseball game against the Houston Astros, Sept. 27, 2025, in Anaheim, Calif.

Associated Press

**TEMPE, Ariz. (AP)** — Mike Trout says he would prefer to return to center field for the Los Angeles Angels, and the star slugger says he will skip the World Baseball Classic because of insurance issues.

The 11-time All-Star who has been plagued by injuries since 2021 says his familiar position isn't as

## Mike Trout wants to return to center field for Angels and says that's easier on the body

physically demanding as the corner outfield spots, contrary to traditional thinking. Trout played his most games since 2019 last season, finishing at 130. The three-time American League MVP started 22 of his first 29 games in right field before a knee injury sidelined him for a month. The 34-year-old was exclusively a designated hitter when he returned in late May.

Trout had 26 home runs but hit just .232, by far the worst average of his career when he had at least 400 at-bats.

He spent time in left field early in his career but was a center fielder for 11 consecutive seasons before the switch to right. Injuries limited Trout to 111 games the previous two years.

Trout said conversations with first-year manager Kurt Suzuki have included the idea of a return to center.

"I feel like I'm at my best when I'm in center," Trout told reporters at the club's spring training facility Monday. "If I have to go to the corner, I'll go to the corner."

Trout believes a return to center will be good for his health. "When I was in center, it was less on my body than the corners," Trout said. "To be honest, in right field I felt I was running a lot. Talking to some other outfielders and they're saying that they feel the same way sometimes, center is less on your legs. I just feel ... confident in center."

Trout, who played in his only WBC three years ago, had said he was interested in playing again before insurance issues arose. □





United States goalkeeper Aerin Frankel blocks a shot by Sweden during the second period of a women's ice hockey semifinal match at the 2026 Winter Olympics, in Milan, Italy, Monday, Feb. 16, 2026.

Associated Press

By JOHN WAWROW  
AP Hockey Writer

**MILAN (AP)** — Aerin Frankel stopped 21 shots for her third shutout of the Olympic women's hockey tournament and the favored United States advanced to the gold medal game by defeating Sweden 5-0 at the Milan Cortina Games on Monday.

Abbey Murphy, Kendall

Coyne Schofield and Hayley Scamurra scored on consecutive shots over a 2:47 span late in the second period to blow the game open and put the Americans up 5-0. Cayla Barnes opened the scoring and Taylor Heise also scored. The Americans continued their roll through the tournament by improving to 6-0, and outscoring their

## Frankel makes 21 saves, U.S. beats Sweden 5-0 to reach Olympic women's hockey final

opponents by a combined 31-1. The U.S. has yet to trail or be tied after 0-0, and in position to become the third women's team to do so over the entire tournament, joining Canada in 2006 and 2010.

The U.S. also extended its shutout streak to 331 minutes, 23 seconds, going back to Czechia's Barbora Jurickova beating Frankel on a breakaway in the second period of a tournament-opening 5-1 win. "I think we're looking incredible. The whole tournament we've really been consistent," Scamurra said. "I don't even think we're at the peak, but I think our peak is getting that gold medal in hand for sure." The win over Sweden sets up what could well be a seventh gold-medal showdown against Canada on Thursday. The defending

Olympic champion Canadians play Switzerland in the day's other semifinal game.

The U.S. already beat Canada 5-0 in a preliminary round game last week. The Americans won Olympic gold in 1998 and 2018, with Canada winning the other five tournaments.

The U.S. has had the recent edge in the rivalry between the sport's two global powers in having won seven straight dating to beating Canada twice at the world championships in April. "Nothing matters. It's the gold medal game," Heise said of a potential rematch against Canada. "Obviously, I'm going to say we've done great and we've had great success. You want to take that confidence and motivation, but you want to move forward. We're going

to look for us and we're going to do what we need to do on Thursday and hopefully come on top."

Sweden will play for bronze on Thursday in an effort to medal for the third time in team history, and first since winning silver at the 2006 Turin Games after upsetting the U.S. in the semifinals.

"We're not done yet. We're going for the bronze now," Sweden forward Nicole Hall said.

Ebba Svensson Traff stopped 19 of 23 shots before she was pulled after Coyne Schofield tipped in Laila Edwards' shot from the blue line with 3:50 left in the second period. Emma Soderberg took over in goal, and was beaten by Scamurra, who tapped in Britta Curl-Salemme's centering pass 1:49 later. Soderberg finished with 10 saves. □

## Breanna Stewart to join Fenerbahçe in April ahead of EuroLeague Women Final Six

By DOUG FEINBERG  
AP Basketball Writer

New York Liberty star Breanna Stewart will join Fenerbahçe in April ahead of the EuroLeague Women Final Six, the European team announced Monday.

The tournament is from April 15-19 and Stewart would be back in time for WNBA training camp — if the season tips off on time. The WNBA regular season is set to begin on May 8 if the league and union can come to a collective bargaining agreement soon. Training camps would start a few weeks earlier. The major sticking point between the two sides is revenue sharing.

Stewart, who is a vice president of the players' union,

said on her podcast earlier this month that "I'm feeling like the owners are finally really acknowledging and being receptive of what we want and the players as well."

Under the previous CBA, the prioritization rule stipulated that veterans under contract had to report by the start of training camp or May 1, whichever fell later on the calendar. If a player missed that deadline they would be suspended for the entire year.

Stewart played for Fenerbahçe in the 2022-23 season where she helped the team win the Turkish League title and was the Euroleague Final Four MVP. She averaged

18.3 points, 6.5 rebounds and 3.5 assists for the Liberty last season before they were eliminated in the first round of the playoffs by Phoenix. The 31-year-old forward is currently playing in Unrivaled — a 3-on-3 league she co-founded with Napheesa Collier. That season ends in early March and Stewart is set to train at a U.S. national team camp for a few days after that. □

Connecticut's Breanna Stewart starts a fast break against Mississippi State during the first half of an NCAA college basketball game in the regional semifinals of the women's NCAA Tournament, March 26, 2016, in Bridgeport, Conn.

Associated Press





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## Create precious memories in the heart of Costa Linda Beach Resort Water's Edge Restaurant offers the complete vacation experience!



**(Eagle Beach)** – Consider your family dinner plans taken care of at Water's Edge. Located in the heart of the Costa Linda Beach Resort and on the shores of the world-famous Eagle Beach in Aruba, Water's Edge offers an elegant yet cozy dining experience that the entire family can enjoy. Whether you're craving Steak, Seafood, International Dishes or a bit of the Caribbean flare, Water's Edge caters to all your culinary needs, all the while offering you a cozy and flexible service with a spectacular view of Aruba's top-rated sandy beaches.

Water's Edge's new menu has a great variety of appetizers, main courses and delicious desserts all on one menu specially made just for you. From the minute you arrive there will be a great staff welcoming you with the most contagious smiles and warmth. Flexible and professional service allows you to enjoy your meal in the cool and elegant indoor dining area, on the sandy, breezy beaches of Eagle Beach or by the open bar outside. Serving breakfast, lunch and dinner, Water's Edge has it all for you, any time of the day.

Start your day off with a hearty breakfast. Water's Edge offers a variety of delicious breakfast items, including their house specialties of Avocado Toast, Chicken & Waffles made with homemade Belgium waffles and topped with a gorgeous hot honey sauce. If you want something on the sweeter side, try their Crème Brûlée French Toast, served with an in-house mascarpone whip cream and topped with fresh fruit and powdered sugar. Or maybe the Traditional American Breakfast is more to your liking, complete with any kind of serving of eggs, bacon, sausage and toast, served with a side of hash browns.

For lunch, keep it easy with their handheld items like their Bacon and Cheddar Burger, Mediterranean Quesadillas or Street Tacos. Want a taste of the Caribbean? Try the Grouper Reuben; A local twist to the traditional Reuben, complete with rye bread, in-house 1000 island dressing, sauerkraut and grilled grouper, served with a side of Cajun Fries.

Dinner plans are set with Water's Edge mouthwatering dinner menu. Start your gastronomic journey with a scrumptious appetizer such as the Maryland Crab Cakes, maybe the Crispy Calamari or the delectable Coconut Shrimp. You can also opt for their Water's Edge House Wedge Salad or freshly made Shrimp Louie Salad, made with poached shrimp, tossed in Louie dressing, fresh avocados and vine ripe tomatoes. For something a bit heartier, try their classic French Onion Soup, Lobster Bisque or Crab and Corn Chowder.

Follow your appetizers with your choice of Seafood, Chicken or Pasta dishes. Enjoy their succulent Shrimp and Clam Sauce with Angel Hair Pasta, a nice plate of Chicken Francese or explore the Water's Edge Fish Market—your pick of Mahi Mahi, Snapper, Grouper or Salmon, served with homemade mashed potatoes, sauce of choice and fresh herbs and vegetables.

Meat Lovers will have their fix with choices of Steak, including a Petite Filet, French Rack of Lambs or their famous 14oz pan-seared Pork finished with a fantastic apple glaze. All our steaks options are seasoned with a blend of kosher salt and freshly cracked black pepper. Served with homemade mashed potatoes, seasoned vegetables and a choice of red wine reduction, green peppercorn demi-glace, mushroom sauce, chimichurri or bacon blue cheese butter. Enjoy it with a side of fresh asparagus, seasonal vegetables, and four different types of fries. Combine your meal with your personal choice of international and exclusive wines.

Kids will enjoy every item of the specially compiled Kids Menu and there are also optional dishes for all vegans, vegetarians



and gluten-free guests.

End the culinary voyage with some luscious sweetness. Choose from a variety of dessert options, including a piece of coconut flan, NY cheesecake, carrot cake, chocolate brownie or our classic Tiramisu with kahlua and amaretto served with chocolate sauce and coffee jelly. Not to mention the fresh and light piece of key lime pie.

### Live entertainment

For seven nights a week, there is live entertainment by the best local artists for you to enjoy. Whether you're in a romantic mood, or more in a swinging mood, every night is a relaxing experience under the stars, where you can combine great music with delicious cocktails. In addition, Water's Edge offers three daily Happy Hours from 12pm-1pm, 4pm-6pm and again from 9pm-10pm with all premium brands specially priced.

Water's Edge prides itself on bringing elegance and comfort to your dining experience, offering personalized service fit for everybody's needs.

Water's Edge is open daily from 8am – 11pm

To reserve your table please call +297 583 8000 Ext. 8106 or + 297 586 9494 (direct), or reserve your table online at [reservations@watersedgearuba.com](http://reservations@watersedgearuba.com). For more information about the menus, entertainment and hours, please visit the website [watersedgearuba.com](http://watersedgearuba.com) □