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LIVE ENTERTAINMENT 7 DAYS A WEEK

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U.S. mayors push back against data center boom as AI backlash grows

Austin, United States

Data centers were supposed to be a gift. In cities across the United States, more and more mayors are treating them like a problem.

With the midterm election season approaching, big tech's promise of a windfall of jobs and tax revenue has given way to talk of polluting gas turbines, strained power grids and a growing sense that the AI revolution is being built on the backs of regular citizens.

The issue has grown large enough to reach the White House, where President Donald Trump this month assembled big tech companies to demand that they bear the exorbitant cost of powering the new data centers breaking ground in communities



Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey addresses the winter meeting of the U.S. Conference of Mayors on January 29, 2026 in Washington, DC.

across the nation. "Most talk has been, 'hey, this is the future, this is economic development, we

construction of new semiconductor plants.

But Mayor Kate Gallego says the local population is growing tired of seeing data centers multiply in their communities, straining water supplies and a power grid that are already at breaking point.

"When you suddenly have transmission equipment in your front yard, that, for many people, does not make it more desirable," she told a SXSW audience. Her frustration with the industry goes beyond power lines. Arizona's largest utility, APS, says it cannot accommodate all the demand -- if every data center seeking to locate in its service area were approved, electricity demand would reach 19,000 megawatts, more than double the grid's record peak.

"We are in constant battle with our utility provider," said Larry Klein, the mayor of Sunnyvale, in the heart of California's Silicon Valley.

- We are not here -

Gallego said she often discovers a tech company has arrived in town only by checking the utility's latest list of biggest customers -- the result of non-disclosure agreements that leave citizens in the dark until it is too late.

"There's a real spectrum of companies -- some are proud to be your partners, and others would just prefer you not even acknowledge that they're there," she said, pointing to Microsoft and Google as more transparent operators.

Mayors warn that the data center issue is becoming a symbol of Americans' growing doubts about AI more broadly.

An NBC News poll released this month found 57 percent of registered voters saying the risks of AI outweighed its benefits, compared with just 34 percent who said the opposite.

"I'm not a Luddite," Kelly said. "But I do think these are the right conversations to figure out how we manage this." □

need to go as far and as fast as we can," Tim Kelly, the mayor of Chattanooga, Tennessee, told AFP on the sidelines of the South by Southwest (SXSW) conference in Austin, Texas.

"I wouldn't say I necessarily disagree with that, but I think now it's starting to get interesting," he added.

At the top of many people's minds is Elon Musk's xAI, which has gone the farthest and at dizzying speed in building AI infrastructure in Memphis and neighbouring Mississippi. To meet its massive energy demands, xAI has been running at least 18 methane gas turbines at its South Memphis site -- sometimes without permits -- accused of pumping out pollutants in predominantly Black neighbourhoods already burdened by industrial pollution.

This week, Mississippi's environmental regulator gave its green light to the gas generators at a site despite fierce local resistance.

Microsoft, Google, Meta and Amazon are also scouring the country to build out the sprawling windowless concrete structures, driven by the insatiable computing demands of AI.

Phoenix has become a prized destination, thanks to generous tax incentives, low regulation and the

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Rocket re-entry pollution measured in atmosphere for first time

Paris, France

When part of a SpaceX rocket re-entered Earth's atmosphere exactly a year ago, it created a spectacular fireball that streaked across Europe's skies, delighting stargazers and sending a team of scientists rushing towards their instruments.

The German team managed to measure the pollution the rocket's upper stage emitted in our planet's difficult-to-study upper atmosphere -- the first time this has been achieved, according to a study published on Thursday. It is vital to learn more about this little-understood form of pollution because of the huge number of satellites that are planned to be launched in the coming years, the scientists emphasized.

In the early hours of February 19, 2025, the upper stage of a Falcon 9 rocket was tumbling back to Earth when it exploded into a fireball that made headlines from the UK to Poland.

"We were excited to try and test our equipment and hopefully measure the debris trail," the team led by Robin Wing and Gerd Baumgarten of the Leibniz Institute



This handout photograph released by The Leibniz Institute of Atmospheric Physics on February 19, 2026, shows three green lasers measuring winds and temperatures in the stratosphere and mesosphere at the institute at Kuhlungsborn on November 30, 2023.

of Atmospheric Physics in Germany told AFP via email. In particular, the scientists wanted to measure how the rocket polluted what they call the "ignosphere" -- because it is so difficult to study.

This region between 50 to 100 kilometres (31 to 62 miles) above Earth includes the mesosphere and part of the lower thermosphere.

- 'Harbinger' -

The team used technology called LIDAR, which mea-

sures pollution in the atmosphere by shooting out lots of laser pulses and seeing which bounce back off something.

They detected a sudden spike in the metal lithium in an area nearly 100 kilometres above Earth. This plume had 10 times more lithium than is normal in this part of the atmosphere.

The team then traced the plume back to where the rocket re-entered the atmosphere, west of Ireland. For the first time, this proves it

is possible to study pollution from re-entering rockets at such heights before it disperses, the scientists said. But the impact from this rocket pollution remains unknown.

"What we do know is that one ton of emissions at 75 kilometres (altitude) is equivalent to 100,000 tons at the surface," they said.

The study warned the case was a "harbinger" of the pollution to come, given how many rockets will be needed to launch all the satellites

that Earth is planning to blast into space.

Currently, there are around 14,000 active satellites orbiting our planet.

In the middle of last month, China applied for permission to launch around 200,000 satellites into orbit.

Then at the end of January, billionaire Elon Musk's SpaceX applied for permission to launch one million more.

Eloise Marais, a professor of atmospheric chemistry at University College London not involved in the new study, told AFP the research was "really important".

"There is currently no suitable regulation targeting pollution input into the upper layers of the atmosphere," she explained.

"Even though these portions of the atmosphere are far from us, they have potentially consequential impacts to life on Earth if the pollutants produced are able to affect Earth's climate and deplete ozone in the layer protecting us from harmful UV radiation."

The study was published in the journal *Communications Earth & Environment*. □

Deputies use seized trafficking funds to launch free ice cream outreach program

POLK COUNTY, FL – In most neighborhoods, the distant chime of a "Mister Softee" jingle signals a dash for loose change. But in Polk County, that familiar melody represents something much cooler: a bridge between the badge and the backyard. The Polk County Sheriff's Office (PCSO) has officially hit the streets with its newest fleet addition—a fully custom ice cream truck. While the vehicle looks like a standard treat-dispenser, its origin story and mission are anything but ordinary. Instead of taxpayer dollars, the truck was funded entirely by seized assets taken from local drug dealers.

"We took the bad guys' money and turned it into something sweet for the good kids," says Sheriff Grady Judd. "It's about more than just a Klondike bar. It's about

making sure the first time a child interacts with a deputy, it's a positive, smiling experience—not a crisis."

From crime to cones

The initiative, colloquially known as "Operation Soft Serve," repurposes funds that were once destined to fuel illegal activity. By law, seized racketeering and drug trafficking assets must be funneled back into community safety and crime prevention. For the PCSO, "prevention" starts with trust.

The truck made its debut this week at a local park, where deputies swapped their tactical gear for aprons. As a line of eager children formed, the atmosphere was a far cry from the tension often depicted in modern headlines. High-fives were exchanged as frequently as Strawberry Shortcake bars.

Building the "trust bridge"

For many urban and suburban communities, police presence is often associated with sirens and flashing lights. This program aims to flip the script. By showing up at community centers, neighborhood block parties, and schools, deputies are humanizing the uniform. "When you sit down on a curb and eat a popsicle with a kid, the barrier falls away," says Deputy Marcus Thorne, who volunteered to man the truck's window. "They see we're just people. They start to feel like they can come to us if they're scared or if something is wrong. That's how you actually keep a neighborhood safe—through relationships, not just patrols."

A sweet success



This photo shows a row of ice cream cones.

Local parents have been quick to praise the move. "In a world where things feel so heavy, seeing a sheriff's deputy handing out free ice cream brings a sense of peace," says Sarah Miller, a mother of three. "My kids were actually excited to talk to the police today. That's a win for everyone."

The program is set to expand throughout the summer, with the truck scheduled to visit

high-priority neighborhoods where law enforcement-community relations have historically been strained.

As the truck pulled away from its first event, the "Pop Goes the Weasel" melody trailing behind it, it was clear that the PCSO had found a recipe for success. It turns out that the best way to protect and serve might just involve a little bit of chocolate and vanilla. □

Polish designers give ancient amber a modern twist

Gdansk, Poland

Long coveted for its golden colour, scientific value and alleged healing properties, young Polish jewellers are transforming ancient amber into trendy pieces for the contemporary consumer. Designers working with the translucent fossil are combining traditional tools like drills, sanders, blasters and power saws with state-of-the-art technology at the Academy of Fine Arts in Gdansk, a city on Poland's Baltic Coast known as the global amber capital. In virtual reality studios, students use their screens to silently assemble objects that spin, whirl and twist, and may one day become a new generation of prized jewellery.

"From the very start, we learn the complete processes (of design), how to apply our creativity to them, how to use diverse technologies," student Martyna Golinska, 26, told AFP.

She is particularly drawn to the CNC numerical milling technique, most often used in the aerospace, automotive and medical industries.

- 'Hacking' technology -

For fellow student Paulina Smigiel, the challenge in these simulations is to translate one's artistic vision into the language of numbers a machine can understand. "If we succeed," she said, "no



Professor and jewellery designer Slawomir Fijalkowski, head of the Experimental Design Studio on Academy of Fine Arts in Gdansk, poses for the pictures at the Amber Museum in Gdansk, Poland on March 10, 2026.

other mechanical intervention is necessary".

This is how rings, necklaces, bracelets, masks, tiaras and more are brought to life: made from or adorned with amber dipped into or wreathed in gold, silver or titanium.

Whether they are milled or 3D-printed, standalone pieces or combined with other stones, minimalist or complex, they are not the traditional pieces of amber jewellery synonymous with Polish gift shops.

"We encourage students to look for their own keys, their own ways of 'hacking' different technologies, whether

they are traditional or more recent, or still only just appearing on the horizon," said 26-year-old graduate-turned-assistant instructor Zuzanna Franczak.

"It's constantly evolving, and artificial intelligence is already starting to make an appearance," she added.

- 'Amber road' -

The students' creativity is showcased in pieces and catalogues as well as at a dedicated exhibition at the Amber Museum along the Baltic Coast, on what was once known as the "Amber Road".

One of the most important

trade routes of classical antiquity, it was here that so-called "Baltic gold" was transported to the Mediterranean.

Formed some 40 million years ago from conifer resins, amber often contains air bubbles, plant fragments or insects trapped before fossilisation, granting each piece a unique "fingerprint".

Once lauded by Ovid, Nero and Pliny the Elder, amber is prized in China for its supposed therapeutic properties and sought-after in the Muslim world, most notably for use in prayer beads.

In Gdansk itself, workshops, shops and stalls dedicated

to amber abound on every corner of the historic centre, each attracting flocks of tourists.

- 'Something new' -

For centuries, amber has been associated with traditional patterns which are still used by many local artists and artisans, according to 21-year-old student Dominika Afeltowicz.

But while their old-fashioned "holiday souvenir" appeal endures, "young people are looking for something new", she told AFP.

Budding designers like her must therefore "experiment" and "push the limits", she said.

Relatively malleable, amber lends itself perfectly to experimental design, bending easily to the designer's will. The delicate material -- whose colours range from dark red to opaque white -- retains its distinct qualities throughout the working process.

"This colour range means you can create similar shapes that each produce... utterly unique effects," said Paulina Smigiel.

Her workshop is led by designer and jewellery artist Slawomir Fijalkowski.

"We're opening doors," he said of the classes, adding that he and his students "are learning together the difficult art of constantly forgetting and re-learning". □

Spielberg defends ballet, opera after Chalamet snub



Steven Spielberg attends Keynote: The Big Picture with Steven Spielberg live from SXSW at Hilton Austin in Austin, Texas.

Austin, United States

Legendary movie director Steven Spielberg on Friday defended enjoying the arts as a shared live experience,

appearing to take aim at Oscar nominee Timothee Chalamet's controversial remarks about ballet and opera.

The man behind "Jaws" and

"Saving Private Ryan" told a South by Southwest audience in Austin, Texas that communal artistic experiences -- from cinema to the opera house -- must be preserved.

Speaking at a keynote panel to promote his upcoming sci-fi film "Disclosure Day," the 79-year-old director drew cheers when he invoked the performing arts forms that Chalamet seemed to dismiss in a recent appearance.

"The real experience comes when we can influence a community to congregate in a strange, dark space," Spielberg said.

"All of us are strangers, and at the end of a really good

movie experience, we are all united, with a whole bunch of feelings that we walk into the daylight with, or into the nighttime with, and there is nothing like that."

"I mean, it happens in movies, it happens at concerts and it happens in ballet and opera. And we want that to be sustained."

Spielberg grinned as the audience broke out into cheers.

Speaking at a CNN and Variety town hall event, the "Marty Supreme" star said he feared cinema could become like ballet or opera -- describing them as art forms people feel obliged to champion even as audi-

ences drift away.

He added that he had no interest in working in a field sustained by advocacy rather than genuine demand.

Spielberg, for his part, was careful not to disparage streaming.

"We make Netflix movies, and I like working with Netflix," he said.

"Disclosure Day," Spielberg's return to extraterrestrial science fiction starring Emily Blunt and Josh O'Connor, is slated for release in June. Spielberg, whose "E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial" remains one of cinema's defining alien stories, told the crowd he had believed since childhood that humanity was not alone in the universe. □

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The fight to save history caught on Congo TV tapes

Brazzaville, Congo

From the rusty tape reels stacked from floor to ceiling in the long-forgotten archives of Congo-Brazzaville's national television company unspools a priceless, fragile testament to the history of central Africa.

For decades, Tele Congo's rolling cameras have captured the course of the country from its time under French colonial rule to the Second World War and the Soviet-aligned era after independence.

"It's a treasure trove," said director and documentary filmmaker Hassim Tall Boukambou, pointing to the thousands of reels piled up on the shelves.

Since 2019, Boukambou and a handful of fellow volunteers have worked to save these archives in the national broadcaster's former headquarters in the capital Brazzaville, whose ceilings are crumbling to the ground. The tapes document everything from sports matches, concerts and musical recordings to news broadcasts and the litany of Stalinist-style trials held under the government that ruled Congo-Brazzaville from 1968 to the 1990s. The oldest available archives



Aaron Loufimpou, who manages and preserves audiovisual archives, stacks Télé-Congo tapes in the archive room at the former television headquarter in Brazzaville, capital of Congo, on March 3, 2026.

date back to the 1920s, to the era under French rule, according to Boukambou.

- 'Miracle' survival -

Founded in 1962, two years after independence, Tele Congo became the first African television channel to broadcast south of the Sahara.

"And why in Congo specifically? Because we had Radio-Brazzaville," Boukambou said.

Since France's colonies in central Africa managed to evade the Germans, the French WWII government in exile made Brazzaville its wartime capital in 1940.

Radio-Brazzaville began

broadcasting the same year, with its high-powered transmitter capable of reaching the south of France, ruled by a Nazi-collaborationist government after the country fell to the Germans at the beginning of the war.

When Congo-Brazzaville gained independence some 20 years later, the transmitter was still in place.

Thanks to that inheritance, Tele Congo became a cultural touchstone across the region, with households in Cameroon, Gabon and the Central African Republic alike all tuning in to the channel's broadcasts.

But as the years went by, Tele Congo declined, a victim of

underfunding and competition from commercial channels even before the country was ravaged by civil war in 1997-1999.

When the broadcaster moved to a new headquarters in 2009, the archive tapes were left to rot in the half-ruined building.

A handful of soldiers still guard the site, whose once-bright television sets lie intact in the darkness for want of electricity.

Without air conditioning, the fragile film reels deteriorate quickly in the humid equatorial African air.

"It's honestly a miracle that we've still got usable material at all," said Boukambou. Next door, three volunteers scrub up and dust off the old reels, hoping to make out a few clues as to their content from the writing on the side. "When I first came here, I thought I was coming to earn something.

"I had never even heard of an archivist in this country," said volunteer Blanbert Banakissa.

A painter and electrician in civilian life, Banakissa has devoted his Saturdays to restoring the archives for the past five years and would like to make it his full-time profes-

sion.

"There are many people who don't know where we come from. But through these tapes that we've neglected, we can pass on this heritage to young people who aren't aware of what we've lost.

"That's what motivated us to embark on this work," he said.

- 'How many hours lost!' -

Once cleaned and identified, each reel is stored and arranged by theme on the already bulging shelves.

In a nearby room lie dozens of tapes deemed too damaged by the passage of time to be saved.

"On each reel, you have roughly an hour of footage. Just imagine how many hours we have lost!" Boukambou lamented as he looked at the pile.

"That's why we have to get to work urgently."

Once the restoration work is complete, the archivists hope to digitise their trove with the help of France's National Broadcasting Institute.

"We have a largely young population under the age of 35 in Africa, who need to delve deep into their history to meet today's challenges," Boukambou said. □

Pope Leo moves into papal apartments

Vatican City, Holy See

Ten months after taking office, Pope Leo XIV on Saturday finally moved into his apartments in the Vatican's Apostolic Palace, a historic papal residence that his predecessor had eschewed.

"This afternoon, Pope Leo XIV will take possession of the apartment in the Apostolic Palace, moving, with his closest collaborators, into the spaces previously used by his predecessors," the Vatican said in a statement. Leo, the first U.S. pope, decided to move into the

apartments in the wake of his May 8, 2025, election as head of the world's 1.4 billion Catholics.

But after being abandoned under the late Pope Francis, who chose a more modest dwelling elsewhere in the Vatican, they required extensive renovation.

During the interim, the 70-year-old Leo continued staying at the Palace of the Holy Office, near the Vatican, where he had lived as a cardinal.

The large apartment he has

moved into includes bedrooms, a chapel, a vestibule, a library, an office, a dining room and a room from which the pontiff recites the Angelus prayer every Sunday through a window overlooking St Peter's Square.

Francis had shocked traditionalists when he decided on his election in 2013 to live in a simple apartment in the Santa Marta guesthouse in the Vatican, where he remained until death.

The gesture was acclaimed by supporters of a humble pope but attracted criticism



Pope Leo XIV leaves after leading Mass during a pastoral visit to the 'Sacred Heart of Jesus' Parish in Ponte Mammolo on the Fourth Sunday of Lent, in Rome on March 15, 2026.

from conservatives, who accused him of divesting the

papacy of a sacred element. □

Conservative Nigerian city sees women drive rickshaw taxis

Kano, Nigeria

Sporting a pink knee-length veil, Umma Hani Yusuf Khalid has recently found financial stability as a rickshaw taxi driver, a trade that was unthinkable for her in Nigeria's conservative Muslim city of Kano two years ago.

As more women are having to fend for themselves amid economic hardship, they are increasingly venturing into trades previously dominated by men.

Khalid's pink three-wheeled electric rickshaw stood out on the frenetic streets of the region's commercial hub, as she pulled over to pick up women passengers.

The 35-year-old divorced mother of two is one of 100 women rickshaw taxi drivers plying the city's chaotic roads under Mata Zalla, a cooperative promoting women's empowerment.

"As a female rickshaw operator, you need to be strong because you made the resolve to go through all kinds of challenges," Khalid told AFP.

Khalid quit selling footwear 18 months ago to get in the driver's seat, which secured her a higher income and allowed her to rebuild her home and help her two nieces get married.

- 'Composed behind the wheel' -

The work is not easy. At day-break, she commutes 15 kilometres (about 9.3 miles) to



Passengers ride on a tricycle in Kurmi market in Kano, on September 10, 2025.

the Mata Zalla office and then taxis back, offering lifts to passengers headed to her neighbourhood.

She stops at home to feed her children and prepare them for school before returning to the busy streets. Still, ever-smiling, Khalid said her trick is to "just remain composed behind the wheel. That's what is required from you."

Mata Zalla, which means "exclusively women" in the local Hausa language, seeks to create employment opportunities for women in an area gripped by poverty.

Kano State is one of 12 northern Nigerian states where Sharia law, based on the

teachings of the Quran, runs parallel to state and federal justice systems.

Kano also has the highest divorce rate in the country, according to the city's Sharia police, Hisbah, leaving many women to support themselves and their children alone.

Mata Zalla secured a loan and partnered with an electric rickshaw assembling plant in the country's economic capital Lagos to establish a women's taxi business.

Women drivers have a portion of their daily wages deducted over three years, which then buys them their own rickshaw, according to

Hauwa Ahmad Tarauni, co-founder of Mata Zalla.

"We thought that this is a lucrative business which women were not benefiting from and had been left for men," 50-year-old Tarauni told AFP in her office.

- 'A drop in the sea' -

Yellow petrol-powered rickshaws, largely imported from India, have become the main form of transportation for Kano's population of five million people since being introduced in 2005.

The roughly 60,000 polluting rickshaws are operated solely by men, according to city's traffic department.

Mata Zalla meanwhile set up

two solar-powered charging stations where drivers can swap the vehicle's battery when it runs low, with the level monitored by a smartphone app.

The job has its risks, Khalid confessed, mainly due to aggressive drivers of private cars.

"They harass us, look down on us as women who are weak... they harass us by trying to hit us, as a way to soften us," she said.

But collisions involving the pink rickshaws have been rare and their drivers first undergo lessons at the city's vehicle inspection office.

With Islamic shariah law in effect statewide, men and women are discouraged from mixing in taxis.

Still, a segregated transportation system has not been enforced, leaving some women feeling vulnerable.

"A man can get too close to a woman, abuse her over small things or the operators, who are usually young men with crazy haircuts, quarrelling with female passengers," said Tarauni.

To address these challenges, Mata Zalla opted to restrict its rickshaws to women passengers.

"[I ride] because she is a woman like myself and it is not good for the woman to take a keke (rickshaw) with a man inside," Sarah Abner, a 32-year-old pregnant passenger, told AFP. □

Cowboy boots and line dancing: country music fever grips U.K. young



Country music fans attend the Country 2 Country (C2C) music festival, at the O2 arena in east London on March 13, 2026.

London, United Kingdom

Trinity Smith has been wearing her cowboy boots all week to break them in

ahead of a weekend of non-stop dancing.

The 24-year-old teacher is one of tens of thousands

of British fans flocking to a London country music festival, as the genre enjoys a surge in popularity among young adults.

At the O2 Arena in east London, the sheer number of cowboy hats, fringed jackets, denim micro shorts and rhinestone boots on display makes you wonder if the spot should be renamed "Nashville-on-Thames".

From Friday to Sunday, stars from Keith Urban to Zach Top -- along with up and coming artists, including several from Britain -- are performing at the Country to Country (C2C) festival.

Organisers say the event, the biggest of its kind in

the UK, has drawn around 45,000 people, many in their 20s and 30s.

A tattoo stand is constantly busy, with cowboy boots, cacti and bull skulls proving especially popular.

"We've been learning line dancing all year to be able to come here," said Smith, who came to the festival from Peterborough, in central England, with her partner. "I like stomping my heels," she added.

- 'Massive' growth in popularity -

C2C has existed for several years but has been continuously expanding with sister events in Glasgow and Bel-

fast. Manchester will come on board next year.

In mid-May, the historic Royal Albert Hall, one of London's best known venues, will also host another country music festival.

Country has long since spread beyond its US heartland.

But in the UK -- home of the Beatles, Rolling Stones and Oasis -- the genre's rise has been especially striking in recent years.

"It's the fastest growing music genre in the UK, and the UK has the fastest growth anywhere in the world," said John Finch, director of the UK Country Music Association. □

Basic driving rules on Aruba: Traffic signs



(Oranjestad)—Though Aruba's traffic is relatively easy to manage, driving here—especially if it's your first time visiting—can be foreign. To help you out, here's a breakdown of some traffic signs you might encounter on the road.

Speed limit in certain areas As mentioned in yesterday's issue, the legal minimum and maximum speed limit on the island is 50 and 80 km/h respectively. However, there are some areas where it is mandated to drive up to a certain speed. This is always indicated by a circular traffic sign with red border and the number 50 on it. Signs like these are always paired by a similar sign with the number crossed out further down the road. This means that the mandate for this speed is now over; you may increase your velocity. Red borders on

traffic sign—whether it's a circle or triangle—usually signal a warning, prohibition or preference.

Besides the "50" sign, you may also encounter a traffic sign that says "bebouwde kom". These can be found in San Nicolas and Oranjestad. *Bebouwde kom* signs are rectangular and blue, and essentially tell you that you are in a heavily inhabited area. The maximum speed limit in a *bebouwde kom* is 50 km/h. Just like the previous pair, *bebouwde kom* signs are also paired with a similar sign crossed out. Priority signs

On the main roads of Aruba (not the highways), you may see a yellow, squared sign with a white border. This sign tells you that on this road, you have priority and all other traffic should yield to you. This sign can be seen in Savaneta for example. So, if you are driving on the main road in Savaneta going to San Nicolas, you are driving on a single long road, and other cars that want to get on this main road or cross it, either from an intersection or from a dirt road, must all wait until traffic on the main road is clear. In other words, you do not have to stop for them. This sign too has a counter part that indicates that your priority is over.

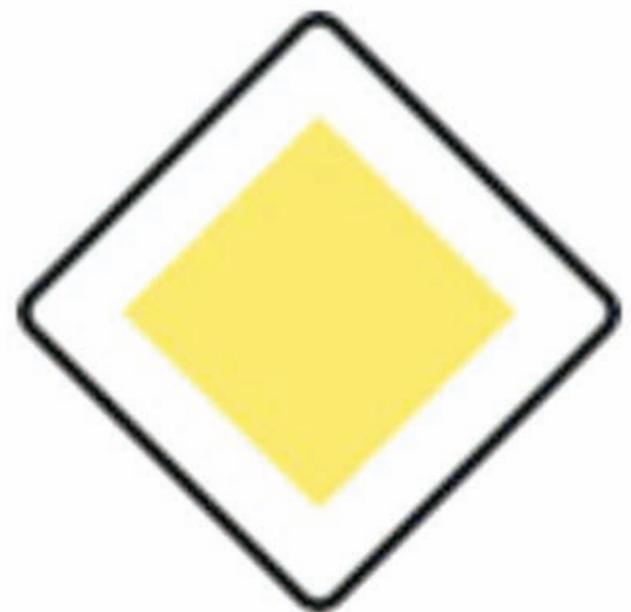
Another priority sign you may encounter is a triangle sign with a red border and something that looks like a cross. You'll see this sign in an intersection. The general rule of thumb for crossing an intersection that do not

contain traffic lights, roundabouts, sign or arrows on the road, is to always yield for traffic on your right. However, if you encounter this sign on your side of the intersection, you have priority over the other cars, even the one on your right.

However, be careful not to confuse this sign with a similar up-side down triangle, also found on intersections. This sign is a prohibition sign, telling you that you have to stop and give other cars priority. Of course you also have a "stop" sign that mean the same thing. The stop sign is generally used for tricky intersections with minimal view of opposite incoming traffic.

These are some of the basic rules that you would have to know if you decide to drive on the island. These are of course other traffic signs, and we recommend you visit aruba-travelguide.com for an extensive overview of all traffic signs used on Aruba. □

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by Urvin Croes

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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. □

Note to our readers:

Aruba Today takes a day for the Hymn and Flag national holiday



(Oranjestad)—The Aruba Today Team would like to inform our readers that there will be no issue for March 18th 2026 due to the Aruban national holiday of Hymn and Flag Day.

This day is even more special, because Aruba is celebrating 50 years of our hymn and flag, as well as 40 years of obtaining Status Aparte.

Many major stores and offices are closed for the day, with the exception of some restaurants and supermarkets around the island.

Aruba Today will resume on Thursday, March 19th 2026. □

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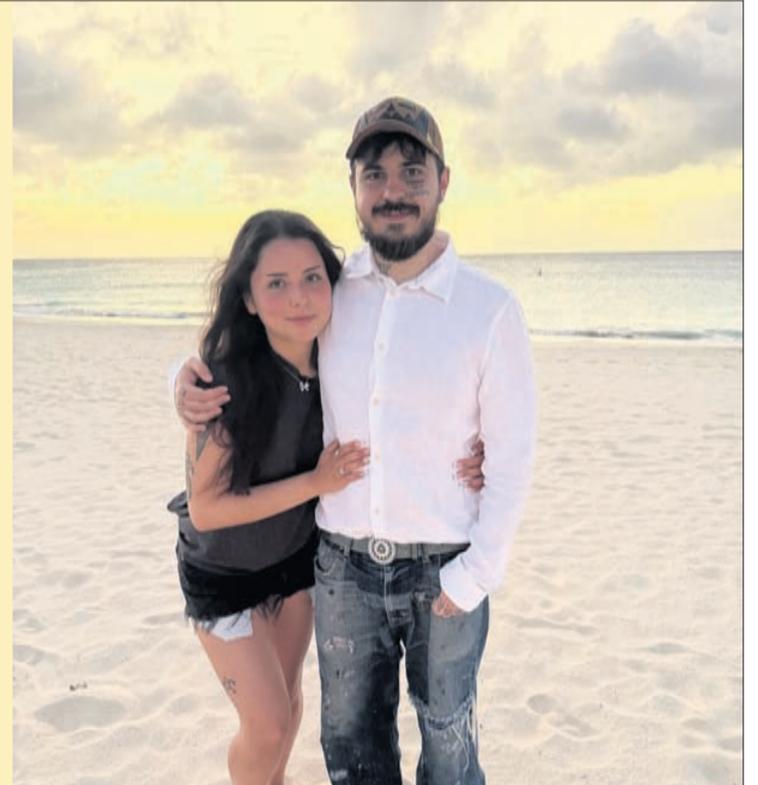
ORANJESTAD — You are back and we would like to portrait you! By inviting you to send us your favorite vacation picture while enjoying our Happy Island.

Complete the sentence: Aruba to me is Send your picture with that text (including your name and where you are from) to: news@arubatoday.com and we will publish your vacation memory. Isn't that a special way to keep your best moments alive? Please do note: By submitting photos, text or any other materials, you give permission to The Aruba Today Newspaper, Caribbean Speed Printers and any of its affiliated companies to use said materials, as well as names, likeness, etc. for promotional purposes without compensation.

Last but not least: check out our website, Instagram and Facebook page! Thank you for supporting our free newspaper, we strive to make you a happy reader every day again.

For today we received a lovely message from Austin Babbitt from New York. He wrote to us saying: “Aruba to me is God's gift.”

Thank you for sending us this wonderful message sharing what Aruba means to you with us and our readers! ☐



Planning on snorkeling? Get to know our Picuda!



(Oranjestad)—If you're ever planning on snorkeling during your vacation on Aruba, you may spot fish that you can't recognize. One of these may be the “Picuda”, a very common fish that swims all year long in the waters of Aruba. Here's some information about the beloved Picuda.

Let's talk about the names of fish. Do you know your

fish? This is an informative article that illustrate some fish and their names in Papiamentu, which the Department of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, known as “Santa Rosa”, wants to share and also obtain information from the public.

Picuda, Sphyaena barracuda, Greater Barracuda Well known is the Picuda

on the island—Barracuda in English. Its scientific name is Sphyaena barracuda. It is a widely caught fish. It is found throughout the year in our waters, where it is a so-called “ambush predator” that stays still or floats in the water waiting for its prey to approach so it can attack it with lightning speed. It is well known for fishermen, especially for its white flesh in fish soup.

In fishing culture, there are many other names, such as Pecho blanco, Blekito, Banana, or Bleki. The names vary according to size.

Description

The Picuda is a long fish, with a round body like a torpedo and silver in color with shiny black stripes. Below, the belly, is whiter, while the top part is darker. Its snout is very pointed, and the

lower jaw is longer than the upper one. Its peduncle, where the body meets the tail, is thick, while the tail also forms a crescent but in this case one more “full” than that of mullet or cone-fish. This reflects the hunting style of the Picuda. It needs to be able to accelerate quickly when the prey gets close.

In Aruba:

Picuda can be found in our waters around our island throughout the year. Picuda, in our waters, is edible without any problem. Picuda is also a highly sought-after fish by sports fishermen or recreational fishermen because it puts up a good fight once hooked. It can be caught via trolling from a boat, casting from shore with a line or rod, or by jigging, casting the lure (artificial bait) and moving it with certain rod motions. ☐

Picture courtesy of the Department of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries (Santa Rosa).

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 Brochettes**, made with locally smoked bacon, *Madam Jeannette* peppers, local honey, and tenderloin, grilled to perfec-



tion and served with *chimi-churri 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. □

Place names in San Nicolas and their origins

(Oranjestad)—If you're ever taking a tour of Aruba, San Nicolas would definitely be on your itinerary. From relaxing on the white, sandy beaches of Baby and Roger's Beach, to exploring the prehistoric caves of Quadirikiri and Fontein, you are taking in a full view of what San Nicolas has to offer. But did you know that you are also passing through areas whose names have historical origins? Here are a few place names in San Nicolas and their origin story.

Sero Colorado

On your way to Baby or Roger's Beach, you'll pass by the famous Red Anchor at what was once the entrance to the Colony residential community and be greeted with red soiled hills by the coast. This is Sero Colorado. Named after the 30-meter, deep red, limestone hill, "Sero Colorado" translates to "Colored Hill". Sero Colorado has deep



historical ties with the once-thriving phosphate industry in the area. Matter of fact, there are still underground shafts and passages deep in Sero Colorado from the time of phosphate mining. In 1958, the refinery at the time, Lago, adopted this name for the residential section of its employees.

Vader Piet

Another well visited area, Vader Piet is located in the

Arikok National Park. Recognizable sites within this area include the Wind Mills and the Quadirikiri Cave. The origin of this name is part historical and speculation, as there are slight deviations from what actually happened.

In 1829, Pieter Lampe was a planter and the person responsible for governing this remote area. As the story goes, Pieter was well known

and beloved for his kindness and good treatment of his employees, and was therefore also called Vader Piet (Father Piet). However, he was tragically murdered—some speculate at the hands of a slave. For his work and good heart, the area was named after him.

San Nicolas

Of course we can't forget San Nicolas itself. Much like Vader Piet, the origin of the

name San Nicolas has so far two different accounts. In the literal sense, "San Nicolas" translates to "Saint Nicolas", leading many to believe that this district was named after a Spanish saint. Though one account does support this with the theory that the district was named after the saint by Spanish colonizers, the other account is much less divine, but does refer to an influential figure in the area.

Nicolaas van der Biest was a successful landowner during the time of the phosphate boom in late 19th century Aruba. Back then, landowners (most, if not all of them men) were referred to as "Shon" by their subordinates. So, the district was originally named after Shon Nicolaas. Over time, the name evolved into what is now San Nicolas. □

Source: "Aruba: Short History" by Dr. J. Hartog.

Cas Floria: The Decorated Houses of Aruba

(Oranjestad)—There may be as many as 200 to 300 houses in Aruba that have beautiful decorations, including curtains, stars, flowers, half-moons, etc., placed on the corners or the upper parts of the house.

These houses can be found everywhere, in nearly every district of Aruba. People always thought that these designs came from an Indigenous culture; possibly, the star design resembled the way it was shown, similar to the "God Sun" of the Indigenous people. However, the history of this decorative system does not go very far back in time.

In his book *Millefiori di Aruba*, Father Nooyen declares that the first house to receive this type of decoration was the home of Mr. Bernardo Eman Croes in Pos Chikito. Julien (Janchi) Christiaans and Gregorio (Goy) Semeleer built this house in 1920 and created the decorations on the upper corners of the house. Other people in Pos Chikito, who saw this beautiful work, also wanted their houses decorated in the same way.

Leoncio (Joonchi) Henricus of Pos Chikito learned the work from Janchi Christiaans and, together with his son Bonifacio (Bonny) Henricus, continued deco-



rating houses in Pos Chikito and Sabana Basora.

Janchi Christiaans, Goy Semeleer, and others from Noord, such as Hilario Christiaans, Victor Tromp, Gerardo Jacobs, and Cornelis Rosa, brought the same decoration to houses in Noord and Paradera. In 1927, Janchi Christiaans built a house for Julian Tromp in Buguruy.

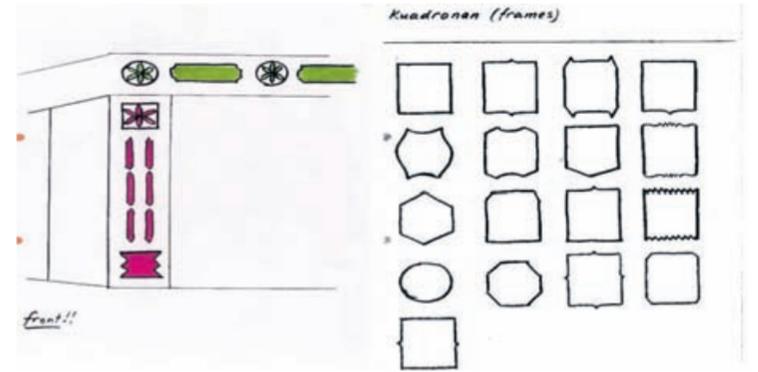
This was the first house in Noord to receive this type of decoration. Later, those in Paradera, Santa Cruz, and Savaneta copied the house decorations. They practiced these systems up until 1944.

Even today, the patterns are well preserved and protected, but they are no

longer used.

Janchi Christiaans began cutting the patterns out of zinc plates and cardboard. He also had his own creations and systems, while Leoncio and Bonifacio Henricus produced their own fantasies. This is what made these decorations popular: many people could turn their imagination into expressive art.

However, the decoration of houses was not originally Janchi Christiaans's idea. Janchi was a disciple of his father, Hose Christiaans, and of the Donati family, from Italian ancestors. They also made these decorations, though without using any patterns, simply designing and applying them with common plaster as



the material.

Using Dr. Johan Hartog's *Breve Historia* as reference, I noticed that he also writes that these designs are not Indigenous symbols, but only decorative fantasies. One point of disagreement is that he wrote that in 1820 someone from Curaçao began this type of decoration in Aruba.

This means that, according to Father Nooyen, who declared that it began in 1920, it would have actually started 100 years earlier. As part of his research, Ito Tromp also interviewed Mr. Julio Maduro of the Department of Labor at that time, who told him that around 1880 Johannes (Janchi) Wolff began with house decorations. And as Janchi himself said, he learned this from his grandfather, who in earlier times had built the first lighthouse at California Point.

After comparing his information, Ito Tromp wrote that Hartog was right concerning the period when decorated houses began in Aruba in 1820. However, it was not people from Curaçao who started it. Victor Tromp, who was 87 years old at the time of writing, was a member of Janchi Wolff's family.

Julio Maduro said that in 1920 they began again with this type of decoration. In general, there is no specific year (up to now) when Arubans first began with this decorative artistic expression. It is interesting to know that these decorations are a kind of symbol for several generations.

For example: Decorations that appear on the house of the Arends family could

also be seen on the houses of the Bermudez or Croes families. This was because parents always gave a specific sign to their sons or daughters when they were getting married.

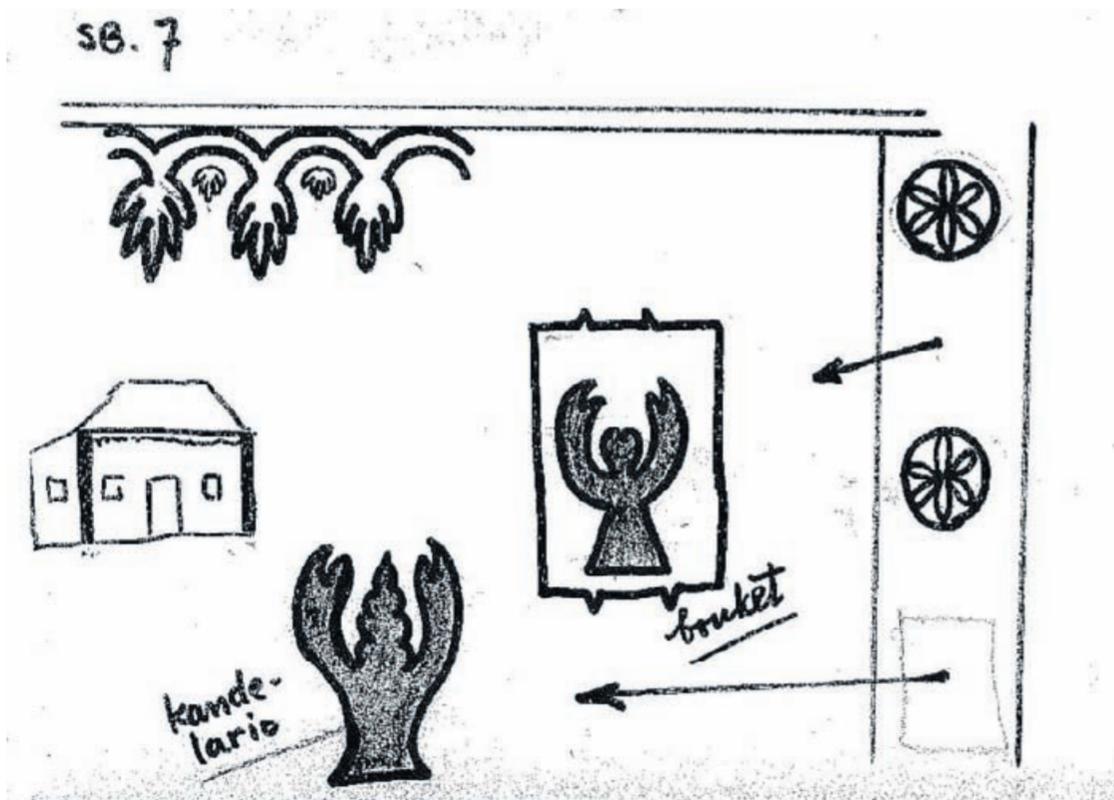
It was also said that these designs had a certain kind of voodoo purpose, to keep away the spirits of the Indigenous people who were buried in the neighborhoods where the houses now stand. However, this has almost completely disappeared.

As for the continuation of these designs from family to family, this is a cultural heritage that is no longer established. For this reason, in earlier times, every young man who married had to have his own house; otherwise, there would be no marriage.

The designs were created according to the individual's imagination. If he saw, for example, six pairs of birds on a tree, he would then paint six pairs of birds on a tree. If he wanted to express his love for his twin children, then he designed a twin.

Nowadays, if you want to use these designs for your house, don't worry—you can simply copy them and paint them. □

Source: *E casnan Decora na Aruba (1976)* by Ito Tromp



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CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH



ACROSS 42 Destitute

1 Floor model 43 Signing needs

5 Boutiques

DOWN 10 Midterms and finals

12 Card for fortunes

13 White House residents

15 Yale student

16 Equip

17 "Wonder Woman" star Gadot

18 "The Bathers" painter

20 Fork part

21 Liner parts

22 Finishes

23 Aquarium fish

25 Take in

28 Severe

31 Give off

32 Solution

34 Gorilla or gibbon

35 Pen fill

36 Before, in poems

37 Kind of burn or murder

40 Mistake

41 Michelangelo statue

DOWN

1 Put off

2 Driven out

3 Leather-neck

4 Meditation sounds

5 Antlered animal

6 Deli choice

7 Genesis

8 Warsaw's nation

9 Modes

11 Bowling feat

14 Direct

19 Quartet

20 Sign of

24 Put in

25 Stun with

26 Ball caller

27 South Dakota

28 Opening

29 Turn

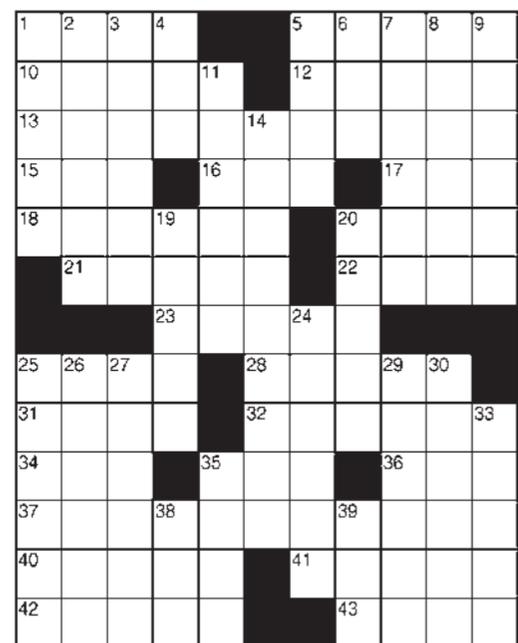
30 Below, in a

33 Oboe

35 Humble

38 Lawn material

39 Opening



3-28

A XYDLBAA XR
is LONGFELLOW

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.

3-28 **CRYPTOQUOTE**

R EHZB KEOL WKTW GL HLPLV

ZEIL IRXKW EA EHL WKRHX —

WKTW RW TZZ IWTVWLQ GRWK

T SEYIL. — GTZW QRIHLB

Cryptoquote: THERE'S NOT A MAN, WOMAN OR CHILD ON THE FACE OF THE EARTH WHO DOESN'T ENJOY A TASTY BEVERAGE. — DAVID LETTERMAN

Cruise ship Schedule: March 16 - 22 2026

			ARR	DEPT	BERTH	
MON	16	VALIANT LADY	09.00	22.00	C	1
TUE	17	CARNIVAL HORIZON	08.00	22.00	B	1
		NORWEGIAN SKY	13.30	22.30	C	1
WED	18	ROTTERDAM	08.00	17.00	B	1
		BRILLIANCE OF THE SEAS	08.00	23.00	C	1
		SERENADE OF THE SEAS	08.00	23.00	I	1
THU	19	MSC DIVINA	08.00	18.00	B	1
		AZAMARA QUEST	09.30	22.00	C	1
FRI	20	CARIBBEAN PRINCESS	09.00	22.00	B	1
		NORWEGIAN STAR	11.00	20.00	C	1
SUN	22	CELEBRITY ASCENT	09.00	23.00	C	1

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 tourists 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

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

Difficulty: ★

3/16

Answer to previous puzzle

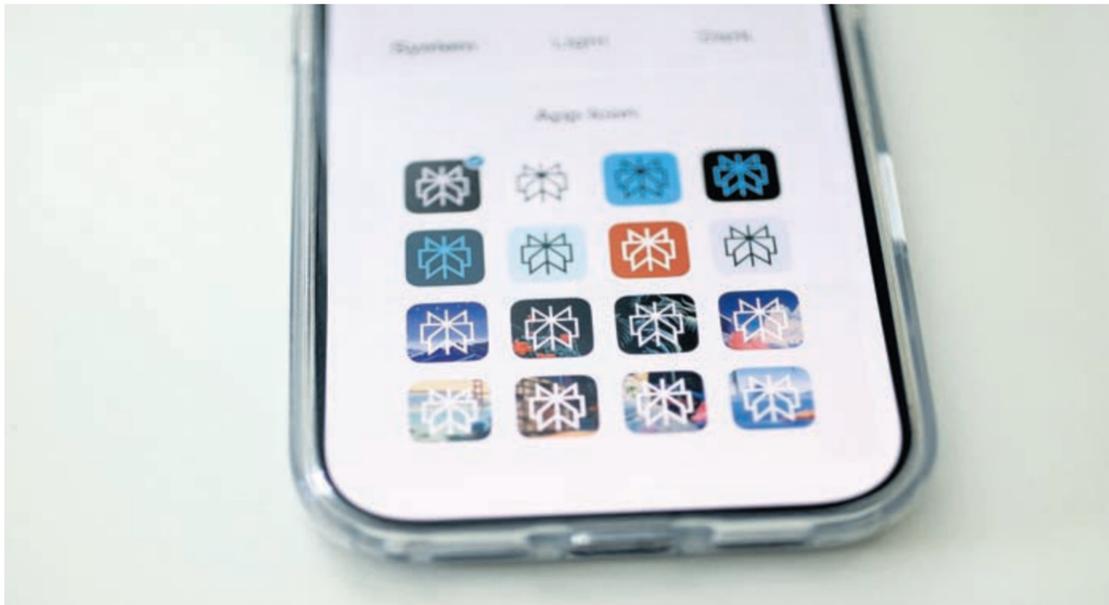
2	9	1	4	6	8	3	5	7
6	8	7	2	5	3	4	9	1
5	3	4	9	7	1	2	6	8
3	6	5	1	9	4	7	8	2
4	7	2	8	3	5	6	1	9
8	1	9	6	2	7	5	4	3
1	2	8	7	4	6	9	3	5
9	5	6	3	8	2	1	7	4
7	4	3	5	1	9	8	2	6

Difficulty: ★★★★★

3/15

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Who covers AI business blunders? Some insurers cautiously step up



In this photo illustration, a Perplexity website is seen on an iPhone on March 10, 2026 in Miami, Florida.

New York, United States

As more businesses trust artificial intelligence "agents" to independently grow their revenues, some insurance firms are stepping in to cover any mistakes -- while others are steering clear.

"The whole intent of using advanced AI is to substantially replace human assistance and oversight in decisions," said Phil Dawson, head of AI policy and partnerships at the specialist insurer Armilla.

The trend of "agentic AI" has taken off, with bots handling computer tasks by themselves and businesses trimming ranks of human workers as a result.

"That really challenges some of the fundamental logic of existing insurance coverage," Dawson said.

Companies in the AI race are striving to perfect the technology, but they have not eliminated the possibility of errors such as "hallucinations" in which fabricated output is confidently presented.

AI-related liability risks have been largely accounted for implicitly under insurance policies in what is referred to as "silent coverage", analyst Sonal Madhok and law professor Anat Lior said in a research paper published late last year by the brokerage firm Willis Towers Wa000_96CW39Vtson.

However, they argue that the situation is similar to the liability coverage questions raised in the early years of

cybercrime. "We can expect policies to explicitly address AI in the near future, ending the silent coverage era," Lior and Madhok said.

Insurers are already moving beyond their "wait-and-see approach" when it comes to AI mishaps, according to Jonathan Mitchell, head of the financial sector practice at brokerage firm Founder Shield.

Some standard insurance policies now include "absolute AI exclusion" clauses that expressly deny coverage for AI-related mishaps, Mitchell said.

Dawson cited a commercial real estate firm that tried to have its AI agent covered as a regular employee but had to revert to a special policy.

- 'AI malfunction' protec-

tion -

Founder Shield incorporates "AI malfunction and hallucination" scenarios specifically into professional services policies covering losses the technology causes clients. The scope of such policies can be extended, for a price, beyond computer networks to cover real world harm such as AI mistakenly ordering too much inventory for a company.

Armillia tests AI models for vulnerabilities before committing to coverage and assesses whether the client's risk management framework adheres to international standards.

But like other insurers, Armilla can decline to take on certain risks.

For example, it avoids providing coverage for anything related to medical

diagnostics or applications focused on mental health. Munich Re, a global titan that does both insurance and reinsurance, provides coverage for companies that design AI models as well as those that use the technology.

"This risk of a model making errors or hallucinating cannot be fully avoided in any technical way," said Munich Re's head of AI insurance, Michael von Gablenz.

"AI systems, at the end of the day, are statistical models; and any statistical model has uncertainty in it," he said.

The AI risk brings with it great opportunity for insurers, though, with von Gablenz estimating the size of the market could eclipse that of cybersecurity insurance. The Deloitte Center for Financial Services projects the global AI insurance premium market could grow to as much as \$4.8 billion by 2032. □



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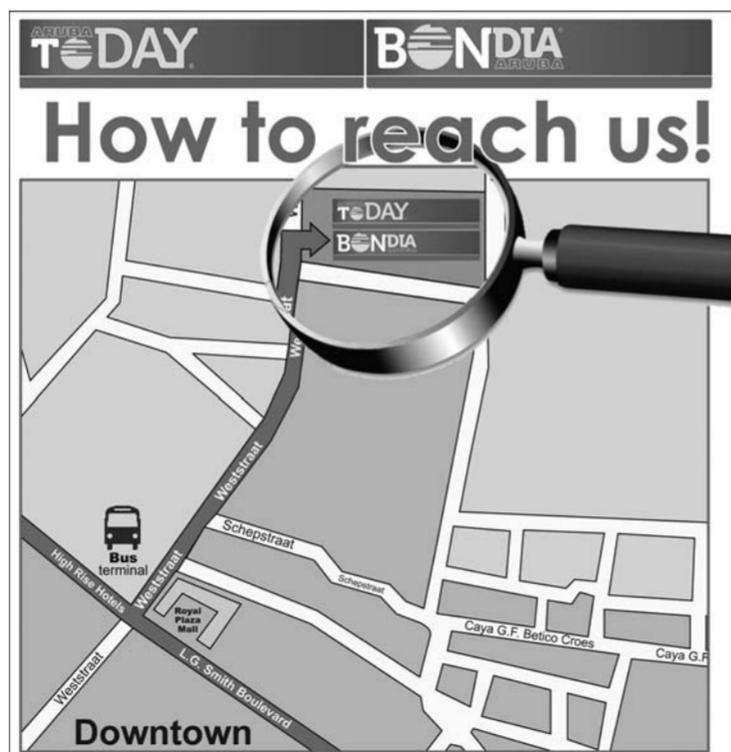
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EMERGENCY

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Oranjestad	527 3140
Noord	527 3200
Sta. Cruz	527 2900
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Fire Dept.	115
Red Cross	582 2219

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Taxi Serv. Aruba	583 3232
A1 Taxi Serv.	280 2828

TRAVEL INFO

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Avianca	588 0059
Jet Blue	588 2244
Surinam	582 7896

AID FOUNDATIONS

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FAVI- Visually Impaired	Tel. 582 5051
Alcoholics Anonymous	Tel. 736 2952
Narcotics Anonymous	Tel. 583 8989
Fundacion Contra Violencia Relacional	Tel. 583 5400
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Child Abuse Prevention	Tel. 582 4433
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ARUBA TODAY NEWS

Espressos and red wine: Italy's baseball team captivates Classic

Los Angeles, United States

Home runs are greeted with a celebratory shot of espresso and the donning of an Armani jacket. Victories are marked with bottles of red wine while the soaring voice of opera singer Andrea Bocelli echoes through the locker room. Welcome to baseball, Italian-style.

Written off as 80-1 underdogs before the World Baseball Classic started, Italy's fairytale tournament has carried them all the way to Monday's semi-finals in Miami against Venezuela.

On Saturday, Italy -- who scored a stunning upset of a star-studded United States lineup during the pool phase -- kept their unbeaten campaign alive with a nail-biting 8-6 quarter-final defeat of Puerto Rico.

That win -- which sent Italy into the last four for the first time in history -- was the latest stop of an improbable journey for a team put together at the last minute and composed largely of American players with Italian descent. Of the 30 players in Italy's squad for the tournament, 24 were born in the US while only three were born in Italy. Nevertheless, that has not stopped the team leaning heavily into their Italian heritage.

Italy's captain, Kansas City Royals first baseman Vinnie Pasquantino, came up with the idea of celebrating each



Manager Francisco Cervelli #29 of Team Italy celebrates with his players after a 8-6 victory against Team Puerto Rico at Daikin Park on March 14, 2026 in Houston, Texas.

home run with a jolt of caffeine, installing an espresso machine in the Italy dugout. Speaking after Saturday's triumph over a strong Puerto Rico, Pasquantino said the Azzurri's exploits in the tournament are helping to boost the profile of a sport which remains an oddity in Italy.

- 'Bringing people together' -

"Italy was able to watch our game today, and it was on television out there," Pasquantino said. "And we've been on the front page of the newspapers. And that is what this tournament is about."

"Yes, it is about winning the tournament and trying to be the best baseball team,

but it's about getting eyeballs and bringing people together on the sport.

"And yeah, Italy doesn't have the greatest development in baseball, and that's what we're trying to do right now. There was baseball being played at bistros and cafes in Italy tonight over there. That doesn't happen."

Italy's manager, the Venezuela-born Francisco Cervelli, who spent 12 years in Major League Baseball as a player, was only appointed to his role in January.

Cervelli said Italy's team has evolved in just a few short weeks since coming together just before the tournament started.

"In the beginning, it was tough. This tournament, they only give you three days together," Cervelli said.

"To put the group and build chemistry, we did so many things inside the clubhouse to get to know personalities, because that's what the important part is, is in this kind of tournament."

Early group wins over Brazil and Great Britain were followed by a seismic upset over the United States, hyped as one of the most talented baseball line-ups ever assembled.

"Brazil was a little uncomfortable, and the guys didn't know exactly what was the role," Cervelli said. "Then Great Britain, and then ev-

erything started. The team were bonding together.

- 'A different team' -

"And then we beat the United States, and now it's a different team. It's a different team. They're going to miss this tournament after they go back to their teams because it's been really fun."

Cervelli has also been made aware of the team's impact from family and friends in Italy.

"I get the message from all my friends, my family there," he said on Sunday. "Just imagine in the south of Italy they don't play that much baseball. Yesterday everyone was watching the game.

"They send me pictures all the time. It's like the family reunion watching baseball. Even if they don't know that much or they don't understand that much, 'How's Italy playing?' It doesn't matter what it is.

"So there is a lot of excitement in Italy right now about baseball."

Those sentiments are shared by Italy's Andrew Fischer, the 21-year-old New Jersey-born infielder who joined the Milwaukee Brewers last year after being chosen with the 20th overall pick of the draft. Fischer, whose maternal great-great-grandfather was born in Campania, has a tattoo of Frank Sinatra on his arm and says playing for Italy has been a chance to celebrate his roots. □

Mikaela Shiffrin claims Are World Cup slalom victory



USA's Mikaela Shiffrin reacts after her run in the Women's Super G race of the FIS Ski World Cup at the La Volata slope in the Passo San Pellegrino ski area, Val di Fassa, Italy on March 8, 2026.

Åre, Sweden

Three-time Olympic champion Mikaela Shiffrin secured

her 109th World Cup victory after winning the slalom event in Åre, Sweden on

Sunday. The 31-year-old American, who won slalom gold last month in the Milan-Cortina Games, has been almost unbeatable in the event this season, winning eight out of the nine World Cup races in the discipline. It was Shiffrin's seventh victory in Åre, something she dubbed "really amazing".

"I was pretty excited, but in the end it was challenging to ski. I pushed really hard and I was glad to get to the finish," Shiffrin said.

"Åre is one of the places I feel a little bit at home. The last two days were spectacular race days. I wanted to push in these conditions."

Shiffrin put her slalom consistency down to "simplicity". "In slalom it's felt pretty simple all season, my skiing has felt connected. I was as simple as possible and really attacking," she said.

"I really want to fight through the final races and have a good energy and good spirit."

Having already secured the crystal globe in her speciality for the ninth time, Shiffrin is also closing in on a sixth overall World Cup trophy.

Having racked up 1,282 points, she leads Germany's Emma Aicher by 140 points. Aicher finished second in Sunday's slalom, 0.94sec

behind, with Switzerland's Wendy Holdener third at exactly one second.

Shiffrin was half a second ahead of Aicher after the first run and could even afford a slight mistake on her second run and still win comfortably.

Aicher's second place, however, was her best ever slalom finish, leaving her feeling "pretty proud".

"I'm happy with my overall skiing right now," the German said.

"It doesn't matter where it's going to end. If you look at last season, I'd come pretty far, so I'm happy and proud of that." □

Sabalenka edges Rybakina to claim long-awaited Indian Wells title

Indian Wells, United States

Aryna Sabalenka saved a match point on the way to a 3-6, 6-3, 7-6 (8/6) victory over Elena Rybakina on Sunday to claim a long-awaited first Indian Wells title.

Sabalenka ended a frustrating run of finals futility against Rybakina, who had won their last four title clashes starting with a triumph at Indian Wells in 2023 and including a nail-biter at the Australian Open in January.

Sabalenka rallied from a break down in the second set and fought off a match point trailing 5-6 in the tie-breaker before finally gaining the longed-for title -- and a healthy measure of revenge.

"Thanks God I got this trophy," said Sabalenka, who lost to Russian teen Mirra Andreeva in last year's final. She had appeared on her way with a break for 2-1 in the third set. But Rybakina piled on the return pressure to break back for 5-5 and fought off five break points in the next game.

Deflated but determined, Sabalenka held at love to force the tiebreaker, rallying from 3-5 down before saving match point with a stunning backhand winner. She won the net point on Rybakina's serve and delivered another massive serve herself to seal it.

"It was a hell of a battle," Sabalenka said. "I'm super-happy with the last three points of the match that I was able to pull out such great tennis."

The latest clash between the big-serving, bit-hitting rivals was again a match of razor-thin margins.

Rybakina converted the only break point of the opening set for a 4-2 lead and backed up the break with a love game.

It wasn't until she served for the set that Rybakina lost two points in a service game. But after falling behind 0-30 she powered back, giving herself a set point with an ace and pocketing the set when Sabalenka's backhand down the line slipped wide.

A double-fault on break point in the opening game



Aryna Sabalenka poses with the championship trophy after defeating Elena Rybakina of Kazakhstan during their Women's Singles Finals match on Day 12 of the BNP Paribas Open at Indian Wells Tennis Garden on March 15, 2026 in Indian Wells, California.

of the second set left Sabalenka in a world of trouble. But despite her obvious frustration Sabalenka dug in,

winning the next four games to take a 4-1 lead.

"The whole idea going into this match was to be men-

tally strong, to stay strong no matter what, to show with the body language that I'm here, I'm fighting and no

matter what's going on right now in the match I'll still be fighting," Sabalenka said.

She broke Rybakina at love to level the set at 1-1 and saved two more break points in a marathon third game. Rybakina, her forehand errors rising along with the desert heat, double-faulted on break point to hand Sabalenka a 3-1 lead, Sabalenka holding with ease to make it 4-1 before Rybakina stopped the rot.

Sabalenka had to fend off a break point for 5-2 and saved another one with an ace as she served out the set.

Sabalenka will now head into her Miami Open title defense aiming to complete the "Sunshine Double."

Rybakina will arrive in Miami ranked second in the world, climbing one spot to overtake Poland's Iga Swiatek. □



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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.

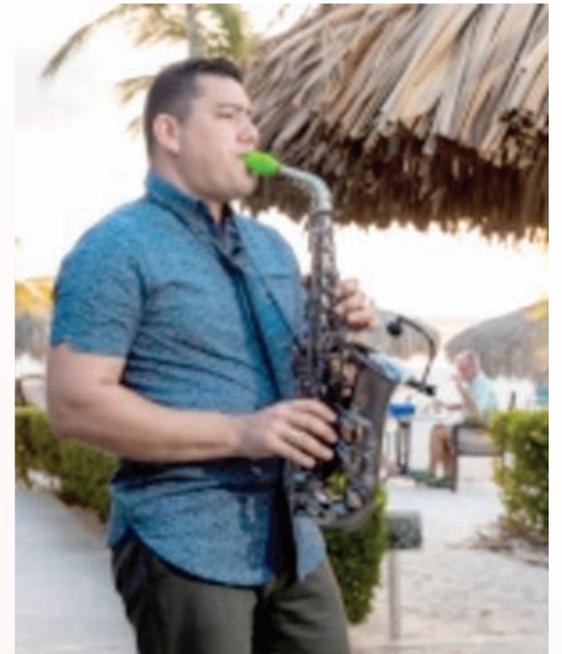
For lunch, keep it easy with their handheld items like their Bacon and Cheddar Burger, Mediterranean Quesadillas or Street Tacos. Want a taste of the Caribbean? Try the Grouper Reuben; A local twist to the traditional Reuben, complete with rye bread, in-house 1000 island dressing, sauerkraut and grilled 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-glaze, 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. For more information about the menus, entertainment and hours, please visit the website watersedgearuba.com □