



Aruba's ONLY English Vacation Newspaper

It's Tern season, and ACF is calling for their protection



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The return of the silence: How “Quiet Parks” are saving urban sanity

In the relentless hum of the 21st-century city a soundscape defined by the roar of transit, the drone of HVAC systems, and the digital pings of a billion smartphones silence has become the world's most endangered resource. However, a global movement is rising to reclaim it. Through the designation of “Urban Quiet Parks,” cities are beginning to treat silence not as an empty void or a luxury for the elite, but as a critical biological and psychological necessity for urban sanity.



John and Julie Holzauer share a quiet moment during a family visit to a city park on September 30, 2011 in Denver, Colorado.

The Vision of Quiet Parks International

The movement is spearheaded by Quiet Parks International (QPI), a non-profit founded in 2019 by world-renowned acoustic ecologist Gordon Hempton and Vikram Chauhan. Hempton, often known as “The Sound Tracker,” spent decades recording the world's rarest natural soundscapes before realizing they were rapidly disappearing.

QPI's mission is simple yet profound: “To save quiet for the benefit of all life”. While the organization initially

focused on remote wilderness like the Zabalo River in Ecuador the world's first Wilderness Quiet Park it soon pivoted toward the places where silence is needed most: our densest urban centers.

What is an Urban Quiet Park?

An Urban Quiet Park is not a place of absolute, tomb-like silence. Instead, it is a space where natural sounds the rustle of leaves,

the call of a bird, or the trickle of water are the dominant acoustic features, largely undisturbed by human-made noise.

To receive certification, a park must undergo rigorous acoustic testing. The goal is for background noise to remain below 45 decibels, roughly the level of quiet library chatter. This ensures that visitors can experience what psychologists call “soft fascination” a state where the mind is gently engaged

by natural patterns without the draining demand for focused attention required by urban environments.

A Global Map of Tranquility The “Quiet Revolution” is already visible in major cities across the globe:

Taipei, Taiwan: In 2020, Yangmingshan National Park became the world's first certified Urban Quiet Park, offering a sanctuary of lush forests and ice-cold springs just outside the bustling capital.

London, UK: Hampstead Heath was recognized in 2021 as Europe's first Urban Quiet Park, providing nearly 800 acres of acoustic refuge only miles from Trafalgar Square.

Stockholm, Sweden: The city has emerged as a leader in the movement, with five parks including Judarskogen and Hansta Nature Reserve receiving certification in 2022.

United States: Recent awards have been presented to Mt. Tabor Park in Portland (2023) and Seward Park in Seattle (2024).

Future evaluations are currently underway for iconic locations such as the Rambles in New York's Central Park, as well as sites in Paris, Toronto, and Brisbane.

The Science of Sanity

The push for quiet parks is backed by a growing body of medical evidence. The World Health Organization (WHO) has long identified noise pollution as a significant contributor to cardiovascular disease, sleep disturbances, and cognitive impairment. □

Scientists create ‘super honey’ from chocolate waste



By Lifestyle & Science Correspondent

CAMPINAS, Brazil — In a breakthrough that sounds like a confectioner's dream, researchers have successfully transformed bitter cocoa waste into a “super honey” that tastes like chocolate and packs a powerful nutritional punch.

The innovation, developed

at the State University of Campinas (UNICAMP) in Brazil, uses advanced technology to infuse native bee honey with the bioactive compounds found in discarded cocoa bean shells. The result is a sustainable, heart-healthy sweetener that researchers believe could revolutionize both the gourmet food and cosmetic

industries.

A Green Chemistry Breakthrough

Every year, the chocolate industry generates over 635,000 metric tons of cocoa shells a papery by-product typically thrown away.

To rescue these nutrients, the UNICAMP team employed a “green chemistry” method called ultrasound-assisted extraction. By placing an ultrasonic probe into a mixture of honey and finely milled cocoa shells, high-frequency sound waves create microscopic bubbles that burst, physically breaking down the shell's cell walls. This allows the honey to act as a natural, edible solvent, absorbing beneficial compounds without the need

for synthetic chemicals.

Why It's a “Superfood”

This new blend isn't just about flavor; it significantly boosts the natural health benefits of both ingredients. According to the study published in ACS Sustainable Chemistry & Engineering, the “chocolate honey” is enriched with: Heart-Healthy Stimulants: The honey absorbs theobromine and caffeine from the shells, which are linked to improved blood flow and cardiovascular health.

Antioxidant Powerhouse: The process significantly increases the levels of phenolic compounds and flavonoids, which help reduce oxidative stress and inflammation.

Energy Without the Crash:

Combining honey's natural sugars with cocoa's stimulants provides a sustained energy boost, making it an ideal “guilt-free” pick-me-up.

Leveraging Local Biodiversity

A key to the project's success was the use of honey from native Brazilian stingless bees. Unlike common European honeybees, these native species produce honey that is more fluid and has a higher water content, making it a more effective “magnet” for drawing out the cocoa's nutrients.

“The biggest appeal is the flavor,” said lead researcher Felipe Sanchez Bragagnolo in an interview with Agência FAPESP. □

Beyond the 'no': The rise of the next generation social impactors

NEW YORK — When John Cronin first entered the job market after leaving school, he was met with a series of closed doors. Like many young adults with Down syndrome, he found that traditional employers often saw his diagnosis before his potential. However, instead of accepting a "no," Cronin decided to build his own "yes."

Today, the 29-year-old co-founder of John's Crazy Socks stands as a symbol of a massive shift in American entrepreneurship. Recently named to the Forbes 30 Under 30 Social Impact Class of 2026, Cronin is the first person with Down syndrome to receive the honor. His story is part of a broader trend: a new generation of "social impactors" who are redefining business success through the lenses of radical inclusivity and shared power.

A Mission Rooted in Happiness

John's Crazy Socks began with a simple mission: to spread happiness. What started as a bootstrapped father-son venture has blossomed into a multi-million-dollar social enterprise that has shipped over 500,000 packages to 94 countries. But the "social impact" isn't just in the colorful patterns. The company's core in-

novation lies in its employment model. To date, it has created 34 total jobs, with 22 of those positions held by individuals with differing abilities. By demonstrating that a diverse workforce is a competitive advantage rather than a charity project, Cronin is challenging the "bureaucracy of low expectations" that often traps disabled workers.

"This isn't just a feel-good story," says Mark X. Cronin, John's father and co-founder. "It's a recognition of leadership, entrepreneurship, and impact at scale".

The 2026 Shift: Diversity by Design

The latest cohort of social innovators reflects a demographic and ideological changing of the guard. According to the 2026 Forbes 30 Under 30 report, this year's list makers have collectively raised over \$3.8 billion in funding—proving that social missions can attract serious capital.

The statistics behind the "Class of 2026" tell a story of intentional diversity:

53% identify as people of color.

39% are women or non-binary individuals.

70% belong to Gen Z, the largest such cohort in the list's history.

This generation is moving

past "charity" toward systemic change. Founders like Olivia Zhang of Cancer Kids First and Adeola Ajani of Fem Equity are harnessing digital platforms and AI to tackle disparities in healthcare and pay equity. Unlike previous eras where social impact was a "side effort," these entrepreneurs are embedding purpose into their core business infrastructure.

The "Prove-It" Era

As we move into mid-2026, social impact is entering what practitioners call its "prove-it" era. With tighter resources and higher public scrutiny, the focus has shifted from feel-good storytelling to "decision science".

"Expectations are higher, and tolerance for actions that don't lead to results is declining," notes Brian Tipples, a social impact strategist. This new rigor is visible in how young founders measure success—not by volunteer hours, but by economic mobility, career trajectories, and data-driven outcomes.

Leading with "Abilities Rising"

For John Cronin, the Forbes recognition is just a springboard. He recently launched Abilities Rising, a family of ventures focused on disability-owned publishing, workplace inclusion,



Leadership Award Honoree and Co-founder of John's Crazy Socks John Lee Cronin attends the The 2019 2nd Annual ADAPT Leadership Awards at Cipriani 42nd Street on March 14, 2019 in New York City.

and mission-driven e-commerce. His goal is to ensure that the "no" he received years ago becomes a relic of the past for the next generation.

"Being a Special Olympics athlete helped make this

possible," John shared in a recent statement. His journey proves that when a business is built on the belief that "ability is something we should expand, not limit," the impact can truly change the world. □

KID smART opens state-of-the-art center for arts and education



NEW ORLEANS — The historic Tremé neighborhood, long considered the heartbeat of New Orleans' musical and cultural heritage, added a vibrant new chapter to its legacy today. Under a bright midday sun and to the rhythm of a celebratory

brass band, the nonprofit organization KID smART officially cut the ribbon on its new Center for Arts and Education.

The 10,000-square-foot facility, located in a beautifully restored mid-century building, represents a \$5.5

million investment in the city's youth. For over 25 years, KID smART has operated as a "nomadic" organization, placing teaching artists in public schools across the city. Today, they finally have a permanent North Star.

Bridging the gap through creativity

The mission of the new center is clear: to prove that the arts are not an "extra" in education, but a fundamental tool for learning. The facility features three multi-purpose classrooms, a digital media lab, a community gallery, and a professional development suite for local educators.

"We aren't just teaching kids

how to paint or dance," said Elise Gallinot Goldman, Executive Director of KID smART, during the opening ceremony. "We are teaching them how to use those tools to solve math problems, understand history, and process their own emotions. This building is a laboratory for the imagination."

A resource for Tremé and beyond

While the center will serve as a hub for student workshops and after-school programming, it is also designed as a community asset. The ground-floor gallery will showcase the work of New Orleans youth alongside professional local artists, creating a literal "path-

way to the profession" for aspiring creators.

Local residents were invited to tour the facility today, many expressing relief that a neighborhood synonymous with jazz and civil rights history is receiving a modern space dedicated to the next generation of culture-bearers.

Empowering the educators

One of the most innovative aspects of the new center is its focus on "Arts Integration" training. The facility will host year-round workshops for New Orleans public school teachers, coaching them on how to weave drawing, movement, and theater into standard Common Core subjects. □

He said, she said, AI said: Wall Street sex scandal rivets and confounds

Washington, United States

A Wall Street banker's explosive sexual harassment lawsuit against a female executive has triggered a torrent of salacious falsehoods muddying the waters with AI-created deepfakes and memes fueling the frenzy.

The social media storm erupted soon after the suit packed with allegations of sexual abuse, coercion, and racial harassment – was filed last month in a New York court by a former JPMorgan Chase banker identified by US media as 35-year-old Chirayu Rana.

Lawyers for the defendant Lorna Hajdini, who remains at the bank, have called the accusations fabricated. JPMorgan Chase has said it investigated the claims and found them meritless.

But even before any legal outcome, the suit's tawdry claims have become a source of public fascination, spawning a wave of AI-generated clips and sexually suggestive memes at a time when high-profile sexual harassment cases against women remain rare.

"This trend hints at how AI



Supporters of the DEFIANCE Act hold up signs at a bipartisan press conference at the U.S. Capitol on January 22, 2026 in Washington, DC.

is going to increasingly pollute our feeds and pollute public discourse on both important and frivolous topics," Timothy Caulfield, a misinformation researcher from the University of Alberta in Canada, told AFP. "This content can be produced incredibly quickly and can be specifically framed to play to our fears, interests, and grievances. In the attention economy,

it is all about clicks. Find a trending story and exploit."

One hyper-realistic AI video circulating on Elon Musk's platform X purports to show the pair laughing and drinking wine at a restaurant, with a voiceover claiming "they are on a date."

The video also surfaced on other platforms, including Meta-owned Facebook, where some posts used it

to baselessly claim that the lawsuit was "fake" and the two had been involved in a "consensual relationship."

- 'Real story fakes' -

Another AI clip circulating across platforms including Instagram dubbed by users as a "Fifty Shades of Gray"-style trailer presents a dramatized visual reconstruction of the alleged harassment, racial slurs and

threats described in the suit.

And another AI video on X depicts the pair running together through a city engulfed in flames before the female executive shoves him aside in a dramatic scene.

Many social media users complained that the AI fabrications make it increasingly difficult to distinguish between reality and fiction on tech platforms, many of which have scaled back content moderation.

The viral posts reflect how some influencers seek to profit from a disinformation trend researchers call "real story fakes" flooding the internet with sensational AI fabrications about a real story gaining public attention.

"The trend of 'real story fakes' has been growing thanks to the proliferation of easy to use AI tools for image and video synthesis," Walter Scheirer of the University of Notre Dame told AFP. In many cases, such content is created as a way to "make money off of an existing controversy" through engagement and platform monetization policies, he said. □

South Korea official floats AI profit social tax as tech giants boom

Seoul, South Korea

A top South Korean official has proposed a tax on AI profits to be redistributed among society as a semiconductor boom drives massive earnings for tech giants Samsung Electronics and SK hynix.

The two South Korean firms have emerged as key suppliers of high-performance chips powering AI infrastructure globally, posting record first-quarter earnings as global demand surges.

South Korea's benchmark Kospi has rallied over the past month, repeatedly hitting record highs and also briefly coming within a whisker of the key 8,000-point mark Tuesday. South Korea was no longer operating as a tradition-

al export economy and could be shifting towards a "technology monopoly economy" driven by scarcity of chips and sustained excess profits, Kim Yong-beom, senior presidential

secretary for policy, said in a Facebook post late Monday.

While the shift towards a technology-dominant economy represented "the core essence of the



In this picture taken on May 8, 2024, "jeonse" real estate scam victim Ahn Sang-mi (centre R) reacts during a rally near the National Assembly in Seoul, during which signs were held that translate as "I pay tribute to you as a tenant and as a citizen", in tribute to the latest scam victim who killed herself.

possibilities currently open before Korea", Kim warned it could also deepen polarization of society.

Kim proposed what he tentatively called a "national dividend" for socially redistributing excess corporate profits from AI technology. The tech tax could be used, for example, to provide startup support for young people, basic income programs for rural and fishing communities, support for artists and stronger pensions for the elderly, he said.

"Using a portion of excess profits to ensure social stability for the current generation and mitigate transition costs is not merely redistribution, but also a type of system maintenance cost."

The presidential Blue House said Kim's post reflected "his personal opinion".

The post was "unrelated to any internal discussions or review within the Blue House", it said in a statement sent to AFP.

A global frenzy to build AI data centers has sent orders for advanced, high-bandwidth memory microchips soaring.

South Korea has said it will triple spending on artificial intelligence this year, aiming to join the United States and China as one of the top three AI powers.

Kim's remarks came as Samsung Electronics' labor union demanded the removal of caps on performance bonuses and called for a system allocating 15 percent of operating profit to bonuses. □

Encroaching world threatens India's last 'uncontacted' tribe

India

One of the last outsiders to make authorised visits to India's only "uncontacted" tribe says it may be time to reconnect with the isolated people in order to shield them from an encroaching world.

Anthropologist Anstice Justin, 71, took part in the government's limited contact missions to the restricted North Sentinel island in the Andaman Sea between 1986 and 2004.

The island's inhabitants are famously resistant to engaging with outsiders, and even killed a US missionary who made an illegal visit in 2018.

What little is known about the Sentinelese who live on the 10-kilometre (six-mile) wide island, covered in rainforest and ringed by coral reefs comes from the government missions.

But even those trips resulted in extremely limited understanding of the people. "We don't even know how they identify themselves," Justin told AFP on the main Andaman Island -- a different world, but just two hours away by boat.

Justin, himself from another group in the Andaman and Nicobar archipelago, recounted his first trip in 1986 to North Sentinel.

- 'Eyes on, hands off' -

He waded through lagoon



This photograph taken on March 26, 2026 shows a board marking a tribal reserve area on the outskirts of Campbell Bay at Great Nicobar island.

waters with saltwater crocodiles, landing on a white sand beach, carrying a sack of coconuts as a sign of goodwill.

"We saw smoke curling, emitting from the forest," said Justin, a former deputy director of the government's Anthropological Survey of India.

"After a few minutes, we saw the Sentinelese emerging from the forest," he added.

The islanders, who government estimates put at 50 people and are designated a "Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group", made headlines in 2018 when they used

bows and arrows to shoot dead an American missionary, John Allen Chau.

Chau broke the government "tribal reserve" exclusion limit stretching five kilometres out to sea, dodging coastguards and marine police.

But Justin, who visited the islands more than 30 times, said his experience was very different.

"What we observed was that there was no sign of unfriendliness, of, allow me to use a term, ferociousness," Justin said.

Observations show the people use narrow outrigger canoes, live in large

communal huts, carry spears, bows and arrows, and wear fibre waistbelts, as well as necklaces and headbands.

Justin said that the government's protection policy was well-intentioned -- but that the modern world was not allowing the Sentinelese to be left on their own.

"The present policy that the Andaman and Nicobar administration has adopted is 'eyes on, hands off' -- that means distant observation," Justin said, speaking in the archipelago's capital Sri Vijayapuram formerly known as Port Blair, a city of more than 100,000 people. Outside contact with other

islanders had a "devastating impact" in the past with diseases brought in, according to rights group Survival International, noting populations of the Great Andamanese peoples collapsed by as much as 99 percent.

"The Sentinelese have made it clear that they do not want contact," Survival International argues.

- 'Fool's paradise' -

Andaman police chief HGS Dhaliwal said his officers were doing everything possible to protect the island from outsiders, but Justin warned that social media-driven publicity seekers were increasingly difficult to deter.

"It is sometimes a challenge to be able to prevent any kind of incident in totality," Dhaliwal added.

"We do have surprise patrols, but still there have been a couple of incidents where poachers came within five kilometres of the island, and there have been other detections and detentions."

Police in February arrested two fishermen who entered the waters around the island, and last year arrested US citizen Mykhailo Viktorovych Polyakov, who landed for five minutes carrying a can of Diet Coke and a coconut in a bid to become a YouTube star. □

Star of Rome's 'sexy priest' calendar admits: 'I was never a priest'

Rome, Italy

His face smiles out from every kiosk in Rome on the cover of the ubiquitous "sexy priest" calendar sold to tourists but Giovanni Galizia was never a man of the cloth.

In an interview with Repubblica daily Monday, the now 39-year-old flight attendant instructor said he donned the priestly garb as a lark with a photographer when he was 17 years old.

"I don't see anything sexy in that photo... there's nothing sensual about it," Galizia told the newspa-

per of the shot gracing the "Calendario Romano", the annual calendar featuring a photograph of a supposed priest for each month.

Today, he said, "time has passed, and it shows".

"What I can assure you is that I was never a priest," he said, adding that other presumed priests could also be fake.

Countless tourists buy the calendar which costs upwards of 10 euros (\$11.65) as a memento of their visit to the seat of the Catholic Church, where not every clergyman is as easy on

the eyes as Galizia.

In 2004, he met a photographer who wanted to reveal various Italian cities through photographs: "Venice with gondoliers, and Rome with priests."

"At one point he asked me if I wanted to participate. It was a game, he had everything ready," including the priest outfit, Galizia said.

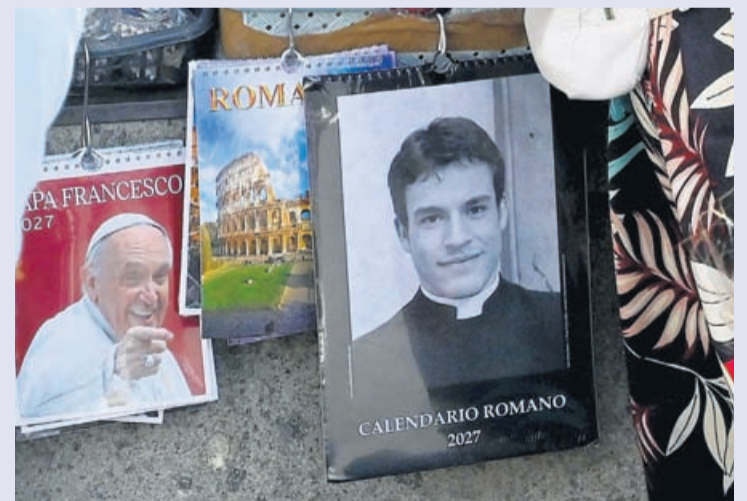
The photograph was taken in Palermo and he "never asked for a euro," for it, he noted.

Galizia said that while his face is famous in Rome, elsewhere he can go in-

cognito.

Friends who visit the capital

"always send me a photo of the calendar". □



A calendar displaying a picture of Giovanni Galizia dressed as a priest is on sale in a souvenirs shop, in Rome on May 18, 2026.

Kenya's new poaching problem: smuggling Giant Harvester Ants

Nairobi, Kenya

Kenyan ant expert Dino Martins gushes over the red and black insects that have become the centre of an international smuggling trade.

Martins has been visiting the network of nests of these Giant African Harvester Ants outside Nairobi for 40 years. "They're big and bold... They're the tigers of the ant world," the entomologist told AFP.

"Each nest here has just one queen and she is the mother who founded this nest 40, 50 or even 60 years ago," he said.

Martins was shocked when he learned that thousands of queens from this *Messor cephalotes* species were being harvested and shipped abroad in syringes and test tubes to be sold for hundreds of dollars each.

The trade came to light in Kenya last year when two Belgian teenagers were arrested in possession of nearly 5,000 queen ants, and accused of "biopiracy".

Kenyan authorities fear a new form of poaching, focused less on ivory and furs, and more on insects, reptiles and rare plants.



Entomologist Dr Dino Martins, holds a giant African harvester ant, in Silole sanctuary in Kajiado on May 13, 2026.

The judge even compared it to the slave trade.

"Imagine being violently removed from your home and packed into a container with many others like you... It almost sounds as if the reference above is to the slave trade," he said in his ruling.

The Belgians were handed a fine of around \$8,000, but as more cases have emerged, sentences have

hardened: last month a Chinese national was sentenced to one year in prison for attempting to traffic 2,000 ants.

On several European websites, the queens go for around 200 euros (\$230). Though marked as unavailable, they are increasingly easy to buy with the right connections, said Ryan, a 25-year-old from France who gave only his first name.

He finds ants "hypnotising", and wanted the largest harvesters, so he bought a starter kit including a queen and 12 workers from an authorised seller for 450 euros. That's "very reasonable," he said a decade ago, a queen could fetch 1,000 euros.

In the end, however, Ryan found they proved too tricky to raise and he gave them away.

Giant Harvester Ants are

common from the Mediterranean to the Cape. They work together almost 24 hours a day, gathering and chopping grasses for their larvae.

They have captivated people for centuries. In the Old Testament, King Solomon famously exhorted the lazy to "Go to the ant... Consider its ways and become wise".

"He was observing the same ant in Jerusalem that we are now," said Martins.

- 'Ants have feelings' -

Colonies can take 20-30 years to produce new queens. They provide all manner of services to the ecosystem: dispersing grass seeds, aerating the soil, and providing food for animals like pangolins.

Martins also considers the smuggling trade unethical simply because "ants have feelings". The trade "exploded" with the arrival of the internet, said Jerome Gippet, a researcher at the Swiss University of Fribourg. Formerly the interest of a few passionate individuals, it eventually gave way to sophisticated networks of collectors, intermediaries and smugglers. □

France unveils architects to transform Louvre

Paris, France

France said Monday that it had selected an international team of architects to transform the Louvre, which has been hit by a litany of problems including a \$100 million jewelry robbery.

The "Louvre-New Renaissance" overhaul, President Emmanuel Macron's signature project announced last year, will include a new space for the Mona Lisa and a new museum entrance.

The vast redevelopment project has been entrusted

to STUDIOS Architecture Paris, the French branch of an international company, and Selldorf Architects, a firm founded by a German architect in New York.

A French landscape and urban planning agency is also part of the winning team, which was selected by a jury from among five shortlisted candidates.

The culture ministry said the winning proposal was selected for "the quality of its architectural approach and its integration in terms of heritage, urban, and landscape considerations", as well as security concerns.

The Louvre said "The proposal establishes an elegant link between the city, the palace, and the museum."

STUDIOS Architecture Paris contributed to the design

of the Louis Vuitton Foundation in Paris and the LUMA Foundation in Arles. Selldorf Architects is known for its work on the historic mansion that houses The Frick Collection in New York as well as the National Gallery in London.

Macron's aides have said the project is expected to cost 700 million to 800 million euros (\$730 to 830 million). But the French Court of Auditors has put the price tag at 1.15 billion euros.

Under the plan, Leonardo da Vinci's masterpiece which attracts around 20,000 visitors a day -- will be independently accessible from the rest of the museum, with a separate ticket to see it.

The museum will also have a new entrance on its eastern facade to help ease

congestion at its current glass-and-metal pyramid entry point.

That entrance was designed for just four million visitors a year when it was inaugurated in 1988.

The Louvre, the seat of French kings until Louis XIV abandoned it for Versailles in the late 1600s, now receives around nine million visitors a year.

The Paris landmark has become a subject of national concern following a months-long string of scandals.

Apart from the embarrassing theft of French crown jewels in October, the museum has struggled with strikes, a ticket fraud scheme that may have cost the museum 10 million euros (\$11.7 million), a water leak and structural, maintenance and security issues. □



This photograph shows the top of the Louvre Pyramid, designed by Chinese-U.S. architect Ieoh Ming Pei with the Louvre Museum in the background in Paris on May 9, 2026.

How Aruban beaches came to be!



(Oranjestad)—We've talked about the best beaches to visit on the island before, but have you ever wondered how Aruba got its white, sandy beaches, and why there's a clear difference between the northern and southern shores? Here are some fun facts about the development of Aruban beaches. How did Aruba get its white, sandy

beaches? Aruba's beaches have developed over the span of thousands of years. Waves crashing on the rocky formations along our coast line (which consists mainly of coral reefs) have started to wear and tear the reefs over time, resulting in its gradual breakdown. Fish that feed off corals also

contribute to this—one small bite at a time. Over the course of thousands of years, as waves continue to crash and fish continue to eat off the corals, sand starts to accumulate around the area. However, whether the sand stays there is another question to be answered, and this is where we highlight the biggest difference between the northern and southern coast of the island.

The sand that accumulates around a torn coral reef is swept away along with the debris by the ocean stream. However, in areas where it's shallow and the stream is weaker, the sand tends to stick to the bottom faster. This is why the beaches in the south—the areas with weaker stream and shallower ocean



floors—has sand that stretches for miles. In contrast, the northern area, where the stream is much stronger and the ocean floor is much deeper, there is no sand present—they were swept away with the current!

Why is the north deep, but the south shallow?

Aruba is a continental island. The island actually forms part of South

America, and the space between Aruba and the South American continent is simply referred to as land that runs under the ocean. This is why it gets gradually deeper in the south, whereas the ocean floor in the north runs steeply to the bottom. □

Source: archival document provided by the National Archive of Aruba (ANA).

A guide for the perfect picture: Where to find the most Instagrammable places in Aruba

(Oranjestad)—Imagine, you're out and about on the island and you want to take the most picture-perfect photo to show your friends and family back home and online. It seems like the perfect spot can be hard to find, but Aruba is full of great spots for a quick snapshot! Here are the most Instagrammable places in Aruba.

Wooden Swing on Plaza Daniel Leo
While you're in Mainstreet Oranjestad, check out the wooden swing on Plaza Daniel Leo. This is another favorite among visitors wanting a cute snapshot for Instagram. Since you've made it this far, one question: How many blue horses have you spotted already?

Mangel Halto



For a different take on beach photos, we definitely recommend Mangel Halto! You can get in the water right by the roots of these beautiful trees (please be careful not to climb them, though!). You will see beautiful skies, birds and other wildlife, and among the greenery of the mangroves, your picture is sure to pop!

Yacht Dock in Oranjestad

Last but certainly not least, the Yacht Dock in Oranjestad is the perfect spot to take a beautiful picture, especially at sunset. The dock is located behind the Wilhelmina Park. This spot offers a gorgeous view of the ocean and sunset, accompanied by the soft



waves crashing on the shoreline. You may even spot some iguanas!

"I LOVE ARUBA"

While you're in the area, check out the 'I LOVE ARUBA' sign is a great first stop for a quick shot with the family. This spot is among the few that has become a favorite among tourists, especially those that are visiting Aruba through a cruise vacation.



Speaking of giant signs that read "Aruba" (because there can never be too many), there is another sign you can find along the Linear Park. It may be a long walk from the harbor to get there, but while you're at it, check out these other spots along the way! □



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. □

Fun facts about the “transhi” hedges!



(Oranjestad)—When off-roading, you may encounter some houses that have rock hedges, aligned perfectly and held together by cement—or sometimes nothing at all.

These hedges are called “transhi,” and have a historical and cultural meaning on the island. Used by cunukeros* around the island back when agriculture played a more dominant role in day-to-day life and survival, these stone hedges represent the resilience of our great-grand parents, who had to make do with what nature gave them.

These stone structures are tradition-

ally placed carefully on top of each other. No cement or other binding mixture was used to hold the structure together. Though not commonly used for modern homes, the few structures that remain around the island stood the test of time, some completely intact even after decades of rain, wind and urbanization.

These stone hedges are a representation of the Aruba's unique farming culture—which valued durability, sustainability and resilience.

*cunukero: Aruban farmers. □

Pictures extracted from the 'Plantage Zorgen Hoop' collection on Coleccion.aw

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It's Tern season, and ACF is calling for their protection

(ORANJESTAD)—Aruba has begun to see terns arriving along its coast to start their breeding season once again. An event that happens every year, the migration of terns to our island normally begins in March, but this year it was observed that they were already present as early as January.



In Aruba, there are ten different species of terns that normally breed from March to September every year. However, ACF has noted that this year their arrival came earlier, and by the end of January a presence of terns was already being seen in their breeding areas. During this season, ten different species breed at different times. This is the reason why the season lasts for more than half a year.

The terns breed mainly in the Baby Beach area and

along the north coast of Aruba. Baby Beach is a particularly special site for terns, since this is where they carry out their reproduction rituals. Referred to as a "discotheque" by Natasha Silva, the point of Baby Beach near the open water is where a large group of terns spends the season searching for their partner—for life—to reproduce.

Terns are very fragile and easily disturbed, especially during their reproduction rituals.

Their nests are divided into two specific sites on our island. The first is the reefs near the refinery in San Nicolas. These reefs become home to the terns, where they lay their nests either on the sand or in the small bushes around the reefs. These reefs are "off-

limits" to the public; one of the only areas in Aruba that is completely protected by law.

The terns also lay eggs along the north coast of our island, between cliffs and rocks throughout the area. This is where they are vulnerable to greater danger, according to ACF. Among these cliffs, everything is well camouflaged and cannot easily be seen, even by people who are walking or driving vehicles over the rocks.

The chicks have a natural behavior to "freeze" in place when they sense danger. This puts them at risk of being stepped on. For this reason, ACF is making a call to the community and authorities to help protect our historic birds.

As general advice, ACF says to keep distance and be cautious when pass-

ing through areas where terns are breeding. "If a tern starts screaming at you, that is a sign that you are too close to their nest and eggs," Silva explained. These are the types of signals the Aruba community needs to be aware of.

So once again, a call goes out to the entire community of Aruba: Let's protect our terns during an important season for them. Educate yourself and others about the birds, stay alert to harmful activities near nests, and share information with ACF if you notice anything unusual in nature. Together we can care for and strengthen our nature, and that begins with education.

Aruba Conservation Foundation (ACF) can be reached by phone at 585-1234 or by email at info@acf.aw

Welcome Decio: Aruba's long-time friend!



(Oranjestad)—Aruba Today would like to give a special shout out to Decio, one of Aruba's long-time visitors, and his family who

arrived today from Brazil! Liliane Mitre, Decio's daughter, tells us how she has been visiting Aruba for

32 years—first time in 1994 with her sister Ana. Her father has been to the island over 40 times. Incredible!

1996 marked a special year for Decio's family, as he and his wife celebrated their "golden" wedding anniversary with their entire family on Aruba. Since then, they have visited the One Happy Island every year.

Liliane says that Aruba is her father favorite place in the world, and has been here with his children, grandchildren and even friend. A devoted Aruba Today reader—he wakes up bright and early every morning during his visit here and likes to drink his coffee



reading our paper. Decio, we at Aruba Today are touched by you and your family's love for our little rock and want to say thank you for the years of support. We hope you spend a marvelous week in Aruba!

Aruban legends: Frenchman's Pass

(Oranjestad)—If you ever plan on taking a group tour of the island, you may pass through the Frenchman's Pass in Balashi. The Frenchman's pass (known to locals as "Franse Pas") remains a mysterious—and spooky—road of which its legend is told from generation to generation.

The history of the Frenchman's pass—and how it got its name—dates back to the colonization era, when the French tried to colonize the island, but were met with an angry mob of indigenous settlers, refusing to give up their land. However, as the French were heavily equipped with fire arms, the indigenous settlers began to retreat, and hid away in nearby caves. The French colonizers tried to smoke them out of the caves, but the indigenous settlers ended up inhaling too much smoke and most died in those caves. From then on, this passage was known as Frenchman's Pass, and there have been many accounts of spirits



roaming the area of Spanish Lagoon.

There are many ghost stories surrounding this area, but one of the most famous one involves a lonely hitchhiker, trying to find a ride back home in the dark rainy night.

Sometime after trying to hitch a ride home, the man saw a car approaching, appearing almost ghost-like in the rain. However, since he needed a ride real bad, he didn't think twice and jumped in. But to his horror, he noticed that there was no driver in the front. Paralyzed with fear, he

didn't dare to get out, and the car started to move.

When approaching a sharp turn, the hitch hiker braced for impact, but just when he thought the car might drive straight off the road and crash, he saw a hand appear out the window and turn the wheel. For the next

few turns, the hand appeared again. After having had enough, the man decided to jump out and he ran to Santa Cruz.

Arriving at a nearby bar, he ordered a drink and began to tell everyone about his experience. Everyone grew quiet, because they realized he wasn't some drunk messing around; he was telling the truth.

Sometime later, two men walked into the bar and one of them noticed the hitchhiker. He called out to his buddy and said: "Look, there's the idiot who sat in our car when we were pushing it!"

French man's pass is one of the few sites on the island that keeps the locals on their toes. While most ghost stories may not have real grounds—or some may even be a set up story for a joke, this pass holds a lot of value to our culture of folkloric story-telling.

Source: visitaruba.com

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, ad-



opted 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 decorating 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 decora-

tion 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 cre-

ations 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 Aruba, *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.

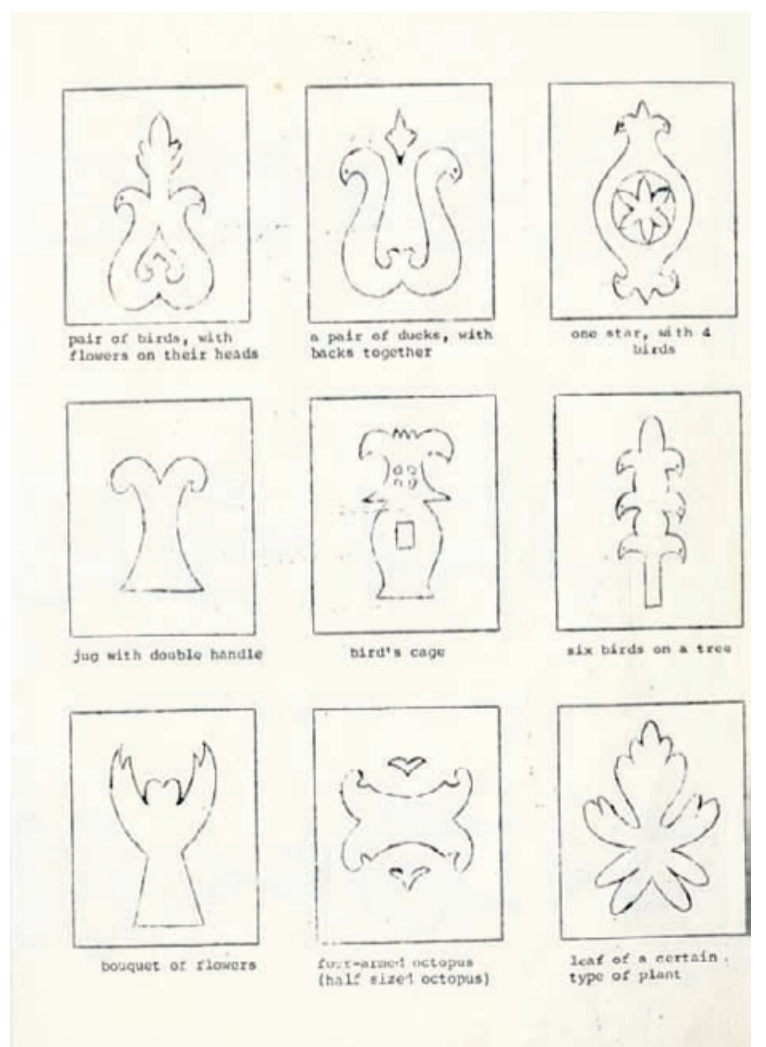
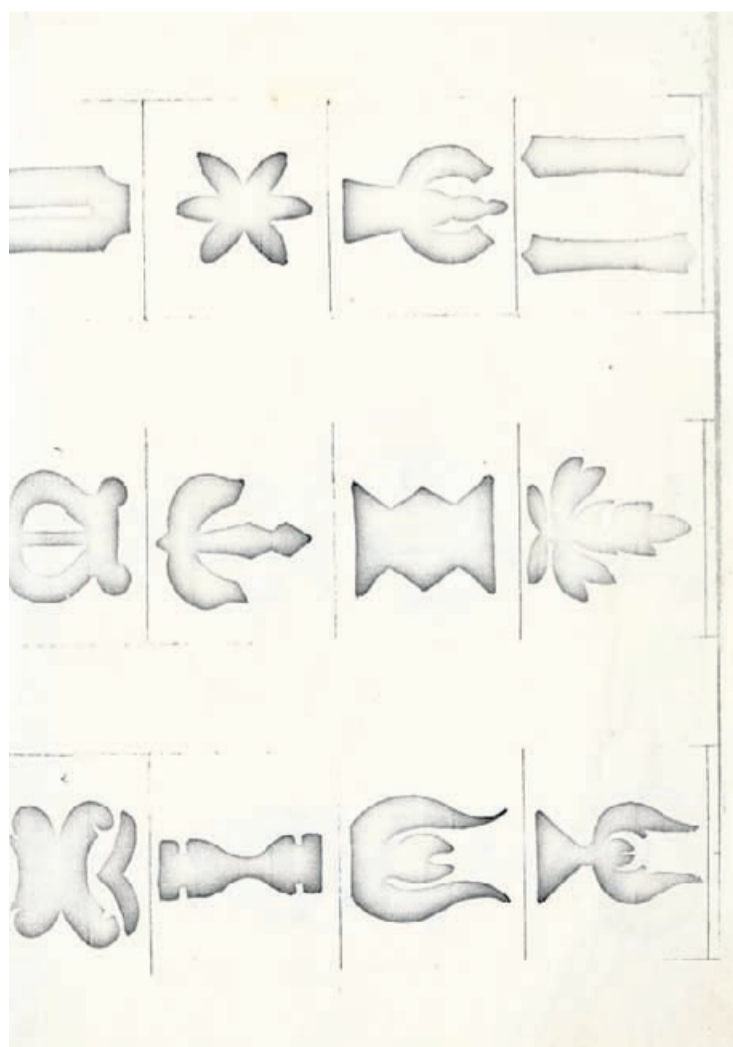
It was also said that these designs had a certain kind of voodoo purpose, to keep away the spirits of the Indigenous people who were buried in the neighborhoods where the houses now stand. However, this has almost completely disappeared.

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.



CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH



- ACROSS**
- 40 Rat's home
 - 1 Rugged rock
 - 41 Biscotti
 - 5 Captain of flavor fiction
 - 42 Wipe off
 - 9 Espresso layer
 - 43 Apertures
 - 44 Earth tones

DOWN

- 1 Neck-wear
- 2 Fix
- 3 From the U.S.
- 4 Telescope pioneer
- 5 Useful skill
- 6 Bowler, e.g.
- 7 Mideast area
- 8 Malia's dad
- 26 Behind
- 27 Quiz show
- 9 Smackers fodder
- 11 Toast start
- 29 Asian island
- 15 Whim
- 19 Visitor to Oz
- 30 Too much
- 31 Plow pioneer
- 21 Bus. sch. course
- 33 Resort spots
- 24 Like type that doesn't fit
- 37 Designer Wang
- 25 Capital of Ghana
- 39 Pharaoh's symbol



1-21

AXYDLBAAXR
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.

1-21 CRYPTOQUOTE

MNQ QNAXCHBKG PS PZ SMES
ANINXR ACCX QEPS E ZPADGC
VNVCAS ICBNHC ZSEHSPAD SN
PVUHNYS SMC QNHGX.

— EAAC BHEAT

Cryptoquote: LEAD FROM THE BACK — AND LET OTHERS BELIEVE THEY ARE IN FRONT. — NELSON MANDELA

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.

buy bottled water from the store.

Supermarket hours

Supermarket hours may vary depending on where you are staying on the island. Generally though, most supermarkets are open from 8am to 9 or 10pm, Monday through Saturday. On Sundays, supermarkets generally close earlier; mostly around 2pm.

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.

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

CRUISE SHIP SCHEDULE

02 SAT	CARIBBEAN PRINCESS	Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 22:00 Berth: C
05 TUE	CELEBRITY SILHOUTTE CARNIVAL MAGIC	Arrival: 08:00 Departure: 17:00 Berth: B Arrival: 9:00 Departure: 22:00 Berth: C
06 WED	GRANDEUR OF THE SEAS	Arrival: 11:59 Departure: 23:00 Berth: C
12 TUE	CARNIVAL HORIZON GRANDEUR OF THE SEAS	Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 22:00 Berth: B Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: C
19 TUE	ADVENTURE OF THE SEAS GRANDEUR OF THE SEAS	Arrival: 7:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: B Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: C
20 WED	ALLURE OF THE SEAS CARNIVAL VISTA	Arrival: 7:00 Departure: 16:00 Berth: I Arrival: 7:00 Departure: 16:00 Berth: C
21 THU	CARNIVAL VENEZIA	Arrival: 9:00 Departure: 22:00 Berth: C
26 TUE	CARNIVAL HORIZON GRANDEUR OF THE SEAS	Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 22:00 Berth: B Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: C

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

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

Difficulty: ★★

5/19

Answer to previous puzzle

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

Difficulty: ★

5/18

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Ebola and hantavirus outbreaks sign of our 'dangerous' times: WHO

Geneva, Switzerland

The deadly hantavirus and Ebola outbreaks are only the latest crises in "dangerous and divisive" times, the World Health Organization chief said Monday.

Opening the body's annual decision-making assembly in Geneva, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus spoke of the new Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo, which he declared an international health emergency over the weekend, and the rare hantavirus outbreak on the MV Hondius cruise ship.

The two "are just the latest crises in our troubled world", he told the gathering of health ministers and high level delegates from around the world.

"From conflicts to economic crises to climate change and aid cuts, we live in difficult, dangerous and divisive times," said Tedros, who was expected to elaborate on the risks during his main address to the week-long World Health Assembly on Tuesday morning.

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez, whose country has been hailed for allowing the stricken MV Hondius to anchor off its Canary Islands last week for the evacuation of passengers and crew, stressed that "protecting others is the best way to protect ourselves".

"No country can save itself" on its own, he said in a surprise address to the assembly, receiving a standing ovation.

Currently, "defending common sense has become a form of rebellion", he charged, lamenting an ongoing "pandemic of egoism".

The 2026 World Health Assembly comes after a particularly difficult year for WHO, weakened by the announced US withdrawal and deep funding cuts.

"The WHO's budget has been reduced by around 21 percent, or nearly one billion dollars. Hundreds of jobs have been eliminated, programs have been



World Health Organization (WHO) Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus delivers a speech at the opening of the 79th World Health Organization (WHO) assembly in Geneva, on May 18, 2026.

reduced," Swiss Health Minister Elisabeth Baume-Schneider noted in her address.

"The WHO had to, and was able to, undergo profound reform in the midst of the emergency."

Suerie Moon, co-director of the Global Health Centre at the Geneva Graduate Institute, also suggested WHO had weathered the storm, and that the hantavirus crisis provided "a clear illustration of why the world needs an effective, trusted, impartial, reliably-funded WHO", she added.

- Sensitive issues -

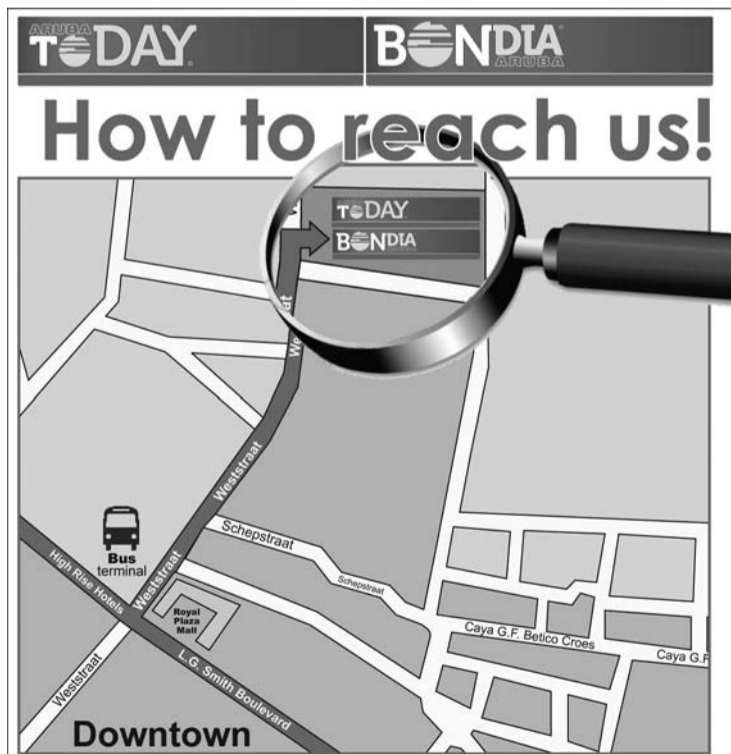
On the first day of the as-

sembly, countries refused once again to add the thorny issue of a request from Taiwan, which China claims is part of its territory, to regain the observer status it held between 2009 and 2016.

Other sensitive issues on the table include Ukraine, the Palestinian territories and Iran, which could spark heated debate. Disagreement between wealthy and developing nations has meanwhile blocked closure on the WHO's landmark 2025 pandemic treaty.

Countries had aimed to finalise during this year's assembly a key annex to the

agreement, which deals with sharing access to pathogens with pandemic potential, then sharing benefits derived from them such as vaccines, tests and treatments. □



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Urgent Care	586 0448
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ARUBA TODAY NEWS

'Mesmeric' movie on secret lives of Nigeria's rich wows Cannes

Cannes, France

A wonky mosaic in the shape of Nigeria plays a subtly telling role in Arie and Chuko Esiri's Cannes Film Festival break-out hit "Clarissa".

No one can get the artwork to sit quite straight on the wall as a chic power couple prepares to receive their guests for a party at their waterside Lagos home.

"It's a perfect motif of the nation," Chuko Esiri, the marginally younger of the twin brothers who directed the enthralling tale, told AFP. "It's slightly off and needs correcting."

Like Nigeria, "it could be amazing. It just needs a little adjustment", but no one quite knows how.

The lives, loves, petty snobberies and private torments of some of Nigeria's most privileged people form the core of "Clarissa", all set in Lagos where the rich float over so much human misery.

Critics at Cannes have found the twins' sly post-colonial take on Virginia Woolf's novel "Mrs Dalloway" one of the most affecting movies of the year so far.

"How lucky we are" they took it on, wrote the Hollywood Reporter's Lovia Gyarkye, while The Guardian's Peter Bradshaw called the movie "seductive" and "mesmeric".

Veteran RogerEbert.com



Nigerian co-director and screenwriter Arie Esiri (L) and Nigerian co-director Chuko Esiri pose for a portrait session on the sidelines of the 79th edition of the Cannes Film Festival in Cannes, southern France, on May 17, 2026.

critic Brian Tallerico declared it "one of the better films I'll see this year".

Waking up as the major discoveries of the festival so far have not phased the brothers one bit, they told AFP the morning after its triumphant premiere in the Director's Fortnight section.

- 'Wired differently' -

Fortunes "rise and fall like the currency" in Nigeria, joked Chuko, the more talkative of the two 40-year-olds.

Nor have the inevitable comparisons with other film-making siblings like the Coen brothers, the Dardennes and the Wa-

chowski sisters, who made "The Matrix".

Their stellar cast led by Sophie Okonedo and "Selma" lead David Oyelowo who both have Nigerian roots also got rave reviews, with Screen magazine and several other critics lavishing particular praise on "Okonedo's acutely calibrated performance" as the elegantly ageing love-crossed high-society hostess Clarissa.

Arie, the older of the two director brothers, told AFP that shooting with his twin is a kind of superpower, admitting he usually plays the tough guy on set.

"We're twins but we're wired differently. I'm right-handed," said Chuko, "and he's left-handed. He's visual, I'm more narrative."

- Two Nigerias -

"Clarissa", told in restrained flashback, is as much about post-independence Nigeria as it is about its upper crust, which the brothers say they know only too well, having "been born into it". Africa's most populous nation "is like any underdeveloped country the middle disappears and so it's basically just two classes", the poor and the rich, Chuko said.

And most of the wealthy in

the film have adopted the manners and clipped accents of their old colonial masters, the British.

The twins' tale turns on the intertwining stories of Clarissa and the soldier husband of her dressmaker, who returns from fighting Boko Haram jihadists in the north with PTSD and his faith in humanity shattered by the corruption of his superiors. Part of the tragedy is that the suffering of the two-decade insurgency "doesn't touch you in Lagos, in the south at all", Chuko said. "It's like being in England and seeing the war in Iraq," he argued.

"The idea of Nigeria is like an ongoing debate. Do we become two countries? Do we stay as one, because it was two countries pushed into one during the colonial era," said Chuko.

- African wave -

Neon, the distributors of the last six winners of Cannes' top prize, have already snapped the film up.

"Clarissa" is the second African film to have got a rapturous reception at Cannes this year after "Congo Boy" from the Central African Republic.

Just like the brothers' first film, the highly-praised "Eyi-mofe (This Is My Desire)" in 2020, "Clarissa" is punctuated with power cuts, "an everyday occurrence" in Nigeria, Chuko said. □

'Parasite' director Bong says making animated film to 'surpass' Miyazaki



South Korean director Bong Joon-Ho and Marrakech festival director Melita Toscan Du Plantier arrive for the Opening Ceremony and the screening of the film "La Venus électrique" (The Electric Kiss) at the 79th edition of the Cannes Film Festival in Cannes, southern France, on May 12, 2026.

Cannes, France

South Korean maestro Bong Joon-ho -- who won three Oscars and the Palme d'Or at Cannes for "Parasite" is making his first animated film.

"Ally" is the story of a clever piglet-like squid living in the depths of the Pacific Ocean, and shows how "encounters between humans and the creatures of the deep can reshape both worlds," according to its producers.

The acclaimed director told reporters at the Cannes Film Festival that he hopes to try to match Japanese animation master Hayao Miyazaki and George Miller of "Babe" fame.

"I've always wanted to create an awesome action sequence that can surpass the great ones created by George Miller or Miyazaki, and I felt this film was my

chance to practice that ambition," he told the film industry bible Variety at the Cannes Film Festival.

Bong, who won a cult following for films like the sci-fi "Snowpiercer", has already made a creature feature, "Okja", starring Paul Dano and Tilda Swinton in 2017. He admitted his fans "might be surprised that it's an animation".

"But once they actually see the film" next year "it'll be quite familiar to them and they might be happy to see my signatures."

Bong, 56, has been working on and off on the movie for nearly seven years and released the first images of the family feature last month. It is expected to be completed in the first half of 2027 and released later in the year. □

U.S. team 'devastated' by lack of home support, says World Cup doc maker

Los Angeles, United States

For most national soccer teams, playing a tournament on home turf is a huge advantage. For the United States, it can be the opposite.

In the Gold Cup final last year, the US lost in a Houston stadium overwhelmingly packed with rival Mexico fans. The semi-final in St Louis, Missouri, was a sea of light blue for their opponents Guatemala.

There were similar scenes at the U.S.-hosted Copa America a year earlier.

It is a huge concern for the US players under extraordinary pressure to deliver as co-hosts at this summer's World Cup, documentary filmmaker Rand Getlin told AFP.

"It devastates them. It hurts them. It makes them sad. They're disappointed in themselves for not giving fans more to cheer for," said Getlin, who spent the past four years embedded with the U.S. team for an HBO series.

"They're like, 'I want to go out and I want to do some-



U.S. fans watch game action during a watch party for the Women's World Cup 2023 between Sweden v United States Round of 16 match at Power & Light District on August 06, 2023 in Kansas City, Missouri.

thing spectacular with this men's national team at the World Cup, so we can change the way the sport is viewed in this country forever," he explained.

Getlin's five-part docuseries is appropriately titled "U.S. Against the World."

It takes viewers into the homes and locker rooms of

several U.S. stars including Christian Pulisic and Weston McKennie.

The series charts their journeys from humble backgrounds in a then-soccer skeptical country to unlikely success playing for Europe's top clubs.

It also depicts the sacking of Gregg Berhalter and the ar-

rival of Mauricio Pochettino as head coach less than two years before the World Cup.

Pochettino, the Argentine former coach of Tottenham Hotspur, was quick to note the contrast between the ferocity of the "unbelievable" Guatemala fans and U.S. supporters.

"That is the connection that

we would like to see in the World Cup. That connection that makes you fly," said following the Gold Cup clash. "To see (Guatemala), how they fight, how the fans behave, that is an important thing that we need to learn in this country," he added.

- 'Pressure' -

Soccer has boomed in North America over the past decade or so. But the focus of fans' support is often glamorous European clubs or, for immigrant communities, their nation of ancestry. In recent weeks, outlets including The Athletic have reported below-expectation ticket sales for the United States' World Cup games, though sky-high prices are mainly deemed responsible.

The US will play more Latin American opposition in the group stage opener, against Paraguay, before coming up against Australia and Turkey.

In the documentary, both Pochettino and the players are careful to avoid blaming the U.S. fans for being frequently outnumbered. □

Mitchell leads Cavs past top-seeded Detroit into NBA East finals

Los Angeles, United States

The Cleveland Cavaliers eliminated top-seeded Detroit from the NBA playoffs Sunday, dominating a decisive game seven 125-94, and will face the New York Knicks in the Eastern Conference finals.

Led by Donovan Mitchell's 26 points, Cleveland's victory makes them the last team to book their spot in this post-season's final four, with the Oklahoma City Thunder and San Antonio Spurs waiting in the West. Mitchell was among four Cavs players who scored 20-plus points, along with Jarrett Allen, Evan Mobley, and Sam Merrill from the bench.

The resounding win on the road in Detroit, after missing a chance to end the series at home Friday, extends an impressive playoff run for the Cavaliers, who

had a mediocre regular season in which they finished fourth in the East.

"We responded with force for 48 minutes tonight," said Mitchell.

"Especially in a hostile environment... that was that was the biggest thing, is just how do you respond? And not letting the moment become too big."

But it was heartbreak for Detroit, who comfortably topped their conference's regular season at 60-22, yet underwhelmed throughout their stuttering playoff run, and finally fizzled out in front of their home fans.

"That game sucked," said Pistons star Cade Cunningham. "Being back home, definitely wanted to get this win in front of the fans. Reminded me of last year, losing on home court. It's not a great feeling."

The Cavaliers raced into a 20-point lead during the first half, their accurate shooting aided by some unusually poor and passive Pistons defense.

- Shellshocked crowd -

Detroit repeatedly missed out on rebounds and allowed uncontested three-pointer attempts, while failing to find their attacking flow.

The Pistons trailed 64-47 at the break. That meant yet another mountain to climb for a team who had already been on the brink of elimination four times this postseason.

Detroit had battled back from 3-1 down to scrape past Orlando in their first-round series, and at 3-2 down against Cleveland had shown resilience to pull back one elimination game on Friday.

But Cleveland would not let the Pistons back into this one, playing with an aggression Detroit could not match, and led by an outstanding Mitchell, who suddenly seemed to be everywhere.

"He started out the game not trying to take it over,

not trying to score every single basket," said Allen.

"He started the game trying to distribute the ball. I think that's huge for a leader like him, trying to get everybody else going, and then getting himself going second." □



Donovan Mitchell #45 of the Cleveland Cavaliers looks to pass the ball against Marcus Sasser #25 of the Detroit Pistons during the third quarter in Game Seven of the Second Round of the NBA Eastern Conference Playoffs at Little Caesars Arena on May 17, 2026 in Detroit, Michigan.

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Aaron Rai of England celebrates with The Wanamaker Trophy after winning the 2026 PGA Championship at Aronimink Golf Club on May 17, 2026 in Newtown, Pennsylvania.

Humble PGA champ Rai celebrates English, Indian, Kenyan heritage

Newtown Square, United States

Aaron Rai grew up hard-working and humble in central England, family examples developing the patterns that led to his victory on Sunday at the PGA Championship.

The 31-year-old became the first English golfer since Jim Barnes in 1919 to capture the PGA crown, making four birdies and an eagle in the last 10 holes to produce a four-stroke victory at Aronimink.

"It definitely feels like a journey," Rai said. "So much goes into it, from being a junior golfer to developing the game to have aspirations of turning professional. Then you realize once you turn professional how good some of these guys are."

Rai's father is of Indian ancestry while his mother has Kenyan heritage and growing up in England has made him a mix of all their cultures.

"I'm very proud to be from England. That's where I

grew up. That's where a lot of my family still live," Rai said.

"I'm very proud of India and Kenya as well. My mom still spends a lot of time in Kenya. Both of my sets of grandparents from my mom and dad's side were from India.

"I'm very proud of representing all three really. I don't know what all that represents or how it's going to come across. All I can say is I'm very proud to be a mix of all of them."

He learned about being a good man and humble from family and golf.

"A lot of that has come from upbringing," Rai said. "Golf was always a very big part of my life from a very young age, but my mom and my siblings were very fast to reinforce the importance of just being a good person and trying to do the right things.

"Golf in itself is an extremely humbling game. There's so much hard work and dis-

cipline that goes into acquiring the skills to become better."

Work ethic was instilled by family as well.

"My dad instilled the importance of work and dedication and trying to consistently build just good, strong habits around the game," Rai said.

"My mom worked extremely hard away from golf. She worked a couple of jobs at one time and she did a lot of work around the house.

"There was a lot of consistent messaging of hard work. It has been something I've just grown up with and I guess as I've got older, something that I've really valued and tried to continue to move forward with."

- 'Real support system' -

Rai's wife, Gaurika Bishnoi, is a pro golfer from India whose advice in a car ride to the hotel lingered with him on the course.

"She has been incredible," Rai said. □



The pack rides with the Cathedral of Reims in background during the third stage of the 106th edition of the Tour de France cycling race between Binche and Epernay, in Reims, on July 8, 2019.

Champagne start in Reims for 2028 Tour de France

Reims, France

The 2028 Tour de France will embark from Reims in the French champagne region, organisers ASO revealed on Monday.

The three-week race will set off on June 24 and arrive on the Champs-Élysées in Paris on July 16, a week earlier than usual, to accommodate the Los Angeles Olympic Games.

The 'Coronation City' of Reims, where French kings were crowned, was chosen for the Grand Depart over Luxembourg, which is also on the route.

"There were some wonderful candidates. The choice turned on the need to actually start in France with some regularity," race director Christian Prudhomme told AFP.

This year's Tour starts from Barcelona while the 2027 Grand Depart is in Edinburgh, with three days of racing in the United Kingdom.

Reims also hosted the first stage of the Tour de France in 1956. The city has since hosted eight more stage starts and nine finishes, often sprints, most recently in 2019.

The route for 2028 has not yet been revealed, apart from five other towns visited during the first four stages. Verdun, with its World War I memorials, the forests and rolling hills of the Ardennes region and the mining towns of Metz and Thionville will also feature during the opening days in north-eastern France.

Charleville-Mezieres, the birthplace of French poet Arthur Rimbaud, and another celebrated champagne town of Epernay are also on the agenda.

The first stage could be suited to sprinters, followed by a more hilly second stage designed to encourage a change in the yellow jersey.

The peloton is then expected to head towards Luxembourg, where there could be more than one stage, a way of rewarding a "fantastic" bid, according to Prudhomme. □