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Aruba's ONLY English Vacation Newspaper

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LIVE ENTERTAINMENT 7 DAYS A WEEK

PROFESSIONAL COMPLIMENTARY PICTURES ON TUESDAY AND FRIDAY

| SUNDAY: | MONDAY: | TUESDAY: | WEDNESDAY: | THURSDAY: | FRIDAY: | SATURDAY: |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| MARRYBELL MADURO SINGER 6:30 TO 8:30 P.M. | ANDERSON BAHAMON SINGER 6:30 TO 8:30 P.M. | JEAN PAUL SAXOPHONIST 6:30 TO 8:30 P.M. | MAILLEYN ALVARADO VIOLINIST 6:30 TO 8:30 P.M. | MARRYBELL MADURO SINGER 6:30 TO 8:30 P.M. | MAILLEYN ALVARADO VIOLINIST 7:00 TO 9:00 P.M. | RICKY THOMAS GUITAR 6:30 TO 8:30 P.M. |



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How a modest 'teabag' is tackling the global arsenic water crisis



A revolutionary, low-cost water purification method designed like a standard teabag can eliminate up to 98% of toxic arsenic from contaminated drinking water. For decades, arsenic contamination in groundwater has loomed as one of the world's most severe, silent public health crises.

Prolonged exposure to this naturally occurring heavy metal can lead to severe health issues, including skin lesions, cardiovascular disease, and multiple forms of cancer. Traditional filtration systems, such as reverse osmosis, are highly effective but remain financially and structurally out of reach for millions of families living

in rural or low-resource regions.

Now, a brilliant scientific breakthrough published in the peer-reviewed journal ACS Omega is flipping the script on water purification. A team of researchers has developed a specialized, pocket-sized pouch that functions exactly like a teabag—but instead of brewing a morning beverage, it safely draws deadly toxins out of drinking water. Remarkably, this innovation was co-authored and driven by Vick Tan, a New York high school student working under a mentorship program at the City University of New York's Advanced Science Research Center (ASRC) alongside renowned chemist Adam Braunschweig.

The science inside the pouch

The initial inspiration for the project sparked from an unusual discovery: when ordinary tea is brewed, heavy metals naturally stick to the tea leaves and standard teabag fibers through a process called biosorbency. Recognizing this untapped potential, the research team set out to engineer a purpose-built pouch optimized exclusively for heavy metal remediation.

Instead of traditional dried tea leaves, these specialized cellulose-based bags are packed with two highly effective, eco-friendly arsenic adsorbers: magnetic iron oxide nanoparticles and pulverized eggshells. The iron oxide nanoparticles act like microscopic magnets, chemically locking onto arsenic ions dissolved in the water. Meanwhile, the crushed eggshells—a widely available agricultural byproduct—help maintain a stable, optimal pH balance within the water, ensuring that the heavy metals remain securely trapped inside the bag rather than dissolving back into the liquid. The laboratory results have been nothing short of extraordinary. In rigorous testing, a single engineered teabag removed over 98% of arsenic contamination from water samples within a six-hour soaking window. Most notably, when tested against water samples meticulously prepared to mimic heavily contaminated well water from Bangladesh, the humble pouch successfully dropped the arsenic levels well below the World Health Organization's (WHO) strict safety limits for human consumption.

Affordable, reusable, and accessible

What makes this breakthrough a true beacon of hope for global health is its sheer affordability and ease of deployment. Industrial water purification infrastructure can cost communities thousands of

dollars to construct and maintain. In stark contrast, the researchers calculate the manufacturing cost of this purifying teabag to be a mere 7 US cents per liter of treated water.

Furthermore, the bags are sustainably designed for multiple uses. After a soaking cycle is complete, a used bag can be gently rinsed, washed in a mild alkaline solution, and dried. The team noted that a single bag can be reused up to five times, experiencing only a modest 19% to 20% drop in extraction efficiency with each subsequent cycle.

To maximize the real-world impact of the system, the scientific team simultaneously created a low-cost, companion chemical test. This simple indicator turns water a distinct yellow shade in the presence of heavy metals, giving remote communities a rapid, on-site detection tool without the need for expensive lab instrumentation.

Empowering global communities

The decentralized nature of this technology means it can be shipped easily to remote villages, distributed seamlessly during natural disaster relief efforts, or utilized by everyday travelers. It puts the power of public health directly into the hands of the individuals who need it most.

"Clean drinking water should not depend on access to expensive infrastructure," Tan emphasized in an official CUNY ASRC release regarding the publication. "Our research shows that simple, low-cost materials can be engineered into scalable solutions for one of the world's most urgent public health challenges."

By transforming a routine household concept into a lifesaver, these scientists are proving that solving global crises doesn't always require millions of dollars in infrastructure—sometimes, it just takes a fresh look at a daily ritual. □

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WEEKLY LIVE SHOWS

8PM

| | |
|------------|---|
| MON | LATIN DANCE SHOW <i>By RCC Aruba</i> |
| WED | CULTURAL DANCE SHOW <i>By Youth in Action</i> |
| THU | ACROBATIC PERFORMANCE <i>By RCC Aruba</i> |
| SUN | VIOLIN SHOW <i>By Angela Flores</i> |

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How global energy shifts are bringing back the stars

Aggressive energy conservation measures and smart city tech are triggering a massive drop in light pollution across major Western nations. EarthSky reports that new imagery released by NASA's Black Marble Project shows an unprecedented dimming of nighttime artificial radiance, restoring night skies for stargazers and giving local ecosystems room to heal.

For generations, the steady march of human progress has been measured by the growth of our artificial footprint. To space-bound satellites, the planet resembled a web of brilliant electricity. However, this illumination came at a steep environmental cost, masking the cosmos, disrupting human sleep cycles, and devastating nocturnal wildlife.

Now, the tide is turning. A landmark global study of Earth's night skies reveals that artificial illumination is no longer a one-way street toward total saturation. Instead, targeted legislative action and advanced infrastructure are successfully dimming city lights.

The story behind the pixels

The new maps are the product of NASA's Black Marble Project, a specialized satellite network designed to monitor human-made light emissions across the globe. Using the Visible Infrared



Reflection of lights of the city of Antofagasta (R) from the Very Large Telescope at ESO's Paranal Observatory, on Paranal Hill in Chile's Antofagasta Region, in the Atacama Desert some 1150 km north of Santiago, on January 27, 2025.

Imaging Radiometer Suite (VIIRS), these satellites filter out seasonal snow, transient forest fires, changing cloud cover, and moonlight to isolate pure human light footprints.

The resulting dataset reveals distinct regional trends. While rapidly expanding urban hubs in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa continue to brighten, a coordinated push for environmental stewardship has triggered sharp dimming trends across Western Europe and various North American communities.

Leading the global dimming trend is France, where

night skies over Paris and surrounding regions dimmed by a massive 33%. This environmental recovery was closely followed by the United Kingdom with a 22% reduction in light output, and the Netherlands, which registered a 21% drop.

Legislation meets innovation

This widespread reduction is not an accident or a sign of infrastructure decline. Instead, it is the direct result of deliberate public policy and a rapid shift toward sustainable, directional LED lighting systems.

Across Europe, rigid dark-sky laws now dictate how and

when cities can be lit:

Curfew Ordinances: In France, commercial properties, shop windows, and non-essential public monuments are legally required to shut off their exterior lights between 1:00 AM and 6:00 AM.

Directional Lighting: Municipalities are actively replacing older, high-glare street lamps that scatter light upward into the atmosphere with shielded, downward-facing fixtures.

Adaptive Dimming: Advanced smart-city grids automatically lower illumination levels by 30% to 50% during deep-night hours

when foot traffic is low.

"The data shows us that deliberate, focused conservation policies work," notes the NASA Earth Observatory team. While part of the initial European drop coincided with temporary energy-saving strategies during the regional 2022 energy crisis, the long-term trend proves that modern infrastructure can maintain public safety while preserving the night.

An environmental and cultural victory

The benefits of reclaiming the darkness extend far beyond energy bill savings. For local ecosystems, the return of natural night is a critical lifeline. Excessive light pollution routinely misorients migrating birds, disrupts the pollination habits of nocturnal insects, and throws off the breeding cycles of amphibians. By dimming the urban glow, these communities are actively protecting local biodiversity.

For humanity, the fading light pollution represents a cultural revival. For the first time in decades, residents living on the fringes of major European metros are seeing the Milky Way from their doorsteps. The data provides a blueprint for communities worldwide, proving that economic development does not have to cost us our view of the universe. □

Alabama's \$17.5M green miracle: Restoring the great pine forests for future generations

In the heart of the American South, a quiet but monumental transformation is taking root. Alabama, a state renowned for its sprawling river systems and emerald forests, has officially committed \$17.5 million toward a landmark

wildlife restoration project. This initiative is not merely about planting trees; it is a profound effort to heal a landscape and ensure that the state's natural legacy remains vibrant for generations to come.

The centerpiece of this am-

bitious plan is the restoration of the iconic longleaf pine ecosystem. Centuries ago, these majestic, towering pines blanketed nearly 90 million acres across the Southeast. Today, due to over-harvesting and urban expansion, less than five percent of that original forest remains. Alabama's new funding aims to reverse this trend by reclaiming thousands of acres of lost habitat, turning the tide for one of the most biodiverse environments in North America.

"This is a generational investment," says state conservation official Sarah Jen-

kins. "We aren't just looking at the next four years; we are looking at the next hundred. We are rebuilding an entire world from the soil up."

The project's impact reaches far beyond the timber. The longleaf pine forest is a sanctuary for some of the region's most vulnerable residents. Among them is the gopher tortoise, often called the "landlord of the forest." These tortoises dig deep, elaborate burrows that provide vital shelter for more than 350 other species, including the rare Eastern indigo snake and

various small mammals. By protecting the tortoise, the state is effectively providing a home for an entire community of wildlife.

Furthermore, the initiative is a lifeline for the red-cockaded woodpecker. Unlike other birds, these specialized woodpeckers only peck their nesting cavities into living pine trees, a process that can take years. The restoration of old-growth stands ensures that these rare birds have the specific environment they need to thrive and sing once more in the Alabama wilderness.



NYC immigrant hubs eye FIFA bounce after Trump crackdown woe



Jacques Brunvil of the NYC Department of Small Business Services (R) hands out World Cup 2026 business tool kits to small business owners in the Little Haiti neighborhood of New York on May 19, 2026.

Brooklyn, United States

World Cup fever is beginning to hit New York's immigrant communities where wariness of the Trump administration's deportation crackdown has weighed on foot traffic.

In Brooklyn's "Little Haiti," street blocks once busy with merchants were quiet earlier this week.

Mahalia Desrosiers, a project manager for the civic group Little Haiti BK, has seen some businesses shut down even though the neighborhood has not actually been raided by immigration agents.

But she is becoming more confident the community will rediscover its joie de vivre as Haiti's first World Cup appearance in more than 50 years quickly approaches.

"I think the World Cup will give people a sense of life, of hope, energy," Desrosiers told AFP. "Haitians will put their flag on everything. We will paint this town red and blue."

City officials have been canvassing immigrant neighborhoods ahead of the first games on June 11 to publicize FIFA-related opportunities.

The city's tourism agency is preparing a FIFA calendar of events so visitors can experience matches in neighborhoods with the most passion at stake. They also plan to post short videos promoting watch parties to social media.

Another program, the Five Borough Winners Special, will supply eating and drink-

ing establishments with complementary drinking cups celebrating the soccer extravaganza.

"With FIFA it's an opportunity to maybe reach a new market, reach a new group of people that may not have visited your business before," said Jacques Brunvil, a senior liaison executive with the New York City Department of Small Business Services (SBS).

There are five dishwasher-friendly commemorative cups, one for each New York City borough. The city is hoping tourists will collect all five and post the bounty online.

The set consists of "taxi yellow for the Bronx, coffee cup blue for Brooklyn, ferry orange for Manhattan, thank you red for Queens and Liberty green for Staten Island," said an NYC Tourism spokesperson.

As of May 20, about 600 businesses had signed up for the program.

Brunvil envisions the boroughs as the backdrop to a kind of roving sports festival celebrating New York's diversity.

"We think that depending on the game, we'll see groups of people migrating to different parts of the city, whether it be Little Haiti to watch the Haiti game or an area like Little Senegal to watch that game," Brunvil said.

"People will move so that they can feel the vibrancy with the fans of that different country."

- Cheaper than going -

Immigrant communities in New York have felt under siege since Trump returned to the White House and launched his mass deportation drive.

City officials have described the toll anecdotally but say they lack the tools to quantify the economic impact. At a City Council hearing this month, SBS Chief of Staff Haris Khan said his agency doesn't collect sales data from individual businesses or employ software to monitor foot traffic.

SBS does track real estate indicators, but "just because occupancy rates are healthy, doesn't really mean we're in a great place for our immigrant communities," he said.

Khan told the hearing his agency saw the World Cup as an opportunity, but he was "certain it won't completely alleviate a year and a half worth of pain for some of these businesses."

At Golden Blue Bar & Restaurant, business has been uneven, with the Little Haiti venue's initial opening in 2020 hit by the pandemic before the more recent worries about immigration raids.

But Amantha Chery, who helps manage the restaurant owned by her parents, expressed confidence the community will come out to celebrate. Tickets for Haiti's first match against Scotland on June 13 are currently more than \$600 on Stubhub. "Because of the (ticket) prices, it's better for us," Chery said.

The restaurant, known for its "Mini Golden Delight" plantains and empanadas, has two televisions in the main dining room, plus a garden room that can house a wide screen.

"It's been a struggle with how Haiti has been represented in the press ... with how 'Haiti's so dangerous' and all that stuff," she said. "But there's so much resilience and beauty in our culture with our people. I'm just happy that we're finally in the press for something amazing." □

California governor orders a plan to cope with AI job upheaval



California Governor Gavin Newsom speaks during the The Center for American Progress (CAP) IDEAS Conference in Washington, DC on May 19, 2026.

San Francisco, United States

California Governor Gavin Newsom on Thursday ordered officials to start work on a plan to mitigate the job-destroying impact of artificial intelligence, the first US state to do so.

Newsom's demand comes as fears grow worldwide that AI could render everyone from truck drivers to lawyers unemployed as machines learn to perform tasks that have previously required a human.

The executive order will mobilize state agencies, experts, universities and industry leaders to develop policies around severance standards, employment insurance, worker training and better tracking of hiring and layoffs in an effort to avoid nasty surprises and sudden workforce cuts.

"Businesses are going to make a fortune, and that's why you cannot continue to have a payroll tax system that taxes jobs and then subsidizes automation," the governor said in a statement.

Newsom -- who is widely expected to be a leading Democratic Party candidate in the 2028 presidential election -- said lightning fast developments in AI meant the entire employment system needed to be reimagined.

"California has never sat back and watched as the future happened to us -- and we won't start now," he said. The move comes as figures revealed the US technology sector -- which is headquartered in California's Silicon Valley -- slashed more than 52,000 jobs in the first three months of the year, according to the firm Challenger, Gray & Christmas.

On Wednesday, Facebook parent Meta began laying off 8,000 people -- around 10 percent of its workforce. Advances in AI, which have allowed for the automation of increasingly complex tasks, are often cited by companies as the reason for reducing headcounts. But some industry watchers say firms are using the technology as a pretext for other cost-cutting.

Changes in how we work are reverberating around the world, sparking debate from Asia to Europe to the United States.

Some tech leaders -- including those at the forefront of AI, like Elon Musk and OpenAI's Sam Altman -- have suggested that the technology will leave so many people without a job that humans will effectively become creatures of leisure who need to be given some kind of basic universal income to survive. □

'Extremely dangerous': Cycle-mad Amsterdam slams brakes on 'fatbikes'

The Hague, Netherlands

Fast, fashionable mode of transport for some, scourge of the cycle path for others: in bike-mad Amsterdam, complaints about "fatbikes" have driven authorities to impose an unprecedented ban in one of the city's top parks.

Hugely popular with children, fatbikes -- so called for their ultra-thick tyres -- are electric bikes that look like squat motorcycles and can reach speeds of up to 60 kilometres (37 miles) per hour.

Competing for space on busy cycle paths in the famously flat Netherlands, many classic cyclists see fatbikes as a menace due to their superior speed and size. Complaints of "fatbike gangs" of youths tearing around Dutch cities and causing havoc are also commonplace.

A petition against "aggressive fatbikers" in Amsterdam has garnered 2,400 signatures, complaining: "Pavements are racetracks. Public space no longer feels safe." So city authorities have decided to ban them in the Vondelpark, a busy park that attracts locals and hordes of tourists on hire bikes or roller skates.

"We get a huge amount of complaints," said Melanie van der Horst, the Amster-



A cyclist rides a 'fatbike' along a path in The Vondelpark in Amsterdam on May 9, 2026.

dam city official who introduced the ban.

"A few years ago, we only got around 20 complaints about fatbikes. Now we have more than 2,000," she told AFP in an interview in the park.

Aside from the nuisance value, there is a safety aspect, given the fatbikes' popularity among children, added the official.

Fatbikes are supposed to have a maximum speed of around 25 kph, but they are often illegally souped up to reach anywhere between 50 and 60 kph.

"Imagine an 11-year-old child driving around town at

50 kph on a big, souped-up fatbike. It's extremely dangerous," said van der Horst. Children have been rushed to hospital with serious injuries after fatbike accidents, she said, including brain injuries and torn knee ligaments. "Doctors say it is the same level of impact as a motorcycle accident."

- 'Goes very fast' -

Visitors to the Vondelpark generally welcomed the ban, with a healthy dollop of the liberal scepticism for which Amsterdam is world-famous.

"I don't think you should ban anything but I do be-

lieve that they should have started maybe by banning kids under a certain age... because I think that's the biggest issue," said Aleksandar Rankovic.

"For the park and the people who just want to have peace, I think it's a good thing," the 47-year-old football coach told AFP.

Tanja Meuris, who has recently moved into the area, also welcomed the ban, but admitted she didn't see the difference between a fatbike and a classic electric bike.

"I have an electric bike myself and I think that this thing goes very fast and it can be

dangerous if not handled well," said Meuris, 27, a psychologist.

Officially introduced on May 11, the ban applies to all fatbikes with an electric motor and whose tyres are more than seven centimetres (about three inches) wide.

From next week, anyone caught riding a fatbike in the Vondelpark will be hit in the wallet.

People over 16 will have to pay a fine of 115 euros (\$133). Children between 12 and 15 pay half that.

Children under 12 get away without having to pay the fine, but their parents are informed.

Amsterdam authorities are keeping a close eye on the effects of the ban, which could potentially be extended to other parts of the capital.

Officials in Enschede, in the east of The Netherlands, have also taken action against fatbikes, banning them in the city centre.

"We've never seen anything like this before. That's why, to protect our children, I would like to see a national law passed," said van der Horst. "I would actually just like to get to a situation where children, especially the youngest ones, are simply not allowed to ride these bikes," she said. □



This picture taken on May 20, 2025 shows Chen Tianming at his house labelled China's strangest "nail house" -- households that refuse to move in the face of development plans -- in Xingyi, in southwest Guizhou province.

Beijing, China

Authorities have razed a ramshackle 10-storey home that for years defied demolition notices and building

restrictions to become an off-beat tourist attraction in southwestern China, footage from the owner showed.

Chinese authorities demolish villager's madcap 10-storey home

Chen Tianming spent almost eight years and 200,000 yuan (\$29,402) turning his family's humble stone bungalow into a towering pyramid-shaped warren of rickety staircases, balconies and other add-ons.

The structure drew comparisons from media and tourists to the fantastical creations of Japanese animator Hayao Miyazaki.

But local authorities took just hours to bring down all but the first floor on Wednesday, said 43-year-old Chen.

Officials have claimed for

some time that the building lacked permits and was potentially dangerous.

"I don't feel regret, because regret is useless," Chen told AFP.

"I also don't blame myself for failing to protect it -- it's just that the force driving its destruction was simply too powerful."

When AFP visited last summer, the structure of faded plywood and contorted wooden beams was unmissable, soaring high above the surrounding farmland.

Videos filmed after the de-

molition by Chen and sent to AFP showed the structure was now mostly gone, with piles of building materials remaining around it.

Early Wednesday, around a dozen people from the local law enforcement and public security bureaus arrived at Chen's home, he said, before they escorted him and his parents away and confiscated his phone. Chen said he saw dozens more people around his house as he was taken to a local government office, where he was kept until late in the evening. □

India capital's motor-rickshaws get Trump makeover

New Delhi, India

New Delhi's iconic auto-rickshaws have received a Donald Trump-themed makeover to mark the United States' 250th Independence celebrations and the upcoming India visit of Secretary of State Marco Rubio, but not everyone is a fan. The U.S. embassy said it is providing thousands of vehicle covers emblazoned with Trump's face and the U.S. flag for the ubiquitous three-wheeled taxi rickshaws plying the sprawling megacity.

"Happy Birthday America!", the cover reads, fitted to the back of the usually yellow-and-green rickshaws, also known as tuk-tuks. "250 years old".

U.S. Ambassador Sergio Gor, who was previously in charge of staffing the second Trump administration with loyalists, launched the rickshaw campaign in April featuring "iconic American images".

The U.S. embassy in New Delhi told AFP that "thousands of tuk-tuks currently in circulation will be sponsored to showcase messages celebrating America's 250th birthday". Some include the Statue of Liberty.

In sweltering heat at a fuel station, 24-year-old Tushar wielded a hammer as he fitted a Trump face cover to



A worker fixes a poster featuring US President Donald Trump on an autorickshaw in New Delhi on May 21, 2026 marking the 250th anniversary of American independence.

a three-wheeled rickshaw. "We get around 60 to 70 of these covers every day from a supplier," Tushar, who uses only one name, told AFP, saying he earns around 50 rupees (half a dollar) to fit each one.

He was busy persuading drivers to fit the free covers as they sat in queues for compressed natural gas (CNG), sweetening the deal with a small packet of tea. "The gifts keep changing," Tushar said. "Sometimes, it is pickles."

- 'Trump ruined everything' - India has been hard hit by fuel disruptions following the

US and Israeli strikes on Iran that led to Tehran's stranglehold on the strategic Strait of Hormuz.

New Delhi announced fuel-saving measures last week, including work-from-home days for government employees, after Prime Minister Narendra Modi called for reduced consumption.

India, the world's third-largest oil buyer, normally sources about half of its crude through the Strait of Hormuz. The country had been one of the few in the region to not hike domestic fuel prices, but has raised costs twice since last week -- sparking

anger especially among commercial drivers.

"I know it's Trump, but I have got a new cover -- and without paying anything," said driver Murari Lal, saying a new plain cover costs around 700 rupees (\$7). Another driver was less enthusiastic.

"I won't get the cover, even if it is for free," he said, declining to give his name. "Trump has ruined everything."

Drivers usually risk a fine if they display adverts on their vehicles, although some still promote brands, language-speaking courses, little-known sexual wellness clinics

or paint nationalistic slogans like "My India is Great".

Tushar said he faced a tough task persuading some to put Trump on their vehicle.

"Those who read the newspapers are angry at him over the war," he said. "They refuse us straight up."

Rubio arrives in India on Saturday, for a multi-city tour of the world's most populous nation -- where he will seek to build ties beyond government meetings in the capital.

He will visit four Indian cities, beginning in Kolkata, home to one of the oldest US diplomatic posts -- which got its first consul in 1792, just 16 years after Washington's independence.

Rubio then attends a gala reception in New Delhi for the 250th anniversary of US independence from Britain, on July 4, 1776.

Trump had initially formed a close bond with Modi, who thrilled Trump in his first term by inviting him to address a huge rally at a cricket stadium.

But Modi annoyed Trump by playing down his role mediating with Pakistan in last year's war, launched after a massacre of mostly Hindu civilians in Indian-administered Kashmir.

Pakistan, by contrast, said Trump deserved the Nobel Peace Prize. □

'Party in the back': Competitors vie for European mullet crown



People attend the annual European Mullet Cup in Audregnies, southern Belgium, on May 23, 2026.

Audregnies, Belgium

Hundreds of distinctively coiffured participants gathered this weekend in southern Belgium for the annual European Mullet Championship

to celebrate the once-maligned hairstyle.

Best captured by the tagline "business in the front, party in the back", the mullet typically combines a closely

cropped fringe and sides with flowing locks down the back of the neck.

Popularised in the 1980s, it fell dramatically out of fashion before making a somewhat subversive comeback in recent years.

This year's European championship is the fourth to be held since a group of enthusiasts in Belgium borrowed the idea from Australia of staging a competition.

Would-be champions for this edition came from as far afield as France, Spain and England.

For many of those involved, the mullet is much more than a hairdo -- it has become a way of life.

"The mullet is open -- to oth-

ers, to difference, to adventure. It has a wild side," said event spokesman David Hubert, who goes by the pseudonym Edgar Funkel.

In the quest to be crowned with the title of best mullet in Europe, hopefuls first had to fill out a questionnaire explaining more about themselves.

"Of course, we choose a great hairstyle, but what we really want is to choose a wonderful person," said jury member Lolita Demoustiez, 39 -- known as Dalita.

"What matters is that the person carrying the mullet truly embodies values such as tolerance, kindness and the freedom to be oneself." Belgian competitor Chris-

tine, 60, said her striking new haircut had helped her get through a recent difficult period in her life.

"It feels absolutely brilliant, and I still haven't taken any antidepressants," she said, showing off her silver grey do. "Long live the mullet!"

Around 50 finalists were selected to show off their mullets before the cheering crowds.

Winners were selected in a range of categories, including junior mullet, traditional mullet, unusual mullet and veteran mullet.

Eventually, the overall champions for 2026 were selected: the duo of Berenice, 44, and Samuel, 46 -- better known to their fans as BesaMulet. □

Sun catchers: The different lizards in Aruba

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

Aruba, as a desert island, is home to an incredible variety of unique and colorful species. Among them we can find different lizards, most of which have South American origins. But there are a few exceptions.

Iguanas

Iguanas are easy to spot, as they are larger than most other lizards and when young, have a bright green color that makes them stand out.

The iguanas usually found in Aruba are the Iguana, known as the green iguana, or locally as Yuwana. The Yuwana are a mostly herbivorous species, and can grow up to 2 meters in size, including the tail, making them one of the largest in the iguana family. As you will see, despite their name, as they reach adulthood, the iguanas can take on a grey or blue tone instead of the bright green displayed by the young ones. In Aruba – as in the rest of the Kingdom of the Netherlands – the most usual color varies from green to lavender, black and sometimes a reddish brown.

Yuwana is a protected species, as it is listed under Appendix II of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), meaning that international trade is regulated through the CITES permit system. In the past, Arubans used to eat a popular Yuwana soup, as it was believed to give strength and help restore health – probably due to the protein boost it delivered. However, it is now illegal to catch, kill, buy or sell Yuwanas in Aruba, and this includes eating them!

Turnip-tailed gecko

The turnip-tailed gecko is known locally as the Pega-

Pega, meaning sticky-sticky, due to the way it sticks to walls using the suction in its little fingers. They are found inside houses, and are mostly a nocturnal animal.

According to Etnia Nativa, the local Pega Pega is immediately recognizable by its large size, with a body length of up to 12 cm, and its large, swollen tail, approximately the same length or slightly shorter than its body; females are larger and more robust than males. It has short, robust legs with flattened toes and extensive basal webbing.

The undersides of its toes are covered in lamellae, which are used as friction pads to cling to smooth vertical surfaces. Some can even walk around completely upside down. Its toes are covered with ridges, which are peppered with millions of microscopic bristle-like structures called setae that attach and detach when the animal wills them to, and they never get gunked up.

They are variable in coloration, from a mottled dark gray to orange-brown, and are capable of changing color depending on their mood and surroundings. Mottled and banded markings aid in camouflage against tree bark. They are harmless and fragile; you can hold one in your hands as long as you are VERY gentle.

Never put pressure on its tail because it will surely drop as a measure to try to distract the predator, and they are different from other lizards because they're long-lived, talkative, lack eyelids, and their small scales are situated next to each other like cobblestones rather than overlapping as is the case in most other lizards.

Turnip-tailed Geckos are insectivorous and feed on cockroaches, grasshoppers, beetles, flies, mosquitoes, and spiders, which makes them the best pest control to have at home! They spend their days concealed in dark tree grooves and cavities, in narrow crevices in the walls, or behind paintings, which

provide the perfect shelter for them. Pega pega is a gecko endemic to our island, but in time, some 4–5 intrusive gecko species have been observed, some of which do not cease to amaze us with the racket they make, especially during the hours of the night.

The Pega-pega Phyllodactylus Julieni is also a protected species in Aruba, by law. It is illegal to kill them!

Striped anole

The striped anole (*Anolis lineatus*) that lives in Aruba is known locally as Waltaka or Toteki. This is a species of lizard in the family Dactyloidae, and they are native to Aruba and Curaçao. It is usually found in dry areas, commonly where there are not large trees; rather they enjoy




rocks, walls or tree trunks, as they prefer to stay close to the ground.

These lizards are about 7cm in length, have a brown color with a stripe on each side and typically, several stripes on the body and tail that are lighter in color. It has a dewlap which is orange-yellow – and what's unique about this species is that it is the only known species of anole where the dewlap is asymmetrically colored, with one side being a deeper


orange and the other side a lighter yellow. Mostly this is seen in the males, as it is almost imperceptible in the females. If the Toteki shows you his dewlap, retreat! This is not a friendly greeting!

Lizards are wonderful creatures that are precious to our fragile, local ecosystem. Please be mindful of these residents as you enjoy your stay. □

Images: Some images are from Aruba Birdlife Conservation.





Public Invitation



MEMORIAL DAY

Remember And Honor

Monday May 25, 2026 10AM

Beach Infront of Costa Linda

| | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 10am–Detail Assembly | 10:07am–“Present arms” |
| 10:05am–Call to attention | “Order Arms” |
| 10:06am–Reading of poem | 10:08am–Reading of poem |
| “We Stand beside sea” | “In Memoriam” |
| Wreath is set afloat | 10:09am–“Present arms” |
| | *one minute of silence* |
| | 10:10am–“Order arms” |

Refreshment Served

THE WEST DECK WEEKLY SPECIALS OPEN HOURS 10:30 AM - 11:00 PM
 ISLAND GRILL • BEACH BAR RESERVATIONS@THEWESTDECK.COM TEL: 587-2667 SPECIALS ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.

MARGARITA MONDAY Starting at \$10

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WING WEDNESDAY By the dozen \$18

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What Aruba means to Paul and Maryann!

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 Paul and Maryann Hidar. They wrote to us saying: Aruba to me is our Caribbean home, our Happy Place that keeps us



coming back year after year! We are on the island now celebrating coming to our One Happy Island for 40 years! We recreated our first time picture from 1986 at the Holiday Inn...then and now! 40 years of Aruba Love. Thank you for sending us this wonderful message sharing what Aruba means to you with us and our readers! ☐



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A brief history of the California Light House

(Oranjestad)—At the furthest western point of the island, there lies the tallest structure on the island: The California Light House. Standing on top of a limestone cliff, this lighthouse oversees the entire island, offering one of few best views of the island and the surrounding sea. It is also one of the few monuments that hold a rich history.

The lighthouse was constructed in between 1914-1916, and its first keeper was a young trained lighthouse keeper from Curacao names Jacob Jacobs. Mr. Frederico Fingal was the last man to have occupied this position until 1962. Though his son, Mr. Romulo Fingal did not continue in his father's footsteps, he does have a special connection to the lighthouse. He sat down with our reporter and shared a bit of its history.

As Mr. Fingal explains, "In 1915, cargo donkeys were hired from Figaroa di Noord to help build the Light house at Westpunt. The donkeys had to walk along the beach all the way to Westpunt carrying the cargo, poles, cement, and all these things. At that time, it was a difficult task until Aruba got its first truck.

These things reflect how people could have accomplished this tremendous job with so little." Mr. Fingal said, "At that time, it wasn't a place for people to work. It was very challenging because it was full of goats and donkeys, and it was very isolated. There were no hotels or roads to get there. There was only a donkey trail. Those were the only means of transportation."

Mr. Fingal continues, "In



1939, I was born in the lighthouse, and my father was the last lighthouse keeper until he retired in 1962. After that, they removed the power cables all the way to the top. According to the story, we couldn't have the light ourselves because they dismantled it, and after many years, I heard that it is in a train museum in San Nicolas, where we found this very special lens that, when the light shines through it, it reaches 30 kilometers out to sea." Mr. Fingal told our reporter.

The lighthouse has a long and very interesting history. The reason why the lighthouse was built, according to Mr. Fingal, dates back to the day when the cargo ship S.S. California sank because of the lack of light. In 1913, Aruba made a request to Curacao to build a Lighthouse at Westpunt, and the governor of Curacao responded to Aruba to come back in 1915 with a well-detailed plan. "During the First World War from

1914 to 1918, they had to wait for the light to be transported to Aruba because it was manufactured in France. At that time, there was no electricity, and the light was very interesting because it rotated with a kerosene lamp that planes used; clean kerosene," Mr. Fingal said.

Mr. Fingal discovered something very interesting about the lighthouse after much research was documented in his book 'History of the Lighthouse at Westpunt.' He found many details: "I found out that the height of the lighthouse was due to the absence of electricity. There was also the presence of coral. There is a long steel cable from where the light is, and under the light, at the highest point, there is a hanging weight, a sort of pendulum that swings like that, with a weight that measures about 1 meter by 30 centimeters wide, which is a block of solid iron attached to a cable. When you re-

lease it upwards, it comes down, and the weight that comes down pulls it up, gradually. And while it comes down, the same weight that is descending causes many small wheels to turn in the opposite direction. The Lighthouse rotates from 6 pm in the evening, when the sun sets, until 6 am in the morning. During the entire night, the

light shines on the lantern, it goes down 24 meters, and the Lighthouse is 30 meters high. It is designed not to collapse," Mr. Fingal explains.

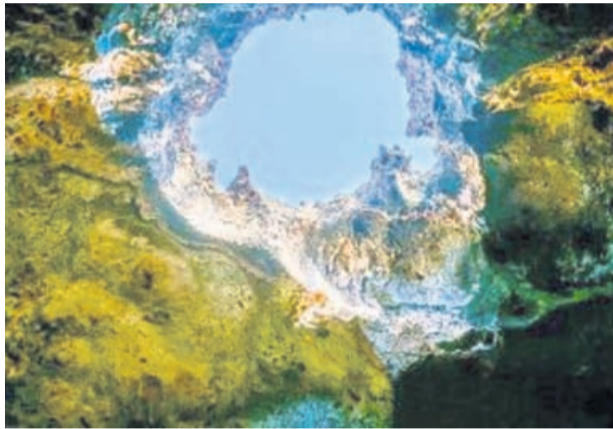
Mr. Fingal further explains that in one night, the lighthouse rotates 4,320 times and consumes one gallon of kerosene for the whole operation. "At that time, the kerosene was supplied from the Lago refinery. Every day it was brought down, and to start the light again, they had to lift the weight up, so our job as children was to crank it and raise the weight back up in the evening when the light stuck, they would take it down again, and the light stayed down. That's how it worked for a very long time," Mr. Fingal explains.

Thanks to the Monument Fund Aruba, which worked hard and is currently in charge of the Lighthouse, Mr. Fingal is very happy with its preservation, along with all the renovations that have taken place. He hopes that the story of the lighthouse will continue to live on for future generations. □



Explore Aruba!

(ORANJESTAD)—Aruba Today collected some things to do BEYOND the beach. Aruba, located 15 miles north of Venezuela in the warm waters of the southern Caribbean, is home to beautiful white-sand beaches, 82-degree days, and thus ideal for the perfect beach day. But we are also blessed with some of the warmest people in the world and our island is 19.6 miles long and 6 miles across, with a total area of 70 square miles. Bit more to discover than the white stretch on the coastline we say. Let's mention some of these hidden gems.



Arikok National Park

The Arikok National park is worth the ride. We love the hikes that are guided by the park's rangers whose job is to maintain trails and protect natural resources. The flora and fauna are beautiful and the historical sites tell you about the island's indigenous roots. If you are not up to walking, you can drive through the park, one way or another this park is a great place to spend an entire day. Cruising through the landscape you end up at some of the most stunning beaches like Dos Playa or Daimara Beach. In total, the park consists of 34 square kilometers of protected nature with a richness of animals



living in it. The Aruban whiptail lizard (cododo), Aruban cat eye snake (santanero) and endangered rattle snake (cascabel) are just some of them, you can also admire these close in the park's Visitors' Center. For more information, visit the website www.acf.aw

Natural Bridge

One of Aruba's favorite tourist attractions is the Natural Bridge. For thousands of years, pounding waves and strong winds have slowly chiseled away the limestone cliffs along Aruba's north coast to create several natural bridges. The largest of these bridges used to be the famous Natural Bridge. The bridge was a formation of coral limestone cut out by years of pounding surf, and was one of the largest of these types of spans in the world. It stood some 23 feet (7 meters) above sea level and spans more than 100 feet (30 meters). Unfortunately the bridge collapsed on September 2, 2005. Despite this, it is still the most photographed nat-



ural bridge and it remains a popular tourist attraction in Aruba, with the adjacent and intact Baby Bridge also meriting a visit. The Natural Bridge is the perfect stop while touring Aruba. There is no admission fee or set hours for visiting. Quench your thirst with refreshing beverages & refuel your tank with local snacks.

The Lourdes Grotto

Named in commemoration of the famous French religious landmark, was created under the guidance of a priest named "Erkamp" and parishioners in the year 1958. The grotto, a shrine built into the rocks is located in Seroe Preto, just off the main road to San Nicolas. A statue of the Virgin Mary, weighing 700 kilos, was hoisted into place in the grotto. Every year, on February 11 (feast of Lady of Lourdes), a procession leaves from the St. Theresita church in San Nicolas to the grotto, where a mass is performed. The grotto is located road-side and can be visited daily. Just make sure you park safely in the event you wish to stop for pictures at this location. □

The Aruban way of life: Creating community with Cas di Torto

(Oranjestad)—The Aruban people understand that a happy life is spent in great ambience with your loved ones. Passed down from one generation to the other, building community has been a key aspect in forging our traditions and customs. The Cas di Torto (mud house) played a big role in cultivating community, bridging families together and forming close bonds with your neighbors—something we highly value today.

Cas di Torto: History and construction

The origin of the Cas di Torto is said to date back to the early 19th century in the Paraguana Peninsula in Venezuela. Refugees who sought sanctuary on Aruba introduced this building method to the island.

The uprights of the walls were made with sturdy and straight wayaca or kwihi wood, or from thin mangrove struts. Then, the wattle walls were weaved in using branches and twigs

from the warero and sisal plant, daubed with a mixture of grass and mud. Finally, the walls got a coat of white plaster to seal everything in.

For roofing, corn stalks, palm fonds and straws were used, allowing air to flow freely through the house. This method of roofing was known throughout the ABC islands (Aruba, Curacao, Bonaire), but the use of cornstalks in Aruba eventually got replaced with use of mud and white plaster for the roofs. The white plaster all around made the houses look like cake, hence the name "Torto" (Spanish for "cake").

Building community

Building Torto houses was often a community effort. Young couples who were about to get married had

to have their house built before they could tie the knot and start their own family. This is where the help of the community comes into play.

Neighbors, extended family and friends would all help in the construction of a Torto House. And everyone had a role: The men oversaw the building of the house, and the women were tasked with collecting wood and straws, cooking and taking care of the little ones.

The couple's family were primarily responsible for feeding everyone who helped build the house. Before construction, someone usually had the task to prepare the meal; going fishing or slaughter farm animals like goats, chicken or sheep. Even the older kids had their tasks; the older

children of the family usually helped with collecting water and mixing the mud.

The average duration of constructing a Cas di Torto was 4 months.

At the end of a long day of work, everyone would gather around and enjoy a feast of hearty food. This type of help from friends and family became a tradition and was called "paga lomba": You help me today; I'll help you tomorrow.

Nowadays, traditional Cas di Torto are rare, especially those that are still inhabited. Houses that do exist probably date back more than a century. □

Picture credits: Aruba National Library (BNA) and the Monumentbureau archive on Coleccion.aw



Basic driving rules on Aruba: Roundabouts

(Oranjestad)—Have you ever felt confused when you're driving on the highways or backstreets of Aruba? Then we present a simple guide to some of the basic rules of Aruban traffic, along with some tips for things to look out for.

Speed limit

Legally, the speed limit on the four-lane highways is 80 km/h. This speed limit also counts for the main roads that are connected to the highways. The minimum speed is 50 km/h. Most people drive around 60 km/h on the main roads and about 70 km/h on the highways. There are also areas that indicate a speed limit on a sign; these are usually around populated and school areas.

The four-lane highways contain the left-lane, also known as the "fast" lane for each direction. Here is where vehicles can drive up to the maximum speed. However, legally it is not permitted to drive for long periods of time on the left lane. This lane is primarily designed for drivers to switch lanes before a roundabout, for example, if your exit on the roundabout is on your far left. The general lane to drive in—both at maximum and minimum speed—is on the right lane.

Roundabouts

Speaking of roundabouts, it is important to know where you have to enter and drive on the roundabout to make your exit. A good rule of thumb is to count the exits starting from your right side. So, exit 1 would be on your right; exit 2 would be straight ahead; exit 3 would be on your far left and exit 4 would lead to the road paralleled to the one you're on, heading in the other direction.

Most roundabouts have these 4 exits, so they are relatively simple. When you're driving on the four-lane highway, it is important to know when to switch to the left lane to make your exit: if your exit is on your far left (exit 3), then you need



to switch to the left lane on the high way before nearing the roundabout so you can take the path that leads you directly to your exit. If your exit is on your right or if you're going straight ahead, you can keep driving in the right lane of the highway.

It's also important to know that vehicles about to enter the roundabout must yield to those already on it. A good rule of thumb is to look out if someone is coming from your left side.

However, other roundabouts can be quite tricky to navigate...

Watty Vos Boulevard (the "paperclip" roundabout)

Probably the biggest roundabout on the island, the "paperclip" roundabout on the Watty Vos Boulevard is one of the trickier roundabouts that could—and has—caused confused among both tourists and locals. However, once you take a good look at it, it's fairly simple. The basis is just the same as a regular roundabout (left exit? left lane! etc.), but instead of having four different exits like on a regular roundabout, now you have two extra; one on the right and the other on the left side of the roundabout. The rules don't change at all, you

just have to keep an extra eye open.

Airport roundabout

Ah, yes. The infamous airport roundabout. The favorite roundabout amongst local, because of its easy (hard) lanes that never (always) cause confusion among drivers. Sarcasm aside, this roundabout can be tricky to enter, especially when you're driving from the direction of the airport heading. When you're driving away from the airport reaching the roundabout, you'll be faced with three lanes. The far right lane is to take the exit 1 out heading east (right lane of highway). The middle exit is

used for exit 1 (left lane of highway), 2 and 3. The far left exit is used to only exit on exit 3 (left lane of highway) and 4.

"Las Americas" roundabout

The Las Americas roundabout is located farther west from the airport roundabout. This roundabout may look like a regular roundabout—and for the most part, it is. However, when you are driving from the east going in the direction of town, please take note that there are two exits on your right.

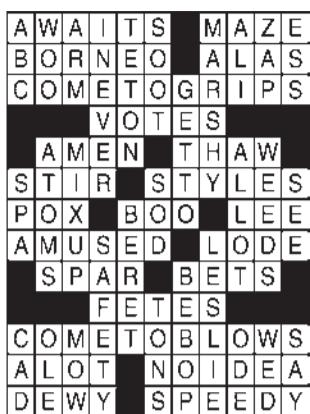
When you're driving towards this roundabout, you'll notice that the road becomes wider, splitting into two lanes. The right lane is used to take the first and second exit on the right. If you want to exit straight ahead, you must drive on the left lane!

It's always scary to drive in new places where the traffic may look and work differently, but once you get it right once, you'll get the hang of it in no time. Additionally, all roundabouts and roads on Aruba have signs and arrows painted on the road to help guide you. So take your time, keep your eyes open and don't forget to wear a seat belt! □

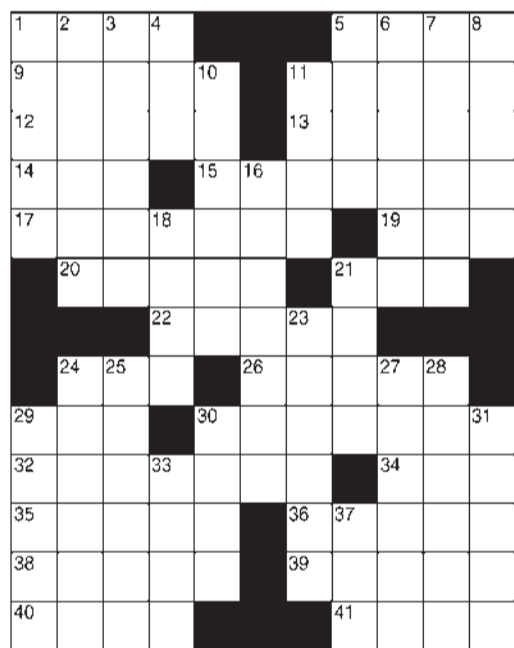


CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH



- ACROSS**
- 39 Indy
 - 1 Golf goals entrant
 - 5 Yellow-stone animal
 - 41 Garden sections
 - 9 Steer clear of
 - 11 Doctor's reading
 - 12 Island off Naples
 - 13 Happened
 - 14 Even score
 - 15 Sent
 - 17 Lost one's footing
 - 19 Scrollwork shape
 - 20 Conde-scending look
 - 21 TV spots
 - 22 Shiny finish
 - 24 Sit-up targets
 - 26 Bridge utterance
 - 29 In the style of
 - 30 Cut off
 - 32 Passed over
 - 34 "The Last Jedi" role
 - 35 Shire of "Rocky"
 - 36 Steer clear of
 - 38 Vote in
- DOWN**
- 1 Accords
 - 2 Uses
 - 3 Entice
 - 4 Knight's title
 - 5 Post-dinner sound
 - 6 Wed in secret
 - 7 Evaluate
 - 8 Marsh plants
 - 10 Put to rest
 - 11 Bill stamp
 - 16 Jane Eyre, for one
 - 18 Cribbage markers
 - 21 Memo letters
 - 23 Web spinner
 - 24 Acid's opposite
 - 25 Dealt with a leak, maybe
 - 27 Evergreen tree
 - 28 Like ranked
 - 29 Fall players
 - 30 Petty fight
 - 31 Textile workers
 - 33 Photos
 - 37 Chemist's place



5-3

A XYDLBAAXR
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.

5-3 **CRYPTOQUOTE**

QKIKIAKQ NGJN ZBHZJB LYYH

ZT JT P Q K J N JT Z N ZT

AKUJDTK YL ZNT IJPZUJO DTK YL

TSZUKT. — IJHGDQ RJLLQKF

Cryptoquote: ANYTHING MADE WITH LOVE, BAM! — IT'S A BEAUTIFUL MEAL. — EMERIL LAGASSE

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.



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 occurs, so keep yourself and your belongings safe.

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

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

Difficulty: ★

5/25

Answer to previous puzzle

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

Difficulty: ★★★★★

5/24

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Rich nations topped \$100B climate finance goal again in 2023, 2024: OECD



This photograph taken on September 22, 2025 shows the logo of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) displayed on banners at the OECD headquarters in Paris.

Paris, France

Wealthy countries topped their \$100 billion annual climate finance goal for poorer nations for the third straight year in 2024, the OECD said Thursday, but questions are growing over their ability to meet a new larger pledge.

Developed nations had long fallen short of their commitment to mobilize \$100 billion a year by 2020, finally hitting the target for the first time in 2022 after the deadline was extended to 2025.

The money is aimed at helping developing countries, which are least responsible for global warming, invest in renewable energy and cope with the worsening impacts of climate change. After providing \$115.9 billion in 2022, wealthy countries sharply raised their contribution to \$132.8 billion in 2023, according to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, which tracks the figures. It increased slightly in 2024

to \$136.7 billion.

Climate finance can come from governments in the form of bilateral aid, multinational development lenders like the World Bank, or the private sector.

Public climate finance slipped 2.6 percent to \$101.6 billion in 2024 but private sector contributions surged 33 percent to \$30.5 billion.

The OECD said the data needed to produce figures for 2025, the last year of the \$100 billion pledge, would not be available before 2027 "at the earliest".

Raphael Jachnik, who led the report at the OECD, told AFP the dip in bilateral public finance partly reflected a return to more normal trends after a sharp rise in 2023.

- Trump guts aid programs -

Climate finance has been a thorny issue at annual UN climate talks, as developing nations grew frustrated with the developed world for

dragging its heels to fulfill its pledges.

Richer nations committed to a new goal at the UN COP29 summit in Azerbaijan in 2024, pledging to provide \$300 billion a year by 2035 -- an amount still considered insufficient by developing nations.

They also set a less specific target of helping raise \$1.3 trillion annually from public and private sources.

Jachnik said the international context "raises more fundamental questions" about the new \$300 billion target. U.S. President Donald Trump, a climate skeptic who returned to office last year, pulled the world's richest country out of climate diplomacy and gutted its foreign aid programs.

The European Union, the biggest contributor to climate finance, is under budget strains and seeking to ramp up military spending amid the wars in Ukraine and the Middle East.

Turkish Climate Minister Murat Kurum, who will chair the COP31 climate summit hosted by his country in November, said Wednesday that he would "hold donors accountable for the commitments they made under the \$300 billion Baku finance goal".

"It is easy to say we support global climate action. But promises must be kept," Kurum said in a speech at a climate ministerial meeting in Copenhagen.

Western nations have pushed to broaden the contributor base to include countries that are still listed as developing but have now become wealthy, such as China and Saudi Arabia. Developed countries, which are facing their own budget constraints and debt problems, have also insisted that the private sector play a bigger role.

- 'Total scandal' -

Asia was the main target of climate finance contributions in 2024, with 36 percent, followed by Africa at 31 percent.

As in previous years, most public climate finance took the form of loans in 2023 and 2024, accounting for 73 percent and 67 percent of the total respectively, according to the OECD.

Developing countries have argued that climate finance should come in the form of grants, as loans compound their debt problems. □

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ARUBA TODAY NEWS

Usyk rocked before stopping Verhoeven to retain heavyweight belts

Cairo, Egypt

Heavyweight boxing king Oleksandr Usyk retained his titles after a dramatic and controversial stoppage victory over kick-boxer Rico Verhoeven with a second left of the 11th round in Egypt on Saturday.

In the shadow of the Great Pyramid of Giza, Verhoeven had rocked the Ukrainian champion and seemed to be leading before he was dropped and eventually stopped.

"I thought it was an early stoppage but in the end it's not up to me," Verhoeven told DAZN.

"I wanted the referee to let me go out on my shield or let me go in the 12th. I felt we were pretty even on the scorecards."

He said he was thankful for the opportunity and revealed that Usyk had offered him a rematch.

"I am super proud of my performance and hopefully, the boxing world embraces me as a boxer," he added.

Despite having fought the likes of former champions Tyson Fury, Antony Joshua and Daniel Dubois, Usyk was given perhaps his toughest heavyweight fight by a man who had only boxed once before, in 2014.

Verhoeven is a legend of



Ukraine's Oleksandr Usyk celebrates after defeating Netherlands' Rico Verhoeven (off frame) by TKO during their WBC World Heavyweight Championship 'Glory in Giza' boxing match at the Pyramids of Giza on May 23, 2026.

kick-boxing but no one expected him to cause the great Usyk so many problems in a boxing bout.

"I know right now, Ukrainian people are sitting in the bomb shelter, my daughter too, in a bomb shelter, sent me a message saying, 'Papa, I love you, you will win'," said Usyk, who retained the WBA, WBC and IBF belts.

"Thank you so much, Rico. You are an amazing fighter. Thank you so much to your team. My team, I love you. My wife, I love you. You are my light and my heart.

"This fight was hard. It was a good fight."

- Plush right hand -

Until the controversial stoppage, Verhoeven had proved to be more than a tricky competitor and gave Usyk a huge scare.

His jerky style, bulldozing aggression and powerful right hand had troubled a sluggish-looking Usyk for most of the fight.

The fight had attracted a host of boxing greats to ring-side including Saul 'Canelo' Alvarez, Terence Crawford, Gennady Golovkin and for-

mer heavyweight champions Joshua and Andy Ruiz. But as an exhausted Verhoeven started to labour in the 11th round, Usyk unleashed a stunning uppercut to drop the Dutchman.

There were only seconds left of the round to survive after Verhoeven climbed off the canvas.

But Usyk went straight in for the finish, unleashing a flurry of punches before the referee called off the bout with Verhoeven stumbling, but still on his feet.

With so little time left in the round, it seemed a hugely

controversial call from the referee.

Despite Verhoeven soaking up heavy punishment, he was likely still leading the fight.

He had started well, landing a couple of vicious right hands in the opening round. Usyk struggled to find his range, and although he had a good fourth round, rocking Verhoeven with an uppercut, he seemed to be losing most of the early rounds.

As the rounds ticked down, everyone waited for Usyk to assert his superiority, but that did not come until the end of the 11th.

A plush right hand sent Verhoeven down and through the ropes.

Once he was up, Usyk unleashed a barrage but the Dutchman looked like he would be saved by the bell, until the referee intervened. Germany's WBC mandatory challenger Agit Kabayel entered the ring after the fight to call out Usyk.

"I have waited so long for this fight. I am ready and I think Germany is ready for the fight. Let's do it in a German stadium. I think all the fans want it," Kabayel said. Usyk replied: "Let's do it, no problem. I am ready, brother." □

Norway's Dversnes takes surprise win in Giro 15th stage



Uno X Mobility Norwegian rider Fredrik Dversnes celebrates as he crosses the finish line to win the 15th stage of the Giro d'Italia 2026 - Tour of Italy cycling race between Voghera and Milan, Italy, on May 24, 2026.

Milan, Italy

Fredrik Dversnes won the 15th stage of the Giro d'Italia on Sunday, taking the honors from a breakaway on a day in which the final lap of Milan was neutralized due to

rider complaints about the race conditions.

Norwegian Dversnes crossed the line ahead of three Italians -- Mirco Maestri, Martin Marcellusi and Mattia Bais -- as a widely expected bunch

sprint never materialised.

Jonas Vingegaard stays in pink as the overall race leader, two minutes and 26 seconds ahead of Afonso Eulalio after a surprising end to a flat 157-kilometre stage from Voghera to Milan, which looked tailor made for the sprinters.

But race organizers were left with the embarrassing decision to first neutralise the last five kilometers for the general classification after Vingegaard was among the riders to complain to race commissioners about the road furniture.

That ruling was then extended to the entire fourth and final lap around Milan, although the stage and eventual sprint would still be valid.

"We all thought that the cir-

cuit was dangerous. I don't want to go into details but when we got into the circuit we spoke to the race's head commissioner and they made a decision," said Vingegaard to RAI after the race.

"As riders we have to be happy that they listened to us and I want to thank the organizers.

"Obviously we spoke within the peloton. If it had just been me who felt this way it would have been different. But I could tell that everyone was of the same idea, so I think I had a bit of responsibility on my shoulders."

It was the biggest win of his career for Dversnes, who rides for Uno-X Mobility and whose last victory was in the fourth stage of the Arctic

Race of Norway in August.

"I knew I had good opportunities because I'm pretty good at going in breaks, so this was my big shot," Dversnes said after the race.

"With 5km to go, of course you start believing, but you have to think about what to do and what's important and not about what happens."

The peloton will have a chance to rest their legs on Monday before the start of the brutal third and final week, which will decide the destination of the pink jersey.

On Tuesday, the first of a series of decisive mountain stages will see the riders move to Switzerland to take on 113km of punishing terrain between Bellinzona and Cari. □

Zverev strolls to opening Roland Garros win, Djokovic waits in wings

Paris, France

German second seed Alexander Zverev enjoyed a comfortable first-round win on the opening day of Roland Garros on Sunday as 24-time Grand Slam champion Novak Djokovic prepares to start his latest tilt at making history.

Under a blazing sun in Paris, Zverev eased past France's Benjamin Bonzi 6-3, 6-4, 6-2. The 29-year-old said it was "always nice to start with a straight-sets win", and he will doubtless have been glad to spend as little time on court as possible with the thermometer going past 30C in the French capital.

The only blip for Zverev in an otherwise polished performance was conceding a break of serve in the second frame against the world number 95 but he swiftly righted course to claim that frame.

He will next face Czech Tomas Machac, who earlier beat Belgium's Zizou Bergs 6-4, 6-4, 6-3.

Karen Khachanov of Russia also advanced into the second round with a straight-sets win over French wild card Arthur Gea.

Czech 26th seed Jakub Mensik made similarly short work of another French invitee, Titouan Droguet, as the 20-year-old strolled through 6-3, 6-2, 6-4.

Brazilian 19-year-old Joao Fonseca then put on a clinical display to see off hometown qualifier Luka Pavlovic without dropping a set.

Former French Open winner Barbora Krejckikova was the highest-profile departee of the day as the world number 41 was eliminated 6-7 (7/9), 7-6 (8/6), 6-2 by American 26th seed Hailey Baptiste.

She was joined in exiting Roland Garros by fellow former major winners Emma Raducanu and Sofia Kenin, who both lost their respective opening matches.

- 'Thoughts to Ukraine' -

Ukrainian Marta Kostyuk earned her 12th consecutive win on clay as she eased past Oksana

Selekhtmeteva, who was born in Russia but obtained Spanish nationality four days ago, 6-2, 6-3.

The Madrid Open champion then revealed that her family home in Kyiv was nearly struck by a Russian missile during a massive bombardment of the Ukrainian capital earlier on Sunday. "This morning, 100 metres from my parents' house, a missile fell," the 15th seed said on-court.

"I'm obviously very happy to be in the second round. All my thoughts and all my heart was to the people of Ukraine today. My biggest example are Ukrainian people today."

Kostyuk will meet Katie Volynets in the round of 64, after the American beat France's Clara Burel in straight sets. Swiss 11th seed Belinda

Bencic opened play on Court Philippe Chatrier with a 6-2, 6-3 victory over Austrian qualifier Sinja Kraus.

Last year's junior winner, Lilli Tagger, was downed in her debut match in the senior draw at Roland Garros as the Austrian 18-year-old lost 6-3, 3-6, 6-4 to Chinese 32nd seed Wang Xinyu.

Russian teenager and eighth seed Mirra Andreeva navigated her way past 181st-ranked Fiona Ferro of France in straight sets.

Djokovic will headline the first night session of the fortnight as he begins his bid for a record-breaking 25th Grand Slam title against big-serving Frenchman Giovanni Mpetshi Perricard. Lifting the Coupe des Mousquetaires for a fourth time would send the 39-year-old



Germany's Alexander Zverev plays a forehand return to France's Benjamin Bonzi during their men's singles match on day 1 of the French Open tennis tournament on Court Philippe-Chatrier at the Roland-Garros Complex in Paris on May 24, 2026.

clear as the player with the most major titles in the history of the sport.

Djokovic's last Grand Slam title came at the US Open in 2023, and every subsequent major has been claimed by tennis' two new

dominant forces -- Jannik Sinner and Carlos Alcaraz.

But with double-defending champion Alcaraz missing through injury, Djokovic will know this is a big chance to seal that elusive quarter century of crowns. □



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



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

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

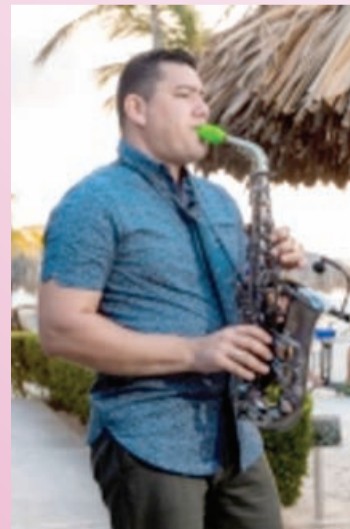
Start your day off with a hearty breakfast. Water's Edge offers a variety of delicious breakfast items, including their house specialties of Avocado Toast, Chicken & Waffles made with homemade Belgium waffles and topped with a gorgeous hot honey sauce. If you want something on the sweeter side, try their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

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

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

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

Meat Lovers will have their fix with choices of Steak, including a Petite Filet, French Rack of Lambs or their famous 14oz pan-seared Pork finished with a fantastic



apple glaze. All our steaks options are seasoned with a blend of kosher salt and freshly cracked black pepper. Served with homemade mashed potatoes, seasoned vegetables and a choice of red wine reduction, green peppercorn demi-glace, mushroom sauce, chimichurri or bacon blue cheese butter. Enjoy it with a side of fresh asparagus, seasonal vegetables, and four different types of fries. Combine your meal with your personal choice of international and exclusive wines.

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

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

Live entertainment

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

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

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