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Birds of Aruba: Soaring through the blue skies



Page 8

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The “snackpacking” revolution hits U.S. cities

The sun was just beginning to crest over the brick-lined streets of Charleston, South Carolina, but the line at a small, unassuming window on Spring Street was already ten people deep. These weren't diners waiting for a white-tablecloth brunch; they were “snackpackers,” the vanguard of a 2026 travel movement that is fundamentally changing how Americans consume both calories and culture.

For decades, the high-water mark of a successful vacation was the elusive dinner reservation at a five-star establishment. However, a post-pandemic shift toward authenticity, combined with a desire for more nimble, budget-conscious exploration, has birthed a new phenomenon. Snackpacking is the art of skipping the heavy, three-course sit-down meal in favor of a day-long, nomadic journey through a city's culinary soul, one small bite at a time.

The concept is simple: instead of spending \$100 and two hours in a single darkened dining room, travelers are spending that same budget over six hours at six different family-



owned businesses. From sourdough starter tours in the Mission District of San Francisco to boudin ball crawls in the humid corridors of New Orleans, the “big meal” is being dismantled and redistributed into the hands of local artisans.

“When you sit in a restaurant for two hours, you see a curated menu and a waiter's uniform,” says Elena Rios, a veteran food guide based in Austin, Texas. “When you snackpack, you see the city. You see the mural next to the taco truck. You talk to the grandmother who has been pressing tortillas for forty years. You aren't

just a customer; you are part of the neighborhood's daily rhythm.”

This trend is more than just a win for the adventurous palate; it is a vital economic engine for the “little guy.” In cities like Portland and Nashville, micro-vendors and food stalls are reporting a 30% increase in daytime foot traffic from tourists. By spreading their spending across multiple vendors, travelers are ensuring that their vacation dollars support a broader cross-section of the community. It is travel with a conscience, wrapped in a paper napkin.

The psychological benefits are equally compelling. In an era of “decision fatigue,” the low-stakes nature of the snackpacking lifestyle is a breath of fresh air. If a \$6 skewer of grilled meat doesn't hit the mark, the traveler hasn't ruined their evening or emptied their wallet. The next discovery is always just a block away, turning a standard sightseeing day into a high-reward scavenger hunt. As we move into the peak travel season of 2026, the data suggests this isn't a passing fad. Major travel apps have begun integrated “snack maps,” and bou-

tique hotels are swapping their formal dining rooms for rotating “pop-up” kiosks featuring local chefs. The American traveler is no longer content to be a passive observer behind a windowpane; they want to be on the pavement, moving, tasting, and connecting. The true beauty of the movement lies in its accessibility. It requires no dress code, no advance booking, and no elite status. It only requires a pair of comfortable walking shoes and a healthy dose of curiosity. Whether it's a warm pretzel in a Philadelphia alley or a fresh peach from a Georgia roadside stand, these small moments of flavor are proving to be the most durable memories of the modern journey.

Snackpacking stands as a powerful testament to the American spirit of exploration. It reminds us that the heart of a destination isn't found in its most expensive buildings, but in the vibrant, bustling, and delicious hands of the people who call it home. This summer, don't just book a table take a walk. The best seat in the city might just be a park bench with a paper bag and a story to tell. □

Nature takes flight: Portland's new timber terminal becomes a sanctuary for the modern traveler

While most airport construction projects are met with groans of frustration, the city of Portland has achieved the impossible: a terminal that travelers actually want to visit early. As of April 2026, the newly completed main terminal at Portland International Airport (PDX) is being hailed as a global masterpiece of “biophilic” design, proving that the stress of modern travel can be cured by a return to nature.

The centerpiece of the \$2 billion “PDX Next” project is a massive nine-acre wooden roof. Sourced entirely from sustainably managed forests within a 300-mile radius including small family-

owned timber lands and tribal nations the structure is a soaring tribute to the Pacific Northwest's heritage. The lattice-work skylights filter sunlight through the beams, creating a “dappled forest floor” effect that immediately lowers the heart rate of hurried



commuters. “Airports are usually glass and steel boxes designed for machines,” says project lead Sarah Jenkins. “We wanted to build a place for people. When you walk in here, you smell the Douglas fir and see the living trees. You feel grounded

before you ever leave the ground.” The terminal functions less like a transit hub and more like a vibrant city square. The interior features “park-like” pods filled with native Oregon greenery, permanent lounge seating that mimics a backyard deck, and a curated selection of local shops that require no “airport markup.” In a motivational move for the local economy, the airport has maintained its “street pricing” policy, ensuring a cup of Stumptown coffee costs the same at the gate as it does downtown. Industry experts are taking note. Earlier this week, PDX was awarded the 2026 “Architecture for Wellbeing”

prize, with judges citing its ability to reduce passenger cortisol levels through design. It serves as a powerful reminder that our infrastructure can and should reflect the natural beauty of the regions they serve. For the vacationer, the message is clear: the journey is just as important as the destination. Whether you are departing for a summer getaway or returning home to the Rose City, the new PDX terminal offers a rare moment of peace in a fast-paced world. It turns out that the secret to better travel wasn't more digital screens or faster moving walkways it was a little bit of wood, a lot of light, and a deep breath of fresh air. □



An aerial picture taken on May 10, 2024 shows the Burgenstock resort above Lake Lucerne.

Iran to dilute its enriched uranium under accord with U.S. to end Mideast war

Washington, United States

The United States and Iran on Wednesday released the text of their agreement to end the Middle East war, with Tehran committing to dilute its enriched uranium while being allowed to resume oil sales.

Washington commits to waive some sanctions and to facilitate the release of a \$300 billion reconstruction fund for Iran supported by regional nations when a final agreement is reached on the Islamic republic's nuclear program, according to the text.

Readouts of the agreement, which is slated to be signed in Switzerland this week, were released by US officials and Iranian state media.

U.S. President Donald Trump said Wednesday that he was prepared to "bomb the hell" out of Iran if they violated the agreement, which he said could be signed as soon as Thursday.

It was previously expected that it would be signed on Friday by Iran's chief negotiator and parliament speaker, Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, and US Vice President JD Vance.

But Iran said Wednesday it was considering a plan for its president and Trump to sign the deal which is intended to stop nearly four months of hostilities that

have roiled the Middle East and the global economy. Trump, who is currently attending a G7 summit in the French town of Evian, near Switzerland, said, "The deal we reached with Iran on Sunday will be signed shortly, tomorrow (Thursday), maybe the next day (Friday)."

He told reporters that he "might" stay in Europe for the signing but added that as a memorandum of understanding "it might not be the kind of a document I should be signing."

- 'Great victory' -

Highlighting the global impact of any deal, China said Wednesday that its top diplomat had impressed on Tehran that it was "key" for all sides to "genuinely implement" their commitments.

While the agreement is essentially a prelude to a more detailed negotiation on Iran's nuclear program and other issues, it has provoked strong reaction from different quarters.

U.S. Senator Bill Cassidy from Trump's own Republican Party was scathing about the agreement which he said would allow Iran to rebuild.

"Iran's nuclear ambitions were not curbed, and they have learned that threatening the Strait of Hormuz works," he said. "Sanctions

will be lifted, and the bombing has stopped. This is the worst foreign policy blunder in decades."

Head of the pro-Tehran Lebanese Shiite movement Hezbollah, Naim Qassem, on Wednesday described the deal as a "great victory" for Iran.

He thanked Tehran for insisting that it cover Lebanon, which was drawn into the conflict when Hezbollah fired rockets at Israel on March 2 in support of Iran. In a televised address, Qassem called on followers to take advantage of the agreement and "expel Israel" from Lebanon.

- 'Major win' -

After the formal signing of the agreement, a two-month negotiating period will begin, with the much-anticipated reopening of the Strait of Hormuz a vital conduit for global oil and gas supplies as the first step. Under the terms of the deal released by US officials, Iran will dilute its enriched uranium stocks, possibly by "down-blending on site under the supervision of the IAEA" the UN's nuclear watchdog.

"The fact that they're conceding to that is a major, major win for the United States of America," a U.S. official said of the nuclear issue on a call with reporters on condition of anonymity. □



Commander of the US Pacific Air Forces (PACAF) Gen. Kevin Schneider attends his meeting with Japan's Defence Minister Shinjiro Koizumi (not pictured) at the Defence Ministry in Tokyo on April 28, 2026.

Pentagon restores name of U.S. Pacific Command

Washington, United States

The Pentagon is restoring the name of the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command to the US Pacific Command, it said on Tuesday, reversing a 2018 decision.

The renaming will not change the command's area of responsibility, which stretches from the western part of India to America's Pacific coastline, the Department of War said in a statement.

Its "fundamental mission and its unwavering commitment to maintaining a free and open theater alongside regional allies and partners" also remain unchanged, it added.

The name change "honors the command's deep historical roots, fostering a sense of pride and collective spirit among all who serve in the Pacific," the department said, without giving additional details.

The U.S. Pacific Command was established by former President Harry Truman after World War II.

It operated under that name for over 70 years before being renamed as the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command in 2018, in a nod to the growing importance of the Indian Ocean in US strategic thinking.

The 2018 name change also came as part of broader efforts by Washington to counter China's growing influence across the Asia-Pacific domain. □

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The ghost light flickers back to life: Harrisburg's youth theater finds its voice again

HARRISBURG, Pa. — For nearly five years, the stage at Central High sat in a state of suspended animation. The velvet curtains, once a vibrant crimson, gathered dust in the wings. The “ghost light” the single bulb left burning in an empty theater to ward off shadows was the only performer on the boards. But this weekend, the silence finally broke.

The revival of Harrisburg's Youth Theater program isn't just a school board victory; it is a long-awaited homecoming for a community that felt its heartbeat stutter when the arts were slashed from the budget in 2021. As the house lights dimmed this past Friday for the opening night of *The Sound of Music*, the collective intake of breath from the audience was audible. “We didn't just lose a class when the program was cut,” said Elena Rodriguez, the newly appointed artistic director who lobbied for two years to restore the department. “We lost a sanctuary. For many of these kids, the theater is



Gamut Theatre in downtown Harrisburg

the one place where they aren't judged for being different. It's where they learn that their voice has actual, physical power.”

The story of the program's demise is a familiar one in post-pandemic education: rising costs and shifting pri-

orities led to the shuttering of elective “extras.” However, the community refused to let the stage go dark permanently. A grassroots coalition of parents, local business owners, and former alumni some of whom have gone on to Broadway and regional

stages raised over \$150,000 to supplement the district's renewed investment.

The result is a program that feels more professional than many college departments. The tech booth has been outfitted with modern LED lighting, and the cos-

tumes were hand-stitched by a volunteer brigade of local tailors. But the real magic, according to the students, isn't in the equipment.

“I've lived in this town my whole life, and I never thought I'd get to stand on this stage,” said Marcus Thorne, a seventeen-year-old senior who plays Captain von Trapp. Marcus had never acted before this year; he was a soft-spoken athlete who wandered into auditions on a whim. “The theater gave me a confidence I didn't know I had. It taught me how to look people in the eye.”

The revival comes at a critical time for Harrisburg's youth. Studies increasingly show that involvement in the performing arts significantly improves mental health outcomes and academic performance for teenagers. In a town that has seen its share of economic hardship, the theater serves as a vital “third space” outside of home and school work. Opening night was a sell-out. □

The ‘Gardens of Grace’: How an inner-city lot became a neighborhood oasis

DETROIT, MICHIGAN — For nearly two decades, the corner of Cass and Ledyard was nothing more than an eyesore a vacant, trash-strewn lot that stood as a symbol of urban decay. But this spring, that same corner is a riot of color, scent, and life. It is now the

“Gardens of Grace,” an urban farm and community space that is feeding more than just the bodies of Detroit's residents.

The transformation was spearheaded by 24-year-old Jada Williams, who grew up three blocks

away. Tired of seeing her neighborhood defined by its empty spaces, Jada gathered a small group of volunteers and spent a year clearing debris, testing soil, and petitioning the city for the right to transform the land.

“I wanted to create something that looked like the way we felt inside resilient, vibrant, and growing,” Jada says, standing amidst rows of ripening tomatoes and blooming marigolds. “This isn't just about vegetables. It's about taking back our narrative.”

The Gardens of Grace operates on a “take what you need, give what you can” model. Residents are encouraged to harvest fresh produce for their families, and in return, many spend their Saturday morn-

ings weeding, watering, or teaching younger kids about the environment. The garden has become a vital source of fresh food in an area often classified as a “food desert.”

Beyond the nutrition, the garden has significantly impacted local safety and social cohesion. According to local precinct data, calls for service in the immediate two-block radius have dropped by nearly 25% since the garden opened. “Criminals don't like bright, well-cared-for spaces where people are always watching and talking to each other,” says Officer Mark Peterson. “Jada and her team have done more for public safety here than a dozen patrols ever could.”

The garden also hosts “Wednesday Workshops,” where local elders teach younger generations traditional skills like pickling, composting, and even herbal medicine. It has become a bridge between generations, a place where stories are told over shovels and watering cans.

As Jada prepares for the first harvest festival of the season, she reflects on the lot's past. “This land used to represent what we lost,” she says, handing a freshly picked cucumber to a passing neighbor. “Now, it represents everything we're building together. It's amazing what happens when you just give the earth and the people a little bit of grace.” □





A tricycle taxi passes a building at risk of collapse in Havana on June 15, 2026.

Cuba's historic homes teeter on brink as economy collapses

Havana, Cuba

In Havana's old town, to walk on the pavement rather than the middle of the street is to take your life into your hands.

The ornate stone balconies of the decaying colonial townhouses jutting above your head are liable to collapse at any moment.

Tens of thousands of people housed in these monuments to pre-revolutionary Cuba, which were subdivided into apartments after Fidel Castro took power in 1959, live on the edge, literally. In the densely populated Centro Habana district, a storm brought down the stone staircase, leading from the ground to the upper floors, in the neo-classical pink 1920s tenement where Marnie Estevez lives. Estevez, her husband, two daughters, mother and 97-year-old grandmother were left perched on the third floor, with no way out. "The fire service had to come and get my grandmother down with a crane," Estevez told AFP in the tiny two-roomed apartment that she, her husband and children have moved into on the first floor.

Her mother and grandmother are still living in a hostel seven years later -- just two of the many thousands of people evacuated from ruined buildings to cramped temporary

lodgings. In nearby Habana Vieja, the historic city center, nine families who decamped from a collapsed building three years ago are still living in a boxing gym. Each family lives between four walls of cardboard surrounded by sheets held up by wires and sticks for privacy.

With Cuba's economy buckling five months into a US-imposed fuel blockade, and the national housing deficit running to over 900,000 units, authorities say a quick fix is unlikely. "It looks very difficult, given the situation," said Dayana Garcia, a mother who is raising three children in the gym.

'No money to fix anything'

Across Havana, the ravages of time, lack of maintenance and overcrowding is writ large in the facades of one of the best preserved colonial cities in the Americas.

Habana Vieja, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is home to around 900 listed buildings, some dating back to the early years of Spanish rule in the 16th century.

But in some cases, blue skies can be seen through the facades, making the decaying structures look like theater props.

Between 2000 and 2013, a total of 3,856 buildings collapsed nearly one a day

according to the Office of the City Historian, which is responsible for maintaining listed buildings.

By 2020, around 37 percent of the country's residential buildings were deemed unsafe.

"Havana is falling down," Estevez's 64-year-old mother Leodiska Canino said flatly.

"There is no money here to fix anything," she added.

In the gym, electrical wires snake across the floor to each family's cardboard home, but there is no running water and the heat under the zinc roof is stifling. The thud of fists walloping punching bags reverberates through the gym from morning until evening.

"This is not a life," one of the relocated mothers grumbled.

- An absent government -

The fortunes of Havana's colonial buildings mirror that of the nearly seven-decade-old revolution, their peeling pastel-colored facades are symbols of the repeated crises that have rocked the island, and its surprising resilience.

Some buildings were spruced up as part of a tourism drive launched in the 1990s, which peaked in the years following the landmark 2016 visit by former US President Barack Obama. □



This photograph shows visitors from the Sully wing, queuing in the Cour Napoleon by the pyramid designed by Chinese-U.S. architect Ieoh Ming Pei, to enter the Louvre Museum in Paris on November 19, 2025.

Louvre museum 'running out of steam', says new director

Paris, France

The Louvre museum is struggling to find funding to upgrade its ageing facilities, its new director said Wednesday, following a litany of problems that included a brazen \$100-million jewellery heist.

"Despite its imposing majesty, despite the daily commitment of its staff, the Louvre is running out of steam," Christophe Leribault told a Senate committee.

"Its equipment and infrastructure are reaching the end of their life cycle."

Leribault, an art historian and museum director specialising in 18th-century art, took the helm in February, after his predecessor stepped down following an embarrassing daylight theft of imperial jewels in October that laid bare severe security failings.

Home to iconic pieces of art including Leonardo da Vinci's "Mona Lisa", the Louvre is the world's most visited museum, receiving around nine million visitors a year.

It is housed in a vast palace in central Paris on the banks of the Seine River, built over centuries by various French monarchs who at times used it as their official residence. "Building-related emergencies are piling up, and we're facing a wall in terms of investments," Leribault said.

The museum had struggled with repeated strikes causing loss of revenue, a ticket fraud scheme that may have cost the museum 10 million euros (\$11.7 million), a water leak, and other maintenance issues. □

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This picture taken on May 14, 2026 shows volunteers identifying stray cats before taking them to be vaccinated and neutered at a park in Jakarta.

Trap, neuter, release: Jakarta battles cat-astrophic stray numbers

Jakarta, Indonesia

Three flea-riddled kittens frolic under the feet of a food vendor at a bustling train station in Jakarta, home to one of the biggest urban stray cat populations on Earth. Numbering as many as 1.5 million by some counts about one for every ten human inhabitants of the sprawling Indonesian capital street cats are ubiquitous and, for the most part, doted on.

"Cats are there to neutralise negative auras and to cheer you up," 33-year-old vendor Saiful Faizin told AFP.

He gives the strays water and leftovers from his chicken porridge cart and plays tenderly with the little ones. With no government department dedicated to domestic animal welfare, stray cat numbers in Jakarta have exploded over the years.

They live at the mercy of the elements, dodging Jakarta's notoriously chaotic traffic and depending on kind-hearted people for food and medical care.

"There are too many cats here... so they end up dying... (in) incidents involving motorbikes," said Hilwa Tasya Sholehah, 25, a vendor at a public park in Jakarta. While they welcome the free rat control, some residents decry smelly cat

urine, noisy territorial fights and property damage such as scratches to motorbike seats. And though Jakarta has boasted rabies-free status since 2004 partly thanks to mass vaccination of strays cats can transfer other bugs or parasites to humans.

"Some people don't realise that giving food for the cats without spaying or neutering them can cause another problem, which is overpopulation," Carolina Fajar of the Let's Adopt Indonesia NGO told AFP at a sterilisation drive in the park.

"They keep mating, they keep having babies, and the population is increasing... exponentially," she said as volunteers stuffed cats into baskets by the dozens.

- Herding cats -

The morning's effort yielded 89 cats, spirited away to private and government-sponsored facilities to get the snip before being released where they were found.

Let's Adopt Indonesia, which spayed and neutered 2,274 cats in Jakarta last year, receives money from private donors and overseas foundations to cover the sterilisation costs. Estimates of the true number of strays in Jakarta vary

wildly, from about 305,000, according to one city official, to five times that, according to another.

The municipality is conducting a census that will for the first time come up with a scientific estimate. Last year, the city sterilised 21,000 cats under a new programme for which it budgeted 3.5 billion rupiah (\$198,000) for 2026.

"Funding is required far exceeding what is currently allocated" to reach the population control threshold of at least 70 percent of strays sterilised, Jakarta's top agriculture official, Hasudungan Sidabalok, told AFP.

He said the service did not have nearly enough official shelters, vets or paramedics to deal with cats in need.

- 'Loved by the Prophet' -

It may seem like a drop in the ocean, but Jakarta politician Francine Widjojo has said every cat sterilised can prevent dozens of new cats from being born on the street.

"One female cat can give birth three to four times a year, and each time can produce four to eight kittens," she told AFP at her office, surrounded by feline paraphernalia and photos of Yakult, one of her 27 cats and the mascot for her 2024 election campaign. □



Young people dive into the Bassin des Recollets on the Canal Saint-Martin in Paris on June 17, 2026.

France braces for heatwave with canal swimming allowed in Paris

Paris, France

France braced for another heatwave, with Paris on Wednesday allowing swimming in one of its canals so residents could cope with the temperature.

It will be the second spell of unusually hot weather this year, after a scorching week in May smashed records in half the country.

"A heatwave episode will gradually set in across the country this week," said Christelle Robert, of national weather service Météo-France.

Temperatures hit 37C in some areas on Wednesday, and are expected to peak at 40C in some regions on Sunday as the country celebrates summer solstice with its annual nationwide music festival, "La Fete de la Musique".

The national weather system issued a heat-wave alert late Wednesday for the following day, saying temperatures would be unusually high in the Paris region and most of the country's east.

The high temperatures come as students across France are taking their high school final exams. Shorts, T-shirts and baggy clothing were the norm as students filed into the Saint-Exupery high school in Lyon.

In Paris, swimming was allowed from Wednesday evening under lifeguard supervision in one part of the Canal Saint-Martin, in the east of the city.

Youth plunged into the canal during the scorching week last month.

"Spending an enormous amount of energy, municipal police and national police to stop young people from swimming when it was 40 degrees... struck us as slightly absurd," Paris mayor Emmanuel Gregoire said on Tuesday evening, however reminding youth that jumping from bridges was dangerous and remained forbidden. Alexandra Cordebard, the mayor of the capital's 10th district, said allowing swimming in the canal earlier than scheduled in July was "a new way of fighting climate change and adapting the city".

In summer, swimmers will also be able to cool off at designated points along the Seine River, after it reopened to swimmers last summer for the first time in a century. Paris had poured more than a billion euros (\$1.15 billion) into getting the river clean enough to use during the 2024 Olympics.

Studies and scientific bodies agree that heatwaves in Europe are becoming more frequent as a consequence of climate change.

Météo France says that of the 51 heatwaves recorded nationwide since 1947, 34 have occurred since 2000 and 26 since 2011. □

Basic driving rules on Aruba: Traffic signs



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

Speed limit in certain areas

As mentioned in yesterday's issue, the legal minimum and maximum speed limit on the island is 50 and 80 km/h respectively. However, there are some areas where it is mandated to drive up to a certain speed. This is always indicated by a circular traffic sign with red border and the number 50 on it. Signs like these are always paired by a similar sign with the number crossed

out further down the road. This means that the mandate for this speed is now over; you may increase your velocity. Red borders on traffic sign—whether it's a circle or triangle—usually signal a warning, prohibition or preference.

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

sign crossed out. Priority signs

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

counter part that indicates that your priority is over.

Another priority sign you may encounter is a triangle sign with a red border and something that looks like a cross. You'll see this sign in an intersection. The general rule of thumb for crossing an intersection that do not contain traffic lights, roundabouts, sign or arrows on the road, is to always yield for traffic on your right. However, if you encounter this sign on your side of the intersection, you have priority over the other cars, even the one on your right.

However, be careful not to confuse this sign with a similar up-side down triangle, also found on intersections.

This sign is a prohibition sign, telling you that you have to stop and give other cars priority. Of course you also have a "stop" sign that mean the same thing. The stop sign is generally used for tricky intersections with minimal view of opposite incoming traffic.

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

Picture credits: aruba-travelguide.com

Conchi: Aruba's hidden natural pool

(Oranjestad)—Amongst the countless beaches surrounding the island that are well-known and frequently visited, there is an additional "hidden" natural pools that is situated in the northern coast of the island, two ideal stops in your tour itinerary. This is Conchi.

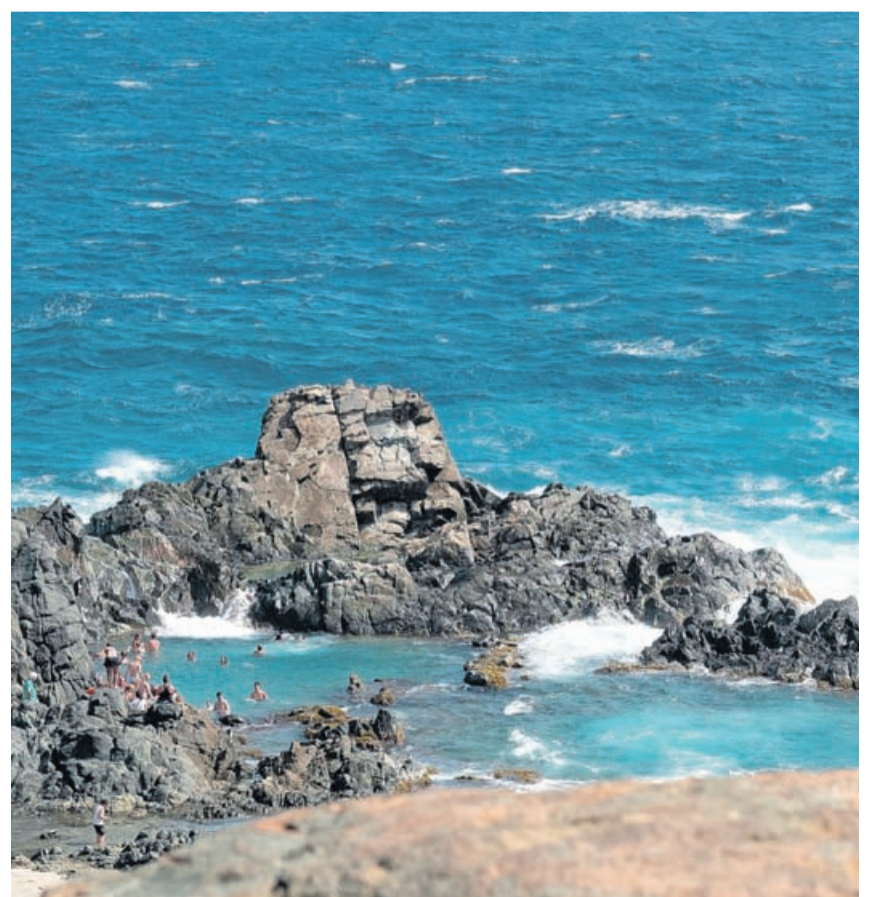
Conchi (Natural Pool)

For many years, Conchi was the only natural pool that we had on the island. Located in the Arikok National Park, near Boca Keto and the Daimari Ranch, Conchi—also known "Cura di Turtuga (Turtle's Cove) or just Natural Pool—is reachable with any 4x4 vehicle or by foot if you're up for a long hike. However, since it is part of the National Park, you must first get permission from park management to enter. You would have to purchase a day pass, and receive a wristband as proof of payment. Once you've completed that, you are set!

If you decide to hike from the entrance of the Arikok National Park, this is also possible: do bring plenty of protective clothing and enough water and food—it could take you up to three hours to hike there!

However, when you eventually do get there, you will be greeted with crystal blue water surrounded by a natural rock formation that protects you from the wild waves on the other side. Though the pool is located on the northern side of the island (where the sea is largely rough and largely no suitable for swimming), the pool itself is very calm. It's also relatively deep, and you can climb up the rocks and jump in!

Fun fact: "Conchi" means small bowl in Papiamentu. Once you get there, you may see why we call it that. □



Birds of Aruba: Soaring through the blue skies

(Oranjestad)—Aruba's nature is very diverse and is home to several beautiful and majestic wildlife. Among these is the bright Trupial, whose angelic voice is always heard with the rising sun; the cuddly parakeet, always in company of another, and the majestic Warawara, a mighty bird that can be seen soaring in the clear blue skies.

Trupial

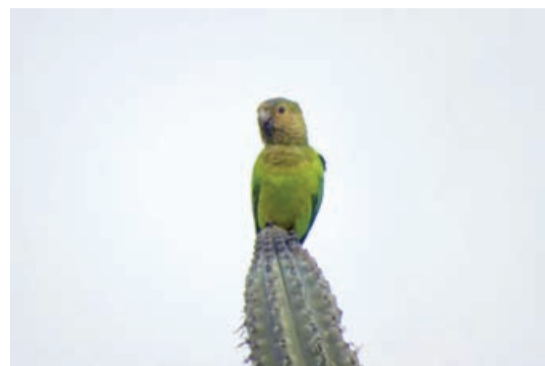


Icterus icterus, or known locally as the Venezuelan or Orange Troupial, is a striking songbird whose bright orange feathers can be spotted from a far distance.

Known to be the first bird to sing at the first sign of sunrise, this beloved songbird likes to wake up with a tune. But don't let their angelic songs fool you; the Trupial can be a bit aggressive towards any threat, protective over their nesting spots—nesting spots they most likely stole from other birds. Trupials can be seen regularly, often in trees or on top of a cactus.

Photo Credit: Daniel Ruben Gonzalez

Prikichi (parakeet)

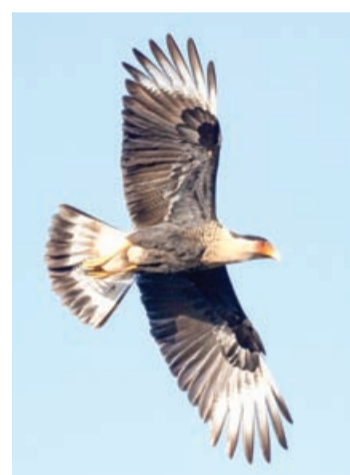


The Brown-throated Prikichi (*Aratinga pertinax*) became the national bird of Aruba

back in 2015, at the request of Aruba Birdlife Conservation. The bright green, adorable parakeet usually flies in flock of 30 or more, but its population has been declining since the 2010s. Prikichis are a shier breed than the trupial, often flying away at the sign of any threat. They use termite nests for breeding spots and feed mostly on seeds from the Kwih tree, Divi Divi tree and fruits.

Photo Credit: Daniel Ruben Gonzalez

Warawara



The Warawara or Caracara is one of the biggest birds found in the Aruban mondi. At a height of 41 to 60 cm, their wingspan can measure up to 125 cm. Known as the "garbage man", this bird of prey mostly feeds on dead animals. Its coat is dark brown, with a cream-colored neck, orange face, thick beak and long legs. The Warawara prefers to build its nest in the middle of tall cacti and produces a rattling, screaming sound, throwing its head back onto its back while calling.

While these birds are a beautiful sight to behold, it is very important to keep your distance and respect their habitats. This is how we protect our wildlife. By admiring the beauty of Aruba in a safe and respectful manner, we can do our part in protecting our sacred nature. □

Photo Credit: Aruba Birdlife Conservation

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Beautiful areas around Aruba



(Oranjestad)—In Aruba, there are tons of activities that to enjoy during your visit, but sometimes you just want to slow down and enjoy the view. Here are some beautiful areas on the is-

land that will have you in awe.
The hidden Natural Bridge
 Here in Aruba we have three natural bridges and many see this one on think-



Surfside Beach
 This beach was very famous when we were kids and many locals love to swim at this beach. After some years the locals shifted to the more north-west beaches like Eagle, Boca Catalina and Arashi but

after the government renovated the whole area it got a new facelift and its back as a family beach and weekends are just amazing at this area.

Natural Bridge at Blackstone Beach

As mentioned, there are three natural bridges and this one is in the Arikok National Park. The other two Bridges you can visit by car but for this one you must have a 4x4 jeep or you will get stuck at the Andicuri Beach. □

Visit the historic museum at Fort Zoutman!

(Oranjestad)—Located in the middle of downtown Oranjestad, situated right next to the government building "Cocolishi", is one of the oldest buildings of Aruba: Fort Zoutman. First constructed in 1796, this site has been used (or left unused) in many ways and have survived eras of war and attempted dismantling.

When anyone refers to Fort Zoutman, they are actually referring to two separate buildings that, over the years, have been merged: the fort and the tower. That's right, the iconic 5-story, squared tower was not part of the original structure of the fort, and is actually called "Willem III Toren". Constructed in 1867, this tower was named after the then-reigning king of The Netherlands, Willem

III. Willem III Toren was originally a light tower, but after a request from Lieutenant Governor Jan Helenus in 1866, it also became a bell tower.

The fort itself was originally constructed to protect the commerce bay of Paardenbaai from pirates and other disreputable characters roaming the Caribbean Sea. Unlike the Willem III Toren, Fort Zoutman had a more tumultuous past, including the on-and-off reception of unwanted members of the English military several times (The Netherlands was at constant war with England back in the colonial era).

Over the years, both the fort and the tower had functioned as different government center points,

including a tax and stamps office. For some time these two buildings also housed a police precinct and jail, and even experienced abandonment until the Cultural Center Aruba Foundation (CCA) petitioned for its renovation in 1964, turning the site into the Historic Museum it currently is.

Despite its small size, The Historic Museum guards a rich depository of the commercial, military and social history of Oranjestad, offering a glance into how the social culture of the town came to be. If you are interested in history and want to learn more about Aruba,

then Fort Zoutman should definitely be included into your itinerary.

The museum is open Monday to Friday from 9am-6pm, and Saturday from 10am-2pm. □

Source: The Old Fort of Aruba by Jan 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 decoration to houses in Noord and Paradera. In 1927, Janchi Christiaans built a house for Julian Tromp in Buguruy.

This was the first house in Noord to receive this type of decoration. Later, those in Paradera, Santa



Cruz, and Savaneta copied the house decorations. They practiced these systems up until 1944.

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

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

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

Using Dr. Johan Hartog's *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. Vic-

tor 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.

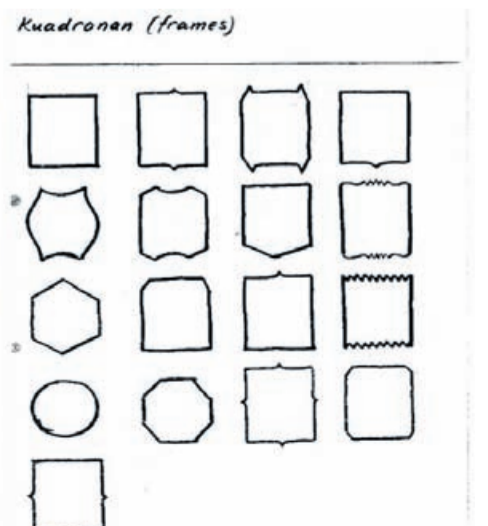
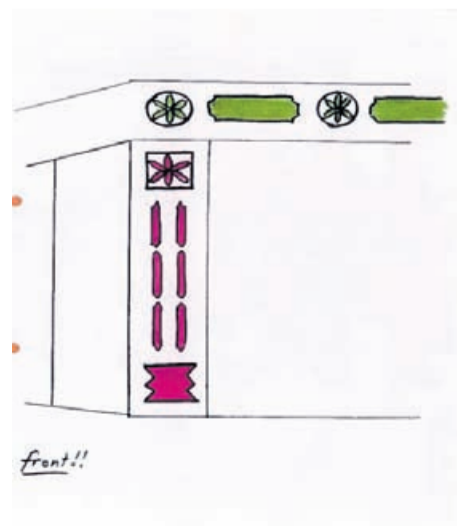
It was also said that these designs had a certain kind of voodoo purpose, to keep away the spirits of the Indigenous people who were buried in the neighborhoods where the houses now stand. However, this has almost completely disappeared.

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.



Aruba: The island of Aloes

ORANJESTAD – Aloe Vera, a succulent plant species, is renowned for its incredible properties for the skin. It is widely distributed and usually grows in tropical, semi-tropical and arid climates on the planet. But this plant also had a very prominent role in the history of Aruba, and its significance to the island's economy endures to this day.

The leaves of Aloe Vera contain a good amount of gel which when used topically, is great for the skin. Traditionally, Arubans use this gel to treat minor burns and other skin ailments, or just to keep skin supple and looking bright and nourished. Aside from the gel, aloe contains a bitter, yellow substance (called aloin) which is a gentle but powerful laxative, and it is also the origin of the industry of aloe in Aruba.

Aloe vera was introduced in Aruba around 1840, when most of the island's inhabitants were farmers of little means. Dutch Governor Van Raders introduced the plant after it had been introduced in other islands of the Caribbean to cultivate and harvest the aloe to produce the laxative.

Around 1920, about two-thirds of Aruba was aloe fields, earning our island



the nickname "The Island of Aloes."

Under Commander Jan Helenus Ferguson (1866-1871), aloe experienced a boom, which is why there is a road named after him, which goes through the aloe fields. In the 19th century, Aruba was the main supplier of aloin for laxative, which was imported abroad to the United States and Europe. The aloin from Aruba and Curaçao was known to be one of the best in the world and was

more expensive, which meant that at the time, it had significant economic impact, particularly for the local farmers.

However, by the time the oil industry arrived on Aruba, it changed the labor market on Aruba, shifting away from agriculture. It would be after World War II that aloe would make a comeback. And eventually, as science learned about the amazing properties of aloe gel, the industry shifted from producing

laxative to producing skin care. An interesting fact is that in 1951, the production of Aruban aloe amounted to around 30 percent of the total global production!

The impact and relevance of aloe is visible all around Aruba. While most homes will have a few plants for personal use and decoration, houses are also decorated with aloe motifs, and at some point, aloe even featured on post stamps. Around 1920, about two-thirds of Aruba was aloe fields, earning our island the nickname "The Island of Aloes." And in 1955, the aloe became a part of Aruba's coat of arms, symbolizing prosperity for the island. □

Images from the archive of the National Library of Aruba.



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 "Col-

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

Vader Piet

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

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

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

San Nicolas

Of course we can't forget San Nicolas itself. Much like Vader Piet, the origin of the name San Nicolas has so far two different accounts. In the literal sense, "San Nicolas" translates to "Saint Nicolas", leading many to believe that this district was named after a Spanish saint. Though one account does support this with the theory that the district was named after the saint by Spanish colonizers, the other account is much less divine, but does refer to an influential figure



in the area.

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

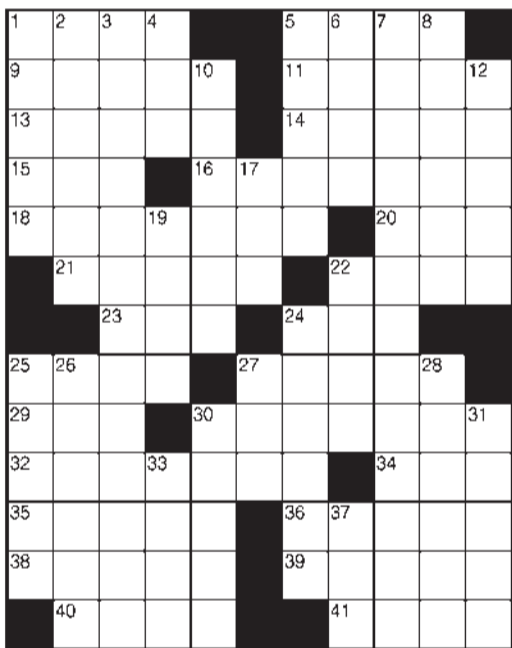
Source: "Aruba: Short History" by Dr. J. Hartog.

CROSSWORD

By **THOMAS JOSEPH**



- ACROSS**
- 1 Cuts off certain
 - 5 Daily stuff common
 - 9 Mood of the people
 - 11 Oryx's cousin
 - 13 Make amends
 - 14 "Otello" composer
 - 15 Plunked down
 - 16 Extreme
 - 18 Like some cars
 - 20 Wallet bill
 - 21 Extreme pain
 - 22 Quiche start
 - 23 Gene messenger
 - 24 Rascal
 - 25 Thin board
 - 27 Luminous glows
 - 29 Femur's upper end
 - 30 Fitting
 - 32 Takes a breath
 - 34 Crude abode
 - 35 Annoyance
 - 36 More than plump
- DOWN**
- 1 Minimum amount
 - 2 Parliament city
 - 3 Shot takers
 - 4 Heir, at times
 - 5 Burton of "Roots"
 - 6 Pub brews
 - 7 Map-makers
 - 8 Finish sight
 - 10 Arizona city famed for its red rocks
 - 12 Chops up
 - 17 Singer Orbison
 - 19 Warning word
 - 22 Franc's replacement
 - 24 Screen sight
 - 25 Armada makeup
 - 26 Roster
 - 27 Orang-utan, e.g.
 - 28 Drunks
 - 30 Not drowsy
 - 31 Boat back
 - 33 Birds, to biologists
 - 37 Sheep call



2-17

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.

2-17 CRYPTOQUOTE

AYQGZBU POWB GZB POX.

XOWBS FBQFYB ZOTB

YCGGYB QE XQ CXNYDBXAB

CX UQACBGK. — POEW GROCX

Cryptoquote: MUSIC EXPRESSES THAT WHICH CANNOT BE SAID AND ON WHICH IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO BE SILENT. — VICTOR HUGO

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 occur, so keep yourself and your belongings safe.

JUNE CRUISE SHIP SCHEDULE

| | |
|---------------|--|
| 02 TUE | GRANDEUR OF THE SEAS Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: B CARNIVAL MAGIC Arrival: 9:00 Departure: 22:00 Berth: C |
| 09 TUE | CARNIVAL HORIZON Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 22:00 Berth: B GRANDEUR OF THE SEAS Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: C CARNIVAL MARDI GRAS Arrival: 13:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: I |
| 16 TUE | ADVENTURE OF THE SEAS Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: B GRANDEUR OF THE SEAS Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: C SEVEN SEAS MARINER Arrival: 10:00 Departure: 21:00 Berth: I |
| 17 WED | CARNIVAL VISTA Arrival: 7:00 Departure: 16:00 Berth: C ALLURE OF THE SEAS Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: I |
| 23 THU | CARNIVAL HORIZON Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 22:00 Berth: B GRANDEUR OF THE SEAS Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: C |
| 30 TUE | GRANDEUR OF THE SEAS Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: B CARNIVAL MAGIC Arrival: 9:00 Departure: 22:00 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

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

Difficulty: ★★★

6/18

Answer to previous puzzle

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

Difficulty: ★★★

6/17

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Plague was killing hunter-gatherers 5,500 years ago: study

Paris, France

The plague was causing deadly outbreaks among communities of hunter-gatherers in Siberia around 5,500 years ago, according to a study on Wednesday that sheds light on how humans could have first caught this scourge.

The plague is generally associated with rats spreading the disease through crowded medieval cities, sparking pandemics such as the Black Death that killed tens of millions of people across Europe from the 1300s to 1800s.

This was a long way from the rugged vistas surrounding Lake Baikal in the Russian region of Siberia, where archaeologists have spent decades studying the burial sites of pre-historic hunter-gatherers.

One of these sites has been particularly mystifying because of its "very unusual mortality profile" many children and adolescents appear to have died over a short period, Oxford University researcher Ruairidh Macleod told journalists.

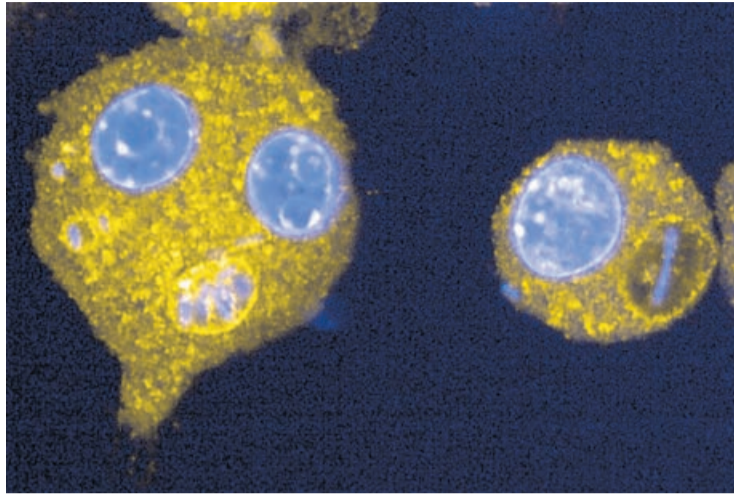
The skeletons also bore no signs of violence or trauma, meaning there was "no reasonable explanation" for this catastrophic event, said the lead author of the new study in the journal Nature.

When the team of researchers sequenced ancient DNA from 46 people across four sites near the lake, they found *Yersinia pestis* the bacteria responsible for the plague in 18 of them.

This means nearly 40 percent of these people had the plague a higher rate than has been detected in some medieval mass graves. Trying to identify plague in such ancient DNA also throws up many false negatives.

The results were therefore "consistent with pretty much everybody having died of plague" at the burial sites across two outbreaks, the earliest of which was 5,500 years ago, Macleod said.

This was a "complete sur-



This handout microscope image taken in 2024 and released by the Institut Pasteur on May 27, 2025 shows Macrophages infected by *Yersinia pestis* bacteria.

prise," he added.

- Not a 'golden age' -

Until this discovery, the oldest traces of plague had been detected among farming communities in northern Europe around 5,300 years ago.

However exactly how deadly these ancient strains were has been "hotly debated" in the scientific community, according to the new study's senior study author Eske Willerslev. It had been thought that this kind of outbreak could not occur among hunter-gatherers, said the geneticist at Cambridge University and the University of Copenhagen.

Because they lived in small groups and were constantly moving around, it was believed that "infectious disease can't really take a hold and devastate entire communities", he said.

This led the authors of some best-selling pop science books such as Yuval Noah Harari of "Sapiens" and Jared Diamond to portray the time of hunter-gatherers as a "kind of golden age" without disease or illness, Willerslev said.

"Well, it wasn't that easy to be a hunter-gatherer," he said, adding that it now looks like the plague was probably "very common" for them.

It was famously rats that spread the plague in the Middle Ages, but for these prehistoric Siberian outbreaks, a different animal was likely to blame: the Tarbagan marmot.

"Marmots are thought to be the original host species that plague first evolved in," Macleod explained.

Even today, cases of plague spread by marmots are regularly recorded in Siberia and Mongolia, where

the rodents are hunted for their fur and meat.

This could have also been how the hunter-gatherers originally caught the virus. "Presumably the first infection was from an animal interaction and then spread among humans" via respiratory droplets, said study co-author Astrid Iversen, a virology professor at Oxford.

She pointed out that today, the World Health Organization estimates three-quarters of all new infectious diseases jump over from animals into humans. So these unlucky ancient-gatherers can provide a lesson for modern humans. "Being able to understand the links between when they infect humans from animals and how they've evolved to be able to do that at different contexts and different places in time and space is really important for understanding the risk of that happening in the future," Macleod said.

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PHARMACY ON DUTY

| | |
|---|--|
| Oranjestad: Eagle Tel. 587 9011 | San Nicolas: Centro Medico Tel. 584 5794 |
|---|--|

OTHER

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

EMERGENCY

| | |
|---------------------------|----------|
| Police | 100 |
| Police Oranjestad | 527 3140 |
| Police Noord | 527 3200 |
| Police Sta. Cruz | 527 2900 |
| Police San Nicolas | 584 5000 |
| Police Tipline | 11141 |
| Ambulance | 911 |
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ARUBA TODAY NEWS

Social networks, online video outweigh traditional media in 2026

Paris, France

News consumers around the world are now turning more to social media and video platforms than traditional outlets for information, a respected report said Tuesday, warning that old-style business models are under threat.

The year 2026 marks "a significant milestone: for the first time, social media and video network consumption is now ahead of other news sources as the most widely used source of news globally", at 54 percent, wrote Jim Egan, lead author of the report from the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism. The annual report from the institute, attached to the University of Oxford, is a closely-watched tracker of trends reshaping the news media. Researchers based their findings on online surveys of almost 100,000 people in 48 countries, run early this year by pollsters YouGov.

This year's edition found 54 percent of respondents said they got news from social media or video platforms in the week before the survey rising to 56 percent if AI



This photograph shows a set up smart-phone screen displaying the logo of main social media platforms including Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, Reddit, Telegram, X, Bluesky, Tiktok and Whatsapp in Saint-Mande, east of Paris, on April 29, 2026.

chatbots like ChatGPT were included.

That outstripped the 52 percent who referenced TV news, 51 percent for newspaper apps or websites, and 21 percent for radio.

- Shrinking revenues -

While it was the first time new

platforms topped the old in the average of the global survey, individual countries had already passed the turning point.

In some countries, though, notably in Europe, traditional media websites and apps remain ahead for now.

"It is better to think of this more as a drift rather than a shift, but it is nevertheless an important moment," Egan wrote.

Across the global survey, three out of 10 respondents said social media or video platforms were their main source of news.

Among 18-24-year-olds, the proportion rose to half. Different social networks also breed different usage patterns.

Most of the respondents visited X or YouTube specifically to find news.

But on Facebook, Instagram and TikTok, users were likelier to stumble across news while doing something else.

Television remained the leading news source only among 45-54-year-olds and over-55s.

The responses about traditional media apps and websites were also grim reading, with none of the age tranches surveyed saying they were their first port of call for news.

"This has obvious implications in terms of prospects for audience reach, engagement, and for monetisation potential," wrote Egan, a former senior executive at the BBC.

The scale of the challenge in finding the revenues to pay for reporting is clear from the fact that just 17 percent of respondents said they pay for information online. □

Paris and Berlin bet on digital sovereignty at Vivatech, G7

Paris, France

France and Germany on Wednesday affirmed their will to work together to secure digital independence, as Europe's largest tech trade fair Vivatech got underway and transatlantic tensions over AI marked the G7 meeting. French President Emmanuel Macron called for

"better regulation" of AI and warned against "non-cooperation between democracies" on the technology, as increasingly capable AI models are released by private developers.

"The American administration made a very serious decision a few days ago. The good thing is, that

means a wake-up call: 'this can be dangerous'," Macron said in Evian, eastern France, where US President Donald Trump was meeting leaders of other top advanced economies. But he also warned that the "reaction had in a way been strictly nationalist". "The U.S. and EU need to be strong partners in AI," European Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen said.

"It is in our mutual interest that our citizens and companies can safely use the best AI models," von der Leyen added. AI developer Anthropic's cutting off access to its most powerful models under pressure from Washington has focused minds across the Atlantic, highlighting the continent's dependence on its erratic ally.

Earlier Wednesday, France and Germany had of-

fered up a "shared vision for strengthening Europe's digital sovereignty" in a joint statement as Vivatech opened for its 10th anniversary edition.

- Buy European? -

"We're making a play for independence, but also for survival," French digital minister Anne Le Henanff said as she visited alongside German counterpart Karsten Wildberger.

"We don't want to go through what we already have with some other technologies," Le Henanff added, referring to cloud computing where "as Europeans, we reacted relatively late".

Brussels is already working on draft "buy European" rules.

And France's finance ministry on Wednesday announced a European effort to encourage "major European procurers,

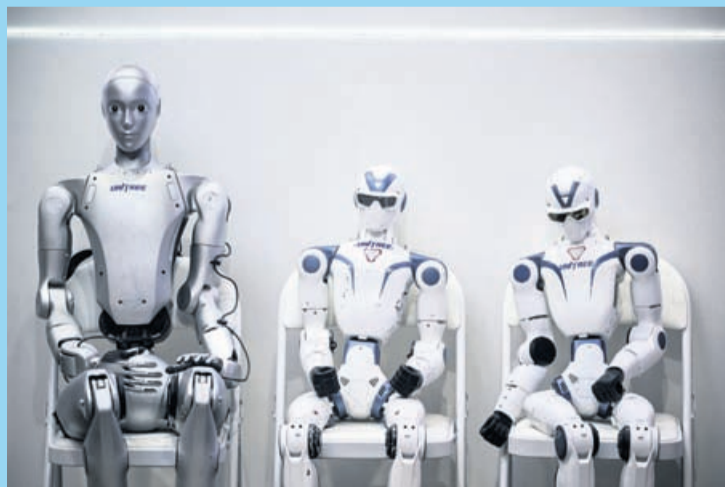
private companies, state agencies and ministries" to stick to the bloc's providers.

Germany, Spain and Belgium backed the proposal.

Wednesday's sovereignty push followed France's Tuesday announcement that its DGSI domestic intelligence agency would replace American data sifting giant Palantir with local competitor ChapsVision

"We cannot accept new strategic dependencies in the digital realm," Prime Minister Sebastien Lecornu said. But Finance Minister Roland Lescure said it would likely take until next year before the French firm was ready to take over.

Leading French AI researcher Yann LeCun said governments were right to pursue sovereign AI, speaking from a Vivatech stage in front of an audience of businesspeople. □



Robots of Unitree Robotics company are displayed at the VivaTech technology startups and innovation fair at the Paris Expo Porte de Versailles, in Paris on June 17, 2026.

Badosa beats Gauff in Berlin to end losing run

Munich, Germany

Paula Badosa fought back tears after recording her first victory since April as she fought back to beat Coco Gauff 1-6, 6-3, 6-2 to reach the quarter-finals of the Berlin Open on Wednesday.

"It's been very tough," the 28-year-old Spaniard said on court, clearly emotional. "One year ago here, I got injured and since then, I couldn't play like consistently and also, I went through a lot professionally, but personally."

Top seed Aryna Sabalenka then beat Ekaterina Alexandrova 6-4, 6-4.

Earlier third seed Jessica Pegula despatched Kat-erina Siniakova 6-2, 6-4 and Alexandra Elea battled past Donna Vekic, who won the Queen's final on Sunday, 7-5, 6-4.

While Badosa ended a five-match losing run, Gauff prolonged one in her first match on grass this season, less than two weeks before the start of Wimbledon.

Last season, after winning Roland Garros, Gauff failed to win a single match on grass suffering first-round exits in Berlin and at Wimbledon.



USA's Coco Gauff returns the ball to Spain's Paula Badosa during the women's singles round of 16 match at the WTA500 Berlin Tennis Open tournament in Berlin on June 17, 2026.

Gauff, the world No. 7, cruised through the first set, but then fell apart. The American's first-serve percentage dropped in each set and the Spaniard broke twice each in the second and third sets as she won in one hour, 36 minutes.

Badosa who reached No. 2 in the world in 2022 and was ranked No.9 before

her injury last year has fallen to 142nd in the world and is playing on a wildcard in Berlin.

"Now seeing myself again, playing in this level for me means a lot," said the 28-year-old.

"For me, it's more the level that I play today against Coco because she started unbelievably well and I kept believing and I think

finally I saw myself on court today."

Badosa will next face her doubles partner Jessica Pegula.

The third-seeded American despatched Siniakova in just over an hour for a fifth straight victory over the Czech.

Sabalenka, playing for the first time since her collapse

in the Rolland Garros quarter-finals, broke Alexandrova's serve to lead 5-4 in the first set and closed it out on her own serve.

Sabalenka broke again to start the second set.

Alexandrova broke back at once but Sabalenka broke again in the fifth game.

Alexandrova saved two match points on serve in the ninth game, but Sabalenka then served out to love.

Young Filipina Alexandra Eala battled past Croatian veteran Donna Vekic in a shade under two hours.

Vekic broke in the second game of the match but thereafter, she struggled to take numerous opportunities, breaking once more while 21-year-old Eala broke four times.

In all, Vekic had 14 break points during the match, but Eala saved 12 of them. By contrast, the Filipina took four of her six break opportunities.

"I told myself that she's fighting back, but I'm also a fighter," Eala said on court.

"So I have to try -- I have to try and give her a hard time." □

Golf groups delay ball distance limit rollback to 2030

Southampton, United States

The U.S. Golf Association, R&A and the PGA and DP World tours said Wednesday in a joint statement they will take until 2030 to examine expanded options to limit driving distance among elite players. Groups will jointly "review, test and implement options that have a meaningful impact on distance at the elite level," the statement said.

They noted that feedback from the golf industry on golf balls being tested on the current overall distance standard (ODS) supported a delay in implementation to 2030 over a two-stage plan starting in 2028 so no changes will be made until January 2030.

"Given that we really want to keep the 2030 ball on the table, we have to work with some prudence and

some urgency, and we will," USGA chief executive Mike Whan said.

"We've taken 2028 off the table. We're leaving 2030 on the table. So when we talk about other approaches... we need to know that sooner than later so it creates a sense of urgency for all parties."

The ODS was agreed upon earlier as a measure to test golf balls.

Talks among the tours and governing bodies found distances continue to increase and there was "a concern by the tours that the updated ODS testing approach may not achieve the desired results."

"Maybe the ODS change that we're implementing won't be significant enough to have the kind of objectives we've set out,"

Whan said.

He said worries were from "some of the best elite male golfers and their organizations about whether or not the ODS ball change would be enough to make real change in distance."

The statement said the groups had a "collective willingness to reconsider alternative approaches that may more materially impact the pace of future distance increases, while minimizing disruption to the overall golf market."

- Door open on ideas -

That's going to mean re-examining ideas tossed aside earlier, some seen as impractical to everyday or elite players.

"We felt in those meetings a collective willingness to reconsider maybe some of the ideas we moved on with," Whan said. "And



John Bodenhamer, Chief Championships Officer, and Kevin Hammer, USGA President, speak to the media during a press conference prior to the 126th U.S. OPEN at Shinnecock Hills Golf Club on June 17, 2026 in Southampton, New York.

determine whether or not there could be other ideas that could be more impactful and maybe even less disruptive for the overall game.

"I think it would be crazy to not take the time to see if we could come up with something together."

Old ideas, such as balls for specific competitions,

could have new life.

"We realized pretty quickly let's not kill the how-abouts because maybe there are some ideas here that are getting reopened we looked at in the past and probably closed the door on because of some of the tour's feedback that feel to be more open today," Whan said. □

Ronaldo fails to shine as DR Congo earn historic World Cup point

Houston, United States
Cristiano Ronaldo's record-equalling sixth World Cup got off to a disappointing start as the Democratic Republic of Congo secured their first ever point at the finals, drawing 1-1 with Portugal in their Group K match on Wednesday.

Yoane Wissa's header cancelled out Joao Neves's early goal and the African side appearing in their first World Cup since 1974 when it was known as Zaire more than held their own. Ronaldo, 41, was largely a peripheral figure throughout the match failing to make the impact his great rival Lionel Messi had done on Tuesday in scoring a hat-trick against Algeria. The DRC's achievement was even greater given



Congo DR's forward #20 Yoane Wissa heads the ball and scores his team's first goal during the 2026 World Cup Group K football match between Portugal and the Democratic Republic of Congo at the Houston Stadium in Houston on June 17, 2026.

their preparations had been disrupted by the Ebola outbreak back in their country. Some Portugal players were wearing wrist bands, given to them by their Prime Minister Luis Montenegro, in tribute to late team-mate Diogo Jota, who was killed in a car crash last year. Portugal got off to the perfect start, with Neves powering home a header from Pedro Neto's cross in the sixth minute.

However, despite dominating possession they lacked a cutting edge and well into time added on in the first half their opponents made them pay. Wissa rose unmarked to head past Diogo Costa in the Portuguese goal sparking wild celebrations on the pitch, the bench and among the Congolese fans in the stadium as the Newcastle forward registered his country's first ever goal at a World Cup.

Former Portuguese defensive bulwark Pepe, watching from the VIP seats, did not look impressed. Bernardo Silva had started the day by joining Real Madrid on a free transfer but he ended it by watching from the bench after Martinez took him off at half-time.

He was briefly off his feet celebrating when Joao Cancelo's overhead kick hit the back of the net only for it to be ruled out for off-side.

The Congolese were matching the Portuguese, though, and 35-year-old veteran striker Cedric Bakambu shrugged aside Bruno Fernandes, but his shot came back off the near post.

Ronaldo finally had a chance to shine when presented with a chance by Francisco Conceicao's pass but he fluffed his lines sending it wide of the post. The same combination linked up again minutes later, Conceicao a far livelier presence than Silva had been teeing up Ronaldo but once again the result was the same, the ball went wide. □



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