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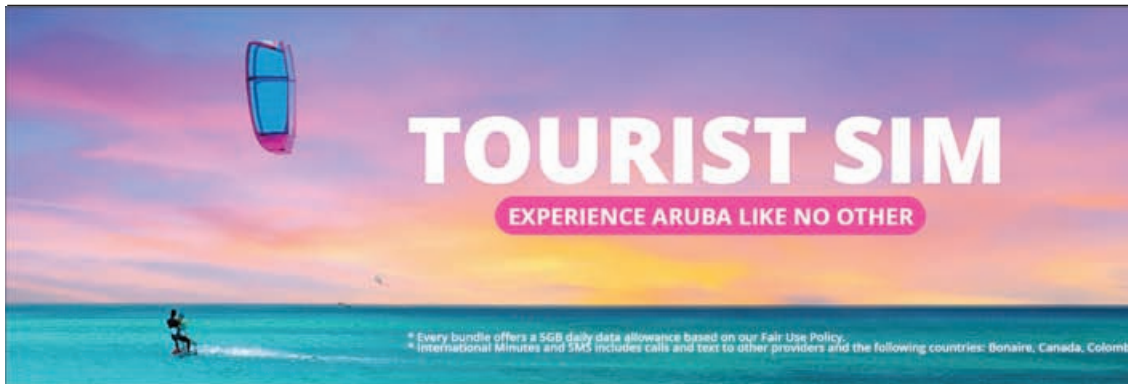
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 **SETAR**



U.S. President Donald Trump holds up a copy of his Truth Social post about Air Force One as he speaks with the media aboard Air Force One shortly after departure from Mildenhall Air Force Base in the United Kingdom, after he switched from the old VC-25A Air Force One to the newer VC-25B Bridge Air Force One, enroute to Washington, on July 8, 2026.

Trump's sale of access to Truth Social raises eyebrows

Washington, United States

U.S. President Donald Trump's move to charge for early access to his often market-moving Truth Social posts is raising eyebrows a year and a half into an administration that has already seen unprecedented enrichment for the First Family.

Trump like his close relatives is alleged to have made billions of dollars in his second White House term through cryptocurrency ventures, property deals, stock trades and payouts from lawsuits.

And on Saturday, Trump Media and Technology Group launched a product called Truth API, first unveiled in mid-July.

Subscribers to the paid service are supposed to get almost instantaneous access to Trump's messages on Truth Social crucial seconds ahead of the general public.

Much of Trump's output on Truth Social consists of AI memes and insults of politi-

cal opponents.

But Trump also uses the platform to announce huge news, ranging from developments in the Iran war to trade tariffs, all of which can instantly send market values tumbling or soaring.

The news outlet Axios has reported that monthly subscription rates for early access run from \$60,000 to \$100,000.

Five trading companies signed up shortly after the launch, according to The Wall Street Journal.

The idea behind this new paid service is "getting the fastest investors and algorithms a split-second advantage," Art Hogan, an analyst with B. Riley Wealth Management, told AFP.

- 'Outrageous abuse' -

Critics however say it's corruption, pure and simple. Democratic Senator Mark Warner announced Tuesday on X that he has introduced a bill "to crack down on this corruption

and ensure all Americans have free and equal access to public announcements from government officials."

His colleagues Elizabeth Warren and Adam Schiff called last week for a probe by the Securities and Exchange Commission, the body which regulates U.S. stock markets, into what they called "outrageous abuse of the President's office for his personal benefit."

Hours after the new service was launched, Trump offered a clear display of how his words on Truth Social can indeed move markets: when he announced Saturday that he was calling off a plan to attack Iran, oil prices dropped.

Ann Lipton, a law professor at the University of Colorado, Boulder, said Trump knows the value of his statements and that the more he rattles markets, the more valuable his new service becomes. □



An overhead pole camera image shows wildfire damage to an Altadena Drive street sign and home destroyed by the Eaton Fire in Altadena, Los Angeles County, California on January 14, 2025.

California utility blamed for deadly 2025 Los Angeles fire

Los Angeles, United States

One of the deadly 2025 fires that ravaged Los Angeles was caused when sparks from an idle transmission tower owned by a local power company ignited dry vegetation, fire officials said in a report released on Tuesday. The report, released after an 18-month investigation, confirms suspicions that utility Southern California Edison (SCE) was responsible for the Eaton Fire that killed 19 people and damaged thousands of homes and other buildings in January 2025.

After consulting with metallurgical and electrical experts, the Los Angeles County Fire Department concluded in the report that the fire "was caused by an electrical incident on a decommissioned Southern California Edison transmission tower."

This line had been out of service for decades but could still receive power and was located near high-voltage lines.

On the night of the fire, "electrical arcs ejected incandescent metal particles that fell onto flammable patches of dry vegetation at the base of the towers," the report continued.

SCE had already acknowledged its responsibility. Last fall, it launched a compensation fund for fire victims to avoid lengthy and costly legal proceedings.

To date, the company has paid out more than \$375 million to victims through this fund, said SCE spokesperson David Eisenhauer.

"Our hearts are with the Altadena community, and we continue to support them as they recover and rebuild through our Wildfire Recovery Compensation Program," he told AFP.

"We received the LA County Fire report and are reviewing it. We have taken our potential role in the start of this fire seriously from the beginning," Eisenhauer said. □

Senate panel advances Blanche nomination to be U.S. attorney general

Washington, United States President Donald Trump's former personal lawyer Todd Blanche took a key step on Tuesday towards becoming the top U.S. law enforcement officer after a Senate panel approved his nomination to head the Justice Department.

The 12-10 vote in the Senate Judiciary Committee was along party lines and came after two Republican senators dropped their opposition to Blanche's nomination.

Blanche's Senate confirmation had been held up by concerns from senators John Cornyn and Thom Tillis over a \$1.8 billion fund for alleged victims of politically motivated prosecution and a tax audit immunity deal with the Republican president. Blanche issued a written order over the weekend scrapping the so-called "anti-weaponization fund" and said the audit immunity agreement with Trump, his two eldest sons and the Trump Organization would only apply "retroactively" to past tax years and not future filings.

The full Senate, where Republicans hold a majority, is expected to vote later this week to confirm Blanche as attorney general. He has been serving as acting attorney general since Trump fired Pam Bondi in April. Senate Democrats have been united in their opposition to Blanche amid concerns he has treated the Department of Justice as an extension of the Republican president's legal team. "Todd Blanche has no business serving as our nation's chief law enforcement officer," Senator Dick Durbin, the ranking Democrat on the Senate Judiciary Committee, said before Tuesday's vote. "The attorney general is supposed to be the people's lawyer," Durbin said. "Mr Blanche continues to operate as the president's personal lawyer, treating the Justice Department like a law firm serving one client the president."

- 'Retribution' campaign - Vice President JD Vance,



U.S. Sen. Richard Blumenthal (D-CT) speaks in front of a poster as members of the Senate Judiciary Committee gather to vote on the nomination of Todd Blanche to be U.S. Attorney General on Capitol Hill on August 04, 2026 in Washington, DC.

in a post on X following the committee vote, said Blanche "will continue to serve the American people and the Trump Administration loyally, and he will make a great Attorney General." Blanche has been closely tied to what Democrats have dubbed a "retribution" campaign by the president against his perceived political enemies and he helped negotiate the extraordinary legal settlement between Trump and the government he controls.

The out-of-court settlement stems from Trump's \$10 billion lawsuit against the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) over the illegal disclosure of his tax records by an agency contractor. It proposed immunity from audits for past tax years and a \$1.776 billion fund for people who say they were unfairly targeted by the Department of Justice, potentially including Trump supporters convicted over the January 6, 2021 attack on the U.S. Capitol.

Federal judges have separately blocked the fund and condemned the tax settlement, which according to U.S. press reports could help the president avoid past liabilities of up to \$100 million. Blanche has also come in for criticism from victims of Jeffrey Epstein over his handling

of the release of investigative files about the convicted sex offender, a one-time close friend of Trump.

Prior to joining the Department of Justice, Blanche represented Trump in his New York trial over alleged "hush money" paid to porn star Stormy Daniels.

He was also on the legal defense team in two federal cases brought against Trump by special counsel Jack Smith for allegedly mishandling classified documents after leaving the White House and for seeking to overturn the results of the 2020 presidential election. Both cases were dropped after Trump won the 2024 presidential election. □



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Returning to 'Ted Lasso' after break 'effortless': Hannah Waddingham

Los Angeles, United States

With World Cup excitement still reverberating, Apple TV's football comedy hit "Ted Lasso" is returning after a three-year hiatus, and according to the cast, they needed no warm-up to get back on the pitch.

"It felt completely and utterly... effortless. Just ridiculously effortless," Hannah Waddingham told AFP at a press event alongside costars Jeremy Swift and Juno Temple ahead of Season 4's premiere on Wednesday.

"I think we've always felt like a family from day one on this," added Waddingham, the award-winning British actress who plays Rebecca Welton, the ruthless president of the fictional professional English soccer club AFC Richmond.

Swift, who portrays team executive Leslie Higgins, chimed in that the cast "hit the ground running" when filming resumed.

The new season of "Ted Lasso," which stars Jason Sudeikis in the title role, shifts the action to the optimistic American coach's (and Sudeikis's own) native Kansas, where he has been



Hannah Waddingham attends Apple TV+'s "Ted Lasso" FYC Event at Hammer Museum on July 29, 2026 in Los Angeles, California.

invited to helm a second-division women's team.

The trip allowed the actors to better understand Sudeikis's inspiration when he co-created the show, one of Apple TV's most successful series, said Temple, who plays the charismatic model-turned-publicist Keeley Jones.

"It felt like a really, really special way to come back again, to be slightly out of our comfort zone," said the

English actress. "That was great."

It was vital to "have this kind of beautiful vacation together in a place that's both very important to Ted and very important to Jason," Temple said, describing it as "such a fun experience for all three of us."

- Showcasing women's sports -

"Ted Lasso" debuted on Apple TV in 2020 and be-

came the platform's flagship series.

In a teaser for its highly anticipated return, Sudeikis and Brendan Hunt appeared in character as Lasso and his assistant Coach Beard during the halftime show of last month's World Cup final between Argentina and Spain.

In the skit, Sudeikis acted as if he were sending pop superstar Justin Bieber into the match as a substitute.

The location shift in the new season has allowed the series to bring back familiar faces including Sudeikis, Waddingham, Temple, Swift, Hunt and Brett Goldstein, who plays AFC Richmond captain Roy Kent.

But it also offers the bandwidth to introduce new characters, bringing fresh tension and comedic drama.

The focus will be on the up-and-coming team, the challenges it faces, and the roster of players jockeying for influence and pitch time.

Faye Marsay, who steps into the cleats of the sharp-tongued center back Lizzie, said she felt it was appropriate to use the hit series as a "platform to shine light on the problems in women's sport and the things that we need to do better."

The show is not "shoving anything down anyone's throat," she said, but it is exposing challenges for women athletes including motherhood and equal treatment.

"I think we do it in a kind of subtle and graceful way." Apple TV will release weekly episodes of "Ted Lasso" until the season finale premieres on October 7. □

Lucas Museum to display unseen 'Star Wars' pieces, curator says

San Diego, United States

The Lucas Museum of Narrative Art founded by legendary "Star Wars" creator

George Lucas and his wife -- will see previously undisplayed items from the hit sci-fi series after it opens

later this year, its curator told AFP.

"We are the home of the Lucas Archives, the Lucas-film production materials," Ryan Linkof said. "So we'll have an exhibition on 'Star Wars' that includes some really special pieces that have never been exhibited before."

More than 1,300 objects will be displayed across 33 galleries covering over 9,200 square meters in the futuristically designed building that will open its doors on September 22.

The museum, spearheaded by the filmmaker and his wife, business executive Mellody Hobson, promises to house some of the objects, artifacts and works Lucas has collected over

decades.

The collection includes illustrations by Norman Rockwell, Jessie Willcox Smith and N.C. Wyeth; works by Frida Kahlo, Jacob Lawrence, Charles White and Robert Rauschenberg; and pieces by cartoonists including Winsor McCay, Jack Kirby and Frank Frazetta.

"This is a kind of art that doesn't often have an institutional home not a lot of art museums collect or exhibit it," Linkof said. "It will be a series of exhibitions organized around material that is really quite rare."

But the crown jewel, at least for some fans, will be production materials from Lucasfilm.

Linkof said the "incredibly ambitious project," which Lucas has worked on for decades, had faced a series of challenges, including those stemming from the pandemic.

But for the curator, it represents something of a culmination of the acclaimed filmmaker's career.

"Mellody has said before that ... everyone gets two songs. He had his first song that was Star Wars, and the second song is the museum," Linkoff said. "And it really is an offering for the world that will really last." Lucas, 82, remains actively involved in the project, the curator said.

"As far as I can tell, he's very happy with it," he said. □



Ryan Linkof, Senior Curator and Head of Film Programs for the Lucas Museum of Narrative Art (R) and Co-Founders of Stoopid Buddy Stoodios' Seth Green (R) and Matthew Senreich pose during a photo call at Comic Con International in San Diego on July 23, 2026.

Cuba's famed resilience comes at a growing mental cost

Havana, Cuba

Cubans take pride in facing hardship with resilience and ingenuity, but that fortitude comes at a high psychological cost amid the island's latest protracted crisis.

On a street in Central Havana, Mayumis Nunez wakes up on an improvised bed in front of the building where she lived for years.

Three weeks ago, part of the beautiful century-old structure collapsed, and it was declared uninhabitable. Since then, she has had nowhere else to spend the night.

Sleeping out in the stifling summer heat leaves her exhausted, but what distresses her more is not knowing when or how this situation will end.

"Just imagine not having any rest. Knowing that it's one day, and another day and another day," says the 44-year-old.

Every morning, she wakes up and climbs up to her damaged apartment to bathe, change clothes and get ready for work.

Since Washington launched an energy blockade in January, living conditions have worsened markedly.

Power cuts mean that water pumps grind to a halt.



Residents sit and lie on beds placed on a street in the Centro Habana neighbourhood after the partial collapse of their building in Havana on July 30, 2026.

Gasoline shortages mean public buses have disappeared from now-deserted roads.

For millions of Cubans, getting water and food, getting around and even sleeping through the night have become daily challenges.

But beyond the material hardships, many describe a similar feeling: the impossibility of unplugging from their problems.

The constant effort of solving today's problems has left no energy to think

about tomorrow.

- 'State of alert' -

At Havana's Calixto Garcia hospital, where a clinic specializing in stress management has operated for years, doctors say the crisis is increasingly reflected in patient visits.

Sitting in a circle, students, retirees and professionals share similar worries: blackouts, economic hardship, relatives who have emigrated and plans put on hold.

Among the participants is

29-year-old teaching student Claudia Sifredo.

Like many young Cubans, she has postponed personal goals, including moving out of her parents' home, a dream she now considers beyond her reach.

"Everything is chaotic," she explains. "This current situation is so stressful and so uncertain that you don't even know how to get through the day."

For now, she says, therapy has helped her focus on what she can control.

"I have to learn how to deal with this environment that I can't change right now."

The concerns may differ from person to person, but many return to the same themes: uncertainty, exhaustion, relatives who have left the country and plans put on hold.

For Tania Peon, director of mental health for the city of Havana, a large part of the population lives in a permanent "state of alert."

"People are constantly focused on meeting basic needs," she explains.

That continuous effort eventually accumulates. "It's stress on top of stress," she says.

According to the specialist, families continue to find ways to cope with shortages, but the wear and tear is becoming increasingly evident.

"The level of exhaustion is high."

The concern is particularly visible among younger people, who are in a stage of life usually associated with building plans and expectations for the future.

"In the first half of this year, we've been observing an increase in suicidal behavior among our teenagers," Peon warns. □

Italian garbagemen help recover lost 1M euro lottery ticket

Rome, Italy

A one-million-euro lottery ticket was recovered from the trash in Italy after the frantic winner called on garbagemen to help her retrieve it, the waste management company told AFP.

The instant win ticket was "miraculously still in one piece" after garbage workers combed through mounds of trash on their truck, said Roberto Nicola Toscano, the administrator of the SANB company in Italy's southern Puglia region.

Toscano explained how when the winner went on Sunday to check her ticket at her local shop after the drawing, the machine indicated it was "non-payable". That was because

smaller retailers can only redeem small wins.

But the woman who remains anonymous didn't realize she had won the big jackpot.

"The winner always played the same numbers, as they were associated with a loved one," Toscano said. When she returned home from the store, a family member told her that her regular numbers had won. They immediately ran back to the shop, only to discover that the ticket had already been thrown away and the trash collected. She called Toscano.

"We reconstructed the journey of the ticket, without much hope of finding it, as it had already been picked up by a garbage

truck," Toscano told AFP.

With a stroke of luck, however, they managed to identify the right truck and stopped it.

Given the risk posed by potentially dangerous material in the waste, they took the vehicle to a specialist company equipped to do the search, he said.

The workers searched for over a day, finding various tickets and ticket stubs.

"Amongst them was the stub we were looking for, which was miraculously still in one piece," Toscano told AFP Tuesday.

When he told the winner they had found it, "she cried with emotion", he said. "I would have hugged her, but we were on the

phone."

The averted disaster did not come for free. SANB, located in Bitonto outside Bari, is a public agency, meaning that the cost of the search would have

been borne by taxpayers.

Toscano said he had the woman sign a promise to "cover all of the additional costs" incurred a gamble that certainly paid off. □



This illustration picture shows an employee of Rome's garbage collection "Ama" getting on his truck on January 11, 2018 in Rome.



An oyster farmer prepares for his oyster sale as the access to the city is once again permitted, in Andernos-les-Bains, southwestern France on August 1, 2026.

A side of oysters for France's flat-out firefighters

Lanton, France

As the smoke from France's worst wildfire in over 75 years rose over the Bassin d'Arcachon, a pair of nearby firefighters tucked into a plate of oysters plucked from the bay west of Bordeaux.

Accompanied by a spritz of juice from unwaxed lemons cut into zigzag wedges with restaurant precision, their mid-shift seafood spread was far from atypical of the meals prepared for the 3,300-strong fire brigade by a legion of enthusiastic volunteers, in a country that prides itself on its gastronomy.

"We've got a strong bond with the oyster farmers, hunters and farmers, who are all part of the region's fabric," said Florian Gazeau, a volunteer at a makeshift resting post near the beach resort of Lanton where scores of firefighters were availing themselves of the wide range of delectable scan on offer.

"If someone has oysters they'll bring them along," added the 32-year-old communications specialist, who had been made redundant as a result of the blaze.

A few meters away, his mother Beatrice was busy ladling out and flipping crepes spread from brim to brim with a generous lay-

er of chocolate-hazelnut spread.

Besides being a "comfort food" after a hard shift at the front, the snacks also make sure the firefighters have "more strength", she said.

"Of course, we try to choose local products and we work with local produce, and that's a great thing," the pancake-purveyor told AFP in the wake of the lunchtime rush by her catering van, which she willingly offered up for the food effort.

"Our terroir is something we truly take pride in."

- 'Go to waste otherwise' -

With restaurants among the buildings consumed in the wildfire's 42,000-hectare (104,000-acre) ravages, much of the produce on offer comes from local businesses that have been forced to shut as a result of the crisis.

"We had one restaurant offer up 100 kilograms (220 pounds) of shrimp," said Jean-Pierre, a caterer who declined to give his last name, as a fellow volunteer laid out wafer-thin slices of ruby-red raw beef carpaccio in the broad sunlight.

"It'd all go to waste otherwise," he told AFP, while stirring a meter-radius metal pan perched atop a gas

burner filled with ratatouille. The ad-hoc canteens range in scale from a single food truck in a parking lot to field kitchens fit for an army.

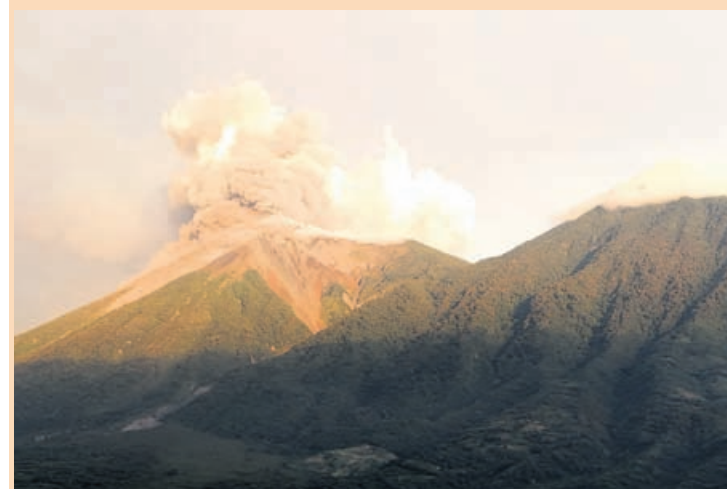
At the buffet for the central command post in Lege-Cap-Ferret, it takes two full-size catering trays to contain the range of artisanal cheeses crumbling or oozing onto the warm metal for the firefighters' pleasure. "It's grandiose, that's what they tell us," said Anne-Marie, who added that they had a several dozen-strong team of people working shifts around the clock and a sizeable chill room to house the perishable pile of donations.

"So it is!" chimed in an off-duty fireman nearby. "But it's the same everywhere."

- 'Giving us everything' -

Not everything served up would meet with approval from the steak-frites purists. Pizza popped up as often as pate on plates, while one caterer from La Reunion has won social media adulation for his gifts of cari, a spicy dish popular on the Indian Ocean island.

For dessert, Proust's beloved madeleines and mirabelles jostled for attention with distinctly American-accented glazed doughnuts. □



This aerial view shows Fuego volcano erupting in Alotenango, some 65 kilometers southwest of Guatemala City, on August 4, 2026.

Hundreds flee homes after Guatemala's Fuego volcano erupts

San Juan Alotenango, Guatemala

Hundreds of people living on the slopes of Guatemala's Fuego volcano evacuated their homes Tuesday after a huge eruption spewed lava and plumes of ash.

Emergency services issued a red alert, the most severe warning, after Central America's most active volcano erupted Monday morning, with conditions intensifying by nightfall.

Rivers of lava streamed down the 3,763-meter (12,346-foot) volcano located less than 100 kilometers from Guatemala City, while ash rose some six kilometers into the red sky.

"Since early morning it was active. That night, the alarm was raised that we needed to evacuate," local resident Alejandro Garcia, 68, told AFP.

Villagers left of their own accord out of fear, Garcia said, describing terrifying scenes of lava oozing down the mountainside.

Firefighters said they transported at least 500 residents of the El Porvenir and Las Lajitas villages to the eastward San Juan Alotenango municipality.

Evacuees are staying in a community hall where makeshift beds have been set up, while the number of people taken to other nearby towns remains unknown.

"If there were any chance of moving to a different house, it would be better, because you're always afraid since the volcano doesn't give any warning," Lidia Ortiz, 40, told AFP at the shelter.

Escuintla to the south was sheltering dozens more families, including children, local authorities reported.

- 'Too much' -

The red alert applies to the Sacatepequez, Chimaltenango and Escuintla areas, with a population of 1.6 million. Emergency services director Claudine Ogaldes called on at-risk families to come to shelters voluntarily.

"In those spaces, you will find care, support and safe conditions while the volcanic activity continues," she wrote on X.

The country's Institute of Volcanology warned of hot volcanic debris flows down Fuego's slopes, with communities on the western and southern flanks at the greatest risk.

Fuego had been erupting for 23 hours straight by Tuesday morning, it said, although the intensity was easing slightly.

"We've already gotten used to having the volcano constantly active, but this time it was really too much," 50-year-old resident Sonia Vasquez told AFP.

There has so far been no impact on the capital's international airport. □



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Infini Unveils Menu XVI: Journey Through Time



Chef Urvin Croes and the team at Infini debut Menu XVI: Journey Through Time, a new tasting menu exploring the cultures, traditions, and ingredients that shaped the Caribbean. True to Infini's "Limitless Possibilities" philosophy, the menu blends history, storytelling, and modern technique into an immersive dining experience unlike anywhere else on the island.

Served chef's table style, each course unfolds as a chapter in a story that carries through the night, with every dish

drawing on Caribbean heritage through a contemporary lens.

The journey opens with Limpia Man, a hibiscus cleansing oil, followed by Batata (sweet potato, coconut, tuna, mango, jerk spice) and Kachá & Bada (T2Pan chocolate sourdough, tomato, avocado). Ikpiki brings amberjack with honeydew and jalapeño, while the returning signature dish Jambo showcases turbot, okra, and Caribbean seafood. A Mojito Bonbon palate cleanser leads into heartier courses: Keshi Yena, a reimagined Caribbean classic, and the centerpiece Merchants and Mangroves, featuring sirloin with harissa and Creole spices. Mosaic bridges savory and sweet before dessert arrives with Carnival, Cos Dushi, and the signature farewell gift, the Bahama Mama Cupcake.

Chef Urvin Croes rose from apprentice cook to Chef de Partie and Sous

Chef at top Aruba restaurants, trained in Europe at the Michelin recognized Grand Hotel Karel V, and returned home to elevate the island's culinary scene. He works closely with local farmers and producers and became the first ever winner of Iron Chef Aruba.

Menu XVI is more than a tasting menu. It's an evening of storytelling, connection, and discovery, celebrating the people, cultures, and flavors that shaped the Caribbean while pushing the boundaries of modern fine dining. □



Today is going to be a good day

(Oranjestad)—Here's why: Aruba Today collected some things to do BEYOND the beach. Yes, we know. 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.

Nature Calls

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. The guided tours are even free of charge. 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 7907 acres 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

The Lighthouse

No, you would not think of this as a hidden gem. The California Lighthouse is actually one of the most known highlights in Aruba and many repeated guests most probably took the ride uphill already. But, there

is a significant change to this tower. Since September 2016 you can climb the top. In 2015 Stichting Monumentenfonds started the restoration of the California Lighthouse. The project finished in September 2016 and the Lighthouse is now open for visitors to enjoy the beautiful view from the top. The construction of the California Lighthouse started in 1915. The name 'California' came from a vessel of the West India Company and Pacific Steamship Co. called 'California' that shipwrecked in the area in 1891. Therefore they came up with the idea of building a lighthouse that could indicate the island's

eastern tip to ships with its light.

Kayak in the Mangroves

Mangel Halto at Savaneta is definitely a place not to miss out on. The beautiful beach with the natural mangroves is simply a beauty, but if you are into a more active way to enjoy the nature: take a kayak. While you are doing some workout—as it might get a little windy and rough—you will see the island from a different perspective. You can even make a stop to do some snorkeling at the reef. It's fun, it's healthy and for sure something else. □



f Caya House CayaHouse J.E Irausquin Blvd 372 www.caya.aw @ reservations@caya.aw

CAYA Introduces a Bold New Menu Celebrating Latin Caribbean Flavors



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

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

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

Among the standout new appetizers are the Tuna al Tamarindo, featuring thinly sliced tuna sashimi served with tamarind leche de tigre, creamy avocado, marinated

onions, radishes, cilantro, and crispy tortillas dusted with tajín; and the Beef Stew Croquettes, a playful nod to Caribbean comfort food, served with truffle and black garlic mayonnaise. Guests can also savor the Beef and Pork Brochetas, made with locally smoked bacon, Madam Jeannette peppers, local honey, and tenderloin, grilled to perfection and served with chimichurri espuma.

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



egg and sarsa criolla.

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

Guests can also enjoy CAYA's new Sabor Experience, a limited time three course menu priced at \$79,

allowing diners to explore an appetizer, main course, and dessert of their choice.

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

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



Visit the natural bridges of Aruba!



(Oranjestad)—After you've visited the Alto Vista Church, the Bushiribana Gold Mill Ruins and the mini natural pool that is located right next to it, you're next up around the northern coast line must be the Natural Bridge. Once the largest natural bridge in the Caribbean, this bridge has been a tourist attraction for many years.

The bridge was formed during thousands of years, cut and crafted by the wild waves that crash into the coral stone walls of the coast. Be-

fore its collapse, this bridge measured 30 meters in length and 7 meters in height, making it the biggest natural bridge in the Caribbean at the time. For many years, this site was also a frequently visited beach, as the bridge had a small opening through which the water would flow into the tiny beach.

Unfortunately in 2005, the bridge collapsed, and the little beach dried up. Despite this, this site remained a tourist attraction, with many visitors walking along the coral cliffs of the bridge to see the spectacular view of the northern coastline and the Caribbean Sea. Visitors can also still visit the souvenir shop on the left of the bridge entrance.

While the natural bridge no longer is functional, there is now a smaller natural bridge very close. This bridge is often called the "Baby Bridge" or "Daughter Bridge". □



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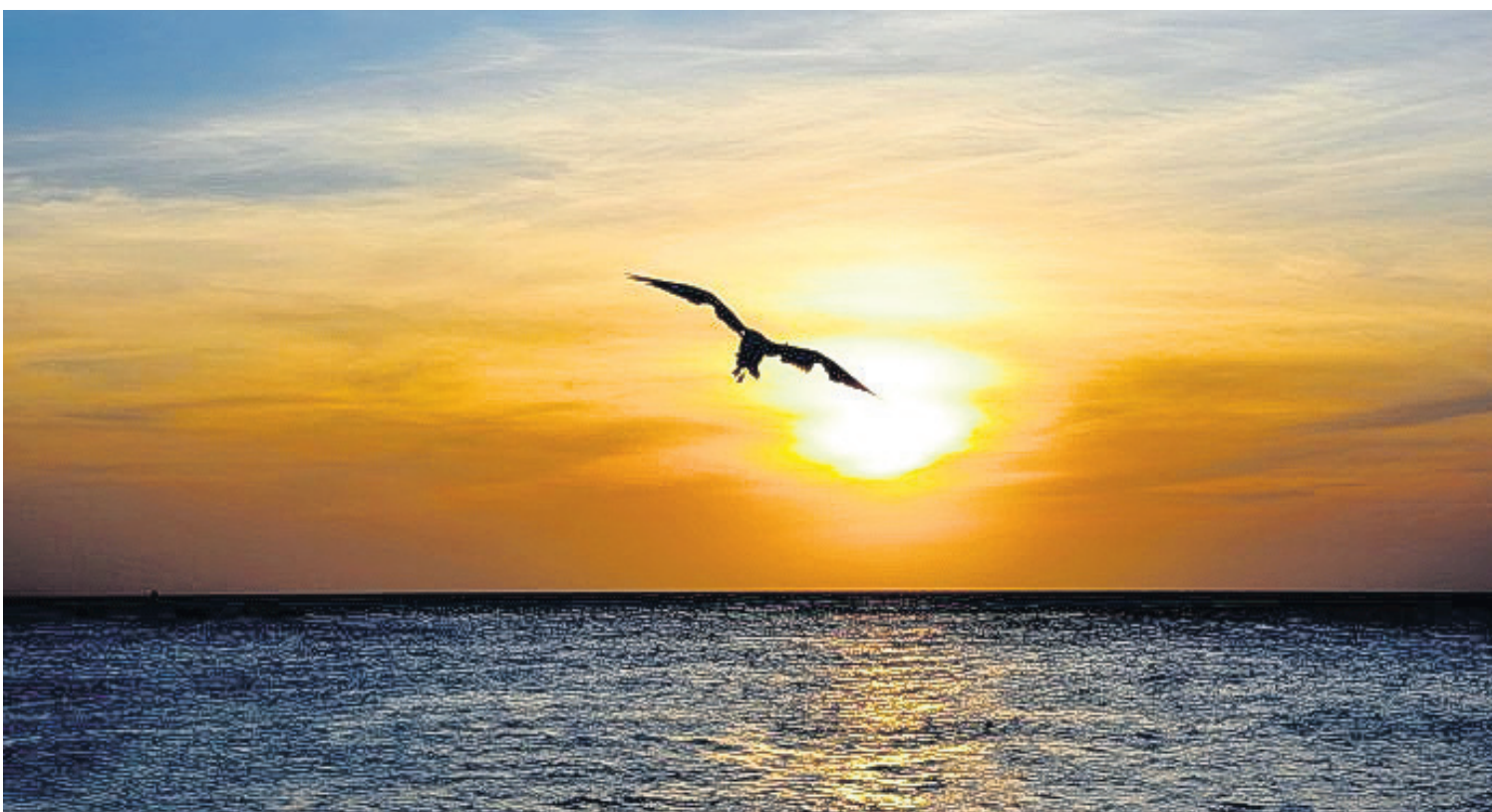
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Best spots to view the sunset



(Oranjestad)—What can be more romantic than surprising your partner with a date watching the sunset? Aruba's sunset leave many speechless, and luckily, the best spots to view the sunset are entirely accessible and easy to find. Here are some of the best places to view the sunset on the island.

California Light House

Of course, being one of the highest points easily accessible to locals and tourists,

the California Light House hill not only offers a tremendous view of the sunset, but also a breath taking scenery of most of the island. In the distance you can spot all the hotels, the western shoreline and the wild waves that crash on the northern side of the island.

Manchebo & Eagle Beach

Speaking of the western shoreline, the best spots for viewing the sunset on the beach has to be either Manchebo Beach or at

Eagle Beach, which stretch along the entire western coast of the island. The sunset on these beaches is truly breathtaking; the sky and ocean look so big and spacious, and paired with the orange/pink hue of the sunset, the white sandy beaches and the soft sounds of waves crashing—it can only be described as an experience!

Arashi Beach

Another beach that has to be considered as another

great spot to view the sunset. Arashi Beach is the last beach you will find along the western coast line, just before you drive up the hill to the California Light House. A favorite for surfers and body boarders, the Arashi sky stretches out for miles, lending a spectacular canvas for the sun to create a masterpiece of orange, pink and purple

Hooiberg Hill

These last two options are for more active couples. If

you and your partner like to hike, the Hooiberg Hill may be a great place for you to get your daily workout in and enjoy a beautiful view of the sunset and the island as a little reward. Climb on top the 587-step stairs and reach the top to enjoy this incredible scenery.

Casibari Rock Formation

If you're a rock climber, you might enjoy watching the sunset on top of the Casibari Rock Formation. It's no Yosemite, but it does offer a fun little exercise to get to the top. But if you prefer not to get your hands a little dirty, you can always use the stairs in the back.hue.□

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Article by Etnia Nativa

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Episode CCCLXIV - 364

Who Controls Paradise? Aruba's Algorithm Challenge

In this new episode, Etnia Nativa Aruba explores one of the most important questions shaping the island's future: how artificial intelligence is quietly transforming tourism through AI-driven travel choices. As AI increasingly influences which destinations travelers discover, consider, and ultimately visit, Aruba's digital identity has become almost as influential as its natural beauty.

For more than three decades, Etnia Nativa Aruba has helped shape the island's cultural and environmental landscape. Since 1994, it has contributed to landmark initiatives including Arikok National Park, the Archaeological Museum, and the Artisan Foundation, while consistently advocating for a tourism model that values quality over quantity. As a steward of heritage, Etnia Nativa has advanced this vision through its engagement with the Aruba Chamber of Commerce, the Social and Economic Council (SER), and numerous environmental and heritage organizations.

For years, Aruba has maintained an international reputation as one of the Caribbean's most desirable destinations. Every day, millions of online searches, images, travel reviews, videos, rankings, and social media conversations reinforce this global perception. The island's digital presence has become one of its most valuable tourism assets, shaping traveler expectations and influencing decisions long before a visitor books a flight.

Today, however, that digital visibility has entered a new era.

Artificial intelligence is rapidly changing how travelers discover and choose destinations. As AI assistants become trusted travel advisors, they increasingly determine which places gain visibility and which are overlooked.

Because AI relies on existing online content, destinations with the strongest digital presence receive more recommendations, attract more visitors, generate even more content, and further strengthen their visibility.

Popularity is now driven by algorithms that continually reinforce themselves. This raises an important question for Aruba, where tourism is both the backbone of the economy and one of its greatest environmental and social challenges. If artificial intelligence continually recommends destinations that are already saturated, could these systems unintentionally accelerate over tourism?

For organizations such as Etnia Nativa Aruba, dedicated to protecting the island's natural and cultural heritage, this question is no longer theoretical. The effects of concentrated tourism are already visible across the island: growing pressure on fragile coastal ecosystems, increasing traffic congestion, rising demand for limited freshwater and energy resources, disturbance of wildlife, erosion of natural landscapes, and the gradual transformation of communities whose identity risks being overshadowed by visitor demand.

The challenge is no longer simply attracting more visitors. It is ensuring that future growth is guided by sustainability, informed governance, and a long-term vision that protects the very qualities that make Aruba exceptional.

The issue extends beyond environmental degradation. Over tourism also affects residents' quality of life, infrastructure, public services, and the authenticity that visitors seek in the first place. Sustainable tourism cannot be measured solely by arrival numbers or hotel occupancy; it must also be evaluated by the health of

ecosystems and the well-being of local communities.

Recent academic research has begun documenting what many destinations have already experienced in practice. AI recommendation systems can exhibit popularity bias, repeatedly directing attention toward places that already dominate the digital landscape. At the same time, researchers are developing new approaches that integrate sustainability indicators, territorial diversity, carrying capacity, and destination saturation into AI models, seeking to distribute tourism more responsibly rather than simply maximizing demand.

This is where an intriguing paradox emerges.

Less visible destinations need stronger digital representation to be recognized by AI, but increasing visibility without considering environmental limits can simply shift tourism pressure elsewhere. The goal is not to promote every place equally, but to ensure recommendations reflect ecological realities—not just digital popularity.

As artificial intelligence increasingly shapes where people travel, authentic voices become more important than ever. Rather than allowing algorithms alone to define Aruba's identity, Etnia Nativa Aruba remains committed to preserving and sharing the island's true cultural and natural heritage.

For more than three decades, its mission has been to connect visitors with the authentic Aruba—its Indigenous history, traditions, art, archaeology, and environment—offering an experience that goes beyond the island's most visible attractions. As the Caribbean's only home museum dedicated to Aruba's cultural heritage, Etnia Nativa serves as the island's authentic cultural gateway, inviting travelers to discover the stories, values, and landscapes that have shaped Aruba for centuries through the vision and expertise of its founder.

In an era when digital recommendations influence millions of travel decisions, choosing authentic cultural experiences helps ensure that Aruba's heritage is not only seen but genuinely understood and preserved for future generations. □

Book your visit today:

WhatsApp +297 592 2702
etnianativa03@gmail.com



Fruit Loose & Veggie Boost

Aruban fruits and vegetables

Fresh fruits make a tropical holiday's picture complete. Whether you see the mango's hanging in the trees or the fresh fruit cocktail on the side table of your pool bed, the link is there: you are in the tropics. Aruba grows her own fruits and veggies and there are some pretty out-of-space local species you may never had heard of, but really healthy and delicious.

Mispel

This is a fruit with a character (5-10 cm/2-4 inches). It does not ripe until it is picked or falls off the tree. Mispel is hard with a sandpaper like texture when immature, soft and juicy when ripe. It's technically a berry, but contains a skin similar to that of a kiwi. It's grainy and sweet, with a light, musky flavor. The sap or gum from the tree is also a source of 'chicle' the original ingredient used to make chewing gum. Rich in tannins, antioxidants shown to contain anti-inflammatory compounds, and vitamin C, essential for healthy immune function. Season: year-round.

Kenepa



Ovoid green fruit that grows in bunches on trees up to 30m high. The fruit is related to the lychee and have tight, thin but rigid skins. Inside the skin is the tart, tangy, or sweet pulp of the fruit covering a large seed. The pulp is usually cream or orange colored. Kenepa strengthens the immune system, and prevents the reproduction of bacteria and viruses in the body. This fruit is highly recommended to treat lung infections and urinary tract infections. It also helps to cure insomnia and rejuvenates the nervous system. Season: the fruit typically

ripen during the summer.

Druif



There is no chance you did not bump into one of the sea grape trees while spending your vacation on Aruba. The sea grape plant is often used in ocean-side landscaping in sandy soil right on the beach and it produces clusters of fruit that resemble grapes. Are sea grapes edible? Yes, they are. Animals enjoy sea grapes and humans can eat them as well, and they are used to make jam. They contain very low calories and sugar, enabling good bacterium to digest food and excrete waste quickly which is effective in preventing constipation. Season: Sep-Oct.

Shimarucu



Maybe Aruba's most popular wild fruit tree. You may have noticed cars at the side of the road and people picking those red berries. Well, that's Shimarucu. The local habit to stop for these delicious fruits goes from generation to generation. Its fruit's degree of sour depends on the amount of rain it gets. Red Shimarucus tend to taste better than orange. The fruit has super power: a true vitamin bomb. Adults only need to eat 3-4 of these berries to meet their daily recommended amount of Vitamin C. Season: Rainy months (Oct-Jan).

Tamarind

A delicious, sweet fruit that has a wide variety of uses and applications, both for medicinal and culinary purposes. It is a medium-sized bushy tree with evergreen leaves and fruit that develops in pods characterized by long, brown shells. Inside is a sticky, fleshy, juicy pulp, which is the Tamarind fruit. Both sweet and sour in taste, the fruit contains a significant level of vitamin C, as well as vitamin E, B vitamins, calcium, iron, phosphorous, potassium, manganese, and dietary fiber. There are also a number of organic compounds that make tamarind a powerful antioxidant and anti-inflammatory agent. Season: March.

When it comes to veggies the island certainly offers a home-grown selection. They taste delicious and have their specific talents to boost your immune system.

Concomber chiquito

This is a sort of local squash, but looks like a cucumber with prickly skin. The taste however is bitterer than the cucumber and the vegetable is smaller in size but bigger in width. Inside is a soft, fleshy pulp and seeds, just like the cucumber. Concomber chiquito is grown in the island and used in salads and 'stoba' (stew) or on its own in vinegar. The veggie contains multiple B vitamins, including vitamin B1, vitamin B5, and vitamin B7 (biotin). B vitamins are known to help ease feelings of anxiety and buffer some of the damaging effects of stress. Additionally this veggie is rich in two of the most basic elements needed for healthy digestion: water and fiber. Season: year-round.

Yambo

Family of Okra, also known as 'lady's fingers': a green flowering plant. Okra belongs to the same plant family as hibiscus and cotton. A classic favorite dish in Aruba is Sopi di yambo.



It has long been favored as a food for the health-conscious. It contains potassium, vitamin B, vitamin C, folic acid, and calcium. It's low in calories and has a high dietary fiber content. Recently, a new benefit of including okra in your diet is being considered. Okra has been suggested to help manage blood sugar in cases of type 1, type 2, and gestational diabetes. Season: year-round.

Bonch'i Cunucu

A long, small bean, boiled for a side dish or snack. Long beans have a chewy, crunchy texture—more so than snap beans—and a flavor reminiscent of the dry navy bean or asparagus. Besides stir-fry, soups and salads, the long bean is a good choice for stewing, braising (to remain chewy and firm), sautéing, shallow frying, and deep frying. With cooking, the long bean's bean flavor intensifies.

Long beans are low in calories, about 45 calories per cup, and rich in vitamin A and also contain vitamin C and potassium. Season: year-round.

Pampuna

In the endless summer of Caribbean living we only have to concern ourselves with a wet season and a dry season. Still we do indulge heavily in the pleasures of pumpkin and enjoy Caribbean pumpkin recipes year round. A popular dish in Aruba is Sopi di Pampuna, don't miss it. This dish is made of pumpkin soup, and parsley. Pumpkins are rich in flavonoid polyphenolic antioxidants such as xanthin, lutein and carotenes and also contain vitamins. Pumpkin seeds are a good source of omega-3 fatty acids, vitamins, minerals and proteins. Pumpkins are used to make desserts, breads and soups. □



CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS 46 Checked out

1 Denali setting

7 Invites

11 Door

12 Debt reminder

13 Idaho export

14 Wee

15 Stops, as rain

17 Bad writer

20 Stratum

23 "That's disgusting!"

24 Like many roads

26 Avril follower

27 Drake's music

28 Gene messenger

29 Collapse inward

31 Failure

32 Car sticker

33 Tag sale words

34 Finally

37 Tabloid staple

39 Voter's page

43 Assistant

44 Pal of George and Jerry

45 Fall short of

DOWN

1 Phone download

2 John, to Ringo

3 Gallery fill

4 Celery

5 Designer Spade

6 Oodles

7 Real

8 Boat-building places

9 Family

10 Pig's place

16 Incline

17 Like a greenhouse

18 Athlete's optimal effort

19 They can be tapped to pay

21 Tedium

22 Goes through

24 Fantasy villain

25 Gum mass

30 Coffee bar orders

33 Travel aid

35 Aid illegally

36 Mall event

37 Block up

38 Clock

40 Turned on

41 Count starter

42 TV's "— Lasso"

J	A	P	A	N		A	S	T	R	O
A	D	O	R	E		C	O	H	A	N
D	A	R	K	V	I	C	T	O	R	Y
E	M	T		A	C	E		R	E	X
			A	D	E	P	T			
P	L	A	Z	A		T	A	H	O	E
E	A	S	T			L	O	N	E	
A	P	S	E	S		R	I	G	E	L
			C	O	C	O	A			
M	A	P		M	O	B		F	O	G
A	L	L	A	B	O	U	T	E	V	E
S	T	O	L	E		S	W	E	A	T
T	O	W	E	R		T	O	L	L	S

1	2	3	4	5	6		7	8	9	10
11							12			
13							14			
			15			16				
17	18	19				20			21	22
23				24	25					
26				27				28		
29			30					31		
32							33			
		34			35	36				
37	38				39			40	41	42
43					44					
45					46					

A X Y D L B A A X R
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.

4-12 CRYPTOQUOTE

VQJA NLATA IMC M NLSQH
JMFFAZ CETSQH ILAQ NLA IVTFZ
IMC ITSNSQH BATCAC FSRA
KVXTC MQZ PSQA. — AFFM
WSNOHATMFZ

Cryptoquote: YOU MISS ONE HUNDRED PERCENT OF THE SHOTS YOU DON'T TAKE. — WAYNE GRETZKY

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.

CRUISE SHIP	
AUGUST SCHEDULE	
02 SUN	FREEWINDS DEPT. Arrival: Departure: 24:00 Berth: E
04 TUE	CARNIVAL HORIZON Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 22:00 Berth: B GRANDEUR OF THE SEAS Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: C
05 WED	FREEWINDS Arrival: 6:00 Departure: Berth: E
09 SUN	FREEWINDS DEPT. Arrival: Departure: 24:00 Berth: E
11 TUE	GRANDEUR OF THE SEAS Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: B ADVENTURE OF THE SEAS Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: C CARNIVAL VISTA Arrival: 13:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: I
12 WED	ALLURE OF THE SEAS Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: I FREEWINDS Arrival: 6:00 Departure: Berth: E
16 SUN	FREEWINDS DEPT. Arrival: Departure: 24:00 Berth: E

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

Difficulty: ★★★

8/5

Answer to previous puzzle

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

Difficulty: ★★

8/4

Southern Europe 'becoming more flammable' in hotter climate, experts say



Tourists enjoy the beach after authorities allowed people back on the Cap Ferret peninsula in the wake of the wildfire which engulfed the Gironde region in Lege-Cap-Ferret, along the Arcachon bay, southwestern France on August 4, 2006.

Paris, France

Southern Europe is "becoming more flammable" with the number of summer days primed for extreme fire conditions more than doubling since 1981, a new study found on Thursday. Scientists said the "major intensification" of fire-prone weather was driven by climate change and especially pronounced in France and Spain, which have been battling some of their largest blazes since records began. There were fewer fires today compared to the 1980s but more extreme and fast-spreading infernos, said the study, which assessed national wildfire statistics and weather and climate data.

The steep increase in the frequency of fire weather characterised by searing temperatures, low humidity, dryness, and strong winds "can only be attributed to global warming," said study co-author Raul Cordero.

"The number of days where the fire weather index is extreme have nearly tripled in some areas of southern Europe," Cordero, an atmospheric scientist from the University of Groningen in the Netherlands, told AFP.

Extreme fire conditions occurred on fewer than 10 days per summer between 1981-2010, but up to 25 days between 2016-2025 in France, Spain, Portugal, Italy and Greece, concluded the study in Scientific Reports. "Until we stop global warming, the situation is going to be just worsening," Cordero said.

The enormous blazes in France and Spain follow successive heatwaves and the hottest June on record in western Europe last month. Scientists attribute the record-shattering heat to

climate change and say Europe, the fastest-warming continent, could face a tenfold increase in extreme fires this century.

- Extreme era -

The World Weather Attribution scientific group said this month that human-induced climate change had worsened a biting drought across Europe and fostered ideal conditions for wildfires.

Much of western Europe experienced a wetter winter before rapidly shifting to hotter, drier weather. The rain fuelled vegetation growth but the sud-

den heat baked it dry as a warmer atmosphere soaked up moisture from plants and soils.

The combination of climate-driven heat and tinderbox conditions were "the ingredients for a disaster", Cordero said.

"That disaster, unfortunately, is unfolding" in Spain and France, he said.

Despite a rebound in wildfire activity since 2018, the annual burned area in southern Europe remains lower in all countries except Portugal than during the 1980s, said the study.

Investments in fire fighting and containment, better-trained brigades and aerial resources like water bombers had helped drive a consistent decline in the number of fires in recent decades.

But paradoxically, this also created dangerous conditions by allowing fuel to build up. □

HEALTH



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24 HOURS
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Tel. 582 1253

San Nicolas: Seroe Preto
Tel. 584 4833

OTHER

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

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Police Tipline 11141
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FAVI- Visually Impaired
Tel. 582 5051
Alcoholics Anonymous
Tel. 736 2952
Narcotics Anonymous
Tel. 583 8989
Against Domestic Violence(FCVR)
Tel. 583 5400
Centre for Diabetes
Tel. 524 8888
Child Abuse Prevention
Tel. 582 4433
Quota Club Tel. 525 2672

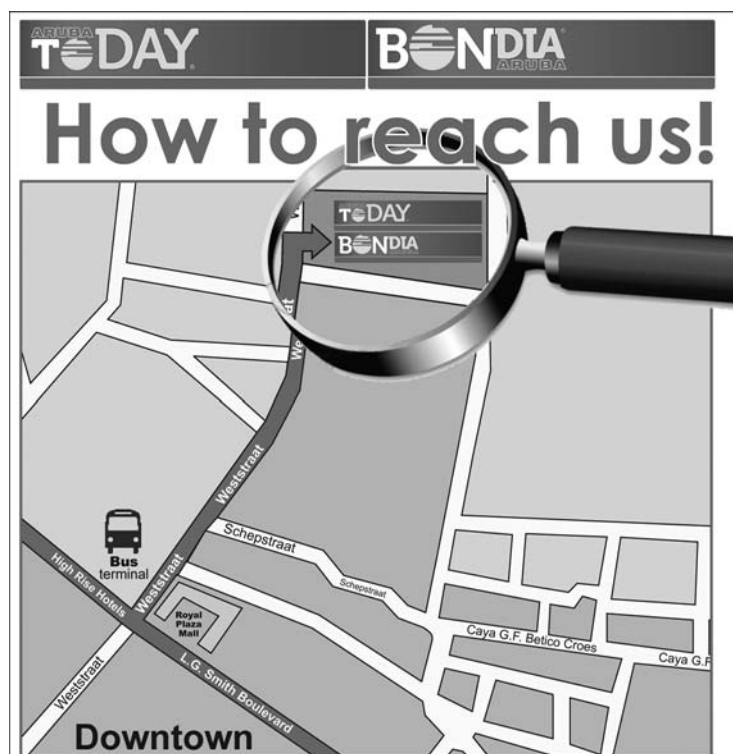
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Training the U.K. 'surgeons of the future' using robots

London, United Kingdom

Pulling his face away from an immersive 3D headset looking deep inside a patient's lung, doctor Sasha Stamenkovic recounted the final steps of an operation using robots to remove a tumour.

"We've done some very, very intricate operating today," said the 60-year-old consultant thoracic surgeon.

"We've saved a lot of lung, we've gone around some really, really small vessels and really small airways."

He was addressing three surgeons from another English hospital observing Stamenkovic using the new da Vinci 5 robotic-assisted surgical system, made by US company Intuitive.

The equipment will arrive in their operating theatre later this year, part of a drive to increase the use of robotics in keyhole surgery across the UK's National Health Service.

Throughout the roughly two-hour operation, Stamenkovic's instructions echoed through a microphone to his surgical team, which includes nurses specially trained as robotic surgical first assistants.

As director of robotic surgery and research at Barts Health NHS Trust, he



This photo taken on July 3, 2026 shows surgeon Sasha Stamenkovic (R), director of robotic surgery, research and fellowship, and Ali Ansari pour (C), senior cardiothoracic trainee on a robotic fellowship, using the new Da Vinci 5 robotic-assisted surgical system while performing lung cancer surgery, as consultants from another NHS Trust observe, at St Bartholomew's Hospital in London.

runs fellowships at St Bartholomew's Hospital in central London, shaping what he says will be the "surgeon of the future."

The government has set a target for robotic assistance to be used in 9 out of 10 keyhole surgeries in England by 2035.

- 'Art form' -

At first glance, the setup looks like a video game. Stamenkovic carried out

the operation via a console at the side of the room, his hand movements translating into the actions of three robotic arms holding operating instruments, looming over a patient lying a few metres away.

A fourth arm holds a camera, providing the 3D stream for the surgeon, as well as two screens in the operating theatre.

The robotic systems can be used across a range of spe-

cialities including urology, gynaecology, colorectal, thoracic, and abdominal or general surgery.

Ali Ansari pour, a senior cardiothoracic trainee on a year-long fellowship, is one of the doctors under his wing.

"Stepping away" from the patient and adjusting to this setup was the "biggest challenge", Ansari pour said.

"I think that almost kind of

separates you from the patient slightly," he said.

"But it gives you incredible vision and makes you very objective in terms of how you deal with the patient." Despite the futuristic appearance, Stamenkovic argued robotics has actually returned keyhole surgery closer to "how the original open surgery used to be".

This is because the slim robotic arms can move more easily than humans holding tools inside the restricted space of a keyhole surgery.

"Robotic surgery has brought you back to what surgeons wanted to do, which was to have an art form able to create something with their hands," he said.

The greater precision also reduces the risk of complications like air leaks, a common cause of longer hospital stays following lung surgery.

- Recovery -

This more precise surgery within a smaller wound should mean a shorter hospital stay and recovery time.

For an overstretched public health service, the hope is patients will leave hospitals sooner, freeing up bed space and reducing waiting lists.

Ian Macleod "didn't realise" until he was wearing a surgical gown and about to be anaesthetised that he would be the first patient in the NHS to undergo lung cancer surgery using the new system.

The 76-year-old retired detective said the news "didn't faze" him, and he was back on his feet 30 minutes after returning to the ward.

The recovery was "extraordinary," said Macleod.

He had undergone non-robotic keyhole surgery for a different cancer in the past, and says that recovery time was "much longer".

Leaving hospital with just one stitch this time, he was driving his wife to the garden centre for coffee less than a week later. □

China draws up safety rules for autonomous vehicles

Beijing, China

China has drawn up new safety rules for the growing number of autonomous vehicles on its roads, including a mandatory de-

activation override, the government said Tuesday. The standards taking effect July 1, 2027 will cover autonomous vehicles that require a human back-

up driver, as well as independently operating vehicles such as the robotaxis made by U.S. manufacturer Waymo.

Under the new rules, manufacturers will have to ensure autonomous systems can match the safety of human drivers, China's Ministry of Industry and Information Technology said in a statement.

Buyers will also have to be informed of any limitations in autonomous systems. The rules standardize interactions between humans and machines to "prevent risks of misuse or abuse", the ministry said.

They will require that autonomous vehicles feature safe procedures to activate and deactivate au-

tomated driving, it said.

For cars with a human back-up driver, the autonomous system must monitor their readiness to take over.

Safety concerns and the cost of developing next-level systems have complicated progress in the introduction of autonomous vehicles.

Beijing warned leading automakers that safety rules would be more tightly enforced after a fatal crash in 2025 involving a Xiaomi car in assisted driving mode.

The new rules follow a U.N. agency's adoption in June of the first global regulations for fully autonomous vehicles, which China backed. □



A Verne RoboTaxi vehicle drives on the streets of Zagreb on May 5, 2026.

For nearly a month, Europe's first robotaxi service has been quietly moving through the streets of Zagreb, with AFP among the first journalists to try it.

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Lead managing owner of the Los Angeles FC Larry Berg speaks to fans and media at the ribbon cutting ceremony for the new home of the Los Angeles FC at the Banc of California Stadium on April 18, 2018 in Los Angeles.

New commissioner Berg wants to take MLS to 'next level'

New York, United States

Larry Berg, who will succeed Don Garber as Major League Soccer commissioner next year, said Tuesday the league is poised to reach the "next level" and he's excited to try to get it there.

"We have this great opportunity to get to that next level in MLS," Berg said. "To be leading that charge is a lifelong dream."

MLS owners on Monday selected Berg as the third commissioner in league history. He'll take over from Don Garber, who succeeded Doug Logan back in 1999.

Garber will continue in the role through the rest of the year, and after Berg takes the reins on January 1 will transition to league chairman.

Berg, a co-owner of Los Angeles FC who has co-chaired MLS's Sporting and Competition Committee, made it clear at his introductory press conference

that his remit is continued growth.

"Over the last 30 years, we've done a lot of things right," Berg said. "The infrastructure part was A-plus."

"We have the foundation. We have the stadiums, we have the training facilities, we have the academies, we have MLS NEXT Pro."

"If we can put on top of that some forward thinking and some other things that make us more exciting and more competitive, then I think we'll be in great shape."

The league is aiming to capitalize on the excitement generated in the United States by the recently concluded World Cup.

MLS is also heading into a period of change as it transitions from its current February-December schedule into a season that aligns with most football leagues worldwide.

The change will see a February-to-May campaign in 2027, dubbed the "MLS

Sprint Season."

That will set the stage for the kickoff of the 2027-28 season in July 2027, concluding with the 2028 MLS Cup in May 2028.

Other issues that will face Berg are proposed changes to roster and salary cap rules, a new collective bargaining agreement with players and a new media-rights deal, with the current agreement with Apple TV ending in mid-2029.

During Garber's tenure, MLS survived serious financial challenges in the 2000s to grow to 30 clubs and saw 26 new football stadiums built.

Five clubs are now valued at more than \$1 billion according to Forbes. That includes Inter Miami, co-owned by David Beckham and currently featuring Lionel Messi playing in Miami's new Nu Stadium.

The others are LAFC, LA Galaxy, Atlanta United and New York City FC. □



Movistar Team's Swiss rider Marlen Reusser competes during the individual time-trial in the 4th (out of 9) stage of the fifth edition of the Women's Tour de France cycling race, 21 km time trial between Gevrey-Chambertin and Dijon, eastern France on August 4, 2026.

Reusser romps to overall lead at Tour de France Femmes

Dijon, France

Marlen Reusser took the overall lead in the Tour de France Femmes on Tuesday, after a carefully executed plan to win the 21km time-trial between Gevrey-Chambertin and Dijon.

The Swiss rider revealed she had been targeting the stage win and the yellow jersey since last year.

"It worked, and I'm really happy. This was my objective here. We called it our 'mustard plan'," she said, referring to the mustard produced in Dijon where the time-trial ended.

Pre-race favorite and 2023 champion Demi Vollering was just 18 seconds slower in third on the day, and trails Reusser by only 14sec overall.

Defending champion Pauline Ferrand-Prevot is now 2min and 13sec off the pace, while 2024 winner Kasia Niewiadoma is 1min 09sec down.

France's Ferrand-Prevot will still be considered an overall contender, though, after beating Vollering by over three minutes in the penultimate stage last year en route to the title.

World time-trial champion Reusser, a qualified doctor, was left lying on the floor and breathing heavily after the finish, while Vollering, the better climber, appeared to have measured her pace.

"It wasn't perfect, perfect, but it was good," said Reusser. "I started well, I did a good climb, but I had a little bit of a problem with my bike and the wind."

The peloton were subjected to clothing checks ahead of the time-trial to ensure no chest form-altering clothing was being used for aerodynamic advantage.

UCI rules state riders may not use any objects to artificially change their "morphology", including cooling devices, padding or front body radio pockets.

Reusser will have to survive Friday's monster climb of Mont Ventoux if she is to take her first Tour de France title. □

Defending champ Shelton finding tournament sweet spot in Montreal

Montreal, Canada

Ben Shelton doesn't want to miss his chances on court as he begins the defense of his ATP Montreal Masters title with the goal of arriving in full flow at the US Open.

With the last major of the season starting on August 31 in New York, the American has programmed a full run-up schedule: Washington last week, Montreal and Cincinnati still to come.

"Three tournaments is the perfect amount. I'd like to get as many matches as possible," the fifth seed said on a rainy Monday that saw the start of play delayed several hours with more afternoon rain interruptions.



"I'm the type of player, the more matches I play, the better I play, as long as my body can hold up," Shel-

ton added.

"It's a great three-tournament run before having a week off leading up to the US Open. I'm just kind of going for it."

Among first-round matches completed, French veteran Gael Monfils opened his last Montreal campaign with a 6-4, 6-4 victory over Poland's Kamil Majchrzak. Monfils, playing his final season on the ATP Tour, energized the rain-weary late-night crowd, winning four straight games to take a 5-2 lead in the second set.

He was broken in his first attempt to serve out the match but made no mistake on his second, advancing to a second-round meeting with 12th-seeded Learner Tien.

"I felt like I played well," Monfils said.

"I was serving really good, tried to be very accurate with my first serve and then second serve tried to be super aggressive and then use my forehand. I felt more and more I could hold his pace."

Monfils, coming off a first-round exit at Roland Garros, needed one hour and 38 minutes to dispatch Majchrzak, who won his first ATP title at s-Hertogenbosch in June.

Italy's former top 10 contender Matteo Berrettini, coming back from an abdominal injury, played his

first match since Wimbledon and lost 6-3, 6-7 (5/7), 6-3 to Argentine Mariano Navone.

The 12-day event is missing world number one Jannik Sinner and 24-time Grand Slam champion Novak Djokovic.

Roland Garros champion and Wimbledon finalist Alexander Zverev is the top seed ahead of Canadian Felix Auger-Aliassime.

Shelton, the ATP number 10 who reached last week's Washington quarters, is not bothered by the extra length of the tournament which continues to spark criticism.

- Shelton's best swing -

"The two-week tournaments I think there's a lack of sustainability, for sure, but I don't know if there's a different way to go about it," he said.

"Jannik knows himself. Novak knows himself. Maybe I would do the same thing if I had won Wimbledon -- I didn't.

"It's tough to criticize those guys for the decisions that they make throughout the season when they're trying to sustain a level and maintain their health.

"At the same time, for me, this is one of my favorite parts of the year, one of my best swings, and I don't want to miss out on playing any of these tournaments." Shelton said that he does not dwell on the 1,000 ranking points he needs to defend in Canada from his 2025 victory.

"If you're always thinking about defending or what week that you made points or didn't make points, it's easy to kind of get lost in your mind," he said.

"That's why I like to just think about my body of work for this year, 2026, what I'm doing and what I want to accomplish by the end of the year.

"To get another opportunity to be playing really good tennis leading into the US Open is kind of my main goal here.

"I'm looking forward to getting out there again." □

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