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Amazon behind massive private gas plant for new data centers

Washington, United States

Amazon confirmed Friday it is financing a massive, private gas power plant in Texas that could become the single largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in the United States.

It is the latest example of tech giants going off the grid to get their AI operations online faster.

The news was first reported by market intelligence company Cleanview, which reviewed satellite imagery to connect three data center construction permits filed this week by Amazon to the gas plant, which is being developed by Pacifico Energy and is known as GW Ranch.



The Austin Energy/Sand Hill Energy Center is seen on July 28, 2026 in Austin, Texas.

Previously filed permits for the plant show it would have 35 turbines and generate 7.65 gigawatts larger than any gas plant currently operating in the United States.

A bigger facility, at 9.2 gigawatts, is planned in Ohio under a public-private partnership involving SoftBank. That plant would connect to the grid as well as power a data center.

The Pecos County, Texas, plant would be permit-

ted to emit more than 30 million metric tonnes of greenhouse gases a year more than any other single source in the country, though facilities rarely emit at their permitted ceiling.

Amazon said that by generating its own power, it would avoid passing the cost on to ordinary Americans, whose electricity bills have spiked as utilities charge consumers for the new infrastructure feeding the AI boom.

"Amazon believes in paying the full costs of powering our operations," a spokesperson said.

"Our new planned data center campus in Pecos County does just that: it's powered by new on-site generation that won't raise electricity costs for Texas families and designed to transition to grid-connected service as interconnection timelines allow."

The company added it was "exploring opportunities" for solar energy and bat-

tery storage on site, and it would make use of "non-potable, brackish groundwater" which it said would avoid putting pressure on the watershed.

Amazon added it remained committed to reaching net-zero carbon emissions by 2040 under The Climate Pledge, and had enabled 40 carbon-free energy projects totaling nearly 10 gigawatts in Texas.

Building so-called "behind-the-meter" power was once a niche practice,

exemplified by Elon Musk's xAI deploying mobile gas turbines to its data center in Memphis in 2024.

xAI still accounts for most of the two gigawatts of behind-the-meter power online today, according to research by Cleanview, which estimates that around 97 gigawatts of such projects are planned involving every hyperscaler including Meta, Microsoft and Oracle, with enormous climate implications.

The precise figure depends on how many are built, how efficient the turbines are and how often they run, but the total emissions could easily top 200 million tons of carbon dioxide emissions a year, roughly equivalent to the annual emissions of more than 45 million cars, or about the entire carbon output of Pakistan.

"There are more efficient ways to use gas," John Rogers, an energy analyst for the Union of Concerned Scientists, told AFP. "Virtually none of these plants are proposing to use those, and that matters for on-site pollution, both direct and climate." □

U.S. left-wing star reveals decision to freeze her eggs

Washington, United States

Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, one of the most prominent figures on the U.S. left and a potential presidential contender, has revealed she is freezing her eggs, saying she wants to speak openly about choices confronting women balancing careers

and family.

The 36-year-old Democratic congresswoman from New York shared videos of the fertility treatment on social media over the weekend, including footage of herself administering hormone injections.

"This is a choice that I am

making to feel more in control of my life," Ocasio-Cortez said, describing her ability to undergo the procedure as a "very privileged position."

Her disclosure came as speculation mounts over her political future.

Hours later, Ocasio-Cortez said in a television interview that she had not ruled out running for the White House in 2028, while also leaving open the possibility of challenging Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer for his New York seat.

"I haven't ruled out the possibility," she told ABC on Sunday when asked about a presidential bid, while insisting her immediate focus remains November's midterm elections.

Ocasio-Cortez, widely known by her initials AOC,

burst onto the national political scene with an upset congressional victory in 2018 and rapidly became a leading voice of the Democratic Party's left wing.

She said going public about freezing her eggs carried a "political risk," arguing women running for office face questions about marriage and children rarely asked of men. "This is just not something that men deal with," she said. "Men run for office, or frankly they interview for jobs," without people wondering whether they intend to start a family.

Ocasio-Cortez also linked the decision to her advocacy for reproductive rights, saying political leaders should normalize conversations about women's

health at a time when access to abortion and other reproductive care remains fiercely contested in the United States.

"In this political environment... I think it's important for us as leaders to have these conversations," she said.

Egg freezing involves stimulating the ovaries with hormone injections before mature eggs are surgically retrieved and preserved for possible future use through in vitro fertilization. The process can be expensive, is not always covered by insurance and offers no guarantee of a future pregnancy. Ocasio-Cortez said she had been saving for the procedure and considering it for a long time.

She did not say whether she ultimately plans to have children. □



U.S. Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez celebrates New York City Mayoral candidate Zohran Mamdani's victory during an election night event at the Brooklyn Paramount Theater in Brooklyn, New York on November 4, 2025.



U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services Robert F. Kennedy Jr. (R) looks on as President Donald Trump speaks before signing an executive order calling for more research and flexibility on vaccines, in the Oval Office of the White House in Washington, DC, on August 10, 2026.

Trump order pushes for overhaul of childhood vaccine schedule

Washington, United States

U.S. President Donald Trump signed an executive order Monday pushing for a rethink of school vaccine mandates and repeating calls for the measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccine to be separated into three individual shots.

Curbing vaccines has been a key priority for Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr, who founded an anti-vaccine nonprofit and has long promoted a disproven link between immunization and autism.

The federal government does not have direct control over several areas covered by the order. States, for example, have the authority to require vaccinations for students to attend school.

On these points Trump's move is more of a suggestion than an order.

"States and territories are advised to review" the Trump administration's recommendations on "immunization requirements for contexts such as school enrollment and attendance," the order states.

In another section, it says the U.S. Health and Human Services department will form a task force to offer the MMR shot as individual vaccines "by working with

the private sector and other countries as appropriate, while guaranteeing continued availability of combination vaccines and those vaccines recommended for shared clinical decision-making."

Years of scientific evidence supports the safety of a combined MMR vaccine. Public health experts have long advised that the combined shot offers children more protection faster, and also decreases the logistical hurdles for parents who may struggle to make multiple appointments.

Yet during the Oval Office signing, Trump made a series of incendiary and unsupported statements, including: "Together, there could be a possibility they are quite lethal."

In a call with reporters, Andrew Racine, president of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), estimated it would take more than a decade to develop approved separated vaccines in the U.S..

"We're advising that you continue to give children a vaccine that has decades of safety data," added Aaron M. Milstone, member of the AAP Committee on Infectious Diseases.

- Worst measles outbreak in decades -

The Trump administration's push to overhaul vaccine policy comes as its efforts to implement major changes were blocked by a federal court earlier this year, pending further litigation.

The judge's stay preventing the overhaul sided with major medical organizations, which asserted that the Trump administration's actions were unlawful.

The president's latest order also arrives just as children across the country are readying to return to school, and as the U.S. suffers its worst measles outbreak in 35 years.

Trump's health secretary Kennedy is accused of contributing significantly to the crisis by spreading anti-vaccine sentiment and fueling fears of well-studied and proven immunizations. Polling indicates that most Americans still support vaccination, and in recent months both Kennedy and Trump had backed off anti-vaccination rhetoric which could spell negative repercussions in November's midterm vote.

But Monday's efforts show the issue remains a core component of their health policy agenda, as both men remain committed to the false notion that vaccines can cause autism. □



U.S. Acting Attorney General Todd Blanche speaks during a news conference about the Trump administration's anti-fraud efforts at the Department of Justice headquarters in Washington, DC, on April 7, 2026.

Trump's ex-personal attorney takes over as top U.S. law enforcement officer

Washington, United States

Todd Blanche, Donald Trump's former personal lawyer, was sworn in as U.S. attorney general on Monday, taking the reins of a Justice Department the president has repeatedly pressured to exact revenge on his political foes.

White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt posted video on X of Blanche's swearing-in ceremony, which was held in the Oval Office with Trump in attendance. "Congratulations to a great lawyer and an even better man!" Leavitt said.

The 52-year-old Blanche was confirmed as the chief U.S. law enforcement officer by the Senate last week after Republican lawmakers shrugged off Democratic concerns over politicization of the Justice Department.

He had been serving as attorney general in an acting capacity since Trump fired Pam Bondi in April, in part for failing to successfully prosecute several of Trump's political enemies.

Bondi notably failed to bring cases to trial against former FBI chief James Comey, an outspoken Trump critic, and New York Attorney General Letitia James.

Since replacing Bondi, Blanche has been closely tied to what Democrats have dubbed a Trump "retribution" campaign against the 80-year-old president's opponents, securing, for example, a new indictment of Comey for allegedly threatening Trump's life in an Instagram post.

Blanche won Senate confirmation by 50 votes to 49 after the White House persuaded a handful of Republican holdouts to join the "yes" column.

The main sticking point was an attempt to establish a \$1.8 billion fund for what Trump calls victims of political prosecutions, likely including the rioters who stormed the U.S. Capitol on January 6, 2021, to prevent Democrat Joe Biden from being certified as president.

The other main issue was an extraordinary move granting immunity to Trump from tax audits.

Blanche ultimately defused the internal party opposition with a written order scrapping the so-called "anti-weaponization fund" and saying the audit immunity agreement with Trump, his two eldest sons and the Trump Organization would only apply "retroactively" to the past tax years and not future filings.

Blanche has also come in for criticism from victims of Jeffrey Epstein over the handling of the release of investigative files about the convicted sex offender, a one-time close friend of Trump. □

Tupac Shakur murder trial begins 30 years after rapper's death

Los Angeles, United States

The trial of a former gang leader accused of orchestrating the murder of rapper Tupac Shakur finally began on Monday, 30 years after one of America's most high-profile unresolved killings.

The proceedings, expected to last a month, will likely not make clear who fired the shots that killed the California hip-hop legend on the night of September 7, 1996, while he was in Las Vegas to see a Mike Tyson boxing match.

But prosecutors aim to show that the defendant, Duane "Keffe D" Davis, onetime leader of the South Side Compton Crips, ordered the killing and provided the gun used to kill Shakur in a drive-by shooting.

The trial began Monday with jury selection, a process expected to last through the week.

Davis, 63, appeared in court wearing a light-blue shirt and blue tie. He faces life in prison without parole if convicted.

The killing of Shakur, also



Duane Davis looks on during the first day of jury selection in his murder trial related to the 1996 killing of rapper Tupac Shakur at Clark County District Court's Regional Justice Center in Las Vegas, Nevada, on August 10, 2026.

known as 2Pac, is one of America's most celebrated cold cases, prompting endless debate among music fans over who did it and why.

The rapper, who died at age 25, was a key figure in a hip-hop rivalry pitting

the East Coast against the West Coast.

Known for hits like "California Love" and "All Eyez on Me," Shakur the son of a Black Panther was raised in Harlem and Baltimore, but quickly became the epitome of a California bad boy

when he signed with Los Angeles based Death Row Records.

The trial will revisit the battle between Death Row, founded by Marion "Suge" Knight, and Bad Boy Records, the East Coast label created by Sean "Diddy" Combs and starring Chris-

topher "The Notorious B.I.G." Wallace (murdered in March 1997).

Prosecutors say Death Row Records was protected by Mob Piru, a Los Angeles gang that was part of the wider Bloods alliance. Knight was affiliated with the group.

Bad Boy Records had hired the rival group South Side Compton Crips, led by Davis, as bodyguards.

After the Tyson fight at the MGM Grand casino, Knight and Shakur beat up Davis's nephew, Crips member Orlando "Baby Lane" Anderson, in retribution over an alleged assault of a Death Row employee.

Davis was out for revenge, the prosecution says.

Later that night, a white Cadillac carrying Davis, Anderson and others pulled up beside Shakur's car in Las Vegas. Shots were fired from the Cadillac, and Shakur was fatally wounded.

- Compromising memoirs -

The investigation sputtered for decades because of a lack of evidence, but the cold case was revived with the publication in 2019 of Davis's memoirs.

In that book, Davis recounted that he was in the front seat of the Cadillac and that he handed a pistol to those in the back seat. But he does not say who opened fire on Shakur. Everyone else who was in the Cadillac that night has since died.

These compromising revelations were consistent with remarks Davis had made previously to reporters. But this time, they came back to haunt him and he was arrested in September 2023.

Davis has since backtracked and pleaded not guilty.

"I'm innocent. I ain't killed nobody. Never did ever kill nobody," Davis said in March 2025 in an interview from prison with ABC News. "They don't have no evidence against me. They can't even put me in Las Vegas." □

UK radio broke rules in announcing king's death: watchdog

London, United Kingdom

A community radio station breached the rules after accidentally announcing the death of King Charles III in a May broadcast, a UK watchdog said on Monday.

Radio Caroline, a former pirate radio that now mostly plays rock music, apologized in May after airing

messages falsely announcing the monarch's death.

One of the messages had said "we have suspended our normal programs until further notice as a mark of respect following the passing of His Majesty King Charles III".

The national anthem was then played, followed by around 16 minutes of si-

lence before the regular program resumed.

The presenter apologized 30 minutes after the messages were initially triggered, Ofcom said.

The regulator, which received two complaints about the broadcast, said the "very significant inaccuracy" and the "considerable length of time" taken to acknowledge the error breached two of its rules.

One requires news reports to be accurate and impartial.

The other requires significant mistakes to be acknowledged and corrected on air promptly.

Radio Caroline told Ofcom the error occurred when a member of staff accessed sound files pre-recorded in the event of the monarch's death while carrying out maintenance on the stu-

dio computer, as the program was being streamed remotely.

The staff member played the files "out of curiosity", which stopped the stream from the presenter's remote location and broadcast the files on air.

The person then reportedly "panicked and left the premises" after realizing what had happened, according to the Ofcom statement.

Radio Caroline said the remote presenter "would not realize that they had gone 'off air' unless they were monitoring their output via an internet monitor."

The presenter, believing they were still on air, was not actively monitoring their phone and did not immediately respond to calls from people at the station who had noticed the error, the report said. □



Britain's King Charles III delivers a speech during the opening ceremony of the 23rd Commonwealth Games at the OVO Arena in Glasgow, Scotland, on July 23, 2026.

Self-taught Turkish 'linguist' keeps dead language alive



Mehmet Kusman, aged 86, who speaks Urartian language, reads a tablet engraved with Urartu language at the fortress of Cavustepe near Van, in eastern Turkey, on July 22, 2026.

Turkey

Mehmet Kusman did not spend very long at school, but he traced the ancient inscriptions chiselled into the black basalt rock and read: "Before me there was nothing. But by the power of the god Haldi I founded this city."

Kusman, 86, has dedicated his life to the fortress of Cavustepe in eastern Tur-

key, and to learning the language of the vanished kingdom of Urartu, to honour its forgotten gods and rulers.

Brisk of step and sharp of mind despite his years and the hot winds that whip the castle, he stood at the foundations of a temple dedicated to Haldi, the warrior god of gods. Kusman wore a cap bought

in Los Angeles on which he has written "USA 2009" in the cuneiform script typical of the region's ancient civilisations.

Kusman was hired as a labourer on the Cavustepe excavations after his military service in the 1960s and there encountered his first stele.

"The inscription was very beautiful," he told AFP. But

the head of the dig discouraged him from learning this "very difficult" script, which borrowed its cuneiform alphabet from Assyrian.

"His telling me 'No' hurt me," he said. "I became relentless, thinking: 'In my lifetime, I will learn it.'"

Despite a lack of formal education, Kusman began copying the inscriptions found during excavations carried out in eastern Turkey, Iran and Armenia, over which Urartu once stretched.

In three years, he said, he mastered the alphabet, but "it took me 22 years to master 650 words" of vocabulary.

- One of the last -

Academics contacted by AFP praised Kusman's enthusiasm and devotion. He has become something of a local curiosity, calling himself "one of the last seven people in Turkey to speak the Urartian language."

Erkan Konyar, professor of ancient history at Istanbul University, describes the kingdom as "one of the most powerful states of

the ancient Near East, between the 9th and 7th centuries BC."

Urartu more recent than the great Mesopotamian kingdoms of Assyria, Sumeria and Babylon brought the tribal mountain communities together under a centralised state, building cities, fortresses, irrigation networks and vast food storage facilities, Konyar said.

Despite retiring in 2005, Kusman continues to watch over Cavustepe, said Konyar, a specialist on Tushpa, the kingdom's founding capital.

"For 60 years, he has lived amid the excavations and introduced thousands of visitors to the history of Urartu."

But Konyar is careful to qualify Kusman's claims to speak the language. In fact, historians do not really know how it was pronounced, he said.

"The available inscriptions allow us to understand it up to a certain point, but we lack vocabulary and texts," he said. "Only the meaning of certain words is known with certainty. □"

Colombia declares state of emergency after quake kills 111

Pereira, Colombia

Colombia on Monday declared a state of emergency following a powerful earthquake that caused at least 111 deaths and flattened dozens of buildings, trapping more victims underneath.

The 7.4-magnitude quake struck western Colombia at 7:34 am (1234 GMT) and triggered a frantic search for survivors in several cities.

"The national government is maintaining all its capacities deployed to protect lives, assist affected communities and deliver aid to every area that needs it," President Abelardo de la Espriella stated from Bogotá.

The leader appointed just three days ago reported 111 deaths, 87 people injured and over 1,000 buildings were damaged.

The quake's epicenter was in Colombia's coastal

Choco region at a depth of 100 kilometers (60 miles). Authorities in the impoverished area reported 12 deaths.

The nearby city of Pereira was one of the worst-hit areas, with local authorities earlier announcing that at least 40 people had died in the Risaralda region of which it is the provincial capital.

The quake crumpled a tower of a beloved cathedral in the city of Manizales, an AFP journalist observed. "A great many buildings" in the city sustained damage, said administrative worker Jaime Zuluaga, 50. "Traffic is paralyzed and people don't want to go back to their homes for fear of an aftershock."

- 'Missing people' -

At least 20 buildings crumbled in Colombia's third-largest city, Cali, trapping people beneath the de-

bris, Mayor Alejandro Eder said.

Choco's governor warned of serious damage in the provincial capital Quibdó, where videos showed more buildings reduced to rubble.

"We are all devastated," Quibdó community leader Luis Gregorio Moreno told AFP.

"At this moment there are reported deaths, dozens of wounded, but what there are most of are missing people," he said.

Ecuador, Panama and Venezuela also felt the early-morning quake, which prompted building evacuations in the Colombian capital, Bogotá.

Still wearing their pajamas, crowds of people rushed out into the street upon feeling the tremor, AFP reporters saw.

"The quake was very, very

strong," said content creator Valeria Polo, 29, in the capital, where only minimal damage was recorded.

Six small airports in western Colombia suspended operations, the civil aeronautics agency said, and the soccer governing body postponed upcoming football matches.

Washington is "closely monitoring the large earthquake that struck Colombia and stands ready to support the people of Colombia," US Secretary of State Marco Rubio wrote on X.

European Union chief Ursula von der Leyen said the EU was "ready to provide more support" to the South American country. □



The damage sustained by the Manizales Cathedral are pictured after the earthquake in Manizales, Colombia, on August 10, 2026.



A drone photo of the village of Moerdijk. The national government, the province, the municipality, and the water board involved will soon discuss the expansion of the Moerdijk port and industrial area.

Energy transition threatens to wipe Dutch village from map

Moerdijk, Netherlands

Residents of Moerdijk, a small Dutch port village that survived WWII bombing and subsequent flooding, are facing a new existential challenge: the threat of being bulldozed in the name of clean energy.

Much of the 1,150-strong population has been left asking "why us? why their village?" Pim Meijer, who represents a collective covering around half the residents, told AFP.

The hamlet, dating from the Middle Ages and located in the south of the Netherlands, between the major ports of Rotterdam and Belgium's Antwerp, has been earmarked by the government for possible eradication.

The reason? To make way for a facility that would receive electricity from offshore wind farms to power the country's ports among Europe's busiest in a more sustainable way.

Residents, who have taken to hanging up protest banners on their homes declaring "Moerdijk must stay", are feeling "anger, incredulity and mistrust towards the government," Meijer said. "There are people who were born and who have grown up here some today are in their 90s," he said. Some families "have

lived in Moerdijk for three or four generations... You can't just leave all that behind you."

- 'Perfect' site-

Yet for energy engineers, the little village is "perfect" for the planned facility, explained Patrick Witte, associate professor for land planning.

"The village is situated just between the ports of Rotterdam and Antwerp, with its transport links via sea, motorway and rail facilitating the grouping together of energy, port-related and infrastructure installations," he said.

The authorities' project, called Powerport, involves developing several hundred hectares for large-scale energy infrastructure, green industry and recycling in the chemicals sector.

"This development is necessary to connect offshore wind power and alleviate grid congestion", states the Moerdijk Port website.

The local council, after enduring years of political delay at the national level, had resigned itself to seeing the village disappear. It was waiting for the next stage to be announced: financial compensation for the soon-to-be dislodged residents.

But then, a couple of

months ago, the Netherlands' new government suddenly suggested a change the project, it said, could potentially go ahead on a smaller site than originally planned, on the outskirts of the village, allowing Moerdijk to be saved.

A final decision is yet to be made. The government is still considering the issue and has not set a deadline. Meanwhile, uncertainty weighs heavily on Moerdijk's inhabitants, their lives in limbo. In the village's streets, the past rubs up against the future.

Amid several abandoned houses, a sign planted in one garden celebrates the birth of a child.

But "some residents are neglecting the upkeep of their homes after all, what's the point? Shopkeepers are no longer investing, and couples with young children are leaving before the school closes down," said Meijer.

- 'Surrounded' -

The option currently being considered would preserve the village but at what cost?

"With energy transition facilities on one side, the port on another and the motorway on a third, residents would find themselves completely surrounded," says Witte, the professor. □



German Interior Minister Alexander Dobrindt addresses a press conference on August 5, 2026 at the German airport Leipzig-Halle in Schkeuditz, eastern Germany, after an explosives-laden drone was found near a Ukrainian cargo plane.

Germany boosts police anti-drone unit after airport incident

Berlin, Germany

Germany will beef up its anti-drone police unit, the government said Monday, days after an explosives-laden unmanned aerial vehicle was flown into a strategically important airport.

Berlin was shocked by the incident last week when the UAV was defused after it was found near a Ukrainian cargo plane at Leipzig-Halle airport, a key military equipment transport hub.

Interior Minister Alexander Dobrindt, who labelled the incident a "hybrid attack scenario" potentially involving a "foreign power", now plans to double personnel in the federal police anti-drone unit to 300.

The number of operational bases for the unit will rise from four to eight, a ministry spokeswoman added at a press conference.

She also said that Dobrindt would next week formally open a new drone technology research centre, attached to the German Aerospace Center.

According to news weekly Die Zeit, the drone at Leipzig airport bounced off one wing of the Antonov plane hours before it was discovered by an airport employee around midnight.

The reason the explosives failed to detonate remained unclear, said the unconfirmed report that cited security camera footage.

The airport in eastern Germany plays a key role in the transport of military goods by the German armed forces and NATO allies. It also serves as a base for Ukraine's Antonov Airlines.

Germany and other European countries have repeatedly observed UAVs flying over sensitive sites such as airports, military bases and industrial plants.

Authorities in Germany, one of Ukraine's biggest military supporters, have said they suspect Russia of orchestrating many of the incidents as part of a campaign of sabotage, espionage and disinformation.

Russia has denied being behind any such incidents. Russia's embassy last week dismissed the Leipzig incident as a "hastily contrived provocation" that "serves only the interests of Kyiv and the militarist wing of the European political establishment".

Also on Monday, Die Zeit and the Bild daily said investigators had found traces of DNA on the drone discovered at Leipzig airport.

Die Zeit reported that the DNA in question had previously been registered in Lithuania but gave no further details. □

Explore Aruba!

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

Arikok National Park

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



The Lourdes Grotto

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

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

Natural Bridge

One of Aruba's favorite tourist attractions is the Natural Bridge. For thousands of years, pounding waves and strong winds have slowly chiseled away the limestone cliffs along Aruba's north coast to create several natural bridges. The largest of these bridges used to be the famous Natural Bridge. The bridge

was a formation of coral limestone cut out by years of pounding surf, and was one of the largest of these types of spans in the world. It stood some 23 feet (7 meters) above sea level and spans more than 100 feet (30 meters). Unfortunately the bridge collapsed on September 2, 2005. Despite this, it is still the most photographed natural bridge and it remains a popular tourist attraction in Aruba, with the adjacent and intact Baby Bridge also meriting a visit. The Natural Bridge is the perfect stop while touring Aruba. There is no admission fee or set hours for visiting. Quench your thirst with refreshing beverages & refuel your tank with local snacks.



Need a ride down town? Now you can check taxi rates from you phone!

(Oranjestad)—If you were planning on taking a trip downtown but want to check how much a taxi ride costs, do we have great news for you. Now you can plan your trip ahead on taxi.aw. With just a few clicks, you'll know exactly how much it costs to take you to your destination.

Although an official fare list already existed, the previous version was very outdated and created confusion among both drivers and customers. The lack of updates and easy access to the official fares contributed to situations where some taxi drivers charged arbitrary or excessive prices, particularly in tourist areas.

The fare is calculated based on the distance and number of kilometers

between different locations on the island. The digital system allows customers to use the same calculation to determine the official fare that the taxi driver must charge during a trip.

The website also incorporates different surcharges that officially form part of Aruba's taxi system. The system provides a range of different locations and zones to select. Be mindful that there are also conditions that apply to the rate of your trip, all of which are explicitly explained on the website's home page.

With an easy interface that's accessible to everyone, taxi.aw can make planning a trip easier, secure and reliable. □





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Po-Ké Ono Brings Bold Asian Fusion to Aruba's Dining Scene

Innovative eatery blends island culture with modern Asian cuisine



Oranjestad, Aruba – In a culinary landscape known for its diversity and creativity, **Po-Ké Ono** stands out as a vibrant and contemporary addition to Aruba's restaurant scene. With locations at Azure in Palm Beach and the Renaissance Marketplace in Oranjestad, the concept introduces a refreshing take on Asian fusion dining—casual in style, yet refined in execution.

Established in 2020, Po-Ké Ono was envisioned as a space where flavor, culture, and creativity intersect. The menu features an array of signature dishes including poke bowls, steamed bao, and sushi, crafted with precision and a focus on freshness. Drawing on Asian influences, the restaurant delivers bold flavors in an approachable format, appealing to a broad audience of locals and visitors alike.

The ambiance is designed to be welcoming and relaxed, with a philosophy centered

around accessibility and enjoyment. Whether dining indoors or grabbing a quick bowl on the go, guests can expect a consistently high standard in both service and cuisine. With extensive menu options, including selections for vegan diners, Po-Ké Ono caters to a wide range of tastes and dietary preferences.

While the concept leans into fast-casual dining, the quality of ingredients and thoughtful



preparation reflect fine-dining roots. Many of the restaurant's core ingredients are sourced locally, emphasizing sustainability and support for Aruba's agricultural community. The result is a dining experience that honors both the island's spirit and the culinary traditions it draws inspiration from. Open daily from 11:00 AM to 10:00 PM, Po-Ké Ono continues to gain recognition as one of the island's premier destinations for sushi, poke, and bao. Its growing popularity is a

testament to Aruba's evolving food culture—one that embraces global influence while staying rooted in community and craft.

For those seeking a modern taste of Asia in the heart of the Caribbean, Po-Ké Ono offers a flavorful and memorable experience worth exploring. □



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. □

Help FUDA with a last wishambulance for Aruba!



Donation: CMB#65550908



All beneficiary will receive a Teddy Bear!



Casago Aruba: Redefining Island Stays with Full-Service Property Management



Casago Aruba was born from a shared passion for elevating the island's tourism experience. Built on a strong foundation of service, hospitality, and a keen eye for quality, the Casago team—backed by over 16 years of experience in the vacation rental and hospitality industry—is on a mission to redefine what luxury and convenience look like for travelers visiting Aruba.

But Casago is more than just a vacation rental platform. It is a **full-service property management company**, offering seamless experiences



for both guests and homeowners alike. While travelers benefit from handpicked accommodations and personalized service, homeowners gain a reliable partner dedicated to the care and performance of their property.

A Stay Tailored to You

Casago Aruba offers more than just stylish villas. Their curated portfolio includes a **wide variety of condos, homes, and villas** in different sizes to suit all types of travelers—from solo adventurers and couples to large families and groups. Every stay is backed by local expertise, with concierge support, 24/7 guest assistance, and an attention to detail that consistently exceeds expectations.

Whether you're here to relax on world-famous beaches, explore Aruba's cultural gems, or discover hidden corners of the island, Casago Aruba ensures your getaway is as smooth as it is memorable.

A Partner for Homeowners

Behind the scenes, Casago offers a robust suite of property management services designed to help homeowners

maximize rental income while minimizing stress. Services include:

- **Promotion** through Casago's professional booking platform and expert local marketing strategies
- **Complete management** of check-ins, guest communication, cleanings, landscaping, pool maintenance, and repairs
- **Transparent maintenance** reporting, real-time reservation tracking, and on-site security monitoring
- **Full handling** of tax filings for both local and state re-

quirements

- **Monthly property inspections** and full utility bill management
- **Strategic planning** to help homeowners increase profitability and keep their properties in top condition

This full-service model ensures that every home is maintained to the highest standard while giving property owners full peace of mind.

Rooted in Community and Sustainability

What truly sets Casago Aruba apart is their commitment to the local community and to sustainable practices. The team works closely with local businesses and artisans, promotes eco-conscious travel, and supports initiatives that contribute positively to the island's environment and economy.

As one of the fastest-growing vacation rental and property management companies on the island, Casago Aruba continues to expand its footprint—welcoming more travelers, partnering with more homeowners, and raising the standard of hospitality in Aruba. □



Ever heard of the cah'i orgel? A key instrument in Aruban folklore music

(Oranjestad)—The **cah'i orgel music box is an important and unique instrument that is used on the ABC islands in the Dutch Caribbean. This instrument is a staple in our folklore music, and its significance in the traditions of Aruba has and continues to bring together the old and young.**

The origin of the cah'i orgel is said to have come from Europe around 150 years ago. A cross breed between the barrel piano and the organ, the most popular stories said that the instrument

came from either England or Germany, but made its way to Italy down to Venezuela, where in 1881, Mr. Horatio Sprock (1866-1949) from Curacao was first introduced to it. After that, Sprock made his own cah'i orgel "Josefina", and successfully debuted it on the streets of Barquisimeto. Back in Curacao, he started his own cah'i orgel business along with his brother Luis. In Aruba, it is said that the cah'i orgel was introduced by Rufo Wever, who later in his career became one of the composers for the Aru-

ban national anthem.

Rufo Wever was a young musician in 1937 when he established his own cah'i orgel business on the island. Before that he experimented with his uncle's cah'i orgel, and he over the years he learned to build and repair the instrument. In fact, he was incredibly skilled in this, and he was one of the few to have recognized from the start that the cah'i orgel is an instrument that needs preserving.

As mentioned, the cah'i or-

gel is a music box. Made from mahogany wood, it contains a cylinder with a maximum of eight music pieces. By rotating the lever on the front side of the box, the cah'i orgel produces music similar to that of a piano, and is accompanied often by someone else playing the "wiri", a percussion instrument made out of steel and reminiscent to the Spanish guiro. Back then, you would often also find someone playing the triangle alongside the cah'i orgel and wiri. In Aruba, the cah'i orgel and wiri is used for traditional music genres,



such as the Aruban waltz, tumba, mazurka and more.

Fun fact: another name for the cah'i orgel is the "tingilingi box." □

Source: "E Cilinder Magico entre Aruba y Curaçao" by Marilyn Alcalá-Wallé, Herta Parabirsing-Balentina and Nidia Rosaria-Wallé.

Unique fauna of Aruba

For a small island, Aruba sure has a lot of unique treasures. Among these, we have some subspecies of animals that are unique to our island. These have evolved to perfectly adapt to our desert climate and make Aruba their home. At the same time, they are part of what makes Aruba truly one of a kind.

Cascabel (rattlesnake, *Crotalus durissus unicolor*)

According to the Arikok National Park, Aruba knows two kinds of snakes, the Santanero and the Cascabel. The cascabel belongs to the rattlesnake family. The cascabel is the only venomous snake from Aruba. It has a length of 65cm to 100cm, and is about 4 to 5cm wide. Its color varies from light brown to grey-brown, and its underbelly is white. On its back there are marks that are a little darker, in the shape of diamonds.

Its reproduction is oviparous, meaning the offspring can hatch from their eggs just before, during or immediately after laying.

The cascabel lives mainly in the Arikok National Park. It likes to live in dark places, and is thus found hidden among the limestone rocks and under stones. As a defense mechanism, the cascabel uses its rattle as a warning, and it is not an aggressive animal.

The cascabel feeds on lizards, small mammals such as rats and mice. It paralyzes or kills its prey with its venom, which is injected through a bite. The enemies of the cascabel are donkeys, goats, humans and cars. Humans are the biggest enemy of the cascabel, as they kill them and destroy their habitat for urbanization.

Shoco (burrowing owl, *Athene cucularia arubensis*)

The shoco is a small bird which is seldom seen. They are active during the day but are more ac-

tive later in the day and at night for hunting. These owls have very good night vision and very good hearing. The shoco is the national symbol of Aruba.

The shoco has about 20cm of length, and the females are slightly heavier than the males. They are light brown in color, with many white spots. The belly of the shoco is either white or light brown, and the shoco has striking yellow eyes. Its beak is yellow/green. Young owls do not have white spots and are lighter in color.

The nest of the shoco is a burrow in the ground. If the shoco cannot find a burrow, it will dig one in soft soil. The shoco lays one or two eggs every other day until all the eggs are laid – a shoco can lay up to four eggs. The first owlets hatch after three to four weeks. The shoco owl takes care of the owlets for three months until they leave the nest. Only a few owlets survive.

The owls dig burrows in the ground with low grass vegetation. An owl can live up to nine years.

Its defense mechanism is simply to fly away or retreat to its burrows. They eat mostly insects, mice and lizards, and the main threats to their survival are boas – an invasive species introduced by humans as pets – and humans through destruction of their habitat.

Prikichi (parakeet, *Aratinga pertinax*)

The Prikichi is the national bird of Aruba. On Aruba, Bonaire, and Curaçao, parakeets can be found, but each of the three islands has a different breed. The Yellow-shouldered Amazon parakeet that we have on Aruba is also found along the coast of Venezuela. Unfortunately, there is interbreeding between the breeds due to cage birds from, for example, Curaçao being released on Aruba. The par-



akeet population on Aruba is in danger due to extensive deforestation occurring on the island because of the growing population.

The prikichi weighs between 90 to 100 grams. It has a greenish-brown head with some yellow around the eye. The back and wings of the parakeet are dark green, and the underside of the body is a lighter shade of green. There is also a bit of blue in the wings. The parakeet's beak is gray/black.

Parakeets often use termite nests as breeding sites. Parakeets are found in all natural environments (mondi) of the island. It defends itself by flying away and loud cries. Parakeets eat seeds from the pods of the Kwihi tree, Divi Divi, and columnar cactus. They also consume natural fruits. Its main predators are boa constrictors, humans.

Coneu (cottontail rabbit, *Sylvilagus floridanus nigronuchalis*)

The Eastern Cottontail rabbit (*Sylvilagus floridanus*) was probably brought over to the island by Indian settlers thousands of years ago as a source of food. This rabbit, locally known as Coneu, has spread all over the island and has become part of our ecosystem. The very adaptable Coneu can live in a wide variety of habitats, including Aruba's xeric scrublands, where it typically grazes on weeds and grasses.

The Aruban Coneu has a brownish

grey color and a distinctive white belly. This white fur extends to the bottom of the tail which becomes visible as the rabbit runs. These rabbits can grow up to approximately 40 centimeters in length over their short lifespan of 3 years. Cottontail rabbits reach reproductive maturity when they are just 2 to 3 months old. A female rabbit, called a doe, finds a suitable nest spot under a shrub or rocks and lines it with fur. She can have an average of 3 to 4 litters per year averaging 5 young each. The doe only visits her young once or twice a day to nurse her babies for a period of 2 to 3 weeks. The young reach independence at 4 to 5 weeks.

The Aruban Coneu is an endangered species and protected by Aruban law. The Coneu is thought to have drastically declined due to an increase in human activities, habitat fragmentation and predation by the invasive Boa constrictor as well as feral cats and dogs. However, recently there seem to be more rabbit sightings in rural and wilderness areas and also in the National Park. This could be linked to a recent decline of the invasive Boa population after the long period of drought. As the Coneu can reproduce very quickly, a short break in predation pressure can lead to a fast increase of rabbits.

These are but a few of Aruba's beautiful inhabitant, which we must all contribute to protect. □



Aruban legends: Frenchman's Pass

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

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



roaming the area of Spanish Lagoon.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Source: visitaruba.com

Food culture in Aruba

(Oranjestad) – Like many other cultures, an important aspect of the Aruban cultural identity is our connection to food and food traditions. The local food traditions consist of a melting pot of different cultural and religious eating habits and dishes.

Breakfast, lunch and dinner

The routine of breakfast, lunch and dinner on the island is one that does not completely follow a European or American routine, despite the major influences from these parts of the world on our culture and way of living. When it comes to the three important meals of the day, most of the Aruban population follows a Latin-American influenced routine.

Breakfast

Breakfast in Aruba is quite simple: a cup of coffee or tea, some bread, and sometimes an egg. Sometimes, due to the need of a quick "to-go" breakfast, you may also find many snack trucks and cafes that sell sandwiches, pastechis (meat pie), arepas and empanadas early in the morning.

Main Meal

The main meal is typically eaten in most households around noon or in the afternoon. This can consist of meat, fish, and chicken—stewed or fried—with funchi (polenta) or rice with stewed vegetables. Often, fried or boiled plantain or pan bati (Aruban pancake) is included. Stews

are a staple in Aruban cuisine and can be largely influenced by Latin-American and Latin/Afro-Caribbean Stews. Some of the more unique stews and soups from the ABC Islands* include sopi bonch'i rabo (red kidney bean soup with pig tail), sopi mondongo (tripe soup), carni stoba (beef stew), comcomber stoba (West Indian gherkin stew) and much more.

Dinner Time

Dinner time can vary significantly from household to household. Unlike the U.S. or in Europe, dinner time typically does not consist of a whole (warm) meal. Instead, the evening "meal" can typically consist of something lighter, like a sandwich, though it is not uncommon to see leftovers from the main meal reheated and eaten again. Tea and coffee are often also served with the evening snack.

(Religious) Holidays

Christmas is probably the biggest global holiday, and every culture has its own spin on what their Christmas cuisine entails. In Aruba, our Christmas cuisine is again largely based on Latin-American influences, most notably from Venezuela. Ayacas and the famous pan di ham* are two crucial holiday dishes, along with stuffed turkey, roasted glazed ham topped with pineapples, arroz con pollo (rice and chicken) and potato salad, among other items. Traditional drinks include ponche crema (Aruban eggnog), chuculati pinda (hot chocolate with

peanut butter), and homemade fruit punch. Desserts include bolo di pistachio (pistachio cake), bolo di cashupete (cashew cake), quesillo (flan), bolo preto (fruit cake), drigidek (gingerbread), pan boyo (bread cake) and more.

Snacks and tasty delights

Besides meals and dishes that are eaten on the dinner table, Aruba also has a food tradition that includes snacks and other tasty delights that you may easily find around the island. These include, Saco*, baskets, pastechi, kroket, deditos, Johnny cake and more. These snacks are usually sold at local snack trucks and cafes, often located on the side of the road. In the area of Tanki Leendert and Tanki flip, for example, there are many of these trucks parked on the side of the road and often open until late at night—offering tasty and filling snacks post night-life fun.

*ABC Islands: Aruba, Bonaire and Curacao

*Pan di ham: Derived from the Venezuelan Pan de Jamon (rolled up bread with ham, raisins and olives)

*Saco: Saco literally means "bag". Saco contains fried potatoes, plantains, chicken (and ribs) and a Johnny cake, served in a paper bag.

Source: Voeding, voedingsgewoonten en gerechten op Aruba (Nutrition, Food Traditions and Dishes on Aruba) by Biblioteca Nacional Aruba □

CROSSWORD

By **THOMAS JOSEPH**

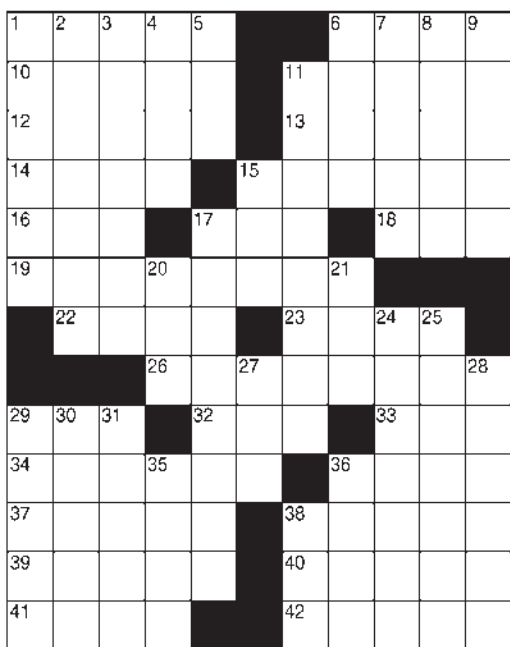
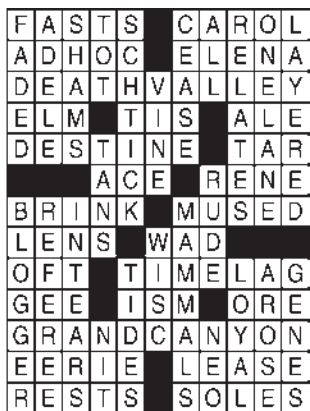
ACROSS

- 1 Lowly females
workers
6 Fortitude material
10 Dance parties
11 Ecru
12 Put up lawyer's
13 Trig topic major
14 Brown songbird
15 Big snake
16 Do something
17 Treasury Dept. div.
18 Gift from Santa
19 Knick-knack shelves
22 Way out
23 Mystique
26 Some online helpers
29 Frilly wrap
32 Ram's mate
33 Porch sight
34 Square
36 Ring of light
37 Clean with effort
38 Talk at length
39 Indian dish
40 Get up

- 41 Farm
42 Pane material

DOWN

- 1 Would-be lawyer's major
2 Otologist's case
3 Strain
4 Bottle part
5 Fast plane
6 Polite fellow
7 Proper
8 Dome-shaped home
9 Minute tool
11 Massa-chusetts
15 Old hand
17 On paper
20 Quirk
21 Deli order
24 Hungary neighbor
25 Be-wildered
27 Cobbling
28 Go pieces
29 Name on the Cardinals' stadium
30 Promptly
31 Squirrel's find
35 For us
36 Fling
38 Scandal sheet



4-19

A XYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

4-19 CRYPTOQUOTE

PQIJP KG PMTP TJ L LFCBQG
TNN NTA PB MGNH PMG JNTZG,
JB ALNN L LFCBQG LP TNN PB
HQBGRP TC GCJNTZGX ABKTC.

— JIJTC V. TCPMBCW
Cryptoquote: THERE ARE YEARS
THAT ASK QUESTIONS AND YEARS THAT
ANSWER. — ZORA NEALE HURSTON

Helpful tips for your stay on Aruba

(Oranjestad)—When traveling to another country, especially for the first time, it is always better to be over-prepared than under-prepared. That is why we have a list of basic—but important—information that we think may come in handy to Aruba's visitors.

Electrical power

Aruba generally operates on 110V to 127V supply voltage and 60Hz. There are also three types of outlets used on the island: type A with two flat prongs; type B with two flat and one grounding prong, and on occasion, type F with two round prong and two earth clips on the side. However, Type A is most commonly found in homes and establishments.

Drinking water



The water that flows through the sinks of every house, hotels and other establishments is distilled and perfectly safe to drink. Aruba's drinking water exceeds WHO's international standards for water quality, so there is no need to buy bottled water from the store.



Supermarket hours

Supermarket hours may vary depending on where you are staying on the island. Generally though, most supermarkets are open from 8am to 9 or 10pm, Monday through

Saturday. On Sundays, supermarkets generally close earlier; mostly around 2pm.

Safety

Since February 2024, Aruba has been categorized as the safest country in the Caribbean by The Telegraph, and many tourist that visit have often told us how they feel safe to explore the island or walk around at night. However, rare incidents do occurs, so keep yourself and your belongings safe.

CRUISE SHIP	
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

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

Difficulty: ★★

8/11

Answer to previous puzzle

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

Difficulty: ★

8/10

U.S. had hottest month on record in July



A man wipes himself off as people cope with extreme heat along the National Mall in Washington, DC, on July 3, 2026, as high temperatures grip the US capital ahead of Independence Day celebrations.

Washington, United States

July 2026 marked the hottest month on record for the contiguous United States, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration said Monday, continuing a recent trend driven by human-caused climate change.

The average temperature for the month in the 48 states, excluding Alaska, Hawaii and overseas territories, was 76.9F (24.9C), making it the warmest July and the warmest month of any kind in the agency's 132-year record.

That was 3.3F above the 20th-century average and breaks the previous record for the hottest month, July 1936, which was 76.8F.

Above-average temperatures were observed across the interior West, Southwest, Rockies, northern Plains and Upper Midwest, as well as parts of the Gulf Coast and Southeast. Wyoming saw its warmest July and warmest month on record, with temperatures 5.1F above average and 0.9F warmer than its previous July record, in 2007.

The other top five warmest months on record nationally are July 2012, July 2006 and July 2022, with human-caused climate change, due mainly to the burning of fossil fuels, looming large over the trend.

The so-called "Dust Bowl summers" of the 1930s especially that of 1936 were

fueled by drought and extreme heat combining with overplowing across the Great Plains, with the hot, exposed land influencing temperatures across North America and beyond into Europe and East Asia, according to research on the subject.

- Climate change fingerprint -

July 2026 began with a heat wave gripping much of the densely populated eastern United States. Scientists from the World Weather Attribution group released an analysis showing the hot and humid conditions that characterized that hot spell which fell as the country celebrated

its 250th anniversary and hosted the soccer World Cup's later stages would have been "virtually impossible" without human-caused climate change.

The naturally occurring El Nino climate pattern, which began in June and is expected to peak later this year, is also thought to have influenced a weeks-long heat dome in north-western states that occurred in July.

Record-warm sea surface temperatures in the central Pacific shifted where tropical storms form and release energy, which in turn distorted the jet stream over the western US

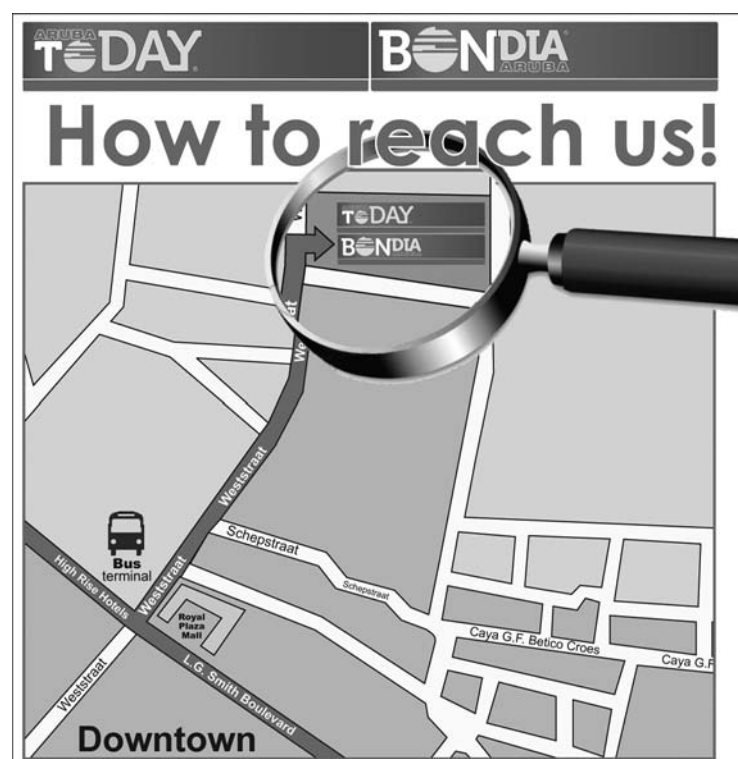
and allowed hot air to get trapped in place.

Hot and windy conditions meanwhile brought elevated wildfire conditions, with much of the western United States already experiencing abnormally dry to drought conditions across multiple years.

- El Nino's impacts -

Regions home to around 900 million people experienced their hottest July on record in 2026, including the Sahel, Central America, France and Spain, according to an AFP analysis of European Union Copernicus data, which combines observations from satellites and weather stations around the world, together with climate modeling.

The strengthening El Nino could shatter all-time records, "adding fuel to a planet already on fire" and pushing the world into "uncharted territory," UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres warned recently. □



HEALTH



DOCTOR ON DUTY

Oranjestad Hospital
7:00 pm/10:00pm
Tel. 527 4000

San Nicolas IMSAN
24 HOURS
Tel. 524 8833

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
Fire Dept. 115
Red Cross 582 2219

TAXI SERVICES

Taxi Tas 587 5900
Prof. Taxi 588 0035
Taxi D.T.S. 587 2300
Taxi Serv. Aruba 583 3232
A1 Taxi Serv. 280 2828

AID FOUNDATIONS

Aruba Food Bank
Tel. 588 0002
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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Chinese AI drives price competition among U.S. labs

Beijing, China

Artificial intelligence users are shopping around as U.S. giants face fierce competition from Chinese rivals and in Beijing's tech district, drinkers at an AI-themed bar can even plug in to DeepSeek for free.

A new generation of cost-efficient, high-performance Chinese AI is putting pressure on Silicon Valley's leading labs to lower prices to grab market share as they try and find ways to turn a profit.

ChatGPT maker OpenAI has slashed fees by 80 percent for its latest lightweight model "Luna", and Anthropic has unveiled a model approaching its most powerful system's performance at half the price. Meanwhile some of China's buzziest AI companies are raising fees as their open-source offerings gain traction among businesses and programmers worldwide. DeepSeek whose V4 Flash tops the usage leaderboard of technical platform OpenRouter said last week it plans a "significant increase" in prices for pro-



A customer uses his phone in front of a board with the menu at AGI Bar in Beijing's in Zhongguancun district on August 9, 2026.

grammers.

Thirsty Beijingers have another option: free AI for customers at AGI Bar, which opened last summer as a hub for developers, founders and investors.

The bar is decorated with references to China's AI boom, with logos of the country's major labs on the walls and the menu full of

jokes riffing on tech jargon. Its signature drink AGI "Artificial General Intelligence", meaning future AI tools as clever as humans is a glass almost entirely full of beer foam, a nod to the frothy hype rife in the industry.

"It's quite common for bars to provide free Wi-Fi with routers, so I'll provide free tokens," or units of AI us-

age, bar owner Song De told AFP.

- Challengers -

The bar in Zhongguancun, often called China's Silicon Valley, has two boxy Nvidia workstations to self-host DeepSeek V4 Flash meaning Song doesn't need to pay the Chinese startup to use its model.

Large language models are the technology that underpins chatbots and other AI tools by crunching vast amounts of digital data.

Song, an independent AI developer himself, is one of many swapping the most cutting-edge, bells-and-whistles and expensive models, like Anthropic's Fable 5, for leaner alternatives like V4 Flash.

These are much cheaper to run and good enough for many purposes, such as helping run AI agents that can carry out real-world tasks autonomously, experts say. "There's a lot of stuff that can be done with older models, or lesser models, or small language models," said technology analyst Jack Gold, founder of J.Gold Associates.

"Especially as we move into the agentic world, a lot of the models will be running locally."

New Chinese AI models big and small from Moonshot AI's Kimi K3 to Alibaba's popular Qwen series are grabbing attention as challengers to Anthropic and OpenAI's lead.

Both US companies are preparing to go public, which means they "need to start showing a profit", Gold told AFP.

"I hesitate to say it's a price war because we're not quite there yet. But it's certainly a price competition to try and get more users on board," Gold said.

"Also there's a lot of pressure from enterprises to say: agents are great, AI is great, but I can't be spending twice the annual salary for (a given employee) on AI."

- 'The cheaper, the better' -

Chinese AI models are often open-source, meaning they can be modified by programmers unlike top US options, where the underlying code and data is locked away. "Open-source is closing the performance gap with closed models faster than anyone expected," said Wang Tiezhen, an independent AI consultant and former head of APAC ecosystem at developer platform HuggingFace.□

Meta releases new AI model as Zuckerberg lays out vision

Washington, United States

Meta Chief Executive Mark Zuckerberg called Monday for lower barriers for open source AI, as his company introduced a new model that can run on a personal computer.

The launch comes amid debate in the United States on whether access

to the technology should be more restricted, and on local pushback against the buildout of data centers that power it.

This was accompanied by a long essay on the Meta website outlining Zuckerberg's vision for artificial intelligence in which he stressed the need to remain competitive against

countries like China, among other issues.

Competitors OpenAI and Anthropic largely focus on closed AI models.

Zuckerberg said in an Instagram video Monday that his company would open the weights for its latest AI model, enabling it to be downloaded by the public. Weights refer to calculations or rules governing how an AI system behaves. He said Meta would also release a new class of open source models, designed to run on a laptop.

"Rather than centralizing superintelligence, we should distribute it widely and give every person the ability to direct it," Zuckerberg said in his essay.

He took aim at other labs that are "focused on building AI for companies, governments or other institutions," arguing that this

would tip the balance of power in favor of institutions instead of individuals. Facing pressure over the novelty of their capabilities, US President Donald Trump signed an executive order in June setting up a voluntary federal review of national security risks in advanced AI models before their release.

Zuckerberg added that foreign labs hold advantages over US ones that have to comply with restrictions on training data.

"I do not believe restricting access to foreign open source models is an effective solution," he said.

"Our goal should be for American open source models to be the best globally. This requires removing the hurdles that make it harder for American open source models to compete," he said.□



CEO of Meta Platforms Mark Zuckerberg attends the Allen & Company Sun Valley Conference at the Sun Valley Lodge on July 9, 2026 in Sun Valley, Idaho.

Tentoglou keep bid for fourth Euro title on course, Nowicki misses out

Birmingham, United Kingdom

Greek long jumper Miltiadis Tentoglou kept his bid for a fourth European title on track at the opening day of the 2026 championships in Birmingham on Monday. Double Olympic champion Tentoglou sailed into the final of the men's long jump with an effort of 8.26 metres at the Alexander Stadium that secured automatic qualification.

"Tomorrow I want to jump 8.50m, 8.60m and win," said the 28-year-old Greek. "I'm good, so I should be able to. I have defended so many titles, so I don't feel the pressure, I feel excited."

Italian Francesco Ettore Inzoli, with a wind-assisted 8.34m, and Serbian Luka Boskovic (8.33) led the way into Tuesday's final.

The world outdoor and indoor champion from 2025, Italy's Mattia Furlani, missed out on qualification with one effort of 7.73m on his comeback from injury.

Like Tentoglou, Poland's



Greece's Miltiadis Tentoglou competes in the men's long jump qualifier during the European Athletics Championships at Alexander Stadium in Birmingham on August 10, 2026.

Wojciech Nowicki is also a serial European gold medallist, having won the last three men's hammer throw titles, in Berlin in 2018, Munich in 2022 and Rome two years ago.

But Nowicki, Olympic champion in Tokyo in 2021 and who also has five world medals to his name (two silver, three bronze), missed

out on qualification for Tuesday's final.

He managed a best of 74.49m, which saw him finish 13th, 73cm off the 12th and final qualifier spot.

Nowicki's teammate Pawel Fajdek, the five-time world gold medallist who also won an European title in 2016, will ensure Polish inter-

est in an event the country has dominated in recent times.

Czech Volodymyr Myslyvcuk (79.61m) and Hungary's Bence Halasz (79.58) led the qualifiers, the only two athletes comfortably beyond the automatic qualification standard of 78.00m.

The Netherlands' Jessica Schilder looked comfortable in qualifying for the women's shot put, the final of which will be held later Monday.

The two-time defending champion comes to Birmingham in fine form, having made history at the Shanghai Diamond League when she threw 21.09m to not only break the Diamond League record, but also became just the third woman in the world to break 21 metres since the turn of the millennium.

Schilder, seeking to become just the second woman to win the event three or more times, will face stiff competition from Germany's Yemisi Mabry, formerly Ogunleye.

Olympic champion Mabry topped qualifying with a best of 19.25m, while Schilder progressed with a first-round effort of 19.00m.

"I'm really not a huge fan of qualifying sessions in the morning if I'm completely honest. I really don't like it," said Schilder. □

Brennan captures Wyndham crown for second PGA win

Washington, United States

Michael Brennan fired a six-under par 64 to win the Wyndham Championship on Sunday, taking his second PGA Tour title in the final regular-season event before the FedEx Cup playoffs.

The 24-year-old American closed with a 13-foot birdie putt at the 18th hole to finish on 22-under 258 and defeat compatriot Beau Hossler by three strokes. Brennan, whose other PGA title came last October at the Bank of Utah Championship on a sponsor's exemption, took home \$1.53 million from the \$8.5 million purse on offer at Sedgefield Country Club in Greensboro, North Carolina.

Brennan reeled off five birdies in a row Sunday to seize command, a run that began with an eight-foot birdie putt at the fourth

hole and included a birdie at the par-three seventh where he missed an ace by six inches.

He made bogey at 11 after a tee shot into the right rough but sank a testy five-foot par putt at the par-three 12th and answered with an eight-foot birdie putt at 13.

"I did it great for nine holes," Brennan said. "I felt really good on the front nine, just playing my game. I was really staying within myself, hitting good shots. I felt like I was really in control."

"Got a little nervous around 10, 11. I made a nice par putt on 12 and that steadied me a little bit going through and just glad to make a few putts coming in."

Hossler birdied 16 and 17 to pull within two shots on the final tee, setting the stage for Brennan's clinching

birdie.

- 'Running on fumes' -

Brennan began the week 105th in the season points rankings with only the top 70 after this week advancing to the playoffs. The victory lifted Brennan to 47th in the points and a berth in the postseason showdown.

"I don't want to be done playing golf," Brennan said. "I feel like I played the best golf I have all year the last couple weeks. This is my sixth week in a row. Seven is a lot but I think I'm going to be perfectly happy running on fumes next week." The playoff field will be trimmed from 70 to 50 players after next week's event in Memphis.

Hossler shot 67 to take second by one stroke over fellow American Ben James, who had a closing 61. Hossler jumped 50 places in the points race but missed out

on the playoffs, finishing 72nd.

"Disappointed but very proud of how I fought on the back nine, particularly at the end," Hossler said. "Stings a little bit but very proud of my commitment. Pretty valiant effort."

Jackson Koivun, a 21-year-old American who turned

professional last month and won the 3M Open two weeks ago, started and finished the week 70th on the list to capture the final playoff spot.

Brennan was the only golfer who began the week out of the playoffs and charged into the postseason at the last event. □



Michael Brennan of the United States poses with the winner's trophy after winning the Wyndham Championship 2026 at Sedgefield Country Club on August 09, 2026 in Greensboro, North Carolina.

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Shelton sweeps Fonseca to reach Montreal quarter-final

Montreal, Canada

Defending champion Ben Shelton kept a clean slate at the ATP Montreal Masters on Sunday, holding off a challenge from Joao Fonseca to power 6-3, 7-6 (7/3) into the quarter-finals. World number 10 Shelton has not dropped a set in reaching the last eight. The 23-year-old American left-hander will play for a semi-final berth against 13th-seeded Czech Jakub

Mensik, who beat Botic Van De Zandschulp 6-4, 7-5, claiming victory on a winning lob.

Van De Zandschulp served for the second set but was broken, with Mensik seizing the momentum as he won 12 of the final 14 points.

Brazilian teenager Fonseca, billed as one of the faces for the future of the sport, might have compromised his own chances when he landed badly on his ankle

after missing a smash while leading 3-1, 40-30 in the second set.

The youngster was plagued by 32 unforced errors as his opponent mastered an annoying evening wind to earn the victory.

"It was tough today, not easy conditions," Shelton said. "With the wind I struggled to find footing on a lot of balls.

"It all came down to grit.



Ben Shelton of the United States looks on against Joao Fonseca of Brazil during their singles Round of 16 match on day eight of the ATP 1000 National Bank Open presented by Rogers at Stade IGA on August 9, 2026 in Montreal, Quebec, Canada.

The tennis was not clean. Beating a high-quality player like that is huge for me."

Shelton secured his ninth straight victory in Canada on the second of four match points as Fonseca hit the net with a return after leading in both sets.

Daniel Merida smothered Tallon Griekspoor 6-3, 6-1 as the Spaniard continued his rapid adjustment to hard-court tennis in Canada.

The world number 63 joins compatriot Rafael Jodar in the Canada quarter-finals and will break through to a career-best spot inside the top 50 as a result of his fourth-round victory.

Prior to making his Montreal debut, clay-courter Merida had never won a four-level match on hardcourt.

He will try to extend his streak of cement success to five in a row when he plays a first Masters quarter-final against U.S. 12th seed Learner Tien, who wore down Argentine Thiago Tirante 6-4, 6-4.

Tien saved the first eight break points he faced in

the second set in a battle of big hitters and secured victory in his fifth match point, with his opponent handing over the final game with four unforced errors.

"Today was humid, conditions are always tough," Tien said. "I'm happy with how the match worked out.

"This was one of those days where I was making good contact with the ball. I was seeing the ball well and returning well."

Against Griekspoor, Merida was deadly with his backhand, leaving the Dutchman flat-footed in the 69-minute triumph.

Spain's title-winner last month on clay in Umag has now claimed 16 victories this breakthrough season.

"This is a dream come true. I'm feeling really great," Merida said. "I'm happy with the level during all the week.

"I was playing great for the last year and the beginning of this year so I just starting to believe more in myself." □

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