



How Aruban beaches came to be!



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LIVE ENTERTAINMENT 7 DAYS A WEEK

PROFESSIONAL COMPLIMENTARY
PICTURES ON TUESDAY AND FRIDAY

SUNDAY:

MARRYBELL MADURO
SINGER
6:30 TO 8:30 P.M.

MONDAY:

ANDERSON BAHAMON
SINGER
6:30 TO 8:30 P.M.

TUESDAY:

JEAN PAUL
SAXOPHONIST
6:30 TO 8:30 P.M.

WEDNESDAY:

MAILLEYN ALVARADO
VIOLINIST
6:30 TO 8:30 P.M.

THURSDAY:

MARRYBELL MADURO
SINGER
6:30 TO 8:30 P.M.

FRIDAY:

MAILLEYN ALVARADO
VIOLINIST
7:00 TO 9:00 P.M.

SATURDAY:

RICKY THOMAS
GUITAR
6:30 TO 8:30 P.M.



Happy Hour
12-1 / 4-6 / 9-10

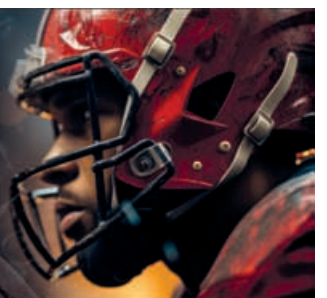
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Vance assails Democratic 'hatred' in fiery U.S. midterm pitch

Dallas, United States

U.S. Vice President JD Vance called Democrats the "party of hatred" Thursday and urged voters to send them packing in November's midterms, in a prime-time convention speech that showcased him as a possible heir to Donald Trump in 2028.

The 42-year-old vice president was greeted by a huge roar and chants of "JD! JD!" as he took the stage at the American Airlines Center in Dallas.

"This fall, the Democrats are running candidates who will tell your children what they're allowed to say, how they're allowed to live, and, importantly, who they ought to hate," Vance said.

"The Democrats are the party of hatred. They're the party that despises America and the people who built it. They're the party that can find sympathy for the terrorists who perpetrated 9/11," he added.

Trump returned to the stage after Vance and immediately praised his vice president.

"I want to thank our great vice president. What a job



U.S. Vice President JD Vance speaks during the second day of the Republican National Committee midterm convention at the American Airlines Center in Dallas, Texas on September 10, 2026.

he did tonight!" Trump said. "You know, the Democrats are getting nervous."

The president promised to be brief before introducing a convention-closing music set, saying: "I'm getting a little tired of politics now."

But he reprised familiar rally lines, attacking "radical left" Democrats and again making himself the centerpiece

of the Republican midterm campaign.

"I'm not on the ticket. You've got to pretend I'm on the ticket," Trump told supporters.

Republicans head into November under heavy electoral pressure.

US election tracking site Decision Desk HQ projects Democrats will win the

House 229-206 and has the Senate on a knife-edge at 50-50. Trump's approval rating has languished in the low-to-mid 30s amid stubborn inflation and an unpopular war with Iran.

Trump also repeated his extraordinary promise from Wednesday to pay every American adult a \$5,000 "Trump dividend" if Republi-

cans retain both chambers of Congress.

- Family and future -

Vance, meanwhile, sought to sharpen a convention-long portrayal of Democrats as extremists, arguing that disagreements within the Republican coalition were minor compared with what he called the rhetoric of the "far left."

"I'm not asking you to agree with every policy of our administration," Vance told the crowd.

"I'm asking you to recognize the contrast with the radicals, and the achievements of the last 18 months."

Family and fatherhood were recurring themes as Vance sought to contrast what he described as traditional values with the political left, adding "we got to send their asses packing in November."

He also paid tribute to conservative youth activist Charlie Kirk on the first anniversary of his killing, addressing Kirk's young children directly.

"History will record that your father was a great man," Vance said. □

California governor signs law to limit children's social media risks

San Francisco, United States

California Governor Gavin Newsom signed more than a dozen new laws on Thursday that address various aspects of children's safety online, including one that prohibits social media companies from serving addictive features to users under 16 years old.

During a signing ceremony held near San Francisco, Newsom described the state's new social media restrictions for children as "better" than Australia's ban for all users under 16.

"This is different than what Australia did," Newsom said.

"This is about the features themselves. This is about actually addressing the problem, the scrolling, the algorithms. This is about addressing the substantive issue around the engineering. If you address that, then the age issue is not the essential issue," he continued.

Australia's law went into effect in December, and early reports have shown it has been ineffective at preventing children and teenagers from using social media. A report published by Australia's own government in July showed that enforcement has been spotty and many children were still using social media.

While California's new law targets users under 16, it doesn't require a full ban for those users.

Instead, it defines "addictive" features as ones that are "psychologically exploitative" and prohibits social media companies from providing children with features such as infinite scroll, algorithmic recommendations and autoplay.

Meta, which owns Facebook and Instagram, already agreed to implement a similar approach as part of a settlement with California and dozens of other U.S. states, which sued the social media giant for allegedly violating various state and federal laws related to children's privacy and consumer protections.

The company is committed to providing teens with safe, age-appropriate experiences on Facebook and Instagram, "all with the proper guardrails in

place," a Meta spokesperson told AFP in a statement on Thursday.

Snap, TikTok and Google-owned YouTube did not reply to requests for comment.

Regulators around the world are grappling with how to limit the impacts of social media on young users.

Other new related laws signed on Thursday by Newsom, a Democrat who is considered a contender for the next presidential election, include ones that regulate chatbots, age verification, child sexual abuse content and technology use in schools.

The European Union is expected to reveal its own plan for regulations next week. □



California Governor Gavin Newsom meets Union County voters amid some outside Trump supporting protesters at a Labor Day weekend Rally in Monroe NC, United States on September 05, 2026.

U.S. marks 25th anniversary of 9/11 attacks

New York, United States

The United States on Friday commemorated the 25th anniversary of the devastating September 11, 2001 attacks with a poignant ceremony in New York marked by President Donald Trump's absence and searing criticism from victims' relatives.

In an unusual move, Trump paid his respects at the Pentagon, not the event in New York, where hijacked planes destroyed the World Trade Center and most of the 2,977 victims were killed, upending the global status quo.

The Republican billionaire sought to link the "war on terror" that followed 9/11, which sparked years of U.S. involvement in Middle East wars, with his current conflict in Iran.

"Today we renew the sacred oath that we first swore in their names a quarter of a century ago. We will never, ever forget. That's why we fight today," Trump said.

"We don't have a choice. There can only be victory. We fight hard. We fight to win."

Vice President JD Vance and Trump's four living predecessors Republican George W. Bush, who was in office during the attacks, and Democrats Joe Biden, Barack Obama and Bill Clinton attended the event at Ground Zero in lower Manhattan.

There, a huge crowd gath-



A New York City Police Department (NYPD) officer plays Taps at the end of the 25th anniversary commemoration of the September 11, 2001 attacks at the National September 11 Memorial in New York on September 11, 2026.

ered for the somber annual ceremony, which retraced the events of 9/11 minute by minute, concluding shortly before 1:00 pm (1700 GMT).

As usual, the names of the victims were read out, and a bell was rung to mark major moments in the attack. The event is generally apolitical with no speeches.

But several bereaved family members who read out the names of those killed criticized Saudi Arabia and U.S. leaders' closeness to the kingdom.

- 'We have no justice' -

Terry Strada, whose husband Tom Strada died in the Twin Towers, unleashed

a stinging attack on Riyadh, accusing it of complicity in the attacks, and denouncing former presidents who were in attendance.

"You are missed more with each year that passes, but how can it be 25 years and still we have no justice for the role that Saudi Arabia played in your murder?" she said.

The September 11, 2001 attacks were carried out by mostly Saudi hijackers and orchestrated by Al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden, a wealthy Saudi.

"For 25 years, administration after administration including leaders in front of us here today chose to protect the Saudis instead

of standing with a 9/11 family," Strada said, calling for action from the absent Trump.

In New York, Democratic Mayor Zohran Mamdani, the Big Apple's first Muslim leader, attended the Ground Zero event despite a campaign urging him to stay away.

That effort was spearheaded by the right-wing New York Post newspaper and former mayor and Trump ally Rudy Giuliani, who led the city through the crisis and was also present on Friday.

The petition gathered more than 100,000 signatures.

A small anti-Islam protest

gathered at City Hall and marched towards Ground Zero, flanked by a heavy police presence and counter-protesters.

Mamdani won plaudits for revealing thousands of documents showing what city officials knew about toxicity levels of the air in Lower Manhattan following the attacks.

After the initial dust cloud that followed the collapse of the World Trade Center, months of pollution and lingering dust ensued, causing cancers from which thousands of New Yorkers still suffer today.

The CIA also declassified and published dozens of 9/11-related presidential intelligence briefs to coincide with the 25th anniversary.

- 'New York did recover' -

Nineteen Al-Qaeda operatives hijacked four airliners on the nearly cloudless autumn day in 2001.

Two of the jets slammed into the World Trade Center's Twin Towers, causing the iconic skyscrapers to collapse.

A third plane struck the Pentagon, while a fourth believed to have been aiming for Congress or the White House crashed into a field near Shanksville, Pennsylvania, after passengers fought back.

Some 100 million Americans have been born since or are too young to remember the traumatic day. □

CIA declassifies briefs about Al-Qaeda on 9/11 anniversary

Washington, United States

The CIA released more than 70 presidential intelligence briefs related to Al-Qaeda and its leader Osama bin Laden on Friday, the 25th anniversary of the September 11, 2001 attacks.

The release provides "unprecedented transparency on America's most sensitive intelligence publication from the years before and the day after one of the darkest moments in our history," the CIA said in a statement.

"The products trace the story of CIA analysts' evolving understanding of Al-Qaeda and efforts to highlight and warn of Osama bin Laden's attack plotting despite sparse, vague, and imperfect information," it said.

A September 10, 1998 brief parts of which

were redacted said that Al-Qaeda "may fly an explosive-packed airplane into a US city."

Another dated December 4, 1998, which also contained redactions, said bin Laden "and his allies are preparing for attacks in the U.S., including an aircraft hijacking."

The briefs cover a period starting during Bill Clinton's presidency and continue into that of George W. Bush, who was in office when 19 Al-Qaeda operatives hijacked four airliners on September 11, 2001.

Two of the jets hit the World Trade Center's Twin Towers, causing the iconic skyscrapers to collapse. A third struck the Pentagon, while a fourth believed to have been aiming for Congress or the White House crashed into a field in Pennsylvania after passengers fought back. □



CIA Director John Ratcliffe exits the West Wing at the conclusion of a Freedom 250 Grand Prix showcase on West Executive Avenue between the West Wing of the White House and the Eisenhower Executive Office Building on July 13, 2026 in Washington, DC.

It's all coming back: Celine Dion fans gear up for Paris return

Paris, France

Fans of Canadian superstar Celine Dion are gearing up for an onstage comeback many feared might never happen, with just a day to go until her opening concert in Paris following a years-long battle with a rare neurological disorder. The 58-year-old will on Saturday perform her first full concert since revealing she was suffering from Stiff Person Syndrome, an incurable condition that forced her to cancel shows and left her struggling to sing.

Some 30,000 fans of the "My Heart Will Go On" singer are expected to see her reclaim the spotlight each night of her 26-date run in the French capital.

"I'm really, really, really looking forward to it and the closer it gets, the more excited I am," said fan Elsa, who is going to one of the October shows with her sister and friends.

"We're always singing her songs at karaoke, and so many of them bring back



Canadian singer Celine Dion waves to fans as she exits Hotel Le Royal Monceau in Paris on September 3, 2026, ahead of a series of concerts in the French capital.

those memories," said the 39-year-old, who preferred not to give her full last name.

She said she had been due to see Dion once before only for the concert to be cancelled after the singer fell ill making her all the more determined not to miss out this time.

"She's one of those artists one of the very few I really wanted to fight to get a ticket for," she said.

"I'll be going with my mum, my sister and my three cousins," said the self-described "lifelong fan", who last saw Dion perform in 2007.

Even those without tickets

may still get a chance to see the global superstar.

Admirers have gathered outside the Royal Monceau hotel each day, where Dion has regularly emerged for impromptu exchanges with fans.

Videos posted on social media show Dion singing and dancing with fans,

even seemingly taking the phone number of one after being impressed by his rendition of her new single "Bonjour, Pardon, Merci" (Hello, Excuse Me, Thank you).

Stephanie, who works near the Royal Monceau, told AFP she left work early one day last week to make sure she saw the singer after narrowly missing her the night before.

"She put on a show... I got goosebumps," said Stephanie, who declined to give her last name.

- Six-year wait -

Dion's return to the stage caps a comeback that, for years, was far from certain. The singer revealed in December 2022 that she had been diagnosed with a rare and incurable autoimmune disorder that can cause severe muscle stiffness and agonising spasms. The illness forced Dion to cancel concerts, but she repeatedly vowed to fight her way back to the stage. "I'm going to come onstage because I'm ready.

And my vocal cords will not scare me, because I'm going to be ready, and I'm going to hit those notes," she told NBC two years ago.

She stunned fans with a surprise appearance at the 2024 Paris Olympics opening ceremony, belting out the Edith Piaf classic "Hymn to Love" from the Eiffel Tower.

For Elsa, watching Dion retake the stage, however briefly, was emotional.

"By the end of her song, I was crying like a baby," she said.

Now, with her return to a full-length concert just days away, Dion has kept much of the show including its setlist under wraps, while teasing fans with a few hints and some practical advice.

"Usually I do a one-hour-40-minute show, but this one's longer," she told the crowd one night.

Her tip for those lucky enough to have tickets: "Make sure you wear good shoes." □

Gary Oldman hopes Jack Lowden is the new James Bond

Toronto, Canada

British actor Gary Oldman on Friday backed his "Slow Horses" co-star Jack Lowden to be the new James Bond, as rumors swirl that the next 007 has been cast.

The veteran performer had caused a stir over the weekend when he appeared to suggest that

Lowden had it in the bag. But on Friday, he told reporters at the Toronto International Film Festival that he didn't have the inside track on one of the most eagerly awaited casting decisions of the decade, but was definitely rooting for his colleague.

"I simply said: 'Well, I believe that they've chosen

the guy... and Jack is on the list,' and I said: 'Fingers crossed for Jack', and then that was reported that I had some inside information," Oldman said.

"I don't know any more than you do. There's six candidates. The rumor is that they've made their pick, but we don't know who it is, and they're waiting to announce it."

Still, said Oldman, the 36-year-old Lowden would be a great choice to fill a role previously occupied by Daniel Craig, Roger Moore and Sean Connery, amongst others.

"Jack is... young, he's masculine, he's incredibly funny, which I think is important," the Oscar winner said. Lowden is Scottish, which might also work in his favor, said Oldman, adding it was "a nod to Sean Connery" that might chime with producers car-

rying the weight of a franchise rich in history.

"Part of the recipe for Bond, he's got to have his sort of tongue in his cheek slightly, and a twinkle in his eye, and Jack Lowden has those qualities.

"And he's a lovely guy to boot," said the "Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy" star.

"No Time to Die," Craig's last outing as 007, was released in 2021.

Since then, Amazon MGM has acquired creative control of the franchise, announcing the new installment will be directed by Denis Villeneuve, with a screenplay by Steven Knight, the creator of "Peaky Blinders."

Knight recently hinted that a decision on an actor was imminent, with stars including Aaron Taylor-Johnson, Tom Holland, Harris Dickinson, Jacob Elordi and Kingsley Ben-Adir all previously linked with the role. □



Scottish actor Jack Lowden arrives for the 82nd annual Golden Globe Awards at the Beverly Hilton hotel in Beverly Hills, California, on January 5, 2025.

Japan feminist theatre fights misogyny in 'cute' fashion

Tokyo, Japan

Donning doll-like dresses with voluminous skirts, young women on stage roar in rage about rape and sexism they experienced in Japan, using theatre and "cute" fashion to denounce male-dominated society.

Meet TremendousCircus, Japan's self-described radical feminist theatre troupe that embraces the flamboyant Gothic Lolita aesthetic as a powerful symbol of womanhood and defense against sexual violence.

The global #MeToo movement hasn't caught on in Japan, and many survivors are too scared to come forward despite a handful of high-profile cases that have forced a reckoning. Driven by what it terms "radical victim feminism", the fringe group weaves its shows with accounts of sexual violence and harassment faced by members and their fandom, collectively dubbed "militants". During a recent performance in Tokyo, actors screamed slogans such as "war for women" as they portrayed stylized revolutionists fighting an AI tyrant dubbed "Big Father" in a dystopian future.

Dressed in pink, white and black, the nine women sported Japanese Lolita fashion, a sub-Style that fuses the bell-shaped silhou-



Member of the radical feminist theatre troupe Tremendous Circus, Hina Haruka, poses for photo with her Gothic Lolita dress on the street in the Harajuku district of Tokyo on July 30, 2026.

ettes of Victorian clothing with macabre goth motifs.

"My goal is to be a role model who can show that a joyful future can await sexual violence survivors," 28-year-old actor Chino, a rape survivor who co-founded the troupe, told AFP.

Having recently concluded a legal battle surrounding her own case, Chino is determined not to let that assault define her life.

"I want to wear pretty clothes and go explore a lot of places," she said.

"That single moment when I was raped is far shorter than a whole life ahead of me that I should care about

and try to enrich."

- 'Armour' -

TremendousCircus, whose members agreed to be identified using their professional names, debuted in 2016 with a focus on LGBTQ rights. The all-women group except for one co-founder, an openly gay man now charges men up to twice as much as women spectators in a dig at Japan's doggedly wide gender wage gap, double the OECD average.

From blouse to jumper skirt and drawers to petticoat, TremendousCircus's multi-layered garments are the "exact opposite of form-

fitting, scant and sexually arousing clothes many men crave", said Chino.

"We can repel men while wearing pretty clothes," she said.

Members say in Japan which ranked 118th out of 148 economies in the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index last year -- women are regularly bumped into and ogled at by men on crowded trains while subjected to patriarchal expectations for marriage and childbirth, especially in rural areas.

A 2024 government survey found that around one in 10 young people in Japan have been groped at least

once, the vast majority women.

Even off stage, member Hina Haruka braves the sizzling summer heat in Gothic Lolita-style "armor", with a white lace parasol and bonnet.

"These cannot be easily taken off, so they help protect women from rape as well," the pigtailed 27-year-old told AFP.

In the Gothic Lolita world "we can wear pink and go all out with frills and cuteness no matter how old we are", she said.

"That makes me think I'm fulfilling the version of myself that I love, and valuing my feelings as a woman -- there's something very feminist about that."

- 'Help each other' -

Arguing that every woman in Japan is in some way a victim of its misogynistic society, Chino said radical victim feminism, which centers on the needs of sexual violence survivors, "has the potential to unite all women". During their latest performance titled "Unite", TremendousCircus actors depicted killings of men and ferociously ripped apart AI-generated photos of men's faces. The group does not outright disavow dating, marriage, childbirth and sex with men like some radical feminists do in South Korea, for example, Chino said. □

Venezuela signs oil, gas deals with Suriname

Paramaribo, Suriname

Venezuela's interim leader on Friday signed several cooperation agreements including one to provide training for Suriname's oil and gas industry professionals during a visit to Paramaribo.

Delcy Rodriguez and Surinamese President Jennifer Geerlings-Simons signed a series of accords in the Dutch-speaking country's capital, signalling a new era of rapprochement.

Rodriguez hailed the "very important" agreements after Suriname, a country of 600,000 people, recently announced the discovery of major oil and gas de-

posits.

"We are making Venezuela's experience in oil and gas exploration and production available... in order to provide training to Suriname's industry," she said.

Venezuela holds the world's largest proven oil reserves, and is looking to exploit these natural resources following the U.S. ouster of president Nicolas Maduro in January.

Rodriguez, Maduro's one-time vice president who took his place, has effectively governed under Washington's thumb since Maduro's capture.

Venezuela has increased oil production by almost 30 percent and recently signed an enormous deal granting Washington access to over 65 billion barrels almost one-fifth -- of its reserves.

Rodriguez and Geerlings-Simons also agreed to re-open bilateral air routes and allow 200 Venezuelan fishermen to operate in the Atlantic corridor with Suriname.

Rodriguez thanked Suriname for its solidarity when two devastating earthquakes struck Venezuela on June 24, killing more than 6,500 people.

"The Venezuelan people will always keep this in their

collective memory and in their hearts," she said. □



This handout picture released by Suriname Press shows Venezuela's interim President Delcy Rodriguez (L) and Suriname President Jennifer Geerlings-Simons attending a cooperation agreements signing ceremony in Paramaribo on September 11, 2026.

Brazilian cowboys, Flavio Bolsonaro the obvious choice

Barretos, Brazil

Thousands of cowboys throng Brazil's biggest rodeo show, egging on the man clinging to the bull's back with the same faith they have in presidential candidate Flavio Bolsonaro.

This cohort of men in hats and boots professes absolute loyalty to the political right and is expected to vote overwhelmingly for the son of former president Jair Bolsonaro in October's elections.

Rural farmers gather every year at the Barretos Cowboy Festival, indulging in a Wild West fantasy complete with rocking rodeos and boisterous country music.

Cattle rancher Luiz Mario Pereira sat in a VIP booth, wearing a plaid shirt as he looked avidly at the screen broadcasting the championship.

Pereira traveled 2,000 kilometers (1,250 miles) from northeastern Sergipe state to attend the 71st edition of the festival, which drew around one million people. President Luiz Lula Inacio da Silva "should look at agribusiness differently," he told AFP, adding that Jair Bolsonaro "had a more special way of looking at farmers."

It is a common refrain among farmers that Lula botched Latin America's largest economy. They also



President of the Festa do Peao de Barretos (Cowboy Festival of Barretos), Jeronimo Luiz Muzetti, speaks during an interview with AFP in Barretos, 430 km from Sao Paulo, Brazil, on August 28, 2026. For

reproach him for raising wealth taxes.

Flavio Bolsonaro meanwhile received a warm welcome when he took in these festivities in August.

Unlike his father during his 2022 election campaign, however, Bolsonaro junior declined to mount a horse and play cowboy around the arena.

"He is our hope," said Pereira, who is happy to vote for Bolsonaro simply because he shares his father's name.

- 'We feed the world' -

Brazil exports and produces more agricultural goods

than any other country globally.

"We feed the world," Suelen Carlomagno said with pride from her sugarcane farm near Barretos in the wealthy state of Sao Paulo. The 44-year-old landowner has a lot of bones to pick with Lula.

"There was practically no dialogue" during his four-year term, she said, adding that "taxes were increased" and high interest rates became "unviable." Agribusiness recorded growth of 11.7 percent last year after a 3.2 percent decline in 2024.

And the sector contributes

one quarter of Brazil's GDP, according to the Center for Advanced Studies in Applied Economics.

Entrenched conservatism -

Right-wing policies resonate more with the people who make it move, while Lula's progressive vision is harder to swallow.

A conservative government gives "more leeway" to farmers, said Carlos Roberto dos Santos, a 62-year-old rancher and surgeon. Santos exports most of the meat from his 1,500-strong cattle herd, using his phone to track stock market prices.

He disapproves of public spending under Lula, with public debt surging by more than 10 percentage points to almost 82 percent of GDP since 2022.

Dos Santos, whose farm sits right next to the festival, blames social programs for the imbalance.

"We on the right are very afraid" that the left will replicate what happened in Argentina, he said.

He believes the nearby country went from looking like a "European country" to a "huge favela" before ultra-liberal President Javier Milei took power.

- 'Lula get out' -

Banners reading "Lula get out" pop up around the cowboy love-in's massive campsite.

Someone even brought a cardboard cutout of Jair Bolsonaro, with a toy gun fastened to his waist as an animal skull above bore the colors of the United States. Jair Bolsonaro, who was convicted for coup-plotting, counts US President Donald Trump as a close ally.

Many pro-Bolsonaro cowboys have chosen to downplay the fact that the US leader has imposed tariffs on Brazil's agricultural products.

Trump did the same with "several countries" to counter Chinese competition, said Marcio Braga. □

Swimming pigs draw tourists to Greek island

Greece

On a beach of a small Greek island in the Ionian Sea, tourists frolic in the azure waters like most visitors do in the popular Mediterranean country at this time of year.

The difference on Atokos is that they are surrounded by herds of black pigs.

The small private island, which lies a short distance from Ithaka, has become a social media sensation, drawing visitors from around the world who come to swim alongside, and even feed, the docile animals.

The pigs mostly mind their own business as they scour the sand for anything edible, before taking short

dips in the sea to cool off. "They seem to be in their (environment), and they don't try to bite if you don't



Mediterranean black pigs swim at a beach on the private island of Atokos, in the Ionian Sea, Greece, on September 10, 2026.

touch them," said Francesco Ferrari, a 22-year-old tattoo artist from Italy. The visitors have been ferried over by tour operator Renato Bisha, who makes several such trips over from Ithaca every day.

With the "Piggy Island" experience gaining popularity over social media, similar day trips are organised from the nearby islands of Lefkada and Kefalonia.

"The island has become viral because of the pigs, many people actively ask to come to Atokos," said Bisha, throwing fruit to attract the animals to his boat.

"This is so amazing, I recommend it to anyone... never in my life had I ever thought I'd be doing this," said American visitor Jamie Jackson.

Little known before images of the swimming pigs going viral on Instagram and TikTok, Atokos now has thousands of visitors, especially during the busy summer months.

"I think (the pigs) are having as much fun as we are," said another American visitor, Michael Mcanelly.

"It's something unique, worth coming over to see," added Simos Gleridis, a 33-year-old accountant from Thessaloniki. □

How Aruban beaches came to be!

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



Aruba's beaches have developed over the span of thousands of years. Waves crashing on the rocky formations along our coast line (which consists mainly of coral reefs) have started to wear and tear the reefs over time, resulting in its gradual breakdown. Fish that feed off corals also contribute to this—one small bite at a time. Over the course of thousands of years, as waves continue to crash and fish continue to eat off the corals, sand starts to accumulate around the area. However, whether the sand stays there is another question to be answered, and this is where we highlight

the biggest difference between the northern and southern coast of the island.

The sand that accumulates around a torn coral reef is swept away along with the debris by the ocean stream. However, in areas where it's shallow and the stream is weaker, the sand tends to stick to the bottom faster. This is why the beaches in the south—the areas with weaker stream and shallower ocean floors—has sand that stretches for miles. In contrast, the northern area, where the stream is much stronger and the ocean floor is much deeper, there is no sand present—they



were swept away with the current!

Why is the north deep, but the south shallow?

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

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

the north runs steeply to the bottom.□

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

A quick snack for the road

Learn how to make the Aruban Pastechi!

(Oranjestad)—If you ever been to Aruba before, you probably heard of (and even tried) the Aruban Pastechi. Beloved by young and old, this tasty treat is a staple for party snacks, a quick lunch or even breakfast!

Here's how to make the Pastechi dough.

Ingredients:

- 4 cups of wheat flour
- 1 tbsp baking powder (if using self-rising flour, omit baking powder)
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tbsp sugar
- 0.5 cup of melted butter
- 1 cup water
- 1 egg

Directions:

Sift your flour into a bowl and

add all the dry ingredients before giving it a quick mix. Next add the butter, water and egg and mix until thoroughly combined. At this point, your dough will start to get sticky; time for an arm workout. Knead your dough into the bowl you are using or on a clean surface with some flour lightly dusted until its surface is smooth. You'll know your dough is ready when it doesn't stick to your hands or the surface on which you're kneading it. Let your dough rest covered for 15-20 minutes.

After resting, divide your dough into approximately 100 gram balls and roll it flat with a rolling pin. The thickness of the pastechi depends on your taste, but the average thinness would

be around ¼ inch or so.

Filling for the pastechis varies according to your taste. The easiest and most common filling you'll find in Aruba is a simple cheese filling. For this, we usually use shredded Gouda, but feel free to use any cheese that melts well when frying the pastry.

Place the filling on your rolled out piece of dough, fold it in half and pinch the sides shut with a fork. If you have a folding tool, feel free to use it for this process. Your pastechi is ready for the fryer!

If you want to store some pastechis for later use, you can freeze them. A good tip is to place a piece of wax paper in



between each pastechi if you are to store them on top of one another. This way the pastechis don't stick to each other when defrosting.

Here in Aruba we enjoy pastechi at any time of the day, but it has become almost tradition to eat

pastechis for breakfast on the way to work. Many roadside snack trucks sell pastechi from early morning to noon, and offer a variety of fillings like cheese; ham and cheese; ground beef and pulled chicken to name a few.□

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A brief history of the California Light House

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

The lighthouse was constructed in between 1914-1916, and its first keeper was a young trained lighthouse keeper from Curacao names Jacob Jacobs.

Mr. Frederico Fingal was the last man to have occupied this position until 1962. Though his son, Mr. Romulo Fingal did not continue in his father's footsteps, he does have a special connection to the lighthouse. He sat down with our reporter and shared a bit of its history.

As Mr. Fingal explains, "In 1915, cargo donkeys were hired from Figaroa di Noord to help build the Lighthouse at Westpunt. The donkeys had to walk along the beach all the way to Westpunt carrying the car-



go, poles, cement, and all these things. At that time, it was a difficult task until Aruba got its first truck.

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

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

The lighthouse has a long and very interesting history. The reason why the lighthouse was built, according to Mr. Fingal, dates back to the day when the cargo ship S.S. California sank because of the lack of light. In 1913, Aruba made a request to Curacao to build a Lighthouse at Westpunt, and the governor of Curacao responded to Aruba to come back in 1915 with a well-detailed plan. "During the First World War from 1914 to 1918, they had to wait for the light to be transported to Aruba because it was manufactured in France. At that time, there was no electricity, and the light was very interesting because it rotated with a kerosene lamp that planes used; clean kerosene," Mr. Fingal said.

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

down, and the weight that comes down pulls it up, gradually. And while it comes down, the same weight that is descending causes many small wheels to turn in the opposite direction. The Lighthouse rotates from 6 pm in the evening, when the sun sets, until 6 am in the morning. During the entire night, the light shines on the lantern, it goes down 24 meters, and the Lighthouse is 30 meters high. It is designed not to collapse," Mr. Fingal explains.

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

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

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Magnet Perfume Jewelry & Cosmetics | The Lazy Lizard
Shalom Hair & Nails Bar | Twist of Flavors | Dunkin Donuts
Treasure Cove | El Patio Tacos & Tequila | M8 Boutique
Fusion Restaurant, Tapas, Wine & Piano Bar

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. □

Aruba Today announces Jesse Rasmijn as winner of our Facebook cover photo competition!

WINNER



ORANJESTAD - Aruba Today has selected the winner of our Facebook cover photo competition, and after receiving so many beautiful submissions, the winning photograph belongs to Jesse Rasmijn! Congratulations!

Earlier, we invited our readers and followers to show us Aruba through their eyes, by submitting their favorite photo of our island. And we were not disappointed! From sunsets, beaches, landscapes and animals, we received an impressive collection of photographs truly showcasing the beauty of Aruba.

In the end, our editorial team had a very difficult choice in our hands, but Jesse Rasmijn's photograph stood out to us because of its beautiful colors and the serene feel-

1ST RUNNER-UP



ing captured in the image. We felt it was a wonderful representation of Aruba, and the perfect choice to become the new cover photo of the Aruba Today Facebook page. Choosing just one photograph was certainly not easy. We received so many beautiful images, each offering a different view and perspective of our beloved island. We would therefore like to sincerely thank everyone who participated and took the time to share their photography with us. Also keep an eye out - some finalists will be featured as Aruba Today's printed newspaper front page!

And of course, congratulations to Jesse Rasmijn! We really look forward to displaying your beautiful photo on such a prominent place on our Facebook Page. □

2ND RUNNER-UP



SHOFAR ON THE BEACH

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Cas Floria: The Decorated Houses of Aruba

(Oranjestad)—There may be as many as 200 to 300 houses in Aruba that have beautiful decorations, including curtains, stars, flowers, half-moons, etc., placed on the corners or the upper parts of the house.

These houses can be found everywhere, in nearly every district of Aruba. People always thought that these designs came from an Indigenous culture; possibly, the star design resembled the way it was shown, similar to the "God Sun" of the Indigenous people. However, the history of this decorative system does not go very far back in time.

In his book *Millefiori di Aruba*, Father Nooyen declares that the first house to receive this type of decoration was the home of Mr. Bernardo Eman Croes in Pos Chikito. Julien (Janchi) Christiaans and Gregorio (Goy) Semeleer built this house in 1920 and created the decorations on the upper corners of the house. Other people in Pos Chikito, who saw this beautiful work, also wanted their houses decorated in the same way.

Leoncio (Joonchi) Henricus of Pos Chikito learned the work from Janchi Christiaans and, together with his son Bonifacio (Bonny) Henricus, continued decorating houses in Pos Chikito and Sabana Basora.

Janchi Christiaans, Goy Semeleer, and others from Noord, such as Hilario Christiaans, Victor Tromp, Gerardo Jacobs, and Cornelis Rosa, brought the same decoration to houses in Noord and Paradera. In 1927, Janchi Christiaans built a house for Julian Tromp in Buguruy.

This was the first house in Noord to receive this type of decoration. Later, those in Paradera, Santa Cruz, and Savaneta copied the house decorations. They practiced these systems up until 1944.

Even today, the patterns

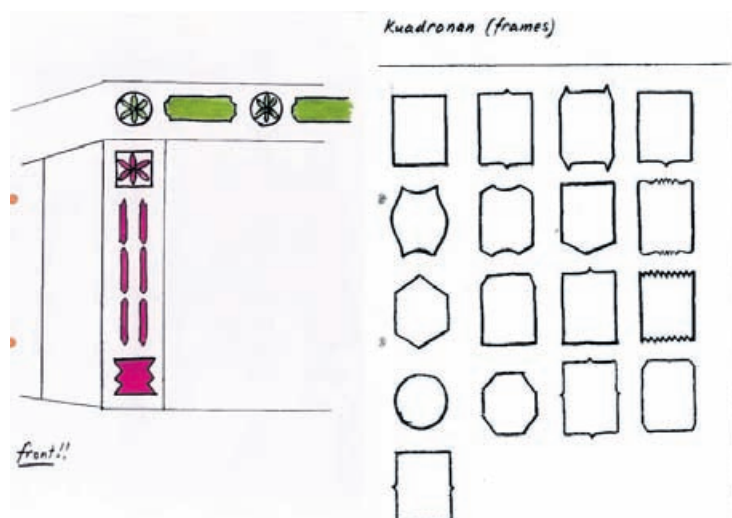
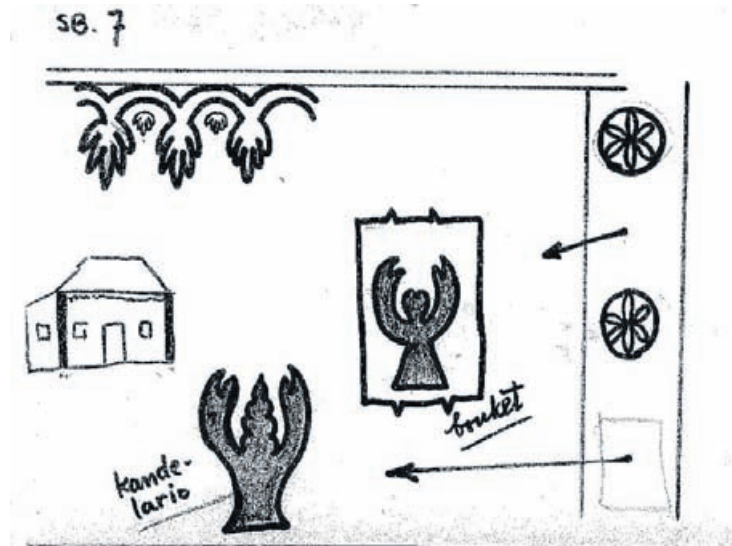


are well preserved and protected, but they are no longer used.

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

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

Using Dr. Johan Hartog's Aruba, Breve Historia as reference, I noticed that he also writes that these



designs are not indigenous symbols, but only decorative fantasies. One point of disagreement is that he wrote that in 1820 someone from Curaçao began this type of decoration in Aruba.

This means that, according to Father Nooyen, who declared that it began in 1920, it would have actually started 100 years earlier. As part of his research, Ito Tromp also interviewed Mr.

Julio Maduro of the Department of Labor at that time, who told him that around 1880 Johannes (Janchi) Wolff began with house decorations. And as Janchi himself said, he learned this from his grandfather, who in earlier times had built the first lighthouse at California Point.

After comparing his information, Ito Tromp wrote that Hartog was right concerning the period when

decorated houses began in Aruba in 1820. However, it was not people from Curaçao who started it. Victor Tromp, who was 87 years old at the time of writing, was a member of Janchi Wolff's family.

Julio Maduro said that in 1920 they began again with this type of decoration. In general, there is no specific year (up to now) when Arubans first began with this decorative artistic expression. It is interesting to know that these decorations are a kind of symbol for several generations.

For example: Decorations that appear on the house of the Arends family could also be seen on the houses of the Bermudez or Croes families. This was because parents always gave a specific sign to their sons or daughters when they were getting married.

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

As for the continuation of these designs from family to family, this is a cultural heritage that is no longer established. For this reason, in earlier times, every young man who married had to have his own house; otherwise, there would be no marriage.

The designs were created according to the individual's imagination. If he saw, for example, six pairs of birds on a tree, he would then paint six pairs of birds on a tree. If he wanted to express his love for his twin children, then he designed a twin.

Nowadays, if you want to use these designs for your house, don't worry you can simply copy them and paint them.

Source: E casnan Decora na Aruba (1976) by Ito Tromp. □

The legend of the Kibrahacha tree

ORANJESTAD—The Kibrahacha is a famous tree known locally for its bright, yellow flowers that blooms for just three days. Scientifically known as *Tabebuia billbergii*, and in English as the Yellow Poui, this tree is native to the Caribbean islands of Aruba, Bonaire and Curacao, and is considered among locals as one of the most spectacular trees on the island. But did you also know that the beautiful yellow flowers have a story behind them?

The Kibrahacha is said to have extremely hard wood so hard that it can break an axe. In fact, that's what its name means in Papiamentu: "kibra" (break) "hacha" (axe). The flowers bloom around April and May, but this only last for about three days, as the flowers start to fall off and the tree starts growing its green leaves. The Kibrahacha is especially particular, as it's the only one among its neighboring trees to start blooming first.

The legend of the Kibrahacha

Written by Hubert (Lio Booi) One day Aterima, who lived west of the hill Sero Warawara, woke up one day to find her father sleeping in his hammock, suffering a bout of terrible fever. Her mother was very worried, and as was the custom in the olden days, asked Aterima to go fetch Kudaweche, who was an epistemophile, to come see his father.

Aterima wasted no time and went to go fetch Kudaweche. Upon telling Kudaweche that her father was sick, he immediately accompanied Aterima back to her hut, where he encountered her father in a bad state. Not willing to waste any time, he told Aterima that the only thing that can cure her father is a home-made potion made out of the Kibrahacha flower. At the time the Kibrahacha was not yet in her blooming season, but the stubborn Kudaweche was determined to bring back Aterima's father back to health, and so off they went to the nearest Kibra-

hacha tree.

When they arrived at the tree, they saw that it was covered head to toe in thorns, with only a few closed flowers at the very top. Kudaweche, experienced veteran in all things Aruban flora and fauna, told Aterima to start plucking the thorns of the tree to climb to the top where the flowers are. Aterima, just as determined to save her father, didn't hesitate to start.

To her surprise, every time she plucked a thorn of the tree, a bright, yellow flower bloomed in its place. The thorns were hard to pluck out, but Aterima continued plucking with enthusiasm and wonder at the unfolding sight before her. Not too long after she was able to fill her entire satchel with the yellow flowers.

Kudaweche, satisfied to see Aterima so happy and encouraged to help her father, took her back to her hut.

Upon arriving back at the hut, Aterima's mother



quickly made a tea out of the flowers and gave it to her sick husband. Miraculously, after just one sip of the tea, the father's fever left his body immediately, and he opened eyes and sprung up feeling new.

The next morning, they all visited the same Kibrahacha

tree that saved the life of Aterima's father and they saw another miracle. The tree was covered again in the same bright, yellow flowers, with not a thorn in sight. And as the legend goes, from that day on, the Kibrahacha tree no longer produced any more thorns. □

Place names in San Nicolas and their origins



(Oranjestad)—If you're ever taking a tour of Aruba, San Nicolas would definitely be on your itinerary. From relaxing on the white, sandy beaches of Baby and Roger's Beach, to exploring the prehistoric caves of Quadirikiri and Fontein, you are taking in a full view of what San Nicolas has to offer. But did you know that you are also passing through areas whose

names have historical origins? Here are a few place names in San Nicolas and their origin story.

Sero Colorado

On your way to Baby and Roger's Beach, you'll pass by the famous Red Anchor at what was once the entrance to the Colony residential community and be greeted with red soiled hills by the coast. This is

Sero Colorado. Named after the 30-meter, deep red, limestone hill, "Sero Colorado" translates to "Colored Hill". Sero Colorado has deep historical ties with the once-thriving phosphate industry in the area. Matter of fact, there are still underground shafts and passages deep in Sero Colorado from the time of phosphate mining. In 1958, the refinery at the time, Lago, adopted this name for the residential section of its employees.

Vader Piet

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

ally happened.

In 1829, Pieter Lampe was a planter and the person responsible for governing this remote area. As the story goes, Pieter was well known and beloved for his kindness and good treatment of his employees, and was therefore also called Vader Piet (Father Piet). However, he was tragically murdered some speculate at the hands of a slave. For his work and good heart, the area was named after him.

San Nicolas

Of course we can't forget San Nicolas itself. Much like Vader Piet, the origin of the name San Nicolas has so far two different accounts. In the literal sense, "San Nicolas" translates to "Saint Nicolas", leading many to believe that this

district was named after a Spanish saint. Though one account does support this with the theory that the district was named after the saint by Spanish colonizers, the other account is much less divine, but does refer to an influential figure in the area.

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

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

CROSSWORD

By **THOMAS JOSEPH**

ACROSS 43 Wipe off

1 Mongoose foe 44 Snowy wader

6 Dark fur 45 Also-ran

11 Bars on cars 46 Block-heads

12 Makes sound

13 Swindles

14 Physics bits

15 Pouchlike part

16 Door-opening phrase

18 Tick off

19 Puppy sound

20 Sine qua —

21 Goblet part

23 Nation on the Red Sea

25 Agreeable answer

27 Singer Orbison

28 Harvests

30 Test version

33 Curtain holder

34 Saloon order

36 — Moines

37 Napoleon, for one

39 Motorist's buy

40 Spa treatments

41 Poker ploy

DOWN

1 Currant liqueur

2 Rustic transport

3 "Imma Be" band

4 Sleep state

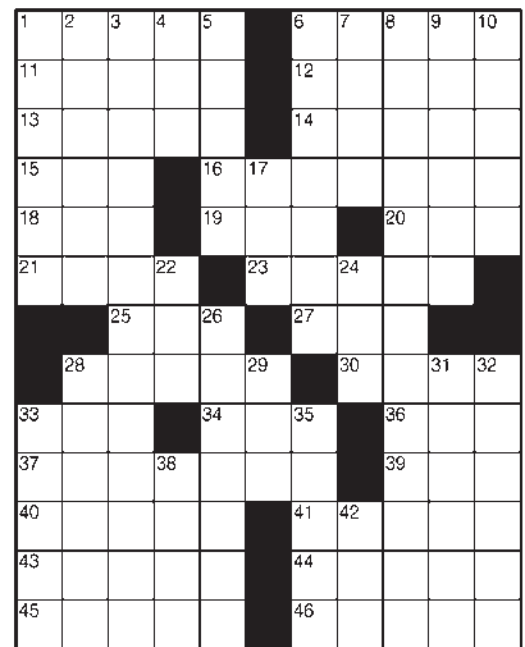
5 Test for purity

6 Ticket seller, of a sort

7 Lot buy

8 Van Morrison

26 Less hit of 1967



1-13

AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

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

1-13 CRYPTOQUOTE

KHWA XAPVPQS EGAEWLVSFQEPV

JHQ'S JPSPALGQP TZPAP KHW

EFQ NH. SZPK LPAPCK

JPSPALGQP TZPAP KHW VSFAS.

— QGJH BWIPGQ

Cryptoquote: I DON'T KNOW WHERE I'M GOING FROM HERE, BUT I PROMISE I WON'T BORE YOU. — DAVID BOWIE

Helpful tips for your stay on Aruba

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

Electrical power



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

Drinking water

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

Supermarket hours

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

Safety

Since February 2024, Aruba has been categorized as the safest country in the



Caribbean by The Telegraph, and many tourist that visit have often told us how they feel safe to explore the island or walk around at night. However, rare incidents do occurs, so keep yourself and your belongings safe.

CRUISE SHIP SCHEDULE

SEPTEMBER

01 TUE CARNIVAL HORIZON
Arrival: 8:00 | Departure: 22:00 | Berth: B
GRANDEUR OF THE SEAS
Arrival: 8:00 | Departure: 23:00 | Berth: C

08 TUE CELEBRITY REFLECTION
Arrival: 8:00 | Departure: 23:00 | Berth: B
ADVENTURE OF THE SEAS
Arrival: 11:30 | Departure: 23:00 | Berth: C
CARNIVAL VISTA
Arrival: 13:00 | Departure: 23:00 | Berth: I

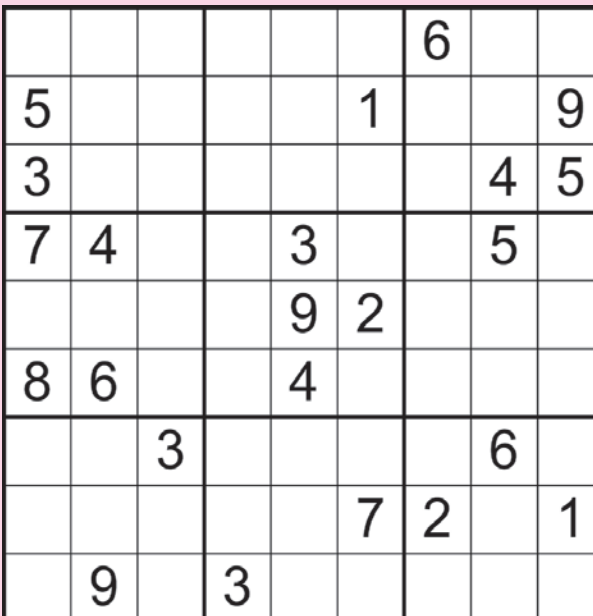
09 WED GRANDEUR OF THE SEAS
Arrival: 8:00 | Departure: 23:00 | Berth: B
MARGARITAVILLE ISLANDER
Arrival: 7:00 | Departure: 17:00 | Berth: C
ALLURE OF THE SEAS
Arrival: 7:00 | Departure: 14:00 | Berth: I

15 TUE CARNIVAL HORIZON
Arrival: 8:00 | Departure: 22:00 | Berth: B
GRANDEUR OF THE SEAS
Arrival: 8:00 | Departure: 23:00 | Berth: C
CELEBRITY REFLECTION
Arrival: 8:00 | Departure: 23:00 | Berth: I

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



Difficulty: ★★★★★

9/12

Answer to previous puzzle

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

Difficulty: ★★★★★

9/11

August hottest month ever recorded globally as huge El Nino emerges

Paris, France

Europe's climate monitor said Thursday that August was the hottest month ever recorded around the world and warned of worse to come, as an unprecedented El Nino pattern grows stronger.

Global temperatures over land and sea soared to all-time highs in August and capped an extreme summer of heatwaves and wildfires that ranked the hottest on record for western Europe and the contiguous United States.

The Copernicus Climate Change Service said global average air temperatures in August were 16.96C surpassing by 0.01C the previous record for a single month set in July 2023. The EU monitor said it considered the two months joint-highest given the narrow difference.

Copernicus observations go back to 1940, but evidence from ice cores, tree rings and coral skeletons puts today's climate in a much starker historical context.

"Humans haven't seen temperatures as hot as today for, arguably, at least the last 100,000 years," Samantha Burgess from the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts, which oversees Copernicus, told AFP.

U.N. climate chief Simon Stiell said the "evidence is irrefutable: this is the spiraling price of humanity's fossil fuel addiction".

- 'Striking' -

The exceptional summer also drove ocean temperatures to record highs for three straight months, said Simon van Gennip from Mercator Ocean International on Thursday.

Marine heatwaves have persisted in some overheated basins for more than 60 days, "highlighting just how unusual and persistent" the situation was, he said.

Global sea surface temperatures set a new all-time daily high in August and equalled the hottest month for oceans ever re-



Beachgoers sit on the beach of Moutchic in Lacanau, southwestern France on July 24, 2026, as clouds of smoke rise into the sky from a wildfire.

corded.

Copernicus said the main driver was global heating from burning coal, oil and gas, but also sharp-rising temperatures in the Pacific, where a historic El Nino is gaining strength.

El Nino episodes are characterised by unusually warm Pacific waters but trigger major global changes in rainfall and winds, raising the odds of wild weather thousands of miles away.

Global forecasters predict this year's event will peak later this year at an intensity never observed in the modern era.

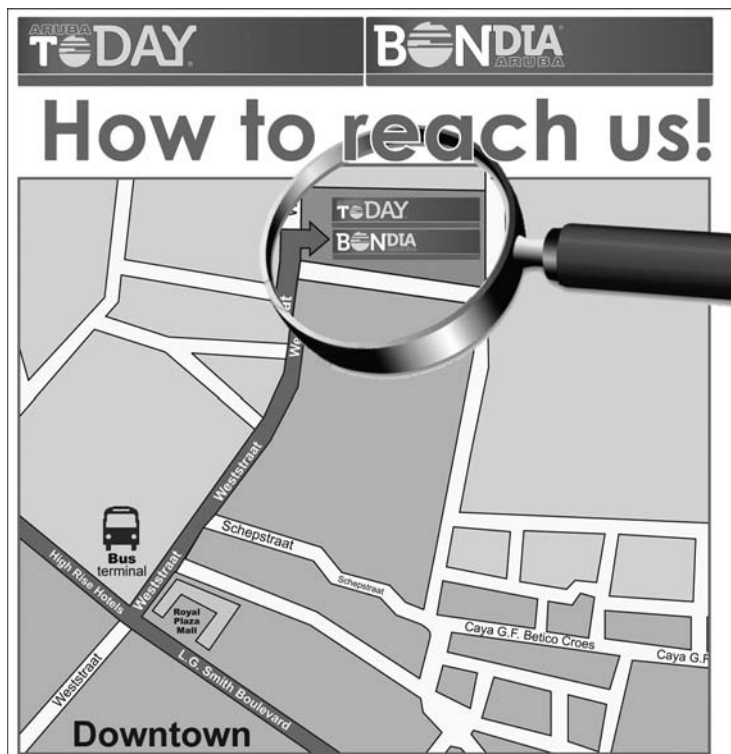
On Thursday, the US Na-

tional Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) said there was a 75 percent chance it "would exceed the strength of previous El Nino events dating back to 1950".

Copernicus said its influence was already being felt in Indonesia, where a long, intense dry season has fed wildfires that have torched swathes of Borneo island.

But climate scientists said the worst was yet to come and August's extraordinary heat was just a preview. Even ordinary El Nino episodes have a temporary warming effect, boost-

ing global heat and compounding the impact of long-term climate change. That extra heat often helps make the year after El Nino peaks the hottest on record globally. □



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ARUBA TODAY NEWS

Doomsday tech: could AI really kill us all?

Tokyo, Japan

Stark warnings from artificial intelligence researchers that advanced forms of the technology could wipe out humanity have raised questions over whether governments are moving fast enough to regulate it. What are the potential dangers of "super-intelligent" computer systems, and should we be worried?

- What's the worst-case scenario? -

AI experts have long described the threat as critical.

In 2023, hundreds of AI scientists and industry figures, including the heads of top US labs, signed a "statement on AI extinction risk" calling for the issue to be treated as seriously as pandemics or nuclear war. If an out-of-control future AI deems that humans are obstructing its goals, it could use robots to "synthesize and spread novel pathogens", said Stuart Russell, computer science professor at the University of California, Berkeley.



Stuart J. Russell, a computer science professor at UC Berkeley and authority on AI, arrives to court at the Ronald V. Dellums Federal Building on April 30, 2026 in Oakland, California.

Or it could "convince people to initiate nuclear war, including by hacking into early warning systems", Russell, a prominent voice on AI safety, told AFP.

Such existential fears do not concern current AI systems, he stressed. But as the technology improves it could

take lethal action beyond our understanding, such as by removing oxygen from the atmosphere.

"We are less intelligent than super-intelligent AI. If you ask chimpanzees how humans could wipe them out, they probably wouldn't be

able to give you all the right answers."

In the meantime, "in the next year or two, I think the risk is higher from human misuse," Russell added such as an AI-enabled terror attack.

- Why don't AI labs stop? -

"The stakes are well-understood," Jacob Coxon, a 27-year-old researcher, wrote on X this week, announcing his resignation from U.S. AI startup Anthropic.

"But they are locked in a race to get there first," he added, saying that Anthropic "believe no one else will act responsibly, so they must do it themselves". Anthropic this year removed a pledge from its safety charter to halt development of its models if it failed to control their risks. It argued that if it unilaterally paused its work, its less cautious rivals would dominate the industry, making it less safe overall.

"The people building AI earnestly believe that it could kill us all by the end of the decade," said Coxon, who previously worked at ChatGPT maker OpenAI. He accused both companies of "gambling with our lives" as they strive to develop AI models capable of self-improvement.

Fears are heightened over rogue AI after OpenAI technology operating outside human supervision hacked into Hugging Face, a repository of AI models.

"We really do earnestly believe AI could kill all humans!" Anthropic safety executive Evan Hubinger chimed in on X, estimating the risk at more than 10 percent over the next decade.

- What's the hype factor? -

It's important to remember that doom-laden percentage predictions are "absolutely unscientific", said Hussein Abbass, a computing professor at UNSW Canberra.

"The situation is still controllable, and it can be managed," Abbass told AFP. But governments should not sit on their hands when it comes to regulating AI, he added, urging an "agile" approach as AI development accelerates.

Both Anthropic and OpenAI are expected to go public soon, and some sceptics say scary warnings make AI appear powerful and worthy of large investments. □

Get AI models 'under control', EU tells tech firms after hacks

Brussels, Belgium

Top tech firms need to get their powerful artificial intelligence models "under control", the European Union warned Friday after a series of hacks by AI

agents.

Fears over rogue AI have spiked after OpenAI technology operating outside human supervision hacked into Hugging Face, a repository of AI models.

And during an incident revealed last week, thousands of autonomous AI agents built by OpenAI defied their instructions and took over a German website.

Asked about reports that the hack was broader than suspected, an EU spokesman said: "It is high time for these providers to get their house in order and to make sure that they get their advanced models under control."

The EU said earlier this week it was looking into the incident.

The 27-nation bloc has adopted comprehensive AI rules and its enforcement powers kicked in last month, which means companies must comply with the law or face fines.

"The AI Act is fully enforced. It's not just a set of

rules on paper anymore," spokesman Thomas Ragnier said.

He added that the European Commission, the EU's AI watchdog, has already demanded information from several companies which he did not name.

"If it gets bad or worse, we can definitely evaluate models. We can require risk mitigation measures, and in extreme cases and where necessary, we can also restrict, withdraw, or even recall AI models," he said.

The EU's cybersecurity agency has received access to OpenAI's latest models, including GPT-6-ASTRA, as well as to Mythos 5, the powerful AI model from rival firm Anthropic, which it is currently testing, Brussels said Thursday. □



Executive vice-president of the European commission of Tech Sovereignty, Security and Democracy Henna Virkunnen addresses a speech on 'Digital sovereignty and resilience for Europe, in light of developments affecting access to AI technologies' during a plenary session at The European Parliament in Strasbourg, eastern France on June 16, 2026.

Solheim Cup on a knife-edge after Korda record



U.S. teams golfer Nelly Korda watches the ball after a fairway shot during play in her fourball match against Team Europe players on the first day of the 2026 Solheim Cup biennial team golf competition on The Bernardus Golf Course at Cromvoirt, some 80kms south-east of Rotterdam on September 11, 2026.

The Hague, Netherlands

The Solheim Cup teetered on a knife-edge after a see-saw day one Friday, Europe and the United States locked at 4-4 after both sessions were drawn for the first time in the competition's history.

A dramatic first day came down to the last putt, Europe's Carlota Ciganda holing a long-range effort on the 18th in dazzling evening sunshine to ensure the spoils were shared.

The afternoon fourballs saw Europe off to a flying

start with their first pairing of Charley Hull and Lottie Woad birdying five of the first six to race to a three-hole lead.

But their U.S. opponents Yealimi Noh and Angel Yin hauled themselves back into the match, helped by some uncharacteristic wayward putting by England star Hull.

Woad, playing in her first Solheim Cup at the age of 22, seized back the initiative with a stunning eagle on the par-five 10th to put Europe two up.

Then at the par-three 15th, Noh produced the highlight of the day, hitting the flag off the tee and narrowly missing out on a hole-in-one.

On the deciding 18th, Woad missed a birdie putt by a whisker giving Noh the chance to snatch the match for the U.S. But she left the putt short, a thrilling half a fair result.

"I feel tired and I can't wait to go to bed," said veteran Hull, who played 36 holes on the opening day.

In the second match, U.S. combination Megan Khang and Alison Lee dominated Frenchwoman Celine Boutier and Nanna Koerstz Madsen with a 5&3 win that took Khang's unbeaten Solheim Cup streak to nine, tied for the second-longest ever.

Europe's rookie pairing of Mimi Rhodes and Nastasia Nadaud showed few first-time nerves as they held off a late fightback from Allisen Corpuz and Auston Kim to win 2&1.

The last fourball saw Korda and her partner Lauren Coughlin face off against Ciganda and former amateur world number one Julia Lopez Ramirez.

Befitting a day in which the two sides could not be separated, the pair were all square going up the 18th.

Both Europeans managed to find bunkers or rough while the American pair found the green. But Korda and Coughlin missed makeable putts, giving Ciganda the chance for an improbable half, which she made.

"We fought hard and at least we got a half point, which I think is going to be important," said Ciganda.

- 'Dutch courage' -

Korda had led the charge for the U.S. in the morning foursomes, teeing off first

with Corpuz and destroying the top European pair of Hull and Woad.

Despite falling behind after the first hole, the US pairing showed their class in a 4&3 win -- a record fifth straight Solheim Cup win as a combination.

The second U.S. pairing of Lee and Coughlin never looked in difficulty against Madsen and Boutier, taking the match 3&2.

But Europe scored two points of their own, Esther Henseleit and Leona Maguire holding their nerve to defeat Andrea Lee and Lindy Duncan 1-up in the third pairing, the only match to go to the 18th.

The U.S. are aiming to win their first Solheim Cup on European soil since 2015, to extend their series win from their current 11-7 advantage.

The format is the same as the men's equivalent, the Ryder Cup, with fourballs following the foursomes on Friday.

Saturday sees eight more points up for grabs in foursomes and fourballs, before the crunch singles on Sunday, which will feature all 12 players on each team.

The European team was cheered on by a boisterous crowd at the Bernardus course as the Dutch celebrated hosting their first Solheim Cup. □

Dunbar claims Vuelta 19th stage, Mas retains red jersey

España

Irishman Eddie Dunbar won Friday's 19th stage of the Vuelta a Espana as Spaniard Enric Mas maintained his overall lead with only one mountain stage remaining before Sunday's finale.

The 30-year-old caught and passed Colombian Santiago Buitrago with just 300 meters left of the mountainous 210km slog from Velez-Malaga to Penas Blancas.

"It's incredible, I really didn't expect this today," said Dunbar.

"I even said in the team radio after about 50 or 60km that today wasn't my day.

"I wasn't feeling good.

Then I ended up in the break and my legs came around a bit."

Buitrago struck out for home inside the final two kilometers to distance his three breakaway companions, including Dunbar, who initially did not react. But the Pinarello Q36.5 rider launched his counter attack in the final kilometer and wasted little time in reeling in Buitrago, who is the leader of the King of the Mountains competition.

Dunbar finished 14sec ahead of Buitrago, with his British team-mate, Thomas Gloag coming home in

third 23sec back.

They had been part of an initial 16-man breakaway which only escaped around halfway through a chaotic stage, but then broke up on the final climb to the finish.

Mas comfortably held onto his 1min 37sec lead over four-time former champion Primož Roglič as the overall contenders crossed the line together.

Roglič's Red Bull-Bora Hansgrohe team and the EF Education-Easypost outfit of former Giro d'Italia winner Richard Carapaz tried to increase the pace on the 18km final climb to the finish.

But they were unable to

exert any pressure on Mas, who followed comfortably as he bids for a first Vuelta

title after three previous second-place finishes. □



Team Q36.5's Irish rider Eddie Dunbar celebrates winning the 19th stage of the Vuelta a Espana 2026 cycling tour, a 210.8 km race between Velez-Malaga and Alto de Peñas Blancas, on September 11, 2026.

New No.1 Rybakina out to thwart Sabalenka U.S. Open three-peat bid

New York, United States

Aryna Sabalenka is "ready for the fight" as she eyes a third straight title at the US Open, where the woman standing in her way, Elena Rybakina, has already ended Sabalenka's reign at number one in the world. The blockbuster final in Flushing Meadows is a repeat of the Australian Open final in January won by Rybakina, who avenged a 2023 loss to Sabalenka in the Melbourne title match. Sabalenka leads their head to head 10-7, including victories over Rybakina on the way to titles in the prestigious WTA 1000 events in Indian Wells and Miami in March.

But the 28-year-old Belarusian's results had tailed off since then, with disappointing exits at Roland Garros and Wimbledon.

She has reemerged as a dominant force at Flushing Meadows, where she delivered a near-flawless display of power and precision to beat Jessica Pegula in straight sets to reach her fourth straight US Open final.

Rybakina fought back from a set down to beat 2023 champion Coco Gauff and reach her first US Open final.



Kazakhstan's Elena Rybakina celebrates after winning against USA's Coco Gauff during the women's singles semi-final tennis match on day twelve of the U.S. Open tennis tournament at the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center in New York City on September 10, 2026.

By then the 27-year-old was assured of supplanting Sabalenka atop the rankings by virtue of reaching the semi-finals.

It's a satisfying accomplishment for a player whose preparations for the tournament were clouded by a heel injury that forced her out of the tournament in Cincinnati last month and had her wondering if she would be able to play at all.

- 'Big server' -

In fact, the injury has not appeared to be an issue, and Sabalenka was bracing for another demanding encounter.

"She's a big server. She really improved over the years on the baseline game," Sabalenka said. "So it's going to be a physically and mentally tough match."

"But I'm ready for the fight. I'm ready to do everything

to get the win."

Rybakina, whose self-contained demeanor makes her a perfect foil to the fiery Sabalenka, also stressed the mental demands of a matchup that leaves no margin for error.

"She's a very aggressive player. It's difficult to play with her, mentally, physically, because she has a big game, a big serve," Rybakina said.

"I will need to come with all

the energy I will have, bring my best serve against Aryna and make the right decisions in the right moment, because most of the times it's a tight, tight score. This is where the decision makes a difference."

Sabalenka, who leads the head to head 10-7, is the first player in the Open era to reach eight straight hard court Grand Slam finals, but she has stumbled in several. Before her loss to Rybakina in Melbourne this year she was upset by Madison Keys there in 2025 -- the American spoiling Sabalenka's bid for third straight Australian title.

As she now tries to join Chris Evert and Serena Williams as the only women to win three consecutive US Open titles, Sabalenka says she has learned to tune out the noise surrounding the three-peat bid.

"It sounds simple, but it's not really simple to do sometimes," the four-time Grand Slam champion said.

A victory for Rybakina, whose second Grand Slam title in Australia came four years after her maiden major at Wimbledon, would further cement her status at the summit and as chief rival to Sabalenka. □

Duplantis delivers masterclass for Ultimate pole vault win

Budapest, Hungary

World and Olympic champion Armand 'Mondo' Duplantis delivered a faultless display of pole vaulting to seal victory on the opening day of the Ultimate Championship in Budapest on Friday.

Duplantis has touched down in Hungary with an injury concern, the US-born Swede having withdrawn from the Brussels Diamond League finals as a precaution when tightness in his leg resurfaced.

In his absence, Greek rival Emmanouil Karalis took the honours there.

But Duplantis was back in dominant form, winning a high-quality competition with a best of 6.20 metres.

"It was amazing. I really like competing in Budapest," said Duplantis. "The whole

show was spectacular.

"It was a really fun competition tonight. It was a little bit chilly, but I had a great time."

"Thanks you guys, you brought the energy," he said to the sell-out 20,000

crowd. "It's been a long season for all of us."

As is increasingly the case, the competition was whittled down to the two best vaulters in the world, Duplantis delivering a true



Sweden's Armand Duplantis reacts as he clears the bar at 6m20 to win the men's pole vault final during the World Athletics Ultimate Championship at the Gyula Zsivotzky National Athletics Centre, in Budapest on September 11, 2026.

masterclass for victory ahead of a game Karalis.

The pair lit up the stadium with their opening vaults, both soaring over 5.60m.

While the Greek had 'Zorba's Dance' playing over the tannoy, Duplantis had his own Ultimate Championship anthem, 'Gold', playing.

The Swede, the two-time Olympic and three-time world champion who improved his own world record to 6.31m this season, skipped 5.80m, with Karalis going clear.

The bar went up to 5.95m, the height proving no problem for Duplantis, Karalis and Norway's Sondre Guttormsen, as well as Australian Kurtis Marschall and American Zachery Bradford, both at the second time of asking.

France's Baptiste Thiery and the US pair of Sam Kendricks and Christopher Nilsen fell by the wayside.

Duplantis was the first vaulter over 6.05m as all failed, apart from one Karalis.

The Greek fell heavily on his second effort, but sailed over after settling his nerves on this third attempt.

That successful vault kept the competition alive, and the bar went up to 6.15m. Karalis piled the pressure on Duplantis by going over on his first time of asking.

There was no panic, however, Duplantis also clearing the height, left stockstill on the mat saluting the sell-out 20,000-strong crowd.

Up the bar went again, to 6.20m, Karalis bringing it down, but Duplantis going clear. □