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White House Chief of Staff Susie Wiles and politcal advisor Stephen Miller attend a bilateral meeting with UK Prime Minister Andy Burnham and US President Donald Trump in conjunction with the 81st session of the United Nations (UN) General Assembly at U.N. Headquarters on September 22, 2026 in New York City.

Two years in, women leaving top roles in Trump admin

Washington, United States
The abrupt exit of White House Chief of Staff Susie Wiles, one day after Republicans were stomped in midterm elections, adds her to a growing list of women who have departed top roles in President Donald Trump's administration since the year began.
At the beginning of his second term, the 80-year-old Republican boasted that he was "thrilled to say that we have more women in our cabinet than any Republican president in the history of our country."
At that point, there were eight women in top roles, out of more than 20 such positions.
Eighteen months later, there are only three left: Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins, Education Secretary Linda McMahon and Kelly Loeffler, who heads the Small Business Administration.
Half the women were pushed out over three months in the spring.
First went Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem, who became the face of Trump's violent anti-immigration offensive.
She was followed by Trump's top federal prosecutor Pam Bondi, Labor Secretary Lori Chavez-DeRemer and Tulsi Gabbard, director of national intelligence.
Most recently, one day after Republicans lost in the midterms, Wiles announced her departure.

- Double standard -
"Is he out of women?" Democrat Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez said last spring, after being asked who would be next to meet that fate.
"Trump only seems to have the capability to fire female secretaries," the congresswoman said, adding: "If you're a man in the Trump administration, it seems that they reward misconduct."
For Trump, a former beauty pageant organizer, women are about appearances, Colorado State University professor Karrin Vasby Anderson told AFP.
"Trump hires and appoints women who he thinks will make him look good. The minute they don't, they are gone," she said.
"He continues to defend (Defense Secretary) Pete Hegseth, despite the fact that nearly everyone agrees that the Iran war has been a catastrophe," Anderson said.
"I think it's telling that the men he defends most vociferously are those who promote a particular kind of sexist MAGA masculinity. It's clear that Trump feels comfortable surrounding himself with that type of man."
Trump has stood by men in his administration despite national outcry against chief of staff Stephen Miller's vocal support for the violent immigration policy and the taint of scandal dogging FBI Director Kash Patel over allegations of a taxpayer-funded slush fund to reward loyalists and other missteps.

- Male successors -
The only man not spared was Mike Waltz, who was removed from his post as national security adviser in May 2025 after he inadvertently added a journalist to a leadership discussion group where they chatted about U.S. strikes in Yemen.
But Waltz rebounded quickly and was appointed to be ambassador to the United Nations soon after.
In every case where a woman was sidelined, a man invariably replaced her.
Todd Blanche took over Bondi's role at the Justice Department after working as Trump's personal lawyer.❑



Robin Maher, Executive Director of the Death Penalty Information Center (DPI), a national non-profit organization providing the media, policymakers, and the general public with data and analysis on issues concerning capital punishment and the people it affects, speaks during an interview with AFP at the DPI offices in Washington, DC, October 19, 2026.

Support for death penalty in U.S. at lowest level in 55 years: poll

Washington, United States
Support for the death penalty among Americans has fallen to its lowest level in 55 years, according to a poll published on Tuesday.
Forty-nine percent of U.S. adults are in favor of the death penalty for convicted murderers and 45 percent are opposed, the Gallup poll found.
The last time support for capital punishment was below 50 percent was in 1971, when it was also at 49 percent, Gallup said.

The Gallup poll of 1,200 adults was conducted between October 1-19 and has a margin of error of plus or minus four percentage points.
The polling began one day after the botched execution by lethal injection in the state of Tennessee of convicted murderer Christa Pike.
Pike survived deadly doses of pentobarbital and was rushed to hospital in critical condition. She has since been returned to prison but said recently that she is in constant pain.

Pike is the only inmate to survive after being injected with lethal doses of execution drugs, according to the Death Penalty Information Center.
Laura Porter, executive director of the US Campaign to End the Death Penalty, said the polling shows the country is "at a pivotal turning point in public opinion on the death penalty."
"Americans have been horrified by the recent botched executions, as well as the proposal to livestream an execution," Porter said. "At the same time, both Republican and Democratic governors have been granting clemencies at an increasing pace.
"The death penalty is being seen for what it is, an utter failure."
U.S. President Donald Trump recently canceled a controversial plan to livestream the firing squad execution of a convicted military base mass shooter.

California Governor Gavin Newsom announced this month he was commuting all death sentences in the state to life imprisonment, a move that will affect more than 500 prisoners.
Gallup said a majority of Americans over the age of 50 tend to favor the death penalty for convicted murders while younger Americans oppose it.❑

Why 'Rock Stacking' is more dangerous than you think

(Oranjestad)— "Rock stacking" is not illegal in Aruba, but its impact on nature is harmful as the stones form part of the natural habitat of small animal species living in Aruba's wilderness. Conservation organizations repeatedly warn people not to participate. To understand the growing opposition to the practice of stacking rocks, it is necessary to understand the deep and negative impact behind it.



The act, called rock stacking, has been practiced for thousands of years and was originally used to guide people on hikes or travelers in mountainous regions, as well as for rituals, burials, and memorials. However, the modern trend is quite different. Today, the popularity of rock stacking has less to do with utility and tradition and more to do with social media. An American artist based in Colorado, Michael Grab, noted that the trend really began gaining popularity around 2014 and 2015, before it exploded and became an international art form.

The reasons behind participation vary widely, ranging from something purely practical or a tradition from the past, to an activity for its "beauty." For many, it is about leaving a mark, creating "art," or simply enjoying the process of balancing rocks. In recent times, those who participate in this—especially in Aruba—do so to leave proof of their presence or simply to post on social media.

Although it may seem harmless, there are several problems and negative impacts behind it. One of these is that many animal species hide under rocks to live, reproduce, or escape predators. If you move a rock, you may be destroying a home. If you stack one on top of another, you may expose prey to predators. Whether this is done in nature areas, along the coast, or in desert environments, it can destroy entire colonies and, in the worst case, threaten species that are already endangered.

There are microorganisms and small species such as insects or certain snakes that live in the soil beneath rocks commonly used for stacking. These rocks help trap moisture underneath, allowing the ecosystem to sustain itself. When you remove a rock, the soil is exposed and the moisture can dry up, killing all living organisms that depend on that humid environment.

Additionally, each rock is full of life—everything from aquatic plants to microorganisms attaches to them. Especially when it comes to rocks near the sea, they create habitats for some marine animals. Holes in the rocks can hold eggs, supporting them until the animals hatch. An expert explained that removing rocks from a fragile environment is essentially the equivalent of removing bricks from someone's house while also taking everything out of their refrigerator.

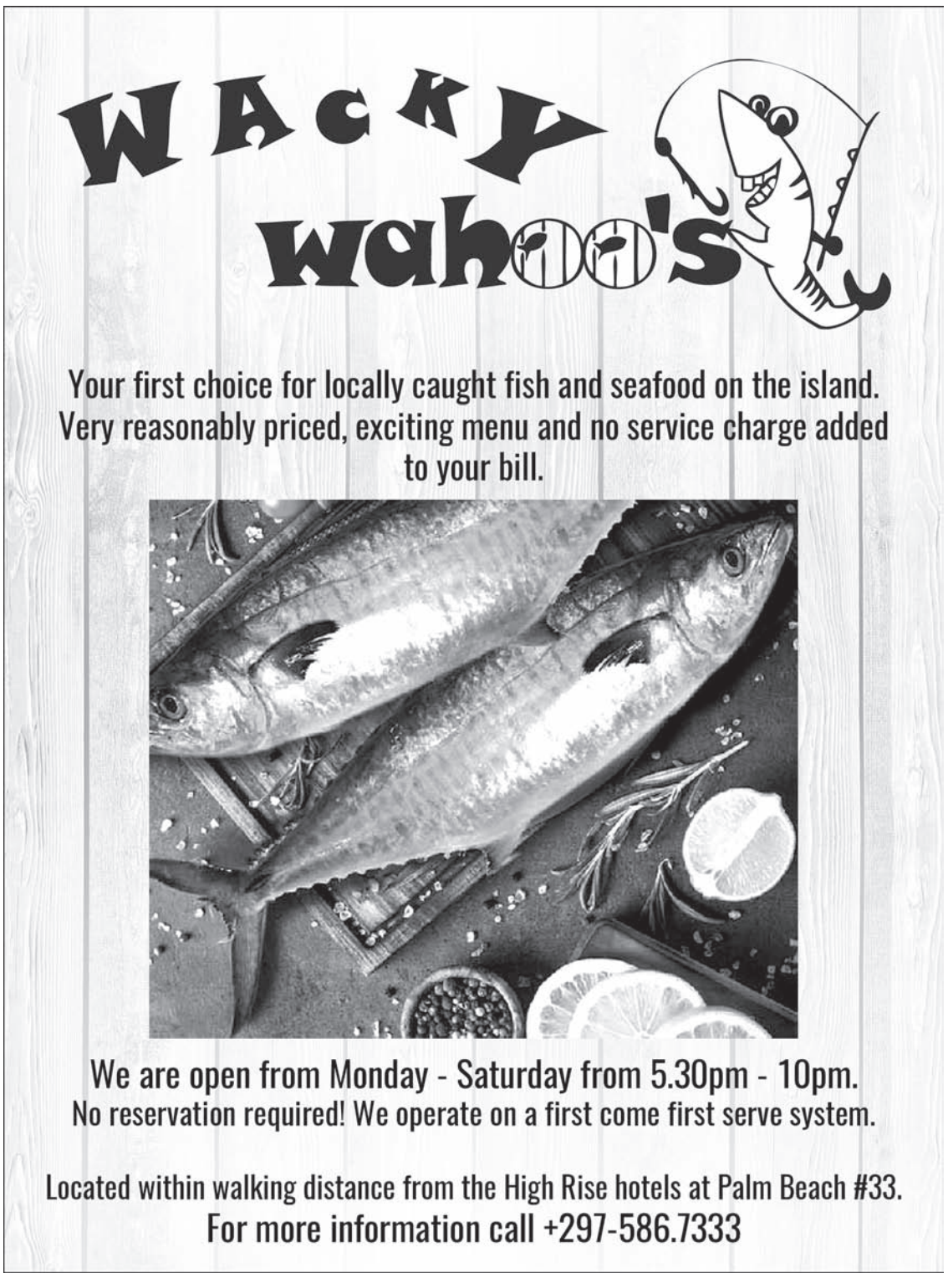
There is also the issue of erosion and soil damage, because rocks help hold the ground in place, sealing the surface and helping manage excess water, even allowing new life to grow. When these rocks are removed, the soil becomes loose, significantly increasing the rate of erosion in that area.

This erosion can cause sedimentation in nearby bodies of water, negatively impacting aquatic habitats and water quality.

Rocks along the coast are part of a natural ecosystem and play an important role in protecting the shoreline from erosion and the force of the ocean. When people remove or stack rocks, it affects coastal stability, increases the risk of erosion, and damages ecosystems. According to South African National Parks, this is particularly relevant for an island like Aruba—especially considering that most, if not all, rock stacking on the island takes place near coastal areas.

It is understandable that rock stacking may seem like a fun activity to do while off-roading; however, the survival, protection, and conservation of the island are just as important—if not more so—to ensure that in the future there will still be an island for both locals and visitors. We want our visitors to appreciate what Aruba has to offer—in a healthy and sustainable way. ❑







The Bushiribana Gold Mill Ruins and its history

(Oranjestad)—The Bushiribana Gold Mill Ruins is one of the most visited places by tourists on the island, as it lies along the northern coast line near the mini pool and on the way to the Natural Bridge. Despite its seemingly plain appearance, this ruin represents one of the most important histories of the island: The Aruban Gold Rush.



Built in 1872 by English company Aruba Island Gold Mining Company Ltd, the gold mill at Bushiribana was constructed in the area where most gold was found by locals. The story of gold on Aruba actually dates back to 1725, when a first exploration for gold on the island was commissioned by the Dutch West India Company. Under the leadership of Mr. Paulus Printz, a three-year search was conducted on Aruba, to no avail. Though they found some gold, it was enough to motivate a further search, and the assignment was discontinued by Printz himself.

It wasn't until 100 years later, in 1824, when a young boy found a lump of gold while out herding his father's sheep. His father took it to a local merchant who then sold the lump for $70. Unbeknownst to the boy and his father, they quite literally struck gold, and as word got out, a gold fever spread among the locals who started searching for more gold. About 25 pounds worth was found.

At the same time, the Aruban government took immediate actions, and informed Curacao that gold was found. At first, everyone could look for gold, as long as they sold it to the government. However, after some time, the government decided to implement stricter rules and banned local search parties.

Over the years, concession-holding had seen different companies from around the world, all of which used primitive methods to dig and carve out gold from the rocks. Aruba Island Gold Mining Company Ltd. was no different, but used a unique method that involved grinding the rocks and letting the dust be blown away by the strong northeast wind, leaving clumps of gold behind. The next step was melting the gold and letting it attach to quicksilver in order to obtain pure gold. All these processes were done at the Bushiribana Gold Mill.

The gold mill itself had a short life-span: only 10 years in service, but its structure remained relatively solid till this day, and is now a historical remnant.❑

Sources: Etnia Nativa

Enjoy one of the best views on Aruba at the top of the Hooiberg Hill



(Oranjestad)—If you are a regular hiker, or maybe want to spice up your morning work out session, then you might enjoy one of the most popular climbing sites on the island: The Hooiberg Hill. Accompanied with a 600-step staircase, this hill overlooks a great part of the island, the Caribbean sea, and sometimes even the Santa Anna mountain located in the coastal state of Falcon in Venezuela, providing one of the best views you can get on Aruba.

located at the center district of the island, Santa Cruz, the Hooiberg Hill is the second highest point on the island at 165 meters above sea level (or about 540 feet above sea level). The highest point is Jamanota Hill at 189 meters (620 feet), located in the Arikok National Park.

The staircase that run on the side of the hill was first built in 1951, when Mr. Eduardo Tromp constructed it. At that time, the staircase consisted of 900 steps. Over time, as the steps faced erosion, the government decided to renovate these stairs in 1991. This new project delivered the newer staircase with only 587 steps. However, don't be fooled—it may still be a work out to get on top. In addition, there is now a gazebo placed halfway up the stair for a little rest. The view at this resting stop is also a sight to see.

The best time to climb the hill would be early in the morning or right before sunset, as it may not be as hot. However, the hill is of course open all day, every day.❑



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Visit the island's popular cave sites!

(Oranjestad)—Among the endless sea of dark brown sand and cacti, there are two caves hidden in the outskirts of San Nicolas, in the north-eastern area of the island. These caves, The Quadiriki cave and The Fontein Cave are open to visitors of the Arikok National Park, so if you ever decide to take an "off-road" tour in the park, be sure to visit these prehistoric caves.

Quadirikiri Cave
Known for its two chambers accompanied by a skylight, the Quadikiri Cave is the most popular cave among locals and tourists, as it is easy to walk through and provides great lighting for pictures.

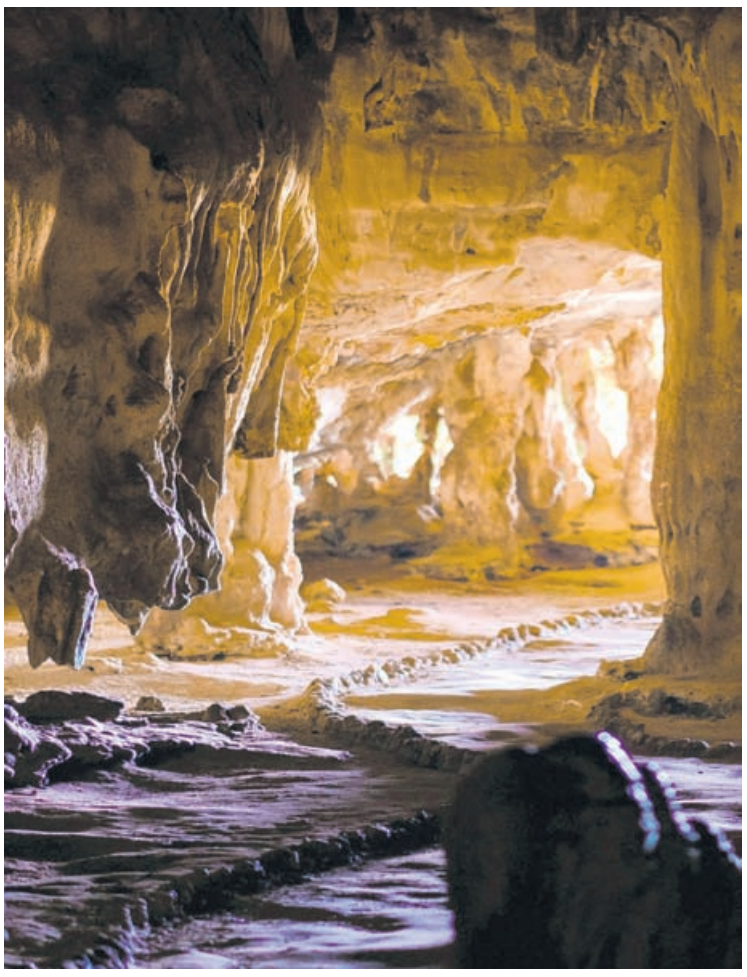
Woman in Quadirikiri Cave, Arikok National Park, Aruba
As with all prehistoric or ancient sites, there is always a folk legend that adds to the lore and mystery of the site. The Quadirikiri cave is no different. The most well-known legend behind the cave could be considered as Aruba's first love story, as it tells the tale of the undying love between the chief's daughter and her beloved. As legend would have it, the chief disapproved of his daughter's choice of lover, as he thought him unworthy. Stubborn and filled with anger, the daughter refused to turn away her beloved.

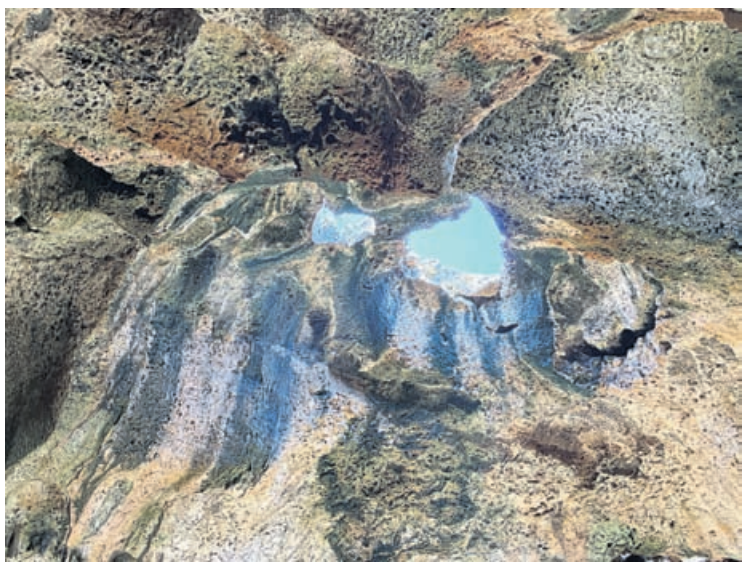
So, the chief decided to lock her up in the Quadirikiri Cave, in hopes that she would soon calm down and turn away her lover. Her beloved, in turn, was locked away in the Tunnel of Love (Now known as the Huliba Cave).

Through the pathways underneath the Tunnel of Love running up to the Quadiriki cave, the two love bird found each other, and refused to let each other go. Because of their stubbornness, they both died in the Quadiriki Cave, their ascending spirits burning two holes in the ceiling of the cave. This is why the cave has two holes through which sunlight passes through to illuminate the chamber.

Though there have been discoveries of Amerindian drawing on the wall, these have mostly been ruined by vandalism. However, the Fontein Cave further up north, provides a better glimpse in prehistoric Amerindian paintings.

Fontein Cave
Longer than the Quadirikiri Cave, the Fontein Cave contains pathways that stretch to the limestone walls further down. Here is also where prehistoric drawings can be seen. Though this cave does not have its own legend, this was speculated to have been occupied—or at least used by prehistoric Arawak settlers on the island for rituals and other spiritual ceremonies.





The Huliba Cave/ Tunnel of Love
The Huliba Cave, formerly known as the Tunnel of Love, was once open to the public, and was the biggest and most accessible of all three caves. This cave had five chambers, including one that is heart-shaped. This cave had narrow stairs that led to long pathways deep into the cave, with a staircase leading to the exit on the other side. In one of the chambers, there used to be the carving of the Virgin Mary, put there for the protection of the cave.

However, the Huliba Cave has been permanently closed for a few years now, as a way to preserve the bat population that lives in the cave. These Long Tongue Fruit Bats and Insect Eater Bats are very important to the ecosystem of the island. Though this cave is no longer accessible to the public, it surely is interesting to learn more about the history of these caves and the Arawak tribes that resided or utilized them.

Do note that these caves are very dark, humid, hot, and are inhabited by bats. Do wear comfortable clothing and shoes, as the pathways in these caves may be rough and bumpy. Take care to not disturb the bats' habitat.❑



ARUBA TODAY

ISLAND INSIGHT



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The Forgotten Wisdom of Aruba

How Our Ancestors Learned to Live with Nature — and What We Can Learn from Them Today



Through this cultural space dedicated to reflection and discovery, Etnia Nativa invites readers to reconnect with Aruba's intangible cultural heritage: the living traditions, ancestral wisdom, values, and stories passed down through generations.

In this new installment, we explore the delicate balance between knowledge and preservation, modernization and cultural identity. We look back at how our ancestors understood their surroundings, adapted to the challenges of island life, and cultivated a profound relationship with the natural environment.

Their experiences, observations, and resourcefulness offer valuable lessons that remain relevant today, reminding us that much of the wisdom we need for the future can be found in the knowledge of those who came before us. After all, Aruba's greatest legacy is not merely what our ancestors built, but also what they knew.

Long before Aruba became an international tourist destination, generations of islanders had to understand the land, adapt to its dry climate, secure food, conserve water, make use of local plants, and find ways to live in harmony with their surroundings.

Their knowledge was not acquired from textbooks or modern technologies. It developed through observation, experience, necessity, and the continuous transmission of wisdom from one generation to the next.

Much of this knowledge deserves to be rediscovered, documented, and preserved. And through Etnia Nativa, we invite you to join us in exploring this remarkable cultural legacy.

Water: The Most Precious Treasure

Aruba has a naturally dry climate. Rainfall is limited and unpredictable, making freshwater one of the island's most precious resources. Yet, long before modern water infrastructure existed, the island's early inhabitants developed ways to understand, capture, and make use of the rainwater available to them.

Historical and archaeological research describes how Caquetío communities managed water through natural drainage channels, irrigation ditches, and small dams, helping retain rainfall for agricultural purposes.



Without modern pumps, sophisticated irrigation systems, or today's technology, these communities relied on their understanding of the landscape and its natural characteristics. They learned to work with the environment rather than against it, recognizing that every drop of water mattered.

Their experiences remind us that water conservation is not a new concern for Aruba. It has been an essential part of island life for generations.

At a time when sustainable water management is becoming increasingly important, perhaps we should ask ourselves: What can present-day Aruba learn from the water-management knowledge of its earliest inhabitants?

Sometimes, looking back can help us find better ways forward.

The Cunucu — More Than a Piece of Land, a Way of Life

Cunucu is a term deeply rooted in Aruban tradition and cultural identity. It represents far more than a piece of agricultural land. It reflects an entire way of life and a profound relationship between people, nature, animals, plants, food, and community.

Traditional Aruban rural landscapes were characterized by small agricultural plots, fruit trees providing both nourishment and shade, fences made from cacti and agaves, and stone walls known as transhi.

Families raised livestock, including goats and chickens, cultivated what the land could provide, and collected and stored rainwater whenever possible. Every element had a purpose, and resources were used with care, practicality, and an understanding of the island's natural limitations.

The cunucu was a living example of adaptation and resourcefulness. It embodied the ability to make the most of what the island offered, even under challenging environmental conditions.

But the cunucu held another treasure: generations of traditional knowledge about the plants growing around us, their uses, and their place in everyday life.

Sometimes, the knowledge we need to protect our future is already there, waiting to be rediscovered in the memories, traditions, and wisdom of those who came before us.

Aruba's heritage is not only found in archaeological sites, historical buildings, or museum collections. It also lives in the knowledge of its people, in the names of its plants, in the traditions of its cunucu, and in the stories that continue to connect generations.

At Etnia Nativa, we believe that understanding our past is an essential part of protecting our identity and shaping our future.

Join us in rediscovering the forgotten wisdom of our island — because the heritage we understand is the heritage we can preserve.

Discover Etnia Nativa through a personal cultural experience. Visits are available by appointment. ❑

For reservations and inquiries:
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Luka Doncic #77 of the Los Angeles Lakers reacts after drawing a foul as he is defended by Dyson Daniels #5 and Jalen Johnson #1 of the Atlanta Hawks during the fourth quarter at State Farm Arena on November 09, 2026 in Atlanta, Georgia.

Doncic leads Lakers past Hawks, Wemby sparks Spurs

Los Angeles, United States
Luka Doncic scored 32 points as the in-form Los Angeles Lakers rolled to a sixth straight victory with a 124-114 defeat of the Atlanta Hawks on Monday.
Doncic, whose sensational early season form has propelled the Lakers to the top of the NBA Western Conference, once again led from the front to secure an impressive win on the road.
The Slovenian star finished with 32 points, 10 assists, eight rebounds, five steals and two blocks in a dominant all round performance.

Doncic, who is averaging 40 points per game so far this season, received offensive support from Sandro Mamukelashvili, who delivered an eye-catching 23 points from the bench that included five three-pointers.

Walker Kessler added 21 points with Collin Sexton scoring 18 and Ziaire Williams 12.
Lakers coach J.J. Redick paid tribute to the contributions of Doncic, Sexton and Mamukelashvili on a night when the team were missing Austin Reaves (illness) and Quentin Grimes (injury).
"I thought Collin did a really nice job of giving us some juice and Sandro had his best game as a Laker," Redick said. "That was awesome.

"Luka, again, just orchestrating. He was out there without a secondary ball handler so he had to be on the ball a lot and that was taxing. I thought he handled it well," Redick added.
The Lakers improved to 10-2 at the top of the Western Conference following the win as Atlanta fell to 7-5.

The San Antonio Spurs meanwhile maintained their hot pursuit of the Lakers in the West, extending their winning streak to nine games after blowing out the Phoenix Suns 122-96 on the road to improve to 9-2.
Spurs star Victor Wembanyama – fresh from a career-high 52-point performance last week – was once again in dazzling form, dropping 40 points with 11 rebounds, eight blocks and three assists in a dominant victory.
"There's a lot of good going on obviously," San Antonio coach Mitch Johnson said of Wembanyama's rich vein of recent form.
"I think he's allowing the game to unfold naturally and he's doing a great job of putting himself in positions to take advantage of the opportunities that are in front of him. And his teammates are doing a good job of utilizing him when appropriate."

The Golden State Warriors kept their own winning streak alive on Monday, thrashing the New Orleans Pelicans 138-87 to record their eighth consecutive victory.
Stephen Curry and Brandin Podziemski scored 23 points apiece while rookie sensation Yaxel Lendeborg added 23 as the Warriors improved to 8-3.
In other games on Monday, the Detroit Pistons improved to 7-3 with a 122-111 defeat of the Washington Wizards after 24 points from John Collins.

The Memphis Grizzlies are also on 7-3 after their 118-102 victory over the Toronto Raptors. The Cleveland Cavaliers meanwhile stumbled to a 124-112 loss to the Charlotte Hornets.
In Houston, Jamal Murray scored 38 points for the Denver Nuggets but it was not enough to stop the Rockets from claiming a 110-100 victory.
Kevin Durant scored 23 points and Alperen Sengun added 20 as the Rockets halted their two-game losing streak.❑



Dorian Williams #42 of the Buffalo Bills intercepts a pass intended for T.J. Hockenson #87 of the Minnesota Vikings during the third quarter of the game at U.S. Bank Stadium on November 09, 2026 in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Bills defense turns tables on Vikings in victory

Los Angeles, United State
The Buffalo Bills turned the tables on the Minnesota Vikings on Monday, producing a steely defensive performance on the road to grab a 23-6 victory in Minneapolis.
A low-scoring showdown between the Bills' potent offense and the stingiest defense in the NFL ended with a hard-fought Buffalo victory at the U.S. Bank Stadium.
Buffalo's defense proved decisive in the win, restricting the Vikings to just two field goals on a miserable night for Minnesota quarterback Carson Wentz.
Veteran back-up Wentz, starting in place of the injured Kyler Murray, struggled throughout, tossing two interceptions, coughing up a fumble and recording just eight completions.
The Bills offense dug deep to grind out victory, with running back James Cook rushing for 107 yards from 31 carries.
Bills quarterback Josh Allen threw 234 yards with one touchdown from 21 completions.
"It's exactly what it was a great performance," Allen told ESPN. "We knew that it was going to take all four quarters.
"That's a great team that we just played. They're extremely well coach and that defense is the best in the league for a reason.
"We kept grinding, kind of wore them down in the fourth quarter. Our defense played fantastic."

Buffalo improved to 7-1 with the win to tighten their grip on the AFC East, ahead of the second-placed New England Patriots (5-4). The Vikings fell to 6-2 in the NFC North.
An attritional first half saw Buffalo kicker Tyler Bass open the scoring with a 39-yard field goal in the first quarter before Vikings counterpart Will Reichard level with a 43-yard effort in the second quarter.
Buffalo grabbed the first touchdown of the game in the final minute of the second quarter, with Allen leading an eight-play 80-yard drive before finding Keleki Latu with a 25-yard touchdown pass to make it 10-3.
Reichard narrowed the deficit to four points with a field goal in the final seconds of the first half, but Minnesota failed to add to their tally thereafter.
Instead the Bills steadily built on their lead, with Bass scoring a 25-yard field goal to make it 13-6 midway through the third quarter.
Cook then struck the decisive blow in the fourth quarter, barreling over from five yards to cap a 15-play, 84-yard drive that took 8min 32sec off the clock.
Bass followed that with a 52-yard field goal to put Buffalo 23-6 up and the Vikings' fate was sealed after a final drive ended with a turnover on downs.❑

McIlroy says DeChambeau would bring 'eyeballs' to European Tour



Northern Ireland's Rory McIlroy tees off during the DP World Tour's Abu Dhabi Aldar Championship golf tournament at the Yas Links Golf Course in Abu Dhabi on November 5, 2026.

Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Rory McIlroy says Bryson DeChambeau would bring "eyeballs" to the European Tour if he decides to accept membership on the circuit following the collapse of LIV Golf. The breakaway league said last week it was shutting down operations after lead investors BC Partners pulled out because a majority of players had not signed up for LIV Golf 2.0.

Several LIV stars, including Jon Rahm and Tyrrell Hatton, have already confirmed that they will play on the European Tour next year.

DeChambeau has not committed to anything and is one of the players seeking to bring BC Partners back to the negotiation table.

Two-time major champion DeChambeau will be able to secure a card on the European Tour thanks to his 2024 US Open triumph, but 2027 is the last year before that privilege runs out.

"I think a name like Bryson DeChambeau, and everything he brings with him, good and bad, he brings eyeballs, which is a good thing for tournaments," said McIlroy on Tuesday ahead of this week's Tour Championship in Dubai.

"I'm certainly not in his shoes, and nor would I ever want to be, but it doesn't seem like he's got many options. If he wants to play competitive golf, it doesn't seem like he's got many options."

The reigning Masters champion is hoping his envious record at the Earth course will help him win an unprecedented fourth European Tour Championship title and also match Colin Montgomerie's record of eight Order of Merit crowns on the circuit.

McIlroy arrives at the season-ending event ranked second behind Eugenio Chacarra in the Race to Dubai.

He trails the Spaniard by 533.93 points, but there are 2,000 points available for the champion and a win would guarantee him the season-long title.

McIlroy also has seven top-five finishes in 15 starts in the event. In the 60 rounds he has played on the course, a staggering 53 of them have been under-par. His worst finish is a tie for 22nd in 2023.

McIlroy felt his experience would give him an edge over Chacarra and the rest of the chasing pack.

The top nine players in the field of 50 have a mathematical chance of winning the Race to Dubai.

"It's been a course that's been very good to me over the years, and I have a lot of experience on it, a lot of experience up at the top end of the leaderboard," said McIlroy, who finished third in Abu Dhabi last week.

"The course has changed and evolved a little bit over the years...

"But when you come back to a golf course that you've played a lot on, and you've done well on, that always gives you a little bit of an advantage starting the week.

"I'm very excited to be back here, and very excited to be in contention for the eighth. I made some ground up last week, maybe not as much as I wanted, but I felt like it was a step in the right direction."

- Rahm has 'extra incentive' -

Among those chasing Chacarra and McIlroy is Rahm, winner last week in Abu Dhabi, a result that helped him jump to sixth place in the season standings.

Rahm has played only five Tour Championships, but he has won three of them and has never finished outside the top five.

"Coming in with a little extra incentive. I really didn't think even after winning last week that I was going to have a chance to possibly win the Race to Dubai at all," said the former world number one.❑

