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Place names in San Nicolas and their origins

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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.

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U.S. President Donald Trump speaks during a press briefing in the Brady Briefing Room of the White House in Washington, DC, on November 20, 2026.

Trump defends 'fantastic' ties with Xi, Putin after summit backlash

Washington, United States
U.S. President Donald Trump on Friday defended his "momentous" summit with Xi Jinping and Vladimir Putin as he returned home from China to face bitter criticism and turmoil after the midterm elections.
Speaking at a news conference in the White House the day after flying back, Trump said his "fantastic relationships" with the Chinese and Russian leaders helped keep the United States secure.
Trump particularly defended his ties to Putin after controversially calling him "my friend" when they met in Shenzhen and insisted that the Kremlin boss genuinely wanted to end Russia's war in Ukraine.
"We had one of the most momentous international summits in many years," Trump told reporters, adding that there was "great electricity" between the leaders of the world's main nuclear powers.
"I have fantastic relationships with Putin. That's a very good thing. I have fantastic relationships with President Xi. That's a good thing, and our country is safe because of that."
Trump however added that he was unsure whether denuclearization which the US president said was one of the main topics of the summit in China "can ever happen."
The 80-year-old was flanked at the White House podium by Vice President JD Vance and Secretary of State Marco Rubio, while Pentagon chief Pete Hegseth and Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent sat nearby.

- 'Embarrassment' -
Trump's bid to tout the achievements of the summit came after U.S. media and his Democratic opponents mocked it as little more than a photo opportunity for a lame-duck president. He arrived in Asia seeking a win after a bruising defeat in US midterm elections earlier this month, with the Iran war grinding on and the White House facing multiple investigations by the incoming Democratic-led Congress.
But the Trump-Xi-Putin powwow produced few concrete results except a brief "Declaration toward Peace" which Trump displayed on an easel during his news conference that made no mention of Iran or Ukraine.
"Trump is an embarrassment on the world stage," House Democratic whip Katherine Clark said on X. "Nothing to end his Iran war. Nothing to help Ukraine. Nothing about AI safety. Instead, he's just obsessing over dictators."
Broadcaster CNN said the meeting was little more than "a well-timed photo-op" for Trump but for Xi and Putin it was a "vindication of their vision that the world is undergoing a fundamental rebalancing of power."
It was no surprise then that Trump spent much of the one hour and 28 minute press conference pushing back at criticism for meeting the autocratic leaders of Washington's main adversaries.
He said that during a bilateral meeting with Putin, the Russian leader "clearly expressed his desire to see the war in Ukraine end by diplomatic means."
Asked if he believed Putin was a friend to America, Trump said "I can't speak to America" but added that their "very good relationship... gives us a lot of additional strength."

- 'Out of control' -
Trump meanwhile lashed out at the "out of control" International Criminal Court and said that Putin wasn't "happy" with the tribunal, which has issued an arrest warrant for the Russian leader over the Ukraine war.
On Iran, Trump accused Iran of "bullshitting for 51 years" and said Tehran's leaders "want to make a deal, but they don't want to make a deal that's acceptable to me."❑



Acting U.S. Secretary of the Army Adam Telle (L) and Secretary of War Pete Hegseth participate arrive on stage for a discussion during the U.S. Army's 2026 Annual Meeting and Exposition at the Walter E. Washington Convention Center on October 14, 2026 in Washington, DC.

U.S. seeks to reassure public over detonation of degraded explosives

Washington, United States
The U.S. government sought to reassure the public Friday over the planned detonation of 68 drums of degraded explosive material in Iowa that could spread toxic lead dust across nearby areas.
The destruction of the lead azide which is at risk of "spontaneous explosion" at an ammunition plant in the midwestern state was scheduled to take place on Friday but was postponed for three days after an outcry over the plan.
The government is working "to ensure that the controlled detonation in Middletown, Iowa is conducted in the safest fashion possible," said a statement from the Army, the Department of Health and Human Services, and the Environmental Protection Agency.
"Officials have been meticulously planning for this event since March, and all agencies involved are prepared to take the most extreme mitigation measures available to ensure there is no risk to the public," the statement added.
An advisory notice said the barrels are to be destroyed by explosives experts "inside earth-covered magazines made of concrete, and surrounded with Hesco barriers full of sand which are approximately two stories high."

The soil covering the magazines will be saturated with water and water misters will be spraying to "reduce the amount of lead that migrates from the detonation through the air off the installation."
But it also warned of possible "localized window damage" to nearby houses, asking some residents leave their homes for a six-hour period.
The advisory included a map showing potential lead dispersion extending more than 20 miles (30 kilometers) north of the ammunition plant, urging citizens to "consider avoiding the highlighted area or remain indoors with windows/doors closed."
"Children under six are especially vulnerable to lead exposure," it said.
Acting Secretary of the Army Adam Telle announced the postponement of the detonation in a post on X, saying Monday was the last day to carry it out "prior to a forecasted temperature drop, which would risk further destabilization of the material."
"Public communication is essential to public trust," said Telle, promising that "the Army will continue to actively engage with state and local officials throughout the region to distribute accurate, up-to-date information."❑

Grand Theft Auto VI takes record $3.8B on first day

Washington, United States
"Grand Theft Auto VI" brought in $3.79 billion in retail sales on its first day, publisher Rockstar Games said Friday, calling it the biggest launch for any entertainment product in history.
The figure, based on company estimates of worldwide sales through the end of Thursday, is nearly five times the roughly $800 million that predecessor "Grand Theft Auto V" took in during its first 24 hours in 2013.
It also exceeds the entire box office run of "Avengers: Endgame," which became the highest-grossing film of all time last month at about $2.9 billion worldwide after a re-release pushed it back past "Avatar."
Rockstar, a label of New York-based Take-Two Interactive, said the game had sold 32.5 million units before release, a record across all platforms.
"We are incredibly humbled by the response from players around the world," said Sam Houser, the studio's founder and president.
The game went on sale Thursday on PlayStation 5 and Xbox Series X|S, launching first in New Zealand and rolling out market by market as each reached midnight local time.
The release quickly became a global phenomenon, generating more social media posts than this year's World Cup, according to monitoring platform Visibrain.



A physical copy of the latest installment of the action-adventure video game "Grand Theft Auto VI" is pictured at a Best Buy store in New York, on November 19, 2026.

Critics praised the game, which has a score of 99 on review aggregator Metacritic.
Rockstar said that made it the highest-rated game ever.
In a review for The Verge, Andrew Webster wrote that "the game is so good that the outsize hype is the least interesting thing about it."

- Award nominations -
Like its predecessors, "GTA VI" is an open-world action game in which players roam freely through a sprawling city, stealing cars, pulling off heists and carrying out missions for criminal gangs.
The story follows Jason and Lucia from a chance meeting during a police stop to a botched robbery that lands Lucia in jail, much of it told through long cut scenes.
Players then take control of Jason, a former soldier doing odd jobs for local gangsters, which range from recovering drug packages dropped at sea to stealing cars and shaking down debtors.
The game is set in Vice City in the fictional state of Leonida, modeled on Florida.
Its busy streets, neon-lit nightlife and beaches are rendered in striking detail, and non-player characters go about their lives whether or not the player is involved.
The game also asks more of players than its predecessors, with fuel levels to watch, a greater police presence and even home repairs to be done.
It features more than 20 radio stations, with artists ranging from Simple Minds to Daft Punk, as well as new podcasts including a true-crime series about Vice City.This week the game received eight nominations for the Game Awards, which will be held December 10.❑

Mamdani plan delays closure of notorious New York jail to 2032

New York, United States
New York Mayor Zohran Mamdani on Friday released a plan for closing the city's notorious Rikers Island jail complex by 2032 missing the original target date by five years.
Long criticized for unsanitary and violent conditions, the facility on the East River that opened in 1932 has counted Tupac Shakur, Mike Tyson, Sid Vicious and Harvey Weinstein among its inmates.

"We have a legal and moral obligation to close Rikers," Mamdani said in a statement, with longstanding complaints about the jail including staff shortages, widespread drug use and broken cell doors and windows.
"For decades, New Yorkers have demanded a correctional system that is safe and humane."
Rikers, which sits between the Bronx and Queens boroughs, primarily holds people who are awaiting trial in New York and have not been convicted of a crime.
Former mayor Bill de Blasio had pledged to close Rikers Island by August 2027, but with less than a year left until that deadline, the four smaller jails intended to replace it are still under construction.
The administration of Mamdani, who took office this year, and various NGOs have blamed the delay on the Covid pandemic and a lack of action by ex-mayor Eric Adams, a Democrat who served from 2022 to 2025.
"The call to close Rikers has echoed across our city for decades. Work has begun to do so, then stopped, and started once again. What will make this chapter different is our commitment to see it through," Mamdani told reporters.

- Reducing the jail population -
The new jails will be spread across New York -- one each in Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens and the Bronx, to allow better accessibility to court dates, attorneys and families.
According to the plan released Friday, the first jail to open will be the Brooklyn facility, in 2029.

Authorities aimed to thin the jail population by reducing reduce pretrial detention and case delays.
Some of the 22 percent of the inmate population diagnosed with serious mental health conditions, along with others with complex health needs, will shift to hundreds of new beds in medical facilities.
The city will also invest $146 million next fiscal year to boost mental health care, substance use treatment, educational and vocational programming and victim services.
The measures are collectively expected to reduce the number of detainees from 6,600 to approximately 4,000.
The first calls to close Rikers date back to the 1960s, driven by dangers for both inmates and correction officers. Politicians and public opinion rallied to the cause in the 2010s partly due to fierce campaigning by families and former inmates.❑



A sign stands at the entrance to the Rikers Island jail complex in the borough of Queens on November 20, 2026, in New York City.

‘Josephine’ tackles sexual violence through a child’s eyes

Los Angeles, United States
Beth de Araujo was just a child when she witnessed a sexual assault.
Rather than talk it through with her, her father let the matter drop, and it was only years later, as an adult, that the screenwriter and director finally asked him why.

That conversation inspired “Josephine,” a film that explores rape through the eyes of an eight-year-old girl and takes a hard look at how society and the justice system handle violence.
“The way we experience the world as children is quite different. First of all, quite literally because they’re shorter than us. Like the world is more on top of them,” de Araujo told AFP.
The film leans into that idea with camera angles that immerse viewers in the perspective of its young heroine, played by newcomer Mason Reeves.

It opens early one morning as Josephine and her father Damien (Channing Tatum) head out for soccer practice. In a split second, the girl strays into the trees and stumbles upon a man raping a woman.



Beth de Araujo arrives at the Los Angeles Premiere Of Sumerian Pictures’ ‘Josephine’ held at the DGA Theater Complex at The Directors Guild of America on November 18, 2026 in Los Angeles, California, United States.

Part thriller, part family drama, the film follows Damien and his wife Claire (Gemma Chan) as they clash over how to help their daughter, who is deeply shaken by what she has seen.
For de Araujo, “Josephine” is also about how each parent has dealt with male violence, and how their own experiences shape the way they try to protect their child.
“When I first read the script, I just felt there was so much truth on every page, and I kept asking myself the question, ‘What would I do in this situation?’” said Chan, who also produced the film.
“And I still don’t know the answer. I just found it really compelling.”

- ‘A horror movie’ -
Chan explained she swung between the two parents, and at times wanted to shake them both and ask what on earth they were doing.
Tatum said he had never been through anything like it, but that the script hit home, both as a son and as a father.

“As I was reading it, I literally was reading my dad’s words to me, my words to my daughter, and it was this weird, strange mix or meld of my life,” he told AFP.
“As a parent, you’re just praying to God that you never have to deal with anything this just horrific,” he added. “It’s a horror movie on some level.”
Blending drama and suspense, “Josephine” keeps audiences on edge from start to finish.

De Araujo said she studied Alfred Hitchcock, the master of suspense, and “part of his mantra is like, ‘you grab them by the throat and you don’t let them go,’ and I guess I really took that to heart, when I think about storytelling.”

The independent film, which hits theaters on Friday, took her twelve years to make.
She weathered financial setbacks, followed a court case from beginning to end that lends the story extra intensity, and won over two Hollywood stars for the lead roles -- a step she called crucial to getting the project off the ground.
Along the way, she also discovered Mason Reeves, whom she happened to meet while shopping at a farmers market in San Francisco.
Now ten, Reeves learned her lines with her mother’s help and, given the subject matter, was kept away from much of the shoot.

“The most challenging part was when I had to cry,” Reeves told AFP. “That was hard for me because I don’t usually have anything to cry about.”❑

Glenn Close, Ridley Scott receive honorary Oscars in career firsts

Hollywood, United States
Hollywood royalty Glenn Close and Ridley Scott both received an honorary Oscar on Sunday, the first golden statues of their decades-long careers, at a lavish gala bringing together industry elites.
Screen legend Close, 79, has been tipped for Academy Awards eight times during her five-decade career, including for her roles in “Fatal Attraction” and “Dangerous Liaisons.”
British director Ridley Scott, 88, known for box-office hits including “Alien,” “Blade Runner” and “Gladiator,” is a nine-time nominee but had also never won the award.
The honorary Oscars, awarded annually by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, celebrate cinema legends for their careers and contributions to the film industry.
US actor John Malkovich, who is tipped for Oscars glory for his role in dark comedy “Wild Horse Nine,” introduced Close as “a friend and a treasured colleague.”
“She is a true master,” said Malkovich, who starred alongside Close as the arch seducer in “Dangerous Liaisons.”
“Glenn is unafraid to go there, and I love that about her.”



U.S. actress Glenn Close attends the 17th Annual Governors Awards at the Ray Dolby Ballroom at Ovation Hollywood in Hollywood, California on November 15, 2026.

- ‘Happy ending’ -
Close, who dedicated the award to her daughter, earned a standing ovation.
“As an outsider, I have never worried about whether I was going to win or not, though some years I thought I might have a chance,” said the actress, who earned her first nomination for 1983 hit “The World According to Garp.”
“I have always felt that the great honor is to be in the room,” she added.

Three-time Best Director nominee Scott received his gong from Matt Damon, who paid tribute to the master of the modern screen epic.
“It is about time we all saw him with an Academy Award in his hand,” said Damon, who worked with Scott on 2015 box office smash “The Martian.”❑

Massive Nigeria's tiny coffee sector wants a shot

Abuja, Nigeria

Richard Ali grew up with the aroma of coffee wafting through his house in central Nigeria as his father, an accountant, worked late into the night, drinking powdered, instant stuff from Maxwell House and Nescafe.

It was not until years later, travelling on the other side of the continent, that Ali had a taste of "coffee, coffee brewed coffee".

"I have to bring this to Nigeria," he thought, and he started looking into importing beans from Rwanda.

Ali later discovered he did not have to: coffee has been growing in Nigeria for more than 100 years.



This aerial view shows a general view of the central business district in Abuja, on May 21, 2025.

A wave of entrepreneurs in Africa's most populous country are turning towards the oil-producing nation's other black gold an uphill task in a place full of tea and instant coffee, and little sense of homegrown java as a daily staple or part of a wider cultural patrimony.

But roasters say they have found a market and sense of national pride to tap into, even if Nigeria's beans are not well-known.

"We need to grow more coffee, whether for the domestic market, which is expanding, or the global market, which is now considering Nigerian coffee," Ali, founder of Tigray Coffee, which launched in 2021, told AFP over a cup of Nigerian brew, light with slightly chocolatey notes.

- Agricultural investments -

In Ethiopia, hundreds of years of cultivation have bound coffee to local culture, while Uganda and Ivory Coast have become modern export powerhouses.

Nigeria produced 1,808 tonnes of beans in 2024 , according to statistics from the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization a paltry sum compared to Kenya's 49,500 tonnes that same year.

The first seeds hit the ground in Nigeria in the 19th century, after coffee was introduced by British colonists.

The crop is notoriously fickle and can only grow in certain parts of the country.

But there has also been a dearth of investment in agriculture, critics say, as the government instead became over-reliant on the oil sector for revenues.

Experts have long called for a more diversified economy. The government agrees, at least in principle: in May, agriculture minister Abubakar Kyari announced federal investments in coffee production in Ondo state, calling it "a powerful economic crop" that could create jobs and "boost rural livelihoods".

- 'Never imported coffee' -

At the opening of a new cafe in Lagos last month , Princess Adeyinka Tekenah paired a local brew not with croissants, but puff-puff, a staple street food snack of fried dough.

"I have been in the business for 12 years and I have never imported coffee," the founder of Happy Coffee told AFP.

While Tekenah has leaned into her local roots, the coffee industry has also been helped by a growing sense of cosmopolitanism in Nigeria's cities, Ali said.

Hip cafes abound in the ritzy parts of Abuja, serving coffee sourced from around the world.

There is growing demand for "the cafe experience", though not Nigerian coffee specifically, Ali cautioned requiring efforts by domestic marketers "to situate Nigerian coffee within the larger specialty coffee conversation".

Nigerian coffee culture is "non-existent, actually, which makes it quite exciting", said Nnenna Samuila, founder of the Everything But Coffee brand.

"We can make it how we want," Samuila, who went into business three years ago, told AFP.

In many cases, weak local production hampered further by poor infrastructure and insecurity cannot keep up: Samuila buys her coffee from neighbouring Cameroon as well as Ethiopia and Kenya.

The Cameroonian coffee may well be Nigerian anyhow: farmers are known to smuggle beans across the border when prices there rise, Ali said.

- Frontier market -

Domestic economic headwinds and shifting regulations abroad are providing more challenges.

Economic reforms by President Bola Tinubu since 2023 have been hailed as long overdue by investors -- but have also been likened to shock therapy, sending the country into a cost-of-living crisis. Meanwhile, Ali needs to help his suppliers smallholders, many farming informally held family plots document their land, in order to comply with European anti-deforestation regulations.❑

Two Salvadoran soldiers killed in Haiti while handling explosives

San Salvador, El Salvador

Two soldiers from the 2,000-troop El Salvador deployment to Haiti were killed while handling explosives, the Salvadoran military said Friday.



People rally in support of Salvadoran Army troops in their mission to help the fight against gangs, in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, on November 18, 2026.

The deaths are the first known casualties of El Salvador President Nayib Bukele's month-long intervention in Haiti, originally to rescue four missing airmen but now apparently with a broader remit to crush Haiti's notorious gangs.

Two other soldiers were wounded in the explosion, the armed forces wrote on X, without revealing the identities of the victims.

El Salvador and Haiti have signed a cooperation agreement, the details of which remain confidential, but which could extend the presence of Salvadoran military personnel in Latin America's poorest country.

Bukele, who has gained cult hero status in Latin America for his iron-fisted approach to the gangs that once plagued his country, on Thursday claimed his troops were teaching Haitian gangs a "lesson."

He has assured however that he will withdraw his troops once they rescue the four airmen who disappeared following a gang attack on the Haitian capital Port-au-Prince on October 18.

The missing soldiers are from a UN-backed international Gang Suppression Force.

The new Salvadoran deployment, which has destroyed facilities belonging to two gangs and helped push militias out of a soccer stadium, is separate from the GSF.

It has been welcomed by Haitian authorities, who have long sought more reinforcements to combat gangs.❑

Fluffy rabbits, dark past draw tourists to Japan island

Okunoshima, Japan

Stepping onto an island in western Japan, tourists squeal with joy at the sight of hundreds of fluffy rabbits, but few realize the land was once home to a secret chemical weapons factory for the country's Imperial Army.

Okunoshima also known as "Rabbit Island" has a perimeter of just four kilometers but welcomes thousands of snap-happy visitors attracted by its bunny population each year.

"This was my dream," to visit the island, 67-year-old Susan Balzer from Canada told AFP.

"You can feed them, they come to you. We never get to really get close to them" back home, she said.

The rabbit population is thought to have grown from a small group released by a nearby elementary school in the 1970s to around 500 today, aided by abundant food and a lack of predators.

But the island's cute exterior belies a dark history.



In this photo taken on October 23, 2026, tourists feed wild rabbits on Okunoshima Island, Hiroshima Prefecture.

In 1929, the former Imperial Japanese Army built a chemical weapons factory on Okunoshima in an effort to catch up with Europe, despite international bans introduced after World War I.

As rabbits hop around the island, which lies in the Hiroshima region, large ageing concrete and brick structures once used as power plants and poison gas depots serve as reminders of its murky past.

Many of its factory workers suffered from cancer and other diseases, according to a monument on the island.

"Learning that many people died from the gas they produced made me realize what a tragic legacy the island carries," 69-year-old visitor Eiji Tomari said.

"At the same time, I'm glad it has become a place where rabbits can live peacefully."

- 'Sustainable tourism' -

Since the production of poisonous substances, including mustard gas and lewisite, was highly secretive, authorities removed the island from Japanese maps, keeping it hidden until the end of World War II in 1945, when Allied occupation forces ordered its destruction.

"It was something that could not be disclosed, not just to ordinary citizens, but to the rest of the world," Okunoshima Poison Gas Museum Director Kazuhito Takahashi told AFP.

"If the facility had been exposed internationally, Japan, which relied heavily on imports at the time, could have faced sanctions," he said.

Masayuki Yamauchi, an 82-year-old tour guide, said rabbits were used as test subjects in experiments, although there is no evidence the bunnies now roaming the island descended from them.

"I hope people will learn about that history and use those lessons to help promote peace in the world," Yamauchi said.

Last year, around 200,000 people visited the island, according to the local tourism association.

But as word spreads on social media, some experts warn that overfeeding the rabbits is harming the ecosystem.

According to a study published in July, wild boars, lured by the food, have reportedly been observed attacking the creatures.❑

Afghan tradition keeps grapes fresh for winter treat

Kalakan, Afghanistan

On the outskirts of Afghanistan's frenetic capital Kabul, Muhammad Saber Shojaei is carrying out a centuries-old task of preserving fistfuls of grapes to be eaten when winter bites. Crouched in front of dozens of "kanginas", clay-and-straw discs containing grapes, Shojaei recalls his father, who taught him the technique.

"I remember the old days, when we sat together around the sandali (stove), eating kangina grapes and enjoying those happy moments," said the 47-year-old from Kalakan district.



This photograph taken on November 10, 2026 shows Afghan farmer Muhammad Saber Shojaei seal packing grapes in mud-and-straw discs known as Kanginas before storing them in a dark room in the Kalakan district of Kabul province.

Carefully putting a bunch of grapes in one of the discs, Shojaei added a second disc on top and sealed the kangina with mud before placing it in a dark storage room.

"In this way, kanginas can keep grapes fresh from now until the spring," said the farmer, who makes about 700 each year to sell by the roadside.

No one knows quite how long kanginas have been used in Afghanistan, with estimates starting at "centuries" and the knowledge passed down through the generations.

During harvest season, grapes for sale can be seen bundled in big plastic bags, or piled high onto trucks as they're taken to markets further afield.

But such abundance comes with problems in Afghanistan, where cold storage to keep produce fresh is severely limited and the export route to Pakistan has been cut off by cross-border conflict.

Farhad Ezati, a 21-year-old trader, said "farmers can't even cover their costs" this year as grape prices have plummeted by 70 percent due to the border closure causing a supply glut.

Standing in a bright green field while laborers packed grapes into cardboard boxes, Ezati said competition among sellers is incredibly tough.

"Afghan grapes are the best," he said, his face brightening. "They're really high in quality... and have a really good taste."

- 'Keep our culture alive' -

Labour-intensive and fragile, kanginas cannot overcome large-scale storage or trade problems.

But in the depths of winter, Afghans living near the vineyards can buy them along the roadside or in nearby markets, and farming families can crack them open and enjoy fresh grapes.

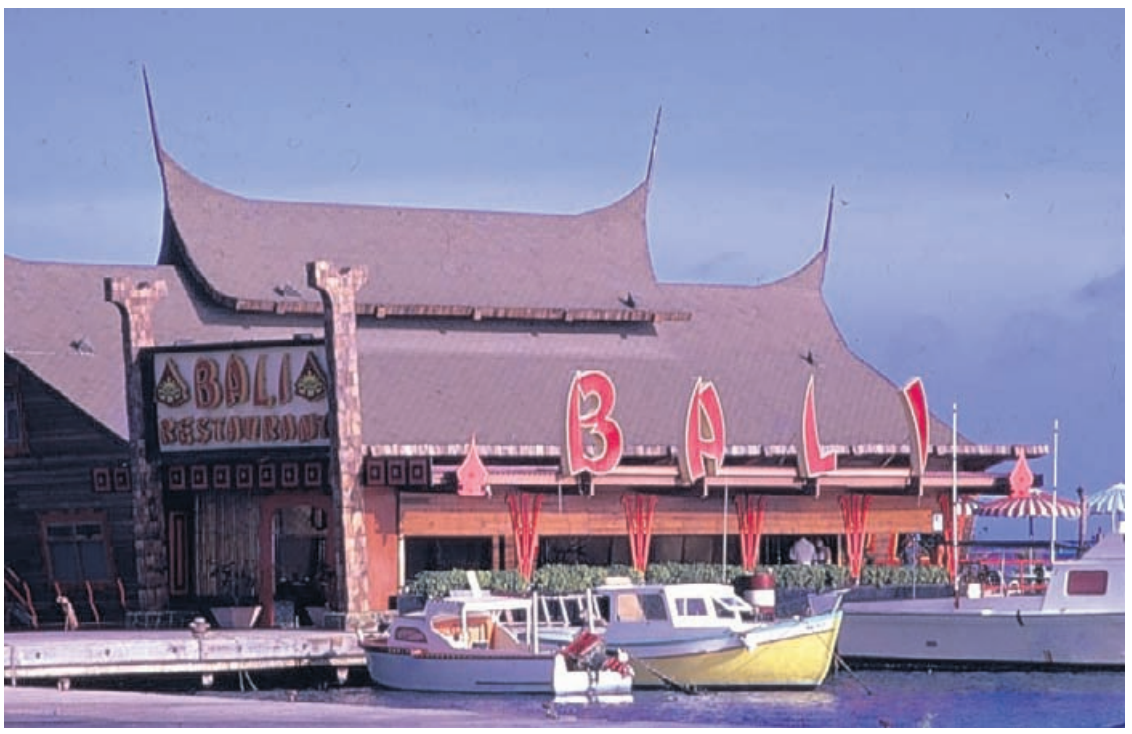
Gulagha Frotan, a community leader in Kalakan, said people wait until snow or rain to enjoy them.

"We don't wash the grapes because they might lose their natural quality. We only blow away the dust, or shake them gently, and then they're ready to eat," the 61-year-old told AFP.

Despite its long history in the Kabul area, the practice is currently only being used in one other province, neighbouring Parwan, according to the U.N.'s Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).❑

The Bali Restaurant: a touristic hot spot and lost gem on the island

(Oranjestad)—Once located by the yacht dock in front of the Parliament building, the Bali Restaurant was once both a touristic and local hot spot, and nowadays it's considered a forgotten gem on the island.



Known as "the floating restaurant", Bali first opened in 1955 by Willem "Bill" Strijland, who had experience in Javanese cuisine. At the time, the restaurant was pretty exclusive—with space to host only 25 guests. Yet, 4 years later, it was named the best restaurant in the Caribbean by the Caribbean Tourist Association.

The restaurant was probably most iconic for its Javanese-inspired exterior with its pointy, slanted roofs. However, the first version of Bali did not look like that at all but was still considered as one of the most popular restaurants on the island at the time. The restaurant saw three different owners during its existence, during which it underwent various renovations and rebranding.

In 1964, the restaurant was taken over by Karel "Carl" Schmand. Over the years, the restaurant needed constant renovation and repair, mainly due to its vulnerability to leaks and the unstable pillars underneath the foundation. However, the biggest change made to the restaurant happened in the year 1970—still under the ownership of Schmand, when it got its iconic pointy roofs. The restaurant was also expanded to host a total of 85 guests. This was "The New Bali", who had its official (re)opening in 1972.

After 1972, when Ronny Schmand took over, the restaurant saw yet another expansion; this time complete with a long bar and dance floor, where guests enjoyed live music from legendary Aruban musician and composer, Toti Arends.

After 1989, the restaurant was again handed over to other owners, and since then suffered from unstable pillars underneath the foundation, resulting in various leaks and overflowing of water into the restaurant. And as most great things come to an end, so did the survival and maintenance of the Bali Restaurant. However, folks today reminisce its legacy, and it's now considered a lost monument.

Be a part of the conversation: if you or any family member of yours have a memory of the Bali restaurant, whether it be a picture or just a story, share it with us! We would love to see this legendary hot spot through the lens of our visitors!

Source and pictures credit to: "De Kolibrie op de Rots (en meer over de geschiedenis van Aruba)" by Evert Bongers.

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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An homage to Aruba

Written by Silvia Sperling Canabarro

Aruba, ever since I first met you, I haven't wanted to return anywhere else.



Next week will mark my 21st trip to the island with my husband. Twice a year, we make arrangements for our autistic son to stay with his caregiver in Porto Alegre so that we can enjoy a few days of rest and sunshine in this magical place that has become our second home.

In the days leading up to our departure, I always feel anxious. What if my son gets sick? What if one of us gets sick? What if something goes wrong and we can't make it to our paradise? It would be such a disappointment.

I know Aruba will always be waiting for us with open arms, crystal-clear waters, and unique little hideaways. But right now, I desperately need to see you again.

To wake up to the breathtaking view of Eagle Beach, head to a little hidden cottage in Grapefield, exercise while facing the wild, crashing sea with its beautiful little natural pools, and stop by the wonderful Rodgers Beach, with its mesmerizing colors.

And as evening approaches, to take our chairs and a bottle of wine to West Punt and watch the sun slowly sink below the horizon.

This is what happiness means to me.

Aruba, wait for me with your beautiful sunshine, with the wind that carries away all sorrows, and with that sea that washes the soul clean.

Aruba, mi dushi.



Aruban legends: Frenchman's Pass



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

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

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

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

When approaching a sharp turn, the hitch hiker braced for impact, but just when he though the car might drive straight off the road and crash, he saw a hand appear out the window and turn the wheel. For the next few turns, the hand appeared again. After having had enough, the man decided to jump out and he ran to Santa Cruz.

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

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

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

Source: visitaruba.com

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National Park Arikok: Aruba's biggest nature conservation

The National Park Arikok comprises almost 18 % of the island. Its rugged terrain, desert-like hills filled with tall cacti, breathtaking coastline and protected local flora and fauna welcome you to be explored. There are numerous animals to discover, for example the bright blue Cododo or mighty Warawara.



The national park Arikok takes you on a memorable journey of the islands past offering unique geological, cultural and historical sites. These can all be enjoyed and explored either on your own or during guided tours. A wide variety of educational and informative programs and fun activities is available.

Did you know that four of the seven species of sea turtle lay their eggs on Aruba's beaches? In the national park, a Least Tern (Sternula antillarum) keeps a strict eye on a very special event taking place below on the beach: A majestic Leatherback (Dermochelys coriacea) heading back to the ocean after laying her eggs during breeding season. Sea turtles prefer nesting in the cool and dark hours of the night. And hatchlings usually wait for the cue of cooling surface sand before emerging.

Nature Conservation

The protected area of National Park Arikok was officially established in 2000. Arikok National Park is a 34 square kilometers (7907 acres) of natural area, located at the north-eastern part of Aruba which contains examples of most of the island's flora and fauna against a backdrop of great geological complexity. We are proud to state that approximately 18% of the total land area of Aruba is assigned as a National Park, to protect and preserve the flora, fauna, geology and historical remains present within Arikok National Park.

The Landscape

There is a great geological variety within the park. The main aspects are the rough hills of the volcanic Aruba lava formation, the mysterious rocks of the batholithic quartz-diorite/tonalite, and the limestone rocks from fossilized coral. The two tallest hills on the island are situated within the park. Jamanota hill 188 meters (617 ft) and Arikok hill 176 meters (577 ft), from which the name of the park is derived.

The line of the permanently wind-and-wave beaten North Coast is broken by several bays (boca's). Most of them are small yet impressive inlets at the mouth of dry riverbeds. Some of these bays (boca's) are spectacular sights, adorned with white, sandy beaches and sand dunes, as is the case at Boca Prins and Dos Playa.

Arikok is also home to Conchi, Aruba's most important natural attraction; also known as The Natural Pool. The journey to the Pool is and adventure by itself and only possible by foot, horse, or 4×4 vehicle. As of 2020, ATV's and UTVs are not allowed in the park due do its significant impact on nature.

Cultural and Historical components

There are a number of sites within the park that attest to the history of Aruba. The Caquetío Indians left rock paintings in Cunucu Arikok and Fontein Cave.

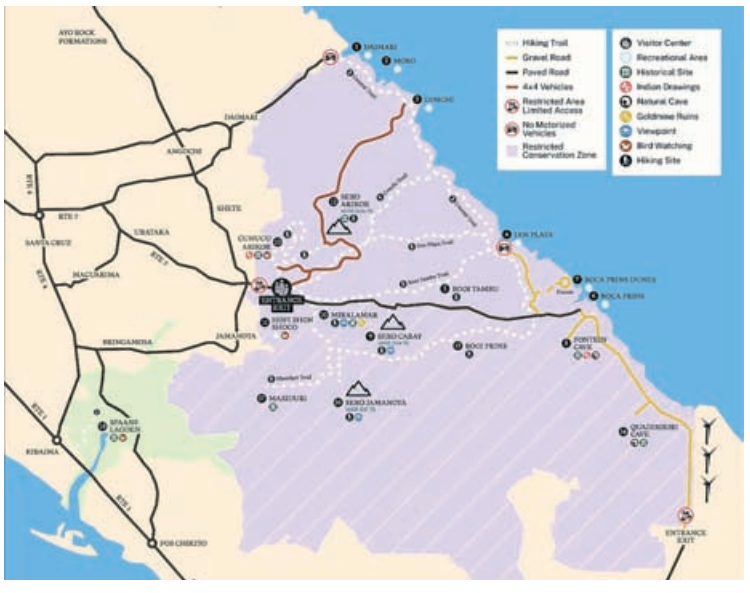
Old plantation (Cunucus) sites tell the story of an active yet challenging agricultural past.

These Cunucus were also residential areas for the few families that worked the land. These families found ways to survive in the difficult conditions, and were able to erect their homes with materials found in the area. Two of these adobe houses have been restored. Park rangers are learning many of the old building techniques in order to preserve this unique Aruban mud-house. At Cunucu Arikok and near Plantation Prins you can find these adobe houses.

Park Management

The Aruba Conservation Foundation (ACF), formerly known as Aruba National Park Foundation, manages the national park. This foundation was established in July 2003. In February 2017, mangrove and wetland RAMSAR site #198 Spanish Lagoon was annexed to Arikok National Park due to its importance as a feeding and breeding area for water birds and as a nursery area for a variety of marine organisms. With this addition, the areas under management increased by 70 hectares while the amount of species of flora and fauna to be conserved to over 250. On December 21st, 2018 (AB 2018 no. 77) Parke Marino Aruba – currently consisting of four marine protected areas (MPAs) – was officially established and subsequently brought under management of ACF. In 2019, preliminary management plan for marine were introduced for Parke Marino to conserve reefs, seagrass beds, and mangrove forests and in 2020 ACF was given additional management areas such as the Saliñas (Druif, Malmok, Cerca, Palm Beach, Bubali etc.) and also additional areas such as Rooi Manonchi, Ser'I Teishi etc. Managed areas can be seen here: https://acf.aw/.

Visit the National Park Arikok to see the wonder of Aruba's nature. The visitor center in San Fuego and entrance in Vader Piet (San Nicolas) is open daily from 8:00 AM to 16:00 PM. Contact the ACF via e-mail, info@acf.aw or call +297 585 1234 for more information. ❑



Place names in San Nicolas and their origins

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



Sero Colorado

On your way to Baby or Roger's Beach, you'll pass by the famous Red Anchor at what was once the entrance to the Colony residential community and be greeted with red soiled hills by the coast. This is Sero Colorado. Named after the 30-meter, deep red, limestone hill, "Sero Colorado" translates to "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 actually happened.

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

San Nicolas

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

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

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

Cas di Torto

Cas di torto (also called cas di lodo or cas di bara) is a traditional building technique from Aruba. It refers to a type of houses made of mud with rounded corners. These houses were usually found around the plantations. The few structures that still exist are the oldest structures that are left standing in the country.



The technique probably came over from the Venezuelan Paraguaná Peninsula in the 18th century. Existing houses date back 150 years. Until 1925 many houses on Aruba were built using this technique, afterwards it fell into disuse. In 2005 there were 62 cas di torto houses left, of which only four were in good condition.

The skeleton of the houses is made up of round wooden poles placed with distances of 1.5 feet between them. Branches are interwoven between them, completing the structural support. On this basis, loam is applied, mixed with sand, water and paragrass. This is then coated with aloe vera juice, which gives the white color and helps to protect against the weather.

On top of the poles pieces of wood are fitted that serve as the base for the roof beams. Until 1815 the roofing usually consisted of corn (maize) stems, afterwards the nuclei of columnar cacti were used. The floor is made of loam, mixed with cement or cow dung.

The houses were usually divided into a kitchen, a living room, a porch and a bedroom. In the kitchen would be a wooden or metal barrel for storing water that was collected in small rain ponds. Around this barrel a thick loam wall would be erected. Often large families would live in these houses; people would sleep on mats on the floor.

If you visit the Arikok National Park you will be able to see a very nice cas di torto. ❑

Basic driving rules on Aruba: Roundabouts

(Oranjestad)—Have you ever felt confused when you're driving on the highways or backstreets of Aruba? Then we present a simple guide to some of the basic rules of Aruban traffic, along with some tips for things to look out for.



Speed limit
Legally, the speed limit on the four-lane highways is 80 km/h. This speed limit also counts for the main roads that are connected to the highways. The minimum speed is 50 km/h. Most people drive around 60 km/h on the main roads and about 70 km/h on the highways. There are also areas that indicate a speed limit on a sign; these are usually around populated and school areas.

The four-lane highways contain the left-lane, also known as the "fast" lane for each direction. Here is where vehicles can drive up to the maximum speed. However, legally it is not permitted to drive for long periods of time on the left lane. This lane is primarily designed for drivers to switch lanes before a roundabout, for example, if your exit on the roundabout is on your far left. The general lane to drive in—both at maximum and minimum speed—is on the right lane.

Roundabouts
Speaking of roundabouts, it is important to know where you have to enter and drive on the roundabout to make your exit. A good rule of thumb is to count the exits starting from your right side. So, exit 1 would be on your right; exit 2 would be straight ahead; exit 3 would be on your far left and exit 4 would lead to the road paralleled to the one you're on, heading in the other direction.

Most roundabouts have these 4 exits, so they are relatively simple. When you're driving on the four-lane highway, it is important to know when to switch to the left lane to make your exit: if your exit is on your far left (exit 3), then you need to switch to the left lane on the high way before nearing the roundabout so you can take the path that leads you directly to your exit. If your exit is on your right or if you're going straight ahead, you can keep driving in the right lane of the highway.

It's also important to know that vehicles about to enter the roundabout must yield to those already on it. A good rule of thumb is to look out if someone is coming from your left side.

However, other roundabouts can be quite tricky to navigate…

Watty Vos Boulevard (the "paperclip" roundabout)
Probably the biggest roundabout on the island, the "paperclip" roundabout on the Watty Vos Boulevard is one of the trickier roundabouts that could—and has—caused confused among both tourists and locals. However, once you take a good look at it, it's fairly simple. The basis is just the same as a regular roundabout (left exit? left lane! etc.), but instead of having four different exits like on a regular roundabout, now you have two extra; one on the right and the other on the left side of the roundabout. The rules don't change at all, you just have to keep an extra eye open.

Airport roundabout
Ah, yes. The infamous airport roundabout. The favorite roundabout amongst local, because of its easy (hard) lanes that never (always) cause confusion among drivers. Sarcasm aside, this roundabout can be tricky to enter, especially when you're driving from the direction of the airport heading. When you're driving away from the airport reaching the roundabout, you'll be faced with three lanes. The far right lane is to take the exit 1 out heading east (right lane of highway). The middle exit is used for exit 1 (left lane of highway), 2 and 3. The far left exit is used to only exit on exit 3 (left lane of highway) and 4.

"Las Americas" roundabout
The Las Americas roundabout is located farther west from the airport roundabout. This roundabout may look like a regular roundabout—and for the most part, it is. However, when you are driving from the east going in the direction of town, please take note that there are two exits on your right.

When you're driving towards this roundabout, you'll notice that the road becomes wider, splitting into two lanes. The right lane is used to take the first and second exit on the right. If you want to exit straight ahead, you must drive on the left lane!

It's always scary to drive in new places where the traffic may look and work differently, but once you get it right once, you'll get the hang of it in no time. Additionally, all roundabouts and roads on Aruba have signs and arrows painted on the road to help guide you. So take your time, keep your eyes open and don't forget to wear a seat belt!❑



ARUBA TODAY

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH



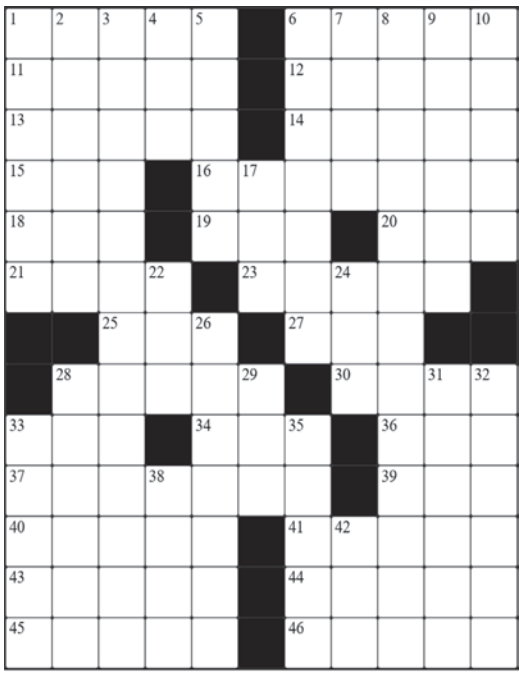
Yesterday's answer

ACROSS

1. Pan, for one
6. Crosses creeks
11. Higher than
12. Justice Kagan
13. Bowler's button
14. Main roles
15. Museum focus
16. Wanes
18. Game cube
19. Music's Yoko
20. Spring month
21. Tombstone name
23. Lipstick slip
25. Tennis need
27. Direction suffix
28. Cruller's kin
30. Concerning
33. Field judge
34. Crater part
36. Team backer
37. Friendly
39. Sphere
40. Sparkly crown
41. Dip for a chip
43. Rocker John
44. Heavens supporter
45. Title documents
46. Panache

DOWN

1. Holiday event
2. Portugal's place
3. Agatha Christie mystery
4. Holiday lead-in
5. Nostalgically trendy
6. Mat word
7. Out of the wind
8. Agatha Christie mystery
9. Make beloved
10. Fresh
17. Print units
22. Stock holder
24. Bit of history
26. Wrapped headdresses
28. Sully
29. Before, briefly
31. Ankle bone
32. Ready to come home
33. Appraised
35. Buttes' kin
38. Yankee great, familiarly
42. Court worker: Abbr.



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.

11-20 CRYPTOQUOTE

NT UCC N LA NE GV CNTP NK KAAXMP KAGPAEP'K KQNINX YNXM U KAED, XMPE CPX GP LA XMUX UEL N'G MUQQV.

— DCULVK WENDMX

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: I WOULD VENTURE TO WARN AGAINST TOO GREAT INTIMACY WITH ARTISTS AS IT IS VERY SEDUCTIVE AND A LITTLE DANGEROUS. — QUEEN VICTORIA

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.



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

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

Difficulty: ★★★★ 11/21

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Answer to previous puzzle

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

Difficulty: ★★★★ 11/20

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Anthropic researcher says Claude solved math's greatest riddle

Washington, United States
A researcher at AI company Anthropic said Friday that he had used the firm's Claude chatbot to prove the Riemann Hypothesis, a problem that has eluded mathematicians for more than 160 years.
First proposed by German mathematician Bernhard Riemann in 1859, the hypothesis concerns the distribution of prime numbers and is widely regarded as the most important open question in pure mathematics.

"I believe I have, working with Claude, discovered a proof of the Riemann Hypothesis," Levent Alpoge wrote in a four-page note released Friday.
The claim has not been independently verified, and the proof has not yet been reviewed by outside experts.
"It's a monumental moment in human history. It's really the biggest thing I think that's ever happened in mathematics," Brian Conrey, a leading specialist on the Riemann Hypothesis, told AFP.
"I really did not see this coming at all," he said, adding that he had not yet seen a manuscript, only the remarks Alpoge posted on his website, and had asked for a copy.

"It looks like it's seriously complicated. I don't think any human was about to find this," Conrey said, adding that he believed "there will be simpler ways to do it."
The Riemann Hypothesis is one of seven Millennium Prize Problems selected by the Clay Mathematics Institute in 2000, which offers $1 million for a solution to each.
Under the institute's rules, a solution must be published in a peer-reviewed journal and withstand two years of scrutiny.
Alpoge said the method also resolves a broader version of the problem known as the Generalized Riemann Hypothesis.

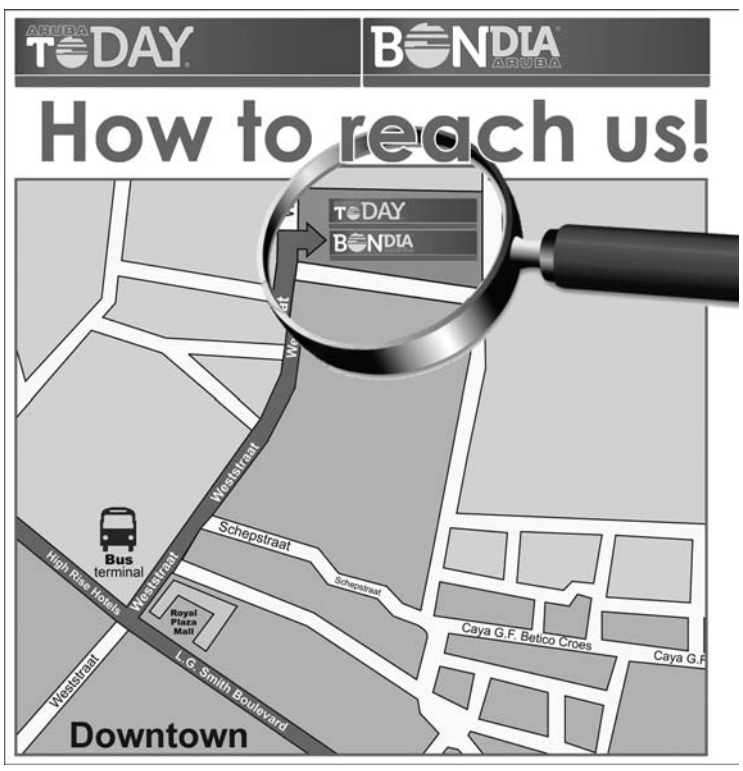


Portrait of Bernhard Riemann (1826-1866.) German mathematician

He said he with help of Claude had produced a version of the proof in Lean, a programming language that allows mathematical arguments to be checked by computer, and that he was releasing only that version for now.
A full written argument would be extremely long, he said, adding that he had not yet mastered all of the mathematics involved and planned to write it up properly.

- No 'machine god' -
Alpoge said he had consulted Anthropic chief executive Dario Amodei before announcing the result, and acknowledged that its timing could be viewed cynically, without elaborating.
The announcement came the day after Anthropic's record stock market debut.
In August, Anthropic said an unreleased version of Claude had improved a long-standing result related to the Riemann Hypothesis, while stressing that it had not proved it.
Anthropic did not immediately respond to a request for comment from AFP.
The claim comes two months after rival OpenAI said an AI model had solved another Millennium Prize Problem, on the equations that govern how fluids move. Mathematicians say that proof appears correct but has yet to be fully vetted.

Alpoge, who had worked on related fluid problems with New York University mathematician Tristan Buckmaster, was at the center of a dispute over credit for that work. OpenAI denied wrongdoing.
Nestor Guillen, a visiting professor of mathematics at New York University, said he was glad that "this time there might not be any of the same corporate controversy."❑



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‘Insane’ to see AI in hands of private giants: ex-Anthropic researcher to AFP

San Francisco, United States
Artificial intelligence (AI) researcher Jacob Coxon, who famously quit Anthropic in September while accusing them of gambling with lives, told AFP Thursday it’s “insane” to see the powerful technology being developed by giant for-profit corporations.
“Today is a very strange day,” the 27-year-old Briton said, as his former employer made a record-setting debut on the stock market.
Coxon spoke outside Anthropic’s headquarters in San Francisco, where protesters called for a ban on the development of models that can autonomously build new generations of themselves via what the industry calls recursive self improvement (RSI).
AI used to be developed by small non-profits and academic research organizations, but now the industry is dominated by trillion-dollar corporations like Anthropic and rival lab OpenAI, which makes ChatGPT.
Anthropic was valued at $1.5 trillion in its IPO on Wednesday, and ended its first day of trading on the Nasdaq exchange with a $1.3 trillion valuation. OpenAI was valued at $1.25 trillion in a private funding round earlier this month, according to reports.



British AI researcher and former Anthropic employee Jacob Coxon speaks to protesters gathered outside Anthropic headquarters in San Francisco, California during the artificial intelligence company initial public offering (IPO), on November 19, 2026.

“I think this symbolizes just how crazy the situation has become, because it’s insane. It’s really insane that for-profit companies are the ones building this technology,” Coxon said.
The Cambridge graduate spent three years working on model pre-training the stage where they absorb vast amounts of data at OpenAI, then a few months at Anthropic.
His resignation, announced on X on September 8, made headlines around the world. He accused both companies of “racing straight to self-improving superintelligence.”

“The people building AI earnestly believe that it could kill us all by the end of the decade,” he wrote.
That doomsday scenario could be unleashed by RSI, in theory.
“You end up potentially compressing decades of AI research into months, and if we don’t understand the AI, this leads to potentially highly dangerous, highly advanced AI systems by the end of 2027,” Coxon told AFP on Thursday.
“Anthropic should refuse to do RSI,” he said, and accused the company of planning to embark on it as early as next year.

– “Scared” about the state of the world –
Coxon resigned from Anthropic before his shares fully vested, but he still holds equity in OpenAI, which could be worth a small fortune if the company goes public in 2027 as planned.
During an appearance at Stanford University on November 9, he described his stake in OpenAI as “blood money” but has it nonetheless.
“I like money, bro,” he said, drawing ridicule on social media before reversing course a few days later and committing to donating all of the value of his shares to AI safety organizations, without specifying which ones.
He now plans to work for a non-profit organization, perhaps in AI safety research.
“Ideally, I’d like to do safety research, but I think there’s not enough time for that,” he said.

“The only thing that will slow down the AI companies is political action. It’s a political problem now, not a technical problem. We need to slow them down,” he said.
He supports the technology overall but encourages people to think critically about it.❑

TikTok launches tool to help public figures detect deepfakes globally

London, United Kingdom
TikTok announced Friday the global launch of its deepfake-detection tool for public figures as the social media platform seeks to curb AI-generated disinformation ahead of a wave of European elections next year.
The “likeness detection tool” allows politicians and accounts with a large number of followers on TikTok to find and report AI-generated content using their image without consent, with the tool gradually being rolled out.
Deepfakes are text, images, videos and sounds that appear to be real but are generated or manipulated by AI.
For TikTok, owned by China-based ByteDance, the tool is a key part of protecting against disinformation during elections across Europe next year, including in Italy, France and Greece.
“Protecting the integrity of the elections is one of the most critical responsibilities that we have at TikTok,” Francesca Scapolo, the company’s government relations lead for European elections, said at TikTok’s safety and innovation event in London on Thursday.
She added that the likeness tool would help “politicians and government identify potentially AI-generated content that has been shared potentially without their consent.”



This illustration photograph shows the logo of the social media and short-form video platform Tik Tok displayed on a smartphone in Mulhouse, eastern France on February 11, 2026.

The European Union began rolling out sweeping artificial intelligence transparency rules in August, including a requirement for deepfakes and other AI-generated content to be labeled.
TikTok has required content creators to label realistic AI-generated images, audio and video for several years. The company last year said that technological improvements would allow it to cut down on moderation jobs and locations worldwide.
AI has grown in importance for social media moderation as operators look to save money on human checks for content like pornography, misinformation and hate speech.❑



Philip Quinton #26 of Real Salt Lake scores the last penalty in the penalty shoot out during western conference wild card match between Seattle Sounders FC and Real Salt Lake as part of the Audi 2026 MLS Cup Playoffs at Lumen Field on November 19, 2026 in Seattle, Washington.

Cincinnati beat Griezmann's Orlando, Salt Lake oust Seattle in MLS playoffs

Miami, United States
FC Cincinnati booked an MLS first-round playoff berth with a 3-1 win that eliminated Antoine Griezmann's Orlando City, while Real Salt Lake beat Seattle on penalties in Thursday's other wild-card clash.

Brazilian midfielder Evander scored twice and provided an assist as Cincinnati came from behind following Martin Ojeda's opener at Orlando's Inter.co Stadium.
Orlando City crashed out at the play-in round for the second year running, despite the coup of signing World Cup-winning France striker Griezmann, who arrived in July from Atletico Madrid.

The 35-year-old had scored 14 goals with eight assists in just 18 appearances this season, helping his new team climb to an eighth-placed finish.
But he missed several chances Thursday, including a glanced header onto the roof of the net deep in stoppage time.

Ojeda opened the scoring in the 26th minute, slamming home a through ball from Ivan Angulo.
The comeback began with a 43rd-minute penalty. Marco Pasalic pulled Pavel Bucha's shirt from a short corner and Evander buried the penalty low and left.

The Brazilian grabbed his brace five minutes after the break. Tom Barlow had a shot well-saved by Maxime Crepeau but reached the rebound first to set up Evander.
Evander turned creator in the 85th minute, setting up Samuel Gidi for an effort that curled just inside the far post.

Cincinnati will play the regular season-topping Nashville in a best-of-three series beginning Sunday.
Their top scorer Kevin Denkey will be fresh, having not played Thursday after just returning from Togo international duty.

- Cabral saves Salt Lake -
Real Salt Lake advanced 4-2 on penalties at Seattle's Lumen Field after the game finished 1-1, thanks to the heroics of Brazilian goalkeeper Rafael Cabral.
Half an hour into a first half dominated by Seattle, Cabral saved an Albert Rusnak penalty, diving low and right to keep the game scoreless.
But five minutes later Rusnak started and ended an excellent team goal, collecting Sebastian Gomez's first-time pass and steering the ball home from an acute angle.
Early in the second half, Cabral made a stunning point-blank save to stop Dejan Joveljic doubling the lead.
Salt Lake stunned the home crowd with a 62-minute equalizer. Morgan Guilavogui latched onto Sergi Solans' through ball and smashed his shot into the roof of the net, ultimately sending the tie to penalties.
Cabral saved the first two Sounders penalties, taken by Joveljic and Rusnak, while Salt Lake buried all four of theirs, including defender Philip Quinton's game-winner.

They will play Western Conference-topping Vancouver in a series starting Sunday.
Lionel Messi's Inter Miami, seeking a second consecutive MLS title, will host the Columbus Crew on Saturday.❑



Victor Wembanyama #1 of the San Antonio Spurs scores over Brook Lopez #11 of the Los Angeles Clippers in the first half at Frost Bank Center on November 19, 2026 in San Antonio, Texas.

Wembanyama laughs off dunking blister as Spurs beat Clippers 124-112

Los Angeles, United States
Victor Wembanyama played through a painful blister caused by excessive dunking to get the San Antonio Spurs back on track with 32 points and 11 rebounds in a 124-112 win over the Los Angeles Clippers on Thursday.
The Spurs, who had their 12-game winning streak snapped by Detroit on Tuesday, trailed early in the fourth quarter before pulling emphatically clear of the Clippers.
French superstar Wembanyama, who also had three assists, sealed the win in unusual circumstances.

He leapt to seemingly dunk the ball, but at the last moment improvised a close-range jump shot from above the rim a decision he later explained was due to a blister he had acquired from slamming the ball so much this season.
"Every time I dunk, it kills me. I've been dragging this blister for I don't know how long, because of dunking. So if I can avoid it, I'll avoid it," he said, with a smile.
"I don't know how it happened at first, but it definitely came from dunking a lot, and it's actually so painful. It's crazy."
Wembanyama was supported by Stephon Castle's double-double of 21 points and 12 assists, and Julian Champagnie, who scored half his 20 points in a blistering final quarter in Texas.

Victory sends the Spurs back joint-top of the Western Conference, level with the Los Angeles Lakers on 13-3 after the Lakers' shock loss Wednesday to lowly ranked Utah.
Brook Lopez and Darius Garland each racked up 23 points in defeat for the Clippers, who allowed 28 points from turnovers.
The defending champion New York Knicks made it three wins in a row, holding on for a narrow 102-99 triumph over the Minnesota Timberwolves.
LaMelo Ball attempted a game-tying trey with nine seconds remaining but missed, and Landry Shamet's steal from Jonathan Kuminga on the rebound sealed the win.
Karl-Anthony Towns led the Knicks scoring with 22 plus 12 rebounds and three blocks, while Kuminga scored 23 in the loss and was superb in defense.
The Memphis Grizzlies grabbed their fifth straight win -- the longest streak in the West with a 126-98 thumping of the Golden State Warriors.
It was a fifth consecutive loss for the Warriors.❑

Vikings and 49ers fight altitude for Mexico City showdown

Washington, United States
Concerns over lower oxygen at high altitude have prompted special preparations for the San Francisco 49ers and Minnesota Vikings ahead of their NFL showdown Sunday at Mexico City.

The Niners share the NFL's best record at 8-1 with Buffalo while the Vikings are 7-2, level with Detroit and Chicago atop the NFC North division.

The contest is set for Estadio Azteca, more than 7,300 feet above sea level, so the 49ers flew to Colorado Springs, Colorado, after beating Dallas last Sunday and practiced at Air Force Academy stadium, with an elevation of more than 6,600 feet above sea level.

Other NFL teams have used the facility ahead of Mexico City contests, including the New England Patriots, Los Angeles Rams and Los Angeles Chargers.

"I think it helps," 49ers coach Kyle Shanahan said. "I grew up mainly in Denver and I always know how bad it would be for me. It didn't matter how good a shape you're in. When I came home from college, you'd run up the stairs and be out of breath. It takes some time to get used to it.



Kirk Cousins #8 and Christian Darrisaw #71 of the Minnesota Vikings celebrate a touchdown against the Green Bay Packers during the fourth quarter at Lambeau Field on November 15, 2026 in Green Bay, Wisconsin.

"When you go to play in Denver, it's always a challenge, and I know Mexico City is higher than Denver. It's not make or break by any means, but I do think it makes you a couple percent better."

Shanahan was coach in 2022 when the 49ers beat Arizona at Mexico City.

"It's definitely nicer to play in something when you're acclimated to that altitude, so you're not as out of breath," Shanahan said.

The Vikings, however, took a different route to having players adjust to high altitude after consulting with experts at FIFA and the US Olympic Committee.

They built a High-Altitude Room at the team's headquarters, allowing players to work at altitude while keeping familiar routines at home before traveling to Mexico on Saturday.

"A lot of these processes and strategies are all situationally dependent... but everybody's always looking to gain any one or two percent competitive edge you can," said Tyler Williams, the Vikings vice president of player health and performance.

"We have close to 450 sessions accumulated in there. Nearly our whole roster has done five-plus sessions and nearly our whole roster has (felt conditions at) 12,000 feet.

"Even though you're not doing a full practice at altitude, you're trying to gain a lower rate of perceived exertion. You also have a behavioral adaptation how your body responds, how you know how to pace yourself at altitude, how to breathe and use breathing strategies in your first exposure compared to your fifth. It's a learned adaptation."

The room, set at 9,000 feet to start and gradually raised to 12,000 feet, can hold up to 12 players with stationary bicycles and a treadmill plus workout programs adapted to the altitude. The Vikings will also have plenty of oxygen on the sidelines.

"Even if you don't feel out of breath, just keep your internal tank full," Williams said. "Use it as often as you feel necessary."

Sunday's other key NFL games find Buffalo (8-1) hosting Miami (1-8) while Chicago entertains New Orleans (3-6) and Detroit is home against Tampa Bay (3-6).

Jacksonville (7-2) visits the New York Giants (5-3-1) in a matchup of division leaders while Denver (7-2) will host Las Vegas (4-6) and Monday's contest has Cincinnati (7-2) at Washington (3-5-1).❑

Alcaraz brushes off injury to down Cobolli at ATP Finals, sets up Shelton clash

Turin, Italy
Carlos Alcaraz made light of any potential hamstring issues he may be facing as he eased to a 6-4, 6-1 victory over Flavio Cobolli in the ATP Finals on Friday, in the process booking a last-four meeting with Ben Shelton.

The third seed had an MRI scan on the thigh issue on Thursday but showed little sign that the heavy strapping on his left leg was hampering him as he needed just over an hour to dismiss the world number six in Turin.



Spain's Carlos Alcaraz prepares a return to Italy's Flavio Cobolli during their match at the ATP Finals tennis tournament, in Turin on November 20, 2026.

With three victories from his three Ivan Lendl Group outings, Alcaraz has topped the pool and will face American Shelton on Saturday in a repeat of the Paris Masters final earlier in November.

Alcaraz beat Shelton 7-6 (7/5), 7-5 in the final in France to win the title for the first time, a measure of revenge on the American who had ended the Spaniard's US Open title defence earlier in the season.

"The challenge is not on the court now, it's outside the court," the 23-year-old Spaniard said.

"I will do everything to be in better shape, physically, to be ready tomorrow (Saturday). It's going to be a really important half of the day that I have ahead of me with my team, with my physio.

"So we will see, but I think I'm doing great things. I felt great on court today."

Later, Daniil Medvedev and Frances Tiafoe will battle it out for the final last-four berth, with the victor set to face world number one Alexander Zverev on Saturday.

Alcaraz has not lost a match going back to a round-of-32 exit at the Shanghai Masters in early October, and that confidence and form was on clear display as he broke Italian Cobolli in the very first game of the match.

The seven-time Grand Slam champion served out the opener, before again breaking the 24-year-old in the first game of the second set before racing to victory.

"It was a difficult match for me, because I had to see how I was going to feel on the court," Alcaraz said.

For French Open runner-up Cobolli it was a swift and painful end to his Finals debut as he finished bottom of the group with three defeats in as many outings.❑