

# ¿Qué Pasa?

New in Que Pasa Grecia

Since our last Update, we've added a Toyota Rav4 for sale and we have price reduction on a house for sale in San Pedro de Sarchi. Joe Cahill's items for sale have been updated—check them out.

Due to Omicron the Democrats Aboard voter registration scheduled for 27 January, 2022 has been postponed. Find more info on 'why' and Hacienda Vivace is restarting—both described in Upcoming Events. One new restaurant and one restaurant relocation have been recommended. We've added a "performing a doggie Heimlick Maneuver" in our Pets/Rescue/Vets section, and a macrobiotica with locations in Santa Gertrudis and San Ramon.

We've also made a minor screen edit change to our 'Out and About' section renaming it 'Basic Info' making it easier for you to find some basic information such as: Costa Rica official holidays, emergency numbers, weather forecast access, trash pick up, bus schedule access, and taxi contacts. We will be updating our COVID section, pending government updates.

Omicron Variant Overwhelms Latin America. Get Your Booster.

The COVID's much more infectious omicron variant has taken over the lead COVID spot in Latin America including Costa Rica. The U.S. State Department has just raised the travel alert for Costa Rica to Level 3. It seems the load of Omicron follows previous waves and that Costa Rica runs about 2-3 weeks behind the wave cycles that have been seen in the U.S. New Omicron cases here are running over 5,000 a day. Even though Omicron appears to be less deadly than Delta or the original version, with so many cases, hospitals are bound to be filling up.

Pfizer boosters are available to all residents 65 or over somewhere in their canton. Get yours now. If you contract Omicron COVID, being vaccinated and boosted increases your chance of not being hospitalized by almost 30X.

Remember, we may be done with COVID-19, but COVID-19 is not done with us—still, not for some time to come.

## Voluntary QR Code 'COVID Passport' Required on a Basis Begins 1 February

From 1 February through, at least, March 7, the voluntary requirement of a Costa Rica Health Ministry QR code 'COVID Passport' will be in place at all sports, cultural, academic and business venues where it is requested for admittance for all persons 12 and older. It is voluntary for the vendor or venue, NOT the attendee and the percentages permitted under various categories are fairly complicated. So, you should be sure to have your QR code residing on your cell phone. The Ministry of Health is asking you to remain truly confused until the Contentious Administrative Court rules on its constitutionality, hopefully by early March.

## Countrywide Sanitary Driving Restrictions Continue to 15 February

Effective 24 January through 15 February the driving restrictions now in place will be extended with the only change being driving prohibitions that will now be from midnight to 5am.

## Credit Card Pin Number Requirement Postponed Until 1 May

Costa Rica has postponed a requirement for your credit card to have an assigned four-digit pin number to be used at the time of purchase for amounts over ₡30-mil (about \$50). This was first due to begin 1 February. As has happened in the past, the rapid implementation may not have been well-thought-through by Costa Rica's bureaucrats. They appear to have seen the error of their ways and are extending the full-compliance period until 1 May. However, they have addressed the issue with solutions only targeted at credit cards issued by Costa Rica banks. This makes it problematic for credit cards issued by North American banks.

The reason: while ATM cards and European bank-issued credit cards assign use of four-digit pin numbers, and soon to include Costa Rica credit cards, many North American-issued credit cards do not issue or use pin numbers for purchases and only infrequently assign them to credit cards when used to withdraw funds from an ATM. With as many North American ex-pats residing and purchasing with plastic, we need to have the government and business community made aware of the potential problem for ex-pats and address it for the many thousands of North Americans residing here.

It may take you some considerable effort, as it did me this week, to get a pin for these cards from your bank. So meanwhile, your editor strongly suggests that you take advantage of this pause to contact your bank or credit card issuer to arrange for a four-digit pin for your credit cards.

## New D101 Filing for Corporations Due by the End of January

Delayed from implementation last year, this new D101 reporting requirement requires a CPA certify that all Costa Rica corporations are either "inactive" (with no income and not subject to tax) or "active" (with income and taxable). This filing is due by the end of January. Check with your CPA, accountant or lawyer about how to comply.

## Costa Rica Presidential and Assembly of Deputies Elections on 6 February

There seems to have been much less hoopla than in previous elections, but on 6 February Costa Ricans will head to the polls to elect the Assembly of Deputies and a new President to four-year terms. There are 27 political parties with candidates for president. If no one gets 40% of the vote on

this first ballot for president, as seems likely, there will be a runoff between the top two vote getters. This election seems to be one of: 'not who you are for, but who you are against.'

Paper or Plastic? Plastic!

By 1 February, 2022, all Costa Rica currency in denominations of 50-mil and 20-mil colones will need to be the new plastic bills. The older paper bills in these denominations will not be accepted as legal tender by vendors, but can be used to deposit in Costa Rica banks. These paper bills can also be exchanged at Costa Rica banks for the new plastic types.

Violent Break Ins Are Still Around—Be Careful, Stay Alert

Keep the police and OIJ phone numbers handy. And, report all crimes.

Guerra avisada no mata a soldado

A good way to say: "I told you so".

Thank you Isabel Arguello for your continuing contributions.  
Isabel teaches Spanish and does translations.  
Find out more about Isabel on the QuePasaGrecia website.

Hoping you don't have to scramble to catch up to begin 2022,  
D. Davis, editor  
Diane Cooner, webmaster

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