

Que Pasa Grecia

Serving the Expat Community since 2014

¿Qué Pasa?



Que Pasa Grecia Update #1 January 2025

What's New in *QuePasaGrecia*

Since our last Update, we have a [sale listing](#) for a two-story, 3-bedroom house with plenty of storage space and great views in El Cajon de Arriba. There is also a large dog-crate for sale and other [various new items](#) listed. January dates for collection of non-traditional refuse items (tires, plastic trash, assorted metal, etc.) is posted in "[Upcoming Events](#)" on the *QuePasaGrecia* site.

At Present, CAJA Is a Mess



Que Pasa offers articles on local places to go, helpful how-to's, and general observations of life in the Grecia/Sarchi area.
Click on the photo to visit our site!

At the moment, CAJA is a real mess, with at least 90 specialists having left recently, and most of the rest looking to leave. The government is aware, and trying to make some major changes, but nothing in this bureaucracy moves at lightning speed. Whether they can make substantive changes before the system collapses is the question at hand.

The CAJA system is quite antiquated and grotesquely inefficient. There is plenty of room for improvement. One case in point: if you are scheduled and high in the queue for surgery, when notified you must stop everything, check into the hospital and occupy a bed - for one hour, one day, or a week. Leave the bed and you lose your place in line and must begin again after you are called again. This fills up the beds in CAJA hospitals with patients who need not be occupying a space until they are being prepped for surgery. The other well-known issue is the long, long queue for diagnostic tests - up to 42 months—not particularly effective if you are being tested for a life-threatening condition.

There are numerous private diagnostic facilities, clinics, and independent physician alternatives. In addition, there are also private hospital solutions: Hospital Metropolitano; Clinica Biblica; CIMA; and Hospital Catolica. Many/most of the private care providers are staffed by most-capable professionals, and many of these health care providers have been trained in the U.S. Many of Costa Rica's private medical solutions have multiple locations and discount programs. Please see our section on [Medical Information](#).

Compared to U.S. health care prices, Costa Rica's private health options are a real bargain. Private health insurance is also available, but not always available if you have a pre-existing condition, or affordable if you are a senior. However, if your Costa Rica budget does not allow a private healthcare option, it is your editor's understanding that, at least, privately performed diagnostics (which can be performed much more rapidly than via CAJA) will be accepted by your CAJA physician.

I am most-hopeful that the current Costa Rica government will come up with solutions that will stave off a collapse of its national healthcare system. Film at 11.

Yellow Fever Shots Required, But There's No Vaccine

There is a growing yellow fever epidemic throughout Latin America. So beginning 1 February, Costa Rica will require



Petmate Sky Kennel for sale. IATA Compliant and Airline Approved Dog Crate for Pets 90-125 lbs
Contact Juliana on WhatsApp at +506 6482 7891
Loving Pet Not Included



Single bed with Sarchi crafted wood frame



[Blooms invites you to get social! Monthly meetings in the Western Central valley.](#)



[New Real Estate listings in Atenas!](#)

yellow fever shots for any citizen/resident headed outbound for a long list of countries in Central and South America.

The one problem emblematic of the current medical disconnect: there is no vaccine available at any private pharmacy in Costa Rica and almost none at any CAJA facility, either, but CAJA assures us that the vaccine will be available by 11 February.

People over 60, women pregnant or breastfeeding and those with prior vaccine-issues history in the past will be exempted for the vaccination requirement. If you are concerned, in doubt, and are planning to visit anywhere in Latin America outside of Costa Rica after 1 February, consult with your physician, who may agree to provide you with a letter exempting you from the vaccination.

Will the U.S. Forcibly Reclaim the Panama Canal?

I mention this primarily because the Canal's proximity is so close to us in Costa Rica that it could impact us in several ways. The U.S. President-elect has said that he wants to take back control of the Panama Canal, which the U.S. ceded to Panama in 1979 during the Carter Administration. As Panama's immediate neighbor to the north, there are domestic and economic implications for Costa Rica as Panama has no interest in giving it back.

I have assurances from former a member of the Carter Administration, who went to Panama 1978 with the president during the negotiation of the Canal Treaties, that it will never happen. For a number of very legitimate and logical reasons, it is not a good, legal, or practical idea for the U.S. to pursue. The point my friend makes is that what Panama is actually providing today is the water needed for ships to get from one side of Panama to the other. And water currently is a diminishing commodity along the Canal in Panama. Honestly, who'd want to take on the cost of resolving to get enough water to keep the Canal and its lakes full and shipping flowing, as well as the negative international response from a takeover that the U.S. could expect.

The 2024 Rain Gauge Was Overflowing—Okay, Stop Already!!!

What's going on here? Panama and our Caribbean Coast are suffering from drought, but in December the Central Valley and Pacific Coast had measurable rain. WHAAA? We're already six



The characteristic symptoms of **mild dengue** are sudden-onset fever, headache (typically located behind the eyes), muscle and joint pains, nausea, vomiting, swollen glands and a rash. If this progresses to severe dengue the symptoms are severe abdominal pain, persistent vomiting, rapid breathing, bleeding gums or nose, fatigue, restlessness, blood in vomit or stool, extreme thirst, pale and cold skin, and feelings of weakness



And now **yellow fever!** Initial symptoms of yellow fever can include fever, chills, severe headache, back pain, general body aches, nausea, vomiting, fatigue (feeling tired), and weakness. Severe symptoms include high fever, yellow skin or eyes (jaundice), bleeding, shock, and organ failure. Also transmitted by infected aedes aegypti mosquitos.

weeks into what is the typical beginning of our summer in the Central Valley and we'll probably continue to have rain into the third week of the new year. Is climate change making this our new normal, or is it just an anomaly? Only time will tell.

For December, Irina says El Cajon de Grecia got 10.6 cms (4.2") and Tom recorded 10.5 cms (4.1") in San Juan de Sarchí. Rainfall totals 1 January through 31 December are off the chart for any year. El Cajon de Grecia had 461.1 cms (181.5" – that's over 15 feet of rain) and San Juan de Sarchi recorded 429.6 cms (169.1") totals for 2024. Sarchi's Director de Acueducto says he's 60 and can't remember ever seeing rain in late December or more predicted for January.

Scotiabank Canada and Davivienda to Combine Operations

Scotiabank Canada will turn over its operations in Columbia, Panama and Costa Rica to Davivienda in return for a 20% stake in Davivienda and positions on the Davivienda board. The transaction is expected to be complete in about one year. Your editor assumes that Scotiabank branches will become Davivienda branches in these three countries, but don't expect this to happen soon. I have been a customer of both banks and Davivienda should be a good surviving bank brand.

Miscellaneous

Beware: Scammers Are Active – it seems scammers have made their New Years Resolutions and are on the move. We have a report that some may actually reside in our area. A good policy is to not do business with folks you don't know or who are not recommended by a friend or trusted source.

School Uniforms Needed – school starts again soon and it's time to ask for you to help us buy uniforms for children of Sarchi's poorest families. Education for all children is free, but those without uniforms are allowed no entry into classes. Let's make sure these kids get an education and a chance for a better life. Contact: Karen Temple-Davis, ktdcasacostarica@gmail.com or Diane Cooner, cr.amani.amor@gmail.com.

QPG's Doors Will Remain Open in 2025 – Gracias!!! to all of you who contributed to cover our annual operational expenses for 2025.

We're Making a Difference - The *Caribe Sinfónico*



Help Aldair Fight Leukemia: Urgent Need for Surgery

January 7, 2025. We are reaching out to you with an urgent request for support.

Aldair, part of the *QuePasaGrecia* family, has been battling leukemia since 2023.

Recently, Aldair's health has taken a concerning turn.

Despite our hopes for his recovery, he now faces new complications that require immediate medical attention.

Here is the link to our GoFundMe campaign:

<https://gofund.me/9d2c568e>



Caribe Sinfónico asks for your support!

Foundation is active and focused on changing lives. The foundation has recently received commitments of support for several workshops and projects and will undoubtedly need more financial and volunteer assistance to stage our youth workshop and concert programs. Please consider volunteering some of your time or making a donation to the Caribe Sinfónico project. Give me a call for more info. You can also check out our webpage: <https://caribesinfonico.com> or visit my GoFundMe page: <https://gofund.me/32e8dcc0>.

“A caballo regalado, no le mires el diente”

Translation: Don't look a gift horse in the mouth.

Meaning: Don't be overly critical of something you receive for free.

Thank you Isabel Arguello for your continuing contributions.

Isabel teaches Spanish and does translations.

Find out more about Isabel on the [QuePasaGrecia](#) website.

Please stay safe, stay healthy, and have a prosperous 2025,

D. Davis, editor

Diane Cooner, webmaster

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