

Que Pasa Grecia
Serving the Expat Community since 2014

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¿Qué Pasa?

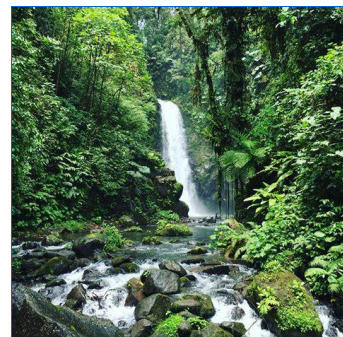


Que Pasa Grecia Update #2 February 2025

What's New in *QuePasaGrecia*

Since our last Update, we have listed [new items for sale](#): an under-the-counter electric instant water heater, a single bed, and two printers. Plus a new request under 'Items Wanted'. Also, Birdy and the Blues Cruisers will be performing Saturdays, [8 and 15 Feb](#). See the website for details on all of these announcements.

U.S. and Costa Rica Government Updates



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!

Much has happened in government and politics since our January update that could affect most of us to varying degrees here in Costa Rica. We are making our best effort here to cover them as apolitically as possible.

The new U.S. administration has frozen all Department of State foreign aid funding for 90 days, including to Costa Rica, in order to make budget expenditure assessments. It is quite possible that some or all of these freezes MAY become permanent. (Some with influence to the president advocated that USAID, the U.S. foreign aid entity, be dissolved entirely and as of this writing the USAID offices were shuttered, but Secretary Rubio says he is the USAID acting director and that is not the case. It's a bit chaotic and the status of USAID is unclear.) Embassy staffing MAY also be impacted as all federal employees have been offered "early retirement" and the budgets of all departments are being reviewed with the object of reducing cost. As a result, ex-pat interaction with the embassy MAY face additional inconveniences and delays based on the ultimate outcomes. And as is typical with incoming administrations, it is almost certain that the U.S. Ambassador to Costa Rica, Cynthia Ann Telles, will be replaced at some point with a candidate chosen by the new administration.

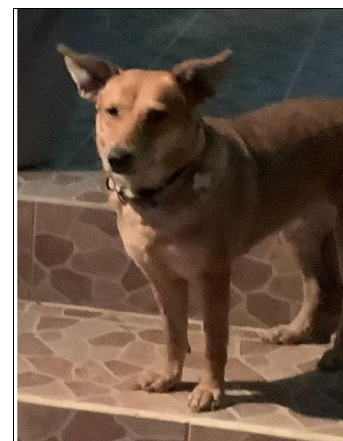
New U.S. Secretary of State, Marco Rubio, has begun his visits to some Latin American countries, including Costa Rica. Costa Rica President Ricardo Chaves has announced that rather than focus discussion topics on intrinsic ideals, such as democracy, with the new U.S. administration, he will take a transactional approach and concentrate on mutual interaction for such things as breaking up cartels, interrupting the drug trade and stemming gang violence. The U.S. immigrant deportation effort and focus on our neighbor Panama and their Panama Canal is underway. The speculation is that the U.S. will threaten some Latin American countries, such as Costa Rica, with tariffs or withdrawal of economic support, unless they agree to become third-party recipients of non-citizen deportees. In addition, the "waiting room" U.S. immigration processing centers in Ecuador, Guatemala, Columbia, AND Costa Rica are being closed. It is still unclear what the ultimate impact of the joint U.S. immigration discussions between the U.S. and Costa Rica will be, but there are now 350,000 Venezuelans, who no longer have "protected status" in the U.S., and whose lives could be dramatically compromised if they are forced to return to Venezuela. How many Venezuelans will be sent to Costa Rica? What will be the impact on this tiny nation of 5-million souls?



Get out and have some fun in February!



Treat yourself to a spa date! You'll thank yourself!



She's HOME!
We are thrilled that ROXY was found on 2 Feb and returned to her family the next day!



Need extra space for visitors? Try La Terraza, one of Grecia's original B&B's. Located in San Roque de Grecia. Click on the photo to see their

The Department of Government Efficiency, DOGE, an unofficial, non-government-funded organization staffed by non-federal personnel has been given full access to the federal payment system by the incoming Secretary of the Treasury. This payment system pays out about \$6 trillion in federal funds annually, **including Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid payments.** Certainly, this is most irregular and highly concerning to many. It would be a good idea for U.S. expat seniors to pay close attention to what is being proposed in procedural changes or reductions in benefits for Social Security and/or Medicare. Make your point of view known regarding any modifications **to your elected representatives.**

Depending on how long the reciprocal tariffs and other measures to restrict U.S. access to raw materials implemented by China, Canada, and Mexico to counter the tariffs just instituted by the new U.S. administration stay in place, we MAY see increased prices in Costa Rica for goods that are manufactured or assembled in the U.S. (The same day that they were implemented, 25% Mexico tariffs have just been delayed for a month in exchange for sending 10,000 Mexican soldiers to the U.S. - Mexico border. The same goes for a delay of the 25% Canada tariffs as the two parties agree to negotiate a border solution.) Eventually, we would see things such as new U.S. cars and large appliances (and other international automobile and appliance brands assembled in the U.S.) with higher price tags for sale in Costa Rica. Other prices that are likely to increase due to tariffs are items that you buy in the U.S. from sources such as Amazon or Ebay, and then have these entities ship them to you in Costa Rica. Depending on where Costa Rica purchases its gas and diesel fuels, they could go up or their price may not be influenced by the increase in the price of a barrel of Canadian crude oil. One possible positive outcome is the value of the dollar may gain strength, which MAY finally make the U.S. dollar more valuable against the Costa Rica colon.

Hand in hand with tariffs, the U.S. president also wants to see the manufacture and assembly of all U.S. companies' products returned to the U.S. If this ultimately discourages U.S. companies from coming to or staying in Costa Rica to build facilities and establish offices in our free trade zones and hire Ticos to staff them, it WILL have a dramatic impact on the C.R. economy.

The topics of tariffs, government department budgets and staffing reductions, and Latin American immigration policies

website.



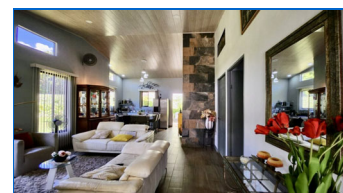
On-demand electric hot water heater for sale!



Epson XP-240 series printer, new ink, for sale!



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



appear to be changing by the moment, but our advice is to please try to stay informed and up to date. All of this movement is apt to have an impact on your pocketbook, and probably on your quality of life and security, as well.

Meanwhile, President Chaves has announced he is making it a priority to implement a "fair retirement" system, eliminating the extravagant retirement incomes granted to ministers and other high-ranking political appointees on their way out the door. It's a popular idea among the general population, but it has been an uphill political push to convince the Chamber of Deputies to take action. He is also offering a bill to make abortion for any reason illegal along with denying access to abortion drugs. Babies will be required to be brought to term and additional funding will be provided for orphanages for unwanted children. Chaves has also made known that he is considering an early resignation from the presidency, so that he'll have time to prepare a run for the Chamber of Deputies in the 2026 elections. Lastly, it is not uncommon here toward the end of a presidential term (and is unlikely to impact you directly), but there have also been five ministers resign recently in the Chaves administration.

Miscellaneous

DEKRA Out Twice - As of Friday, 31 January, the temporary facility in Grecia across from the CoopeVictoria servcentro is out and is being transferred to Upala. The closest inspection facility for those of us in Grecia, Sarchi and Naranjo is once again at Coyol, Alajuela. At the end of July, DEKRA is out in Costa Rica and two other agencies will step in to handle inspections.

Two In-One Out - There is a new 500-mil two-metal coin commemorating the 200th anniversary of the Annexation of Guanacaste. It joins the two-metal 500-mil coin commemorating the 75th anniversary of the abolition of the army. The largest Costa Rica 500-mil coin (solid brass) **will no longer be accepted for commerce after the end of July**. These must be exchanged at local bank for one of the smaller, two-metal new coins.

Medicare Coverage in C.R.? - Hospital Metropolitano, which currently has 11 hospitals and medical clinics in Costa Rica, plans to begin offering U.S. Medicare coverage. Initially, their plan is to offer direct-billed medical services to U.S. expats still covered by Medicare via the 90-day travel coverage offered in many insurance policies of Medicare recipients. (More details will follow.)

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



Help Aldair Fight Leukemia: Urgent Need for Surgery

Update: Aldair's surgery has been postponed due to his low white blood cell count.

We will keep you posted here and via the GoFundMe campaign. Thank you to everyone that is helping!

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

Health Warning - The Ministry of Health has issued a strong warning against the advertising, use, and consumption of ayahuasca and ibogaine for therapeutic purposes. These substances, often touted for their supposed spiritual and healing properties, lack the required sanitary registration in Costa Rica. While rituals and ceremonies involving these substances are cropping up in various parts of the country, particularly those attracting expats and tourists seeking alternative experiences, health authorities emphasize that such practices are unauthorized and potentially dangerous. *(Source: Tico Times)*

Gracias for Your Generosity

The Sarchi school uniform drive was a big success. Thank you all who donated this year! Many elementary school children will benefit this year.

2025 Has Started a Bit Wet

Well, trying to be upbeat, we have an early start to 2025's total rainfall. Your editor has a relative coming this month and I don't know what to tell them to pack. I'm also afraid to wash the car. Guess you best dust off your umbrella (if it ever had a chance to get dusty) and keep it handy. The natives are amazed that we had moisture in late December and totally nonplussed that it rained at all in January. The January rainfall total in El Cajon de Grecia was 1.3", and in San Juan de Sarchi it was recorded at 1.13".



Our next concern - Romeo's daughter Lia, who has been in the U.S. for 1 year and is now in limbo due to new US admin policies. Stay tuned.



Thank you for making this years' Sarchi School Uniform Drive a BIG success!



[Caribe Sinfónico asks
for your support!](#)

***“Más vale pájaro en mano que
cientos volando.”***

**Literal translation: Better a bird in hand than
hundreds flying.**

**Similar English meaning: A bird in the hand is
worth two in the bush.**

***Thank you Isabel Arguello for your continuing
contributions.***

Isabel teaches Spanish and does translations.

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

Think positively, for as Richie Havens once said, “Here
comes the sun,”

D. Davis, editor

Diane Cooner, webmaster

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