

Que Pasa Grecia
Serving the Expat Community since 2014

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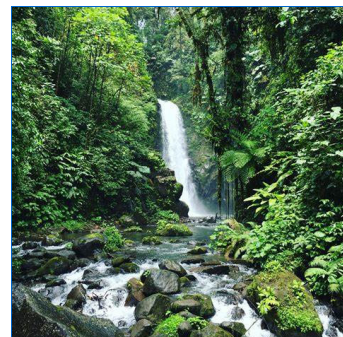
¿Qué Pasa?



Que Pasa Grecia Update #3 March 2025

What's New in QuePasaGrecia

Since our last Update, we have a new listing for a home for sale near downtown Grecia, miscellaneous paint and supplies, 2 desktop printers, a lawn mower, plus a number of assorted items. In Grecia, there is a Sunday morning English language worship service, and Democrats Abroad meets March 4. We continually have new listings, changed hours, new staff, moves and closures for our recommended restaurants. Always check our Recommended Restaurants



section before you head out to dine. For details, open up the [QPG website](#).

U.S. and Costa Rica Government Updates

Much more has happened in government and politics in the month since our last update. For me, it is quite disturbing, which has made it nearly impossible for your editor to remain apolitical. However, I will try to be pragmatic and practical regarding how the new developments could impact U.S. residents living abroad.

In the area of foreign policy, the U.S. administration has completely reversed direction and its leadership position in the world by abandoning its long-time European allies and has crossed over to join hands with the U.S.'s long-time adversary, the Russian autocrat, Vladimir Putin.

With this new position, the U.S. has also abandoned support for the nation of Ukraine, which for three years has been fighting the Russian invasion into its country. During all of this time, Ukraine has been taking it on the chin to defend democracy for the free world and its own independent self-rule. I am not able to sugarcoat my awe and profound disappointment or the implications of this new position. A White House visit by President Zelenskyy with the U.S. president and vice president in the White House did not go well. The deal to cede 50% of Ukraine's minerals as a repayment for U.S. support for the last three years was not signed. Any future support of Ukraine and any agreement to support Ukraine between the U.S. and its former allies in Europe apparently ended in that meeting. The near future will further enlighten this raw situation and its fallout.

From what I have read in the international press and from the published support for Ukraine from the country's fellow European leaders, in a little less than a week, the U.S. is no longer viewed as the leader of the free world or an ally of Western Europe by the world's other leaders and most of their citizens. From a purely pragmatic perspective, this change has implications for all U.S. citizens traveling or living abroad. It is certainly possible that merely presenting a U.S. passport in the future will no longer guarantee respect or civility to the person carrying it to another country. Depending on where you travel, you might encounter new visa requirements, more hassles, delays, and red tape, or even some additional security

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!



For Sale - Beautiful home on a quiet street, 10 minute walk to downtown Grecia!



Rustic table
Guanacaste wood



His/hers riding helmets - see our Items for Sale page, along with [many new listings!](#)

scrutiny. Just be prepared for the possibility.

The U.S. Chief Justice has re-affirmed the freezing of USAID funds needed to reimburse entities globally for services already rendered. We will see if any of this impacts Costa Rica. After the Secretary of States' brief visit to Costa Rica, President Chaves agreed as a third party to accept and detain a planeload of deportees from other countries. The first deportees have arrived here. (It is unknown but assumed that pressure or threats were made to guarantee Costa Rica's cooperation.) In a U.N. vote to reaffirm that Russia invaded Ukraine and, thereby, started the war, the U.S. voted "NO" along with Israel and a number of authoritarian countries--Costa Rica abstained. And another note: Costa Rica has a new U.S. Ambadora, Melinda Hildebrand, awaiting the formality of Senate approval.

Elon Musk is rummaging through virtually every U.S. agency and department including the Social Security Administration and Health and Human Services. Everywhere his DOGE team goes, firings and budget cuts get made. Those of you U.S. expats should watch to make certain that your SSA retirement benefits and MediCare, if you have it, aren't impacted. Now, the president has just ordered cuts in the federal workforce across the board. The Social Security Administration is under instructions to cut its staff by 50%. Regardless of how you feel about the need to cut the federal workforce, if the personnel cuts hold, you can expect, at a minimum, longer hold times when calling, other delays in inquiry response and services, and possible decreases in agency effectiveness.

The National Institute of Health (and other agencies) under the new Secretary of Health and Human Services, has had its staff cut and is under new directives. In the past, agencies in this department and the CDC would monitor outbreaks of dangerous diseases (such as Ebola, HIV, and COVID 19), around the world and take actions along with USAID (such as sponsoring mass vaccination and isolation campaigns) to halt them from spreading and becoming global pandemics. They appear to be under orders from the department's leadership to focus on other issues. What this might mean for small nations without vast medical resources, such as Costa Rica, is concerning.

There have also been wholesale firings of the top leadership at the Pentagon including the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, two women service heads, and all three of the



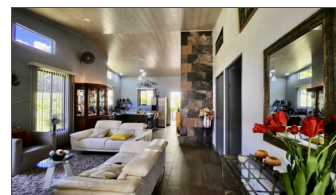
Almost New Lawnmower



Single bed - frame and firm mattress



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



New Real Estate listings in Atenas!

senior Judge Advocate Generals (JAGs) in the three major service branches. I mention this as a concern, because it implies that the president intends to put his own loyal people in positions of power, which MIGHT cause less resistance to the act of invading other countries or the use the military for domestic intervention at home. Will we see U.S. troops attack cartels in Mexico as the president has already suggested, or have Costa Rica used as a staging area to invade Panama to take possession of the Canal (as the U.S. used Costa Rica in its support of rebels in Nicaragua 50 years ago)?

The pause on tariff implementations will end on 4 March. The tariffs on Canada and Mexico will go into effect and the tariff on Chinese imports to the U.S. will be doubled to 20%. The president is also looking at 25% tariffs for imports from European countries. This is quite likely to set off a global trade war. It is likely to make some of what we buy in Costa Rica more expensive, especially items made in or re-exported from the U.S. to Costa Rica. There are many rumors floating around about other pending actions and executive orders, but until action actually occurs, there is nothing to report. This is all new territory, and all the way down here in tiny Costa Rica we will need to see where this leads before we can make recommendations about what to watch or prepare for.

If a rumored new law is implemented, illegal immigrants would be required to register with the federal government. If they don't, they will go from being violators of civil law to violators of criminal law and face imprisonment and deportation. Such a registration law would certainly make it easier to find undocumented immigrants in the U.S., incarcerate them, and then deport them. This could increase the numbers of deportees flowing back into all Latin American countries including Costa Rica and could have a noticeable negative impact on the economies of all of these countries.

Miscellaneous

AutoMercado Coming to Grecia – The rumors of a decade are finally coming true. The banner stakes out the narrow lot on a site not far south of downtown Grecia on Ruta 154 where there will be an AutoMercado “soon.” No opening date has been provided.

The Phone Scammers Are Busy - Phone scammers are



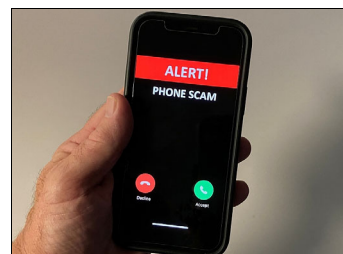
Need extra space for visitors? Try La Terraza, one of Grecia's original B&B's. Located in San Roque de Grecia. Click on the photo to see their website.



This month, we are highlighting **DUO**, a non-profit organization dedicated to education and assistance in suicide prevention. They now offer a monthly donation option, making it easier than ever to support their vital work. [Click here to read about](#) their services and how you can support them.



No longer a rumor - AM is coming to Grecia.



becoming sophisticated. Now, you may even see the purported source's actual number and logo (such as your bank, or Migracion) on your cell's screen. I read that it is being done in the U.S. and, I think, it actually happened to my wife and I here in Costa Rica. A good rule is to never give out personal information over the phone. Keep your responses to a minimum as scammers can record your voice and piece your words together to gain entry at banks or other businesses to your accounts. Just be aware and be careful.

Travel within the U.S. – Official state I.D.s (with digital identification information imbedded in them) are now also required for any air travel within the U.S. If you don't have one of these new official I.D.s you will need to carry your passport with you when traveling by air. I assume that these I.D.s are also used for car rentals and your passport will also need to be alongside when making car rentals in the U.S. (It's really not that much different than it is now, except that your passport needs to be with you and more exposed to loss or theft; rather than kept in a safe at the hotel or with the folks where you are staying.)

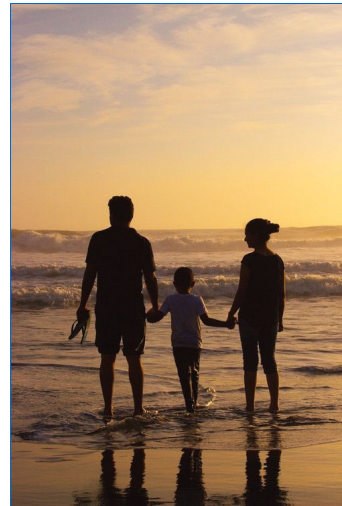
Keeping an Eye on Nicaragua – The Nicaraguan government just swore in 30,000 hooded "volunteer police" at the same time that they withdrew from the U.N. Human Rights Council. What does that mean for Nicaragua's citizens? There is also a contingent of Russian troops stationed there. Costa Rica has no army. If Nicaragua decided to make an incursion into one of its neighbor's territories, such as Costa Rica's Guanacaste province (once a part of Nicaragua), would the current U.S. administration come to Costa Rica's defense? That is no longer certain. Let's keep a wider eye on our immediate neighbor to the north. And if Nicaragua further cracks down on its citizens, Costa Rica could see masses of refugees fleeing here to escape new government oppression.

3 New Ruta 1 Interchanges - Three new interchanges on Ruta 1 that will hopefully make entry onto Ruta 1 faster and safer have been funded; basic designs and engineering completed; and released for public comment. These overpass interchanges will be located at Ruta 154/ Ruta 1 Grecia; Ruta 141/Ruta 1 Naranjo; and Calle 1/ Ruta 1 San Ramon. The announcement said these new structures would be completed in early 2026, but we all know that is very optimistic.

Your bank will NEVER call asking for your private information. Neither will Social Security or the IRS.



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



Residencia de la Vida - serving at risk children



Help Aldair Fight Leukemia:

Update: Aldair's dental surgery has been postponed due to his low white blood

AyA Water Bills to Rise – Water customers in Grecia and Naranjo (Sarchi has its own municipal water system) will see their monthly water bills rise slightly as AyA has added a fee to protect rivers.

Chances to Help and Get Involved- This month, we are spotlighting our Community page, where we showcase a variety of charities and causes that deserve your support. Costa Rica is a country with many needs: assisting new mothers and their babies; providing school uniforms for underserved children; supporting suicide prevention initiatives; aiding the Red Cross; non-profit foundations; medical assistance; and orphanages. The list is extensive.

A special shout-out also goes to the **women of Blooms** (a local group that meets monthly) for bringing many of the needs above to our attention. We encourage you to visit QPG's Community page and find a cause that resonates with your interests. Every contribution or volunteer hour, no matter how slight, can make a significant difference.

Thanks as always for helping local people in Costa Rica enjoy more opportunities!

cell count. Next checkup in mid-March. We will keep you posted here and via the GoFundMe campaign. Thank you to everyone that is helping!

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



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



“Llevarse como el perro y el gato.”

Literal translation: Getting along like cats and dogs.

Thank you Isabel Arguello for your continuing contributions.

Isabel teaches Spanish and does translations.

Find out more about Isabel on the

[QuePasaGrecia](#) website.

“The times, they are a changin’” let’s be careful out there,

D. Davis, editor

Diane Cooner, webmaster