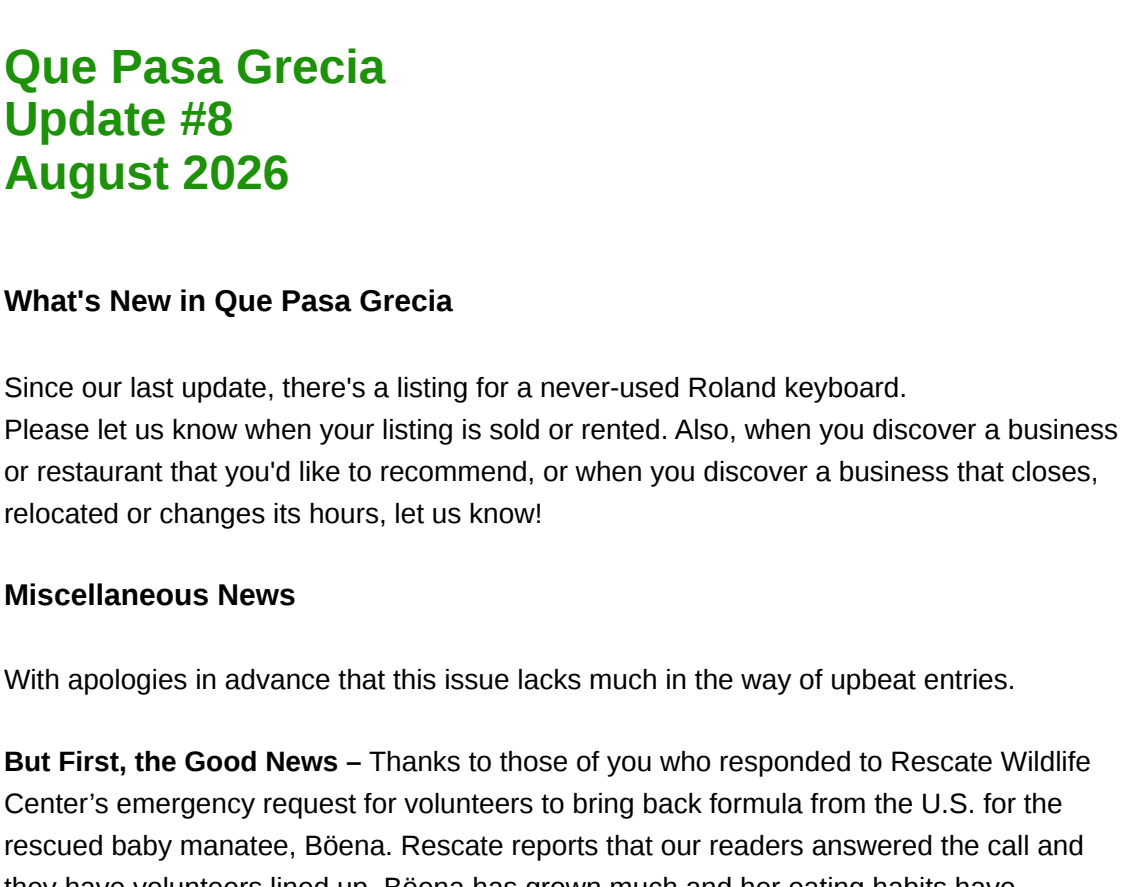


Que Pasa Grecia

Serving Grecia, Sarchi, and Naranjo since 2014

¿Qué Pasa?



Que Pasa Grecia Update #8 August 2026

What's New in Que Pasa Grecia

Since our last update, there's a listing for a never-used Roland keyboard.

Please let us know when your listing is sold or rented. Also, when you discover a business or restaurant that you'd like to recommend, or when you discover a business that closes, relocated or changes its hours, let us know!

Miscellaneous News

With apologies in advance that this issue lacks much in the way of upbeat entries.

But First, the Good News – Thanks to those of you who responded to Rescate Wildlife Center's emergency request for volunteers to bring back formula from the U.S. for the rescued baby manatee, Böena. Rescate reports that our readers answered the call and they have volunteers lined up. Böena has grown much and her eating habits have improved. So, muchismas gracias a todos.

New Tax Rate Raises the Cost of Living – If the proposed new IVA tax rate is implemented, everyone living in Costa Rica will soon find food more expensive for purchases of the government's "basic basket" classification (milk, rice, bread, beans, flour, etc.). The IVA rate will be raised from 1% to 13% for these staples. The government of Costa Rica is desperate to balance the budget and this tax change is one attempt to put more revenue in the coffers of La Hacienda. While the new rate will raise the cost of these basic foods for everyone, the poorest here, already struggling to put nourishment on the table, currently spend 44% of their income on staples, and will be impacted most adversely.

Record Highway Deaths Hidden in the Details – It turns out that the official traffic fatality numbers publicized by the Policía de Transito include only deaths at the accident scene. Accident deaths occurring on the way to the hospital, at the hospital, or anytime thereafter are not counted. However, the OIJ does count total traffic-related deaths no matter where or when they eventually may occur. For the first half of 2026, the transit police have recorded 278 traffic deaths at the scene and OIJ has recorded 525 traffic-related deaths for the same period. When OIJ-counted traffic-related deaths are used, traffic deaths over the last four years actually exceed homicides (which due to drug cartel violence have skyrocketed over the same timeframe). In 2025, the OIJ counted 903 traffic deaths. It appears traffic-related deaths this year will top 1,000 with motorcycles so far accounting for 60% of the deaths. For a country of only 4-million, those numbers are epidemic. There are a number of suggestions now being seriously considered to reduce traffic fatalities. One of them is a driver's education program. Your editor, for one, believes this is an action long overdue.

Biggest Law Enforcement Raid Ever – Costa Rica's largest coordinated raid on drug cartels ever took place on Friday, 24 July. Costa Rica's "Most Wanted," Alejandro Arias Monge, alias "Diablo," wanted for kidnappings and his enforcer, Jonathan Pérez, alias "Tan" were apprehended after a gun battle where more than 2,500 bullets were expended. El Salvador has used extreme and very undemocratic measures to get their cartel and gang crime under control, often at the expense of innocents. Ecuador has just moved into having the highest murder rate in the world due to drug crime from cartels and gangs. Drug- and gang-related murders have caused C.R.'s homicide rate to skyrocket in the last four years. Costa Rica is attacking drug crime trying to avoid the similar low-record results. In the last three years, Costa Rica law enforcement has neutralized the country's 12 highest-profile drug lords. Let's hope that residents' freedom of movement and individual rights will not become victims of law enforcement's success as has happened to varying degrees in both El Salvador and Ecuador.

Mega Prison Nears Completion – As already mentioned, Costa Rica has a growing cartel and gang drug problem with a skyrocketing homicide rate. Strong action is required to get a handle on getting them off the street and cutting out their negative influence on an otherwise-peaceful Costa Rica. Construction of a clone of the El Salvador Terrorism Confinement Center (CECOT) prison is well-along here with assistance from El Salvador. Located in the southwest quadrant of the Central Valley, Costa Rica's mega prison is nearly complete. We have assurances from President Fernandez that individual rights will not be violated for those detained at the new prison. However, a close watch needs to be implemented to be sure that the type of prisoner mistreatment and abuse present in El Salvador's CECOT is not mirrored at Costa Rica's CECOT clone.

Bye, Bye Prison Perks – Whether or not you agree with this approach to incarceration, the government is cracking down on its prisoner's lifestyles. Costa Rica has been extremely lax in the past in controlling the incarceration, luxuries and "punishment" aspects of those who are detained by authorities. Prisoners have just had 187 TVs removed from 20 Costa Rica prisons. And, from now on, all prisoners in Costa Rica will: substitute street clothes for orange jumpsuits; have the frequency of their conjugal visits cut by 75%; have cellphones inside the prisons confiscated; and have phone access to outside contact reduced or eliminated. Clearly, luxury should not be part of a prisoner's lifestyle. However, your editor worries that an absence of a program for skills training to reduce recidivism combined with too much idle time for those incarcerated without organized activities or TVs provided to help fill a prisoner's free hours will translate into violent confrontations among individuals and gangs housed together behind bars.

Update: "The Government They Voted For" No More – President Fernandez's statement in June that the citizens of Nicaragua have gotten the government that they voted for has become untrue. Nicaragua's President Ortega has just declared that Nicaragua is eliminating its elections and Costa Rica has reacted Fernandez's statement by condemning Ortega's "no more elections" declaration. (Note: A Central America expert and former U.S. diplomat to Costa Rica has speculated that such actions by Nicaragua may prompt the current U.S. regime to take action similar to that taken against Venezuela's Maduro. We'll need to keep an eye on this situation.)

New U.N. Secretary General – The early favorite among the U.N. Security Council members to become the first woman Secretary General of the United Nations in its 80-year history is Rebecca Grynspan, a former Costa Rica vice president.

Rainfall

El Cajon de Grecia (Irina)
July: 24.0 cms; 9.45 ins.
YTD: 79.8 cms; 30.43 ins.

San Juan de Sarchi (Tom)
July: 21.7 cms; 8.43 ins.
YTD: 75.4 cms; 30.06 ins.

July rainfall totals were about equal to last July's, but YTD rainfall totals are about half of last year at this date. A super El Niño is forming and rainfall during September-October, typically our wettest months, is predicted to be much lower than normal prompting drought conditions and probable water rationing in some locations. Also, anyone with respiratory issues is warned to take measures to avoid being impacted adversely by dust blowing here through the early days of August a result of severe African Sahara Desert wind storms.

Note to Readers:

The following section, **U.S. Government Changes Impacting Expats**, is accurate at the time of writing, but may contain information, conclusions, and/or suggestions with which some readers may disagree, cause discomfort, or find objectionable. For those individuals, we recommend that you finish your Que Pasa Grecia update reading here and skip to the Costa Rican saying. For the rest of our readers, we hope you find value in reading the section below.

U.S. Government Changes Impacting Expats

Foreign Entanglements – The U.S. government has provided a significant military and enforcement presence in Costa Rica's ongoing fight to control the growing drug cartel and gang activity. There has been no indication of what, if any, concessions come attached with this assistance.

The ceasefire in the U.S.-Iran War has ended and the Strait of Hormuz remains closed. Now, Iranian allies, the Houthis, are threatening to close the Strait of [Bab-el-Mandeb](#) (south of the Suez Canal) to Saudi Arabian shipping. The cost of barrels of oil has already risen and will probably continue an upward trend. The prices of petroleum and several fertilizer ingredients from Saudi Arabia have increased and will probably continue going up, which will drive up prices in Costa Rica for fertilizer, fuel and everything delivered by motorized vehicles.

Ukraine and Russia, both major exporters of wheat and other grains, are attacking each others' shipping. If their grain shipments are halted or significantly reduced, global grain supplies will be reduced. Grain shortages will cause prices on the world market to head upward.

Immigration – The protection status for Haitians legally in the U.S. has been eliminated. This effects several hundred thousand Haitians, who are heavily involved in providing labor at U.S. senior assisted living facilities, airports, hospitals, and resorts. They are subject to now being removed from the U.S. It is probable that most who are rounded up will be returned to Haiti, a country now largely in the hands of roving gangs and war lords, but it is possible that some will be sent to Costa Rica.

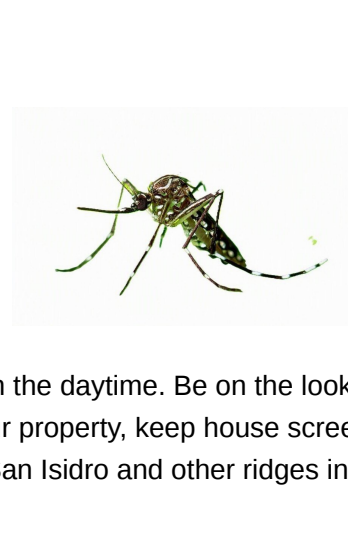
Travel/Tourism – An increase in Canadian tourists is expected and United Airlines launched a new non-stop route to SJO from San Francisco—both bits of positive news. However, tourism to Costa Rica was down in the most-recent quarter and Southwest Airlines' recently announced a direct route from Las Vegas to Costa Rica was cancelled before its first flight could be launched. These are warnings that we could expect a downturn in U.S. tourism to Costa Rica. It's not a good sign for tourism, one of this country's largest revenue generators.

Tariffs, Retirement Savings, and the Cost of Living – Due to not fully adhering to a U.S. Section 301 classification regarding forced labor import regulations, the U.S. regime has raised Costa Rica's tariff rate for goods being imported to the U.S. from 10% to 12.5%. Costa Rica joins 80 other countries that had their tariffs increased due to actions not taken to avoid the purchase of products from countries using forced labor. The cost of Costa Rica exports to the U.S. will be slightly more expensive. It's unclear how much, if at all, this will impact sales revenues for Costa Rica goods sold to the U.S. In addition, the continuing U.S.-Iran conflict and blockage of the Strait of Hormuz is raising fuel and fertilizer prices (covered in "Foreign Entanglements" above). On a positive note, the Fed passed on raising interest rates for this quarter at its July meeting. Also, see the proposed "[New Tax Rate Raises the Cost of Living](#)" above. For your budgeting/planning purposes, Costa Rica's Central Bank estimates that the exchange rate with the U.S. dollar will remain in a range of between 455 and 465 colones to the dollar through the end of 2026. The Central Bank is targeting Costa Rica's inflation rate to remain at or near 3%.

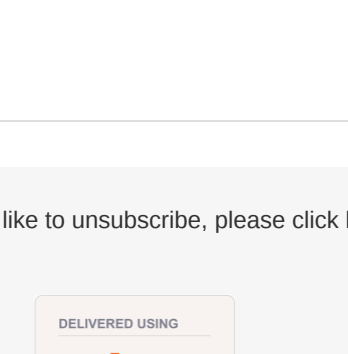
Health – We are continuing to see budget and impact cuts made by the new regime to U.S. agencies in 2025 that support global health and staff the control of outbreaks of various viruses and insect-borne diseases in third-world countries. Ebola and Dengue are but two. This reduced support is and will impact slowing or eliminating the spread of these and other diseases. In addition, the U.S. has largely eliminated support for reducing global hunger. If migration due to starvation caused by droughts increases in Central and South America and Costa Rica, it will stress our local economy.

"Llevarse como el perro y el gato." Equivalent meaning:
They get along like cats and dogs.

Enjoy life, but watch your wallet,
D. Davis, editor
Diane Cooner, webmaster
www.quepasagrecia.com



[Things to do in the west Central Valley](#)



New eats in Bolivar (Cajon) district - 6 restaurants and cafeteria style seating under one roof!! Plenty of parking!! Live music!! Rave Reviews!
[Mercadito Gastronomico](#)
Los Bambuses.

Böena is growing thanks to your help!

Canasta basica - heading thru the roof.

Seniors ride free locally with Dimex card, half price Grecia to San Jose.

Practical tips to monitor your home water use.

Watch your water use, but be sure you are consuming enough in your body. Even if it's not sunny, the heat leads to dehydration, which can lead to all sorts of symptoms.

How did it get to this?
CACCO mega prison nears completion at La Reforma site.

Always be alert to scams, they are never ending. And many have come from inside La Reforma jail!

[Roland keyboard, like new out of the box!](#)

[Real Estate For Sale - Atenas](#)

[Caribe Sinfónico](#) would love your help! [Learn more here](#) and to donate.

Book Readings with Edie, Starting in August. All forms of informality, including cussing, wine, unique lifestyles, and different faiths, are invited.
[Click here for details.](#)

Even Godzilla can't help the situation in the Strait of Hormuz.

Aldair turned 24 on July 3, which would not have happened without this community's support. The second campaign of chemo did not stop the leukemia, and he has returned to hospital for various transfusions to stabilize him long enough to travel to CR to get a special blood exam to see if he can be a candidate for a different treatment regimen. We pray that this aggressive cancer can be stopped via a different path. When you support Aldair's fight against leukemia, you support his entire family - Romeo, Adriana, Valentina - of ceramic artists. Blessings to all, they remain grateful for your continued support!

Read the current update via our [GoFundMe Campaign](#).

Aedes aegypti does it's work in the daytime. Be on the lookout, protect yourself. Eliminate standing water sources on your property, keep house screens intact. Now active in Grecia, Cajon, San Isidro and other ridges in the area.

Dengue symptoms usually appear 3 to 14 days after a mosquito bite and can last 2–7 days. Typical early signs include sudden high fever (102–104°F / 39–40°C), severe headache, retro-orbital pain (pain behind the eyes), intense muscle and joint pain, nausea, vomiting, swollen glands, and rash. These flu-like symptoms are sometimes called "breakbone fever" due to the severe body aches and joint pain they cause.

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