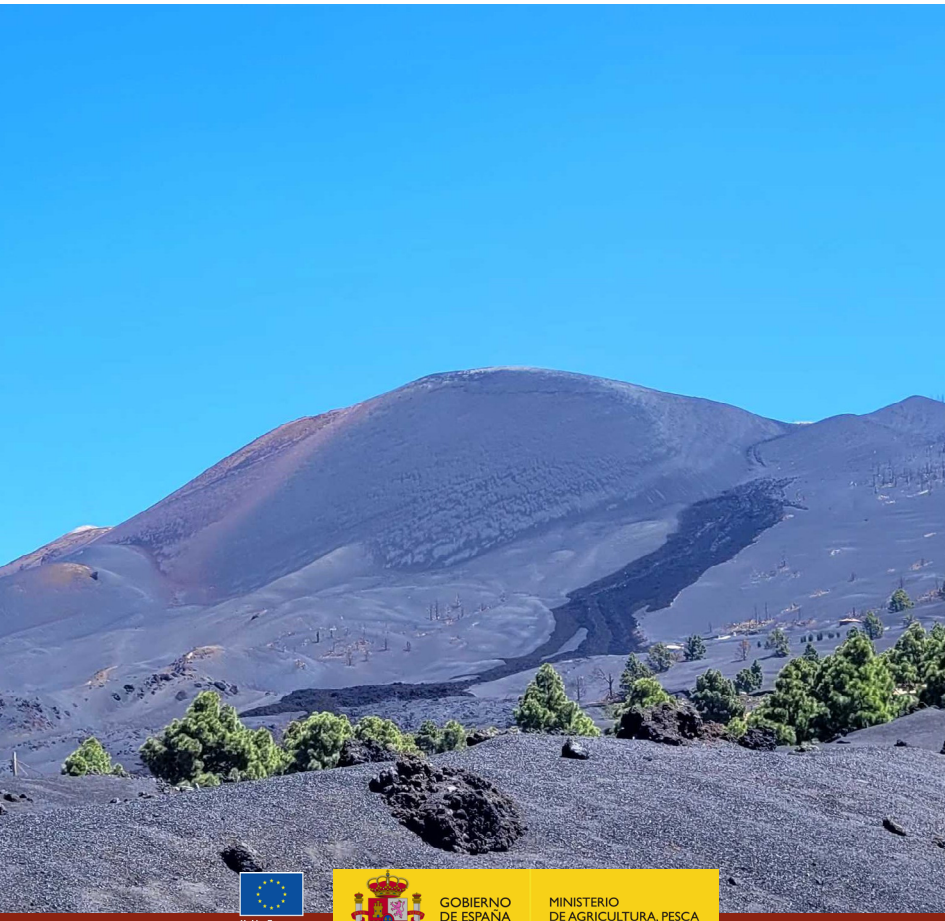
Nature Trails

La Palma Nature Trail









Unión Europea
Fondo Europeo Agrícola de Desarrollo Rural
Europa invierte en las zonas rurales

GOBIERNO DE ESPAÑA
MINISTERIO DE AGRICULTURA, PESCA Y ALIMENTACIÓN

datos abiertos

Legal Notice: The contents of this publication may be reused, citing the source and, where applicable, the date of the lastest edition.

Title:
La Palma Nature Trail.

Edit:
© Ministerio de Agricultura, Pesca y Alimentación.
Secretaría General Técnica. Centro de Publicaciones.

Proposing unit:
Dirección General de Desarrollo Rural, Innovación y Formación Agroalimentaria
Subdirección General de Regadíos, Caminos Naturales e Infraestructuras Rurales.

Design and layout:
Tragsatec. Grupo Tragsa

NIPO: 003-26-084-8

Online store:
www.mapa.gob.es
https://servicio.mapa.gob.es/tienda/

e-mail:
centropublicaciones@mapa.es

Catalogue of AGE Publications:
https://cpage.mpr.gob.es/

To help protect the environment, it is recommended that this publication be printed only if strictly necessary, either in whole or in part.

GOBIERNO DE ESPAÑA
MINISTERIO DE AGRICULTURA, PESCA Y ALIMENTACIÓN
SUBSECRETARÍA
SECRETARÍA GENERAL TÉCNICA
DIVISIÓN DE ARCHIVOS Y PUBLICACIONES

Guide to the
NATURE TRAILS
of Spain

Nature Trails

La Palma Nature Trail

GOBIERNO DE ESPAÑA
MINISTERIO DE AGRICULTURA, PESCA Y ALIMENTACIÓN

CONTENTS

Introduction 7

MIDE (Excursion Information Method) 8

Recommendations 11

How to use this guide 12

Natural Trails 14

La Palma Nature Trail

GR-130: Royal Way of the Coast and Middle Lands 16

Introduction GR-130: Royal Way of the Coast and Middle Lands 17

STAGE 1: SANTA CRUZ DE LA PALMA → SAN JUAN DE PUNTALLANA 19

STAGE 2: SAN JUAN DE PUNTALLANA → BARLOVENTO 25

STAGE 3: BARLOVENTO → SANTO DOMINGO DE GARAFÍA 33

STAGE 4: SANTO DOMINGO DE GARAFÍA → TIJARAFE 41

STAGE 5: TIJARAFE → LOS LLANOS DE ARIDANE 49

STAGE 6: LOS LLANOS DE ARIDANE → FUENCALIENTE 57

STAGE 7: LOS CANARIOS → VILLA DE MAZO 63

STAGE 8: VILLA DE MAZO → SANTA CRUZ DE LA PALMA 69

GR-131: "El Bastón" 76

Introduction GR-131: "El Bastón" 77

STAGE 1: PUERTO DE TAZACORTE → ROQUE DE LOS MUCHACHOS 79

STAGE 2: ROQUE DE LOS MUCHACHOS → REFUGIO DE EL PILAR 85

STAGE 3: REFUGIO DE EL PILAR → FARO DE FUENCALIENTE 97

Additional information 105

INTRODUCTION

The La Palma Nature Trail, made up of the GR-130 "Camino Real de La Costa y Medianías" (Royal Way of the Coast and Middle Lands) and the GR-131 "El Bastón" long-distance walking trails, offers a unique experience for those looking to immerse themselves in the scenic, cultural and geological diversity of La Palma.

GR-130 Royal Way of the Coast and Middle Lands

This circular trail, starting at Plaza de España in Santa Cruz de La Palma, invites you to discover the island over eight fascinating stages. Along the route, there is an astonishing array of landscapes: from busy urban areas and quiet rural areas, to rolling fields of crops in the middle lands, dramatic ravines and lush pine and laurel forests. There is no shortage of arid regions dotted with the cardon, a cactus-like shrub which only serves to further enrich the experience. This trail features some marvellous natural wonders such as the Barranco del Agua ravine, the Guelguén Special Nature Reserve and the Los Volcanes de Aridane Natural Monument. At the northern end, part of the original route of the Camino Real has been preserved, offering a real connection with the history and landscape of La Palma.

GR-131 "El Bastón"

El Bastón is a challenging and spectacular route that starts in Puerto de Tazacorte and climbs up to the highest point of the island, the Roque de los Muchachos, at an altitude of 2,426 metres. From there, the trail follows the ridge of the Caldera de Taburiente, offering breathtaking views of the Aridane Valley and Santa Cruz de La Palma. The route then descends to the El Pilar Refuge and continues along the iconic Ruta de los Volcanes, passing craters such as Hoyo Negro, Duraznero and Montaña de Fuego, until it reaches the Faro de Fuencaliente lighthouse. Along this stretch, the landscape changes continuously, from green pine forests and arid volcanic peaks to coastlines and salt flats, offering breathtaking views of neighbouring islands of Tenerife and El Hierro.

Both trails provide a comprehensive overview of La Palma, combining the history of ancient paths with the impressive natural and cultural diversity of the island. The La Palma Nature Trail is a unique opportunity to experience the island's rich geography and heritage, from its urban and rural areas to its impressive volcanic and coastal landscapes.

MIDE

EXCURSION INFORMATION METHOD

MIDE is an information system that evaluates and quantifies the technical and physical demands of different excursion routes. The aim is to unify the assessment of the difficulties offered by the different routes in order to allow cyclists, walkers and hikers to make the most informed decisions.

The **MIDE** system is composed of two blocks of information:

Assessment of four different aspects of difficulty: severity of the natural environment, orientation on the route, difficulty of the journey and the amount of effort required. These ratings, from 1 to 5 points and from low to high, are based on different concepts which are interpreted in the table on the following page.

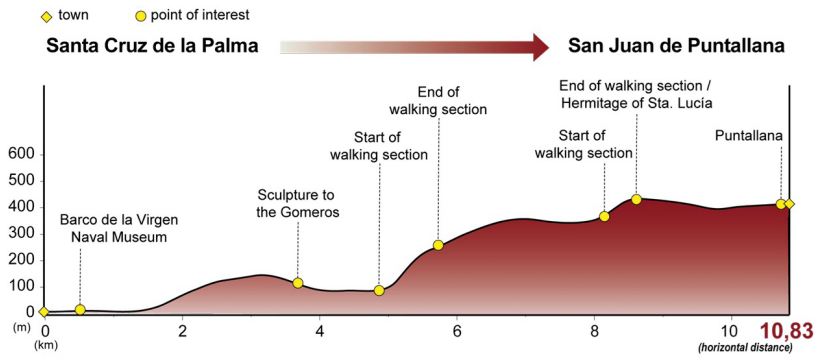
Basic information on each route: timetable, cumulative positive difference in altitude, cumulative negative difference in altitude, horizontal distance covered, annual season in which the assessment is carried out and type of route (outward, return, circular and crossing).

LA PALMA NATURE TRAIL

STAGE 1 SANTA CRUZ DE LA PALMA → SAN JUAN DE PUNTALLANA

MIDE

Harshness of natural environment	3	Upward gradient	633 m
Guidance along the route	2	Downward gradient	224 m
Route difficulty	3	Route lenght (actual distance)	10,94 km
Amount of effort needed	3	Time	3 h 40 min



Example of MIDE application

Environment
Severity of the natural environment



1. The environment is not risk-free
2. There is more than one risk factor
3. Various risk factors
4. Substantial risk factors
5. Many risk factors

Route
Orientation on the route



1. Well-marked trails and crossings
2. Pathways or signage indicating continuity
3. Requires the identification of geographic features and cardinal points
4. Requires off-path navigation
5. The route is interrupted by obstacles that must be overcome

Terrain
Difficulty of terrain



1. Flat surface
2. Bridleways
3. Stepped paths or irregular terrain
4. Necessary to use hands or jump to maintain balance
5. Necessary to use hands to progress

Efforts
Degree of effort required



1. Up to 1 hour of total walking
2. Between 2 and 3 hours total walking
3. Between 3 and 6 hours total walking
4. Between 6 and 10 hours total walking
5. Between 6 and 10 hours total walking

Calculated according to the MIDE criteria for an average hiker with a light load

The **MIDE** method is recommended by the Spanish Federation of Mountain Sports and Climbing (FEDME).

More information at **www.euromide.info**

MIDE

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Do not bury rubbish or litter in nature. Keep it until it can be deposited at a collection and recycling site.
- Never light fires or throw away lit cigarettes.
- Remember to always close gates, fences and gates behind you to prevent livestock from escaping.
- Never walk on crops. Use the footpaths.
- Respect the marked trails. Shortcuts only lead to serious erosion that can lead to the disappearance of the traditional path.
- Keep your dog on a lead at all times. This way you avoid disturbing domestic animals and mean you can see more wildlife.
- Respect and care for water sources and streams. Water is life.
- Do not camp outside the designated campsites.
- Defend nature and remember that the extinction of a plant or animal species is irreversible.

HELPING TO CONSERVE THESE NATURE TRAILS IS TO KEEP OUR CULTURAL HERITAGE ALIVE

The stages of the nature trail proposed in this Guide are independent of each other, with the only common link being that they constitute an approach to the habitat they pass

Colour indicative of the Geographical Sector in which it is located

Name of the Nature Trail

Name of the stage of the Nature Trail

MIDE profile of the Nature Trail indicating different degrees of difficulty, slopes of the route, time required to complete the route, highlights of the route and total distance

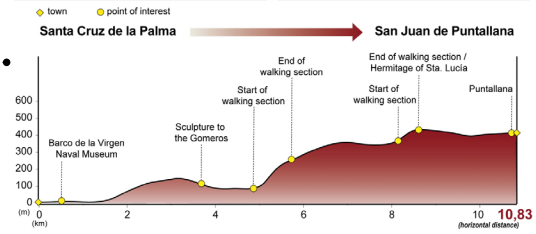
Introductory text

LA PALMA NATURE TRAIL

STAGE 1 SANTA CRUZ DE LA PALMA → SAN JUAN DE PUNTALLANA

MIDE

Harshness of natural environment	3	Upward gradient	633 m
Guidance along the route	2	Downward gradient	224 m
Route difficulty	3	Route lenght (actual distance)	10,94 km
Amount of effort needed	3	Time	3 h 40 min



LEAVING THE CITY BEHIND, THE ADVENTURE BEGINS

Spectacular opening stage of the Royal Way of the Coast and Middle Lands (GR-130) starting in the island's capital, Santa Cruz de La Palma, with its impressive architectural heritage. There is a succession of ravines, including the Barranco del Agua ravine, declared a Site of Scientific Interest, until it ends in the quiet and peaceful town of San Juan de Puntallana.



Traditional balconies in Santa Cruz de La Palma

through and therefore offer an approach to the nature, history, culture and traditions of our country, while at the same time attempting to promote a call for conservation.

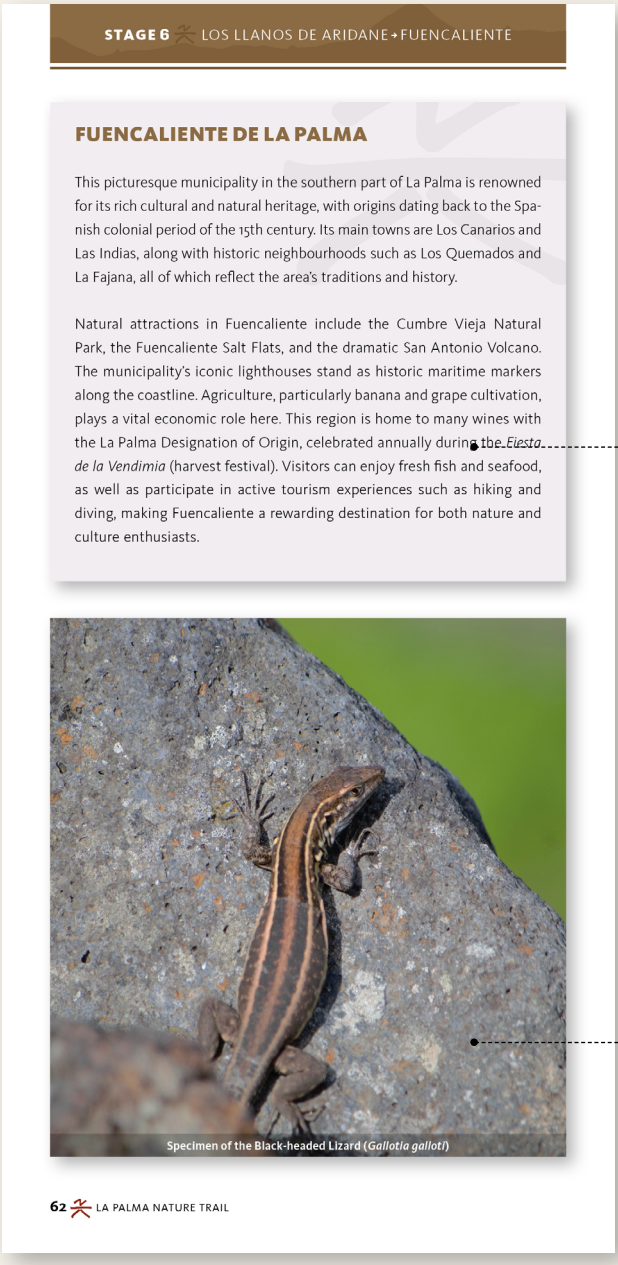


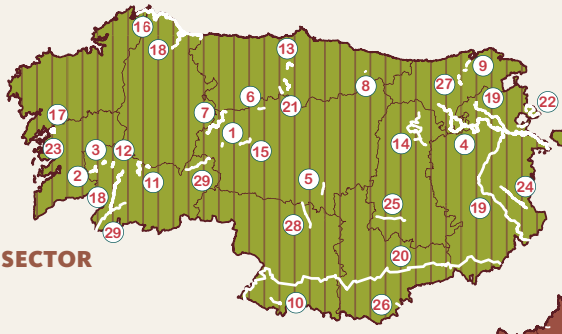
Table with historical or anecdotal information on some aspect of the Nature Trail

Photograph of the route, layout, monuments or natural highlights, with respective informative caption

NATURE TRAILS

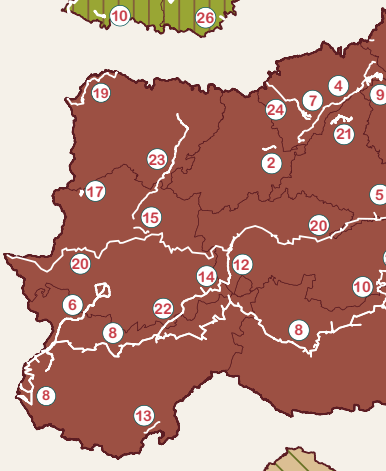
I. NORTHWEST PENINSULAR SECTOR

- Cacabelos - Quilós (1)
- Carballeda de Avia (2)
- Dos Arrieiros (3)
- Ebro (4)
- Esla (5)
- Laciana. Villablino to Villaseca section (6)
- Mirada Circular: Ancares Leoneses from Guímara to Balboa (7)
- Muñigo - Covadonga (8)
- Pas (9)
- Sayagués Agricultural Landscape (10)
- La Ribeira Sacra (11)
- River Barbantiño (12)
- River Nalón (Fuso to Tuñón) (13)
- Románico palentino (14)
- Ruta de la Conquista (15)
- Cantabrian Sea Route (16)
- The ecological routes of the Catoira River (17)
- San Rosendo (18)
- Santander - Mediterráneo (19)
- Senda del Duero (20)
- Senda del Oso (21)
- Senda del Pastoreo (22)
- Sendas en Abalo (23)
- Sierra de la Demanda Greenway (24)
- Tren Secundario de Castilla (25)
- Eresma Valley Greenway (26)
- Toranzo Valley (27)
- Vía de la Plata (28)
- Via Nova (29)

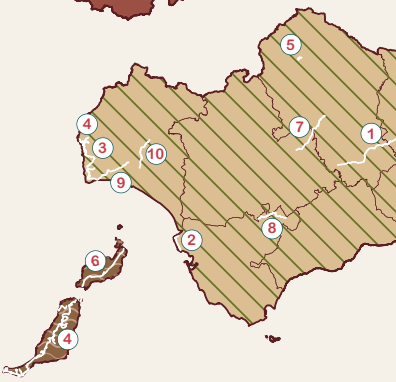


VI. CENTRAL PENINSULAR SECTOR

- Agua Soriano. Antonino Route (1)
- Campo Azálvaro (2)
- Mª Cristina canal and branches (3)
- Cañada Real Soriana Occidental (4)
- Cañada Real Soriana Oriental (5)
- Corredor Cáceres-Badajoz (6)
- Eresma (7)
- Guadiana (8)
- Beech and Oak Forests of Riaza (9)
- Wetlands of La Mancha (10)
- Júcar (11)
- La Jara (12)
- La Jayona (13)
- Las Villuercas (14)
- Monfragüe (15)
- Renacimiento (16)
- Rivera de Acebo (17)
- Santander-Mediterráneo (18)
- Senda del Duero (19)
- Tajo (20)
- Lozoya Valley (21)
- Vegas del Guadiana (22)
- Vía de la Plata (23)
- Eresma Valley Greenway (24)
- Villacañas to Quintanar de la Orden or El Trenillo (25)





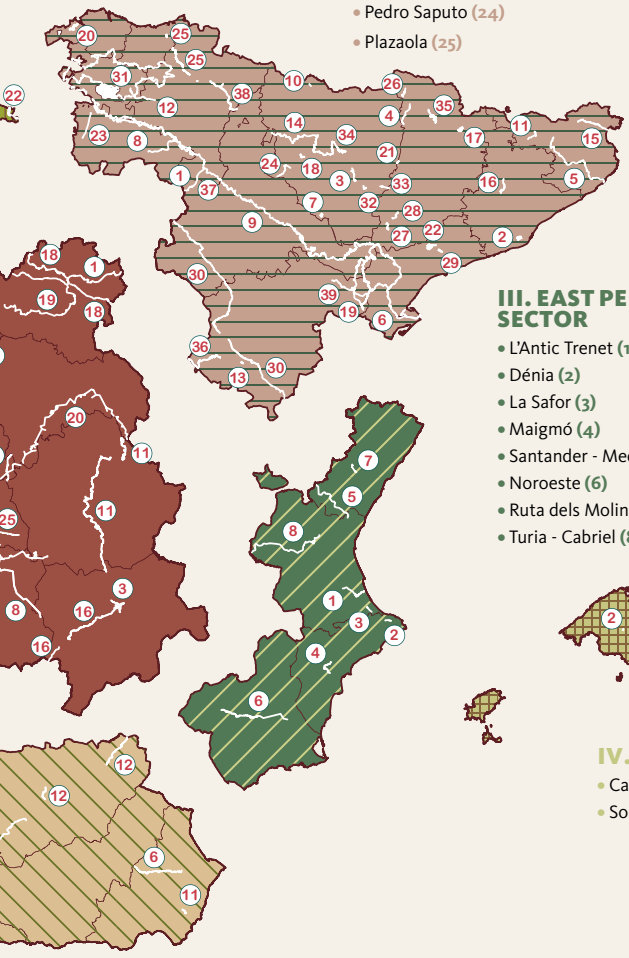


VII. CANARY SECTOR

- Anaga-Chasna (1)
- La Gomera Coasts (2)
- La Gomera Peaks (3)
- Fuerteventura (4)
- La Palma (5)
- Lanzarote (6)
- Traditional Trails of El Hierro (7)

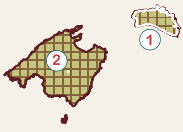
II. NORTHEAST PENINSULAR SECTOR

- Agua Soriano. Antonino Route (1)
- Anell Verd (2)
- Camí de l'Aigua (4)
- Carrilet (5)
- Carrilet de la Cava (6)
- Castejón de Monegros (7)
- Cidacos (8)
- Ebro (9)
- Embalse de Lanuza (10)
- Ferro i el Carbó Greenway (11)
- Basque Navarre Railway Greenway (12)
- Guadalaviar (13)
- Hoya de Huesca (14)
- La Muga (15)
- La Séquia (16)
- Les Mines (17)
- Loreto y el Canfranero (18)
- Matarraña - Algars (19)
- Montes de Hierro Greenway (20)
- Montfalcó al Congost de Mont-rebei (21)
- Muntanyes de Prades (22)
- Oja (23)
- Pedro Saputo (24)
- Plazaola (25)
- Port de Vielha (26)
- River Segre and Utxesa reservoir (27)
- Riu (28)
- Ruta del Glorieta (29)
- Santander - Mediterráneo (30)
- Senda del Pastoreo (31)
- Sierra de San Quílez (32)
- Sifón de Albelda (33)
- Somontano de Barbastro (34)
- Sort i la Vall d'Àssua (35)
- Tajo (36)
- Tarazonica Greenway (37)
- Val de Zafán (39)



III. EAST PENINSULAR SECTOR

- L'Antic Trenet (1)
- Dénia (2)
- La Safor (3)
- Maigmó (4)
- Santander - Mediterráneo (5)
- Noroeste (6)
- Ruta dels Molins d'Aigua (7)
- Turia - Cabriel (8)



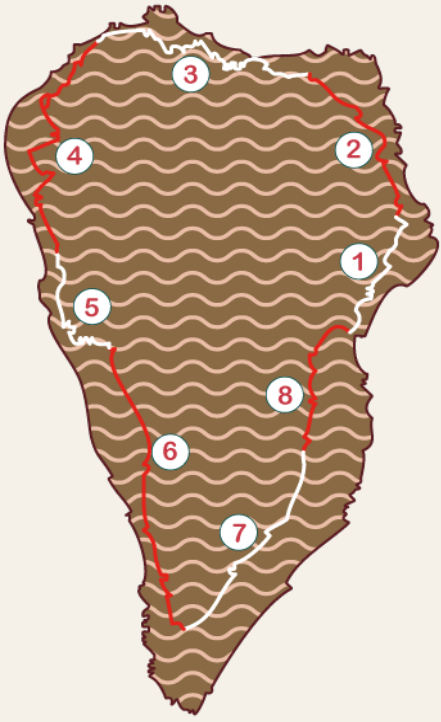
IV. BALEARIC SECTOR

- Camí de Cavalls (1)
- Son Juny (2)

V. SOUTHERN PENINSULAR SECTOR

- Aceite (1)
- Entre Ríos (2)
- Guadiana (Natural Path) (3)
- Guadiana Greenway (4)
- Guadiato (5)
- Guadix-Almendricos (6)
- La Campiña (7)
- La Sierra (8)
- Litoral (9)
- Los Molinos del Agua (10)
- Lucainena de las Torres to Agua Amarga (11)
- Renacimiento (12)

LA PALMA NATURE TRAIL
GR-130 ROYAL WAY OF THE COAST AND MIDDLE LANDS



GR-130: ROYAL WAY OF THE COAST AND MIDDLE LANDS	PÁG.
STAGE 1 • SANTA CRUZ DE LA PALMA → SAN JUAN DE PUNTALLANA	19
STAGE 2 • SAN JUAN DE PUNTALLANA → BARLOVENTO	25
STAGE 3 • BARLOVENTO → SANTO DOMINGO DE GARAFÍA	33
STAGE 4 • SANTO DOMINGO DE GARAFÍA → TIJARAFE	41
STAGE 5 • TIJARAFE → LOS LLANOS DE ARIDANE	49
STAGE 6 • LOS LLANOS DE ARIDANE → FUENCALIENTE	57
STAGE 7 • LOS CANARIOS → VILLA DE MAZO	63
STAGE 8 • VILLA DE MAZO → SANTA CRUZ DE LA PALMA	69

INTRODUCTION GR-130 ROYAL WAY OF THE COAST AND MIDDLE LANDS

U historical route around the island, connecting its main towns and offering a complete immersion in the diversity of the landscape, culture and heritage of La Palma.

The Royal Way of the Coast and Middle Lands Nature Trail is an historic route that circles the island of La Palma for 159 kilometres, connecting the main towns and villages and offering a complete immersion in the rich diversity of the island's landscape, culture and heritage. Following the old Camino Real, this trail not only links the different regions of La Palma, but also invites hikers on a journey through the history and culture of La Palma, for a comprehensive exploration of its geography and heritage.

Along the route, an impressive variety of landscapes unfolds: from urban and rural areas, to rolling fields of crops, along the coastline, deep ravines and pine and laurel forests as well as the arid badlands dotted with cardon, a cactus-like shrub. This geographical diversity offers a unique experience, allowing you to enjoy panoramic views and discover varied ecosystems.

The Trail crosses emblematic places such as the Barranco del Agua ravine, the Special Nature Reserve of Guelguén, and the Los Volcanes de Aridane Natural Monument, offering a deeper connection with the nature and history of La Palma every step of the way.

In its origins, the Camino Real de La Costa was vital for the communication and development of the island. Although some of the original layout has been absorbed into the road network, in many areas, especially in the north, the original cobblestone pavement is preserved, allowing users to experience the landscape in an authentic way, just as the island's ancient inhabitants did, and to connect with traditional ways of life.

The circular route allows you to freely choose the starting and finishing point, although the Plaza de España in Santa Cruz de La Palma is the long-established recommended starting point, from where you can start in the direction of Puntallana. The trail is divided into eight stages, each starting and finishing in the main urban centres of the island, making it easier to plan your trip on the route depending on the time available, physical condition and interests.

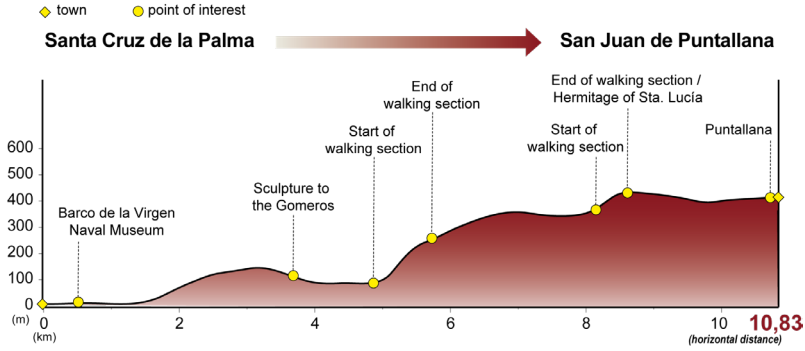


El Enano Monument

STAGE 1 SANTA CRUZ DE LA PALMA → SAN JUAN DE PUNTALLANA

MIDE

Harshness of natural environment	3	Upward gradient	633 m
Guidance along the route	2	Downward gradient	224 m
Route difficulty	3	Route lenght (actual distance)	10,94 km
Amount of effort needed	3	Time	3 h 40 min



LEAVING THE CITY BEHIND, THE ADVENTURE BEGINS

Spectacular opening stage of the Royal Way of the Coast and Middle Lands (GR-130) starting in the island's capital, Santa Cruz de La Palma, with its impressive architectural heritage. There is a succession of ravines, including the Barranco del Agua ravine, declared a Site of Scientific Interest, until it ends in the quiet and peaceful town of San Juan de Puntallana.



Traditional balconies in Santa Cruz de La Palma

The first stage of the La Palma Nature Trail, specifically the GR-130, also known as the Camino Real de la Costa y Medianías, starts at the iconic Plaza de España in Santa Cruz de La Palma.

Before setting off on the 11 km stage, take a moment's pause in this historic square and admire the Church of El Salvador, its beautiful fountain and the majestic Town Hall building. The church, built after the Christian conquest, has been remodelled and enlarged over time, while the Fountain and the Town Hall are more recent. The latter were built after the attack of the French pirate Leclerq, destroying much of the city, including the old town hall. This made it necessary to build the current town hall in 1588, using stone brought from the neighbouring island of La Gomera.

The stage begins at the aforementioned Plaza de España, before following Calle O'Daly, one of the main shopping areas of Santa Cruz de La Palma. A few steps away, when crossing the Avenida del Puente, it is possible to see the city beach, decorated with a striking sculpture of a cetacean that embellishes the landscape. Following the route along Calle Anselmo Pérez de Brito, we come to the El Enano Monument, located next to the Museo Naval - Barco de la Virgen. This museum is located inside a replica of the Santa Maria, the famous ship that took Christopher Columbus to the Americas.



Barco de la Virgen Naval Museum



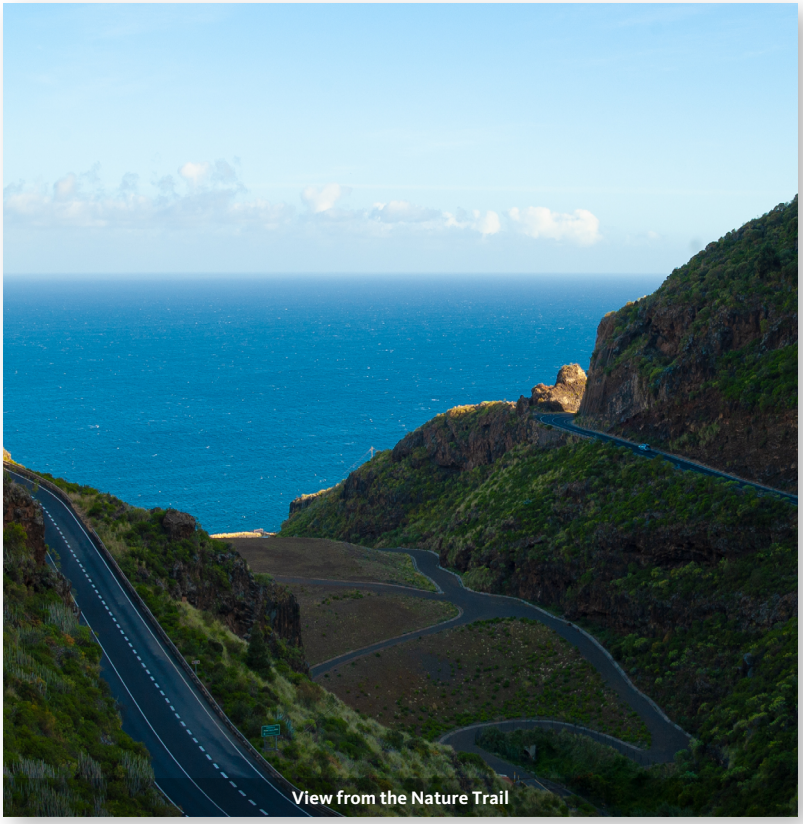
Barranco de Los Gomeros viewpoint

Afterwards, the route continues crossing the Avenida de las Nieves and the ravine that gives it its name, the Barranco de Las Nieves, still in the city centre. Further on, after crossing the LP-1 road, take Calle Abenguareme for the last stretch before leaving the city behind and immersing ourselves in the island's natural environment.

The route continues to the left along a dirt track, clearly signposted, reaching the first banana plantations shortly afterwards. After a short zigzagging stretch, the ascent begins along the Barranco de Carmen ravine to the LP-1 road. At this point, continue along the pavement before crossing the road at the zebra crossing at the roundabout connecting the LP-1 and the LP-20 ring road, which is also served by a pedestrian crossing.

The road continues uphill on a tarmac road reaching La Palmita, a quiet hamlet with a tradition of livestock farming, especially goat rearing. Then continue parallel to the LP-1 road, leaving it after crossing the LP-4 road, taking a dirt track shortly afterwards.

A few metres further on, the route continues parallel to the LP-1 road, but this time along a narrow path that runs along the right-hand side of the road. A little further on, we reach the Los Gomeros sculpture, erected in honour of the neighbouring islanders.



View from the Nature Trail

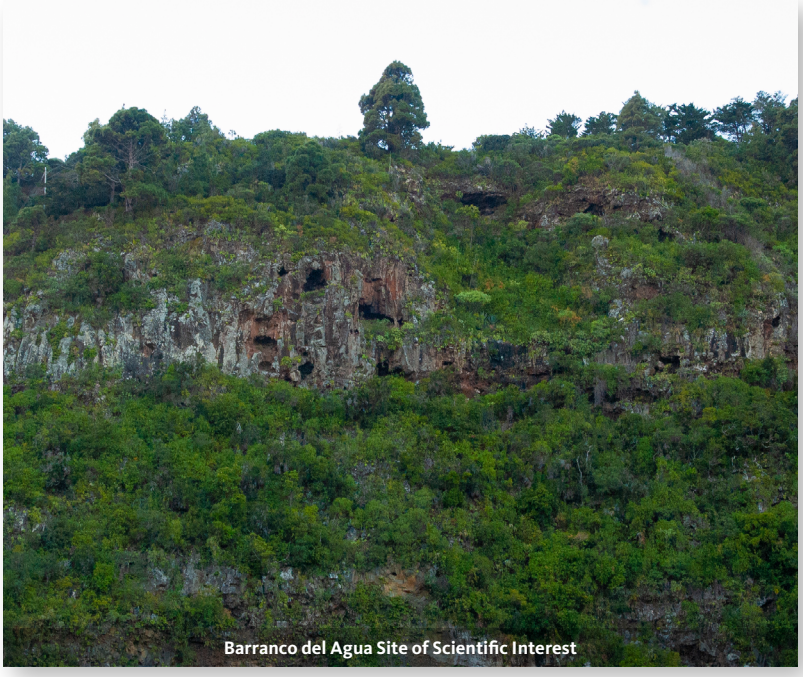
After another stretch parallel to the LP-1 road, it is time to cross the road, taking extreme precautions to begin the demanding ascent along a dirt and stone path that starts at the lower part of the Barranco Seco ravine. The effort of the ascent is amply rewarded by the spectacular views of the ravine and the immense Atlantic Ocean stretching into the distance.

The route continues along an asphalted road, passing through the houses of La Verada, surrounded by small orchards with different plantations. You then reach Lomo del Pino, crossing the La Lomadita local road and continuing along a dirt track. Descend again to cross the LP-1 road, always taking extreme precautions. From here, the route continues parallel to the road along a path protected behind the bionda, until it reaches the southern mouth of the Barranco del Agua Tunnel. At this point, take the tarmac track on the right, which serves as an alternative to the tunnel for motor traffic.

In the middle of the Barranco del Agua ravine, itself a site of special importance declares as a Site of Scientific Interest, we cross the LP-1 again to begin a short but intense climb along a path. This ascent culminates at the chapel of Santa Lucía, a simple traditional Canary Island building that houses a Flemish carving from the early 16th century, one of the oldest across the islands.

It begins a descent along an asphalted road that crosses the quiet and scattered district of Santa Lucía, until it crosses the familiar LP-1 road once again. After the crossroads, the route continues along a tarmac road, which soon becomes a dirt track between scattered houses. After passing two crossroads, a short stretch of road leads the traveller to the Avenida de Atabara, next to the Puntallana Public School.

The last few metres of the stage run along the aforementioned avenue, leaving the town's town hall on the left, until reaching the Church of San Juan Bautista, where this first stage of the GR-130 comes to an end.



Barranco del Agua Site of Scientific Interest

BARRANCO DEL AGUA

The Barranco del Agua is a protected natural area, belonging to the territory of the Canary Islands, which is included in the Natura 2000 Network, as a Site of Community Importance, under the name of Barranco del Agua Site of Scientific Interest.

It is located in the north-eastern sector of the island of La Palma, in the municipality of Puntallana. Its course runs from the Caldera de Taburiente to the Martín Luís cove, between the Tenagua and Santa Lucía mountains, covering an area of just over 74 ha.

This ravine is one of the island's natural treasures, attracting many visitors both to study and to enjoy its ecosystems and biodiversity. Its value lies in the representation of almost all the vegetation levels recorded in the archipelago in a single space. These floors have been generated thanks to the different altitudes between the highest and lowest areas, the different types of volcanic soil, the concentration of humidity, the proximity to the ocean or the solar exposure, which depends on the orography of the ravine.

Among the plant formations that can be seen in this area, the cardonal-tabaibal stands out in the low area near the coast. This is one of the most important communities on the island, with xerophytic scrub species adapted to dry places or environments, such as cardon (*Euphorbia canariensis*), tabaiba (*Euphorbia* sp.) and broom (*Retama rhodorhizoides*). Although, in the deeper areas, you can find some specimens of Canary Island pine (*Pinus canariensis*). In these areas, it is also common to spot some birds, reptiles and amphibians such as the canary (*Serinus canarius*), the Tawny Pipit (*Anthus berthelotii*), kestrels (*Falco tinnunculus*), palm frilled lizards (*Gallotia galloti* ssp. *palmae*) and the San Antonio frog (*Hyla meridionalis*).

Meanwhile, in the upper-middle sections of the ravine, areas of thermophilic forest, famous for its high mountain palm trees (*Phoenix canariensis*), still resist agricultural and environmental pressures. Areas where it is easy to distinguish characteristic scrubland species like rockrose (*Cistus monspeliensis*), granadillo (*Hypericum canariense*), verodes (*Kleinia neriifolia*) and Canary Island juniper (*Juniperus canariensis*).

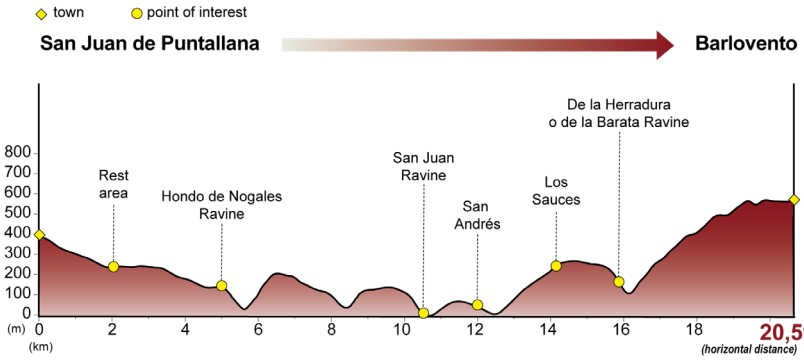
Although the most prominent ecosystems are the middle and lower areas. In the upper part there is a wooded mass of pine forest and woodland, with samples of species such as faya (*Myrica faya*), laurel (*Laurus novocanarensis*), viñatigo (*Persea indica*), heather (*Erica arborea*), bejeque (*Aeonium canariense*), bicarera (*Canarina canariensis*) and Canary Island pine, among others. A sector of the ravine inhabited by birds such as the common ringdove (*Columba junoniae*), the turquoise (*Columba bollii*), the chaffinch (*Fringilla coelebs*) and the sparrowhawk (*Accipiter nisus*).

The Barranco del Agua is a route of great scenic beauty, combining environmental richness and cultural landmarks. Some of those cultural landmarks date back to the collection and use of water since Guanche times. Although no clear sites have been found, there is evidence of the historical importance of this area as a shelter or corral. A great archaeological potential worth discovering.

STAGE 2 SAN JUAN DE PUNTALLANA → BARLOVENTO

MIDE

Harshness of natural environment	3	Upward gradient	1328 m
Guidance along the route	2	Downward gradient	1141 m
Route difficulty	3	Route lenght (actual distance)	20,95 km
Amount of effort needed	4	Time	7 h 55 min



TOURING THE MOST FERTILE LANDS OF LA PALMA

The second stage of the Royal Way of the Coast and Middle Lands offers a pleasant walk from the Church of San Juan de Puntallana to Barlovento, in the extreme north of La Palma, crossing some of the most fertile and best conditioned agricultural lands on the island. With a cumulative difference in altitude of 1,110 metres due to the five deep ravines traverse, this stage is packed with legends, such as that of the site known as Salto del Enamorado or "Lover's Leap". Some must-see stops on the route include the historic centre of San Andrés and the Barranco de Nogales ravine, highlighting the historical richness and natural beauty of the area.



The Nature Trail as it passes through a banana plantation



Trail signage next to banana plantations

The stage starts next to the Church of San Juan de Puntallana, beginning a route that winds up hill and down dale through some of the oldest ravines on the northeast coast of the island, ending in Barlovento. On Calle Procesiones, just behind the Puntallana square and next to the aforementioned church, there is an information panel indicating the start of the stage. From this point, you can already enjoy the impressive panoramic views of the route, with the rural surroundings of the town, the cliffs and the Atlantic Ocean, which will accompany the route all the way to the east.

The route starts to the north, beginning a steep descent through the streets of the urban area of Puntallana, at an altitude of 410 metres, characterised by its traditional architecture and agricultural environment. On the way we pass by the Casa Luján Ethnographic Museum, the Fuente de San Juan, an ideal place to enjoy the calm and beauty of the Medianías landscape, and a youth hostel. Shortly afterwards, at a crossroads, the path turns off to the right, reaching the LP-102 road along Calle Martín Luis.

This stretch, which is asphalted and flanked by rock walls protecting the farms, leads to the main road, where you turn left and walk a few metres before turning off again, this time onto a farm track surrounded by vineyards and banana plantations. This detour marks the point at which the traveller leaves the asphalt and enters the rural roads, connecting with nature and moving away from the urban environment.

The path continues for about a kilometre and a half, well signposted and marked at several points, overcoming the steep slopes of this part of the island. Here, ravines and ancient volcanic lava flows, vestiges of the primitive volcano that gave rise to La Palma more than two million years ago, dominate the landscape. Along the road, surrounded by lush coastal vegetation and extensive agricultural estates, mainly banana plantations, some covered by greenhouses, the beautiful green landscape of the coastal cliffs stands out. These halophilic plant species have adapted to the saline environment. These include, among others, the tobacco tree (*Aeonium palmense*), the sowthistle (*Sonchus bornmuelleri*), the saltbush (*Schizogyne sericea*) and *Limonium pectinatum* and solandri (*L. imbricatum*).

In a small watercourse, a prelude to the deep ravines to be negotiated, there is a rest area ideal for recharging your batteries. After crossing this watercourse, the route continues descending through three small ravines. Once you have crossed the last of these, the road turns slightly to the right to join the paved road to La Lomada. After a 300 m downhill stretch, the route turns left and continues northwards for about 400 m along the Nogales road.

This road has a turn-off that leads to the popular Nogales beach. Afterwards, the path enters a farm track that crosses a small ravine and approaches the first great challenge of the stage: the imposing Barranco Hondo de Nogales. Here the route drops almost 100 m in altitude, to reach just 20m above sea level before ascending along a zigzagging, fenced path that climbs to 230 m in altitude.



Barranco de Nogales

SAN ANDRÉS Y SAUCES

San Andrés y Sauces, located in the northeast of La Palma in the province of Santa Cruz de Tenerife, was once the Benahorita canton of Adeyahament, known for its water springs. The municipality includes several towns and villages, the most important of which are Villa de San Andrés, with its colonial architecture and the Church of San Andrés Apóstol; and Los Sauces, named after the Canarian willow tree, known for its lively squares. It is home to the Bosque de Los Tilos forest, part of Las Nieves natural park, stretch of coastline that's home to the Charco Azul natural pools and the beaches of Espíndola.

Since the 16th century, it has excelled in agricultural production, growing bananas, yams and sugar cane, and offering a rich local gastronomy. The municipality celebrates numerous cultural, sporting and festive events, including festivals in honour of the patron, the Virgin of Montserrat in September, and the 60s Wedding and the Burial of the Sardine during Carnaval.

Once this major obstacle has been overcome, the second stage of the route continues for 2 km, skirting the cliffs of Bajamar de La Galga. Along this stretch, the traveller will pass through narrow paths, banana plantations and rural tracks providing access to the plantations. Local legend places the island myth Salto del Enamorado,



San Andrés Lime Kiln



The Nature Trail through the streets of San Andrés

or Lover's Leap, on this cliff, when a young shepherd fell to his demise in an attempt to earn the love of beloved. During this stretch, the route is again surrounded by native coastal vegetation, along with banana trees, vineyards and small vegetable gardens, before entering the area of La Galga. Here we can observe species of rock vegetation such as spurge (*Echio breviramis-Euphorbietumcanariensis*) or coastal tamarisk (*Tamarix canariensis*).

After skirting Punta de La Galga, the path crosses the small ravine of the same name and descends along the Bajamar path to the bottom. From there, turn left and climb up a path that runs along the walls of the ravine, made up of impressive basalt columns, until it joins the Garachico path. A few metres further on, the route comes to a crossroads where we turn right, joining a tarmac road. For just over a kilometre the road passes through banana plantations and irrigation ponds, skirting Punta del Guincho and passing number houses belonging to the Garachico and San Juan neighbourhoods before reaching the San Juan ravine.

The descent of this new ravine, which is approximately 100 m long, is well prepared with wooden handrails and rock steps to facilitate the descent and prevent any falls. Once in the deepest part of the ravine, we briefly pass along the beach before beginning a gentle ascent along a cemented track that will take us to the gates of



Detail of the descent through the Barranco de San Juan ravine

San Andrés cemetery. This marks the halfway point of our route. It is a good time to stop and look back to contemplate the beauty of the ravine we have just descended and its surroundings. In the San Juan ravine there are several archaeological sites to visit in the Tendal Archaeological Park, located in the San Juan area.

The next section of the route runs for one kilometre through banana plantations, following the asphalted road to San Sebastián. It passes by the calvary, with its three crosses, and the Shrine of El Pilar and San Sebastián, before entering the picturesque coastal town of San Andrés. The town its traditional La Palma architecture and is one of the most beautiful and best-conserved on the island. Strolling through its cobbled streets, past the Church of San Andrés Apóstol, until you reach the ocean through the Barranco del Agua ravine, where an old lime kiln stands, surrounded by the imposing tops of the palm trees, for an experience that seems to stop time.

Continuing along the asphalted roads of La Cruz Grande and La Calzada, San Andrés and the ocean are left behind and a notable climb begins, a kilometre and a half long, to reach the centre of Los Sauces, 270 m above sea level, reaching the Plaza de Monserrat and the Antonio Herrera park. The parish of Monserrat boasts beautiful houses and buildings in the colonial style of the island, as well as shop, bars and cafés where walkers can recharge their batteries before tackling the last few kilometres of the stage.

From here, the stage crosses the LP-1 road and passes through the gate of the Town Hall. Turn right and walk onto Calle Ciro González. At the end of this street, turn right again along Calle Abraham Martín street and continue as far as the Cruz de La Loma viewpoint.

From here, the descent begins through the last large ravine of the stage: the Herradura or Barata ravine, located 100 m above sea level. The descent starts in the district of El Poiso, and follows a well-marked path. This path crosses the LP-1 road a few metres further down and descends until it reaches the deepest part of it, where the municipality of Barlovento begins.

Once you have passed the deepest part of the Herradura or Barata ravine, the route begins a steep climb. This ascent makes it possible to distinguish the changes in the landscape, as well as the different bioclimatic levels of the island. After a few metres of ascent, the stage crosses the LP-1 road for the last time, entering the steep wall of the ravine via a zigzagging path. Once again, the ascent is well marked and well equipped with handrails and cobbled steps to make the climb easier. The surrounding landscape on the ascent is spectacular, featuring rich soils and caves on the walls of the ravine, as well as the vegetation clinging to the rocks, including spurge and Hercules club.

Why stop and enjoy the views once you have completed this climb up the rocky face of the ravine. You can make out ocean in the distance, the town of Los Sauces and the nearby rainforests. The path continues into Las Cabezadas along Calle Loma de la Florida, where it turns left to join the LP-107, with which it will share part of the route in this last section of the stage. After walking about 600 metres along LP-107, the road turns to the right, passing in front of Las Cabezas primary school and enters a dirt track that leads to Calle Lomo Romero. There it turns left to rejoin the road after a steep climb.

Following the road in a northerly direction, the path reaches another climb on the left. This time, the path enters a dirt and rocky track. This climb winds through a beautiful forest, typical of this part of the island, which is much more humid and lush, as the conditions are typical for Monteverde vegetation. Specimens of the Canary Island pine, firetree, Bystropogon origanifolius var. palmensis), Cistus symphytifolius and Lotus hillebrandlii among other species will all be on display.

After continuing uphill through some 500 m of the thick forest, the path crosses the LP-107 road again. After a bend, turn left again onto a small path that climbs up to the hamlet of Lomo Machín. Here the trail continues straight between picturesque houses and small agricultural plots, as orchards replace the banana plantations. A little further on, turn right following the path to Lomo Machín Alto.

After a few metres, turn left again and continue northwards until you reach Calle Las Paredes. From there, the path leads to Calle Barranquito del Rey street, which itself, further and turning to the left, leads to the intersection with the LP-1 road. Crossing the road, next to a restaurant car park, an information panel indicates the end of this challenging but beautiful stage of the Nature Trail: Camino Real de La Costa and Midlands.

LAS NIEVES NATURAL PARK

Las Nieves Natural Park was declared a Natural Park in 1994 and a Biosphere Reserve by UNESCO in 1983. It extends across the eastern and north-eastern slopes of La Palma, covers 5,094 ha and extends through the municipalities of Santa Cruz de La Palma, Puntallana and San Andrés y Sauces, reaching up to 2,300 metres at the upper edge of the Taburiente Chain.

This park is an outstanding example of Canarian laurel forest, with high humidity and a number of natural water springs like the Cubo de la Galga and Bosque de Los Tilos. It also features different levels, from scrubland and pine forests to savin forests and thermophile forests, and is home to endemic species such as the Canary Island pine and the La Palma cabezón. Fauna includes birds such as canaries and kestrels, reptiles like the Western Canaries lizard, and amphibians such as the San Antonio frog.

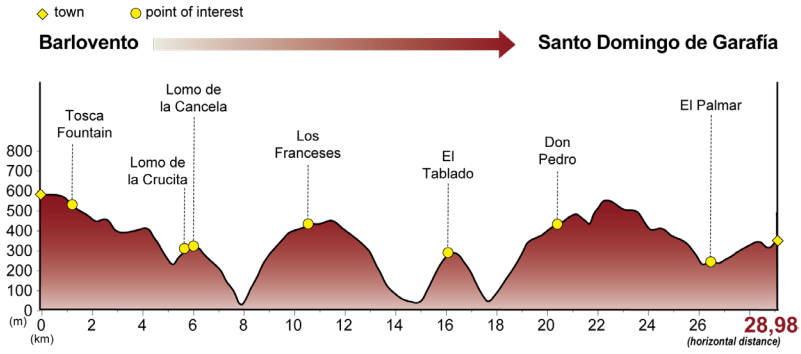


Nature Trail through the streets of Lomo Machín

STAGE 3 BARLOVENTO → SANTO DOMINGO DE GARAFÍA

MIDE

Harshness of natural environment	3	Upward gradient	1844 m
Guidance along the route	2	Downward gradient	2076 m
Route difficulty	3	Route lenght (actual distance)	29,74 km
Amount of effort needed	5	Time	12 h 20 min



EXPLORING THE NORTH OF THE ISLAND AMONG RAVINES AND CANARY ISLANDS DRAGON TREES

A demanding stage, almost 30 km through the rugged north of La Palma, from the town of Barlovento to Santo Domingo de Garafía. The trail follows a succession of ravines and protected natural spaces, with a multitude of plant formations, including masses of laurel, Hercules club and plenty of Canary Island dragon trees (*Dracaena draco*), which were an important economic driving force for those brave settlers until not so long ago.

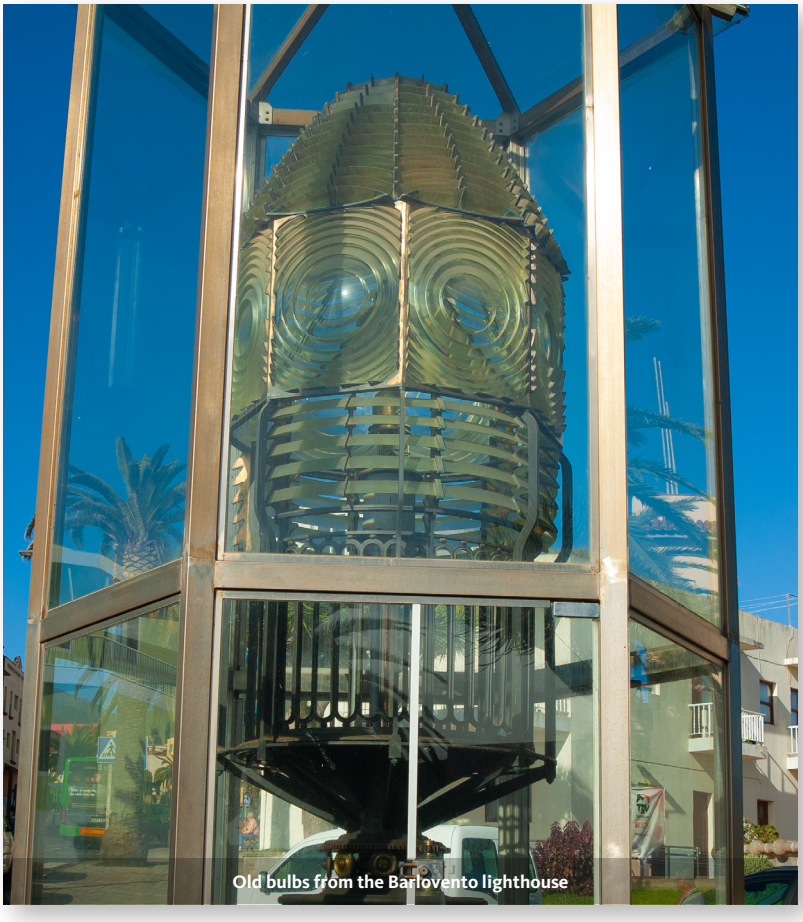


Canary Island dragon tree (*Dracaena draco*) and traditional La Palma construction

The third stage of the GR-130 La Palma Nature Trail begins in the town of Barlovento, at the roundabout between the LP-1 and LP-109 roads. The town hall and the Church of Nuestra Señora del Rosario, as well as the old optic of the Faro de Barlovento lighthouse, located next to these buildings.

Once we have enjoyed a visit to Barlovento, we embark on this long and challenging 30 km stage across the north La Palma. The route starts on the LP-1, so extreme caution with traffic is recommended. After a slight turn, before completing the first kilometre, take the asphalted track on the right, flanked by houses and small vegetable gardens. A little further on, the track turns sharply to the left and becomes a dirt road.

After a winding stretch halfway up the slope, the first Canary Island dragon trees (*Dracaena draco*), emblematic plants of the area, begin to appear. Approaching the first houses of La Tosca, the resilience of the inhabitants of the north of the island becomes palpable, in order to settle in this hostile environment. This area, which did not have asphalted roads until the mid-20th century, survived mainly on the sale of dragon tree leaves for traditional basketry, which explains the abundance of this species in the area.



Old bulbs from the Barlovento lighthouse



La Tosca fountain

The route continues along the asphalted track to the La Tosca fountain, once used as an outdoor washing place. When you reach the fountain, take the track on the right, descending as indicated by the Caminos Naturales signage.

Further on, after another turn to the left, the trial becomes narrower and turns into a paved path, as the surroundings become more picturesque. Here, it crosses a small area where species typical of the laurel forest intermingle with heathland, creating a charming atmosphere in the Barranco de Topaciegas ravine, plunging the us into the Monteverde de Gallegos-Franceses Special Area of Conservation.

We are taken through a series of ravines, and next up is the Barranco de la Vica ravine, known for its interesting flora, and largely similar to the previous one. On reaching the first houses of La Palmita, after almost four kilometres, a typical decorated cross greets us as we cross the district. It is now time for a sharp descent to the bottom of the Barranco de Gallegos ravine, taking us into the Guelguén Special Nature Reserve. After this descent, typically of this stage, the trail turns back uphill again, zigzagging occasionally with the sole purpose of softening the slope to be overcome.

Shortly before the six-kilometre mark, we reach the area of Gallegos, with the houses of Lomo de la Crucita in emerging first and in parallel the houses of Lomo de la Cancela, both illustrative of the harshness of inhabiting these lands.

The path continues to approach the coast with a steep descent reaching the Gallegos viewpoint, also known as the Lomo de la Cancela viewpoint. From here, we can enjoy spectacular panoramic views of the island's coastline and the Atlantic Ocean as well as the remains of the old Gallegos dock, which in the past used to supply these villages. Goods were transported up the steep slopes to villages.

Continuing, we zigzag our way up and down the Barranco de Melchor Pérez ravine and then the Barranco de Franceses ravine. Along the route, the moist breeze from the Atlantic Ocean will help us catch our breath.



Views of Stage 3 GR -130 of the La Palma Nature Trail



Traditional Canary Island potato cultivation

Progressing further, the route widens and the gradient eases slightly as it reaches the first house in one of the neighbourhoods that make up Franceses. After a short zigzag, we reach the main asphalted track offering some relief to regain strength as we cross the district of Los Franceses. We then pass a new, smaller settlement belonging to Los Franceses, before continuing along what is known Camino de la Fajana, a wide, well-surfaced track. After a series of bends, we temporarily leave the track for a path on the right which, after a short windy section, returns to the main track.

Just before tackling the last stretch of the descent towards the banana plantations that announce our arrival in the village of La Fajana, the route turns sharply to the left, where there is the option of a quick visit to Los Frances beach and the remains of what was once the old port.

The route then descends to the bottom of the Barranco de los Hombres ravine, before immediately tackling a vertiginous and tough ascent. After overcoming the most demanding ramps, we enter the Protected Landscape of El Tablado, before entering the village of the same name. The short walk through this small village is the perfect moment for a break to take in the traditional buildings and its small vegetable gardens where the famous Canarian potato is grown.

Once we have caught our breath, we face the next descent, this time into the Barranco Fagundo ravine, before heading back uphill again. The orography gives the walker a break, passing by the Mirador de La Calzada viewpoint, reaching a handful of scattered houses, the prelude to the last stretch of the route before reaching the town of Don Pedro.

After leaving the small village behind, the path crosses several minor ravines, entering the Monteverde de Don Pedro-Juan Adalid SCI. Here, small patches of laurel forest emerge, as the name *monteverde* indicates, and then a vegetation transition begins, caused by more sunshine and less rainfall, which will lead to more abundant Hercules club.

In the meantime, the kilometres continue to add up until they reach the crossroads with the asphalted track of the Juan Adalid Wind Farm, where the signs indicate to the hiker that they are facing the last six kilometres of this spectacular and at the same time demanding stage. From here we face a winding descent through the Barranco de Domingo Díaz ravine, before crossing the Barranco de El Mudo ravine and arriving in the village of El Palmar. This area, renowned for its agricultural tradition, features terraces built into the hillside, many of which are still in use today.

Numerous Canary Island dragon trees (*Dracaena draco*) dot the surroundings, just as the tail eases after a challenging few kilometres and we enter alternating stretches of dirt track and asphalt or cement path. One last ravine, dotted again with Canary Island dragon trees, lies ahead before finally arriving at the stage finish next to the Church of Nuestra Señora de la Luz in Santo Domingo de Garafía.



Church of Nuestra Señora de La Luz in Santo Domingo de Garafía



A spurge species specimen (*Euphorbia canariensis*) on the Nature Trail

EL PALMAR DRAGON TREE FOREST

The dragon trees, specifically the Canary Island dragon tree *Dracaena draco* is the most representative of Canarian vegetation and cherished in many local legends. This endangered species is typical of the subtropical climate, characteristic of Macaronesia, where the Canary Islands, Madeira and Cape Verde are located, along with other species of this genus being found on the west coast of Africa.

These trees, known for their thick and robust trunks, change in appearance with age and their sap is unique in the plant world, thanks to its reddish hue. When in flower, they show white flowers and reddish-orange fruits on the tips of their branches.

They grow mainly in the thermophilic areas of the island, particularly on inaccessible cliffs and slopes with a certain degree of shade and humidity. Although in the past dragon trees formed dense forests, today their populations tend to be small and scattered, and can be found in ravines and inland areas of the north of La Palma. That's why a dragon tree forest is a natural treasure that highlights the importance of conserving biodiversity on the island, as well as being part of a natural heritage, unique in the world.

The dragon tree had a very special significance for the Benahoaritas, who attributed magical properties to it due to the intense red colour of its resin, known as 'dragon's blood' and used for medicinal purposes. The leaves were also used for fodder, rope making and other traditional uses.

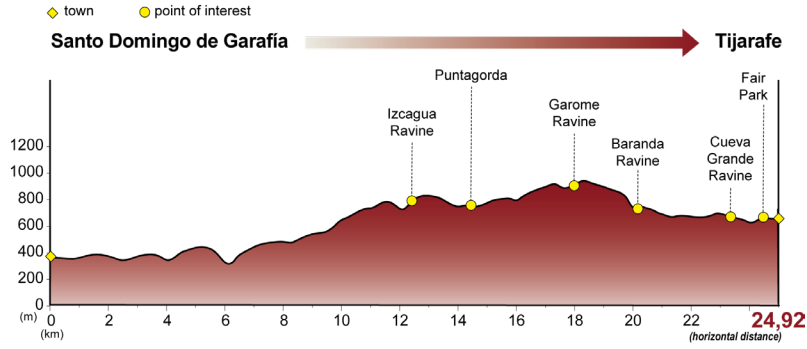


Canary Island dragon trees (*Dracaena draco*)

STAGE 4 SANTO DOMINGO DE GARAFÍA → TIJARAFE

MIDE

Harshness of natural environment	3	Upward gradient	1289 m
Guidance along the route	2	Downward gradient	994 m
Route difficulty	2	Route lenght (actual distance)	25,25 km
Amount of effort needed	4	Time	7 h 53 min



ETHNOGRAPHIC HERITAGE ON A ROUTE THROUGH THE RAVINES OF NORTHWEST LA PALMA

This is another long and challenging stage of the GR130, and although perhaps less intense than the last one, the descent and ascent of several ravines remain a constant feature. These include the imposing Izcagua and Briesta ravines, typical of the rugged landscape of the island's northwest. As well as enjoying the spectacular landscape of the ravines, with the ocean almost always in view, you'll learn about the island's rural heritage as you pass old water cisterns, threshing floors and traditional mills, and villages of houses that preserve the traditional architecture of the island.


Izcagua Ravine



Fernando Oporto ravine

This stage starts right where we left off, at the exit of the Sables ravine. Soon we reach the Plaza Baltasar Martín, next to the Church of Nuestra Señora de la Luz. This church has the unique feature of two naves, something unique in La Palma and even rarer in the rest of the Canary Islands, while it also features a beautiful Mudejar coffered ceiling.

The first few kilometres of this stage run along the LP-114 road, as it follows the route of the old Camino Real or Royal Way route. It is important to exercise extreme caution on this section, especially on sharp bends and changes of gradient, where visibility is limited. We soon leave the municipal capital of Santo Domingo de Garafía behind passing by the town hall and the football pitch. Although the first ravines are crossed by asphalt paths, the landscape on both sides of the road, covered with vegetation that fills the ravine depths, offers a beautiful contrast and a visually attractive experience.

After overcoming the Fernando Porto ravine, take an asphalted track next to a bus stop that ascends to area of Cueva de Agua. Less than a kilometre later, the route leaves the asphalt in favour of a path next to a small square with a statue of the Virgin. The descent to the barranco del Atajo ravine begins, followed by a demanding climb to the Lomo de Briesta. This section is particularly challenging due to the loose road surface and steep gradients.

Having climbed up the ravine, we leave the path to continue along a track that crosses a few agricultural holdings and we pass some impressive Canary Island pines (*Pinus canariensis*). The track gives way again to a path that begins to descend as it enters the Briesta ravine, one of the largest of those found on this stage. At the bottom of the ravine, the path meets the LP-114, along which you walk briefly before turning off again to ascend a path that crosses a cultivated area. After passing some buildings, the route returns to the road, offering a moment to regain strength before continuing the journey.

Back on the road, it is important to walk with caution, especially on the first stretch of curves where visibility is poor. After almost a kilometre, passing some scattered houses with their vegetable gardens and a small ravine, we take a detour to the right along a dirt track.

After about 700 m, at the bottom of a ravine and next to a rural tourism complex, there is the option of taking an alternative route. Although it does extend the route a little, this branch offers walkers the chance to enjoy some of the most beautiful Canary Island dragon trees (*Dracaena draco*) in Buracas, home to the highest concentration of these iconic trees in all the Canary Islands. The route also passes through the archaeological and ethnographic site of the Buracas Caves, consisting of several natural cave settlements, petroglyphs and necropolises. This detour, a little over 1600 m along a track and cobbled paths, reconnects with the main route just before reaching the area of Las Tricias.



On some sections the path uses the carriageway of the LP-114

ARCHAEOLOGICAL-ETHNOGRAPHIC COMPLEX OF BURACAS

The archaeological-ethnographic complex of Buracas, discovered in 1941 in the lower section of the Barranco del Corchete ravine in the municipality of Garafía, in northern La Palma, is a remarkable site of pre-Hispanic heritage. This ancient settlement, inhabited by the Benahoaritas — the island's original inhabitants — features natural caves used as homes and decorated with mysterious petroglyphs in geometric patterns.

Buracas consists of several settlements on three levels of a hillside, showcasing three groups of petroglyphs with spirals and meanders made using the picado ("pricking") technique.

In addition to its archaeological value, Buracas holds ethnographic significance. Its caves have been reused over the years as homes, barns, and livestock pens, thanks to the presence of two permanent natural springs that historically attracted people from all over the island.

Returning to the main route, the path gains height, crossing the ravines of La Mejera and Corchete. Here, the landscape is enriched by the presence of an aqueduct and by a beautiful route surrounded by dragon trees and other vegetation at the bottom of the ravine. Soon we reach the point where the alternative branch returns to the main trail and continues southwards between the scattered houses Las Tricias, crossing, on a couple of occasions, an asphalted track that leads to the Gofio Interpretation Museum (MIGO).



Almond trees (*Prunus dulcis*) on the sides of the trail



Descent between railings at the bottom of the Izcagua ravine

Gofio, one of the essential ingredients of the traditional Canarian diet, is an unsifted flour made from toasted cereals, usually wheat or maize, known locally as millo. This food, which has its roots in the culture of the aboriginal Canary Islanders, has endured as a gastronomic symbol of the islands. The MIGO was inaugurated in 2016, is located in the old Las Tricias mill, which remained in operation until the mid-20th century. All locals went to this mill with their grain and, due to its location, the neighbours could see if the blades were working before making a visit. The long waits, especially on windy days, turned this place into a meeting place for the locals.

The path then goes over the Corchete ravine again, but without descending, and returns the road, which it follows for half a kilometre before leaving it again next to a large house. As you walk through the scattered buildings, you can appreciate the valuable ethnographic heritage of the area, with traditional architectural elements such as threshing floors and cisterns. After crossing a small ravine, the descent begins, along a paved track protected by a fence, towards the Iznaga ravine. Both the descent and the subsequent ascent are in the shade of a pine forest, making this demanding section of the stage somewhat more bearable.

Once the ravine is crossed, in the municipality of Puntagorda, and after crossing the road, the path continues through pine trees until it reaches La Rosa Nature Centre. Here, we begin a slight descent between mansions and vegetable gardens until we cross the road again in the direction of the town of Puntagorda. Our route does not venture too far into this town, as it turns off at the next point without reaching the large Pino de la Virgen, one of the most characteristic elements of this town.



Traditional wine press next to the Church of Nuestra Señora de La Candelaria, Tijarafe

The path continues its course around Puntagorda, running parallel to the LP-1, which it crosses near some industrial warehouses. Continue just 300 m along the other side of the road, passing another traditional mill, before crossing the road again. Here the path runs along a track that connects with scattered houses and crosses the Barranco de El Roque ravine. After crossing yet again, the route follows a path that skirts the Barranco de Garome ravine about halfway up the side, winding through pinegroves. The path gradually gains altitude before reaching a track that descends towards the Casa del Trigo recreational area. Near here, just across the road, is a viewpoint that offers an impressive panoramic view of the Garome ravine, with the Atlantic Ocean as a backdrop.

Once in the municipality of Tijarafe, the path enters the village of Tinazara. At first it winds its way between scattered houses surrounded by fruit trees and orchards, and then continues along a fully developed street that passes by the Shrine of the



Sagrado Corazón de Jesús, a simple temple, but one with special views. Just over a kilometre after the shrine, the asphalted road becomes a cobbled track that descends to the Barranco de la Baranda ravine.

The last 5 km of the route follows a similar pattern, alternating between cobbles and tarmac between scattered houses and fruit orchards. The route also crosses several ravines, some quite large, such as the Pinillo, Cueva Grande and Aserradero. Along the final stretch, the path enters the asphalted streets of El Pueblo de Tijarafe, the municipal capital. The route then crossed the LP-1 once more, next to the Tijarafe fairground, recognisable by its large white textile cover. On the other side of the road, we continue on Calle Alcaldesa Mª Nieves Martín, which leads to the end of the stage next to a square where a traditional wine press has been restored just behind the Church of Nuestra Señora de la Candelaria.

TIJARAFE

Tijarafe is a charming municipality located in the northwestern part of the island of La Palma, in the province of Santa Cruz de Tenerife. Its municipal boundaries border Puntagorda to the north, the Sierra de la Cumbre mountains to the east, the ocean to the west, and the municipalities of Tazacorte, Los Llanos de Aridane and El Paso to the south.

Its name has its roots in the aboriginal languages of the Canary Islands, though the exact etymology of "Tijarafe" is unknown. There are several interpretations, including a connection to the words tigad or tigaday, referring to a species of bush in the area, or the term tigarafe, which means a meeting place.

Tijarafe's history dates back to the arrival of the Castilians in 1492, led by Alonso Fernández de Lugo. After the conquest, the area underwent land redistribution and became home to a diverse society of Iberian settlers, slaves, and the aboriginal population. The 19th century brought change as many poor peasants emigrated to Cuba due to the agricultural hardships. In the early 20th century, the arrival of water and banana cultivation transformed the economy. Agriculture and livestock remain the economic pillars today, with bananas accounting for 69% of the workforce.

The municipality's geography features mountainous terrain with gentle slopes between 400 and 800 meters above sea level, where most of the population resides. The 11.5 km of coastline are lined with dramatic cliffs that are difficult to access.

Despite its calm appearance, Tijarafe boasts spectacular natural sites such as the Barranco del Jurado, a dramatic ravine filled with rock formations and caves that leads to the scenic Cala del Jurado. Nearby is the Cueva Bonita, a sea cave famous for its colorful reflections at sunset and pirate legends. The coast also features the Prois de Candelaria, an iconic historic dock turned summer retreat, and the cave complex of Pozo de Tinizara at the mouth of the Barranco de Garome.

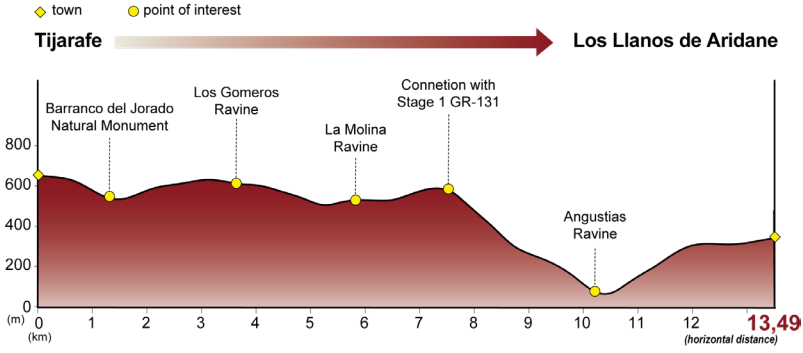
One of the region's highlights is the volcano La Caldera de Jieque, known as the mini "Taburiente." This rugged, microclimate-rich area supports endemic flora and is a favorite among mountain shepherds.

Local festivities are celebrated around September 8 in honor of Our Lady of Candelaria. A standout event is the Danza del Diablo (Devil's Dance), a vibrant and traditional celebration. The festivities also include religious pilgrimages, wrestling, food fairs, and activities for children.

STAGE 5 TIJARAFE → LOS LLANOS DE ARIDANE

MIDE

Harshness of natural environment	3	Upward gradient	643 m
Guidance along the route	2	Downward gradient	956 m
Route difficulty	3	Route lenght (actual distance)	13,72 km
Amount of effort needed	3	Time	6 h 25 min



TOWARDS THE BARRANCO DE LAS ANGUSTIAS RAVINE AND THE ARIDANE VALLEY

One of the shortest stages of the GR 130, but also one of the most challenging, it offers spectacular views of the Barranco de las Angustias ravine and the Aridane Valley from the natural viewpoint of the Laderas de Amagar. On this route, just over 13 km long, you will experience some of the most dramatic landscape changes: from the rugged surroundings of ravines and scattered dwellings to the imposing rock walls of the Angustias ravine and the extensive banana plantations. Finally, you reach Los Llanos de Aridane, one of the biggest towns on La Palma. Throughout the stage, we have the opportunity to explore the island's rich variety of cultural landscapes.


On the other side of the ravine, the road starts to climb towards Llanos de Aridane

Stage 5 of the GR 130 starts in the village of El Pueblo de Tijarafe, just behind the Church of Nuestra Señora de la Candelaria. This church stands out for its sober design and unusual bell tower with a balcony that can be accessed from external stairs. Inside, the coffered ceiling and the impressive main altarpiece, the work of the sculptor Antonio de Orbarán, are striking. From the church, a stairway leads down to the square, passing between a magnificent Indian laurel (*Ficus microcarpa*) and a Canary Island palm (*Phoenix canariensis*).

This square offers panoramic views of the landscape of Tijarafe, the ocean and the curious roofs of the local buildings. Before continuing, we recommend a visit to the tourist information office and the local library, the upper floor of which houses the Luis Lorenzo Barreto Ethnographic Museum. You'll find a fascinating collection of traditional costumes from the municipalities of La Palma.

The route starts on a descent as far as the LP-1 road, which it follows for about 100 m before leaving it on the left hand side along a dirt track. This track passes behind a house and goes up a small hill before meeting the road again on the way down. After crossing the road, pay special attention to the bend on the left, the path then descends towards the Barranco del Jurado ravine. This ravine is named after the geological formations sculpted by erosion and known by the locals as "juros" and was declared a Natural Monument in 1987. Climbing up the opposite slope, we reach the Shrine of Buen Jesús, a simple temple dating back to the late 16th century and declared a Protected Cultural Heritage site in 1994, popularly known as "El Jesús". This shrine is much loved by locals, so much so that it has given its name to the district of Tijarafe in which it is located.



This stage alternates between sections of track, path and asphalted sections



After passing by the Fuente del Toro recreation area, the road climbs steeply uphill

Our trail continues through the streets of the lower part of "El Jesús", crosses a small ravine and reaches the LP-1 road at the Fuente del Toro recreational area. After crossing the road and skirting the recreational area on a cobbled path, the path turns into a concrete path that passes through the more scattered houses in the upper part of the village. Along the route there are several crosses that mark the route of the old Camino Real.

The concrete gives way to a dirt track that descends towards the Los Gomeros ravine. From there, the path climbs up the opposite slope until it reaches a road that serves the houses in the Arecida district. Continue along this road as it descends to meet the LP-1 again. From this point, the route follows the old Camino Real, staying at a lower level than the road as it heads towards the district of La Punta. Over this stretch, the landscape mixes cultivated areas and new tourist or residential uses of the old houses. The road surface alternates between asphalt and concrete and the most picturesque cobblestones.

After passing the small district of La Punta, you cross the road again and begin a slight but steady ascent until you reach the municipal boundary between Tijarafe and Los Llanos. Once at the top, the view opens up to the spectacular landscape of the Aridane Valley. At this point, the GR 130 path crosses the first stage of the GR 131, which climbs from Puerto de Tazacorte to Roque de los Muchachos. It is the perfect place to stop, admire the scenery and recharge your batteries before tackling the demanding the descent that awaits the walker.

This section of the path, popularly known as Las Vueltas de Amagar, descends in a convoluted zigzag to overcome a drop of more than 500 m from the start of the descent to the bottom of the Las Angustias ravine. The course is estimated to have up to 73 laps, making it a remarkable challenge. After a first steep downhill stretch and a junction with the road where, although vehicles do not usually go very fast due to the gradient, it is advisable to pay attention, especially when curves reduce

BARRANCO DE LAS ANGUSTIAS RAVINE

The Barranco de Las Angustias ravine is part of the Canary Islands Network of Protected Natural Spaces and is designated as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) within the Natura 2000 Network. Its significance lies in its geological and climatic features, which give rise to La Palma's unique vegetation, including forests of Canary Island Pine (*Pinus canariensis*).

Located on the western side of La Palma, it spans the municipalities of El Paso, Tijarafe, Los Llanos de Aridane, and Tazacorte. It forms the natural outlet and boundary of the Caldera de Taburiente. Environmental highlights include ancient basalt rock formations, extensive areas of plutonic rocks, steep cliff walls, a dense network of dykes and springs, and the spectacular Cascada de Colores (Waterfall of Colours).

Exploring the Barranco de Las Angustias offers visitors not only dramatic geological scenery but also an opportunity to witness and help preserve its rich biodiversity. Among the flourishing plant life, the Canary Island Pine is predominant, thriving along the slopes of the ravine and forming characteristic forest landscapes. Other notable plants include Palm Lavender (*Lavandula buchii*) and the striking Red Tajinaste (*Echium wildpretii*), with its tall red flower spikes during bloom. Wildlife in the ravine includes several endemic species, such as the La Palma giant lizard (*Gallotia auaritae*) and the laurel pigeon (*Columba junoniae*).

The ravine also holds deep historical significance tied to the Benahoarita culture—the original inhabitants of La Palma. It played a key role in the Aridane canton of the Benahoaritas, who used its natural resources for agriculture and water supply. The permanent stream known as Dos Aguas served as a crucial water source for irrigation and still contributes to local farming today.

For all these reasons, the Barranco de Las Angustias ravine remains a captivating destination that draws visitors for hiking, nature sports, or simply to enjoy a walk through its breathtaking landscapes.

visibility, you reach the Amagar plain, which offers some rest. A terrace suspended from the old riverbed, where the banana plantations occupy practically the entire surface and the path runs between them.

We cross the road again, a particularly dangerous point because visibility is limited due to the sharp bends and the terrain itself. Then the descent continues to the LP-1. At this point we cross again at a point with better visibility, and continue descending to the bottom of the ravine. Before crossing and continuing with the stage, you can visit the Sanctuary of La Virgen de Las Angustias, about 300 m to the left along the road. This 16th century building, with a single nave, houses a Baroque altarpiece and a magnificent Flemish polychrome carving. It is worth mentioning that this was one of the first religious constructions built by the Spaniards on the island.



The descent is along a rather steep path, but one with spectacular views

On returning to the path, we cross the road and take a footbridge over bed of the ravine. On the other side, the trial takes us through banana plantations once again and begins to climb the other side of the Barranco de Las Angustias ravine. We have to cross the road three more times before taking a cobbled path that climbs steadily upwards with little change direction. The road leads to the district of Argual, already integrated in the urban area of Los Llanos de Aridane.



Views of Las Angustias ravine before starting the descent

From here, the path enters the streets of Los Llanos, so it's important to take extra care at the crossings. The route passes first along Calle Velázquez, then along Calle Manuel de Falla and then along Avenida de Tanausú. The stage culminates in the Plaza de España, the heart of the city, where there are large Indian laurels brought by the emigrants to Cuba. The stage ends here, between the Church of Nuestra Señora de los Remedios and Los Llanos de Aridane Town Hall.





Bed of the Barranco de Las Angustias ravine

SHRINE OF NUESTRA SEÑORA DE LAS ANGUSTIAS

Located within the awe-inspiring setting of the Barranco de Las Angustias ravine, in the municipality of Los Llanos de Aridane, stands the Shrine of Nuestra Señora de Las Angustias. This sanctuary is notable not only for its spiritual significance but also for its surroundings—lush vegetation, banana plantations, and rugged ravine slopes.

The shrine was constructed in the 16th century in Baroque style and was built to house a polychrome wooden sculpture of Flemish origin depicting the Pietà—the Virgin Mary holding her crucified son. This work of art arrived on La Palma between 1515 and 1522 and is remarkable for the upright posture of the Virgin contrasting with the contorted body of Christ in her lap.

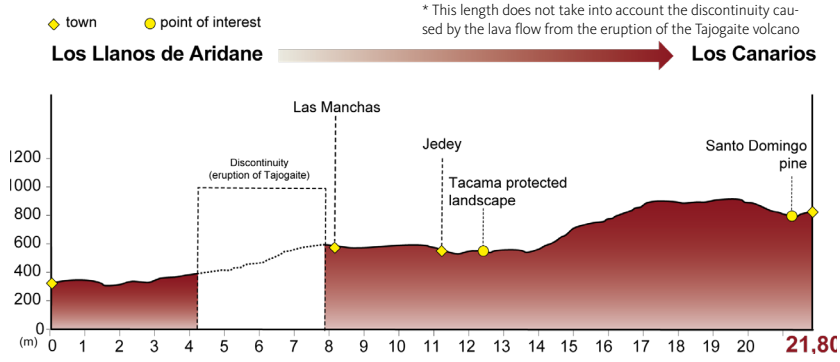
The façade features Baroque design, including a triple niche where the image of the Virgin Mary is placed. Inside, a Baroque altarpiece and central niche emphasize the sculpture's presence. The sanctuary also contains sacred objects such as an imperial crown, Christ's potencies, and a large silver cross. Eath year on August 15th, the shrine becomes a gathering point for devotees and pilgrims during the procession to Calvary in honor of the Virgin. Eight days later, the "octava" is celebrated with a second procession around the sanctuary, marking it as an essential religious and cultural event for the island community.

STAGE 6 LOS LLANOS DE ARIDANE → FUENCALIENTE

MIDE

Harshness of natural environment	3	Upward gradient	850 m
Guidance along the route	2	Downward gradient	470 m
Route difficulty	2	Route lenght (actual distance)*	13,34 km
Amount of effort needed	4	Time	6 h 10 min

* This length does not take into account the discontinuity caused by the lava flow from the eruption of the Tajogaite volcano



FROM LOS LLANOS DE ARIDANE TO LOS CANARIOS THROUGH TRADITIONAL AND VOLCANIC LANDSCAPES

Stage 6 of the La Palma Nature Trail stretches for almost 22 kilometres, starting in Los Llanos de Aridane and boasting a rich variety of landscapes. The route passes through urban areas with traditional architecture, fields of crops and spectacular volcanic formations. Although the route is briefly interrupted by volcanic lava flow forms from the recent Tajogaite volcano eruption, we return to the trail at Las Manchas, offering impressive views of the volcano and the coast. Continuing towards Jedey and crossing the Tamanca Protected Landscape, the path allows you to observe endemic species and vineyards. Finally, the route climbs through lush pine forests on the Cumbre Vieja Ridge, culminating near the majestic Pino de Santo Domingo, in the vicinity of Los Canarios, where it connects with stage 3 of the GR-131.



Start of the stage in Los Llanos de Aridane



Benahorita Archaeological Museum

Stage 6 of the La Palma Nature Trail, also known as the "Camino Real de la Costa y Medianías" or Royal Way of the Coast and Midlands, starts at the iconic Plaza de España in Los Llanos de Aridane, between the Town Hall and the Church of Nuestra Señora de los Remedios. From here, the path runs along Calle Real for a short stretch, where traditional buildings stand alongside lively shops, restaurants and terraces.

Following the signs, we turn left at Calle Benigno Carballo until it reaches the LP-2 road, passing the Benahorita Archaeological Museum.

After crossing the road and taking Calle Barranco Tenisca, we walk along the banks of the ravine of the same name before turning south on to Calle Pedro Miguel Hernández Camacho. The route climbs up the Camino de Triana and, a litter further on, we enter Camino de Malpaís de Triana, passing under the LP-21.

Due to the volcanic lava flow forms from the Tajogaite eruption in 2021, the route is temporarily interrupted at this point. The trail resumes 2.9 kilometres further on, at the Las Manchas football pitch and athletics track, just at the intersection of the LP-2 and LP-212 roads.

From here, we have the opportunity to visit the impressive viewpoints of the volcano, signposted by the island council, and located along the LP-212.

The eruption of the Tajogaite volcano, which began on 19 September 2021 and lasted until 13 December of the same year, was the most extensive in the history of La Palma. This eruption, preceded by thousands of earthquakes, dramatically transformed the landscape by covering 1,200 hectares with lava and destroying more than 1,600 buildings. The event was an impressive natural spectacle, marked by phreatic explo-

LOS LLANOS DE ARIDANE

Los Llanos de Aridane, the second largest municipality of La Palma, is located on the western slope of the island on the plain of the Taburiente volcanic complex. The town consists of several neighbourhoods, each with its own history and features, many of which were affected by the eruption of the Tajogaite volcano in 2021. It is also the island's main sun and beach destination, featuring coastal areas such as El Remo, Charco Verde, La Bombilla, and Puerto de Naos.

The town centre includes landmarks such as the Plaza de España, the Church of Nuestra Señora de Los Remedios, and the Benahoarita Archaeological Museum. Cultural attractions and events are abundant, particularly the June festivities in honour of Nuestra Señora de Los Remedios. A visit to Los Llanos wouldn't be complete without tasting traditional dishes like *Papas Arrugadas and Sancocho*.

sions, huge ash plumes and rivers of lava in Strombolian phases. However, it also brought with it an unprecedented humanitarian crisis, with thousands evacuated and devastating economic losses, especially in the agricultural and tourism sectors.

After this natural interruption, the Camino Real resumes its course along the middle of the island, flanked by the Atlantic Ocean to the west and the Cumbre Vieja Ridge to the east. This section of the route offers a landscape of contrasts: rural dwellings, agricultural plots, some in use and others abandoned, and extensive areas of badlands. This volcanic terrain, marked by its arid and slightly eroded rocks, despite its desolate appearance, can become fertile soil under the right conditions, favouring both agriculture and urban development.



Panoramic view of the section of the trail cut off due to the Tajogaite eruption

On entering the picturesque locality of Las Manchas, the route runs parallel to the LP-2, passing by the Church of San Nicolás de Bari. The whitewashed houses contrast with black volcanic rock to add a unique charm to the surroundings. Shortly after leaving the village, the path turns off to the right, skirting a traditional house, and enters a farm track that connects with the Camino de Tamanca. This track runs parallel to the LP-2, heading towards Jedey, offering a route full of diverse landscapes and a rich volcanic history.

Once past the picturesque hamlet of Jedey, the road turns off to the right and enters the track at 580 metres above sea level. This track, sometimes paved and sometimes dirt, runs through the Tamanca Protected Landscape. In this region, the aridity and ancient lava flows have allowed the growth of endemic species such as spurge (Euphorbia lamarckii), Retama rhodorhizoides and Canary Island sorrel (Rumex lunaria), while we can also see vineyards and farmland and fauna like the La Palma giant lizards (Gallotia auaritae) and the Western Canarian lizard (Gallotia galloti palmae). The landscape is a spectacle of contrasts, with the vibrant green of the vegetation, the deep blue of the ocean and the black of the lava platforms creating a backdrop of great beauty.



Stage 6 running along the promenade next to LP-2



Access to the Protected Landscape of Tamanca

The path climbs to 800 metres above sea level for approximately 4 kilometres, until it enters an area of pine that marks the last kilometre before rejoining the LP-2. For about 800 metres, the path follows a signposted and paved walkway, crossing the road next to an old maintenance hut to enter a forest track.

This track, on sandy volcanic soil, continues to climb and crosses the first of many calderas that make up the Cumbre Vieja Ridge. The caldera, known as Hoyo Frio, is a small, relatively flat volcanic formation. From here, the path plunges into a dense pine forest, heading towards the southern tip of La Palma. On a clear day, the views are spectacular, with the ocean stretching both south and west, and even the silhouette of the island of El Hierro visible on the horizon.

After 5 kilometres through a landscape of pine forests and vineyards, the path reaches 920 metres above sea level and arrives at the majestic Pino de Santo Domingo, an iconic landmark close to Los Canarios, in the municipality of Fuencaliente. Here, the trail turns east, leaving behind the picnic area often used for cultural events, and enters a small valley, flanked by pine trees and vineyards. Some 400 metres later, stage 6 ends at the junction with stage 3 of the GR-131. From this point, walkers can continue on to Los Canarios, explore the salt flats or head towards the iconic lighthouse of Fuencaliente, marking the end of a fascinating journey.

FUENCALIENTE DE LA PALMA

This picturesque municipality in the southern part of La Palma is renowned for its rich cultural and natural heritage, with origins dating back to the Spanish colonial period of the 15th century. Its main towns are Los Canarios and Las Indias, along with historic neighbourhoods such as Los Quemados and La Fajana, all of which reflect the area's traditions and history.

Natural attractions in Fuencaliente include the Cumbre Vieja Natural Park, the Fuencaliente Salt Flats, and the dramatic San Antonio Volcano. The municipality's iconic lighthouses stand as historic maritime markers along the coastline. Agriculture, particularly banana and grape cultivation, plays a vital economic role here. This region is home to many wines with the La Palma Designation of Origin, celebrated annually during the *Fiesta de la Vendimia* (harvest festival). Visitors can enjoy fresh fish and seafood, as well as participate in active tourism experiences such as hiking and diving, making Fuencaliente a rewarding destination for both nature and culture enthusiasts.

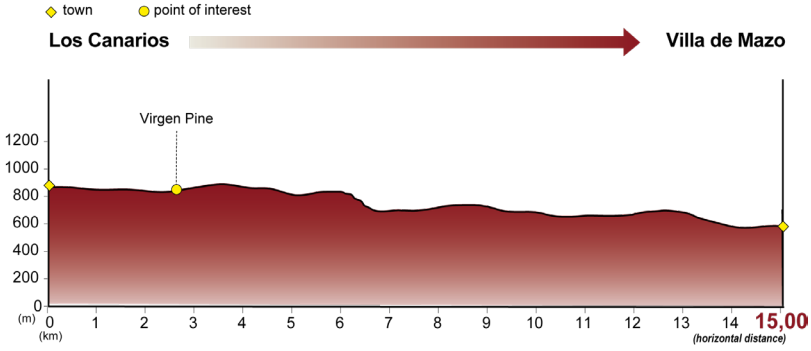


Specimen of the Black-headed Lizard (*Gallotia galloti*)

STAGE 7 LOS CANARIOS → VILLA DE MAZO

MIDE

Harshness of natural environment	3	Upward gradient	267 m
Guidance along the route	2	Downward gradient	551 m
Route difficulty	2	Route lenght (actual distance)	15,05 km
Amount of effort needed	3	Time	4 h 48 min



WALKING AMONG PINES, VOLCANOES AND VINEYARDS

Stage 7 of the La Palma Nature Trail, with a distance of 15 kilometres, begins in Los Canarios at an altitude of 820 metres and offers a route that combines urban, agricultural and volcanic landscapes. Initially, the path crosses a pine forest with distinctive volcanic soil and continues along the southeastern slope of the island, bordering the Cumbre Vieja Natural Park and passing the Plaza del Pino de la Virgen before crossing the historic lava flow forms of the Martín de Tigalate volcano. The trail descends towards Monte de Luna, where it enters an agricultural track that reveals the rural life of the island. After crossing the LP-2, the route continues towards Villa de Mazo, crossing agricultural areas and passing the municipal cemetery. The stage concludes in the Montaña de las Toscas recreational area, near El Pueblo, offering a quiet finish in a natural setting.



Detail of the Nature Trail as it crosses the Martin de Tigalate lava flow features

Stage 7 of the La Palma Nature Trail, also known as the Camino Real de la Costa y Medianías, starts in the village of Los Canarios, at the intersection with stage 3 of the GR-131. Starting at an altitude of 820 metres, the path starts just 400 metres east of the Pino de Santo Domingo recreation area.

The path leads off to the right, along an earthy path flanked by low stone walls. As you walk, you pass through an extensive pine forest of Pinus canariensis, whose intense green contrasts with the black of the volcanic soil. This soil is mainly composed of eroded ancient lava flows, covered with small rocks and minerals such as ash and pyroclasts. The powerful blue of the Atlantic to the east and the gold of the fallen needles of the pine trees complete the picture.

Along the way, it is easy to spot some of the most outstanding species of La Palma's impressive fauna, such as the magpies (*Pica pica*), the La Palma giant lizard (*Gallotia auaritae*) and the Western Canaries lizard (*Gallotia galloti palmae*).

The path gradually turns to the right, skirting the southern tip of the island and entering its southeastern slope. From here, it continues in a northerly direction towards Villa de Mazo, following the edge of the Cumbre Vieja Natural Park on the left-hand side.

After a little more than 2.5 kilometres, the path goes for about 600 metres along the track that leads to the Fuente de los Roques, where the Plaza del Pino de la Virgen is located. In this peaceful place, a majestic pine tree houses the image of a Virgin attached to its trunk, which is venerated every second Sunday in August with a pilgrimage that starts from Los Canarios.



Signposting of Stage 7 next to volcanic rock roadway



Arrival at Pino de la Virgen Square

Once past the Pino de la Virgen, stage 7 continues straight on along the track for about 800 metres. Here, the asphalt track gives way to a paved road that climbs gently before entering the lava flow form landscape of the Martín de Tigalate volcano. Its 1646 eruption, which lasted some 82 days, left behind a landscape like something from another world, with a rugged and primitive terrain that evokes a lunar or extraterrestrial landscape. Despite the harsh geological conditions, nature has found its way, and the walker can observe how layers of lichen, scrub and species such as bejeque (*Aeonium spathulatum*), pennyroyal (*Bystropogon origanifolius*), calcosa (*Rumex lunaria*), ferns (*Notholaena marantae*, *Cosentinia vellea*) and tabaibal-cardonal formations have flourished, adding life and colour to this amazing volcanic landscape.

Beyond the lava flow features of the Martín de Tigalate volcano, the path crosses a more humid environment, where the vegetation becomes more exuberant and diverse. Here, the ground varies between a stone pavement and sandy soil, and it is easy to find larger shrubs such as heather (*Erica arborea*), faya (*Myrica faya*) and acebiño (*Ilex canariensis*), always surrounded by the omnipresent Canary Island pines. After some 500 metres in this leafier environment, the stage returns briefly to the Martín washes before beginning a gentle descent that leaves the wooded area behind and enters the northern section of the Monte de Luna district for 200 metres.



Blue Palm Lizard (*Gallotia galloti palmae*)

The path then turns to the left to take a track that crosses predominantly agricultural areas, where vineyards mingle with pine forests, all delimited by the characteristic stone walls. This 1.5-kilometre stretch is one of the most challenging parts of the route, as the path climbs some 25 metres before turning right through an area with steps. Here the path descends, running parallel to the Meredos ravine, and passing the last houses in the district before reaching the LP-2 road.

After 6.7 kilometres, the stage crosses the aforementioned road and continues parallel to it along a promenade on its right bank, crossing it again some 300 metres further on, opposite a rest area. A short distance further on, the path crosses a small stream and turns left to join a new track that leads in the direction of Villa de Mazo.



In this section, the track continues through the agricultural area, crossing two small watercourses before connecting with a path that leads directly to the gate of the municipal cemetery of Villa de Mazo. From here, following the cemetery street in a straight line, the path crosses the Tigalate district until it joins the LP-206 road. For 1.6 kilometres, the route runs parallel to the road, crossing it at several points and sharing the same route in some sections, so it is important to take extreme caution.

On reaching the district of Tirimaga, the path continues straight on along the Camino Viejo for 2.2 kilometres, leading to the San Simón ravine. Crossing the ravine, the path continues along a track parallel to the LP-206 road for 1.2 kilometres, leading to the Camino de Las Tocas, just outside the village of La Sabina. From here, the last stretch of the route takes us to the Montaña de las Toscas recreational area, located just 5 kilometres from El Pueblo, the main centre of Villa de Mazo.



Waypoint at the beginning of the path after crossing the LP-206 road

VILLA DE MAZO

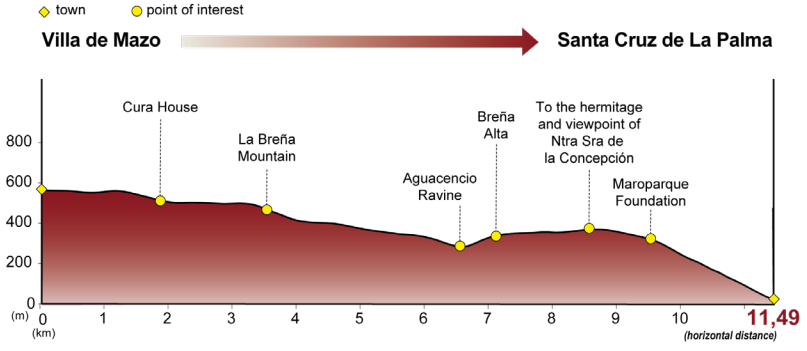
Located in the southeast of La Palma and bordering the Atlantic Ocean, Villa de Mazo is full of history, culture, and natural beauty. Among its fourteen neighbourhoods, El Pueblo—the municipal capital—stands out with its Town Hall and the 15th-century San Blas Parish Church. Founded after the Spanish conquest in 1492, Villa de Mazo is known for its volcanic terrain, fertile soils ideal for Malvasia grapes, and rich traditions in basketry and embroidery, which are showcased at the lively Municipal Market.

Visitors can explore the Belmaco Archaeological Park, renowned for its ancient petroglyphs, or enjoy hiking trails connecting the coastline with the Cumbre Vieja Natural Park. The Corpus Christi celebrations, held each spring with their floral arches and carpets, are a must-see cultural event. Local gastronomy—fresh fish, cheeses with mojo, and local wines—adds a deeply authentic touch to the experience.

STAGE 8 VILLA DE MAZO → SANTA CRUZ DE LA PALMA

MIDE

Harshness of natural environment	2	Upward gradient	238 m
Guidance along the route	1	Downward gradient	780 m
Route difficulty	2	Route lenght (actual distance)	11,49 km
Amount of effort needed	3	Time	3 h 11 min



CLOSING THE CIRCULAR ROUTE THROUGH THE EAST MIDDLE LANDS OF THE ISLAND

The final stage of this circular route around La Palma runs through one of the most developed urban areas of the island. Although in some sections the asphalt gives way to the original cobblestones of the Camino Real, the route remains close to residential areas, either in scattered neighbourhoods or in villages like San Pedro (Breña Alta) or Santa Cruz de la Palma. Despite the proximity to urban life, elements of the traditional rural environment of La Palma can still be seen. While walking, it is common to come across small farms and roadside crosses and grottoes. The latter are at the centre of one of the most popular local celebrations, the Fiesta de las Cruces, which is held on 3 May. During this festivity, the crosses are decorated with fabrics and flowers and the best jewellery from each home, offering a spectacle of colour and tradition.


Santa Cruz de La Palma Town Hall



The stage starts next to the Toscas mountain recreational area

The last stage of the GR130 starts at the Montaña de la Tosca recreational area, located under a leafy pine forest (*Pinus halepensis* and *Pinus radiata*) on the slope of the hill that gives it its name. From the top of this mountain, there is natural platform for stargazing which can be accessed from a turn-off about 500 m south of the recreation area.

The route continues along the tarmac track on which the last kilometre of the previous stage was covered. It heads north, past a number of detached houses of the El Pueblo district of Villa de Mazo, overlooking the ocean to the east. A short while late, you reach a crossroads with the road that descends to the town centre. Continue straight on, in the direction of the small Pago del Poleal, passing by a niche with a cross.

After a half kilometre, you leave the tarmac to continue along a cobbled path, a reminder of the old Camino Real. This path then enters a wilder area, surrounded by ferns, thistles and other thermophilic scrub. Along the way, we can see the visnea mocanera (*Visnea mocanera*), Canarian juniper (*Juniperus cedrus*), fruit trees that have escaped from nearby orchards and the peculiar inflorescences of the swan's neck agave (*Agave attenuata*).

The trail returns to tarmac next to the Casa del Cura, one of the oldest buildings in the municipality. This house served as a home for the priest who ran the Shrine of San Jacinto and also had another building that was used as a storehouse and shelter for overnight stays for travellers on the Camino Real.

From this point on, one of the most important landmarks of the stage is already perfectly visible, the Breña mountain, which we reach after another kilometre. On the way, it is worth stopping at the recreation area next to the Monte cross, where you can enjoy beautiful views of the mountainside. The scattered houses of Villa de Mazo come into view first, before the banana plantations and finally, next to the ocean, the airport of La Palma. At the foot of the mountain there is a recreation area with parking and an information centre.

The mountain of La Breña stands as a true oasis of vegetation among the more urbanised surrounding areas. The slopes are covered with lush scrubland with a mixture of laurel forest species like heather (*Erica arborea*), firetree (*Myrica faya*) small-leaved holly (*Ilex canariensis*), and others more typical of thermophilic forests such as wild olive trees (*Olea cerasiformis*), Phoenician juniper (*Juniperus turbinata* ssp. *canariensis*), Visnea mocanera and the Canary Island date palm (*Phoenix canariensis*).

Although the path deviates from the road to take a path that descends between the mountain and the houses of the Las Ledas district in Breña Baja, there is the option of continuing along the road to the summit, where a viewpoint offers excellent views of the surroundings. The descent ends at a road next to an irrigation pond. From there, cross the road to cross a small hill with a concrete irrigation channel.



Church of San Pedro, in the village of San Pedro (Breña Alta)



Views of the ocean and Santa Cruz de La Palma on the descent to the island's capital

LA BREÑA MOUNTAIN

The Breña Mountain is what is known as a cinder cone, formed by the accumulation of small volcanic materials such as lapilli and basaltic scoria.

The special interest of this area is due to the presence of the habitat of community interest "Macaronesian laurel forests (*Laurus, Ocotea*)", which led to the mountain being declared a Special Area of Conservation as part of the Natura 2000 Network.

The main wood formations are laurel forest in transition with thermophilic forest, intermingling species typical of the monteverde such as heather (*Erica arborea*), firetree (*Myrica faya*) or small-leaved holly (*Ilex canariensis*) with others typical of the thermophilic forest like the Canarian wild olive tree (*Olea cerasiformis*), juniper (*Juniperus turbinata* ssp. *canariensis*), Canarian mocán (*Visnea mocanera*), *Maytenus canariensis,* Canary Islands St. John's wort (*Hypericum canariensis*) and the Canary Island date palm (*Phoenix canariensis*).

In the transition sections towards areas more dominated by human activity, nitrophilous communities of incienso and Canary Island sorrel dominate, with species like marguerite daisy (*Argyranthemum frutescens* subsp. *frutescens*), mountain daisy (*Argyranthemum broussonetii*), incienso canario (*Artemisia thuscula*), jediondo (*Bosea yervamora*), duraznillo (*Ceballosia fruticosa*), cabezón (*Cheirolophus canariensis* var. *canariensis*), la corona de la reina (*Gonospermum fruticosum*), Canary tree mallow (*Lavandula canariensis*), malva de risco (*Lavatera acerifolia*), Canary Island sorrel (*Rumex lunaria*) and Canarian sage (*Salvia canariensis*) among others.



The plant formations of the mountain are completed by sub-nitrophilous grasslands of thistle and ferns and an area of repopulated Canary Island pine (*Pinus canariensis*).

Apart from its floristic value, the mountain of La Breña is also a refuge for an interesting population of beetles, including a species described for the first time in this enclave, *Curimopsis dacilae*.

The route continues along the road, crossing the Barranco de Amargavino ravine, where you take a concrete track north, soon joining an asphalted road. As we continue through the fields and rural houses, passing by several crosses like the cross of Miranda or the cross of Rosal, located next to the simple Shrine of San Miguel Arcángel, the path crosses the road several times until it reaches the Barranco Loja del Llanito ravine. After fording the river, the route climbs up a cobbled path until it reaches the town of San Pedro, the capital of Breña Alta.

After crossing the LP-204 road, the route continues through the streets of San Pedro, passing by the Church of San Pedro and the Town Hall. From here, the route continues parallel to the road for almost 2 km when the street climbs up to meet the road in the Buenavista district. For the next kilometre, the trail runs alongside the road, mostly the pavement, although in some sections it is necessary to walk on the hard shoulder, requiring due care, especially at roundabouts. It is worth taking a temporary detour from the route to visit the Shrine of Nuestra Señora de la Concepción and a spectacular viewpoint, both located on the Risco de la Concepción, a volcanic building of submarine origin in the shape of a crescent, declared a Natural Monument in 1987.



Stage 8 of the GR130 ends next to the Church of Matriz de El Salvador in Santa Cruz de La Palma

On the way back to the main route, we take a detour from the LP-202 down the streets of the La Cuesta district, which is perched at the top of the Risco de la Concepción. We soon pass a small square where the unique cross of Los Bolos is located and, a little further, the Maroparque Isla de La Palma gate, a zoo-botanical park that serves as a rescue centre for exotic animals. The descent follows the twists and turns of the road and, flanked by buildings all the way down, you hardly notice that you have passed from the municipality of Breña Alta to that of Santa Cruz de La Palma.

To conclude the stage, all that's left to do is to finish the descent along Calle San Sebastián, now in the centre of Santa Cruz. Here we pass by the shrine of the same name, before reaching the steps leading down to the Plaza de España, but not before passing by the building of the Royal Cosmological Society, which also houses the municipal library. In the Plaza de España in Santa Cruz de la Palma, at the foot of the Church of Matriz de El Salvador facing the Town Hall, our adventure of almost 150 km around the Isla Bonita comes to an end.

RISCO DE LA CONCEPCIÓN

The Risco de La Concepción, located in the municipality of Breña Alta, on the island of La Palma, is a Natural Monument protected by Law 12/1994 of 19 December 1994. It forms part of the Canary Islands Network of Protected Natural Spaces (ENP) and is integrated in the Natura 2000 Network, as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

This imposing cliff, with a drop of more than 300 m, marks the southern limit of the city of Santa Cruz de La Palma. It was formed by a phreatomagmatic hydrovolcanic process and a relatively recent eruption, which makes it of great geological value. Originating in shallow water, before the Cumbre Nueva existed, the Risco de La Concepción has a distinctive crescent shape. Its eastern flank has been sculpted by intense sea erosion, resulting in an impressive coastal cliff.

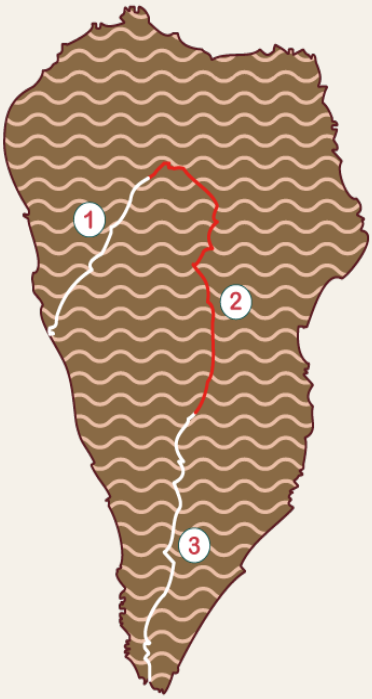
With its distinctive volcanic structure and yellowish tones, the Risco de La Concepción is a real treasure for those interested in science, geology and geomorphology. Located in a semi-arid bioclimatic environment, the cliff is a refuge of typical vegetation of the thermophilic forest, where the cardonal-tabaibal dominates at lower altitudes. In the more humid areas with seepages, there are examples of monteverde. The Risco is an ideal place for flora and fauna observation, excursions, research and photography.

At the summit, 400 m above sea level, stands the Shrine of Nuestra Señora de La Concepción, built in the early 16th century and rebuilt in 1672. The chapel houses paintings date from between the 17th and 18th centuries and features a viewpoint offering panoramic views of Santa Cruz de La Palma.



A good part of this stage runs along a tarmac track between stone walls

LA PALMA NATURE TRAIL
GR-131 “EL BASTÓN”



GR-131 “EL BASTÓN”	PÁG.
STAGE 1 • PUERTO DE TAZACORTE → ROQUE DE LOS MUCHACHOS	79
STAGE 2 • ROQUE DE LOS MUCHACHOS → REFUGIO DE EL PILAR	85
STAGE 3 • REFUGIO DE EL PILAR → FARO DE FUENCALIENTE	97

INTRODUCTION GR-131 "EL BASTÓN"

El Bastón Nature Trail is one of the most challenging and at the same time impressive routes on La Palma.

El Bastón Nature Trail is one of the most impressive and demanding routes on La Palma, a route that combines the Volcanoes Route and the Crest Route, offering an unforgettable experience for nature and hiking lovers.

This trail, officially known as GR-131, stretches from Puerto de Tazacorte to the Faro de Fuencaliente lighthouse, passing through some of the island's most impressive landscapes, including the Caldera de Taburiente National Park and the Cumbre Vieja Natural Park.

The adventure begins in Puerto de Tazacorte, where the path ascends from sea level to the highest point of the island, the Roque de los Muchachos, at an altitude of 2,426 metres. From there, the trail follows the edge of the Caldera, offering panoramic views of the Aridane Valley and Santa Cruz de La Palma, before descending towards the El Pilar Refuge. On this stretch, it crosses a variety of ecosystems, from scrubland and pine forests to the steep ridges of the island, showing the transition between high mountain vegetation and cultivated areas. The trail follows the iconic Ruta de los Volcanes, passing craters with names like Hoyo Negro, Duraznero and Montaña de Fuego. The trail skirts the San Antonio volcano and ends at the Fuencaliente lighthouse, where the landscape changes radically, with coastline, salt flats and beaches, and, weather permitting, views of the neighbouring islands of Tenerife and El Hierro.

Beyond its natural beauty, this route has a profound historical value, as it follows ancient paths used by the island's inhabitants to connect communities. Along the way, you will experience a stunning transition of ecosystems, from coastal areas to arid peaks, offering a unique experience on every stage. It is an epic challenge that reveals the incredible natural and geological diversity of La Palma, and a unique opportunity to connect with the landscape and history of the island.

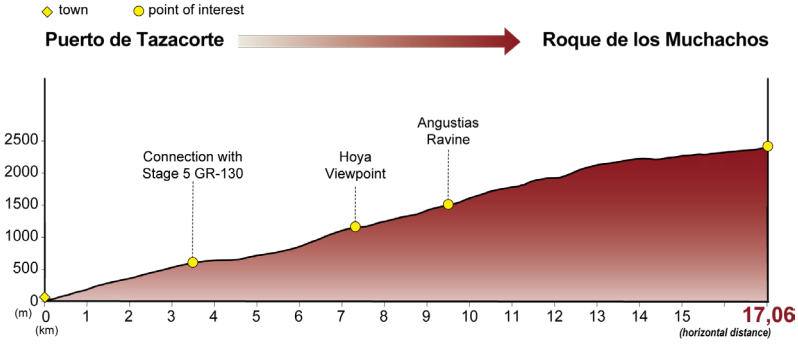


Caldera de Taburiente National Park

STAGE 1 PUERTO DE TAZACORTE→ ROQUE DE LOS MUCHACHOS

MIDE

Harshness of natural environment	4	Upward gradient	3274 m
Guidance along the route	1	Downward gradient	885 m
Route difficulty	3	Route lenght (actual distance)	17,43 km
Amount of effort needed	4	Time	8 h 27 min



FROM THE SEA TO THE PEAKS OF LA PALMA

The first stage of El Bastón is an exciting adventure that leads from Puerto de Tazacorte to Roque de Los Muchachos, the highest peak of La Palma, located at an altitude of 2,426 metres, in the Caldera de Taburiente National Park. This route is not only a physical challenge, but also a journey through the varied landscapes and ecosystems of the island, with breathtaking panoramic views of the Aridane valley and the Caldera.

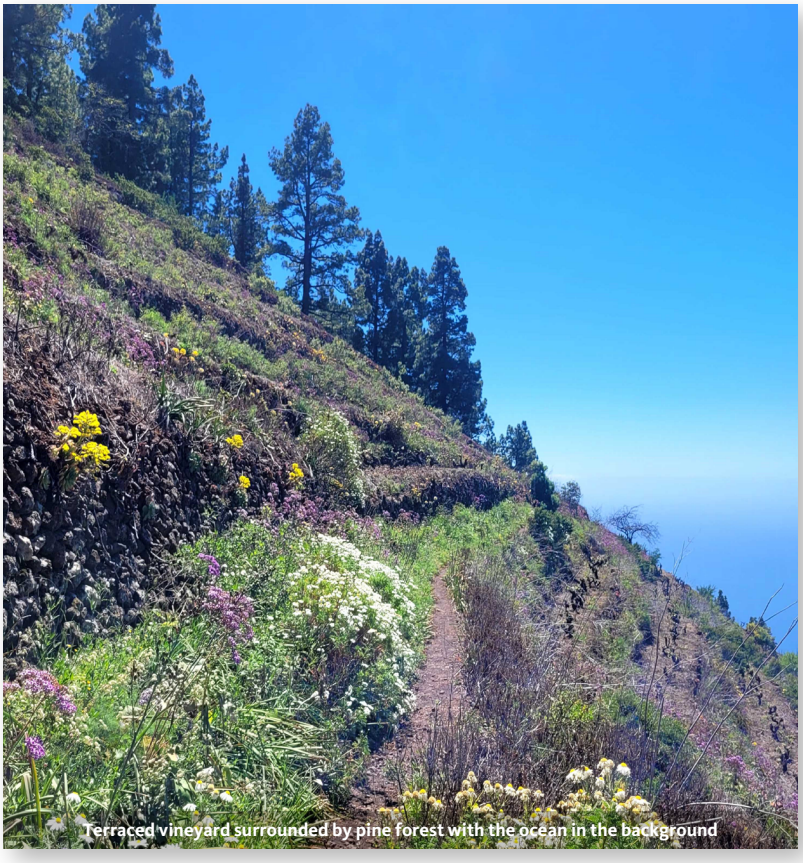


Views of the beach and Puerto de Tazacorte from the Mirador de la Punta

The route starts at Puerto de Tazacorte, where a sign at the foot of the cliff marks the beginning of the route. From here, the path winds its way to the northeast, ascending through the rocky morphology of the island with a series of strategically placed steps that facilitate the climb to reach the impressive viewpoint of La Punta, 270 m above sea level. From here, you can enjoy a panoramic view of the picturesque southwest coast of the island, as well as the fascinating fajanas formed by the Tajogaite volcano in 2021.

The route continues to rose between agricultural tracks, flanked by characteristic black brick walls that separate the banana plantations. After passing a small farm, the path briefly joins the tarmac path to El Time. After 300 m, the path turns off to the right to face a steep paved slope, flanked by banana trees.

After passing this section, the path turns right again and continues along an unpaved track until it reaches the asphalted path to Miasoles, which we take for some 700 metres. Finally, we reach the Mirador del Mite viewpoint, 594 m above sea level, from where the view is even more extensive. After passing by a nearby restaurant, the path turns slightly to the left to cross the LP-01 and rejoin the Time path, which is paved for only a few metres before going around a house.



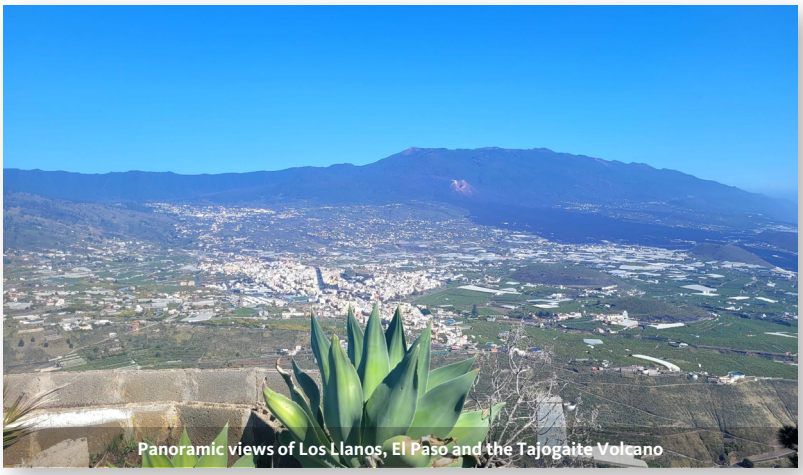
Terraced vineyard surrounded by pine forest with the ocean in the background



Views of the Barranco de las Angustias ravine and the Aridane Valley from the Mirador de la Hoya

A few metres further on, the path reaches a somewhat flatter area that serves as a connection point with stage 5 of the Camino Real por la Costa, from Tijarafe to Los Llanos de Aridane. Here, at 600 m above sea level, impressive views open up to the southeast, revealing the majestic Aridane valley, the Tajogaite lava flows, the Cumbre Vieja ridge and the final sections of the Barranco de las Angustias ravine. To the northwest, the landscape of the middle lands extends, showing how erosion has modelled the ancient lava flow forms of the primitive Cumbre Nueva Volcano. In this section, the environment begins to transform, the coastal ecosystem merging with that of the middle lands, giving way to the first Canarian pines and the working areas, both in use and abandoned.

The path continues uphill for a kilometre and a half on a relatively straight route, crossing fields dominated by vineyards, avocado and, to a lesser extent, banana trees, until it reaches the road to Las Cabezas. This part of the path runs along a farm track with an uneven surface, combining steep and flat areas. The track, with areas of earth and basaltic rocks of different sizes, is flanked by traditional agricultural walls made of volcanic rock. Among these plots, you can see traditional Canarian-style agricultural dwellings, with white-painted volcanic rock walls and black stone skirting boards and corners, as well as brightly painted doors and windows. Before continuing parallel to the road, there is a drinking water fountain and several panels with information on the agricultural uses and traditions of the municipality of Tijarafe. Here, 5.3 km from the start and at an altitude of over 730 m, might be an ideal spot rest and admire the fabulous views of the municipality of Tijarafe, with the ocean as a backdrop beyond the forests of the summits. The perfect place to recharge your batteries before continuing the ascent, while enjoying the natural beauty and rich agricultural heritage that defines this stage.



Panoramic views of Los Llanos, El Paso and the Tajogaite Volcano

Having crossed the road, the path returns to the track and continues climbing for two kilometres, gaining more than 300 metres in altitude, exceeding 1,100 metres and reaching the edge of the Caldera de Taburiente, and the Torre del Time and the Hoya Grande viewpoints. From here, you begin to leave behind the views of the Aridane Valley and the depths of the Caldera begin to come into view.

This section is one of the toughest and most fascinating of the entire stage. Its difficulty lies in the steep slope and the irregular relief of the track, made up of large basaltic rocks forming a sort of volcanic road. Its beauty lies in the notable contrast between the agricultural landscapes of the middle lands and the Canary Island pine forests (*Pinus canariensis*) that dominate the area. Here, not only is the change of landscape visually apparent, but a change in temperature is also felt, somewhat higher due to the increased sun exposure and decreased humidity resulting from the remoteness of the ocean. This floor is one of the richest in biodiversity on the island. In addition to the pines, there are other species such as heather (*Erica arborea*), *Cistus symphytifolius* and *Adenocarpus viscosus*, together with herbaceous species such as grasses and vines, the fruit of agricultural use.

After passing the viewpoint, the path enters a forest track before turning right where it takes a narrow path that leads to the peak of Hoya Grande, at 1,344 metres above sea level. On this route, you may be pleasantly surprised by the terraced vineyards surrounded by a pine forest, as the road winds its way towards the Roque de los Muchachos. For the next two kilometres, the narrow, stony path crosses a dense pine forest and climbs steeply uphill.

A remarkable feature of Canary Island pine is its extraordinary regenerative capacity. This species, endemic to the Canary Islands, can survive fires thanks to its thick bark and its ability to resprout, recovering part of its vegetation within just six months of a fire. Along the route, the path approaches and leaves the ridge of the Caldera, offering, at the highest points, impressive views of the Barranco de Las Angustias ravine and the Bejenado peak, witness to the oldest volcanic history of La Palma.

From 1,800 m above sea level, close to the tenth kilometre of the route, the forest begins to open up, revealing the first examples of high mountain vegetation on La Palma. These plants have adapted to extreme climatic conditions, such as low temperatures and high sun exposure. The landscape, still dominated by pine forests, becomes less dense at such high altitudes, giving way to bushes such as the tajinaste (*Echium* sp.) and endemic plants such as the blue tajinaste (*Echium gentianoides*) or the summit bencomia (*Bencomia exstipulata*), which stand out for their resistance to wind and cold, with compact forms and small leaves.

After skirting the cliffs of Somada Alta at about 1,890 m above sea level, the path sneaks around the Hoya del Estrabito, a depression from the edge of which the peaks of the Caldera and the beginning of the Cumbre Vieja Ridge can be clearly seen. It also offers a brief moment of respite as the path flattens out slightly for a few metres. Continuing for just over another kilometre, the first stage of the Bastón gradually leaves the forest behind and arrives at the Pinos Gachos, at an altitude of 2,100 metres above sea level. An idyllic spot from where you can make out, looking to the right, the Caldera, Roque Idafe, Cumbrecilla, Pico Bejenado, Dorsal del Cumbre Vieja, Valle de Aridane and the lava flow forms left by the recent Tajogaite volcano.

A remarkable feature of Canary Island pine is its extraordinary regenerative capacity. This species, endemic to the Canary Islands, can survive fires thanks to its thick bark and its ability to resprout, recovering part of its vegetation within just six months of a fire. Along the route, the path approaches and leaves the ridge of the Caldera, offering, at the highest points, impressive views of theBarranco de Las Angustias ravine and the Bejenado peak, witness to the oldest volcanic history of La Palma. From an altitude of 1800 m, close to the tenth kilometre of the route, the



Panoramic view of the Astronomical Observatory and the sea of clouds from Roque de los Muchachos

forest begins to open up, revealing the first examples of high mountain vegetation on La Palma. These plants have adapted to extreme climatic conditions, such as low temperatures and high sun exposure. The landscape, still dominated by pine forests, becomes less dense at such high altitudes, giving way to bushes such as the *Echium* sp. and endemic plants like *Echium gentianoides* or *Bencomia exstipulata* on the summit, which stand out for their resistance to wind and cold, with compact forms and small leaves.

After skirting the cliffs of Somada Alta at about 1,890 m sea level, the path sneaks around the Hoya del Estrabito, a depression from the edge of which the peaks of the Caldera and the beginning of the Cumbre Vieja Ridge can be clearly seen. It also offers a brief moment of respite as the path flattens out slightly for a few metres. Continuing for just over a kilometre, the first stage of the Bastón gradually leaves the forest and arrives at the Pinos Gachos, at 2,100 m above sea level. An idyllic spot from where you can make out, looking to the right, the Caldera, Roque Idafe, Cumbrecilla, Pico Bejenado, Dorsal del Cumbre Vieja, Valle de Aridane and the lava flow forms left by the recent Tajogaite volcano.

ROQUE DE LOS MUCHACHOS OBSERVATORY

La Palma's Roque de los Muchachos Observatory is a prestigious astronomical centre. Standing at an altitude of approximately 2,423 m above sea level, its location offers optimal atmospheric conditions for astronomical observation, benefiting from dark skies and low light pollution, which guarantee an exceptional environment for the study of the cosmos.

This complex houses a variety of observatories and telescopes, both optical and radio astronomical, operated by various international institutions. These include the Gran Telescopio Canarias (GTC), one of the most imposing structures with a primary mirror 10.4 m in diameter, and the Telescopio Nazionale Galileo (TNG), with an aperture of 3.58 m.

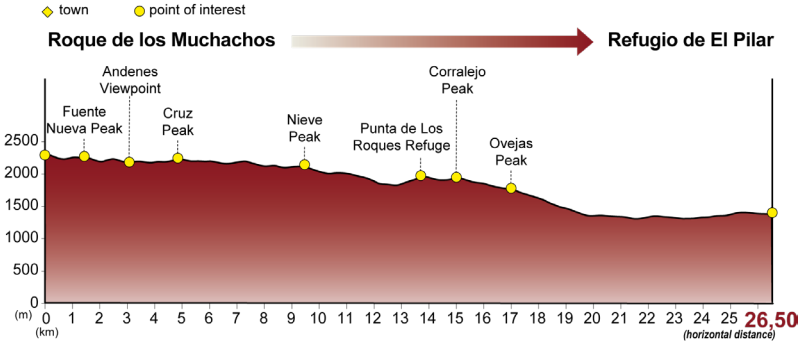
Scientific institutions and space agencies from all over the world take advantage of the facilities of the Roque de los Muchachos Observatory to carry out research and observations of astronomical relevance. Due to the sensitivity of the instruments, access to the observatory is usually restricted and reserved for authorised personnel and scientists. However, some observatories do organise public visits and outreach activities.

Over the years, the Observatory has played a crucial role in contributing significantly to discoveries and advances in astronomical research, covering areas such as astrophysics, cosmology and space astronomy.

STAGE 2 ROQUE DE LOS MUCHACHOS→ REFUGIO DE EL PILAR

MIDE

Harshness of natural environment	3	Upward gradient	1101 m
Guidance along the route	2	Downward gradient	2062 m
Route difficulty	3	Route lenght (actual distance)	26,91 km
Amount of effort needed	4	Time	9 h



THE PEN CANNOT CAPTURE IN WORDS WHAT IS FOREVER ETCHED IN THE RETINA

This stage of almost 27 km leads the hiker through the heart of the island of La Palma, which is none other than the Caldera de Taburiente National Park. It starts at the majestic Roque de los Muchachos and continues eastwards along the ridge of the Caldera. Along the way, different peaks will be reached and spectacular views of ravines that overwhelm the sense of sight with their beauty. As we change course to the south, the extensive pine forests of Canary Island pine (*Pinus canariensis*) stand solemn and majestic. On the final stretch, the path plays with the Cumbre Nueva or La Hilera track, offering the beauty and freshness of the laurel forest, finally reaching El Pilar Recreational Area.


Astronomical observatories at Roque de los Muchachos

This spectacular stage, almost 27 km long, starts at the information point of the Caldera de Taburiente National Park, located at the iconic Roque de los Muchachos, one of the most iconic sites on the island of La Palma.

After enjoying the obligatory visit to the Roque de los Muchachos, the route departs from the small car park, advancing along a narrow cobbled path, accompanied by the numerous telescopes located in this area.

The road meanders, adapting to the steep terrain, with continuous ascents and descents that offer a constant challenge. Looking back, you can still see the Roque de los Muchachos and contemplate the landscape, enjoying the chromatic variety offered by the different layers of soil of the different ravines that can be seen.

Leaving a new telescope to the left, the path reaches the Fuente Nueva Peak, which rises to 2,366 m above sea level, crowned by a trigonometrical station. This element, which belongs to the National Geographic Institute, forms part of a large network distributed throughout the national territory, and is of vital importance for carrying out all types of topographic and cartographic work.

As we continue along the route, we can see the next climb, while to the right, the spectacular landscape of the Caldera de Taburiente National Park, declared as such in 1954. The park is not only a natural treasure, but also a Special Protection Area for Birds (SPA), Biosphere Reserve and Starlight Destination since 2012.



Specimen of red tajinaste (*Echium wildpretii*)



Views of Stage 2 of the La Palma Nature Trail (GR-131)

During these first few kilometres of the stage, the altitude marks the predominance of a low and resistant scrubland, adapted to the harsh climate conditions of the place, with the red or pink tajinaste (*Echium wildpretii*) standing out among all the species, which with its spectacular flowers gives colour to one of the typical snapshots of the island of La Palma.

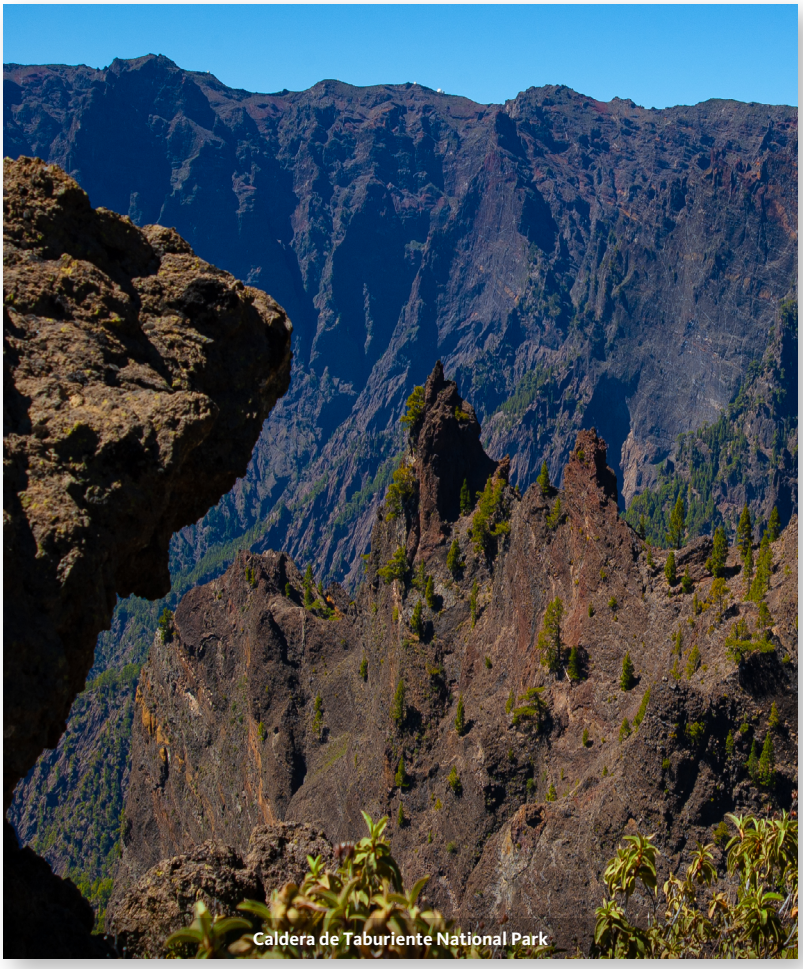
The itinerary advances close to the LP-4 road, reaching the so-called Pared de Roberto and shortly after, it reaches the Mirador de Los Andenes, next to the aforementioned road. Here, hikers can continue to enjoy the Caldera de Taburiente and motor tourists can look out over it. National Park information signs warn of the danger of tackling the next section in winter and in icy conditions, so walkers should plan their journey accordingly and heed the signs.

The route continues skirting the ridge of the Caldera de Taburiente, leaving the Barranco de Gallegos ravine behind on our left and the Barranco del Diablo ravine on the right. The route gradually turns in a south-easterly direction, reaching the Pico de la Cruz, at an altitude of 2351 m, marked by a new trigonometrical station. A little further on is the Pico Cruz Sur Amateur Astronomical Viewpoint, where an interpretative panel provides information on how to enjoy the sights on clear nights.

There is a succession of uphill and downhill sections, as well as ravines, leaving the Barranco de La Fuente de Vizcaíno ravine on the left and the Barranco de Los Guanches ravine on the right. As you climb to altitudes of over two thousand metres, the hiker walks above the sea of clouds, with the silhouette of the spectacular Teide, the highest peak in Spain and also a National Park on the neighbouring island of Tenerife, towering above to the east.

The route now heads south, reaching the start of the Barranco Hondo ravine on the left and the Barranco de Altaguna ravine on the right, before reaching the Pico de la Nieves a short while later. At an altitude of 2239 m, this peak culminates in a wooden cross that dominates the surroundings.

From here, the path starts to zigzag downwards, losing altitude and changing floors vegetation with the changing altitude, with the first specimens of Canary Island pine (*Pinus canariensis*) appearing. This tree, a symbol of the island of La Palma, is the only native pine species capable of resprouting from the trunk, a crucial adaptation to the fires caused, among other things, by volcanic eruptions.



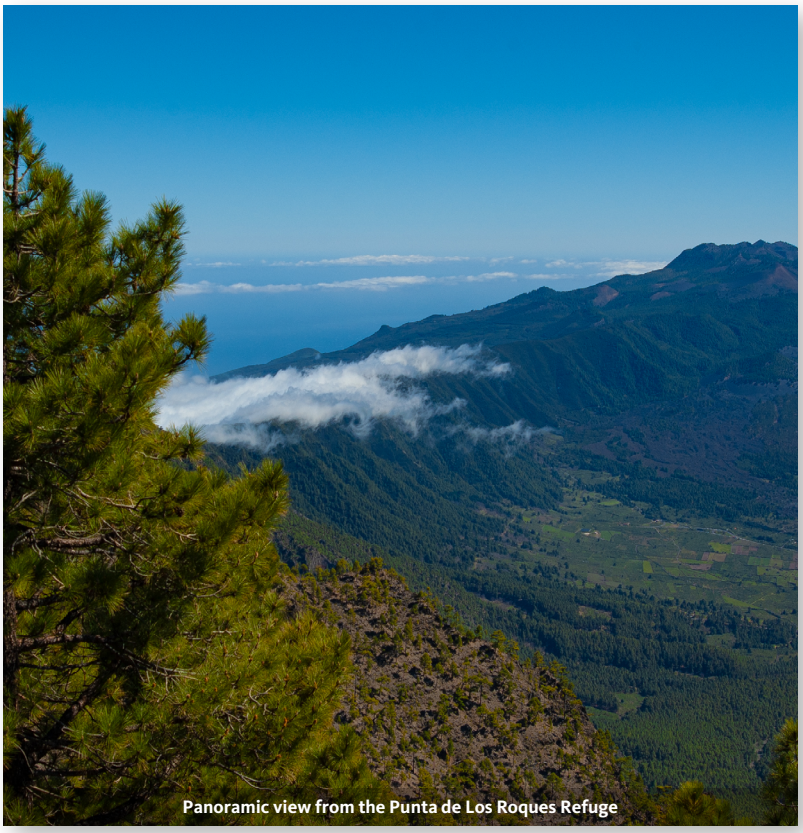
Caldera de Taburiente National Park



Detail of male flowers of Canary Island pine (*Pinus canariensis*)

As we descend we can see how the pine forest is gaining prominence, with its long needles arranged in threes rocked by the wind, which is very frequent on this stage. The landscape continues to be impressive and its immensity is not fully reflected in photographs or written descriptions, so it is recommended that hikers, provided they have enough time, make a few stops to appreciate the grandeur of the surroundings.

The path continues along the ravines on both sides of the route, with the Barranco de la Piedra Majorera ravine on the right and the Barranco de la Madera ravine on the left, both of which have been aptly named to reflect their natural environments. The Tagoror and La Erita petroglyphs are also close to the route, historical remains that add a mystical touch to the route. Shortly after, we reach the Lomo Corralejo, descending along new zig-zag path that climbs up along the crest of the mountain with views of a landscape so astonishingly spectacular it's hard not know where to look, intoxicated by so much beauty.



Panoramic view from the Punta de Los Roques Refuge

Due to the technical demands and the length of the stage, it is crucially important to plan well in advance. Fortunately, there are plenty of information signs along the route. At this point we find one with information on the remaining distance to different exits and escape routes, which can help to avoid unnecessary risks and/or to solve any setbacks or unforeseen incidents.

The hiker continues on this stage, perplexed by the landscape that surrounds him, reaching the Punta de Los Roques Refuge, an idyllic place to spend the night or simply take refuge from bad weather, equipped with water and electricity. The refuge is run on a system of respect and collective care of this small building located in one of the largest places on the island, scenically speaking.

The route descends steadily downhill to a point where you can see the west coast of the island. On a clear day, you can clearly make out the effects of the eruption of the Tajogaite volcano of 19 September 2021 and which lasted 85 days.

Further on, we reach the Pico Corralejo, at an altitude of 2,044 m, where a new trigonometrical station marks the highest point. Enjoying the extensive Canary Island pine forest and admiring its amazing capacity for sprouting and regeneration, we slowly leave the ridge of the Caldera de Taburiente behind, as the physical demands of the walk ease up somewhat.

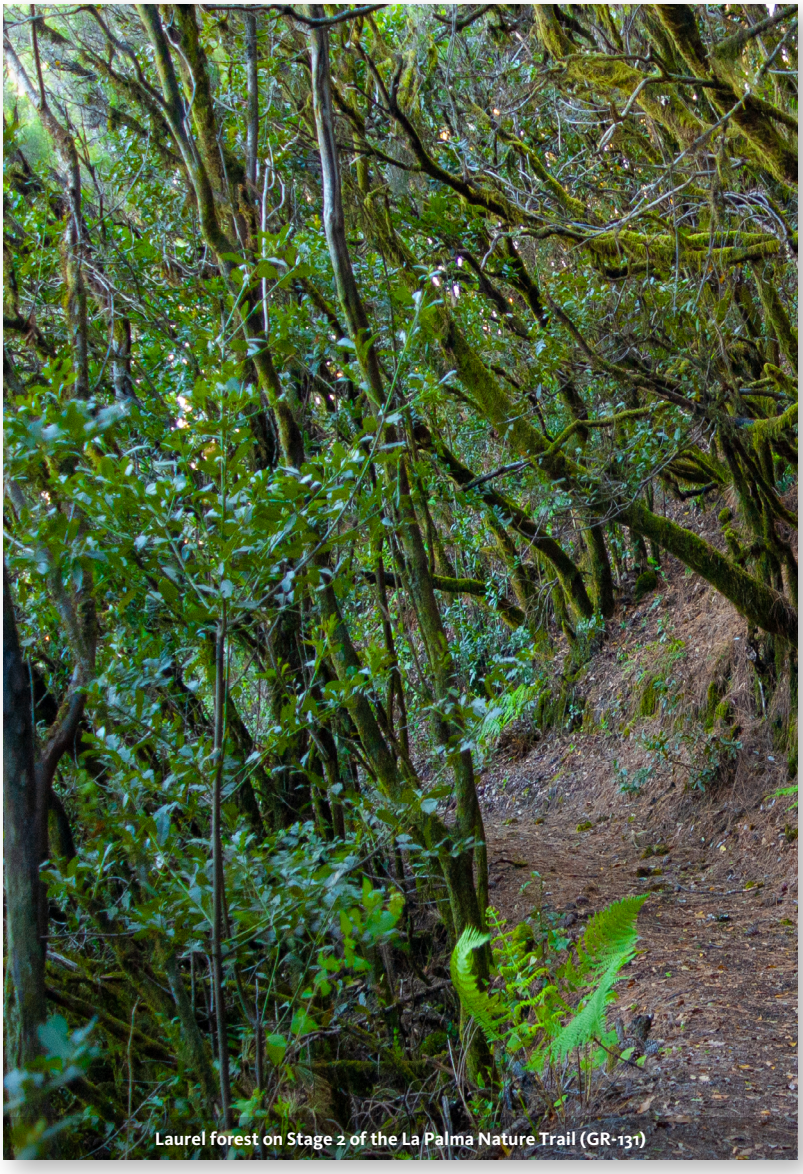
The route continues to reach a new peak, in this case to the right of the route: Pico de las Ovejas which, at 1854 m, illustrates how much we have descended already. A short while later, around Roques de la Perra, the first specimens of typical laurel forest species can be seen, intermingled in the pine forest which gradually begins to dominate the coniferous forest.



Hiker on the La Palma Nature Trail

After a further zigzagging downhill we reach the Cumbre Nueva track, also known as La Hilera. A few metres further along this track, we leave it after a horseshoe bend for a path that plunges us deep into the laurel forest. This cool, sombre setting evokes scenes from fairytales and legends of mythological beings. The path crosses the forest track again briefly before continuing on to the last part of the stage, the least demanding, with 6.5 km to go.

Along the path, you can enjoy the dense orchard that makes up the monteverde, where the odd Canary Island pine tree creeps into these forests full of biodiversity. The kilometres follow one after the other, approaching the forest track on a couple of occasions, to then continue along it for a few metres, taking the path again in the vicinity of a firebreak.



Laurel forest on Stage 2 of the La Palma Nature Trail (GR-131)



Detail of autochthonous vegetation on the La Palma Nature Trail

A short while later, after passing by some telecommunication antennas, we descend to the Pista de Cumbre Nueva track, for a long stretch that offers the change to recover somewhat after the intense first kilometres of the stage. The path then veers to the left of the track, crossing it a total of six times, changing at each crossing the side on which we leave the Pista de Cumbre Nueva. Despite the many crossings, the route is easy to follow thanks to good signposting and the constant proximity of the track, which serves as a reliable guide.

The vegetation remains dense and exuberant, typical of these laurel forests which benefit from the horizontal rainfall caused by the frequent fogs in the area. The route continues through the Cumbre Vieja Natural Park and, after the sixth and last junction with the track, the Canary Island pine forest curiously emerges once again.

The hiker returns to the track shortly before reaching the LP-301 road, which we follow carefully for just over 200 m, as far as the El Pilar Recreational Area and with it the end of this spectacular stage. This Recreational Area has a multitude of services including parking, a bus stop, children's play area, barbecues, picnic areas and the El Pilar - Cumbre Vieja Visitors' Centre.

CALDERA DE TABURIENTE NATURAL PARK

The Caldera de Taburiente National Park is a natural treasure on the island of La Palma that captivates nature lovers and explorers. Its geological formation, as a volcanic caldera, provides a unique diversity of landscapes, from high peaks to deep ravines, as well as Canary Island pine forests (*Pinus canariensis*), waterfalls, such as the famous Cascada de Colores waterfall, streams and cliffs, creating a fascinating landscape .

The name "Taburiente" comes from the language of the Benahoaritas, the indigenous inhabitants of La Palma before the Castilian conquest in the 15th century. Although the exact meaning is unclear, it is presumed to be related to the name of an ancient tribe or place on the island.

The Caldera de Taburiente is an impressive natural monument that was formed over millions of years, combining volcanic and erosive processes. It all began approximately 3 million years ago, with a series of eruptions that raised the present-day base of the island from the ocean floor. During the Pleistocene, around 1.6 million years ago, the collapse of the great volcano created a huge depression that gave rise to the Aridane Valley and the famous volcanic caldera. Over time, erosion from fluvial activity has continued to sculpt the caldera to this day, with weathering and other erosional processes shaping the landscape.



Panoramic view of the Caldera de Taburiente National Park

The biodiversity of the Caldera de Taburiente is truly extraordinary, with unique species of flora and fauna, which have adapted to the specific conditions of the island and the different bioclimatic levels. From sea level to the 2,426 m high Roque de los Muchachos, the caldera is home to an incredible natural wealth. Among the most notable species are the emblematic Canary Island pine and the fayal-brezal forest. The latter is a plant formation characteristic of Macaronesia, consisting mainly of the species known as faya (*Myrica faya*) and heather (*Erica* spp.), which are usually found in areas of higher humidity and altitude, thus contributing to the islands' biological diversity. We cannot overlook the importance of the colourful, reddish and blue flowers of the Echium wildpretii species, which add a distinctive beauty to the landscape. Other species can also be observed, such as the coxcomb (*Adenocarpus viscosus*) and spurge (*Euphorbia canariensis*), visible in the drier areas, which also play a crucial role in the botanic diversity of the area.

In terms of animal biodiversity, the Caldera de Taburiente is home to a fascinating variety of species that contribute to the wealth of its ecosystem. Among the majestic birds that inhabit this environment, we find not only the kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*) and the palm crow (*Corvus monedula hesperius*), but also the canary (*Serinus canaria*), endemic to the region, which brings a special singularity to the local birdlife. Other notable birds include Bulwer's petrel (*Bulweria bulwerii*) and the peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*), which find the park's diverse habitats an essential refuge.



In the reptile kingdom, the La Palma giant lizard (*Gallotia auaritae*) stands out as a unique species on the island. The wealth of insects also contributes to the biological diversity of the park. Among them, the Caldera beetle (*Apalus bimaculatus*) and the lemon verbena butterfly (*Pyronia bathseba*) are examples of the numerous species that find their home in the varied habitats that make up the park. The conservation of these habitats is essential to preserve the integrity of the endemic fauna and to ensure a sustainable ecological balance in the region.

That's why the Caldera de Taburiente is protected as a National Park, with the status of Biosphere Reserve and Special Area of Conservation under the Natura 2000 Network. This protection status is of critical importance not only to preserve biodiversity, but also fundamental ecological processes. These unique habitats benefit from exceptional climate values, such as subtropical conditions and the influence of the trade winds, contributing to the formation of diverse microclimates.

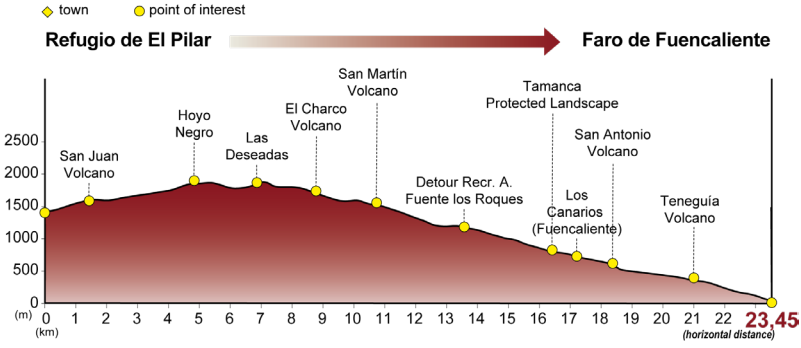
For hiking enthusiasts, the park offers a network of trails, the "Sendero de los Roques" being one of the best known, offering breathtaking panoramic views of the caldera and, on a clear day, of the islands of Tenerife, El Hierro and La Gomera. Its remote location and low light pollution make it an ideal place for astronomical observation, contributing to La Palma's recognition as a Starlight Reserve. That is why, on the summit of the Roque de los Muchachos, there is the telescope array of the Roque de los Muchachos Astronomical Observatory, a place of astronomical research of worldwide scientific relevance.

Culturally, the Caldera de Taburiente has a special significance for the people of La Palma. Before the Castilian conquest, it was considered sacred by the Benahoaritas, the original inhabitants of La Palma, who saw it as a spiritual place and home to the sun god Magec. After the conquest, the area was used for agriculture and livestock farming, leaving traces of human intervention in the area, such as cultivation terraces and old roads, highlighting the high water value of the caldera. In short, the Caldera de Taburiente is an enriching experience, both in terms of nature and history.

STAGE 3 REFUGIO DE EL PILAR → FARO DE FUENCALIENTE

MIDE

Harshness of natural environment	4	Upward gradient	1436 m
Guidance along the route	2	Downward gradient	2859 m
Route difficulty	3	Route lenght (actual distance)	23,76 km
Amount of effort needed	4	Time	8 h 37 min



THE ROUTE OF THE VOLCANOES

The final stretch of "El Bastón" coincides with one of the most emblematic routes of La Palma: the Route of the Volcanoes. This road, frequented since the 17th century, was known as the "Camino de los Palos Jincados" named for the sticks or poles driven into the ground to serve as a guide for travellers. Today, walking through it is like taking a journey through the volcanic history of the island, where you walk among calderas and volcanoes, over lava and volcanic ash, much of it from the last eruptions on the island prior to the Tajogaite eruption. Along the route you have the opportunity to explore almost all the vegetation levels of the south of the island: from the lush pine forests and crespales to the pioneering communities that survive in the badlands like spurge and salt marshes.



In the higher areas of the route, only pine trees are left as accompanying vegetation



The path immediately enters a mass of Canary Island pines

The entire stage, except around Los Canarios, runs through protected natural areas, including the Cumbre Vieja Natural Park, briefly through the Tamanca Protected Landscape and the Volcanoes of Teneguía Natural Monument.

This stage begins at the El Pilar Recreational Area, one of the most popular on the island due to its location, relatively easy access and excellent facilities, including an environmental information centre. It is worth bearing in mind that once you have left the recreational area behind, the next possibility of easily leaving the route or obtaining water is at the Fuente de los Roques rest area, 14 km from the start, so make sure to prepare well for this stage and take plenty of supplies.

The path immediately enters a pine forest that gains height on the slope of the Birigoyo peak. This first section alternates between a reforestation pine forest and a more mature pine forest in where Canary Island pine (*Pinus canariensis*) is accompanied by sub-humid shrub species like mountain pine (*Adenocarpus foliolosus*), amagante (*Cystus symphitifolius*), broom (*Chamecytisus proliferus*) and mountain pennyroyal (*Bystropogon origanifolius*).

As we ascend, there is a small viewpoint with a panoramic table offering spectacular views of the Aridane valley. The path continues around the mountain to the west, arriving at a wider track where it runs briefly before leaving both the track and Birigoyo.

From here, at the start of the ascent to the Hoyo Negro crater, the name Route of the Volcanoes begins to live up to its name. This crater was witness, together with the Peach Tree crater that will be visited later, to the eruption of 1949. During the

ascent, the pine forest has become increasingly scarce in favour of a sparse scrub formation characteristic of the lapillis and volcanic sands of recent eruptions, the crespar. Among the species found in this area are the crespa (*Plantago webii)* (an ednemism of the Canary Islands), and palm endemisms such as the palm thyme (*Micromeria herpyllomorpha*), pajonera grass (*Descurainia gilva*) and rosalillo *Pterocephalus porphyranthus*.

During these first few kilometres of the stage, the altitude marks the predominance of a low and resistant scrubland, adapted to the harsh climate conditions of the place, with the red or pink tajinaste (*Echium wildpretii*) standing out among all the species, which with its spectacular flowers gives colour to one of the typical snapshots of the island of La Palma.

Leaving the peak of Nambroque to the left, the path descends halfway down the slope towards the Malforada lavas, an impressive spot formed by the lava flow of the Duraznero. We then skirt the Fraile mountain to the right and the path reaches its highest point at Las Deseadas, a volcano with two almost twin peaks separated by its crater, representing the highest point reached on this stage.

We then enter a kind of closed valley, where a slight ascent leads to an ancient crater that looks like a closed valley covered with lapilli from the eruption of the El Charco volcano. From this point on, the rest of the stage is an almost continuous descent. The path skirts first the Cabrera mountain, and then the Hoya de la Manteca and the Martín volcano, whose reddish tones stand out against the grey tones of the surroundings. The path skirts these volcanoes on their western side and continues in the direction of Pelada mountain, leaving behind the scrubland landscape to re-enter the pine forest floor.



Views to the southeast from Hoyo Negro. Between the sea of clouds you can make out the island of Tenerife

THE LATEST ERUPTIONS ON LA PALMA

Cumbre Vieja is one of the two main volcanic areas on the island of La Palma, together with the area of the Taburiente Domain, in the north of the island, and is currently inactive. The Dorsal Domain, in the south of the island, is made up of Cumbre Vieja and Cumbre Nueva, and has been at the centre of the latest eruptions recorded on the island of La Palma. The dates and the name given to the volcano that caused the eruption are listed below:

1470-1492: Montaña Quemada.

1585: Tajuya Volcano.

1646: Martín Volcano.

1677: Fuencaliente Volcano.

1712: El Charco Volcano.

1949: San Juan Volcano (craters of Duraznero, Hoyo Negro and Llano del Banco).

1971: Teneguía Volcano.

2021: Tajogaite.

The craters and volcanoes of almost all of these historic eruptions are visited during the Volcano Route.



Monument to the Walker and the Church of San Antonio Abad, Los Canarios



Views towards Caldera de Taburiente and Llanos de Aridane

A path skirts its way around Fire Mountain halfway up. Just before leaving it behind, a detour leads to the recreational area of Fuente de los Roques, where you can refill your water bottle or leave the route if you need to, with this point reachable by car. Back on the route, the path continues its descent through the pine forest. On this slope, with less humidity, the accompanying vegetation has changed to species like the rockrose narrow-leaved cistus (*Cistus monspeliensis*) or Canary buckthorn (*Rhamnus crenulata*).

After more than two kilometres of descent through pine trees along a path bordered by rocks, you reach a wide track that connects with the village of Los Canarios. At this point, this stage of the GR 130 intersects with the end of stage 6 and the start of stage 7 of the GR 130. The descending path is resumed, which briefly meets the same track as before and, half a kilometre later, merges onto asphalted track that leads to the sports area of Los Canarios. Before crossing the track, if you walk along it in a westerly direction you can reach a rest area. After crossing, the trail follows a cobbled slope that ends at the foot of the Church of San Antonio Abad. Curiously, the bells of this temple were installed in 1867 with donations from locals who had emigrated to Cuba, next to a bronze statue erected in honour of the hikers who walk the paths of La Palma every day.

From the square, the descent begins along Calle José Pons, leading to the main road. Only a little further on, before turning right into Calle Emilio Quintana Sánchez, we tale the Las Indias road, LP-209, until it reaches Calle de los Volcanes. After crossing the road again, continue straight on to the San Antonio volcano. At its foot is the Fuencaliente Volcanoes Visitors' Centre, an interpretation centre on the volcanism of La Palma and the Canary Islands.

The trail takes a path that starts to the right of the visitors' centre and descends to a wide track that skirts the volcano. On the right you can first see Roque de Teneguía, where a series of aboriginal engravings were found, and then the volcano to which it gave its name, and which last erupted in 1971.

The trail then turns almost 180º to head towards the Teneguía volcano. In this area, where the soil hardly allows the growth of Echium breviame or La Palma thyme (*Micromeria herpyllomorpha*), man has managed to make the most of the land by planting vines, which occupy almost any area that can be cultivated. Half a kilometre before reaching the volcano, the path changes direction again, taking a track in a southerly direction that runs over the lava of the volcano, between the volcanic cone and the Mago mountain.



The path runs halfway up the slope of the San Antonio volcano



Hikers on their way to the Teneguía volcano

The path meets the LP-207 road, which it crosses on two more occasions as it continues its descent towards the Fuencaliente lighthouse. The lighthouse and salt flats of Fuencaliente, which are visible to the south, are an important landmark on the route. The salt flats have been declared a Site of Scientific Interest, the only ecosystem of this type on La Palma and a meeting point for wading birds. Along the route to the lighthouse, the landscape is dominated by tabaibas (*Euphorbia* sp.), arreboles, iramas (*Schizogyne sericea*) or verodes (*Kleinia neriifolia*), species that have adapted to the volcanic soil and the action of the salty winds.

The path finally ends at the platform where the lighthouses of Fuencaliente are located. The original building was the second lighthouse built on La Palma, in 1899, although it did not enter service until 1904. Apart from the deterioration due to its location, it suffered a lot of damage during the Teneguía eruption, so another one was built next to it in 1983. However, the original lighthouse was restored in 2006 as an interpretation centre for the marine reserve of the island of La Palma.

Although the end point of this trip that began in the port of Tazacorte is the lighthouse, it is worth taking the time to visit the nearby beaches for a well-earned swim if the waves and the weather are suitable.



During the descent, as well as permanent view of the ocean, you can see the salt flats of Fuencaliente

SALINAS DE FUENCALIENTE

The Fuencaliente salt flats, steeped in a rich family tradition, are a place where craftsmanship and sea salt production converge. This space, characterised by its chromatic contrasts to create an impressive sense of magic, has become an enterprise rooted in the nature of the island, spanning generations.

The legacy of craftsmanship has endured over time even since the eruption of the Teneguía volcano in 1979, which left its mark, paralysing the construction of the salt pans for a year. This link with history and nature has attracted ornithologists, botanists and scientists, culminating in its designation as a Natural Area of Site of Scientific Interest in 1994 (LENAC 12/1994, 19 December).

Since the beginning of its activity in 1967, the Salinas de Fuencaliente have experienced a constant growth, reaching their current extension of 35,000 m2, supported by UNESCO programmes in 1994. This saltworks complex has become a reference point for natural and scenic visits to the island, uniquely fusing historical, cultural, natural, botanical and geological aspects.

COUNCILS

- **SANTA CRUZ DE LA PALMA COUNCIL**
  (https://www.santacruzdelapalma.es/web/sclapalma/)
- **PUNTALLANA COUNCIL**
  (https://puntallana.es/)
- **SAN ANDRÉS AND SAUCES COUNCIL**
  (https://sanandresysauces.es/)
- **BARLOVENTO COUNCIL**
  (https://barlovento.es/)
- **VILLA DE GARAFIA COUNCIL**
  (https://www.garafia.es/)
- **PUNTAGORDA COUNCIL**
  (https://www.puntagorda.es/)
- **TIJARAFE COUNCIL**
  (https://tijarafe.net/)
- **LOS LLANOS DE ARIDANE COUNCIL**
  (https://www.aridane.org/city/)
- **EL PASO COUNCIL**
  (https://elpaso.es/)
- **FUENCALIENTE COUNCIL**
  (https://www.fuencalientedelapalma.es/)
- **VILLA DE MAZO COUNCIL**
  (https://villademazo.com/)
- **BREÑA BAJA COUNCIL**
  (https://www.bbaja.es/es/)
- **BREÑA ALTA COUNCIL**
  (https://brenaalta.es/)
- **TAZACORTE COUNCIL**
  (https://tazacorte.es/site/)

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

OTHER LINKS OF INTEREST

- **RED CANARIA DE ESPACIOS NATURALES PROTEGIDOS**
  (https://www.gobiernodecanarias.org/planificacionterritorial/materias/informacion-territorial/enp/)

- **PARQUE NACIONAL DE LA CALDERA DE TABURIENTE (MITECO)**
  (https://www.miteco.gob.es/es/parques-nacionales-oapn/red-parques-nacionales/parques-nacionales/taburiente.html)

- **PARQUE NACIONAL DE LA CALDERA DE TABURIENTE (GOBIERNO DE CANARIAS)**
  (https://www.holaislascanarias.com/espacios-naturales/la-palma/parque-nacional-caldera-de-taburiente/)

- **FUNDACIÓN CANARIA RESERVA MUNDIAL DE LA BIOSFERA LA PALMA**
  (https://lapalmabiosfera.es/)

- **INSTITUTO DE ASTROFÍSICA DE CANARIAS (IAC)**
  (https://www.iac.es/es/observatorios-de-canarias/observatorio-del-roque-de-los-muchachos)

- **LA PALMA, BEAUTIFUL ISLAND, CANARIAS**
  (https://visitlapalma.es/en/)

- **TOURISM CABILDO DE LA PALMA**
  (https://www.cabildodelapalma.es/en/node/173)

- **TOURISM GOBIERNO DE CANARIAS**
  (https://www.gobiernodecanarias.org/turismo/)

- **LA PALMA TOURIST CENTERS**
  (https://lapalmacentrosturisticos.com/en/?noredirect=en_GB)

- **GOFIO INTERPRETATION MUSEUM (MIGO)**
  (https://www.garafia.es/museo-de-interpretacion-del-gofio/)

- **ROQUE DE LOS MUCHACHOS VISITOR CENTRE**
  (https://lapalmacentrosturisticos.com/en/?centros=centro-de-visitantes-roque-de-los-muchachos&noredirect=en_GB)

- **LA PALMA MARINE RESERVE INTERPRETATION CENTRE**
  (https://lapalmabiosfera.es/comunidad/centro-de-interpretacion-reserva-marina-de-la-palma/)



Agua Ravine

Nature Trails









Since 1993, the Nature Trails Programme of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food has the main objective of re-conditioning old unused infrastructure (railway lines, livestock trail or traditional paths), to give them new life as spaces for citizens to use and enjoy.

This guide offers detailed texts and accompanying maps for the nature trails completed to date, which are one of the best ways of getting close to nature and discovering the culture and traditions of our territory.