

Fuerteventura

47 long and short walks • 4 car tours



GPS

This is a sample from the
PDF edition of
Landscapes of
FUERTEVENTURA

a countryside guide
Eighth edition



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revised by Sunflower Books
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This shorter sampler includes some of the introductory text, the introductions to each of the main sections (Picnicking, Car Touring and Walking) with an example of each. There is a total of 160 pages, plus a pull-out island map, in the full book.



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The parish church at La Oliva, Nuestra Señora de la Candelaria, overpowers the village with its solid black-stone bell tower (Car tour 3, Walk 7).





Getting about

On Fuerteventura it's a good idea to hire a vehicle for at least part of your holiday. **Car hire** on the island is very reasonable, with all hire firms offering competitive rates.

Coach tours are easy to arrange and get you to all the tourist points of interest, but never off the beaten track.

There is a very good **local bus** service between the resorts themselves and to/from Puerto del Rosario. But buses to inland villages are still severely limited (often just one a day), so you may need private transport to reach any hikes in these outposts. Selected bus timetables are shown on page 126, but you may find more convenient buses operating from your resort once you are on the island. Don't rely *solely* on our timetables. Re-check the timetables at www.tiadhe.com, where you'll also find information about bus fares. Although some buses may run late, I'd advise you *always to arrive 15 minutes early!*

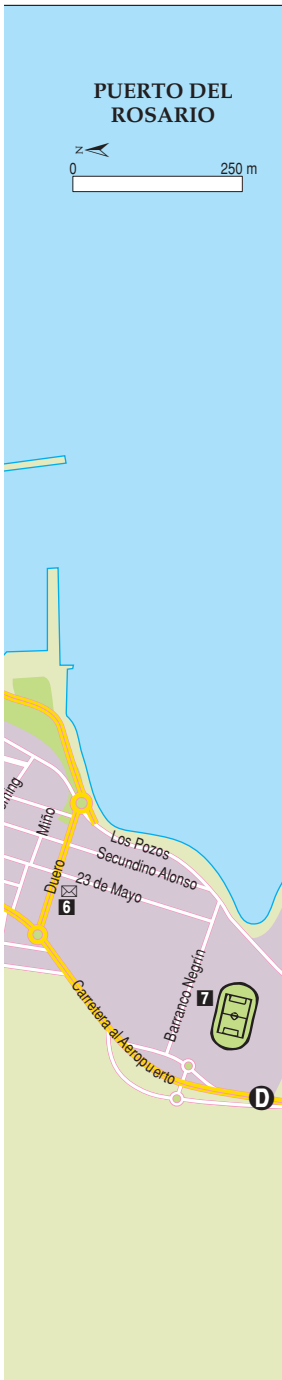
Taxis fares are not particularly high, but you *do* have to travel long distances to get anywhere. Sharing with others lessens the blow. There are no Uber or similar on demand services on the island at present. At all the major resorts you will find a list of prices to the most common destinations — usually at the taxi stand. If you want to know approximately how much your journey will cost, you can compare distances with one of the more popular routes before you set off. Below are the telephone numbers of the major taxi operators. *It's best to book 24 hours in advance to assure a place!*

Airport 902-404704
Antigua 928-878011
Betancuria 928-163004
Puerto Rosario 928-850216
Caleta de Fuste/Castillo
928-163004; 928-166510
Corralejo 928-537441,
928-866108
Costa Calma 609-274180
Gran Tarajal 928-870059
La Lajita 928-161110
La Oliva 928-866108
Pájara (Morro Jable taxi)
928-541257; (Costa
Calma taxi) 928-547032
Tuineje 928-870059



8 Landscapes of Fuerteventura





PUERTO DEL ROSARIO

- 1 Tourist information
- 2 Bus station
- 3 Casa Museo de Unamuno
- 4 Town hall and police
- 5 Island council (Cabildo)
- 6 Post office
- 7 Sports ground
- 8 (near Exit B) Medio Ambiente offices
- 9 Medical centre
- 10 Nuestra Señora del Rosario
- A** to Corralejo
- B** to La Oliva
- C** to Casillas del Angel
- D** to hospital and airport

GRAN TARAJAL

- 1 Tourist information
- 2 Telephones
- 3 Medical centre
- 4 Taxi rank
- 5 Post office
- 6 Bus stop
- 7 Police
- 8 Market
- 9 San Diego
- A** to Tuineje

10 Landscapes of Fuerteventura





Picnics and short walks


Most tourists come here for the beaches and the sunshine. There are enough beautiful beaches on this island to visit a different one each day for a month. Many of them are off the beaten track, and this means taking along a picnic if you will spend the day there. And carry a large umbrella because there is generally little or *no* shade (indicated by ○ in our picnic titles).

Finding other picnic spots, however, is a different story. There's no wealth of 'organised' picnic places on Fuerteventura, unlike on some of the other Canary Islands. The picnic settings I've suggested are therefore natural beauty spots I've discovered on my walks. My own personal favourite is Lobos ... when it's not too windy!


On the following pages you'll find my suggestions for some lovely picnic spots, together with all the information you need to reach them. *Note that picnic numbers correspond to walk numbers*, so you can quickly find the general location on the island by referring to the pull-out touring map (where the walks are highlighted in green/white). Most of the spots I've chosen are easy to reach, and I include transport details, walking times, and views or setting — as well as page references for maps and photos. The *precise* location of the picnic spot is shown on the relevant large-scale *walking* map by the symbol **P**.

While I've recommended a car for getting to and from almost all these picnic spots, many are accessible by bus as well — you'll just have a somewhat longer walk. (**These picnic suggestions make ideal short walks however you are getting about on the island.**) Please read the country code on page 15 and go quietly in the countryside. *Buen provecho!*


1 LOBOS (map page 48, photos on pages 44-45 and 46-47) ○

Access by  ferry from Corralejo to/from Lobos: 10-15min on foot. Head left from the jetty; less than 10min along, take a path off left, into the sand dunes — to lovely Playa de La Calera. If you prefer swimming off rocks, try the stunning setting of Casas El Puertito just 5min from the jetty — *to the right*. Both are superb, tranquil spots. *No shade!*

2 FARO DE EL TOSTON (touring map, photo on pages 50-51) ○

Access by  to/from the Faro de El Tostón: 5-10min on foot. Park at the side of the road to the lighthouse, north of El Cotillo. Picnic at any of the delightful turquoise coves or on the dunes nearby. *No shade!*

3 HERDERS SHELTER (map and photos on pages 54-55) ○



Access by  only: from the FV109 3km east of Lajares follow the





Side-on view to the Casa de los Coroneles at La Oliva (Walk 7). Behind the building is a palm-shaded ruin from where you can look out at the perfectly formed volcanic cone of Montaña del Frontón (Picnic 7)

smooth dirt road across the cycle path to waypoint ④; park and walk to ② (10-15min on foot). Use the map to peer into Calderón Hondo while you're there!


7 LA OLIVA (map on pages 64-65, photos above and on page 35)

Access by  (Lines: 07, 08): 10-15min on foot. From the bus stop, walk to the Casa de los Coroneles, signposted from the church. Or by : 5min on foot. Park in the car park in front of the Casa in La Oliva. Take the track at the right of the outbuildings to reach a ruined homestead directly behind the Casa de los Coroneles. This is a pleasant spot from where you can admire the setting without the tourists, or look out east to the impressive Montaña del Frontón. Some places to sit in the shade from a few palms or the walls of this derelict, but charming homestead.

9 TEFIA (map and photo on pages 68-69)



Access by  (Line 02): 10-15min on foot. From the bus stop, follow Walk 9 on page 69 to the pretty Ermita de San Agustín. Or by : 2min on foot; drive to the *ermita*. Picnic in the shady courtyard, where there is seating. Utterly peaceful.

10 BARRANCO DE LOS MOLINOS (map on page 71, photos on pages 70-71 and 72)



Access by : 10min on foot. Park 12

in the car park at waypoint ⑤, just past Las Parcelas. Walk straight ahead to the hide, where there is a bench in the shade protecting you from the afternoon sun. Picnic while watching the birds and enjoy the 'green curtain' of the *barranco*.



13 CONVENTO DE SAN BUENAVENTURA (map and photo on page 82)

Access by  or  (Line 02) to/from Betancuria: 10-15min on foot. Follow the Short walk on page 80 and picnic in shade of the convent ruins or in the pretty *barranco* below.

14 BETANCURIA (map on page 82)

Access by  or  (Line 02) to/from Betancuria: 15-20min on foot, with a steady climb of up to 100m/330ft. Follow Short walk 14 on page 83 out of Betancuria and picnic anywhere on the grassy slopes above the last houses ... out of sight of the dogs, or you'll get no peace! There is a good outlook down to the village. There is no shade until you get up into the stubby pines.

16 BARRANCO DE LAS PEÑITAS (map on pages 90-91, photos on pages 42, 88-89 and opposite) ○

Access by  or  (Line 02) to/from the 'Casa de la Naturaleza' bus stop on the Presa de las Peñitas road in Vega de Río Palmas, as described in 'Transport' on page 76: 30-40min on foot. Follow Walk 16



Touring

Most visitors to Fuerteventura hire a vehicle for all or part of their stay. Car hire is not expensive. Do shop around, while at the same time bearing in mind that cheapest is not always best! Always check your vehicle in advance and point out any existing dents, scratches, etc. Ask for all the conditions and insurance cover in writing, in English. Check to make sure you have a sound spare tyre and all the necessary tools. Be sure to get the office *and the after-hours* telephone numbers of the car hire firm and carry them with you. If you're not 100% happy about the car, don't take it. Finally, if you pay by credit card, make a note of exactly what you're signing for. *Important:* Leave nothing of value in your car, and always lock it. Car theft is not unknown.

The touring notes are brief: they contain little history or information readily available in free tourist office leaflets or standard guide books. The main tourist centres and towns are not described either, for the same reason. Instead, I concentrate on the 'logistics' of touring: times and distances, road conditions, and seeing places many tourists miss. Most of all I emphasise possibilities for **walking** and **picnicking**. While some of the references to walks and picnics off the beaten track may not be suitable during a long car tour, you may see a landscape that you would like to explore at leisure another day, when you've more time to stretch your legs.

The large fold-out touring map is designed to be held out opposite the touring notes and contains all the information you will need outside the towns. **Town plans**, showing exits for motorists, are on pages 6-10. The two largest resorts on the island are Corralejo in the north and Morro Jable in the south, so I based the drives around these two centres, but they can easily be joined from other, more central, fast-growing holiday resorts like Caleta de Fuste.

Remember to allow plenty of time for visits, and to take along warm clothing as well as some food and drink, in case you are delayed. The distances in the touring notes are *cumulative* from the departure point. A key to the **symbols** in the touring notes is on the touring map.

All motorists should read the country code opposite and go quietly in the countryside. *Buen viaje!*

A country code for walkers and motorists

The experienced Rambler is used to following a country code, but the tourist out for a lark may unwittingly cause damage, harm animals, or even endanger his own life. Please heed this advice.

- **Do not light fires.**
- **Do not frighten animals.**
- The **dunes** in the north as well as in the south are the home of very rare birds, some of which lay their well-camouflaged eggs directly on the ground. They could easily be destroyed by jeeps or mountain bikes, so please *keep to the main tracks and do not travel cross-country*.
- **Walk quietly** through all hamlets and villages.
- **Leave all gates just as you find them.**
- **Protect all wild and cultivated plants.** Don't try to pick wild flowers or uproot saplings. Obviously fruit and other crops are someone's private property and should not be touched. Never walk over cultivated land.
- **Take all your litter away with you.**
- **Walkers — Do not take risks!** This is the most important point of all. Do not attempt walks beyond your capacity, and do not wander off the paths described here if there is any sign of mist or if it is late in the day. Never walk alone (four is the best walking group), and always tell a responsible person exactly where you are going and what time you plan to return. Remember, if you become lost or injure yourself, it may be a long time before you are found. On any but a short walk close to villages, be sure to take a compass, whistle, torch, extra water and warm clothing — as well as some high-energy food, like chocolate. Read and re-read the important note on page 2, as well as guidelines on gear and equipment for each walk you plan to do!

On the Cofete track you're likely to encounter wild donkeys demanding a 'toll'!



Car tour 1: THE BEST OF FUERTEVENTURA

Morro Jable • La Pared • Pájara • Betancuria • Antigua • Gran Tarajal • Las Playitas • Morro Jable

190km/118mi; 5 hours' driving; Exit A from Morro Jable

En route: Picnics 13, 14, 16, 18, 19, 22 (see pages 11-13 and **P** symbol in the text); Walks 12-19, 22-26, 28, 29; Walk 11 is accessible by detour


The main north-south road (FV2) is generally good — in places motorway standard. Inland roads are good, but narrow. Between Pájara and Vega de Río Palmas the road is quite high and winding. It can be very windy.

Opening hours

Iglesia Santa María and adjacent Museo de Arte Sacro (Betancuria): 09.30-17.00 Mon-Fri, 09.30-14.00 Sat;
Casa Museo (of archaeology; Betancuria) 10.00-17.00 Tue-Sat, 11.00-14.00 Sun;
Windmill Crafts Centre (Antigua) 10.00-18.00 daily;
Windmill Interpretation Centre (Tiscamanita) 10.00-18.00 daily;
Aloe Vera Exclusive (Tiscamanita): 10.00-17.30 Mon-Fri, 10-14 Sat

This drive takes you to some of the best sights on the island, from the most stunning beaches to the most picturesque valleys. You will be treated not only to the beauty spots, but also to the geographical and geological wonders of the island. And the final ingredient to flavour this tour to perfection is the little village of Betancuria — Fuerteventura's ancient former capital.

Leaving Morro Jable, take the FV2 (Exit A). Out of the eyesore of development that is quickly spreading north, you wind in and out of the deep bare *barrancos* that cleave the mountainous backbone of the Jandía Peninsula. Pick up the FV2 expressway at Club Aldiana (where Walk 28 starts). Pico de la Zarza (806m/2645ft), the island's highest summit, can be seen at the end of both the Vinamar and Butihondo valleys. It's a modest peak that rises a mere shoulder above its off-siders. On a fine day, however, you can have a most enjoyable hike there (Walk 26). Leave the expressway at the sign 'Butihondo' and follow the old road (FV602) north towards 'El Salmo'.

Just as you leave the Barranco los Canarias (16km ) , you go under the expressway, round a bend and come to the **Mirador del**

Salmo with a stunning view over () captivating **Playa de Sotavento de Jandía**★ — the queen of Fuerteventura's beaches. A track forks right off the viewpoint on the bend in the road here and descends to the beach. You could drive down this track — or down the road signposted to 'Playa de Sotavento' 3km further on: this road leads to the glorious part of the beach shown on pages 124-125 — a lagoon framed by an expansive sand bar, where the sea is dotted with a myriad of colourful windsurfs and kites. Sotavento is the highlight of marathon Walk 28 and easy Walk 29; the latter begins at the Hotel Meliá Fuerteventura another 2.5km north. To the north are the giant sand hills of the Pared isthmus. Just before you reach Costa Calma, wind generators come into view through the hills on the left (photo on page 108).

They're landmarks on Walks 24 and 25, both of which start at Costa Calma and cross the isthmus. **Costa Calma** (25km 🏠🏠🚰) has tried to mitigate the worst effects of touristic development with beautiful landscaping.

Some 27km from Morro Jable, at a roundabout 1.5km beyond Costa Calma, turn off left for La Pared (FV605). **La Pared** (32km 🏠🚰👉), is a pretty *urbanización* with lots of greenery — an oasis in the desolate and naked landscape on the outskirts of the dunes. Continuing towards Pájara, cloud-catching hills rise on the right — Montaña Cardón (691m/2265ft), setting for Walk 23, is the highest. The landscape is a mixture of sharp ridges and smooth rounded hills. You pass the quiet cultivated valley

of **Huertas de Chilegua** (🚰), and the road climbs into these smooth rounded hills — ochre-coloured mounds of the the oldest hill formations on the island. Crossing a pass at the **Mirador de Sicasumbre** (👁️), without even getting out of the car you have an unsurpassed view of the sea on the left and inland down a narrow valley — the actual viewpoints are up hills left and right. A sea of ridges and valleys cuts up the bleak landscape ahead. Soon after, a 'zona militar' sign warns that you're passing a prohibited area (a firing range).

Right: the wrecked freighter mentioned on the next page. Below: the Barranco de las Peñitas, one of the island's most picturesque valleys, is visited later in the tour.



18 Landscapes of Fuerteventura

Descending to another isolated farmstead, watch for small earthen reservoirs in the valley floor. These are called *presas secas* (dry reservoirs), because they have been built to catch the water that comes down the *barrancos*, but they do not retain it. The water passes through the permeable soil into wells which have been sunk some 17-20m (about 60ft) below the ground in front of these *presas*. The small metal windpumps (like the one in the photo on page 17) are used to bring this water up to ground level again.

Through the hills, down on the coast, you may catch sight of a

shipwreck washed ashore. If you want to see it at close quarters, allow for a detour of some 15km and take the gravel road forking off sharp left some 8.5km down from the pass, with a sign, 'Lugar La Solapa'. Go down all the way to the coast and, just before reaching the beach (Playa La Solapa), turn left for about 3.5km to Playa Garcey and the shipwreck.

Closer to Pájara the hills open out into a vast depression. Meet at junction (54km) and turn sharp left on the FV621, to descend to Ajuy. Rounding a bend, you look down into a valley lush with palm trees, tamarisk shrubs and garden



plots. Watch for the small ravine crammed with palms cutting back off it, into the hills running down on the right. This ravine, the Barranco de la Madre del Agua (P19), boasts the only permanently flowing stream on Fuerteventura. It's only a trickle, but the picnic spot is enchanting (photo on pages 94-95).

Ajuy (63km; Walks 17-19), the small village set on the edge of a black-sand beach shown on page 92, is one of two fishing settlements on the west coast. The dramatically sited ancient port here is well worth a visit, as is the Mirador Caleta Negra (📷).

This viewpoint (photo on page 97), and the port itself, lie north of the village, some 10 minutes' walk around the cliffs — just follow the crowds! The *mirador* sits in the cliff-face like a balcony, from where you look straight across to some sea caves. You can also take steps down into two sea caves directly below the viewpoint. Read about them in the photo caption on page 96! But after visiting the *mirador*, I'd suggest you follow the notes for Walk 18 to get away from the crowds (P18) since, fortunately, few tourists venture beyond the viewpoint. Just keep well away from the edge of the cliffs!

From Ajuy return to the junction and keep straight on to Pájara (74km 🚗🏠🌳). This is a large farming community surrounded by hills. The shady village is a welcoming sight, with its abundance of trees and small colourful gardens. Don't miss the church here; it is especially noteworthy for the striking 'Aztec' stone-carved decoration above the main entrance. Quite a curiosity because, along with a similar lot of sculptures in La Oliva, these carvings are unique in the Canary Islands. The two naves inside the church date back to 1645 and 1687, while the carving over the door is thought to date from the 1500s.

Leaving Pájara, take the road signposted for 'Betancuria' (FV30); it's at the left of the church. Again you ascend into the hills, climbing a sometimes narrow, winding road that hugs the sheer inclines (some people

The church at Pájara, dedicated to the Virgen de la Regla, is especially noted for the much-photographed 'Aztec' stone carvings around the main entrance.



20 Landscapes of Fuerteventura

might find this stretch unnerving, although it is built up at the side). There are excellent views back over the Barranco de Pájara. The (unsigned) **Degollada de los Granadillos** with the **Mirador del Risco de Las Peñas** on the left (📍) is the pass that takes you over a solid spur of rock jutting out into the valley below. From here you have a superb outlook over to the enclosing rocky ridges.

Soon, descending, you come to another parking area, the **Mirador de las Peñitas** (📍), overlooking the **Presa de las Peñitas**, a reservoir lodged in the V of the Barranco de las Peñitas, shown on page 91. It looks deeper than it is, since it has filled up with silt; lately it's completely dry all year round. Groves of tamarisk trees huddle

around the tail of the *presa*, and that's a good spot from which to do some bird-watching. Green gardens step the sides of the slopes, and palm trees complement the scene. Below the reservoir lies a sheer-sided rocky ravine, the ideal hiding place for the chapel dedicated to the island's patron saint, Nuestra Señora de la Peña (📍P16; photo on pages 88-89). This impressive ravine is one of the island's particular beauty spots.

Soon the rest of the valley opens up, with houses set amidst a healthy sprinkling of palms and cultivated plots. The first turning below the *mirador* is a sharp left, signposted 'Vega de Río Palmas' (85km): it leads after a little over 1km to the *tapas café* (🍷), shown on page 24 and the starting point



for Walks 16 and 17. (This detour is *not* included in the main touring distances.) Keep ahead and come the church in **Vega de Río Palmas** (85km 🚶🏠🗺️), on the right and also dedicated to Nuestra Señora de la Peña. Walks 14 and 15 end here ... perhaps with a visit to the excellent bar/restaurant Don Antonio beside the church.

At the end of this valley you come to the village of **Betancuria**★ (90km 🚶🏠🗺️; photo on page 77), well hidden from the marauding Berbers of earlier centuries. It's a very picturesque collection of manorial buildings, with a grand 17th-century cathedral dedicated to Santa María. The cathedral and convent here are the oldest examples of their style in the archipelago. Relics abound in

historic Betancuria. A number of the old houses have doorways and arches dating back to the 15th century. Betancuria was the capital of Fuerteventura for some 400 years, up until 1835, and was also the first episcopal seat for all the Canaries. The oldest part of the village huddles around the cathedral, where many of the once-neglected buildings have been restored. History-hunters will enjoy the cathedral and the small Museo de Arte Sacro — as well as the nearby Casa Museo on the main road. Walk 12 ends in Betancuria, having followed an old pilgrims' route over the hills from Antigua. Walk 13, to the viewpoint shown on pages 80-81, begins and ends here; Walk 14 starts here and heads over the hills (P14) to Vega de Río Palmas via the island's only 'pine forest'.

Continuing north on the FV30 out of Betancuria, everyone passes by the beautiful 15th-century Franciscan convent of **San Buenaventura** (P13), the shell of which sits below the road on the right. Inside it (unseen from the road) are the beautiful cloistered arches shown on page 82. There is also a small enclosed church near the convent — the first church on the island (but much rebuilt in the 17th century). As you zigzag up out of the valley, you can either pull over at the top of the pass at the **Mirador Guize y Ayose** with its two 4m/12ft-high bronze statues of aboriginal (Majo) kings — my suggestion — or turn up right to the **Mirador de Morro Velosa** on a hilltop above the pass (📷🗺️). This *mirador*; the goal of

The church in Vega de Río Palmas, with the lovely restaurant Don Antonio at the right of the square





The seaside nucleus of Las Playitas is still unspoilt.

Walk 13 referred to above, is closed at present for rebuilding, and it is not known when it will reopen. It can be dreadfully crowded: if you drive to it (when it reopens), make sure your car won't be trapped by tour coaches! From either vantage point there is a fine panorama over a vast plain to the north. Its far-distant reaches are edged by sharp abrupt hills called *cuchillos* (knives); over to the left lie *morros* (low, smooth hills). Betancuria nestles cosily in the valley floor below. Those of you familiar with the work of Lanzarote's César Manrique will find the Morro Velosa *mirador* building itself of interest, as

Manrique supervised its planning. Inside, there will be an exhibition about Fuerteventura's protected areas and species.

Descending, you soon pass the turn-off left to Valle de Santa Inés and Llanos de la Concepción (Walk 11), while you continue ahead on the FV416 for Antigua. Another expansive plain stretches out below you now, edged by the buildings of Antigua. Entering **Antigua** (100km 🗺️🏠🚗🚲), you come to the beautifully laid-out square shown on ages 78-79, with its simple but nevertheless imposing 18th-century church. Walk 12 starts here. Just north of Antigua (on the Puerto del

Rosario road) stands **El Molino**★, a well-preserved 200-year-old windmill, once used for grinding corn. This is part of the Antigua Windmill Crafts Centre (✂MWC). The windmill (*molino*) is an appropriate introduction to Antigua, because this area has the highest concentration of windmills on Fuerteventura. Next door is the Majorero (Goat) Cheese Museum.

Now following the FV20 south towards Tuineje, you're out in the country again. Palms return to the scene, and a trickle of villages is seen sitting back in the plain.

Threading your way through hills, you find cultivated fields sheltering along the floors of the *barrancos*.

You clip the edge of **Valles de Ortega**, but **Água de Bueyes** (106km ✂) is the next village en route. Its less common windmill, the *molina*, is shown on page 36.

Three dark volcanoes — La Laguna, Liria and Los Arrabales — rupture the lake of lava that spills out over the plains on the left. This area is called the *malpais*

(‘badlands’), and the eruptions from these volcanoes created the AA-lava landscape visited in Walk 21. A restored windmill sits at the entrance to **Tiscamanita** (109km ✂); here you'll find the Windmill Interpretation Centre. On the outskirts of the village, you may like to call at the Aloe Vera

Exclusive factory, for a stimulating introduction to the benefits of the plant. Around **Tuineje** (112km 🚗) the large *fincas* of the tomato-growers are a prominent feature in a barren landscape.

You now keep on the FV20, passing through an industrial area, to your next port of call — **Gran Tarajal** (125km 🚗✂☉). Coming into one of the island's biggest towns, you look out over lean

groves of palms dispersed along the valley floor. Tamarisk (*tarajal*) shrubs add to the verdure. This once-important port has a small commercial centre and attractive boulevard lining the beach. The houses step back up the steep sides of the *barranco* and overlook the black-sand beach that curves around it.

Leaving Gran Tarajal, turn off right on the FV512, eventually passing an eyesore of development. Under 1km further on you come to the burgeoning development spreading out from the nucleus of the island's prettiest seaside village, **Las Playitas** (131km 🚗). Built on sheer rocky outcrops which rise out of the mouth of the *barranco*, it conceals a lovely dark-sand beach stretching out behind it.

Detour: Curiosity-seekers may like to drive from Las Playitas to El Faro de Entallada, the fortress-like lighthouse shown overleaf. It's set at the mouth of a wide bare valley, some 6km further north. A tarred road (very narrow for the last kilometre) on the right leads out to it, on your return from Las Playitas. Just below the lighthouse is a spectacular *mirador* with views all the way to Jandía.

Homeward bound, from Las Playitas return to the FV4 and keep right. Then go left on the FV2 for ‘Morro Jable’. Winding behind great coastal valleys, some 6.5km from the Gran Tarajal junction you pass the turn-off for the small fishing village of Gini-ginamar (🚗✂P22). If you'd like to visit it, the detour will take 8km return. Giniginamar is the starting point for Walk 22 — a very scenic, but somewhat vertiginous, coastal hike to Tarajalejo.

Tarajalejo (152km 🚗🚗✂ and 🚗 4km to the north) lies either



Above: the Casa de la Naturaleza in Vega de Río Palmas is a super place to take a break, full of greenery and with a mini 'lake' inside. Left: the well-kept plants of Aloe Vera Exclusive and the Faro de Entallada



side of the FV2. The resort, to the left, occupies the end of a sweeping beach. Short walk 22 starts and ends here. Some 4km further on, you pass a turn-off left for the small tourist resort of La Lajita (🏠🌳). Just past this turn-off is the beautifully landscaped **Oasis Park**★ — a zoo, garden centre, and camel station offering rides. The camel trains crossing the hills on the left here as you leave the valley really do make an impressive sight.

Now climb amidst low hills, snatching views of pretty coves with not a soul about. Mounting the top of a crest, you join the expressway with fine views of Jandía, encompassing the mountainous backbone and identical twin peaks of Zarza (Walk 26) and Mocán, and the luminous blue and green ribbon of beaches that are the fame of Fuerteventura. Soon you're back in **Morro Jable** (190km).





Walking

Fuerteventura is a large island, but it does not present a great variety of landscapes to the casual visitor. So I hope you will be pleasantly surprised by the many picturesque corners found on these walks which cover a good cross-section of the island. *There are walks for everyone.*

Beginners: Start on the walks graded ●, and check any short walks — *and the picnics!*

Experienced walkers: If you are accustomed to rough terrain, you should be able to enjoy all these walks. Do take into account the season and weather conditions: don't attempt the more strenuous walks in high summer; protect yourself from the sun and carry ample water.

All walkers: Before you set off, be sure to check for any users' updates on Sunflower's website! See the 'UPDATE' tab on the Fuerteventura page.

G Grading, waymarking, maps, GPS

We've tried to give you a quick overview of each walk's **grade** in the Contents. But for full details see the walk itself. Here is a brief overview of the three gradings:

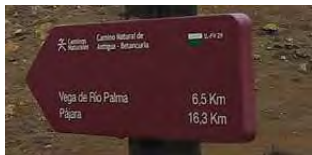
- easy-moderate — ascents/descents of no more than about 300-500m/1000-1800ft; good surfaces underfoot; easily followed
- moderate-strenuous — ascents/descents may be over 500m/1800ft; variable surfaces underfoot — you must be sure-footed and agile; possible route-finding problems in poor visibility
- expert — only suitable for very experienced hillwalkers with a head for heights; hazards may include landslides or very narrow trails with no respite from constant exposure

Any of the above grades may be followed by:

- ⚠ *possibility* of vertigo — for those with no head for heights at all
- ⚠⚠ *danger* of vertigo — you must have a very good head for heights

Over the last few years **waymarking** has improved by leaps and bounds, with many new trails being developed as well. Aside from the nine stages of the 135km-long **GR 131** (waymarked red/white), which runs from the island of Lobos to Punta de Jandía, there are also many shorter walks: **PR**

Hint: On Fuerteventura, the maroon signposts used only for GR routes on other Canary Islands, indicate shorter routes as well! This can be confusing, since the trail signage is very small, in the upper right-hand corner. For instance, this sign is for the green/white waymarked SL FV 29 to Vega de Río Palma.





























Walk 20: behind the salt pans, you'll see this whale's skeleton — a much photographed focal point in Las Salinas

Organisation of the walks

This book describes hikes and rambles all over the island. To choose a walk that appeals to you, you might begin by looking at the touring map inside the back cover. Here you can see at a glance the overall terrain, the roads, and the location of the walks. Flipping through the book, you will see that there is at least one photograph for every walk.

Having selected one or two potential excursions from the map and the photographs, turn to the relevant walk. At the top of the page you will find planning information: distance/time, grade, equipment, and how to get there. If the grade and equipment are beyond your scope, don't despair! There may be a less demanding short walk — or an easier walk in the same area. If you want a really easy walk, look at the picnic suggestions on pages 11-13.

When you are on your walk, you will find that the text begins with an introduction to the landscape and then turns to a detailed description of the route. The **large-scale maps** (all 1:50,000) have been annotated to show key landmarks. **Times** are given for reaching certain points in the walk. *Note: I am a very fit walker*, and these are 'neat' walking times. If you prefer a more leisurely pace, and you stop to picnic or take photographs, a walk may take you *more than twice as long*. Please compare your pace with mine on one or two short walks, before you set off on a long hike.

 main road	 church, chapel	 palm grove
 secondary road	 cemetery, cross	 pylon, aerial
 dirt road	 castle, watchtower	 picnic spot (see page 10)
 jeep track	 bus stop	 picnic tables
 footpath	 parking	 best views
 route of main walk and direction	 spring, tank etc	 cave
 alternative route	 start, waypoint	 stadium
 other walk	 windmill, turbine	 ferry

Walk 24: THE PARED ISTHMUS

Distance: 12.5km/7.8mi;
3h15min

Grade: ● easy. The walk crosses a sandy plain on tracks. One steep, slippery descent lasting a few minutes, and a steep 15min climb up a sandhill; overall ups and downs of about 200m/650ft.

Don't attempt on very windy days, when all the sand in the air will make it extremely unpleasant.

Equipment: comfortable walking shoes, fleece, sunhat, sunscreen, sunglasses, rainwear, picnic, plenty of water

Transport: 🚗 to/from Costa Calma; park at El Palmeral shopping centre (28° 7.711'N, 14° 13.798'W). Or 🚌 (Lines 01, 04, 05, 09, 10) to/from Costa Calma; alight at the bus stop called 'Gasolinera Costa Calma', just south of the petrol station and the El Palmeral shopping centre.

Shorter walk: Aqua Liques

(10km/6.2mi; 2h30min). ●

Grade, access and equipment as main walk. Follow the main walk to **Aqua Liques** (📍), then return the same way.

You start off this hike with the giant wind generators stealing your attention, then you cross the sandy isthmus to the spellbinding sea and its glaring cliffs and rolling dunes. If you're staying anywhere in the vicinity then this walk is a must. It's a popular excursion, so you needn't worry about finding your way. However, tracks criss-cross this isthmus in all directions, and the route could easily change in the near future. *Basically as long as you head straight over the isthmus, you can't get lost.*

Start out at the EL PALMERAL shopping centre at **Costa Calma** (📍). Walk uphill on the road just to the right of the shopping centre (with the 'no entry' sign), passing the Restaurante Mediterran on the right. Minutes up, you're away from the resort. In front of you lies a sandy plain that stretches into nothingness. But before you notice anything else, you'll be spellbound by rows of wind generators over to your left. Not only are they a work of art (or perhaps you beg to differ!), but they blend into the landscape. They're striking in their simplicity.

About five minutes along, when the road heads right, continue ahead. Your walk across

The spectacular seascape near the point, Los Boquetes



the isthmus is straight on, but first you have to take a detour to cross the motorway. Turn right on a track here (by a **PYLON**) and follow it until you can turn left to cross the motorway via an **UNDERPASS** (①; 10min). Once on the far side, turn left until you are back opposite the pylon, then head right on a clear track. Far to the right you can see the jagged hills that enclose the Tarajalejo Valley, where Walk 22 ends. To the left, the ‘hills’ are barely ripples in the landscape. The faint whining sound of wind generators permeates the air.

You’ll see other walkers crossing the isthmus. All on different tracks. But don’t panic, you *are* on one of the tracks that will get you there — even if it’s covered with sand from time to time. Eventually you cross the signposted **GR 131** (②; 35min) and the sea comes into view. After leaving another track off to the

right you’re almost there — perhaps being battered by the wind. The island seems to roll straight off into the sea — the cliffs are still in hiding. To your left is the piercing mountain chain that rears up along the Jandía Peninsula.

Several faint tracks now cross your way and you continue straight on. Beyond **ONE MORE WIDE TRACK** (which you follow to the right for just a few paces), you’re above the sea at **Aqua Liques** (③; 1h15min). A bite in the cliffs allows you to — *carefully!* — slide your way down to the shore in just a few minutes. A rocky sea-ledge sitting just above the water, at the foot of the cliffs, enables you to walk quite a long way along the shoreline. This seascape is exquisite, with its brilliant blue waters, dark lava-coloured rocks and off-white, rose-tinted cliffs of fossilized sand.





Walks 24 and 25 both skirt below these wind generators. Some of you won't agree with me, but they are one of my favourite sights on the island!

Your immediate destination is the point along to the right, where the cliffs subside into sandhills. This coastal walk is nothing short of spectacular. On hazeless days you can see the Jandía Peninsula curving out to your left. Barbary ground squirrels scurry to and fro

amongst the rocks. Not far along you come to a small sandy beach. A knee dip is about all I can recommend here ... it's the usual story: dangerous undertows. Nearing the point, sandhills roll back off the shore. Stunted *aulaga* and large-thorned *espinos* grow





You pass this colourful display as you travel to La Pared on the FV2: it's the Oasis Park, hiding a wildlife centre and botanical gardens.

rampant on these dunes. The waves crashing over the shoreline rocks are an awesome sight. Closer to the point, notice the dark red hues emanating from the sea-cliffs below you. A little under 45 minutes along the sea ledge you pass a **SANDY TRACK** rising to the right and then you're at the point, **Los Boquetes (4; 2h)**. A few minutes further on, a dramatic rock wall blocks your way. Don't venture too close to the sea here!

Homeward bound, go back to the sandy track and follow it to the left. It forks almost at once; go left again, rising up to the plateau. When you meet a crossing track after about 10 minutes, turn right. After less than 400m (you may have passed a **BLUE POST** about halfway along), be sure to leave this wide track for a narrower track that rises up to a low ridge, where you can get your bearings. Your target from here is the wooded park-like area behind Costa Calma, which is now in sight.

You cross the **GR 131 (5)** again, then continue straight on along the **Cañada del Río (6)**, the stream bed below, sometimes on a track

marked with cairns. On reaching the motorway embankment, follow the fence downhill for about 150m to another (well hidden) **UNDERPASS (7)**. Go through the tunnel, then turn left and head back up the hill on another dirt road to pick up your original route opposite where the motorway intersected it. Turn right for 120m, to a small **ROUNDBOUT (3h05min)**.

Keep straight ahead through the urbanization. On coming to another **ROUNDBOUT** just past the Royal Suite Hotel, you'll find the **BUS STOP** (for those travelling south) to the right (**3h15min**). If you're heading north, go past this bus stop and, at the following roundabout, go right. Go left at the fourth roundabout, then cross the main road. Your **BUS STOP (8)** is ahead, in front of the Hotel Fuerteventura Playa. (If you came by car to Costa Calma, you can either walk the 2km back to the El Palmeral shopping centre by keeping straight ahead at the fourth roundabout, or catch a southbound bus to the 'GASOLINERA' BUS STOP.)



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area covered by this book



walking map



touring map



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