

LAPALMA &

El Hierro • 4 car tours, 48 long & short walks

GPS



This is a sample from the
PDF edition of
Landscapes of
**LA PALMA
AND EL HIERRO**

a countryside guide
Eighth edition



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updated by Conny Spelbrink

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 168 pages, plus two pull-out touring maps, in the full book.



SUNFLOWER BOOKS



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Fold-out touring maps *inside back cover*

(with plans of Santa Cruz de La Palma and Valverde)



Getting about

There is no doubt that a **hired car** is the most convenient way of getting about on these islands, and I definitely recommend it on El Hierro (where there are very few bus lines); it's the most convenient way to get around La Palma as well. If you *do* hire a car, GPS coordinates for parking places are shown under 'Transport' for each walk, so that you can set your sat nav (or smartphone). When hiring, ask to see all the rental and insurance conditions (in English), and carry the rental firm's telephone number (and out-of-office-hours number) with you. If you pay by credit card, remember to check the amount you sign for and keep all receipts!

The second most flexible form of transport is a hired **taxi** and, especially if three or four people are sharing the cost, this becomes an attractive idea. If you're making an unmetered journey, do agree on the price *before* setting out: all taxi drivers should carry an official price list.

Coach tours are the most popular way of seeing many holiday islands; this is an easy way to get to know a place in comfort, before embarking on your own adventures.

My favourite way of getting about is by **local bus**. The system is very economical and reliable, and the bus network on La Palma is good — although the same can not be said for El Hierro. Plans of Santa Cruz and Valverde with the maps at the back of the book show you where to board buses in these towns. Timetables for all the buses used for the walks and picnics are on pages 155-158. But please do not rely *solely* on these timetables: pick up the latest bus timetables from the bus stations or, better, download them before you travel.

La Palma's bus company is called TILP (Transportes Insular La Palma). Their website, tilp.es, has no English version at present, but it is very easy to see the timetables: click on 'Líneas Regulares', then 'Líneas y horarios'. You can download timetables with route maps by clicking on 'Descargar las líneas y horarios'. There are *no* special fare-saving tickets for visitors as we go to press, but prices are reasonable and depend on distance travelled: up to 10km for €1.50, 10-20km for €2.40, over 20km for €2.60.

El Hierro may have fewer buses but TransHierro, the operator, *does* have an English website: transhierro.net, where you can check all their timetables and routes. The price per journey is €1.60; saver tickets cost €13 for 15 trips.



Picnicking

La Palma and El Hierro are rugged and unspoilt, ideal for picnicking. On the following pages I have listed a few of my favourite picnic spots along the routes of the walks. All the information you need to get there is given on the following pages, where *picnic numbers correspond to walk numbers*. So you can quickly find the general location on the islands by referring to the touring maps, where the walks are numbered in green. I give transport details (🚗: car parking; 🚌: how to get there by bus), walking times, and views or setting. Beside the picnic title, you will find a map reference: the location of the picnic spot is pinpointed on this *walking map* with the symbol **P**. Many of the picnic places are illustrated.

Most of these picnic spots are reached after a very short, easy walk. In fact, they make *excellent rambles for 'non-walkers'*, and are ideal for stretching your legs during car tours. Do, however, look over the comments before setting out: if some walking is involved, remember to wear sensible shoes. Always take a **sunhat** with you (○ indicates a picnic in full sun). It's a good idea to take along a plastic sheet as well, in case the ground is damp or prickly.



La Palma

1 MIRADOR LA TOSCA (map page 42, photo page 44)

by car: 15-25min on foot

by bus: 20-30min on foot

☞ Park in the space next to the Mirador La Tosca (28° 48.642'N, 17° 48.871'W; Car tour 1).

☞ bus to the Mirador La Tosca (Línea 120 from Barlovento)

Follow the beginning of Walk 1, down to a magnificent panorama over La Tosca and the distant sea-cliffs.

Dragon trees galore; shade nearby.

3 LOS TILOS (map page 48, photos pages 50, 51) ☞

by car: 5-30min on foot

by bus: not easily accessible

☞ Park at Los Tilos car park (28° 47.388'N, 17° 48.130'W; Car tour 1).

Below the visitors' centre there is an organised picnic area — quiet except for weekends. But I prefer picnicking below it, alongside the watercourse

(canal). To get there, refer to the notes in Walk 3, from the 2h-point at the Interpretation Centre. It's an excellent spot. Then perhaps refer to Short walk 3 to explore the fascinating barranco (which I find too busy with walking traffic for an enjoyable picnic).

12 ERMITA DE LA VIRGEN DEL PINO (photo page 22, map page 75)

by car: 5-20min on foot

by bus: not easily accessible

☞ Park in the car park at the chapel: take the LP302 for 'Parque Nacional'; the first right turn leads to the ermita. (28° 39.773'N, 17° 50.506'W; Car tour 2)

Picnic in the forest of venerable Canary pines behind the chapel.

14a LA PARED VIEJA (map page 85) ☞

by car: up to 5min on foot

by bus: not easily accessible

☞ Park at the picnic area. Turn left off the El Pilar/San Isidro road just under 5km northeast of the Refugio El Pilar (signposted). (28° 37.110'N, 17° 49.386'W; Car tour 2)

An official picnic site in a dense laurel forest. Popular on weekends.

14b (REFUGIO) EL PILAR (map page 85, photo page 96) ☞

by car: up to 5min on foot by bus: not easily accessible

☞ Park at the picnic area, off the El Pilar road (LP301), 7km south of the LP3 (28° 36.845'N, 17° 50.191'W; Car tour 2).

An official picnic site in the woods at

Not all picnic places need be on the route of walks: what more pleasant than to sit by this spring and shrine to St John the Baptist at Puntallana?






Touring

Car hire on these islands is good value, especially if you book online before travelling. **Roads** vary from quite wide 'A'-type (there are *no* motorways!) to winding and precipitous — and then there are the gravel tracks of El Hierro's highlands. Road conditions are described at the top of each tour.

There are three tours on La Palma: I've simply split the island north and south, but devoted a full day to the Caldera de Taburiente and surrounding landscapes. El Hierro's highlights *can* all be seen in a day ... but naturally, I hope you'll take a wrong turning somewhere — not only on Hierro, but on both islands. The serendipity of 'getting lost' is, after all, the best way to get to know a place.

The touring notes are brief: they include little history or other information that you can obtain in general guides or free from the local tourist offices. Instead, I've concentrated on the 'logistics' of touring: times and distances, road conditions, and seeing parts of the islands that many tourists miss. Most of all, I emphasise possibilities for **walking** and **picnicking** (the symbol **P** is used to alert you to a picnic spot; see pages 8-11). While some of the picnic and short walk suggestions may not be suitable during a long car tour, you may see a landscape that you would like to explore at leisure another day.

Most major **petrol stations** are open on Sundays and holidays, but a few of the smaller ones may not be. Take along **warm clothing** and some **food and drink**; be prepared for delays on the small country roads and tracks, and remember that mountain roads may sometimes be **impassable** in stormy weather.


Allow ample time for stops: my times include only short breaks at viewpoints labelled  in the notes. Calculate time for **detours** as well: villages, picnics and walks shown in () at the top of the tours are only accessible via *detours*. Distances quoted are *cumulative km from the departure towns*.

The touring maps are designed to be held out facing the touring notes and contain all the information you need to follow the tours. But take time to look at the walking maps, too, when touring; they cover much of the islands in greater detail. The **symbols** in the text correspond to those on the touring maps: see the map keys.

Car tour 1: LA PALMA'S VERDANT NORTH AND THE ISLAND'S SUMMITS

Santa Cruz • Los Sauces • Barlovento • Garafía • Roque de los Muchachos • Santa Cruz

189km/117mi; 7h driving; take the northern exit from Santa Cruz.

On route:  at Los Tilos, Laguna de Barlovento; Picnics (see pages 8-11) 1, 3; Walks 1-12, 25, 26
The roads are generally very winding and, on a few stretches, narrow; some are country lanes, others might prove vertiginous for some motorists. This drive is not recommended immediately after heavy rainfall (especially in winter), due to the danger of rockfall. Where the road climbs above 600m, there's always the possibility of cloud. There is only one petrol station between Barlovento and Santa Cruz — at the turn off for San Antonio del Monte, just after La Zarza (92km on the touring route

via the observatory). Be alert for ongoing roadworks in the north, also for livestock and pedestrians on all roads: drive slowly.

Opening hours



El Tental Archaeological Park daily 10.00-18.00 (15.00 Sun/Mon)

Los Tilos Interpretation Centre free admission; daily from 09.00-17.00; tel 922 451246




Parque Cultural La Zarza admission €2, children half price; daily from 11.00-17.00, closed Mondays; tel 922 695005

Observatorio Astrofísico open to the public for visits of between 70 and 90 minutes which must be booked in advance; see the observatory's website: www.iac.es.

Gaping, deep *barrancos* leave you in awe as you edge along the island's high sea shelf. The further north you go, the more desolate the landscape. Then, heading inland, you climb to the rim of the crater, up through forest, to a moonscape of volcanic hues and unsurpassed panoramic views. It will be a long day, so take plenty of snacks ... and don't forget your camera.

Heading north on the LP1 out of Santa Cruz, climb to the island's midriff ( at 7.5km). At **Puntallana** (10km ; Walks 9-11) fork right into the village and just before the church of St John the Baptist (shown on page 70) descend a steep narrow lane to the right. * Park 0.2km downhill, off the road, just before a T-junction. Traditional Canarian houses line the lane. Ivy and other creepers cascade down the ravine walls. Walk downhill a minute, then take the first right, to find the splendid little jacaranda-shaded *plaza* shown

on pages 8-9 hidden in the *barranco* wall. A spring flows into pools here, by a shrine to St John.

Return to the LP1 and continue north, heading in and out of sheer-sided ravines and a series of tunnels. Less than 1km beyond **La Galga** (17km ) , approaching a bend in the road, pull over right for the **El Tental Park Visitors' Centre** (★) and the **Mirador de San Bartolomé** (). You pass the eponymous church () as you walk up the hill. From the *mirador* there is a fine view inland, across the mountainous eastern wall that flanks the crater. Los Sauces is the settlement further north.

*Or park at the church and walk down

14 Landscapes of La Palma and El Hierro


Stop off at the church of San Bartolomé for a slightly unnerving cliff-edge view into the **Barranco de la Galga** (📷), then return to the main road and turn right. The track forking left just before the second tunnel is the base for Walks 7 and 8, popular walks in the laurel woods. Beyond this second tunnel another spectacular *mirador* awaits you, on the opposite side of the Barranco de la Galga. The oldest Guanche remains on La Palma, dating back to the 4th century BC, were discovered in the cave-like rock overhang you can see in the next big ravine, the **Barranco de San Juan**. The finds from this cave are exhibited in the museum at the San Francisco Convent in Santa Cruz.


At **Las Lomadas** (26.5km ✂) you reach a junction. Straight ahead is one of the most modern arched bridges (★) in the world,


the spectacular span 150m/500ft above the *barranco* bed shown on page 49. But *turn left* here, for 'Los Tilos'. Immediately, a road signposted 'Los Nacientes' turns left uphill — to Los Nacientes (springs) de Marcos y Cordero — the first 8km on tarmac, then a rough track only suitable and only permitted for four-wheel-drive vehicles. Walk 6 ends at the top of the track, emerging from the canyon that hides these mountain springs: if you're adventurous, fit and have a head for heights, make Walk 5 or 6 a priority.

But for this tour keep to the main road and drive up another gaping *barranco*, the Barranco del Agua. This immense dark ravine (see photo on page 53) boasts a magnificent jungle-thick laurel forest; there is also a colony of prehistoric *Woodwardia radicans* (ferns) on the gorge wall. You can




learn more about La Palma's flora at the Visitors' Centre at **Los Tilos**★ (30km ; Picnic 3), and read more about this area on pages 48-62 (Walks 3-6).



Leaving the Barranco del Agua, continue north on the LP1 to La Palma's third largest town, **Los Sauces** (32km ) , where Walk 2 begins and Walk 3 ends. This very pleasant (and principal) agricultural centre is swallowed up in banana groves. Some 1.5km out of town, branch off seaward for 'San Andrés'. Descending through banana groves, you pass the signposted turn-off for Puerto Espíndola and Charco Azul, your route on the way back.

San Andrés (36km ) sits on the hillside just above the sea. There are two good restaurants here in the church square. Wander along the cobbled lanes of the village, then peek inside the 17th-

century church in the palm-graced *plaza*, to see some rather macabre wax models. These represent ailing or injured parts of the body. In a practice dating back to the Middle Ages, they are pinned to a board on the church wall, in the hope that illnesses will be cured and injuries mended.

Return to the Puerto Espíndola junction and turn right; 0.5km further on, fork right again for 'Charco Azul'. Some 0.3km down this narrow lane, you come to a parking bay overlooking this emerald-green natural rock-pool (*charco*), set at the foot of low sea cliffs. (*Remember, however: when the seas are high, it's too dangerous even to venture down onto the rock here.*) Continuing on through banana groves, reach a junction and turn right into the new port of **Puerto Espíndola** (39.5km ) , with an excellent restaurant, Meson del Mar.

Ascending to the LP1, keep right. Just over 2km north along the LP1 turn right for 'Faro de Punta Cumplida'. This narrow, winding and bumpy road will take you down to some more rock pools. Keep right at the T-junction; 1.2km down, at **Punta Talavera**, there's an inconspicuous little port concealed in a rocky promontory. Park above it and walk down to the fishermen's huts that snuggle below, and to the tunnel in the rock — a very scenic spot. Swimming is only safe here when the sea is calm.


After passing the **Faro de Punta Cumplida** () , now a luxury hotel, you climb through extensive banana plantations to a T-junction, where you turn right and descend () to the **Piscinas**

Central plaza and church of San Salvador in Santa Cruz




The Observatorio Astrofísico, near the Roque de los Muchachos, is the most important in the northern hemisphere. For fascinating details and information about visiting (in English), log on to www.iac.es.

de la Fajana (50km   ). The pools here, larger than those at the Charco Azul, are also set in the seashore lava and are equally dangerous when the sea is high. The restaurant next to the pools has a good selection of fish and seafood, and the terrace setting is spectacular, overlooking the wild cliffs of the north coast. Walking beyond the apartments for 10 minutes, you will find some unfrequented natural pools set in a flat tongue of rough lava.

To rejoin the LP1, pass the turn-off left back to the lighthouse and keep straight uphill, ignoring all turn-offs. Turn right on the LP1 and climb to **Barlovento** (57.5km    ), an exposed, windswept village with a thoroughfare the width of a motorway. Walk 2 ends here. Pass the LP1 off right to Gallegos and continue straight ahead for 1km, *past* the Hotel La Palma Romantica (58.5km ). When you come to La Pradera (59.5km ), a large prettified shed standing amidst trees off to the right, you may wish to ‘go native’: this popular local restaurant is a brilliant lunch or snack stop. Try the excellent grilled cheese with *mojo* sauce and a glass of red wine. Just past the restaurant, take the turn-off left to the **Laguna de Barlovento** *zona recreativa* ( ), laid out at the side of the island’s largest reservoir, with a restaurant and duck pond (photo on page 46). All sorts of birds gather in this area around the reservoir, and in the winter one can see many migrating birds as well.

Turn back from the picnic



grounds and retrace your route for 3km, then fork left on the LP1 for ‘Gallegos/Franceses’. Less than 1.5km further on is the **Mirador La Tosca** (65.5km ; Picnic 1), from where you have a superb view over La Tosca’s dragon trees and along the wild north coast. Settlements are few and far between. Grazing is the main means of livelihood in this far-flung corner of the island. Walk 1, which starts here, gives you a taste of this pastoral corner of the north.

Possible detours: The main tour passes above two precious little villages, Gallegos and Franceses. But I highly recommend taking detours to them: 2km for Gallegos and just over 5km for Franceses. Note that some of the roads are narrow and, in Franceses, some stretches of road are *vertiginous*. To make for Gallegos, where Walk 1 ends, turn right at 71.5km. Keep right on entering the village, then turn sharp left in the village centre (the first left turn you come to), ignore a road to the right and climb back up to the LP1. (But see the footnote on page 43 and map



on page 42: if the new *mirador* is signposted, drive down to the coast before leaving!)

The flimsy sign announcing the Franceses turn-off (75km) comes up without warning. *This detour is only recommended for confident drivers*. It's a spectacular and rugged corner of the island, and relatively unvisited ... so far! You'll pass various tiny *barrios* (parts of the village), each of them named. First you squeeze through Los Machines. Then, winding in and out of gullies, ignore a turn-off to La Fajana (although it is only 2.5km off the LP1, this very narrow road down to the coast is brilliant but pretty hair-raising!). Less than 1km further on, you round a bend at the edge of the enormous Barranco Franceses and come upon a magnificent vista across the coastal hills of the northwest. Then a steep climb takes you back up to the LP1, where you turn right.

The road snakes up through tree heather to 1100m/3600ft. Keep straight on, where the LP109 joins from the left. If you're ready

for lunch, visit the simple Bar/Restaurant Los Reyes in the tiny hamlet of **Roque del Faro**, 1.5km along. On cold days try the broth, the warming rabbit or goat stews, or the very tasty *gofio* dish (made from roasted maize). Wash it down with the wine called 'tea'. A great place, and as yet few tourists know about it. A slightly more sophisticated restaurant lies 4km further along: Restaurante La Mata.

Within the next 5km you reach the **Parque Cultural La Zarza**★ (90km). The small, well-equipped museum here (with explanations in English) is well worth a stop. A waymarked path (allow 15-20 minutes each way) heads off behind the museum to two 'caves' (La Zarza and La Zarcita, really rock overhangs), with curious Guanche petroglyphs. The meaning of these spiralled rock carvings has still not been discovered, but it is thought that they have to do with water. *Note* that there is a petrol station 1km past this point, opposite the turn-off to the houses and chapel of San Antonio del Monte.

18 Landscapes of La Palma and El Hierro

Continuing west, when you reach the Puntagorda/Garafia junction (⊕ Cruz Roja), turn right. Notice the old *gofio* (maize) mill on the right here. A convoluted road (LP112) down through almond groves brings you to **Garafia** (100.5km ↕⊗⊕), another isolated farming outpost, best known for breeding livestock. Reaching the village, turn right for the 16th-century church of Nuestra Señora de la Luz★ shown on page 126, one of the largest on the island. It has an interesting wooden ceiling. Walk 26 begins and ends here ... but the truth is that few hikers venture out this far into the 'sticks'. For food there are several local restaurants here, offering good, plain cooking in simple surroundings — among them Santo Domingo in the *plaza* and La Taberna Santi next to the supermarket.

Leaving Garafia, you can make a pleasant circuit by continuing past the square and taking the first right. Then turn right again, to return to the main road. Making for Las Tricias, turn right and follow the road south. Another *gofio* mill appears on the right as you leave Garafia. Once again settlement is sparse. Two more impressive ravines are crossed. Climbing slopes clad with almond trees, you pass through picturesque **Las Tricias**★ (112km), a retreat for 'alternative life-stylers'. Walk 25 would take you right down amongst them all — and past the *gofio* mill shown on pages 122-123. But it's really the great clumps of dragon trees everyone comes to see (photo page 124).

Just 1km above Las Tricias you meet the LP1 signposted back to Garafia. Turn left uphill here, to begin your ascent to the Roque de

los Muchachos. After 10km branch off right on the LP4. The ascent gets steeper, the bends sharper. Stunning scenery unravels — over the farmlands of the north, the thickly wooded hillsides, and the sea. Nearer the rim of the crater, the pines vanish and *codeso* (broom) carpets the ground. Pass th first observatory buildings, turn right at the first junction, and head up to the island's highest peak, the **Roque de los Muchachos**★ (145km ↻i).

For a spectacular view into the Caldera de Taburiente, walk down to the salient of rock on the right, behind the car park. Over the shoulder of the crater the white-domed buildings of the **Observatorio Astrofisico** glare back at you. This complex, the most important in the northern hemisphere, has many telescopes, including two for the sun and 11 for the furthest galaxies. The Gran Telescopio Canario (installed in 2007) is one of the largest telescopes in the world.

Return to the junction with the LP4 and turn right for Santa Cruz. Rounding the *caldera*, the deep volcanic yellows, oranges and reds in the rock distract you from the panoramic views. Two more *miradores* (**Los Andenes** and **Degollada de Franceses**) on the very edge of the crater (📷) give you another chance to take in this great work of nature. Descending, re-enter the pine zone and after 8km pass the Pico de la Nieve track, starting point for Walk 12 and Short walk 12. Over the pines the east coast begins to open up and, lower down, you get a fine view of Santa Cruz, with a prominent half-crater backdrop. On reaching the LP401, keep left, then turn right on the LP1 into **Santa Cruz** (189km).



Walking

La Palma and El Hierro offer unlimited scope for walkers. This book covers a good cross-section of walks on both islands. Due to the rugged, mountainous terrain of these islands, many of the walks in the book are quite strenuous, but I usually suggest a less difficult alternative — perhaps a short walk, or just a stroll to a picnic spot.

I hope you will also make up your own walk combinations. I've shown where my routes link up on the walking maps, and the fold-out touring map shows the general location of all the walks. But only join up walks by using routes described in this guide or the officially waymarked trails. 'Official' trails are very well signposted, so even if the trail is not described in detail in my notes, you can still use them with confidence to short-cut (or 'long-cut') any of my walks.

There are walks in this book for everyone.

Beginners: Start on the walks graded 'easy', and be sure to look at any short or alternative walks — some are easy versions of the long hikes. You need look no further than the picnic suggestions on pages 8 to 11 to find a large selection of *very* easy rambles.

Experienced walkers: If you are used to rough terrain and have a head for heights, you should be able to tackle all the walks in the book, *except those colour-coded black* (see opposite). Of course, you must take into account the season and weather conditions. For example, in rainy weather some of the *barranco* walks will be unsuitable; in strong winds or snow do not plan excursions to the mountains! And always remember that **storm damage can make these routes unsafe at any time!** Remember, too: always follow the route as described in this book. If you have not reached one of the landmarks after a reasonable time, you must go back to the last 'sure' point and start again.

All walkers: *Do* check the update service described on the inside front cover of the book before you travel!

Grading, waymarking, maps, GPS

There is a quick overview of each walk's **grade** in the Contents. But in the limited space we've only had room to show the *lowest grade of a main walk*: for full details of grading, see the introductory remarks about the walk itself.

Below 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 balancing on the narrow ledges with no respite from constant exposure

Any of the above grades may, if applicable, be followed by:

- ⚠ *danger* of vertigo — you must have a *very* good head for heights

Waymarking and **signposting** have been brought up to ‘Euro’ standards on most routes. There are three types of waymarking:



Walkers' signposts on the Ruta de los Volcanes: the top fingerpost marks a route shared by the GR131 (red and white) and an SL trail (green and white); the middle fingerpost is solely for the GR131 and the bottom one for the SL VM 125 trail. If one of the trails were an 'LP' route, the equivalent part of the sign would be yellow. But you will also find fingerposts with no colour at all, or handwritten, or carved in wood.

- *Red and white* waymarks indicating GR routes ('Grandes Recorridos': long-distance footpaths);
- *Yellow and white* waymarks indicating PR routes ('Pequeños Recorridos': short trails of up to six hours);
- *Green and white* waymarks indicating SL routes ('Senderos Locales': local trails, up to about 10km long).
- For all these routes, two parallel stripes mean 'continue this way'; right-angled stripes indicate a 'change of direction'; an 'X' means 'wrong way'.

Our walking maps include official trails adjacent to our walks, with their relevant numbers printed in purple. *This should give you ample scope for devising even more walks — perhaps a linear route to catch a bus or*

a circuit back to your car. For full details of waymarked walks on **La Palma**, see www.senderosdelapalma.es; the site lists all the island's official routes. They also publish a 'topoguide' of some 350 pages, which can be bought at various tourist offices. For **El Hierro** see www.senderosdelhierro.com, for an interactive map. You can also download KLM files for viewing in Google Earth or for reformatting to GPX.

and return y volver ee vol-vair
 for us at ... para nosotros a ... pah-rah nos-oh-tros ah ...

Point out the time when you wish him to return on your watch.

An inexpensive phrase book will help you compose other 'key' phrases and answers.


























Organisation of the walks

I hope that this book is set out so that you can plan your walks easily ... depending on how far you want to go, your abilities and equipment, and what time you are willing to get up in the morning! You might begin by considering the fold-out touring maps inside the back cover. Here you can see at a glance the overall terrain, the road network, and the general orientation of the walking maps in the text.

Quickly flipping through the book, you'll find that there is at least one photograph for every walk. Having selected one or two potential excursions from the map and photographs, look over the planning information at the beginning of each walk description. Here you'll find distance/walking time, grade, equipment, and how to get there by public transport. If the walk appears to be beyond your fitness or ability, a short or alternative version may be given, which *does* appeal to you. On hot days, the picnic strolls described on pages 8-11 may be as strenuous an adventure as you'd like to tackle.

When you are on your walk, you will find that the text begins with an introduction to the overall landscape and then turns to a detailed description of the route itself. **Times** are given for reaching certain points in the walk. **Important:** *do* compare your own times with those in the book on one or two short walks, before you set off on a long hike. Remember that I've included only *minimal stops* at viewpoints; allow ample extra time for photography, picnicking, or swimming. Don't forget to take **transport** connections into account!

The large-scale **maps** (all 1:50,000; see page 34) have been set out facing the walking notes if the route is isolated, but where several routes converge, they are often presented on facing pages, to help with overall orientation. Below is a key to the symbols on the maps:

	trunk road		spring, tank, etc		shrine or cross
	secondary road		watercourse, pipe		church/cemetery
	major track		picnic suggestion (see pages 7-10)		stadium
	other track		best views		danger! vertigo!
	path, steps		bus stop/car parking		map continuation
	main walk		waypoint		Visitors' Centre
	alternative walk		specific building		mill/cave
	altitude (m)		picnic site with tables		rock formation
					blow hole

Walk 2: LOS SAUCES • MIRADOR DE LAS BARANDAS • BARLOVENTO

See also photo on page 53

Distance: 12km/7.5mi; 4h10min

Grade: ●● strenuous, with an ascent of about 900m/3000ft overall. The path out of the Barranco de Herradura is steep, narrow and vertiginous. You must be sure-footed and have a head for heights. Don't attempt in wet weather.

Mostly yellow/white PR waymarked

Equipment: walking boots, sunhat, sunglasses, suncream,

fleece, raingear, picnic, plenty of water, walking pole(s)

Transport: 🚍 from Santa Cruz to Los Sauces (Línea 100); journey time 35min. Or 🚗: park in Los Sauces, either near the church, or one street to the west (28° 48.285'N, 17° 46.484'W). Return on 🚍 from Barlovento to Santa Cruz (Línea 100); journey time about 55min. Or the same line to Los Sauces, to collect your car.

The north boasts the most impressive ravines on the island, like the unmissable Barranco de Herradura. A forestry track leads you into this *barranco*, and a footpath not much wider than a pair of boots takes you back out of it. On the way in, you'll see magnificent colonies of La Palma's endemic blue *Echium* (viper's bugloss), a rival for Tenerife's *taginaste rojo* both in splendour and in height. *Woodwardia radicans*, a prehistoric fern with two-three metre-long stems, flourishes on the damp *barranco* walls.

Begin the walk at the BUS STOP in Los Sauces (●). Cross the street and walk 10-20m/yds to the left. Then go uphill (at the right of a park), past the Ayuntamiento (town hall) and the pharmacy. Keep straight uphill, climbing steeply. This village has an authentic farmyard feel about it. Some of the old homes will take you by surprise with their unusually bright colours, while the gardens display a mixture of flowers, fruit trees and vegetables.

A renovated AQUEDUCT on the left will catch your eye (10min). Just past the aqueduct, turn right (signpost: 'PICO DE LA CRUZ, MIRADOR TOPO DE LAS BARANDAS, PR LP7'). Not far uphill, the road forks. Both forks rejoin, but take the left fork — it's quicker. Once past the CAMPO DE FUTBOL, the climb steepens, as you rise through patchy cultivation. Soon after the forks have rejoined and the way

has reverted to track, you reach the rim of Barranco del Agua, with an excellent view towards the *cumbre* from the Mirador de Llano Clara (●; 30min).

From this lookout point, leave the track and climb a cobbled path to the left (SIGNPOST). Several minutes up, on rejoining the track (SIGNPOST), follow it to the left uphill. The steadily ascending track winds through scrub, a mixture of laurels, heather, ferns, *codeso* (*Adenocarpus*), and scatterings of old chestnut trees, while the Barranco de Herradura drops away to the right.

Ignore all turn-offs until you reach the turn-off left to the Mirador de las Barandas (●; 1h10min). From this *mirador* you enjoy the splendid view shown on page 53, looking straight down into the Barranco del Agua and across the heavily-wooded ridges that carve up the landscape.



The Laguna de Barlovento, with the eponymous village in the background

Return the 120m/yds to the main track, to continue the walk. Ignore a first track off right but, 10 minutes from the *mirador*, fork right on a clear track (📍; signpost: ‘LAGUNA DE BARLOVENTO, PR LP7.1’). Every now and then you’ll see enormous viper’s bugloss along the route. In summer their 2-3m/6-9ft-high stalks will be embellished with blue flowers. The native white-tailed and Bolle’s laurel pigeons abound up here too. Ignore a faint track to the left after approximately 20 minutes (SIGNPOST). The prehistoric fern colonies (*Woodwardia Radicans*) along this part of the walk are the largest on the whole island.

Entering the **Barranco de Herradura**, the way becomes dark and shady. A rockfall has caused the track to narrow down to a path. As you approach the valley floor, notice the caves cut into the bank on the left, just before the track turns sharply to the right. A

couple of minutes further along, go into the trees on a waymarked path. In just one minute you reach the **Galería Meleno** (📍; **2h10min**), securely locked behind a metal gate. There’s an **ABANDONED BUILDING** on the left side of the ravine; some endemic geraniums grow beside the track.

The continuing path begins at the right of the abandoned building and is steep and vertiginous at the outset. The slopes are sheer, but wooded, thus lessening the exposure ... at least psychologically. **Important:** *remember that the leaves covering the path are very slippery.* A good 10 minutes up, you round a bend and enter another shady mossy *barranco* with vertical walls; not only is this ravine so dark that it’s difficult to appreciate its beauty, but your eyes *should* be glued to the path the whole time!

Close on 30 minutes up from the *barranco* floor, you rise to a

CREST (6; 2h40min; PR LP7.1 SIGNPOST). The path takes you to a track, soon flanked by garden plots. The Laguna de Barlovento (a large reservoir) appears through the trees, with a *zona recreativa* to its right. The surrounding hills are being cleared of trees and scrub to create gardens and orchards. When you come to a T-junction, turn left (6; where a SIGNPOST points in the opposite direction). The *laguna* reappears not far ahead; later in the walk you will circle to the left of it.

Now ignore all side paths and tracks for the next 10 minutes, until you come to a MAJOR SIGNPOSTED JUNCTION (7): turn right here. Now keep to the main track, ignoring all side tracks. Twenty minutes from the major junction, weave your way past a few abandoned buildings (visitors' centres and museums for a 'rural interpretation park' which never got off the ground). Reaching a junction with a large orange building on the corner below, turn

right and after a minute join the road to the Laguna de Barlovento *zona recreativa* (8; 3h35min). Turn left; then, some 50m/yds along, leave the road: turn right on a track, heading into a cultivated basin. Ignore the fork to the right at the outset. Follow the same path/track, ignoring all turn-offs, until you reach the main road. Turn right for 150m/yds, then go left into a small industrial area.

When you reach the main road again, cross it and follow the track opposite, again ignoring side paths. Cross the road again and continue on a path, straight past cultivated fields and a housing estate on the left. Reaching the main Barlovento/Gallegos road, follow it to the left, then take the second right turn, just before a *casa forestal* (forestry house).

This brings you to the centre of Barlovento. The BUS STOP (9; 4h10min) is 100m/yds below the Consultorio de Barlovento (health centre).





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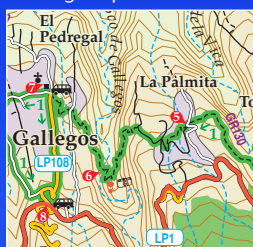
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