

La Gomera Guided Walking Holiday

Tour Style: European Centre Based
Destinations: Canary Islands & Spain
Trip code: LGLCL
3 & 4



HOLIDAY OVERVIEW

This mountainous terrain is a walker's paradise, with exhilarating routes spreading out across the dramatic landscape of this rugged island. Perfect for those with a real head for heights, this small island manages to squeeze in breathtaking barrancos, laurisilva forest and the wonderful Garajonay National Park. Stay at the Parador with its sea views and easy access to the tiny island capital of San Sebastián – Christopher Columbus' stop off point en route to the Americas. There will also be time to explore traditional villages, and the option to reach the top of the island. La Gomera is a short ferry journey from neighbouring Tenerife and known as the ultimate winter walking escape. The island has narrow and deep ravines crisscrossed by rugged mountains and offers a network of trails and pathways. 'Caminos reales' (royal paths) were used by the inhabitants of the island until the middle of the last century to pass through some difficult areas with horses and donkeys carrying loads of straw, cereals, potatoes and other products. The island is bathed by trade winds and the geography of the island allows several microclimates. The north is wetter – where the World Heritage Site of Garajonay National Park is located, the rain condenses creating a beautiful green forest. Meanwhile in the south the weather is sunny and much warmer most of the year. The average temperature of 22° makes this a great place to visit at any time of the year. San Sebastián, La Gomera's capital, has beautiful buildings and traditional Canarian architecture. The Virgin of Guadalupe is the patron saint of San Sebastián and you can visit the charming Chapel of Puntallana.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- A full programme of guided walks with 2 options every day
- All transport to and from walks
- The services of experienced HF Holidays' leaders
- 'With flight' holidays include return flights from the UK and hotel transfers
- 7 nights' accommodation in en-suite rooms
- Half Board – extensive breakfast and á la carte dining in the evenings

HOLIDAYS HIGHLIGHTS

- Conquer high cliffs and walk along a ridge with incredible views
- Experience La Gomera's whistling language and look out for dolphins following your ferry
- Discover breathtaking barrancos and the stunning Garajonay National Park
- Explore the island capital of San Sebastián

TRIP SUITABILITY

This is a level 3 and level 4 graded Activity, Easier walks: 5 to 8 miles (8 to 13km) with steep ascents and descents. Up to 1,200 feet (360m) of ascent and 2,500 feet (750m) of descent in a day. Harder walks: 7 to 11 miles (11 to 17½km) with steep ascents and descents on rough paths and tracks. Up to 3,000 feet (900m) of ascent and 4,000 feet (1,200m) of descent in a day.



ITINERARY

Day 1: Arrival Day

Welcome to Parador de La Gomera. Unpack and settle in.

Day 2: Garajonay National Park

Both groups will start the day with a stroll down the hill and an exploration of San Sebastián. We then board our transport for the ride up to the Garajonay National Park, in the centre of the island.

Option 1 - Exploring Garajonay

Distance: 6 miles (9½km)

Total ascent: 700 feet (210m)

In summary: This walk follows a broad contouring track around Garajonay, to reach a viewpoint and pick up the GR 131. Our path then descends to tiny Iqualero and another mirador. Here we find a monument to Silbo, the unique whistling language of La Gomera. Below the village we join a high terrace path in a spectacular location to traverse round the hillside and pass beneath the rocky stronghold of Fortaleza. We continue to the large village of Chipude where we finish our walk at one of the bars in the square.

Highlight: Iqualero's monument to Silbo, La Gomera's unique whistling language.

Option 2 - Fortaleza

Distance: 7 miles (11km)

Total ascent: 1,200 feet (350m)

In summary: This walk follows the same route as the easier walk as far as the col beneath Fortaleza. Here we follow an airy path on a winding route up through the cliffs to reach the top at 1,243m. After circling the summit plateau, we retrace our route down to the col and continue to Chipude.

Highlight: The views from the summit of Fortaleza are excellent.

Day 3: Agulo

Today we will use hired transport to make our first visit to the northern side of La Gomera, with its small fields of bananas and the village of Agulo.

Option 1 - Agulo & The Mirador De Abrante

Distance: 6 miles (10km)

Total ascent: 700 feet (210m)

Total descent: 2,800 feet (870m)

In summary: We begin at the visitor centre high above Agulo, where you can learn more about the flora, fauna, history and traditions of the island. Starting our walk, we follow a good track along the ridge before striking out across vivid red earth to reach the cafe and skywalk at Mirador de Abrante. Returning to the ridge, we begin the steady descent to the attractive settlement of Agulo. Here there will be time to look around and pause for a drink, before continuing our descent to the coast and a stroll above the seaside rocks to the wild bay of Playa Hermigua, before ascending to the road for the bus back to the hotel.

Highlight: The skywalk at the Mirador de Abrante is a spectacular experience.

Option 2 - Inland From Agulo

Distance: 8 miles (13km)

Total ascent: 2,200 feet (660m)

In summary: We leave our transport in Agulo to ascend a seemingly impossible route through the cliffs behind the village. We ascend on a steep stepped path to a mirador above the coast. The route then follows a valley inland before a further ascent takes us to the visitor centre where our easier group started their walk. We follow the easier route back through Agulo to finish at Hermigua.

Highlight: The ascent of the cliffs is on good paths and is a stunning start to our day's walk.

Day 4: The Green Heart Of La Gomera

Today we visit the Garajonay National Park to ascend the highest point on the island (1,487m). It provides an opportunity to see at close hand the unique laurel and tree heather forest that once covered much of the centre of the island.

Option 1 - Forest Tracks To La Gomera's Heart

Distance: 7 miles (11km)

Total ascent: 900 feet (280m)

Total Descent: 1,900 feet (575m)

In summary: We start this walk just beyond Pajarito and take tracks and paths to the summit of Garajonay for views across the island. This route then meanders through the famous laurel and tree heather forest to the Visitor Centre and Cafe at Laguna Grande before descending through farmland to the village of El Cercado.

Highlight: El Cercado is renowned for its characteristic brown pottery, made only by women.

Option 2 - The Roof Of The Island

Distance: 7 miles (11½km)

Total ascent: 400 feet (130m)

Total descent: 4,100 feet (1,250m)

In summary: This group alights at Pajarito to directly ascend Garajonay summit, with good views to neighbouring islands. After admiring the view, we descend through the forest to Ermita de Lourdes, and the village of El Cedro, where we may choose to sample the watercress soup for lunch. The most dramatic part of our walk is the descent by a stepped path down the cliff, before continuing down to the lower valley and finishing at El Convento.

Highlight: On a clear day we'll be able to spot the other Canary Islands from the summit of Garajonay.

Day 5: Free Day

Each week there is a free day when no guided walks are offered. This is an ideal opportunity to relax around

the hotel, walk independently or visit local places of interest. Some options for your free day may include:

San Sebastián: Wander down to San Sebastian and visit the excellent little archaeological museum, sit and people watch in the shady square or even visit the sheltered black sandy bay for a swim. Hire a boat from San Sebastián for a fishing or whale watching trip (max five people).

Hotel: Spend the day at the hotel, perhaps taking advantage of the swimming pool, sauna or massage facilities, or wander through the hotel gardens improving your knowledge of the local fauna. Stroll out from the hotel through the town to the remote beach at Playa Guancha or in the other direction for a shorter walk to the lighthouse at Punta de San Cristobal.

La Gran Rey: Take a bus ride from the town to La Gran Rey, one of the main beach resorts, for a meal, swim or even a trip on one of the whale watching boats.

For information on La Gomera please visit www.lagomera.travel

Day 6: Down To San Sebastián

Both groups will have a short bus journey to the start of these walks and finish at the Parador. This area has wild and remote countryside with excellent views.

Option 1 - San Sebastián

Distance: 7½ miles (12km)

Total ascent: 1,200 feet (360m)

Total descent: 2,400 feet (735m)

In summary: This walk starts by ascending an ancient trail towards Enchereda, we then take a good track to a col where we stop to admire the fine views before continuing the ascent on a rocky path (GR132). This track zigzags down just below Jaragan and then a ridge walk takes the group back into San Sebastián.

Highlight: Walking a ridgeline means we're accompanied by great views for much of the day.

Option 2 - Ayamosna And The Deserted South

Distance: 11 miles (18km)

Total ascent: 1,000 feet (300m)

Total descent: 3,200 feet (960m)

In summary: We start at the mirador at the Degoilade de Paraza, just 15km from San Sebastián. A few steps lead to a cliff path to the settlement of Ayamosna and onto a wild rocky ridge before descending into a steep valley. The group then ascends again to the GR131 coastal footpath that winds down to a deserted beach. There are headland views and distant San Sebastián. The group arrives back at the Parador after making their way through the town.

Highlight: The beach at Playa de la Guancha is an idyllic spot for a swim on a calm day.

Day 7: The Benchijigua Valley And The Guarimiar Barranco

For our final walks of the week we make our first visit to the valleys to the southwest of San Sebastián. Our road branches off the high road at the Degollada de Peraza and heads down towards Playa Santiago.

Option 1 - The Benchijigua Valley

Distance: 6 miles (9km)

Total ascent: 400 feet (120m)

Total descent: 2,300 feet (690m)

In summary: This group takes a broad track winding along the hillside to the attractive restored hamlet of Benchijigua. Taking a narrow path we follow the valley southwards through terraces, along a rock shelf and past a disused gofio mill. We then descend to cross a dry stream bed, before ascending to the bar at Pastrana. We continue to meet our transport at the road junction just beyond which will take us to visit Playa Santiago.

Highlight: There's an excellent tapas bar in Pastrana; a perfect place to wait for our coach.

Option 2 - The Guarimiar Barranco

Distance: 10 miles (16km)

Total ascent: 1,800 feet (540m)

Total descent: 3,100 feet (950m)

In summary: We initially follow the same route as the easier walk to Benchijigua, before picking up the rising track over the ridge and descending to Imada, a village nestling near the top of the neighbouring valley. Here we take the path through the famous Guarimiar barranco, walking beneath and above high cliffs, to the hamlet of Guarimiar. The route then continues down the valley with the option to climb to a higher road and welcoming bar.

Highlight: The Guarimiar barranco is famed for a reason; it's one of the most spectacular parts of La Gomera.

Day 8: Departure Day

We hope to see you again soon.

ACCOMMODATION

Parador De La Gomera

The stylish Parador de la Gomera is perched over the town of San Sebastián and the harbour, with incredible coastal views. There is a tropical garden surrounding the hotel with an outdoor pool, as well as a relaxing enclosed central courtyard. The hotel's restaurant has a great local reputation and offers hearty Canarian fayre.

Accommodation Info

Facilities

The Parador has an outdoor swimming pool in a stunning location overlooking the harbour and marina of San Sebastián. The hotel is surrounded by a delightful garden planted with palms and tropical shrubs with paths that lead you to viewpoints.

There are traditional courtyard areas to relax in at the end of the day as well as several comfortable lounges, all furnished with antique colonial furniture, and some with wonderful sea views.

There is an attractive dining area with an enclosed veranda leading to the garden. There is a small sauna available to all guests.

Food & Drink

Our holidays at La Gomera are on a Half Board basis and include breakfast and evening meal.

Breakfast

An extensive continental breakfast is served in the attractive dining room which includes fresh fruit, juices, eggs, selection of breads, cheese, hams, cereals, yoghurt, jams and tea/coffee.

Lunch (Payable Locally)

You may prefer to buy ingredients for your packed lunch locally in nearby San Sebastian. On some days it may be possible to visit shops on the walk, or eat in a local café; your leaders will advise you of the options.

Evening Meal

The Parador has a great reputation on the island for their excellent cuisine and to ensure that our guests enjoy this, we have recently arranged for our guests to experience á la carte dining. This will give you an opportunity to sample the unique Canarian dishes; potage de berros (watercress broth) or cazuela de pescados gomeros (a local fish casserole) as well as others.

Your Evenings

Each evening your walking leaders will tell you about the choice of walks for the next day and answer any questions you may have. During the evening you may like to join in an optional organised evening activity, such as a quiz.

On a warm evening, it is nice just to stroll in the gardens or even down to San Sebastian for a drink in a local bar.

TRAVEL DETAILS

THE HASSLE-FREE OPTION

Book your holiday 'with flight' from Gatwick to Tenerife South airport. For flight times and prices please see the Dates & Prices tab.

Return transfers between the airport and the hotel are included in the holiday. There is a coach transfer to Los Cristianos ferry terminal, where you will have time to explore this popular tourist destination, followed by a 50

minute scenic ferry crossing to La Gomera.

THE FLEXIBLE TRAVEL OPTION

Alternatively, tailor your journey to suit you by booking your holiday 'without flight' allowing you the freedom to book your own flights from your local airport.

Transfers from Tenerife South airport are included for La Gomera holidays. However as transfers are timed to meet the HF Holidays flights you will need to ensure that your travel arrangements are timed to match.* (Please call us on 020 8732 1220 for more information). Our flight to Tenerife is due to land at 1130 (Easy jet U28703).

Please note week commencing 22 February there is a festival in Los Cristianos which means we are unable to take the ferry crossing until 1900. Therefore that week we use a British Airways flight (BA2702) which is due to land at 1440.

* Please note that HF Holidays is not responsible for your onward travel if you fail to meet the transfer coach

USEFUL HOLIDAY INFORMATION

What To Bring

Essential Equipment

To enjoy walking/hiking comfortably and safely, footwear, clothing and equipment needs to be suitable for the conditions. Safety and comfort are our priorities, so our advice is to come prepared for all eventualities.

- Footwear with a good grip on the sole (e.g. Vibram sole) is the key to avoiding accidents.
- Walking/hiking boots providing ankle support and good grip are recommended (ideally worn in), and specialist walking socks to avoid blisters.
- Several layers of clothing, which can be added or removed, are better than a single layer (include spares).
- Fabrics (lightweight and fast drying) designed for the outdoors are recommended.
- Waterproof jacket and waterproof over trousers.
- Warm hat and gloves.
- Denim jeans and capes are not suitable on any walks.
- Rucksack with a waterproof liner.
- Thermos flask for hot drink.
- Water bottle (at least 2 litre).
- Spare high-energy food such as a chocolate bar.
- Small torch.
- First aid kit – your leader's first aid kit doesn't contain any medication or blister kits (such as Compeed).
- Sun hat and sunglasses
- Sun cream.

Optional Equipment

- Walking poles are useful, particularly for descents.
- Insect repellent.
- Camera.
- Gaiters.

Useful Information

Language: Spanish

Currency: Euro

Changing money: There are several ATM machines in San Sebastián where you can obtain money.

Electricity: 220 Volt AC with round two pin plugs; you will need an adaptor for any appliances brought from the UK.

Tap water: Is considered safe to drink, but if you prefer, bottled mineral water can be purchased from the hotel or local supermarkets.

Telephone code: If the international number you wish to call starts with a 0, you must drop the starting digit when dialling the number.

To dial a UK number 0044

To dial a Spanish number 0034

The language of La Gomera is Spanish.

Is considered safe to drink, but if you prefer, bottled mineral water can be purchased from the hotel or local supermarkets.

If the international number you wish to call starts with a 0, you must drop the starting digit when dialling the number.

To dial a UK number 0044

To dial a Spanish number 0034

Local Currency

The currency of la Gomera is the Euro.

Electricity

220 Volt AC with round two pin plugs; you will need an adaptor for any appliances brought from the UK.

ATM Availability

There are several ATM machines in San Sebastián where you can obtain money.

HOW TO BOOK

When you're ready to book, you can choose to **book online** or book **over the phone**. Our website offers secure online booking for our holidays, is available 24/7, and offers more in-depth information about all our holidays. If you prefer to call us, our experienced and knowledgeable team are available to answer any specific questions you have and can offer guidance as to which holiday is best suited to your needs.

Our office is open: Monday to Friday: 9am – 7pm Saturday & Sunday: 9am – 1pm Bank Holiday Monday: 9am – 1pm

PAYING YOUR DEPOSIT

To secure the holiday of your choice, you will need to pay a deposit: UK & European Holidays: £150 per person and Worldwide Holidays: £250 per person. You can pay your deposit by debit or credit card with no additional card fees charged or make an online BACS payment directly into HF's bank account, please see details under BACS payments. You can also pay your deposit by cheque within seven days of booking. Cheques should be made payable to 'HF Holidays Ltd' with your booking reference / Order ID on the back.

NON-MEMBER FEE

Non-members can join our holidays by paying a Non-Member's fee of £10 per person per holiday. Alternatively, full membership is available from £100 – visit hfholidays.co.uk/membership for details.

BACS PAYMENTS

Please quote your booking reference / Order ID when you make your payment online: Bank Name: Svenska Handelsbanken AB (publ) Account Name: HF Holidays Ltd Account Number: 35923304 Sort Code: 40-51-62 IBAN: GB92HAND40516235923304 Swift / Bic Code: HANDGB22

Once we have received your booking and deposit, we will send a confirmation invoice to the lead name. Please check this carefully. For bookings 'with flights' it is essential that the names on your booking confirmation invoice match those on your passport for bookings overseas. Please advise us immediately of any errors. Any name changes after the balance of your holiday has been paid will be subject to a fee levied by the airline.

MANAGE MY BOOKINGS

Payments can also be made through the Manage My Booking function on our website. Click on the link at the top of our homepage. This is available to all customers who provide an email address at the time of booking.

YOUR FINAL BALANCE

The balance is due 10 weeks before departure. As with paying your deposit, you can pay your final balance by debit or credit card, make an online BACS payment directly into HF's bank account or pay by cheque.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

Travel insurance is an important part of any booking and essential for one of our holidays. HF Holidays works with specialist. Insurance Brokers Campbell Irvine Direct. For more information or to obtain a quote call them on 01702 427 236 or visit hfholidays.co.uk/insurance

PEACE OF MIND

ATOL:

The air holidays and flights in this brochure are ATOL-protected, since we hold an Air Travel Organiser's Licence granted by the Civil Aviation Authority. Our ATOL number is ATOL 710. In the unlikely event of our insolvency, the CAA will ensure that you are not stranded abroad and will arrange to refund any money you have paid us for advance bookings. For further information visit the ATOL website atol.org.uk

MEMBER OF ABTOT:

HF Holidays is a member of ABTOT (The Association of Bonded Travel Organisers Trust Limited) which provides financial protection under the Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours Regulations 1992 for HF Holidays Ltd and in the event of their insolvency, protection is provided for the following: 1. non-flight packages commencing in and returning to the UK; 2. non-flight packages commencing and returning to a country other than the UK; 3. flight inclusive packages that commence outside of the UK and Republic of Ireland, which are sold to customers outside of the UK and Republic of Ireland. 1, 2 and 3 provides for a refund in the event you have not yet travelled. 1 and 3 provides for repatriation. Please note that bookings made outside the UK and Republic of Ireland are only protected by ABTOT when purchased directly with HF Holidays Ltd.

TRIP NOTE VALIDITY

These Trip Notes are valid based on the date printed at the bottom of the page. They will occasionally be updated post booking and pre-departure. We will send you the latest trip notes prior to departure through a link in your pre departure documents or we can send you a copy in the post if preferred.

In booking this trip you should be confident in your ability to participate in all activities described in these Trip Notes. If you have any doubt about your suitability you should call HF Holidays and ask to speak to one of the team about this itinerary.

The information in these Trip Notes is given in good faith. Where differences exist between the Trip Notes and our current brochure, the Trip Notes supersede the brochure. All holidays can be subject to unexpected changes; so please be prepared to be flexible where necessary. At times, it may not be possible to follow the itinerary as planned due to weather conditions, political, physical or other factors. In these circumstances we will make the best possible alternative arrangements to maintain the integrity of the original itinerary.

PRICE GUARANTEE

We promise that our earliest published prices will always be the best and if we reduce our holiday price after your booking has been confirmed, we will pass this reduction on to you. Our price promise applies if any subsequent offer price is for an identical holiday, duration, location and date and does not cover any optional extras, flights or additional services.

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