

La Palma Guided Walking Holiday

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



HOLIDAY OVERVIEW

Discover one of the lesser known Canary Islands, La Palma. Enjoy more challenging mountain walks on the Canaries amidst the beautiful, diverse and relatively undiscovered landscapes of La Palma, with its lush forests and dramatic volcanic scenery forming part of a larger stunningly beautiful national park: Caldera de Taburiente. There's even the option to reach the top of 'the world's steepest island'. La Palma sits northwest of Tenerife, north of smaller El Hierro, and is geologically similar to both. These three western islands, plus La Gomera, are relatively young compared to the eastern islands, and were the product of volcanic eruptions from the ocean floor 3 to 4 million years ago. On La Palma, the original volcano collapsed half a million years ago to create the landscape we see today, dominated by the huge Caldera de Taburiente, which provides the diverse landscapes of several of our walks. The island is widely regarded as the steepest island in the world and has become a mecca for star-gazers, due to its dark skies and row of observatories, which sit high above the clouds. Like its neighbours, the island enjoys a warm, pleasant climate all year round. However, unlike some of the larger Canary Islands, teardrop shaped La Palma is relatively untouched by mass tourism and offers a fantastic walking escape in winter and spring as well as incredibly varied terrain, from pine forests, coastal walking and agricultural plantations to its stunningly beautiful national park focussed on the volcanic ridge. Also known as 'La Isla Bonita', this island is a green, walkers' paradise with over 1,000km of paths and lush vegetation and volcanic geology creating amazing views at every turn. Santa Cruz de la Palma (or simply Santa Cruz) is the island's atmospheric capital and was founded in 1493. The city features the only notable port on the island, with an array of colourful colonial buildings, many of which feature photogenic flower-filled balconies. Our base in Breña Baja is just a short journey from San

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- A full programme of guided walks with 2 options every walking day
- All transport to and from the 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 evening meal

HOLIDAYS HIGHLIGHTS

- Discover 'La Isla Bonita' – a green paradise which feels a world away from mass tourism
- A walker's paradise home to almost 1,000km of paths and the spectacular Caldera de Taburiente rim, often above a 'sea' of clouds
- Lush green vegetation and incredible volcanic geology create amazing views at every turn
- Visit the capital of Santa Cruz de la Palma with its pretty balconies and colonial era architecture
- Stay at the landmark Parador de la Palma with its extensive gardens and Atlantic views

TRIP SUITABILITY

This is a level 3 and level 4 graded Activity, Easier walks: 5 to 8 miles (8 to 13km) on a mix of rocky and cobbled paths, with some steep ascents and descents. Up to 1,200 feet (360m) of ascent in a day. Harder walks: 7 to 11 miles (11 to 17½km) with some steep ascents and descents. There are also some rocky sections. Up to 2,500 feet (750m) of ascent in a day.



ITINERARY

Day 1: Arrival Day

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

Day 2: Southern Volcanoes

Today both groups explore the southern tip of La Palma which is the site of the most recent volcanic activity.

Option 1 - Southern Volcanoes & Faro De Fuencaliente

Distance: 6 miles (9½km)

Total ascent: 100 feet (30m)

Total descent: 2,300 feet (690m)

In summary: This walk starts from the southern town of Los Canarios to ascend Volcan San Antonio and visit the visitor centre. The route then descends through the volcanic lava fields before emerging at sea level in Faro de Fuencaliente. At the end of the walk there is time to explore the only commercial salt pans on La Palma and enjoy refreshments.

Highlight: The spectacular volcanic lava fields.

Option 2 - Camino Real & The Southern Volcanoes

Distance: 9 miles (14½km)

Total ascent: 800 feet (240m)

Total descent: 3,200 feet (960m)

In summary: The harder walk starts on the southwestern side of the island and follows the Camino Real (GR130) with good coastal views to reach Los Canarios. The route then follows the same path as the easier walk to arrive at Faro de Fuencaliente for refreshments.

Highlight: Fabulous views along the coast and out to the island of El Hiero.

Day 3: Ancient Laurel Forests And The North-east Coast

Today both groups will explore the laurel forest of La Galga and part of the northeast coast, with spectacular views from Mirador de la Somada Alta.

Option 1 - Laurel Forest Of La Galga & San Andrés

Distance: 6 miles (9½km)

Total ascent: 1,200 feet (360m)

In summary: The easier walk explores the laurel forests behind La Galga. The route ascends to the Mirador de la Somada Alta before beginning the descent into the depths of the laurel forest. The high sides of the ravine restrict the light to the valley floor creating a magical walk through the lush ferns and mosses. Emerging from the ravine, we descend to San Bartolome for lunch in a local bar, followed by a tour of the village and a viewpoint before travelling to the attractive village of San Andrés.

Highlight: Enjoy a typical lunch in a local bar.

Option 2 - Laurel Forest Of La Galga & Cliff Paths To San Andrés

Distance: 8 miles (13km)

Total ascent: 1,700 feet (510m)

In summary: The harder walk also explores the laurel forests, ascending to the Mirador de la Somada Alta before a descent to lunch in San Bartolome. We then descend to the coast to reach a cliff path (GR130). The cliff path continues through banana plantations to finally reach San Andrés and welcome refreshments.

Highlight: Stunning views of the coastline below.

Day 4: Mirador De La Cumbrecita And The El Riachuelo Valley

Today takes us to the heart of the Taburiente National Park. On a clear day we will be able to enjoy stunning views from the Mirador de la Cumbrecita down into the Caldera de Taburiente and upwards to the rim of the caldera, before descending through the El Riachuelo valley.

Option 1 - Mirador De La Cumbrecita Circuit

Distance: 7½ miles (12km)

Total ascent: 1,000 feet (300m)

Total descent: 2,000 feet (600m)

In summary: The first section of this panoramic circuit follows an almost level track with good views. We then reach a viewpoint at the Mirador de Los Roques. From La Cumbrecita there are good views back down the El Riachuelo valley. Leaving La Cumbrecita we walk down the quiet access road into the lower El Riachuelo valley. We then follow rough forest trails ascending to reach tracks below the Cumbre Nueva before continuing on pleasant forest trails to reach the Ermita de la Virgen del Pino.

Highlight: Panoramic views on the way to the viewpoint.

Option 2 - Mirador De La Cumbrecita Circuit & The Camino De Gordian

Distance: 6½ miles (10½km)

Total ascent: 1,300 feet (400m)

Total descent: 2,700 feet (800m)

In summary: After enjoying the magnificent views on the circuit of La Cumbrecita, we descend a narrow path that contours high above the El Riachuelo valley, below the cliffs of the Cumbre Nueva. Descending into the lower valley, the rough path then skirts around the edge of farmland ascending onto the ridge of Lomo de Padron. Joining a track, we make our way down to the Ermita de la Virgen del Pino to meet the coach.

Highlight: A challenging route with breathtaking scenery.

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:

Hotel: Relax in the hotel, swim in the pool and take lunch on the patio.

Santa Cruz: Visit nearby Santa Cruz. Walk around the cobbled streets in the old quarter where there are traditional buildings with wooden carved balconies festooned with brightly coloured flowers. You can walk to the colourful market, have lunch in one of the many restaurants and walk along the promenade round the harbour.

For information on La Palma, please visit www.hellocanaryislands.com

Day 6: Caldera De Taburiente Rim

Accompanied by a local guide, these walks take us to the highest point on the island. The summit area is home to many international observatories, located here due to the 'dark skies' of La Palma.

Option 1 - Roque De Los Muchachos & The Caldera De Taburiente Rim

Distance: 4½ miles (7km)

Total ascent: 500 feet (150m)

Total descent: 2,200 feet (660m)

In summary: The walk will usually enjoy the magnificent views from the highest point on the island, Roque de las Muchachos (2,426m) and follow sections of the GR131 along the rim of the Caldera de Taburiente.

Highlight: Follow the caldera rim trail with picture postcard views down into the caldera.

Option 2 - Caldera De Taburiente Rim

Distance: 7 miles (11km)

Total ascent: 1,300 feet (400m)

Total descent: 3,300 feet (990m)

In summary: The harder walk will also enjoy the magnificent views from the highest point on the island, Roque de las Muchachos (2,426m), and follow more of the GR131 along the rim of the Caldera de Taburiente across Pico de la Cruz and Pico de la Nieve before descending the eastern slopes through pine forests to meet the coach.

Highlight: Today we walk with a local guide who will share their extensive knowledge of the history and geology of the island.

Day 7: The Volcano Ridge And Lava Fields Of The Taburiente National Park

Today, we travel to the centre of this beautiful island where we can appreciate its volcanic geology.

Option 1 - Traverse Of Cumbre Nueva

Distance: 7 miles (11km)

Total ascent: 1,000 feet (300m)

Total descent: 2,100 feet (630m)

In summary: The easier walk ascends through enchanting woodlands on tracks used for centuries to cross from east to west on the island to the significant north-south intersection at Refugio del Pilar, a popular camping and recreational spot. It then descends on rough paths across the drier western slopes and lava fields of Montana Quemada to finish with refreshments at a bar on the outskirts of El Paso.

Highlight: Discover some of the oldest prehistoric lava flows.

Option 2 - Circuit Of Pico Birigoyo & The Volcano Route

Distance: 9½ miles (15km)

Total ascent: 2,300 feet (700m)

In summary: The harder walk starts from the Refugio del Pilar and follows forest tracks to circuit Pico Birigoyo and ascends onto the ridge of the Volcano Route. We then follow the Volcano Route to view the crater del Hoyo Negro and ascend Pico Nambroque to enjoy stunning views southwards along the ridge. Returning northwards, we follow the GR131 back along the Volcano Route descending to the Refugio del Pilar where we meet the coach for a transfer to meet the easier walkers for a final drink.

Highlight: The Cumbre Vieja is one of the most active volcanic areas in the Canaries with over 120 volcanoes and craters.

Day 8: Departure Day

We hope to see you again soon.

ACCOMMODATION

Parador De La Palma - La Palma

The Parador de la Palma is located in an area of great scenic beauty, close to the capital of the island. The Parador building is newly-constructed with traditional Canary Island architecture. It has an extensive garden of 44 hectares, home to native plants and fruit trees allowing pleasant walks along several paths where the plants are identified by their scientific names. There are stupendous views over the Atlantic Ocean at this very special location.

Accommodation Info

Rooms

The Parador has 78 comfortable en-suite rooms, some with sea views from their balconies as well as air conditioning and satellite television.

The rooms are comfortably furnished with TV, telephone, room safe (free), WiFi (free), en-suite bathroom with complimentary toiletries, hairdryer and minibar (charged).

Facilities

Inside, the reception leads to a central courtyard garden with shaded seating all around. A large bar area leads to an elegant dining room serving traditional Canary Island produce. At the reception there is a small

shop selling essentials.

As well as offering a high standard of comfort, the hotel has an outdoor swimming pool (seasonal) and seating, a sauna and gym.

The Parador is set within 44 hectares of tropical gardens, with avacado trees and native plants. This makes a delightful walk in the evening with views of the Atlantic Ocean.

There is a comfortable sitting room and large bar area with seating. Free WiFi is available throughout the hotel and bedrooms.

Food & Drink

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

Breakfast

The buffet breakfast consists of wide selection of breads, jams, fresh and stewed fruit, cereals, fruit juices, cheese and cold meats, tea and coffee. There are also hot breakfast options available.

Lunch (Payable Locally)

You may prefer to buy ingredients for your picnic lunch locally in nearby Breña Baja. 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 restaurant specialises in preparing local dishes but does have international dishes on the menu (there is also a special gluten free menu). Recommended dishes include watercress or chickpea broth made with varied meats. Also recommended are the fresh, grilled or parboiled fishes, served with a good "mojo" (typical Canary Island sauce).

Dinner is a 3-course meal served at your table.

Drinks

The hotel has a well-stocked bar serving beer, wine and spirits

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; one evening we take our guests into Santa Cruz after the evening meal.

We have organised a local guide to speak to our guests about the local geology and history of this interesting island. On a warm evening, it is nice to just stroll in the gardens below the Parador or perhaps take part in a short quiz.

Travel Details

THE HASSLE-FREE OPTION

Book your holiday 'with flight' and choose between Gatwick and Manchester flights to La Palma airport. For flight times and prices please see the Dates & Prices tab.

If you choose this option we automatically include return transfers between the airport and the hotel. The short coach transfer takes approx 15 minutes to the Parador de la Palma.

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.

If you choose this option, transfers are not included in the price. However our hotel is just a short hop from the airport, only 5 km! Below are some suggestions to help you reach your destination:

- We can book you a seat on the **HF Holidays' transfer coach** from La Palma airport. This short transfer is timed to meet the HF Holidays' flights* (provisional flight times can be found on the dates and prices tab or you can call us on 020 8732 1220 for more information). Cost per single journey is £6.
- Why not let us book you a **private taxi transfer** at a cost of £15.00 per single taxi journey?

Transfers must be pre-booked. Please call 020 8732 1220 for more details

* 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

The language of La Palma 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 Palma 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 Santa Cruz 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.

ASSOCIATE'S FEE

Non-members can join our holidays by paying an Associate's fee of £10 per person per holiday. Alternatively, full life 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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