



— ECOTOURISM GUIDE —

**GRAN CANARIA
BIOSPHERE RESERVE**

GRAN CANARIA BIOSPHERE RESERVE ECOTOURISM GUIDE

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Infographs: Jorge Delgado / laCarpintería Espacio Creativo.

Coordination: Gran Canaria Island Council – Environmental Unit.

This publication is to be cited as follows:

Ramos Melo, J. J., D. González & P. González del Campo (2016). Gran Canaria Biosphere Reserve Ecotourism Guide (English Edition). Gran Canaria Biosphere Reserve. Gran Canaria Island Council - Environmental Unit. Birding Canarias S.L.U.124 p.



1 PRESENTATION



MONTAÑA DE LA ESCALERA - L'INAGUA



CUERVO
CANARIO

The Gran Canaria Biosphere Reserve - located on the western side of the island - is a true example of sustainable development.

It is a territory where local men and women have long since used their natural resources in a sustainable way, thus guaranteeing their survival today.

This wild and inaccessible area of grand ravines is the result of continuous wind and rain erosion over millions of years. Today its rocks show us fossils of times past when this territory was still covered by green forests. Its caves tell stories of the islands' first settlers, and the memories of the oldest inhabitants remind us of a way of living that no longer exists.

The numerous ravines are the roads through which life runs from the highest peaks of the island to the coast. Water has shaped a privileged landscape that hosts unique species of flora and fauna and is home to local species such as the Gran Canaria Blue Chaffinch - an authentic jewel of island biodiversity that fascinates both naturalists and travellers.

We can find some of the most beautiful pine forests in the Canary Islands on the summits of the mountains, the ravines grow palm trees and willows and the coastal slopes are populated by Canary Island spurge and euphorbias - hidden corners of the island where we discover the last forests of Canary Islands Tamarisk and Mt. Atlas mastic trees. All these amazing landscapes can be explored through a wide network of trails that cross the Biosphere Reserve.

The Gran Canaria Biosphere Reserve can be discovered on foot, on horseback or by bike. Through this ecotourism guide we will reveal an unknown paradise. This guide has been designed for those travellers who want to experience Gran Canaria in an alternative way, for visitors searching to enjoy the people, roads, climate, traditions, biodiversity and gastronomy in a sustainable way.

2

GRAN CANARIA BIOSPHERE RESERVE

Unesco declared the Gran Canaria Biosphere Reserve in June 2005 due to the greatness of its landscapes, its beautiful pine forests and its rich biodiversity. This extraordinary archaeological and ethnographic cultural heritage and the traditional agriculture arise from an intimate symbiosis between people and their environment. As a result we discover an attractive mosaic of small settlements and terraced crops in which its inhabitants still live a unique intangible tradition. This place offers an exclusive opportunity to stimulate the rational use of the island's biodiversity for the benefit of local populations in both terrestrial and marine environments.

The main objective of Unesco's Man and Biosphere Project (MaB) - which involves more than 650 Biosphere Reserves worldwide - is to maintain a lasting balance between the different aspects that characterise a given territory: inhabitants, habits, cultural heritage, biodiversity, natural resources, economy, landscape, but also the future socio-economic development of the populations living in the region.

The Gran Canaria Biosphere Reserve is a true example of sustainable development. Men and women of the area have always exploited their natural resources in a sustainable way, guaranteeing survival to this day. The Biosphere Reserve covers most of the southwest part of the island. It includes protected natural areas such as: Nublo Rural Park, Pílancones Natural Park, Tauro Natural Monument, Güigüí Special Natural Reserve, Tamadaba Natural Park, Inagua Natural Reserve and also the Roque Nublo Natural Monument and Tirajana Natural Risks Monument which are both included in the Nublo Rural Park. Its area covers the municipalities of Artenara, La Aldea de San Nicolás and Tejeda, and partially those of San Bartolomé de Tirajana, Mogán, Agaete and Vega de San Mateo.

Due to conservation and protection interests the Biosphere Reserve has been zoned in different areas. The nucleus area is the "Reserve Territory" which concentrates the most remarkable natural values. The most important part of the natural heritage is located in the Inagua Integral Natural Reserve and the Güigüí Special Natural Reserve. This area covers 6,423.55 hectares. Main activities carried out here involve territory conservation. Its



PINZÓN AZUL
DE GRAN CANARIA

ecosystems holding native pine forests and the important amount of spurge and cactus spurge to be observed here placed the territory in this nucleus zoned area.

The buffer zone (35,939.99 hectares) that always surrounds the Nucleus of Biosphere Reserves acts as a “shield of protection” for the values contained therein. This area is composed of Tamadaba Natural Park, Pilancones Natural Park and the Nublo Rural Park. Most human activity and the development in this area are related to the natural, cultural or ethnographic values to be protected. Activity in this territory is allowed only when it is developed in a respectful way with the environment and according to the conservation and management rules.

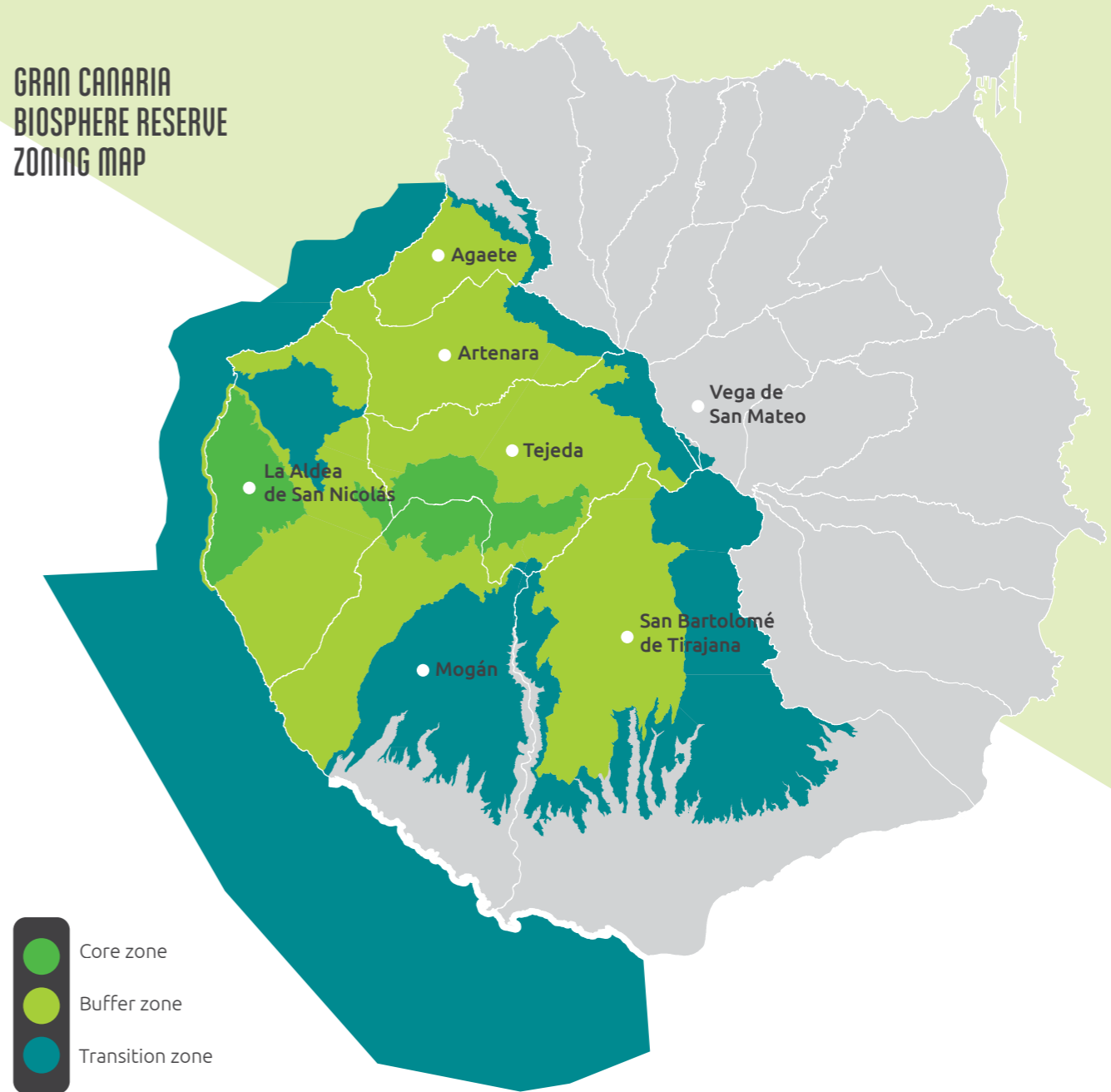


See more information on zoning in the Biosphere Reserve:



The Transition zone, 61,232.90 hectares, is the exterior border of the Biosphere Reserve. It includes the coastal strip from Agaete to San Bartolomé de Tirajana and the areas located higher than 300 m in the municipalities of Agaete, Mogán and San Bartolomé de Tirajana. This is the most populated area in the Biosphere Reserve territory. Development through practices of sustainable exploitation of resources, environmental education and research is fostered here.

GRAN CANARIA BIOSPHERE RESERVE ZONING MAP



MESETA CENTRAL

2

THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT: GEOLOGY, FAUNA & FLORA

The Canary Archipelago's history began about 23 million years ago when the volcanoes started modelling a beautiful stage on which hundreds of thousands of living beings have been acting and writing an amazing story worth knowing.

The island of Gran Canaria initiated its journey 14 million years ago and is presented before our eyes after three great eruptive cycles, offering an admirable geological landscape.

For the last few thousand years Gran Canaria has rested and the island now slowly erodes without anyone knowing what it will be like in the future. We continue, however, to learn about the island's past and enjoy its present. A present that allows us to appreciate the remains of the original Tejada Volcano, the skeleton of the mythical Stratovolcano Roque Nublo or the young volcanic cones that have emerged during the last millennia in the Northeast sector. Those volcanoes represent the three great episodes around which the island's geological plot revolves.

Volcanism and erosion have been responsible for differentiating the massifs in the sector declared as a Biosphere Reserve. From North to South, Tamadaba, Azaenague, Inagua, Güigüí (Guguy), Pilancones, Tauro and Amurga are the main ones and they are separated by imposing ravines and valleys: Barranco Grande, Mogán, Arguineguín, Fataga or Las Tirajanas being the most substantial ones while Tasarte, Tasartico, Veneguera, Ayagaures, Vicentes or Vicentillos are smaller but not to be disregarded.

Each period and the successive erosive processes have initiated impressive formations among which can be highlighted - within the scope of the Reserve - Las Calderas de Tirajana and

Bentayga, the conical dike system, Los Roques, Los Azulejos, Tarta de Coladas de Inagua, Las Mesas de Acusa and El Junquillo, Domo de Risco Blanco, Montañón Negro y La Caldera de Los Pinos, Güigüí (Guguy) beaches, Andén Verde Cliffs and Faneque or La Punta de Las Arenas.

The foundations of Gran Canaria are constituted of a diversity of materials that are shown through interesting formations, allowing us to appreciate the history of the island in this open-air museum. Those foundations have traced the path of all its inhabitants - terrestrial and marine - and within the limits of the Biosphere Reserve they are the cause of a really interesting and particularly high biodiversity

LA MAJADA RAVINE



FLORA

All life forms depend on the ability of plants to capture solar energy and convert it into the chemical energy that every organism needs to survive. This gives us an idea of the importance of this kingdom, here giving a demonstration of wealth, exclusivity and diversity that can only be found in very few places on our planet.

The enormous variety of ecospheres offered by this “island of valleys” and its characteristic climate - marked by the situation of the islands on the planet and influenced by the cold Canary Islands current, trade winds and proximity of the Sahara - make this region an authentic laboratory where an immense amount of plants find the perfect place to settle and, in many cases, evolve to differentiate from their ancestors.

Almost all the archipelago’s plant formations are represented within the Gran Canaria Biosphere Reserve. Samples of high mountain scrub, pine groves, monteverde, thermophilic forest, palm groves, saucedal, Canary Islands tamarisks, succulent bushes, halophytic and psamophile vegetation or seagrass meadows, among others, cover charming corners giving shelter to other plants and becoming an ideal habitat for many other plants, fungi and animals.

Some forests and shrublands that stand out due to their size, beauty and good state of conservation deserve a special mention: Tamadaba-Azaenague pine forests, Inagua, Pilancones, Tirajana, Acusa Verde, Acusa Seca or Pino Gordo palm groves, Artejevez and Tocodomán almacigares, La Punta de La Aldea Canary Islands tamarisks, Güigüí (Guguy), Rampas de Tabaibales, Gambuesillas Cardonales, Rampas de Amurga, Andén Verde Cliff, Las Marciegas and Playa del Risco or the seagrass meadows of the coast of Güigüí (Guguy) and Tauro.

Due to their rarity and the relictic character the following places also deserve an acknowledgement: Monteverde redoubts in Barranco Hondo, Los Cedros and Verechuelos mountain juniper (cedar), bencomias on the Riscos de Tirajana and the Gran Canaria dragos that are distributed in the Inagua, Tabaibales, Tauro, Pilancones, Amurga and La Mesa del Junquillo massifs.

Each of these habitats is made up of a multitude of species, a large majority being endemic to the Macaronesian region, the archipelago or the island, where more than 100 plants exist that are unknown anywhere else on the planet.

ARTEARA
PALM GROVE

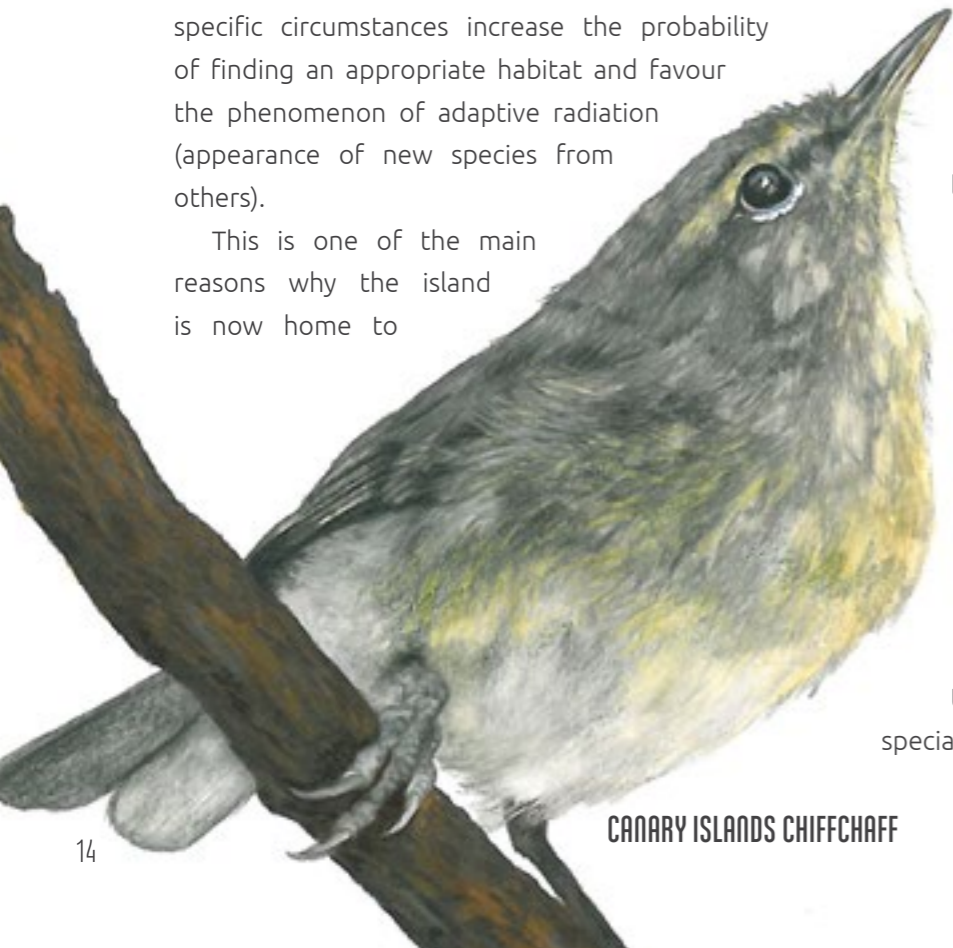


FAUNA

The climatic and physical characteristics of Gran Canaria have allowed the development of highly diverse vegetation and this vegetation is the key for an immense list of animals finding conditions here that allow them to settle and survive in isolation.

The abrupt relief determines a greater or lesser incidence of the Atlantic trade winds, thus creating a multitude of microenvironments. These specific circumstances increase the probability of finding an appropriate habitat and favour the phenomenon of adaptive radiation (appearance of new species from others).

This is one of the main reasons why the island is now home to



CANARY ISLANDS CHIFFCHAFF

a great variety of invertebrates, fish, endemic mammals, at least three species of reptiles and more than one hundred birds that have arrived and been established on a permanent basis both on the surface and in the water.

The high degree of endemic species within the group of invertebrates certainly deserves to be highlighted. We have the exclusive presence of two birds: Canary Islands Chiffchaff and the Blue finch - one of the rarest species in the region - and at least three species of pelagic nesting birds as well as three endemic reptiles: the Gran Canaria skink, the Gran Canaria giant lizard and the subspecies Boettger's Wall Gecko as the following bats: Savi's Pipistrelle and European Free-tailed Bat. Over thirty cetaceans have been sighted in Canary Island waters, many different sea turtles, a great number of fish, among which are some of the most threatened sharks of the planet and some marine mammals like the bottlenose dolphin.

Within the Biosphere Reserve there are several areas that deserve special consideration because of their

importance for certain animals. The cliffs of Faneque, Andén Verde, Tabaibales and Güigüf (Guguy) are the last "big" refuges where pelagic birds breed. The southwest coast is a place of passage and feeding for dolphins and whales while the seagrass meadows feed sea turtles. The beach of La Aldea is a sanctuary for the Atlantic Angel Shark, and the wetland of Las Marciegas is a migratory passage or wintering place for shorebirds, swallows, swifts and other small passerines.

Inland, the pine forests are a home to numerous species and subspecies of endemic forest birds, the Inagua massif and the Central Plateau are the Blue finch's habitat, the ravines and rocky cliffs of Las Calderas de Tirajana and Bentayga

are very important for birds of prey, mainly also endemic subspecies. Herons, egrets and sometimes also other birds such as the black stork or the winch winter in the dams of Barranco Grande. The channel and the slopes of Valle de la Aldea shelter the best populations of alcaraván and Moorish bird, and on the other hand, the Gran Canaria giant lizard and the Gran Canaria skink.

Invertebrates can be found almost everywhere. The terrestrial molluscs which have a very high percentage of endemic varieties are especially interesting although this does not detract from any of the other groups that inhabit both land and water which represent the vast majority of animal biodiversity.

GRAN CANARIA
STICK GRASSHOPPER





GRAN CANARIA BIOSPHERE RESERVE: COASTAL ECOSYSTEMS AND BEACHES

MOST COMMONLY FOUND SPECIES



- 1.- Whimbrel
- 2.- Common Ringed Plover
- 3.- Grey Plover
- 4.- African Blue Tit
- 5.- Common Moorhen
- 6.- Gran Canaria Skink
- 7.- Sardinian Warbler
- 8.- Grey Heron
- 9.- Canary Island tamarisk
- 10.- Little Egret
- 11.- Peregrine Falcon

GRAN CANARIA BIOSPHERE RESERVE: ECOSYSTEMS IN RAVINES

MOST COMMONLY FOUND SPECIES



- 1.- Common Barn-owl
- 2.- Eurasian Blackbird
- 3.- Canary Palm tree
- 4.- Gran Canaria dragon tree
- 5.- Pink Maple-leaved Canary Shrub Mallow
- 6.- Painted lady butterfly
- 7.- Canary
- 8.- Eurasian Blackcap
- 9.- Rhodium wood
- 10.- Winter cherry





GRAN CANARIA BIOSPHERE RESERVE: ECOSYSTEMS IN RAVINES

MOST COMMONLY FOUND SPECIES



- 1.- Gran Canaria Blue Chaffinch
- 2.- Great Spotted Woodpecker
- 3.- Common Raven
- 4.- Canary wall gecko
- 5.- Canary pine tree
- 6.- Scarlet Milkweed
- 7.- Common gum cistus
- 8.- Red pine mushroom
- 9.- Tamadaba butterfly

GRAN CANARIA PROTECTED NATURAL AREAS NETWORK

Below we will introduce you to some of the most representative Protected Natural Areas belonging to the Gran Canaria Biosphere Reserve, both from the Canarian Network (11 of the 33 zones on the island are within the territorial limits of the Biosphere Reserve) and the European Ecological Network Natura 2000. This network consists of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) - the Gran Canaria Biosphere Reserve holds a total of 15 SACs of which 2 are marine areas and 5 Special Protection Areas for Birds (SPAB).

If you are interested in one that is not among the following, you will find them on the map on pages 30 and 31, from where detailed information can be accessed.



INAGUA - GÜICÜI (GUGUY)

» Inagua Natural Integral Reserve

The Inagua, Ojeda and Pajonales mountains hold one of the best-preserved natural pine forests of Gran Canaria. They are also the headwaters of some important ravines (Mulato, Mogán, etc.), which play an important role in groundwater recharge and soil conservation. The fauna and the flora are composed of several threatened endemic species, some of which have their most important populations here. For some bird species, such as the Blue Chaffinch, these pine forests are their main refuge. This spectacular landscape has great scientific, geological and geomorphological interest.



TAMADABA -
LA CALDERA

» Tamadaba Natural Park

A great network of ravines, escarpments and massifs here conveys an erosive landscape of contrasts and great beauty where natural elements of notable geomorphological interest can be found. Tamadaba is home to one of the island's best preserved natural pine forests and is important for its high hydrological uptake that is evidenced by the presence of several artificial dams in its surroundings. Other well-preserved biosystems can be found in the ravines and the Canary Island Spurge and Sweet Tabaiba in the lower area, in addition to the specific escarpment habitats. The Guayedra Risks are the chosen habitat for several threatened species, some of which are unique to this place and certain endemic and threatened birds species find nesting areas in the pine forests. From a cultural point of view, there are also isolated and semi-abandoned villages adding to the archaeological importance of areas such as El Risco and the Guayedra valley.



» Pílancones Natural Park

The characteristics of this area play an important role in soil protection and aquifer recharge. Several south directed ravines of great geomorphological interest and scenic beauty can be observed here. The pinewood on the summit constitutes a well-preserved habitat for large bird populations, and some Canary Island Spurge and Sweet Tabaiba, as well as certain aquatic habitats. Threatened species of flora and fauna and elements of scientific interest are distributed throughout the park.

» Rural Nublo Park

Many values to be found in this park justify its protection. It houses well-preserved natural habitats, abundant endemic and threatened species, some of which are restricted to this natural space such as the rosalillo (*Dendriopoterium pulidoi*). On the other hand, pine forests, abundant artificial ponds and coastal cliffs are important habitats for many bird species. The forest masses included in this park play a significant role in the underground aquifer and soil

conservation, being a sample of one of the Canary Islands most characteristic pine forest systems. From the geomorphological point of view there are several relevant structures, such as the colossal boiler sinking / erosion of the Tejeda basin and the ravines of the southwest or Roque Nublo. Nublo Rural Park offers spectacular landscapes of dismantled structures and strong escarpments. The volume and alternation of the masses make up a peculiar landscape of great singularity in the archipelago.

ROQUE NUBLO

LOMO ASERRADOR-PILANCONES



» Güigüí Special Nature Reserve

An interesting sample of cardonal-tabaibal - Canary Island Spurge and Sweet Tabaiba - and important remnants of thermophilic forests can be observed in this reserve. The peculiar orography of embedded and ancient ravines composes a representative formation of the island's geology shaping landscapes of great beauty in Güigüí. Some endangered endemic populations are distributed in the reserve, with exclusive species such as the cabezón (sunflower family - Cheirolophus falcisectus). As for fauna, on the coastal cliffs there are several threatened bird species and from the cultural point of view there is the remarkable existence of archaeological sites in the surroundings of the Hogarzales mountain.

BARRIER-FREE TRAILS

» Riscos de Tirajana: Natural Monument

This is an area of great geological and geomorphological interest that has been shaped through important processes of erosive dismantling. It is a home to numerous threatened and protected endemic species. Even a hawk (Falco sp.) protected by national and international regulations has been found on these escarpments that build a landscape constituting a scenic frame of great beauty and uniqueness.

» Roque Nublo: Natural Monument

Roque Nublo represents a natural element of great singularity in the island's landscape. It is part of the remains of ancient materials that formed its central construction in which later intense erosive processes have shaped a peculiar ledge. Roque Nublo is a symbol for the inhabitants of Gran Canaria.



CALDERA DE LAS TIRAJANAS

» Tauro Natural Monument

There are several microchains of small ravines close to the populated areas of Arguineguín and Mogán on both sides of the mountain formation. The area plays an essential part in the maintenance of ecological processes such as soil protection and hydrological recharge, especially in the upper forestal part. The massif was once a place of aboriginal ceremony - adding an outstanding cultural value.

» Las Cumbres: Protected Landscape

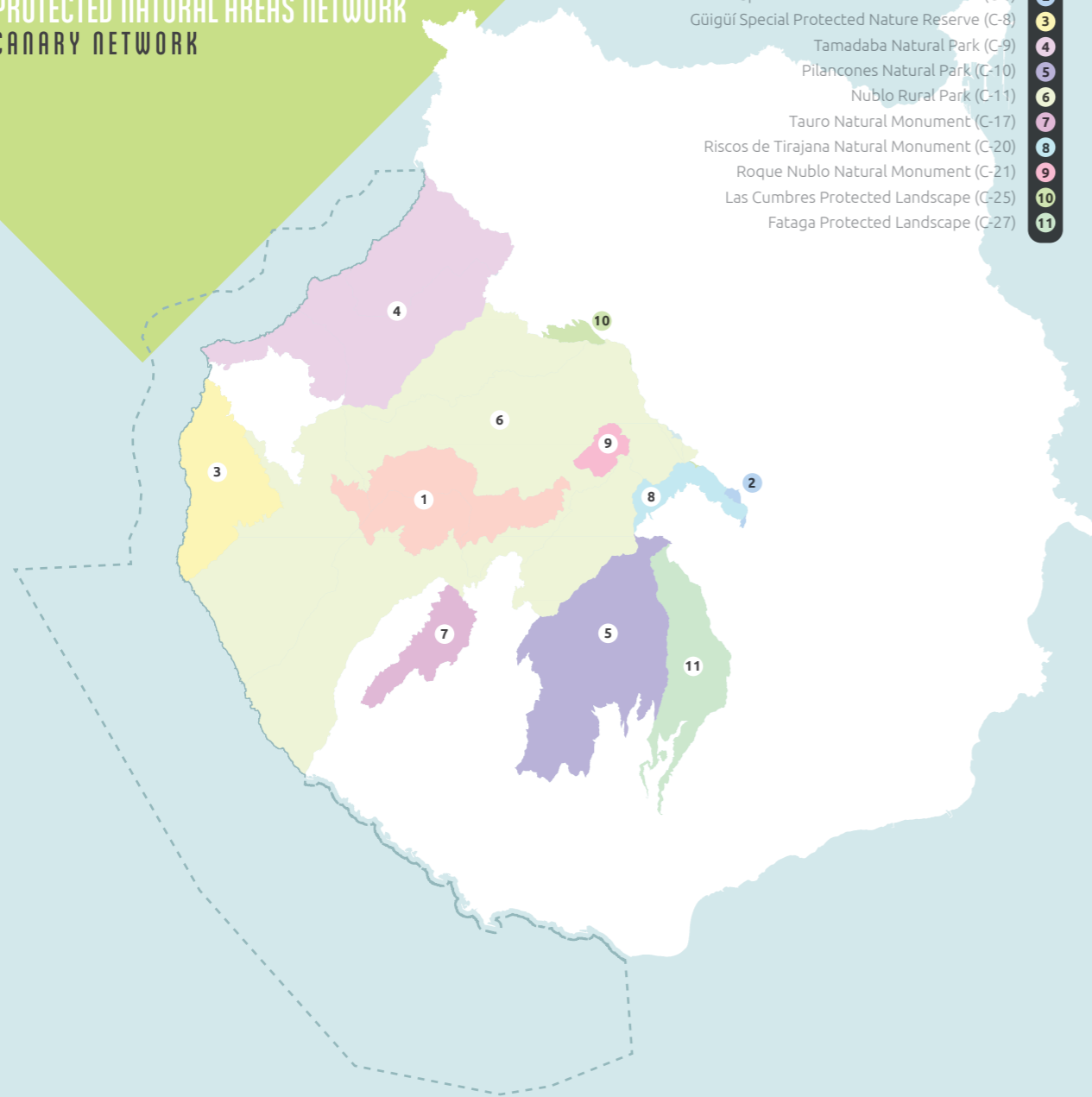
This area is located in the higher regions of the North side of the island and therefore plays a significant role in the preservation of essential ecological processes such as water capture. The headwaters of the main ravines in the northeast part of the island are located here. Most of these ravines have dams in the lower reaches, hence the importance for the area to protect its soils in order to avoid clogging ponds. Las Cumbres contains endangered and protected endemic species such as the 'silver daisy' (*Tanacetum ptarmici florum*). Altogether it is a typical mountain landscape of great beauty with natural elements of geological and geomorphological interest such as the Montañón Negro, the Caldera de Gáldar or the Saucillo rocks.

TAURO HIGHTS



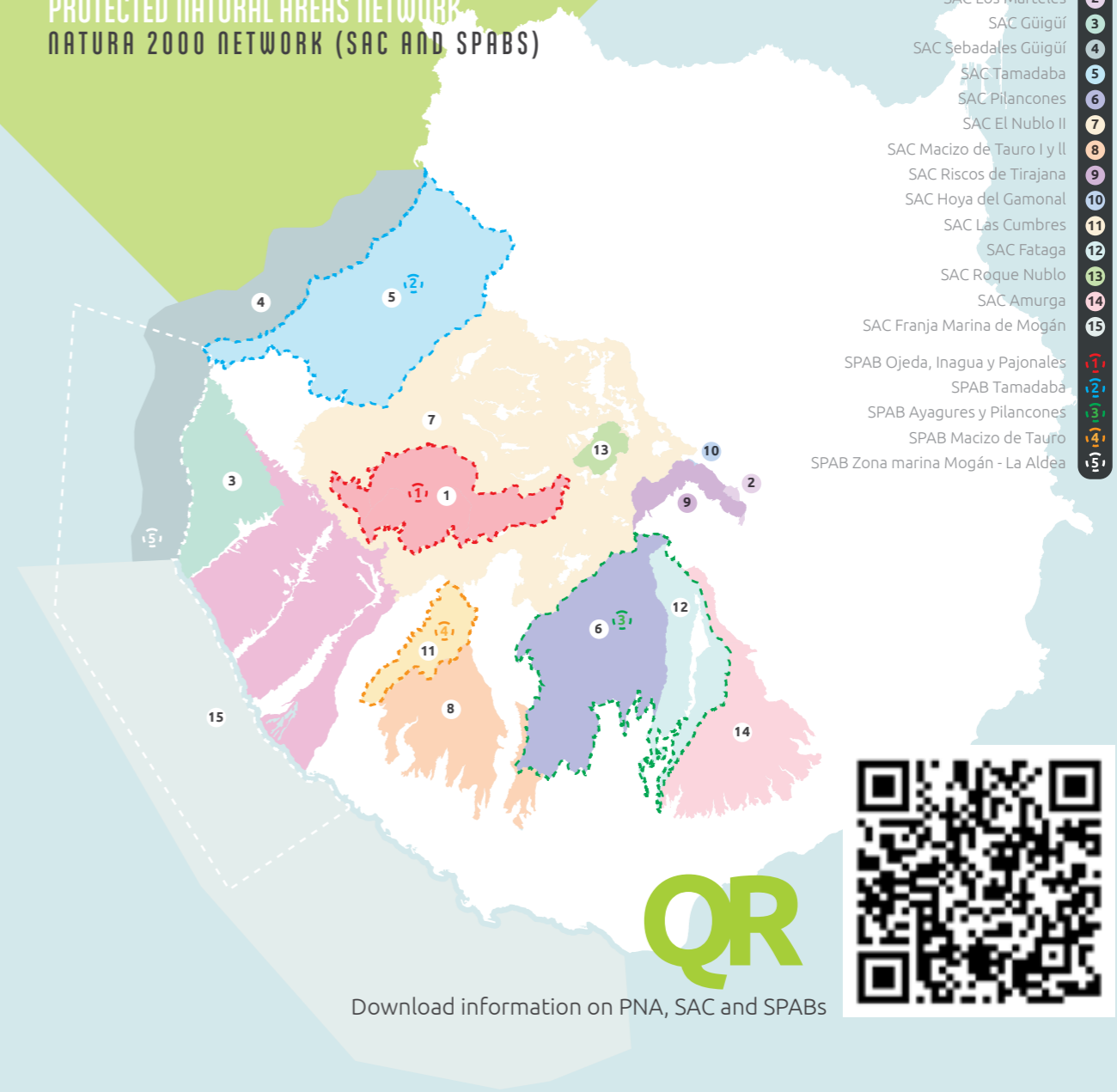
GRAN CANARIA BIOSPHERE RESERVE:
PROTECTED NATURAL AREAS NETWORK
CANARY NETWORK

- 1 Inagua Protected Nature Reserve (C-1)
- 2 Los Marteles Special Protected Nature Reserve (C-6)
- 3 Güigüí Special Protected Nature Reserve (C-8)
- 4 Tamadaba Natural Park (C-9)
- 5 Pilancones Natural Park (C-10)
- 6 Nublo Rural Park (C-11)
- 7 Tauro Natural Monument (C-17)
- 8 Riscos de Tirajana Natural Monument (C-20)
- 9 Roque Nublo Natural Monument (C-21)
- 10 Las Cumbres Protected Landscape (C-25)
- 11 Fataga Protected Landscape (C-27)



GRAN CANARIA BIOSPHERE RESERVE:
PROTECTED NATURAL AREAS NETWORK
NATURA 2000 NETWORK (SAC AND SPABS)

- 1 SAC Ojeda, Inagua y Pajonales
- 2 SAC Los Marteles
- 3 SAC Güigüí
- 4 SAC Sebadales Güigüí
- 5 SAC Tamadaba
- 6 SAC Pilancones
- 7 SAC El Nublo II
- 8 SAC Macizo de Tauro I y II
- 9 SAC Riscos de Tirajana
- 10 SAC Hoya del Gamonal
- 11 SAC Las Cumbres
- 12 SAC Fataga
- 13 SAC Roque Nublo
- 14 SAC Amurga
- 15 SAC Franja Marina de Mogán
- 1 SPAB Ojeda, Inagua y Pajonales
- 2 SPAB Tamadaba
- 3 SPAB Ayagures y Pilancones
- 4 SPAB Macizo de Tauro
- 5 SPAB Zona marina Mogán - La Aldea



Download information on PNA, SAC and SPABs



PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

EZEQUIEL CARDENES:
TEJEDA CITY COUNCIL: EDUCATION,
TRADE, TRANSPORT, HERITAGE AND
CONSUMPTION COUNCILOR.



“

I studied and lived outside Tejeda until I went back to the village to run a family business. That's when I realized that I was spending more time in Tejeda than anywhere else. Over time I have ended up engaging in politics and local management to help my people.

We want visitors to enjoy a unique experience in the heart of the Reserve, staying in the cave houses, tasting local gastronomy and discovering a different way of life that is in harmony with the environment.

”

TEJEDA



5 ARCHEOLOGICAL HERITAGE. OLD CANARIES NATIVES

There is no information to state conclusively when, how and from where the first inhabitants arrived in the Archipelago.

Several researchers, however, agree that this colonisation may have occurred during the first millennium BC (some 2,000 years ago) and the North African origin and their relationship with the Amazigh culture seems to have been demonstrated.

As far as Gran Canaria is concerned, the original name to identify the old settlers and the name they gave to the island remains unknown. Most of the knowledge that exists about their way of life comes from Castilian chronicle writings during the period of conquest (a very limited period of time) and those anthropological and archaeological investigations are very limited by the speed with which the island was conquered.

There has nevertheless been a slow progress in understanding what happened in the Amazigh period and certain aspects of survival strategies, language, habitat, beliefs, rites and customs are now known.

Numerous traces from this period make it possible to deduce that, at least in moments close to the conquest, there was a remarkable population density, economy was based on cereal cultivation and they had an advanced knowledge of ceramics,

leather, wood and lithic manufacturing, Unique funeral rites were practised, diverse cave paintings created and a multitude of places are dedicated to the cult giving a good account of the complexity of its magic-religious world.

Focussing on the Biosphere Reserve and its immediate surroundings we observe that the main settlements were found in the mouths of the great ravines. This is the case of Agaete, La Aldea de San Nicolás, Mogán, Arguineguín, Maspalomas and possibly Tirajana, where inhabitants lived in typical dry stone houses. Others were located in strategic interior places such as the headwaters of the Agaete Valley - including Montaña Gorda, El Sao, El Hornillo and Barranco Hondo - key points on the edge and inside La Caldera de Tejeda - Tirma, Acusa, Bentayga mountain range And Artenara risks - and along the Tirajana basin, in Tunte and Las Fuerzas. A large network of artificial caves characterizes this second group.

Linked to all these villages there are many vestiges that make the Gran Canaria Biosphere Reserve an authentic open-air museum that includes cists, tombs, funerary caves, places of worship, cave paintings and engravings, silos and granaries, gambuesas, mines and many more still unknown.

ENGRAVINGS: CUEVA DE LA PAJA



Some sites are to be highlighted due to their functionality: among the settlements, due to their spectacular, good state of conservation and diversity of integrated elements: Acusa, Bentayga mountain range, Cañada de Los Gatos and Los Huesos Mountain; by its size: El Lomo de Caserones. Some places of burial also deserve special attention: Maipés de Agaete and the Arteara necropolis.

Dedicated to cult are the caves of Risco Caido, Candiles, the almogarenes of Tirma, Bentayga, Hogarzales, Altos de Tauro, plains of Gamona. The Fortresses of Tirajana and Ansite are seen as places of refuge and defence, and the hermitages of Santa Águeda and San Nicolás as historical sites. The list of interesting sites however is much longer.

The first Gran Canaria Sacred Mountain Spaces are also worth mentioning as a particular phenomenon aspiring to be declared a World Heritage Site.

PAINTED STONES AND CAVE ENGRAVINGS.

Amongst the known archaeological remains on this part of the island, the cave paintings and engravings have a special importance. Their diversity, singularity and abundance make them one of the main attractions of the Gran Canaria Biosphere Reserve.

This cultural testimony from the first Canarians serves to compare the North African and Canary Amazigh worlds. Links exist between all the islands, but specific features are detected on an insular scale. The lack of knowledge about their meaning gives them a halo of mystery that makes them even more interesting.

ÁLAMO BARRI

QR



More information on the archaeological heritage in the Gran Canaria Biosphere Reserve:



PAINTINGS IN LOS CORRALES CAVE

The engravings have been located in many points along the length and breadth of the island. Among the motifs represented, through different techniques, the alphabetic inscriptions, identified as Libby-Amazigh, stand out; Zoomorphic, including anthropomorphic, and triangular engravings interpreted as pubic representations. Naviform engravings and striped sets are also known as beads.

The paintings are mainly detected in artificial caves. They appear in different forms and are made with different materials - charcoal, ashes,

ochre, etc. - and possibly with different objectives. Geometric motifs, spots on a dark background or human figures are some of the painted motifs that were found.

Riscos de Artenara and Chapín, Acusa, Güigüí (Guguy) massif, Bentayga mountain range, Majada Alta, Tauro and Amurga are some of the places that hold an abundance of engravings and paintings in a good state of conservation.

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE



JENNIFER CABRERA GUERRA:
SPINNER AND WEAVER

“

I was born in La Palmas, but I have always loved the rural world and life in the countryside.

Years ago I said “the day I learn to weave, I will not do nothing else”. I learned with an artisan from Las Palmas and this is what I do today.

I use only sheep’s wool from the Biosphere Reserve, sheep that feed on the pastures of the summit. This is very noticeable in the quality of the wool, it is very soft, better to work with.

”

OVEN NEAR LA PAJA CAVE



CRAFTS AND TRADITIONS

The most important traditions and craftsmanship on the island have their origin in the Amazigh period and are made by different groups of people.

All those crafts and traditions are cross-cultural products, some have barely undergone changes and others have evolved over time. Among them are local festivities, agrarian work, legends or the craftsmanship in itself. A considerable number of them stand out for their popularity and uniqueness.

The ancient pottery tradition preserved by the residents of Lugarejos - Artenara deserves special attention. The slab here continues to be made with the same materials and the same procedures that have been used for more than a millennium.

Basketry was originally mainly manufactured with reed rush fibres, to which other local and introduced plants have been incorporated with the passage of time. Palm crafts are closely linked to the towns of Acusa Seca and Santa Lucia. Local 'fiestas' are possibly the most popular traditions kept alive. El Charco, in the wetland near the Aldea de San Nicolás beach commemorates one of the old canaries fishing techniques, 'embarrascada', a practice consisting in throwing pieces of tabaiba and cardón to the puddles to numb the fish with the effects of the latex that ooze from the stems. Since ancient times the neighbours of El Valle have concentrated every month of September by the pool to collectively fish flathead grey mullets or occasionally eels.

La Rama, this celebration most probably has Amazigh origin. It seems, there was a habit of going to certain forests of the island in search of branches - bringing them down to the beaches to be beaten on the water in request of rains. Nowadays, its "recreation" - with a very different spirit - is one of the most important ones celebrated in the archipelago.

Some habits were implanted after the arrival of the Europeans. There is a rich folklore that mainly comes influenced by different music and dances from the Iberian Peninsula. Linked to folklore, although of more recent creation, a wide variety of typical costumes has been emerging also very much inspired by costumes used in different parts of the peninsula.

Traditional costumes are deeply related to the island's spinning and weaving tradition, and at the same time, those are related to the world of grazing providing the raw material. Grazing has existed on the island since Amazigh time. After

the conquest the same migration routes most probably continued to be used. The changing microclimatic conditions of the territory force the search of the best pasture areas in each season. Current transhumant grazing, mainly sheep, uses old roads and livestock tracks and stretches. This activity, when managed in a sustainable way, provides organic fertilizer and agglomerates leaves and grass with footsteps which contributes to fire prevention while setting routes and roads.

The arrival of the new settlers led to the appearance of cheese production and many of the utensils and techniques that are used today. Local cheese production is one of the most important and

BASKET MAKER



highly valued traditions. The Gran Canaria cheese - curdled using the petals of wild artichoke or thistle - is highly appreciated. Other characteristic dishes include goat's meat that is prepared in many different ways.

Another representative gastronomic element in the Canary kitchen is gofio: roasted flour, firstly from barley and wheat, and after the conquest of America also maize flour.

Although almost disappeared, jobs related to the pine forest occupied an important place for centuries in the lives of the inhabitants of different zones of the Gran Canaria Biosphere Reserve. As a reminder we have coal ovens, coal pits and the shelters that the locals used for their tasks. There are still some 'pinocheros', now selling the pine leaves to be used by farmers who cultivate tropical fruits in ravines like Tasarte or Veneguera.

On the coast of Mogán, Agaete and La Aldea de San Nicolás few fishermen still have the knowledge and habits that have been inherited for centuries. Very typical is the 'jarea de la pota' – different species of fish and squid are sun dried and salted to be conserved for a longer time.



WEAVER

POPULAR FESTIVITIES

Many festivities are celebrated in Gran Canaria but here we will list the most relevant ones taking place in the territorial scope of the Biosphere Reserve:

» "El Charco" in La Aldea de San Nicolás

Hundreds of people jump into a small lagoon by the sea known as "El Charco" to fish with their bare hands. This ritual is replayed every year on September 11th evoking the aboriginal Canary way of fishing.

» "El Almendro en Flor" in Tejeda and Tunte

This celebration, which takes place in February when the almond trees bloom, honours the approaching of spring. It is most popular in the towns of Tejeda and Tunte – those being the areas of the island with the most almond trees.

» "The Virgin de la Cueva" in Artenara

The image of Santa Maria de la Cueva is carried in pilgrimage from its cave-sanctuary to the main church at the end of August. During a whole week the town is full of activity with dances, markets and many visitors. The Gran Canaria cyclists never miss this honouring of their patron saint.

» "La Bajada del Carbonero" in Tunte

Recuerda una profesión que ocupó a muchas familias de la zona, la de carbonero. Se celebra en verano y, con la cara manchada de carbón, recorren las calles del pueblo bailando al son de la música de la banda local hasta llegar a la plaza de la iglesia donde continúa el baile hasta entrada la madrugada.



PARRANDA

» **Horse exhibition - La Culata de Tejeda**

The fair is organised by La Culata Equine Association and is held every year during the month of May. Specimens of equidae from different categories: donkeys, mules, horses, mares and ponies from throughout the island are gathered in the village of La Culata. The livestock fair is complemented by various festive and gastronomic acts.

» **'La Rama del Valle' or 'La Rama de San Pedro'**

'La Rama' is celebrated every year during the month of June in the valley of Agaete on the outskirts of the Biosphere Reserve. It consists of a festive pilgrimage that is organised in honour of San Pedro the Apostle. The participants carry large bouquets formed by branches of trees and shrubs collected in the forests of Tamadaba and transported to the district of San Pedro in the Valley of Agaete.

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE



**MARÍA ISABEL LEÓN SÁNCHEZ.
POTTERY. LUGAREJOS**

She has restored the characteristic Lugarejos pottery tradition which had disappeared a few decades ago due to the death of local pottery makers.

“

The earthenware of Lugarejos is a very fine, decorated, worked without a potter's wheel. The ceramics are made outdoors with firewood in a very distinctive way.

I continue with the tradition of making pottery because I like it, although it is not very profitable and almost nobody wants to continue the tradition.

The stones we use to smoothen the pieces of clay are unique tools, they are inherited from mothers to daughters. I received mine from my mother-in-law and from some deceased potter neighbours.

”

7

AGROTOURISM. PASTORING: AN ANCESTRAL ACTIVITY

The enormous diversity of environments that can be found in the interior of the Biosphere Reserve have allowed an important list of agricultural activities to be implemented and developed.

Since many of these activities are unique or very different from those practiced elsewhere, this variety is a great attraction to visitors.

At the summits, the terraces, locally known as 'bocados', stagger the slopes of the steepest ravines in an attempt to obtain small flat areas for farmers to grow potatoes, maize, cereals and legumes. This work of many generations stands out especially in Barranco Hondo.

Small familiar dairy production sites where one can learn about the cattle tradition and taste some of the most exquisite Canary cheeses are located in Artenara, Tejeda, La Aldea de San Nicolás or Mogán.

Farms where tropical fruits such as avocados, mangoes, papayas, coffee (and many other species) are grown occupy the banks of the Agaete, La Aldea de San Nicolás, Tasartico, Tasarte and Veneguera ravines.

Tirajana and Tejeda offer us vineyards where local wines that improve with each harvest can be tasted surrounded by beautiful landscapes.

The ancestral tradition of Northern herdsmen moving their sheep in search of the best pastures to places like Cueva Nueva, Sierra del Bentayga or Majada Alta on a magical journey enjoying some of the most interesting natural spaces of the Biosphere Reserve is also an event not to be missed.

CUEVA NUEVA





TRANSHUMANCE

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE



NATALIA & BEATRIZ
FARMERS & CHEESE PRODUCTION:
CORTIJO DE LA DATA (TEJEDA)

The twin sisters Natalia and Beatriz manage a livestock farm of about 400 goats and sheep. Being the daughters and granddaughters of shepherds they have only recently taken over the reins of the family tradition. The prestige of their cheeses is based on the quality of the pastures where they feed their animals, a special care in the elaboration process and continuous training as well as a desire to innovate.

“

What we like best in our job is being with the cattle, shepherding, milking and making the cheeses. The accountancy and the paperwork are the most unpleasant tasks. The feeding of the livestock is what differentiates our product. We want to achieve the best quality in our cheeses and the pastures of the Biosphere reserve are

a guarantee for this. We like to share our knowledge with tourists, visitors, children and anyone else who is interested to learn about and appreciate our cheeses. For us, shepherds of the Biosphere Reserve, animals are not a mere production machine; we have a great deal of respect for our goats and sheep and for our territory in general

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0 ASTROTOURISM. OBSERVE THE NIGHT SKY

The Canary Islands are world famous because their highest points provide the perfect environmental conditions for the observation of the night sky: limited light pollution (benefiting from the sea of clouds which covers the lower coastal populations) and perfect weather conditions (absence of wind on the peaks and low humidity).



The skies of Gran Canaria Biosphere Reserve's summits are no exception. The small villages maintain very low levels of light pollution and their clear skies offer us a possibility to learn about and enjoy that which has fascinated the human being since he began to ask questions about the Universe. Throughout the year there are different astronomical events. Many visitors come to enjoy those special events such as the Perseids or the Lionesses or to watch the passing of the International Space Station. They also come to learn about mythology associated with the observation of the sky or recognise different constellations, planets, nebulae and galaxies which help us to situate ourselves within this enormous universe and to realize its dimensions on a scale that is almost impossible to imagine for a human being.

Heaven has been a reason for worship and study for many cultures everywhere and it is no surprise that the ancient inhabitants of Gran Canaria also performed their services and offerings to the stars. The study of these practices is known as archaeoastronomy. It reveals to us the relation of the first settlers with the sky and astronomical phenomena like equinoxes or solstices, or the capture of the computation of the time through sky observation to organize their agricultural, livestock and religious life.

Another activity with an increasing number of participants is astrophotography. The possibilities offered by reflex cameras (not to mention specialised cameras) make this discipline gain more and more adepts and the results are quite impressive. Nice results can be achieved in a short time; e.g. capturing the movement of the celestial vault portraying nocturnal landscapes where static elements are combined with objects that appear in the sky at that moment, or showing the movement of the clouds or the moon in "time-lapse". The possibilities are enormous and the summits of Gran Canaria display a perfect framework and are a challenge for photography lovers.

We recommend that you save at least one night to enjoy sky observation in the Gran Canaria Biosphere Reserve. This activity will feed your curiosity and increase your knowledge about the environment in which we live. If you already have astronomical knowledge and simply wish to observe the sky from different latitude you can do this by yourself but in case your knowledge is not very extended we recommend you to have the explanations of specialised astronomical guides. Several companies on the island offer astronomical evenings, archeo-astronomy themed nights, astrophotography workshops or astronomical walks. Check out the different companies that offer astro-tourism. They will put the necessary means to enjoy a good observation at your disposal. Don't forget to wear warm clothes - the magical nights on the summits of Gran Canaria can get chilly.



Find more information about Gran Canaria in the following link
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BENTAYGA MOUNTAINS



GRAN CANARIA BIOSPHERE RESERVE
NIGHT SKY



BIRDWATCHING

A great diversity of environments can be found in the Gran Canaria Biosphere Reserve: coastal cliffs, beaches and shores, areas of pine forests, thermophile forests with dragon trees, wild olive trees, mastic trees, large palm groves, Canary island spurge and cacti and ravines with prominent cliff walls. All those create suitable conditions for the presence of many different bird species.



If you carry your binoculars, a bird guide and your logbook in your backpack you can enjoy bird watching throughout the year. The winter months are the most interesting to spot the wintering migrations from Europe to this corner of Gran Canaria, whereas spring is the season to enjoy birds showing their most beautiful plumage and sing the most extraordinary songs to attract females and reproduce. During the summer the field fills with birds when the chicks born weeks before have flown from their nests and in the autumn we will be able to entertain ourselves observing the mixed groups of different species that wander from one place to another in search of food.

One of the most interesting bird groups within the Biosphere Reserve is the large population of birds of prey. The presence of species such as the common buzzard (*Buteo buteo insularum*) in most of the ravines within the Reserve, the large number of common kestrels (*Falco tinnunculus canariensis*) from the coastal environments to the pinewoods and summit shrub areas, the Barbary Falcon (*Falco pelegrinoides*), which lives in some of the most abrupt and isolated walls of the Reserve, the Eurasian Sparrow hawk (*Accipiter nisus granti*) frequently spotted in forestal areas, the sporadic presence of ospreys (*Pandion haliaetus*) in the coastal zones, and the nesting of the only Canary population of black kites (*Milvus migrans*) make the



ORNITHOLOGICAL TOURISM:
CUEVA DE LAS NIÑAS DAM

Gran Canaria Biosphere Reserve a perfect place to enjoy bird watching.

The coastal areas are home to some of the largest colonies of seabirds on the island; species such as Cory's shearwater (*Calonectris borealis*) are very abundant in the Biosphere Reserve waters between the months of March and November. During the summer period one can also observe other pelagic seabirds such as the European Storm-Petrel (*Hydrobates pelagicus*), Bulwer's Petrel (*Bulweria bulwerii*), and with a little bit of luck even the more threatened and scarce Barolo Shearwater (*Puffnus baroli*).

The Caspian Gull (*Larus cachinnans*) is frequently spotted all year round on beaches, cliffs and in harbours, and some solitary specimens of Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*) - a bird that was regularly seen on all the Canary Islands coasts until a few years ago - exclusively during the summer months.

Between the vegetation in the ravine puddles, the reservoir tails on the summits and the irrigation ponds of the farming areas some aquatic birds like the Little Ringed Plover (*Charadrius dubius*), Common Moorhen (*Gallinula chloropus*), Common Coot (*Fulica atra*) or the Grey Wagtail (*Canarian*) (*Motacilla cinerea canariensis*) can be observed - all of them with very small and localised populations.

Cultivation zones of the midlands and plains between ravines harbour important populations of agricultural and open environments birds. Those are now declining regionally, but are sometimes quite common in some places of the Reserve. Birds such as Eurasian Thick-knee - Western Canarian (*Burhinus oedicnemus distinctus*) compose important flocks after the breeding season. In early summer in the abandoned orchards and vacant lots of the ravine of the village of San Nicolás the Trumpeter Finch (*Bucanethes githagineus*), Eurasian Linnet (*Acanthis cannabina*) and European Goldfinch (*Carduelis carduelis*) form large colonies that feed on the slopes near the crop fields. In the open areas with a low presence of trees and shrubs we will find the Berthelot's Pipit (*Anthus berthelotii*) an endemic species of the archipelagos of Madeira, Salvajes and Canarias.

The small forests of canary palms, almácigo (*gumbo-limbo*), mastic, wild olive trees and Phoenician Juniper create ideal conditions for small insectivorous and frugivorous birds. The Sardinian Warbler (*Sylvia melanocephala*) and the Blackcap (*Sylvia atricapilla*) wander from one place to

another between the dense shrub branches while large groups of Island Canaries (*Serinus canaria*) - a Macaronesian endemism shared with Madeira and other islands of the Canary Archipelago - are singing their own song. In these areas of the forest there is also an important population of Canary Islands Chiffchaff (*Phylloscopus canariensis*), another Canarian endemic species that inhabits all western central islands and is commonly sighted in wooded areas, shrubs, crops and gardens.

In the higher areas of the canary pine forests we will find the most valued species of the reserve: the Canary Island Blue Tit (*Cyaniste tenerifae hedwig*), a subspecies of the North African herring which only lives here, the great spotted woodpecker (*Dendrocopos major thanerii*) an insular subspecies.

CORY'S SHEARWATER



Those indicate the good forest conservation. The winged jewel of the island is located in the canary pine forests of the Inagua, Ojeda and Pajonales Integral Reserve; the Gran Canaria Blue Chaffinch (*Fringilla polatzekii*), being one of the most endangered bird species in Europe with a population of about 200 nesting pairs which are mostly found within the Gran Canaria Biosphere Reserve.

During the autumnal and spring migrations and during winter you can observe different species of migratory birds in the humid zones. The Marciegas at the mouth of the ravine of the Village of San Nicolás is a most interesting place where Little Egret (*Egretta garzetta*), Black-crowned night heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*), Common Sandpiper (*Actitis hypoleucos*), Whimbrel (*Numenius phaeopus*) and Common Greenshank (*Tringa nebularia*) can be spotted.

During spring - when the winds of the east and the southeast dominate - different species of Canary Islands Chiffchaff, Blackcap, Grey Wagtail, Eurasian reed-wharbler, and barn swallows and Northern House-Martin come and gather here. Some rare bird species like the Dark-bellied Brant (*Branta bernicla*) and other species of ducks have been observed in these latitudes



BLUE TIT

NOTE

10 PLACES OF INTEREST FOR THE OBSERVATION OF BIRDS IN GRAN CANARIA BIOSPHERE RESERVE

1. Acusa ravine
2. Inagua pine forest
3. Pajonales pine forest
4. Tamadaba Natural Park pine forest
5. Dam las Niñas
6. Viewpoints on the carretera de Andén Verde
7. Boat trip from Mogán
8. Veneguera ravine
9. Vegetable gardens and cultivation areas in Tejeda and Artenara
10. Las Marciegas. Outflow of the la Aldea ravine



BIRDS IN THE GRAN CANARIA BIOSPHERE RESERVE



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1. Trumpeter Finch
(*Bucanethes githagineus*)

4. Gran Canaria Teydefinch
(*Fringilla polatzeki*)

7. Canary Islands Chiffchaff
(*Phylloscopus canariensis*)

10. Peregrine Falcon
(*Falco pellegrinoides*)

2. Spectacled Warbler
(*Sylvia conspicillata*)

5. Great Spotted Woodpecker
(*Dendrocopos major thanneri*)

8. Plain Swift
(*Apus unicolor*)

11. Common Raven (Canarian)
(*Corvus corax canariensis*)

3. Tenerife Blue Tit (Gran Canaria)
(*Cyanistes teneriffae hedwig*)

6. Berthelot's Pipit
(*Anthus berthelotii*)

9. Cory's Shearwater
(*Calonectris borealis*)

12. Eurasian Thick-knee
(*Burhinus oedincnemus*)



ORNITHOLOGICAL TOURISM IN INAGUA

PUNTA DE LAS ARENAS



PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

FRANCISCO ASCANIO "FRANCIS", ENVIRONMENTAL AGENT

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Even as a child I loved this job. My father was an environmental agent for more than thirty years and I liked what I saw so I started studying until I passed the first civil service exams to be called in the Canary Islands.

In my opinion the lack of regulation for tourism activities is the main threat to the Biosphere Reserve. I would like all social agents involved to stand up for consistent regulation and respect our primary resources.

The primary sector should remain the economic engine in the Biosphere Reserve and Tourism should not be developed to its detriment. If I had to give a special mention to one space within the Biosphere Reserve it would be the Inagua Integral Natural Reserve. The Biosphere Reserve offers a diversity of environments, climates and species that are difficult to find - in such a small space - in other parts of the world. People living here are close and welcoming.

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10

WHALEWATCHING: IN SEARCH OF WHALES AND DOLPHINS

The volcanic Canary Islands emerge like enormous mountains from the depth of the ocean floor and have unique geomorphological characteristics. The temperature difference between its surface waters and the deep waters at a short distance from the coast provide a perfect habitat for a great diversity of marine species and a great variety of life forms. So far 30 different species of cetaceans have been identified in the Canary Islands waters, making the Canary Islands one of the most diverse places of the Atlantic Ocean with stable cetacean populations. Cetaceans and other migratory species take advantage of these waters to feed on their long ocean voyages.

The presence of these great marine animals is nothing new to the inhabitants of the islands. Pliny, in describing the islands, already mentioned the presence of whales on our shores. Whalebones coming from the numerous stranding that take place on the many beaches and shoals have been carved by the old inhabitants of the islands before and have been found in different deposits.

Other authors such as Viera and Clavijo or Webb and Berthelot have also narrated massive whale stranding. But it is especially in the last 30 years that the relationship of these special marine mammals with the archipelago has been studied more in depth. -

The Gran Canaria Biosphere Reserve has beautiful coasts and villages, huge ravines and wonderful interior landscapes. Other treasures are hidden in a marine Special Area of Conservation (ZEC) called the Maritime Strip of Mogán (see map page 31).

The presence of cetaceans in Canary waters reminds us that the ocean surrounding us is alive

and full of riches. This abundance attracts numerous wildlife lovers giving them the opportunity to observe different species of dolphins and whales in a comfortable, safe and respectful way within the Gran Canaria Biosphere Reserve. The chances of spotting some of them are very high: Atlantic spotted dolphin (*Stenella frontalis*), common bottlenose dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus*), short-beaked common dolphin (*Delphinus delphis*), a community of coastal cetaceans and deep divers like the Cuvier's Beaked Whale and a very interesting colony of Risso's Dolphin (*Grampus griseus*). In times of migratory passage sperm whales (*Physeter*



SHORT-FINNED PILOT WHALE

macrocephalus) or huge Fin whales (*Balaenoptera physalus*) can also be spotted.

Various national and international laws protect cetaceans. There are a number of rules to be followed by companies offering whale-watching activity. Please respect those rules and demand that they be fulfilled. Here are some of them:

RULES

- » **Observation of a group of whales or individual whales should never exceed 30 minutes.**
- » **It is not allowed to approach to less than 60 meters.**
- » **Navigate at low speed.**
- » **Not many ships should be concentrated in one place.**
- » **It is absolutely forbidden to bathe with animals, feed them, touch them or disturb them with noises.**
- » **No waste may be thrown into the water.**
- » **Leave the area if you are disturbing the animals.**

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Real Decreto
1727/2007



Find out about the companies that carry out whale watching activities. Visit the ports of Pasito Blanco, Mogán, Puerto Rico or Maspalomas. They have departures to visit the marine part of the Biosphere Reserve of Gran Canaria so you can enjoy a day of observing dolphins and whales in full freedom. Remember that whenever we are trying to see wild animals, there is no guarantee. The only expectations should be to enjoy a day of sailing.

BRYDE'S WHALE



COMMON WHALES AND DOLPHINS IN THE BIOSPHERE RESERVE WATERS



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1. Sperm Whale
Physeter macrocephalus

2. Bryde's Whale
Balaenoptera edeni

3. Fin Whale
Balaenoptera physalus

4. Blainville's Beaked Whale
Mesoplodon densirostris

5. Risso's Dolphin
Grampus griseus

6. Cuvier's Beaked Whale
Ziphius cavirostris

7. Short-Finned Pilot Whale
Globicephala macrorhynchus

8. Common Bottle-Nose Dolphin
Tursiops truncatus

9. Striped Dolphin
Stenella coeruleoalba



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10. Short-Beaked Common Dolphin
Delphinus delphis

11. Atlantic Spotted Dolphin
Stenella frontalis

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PHOTOGRAPHING NATURE

An increasing number of people are approaching nature with their cameras. They are mainly motivated by the new facilities of digital photography, their interest in nature and the reduced cost of editing and printing images.

The Gran Canaria Biosphere Reserve provides an array of possibilities for photographers. The great variety of environments is very attractive to all those who like to photograph natural landscapes.

The island's orientation to the west provides opportunities to take pictures of spectacular sunsets using warm lights and backlighting.

The Acusa ravine's flowing water during winters allows images of water in movement giving torrents and waterfalls a velvety texture.

Underwater photographers can go diving during the calm sea days. They will get a unique chance to photograph places with a rich and varied diversity of species and sea fauna - some of them with very small populations throughout the archipelago - and singular underwater geomorphological formations (such as caves, shoals, slopes).

During the night, the low light pollution on the summits makes it possible to make beautiful images of the Milky Way, the different constellations and shadows of rock formations after sunset.

Birds are the main attraction for wildlife photographers. Around forty species of birds can be spotted in the Reserve and some of them are unique winged jewels in the Canary Islands. There are three endemic species of reptiles, little more than half a dozen mammal species and an entire army of terrestrial invertebrates to give the photographer plenty of reasons to discover the Reserve with the camera in hand. Cetacean lovers going out to sail will also get good chances to photograph several species of dolphins and whales in the marine area.



CABEZÓN DE GRAN CANARIA

The Biosphere Reserve is a perfect setting for any photographer throughout the year. Clean winter skies give intensity to the predominant greens and blues. Spring is the time of the year with greater colour diversity when hundreds of plants give a multi-coloured rainbow sensation, an excellent period for macro photography using flowers and the invertebrates that visit them as subjects. Summer, especially June and July, are the best for bird photography with our telephoto lenses of 300 mm, 400 mm. It is the time when the field is full of young birds that have just flown from their nests and precautions will have to be taken to disturb them as little as possible. Brown and ochre predominate in autumn. It is the ideal season for mushroom photography and natural still life:- dry branches, leaves or other dead elements in the heart the forest.

Excellent images can be made in a unique place, an authentic stage of luxury to enjoy photography with very light amateur equipment: The setting requires special care and preservation measures to ensure the place for future generations. Precautions will have to be taken and regulations followed. Please apply the ethical code of the nature photographer and request the necessary authorisations to photograph wild life within protected natural spaces or those threatened species (outside or within these spaces).



To request and process the authorisation, please visit:



CORAZONCILLO
PLATEADO



NOTE

DECALOGUE OF ETHICS IN NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY

Respect for nature must prevail over any activity developed in the natural environment. The present code of ethics is an adaptation of the declaration of basic principles for the practice of nature photography established by the Spanish Association of Nature Photographers (AEFONA).

- 1. The nature photographer must faithfully reflect natural situations and avoid suffering, disturbance or interference in the behaviour of living beings, the main motto being that the safety of the subject must take precedence over obtaining an image.**
- 2. Nature photographers should not only learn the necessary techniques, but should also strive to document and know the behaviour, biology and requirements of the species.**
- 3. The photographer must obtain the relevant permits, especially in the case of protected species, and know the regulations of the natural spaces.**
- 4. Any alteration or irreversible manipulation shall be avoided. We should not leave any kind of waste in nature. Plants are also living beings and they deserve our full consideration. It is always better to remove or fasten branches, than cut them or pluck them, even if they are common species.**

- 5. The use of sound claims with songs of birds is especially discouraged in breeding season, due to the negative impact it has on the avifauna. The experienced photographer must learn to recognize the signs of stress and avoid them.**
- 6. Bird photography in the nests is discouraged. Altering the environment of a nest and the visible presence of the photographer or his or her team can draw the attention of other people or predators on the subject and should be avoided.**
- 7. It is not advisable to feed wildlife for the performance of photographic activities, as it can create significant alterations in individuals and populations, introduce diseases and cause accidents or unnatural behaviours.**
- 8. It is not advisable to extract specimens of their habitat or to move them from the place or circumstances in which they are to take pictures in another clear place or even in a study or terrarium. This causes stress, the animal is put in danger and the natural habitat is not correctly documented.**
- 9. In the event of any undesirable infringement or situation, including actions outside the current legality of other photographers, authorities are to be informed.**

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Please consult further information
on the Aefona website



12

DIVING. UNDER-WATER RESERVE

The marine strip included in the Biosphere Reserve is one of its main values due to the great biodiversity it holds and the important number of protected species in its waters. The coastal section is very extensive and occupies almost 35% of the surface of the Biosphere Reserve. Apart from whale watching, which we have dealt with in the previous chapter, one can also choose to go diving or snorkelling to explore marine life.

The exceptional surroundings make these waters an ideal place for marine life lovers, either being a diving or snorkelling expert or a beginner who wants to take up the activity while visiting the Biosphere Reserve. These specific conditions that are difficult to match make Gran Canaria a perfect destination for scuba diving.

The water temperature fluctuates throughout the year between 17°C in the winter and 22°C in summer.

Meteorological conditions on the island allow underwater activity all year round, except for a few exceptional days of rough sea.

Added to all this Gran Canaria has yet another peculiarity that is not easily found in Europe: volcanic eruptions have shaped the seabed into a landscape of unique beauty where life and volcanic formations create precious contrasts giving diving immersions a monumental and mysterious halo.

The diversity of species to be found in each dive is very high. Some of those species are most noteworthy because they cannot easily be seen in other latitudes. This all offers the marine Reserve's visitors a unique chance to observe species they have never seen before.

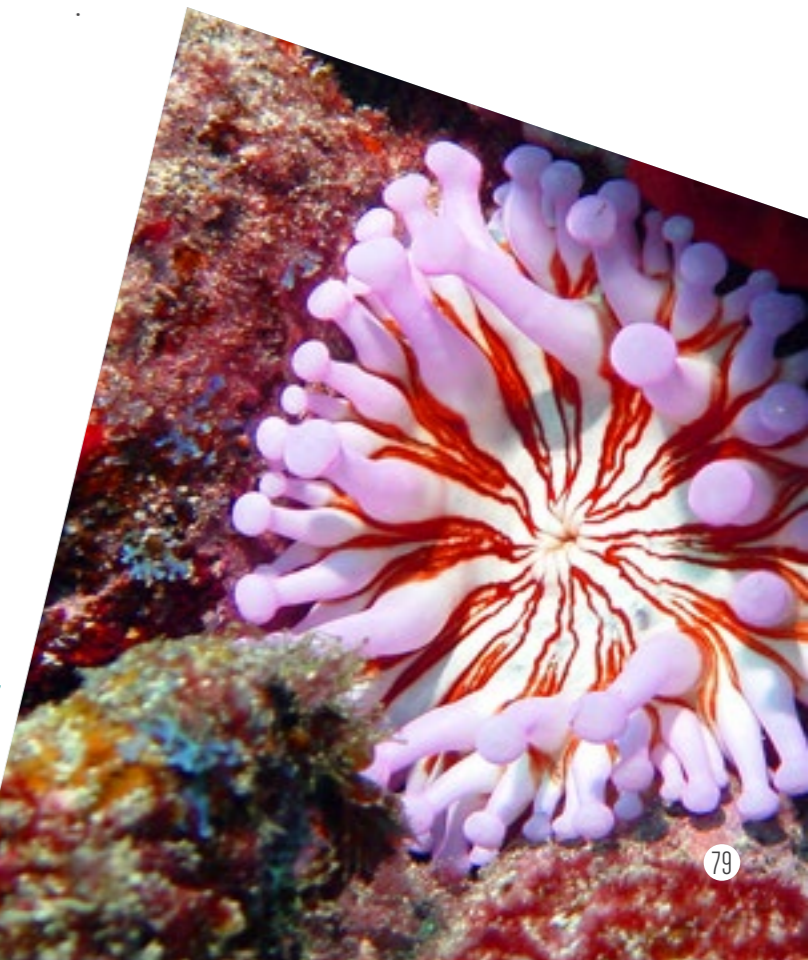
The coasts where the scuba-diving immersions of the Reserve are located are mostly well preserved and far away from the main tourist centres giving them an added value.

There are different schools and diving clubs on the island organising diving courses and organized dives without needing your own equipment.

If you don't have the time or you don't want to take a complete diving course you can always take a 'Discover Scuba Dive' to have your first underwater contact with an air regulator and diving bottle. You can also choose to go and visit one of the many points on the coast to go snorkelling, an easy way to explore the Reserve's underwater life that is within everybody's reach.

Some of the best known diving immersions in the Reserve are Las Merinas, El Roque, Los pecios de Mogán, El pecio Ruso del Pajar, La Baja de Pasito Blanco or the Arguineguín's artificial reef. The scuba-diving starting points in the Reserve are the following: Puerto de Las Nieves in Agaete, La Aldea de San Nicolás, Puerto Mogán, Arguineguín or Pasito Blanco. Please check the list of dive centres and get in touch with them to plan your diving excursions.

ANEMONE



MICRO ECO-TOURISTIC COASTAL AREA: LA ALDEA DE SAN NICOLÁS

This Micro Eco-Touristic Coastal Area (MAEL) pilot project aims to promote a new strategy for the development of sustainable activities, thus improving the environmental quality of the spaces where those activities are developed. The project, through local administrations, intends to stimulate ecotourism activities in small areas and guarantee a better conservation of the area.

The Micro Eco-Touristic Coastal Area El Roque (MAEL) is located in La Aldea de San Nicolás. This

village is a hidden spot on the island with a practically virgin coast. The small number of inhabitants, a striking terrain and rich marine currents ensure a beautiful spot worth visiting. The MAEL of La Aldea de San Nicolás stands out for the abundance of fish and its magnificent Gorgonian fields. Bastard Grunts, Blackspot seabream, African striped grunt, barracudas and white seabream gather on the sand banks and small caves on the rocky bottom. On this rocky bottom or on the extensive sand bottoms it is also frequent to see large animals such as common stingrays, Angel sharks (threatened species protected by regulations) and spiny butterfly rays. It is a privileged space to enjoy and discover the underwater riches of the Gran Canaria Biosphere Reserve.

DIVING AREAS

La Aldea de San Nicolás presents more than a dozen different diving spots well known by local divers. There are all kinds of alternatives, from the comfortable diving immersion in Abades, protected by Punta de la Aldea to deep and technical dives and such as Punta Arenas. Divers should be extra cautious here because it is due to strong currents that this spot has abundant marine life. Only experienced divers should dive into its waters. La Aldea's beach is a perfect environment to snorkel for the less experienced.

To learn more about this space, please visit the Micro Eco-Touristic Coastal Area Interpretation Centre El Roque - El Muelle – Playa de La Aldea de San Nicolás.

» EL ROQUE

Depth: 10 m. Under the imposing ridge known as El Roque, cut vertically by the force of the sea, the sea bottom is covered by rocky cliffs that are the remains of thousands of years of beating waves shaping a spectacular landscape. This scenery becomes even more attractive with the play of lights produced by the intense sun shining in La Aldea and the mountain shadows. The fauna and flora to be observed is characteristic to the environment.

» EGORGONIAN FIELDS

Depth: 20 m. Gorgonian fields this size in shallow waters are not easily found in the Canaries. The marine currents of La Aldea bring richness to its waters and make this place a unique and worthy area to visit.

» LA HERBIDERA

Depth: 22 m. Successive sandbanks leave small cavities where multiple animals hide. Especially noteworthy are common stingrays and giant anemones, which are commonly seen throughout the whole Micro Area.



STARFISH

» EL RAJÓN

Depth: 21 m. El Rajón is an unusual formation, a cave inside another cave where Glasseye Snappers and Bearded Umbrines take shelter during the day to go hunting at night. Rock formations are filled with Bastard Grunts and Blackspot seabream and between the cracks all type of marine life can be found from abundant spider crabs to Fangtooth morays.

» LA SEIFIERA

Depth: 23 m. This extensive rock slab goes from East to West across the Micro Eco-Touristic Coastal Area reaching La Seifiera where the largest fish banks are concentrated. Bastard Grunts, Blackspot seabream and white seabream are abundant in this zone where a substantial concentration of common two-banded seabream give name to the place. Towards the north one can find a large Gorgonian population challenging La Aldea's marine currents.

Enjoy extra-ordinary diving experiences in the alluring waters of the Gran Canaria Biosphere Reserve. Do not forget that you are interacting with nature. It is a must to always respect the environment in which we move, avoiding inadequate contact with the surroundings and aquatic beings, for your own safety as well as the well being of the creatures that inhabit these waters. Remember to always check the sea conditions when preparing an immersion. Our recommendation is that you always consult the local dive centres that organise scuba-dives in the Biosphere Reserve and let yourself be guided by their recommendations.

SNORKELLING

The Biosphere Reserve also has spectacular beaches and creeks to snorkel and swim (Veneguera, Tasarte, Tasartico, La Aldea, Guguy ...).

Please follow these guidelines:

- » Beaches are unguarded. Be careful!
- » They are usually areas prone to rock fall. Do not approach the mountainsides and cliffs.
- » Strong currents might cause you to have difficulties.



We recommend that you check the scuba-diving guide using the following link to the Reserve of the Biosphere of Gran Canaria immersions that allows you to know the characteristics of each one of them:



PERSONAL EXPERIENCE



JUANA OJEDA GARCÍA.
AGAETE PROFESSIONAL
FISHERMEN'S COOPERATIVE
SECRETARY

The Agaete Professional Fisherman's Cooperative develops an important part of its fishing activity within the marine area of the Gran Canaria Biosphere Reserve. The local fishermen use a traditional type of artisan and sustainable inshore fishing.

“

Although I was not brought up on the coast, I have lived most of my life close to the sea and my neighbours have always been sailors. Nowadays I know more about the sea than I do about the mainland.

About 40 professional fishermen from Agaete and approximately 60 from the Mogán Fishermen's Cooperative practice sustainable fishing in the Biosphere Reserve's waters. The waters in Biosphere

Reserve are very rich. There are many seafood fisheries and some very good breeding grounds. Fish in this area have a different flavour and another colour, different from the rest of the island.

The working conditions here are very rough. You have to know the sea. People who come to fish from other areas sometimes don't even last two days due to the harsh weather conditions.

”

QR

Please find out more about Gran Canaria's marine environment using the following

link:



12

HIKING. WALKING THE ROADS OF THE PAST

Hiking is an exercise that without a doubt has been carried out in the ravines and forests of the Biosphere Reserve since ancient times. From the time of the ancient canaries to the present day men and women who have inhabited these lands have used the roads and paths to carry food, move animals and bring news, tell stories or spread gossip. Initially by necessity and nowadays for sport and health, walking our trails is an experience that leaves none of their visitors indifferent.

Walking the Gran Canaria Biosphere Reserve routes is a unique experience and offers the opportunity to know the territory and its protagonists closely. Observing the local customs and traditions closely one will discover a way of life very different from the one we are used to.-

The Reserve holds an extensive network of trails connecting population centres and Protected Natural Areas. All of them are well equipped with signposts indicating place names and giving the exact distance between one point and the next one. Information panels give detailed descriptions of most of the itineraries and facilitate data on the natural landscape, cultural and ethnographic resources that we find on our way.

Different itineraries are available, from small walks for those who don't have much experience but still feel the need to be in contact with nature to great itineraries taking several days. Some trails join the coast with the summit and could be an important sports challenge. A whole range of possibilities are at hand to discover the Reserve, although it is important to one knows one's limits to select and enjoy the hikes.



Please use the following link to find more detailed information on hiking the island of Gran Canaria:



TRAIL TO FORTAMAGA. MESA DE ACUSA



NOTE

PLAN

CHOOSE THE RIGHT EQUIPMENT

BE CAREFUL



PLAN

- » Prepare your hike. Find more information about the difficulty level, duration, starting and ending point, the state of the trail, ...
- » Before leaving, inform someone about the excursion you are going to take and your estimated time of return.
- » Never walk alone.
- » Check the weather forecast. Avoid hiking in extreme heat or stormy weather.
- » You may not have mobile coverage. If necessary carry a map or a GPS. or download an offline geo-reference application.
- » Bring medication if needed.

CHOOSE THE RIGHT EQUIPMENT

- » Wear appropriate footwear and clothing. It is advisable to always take a warm coat and raincoat.
- » Protect yourself from the sun (cap and sun cream).
- » Use walking sticks. They can be very useful.
- » Carry your mobile phone with a fully charged battery.
- » Bring food and water.
- » Other utensils: compass, flashlight, whistle, bright coloured handkerchief ...

BE CAREFUL

- » Do not leave the group.
- » In case of stretches of walking along a road, preferably walk on the left side.
- » Pay attention to the environment to have a reference in case you get lost. Do not leave the paths.
- » Keep a relaxed and constant pace. Rest when needed. Do not walk near cliffs.
- » If bad weather surprises you, stay calm and save your energy.
- » Avoid possible rock fall areas.
- » Do not leave residues (even organic waste)
- » Free camping is prohibited.
- » Follow the instructions of the environmental agents.
- » Respect natural and cultural heritage.
- » If you bring your pets, keep them under your control at all times.
- » Respect private property.
- » Do not disturb unnecessarily by making noise, playing music or screaming.
- » Avoid forest fire: do not light a fire and don't throw cigarette butts.
- » Do not drink water from springs / fountains if those are not indicated as safe drinking water.
- » In case of emergency call 112.

NOTA

13 NOT TO BE MISSED HIKES IN THE BIOSPHERE RESERVE

1.- TASARTICO - GÜIGÜÍ (GUGUY) - PEÑÓN BERMEJO - CUERMEJA

DISTANCE: +/- 15 KM.

APPROX. TIME: +/- 5H

DIFFICULTY: HIGH

LANDSCAPE INTEREST: HIGH

FAUNA INTEREST: MEDIUM

BOTANICAL INTEREST: HIGH

ETNOGRAPHICAL INTEREST: MEDIUM

RECOMMENDED SEASON: SPRING



Download Track Information here

2.- LA ALDEA - TASARTE - VENEGUERA - MOGÁN

DISTANCE: +/- 19,7 KM.

APPROX. TIME: +/- 6,5H

DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM

LANDSCAPE INTEREST: HIGH

FAUNA INTEREST: LOW

BOTANICAL INTEREST: MEDIUM

ETNOGRAPHICAL INTEREST: HIGH

RECOMMENDED SEASON: ALL SEASONS



Download Track Information here



3.- ENCRUCIJADA ROQUE NUBLO

DISTANCE: +/- 11,2 KM.
APPROX. TIME: +/- 3H45m.
DIFFICULTY: LOW
LANDSCAPE INTEREST: HIGH
FAUNA INTEREST: MEDIUM
BOTANICAL INTEREST: HIGH
ETNOGRAPHICAL INTEREST: LOW
RECOMMENDED SEASON: ALL SEASONS



Download Track Information here

4.- CIRCULAR LOS LLANOS DE LA PEZ

DISTANCE: +/- 8,4 KM.
APPROX. TIME: +/- 2H45m.
DIFFICULTY: LOW
LANDSCAPE INTEREST: HIGH
FAUNA INTEREST: HIGH
BOTANICAL INTEREST: MEDIUM
ETNOGRAPHICAL INTEREST: MEDIUM
RECOMMENDED SEASON: ALL SEASONS



Download Track Information here

5.- CRUZ DE TEJEDA - LLANOS DE LA PEZ - PASOS DE LA PLATA - TUNTE

DISTANCE: +/- 14,6 KM.
APPROX. TIME: +/- 5H.
DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM
LANDSCAPE INTEREST: HIGH
FAUNA INTEREST: MEDIUM
BOTANICAL INTEREST: HIGH
ETNOGRAPHICAL INTEREST: HIGH
RECOMMENDED SEASON: ALL SEASONS



Download Track Information here

6.- CRUZ DE TEJEDA
- ARTENARA

DISTANCE: +/- 7,2 KM.
APPROX. TIME: +/- 2,5H.
DIFFICULTY: LOW
LANDSCAPE INTEREST: HIGH
FAUNA INTEREST: MEDIUM
BOTANICAL INTEREST: HIGH
ETNOGRAPHICAL INTEREST: HIGH
RECOMMENDED SEASON: ALL SEASONS



Download Track Information here

7.- CIRCULAR DE
TAMADABA

DISTANCE: +/- 6,4 KM.
APPROX. TIME: +/- 2H.
DIFFICULTY: LOW
LANDSCAPE INTEREST: HIGH
FAUNA INTEREST: HIGH
BOTANICAL INTEREST: HIGH
ETNOGRAPHICAL INTEREST: LOW
RECOMMENDED SEASON: ALL SEASONS



Download Track Information here

8.- CIRCULAR CRUZ DE TEJEDA - TEJEDA -
DEGOLLADA LA CUMBRE

DISTANCE: +/- 12 KM.
APPROX. TIME: +/- 4H.
DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM
LANDSCAPE INTEREST: HIGH
FAUNA INTEREST: MEDIUM
BOTANICAL INTEREST: HIGH
ETNOGRAPHICAL INTEREST: MEDIUM
RECOMMENDED SEASON: ALL SEASONS



Download Track Information here



ALFARERA



9.- CIRCULAR EL GARAÑÓN - CULATA DE TEJEDA - TIMAGADA - LA GOLETA

DISTANCE: +/- 14,7 KM.
APPROX. TIME: +/- 5H.
DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM
LANDSCAPE INTEREST: HIGH
FAUNA INTEREST: MEDIUM
BOTANICAL INTEREST: HIGH
ETNOGRAPHICAL INTEREST: HIGH
RECOMMENDED SEASON: ALL SEASONS



Download Track Information here

10.- TUNTE - FATAGA - ARTENARA

DISTANCE: +/- 10,2 KM.
APPROX. TIME: +/- 3,5H.
DIFFICULTY: LOW
LANDSCAPE INTEREST: HIGH
FAUNA INTEREST: HIGH
BOTANICAL INTEREST: HIGH
ETNOGRAPHICAL INTEREST: HIGH
RECOMMENDED SEASON: ALL SEASONS



Download Track Information here

11.- CIRCULAR CRUZ DE ACUSA - LAS HOYAS - LUGAREJOS - CORUÑA

DISTANCE: +/- 7,8 KM.
APPROX. TIME: +/- 2,5H.
DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM
LANDSCAPE INTEREST: MEDIUM
FAUNA INTEREST: MEDIUM
BOTANICAL INTEREST: MEDIUM
ETNOGRAPHICAL INTEREST: LOW
RECOMMENDED SEASON: ALL SEASONS



Download Track Information here

12.- TUNTE - DEGOLLADA MANZANILLA - EL VENTOSO - AYAGAURES

DISTANCE: +/- 11,9 KM.
APPROX. TIME: +/- 3H.
DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM
LANDSCAPE INTEREST: HIGH
FAUNA INTEREST: LOW
BOTANICAL INTEREST: HIGH
ETNOGRAPHICAL INTEREST: MEDIUM
RECOMMENDED SEASON: ALL SEASONS



Download Track Information here

13.- DEGOLLADA TASARTE - LOMO EL VISO - EL BLANQUIZAL - LA ALDEA

DISTANCE: +/- 9,5 KM.
APPROX. TIME: +/- 3H.
DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM
LANDSCAPE INTEREST: HIGH
FAUNA INTEREST: HIGH
BOTANICAL INTEREST: HIGH
ETNOGRAPHICAL INTEREST: MEDIUM
RECOMMENDED SEASON: ALL SEASONS



Download Track Information here

AZARAENEGUE



1

ACTIVE TOURISM. ENJOYING THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT IN A SUSTAINABLE MANNER

Nowadays active tourism is widely known and one of the many options you have during your visit to the Biosphere Reserve. You might already practice some of the sports that we are going to show you, but maybe this is your opportunity to start practising one of them. The Biosphere Reserve is an ideal place to practice some of the many activities that are proposed in a safe and respectful way with the environment by introducing you to very special natural surroundings and discovering the values for which this place has been recognized worldwide. An added value is

that due to the benevolence of the islands climate these activities can be practiced all year round! The island offers a range of possibilities from the cool summits to the warm coasts, from the calm of the forests to the winds that will serve you in some of your sports experiences.

Diving and trekking have already been focussed on in a separate chapter as those are the most practised activities in the Biosphere Reserve. We will here concentrate on the other options available such as cycling, climbing, canyoning, horseback

TIRAMA

PUBLIC USE INFRASTRUCTURE

The Cabildo de Gran Canaria Environmental Service manages several facilities located in the Natural Spaces that allow the development of educational and free-time activities in direct contact with the natural environment. All citizens have a right to use these facilities while the use is compliant with nature conservation.



More information following this link:



riding, sea kayaking and paragliding. An injection of healthy and natural life available for everyone!

Remember that for your activity to be sustainable and to make sure that other visitors can enjoy the environment as well, those activities need to be done in a respectful way. Please investigate previously about allowed activities in the areas you are going to visit and never participate in activities that could endanger the natural environment.

BYCICLE ROUTES

Visit the Biosphere Reserve on wheels

The island is the perfect spot for cycling or mountain biking. Hundreds of kilometers of roads and tracks running through the Biosphere Reserve make a perfect setting for privileged cyclists. There are cycling options available for everyone, from the most demanding tours for experienced cyclists seeking great slopes for both ascending or descending, to small excursions that will delight the lovers of tranquility and nature. Both will enjoy spectacular scenery with deep ravines, high mountains and typical forests, always surrounded by a very different flora and fauna from other continental regions. An experience not to be forgotten easily.

If you did not bring your own bicycle there are several companies in Gran Canaria that offer both technical equipment rental and/or guided services within the Reserve.

Please search the active tourism companies' directory to find them and discover this beautiful island by bicycle.



Different cycling itineraries have been designed on the island and all of them pass through the Biosphere Reserve. Take a look at the following link and decide which best suit your level.



MOUNTAIN CLIMBING

Clambering the Biosphere Reserve

If you like to practice traditional climbing you will find a place in the Biosphere Reserve that offers the perfect conditions. Abundant remains of ancient volcanic formations dismantled by erosion with a complete repertoire of cracks, chimneys, plates, wedges, overhangs, ceilings, etc. will give you an infinity of possibilities, levels and challenges to test your ability and fulfil your desire to improve. Roque Nublo, a basaltic conglomerate of spectacular shape and one of the island's icons, offers 12 paths of different difficulties for you to climb and enjoy. Please remember it is necessary to have a valid authorisation.

The Biosphere Reserve provides many more climbing and bouldering areas for you to put into practice what you can do or where you can start practising this impressive sport comfortably in a safe way that is adapted to your physical condition.

We recommend that you get in touch with one of the active tourism companies that you will find in the directory of this guide to rent equipment or to schedule a climbing activity, whether your level is advanced or whether you are an absolute beginner.

Check the following link to learn more about climbing in Gran Canaria



CANYONING

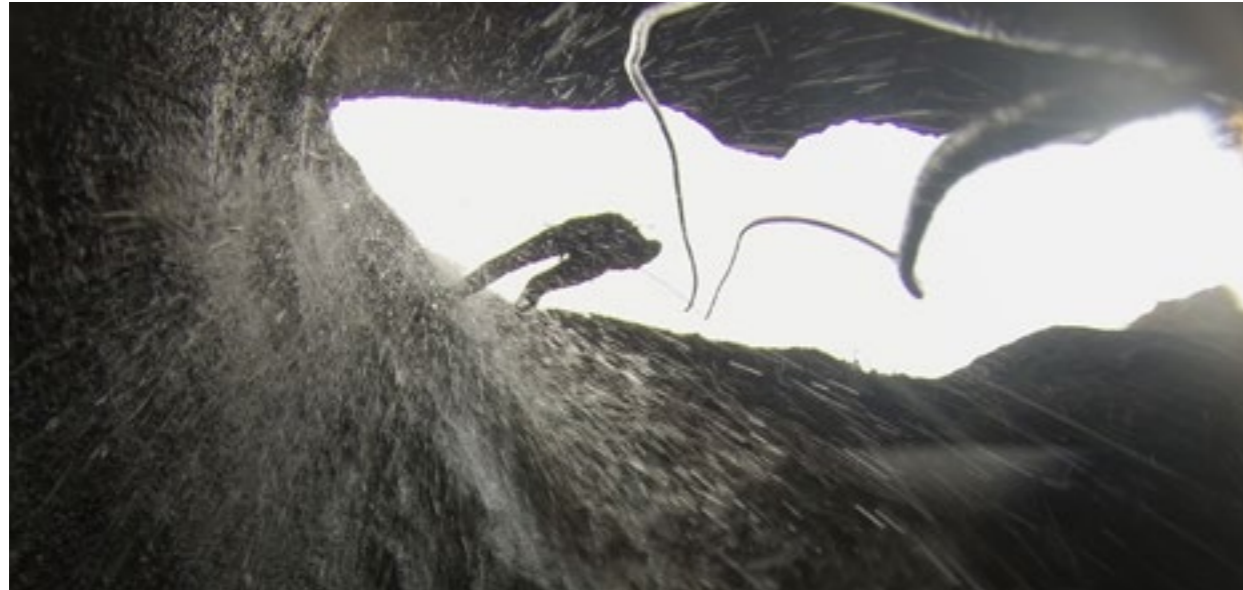
Descending to the Reserve's deepest areas

Canyoning will satisfy geology lovers who enjoy the capricious forms shaped by nature and adrenaline addicts. The Biosphere Reserve has many ravines to descend, rappel, or wade in shallow waters. In those ravines you can see the erosion caused by the water over millions of years, revealing the different stages of formation of the island shown like an open book on its walls. This activity is an authentic immersion in the deepest part of the Biosphere Reserve, an activity reserved

only for those people with adventurous spirit with professional equipment and a good physical shape.

The practice of canyoning is risky. Training, adequate material and a route adapted to your level together with a good guide who knows the geological peculiarities of the ravines are a must. Before deciding you should contact the active tourism companies who offer the practice of this exciting sport. Check the business directory and decide!

Always remember to ask for the necessary permits for the practice of this sport.



HORSE RIDING

A journey to the past

Horses arrived in the Canaries during the Castilian conquest. They were initially used as warlike weapons, a tool that gave them a great advantage to the original settlers of the islands and making a remarkable difference to the future of the contest. Once this stage of the history of the Canary islands was overcome, horses became part of daily life and of the evolution of the islands as we know them today. They have always been companions and allies in the transportation of goods, in the difficult labours in the countryside and in the daily life of many of its inhabitants, always helping them to improve their well being. Today the relationship between the human being and the horse in the Canaries is mainly for leisure, with a few exceptions still to be found in the rural parts of the islands.

A great adventure for your stay on the island is to ride on one of these magnificent animals and discover some of the breath-taking places of the Biosphere Reserve. This is a perfect opportunity to admire nature more slowly from a very different perspective as this activity joins three living elements: the horse, the environment and you.

Several riding centres offer routes in the Reserve. Their beautiful horses are mostly accustomed to be ridden by different (even inexperienced) riders with professional riding instructors, Riding excursions are also suitable for the smallest family members, something unforgettable for them.



Check the Horse Riding Federation link with the island's equestrian centres to find out about the routes they offer and enjoy being in direct contact with these fantastic animals:



SEA KAYAK

A marine perspective

Sea kayaking is a fun, easy and safe option to enjoy the Biosphere Reserve from a different perspective. There are several calm areas where the sea allows us to paddle freely. There are many surprises: fish, seabirds, cliffs, caves and beaches that are inaccessible by land appear before us. In addition, fun is ensured with two-person kayaks, where rapport and teamwork are essential. With skill, balance and some indications of good professionals anyone can take an oar and embark on an adventure with total security. This will be a memorable experience without any doubt.



QR

Several specialised companies dedicated to this activity organise trips for initiation and improvement, in single or double kayaks and with the possibility of renting the necessary equipment. Look through the directory to find the company that suits you best and do not hesitate to row the coast of the Biosphere Reserve.



PARAGLIDING

Dare to fly

Paragliding has become increasingly popular for decades in the archipelago and this has not gone unnoticed by paragliders from different parts of the planet. More and more paragliders come to the Canaries looking for the peculiarity of their air currents and the spectacular scenery where mountains, ravines, contrasts of vegetation and the Atlantic Ocean melt into a single image that is breath-taking from the air. A paragliding flight could travel many miles, reaching great heights and landing on one of the island's spectacular beaches. These characteristics, which are almost exclusive to this sport, allow you to know the different landscapes that exist on the island, gradually descending from the highest points to the coast in a short time.

In the heart of the Biosphere Reserve you can enjoy an unforgettable day by launching from Los Pechos, from where you can see one of the most extraordinary natural sites of the Archipelago. If you are an expert paraglider remember to check the companies and specialised sports groups to know the conditions of each of the launching areas as they can have very variable conditions.

If you are simply looking for a single flight, there are courses and options to try in a two-seater paraglider with an expert monitor bringing knowledge and safety to make your experience as unforgettable as it is satisfactory

QR

Check out the schools where you can train to practice this exciting sport on the Canary Islands Air Sports Federation website.



15

NATURE TOURISM SERVICES.

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM COMPANIES

» Alisio Actividades Medioambientales S.L.

Sports and adventure activities, climbing, kayaking, hiking, canyoning, archery.

Address: Alférez Provisional 2, 35019 Las Palmas de Gran Canaria
Telephone: (+34) 616 072 687
Web: www.alisioactividades.com

» Aventura en Canarias

Hiking, climbing, bicycle, via ferrata, multi adventure, horse riding, parachuting, bungee jumping and paragliding.

Telephone: (+34) 626 331 588
Web: www.aventuraencanarias.com

» Bikecenter Free Motion

The largest bicycle rental in the Canaries (always the newest materials) / routes by road, mountain and electrical bicycles - different levels - weekly training packages / hiking trails.

Direcciones:
- C/ León y Castillo 323 esq. c/ Italia, Las Palmas de Gran Canaria
- Hotel Sandy Beach, Av. Alfereces Provisionales s/n Local 9, Playa del Inglés
- CC Oasis Beach, Av. Christobal Colón s/n, Meloneras
- Hotel Cordial Mogán Playa, Puerto de Mogán
Telephone: (+34) 928 777 479
Web: www.free-motion.net

» Canarias Bike Mobility

Guided tours and excursions on a recumbent bike (a different way of cycling).

E-mail: reservas@canariabikemobility.com
Web: www.canariabikemobility.com

» Climbo

Active tourism company, rural tourism and sports activities, specialised in climbing, adventure, hiking, canyoning, jumping, via ferrata, kayak.

Address: Paseo Tomás Morales 68, 1ªA
Telephone: (+34) 636 898 493 / (+34) 687 512 500
Web: www.climbo.rocks

» Excursions Gran Canaria

Guided tours in small groups. Hiking tours. Hikes through historical town centres.

Telephone: +34 - 634 521 816 (Mo to Fri: 9:00- 17:00)
Web: www.excursionsgrancanaria.com

» Gran Canaria Viva

Hiking activities.

Address: c/ Alemania 84, 35006 Las Palmas de Gran Canaria
Telephone: (+34) 627 567 951
Web: www.grancanariaviva.com



ALMACIGAR DE ARTEJEVEZ

» **Limonium Canarias. Aventura y Medioambiente en Gran Canaria**

Land Activities: guided hiking, orientation; multi-adventure, climbing, descending ravines, suspension bridges and zip lines; caving.

Water activities: kayak, scuba diving; apnoea Diving; whale watching.

Activities in the air: paragliding

Address: c/ José y María, 69 - Lomo los Frailes.
Tamaraceite.
35018 Las Palmas de Gran Canaria
Telephone: (+34) 928 436 995
Web: www.limoniumcanarias.com

» **Macaronesia Tours**

Gastronomic Tours. Coffee and Wine Routes. Visits to sites and museums.

Telephone: (+34) 653 026 697 ((From 9:30 to 19:00 h.)
Email: info@macaronesiatours.com
Web: www.macaronesiatours.com

» **Vivac Aventura, S.L.**

Management of natural environment facilities. Nature activities: hiking, climbing, rappel, mountain biking...

Address: c/ Virgen del Pilar 32 Local 8
35012 Las Palmas de Gran Canaria
Telephone: (+34) 928 413 282
Web: www.vivacaventura.com

» **Cycle Gran Canaria**

Mountain bike routes, cycling routes, training camps.

Address: Edificio Princesa Arminda Portal 2,3º -D-I San Fernando de Maspalomas
Telephone: (+34) 928 769 508
Web: www.cyclegrancanaria.com

» **El Salobre Horse Riding**

Horseback Excursions.

Address: c/ Islas Malvinas 3, 35106 El Salobre - San Bartolomé de Tirijana
Telephone: (+34) 616 418 363
Web: www.elsalobrehr.es

» **Fun Action Sports & Adventures**

Hiking and biking activities.

Web: www.funaction.net

» **JoselitoMoves**

Guided walks to discover the island. Customised service.

Telephone: (+34) 609 549 324 / (+34) 634 647 819
Web: www.joselitomoves.com

LOS MORISCOS



» **Rocky Adventure**

Guided walks to discover the island.
Customised service.

Address: Centro Comercial Eurocenter Local 91-92 -
San Bartolomé de Tirajana
Telephone: (+34) 615 932 589
Web: www.rockyadventure.com

» **The Black Horse Canarias**

Excursions on horseback.

Address: Archipiélago Canario 66, 35106 El Salobre -
San Bartolomé de Tirajana
Telephone: (+34) 928 143 294 / (+34) 670 448 479
Web: www.theblackhorsecanarias.com

» **Vulcan Canarias**

Hiking Activities, canyoning, climbing,
archaeological routes, mountain biking,
paragliding, diving and kayaking.

Telephone: (+34) 662 453 519 / (+34) 603 510 867
Web: www.vulcancanarias.com

» **Colectivo Azanegue**

Naturalistic routes and services related to
environmental education, conservation and
nature tourism research.

Telephone: (+34) 636 374 055
Email: azaenegue@hotmail.com

» **AstroEduca**

Company specialised in scientific outreach
and star tourism in Gran Canaria since 1995.

Address: Av. Tinamar, 46 - Vega de San Mateo
Telephone: (+34) 665 829 275 / (+34) 928 661 130
Email: info@astroeduca.com
Web: www.astroeduca.com

» **Canarias Etnográfica**

Mountain activities development, studying
and promoting local customs and traditions
in the heart of Gran Canaria.

Telephone: 680786936
Email: info@canariasetnografica.com
Web: www.canariasetnografica.com

MONTAÑA LA ESCALERA - INAGUA



16

RURAL ACCOMMODATIONS

The Gran Canaria Biosphere Reserve has a wide range of accommodation where you can enjoy your stay in a unique environment. Discover the local customs and traditions, observe the extraordinary biodiversity that surrounds them and savour the rich local gastronomy.

QR In the following search engine you can consult all available legal accommodations, contact them and make your reservations.



The establishments included here are all recognised by the Gran Canaria Tourist Board for having carried out the administrative procedures necessary to operate

MUNICIPALITIES INTEGRATED IN THE GRAN CANARIA BIOSPHERE RESERVE:

- » **Agate**
www.aytoagaete.es
- » **Artenara**
www.artenara.es
- » **La Aldea de San Nicolás**
www.laaldeadesannicolas.es
- » **Mogán**
www.mogan.es
- » **San Bartolomé de Tirajana**
www.maspalomas.com
- » **Tejeda**
www.tejeda.es
- » **Vega de San Mateo**
www.vegadesanmateo.es

RURAL ACCOMMODATION IN ARTENARA





RURAL ACCOMMODATION IN ARTENARA

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

SERGIO HOUGHTON GARCÍA AND
NEUS SANTIAGO BAYONA.
ECOLOGICAL PRODUCERS AND
OWNERS OF A BIOCREPERIE IN
ARTENARA.



“

We've been practising healthy cooking for years, we wanted a change in our lives and we came to live here. We found a place to take our project one step further, to grow ecological, sustainable and respectful to the environment everything that we then cook in our dishes.

The Reserve's landscape is impressive, it leaves no one indifferent. We would like it to be preserved for future generations

for tourists to come and enjoy. We are convinced that organic farming, green employment and in general bio-culture is the key to the conservation of the Reserve.

We want to expand and share our project among neighbours, friends and visitors to find a different way of harmony with nature through healthy and ecological gastronomy in the Biosphere Reserve.

”

17

THE ECOTOURIST LETTER

PRINCIPLES OF AN ECOTOURIST

Ecotourism is not only a different way to see tourism. It also establishes a philosophy and proposes a model of sustainable development respecting local resources. Following the World Tourism Organization's guidelines for the regulation and enhancement of the ecotourism sector in the Biosphere Reserve of Gran Canaria and the Canaries in general, we propose the following decalogue to become a true Eco tourist.

FAÑEQUE CLIFF, TAMADABA

- » Enjoy the natural and cultural resources in a respectful and sustainable way.
- » Hire services that integrate educational information and interpretation of local heritage elements.
- » Hire small local businesses working with reduced groups.
- » Avoid leaving traces on the natural and cultural resources of the place. This will contribute to the conservation of the natural, cultural and ethnographic resources of the place.
- » Avoid unnecessary movement and offset your emissions by planting trees, through one of the platforms available on the network.
- » Consume local, ecological and natural products.
- » Stay in legalised rural houses or hotels managed by local companies or communities that hold quality certifications respecting the environment.
- » Spend some of your time talking to the local population and discovering different ways of life.
- » Respects the rules of conservation and public use of protected natural areas.

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12 THINGS NOT TO BE MISSED IN THE GRAN CANARIA BIOSPHERE RESERVE

1. Walk along the wide network of paths that cross ravines, slopes, peaks and beaches.
2. Swim or snorkel in the waters of some of the solitary beaches that are at the mouth of the numerous ravines crossing the Biosphere Reserve.
3. Enjoy the rich local cuisine, eat goat and sheep cheeses, roasted rockfish seasoned with traditional mojos, desserts and sweets made with almonds and honey from flowers of the peaks.
4. Observe the Milky Way or the night sky during a summer night from the Pico de las Nieves or the Roque Nublo surroundings.
5. Attend traditional festivals held in different towns and villages.
6. Travel the Acusa road that connects Artenara and La Aldea de San Nicolás or the road next to the dams that connects Ayacata and Mogán.
7. Spend time talking to neighbours, listening to local stories, customs and traditions.
8. Take a bike ride along the tracks and paths going across agricultural zones.
9. Observe the secret life of the Gran Canaria blue finch, a winged jewel that only lives in the pine forests of the Gran Canaria Biosphere Reserve, in the company of a local guide.



— GUÍA DE ECOTURISMO —
**RESERVA DE LA BIOSFERA
DE GRAN CANARIA**



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