

MOUNTAINS AND SEA CLIFFS OF EL HIERRO

Canary Islands

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	Introduction	1
2	Basic Information	2
2.1	Required physical condition and type of terrain.....	2
3	Destination.....	2
4	Program.....	4
4.1	Program outline.....	4
4.2	Detailed program	4
5	More Information	7
5.1	Included.....	7
5.2	Not included	7
5.3	Packing list.....	7
5.4	Observations	8
5.5	Insurance policy.....	9
5.6	Links of interest	10
5.7	Highlights.....	10
6	Similar trips	10
7	Contact.....	10

1 Introduction

We present an **8-day trip**, including travelling days, to discover on foot the most beautiful natural attractions of the island. Also, we will learn about its history and we will savour its **delicious food**, completing a trip that will make us live a very intense and a very special experience.

Small is beautiful. And **El Hierro**, with 268,71 Km² is the smallest of the **Canary Islands** (If we don't include the islets of the Chinijo Archipelago). Yes, it is a beautiful island. But don't be deceived by its size, that will not be an impediment to enjoy the dramatic landscapes by walking in one of those places increasingly scarce around the world, where nature remains untouched. And this is not counting its underwater treasures... Do you know that **El Hierro** is considered one of the best places to do scuba diving? But we hope you still have some energy left, because we came here to do some walking! **El Hierro** is a wonder for walkers. It is the most southern and western island of the archipelago, the most rural and the wildest, what give and special character to the island.

El Hierro was declared a **Unesco Biosphere Reserve**. It has a precipitous orography due to its volcanic history and it is covered by a unique vegetation capable to adapt to the insularity and the climate. The presence of the trade winds gives place to the development of spectacular **Laurisilva** forests. Surely, we will be lucky enough to have the company of a lizard on one of our walks, the most famous animal of the island! And don't worry they are inoffensive!

2 Basic Information

Destination: El Hierro, Canary Islands (Spain).

Activity: Trekking.

Difficulty: ** Technical level **

Duration: 8 days.

Season: All year round.

Minimum group: 4-8 people

2.1 Required physical condition and type of terrain

Physical level	Total elevation	Kms	Physical Condition
*	Up to 600 m	Up to 16 km	Normal: occasional sport practice
**	Up to 1200 m	Up to 23 km	Good: regular sport practice
***	Up to 1400 m	Over. 23 km	Very good: strict sport practice

Physical level category does not have to correspond exactly with given ascent and kilometers at the same time.

Type of terrain

* Good conditioned forest tracks and trails

** Good conditioned trails. Presence of stones and roots on the way requiring attentive hike.

*** Bumpy, stone loose tracks, including off trails

Observations. Walks are accessible for active people that does some hill walking frequently and that are able to climb between 800 – 1.200 metres daily at an easy pace and with a duration of 4 to 6 hours including stops.

3 Destination

El Hierro is the most southern and western island of the archipelago and it is a **Unesco Biosphere Reserve**.

Its geological morphology is very complex due to its volcanic origins. It has a main mountain range with **Pico de Malpaso** (1.501 m) being its highest peak, and dividing the island in two halves, one to the south and the other to the north. The coastline is quite steep, with numerous imponent cliffs.

The climate is determined by the **trade winds** and the **Canary's stream**, which is a cold fork in the **Gulf Stream**. The water temperature in winter is around 18º C, and around 20º C in the summer. The trade winds, loaded with humidity, impact against the mountains causing rain, mainly in the north face, whereas in the south predominates the dry winds, creating an arid landscape. The temperature is mild all year round, with warm winters and cool summers.

The complex geological morphology and the climate of El Hierro creates a very unique and special vegetation. The visitor will enjoy a **varied flora**, from lush **laurel forests** to coniferous woodlands, green meadows and **banana plantations**. As we already mentioned before, the south has a much drier climate and so the plant species are very different in this area.

Its inhabitants, the "**herreños(as)**", have suffered a fall in numbers along history due to economic hardship and long droughts. In recent years this trend has change, as many emigrants has returned from Venezuela. Right now, El Hierro is the **least populated island** with 11.000 habitants.

The local government wants to keep alive the folklore of the island. There are some folkloric associations that performs traditional dances. The most important festivity of El Hierro is **La Bajada de la Virgen de los Reyes** (saint of the island) and it is celebrated every 4 years, the first Saturday of July. The Saint is transferred 44km from Dehesa (Frontera) to Valverde, the capital of the island, going through all villages of the island. The procession is accompanied by dancers performing the traditional **baile de la Virgen**.

Another famous inhabitant is the Lizard. The giant lizard (grows up to 70cm) is the king! And although its population has decreased, it is still possible to spot it. Don't worry they are inoffensive!

We can't finish without mentioning the delicious **local gastronomy**. **Fish** has an important place and it is cooked in many different ways, offering the visitor a varied selection of dishes. Other traditional recipes are **potaje, el puchero** and **el rancho con papas**.

In order to enjoy the tasty food, it is important to burn some energy first by walking or maybe practising "lucha canaria" which is one of the most popular local sports.



4 Program

4.1 Program outline

Day 1. Flight to **Tenerife Norte (TFN)**. Transfer to Santa Cruz de la Laguna.

Night in San Cristóbal de la Laguna.

Day 2. Arrival to the island of El Hierro. Reception of participants and transfer to the accommodation. Trip to **Tamaduste** (depending on the time of arrival).

Night in Valverde.

Day 3. Day trip from **Valverde. Garoé “the sacred tree”**. Visit to **Valverde**.

Distance 8.5 km. Ascent + 220 m – 680 m. Estimated time 3-4 hours.

Night in Valverde.

Day 4. El Pinar-Tacorón- La Restinga.

Distance 16 km. Ascent + 400 m – 1.200 m. Estimated time 5 hours.

Night in La Restinga.

Day 5. Las Playas Natural Monument, Isora Viewpoint and Las Playas Viewpoint.

Distance 15 km. Ascent + 1.230 m – 1.230 m. Estimated time 5-6 hours. It is possible to do it shorter following a shortcut in the route.

Night in La Restinga.

Day 6. Sabinosa-Camino de la Virgen- Sabinosa. Visit to the centenary **Juniper forest**. Visit to Orchilla Lighthouse or Arenas Blancas beach.

Distance 17 km. Ascent + 1.260 m – 1.260 m. Estimated time 6 hours.

Night in Valle de Frontera.

Day 7. Camino de Jinama. Frontera. Tigaday. Jinama-Fireba-El Salvador. Sunset at La Peña Viewpoint.

Distance 15 km. Ascent + 1.280 m – 1.280 m. Estimated time 6 hours. It is possible to do it shorter following a shortcut in the route.

Night in Valle de Frontera.

Day 8. Transfer to **Valverde (VDE) airport**. Return flight.

4.2 Detailed program

Day 1. Flight to Tenerife Norte (TFN). Transfer to Santa Cruz de la Laguna. Free time to walk the streets of this beautiful town. Alternatively, it is possible to fly directly to **El Hierro** and start the trip on the second day.

Night in San Cristóbal de la Laguna.

Day 2. Arrival to the island of El Hierro. Reception of participants and transfer to the accommodation. Trip to **Tamaduste** (depending on the time of arrival).

Tamaduste is a small village located near the airport and it surprises visitors for the colours of the sea. Here we will do a beautiful itinerary where we will see volcanic features like lava flows, cliffs of basaltic rocks and other interesting rock formations.

Night in Valverde.

Day 3. Day trip from **Valverde. Garoé “the sacred tree”**. Visit to **Valverde**.

The **Bimbaches** were the first inhabitants of the island of **El Hierro**. The **Garoé** is a specimen of tilia that was the sacred tree of the island. The big leaves of the **Garoé** were capable to capture and purify the water particles of the fog and the people collected it by digging a ditch around the tree. The original tree was uprooted in a storm. In 1949 a new tree was planted in the same place.

Starting from **San Andrés** (1.100 m) that is the highest situated village of the island, we will follow a lineal route visiting the **Garoé** and the interesting **Nisdafe Plateau**.

We will finish in **Valverde**, the capital of the island. We will have free time to walk its streets or to rest at one of the bars and cafes.

Distance 8.5 km. Ascent + 220 m – 680 m. Estimated time 3-4 hours.

Night in Valverde.

Day 4. El Pinar-Tacorón- La Restinga.

We will visit the south of the island with an interesting itinerary that links the small village of **El Pinar** with the coast village of **Tacorón**, enjoying the views over **Mar de las Calmas, Naos Bay** and the **Mar de Lavas**. It was here where just a few years ago a submarine volcanic eruption reminded us that the Canary Islands are still active.

We will have time for swimming and sunbathing at a small beach of red sands enclosed by high cliffs.

Distance 16 km. Ascent + 400 m – 1.200 m. Estimated time 5 hours.

Night in La Restinga.

Day 5. Las Playas Natural Monument, Isora Viewpoint and Las Playas Viewpoint.

In the south east area of the island we find **Las Playas Natural Monument**, a place of great beauty. The emblematic amphitheater-like terrain is the result of a series of landslides.

In a high position, **Las Playas** and **Isora viewpoints** offer superb views of this incredible landscape. Here, visitors will not miss the exalting **Bonanza Rock**, a volcanic outcrop, rising from the depths of the ocean

We will do an interesting walk from the top of the cliffs until we reach the beach. We will go back up by a different path to complete this circular route.

Distance 15 km. Ascent + 1.230 m – 1.230 m. Estimated time 5-6 hours. It is possible to do it shorter following a shortcut in the route.

Night in La Restinga.

Day 6. Sabinosa-Camino de la Virgen- Sabinosa. Visit to the centenary **Juniper forest**. Visit to Orchilla Lighthouse or Arenas Blancas beach.

We can't leave **El Hierro** without visiting the famous centenary Juniper forest, that shaped by the winds, are a real gem for visitors. The Juniper is the island's symbolic tree.

We will start from **Sabinosa** gaining height until we reach the main range of the island. We will walk west to get to a point situated directly above **Sabinosa**. From here we will start our way down to the starting point completing this circular itinerary.

Distance 17 km. Ascent + 1.260 m – 1.260 m. Estimated time 6 hours.

After the walk, we will travel to **Arenas Blancas Beach**, where we will have some free time to relax at the beach.

Night in Valle de Frontera.

Day 7. Camino de Jinama. Frontera. Tigaday. Jinama-Fireba-El Salvador. Sunset at La Peña Viewpoint.

El camino de Jinama is a route that goes through the **Natural Park of Frontera**. This used to be to route chosen by the locals to get to **El Golfo** in the old times. It was also used for the "mudadas" which means moves.

From the village of **Frontera**, on the north face of the island, we will start the first part of the route with a steep climb to reach the main range of the island. We will cover part of the range walking towards the West and we will finish with a direct way down to **Frontera**.

Distance 15 km. Ascent + 1.280 m – 1.280 m. Estimated time 6 hours. It is possible to do it shorter following a shortcut in the route.

Later we will travel to **La Maceta** where we will have the opportunity to swim in the natural pool by the sea. We can also visit some of the beaches of this area, learn about the first inhabitants of El Hierro and broaden our knowledge about the island's flora and fauna.

We will travel to La Peña Viewpoint, one of the most celebrated sites of the island, to contemplate the sunset. It was created by the canarian architect **César Manrique**, who created other masterpieces along the archipelago. The viewpoint consists of several balconies at different levels. The views over the **Golfo Valley** are spectacular.

Very close, we find the **Jinama Viewpoint**, a bit wilder but offers incredible views over the **Golfo**.

Night in Valle de Frontera.

Day 8. Transfer to **Valverde (VDE) airport**. Return flight.

5 More Information

Price. 960 euros. 160 euros supplement for single room applies.

5.1 Included

- Certified Mountain Guide for the duration of the trip.
- 7 nights of hotel/apartment.
 - 1 night at La Laguna Gran Hotel **** breakfast included. San Cristobal de la Laguna. <https://lalagunagranhotel.com>
 - 2 nights in apartments in Tamaduste in a double room with breakfast included (breakfast will be at a local café)
http://www.apartamentosboomerang.com/es/apartamentos_boomerang_i_el_hierro
 - 2 nights at Sur Restinga hotel in Restinga. Double room with breakfast included. <https://es.surrestinga.com>
 - 2 nights at Los Verodes apartments in La Frontera. Double room with half board (the meals are in a local restaurant) <https://apartamentoslosverodes.com>
- Transfers: Private transfer from/to the Valverde airport.
- Accidents and rescue insurance cover.
- Travel management.

5.2 Not included

- Flights (Muntania offers this service for an additional cost of 20€)
- Meals (lunches and some dinners)
- Any other activity not including in the programme

5.3 Packing list

- Backpack (25-35 litres).
- Trekking boots or walking shoes.
- Technical clothing:
 - Socks.
 - Long and short trekking trousers.
 - Thermal t-shirt (base layer)
 - Fleece jacket or similar (second layer)
 - Gore-Tex jacket or similar (third layer)
 - Cap or hat for sun protection
- Sunglasses
- Water bottle (1 litre minimum)
- First aid kit and essential toiletries
- Sunscreen and SPF lip balm
- Expandable hiking poles.
- Camera
- Swimming suit

The luggage not needed during the walks or visits will be stored at the hotel/apartment. The days when we change accommodation, the luggage will be kept at the private vehicle while the group is doing the different activities and it will be collected at the new accommodation after all the visits have finished for the day.

We kindly ask you to pack a reasonable size suitcase as the storage space in the vehicle is limited.

5.4 Observations

Date Flexibility

Aside from the regular travel trip dates, we are flexible to reconsider new dates if those are more convenient to the client's leisure plans. Do not hesitate to contact us should you have any different dates in mind.

Time and meeting point

One week prior to the trip departure date, an email will be sent to each participant to give away the meeting point and time along with the guide contact information. At this point any information considered essential to the trip organization will be shared.

Plane tickets (if applicable)

If case you wish us to handle you plane ticket, please contact us with airport arrival and departure details and number of needed luggage. Before issuing any ticket, Price and details Will be send to the client for its approval.

Muntania fee for plane ticket management is 20€ per person.

If, otherwise, you handle your plane tickets, please coordinate with us before hand to check on arrival and departure information.

Please take into consideration getting with you on your carry-on luggage some set of clothing in case of checked luggage lose.

Double/sinlge room

There is the option to book a single room if there is availability. Please ask for more info if you are interested in this option.

If you don't want to pay the single room supplement, you can ask for a shared room. The availability of this option will depend on other passenger being interested in this option. We will try to find a roommate of the same gender but if this is not possible, we will always ask both parts for their consent. If the group number is uneven and everyone wants to share, the last person to make the payment will have to pay the single room supplement.

Optional visits

Winery

Fifty years ago, a foreigner found strange that in every house he visited it was usual that the kid or the grandfather was sent to fetch some wine from the wine cellar. And even in the hottest day, he was never offered water, a much scarce liquid... We invite you to visit a vineyard situated at 600-700 m above sea level and that exists from the nineteenth century. Today, this is the only ecologic winery in El Hierro. This is a guided enological experience with impressive views over Valle del Golfo. In the 2-3 hours tour you will learn interesting facts about Valle del Golfo and you will visit the vineyard and the installations where the wine is produced in a traditional and modern ways.

<https://canariasconvida.com/item/bodega-uwe/>

Traditional Restaurant

Guachinche is an establishment of Tenerife where they offer traditional homemade dishes that goes with wine from their own harvest. This type of establishments has their origin in the farmer's markets that used to take place at specific times of the year to sell their products (specially the Malvasia wine) directly to the British buyers and later to the local clients, saving, this way, on intermediaries.

<https://guachinche-las-lapas.eatbu.com>

Other

The selection of itineraries can suffer changes due to bad weather conditions or other serious reasons. In any case, the guide will provide with the best alternative option.

The order of the itinerary can vary to adapt to the accommodation or attraction's availability.

Any change in the itinerary caused by reasons not related to Muntania Outdoors (for example weather conditions) could incur an extra fee for participants.

5.5 Insurance policy

This activity includes a basic insurance policy; however, we highly recommend to add, for wider coverage, an extra specific travel policy. This extra policy can be contracted exclusively for the activity dates or annually (flexible starting coverage date), covering not just Muntania Outdoors trips but any other sport activity you may carry out throughout the year.

Extra insurance coverage with cancellation option, will allow you or a family member, in case of incident, to get back the total paid amount (or a percentage if you are already travelling) either for plane tickets or any trip service you might have hired. Moreover, through this coverage home return expenses will be taken care of.

Intermundial insurance company is our supplier for extra coverage insurances; thanks to the signed agreement between parties, Muntania gets to offer lower prices than handling directly with them. The travel

insurance with cancellation option offered by Muntania will be covered up to 900€ for national trips and 2000€ for abroad travel. In case your total trip cost is higher than the given coverage limit, an extension is always possible (please consult).

5.6 Links of interest

- <http://www.holaislascanarias.com>
- <https://elhierro.travel>

5.7 Highlights

- Spectacular volcanic landscapes and laurel forests.
- Great variety of landscapes.
- Good weather
- Delicious gastronomy.

6 Similar trips

- Hiking in El Hierro. Canary Islands.
- Hiking in La Gomera and Tenerife. Canary Islands.
- La Palma island, the hiking paradise.

7 Contact

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