Canary Islands

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The Best of Gran Canaria

A week on Gran Canaria gives you enough time to explore the museums and restaurants of the capital, munch seafood along the coast, admire the mountains and even spend a little time on the beach.

Start in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria with a gentle stroll on Playa de las Canteras or a dip in the ultra-calm ocean – perfect for snorkelling. Pass the second day wandering the cobbles of historic Vegueta with its stellar museums. Day three, head to the lovely town of Arucas before hitting the north coast to sample seafood in Puerto de las Nieves. Day four, tackle the spectacular winding west coast road, grabbing lunch in quiet Puerto de la Aldea, then continue the magnificent drive to pretty Puerto de Mogán, with its Med-style yachting harbour. Day five, swing southeast to the shimmering sands of Maspalomas for a stroll or a swim, then take the GC-60 north to Tejeda for lunch with a view. Spend day six on a mountain hike or drive, drinking in the jaw-dropping scenery. To finish, wind your way down to Agüimes with its lovely pastel-painted buildings and historic charm, then veer back inland to the lush Barranco de Guayadeque for lunch in a cave.
Above: Valle Gran Rey (p178), La Gomera
Left: Harbour in Corralejo (p86), Fuerteventura
The beaches here are brilliant, but there is more to the island. This route covers quaint fishing towns and inland villages as well as the famous dunes and beaches.

Start at Corralejo's pretty harbour for a little beach time or some watersports. Continuing in seaside mode, head south-east, past the endless shifting dunes on the FV-1 road. End the day with a stroll and dinner in Puerto del Rosario. Day two, continue south, stopping at pint-sized Pozo Negro, where simple seafood restaurants overlook the surf. It’s time for a break from all those blues, so wend your way inland to pretty Pájara. Pop into the extraordinary church here and pray for a free room at the town’s lovely casa rural. Day three, stop at Betancuria’s eye-catching church and quirky museums then spend the afternoon exploring the art and architecture of La Oliva. Spend day five in the low-key beachside town of El Cotillo, sampling its fine cafes, eating seafood and watching the surfers. Day six, return to Corralejo via the hip surfing village of Lajares, ending with an afternoon ferry to unspoilt Isla de Lobos for a relaxing stroll on the sand.

A touch of art, a splash of wine, a dash of seafood and a whole lot of spectacularly stark scenery.

Explore Arrecife’s art and history, take a dip at the Playa del Reducto and have dinner and drinks at the smart new marina. Next day head north for the Cueva de los Verdes and Jameos del Agua before the tour buses arrive, then backtrack and take the rest of the day off in simple seaside Arrieta. Day three, head for overlooked Órzola, launchpad for ferries to Isla Graciosa. Spend the day on deserted beaches and the night in utter tranquillity. Back on Lanzarote, stop at postcard-pretty Haría to visit artist César Manrique's former home. Then head south to Teguise, a great little town that's a joy to wander. End in La Caleta de Famara for a seafood dinner as the sun sets. Watch dawn surfers in action before visiting the wineries of La Geria. Day six, explore the lava fields of the Parque Nacional de Timanfaya, joining the bus tour through the dramatic Ruta de los Volcanes. Stay over in unspoilt El Golfo and enjoy more seafood overlooking the waves.
Tenerife & La Palma

It’s all perfectly preserved architecture and impressive mountain backdrops on this island-hopping adventure.

On Tenerife, stay two nights in Puerto de la Cruz, enjoying the shops, bars and beaches. Day three visit La Orotava, with its grand 17th-century mansions. Still in historical mode, continue on to La Laguna’s traditional quarter for an overnight stay. Next day, retrace your steps to contrasting Garachico and its simple fishermen’s cottages. Day five, head for El Teide for a day of walking, gawping and camera snapping. Day six, hightail it to Los Cristianos and catch the daily ferry to La Palma.

Spend a couple of nights in the capital Santa Cruz, exploring the old town, kicking back on the beach and taking a pilgrimage to the Santuario de la Virgen de las Nieves. Continue north to explore the hilly, cobbled streets of San Andrés. Day eight, visit the lush rainforest of Los Tiles before cooling off at the salt-water pools at Charco Azul. Day nine, hike through Parque Nacional de la Caldera de Taburiente. Continue south to lively Puerto Naos before visiting the handcraft museum at Villa de Mazo.

La Gomera & El Hierro

Simple pleasures reign on the smallest islands: rustic cuisine, forest hikes, ocean swims and plenty of winding roads.

Spend the first day on La Gomera exploring the backstreets, big streets and everything in between in San Sebastián. The next day recover from all that urban exhaustion with a dip at Playa Santiago. Day three, head to the verdant Hermigua and postcard-pretty Playa de la Caleta. Next day, continue south for a trek through a fern-filled rainforest up to the lofty peaks (and views) of the Alto de Garajonay. Drive beside the stunning Valle Gran Rey gorge until it reaches the sea. Stay overnight at La Playa before returning to San Sebastián to catch the ferry to El Hierro.

Check out the low-key capital of Valverde, before heading south to the Ecomuseo de Guinea, a natural-cum-cultural treat. Dine on superb Canarian food at down-to-earth Tigaday and stay overnight. Next day, head for the natural pools at Charco Azul, before heading to the lush pines of El Pinar, the Centro Volcanícológico and the off-shore scuba diving at La Restinga.
Map Legend

Sights
- Beach
- Bird Sanctuary
- Buddhist
- Castle/Palace
- Christian
- Confucian
- Hindu
- Jain
- Jewish
- Monument
- Museum/Gallery/Historic Building
- Ruin
- Shinto
- Sikh
- Taoist
- Winery/Vineyard
- Zoo/Wildlife Sanctuary
- Other Sight

Activities, Courses & Tours
- Bodysurfing
- Diving
- Canoeing/Kayaking
- Course/Tour
- Sento Hot Baths/Onsen
- Skiing
- Snorkelling
- Surfing
- Swimming/Pool
- Walking
- Windsurfing
- Other Activity

Sleeping
- Sleeping
- Camping

Eating
- Eating

Drinking & Nightlife
- Drinking & Nightlife
- Cafe

Entertainment
- Entertainment

Shopping
- Shopping

Information
- Bank
- Embassy/Consulate
- Hospital/Medical
- Internet
- Police
- Post Office
- Telephone
- Toilet
- Tourist Information
- Other Information

Geographic
- Beach
- Gate
- Hut/Shelter
- Lighthouse
- Lookout
- Mountain/Volcano
- Oasis
- Park
- Pass
- Picnic Area
- Waterfall

Population
- Capital (National)
- Capital (State/Province)
- City/Large Town
- Town/Village

Transport
- Airport
- Border crossing
- Bus
- Cable car/Funicular
- Cycling
- Ferry
- Metro station
- Monorail
- Parking
- Petrol station
- S-Bahn/S-train/Subway station
- Taxi
- T-bane/Tunnelbana station
- Train station/Railway
- Tram
- Tube station
- U-Bahn/Underground station
- Other Transport

Routes
- Tollway
- Freeway
- Primary
- Secondary
- Tertiary
- Lane
- Unsealed road
- Road under construction
- Plaza/Mall
- Steps
- Tunnel
- Pedestrian overpass
- Walking Tour
- Walking Tour detour
- Path/Walking Trail

Boundaries
- International
- State/Province
- Disputed
- Regional/Suburb
- Marine Park
- Cliff
- Wall

Hydrography
- River, Creek
- Intermittent River
- Canal
- Water
- Dry/Salt/Intermittent Lake
- Reef

Areas
- Airport/Runway
- Beach/Desert
- Cemetery (Christian)
- Cemetery (Other)
- Glacier
- Mudflat
- Park/Forest
- Sight (Building)
- Sportsground
- Swamp/Mangrove

Note: Not all symbols displayed above appear on the maps in this book.
Lucy Corne
Gran Canaria, Fuerteventura, Lanzarote  Lucy’s first introduction to the Canary Islands was a four-month stint entertaining kids in a Gran Canaria tourist resort. It did not show off the best that the island had to offer, but rare days off were spent discovering there was more to Gran Canaria than beaches and all-you-can-drink boat trips. She soon moved to Las Palmas and spent four years in the Canaries, teaching English, writing for a local newspaper and exploring hamlets, hiking trails and hidden beaches across all seven islands. She was thrilled to return for this book and was particularly excited to revisit Gran Canaria’s mountainous centre, roam barefoot again on Isla Graciosa and attempt to eat her body weight in papas arrugadas. See more of Lucy’s work at www.lucycorne.com. Lucy also wrote the Plan Your Trip, Island Cuisine, Canarian Arts & Culture, Life on a Volcano and Survival Guide chapters.

Josephine Quintero
Tenerife, La Gomera, La Palma, El Hierro  Josephine has lived on mainland Spain for over 20 years and has visited the Canary Islands on several occasions, including researching two previous editions of this title. She finds that the islands continually throw up surprises, although there is one constant: the genuine friendliness of the locals. Highlights during this trip included gazing at evocative art at the magnificent TEA museum in Santa Cruz, listening to soul-stirring Silbo (whistling) in La Gomera, and hiking in the lush green hinterland in La Palma where there was (thankfully) no mobile signal and only the sound of birdsong. Josephine also wrote the Canary Islands Today and History chapters.

Read more about Lucy at: http://auth.lonelyplanet.com/profiles/lucycorne

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