

The best MARCO POLO Insider Tips

Our top 15 Insider Tips

INSIDER TIP Festival fervour

At the largest pilgrimage on the Canary Islands you'll experience devotion and exuberant fiestas. To celebrate Candlemas, tens of thousands come – some even by boat → p. 121

INSIDER TIP Luxurious indulgence

Intimate and exclusive residence with spacious suites and luxurious spa with a splendid view over the golf course to the mountains: the *Royal Garden Villas* offer peace and tranquillity → p. 92

INSIDER TIP The great outdoors

Away from the coast Tenerife offers plenty of breathtaking encounters with nature. Dedicated active holidaymakers choose to stay in the *Luz del Mar* in Los Silos → p. 38

INSIDER TIP Music in the Auditorio

Every week Tenerife's most extraordinary building is the venue for concerts in all musical genres → p. 60

INSIDER TIP Organic finca

Situated on the edge of a canyon, the Köllmann family runs the large organic *Finca El Quinto* with rustic houses in green surroundings, a paradise for nature lovers and families → p. 51

INSIDER TIP Fish, fresh off the boat

San Andrés, a small coastal village, is a popular place for islanders (and few tourists) at weekends. The sea breeze must whet their appetite, because the restaurants do a roaring trade serving (usually) fresh fish and seafood → p. 65

INSIDER TIP Among shepherds and farmers

Located in the cloud-covered laurel forest is a small *visitor centre* that provides information on walks in the *Montañas de Anaga*. Lower down there is an ancient track, laid out as a sensory trail. It only takes an hour, but that's long enough to appreciate the full beauty of the "enchanted forest" → p. 59

INSIDER TIP Good food and inexpensive

La Hierbita or "Little Herb" in Tenerife's capital city is very popular with young people. There is a wide selection of tapas, generous portions of Canarian fare, plus plenty of local wines → p. 63

INSIDER TIP Troglodyte village

At the point where the road ends below steep cliffs, a signposted footpath winds up to the tiny mountain village of *Chinamada*. The villagers still live in cave houses, just as they have for centuries → p. 54

INSIDER TIP The ultimate scenic route

A *panoramic road* extends the length of the Anaga Mountains with lookout points for fine views as far as the sea. It's the way to see the island's more primitive side (photo left) → p. 101

INSIDER TIP Beach for individualists

The black sandy *Playa del Bollullo* with its beach bar near Puerto de la Cruz has yet to be discovered by tourists. → p. 48

INSIDER TIP When night falls

Under an old stone bridge is *La Noria*, the centre of Santa Cruz's nightlife. Young revellers get together in the bars and bodegas in pedestrian zones with atmospheric lighting → p. 64

INSIDER TIP Mix with the locals

Casa La Verita and *Cha Carmen* are traditional country hotels in the hills between Arico and Fasnía, well away from the tourist crowds → p. 76

INSIDER TIP A close encounter with whales

Every day boats such as the "Lady Shelley" set sail from harbours in the southwest in search of dolphins and whales (photo below) → p. 82

INSIDER TIP Amuse-bouche

The dishes at the *Ardeola* restaurant in Garachico have a creative Canarian touch, are made with the freshest ingredients and are served in an exclusive atmosphere by an efficient, friendly service → p. 35



BEST OF...

GREAT PLACES FOR FREE

Discover new places and save money

FOR FREE

● *A park above the town*

From the coastal vantage point in *Puerto de la Cruz* climb up past waterfalls and on to the *Parque Taoro* (photo). While the “Risco Bello” part of the park charges an admission fee, you can admire the wide plateau fringed by subtropical plants for free → p. 47

● *Natural swimming pools*

Ignore the waves crashing against the sea wall sending spray high into the air, while you swim serenely in the *natural pools of Bajamar*. Few other places in the north offer the same safe bathing opportunities → p. 53

● *From fruit market to art showroom*

The *Centro de Arte La Recova* used to be a busy fruit market hall in Santa Cruz, but now it is used to display art – photographs, avant-garde and the out-of-the-ordinary → p. 66

● *Wine history in the winery*

Do make a detour to this large farmstead in El Sauzal with its fine traditional architecture and panoramic sea views. The building houses the *Casa del Vino*, a winery selling Tenerife’s best vintages, plus you can follow the story of wine production on the island → p. 29, 67

● *Visitor centre with botanical garden*

In the *Centro de Visitantes El Portillo* you can be part of the island’s geological history. The volcanic tunnel quakes, red-hot lava flows and the room rumbles. Round off your visit with a tour of the botanical rock garden replete with native alpine flora

→ p. 71

● *A picture-book landscape*

“... I have never beheld a prospect more varied, more attractive, more harmonious in the distribution of the masses of verdure and rocks,” wrote Alexander von Humboldt in 1799, when he first saw the Valle de la Ortava. At the lookout point *Mirador de Humboldt* plus café, you don’t have to order anything → p. 32



● ● ● ● Dots in guidebook refer to “Best of...” tips

ONLY ON TENERIFE

Unique experiences

● *A dragon tree with no dragons*

It has become one of Tenerife’s trademarks. Although the tree with its lush crown is actually a type of lily, it can live for up to 1,000 years. The largest and most beautiful *drago* grows in Icod de los Vinos → p. 38

● *A Canary delicacy*

It’s a cereal, roasted and finely ground – *gofio*, the nutrient-rich staple food of the island’s original inhabitants. Frowned upon for a long time as poor man’s food, it is now a popular ingredient in the new Canarian cuisine, e.g. in *El Duende* → p. 26, 48

● *Gaze into space*

Stand on the roof of the island and pretend you’re an actor in a science-fiction film – the metallic white towers of the *Observatorio del Teide* (photo) look straight up into the clear blue sky which offers fine glimpses into space → p. 71

● *The pine tree – a survivor*

In the forest belt below the Cañadas grows the Canary pine. With its extremely long needles it “combs” moisture from the clouds, while the thick bark even protects it from fire. One outstanding example is the *Pino Gordo* → p. 77

● *Sun-ripened*

Many of the exotic fruits that can grow in the “eternal spring” are made into jams, chutneys and compotes. For the best selection visit *Delicias del Sol* in Chío – everything here is organic → p. 95

● *Stone pyramids*

In many places stones are carefully laid to create rural and urban walls. But in Güímar they were made into mysterious pyramids. They suggest that even before Christopher Columbus the Canary Islands were a staging post between the Old and the New World → p. 75

● *Filigree rosettes*

The women of Vilaflor have made a virtue out of necessity. To supplement the family budget, in the evening they get together and make lace rosettes. In this mountain village bed covers, table lace and shawls are still made using the traditional method → p. 77



ONLY ON

DISCOVERY TOURS



1

TENERIFE AT A GLANCE



START: ① Puerto de la Cruz
END: ① Puerto de la Cruz

Distance:
🕒 260 km/161 miles

2 days
Driving time
(without stops)
7 hours



COSTS: For 2 people: 260 euros for hire car, petrol, food, accommodation and cable car

WHAT TO PACK: Sun cream, headwear, warm jacket, swimwear

IMPORTANT TIPS: Progress is slow on mountain roads.

As most visitors arrive at the national park and the Mount Teide cable car around noon, it is recommended to set off early.

This tour takes you through all the island's climatic zones on the way up to Spain's highest mountain, Mount Teide. First through a lush green landscape, you then ascend to windy heights where there are no trees in sight. Las Cañadas' gigantic crater

Every corner of the earth has its own special charm. If you want to explore all the many different facets of this region, head off the beaten track or get tips for the best stops, breathtaking views, hand-picked restaurants or the best local activities, then these customised discovery tours are just the right thing. Choose the best route for the day and follow in the footsteps of the MARCO POLO authors – well-prepared to navigate your way to all the many highlights that await you along the tour.

with its rock formations rises up dramatically – and remnants of old and new volcanic eruptions are evident everywhere. In contrast are the lively towns of La Orotava and La Laguna as well as the sun-bathed beaches along the southern coast.

Start in ① **Puerto de la Cruz** → p. 44 and head south through the densely populated **Valle de la Orotava** → p. 41 first to the picturesque village of ② **La Orotava** → p. 40. Romantic plazas, churches and monasteries serve as reminders of the island's colonial past. Carry on along the TF-21 and above **Aguamansa** lies the

