

TOP 10



Not to be missed!

Our TOP 10 hits – from the absolute No. 1 to No. 10 – help you plan your tour of the most important sights.

★ PARQUE NACIONAL DEL TEIDE ▶ 122

Towering over the volcanic landscape of the national park is the Pico del Teide, the highest mountain in Spain (3,718m/12,200ft, photo). The cable car takes you up to 3,550m (11,650ft) and, if you wish, you can then climb up to the summit.

★ LA LAGUNA ▶ 74

As you stroll through the historic centre of this World Heritage Site, the cathedral, churches and cloisters are a clear reminder of Tenerife's colonial past.

★ ICOD DE LOS VINOS ▶ 92

An enormous dragon tree is this small wine town's main attraction. Just to the north, in the parish church, you can admire an imposing silver cross.

★ MASCA ▶ 94

The gorge that opens up by this picturesque mountain village in the Teno Mountains promises fit outdoor enthusiasts a spectacular experience.

★ PUERTO DE LA CRUZ ▶ 96

This popular holiday destination ranks highly for its attractive old town centre, and also for the Lago Martiánez swimming complex,

designed by César Manrique, in which water activities and art flow harmoniously together.

★ LA OROTAVA ▶ 100

Even the famous German naturalist and explorer Alexander von Humboldt could not resist the charm of the historic district's streets and alleys.

★ SAN ANDRÉS ▶ 52

People from Santa Cruz love the fish restaurants here. What is more, Tenerife's most beautiful palm-fringed beach can be found on the Playa de las Teresitas.

★ MONTAÑAS DE ANAGA ▶ 77

Tenerife's hiking paradise offers a captivating mix of unspoilt laurel forests, panoramic views and remote mountain villages.

★ VALLE GRAN REY ▶ 150

A wonderful valley on La Gomera with beautifully laid terraces, palm groves and a touch of flower power.

★ PLAZA DE ESPAÑA & PLAZA DE LA CANDELARIA ▶ 54

These interlocking squares were given a makeover by London's Tate Modern architects Herzog & de Meuron; their saltwater lake is particularly impressive.

ISLAND LIFE

On first impressions you might think that Tenerife is a chunk of Britain teleported to the sunshine. English breakfasts and Sunday roasts, plus Premier League football shown in sports bars are typical of Playa des las Américas and Los Cristianos.

Island(s) of Eternal Spring

On the Canary Islands, the temperatures are mild all year round; in the summer it is nowhere near as hot as places in southern Europe for example, which explains why an increasing number of Spaniards from the mainland enjoy the summer break on the Atlantic islands. For Central Europeans the Canarian “winter” is like their spring; the average daily temperature, even during the coldest month of the year in February, rarely falls below 20 degrees Celsius. On the south coast of Tenerife, you can bathe all year round.



On a clear day you can look across from Mirador Pico del Inglés at the Anaga mountains

Every year around five million non-Spanish tourists take holidays on the island. The majority are British and the second largest group is from Germany. Twenty thousand Brits live here year-round, with double that number owning holiday or second homes.

More Than Just a Tourist Enclave

Tenerife is still very much a Canarian island with a robust culture. Universidad de la Laguna is an obvious and vigorous counterbalance to euro-vacation land. The 25,000 students arriving from all across the country represent a contemporary and energetic 21st-century Spanish influence on the island. And Santa Cruz de Tenerife is an authentic Spanish city; this is one of Spain’s most exciting cityscapes, and a perfect place for that most traditional of Spanish pastimes, the evening *paseo walk*.

TENERIFE FACTS

- Tenerife is the largest of the seven islands that make up the archipelago of the Islas Canarias or Canary Islands.
- The autonomous region is made up of two provinces – Santa Cruz de Tenerife (incorporating Tenerife, La Palma, La Gomera and El Hierro) and Las Palmas (incorporating Gran Canaria, Fuerteventura and Lanzarote).
- The Canary Islands have thirteen seats in the Spanish Senate (government) plus two elected by the autonomous council. Tenerife supplies three seats.
- The Canary Islands are home to 2.1 million people, of whom 906,000 live on Tenerife.
- *Tener* is the word used by the native inhabitants (the Guanches) for either “mountain” while *ife* was the word for “white”. Tenerife can thus be literally translated as “white mountain”.

Getting Your Bearings

Humming with activity, Santa Cruz is the urban heart of Tenerife, far removed from the tourist clichés. A major port, it is the capital of the province (which includes the islands of La Gomera, La Palma and El Hierro) and home to 220,000 people, almost a quarter of Tenerife's population. It has fine churches, interesting museums, leafy squares, an aquatic centre and, just north of town, a fine beach.



The Canary Islands are blessed with all sorts of tax breaks and the local version of sales tax – IGIC – is very low. As a result a good percentage of package tourists are guided through Santa Cruz for at least a morning's shopping.

One of the best parts about Santa Cruz is the chance to get lost in the bustle of a real Spanish city. There is enough to see and do to fill at least a day, and a little people-watching over a drink at a city centre *terrazza* is the perfect way to while away an early afternoon. If you time your visit right you could be here for one of the most exciting festivals in the world – *Carnaval*. Since 2000, the city has undergone massive changes with a crop of contemporary buildings and communal spaces that have upped its cool factor. An enjoyable aquatic centre and a fine sandy beach just north of town add to the allure.

View from Hotel Contemporáneo over the Salamanca district of Santa Cruz



TOP 10

- ★ San Andrés ▶ 52
- ★ 10 Plaza de España & Plaza de la Candelaria ▶ 54

Don't Miss

- ① Plaza de la Iglesia ▶ 56
- ⑫ Plaza del Príncipe de Asturias ▶ 59

At Your Leisure

- ⑬ Castillo de San Juan & Auditorio ▶ 61
- ⑭ Parque Marítimo ▶ 61
- ⑮ Mercado de Nuestra Señora de Africa ▶ 61
- ⑯ Tenerife Espacio de las Artes ▶ 62
- ⑰ Plaza 25 de Julio ▶ 63
- ⑱ Parque García Sanabria ▶ 63
- ⑲ Museo Militar ▶ 63

