

# CANARY ISLANDS: NATIONAL PARKS OFFER REMARKABLE EXPERIENCE



The beautiful Canary Islands, a Spanish archipelago situated near the south-west coast of Africa, attract nature lovers with a number of national parks. Each of the four reserves offers quite a different experience.

Spain boasts a total of 13 national parks four of which are located in the Canaries. Two of them were declared as World Heritage Site by UNESCO and the other two as World Biosphere Reserve. Tourists going on Canary Islands holidays can look forward to abundant wildlife and stunning creations of nature.

## **Caldera de Taburiente**

The official name of the park established in 1954 and situated on the island of La Palma is Parque Nacional de la Caldera de Taburiente. It is believed that Caldera used to be a huge crater but now it is a mountain arch with a crater shape. The total area of the park is about 46.9 sq. km.

Among the most popular attractions for visitors is the wall of Caldera de Taburiente. At some places, the wall is more than 2000 m high (from Caldera floor). Roque de los Muchachos is the highest point on the wall (northern part) reaching exactly 2,423 m high. The Observatory situated near the peak is a convenient place for tourists offering nice views of the park. In 2002, Caldera de Taburiente was declared as World Biosphere Reserve.

## **Garajonay**

UNESCO declared Garajonay a World Heritage Site in 1986. Situated in the center and north of La Gomera, Garajonay was established in 1981, covering an area of 40 sq. km. It is named after the highest point of the island, Garajonay rock formation (1,484 m).

The park is famous as the best example of the humid subtropical forest known as Laurisilvia. Other than Laurisilvia, the forests of Garajonay include many different types of forest structures thanks to distinct humidity and stability of temperature.

The soothing forest greens of different trees are the main attraction for tourists while visiting Garajonay National Park. The park also has two wooden statues of the legendary lovers of Guanche, Gara and Jonay, also a well known destination for visitors.

## **Timanfaya National Park**

Parque Nacional de la Timanfaya, established in 1974, was declared a World Biosphere Reserve along with the whole Lanzarote island in 1993. It covers the southern part of Tinajo and northern part of Yaiza with an area of 51.07 sq. km.

What is quite remarkable for all visitors is that the whole land is volcanic-soil made. Although today Timanfaya is the only active volcano the surface temperature is still very high at places ranging between 100 °C and 600 °C. Tourists thus can enjoy views of geysers of steam.

## **Teide National Park**

Parque Nacional de la Teide is located on the island of Tenerife. Established in 1954, Teide was declared as the second World Heritage Site of Canary Islands by UNESCO in 2007. The park is situated around the highest mountain of Spain, Mount Teide, which is also the world's third largest volcano (3,718 m). The Pico Viejo volcano is located near Teide as well.

Apart from being the oldest and largest national park of Spain and a UNESCO declared World Heritage Site, it is a huge attraction for the tourists for being one of the twelve Treasures of Spain. The Observatorio de Teide can be found midway up the mountain. This gives a very clear view of the whole place.

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