

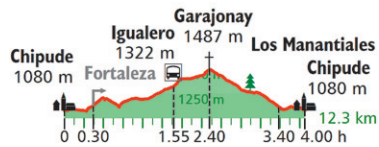
19 From Chipude to Garajonay, 1487 m

4.00 hrs



Pleasant high ramble to the highest point of the island

Garajonay is not only the most visited but also the most approachable walking destination on La Gomera, but most walkers prefer tackling this peak via the shorter ascents from Laguna Grande, Contadero or Pajarito. This route is much more peaceful and inspiring, leading along a pleasant, particularly panoramic high mountain trail to Iguale-ro, La Gomera's highest village, then climbing from there to the crest of Garajonay. If this peak isn't enough of a challenge for you, there is another popular one to »take on« – the Fortaleza.



Starting point: The church square of Chipude, 1080 m (bus stop for lines 1, 4, 6).

Height difference: About 550 m.

Grade: Taken as a whole, this is essentially an easy, mostly pleasant walk following distinct trails.

Refreshment: In Chipude and in Aparta-

dero/Pavón, bar/restaurants.

Alternatives: Ascent to the Fortaleza from the Fortaleza Saddle (¾ hr there and back, →Walk 18). Descent from Garajonay to the road junction at Pajarito (→Walk 8; bus stop for line 1).

Linking tip: With Walks 8, 17, 18, 20, 21 and 61.

From the church square of **Chipude**, follow the main road towards San Sebastián then 150 m on, turn left onto the broad cobbled trail, GR 131 (white/red), that ascends for a short stretch to cross over the main road and, on the other side, descends to the road to La Dama. After 30 m, the camino forking

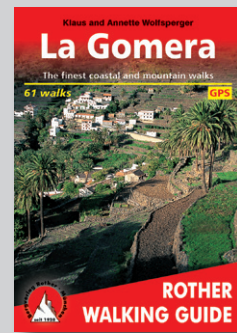


View from Mirador de Iguale-ro of the high mountain trail and to Fortaleza; La Palma in the background.

left continues on parallel to the road and leads to the hamlet of **Apartadero** then merges with the road again. Past the Los Camioneros bar and after a sharp right-hand bend (or via the *camino* through the *barranco*) reach the hamlet of **Pavón**. 20 m after the transformer tower on the side of the road, a cobblestone street ascends to the left and ends just before a small gentle valley notch. Here right through the notch climbing to the **Fortaleza Saddle**, 1125 m, to reach a fork in the trail (to the right a possible excursion onto the Fortaleza, →Walk 18).

Continue the route by keeping straight on along the GR 131 and, after 10 mins, meet the road to Erque. Descend to the right along this for about 10 mins until crossing a *barranco* in a sharp right-hand bend. Here, immediately after the bend, the GR 131 turns left onto a *camino*. This ascends in a





Since the forest fire of 2012, the high trail to Iqualero has lost much of its charm.

pleasant, gentle high mountain walk below the timberline traversing the slope and opening a fantastic view of the Fortaleza. Near a high tension power pylon also catch a downwards view of the hamlet of Erque nestled in the chasm-like *barranco* of the same name. In easy up-and-down walking with a lovely view of La Dama and the neighbouring islands of El Hierro and La Palma, traverse the slope. Only after passing the third power pylon (a good ½ hr) does the trail become somewhat steeper. 5 minutes later the trail forks – here turn left (straight on, the GR 132.1 to Erquito branches off). Our *camino* now climbs through overgrown terraces to the village street of **Iqualero** (10 minutes), ascending to the main road (10 minutes; bus stop shelter for lines 1, 6).

The GR 131 crosses the main road bearing right, then turns left onto a *camino* behind the small waterworks (sign); this ascends in a fairly straight line through the pine forest which has been almost fully decimated due to the

From Garajonay, you can enjoy a splendid view of Tenerife when weather is clear.



forest fire of 2012. After 10 mins, meet a forestry road – follow this to the left via the GR 131. After a few minutes, another forestry road merges from the left into ours then a quarter of an hour later another forestry road coming from Chipude merges sharply from the left (the return route later on). A good 100 m later reach another track forking off (the cobbled road forking left leads to the mountain road with the car park, Alto del Contadero; to the right to the Garajonay summit). We follow the cobbled road 20 m to the right and then turn left onto a path that forks shortly after – turn right here crossing the ridge to ascend to the overlook platform at **Garajonay**; when weather permits enjoy a won-

derful 360° panoramic view. Return along the cobbled road and after 5 mins turn left at the fork and onto the cobbled road towards Chipude (sign). A good 100 m on, reach another fork – turn right here (sign »Chipude – Laguna Grande«), descending along a steep cobbled road while enjoying a fabulous view of the Fortaleza. After about 20 mins, pass the pine forest, Pinar de Argumame (here, two trails fork off to the right). 50 m further on, reach another junction. Here, a forestry road forks to the right and, diagonally right, a signed, hollow way-like trail forks off as well; continue along this one. In a few minutes, this trail becomes a regular roadway, then shortly after, swings to the left and forks – bear right to descend. Soon the roadway becomes a stepped *camino* passing vineyards and descending to **Los Manantiales**. Cross over the road and then turn right onto the lantern-flanked *camino* to continue. At the first house, turn left, descending to an intersecting trail. Continue left along this until, in front of a house, a broad intersecting trail leads to the right descending to the valley floor. On the other flank of the valley, a gently ascending trail continues, bearing right along the slope, and forks 5 mins later (to the right heads to El Cercado). Here left to the ridgeline then descend through a small valley and continue along a cobblestone street down to the church square of **Chipude**.



Just before reaching Iqualero.