

TOP 50 Ruta de los Volcanes

5.45 hrs.



The Volcano Route – the show-piece walk of the island

The traverse of the Cumbre Vieja is one of the greatest and most breathtaking walks on the island – not only because of the constantly varied landscape and the insight it provides into the volcanic history of the 'isla bonita', but also because of the tremendous views taking in the west and east coasts. If you wish to attempt walking the Volcano Route you should, however, be aware that

it is a strenuous day's walk and sudden, unexpected adverse weather conditions can occur on the crest of the ridge with cloud, fog and a strong to hurricane force wind.

Starting point: Refugio del Pilar, 1440m (no bus service, →p. 153).

Destination: Los Canarios (Fuencaliente), 722m (No.200, 201, 203 bus stop). Return to the Refugio del Pilar by taxi.

Height difference: ascent to Deseada 700m, descent to Los Canarios 1400m.

Grade: this is a strenuous mountain walk requiring good physical fitness and sure-footedness. There is often low clouds and extremely stormy winds along the crest of the ridge which can force you to abandon the attempt.

Refreshment: in Los Canarios several bar-restaurants and bodegas.

Alternatives: the Volcano Route can be split into two sections: Refugio El Pilar – Deseada and Los Canarios – Deseada. From the col between Volcán Martín and Los Faros fit walkers can return by descending with the SL LP 111, on the right past Montaña Pelada, to a forest road (good ½ hr.) and along this to the right in about 4 hrs. back to the Refugio del Pilar (total time 8–9 hrs.).

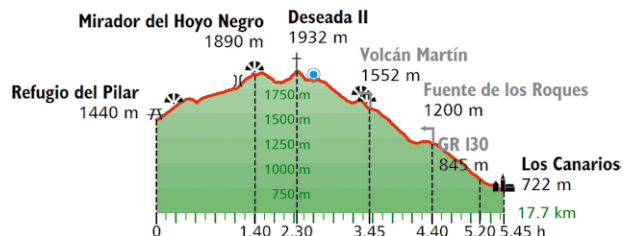
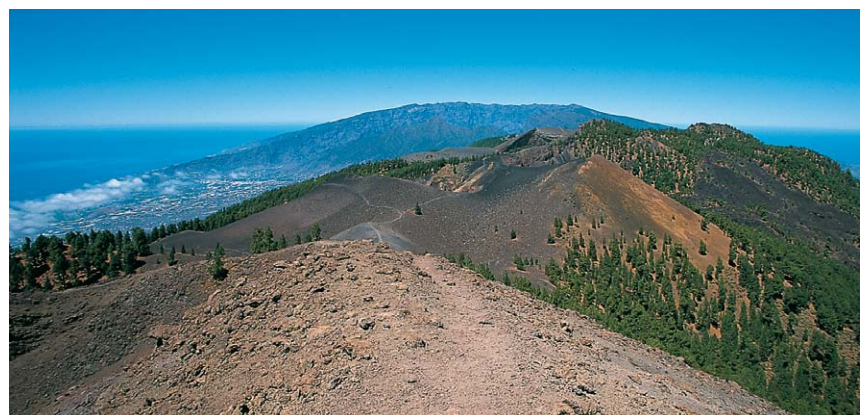
Linking tip: with Walks 45, 49 and 52.

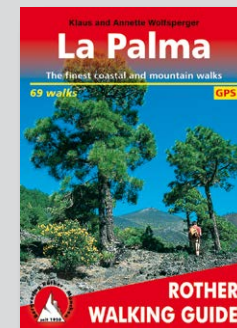


The ascent to the ridgeline of the Cumbre Vieja.

From the road go straight through the picnic area to the **Refugio del Pilar** and 50m after the Visitor Centre (interesting exhibition about the Cumbre Vieja) keep right at the fork in the direction of 'Los Canarios' (GR 131, white/red). After 10 minutes keep right again at the fork. The footpath runs at first through marvellous pine wood and the view opens out later of the mountains surrounding the Caldera de Taburiente and of the Aridane Valley. Now cross the gritty volcanic hillside of Pico Birigoyo – only ferns, gorse bushes and pines brighten the landscape which is dominated by black sand. After a total of 40 minutes the path joins a forest road which is followed uphill to the left. 15 minutes later – once again in an open pine forest – the GR 131

From the Deseada, you can get an overview of a long stretch of the Volcano Route.





turns off to the right onto a path that leads through a wonderful landscape which nature has modelled almost in the style of a park: gorse bushes nestle in the ochre-coloured volcanic grit, light-green pines contrast with the dark lava scree and cover the path with a soft carpet of needles. Deep below is the west coast with its plantations and greenhouse roofs. A bridge is crossed (20 minutes) and then an ascent follows, up a splendidly colourful eroded gully, to the crest and along this to the highest point of the ridge, 1904m (20 minutes; half way along ignore the footpath bearing left, the *SL LP 125*, →Walk 45) – you can see Santa Cruz and Los Llanos if you look back.

Then descend to the rim of the deeply incut, heavily eroded basin of the **Cráter del Hoyo Negro**. The path now keeps bearing to the left and contours round the next elevation on the ridge to the left. Here, it's worthwhile taking the detour to **Pico Nambroque**, 1924m, which drops away steeply to the east (¼ hrs., →Walk 45).

Further on along the Volcano Route, the next volcanic basin with the pitch-black lava field La Malforada is visible. The path continues to the right along the crater and forks at the lowest point of the crater rim at the foot of the *Montaña del Fraile* (¼ hr.). Straight on, a path goes off to the main summit of *Deseada*, 1945m (the path along the way touches the *Cráter del Duraznero*, finally left) – however, stay to the right along the waymarked main path. First it leads gently downwards in a wide curve around *Duraznero* and goes through an increasingly steep valley up to the summit of *Deseada II*, 1932m (½ hr.). A

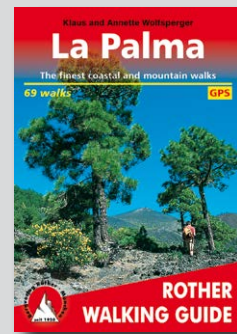


La Malforada lava field with Montaña del Fraile.

splendid panorama is the reward, which includes, besides the *caldera* outline and distant parts of the Volcano Route, also a superb view of the west coast; from the main summit (10 minutes) the east coast can also be seen. La Gomera, Tenerife and El Hierro are visible in the distance.

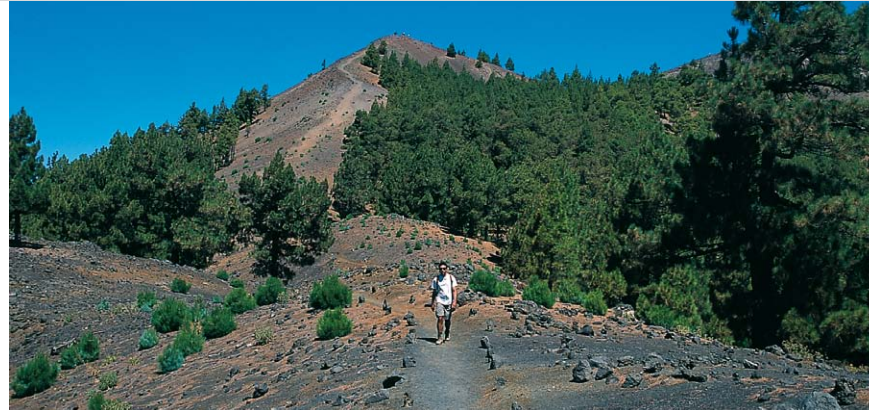
Continue southwards along the top of the ridge directly towards the gentle summits of the *Montaña los Bermejales* and the *Montaña de los Lajiones* where there is a small dark rock wall. After just under 20 minutes the *PR LP 15* crosses your path (→Walk 49; on the right, a water tap). The *GR 131* now goes uphill a little and continues across a shallow depression east of the *Montaña de los Lajiones*. There is then an elongated small valley which leads down between several rises. Gradually more and more pines are to be found at the edge of the path. This is an idyllic spot especially when the laburnum (*codeso*) is in flower.

Soon the pines become less frequent. The path, rising slightly, goes to the left around a dark volcanic cone (*Caldera del Búcaro*) and leads on to a low, faintly defined col (*Mirador de Montaña Cabrito*, 1638m; 40 minutes). In front of you, the *Volcán Martín* has now appeared. Go down along the ridge to the fork shortly before the edge of the red-coloured *Martín* crater (1552m; 10 minutes). Straight on it is possible to make a detour to the summit of **Volcán Martín**, 1597m, or to the *Fuente del Fuego* in the *Martín* crater (10 minutes are needed for each; →Walk 52).



However, stay to the right on the main path which leads across the scree-covered flank to a col between the volcano and the Faros summit. Now walk on over gritty volcanic slopes directly towards the brownish double summit of the **Montaña Pelada** (after 5 minutes the **SL LP 111** turns off right), which the Volcano Route avoids to the left with fine views of the secondary crater situated to the south of Martín. 25 minutes from the col the path levels out in a pine forest and there is a fork immediately afterwards. The Volcano Route goes off to the left here and leads steeply down to the Martín lava flow, on the right edge of which it continues towards the valley. Soon a wider, level path appears which is abandoned for another to the left after a few minutes. 2 minutes later cross over the **SL LP 110** (→Walk 52) and go straight on in the direction of the Fuente de los Roques. The path now continues, ascending slightly through an undulating sandy landscape with pine trees, to the foot of **Fuego** (Montaña la Semilla, 1248m), which you go round on the left. After 10 minutes there is a steep path (which is ignored) off to the left to the nearby picnic area of Fuente de los Roques which is already visible. A few minutes later the path on the south side of the Fuego forks once again – here go left down along the obvious stone-bordered path.

To the left, the destination of the next leg of the walk can be seen: the **Montaña del Pino**, 1039m (radio masts). A quarter of an hour later a forest track is crossed at its northern foot and the mountain is avoided to the right, immediately crossing another track. The track now drops down more steeply. Only af-



From Deseada it's downhill all the way.

ter a good 10 minutes – another track is crossed – does it level out a bit again. The *camino* is now bordered by stone walls and passes the first vineyards. After a few minutes, another track is crossed (with the **GR 130**) and then yet another. The path now skirts the following mountain to the right and merges after a few minutes into a track. Turn to the left along this track and leave it behind again after 5 minutes for a roadway which bears off diagonally left. Los Canarios can now be seen below. A few minutes later, the road is crossed again keeping to the left and then the church is reached, followed 100m after that by the main road of **Los Canarios** (Fuencaliente).

You can let the walk gently draw to a close in Los Canarios.

