

identification data

Name
CALDERA DE TABURIENTE
Protection Category
National Park
Autonomous Region
Canarias
Province
Santa Cruz de Tenerife
Area
4,690 hectares
Longitude **17° 52' 7" W**
Latitude **28° 42' 26" N**
Created
6 October 1954
Reclassified
25 March 1981

addresses

PARQUE NACIONAL DE LA CALDERA DE TABURIENTE
"El Paso" Visitor Centre and Park Offices
Ctra. General de Padrón, 47
38750 El Paso - La Palma - S/C de Tenerife
Tel. 922 92 22 80
Fax: 922 49 70 81
e-mail: infcalde.cmayot@gobiernodecanarias.org
Web:<http://www.mma.es/parques>
(112) Emergencias

diplomas

1981
Special Protection Area
for Birds

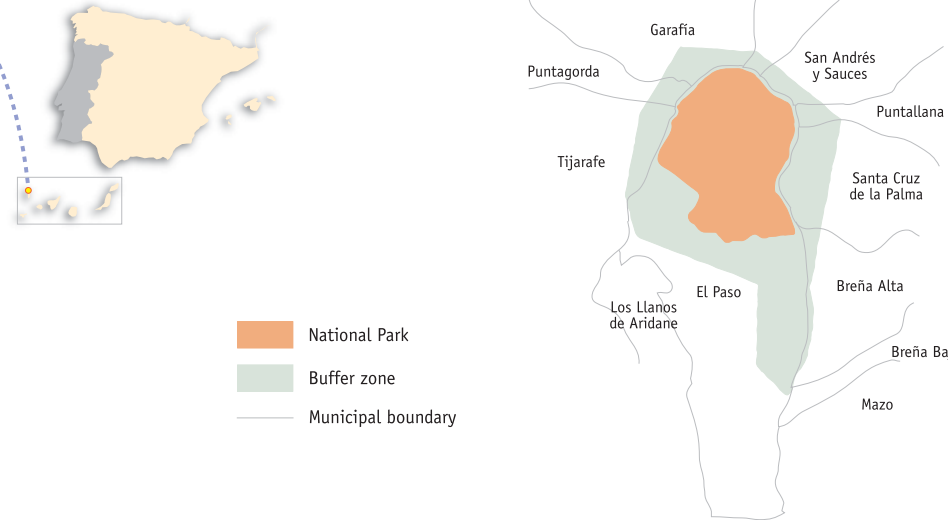
2001
LIC

2002
Biosphere Reserve



◀ The Caldera covered by clouds.

The Park is in the El Paso district of La Palma, the most north-westerly of the Canary Islands. An island of steep slopes, it is swept by the trade winds and is far away from its nearest neighbour. The result is a magnificent variety of landscapes and a great wealth of endemic species.



Orange National Park
Green Buffer zone
Grey Municipal boundary

The National Park. The most representative ecosystem is that of the Canary Island pine, set in a spectacular landscape of bounding waterfalls where archaeological remains are plentiful, especially rock carvings or petroglyphs. Any traveller interested in getting to know this environment will be surprised at the abruptness of the mountain landscape. The main part of the Park is the head of the *Baranco de Las Angustias*, a semi-circular ravine 8 km in diameter and 2,000 m from top to bottom, which resembles a gigantic volcanic crater or caldera, although, in fact, it is not. The pinnacles are punctuated by crests, known as *raques*, the result of uneven erosion of the diverse volcanic materials. Halfway up the cliffs, between 1,200 and 1,600 m, there are frequent springs that run down the gullies to produce numerous waterfalls of great height and little volume – a surprising sight in so arid a landscape.

Principal ecosystems
Erosive caldera with Canary Island pine, alpine scrub, ravine bed vegetation and varied rock flora.

Water. There are numerous springs in the Park. Their waters run in more or less tranquil streams, occasionally negotiating large drops, where they form picturesque cascades. Most of the waters are crystalline, except for those originating in *Las Rivanteras* ravine, characterised by the dissolved ferrous salts, which turn the water course a ruddy orange colour. Water is scarce throughout the islands, and so has always been especially important in La Caldera. Its many springs have been used for irrigation since colonisation began. In the course of the 20th century, many galleries were excavated, horizontal tunnels for the exploitation of underground waters, which reduced the number of water sources in the Park, although the volume of flow remains more or less stable. Some galleries were opened from the exterior, causing a drop in the volume of flow and the number of sources; the owners therefore excavated others in the opposite direction to gain access to new underground waters and thus maintain the output.



establishment

Caldera de Taburiente National Park was created by Decree on 6 October 1954, covering an area of 3,750 ha. It was reclassified by Act 4/1981 on 25 March 1981. Its area was increased to 4,690 ha when El Paso Town Council decided to include part of its public woodlands in the protected area.

man and his imprint on the park and its surroundings



◀ The Astrophysics laboratory: one of the modern signs of human habitation.

Humans have been present in Caldera de Taburiente for 2,000 years.

▶ Vestiges of man's presence in past ages.



Cultural aspects. Archaeological studies show that the zone was inhabited by a pastoral society; the materials they used were Neolithic and they had tools made of stone and bone, leather and wood. Traces of the original inhabitants of La Caldera, called Benahoarises, survive in the form of ceramics made without using potter's wheels and rock carvings or petroglyphs, which can still be seen today. They lived their lives partly in caves in the lower parts of the island – all outside the Park boundaries – and partly on year-round or seasonal pastures. This culture was not long in vanishing under the pressure of the colonisation that followed the conquest. The Caldera de Taburiente was first fiefed to a nephew of Alonso Fernández de Lugo. It was then sold several times before coming into the hands of Jacome de Monteverde, the last single landowner until his death in 1557. His will divided all his farmland properties among his sons and provided that the Caldera, the source of water, should remain undivided, thus creating an entailed estate known as the *Heredamiento de Las Haciendas de Argual y Tazacorte*. By the end of the 20th century, around 1,800 landowners shared the Park's waters, which supply Argual and Tazacorte, one of the most prosperous banana growing areas in the Canary Islands.

An age-old culture. The Benahoarises left records of their lives in the form of rock carvings or petroglyphs, which still survive in the Park. The most common motifs are spirals, concentric circles and signs resembling the Berber alphabet. The island was divided into clans under chiefs known as *Menceys*. The last Mency of the Aceró clan was *Tanausú*. These territories were conquered by Alonso Fernández de Lugo for the Kingdom of Castile.

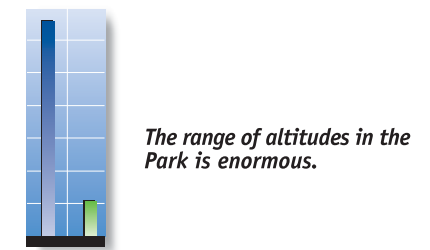
▶ Prehistoric rock carvings, or petroglyphs, abound in the Park.

flora and fauna

Flora. The Canary Island pine dominates the landscape. A tall tree with a straight trunk and conical crown when young, it grows larger than any other Spanish pine. It is unusual in being resistant to fire and in its capacity to regenerate after burning. Although the pine woods are poor in companion species, the Park is rich in rock plants that grow on the steep walls and *raques*, such as the houseleek, some bugloss species, the Canary cistus, the yellow-flowered La Palma tansy and rock rose, at whose base there often grows an odd red-and-yellow coloured parasitic plant known by the islanders as *batatilla*. On the crest of the Caldera, at altitudes of over 2,000 m, one can find alpine vegetation like broom and endemic species such as the violet, viper's bugloss and Spanish broom. On gentler slopes, man has planted small fields of cereals, vines, tobacco and fruit trees. There are also some fig trees of considerable size. Two imported species flourish among the hedgerow vegetation: tедера (*Psoralea bituminosa*), used to feed cattle, and haragán, or croftonweed (*Ageratina adenophora*) a species originally brought from Mexico.



New pine shoots shortly after a forest fire.



The range of altitudes in the Park is enormous.

DATA
Roque de los Muchachos 2,426 m
lowest altitude in the Park 430 m



The Barranco de Las Rivanteras waterfall, coloured a ruddy orange by ferrous salts from nearby springs.



- FLORA
- 1 Canary cedar
 - 2 Canary Island willow
 - 3 Viper's bugloss
 - 4 Bejeque (*Aeonium palmense*)
 - 5 Tagasaste (*Chamaecytisus proliferus*)
 - 6 Spanish broom
 - 7 Amagante (*Cistus symphytifolius*)
 - 8 Canary pine

- FAUNA
- 9 Rock dove
 - 10 Kestrel
 - 11 Canary long-eared bat
 - 12 Chough
 - 13 Canary lizard
 - 14 Chaffinch



The Canary Island praying mantis is endemic to the island of La Palma.



The Canary Island pine is the most abundant tree species in the Park.



Water as the source of life: La Desfondada waterfall.

visiting the park



Broom in bloom



Aerial view from Punta de Los Roques



Bird's foot trefoil in bloom



Roque Palmero



Aerial view from Roque de Los Muchachos

General Information. Visitors can drive into the Park by three routes, as far as the starting-points of internal or peripheral footpaths that allow more thorough exploration of the Park. Those entering from the south can start at the Visitor Centre, from where there is a path to La Cumbreita. Entry on the west side is by way of Lomo de los Caballos to Barranco de Las Angustias; starting-point for the most popular route (Brecitos – camping area). On the north side the road goes as far as Roque de los Muchachos.

Visitor Centres. The El Paso Visitor Centre and the Park offices are at km 23.9 on the LP-3 road, between Santa Cruz de La Palma and Los Llanos de Aridane. The Centre has wheelchair access and contains exhibition and audiovisual rooms (video presentations in three languages), a botanic garden, a book library and a bookshop. The Taburiente Service Centre is located in the heart of the Caldera, next to the camping area. There is an exhibition room with a scale model, toilet facilities and a seasonally staffed first-aid post. Guided visits are available. There are information points at La Cumbreita, Lomo de Los Caballos and Roque de Los Muchachos, all with attended parking areas.

Routes. Visitors can go round the edge of the Park or through the centre following the marked trails. If you only have a few hours to spare, we recommend the Cumbreita - Lomo de las Chozas trail or the peak of Roque de Los Muchachos. If you have the whole day, we would suggest Brecitos – Camping Area - Barranco de Las Angustias. For more than one day, there are interior or peripheral trails. To spend the night in the camping area, you must get a permit from the Visitor Centre.

Other services. El Riachuelo nature study centre is situated outside the Park boundaries at the southern entrance. It can accommodate 77 in cabins and has a dining room and other services. Those wishing to use the centre should submit a programme of educational activities with the assistance of the Park guides. There is a refuge at Punta de Los Roques.

advice and safety

▶ **Visitors to the Park are asked to respect the peace of the place and cooperate in its preservation.** Do not disturb the animals and remember that you are not allowed to uproot, pick or extract plants or minerals, or to disturb any other natural element. As far as possible you should take any litter back to town to avoid overflowing litter bins. Never leave litter anywhere other than in the receptacles provided. Free camping is absolutely prohibited anywhere in the National Park. It is forbidden to light fires, to build stone dikes or channels, to make inscriptions, to fly kites, gas balloons, hang-gliders or paragliders, to make loud noises or to stray from the designated paths. Pets are not allowed inside the Park. Walkers are advised to wear comfortable clothing and climbing boots or sports footwear. Do not forget to take food and water with you. In summer you must guard against sun and dehydration, especially near the summits, where in winter temperatures can fall below zero. Do not travel alone and do not stray from the trails, as you could get lost or have an accident. Check on the state of paths before starting on any route, especially the one between Cumbreita and the Camping Area. In many ravines and on unstable terrain there are occasionally rockfalls that block the accesses.

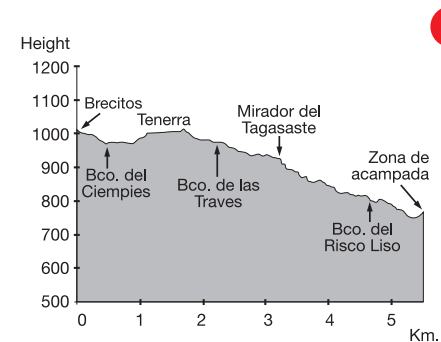
don't miss:

- ▶ The main part of the Park is the head of the Barranco de Las Angustias, a semi-circular ravine resembling a gigantic volcanic crater or caldera, although in fact it is not.
- ▶ Half-way up the cliffs are numerous waterfalls of great height and little volume – a surprising sight in so arid a landscape.
- ▶ Of the 432 flowering plant species discovered in La Caldera, around 40 are endemic to the island of La Palma. Some are in danger of extinction.
- ▶ The Park's waters are crystalline, except for those that run down the Almendro Amargo or de las Rivanceras ravine and tributaries.

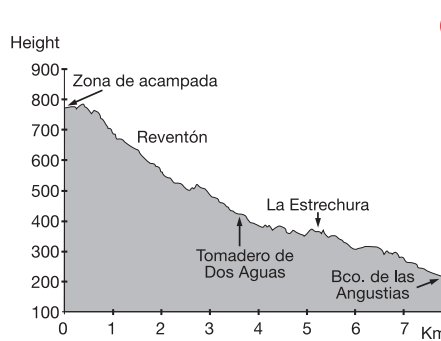
Please note that the following prohibitions apply within the Park boundaries:



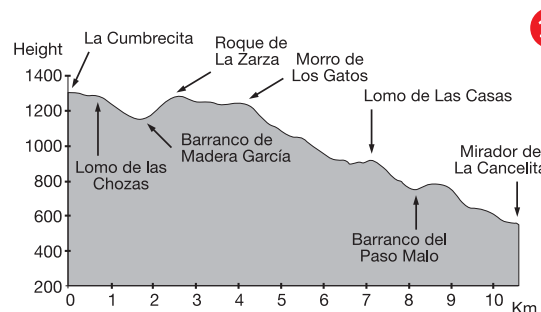
map of Caldera de Taburiente National Park



Winding through a mature pine forest with small gullies, some with flowing water, the trail is downhill nearly all the way into the Caldera. Average time: 1.5 - 2 h. This is the easiest route to the campsite. Recommended for normal walkers. For people who do not suffer from vertigo.

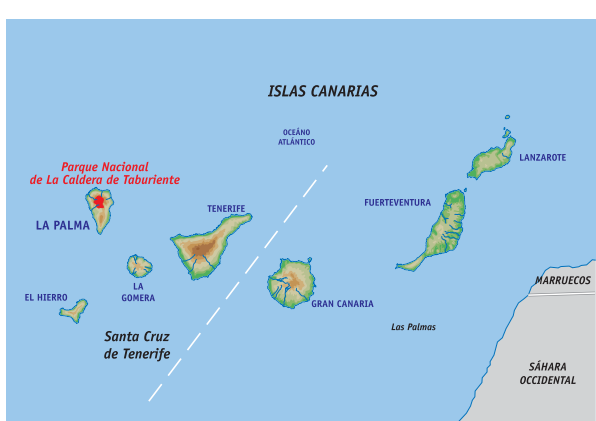


The trail first passes through low altitude pine forest and then enters a ravine, where geological features predominate: dykes, iron-stained waters, rocks, pillow lava, etc. Average time: 4 hours. Impossible in heavy rain.



Descent among pine trees and shady cliffs with "bejeques", wide views, springs, high rocks and dry farming vegetation in the end. Average time: 6 - 8 hours. Ask about the trail before setting out, maybe it's dangerous.

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Your safety is our concern, but it is your responsibility.

For any further information related to the paths, ask in the Park Information Centres