

HIKING IN EL HIERRO

Canary Islands



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1 Introduction

We present a **7-day trip**, including travelling days, to discover by foot the most beautiful natural attractions of the island of El Hierro. We will also learn about the island's history and we savour **delicious local delicacies**, so completing our energetic, rewarding and very special journey.

Small is beautiful. And **El Hierro**, at 268,71 Km² is the smallest of the **Canary Islands** (If we don't include the islets of the Chinijo Archipelago). But don't be deceived by its modest size, as this is definitely not impediment to enjoying the dramatic landscapes we encounter on an island where nature remains untouched. And this is before we consider its underwater treasures... Do you know that El **Hierro** is considered one of the best places to go scuba diving? But we hope you still have some energy left, as we came here to do some walking! El Hierro is a wonder for walkers. It is the most southern and western island of the archipelago, the most rural and the wildest, which gives the island its special character.

El Hierro is also a **Unesco Biosphere Reserve**, with a steep terrain forged by its volcanic history, and remarkable vegetation created by its unique location, micro-climate, and the abiding presence of the region's trade winds,

with the spectacular **Laurisilva forest** a definite highlight. We might will be lucky enough to have the company of the island's most famous resident, the Hierro giant lizard. And if you do don't worry, they will just be enjoying a pleasant stroll in this most stunning of islands.

2 Basic Information

Destination: El Hierro, Canary Islands (Spain).

Activity: Trekking.

Difficulty: * Technical level **

Duration: 7 days.

Season: All year round.

Minimum group: 4-8 people

2.1 Required physical condition and type of terrain

Physical level	Total elevation	Kms	Physical Condition
*	Up to 600 m	Up to 16 km	Normal: occasional sport practice
**	Up to 1200 m	Up to 23 km	Good: regular sport practice
***	Up to 1400 m	Over. 23 km	Very good: strict sport practice

Physical level category does not have to correspond exactly with given ascent and kilometers at the same time.

Type of terrain

- * Good conditioned forest tracks and trails
- ** Good conditioned trails. Presence of stones and roots on the way requiring attentive hike.
- *** Bumpy, stone loose tracks, including off trails

Observations. Walks are accessible for active people that does some hill walking frequently and that are able to climb between 500 – 700 metres daily at an easy pace and with a duration of 3 to 5 hours including stops.

3 Destination

El Hierro is the most southern and western island of the archipelago and it is a **Unesco Biosphere Reserve**.

Its geological morphology is very complex due to its volcanic origins. It has a main mountain range with **Pico de Malpaso** (1.501 m) being its highest peak, and dividing the island in two halves, one to the south and the other to the north. The coastline is quite steep, with numerous imponent cliffs.

The climate is determined by the **trade winds** and the **Canary's stream**, which is a cold fork in the **Gulf Stream**. The water temperature in winter is around 18° C, and around 20° C in the summer. The trade winds, loaded with humidity, impact against the mountains causing rain, mainly in the north face, whereas in the south

predominates the dry winds, creating an arid landscape. The temperature is mild all year round, with warm winters and cool summers.

The complex geological morphology and the climate of El Hierro creates a very unique and special vegetation. The visitor will enjoy a **varied flora**, from lush **laurel forests** to coniferous woodlands, green meadows and **banana plantations**. As we already mentioned before, the south has a much drier climate and so the plant species are very different in this area.

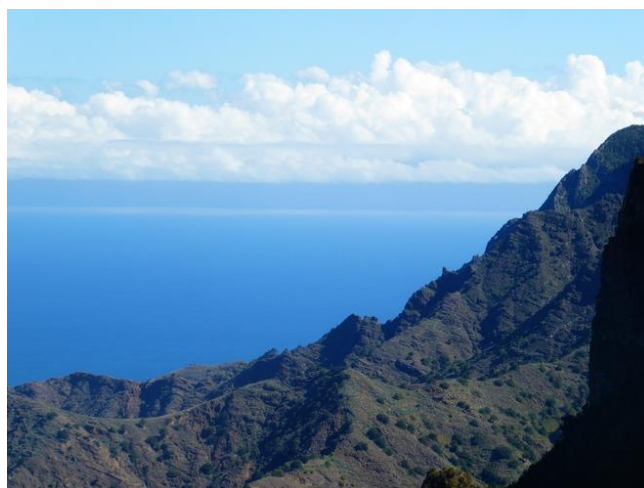
Its inhabitants, the “**herreños(as)**”, have suffered a fall in numbers along history due to economic hardship and long droughts. In recent years this trend has change, as many emigrants has returned from Venezuela. Right now, El Hierro is the **least populated island** with 11.000 habitants.

The local government wants to keep alive the folklore of the island. There are some folkloric associations that performs traditional dances. The most important festivity of El Hierro is **La Bajada de la Virgen de los Reyes** (saint of the island) and it is celebrated every 4 years, the first Saturday of July. The Saint is transferred 44km from Dehesa (Frontera) to Valverde, the capital of the island, going through all villages of the island. The procession is accompanied by dancers performing the traditional **baile de la Virgen**.

Another famous inhabitant is the Lizard. The giant lizard (grows up to 70cm) is the king! And although its population has decreased, it is still possible to spot it. Don't worry they are inoffensive!

We can't finish without mentioning the delicious **local gastronomy**. **Fish** has an important place and it is cooked in many different ways, offering the visitor a varied selection of dishes. Other traditional recipes are **potaje**, **el puchero** and **el rancho con papas**.

In order to enjoy the tasty food, it is important to burn some energy first by walking or maybe practising “**lucha canaria**” which is one of the most popular local sports.



4 Program

4.1 Program outline

Day 1. Arrival to the island of El Hierro. Reception of participants and transfer to the accommodation. Trip to **Tamaduste** (depending on the time of arrival).

Night in Valverde.

Day 2. Day trip from **Valverde. Garoé “the sacred tree”**. Visit to **Las Playas Natural Monument**.

Distance 8.5 km. Ascent + 220 m – 680 m. Estimated time 3-4 hours.

Night in Valverde.

Day 3. El Pinar-Tacorón- La Restinga.

Distance 11 km. Ascent + 50 m – 800 m. Estimated time 3 hours.

Night in La Restinga.

Day 4. La Llanía. Montaña de la Fuente- Ermita de San Salvador- El Pinar. Visit to **Las Playas Viewpoint** and **Isora Viewpoint** over **Las Playas Natural Monument**.

Distance 11 km. Ascent + 200 m – 600 m. Estimated time 4 hours.

Night in La Restinga.

Day 5. Coastal Route Punta Grande- La Maceta. Optional bath in the **natural swimming pools by the sea**. Visit to other natural attractions.

Distance 8 km. Ascent – 220 m. Estimated time 2-3 hours.

Night in Valle de Frontera.

Day 6. Ermita de los Reyes-Mirador de Bascos- Ermita de los Reyes. Visit to the centenary **Juniper forest**. Visit to Orchilla Lighthouse or Arenas Blancas beach.

Distance 10 km. Ascent + 440 m – 440 m. Estimated time 3-4 hours.

Night in Valle de Frontera.

Day 7. Transfer to **Valverde (VDE) airport**. Return flight.

4.2 Detailed program

Day 1. Arrival to the island of El Hierro. Reception of participants and transfer to the accommodation. Trip to **Tamaduste** (depending on the time of arrival).

Tamaduste is a small village located near the airport and it surprises visitors for the colours of the sea. Here we will do a beautiful itinerary where we will see volcanic features like lava flows, cliffs of basaltic rocks and other interesting rock formations.

Night in Valverde.

Day 2. Day trip from **Valverde. Garoé “the sacred tree”**. Visit to **Las Playas Natural Monument**.

The **Bimbaches** were the first inhabitants of the island of **El Hierro**. The **Garoé** is a specimen of tilia that was the sacred tree of the island. The big leaves of the **Garoé** were capable to capture and purify the water particles

of the fog and the people collected it by digging a ditch around the tree. The original tree was uprooted in a storm. In 1949 a new tree was planted in the same place.

Starting from **San Andrés** (1.100 m) that is the highest situated village of the island, we will follow a lineal route visiting the **Garoé** and the interesting **Nisdafe Plateau**.

We will finish in **Valverde**, the capital of the island. We will have free time to walk its streets or to rest at one of the bars and cafes.

Distance 8.5 km. Ascent + 220 m – 680 m. Estimated time 3-4 hours.

In the afternoon we will visit **Las Playas Natural Monument** which is very scenic place. The emblematic amphitheater-like terrain is the result of a series of landslides.

Here, visitors will not miss the exalting **Bonanza Rock** rising from the depths of the ocean.

Night in Valverde.

Day 3. El Pinar-Tacorón- La Restinga.

We will visit the south of the island with an interesting itinerary that links the small village of **El Pinar** with the coast village of **Tacorón**, enjoying the views over **Mar de las Calmas**, **Naos Bay** and the **Mar de Lavas**. It was here where just a few years ago a submarine volcanic eruption reminded us that the Canary Islands are still active.

We will have time for swimming and sunbathing at the beach and also to try the local cuisine.

Distance 11 km. Ascent + 50 m – 800 m. Estimated time 3 hours.

Night in La Restinga.

Day 4. La Llanía. Montaña de la Fuente- Ermita de San Salvador- El Pinar. Visit to Las Playas Viewpoint and Isora Viewpoint over Las Playas Natural Monument.

We will start at a high altitude, very close to some of the highest peaks of the island. We will walk towards the West along ridge with fantastic views to both sides until we reach **Ermita de San Salvador**. We will now turn towards the south to descent through a magnificent laurel forest to get to **El Pinar**.

Distance 11 km. Ascent + 200 m – 600 m. Estimated time 4 hours.

After the lunch break, we will now use a private vehicle to visit **Las Playas Natural Monument** from **Isora Viewpoint** and **Las Playas Viewpoint**.

Night in La Restinga.

Day 5. Coastal Route Punta Grande- La Maceta. Optional bath in the natural swimming pools by the sea. Visit to other natural attractions.

We will have a relaxed journey. We will travel to the north to do a coastal itinerary between **Punta Grande** and La Maceta. Along the route, we will have time to admire the **Atlantic Ocean**, to see the striking colours of the water and the waves sculpting the coastline.

The reward will be to reach **La Maceta** and to go for a swim in the natural swimming pools by the sea.

Distance 8 km. Ascent – 220 m. Estimated time 2-3 hours.

Once we have rested, we will visit a couple of learning centres where we will learn about history, fauna and flora. We will also stop at the **Charco Azul**, another natural swimming pool in the sea.

We will travel to La Peña Viewpoint, one of the most celebrated sites of the island, to contemplate the sunset. It was created by the canarian architect **César Manrique**, who created other masterpieces along the archipelago. The viewpoint consists of several balconies at different levels. The views over the **Golfo Valley** are spectacular.

Very close, we find the **Jinama Viewpoint**, a bit wilder but offers incredible views over the **Golfo**.

Night in Valle de Frontera.

Day 6. Ermita de los Reyes-Mirador de Bascos- Ermita de los Reyes. Visit to the centenary **Juniper forest**. Visit to Orchilla Lighthouse or Arenas Blancas beach.

We can't leave El Hierro without visiting the famous centenary Juniper forest, that shaped by the winds, are a real gem for visitors. The Juniper is the island's symbolic tree.

We will start from the south of the island to get to the main range of the island. From here we will walk towards the West descending through Loma de las Cabras and visiting **Bascos Viewpoint** and the **Juniper forest**.

Distance 10 km. Ascent + 440 m – 440 m. Estimated time 3-4 hours.

To finish the journey, we have two optional visits (depending on the available time):

The first option is to visit **Orchilla Lighthouse**, situated in a beautiful setting. This remote place was once a cartography landmark in every map of that time as it was the most western point of **Spain** and the location of the **Meridian 0**, which in 1.885 would change to **Greenwich**.

The second option is to enjoy the free time at the **Arenas Blancas Beach**.

Night in Valle de Frontera.

Day 7. Transfer to **Valverde (VDE) airport**. Return flight.

5 More information

Price. 850 euros. 160 euros supplement for single room applies.

5.1 Included

- Certified Mountain Guide for the duration of the trip.
- 6 nights of hotel in a double room with breakfast included (single room supplement applies)
 - 2 nights in apartments in Valverde in a double room with breakfast included.
 - 2 nights at Sur Restinga hotel in Restinga. Double room with breakfast included.
<https://es.surrestinga.com>
 - 2 nights at Los Verodes apartments in La Frontera. Double room with half board (the meals are in a local restaurant) <https://apartamentoslosverodes.com>
- Transfers: Private transfer from/to the Valverde airport.
- Accidents and rescue insurance cover.
- Travel management.

5.2 Not included

- Flights (Muntania offers this service for an additional cost of 20€)
- Meals (lunches and some dinners)
- Any other activity not including in the programme

5.3 Packing list

- Backpack (25-35 litres).
- Trekking boots or walking shoes.
- Technical clothing:
 - Socks.
 - Long and short trekking trousers.
 - Thermal t-shirt (base layer)
 - Fleece jacket or similar (second layer)
 - Gore-Tex jacket or similar (third layer)
 - Cap or hat for sun protection
- Sunglasses
- Water bottle (1 litre minimum)
- First aid kit and essential toiletries
- Sunscreen and SPF lip balm
- Expandable hiking poles.
- Camera
- Swimming suit

The luggage not needed during the walks or visits will be stored at the hotel/apartment. The days when we change accommodation, the luggage will be kept at the private vehicle while the group is doing the different activities and it will be collected at the new accommodation after all the visits have finished for the day.

We kindly ask you to pack a reasonable size suitcase as the storage space in the vehicle is limited.

5.4 Observations

Date Flexibility

Aside from the regular travel trip dates, we are flexible to reconsider new dates if those are more convenient to the client's leisure plans. Do not hesitate to contact us should you have any different dates in mind.

Time and meeting point

One week prior to the trip departure date, an email will be sent to each participant to give away the meeting point and time along with the guide contact information. At this point any information considered essential to the trip organization will be shared.

Plane tickets (if applicable)

If case you wish us to handle you plane ticket, please contact us with airport arrival and departure details and number of needed luggage. Before issuing any ticket, Price and details Will be send to the client for its approval.

Muntania fee for plane ticket management is 20€ per person.

If, otherwise, you handle your plane tickets, please coordinate with us before hand to check on arrival and departure information.

Please take into consideration getting with you on your carry-on luggage some set of clothing in case of checked luggage lose.

Double/sinlge room

There is the option to book a single room if there is availability. Please ask for more info if you are interested in this option.

If you don't want to pay the single room supplement, you can ask for a shared room. The availability of this option will depend on other passenger being interested in this option. We will try to find a roommate of the same gender but if this is not possible, we will always ask both parts for their consent. If the group number is uneven and everyone wants to share, the last person to make the payment will have to pay the single room supplement.

Other

The selection of itineraries can suffer changes due to bad weather conditions or other serious reasons. In any case, the guide will provide with the best alternative option.

The order of the itinerary can varies to adapt to the accommodation or attraction's availability.

Any change in the itinerary caused by reasons not related to Muntania Outdoors (for example weather conditions) could incur an extra fee for participants.

5.5 Insurance policy

All activities in Spain have an accident insurance included in the price. Yet, if you practise mountain sports regularly and also travel frequently, **we suggest you get a travel insurance**, that as well as covering any accident and rescue it also protect you against many other situations.

If you do not have a travel insurance you can acquire one with our travel agency. Exploring Spain processes all insurances with **Intermundial**. The cost of these insurances is lower if you buy it through Exploring Spain than if you do it directly with Intermundial.

EU RESIDENTS

Ski/Aventure Plus

It is a **travel insurance** and also **covers the practise of many sports and activities**. You can get one for the duration of the trip or for the whole year, being able to choose the starting date. If you get the insurance for a year, it will not only be valid for the trip with Exploring Spain but also it will be valid for any other trips or activities you may do during that year.

Ski/Aventure Plus with Cancelation

It has the same coverage that the previous insurance but also you will be cover in case of cancelation of the trip and tickets in case of force majeure (sickness, injury...) for yourself and/or a relative.

The travel insurance with cancelation that we offer, allows a refund of the costs already paid for up to 1.000 €. If the cost of the trip and flights is higher, you can extend the amount covered (under request).

Multi-assistance Plus with or without Cancelation

Both Multi-assistance Plus with or without Cancelation are **travel insurances with better coverage** than the Ski/Adventure Plus with or without cancelation but they **do not cover the practise of sports**.

This insurance can be of your interest if you already have an accident and rescue insurance that covers the activity that you will be doing in the trip, but you do not have a travel insurance. It can also be useful if you are interested in a trip without practising any sports.

NON EU RESIDENTS

Incoming Cancelation Plus

This insurance covers the costs of the trip and the tickets if you have to cancel the trip before the departure because of different reasons like for example a sickness (see conditions of the insurance).

This insurance can be useful if you already have a travel insurance but it does not cover the cancelation of the trip or if you already have an insurance covering sports and activities.

Incoming Ski/Aventure Plus with Cancelation

It is a **travel insurance** and also **covers the practise of many sports and activities**. You will also be cover in case of cancelation of the trip and tickets in case of force majeure (sickness, injury...) for yourself and/or a relative. You can get one for the duration of the trip or for the whole year, being able to choose the starting date. If you get the insurance for a year, it will not only be valid for the trip with Exploring Spain but also it will be valid for any other trips or activities you may do during that year.

The travel insurance with cancellation that we offer, allows a refund of the costs already paid for up to 2.000 €. If the cost of the trip and flights is higher, you can extend the amount covered (under request).

*Consult prices and conditions for Intermundial insurances with Exploring Spain following this link:
<https://www.exploring-spain.com/insurances>

Included accident and rescue insurance

** Included accident and rescue insurance. Nº POLIZA 4020006195 Muntania Outdoors. Assistance phone number 24h 902 09 15 57 (it is the contact number for the insurance company Prebal, Previsión Balear M.P.S).

*** It is the customer's responsibility to inform the insurance company about the accident as soon as possible. Prior the departure for the trip, we will send you an email with the insurance policy number and the assistance number so you can have it during the trip.

**** Depending on where the accident happens, the customer will have to pay in advance if the insurance company indicates it, being the payment refunded by the insurance company within the policy's limits. In any case Exploring Spain – Muntania Outdoors S.L. is responsible for any advance payment required for the rescue or assistance.

5.6 Links of interest

- <http://www.holaislascanarias.com>
- <https://elhierro.travel>

5.7 Highlights

- Spectacular volcanic landscapes and laurel forests.
- Great variety of landscapes.
- Good weather
- Delicious gastronomy.

6 Similar trips

- Mountains and sea cliffs of El Hierro. Canary Islands.
- Hiking in La Gomera and Tenerife. Canary Islands.
- La Palma island, the hiking paradise.

7 Contact

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