

IMC2012 - OPTIONAL TOURS

BUS & CITY TOURS

(B1) The capital of the island, Santa Cruz de La Palma, a quaint Renaissance jewel - Thursday 13 Sep and Thursday 20 Sep 2012 (15 Euro/pers, 09.00 – 13.30)

Back in the 16th century, the harbour of Santa Cruz de La Palma was one of the richest of the powerful Spanish Empire. As a result, the town still retains some of the best architecture from the Renaissance period in the Canary Islands, protected by the law since 1975. We will gently walk along its main cobblestones street, visiting three of its interesting museums and taking in the sights, sounds and culture, in all its glorious past and vibrant present. Foodies and souvenir seekers will also greatly enjoy the guided visit to the local market.

09.00 Departure from Los Cancajos

09.20 **Plaza La Alameda** and the **Santa María ship replica** of Christopher Columbus (home of the **Naval Museum**, set in the hold of the ship). The Dwarves' dance and other highlights of the Bajada.

09.50 **Saint Catherine's** castle. Pirates and privateers.

10.15 Visit to **San Francisco Insular Museum**. Art, natural history and handicrafts.

11.15 Resume the walk.

11.30 **Balconies** of Santa Cruz and **Placeta Borrero**.

12.00 Visit to the **local market**. Shopping / coffee mini-break.

12.30 **Plaza de España** and **El Salvador church**. The best Renaissance period set of buildings in the Canary Islands.

13.00 **Casa Salazar**. A sneak peak in the home of one of Santa Cruz's wealthiest merchant families.

13.15 Getting back to the bus.

13.30 Arrival at Los Cancajos. End of tour.

(B2) Southern route. Archaeology, wine, volcanoes and the Atlantic Ocean - Saturday 15 Sep and Wednesday 19 Sep 2012 (30 Euro/pers, 9:00-17:00, lunch not included)

We will start the tour with a visit to one of the caves inhabited by La Palma original people. Then we will move to Fuencaliente, the land of spectacular barren volcanic landscape. We will get to know Spain's youngest soil, created by the eruption of Teneguía volcano in 1971. Great wines are produced here and we will sample them, as well as the celebrated Canary Islands' bananas. We will end the day as we started, admiring the skills of local craftsmen at replicating the works of the Benahoaritan culture.

09.00 Departure from **Los Cancajos**

09.30 **Belmaco Cave**. A visit to the first discovered pre-Hispanic rock carvings (petroglyphs) in the Canary Islands, where visitors will enjoy an interesting look at Benahoaritas' (the original inhabitants of La Palma) way of living. According to some archaeologists, this site could have astronomical significance for the original islanders.

10.45 **San Antonio** and **Teneguía volcanoes**. Short walking tour around the famous volcanic cones and craters situated just in the south of La Palma, at the end of one of the most active volcanic areas on Earth, including the entrance to the Visitors' Centre.

11.50 Getting back to the bus.

12.00 **Teneguía Winery** (Llanovid). Fuencaliente, the village where this cellar was

established, produces an unique grape due to very special conditions. Here the marvelous and famous malvasia wine reaches an extraordinary taste. Visit to the winery.

12.30 Getting back to the bus

13.00 Lunch in Kiosko **La Zamora**, picturesque sea-side restaurant.

13.45 **El Faro. Las Salinas** (salt pans). Marine Reserve. A place to enjoy a spectacular mixture of sea, salt pans and volcanic landscape under the look of the ancient lighthouse. Good place to get unique photos of a volcanic landscape. Short walk around and visit to the Marine Reserve's Interpretation Centre.

14.00 Getting back to the bus.

14.30 Stopover at a **banana plantation**. The Canary Islands is the most important production area for this crop in Europe. Banana tasting.

15.00 Getting back to the bus.

16.00 Short stop on the way back at **El Molino**. In this old windmill it is possible to admire a pottery workshop that applies ancestors' techniques.

17.00 Arrival at **Los Cancajos**. End of tour.

(B3) West of the island. From east to west, admiring an outstanding landscape along the way - Sunday 16 Sep 2012 (35 Euro/pers, 9:00-18:00, lunch not included)

The first stop of this tour is a large dark sand beach set against La Palma's sunny western flank. After a quick visit to a church that holds the key to the history of the 16th century the bus will climb the high wall of El Time and take us to an encounter with the striking dragon trees, whose peculiar shape should not obscure its role as useful sources of medical remedies known since Roman times. A short walk will allow us to meet these ancient giants in person. Then we will be transported inland, into the mist-ridden caves of La Zarza and La Zarcita and its archaeological park. After lunch and a tasty coffee break, we will have the chance to admire the natural fortress of La Caldera, protected as a National Park since 1954.

09.00 Departure from **Los Cancajos**.

10.00 Stopover at **Puerto de Tazacorte**, to enjoy the view of one of the most popular beaches of western La Palma.

10.20 Getting back. On the way to the North, short stop at **Nuestra Señora de las Angustias**, a beautiful yet tiny church presided by a valuable Flemish statue.

11.45 **Buracas**. Walking tour to see the magnificent dragon trees, which remain majestic despite the passing of time and are surrounded by incredible ravines.

12.30 Getting back to the bus.

01.15 **La Zarza** and **La Zarcita**. Walking tour visiting this superb archaeological site and admiring an extraordinary set of petroglyphs with mysterious meaning and placed in a magical and natural scenario.

14.00 Getting back to the bus.

14.30 Lunch in **El Bailadero** (typical La Palma cuisine).

15.15 Getting back to the bus.

16.00 **La Muralla**. A short break on the way back while enjoying the views.

16.15 Getting back to the bus.

17.00 **La Cumbrecita**. A bird's eye view into the National Park. A humbling view of the crater-like structure of La Caldera, 8 km across.

18.00 Arrival at **Los Cancajos**. End of tour.

(B4) North-East of the island. Visiting the flora that existed in Europe millions of years ago - Monday 17 Sep 2012 (30 Euro/pers, 9:00-17:00, picnic not included)

The laurel forest or laurisilva used to cover the whole of the Mediterranean Basin right until the disappearance of the dinosaurs. Nowadays it only survives in a few Atlantic enclaves, such as the northeast corner of La Palma. A short walk in this damp forest, all majestic trees and giant ferns, will be the highlight of the morning. After lunch, we will visit the northeastern tip of La Fajana, with its semi natural pools carved against the volcanic coastline. Swimmers and watchers will equally enjoy this relaxing break before returning to the hotel.

09.00 Departure from **Los Cancajos**

10.00 **Los Tilos**. A two hours walking tour across the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve forest will lead us to an exceptional 360 degree viewing point.

12.00 Getting back to the bus.

13.00 Lunch in **Laguna de Barlovento**, the largest water reservoir on the island.

15.00 Getting by bus to **Las Toscas**, a perfect place to glimpse the wild and breathtaking North of La Palma.

15.30 Getting by bus to **La Fajana**. Natural swimming pools where some people can have a fresh swim, while others enjoy a drink feeling the natural breeze coming from the Ocean.

17.00 Arrival at **Los Cancajos**. End of tour.

HIKING TOURS

(H1) Caldera Ridge Tour, Walking over the edge - Thursday 13 Sep 2012 (30 Euro/pers, 9:00-16:30, picnic not included)

This tour takes the astronomy to the outdoors. Starting at the highest point of the island, the path will lead us to really close encounters with some of the telescopes (INT, JKT, SST, DOT). As we progress, we will have the chance to learn about the culture of local mountain shepherds, whose habits and way of life descend directly from the aboriginal inhabitants of La Palma. Sturdy but threatened local plants and local legends will accompany our tracks back to the bus, while we almost fly over the edge of La Caldera and its imposing 1.500 meters basalt walls. A visit to the Sanctuary of Las Nieves, home of a curiously astro-themed statue, will be followed by an aerial view of Santa Cruz, just before the return to the hotel.

09.00 Departure from Los Cancajos

10.30 Arrival at **Observatorio Roque de los Muchachos**. Leg-stretching at the helipads and quick reconnoiter of the surroundings. The story of La Palma mountain shepherds.

11.45 Arrival at **Roque de los Muchachos** (the island's highest peak). Start of the walk.

12.00 Visit to a **shepherd's hut**. Recovering a fragile ecosystem: outdoor plant nurseries.

12.30 **Fuente Nueva**, the hill of the British. In-between, close-up view of the solar telescopes (SST & DOT).

13.30 **Pared de Roberto**: The devil's work and rock carvings.

14.00 Lunch break (picnic).

14.30 End of the walk. Getting back to the bus.

15.30 **Las Nieves**. Religion, Flemish art and astronomy.

16.00 **La Concepción** viewpoint. A bird's eye view over Santa Cruz.

16.30 Arrival at Los Cancajos. End of tour.

Description of the path: The terrain is virtually flat, save for a couple of hills. Nevertheless, we will keep a slow pace, due to the fact that it is entirely above 2.000 metres and the air is a bit thin. The overall distance is 3.5 km. This route is not recommended for vertigo sufferers, as we will be walking close to the edge of the Caldera.

What to bring: Sun block lotion & cap or, better still, wide-brimmed hat. Water to cover

your personal needs. Walking boots and a light coat (waterproof if possible, just in case). Due to the height, it will certainly feel a bit chilly, even under a bright sun.

(H2) Center of the island. National Park Caldera de Taburiente - Friday 14 Sep and Tuesday 18 Sep 2012 (9:00-13:30)

We propose you two options for visiting Caldera: a short one taking only 2 hours and a long one which takes five hours hiking.

The Caldera de Taburiente is about 10 km across and in places the walls tower 2000 m high over the caldera floor. The caldera originated two million years ago from a massive shield volcano about 20 km in diameter, later being sculptured by erosion. In 1954 the caldera was declared a Spanish national park. At its visitant centre you will have the opportunity to find out more about the geology of La Palma, one of the youngest islands in Canary and one of the most active volcanic places on Earth. A winding road will guide you through a pine forest to La Cumbrecita, a window in the Southern side of the Caldera de Taburiente. From here you could admire the steep wooded gorges and the rocky crags of the largest erosion crater in the world. A gentle walk will take you from here to another gorgeous lookout point, Mirador Lomo de Las Chozas. On your way to and from the caldera, you could admire the great views of the Eastern side of La Palma and Santa Cruz from the scenic Miradors de Brena Baja and La Concepcion.

09.00 Departure from **Los Cancajos**

09.30 Stop and photos at **Mirador de Brena Baja**

10:00 Entrance in the **National Park Caldera de Taburiente**. Stop at **Centro de Visitantes** with visit and watching of the movie about the Caldera de Taburiente and volcanoes story.

11:00 Departure by bus to **La Cumbrecita**. Photos. Walk to Mirador del Lomo de las Chozas. Photos. Return via a winding trail surrounded by the famous pine wood of La Palma. End of the walk.

13.00 Return by bus to Los Cancajos. Stop to **Mirador de la Concepcion**. Admire Santa Cruz de La Palma from the abrupt edge of an impressive surrounding caldera. Photos.

13:30 Arrival in **Los Cancajos**.

Description of the path: This is an easy walking path, which includes a short inclined area which solicite you to make more effort. You should walk carefully because there is a risk of slipping on land mostly covered with very dry pine needles. This route is recommended for all walking amateurs.

What to bring: Sun block lotion & cap or, better still, wide-brimmed hat. Water to cover your personal needs. Walking boots and a light coat (waterproof if possible, just in case).

(H3) The Great Caldera Walk. Into the heart of the National Park - Friday 14 Sep and Tuesday 18 Sep 2012 (9:00-18:30, 30 Euro/pers, picnic not included)

Caldera is a word that was invented on La Palma by a German geologist in the 19th century, to designate cauldron-like depressions like the one set in central La Palma. The Great Caldera Walk was dedicated to have experience and love the hiking on a mountain. Walking into it is like stepping into the heart of the island, shrouded by massive stony walls that spring all over us as they head towards the blue sky. Be sure to load your camera properly for this one. After a little over 5 km, chilling mountain waters await our feet, if you dare to swim in them. The exit route will use the deep trench of Las Angustias ravine, with its colorful waterfalls,

naturally carved over millennia.

09.00 Departure from **Los Cancajos**.

10.30 Arrival at **Los Brecitos**, via **Barranco de las Angustias** and **Hacienda del Cura**. Start of the walk.

11.30 Stop at **Lomo del Tagasaste** viewpoint. Photo-op.

12.15 Arrival at the **National Park campsite**. Lunch and swim break. Dare the chilling waters of Taburiente. Hundreds of photo-ops at La Palma's most scenic spot. Optional short walk to **Roque del Huso**.

14.00 Departure from the campsite.

15.00 Visit to the **Cascada de Colores** (Colorful waterfall).

15.30 Arrival at **Dos Aguas**, where the twin ravines meet. The trail takes to the river bed of **Barranco de las Angustias**.

17.00 Arrival at **La Viña** parking area. End of the walk.

18.30 Arrival at **Los Cancajos**. End of tour.

Description of the path: The first half of the route (Brecitos - Campsite) is not too demanding, as it goes generally downhill for a little over 5 km. So is the optional route to Roque del Huso (unsuitable for vertigo sufferers). The second half, after lunch (Taburiente - La Viña), is more demanding, both because of its length of 7 km and because we will be walking over the ravine turnstones for most of it. Knees and ankles inevitably suffer in this part of the route.

What to bring: Sun block lotion & cap or, better still, wide-brimmed hat. Water to cover your personal needs (mostly for the first half, as we can refill in Taburiente). Walking boots and a light coat (waterproof if possible, just in case). Walking poles are recommended. And don't forget your swimsuit and a towel if you want to venture the ice cold waters of Taburiente!

(H4) The Route of the Volcanoes. La Palma hiking network's gem - Saturday 15 Sep and Wednesday 19 Sep 2012 (30 Euro/pers, 9:00-18:30, picnic not included)

Thousands of hikers from all over Europe come to La Palma every year just to enjoy this route. It traverses one of the most active volcanic rifts on the planet. As we climb the first half, the line forests give way to mountain scrubs, symbolizing the ascent of our steps. Cinder cones, lava pools and fields of ash, gently rubbed by passing clouds, make this route one of the finest walks in the world.

09.00 Departure from **Los Cancajos**

10.15 Arrival at **Refugio del Pilar**

10.30 Leg-stretching visit to **Cumbre Vieja Natural Park Visitor' Centre**.

11.00 **Birigoyo** flanks viewpoint. Photo-op over **Bejenao** and **Llano de las Cuevas**.

12.15 Arrival at **Hoyo Negro**, crater from the 1949 eruption.

13.00 **Duraznero** lava pool.

13.30 **Las Deseadas** (1.949 m), highest point in the route.

14.00 Picnic lunch break at **Montaña de Cosme**, quite close to the main crater from the 1712 eruption.

15.00 Resume the walk.

16.15 **Volcán Martín** viewpoint (1646 eruption).

17.30 Expected arrival at **Los Canarios**.

18.30 Arrival at Los Cancajos. End of tour.

Description of the path: It is by far the most demanding of the three hiking routes. Only keen hikers, able to walk comfortably for well over 5 hours, should attend. The first 10 km are the most demanding and they reach virtually the mark of 2.000 metres. The following 11 km are all downhill. The volcanic landscape is well worth the effort, though.

What to bring: Sun block lotion & cap or, better still, wide-brimmed hat. Water to cover your personal needs (on hot days you can easily need 2 litres for this sort of hike). Walking boots and a light coat (waterproof if possible, just in case). An inner fleece is probably not a bad idea either, as we may encounter drifting moist clouds. Walking poles are highly recommended.

NIGHT TOUR

(N1) Astronomical Night in La Palma - One night between Saturday 15 Sep and Wednesday 19 Sep 2012 (date flexible, 25 Euro/pers, 20:00-24:00)

The tour proposes you to observe the dark skies of La Palma from one of the following astronomical viewpoints: Mirador Llano de La Venta (East, alt. 1337m, 30 min from hotel), Mirador Llano del Jable o de Las Brujas (West, alt. 1345m, 30 min from hotel), Mirador Amateur Pico Cruz Sur (central, alt. 2310m, close to ORM, 1 hr from hotel), Mirador Astronomico Volcan de San Antonio (South, alt. 634m, 30 min from hotel). Moon phase is new on 16 Sep 2012. Few telescopes (10" and 11") and binoculars will be provided.

What to bring: warmer clothes (especially for sites at higher altitudes), binoculars, astronomical accessories, etc.

NOTES:

1. The excursion prices are available for a 19-25 group pax; Prices for less than 19 tourists will be up to 10 Euro/pax higher, depending on the number of people and the bus capacity.
2. Our tourist offer and excursion schedule offer participants the opportunity to visit the island in a professional guided fashion. We created two types of excursions aiming to visit the most popular sites of the island in bus or walking, among which the volcanoes San Antonio and Teneguia in the South, the National Park Caldera of Taburiente in the centre, the capital of the island, Santa Cruz de La Palma in the East, and other spectacular sites in the West and North of La Palma. In this sense, if you want to spend more or less time in La Palma before the conference, you'll have more options to visit the entire island.
3. The planed dates for the excursions are concentrated just before starting the conference (in the interval 13-20 Sep 2012), so that people joined by spouses, family, friends, etc to be able to enjoy more the Cancajos tourist resort with the beach and sun, meantime the meteor workers attend to the conference. We think this is the best option for everybody.
4. The timings follow the guidelines recognized by La Palma's Hiking Network official guidebooks. Walking paces change a great deal between groups, so even though we try to keep to the schedule a certain level of uncertainty is inevitable.