

45 Ruta de los Volcanes

5.45 hrs.



The Volcano Route – the showpiece walk of the island



The traverse of Cumbre Vieja from the north to the south 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 of the west and east coasts. If you wish to attempt the route you should, however, be aware that it is a

strenuous day's walk and sudden, unexpected bad 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. 141).

Destination: the village of Los Canarios (Fuencaliente), 722m (No. 3, 31 bus-stop). Return to the Refugio del Pilar by taxi.

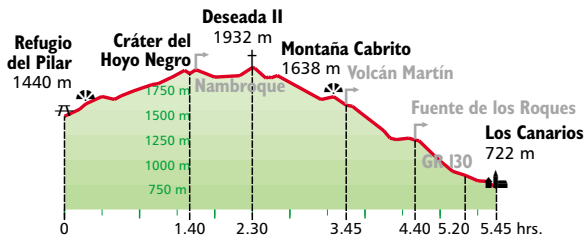
Height difference: ascent to Deseada 700m, descent to Los Canarios 1400m.

Grade: strenuous mountain walk requiring good fitness and surefootedness. There is often low cloud and extremely stormy winds along the crest of the ridge which can force you to turn back.

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 FU 111, on the right past Montaña Pelada, to a forest road (good ½ hr.) and along this right in about 4 hrs. back to the Refugio del Pilar (total time 8–9 hrs.).

Linking tip: with Walks 40, 44 and 47.



Ascent to the top of the Cumbre Vieja ridge.

From the road go straight through the picnic area to the **Refugio del Pilar** and 50m after the Visitors Centre (interesting exhibition about Cumbre Vieja) keep right at the fork in the direction of 'Los Canarios' (GR 131, red and white). After 10 minutes keep right again at the fork. The footpath runs at first through marvellous pine trees 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 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

View from Deseada to the caldera.





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 is made up an eroded gully with splendid colours 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 VM 125, →Walk 40) – 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 to the left and contours round the next elevation on the ridge to the left. Here it's worth taking the detour to **Nambroque**, 1924m, which drops away steeply to the east (¼ hr., →Walk 40).

The next volcanic basin of La Malforada with the pitch-black lava field is visible further along the volcano route. 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 edge of the Cráter del Duraznero, finally left) – however, stay to the right along the 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 splendid panorama is the reward, and besides the caldera outline and distant parts of the volcano route, it



La Malforada lava field with Montaña del Fraile.

also includes 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 Montaña los Bermejales and 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 44; on the right a place for water). 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). Now Volcán Martín is visible. Go down along the ridge to the fork shortly before the edge of the red-coloured crater of Volcán Martín (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 crater (10 minutes for either; →Walk 47). However, stay to the right on the main path which leads across the scree-covered flank to a col between the



volcano and the Los Faros summit. Now walk on over gritty volcanic slopes directly towards the brownish double summit of **Montaña Pelada** (keep left at forks in the path, after 5 minutes the **SL FU 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 FU 110** footpath (→Walk 47) and go straight on in the direction of the Fuente de los Roques. The path now continues ascending slightly through an undulating sand 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: **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 after another quarter of an hour – another track is crossed –



From Deseada it's downhill all the way.

does it level out a bit again. The *camino* is now bordered by stone walls and passes the first vineyards. After a few minutes of following the path straight on, another track is crossed (with the **GR 130**) and then another. The path now skirts another mountain to the right and ends after a few minutes in a track. This is followed to the left and abandoned after 5 minutes for a roadway which bears off diagonally left. Los Canarias can now be seen below. After a few minutes 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 Canarias** (Fuencaliente).

You can let the walk gently fade away in Los Canarias.

