

27 Masca gorge

5.45 hrs.



Daring descent through the rocky labyrinth of the Barranco de Masca

The chasm-like Masca Gorge, surrounded by rock faces several hundred metres high, is an adventure in itself: passing through Masca's orchards and following a small brook, enter into an incredible labyrinth of crags and barrancos, the sound of the sea growing ever nearer – fantastic!

Starting point: centre of Masca, 600m (bus stop for the 355), above the chapel.

Height difference: 650m.

Grade: strenuous, frequently steep walk requiring sure-footedness and a head for heights. Never enter the gorge during unstable weather (rain, storms) or after heavy rainfall!

Refreshment: bar/restaurants in Masca.

Return by boat: when the sea is calm there's the possibility of returning from the Playa de Masca by boat to Los Gigantes (tel: 922 861 918, E-Mail nashira@teletel.es, reservations required, departure from Playa de Masca daily around 13:45, 15:30, 16:30 (de-



pending on the booking); alternatively you can also join an organised walking group).

Tip: there's good swimming from the beach when the sea is calm, so bring your swimming gear.

Info: the environmental authorities are planning an entrance fee (along the lines of the Barranco del Infierno, see Walk 33).

From the main road go down to the chapel of Masca. Head left past the chapel and descend to the village district situated on the mountain ridge between the Barranco de Masca (left) and the Barranco Madre del Agua (right). The hiking path into the Barranco de Masca branches off left 10m after a large signpost and about 30m before the bar on the mountain ridge. It leads purposefully between agaves and palm trees down to the streambed.



Start of the gorge adventure.

After a good quarter of an hour you cross over a small bridge (25m after that on the left above a scree slope the entrance to a tunnel that leads over into the Barranco Seco). 10 mins. later cross over again onto the right hand bank of the stream. The idyllic path passes some terraces and crosses through rushes and reeds to return to the left bank. After a total of 40 mins. – leaving the cultivated terraces of Masca behind – the path returns again to the right bank. The rock faces are now getting closer together. The path leads over smoothly polished rocks down to a small weir where a water channel begins on the left; along this you can circumvent the dam wall. Then the path continues in the streambed and skirts to the right around a rock barrier. You are now in a veritable labyrinth of rocks – small barrancos merge from all sides, one mountain ridge after the other encroaches with steep, sometimes overhanging, rock walls. After 10 mins. you pass an iron gate and shortly afterwards, the route is blocked by a large boulder. The path descends bearing right through the rock arch. Then the always clear path crosses





Destination of this spectacular gorge walk – the boat mooring on Playa de Masca.

back and forth over the streambed. Three quarters of an hour later another giant boulder blocks the path (a cascade) – go down the ramp to the left. 10m above the *barranco* floor you now see a rock arch – soon afterwards, the path, reinforced along this stretch, ascends a few metres to the right to soon cross the *barranco* floor and switch to the left bank. The path then switches sides several times and sometimes it runs directly through the streambed. Gradually, the sound of the sea grows nearer. The path finally descends a ramp through a rock arch. The steep walls now recede and the sea appears ahead. To the left, where the gorge merges into the sea, a little *finca* can be seen – to the right, a small footbridge leads to a rock in the sea (where boats are moored). The **Playa de Masca** is covered in gravel and smoothly polished rocks but 100m to the left (depending on the surf and season) a strip of sand can be found which, when the sea is calm, is a perfect spot for a swim.

In the Barranco de Masca just before the playa.