

# Tenerife



Tenerife is the biggest and best-known Canary Island, with over 10 million visitors a year, and finally the word is out that the landscape, sights and attractions here go way beyond beaches, lap dancers and best bitter on tap.

The potpourri of experiences includes 350km of coast; tropical-forest walks and designer-shop struts; dark forays into volcanic lava; traditional Canarian cuisine and (if you must) egg and chips. As for the drama, this is where Tenerife really does soar high and above its neighbouring islands. At 3718m the Pico del Teide is Spain's tallest peak, surrounded by a moonscape of rock formations and intense volcanic colours. It's fabulous walking territory; pack your lace-ups.

Tenerife is also diverse enough to allow an authentic Canarian experience. Simply put, the further you head away from the southwestern resorts, the fewer tourists you find. For example, the capital, Santa Cruz de Tenerife, is delightfully untainted by camera-wielding coach loads, although Carnaval gets packed with a clued-in crowd here for an experience second only to Rio in terms of raw fiesta spirit.

Putting pleasure before business is an appealing quality of the Tinerfeños, which means there is plenty of nightlife choice, ranging from spit-and-sawdust local bars to big bad discos with international DJs and foam parties.

In short, Tenerife is a happening, well-rounded and lively destination that caters just as happily to rucksack-toting types as sozzled sun worshippers.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Do a Darwin and check out the magnificent **Anaga mountains** (p160), the oldest geographical region on the island
- Don the blinkers for a night on the town at the neon-framed hot spots in **Playa de las Américas** (p178)
- Hike around the fabulous moonscape of **El Teide** (p170)
- Check out the great wave of the **Auditorio de Tenerife** (p155) in Santa Cruz de Tenerife
- Visit **La Laguna** (p156), the best-preserved historical quarter on the island



■ TELEPHONE CODE: 922

■ POPULATION: 709,000

■ AREA: 2034 SQ KM

## ITINERARY 1

### STRIDING OUT: FROM TENERIFE TO LA GOMERA & EL HIERRO

Tenerife has a diverse and varied scope for walkers. You could start at the heart and soul of the island, **Pico del Teide** (1; p170) and the gentle, yet rewarding, 16km Las Siete Cañadas day walk between the two visitor centres, allowing four to five hours.

Hightail it (on wheels) to Los Cristianos and hop on one of the daily ferries for La Gomera. Head inland from your disembarkation point of San Sebastián de la Gomera to **Parque Nacional de Garajonay** (2; p195), a green oasis in the centre of this mountainous island. Follow the trail, surrounded by laurel trees, to the **Alto de Garajonay** (3; p196) where, if it is clear, you can swoon at the stunning views of Tenerife and El Teide. Hike down to lush **Valle Gran Rey** (4; p202) and stride out through the palms.

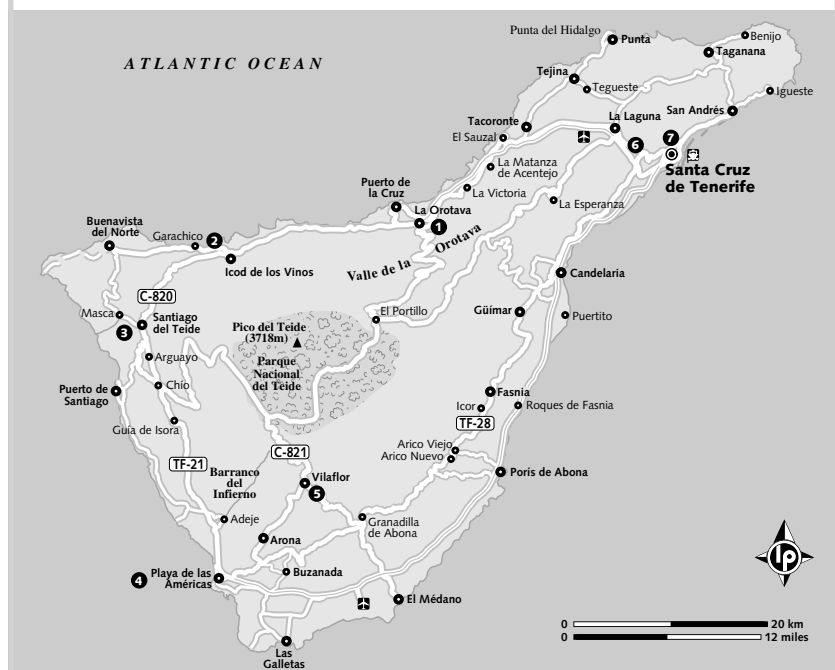
Catch the ferry to El Hierro, skip the capital Valverde and head straight for **La Restinga** (5; p239) and a gentle stroll through **El Pinar** (6; p238), a protected pine forest. Head to **El Sabinar** (7; p244) further west, where twisted juniper trees create a ghostly yet captivating landscape.



## ITINERARY 2

### ACE ARCHITECTURE: FROM CLASSIC TO CUTTING EDGE

Tenerife has some striking examples of traditional Canarian architecture. One of the finest historical quarters can be found in **La Orotava** (1; p165), its cobbled streets studded with grand 17th-century mansions, distinctive for their ornate wooden balconies. For the largest concentration of historic buildings, meander down Calle Colegio, where 12 mansions – the former homes of noble local families – stand. Don't miss the appropriately named Casa de los Balcones, which is sumptuously over the top. Due south, **Garachico** (2; p168) is another frozen-in-time town with stately historic buildings interspersed with simple fishermen's cottages. Check out the classic San Roque and La Quinta Roja hotels, as well as the contrasting, scaled-down simplicity of the native architecture of **Masca** (3; p173); this is how villages are supposed to look, with stone houses and a refreshing lack of concrete. There's not much to stop you on the southern coast, where the architecture tends towards the upturned-egg-carton look. There are exceptions, however, with luxury hotels like **Villa Cortés** (4; p182) in Playa de las Américas with its Mexican-hacienda look and fabulous palette of colours. Head through Parque Nacional del Teide, stopping briefly at lovely **Vilafior** (5; p173) with its traditional buildings surrounding the main square, and take an obligatory gawp at El Teide. In the north, **La Laguna** (6; p156) heaves with fine 16th- and 17th-century Renaissance mansions. Take a leisurely stroll around the historic central plaza, surrounded by stately buildings fronted by wooden balconies and porches. The island's capital, Santa Cruz de Tenerife, holds the island's most exciting modern building, the **Auditorio de Tenerife** (7; p155), which shimmers on the seafront like a giant wave about to break, providing the city with a world-class venue for concerts and the arts.



## HISTORY

The original inhabitants of Tenerife were primitive cave-dwellers called Guanches who arrived from North Africa around 200 BC. Tenerife was the last island to fall to the Spanish (in 1496) and subsequently became an important trading centre. As such, it was subject to invasions by marauding pirates and, in 1797, from the British in the famous battle of Santa Cruz, when Nelson lost his arm during the fight.

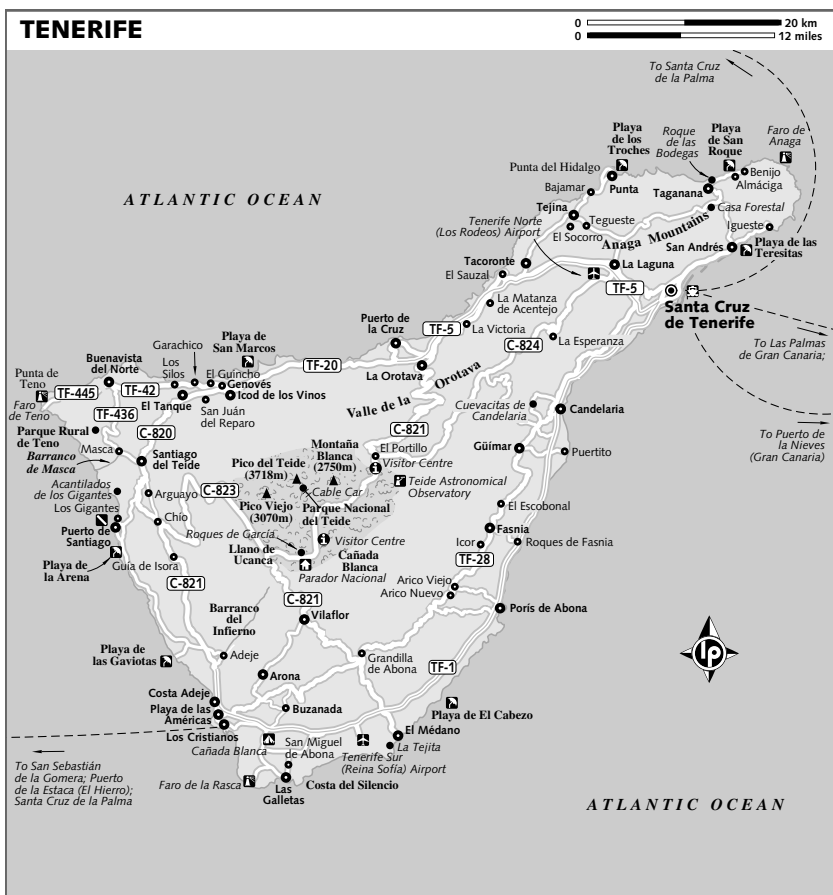
In 1821 Madrid declared Santa Cruz de Tenerife, by then the island's main port, the capital of the Canaries. The good and great of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria remained incensed about this until 1927 when Madrid

finally split the archipelago into two provinces, with Santa Cruz as provincial capital of Tenerife, La Palma, La Gomera and El Hierro. As economic links between the Canaries and the Americas strengthened, a small exodus of islanders crossed the ocean, notably to Venezuela and Cuba. In later years affluent emigrants and Latin Americans reversed the trend, bringing influences that are still evident in the music and food of today's Tenerife.

## INFORMATION

### Maps & Books

Maps of the island are readily available. Among the best are those by Editorial Ever-



### NAMING NAMES

The townsfolk of Santa Cruz de Tenerife are known in the local slang as Chicharros after the *chicharos* (horse mackerel) that were once favoured by the fishermen of the island.

est costing €2.80. *Tenerife & its Six Satellites* by Olivia M. Stone provides a fascinating glimpse of the island from a late-18th-century viewpoint.

### Newspapers

There are a disproportionately large number of newspapers in Tenerife. The most popular Spanish titles are *El Día*, *La Gaceta de Canarias* and *La Opinión de Tenerife*.

Of the several English-language papers and magazines, *Island Connections* (for sale at newsagents but free from tourist offices) is the most widely distributed. There are so many Brits on Tenerife that the tabloid *Sun* newspaper even has a printing house here!

### ACCOMMODATION

While finding a room is generally not a problem in Santa Cruz and in the north of the island, the same cannot be said for the southern resorts, particularly around Los Cristianos and Playa de las Américas. There are plenty of websites to assist you with advance booking, including [www.lonelyplanet.com/accommodation](http://www.lonelyplanet.com/accommodation), [www.sunsearchervacations.com](http://www.sunsearchervacations.com), [www.hostelbookers.com](http://www.hostelbookers.com)

[/guides/spain/tenerife](http://guides/spain/tenerife), [www.casascanarias.co.uk](http://www.casascanarias.co.uk) and [www.ecoturismocanarias.com](http://www.ecoturismocanarias.com); the latter two specialise in *casas rurales* (rural accommodation). For *casas rurales*, also check at tourist offices or **Aecan Turismo Rural** (☎ 922 24 81 14; [www.aecan.com](http://www.aecan.com); Calle Villalba Hervás 2-3, Santa Cruz de Tenerife), which has several on its books.

Among the top recommended places to stay are sumptuous Hotel San Roque (p169), quirky Pensión Casablanca (p153), Villa Cortés (p182) for self-pampering heaven, historic Hotel Marquesa (p164), and the tranquil *casa rural* of Casa Ida (p169).

### ACTIVITIES

Popular water sports such as diving, sailing, fishing and windsurfing are available on the island. Most facilities are concentrated in and around the southwestern resort areas.

Tenerife is marvellous for hiking and climbing with plenty of scope, ranging from easy rambles to mountain assaults. For the most dramatic scenery, choose from 21 trails within the Parque Nacional del Teide. Other attractive areas are the Anaga mountains in the northeast and around the Valle de la Orotava. There are numerous companies offering guided walks, as well as the rangers at El Teide. Check the following websites and ask at any tourist office for details: [www.pateatusmontes.com](http://www.pateatusmontes.com); [www.gregorio-teneriffa.de](http://www.gregorio-teneriffa.de); [www.gaiatours-tenerife.com](http://www.gaiatours-tenerife.com); [www.caminantadesaguere.com](http://www.caminantadesaguere.com). For ideas about combining walks here with other islands, see Itineraries on p144.

### GETTING AWAY FROM IT ALL – TENERIFE SPAS

Holidaying can be tough, especially when there's so darn much to see and do. Thank goodness for day spas.

Around Costa Adeje, escape to **Aqua Club Termal** (☎ 922 71 65 55; [www.aquadubtermal.com](http://www.aquadubtermal.com); Calle Galicia, Torviscas Alto), which, according to its promotional bumf, is the most comprehensive thermal and sports complex in Europe. It has 6000 sq metres of floor space, all dedicated to pampering. Don't miss the Turkish bath.

**Vitanova Spa** (☎ 922 79 56 86; [www.vitanovatenerife.com](http://www.vitanovatenerife.com); Calle Alcalde Walter Paetzman s/n, Playa del Duque), also in Costa Adeje, offers massages and facials as well as such scrumptious delights as chocolate massage and an anticellulite scrub with seaweed and grapes.

The **Mare Nostrum** (☎ 922 75 75 40; [www.expogrupo.com](http://www.expogrupo.com); Avenida de las Américas s/n) resort in Playa de las Américas is also sure to spoil. There are those enticing-sounding fungal wraps and electrotherapy for serious spa-goers, and massages and steam baths for those seeking to destress.

In Puerto de la Cruz, the Oriental Spa Garden at **Hotel Botánico** (☎ 922 38 14 00; [www.hotelbotanico.com](http://www.hotelbotanico.com); Avenida Richard J Yeoward 1) has fabulous Thai décor throughout and offers a range of treatments, including body wraps, oriental massages and beauty treatments.

## FESTIVALS & EVENTS

### January–March

**Festival de Música de Canarias** The biggest event on the serious music calendar, held annually in January and February in Santa Cruz de Tenerife and Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (on Gran Canaria). For more information, visit [www.socaem.com](http://www.socaem.com).

**Carnaval** Celebrated throughout Tenerife but particularly in Santa Cruz (p151), where it is regarded as the Canarian fiesta *par excellence*. Puerto de la Cruz comes a close second in terms of fiesta spirit.

### March

**Canarian Food Fair** (mid-March) A week-long event in Los Cristianos showcasing food and produce from all over the islands, with free tastings and an opportunity to purchase.

### May

**Día de la Cruz** (3 May) Held throughout the island, but particularly in Santa Cruz and Puerto de la Cruz, where crosses and chapels are decorated with flowers in celebration of the founding of both cities.

### June

**San Juan** (23 June) Held in Puerto de la Cruz on the eve of the saint's day. Bonfires light the sky and, in a throwback to Guanche times, goats are driven for a dip in the sea off Playa Jardín.

**Corpus Christi** Celebrated with gusto in La Laguna (the date changes annually) and even more so in La Orotava, where mammoth floral carpets, using tons of volcanic dirt, flower petals, leaves and branches, are painstakingly designed into intricate biblical scenes in the streets and plazas.

### July

**Romería de San Benito Abad** (first Sunday in July) One of the most important fiestas in La Laguna, in honour of the patron saint of farmers and crops.

### August

**Virgen de la Candelaria** (15 August) Celebrated in Candelaria with processions and pageantry (see the boxed text, p176).

**Romería de San Roque** (16 August) Garachico's most important annual festival. The town fills with pilgrims (and party goers) from throughout the island. San Roque (St Roch), the town's patron, was credited with saving the town from the Black Death, which arrived in 1601.

### September

**Fiesta del Santísimo Cristo** (7–15 September) Held in La Laguna and includes religious processions, traditional music and an impressive fireworks display.

**Cristo de los Dolores** (first Sunday after 15 September) Tacoronte fiesta with harvest festivities and wine tasting.

### November

**Fiesta de Los Cacharros** (29 November) Held in Taganana and Puerto de la Cruz, this is a quaint festival where children rush through the streets, dragging behind them a string of old pots, kettles, pans, car spares, tin cans – just about anything that will make a racket.

### December

**Fiesta de la Consolación** (first week in December) Takes place in Masca, with villagers wearing traditional dress and bringing out their *trimples* (similar to a ukulele) and other instruments for an evening of Canarian music.

## TENERIFE FOR CHILDREN

Tenerife is a favourite destination for families as there are plenty of sights and activities to keep the kiddies amused. Unless your tot is one of that curious breed that objects to sand between the toes (it happens!), the beaches in the south are superb, with white sand and shallow waters. Older children can also enjoy water sports ranging from surfing to diving. Take to the high seas on an organised whale-or dolphin-watching excursion (see p174 and p181).

If watery pursuits begin to pall, the southern resorts of Los Cristianos and Playa de las Américas equal theme-park heaven for children. The tourist office has shelves full of brochures and flyers. Animals feature heavily, although there is nothing as straightforward as a plain old zoo. Instead, choose from the Camel Park (p184) or Jungle Park (p181). There are also water parks throughout the island; again check at the local tourist office for details. Many hotels have swimming pools, or head for Santa Cruz's Parque Marítimo César Manrique p153, a wonderful complex of pools.

For something mildly more stimulating, check out the Museo de la Ciencia y el Cosmos (p159) in La Laguna. The island's most popular family day out is the **Loro Parque** (p163) in Puerto de Santa Cruz; even if you opt not to visit, you can't escape the publicity, with ads and stickers on seemingly every surface – moving or otherwise.

## GETTING THERE & AWAY

### Air

Two airports serve the island, with flights available to the other islands, the Spanish

mainland and various European destinations, plus a few more exotic ones such as Venezuela and Cuba. Facilitating nine million passengers per year – often well in excess of 25,000 daily – is modern **Tenerife Sur airport** (Reina Sofía; ☎ 922 75 95 10; www.aena.es), about 20km east of Playa de las Américas. All international charter flights land here, plus most scheduled international flights and many from mainland Spain.

The airport functions 24 hours a day and has half a dozen car-rental offices, a post office, several banks, ATMs and exchange booths, and knowledgeable staff at its **tourist office** (☎ 922 39 20 37).

Almost all interisland flights, plus a few scheduled international and mainland services, use the older and smaller **Tenerife Norte airport** (Los Rodeos; ☎ 922 63 56 35). Here you'll find an exchange booth, several car-rental agencies, a bar and a moderately helpful information booth.

## Boat

For details of the ferry from Cádiz in mainland Spain, see p260.

There are regular ferry, hydrofoil and jetfoil services from Tenerife to the other islands. See the listings for individual towns for details.

## GETTING AROUND To/From the Airport

From Tenerife Sur, TITSA bus 487 departs hourly between 8.10am and 10pm for Los Cristianos (€1.50) and Playa de las Américas (€1.85); it's less than a half-hour ride to both destinations. Bus 341 (€5, 1½ hours) departs at least hourly from 6.50am for Santa Cruz. There are four 340 buses (€7.85, two hours) daily to Puerto de la Cruz via Tenerife Norte airport.

Call ☎ 922 39 21 19 for a taxi. Approximate fares from Tenerife Sur are Los Cristianos €18, Playa de las Américas €21, Los Gigantes €45, Puerto de la Cruz €96, Santa Cruz €62 and El Médano €9.

From Tenerife Norte, TITSA buses 102, 107 and 108 (€1.30, 20 minutes) go to Santa Cruz. Bus 102 (€4.10, one hour) carries on to Puerto de la Cruz via La Laguna, only 3km from the airport.

## FOOD & DRINK

Don't confuse the traditional culinary fare here with that of the Spanish mainland; there are distinctive differences, although the ubiquitous tapas of Spain are common here also. The cuisine reflects a Latin American and Arabic influence, with more spices, including cumin, paprika and dried chillies, than the Spanish norm.

The staple product par excellence is *gofio*, toasted grain that takes the place of bread and can be mixed with almonds and figs to make sweets. Other basic foods are bananas and tomatoes, while the traditional *cabra* (goat) and *cabrito* (kid) remain the staple animal protein. The rich, gamey *conejo en salmorejo* (rabbit in a marinade based on sweet black pudding and avocado) is common, as well as stews (*potaje*, *rancho canario* or *puchero*) of meat and vegetables simmered to savoury perfection. Fish is also a winner, with the renowned horse mackerel (*chicharros*) of Santa Cruz de Tenerife even lending their name to the city's residents: the Chicharreros. Also recommended is the *sancocho canario*, a salted-fish dish with *mojo* (a spicy salsa based on garlic and red chilli peppers). This sauce is the most obvious contribution to the Canarian table, and is typically served with *papas arrugadas* (wrinkly potatoes), small new potatoes boiled and salted in their skins. The most typical dessert is *bienmesabe* (literally 'tastes good to me'), a mixture of honey, almond cream, eggs and rum.

Tenerife is the islands' principal source of wine, and the red Tacoronte Acentejo was the first Canarian wine to earn the grade of DO (*denominación de origen*, an appellation certifying high standards and regional origin). Other productive vineyards are in the Icod de los Vinos, Güímar and Tacoronte areas of the island. The Casa del Vino La Baranda (p160) in El Sauzal organises regular wine-appreciation courses. Other local tipples include La Dorada beer. Brewed in Santa Cruz de Tenerife, its lager-style taste is equal to any import from the mainland.

If you are into self-catering, then hit the local markets. They are the best place to buy the freshest vegetables and fruit. Stalls are grouped according to the types of food they offer. One of the best markets is the Mercado de Nuestra Señora de África (p154) in Santa Cruz de Tenerife.

A taxi into Santa Cruz from Tenerife Norte costs around €15. The fare to Puerto de la Cruz is around €26.

## Bus

**TITSA** (Transportes Interurbanos de Tenerife SA; ☎ 922 53 13 00; www.titsa.com) runs a spider's web of services all over the island, as well as within Santa Cruz and other towns. If you intend to use the bus a lot, purchase a Bonobus card, costing €6 for trips within Santa Cruz or €12 or €30 for bus trips throughout the island. The card represents at least a 30% saving. Insert the card in the machine on the bus, tell the driver where you are going and the amount is subtracted from the card. It includes half-price admission into many of the island's museums, including the Museo de la Naturaleza y El Hombre (opposite) in Santa Cruz.

## Car

Car-rental agencies are almost as plentiful on the island as English pubs, so you shouldn't have a problem, even if you want same-day rental. The generally reliable international chains are present in all major resort areas and the airports. Expect a car to cost between €25 and €45 a day. You'll also find a generous sprinkling of small businesses offering older cars for as little as €15 a day.

## Taxi

You can take a taxi anywhere on the island – but it is an expensive way to get around. You are much better off hiring a car.

# SANTA CRUZ DE TENERIFE

pop 200,000

This bustling port city can take time to appreciate but it is well worth making the effort. Wandering around the centre, you will discover evocative, brightly painted buildings, sophisticated and quirky shops and a tropical oasis of birdsong, fountains and greenery in the city park. What you'll be hard pushed to find is an all-day English breakfast because, above all, Santa Cruz is a vibrant, typically Spanish city without the tourist mayhem that typifies much of the south. The city also has an excellent bus sys-

tem, making it a sensible base for exploring Tenerife's northeast.

## HISTORY

Alonso Fernández de Lugo landed on Tenerife in 1494 to embark on the conquest of the final and most-resistant island in the archipelago. La Laguna, a few kilometres inland, initially blossomed as the island's capital. Santa Cruz de Santiago (as Santa Cruz de Tenerife was then known) remained a backwater until its port began to flourish in the 18th and 19th centuries. Only in 1803 was Santa Cruz 'liberated' from the municipal control of La Laguna by Spanish royal decree; in 1859 it was declared a city.

## ORIENTATION

Taking Plaza España as a hub, everything of interest lies within 1km. At the south-western edge is the bus station, while to the northeast is the terminal for jetfoils to/from Las Palmas de Gran Canaria. With the exception of a couple of museums, most of the sights and good shops lie within the central grid of streets leading inland from Plaza España.

## Maps

The town map handed out by the tourist office is refreshingly accurate and helpful. If you need more detail, buy Editorial Everest's map of Santa Cruz de Tenerife (€2.80), which includes tourist attractions.

## INFORMATION

### Bookshops

**La Isla Bookshop** (☎ 922 28 54 81; Calle Robayna 2) This shop has titles in English, including novels, a few Canaries guidebooks and a selection of Lonely Planet guides.

### Emergency

**Police station** (☎ 922 22 24 47; Avenida Tres de Mayo 32)

### Internet Access

**Ciber Scout** (☎ 922 27 88 63; Centro Castillo, Calle Castillo s/n; per hr €2; ☎ 8am-11pm Mon-Sat, 10am-11pm Sun)

### Medical Services

**Hospital Rambla** (☎ 922 29 16 00; Rambla General Franco 115)



## Post

**Main post office** (☎ 922 24 51 16; Plaza España 2)

Allows you to send faxes.

## Telephone

Street phones abound in Santa Cruz.

**Telephone office** (☎ 922 24 72 74; Paseo de las Milicias de Garachico 3; internet per hr €2; ☎ 9am-10pm Mon-Fri, 9.30am-2pm & 5-9pm Sat & Sun; ☎) A good, efficient office.

## Tourist Information

Scattered about the city you'll find some computer terminals in public spaces, with touch-screen information about Santa Cruz attractions.

**Tourist office** (☎ 922 23 95 92; www.puntointo.idcnet.com; Plaza España s/n; ☎ 8am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm Sat) Located in the Cabildo Insular de Tenerife building. Don't confuse it with the tourist information kiosk in front of the adjacent post office.

## SIGHTS

The majority of Santa Cruz's sights are within easy walking distance of Plaza España. While the city is not packed with attractions, there are some lovely buildings and well-run exhibitions to enjoy.

## Museums

**Museo de la Naturaleza y El Hombre** (☎ 922 53 58 16; www.museosdetenerife.org in Spanish; Calle Fuente Morales s/n; adult/under 12yr €3/1.50; ☎ 9am-7pm Tue-Sun; ♿) is a brain-bending amalgam of natural science and archaeology in a former civil hospital. It has several fascinating Guanche

mummies and skulls, a handful of artefacts, including pottery, and well-presented facts and figures about volcanoes and the flora and fauna of the islands. There's also a café and gift shop.

**Museo de Bellas Artes** (☎ 922 24 43 58; Calle José Murphy 12; admission free; ☎ 10am-8pm Mon-Fri) is home to an eclectic mix of paintings by mainly Spanish, Canarian and Flemish artists, including Ribera, Sorolla and Brueghel. There's also sculpture, including a Rodin, and temporary exhibitions.

**Museo Militar de Almeyda** (☎ 922 84 35 00; Calle San Isidro 1; admission free; ☎ 10am-2pm Tue-Sat) explains the military history of the islands. The most famous item here is El Tigre (The Tiger), the cannon that reputedly blew off Admiral Nelson's arm when he attacked Santa Cruz in 1797. Much of the museum is devoted to the successful defence of the city, brought alive by a superb 30m scale model of the flagship *Theseus*.

## Around the Centre

Santa Cruz is a busy port city but the centre is compact enough to explore on foot. Pick up a map at the tourist office in waterfront **Plaza España**, with its controversial centrepiece: a memorial to the fallen of the 1936-39 civil war. Head inland along Plaza Candelaria and the pedestrianised shopping strip of Calle Castillo; a right turn along Calle José Murphy leads to the **Iglesia de San Francisco**, a baroque church from the 17th and 18th centuries.

Three blocks southwest of Calle Castillo is the 19th-century **Teatro Guimerá** (see p155),

## CARNAVAL CAPERS

Only Rio de Janeiro does it better and even *that* party does not overshadow Santa Cruz's efforts to make **Carnaval** (www.camavaltenerife.com) a nonstop, 24-hour party-orgy. Festivities generally kick off in early February and last about three weeks. Many of the gala performances and fancy-dress competitions take place in the Recinto Ferial (fairgrounds) but the streets, especially around Plaza España, become frenzied with good-natured dawn-to-dusk frivolity.

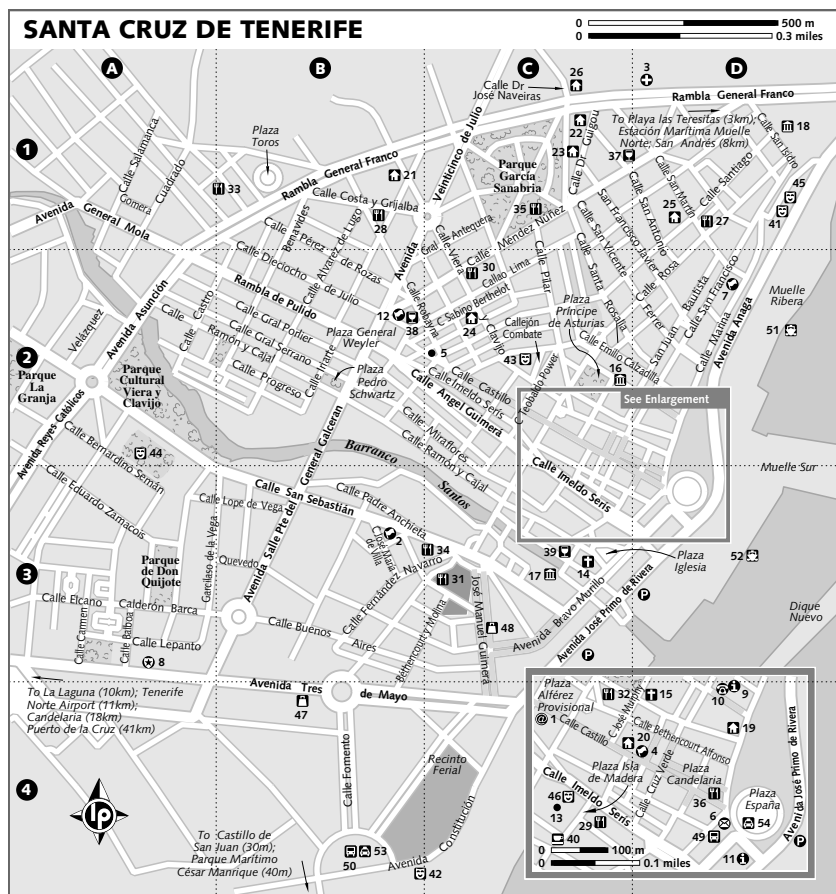
Don't be fooled into thinking this is just a sequin-bedecked excuse to party hearty, though. It may sometimes be hard to see or believe, but there is an underlying political 'message' to the whole shebang. Under the Franco dictatorship, Carnival ground to a halt and there didn't seem to be too much to celebrate. The Catholic Church's cosy relationship with the fascists was another source of frustration so, when Carnival was relaunched after the death of General Franco, the citizens of Santa Cruz wasted no time in lampooning the sexual and moral hypocrisy of the church and the fascists. Today, you will still see a lot of people dressed for the event as naughty nuns and perverted priests, and more drag queens than bumblebees in a buttercup field. And all in the name of good, clean fun. Book your accommodation ahead – if you intend to go to bed, that is.

fronted by a suitably theatrical giant mask sculpture. The sumptuous interior is reminiscent of Madrid's Teatro Real, with semicircular balconied seating and plenty of gilt. Next door, the **Centro de Arte La Recova** (☎ 922 29 07 35; Plaza Isla de la Madera s/n; admission free; 🕒 11am-1pm & 6-9pm Mon-Fri) is housed in a former market, which makes for an interesting gallery space for the temporary exhibitions of contemporary Canarian and mainland-Spanish artists.

The formerly seedy **Plaza Iglesia** has been turned up and is now home to a couple of fashionable bars and brightly painted buildings. Look for the striking bell tower of the city's oldest church, the **Iglesia de Nuestra Señora de la Concepción** (Plaza Iglesia; 🕒 mass 9am & 7.30pm), which has a tiled roof and some traditional *mudéjar*

(Islamic-style architecture) ceiling work. The present church was built in the 17th and 18th centuries but the original building went up in 1498, just after the island was conquered. At the heart of the shimmering silver altar is the Santa Cruz de la Conquista (Holy Cross of the Conquest), which gives the city its name. Tradition has it that Alonso Fernández de Lugo, the Spanish commander, planted it in his camp to give thanks for his 1494 victory over the Guanches.

Check out the anteroom to the sacristy. The altarpiece in the chapel beside it was carved from cedar on the orders of Don Matías Carta, a prominent personage who died before it was completed. He lies buried here and the pallid portrait on the wall was done *after* his death



(hence the closed eyes and crossed arms). There's also a fine painting, *La Adoración de los Pastores* (The Adoration of the Shepherds), by Juan de Miranda.

A 10-minute walk southwest along the waterfront brings you to the 17th-century **Castillo de San Juan**. In the shadow of this protective fort there used to be a lively trade in African slaves. Nowadays its squat, rectangular basalt form is overshadowed by the magnificent, soaring white wave of an auditorium: the **Auditorio de Tenerife** (see p155), designed by the internationally renowned Spanish architect Santiago Calatrava and possessing a Sydney Opera House presence, as well as superb acoustics.

Just beyond this contrasting pair is the **Parque Marítimo César Manrique** (Avenida Constitución s/n; adult/senior/child €2.50/1/1.20; ☎ 10am-7pm), where you can have a dip in one of the wonderful designer pools or collapse on a sun lounge and drink in the beautiful view and something refreshing. It's suitable for all ages, and great for children. For more information about César Manrique, see p131.

## SLEEPING

You should have little trouble booking a room, aside from Carnival time, when you should reserve at least three months in advance; be prepared to pay more for your partying as well, with room prices typically increasing by at least 10%.

## Budget

**Pensión Casablanca** (☎ 922 27 85 99; Calle Viera y Clavijo 15; s/d €15/21) In a great location on a leafy pedestrian street, the building dates from 1902.

The rooms are brightly painted (you may need shades for the turquoise) with decorative finishes and floral trim. They are small but good value; the only downside is that there are only three communal bathrooms for 17 rooms, which could mean crossed legs in the corridor.

**Pensión Mova** (☎ 922 28 32 61; Calle San Martín 33; d €32, s/d without bathroom €13/27) If the Casablanca is full this is a second choice. The owners can be terse and the reception area is cluttered and shabby, but the rooms are okay and there's a handy adjacent bar for breakfast.

**Hotel Atlántico** (☎ 922 24 63 75; fax 922 24 63 78; Calle Castillo 12; s/d with breakfast €38/57) Enjoys an ace location bang on the city's main pedestrian street, and is distinguished by its jaunty blue-and-white canopies. The rooms are a bit battered but well equipped with fridges and multispeed ceiling fans. The generous breakfast is served on a roof terrace with views.

## Midrange

**Hotel Contemporáneo** (☎ 922 27 15 71; www.hotelcontemporaneo.com in Spanish; Rambla General Franco 116; s/d €60/88; P ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎) A great peach-and-white confection of a place to stay on one of the city's swankiest streets. Rooms have mahogany- or grey-stained hardwood floors, a plush yet understated colour scheme and ADSL connection; those on the 7th floor have private balconies. There is wi-fi in the lobby.

**Hotel Taburiente** (☎ 922 27 60 00; www.hoteltaburiente.com; Calle Dr José Naveiras 24a; s/d/tr €75/85/90; P ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎) The public areas have a fashionable minimalist look – think black glossy pots

<b>INFORMATION</b>		<b>SLEEPING</b> ☎		Bar Zumeria Doña Papaya.....38 B2	
Ciber Scout.....1	C4	Aecan Turismo Rural.....19	D4	Murphy's.....39	C3
French Consulate.....2	B3	Hotel Atlántico.....20	C4	Sáffron & Porron.....40	C4
Hospital Rambla.....3	D1	Hotel Colón Rambla.....21	B1	<b>ENTERTAINMENT</b> ☎	
Irish Consulate.....4	D4	Hotel Contemporáneo.....22	C1	Arco Pub.....41	D1
La Isla Bookshop.....5	C2	Hotel Taburiente.....23	C1	Auditorio de Tenerife.....42	B4
Main Post Office.....6	D4	Pensión Casablanca.....24	C2	CD Tenerife.....43	C2
Netherlands Consulate.....7	D2	Pensión Mova.....25	D1	Estadio Heliodoro Rodríguez López.....44	A2
Police Station.....8	A3	Sheraton Mencey Hotel.....26	C1	Fool Company.....45	D1
Servicio de Uso Público.....9	D4	<b>EATING</b> ☎		Teatro Guimerá.....46	C4
Telephone Office.....10	D4	De Canio.....27	D1	<b>SHOPPING</b> ☎	
Tourist Office.....11	D4	La Cazuella.....28	B1	El Corte Inglés.....47	B4
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<b>SIGHTS &amp; ACTIVITIES</b>		La Taberna de Wally.....30	C2	<b>TRANSPORT</b>	
Centro de Arte La Recova.....13	C4	Mercado de Nuestra Señora de África.....31	C3	Bus 015 for La Laguna.....49	D4
Iglesia de Nuestra Señora de la Concepción.....14	C3	Romana.....32	C4	Bus Station.....50	B4
Iglesia de San Francisco.....15	D4	Sukothay.....33	B1	Estación Marítima Muelle Ribera.....51	D2
Museo de Bellas Artes.....16	C2	Supereko 7.....34	C3	Naveira Armas Ferry Departures.....52	D3
Museo de la Naturaleza y El Hombre.....17	C3	Terrazas.....35	C1	Taxi Rank.....53	B4
Museo Militar de Almeyda.....18	D1	<b>DRINKING</b> ☎ ☎		Taxi Rank.....54	D4
Teatro Guimerá.....(see 46)		Bar Imperfecto.....37	C1		

with a couple of lilies, chunky glass vases filled with green apples and plenty of mirrors and soft natural colours. The rooms are pleasant but lack the same wow factor; ask for one with a balcony overlooking the park.

**Hotel Colón Rambla** (☎ 922 27 27 16; www.hotel-colonrambla.com; Calle Viera y Clavijo 49; s/d €80/130; (P) (♿)) This apartment-style hotel has well-lit large rooms with wood panelling, sitting room and sparkling white bathroom. There is a small kitchenette with fridges and two-ring cookers in each entrance lobby. All the balconies overlook the central pool so no saggy swimwear, please.

## Top End

**our pick Sheraton Mencey Hotel** (☎ 922 60 99 00; www.sheratonmencey.com; Calle Dr José Naveiras 38; s/d from €215/295; (P) (♿) (♿) (♿) (♿)) Prestigious Mencey is where the rich and famous stay when they're in town. Rooms are sumptuous, facilities are top-notch and the grandeur never fades. The rooms are feminine without being fussy, with dark-wood furnishings and marble-clad bathrooms. In the low season, you can expect prices to drop by about 20%, although the price of the royal suite (€980) does not change. There's a casino that may come in handy (or not) if you're aiming for the latter.

## EATING

### Self-Catering

**Mercado de Nuestra Señora de África** (Calle San Sebastián; ☎ 11am-11.30pm Mon-Sat) This market has a Central American look with its arched entrance, clock tower and flower sellers. It's not large by Spanish standards but is still tantalising, with its mountains of fresh fruit and vegetables and variety of fish. You can also buy bread, fabulous local cheese and meats.

**Supereko 7** (Calle Padre Anchieta 10; ☎ 9am-8pm Mon-Fri, to 1pm Sat) An ecological supermarket with a small café dishing up a vegetarian menu for €7.

### Restaurants

**Da Canio** (☎ 922 24 81 31; Calle San Martín 76; mains €6.50-8; ☎ closed Sun; (V)) Owned by Italians and serving up a better class of pizza and pasta, the dining room is tastefully decked out in terracotta and stone. The 34-plus pizza choices are ideal for fussy families, and the pasta and risottos come recommended as well.

**La Taberna de Wally** (☎ 922 27 34 13; Calle Viera y Clavijo 44; mains €7.50-9; ☎ closed Sun night & Mon) A delight. The eclectic menu includes freshly prepared salads, garlic soup, snails and meat and fish dishes, all served in a gorgeous garden courtyard surrounded by graceful old buildings. At weekends, the friendly owner turns the place over to a DJ, who spins great chill-out music until the wee hours.

**Sukothay** (☎ 922 53 25 01; Calle General Goded 5; mains €7.50-12; ☎ closed Sun; (V)) This Japanese-Thai restaurant has an easy-on-the-eye minimalist interior with two floors and open-plan kitchen. The Zen feel continues with a menu of rave dishes from both cuisines, including green and red curries, papaya salad, sushi and tempura. The wine list is better than the oriental norm.

**La Cazuela** (☎ 922 27 23 00; Calle Robayna 34; mains €7.50-14.50; ☎ closed Sat lunch & Sun) Drenched in Canary yellow with a pretty, flower-filled terrace, this place is heartily recommended by locals for its solid traditional fare. Settle in for a long, filling lunch and try the *cazuela* (a casserole made with fresh or salted fish).

**La Fundación** (☎ 922 28 39 72; Calle Imeldo Seris 25; mains €10.50-18.50; ☎ closed Sun) This is where Santa Cruz's elite wine and dine on market-fresh cuisine. In an exquisitely restored Canarian mansion, savour dishes like salad of Canarian cheeses with quince and honey, or roast duck with papaya compote, washed down with excellent wines. There are two storeys with the less formal *tasca* (bar) downstairs.

### Cafés & Terrazas

Chairs on squares are plentiful here, due to the friendly, gregarious nature of the locals and, still more, to the sunshine.

**Romana** (☎ 922 24 58 52; Calle Villalba Hervas 19) Join the queue for arguably the best ice cream in town; try the legendary ice-cream sandwich; it beats a BLT any day.

**Sáffron & Porrón** (☎ 922 15 18 67; Calle Antonio Domínguez Afonso 30) The colourful single-storey houses on this pedestrian street have been restored. Stop by this tiny café-bar, its walls papered with faded Andalusian *feria* (fair) and bullfighting posters. It has outside tables.

More pleasant café *terrazas* (terraces) include those on Plaza Candelaria and the shaded number on the fringe of Parque García Sanabria, where you can let the kids romp in the adjacent playground.

## DRINKING

**Bar Zumería Doña Papaya** (☎ 922 29 06 79; Calle Callao de Lima 3; juices €1.35; ☹ closed Sun) Delicious fresh fruit juices, including strawberry, mango, papaya, avocado and various delectable-sounding combinations.

**Bar Imperfecto** (☎ 659 57 70 23; Calle San Antonio 69; ☹ 9pm-2.30am Mon-Sat) Although it doesn't get busy until hot-chocolate time, the atmosphere is worth the wait. Alternative music and rock and roll is the music scene, played against a dark, wood-panelled backdrop with black-and-white pics from the silver screen.

**Murphy's** (☎ 922 28 48 64; Plaza de la Concepción s/n; ☹ 5pm-2.30am Mon-Thu, 5pm-3.30am Fri & Sat, 6.30pm-2.30am Sun) This Irish pub has a predictable blarney atmosphere and Guinness on tap, but is classier than many Irish imports. Live music most weekends.

## ENTERTAINMENT

### Nightclubs

Most of the nightlife is centred around the northern end of Avenida Anaga, while there is an increasing number of live-music venues within stumbling distance of Plaza España.

**Arco Pub** (Avenida Anaga 31; ☹ 6pm-3.30am Mon-Sat) Live music ranging from alternative rock to electro-house and jazz, performed for a DIY-dressed-up crowd accompanied by luridly coloured, knockout cocktails.

**Fool Company** (Avenida Anaga 25; admission €10; ☹ midnight-6am Wed-Sat) Has some live music, but mostly invigorating funk and R&B DJs. It can get packed with a party-loving crowd firing up to a steamy dance-pit. Look for the plastic bamboo out front.

### Theatre & Classical Music

**Auditorio de Tenerife** (☎ 922 27 06 11; www.auditorio.tenerife.com; Avenida Constitución s/n; ♿) Tenerife's newest and flashiest entertainment option has dramatically designed curved white concrete shells capped by a cresting, crashing wave of a roof. It covers and significantly enhances a 2 hectare oceanfront site. The auditorium hosts opera, dance and classical-music performances, among others.

**Teatro Guimerá** (box office ☎ 902 33 33 38; www.teatroguimera.es; Plaza Isla de la Madera s/n; tickets €12-18; box office ☹ 11am-1pm & 5-8pm) The other venue for highbrow entertainment, whether music or theatre.

## Sport

Santa Cruz is home to football team **CD Tenerife** (☎ 922 29 81 00; www.clubdeportivotenerife.es in Spanish; Callejón Combate 1), which plays in Spain's second division. You can buy tickets at the *taquilla* (box office) of the club stadium, **Estadio Heliodoro Rodríguez López** (Calle La Mutine s/n), or call into the club's headquarters.

## SHOPPING

The main shopping strip is the pedestrianised Calle Castillo and surrounding streets. Some promising deals are available on electronics and watches but there are also some great little boutiques, stocked with clothes from Spanish and international designers.

**El Corte Inglés** (☎ 922 84 94 00; Avenida Tres de Mayo 7) Monster-sized, and will keep you stocked in whatever your heart desires. It also has an excellent, albeit pricey, supermarket with interesting imported goodies.

**Rastro** (Calle José Manuel Guimerá; ☹ Sun morning) This flea market is held along two parallel streets leading from the covered market to the coast. It's the usual mix, including pirated CDs, cut-price underwear and handmade jewellery but is bustling and fun. Keep your money out of sight.

## GETTING THERE & AWAY

### Air

Tenerife Norte is the nearest airport to Santa Cruz. It handles nearly all flights between the islands, and very few others. See p148 for details.

### Boat

The **Acciona-Trasmediterránea** (☎ 922 84 22 44; www.trasmediterranea.com; Estación Marítima Muelle Ribera) runs a weekly ferry (from €256, car €166, two days) with cabins to Cádiz, via Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Puerto de Rosario (Fuerteventura) and Arrecife (Lanzarote), departing every Monday at 3pm. Trasmediterránea also runs a daily jetfoil to Las Palmas at 8am (€51, one hour 10 minutes). It leaves at 10am on Sunday.

**Naviera Armas** (☎ 902 45 65 00; www.navieraarmas.com) runs a fast ferry (€24, 2¼ hours) to Las Palmas twice a day on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, three times daily on Wednesday and once daily on Saturday and Sunday; and to Morro Jable (€37.40, seven hours) on Fuerteventura every Monday at 3am. It also has a boat (€42, 12¼ hours) at

6.45pm on Wednesday and Friday to Arrecife on Lanzarote.

**Fred Olsen** (☎ 902 10 01 07; www.fredolsen.es) has six to eight daily high-speed ferries (€64, 1½ hours) to Agaete in the northwest of Gran Canaria, from where you can take its free bus onwards to Las Palmas (35 minutes).

**Garajonay Expres** (☎ 902 34 34 50; www.garajonayexpres.com) connects Los Cristianos with San Sebastián (€19, 45 minutes), Playa Santiago (€22, one hour) and Valle Gran Rey (€23, 1½ hours) on La Gomera, three times daily at 8.30am, 1.55pm and 6.15pm. Passengers based in Santa Cruz can take a courtesy bus to Los Cristianos to catch the ferry.

Buy tickets for all companies from travel agents or from the main Estación Marítima Muelle Ribera building (from where the Fred Olsen boats leave). Naviera Armas has its base further to the south.

## Bus

TITSA buses radiate out from the **bus station** (☎ 922 21 56 99; www.titsa.com) beside Avenida Constitución, with major routes including the following:

**Bus 102 Puerto de la Cruz via La Laguna & Tenerife Norte** (€4.10, 55 minutes, every 30 minutes)

**Bus 103 Puerto de la Cruz direct** (€4.20, 40 minutes, more than 15 daily)

**Buses 106 & 108 Icod de los Vinos** (€5.80, 1¼ hours, more than 15 daily)

**Bus 110 Los Cristianos & Playa de las Américas direct** (€7.30, one hour, every 30 minutes)

**Bus 111 Los Cristianos & Playa de las Américas via Candelaria & Güímar** (€7.30, one hour 20 minutes, every 30 minutes)

**Bus 341 Tenerife Sur** (€5.70, 50 minutes, 20 daily)

**Buses 014 & 015 La Laguna** (€1.25, 20 minutes, every 10 minutes)

## Car & Motorcycle

Car-rental companies (some also rent out motorcycles) are plentiful. Major operators also have booths at the *estación marítima* (ferry terminal).

## GETTING AROUND

### To/From the Airport

See p149 for details of the regular buses serving both airports.

A taxi to Tenerife Norte will cost about €15 and to Tenerife Sur, around €60.

## Bus

TITSA buses provide the city service in Santa Cruz. Several buses pass regularly by the centre (Plaza General Weyler and Plaza España) from the bus station, including 910 and 914. Other local services include the circular routes 920 and 921. A local trip costs €1.

## Car

Paid parking stations can be found underneath Plaza España and within the Mercado de Nuestra Señora de África market.

## Taxi

The major taxi stands are on Plaza España and at the bus station. Call **Radio-Taxi San Pedro** (☎ 922 31 00 00) for bookings.

## Tram

A tram line was under construction at the time of research, linking Santa Cruz with La Laguna. It is due for completion by early 2008; check at the tourist office for an update.

# THE NORTHEAST

## LA LAGUNA

pop 130,000

An easy day trip from Santa Cruz or Puerto de la Cruz, San Cristóbal de la Laguna may have an unattractive shell of concrete blocks, but its kernel, the historic town centre, is a gem, with narrow streets lined with colourful buildings, grand old villas and idiosyncratic small shops. Its layout provided the model for many colonial towns in the Americas and, in 1999, La Laguna was added to the Unesco list of World Heritage sites. The town has a youthful energy and possibly the island's most determined *marcha* (nightlife).

## History

In 1494 Alonso Fernández de Lugo's troops ended up making a permanent camp at what is now known as La Laguna (the lagoon from which the name comes was drained in 1837).

By the middle of the 16th century, the old town was pretty much complete and La Laguna became a bustling city of merchants,

soldiers, bureaucrats and the pious. In 1701 the university was established.

## Orientation

The bus station is about a 10-minute walk northwest of the old centre. The university, where you'll find the bulk of the bars and plenty of downhome restaurants, lies to the south of the old centre. The little accommodation available is in the historic area, as are the best restaurants, banks, the post office and the tourist office.

## Information

### EMERGENCY

**Police station** (☎ 922 25 04 52; Calle Nava y Grímón 66)

### INTERNET ACCESS

**Reicom** (☎ 922 25 02 08; Centro Santo Domingo 12; per hr €1.80; ☎ 9.30am-10pm Mon-Fri, 10am-10pm Sat & Sun) Also has telephones and a photocopying and fax service

### POST

**Post office** (☎ 922 61 43 04; Calle Santo Domingo)

### TOURIST INFORMATION

**Tourist office** (☎ 922 63 11 94; Calle Carrera 7; ☎ 8.30am-8pm Mon-Fri, to 2pm Sat & Sun Jun-Sep, 8.30am-5pm Mon-Fri Oct-May) In a lovely old house with an inner courtyard; ask for the fascinating *San Cristóbal de La Laguna, World Heritage Site* brochure.

## Sights

### CANARIAN MANSIONS

La Laguna allows you to fully appreciate the beauty and eccentricity of Canarian urban architecture: bright façades graced with wooden double-doors, carved balconies and grey stone embellishments. Elegant, wood-shuttered windows conceal cool, shady patios, which, in the best cases, are surrounded by 1st-storey verandas propped up by slender timber columns. Whenever you see an open door, look inside – with luck the inner sanctum will also be open.

The documents, maps, artefacts and descriptions are interesting enough at the **Museo de la Historia de Tenerife** (Casa Lecarño; ☎ 922 63 01 03; Calle San Agustín 22; adult/under 18yr €3/1.50, admission free Sun; ☎ 10am-8pm Tue-Sun) but the 16th-century mansion itself is noteworthy, having benefited from an effective and tasteful renovation. Note the brickwork, which features Renaissance designs, on either side of the stone portico at the museum's entrance.

Calle San Agustín and the surrounding streets are lined with fine old houses. Take a look inside **Casa del Montañés** (Calle San Agustín 16). Peek too into the tranquil patio of the **Casa Salazar** (Calle San Agustín 28), nowadays home to the bishop of La Laguna. The imposing **Casa de los Capitanes** (Calle Carrera) is beside the *ayuntamiento* (town hall) and houses the tourist office. The distinctive blue façade of **Calle Carrera 66** is the former home of surrealist painter Oscar Domínguez. Check out the window framed with a giant sardine-tin sculpture!

### CHURCHES & CONVENTS

La Laguna's religious clout is also considerable.

**Iglesia de Nuestra Señora de la Concepción** (Plaza Concepción; tower €1; ☎ 8.30am-1.30pm & 6-7.30pm Mon-Fri, 8.30am-1.30pm & 6-8.30pm Sat, 7.30am-2pm & 4.30-8pm Sun) was the island's first church – constructed in 1502 – and has subsequently undergone many changes. Elements of Gothic and plateresque styles can still be distinguished and the finely wrought wooden *mudéjar* ceilings are a delight. Climb the tower for stunning rooftop views.

A few minutes' walk east, the **Catedral** (Plaza Catedral) was completely rebuilt in 1913. A fine baroque retablo in the chapel is dedicated to the Virgen de los Remedios. There are some fine paintings by Cristóbal Hernández de Quintana, one of the islands' premier 18th-century artists.

The **Iglesia de Santo Domingo** (Calle Santo Domingo), originally a hermitage and expanded in the 17th century, also contains paintings by de Quintana. Seek out the vivid murals painted in the 20th century by Mariano Cossío and Antonio González Suárez.

At the northern end of the old quarter, the **Santuario del Cristo** (Santuario del Santísimo Cristo de La Laguna; Plaza San Francisco s/n; ☎ 8am-1pm & 4-8.45pm Mon-Thu & Sat, 8am-9pm Fri & Sun) contains a blackened wooden sculpture of Christ – the most venerated crucifix on the island. Be as respectful as possible inside, as most of the people here are praying, not sightseeing.

Of the convents, the most interesting is **Convento de Santa Clara** (cnr Calle Anchieta & Calle Viana; ☎ 4-7pm Mon-Sat & 11.30am-7pm Sun). You can also visit its fine 16th-century chapel. The Santa Clara chapel and the closed order in **Convento de Santa Catalina** (Plaza Adelantado; ☎ 7.30-10am & 5-8pm) are still active. The latter was on the verge of opening a religious museum at the time of research.





## MUSEO DE LA CIENCIA Y EL COSMOS

If you enjoy pushing buttons and musing on the forces of nature, you can have fun at this **museum** (☎ 922 31 52 65; www.museosdetenerife.org; Calle Vía Láctea s/n; adult/child/student €3/free/1.50; ☎ 9am-7pm Tue-Sun), even if you don't speak Spanish. About 1.5km south of Plaza Adelantado, it also has a planetarium, so you can stargaze during the day. A good choice for those wanting to have their children stimulated by something other than yet another sugary ice cream.

## Language Courses

The **Universidad de La Laguna** (☎ 922 60 33 45; www.ull.es) offers four-month Spanish classes at all levels.

## Sleeping

Unfortunately, sleeping possibilities are limited. However, at the time of research a new four-star hotel, San Cristobal de la Luna, housed in a historic building, was near completion. Check the web or local tourist office for contact information.

**Hotel Agüere** (☎ 922 25 94 90; haguere@infonegocio.com; Calle Carrera 55; s/d/t €51/67/86) This is the kind of hotel that could be easily transformed into a luxurious (and expensive) boutique hotel. Constructed in 1760, it has a massive glass-roofed patio, which looks mildly neglected, and large rooms with wooden floors and dark wood furniture. It's all slightly shabby and dated but is good value for its old-world ambience.

**our pick** **Hotel-Apartamentos Nivaria** (☎ 922 26 42 98; www.hotelnivaria.com; Plaza Adelantado 11; s/d from €77/86, apt from €106; P ♿) The former home of a marquis, the façade is washed in burnt sienna with traditional wooden balconies. There are two classes of room and, if you're ready to flash your cash, the superior are worth it. They are exquisitely done up with elegant furniture, leafy plants and earthy colours. The bathrooms are fashionably mosaic-tiled.

## Eating

**La Folie** (Calle Santo Domingo 10; snacks €2.50-6) This fabulous place has a real '60s Haight-Ashbury feel with its cavernous interior, leopard-skin upholstery, murals and idiosyncratic clutter. Good for breakfast, savoury crepes and *mojitos*.

**Osteria da Andrea** (☎ 922 26 05 01; Calle Deán Palahi 26; mains €7-10; ☎ closed Mon & Tue) This sophisticated Italian restaurant has an arty, minimalist interior and daily-changing menu; the sign of an innovative chef. Each day's menu usually includes a risotto and unusual pizza among the dishes, such as the delicious *berenja a la parmesan* (aubergine with parmesan cheese). There's a tapas bar out front.

**El Tonique** (☎ 922 26 15 29; Calle Heradio Sánchez 23; mains €7.20-15; ☎ closed Mon lunch & Sun) Head downstairs to this cosy restaurant, its walls lined with dusty bottles of wine. These are but a sample of more than 250 different varieties quietly maturing in Tonique's cellars. The food is very good and worth the wait for a table (it's popular for lunch) and a plate of *pimientos del piquillo rellenos de merluza* (small peppers stuffed with hake).

## Drinking

Students provide the town's nightlife, and the bulk of the bars are concentrated in a tight rectangle northeast of the university, known as El Cuadrilátero. At its heart, pedestrianised Plaza Zurita is simply two parallel lines of bars and pubs, so there's no shortage of quaffing choice.

## Getting There & Away

There is a stream of buses going to Santa Cruz. Bus 015 (€1.25, 20 minutes) is best, as it takes you straight to Plaza España. Buses 101 and 102 also offer a regular service to Puerto de la Cruz (€3.20, one hour), La Orotava (€4.45, 1½ hours) and beyond.

Finding a parking on the streets is migraine-inducing. There's an underground pay car park beneath Plaza San Cristóbal.

## SAN ANDRÉS & AROUND

The village of San Andrés, all narrow, shady streets, is 6km northeast of Santa Cruz. It is distinguished by the now-crumbled round tower that once protected the town, plus some good seafood restaurants, which alone justify the short journey. Bustling **Marisquería Ramon** (☎ 922 54 93 08; Calle El Dique 23; mains €7-36; ☎ closed Mon) is a slick restaurant just southwest of the tower. It gets packed to its fishy gills at lunchtime, handled with aplomb by the old-fashioned, hard-working waiters. Pick your fish from the glass-fronted fridge.

The golden sands for the **Playa de las Teresitas**, just beyond the village, were imported from the Sahara. It's a pleasant beach where the sunbathers are almost exclusively Spanish, whether local or from the mainland. Limited parking is available and it's safe for children to swim here.

There are frequent 910 buses (€1.25, 20 minutes) from Santa Cruz to San Andrés, continuing on to Playa de las Teresitas. Bus 245 goes northeast from San Andrés to the end of the road at Iguete, following another 6km of beautiful coastline.

## TAGANANA & THE ANAGA MOUNTAINS

A spectacular road trip leads up the Barranco de las Huertas to cross the Anaga range (geologically the oldest part of the island) before plummeting down on the other side to the hamlet of Taganana. The views to the craggy coast from above are breathtaking.

Bus 246 travels to Taganana at least six times daily from Santa Cruz (€2.10, 50 minutes).

There's little to see or do in town but it's only a few more kilometres north to the coast and **Roque de las Bodegas**, which has a number of small restaurants and drink stands. Local windsurfers, surfers and boogie boarders favour its beach – and, even more so, the rocky strand of **Almáciga**, 1.25km eastwards and accessible by the same bus (€2.50, one hour).

If you have your own wheels, backtracking up and into the Anaga mountain range and heading west at the intersection (follow signs for La Laguna) continues a spectacular excursion. Park at the **Casa Forestal**, just south of Taganana, for a hike through a rare laurel forest with branches sprayed with lichens resembling glimmering party streamers. Continue driving for a superb ridge ride with views of the ocean to both north and south and, if the air's clear, of the islands of Gran Canaria and El Hierro rearing from the seas. Take time to pause at the numerous *miradores* (lookouts) along the way.

## PUNTA DEL HIDALGO & AROUND

You might want to allow for a side trip to this part of the coast as you head towards La Laguna from Taganana. Once the mountain road has dropped to the plain, turn west for Tegueste; if it's lunchtime, dip south to the tranquil village of El Socorro and **Restaurante Bar San Gonzalo** (☎ 922 54 38 00; Carretera General Del Socorro 179; 🚫 closed Wed), which is excellent for

steaks and has a dining room with vineyard views. Continuing northwest, you reach the seaside resort of **Bajamar** (via Tejina). The only real swimming is in large manmade rock pools awash with Atlantic rollers but it is popular with locals.

Three kilometres northeast, **Punta del Hidalgo** is a more interesting place, although don't expect any crumbling cobbles or medieval churches. Like most of the towns in this region, Punta is comparatively modern, its charm being the dramatic ocean location backed by soaring craggy mountains. Stroll along the boardwalk, stopping for a coffee or *cerveza* (beer) at friendly **Angelo** (☎ 922 15 63 88; Altagay Apartments) across from the beach. Locals try their luck on boogie boards in the surf of Playa de los Troches, just north of the centre.

If you want to stay in the area, try **Hotel Delfin** (☎ 922 54 02 00; www.delfinbajamar.com; Avenida el Sol 39; s/d/tr with breakfast €34/53/76; 📞 🚻 🚰 🚿) in Bajamar, which has superb sea views and pretty rooms with bright fabrics and wicker furniture. Alternatively, the **Oceano** (☎ 922 15 60 00; www.oceano-tenerife.com; Punta del Hidalgo; s/d with breakfast from €70/86; 🚻 🚰 🚿) is a well-equipped spa hotel, popular with Germans, with excellent facilities and large, bright apartments. Facilities include a sea-water pool, gym, Finnish sauna and organised excursions.

Bus 105 runs to Bajamar (€2.20, one hour five minutes) and Punta del Hidalgo (€2.50, 1¼ hours) every 30 minutes from Santa Cruz via La Laguna.

## TACORONTE & EL SAUZAL

Tacoronte is located in the heart of one of the island's most important wine regions. Downhill from the modern town centre is the signposted **Iglesia de Santa Catalina** – a bright little whitewashed church built in the Canaries' colonial style. You'll also see a handful of traditional old houses but otherwise there's a lack of gawp-worthy sights here.

Just beyond the El Sauzal exit from the motorway is the **Casa del Vino La Baranda** (☎ 922 57 25 35; Autopista del Norte; admission free; 🕒 11.30am–7.30pm Tue–Sat, 11am–6pm Sun), a museum devoted to wine and its production, located in a traditional Canarian country house with an opportunity to sample the produce in the adjoining tasting room. It's a charming place, with some beautiful views of El Teide on a clear day. The museum

### LA MATANZA DE ACENTEJO & LA VICTORIA

At the spot now called La Matanza de Acen-tejo (The Slaughter of Acentejo), Bencomo's Guanches inflicted a nasty defeat on Alonso Fernández de Lugo's Spaniards in 1494. Two years later, though, de Lugo was back and this time he had better luck, winning a decisive victory over the Guanches 3km south of the scene of his earlier defeat. Predictably, the village that eventually sprang up here was known as La Victoria.

Bus 101 links these towns to Puerto de la Cruz and Santa Cruz.

also has a well-regarded restaurant and, during July and August, the central courtyard becomes a tasteful venue for classical-music concerts every other Tuesday from 8pm. The museum also organises regular wine-tasting courses.

Bus 101 links these towns to Puerto de la Cruz (€2.30, 20 minutes) and Santa Cruz (€2.10, 40 minutes) every 30 minutes or hourly (depending on the time of day).

## THE NORTH

### PUERTO DE LA CRUZ

pop 31,100

Puerto de la Cruz is the elder statesman of Tenerife, with a history of tourism that dates back to the late 19th century when it was a spa destination popular with genteel Victorian ladies. These days, despite the proliferation of German bakeries (who's complaining?), the town has remained a pleasant resort attracting a classier style of tourist than the pie-and-pint crowd who happily prefer the south. There are stylish boardwalks, traditional restaurants and a leafy central plaza with plenty of bench space and terrace bars.

### History

Until it was declared an independent town in the early 20th century, Puerto de la Cruz was merely the port of the wealthier area of La Orotava. Bananas, wine, sugar and cochineals (dye-producing insects; see the boxed text, p132) were exported from here

and a substantial bourgeois class developed in the 1700s. In the 1800s the English arrived, first as merchants and later as sun-seeking tourists, marking the beginning of the tourist transformation that characterises the town today.

### Orientation

The heart of Puerto de la Cruz is the lovely Plaza Charco, centred around an ancient Indian laurel tree. Historic buildings are huddled around the plaza, while, to its east, a long coastal promenade marks the site of major tourist developments (such as high-rise hotels and the Lago Martiánez saltwater pool complex). To the west of Plaza Charco is a maze of pedestrian streets, though the further west you go the less well-kept the town becomes. The Playa Jardín at the western edge of town is a 25-minute walk from the centre.

### Information

#### BOOKSHOPS

**The Bookshop** (☎ 922 37 40 37; Calle Iriarte 42; ☎ 10am-1.30pm & 5-7pm Mon, Wed & Fri, 10am-1.30pm Tue, Thu & Sat) English-run shop selling new and used books, CDs and videos in English, Spanish and various other languages.

#### EMERGENCY

**Police station** (☎ 922 37 84 48; Plaza Europa)

#### INTERNET ACCESS

**Ciber-Locutorio** (☎ 922 37 20 11; Calle Agustín de Béthencourt 3D; per hr €1.50; ☎ 9.30am-11pm Mon-Fri, 1-11pm Sat) Also has telephones and a fax and photo-copying service.

#### LAUNDRY

**Lavandería Minosa** (☎ 922 38 32 58; Calle Mazaroco 26; wash & dry up to 4kg €6.50; ☎ 9am-1pm & 4-7.30pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm Sat)

#### MEDICAL SERVICES

**Hospital Tamaragua** (☎ 922 38 05 12; cnr Calle Agustín de Béthencourt & Calle Valois; ☎ 24hr) Private clinic in the centre of town.

**Le Ro** (☎ 922 37 33 01; Edificio Martina, Avenida Generalísimo; ☎ 9am-noon Mon-Fri) Specialist shop for disabled and elderly travellers, offering wheelchair rental and travel assistance.

#### POST

**Main post office** (Calle Pozo)

PUERTO DE LA CRUZ

**A** INFORMATION

- 1 Cyber-Locatorio.....1 D2
- 2 Hospital Tamaragua.....2 D3
- 3 Lavandería Mimosa.....3 B3
- 4 Le Ro.....4 F2
- 5 Main Post Office.....5 B3
- 6 Police Station.....6 D2
- 7 The Bookshop.....7 D3
- 8 Tourist Office.....8 C2
- 9 Viajes Insular.....9 E3

**B** SLEEPING

- 1 Hotel Marquesa.....24 D2
- 2 Hotel Monopol.....25 D2
- 3 Hotel Puerto Azul.....26 B2
- 4 Hotel San Telmo.....27 E2
- 5 Hotel Tigalca.....28 D4
- 6 Main Post Office.....29 C2
- 7 Pensión Los Geranos.....30 C3
- 8 Pensión Rosa Mary.....30 C3

**C** DRINKING

- 1 Colours Café.....40 C3
- 2 Ebanó Café.....41 D3
- 3 Train to Loro Parque.....45 E2

**D** TRANSPORT

- 1 Bus Station.....40 C3
- 2 Train to Loro Parque.....41 D3
- 3 Train to Loro Parque.....45 E2

**E** ENTERTAINMENT

- 1 Joy.....37 B3
- 2 Caballo Blanco.....38 D2
- 3 Caballo Blanco.....42 E2
- 4 Joy.....43 E3

**F** EATING

- 1 Mison Los Gemelos.....37 B3
- 2 Pomodora.....38 D2
- 3 Tapas Arcón.....39 C3
- 4 Joy.....37 B3
- 5 Caballo Blanco.....38 D2
- 6 Caballo Blanco.....42 E2
- 7 Joy.....43 E3
- 8 Colours Café.....40 C3
- 9 Ebanó Café.....41 D3
- 10 Train to Loro Parque.....45 E2

**1** SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

- 1 Ayuntamiento (Town Hall).....10 D2
- 2 Casa de la Aduana.....11 C2
- 3 Casa de la Aduana.....12 D2
- 4 La Papaya.....13 D2
- 5 La Rosa de Bari.....14 A3
- 6 Castillo de San Felipe.....15 B4
- 7 Ermita de San Juan.....16 D2
- 8 Iglesia de Nuestra Señora de la Peña de Francia.....17 C3
- 9 Iglesia de San Francisco.....18 F1
- 10 Lago Martiánez.....19 B3
- 11 Museo Arqueológico (Archaeological Museum).....20 C2
- 12 Risco Belle Aquatic Gardens.....21 D4
- 13 Sitio Lirre Garden.....22 E4
- 14 Torreón de Ventoso.....23 C3

**2** SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

- 1 Casa El Farol.....31 C3
- 2 Casa Miranda.....32 D2
- 3 Crisna.....33 C2
- 4 El Limón.....34 D3
- 5 La Papaya.....35 C2
- 6 La Rosa de Bari.....36 B2
- 7 Calle Cruz Verde.....31 C3
- 8 Calle Miranda.....32 D2
- 9 Calle El Limón.....33 C2
- 10 Calle La Papaya.....35 C2
- 11 Calle La Rosa de Bari.....36 B2
- 12 Calle Cruz Verde.....31 C3
- 13 Calle Miranda.....32 D2
- 14 Calle El Limón.....33 C2
- 15 Calle La Papaya.....35 C2
- 16 Calle La Rosa de Bari.....36 B2

**3** SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

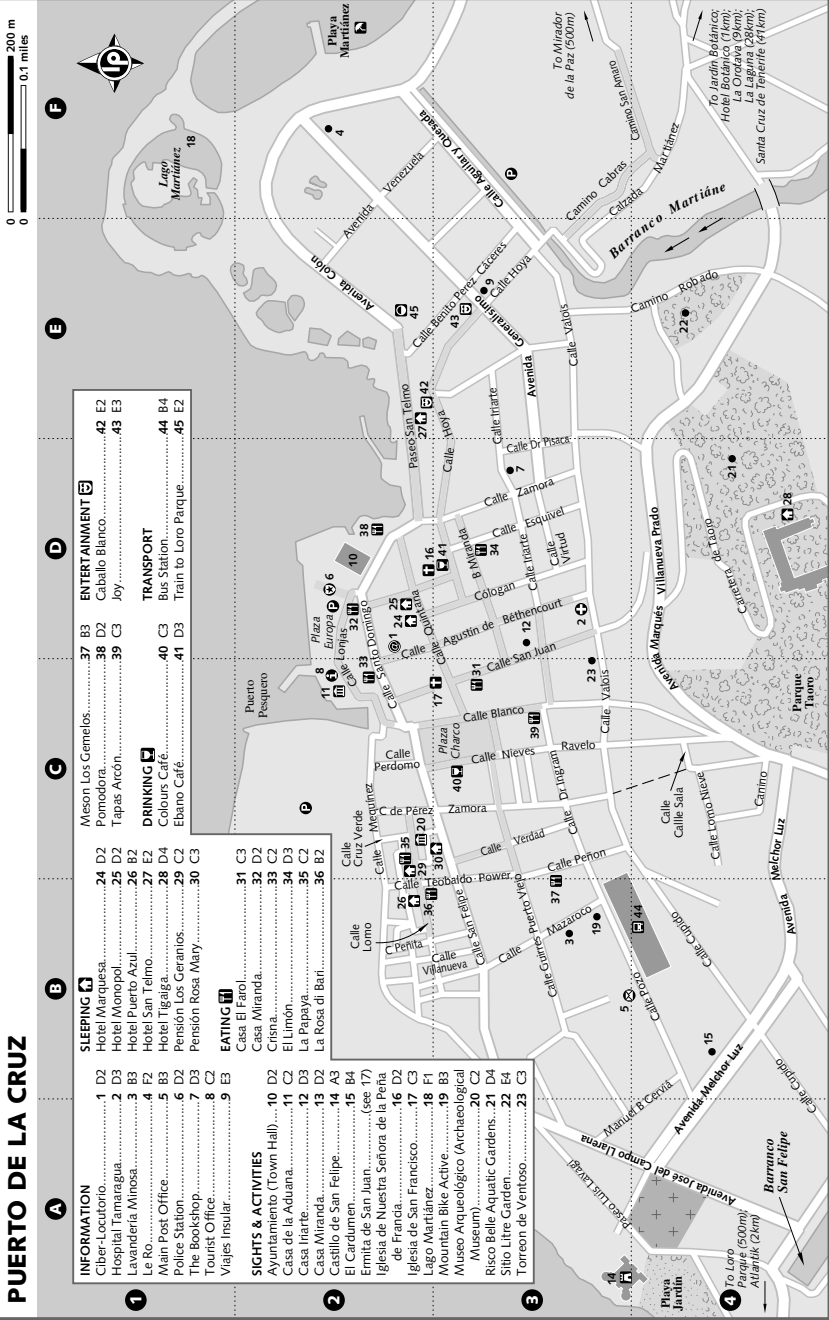
- 1 Plaza Europa.....32 D2
- 2 Plaza de España.....33 C2
- 3 Plaza de San Juan.....34 D3
- 4 Plaza de la Aduana.....35 C2
- 5 Plaza de San Felipe.....36 B2
- 6 Plaza de San Juan.....34 D3
- 7 Plaza de la Aduana.....35 C2
- 8 Plaza de San Felipe.....36 B2
- 9 Plaza de San Juan.....34 D3
- 10 Plaza de la Aduana.....35 C2
- 11 Plaza de San Felipe.....36 B2

**4** SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

- 1 To Loro Parque (500m).....41 D3
- 2 Lago Martiánez.....42 E2
- 3 Playa Jardín.....43 E3
- 4 To Loro Parque (500m).....44 B4
- 5 Lago Martiánez.....45 E2
- 6 Playa Jardín.....46 E2
- 7 To Loro Parque (500m).....47 B4
- 8 Lago Martiánez.....48 E2
- 9 Playa Jardín.....49 E3
- 10 To Loro Parque (500m).....50 B4
- 11 Lago Martiánez.....51 E2
- 12 Playa Jardín.....52 E3
- 13 To Loro Parque (500m).....53 B4
- 14 Lago Martiánez.....54 E2
- 15 Playa Jardín.....55 E3

**5** SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

- 1 To Loro Parque (500m).....56 B4
- 2 Lago Martiánez.....57 E2
- 3 Playa Jardín.....58 E3
- 4 To Loro Parque (500m).....59 B4
- 5 Lago Martiánez.....60 E2
- 6 Playa Jardín.....61 E3
- 7 To Loro Parque (500m).....62 B4
- 8 Lago Martiánez.....63 E2
- 9 Playa Jardín.....64 E3
- 10 To Loro Parque (500m).....65 B4
- 11 Lago Martiánez.....66 E2
- 12 Playa Jardín.....67 E3
- 13 To Loro Parque (500m).....68 B4
- 14 Lago Martiánez.....69 E2
- 15 Playa Jardín.....70 E3



## TOURIST INFORMATION

**Tourist office** (☎ 922 38 60 00; www.puertodelacruz.org; Casa de la Aduana, Calle Lonjas s/n; ☎ 9am-8pm Mon-Fri, to 1pm Sat)

## TRAVEL AGENCIES

**Viajes Insular** (☎ 922 38 02 62; www.viajesinsular.es; Avenida Generalísimo 20) This is the best local travel agency and can help with air fares, ferry travel, car rental and booking excursions.

## Sights & Activities

The Plaza Europa, a balcony of sorts built in 1992, may be a modern addition, but it blends well with the historic surroundings and is a good place to start your visit. The tourist office is here, located in the **Casa de la Aduana** (built in 1620), the old customs house, where now you can also find quality arts and crafts for sale. Opposite is the **ayuntamiento** (town hall), which was a banana-packaging factory until 1973. From here, head down Calle Lonjas where, on the corner, you'll find the **Casa Miranda** (p165) restaurant, one of the town's better examples of 18th-century Canarian architecture. A short walk away is **Museo Arqueológico** (Archaeological Museum; ☎ 922 53 58 16; Calle Lomo 9; adult/under 6yr/7-12yr €1.50/free/1; ☎ 10am-1pm & 5-8pm Tue-Sat, closed Aug), which provides an insight into the Guanche way of life with its replicas of a typical cave dwelling, as well as a burial cave where pots and baked-clay adornments share the same burial area, demonstrating the Guanches' belief in an afterlife.

Next, head southeast to lively **Plaza Charco** (Puddle Plaza), which acquired its name because it used to flood from the sea every time there was a heavy storm (thankfully, no more). Just off the plaza is **Iglesia de San Francisco**, tacked on to tiny **Ermita de San Juan**, the oldest structure in town (built in 1599). Three blocks away is **Iglesia de Nuestra Señora de la Peña de Francia**, a 17th-century church with three naves, a wooden *mudéjar* ceiling and the image of Gran Poder de Dios, one of the town's most revered saints.

Several Canarian mansions, many of them in poor repair, dot the town centre. The mid-18th-century **Casa Iriarte** (Calle San Juan), once the home of intellectual Tomás de Iriarte and the site of clandestine political meetings, has seen better days. The **Torreón de Ventoso** (Calle Valois) is one of the better-kept historic buildings. The tower once formed part of the town's Au-

gustine convent and was used to keep watch over the port.

Outside the town centre there are also some noteworthy spots, such as **Castillo de San Felipe** (☎ 922 38 36 63; ☎ open for special events only) beside Playa Jardín and, above town, the **Mirador de la Paz**, a square with great views where Agatha Christie was supposedly inspired to write the novel *The Mysterious Mr Quin*. Don't miss a visit to the **Jardín Botánico** (☎ 922 38 35 72; Calle Retama 2; admission €3; ☎ 9am-6pm Oct-Apr, to 7pm May-Sep), on the road out of town. Established in 1788, the botanical garden has thousands of plant varieties from all over the world. Just 1km closer to the town centre, the **Sitio Litre garden** (☎ 922 38 24 17; Carretera del Botánico; admission €4.50; ☎ 9.30am-2.30pm) boasts a luscious orchid collection and the town's oldest *drago* (dragon tree); see the boxed text, p42. Another tropical oasis is the **Risco Belle Aquatic Gardens**, which sit in the heart of the **Parque Taoro** south of the town centre.

## LORO PARQUE

Where else can you see 3000 parrots (the world's largest collection) all in one place? **Loro Parque** (☎ 922 37 38 41; www.loroparque.com; Calle Avenida Loro Parque; adult/under 12yr €29/19; ☎ 8.30am-6.45pm) is home to 340 species of parrots along with other exotic animals, including tigers, gorillas and chimpanzees. Unless you object in principle to wild animals in captivity, the park is quite impressive. Don't miss the dolphin and whale shows, the subterranean aquarium with the world's longest submarine tunnel and the vast 'penguinarium'. You could walk here from town, but it's much easier to hop on the free train that leaves every 20 minutes from outside McDonalds on Plaza Reyes Católicos.

## LAGO MARTIÁNEZ

Designed by Canario César Manrique (see p131), the watery playground of **Lago Martiáñez** (☎ 922 38 59 55; Avenida Colón; adult/under 12yr €3.50/1.10; ☎ 10am-sunset, last entry 5pm Oct-Apr, 6pm May-Sep), northeast of the centre, has four saltwater pools and a large central 'lake'. It can get just as crowded as the surrounding small volcanic beaches. Swim, sunbathe or grab a bite at one of the many restaurants and bars. There's a glittery new casino here, as well.

## ADVENTURE SPORTS & DIVING

Offering a hodgepodge of adventure-sport rental, excursions and courses, **El Cardumen**

(☎ 922 36 84 68; Avenida Melchor Luz 3; ☎ 9.30am-1.30pm & 5-8pm Mon-Fri, opens 10am Sat) is the place for action.

**Mountain Bike Active** (☎ 922 37 60 81; www.espana.bike.com; Edificio Daniela 26, Calle Mazaroco; bike rental from €36 per day; ☎ 9.30am-1.30pm & 5-7pm), across from the bus station, organises trips to El Teide and around.

Divers should contact **Atlantik** (☎ 922 36 28 01; www.scubadivingplanet.com; dives with equipment rental €65; ☎ 9am-6.30pm Mon-Fri, 12.30-2pm Sat), based in the Hotel Marítim, 2km west of the town centre, offering a range of courses.

## Tours

The **tourist office** (☎ 922 38 60 00; Casa de la Aduana, Calle Lonjas s/n; ☎ 9am-8pm Mon-Fri, to 1pm Sat) offers various guided routes through town.

For nature hikes there are local guides, including **Jorg and Mario** (☎ 922 37 60 07; www.derwanderstab.de), who meet hikers at the bus station from where they set out on several hikes, including Teide and the northwest, and **Cristóbal** (☎ 639 33 27 61), who offers similar and is a botanical expert. Trips cost from €25 per person.

## Sleeping

There is plenty of good accommodation in Puerto de la Cruz.

### BUDGET

**Pensión Los Geranios** (☎ 922 38 28 10; Calle Lomo 14; d €27) The best-value budget hotel on one of the town's prettiest pedestrian streets. Although the building won't win any design awards, the rooms are bright with light wood furnishings and pale-peach paintwork; several have private balconies at no extra cost.

**Pensión Rosa Mary** (☎ 922 38 32 53; Calle San Felipe 14; s/d €18/30) The décor at this place is a bit frumpy but the rooms are clean and there's a TV room, plus a sunny rooftop terrace.

**Hotel Puerto Azul** (☎ 922 38 32 13; www.puertoazul.de; Calle Lomo 24; s/d €27/43, breakfast €4) Down the street from Los Geranios, rooms here are small and fairly forgettable, but most have terraces and there's a rooftop terrace for catching the rays. There are price reductions for longer stays.

### MIDRANGE

**Hotel San Telmo** (☎ 922 38 58 53; www.hotel-santelmo.com; Paseo San Telmo 18; s/d with breakfast €38/68; ☎ ☎) This hotel enjoys a great location overlooking the thundering surf at the rocky part of

the promenade. Rooms are pleasant enough with terracotta tiles and bright fabrics; there's a rooftop pool and generous German-style buffet breakfast.

**Hotel Marquesa** (☎ 922 38 31 51; www.hotelmarquesa.com; Calle Quintana 11-13; s/d €35/88; ☎ ☎) About as close as you can be to church without attending confession, this is one of the town's most headily historic buildings, with dark, heavy wood furnishings, beams and balconies. The hotel's Tasca restaurant is a pleasant place for an informal seafood dinner.

**Hotel Monopol** (☎ 922 37 03 10; Calle Quintana 15; s/d €59/100; ☎ ☎) Next door to the Marquesa is another original hotel, this one built in 1742. The service is low-key but efficient, and the extras include a heated pool, games room, sauna and three sun-bronzing terraces. Original wooden balconies provide plenty of charm, while the rooms are small but well-equipped.

### TOP END

**Hotel Tigaiga** (☎ 922 38 35 00; www.tigaiga.com; Parque Taoro 28; d from €140; ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎) This superb hotel has ocean-view rooms, a program of guided walks and lush subtropical gardens. The rooms are classy and large with incredible views.

**Hotel Botánico** (☎ 922 38 14 00; www.hotelbotanico.com; Avenida Richard J Yeoward 1; s/d with breakfast €193/276; ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎) The most exclusive hotel in these parts, the Botánico has beautiful gardens, a great pool area and a new spa centre (see the boxed text, p147). Rooms are comfortable though not luxurious, with big balconies and all the standard amenities.

## Eating

### BUDGET

**Crisna** (☎ 922 38 19 06; Calle Santo Domingo s/n) Not for the hip and thigh conscious, this *salon de té* has a vast choice of deliciously creamy cakes.

**El Limón** (☎ 922 38 16 19; Calle Esquivel 4; snacks €2.20-6; ☎) A bright vegetarian restaurant with a menu of mainly snack-style fare, including veggie burgers, seitan kebabs, salads and fresh fruit juices; try the papaya.

**Tapas Arcón** (☎ 922 37 19 88; Calle Blanco 8; tapas about €4; ☎) *Papas arrugadas* (wrinkly potatoes) with *mojo* (spicy salsa), or the Arcón special sauces of almond and sweet pepper or parsley and coriander are the must-have tapas here.

**MIDRANGE**

**Meson Los Gemelos** (☎ 922 37 01 33; Calle El Peñón 4; mains €5-8) Round the corner from the bus station, this is a friendly, welcoming restaurant with a great atmosphere; the house speciality is grilled meats. There's a covered interior patio, lots of locals and a noisy parrot.

**Pomodora** (☎ 922 38 13 28; Punta Viento; mains €5-10; ♾) The location, in a cave under the seaside promenade, is the main draw at this restaurant and pizzeria. Diners get a fantastic view of the rocky coast; the menu reads like a novel, in six languages, no less.

**La Papaya** (☎ 922 38 28 11; Calle Lomo 10; mains €6-8) This long-time favourite has a series of small dining rooms with rock-face walls and a pretty patio with adjacent leafy garden. There are Canarian touches to the menu, including the succulent salmon in *malvasia* (Malmsey wine) sauce.

**Casa El Farol** (☎ 922 36 88 12; Calle San Juan 14; mains €6-12) Comprises three separate eateries for the indecisive. There's a *mesón* (traditional restaurant) with good Mediterranean-style dishes, a bistro in the patio (try the goat's cheese and tomato salad with pesto) and a bakery with a German pastry chef, plus homemade fresh-fruit ice cream.

**TOP END**

**Casa Miranda** (☎ 922 37 38 71; Calle Santo Domingo 13; mains €10-13) A three-storey Canarian mansion built in 1730, this was the family home of 18th-century Venezuelan president Francisco de Miranda. Nowadays you can get seafood and grilled meats in the fine dining room, or order tapas in the downstairs bar.

**La Rosa di Bari** (☎ 922 36 85 23; Calle Lomo 23; mains €11-17) One of the classiest restaurants in town, located in a lovely old house with several romantic dining rooms. Enjoy innovative dishes like cod in port sauce with truffles, or asparagus gnocchi with prawns.

**Drinking**

Most nightspots are around Plaza Charco or along Avenida Generalísimo.

**Ebano Café** (☎ 922 38 86 32; Calle Hoya 2; ☎ 10am-12pm) This is a beautiful building with lots of original features. Sit outside in a comfy wicker chair with a view of the church and gardens. Tapas also served.

**Colours Café** (☎ 922 38 59 13; Plaza Charco; ☎ 8pm-2am Wed-Mon) Above a pizzeria on this energetic stretch of eateries, snag a seat by a window overlooking the square. A cocktail bar with mellow décor and Latin and African music, this is a good place to kick off your night on the tiles.

**Entertainment**

**Joy** (☎ 922 37 39 85; Calle Hoya s/n; admission before 2am free, after 2am €6 with drink; ☎ 11pm-6am Mon-Sat) Sophisticated it ain't. This cavernous disco pumps out a mix of techno, pop and house. It's popular with the local 20-something gang with free drinks for ladies until 1.30am.

**Caballo Blanco** (☎ 922 38 58 53; Paseo San Telmo 18 ☎ 9.30pm-late Mon-Sat) This club is for a more mature crowd with a keyboard player as well as DJ and music stuck firmly in the *Lady in Red* genre of the '60s to '80s.

**Getting There & Away**

The bus station is on Calle Pozo in the west of town. There are frequent departures for Santa Cruz (€4.10, 55 minutes). Bus 103 is direct while bus 102 calls by Tenerife Norte airport and La Laguna. Other popular routes include a 9.15am 348 bus (€4.80, 1½ hours) to El Teide. Bus 343 (€11.20, two hours, six daily) runs to Playa de las Américas. Bus 363 offers an hourly service from 6am to 10pm to Icod de los Vinos (€2.50, 45 minutes) and on to Garachico (€2.90, one hour).

**Getting Around**

For information about bike rental, see opposite. For details about car hire, see p150.

The long-distance buses starting in or passing through Puerto de la Cruz often double up as local buses.

Taxis are widely available and are a relatively inexpensive way to jet across town (a 15-minute ride should cost under €5).

**LA OROTAVA**

pop 40,000

This colonial town will have your camera clicking all day. It has the lot, it seems: cobblestone streets, flower-filled plazas and more Castilian mansions than the rest of the island put together. Along with La Laguna, La Orotava is one of the loveliest towns on Tenerife, and one of the most truly 'Canarian' places in the Canary Islands.

The lush valley surrounding the town has been one of the island's most prosperous areas since the 16th century when well-to-do Spaniards built churches and manor houses here. The valley is a major cultivator of bananas, chestnuts and vineyards, and is also excellent hiking country, with a maze of footpaths leading you into Canarian pine woods, with 1200m views down over the coastal plain; the tourist office can advise on routes.

## Information

### EMERGENCY

**Police station** (☎ 922 33 01 14; Calle Cologan 2)

### POST

**Post office** (Calle Cologan s/n)

### TOURIST INFORMATION

**Tourist office** (☎ 922 32 30 41; www.villadelorotava.com in Spanish; Carrera Escultor Estévez 2; ☎ 8.30am-6pm) A well-marked tourist route of the town's major monuments starts here. You can also pick up stamped leaflets allowing free entrance to several museums.

## Sights

La Orotava has been able to preserve the beauty of its past. Traditional mansions are flanked with ornate wooden balconies like pirate galleons, surrounded by manicured gardens. You can cover the centre on foot in just half a day.

**Plaza Constitución**, a large, shady plaza just a block from the tourist office, is a good place to start. On the plaza's northeastern side is the **Iglesia de San Agustín**, a simple church with a pretty wooden ceiling. A few doors away stands the palatial **Liceo de Taoro** building (1928); a private cultural society, but open to the public. An attractive terraced garden separates the mansion from the street and, although the building looks a tad foreboding, you can enter and have a drink at the café, a meal at the restaurant or check out any exhibitions that may be taking place.

Also on the plaza are the 19th-century **Jardines del Marquesado de la Quinta Roja** (☎ 9am-midnight), a series of orderly, French-influenced flower gardens cascading down the hillside, crowned by a small 18th-century marble temple.

Easier on the knees is the sweet-smelling **Hijuela del Botánico** (☎ 9am-2pm Mon-Fri), just across Calle León. This small botanical garden

was created as a branch of the larger Jardín Botánico in Puerto de la Cruz. Around 3000 plant varieties are gathered here, and there are also birds and butterflies.

Also on Calle León is the **Museo de Cerámica** (Ceramics Museum; ☎ 922 32 14 47; Calle León 3; admission €2; ☎ 10am-6pm Mon-Fri, to 2pm Sat & Sun), boasting the largest clay-pot collection in Spain. The museum is well laid out, and there are detailed explanations in several languages. The sheer size of the pots in the **Sala de Vino** are impressive, and the sepia photos are fun, but after a few dozen pots or so, there is a certain sameness about the place.

Head down Calle Tomás Zerolo to visit **Museo de Artesanía Iberoamericana** (Iberoamerican Handicrafts Museum; ☎ 922 32 17 46; Calle Tomás Zerolo 34; admission €2.10; ☎ 9.30am-6pm Mon-Fri, to 2pm Sat), housed in the former Convento de Santo Domingo. Exploring the cultural relationship between the Canaries and the Americas, the museum exhibits musical instruments, ceramics and various artefacts. The adjacent **Iglesia de Santo Domingo** has beautifully carved doors and a rich *mudéjar* ceiling.

Back in the centre of town, the **Iglesia de la Concepción** (Plaza Patricia García; ☎ 11am-1pm & 5-8pm) is one of the finest examples of baroque architecture in the entire archipelago. Follow Calle Colegio (which becomes Calle San Francisco) uphill from behind the church. This street is home to several of the **Doce Casas**, 12 historic Canary mansions that are one of La Orotava's most distinguishing features. The 17th-century **Casa Lercaro** (Calle Colegio 5-7; ☎ 10.30am-8.30pm) is now an upmarket restaurant, café and *cervecería* (beer bar); see Kiú, p168.

Down the street is the **Casa de los Balcones** (Casa Fonesca, Calle San Francisco 3; admission €1.50; ☎ 8.30am-6.30pm Mon-Fri, to 5pm Sat, to 1pm Sun). Built in 1692, the interior and exterior balconies feature ornate carvings and there's a small separate museum showing furniture and costumes of the period. Across the street is **Casa del Turista** (☎ 8.30am-6.30pm Mon-Fri, to 5pm Sat, to 1pm Sun), which has similar features but is less outstanding. In both *casas* a vast selection of local handicrafts are for sale, including embroidery and pottery.

On your way up Calle Colegio, stop at **Molino la Maquina** (Calle Colegio 3; ☎ 8am-1pm, 2.30-6pm), which makes *gofio*, made from ground corn or wheat. The pretty white stone towers were the old water mills used to grind



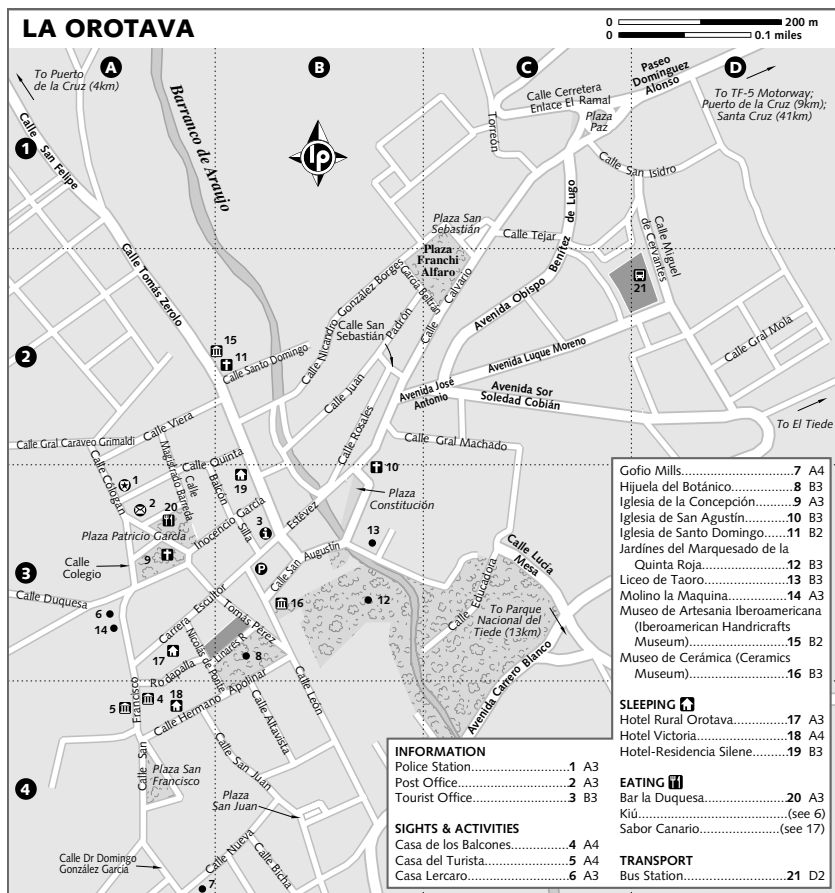
corn. Now they're just for show and everything is done electronically. There is another historic **gofio mill** further along the road (see the La Orotava map or follow your nose). At both you can buy *gofio* for around €1.45 per kilogram.

## Sleeping

**Hotel-Residencia Silene** (☎ 922 33 01 99; Calle Tomás Zerolo 9; s/d €25/40) An old family home, the whole place is slowly (very slowly) being improved. A few of the rooms are lovely; freshly painted with the original green-and-pink floor tiles, large terraces and new pine furniture. Others are dingy and, worse still, smell damp. There's no difference in price so check them out before you check in.

**Hotel Rural Orotava** (☎ 922 32 27 93; www.hotelorotava.com; Calle Carrera 17, s with breakfast €50, d with breakfast €65-75; ☑) This historic hotel is high on atmosphere and touted as the oldest of the town's achingly gorgeous mansions. Many of the original features remain, including the *mudéjar* carved ceilings. The rooms are all different and have been decorated with unpretentious good taste.

**ourpick Hotel Victoria** (☎ 922 33 16 83; http://hotelvictoria.htnsl.com; Calle Hermano Apolinar 8; s/d with breakfast €115/135; ☑) This is a seductive little number; a 17th-century mansion restored to an exquisite boutique hotel. The rooms are set around a central patio and have plenty of designer detail with textured cream wallpaper, modular light fittings and wi-fi access.



There's an excellent restaurant and rooftop sun terrace.

## Eating

**Bar La Duquesa** (☎ 922 33 49 49; Plaza Casanas 6B; mains €4-6) In the shadow of the church, this simple place has cacti growing from the roof tiles (truly!) and splendid Canarian food.

**Sabor Canario** (☎ 922 32 27 93; www.hotelorotava.com; Hotel Rural Orotava, Calle Carrera 17; mains €5-8; ☹ closed Sun) Exercise the taste buds on soul-satisfying traditional cuisine at this fabulous restaurant located in the leafy patio of the Hotel Rural Orotava.

**Kiú** (☎ 922 32 37 38; Casa Lercaro, Calle Colegio 7; mains €6-12) This enticing space is *the* place to come for laid-back nightlife, a morning coffee or an elegant meal. The café has a decadent cake choice; the *cervecría* has beer on tap and live music at weekends; and the elegant restaurant hits the right spot with innovative dishes like sole and prawn rolls in a dill sauce.

## Getting There & Away

La Orotava is 9km inland from Puerto de la Cruz, and buses (€1.25, 20 minutes) leave roughly every half-hour from 7am to 11pm. Bus 63 (€3.90, 50 minutes), among others, comes from Santa Cruz. Call the **bus station** (☎ 922 33 27 02) for more information.

## ICOD DE LOS VINOS

pop 22,200

An umbrella-shaped *drago* tree is the cause of a lot of fuss in this town. Indeed, it's worth a look and a read-up (see the boxed text, p42), and the shady main square, Plaza San Marcos, is a lovely, leafy spot to rest and enjoy the town's white-walled church. Otherwise, for restaurants and places to stay head on to neighbouring Garachico (right), which is a few notches up on the postcard-pretty stakes.

The **tourist office** (☎ 922 86 96 00; Calle San Antonio; ☹ 9am-7pm Mon-Fri) is just off the main plaza.

## Sights

The pride of the town is the world's largest and oldest **drago tree**, which has supposedly been here for more than 1000 years. Past **Plaza Constitución** (aka Plaza Pila), a square with historic Canary homes, is **Drago Park** (fax 922 81 44 36; admission €4; ☹ 9am-6.30pm), where you can pay to

get up close to the famous tree; fax ahead to request a guided tour. The best view, however, is the free one from the west wall of the Plaza de la Inglesia. **Plaza San Marcos** is in the centre of town. Here you can see the **Iglesia de San Marcos**, which has an ornate silver high altar and a sacred **museum** (admission €0.60).

The second major sight here is the **Mariposario del Drago** (☎ 922 81 51 67; Avenida Canarias), a hot and sticky greenhouse full of exotic butterflies. However, this was closed for restoration at the time of research; check at the tourist office for an update.

## Getting There & Away

If you're driving, save yourself a headache and follow the signs towards the paid car park. Arriving by bus is easy: bus 106 (€5.80, 1¼ hours) comes directly from Santa Cruz every two hours from 6.45am to 10.45pm. Bus 354 (€2.50, 45 minutes) comes from Puerto de la Cruz every half-hour from 7.30am to 10.30pm, and bus 460 (€5.40, one hour 35 minutes, eight daily) makes the trip up from Playa de las Américas. The **bus station** (☎ 922 81 13 04) is to the northeast of the town centre.

## GARACHICO

pop 6800

A gracious, tranquil town located in a deep valley flanked by forested slopes and a rocky coastline, Garachico has managed to retain its Canarian identity and is one of the few coastal towns where you may still need Spanish to order a beer. There are no big hotels, probably because there is no real beach, though swimming in the natural, volcanic coves along the rocky coast is a rare delight.

Named for the rock outcrop off its shore (*gara* is Guanche for island, and *chico* is Spanish for small), Garachico is a peaceful place. You'd never guess the history of calamities that lies behind its whitewashed houses and narrow, cobblestone streets. Garachico was once an important commercial port, but its unlucky inhabitants suffered a series of disasters that all but finished off the hamlet: freak storms, floods, fires, epidemics and, in 1706, a major volcanic eruption that destroyed the port and buried half the town in lava, reduced it to a poor shadow of its former self.

Just outside town, you can hike trails that follow the path of the disastrous lava flow.

The **tourist office** (☎ 922 13 34 61; Calle Esteban de Ponte 5; ☹ 10am-3pm Mon-Fri) stocks maps of the town and can advise on *casas rurales*.

## Sights & Activities

The soul of Garachico is the main Plaza Libertad with its towering palm trees, café tables and lively atmosphere. At dusk old men in flat caps play cards surrounded by sauntering couples, children kicking balls, and families. Nearby is the **Iglesia** and evocative **Convento de San Francisco** (1524). The latter houses a small **museum** (☎ 922 83 00 00; admission €0.60; ☹ 10am-7pm Mon-Fri, to 3pm Sat & Sun) about the town's history. Just off the plaza is the **Iglesia de Santa Ana**, with a dominating white bell tower and original 16th-century doors.

Another rare remnant of the volcano is in the Plaza Juan González (aka Plaza Pila), and the **Puerta de Tierra** (Land Gate), all that's left of Garachico's once-thriving port. It was once right on the water but thanks to the eruption is now in the centre of town.

On the water you can visit **Castillo de San Miguel** (admission €0.60; ☹ 10am-8pm Mon-Fri, to 6pm Sat & Sun), a squat stone fortress built in the 16th century, with photos and explanations of the area's flora and fauna, as well as a chronological history of the town.

Divers can check out the scuba centre in the **península El Jardín** (☎ 922 83 02 45; www.argonautas.org; Calle Esteban de Ponte 8; dive with equipment rental €45).

## Sleeping

Garachico is a perfect place to base yourself if you're looking for a small-town feel with easy access to northern Tenerife and outdoor pursuits.

**El Jardín** (☎ 922 83 02 45; www.argonautas.org; Calle Esteban de Ponte 8; s €20-45, d €25-50) The only place in town that can qualify as budget. It varies as much in room quality as it does in price – while the €50-per-night room is spacious and almost elegant, the cheaper rooms have threadbare furnishings and a dormitory look.

**Hotel Rural El Patio** (☎ 922 13 32 80; www.hotelpatio.com; Finca Malpais 11; s €50-87, d €63-114; ☹ ☎) Just east of town, in El Guincho, is this tranquil, white-walled place tucked among plantains. The rooms are spread throughout three low-rise buildings set around a stone patio.

**our pick** **Hotel La Quinta Roja** (☎ 922 13 33 77; www.quintaroja.com; Glorieta de San Francisco; d/ste with breakfast from €103/143; ☹ ☎ ☎) This re-

stored 16th-century manor house is lovely. Managed by an enthusiastic young team, the rooms are centred around a gracious patio complete with fountain and wooden galleries. Rooms have cherry-coloured wooden floors, muted décor and Med-blue mosaic-tiled bathrooms.

**Hotel San Roque** (☎ 922 13 34 35; www.hotelsanroque.com; Calle Esteban de Ponte 32; s/d/ste with breakfast from €135/190/255; ☹ ☎ ☎) Another stunning hotel, set in a 17th-century mansion, which has been converted with style and originality, but without compromising on the old-Havana feel of the place. The rooms are set around two courtyards and have eye-catching designer detail, as well as spa baths, DVD and CD players and wi-fi access.

## CASAS RURALES

There are several *casas rurales* in these parts.

**León Acosta** (☎ 922 13 33 66; Calle El Monte 14, San Juan del Reparo; s/d with breakfast €25/50) A gingerbread cottage of a place with just one room, located in a sleepy, unspoiled village near Garachico.

**Casa Ida** (☎ 922 13 32 97; www.ruralida.com; Calle La Oliva 8, Genovés; d from €54) Located between Icod de los Vinos and Garachico and comprising five cottages set on several levels and surrounded by fruit trees and gardens. There are sweeping views of the sea and El Teide. The accommodation is attractive rustic style with beams, terracotta tiles and chunky wooden furniture.

## Eating

**El Caletón** (☎ 922 13 33 01; Avenida Tomé Cano 1; mains €7-18) The best position in town, with a vast terrace overlooking the volcanic rock pools. You can have a drink or ice cream or something more substantial; the menu includes a tasty *setas con gambas* (oyster mushrooms with prawns).

**Casa Gaspar** (☎ 922 13 31 06; Avenida República de Venezuela 2; mains €10-16) This restaurant has a good reputation with the locals. It has an old-fashioned elegance and serves tasty seafood dishes.

## Getting There & Away

Bus 107 connects the town with Santa Cruz (€6, one hour 55 minutes), La Laguna, La Orotava and Icod de los Vinos, while bus 363 (€2.90, one hour, up to 20 daily) comes and goes from Puerto de la Cruz.

## THE CENTRE

### PARQUE NACIONAL DEL TEIDE

Covering 189.9 sq km, Teide is not only Spain's largest national park, it is the most popular, attracting a whopping four million visitors a year. A visit here should top everyone's itinerary. Most folk arrive by bus and don't wander far off the highway that snakes through the centre of the park, but that just means that the rest of us have more elbow room to explore. There are currently 21 walking tracks (30 more tracks will soon be signposted) marking the way through volcanic terrain, beside unique rock formations and up to the peak of El Teide (Pico del Teide), which, at 3718m, is the highest mountain in Spain.

This area was declared a national park in 1954, with the goal of protecting the landscape, which includes 14 plants found nowhere else on earth. The park is simply stunning; more than 80% of the world's volcanic formations are here, including rough badlands (deeply eroded barren areas), smooth *pahoehoe* or *lajial* lava (rock that looks like twisted taffy) and pebble-like lapilli. There are also complex formations such as volcanic pipes and cones. The park protects nearly 1000 Guanche archaeological sites, many of which are still unexplored and all of which are unmarked, preventing curious visitors from removing 'souvenirs'.

El Teide dominates the northern end of the park. If you don't want to make the four-hour climb to the top, take the cable car (below). Surrounding the peak are the *cañadas*, flat depressions likely caused by a massive landslide 180,000 years ago.

### Information

The park has two excellent visitor centres: **El Portillo** (☎ 922 29 01 29; www.mma.es; Carretera La Orotava-Granadilla; 🕒 9am-4pm) in the northeast, with an adjacent botanical garden; and **Cañada Blanca** (☎ 922 29 01 29; Carretera La Orotava-Granadilla; 🕒 9am-4pm) in the south, which has an informative 15-minute video presentation about the history, ecology, flora and fauna of the park. Both centres stock maps and hiking information as well as an excellent guidebook to the park.

### Sights

#### PICO DEL TEIDE

The **cable car** (☎ 922 69 40 38; adult/under 14yr €22/12; 🕒 9am-4pm) provides the easiest, most popular and most expensive way to get up to the peak of El Teide. If you don't mind paying up, the views are great – unless a big cloud is covering the peak, in which case you won't see a thing. On clear days, the volcanic valley spreads out majestically below, and you can see the islands of La Gomera, La Palma and El Hierro peeking up from the Atlantic. It takes just eight minutes to zip up 1200m.

A few words of warning: those with heart or lung problems should stay on the ground,

### THE DAY EL TEIDE SWALLOWED THE SUN

These days scientists can explain exactly how a volcano erupts: magma from the earth's core explodes through the crust and spews ash, rock and molten lava over the land. But the Guanches, living in pre-Hispanic Tenerife, had a more romantic version. According to legend, the 13th-century eruption was caused when El Teide swallowed the sun. The people believed that the devil, Guyota, lived inside El Cheide, as El Teide was then known. One day he emerged from his underground lair and saw the sun. Jealous of its light, he stole it and hid it inside his lair, causing death, destruction and darkness all over the island. The Guanches begged Chaman, the sky god, for help, and the god battled Guyota inside the volcano. The Guanches knew Chaman had triumphed when one morning they awoke to see the sun back in the sky and the volcano plugged with rock, trapping the evil Guyota inside forever.

The legend coincides perfectly with what happened following the medieval eruption. An ash cloud covered the sun, and the only light the Guanches saw came from the mouth of the active volcano, leading them to believe the sun was trapped there. The volcano's toxic ash would have killed many plants and animals, and the 'battle' going on inside the volcano was probably the rumblings following the eruption. The 'plug' that safely trapped Guyota in El Cheide was new volcanic rock.

as oxygen is short up here in the clouds. It's chilly, too, so no matter what the weather's like below, bring a jacket. The cable cars, which each hold around 35 passengers, leave every 10 minutes, but get here early (before noon) because at peak times you could be queuing for two hours! The last ride down is at 5pm.

See p172 if you want to tackle the mountain on foot.

### ROQUES DE GARCÍA

A few kilometres south of the peak, across from the *parador*, lies this geological freak show of **twisted lava pinnacles** with names like the Finger of God and the Cathedral. Known as the Roques de García, they are the result of erosion of old volcanic dykes, or vertical streams of magma. The hard rock of the dykes has been bared while surrounding earth and rock has been gradually swept away. The weirdest of the rocks, the **Roque Cinchado**, is wearing away faster at the base than above, and one of these days is destined to topple over (so maybe you shouldn't get too close). Spreading out to the west are the otherworldly bald plains of the Llano de Ucanca.

This is the most popular spot in the park and is viewed by nearly 90% of its visitors. The car park is always crowded, but most people just leave their cars or tour buses for a 15-minute glance. If you plan to hike the relatively easy, 1½-hour trail that circles the rocks, you'll most likely be alone.

### PICO VIEJO

With a name meaning 'old peak', this is the last of Tenerife's volcanoes to have erupted on a grand scale. In 1798, its southwestern flank tore open, leaving a 700m gash. Today you can clearly see where fragments of magma shot over 1km into the air and fell pell-mell. Torrents of lava gushed from a secondary, lower wound to congeal on the slopes. To this day, not a blade of grass or a stain of lichen has returned to the arid slope.

### Walking

Don comfortable shoes, don't forget your map and bottle of water and get ready to stride out; you won't be disappointed. You are likely to see lots of the Teide broom shrubs that fill so much of the park and, if you're here in early summer, the spectacular Teide vi-

per's bugloss (see p41) in bloom. Keep to the marked trails.

### GUIDED WALKS

Park rangers host guided walks up the mountain in both Spanish and English. The pace is gentle and there are frequent information pauses. Even though you'll huff and puff rather more than usual because of the high altitude, the walks are suitable for anyone of reasonable fitness (including children aged over 10).

Groups leave at 9.15am and 1.30pm from the visitor centre at El Portillo, and at 9.30am and 1pm from the visitor centre at Cañada Blanca. Walks last about two hours.

Groups are small, so it is essential to call ahead and reserve a spot. Phone ☎ 922 29 01 29 between 9am and 2pm Monday to Friday).

### SELF-GUIDED WALKS

The general park visitor guide lists 21 walks, ranging in length from 600m to 17.6km, some of which are signposted. Each walk is graded according to its level of difficulty (ranging from 'low' – the most common – to 'extreme'). You're not allowed to stray from the marked trails, a sensible restriction in an environment where every tuft of plant life has to fight for survival.

You don't have to be a masochist to enjoy the challenge of walking from road level up to **La Rambleta** at the top of the cable car, followed by a zoom down in the lift. Get off the bus (request the driver to stop) or leave your car at the small road-side parking area (signposted 'Montaña Blanca' and 'Refugio de Altavista') 8km south of the El Portillo visitor centre and set off along the 4WD track that leads uphill. En route, you can make a short (half-hour, at the most), almost-level detour along a clear path to the rounded summit of **Montaña Blanca** (2750m), from where there are splendid views of Las Cañadas and the sierra beyond. Alternatively, make the Montaña Blanca your more-modest goal for the day and head back down again (about 2½ hours for the round trip). Yet another relatively gentle route is the 16km **Las Siete Cañadas** between the two visitor centres, which, depending on your pace, will take between four and five hours.

For the full ascent to La Rambleta, allow about four hours. You can always wimp

out by taking the cable car up and walking back down.

### CLIMBING TO THE SUMMIT

The key to climbing the summit from the top of the cable car is to plan ahead. There's a permit scheme in force that restricts the number of visitors who can climb to the summit to 150 a day. Until recently, anyone who intended to make this climb had to go in person to the national park office in Santa Cruz. Now, if you plan ahead by at least one week you can reserve your place by contacting the **Servicio de Uso Público** (☎ 922 29 01 29; fax 922 24 47 88; teide@oapn.mma.es; 4th fl, Calle Emilio Calzadilla 5, Santa Cruz; ☎ 9am-2pm Mon-Fri) either by fax or email.

If you are unable to plan this far in advance, you will have to apply in person at the Servicio de Uso Público office in Santa Cruz. Take a photocopy of your passport or ID. Permits, which are free, specify both the

date and the two-hour window during which you're allowed beyond the barrier. In addition to the permit, take your passport or ID with you on the walk, as you'll probably be asked to produce it.

From the cable car it's about a one-hour walk to the summit.

### Sleeping & Eating

**Parador Nacional** (☎ 922 37 48 41; www.parador.es; d€125; (P) (Q)) Camping isn't allowed inside the park, but you can stay at this low-key *parador*, which unfortunately was designed with little empathy for the surrounding landscape. Once inside, however, the rooms are attractively rustic in style with earth colours, tasteful original landscapes and king-size beds. You pay slightly more for a Teide view. Avoid the adjacent cafeteria for anything more than a drink on the terrace; the food is overpriced and pedestrian.

If you're driving and want to round off your hike with a memorable dining experi-

## LOCAL VOICES

**Name?** Nemesio Perez

**Official title?** Volcanologist

**Sounds like you are in the right place!**

'Yes, I was born and raised in Puerto de la Cruz with a volcano by my home. When I was a child I would visit with my family, particularly when there was snow. I also remember searching for colourful rocks to prepare the Portal de Belén (nativity scene) for Christmas.

'I knew from a young age that I wanted to work in volcano science, so studied geochemistry in Madrid and La Laguna.'

**So what's the big deal about El Teide?**

'That's easy on many levels. Not only is El Teide the highest peak in Spain, it's the most important active volcano in the Canary Islands. The most obvious volcanic degassing is located at the summit cone where fumaroles of about 85°C (the boiling temperature of the water at that altitude) can be found. We collect samples of these gasses on a monthly basis. In addition to these visible emanations, the summit cone of Teide volcano releases about 100 tons of carbon dioxide daily into the atmosphere.'

**What impact does this have on the environment?**

'Carbon dioxide is the second major component of volcanic gases, after the water vapour, and equals about 100 ton a day. This quantity is normal – we can't turn off the volcano's plumbing system! Global carbon-dioxide emissions from subaerial volcanism equals only about 2% of the global carbon-dioxide emissions, so is fairly negligible.'

**What do you enjoy most about the job?**

'Volcanoes provide a special beauty to the landscape and I really enjoy this characteristic of the volcanic environments, as well as meeting the people who live in active volcanic regions all over the world.'

**What is the likelihood of El Teide blowing again?**

'The most recent eruption occurred in the western flank of Pico Viejo in 1798. A multidisciplinary approach is used for monitoring Teide's volcanic activity. Teide is an active volcano in a dormant stage, and the probability of an eruptive phase is actually very low, so we are on top of the situation – so to speak.'

### IT'S ASTRONOMICAL

One of the best places in the northern hemisphere to stargaze is the **Teide Astronomic Observatory** (☎ 922 60 52 00), set just off the C-824 highway that runs between La Laguna and the El Portillo visitor centre. Scientists from all over the world come to study here and at its sister observatory in La Palma (see the boxed text, p226). You can add your name to the list of those who've seen through the mammoth telescopes scattered here if you stop by between 10am and noon any Friday from December to March. You'll need to make an appointment first. For more information, see [www.iac.es](http://www.iac.es).

ence, continue for around 25km until you reach the pretty agricultural town of Vilaflor. Just off the lovely main square, flanked by handsome buildings, seek out **Restaurante Casa Pana** (☎ 922 70 90 70; Calle Los Castaños 7; mains €4-6), run by the lovely Miryn in her grandmother's former home. Each room is painted a different colour, while outside the tables are set under pomegranate trees and grape vines, an ideal setting for a long, leisurely lunch. The white wine is made here and excellent, as is the traditional cuisine. For dessert, pop up the road for a homemade *torta de almendra* (made with almonds, eggs and fresh lemon) at **Dulceri Vilaflor** (☎ 922 70 90 94; Calle Los Casañaños 3). If you want to stay in this delightful small town there are several *casas rurales*, including elegant **Casa El Zaguén** (☎ 680 81 60 87; Plaza Vilaflor 13; s/d €35/50) on the main square.

### Getting There & Away

Surprisingly, only two public buses arrive at the park daily: the 348 bus (€4.80, one hour) from Puerto de la Cruz and the 342 (€4.70, 1½ hours) from Playa de las Américas. Both head to the park at 9.15am, arriving at the *parador*, and leave again at 4pm. That's good news for the countless tour companies that organise bus excursions, though not so encouraging for the independent traveller. The best way to visit is with your own car. There are four well-marked approaches to the park; the two prettiest are the C-824 coming from La Laguna and the C-821 from La Orotava (and Puerto de la Cruz). The C-821 is the only road that runs through the park, and the *parador*,

the cable car and the visitor centres are all off this highway, as well as several *miradores* where you can pull over and take the shot to impress the folks back home. To see anything else, you have to walk. The C-821 carries on to Vilaflor, while the C-823 highway links the park with Chío and Los Gigantes.

## THE NORTHWEST

### PUNTA DE TENO

When Plato mistook the Canary Islands for Atlantis (see p24), it must have been because of places like Punta de Teno. It's what daydreams are made of – waves crashing against a black, volcanic beach, solitary mountains rising like giants in the background, the constant whisper of lizards scurrying in the brush... This beautiful spot, the most northwestern on the island, is no secret. But it still has a wild charm that the visitors can't take away. You can fish off the point, splash along the rocky coast or just absorb the view.

Think twice about heading out here if there have been recent heavy rains, as mud and rock slides are common.

Take the highway towards Buenavista del Norte from Garachico and keep following the signs to the Punta, around 7km further on. Bus 107 (€7.20, 1½ hours) comes every two hours from 7.15am, while from Santa Cruz (€3.80, one hour) there are buses roughly every half-hour to Buenavista del Norte from 6am until 11pm, but to get out to the Punta you need your own car.

### MASCA

If you arrive before about 10am, you could be tricked into thinking that you're the one who discovered this little mountain town. It wouldn't be true, of course – plenty of tourists and tour buses arrive daily – but nevertheless Masca feels like an oasis lost in the harsh landscape. The surrounding rugged and beautiful Parque Rural de Teno is popular for hiking – if you don't want to go it alone, **El Cardón** (☎ 922 12 79 38; [www.elcardon.com](http://www.elcardon.com)) provides guides, setting out from Garachico, Los Silos or Buenavista del Norte on Wednesday and Saturday.

A popular but demanding trek is down Barranco de Masca to the sea. Allow six hours

## DETOUR

The northwest corner of Tenerife offers some spectacular unspoiled scenery. From Garachico, head west on the TF-42 highway past Buenavista del Norte and down the TF-445 to the lonely, solitary **Punta de Teno** (p173).

You'll have to return to Buenavista to catch the TF-436 mountain highway to Santiago del Teide. Curve after hairpin curve obligates you to slow down and enjoy the view. Terraced valleys appear behind rugged mountains, and **Masca** (p173) makes the perfect pit stop. When the highway reaches Santiago, you can head either north on the TF-28, towards Garachico, or south towards Los Gigantes, where signs point the way down to **Playa de la Arena** (below), a sandless beach that's nearly as pretty as Punta de Teno, though more developed.

You'll need at least a full morning to complete this route.

to hike there and back, or do it the smart way and catch the **Excursions Marítimas** (☎ 922 86 19 18) ferry to Los Gigantes (€10, 3.30pm and 4.30pm daily).

There are two 355 buses (€1.60, 30 minutes) each day to/from Santiago del Teide.

## LOS GIGANTES & PUERTO DE SANTIAGO

pop 5750

These two towns have merged into one, and a worrying number of cranes can only mean more building is under way. At least the majority are low-rise apartments that look very humble indeed next to the awesome Acantilados de los Gigantes (Cliffs of the Giants) rock walls that soar up to 600m out of the ocean along the northern coast. The submerged base of these cliffs is a haven for marine life, making this one of the island's supreme diving areas.

The best views of the cliffs are from out at sea (there's no shortage of companies offering short cruises) and from Playa de los Gigantes, a tiny volcanic beach beside Los Gigantes' port that offers a breathtaking view and the excellent Restaurante Marinero Jesse (opposite). If you are looking for more sun-bed space, head to Playa de la Arena, a larger volcanic beach in Puerto de Santiago. Both resorts have a large British expatriate community, which means plenty of restaurants serving beans on toast.

The **tourist office** (☎ 922 86 03 48; Calle Manuel Ravelo 20, local 35; ☎ 9am-3.30pm Mon-Fri, to 12.30pm Sat) is on the 2nd floor of the shopping centre across from Playa de la Arena.

## Activities

This is the best place on the island for diving with abundant marine life. **Los Gigantes**

**Diving Centre** (☎ 922 86 04 31; www.divingtenerife.co.uk; Los Gigantes Harbour; dive with equipment rental €45; ☎ 9.30am-5pm Mon-Sat), an English-owned outfit, has been diving here for more than a decade. Dive excursions are run at 10am and 2pm.

Equally popular are whale and dolphin trips. The waters between western Tenerife and La Gomera are among the world's best for spotting these amazing creatures. One reputable outfit is **Katrin** (☎ 922 86 03 32; Los Gigantes Harbour; 2hr safari €25; ☎ 11.30am-1.35pm), which conducts marine biology research and also takes groups out with special needs. **Ocean Explorer** (☎ 687 39 58 56; Los Gigantes Harbour; 1hr whale excursion €25, 1hr dolphin excursion €15; ☎ 11.30am-5.30pm) has several daily whale- and dolphin-watching trips and also offers parasailing (€30 for 15 minutes) and rents jet skis (€40 for 20 minutes).

If you prefer a dip in a pool, **Piscina Oasis** (☎ 922 86 27 63; Avenida Marítima; with sun bed €4; ☎ 10am-6pm; ☎) is a grassy area above the harbour with two pools, a bowling green, a mediocre restaurant and superb views.

## Sleeping

**Poblado Marinero** (☎ 922 86 09 66; www.elhotelito.com; Acantilados de los Gigantes; 2-/4-/6-person apt €70/83/109) Located just above the marina in Los Gigantes, the flats here are modern with a predominance of beige and brown. Never mind, they are clean and spacious, with cool tile floors, open-plan kitchens and traditional wooden balconies.

**Hotel Playa la Arena** (☎ 922 86 29 20; www.springhotels.com; Calle Lajjal 4, Playa de la Arena; s €62-86, d €84-120; ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎) Upscale and one of the better-value places. The vast and shiny foyer (great for roller-skating!) is impressive with its balconies and trailing plants. The 432



rooms have marble bathrooms, balconies and a warm colour scheme; there are several vast pools set among leafy palms in the gardens.

## Eating

You won't be hard pressed to find a restaurant (most are by Los Gigantes Marina or along the Avenida Marítima), but there are slim pickings for truly good ones.

**Bamboo** (☎ 922 86 03 73; Calle Flor de Pascua 25) Head to this traditional cafeteria for a coffee and slice of gooey almond cake.

**Krishna's** (☎ 922 86 01 50; Calle Flor de Pascua 39) Good for Indian curries.

**Restaurante Marinero Jesse** (☎ 922 86 19 55; Playa de Los Gigantes; mains €10-15) Fronting the beach, Jesse specialises in paella, fresh seafood and fantastic views. There is also an impressive list of local wines. The atmosphere is casual by day and dressier in the evening, when reservations are usually necessary.

**El Rincón de Juan Carlos** (☎ 922 86 80 40; Pasaje de Jacaranda 2; mains €11-27; ☎ dinner) If you're all set to splurge, this formal restaurant is just off the main plaza in Los Gigantes. Try the duck with truffles, leaving room for the deliciously posey lavender *crème brûlée* with green-apple ice cream.

## Getting There & Around

Bus 473 (€3.60, 1¼ hours) comes and goes from Los Cristianos, and bus 325 (€5.50, 1¾ hours, six daily) travels from Puerto de la Cruz. For those with wheels, it's a well-marked 40km drive from Los Cristianos.

# THE EAST

A modern motorway (the TF-1) cruises down Tenerife's eastern coast, linking Santa Cruz to the resorts of the south in an easy 40-minute drive. The landscape of the east is dry, dusty and sterile, speckled with bright little villages. If you're not in a hurry, get the feel of this lunarlike terrain by braving the winding TF-28 highway, formerly the principal thoroughfare, which crawls along the mountain ridge above the coast.

## CANDELARIA

pop 16,000

Just 18km south of Santa Cruz is Candelaria, a busy little village where the only real claim to fame is the basilica, home to the patron

saint of the entire Canary archipelago. The ornate 1950s **Basilica de Nuestra Señora de Candelaria** (☎ 922 50 01 00; ☎ 7.30am-1pm & 3-7.30pm) sits at the edge of the town centre, overlooking a rocky beach and flanked by a plaza where nine huge statues of Guanche warriors stand guard. During the official festivities for the **Virgen de la Candelaria** celebration on 15 August (see the boxed text, p176), this plaza fills with pilgrims and party goers from all over the islands.

On the northern edge of town, two hotels and the best swimming beach in the area form Las Caletillas, which is technically a separate town, although you would never know it.

The **tourist office** (☎ 922 50 04 15; fax 922 50 26 83; Plaza CIT; ☎ 9am-2pm & 4.30-7pm Mon-Fri) is located at the northern end of town, beside Hotel Tenerife Tour.

## Sleeping & Eating

**Hotel Tenerife Tour** (☎ 922 50 02 00; www.tenerifetour.com; Avenida Generalísimo 170; s/d with breakfast €43/58; ☎ ☎ ☎) Right on the water, this place has a boxy exterior and the pool area is stark, but the rooms are bungalow-style and spacious with balconies. Views are either of the pool with ocean backdrop or the hotel's tropical garden.

**Gran Hotel Punta del Rey** (☎ 922 50 18 99; www.hoteles-catalonia.es; Avenida Generalísimo 165; s/d €54/60; ☎ ☎) The lobby has a dated tour-group feel with its vending machines and old-fashioned staff uniforms. On the plus side, the rooms are large and modern with parquet and marble floors; some overlook the tropical gardens complete with goldfish ponds and palms. There is also a lovely saltwater pool here designed by César Manrique.

**Casa Gladys** (☎ 922 50 48 36; Avenida Marítimo 33, Las Caletillas; ☎ closed Thu) Despite the disquieting name, this restaurant on the seafront does not serve cups of tea and poached eggs on toast, but far more exotic fare. The owner is from Venezuela so that country's cuisine is tastily represented, as are spicy Mexican dishes.

## Getting There & Away

If you're driving, take exit 9 of the TF-1 motorway. Buses 122, 123, 124 and 131 (€1.25, 30 minutes) connect the town with Santa Cruz.

## GÜÍMAR & AROUND

pop 16,000

A rural town with views of a gauzy blue ocean in the distance, Güímar's centre is well-kept and pleasant for a stroll. Most people come to see the **Pirámides de Güímar** (☎ 922 51 45 10; www.piramidesdeguimar.net; Calle Chacona; adult/under 8yr/9-12yr €10/free/5; 🕒 9.30am-6pm), featuring much-restored pyramid ruins that explores an intriguing question: could the Canarios have had contact with America before Columbus famously sailed the ocean blue? This theory was developed by renowned Norwegian scientist Thor Heyerdahl, who lived on Tenerife until his death in 2002 and based his ideas on the Mayan-like pyramids discovered in Güímar.

The roughly hourly buses 120 and 121 (€2.60, 50 minutes) from Santa Cruz stop at the Güímar bus station, a few blocks from the pyramids.

On the TF-61 highway linking Güímar with the small coastal town of Puertito is the rural hotel and restaurant **Finca Salamanca** (☎ 922 51 45 30; www.hotel-fincasalamanca.com; Carretera Güímar-Puertito; s/d with breakfast €63/102; 📞 🍷). The large, rambling main building fronted by cacti has a New Mexico feel, with the rooms set bungalow-style in the grounds. They are pleasant, if lacking imagination, with terracotta tiles, large bathrooms and chocolate-box paintings of Spanish *pueblos* (villages). The restaurant (mains €10) is more elegant with its glassed-in terrace overlooking the lovely gardens, complete with old-fashioned well, plenty of seating and a magnificent rubber tree.

About 12km further south is El Escobonal and the **Archeological & Ethnographi-**

**cal Museum of Agache** (☎ 922 53 04 95; Plaza El Escobonal; 🕒 5-8pm Mon-Fri), displaying all kinds of odds and ends related to Guanche and island culture. Continue on to Fasnía and the tiny **Ermita de la Virgen de los Dolores**, a chapel perched on a hill at the edge of town (off the TF-620 highway). It's usually closed, but is worth the short drive up for the panoramic views of the harsh, dry landscape.

Keep on the TF-620 past the *ermita* to reach **Roques de Fasnía**, a little town carved into the volcanic cliff. There's a tranquil black-sand beach that's rarely crowded. A bit further south is **Porís de Abona**, a charming little fishing village albeit surrounded by new housing. There's an attractive cove here, complete with fishing boats and sandy beach where you can take a dip. German-owned **Café al Mar** (☎ 626 39 00 96) enjoys prime position and is good for pitta bread sandwiches and the like. The owner, Juliane, also has apartments to rent.

## EL MÉDANO

Not yet squashed by steamroller development, El Médano is a world-class spot for windsurfers and kite boarders. The laid-back atmosphere they bring with them gives the place a dab of bohemian character. The resort boasts the longest beach in Tenerife (2km), lined by a wooden boardwalk – ideal for evening strolls.

## Information

**Cyber Corner** (☎ 922 17 83 59; Paseo Nuestra Señora Mercedes de Roja 26, local 2; per hr €2; 🕒 10am-2.30pm & 5-11pm) Connect to the internet at this spacious place right off the beach.

### THE VIRGIN OF CANDELARIA

In 1392, a century before Tenerife was conquered, a statue of the Virgin Mary holding a *candela* (candlestick) washed up on the shore near modern-day Candelaria. The Guanche shepherds who found the statue took it to their king and, according to legend, the people worshipped it. When the Spanish conquered the island a century later, they deemed the statue miraculous, and in 1526 Commander Pedro Fernández de Lugo ordered a sanctuary be built. The logical explanation of the 'miracle' is that the statue was either the figurehead from a wrecked ship, or a Virgin brought by French or Portuguese sailors, who had been on the island before the Spanish conquest. In either case, the statue was swept away by a violent storm in 1826 and never found. The ornate statue that is today swathed in robes in the *Basílica de Nuestra Señora de Candelaria* was carved soon after by local artist Fernando Estévez. On 15 August, the day she was supposedly found by the Guanches, the Virgin is honoured by processions, numerous masses and a kitschy re-enactment of costumed 'Guanches' worshipping her.

## GRANDILLA PORT CONTROVERSY

Santa Cruz de Tenerife's current double-whammy position as the island's major port and capital may soon be toppled by a controversial new port project in Grandilla in the southeast of the island. Upon completion, this is predicted to be the fifth largest port in Spain, comprising a 2.5km-long, 55m-deep breakwater, a 26-hectare area for containers, a 200-sq-metre area for general merchandise and a commercial port area of 19.5 hectares.

Despite protests from Greenpeace and local environmental agency **Ben Magec** ([www.benmagec.org](http://www.benmagec.org) in Spanish), the Commission of the EU granted approval for the controversial project in late 2006 after four years of debate. Paraphrasing European commissioner Stavros Dimas, he explained that because Tenerife is a small island, it is highly dependent on an efficient maritime transport system. He added that the main Santa Cruz port is no longer able to cope with the increasingly heavy workload of containers, thus the construction of the industrial port of Grandilla is essential to guarantee the economic security of the island in the future.

The flip side of this comes from the environmentalists who cite that the project will destroy 5km of coastline and negatively impact the island's emblematic beaches of El Médano and La Tejita. The new port is also predicted to severely impact the biodiversity on the island, the natural flora and fauna, as well as local fishing and archaeological remains. According to Ben Magec, the current port is of a sufficient size to serve the island and is already integrated into the city's infrastructure. In its view, the intent of the politicians is to transform Santa Cruz into a leisure port for cruise liners.

**Tourist office** (☎ 922 17 60 02; [www.grandilla.com](http://www.grandilla.com); Plaza los Príncipes de España; ☎ 9am-3pm Mon-Fri, to noon Sat)

## Activities

The sails of windsurfers and kite boarders speckle the horizon here. There are several companies that offer classes and equipment rental, but novices note that the winds are very strong and challenge even the pros. You can rent windsurf equipment or sign up for courses at the **Surf Center Playa Sur** (☎ 922 17 66 88; [www.surfcenter.info](http://www.surfcenter.info); 12hr rental €60; ☎ 10.30am-7pm), just beyond Hotel Playa Sur Tenerife.

Another option for kite boarding is the **Azul Kite School** (☎ 922 17 83 14; [www.azulkiteboarding.com](http://www.azulkiteboarding.com); Paseo Mercedes de la Roja 26; 3hr course from €90; ☎ 11am-1pm & 4-7pm Tue-Sat, 11am-8pm Tue-Sat in summer).

## Sleeping

**Senderos de Abono** (☎ 922 77 02 00; Calle Peatonal de la Iglesia 5; s/d with breakfast €40/60; 🍷 🍷) This rural hotel and restaurant (mains €8) is just across from the lovely stone church in Grandilla de Abona, a genuine working town. A converted post office, its rooms are in a series of old stone buildings with tiny courtyards, foliage-filled gardens and bucketfuls of charm.

**Hotel Playa Sur Tenerife** (☎ 922 17 61 20; [www.hotelplayasurtenerife.com](http://www.hotelplayasurtenerife.com); Playa El Médano; s/d €70/110;

📍 📍) The slightly less central of the two beach-side hotels here. The rooms are large with pale wooden furniture, small balconies and great ocean views. You can book sporting activities through the hotel.

## Eating

**Timón** (☎ 666 27 90 50; Calle Marcial García s/n; tapas €2) If you're lucky you may be able to grab one of just two outside tables on a weeny terrace above the thundering surf. You don't have to push the boat out to sample the delicious seafood tapas here.

**Café M** (☎ 699 94 73 94; Paseo Mercedes de Roja 14; mains €4-8) A cheery, German-run restaurant with healthy salads, pasta and wraps, plus a terrace overlooking the surfers.

There are several good restaurants on the pedestrian thoroughfare that runs through El Médano's town centre. Try **El Astillero** (☎ 922 17 82 20; Paseo Marcial García 2; mains €6-10), which specialises in seafood, including a tasty mussel soup, and has a pretty dining room with beach views. Afterwards, head down the street for homemade ice cream at the **Heladería Picacho** (Paseo el Picacho 2).

## Getting There & Away

El Médano is just east of the Tenerife Sur airport, off exit 22 of the TF-1. Bus 470 (€2.80, one hour 35 minutes) leaves hourly from Los Cristianos, and 116 (€5.70, one

hour 10 minutes) leaves every two hours from Santa Cruz.

## THE SOUTH

### LOS CRISTIANOS, PLAYA DE LAS AMÉRICAS & COSTA ADEJE

pop around 150,000

Don't forget to wear your shades when you first hit Tenerife's southwestern tip. You'll need them, not just against the blinding sunshine, but also the accompanying dazzle of neon signs, shimmering white sand and lobster-pink northern Europeans. Large multipool resorts with all-you-can-eat buffets have turned what was a sleepy fishing coast into a mega-moneymaking resort. The beaches are admittedly fabulous: sweeping and desert-white, thanks to sand imported from the Sahara.

The nightlife is for those with high energy and high spirits and there is a predictably dizzying array of restaurants. Where else can you eat in an 'authentic Mexican Cantina' for lunch, a 'real Parisian café' for dinner and have a drink in a blarney-themed Irish pub afterwards? Of course, all that variety leaves little room for Spanish culture to shine through. To see the true Spain, head inland or use Los Cristianos' commercial port to hop over to one of the small western islands. Here in the south, golden tans and golden beaches reign.

#### Orientation

Although they are three different resort areas, Los Cristianos, Playa de las Américas and Costa Adeje are often lumped together and referred to as one. Furthest south is Los Cristianos, where the maze of a town centre still retains – barely – the feel of a fishing village. Just beyond is Playa de las Américas. Technically, both are in the same municipality of Arona, but Playa de las Américas has evolved into an altogether flashier place, with high-rise hotels, glossy shopping centres and Las Vegas-style fake Roman statues and pyramids. The Costa Adeje flows seamlessly from the northern border of Playa de las Américas and is home to luxurious hotels and some of the better beaches. It's quieter and has the best reputation of the bunch, though, like the rest of the coast

here, it is one long commercial strip aimed at tourists.

The free tourist-office map is helpful, but if you're confused, do what the locals do – orientate yourself by the hotels and large buildings.

#### Information

##### BOOKSHOPS

**Bookswop** (Edificio Cristianos 1, local 8, Los Cristianos) The place to exchange or pick up a secondhand book in English.

**Librería Barbara** (Calle Pablo Abril 5, Los Cristianos) English, German and French titles, plus maps and guidebooks.

##### EMERGENCY

**Police station** Los Cristianos (☎ 922 75 71 33; Calle Valle Menéndez 5); Playa de las Américas (☎ 922 78 80 22; Avenida Noelia Alfonso Cabrera 5); Costa Adeje (☎ 922 79 78 11; Sector Las Terrazas) The Costa Adeje station is beside the Palacio de Congresos.

##### INTERNET ACCESS

**Communication Direct** (Edificio Don Antonio, Calle General Franco 44, Los Cristianos; per hr €1.80; ☎ 9.30am-10pm)

**Mundosnet** (☎ 922 79 40 89; Avenida Juan Carlos 1, Los Cristianos; per hr €2; ☎ 10am-9pm, closed Sun)

##### LAUNDRY

Washing a load costs about €6, more if you also want your clothes dried.

**Washtub Laundry** (☎ 922 79 44 90; Edificio Altamar, Avenida Noelia Alfonso Cabrera, Playa de las Américas) Bring in laundry by 1pm to get it back the same day.

**Whirly Wash** (☎ 922 79 02 99; Edificio Los Cristianos, Avenida Habana, Los Cristianos) Free pick up and delivery.

##### LIBRARIES

**Public library** (☎ 922 75 70 06; Centro Cultural, Plaza Pescador 1, Los Cristianos; ☎ 9am-2pm & 4-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-12.30pm Sat) Great resource for island-related material and some foreign-language titles.

##### MEDICAL SERVICES

**Hospital Costa Adeje** (☎ 922 79 10 00; Urbanización San Eugenio, Costa Adeje)

**Hospital Las Américas** (☎ 922 79 24 00; Avenida Arquitecto Gómez Cuesta, Playa de las Américas)

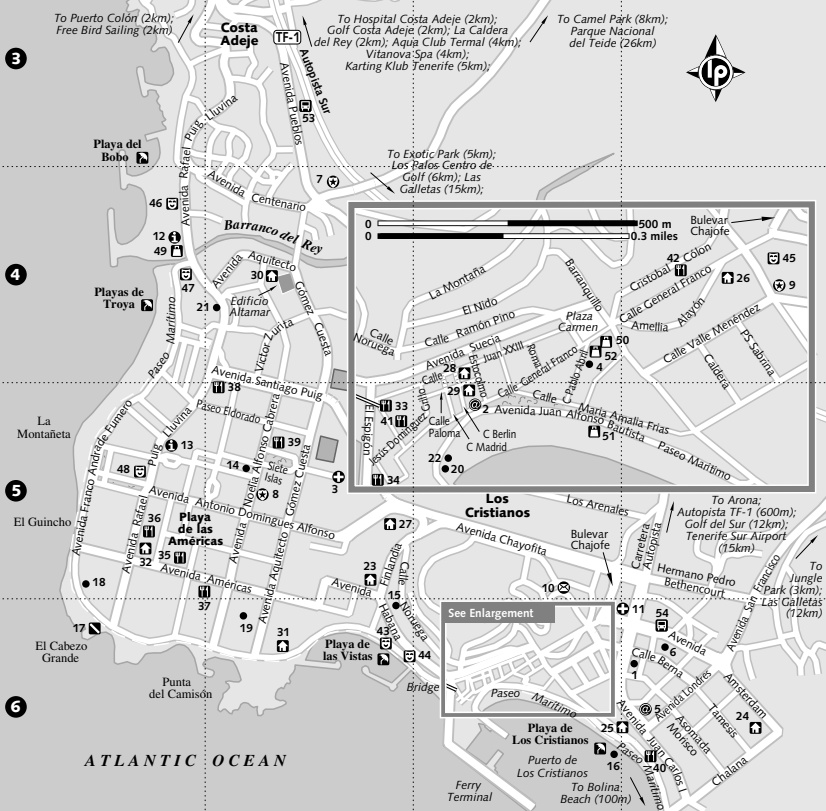
**Le Ro** (☎ 922 75 02 89; Edificio Mar y Sol, Calle Amsterdam 8, Los Cristianos) Caters to people with disabilities and has wheelchair rentals. Provides specialised medical attention.

**Orange Badge** (☎ 922 79 73 55; www.orangebadge.com; Cristian Sur Apartments, Avenida Amsterdam 9, Los

# LOS CRISTIANOS, PLAYA DE LAS AMÉRICAS & COSTA ADEJE

0 500 m  
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## TIMESHARE UNCOVERED

Despite all the adverse publicity and warnings from local tourist offices, timeshare touts in this holiday-heaven resort continue to convince tourists that their scratch card is the one in a hundred/thousand/million winner! And the prize (usually a bottle of cheap champagne) can, of course, only be collected in person from the resort. If you go (don't!), be prepared to spend a minimum of three hours at the resort and be subjected to some of the most aggressive high-pressure sales methods employed in the world. Many people are simply unable to resist. If you do go to a presentation, don't take your chequebook, credit cards or any cash with you. Also be wary of the latest discount holiday-club scam. The promise is that, once you have made an initial payment, you will benefit from discounted accommodation, airline tickets, car rentals and cruises. In fact, this product is even worse than timeshare and that first payment will bring you nothing in return, except grief.

Cristianos) Caters to people with disabilities and offers wheelchair rentals.

**Primary Care Center** (Centro de Salud Los Cristianos; ☎ 922 78 78 47; Valdés Center, Avenida Juan Carlos I, Los Cristianos)

## POST

**Post office** (Paseo Valero, Los Cristianos)

## TOURIST INFORMATION

**Tourist office** Los Cristianos (☎ 922 75 71 37; www.arona.org; Centro Cultural, Plaza Pescador 1); Playa de las Vistas (☎ 922 78 70 11; Centro Comercial San Telmo); Playa de las Américas (☎ 922 79 76 68; Centro Comercial City Center, Avenida Rafael Puig Lluvina); Costa Adeje (☎ 922 75 06 33; Avenida Litoral) The Costa Adeje office is by the Barranco del Rey.

## Activities

The 2800 average hours of yearly sunshine means that beaches are the star turn here, but if you just can't take another day of lying prone on a sun bed, there are other, more mildly energetic options.

Most activity firms rely heavily on their 'public relations' agents to bring in tourists. Some are quite helpful; others can be a pain. That said, there is plenty of ready information and the tourist offices have umpteen flyers and brochures.

## DIVING

The volcanic coast here makes for excellent diving, and calm waters means that even a first-timer can have a thrilling 'try-dive' in the ocean. A standard dive runs upwards of €35, though the per-dive rate drops if you're planning several days of diving. **Ocean Trek** (☎ 922 75 34 72; www.tenerife-diving.com; Avenida Rafael Puig Lluvina, Playa de las Américas; ☎ 9am-9pm), just beside

Hotel Tenerife Sol, offers the standard array of boat dives, courses and speciality night dives and wreck dives. Also recommended is **Fun Dive Tenerife** (☎ 922 75 27 08; www.fun-dive-tenerife.com; Hotel Park Club Europe, Playa de las Américas; ☎ 9am-6pm), with diving classes for children as well as PADI-regulated night diving trips.

## SAILING & SURFING

You won't have to sail far from shore before the hotel jungle of Tenerife's largest resort melts into the gentle slopes of the island. Rent a boat, take an excursion or sign up for a whale-watching trip (opposite) and cruise the waters between Tenerife and La Gomera with the shadow of El Teide behind you. The tourist office in Los Cristianos has a list of companies that organise all kinds of boat trips, including **Bahriyeli** (☎ 922 75 15 76; www.mardeons-tenerife.com; Puerto de los Cristianos; 3hr trip adult/under 12yr €33/16.50).

If money is unlimited, **Free Bird Sailing** (☎ 922 71 57 80; www.freebirdsailing.com; Puerto Colón, Costa Adeje; ☎ 9am-7pm) can set you up with a luxurious catamaran, including crew and food, for several hundred euros.

On a more modest scale, **K-16 Surf** (☎ 922 79 84 80; www.k16surf.com; Calle México 1-2; rental per day €24) rents out fibre surfboards and provides tuition for only slightly more than the price of rental.

## HORSERIDING

There are several riding stables in the vicinity, including **La Caldera del Rey** (☎ 606 08 64 67; San Eugenio Alto, Costa Adeje; 2hr trek €50), which also has a children's petting farm, BBQ area, climbing wall and a low rope course for children.

## GOLF

Constant mild weather means that Tenerife is a place where golfers can play year-round.

It's not the most ecologically sound activity on the island (water is a constant problem, and golf courses need plenty of it) but that hasn't stopped sprawling courses from emerging all around Playa de las Américas. Some of the best courses are **Golf Costa Adeje** (☎ 922 71 00 00; www.golfcostaadeje.com; Finca Los Olivos; 18 holes €55-85; ⌚ 7.30am-7pm), **Golf del Sur** (☎ 922 73 81 70; www.golfdelsur.net; Urbanización Golf del Sur, San Miguel de Abona; 18 holes €60-84; ⌚ 7.30am-7pm) and **Los Palos Centro de Golf** (☎ 922 16 90 80; www.golflospalos.com; Carretera Guaza-Las Galletas, Km7, Arona; 9 holes €19-24; ⌚ 7am-7pm).

### WHALE WATCHING

Companies offering two-, three- and five-hour boat cruises to check out whales and dolphins are set up at the end of Playa de Los Cristianos, near the port, and in Puerto Colón in Costa Adeje. Most trips include food, drink and a quick swim. Though all are basically the same, with a two-hour trip costing upwards of €15, we recommend two smaller Playa de Los Cristianos-based companies, **Neptuno** (☎ 922 79 80 44; ⌚ 9am-7pm) and **Travelin' Lady** (☎ 609 42 98 87; under 10yr free; ⌚ 9.30am-8pm Sun-Fri, noon-3pm Sat). Both offer personal service, small boats, and lower prices than many other outfits in the area.

### FISHING

Deep-sea-fishing jaunts range from about €36 for a three-hour trip to €70 for a day on the water. Get information from the kiosks set up at the western end of Playa de Los Cristianos or from a tourist office.

## Los Cristianos & Playa de las Américas for Children

There is plenty going on for children of all ages here. Along the beaches, carnival-like attractions such as bumper cars and mini bungee jumping are popular with older kids, while playgrounds on Playa de Los Cristianos and behind the Centro Comercial in Los Cristianos can keep the little ones entertained.

Away from the beaches, theme parks include **Jungle Park** (☎ 922 72 90 10; www.aguilasjunglepark.com; Los Cristianos-Arona, km3; adult/under 12yr €22/15.50; ⌚ 10am-5.30pm), where the main show stars eagles that swoop dramatically over the crowd. You can also see hippos, crocodiles and other wild beasts here.

For older children, **Karting Klub Tenerife** (☎ 922 73 07 03; Carretera del Cho, Arona; adult/10-

18yr €12/6; ⌚ 10am-8pm) offers go-karts and video games.

All parks have free bus services. If you want a break from the children, baby-sitting services can often be found through hotel receptions.

### Sleeping

This is one of those rare hotel jungles where you may have to swallow hard and check out one of the high-profile tour operators, which often have amazing deals. Some of the most reputable agencies are Thomas Cook-JMC, Thompson, My Travel, First Choice and Cosmos. If you decide to stake out on your own accommodation anyway, try apartment agencies first. A pleasant flat for two, with kitchen, TV and living area, starts at around €300 a week (generally the minimum booking period). Contact the tourist office for a full listing of agencies, or start with **Anyka Sur** (☎ 922 79 13 77; www.anykasur.com; Edificio Azahara, Avenida Habana, Los Cristianos), **Marcus Management** (☎ 922 75 10 64; www.tenerife-apts.com; Apartamentos Portosin, Avenida Penetracion, Los Cristianos) or **Tenerife Holiday Rent** (☎ 922 79 02 11; fax 922 79 58 18; Edificio Tenerife Garden, local 4, Playa de las Américas).

### BUDGET

If you're hunting for a *hostal* or *pensión*, Los Cristianos is your only bet, although the package deals mentioned previously may work out to be even cheaper. Expect a decent room for two to cost around €30 a night, and book ahead if possible, as the limited number of *pensiones* means they're often full.

**Pensión La Playa** (☎ 922 79 22 64; Calle Paloma 9, Los Cristianos; d/tr €26/32) The dormitory-style rooms face a lively pedestrian side street, so earplugs are advisable. A warning: La Playa is not for those with wide girths (or fat suitcases), as stairwells are painfully thin. The communal bathrooms are swing-a-cat small as well.

**Pensión La Paloma** (☎ 922 79 01 98; Calle Paloma 7, Los Cristianos; s/d/tr €20/26/32) Just across the street from La Playa, rooms here don't exactly sparkle but they have private bathrooms and more charm than others in this price bracket. The same family runs the popular restaurant downstairs.

### MIDRANGE

**Hotel Andrea's** (☎ 922 79 00 12/24; www.hotelesreveron.com; Calle General Franco 23, Los Cristianos; s/d €35/53) A small but neat hotel with large, if rather bleakly furnished, rooms and small glassed-in

terraces. There's a comfy communal sitting room with TV and soft drinks. If you want something stronger, head downstairs to the bar and pizzeria.

**H10 Oasis Moreque** (☎ 922 79 03 66; www.h10.es; Avenida Juan Carlos I 28, Los Cristianos; s €45-63.50, d €60-97; 🏠) One of the few hotels in Los Cristianos that's actually on the beach; look for the baby-blue exterior. Unfortunately, the interior décor is similarly unsubtle, but rooms have wide balconies, with more than half looking out to the ocean. The ceiling fans are a boon and the small pool area has pleasant gardens.

**Playa Azul** (☎ 922 79 19 19; reserves@playazul.e.telefonica.net; Edificio Playazul, Avenida Arquitecto Gómez Cuesta, Playa de las Américas; 2-/3-/5-person apt €58/65/86; 🏠 🚰 🚰) Comfortable apartments with a formula feel, situated agreeably near the Playas de Troya stretch of sand and close to more-relaxed Costa Adeje. The private parking is a major plus.

**Apartmentos Mary Sol** (☎ 922 75 05 40; fax 922 79 54 73; Avenida Amsterdam 8, Los Cristianos; studio/1-bedroom apt €77/98; 🏠 🚰 🚰) These spacious apartments are modern, if bland, with a hospital look to the corridors. But they are fully equipped for guests in wheelchairs and the terraces overlook the central pools (one is therapeutic). There are various organised activities, including diving courses with a professional instructor.

## TOP END

**our pick Villa Cortés** (☎ 922 75 77 00; www.europe-hotels.org; Avenida Rafael Puig Lluvina s/n, Playa de las Américas; s/d/ste with breakfast €240/300/450; 🏠 🚰 🚰 🚰 🚰) Designed in the style of an ultraluxurious Mexican hacienda, this new kid on the block is truly sumptuous, with an exciting and dynamic colour scheme and décor. There are lots of hot yellows, oranges and blues, plus murals, exquisite original artwork and the occasional quirky touch – like the family of giant ceramic frogs just off the lobby and the mini Aztec temple outside. The gardens have streams with goldfish and a pool with cascading waterfall; the rooms are predictably stunning.

## Eating

You won't go hungry here. The dilemma is more likely to be choosing where to go for the best quality and good value. Avoid restaurants that advertise their international cuisine with sun-bleached posters on the pavement. Otherwise, choices range from €5 Chinese buffets to dress-for-dinner shows. There are hidden

corners where you'll find Spanish and Canarian food. Mains are around €10.

## BUDGET

**Supermercado Carolina** (☎ 922 79 30 69; Calle General Franco 8, Los Cristianos) One of the better supermarkets around, particularly for imported goodies, although it's not cheap.

**Bar Nuestro** (☎ 670 47 97 08; Calle San Roque 12, Los Cristianos; mains €5) A cloth-cap-authentic local bar, Bar Nuestro has a barnlike interior and an unwaveringly authentic Canarian menu that includes dishes like garbanzos with pork sausages and grilled sardines.

## MIDRANGE

**Mamma Rosa** (☎ 922 79 48 19; Apto Colón 11, Playa Américas; mains €6-15) This place serves hearty Mexican and Italian dishes, including *fajitas de pollo* (soft Mexican tortillas stuffed with chicken) and tagliatelle with king prawns, broccoli, garlic and chilli. The portions will keep rumbling tummies at bay for hours.

**Rincón del Marinero** (☎ 922 79 35 53; Muelle Los Cristianos; mains €9-13) Specialising in local seafood, including a tasty *zarzuela* (fish and seafood stew), this nautical-themed restaurant has all its tables under a covered terrace (proof that there's never bad weather here).

**Mesón Mojo Picón** (☎ 922 75 02 73; Residencial Las Viñas, Playa de las Américas; mains €9-14) This place has an attractive patio and features Spanish specialities from all over the mainland, including Andalusian gazpacho, Catalan bread with crushed tomatoes and garlic, and Iberian cured sausages.

**Garibaldi** (☎ 922 75 70 60; Avenida Rafael Puig Lluvina, Playa de las Américas; mains €9-18) This recently revamped Italian restaurant has an air of gentility and serves its meats and pastas on a romantic patio surrounding a fountain.

**La Pirámide** (☎ 922 79 63 60; Avenida Américas, Playa de las Américas; mains €9-20) The dinner theatre at the restaurant inside a pyramid-shaped congress hall is more sophisticated than it sounds. There are opera nights on Tuesday, Friday and Saturday, and classical concerts at other times. Check first in case the schedules change.

**Olive Garden** (☎ El Carmen 5, Los Cristianos; mains €10-12; 🍴) English-run, with outside tables on the promenade, the copious menu includes plenty of vegetarian choices such as vegetable kebabs and meatless goulash and chilli. Carnivorous folk may prefer the daily roast beef and Yorkshire pud.



**Casa del Mar** (☎ 922 79 32 75; Esplanada del Muelle, Los Cristianos; mains €10-15) Enjoy views of the beach as you savour the freshly caught *lubina* (sea bass), *dorada* (sea bream) and *merluza* (hake). On the roof is a sunny terrace bar selling drinks and ice cream.

**El Faro** (☎ 922 75 08 12; Avenida Américas, Parque Santiago V, Playa de las Américas; mains €10-17) For a swanky night out, El Faro fits the bill. Watch the world go by from the 2nd-storey terrace as you savour the imaginatively prepared meat, fish and pasta dishes.

## Entertainment

Post-midnight, Los Cristianos' action takes place at the Centro Comercial San Telmo, the shopping centre behind Playa de las Vistas when this daytime-dull little strip is transformed into a string of nightclubs pumping out music late into the night. In Las Américas, places are altogether classier and more costly.

**Centro Cultural** (☎ 922 75 70 06; Plaza Pescador 1, Los Cristianos; tickets €3) Offers a variety of cultural events, such as Cine de Verano, a summer festival of open-air movies (in Spanish) offered nightly except Wednesday. A brand new auditorium opened its doors here in early 2007 as a big-name concert venue.

**Esencia de Amor** (☎ 922 75 75 49; La Pirámide, Avenida Américas, Playa de las Américas) Spanish ballet and flamenco concerts are generally top billing.

**Jazzissimo** (☎ 922 78 82 75; www.jazzissimo-tenerife.com; Rafael Puig Lluvina 12, Las Américas; ☎ 10pm-3.30am Mon-Sat) A jazz and soul club opened by Cleo Laine and Johnny Dankworth a few years back and which has been going strong ever since. Every Saturday is salsa night with a live Cuban band.

**Bolina Beach** (☎ 922 79 06 99; San Telmo Beach, Los Cristianos; ☎ noon-2am) This is a fashionable bar and club overlooking the sweeping sand with a chilled-out atmosphere and nightly live music.

**Casablanca** (Centro Comercial San Telmo, local 17, Los Cristianos; ☎ 11pm-late) The most famous club in this pulsating strip heaves with gyrating bodies post-midnight.

**Metropolis** (☎ 922 75 30 00; Hotel Conquistador, Paseo Marítimo s/n, Playa de las Américas; ☎ 10pm-6am) Improve your moves on the dance floor at this megadisco with a seafront terrace. It's considered the best dance spot in town and gets the thumbs up from readers.

**Las Verónicas** (Paseo Marítimo s/n) On Playa de las Américas' border with Costa Adeje, Las Verónicas has a buoyant and youthful nightlife. There have been problems with violence and drugs here as well, although these are reputedly lessening after the closure of several of the seedier, drug-peddling places.

## Shopping

Modern shopping centres are mushrooming throughout the resort, but for traditional Canary textiles, such as embroidered tablecloths, head to **Azulito** (cnr Calle General Franco & Calle Pablo Abril, Los Cristianos) or one of the **Artenerife** (☎ 902 32 04 20; Avenida Rafael Puig Lluvina) kiosks. **La Alpizpa** (☎ 922 79 87 55) on the seafront sells arts and crafts made by the handicapped, with the money going to charity.

## Getting There & Away

### AIR

Hopping over to Playa de las Américas is easy from mainland Europe. The Tenerife Sur airport is just 30km away and daily flights from Spain, the UK, Germany and other destinations give you plenty of flying options (see p148 for details).

### BOAT

Ferries come in and out of the Los Cristianos port day and night. The main routes are to Santa Cruz de la Palma, La Palma (€34, three hours); Puerto de la Estaca, El Hierro (€49, two hours) and San Sebastián de la Gomera, La Gomera (€23, one hour by ferry, 40 minutes by hydrofoil), with several daily crossings to each destination, increasing during summer.

### BUS

Plenty of Tenerife's bright-green TITSA buses come through the area, stopping at stations in Los Cristianos and Playa de las Américas. Buses 110 (direct, €7.30, one hour, every 30 minutes) and 111 (indirect) come and go from Santa Cruz. Bus 487 (€2.10, 45 minutes) goes to Tenerife Sur airport, but to get to Tenerife Norte airport you have to pass through Santa Cruz. Plenty of other buses run through the two resorts, en route to destinations such as Arona (bus 480), Los Gigantes (473), Puerto de la Cruz (343), El Médano (470) and Las Galletas (467). The Playa de las Américas bus station is situated between central Las Américas, San Eugenio and the *autovía*. There's no Los Cristianos

bus station, as such; the buses stop on Avenida Juan Carlos 1, just beyond the cross road with Avenida Amsterdam, opposite the Valdes Commercial Centre. For 24-hour bus information, call ☎ 922 53 13 00.

### Getting Around

Most of the long-distance bus routes do double duty as local routes, stopping along the major avenues of Los Cristianos and Playa de las Américas before heading out of town.

There are taxi stands outside most shopping centres. Getting a taxi at night usually isn't a problem, as most people choose to walk. A ride across town should cost between €5 and €7.

## AROUND LOS CRISTIANOS, PLAYA DE LAS AMÉRICAS & COSTA ADEJE

### Exotic Parks

What strikes your fancy? Birds? Cacti? Camels? They're all here, most of them just a hop, skip and a free bus ride away.

In Guaza, the **Exotic Park** (☎ 922 79 54 24; Autopista del Sur exit 26; adult/6-14 yr €10/5; 🕒 10am-7pm) offers a chance to do things you never knew you wanted to do, like go inside a bat cave and see a 'reptilium' up close. There are also monkeys, exotic plants, birds and supposedly the world's largest cactus collection.

At the calmer end of the spectrum is the **Camel Park** (☎ 922 72 11 21; La Camella; adult/under 12yr €10/5; 🕒 10am-5pm), a camel-breeding and riding centre with a few traditional farm animals.

### Las Galletas

If Playa de las Américas is a large pizza with all the toppings, Las Galletas is a small pizza crust with a sprinkling of cheese and no spices at all. It's a drab place that seems to have done very little (good or bad) to attract the thousands of tourists who land every day just a few miles away. The volcanic beach is rocky and the colour of pencil lead, although dozens of tiny fishing boats lie belly-up on the sand, proof that the town is still just a fishing village at heart – just not a very picturesque one.

### INFORMATION

**La Vava Pipi** (☎ 922 73 35 92; Calle Carmen García 1; per hr €2) Internet access down the road from the tourist office.

**Tourist office** (☎ 922 73 01 33; La Rambla; 🕒 9am-3.30pm Mon-Fri) At the western end of La Rambla, the tree-lined walkway that runs parallel to the Paseo Marítimo.

### SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

Wind and water have carved the dramatic rock formations of **Montaña Amarilla** (Yellow Mountain), a volcanic mound on the coast outside town. To get here, take Avenida José Antonio Tavio (beside the Ten Bel complex) down to Calle Chasna. At the end of the street is a small car park and a path leading you down to the water. You can ramble across the rocks, enjoying a building-free view of the coast, or hike around the *montaña*.

Although the actual town is dreary, Las Galletas, together with Los Cristianos and Los Gigantes, is considered one of the best diving spots in the south. For courses, try-dives and excursions, head to **Buceo Tenerife Diving Center** (☎ 922 73 10 15; www.buceotenerife.com; Calle María del Carmen García 22; dive with equipment rental €35; 🕒 9am-6pm). There are reduced costs for making multiple dives. Dives are at 9am and noon, with an extra 3pm dive on Saturday.

Rent sailboats and windsurfers, or take classes, at the **Escuela de Vela las Galletas** (☎ 629 87 81 02; Playa Las Galletas; windsurfer rental per hour €15, catamaran rental per hour €30; 🕒 10am-6pm Tue-Sun).

### SLEEPING

There are a few accommodation options if you are dead set on staying.

**Camping Nauta** (☎ 922 78 51 18; Carretera 6225, Cañada Blanca; camp sites per adult/tent €4/4; 📶). This is one of the only camp sites on Tenerife. Nauta has two swimming pools and tennis courts as well as hook-ups for caravans.

**Ten Bel** (☎ 922 73 07 21; www.tenbel.com; Urbanización Tenbel; 2-/3-person apt €58/70; 📶) The most appealing accommodation in town. This 'holiday village' is a complex of four separate apartment buildings with private coast access (it's on a big cliff beside the water, but you can swim in the coves) and several pools. Apartments vary widely but in general they're simple and clean, if low on originality or charm.

### EATING

There are a few traditional bars in the centre of town, which are good for tapas. Alternatively, head for the waterfront, where there are several restaurants with terraces.

**Bar La Caleta** (☎ 627 52 49 06; Calle Dionisio González s/n) A crusty, old-fashioned place that has delicious, typically Andalusian tapas, including fried peppers and *tortilla* (potato omelette).

**Via Moana** (☎ 922 73 25 40; Playa de las Galletas; mains €10-18; 🕒 noon-3am summer only; 📶) Get

away from the crowds at this laid-back café and restaurant that's right on the water. On summer nights live music or a DJ turns the place into the town's main nightspot, with an eclectic mix of jazz, folk, Celtic and rock music.

#### GETTING THERE & AWAY

Las Galletas is a few kilometres off the TF-1, exit 26. Buses 467, 470 and 473 (€6.90, 30 minutes) connect the town hourly with Los Cristianos, while buses 112 and 115 (€6.60, 1¼ hours) come and go from Santa Cruz.

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