

Gran Canaria

Atlantic Island Trekking

Europe | 1,950m



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EXPEDITIONS

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What a place the **Canary Islands** are... just 150 kilometres off the west coast of Africa, you need to expect the unexpected here!

This expedition came about after Marni and Rolfe, founders of 360, spent an impromptu three weeks in **Gran Canaria**. The moment they arrived they knew they must open this spectacular island up, incorporating all the very best bits is an incredible one week trip. The island was one of the most surprising places they had explored, with **unique trekking, stunning views** and an amazing **diversity of landscape and microclimates** all just on one small island...no wonder the island is often referred to as a mini-continent!

An **adventure paradise**, we'll discover enormous vertical cliffs dropping into the Atlantic, **deep rich canyons** carved out from

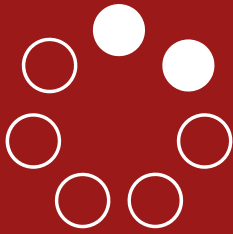
high plateaus dotted with **enormous euphorbias**, remote fir and bay laurel forests, **desert-like landscapes** with flora and fauna to match and enormous lava towers that could be straight out of a Dali painting. We will trek to abandoned villages, spend a night in a converted **traditional cave house**, explore **UNESCO sites**, and drink wine while watching sunsets, then wake to the noise of the Atlantic's powerful, booming waves.

Marni and Rolfe decided there and then this was a perfect destination for 360. But, be warned, this expedition is far off the beaten track and well away from what you might find in the holiday brochures and write ups of this spectacular island! Put on your walking boots and join us for this unforgettable adventurous week...

Gran Canaria

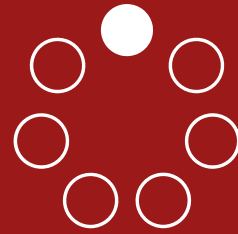
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Physical – P2

This trip is challenging and a good solid fitness level is required. There will be prolonged walking over varied terrain and you should be training to comfortably walk for 6 to 8 hours, over undulating terrain, with a few punchy uphill climbs, carrying a pack up to 6kg in weight.



Technical – T1

No technical skills are needed. A good steady walking ability only is required.

Please note that the grading system used is a rough guide only.



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ITINERARY

DAY 1 : Depart UK, arrive Gran Canaria. (Transfer to Mogán)

We meet the team and board our transfer to the charming fishing village of Mogán, approximately a 60 minute drive through beautiful countryside and local villages. Mogán is, quite simply, stunning! It's one of the most beautiful towns on the island, a charming fishing town nestled in a cove with a stunning sheltered beach and wonderful restaurants. It has a real air of stillness and one of the most tranquil fishing ports we have ever visited. Enjoy a walk around the marina, which hosts a wonderful close-knit sailing community due to its unique enclave and natural beauty, watch the boats and soak up the sea views in one of the many beautiful bars, or take a walk through the streets of the old quarter... today is for us to unwind.

There are a plethora of coastal restaurants so we can choose our favourite and sit and watch the sun dropping into the Atlantic sea. This really is the perfect start to your getaway and to the very unique adventure that awaits.

DAY 2 : Trek to Güigüi beach

How could we come to this magical island and not take the opportunity to trek to Güigüi beach?! Tucked away on a remote section of coastline, this is a little slice of paradise and we get to enjoy the wide and beautiful beaches practically to ourselves.

After an early departure from Mogán, we launch into the highlands on the wildly acclaimed roads of Gran Canaria and you'll see for yourself why so many car commercials feature these roads! Remote, often single lane, hugging the impressive volcanic cliffs, the views we'll experience just on the drive are captivating. The landscape is arid, yet full of desert palms and huge euphorbias, with traditional white washed villages dotted along the way.

At the start of our trek we have an immediate insight into what Gran Canaria is all about; we begin in a banana plantation set against a red rock landscape, more reminiscent of that of a sci-fi movie, which beckons to be explored. We follow a rugged trail, winding through huge (and much photographed!) cactuses, swathes of wild plants and flowers and impressive boulders, that finally brings us to the high pass, from the top of which the views of the wild west coast of the island are awe-inspiring. Its jagged coastline mimicking dragons' teeth looks raw, yet incredibly beautiful.

Now, it's time to descend, making our way down into a deep canyon, passing remote, tiny unmanned farms. Güigüi is one of the most important parts of the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve of Gran Canaria and when we finally arrive at the black and gold volcanic sands of the beach you'll be left wondering which continent you are really on!

It's time then to relax and enjoy a well-deserved picnic and a walk along the beach with its pounding waves that demand our attention. Our trek back up and over offers a whole new perspective on the walk in and, in all, it's a truly wonderful first day of trekking. Now we've had our ocean fix, we will begin to head inland for some really wild scenery... but not before we are transferred a short distance to La Aldea de San Nicolás, our base for the night.

Trekking time: approx. 6 hrs

Approx. 12 kms & 1,200m ascent / descent.

(BLD)

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ITINERARY

DAY 3 : The abandoned villages of Pino Gordo and Vigaroé

After an early breakfast, we set off to the neighbourhood of Molino de Agua where an old dirt track starts that leads us up to the water tunnel of Pino Gordo. With bare feet, we walk through the water tunnel and once we reach the other side; paradise awaits us! The lush palm grove of Pino Gordo will be our backdrop for the next hour as we hike up to the first abandoned hamlet with its old fruit trees and overgrown agriculture terraces. A steep and rocky climb then brings us to a mountain pass where we are rewarded with spectacular views reaching as far as the Crater of La Caldera de Tejada and the pine forests of Tamadaba.

A well-deserved short break to not only catch our breath, but take in more of the island's incredible vistas, then we hit one of Gran Canaria's 'lost mule paths', El camino de Lo Picachos, which gently follows the curves of the ravine of Las Garabateras and Los Picachos into the abandoned hamlet of Vigaroé. During our descent to the lake of El Caídero de La Niña we follow the bed of the steep-sided, rocky ravine, passing pre-Hispanic caves, palms and giant boulders.

We head back to La Aldea to relax for the evening.

Trekking time: approx. 5-6 hrs.

Approx. 16km & 900m ascent / 650m descent

(BLD)

DAY 4 : Trek to the Tejada caldera and explore cave dwellings in Mesa de Acusa

We start this morning's trek at the fertile plateau of La Mesa de Acusa, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, where we'll have time to explore a series of interesting pre-Hispanic cave settlements nestled in the cliffs that surround the plateau. History combines with beauty here, as we wander along the old camino real which links Acusa Seca with Artenara; the only real village in the whole municipality.

Artenara is famous for having the biggest troglodyte, or cave dwelling, community in the Canaries, with the community using the caves for everything from housing to churches, stables and storage rooms! A massive collapse of an ancient magma chamber formed the 20km wide Tejada Caldera, and Artenara is perched on Risco Chapin, one of the calderas enormous walls.

Once we've gotten our fill of the historical aspects of this amazing spot, we'll follow the Risco Chapin trail, dotted with colourful wildflowers, which leads us to the geographic centre of the island: Cruz de Tejada. On our way we pass the cave temples of Cuevas del Caballero and Cueva de Los Candiles, both often used in the past for fertility rituals, but for us, a great stop for a lunch break!

We'll be collected and transferred to the fascinating cave village of Acusa Seca, for some time in this wonderfully intriguing and unique accommodation in El Hornillo.

Trekking time: approx. 5-6hrs.

Approx. 18km. 600m ascent / descent.

(BLD)

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DAY 5 : Roque Nublo & Pico de Las Nieves (1,950m)

The goal for today is the spectacular rock pinnacle 'Roque Nublo'! Luring tourists like a beacon, this 90m-high spire dominates the island's highlands and can be spotted from as far away as the coast. We start our trek on the well-trodden path that undulates along the rim of La Caldera de Tejeda before it drops dramatically to the charming village of La Culata, situated just below one of the world's biggest monoliths: Roque Nublo.

The steep and rocky platform which hosts the imposing tower of Roque Nublo looks unassailable from La Culata, but there are breaches in its cliffs that make our ascent more than comfortable. Here we have a picnic lunch, before continuing our trek by circumnavigating this massive monolith to appreciate it from every side. After, overlooking the South and West of Gran Canaria, we hit a path that zigzags uphill, on bare rock, past pines until it reaches El Montañón and Los Riscos de Tirajana where wild flowers provide more vibrant scenery between March and June. We hike on narrow edges, feeling on top of the world at times as we peer over the tops of the tall pine trees that climb to obscure the views. The summits of Pico de Las Nieves and El Campanario are well worth a stop if we can, as the views reach as far as the Maspalomas sand dunes, Tenerife and sometimes even the island of La Gomera.

Trekking time: 7-8hrs.

Approx. 23km. 1,000m ascent / 450m descent.

(BLD)

DAY 6 : Tamadaba Biosphere Reserve

Today we leave the highlands and descend to the Atlantic coast. We wake up in one of Gran Canaria's most charming troglodyte or cave villages: El Hornillo. It's located in the ravine of Agaete, below the towering massif of Tamadaba. This massif houses Gran Canaria's best preserved humid pine forest and the second biggest cliffs in Europe, all packed together in one great nature park. Passing the island's highest village, and several small lakes and dams, it doesn't take long before we drop steeply into the lichen-draped forest of the Tamadaba UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. Once we have reached the remote forested uplands of Tamadaba we pass on to the drier side, where spectacular cliffs are the scar of a giant landscape landslide that turned Gran Canaria's west coast to its current formation. In La Finca de Firma, we start our vertical descent to the sea, and the delightful coastal village of El Risco. We'll then head to the bustling and vibrant Las Palmas for our last night, to enjoy delicious tapas and the fun atmosphere of this beach town.

Trekking time: approx. 7-8hrs.

Approx. 18km. 400m ascent / 1300m descent.

(BL)

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ITINERARY

DAY 7 : Transfer south of Las Palmas for departure flights home

Depending on flight times we'll either have the morning or often the full day at leisure (with the option to jump into a local taxi and head to the stunning Maspalomas sand dunes to watch the sun rise!) otherwise if you prefer we'll head on an early morning transfer to the airport to check in for our departure flights home.

However, if you'd like to have a full extra day here and depart tomorrow (or later!) please do let the office know on booking. There are so many options, spending longer at Maspalomas, you can try your hand at kite surfing, grab a surf board, or take a leisurely dip! Las Palmas and the Old Town are also just a wonderful place to meander, soak up the sun, and enjoy the last bit of your holiday!

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KIT LIST

Bags & Packs

Daysack

40-60L rucksack that is well worn in and with a good waist belt. A waterproof cover is advisable (remember that these covers are not 100% waterproof but act as a barrier) and remember, whilst trekking, you will need to carry all of the kit that you are not wearing

Drybags

Pack some fresh clothing into bags to keep them dry in the event of a total downpour that seeps into your kitbag. Good for quarantining old socks!

Waterproof rucksack cover

To protect rucksack from rain

Headwear

Warm headgear

Optional, but handy for the evenings if you do get cold!

Wide brimmed hat

Keeps the sun off exposed areas like ears and the nape of the neck

Sunglasses

Julbo is our preferred supplier

Lip salve

Sun cream will not work on your lips and they are very susceptible to burn without proper protection

Sunblock

High factor as the sun is reflected off the road into your face

Upper Body

Base layer x 2

This is the layer closest to the skin and its principal function is to draw (wick) moisture and sweat away from the skin. Handy for layering on any chillier days.

Mid layer

These are typically lightweight microfleece or similar technology that provide varying degrees of warmth and insulation without being overly bulky or heavy to pack

T-shirts

A couple of T-shirts are advisable for this summer expedition. The days are reasonably warm (with high temperatures at lower altitudes)

Hard Shell

These jackets are thin, highly waterproof and windproof and worn over all other items of clothing. You'll find these made of Gore-Tex or other proprietary waterproof yet breathable technology. Inexpensive hard shells that aren't breathable will prevent evaporation, making you sweat intensely and are not recommended

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KIT LIST

Soft Shell

Optional. These should be windproof (not all are) and insulative. They are mostly made of soft polyester and sometimes resemble a neoprene finish which makes them very mobile and comfortable to wear. While offering a degree of weather repellence, they are not waterproof.

Lower Body

Shorts

A couple of shorts are advisable for this summer expedition. The days are reasonably warm (with high temperatures at lower altitudes)

Trekking trousers

These tend to be polyester so they dry quickly after a shower and weigh little in your pack. Consider perhaps a pair with detachable lower legs as an alternative to shorts

Underwear

Merino or wicking material, not cotton. How many pairs you take is entirely up to you

Waterproof trousers

Optional – A lightweight pair of Goretex/eVent trousers that will act as a great windproof too.

Feet

Walking boots

Well worn in 4 season waterproof boots with mid to high ankle support

Spare laces

Just in case

Comfortable trainers/Crocs

Optional, but great for use in the evenings in the hotels or the last day to give your feet a break from your boots!

Trekking socks x 3

Single layer or wearing 2 pairs is a personal choice and lighter weight merino wool is a good option

Hydration

Water bottles / bladder x 2

2L capacity either in a combination of bladder and Nalgene bottle or just Nalgene bottles

Water purification

Although all water is filtered some prefer to double up and add purification tabs as well. Always good to have in your bag!

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KIT LIST

Evening Wear

Evening clothes

Comfortable clothes for the evening

Toiletries

Alcohol gel

A must have for good expedition hygiene!

Toilet paper

Provided at the accommodation and any public toilets but a spare in your daysack may be useful if you need to hide behind a rock during the day.

Wet wipes

Handy for general cleanliness while trekking, one packet will suffice

Expedition towel

Towels from the likes of Lifesystems are perfect if you wish to have one in case of wild swimming, but towels will be provided at the accommodation.

Wash kit

Keep it simple – remember, you've got to carry it! Essentials are toothbrush, toothpaste and deodorant. Moisturiser is advisable, everything else is a luxury!

Medications

Personal first aid kit

The 360 med kits are designed to be used in emergencies and akin to an A&E rather than a pharmacy on Expeditions so please come prepared with useful meds for yourself such as painkillers (Ibuprofen if you can take it and a Paracetamol) plus blister plasters, plasters, antiseptic, rehydration sachets and any muscle rubs you wish to use.

Personal medication

Keep this in your daysack

Miscellaneous

Camera

Bring plenty of spare batteries and memory cards

Head torch

Bring spare batteries

Snacks

Although you will be fed well we do advise bringing a small selection of energy bars. Have a couple per trekking day

Ear plugs

For protection against the inevitable snorers!

Penknife (optional)

Swimsuit

For the odd swim

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KIT LIST

Trekking poles

These tend to be a personal preference but help with your stability and can dampen the pressure on the knees coming down hill

Documentation

Passport

Don't forget this! Your passport should have at least 6 months validity and the expiry date should be at least six months after the final day of travel.

Copy of passport

Just in case

Dental check up

We recommend you have a dental check-up before your trip.

Travel insurance

Please bring a copy of your own travel insurance details and relevant contact numbers. We have a partnership with True Traveller and would recommend that you contact them when looking for travel insurance for your trip with 360. However, it is vital that you ensure that the insurance cover they offer is suitable for you, taking your personal circumstances (items to be insured, cancellation cover, medical history) into account. Many other insurance providers are available and we do recommend that you shop around to get the best cover for you on the expedition you are undertaking. It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the appropriate insurance for your intended trip to include, at a minimum, medical evacuation and coverage for the maximum altitude and included activities of this trip.

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FAQ'S

Food and Water

Where do we get drinking water from?

All drinking water will be either provided in the mornings or can be bought at various stops for the day's walking. We pass streams in various places that you can top up from if you should run out, so do take purification to add to it in the form of silver chloride or chlorine.

What is the food like?

The food in the local hotels and hostels is plentiful and of very good quality, often using locally sourced ingredients. Breakfasts consist of pastries, fresh bread and jams and you can expect hearty meals in the evenings and simple but filling packed lunches.

Do you provide snacks during this expedition? Or do you recommend that we bring our own?

360 provides some snacks for your trekking days, however do bring some of your favourite snacks from home! Flapjacks, shortbread, sweets, nuts and chocolate are great, anything really that you're going to look forward to eating and which will give you energy!

Accommodation

What is the accommodation like?

We'll be staying in simple but comfortable accommodation in hotels or local B&Bs along the way – they've all got their own unique character, in some gorgeous locations!

Kit

What bag do I need to bring?

A rucksack of around 40-60L should do you just fine. If you are borrowing or buying a rucksack, ask someone to help you adjust it to fit your back. And ensure you are making these adjustments with weight inside it, not empty. Generally it should sit reasonably high on your back so that the weight is acting vertically downwards, not forcing your shoulders back or drooping past your backside. Again, it's about how you feel comfortable wearing it and important to get right.

Make sure too that it is either waterproof or you have a waterproof cover for your rucksack. It's not a bad idea to pack your gear into waterproof stuffs sacs, or even bin bags, in case of a deluge.

Do we need any technical gear for this?

No, this is a trek, so standard walking gear outlined in the kit list should suffice.

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FAQ'S

Do I need a sleeping bag?

The accommodation will all provide blankets and bedding so no, you don't need to bring a sleeping bag. Some people like to take a sleeping bag liner with them, but it's not necessary, more a personal preference – do remember you'll be carrying it though!

The Trek

How fit do I need to be?

Although we're not at altitude, or in somewhere like the Himalayas, don't underestimate this trek. The days are relatively long with reasonable altitude gains (and losses) each day, and the temperatures can be higher than you may be used to. If you make an effort with fitness before coming out you'll enjoy it far more than if you are struggling up every hill each day barely able to notice the spectacular views.

Can we swim if we pass any lakes?

They'll likely be cold but there's no reason why not!

The Weather

What's the weather like?

It's likely to be lovely and sunny, and reasonably warm (pretty hot lower down). The average high temperature in October in Gran Canaria is around 26°C, while at night you can expect temperatures of around 20–21°C. However, we're on the coast, and not very far from the Atlantic, so there is always a risk of rain, thunderstorms, and wind – a light waterproof is wise!

The climate is generally better than the UK, but there is still the risk of inclement weather, so we advise in the kit list to pack accordingly (see above). And just like any other holiday, having a quick last minute look at the forecast before you come out can be a useful pointer of what's in store.

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FAQ'S

Insurance

Do I need special insurance for this trip?

You must carry individual travel insurance to take part in the expedition. We cannot take you on this trek without proof of insurance.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the appropriate insurance for your intended trip to include, at a minimum, medical evacuation and coverage for relevant activities and up to the maximum altitude of this trip.

Your insurance details are requested on the booking form, however this can be arranged at a later date. 360 Expeditions will be requesting your insurance details 8 weeks before your departure.

Electronics

Will my mobile work?

It should do for the majority of the trek, but don't rely on it as there could be exposed points where you get a signal, but in valleys and some of the cave sections you'll be hard pushed to get a signal at times, though in the towns at the start and end points of the days and the trek you'll likely get much better signal.

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TRAINING PROGRAM

To begin 6 months prior to the expedition where possible.

1. CVS: Cardiovascular exercise which is low impact such as swimming, cycling, cross trainer, rowing.

2. Weekend walk should be done over undulating terrain. Only a light rucksack needs to be carried.

3. For specific exercises it is worth doing static squats and heel raises on a regular basis to improve leg muscles prior to the trip. Static squats are especially useful to help protect the knees. Please remember that it is still important to have a well balanced workout using a variety of muscle groups.

4. It is worth winding down and resting in the week leading up to the trip, doing several light walks to keep things going.

5. When walking going at a pace of a brisk walk with a light sweat and enough to feel breathless is recommended

6. During the program, rather than step up suddenly each month (example, going for 3 one hour walks each week during the weekdays in April to 3 one and half hour walks suddenly in May) it is better to build up gradually each week so there isn't a large transition (example, going for 3 one hour walks during week 1 in April, going for 3 one hour and ten minute walks during week 2 in April, going for 3 one hour and fifteen minute walks during week 3 in April, going for 3 one hour and twenty minute walks during week 4 in April)

6. It is important you seek medical advice prior to starting any training program, especially if you are not used to regular physical exertion

All the best with your training!

MONTH 1

OPT 1

2 x 30 mins weekday walk
1 x 1 hour weekend walk
1 x 10 mins CVS

OPT 2

1 x 30 mins weekday walk
2 x 1 hour weekend walk
1 x 10 mins CVS

MONTH 2

OPT 1

2 x 45 mins weekday walk
1 x 2 hours weekend walk
2 x 10 mins CVS

OPT 2

1 x 45 mins weekday walk
2 x 2 hours weekend walk
2 x 10 mins CVS

MONTH 3

OPT 1

2 x 45 mins weekday walk
1 x 2 hours weekend walk
2 x 10 mins CVS

OPT 2

1 x 45 mins weekday walk
2 x 2 hours weekend walk
2 x 10 mins CVS

MONTH 4

OPT 1

3 x 1 hour weekday walk
1 x 4 hours weekend walk
3 x 15 mins CVS

OPT 2

2 x 1 hour weekday walk
2 x 4 hours weekend walk
3 x 15 mins CVS

MONTH 5

OPT 1

3 x 1.5 hours weekday walk
1 x 5 hours weekend walk
3 x 20 - 25 mins CVS

OPT 2

2 x 1.5 hours weekday walk
2 x 5 hours weekend walk
3 x 20 - 25 mins CVS

MONTH 6

OPT 1

3 x 2 hours weekday walk
1 x 6 hours weekend walk
3 x 30 mins CVS

OPT 2

2 x 3 hours weekday walk
2 x 6 hours weekend walk
3 x 30 mins CVS



"Life should not be a journey to the grave with the intention of arriving safely in a pretty & well preserved body, but rather to skid in broadside in a cloud of smoke, thoroughly used up, totally worn out & loudly proclaiming 'Wow! What a Ride!' "

Dream it. Plan it. Live it.

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