

identification data

addresses

diplomas

Name  
**GARAJONAY**  
Protection Category  
**National Park**  
Autonomous Region  
Canarias  
Province  
**Santa Cruz de Tenerife**  
Area  
**3,984 hectares**  
Longitude **17° 14' 50" W**  
Latitude **28° 6' 22" N**  
Created  
**25 March 1981**

**PARQUE NACIONAL DE GARAJONAY**  
"Juego de Bolas" Visitor Centre  
La Palmita-Agulo, 38830 La Gomera, Santa Cruz de Tenerife  
Tel. 922 80 09 93  
Fax: 922 80 12 29  
**Park Offices**  
C/ Ruiz de Padrón, Avda. del V Centenario,  
Edif. Las Creces, portal 1, local  
38800 San Sebastián de la Gomera  
Isla de La Gomera, Santa Cruz de Tenerife  
Tel. 922 92 26 00  
Fax: 922 87 28 33  
e-mail: cvgarajonay@oapn.es-mailto:cvgarajonay@oapn.es  
Web: http://reddeparquesnacionales.mma.es/parques/garajonay  
Emergency telephone: 112



Garajonay is the largest best preserved greenwood forest.



Garajonay is situated in the central uplands of La Gomera, one of the westerly Canary Islands. With an area of only 373 km<sup>2</sup>, the abruptness of La Gomera's relief makes for an immense variety of climates and landscapes and lends it a highly distinctive personality. The Park includes the "Woodland of Public Utility" belonging to the island's six municipal councils.



Legend:  
National Park  
Protected area  
Municipal boundary

establishment

Declared a National Park by Act 3/1981 of 25 March, Garajonay occupies the higher reaches of La Gomera and covers an area of 3,984 ha, that is 10% of the total area of the island. In November 1986, the UNESCO World Heritage Committee included Garajonay in its World Heritage list, thus raising it to the supreme international category attainable by a national protected area.

man and his imprint on the park and its surroundings



Local pottery is made without wheel, keeping similarities with that of the pre-Hispanic culture.

Colonisation of the island began in the 5th century BC.

Palms and terraces: essential elements of the landscape of La Gomera.



**La Gomera and Man.** The population of La Gomera is now 22,000. The main settlements are in the island's great ravines, close to the coast. The most important economic activity is tourism, while agriculture is gradually falling away. The chief crops are bananas for the export market and vegetables for home consumption. Among the outstanding features of La Gomera, and a peculiarity of its scenery, are the terraces that climb the steep hillsides, created to provide level space for cultivation. Another outstanding feature is the greenwood, most of which lies within Garajonay National Park. It is the largest and best preserved example of this kind of ecosystem in the Canaries and supplies most of the island's water.



**Cultural aspects.** The traditional culture of La Gomera has survived to the present day. It is the result of the merger of the culture of the former gomeras with the European culture which arrived to the island in the 15th century. A further factor is the isolation, which was only partially broken in the 1970s. The manner of building houses and of farming, the various crafts, the silbo, drum dancing, ballads and other features are manifestations of a highly distinctive culture. Silbo, for example, is a kind of whistling language unique in the world. It is a means of transmitting spoken language over long distances by whistling, devised to facilitate communication in this island full of ravines.

The Canary Islands Government has submitted Gomeran Silbo language candidature to Unesco's Intangible Heritage of Humanity.

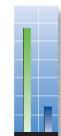
flora and fauna

**Flora.** Canary greenwood is the defining element of Garajonay, covering over 85% of its area. It comprises just under 20 tree species, distributed and mingled on the basis of ecological affinities to form several different types of forest. The dominant species are the wax myrtle (*Myrica faya*), acebiño (*Ilex canariensis*), loro (*Laurus azarica*), Indian avocado (*Persea indica*), palo blanco (*Picconia excelsa*) and tree heath (*Erica arborea*), (which here possibly attains larger sizes than anywhere else in the world, growing as tall as 20 m). Other species like til (*Ocotea foetens*), besom heath (*Erica scoparia*) and mahogany laurel (*Apollonia barbuiana*) are abundant locally. The Park's high atmospheric humidity is apparent in the mosses and lichens that cover the tree trunks, and the plentiful fern cover. The flora populating the *Raques* and escarpments is of particular interest. The crevices there are home to large numbers of rare species exclusive to these enclaves. The plant species with flowers is outstanding in that, although not very varied, there are numerous species – around 120 – endemic to the Canary Islands, some of them found only in the Park. Another interesting feature of the Park's flora is the incidence of phenomena characteristic of island evolution, such as gigantism or abnormal largeness. By which developed forms of large woody species whose relatives inhabit mainland, from which they originated, have habit of herbs.

**Fauna.** There are more than 1000 catalogued species of fauna in Garajonay, over 150 of which are endemic to the Park. Indeed, the concentration of exclusive species per unit of area is unequalled in Europe. Vertebrate species are few, however, due to obstacles to colonisation from the continent. They in fact total only 40, primarily birds. Predominant are Bolle's laurel pigeon and the laurel pigeon, both species endemic to the greenwood. Although most of the bird species can be found in continental Europe, many of those found here are different enough to constitute sub-species, which makes the birdlife of La Gomera particularly interesting. The only autochthonous mammals are four species of bat, which, like the birds, were able to fly from the African continent to the islands. However, by far the most numerous life-form in terms of species are the invertebrates, particularly insects. Most frequent of all are the coleoptera (beetles), followed at a distance by arachnids (spiders) and molluscs (snails, slugs...)



Mists are a permanent feature of the greenwood.



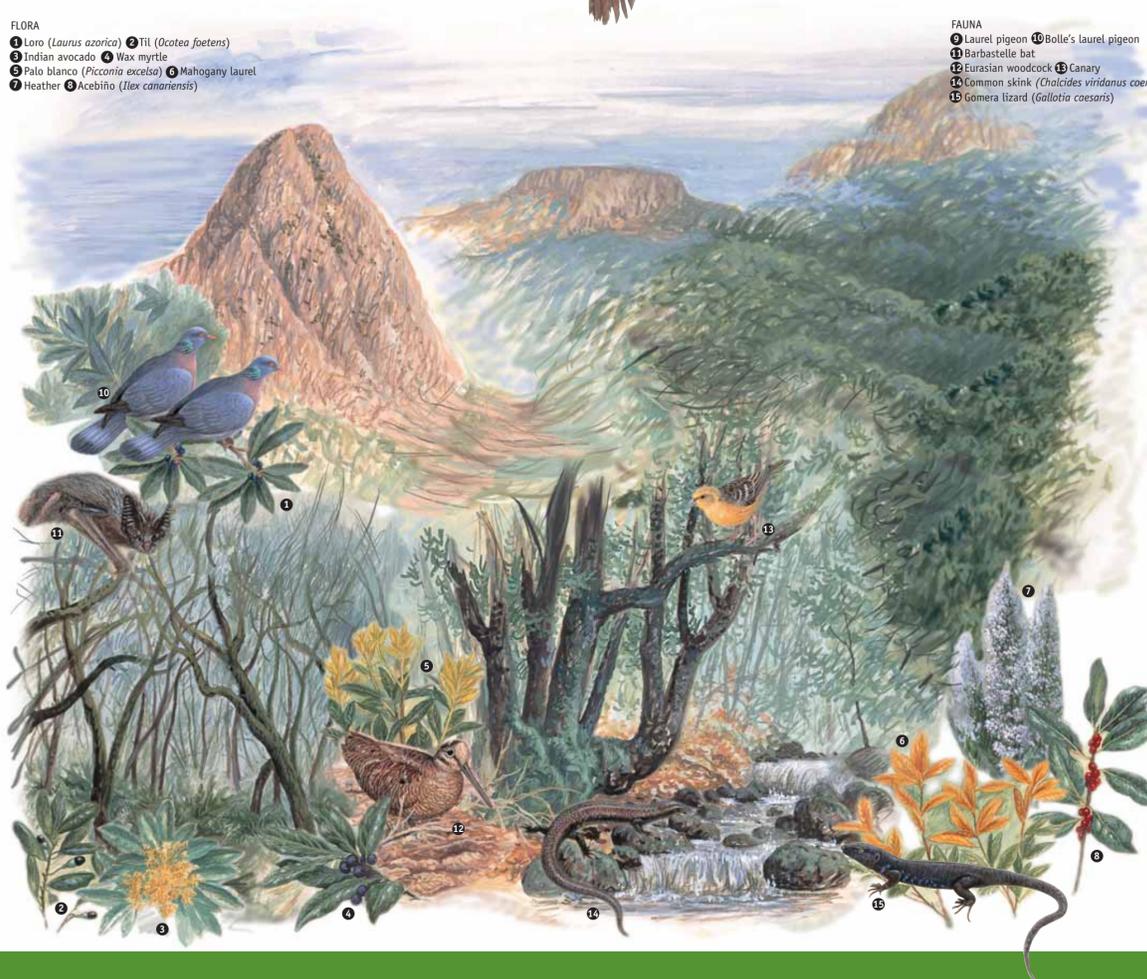
Greenwood: the enormous natural wealth of the Park.

DATA

greenwood	85%
rest of the Park	15%



Alpine heath. The greenwood consists of several types of forest.



- FLORA
- 1 Loro (*Laurus azarica*)
  - 2 Til (*Ocotea foetens*)
  - 3 Indian avocado
  - 4 Wax myrtle
  - 5 Palo blanco (*Picconia excelsa*)
  - 6 Mahogany laurel
  - 7 Heather
  - 8 Acebiño (*Ilex canariensis*)

- FAUNA
- 9 Laurel pigeon
  - 10 Bolle's laurel pigeon
  - 11 Barbastelle bat
  - 12 Eurasian woodcock
  - 13 Canary
  - 14 Common skink (*Chalcides viridanus coeruleopunctatus*)
  - 15 Gomera lizard (*Gallotia caesaris*)



Greenery provides a useful camouflage.



Greenwood: the real wealth of the Park.



Bicolored, the Canary bell flower, (*Canarina canariensis*): a lovely endemic species linked to the greenwood.

# visiting the park



A woodland stream



Hanging mosses



A stand of Indian avocado



Visitor Centre



Roques

**General Information.** You may reach La Gomera by a short sea voyage from the port of Los Cristianos in the south of Tenerife (there are several daily departures) or by inter-island flight. There is plenty of accommodation on La Gomera, ranging from hotels and apartments to rural bed and breakfasts. The Park is open to the general public and can be reached by road or footpath. There are also several tourist agencies that organise group excursions. A wide variety of facilities and services are available to help visitors enjoy and appreciate the Park.

**Visitor Centre.** Before entering the Park, visitors are recommended to stop by the Visitor Centre, where displays and audiovisual recordings give an introductory overview of the Park and the island. Tel. 922 80 09 93. The Centre also offers books, leaflets, maps, local crafts, guided tours and any information you may require. The adjacent gardens contain examples of the island's most interesting species of flora. The Visitor Centre is open every day from 9.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m.

**Information Center of La Laguna Grande.** Information point located in La Laguna Grande. Open daily from 9.30 to 16.30.

**Collaborator information points:** a network of tourist businesses collaborate with the Park providing information. Look at: <http://reddeparquesnacionales.mma.es/parques/garajonay>

**Routes**  
**Trails.** The best way to get to know the Park is on foot. There are numerous trails of varying difficulty and length. Visitors wishing to explore the terrain on their own can follow self-guided routes with the aid of specific publications.  
**Guided excursions.** The Park offers guided excursions with nature guides for those wishing to get to know it more fully. Apply at the Visitor Centre, or by telephone on 922 80 09 93 from 9.30 to 16.30. Central reservation address: [www.reservasparquesnacionales.es](http://www.reservasparquesnacionales.es)

**Other services**  
**Viewpoints.** There are numerous viewpoints on the roads through the Park from which to enjoy the scenery.  
**Laguna Grande Area.** Equipped with a restaurant and bar, a children's park, barbecues, drinking water, tables, a self-guided trail and an information service during peak periods.  
**Recreational areas.** Besides Laguna Grande, the Park has three small recreational areas: Ermita de Lourdes, Las Creces and Epina, all with tables and drinking water.  
**Arboretum of Meriga.** The perfect place to visit to facilitate the recognition of trees and shrubs of the forest.

## advice and safety

Visitors are advised to bring warm clothing and a waterproof jacket. Walkers should wear outdoor or sports footwear. The Park is a highly fragile system whose conservation depends on visitors behaving responsibly. Please note that the following prohibitions apply within the Park boundaries:

- No camping
- No fires
- Do not disturb the animals or pick flowers
- No rubbish
- No picnicking except in recreational areas
- No loud noises

## don't miss:

- ▶ The Canary Island cloud evergreen forest has been greatly degraded by human activity and has shrunk to 20% of its original area.
- ▶ Garajonay is the largest and best preserved example of this type of ecosystem.
- ▶ Five million years ago, there were similar forests in the Mediterranean basin. They were wiped out by climatic changes in continental Europe.
- ▶ These forests are inhabited by numerous animal and plant species that are unique in the world.

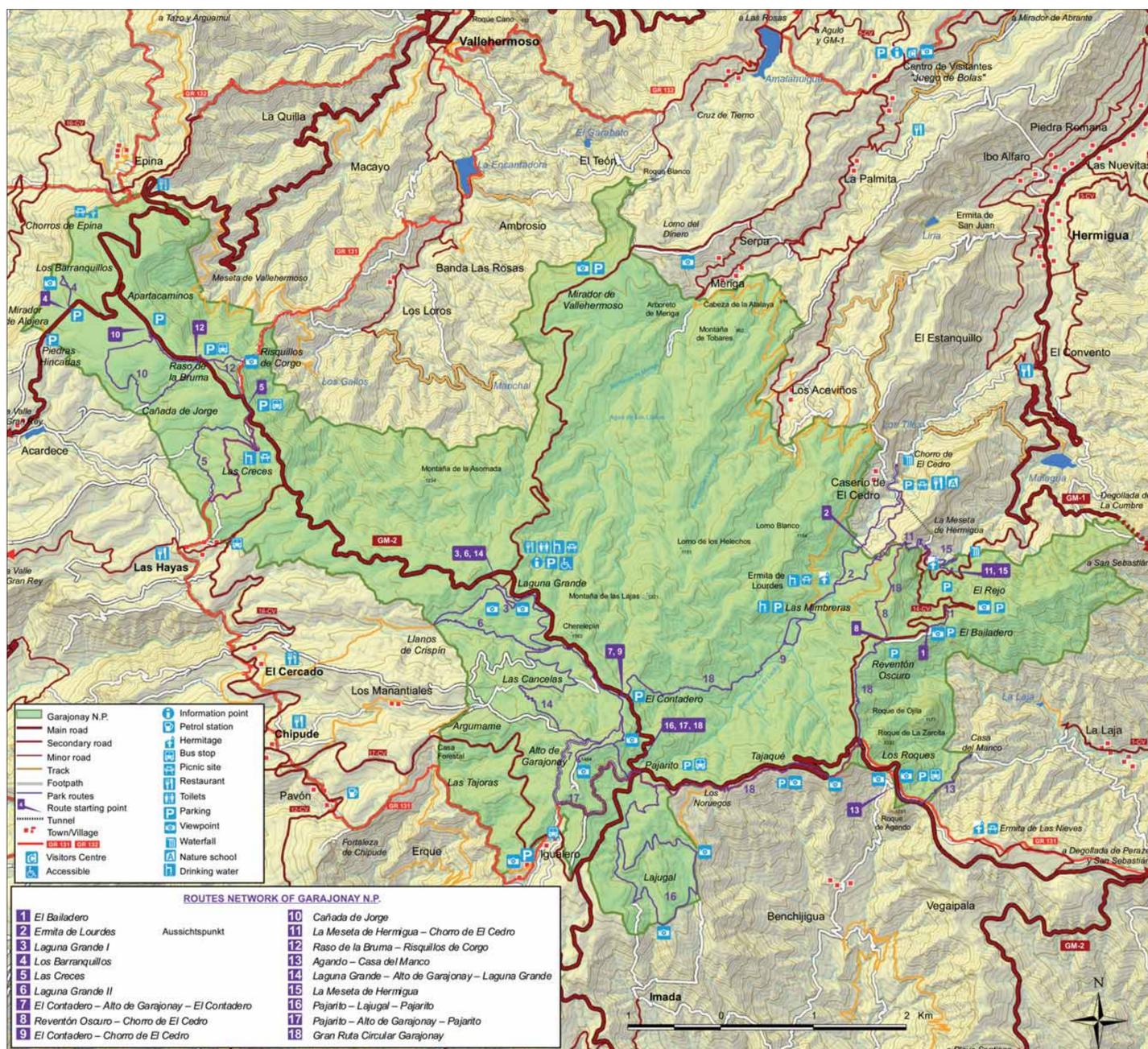
## map of Garajonay National Park

**GARAJONAY**  
**PARQUE NACIONAL**

Your safety is our concern, but it is your responsibility.



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For any further information related to the paths, ask in the Park Information Centres