

## 10 PICO BEJENADO

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Distance: 12.5km/8mi; 4h25min

**Grade:** strenuous, with an ascent/descent of 700m/2300ft, but suitable for anyone who is reasonably fit. You must be sure-footed, and a few stretches demand a head for heights. Only suitable in fine weather; should clouds descend, the utmost care needed, especially at the summit. If a strong wind is blowing, keep away from rim of the crater. Signposting and yellow/white waymarking (PR LP13,3).

**Equipment:** walking boots, sunhat, sunglasses, suncream, raingear, long-sleeved shirt, long trousers, warm cardigan, warm jacket, gloves, picnic, plenty of water

**How to get there and return:** 🚗 car to/from El Barrial, above Valencia. Turn off the El Paso/Santa Cruz LP2 road for 'Parque Nacional' (at the visitor centre). Keep straight on at the first junction but, shortly after, turn left for Valencia. Keep ahead on this road and park when it reverts to very rough track. (There is another parking area further up this track, at the point where the ascent proper begins and the road is once again surfaced; you may prefer to park there if you are in a 4WD vehicle.)

**P**ico Bejenado, like Pico de la Nieve, is accessible to everyone, and for this reason alone, worth the effort of the ascent. You'll feel like an eagle once on the summit, as you peer down into every corner of the Caldera de Taburiente (Walk 11). And on the ascent you have a sweeping vista over the Los Llanos basin as it spills out into the sea. This hike offers a superlative of views.

**These hike timings begin** at the point where the asphalt *first* ends (signpost: 'PR LP13,3 BEJENADO'). Follow the track ahead to the turn-off point for the ascent of the peak, by a large park INFORMATION BOARD and a second parking

area with SIGNPOST (20min). Ignore a track to the right which comes up immediately. At a junction (35min) go left (signposted 'PICO BEJENADO'). Ignore a strong path ascending to the right just past the junction. The hillsides are wooded in Canary pines, and bare of undergrowth. Pico Bejenado is the peak furthest to the left in the wall of mountains ahead.

You come to another SIGNPOST (1h), pointing your way up a minor track to the right. Some minutes up, the track ends and a clear path takes over, zigzagging up the hillside. A little over five minutes later, keep left at a fork (sign: PETROGLIFOS 130M). But it's worth taking the short detour to right, to see the large petroglyph and take in the excellent views over the mountains near La Cumbrecita. The ascent steepens as you mount the shoulder of the crater, but the panorama expands to encompass the west coast, where a gentle built-up plain fans out from the basin of fields tucked back into the *cumbre*.

Soon (1h45min) the rim of the crater is just before you. You look down into a pine speckled *caldera*. More than likely the far walls of the crater will be under a mantle of clouds, which only enhances the picture. A minute further uphill, a sign tells you that this is the **Mirador El Rodeo**.

Forty minutes above the mirador, you finally reach the summit, **Pico Bejenado (2h25min)**, with a bird's-eye view over the whole crater, lined by streams of ridges pouring down off the encircling wall of mountains. The strip of *barranco* bed visible below is the Playa de Taburiente. If you scramble down the 2m/6ft-high rock-face on the west side of the summit and continue to the end of the ridge, you will be able to look down into the Barranco de las Angustias and trace the forestry track up its far wall to Los Brecitos, where Walk 11 begins.

Return the same way, allowing 2h to regain the LOWER CAR PARK (4h25min).

*On the rim of the crater, just above the Mirador El Rodeo*

