

## 7 MANCHA BLANCA • PLAYA DE LA MADERA • TINAJO

**Distance:** 21.5km/13.3mi; 5h20min

**Grade:** easy but long. Since there is no shade en route, this walk is not recommended in very hot weather. Note also: if you plan to swim in the rock pools or at the beach, make absolutely certain that the sea is safe. I have never swum at the beach myself, because it never looked safe enough to me!

**Equipment:** comfortable walking shoes, fleece, sunhat, raingear, suncream, swimwear, picnic, plenty of water

**How to get there:** 🚌 to Mancha Blanca (Tinajo bus, Timetable 11)

**To return:** 🚌 from Tinajo (Timetable 11) or 🚖 taxi

**Short walk: Mancha Blanca — Tinajo** (6.5km/4mi; 1h45min). Easy stroll on country lanes, through beautiful farming country. Access/return as above; wear comfortable shoes and take a sunhat. Follow the main walk for 55min, then fork right for Tinajo, picking up the main walk again at the 4h30min-point. If travelling by 🚖, park at Tinajo and take a bus to Mancha Blanca to start, picking up your car at the end of the walk.

**Alternative walk: Timanfaya coastal path.** Quite easy, but walking boots should be worn, as the entire path runs over lava. 🚌 to Playa de la Madera and return: the rough but motorable track is shown as the walking route on the map overleaf. From the beach a path runs south along the coast. Follow it for as long as you like and return the same way. This is the only place where you can wander freely inside the Timanfaya National Park. The lava formations on the coast, the views to the volcanoes in the southeast, and the mesmerising breaking of the waves make for an exhilarating hike. *See also page 118.*

**T**his walk will not appeal to everyone. It takes you straight through the vast lava flows that have buried much of the southwest of Lanzarote. Not a soul lives out here — not even plants survive. It's a no-man's land. Deep in its midst, you stumble upon islands of lava-free ground, called *islotos* (see page 79). Here you'll find some plant life and cultivation taking refuge. It's a curious landscape that few would dare to call beautiful, but it has a special allure.

Alight from your bus in **Mancha Blanca** at the YAIZA/LA GERIA JUNCTION, and **set off** by going past the bus shelter on the ROAD TO TINAJO. After 100m/yds turn left on the LZ67, signposted to YAIZA and the MONTAÑAS DEL FUEGO. Ignore all side-streets. We skirt this well-dispersed rural village. Stone walls hedge in the road and cordon off the countryside. Here we're on the edge of a sea of 'AA' lava (a sharp, unevenly-surfaced lava; photograph page 114). The grand crater

*The dark picón-covered gardens of Mancha Blanca, with the yawning craters of Montaña Caldereta and Montaña Blanca in the background*

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dominating the scene is **Montaña Blanca** (see below), and pint-sized **Montaña Caldereta** sits in front of it.

Just outside the village, 100m/yds past the last house, turn right on a tarred lane (**15min**). From here we follow tarred country lanes through fields. Seven minutes later, before a solitary house ahead to the right, turn sharp left (by a 40KM SPEED RESTRICTION SIGN). Ignore all side-tracks. The sharp colour contrast of vivid green plots and ash-grey *lapilli* enhances this picturesque countryside. **Montaña de Tenezar** rises up boldly at the end of the road. Another junction awaits you at the foot of the mountain, where there is a SOLITARY FARM ahead on the right (**55min**). Turn left (*right* for the Short walk). After passing two forks to the right (the first chained off), the tar peters out into a motorable track. You head into lava that now takes over the landscape. The craters of Montaña Blanca and soon bulge up out of the lava. Up close, the mountain's rocky exterior resembles a freshly-baked cake.

Slowly, the off-shore islands appear: Alegranza, the furthest afield, Montaña Clara, and finally La Graciosa. The dark lava drops off into a deep blue sea. Without warning, suddenly the lava flow subsides and reveals a basin of low stony hillocks that lean up against Montaña Blanca like cushions. A couple of stone *casitas* can be seen, set in a coomb in the shoulders of the crater. This is Casas del Islote. We pass a fork off left to **Casas del Islote** and the Montañas del Fuego at about **1h45min** and dip down into an *islote*.

Some 25 minutes further on pass another turn-off to





Left: waves crash on the Timanfaya coast ahead, as we near the Playa de la Madera. Right, top: curious 'islands' of greenery (chiefly *tabaiba*) rise out of the lava. These islots are patches of ground untouched by the eruptions in the 1700s. *Tabaiba* (middle) flourishes on the island, but *uvilla* (bottom) is confined to coastal areas.

the right. From a rise eight minutes further on, you spot the first of the beaches, **Playa de las Malvas**. These black sand beaches are small and the waters usually turbulent. A tiny lagoon sits back off the beach here. Beyond this play we head back into the lava again and, less than 15 minutes later, we drop down onto **Playa de la Madera (2h35min)**. This small cove doesn't look too friendly either. Play it safe and stick to the rock pools. Pillows of yellow-tipped *Zygophyllum fontanesii* (*uvilla* — 'little grapes') grow out of the sand. A path crosses the beach and climbs into the rock on the other side, from where a coastal path heads south (*Alternative walk; see also page 118*). Shallow and inviting rock pools (only safe when the sea is calm) lie nearby.

Some 1h55min into the straightforward return walk you rejoin the road by the solitary farm below Montaña de Tenezar. This time, keep straight on for Tinajo. La Graciosa is at last in full view, and the Risco de Famara (Walk 2) dramatises the landscape as it bursts straight up

out of the sea. **Tinajo** is a sprinkling of hamlets that sprawls over a large cultivated plain. Entering the village, keep straight along, passing all turn-offs to the right. On reaching a large intersection, go left, taking the second of the two roads leading down to the PLAZA (5h 20min). The bus stop for Arrecife is in front of the church.

