

19 LA TABAIBA • TENO ALTO • BUENAVISTA

See also photograph page 1 Distance: 10.5km/6.5mi; 3h30min

Grade: moderate-strenuous, with an ascent of 200m/650ft and a steep, rocky descent of 600m/1970ft. You must be sure-footed and have a head for heights (danger of vertigo); *the descent is only recommended for very experienced hikers* (otherwise, do the Alternative walk below — or consider doing the main walk in reverse: climbing is always less vertiginous than descending). *The walk is only suitable in fine weather.*

Equipment: hiking boots, warm fleeces, sunhat, rain-/windproof, suncream, picnic, water

How to get there: 🚌 363 from Puerto to Buenavista (Timetable 6); journey time 1h20min; *change to* 🚌 355 to the pass of La Tabaiba (Santiago bus, *not in the timetables*; departs 09.30 *only*, Mon-Fri) — or take a taxi (5km). Since bus and taxi drivers do not know the pass by this name, and there is *no* signposting, ask for the '*mirador* above (poor *en-see-mah*) Las Portelas'. It's the highest point on the road to Masca, and there is a large parking bay.

To return: 🚌 363 from Buenavista to Puerto (Timetable 6); journey time 1h20min

Alternative walk: La Tabaiba — Teno Alto — La Montañeta: 8.5km/5.3mi; 2h40min. Moderate; equipment and access as above; return on 🚌 366 to Buenavista (Timetable 11); journey time 15min; *change to* 🚌 363 to Puerto (as above). Follow the main walk to Teno Alto, then use the map for Walk 20 to reach La Montañeta (the first part of Walk 20, but in reverse). *Note:* the initial 5min descent back into the El Palmar valley is very steep and slippery; use the road if this looks too difficult.

Spectacular, exhilarating and, in places, hair-raising ... but if you are sure-footed and not affected by vertigo, I highly recommend this hike. The final descent has to be one of the most impressive in the archipelago! This hike dissects the hills of Teno: rocky ridges offering stunning views, plunging gulleys, lush meadows, goatherds, and a hair-raising descent on an incredible path! Don't miss it!

Alight from the bus or taxi at the pass of **La Tabaiba** (see above). **Start out** by following the path off the parking bay, heading north. There is a superb view over the verdant cultivation in the El Palmar Valley on the right; to the left, you look across sheer plunging ravines. Your route heads up the **Cumbres de Baracán** (Picnic 19a), towards Montaña Baracán, the highest point; later, it will swing across to the left, to enter the heights of Teno. The zigzag path is clear, and *sendero turístico* signs appear at regular intervals. The slopes are a tapestry of wild flowers in spring, and goat bells tinkle in the valleys below. Los Carrizales is the small village far below to the left.

You pass a path (**30min**) ascending to **Montaña Baracán**. As the view from its summit has little more to offer, continue to the left. On reaching the top of the ridge, you look straight out over a dissected tableland. Teno Alto is the tight cluster of houses sheltering at the foot of a hill

below you. Other scattered dwellings sprinkle the tops of ridges. The banana plantations of Buenavista appear through the walls of a *barranco* and, behind you, the massive shoulders of El Teide rise spectacularly.

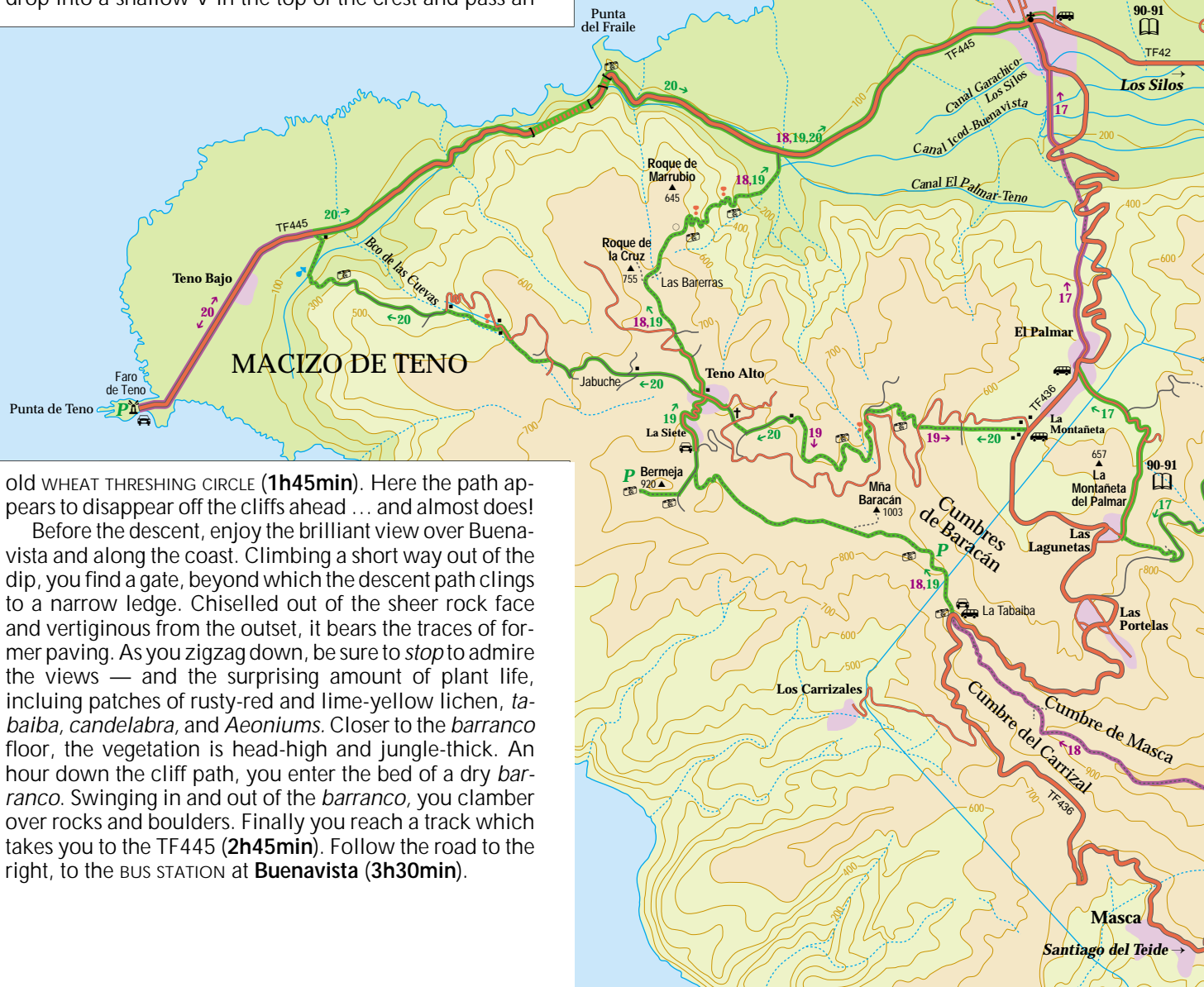
Crossing over the ridge, you head into scrub, stride across grassy slopes, and then dip into a beautiful wood of heather. Below the wood you come to the edge of La Siete. Before entering the hamlet, turn left on a track — to a wide hillside 'balcony' with a stupendous view: a landscape of razor-sharp ridges. A little further on, turn right on a path — to an even better viewpoint, overlooking a tilting plateau of grassland with the scattered homesteads of a few goatherds. The only sound is the tinkling of goats' bells — and yappy herders' dogs. This is my favourite part of Teno; I could sit here forever ... when the wind isn't blowing (Picnic 19b).

Onward bound, head back down the track to the hamlet of **La Siete**, from where you follow a narrow tarred road in a short winding descent to **Teno Alto (1h25min)**. (*Those doing the Alternative walk should now use the map overleaf, to continue to La Montañeta: follow the route of Walk 20, but in reverse.*) The main walk leaves Teno on the road ascending to the left of Bar Los Bailaderos (signposting: 'PUERTO MALO'). The Buenavista flats reappear, down through a deep ravine. A few minutes along, just after a track forks off to the right, turn off on a wide dirt path (probably once a track) descending to the right. This steep descent brings you back to the road at a point where the road curves to the left and a track forks off it to the right. Cross the track and ascend the ridge ahead (signpost 'PUERTO MALO'). Your path soon swings

The hillside balcony not far outside La Siete (Picnic 19b).



right, to pass between two hills: the prominent pointed one on the left is **Roque de la Cruz (1h40min)**. Here you find a cairn marked 'Las Barerras' (and *perhaps* a signpost to 'VISITAS'). Your path is the lower one to the right, which descends into the lush valley below. A patch of eroded hillside opposite catches the eye, with its breathtaking array of soft volcanic pinks, mauves, creams, and browns. *Sendero turístico* signs and small cairns keep you on route. Remains of a cobbled path come underfoot. You drop into a shallow V in the top of the crest and pass an



old WHEAT THRESHING CIRCLE (1h45min). Here the path appears to disappear off the cliffs ahead ... and almost does!

Before the descent, enjoy the brilliant view over Buenavista and along the coast. Climbing a short way out of the dip, you find a gate, beyond which the descent path clings to a narrow ledge. Chiselled out of the sheer rock face and vertiginous from the outset, it bears the traces of former paving. As you zigzag down, be sure to *stop* to admire the views — and the surprising amount of plant life, including patches of rusty-red and lime-yellow lichen, *tabaiba*, *candelabra*, and *Aeoniums*. Closer to the *barranco* floor, the vegetation is head-high and jungle-thick. An hour down the cliff path, you enter the bed of a dry *barranco*. Swinging in and out of the *barranco*, you clamber over rocks and boulders. Finally you reach a track which takes you to the TF445 (2h45min). Follow the road to the right, to the BUS STATION at Buenavista (3h30min).