



# Canarletter

Information

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## In this newspaper : Tenerife informations

### *In this issue:*

<i>Tenerife</i>	1
<i>Geography</i>	1
<i>Transport History</i>	2
<i>History II Teide Observatory</i>	3
<i>Climate data</i>	4
<i>Traditional Architecture</i>	4

## Tenerife

**Tenerife** – a Spanish island, is the largest of the seven Canary Islands in the Atlantic Ocean off the coast of Africa. The island's population is 852,945 (2006 census).

Santa Cruz de Tenerife is the second biggest city in the archipelago, the capital of the island and the head of the *cabildo insular* (island government); it is also officially co-capital of the autonomous community of the Canary Islands together with Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, with whom it shares governmental institutions such as Presidency, Parliament and ministries. The island is home to La Laguna University founded in 1792.



Flag of Tenerife



Satellite montage of Tenerife

## Geography

The island is located at 28°19' N, 16°34' W and has a surface area of 2,034 km<sup>2</sup> (785 sq.mi). Like the rest of the Canary Islands, it is of volcanic origin. The last of the three eruptions that created the island happened about 3.5M years ago, although small murmurs occur. The most recent earthquake of about 4 on the Richter scale was in 2002. The highest point of

Spain, Teide (3 717 m), is on this island. The island itself is clearly divided into a very dry southern part and a very humid and green north.

The island is part of the province of Santa Cruz de Tenerife. It includes 31 municipalities:

[Adeje](#), [Arafo](#), [Arico](#), [Arona](#), [Buenavista del Norte](#), [Candelaria](#), [Fasnia](#), [Garachico](#), [Granadilla de Abona](#), [La Guancha](#), [Guía de Isora](#), [Güímar](#), [Icod de los Vinos](#), [La Matanza de Acentejo](#), [La Orotava](#), [Puerto de la Cruz](#), [Los Realejos](#), [El Rosario](#), [San Cristóbal de La Laguna](#), [San Juan de la Rambla](#), [San Miguel de Abona](#), [Santa Cruz de Tenerife](#), [Santa Ursula](#), [Santiago del Teide](#), [El Sauzal](#), [Los Silos](#), [Tacoronte](#), [El Tanque](#), [Tegueste](#), [La Victoria de Acentejo](#), [Vilafior](#)

# Transport

The island of Tenerife is served by Tenerife North Airport (TFN) and Tenerife South Airport (TFS).

The Aeropuerto de Los Rodeos (north), the litan area Santa Cruz-La Laguna (423.022 national and European flights, and for the Aeropuerto Reina Sofía (south) is the bu- typically serves the mass of regular and Europe.



A network consisting of two fast, toll-free entire island, linking all the main towns and on is in the west from Adeje to Icod de los mountain road. However, plans are now afoot to complete the autopista, which is causing heavy debate between the environmentalists and the local businessmen, though works are to start in early 2007. This, however, pales in comparison to the heated discussions concerning the planned port in Granadilla, which is now in the hands of Brussels. Away from the major motorways, there is a network of secondary and communal roads, varying from wide to steep, winding narrow roads, mainly unlit and often with drops either side of the main carriageway surface. Public transport on the island is provided by an extensive network of buses (*Guaguas*) and run by TITSA, who operate a fleet of modern, air-conditioned buses<sup>[1]</sup> which, generally, run on time. Plans for a light-rail network linking the capital with the South have been approved by both the Tenerife Council and the Canary Islands Government, for Gran Canaria and Tenerife, though the discussion with the central Spanish Government hinges now on budget.<sup>[2]</sup> The metropolitan Area formed by Santa Cruz and La Laguna will be served by the *Tranvía de Tenerife* (Tenerife Tram) working in early 2007, after 3 years of intensive works.

smaller of the two, is located near the metropo- people). It serves inter-insular flights as well as last two years, a weekly service to Venezuela. siest Airport in Tenerife, ranking 7th in Spain. It charter flights constantly arriving from most of

motorways (TF1 and TF5) encircles nearly the resorts with the metropolitan area. The excepti- Vinos, which is traversed by a smaller winding

# History

Known to the Romans as *Nivaria* (from the Latin *nix, nivis*, "snow"), a referen- ce to the snows atop the volcano known as El Teide, Tenerife bears a name that is also a reference to this volcano, and was used for the island by the Guanches of the neighboring island of La Palma, "Tene" signifying "mountain" and "ife" white (the "r" was added by the Spanish). To the natives of Tenerife, the island was known as *Chenech, Chinech* or *Achinech*. As the legend goes, many islands, among them Tenerife, were the uppermost peaks of Atlantis, a continent that sank under the ocean in a catastrophic event which left only the highest mountains above sea level.

It is also believed that nearly 3 million years ago the island known today as Tenerife was three separate islands with three mountain ranges: the Ana- ga, Teno and Valle San Lorenzo. Then, as the consequence of a remar- kable volcanic process, they melted together forming the island of Tenerife.



**Alonso Fernández de Lugo presenting the captured native kings of Tenerife to Ferdinand and Isabella**

Tenerife at the time of its conquest was composed of nine distinct *men- ceyatos*, as the small kingdoms of the Guanches were known. Though the Spanish forces under the *Adelantado* ("military governor") Alonso Fernández de Lugo, suffered a crushing defeat at the hands of the Guanches in the First Battle of Acentejo in 1494, the Guan- ches, eventually overcome by superior technology and diseases to which they were not immune, surrendered to the Crown of Castile on December 25, 1495.

As on the other islands of the same group, much of the native population of Tenerife was enslaved or succum- bed to diseases at the same time as immigrants from various places in Europe associated with the Spanish Empire (Portugal, Flanders, Italy, Germany) settled on the island. Nati- ve pine forests on the island were cleared to make way for the cultivati- on of sugarcane in the 1520s; in suc- ceeding centuries, the island's econo- my was centered around the cultivati- on of other commodities such as wine and cochineal for making dyes, as well as bananas.



**Santa Cruz de Tenerife**

## History II

The island was attacked in 1797 by the British. On July 25, Horatio Nelson attacked Santa Cruz de Tenerife, the capital town of Tenerife and headquarters of the Captain General. After a fierce engagement, the British were repelled; Nelson lost his right arm as he tried to disembark at the shore. On September 5, another attempted landing in the region of Puerto Santiago was fended off by the inhabitants of the Valley of Santiago, who hurled stones at the British from the heights of the cliffs of Los Gigantes.

Less hostile visitors arrived at the island in succeeding centuries. The naturalist Alexander von Humboldt ascended the peak of the Teide and remarked on the beauty of the island. Tourists began visiting Tenerife in large numbers in the 1890s, especially

the northern towns of Puerto de la Cruz and Santa Cruz de Tenerife.

Before his rise to power, Francisco Franco was posted to Tenerife in March 1936 by a Republican government wary of his influence and political leanings. However, Franco received information and in Gran Canaria agreed to collaborate in the military coup that would result in the Spanish Civil War; the Canaries fell to the Nationalists in July 1936 and its population was subject to the mass executions of opponents to the new regime. In the 1950s, the misery of the post-war years caused thousands of the island's inhabitants to emigrate to Cuba and Latin America.

The Tenerife disaster, the airliner collision that took place on March 27, 1977 at Los Rodeos airport in the north of the island, was the deadliest aircraft disaster in history until the September 11, 2001 attacks, and remains the deadliest aviation accident in history.

The naturalist Alexander von Humboldt ascended the peak of the Teide and remarked on the beauty of the island.

## Teide Observatory

The **Observatorio del Teide (Teide Observatory)** is an astronomical observatory on Tenerife operated by the Instituto de Astrofísica de Canarias. Opened in 1964, it became one of the first major international observatories, attracting telescopes from different countries around the world because of the good astronomical seeing conditions. Later the emphasis for optical telescopes shifted more towards Roque de los Muchachos Observatory on La Palma nearby, as the seeing conditions proved to be even better there.

### Solar telescopes

Solar Vacuum Tower Telescope (**VTT**): 70 cm diameter. Operated by the Kiepenheuer Institute of Solar Physics, Freiburg (Germany). Installed in 1989. **THEMIS** Solar Telescope: 90 cm diameter, built 1996, operated by Italy and France. **Gregor** Solar Telescope: 1.5 m, operated by a German consortium. Not operational. A node of the Birmingham Solar Oscillations Network (**BiSON**), operated by the University of Birmingham, UK.



Observatorio del Teide website  
<http://www.slooh.com>

**Dream holiday with  
Canartours.com**



## Climate data

The first table shows average daily sunshine (hours of sunshine) in four weather stations on the island, and the second table shows average monthly and annual temperatures in the same weather stations. A third table shows average annual rainfall in six weather stations and finally there is a series of interesting links.

### AVERAGE MONTHLY AND ANNUAL TEMPERATURES

Month	(in °C)
January	24
February	25
March	25
April	26
May	26
June	28
July	28
August	29
September	27
October	26
November	26
December	24
<b>AVERAGE</b>	<b>26,2</b>

## Traditional Architecture

The traditional architecture of the Canary Islands, the architecture of stately homes and more humble houses for the people, takes its inspiration mainly from the traditional architecture of Andalusia and Portugal, although it also has a strong personality of its own.

The best of the Andalusian architecture - of which magnificent examples can be found in La Orotava and La Laguna - are the typical balconies and interior patios. Both rely heavily on wood, usually heart wood from the pine trees of the island, often magnificently worked by the hands of craftsmen.

The facade of these buildings is usually simple, free of adornments, which are reserved exclusively for use in grand balconies, set with latticework louveres and broad overhangs over the street. Windows are usually sash-windows and they usually have seats on the inside, set into the wall.

Interior patios, genuine gardens in which you can still sometimes find a distilling stone (a curious and beautiful device used to filter water and keep it cool), are surrounded by a gallery, supported on posts of resinous pine, which gives access to the bedrooms and chambers of the house. Wooden stairs, in keeping with the whole style, lead up to the gallery.

The facades of traditional, thick-walled houses of the people are painted many different, and surprising colours, although, in recent years, there has been a trend toward painting them a uniform, impersonal white. You can find examples of this kind of architecture scattered all over the Island, like the one you can still see in the Masca House.

Official and religious buildings reflect the different styles that have prevailed in each age, from the immediate post conquest times - some churches like La Concepcion de La Laguna -, passing through the Baroque and Neo-classical trends to the more modernist styles of more recent years. La Laguna, La Orotava - whose town centres are national historic-artistic monuments -, Santa Cruz and Puerto de la Cruz conserve remnants of all these styles in their older and more personal streets. Of more recent architecture, mention is worth making of the head offices of CajaCanarias savings bank, in the heart of Santa Cruz, because of its original treatment of lines and spaces.