



GranCanaria

PRESS KIT
2019



BASIC INFORMATION ABOUT GRAN CANARIA

Gran Canaria is one of the seven islands of volcanic origin that make up the Autonomous Community of the Canaries. It is situated at a distance of 1,250 kilometres from Cádiz, the nearest continental European port, and 210 kilometres from the northwest coast of Africa.

According to figures from the Canary Institute of Statistics, in 2018 Gran Canaria registered a census of 846,717 inhabitants, meaning that 39.8% of the total population of the Archipiélago lives in the 21 municipalities on this island. Its capital city, Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, is not just the largest city in the region, with 378,517 residents, but is also an attractive economic, cultural and administrative centre. According to the latest available data, 28% of all visitors who chose to come to the island for their holidays paid a visit to the city.

Gran Canaria welcomed 4.5 million tourists in 2018, a figure that strengthens its position as a **world tourist power**, and one of the top holiday destinations for European visitors. Travellers come mainly from Germany, the United Kingdom, Scandinavia and Spain, attracted by a range of factors including the sun, beaches, natural su-

rroundings, our local cuisine, the chance to do all kinds of outdoor sports throughout the year, an important historical heritage, our top cultural calendar, or simply to get away from the daily grind thanks to a cosy enclave that offers an unrivalled climate compared to anywhere else around Europe.

The island offers endless possibilities that suit all tastes, and as such is the favourite destination for families, sportsmen and women, nature lovers or anyone else looking for a place to have a relaxing experience at the finest spa centres.

Gran Canaria has become a safe, close at hand holiday destination, based on a multiproduct portfolio, with high levels of customer service and a competitive range of accommodation establishments that are being constantly upgraded to adapt to clients' ever-changing needs. These virtues have led the island to becoming a top resort, that reaches its peak during the busy winter season, when millions of Europeans pour into the island to escape the cold back home.





**4.5 MILLION
TOURISTS IN 2018**

LEADING SOURCE COUNTRIES FOR VISITORS IN 2018 (NUMBER OF TOURISTS)

GERMANY	978,579
SCANDINAVIAN COUNTRIES	993,655
UNITED KINGDOM	857,654
SPAIN	573,983
OTHERS	1,105,963
TOTAL	4,509,834

INCOMING VISITORS FROM SCANDANAVIAN COUNTRIES IN 2018 (NUMBER OF PASSENGERS)

NORWAY	342,600
SWEDEN	338,866
DENMARK	179,943
FINLAND	140,205
TOTAL	1,001,614

* You can consult all the information concerning tourist arrivals at Gran Canaria by visiting the Professional Area of the Gran Canaria Tourist Board website.

NUMBER OF PLACES OFFERED BY ACCOMMODATION ESTABLISHMENTS IN GRAN CANARIA IN 2017

TYPE	CATEGORY	TOTAL OF ACOMODATION UNITS	TOTAL PLACES	TOTAL NUMBER OF ESTABLISHMENTS
NON-HOTEL	Apartment	20,473	60,800	450
	Emblematic House	39	210	21
	Rural Accommodation	201	859	168
	Villa	8	103	8
	Rustic Accommodation	69	150	30
	Holiday Let	3,965	15,120	3,326
	Non-Hotel Total	24,755	77,242	4,003
HOTEL	Hotel	28,158	60,156	143
	Emblematic Hotel	39	92	3
	Rural Hotel	84	169	7
	Urban Hotel	784	1,639	22
	Inn	341	602	22
	Hotel Total	29,406	62,658	197
Gran Canaria Total		54,161	139,900	4,200

Tourist expenditure in Gran Canaria increased in 2018 to 4,489 million euros. Each visiting tourist spent an average of 1,173.69 euros in their time on the island, above the average for the Archipelago. Parallel to this, the tourism industry employs 22.14% of the labour force in a territory whose surface area (1,560 square kilometres) is slightly inferior to that of the city of London (1,572 square kilometres).

Travellers choosing to holiday in Gran Canaria fundamentally rate its climate, its rest and relaxation facilities, its safety and the open character of its inhabitants. Its diversity led to 50% of tourists going on excursions to get to know the interior of the island, while 22% of visitors tried out the local cuisine, and a further 19% opted to check out the night life, concerts or shows.

Gran Canaria has 60 kilometres of beaches spread out along its 236 kilometres of coastline. Sixteen of these boast the blue flag, awarded every year by the European Federation of Environmental Education, a fact which certifies the quality

of its waters and infrastructures, and its suitability for bathing and water sports. The European programme has awarded blue flags to the sports marinas of Mogán and Pasito Blanco, and Blue Centre and Blue Hiking awards to the Visitor Centre of the Maspalomas Dunes Natural Reserve, in San Bartolomé de Tirajana, and the hiking path at Bahía de Confital and at Las Canteras Beach in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, respectively.

In terms of connectivity, in 2018 the island handled flights from 151 airports from 25 different countries, placing the Airport of Gran Canaria in 6th place in Spain, with over 13.5 million passengers.



AIR CONNECTIVITY OF GRAN CANARIA, IN NUMBERS (2018)

Passengers	13,092,117
Flight Operations	118,554
Tons of goods transported	18,045,279
Airlines	47
Countries	25
Destinations	148



VARIETY AS THE MAIN ATTRACTION

The average annual temperature of 24 degrees set steadfastly on thermometres around Gran Canaria is not the only essential ingredient for enjoying a wide array of fine beaches. The sea that surrounds the island is an entertainment water park where professionals and amateurs go windsurfing, surfing, diving and sports fishing, all along a safe shoreline equipped with modern infrastructures.

Sport

Gran Canaria is the top tourist destination for golf. The island has 7 very different golf courses all within a radius of under an hour's drive. One of these is the Royal Golf Club of Las Palmas, the oldest in Spain, built in 1891 in Bandama, by reputable Scottish golf architect Mackenzie Ross.

The island offers a wide range of sports thanks to its climate, its orography and the multitude of landscapes that start high up at Roque Nublo and run all the way down to the fine beaches at Las Canteras and Maspalomas Dunes. The coastline is a sporting hotspot, offering sports fishing, sailing, water speed-bikes, surfing, windsurfing and kite-surf. Jetskiing and parasailing provide high levels of adrenaline, while the wealth of wildlife on the seabeds are a great attraction for divers and sports fishing enthusiasts.

The mountains and ravines in Gran Canaria are like an open air gymnasium that opens 365 days a year. The mild climate that rules the lives of people on the island favours physical exercise in natural surroundings, and attracts elite sportsmen and women who come here to set up their training bases.

The mountainous relief makes for contrasting horizons, and are just perfect for hill-walking, climbing and mountain biking. An example of the excellent conditions for active tourism on the island is its full calendar of mountain races, the highlight of which is the demanding **Transgran-canaria**.

With one of the finest and most incredible waves in the world, El Frontón was the setting for the latest **World Cup Gran Canaria Fronton King 2018**. The professional bodyboard championship is held here on this beach in Gáldar, and features some of the world's top competitors in this discipline, including Guilhaerme Tamega, André Bota, Amaury Lavernhe and Alexandra Rinder, as well as other well known international riders such as Antonio Cardoso, Álex Uranga and Alan Muñoz.

The Gloria Challenge Mogán, meanwhile, is held at the municipality of the same name situated at the south of Gran Canaria. The fourth year of this championship, held in April 2019, attracted some 444 triathletes from 25 different countries, who battled it out to see who would become champion. The event comprises a 1.9 kilometre swim, a 90 kilometre cycle stage, and a further 40 kilometre run, and each year attracts more and more elite athletes, notably Belgian triathlete Pieter Heemeryck and British triathlete Emma Pallant, last year's winners.

Both events are yet another show of strength of Gran Canaria as an ideal destination for a wide array of sports, both for holding top ranking competitions and for training 365 days a year.



Gastronomy

Gran Canaria's towns and villages offer the opportunity to discover a fine local cuisine, based on a rich assortment of locally farmed products. Top dishes include papas arrugadas potatoes, sancocho and an array of stews and broths which are the perfect blend for a fine local meal, washed down with superb local wines with the island's own **Denomination of Origin**, plus extraordinary quality cheeses and the finest desserts from the island's bakers. The Valley of Agaete cultivates the only coffee to be produced in Europe; the Arehucas Rum bodega is the largest and oldest of its kind on the whole of the European continent, while the restaurants nestling on the coast provide superb local fresh fish from the Atlantic.



Gran Canaria has joined forces with the Saborea España initiative, which highlights the wonderful establishments that make up the island's culinary range, the quality of the local chefs, and the endless possibilities offered by tasty, locally grown ingredients.

Madrid Fusión was the stage chosen to present the island's 1st annual International Cheese Gastronomic Forum, held this year in April. This culinary event placed Gran Canaria at the forefront of international gastronomy, as it attracted the world's top cheese specialists who gave talks on its qualities; explained the possibilities it offers for sweets and desserts, plus savoury and frozen recipes; revealed the harmonies it offers to other ingredients and offered formulas for introducing cheese into the menus of leading restaurants around the world.

One of the Forum's main aims was to promote dialogue between culinary professionals and the producers from the 80 cheese manufacturing businesses on Gran Canaria, with the purpose of guaranteeing the survival of traditional techniques in the long term while increasing the quality of the island's cheeses by promoting them far and wide. Chef Juan Roca, considered the best cook in the world for the work he has done at Celler de Can Rosa, praised the excellent quality of cheeses produced in Gran Canaria while acknowledging it is one of the raw ingredients they are now using at their restaurant as part of one of dishes that make up their culinary repertoire. Indeed, as part of the 'Gran Canaria cheese meeting', Roca presented a new recipe that uses one of Gran Canaria's cheeses.



Historic, natural and cultural heritage

The island's geographical idiosyncracies and its unique terrain, which reaches a maximum altitude of 1,949 above sea level at Pico de Las Nieves, generate microclimates which have led to the island being labeled a **Miniature Continent**. 42% of the island's land surface area and marine shoreline was awarded special protection in 2005 by UNESCO with its declaration as a Biosphere Reserve, in recognition of the high levels of preservation and the variety of its species, as well as the sustainable development of its natural environment.

Tourists visiting Gran Canaria are naturally drawn to the climate, beaches and peace and quiet, yet when they venture northwards they find the 'hidden gem' of this part of the island. Here they discover new delights, from going for a dip in secluded natural pools in Guía, seeing the Special Reserve at Los Tilos de Moya, the only remaining laurel tree forest in Gran Canaria, visiting the Painted Cave Museum and Archaeological Park, to adventuring to the beaches and steep cliffs around Agaete, strolling around the historical town centre of Arucas, losing themselves in the woods around Osorio in Teror, and going hiking along the Azuaje Ravine in Firgas. All these are stunning attractions that don't necessarily appear in traditional tourist guides.

Gran Canaria is brimming with landscapes and natural areas that are just ideal for hiking, mountain biking, cycle tourism and climbing enthusiasts. The **Nublo Rural Park** and the **Maspalomas Dunes Special Natural Reserve** are the most representative attractions, while the island also hides a great biodiversity in its interior, which can be captured from the 31 panoramic viewpoints dotted about the countryside.

Gran Canaria has the widest range of pre-Hispanic cultural and artistic content on the Archipelago. **The Painted Cave of Gáldar**, an excavation of volcanic tuff rock, houses ancient wall paintings in its interior, and is the most representative archaeological settlement out of an ample network of vestiges that illustrate just what life was like for the first dwellers to inhabit the Canaries. Christopher Columbus stopped off in Gran Canaria on three of his four expeditions to America. The district of Vegueta is at the cultural heart of the capital, and houses a museum that carries his name, offering a fas-





and clarity of the atmosphere that enables people to stargaze, a pleasure which is in danger of disappearing around the planet.

To this end, this defence of the skies over Gran Canaria has become the backbone of intervention by the island's authorities, while they are also striving to have the aboriginal archaeological settlement of **Risco Caído**, in Artenara, declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO, along with the **Sacred Areas of Montaña de Gran Canaria**.

Currently, one of the most original cultural attractions being forged in Gran Canaria is the **'Sanmao-Echo Route of Gran Canaria'**, an initiative whose purpose it is to pay tribute to Chinese writer Chen Ping. This literary novelist, who is famous back in her eastern homeland, spent six years in the town of Playa del Hombre, in the municipality of Telde, during the 1970s. Sanmao is the writer of around 20 books, and was the translator of the popular Spanish Mafalda comic into Chinese, so all this has moved Gran Canaria to honouring her memory with an educational tour around her former home and the places she frequented.

cinating collection of objects that showcase the links with the so called New World.

The island offers visits to a diverse range of archaeological sites spread around its territory, including **Cenobio de Valerón** (Santa María de Guía), the **Roque Bentayga Visitor Centre** (Tejeda), the **Maipés Archaeological Park** (Agaete), the **Arteara Necropolis** (San Bartolomé de Tirajana), **Cañada de Los Gatos** (Mogán), the **Guayadeque Ravine Visitor Centre** (Agüimes) and **La Fortaleza Visitor Centre** (Santa Lucía de Tirajana).

Gran Canaria has been declared a **'Starlight Tourist Destination'** by the United Nations Education, Science and Culture Organization (UNESCO). Astrotourism is one of Gran Canaria's leading projects, and has launched into the conquest of its spectacular night skies while fighting against light contamination, in an attempt to bring back the right to observe the stars. The island is keen to recuperate the quality of skies the aborigines used to see, with unique astronomic markers, diversify the range of tourist offers while opening new windows to knowledge.

Gran Canaria is one of the few locations around the world, alongside Hawaii, New Zealand and Chile, considered by UNESCO to be a 'window to the sky' thanks to the quality





**STARLIGHT
TOURIST DESTINATION**

AN ISLAND UNDERGOING CONTINUAL CHANGE

Gran Canaria is a tourist destination that takes on the challenge of offering maximum quality to its visitors, through new projects and investments that guarantee its continual transformation. The **Poema del Mar Aquarium** is a top tourist attraction created by the owners of Loro Parque and represents a bold move by the capital city to widen its leisure and entertainment facilities.

This recreational site occupies some 8,500 square metres, and is divided up into three different areas, with a capacity to house 350 different species of animals.

Meanwhile, the area known as El Veril, in the municipality of San Bartolomé de Tirajana, is set to house the **Siam Park** water park. This huge project is costing 60 million euros, and work has already started on preparing the land for it.

This latest leisure attraction will be built on an area covering 175,000 square metres, and will feature slides, beaches, rivers, gardens, restaurants, a volcano and Thai-inspired temples, among many other facilities, to provide many hours of adventures for the whole family.

This year, the island boasts a whole new leisure and entertainment facility with the opening of the **Maspalomas Lighthouse**.

On the night of 1st February of 1890 the Maspalomas Lighthouse flashed its first beam of light. It had been built by celebrated Canarian engineer Juan León y Castillo, who has had a number of streets named in his honour around the island. It took him five years to bring his project

to reality and to see his solitary tower raised at Gran Canaria's southernmost point, between the dunes and the shore. As was common, alongside the tower he had living quarters for the lighthouse keeper built, inspired by traditional houses with a typical Canary courtyard. Its pointy silhouette, set in unique and at the time deserted surroundings, became a symbol for the municipality. Over time, it also became a top tourist feature for the island.

Following an eventful life, the Maspalomas Lighthouse recently opened its doors to millions of local, national and foreign tourists who come pouring into the island every year. It has done so initially as a tourist information point and a craft shop, but as part of a much more ambitious plan it is set to become a future Ethnographic Visitor Centre. Long before the Castilian troops finally conquered the island, the natives had turned this little piece of paradise on Earth into one of their favourite places to live. There are numerous vestiges of their presence in this region of Gran Canaria, which nevertheless even in modern times remained cut off for many decades. Before, that is, the arrival of tourism.

The emblematic Maspalomas Lighthouse was declared a Site of Cultural Interest in 2005, and is undoubtedly a highly attractive place for curious visitors to come to, following extensive refurbishments made to its pavement area and wooden features. Today, like all its fellow lighthouses, it is fully automated and works with a conventional electrical connection. But within its 60 metres of tower and its masonry walls it still preserves an age-old flavour in keeping with its 130-year history.



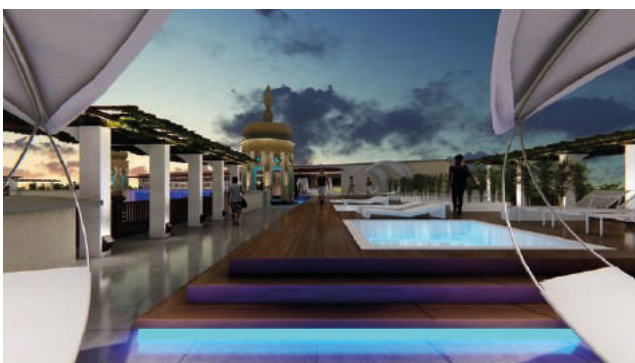
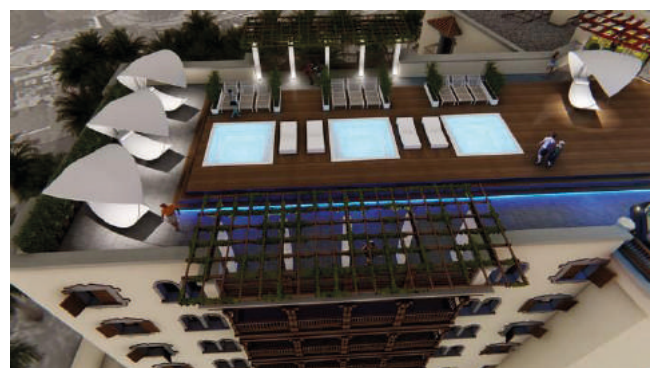
Visiting hours (access to the ground floor): 10.30 to 17.00.

Innovation

Las Palmas de Gran Canaria is taking giant strides forward from a tourism point of view. There are several indicators to back this up: in 2018 it registered a further increase in tourists staying at the city, with the number of visiting Spaniards and foreigners now surpassing the 400,000 mark. Night stays also topped the figure of a million and a half per year. To keep pace with this growth, the city's accommodation facilities have not just increased, they are becoming of much higher quality and are much more personalized.

To this end, the most emblematic hotel in the capital city, the Hotel Santa Catalina, is soon to open its doors once more following its latest restoration. It will do so under a new name, the Royal Hideaway Hotel, while conserving the essence of its rich history, as it is a highly protected architectural gem, and is an integral part of the Architectural and Cultural Heritage of the city of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria. Hence its refurbishment, which constitutes one of the most ambitious projects to be undertaken by the Barceló Hotel Group, has been overseen by the Gran Canaria Historic Heritage Commission.

The Hotel Santa Catalina, along with its surrounding area of Doramas Park, the Pueblo Canario and the Néstor Museum, is a true icon of the history, art and identity of the Canaries. It has also been a top meeting place for local society. In fact, it was designed in 1945 by Miguel Martín-Fernández de la Torre, one of the architects who boosted tourist activity by prioritizing its integration into the island's idiosyncratic features. The latest refurbishment programme at the hotel has already brought with it some prestigious recognition, as it has been honoured as one of the 10 best sustainable hotel restoration projects carried out in 2019 at the Re Think Hotel awards ceremony.



Infographics of the Santa Catalina hotel reform

Regarding the rest of the upgrading works on accommodation undertaken at the city to provide a high quality and personalized offer, mention must go to the **Hotel Silken Saaj Las Palmas**. This is a 4-star urban boutique hotel in an excellent setting along the beach front of Las Alcaravaneras Beach and alongside the Nautical Club, close by the main shopping and entertainment area of the city. The Silken Alcaravaneras is a new build, inaugurated in 2018 with a painstaking and cutting-edge luxury design, featuring a total of 66 large and luminous rooms. It is easily identifiable as it stands out for its unmistakable façade made from glass slats, which change colour depending on the sky's reflection.

By contrast, the **Design Plus Bex Hotel** has opted for a totally different look. Located at the former headquarters of the Foreign Bank of Spain building, it is a harkback to the 1920s with its detailed and unique architectural design. Art Deco style is highly apparent all around the hotel, impregnating it with the glamour and elegance of that happy period, as well as in its 97 comfortable and modern rooms. To achieve this, a huge refurbishment has been carried out at the building, originally built back in 1959 to house the institution mentioned above. Indeed, the hotel is located on a street popularly known as "Bank Street", and has just completed its first year of extraordinary hotel service.



Design Plus BEX Hotel

Continuing in the vein of innovation, an event worth highlighting is the Overbooking (OVB) event, which was born in Gran Canaria, arising from the kernel of an idea: the need that exists in such an important industry as tourism to deal with aspects related to tourist communication, including all those sectors within it, including brands, holiday destinations, transport firms, accommodation facilities, restaurants, tour operators and firms offering complementary services. The event dates back to 2012 as a tourist communication forum, but it was in 2016, with the backing of the Tourist Board and the co-organization by 22grados°, when the event really took off and became a leading light in communication and tourist marketing on the national stage, evolving its contents and formats over the following few years.

Gran Canaria's long tourist history, which goes back to the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century, has been one of the factors that influenced the decision to bring this type of gathering to the island. At what is conceived as a highly specialist event, every year experts in big data and artificial intelligence, digital marketing, web positioning and customer loyalty techniques divulge the latest trends and apply them to the tourism industry.



'Overbooking Gran Canaria' Forum #OVB18

Commitment to Quality

Gran Canaria's commitment to the quality of the accommodation and services that make up the holiday destination can be clearly seen in the diverse range of initiatives on the part of local institutions. These include the affiliation going back a decade now to the Integral System for Tourism Quality in Spanish Destinations (SICTED in Spanish). It entails a project of ongoing improvements in quality at tourist destinations, promoted by the Secretary of State for Tourism, with the support of the Federation of Municipalities and Provinces of Spain (FEMP in Spanish), who work together with firms and tourist services from a range of different trades, with the aim of improving the experience and satisfaction levels of tourists. Gran Canaria joined the organization back in 2009, and now boasts some 310 committed firms and 22 trades linked to the tourism industry.

To achieve this objective, the Gran Canaria Tourist Board works throughout the year to bring in new businesses and services, while advising, assessing and monitoring those who have already earned their quality seal. The huge efforts they put into facilitating the entry of new Gran Canarian businesses to the methodology of national tourism excellence have contributed to raising the level of competitiveness of the destination and remains the road map for taking the island's standards in tourism to even higher levels. To fulfill this aim, every year training modules, workshops, individual technical assistance and group debates are held, as well as evaluations and self-evaluations. Through the latter, activities specific improvement plans and action points are implemented which are assessed by a quality board set up within the SICTED framework.



Legal safety and economic incentives

Gran Canaria is part of the Single European Market to all effects, both in terms of common currency and customs. Travelling to Gran Canaria therefore needs no different requirements than if you were flying from Barcelona to Madrid, or from Bilbao to Málaga. Its airport is situated just 18 kilometres from the island's capital city, Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, and 25 kilometres from the tourist hotspots to the south. The airport's geographical location and optimum meteorological conditions contribute to it being considered one of the safest of its kind, and it operates 24 hours day and night.

As a Spanish territory, it maintains security standards on a par with anywhere else around the European Union. Its security levels in terms of health, food, environment and justice provide a solid base for the development of tourism, and are aspects that are highly valued by large tour operators from all over Europe.

In 2016, The Canary Health Service became the first health system in Spain to form part of the European Food Safety Authority, serving to strengthen the Canaries and Gran Canaria's position as tourist destinations offering the highest levels of quality and security.

Gran Canaria is also a hotspot for shoppers, thanks to its wide choice of shopping centres and a fiscal system that provides low tax rates for consumers. The island boasts large shopping areas with all the leading national and international brands; visitors can buy from shops from the Ethnography and Development of Canary Crafts Foundation, FEDAC, that sell traditional island items, while farmers markets and stalls open their doors for business over the weekend at the hillside towns and up at the summit, with the stand out markets being at Teror, San Mateo, Santa Brígida and Cruz de Tejeda.

Did you know...?

... French pianist **Camille Saint Saëns** composed his work 'Canariote Waltz' following his first ever trip to Gran Canaria. He spent the winter period here and returned to the island on several occasions afterwards.

... American musician and composer, **Leonard Bernstein**, who wrote the original soundtrack for **West Side Story**, often visited Gran Canaria and stayed for long periods. The island will be celebrating the centenary of his birth in 2018.

... the **Santa Catalina Hotel** in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria was built with British funds and was inaugurated in 1890. Celebrated personalities from the world of culture and politics, including **Sir Winston Churchill**, **María Callas** and **Gregory Peck** have been guests there.

... British novelist **Agatha Christie** travelled to Gran Canaria and stayed at the **Metropole Hotel**. She would sit out for hours on end and look out over the wonderfully peaceful sand and sea landscape. Some of her **Hercules Poirot** adventures were written from her hotel terrace.

... the oldest golf club in Spain is in Gran Canaria. **The Royal Las Palmas Golf Club** is situated in Bandama and was built in 1891.

... the **Viera y Clavijo Botanical Garden**, in Gran Canaria, is the largest botanical garden in Spain, and it was Swede **Eric Ragnor Svensson** who was the inspiration behind it.

... the film **Moby Dick**, starring **Gregory Peck**, was filmed on Las Canteras Beach in 1954.

... one of the bells in **Santa Ana Cathedral** was donated to Las Palmas de Gran Canaria in 1999 by the resident Dutch colony on the island. It was given as a replacement for the previously destroyed ones during the siege and burning down of the city by Dutch pirate **Pieter Van der Does** in 1599, exactly four hundreds years before.

... Gran Canaria goes by the name of '**Miniature Continent**' due to the huge variety of landscapes and climates to be found on the island. On some winter days visitors can be on the beach with a mild 22° C, and then within the hour be up at the summit, on occasions white with snow, with 0°.

... researchers at the **University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria** are trying to confirm their hypothesis that the 1755 earthquake of Lisbon caused a tidal wave that reached Gran Canaria and generated the dunes at **Maspalomas**.

... the island of Gran Canaria is around **14.5 million years old**, making it the youngest of the eastern islands and the oldest of the western islands, and has not registered any more volcanic activity since the Quaternary period.

... **La Isleta** was once a islet separated from the rest of the island by a stretch of water just over a kilometre long and which over time accumulated deposits of lifeless remains of marine fauna and sand, which led to dunes forming and becoming an isthmus.

... Gran Canaria used to be an island with its own lush **Macaronesia woodland**, which also spread over the rest of the **Canary Islands**, the **Azores**, **Madeira** and **Cape Verde**, and was virtually wiped out. There are scanty remains of this so called **Doramas Jungle** at Los Tilos de Moya, following the cutting down of wood used to power sugar mills set up following the Conquest.

... Gran Canaria boasts **33 different protected areas** spread over **66,707 hectares**, which represents just under half of the island's total land surface (42.75 %).

... the leading Spanish realism novelist, **Benito Pérez Galdós**, was born in Gran Canaria and was the author -among many other works- of one of the **National Episodes** which narrate the great 19th century battles against France and England.

... Throughout its history, Gran Canaria has played an important role as maritime support base for **transatlantic voyages**, from the period of **Christopher Columbus** through to modern times.

... tourism in Gran Canaria began towards the end of the 19th century with a wide range of spas that used to attract wealthy European visitors.

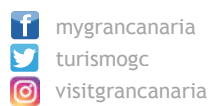
... the last president of the Spanish Republic, which was ended by the Civil War in 1936, was the internationally acclaimed Gran Canarian scientist **Juan Negrín**.

... **Alfredo Kraus**, one of the finest light lyrical tenors from the second half of the 20th century was born in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria and the city's **Auditorium** is named after him.



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