



In the mid-19th century the Canaries were given free port status which lowered duties and trade barriers. Las Palmas and Tenerife became two of the world's busiest ports. With the introduction of the banana crop as a major export and the increasing growth of tourism, the Canaries continue to have a stable economic base.

PLACES OF INTEREST

1 Playa de las Canteras is a 2-3 miles stretch of Golden Sand Beach in the heart of the city.

Pueblo Canario (Canary Village), a typical Canarian village, is a good place to soak up the culture of Gran Canaria as you shop for handicrafts and enjoy displays of dancing and singing. You can also visit the exotic art museum of Nestor de las Torre, the local artist who designed the village.

Vegueta, the oldest area of the city, is a nice place to learn the history of the island as you wander the old streets and alleyways.

Casa de Colon (The House of Christopher Columbus), formerly the residence of the island's first governor, was used by Christopher Columbus on at least 3 different occasions. It is now a museum contain-

ing navigational instruments, charts, weapons, and other items which are characteristic of the period.

Catedral de Santa Ana represents the Gothic and neo-Classic architecture of the time. Although opening times are very erratic, for a few euros, you may be able to see the treasury with exhibits of ancient religious art and jewelry.

Museo Canario contains the islands most important collection from Guanche times.

Beyond Las Palmas

2&3 Playa del Ingles and Maspalomas are two of the most famous beach areas on the island. There are a number of high rise hotels, shopping malls and fast food restaurant in the area.

4 Cruz de Tajeda (Cross of Tejada) is one of the most popular scenic vistas on the island at 4,800 ft. The spectacular panoramic view includes two famous rock formations that were once worshipped by the Guanches; Roque Nublo (5,961 ft) and Roque Bentaiga. You will also find a famous Parador (state run restaurant) for refreshments.

5 Caldera de Bandama, a volcanic crater, is one of the islands natural wonders. The Crater is almost 1 km across and reaches a depth of 650 ft.

SHORE EXCURSIONS To make the most of your visit to Gran Canaria, we suggest you take one of our organized Shore Excursions.

LOCAL CUSTOMS Bargaining: is acceptable in some stores.

Tipping: All prices on a menu include tax and a service charge. It is customary however to leave a tip of 5% – 10% if you are happy with the food and service. Taxi drivers should be tipped approximately 10%.

Local Cuisine: Paella is the Spanish national dish, a combination of seafood, chicken, and vegetable mixed together in a saffron-flavored rice. Tapas is another cuisine unique to this culture. Tapa is a small portion of food usually served in a bar to encourage you to keep drinking.

Drink Specialties: The Canaries are famous for "Malmsey" wine made from the volcanic soil. These wines tend to be very sweet. Sangria is also a popular drink throughout Spain. Bottle water is recommended.

SHOPPING FACILITIES Stores are generally open from 9:00 am – 1:00 pm and 4:00 pm – 8:00 pm.

In 1852 the Canary Islands were declared a duty-free zone in order to stimulate trade and growth. The Canaries remain duty free to this day and goods are imported without restrictions from all over the world. With a lower luxury tax, you may find some bargains but not as many as one would expect. The items with a slightly lower luxury tax are similar to what one would find in a duty free shop at the airport – cameras, calculator, watches, perfume, jewelry, leather goods, spirits and tobacco.

The most celebrated local handicraft is embroidery. You will find excellent and detailed needlework on bedspreads, towels, napkins and tablecloths.

Most stores accept credit cards.

LOCAL CURRENCY The unit of currency in this port of call is the euro. There are 8 euro coins denominated in 2 and 1 euros, along with 50, 20, 10, 5, 2, and 1 cent pieces. Every euro coin carries a common European face. On the obverse, each Member State decorates the coins with their own motifs. No matter which motif is on the coins they can be used anywhere inside the Member States. There are 7 euro notes. In different colors and sizes, they are denominated in 500, 200, 100, 50, 20, 10, and 5 euros. The notes are uniform throughout the euro area; unlike coins, they have no national side. All euro notes are legal tender in all countries of the euro area.

POST OFFICE AND TELEPHONE FACILITIES The Post Office is located at Calle 1 de Mayo.

There is a calling station at the Santa Catalina pier, a short walk from the ship.

There are local phones within a 5 minute walk from the ship. Coins or a calling card is required. You can dial internationally from any public telephone if you have a calling card with one of the companies listed

below. Simply dial the access code and give the operator your card number.

AT&T: 900.99.0011

MCI: 800.099.357

TOURIST INFORMATION The Tourist Information Office is located in Las Palmas, Casa del Turismo opposite Santa Catalina Park.

TRANSPORTATION Taxis are available at the port. It is advisable to negotiate a fare before departing.

There is a local bus system, but it is not designed for tourists. There are infrequent timetables to locations outside the city.

USEFUL WORDS AND PHRASES

Good Morning • Buenos Dias

Good Afternoon • Buenas Tardes

Good Day • Buen Dia

How Much • Cuanto es

You're Welcome • De Nada

Thank You • Gracias

Where is the bathroom • Donde esta el cuarto de baño