

TOP 23 From Chipude to Garajonay, 1487m

4.00 hrs



Pleasant high ramble to the highest point of the island

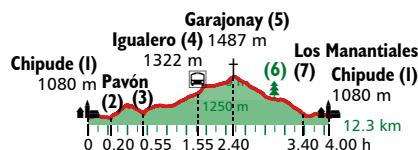
Garajonay is not only the most visited but also the most approachable walking destination on La Gomera, but most walkers prefer tackling this peak via the shorter ascents from Laguna Grande, Contadero or Pajarito. This route is much more peaceful and inspiring, leading along a pleasant, particularly panoramic high mountain trail to Igualero, La Gomera's highest village, then climbing from there to the crest of Garajonay. If this peak isn't enough of a challenge for you, there is another popular one to »take on« – the Fortaleza.

Starting point: set off from the church square of Chipude, 1080m (bus stop for lines 1, 4, 6).

Height difference: about 550m.

Grade: taken as a whole, this is essentially an easy, mostly pleasant walk following distinct trails.

Refreshment: in Chipude and in Aparta-



dero/Pavón, bar/restaurants.

Alternatives: ascent to the Fortaleza from the Fortaleza saddle (¾ hr there and back, →Walk 22). Descent from Garajonay to the road junction at Pajarito (→Walk 11; bus stop for line 1).

Linking tip: with Walks 11, 21, 22, 24, 25 and 70.

From the church square of **Chipude (1)**, follow the main road towards San Sebastián then 150m on, turn left onto the broad cobbled trail, GR 131 (white/red), that ascends for a short stretch to cross over the main road and, on the other side, descends to the road to La Dama. After 30m, the camino



View from Mirador de Igualero of the high mountain trail and to Fortaleza; La Palma in the background.

turns diagonally to the left, parallel to the road, and leads to the hamlet of **Apartadero** then merges with the road again. Past the Los Camioneros bar and after a sharp right-hand bend (or via the camino through the barranco) reach the hamlet of **Pavón (2)**. 20m to the right of the transformer tower at the side of the road, a cobblestone street ascends to the left and ends just before a small gentle valley notch. Here right through the notch climbing to the **Fortaleza saddle**, 1125m, to reach a fork in the trail (to the right a possible excursion onto the Fortaleza, →Walk 22).

Continue the route by keeping straight on along the GR 131 and, after 10 mins, meet the road to Erque. Descend to the right along this for about 10 mins until crossing a barranco in a sharp right-hand bend. Here, immediately after the bend, the GR 131 turns left onto a camino (3). This ascends in a pleasant, gentle high mountain walk below the timberline traversing the





Since the forest fire of 2012, the high trail to Igualero has lost much of its charm.

slope and opening a fantastic view of the Fortaleza. Near a first high tension power pylon also catch a downwards view of the hamlet of Erque nestled in the chasm-like *barranco* of the same name. In easy up-and-down walking with a lovely view of La Dama and the neighbouring islands of El Hierro and La Palma, traverse the slope. Only after passing the third power pylon (a good ½ hr) does the trail become somewhat steeper. 5 minutes later the trail forks – here turn left (straight on, the GR 132.1 to Erquito branches off). Our *camino* now climbs through overgrown terraces to the village street of **Igualero (4)**; 10 minutes), ascending to the main road (10 minutes; bus stop shelter for lines 1, 6).

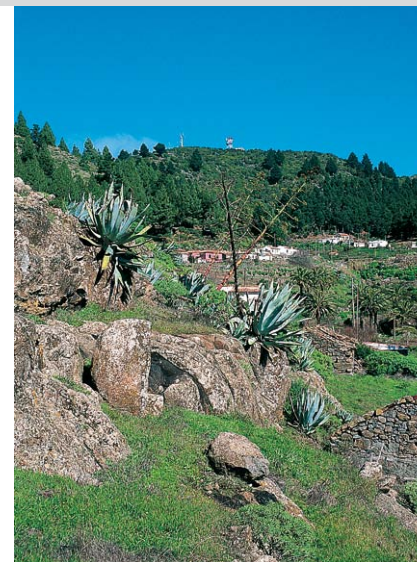
The GR 131 crosses the main road bearing right, then turns left onto a *camino* behind the small waterworks (sign); this ascends in a fairly straight line through the pine forest which has been almost fully decimated due to

From Garajonay, you can enjoy a splendid view of Tenerife when weather is clear.



the forest fire of 2012. After 10 mins, meet a forestry road – follow this to the left via the GR 131. After a few minutes, another forestry road merges from the left into ours then a quarter of an hour later another forestry road coming from Chipude merges sharply from the left (the return route later on). A good 100m later reach another track forking off (the cobbled road forking left leads to the mountain road with the car park, Alto del Contadero; to the right to the Garajonay summit). We follow the cobbled road 20m to the right and then turn left onto a path that forks shortly after – turn right here crossing the ridge to ascend to the overlook platform at **Garajonay (5)**; when weather permits enjoy a wonderful 360° panoramic view.

Return along the cobbled road and after 5 mins turn left onto the cobbled road towards Chipude (sign). A good 100m on, reach another fork – turn right here (sign »Chipude – Laguna Grande«), descending along a steep cobbled road while enjoying a fabulous view of the Fortaleza. After about 20 mins, pass the pine forest, Pinar de Argumame **(6)**; here, two trails fork off to the right). 50m further on, ignore a forestry road forking to the right towards Laguna Grande. Another 100m further on, turn right along a roadway (sign: »Chipude«) that veers left, 50m on, down the valley. Soon the roadway becomes a stepped *camino* passing vineyards and descending to **Los Manantiales (7)**. Cross over the road and then turn right onto the lantern-flanked *camino* to continue. At the first house, turn left, descending to an intersecting trail. Continue left along this until, in front of a house, a broad intersecting trail leads to the right descending to the valley floor. On the other flank of the valley, a gently ascending trail continues, bearing right along the slope, and forks 5 mins later (to the right heads to El Cercado). Here left to the ridgeline then descend through a small valley and continue along a cobblestone street down to the church square of **Chipude (1)**.



Just before reaching Igualero.