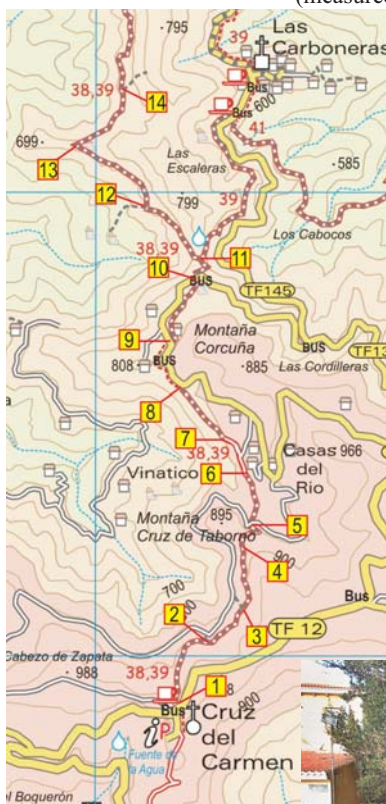


38 CRUZ DEL CARMEN - PUNTA DEL HIDALGO

This adventure takes us through several climate zones and landscape types: Starting in **Cruz del Carmen**, often shrouded in clouds, we walk through a deep *laurisilva* forest, pass along eye-pleasing agriculture plots, to end up in a wild and sun-drenched landscape of jagged basalt crags. There's a natural swimming pool at **Punta del Hidalgo** offering a pleasant, safe dip.



(measured without **Mirador Aguaide** detour)



Access by bus: Most buses from **La Laguna** bus station into the **Anaga** pass through **Cruz del Carmen** giving a good choice for our outward ride (N^os 76, 77, 273, 275). For our return the 50 and 105 run from **Punta del Hidalgo** to **La Laguna/Santa Cruz**.

Access by car: Not suitable for car drivers who could consider our Walk 39 'Cruz del Carmen Circular' adventure (actually a pan-handle).

Each side of **Bar/Rest Cruz del Carmen** are *sendero* boards; we choose the 'PR TF 10: Chinamada 5.3km, Punta del Hidalgo 9.7km' trail (Wp.1 0M). Immediately we're in the laurel forest on a broad woodland path which zigzags down with log-stepped sections (poor GPS reception in the forest).

As the trail levels out we pass a path off to our left (Wp.2 8M), our route curving round a large, steep wooded bowl in the *cumbre* to pass a second path (Wp.3).



Starting out at Wp.1, alongside the stone wall

After a short ascent we resume our inexorable descent through the trees. As

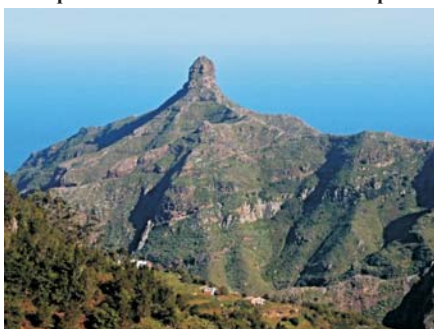
we cross a ridge between two bowls (Wp.4 15M) a fainter walking trail goes straight ahead, while we go down a log-stepped descent into the second bowl. We catch glimpses of a dirt *pista* below us, before dropping onto the *pista* (Wp.5 19M) past a ‘hitching rail’ barring vehicle traffic.

Across the dirt track, a ‘Carboneras, Chinamada, Taborno’ sign points us down a steep trail, dropping down through tight zigzags into a sharp cleft and past a waterpoint, just before crossing the cleft’s boggy watercourse (26M). We head steeply up in a slogging ascent, the gradient easing before we emerge from the forest onto a dirt track to the sight of brightly painted houses above us (Wp.6 28M).

Turning left, we head down the track past a cottage towards a *casita* and electricity pylon set on the next ridge. Ignoring tracks into the fields we keep heading downhill, our track narrowing to a trail (Wp.7). Ignoring a small path running ahead we start climbing steeply up and right to the electricity pylon and the tarmac road (Wp.8 42M).

Roque de Taborno seen from before Wp.10

Taking to the tarmac (NW), we pass a bus stop in the right bend and then, in the left bend, we leave the road at the three dragon trees (Wp.9 44M) on a trail to our right. We stroll along past colourful houses, soon on a narrow rural path to cross a dirt track while heading directly to the trees, before concrete steps take us down past a building onto the road (Wp.10 48M).



Crossing the road we follow the ‘Chinamada, Carboneras’ sign to go down manicured steps and head down the trail beneath a rock/earth cliff. Views open up over a ribbon of tarmac road way below us and across to **Roque de Taborno** in the distance. It’s steeply down to a signed ‘Chinamada, Carboneras’ junction (Wp.11 52M) where we continue ahead on the **Chinamada** path towards the pylon; the right hand trail drops down to **Las Carboneras** (see Walk 39).

Contouring along beside a very steep ridge, we enjoy exceptional views before dropping down into the forest to a junction (Wp.12) where we keep right to climb back to our contouring altitude. We reach a goat farm *casita* sited above caves cut in the golden volcanic rock (Wp.13 67M), an idyllic picnic setting if you’re taking a break.

From the *casita* our path contours round a steep wooded bowl before dropping to pass long-abandoned terraces, then we climb to excellent views on a corner (Wp.14 74M). Again, our route contours across the steep slopes, passing abandoned terraces before topping a crest (Wp.15) (just a few steps to the left off the main trail is another great viewpoint) to find sections of the original boulder-laid *camino real*. Our route crosses to the eastern side of the ridge, a minor path at a small shrine going off to our right (Wp.16 87M), where there’s the opportunity to shortcut if you’re doing Walk 39.



Chinamada in sight ahead



We go straight on, **Chinamada** coming into sight as we descend steadily to a *mirador* viewpoint. Dropping from the *mirador*, our path runs down past a cave with carved seat, to come onto a driveway at the first house and onto the road from **Las Carboneras** (Wp.17 96M) below a small red house.

Bearing left on the road, we stroll down below more cave houses built into a promontory to a parking area adjacent to the gaudily painted village square; on our right **Bar La Cueva** is built into the rock (closed Mon & Tues). For a short diversion starting from behind the plaza (Wp.18 101M) we recommend following the 'Mirador Aguaide' sign to overlook the massive rock eruption out of the *barranco* floor; approx 8 minutes each way.

Walk 39 now leaves us to take the road to Las Carboneras.

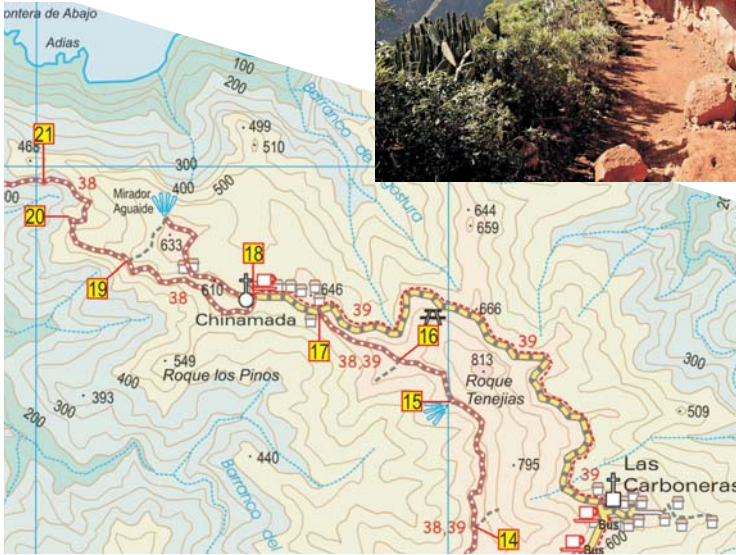
30 metres south-west of the **Chinamada** plaza, we take the broad paved trail ('Punta del Hidalgo 90 min.') to descend on elegant stairs (W) before passing cultivated fields and terraced vines. Soon we leave the cultivation behind to find ourselves in a landscape of eroded basalt crags.

We pass a small *mirador* secured by a railing, and meet a faint path from **Mirador Aguaide** which joins us from the right (Wp.19 113M). Steadily descending on rough bedrock, we have views into the *barranco* as we come to a small *mirador* (Wp.20 121M), from where we have a view of a bizarre rocky bridge, situated on the top of the ridge right in front of us.

Moving on, we negotiate a broad carved stairway under a rock overhang (see photo on next page), and just after a right bend, we find ourselves in front an

Passing under an overhang (after Wp.21)

exposed red-orange colourful rock face (Wp.21 128M).



For the adventurous, an almost invisible turn-off to the right, starting with a traverse of a rocky ledge, leads to the bizarre rocky bridge that tops the ridge above us (10 minutes one way, only for absolutely surefooted walkers, who don't mind potentially getting scratched by cacti and some light scrambling).

We continue our descent to pass another impressive overhang and then a series of carved steps, before coming to a railed *mirador* viewpoint (Wp.22 141M), backed by a huge black-red rock and a natural bench.

Our trail continues along the railing, then swings left (SW) in front of the double-headed **Roque Dos Hermanos** to descend in tight, yet comfortable switchbacks. After passing a series of caves (Wp.23 163M), our trail runs through a gully and soon joins a large dry stone wall, just before climbing down the broad paved stairs into the bed of the *barranco* (Wp.24 186M).

We either turn right to follow the streambed for a short detour to **Playa de los Troches** beach (Wp.25 189M), or directly cross over it to climb out on a track around two industrial buildings onto the driveway of a house. Continuing straight on we pass a barrier to walk beside a banana plantation, before coming to a T-junction (Wp.26 199M), where we bear left.

Just a few metres up the lane we reach a small circular plaza with a bus terminus (Wp.27 201M), from where we can catch a bus back. Or, if there's time, continue along the road for 800 metres, where we find bars and a pastry shop opposite a church and another bus-stop (Wp.28 211M). The sea-water pool is a further 1km down the road.