



SELF-GUIDED PATH

The tunnels that arise from water

THE SOURCES OF MARCOS AND CORDERO

The trail has the following characteristics:

- 9 KM ⇄ Round Trip
- 2 HOURS ⊖ Approximate duration (one-way)
- HIGH — Difficulty

If you hike this trail, it is under your responsibility. It is a dangerous trail, only suitable for expert hikers. The path goes through 13 tunnels, the largest being 347 metres long. Casa del Monte access hours: in Summer until 14:00 hours, and in Winter until 12:30 hours. It is obligatory to wear helmet and proper footwear, torch/flashlight and raincoat, since in the trail there are several areas with slides. There is mobile phone coverage only in Casa del Monte and Espigón Atravesado.

START AND FINISH:

Casa del Monte (although there is a possibility to go down the ravine from the spring of Cordero to Los Tilos)



An island that we must preserve together

PLEASE REMEMBER THE FOLLOWING BEFORE STARTING THIS EXPERIENCE

- Risk of slides and risk of falling, avoid leaning on the rails.
- Do not transit under adverse weather conditions. Use of proper footwear and helmet is mandatory.
- Respect wildlife.
- Do not leave anything that you bring; The environment does not need it.
- Admire it, but please leave what you find.
- Take the other visitors into consideration.



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These texts are only an approximation to the environmental richness of this area. If you wish to receive further information about this or other self-guided paths, as well as about environment education activities, please contact the Environment Insular Service.

LAS NIEVES NATURAL PARK

- ☎ Cabildo de La Palma: 922 423 100
- ☎ Los Tilos Visitor Centre: 922 451 246

OPENING HOURS

- 9:00 - 17:25 (November - February)
- 09:00 - 18:25 (March - October)





» This path goes through one of the frailest and most valuable natural areas in La Palma.

» It is a route associated to water, the most precious resource in an island.

» The stops are specific marked spots which offer you the possibility to know landmarks of interest.

1. EVERYTHING ASSOCIATED TO WATER

La Casa del Monte is a construction associated to the main resource of this area: water. The channel is just beside it, which conducts it towards the hydroelectric power plant of El Mulato. It is the only one still working in the Canary Islands, it is located in the lower area of the gully, near the Visitor Center of Los Tilos and it started functioning in 1955.

2. BETWEEN TWO FORESTS

The start of the path experiences a progressive vegetation change, from the fayal-brezal (with *Myrica faya* and tree heaths) to a pine forest, and this vegetation predominates until reaching the sources. This indicates us that we are above one thousand meters, which is the upper limit of this area. The ecological and landscape richness of this environment made this area the first Biosphere Reserve in the Canary Islands in 1983, spread today throughout the entire island. Both Marcos and Cordero, as well as the forest of Los Tilos are still core areas of the Reserve, of the most important for preservation. It is also a Natural Park, according to the Canary Islands regulations.

3. KEEP THE WATER CLEAN

We will walk beside the water channel. Look at how clean and transparent it is. Leave it that way, try not to dirty it. Do not walk inside the channel or on the border and do not throw litter. As an old Spanish saying says: If you are not going to drink it, leave it alone.

4. THROUGH THE ROCK

The route goes through other twelve tunnels like this one until reaching the sources. These were manually excavated in the live rock in 1900, with the objective of channeling the water from the sources, which, until then, was collected on the lower area of the gully. This made possible a better use of the water, but the willows related to the watercourse of the gully disappeared.

5. A DIKE OF STONE

We have gone through four tunnels so far. Please take a look ahead. See the rock that goes through the slope. It is a volcanic dike. They are formed when the lava stream stuck on older rocks, called bedrocks, cools fast. These are important to explain the direction of previous eruptions and also because, as they are impermeable to water, are associated to underground aquifers.

6. WATER THAT SHAPES THE LANDSCAPE

This gully is still a steep narrow passage. The water falls about 30 meters and it is starting to pierce the hard volcanic rock. This type of shape is known in La Palma as *caboco*, a term associated to the hydraulic technology of mills and the water falls that were forced in order to move through shovels the millstones.

7. THE SOUND OF LIFE

Relax in this flat area between tunnels nine and ten. Hear that sound that although being clear, we cannot see yet where it comes from. It is the force of the source that comes from the rock. Its sound is life and the first sign of the proximity of the sources, whose water has been accompanying us from the beginning of the route.

8. HOW MUCH WATER CAN BE CONTAINED HERE?

This pond had a decisive role in the operation of the channel. It is a construction whose function is to measure the amount of water that goes through it. When people started to make good use of the water from the sources, there were times in which it was necessary to limit excessive volumes of water in order to prevent them from damaging the construction, and here is where the excess was removed. Nowadays it is not used often, due to the decrease of the water volume of Marcos and Cordero.

9. A WET TUNNEL

Put on your raincoat and watch your step. This tunnel is a real water curtain from the source of Marcos. Look at the holes in the tunnel, but do not get close. It is a wonderful spectacle to see the Caldera from inside. The handcrafted work done in the early 1900s to channel the water, with the channel sculpted on the rock is especially interesting.

10. THE ROCK THAT STREAMS WATER

You see before you the greatest spring in the Canary Islands and possibly one of the most beautiful in the archipelago. The waterfalls run by the mountainside, where you can see a vegetation associated exclusively to water. The wall that goes through the tunnel that we just passed is also spectacular. The aquifer of Marcos and the aquifer of Cordero, a little further, stream on this point because there is an impermeable layer underneath which prevents water from coming down. Due to saturation, water comes up from the ground.

11. THE THREE WATERFALLS

The source of Cordero is formed by three waterfalls. You can see more easily the hydrophilic (with strong affinity for water) vegetation associated to the spring. The source of Cordero has a lesser volume of water than the source of Marcos and it is even less spectacular. Take this opportunity to rest, either if you are going to retrace your steps towards La Casa del Monte or if you are going to continue through the gully.