

# Gran Canaria Dive guide

Biosphere Reserve





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Diseño gráfico y maquetación

La Sombra del Guisante S.L.

Ilustraciones, fotografía y textos inmersiones

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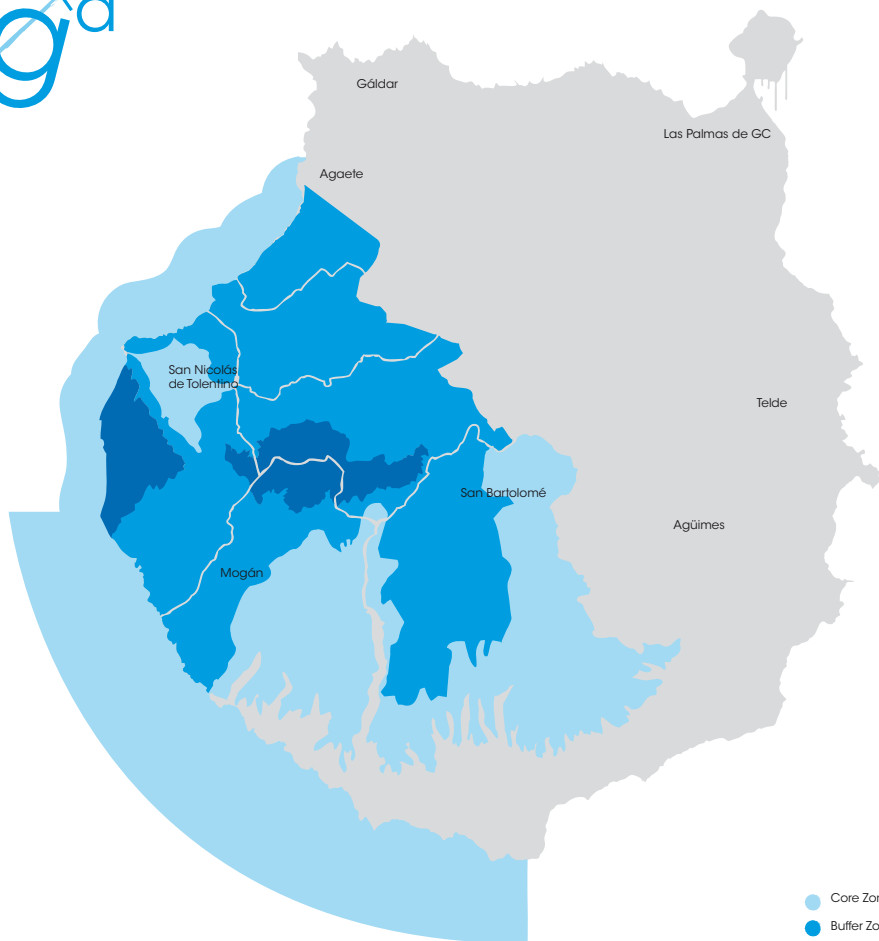
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\* Locations recommended for snorkelling.

Snorkel: diving with mask and breathing tube, without self-contained tanks.

# Gran Canaria Biosphere Reserve

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- Core Zone
- Buffer Zone
- Transition Zone





## Gran Canaria · Biosphere Reserve

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On 29th June 2005, the western part of Gran Canaria was declared a global [Biosphere Reserve](#) in recognition of its high natural and cultural richness.

This declaration also provides recognition to other environmental values such as [the local inhabitants' economic development in harmony with the natural resources or the research activities](#), environmental education and awareness raising activities being carried out.

This declaration does not only represent acknowledgement, it also represents the commitment from both institutions and all the local population to maintain the region's environmental characteristics and to promote the sustainable use of available resources.

The territory's zonal classification is an important characteristic of the [Biosphere Reserve](#) concept. To guarantee the local population's economic and social growth in balance with the natural and cultural values of the reserve it is organised in three basic areas: core zone, buffer zone and transition zone.

The core zone comprises the [Integral Nature Reserve of Inagua](#) and the [Special Nature Reserve of Güi-Güi](#) and the zone's function is fundamentally based on the conservation of the natural values.

The buffer zone is formed by the [Tamabada Natural Park](#), [Pilancones Natural Park](#) and the [Nublo Country Park](#) along with a small 250 ha marine area.

The transition zone occupies the rest of the Reserve territory housing 80% of the population.

The key objective in these areas is to [promote the local population's socio-economic development in harmony and balance with natural resources](#), along with various activities within the ambits of research, training and awareness raising activities.

The territory is renowned for its geological formations, extensive pine forests and high biodiversity, in both flora and fauna. The region also has great cultural richness demonstrated in the multitude of archaeological sites that are present. The population developed significant primary industrial activities in the region which have given rise, through time, to the appearance of traditional population centres.

The marine area makes up 34.7% of the [Biosphere Reserve's](#) total surface area and renowned for its size and its [elevated biodiversity, which includes a very high number of protected species](#).

It is hoped that responsible diving will be promoted in the region; given that the reserve has magnificent diving conditions all year round.

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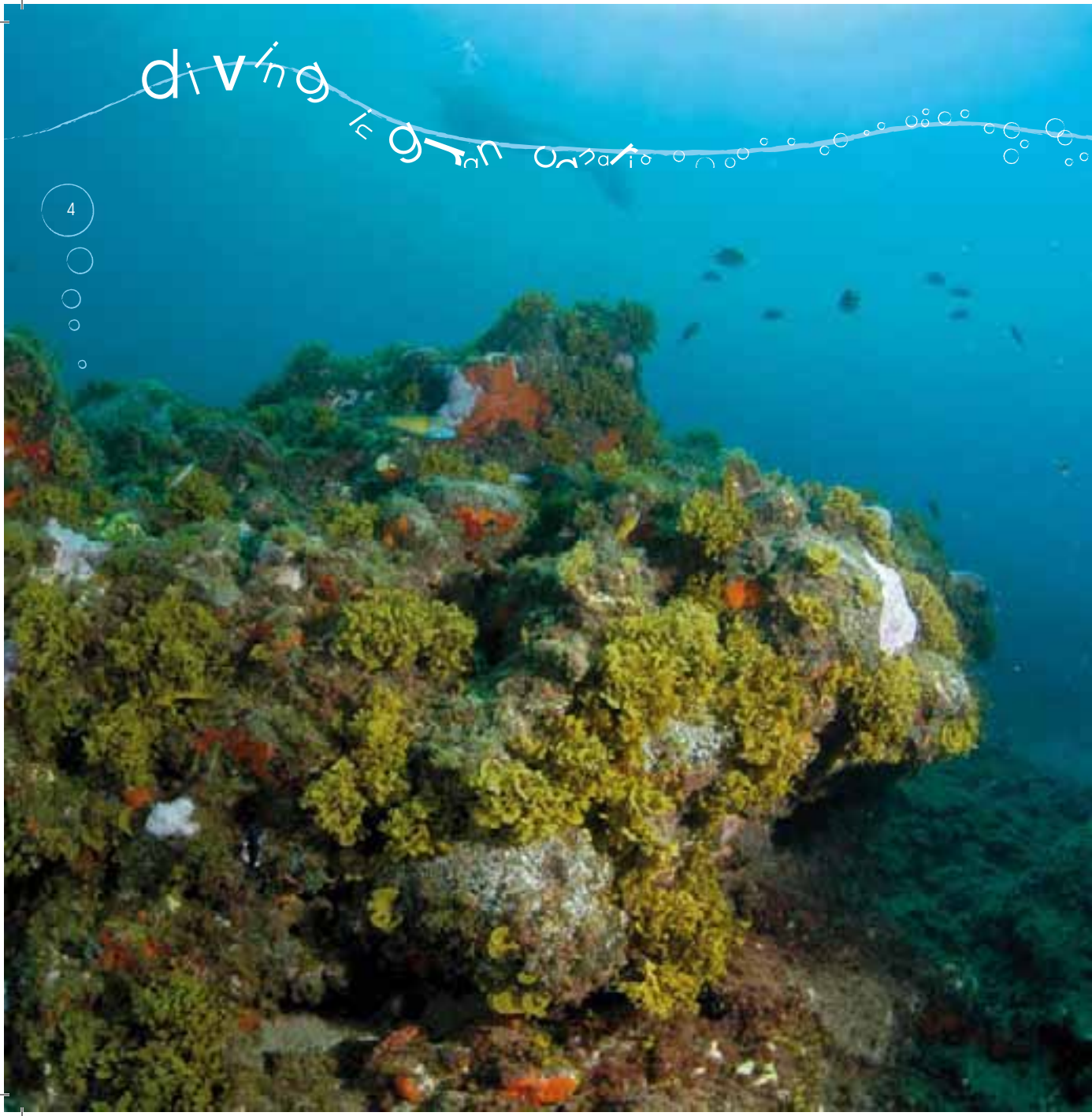
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## Diving in Gran Canaria

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Gran Canaria is an authentic paradise for sea lovers and for those who participate in the whole host of marine and maritime activities.

The water temperature (18° in winter and 22° for the rest of the year), sporting facilities and pleasure marina infrastructures, perfect sea and wind conditions are all favourable characteristics for sailing and for carrying out all kinds of nautical sporting activities through the entire year. In fact, this sub-sector is the most important leisure component for the Island.

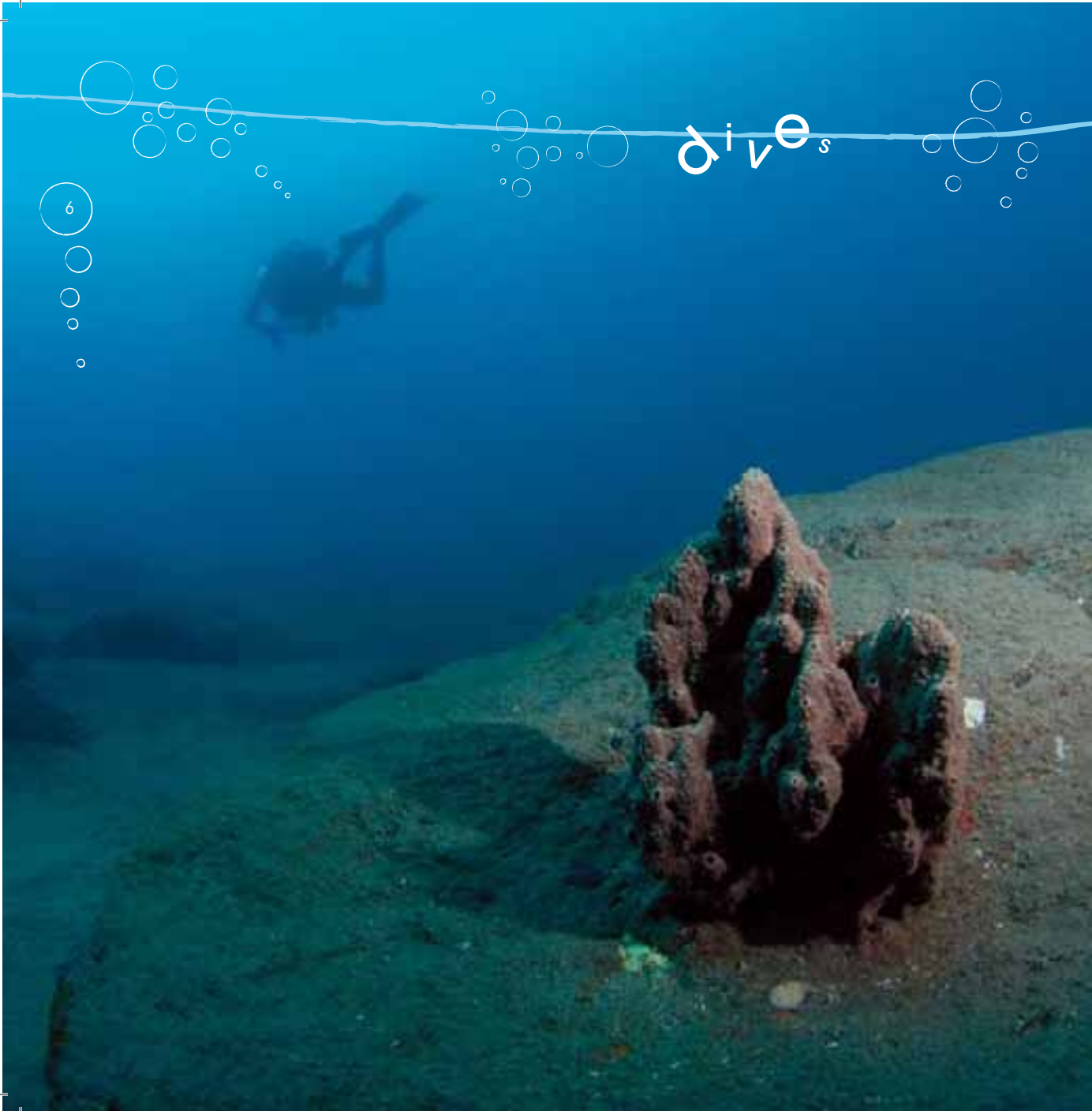
The island's 236 kilometres of coastline provide the best conditions for carrying out all kinds of nautical and water sports. Perfect winds for sailing, prevailing sea currents giving rise to large banks of fish close to the coast, and the amazing sea bed features are the region's key natural advantages. This means that whilst the rest of Europe has to postpone their sea activities during the winter, Gran Canaria is a great sporting resort that is open all year round.

There are endless scuba diving possibilities in Gran Canaria. The Island surprises visitors with the biological and ecological wealth of its marinescape and also for the variety and beauty of its underwater scenery originating from its volcanic origins.

The most interesting areas for diving can be found all around the Gran Canaria coastline, with many virgin coast locations. Lovers of this sport can find many different dive clubs and schools which allow them to participate in basic and advanced courses throughout the year, or join organised dive trips where equipment is provided. On a safety note, Gran Canaria also has two decompression chambers strategically located in the north and south of the island.

dive<sub>s</sub>

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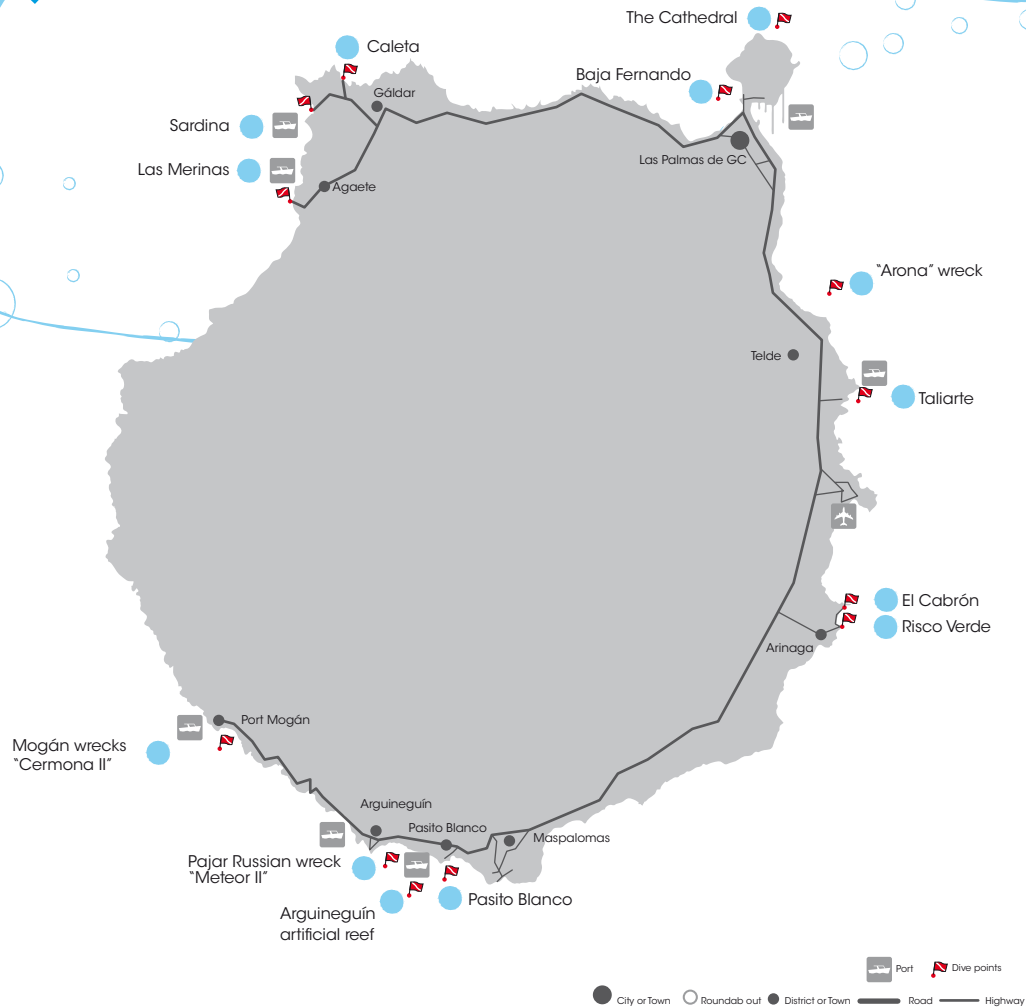
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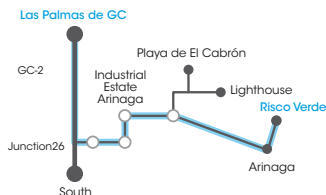
\* Locations recommended for snorkelling.

Snorkel: diving with mask and breathing tube, without self-contained tanks.

# Location map



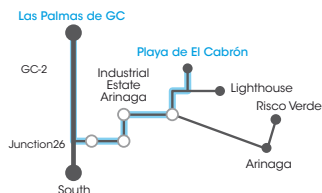
## Location Map



### Risco Verde

From Las Palmas de GC city, take GC-2 highway south to Junction 26, direction Arinaga. Once there, turn left at the first roundabout next to the petrol station. Continue straight on to the coast.

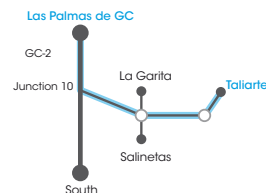
Distance 40 km - Time 45 min



### El Cabrón

From Las Palmas de GC city, take GC-2 highway south to junction 26, direction Arinaga. Once there, turn left at the first roundabout next to the petrol station. Head towards the lighthouse (Faro) until you reach a dirt track that will lead to El Cabrón.

Distance 40 km - Time 45 min



### Taliarte

From Las Palmas de GC, take GC-2 highway south to junction 10, direction Puerto de Taliarte.

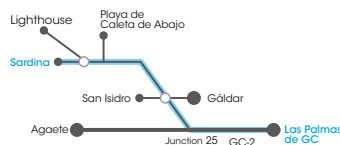
Distance 23 km - Time 30 min



### Caleta Baja

From Las Palmas de GC, take the GC-2 highway towards Agaete to junction 25 (about 28 km) direction Sardina. Having covered around 7 km on windy roads and just before you get to the Sardina roundabout, there is a signpost to the right with the name of the beach.

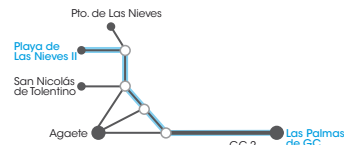
Distance 31 km - Time 45 min



### Sardina

From Las Palmas de GC, take the GC-2 highway towards Agaete to junction 25 (about 28 km) signposted direction Sardina. When you reach the Sardina roundabout, go straight on to the fishing harbour.

Distance 31 km - Time 45 min



### Las Merinas

From Las Palmas de GC, take the GC-2 highway towards Agaete. When you arrive at the first roundabout before entering the village, follow the signs for Puerto de Las Nieves. The dive entry point can be found just to the left of the Playa de Las Nieves II, right next to the old fishing harbour.

Distance 34 km - Time 45 min

## Shore dives

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## Mogán wrecks · "Cermona II"



**Municipality**  
Mogán

**Location**  
In front of the marina

**Access**  
Boat

**Average Depth**  
16 m

**Maximum Depth**  
21 m

**Difficulty**  
Medium

**Currents**  
Moderate

**Estimated time**  
50 min



Leaving from the port of Mogán, known locally as "little Venice", sailing in a south-westerly direction for 5 minutes, we can find the "Cermona II". It is a 32 m fishing vessel with a steel hull, which was sunk in May 2002.

The fishing boat is a complete and very attractive wreck, lying on its side, at a **depth of 20 metres** on a mixed floor of sand and gravel.

**Its main attraction is the chance for divers to safely explore the bridge and the holds.** Taking a peek at the engine-room is always a curious experience, as is having a look in the narrow galley, always taking due care and the relevant precautions.



## Mogán wrecks · "Cermona II"



## From fishing boat to underwater refuge

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The wreck is almost entirely covered with a fine layer of algae and provides shelter for vast number of the island's characteristic *crustacean*, *fish* and *mollusc* species.

You can find old the classic *vieja*, the only *indigenous parrot fish* in the Canaries. *Roncadores* or *grunts*, *trumpet-fish*, the different *damselfish*, *bream*, *moray eels* and the odd *grouper*; will make the perfect dive for any enthusiast; and with a bit of luck, you might even see some *pelagic fish* such as *amber jacks*, *mackerel* or other *tuna* species.

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## Pajar Russian wreck, "Meteor II"



## Municipality

San Bartolomé de Tirajana

## Location

El Pajar

## Access

Boat

## Average Depth

17 m

## Maximum Depth

22 m

## Difficulty

Low

## Currents

Sheltered

## Estimated time

45 min



At no more than 10 minutes from the Pasito Blanco leisure port in the area known as "El Pajar", lies the wreck of "Meteor II", a Russian-built hydrofoil that had been used principally for tourism.

This is an accessible dive for people who do not need to be advanced divers; the small boat is **30m long** and **8m wide** and was sunk in 2003. It has become an attractive wreck and offers a very satisfying dive.

The wreck is almost intact and sits in its upright sailing position. It is surprising as much for its **unusual "Star Wars" design**, as for the vast amount of marine life that shelters in or around it. Divers can go in through the boarding door and visit almost everywhere from the seating area to the toilets, a privilege few wrecks can offer.

As throughout the zone, *roncadore grunts* shoal in huge banks around "Meteor II". *Stingrays* and *angelsharks* accompany the other resident species helping make this a **dive full of curiosities**.



Pajar Russian wreck, "Meteor II"



Come aboard a curious hydrofoil

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## Arguineguín artificial reef



**Municipality**

Mogán

**Location**

Opposite Montaña Arena

**Access**

Boat

**Average Depth**

20 m

**Maximum Depth**

23 m

**Difficulty**

Medium

**Currents**

Sheltered

**Estimated time**

40 min



Opposite the "Montaña Arena" beach at a depth of 23m on a sandy sea-bed, there are a large number of concrete structures that make up the [artificial reef](#). There are 4 modules which together help promote the proliferation of all the different species. The artificial reef was created in 1991 by the Canaries government under the supervision

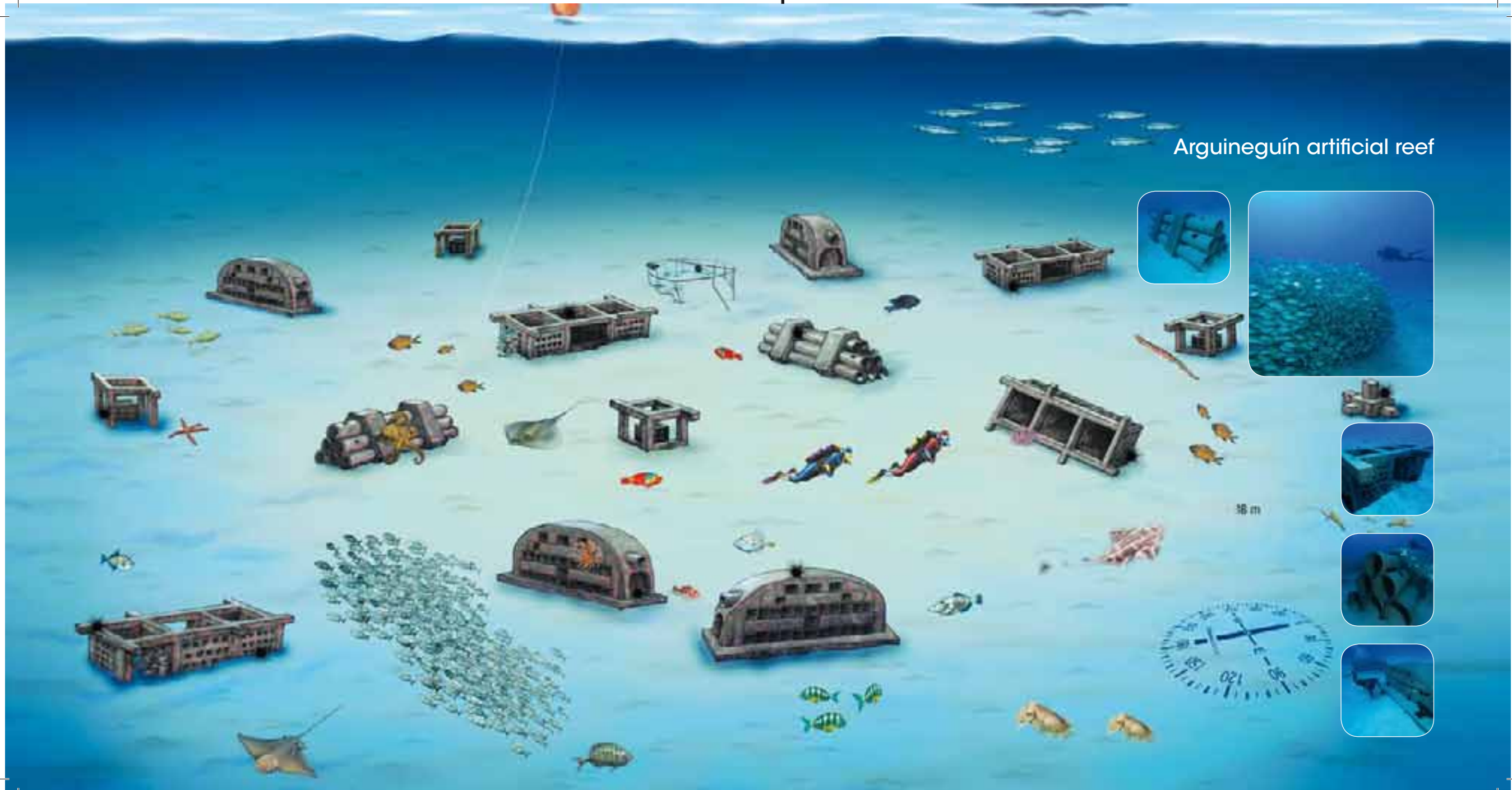
and monitoring of the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria.

The most surprising feature among the great amount of sealife to be found is the vast bank of [grunts](#) or [roncadores](#) as they are locally known. It is difficult not to want go through the curtain of fish over and over again. On the sandy bed in between the different modules divers can see the timid little [sand-eels](#), and if they look closely following trails in the sand then they might find [angel-sharks](#), [rays](#) and [electric rays](#).

You can't go away without exploring every last corner, where you'll find everything from [moray eels](#) and [alfonsinos](#), to [octopus](#) and [comber](#). Finally on the ascent to the surface, you can come face to face with the big [barracudas](#).



## Arguineguín artificial reef



Take in an exhibition full of life

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## Pasito Blanco



### Municipality

San Bartolomé de Tirajana

### Location

Pasito Blanco

### Access

Boat

### Average Depth

15 m

### Maximum Depth

19 m

### Difficulty

Low

### Currents

Medium

### Estimated time

50 min

This dive site can be found 5 minutes due south from the Pasito Blanco leisure port, this dive zone presents a rectangular platform **just over 60m** long and about **16m wide**. On the sandy bed surrounding this basaltic table, it is not uncommon to find *angel-sharks*, *rays* and *stingrays*.

The tongue of rock is built up of many layers of lava and they gradually lose height as they progress northwards from the max height of 17m at its highest point.





Pasito Blanco



## Glide over a lunar landscape

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A visit to Pasito Blanco to explore all the nooks and crannies can reveal a whole variety of surprises. It is not uncommon to be greeted by the toothy smile of [moray eels](#) or [spiny puffer fish](#) awaiting nightfall. [Roncadores or grunts](#) unsuccessfully try to go unnoticed as they team and mill around. [A peacock worm demonstrates the beautiful and yet fragile nature of the reef environment.](#)

Divers shouldn't forget to look out into the "deep blue" as this is a zone where the [pelagic](#) fish pass by such as the rapid [tunids](#) and maybe even a formidable [amberjack](#).

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## Risco Verde



**Municipality**  
Agüimes

**Location**  
Arinaga

**Access**  
Shore dive

**Average Depth**  
17 m

**Maximum Depth**  
22 m

**Difficulty**  
Low

**Currents**  
Sheltered

**Estimated time**  
50 min

Risco Verde can be found at the north end of Arinaga beach, on the outer limits of the future [Arinaga Marine Reserve](#) and close to the [El Cabrón beach](#).

This is an ideal dive for those who want a peaceful dive full of small fish. The entry and exit are fairly easy from a ladder on the sea wall itself.







On the far left of the bay, the closest to the coast and at a very shallow depth one can find a [region of crevices and holes gouged into the rock](#), totally covered in a [seaweed blanket](#) of different species of algae. Once divers arrive at the fringe zone at the edge of the sands, they can enjoy an environment full of small fish such as [damsel fish](#), nibbling [parrotfish](#) or colourful [guelde](#) fry that abound in the area.



With a little luck, divers might even see an [angelshark](#) or [stingray](#). This is a [simple dive that can be done at night](#), recommendable for all levels, easy access and a [rich abundance of marine life](#).

## El Cabrón



### Municipality

Agüimes

### Location

Playa de El Cabrón (Arinaga)

### Access

Shore dive

### Average Depth

19 m

### Maximum Depth

22 m

### Difficulty

Average

### Currents

Frequent

### Estimated time

45 min



In the rugged coastal zone of the Agüimes municipality [one of the best dive sites on the Island](#) can be found, right next to Playa de El Cabrón. The richness of marine life in the area is so great that it has been nominated to be included in the future [Arinaga Marine Reserve](#). It is a very attractive dive for those who love the world beneath the waves.

At a depth of 12m a rocky platform marks a 23m drop-off which comprises the El Cabron reef front where the [highest concentration of different species can be found](#).

At the base of the reef front there are abundant caves and crevices which shelter [drum](#), some [brotula](#) and [big-eyes](#). In front of the reef face there is a large sandy plain where the [red-mullet](#), [striped sea bream](#) and a popular zone for [roncadores](#) or [barred grunts](#) in huge banks of fish typical of El Cabrón.

All along the reef front it is common to see specimens of [groupers](#) and [island-groupers](#). The numerous crevices are also the ideal home for [moray eels](#). Nevertheless, the most spectacular sight by far can be seen in the middle of the water column where groups of [barracuda](#) and [amber jacks](#) can be seen.







The highest concentration of sensations

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## Taliarte



### Municipality

Telde

### Location

Taliarte

### Access

Shore dive

### Average Depth

5 m

### Maximum Depth

8 m

### Difficulty

Low

### Currents

None

### Estimated time

50 min

It is a very simple dive, with easy shore access and a depth that is never greater than 8m.

Between the harbour-mouth of Taliarte and Melenara beach there is an interesting rocky zone formed by a small reef-front, whose upper part is covered by a dense meadow of seagrass. This converts the zone into a [nursery area for a great many species](#) such as [salemas](#), [parrotfish](#), [peacock wrasse](#) etc.



Search the reef-face and surprise yourself

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A variety of invertebrates such as *octopus* and *spider crabs* can also be found in the zone, along with *anemones* and *coneshells* etc. In the zone around the entry channel to the port of Taliarte there is another attractive dive: it is a small *seagrass meadow*, which is ideal for those who are interested in *invertebrates* and *small fish*.

This is a good bet for a first dive or for a night dive, the night dives allow divers to see *rock-lobsters*, *sea cucumbers*, open *jewel anemones* and even *squid* that come up to shallower waters at night to feed.

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## "Arona" wreck



**Municipality**  
Las Palmas de G.C.

**Location**  
Bocabarranco

**Access**  
Boat

**Average Depth**  
27 m

**Maximum Depth**  
36 m

**Difficulty**  
Low

**Currents**  
Sheltered

**Estimated time**  
45 min



In 1972, a fire in the engine-rooms sent this giant vessel, 110m long, to the bottom of the sea close to the desalination plant for Las Palmas, where it now lies on its starboard side. The depth of the dive site varies from between 24 and 36 metres.

The wreck is in a relatively good condition as its **whole hull is still intact, along with a lot of the decking**. Although it is a large wreck, it can be explored in a single dive.



The hull has a great deal of incrustation, and both *red and yellow gorgonian fan coral* can be found at various points. A number of other interesting creatures can be found hiding away in the dark interior such as *small corals* and *jewel anemones*.

In the higher reaches of the wreck, circling the turrets there are almost always *great banks of pelagic* fish such as *bogues*. These are usually accompanied by the odd group of *barracuda* or *amber jacks*.

Large groups of *roncadores* or grunts and *besugo* swim around the hull, while *red-mullet* can be found feeding freely on the sea bed.



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## The Cathedral



### Municipality

Las Palmas de G.C.

### Location

La Isleta

### Access

Boat

### Average Depth

17 m

### Maximum Depth

22 m

### Difficulty

Low

### Currents

Sheltered

### Estimated time

45 min



The dive is to be found at 20 minutes from the leisure port of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, just in front of the "Peninsula del Nido". This spectacular dive is [renowned for its breathtaking scenery](#).

The dive begins with a [large cave](#) that has a [10m siphon](#) in its upper reaches. The outer walls of the cave drop to 45.50 metres.





## A natural monument to world beneath the waves

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During a tour of the Cathedral, divers come across a series of immense vaulted arches so that there are always a number of different ways out and this in turn creates a seascape of shadows and shafts of light. The rest of the dive is made up of a series of passageways and caves.

The fauna of the zone is made up of *sea-urchins*, *sea-slugs*, *prawns* and small fish such as *bogues*, *wrasse*, *comber*, etc. In all the views out to the deep, with a little bit of luck divers will get to see passing *pelagic* fish such as *amberjacks*, *barracuda*, etc.



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## Baja Fernando



### Municipality

Las Palmas de G.C.

### Location

La Isleta

### Access

Boat

### Average Depth

15 m

### Maximum Depth

30 m

### Difficulty

Low

### Currents

Sheltered

### Estimated time

45 min

This is a boat access dive as it is located very close to Confital bay. It is a submerged bar at a depth of between 15-30m.

The sedimentary materials that make up the bar are extremely eroded and have now become *spectacular formations of outstanding beauty*. Divers can find *arches*, *passages*, *overhangs* and *cornices*. The seabed is very irregular and shelters a wide and interesting array of fauna.





## A labyrinth sculpted out of basalt

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Specimens of *giant jewel anemones* can be found and at night *orange ball anemones* can also be found. There are numerous *sea urchins* and the fish are represented by different *breem* species, a few *dogfish*, and with a little bit of luck, maybe even the odd *eagle ray*. However the most striking feature of this dive is by far the *underwater scenery*.



## Caleta Baja



### Municipality

Gáldar

### Location

Playa de Caleta de Abajo

### Access

Shore dive

### Average Depth

12 m

### Maximum Depth

18 m

### Difficulty

Average

### Currents

Sheltered

### Estimated time

50 min



In the Caleta de Abajo beach, on the north-west coast of the island and very close to Sardina, divers can find [one of the most spectacular dives on Gran Canaria, Caleta Baja](#). It is a very simple dive although a little dexterity is required on entry and exit.

The [great diversity of marine life](#) to be found is outstanding, as much for the variety as for the quantity. Depending on the time of year and the state of the sea, divers can experience things they will ever forget and that will be difficult to better such as waltzing with [manta rays](#) or being surprised by a [shoal of horse mackerel](#). The big cave with its host [bank of grunts](#) and the nearby deep cut are, amongst others, two key features for divers to visit. All of this, within the chains of sinuous canyons that disappear into the sandy bed, where white sand is incessantly pounded by the ocean and gently covers the [basking angel sharks](#) and [rays](#).







A show you will want to see again

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## Sardina



### Municipality

Gáldar

### Location

Sardina beach and harbour

### Access

Shore dive

### Average Depth

12 m

### Maximum Depth

18 m

### Difficulty

Low

### Currents

Sheltered

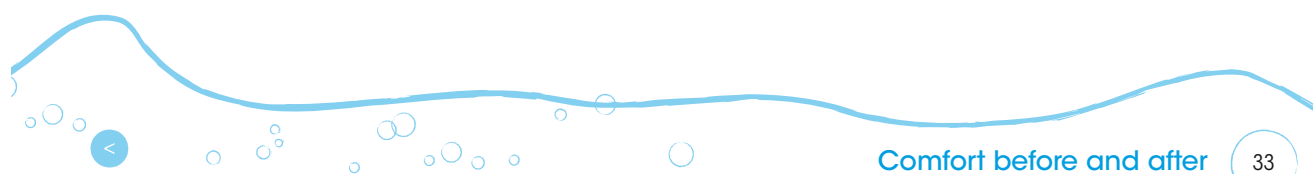
### Estimated time

50 min

One of the most frequently visited dive sites can be found in the Sardina area of Gáldar. It is a huge bay [sheltered from the ocean's relentless onslaught](#) and the force of the wind, ideal for an initiation to diving, for [lovers of submarine photography](#) and for [night dives](#).

A swimming tour that starts on the small sandy beach out to the last dock which allows divers to ready themselves comfortably. Access and egress to the water is incredibly easy from a ladder on one of the harbour walls.





### Comfort before and after

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Sea horses, amberjacks, angel sharks, sting rays, butterfly rays, grunts, horse mackerel, bream, sand eels, giant jewel anemones and an almost endless etc., are the almost daily local visitors and inhabitants of the Sardina dive.

Searching amongst the reef-face for species such as *sponge fish* becomes a fun game. And the ever alert *barracuda* and *bogues* often offer a spectacle worth watching.

When it's time to go home, there is nothing better after a dip in the sea than to recharge your batteries in one of the seafront restaurants.



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## Las Merinas



#### Municipality

Agaña

#### Location

Playa de Las Nieves

#### Access

Shore dive

#### Average Depth

7 m

#### Maximum Depth

12 m

#### Difficulty

Low

#### Currents

Sheltered

#### Estimated time

50 min



Divers can find a group of rocks that appear on the surface called Las Merinas as they enter the water from the left hand side of the beach, just a few metres from the base of the natural monument that was known locally as "God's Finger"

A chain of passageways and interconnecting canyons make this dive an authentic delight.

Having a look in amongst the

rock-walls, divers will find a great quantity of small coral, along with spectacular giant anemones along with their inseparable *scarlet cleaner shrimps*. Sometimes at nightfall, *stingrays* and other *rays* appear on the prowl for any small fish to satiate their appetites.

Once there was a colony of *gorgonian fan corals*, but unfortunately due to the actions of a few trophy hunters, it was.







Incredibly easy and very enjoyable

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# Dive centres and diving clubs

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## Dive Centres and Diving Clubs

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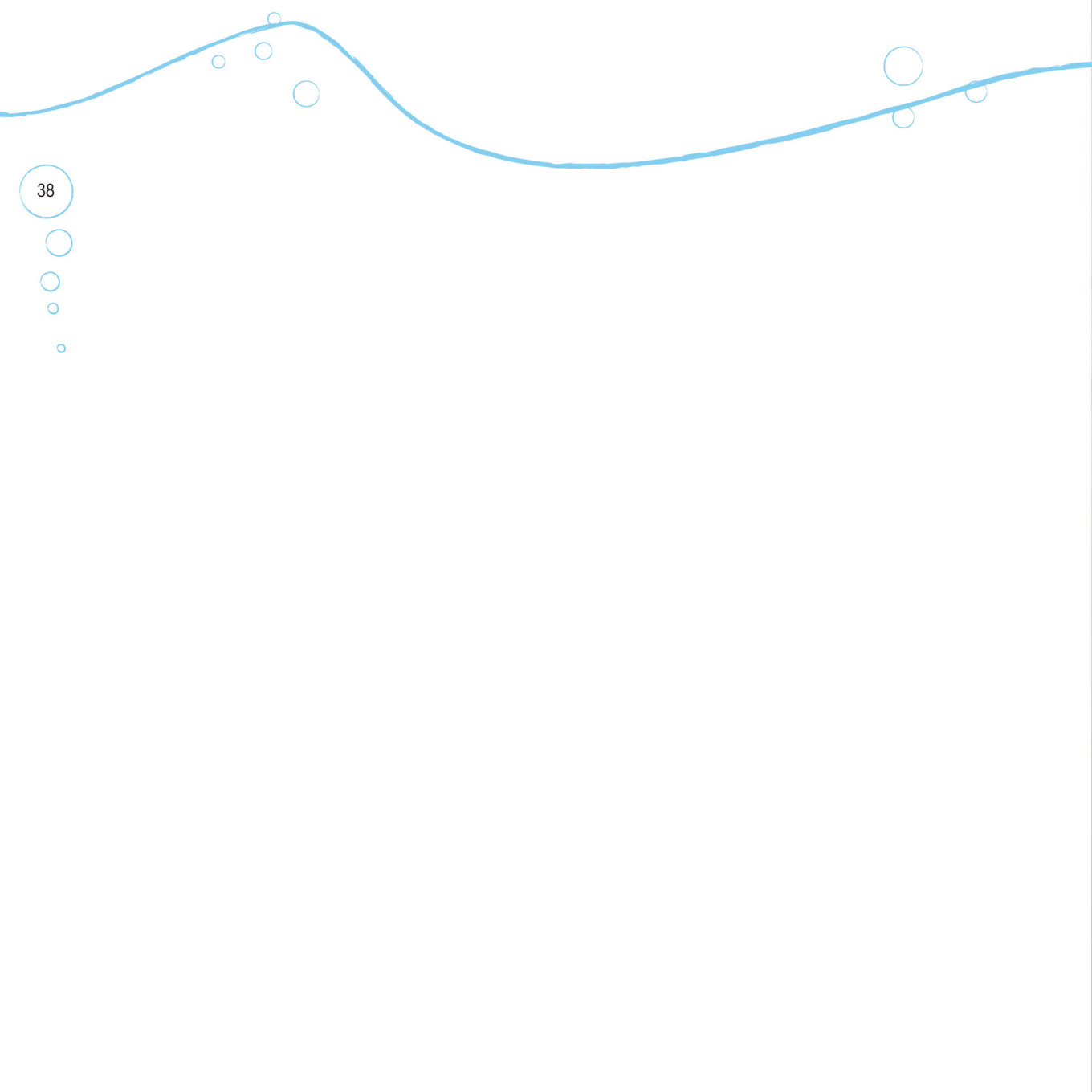


Diving and other underwater leisure activities in the Canary Islands have experienced a continuous and steady increase in recent years, especially thanks to the [great attraction that the waters and seabed offer to divers](#) drawing them beneath the waves.

These natural resources have enormous environmental value and richness, and their conservation and continuity for future generations must be guaranteed through [respectful use and activity in the environment](#). Nevertheless, this activity bears obvious significant human risks as it is carried out

in an alien environment, that can become particularly dangerous depending on the depths being reached.

On the other hand, [continual technological innovations provide divers with a greater degree of autonomy and freedom of movement](#) which in turn implies a greater risk. In effect, spending a length of time below the surface at a determined depth exposes the human body to a clear danger which can be reduced if divers possess both the correct aptitude and knowledge, along with the material means and techniques required.





# Gran Ajá





## Gran Canaria

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### Discover a *Great Continent*

With its volcanic origins, the most emblematic characteristic of Gran Canaria is its roundness and diversity of landscape.

This landscape diversity becomes one of the principal attractions of the island and gives rise to the nickname "*Miniature Continent*".

In just one day it is possible to go from the *warm coast with beaches* and crystalline waters, to *temperate medianias* (a name given in the Canary Islands to the zones between the coast and the higher areas), cross *subtropical valleys and forests* or climb the mountain peaks. The island is divided into *32 protected natural areas* which provide an interesting demonstration of the island's natural diversity.



### *At a Perfect Temperature*

Mild summers, and warm winters; a **springtime climate, 12 months of the year**, with an average temperature of 24°, the **warm waters and gentle winds** thanks to the presence of trade winds are a perfect invitation for leisure activities - **an ideal climate for sports all year round**. It is no surprise that many of the sporting elite choose Gran Canaria for their training programmes at any time of the year.

The welcoming climate influences the open and friendly character of the Gran Canarians who enjoy open-air terraces, fiestas and music-cultural festivals.







### Live a *Culture*

A bridge between three continents, Gran Canaria has been witness to the greatest adventure in history: The discovery of the New World. Our legacy as a stop off point for travellers is reflected in the open, *cosmopolitan and multicultural character of the Island*. Cities and towns with over 500 years of history, reflect *colonial architecture and century-old traditions* that mark our solid Atlantic identity.

Tourism on Gran Canaria is as varied as the island itself. *Its natural enchantment, its "living history" and cultural & festival activity; all of these cocooned in the excellent springtime climate that reigns 365 days a year, guaranteeing unforgettable holidays for all its visitors.*

[www.grancanaria.com](http://www.grancanaria.com)



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