

## A World Biosphere Reserve Island

Fuerteventura, was declared by Unesco as a World Biosphere Reserve for all of its island territory and its surrounding waters, and has a surface area of more than 350,000 hectares where to loose yourself. Natural monuments and parks, rural areas, and landscapes, living witnesses of its volcanic origin such as the badlands, where there are a variety of plants and indigenous fauna of immeasurable value. These are protected with a lot of effort, through the many environmental projects, such as the reintroduction of the *Caretta-Caretta* turtle, or the conservation plans of species such as the guirre or the bustard. Choose your way of discovering these unique places: on foot through the recently created network of paths that cover the island from end to end, on bicycle, on the back of a camel... or simply allow yourself to be taken because each place is a treasure.

## Volcanic heritage

Each corner of the island's geography is dependent on Fuerteventura's volcanic origin. A process that finds its origin more than 20 million years ago, and which makes it the oldest island in the Canary Islands archipelago. So many years of the never-ending caress of the trade winds has determined all its landscape and makes Majorera nature a unique spectacle. Where millions of years ago there were woods, today there is a sea of sand dunes; the rocky formations of yesterday, many metres below ground, today flower on the surface.

Each landscape, each stone, each living being that inhabits the island and even the taste of the produce that is grown on its land, have the volcano's seal engraved on them.

## Flora and Fauna

Fuerteventura surprises us by its astonishing flora and fauna. Its skies are crossed by the best representation of bird fauna in the Canary Islands, with an important number of nesting species such as the guirre and the Houbara Bustard, sub-endemic species of the Canary Islands together with other migratory birds, which make use of its virgin coasts as a stopping place and watering hole.

On land among the mammals we find donkeys, Majorero camels and the indigenous Majorera goat as recognised by scientists, who roam freely all over the Island and can be blamed for Fuerteventura producing a delicious goat's cheese which has won many awards in the world: the Majorero cheese. In the sea, the volcanic formations of the island's seabeds are home to more than 390 species of unique marine creatures.

In the emerged area we find flora, which seems highly unusual due to the desert dominance and arid landscapes, but they really make up a rich variety of unique species adapted to the arid climatic conditions. However what really stands out are palm groves forming authentic oases, clumps of tamarisks, gorse and tabaibas or euphorbias like the *Jandia cardon*, which is endemic in the south of the island. All of them remind us that all over the territory we are facing a landscape created by itself due to the lack of rain and thousands of years of erosion.

The sea that surrounds the island is a real paradise for cetaceans with more than 22 species of dolphins, whales and beaked whales, together with different turtle species, highlighting the *caretta-caretta*.

## Patronato de Turismo de Fuerteventura

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# Tourism



Vega de Río Palmas



Aloe Vera



Montaña Roja



Aiyú



Cofete



## Protected nature and that protects us

Fuerteventura's natural wealth has meant that the island has a lot of protection. From the Natural Parks and Monuments to Places of Scientific Interest they try to save the best of the island: its natural environment.

**Natural Park on the islet of Lobos:** Separated from the island by a small body of water, it is home to very valuable habitats, in a magnificent state of conservation where there is no lack of endemic species, exclusive species and paleontological sites. We must highlight the presence of the endemic evergreen (*Limonium ovalifolium canariensis*). This was also the last place in the Canary Islands where the monk seals, also called marine wolves lived, which explains the island's name, and has been declared as a Special Protection Area for Birds (ZEPA)

**Corralejo Natural Park:** Its field of sand dunes has a great scientific interest, and the area itself makes up an exceptional landscape containing the habitat for numerous species adapted to the desert. It is a Special Protection Area for Birds (ZEPA)

**Jandía Natural Park:** Nearly 15,000 hectares of surface area, which hold the majority of the island's endemic vegetation, species that are listed in catalogues under the level of threatened or protected. But the most unique things are its virgin landscapes, such as the majestic spectacularly beautiful Cofete Beach, which represents one of the most valuable and specific examples of Canary island nature. It is a Special Protection Area for Birds (ZEPA)

**Betancuria Rural Park:** It is made up from a beautiful landscape, formed by valleys and ravines, massive boulders and plants where rupicolous species take refuge. It contains a deposit of ocean sediment and extinct marine fossils of immeasurable scientific value. It is a Special Protection Area for Birds (ZEPA)

**Malpaís de La Arena Natural Monument:** It came about from volcanic eruptions ten thousand years ago, and is defined as a place of scientific, geologic, geomorphologic interest with great aesthetic value. It has the largest populations of Canarian tarabilla, a small bird that is indigenous to the island, and of unique plants such as tabaibas or lichen.

**Tindaya Mountain Natural Monument:** It is one of the most emblematic elements of the Fuerteventura landscape, due to its geological, scientific, archaeological and cultural interest. It has many rare endemic species, and its summit is home to more than 300 "podomorfos" engravings by Aborigines that inhabited the island.

**Los Cuchillos de Vigán Natural Monument:** This is made up from points of incredible unique beauty where guirre, the fishing eagle and the Berber falcon shelter. It also has examples of fossilized marine fauna.

**Caldera de Gairía Natural Monument:** A volcanic cone that is the result of recent volcanic activity, of great botanical interest as despite its aridity, it has large populations of tabaiba. There are also archaeological sites in the interior of the crater. icos.

**Monumento Natural de Montaña Cardón:** The mountain mass of Cardón Mountain is a structure represented by a steep relief carved by erosion. Its floral wealth in rupicolous species, the majority of which are protected, gives it great scientific value.

**Ajui Natural Monument:** Located inside Betancuria Rural Park, its main interest comes from the vast deposit of old materials, ocean sediments and fossils of extinct marine animals. The Ajui caves make up a spot of great landscape beauty on the island.

**Protected Landscape of Malpaís Grande:** A field of lava formed by a complex volcanic process of great scientific value. Its skies are crossed by birds of prey such as the guirre, buzzard or crow and tucked away in its interior it has an Aboriginal town, La Ataliyita. It is a Special Protection Area for Birds (ZEPA)

**Protected Landscape of Vallebrón:** Represents a geomorphological relief unit in knife form that is very characteristic of Fuerteventura and that has been transformed by Man with its innumerable terraces. On its most eastern side it is home to the Muda mountain, which at 690m is one of the highest peaks on the island.

**Playa del Matorral Site of Scientific Interest:** It is a flooded marsh ecosystem with rich flora halophyte (salt marshes) of high scientific value due to their diversity and is sporadic home to migratory seabirds that use it as a resting place. It is Special Protection Area for Birds (ZEPA)

## Activity in nature

The warmth that envelops Fuerteventura throughout the year makes its the ideal place to take part in activities in an environment where nature plays the main role. Discover the island, from point to point, in the most natural way.

### Trekking

Fuerteventura currently has a newly opened network of trails, which takes in 255 kilometres of paths throughout the island to be able to walk on foot, an opportunity to get to know the island's best landscape, natural, historical and cultural qualities. Of the 255 kilometres, 153 form part of the GR 131, a part of the Grand Tour that crosses the island from north to south, from Corralejo to Punta de Jandía, in a total of nine stages.

A series of paths of Small Tour (PR) and Local Trails (SL), complete the framework that reaches nearly all corners of Fuerteventura. A very valuable spectacle.

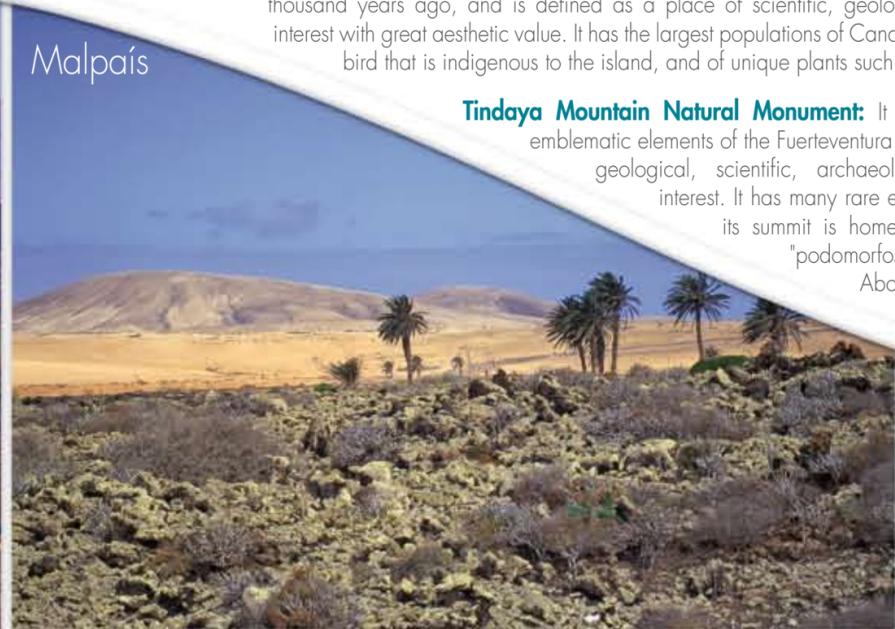
### Bird watching

The island's status as a crossing and nesting point for a great variety of birds, makes Fuerteventura an extraordinary place for bird watching. The island has various "hides" located in the wetlands most used by the birds, such as Catalina García pool or los Molinos dam, from where you can see unique flocks of ducks that periodically invade the Majorero skies.

Volcanoes



Malpaís



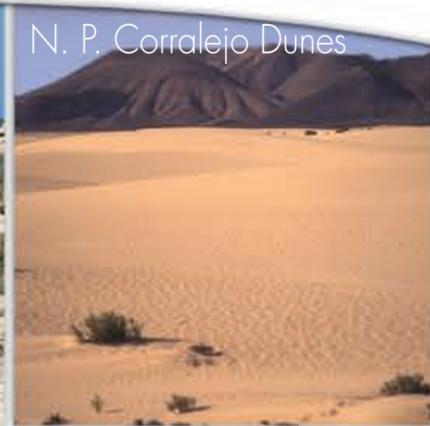
Guirre



Majorera goat



N. P. Corralejo Dunes



La Alkogida Ecomuseum



Lobos Island



Tindaya Mountain



Caretta-caretta turtle



Cardón

