



SELF-GUIDED PATH

# Espigón Atravesado

## A lookout traversing the mist

### LOS TILOS

This route allows us to visit the laurel forest of Los Tilos and its other great richness, water, which is present throughout the entire route. The route ends at one of the most beautiful lookouts in La Palma, Espigón Atravesado (the Traversed Hill Lookout).

The trail has the following characteristics:

5 KM ⇄ Round Trip

90 - 120 MIN. ☉ Approximately

LOW — Difficulty

This trail goes through the forest path that runs parallel to the ravine. Start and finish: La Portada. It is a round trip over the same route.



# An island that we must preserve together

## PLEASE REMEMBER THE FOLLOWING BEFORE STARTING THIS EXPERIENCE

- Use the proper gear, avoiding transit during meteorological alerts.
- Stay in the main trail, and do not lean on rails.
  - 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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MINISTERIO DE AGRICULTURA Y PESCA, ALIMENTACIÓN Y MEDIO AMBIENTE



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 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 allows you to know the main nature and culture values of the environment of the recreational area.

» Its difficulty is low and you only need about one hour and thirty minutes to walk it.

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

## 1. THE FAÇADE OF BIODIVERSITY

This place is called La Portada (The Façade) because it was the access to the Property of el Canal and Los Tiles, which in 1983 formed the first Biosphere Reserve in the Canary Islands and today is spread throughout the entire island. The first trees of the laurel forest that we can find are in the right margin of the path.

## 2. WATER, WATER, COMING FROM THE CLOUDS!

The two devices located beside the path measure water. Those are a rain gauge and a hygrometer, which measure rainfall and atmospheric humidity, respectively. This is conditioned by the sea of clouds, which is the fog layer moved by the wind against the trees and which produces the horizontal wind. This produces thousands of droplets that the evergreen leaves of the trees intercept and lead to the ground.

## 3. A TUNNEL FOR WATER

This tunnel was built by the middle of last century to allow the forest exploitation of this estate. Until it was bought by the State, the Channel and Los Tiles were chopped down by areas to make the most of the wood, and flocks of sheep and goats grazed on what today are the laurel forests. The tunnel is also a passing area for the channel, which transports the water from La Laguna de Barlovento to the tropical crops of Valle de Aridane and the south of the island.

## 4. GIVING NATURE A HAND

This small fish farm has helped recover some endemic species, exclusive from La Palma, whose populations were very small in the environment. We have helped Nature preserve some of its treasures. The upper area of the fish farm is today a laurel area in good condition, but about fifty years ago there were potato plantations, which were grown when the estate was exploited. It is a sample of the recovery ability of Nature.

## 5. A CHANNEL EXCAVATED BY WATER

The narrowing of the gully channel shows us the force of the water. It has gradually excavated this deep narrow passage. La Palma is a relatively young island, and that is why the gullies are still narrow and deep. Not enough time has passed for the gullies to widen, as tens of thousands of years are required for this.

## 6. HOW MUCH WATER WOULD CORRESPOND TO US?

This construction was a water weigher. Its function was to measure the volume of water coming from a water gallery located in the upper section of the gully. Each owner was entitled to a certain amount of water and the weigher had to determine how much would correspond to them: it “weighed” the water that corresponded to each owner in accordance with the number of their shares.

## 7. THE LOADING AREA FOR WOOD AND COAL

This plain played an important role during the time in which the estate was used for wood exploitation. Trunks arrived to this plain and were loaded into wagons. There were funiculars coming from the laterals of the gully that transported the wood. The most important thing today are the til trees. The til tree is graceful, with a wide top, which can reach a height of 30 meters. It's almost elliptical leaves have a shiny green color and its fruit has a size of around 3 centimeters, a brownish-grey color and its heart exhales a smelly odor that is lost once dry and which gives the name to the species, *Ocotea foetens*. The til tree is more predominant in the darker depths of the gully, with high wetness on the soil, as it happens on this plain terrain.

## 8. A WATER MINE

This construction is of a gallery, the system used in La Palma to extract water from the aquifers. To that end, the rock is pierced until reaching an impermeable dike. If there is an aquifer behind, once pierced through, an artificial underground spring will be created, which will provide water as long as that aquifer is loaded. In the construction next to the mouth of the gallery the motor that was used to make this water mine operative, to introduce air for the cabuqueros (the gallery workers) and to contribute to the piercing action is located.

## 9. A CHANGING FOREST

At this point we will notice that the vegetation landscape around us has been changing. We are now in a more exposed area of the gully, and the laurel forest has given way to the *fayal-breza* (with *Myrica faya* and tree heaths), which is the other formation of this area. We will notice immediately because there are less trees. The heathers are predominant, which have many branches and their narrow leaves are more similar to pine needles than to the shiny leaves of the lauraceae. Less water, less soil and more wind make this area not suitable for the species that require humidity and calm, like the majestic til trees.

## 10. A HILL TRAVERSED IN THE GULLY

This lookout allows us to contemplate with a bird's eye view the magnificent gully. Erosion has forged this deep fissure, decorated with laurel trees of extraordinary quality, in which the sea of clouds is present. The *scopoli's* shearwater or *estapagao* as it is known in La Palma, makes its nest on the vertical wall located underneath us, as it is a sea bird that makes its nests in inner gullies. If we do not make a move, we will hear and see the La Palma chaffinch, the *chirivi*, which is abundant in this area, as well as the laurel pigeons and the *bolle's* pigeons with their unique features.