

# VOLCANIC ADVENTURES

Simone Hellyer heads to the volcanic isle of Tenerife for sun, sea and cycling



Tenerife has been a staple package holiday destination for decades, with trips there often working out cheaper than an equivalent stay back home. But that doesn't mean sun-seekers can't enjoy luxury and adventure on the volcanic isle.

With year-long temperatures averaging between 20-25 degrees, Tenerife is a great place to enjoy a sunny break in winter or spring. And with a flight time of just four hours from Gatwick, you'll be sipping sangria and enjoying a Spanish siesta before you know it.

We stayed at Hotel Jardin Tropical in

Costa Adeje on the south-western part of the island during our visit – perfect for stunning sea views and not far from the tourist hotspots of Playa de las Américas and Los Cristianos. Like a grand Moorish palace, the hotel is a whitewashed warren housing 419 rooms, five restaurants, four bars, two pools, a gym, a spa and plenty of sunbeds and Balinese beds offering stunning views of the bright blue sea.

The hotel completed a comprehensive €12m refurbishment in December 2017 and there are now four types of room available – from large double rooms to premium rooms that come with ocean

views and access to the hotel's club facilities. Ours was a comfy double bedecked with stylish touches such as bamboo mirrors, aquamarine tiles, a large bathroom and quirkily shaped balcony.

In my experience there are two types of hotel guests: those who live for the evening entertainment and those who want a good night's sleep. I always thought of myself as firmly in the latter camp – until I was introduced to Jardin Tropical's silent disco night. Throughout our stay DJ sessions, live music and live art demonstrations kept guests well entertained.

There are plenty of dining options too; during our stay we ate at hotel restaurant El Churrasco, which was great for steak, and enjoyed fresh seafood lunches at Burger and Crab. At the hotel's Laguna Food Market you can choose dishes from several food stations, including fresh fish cooked right in front of you and a decadent sweet section with an enormous chocolate fountain.

We also ventured to apartment complex Las Terrazas de Abama, which is next to the Abama golf course and has the same owners as Hotel Jardin Tropical. It's worth paying a visit for the stunning sunset views alone, but we came to sample the menu at on-site restaurant Melvin. Here we enjoyed a trio



Sunset views at Hotel Jardin Tropical's Beach Club





The island has become popular with cyclists

of croquettes, tuna tartare and a rich squid risotto – delicious.

To work off all that food we went to check out Hotel Jardín Tropical's new on-site cycling centre. Staff at the hotel said that Tenerife is becoming increasingly popular with cyclists due to its rich variety of cycles routes and warm climate. At the centre there are a variety of rental options, including road bikes, mountain bikes and E-bikes. Inspired, but not ready to head out alone, we joined a mountain bike tour of the north-west part of the island with Tenerife Bike Adventures. Luckily I had the foresight to opt for an E-bike, because the going was tough. But once fully acquainted with my bike's turbo setting, I was soon cycling up some very steep paths with relative ease. The effort was more than worth it once we reached the summit of our ride – Chinyero volcano. Here we enjoyed a well-earned break as well as unspoilt views of Tenerife's highest peak Mount Teide as the clouds rolled around us. Unfortunately, what goes up must come down, so we set off on the descent. Not being an experienced mountain biker, the route we took was too advanced for me, but I had lots of support from our knowledgeable guides and there are much easier routes you can choose. We also got to break the descent at a remote café frequented by local hunters.

Here I enjoyed a probably never-to-be-repeated dish of goat and chips and a much-needed stretch.

Watersports are big in Tenerife too and there are lots of places you can go for kite surfing, jet skiing and paddle boarding. We decided to take to the sea in the comfort of a sailing boat for a whale-watching tour from nearby Puerto Colón. Bottlenose dolphins and pilot whales live in the waters between La Gomera and Tenerife all year and we were lucky enough to spot both on our tour. No doubt intrigued by the aroma of our smoked

salmon sandwiches, a whole family of pilot whales swam right next to us for a few magical minutes. At certain times of the year you may spot Bryde's whales, fin whales or even a blue whale.

Whether you choose to spend your time seeking adventure, relaxing or making the most of the tourist traps, of one thing you can be sure: the weather will be better than back home. ♦

### GOOD TO KNOW:

For more details on Hotel Jardín Tropical, visit [jardin-tropical.com](http://jardin-tropical.com)



Searching for dolphins off the coast of Tenerife

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