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SEVEN TOOLS  
FOR LIFE**

**CYCLING  
ADVENTURE  
IN TENERIFE,  
CANARY ISLAND**

**BENEFITS  
OF THE  
MEDITERRANEAN  
DIET & RECIPES**

**TURN BACK  
THE CLOCK WITH  
CATARACT  
SURGERY**

# HEALTHY AGING®

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# ADVENTUROUS CYCLING IN TENERIFE: ARE YOU UP FOR THE CHALLENGE?

By Michael Chauner



Jordi de la Fuente - Turismo de Tenerife

*Cyclists enjoy the view of a 19th-century lighthouse in Punta de Teno.*

Bored of touristy sightseeing trips? Tired of gluttonous beach vacations? The all-too-typical lethargic American holiday can leave you feeling unfulfilled (or downright lazy) upon returning home and often does little to create a lasting memory or sense of real accomplishment.

If you are a follower of Healthy Aging®, you know that we have always been proponents of meaningful, purposeful, and active travel. Well, in this issue's travel section, we found an amazing and unique trip experience that crushes those goals in adventurous fashion: Cycling in Tenerife.

#### WHERE IS TENERIFE?

While fans of professional cycling may have heard about Tenerife because **their favorite Tour de France champions** are known to frequent the island for offseason training (you will, in fact, see many along the roads between November and February), most Americans would probably have a hard time finding the island on a map.

Located about 60 miles off the Moroccan coast in the North Atlantic, **Tenerife** is the largest of the Canary Islands at 785 square miles and stands the tallest amongst its six siblings. It is a Spanish island that was originally and painstakingly conquered by the Castilian Crown in the late 15th century for its strategic position en route to the Americas and its rich natural resource offerings.

After centuries of various agricultural development, from sugar cane to vineyards, Canarian banana farming eventually rose to the top. It wasn't until the late 20th century that tourism finally replaced agriculture as its main industry.

Tenerife is famously home to the Teide volcano, the third tallest on earth from the

sea floor and the highest peak in all of Spain. The island emerged from the Atlantic Ocean by volcanic eruption some 12 million years ago, and its current form was developed through millions of years of volcanic activity that gave the island its dramatic and undulating landscape. Tenerife's vast network of small roads boldly weave up and down almost every one of the island's sharp peaks.

#### CYCLING IN TENERIFE

It's no wonder that glutton-for-punishment cycling nuts travel from around the globe to experience Tenerife's limitless hills. And if you haven't already found the elephant in the room: Yes, the terrain is challenging!

However, Tenerife's experienced cycling tour operators are experts at planning routes for any group's level, and now with the evolution of e-bike technology, accessibility by bike can be for everyone (Pro tip: take the motor!).

Therefore, we recommend booking a guided tour to properly accommodate your individual or group's capabilities. The best tour operators on the island that we found are known as the Delgado Brothers, who head up "**Tenerife Bike Training**," a professionally run, fun-loving sibling organization that seamlessly transports you around to each of the island's many treasures.

They work alongside **Bike Point Tenerife**, the island's primary retailer and premier rental service, offering high-quality European inventory with everything from hybrid e-bikes to high-end racing cycles.



*Breathtaking view of the blue waters of the Tacoronte coast.*

## HOW TO GET THERE AND WHERE TO STAY

Cheap flights to Spain make Tenerife a popular beach destination for continental Europeans looking for a quick getaway and who typically descend in droves upon the touristy Playa des Americas. Travelers from the US should either fly through Madrid or try one of the newer direct flights from Newark to Tenerife offered by United.

For easier access to cycling-friendly roads and to spare yourself from the congested beach zone traffic and holiday craziness, a cycling-specific trip is best stationed at one of the island's many exclusive boutique resorts.

The **Mynd Adeje Hotel** in the tranquil town of Callao Salvaje is a beautiful, small hotel with an inviting pool and picturesque rooftop that showcases dramatic sunsets over the Atlantic, beautifully silhouetting its smaller island brother, La Gomera.

Another option is the grand **Hotel Regency Country Club**, located in the remote village of Chayofa. The resort features large pools and quality Mediterranean culinary offerings from its Pura Restaurant Lounge.

## MUST-RIDE CYCLING ROUTES

Check out the following cycling route suggestions to experience the wonders of Tenerife by bicycle.

### EASTERN ROUTE

A moderate and enjoyable ride is to snake across the southeastern coastline from La Medida to Chayofa (the road is called TF-28), which offers some of the gentlest hills of the island that roll above the ocean from village to village. Stopping at a friendly café for a Cortado is easy along this way and a great opportunity to experience the local flavor.

### NORTHWEST TO NORTHEAST

Possibly the most diverse and scenic part of the island is the passage from Tacoronte to San Andrés by way of the breathtaking

*Clockwise from top: Cycling through the Tenerife countryside; Villa de Arico, Tenerife; Bike Point Tenerife will set you up with the best equipment available; Cyclists witness the Teide Volcano from below.*



Jordi de la Fuente - Turismo de Tenerife



Michael Chauner





Jordi de la Fuente - Turismo de Tenerife

**Anaga Rural Park.** And the views at the top of the green mountains below don't come without a cost, as you must first climb your way through the enchanting laurel forest, which is home to some 600 endemic plants that can be observed on the long ride up.

There is a remarkable juxtaposition between the arid landscape of Tenerife's south and the densely forested northern region, which traps humidity from the ocean's Trade-winds within this magical mountain range. At the top, you'll have a front-row observation of the clouds.

While plummeting out of the mist to the port city of San Andrés, you will have less time to take in the expansive view that showcases yet another vegetation floor of loosely dispersed shrubs that mingle amongst jagged rocky pillars and the smooth, sweeping road that slices through it.

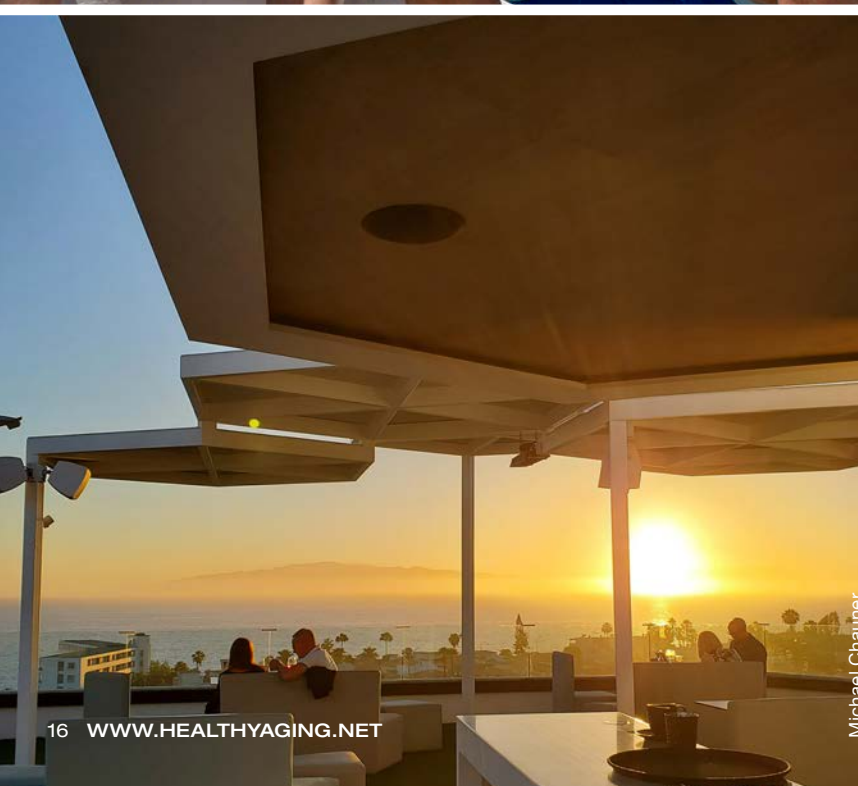
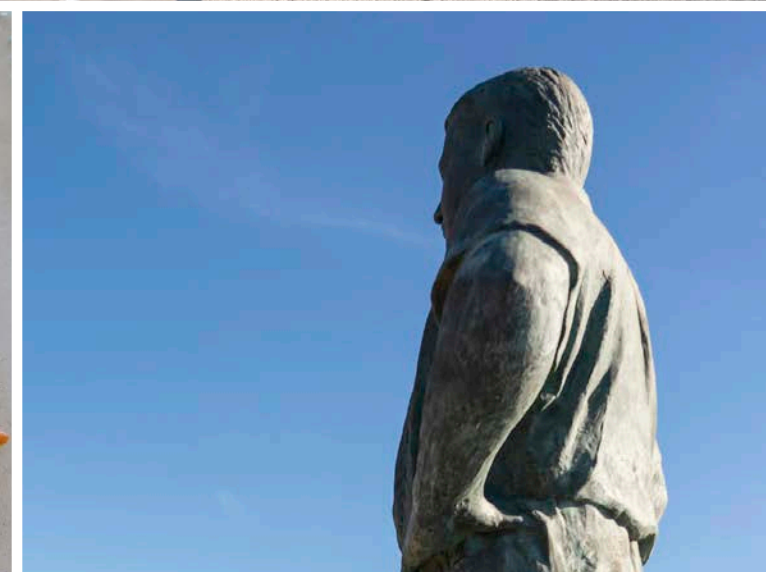
**NORTHERN COAST**

The least challenging route is from Puerta de la Cruz to Punta de Teno, home to a 19th-century lighthouse that gazes across the Atlantic's powerful currents. The backdrop is an awesome panorama of giant volcanic cliffs that tower over the blue water below. Scenes from the recent Clash of the Titans film were shot here (hint: bring camera!).

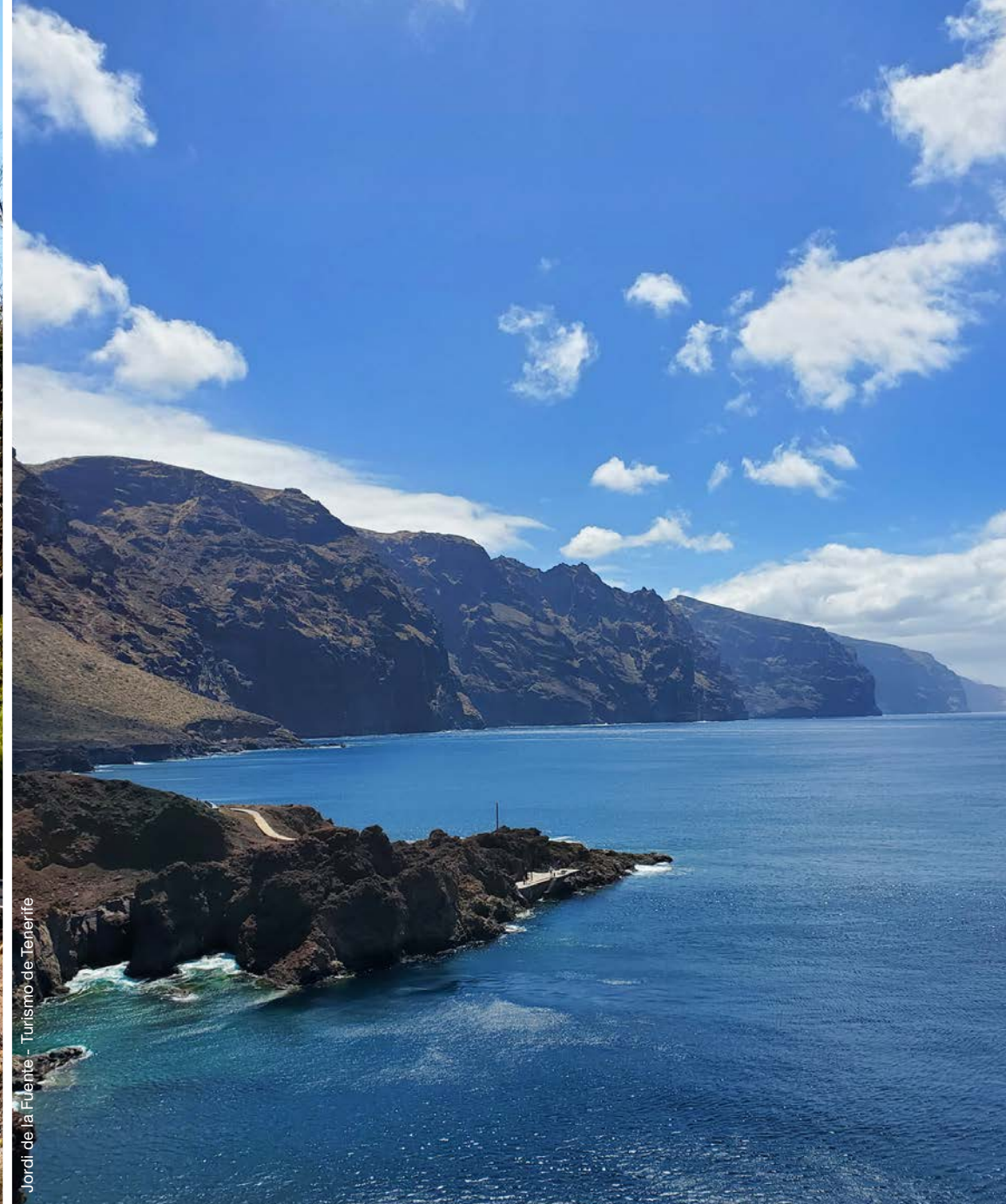
**BANANA PLANTATION VISITATION**

You can't truly experience Tenerife without checking out a banana plantation. These jungle-like farms are dotted across the island, easily recognized by their meshy sun-screened roofs. Bananas originally arrived in Tenerife in the 15th century by way of Southeast Asia and are now exported to account for 60% of Europe's production of this fruit! Each banana plant "gives birth" to some 250 bananas in its lifespan before passing along its seed to its child. After one Canarian banana, you'll never go back to Chiquita!

*Clockwise from top left: Group cycling in Tenerife; The winding road from La Medida to Chayofa; Outside of Chayofa and through history; Hotel Regency Country Club in Chayofa; Taste the local fare at Pura Restaurant Lounge - Hotel Regency Country Club; Witness beautiful sunsets atop the Mynd Adeje Hotel; Well-earned paella for the hungry cyclists.*



Michael Chaluner



Jordi de la Fuente - Turismo de Tenerife



Michael Chauener



Jordi de la Fuente - Turismo de Tenerife



## THE MAMMOTH: VUELTA AL TEIDE

For the more serious cyclists or hardened adventurers who seek the ultimate challenge, the **Vuelta al Teide** is a hero's trial of a bike ride. Organized as an official Gran Fondo that runs annually in mid-May, the event features two distances of either 95km or a daunting 175km. It tackles the monstrous Teide volcano located at the center peak of the island. You can find the exact route online and attempt it yourself if you plan to visit separately from this event.

Starting and finishing in the scenic and historic town of **Puerta de la Cruz**, the longer distance tests both the legs and will of its approximately one thousand participants, pummeling them with 14,000 vertical feet of climbing throughout the journey.

Daring contestants who seek to best Tenerife's most precipitous slopes face four lengthy climbs before culminating with the never-ending ascent up the Teide volcano and subsequent journey across its moon-like national park. The suffer-fest is finally rewarded at the mountain's plateau, where you can witness the dramatic red lava rocks cast within the deserted and surreal volcanic crater of Las Cañadas.

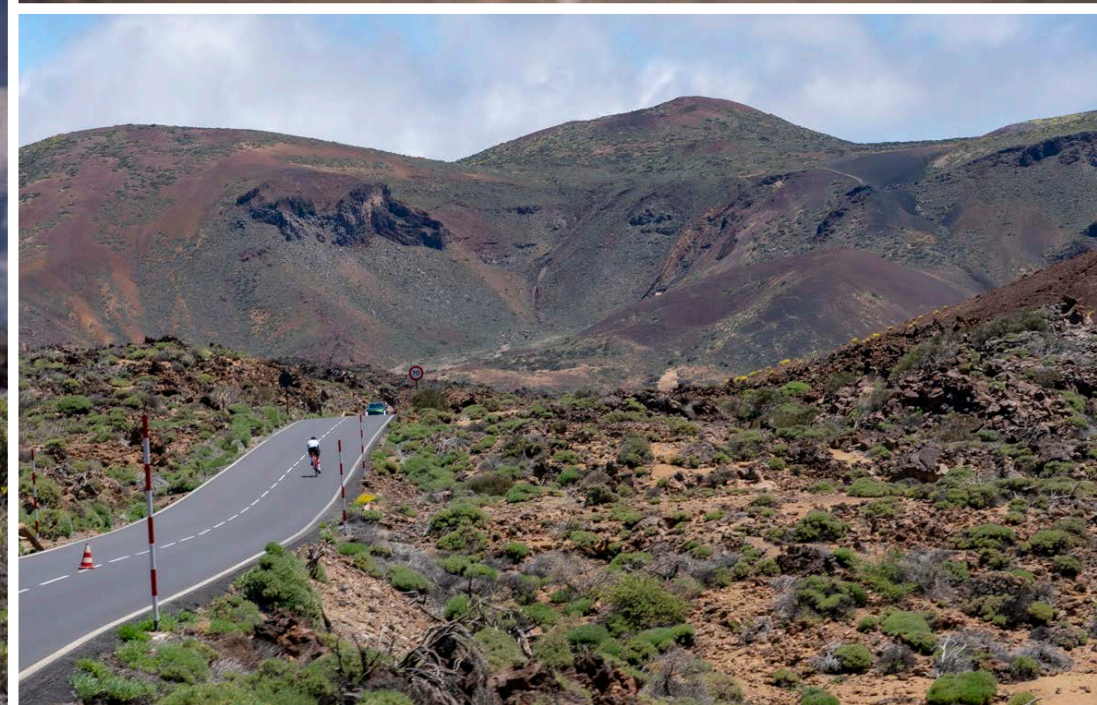
Make sure to have fresh brake pads for the 30 miles of downhill that lie between you and some well-earned Paella and Spanish beer that await in Puerta de la Cruz. This is truly a bucket list event!

## OTHER TENERIFE ACTIVITIES

Beyond the bike, this amazing island does provide a multitude of non-cycling activities.

*Clockwise from top left: Start/finish at the Vuelta al Teide, Puerta de la Cruz; Cyclists from around the world travel to ride through Tenerife's amazing landscape; Traversing the Teide National Park; Dramatic and arid landscape along the route; View from the Teide National Park.*

*Previous page clockwise from top left: Cyclists snake through the undulating terrain outside of Chayofa; Blue Lagoon Cliffs, Punta de Teno; Michael Chauner leading the climb; One of Tenerife's unique experiences is visiting one of their many banana plantations; Dramatic cliffs on the island's northern coast; Enjoy a coffee along the route!; View from the summit in the Anaga Rural Park.*





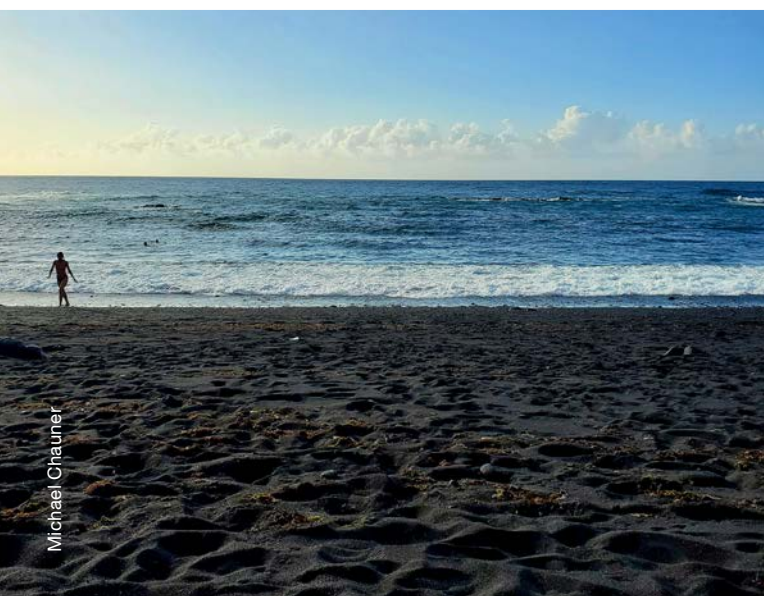


*Ascending the mighty Teide Volcano.*

Jordi de la Fuente - Turismo de Tenerife



Deposit Photos



Michael Chauner



It boasts some of the world's most extraordinary biodiversity that everyone from windsurfers to biologists can enjoy.

**WATER SPORTS:**

The Northeast Tradewinds make Tenerife a popular destination for both sailing and windsurfing, and the island has hosted many aquatic sporting events, such as the **PWA World Windsurfing Tour** and Grand Slam events (X-Games style competitions).

**WHALE WATCHING:**

The corridor between Tenerife and neighboring La Gomera has been certified as a pilot whale heritage enclave, making the area famous for whale watching.

**HIKING:**

Trails and offroad paths expand the island from the volcanic national park to the serene laurel forest.

**OBSERVATORY:**

The **Teide Observatory** is the largest solar observatory in the world! Located within the national park and surrounded by clear sky, it is uniquely situated latitudinally. It is placed high enough above sea level that it is one of the three most important observatories on the planet.

As a true destination for the active traveler, Tenerife is an impressive island with extraordinary sites to see and equally testing terrain to navigate by bicycle. Cyclists who visit will gain a unique perspective of the island's intricacies through its winding roads that capillary the island through and across every peak and valley.

After a long day in the saddle, nothing can compare to enjoying a crisp glass of Canary wine while watching the sun slowly disappear into the Atlantic Ocean. Then you can go home feeling satisfied. ♦

*Clockwise from top left: The Teide Observatory; Enjoying the refreshing Atlantic waters off the coast of Costa Adeje; One of the many beautiful black sand beaches in Tenerife; Coastal view, Costa Adeje, Tenerife.*

**PLACES TO STAY**

**Mynd Adeje Hotel** Hotel MYND Adeje in

Tenerife — Official Website ([myndhotels.com](http://myndhotels.com))

**Regency Country Club**

**Coral Hoteles**

**Hotel Alua Tenerife**

**Hotel Barceló Tenerife**

**Hotel Meliá Hacienda del Conde**

**Hotel Villalba**

**Parador Nacional del Teide**

**Spring Hoteles**

**CYCLING COMPANIES**

**Bike Point Tenerife**

**Tenerife Bike Training**

**Vuelta al Teide**

**OTHER ACTIVITIES**

**Banana Plantation Visits**

**Whale Watching**

**Teide Observatory Observatory Tour**



*Michael Chauner, contributing writer for Healthy Aging®, is an international cyclist, coach, and "Organizador de Viajes " (Organizer of trips!).*

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