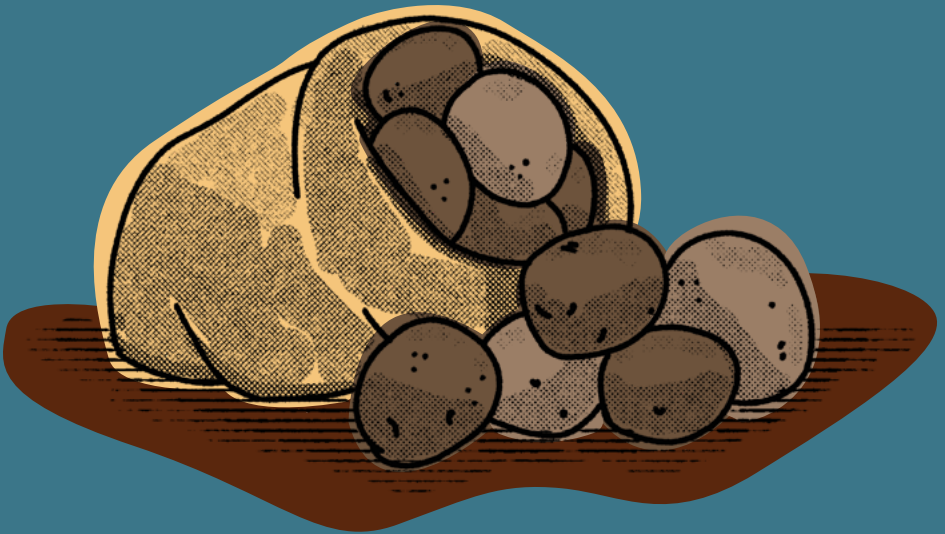


La Orotava *SlowTours*

BENIJOS



INTRODUCTION

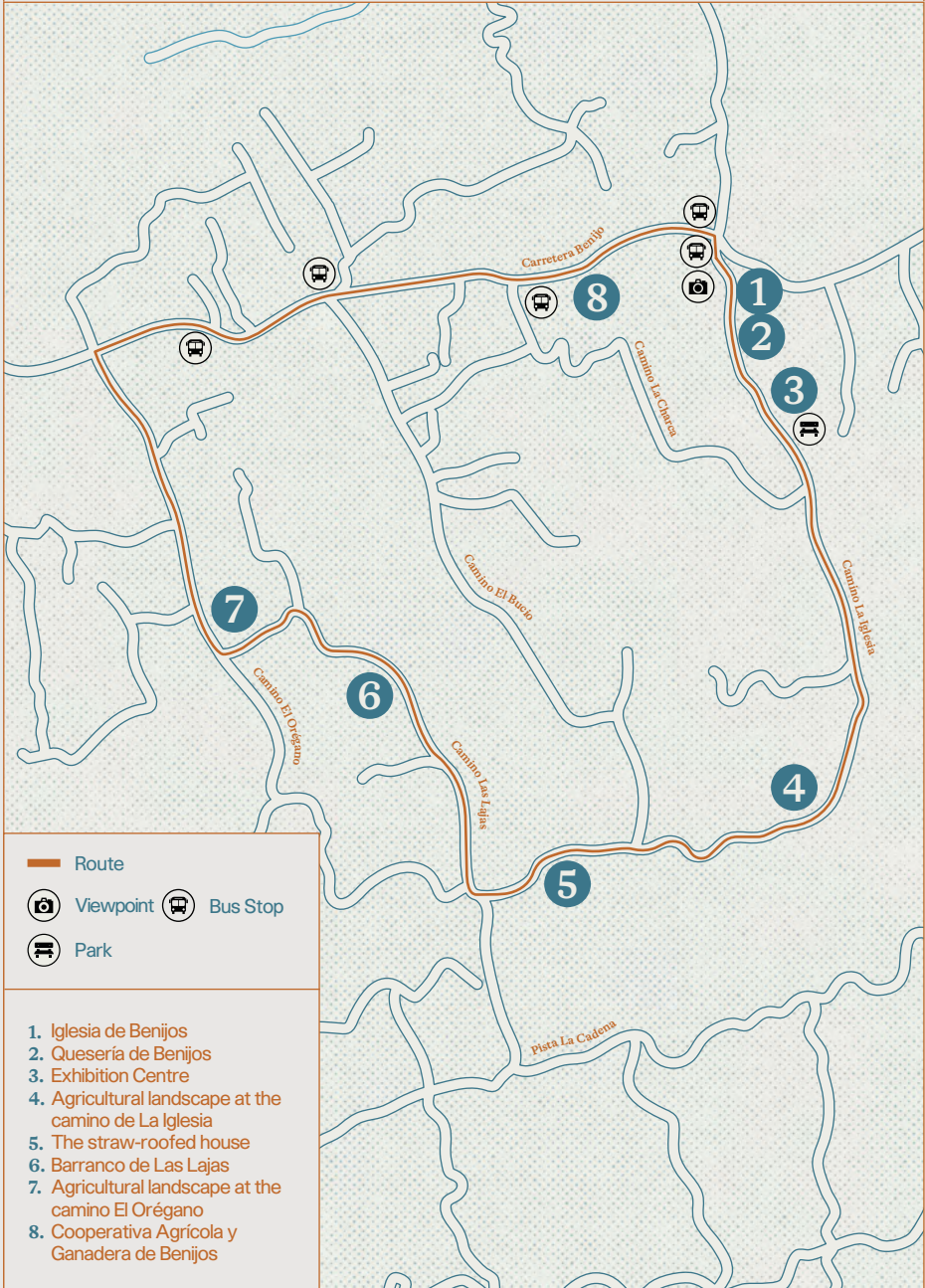
The City Council of La Orotava has devised a local strategy towards sustainable community development in rural areas. This initiative seeks to carry out activities in the most isolated and unknown spots, such as the many groups of farmhouses located in the highlands and midlands.

This collection of self-guided trails under the name *La Orotava SlowTours* is among the initiatives framed within the aforementioned strategy of economic, social and cultural development of rural areas. Their purpose is to serve as a useful tool to disseminate the rich natural and cultural heritage that we have in our land, in a didactic and practical manner.

Each trail created invites us to explore seldom-visited spots in La Orotava, which have their own idiosyncrasies. In these areas there are still many cultural expressions and elements of heritage value which stem, precisely, from the historic isolation they have endured. We hope that the dissemination of this information contributes to raising awareness as to the importance of rural areas in the progress of our society.



BENIJOS



TECHNICAL DETAILS: BENIJOS

START:

Iglesia de Benijos

FINISH:

Iglesia de Benijos

TYPE OF ROUTE:

Circular

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY:

Intermediate



DISTANCE:

4.18 km

DURATION (ON FOOT):

3 hours

HIGHEST ALTITUDE:

1,065 m

LOWEST ALTITUDE:

853 m

POSITIVE SLOPE:

226 m

NEGATIVE SLOPE:

226 m

POSITIVE AVERAGE SLOPE:

9.4 %

NEGATIVE AVERAGE SLOPE:

-12.4 %

MODALITY:

On foot. By car in all sections of the trail.

HOW TO GET THERE:

From the carretera general Benijos TF-326, reach the neighbourhood church square.

APPROVAL STATUS:

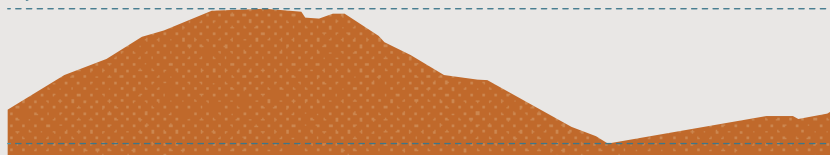
Not officially approved.

NEARBY PUBLIC CAR PARK:

In the area around the church.

TRAIL PROFILE:

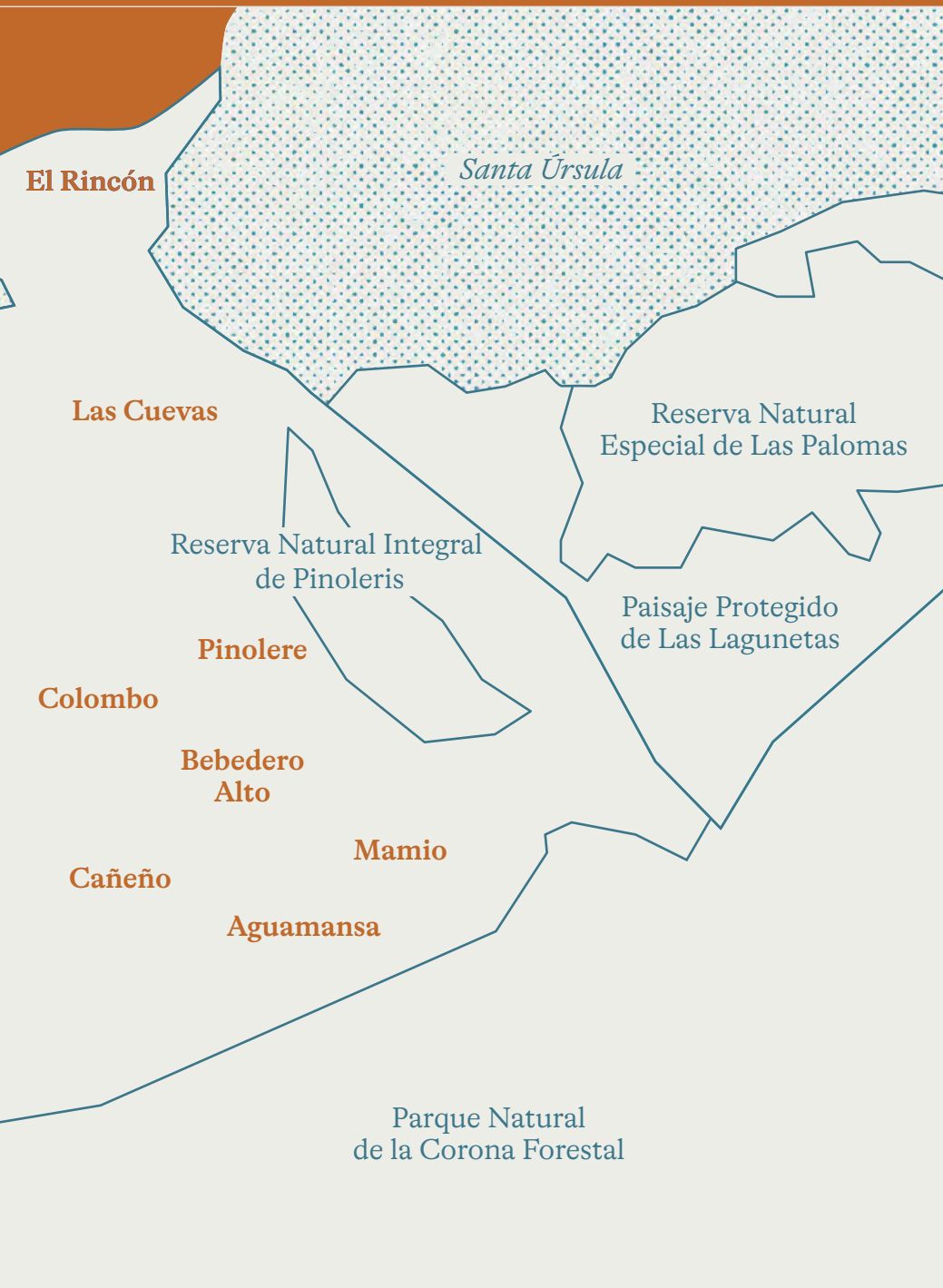
1,065 m



853 m

CITY OF LA OROTAVA





WELCOME TO: **BENIJOS**

To the west of La Orotava lies one of the most unique rural areas of the town: Benijos. This place is characterised by its agricultural activity, especially in relation to the cultivation of potatoes and the production of goat's cheese. In this area, there are extensive terraces that are the result of the massive ploughing of the land, especially during the second half of the last century.

Benijos is located in one of the areas furthest from the town centre. This historical isolation favoured its connection to the mountains and the creation of its own culture, closely related to agriculture and livestock.

This circular route, which starts in the main area of the neighbourhood, will take you into an active

agricultural territory, which changes with the seasons and crop cycles. You will walk among cultivated vegetable gardens and scattered houses, where goats, chickens and beasts, which are so necessary for working in the fields, are still kept.

Discover La Orotava at its most rural, its people and its culture, through this trail that features the most representative heritage landmarks. Immerse yourself in this land, in a respectful and conscious way, and learn about the history and reality of a place influenced by its climate and terrain.



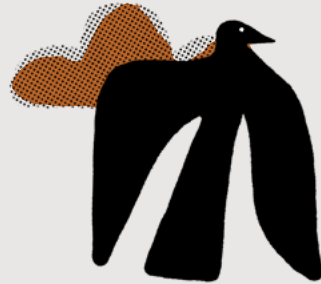
TIPS

During your self-guided visit to this rural setting, you will walk along very steep asphalted roads. If you enjoy this trail, we would like you to show a responsible attitude with a commitment to our environment. You will find some tips here:

1. Wear appropriate footwear and clothing for the type of activity that we are offering you.

2. Do not alter the environment that you are visiting, do not disturb the species or their habitats—leave no trace.

3. Do not damage the heritage elements that you are visiting. Help preserve the cultural legacy of this place.



4. Do not leave rubbish along the route, take your waste with you and place it at the designated points.



5. Support rural development by consuming in local businesses and buying local crafts.

6. Respect the animals and crops you find along the way. For your own safety, do not enter into restricted areas.

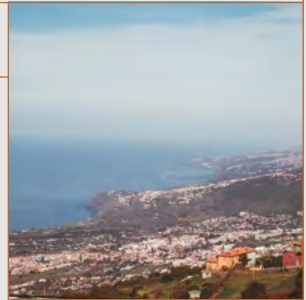
For an outstanding experience, do some research and learn about the place and its people beforehand. Immerse yourself in the history, culture and tradition of one of the most unknown areas of La Orotava.



IGLESIA DE BENIJOS

The trail begins at the heart of the neighbourhood, where you can find the new Iglesia de Santa María de la Cabeza. This church, which follows the architectural standards of contemporary churches, has a fan-shaped floor plan. Its main façade juts out from the central body, and has a rose window and a bell tower attached to it.

The neighbours congregate in the adjoining square during religious gatherings and festivities, especially those related to the local festivities in September, which last for days. From this stop, the trail continues up the path known as Camino La Iglesia.



Since 1983, this church has housed the image of San Isidro Labrador by the sculptor Ezequiel de León Domínguez.



QUESERÍA DE BENIJOS

This dairy, which bears the same name as the neighbourhood, is one of the most important sites in the local agricultural system. Its activity began in 1998, thanks to the production of milk from local farmers. Today, the dairy is supplied by more than a hundred producers from different origins and produces different types of cheese such as fresh, semi-cured and cured cheese, as well as cheese made from mixed goat's and cow's milk.

Most of the farms that supply this cheese factory are family-run and retain their shepherding activities, where the herds graze in the open air. The trail continues up the Camino de La Iglesia to the next stop, a large space used for a variety of activities that are representative of this place.

The conservation of grazing lands in rural areas contributes to the prevention of fires.



EXHIBITION CENTRE

This exhibition centre is the most enigmatic meeting place in the area. From this point you can see a large space, with different levels, used for the well-known Feria del Ganado (livestock fair), which takes place as part of the neighbourhood's festivities and brings together up to three thousand head of goats, horses, mules and cattle. Threshing, *sortija* (running at the ring) and horse and mule competitions, which are very popular in La Orotava, are organised among other traditional demonstrations.

Until a few decades ago, the fair was held with a greater presence of cattle, essential for farm work. The mechanisation of the agricultural sector led to its disappearance, making the current participation of cattle from other towns necessary.



Most of the goat herds in La Orotava come from the Benijos area, with native breeds such as the Tinerfeña Norte, adapted to humidity and cold temperatures.



AGRICULTURAL LANDSCAPE AT THE CAMINO DE LA IGLESIA

At this point of the trail you can see an agricultural landscape that features extensive terraces and some scrubland areas. At the beginning of the year, mountains of manure are scattered across the fields, ready to be spread before the potatoes are sown. In spring, furrows become covered with green sprouts—the most famous tubers of our gastronomic culture are growing under the soil.

At the beginning of summer, the long-awaited harvest begins, which nowadays, although mechanised, brings together several people from each family unit to harvest, sort and carry the potatoes. Along this path you can find grazing animals, a sight that is becoming less and less frequent on the Island.

Crop rotation is encouraged in the area, a technique that consists of sowing different species consecutively on the same piece of land, thus giving the soil a rest.



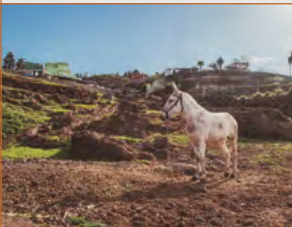
THE STRAW-ROOFED HOUSE

At this point on the path you can see the ruins of a traditional straw-roofed house. Before the land was cleared to build the extensive terraces, there were many straw-roofed houses which served as a home for the local population. Many of today's dwellings are located on the sites of the old straw-roofed houses.

This example, although it lacks the thatched gable roof, preserves all of its two-sided stone walls without plaster on them. It has a rectangular floor plan and a single access opening on the main façade.



The thatched roof of the straw-roofed house, probably made of cereal straw, rested on a wooden frame made from trees from the nearby hills.



BARRANCO DE LAS LAJAS

The trail continues down the Camino Las Lajas, from where you can enjoy a panoramic view of the Benijos agricultural system and a small ravine of singular beauty. In this place you can notice the erosion caused by rainwater on the land, creating geographical features such as this one that shape the landscape.

This type of natural spots, where the most resistant geological material has been left uncovered, have become common places of use where we can often find animals grazing or resting.

Benijos borders the neighbouring town of Los Realejos through another outstanding geographical element: the ravine known as Barranco de La Raya.



AGRICULTURAL LANDSCAPE AT THE CAMINO EL ORÉGANO

In this section of the trail, the descent is made between wide terraces. Although the main crop in the area is potatoes, it is possible to find other species such as corn and cabbages. Sometimes we can find land planted with lupin beans, a leguminous plant that provides nitrogen to the soil. In Benijos there is a long tradition of mules and horses associated with the sowing of cereals such as oats, a grass that adapts well to this climate and is highly appreciated as fodder.

This area concentrates the dwellings of several families, some of them related to goat farming and the production of handmade cheese. The trail continues descending until it connects with the main road that crosses the neighbourhood.



The switching from potatoes to other crops on the same plot of land helps to control very harmful pests such as the Guatemalan potato moth.



COOPERATIVA AGRÍCOLA Y GANADERA DE BENIJOS

In these facilities, various post-harvesting tasks are carried out on potatoes grown in the area and elsewhere on the Island. The Cooperative's aim is to make full use of the product, cutting the tubers in different ways depending on their use on the market. In this way, we can obtain slices, wedges, dices, chips or whole potatoes.

Nowadays, these facilities are managed by the Cooperativa Garañaña, where various machines carry out the peeling and cutting of the potatoes. Onion peeling has also been introduced. Both products are sold to hotels, schools and markets.

The Cooperative receives potatoes of commercial varieties such as Cara, Red Cara and Druid, as well as some of the old Tenerife potato varieties known as *papas antiguas*, such as Bonita and Azucena.

USEFUL INFORMATION:

CHEMISTS:

Farmacia Barroso

Carretera General Las Cañadas

TF-21 178, Barroso, 38310

La Orotava

+34 922 334 483

Farmacia Camino Chasna

Camino de Chasna, 24, 38310

La Orotava

+34 922 336 426

HEALTH CENTRES:

Centro de Salud de Barroso

Carretera General Las Cañadas

TF-21, Barroso, 38310 La Orotava

+34 922 478 434

Centro de Salud de Camino de Chasna

Camino de Chasna, 73, 38310

La Orotava

+34 922 478 524

TAXI:

Taxi stand

Calle Inocencio García, 15, 38300

La Orotava

+34 922 323 737

Taxi stand

Calle San Juan Bosco, 1, 38300

La Orotava

+34 922 323 737

EMERGENCY:

112

LA OROTAVA LOCAL POLICE:

Policía Local

Calle Cologan, 2, 38300 La Orotava

+34 922 330 114

TITSA (BUS STATION):

Av. Ob. Benítez de Lugo, s/n, 38300

La Orotava

+34 922 332 702

TOURIST INFORMATION OFFICE:

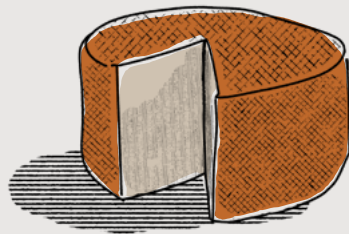
Calle Carrera del Escultor Estévez,

5, A, 38300 La Orotava

+34 922 323 041

Check the city's tourist information on its official website:

<https://www.laorotava.es/es/turismo>



La Orotava *SlowTours*: Benijos

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