

Festivals

FIESTAS OF THE VIRGIN

The Patron Saint Fiestas in honour of the Virgin of Guía take place during the first fortnight in August, with the most important date on the calendar being the 15th. The morning sees the procession, while in the afternoon it is the turn for the Battle of the Flowers. The fiestas include a good number of cultural events, the highlight of which are the passacaglias (street march) featuring “papagüevos” (over-sized papier-mache models who are the authentic protagonists during festivities), the parade of floats and the afore-mentioned Battle of the Flowers.

FIESTA OF LAS MARÍAS

This fiesta commemorates the tradition of the Voto de Vergara, which occurred in 1811 due to a devastating plague of locusts, leading the peasants to make a promise to come down every year from the hillside to see the Virgin of Guía in a show of gratitude. The fiesta is held every year on the third weekend in September, and comprises two main events: The Bajada de la Rama (bringing down of the branch) from the hills to Guía on the Saturday and the Procession and Pilgrimage on the Sunday at midday. Both these celebrations ring out to the sounds of caracolas and bucios (shell wind instruments) and drums (as an allegory of the instruments used to scare off the plague). As for the pilgrimage, it is said to be one of the purest, most beautiful and most traditional throughout the Canaries.

THE CHEESE FIESTA

This fiesta takes place on two different weekends, the last weekend in April in the town centre of Guía and then on the first weekend in May in the village of Montaña Alta. Here the cheese-makers and other artisan producers offer their finest products, including the sampling of typical food, as well as organizing demonstrations of traditional activities related to cattle-rearing and shepherding.



Llegada Rama Las Marías.



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Gran Canaria

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SANTA MARÍA DE GUÍA

Cuisine

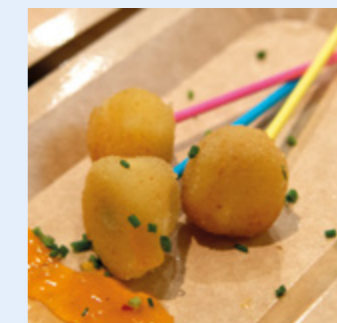


TYPICAL PRODUCTS FROM THE MUNICIPALITY

Flower Cheese
Guía Sweets
Lengüillas cakes

Typical Recipe

“Media Flor” Cheese Croquettes



INGREDIENTS

200 gr. Butter
200 gr. Flour
1 L. Milk
200 gr. Onions
3 Cloves of garlic
150. gr. Bacon
100 gr. Dates
150 gr. “Media Flor” Cheese
Flour
1 Egg, beaten
Bread crumbs
Frying oil

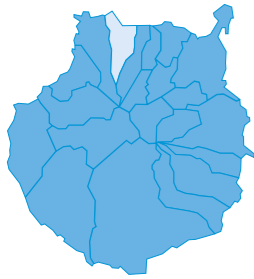
PREPARATION

Finely chop the onion and garlic, and leave to simmer in a pan with the bacon and the butter, avoiding it to change its colour. Make a roux, adding the flour and butter, stir for a while and add the milk, little by little. Leave to simmer, season with salt, pepper and nutmeg. Let it thicken while stirring constantly, and when it's nearly done add the “media flor” cheese and the dates, chopped. Leave aside until cold. Form the croquettes and dip in flour, egg and finally bread crumbs. Fry in abundant hot oil. Serve with tomato marmalade.



MUNICIPALITIES OF GRAN CANARIA





At the northwest of the island of Gran Canaria between the municipalities of Moya and Gáldar and 22 kilometres from the capital. It covers a land surface area of 42.59 square kilometres which extend from the sea up to the summit.

Did you know?

- The name of Santa María de Guía is in honour of the Virgin of Guía, the patron saint of the municipality, and the town was founded immediately following the conquest of the island.
- Many illustrious figures have graced the region throughout its history; these range from craftsmen and women, politicians, musicians, poets and sculptors, who especially between the 18th and 19th centuries, placed the municipality at the forefront of the Canary Islands. Leading examples include sculptor Luján Pérez, clergyman and politician Canónigo Gordillo and the great musicologist and researcher Néstor Álamo, among others.
- Guía Flower cheese has been made at this northwest region of the island since the 16th century. The name "Guía" features on it because it was at its market, from the 19th century onwards, where it became famous. What makes it such a special product, alongside the vegetable rennet used in its production, is the rich, green farmland used by the Canary breed of sheep for grazing and the wholly artisan nature of its manufacturing process.

Cenobio de Valerón is the gateway to the Municipality of Santa María de Guía. This archaeological site, consisting of nearly 300 caves dug on volcanic tuff and located at Cuesta de Silva (GC-291), is Gran Canaria's largest and most spectacular prehispanic granary. During the visit, while learning about the importance of agriculture for the production model in olden times, as a pillar for their nourishment and socio-political organization, you will hear about the area's fauna and flora, the site's volcanic geology and, of course, it's archaeological value. Nearby you will find **Camino Real de la Cuesta de Silva**, which linked the capital town with the North, in use from the time of the aborigines, and recently marked with explanatory signs.

After Cenobio de Valerón, a must see is the **Historic Town Centre** (declared a Historic and Artistic Monument) of Guía. A stroll around its streets reveals the beauty of its buildings and takes us back the splendours of yesteryear. Among these are the **Parish Church** (built between the 17th and 19th centuries), with its Baroque façade flanked by two neo-classical towers, the inside of which boasts important and carefully preserved works of art, including alterpieces and figures carved by celebrated Guía-born



Parish Church.

sculptor José Luján Pérez, which are an integral part of the local Easter Week celebrations; the **House of Los Quintana** (a stately building dating from the 16th century); the **birth home of Néstor Álamo** (17th century) and the **Hermitage of San Roque** (from the 16th century, and restored in the 19th century in an eclectic style). Other places of interest in the town centre are the **factory** where they manufacture traditional Guía sweets; the **craft workshops** where visitors can see the manufacturing process of **Canary knives** (their handles being carved out of goat's horns), plus examples of **wood carvings** and the establishments where the famous Guía Cheese can be sampled. On our way round we can also see many outstanding examples of highly varied

architecture in the city, highlighted by Gran Canarian façades and their neo-classical architecture, here at one of the finest displays to be found on the archipelago.

One of these emblematic buildings is the home for "**La Bodega**" **tourist visitor centre**, where as well as receiving tourist information on the municipality, visitors can sample and purchase cheese and other local products, as well as traditional arts and crafts. Also in the town centre is the **Néstor Álamo Museum**, located in the house where this celebrated musicologist and historian was born in 1906. The visit offers the opportunity to understand and enjoy the evolution of music in the Canaries, from the sounds created by indigenous dwellers some



Historic Town Centre.



Bascamao.



La Bodega.



Natural Pools of Roque Prieto.

How to get there

BY BUS
FROM LAS PALMAS DE G.C.
Service 105 and 103
FROM AIRPORT
Service 60 to Las Palmas de G.C.
FROM MASPALOMAS
Service 50, 01, 04 y 05
 to Las Palmas de G.C.
FROM MOGÁN AND PUERTO RICO
Service 01 to Las Palmas de G.C.

two thousand years ago through to the sounds heard all over the archipelago, gaining an insight into all its musical and cultural influences. This all goes on at the different rooms set within this stately 17th century building, with the common theme naturally being the figure and the works of the multitalented Néstor Álamo, who spent most of his life involved in research, the recuperation of traditions, and the dissemination of the history and culture of Gran Canaria.

For those who prefer the sea and nature, the municipality offers them the opportunity to enjoy these too. Given the

rocky nature of its coastline, there are two main areas for bathing: **San Felipe beach**, which features superb waves for surfers; and the **natural water pools of Roque Prieto**, where visitors can enjoy the sea in a friendly, family environment. The middle and high lands also offer beautiful scenery, and spaces for relaxation, such as the **recreation areas** of Santa Cristina and Monte Pavón and others, ideal for hiking or MTB lovers. **El Brezal Special Natural Reserve** is one of the protected spaces in the municipality, with a very well preserved bayberry and heath forest, the typical green mountain of the Canary Islands, with a large network of walking paths.

El Brezal Special Natural Reserve is one of the protected areas in the municipality, the home for some beautifully preserved heath and woodland, offering a fine display of Canarian greenery. Also in the hillside area of Montaña Alta is the Casa del Queso. These cheese-making facilities have been converted into a visitor centre, where visitors can sample and buy the wonderful local cheeses plus other local products, as well as learning about the complete artisan manufacturing process of the ethnographic jewel of Canary cuisine that is **Guía Flower Cheese**.