

Tenerife Sur: Short Walks Under 10 km

El Rio-Presa del Rio Circular (Arico)

Route Summary

The walk starts and ends in El Rio which enjoys a great vantage point over the east coast. The focal point of the walk is the “Presa del Rio”, an apparently unused dam in the scenic Barranco del Rio. The descent to the dam may not suit all walkers but an alternative is suggested.

Duration: 3 hours



Route Overview

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Transport/Parking: Titsa 416 from Los Cristianos to Granadilla, then Titsa 35 (to Guimar). Easy parking on road near to school at start of walk.

Length: 6.520 km / 4.08 mi

Height Gain: 290 meter

Height Loss: 290 meter

Max Height: 636 meter

Min Height: 447 meter

Surface: Rough. Vertigo sufferers can take in the views of the dam and Barranco del Rio from above, just below Waypoint 17, and return to El Rio along the narrow tarmac originally set out on.

Child Friendly: Yes. But only if children are used to hikes of this distance and overall ascent on rough surfaces.

Difficulty: Medium.

Dog Friendly: Yes. On lead in El Rio.

Refreshments: We didn't see a cafe/bar in El Rio. We suggest Villa de Arico, Granadilla or San Isidro.



Description

At 6.5 km and just under 300 m overall ascent, this is a moderate hike amongst the distinctive and pleasing honey-coloured stone of Arico that will only occupy part of your day. The many dry-stone walled terraces are a joy to behold, and, on a clear day the wide-open “big country” views will take your breath away. The walk starts and ends in the typical Canarian village of El Rio on the TF-28 between Granadilla and Villa de Arico. Enjoying a great vantage point over the east coast, it's an unassuming place with lots of pretty corners to discover. The focal point of the walk is the “Presa del Rio”, an apparently unfinished and abandoned dam in the wonderfully scenic and rugged Barranco del Rio. We found the approach to the dam from the east side was a little tricky and precipitous in places but, no doubt, the rock climbers we encountered clinging to the nearby cliffs wouldn't have blinked an eye. If you are concerned about suffering from vertigo in the descent to the dam you can take in the views of the dam and Barranco del Rio from just below Waypoint 17, and, instead, return to El Rio along the narrow tarmac road you originally set out on.



Waypoints

(1) Start walk at school

(28.14257; -16.52340)

Start the walk outside the little school (collegio) on Calle Hoya de las Escobas Camino Real in El Rio. With your back to the school building, set off walking to your left, looking for the first opening on your left.



(2) Left and up

(28.14252; -16.52282)

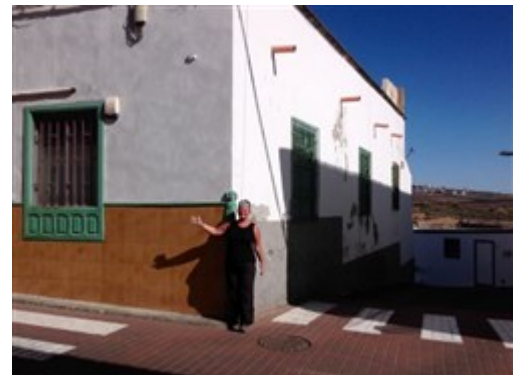
In about 60 m, go left and up Calle El Barranco Camino Real. (59 m)



(3) Left and up again

(28.14311; -16.52242)

In around 80 m, go left again and walk up Calle San Bartolome towards the main road. Cross the main road with care to the church and small plaza. (137 m)



(4) The church in El Rio

(28.14336; -16.52286)

In about 50 m, having crossed the main road, check out the little church, plaza and walks information board. When you are ready, re-join Calle San Bartolome and continue walking uphill. (189 m)



(5) Right and up steps

(28.14525; -16.52396)

In about 250 m, just after the white Depositivo (drinking water tank) building, take the steps off the road on your right, onto the old stone-paved camino. Continue uphill a small way looking for a modern steel fence on your right partially enclosing the "Lavaderos" (old stone tanks for washing clothes by hand). (441 m)



(6) The Lavaderos

(28.14576; -16.52398)

In 70 m from the road you have arrived at the "Lavaderos" (old stone tanks with scrubbing areas for washing clothes by hand). Notice that they are in 2 sections, with access from different sides. There is also a large storage tank for the waste water, presumably for irrigation purposes when the facility was operational. When you are ready, continue walking uphill on the stone-paved camino which is damaged in places. Don't deviate towards the houses on your left side. When you reach the tarred road, carry on uphill, walking out of the village. (511 m)



(7) Right off road onto track

(28.15079; -16.52666)

In about 700 m, after passing large water storage tanks, go right and off the road onto a rough track. Follow the track gently downhill and past 3 man-made caves (for storage?) on your right. (1.2 km)



(8) Left and up

(28.15147; -16.52592)

In just over 100 m from the road, after passing the three "caves" on your right, go left and gently uphill to follow the rough road. (1.3 km)



(9) Veer right and down rough road

(28.15340; -16.52607)

In 200 m, or so, at an indistinct junction, follow the rough road downhill, veering very slightly to your right. (1.5 km)



(10) Veer left and up

(28.15405; -16.52619)

In another 130 m, or so, at the base of the slope you have just descended, turn fairly sharp left to follow the abandoned old road uphill, ignoring the path, straight on between two small cairns (this is the path to Villa de Arico). (1.6 km)



(11) Over wall

(28.15848; -16.53079)

In 1.4 km, the old road reaches an apparent obstacle, as the gap in a dry-stone wall where the road once ran through has been barred by a continuation of the low dry-stone wall, and a wire fence. The fence has fallen down, though, and the wall is partially dismantled and easily crossed over. (2.5 km)



(12) Through gap in fence

(28.15871; -16.53114)

Once over the wall, head straight ahead for your exit from the fenced, and apparently abandoned, enclosure at the opposite side, where the wire fencing is again broken down. From there, head for the obvious downhill junction on the rough road ahead, and slightly to the right of you. (2.6 km)



(13) Left and down

(28.15895; -16.53137)

In about 40 m from emerging out of the broken-fenced plot go left and downhill at the obvious road junction. Continue walking down, and around, and then up to a gate at the narrow tarred road you left at Waypoint 7. (2.6 km)



(14) Right and up road

(28.15596; -16.53173)

In 500 m, after a steep uphill section, pass around the gate, if closed, and continue up the narrow tarred road for about 200 m. There may well be rock climbers' cars parked here. (3.1 km)



(15) Left off road

(28.15681; -16.53318)

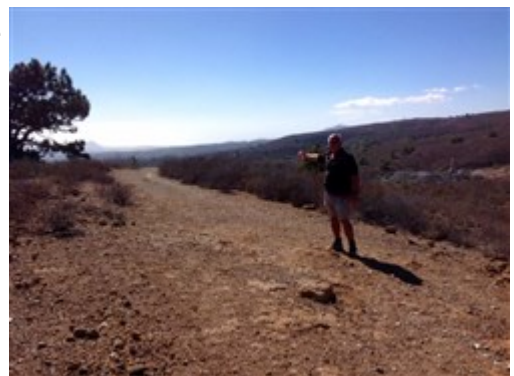
In about 200 m, more or less opposite the gates to a finca on your right side, take the path on your left and go left, parallel to the tarred road, at first returning in the direction you have just come. (3.3 km)



(16) Veer slightly right and down

(28.15590; -16.53307)

In 100 m, or so, as the indistinct path you are on veers a little to the right, take the rough road downhill. (3.4 km)



(17) Left down narrow path

(28.15515; -16.53386)

In another 100 m, or so, take the obvious narrow path on your left side going down towards the edge of Barranco del Rio. As you approach the barranco the dam (Presa del Rio) comes into sight below you and the path starts to descend more steeply on sometimes irregular concrete and stone steps. With due care, and a bit of scrambling, you will arrive at the level of the dam, facing the upstream (dry, probably!) barranco. Turn around and take the path onto the observation level of the dam. (3.5 km)

N.B.: The path down the side of the barranco to the dam is precipitous and tricky in places, and may not suit those who suffer from vertigo. If you feel that the path is not for you, re-trace your steps back to the narrow tarred road and take that road downhill, back to El Rio, to finish the walk.



(18) Presa del Rio dam

(28.15468; -16.53510)

In about 200 m from Waypoint 17, above the barranco, you are on the dam observation platform where there are great views up and down the barranco. We believe that the dam was constructed in 1980 but was never properly finished, or put into operation. You may notice rock climbers on the cliffs on the right-hand side of the barranco, upstream. When you are ready, carry on crossing the dam to the other side of the barranco. (3.7 km)



(19) Left and up rough road after dam

(28.15434; -16.53518)

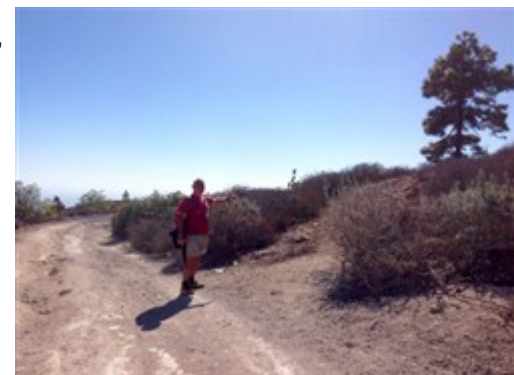
In 50 m from the dam, take the obvious rough road leading away from the dam, in the direction of El Rio and the east coast. (3.75 km)



(20) Right and up indistinct rough road

(28.15299; -16.53473)

In less than 200 m, go right, up and off the access road to the dam, taking another, more indistinct and apparently unused rough road as it winds around the hillside and countryside above you. Keep following this road, overgrown in places. (3.9 km)



(21) Left and down road

(28.15081; -16.53633)

In about 300 m, you will arrive at a junction with a well-used rough road. Go left and down the road, enjoying the open views all around. Keep going downhill as this road eventually meets the main access (rough) road to the dam that you left at Waypoint 20. Keep on, downhill, with the outskirts of El Rio clearly emerging on your left side, ahead of you. Watch out for a large water irrigation channel in about 1.6 km. (4.2 km)



(22) Left onto path after water channel

(28.14254; -16.52797)

In 1.6 km, as the road passes over a very large irrigation channel flowing with water, take the, at first, indistinct path on your left, just after the channel. This path heads in the direction of El Rio and the Barranco del Rio. Soon it becomes an old cobbled camino that winds its way down and towards the nearest houses. Take care, and keep away from the steep left-hand edge, as the old camino is overgrown in places. (5.8 km)



(23) Cross the bridge and follow path up through houses

(28.14358; -16.52561)

In 400 m from the water channel at Waypoint 22, just before the houses, you cross a bridge over the barranco. The entrance to the area with the houses looks a little overgrown, private, and unwelcoming but don't be put off. The path is there, hidden from your view, and it is public! Follow the path up past the garden areas of the houses and you will soon emerge onto a lane by the houses. Follow the lane down towards the main road. (6.2 km)



(24) Cross main road and onto Calle Hoya de las Escobas Camino Real

(28.14257; -16.52430)

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In 200 m, or so, from the bridge over the barranco at Waypoint 23, cross the main road and onto Calle Hoya de las Escobas Camino Real, heading back to your start point at the school. (6.4 km)



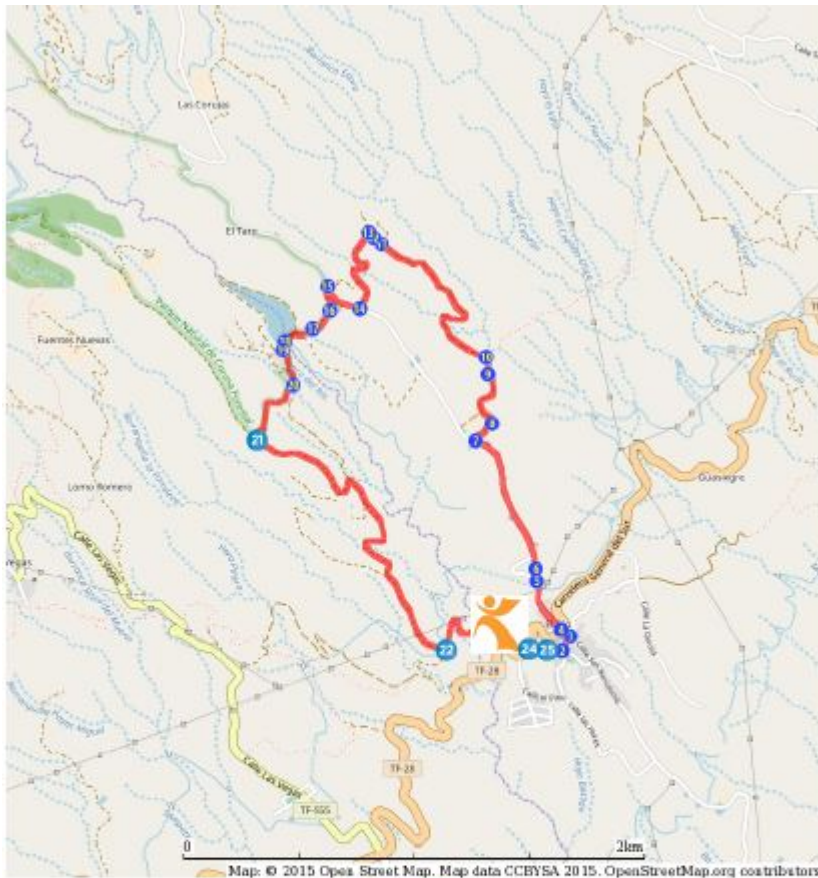
(25) End of walk back at school

(28.14255; -16.52349)

In just another 100 m you are back at your start point outside the school. (6.5 km)



Route Map



Links:

[Photos from walk](#)

[Download Route Guide](#) (PDF with illustrated Waypoints)

[Download GPX file](#) (GPS Exchange Format)

[Access Walk on Viewranger](#)

[Access Walk on Wikiloc](#)