

A winter-sun break in TENERIFE



Forget about brash resorts, boisterous nightlife and boozy Brits, the island of Tenerife has another relatively undiscovered side, says **Susie Boulton**

No wonder Tenerife sees five million tourists a year. Largest of the Canary Islands, it basks in the sun all year round and bills itself as the Island of Eternal Spring. Most visitors make a beeline for the sun-baked south, drawn by the white-sand beaches and enticing warm waters. Few stray further, unaware even that there's another Tenerife: one of surreal lunar landscapes, verdant mountains, historic towns and hidden hamlets.

Rising out of the sparkling ocean is majestic Mount Teide, at 12,198ft the world's third-largest volcano and the highest peak in Spain. A hike up takes six hours and plenty of stamina, while the cable car whisks you up in eight minutes. Take warm clothing – it may be hot on the beach but the peak is snow-capped for half the year. Special guided night visits take in



Garachico, top, is a great base for hikers heading into the interior, above; *papas arrugadas* with red and green *mojo* sauces, right




glorious sunsets and stargazing sessions. Tenerife has some of the clearest night skies in the world.

Hikers are spoilt for choice with trails through rugged mountains, deep valleys and rainforest – many undiscovered by tourists. A good walking base is Garachico, a gem of a village on the northwest coast, miles away from the razzmatazz of the south. The former harbour was destroyed by lava flows in 1706 but the area retains cobbled streets, colonial charm and refreshing rock pools carved from lava. Tenerife also boasts two fine historic towns: La Laguna, former capital and Unesco World Heritage Site and the lovely La Orotava with beautiful colonial mansions.

The Canary Islands are fast becoming a foodie destination and, beyond 'all-day-breakfast land', there is plenty of genuine Canarian cuisine, often served in little *tascas* – tapas restaurants. *Mojos*, the red and green piquant sauces served with fish and meat, also go wonderfully well

with *papas arrugadas*, the little salt-encrusted, wrinkled jacket potatoes. These scrumptious little spuds were awarded their own Certificate of Origin in 2012. The island offers great seafood and all manner of exotic Atlantic species – *vieja* (parrot fish), *pompano* (butterfish) and *mero* (dusky grouper).

Tenerife is one of the world's best spots for all-year pilot whale watching. Book a boat trip and watch these playful creatures – along with sociable bottlenose or Atlantic-spotted dolphins – race through the water. Or try snorkelling with turtles and deep-sea fishing.

Tandem paragliding – floating over breathtaking landscapes – is a fabulous way to see the island. And age or lack of experience is no excuse! 



FIND OUT MORE

For lots of extra info on visiting Tenerife, including the best alternative tourist attractions, go to saga.co.uk/dec-mag

FIVE GREAT New Year's Eve EXPERIENCES

SAMOA

There'll be nowhere 'appier than Apia, capital of Samoa, as the Polynesian islanders are among the first around the world to mark the arrival of 2017, soaking up the sun and the *vaimeleni* – a coconut, pineapple and watermelon concoction. samoa.travel



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VIENNA

You may think you're in André Rieu world, as the Austrian capital enjoys frock-tacular concerts, balls and open-air waltzing to literally dance in the New Year. Follow the New Year's Eve Trail for a memorable musical experience from Strauss to hip-hop. austria.info



2

PARIS

A wining and dining cruise down the Seine is romantic at any time, but against a backdrop of illuminations and one of Europe's greatest firework displays reflecting off the water, this is hard to beat. *Bonne année!* pariscityvision.com



3

EDINBURGH

Hogmanay on home turf means 'Auld Reekie', with live concerts, street parties, a ceilidh, torchlight procession and the castle lit up by fireworks. And, if you're brave, clear your head in the morning with a dip in the Firth of Forth. edinburghshogmanay.com



4

MIAMI BEACH

Head for Florida's east coast for the best beach party. Enjoy great firework displays from a private yacht or scrunch the sand under your toes and marvel at the music. If only the rest of 2017 could be as good! mianewyearsve.com



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