

Title:

10 Lanzarote Beaches - General

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1067

Summary:

White Sands ; Black Sands, Placid Waters, Ruffled Waters - Lanzarote Beaches have everything.

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Article Body:

Lanzarote offers a wide variety of beaches including white and black sand, placid and ruffled waters and these are, as you would expect distributed along the entire coast of the island.

Further articles posted by me discuss in more detail the best beaches in each of the seven municipalities (articles 11 to 17) and these form part of a much wider portfolio of information I'm providing to help holiday makers.

So, where is the best beach then ?

As my 'home-from-home' is in the south of the island in Playa Blanca in the municipality of Yaiza, I am somewhat biased as to where the best beach is and for me it is without doubt, Papagayo. Judging by the research I've done on the Internet, I am not alone in this opinion, so no matter where you are staying, I would suggest that you should not miss this one out.

Punta de Papagayo (to give it its full name), is located at the southernmost tip of Lanzarote. With a surrounding landscape of volcanic ash, crystal clear water and fine white sand, this stretch of the coast, with several small bays and coves is quite simply stunning. Access is gained by first driving across a dirt track road (quite bumpy), then paying a toll (it's that good, they charge you a small entrance fee), and then walking down the sand banks to the beach as there is no man-made path.

BEFORE you walk down the banks, remember to get anything you need from the one and only cafeteria in this area, as you won't want to keep trudging up and down,

trust me, I've done it. The difficulty in getting to the beach is worth it. If you decide to walk along the beach to look at other bays, please bear in mind the fact that some visitors bathe nude at this location as it is permitted. You should not encounter this in the bay by the cafeteria.

If you research this beach on the Internet more widely, you will read statements like 'wild at times' and 'waves can be a little strong at times', so your instinct will, quite rightly tell you to keep an eye on the children.

I want to devote the rest of this introductory article to a day on Papagayo in the Spring of 2005.

On this particular trip, my wife decided to stay at the top of the cliff by the cafeteria, as we were not planning to stay long. I took my two sons down to the immediate bay as the children were pestering me to let them play in the sand and have a dip in the water (as children do). I did what most parents do on holiday - I gave in to their demands for a peaceful life.

My eldest son (who was 11 at the time) decided he'd like to be a little braver than the younger one, who was 6 years old and who stayed in the 'ankles only' region of the sea with me. He wandered out to a point that each wave broke about the chest to neck area and if he jumped up as the wave broke to avoid getting a mouthful of salt water.

All children do this and I'm sure by now, you know what's coming... well he didn't !

I could see a rather large wave behind him out at sea and began to shout towards him to come back in a bit. He never understood my gesticulations towards him, so I moved towards him (instructing the younger one to go back up the beach immediately and 'stay put'). For once, the younger one did as he was told and as I got closer he heard me and moved towards me. I got to within 5 metres of him before the wave crashed 15 feet above his head !

For what seemed an eternity at the time, I completely lost sight of him. He resurfaced, spluttering, and a good 30 metres away from me, which should give you an appreciation of the waves power. My son waited to see my reaction before bursting out laughing (I think he thought I would be angry with him, as if !). He was covered from head to foot in sand, had drank a pint or more of salt water and despite his brave face, he was clearly shook up and to this day we still recall that wave at Papagayo, but he had learnt his lesson and he lives to swallow salt water another day.

It is worth pointing out that both of my children are very good swimmers, having

attended swimming lessons from an early age. Their 'reward' for this, is to be given more freedom when on holiday, particularly in the swimming pools, providing we can still see them. I did not for one moment (you know I really mean that I did) think that he would not come back up, but please take my experience into account if you go to Papagayo as the warning 'strong waves at times' is often dismissed by the occasional visitor.

But don't let this put you off, as this is truly a fantastic location and we still go back on most visits to the island.

I will to bring this article to a close with an important Safety Message - Swimming & playing in the sea is great fun, but be aware of the dangers and act responsibly and look out for Flag warnings.  
To this end, you should :

1. Swim parallel to the shore ;
2. Swim within your depth (it can often be difficult to swim back to the Beach as currents can be strong) ;
3. Never swim immediately after eating ;
4. Never swim alone or at night ;
5. Be aware of local conditions (currents etc), seek advice if in doubt and beware of boats and jet skis if they are in the vicinity and please do not swim in areas allocated for their use ;
6. Remember that a Red Flag means "Dangerous Conditions, do not enter the water" ;
7. Remember that a Yellow Flag means "Dangerous Conditions, exercise caution" ; and
8. Remember that a Green Flag means its "Safe for swimming".

Oh... and in case you're wondering, it was a Green Flag at the time of the incident with my son and it was altered to Yellow by the time we got back to the top of the cliff.

Were we unlucky ? No we were lucky !