

# Canary Islands-romantic year-round vacation

[The Canary Islands- archipelago of eternal spring.](#)

By Lee Daley © 2015

The seven islands that make up the Canary Islands have long attracted sun worshipping Europeans. The islands all boast a year-round spring/summer climate.. Their unique topography and location near the coast of Morocco. give them an incredible array of eco-systems. In one day, you can watch the sun rise over shimmering Sahara-like sand dunes, head to a black sand beach to surf; swim and sun bathe and follow it up with a trek through pine forests of ancient trees. The best way to top off the day? A leisurely climb will take you above a canopy of clouds. Here, you can watch the sun sink into the sea from atop a volcanic mountain.

The islands are actually the tallest tips of a vast underwater volcanic mountain range formed about 30 million years ago when a series of eruptions threw up great plates of the earth's crust. The most recent burp from below the sea came in the 1800s.

Seven main islands comprise the Canaries: Gran Canaria, Tenerife, La Gomera, Fuerteventura, Lanzarote, La Palma, and El Hierro. Spanish is the national language but English is widely spoken. In many ways, each island is a world unto itself. Yet all offer sea, sand and sun served up with a Spanish slant.

Here's a look at one of the most popular of the Canary Islands, Gran Canaria. I'll cover more on Gran Canaria and the other islands in my next post.

The third largest in the archipelago, Gran Canaria accounts for almost half of its population. The island calls itself a "continent in miniature" because of its abundance of culture and history, outdoor adventure, healthy climate, magnificent beaches and non-stop nightlife.

Sun worshippers flock to Gran Canaria for its diversity of beaches. The island's 146 mile coastline boasts more than 150 of them... Rock climbers favor the northern shores while sun seekers head south where the beaches are warmer. One of the most spectacular sites on the island is the Maspalomas Sand Dunes and Nature Reserve. Unofficially the dunes here are a popular "au natural" sunbathing spot.

[Read more about Gran Canaria and other Canary Islands in Part Two..](#)

Visit the [Canary Islands web site](#)

**Travel quote of the day: "Once you have traveled, the voyage never ends, but is played out over and over again in the quietest chambers. The mind can never break off from the journey." - Pat Conroy**



Photo: Maspalomas Sand Dunes, Gran Canaria Island, copyright 2009, Lee Daley