

The Lava Tube of La Corona, a Geosite working as a small but sustainable and profitable Geopark: Lanzarote and Chinijo Islands Geopark Project, Canary Islands, Spain

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The Canary Islands are located on the African tectonic plate over a passive continental margin in an intraplate geodynamic context, its' basement is composed of oceanic crust. Lanzarote is located in the northeast of the Canary Islands, 125 km from the coast of Africa. It has an area of 845 km² and a maximum altitude of 671 m. In the north of the island, a more than 7.6 km long lava tube extends, formed during the eruption of Corona (25 kyr ago) and composed of a complex network of tunnels and superimposed galleries with domed ceilings up to 20 x 20 m and interior lakes, it is identified by a chain of jameos (collapsed of lava tubes). The last section is "Túnel de la Atlántida" and is entirely flooded and only accessible by cave divers. This section offers access the world's most extensive anchialine ecosystem in a volcanic island and represents excellent models to study evolution and morphological change. The conditions of this closed system in all the tube have allowed the installation of the Geodynamics Laboratory where there are Geophysical and Climate Change instrumentation from many countries in the world.

Along the tube there are two tourist centers: "La Cueva de los Verdes" and "Jameos del Agua". The visit to La Cueva de los Verdes is a journey into the bowels of the Earth. A spectacular and unique experience along the superimposed galleries, it received 334,326 visitors during 2013. Jameos del Agua is a creative work attributable to César Manrique in a nature place with auditorium, restaurant, museum and "La Casa de los Volcanes" (scientific, educative and tourism center). In 2013 it received 612,450 visitors. The economic benefits translate into contracts to the local population, as well as an annual fee to the Town Council.

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