

GRAN CANARIA

Gran Canaria is the 'gayest and proudest' of the Canary Islands, tantalizingly situated just 130 miles off the northwest coast of Africa. There's a fascinating history to explore, and plenty of relaxed revelry with a Spanish flair.

Michael Darton

the south-west coast of the island is a tourist's paradise, including Playa del Inglés, Maspalomas, and San Agustín. These areas offer inexhaustible shops, restaurants, bars, hotels and night-clubs as well as expansive lengths of beaches and semi-desert areas; here you'll find the infamous dunes offering lots of nudity and all-male recreational fun! This is nicely complemented by the north of the island, offering a more unique cultural experience together with mountains and lush greenery.

Early settlers of Gran Canaria were known as the Guanches, believed to be from North Africa. In the mid-15th century, Spain began its conquest, putting Gran Canaria and the other nearby islands under Spanish rule.

Today, the sunshine is year-round, the temperatures are subtropical, and the mood is relaxed and laid back. The island has much to offer the gay traveler, and visitors from the EU will enjoy great exemptions from normal EU excise and duties.

Getting there and getting around

Air Europa has connections from many European cities and flies to Gran Canaria at very reasonable rates. You can fly direct from Madrid in about two hours for as

little as 30 euros. Book early for discounted fares. Check out other airlines, too, as there are lots of connecting flights at great prices.

The airport is about a 30-minute drive to Playa del Inglés, San Agustín, and Maspalomas. Most hotels and guesthouses will pre-arrange a taxi to pick you up at the airport. Alternatively, if you wish to get behind the wheel and drive yourself, hiring a car at the airport is easy and inexpensive; rates start at around 30 euros a day.

The island also has an impressive and well-organized bus service, but taxis are so cheap, safe, clean, and reasonably-priced, you're just as well flagging down a cab.

Gay Pride, May 5-11, 2008

Gran Canaria's Pride event attracts over 100,000 participants to a whole week of excitement, entertainment, and partying. Every business in Playa del Inglés takes part in painting the whole resort in full rainbow colors!

The annual popular Mr. Gay Gran Canaria event draws huge crowds, and is surrounded by street entertainers and colorful festivities around the Yumbo Center. On Pride Saturday there is an astonishing street parade offering glamorous costumes and cute suntanned men in skimpy trunks. The parade ends near the Yumbo Center and turns into a huge outdoor dance party.

The Pride main stage has traditionally boasted some of the finest of international acts, and next year promises not to disappoint.

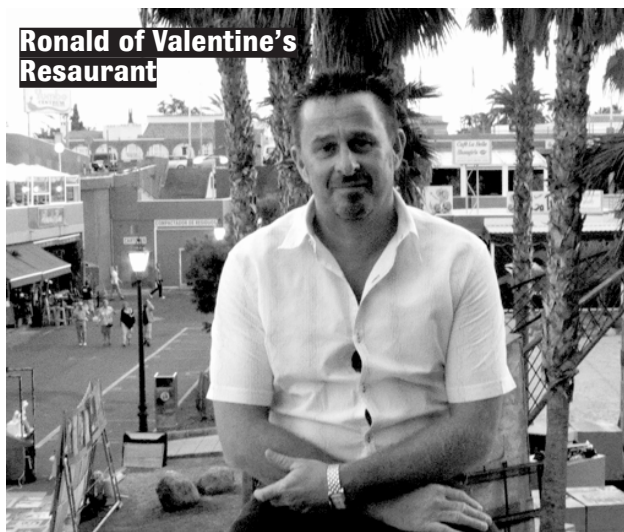
Bars and clubs

The famous **Pub Nestor** (ground floor, Yumbo Center; Playa del Inglés; Pub-nestor.com) is run by the charming and hard-working Holger Haerich. The bar boasts a spacious terrace where you can sit and watch the events of the Yumbo Center. Be ready to be entertained by street performers, sexy Spanish promenaders, or the eager-to-please staff just having fun! The bar opens around 5 p.m. and has a huge choice of local and international beers. They serve pub food and snacks, too. Later in the evening you can see their famous Open the Box game show live on stage and other cabaret performances. Each Friday, Bar Nestor organizes an exclusively gay boat trip, full-on rainbow colors are set sail as the crew takes revelers out for four hours of hedonistic fun and breathtaking views. More information is available from their website.

Heaven Gran Canaria (third floor, Yumbo Center; Playa del Inglés) has set new standards in clubbing on the island. With state-of-the-art lighting and sound, Heaven hosts an array of differing nights including the highly successful and recently launched KINK, a popular fetish



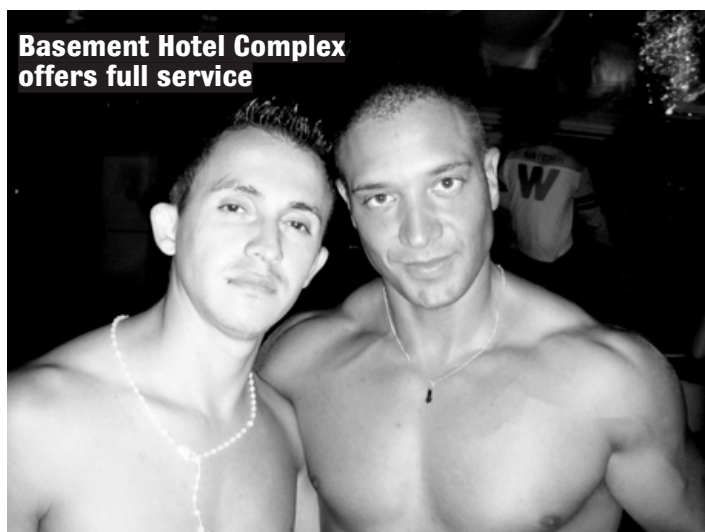
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**Ronald of Valentine's
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At the Construction Bar

Get lost in the impressive Basement labyrinth



At Basement Complex



At Basement Complex

night the first Thursday of each month. Heaven's White Parties have also been a huge success, running the whole week-end, culminating in a Sunday pool party. They also have themed events and traditional club nights which go on to the early hours of the morning. Look out for nights when the club is transformed into Heaven and Hell, full of adult fun and debauchery with an array of darkrooms and play areas, go-go dancers, and video screens.

Detox Retox (Avenida de Tirajana, Playa del Inglés) is modern and chic, with comfy sofas and a welcoming ambiance. They serve a huge selection of exotic drinks and international beverages – try their unique “Lick My Butt-ascotch” cocktail!

Qe2 Show Bar (ground floor, Yumbo Center; Playa del Inglés) is a well-run entertainment lounge and bar with most nights hosted by the glamorous Belinda Scandal with live singers and a cabaret show; sit back and enjoy the ride!

After a day on the beach or in the dunes, **Cafe Wein** (Cita Center, Playa del Inglés) is a popular retreat. This stylish tea shop serves a selection of hot and cold drinks and tempting sweets and *gateaux*. It's busy from about 5 p.m.

Saunas, cruising, and online services

Heroes Sauna (level four Yumbo Center, Playa del Inglés) is high tech and highly sexed. This newly opened state-of-the-art sauna offers showers (private and public), a huge whirlpool, as well as other nooks and crannies. The bar area serves drinks and snacks, ideal for a post-beach (or late-night) visit. They also have a therapeutic masseur onsite to refresh and stimulate your muscles and soul.

Sauna Nilo (Centro Nilo, Playa del Inglés) is situated on the outskirts of Playa del Inglés in the Nilo Center. This is where the humble beginnings of the gay scene began over 20 years ago; now the bars are no longer there, but this long-standing sauna is still in swing. With a steam room, sauna, and dark rooms, it's open every day from 8 p.m. till 2 a.m. Gorgeous masseurs from Belgium and Brazil are here to offer their services.

Chaps Gay Cruising Club (underground in basement of the Cita Center, Playa del Inglés) hosts an array of events

each week. Monday is naked night, so no need to worry about what to wear! Sundays offer Foam cruising. The five-euro entry includes a free welcome drink.

Construction Bar (first floor, Yumbo Center; Playa del Inglés) is full of local and international guys. They have an outside bar area with a large terrace. Inside, they boast a cruising area with large darkrooms and private areas, too. Anything goes in this well-run and friendly cruise haunt.

PuntoNet (Avenida de Tirajana 3, Playa del Inglés) is a gay-run, modern internet shop that offers a host of high-speed internet services, including wi-fi and webcams. It's a cool vibe in here and you can have a drink and chat to the staff who can advise you on almost anything.

Hotels and accommodations

Pasion Tropical (Calle Las Adelfas 6, San Agustín; +34-928-770-131) – a beautiful complex on the beach of San Agustín, about a five-minute taxi from Playa del Inglés – is a well-run venue with a gorgeous tropical oasis of natural gardens. It has a great pool area with a jacuzzi and bar. The rooftop overlooks the sea, so you can sunbathe as you look over the ocean. All the rooms are spacious and well-equipped with kitchenette, TV, and bathroom. The breakfast area offers free wi-fi access, and each day a generous continental breakfast is served until 11:30 a.m.

Basement Complex (opposite the Yumbo Center; +34-928-765-143) is a recently-opened hotel complex directly opposite the Yumbo Center, just a short walk from the beach. It offers the ultimate experience in cruising and comfort. With neat and well-equipped rooms and studios, as well as interesting cruising areas (including dark rooms and a sling room), this place is full of delights. The Complex manages to offer a real element of pure sleaze and sex on-site with a relaxed and friendly atmosphere. The staff is great, and host an open air sex party each week: all are welcome to get lost in the labyrinth at the rear of the complex.

Restaurants

Valentine's (second floor, Yumbo Center; Playa del Inglés) is well established

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Heaven hosts world-class parties!



At Basement Complex



Las Palmas lads reading *The Guide*



At Basement Complex

basement studios gran canaria

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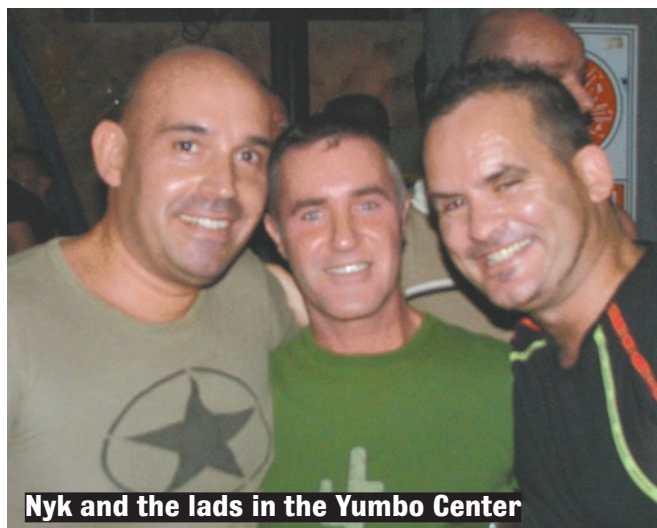
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Nyk and the lads in the Yumbo Center



Preston and the wonderful Paul from Pub Nestor



Trick or treat!



At Basement Hotel Complex



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If you're looking for your dream property in Gran Canaria, the first and most important step is to find an estate agent you can absolutely trust and depend on.

Dream Home Okey is a small, friendly estate agent company, owned by one Icelandic with many years of experience in both Icelandic and Spanish real estate.

As specialists in Gran Canaria, we take pride in our highly-focused market expertise and in the professional - yet personal - relationship we enjoy with each and every one of our customers.

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Ólafur Nordgulen
Director



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MASPALOMAS GAYPRIDE
11th - 12th May '08

**Pride
Maspalomas**

5 - 11
May '08

Logos on the left: Tropical, GLAM, LOTSAN, throb

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and renowned with international travelers and locals alike. Open daily from 7 p.m., Valentine's serves local fresh fish and meats as well as international pastas and sauces by world famous chefs. Popular is the superb monkfish saltimbocca, delicately cooked and wrapped in Serrano ham and sage with fresh baby asparagus and buttered potatoes. They also offer a varied range of vegetarian food including Asian vegetable rice with cashew nuts and a mouth-watering spinach lasagna.

For those who want to venture out, **Restaurante Tagoror** (Montaña Las Tieras 21; Ingenio; +34-928-17-2013) is set in the mountains and situated in the Guanchen Village. They offer typical Canarian food and host authentic entertainment. You can book with your hotel or tour operator, or call them direct.

Las Palmas

It's well worth taking a visit to Las Palmas, the capital of Gran Canaria, with



Desire does discipline

about 400,000 inhabitants. Las Palmas is less touristy and offers some rich history and architecture. The city has some beaches, and local bars and restaurants serve traditional Spanish tapas, small serving of meat, fish, and vegetables – often accompanied with beer.

If you want to be part of an entertain-

ing gay tour, try **Let me take U** (Let-metakeu.com), a well-thought-out excursion which introduces you to some of the highlights you might miss touring on your own. They offer group or individual tours of Las Palmas, where you can take in the history of the city and visit some of the local gay bars and clubs, too. ▼

Check out our

Paris

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The Guide

L'ARC DE TRIOMPHE, "DEPARTURE OF THE VOLUNTEERS OF 1792" BY FRANÇOIS RUDÉ.

