

Abama Resort Tenerife: A LUXURIOUS HAVEN FOR DISCERNING TRAVELLERS

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Abama Golf Resort Tenerife is an ideal haven for golf enthusiasts and families who appreciate superb cuisine and a wide range of activities in a relaxed, yet luxurious setting. And the Corpus Christi Flower Carpets Festival in La Orotava is a rare visual feast!

Tenerife, the largest of the Canary Islands nestled off the African coast, is renowned for its rich and captivating history. Today, Tenerife is transitioning into an upmarket cultural, historic, and artistic luxury destination. Efforts are being made to reduce the number of visitors while engaging them with sports, activities, and a luxury lifestyle that aligns with the island's beautiful architecture, countryside, and beaches.

Leading the way in this transformation is Abama Resort & Spa Tenerife. The resort has converted a former 400-acre banana plantation into an exclusive holiday and residential golf resort, featuring Michelin-star dining and world-class service, including the five-star Ritz Carlton Hotel. Three of Tenerife's six Michelin-starred restaurants are located in the resort, with multiple award-winning chef Martín Berasategui overseeing operations. The resort offers a total of 12 restaurants, two of which hold Michelin stars.

Beyond the realm of gastronomy, Abama Resort caters to the desires of sports enthusiasts with its highly regarded sports facilities, including Abama Golf and Abama Tennis Academy. Offering breathtaking views

of the surrounding natural beauty, the resort's meticulously sculpted golf course spans an impressive 6,271 metres, peppered with over 25,000 palm trees, white-sand bunkers, and pretty lakes connected by cascading waterfalls.

Equally impressive are the resort's tennis and padel facilities, which not only boast exceptional amenities but also provide an unmatched setting, with the majestic Teide National Park and its iconic volcano on one side, and the sparkling waters of the Atlantic and the neighbouring Canary Islands on the other.

For those seeking a holistic approach to well-being, Abama Resort offers a comprehensive range of wellness offerings. The resort features a state-of-the-art spa and a social club at Las Terrazas de Abama Suites, where guests can indulge in rejuvenating experiences while being treated to breathtaking sunsets. Activities such as yoga and Pilates provide the perfect opportunity to unwind and recharge, immersing oneself in the tranquillity of the surroundings. Additionally, Abama Kids Camp ensures that younger guests are well taken care of.

With its uniform climate, Tenerife is an attractive destination for travellers throughout the year. The average temperature ranges from 20°C in January to 28°C in July and August, making it suitable for year-round holidays. December is the busiest time of the year, offering the opportunity to swim in the sea at Christmas.

After settling into my luxury suite, I made my way to the beach, a short golf cart ride or a pleasant 15-minute walk through the golf course, passing by the Ritz-Carlton. The resort also offers a convenient car service that can be ordered from the room or at the reception, and they even pick guests up from the beach. However, I found the golf buggy ride to be much more fun.

The beach was nestled amidst volcanic cliffs, providing a scorching sun trap and protection from the wind. To reach the beach, one could either navigate steep steps that meander down the cliff or take the funicular, which offered a breathtaking view as it glided down a monorail to the bottom. There is also an access road for cars and golf buggies if you prefer to be chauffeured.



For those interested in marine life, the southwestern region of the island, between Tenerife and La Gomera, offers opportunities to spot pilot whales and dolphins. Another must-visit attraction is "La Cueva del Viento" or the Cave of the Wind.

In the evening, I had the pleasure of dining at the Melvin Restaurant, located just a hundred meters from my suite and managed by the multiple award-winning chef Martín Berasategui. Perched high on the hill, the restaurant offers a commanding view of the resort landscapes and the sea. Its glass-slatted terrace windows gleam in the setting sun, casting a warm orange glow over the surrounding greens.

The dining experience offered a succession of marvellous Tenerife-style amuse-bouches. From ham and cheese croquettes to crispy prawns, each bite was a delight. The burrata starter was creamy and soft, and the main course of freshly caught line fish in a creamy butter sauce was rich and delicious.

After such a gastronomic evening, I retired to bed early, anticipating the highlight of the next morning—an excursion up north to witness the Corpus Christi Flower Carpets in La Orotava. A unique festival started in 1847 when an elderly aristocrat named Leonor del Castillo y Betancourt first laid out a carpet of natural flowers to enhance the local celebrations. Since then, the entire town of La Orotava has come together, young and old alike, to decorate every street and plaza with exquisite

floral pieces, including religious iconography, lifelike portraits, and intricate patterns. The preparation of these materials takes months, involving the drying, dying, and burning of herbs, flowers, and sand to create the necessary colours for these illuminated works of art.

Buckets filled with these aromatic herbs and multi-hued volcanic sands are scattered everywhere as people delicately draw from them and carefully place or shake them onto the cobbled streets. Metal templates are used to lay out patterns, and coloured strings are used

to plan portraits. Petals of every tone and tint adorn the roads, infusing the air with fragrant aromas. Imagine the perfume department of Harrods scattered across an entire town, and you'll begin to grasp the intoxicating scents that whirled around us.

The best vantage point to admire the flower carpets is from the balcony of the La Orotava Town Hall. However, wandering through the streets and observing the locals engrossed in their creative work is a fascinating experience. I recommend visiting the Church of Our Lady





of Conception too. It is a superb example of baroque masonic architecture, with numerous grotesque gargoyles and hidden masonic symbols.

What strikes the casual observer most is the happy concentration of the villagers' faces as they create these sensational drawings. Their work is demanding, especially when they must repair and complete everything before 7 pm on the same day. At that time, a village procession carrying religious icons will walk over each and every lovingly prepared illustration, effectively destroying them all in the process.

Jorge, the immensely likeable Manager of the Abama Resort, astutely draws a parallel between the creation and destruction of Mandalas by monks in Bhutan and the ephemeral nature of the hotel trade. He eloquently describes the artistry of the hotel industry, where every day brings the opportunity to create something of incredible quality that is destined to vanish. Each customer is satisfied, each perfect meal is served—it all must be repeated the next day. Nothing lasts, and one's reputation hinges solely on the latest creation.

During my visit, I had the privilege of indulging in an exclusive tour of the homes of local artist aristocrats, who celebrated the day by inviting friends and esteemed dignitaries for a delightful gathering featuring hors d'oeuvres and fine local wines.

One of these extraordinary homes, Casa Cologan, belonged to Jose Alcazar and his wife, descendants of Irish merchants. Cologan is believed to be derived from Callaghan, an Irish family that settled in Tenerife in the 1700s. This residence embodies the unique Irish-Spanish aristocracy that developed on the island.

The interior of Casa Cologan is a higgledy-piggledy of studios, gardens and terraces each as individual as the next. One cottage housed Jose's atelier and another a gorgeous classic Shadow motorbike which I was allowed to ride. Jose's paintings cover every nook and cranny and are for sale, a mixture of landscapes, portraits, abstracts and sculptures using local volcanic stone and recycled materials.

Casa Cologan also offers rental accommodations, and I highly recommend considering a stay, as the hosts exemplify old-school Spanish charm and artistry with an intimate understanding of Tenerife's history.

Bebel, our knowledgeable social guide, adeptly orchestrated many of these experiences. She expertly matches visitors with a deep interest in local history, art, and architecture with local experts. Also highly recommended for the sort of tours that you just can't find elsewhere.

We toured the town again, then stopped at another grand house as we had been invited by Rafael Machado to dine at his private



residence, Casa Machado y Llarena, in the company of his friends and notable figures from the town.

Machado, a retired lawyer, has called this house his family home for generations. It exudes an enchanting blend of Spanish colonial architecture, with sprawling corridors, balconies, and a mesmerising open-air Moroccan-style courtyard covered with a white canvas sail for shade.

Throughout the residence, classical historic paintings depicting famous battles blend seamlessly with modern sculptures—a perfect synthesis of history and contemporary art, characteristic of Tenerife. The ongoing refurbishment of the house employs natural woods and materials, infusing the space with warmth and luminosity, creating a welcoming open-plan ambience.

The buffet was served in a secondary courtyard, which came alive with a coruscating mural painted by a local graffiti artist, depicting an abundance of flowers, ferns, and indigenous fauna. The menu featured an array of traditional Tenerife dishes; Cornejo, mini roasted potatoes resembling sun-dried river stones, crispy cheese and ham croquettes, seared beef, tomato and onion salads, and slices of flavourful chorizo that delighted the palate.

With Rafael's fluency in Spanish, English, and French, conversations flowed effortlessly among guests, each sharing stories in their preferred language, seeking the 'Mot Juste' to convey their experiences. Mary Cabral, our expert tour guide, proved to be a veritable treasure trove of local history and architectural insights.

Casa Machado y Llarena is available for tours and dining and is a must-see.

Our drive back south over the volcano was impressive, passing through the dense cloud called 'La Pansa de Burro,' typically found in the island's north. Temperature variations of over 10 degrees separate the lush, rainier north from the hotter, drier south, with the volcano acting as the dividing line.

To conclude the afternoon, I returned to the beach for a refreshing swim, letting the water wash away the indulgences of the day. As evening descended, I savoured my final night at the Tagara, a brand-new restaurant in the resort that specialises in Canarian cuisine and wines. I had the pleasure of dining with Juan Manuel, the passionate and erudite manager.

Chef Andreas kindly offered to guide my culinary experience, and I gladly accepted his suggestions, as let's face it they know best. The meal commenced with bread and a sublime honey butter, an enticing prelude to the sumptuous tuna carpaccio that followed, along with a tantalising "pulpo picante", accompanied by three different croquettes that were both flavourful and light.



Throughout the meal, Juan Manuel's expertise shone as he provided insights into the gastronomic provenance, the wines, and the local ingredients. The main course arrived—a succulent slow-roasted kid goat, bursting with juicy flavours. The meal concluded with homemade ice cream and flan, the former boasting a subtle density and creaminess that delighted the senses. The dessert wine, a Canary Sack, stood out—a locally produced gem once beloved in 1880s England.

Tenerife proudly stands as a lively and highly sought-after tourist destination, with its pristine beaches, enchanting villages, and majestic landscapes continuing to captivate visitors. The annual Corpus Christi Flower Carpets Festival in La Orotava serves as a testament to the island's vibrant cultural heritage.

The Abama Resort Tenerife encapsulates this remarkable culture, offering an ideal haven for golf enthusiasts and families who appreciate superb cuisine and a wide range of activities in a relaxed yet luxurious setting. With its magnificent villas and apartments nestled within meticulously landscaped gardens, the resort ensures a memorable stay. The variety of high-class restaurants, from Michelin-starred establishments to the relaxed pool bar, caters to every culinary desire, while the warmth, charm, and joy for life exhibited by the people of Tenerife leave a lasting impression.

Last, but not least, Abama also offers the opportunity to acquire villa plots and create opulent residences in prime locations overlooking their magnificent golf course, offering awe-inspiring vistas of the Atlantic Ocean and the stunning Canary Islands. As proud owners and esteemed guests, owners will have exclusive access to the state-of-the-art tennis complex, serene beachfront, and Europe's premier golf course.

Two-bedroom apartments at Los Jardines start from € 876,000.

Abama Resort Tenerife
www.abamahotels.com/en/
Corpus Christi Flower Carpets in La Orotava
www.webtenerife.co.uk
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