



Self guided walk

# *Chamorga* - *Casas de Tafada*



**Parque Rural**  
Anaga

Chamorga is one of the towns of *La Punta de Anaga*, whose main characteristic is its isolation from the main island towns. This isolation is not even broken by the road, built in 1975, or two daily public transport buses, one early in the morning and another one late in the afternoon.

This has forced the inhabitants to exploit the resources of the environment to meet their needs: caves for cattle, stones to create agricultural terraces and steps on almost vertical walls, multipurpose buildings at strategic locations...

Chamorga daily life can be explained through the school's history. In 1936, the large number of children of school age leads neighbours to request a school for the area. At the end of the decade is granted and 100 school children between 6 and 12 years begin their classes in a house donated by a local family.

The house had two rooms, one for the classroom and one for receiving the teacher, but did not have any furniture and each student had to bring their own or sit on the floor.

It gradually improves with some desks and in the 60s the current building is constructed, remaining until our days as the unitary school.



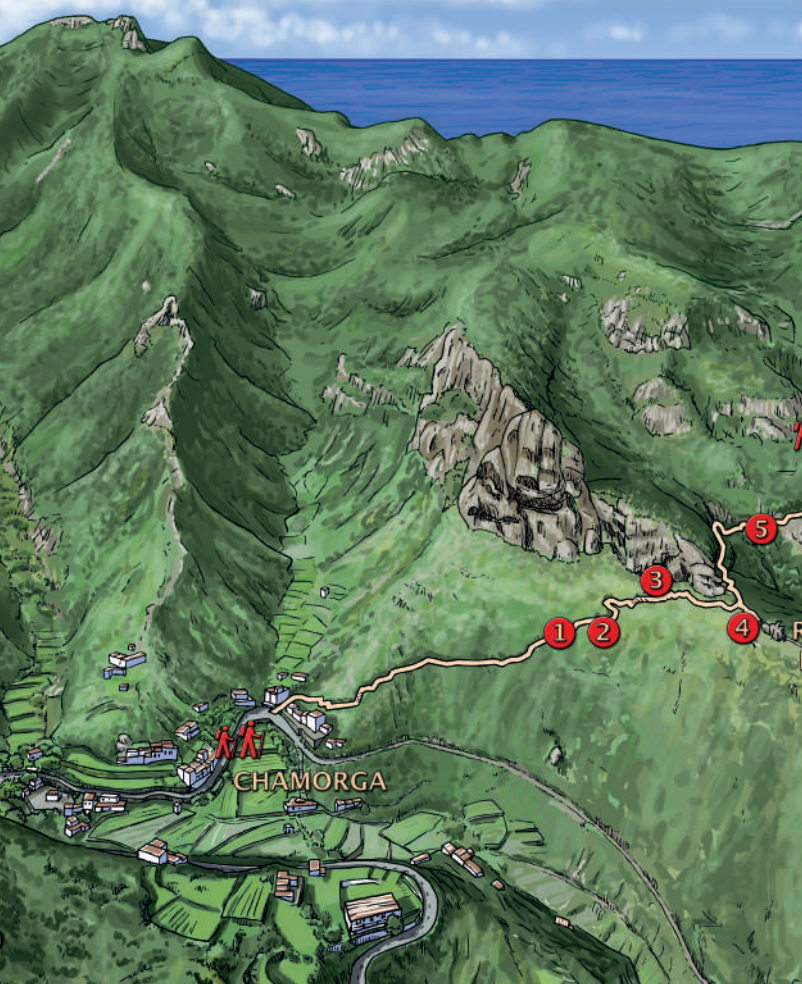


However, as the town loses inhabitants, the school runs out of students. In 2014 there are 3 girls, and in 2015 it will be permanently closed.

But, in the same way that children are still living in the village, Chamorga refuses to vanish away and invites visitors to tour its trails, talk to the people and enjoy their food.



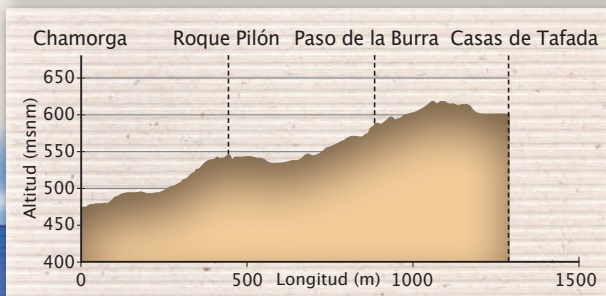
We invite you to discover one of the most remote places of Anaga. Through the stops that we propose in this booklet you will learn how people lived in this area and how the natural resources were managed. To this end, the trail has 7 stops, each marked with a numbered post and several guidance signs identified by two walkers.





## TRAIL INFORMATION

- **Length:** 1,3 km.
- **Duration:** 2 hours (return trip)
- **Effort:** Low
- **Recommendation:** Let your friends or family know where you are going. Use appropriate footwear. You should take a waterproof jacket, warm clothing, a hat, food and water. There are some areas where the ground can be slippery. In a section of the steps there is risk of vertigo.



## SANGUINOS AND AGRICULTURE COEXIST IN THE SLOPES OF ANAGA

You are now facing two sanguinos, a tree species belonging to the “monteverde” (greenwood, laurel and heath forests) of the Canary Islands and Madeira. This species is not very abundant





in our forests and yet along the trail you can see them quite often. Around mid-twentieth century, many inhabitants of Chamorga left the village to work in the Capital. This also led to the abandonment of agriculture, favouring the monteverde trees that slowly colonized farmlands. Today, sanguinos and cultivated land coexist in these slopes. This reflects the spirit of coexistence Anaga, where nature and tradition are two pillars of this natural protected area.

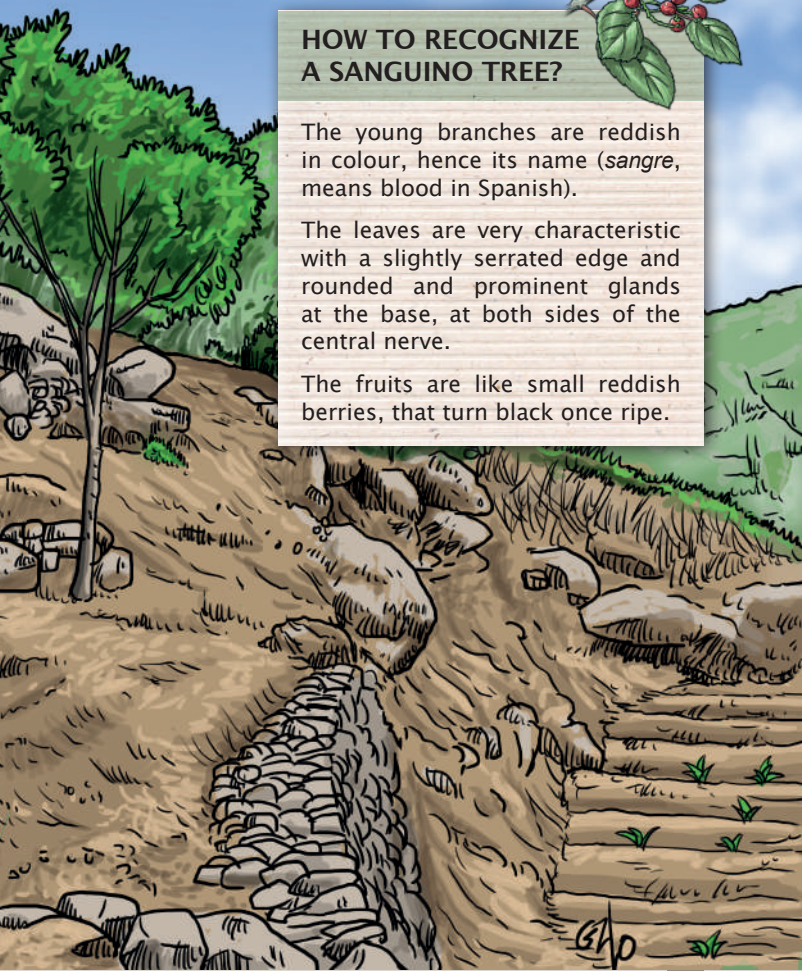


### HOW TO RECOGNIZE A SANGUINO TREE?

The young branches are reddish in colour, hence its name (*sangre*, means blood in Spanish).

The leaves are very characteristic with a slightly serrated edge and rounded and prominent glands at the base, at both sides of the central nerve.

The fruits are like small reddish berries, that turn black once ripe.



## CHAMORGA IS ONE OF THE NEWEST TOWNS IN ANAGA

Emerged in the second half of the XVIII century, it is believed that it was created as a settlement for those who cut down the forest illegally to sell the wood and to obtain farming plots.

The original nucleus was very small, and even nowadays the traditional houses can be distinguished, with stone walls and hipped Arabic tile roofs. The remaining buildings with a flat roof correspond to the first half of the XX century, when Chamorga population peaked during the war and post-war, but never exceeding a hundred inhabitants.

By 1975 the road reaches the village to improve communications with the rest of the island and to make life “easier” for the villagers. However, contrary to what was believed, favored further emigration of their inhabitants, attracted by job improvements and city conveniences.

At present, Chamorga looks into the future recalling its essence,





knowing that rural tourism, organic farming and nature offer new opportunities.



## THE NEARBY CAVES OFFERED MANY ADVANTAGES

In an isolated area like this, cattle were vital. Each family tried to have some goat milk for daily use and a pig, for meat, butchered on special occasions.

Generally, pigs were reared in sheds next to the houses, while goats and sheep were kept in stone pens near the village, in natural caves or in small cavities in the slopes closed by gates made with hurdles and sticks. You are now in one of those places, partially enclosed with dry stone walls and topped with intertwined sticks, locked in stone and rock. And this one is still used to keep goats.

The locations of these pens kept the animals away from the crops, but near the road to take them away every day for grazing, in many cases, to very faraway places. It was like this because the goats could only feed on communal grazing free lands (no owner) in small fields or scattered steep lots (*cadenitas*) owned by the shepherd. Also, in the evening, once the cattle were taken indoors to be milked, people didn't have to walk





long with the heavy load of fresh milk all the way to the village. Everything was conveniently planned.



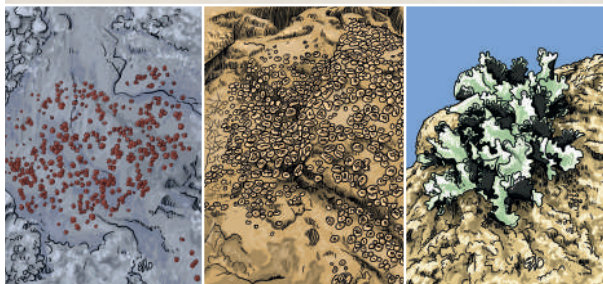
## THIS STONE HAS GROWN A SECOND SKIN

You are now next to Roque Pilon (Pillar Rock). It is believed that its name comes from its pointy shape, similar to a small pillar or column, but no one knows for sure.

In Punta de Anaga, isolation and few roads have maintained a clean and uncontaminated atmosphere. So in many places these huge rocks are lined by lichens that adhere to the stone like a second skin.

Lichens do not have roots and take up water and nutrients from the natural humidity, so when the air is polluted they disappear first. Therefore, they are called biomarkers or natural indicators of pollution.

If you approach the rock, you can distinguish a multitude of shapes and colors. Lichens appear similar to small seedlings, fibrous and twisted yarns, similar to leaves, crusts, coffee stains and spots, or rosettes difficult to distinguish from the rock, etc. showing green, gray, brown and reddish colors. It is a miniature universe that brings together more than ten different species.







## THE ORCHILLA DYED THE EUROPEAN COURTS

In Roques and cliffs where the air is loaded with sea salt grows the Orchilla, a lichen species that produces a red dye which was formerly extracted and highly prized in European courts.

In the XVIII century, orchilla was an important source of wealth. The orchilleros (orchilla collectors) risked their lives, sliding down the cliffs to obtain the precious lichen. On farms spread between Chamorga and Taganana they spent long periods between collecting trips, causing sometimes problems since they would eat fruits and vegetables, freely staying wherever they wanted.

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**THIS PEAR TREE IS AN EVIDENCE  
FOR THE AGRICULTURAL  
IMPORTANCE OF THIS AREA**



General appearance of a pear tree without leaves or flowers.



The region's water and good climate has permitted, during centuries, an important agricultural activity. Some crops include potatoes (normal and sweet) pumpkin, zucchini, corn, wheat, yams, grapes and a wide variety of fruit trees.

Among this later ones pears are remarkable, as the one you can see down the path, both in quantity and variety.

Pears were produced massively here; so many that they were even taken by boat to Igueste, San Andres and Santa Cruz. Women use to carry them in baskets on top of their heads, to later sell them in San Andres. And the elders remember to see the houses in Tafada, towards where we are heading, full of pears. There were many varieties: Buen cristiano (good Christian) la española, la redonda (rounded), la agria (bitter) or la güimarera (from Güímar). Many of these have disappeared from the island, and the ones here are endangered because of land abandonment and plant disease.

## PEAR TREES IN THE CANARIES



Pear trees were introduced after the Conquest adapting very well to the different islands environments, and its fruits were consumed fresh, dried, in potage (a creamy vegetable soup), in syrup, etc. This made pears one of the most cultivated fruits, consumed and appreciated in the Canaries.

It is believed that its cultivation was higher in the islands where sugar cane was produced. Sugar, pears, pumpkins and quince were major components in preserves elaborated then.

The quality of the "island casks" (barrels of sugary fruit) competed with other Spanish goodies of the moment and were so appreciated and exported as Malvasia wine.

**EXPERT HANDS TURNED THIS  
WALL INTO A LADDER AS THE  
ONLY WAY TO TAFADA**





To reach the Houses of Tafada you must first climb the hill and then overcome the cliff facing you. Tens of meters before or after this point the ground forms an impassable cliff wall and only here, in the Paso de la Burra (Donkey's Pass), the slope and ramp are not so steep.

In the XVIII century, the skill of the ancient builders of the road, took advantage of this inclined dike to support at its base a staircase built with stones and rocky slabs that came off the rock wall itself. Above, where the material is easier to work with, they directly carved and chiseled some rock steps to continue the ladder all the way to the top.

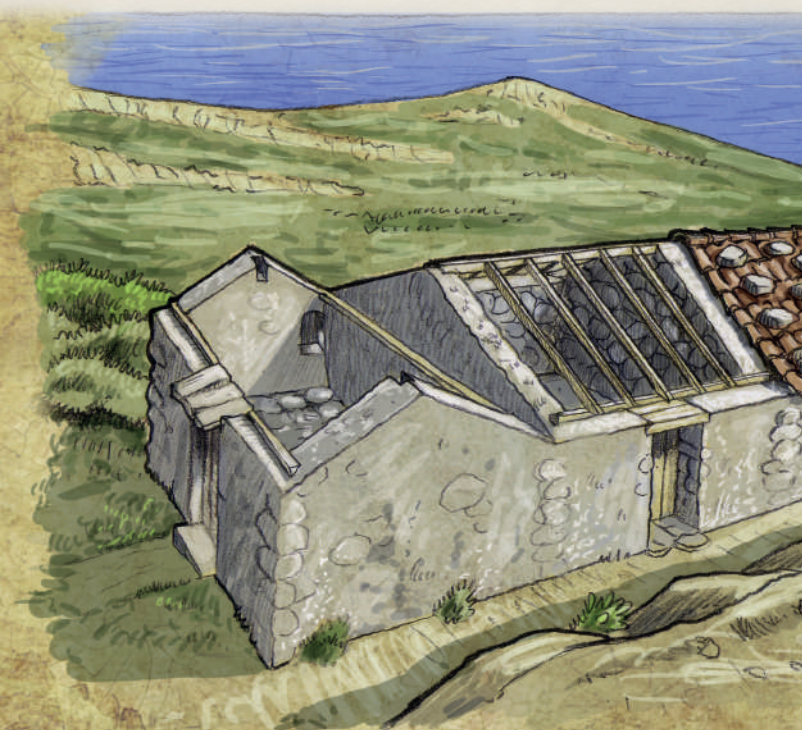
The isolation and need sharpened the inhabitants of these regions wit, forced to adapt to whatever the environment provided. With skilled hands they were able to take advantage of an inclined wall to draw the only possible way over it.



## TAFADA HOUSES: YOU ARE NOW ENTERING THE HACIENDA'S DOMAIN

You are now facing the Tafada Houses ruins, located on the hill with the same name. These houses were never more than shacks, but had a great importance in the operation of the main Haciendas in the area: Las Palmas de Anaga, Los Orobales and Breñas Baja and Alta. Tafada belong to the latter.

These Haciendas (farm complexes) stretched from the coast to the summit and included houses, warehouses and even chapels. Butlers lived in the major housing, and were responsible for all land business and dealing with the workers, sharecroppers and farmers. These in turned





lived in houses and shacks scattered around the farmlands. The Tafada Houses are such buildings used by the workers during the harvest and functioned as a home and storage place.

The small wooded valley you face now is the Hoya de Tafada. This relatively flat basin had water and plenty of grass, so in summer supported more than 50 livestock heads (mainly goats and sheep), and even cattle dealers came here to negotiate the purchase with the stewards. Herders and farmers also used these houses.

Between these walls agricultural laborers, shepherds and tenants took cover, cattle was protected and crops of yam, beans, and especially wheat, millet and fruit were stored. What once were pastures and crops today are monteverde forests.





## OTHER ATTRACTIONS IN PUNTA ANAGA

- Roque Bermejo and Faro de Anaga: You can visit both sites following the marked trail PR-TF 6.1, two of the most beautiful places in Anaga.
- PR-TF 5 Chamorga-Igüeste de San Andres: This trail will lead you to the nearby towns of La Cumbrilla and Lomo de las Bodegas. It also reaches the peculiar and ancient settlement of Las Casillas.
- Montes de Anaga Hostel: Located in the privileged Bailadero summits, with nine rooms for 2, 4 and 6 persons, the facilities meet all the amenities to make your stay at Anaga Rural Park unbeatable.



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