

NANNY TO GO Need help with the kids while you're away? Take a nanny.

Childcare agency **Tinies** (www.tinies.com) has several, available through its new holiday service

The experts

► near the astounding, lunar-like landscape of the Timanfaya National Park, a UNESCO-designated Biosphere Reserve, as well as the fishing village of Playa Blanca and the shops and activities available in Marina Rubicón. The hotel itself has been designed to resemble a traditional island village, albeit one with six innovative restaurants, three pools and a spa. Room rates start at €141.

LOUISE RODDEN

For those into hiking or simply getting out into a more rural location, the tiny, mountainous island of La Gomera has well-marked rainforest trails through its Garajonay National Park, and charming low-key villages. Cliff-top Hotel Jardín Tecina in sleepy Playa Santiago (www.jardin-tecina.com) has comfortable balconied rooms (opt for sea-facing), as well as restaurants, pools and tennis courts within sprawling tropical gardens (doubles from about €500 per person per week, including breakfast). Or consider something smaller: a rural inn of four-star standard perhaps, such as Ibo Alfaro in Hermigua (www.hotel-gomera.com), which



has doubles from €75 a night including breakfast.

On Tenerife, the north of the island has none of the brashness of the south: it is the part that locals know and love. Base yourselves in Garachico, and visit handsome heritage towns such as San Cristobal de la Laguna and La Orotava. I suggest you stay in the lovely 17th-century mansion La Quinta Roja (www.quintaroja.com), facing Garachico's tree-lined Plaza Libertad. Doubles there are from around €120 including breakfast.

THE TOUR OPERATORS PRUE JOHNSON

This year I've predicted that the new Gran Meliá Palacio de Isora in Tenerife will be a big success with Cadogan's clients. Located on the west coast close to a small fishing village, the hotel cleverly gives the impression of being a far smaller, more intimate property than it actually is. It has been designed to sit comfortably against the mountainous backdrop. The low-level buildings look out over the ocean and a fabulous courtyard at the heart of the buildings provides a stunning centrepiece. However, the highlight has to be the exclusive Red Level, a separate area with an 'adults only' policy where you get preferential service (there's a private butler) and can choose between luxurious suites and villas with private pools. Room rates start at about €300 a night, but Cadogan (www.cadogan.holidays.com) offers packages including flights.

LOUISE ROSS

Tenerife is the perfect choice for reliable winter sun. I'd recommend the charming town of Garachico, in the shadow of Tenerife's Mount Teide, because its quaint, cobbled streets, old port and coastline peppered with natural rock pools are in complete contrast to some of the larger resort towns.

Hotel San Roque dates back to the 17th century and is now a stylish 20-bedroom boutique hotel. The owners' collection of original artwork and sculptures adorn the property throughout, while bedrooms and suites are individually styled with bespoke Bauhaus furniture. An alternative, set in its own secluded estate, is the five-star Abama Golf & Spa Resort, owned and managed by Ritz-Carlton. With beautiful views across the Atlantic to the island of La Gomera, the Abama has 10 restaurants, seven swimming pools and a secluded sandy beach. It also offers an impressive spa and an 18-hole golf course. Both can be booked through Carrier (www.carrier.co.uk): seven nights at Hotel San Roque cost from £995, from £1,160 at the Abama, both per person on a b&b basis, including flights and private transfers.



Q&A NICK TREND ANSWERS YOUR TRAVEL QUERIES

Q My husband and I have a long-held ambition to see a solar eclipse and were hoping to book a trip next year. I know there is a total eclipse in the South Pacific in July 2010; do you have any advice as to where might offer the best chance of a clear sky, and also which companies are

offering tours? Our budget would be up to about £4,000 a head.

GF, Cotswolds

A I can't give you categorical advice about where the best views will be, but in any case, since most of the path of the eclipse will be over the Pacific Ocean, you have

relatively few land-based points from which to view it, and the chance of clear skies on the region's small islands is very good. **Explore** (www.explore.co.uk) has four itineraries, all of which involve seeing the 11 July eclipse event on **Easter Island** (famous for its giant Moai carved stone heads). Prices start at £4,295 per person for a nine-day trip to Easter Island and Chile departing 6 July 2010, including flights, transfers, six nights' accommodation (three nights' hotel, three nights' camping) with breakfast, most other meals and a tour leader. Many other itineraries are already fully booked, but you could also try **Explorers Tours** (www.explorers.co.uk) and see if it

has availability. Another option is viewing the annular eclipse in January 2010 in Kenya. (An annular eclipse is similar to a total eclipse, but the moon appears to

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