

Atalaya de Femes

Starting point	Car parking in the centre of Femes
Distance	5.3 miles
Date of Walk	7 February 2015
Traffic light rating	

Introduction: Atalaya de Femes is the second highest mountain on Lanzarote at 611 metres (2004 ft). It is only surpassed by Peñas del Chache (615 metres), above the cliffs of Famara. However, Peñas del Chache is topped by a military installation and is off limits.

From Atalaya de Femes summit are good views of the Montañas del Fuego, the east and west coasts of the island and to the south, Playa Blanca and Fuerteventura. Unfortunately, its summit is marred by a veritable forest of every sort of antenna you can think of but one cannot question the practicality of the location. There is also the Spanish equivalent of a trig.point.

However, do not let this put you off. This is a splendid ridge walk.

The walk starts from the lovely hill-top village of Femes which has a balcony from where there is a stunning view down to Playa Blanca and across the sea to the island of Fuerteventura. It is worth having a wander round before or after the walk. There are a few bars and a nice plaza and church. There is limited parking at the centre of Femes.

The route unfortunately starts with a walk along the LZ-702 but there is pavement initially and then a wide, if rough, verge when the pavement ends, on the opposite side of the road. The walk ends with a somewhat slithery walk down the access track from the masts.

To get to Femes, either take the Calle Del Rubicon out of Playa Blanca (steep road with hair-pin bends) or go via the LZ-702 from the roundabout on the LZ-2 at Uga.

Start: From the village centre, go left to walk down the main road, the LZ-702. There is pavement to start with and when it runs out, cross the pedestrian crossing to walk down the left hand side of the road on the rough verge.

At the edge of the village, pass a bus shelter then a roughly circular area at a road junction planted with palm trees. Ignore the dirt track which goes off to the left immediately after this road junction and continue until you reach the road sign indicating you are leaving Femes ("Femes" crossed through with a red line).

Around 100 yards after this sign, at the end of the field on the left, turn left on to a broad dirt track. There is a white painted small post at either side of the track.

Follow this track along the top edge of the fields for some distance. Eventually, it narrows to a mere footpath and starts to climb gently. It is marked by a few stone

cairns. After passing to the rear of a rough farm building/hut, it crosses a small gully and rises to meet a broader track on the small ridge. Turn left, uphill.

You begin to get sight of the east coast.

The track climbs and just as it reaches a cultivated area (not easy to pick out immediately), before the top of the ridge, fork right, crossing a small, shallow, rough rainwater gully. There is a small cairn. This is the only tricky bit of navigation on the walk.

Cross two further rainwater gullies and after the second, the path swings left, passing another cairn on the left.

On reaching a banking, which seems a result of digging out a drainage ditch next to it, turn left along the banking. The radio masts at the summit soon come into view and the path broadens and becomes clearer. There are views of Montana Cuervo.

You also see several other landmarks including Montana Guardilama and Montana Tinasoria.

Follow the path to the summit. There is a “false” summit first which is the steepest part of the walk. After this the path levels out and descends gently to the access track to the summit. Turn right here.

From the summit, follow the broad track back downhill, passing the point where you joined it.

The track zig-zags down the hill eventually arriving at a couple of posts normally with a chain across to prevent unauthorised vehicles. Just after this, the track curves left to join another track. Turn right here.

The track descends into Femes. When it meets a tarmac road, turn left and at the concrete road, keep straight ahead back to your starting point.

