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Rubicón Plain

Starting point	Faro de Pechiguera (lighthouse), Playa Blanca
Distance	10 miles (5 each way)
Date of Walk	11 February 2016
Traffic light rating	

Introduction: The Rubicón Plain is effectively a desert, in the south west corner of Lanzarote, just north of Playa Blanca. It is a somewhat eerie area overlooked by the Hacha Mountain range, the Atalaya de Femes mountain with its forest of aials and Montaña Roja.

The walk follows the coastal edge of the Plain where there can be impressive breakers crashing ashore. Despite the desert nature, there are some interesting plants here and there.

Somewhat sadly, the most significant feature on the walk is the ghostly ruin of the huge Atlante del Sol hotel. Believed to have been built in the 1960s or 1970s, it is difficult to find out much definite information about it. There are tales of failed attempts to create a golf hotel, embezzlement and illegal development. Whatever the truth, one wonders at the logic of ever considering building a hotel in this remote spot in the first place. There is no beach, although there are Los Charcones – natural seawater pools, which I did not investigate.

The hotel was “squatted” at one time by some unsavoury characters but now seems fully abandoned to its fate. Indeed, it is clearly in a very dangerous state, with part of it having collapsed and I would not venture too close.

Despite having perhaps painted a bleak preamble for this walk, it nevertheless seems quite popular and I saw a few people doing it. Part of the reason for this is no doubt its proximity to Playa Blanca where in effect you follow its promenade west to its end and simply keep going past the Faro de Pechiguera (lighthouse).

It is an easy walk in that there are no gradients.

If you have the benefit of access to a couple of vehicles or are prepared to make use of taxis one way, this could be treated as a linear walk to the Salinas de Janubio (salt pans). However, I did it as a “there and back” walk from the lighthouse to Punta de Piedra Alta, where there is a “trig. point”. You could of course walk less than this by simply turning back when you have had enough.

I started from the Faro de Pechiguera, where there is plenty of parking. To get there by car, turn west off the LZ2 on the northern outskirts of Playa Blanca at the roundabout with the filling station, following the Faro de Pechiguera sign. Count the mini roundabouts and at the seventh one, turn left down to the lighthouse.

As you are following the coast, directions are really superfluous but I will give a few.

Start: Facing the sea, turn right and follow the coast along. After a hundred yards or so, cross a low (couple of feet) wall where generally, there are some rocks piled up to make a crude stile. Alternatively, if you follow the fence, you will avoid the wall altogether.

Pass to the seaward side of some very smart villas where briefly, the path is a broad track.

After passing some open ground, you come to the end of a cul-de-sac road presumably built for future development. Continue beyond here along the paved promenade.

Shortly after the end of the promenade, the broad track curves right. On the bend, take the path on the left.

Soon, you pass an iron waymarker with a red arrow pointing along your route. You will see more of these.

You arrive at an "off-grid" habitation where there are a number of caravans and an old building. Follow the path to the seaward side, passing a small stone shrine.

Eventually, arrive at a stone wall AT Punta Gines, which no longer seems to serve any useful purpose. You could be forgiven for thinking the path goes left here but in fact it goes straight on past the landward end of the wall.

Beyond the wall the path becomes rather indistinct as you cross a stony area but the Atlante del Sol ruin is clearly visible ahead. Just make your way towards it the best way you can.

Pass the ruin – I opted for the landward side to keep away from the collapsing area. The broad track you should be on by now turns inland for a while. Follow the track along passing a stone shelter which could provide a lunch stop, although it seemed to have been used for fly-tipping as I passed.

Simply follow the coast along until the trig. point at Punta de Piedra Alta comes into view.

The return journey is a matter of retracing your steps.

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