



**TELESCOPE
THEMIS**
CNRS / INSU IRL2009

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Visitors Booklet:

Practical and Safety Information for Visiting Astronomers at THEMIS

[ALA-BG-EP 2026]

Rev. 2026



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1. Life at THEMIS:

1.1 Short introduction

THEMIS is located on the island of Tenerife, Canary Islands, Spain, on the site of *Observatorio del Teide* (OT) of the *Instituto de Astrofísica de Canarias* (IAC) at coordinates 28°18'12.1"North 16°30'31.5" West and 2357m of elevation. The site is also known as *Izaña*, and it is a Spanish Natural Park, neighbouring the Teide National Park. During your stay at the observatory, you are requested to respect the natural environment and local wildlife. In particular avoid damaging plants and even walk or drive outside pre-established paths at and around the OT.

1.2 Travelling to THEMIS

The island of Tenerife is connected by air to many European destinations and has 2 airports, the international Reina Sofia (TFS) airport and the domestic Tenerife Norte / Ciudad de La Laguna (TFN) airport. Both are convenient when coming to THEMIS. Reaching THEMIS from any airport is a 40 to 80 km drive, that can be done with a rental car or a taxi. Typical taxi fare from TFN to THEMIS is about 50-70€ (one way).

Travel to and from the telescope is under the responsibility of the observing visitors. If you are in doubt about the local weather conditions, we strongly recommend consulting the different information and links on the [THEMIS weather page](#) and getting in touch with the THEMIS team before traveling to the telescope. Weather alerts may result in the authorities closing the access roads, in which case the telescope and the observatory will be closed as well.

1.3 Arrival

Access to the Teide observatory is forbidden to the general public. At the entrance a barrier gate stops cars from getting in. Observers should make use of the gate interphone to call the gatekeeper. Please identify yourself and tell your interlocutor your name and your business with THEMIS. Expect your interlocutor to speak only Spanish or English. The gatekeeper is a 24/7 service and it must answer you even late at night.

1.4 Lodging at the Observatory / elsewhere

The OT Residencia is offering on-site hotel rooms and a meal service. As an observer at the THEMIS telescope you are entitled to book a room at the OT Residencia at a price of about (Single 75 € - Double: 100,00 €) /night (2025), meals not included. Practical information on this facility together with safety and emergency instructions can be found on their website (¹ in Spanish). Booking your stay or your meals must be done in advance through [their website](#) (²), and you must register prior to any booking. Please note that unless you are explicitly invited by THEMIS, you will have to pay for your room expenses before leaving (credit cards are accepted).

Obviously Tenerife is a very touristic island and you can find a great many offers of accommodation beside the OT Residencia, although not in the immediate vicinity of the OT. The closest alternative is the Parador Nacional de Las Cañadas (20 km away). Other classical alternatives are in La Esperanza and in La Laguna (30-40 km away). While this solution possibly provides you with a better sleep (sleeping in altitude is not always comfortable), you will need to drive up and down to come observing (about 80 km a day), which may also be quite tiresome.

¹ https://www.iac.es/sites/default/files/documents/2018-01/inf-general_OT_4.pdf

² <https://www.iac.es/en/observatorios-de-canarias/teide-observatory/services>



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1.5 Parking

If you come by car, parking space for your car is available next to the Residencia. If you are using your car to come to the telescope, a parking lot is available for THEMIS users next to the telescope. Do not park on the side of the road. **Driving on the THEMIS belt zone with the white stones around the telescope is strictly forbidden.**

1.6 Meals

Meals at the Residencia are convenient and usually very generous. They must be book in advance using the [same website as for booking your room](#). **Meals shall not be booked later than 10:00 am for the same day.** Meal hours are 13:30 for lunch and 19:00 for dinner. Please note that unless you are explicitly invited by THEMIS, you will have to pay for your meal expenses before leaving (credit cards are accepted).

Using the telescope cafeteria: as an alternative for you daily meals, you are welcome in using our telescope cafeteria. We have a small kitchen fitted with a cooking table, a microwave oven, a fridge, a dish washer. Cookware and cutlery are available. However we remind you that you will have to:

- Bring your own supplies for the duration your stay; this is paramount because the nearest food shop is 30 km away.
- Obviously you want to leave this social place clean after using it, as is it shared by everyone using the telescope.
- Should sanitary restrictions be enforced (pandemic specific limitation of the number of people at the same time), they are quite visibly posted on the cafeteria billboard, and you should respect them.

1.7 Weather and weather data

THEMIS is located at 2357m of elevation, higher than most working places in mainland Europe. While the observing campaign is taking place during the good season (spring to fall), please remain aware that you are working at high altitude, that the OT weather may change rapidly and this may affect you work or travel plans. The THEMIS weather station is displaying continuously in the Observing room (501) and is also [available from the THEMIS weather webpage](#)⁽³⁾. In winter and mid-season you should pay attention to temperature and humidity levels, as this is a diagnosis of possible icing on the roads. At any time you shall pay attention to wind speed. There is a reasonably accurate forecast at 3 days for the OT that is available on the THEMIS website⁽⁴⁾, which may be very useful for planning the strategy of your observing run .

1.8 Entering and leaving THEMIS building

Access to the telescope is only permitted under the presence of the telescope operator. The telescope operator will open the main entrance and keep it open while he is present at the building. Being responsible of the daily security of the instrument and site, no observers can stay in the building in his absence. Please respect the working hours of the operators by planning on leaving the premises after sunset. While the telescope operator is present in the telescope the main entrance will be unlocked but the secondary door will be usually locked. The observers are provided with the digital code to this door, and at any time the telescope operator will respond to interphone calls.

³ <https://www.themis.iac.es/doku.php?id=observation:weather>

⁴ https://www.meteoblue.com/en/weather/forecast/meteograms/28.303N-16.509E2369_Atlantic%2FCanary



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Because of the isolated location of THEMIS, the exact number of personnel actually present in the building must be known at all time. **It is therefore compulsory to signal your presence on the board at the entrance, to avoid any trouble.**

As you will need making an appointment with your daily telescope operator, if you happen to be the first to arrive in the morning, please wait outside, the THEMIS staff shall certainly not be too long to arrive. You can also contact the THEMIS to inquire about arrival times.

1.9 Conviviality at THEMIS – living with ASTRI

At first floor, Themis hosts the control room of the ASTRI telescopes, outside our facilities. As ASTRI team is sometimes working during day shift or observing nights, please take into account that you will maybe find some new colleagues in the cafeteria!

So, leave the curtains closed not to contaminate their observations.

Also, you will observe that our colleagues work mainly at night, and they are likely to leave the building to work on their facilities while you are you are still at fifth floor, causing them to set the alarm on, and you getting caught.

For this reason, it is again **compulsory to signal your presence on the board at the entrance, to avoid any trouble.**

1.10 Code of conduct

The THEMIS telescope operates under the ethical and professional guidelines established by the **CNRS Charter of Ethics and Professional Conduct** and the **Instituto de Astrofísica de Canarias (IAC) Code of Conduct**. These frameworks ensure integrity, transparency, and respect in all scientific activities, fostering a collaborative and inclusive environment. All visitors and staff members present in the THEMIS building are expected to adhere to these principles, which promote responsible research, data sharing, and the protection of intellectual property. For further details, refer to the [CNRS Charter](#) and the IAC Code of Conduct. Also, any act of violence, discrimination, moral harassment, sexual harassment, or sexist behavior, as defined in [CNRS Circular No. CIR211829DRH of April 12, 2021 \(amended on July 1, 2022\)](#), is strictly prohibited. Any individual that does not comply to these rules and can be asked to leave the premises and legal and administrative actions will be considered.



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2. Observations

2.1 Telescope operation, operation hours

For solar observations, the telescope can be operated from sunrise + 5° of elevation to sunset -5° of elevation. For Mercury observations the same rules apply for rise and set. For stellar observation, because of our limited support capabilities, the operations hours and the duration of the run must be agreed upon at the moment of submitting your observing proposal. Requests for pointing / tracking celestial objects that are not part of the accepted observing proposal are not automatically approved and shall be discussed on a case by case basis.

You are strongly encouraged to contact your next day operator by phone or email and to make an appointment with him as to the daily starting hour. Quite traditionally, you will be lodging at the OT Residencia, but not the THEMIS crew and we have to drive up > 40 km in the morning to meet you. The THEMIS team is dedicated and professionals and care very much about your run, still unwanted road delays may happen as well as unscheduled personal constraints.

2.2 Technical support during the observation

A qualified technical support is available to any observer coming at THEMIS, meaning that one or more person from the THEMIS crew will be present at all time when you use the telescope. This support person is in charge of:

- Opening and closing the telescope building in the morning and evening
- Initializing the telescope and pointing the targets
- Helping you to obtain your data through instrumental configuration, changing the observing modes (flats, darks...), setting up the adaptive optics, ...
- Answering technical and practical questions

Verifying that the acquired data are correct and useful is your responsibility, although in many cases (and depending on the persons available), we will like to help you to this also.

2.3 Weather observing limits

The telescope operator will stop the observation and close the dome in case of rain, snow, heavy calima (canarian name for haze due to dust coming from the Sahara, affecting visibility and the clarity of the sky), or any other weather phenomenon than can damage the entrance window of the telescope.

The telescope operator will stop the observation and close the dome for either sustained wind speed above 45 km/h or wind gust above 60 km/h. If the telescope is pointing away from the wind direction, the former limit can be relaxed somehow under operator's judgment. The reference wind speed for this decision is i) the Themis anemometer and ii) the AEMET weather station if Themis anemometer is unavailable; weather data is continuously displayed in the observing room and also publicly available on our website.

2.4 Other observing limits

During daytime, It is terminally forbidden to point the telescope in an annulus centered on the Sun and ranging from 2Ro to 12° away from the center. See the panels in the Observing room (501) and on the Cafeteria billboard about this "do-not-enter" zone. Technical supports persons are fully aware of this restriction.



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2.5 Computing, data archiving, copying, data policy

During the observing run, observers are granted access to a dedicated workstation and to the telescope network. You are also welcome bringing your notebook computer and accessing our data storage with it. Wifi is available without password on the ground floor of the telescope and in the observing room.

After each camera acquisition, data is stored locally on a data server computer that can be accessed through ssh, sftp, windows disk mounting, nfs disk mounting. Server IP address is 161.72.129.164, user is 'themis' and password is '04izana', and the daily directory is '/data/themis'

At midnight every night, daily data are copied to another high-speed RAID device for longer term storage, with an additional safety copy to a low-speed cheap-but-large usb drive. After these copies, data are deleted from the former '/data/themis' area. So if you are looking for 'yesterday's data' in '/data/themis', you will NOT find them and this is normal, but you can safely recover them elsewhere.

Please note that because of our firewall you will not be able to access any of these locations from outside the THEMIS building. If you need to access data from your home institution, the THEMIS team can temporarily copy them to an export area that is visible from outside¹.



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3. Safety rules and good practices

At any time, it is absolutely forbidden for visiting observers and for THEMIS staff

- **To smoke in the telescope**
- **To work alone in the telescope**
- **To use the elevator when you are the last one to come or leave the telescope**

3.1 Reporting emergencies

Please report smoke, fire, suspicious smells, spilled water, people sickness, people unconsciousness, any injury to persons, or any other situation you would consider an emergency in the following order:

For an immediate response from other people in the telescope building: use any phone and dial

1155 (general call)

To contact the Observatory administration at the Residencia: use any phone and dial

1120 (OT reception)

In the eventuality none of the above works, you may call the EU emergency number, however, you cannot expect a fast response because of road delays for an emergency team to reach you. Use any phone and dial

112 (Spanish emergencies)

Other possible numbers for any practical problem:

- THEMIS Director mobile phone: +34 619 01 58 93
- THEMIS administrator mobile phone: +34 619 74 54 21

3.2 Evacuation of the telescope or of the observatory

You may be requested to leave immediately the telescope and/or the observatory for safety reasons. The instruction to leave may come from THEMIS or from the IAC-OT, more specifically:

- from the telescope operator, or from any member of the THEMIS staff.
- From IAC-OT personal from the Residencia

You must obey this evacuation order and follow any other specific instruction that may be given to you by the above indicated persons. The most common reason to evacuate the telescope or the observatory is a change in the weather and upcoming strong inclement weather conditions.

3.3 Behaviour in the event of bad weather condition

Exceptionally, between mid-October and mid-May, weather conditions may dramatically deteriorate. In this case, in coordination with the OT personal, our team will invite you to leave the OT.

Please note, that if the situation seems risky, the responsibility of the convoy will be held by the IAC personal.

Also, in the situation where no one from THEMIS team managed to drive up to the OT, please refer to our colleagues of IAC to handle the situation.

When at the residencia, if snow is falling, do not leave the building without informing IAC personal.



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Also, at your arrival at Tenerife, you may find some bad weather. In this case, we strongly recommend getting in touch with Themis personal before driving to the OT. It not unusual to find the road closed.

3.4 Access to technical zones

Themis technical facilities can be dangerous for unaware visitors. It is therefore prohibited to enter the following rooms:

- At level 0 (RdC): the electrical generator room, the refrigeration production unit, the electrical plant, the workshop.
- In the first floor: the air conditioning room, the cooling pump room.
- In the second floor: no access to the spectrographs bottom.
- In the fourth floor: no access to the data center's room.
- AT the fifth floor: no acces to the upper platform.

Also, during telescope operation, no access to the cupola, no more than to the spectrograph.

You will find a bathroom at the level zero, near the cafeteria, and at the third floor.

3.5 Thermal control

The Themis building is fully air-conditioned (regulated with a precision better than the degree) to limit the impact of thermal turbulence on the instrumental "seeing" and the proximity of the building.

To keep the building well regulated, we must specifically:

- Do not enter the forbidden rooms during observations (access to the dome, central pillar, dome, spectrograph, under spectrograph)
- Always keep the following doors closed:
 - the two entrance doors to the building,
 - the two doors to the decompression chamber between the entrance room and the circular corridor,
 - doors to the technical rooms,
 - kitchen door,
 - door between the circular corridor and the staircase.

3.6 Technical work at Themis

In case you come to Themis to do technical work, please note these few points:

- if the instrument is operating, ask before entering spectrograph, or the cupola
- access to the instrument is only authorized in the area concerned by your task
- you are not supposed to touch anything you do not understand
- you do not touch anything without authorization
- access to technical areas, other than those previously authorized, are subject to prior authorization
- access to the electronics laboratory is free, but the use of the equipment must be agreed with the team, especially for work on high voltage equipment (220v)
- access to the mechanical workshop can be authorized if necessary, but the use of machine tools is **strictly prohibited** without prior authorization.



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4. Map of the Teide Observatory of the IAC

