# Woman’s Tenerife party bar experience exposes island’s hidden drug risks to tourists



A woman has shared her experiences of working in a Tenerife party bar, shedding light on the darker aspects of the island’s nightlife that young holidaymakers should heed. Ciara O'Loughlin, reflecting on her time serving cocktails in the vibrant Playa de las Américas, warned prospective visitors about the island's "dark underbelly", particularly linked to drug trafficking and the risks it poses to unsuspecting tourists.

At just 20 years old, after completing her second year at university, O'Loughlin embarked on an adventure with a friend, seeking to embrace independence and earn some money while soaking up the sun. Their summer jobs in a bustling area known for its lively nightlife allowed them to enjoy the thrill of working in close proximity to some of the most popular bars and clubs. However, while the allure of cheap drinks and vibrant parties was undeniable, O'Loughlin quickly learned that beneath the surface of this sunny paradise lay a serious drug underworld.

Her narratives resonate with caution: many tourists, particularly young Brits and Irish, may not realise the potential dangers that accompany their holiday revelries. During her tenure in the bar, a culture emerged where bartenders were encouraged to keep the party atmosphere alive by consuming alcohol during their shifts. This 'party hard' ethos could lead to a myriad of problems, not least the risk of being exploited or caught up in the dangerous world swirling around them. Ciara's own brush with trouble came when she experienced a handbag theft on her way home, highlighting the vulnerability of working in such volatile environments.

This account finds unfortunate corroboration in recent crime statistics related to Tenerife's nightlife. A significant case saw eight individuals sentenced to 21 years in prison for their roles in drug distribution at a nightclub in La Laguna, where authorities seized nearly two million euros worth of illegal substances. This reflects ongoing efforts by Spanish law enforcement to combat the drug trade, which continues to tarnish the island's reputation as a carefree holiday destination.

In addition, the nightlife scene on the Canary Islands faces scrutiny not only for drug dealing but also for the exploitation of young workers. Recently, police uncovered a disturbing trend involving the employment of minors in establishments across Gran Canaria, which brings to light broader social issues regarding age restrictions and community welfare. The juxtaposition of idyllic holiday experiences with such serious infractions raises pressing questions about safety and regulation in the tourism sector.

The darker elements of Tenerife’s party culture also manifest in reports of violence, drug-related crimes, and scams targeting tourists. Areas like Playa de las Américas and the Veronicas Strip, while famous for their energetic nightlife, are increasingly described as perilous. Tourists are urged to remain vigilant, avoid excessive drinking, and stay informed about their surroundings—measures essential for ensuring their safety in these vibrant yet unpredictable locales.

Ciara O'Loughlin's cautionary tale serves as a reminder for all young holidaymakers: while the thrill of a first party holiday is enticing, awareness and vigilance are paramount. As they prepare for sun-soaked escapades, the importance of staying informed about potential hazards cannot be understated. As the island grapples with its dual identity as a tourist haven and a hub for illicit activities, one cannot help but heed the cries for caution echoing from the sunlit shores of Tenerife.

### Reference Map

1. Integrated core narrative regarding Ciara O'Loughlin's account and her warnings about nightlife.
2. Included details about recent drug-related arrests and sentences in La Laguna.
3. Addressed the issue of minors working in nightlife venues and its implications.
4. Discussed the general risks associated with nightlife in Tenerife and relevant advice for tourists.
5. Reiterated Ciara O'Loughlin's insights on the challenges faced by holidaymakers, underscoring her warnings.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/worked-tenerife-party-31668157> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.canarianweekly.com/posts/Eight-sentenced-to-a-total-of-21-years-in-prison-for-drug-dealing-at-Tenerife-nightclub> - In October 2024, eight individuals were sentenced to a cumulative total of 21 years in prison for their involvement in distributing cocaine and hashish at a nightclub in La Laguna, Tenerife. The court also imposed fines amounting to €19.2 million. The operation led to the seizure of nearly two million euros worth of drugs and €53,000 in cash from the defendants' residences. This case highlights the ongoing efforts by Spanish authorities to combat drug trafficking within the Canary Islands.
3. <https://www.canarianweekly.com/posts/Noise-problems-and-underage-staff-issues-escalate-in-Maspalomas-nightlife-scene> - In November 2024, the National Police identified 42 minors working in two nightclubs in the Plaza de Maspalomas shopping centre in Playa del Inglés, Gran Canaria. Laws prohibit individuals under 18 from selling or serving alcoholic beverages. This intervention was part of a broader initiative targeting drug trafficking and substance abuse. The incident underscores the challenges in balancing a vibrant nightlife with legal and social norms to protect community well-being.
4. <https://tenerife.chat/blog/exploring-the-most-dangerous-part-of-tenerife-unveiling-the-risks-and-hazards> - Tenerife's nightlife, particularly in areas like Playa de las Americas and the Veronicas Strip, is known for its vibrant party scene. However, these areas also have a darker side, including incidents of fights, assaults, and drug-related crimes. Tourists are advised to exercise caution, avoid excessive drinking, and stay vigilant to ensure their safety while enjoying the island's nightlife.
5. <https://www.express.co.uk/travel/articles/1922209/brits-tenerife-warning-tourists-drug-underworld> - Ciara O'Loughlin, a former bartender in Tenerife, highlighted the 'dark underbelly' of the island's party scene, particularly in Playa de las Americas. She described a serious drug underworld operating on the island, where unsuspecting tourists can easily find themselves in trouble. O'Loughlin's firsthand account serves as a warning for young holidaymakers to stay vigilant and be aware of the risks associated with the nightlife in Tenerife.
6. <https://penofglen.wordpress.com/2024/06/26/beneath-the-sun-unveiling-tenerifes-dark-secrets/> - An exploration of Tenerife's darker aspects reveals concerns such as scams targeting tourists, violent brawls, and persistent drug trafficking. Incidents like a major scam operation swindling over 1,800 victims and a violent brawl involving British tourists highlight the challenges faced by the island. The rise of 'pink cocaine' and other illicit substances further complicate the situation, emphasizing the need for tourists to remain cautious and informed.
7. <https://edinburghdaily.uk/beware-of-tenerifes-dark-element-british-holidaymakers-warned> - Tenerife's popular tourist destinations, especially Playa de las Americas, have been cautioned about a 'dark element' in the island's nightlife. Reports indicate a serious drug underworld operating in these areas, with bars and clubs involved in illicit activities. Tourists, particularly young holidaymakers, are advised to stay vigilant and be aware of the risks associated with the nightlife scene in Tenerife.