

THE PLAN OF BOOSTING THE SERRANÍA DE RONDA TOURIST PRODUCT

The Serranía de Ronda (Málaga Province) has been declared “a pilot tourist destination” according to the Collaboration Agreement which is outlined in the present Tourism Plan. Its actions are jointly financed by the Secretaría de Estado de Turismo (Government Tourism Secretary), la Junta de Andalucía (the Andalusian Local Government) and the Diputación de Málaga (Málaga City Council). The latter manages the Plan via its Tourism Service. As part of the above mentioned Agreement, the CIT Serranía de Ronda (Centre for Tourist Initiatives) and the Consorcio Serranía de Ronda, take an active part in the Plan.

The goal of this Plan, which was created in 2008, has been divulging the resources, services and the tourist offer of a specific area as a structured product which adds distinguishing value to the tourist destination in question. All of the above is designed and executed with quality and integration with the natural environment in mind. The investment has reached 4.530.000 Euros and has been converted into the following:

- Resources for the Regional Tourist Office in Ronda
- Resources for the Tourist Information Points (PIT) in hotels/ other establishments
- Birdwatching Viewpoint (Mirador de Africa), in Benarrabá
- Birdwatching hide and a feeding station for carrion birds, in Cortes de la Frontera
- Recreational adaptation and enhancement of the value of the Eucalyptus Arboretum, in El Colmenar (Cortes de la Frontera)
- Adaptation of the Visitor´s Centre of The Arboretum, in El Colmenar (Cortes de la Frontera)
- Adaptation of the recreational area, in Montecorto
- Restoring sculptures (Open-air museum, the village), in Genalguacil
- Design of the product “A Network of Viewpoints”. Projects
- Adaptation of the Network of Viewpoints
- Viewpoint of Fray Leopoldo, in Alpendeire
- Monument to Fray Leopoldo of Alpendeire
- Wooden enclosures for trash containers
- Floodlighting for the Castillo de Gaucín
- Artistic lighting feature at the irrigation channels, in Montecorto
- Spotlights for the sculptures, in Genalguacil
- Uniform waymarking system for the region
- Tourist offer infrastructure, in Faraján
- Infrastructure (phase 1) for the Multiadventure Park, in Benadalid
- Resources for the Casa de Moros y Cristianos, in Benalauria
- Meeting and congress hall for tourism, in Benalauria
- Mycology Interpretation Centre, in Júzcar
- Train Station Tourist Centre, in Arriate
- Reception and Interpretation Centre of Los Riscos, in Cartajima
- Equipment for the Popular Arts and Aguardiente Museum, in Jubrique
- Ethnographical Museum of Benalauria
- Museum of the Chestnut, in Pujerra
- Museum of the Canyon, in Gaucín
- Open-air Museum of Mosto (local young wine), in Atajate
- Embellishment of the irrigation channels (asequias), in Montecorto
- Embellishment and waymarking, in Jubrique
- Adaptation of the surroundings and access to the “Doce Pilares”, in Montecorto
- Adaptation of “El Chorrillo”, in Serrato
- Route of El Chorrillo, in Serrato
- Route of Camino Molino, in Faraján
- Route of Los Riscos, in Júzcar
- Route of el Mosto, in Atajate
- Route of El Concoste-la Portá, in Benarrabá
- Route of El Charco de la Cal and Las Caleras footpath, in Igualaja
- Route of Los Nacimientillos-Las Pilas, in Algatocin
- Route of Fray Leopoldo de Alpendeire, in Alpendeire
- Recovery of the Camino del Cura, in Benalauria
- Improvements around Las Buitreras and Puente los Alemanes, in Cortes de la Frontera
- Design for the development of the product “The Great Path of the Serranía de Ronda”
- The Great Path of the Serranía de Ronda -GR 141-
- Design of the product “Vias Ferratas” (fixed climbing routes)
- Vias Ferratas Network (12)
- Resources for the Albergue las Conejeras, in Parauta
- Culture Park: adaptations necessary to make the Nazari district functional
- Adaptation of the Centre of Speleology Interpretation (Caving) Museum, in Montejaque
- Adaptation of rock climbing areas
- Downhill slope for MTB cycling, in Algatocin
- Area for Motor homes, in Benarrabá
- Canoeing Station (restoring of the train cars), in Jímera de Líbar
- Orienteering Circuits, in Jímera de Líbar and Montecorto
- Restoring of the Historic Wash-house La Fuente, in Jímera de Líbar
- Implantation and consolidation of the Modelo de Aproximación a la Calidad Turística (WACT). Tourism Quality Model
- Training Course: a Network of Tourist Information
- Training for business people in the field of tourism: “Know your tourist environment”
- Implementing the SICTED
- Design of the product “Heritage of natural springs and wash-houses”
- Design used to develop “Specialised Complex of Almazara (Museum-Restaurant, Interpretation Centre and Information Point (PIT) in Jímera de Líbar”. Projects.
- Publishing maps- tourist leaflets and the Boosting of Tourism Plan. Different languages.
- Publishing of the files of the Boosting of Tourism Plan
- Publishing of leaflets with 6 footpaths: Charco la Cal, Caleras, Mosto, Riscos, Concosté-La Portá and Los Nacimientillos-Las Pilas
- Charts of urban walks: production, design and publishing
- Guide to the resources of the olive oil tourism in the Serranía de Ronda
- Information system and Stock Images. WEB
- Videos of tourist resources of the Serranía de Ronda
- Active Tourism Guide to the Serranía de Ronda (Spanish and English)
- Topography Guide to The Great Path of the Serranía de Ronda -GR 141- (Spanish and English)



THE SERRANÍA DE RONDA

A REGION BEAUTIFUL BY NATURE

ACTIVE TOURISM

● It is located in the north-eastern part of the Málaga Province. It covers the surface of a little over 1.500 km2. The Serranía de Ronda is characterised by an abrupt land relief where the great valleys of the Río Guadiaro and Río Genal stand out, contrasting with the plains of the Meseta de Ronda and the Sierra de las Nieves mountain range.

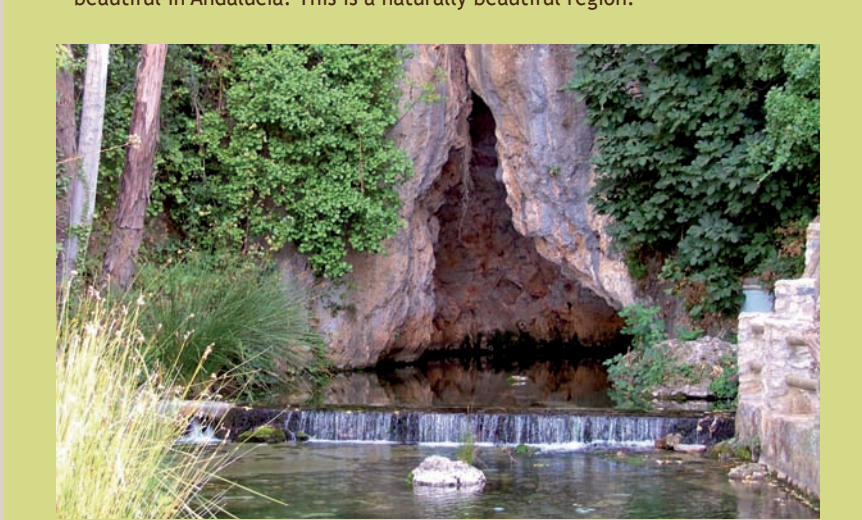
● The principal attractions of the region are its rich culture and nature, which, joined with a wealth of ethnographic heritage preserved by the local inhabitants along many generations, offer the visitor never-ending opportunities for their visits and trips.

● There are traces of many different cultures which have passed through the Serranía de Ronda and which used to occupy the south of the Iberian Peninsula. Amongst these traces there are such highlights as the cave paintings in the Pileta cave in Benaolán, the amphitheatre and Roman city of Acinipo, the Arabic Castles in Benadalid and Gaucín and the historic old town of Ronda.

● One detail that proves the importance of the natural values of the area is that the entire Serranía de Ronda, along with other Andalusian provinces and northern Morocco, constitutes the Intercontinental Biosphere Reserve of the Mediterranean; the first intercontinental area declared a Biosphere Reserve by UNESCO. The great biological diversity is reinforced here by the fact that the different parts of the region are officially protected in some way:

- Three Natural Parks: Sierra de Grazalema (Benaolán, Cortes de la Frontera, Jímera de Líbar, Montejaque and Ronda), Sierra de las Nieves (Parauta and Ronda) and Los Alcornocales (Cortes de la Frontera).
- Paraje Natural (Nature Site): Sierra Bermeja (Genalguacil).
- Two Nature Monuments: Cañón de las Buitreras (Cortes de la Frontera and Gaucín) and Pinsapo (Spanish Fir Tree) de las Escaleretas (Parauta).
- Un Lugar de Interés Comunitario, (A site of EU interest, abbreviated as LIC): Valle del Genal (Algatocin, Alpendeire, Atajate, Benadalid, Benalauria, Benarrabá, Cartajima, Faraján, Gaucín, Genalguacil, Igualaja, Jubrique, Júzcar, Parauta and Pujerra).

● Either because of their nature or their culture, the 21 villages which make up the Serranía de Ronda, have something to offer to the visitor. The beauty of their streets and squares, strongly marked by their Arabic past, compete for uniqueness with the beauty of the landscapes.



● Walking is the most practiced sport in the Serranía de Ronda. The number of kilometres of waymarked footpaths, scarce population, and the variety and beauty of the landscapes which you pass through make this region one of the most attractive ones to enjoy walking and the solitude in nature.

● In the Serranía you can experience a variety of canoe trips, from relaxing ones in the Zahara reservoir to the dizzy white-water descents down the Guadiaro river in high water season.

● There is an entire inland world full of history and legends, water springs, abandoned hamlets, mills and farmhouses awaiting you. All you need to do is leave your car behind, put your boots on and follow the footpath. The Great Path of Serranía de Ronda is waiting.

● The Serranía de Ronda is a region characterised by a great expanse of open spaces, which cannot be reached by road, leaving this inside world to be reached only on foot or on bicycle wheels.

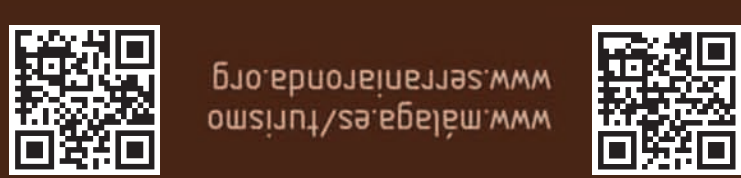
● The Serranía de Ronda boasts a Via Ferrata park which is the most important one in Spain, as well as active tourism companies prepared to help you practice this sport safely.

● The terrain of the Serranía de Ronda, mostly consisting of limestone rock, almost entirely free of vegetation, is a true paradise for rock climbing enthusiasts, especially those who do sport climbing, preferring higher levels of difficulty over scaling the highest rock faces and peaks.

● The Serranía de Ronda has all the necessary features allowing the existence of canyons, the best known one is the Cañón de las Buitreras, a Junta de Andalucía Nature Monument. Active tourism companies have the equipment and technical knowledge necessary to help you practice canyoning safely.

● The network of viewpoints of the Serranía de Ronda is a novel idea which allows visitors to explore those regionally significant features which are difficult to see otherwise. In order to achieve this, some of the best vantage points of the region's geography have been used to broaden the traditional concept of a viewpoint merely understood as a high point used to enjoy the broad views.

● The Serranía de Ronda offers a whole underground world to be discovered and enjoyed. The characteristic erosion produced by weathering and the dissolving of calcite which makes up a good part of the Serranía de Ronda, has created throughout the millions of years one of the most spectacular landscapes on Earth, the karst or karstic land relief.





GR-141.The Great Path of the Serranía de Ronda

- The Gran Recorrido (GR) long distance footpaths are legalised and waymarked, and minimum 50 km long. (see the chapter on walking in the *Active Tourism Guide*). There are four GR long-distance walks:
- GR-7 Tarifa-Andorra-Templo de Delfos. A long-distance walk which connects Tarifa and Andorra, crossing all of Spain. Additionally, this footpath forms part of the European route E-4 that leads to the Delphi Temple in Greece. The GR-7 crosses the Serranía de Ronda from south to north through the Guadiaro Valley and the Meseta de Ronda.
- GR-249 The Great Malaga Path. A walk of 35 stages through Malaga province, visiting the most beautiful landscapes, both along the coast and inland. In the Serranía de Ronda, the GR-241 leads along the valleys of the Guadiaro and Genal rivers.
- GR-243 Long Distance Walk in the Sierra de las Nieves. A circular walk which allows you to discover the Sierra de las Nieves Natural Park and its charming villages.
- The Great Path of the Serranía de Ronda. It is a well-known fact that one of the best ways to get to know a place is to abandon the roads and walk into the landscape. In the Serranía de Ronda this is particularly true since, for technical reasons, no modern roads were built along the old routes linking the many villages as it had happened in other regions where the terrain was gentler. In this way, a whole inland world waits here to be discovered, full of stories and legends, natural springs, abandoned hamlets, mills and farmhouses. Of course, you have to leave the car behind, put your boots on and follow the footpath. The Great Path of the Serranía de Ronda is waiting.

But do not worry, you will not be alone. The route leads through most of the small villages of the Serranía de Ronda where you can recharge your batteries in one of the bars and restaurants, buy food for the journey and even spend the night in one of the village holiday homes or small hotels.

● STAGE 1. RONDA-JIMERA DE LÍBAR

The starting point of the GR -141 is the Plaza del Campillo, in Ronda's Old Town. The route takes you down to the bottom of the Tajo gorge and from there leads along the Guadiaro Valley, with the river and the railroad being your fellow travellers along the entire stage. You will be walking quite close to the Cueva del Gato cave and pass through the villages of Benaoján, Estación de Benaoján, Estación de Jimera de Líbar and finally Jimera de Líbar, a sunny village where you can refuel and relax after the day's endeavour.

● STAGE 2. JIMERA DE LÍBAR-EL COLMENAR

You will leave the village of Jimera de Líbar passing in front of his old wash-house. The walk leads along the hillside on the left bank of the river through dehesas (farmland with cork oak trees), olive groves and mountain farms with unparalleled views of the Sierra de Líbar.In the so-called "Laguna Honda" you can choose to get closer to the village of Cañada del Real Tesoro (or Estación de Cortes) to freshen up and have a hot meal, or you can continue straight to your destination. Both routes join within a few meters after leaving the village and at the level of the bridge El Puente de Los Alemanes the path enters the closed-in gorge Canyon de Buitreras, one of the most beautiful and spectacular landscapes of the valley. Do not be surprised to find groups dressed in neoprene wetsuits ready to practice canyoning. At this point, the path crosses the river and continues along its right bank, by the Charco del Moro and a picturesque suspension bridge just before reaching the quiet village of El Colmenar (or Estación de Gaucín) where Stage 2 ends.

● STAGE 3. THE COLMENAR - BENARRABÁ

At this stage you leave the Guadiaro Valley to meet the Genal Valley. Before that happens, you need to leave El Colmenar crossing the Guadiaro river again and walk up along its left bank between pastures and farmland until you get to the next valley. The scenery that unfolds before your eyes is so different that it

seems impossible that you have covered only a few kilometres. The village of Gaucín offers all kinds of services and it is worth a visit, especially its magnificent castle where you can enjoy lovely views towards the Strait of Gibraltar. The path leaves Gaucín and leads direction north along the right side of Valle del Genal. You can sense rather than actually see the river winding through the valley. Your final destination, Benarrabá, appears before you as a white spot among cork oaks and chestnut trees. It's time to relax and enjoy a well-deserved rest.

● STAGE 4. BENARRABÁ-BENALAURÍA

This Stage will let you get to know the Genal river up close, a paradise frozen in time that will not leave you indifferent. You will be coming out of Benarrabá walking downhill until you reach a bend in the river, a place known as "Llano de la Escribana ", an ideal spot to have a swim. From here onwards you will start on an incredible-looking path leading straight into the belly of the Genal, along its left bank. Aerial walkways allow you to literally walk over water until you reach Venta San Juan, a popular swimming area where you can relax and satisfy your hunger. The path crosses the river and it is time to say farewell to the river as you will not be as close to it again. Along the right slope you will be walking uphill gaining height among cork oaks until reaching Benalauría, the best reward for this tough stage.

● STAGE 5. BENALAURÍA-ALPANDEIRE

From Benalauría onwards, the path is agreeable and dotted with little villages, each one full of harmony and with better and better views, such as Benadalid and its castle, Atajate and its young wine.

In Atajate you turn sharply eastward and move away from the valley in search for the Audalazar river, a shy and impenetrable right-bank tributary of the Genal. If you take your shoes off to cross the river at the ford, the cold water will take away the heat and fatigue accumulated during the five days of the Path. This could be a little break to think how five centuries ago in this area the settlement of Audalazar was irreparably abandoned, like many other villages, when the assimilated Moors (Moriscos) were thrown out of the Kingdom of Granada. It is time to return to the footpath. It is a short but strenuous climb up the left bank of the river to the village of Alpandeire, where Stage 5 ends.

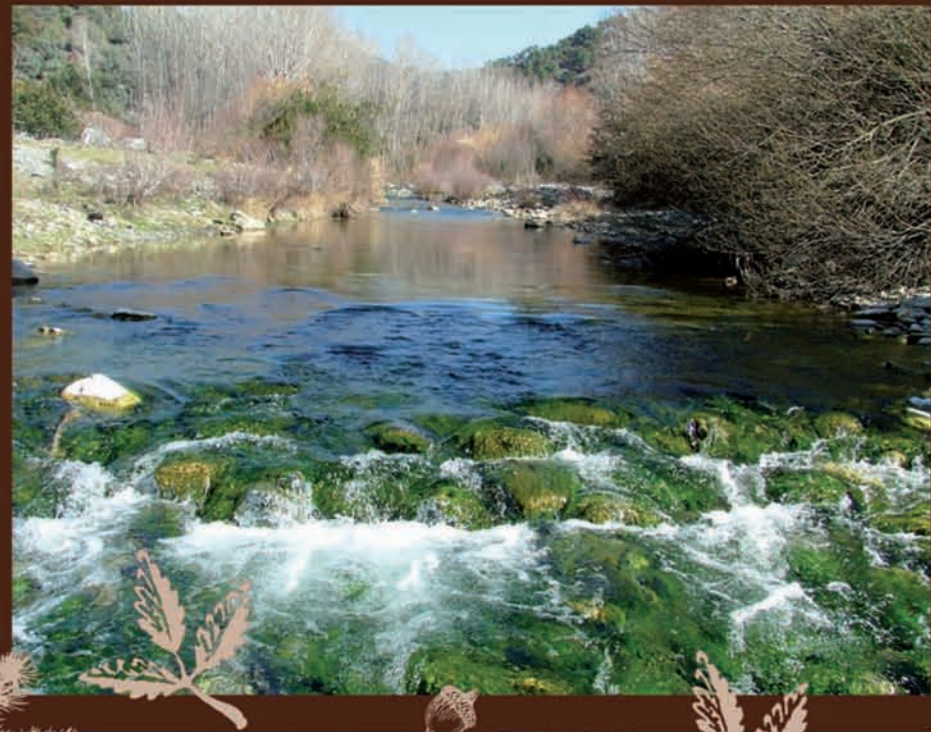
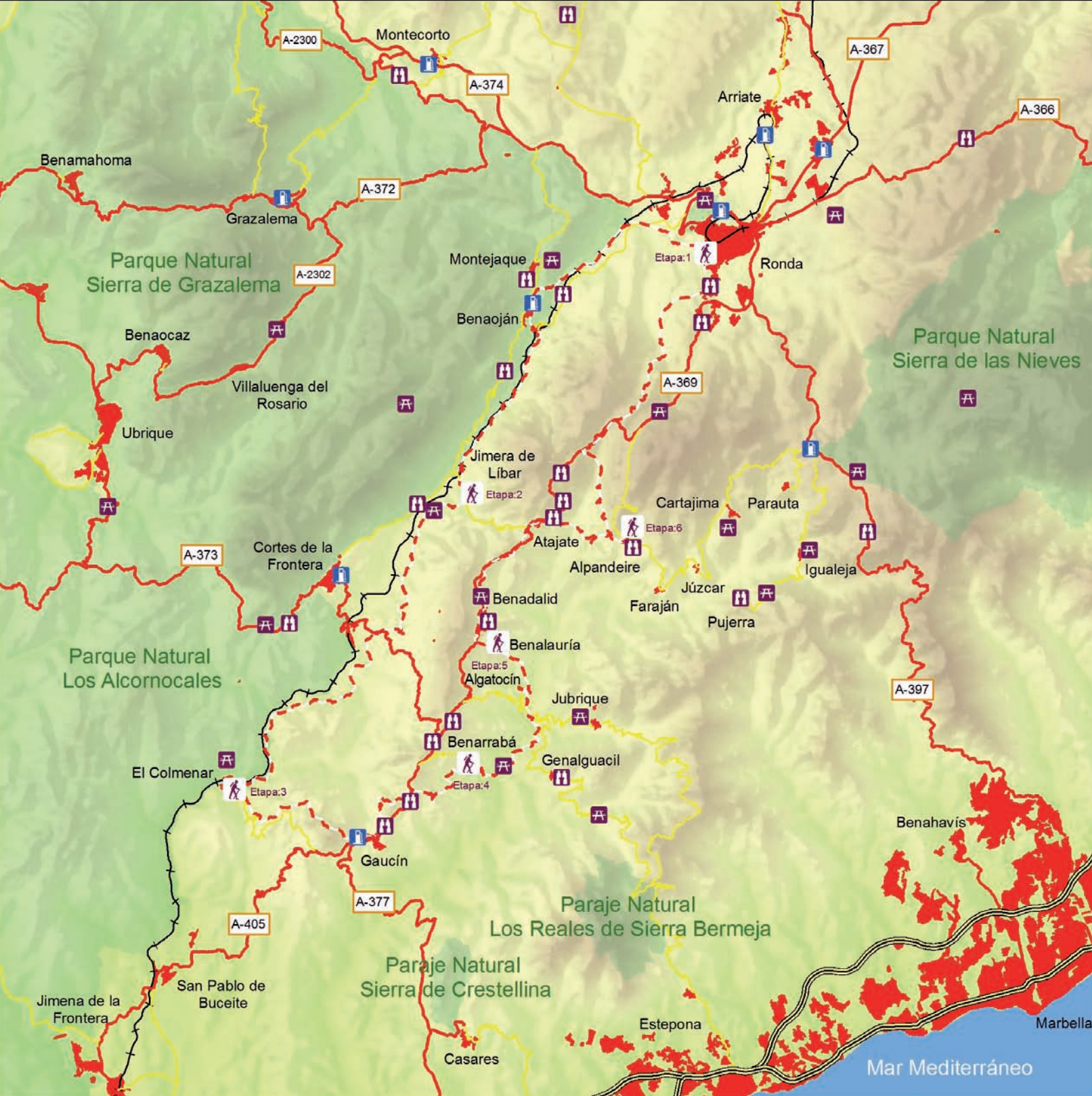
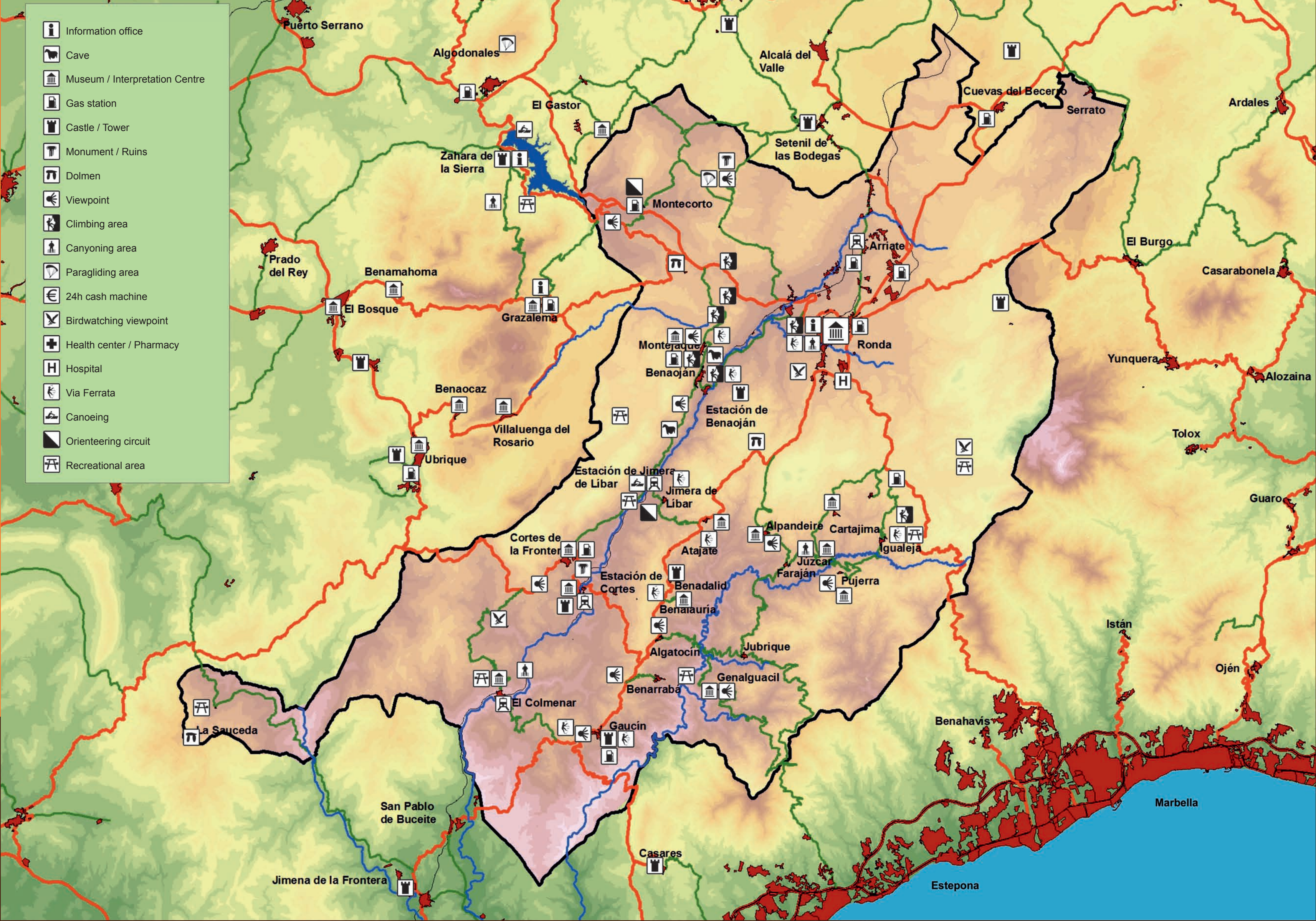
● STAGE 6. ALPANDEIRE-RONDA

Waking up in Alpandeire is a true gift to your senses. At your feet, you can make out the indecisive course of the Genal River which still seems to be looking for its older sister, the Guadiaro. The rivers will be united soon, and the Genal river's name will disappear, shortly before both rivers flow together into the Mediterranean at the level of Sotogrande. But let us not forget our destiny lies elsewhere: Ronda.

You will be leaving the village along the same path you had arrived on. Now, however, you are following the small valley of Audalazar, upstream, not losing any of the altitude. You will be crossing the gully and continue climbing between pastures and farmhouses seemingly suspended in time.

The stone-paved path is so old that nobody remembers its age, but certainly the early men must have walked this path and they have marked their land and the final resting places of their ancestors with dolmens called Mimbres, Los Monteros and Encinas Borrachas. It is at the Encinas Borrachas pass where you abandon the Genal Valley for good. One last look back and you enter a more gentle terrain, where Ronda starts showing behind the bends in the road. First, however, the Great Path of the Serranía de Ronda offers one last surprise. Unexpectedly, the path is enclosed by stone walls forming a spectacular gorge, the Tajo Abanico; you will be crossing the whole Tajo before arriving in Ronda at the San Francisco neighbourhood.

It is the end of a road that, and in exchange for your effort, you have been shown the best kept secrets of the Serranía de Ronda. A region original by nature.



Serranía de Ronda

THE PLAN OF BOOSTING THE SERRANÍA DE RONDA TOURIST PRODUCT

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