



2.

GR-141

Gran Senda

in the Serranía de Ronda

Long-distance trails or Senderos de gran Itinerary (commonly known by the abbreviation GR). They are long routes officially approved and signposted with a minimum length of 50km (see the Section *Hiking* of this Guide of Active Tourism). This region boasts four long-distance trails:

GR-7 Tarifa-Andorra-Temple of Apollo. Long route across Spain linking the town of Tarifa and Andorra. It is part of the E4 European long-distance path, which ends in the Temple of Apollo in Greece. The GR-7 traverses the Serranía de Ronda from south to north along the valley Valle del Guadiaro, in the plateau of Ronda.

GR-249 Gran Senda de Málaga. It is composed of 35 separate routes along the most beautiful coastal and inland landscapes. GR-241 crosses the valleys Valle del Guadiaro and Valle del Genal in the Serranía de Ronda.

GR-243 Long-distance trail in Sierra de las Nieves. Sierra de las Nieves Natural Park and its enchanting villages can be discovered by hiking this circular trail.



Hiking in Valle del Guadiaro. *Miguel A. Mateos*



Ancient trail of Tajo del Abanico. *David Barrera*

GR-141 Gran Senda de la Serranía de Ronda. It is a circular trail composed of 6 separate routes along a large part of the Serranía de Ronda.

GRAN SENDA DE LA SERRANÍA DE RONDA

It is perfectly well known that you will enjoy unforgettable landscapes exploring the region off-road. Unlike other regions with a gentler orography, this fact becomes especially true in the Serranía de Ronda because modern roads were not built, for technical reasons, along ancient paths which used to link different villages. Thus an unexplored world with stories and tales, fountains, abandoned *alquerias* (old farmhouses), mills and *cortijos* (typical Andalucian country houses) is out there awaiting a doughty explorer to discover it. You will need to park your car, put your hiking boots on and follow the route. The Gran Senda de la Serranía de Ronda is waiting for you.

You will not feel alone at any time as the trail goes through most of the small villages in the Serranía where you can have a well-deserved rest in bars and restaurants, buy food for the hike and even stay overnight in a cottage or a small hotel.

Jimera de Líbar. *Felipe Crespo*



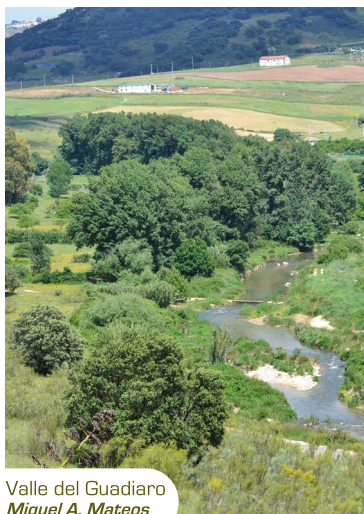


2. GRAN SENDA

ROUTE 1. Ronda-Jimera de Líbar

The point of departure of GR-141 is from the square Plaza del Campillo, in the old town of Ronda. The route drops down into the gorge el Tajo and from there to the valley Valle del Guadiaro, where the railway and the river will become your soul-mates along the whole route.

You will be walking close to the cave Cueva del Gato and going through the towns of Benaoján, Estación de Benaoján, Estación de Jimera and, finally, Jimera de Líbar, a sunny town where you could have a rest.



Valle del Guadiaro
Miguel A. Mateos

ROUTE 2. Jimera de Líbar-El Colmenar

Once you have left Jimera de Líbar and its ancient washing place behind, the route goes through the left bank of the river crossing open woodland scattered with cork oak, olive groves and *cortijos* with superb views to the mountain range Sierra de Líbar.

In Laguna Honda you can rather walk to the nearest village Caña del Real Tesoro (also called Estación de Cortes), ideal to have a good rest break and take in hot food, or keep walking to your destination. Both paths meet a few metres after the village where it stretches leading to the canyon Cañón de las Buitreras through the bridge Puente de los Alemanes. This is one of the most impressive and beautiful spots in the valley. It is very common to come across with canyoneers wearing their wetsuits ready to practise canyoning.



Ancient washing area in Jimera de Líbar. *Miguel A. Mateos*



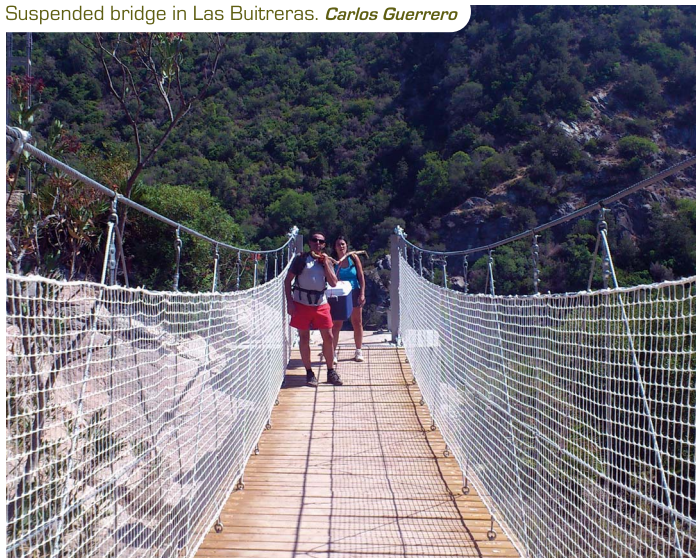
It is then when the route crosses the river and goes along the right bank, passing by the Charco del Moro and a spectacular suspension bridge. Finally, you will arrive to the end of the second route in the quiet village El Comenar (also called Estación de Gaucín).

ROUTE 3. El Colmenar-Benarrabá

In this route you will leave the Valle del Guadiaro behind and will discover the Valle del Genal. Once you have walked through the village El Colmenar and crossed the Guadiaro River again, you will hike uphill on the left bank of the river across open woodlands and agricultural fields towards the other valley. It seems impossible that after having walked a few kilometres you can be delighted with such a different and beautiful landscape. It is worth visiting the village of Gaucín, where you will find all necessary services and enjoy the magnificent castle with sweeping views to the Strait of Gibraltar.

The route leaves Gaucín behind and goes along the right bank of the Valle del Genal. The river becomes nearly invisible weaving back and forth through it. At the end of this route, the village of Benarrabá starts to show up in the distance with its characteristic white houses surrounded by cork oaks and chestnuts. It is time to enjoy your well-deserved rest. ►

Suspended bridge in Las Buitreras. *Carlos Guerrero*





Surrounded by holm oaks. *David Barrera*

ROUTE 4. Benarrabá-Benalauría

This route will allow you to discover the Genal River, a secret paradise frozen in the past which will not disappoint you. When you leave the village of Benarrabá you will reach the river meander called Llano de la Escribana, a popular place to take a dip. From there you will penetrate into the valley, walking through the left bank of the river and some suspended footbridges will let you arrive to a popular swimming area called Venta de San Juan where you could have a rest and enjoy a delicious meal.

The route crosses the river again and it is then when, much to your regret, you will say goodbye to this paradise. If you keep walking uphill on the right bank you will arrive in Benalauría, which will become the best reward after this difficult route.



Footbridge over Genal River. *Rafa Flores*



Cobbled paths. *David Barrera*

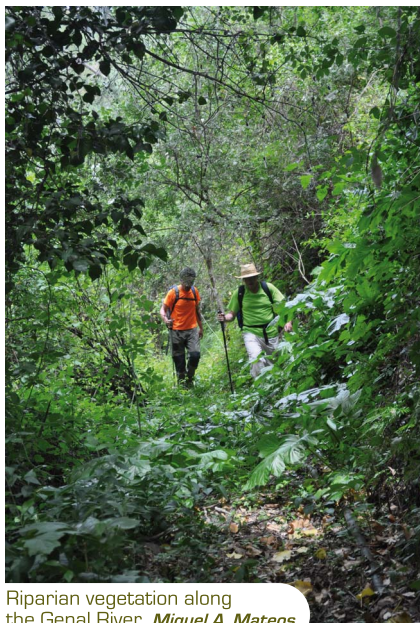


ROUTE 5. Benalauría-Alpandeire

After Benalauría, the route is easier and is dotted with beautiful villages, each of them boasting marvellous views to the valley and their own traditions: Benadalid and its castle; Atajate and its grape must.

It is exactly in Atajate where you will turn sharply to the east and descend again to the valley looking for the inscrutable and shy Audalázar River, a right tributary of the Genal River. If you take your boots off in the ford of the river, you will experience an exceptional relief after five days of hike thanks to its refreshing water. You will then visualize how five centuries ago the alqueria of Audalázar was prominently erected in this area before it was abandoned, as many other villages, when the Moors were expelled from the Kingdom of Granada.

It is time now to return to the route where you will need to face a difficult ascent along the left bank of the river to arrive in Alpandeire, the end of the route.

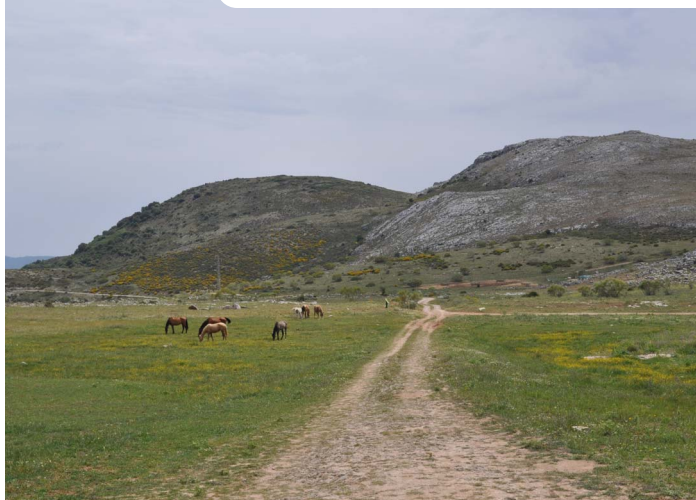


Riparian vegetation along the Genal River. *Miguel A. Mateos*



2.GRAN SENDA

Encinas Borrachas Mountain Pass. *Miguel A. Mateos*



ROUTE 6. Alpandeire-Ronda

Having the opportunity to wake up in Alpandeire is a real gift. From there you can predict the hesitant course of the river joining the Genal River, name that they will take to flow together and discharge into the Mediterranean Sea at the level of Sotogrande. However, our next destination is another one: Ronda.

You will walk back to the same route but this time you will turn off and hike uphill through the small valley Valle del Audalázar. You go through the canyon and walk along pasture lands and cortijos frozen in the past. It is impossible to know how ancient the cobbled path is but you can observe how centuries ago it was marked out with burial mounds for the ancestors: the dolmens of La Mimbres, Los Monteros and Encinas Borrachas. And it is precisely here where you will leave the Valle del Genal behind and after looking back for a while; you will walk along a gentler route towards Ronda.

Nevertheless, the Gran Senda de la Serranía de Ronda has a last surprise for you. The route stretches leading to a spectacular rocky gorge called Tajo del Abanico before arriving in Ronda through the neighbourhood El Barrio de San Francisco.

It is the end of a route that has shown, in return for the effort, the well-kept secrets of the Serranía. A region of natural beauty.



REQUIRED EQUIPMENT

- Hiking boots • Suitable clothes based on the season and the route • Long trousers • Warm clothing • Hat or cap • Map or a guide of the route • Water • Food • Mobile phone with a spare battery • Torch • First-aid kit

TO FIND OUT MORE

Official website of *Federación Andaluza de Montañismo* (the Andalusian Hiking Association) where you could free download useful information about the *GR-141 Gran Senda de la Serranía de Ronda*.

<http://www.fedamon.com/index.php/home-6>



Official website of GR7 along Andalusia.

<http://www.andalucia.org/es/rutas/sendero-europeo-peloponeso-tarifa-gr-7-e-4/>



Link to the official website of the *GR-249 Gran Senda de Málaga* with information about the different routes, distances, videos and more.

www.gransendademalaga.es



BOOKS

- **Topoguía del GR-141 Gran Senda de la Serranía de Ronda.** Rafael Flores Domínguez. Editorial La Serranía 2014.
- **Topoguía del GR-249 Gran Senda de Málaga.** Carlos Guerrero. Editorial La Serranía 2014. ▶



2.GRAN SENDA

VIDEOS

Great selection of promo videos about the *Gran Senda de Málaga*, a circular trail along the province of Málaga.

http://www.gransendademalaga.es/4268/com1_bs-Gran%20senda/videos



SPECIALISED COMPANIES

www.pangeacentral.com

www.sierraventuraronda.es

www.aventuraronda.com

www.alandalusactiva.com

www.rondabout.com

ATTENTION

- ✓ Before the hike, especially in short and long distance trails (PR and GR), it is necessary to check out the itinerary and be aware of our hiking skills, resistance and orienteering knowledge.
- ✓ Take notice that it is very common to find the signposting in bad conditions or even missing. It is recommended not to rely only and exclusively on it.
- ✓ Please, obey all warning signs.
- ✓ Give yourself enough time to finish the route.
- ✓ Take all litter home and respect nature.
- ✓ In summertime, there is a high risk of fire. Do not set any fire.
- ✓ Livestock farming is a vital economic activity in the Serranía de Ronda. Therefore, you are asked to take due care to close gates and respect livestock. ■





How to use the guide

David Barrera



The Serranía de Ronda is a great place for active tourism with a wealth of possibilities within your reach. This guide delves into fourteen of the main activities and each of them has a different icon and colour to make searching easier.

Each pursuit is divided into different sections to organise the wide range of information offered. These sections are:

- **DEFINITION.** It consists of a general description of the activity as well as the most interesting tourist attractions and resources available in the Serranía de Ronda to practise it. It is been considered convenient to include an information sheet ►

for some activities such as Iron Way, climbing, canyoning and the network of viewpoints with extra details. All the other pursuits have been considered as a whole.

- **REQUIRED EQUIPMENT.** It has been specified compulsory equipment for a personal protection and technical requirements to practise the activity. If you decided to rely on a specialised company, it will provide the necessary equipment.
- **TO FIND OUT MORE.** It is a section with a wide variety of essential bibliography about the activity in the Serranía de Ronda as well as with links to specialised web pages to find out more information.
- **VIDEOS.** It is a collection of links to check out institutional and private videos which will show you the different experiences you can live in the Serranía de Ronda before plunging into it.
- **SPECIALISED COMPANIES.** It is a full list of specialised companies focused in active tourism.
- **ATTENTION.** It is a summary of rules and advices which need to be taken. They could be general rules, like litter collection, or more specific advices, as checking on the weather forecast before practising canyoning. ■

Cherry Blossom. *Felipe Crespo*



