

# GR 141

**GRAN SENDA de la SERRANÍA de RONDA**  
**GREAT TRACK of the SERRANÍA DE RONDA**

**ANDALUSIA**





## Great Track of the Serranía de Ronda

### Topographical guide of the GR 141



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The Gran Senda de la Serranía de Ronda (Great Track of the Serranía de Ronda region) is a circular route, divided into six sections, that runs through the valleys of the rivers Guadiaro and Genal; down the same paths which were once trodden by those who travelled between the Serranía and Gibraltar before the 20th century revolutionised the means of transport. As with any other route with a long itinerary, it is necessary to have a certain degree of physical training to be able to overcome the ascensions and the long distances. Do not forget we are going to be walking over abrupt mountains and continuous drops.

The landscape we will find forms a magnificent sight thanks to its irregular and violent topography, to its biological and geological richness, to the great variety of ecosystems: thick forests, plains, rocky terrains, vegetable gardens, farmlands... and also thanks to its towns. They appear now and then, scattered over the mountains. And amongst the towns, the trace of the mule drivers, of the old mills, of the old works, and of all the people that met on their way from one place to another of this mountain range, or from Ronda to Gibraltar.

We hope this guide helps you enjoy the Serranía de Ronda even more through your slow journey on foot, which perhaps may take you further than a car or a plane could nowadays.



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◀ Alpanseire y Faraján. We see the famous Barbas del Jardón in the background

## HOW THIS GUIDE WORKS

The GR-141, Senda de la Serranía de Ronda (Great Trail of the Serranía de Ronda) is divided into 6 sections, all feasible within a day's journey and none of them are mean walking more than 25 km per day. The most interesting information for hikers is presented in simple and graphic charts, like the total length in kilometres of the section, the estimated time it will take you to walk it, in which possible stops to eat, rest or take pictures are included and finally, the total ascending and descending distance with an altitudinal diagram.

The parameters related to effort, difficulty and orientation meet the precepts of the MIDE method (EIJ method in English), of which we speak on another chapter. To help you get to know the terrain better, we provide three boxes with the percentages of the distance done over either paved roads, soil tracks or pedestrian trails.

The fourth box informs you of how much percentage of the section is livestock trail. If the best time to do the routes is not specified or recommended, you should know that any season is favourable except summer. This assertion must be further explained however. In the sections that run near the rivers Guadiaro and Genal you may swim in their waters to make a journey during summer easier. Also during those dates and if the wind blows from the West, you can feel its coolness well into the day. In short, you must decide when it is the best time for you, taking into account the effort you wish to make, the context of the landscape and the weather. Additionally, if you need more information we recommend you to check the weather forecast in specialised websites.

Some of the intermediate landmarks of the itineraries: fountains, cortijos (country houses), historical sites, lookouts, cross-roads... articulate both the map and the altitudinal profile of each section. In order to locate them easily, they are listed in chronological order with their UTM coordinates and their altitude. Regarding the cartography, we use the 1:25,000 maps of the Instituto Geográfico Nacional (National Geographic Institute) of the areas through which the six sections of the GR-141



© Rafael Flores



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© Rafael Flores



© Miguel A. Mateos

run. As an interesting and revealing fact, we have measure the percentage of the journey done in each municipality.

At the bottom of the informational chart, we list the approved trails with links to the GR-141 (in bold letters) and those going out of the different towns of the Gran Senda de la Serranía, without having to cross with ours. The latter are marked in a lighter colour to distinguish them from the first.

Previous to the detailed description of each section there is a summary of the most relevant elements, especially those related to the topography and the connections with other trails. In the "Keep in Mind" chapter we gather all those pieces of advice that will male your journey easier, making a special emphasis on fording the rivers and streams, on the gates we must cross and on respecting the private property.

The description of each itinerary gathers all the information that may be useful to the hiker: facts about the flora, the fauna and the geography in general, the location of ethnological points of interest, information on the cultural and historical heritage of the towns of the Gran Senda de la Serranía de Ronda. To make the reading more enjoyable, the narrative sticks to the main landmarks of each section, those that mark a change in the landscape or that have a great panoramic view of the surroundings.

◀ Via ferrata in the Sierra del Hacho

Footbridge by the Genal  
Retinta cow, abundant in the area

Walking through the Tajo de Ronda



## HIKING

Hiking is non-competitive sport activity consisting in walking across different territories through different trails. Hiking favors the recovery of livestock trails and public paths and can be practised anywhere: in the mountains, in the countryside and also in big cities.

## MARKED TRAILS

They are itineraries marked for pedestrians, this is, with markers and painted marks that show us which way to go.

Senderos de Gran Recorrido (GR – Long itinerary trails): They are those longer than 50 kilometres. If they meet international trails, they are indicated with the letter E.

Senderos de Pequeño Recorrido (PR – Short itinerary trails): They are in between 10 and 50 kilometres long and normally have connections to a GR. They can also be circular, starting and ending in the same place.

Senderos Locales (SL – Local Trails): They are not longer than 10 kilometres long and they are very easy to walk.

One does not need a special physical condition or to be a member of the club to walk the SGR, SPR and SL Trails. It is hard to get lost, as all the itineraries are marked. The itinerary can be done in one direction or the other, and you can make them as long as you wish. Sometimes there are diversions to monuments and other points of interest. The SGR are designed to cross several towns where you can supply yourself and sleep. This allows you not to carry too much weight during your journey. The SPR are designed for short walks, a day trip or a weekend.

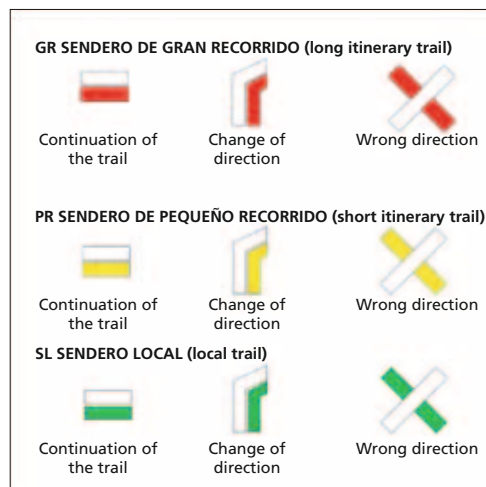




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▲ Several marks and signs used to indicate the itineraries

## BASIC MARKERS



## SUGGESTIONS

In order to have a successful journey, with all security guarantees, it is indispensable that you carry the proper gear in ideal conditions; and also to anticipate certain determining factors.

## PREPARING YOURSELF FOR THE JOURNEY

Gather information about the area.

Process, among other documents, the permits to cross private areas or to camp and book your reservations in hostels or other lodgings.

Search how to move to the start of the trail.

Examine carefully the itinerary on the map, the weather and your schedule..

## INDIVIDUAL EQUIPMENT

Among all the elements that form the hiker's equipment we could highlight this guide, specific footwear (boots or shoes), a backpack, a cap, sunscreen, lip balm, a water bottle and food rich in sugar and carbohydrates. We should also carry a small umbrella, a raincoat or similar, and a change of clothes if case there is bad weather. If you expect to arrive during the night or sleep during the journey, you should also bring a torch with you. It is important you also carry a basic first-aid kit: sticking-plasters, disinfectant, aspirins, an antacid, bandages, a needle and little more.

## KEEP IN MIND

Do not litter or bury trash. Throw it in the nearest trash can.

It is forbidden to light fires. You may only use the grills set up in recreational areas. Do not do so during the period from the 15th June to the 15th October.

It is preferable that you bring your food already cooked.

Close the gates to prevent the cattle from crossing from one property to another.

Follow the paths. Shortcuts will only erode or deteriorate the ground, causing the original trail to disappear.

When walking in forests and farmlands, do so slowly and with respect.

To pollute the harmony of the countryside with noise.

Dogs must be on a leash so they do not frighten the cattle or the wildlife.

Respect and take care of the fountains, springs, rivers and other water courses. Do not dump sap, detergent, contaminating products or wastes in them.

Do not pick the flowers or break the branches of trees.

Do not camp freely. Respect and use the designated areas for this purpose.

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## THE MIDE (EJE)

The MIDE (EJE in English) is a method to evaluate the technical and physical difficulty of the different trips. It classifies the itineraries in a graduated scale and, because of this, it is an essential tool for hikers, who may choose the itinerary better adapted to their conditions and motivations. The information of the MIDE has proved to be very useful in preventing accidents in the mountains.





The MIDE has reference and assessment information. The reference data describes the trip: starting and ending point, intermediate landmarks, total ascent and descent, length and time of the year for which the evaluation was made. The assessment number is chosen regarding four elements:

The severity of the natural environment through which it runs.

Difficulty to orient oneself and to choose and follow the itinerary.

Difficulty moving along (type of road, having to climb, etc.)

Effort implied in the journey.

 <b>Environment.</b> Severity of the natural environment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The environment does not present any risks</li> <li>2. There is more than one risk factors</li> <li>3. There are several risk factors</li> <li>4. There are quite a few risk factors</li> <li>5. There are many risk factors</li> </ol>
 <b>Itinerary.</b> Difficulty to orient oneself and follow the itinerary	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Well-defined roads and crossroads</li> <li>2. Signs indicate the continuation of the track</li> <li>3. Precise identification of the geographic accidents and the cardinal points is required</li> <li>4. Off-road orientation and techniques are required</li> <li>5. Orientation is interrupted by obstacles that one must skirt round</li> </ol>
 <b>Journey.</b> Difficulty moving along	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Journey through an even terrain</li> <li>2. Journey through livestock trails</li> <li>3. Journey through stepwise trails or irregular terrain</li> <li>4. Using your hands is required to keep balance</li> <li>5. Climbing is required to continue</li> </ol>
 <b>Effort.</b> Effort made during the journey	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Up to 1h journey</li> <li>2. More than 1h and up to 3hrs journey</li> <li>3. More than 3hrs up to 6hrs journey</li> <li>4. More than 6hrs up to 10hrs journey</li> <li>5. More than 10hrs journey</li> </ol> <div>Calculated by the MIDE for an average hiker not carrying too much weight</div>

## Serranía de Ronda

### A beautiful region by nature

The Serranía de Ronda is in the westernmost part of the province of Malaga, right on the border with the one of Cádiz. It has an extension of 1,536 km<sup>2</sup> distributed in twenty-three municipalities, among which is Ronda, the largest in the region, with more than 35,000 inhabitants, and the smallest in Malaga, Atajate, where less than 200 people live.

Pine forest in Sierra Bermeja (Jubrique).



▲ Crag.

From a geographical point of view, the Serranía de Ronda is in the heart of the Baetic System, which gives it a distinct mountainous character. A set of rugged mountain ranges and large slopes creates its relief, which softens in the surrounding areas such as the Gibraltar countryside, the Costa del Sol or the Llanos de Antequera.

In spite of the similar landscape of these Málaga and Cádiz mountain ranges, the variable course of the rivers that originate in the Sierra de las Nieves separate three distinctive areas. On the one hand, we find the highest area of the region, a **plateau** which seats the municipalities of Ronda, Arriate and Montecorto. It is the most populated part of the Serranía de Ronda and has a robust agricultural vocation, especially with Mediterranean crops such as cereal, olives and grapes. This area receives protection to the northeast by the Sierra de las Nieves, the great dominator of the landscape of the Serranía de Ronda. It is a very suitable place for the practice of mountain biking, horse riding, hiking, especially in the Natural Park of



▲ Chestnut forest.

Sierra de las Nieves, which is also a Biosphere Reserve. (The declaration of National Park is going through its bureaucratic phase on the date of publication of this guide). You can also practice gliding in its western end, due to the warm and stable winds that enter from the Valley of the Guadalquivir.

Many streams descend from the summits of the Sierra de las Nieves and meet in the three main rivers of the region: Guadalteba, Guadiaro and Genal.

The **Guadalteba** takes the road from the north, crossing Cuevas del Becerro and Serrato in successive stepped valleys cultivated with cereal and olive groves, until delivering its waters to the reservoirs of the Guadalteba, one of the central water reserves of Malaga.

The Guadiaro, on the other hand, collects the waters of the rivers Guadalcobacín and the Guadalevín, the indefatigable sculptor of the Tajo de Ronda. After excavating the bottom of the gorge





▲ View from Las Turquillas, in the Sierra de Las Nieves.

and passing between the feet of Puente Nuevo, it joins his comrade to form the Guadiaro River, which crosses the Serranía de Ronda in north-southwest direction. The Guadiaro River runs through the municipal districts of Montejaque, Benaolán, Jimera de Líbar and Cortes de la Frontera before entering the province of Cádiz, where it turns eastwards. Then, it receives the waters of the Genal River to end, a few kilometres later, in the Mediterranean, at Sotogrande. The **Guadiaro Valley** is an open valley, flanked by limestone mountain ranges, with a temperate and very fertile climate. The river is generous for agriculture and water sports, especially canoeing (between Estación de Benaolán and Estación de Cortes) and canyoning (Cañón de las Buitreras, the most coveted by lovers of this sport in the south of the Iberian Peninsula). The valley and, in particular, the mountain ranges that channel it are also very suitable for hiking, climbing and via ferratas.

The Genal, like the other three rivers, rises in the Sierra de las Nieves. However, somewhat disdainful with Ronda, it heads



▲ Laguna del Moral, in La Saucedá.

very quickly south until it becomes encased in a deep valley flanked by forests of cork and chestnut trees where it becomes invisible among the thicket. From there, the river seems to twist itself in infinite curves, as if it never wanted to leave behind its paradise. The result is the **Valle del Genal**, a dense, abrupt and millennial valley that is painted yellow and ochre in autumn. It is one of the fascinating natural phenomena in Europe. Then again, against its will, the river seems flows as if weeping, leaving behind vegetable gardens, ditches, terraces and mills to arrive punctually at the date with the Guadiaro, in the province of Cádiz. There, exhausted, it delivers its waters, and they travel together the last kilometres with the name of Guadiaro to finally disappear in the sea.

The Genal runs through the municipalities of Igualeja, Pujerra, Parauta, Cartajima, Júzcar, Faraján, Alpandeire, Atajate, Benadalid, Benalauría, Algatocín, Benarrabá, Jubrique, Genalguacil and Gaucín. The steep slopes and the dense forest of chestnut and cork trees make this valley an authentic



paradise for lovers of hiking, especially in spring and autumn. In the high limestone ridges utterly bare of vegetation, which separate the waters of Genal and Guadiaro, it is possible to practice climbing and via ferratas.

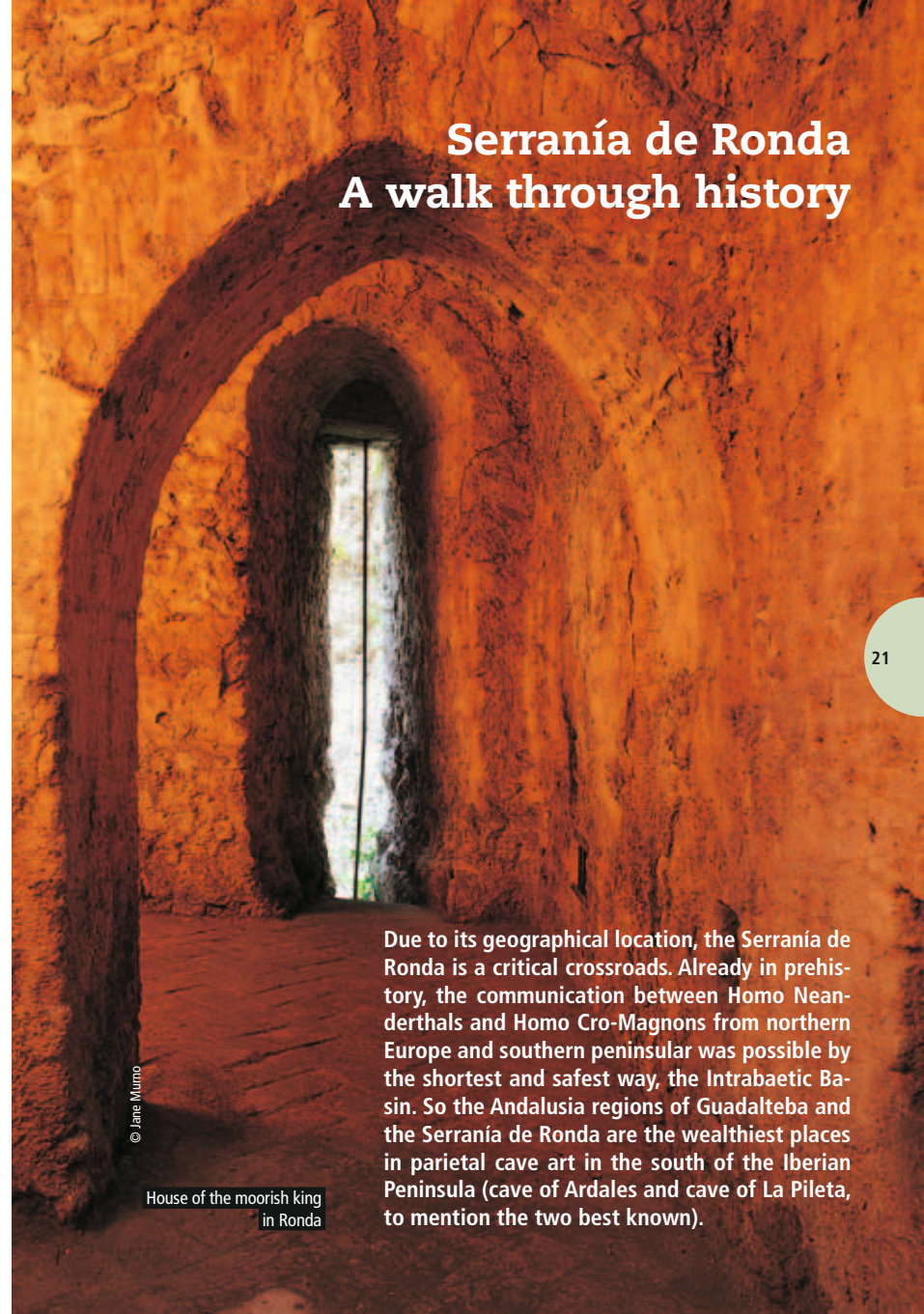
Thus, the variety of landscapes and ecosystems that we find in the Serranía de Ronda is due to the complicated orography, the diversity of soils, the river valleys and the exposure to the Atlantic weather fronts that guarantee an optimum level of humidity to keep the thick forests of cork oaks, holm oaks, pines, chestnuts and fir trees. For all this, the Serranía de Ronda offers many possibilities for sports and outdoor activities in an environment that we could define as one of the most changing and beautiful in Andalusia. **It is a stunning region by nature.**

► Las Buitreras canyon.



## Serranía de Ronda

### A walk through history



© Jane Munro

House of the moorish king  
in Ronda

Due to its geographical location, the Serranía de Ronda is a critical crossroads. Already in prehistory, the communication between Homo Neanderthals and Homo Cro-Magnons from northern Europe and southern peninsular was possible by the shortest and safest way, the Intrabaetic Basin. So the Andalusia regions of Guadalteba and the Serranía de Ronda are the wealthiest places in parietal cave art in the south of the Iberian Peninsula (cave of Ardales and cave of La Pileta, to mention the two best known).





▲ Ruins of Acinipo.

During **Romanization**, the Serranía continues to play its strategic role as a critical crossroads between the interior of Iberia and Mauritania, through the Columns of Hercules (Strait of Gibraltar). These first communication routes –roadways– joined the early inhabited centres of which we have evidence in the Serranía: Vesci (Gaucín), Saepo (Cortes de la Frontera), Ocurri (Ubrique), Laecipo (Casares), Arunda (Ronda) and, above all, Acinipo (currently an Archaeological Site of the Junta de Andalucía).

This network of roads, also the origin of some of the towns, had as its primary motivation the commerce and especially the search for metals. Acinipo is equidistant from the two large metalliferous areas of Iberia: Cartagena-Almería and Huelva. There is evidence of the abandonment of Acinipo in the first century after Christ. Therefore, **Arunda** (Ronda) became the principal urban area of the Serranía.

The **Muslim invasion** in the eighth century broke the organisation of the territory. Nevertheless, they kept some



▲ Arab baths in Ronda.

essentials such as the roads and bridges because of their utility. The route of the Strait remained as a secondary path since the Guadalquivir Valley was the best road between Algeciras and Córdoba, the first capital of al-Andalus. The track through the Serranía was necessary for the occupation of the land, as a means of communication between the groups of Berbers who settled in the Serranía and their places of origin in North Africa. Thus things continued like this for five centuries until, at the beginning of the thirteenth century, the peninsular Christian kingdoms united to fight against the Almohads that occupied half of the Iberian Peninsula. The Christian victory in the battle of Navas de Tolosa (1212) pushed the Muslims southward. Later, the Castilian conquests of Murcia and Almería, north of Al-Andalus, and Algeciras, to the south, isolated the last Islamic stronghold of Europe. This manoeuvre caused Muhammad I Al-Ahmar, founder of the Nazari dynasty, to place its southern border in this region.

The situation continued for more than a hundred years, leaving important remains of castles, watchtowers and



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▲ Festival of moors and  
christians in Benalauría.

◀ Castañuelo hermitage  
in Jubrique.

a permanent mark on local toponymy, architecture and culture. In the year 1482, Muslim soldiers from Izna-Runda (Ronda) took the Christian castle of Zahara de la Sierra causing a total war between Castile and the Kingdom of Granada. In 1485, the city of Ronda was conquered and with it the whole region. Only seven years were enough to put an end to the Nasrid Kingdom of Granada. In the year 1492, the Alhambra surrendered.

The Catholic Kings agreed with Boabdil, the last Nasrid king, to respect the life of the Muslim people and their properties in exchange for their conversion to Christianity. However, those who did not accept the conditions had to embark to Africa. The ones who remained received the name of Moriscos and lived, not without difficulties, with the Christians. However, coexistence did not last. In 1609, after several revolts in the Alpujarras and the Serranía de Ronda, the Moors were forced to leave the Iberian Peninsula. The result of this critical loss of population in regions with strong Moorish presence such as the Serranía de Ronda, and despite the unsuccessful attempts to repopulate, was the abandonment of more than half of the towns in the Genal Valley. The name of these abandoned towns in Spanish is *despoblados moriscos*.

The Serranía experienced a period of peace between the **sixteenth** and **seventeenth centuries**, and the finishing of the current population centres finished. The nobles, who benefited from the repartimientos (division) of the conquered Muslim properties, improved their houses and paid for the renovation of the churches. The widespread enthusiasm did the rest, leaving behind a legacy such as the rustic Baroque style that we know today, very noticeable in churches and infrastructures like fountains and laundries.

If the Romans saw in the geology of the Serranía an excellent place to look for metals, it is not surprising that centuries later other people would travel the region in search of iron. So, in the **eighteenth century**, the municipality of Júzcar got the setting of the Royal Tin Factory of San Miguel on the banks of

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the Genal River. The most significant industrial investment in the Serranía, which was supplied by the valley's iron deposits, would flop miserably twenty years after its founding.

Due to its strategic value, the Serranía de Ronda was the key to the outcome of the **Peninsular War** (1808-1814), a reaction against the French occupation of Spain. With all the Iberian Peninsula under their power, the Napoleonic troops forced the Government of the Regency to withdraw in Cádiz. However, the access route to Algeciras, the same one that Neanderthals and Cro-Magnons had already travelled, was now in the hands of the mountain guerrillas who organised themselves around the castle of Gaucín. Ronda fell to the hands of the French in 1810, and during three years a bloody guerrilla struggle broke out against them. In 1812 the Constitution of Cádiz was drafted. In 1813 the French army retreated to France and in 1814 King Joseph Bonaparte, brother of Napoleon, resigned the throne. For the loyalty to the Spanish crown, King Ferdinand VII granted the title of villas to the towns of the valleys of Guadiaro and Genal, to date dependent on Ronda, creating the current administrative organisation of the Serranía de Ronda.

▼ Arch of Felipe V in Ronda.

▼ The Palace of Mondragón in Ronda, the Castle of Gaucín, dolmen of Piedra Caballera in Montecorto and stone house in Cortes de la Frontera.

Better luck than mining would run the **hydroelectric power plants** built along the Guadiaro River since the beginning of the twentieth century. For example, the San Miguel Hydroelectric Power Plant, in Molinos del Tajo, was the first to produce electricity for the region. Some from the same period such as Buitreras and Corchados are still standing. The current hydroelectric power plant of Molinos del Tajo is from 1949.

The date for the building of **Bobadilla-Algeciras railway** line is between 1888 and 1892. It crosses the region from north to south and the entire Guadiaro Valley. Under the influence of this line and its stations, four new towns appeared: Estación de Benaoján, Estación de Jimera, Estación de Cortes and Estación de Gaucín.

The base of the **current road network** was built during the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera (1924-1930), although it was necessary to wait until after the Spanish Civil War for traffic to reach all the towns. It was the last great infrastructure of the Serranía, and it has shaped the territory, conditioning its communication channels and its economy.



This continuous presence of man in the Serranía de Ronda has left behind a valuable cultural heritage worthy of being known. The recovery of public roads and tracks for hiking and the efforts made in local signage help to reconstruct the past. The Serranía de Ronda, as well as a spectacular vacation area, is an educational territory, a real Cultural Park.

► Torre del Paso in Cortes de la Frontera.



GENERAL  
MAP



















## Great Track of the Serranía de Ronda Sections



GR 141 video

-  Panorámica view
-  Woods
-  Bird watching
-  Equine
-  Cattle
-  Wild animals
-  Wolves
-  Monument or ruin
-  Swimming
-  Canoeing
-  Fishing
-  Cave

SECTION 1:  
RONDA – JIMERA DE LÍBAR



# Ronda Jimera de Líbar

GR 141 GRAN SENDA DE LA SERRANÍA DE RONDA  
SECTION 1: RONDA – JIMERA DE LÍBAR

LENGHT 22,4 km DURATION: 7 h

INCLINESS  
Total ascent: 624 m Total descent: 837 m

CARTOGRAPHY E/1:25.000  
1050-II (Montejaque) | 1050-IV (Benaoján) | 1051-I (Arriate) | 1051-III (Ronda) | 1064-II (Cortes de la Frontera)



PROFILE OF THIS SECTION



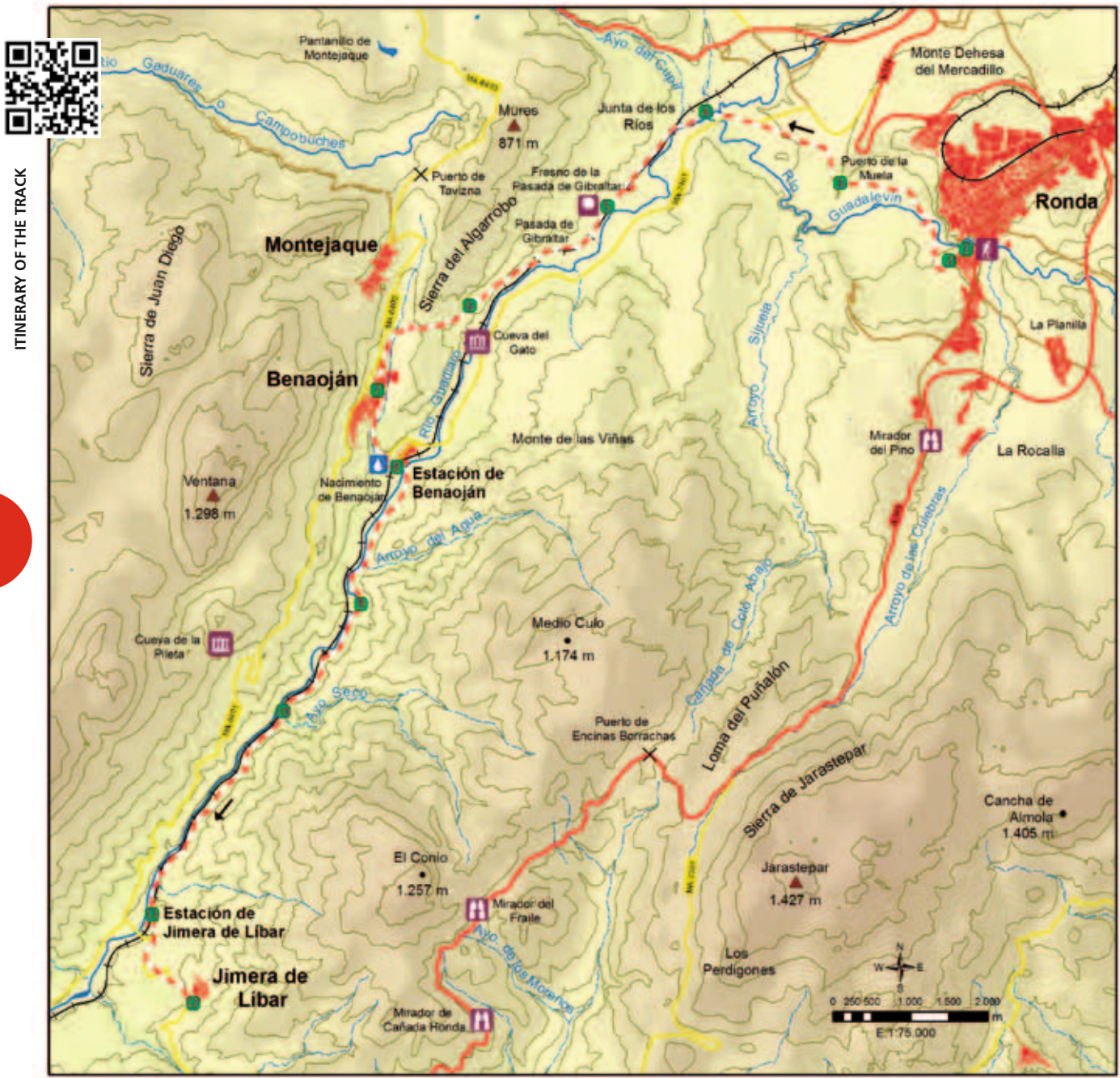
LINKS TO OTHER APPROVED TRACKS

GREAT TRACKS	SMALL TRACKS	LOCAL TRAILS
GR 7 (E 4) Tarifa - Atenas	PR-A 251 Ronda - Montejaque	SL-A 38 Ronda - Molinos
GR 249 Gran Senda de Málaga	PR-A 255 Jimena - Cortes	SL-A 138 Río Guadiaro
GR 243 Sierra de las Nieves	PR-A 258 Jimera - Atajate	SL-A 139 Cueva del Gato
	PR-A 221 Ronda - Cartajima	SL-A 35 Ronda - Ventilla
	PR-A 71 Ronda - Pilar de Coca	SL-A 36 Ronda - Cabeza
		SL-A 37 Ronda - Planilla
		SL-A 39 Ronda - Pilar Ca.
		SL-A 40 Ronda - Abanico

This guide does not offer information regarding the state of conservation of the tracks since it can vary at any time.

ITINERARY OF THE TRACK

1





## SUMMARY OF THE SECTION

This section of the track runs through a territory with great ethnological and environmental value. Its start is located in one of the historical access- es to the town of **Ronda**, from which we can see the majestic **Tajo** and the Puente Nuevo (New Bridge). Before reaching the puerto de la Muela (pass of la Muela), we will cross the Hoya del Tajo (river basin of el Tajo) and its splendid Andalusi vegetable gardens. After these, we will come across the stone pine forest of mount Dehesa del Mercadillo, and then a wide valley where the Guadalquivir and Guadalevin merge their waters to become the **Guadiaro river**, one of the most important in the Medi- terranean Hydrographic District. From there, we will wander for a while along the Algeciras-Bobadilla railroad track until we get to the **Pasada de Gibraltar**,

where we will follow a trail in con- tinuous ascent that crosses the steep mountainside of the Algarrobo mountain range.

From the nearby **puerto de Ronda** (pass of Ronda) we will enjoy an attrac- tive panoramic view of the Valle del Guadiaro (Guadiaro Valley) and the location of the cueva del Gato (Cat's cave). In our descent towards **Benaolán**, we will

be surprised by the contrast between the sharp karstic mountainside and the polje on which the town sits. During the next stretch of the trail, we will be able to see the source of the Benaolán river, impressive after constant rains, and the neighbourhood of la Estación (Benaolán Station). The second part of the track runs alongside the left bank of the Guadiaro river and through a narrow valley, in between the **Benaolán and the del Palo mountain ranges** to the West, and the **Monte de las Viñas** (Mount of the Vineyard) and the **del Conio moun- tain range** to the East. The latter separates the Guadiaro from the nearby Valle del Genal (Genal Valley). During the journey, we will walk through a green canopy of holm oaks and gall-oaks. The other unique feature of the track is the railway line, which crosses the diverse landforms of the area, passing through tunnels and over viaducts. An important part of the track is through the Sierra de Grazalema Natural Park.



Purple milk thistle

© Rafael Flores

### MAIN SPOTS OF THIS SECTION

1	Ronda	30S x: 306528 – y: 4068038	start
2	Mirador del Tajo	30S x: 306226 – y: 4068113	0,8 km
3	Puerto de la Muela	30S x: 304933 – y: 4069058	3,1 km
4	Junta de los ríos	30S x: 303167 – y: 4069874	5,3 km
5	Fresno de la Pasada de Gibraltar	30S x: 301996 – y: 4068690	7,0 km
6	Puerto de Ronda	30S x: 299729 – y: 4067200	9,9 km
7	Benaolán	30S x: 299011 – y: 4066442	11,8 km
8	Barriada Estación de Benaolán	30S x: 299237 – y: 4065379	13,3 km
9	Mirador de las Angosturas	30S x: 298692 – y: 4063777	15,1 km
10	Arroyo Seco	30S x: 297834 – y: 4062125	17,4 km
11	Barriada Estación de Jimera	30S x: 296106 – y: 4059762	20,9 km
12	Jimera de Líbar	30S x: 296633 – y: 4058399	22,4 km



◀ THIS SECTION ONLINE

### KEEP IN MIND

The itinerary is not difficult at all under normal conditions. However, in case of heavy rain, there are two spots where the water flood the road: in las Angosturas and just before reaching Estación de Jimera (Jimera Station). The train will allow us to move in between Ronda, Benaolán-Montejaque, Jimera de Líbar, Cortes and Gaucín (El Colmenar) stations, starting or intermediate points of this section. This part of the track coincides with the GR 249 Gran Senda de Málaga (Great Track of Málaga).

## DESCRIPTION OF THE ITINERARY

### 1 RONDA – km 0

We begin the first part of the **GR 141** Gran Senda de la Serranía de Ronda (Great Track of the Serranía de Ronda) in Plaza de María Auxiliadora (María Auxiliadora Square), also known as Plaza del Campillo. It is located in the historical centre of the city and near a row of natural balconies that look over the **Hoya del Tajo** (river basin of the Tajo de Ronda), a great steep depression through which the Guadalevin river runs. The quickest way to get here, taking the Municipal Tourism Office next to the bull ring as reference, would be to get to the nearby Plaza de España and to cross the famous **Puente Nuevo** (New Bridge). Then, we just have to follow Armiñan and Tenorio streets.



The wide and stone paved path starts with a steep slope that twists and turns in between the almond trees, known as the **Cuesta del Cachondeo**. In front of the worn walls of the Albacara, which were once plastered with rammed earth and lime, we find a fork on the road. The path runs alongside the wall and connects the **Puerta del Viento** (Gate of the Wind), to the left, with the **Puerta de los Molinos** (Gate of the Mills), to the right. After crossing the Puerta del Viento, we turn to a path which descends to the right. This path is made of slippery pebbles that can make the walk more difficult when it rains. If so, be careful not to fall and watch out for any passing vehicles.

▼ Exit of Ronda



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Puerta del Viento, through which the GR 141 runs.  
Picha del Moro, to the right



The **Puerta del Viento** and the **Puerta de los Molinos**, as well as the wall, are of Andalusí origin. They were used to keep the cattle outside the ancient medina quarter. We recommend you to walk to the nearby **Puerta de los Molinos**, also known as **Arco del Cristo**. It is also the start of the path to the old flour mills, to the hydro-electric power plant of San Miguel and to the Guadalevin river. The views from the Puerta de los Molinos are extraordinary: the **Puente Nuevo** and the river, with its 30m waterfall where people practice canyoning. Besides the Puerta del Viento stands a rocky, flat-topped hillock known as **Picha del Moro**. If you search thoroughly enough, you may find sea fossils dating from the Upper Miocene.



► Near the Asa de la Caldera



► Arco del Cristo and the Asa de la Caldera in the background





© Rafael Flores

## 2 MIRADOR DEL TAJO – (Lookout of the Tajo) km 0,8

We make a stop at this wider part of the trail to enjoy a wonderful panoramic view of the Tajo, which is higher than 100m in some points. The deep breach that splits the old town in two was formed by the erosive force of the river, cutting through the softer minerals to make its way to the river basin. The remaining detritus is carried there by the flowing current.



The **Puente Nuevo** is an important piece of engineering that stands 98m tall. It took forty years to build and was finished in 1793.

There are many irrigation channels (known as acequias) that run through the river basin to carry water to the more than fourteen flour mills, to the hydro-electric power plant and to the productive vegetable gardens

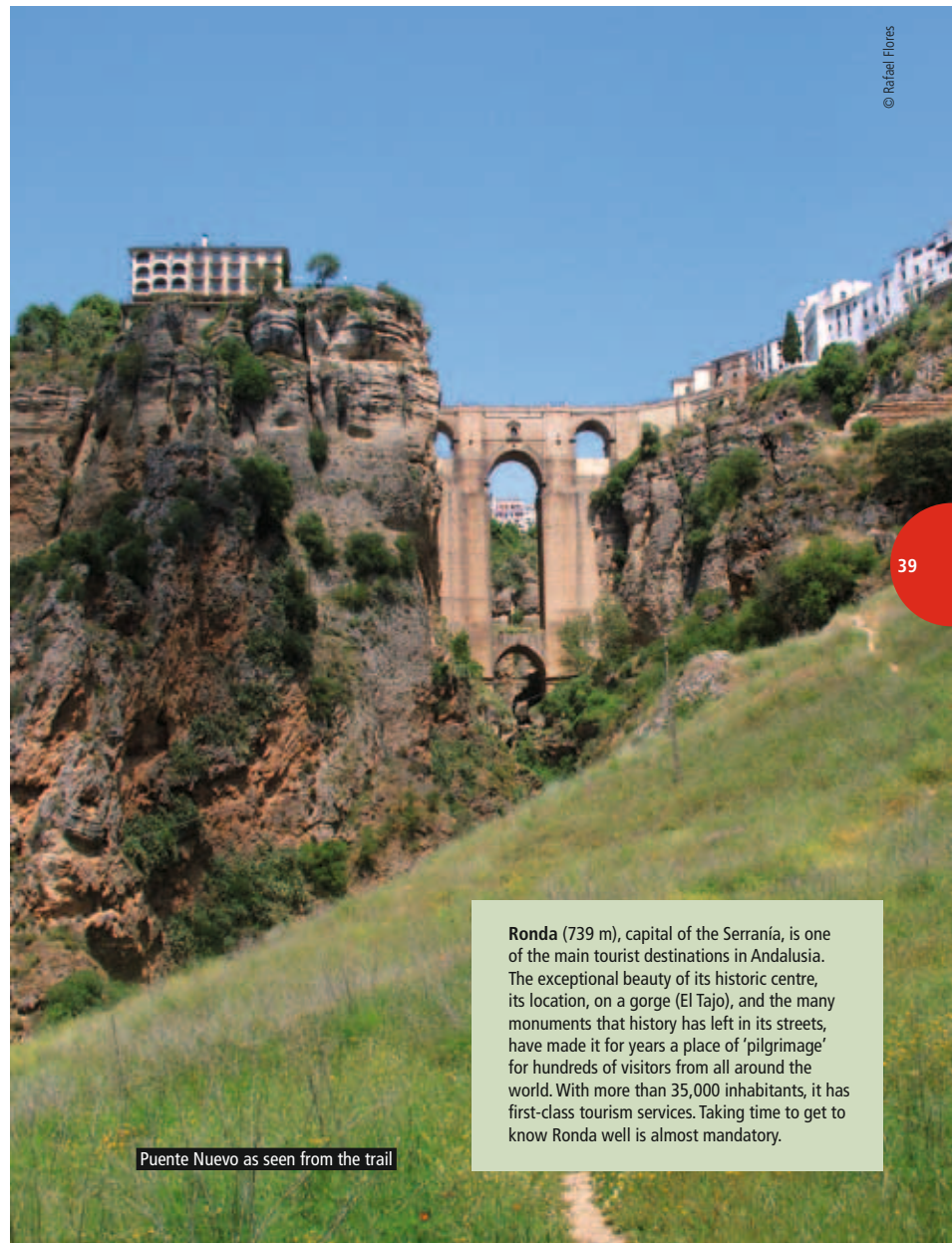
that cover the river banks of the **Guadalevín**. The avifauna is another added value of this location, and will soon be declared a Natural Monument in Andalucía. Amongst the most representative local species we could name the noisy red-billed

▲ Practising canyoning in the Tajo

► The Hoya del Tajo



© Miguel A. Mateos



© Rafael Flores

**Ronda** (739 m), capital of the Serranía, is one of the main tourist destinations in Andalusia. The exceptional beauty of its historic centre, its location, on a gorge (El Tajo), and the many monuments that history has left in its streets, have made it for years a place of 'pilgrimage' for hundreds of visitors from all around the world. With more than 35,000 inhabitants, it has first-class tourism services. Taking time to get to know Ronda well is almost mandatory.

Puente Nuevo as seen from the trail

▼ Vinyards in the Hoya del Tajo



© Rafael Flores

chough and others like the common kestrel, the peregrine falcon, the Eurasian eagle-owl, the Alpine swift or the blue rock thrush. There is also a small lane that climbs up to this point from the Arco del Cristo and the walls of the Albacara.



We resume our journey in between fields of olive trees until we reach some mills that are being restored. We then cross the Guadalevin and start walking towards the **puerto de la Muela**. Spectacular sights of the Tajo await us, with its Asa de la Caldera (literally, Handle of the Cauldron). Upon the southwest edge of the basin, we can appreciate the shapes of the enormous stone pines and the small caves of **the monastic rock complex of the Virgen de la Cabeza**, of Mozarab origin (11th century). A popular romería (religious pilgrimage) is celebrated there each July.

If we look North, under the cliffs of the lowest part of the Tajo, we can see the ancient Trinitarian convent (1505). The convent has been turned into a winery, hence the presence of vineyards

© Rafael Flores

◀ Panoramic view of the Virgen de la Cabeza

▶ Puerto de la Muela

© Miguel A. Mateos



▲ Near the road

▶ Near the railroad track

### 3 PUERTO DE LA MUELA (Pass of La Muela)– km 3,1

After a steep slope, we finally surmount the mountain pass of la Muela, superb balcony to make a stop and to look back. Up to here, the track coincides with the local trail SL-A 38 Molinos del Tajo (Mills of the Tajo). This itinerary is also part of the Montejaque-Ronda section of the GR-7 (E/4) and the small routes that lead to Benaoján (PR-A 251) and Montejaque (PR-A 253), that converge from this point onwards.

We continue straight at first, until we find a pair of little, ruined houses known as del Consumo and del Fielato. They used to be checkpoints for the products that arrived to the city of Ronda. We continue through a clear piece of land that used be a sand mining area (Arenas de Santander) and then descend among the country houses of the **Cañada Real** del Campo de Gibraltar, with which we will also share our itinerary from now on. The track ends at the road from Ronda to Benaoján (MA-7401). We will follow the road for 400m and then, after crossing it, continue down the track that goes to Junta de los Ríos..

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▲ Pasada de Gibraltar

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#### 4 JUNTA DE LOS RÍOS (Confluence of the rivers)– km 5,3

From the small bridge that crosses the Guadalquivir river, we can see the point where the two rivers (Guadalquivir and Guadalquivir) meet. From this point onwards the river is known as Guadiaro. Black poplars, poplars, willows and ash trees grow on the river bank and barbed are easily spotted in its waters. Further on, we will see a small stream, the arroyo del Cupil, flowing into the Guadiaro river. We leave the paved track and cross the railroad at the level crossing, after which we will find another fork in the road.

We are now entering the **Sierra de Grazalema Natural Park**. At this point we can cross the Cañada Real del Campo de Gibraltar through the itineraries GR-7 and PR-251 to Montejaque and to the Boquete de Mures. Our choice is to follow the track that overlaps with the PR-253 and the GR-249. We walk alongside railroad track and the Guadiaro river. We will see the limestone mountainsides of the cerro de Mures and the sierra del Algarrobo to the West, dedicated to dry-land farming. After leaving behind the wide meadow known as Vega of **Huertas Nuevas**, at the point where the **Guadiaro** approaches the Cañada Real, we find a prominent and solitary ash tree.



#### 5 FRESNO DE LA PASADA DE GIBRALTAR (Ash tree of the Pasada de Gibraltar)– km 7

We stand in the shade of the historical **ash tree of the Pasada de Gibraltar**, unavoidably tied to the more recent history of the Serranía de Ronda. Both the Cañada Real del Campo de Gibraltar and the Algeciras-Ronda railway (finished in 1892) were once vital connections to the region. The Cañada has been, since time immemorial, the entry point for the commerce that came from the several seaports of Cádiz. After the English colony of Gibraltar was established, it became one of the most frequently travelled roads of the 18th and 19th centuries. It was frequently followed by mule drivers (known as *arrieros*), smugglers and the so-called romantic travellers, many of them

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▲ Sign at the crossroads

► Ash tree of the Pasada de Gibraltar



© Rafael Flores

British soldiers from "La roca" (as Gibraltar is known) and Central Europeans, who wanted to get to know and live new experiences in this picturesque region of the Serranía de Ronda.

However, the railway marked a milestone in the trade relationships with Gibraltar. With its arrival, this exact point will become one of the many chosen by the black marketeers for their accomplices to pick up the stashes (tobacco, coffee, sugar, fabrics, etc.) that were thrown out of the windows of the train to dodge controls at the Ronda station. Afterwards, smuggler

women (known as *matuteras*) would deliver the goods to houses and businesses. In fact, entire families would take part in this illicit activity that, nevertheless, fed a lot of people until well into the 20th century.

We leave behind the municipality of Ronda and enter that of Benaoján. A road

▼ Matuteras, getting ready to cross the border with Gibraltar. Unknown artist





© Miguel A. Mateos

▲ On the way to the Puerto de Ronda



crosses the railway towards the Pasada de Gibraltar, fording the Guadiaro river and resuming the Cañada Real together with the PR-251 and heading to cueva del Gato, estación de Benaolán and Benaolán. We continue straight into a well marked trail, the **Camino Viejo de Ronda** (Old Road to Ronda), which gradually climbs higher and higher through huge retamas (a species of broom bush) and groups of fan palms. Asparagus plants, thorny brooms, buckthorns and wild olive trees also grow here. If we look up to the sky we will surely spot committees of griffon vultures, which are abundant in the area. We must highlight the preservation of the stone pavement, the steps and gutters in several parts of the road, which confirm the high value of this connection in between Benaolán and Ronda. If we pay attention we will discover fossils of seashells on these Jurassic limestones. Just before reaching the highest point, we recommend you to stop and watch how the cold waters of the Guadares merge with the Guadiaro. A few more meters and we will finally conquer the puerto de Ronda.

## 6 PUERTO DE RONDA (Pass of Ronda) – km 9,9



This small hill offers us a unique vision of the mountainsides of Benaolán and Montalate, perfect models of this karstic landscape. The road turns into a narrow path between stone walls that separate us from the fields of olive trees. From there we can see the barrio alto (high quarter) of Montejaque and Benaolán, that sits on the mountainside and stretches out to the **polje of the Vega**. You will be able to glimpse portions of the ancient Roman road on your way. Soon, the rains will uncover the rest of the pavement. After a couple of zig-zags, we will arrive at Benaolán, famous among other things for its renowned delicatessen industry. However, it is mostly known as the location of the **cueva de la Pileta** (cave of the Pool), one of the most important cave painting sites in the world.



© Miguel A. Mateos

▲ Los Cascajales river source

## 7 BENAOLÁN – km 11,8

We follow our journey through the town of Benaolán. We recommend you to make a stop by the pozo de San Marcos (well of Saint Mark) to cool down a bit. Back on the track, we continue

© Rafael Flores



**BENAOLÁN:** 564 m above sea level. It is one of the towns that are part of the Sierra de Grazalema National Park. It stands on the mountainside of the sierra de Juan Diego, at the feet of the interesting polje. Benaolán has a large number of delicatessen and dried or cured meat (embutido) industries, located in between the city centre and the *barriada de la Estación* (Station quarter). The town's **barrio alto** (high quarter), with its narrow streets and whitewashed houses, and the iglesia de **Nuestra Señora del Rosario** (church of Nuestra Señora del Rosario) are worthwhile seeing. You can also visit here the famous *cueva de la Pileta*, the Natural Monument of **Cueva del Gato**, the *torre Séxima*, visible from the road to Ronda, and the **nacimiento de Benaolán** (Benaolán river source), spectacular in the rainy seasons. The main holidays and festivities are the **fiesta de San Marcos** (end of April), the *feria de la Virgen del Rosario* (beginning of October) and the **verbena del Tren** in the *barriada de la Estación* (end of July or beginning of August). + Info: [www.benaolan.es](http://www.benaolan.es)

Arriving at Benaolán

Benaolán is located on a polje



© Rafael Flores

going up to the Estación de Benaolán (Benaolán Station). From the top we can admire the wonderful Benaolán river source (also known as los Cascajales), where the aquifer of Montejaque-Cortes (or of the Sierra de Libar) flows into. After heavy rains it is a worthwhile sight, and both locals and foreigners come to see the pouring waters. By the river bank, we can see an old mill, that has been transformed into a hotel. We will then descend through the **Vereda de la Trocha** and get to Estación de Benaolán..





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▲ Benaoján station

## 8 ESTACIÓN DE BENAJOÁN (Benaoján Station)– km 13,3

The neighbourhood of Estación de Benaoján was built due to the construction of the Bobadilla-Algeciras railroad. It reached its peak in the mid-20th century, when the delicatessen lived its best moments. The industrial restructuring of the 80s caused its decline and **many abandoned factories** remain as proof. Nevertheless, we can still buy different pork products (like manteca de lomo, zurrapa colorá, caña de lomo, salchichón, etc.). In the last few years tourism activities have developed and we now find numerous restaurants and accommodations. From Benaoján Station we can follow several tracks of great interest. The one that takes you through the SL-A 139 towards the cueva del Gato (2.2km long), and the one going up to the cueva de la Pileta and through the Sierra de Grazalema Natural Park (3.2km) are highly recommendable.

The GR-141 continues its way to Jímera de Líbar after a level crossing and the bridge over the Guadiaro. The path that we see by the river leads to the **charco de la Barranca** and the **cueva del Gato**. We will turn South, following the signs of the GR-141, GR-249 and SL-A 138. We will encounter the ruins of some old mills associated near the river banks and inns like the one of María Joaquina, located on the left bank and easily recognisable for its two palm trees in the front



▼ Charco de la Barranca



© Rafael Flores



The **cueva del Gato** (cave of the Cat in English) is one of the most beautiful locations in the Serranía de Ronda; water falls out of the Cat's mouth and into the Charco Frio (Cold Pool), forming one of the most recognisable and beautiful postcards of the **Sierra de Grazalema Natural Park**. The cave of la Pileta is doubtlessly the main Palaeolithic site of the Mediterranean and one of the most important pre-historic sanctuaries in Europe. It was discovered by José Bullón in 1905 and since then, his descendants have taken care of the cave admirably. It was declared **National Monument** in 1924 and acknowledged as Item of Cultural Interest in 1985. The famous investigator Henri Breuil, after a scientific visit in 1912, confirmed the high value of the cave paintings. The oldest ones are 30,000 years old. The pregnant mare and the great fish stand out among the different images, mostly hunting themes and animals. It can be visited in small groups from 10am. The telephone number for reservations is 952167343. The tour takes an hour approximately.

▼ Pregnant mare.  
Cave paintings in the  
Cueva de la Pileta



© Rafael Flores

Cueva del Gato Natural Monument,  
located near the GR 141

patio, devoured by the red palm weevil. We can see again how the erosion removes the soil that hides the stone pavement.

Once we arrive at a mound on the road, we can look out to see a splendid panoramic of Benaoján and its mountain range. Afterwards, we will follow our path along the oak-covered mountainside. We will also find oaks, ardiviejas (a type of rockrose), furzes, matagallos (a type of nettle), and osyris. On the other side of the river, in the paraje de la Fresnedilla, we will observe the water supply facilities of Benaoján and the old vegetable gardens of Andalusí origin, which are still cultivated. After a small descent, the road crosses a bridge





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▲ Old inn of Arroyo del Agua

▼ Railroad track through the Angosturas



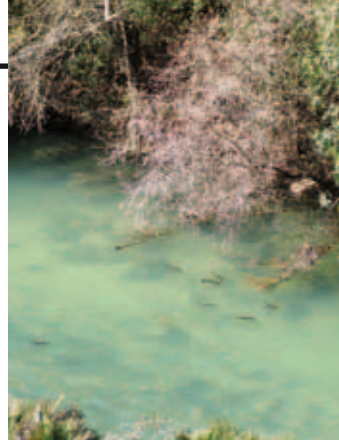
© Rafael Flores

## 9 MIRADOR DE LAS ANGOSTURAS (Lookout of the Angosturas)– km 15,1



This spot on the road offers an extraordinary view of the Angosturas, a dry section of the Guadiaro dug into the marl formations from the Cretaceous, predominantly auburn in colour. The railroad runs under the rough terrain through a tunnel. We can see one of the mouths of the tunnel while placidly walking the trail. In the backwater of

over the arroyo del Agua (Stream of the Water). Once we have crossed the river, which is covered in rosebays, we can visit the ruins of **the inn of arroyo del Agua** with the ruiniform Cachón background on the opposite bank. Behind the walls and looking to the river, a part of the old stone paving is still preserved, as well as some fig trees and a marvellous laurel. It is here that the road turns into a small path. After a light ascent, we reach another fabulous hillock where the path cuts through the rock.



© Rafael Flores

▲ Barbels in the Guadiaro river



the river we can see **Andalusian barbels**, eels, Northern Iberian chubs and bogues. However, otters will be harder to spot, although many live in this river. Other notable inhabitants of the area are the grey heron, the mallard, the sandpiper and the cormorant, who flows with the current as if it were a game.

We will immediately descend to the proper river bank, surrounded by rosebays and other species typical of gallery forests. If we look carefully, we can see the base of the **punte del Moro**, of Andalusian origin, in the narrowest part of the river. This part of the trail is usually flooded during the rainy seasons. Therefore, it becomes one of the difficult parts of the track during those times of the year. We ascend and soon stand upon a dominant spot that offers us a view to the west of the **canchas de la Mesa**, the location of the famous cueva de la Pileta. We can also observe the bridge of the Guadiaro that precedes the second tunnel, on which we stand. We can see gall-oaks, fan palms, spurge flaxes, mastics, thorny brooms and some carob trees. We will also find a mosaic of thorny plants including blackthorns, briars and hawthorns. Their fruits are the delight of the small passerine birds. We downwards for a while, sometimes surrounded by holm oaks and yellow brooms, and others by gall-oaks. A newly placed handrail offers safety during our way down the following slope: we will soon arrive at the **Arroyo Seco**.

## 10 ARROYO SECO (Dry stream)– km 17,4



We are near the borders of the municipality of Jimera de Líbar. We cross Arroyo Seco through a plank bridge, although it only carries water during rainy seasons. From this moment on, we will be very near to the railroad track and the Guadiaro river. You should spend a moment to take a picture of the valley and the surrounding cliffs of the **sierra del Palo**, especially if it has rained heavily; then, the landscape acquires majestic colours and water pours down wonderful falls. A large boulder fell onto the railroad track on the 19th January 1979, due to these heavy rains. This caused the derailment





© Rafael Flores

of the **Algeciras-Madrid express**. There were no victims, although the train engine had to be retrieved from the river. Thick, metallic nets have been placed to prevent any future landslides.

Now we must go down the **cuesta de los Recoveros**. We will have to walk carefully because there are many loose stones and the iron studs that hold the nets in place are not well protected. After this, we will reach a tremendous, green bridge and we will avoid the trail of the SL-A 138, that also leads to the **Estación de Jimera** (Jimera Station). Once we get to the other side, we will walk in between a meadow of walnut trees and the river. If it has been raining heavily, it is probable that

▲ Vegetable gardens near Jimera Station



part of the road may be flooded with the water of a nearby acequia or the river itself. If it is the case, either cross with extreme caution or turn back and follow the SL-A 138. We will then reach the swimming and canoeing areas of the Estación de Jimera.

► Jimera Station



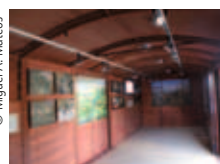
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© Rafael Flores

▲ Canoeing down the Guadiaro

▼ Canoeing centre in Jimera Station



© Miguel A. Mateos

## 11 BARRIADA ESTACIÓN DE JIMERA DE LÍBAR (Neighbourhood of the Jimera de Líbar Station)– 20,9 km

As it happened with the Benaoján Station, this neighborhood rose thanks to the construction of the Algeciras-Bobadilla railroad. The nice climate of the town, in which vegetable gardens and citrus fruits proliferate, did not come unnoticed by the tourists, who made the area the leading edge in rural tourism in the region of Málaga. From here we can make different itineraries: on one hand, across the Cañada Real del Campo de Gibraltar and the Guadiaro, and through the proper town of Jimera de Líbar on the other. You can also practice canoeing, as the section of the river in between the stations of Benaoján and Jimera is perfect for doing so. Several whitewater rafting competitions have been held here.

The GR 141 runs through the street parallel to the river until we get to a small tunnel. After it, we have to go up the street that takes us to a roundabout on the MA-8307 road.

We follow our journey to Jimera, among olive and almond trees.



## ▲ Jimera de Líbar

**12 JIMERA DE LÍBAR – 22,4 km**

We arrive at Jimera de Líbar, where many signs point us towards the different trails of the Serranía de Ronda and show us the diverse tourist attractions that this town has to offer. Next to **la Fuente** (the Fountain), dating from 1789, we can find the signs indicating the next section of the GR-141, that will take us to El Colmenar (Estación de Gaucín).





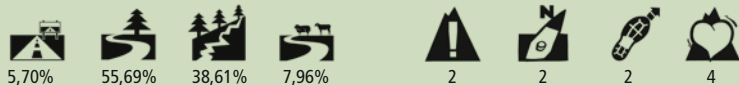
## 2 Jimera de Líbar El Colmenar

GR 141 GRAN SENDA DE LA SERRANÍA DE RONDA  
SECTION 2: JIMERA DE LÍBAR - EL COLMENAR

LENGHT: 24,9 km DURATION: 7 h

INCLINESS  
Total ascent: 749 m Total descent: 1.001 m

CARTOGRAPHY E/1:25.000  
1064-II (Cortes de la Frontera) | 1064-IV (Gaucín) | 1064-III (El Colmenar)



PROFILE OF THIS SECTION



LINKS TO OTHER APPROVED TRACKS



GR 249 Gran Senda de Málaga	PR-A 258 Atajate - Jímera	SL-A 34 Cañón Buitreras
	PR-A 237 C Tesoro - Benalauría	SL-A 138 Río Guadiaro
	PR-A 245 El Colmenar - Gaucín	SL-A 186 Camino de la Estación

This guide does not offer information regarding the state of conservation of the tracks since it can vary at any time.

ITINERARY OF THE TRACK

2





SUMMARY OF THE SECTION

We will follow the course of the river Guadiaro along this section of the track, which will take us from Jímera de Líbar to El Colmenar (also known as **Estación de Gaucín**). The latter belongs to the town of Cortes de la Frontera. Most of our journey runs along the left river bank, through meadows, woodland and farmlands that stretch over the inter-stream ridge that separates us from the Valle del Genal (Valle of the Genal). A succession of medium-height mountain ranges dominate the fields, such as the sierras del **Conio**, **Benadalid**, **Benalauría**, del **Fraile** and del **Hacho**. On the other side we will always see the grey limestone of the macizo de Líbar (massif of Líbar), which is the most eastern area of the Sierra de Grazalema Natural Park and runs parallel to the river Guadiaro. Only at the end of this section of the track, when we get to the narrow cañón de

las **Buitreras** (canyon of las Buitreras), a protected area and Natural Monument in Andalusia, will we cross to the opposite river bank to finish our journey. We can also choose to take the detour of the Gran Senda de la Serranía de Ronda (Great Track of the Serranía de Ronda), that will take us from the Laguna Honda, near the town of Cañada del Real Tesoro and back to the main route through the Pasada del **Bujeo del Álamo**.



Ardivieja flower

© Rafael Flores

KEEP IN MIND

We will pass through a total of 10 wooden gates (locally known as **angarillas**) that we must remember to close to prevent the cattle from crossing from one ranch to another. We should also have in mind, specially in the rainy seasons, that the track can be a bit uncomfortable to walk through due to the sticky mud in the Dehesa de Jímera and the rest of clayey trails of this section. Also be careful when crossing the different fords, as the river levels can be high because of the rain. Please do not disturb the livestock that graze in the field, specially the cattle. Although cows are gentle animals, they are easily enraged when bothered and may charge at you; should we find any in the middle of the track, we should best make

MAIN SPOTS OF THIS SECTION			
1	Jímera de Líbar	30S x: 296633 – y: 4058399	520 m
2	Dehesa de Jímera	30S x: 294870 – y: 4057842	453 m
3	Vado de Arroyo Judío	30S x: 294291 – y: 4056784	413 m
4	Arroyo Alfacara	30S x: 293937 – y: 4055523	424 m
5	Laguna Honda	30S x: 293483 – y: 4053823	445 m
6	Siete Pilas	30S x: 293522 – y: 4052742	565 m
7	Venta del Tío Casas	30S x: 291488 – y: 4051148	365 m
8	Puerto de la Fresneda	30S x: 290811 – y: 4049858	474 m
9	Puente de los Alemanes	30S x: 287866 – y: 4048541	330 m
10	Charco del Moro	30S x: 288135 – y: 4047296	220 m
11	Central Hidroeléctrica Buitreras	30S x: 287139 – y: 4046390	227 m
12	El Colmenar	30S x: 286334 – y: 4046512	239 m



◀ THIS SECTION ONLINE

a detour and resume the trail further on. The puente de los Alemanes (Bridge of the Germans), which is 60 metres high, does not currently have any security fences, so we should take precautions, specially if we want to look over the bridge to see the bottomless abyss below. The descent towards the charco del Moro is very steep and slippery, so it is recommendable to use alpenstocks. Up to the scattered houses of Siete Pilas (Benalauría), our track coincides with the itinerary of the GR-249, Gran Senda de Málaga (Great Track of Málaga). As with the first section of the track, Jímera de Líbar, Cañada del Real Tesoro (Estación de Cortes) and El Colmenar (Estación de Gaucín) are all connected by the Algeciras-Ronda railway, which allows us to combine both sections. ADIF-RENFE Information number: 902320320.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ITINERARY



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▲ Sierra Blanquilla to the left and sierra del Palo to the right

1 JIMERA DE LÍBAR – km 0

We start by the MA-8307, at the exit of Jímera and in direction to Atajate. Near the fountain we will see a public washing place, now fallen into disuse but well preserved, and behind it, a trough for the cattle. Hear you will also see several markers that belong to the PR-A258 Jímera de Líbar-Atajate (although the sign wrongly reads PR-A 257) and to the great tracks GR-249 and GR-141. The last two overlap up until the **Laguna Honda** (Deep Lake in English).



We start our walk down the road to **Atajate** and later we turn to the asphalt lane to the right. This path will take us though several smallholdings of olive trees, almond trees and farmlands. At that same crossroad you will see a sign of the GR-249. It is worthwhile to stop here for a moment to look at the spectacular view of the **Blanquilla**, del **Palo** and **Benaoján** mountain ranges, all part of the **Grazalema Natural Park**. On these steep mountainsides and under the highest escarpments, natural habitat of the mountain goat, there are small patches of holm oaks that are home to several species, like the ginet.



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**JIMERA DE LÍBAR:** 540 m above sea level. The town is formed by two different settlements: the town itself and the neighbourhood of la Estación near the river Guadiaro we have just crossed. We can visit the *iglesia de Nuestra Señora del Rosario*, the ermita de la *Virgen de la Salud* and the *fountain-washing place*. As we have said, in the neighbourhood of la Estación there are several rural lodgings and tourist attractions related to the *Sierra de Grazalema Natural Park*. We should mention the local fair and feasts to honour the Virgen de la Salud (mid-August) and the *romería* (religious pilgrimage) at the end of June.  
+ Info: [www.jimeradelibar.es](http://www.jimeradelibar.es)



We will walk under the shade of the holm oaks and surrounded by retamas (a type of broom bush), thorny brooms, fan palms and mastics. We follow the trail towards the **arroyo de Atajate** (stream of Atajate, also known as del **Molinillo**). Further down the river, some black poplars indicate the location of the abandoned **mill of Cecilio**. The following ford will grant us access to the public mount **Dehesa**. We follow the road not paying attention to the diversions to the right, as they would take us to the Cañada Real del Campo de Gibraltar and to the river bank of the Guadiaro.

## 2 MONTE MUNICIPAL DEHESA (public mount Dehesa)– km 2,1

The Dehesa is a property of the town of Jímera de Líbar and it has a surface area of 257 hectares. It is an important cork oak forest, where holm oaks and gall-oaks also grow. The underbrush is formed by retamas, rockroses and matagallos (a type of nettle). Forest resources like cork are exploited, but also the montanera pig rearing is practised (pigs are left to roam freely and graze on acorns and wild grass). Other livestock is also bred here, such as goats and sheep. There is also a warehouse that is used as seedbed by different companies.

After a couple of hundred metres we will have to have to cross a wooden gate as we enter a different property. From

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- ▲ Rock bunting
- Debarking of the cork oaks during summer

- ▼ The massif of Líbar reflected in the waters of the Guadiaro



© Rafael Flores

here we can see to the South-west some houses of Cortes de la Frontera scattered under the **sierra de los Pinos**, one of the locations with the highest rainfall rate of the Iberian Peninsula. Its proximity to the river allows us to hear the murmur of the **Guadiaro**, protected by a dense river bank vegetation. As we wander down the path, we can enjoy the view of several old cork oaks and gall-oaks. Charcoal used to be made out of these, when wood was the main energy resource. Soon, we will arrive at the **ford of the Arroyo Judío**.



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▲ Deer roam the meadows of the Valle del Guadiaro

► Trail in between the cork oaks



© Miguel A. Mateos



### 3 VADO DE ARROYO JUDÍO (ford of the Arroyo Judío)– km 3,5

Under normal circumstances, we should be able to cross the stream easily, but be careful if it has rained heavily. To the right we can see a facility for retinta cows, the most important type of cow of the area. However we have also seen other Andalusian species that are being recovered, such as the pajuna, the berrenda or the cárdena. A bit further on, to the right, we find the **cortijo de Arroyo Judío** (country house of Arroyo Judío) and a road going down that connects with the **Cañada Real** del Campo de Gibraltar, which runs almost parallel to the GR-141.



We continue straight through the Vereda de Gaucín until we reach a hight that allows us to see a great panoramic view of the Guadiaro valley. We will soon pass by the cortijo de **Bernardito**, easily recognisable for its beautiful eucalyptus. As many other cortijos of the area, this country house is in ruins, and only the best preserved part is still used as a stable. Here we will see two different paths: ours continues straight forward and the ascends to meet again with the first path.

▼ Panoramic view of Cortes de la Frontera from the Vereda de Gaucín to Jímera de Líbar

We leave the municipality of Jímera de Líbar and we enter that of Benadalid. The vegetation also changes, as this piece of land is a pure plantation of walnut trees. **This may be the most difficult part of the journey:** there are many forks on the road to prevent the overcrowding of the path.



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► Cattle will be seen along this entire section of the GR 141

▼ We will cross several wooden gates on our way



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This may cause us to miss the ruins of **the old inn of the Alfacara**. However, we will know we are following the correct path if we come across a battered threshing floor surrounded by a stone wall. After crossing a gate we arrive at the Alfacara stream.

#### 4 ARROYO ALFACARA (Alfacara stream)– km 5,2

Both the fig trees and the rosebays, tied by climbing plants, almost cover the Alfacara stream. Usually, we will be able to cross it easily, but a rise in the level of the river may cause the pontoons to disappear, which can cause some difficulties. After we cross the stream we will walk by a water tank and the old path. Here, the track turns into a paved lane that ends at a larger road. We follow the Vereda de Gaucín, bordered by boundary mounds during a great part of the way. The next landmark of our journey is the vado del arroyo de la Fuensanta (ford of the Fuensanta stream). Next to it we can see the majestic **Cortijo Nuevo**. From here we will discover wide farmlands and grazing lands.

We ascend in between scattered hawthorns as we gain sight of the Benalauría mountain range. To the South-east we can see the motley historical centre of Cortes de la Frontera on

the eastern mountainside. The next gate gives us access to the estate of the **cortijo de los Capitanes**, where the ground is quite muddy. We should pay attention, because at some points the path can be hardly seen. However, the following gate is seen from afar. From a small hill we will be able to see the location of **Siete Pilas**, easily recognisable for some tall black poplars that tower over the mountainside. We descend parallel to the **arroyo de la Vega**, which practically covered with mastics, until we cross its ford and the following gate. Shortly after, we will find the Laguna Honda.

#### 5 LAGUNA HONDA – km 7,5

**The Laguna Honda** (Deep Lake in English), also known as **Laguna Florida** or **Laguna del Quemado**, is in truth a small endorheic pool that is totally dry during summer. A few meters onwards, the trail overlaps a part of the track from Cordel del Guadiaro to puerto del Espino. This is also part of the PR-255 Jimera de Libar-Cortes de la Frontera, which covers both that livestock trail and the Cañada Real del Campo de Gibraltar. We continue to the left until we find a fork on the road that has some signs belonging to the GR-141 and the GR-249. One points to the 7.5km we have already walked from Jimera; another to the 17.4km left to finish our journey at El Colmenar. Here we find the diversion to the GR-141-1 that will allow us



▲ Signs at the diversion to the Cañada del Real Tesoro

▼ Laguna Honda



© Rafael Flores



to reach the Cañada Real del Tesoro, also known as Estación de Cortes (Cortes Station). We can continue our itinerary after we have passed that town and once we have supplied ourselves with food at the Pasada del Bujeo del Álamo.

To resume our journey down the GR-141, we take the detour to the left until we reach the municipality of Almargen, that meets the trail from Ronda to Gaucín at the old inn of San Isidoro. We are on the public mount Dehesa. After the Reconquista ("reconquest", historical period from 722 to 1492 during which the Christian kingdoms of the Peninsula sought to conquer the land controlled by Muslims), these and other surrounding lands were given to the towns of Benadalid and Benalauría. These in turn, belonged to the feudal estate of Benadalid, controlled by the Duke of Ferias. After the Moorish were driven out, some pieces of land were given to settlers so they could farm them, while the trees themselves remained as property of the towns. The mount was run collectively between the two towns until 1931. Nowadays, although the Dehesa is still property of the town, its is run by the Regional Government of Andalusia

We resume our journey walking down the road that goes from **Cordel del Guadiaro** to **puerto del Espino**. Further onwards, near the hidden fountain of los Garbanzos, we enter the municipality of Benalauría. After one last steep slope, we arrive at the scattered houses of Siete Pilas.

▼ Sierra de Libar



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▲ Troughs of Siete Pilas.  
Cortes de la Frontera in the background

► Pasada del Bujeo del Bujeo del Álamo. Diversion GR 141.1



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## 6 SIETE PILAS – km 8,9

On the higher part of the trail, where the road from Benalauría to Cortes begins, we find the troughs that give name to this location: Siete Pilas (Seven Troughs in English). This settlement has one of the best panoramic views of the mountains of the Sierra de Grazalema Natural Park. These mangers figure on official documents as **Abrevadero-Descansadero de las Pilas de Calabrina** (Trough-Stopping place of Pilas de Calabrina), and they belong to the road from Cordel del Guadiaro to puerto del Espino (pass of el Espino). If we take into account the disputes over these rich lands, we can understand the strange arrangement of the towns of Benadalid, Benalauría, Algotocín and Gaucín which, although belonging to the Valle del Genal, they expand their borders to the river banks of the Guadiaro.

The road from Benalauría to Cortes runs by the troughs. This road is also part of both the GR-249 (Gran Senda de Málaga) and the PR-A 237 (Cañada del Real Tesoro-Benalauría). We find the western exit next to a multisport court and a few houses. A dense holm oak forest surrounds the road, which on some parts still conserves its stone pavement and gutters. After less than a kilometre down this path, we have to cross the A-373 road and continue following well-trodden trail. Soon, we will leave the PR-A 237 through another gate. This part of the itinerary is



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▲ Remains of the old stone pavement of the road from Benalauría to Cortes de la Frontera



- ▲ Gall-oak forest in Siete Pilas
- Abandoned vegetable gardens on the riverbanks of the Guadiaro

wonderful to walk thanks to its flat course. It will lead us to the municipality of Cañada del Real Tesoro. From here, we will get to a small trail near the **Fuente de la Pasá house**.

We turn to the left and, after a small ascent, we will pass near the cortijo of Siete Puertas. We will walk near a wide meadow that encloses the river Guadiaro, next to the end of the mountain, and surrounded by a magnificent forest of holm oaks, cork oaks and gall-oaks. The next landmark of our journey is the crossroads between the **Cañada Real del Campo de Gibraltar** (which we are walking) and the **Cañada Real del Llano de las Cruces**.

## 7 VENTA DEL TÍO CASAS (Tío Casas Inn)– km 11,2

We are on the location of the Venta del Tío Casas (Tío Casas Inn). Also near the crossroads, we see the house of el Cerrillo. The Cañada Real del Llano de las Cruces, through which the PR-A 244 Gaucín-Cañada del Real Tesoro runs, then turns right and crosses the Guadiaro over a beautiful bridge at the **Pasada del Bujeo del Álamo**. We continue straight ahead through a meadow roamed by retinta cows and Iberian pigs until we reach the bridge that crosses the Salitre stream. This bridge is both pedestrian and for vehicles. From here, to the left, and belonging to the municipality of Algotocín, we find the Cañada Real del Campo de Gibraltar which goes to the pass of las Eras. This part of the track also belongs to the PR-A 244 to Gaucín.



- ▼ Many Iberian pigs are bred in the area

- Old threshing floor near cortijo del Conde



The road to the Puertos (mountain passes), our road, turns to the right and ascends up to a small resting place by two decrepit elms. After another ascent, we arrive at the Puerto de la Fresneda (Ash Forest Pass).

## 8 PUERTO DE LA FRESNEDA (Ash Forest Pass)– km 14,6

This last slope is quite steep, so you might want to stop for a while before continuing our journey. From here onwards, the view of the landscape changes completely thanks to the altitude. Unfortunately, these lands have been consumed by the fire and there are numerous dead gall-oaks and holm oaks. However, the underbrush gives a note of hope. Soon, we will cross the de la Abejera stream, dry during most of the year. Further on, when we find a fork on the road, we take the path to the right, which ascends to the **cortijo del Conde**. Near this country house we find a sign that points towards the **cañón de las Buitreras** (canyon of the Buitreras). From this lookout we can see how the railroad enters one of the many tunnels that go through the mountain. Particularly remarkable is the proliferation of the turbinata subspecies of Phoenician juniper, which normally grows near the coast, showing that this area was once near the sea. Nearly at the end of the track, we find the ruins of the cortijo del Conde. This ranch, now abandoned, is also known as the cortijo de las Buitreras and it stands as proof of the crisis that the traditional agricultural model suffers

- ▼ Towards la Fresneda



- ▲ Ruins of the cortijo del Conde



© Miguel A. Mateos



- ▲ Puerto de la Fresneda
- The road from Puerto de la Fresneda



© Rafael Flores

since some decades ago. The trail descends, surrounded by fig trees, towards a visible threshing floor. We will then walk through the retamas and down some steps and walkways carved into the stone. We are now on the Puente de los Alemanes (Bridge of the Germans).

## 9 PUENTE DE LOS ALEMANES (Bridge of the Germans) – km 20,1

Built in 1918, the puente de los Alemanes is part of a 6 km

- ▼ Puente de los Alemanes and its stairway

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© Rafael Flores



- ▲ The river course of the Guadiaro through the Cañón de las Buitreras



conduit that supplies water to the Buitreras hydro-electric power plant. This place is simply spectacular: it is both majestic and intimidating. At the bottom of the canyon, the waters of the Guadiaro run as if they crossed an open cave. On the other side, there is a small tunnel we must go through to get to the foot of a steep mountainside. A hard ascent awaits us, but it is highly worthwhile. When we get to the top a natural balcony will offer us a great panoramic view. After that, we will have to descend to return to the **riverbanks of the Guadiaro**. We must be very careful, the gradient is steep and the terrain is quite slippery. From this sheer mountainside we can see the amazing railroad track. We will then arrive at the Charco del Moro.

## ► Charco del Moro



© Rafael Flores



▲ People practising canyoning in the Cañón de las Buitreras

## 10 CHARCO DEL MORO (Pool of the Moor)– km 21,3

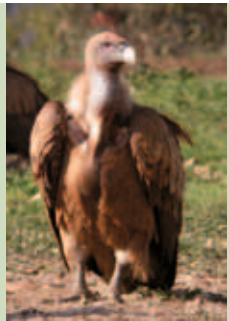


The charco del Moro is a long pool of cold water embedded in between two walls. If we look closely, in the middle of the pool and near the left edge, we will see small waves on the surface of the water; this is where the emergence point of the subterranean waters is located.



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The cañón de las Buitreras was the first ravine in Andalusia dedicated to canyoning. Nowadays, these activities are regulated and you need permission from the Consejería de Medio Ambiente (Regional Department of the Environment) to practice them. You can get it at the local office in Ronda, located in the Alameda del Tajo. To pass in between these walls, that in some points are a hundred metres high, as you climb, jump and swim in the long pools is a remarkable experience for those brave enough to try it. To those new to this type of sport, we highly recommend hiring the services of one of the companies dealing in active tourism of the area; this way, with the help of an experienced guide and the necessary equipment, we will have an unforgettable experience.



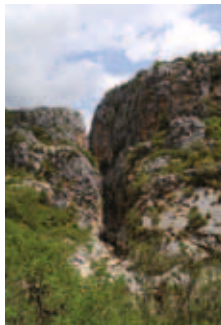
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▲ Griffon vulture

◄ The river Guadiaro and the railway track run side by side through the Buitreras area



© Rafael Flores



© Rafael Flores

▲ Cañón de las Buitreras  
► Admiring Sierra del Hacho



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From here on, we will walk along the Guadiaro, either over its river bank or on the western mountainside. We would like to highlight the suspension bridge that crosses adit 9, an outlet of the hydro-electric complex that can be quite impressive when it carries a lot of water, creating a wonderful waterfall. Equally impressive are the wild mountains of the **sierra del Hacho**, almost completely covered by a beautiful forest and packed with all the types of flower that are typical of the Mediterranean mountain vegetation.



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## 11 CENTRAL HIDROELÉCTRICA BUITRERAS (Buitreras hydro-electric power plant)– km 24

We finally arrive at the great pipe of the Buitreras hydro-electric power plant. The main building has the same taste as other buildings from the beginning of the 20th century, and has a great architectural value. Since 1918, the Hydro-electric company of the Guadiaro has worked at full operating level with two other groups, that were joined by a third seven years later. In between all of them, they generated 7200 kW of power. In 1949, the station management changed hands, and has been run since then by Sevillana de Electricidad, nowadays known as Endesa. We continue down the path and among the **abandoned houses of former workers** of the station. We then exit the complex through a great gate. The next stretch of the road is an asphalt lane that runs among tall eucalyptuses and will take us to the town of El Colmenar.





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▲ Mules are still used in the cork extraction

## 12 EL COLMENAR – km 24,9

This town was settled during 1892, when the **Algeciras-Bobadilla railway** was built by the English company The railway Algeciras-Gibraltar. The British influence in the architecture is easily noticeable in the station and other surrounding buildings. Since the 1st October 1913 the Compañía de los Ferrocarriles Andaluces ran the railway, but in 1941 the service was nationalised and RENFE took over the management.

A point of botanic interest is the **eucalyptus**

**arboretum** of El Colmenar, located in the outskirts of the town, near the forest trail of Cortes de la Frontera. The history of this place goes back to the beginning of the 20th century. Its original purpose was to experiment with the species of trees that better adapted to the local terrain. With this aim, the work team of engineer Eladio Caro introduces more than 60 different species in a this previously delimited piece of land. The abundance of game in the **Los Alcornocales**

**Natural Park**, which can be hunted in the Reserva Andaluza de Caza de Cortes de la Frontera (Andalusian Game Reserve of Cortes de la Frontera), has influenced the traditional culinary recipes of the town, as many include venison. In the same manner, the local fondness for fungi picking has caused the presence of many tapas and dishes with ceps and chanterelles in the restaurants and bars of El Colmenar. The Estación de Gaucín (as the town is also known), is one of the Andalusian towns that still conserves a wide mule driving tradition, specially used in the **cork extraction**.



# 3 El Colmenar Benarrabá



10

DURATION: 8 h

Total ascent: 1.557 m

Total descent: 1.356 m

1064-III (El Colmenar) | 1064-IV (Gaucín)



17,20%



30,67%



53,13%



9,40%



2



2



2



4

10

## GREAT TRACKS



## SMALL TRACKS



LOCAL TRAILS

SL-A 34 Cañón Buitreras

SL-A 175 Concoste - La Porta

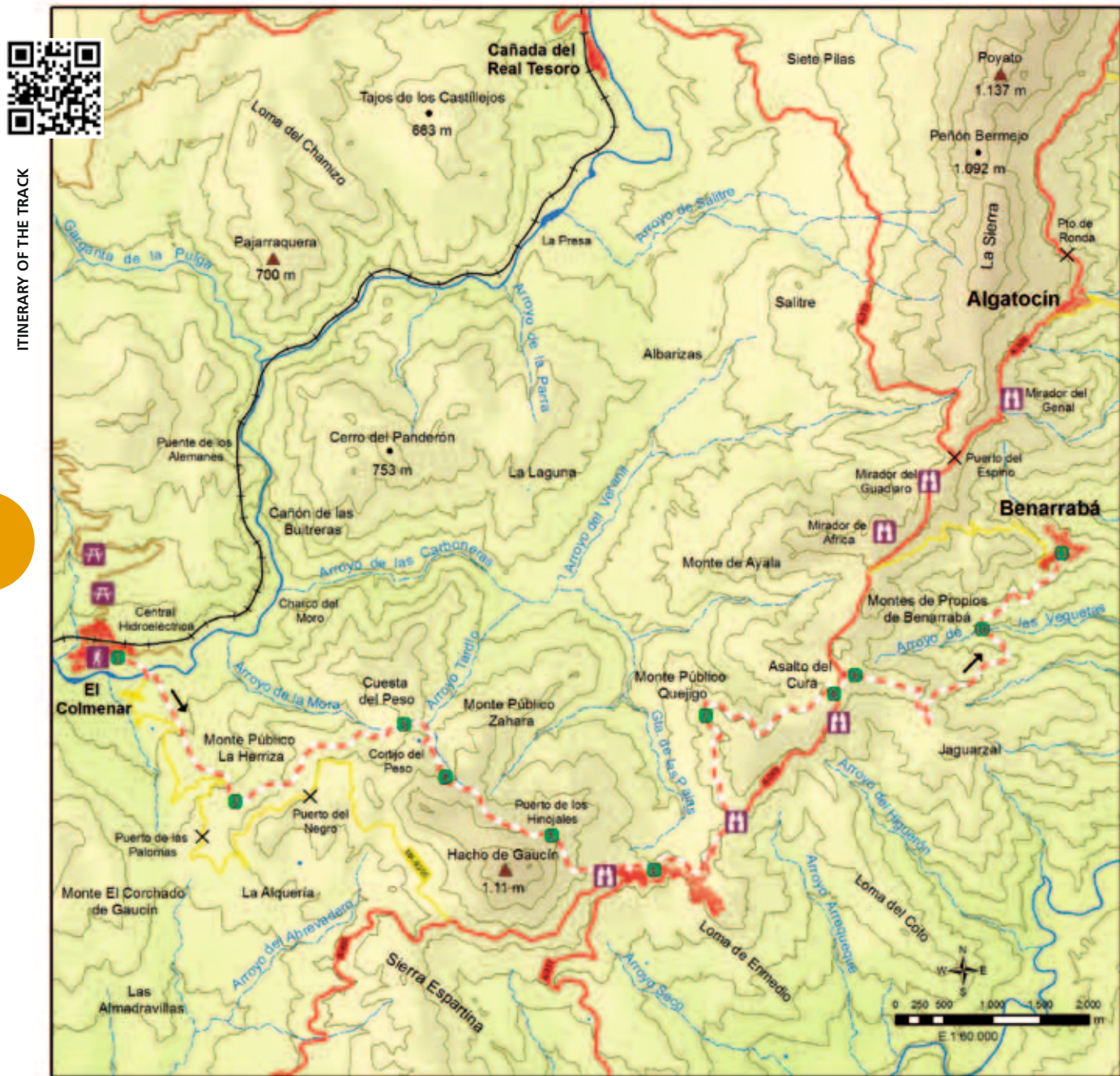
SL-A 216 Sendero Ornitológico

SL-A 215 Llanos del Rey

This guide does not offer information regarding the state of conservation of the tracks since it can vary at any time.

## ITINERARY OF THE TRACK

3



SUMMARY OF THE SECTION

Transitional stage between the **two main valleys** of the GR-141, the **Guadiaro** valley, where we initially walked, and the **Genal** valley, where we will walk from now on, with Benarrabá as our first destination. From the Bujeo fields where cows graze, we will steadily climb up the **Hacho mountain range**, covered by a large patch of Mediterranean forest. The **port of Hinojales**, the highest point of our day, dominates the large panoramic view overlooking the imposing spur of Líbar, in the eastern sector of the Sierra de Grazalema natural park, and the rolling hills that extend from Cortes de la Frontera to Campo de Gibraltar, forming the great forests of the natural park of Alcornocales. We will also get a glimpse of the romantic village of **Gaucín** with the historic **castle of the Águila** towering over it.

On entering the Montes de Propios de Benarrabá, the cork grove stands as absolute owner of the forest. Meanwhile, the curious hiker will not have a chance to grasp all the magnificence of the Valle del Genal, shaped by green hills and deep gorges with no apparent order, and a small group of charming whitewashed villages of clear Andalusian typology scattered around.



© Rafael Flores

KEEP IN MIND

As in previous stages, we will be passing between plots of land using gates that we must close behind us. In the summer months, the first stretches of the path run through fields riddled with thistles that make wearing long trousers a good idea. Be careful not to disturb the cows grazing in the first fields. We will cross Gaucín by road and the roadside won't always be very wide, so be careful with the traffic, especially when crossing from one side to another. Some bits of the GR, through the passage of the Montes de Propios de Benarrabá, will be more or less signposted depending on how

MAIN SPOTS OF THIS SECTION			
1	El Colmenar	30S x: 286492 – y: 4046469	244 m
2	Monte público La Herriza	30S x: 287725 – y: 4044836	435 m
3	Colada del Camino del Molino	30S x: 289607 – y: 4045668	583 m
4	Monte público Zahara	30S x: 289835 – y: 4045191	676 m
5	Puerto de los Hinojales	30S x: 290983 – y: 4044506	791 m
6	Gaucín	30S x: 291814 – y: 4044143	630 m
7	Monte público Quejigo	30S x: 292606 – y: 4045872	664 m
8	Asalto del Cura	30S x: 293895 – y: 4045890	737 m
9	Montes de Propios de Benarrabá	30S x: 294047 – y: 4046187	784 m
10	Arroyo de las Veguetas	30S x: 295411 – y: 4046637	412 m
11	Benarrabá	30S x: 296288 – y: 4047364	538 m



◀ THIS SECTION ONLINE

the cork grove is managed. Wooden beacons will always help to clear any doubts. The surrounding plots of land, before reaching Benarrabá, are dedicated to the cultivation of fruit; as one may imagine, the fruit belong to their owners and, as one might expect, cannot be collected, even if it is only an orange. Until Gaucín, the path of this stage coincides entirely with the PR-A-245 El Colmenar-Gaucín. In addition to the beacons of these standardized trails, we will see signs in yellow, blue, white and green paint. At the end of the stage it coincides with PR-A 243 Gaucín-Benarrabá.

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▲ Starting the journey

▼ Facing El Colmenar

© Rafael Flores



DESCRIPTION OF THE ITINERARY

1 EL COLMENAR – km 0

Situated at the village crossing, we go south to the road of Gaucín (MA-9300). Then we get to the **iron bridge** over the Guadiaro river. From the other end we go down to the bank and move to cross over the gate that takes us away through a small path that happens to meet the Cañada Real of El Colmenar. This first street slope ends to the right, the lane is cut off by a gate that separates it from the road. It is unusual, and at the same time exemplary, to find here a large container installed by the hunting society of Las Lomillas, where hunters deposit their cartridges; we applaud the idea, because this measure helps to avoid contaminating the soil and prevents the poisoning of wildlife, especially birds. The trail crosses over the gate and continues straight ahead. The height gained adds mastic shrubs to the vegetation and displays an extraordinary landscape from west to north. During the summer, the fragrance of the pennyroyal will waft through the air, as it is very abundant in the Bujeo.



After about a hundred meters from the last intersection, we stumble across a high step besides the gate when accessing a nearby cortijo, a sort of 'farmhouse'. We walk up another little slope and then we access the public hill of La Herriza, in the municipality of Gaucín.





© Miguel A. Mateos

▲ On the way to las Herrizas

## 2 MONTE PÚBLICO LA HERRIZA (La Herriza public hill) – km 2,4

We leave the clayey meadows behind and we access the hill through the next gate. Here the holm oak is accompanied by plenty of Jerusalem sage, rockrose and mastic. After so much walking uphill, we finally walk on a flat surface for a while, although the pattern changes when we have to jump over another fence. Finally, after a short climb, we reach the path to access this area. After walking around 125 meters we find the track is cut off at the entrance of a sharp curve; it forces us to carry on ahead along a tire track, towards a plain surrounded by old kermes oaks.

▼ Ash trees of the public hill of la Herriza



© Rafael Flores

🌿 The **Cañada Real of Benarrabá** appears in our path and we will walk through it. The walk takes us to the top of the **hill of La Mora**, exactly at the point where there is a lamppost. To the north, the landscape is beautiful on the rounded hill of La Mora; also to the southeast, where the steep **Puerto del Negro** stands out, covered with oaks. Then we continue along the path that runs parallel to the power line and reach a path that leads us to a **beautiful forest** of holm oaks, pines, heather and Portuguese oaks. Soon we will have to turn down a path on the right, in an area of wild olive trees, blackberry bushes, fan palms and flax-leaved daphnes.



© Miguel A. Mateos

▲ Area of El Peso

## 3 COLADA DEL CAMINO DEL MOLINO AL PESO (track of Camino del Molino al Peso)– km 4,8

At this crossroads we leave the Cañada Real of Benarrabá. This entire area is known as **El Peso**, because history says that it is the place where the mountain-dwellers weighed the fan palm, which was collected between June and August. The process required leaving it to dry in the sun for a month; then it was bleached in a container with burning sulfur. Subsequently they cut it into strips from which the tough wiry grass was extracted. Being easier to shape than esparto, it was used to make hats, fans to stoke the fire and large baskets for figs. These and other crafts are not very common nowadays.

► Walking towards the Sierra del Hacho

© Rafael Flores





At the crossroads of the ancient cortijo of El Peso, we take the left strand and go up towards a nearby green gate; then we arrive at a main route from near the Puerto del Negro, on the MA-9300 road. If you want to get some water, the **fountain of El Peso** is next to the track, a short distance towards the road. The GR splits off upwards from the main track. A chain prevents vehicles from entering, but not people from passing through. On the side, a mosaic indicates the access to the **Hacho mountain range via ferrata**. From the forest house, where the lane ends, 250 meters separate us from a steep rise.

#### 4 MONTE PÚBLICO ZAHARA (Zahara public hill) – km 5,6

We are next to the forest house, in the Zahara public hill, belonging, as the previous one, to the municipality of Gaucín. Our path crosses a gate into the mountain. Henceforth, we will discover some old educational boards that point out where the different species of the Mediterranean forest grow. After crossing a new gate, we will walk another 350 meters slightly upwards until we reach **Puerto Blanquillo**, which seems like a perfect viewpoint with it being 746 meters high.



We have barely walked 150 meters from the port, when we have to go to the right-hand side of the fence through a gate. To the south we can perfectly see the hillside of the **Hacho** and a detached and unique stone hillock called **Tajo Bermejo**. We soon discover the hollow of a limestone quarry

▼ Via ferrata of the Sierra del Hacho

► Sign of the via ferrata of the Sierra del Hacho



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© Rafael Flores



▲ Siete Pilas and the ridge of the Guadiaro

on one side, surrounded by Jerusalem sage, heather, hawthorn and wild roses. The limekiln is in a hollow circle of about two meters deep and with stone on the inside. We continue walking, circling the hillside of the Hacho, with its summit full of holm oaks, even though it can't be seen from here. If it was not visible before, now, from a hillock with an electric pole, we can see the north, the town of **Cortes de la Frontera** lying in the foothills of the **Sierra de los Pinos**. We have finally reached the **port of Los Hinojales**.



**The limekilns** were furnaces where lime was made. The one that appears in our route is in a circular pit about two meters deep and rendered with stone on the inside. The firewood was deposited at the bottom and the limestone (dolomites) was placed in the upper part. The dome was covered with branches and soil. There was a hole at the bottom to stoke the fire. Lime production was an important economic resource supplementing the family income of previous generations. Its use was diverse, but in the Serranía it was basically used for construction (limestone mortar, sand and water) and the traditional summertime whitewashing of houses.

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▲ Cortes de la Frontera and the Sierra de los Pinos, located in the Sierra de Grazalema Natural Park

## 5 PUERTO DE LOS HINOJALES (Port of Los Hinojales) – km 7,1



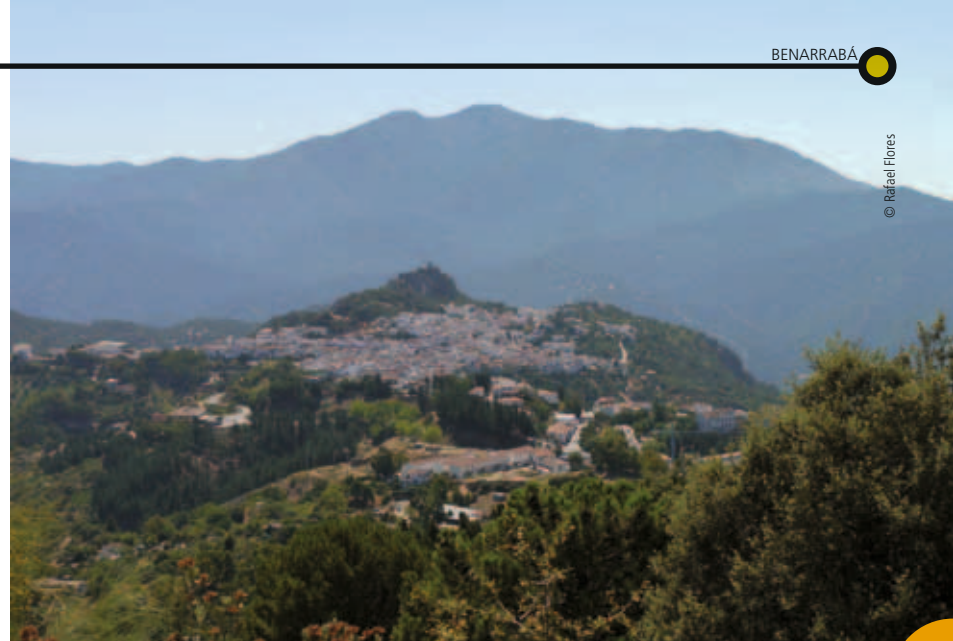
We can consider this panoramic view as something spectacular, looming over the jumbled rooftops of the old town of Gaucín with the Sierra Bermeja closing the horizon. Above the hamlet stands the **castle of Águila** on a high crag, with Roman origins. One of the most famous events of its long history dates back to 1309, when Christians tried to conquer this strategic square while Castile was under the reign of Sancho IV. According to the legend, Alfonso Perez de Guzman, known as Guzmán el Bueno, was famous for sacrificing his son to the enemy before succumbing to extortion during the Marinid siege in Tarifa in 1294.

▼ Tajo Bermejo is home to a vulture colony



© Rafael Flores

The path, paved in some sections, descends accompanied by stone walls and widens as we approach smallholdings and country houses. This new position allows us to see the wind farm near Sierra Crestellina. Finally, the trail becomes a path that goes through olive trees, almond trees and cherry trees. Leaving behind a communications antenna, it flows into the **Camino del Montoro** street and through Gaucín, next to the gas station.



© Rafael Flores

▲ Gaucín from the pass of los Hinojales

## 6 GAUCÍN – km 8



The route we have to follow is easy: the crossing of the A-369 road heading east, through the area where Gaucín faces the Guadiaro. We have to walk very carefully because there is not always enough roadside or sidewalks. After the Antonio Godino public park, we will find an information panel with short distance trails (PR-A) of the Ronda region. We follow the trail signposted as Route VI-La Umbria. The PR-A 243 Gaucín-Benarrabá continues along the road about 400 meters and ends up joining the GR-141 in the spot called Asalto del Cura.

We move forward along the road of **Umbria**, among holm oaks, olive trees and some vines, enjoying the view of the Hacho hillside. Soon we arrive at the entrance to a country house. Finally we turn right onto a path that goes between cork oaks and parallel to a fence, with a hidden view of the **Libar massif** and the Guadiaro valley. The area we are passing through is called **La Lobería**, referring to the presence of wolves in the Serranía de Ronda until relatively recently. The route is wonderful to trudge through, almost

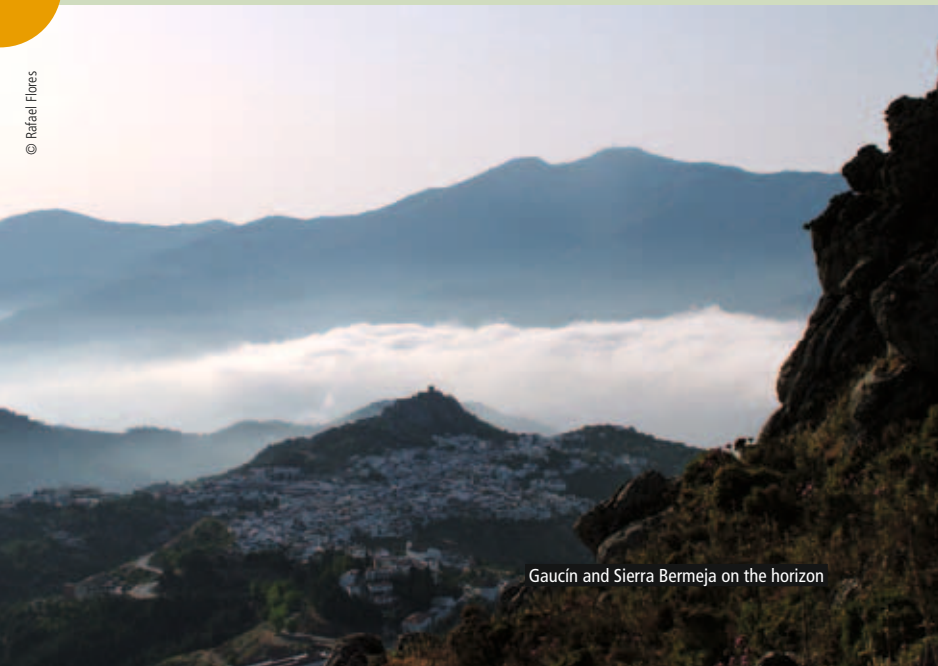


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**Gaucín.** 629 m above sea level. Situated in the Serranía de Ronda and leaning on the Campo de Gibraltar, the most important of the itineraries of the so-called *Camino Inglés* (meaning the "English path"), Gaucín can brag about being one of the main icons of Andalusian romanticism. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, countless European and American travelers passed by, almost all coming from the English square of Gibraltar, on their way to Ronda. This is described in writings and paintings by famous figures such as *Próspero Merimée* (author of the famous novel *Carmen*), David Roberts, *Gustavo Doré* or *Charles Davilliers*. From the promenades that surround the road, especially towards the west, or from the castle, we get a charming view of the *Serranía de Ronda*, of the *Campo de Gibraltar* (including the Rock) and the *African coasts*; then we perfectly understand the imprint of these enchanting landscapes on the romantic travelers. Nowadays, a large percentage of the population of Gaucín is made up of British and Central European citizens, which gives the town a cosmopolitan vibe. This does not prevent traditions from being kept. On Easter Sunday the fiesta of *El Toro de Cuerda* is celebrated, and one of the outstanding events in summer is the fascinating *Flamenco Festival* of the CorkValle del Genal.

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Gaucín and Sierra Bermeja on the horizon

◀ Gaucín, el Hacho and the pass of los Hinojales from the tower of the Castillo del Águila

Lookout of Gaucín

Detail of the Seis Caños fountain of Gaucín

flat, leaving some paths to access the adjoining country houses on either side, always under the cool shade provided by Portuguese oaks, carob trees and cork oaks. And we can see a rustic gate worked the old fashioned way, with wire and wooden logs. After wading through a creek, we reach a little slope and take a wider path that emerges on the right. We keep circling the hill of La Lobería when, on the



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▲ The GR 141 through la Lobería

▶ Vía ferrata of Gaucín

northwest corner of it, the path turns east and runs into the access gate to the **Quejigo hill**.

## 7 MONTE PÚBLICO QUEJIGO (Quejigo public hill) – km 11,4

As in previous milestones, we find some blue paint marks, but what most interests us is the roughness of this municipal hill of Gaucín, where vigorous Portuguese oaks, cork oaks, cluster and radiata pines grow, along with a dense thicket of blackberry bushes, rockrose, ferns and broom. From the trail, we glimpse the **ornithological viewpoint of Africa** on the northeast, located on top of a hill near the crossing of the A-369 with the road that goes down Benarrabá. This installation allows us to enjoy the flight of vultures and other birds that use the valley corridors of the Genal and the Guadiaro in migratory periods to or from the neighboring continent.







© Rafael Flores

Good observers will already have noticed the presence of **chestnut trees**. From now on, lovers of photography, get ready, for you will not only enjoy watching the chestnut trees, elderly Portuguese oaks and cork oaks scattered through the area.

Another 500 meters of hiking places us at an important crossing with a wide track from the nearby A-369. We turn abruptly to the right, and then, after completing the slope, we come to the spot of Asalto del Cura.

▲ Hills of Gaucín, lookout of Africa and, on the horizon, the Torrecilla (1919m), highest point of the Serranía de Ronda



© Juan Luis Muñoz



© Rafael Flores

▲ Great tit and common brimstone

► Chestnut forest in the Asalto del Cura



## 8 ASALTO DEL CURA – km 13,5

The location is **idyllic** because of the beauty of its chestnut trees, pines and oaks. There are several stories surrounding Asalto del Cura. The most widespread one refers to the accost the local parish priest suffered at the hands of bandits. The truth is that it is the place where residents of Gaucín usually celebrate St. John's Eve. From here several roads lead into the mountains. Once we pass the gate, we reach the A-369. In the plain, to the right, lies the PR-A 243 Gaucín-Benarrabá path, which we will run into later. Not far away, towards the village



© Miguel A. Mateos

▲ Sierra Crestellina

## 9 MONTES DE PROPIOS DE BENARRABÁ – km 15,3

Now we can already say we are on the slope of Genal, more specifically, on the border of the municipalities of Benarrabá and Gaucín. Precious is the image of **Alpandeire** lying north at the foot of the Riscos, a spot where the karst modeling suggests prodigious rock formations; **Faraján** can also be watched from above. To the east, **Jubrique** and **Genalguacil**. Closer and in the same direction, the hill of **Poron** rises, and at its feet lies Benarrabá, not yet visible. We have to run along the **knoll of the Coto**, towards the east, always in parallel or near the wide track.

The Montes de Propios de Benarrabá, although they were tithes of the Duke of Medina Sidonia, became municipal property from the 18th century. They are mainly used for the cork extracted from the **cork oak or kermes oak**, as they are known in the Serranía. Goat farming and pig fattening are also important economic activities in these places, as well as **hunting**: there are places for wild boar and roe deer hunting, a small species of deer found in these lands in one of its favorite spots in the Serranía de Ronda.

There comes a moment when the hill is equal in height to the path and we find the entrance to the **Bellavista country house**. Further on, the GR-141 turns right and begins a

lies the viewpoint of Asalto del Cura, on the roadside.

We must cross the A-369 and position ourselves on the opposite lane. After passing a gate to the left, we leave the path the PR-A 243 goes through, which we will be joining later. We continue moving slightly uphill, almost parallel to the road and we climb a hill where the landscape changes. This is where the access to the Montes de Propios de Benarrabá appears, and it starts near the **Corchas inn**.

### The cork

The extraction of cork bark is part of the rituals of our region. To maintain the production, the extraction is carried out on a plot every nine or ten years, thus, every year one of the 9 or 10 plots, in which the land is divided, is worked. The task is performed by the *corcheros*, 'men that work the cork', each specializing in one task. The loggers, with hard blows, take out the bark; the *rajadores* slice the material into pieces of similar size; others stack the cork and take it where the mules are so the mule drivers load them and transport them to the courtyards, where they weigh the bark with a derrick. The measure used is the Castilian quintal, equivalent to 46 kg or 4 arrobas (25lbs). A kermes oak is ready to be exploited at around 35-40 years of age. When first extracted, cork is called "bornizo" and its lower quality also means it has a lower price. The one extracted second is called "segundero" and it is usually transformed to make cork boards. From the third extraction on, they are known as the reproduction ones and they are mainly used to manufacture corks for the wine industry.



© Rafael Flores



descent that offers the view of the **Rock of Gibraltar** and **Jebel Musa**, both considered in Greek mythology as the Pillars of Hercules, which at the time marked the limits to the known world. We also catch a glimpse of the two peaks of the **Sierra Crestellina natural park** and veering west appears the natural area of **Reales de Sierra Bermeja** and three Spanish firs rise skyward.

▼ The Rock of Gibraltar and the Jebel Musa (Morocco) from the lookout of Africa



© Rafael Flores

### Sierra Bermeja

The Spanish fir was introduced to the scientific community by Pierre Edmond Boissier in 1837. It was in Sierra Bermeja where he became acquainted with it; in order to do so he relied on the indications of an apothecary from Málaga, Félix Haenseler, who showed him a twig from his herbarium. A little known fact regarding our fellow countryman is that he first described the Egyptian mongoose after catching sight of it in these mountains. The strange geological nature of Sierra Bermeja, consisting of rocks of igneous origin rich in heavy metals called peridot, causes this territory of the Serranía to have a large number of endemic plants; so many that, in Europe, only Sierra Nevada exceeds it in quantity and variety.

Shortly before passing the entrance gate to La Corchuela, on the southwest we have a nice view of Gaucín and its castle. We have traveled 1.3 km since we entered the municipality of Benarrabá when we arrive at an important crossroads. The main trail downwards branches out to reach the region of **Los Lobos, Los Pepes and Prado de la Escribana**, all on the bank of the river Genal. Our path turns sharply to the left and meets the PR-243 further down. Near the house of El Guarda, a couple of red and white posts indicate the point where we leave the track to follow a narrower one that veers off to the left. Once again we separate from the PR-A 243. This new section is extremely beautiful, because the elderly kermes oaks, known in the area as grandfathers, join beautiful Portuguese oaks and dense fern, forming a mixed forest of great beauty. We end up running into another track and connecting to the PR-A 243. We move towards the **creek of las Vaguetas**, protected by a large tangle of vegetation, and we have to head up towards the marked trail between a pure kermes oak until we cross over the gate and wade across the stream.



© Rafael Flores



▲ Natural Site of the Reales de Sierra Bermeja with its small Spanish fir forest

◀ Spanish fir branch





© Miguel A. Mateos

▲ Descent towards the stream of las Vегuetas

## 10 ARROYO DE LAS VEGUETAS (Las Vегuetas creek) – km 17

From the other side of the creek there is an uphill path with a steep slope until it reaches a smoother track. The oak forest gives way to plots of land and citrus, fig trees, olive trees and almond trees. Unfortunately, the prickly pears that mark the way suffer from the cochineal carmine, a plague that ravages the valley of Genal.

## 11 BENARRABÁ – km 18,7

After entering the area of La Gaspara, we connect with the paved road of Benarrabá that goes down to the Prado de la Escribana and goes up the road of Genalguacil. Then we have to climb towards Benarrabá and the stage ends at **Plaza del Cerro**.



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▲ View of Jubrique from the cork oak forest from the lookout of Benarrabá

### Benarrabá

520 m above sea level. Like other municipalities of Valle del Genal, Benarrabá is a harmonious urban group of whitewashed houses with narrow and steep streets of Andalusian typology. Their traditional pig meat industry is very renowned and boasts about having its very own tapas route, which is highly recommendable and includes the main restaurants in town. In winter, making the most of long weekends, the **Feria Gastronómica Serranía de Ronda** is celebrated with an exhibition of regional products. The festival calendar highlights the celebration, on January 5, of the allegorical religious play of the **Three Wise Men**. There are street performances around different town squares in which almost the entire neighborhood participates. + Info: [www.benarraba.es](http://www.benarraba.es)

SECTION 4:  
BENARRABÁ – BENALAURÍA



# 4 Benarrabá Benalauría



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DURATION: 5 h

Total ascent: 884 m

Total descent: 732 m

1064-II Cortés de la Frontera | 1064-IV Gaucín



7,54%



44,04%



48,42%



28,99%



1



2

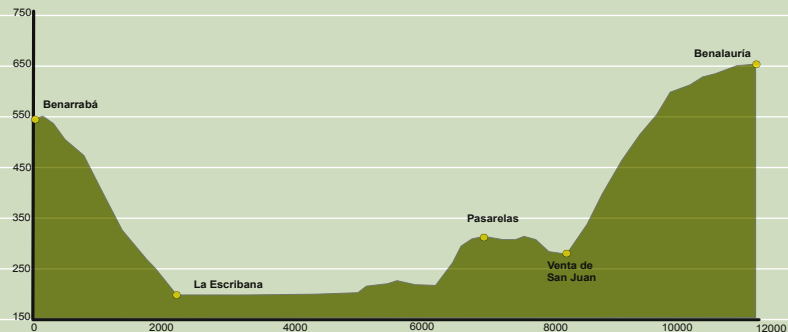


2



4

## PROFILE OF THIS SECTION



## LINKS TO OTHER APPROVED TRACKS



## GREAT TRACKS



## SMALL TRACKS



## LOCAL TRAILS

PR-A 240 Benarrabá - Genalquacil

SL-A 175 Concoste - La Portá

PR-A 239 Benarrabá - Algotocín

SL-A 157 Prado de la Escribana

PR-A 236 Benalauría - Benadalid

PR-A 237 Benalauría - C Tesoro

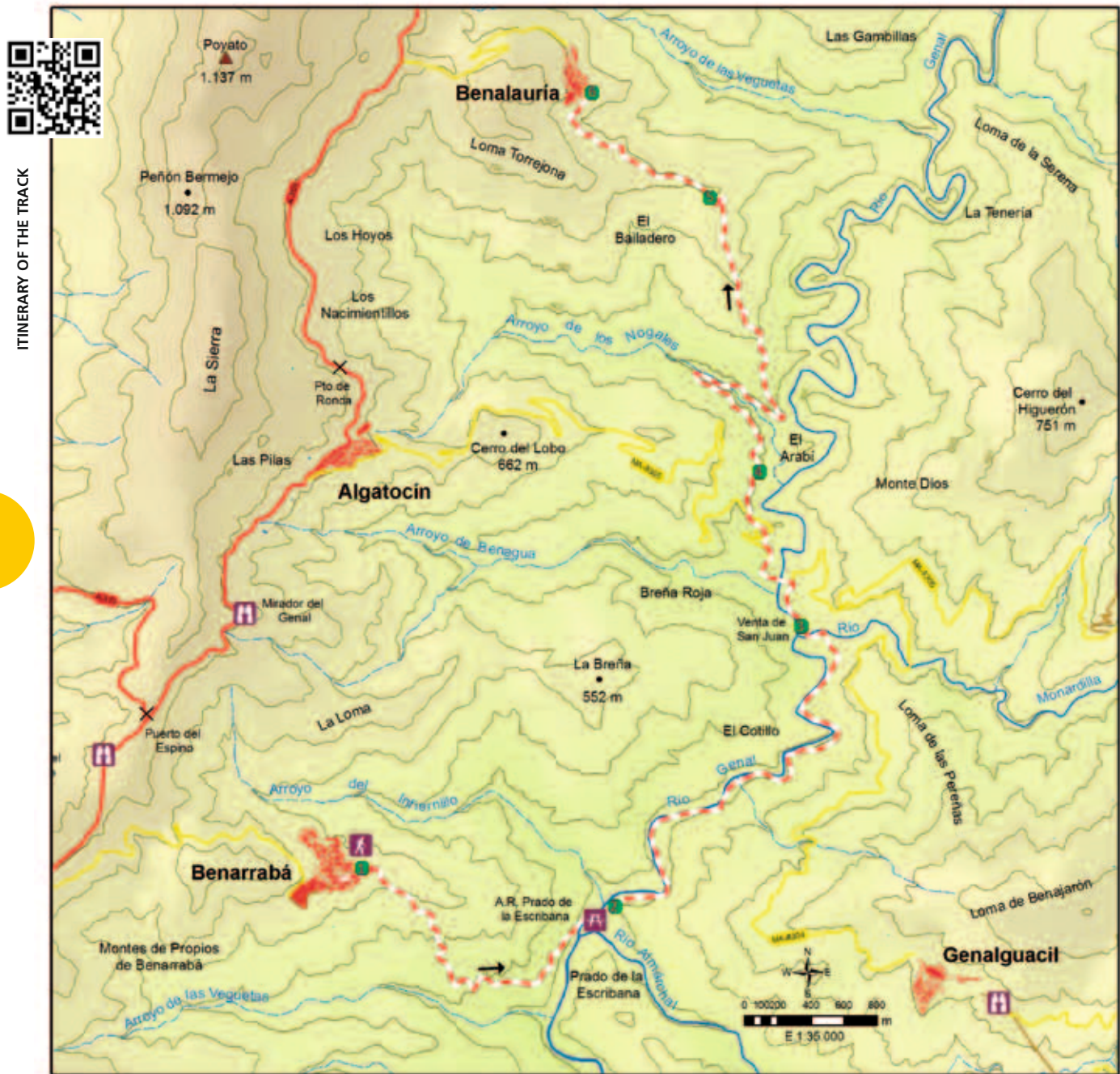
PR-A 238 Benalauría - Algotocín

PR-A 291 Benalauría - Jubrique

This guide does not offer information regarding the state of conservation of the tracks since it can vary at any time.

## ITINERARY OF THE TRACK

4



SUMMARY OF THE SECTION

This section offers the best of the **Genal valley**: the cork oaks, the meadows and vegetable gardens, the mills and the river, with its particular ecosystem; the mountain farms, the polyculture, the muleteers’ paths, the chestnut grove and the Andalusian architecture, very characteristic in this area of the Serranía de Ronda. From the beginning, we will continue going down until we reach the **meadow of La Escribana**. From that cross-roads, an old resting place for cattle, where the river **Almárchar**, which comes from Sierra Bermeja, flows into the **river Genal**, we will walk on a recovered path parallel to the course of the Genal river. **San Juan inn** and the campsites placed at both shores, make this place one of the most visited, especially during the summer, when several pools are set up to **bathe in the river**. The climb up to Benalauría will include some steep slopes, although the foliage is always helpful to alleviate our effort. Once we reach the chestnut grove, the environment changes and, with Benalauría faraway, the walk becomes easier.



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MAIN SPOTS OF THIS SECTION			
1	Benarrabá	30S x: 296288 – y: 4047364	538 m
2	Prado de la Escribana	30S x: 297883 – y: 4047192	190 m
3	Venta San Juan	30S x: 299073 – y: 4049181	273 m
4	El Arabí	30S x: 299021 – y: 4050160	292 m
5	El Bailaero	30S x: 298413 – y: 4051630	604 m
6	Benalauría	30S x: 297880 – y: 4052151	631 m



◀ THIS SECTION ONLINE

KEEP IN MIND

The fact that this section is shorter does not mean it demands less physical effort than the previous ones. The big gradients, ascent or descent, are continuous throughout the whole route, except the part within the meadow of La Escribana and San Juan inn. Even though this stretch is almost flat, it has some risks, like floods or landslides due to the river’s proximity and the route passing through unstable areas. It may be impossible at times to wade through Monardilla river, close to San Juan campsite, might be impossible due to river swellings. We will pass through the short stretch from the way MA-8305 (Algatocín-Jubrique) to the point where the path splits from the hill walking on the roadside and taking shortcuts in a couple of curves, so we will need to be careful with cars. From the meadow of La Escribana to Benalauría, we will run into the GR-249 Gran Senda de Málaga but in the opposite direction. We highly recommend using telescopic poles.




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- ▲ Berry of the arbutus
- Balcony in Benarrabá

DESCRIPTION OF THE ITINERARY

1 BENARRABÁ – km 0

The track starts in front of the Sierra del Espino rural school, near the local swimming pool and the **Banu Rabbah hotel**. It is extremely pleasant to walk absorbed by the chromatic nuances of mastic trees, labdanum trees, lavender, arbutus, brooms, pines and gall-oaks; but  **kermes oaks** or **cork oaks** take the biscuit. Visitors from other places might find the bizarre tradition of reusing old mattresses as gates and fences to delimit properties shocking. This is common in all the Serranía de Ronda but specially in Genal valley, where it is a widespread practice. To find an explanation, we must go back to fairly recent times, when subsistence economy was dominant in the Mediterranean mountain and exploiting any resources was a vital task. This forgotten practice is called recycling nowadays.



© Felipe Crespo





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▲ The trail to Concoste overlaps the GR 141 in one section

► Over the hills of Benarrabá



© Miguel A. Mateos

Almost without noticing, we will arrive to a protrusion with a signpost that says SL-A 175 and informs us about the **mountains of Benarrabá**, which can be seen from this location. The signpost explains the importance of the valley of the Las Vegetas stream, where there used to be flour mills. Now we can understand the importance of the **Concoste path**, which was frequently used by muleteers charged with strings of coal, lime, cork barks, resin, honey, mushrooms, medicinal herbs, fruits and vegetables, almonds, chestnuts, oil, cold meats, cheese, moonshine, grape juice, etc. to supply the markets of the nearby coast; the return was not in vain either, they traded with salt and fish here. Transporting goods on mules, arriería, was undoubtedly the main economic activity for some villages in the Valley, such as Igualeja, Parauta, Jubrique, Benalauría and Benarrabá. Thanks to the muleteers, many of the paths around GR-141 have been preserved.



© Rafael Flores

▲ In the valley of the Genal mules are still used for transportation

From this point, the slope is steeper and therefore we will find some short and bent stretches where the path is divided and joins further on to let the mules pass through the narrower parts. At the end, we will arrive at an esplanade used, when necessary, as a storehouse for cork barks. There are different branches, but we will need to continue by the central one, that merges with the **El Lavadero path**, which comes from Benarrabá towards the field of the big **meadow of La Escribana** and Genalguacil. We will follow the dusty path and soon we will see the meadow of La Escribana and the long meadow of La Tintorera on the left shore of Genal river.

In this place, we can see the ruins of the **La Cuna mill**, used for flour and oil, as well as a house. Its name stands for a ropes and pulleys gadget used in times of river swellings that allowed transportation from one shore to the other using a cradle, cuna in Spanish. From there, we will go to the mouth of Almárchar river, dry during the summer months, to the river Genal.



▼ Genalguacil

© Miguel A. Mateos





© Miguel A. Mateos

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▲ Prado de la Escribana

## 2 PRADO DE LA ESCRIBANA – km 2,7

In the meadow of La Escribana, an old resting place for the cattle from **El Cordel de Umbria** to Genal river, we will find a place for recreation with tables, benches and children's games. The night of the 24th of June is a special date in the calendar of festivities of the neighbours from Genalguacil and Benarrabá, who visit this place to celebrate the **night of San Juan** (St. John's Eve). In summer, when the river is dammed to make bathing easier, it is possible to see the evolution of the bogas and bordallo fish through the clear waters.

▼ Sculptures in the open air museum of Genalguacil



© Miguel A. Mateos

The GR-141 bends to the north-west parallel to the river and continues close to the shore next to canes and tamarisk trees. It is worth visiting **Genalguacil**, a beautiful white village perfectly preserved and converted into an outdoor museum thanks to a great amount of artworks placed in the most picturesque areas of its streets. These sculptures, pictures, photographs, videos, etc. are the result of the **Art Conventions** of Genal valley, which take place every two years during the first half of August. The artists get free accommodation, food and the

necessary materials in exchange for their works. Some of them are exhibited in the Local Museum of Contemporary Art.

We enter a poplar grove and then we get to the first of the three walkways that divide the river into three adjoining parts. There is a signpost warning about the risks of landslides, floods and narrow passages where you will need to use your hands. When we leave this place, we enter into a sandy land with a ditch parallel to the path and anchored to the rock. The foliage, due to the reigning humidity, is almost wild: growing here and there, there are blackberries, wild vines, butcher's-brooms, redouls, soapworts, and also willows, osiers, and black poplars covered by thick ivies. When crossing a gate, the GR-141 takes advantage of the old ditches to continue with the cool shade offered by the gallery-shaped grove. One kilometre after the first metallic walkway, we will arrive at the second one. The next meadow is **La Huerta de Juan Ruiz**. The fences of the property have a gate that provides access to a beautiful pool in the river, fed by the influx of a couple of streams.



▼ Trail by the river

► Observing the Genal from one of the walkways



© Rafael Flores

We continue through the abandoned ditch and we cross a relatively narrow flight area with a guiding cable along the wall. We can see the curious meander drawn by the Genal river. A new abandoned ditch appears in our field of vision; the **Cuarterones**, presided by two farms, the one in the plain in better conditions. Just as we continue we will start to see the former **mill of Los Cipreses**. In the course of the walk, just before wading across the **Arroyo Hondo** stream, a subsidiary of the river, we will find a water tank half covered by small vaults. We go beyond the municipality of Genalguacil and we enter Jubrique.



© Rafael Flores

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### 50 years back

If we went back in time, at least 50 years, the wild and impenetrable shores of the Genal river had similar appearance to this: farms in the middle of the mountainside surrounded by olive trees, almond trees, walnut trees, fig trees, vineyards, holm oaks, gall-oaks, pines, kermes oaks and chestnut trees in the shady spots, mixed with coal furnaces and limekilns next to the paths that go to the villages. There would be donkeys in the surrounding areas, as well as pigs, cows, goats, sheep and chickens. There would be exultant vegetable gardens and meadows full of cherry trees, pomegranate trees, plum trees, orange trees, lemon trees, peach trees, apricot trees, pear trees watered by the numerous ditches that still surround the shores nowadays. The handmade waterwheels were in different points of the river and close to them, apart from some tanneries, there were numerous fully functional flour, oil and sumac mills. The paths and small inns along the river, in both shores, were always crowded with muleteers, neighbours and passers-by. The competence of the new agroindustrial models led to the restructuring of these old models of the country life in the last third of the 20th century.



© Miguel A. Mateos

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At around 75 meters we will find the third and last walkway and here we will connect with the path to access the meadow of **Los Tiritones**, where there are pomegranate trees and some olive trees with distinguished appearance. The stretch is no longer than 250 meters until we come back to the path next to the river. Further on, we will move away from the Genal river and advance to a plain between this river and the **Monardilla** river until the path divides in two. We continue towards the gate preceding the ford of Monardilla river. We walk next to the Genal river again, behind the **San Juan campsite**, which holds a beautiful rural accommodation covered with ivies. Afterwards, we will come across the split between the two constructions of

▼ Spillway of the mill of Álamo



© Rafael Flores

the **mill of El Álamo**. The horizon on the west offers a beautiful view of Algatocín and further down, very close to the river, a garden of fruit trees that is well cared for and distributed in plots flourishes. Next, we go around the parking lot and we arrive at the bridge over the road.

► Pool by the inn of San Juan

© Rafael Flores



### 3 VENTA SAN JUAN – km 6,4

The river defines the municipalities of Jubrique and Algatocín here. In the former, we will find the campsite and San Juan inn and, in the latter, the Genal campsite. The inn is famous in the region and it is very crowded, especially in the summer months. It existed before the road was built, as it was a compulsory stop on the way between Algatocín and the villages of Jubrique and Genalguacil. Under the road, there is the most bustling **pool** of the summer season. We continue along the roadside on the left-hand side, going around the installations of the Genal campsite, shaded by huge cork oaks that have earned the name of **Arboleda Singular de Andalucía**, Unique Grove of Andalucía.



▼ The enclosed valley of the stream of Algatocín from the campsite of San Juan



© Rafael Flores

We cross the road and climb a very steep slope to avoid a long turn of the MA-8305. The operation is repeated until the path ends in front of the path of the Monte. We open, cross through and close the gate behind us. This path enters the public hill of Algatocín: **Coto and Vega del Río**. The panoramic view to the North shows the sobriety of the whitish Jarastepar hill as opposed to the green Genal valley. We

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© Felipe Crespo

## ▲ El Arabí

continue almost cruising through the cork oak grove, spotting, on the east, our path and the El Arabí country house, over a group of prickly pears. Once we are at the crossroads, there is a path to the west, while our path, now known as Carril de los Nogales, turns abruptly to the east, to find the ford shaded by black poplars. The place name **Benajamón** derives from Benahabú, a close Nazari farmhouse abandoned after the Mudejar rebellion of Sierra Bermeja (1501). On the small slope we find a gate with an adjoining pedestrian walkway and, on one of the sides, a house for cattle. Finally, we arrive at El Arabí.

## ▼ Parasol mushroom



© Rafael Flores

## 4 EL ARABÍ – km 9,5

At this important crossroads we can see the promontory of the country house mentioned above and a path under it that goes to the shore of the Genal river, where we will find the **Villarta, Enmedio or Tomás mills**, covered by a thick tangled mess of hazel trees and alder trees. It is divided in two rooms, one for milling wheat and the other for the oil. On the front of the façade, we can barely read: It started to work the 7th of August, festivity of Saint Cayetano,

## ► Backwater of the Genal



© Rafael Flores

1735. It preserves a pave and the press. For a time, it was a gunpowder factory.

The GR-141 continues a few meters, from the pronounced curve, through a concrete slope and passes next to a farm. From there, a narrow path splits off with a big slope that connects, after a bit less than 300 meters, with a walkway from Benalauría to Jubrique passing by the **pool of Esteban**. Shortly after, we enter the municipality of Benalauría. We have to take these slopes calmly, especially in the steeper parts.



The cork barks and the swabs are very common, although from time to time beautiful gall-oaks appear. In one of the breaks, if we look towards the river, it is possible to see the meadow



## Grapes and phylloxera

A century ago, the cultivation of grapes prevailed in most parts of Genal valley, especially in the municipality of Jubrique, where it occupied up to 70% of its dry lands. Almost all the farms had a winery to produce grape juice. As production was higher than demand, one part was distilled to obtain moonshine; up to 70 stills existed in Jubrique. The phylloxera plague at the end of the 19th century, got rid of almost all the crops, which resulted in an economic blow and a change of the farming landscape. Vines were substituted by chestnut trees and sumac. Nowadays, chestnut trees are one of the identifying elements of the Genal valley.





© Rafael Flores

▲ Benalauría

of the Capellanía and the facilities of the **mill of Almenta**, partly reconverted to rural accommodation. On the other side of the Genal river, there is the pronounced hillside of the **hill of Higuerón**, mainly covered by pines, holm oaks, kermes oaks and olive trees.



The slender path ends in a trail that we will follow until reaching the main one. We will find the reward for such a hard climb when we look to the west and our sight will come across the idyllic presence of Algotocin, presided by the tower of the **Virgen del Rosario** parish church, with clear Andalusian influence. When the path draws a pronounced curve, we will see a shortcut that saves a good amount of meters to the top of the hill.

► Road to the Bailaero

## 5 EL BAILAERO – km 10,1

We are in the perimeter of the **chestnut trees grove**, the only flat area, which makes it an ideal place to celebrate dances and other festivities, hence the name of the place. At present, given its proximity to the village, El Bailaero is the destination for relaxing walks. We walk down the Carril del Castañar, with Benalauría and the cemetery in the distance. In the north are the mountains of **Conio** and the sharp hill **Cerro de los Frailes**; veering eastward, the high Genal appears in all its magnificence. The **Sierra de las Nieves Natural Park** closes the horizon, of which we glimpse its main massif covered by the pinsapar, Spanish fir grove, of Ronda and the majestic **Torrecilla** peak (1,919 m), located in the Sierra de Tolox. Among chestnut trees, and sumac cultivated terraces covering the edges of the path, we arrive at the **Chorruelo fountain**, located on the last curve before entering Benalauría.



© Miguel A. Mateos

► Through the chestnut forest of Benalauría



© Rafael Flores

## 6 BENALAUÍA – km 12,3

515 inhabitants – 665 m altitude. Placed on the east hillside of the Cerro, according to some authors in Benalauría you do not walk it, you climb it. This fact makes this beautiful village a panoramic viewpoint over the ends of the mountains:



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▼ Museo de la Molienda  
(Miling Museum) in Benalauría



© Rafael Flores

The Andalusian heritage is more than palpable in the urban streets of Benalauría, adjusted to several streets horizontally aligned and others vertically aligned that structure the network. The old *La Molienda* mill of blood, once used to press olives, has been converted into an interesting *ethnographic museum* that is not to be missed. Moreover, near the town hall, an interpretative room of *Moors and Christians* is open to the public, declared of National Tourist Interest in Andalucía. It is celebrated on the first Sunday of August. This is a live performance, with popular participation, in the context of the episode of the Mudejar rebellion of 1501, which occurred in the mountains of Sierra Bermeja, of which the most important historic event was the defeat of Calaluz or Calalui, in which a hundred Christian soldiers lost their lives, including Alonso de Aguilar, the younger brother of the well-known Gonzalo Fernández de Córdoba, known as the Gran Capitán, Great Captain. Some authors establish the scene of the battle on the hill of Cerro de Castellón or Reales Chicos, in the Natural Setting of Los Reales de Sierra Bermeja, although other theories, mainly based on place names, place it on the hill of El Canalizo.



SECTION 5:  
BENALAURÍA – ALPANDEIRE



# 5 Benalauría Alpandei

GR 141 GRAN SENDA DE LA SERRANÍA DE RONDA  
SECTION 5: BENALÁURIA - ALPANDEIRE

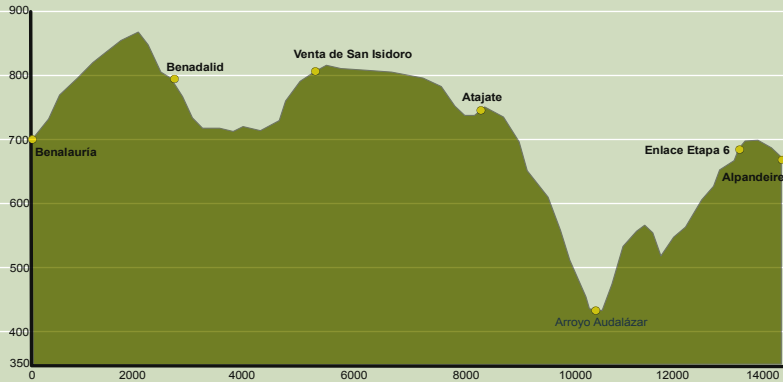
LENGTH: 15,5 km DURATION: 7 h

INCLINESS  
Total ascent: 1.357 m Total descent: 1.364 m

CARTOGRAPHY E/1:25.000  
1064-II Cortes de la Frontera



PROFILE OF THIS SECTION



LINKS TO OTHER APPROVED TRACKS

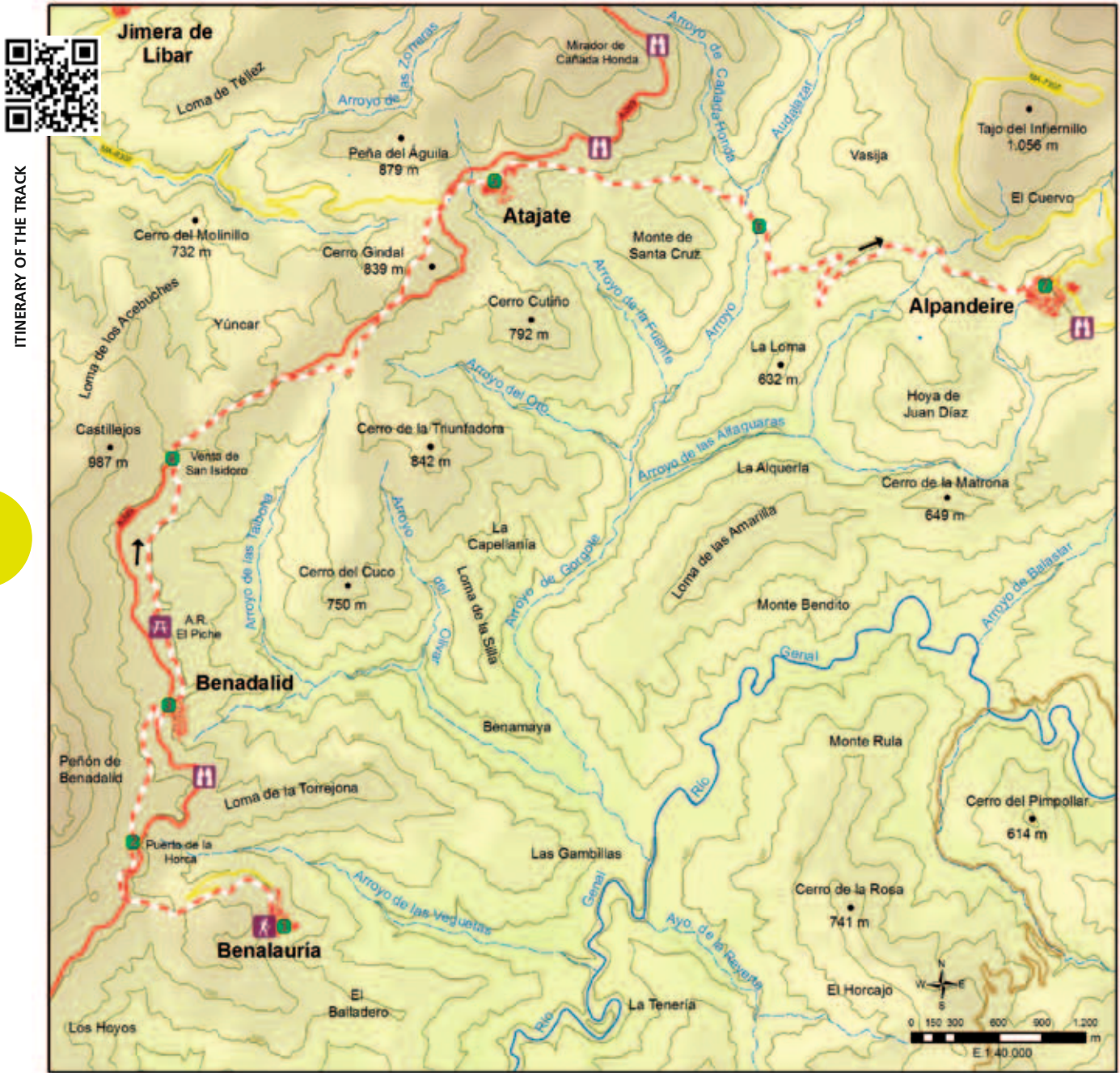


- GR 249 Gran Senda de Málaga
- PR-A 291 Benalauria - Jubrique
- PR-A 238 Benalauria - Algotocín
- PR-A 237 Benalauria - Cañada del Real Tesoro
- PR-A 236 Benadalid - Benalauria
- PR-A 235 Benadalid - Atajate
- PR-A 229 Atajate - Alpandeire
- PR-A 258 Atajate - Jimera de Líbar
- PR-A 228 Alpandeire - Faraján

This guide does not offer information regarding the state of conservation of the tracks since it can vary at any time.

5

ITINERARY OF THE TRACK





SUMMARY OF THE SECTION

The most remarkable geographical feature in this section is the long Genal-Guadiaro interstream ridge. The GR-141 runs on its eastern side, overlapping the ancient **Vereda del Camino de Ronda**, which was the historical connection of this region and the Campo de Gibraltar. In accordance with its geological diversity, the surrounding landscape shows three well-defined spaces: the mountainous border which encloses the valley to the West and to the North, characterised by the greyish colour of its limestones and dolomite rocks and certainly deforested by human action (coaling, shepherding, felling, fires, etc); the valley itself, composed of metamorphic rocks (slates, gneisses, schists, quartzites, phyllites, etc.), where a magnificent oak forest grows; and lastly, to the East, the peculiar **Sierra Bermeja**, home to pinaster and radiata pines,

to Spanish firs and to numerous botanical endemisms. The depression of the Guadiaro allows us to barely make out the **Peñón de Gibraltar** (Rock of Gibraltar), as well as the African coast to the South.

Between the two inns of San Isidoro and Atajate, the path climbs along the ridge that separates our two main valleys. This will allow us catch sight of the **macizo de Líbar** (massif of Líbar) in all its splendour to the West;

one of the most prominent karstic landscapes of the eastern edge of the Sierra de Grazalema Natural Park. To the North, we will always have **sierra del Oreganal** (mountain range of the Oreganal), which cuts the plateau of Ronda off from the prolific Valle del Genal (Valley of the Genal). From afar, we will be able to see the mountainsides that surround the towns of Faraján, Júzcar, Cartajima, Parauta, Igualaja and Pujerra, dotted with chestnut groves. Once we arrive in Atajate, we will leave the Camino de Ronda to walk down the trail to Alpandeire, crossing the narrow valley of the Audalázar and one of the most beautiful **holm oak forests of the upper Genal**.



Centaurea pullata

© Rafael Flores



◀ THIS SECTION ONLINE

MAIN SPOTS OF THIS SECTION

1	Benalauría	30S x: 297880 – y: 4052151	631 m
2	Puerto de la Horca	30S x: 296782 – y: 4052989	859 m
3	Benadalid	30S x: 297090 – y: 4053768	706 m
4	Venta San Isidoro	30S x: 297025 – y: 4055426	792 m
5	Atajate	30S x: 299350 – y: 4057423	759 m
6	Arroyo Audalázar	30S x: 301050 – y: 4057006	445 m
7	Alpandeire	30S x: 303046 – y: 4056546	701 m

KEEP IN MIND

After leaving Benalauría and by the the old in of Santo Domingo, we will have to cross the road A-369 (Ronda-Gaucin). We must do so with extreme caution, and again when we get to Benadalid and to Atajate. After walking for a kilometre, between the inn of San Isidoro and the entrance to the Yuncar estate, we will actually be walking on the verge of the road. Crossing the ford of the river Audalázar (which carries water all year round), is not difficult at all, except when there is a great rise in its level. As in previous sections, we will have to cross several gates in between estates and we must also respect the fruits and crops from the different farming fields. The first part of the track matches the GR-249 (the section from Siete Pilas to Benalauría) and the PR-A 237 (Cañada del Real Tesoro-Benalauría). The routes from Benadalid to Atajate and from Atajate to Alpandeire overlap the approved trails PR-A 235 and 229, respectively.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ITINERARY

1 BENALAURÍA – km 0

From the **plaza del Teniente Viñas** (Lieutenant Viñas Square) we follow the steep Fuente street until we leave the old town through a paved road. After 400 metres we reach the main road to Benalauría (MA-8306). We will continue down that road towards the sport facilities, the town pool and the factory of **La Molienda** cooperative, which produces handmade ecological preserves. The slope comes to an end at the crossing with the A-369, by the **old inn of Santo Domingo**, also known as the **inn of Farruco**. The inn used to be a required



© Juan Luis Muñoz

▲ Robin



stop-off for traders, mule drivers and even doctors that came from Ronda before a medical centre was opened in Algotocín. From here, the spectacular limestone hulk of the **peñón de Benadalid** (rock of Benadalid) or the **tajo de los Aviones** easily catch the attention of the walker. Numerous birds that usually inhabit rocky areas nest on their walls: crag martins, red-billed choughs and several birds of prey. This is also the perfect setting for mountain climbers and enthusiasts of via ferratas.

▼ Peñón de Benadalid (Rock of Benadalid)



© Rafael Flores



### Vias ferratas

This area offers three different via ferratas: those of Benadalid and Benalauría, on the Peñón de Benadalid, and the one of Atajate. The latter has a which has a 27 metre long Tibetan bridge. All three of them, together with nine other, are part of one of the greatest network of via ferratas in Andalusia. Tibetan bridges, zip lines, overhang climbing and verticality above all, make this activity one of the most demanded.

[www.malaga.es/en/turismo](http://www.malaga.es/en/turismo).



© Miguel A. Mateos

© Miguel A. Mateos

We resume crossing the trail until we get to the paved road, going up the slope that goes over the **fuelle de la Encina** (dry almost all year round), and sharing the itinerary with the PR-A 237 Benalauría-Estación de Cortes and the GR-249. Soon enough, we will see an access for vehicles and, immediately after it, a diversion to the right that overlaps the Vereda del Camino de Ronda and the Gran Senda de la Serranía. We leave both the GR-249 (section from Jímera de Líbar to Benalauría) and the PR-A 237, converging with the path that goes up to the **via ferratas** and the border pass of Benalauría. At the crossroads, two signs indicate: Siete Pilas, 3.5km and Benadalid, 2.8km. Our path runs parallel to the A-369, below the stacks of the Peñón de Benadalid and among olive trees, almond trees and scattered holm oaks; with blackberries, wild roses, matagallos (a type of nettle) and climbing plants anchored to its sides. To the East, we will catch sight of the deep crack formed by the **arroyo de**



**las Veguetas** (stream of las Veguetas) as it flows towards the Genal. There are many proofs of the importance of this livestock trail, like the ancient stone pavement that can be seen in some sections. They are of Roman origin, part of the **Via XIII Carteia-Arunda**. On the **highest point of the this section** (842 metres) and after crossing a gate, we find the next important landmark.

## 2 PUERTO DE LA HORCA (pass of la Horca)– km 2

We cross the gate and soon conquer the puerto de la Horca (pass of la Horca), where the municipalities of Benalauría and Benadalid meet. On the summit of the hill to the right, although we can not see them from here, sit the **remains of the medieval watchtower of el Frontón**, possibly connected to the communications of the lower Genal. We must now descend towards Benadalid, almost visible from where we stand. The only difficulty we encounter on this stretch of the trail is a double bend we must make going down. However, you



▼ Benadalid

© Miguel A. Mateos







▲ Mosaic in Benadalid

may also take a short cut among the thorny furzes; it is up to you. Doubtlessly, one of the most beautiful images of this section is that of the caserío de Benadalid and its **peculiar castle**.

From this same bend to the left we discover a threshing floor and an iron cross, very common in all the Serranía de Ronda region; some mark the location of a tragic event, but others are connected to superstition and usually stand in high and visible places, surrounding the town like a protective ring. The presence of a group of eucalyptuses and a sign of the ruta del Legado Andalusi, Ruta de los Almorávides y Almohades, marks the junction with the road, near the **Aguayar inn**. We cross the road carefully and start walking down a path to the village. On the way, several beautifully crafted **mosaics** inform the tourist about the town.

### 3 BENADALID – km 3,1



We end this part of the section in Real street, in front of the esplanade where the castle of Benadalid stands, and gather information of this beautiful town:



© Miguel A. Mateos

**Benadalid.** 690 m above sea level. In the square we find two unique elements of the architectural heritage of Benadalid. One of them is the altar carved in white stone and known as **las Cruces** (the Crosses), from 1776. The other is the **castle**, more important because of its age and transcendence. It still has three of the four towers of its corners. Although there is no reliable information of when it was built, everything indicates it is from the 13th century and built on top of Roman ruins. In the plot of land in front of it, coinciding with the feast in honour of San Isidoro (the local patron) at the end of August, the **fiesta de moros y cristianos** (feast of Moors and Christians) is celebrated.



▲ El Piche



We resume the Gran Senda (Great Track) walking down the paved lane that turns to the left of las Cruces, clearly oriented to the North. The terrain becomes easier and very different from the sheer cliffs of the ridge. The surrounding vegetation is the one typically found in sunny mountainsides: holm oaks, olive trees, almond trees, fig trees, prickly pears, terebinths, ivies and others, all marked with their corresponding signs. After 500m we find the **solar del Piche**, the old location of the local washing place, now used as a recreational area and for different events. Here, near the **Fuensanta** and located by the river front of the Guadiaro, a small **spring** supplies water to the town of Benadalid.

From here onwards, we will follow an unpaved path until we get to the **small house of La Almendra**. From here, we will begin a beautiful, and sometimes stone-paved, path. As we continue our journey, we will have to ford the narrow **arroyo de la Solana** (stream of la Solana), dry almost all year round. On the sides of the road we will find plenty of **sumacs**, a bush relatively abundant in the Valle del Genal (Valley of the Genal), where it has always grown in its limestone ground.

#### Fiesta de moros y cristianos (feast of Moors and Christians)

It is a performance of the fights in between the Andalusis and the Castellians (Mudejar rebellion of 1501 and the Moorish rebellion of 1570) after the capitulations were broken. The plot is similar to the one of Benalauria: the Saracens kidnap the master, a battle takes place and he is finally freed by the Christian troops, celebrated with a great fanfare. This is followed by a great parade in which both sides take part. The town of Benalauria has a centre dedicated to this performance.



Catching sight of the ridge

### Sumac

It has medical properties and the tannin of its leaves is an effective tanning product; this is why it is also known as "tannery sumac". The vineyards were abandoned at the end of the 19th century due to the phylloxera plague. This stimulated a great growth of the harvest of this plant, which was an important financial support for the very poor economy of the time. The harvest was made during the months of August and September, after which came the milling season. Hundreds of mule drivers transported the product to the mills; some went to the train station of Jímera and others took them directly to the tanning factories of Ubrique (Cádiz).

Later on, we will avoid taking two diversions to the right that lead to the **Huertas Moras**. By the second one, in the shade of a fig tree and behind some small black poplars, there is a small, normally dry fountain. In the background we will catch sight of the round **Cerro de la Venta** (hill of la Venta) with an electric pole on its top. We will briefly ascend through the blackberries, wild roses and thorny brooms that seem to block our way. However, before we get to the road the situation clears up and fragrant French lavenders cover the ground.

## 4 VENTA SAN ISIDORO (San Isidoro Inn, also known as Los Pavos) – km 6,6

The following zigzag will take us up to the ruins of the old inn of **Los Pavos**, although the sign reads: **San Isidoro**. What nowadays is nothing more than ruins, nearly swallowed by trees of heaven, used to be a frequent stopping place for mule drivers, smugglers and travellers; a place to stock up on food, exchange news and discuss about regional events. In inns like this one, people sang and drank, forgetting for a few hours of their hard work travelling through the bitter and tortuous trails. With the coming of the paved roads, the train and the new means of transport, the mule driving activity languishes and with it the inns and taverns, of which only evocative memories remain.

An important trail starts at the other side of the A-369 and down its left side we will walk to the North-east, protected by the crash barriers. To the West, we will enjoy good **panoramic views** of the Sierra Blanquilla, sierra del Palo (1,401m) -the highest point of the Sierra de Grazalema Natural Park- and the **sierra de Juan Diego or Benaoján**, that stretches out towards the North. The sights to the East are equally attractive. We will see the grey outcrops of Jarastepar and los Riscos, behind which we will catch sight of some of the peaks of the Sierra de las Nieves Natural Park, as well as the **Torrecilla** (1,919m), the highest point of the mountain range.

© David Barrera



▲ Road to Atajate

After a kilometre and once in the municipality of Atajate, we leave the road by the Yuncar estate, taking a diversion to the right and towards a descending trail. From here we can partially see Benadalid, lying on the side of the ridge. When we get to the crossroads, the trail is wide enough again for cars to circulate. In summer, it is possible to see lively European bee-eaters perched on the nearby electric posts and cables. After a slope, we get to the road by the **puerto del Oro** (Gold pass in English). In front of it and above a field of chestnut trees, we will see the trail we must take. This trail will take us through different estates: some have chestnut trees, others have cherry trees, olive trees or fig trees. But above all, we will be seeing many wild bushes to both sides of the road, specially blackberries and blackthorns. The vineyards of the surroundings indicate the proximity of Atajate.

## 5 ATAJATE – km 8,9

We will find the mesón de **Los Pillarejos** (inn of Los Pillarejos) on the other side road and finally enter the town through a stone-paved promenade.

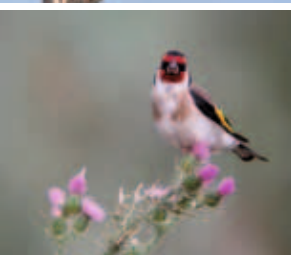
117

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▼ Booted eagle and goldfinch



© Juan Luis Muñoz



© Juan Luis Muñoz



© Miguel A. Mateos

**ATAJATE.** 745 m above sea level. The town is located in the headwaters of the river Genal, nearly on the border with the neighbouring Valle del Guadiaro. It is the town with the smallest population in the province of Málaga. The **iglesia de San José** (church of San José) stands out enormously. The **Cruz de Piedra** (Cross of Stone) stands in the square and in the main entrance to the village there is a well preserved washing place. Despite being the town with the smallest population in Málaga, it has an important tourist infrastructure, especially restaurants.





© Mateos

**Grape juice** is the star product of Atajate. As if it were an open air museum, the town has many statues that show us the process to make the precious liquid, which it is still made in the traditional way. The last week of November a contest and a tasting take place, accompanied by the traditional migas and roasted chestnuts: it is the so-called *fiesta del mosto* (grape juice party).

The local fair is celebrated in mid August to honour the local patron **San Roque and the Virgen del Rosario**. + Info: [www.atajate.es](http://www.atajate.es)

We cross the road that goes through the village lengthways, until we get to the washing place located next to a recreational area and playground. In front of it, in the widening, we see two notice boards: one about the different places of tourist interest and another with information about the via ferrata located in los Tajos.

A little less than a kilometre after leaving Atajate we will be able to make a turn to the left, right by an olive tree and some small holm oaks. As we will be seeing ahead, the stone pavement reveal the importance and the age of this communication link, down which the PR-A 229 to Alpandeire

#### ▼ Vineyards



© Rafael Flores

#### ► Via ferrata in Atajate



© Salvador Moreno

runs. When we get to the borders of the two municipalities we will have to cross another gate, after which we will walk among the olive trees up to the next gate. The following zigzag crosses the darker face of the mountain and there are holm oaks, olive trees and agaves... and the track ends at a sign blocking the way to the bee hives. Logically, we walk in the other direction, heading to the **stream Audalázar** (or **Laza**), in the shade of the increasingly numerous gall-oaks. In the sharp turn, we avoid taking the northern diversion and continue the path until we reach another gate. Behind it we will find the ford of the Adalájar, with gallery forest of black poplars, willows, canes, reeds, tarays and rosebays.

- Fording the Audalázar
- ▼ Starting the descent towards the river Audalázar



© Rafael Flores



© Rafael Flores



© Rafael Flores

▲ Fungi in the holm oak forest

## 6 ARROYO AUDALÁZAR (stream Audalázar) – km 11,3

On some patches over the river, we find the **Cortijo de los Casarones** in between some black poplars. There is also a group of piles of stones belonging to the remains of the Andalusí village of Adalázar or Güidazara. This part of the stream always carries water as seen in the many fishes that inhabit its pools. One of them is a not far upstream; it is called the poza del Azulejo and it used to be frequented by the locals of Atajate during summer. The most eager and adventurous should know that if they go 100m upstream they will see, only in the rainy seasons, how the arroyo de Vasijas flows down a beautiful waterfall. The ford does not normally offer any difficulties, except if you are carrying a lot of weight. In that case you must be extremely careful.

On the other side, before going up the steep slope, lies the **Vega de la Chispa** estate, covered with walnut trees and orange trees. The hill we are about to climb has an important vegetation cover dominated by holm oaks and chaparros (cork oaks). We have a totally opposite sight if we look to the North, towards the bald mound cleaved by the deep furrow of the cliff of **Cañada Honda**. The arrival at a hillock offers us a breather. From here the trail is more even, skirting the arroyo



▼ Holm oak forest in the municipality of Atajate



© Rafael Flores

► Drove of pigs in mount Las Amarillas



© Rafael Flores



del Almendral. After crossing a gate, the livestock trail opens up into a wider track.

The next remarkable landmark is the **loma de Enmedio**, where we find an important crossroads. The ascending diversion is obviously the one we must take. Certainly, we will have already noticed Iberian pigs freely grazing acorns. This normally from October to February, during the same time as the acorn ripens. It is the main nourishment for the fattening of these pigs that provide the market with the prestigious **Iberian ham**.



The **panoramic view** from this place are particularly beautiful. The steep slopes return without any diversion, except for the occasional access to an adjacent estate. We finally get to the track of the **Fuente del Espino**, at a point called **Junta de las Vereas**. It is a place of great importance, because it is here that the livestock trail turns to the left to Ronda, the end of the sixth section of the GR-141. However, we are now heading to Alpendeire, so we turn to the opposite direction, an easier stretch of the trail, but fairly dull plant-wise. After a while we will catch sight of the jumbled town of Alpendeire and of el Pozancón. The latter is a chasm under the last houses through which the waters of the aquifer of the **sierra del Oreganal** pour during strong rains. It is a wonderful vision to contemplate.





© Rafael Flores

▲ Arriving at Alpandeire

▼ Los huertos (Alpandeire)



© Rafael Flores

## 7 ALPANDEIRE – km 15,5

We enter the town through a steep slope that leads to the parish church of San Antonio de Padua. It is the most remarkable building of the old town, also known as the **Cathedral of the Serranía** because of its size. Fray Leopoldo de Alpandeire was born here. He was member of the Order of the Capuchin Friars, a humble and religious man who was loved and admired in all Andalusia due to his dedication to the less favoured. There is a cultural tour called the Legacy of Fray Leopoldo.

The feast of **el Niño del Huerto**, both in Alpandeire as in other towns of the upper Genal or Havaral is one of the most

▼ Alpandeire and Faraján. The famous Barbas del Jardón in the background



© Rafael Flores

peculiar celebrations of the Serranía de Ronda. Each Easter the streets are filled with colours, strange rituals, offerings, joyful parades and traditional music.

Even though we have met several chestnut groves in previous sections, the strip to the East of Alpandeire, where the towns of Faraján, Júzcar, Pujerra, Cartajima, Parauta and Igualaja lie, has the larger ones. **Chestnuts** are the main economic resource of this corner of the region of the Serranía de Ronda. The chestnut trees, which take up an area of 4000ha, are an attraction for tourists, hikers, photographers and nature-lovers in general, especially during the months before winter, when the leaves have a reddish colour. People from the Valley call this short cycle the **Primavera de Cobre** (Copper Spring) and, according to many, it is one of the most beautiful autumnal sceneries in Europe. The harvest takes start at the beginning of September and end at the beginning of November. Entire families and temporary workers from nearby towns take part in this job.

The **chestnuts** are extracted from its prickly husk with gloves and are stored in wicker or esparto baskets. Later, the

**ALPANDEIRE.** 670 m above sea level. It is the home-town of Fray Leopoldo, a friar of the Order of the Capuchins, canonized as Blessed by the Catholic Church. The old part of town still preserve the outline of the Andalusi period. One noteworthy building is the **church of San Antonio de Padua**, which is known as the Cathedral of the Serranía because of its size. Other interesting attractions are the ancient granary (now a cultural centre), the birthplace of Fray Leopoldo and the gardens of Fray Leopoldo. The **Huerto del Niño** is very popular during Easter holidays. In mid August the feasts to honour the local patron San Roque take place. In the lower part of the town you will find the **Pozancón**, a vertical chasm that pours water when it has rained heavily. There are several dolmens in the municipality, like the **Encinas Borrachas**.

+ Info: [www.alpandeire.es](http://www.alpandeire.es)

► Chestnuts of the Serranía



© Carlos Serrano

are transported to the different cooperatives to be sold and distributed. The richness and **great variety of fungi** is an important lure for gatherers and mycologists. In the month of November, the local government of Júzcar organises one of the most reputed **mycological activities** of Andalusia.

A good way to get to know all of these towns dedicated to the harvest of chestnuts is through the network of **Pequeños Recorridos** (Small Tracks) that connect them. It is worthwhile to leave the Gran Senda de la Serranía to go all over the routes and to enjoy landscapes more likely to be found in southern latitudes.

#### Route of Fray Leopoldo

The Route of Fray Leopoldo is the path that the Blessed one undertook when he visited his hometown, Alpandeire. He arrived at Estación de Jimera by train from Granada, where he had his residence in the Capuchin convent of the city. From there he went to Jimera and then, always on foot, to Atajate to, through the Audalázar River, to finally reach Alpandeire. The route allows the contemplation of landscapes of great beauty.



SECTION 6:  
ALPANDEIRE – RONDA



125

# 6

## Alpandei Ronda

10

DURATION: 7 h

Total ascent: 1.622 m

Total descent: 1.561 m

1050-IV (Benaoján) | 1051-III (Ronda) | 1064-II (Cortes de la Frontera)



12%



50%



38%



59,51%



1



2

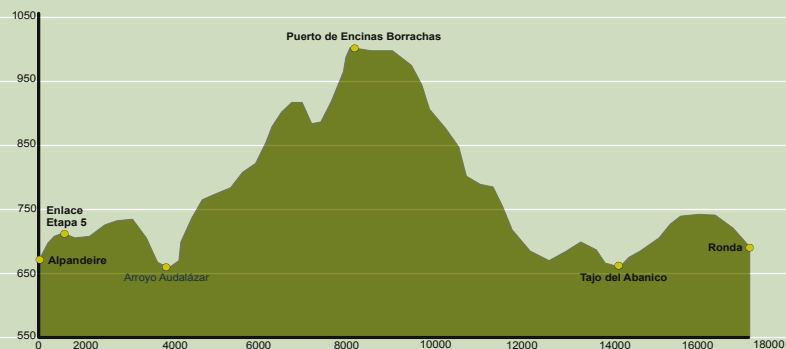


2



4

## PROFILE OF THIS SECTION



## LINKS TO OTHER APPROVED TRACKS



## GREAT TRACKS



## SMALL TRACKS

LOCAL  
TRAILS

PR-A 229 Alpandei re – Atajate

SL-A 40 Ronda - Abanico

PR-A 251 Ronda – Montejaque

SL-A 36 Ronda - Cabeza

PR-A 221 Ronda – Cartajima

SL-A 35 Ronda - Ventilla

PR-A 71 Ronda - Pilar de Coca

SL-A 37 Ronda - Planilla

SL-A 39 Ronda - Pilar de Cartajima

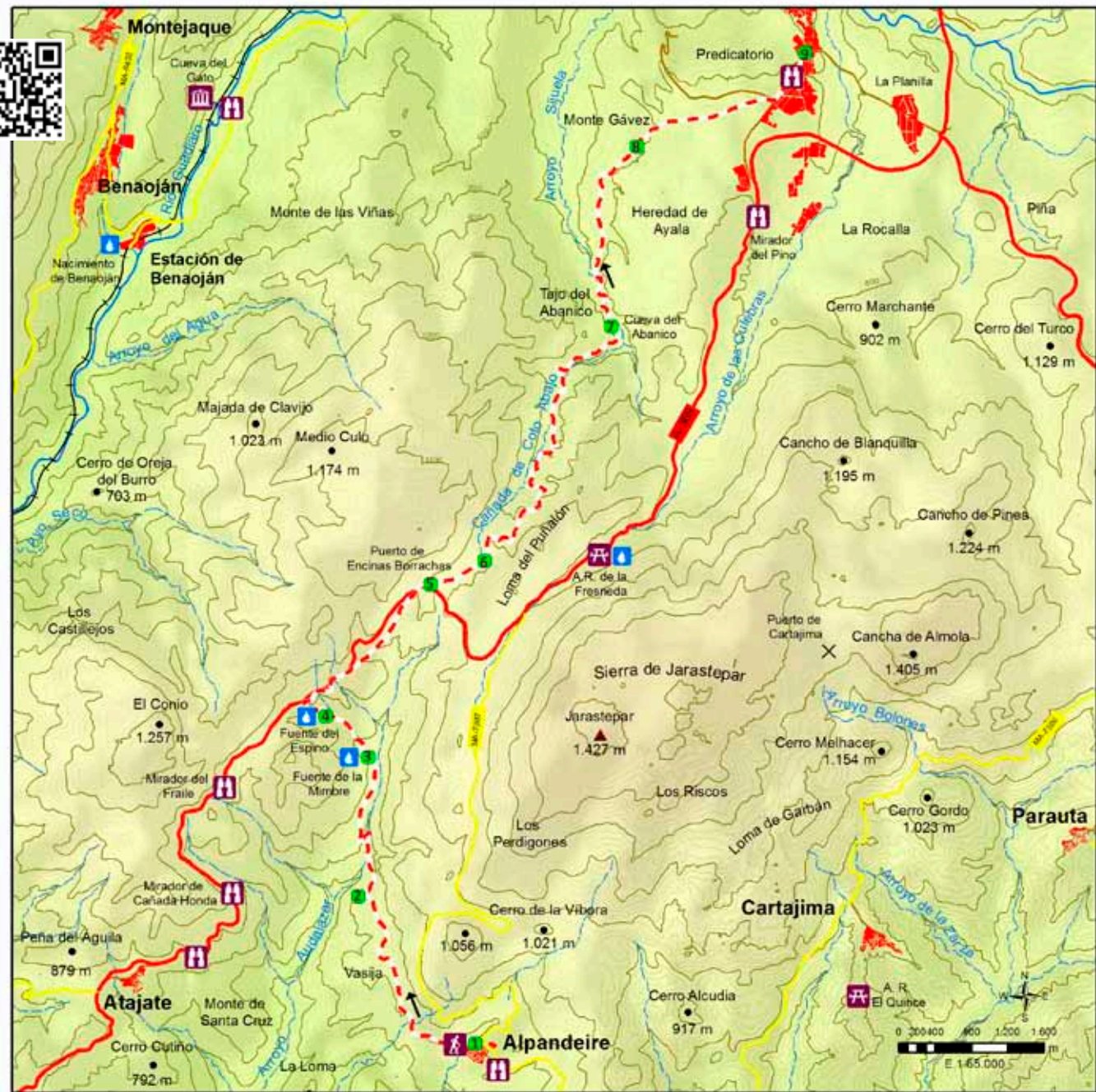
SL-A 38 Ronda - Molinos

This guide does not offer information regarding the state of conservation of the tracks since it can vary at any time.

6



## ITINERARY OF THE TRACK





SUMMARY OF THE SECTION

The sixth section of the Gran Senda (Great Track) runs through two areas of great geographic and historic importance to the region. On one hand, we have the river basin of the **Audalázar stream**, one of the main sources of the river Genal, and on the other, the **Meseta rondeña** (Plateau of Ronda), surrounded by all the mountain ranges that make up the Serranía de Ronda. The first stretch of this section includes the **Vereda de la Fuente del Espino**, which crosses the valley of the Audalázar stream to get to the **Vereda del Camino de Ronda**, and which we already know from the previous section. From the puerto de las **Encinas Borrachas** (Drunken Holm Oaks pass), the highest point of this part of our journey, we will enjoy great panoramic views of the Sierra de las Nieves Natural Park and the hollow of Ronda, which is surrounded by vast holm oak forests. Before we arrive in Ronda, we will go through the spectacular setting of the **Tajo del Abanico**, moulded by the **Sijuela stream** and by other weathering agents. Finally, amongst farming grounds and cortijos (country houses), we enter the town of Ronda through the popular **barrio de San Francisco** (San Francisco neighbourhood), and finish our journey through the GR-141.



Black wheatear

© Juan Luis Muñoz



Going up to Fuente del Espino

© Rafael Flores

MAIN SPOTS OF THIS SECTION			
1	Alpandeire	30S x: 303052 y: 4056548	688 m
2	Mirador del Audalázar	30S x: 301855 y: 4058207	737 m
3	Fuente de la Mimbre	30S x: 301804 y: 4059888	766 m
4	Fuente del Espino	30S x: 301280 y: 4060250	867 m
5	Puerto de Encinas Borrachas	30S x: 302523 y: 4061651	1.008 m
6	Mirador de la Meseta de Ronda	30S x: 303192 y: 4062156	987 m
7	Cueva del Abanico	30S x: 304467 y: 4064712	653 m
8	Colada de Cortes de la Frontera	30S x: 305003 y: 4066664	693 m
9	Ronda	30S x: 306684 y: 4067489	700 m



◀ THIS SECTION ONLINE

**KEEP IN MIND**  
This section is not difficult at all, but you should perhaps keep in mind the weather, looking out for the strong winds or the fog that may be present during your ascent to the Encinas Borrachas (Drunken Holm Oaks). We will also have to cross or walk along the A-369 road, so watch out for the passing vehicles. Although we will always walk down livestock trails and public paths, some go through private ranches dedicated to stock breeding, agriculture or hunting; therefore, we must never abandon the road nor bother the cattle. Its is important that you bring along enough water because, although there are several fountains along the way, they may be dry. As in previous sections, we remind you that you must close the several gates you will encounter as you cross them on your way.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ITINERARY

1 ALPANDEIRE – km 0

We exit the old town through **Barranco street**, which goes down from the La Casa Grande hotel to the riverbed of the **arroyo de la Fuente** (de la Fuente stream), where we find a fork on the road. We follow the path going upwards, instead of the one leading to the old washing place, to the **Pozancón** and to other locations like that of los **Huertos**. We are now walking down the livestock trail of the **Vereda de la Fuente del Espino**, surrounding the steep mountainsides of the Despeñaderos. The hight at which we stand offers us one of the most beautiful images of Alpandeire and its towering parish church. The view is equally attractive from South to West, as it includes important landmarks like the sierra Crestellina (Crestellina mountain range), the Reales de Sierra Bermeja, the string of towns on the ridge (Benarrabá, Algotocín, Benalauría and Benadalid) and, later on, Atajate and the bare summits of Martín Gil and sierra de los Pinos that surround the Valle del Guadiaro on its western side. After less than a kilometre walking, we arrive at Junta de las Vereas, a crossroads with the road to Atajate. We had already seen this part of the trail in the previous section.



▲ La Cruz Chiquita (The Little Cross)



▼ Panoramic view of the ridge and the towns of Algotocín, Benalauría and Benadalid, located on the right bank of the Genal



© Rafael Flores



characterised by the limestone pavement on its peak, and the **cerro de los Frailes**, with its bare summit surrounded by holm oaks. In this part of the track, the surrounding vegetation is mainly formed by olive trees, almond trees, fig trees and vines, with their grapes hanging from the adjoining walls. The number of holm oaks will increase as we follow our way down the path. After a bit more than two kilometres walking we will find, to one side of the road and covered by a small dome, the **fuelle de las Vasijas**, where we can refill our bottles with water. After another 500m we get to a point where the path ends and a livestock trail begins.

## 2 MIRADOR DEL AUDALÁZAR (lookout of the Audalázar) – km 2,7



From this exceptional **natural lookout of the Audalázar** we can see the valley of the same name, in between the sharp limestone walls of the **tajo de los Castillejos** and the steep mountainside of the cerro de los Frailes. The path descends leaving behind the white **rancho del Infierno**, also known as rancho de las Pellejas or rancho de Vasijas. The track is quite deteriorated but can be easily walked, sometimes over its ancient stone pavement. Due to the abrupt terrain, we will basically see retamas (a species of broom brush), ardiviejas (a type of rockrose), terebinths and some wild olive trees. However, on the opposite side we will see a holm oak forest with **several clearings**. It



© Miguel A. Mateos

- ▲ A holm oak points the way
- The narrow valley of the Audalázar stream



© Rafael Flores

- Berries of the Mediterranean buckthorn



© Rafael Flores

fostered farming activities and the existence of several cortijos (country houses), like the ones of de Marquez, Rozas Bajas, Las Rozas y Roza Llana, which are currently abandoned.

During our journey we will come across an odd holm oak that stretches out from the slope; a perfect place to take a picture. After this, we will continue onwards to reach the **vado del arroyo Audalázar** (ford of the Audalázar stream), also known as **Laza**. The stream is normally dry, specially in summer. Nevertheless, a small spring called **Chorillo Barrera**, normally pours into a small pool visited by the local birds. The ravine downstream is covered by a thicket of osiers and rosebays. However, at its source it is more open, thanks to the installation of a pipe that supplies water to Alpandeire.



During the following ascent we will cross a wooden gate and pass through a normally muddy area. After a couple of short zigzags, we will reach the top of the cutting and we will find a crossroads. The trail progresses placidly under the shade of the holm oaks, although in slight ascent. On our way, under a small holm oak and on the slope that looks over the ravine, we will find the megalithic **sepulcro del Gigante** (sepulchre the Giant). It is also known as **sepulcro de la Mimbre** and it can possibly go unnoticed. In any case, we will encounter several other properly waymarked **dolmens** and ceramic remains (Roman tegulae) that prove the presence of human beings in this area since prehistoric times.

We make a trip back in time to the 20th November 1941 and within the context of the Spanish Maquis guerrilla warfare against Franco's regime. That very day there was a fight in the cortijo del Espino. It was regularly occupied by guerrilla fighters, who felt relatively safe there. That day, the seven men of the Fermín Galán group were hiding there. The owner of the country house excused himself saying that he was going to check on some snares. But he had gone to call the Guardia Civil (a police corps with responsibilities outside towns and cities) instead, tired of the unending and distressing situation. Several were killed or wounded during the exchange of shots. Finally, the Maquis managed to escape and hid in the mountains. The boss of the party, Pablo Pérez Hidalgo, also known as the El Rubio de Bobadilla, decides to give up the fight in 1949. He then hides near Genalguacil, in the cortijo del Cerro property of Ana "La Oveja" Trujillo, with whom he had a relationship. A couple of days later, some of his comrades-in-arms we taken down by the Guardia Civil in the mountains of Benarrabá. During the identification parade, El Rubio's father said that he recognised his son among the bodies. El Rubio de Bobadilla sprung a surprise turning himself in to the police with the coming of democracy in 1976. He died in his home town in 1992.

At a distance, we catch sight of the place where the five passes of the narrow valle del Auladázar meet. The black poplars indicate the location of the vegetable garden and the ruins of the **cortijo de la Mimbres**, where the GR-141 is headed. This area is abundant with Mediterranean buckthorns.

### 3 FUENTE DE LA MIMBRE – km 5,1

The most striking thing, apart from the location in between walnut trees and fig trees of the vegetable garden, is the **small reservoir pool** that was used to wash the iron that was extracted from the mines at los Perdigones. In 1795, during the rule of Philip V, a great iron and steel factory was installed in the surroundings of Júzcar: the Real Fábrica de Hojalata de San Miguel. The project was conceived by the engineers Emérico Dupasquier and Pedro Enrique Meurón. After arduous operations of industrial espionage, they obtained from the Germans the formula for the processing of iron to make tin. There were several reasons for which the factory was installed near the river Genal: the rich forests, vital for the blast furnaces; the presence of nearby iron mines; the proximity to various sea ports, which were necessary to take the tin to the Latino American market and, finally, the motive force of the river Genal, which was used to power the factory. For several reasons, the factory was shut down fifty years later. We resume our journey down the trail (which is held by a stone wall) towards the riverbanks of the stream of Fuente del Espino. Although it is normally dry, it runs fast when it rains, as shown by the smooth rocks of the riverbed, smoothed by the erosion.

### 4 FUENTE DEL ESPINO – km 5,8

The short but continuous ascent will take us to the Fuente del Espino, old meeting point for mule drivers, travellers and the "people from the mountains" (as smugglers, bandits and Maquis were known) who travelled the roads going to Benaolán, Atajate, Ronda and Alpandeire. The track leads to the cortijo de la Fuente del Espino and finishes at the A-369. Immediately after leaving the fountain, we turn right to the

#### ► Fuente del Espino



© Rafael Flores

steep slope that takes us to the road. First, we will follow the path leading to the A-369 for 600m. Then, we will continue the path up the steep mountainside. From here, we can see the itinerary that will take us to the **puerto de las Encinas Borrachas** (Drunken Holm Oaks pass). The trail then takes you to a wider path below the A-369 and the impressive **tajos de Montero**, another important landmark to the history of the Serranía de Ronda. In 1811, when the Napoleonic troops

#### ▼ Walking under the Tajos de Montero



© Rafael Flores







© Rafael Flores

► Dolmen of Montero



where moving from Ronda to Gibraltar, they were surprised by a guerilla from the area, inflicting a heavy defeat and numerous casualties. A French general gave this place the name of "Street of Sorrow" and "Cemetery of France". The revenge was terrible for the people of the area, specially for the locals of Atajate: the French only left standing the cross that dominates the square today. During our journey we will find the dolmen of Montero, dating from the Bronze Age, that is, 6000 years ago. The following ascent will take us to the puerto de las Encinas Borrachas, at an altitude of 1000m, the highest in the entire GR-141.

### 5 PUERTO DE ENCINAS BORRACHAS (Drunken Holm Oaks Pass) – km 8,8

The name of this pass is due to the presence of several holm oaks that have been ruined by the cattle and bent by the strong winds of the area, giving the impression of being drunk. The GR-141 continues down the verge of the road up to the pass. From there we will admire the **massive Jarastepar**, that seems to be recovering its lost holm oak forest, and the deforested **sierra Carrasco**, to the West. On the wide plain lies the cortijo de Encinas Borrachas and, a little bit further on, the dolmen of the same name. The ancient road runs parallel to ours. If you pay attention you will see its old stone pavement, its gutters and its counterforts on the side.



► Dolmen at the Encinas Borrachass



© Rafael Flores

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▲ Walking to Ronda

### 6 MIRADOR DE LA MESETA DE RONDA (lookout of meseta de Ronda)– km 9,7

When we get to an electric pole, where the path starts to descend, we should make a stop to admire the marvellous views of the **hollow of Ronda**, with the town sitting above the famous Tajo. We are in the border between the municipalities of Alpendeire and Ronda, and we start to descend to get to the entrance of the estate of **Coto Alto**.



From here, in front of the vereda del Camino de Ronda, we turn left to the camino del Coto, which goes through the estate and continues the GR-141. Instead of crossing directly the first gate, we will have to walk for a while down the livestock trail before reaching another. We will then cross this gate to the left in order to descend to a narrow pedestrian pass that will later take us down to the trail. We must never leave the road, there is livestock in the area that we should not bother. The holm oak forest that covers these red mountainsides where we can easily find **deer**, introduced in the area as game. We leave behind a wide pool where two enormous columns stand, giving it the appearance of a Roman temple.





© Mateos

#### ▲ Mirador de la Meseta

At the following crossroads, we take the path that goes down to the cortijo del Coto, now partially in ruins, but that must have been quite important, taking into account its size. We walk along the **arroyo de los Chopillos** (stream of los Chopillos), normally dry unless it has rained heavily. In some parts of the road we will distinguish the old stone pavement, now partially covered by the soil of the track. We will have to pass another trail to the right before the path widens and leaves the estate through another pass, similar to the one mentioned before. We are getting nearer to the **cueva del Abanico**.

#### ► Gaining sight of Ronda and its plateau



© Rafael Flores

© Rafael Flores



#### ▲ Cueva del Abanico

#### ► Trail by the Sijuela stream



© Mateos

### 7 CUEVA DEL ABANICO – km 13,8

We are at the source of the **arroyo de Sijuela** (stream Sijuela). Its is the main modeller of the landscape through which we now walk. Its waters have dug the ravine for years, carving the walls and digging large caves like the cueva del Abanico. This place is frequented by mountain climbers. We can see a smaller, darker cave by the first. We can get to the back of the cave, walk a couple of metres and return going around some rocks. Some scenes of the film Carmen were shot here some years ago. The leading actor was the tenor Plácido Domingo.

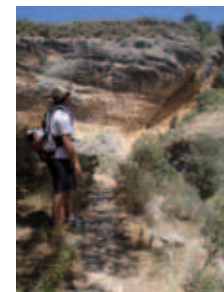
Following the trail that overlaps the SL-A 40, we ford the stream and continue over the ravine. The river source is located under a fig tree; its waters pour down a hidden fall. We can see the old stone pavement in some sections

#### ► Erosion on the molasse formed by the Sijuela stream

#### ►► At El Coto we find remains of the old road



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▲ Tajo del Abanico

of the path. Although some say it is from Roman origin, it was actually built in the Middle Ages. The name of the area, **Abanico** (Fan in English), was given to the area due to the large rock of the same shape that seems to keep a fragile balance on the ground.

We resume our journey going up a steep slope. We then cross a wooden gate and get to a widening on the path that offers us a great sight of the ravine. We leave the arroyo de Sijuela and penetrate into a **lovely holm oak forest**, guarded by sandstone walls and with views to the valley through which the emerging Guadiaro runs. Before we reach the next gate, we will have the chance to see a threshing floor and a renovated cortijo on our way. The country house reminds us of the old Roman granaries located on the plateau of Ronda. We leave the trail and follow a track that will lead us through fields of **olive trees**.

Without any doubt, the beauty of the **torre de la Cazalla** (tower of la Cazalla), similar to the one we saw before,

▼ Sifting olives



© Rafael Flores



will certainly catch your attention. Unfortunately, both the cortijo and the tower are very badly preserved. The last spur of the ravine that has accompanied us is called the **tajo de los Aviones**. It has quite a spectacular shape, as it forms a natural patio with balconies. We continue in slight descent until we get to the beginning of a concrete slope and the diversion going left, merging with the **colada de Cortes**.

## 8 COLADA DE CORTES DE LA FRONTERA – km 17,2

We leave the colada to the left and go up the **cuesta del Cascajal** (slope of the Cascajal). We are getting closer to the town Ronda, as we can see by the numerous country houses and the olive fields, predominating over the holm oaks. In one of the ranches to the left of the road, we will see the **torre de la Cañá**. It is similar to the previous ones and built for the same purpose. Before reaching Ronda, the trail regains its normal width and continues placidly to get to the setting of the Virgen de la Cabeza. This is another of the idyllic sites of the outskirts of Ronda. Here we will find an **Early Christian church of the 9th century** dug into a sandstone wall. A traditional *romería* (religious pilgrimage) is celebrated here in the month of June. In front of the aforementioned widening of the roads there is a small roundabout and the road from Ronda to Gaucín.



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► Torre de la Cazalla

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## 9 RONDA – km 18,8

We are now in the historical centre of Ronda. This street is part of the Camino de Ronda, the old road that we have already met in previous sections and that serves as link between Ronda, the towns of the Valle del Genal and the region of Campo de Gibraltar. As we begin to go down the street, and to the left, we can enter a tourist facility called **el Predicadorio**. From the great adjacent terrace we have splendid views of Ronda. Here we will also discover the remains of a

▲ Panoramic view of Ronda from el Predicadorio



**Roman canalization** and the tower that supplied water to the ancient forum of Arunda (Ronda). After passing the convento de las Franciscanas (Franciscan convent) we enter Ruedo Alameda square. This is the centre of the traditional neighbourhood of San Francisco, inhabited by the farmers of Ronda. We end our journey through the GR-141 near the **medieval wall**, by the puerta de Almocábar (of Andalusí origin), and the puerta de Carlos V (Renaissance).



▼ Puerta de Almocábar



© Mateos



## Other towns of the Serranía

The Great Track of the Serranía de Ronda crosses many villages in the region, but not all. In the description of the route, this guide informs only of the towns that it passes. Of the rest, most in the environment of the Great Track, there is information in following pages.



### ALGATOCÍN

**724 m altitude.** It clings to the right bank of the Genal River, under the cliffs of the Sierra del Fraile. From a distance, it highlights a compact **urban centre**, with a remarkable Andalusí heritage, and the tower of the church of **Nuestra Señora del Rosario**. The fountain of **San Antonio** is another of the tourist attractions of Algotocín. Above the road to Ronda emerges the hermitage of **Santo Cristo**, with splendid views of the Genal Valley and Sierra Bermeja. At the beginning of October, two festivals take place: **San Francisco** (the patron of the village) and the patron festival of **Virgen del Rosario**. In Easter, the celebration of the **Huerto** and the **Quema de Judas** (Burning of Judas) stand out. The days before Christmas they celebrate **Las Mañanitas** (ritual of cantes, masses at dawn and the serving of traditional breakfasts). + Info: [www.algotocin.es](http://www.algotocin.es)



### ARRIATE

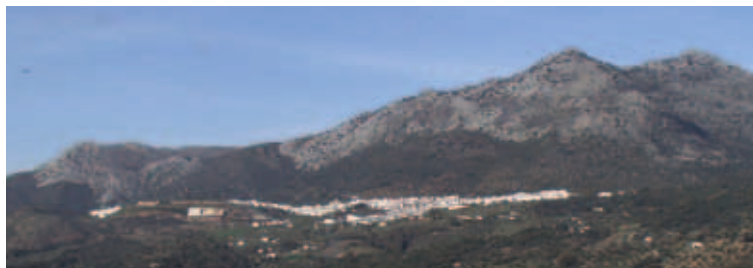
**603 m altitude.** The village of Arriate sits on the fertile valley of the Guadalcobacín River. Among its most outstanding monuments, there is the church of **San Juan de Letrán**, crowned by a beautiful bell tower. We recommend the urban walk that runs along the Guadalcobacín River to contemplate the landscape from the **viewpoint of the Estacá**. We cannot miss the gorge of **Arroyo de la Ventilla**; to get there, we can take a 3.1 km circular and signed track. The **celebrations and fair of San Pedro**, during the festivity of Corpus Christi, happen to be the most important of the calendar (end of June). As in the neighbouring Ronda, **Holy Week** of Arriate is of National Tourist Interest of Andalusia. Another curious folk tradition is the party of **Partir la Vieja** (it takes place in the rural centre of Parchite, during the middle of Lent). + Info: [www.arriate.es](http://www.arriate.es)



### CARTAJIMA

**845 m altitude.** The highest village in the Serranía de Ronda lies at the foot of the Sierra del Oreganal, facing the Genal Valley. The most important building is the church of **Nuestra Señora del Rosario**. The urban area presents a trace inherited from the Al-Andalus period. During Holy Week what stands out is the procession of **Cortesías** and the **Quema de Judas** (Burning of Judas). In mid-August, they celebrate the feast of the **Virgen del Rosario**. A setting called **paraje de los Riscos**, shared with Júzcar and Alpandeire, is one of the most impressive karstic landscapes of Andalusia. It is visible from the viewpoints of the Riscos and Quince. + Info: [www.cartajima.es](http://www.cartajima.es)





### CORTES DE LA FRONTERA

**633 m altitude.** After Ronda, it is the most populated and extensive municipality in the Serranía. Its strategic location, halfway between the natural parks of Sierra de Grazalema and Los Alcornocales, gives it outstanding environmental importance. Together with being part of these emblematic protected areas, in its territory, we also find the natural monument called **Cañón de las Buitreras**. In Cortes, there is a Visitors Centre with information about the three natural parks of the Serranía. Moreover, in the zone of Saucedá, there is a Recreational Area with cabins, shelter and a camping site, in addition to the remains of the town of the same name, which was bombed during the Spanish Civil War. The economy of Cortes depends on the pork industry but, mainly, on its enormous forest wealth, based mostly on the extraction

of cork. In the urban area, we can visit the beautiful façade of the **Town Hall** (from the time of Carlos III), the **bullring**, the chapel of **Valdenebros** and the church of **Nuestra Señora del Rosario**. In the district, we also find other patrimonial sites such as the **Casita de Piedra** (an old cave church of the seventh century), the tower of **Paso** and the ruins of **Cortes el Viejo** (Roman and Al-Andalus remains). Three population centres form the municipality: Cortes de la Frontera, Cañada del Real Tesoro (Estación de Cortes) and El Colmenar (Estación de Gaucín). The main festive landmarks are the procession of **Corpus Christi** (they make floral carpets for the parade) and the fairs of **San Roque** and **San Sebastián** (at the end of August). In autumn, they celebrate some renowned mycological days. + Info: [www.cortesdelafrontera.es](http://www.cortesdelafrontera.es)



### FARAJÁN

**640 m altitude.** The municipality is rich in springs and orchards. The most striking of the monumental heritage is the church of **Nuestra Señora del Rosario**. The fair of **San Sebastian** takes place in mid-August and the fiesta of the **Inmaculada** on December the 8th. During the Holy Week, the procession of **Nuestro Padre Jesús de Medinaceli** stands out, together with the ritual of cleansing the face of the Christ with the recitation of ancient poetry. In the surroundings of the village is the **travertine of Balastar**, a garden-orchard, adorned with two beautiful waterfalls, which are accessed by a signposted path. + Info: [www.farajan.es](http://www.farajan.es)



### GENALGUACIL

**590 m altitude.** It is the white village par excellence, the most isolated of the Genal Valley and, therefore, of the Serranía de Ronda. Perhaps for that reason, and the care of its inhabitants, its urban centre that follows an Al-Andalus typology and is considered the best preserved of the region. Strolling through its streets is a pure delight due to the whiteness of its houses, the vegetal exuberance and the numerous sculptures scattered in the most typical corners, which make it a true museum-town. The most notable building is the church of **San Pedro Mártir en Verona**. Among the events of interest, it is necessary to mention the **Genal Valley Art Encounters**. It takes place every two years, in August, when sculptors, painters, carvers and other artists come to create their pieces in the streets. Many of their works are exposed outdoors. We must visit the **Museum of Contemporary Art**, which collects some of the creations. In April the patron is honoured at the traditional festivities of **San Pedro Mártir en Verona**. + Info: [www.genalguacil.es](http://www.genalguacil.es)



### IGUALEJA

**693 m altitude.** At the entrance of the town, in the place called **Nacimiento** and under a cave, we can find the waters that give life to the Genal River. The location is granted protection as a **Natural Monument of Andalusia**. The municipality is rich in forest and livestock resources, but its main asset is the chestnut crop. Two neighbourhoods divide the town, Albaicín on the left bank of the river and Barrio Alto or Santa Rosa, on the other side. Both preserve the typical layout of the Al-Andalus villages. It's most interesting buildings are the church of **Santa Rosa de Lima**, the niche of the **Señor de la Misericordia**, the hermitage of **Divino Pastor**, the **Cross of Cantillo Street** and the **Cross of the Bridge**. Not far away, but with very steep and complicated access, there are the caves of the **Excéntricas** and **Fuensanta**. The festivals with a stronger tradition and singular are those of La Plaza (Corpus Christi Day) and La Calleja (A week after Corpus Christi), which show great rivalry. At the end of August, the fair of Santa Rosa takes place, while the one for the patron, San Gregorio, takes place on March 12th. + Info: [www.igualeja.es](http://www.igualeja.es)



### JUBRIQUE

**560 m altitude.** It spreads on a steep slope of the foothills of Sierra Bermeja, in the Genal Valley. Formerly it had fame for the development of mostos (wine musts) and spirits. It is a typical white town of Al-Andalus origin that has managed to preserve the oriental essence of its streets, with numerous algarfas and adarves. In the village, we find the church of **Francisco de Asís** and in the outskirts the hermitages of the **Cruz del Chorrillo** and the old Islamic one called **Castañuelo**. The elaboration of aguardiente (liquor) was an essential activity in the municipality, and today it is still celebrated with a festival and a contest that takes place at the end of December. At the beginning of October, the Festival of Jubrique in honour of **San Francisco de Asís** celebrates a great chestnut roasting called tostón. Another celebratory event of interest is the **Mask Festival** (very special carnival, coinciding with the Cultural Week), which takes place at the beginning of May. +Info: [www.jubrique.es](http://www.jubrique.es)



### JÚZCAR

**625 m altitude.** Known as the blue town, Júcar sits on the slopes of the Sierra del Oreganal, on one of the main headwaters of the Genal River, the Zúa River. Among its highlights, there is a twisted urban centre, and its houses painted blue to promote the launching of the Smurfs movie. In the village's square stands the main building, the church of **Santa Catalina**. In the municipality, the ruins of the first steel industry in Andalusia, the **Royal Tin Factory of San Miguel**, remain on the banks of the Genal River. In the Sierra del Oreganal we find the place called **Los Riscos**, an authentic open-air museum about geology. We recommend the walking track called **Sendero de las Eras** (circular, 5 km) to discover the fantastic formations of the karstic model, here called cliffs (torcal). Despite its small population, Júcar is a very dynamic town that organises every year a cultural event of high quality: **History Symposium about Serranía de Ronda**. +Info: [www.juzcar.es](http://www.juzcar.es)



### MONTECORTO

**480 m altitude.** It rests on the foothills of the Sierra de Grazalema Natural Park. The numerous dolmens on its lands confirm the antiquity of the first settlements in the municipality. Its main tourist attractions are the temple of **Nuestra Señora del Carmen** and the walk along **Acequia de Benito**, of great ethnological interest. On the hillside of Malaver are the ruins of the castle called **Castillo del Moral**, visible from the viewpoint of the circular track named as **Ruta Senderista El Pinar**. The **Feria del Carmen** takes place in mid-July and the **Romería de la Inmaculada** at the beginning of May. +Info: [www.montecorto.es](http://www.montecorto.es)



### MONTEJAQUE

**689 m altitude.** Like Benaoján, part of its municipality is located in the limits of the Sierra de Grazalema Natural Park and shares a vital pork industry. The urban design from the Al-Andalus period remains in perfect condition. Among the architectural heritage buildings, we highlight the church of **Santiago**. In the municipality, we find the dam called **Presa de los Caballeros**, on the Gadaures River, unusable due to the leaks that end up in the spectacular cave named as **Cueva del Hundidero**. The main celebratory landmarks are the patron saint festivities of the **Virgen de la Escarigüela** (May) and the fair of **Santiago Apóstol** (at the end of July). It has a Speleology Interpretation Centre that is worth visiting. +Info: [www.montejaque.es](http://www.montejaque.es)



### PARAUTA

**800 m altitude.** It is the municipality that bridges between the Sierra de las Nieves Natural Park and the Genal Valley. It boasts the variety and quality of landscapes that surround it. The most significant building in the town is the church of the **Inmaculada Concepción**. In the high part stands the centenary oak called **Valdecilla**, which appears in the coat of arms of Parauta. At the entrance to the Sierra de las Nieves Natural Park, we find the **Conejeras Recreational Area** and the municipal campsite. In the urban area, both in public and private gardens, we can enjoy the endemic pinsapo (Andalusia fir). November is the month to celebrate the festival of **Fiesta del Conejo**. The fair of the **Virgen del Rosario** takes place in mid-August, while the patronal celebration in honour of the **Inmaculada** takes place on December 8th. + Info: [www.parauta.es](http://www.parauta.es)



### PUJERRA

**770 m altitude.** From a distance, the town seems immersed in an impressive chestnut forest, the symbol of the municipality and its primary economic resource. The urban layout is like a labyrinth of narrow streets, as all the villages of the Genal Valley. The church of the **Espíritu Santo** (Holy Spirit) is the most remarkable monument. It is also worth visiting the hermitage of **San Antonio**, on the outskirts of town, in the direction of Igualaja. The legend says that it is the birthplace of King **Wamba**, and the people paid homage to him by placing a bust. They celebrate the fair of **San Antonio de Padua** in mid-June. During the feast dedicated to the **Virgen de Fátima**, there is the celebration of the **Feria de la Castaña**, a chestnut festival with dancing, tastings of roasted chestnuts and spirits. We must visit the **Casa Museo de la Castaña** (Chestnut House Museum). The road that connects Igualaja with Pujerra, especially in autumn, is one of the most beautiful in Andalusia. +Info: [www.pujerra.es](http://www.pujerra.es)



### SERRATO

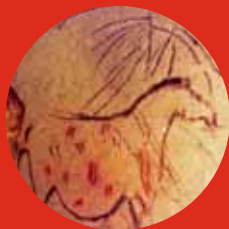
**510 m altitude.** Emancipated from Ronda in 2014, it is a new municipality in the Seranía. It lays in a vast countryside dedicated to agriculture and livestock. Serrato's heritage includes the church of **Nuestra Señora del Rosario** and the fountain called **Fuente del Caño**. The most interesting festive celebrations are the one dedicated to the patron that is named **Día de la Patrona de Nuestra Señora del Rosario** (October 7th) and **Día de la Vieja** (March), which takes place at Prado Medina. +Info: [www.serrato.es](http://www.serrato.es)



We want to show our sincere gratitude to all the people who, with their collaboration, have made the Great Track of the Serranía de Ronda (GR 141) possible. Moreover, our thanks also go to those who have allowed the tracks to run through their property.



**GR 141. GRAN SENDA de la SERRANÍA de RONDA**



You do not need this guide to travel the Gran Senda de la Serranía de Ronda (Great Track of the Serranía de Ronda region). However, if you carry it in your backpack, you will not regret it. It will speak of the things that you will see along the way, and also of those that are not so evident: the ruins of mills that were used to make olive oil or flour, the stone pavement of the road built in the Middle Ages, the *cortijos* (country houses) that organised the agricultural production and the livestock farming... This guide will also refer to the people that met on these roads: mule drivers, travellers, smugglers, bandits and, naturally, the inhabitants of the region of the Serranía de Ronda, who managed to subsist on a not very favourable agricultural economy. This book will also inform you about the topography and cartography, it will tell you about the wildlife and the splendid landscapes you will see, and it will announce the evocative names of the landmarks. But you should pay special attention to what it has to say about life in these mountains before the appearance of the car. There is a lot of history and many stories in between Ronda and Gibraltar, and all of them take place, or took place, on the roads of the Gran Senda de la Serranía.



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