



Stage

35

# ALHAURÍN DE LA TORRE • MÁLAGA

## THE STAGE IN SUMMARY

Stage 35 brings the main route of the Great Malaga Path to a close. In doing this, it connects the town of Alhaurín de la Torre with the city of Málaga, passing through the wide Guadalhorce valley. The landscape is shared between the airport area, the expanse of irrigated farmland, the estuary of the province's most important river and the metropolitan areas. The Path should follow a straight line running north-west to south-east, however it is forced to weave its way around a number of obstacles. Nevertheless, this allows you to get to know each of these sites in greater depth, since they form an important part of 21st Century Malaga's identity.

El Peñón de Zapata (or the Rock of Zapata) is a district of Alhaurín de la Torre, and is the gateway into the municipal area of Málaga, which begins at the junction of some main tracks at kilometre 3.

The stage is almost entirely flat, with just a slight descent near the start. There is little else that presents any difficulty, except the 13 kilometres along mostly well-maintained tracks. Be aware that in the rainy season, they can get a little muddy, especially near the Guadalhorce.

If there is one area of the Province of Malaga with a certain urban vitality or dynamism, it is undoubtedly that under the influence of the Provincial capital. At times, it has suffered from the improvisation of previous eras and, at others, it has tried to respond to population growth with modern infrastructure and developments. This last stage helps one understand the capital's geographical location, on the level terrain between the uplands of the Sierra de Mijas and the Montes de Málaga. These flood plains are formed of sedimentary materials that the River Guadalhorce, and to a lesser extent the Guadalmedina have deposited over millennia.

Being so close to the capital, the agricultural and natural aspects of the route are surprisingly evident throughout. The Great Path provides access here to a true oasis of biodiversity and is an essential resting spot for the intercontinental migration of birds, the Mouth of the Guadalhorce Nature Reserve. ▶

An aeroplane coming in to land, over fields of crops



## 35. ALHAURÍN DE LA TORRE • MÁLAGA

Zapata (SW) (23m) Alhaurín de la Torre



Málaga (S) (0 m)



12.9 km



2 h 35 min.



10 m



30 m



Linear



On foot



1.3 km



11.2 km



0.4 km



Environment  
hazards



1

2

3

4

5

Underfoot  
Conditions



1

2

3

4

5

Navigation



1

2

3

4

5

Physical Effort



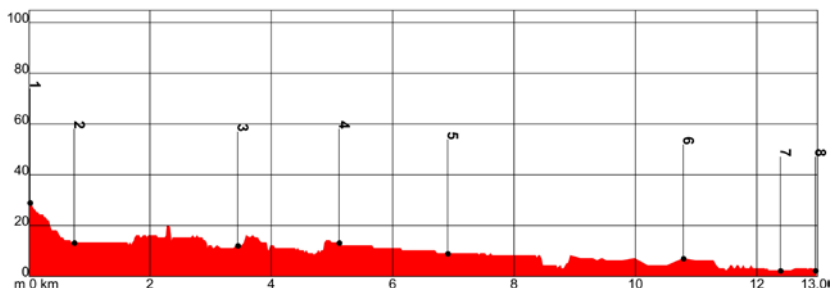
1

2

3

4

5



- Road traffic circulating on tarmac roads
- Lighter vehicles circulating on the tracks

GR 248

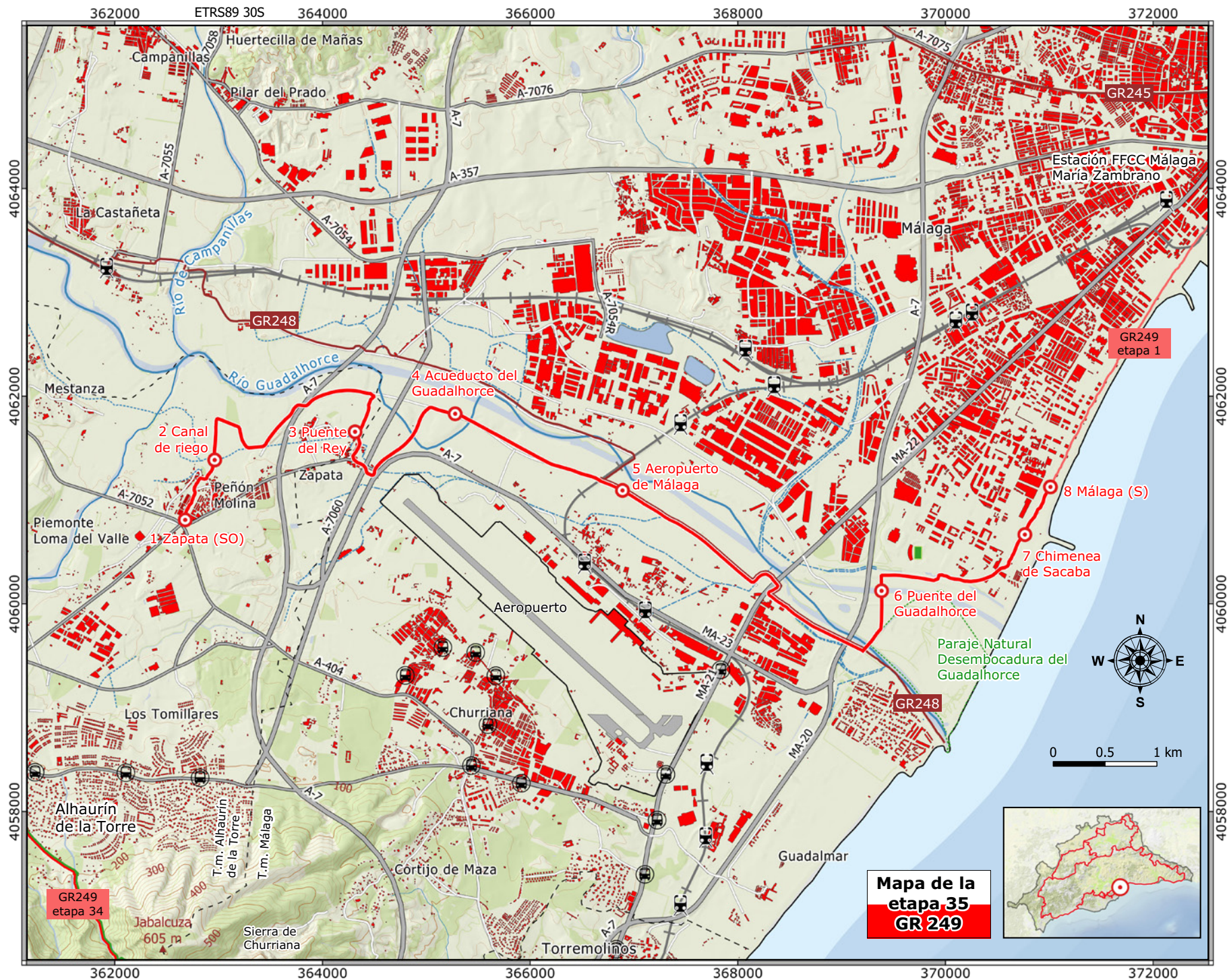
The Guadalhorce, overlap towards the end

GR 92 E12

Coastal Path, link-up at the end

P O I N T	X	Y	HEIGHT ABOVE SL	DISTANCE
1.Zapata (SW)	362680	/ 4060810	/ 23 m	Km 0,0
2.Drainage channel	362960	/ 4061385	/ 10 m	Km 0,8
3.Puente del Rey aqueduct	364315	/ 4061655	/ 13 m	Km 3,5
4.Guadalhorce aqueduct	365280	/ 4061830	/ 11 m	Km 5,1
5.Málaga Airport	366890	/ 4061090	/ 9 m	Km 6,9
6.Guadalhorce bridge	368385	/ 4060125	/ 2 m	Km 10,8
7.Sacaba chimney	370765	/ 4060665	/ 2 m	Km 12,4
8.Málaga (S)	371010	/ 4061125	/ 2 m	Km 13,0









## ROUTE DESCRIPTION



### The Aquaduct and the King's Bridge

→ Up to km 3.5

You depart south-west El Peñón de Zapata from the roundabout at the intersection of the A-7052 and Las Américas Avenue, heading north through the park by the Gran Canaria Avenue. After a few gentle bends along Los Mellizos Street, you come to the first fields of crops. You then cross a deep canal near the Zambrana stream, with the occasional bed of Reeds or solitary Eucalyptus tree. Meanwhile, the terraces are occupied by citrus trees, vegetables and seasonal fruit. The tracks follow the right-angled layout of the roads and farmland, and therefore zigzag alongside the irrigation ditches, maintaining a north-easterly direction overall.

About a kilometre from the start, the track turns to the east and south, forming a curve that links up again with the irrigation ditch. Cross over to the other side and continue alongside until you reach the River Guadalhorce, where you leave its side and pass under the A-7 dual carriageway. Continuing along the track and keeping the river bank on your left, you loop round to the south before arriving at the historic highlight of the day, the aqueduct. Known

as Puente del Rey (the King's Bridge; km 3.5), it dates back to 1726 and was replaced by the San Telmo aqueduct, to the east of the city of Malaga.

There is a group of houses built into its base, which even used to make use of the arcades too. The Path nevertheless, turns through the fields and returns to the north for a short way.



### The River Guadalhorce and its mouth

→ Up to km 8.7

The Guadalhorce valley is blessed with an ideal climate, in addition to the extremely fertile soils due to the river deposits building up to produce the flood plains. Water was the only element required to complete the triangle of agricultural production. Since the Guadalhorce has a significant volume of water, any improvised channelling or temporary irrigation ditches proved useless. It was not until the 1970s that, following the control over the flow through the Chorro reservoirs, two large canals were built under the so-called Guadalhorce Plan. Of greatest interest here is the Right Bank Canal. This carries water through the final part of the valley as far as Alhaurín de la Torre, using both pipes and open and concrete-sided channels. ▶

255

256



The wooden walkway bridge over one of the branches of the river, and the Nature Reserve

A drainage ditch flowing into the Guadalhorce brings an end to the detour around this network of tributaries. From this point onwards, you head south-east along a wide track between the river and the international airport on your right. The watercourse stays on your left, generally very close, before a large pipeline and then a railway line cross overhead near to the Guadalhorce Industrial Estate. The Path is separated from the airport runways and the freight and passenger terminals by high security fences and a perimeter track.

The River Guadalhorce has accompanied the Great Path from its source near Stage 12 (Villanueva del Rosario to Archidona) and then again, from Stage 19 to 22 around the area of the reservoirs. Almost as if it were a metaphor, they both now come to an end together. Although much further upstream and far from here, the river maintains some spectacular riverside clumps of tall trees, it is quite the opposite here. This area is filled with Bulrushes, Reeds and Giant reeds with a scattering of Tamarisk and Poplar trees. The Path keeps a certain distance from the river, however an intricate network of paths goes down to the riverside. When you approach the MA-21 motorway, the path bends slightly to pass under the bridge (km 8.7). This is just where the river divides into two branches, the main channel and a

secondary branch to minimise occasional flooding. Together with the beach, they make up the Nature Reserve of the river mouth, covering 67 hectares.



### The beaches of Sacaba and La Misericordia

→ To the end of the stage

With the river channel on the left and an industrial estate on the right, it passes under the MA-20 motorway and then turns left, leaving the Nature Reserve behind and on the other side. A pathway of Alberro sand leads to the spectacular footbridge over the Guadalhorce, with its wavy appearance. Once you have crossed over, turn right towards another bridge that crosses the other branch of the river.

One of the chimneys of La Térmica is a sign of the industrial past and welcomes you to the seaside boulevard called Paseo de Antonio Banderas. Málaga's most south-westerly beach, called Sacaba has landscaped promenades, the famous beach bars and various tourism and sports amenities.

La Misericordia beach is the setting for the Great Malaga Path's Kilometre Zero. Over 35 Stages, the route as a whole has managed to guide the visitor through the real Malaga, created by all *Malagueños* (Malaga's inhabitants) over millennia and is found in a privileged natural setting, which the Great Path has made it possible to get to know better. ■

The aqueduct of El Puente del Rey, with its hollow arches and cutwaters

