



GR 48[®]


PROVINCE OF SEVILLA

ANDALUCÍA

SIERRA MORENA PATH

6 Trail maps

Scale 1:45000 and 1:75000



GR 48®

PROVINCE OF SEVILLA

ANDALUCÍA

SIERRA MORENA PATH

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INTRODUCTION

The *Asociación para el Desarrollo Integral del Territorio de Sierra Morena*, *ADIT Sierra Morena*, (Association for an Integral Development of Sierra Morena Territory) is a non-profit institution established by the following bodies: *Asociación Grupo de Desarrollo Rural Sierra de Aracena y Picos de Aroche*; *Asociación Grupo de Desarrollo Rural Sierra Morena Sevillena*; *Asociación para el Desarrollo Rural de Sierra Morena Cordobesa* and the *Asociación para el Desarrollo Rural de la Campiña Norte de Jaén*. The group also includes other public and private institutions from the provinces: Huelva, Seville, Córdoba and Jaen.

ADIT Sierra Morena is supporting many activities and projects around hiking. This outdoor activity appears to be an important tool for introducing the highlands to visitors. At the same time, hiking is seen as the fundamental outdoor activity on which many others are based and that will reinforce a proper growth of the region without compromising its cultural and environmental values.

The GR-48 'Sierra Morena Path' is a 590 kilometres waymarked trail through the provinces of Huelva, Seville, Córdoba and Jaen. The starting point is Barrancos a small town located in Portugal. The journey, described here from west to east, embraces an astonishing territory worthy of visiting or living in it.

This is a full colour essential topo-guide to some of the blissfully undiscovered walks in southern Andalucía. It has been designed for better appreciate the natural beauty and cultural aspects exhibited throughout the trail. The guide provides texts, pictures, sketches and relevant maps in order to facilitate the walking. It also features information on estimated times, distances, and difficulty. The reading will help the walkers to pay attention to different ways of countryside labour; to discover singular natural features; to perceive the footprint left on the natural environment; and to appreciate the many environ-

INTRODUCTION

mental features they may come across with at any season of the year. In addition, readers will find easier to understand the many shades between the provinces and regions where the trail goes through. This topo-guide will certainly enhance the walkers' vision of the track as well as provide a complete picture of the journey.

Every section of the route is introduced with general information about the province where the track passes through. Also included are detailed overviews of each locality the walkers will find on their journey. We do believe that hiking stirs up complicity between the walker and the environment yet it uplifts the walker interest and curiosity about the reality around them. The walk itself evidences the harmonious relation established through centuries between human beings and the land. It is an amazing way to discover how much tradition is still rooted in the small towns the walker will find on their way. Moreover, it will give the walker the chance to find out about natural resources uses and costumes as well as other activities around those.

The walks are, in general, easy to follow. Each section of the trial is suitable for mountain biking, horse riding or just walking. The technical difficulty of each section determines its length. All the routes start and most finish in a well equipped small town, village or settlements where the hiker may find supplies such as food, drinks and accommodation for at least one night.

Certainly this is a much essential guide which cannot be missing from the backpack of those lovers of mixing together nature discovering and travelling.



PRESENTATION

PRESENTATION

HIKING

6

Hiking is a non-competitive sporting activity which takes place on rural tracks and paths. In Spain, these paths are mainly endorsed by the different national Mountaineering Federations. 'Vías pecuarias', local paths and riverside paths -all they of public uses- are preferably designated for hiking.

This recently developed outdoor activity is becoming very popular since ramblers not only enjoy outdoor walking but also achieve a much deeper knowledge of the social, cultural, ethnographic and historical heritage of the places located throughout the trail.

Hiking is an activity which poses low impact onto the environment. In order to sustain the environmental conditions and natural heritage of the areas covered by the trail, a thoughtful system of regulated blazes and marks is posed on countryside paths, animal tracks, rivers alleyways and rural roads. This system also facilitates and ensures walkers safety. So far, it could be said that is a most engaging and harmless way to discover both the environmental wealth of a country and the peculiarities of the people living in.

A BIEF NOTE ABOUT HIKING

It seems to be in France where hiking was considered as an activity for visiting places. Shortly after the World War II, the FFRP (*Fédération Française de la Randonnée Pedestre*) was born and soon other countries as Germany, Netherland, Belgium and Switzerland starting to promote hiking as a way

for sporting and doing tourism up in the mountains.

In Spain the FEDME (*Federación Española de Deportes de Montaña y Escalada*) is the body in charge for the management of this outdoor activity. Hiking is seen as directly related to mountaineering at the time it does require of regulation about blazing trails.

PATHS HOMOLOGATION AND SIGN POSTING

The FEDME is the body responsible for a footpath homologation. This means that the route is well marked and signposted using a system of registered trade mark signs. It does also mean that there is a writing topoguide where the route is thoughtfully described and that there is a legal body fully compromised to the path maintenance and care.

Wherever possible, a homologated path will avoid crossing or using tarmacs and traffic roads. It is a pedestrian path well equipped with direction signs such milestones or mileposts, direction arrows, paint marks and interpretation boards. Most footpaths are suitable for bicycling and horseback riding.

In Spain, footpaths are classified into:

- **SGRs:** Those are long distance trails that run over 50 kilometres and link countries, regions or single sites really far away from each other. A SGR route is usually split into several sections for a much affordable journey.
- **SPRs:** Half-day or one-day trails that cover any distance between 10 and 50 kilometres. These short journeys are designed for visiting specific and singular natural sites or for taking the walkers up to a location of cultural or natural interest.
- **SLs:** This is a very easy trail that covers less than 10 kilometres and poses low difficulty on to the walkers.

7

GR routes that run through more than three European countries are classified as European International Path (E).

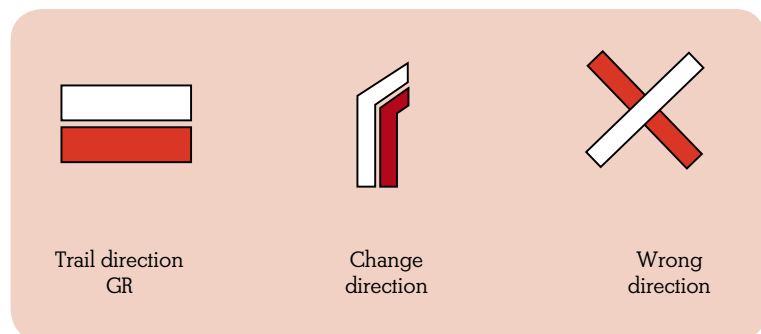
• Waymarking



Finger posting



Milestone



RECOMENDATIONS

To maximize your enjoyment and minimize problems on the trail, before starting any outdoor activity, we need to carefully ponder over the stuff and equipment we are going to take with us. It is also worthy to give lengthy thought to prevent any unforeseen incidents they may occur along the route.

BEFORE THE WALK

Gather information and use accurate maps for planning on the route. Work out your time realistically. Take the advice culled by other hikers and ask to local people since they best know the area. Ramblers' experience enhances through vivid conversation with locals.

Get updated permissions from the environment department if you might trespass restricted areas. You may need to get especial permits for walking on restricted areas; certain protected sites of a natural park; for using cook-

ing devices or lit a fire; and for using a mountain refuge or accommodation within the limits of protected areas.

Make sure your equipment is the right one. Boots are perhaps the most important tool when hiking. Get a pair of lightweight, over-the-ankle boots with a Gore-Tex lining that keeps rainwater from seeping in yet allows your feet to breathe. Your ankles will suffer a lot if your boots do not provide enough support and you may experience internal injuries such sprains. Remember to break in your boots thoroughly before departure. Lightweight polyester hiking pants are preferable to jeans or heavy cottons, which can be uncomfortable in wet or warm weather.

Get a good quality daypack with enough capacity to tote your personal items. Better if it has bottle holders that keep precious water within easy reach. The following items are essential in your pack: a water bottle, the topoguide and useful maps, sunglasses, sun cream and lips moist, a brim-med hat, some energetic food, a Swiss Army knife, a hiking lantern or a mountaineering one and a basic first aid kit equipped for topical injuries.

Take a mobile phone with you even you might find yourself walking in low or no-signal areas. Remember the Spanish number for emergency calls: 112

ALONG THE WALK

Hiking may produce threats to personal safety. Even if you are in top condition, it is a good idea to combine techniques for hiking to your physical potential in order to minimize strenuous exercising.

It is important to start your walk to a slower pace and progressively increase your speed until you find yourself walking steadily. Matching your walking pace to the breathing will keep you better oxygenated. Avoid prolonged stops to prevent muscles cooling. A walking pace of 3 to 4 km per hour on a flat route appears to be a right walking rhythm.

Keep yourself well hydrated. Drink water frequently and, every now and then have a isotonic drink in order to prevent metabolic imbalances.

OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH NATURE

- Keep an appropriate relationship with the natural surroundings. Natural environment conservation will have a joyful meaning if we do so.
- Fire is perhaps nature worst enemy. Along the walk, surely there will be designates areas where you are allow to lit a fire. Obeying area regula-



tions about seasonal restrictions on fire will reduce the risk of wildfire.

- Human waste is often a major source of environmental impact from hiking. A responsible hiker will take out their garbage and dispose it in suitable containers. When getting ready for the walk, it is important to think ahead about the amount of garbage you may finish your walk with.
- Just like the unwritten standards established for a better living together in the cities, a logical and sounded relationship is set up between nature and hiking. An emphatic relationship is often established among hikers and it also extends to local people in the villages.
- Collecting living plants, animals or stones will have an adverse impact on the ecosystem. A picture will make an everlasting souvenir though.
- A good practice is keep country gates and railings closed behind us to avoid cattle and wild animal species entering fenced-off areas.
- Personal pets should always go by our side and supervised.

Dangerous hiking circumstances include losing the way. It is paramount to keep walking on the path and always keep an eye on it when we walk somewhere else. Missing the way may put at risk our safety and turn a joyful experience into a proper mare.



MIDE METHOD FOR APPRISING HIKERS

WHAT IS MIDE?

MIDE is a communication system which informs about the technical and physical characteristics of a trail. It is aimed to evaluate and unify the findings of hiking trails allowing each practitioner to make a better choice.

The MIDE system uses a scale designed to assess and grade the difficulty of a specific hiking trip. By doing so, hiking trips are classified according to their difficulty and hikers will have a much accurate knowledge about the route.

This is a tool designed by experienced hikers so other hikers may easily find the route that better suits to their physical condition and motivation.

It is not all about information as the MIDE appears to be a tool for preventing accidents up in the mountains. The general idea is that well informed walkers are likely of suffering less harm. (Information = safety).

WHEN MIDE WAS CREATED?

MIDE is a relatively recent tool. It was developed in 2002 within the framework of the programme 'Montañas para vivirlas seguro'. Three years after the project started, some of the programme sponsors (Gobierno de Aragón –Protección Civil; Obra Social y Cultural de Ibercaja and the Federación de Montañismo de Aragón) pondered over the need for expert information to be put in place in order to prevent accidents in the mountain. In 2003, the MIDE Procedure Manual is introduced to the public and therefore the MIDE method begins to be used.

WHAT SORT OF INFORMATION DOES MIDE PROVIDE?

The MIDE contains **background information** and **assessment information**. Background information is about informing on general aspects of a rated route. It gives information about where the track starts and finishes; about places where the track passes by; about both positive cumulative slope and negative cumulative drop for the whole route; horizontal distance for the entire route; and weather conditions for which the assessment applies.

Assessment information is about rating the following topics:

- Severity of the natural environment
- Guidance on the route about choosing and keeping good orientation.
- Difficulty in walking along the track (type of path, slopes, etc)
- Struggle required for accomplishing the route.

A numerical value (1 to 5) is given to the above topics in order to set down the degree of difficulty poses on the route.



Environment

- 1- The environment holds
- 2- There is more than one factor of risk
- 3- There are several factors of risk
- 4- There are enough factors of risk
- 5- There are many factors of risk

Orientation

- 1- Well defined tracks and junctions
- 2- Waymarking signs showing the way
- 3- It requires precise identification of geographical features and of compass points
- 4- It requires walking out the track tracing
- 5- The track is obstructed by unavoidable obstacles which must be skirted along.





Track features

- 1- The track runs on smooth surface
- 2- The track runs on bridle paths
- 3- The track runs on irregular surface and staggered paths
- 4- The use of hands and even jumping over obstacles is required to negotiate the track
- 5- The use of hands is required to progress



Struggle

- 1- Up to 1 hour walk
- 2- From 1 to 3 hours walk
- 3- From 3 to 6 hours walk
- 4- From 6 to 10 hours walk
- 5- More than 10 hours walk

Calculations made according to MIDE criteria for an average and slightly loaded hiker. Hiking rated according to MIDE criteria for summers without snow.

Sevilla Natural Park as well as through a good section of the Dehesas de Sierra Morena UNESCO Biosphere Reserve.

The wealthy diversity of natural resources in the area will enhance the hiker's knowledge and personal development. And so it will be the hospitality of the small and picturesque streets of these highland villages and towns built on the wisdom of many different civilizations.

This magnificent section of the GR-48 will help the hiker's understanding of the narrow communication established throughout centuries between people and the natural world. Our ancestors' lifestyle, along with the current management of the area, has made of this region the utterly model of sustainability.

The climate is Mediterranean with strong and marked seasonal variation and extreme weather situations as big snows and big droughts. Very dry summers and pretty mild winters is the main weather feature. Average rainfall is 60 to 70 rainy days per year which occur in winter periods. Higher temperatures in summer may rise up to 40°C whereas the average lower temperature may drop to 5°C in winter.

On this section of the trail, the path crosses over many rivers and brooks. Ravines of different depth and shape follow each other along the track too. Most rivers and water streams circulate in a North – South direction towards the Guadalquivir River. As the walk progresses from the western to the east, we will meet the following rivers and brooks: Rivera de Cala River, Arroyo de Gargantafria Brook, Arroyo del Tamujar Brook, Viar River, Rivera del Huesnar Natural Site, Arroyo de Guadalbacar Brook and the Retortillo Brook.

In addition, many reservoirs are located in the area. The most important reservoirs are: Pintado, Melonares, Huesna, José Torán and Retortillo Reservoir. A section of the GR-48 Trail will go bordering by the Retortillo shores.

This section of the route winds through a natural site which has been classified -under the European Habitats Directive, as SPA for Birds in Andalucía (Special Protection Area, ZEPA in Spanish). Moreover, the area sustains a high ecological importance due to the rich variety of species and natural habitats within it. In addition, this natural site is also protected and classified as SCI (Site of Community Importance, LIC in Spanish) and as SCS (Special Conservation Site, ZEC in Spanish). Therefore, it is included in the Nature 2000 European Network.

Within the Sierra Norte de Sevilla Natural Park there are identified seventeen natural habitat types of Community Interest whose conservation requires the designation of Special Areas of Conservation. Among those and meriting prior attention are the Pseudo-steppe with grasses and annuals Thero-Brachypodietea and the alluvial forests of Alders and Ash-trees.

Sample of a MIDE route rating:

5	5	4	3

More information:

www.euromide.info
www.fam.es

THE NATURAL WORLD

This section of the GR-48 Path goes through Sierra Morena Mountain Range within the province of Seville. It takes over the previous Sierra de Aracena y Picos de Aroche Natural Park in the Sierra Morena Mountain Range of Huelva to connect to the mountain range section in the province of Córdoba where are located the adjacent Hornachuelos Natural Park and the Sierra de Cardeña y Montoro Natural Park.

The trail winds through the geography of the Sierra Morena Mountain Range central area, looking for valleys, hills and rivers. Within the province of Seville, the trail goes almost entirely through the Sierra Norte de

GEOLOGY

The track runs through valleys and mountain ranges and, it occasionally gets close to the wider boundaries of the Guadalquivir River depression. This peculiar geomorphology is located in the Ossa-Morena Zone and the Hesperian Massif in the Sierra Morena Mountain Range.

The area orography was originated in the Hercynian orogeny which also outlined the valleys remarkable NW-SE geological lineament. Later on, materials were eroded as the time passed by and the Alpine orogeny worked on cracking the territory and giving rise to many new geological structures. Rivers got to a new lower base level causing the land surface to develop new features similar to those of today landscape ones.



Cerro del Hierro Natural Site

This is a region of very complex geology. The Pedroso Fault splits the area in two units. One unit is 600 meters average altitude above sea level producing the 'step' onto the other unit which is 300-400 meters average altitude above sea level.

Strata contain deposits from different systems of metamorphism. They are divisible into two groups: acid rocks such slates, greywackes and schists; and Karst phenomena in carbonate rocks. Volcanic rocks occur in the Viar Basin and in the surroundings of Almadén de la Plata and Cazalla towns. Similarly, igneous rocks can be admired near El Real de la Jara and Puebla de los Infantes towns.

This great diversity of deposits and materials enriches with the action of the climate which still continues moulding the relief and shaping off a mountain range made of rolling hills and soft valleys.

FLORA. THE PLANTS WORLD

The Sierra Norte de Sevilla Natural Park is located in the Holarctic kingdom, Mediterranean region and in the Marianico-Monchiquense sector in the Luso-Extremadurensis province.

The area supports both thermo-Mediterranean and meso-Mediterranean floors with a clear exhibition of Mediterranean forests and pastures comprising Cork and Holm Oaks, Wild Olive trees and patches of Myrtle bushes. In many areas Wild Olive groves and Holm Oak groves mix together. In other sections Wild Pear trees, Peony and Mastic bushes intercalate in pastures of Holm Oaks.

Vegetation is characterised by a predominance of native *Quercus* formations being the most abundant species Holm Oaks, Cork Oaks, Portuguese Oaks and Pyrenean Oaks.

The land is mainly covered by meadows and pastures where scattering Holm Oaks and Cork Oaks share ground with some slightly dense Black Pines reforestation. Other vegetation formations are Mediterranean scrub hardwoods; Olive and other fruit trees and Eucalyptus trees cropping; serial Mediterranean bush; pastures; wooden formations mainly comprising pure or mixed formations of Holm Oaks, Cork Oaks and Portuguese Oaks; and tree crops. The rest of the land is mainly covered by riparian vegetation, Coniferous forest formations and scrub; reservoirs, firebreaks (fireroads, fire lines or fuel break); urban and developable land; and areas for general uses.



Sageleaf Rockrose

The many rivers and water streams flowing in the area support important sections of gallery forests of high ecological wealth. Gallery forests comprise wood formations of Alder trees, Elm groves, Ash-trees, and Black Poplar and White Poplar groves. The Huesna riverbanks stand out because of their excellent conservation conditions.

This area is home for eleven endangered species which are registered in the *Catálogo Andaluz de Especies Amenazadas* (Andalusian Catalogue of Endangered Species). Some of them such as Maple trees and European Hackberry trees locate along the GR-48 Path through Seville province. In the area, there are other species which are not under threat yet they are very interesting. They are Carob trees and large and wealthy undergrowth comprising among others Black Elderberry bushes, White Rockroses, Junipers and Blackthorn bushes.

FAUNA. THE ANIMAL WORLD

Within the Sierra Morena Western Mountain Range are three Natural Parks: the Sierra Norte de Sevilla Natural Park (Seville province), the Sierra de Aracena y Picos de Aroche Natural Park (Huelva province) and the Sierra de Hornachuelos Natural Park in Córdoba province. This large and continuous area acts as green corridor securing the animal connections in the whole area which is also home to many interesting animal species.

Research shows a total of 200 vertebrate animal species in the area. According to PORN (Natural Resources Management Programme) birds constitute the larger group with 125 different species recorded followed by mammals (36 species), reptiles (20 species), amphibians (11 species) and fish (8 species).

In addition, the region is home to a large range of different invertebrate species. Among the most important are dragonflies which are considered to be bioindicator of high quality waters and of good conservation of nature aquatic ecosystems. Another bioindicator of the excellent conservation conditions in the area are some butterflies families (*Rhopalocera*) since some of those species are very sensitive to any environment changes.



Swallowtail Butterfly



Beaudouin's Snake Eagle

The Common Trout and the Rainbow Trout are noteworthy among the fish farming species and therefore, it can occur some private trout fishing sections in some pristine water rivers.

Besides the fish farming fauna, a large number of amphibian and reptile species can be found by the rivers and water streams. Among them are the Bosca's Newt, the Iberian Midwife Toad, the Natterjack Toad, the Lataste's Viper and the Ladder Snake.

As we said above, there is an outstanding number of bird species in the area being the birds of prey the most significant. Special mention in here to the White-Throated Dipper as this bird is another good bioindicator of quality fluvial courses. In addition, the area is home to many endangered birds such as Black Storks which are on the very edge of extinction.

Hunting activity is really important in the region. Big game hunting of Deer and Wild Boar and small game hunting of Rabbit, Hare, Partridge and Song Thrush birds are very popular among game hunters. Nevertheless, some of those species' population has seen a significant withdrawal in recent years and therefore, hunting activity is being closely monitored.



Traditionally crafted Water Well

THE HUMAN FOOTPRINT

Many are the cultural and historical features which can be seen along this section of the trail. All they are silent witnesses of the different civilizations which once occupied this territory. Still standing on the land are some hundreds years old farmhouses, bridges, paved roads, dry stone walls, mills and fountains; all they worthy of being respected and admired.

On the first stage of the route are some prehistoric dolmens. They are ancient witnesses of past civilizations although they are hard to be spotted along the trail. Stone made bridges remain from the ancient Roman time. However, the most significant cultural heritage comes from the Arabs occupation and notable suburbs from that time still stand on many historical town centres. Castles and fortress are the main architectonic features in several towns and villages of either Arabic or Christian origin. Also from those centuries are the many watermills on the riverbanks as well as the wine presses and oil presses which still remain in many Country Estates, today fully oriented to cattle breeding though.

Definitively, walkers will come across with an endless number of built elements scattering this network of ancient paths and cattle routes. Certainly, this is a total trail which appears to taste the many rough tracks and paths through this hard yet tender territory.

TOWNS AND VILLAGES

EL REAL DE LA JARA



Altitude: 465 m

Population: 1.626 (2009)

This small town is located at Sierra Morena mountain range in Seville province. The municipal district has boundaries to the north with Extremadura region and to the west with Huelva province. The Sierra Norte de Sevilla Natural Park eastern limits are bound on this municipality. A typical mountain landscape stretches the township where the most emblematic natural element are large pastures, some of them supporting river valleys and breathtaking natural sites such La Rivera de Cala Natural Site.

The town's strategic location was very important in the Middle Ages. The historic and cultural heritage from that time is well

represented by some interesting architectonical elements such San Bartolomé Church – Mudejar style, Nuestra Señora de Gracia Hermitage and the remains of the Castle.

Data from 2009 shows that the main working activities are wholesale and retail trade; activities related to the sale and repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles; hospitality and building construction. In addition, rural tourism together with the management and uses of the natural resources are recently becoming good tools for economy recovering in the area.

Source: www.elrealdelajara.es

Town Council:
Plaza de Andalucía, 8
954733007

Local Police
Plaza de Andalucía, 8
652825238

Guardia Civil (National Guard)
Real, 51
954733003

Medical Centre
28 de Febrero
954733394

ALMADÉN DE LA PLATA



Altitude: 450 m
Population: 1.533 (2009)

This small town is located at the heart of the mountain range and at the south-westernmost limits of the Sierra Norte de Sevilla Natural Park. The site has historically been close related to the Vía de la Plata Trail, a very popular track connecting to the famous Camino de Santiago Route.

In addition, the name of the site is after the silver extractions taking place in the area from thousands years ago. In fact, mining works had been rooted in many different groups which settled in the area such as ancient Romans, Muslims and Christians. The cultural legacy left by those groups still is very clear in the town. Some good examples are the remains of the Muslim Castle which have been restored and transformed into the Town Council; the former Los Angeles Hospital from the 17th century; and Santa

María de Gracia Church from the late 16th and early 17th centuries.

There are some interesting places to visit in the surrounding areas. Among others, they are: Los Covachos Cave where can be seen some very important cave paintings. Access to the cave is restricted to very small groups of visitors though; the Sendero de los Molinos Path with some beautiful views on its way to the Rivera de Cala Natural Site; and the Almadén de la Plata Forest Park where there are both a recreation area and the Park Interpretation Center.

Source: www.almadendelaplata.es

Town Council
Plaza de la Constitución, 1
954735082

Guardia Civil (National Guard)
Ctra. Sevilla, s/n
954735080
Medical Centre
Cervantes, 36
954735198

Taxi:
• Taxista Braulio García Prado: 615 95 45 03
• Taxista Manuel Muñoz Marín: 954 73 50 92/ 656 62 61 83

CAZALLA DE LA SIERRA



Altitude: 593 m
Population: 5.034 (2009)

This is a small town located at 81 kilometres from Seville capital city which still holds the spirits of a greatest medieval time. Visitors will be delighted with the town cultural heritage at the heart of the Sierra Norte de Sevilla Natural Park. The park is also part of the largest pasture land on the world which has also been granted UNESCO MaB Dehesas de Sierra Morena Biosphere Reserve.

The village boasts of have been a great medieval site. The town's historic quarter is classified Spanish Cultural Property and most buildings are classified as BIC, 'Bienes de Interés Cultural del Conjunto Histórico' (Spanish Cultural Assets). The whole conservation area comprises some of the most interesting cultural and architectonical elements from the Renaissance in Andalucía such the Parish Church

and the Cartuja, located outside the town and considered a unique master piece in the region. Traditional gastronomy is very much related to the natural resources of the area. Visitors' senses will be amazed by the pleasure of tasting lamb, Iberian pork and game meals. The later are base for many traditional dishes which are closely related to big game hunting. In addition, other manufactured products such brandy and aniseed spirits are nationwide appreciated.

Hunting activity and especially game hunting are so much rooted in the municipality. Special mention in here to the Concentración de Rehalas de la Sierra Morena which is a nationwide recognised activity that is aimed to and gives value to big game and hunting hounds, a traditional occupation in the region.

Source: www.cazalladelasierra.es

Tourist Information Office

Plaza Doctor Nosea, 1
954884025

Oficina de Turismo

Plaza Mayor, s/n
954883562

Local Police

954884000 / 609556161

Guardia Civil (National Guard)

Avda. de la Constitución, 68
954883376

Medical Center

Matadero, s/n
955889601

Fire Brigade

667 729 308

How to get there:

- Autobuses Linesur
Cazalla de la Sierra - Sevilla
- Sevilla-Estación de autobuses
Plaza de Armas. 954902368 / www.linesur.com/
- Sevilla-Estación de Autobuses
Prado de San Sebastián
954988222 / www.linesur.com/
- Tren, RENFE
Consulta sobre horarios y precios:
902240202 / www.renfe.es
- Taxi Benito Romero
954884938 / 678036369
- Taxi Antonio Forero
954883097/669450425
- Taxi "El Gamba" Antonio Rosendo
954884094 / 689194619

CONSTANTINA



Altitude: 555 m

Population: 6.598 (2009)

This town locates some 81 kilometres from the capital city and in an area that receives the most rain in Seville province.

The site hosts the largest population in the region and one of the most breathtaking and wealthy urban landscape. A large section of the town's centre has been classified *Conjunto Histórico-Artístico* (a

legal designation which protects Spain's cultural heritage comparable to the British Conservation Area). It is worthy to spend some time walking in this town, since there are many wonderful historical monuments to see. The effort for a steep climbing will pay off with the visit to the Castle, the Santa María de la Encarnación Parish Church and the remains of Nuestra

Señora de la Hiedra Hermitage.

Traditionally, the economy has been based on the manufacturing of natural products. Today the main activities are wholesale and retail trading; activities related to the sale and repair of vehicles and motorbikes; and hospitality.

Source: www.constantina.org

Town Council

Eduardo Dato, 7
955880700 / 955880701

Medical Centre 955889008
Hospital de Alta Resolución de Sierra Norte 955889043

Tourist Information Office

Plaza del Llano del Sol, 6
955 881 297

Local police

Eduardo Dato, 7
955 889 503

Guardia Civil (National Guard)

955883891

"El Robledo" Visitors Centre

955889688 / 955884690

LA PUEBLA DE LOS INFANTES



Altitude: 230 m

Population: 3.262 (2009)

Looking for the rearmost mountains skirts, La Puebla de los Infantes is located between the vega (productive fertile plain fields) and the sierra (mountain range). Despite of being relatively close to the capital city (only 84 kilometres from Seville), this small town preserves its cultural values totally focussed on the land.

The southernmost limit of the Sierra Norte de Sevilla Natural Park while bordering Hornachuelos municipality in Córdoba province can be spotted from the top of the Castle.

Nuestra Señora de las Huertas Church, Santa Ana Hermitage and Nuestra Señora de las Huertas Hermitage are, among others, the most interesting features that can be visited in the town.

The main working activity is wholesale and retail trading; activities related to the sale and repair of vehicles and motorbikes; hospitality and rural tourism.

Source: www.lapuebladelosinfantes.es

Town Council

Plaza de la Constitución, 1
954808015 / 954808089

Medical Centre

Plaza Carlos V s/n.
955808500

Local Police

954808249 / 606983030

Guardia Civil (National Guard)

954808013

SAN NICOLÁS DEL PUERTO



Altitude: 583 m

Population: 682 (2009)

This small town is quite close to Constantina yet its municipal district locates deep inside the Sierra Norte de Sevilla Natural Park.

San Nicolás del Puerto surroundings are exceptionally interesting. Just a few kilometres from the town there are some highly valuable natural sites such the impressive Oak wood at the Cerro del Hierro Natural Site; the Cerro del Hierro Mining Site, recently granted as Natural Monuments; and the refreshing Huesna Waterfalls. The later is an astonishing natural site near the town where the river emerges from a vertical wall.

In the town centre there are some interesting historical monuments. The ancient Roman Bridge over the Galindo River is a masterpiece

of civil engineering which still is in use. In addition, San Sebastián Church (Mudéjar style) is the best religious building in the town which was built in the 15th and 16th centuries.

It is always a pleasure for visitors to spend some time in the fresh and lush Rivera del Huesnar Natural Site which locates near such a hospitable town

Source: www.sannicolasdelpuerto.es

Town Council

955886500 / 955886559

Medical Centre

955895539

Local Police

955886500 / 955886559

Guardia Civil (National Guard)

955885003

HORNACHUELOS



Altitude: 185 m

Population: 4.684 (2009)

Hornachuelos municipal district links two sections of the Sierra Morena Mountain Range, one in Sevilla province and the other in Córdoba province. The municipality stretches a good section of the Sierra de Hornachuelos Natural Park. The town is located between two impressive ravines and the Bembézar River flows through one of them. The limestone bedrock on which the town is standing has traditionally been the ideal material used for building up the town's wonderful architectonic elements.

Different civilizations were traditionally settled in here leaving behind an impressive cultural and historical heritage. Special mention to the enclosure Plaza de Armas Castle and Fortress; the Salvador Hermitage; Moratalla and the Santa María de las Flores Church.

Mining works have traditionally been much rooted in this town and even the name of the site is clearly influenced by this activity. Hornachuelos' name is after the word 'hornacho' which is the name of the tunnel carved in the ground to

enter the mine where the minerals were extracted.

Wholesale and retail trading together with houses building are the most important activities in the town. However, game hunting is the most significant activity in the municipality which is also complemented with many other activities related to tourism such hospitality and accommodation.

Source: www.hornachuelosrural.com

Town Council

Plaza de la Constitución, 1
957641051 / 957641052

Tourist Information Office

C/Ctra. San Calixto s/n
615 646 593

Local police

957641033 / 609602185

Guardia Civil (National Guard)

957640065

Centro de Salud

957641111

Centro de Visitantes del Parque Natural Sierra de Hornachuelos "Huerta del Rey".

Ctra. San Calixto, Km. 1,600.
957641140

GR-48.

PROVINCE OF SEVILLA

GR-48. PROVINCE OF SEVILLA

ROUTE DESCRIPTION

The route described here is west to the east through the province of Seville. The GR-48 Path will wind through some beautiful hills and valleys of Sierra Morena Mountain Range. Some 140 kilometres of serpentine paths and footpaths will help the hiker to thoroughly discover the lush diversity and wealth of a territory Oaked in tradition and highland culture. This scenically diverse six stages track will take hikers through sites of great natural and cultural value. As the walk progresses, hikers will find themselves walking through a highland region comprising the UNESCO MaB Dehesas de Sierra Morena Biosphere Reserve, the Sierra Norte de Sevilla Natural Park.

The trail starts off at El Real de la Jara town and through valleys full of history led by their own people. The path will connect to the Rivera de Cala Natural Site to come into the heart of the Sierra Norte de Sevilla Natural Park and into the Viar River Valley -one of the most breathtaking natural sites in the park, before coming to die at the park southwest limit. The very particular geological origin of this section of the mountain range has shaped the landscape. Today the region shelters a great biodiversity, most notably the birds and especially the Iberian Eagle, the Black Vulture and the Black Stork. The UPA public mounts lead to pastures with impressive Holm Oaks and Cork Oaks whose fruits are ideal food for the cattle that grazes under the trees. Approaching to Cazalla de la Sierra town, the number of farmhouses and watermills increases and rich and lush vegetable gardens appear surrounding the urban area.

Then the track heads towards Constantina town while climbing down and swinging through mountain Olive groves and until it comes into the Rivera del Huesnar. From the Los Tres Ojos Bridge, the trail goes upstream and parallel to the river to later join a good section of the Sierra Norte Vía Verde Track. The site itself is considered to be one of the most admirable natural sites in Sierra Morena Mountain Range. About halfway, it will be worthy to make a detour to continue walking onto another path that meets this trail. This new

path runs along a section of the Sierra Norte Vía Verde Track while passing by former watermills and train tunnels to finally get to the Cascadas del Huesnar Waterfalls which is one of the most spectacular natural sites in the region, also classified as Natural Monument. Hikers should not leave the site without visiting a former mining site known as El Cerro del Hierro Site, another spectacular Natural Monument. The site itself is home to many singular and most valuable animal and plants species. This particular route is illustrated in the guide under the title "OPTIONAL STAGE. RIVERA DEL HUESNAR – CERRO DEL HIERRO". Approaching Constantina town, Sweet Chestnut groves appear to be decorating both sides of the trail. After passing through the town centre, the trail heads towards La Puebla de los Infantes town.

The trail then matches the *Cordel del Alcoronocal de las Ánimas* Path which is also the boundary of the Natural Park. In this section of the route, the landscape changes constantly from irrigated crops to massive sections of Mediterranean woods comprising Cork Oaks and a large variety of Mediterranean autochthonous bush species. The Gibla Path will take walkers to the end of the route after passing by fields and vegetable gardens surrounding La Virgen de las Huertas Hermitage.

Last stage of the route links the Sierra Norte de Sevilla Natural Park and the Sierra de Homachuelos Natural Park in the province of Córdoba. The Retortillo Reservoir water sheet reflects the Cerro del Águila Hill and a most typical highland landscape. The reservoir is surrounded by some of the province best private Country Estates which are fully devoted to hunting activities and big game hunting. At the end of the route, the Sierra de Homachuelos Mountains welcome hikers with one of the region's best kept natural treasures: the Guadadora Brook. The trail goes parallel to the brook and in the shade of lush riparian vegetation comprising old Alder trees and Lote trees to finally come to die in a locality that boasts of astonishing views: Homachuelos town.

STAGE 1:

REAL DE LA JARA - ALMADÉN DE LA PLATA



This stage of the route connects two highlands towns El Real de la Jara and Almadén de la Plata. The trail will take us through breathtaking valleys and stunning mountain passes from where we will enjoy impressive views. The trail matches almost completely another traditional path known as either *Camino Viejo de Almadén de la Plata* or *Camino de los Bonales*. This path connects two traditional paths: the *Camino de Santiago* Route and the *Vía de la Plata* Track. We will be walking on the footprints left behind by the pilgrims in the past.

The section of the route described in here is northwest – southeast oriented. We will go through pastures and other areas fully covered with Mediterranean woods and wade across some seasonal brooks to finally come close to the Rivera de Cala narrower section. Cattle breeding and game hunting are perhaps the most important resources in the region although tourism is being increasingly sponsored by activities like this hiking trail.

Because of the clear waymarking signs along the trail, we will be able to enjoy the beauty of the Natural Park while walking onto a good section of the Vía de la Plata Track. This track was one of the most important communication routes in the past. The track was built and paved by Romans when conquering the North of their beloved Hispania

Start: Real de la Jara
Finish: Almadén de la Plata
Distance: 13,8 Km
Time: 4 hours and 30 minutes

Suitability:



MIDE evaluation:



Environment: Severity of the natural environment.

1



Track Features: Difficulty in following the track

1



Orientation: Guidance on the route directions..

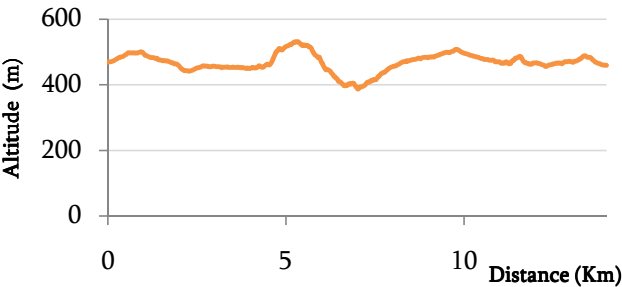
2



Struggle: Struggle required for accomplishing the route.

2

El Real de la Jara - Almadén de la Plata



ROUTE GENERAL DESCRIPTION

According to some writers, the origins of El Real de la Jara were in the lost kingdom of Tartessos. However, it was during the Almohad Caliphate (12th century) when the site experienced its greatest development and it was named Xara due to the thick Rockroses patches growing in the surrounding areas. During the Christian conquest, by the mid 14th century, Alfonso XI King of Castile camped in the area and the site was renamed as 'El Real' after the king.

The impressive medieval Castle (Mudéjar style) which was built in the 14th century is atop of a nearby hill to the North from where it looks over the town. From the Castle, walkers will enjoy breathtaking views of the valley and even of Santa Olalla del Cala.

Walking in the town's streets we will see many interesting sculptures of animals while looking for Plaza de España Square where this stage of the route will start. From here, we will come into Murillo Street where is a fountain with



Fountain with the emblem of the Pilgrimage to Santiago

the shape of the shell of Vieira (scallop) also known as Concha de Santiago. To the left is Pablo Picasso Street and after some metres walking between the whitewash houses in this street, we will get to the Camino Viejo de Almadén Path also known as Camino de los Bonales. The local Youth Hostel is by this traditional path. The building used to be a water tower which has now been converted into lodging for the pilgrims of the Camino de Santiago Route.

From this point, we will follow the well waymarked trail with thick dry stone walls while leaving behind a beautiful view of El Real de la Jara town which seems to say farewell to pilgrims and hikers.

As the walk progresses, we will get into open pastures with annual grass and herbs which are ideal for cattle grazing and that in spring form an amazing tapestry of blooming tiny flowers. Another path branches off to the right of the track. To the right is the path that leads to the impressive four floor farmhouse known as Santa María Magdalena or Los Aguados which fuses into the horizon



View of El Real de la Jara town and the Castle in the background

with the picture of Santa Olalla del Cala appearing to be vigilant of our walk on this very first section of the trail.

Along the trail we will find some different waymarking signs of the Camino de Santiago Route. One of them is the typical pilgrim's iron cane. We will continue straight ahead, avoiding another path that branches off to the right, and passing by a granite monolith with a plate honouring to Jose Luis Salvador Salvador who was the main trustee to the Camino de Santiago Route.

The trail will continue ahead while winding through pastures. Vegetation of Brambles and Oleanders to the right side of the trail tells us about a seasonal which after passing by the remains of a ruined but charming structure will approach the trail now slightly descending. In the horizon in front of us, we will spot the well marked profile of the Sierra de Encinarejo mountain range fully covered with Holm Oaks and that we will be passing through later on.

As the path climbs down, the pasture becomes slightly thicker comprising Kermes Oaks, Rockroses, and other Mediterranean undergrowth. We will eventually come close to a small brook which is the main tributary of the Arroyo del Chaparral Brook. Later, and as the walk progresses, we will wade across the Arroyo del Chaparral Brook.



Milestone at the Camino de Santiago Route



White Rockrose and Montpellier Cistus or Montpellier Rockrose

••• Km 2.7. Arroyo del Chaparral Brook

The stony riverbed indicates that we are wading across the head of the brook and its source. Vegetation is poorly developed and only some species of Oleanders and Reed are spotted on the riverbanks. Further down the thicket becomes thicker and along the riverbanks we will see some other species of Mediterranean undergrowth such the White Hawthorn which will be white when blooming in March.

The trail is easy to walk and flat through an in-apparent harmony pasture. We will pass by another path to the right that leads to the Dehesa El Chaparral Country Estate. Further up and as the walk progresses, we will pass by the Country Estate farmhouse.

We will continue ahead while approaching the thick hillsides of a mountain range that emerges to the left and that is crossed by enormous high-voltage towers. In the past, farmhouses and kitchens were probably warmed with a fire fed with the wood collected from every single Holm Oak in the area. Today, these 'electrical highways' through the natural world are the result of a very day increasing energy consumption.

The trail will pass by the remains of a former manor known as Casa Huerta de Cano which is located to the right of the track. Wild plants and vegetation seem to work hard providing rich nutrients to the roots of the many plants that cover this old building.

Then the pasture eventually turns into a garden where stout Oaks have been replaced by an open meadow which was probably worked in the past by the caring and skilled hands of the gardeners.

The trail is now coming close to a natural site known as Los Bonales which is also the name of the traditional path we are walking on. This is a wide open area with no trees for cattle grazing. The slight slope that shapes the area is totally flooded in winter time yet in the spring and summer provides high quality

fodder for the animals. This is a quite interesting ecosystem where small plants are fully adapted to the temporary floods on which they are dependent too. This peculiarity is also the reason why conservation of this natural site is very important.

••• Km 4. Los Bonales Country Estate main gate

The trail continues ahead until it meets a gate blocking the track. Immediately after crossing the gate, the trail starts climbing a soft slope which goes around a pasture to the right. This pasture is fully devoted to Iberian pigs breeding. Iberian pigs appear to be the ideal animal species related to this environment.

Holm Oaks get from the land and from the air enough energy to produce acorns which are fruits very rich in energy and fat. In autumn, an exceptional event known as the '*montanera*' happens in the area when it seems to be raining acorns due to the large number of fruits falling from the Holm Oaks. That is also the time for the last phase of putting on weight for the Iberian pigs which are solely fed with acorns. It could be unmistakably said that natural sites like this one are the most adequate for the Iberian pig developing their most favourable characteristics which later will become the well appreciated delicacies at the table.

Some metres ahead the trail bends to the right and goes across a small brook. Some 50 metres after wading across the brook and just after going across another country gate, we will take a footpath that branches off to the left.

We will follow this new path ahead which now climbs up a sloppy hillside and goes through young Holm Oaks having to the right side a small *rambla* (the dry bed of an ephemeral stream) and passing by an artificial pond. Shortly after, we will go across to another country gate. The reward for such climb is the astonishing views. Behind us will remain El Real de la Jara town and the nearby extensive pastures known as El Chaparral and Los Bonales.



Ideal food for the Iberian pig



Artificial pond

After crossing the gate, we will continue straight ahead and the trail starts descending downhill while searching for a tiny brook. We will also see another artificial pond and a farmyard to the right of the brook.

As the walk progresses, we will come to another country gate. After crossing it, the trail makes a turn to the right and goes across a new country gate. Here we will see some GR-48 waymarking signs together with those of the Camino de Santiago Route.

The trail continues ahead and winds along the ridge of the mountains and until the Alto de Encinarejo Mountain Pass. From there we will enjoy the impressive views to both sides of the trail.

••• Km 5.2. Alto de Encinarejo Mountain Pass

Large mix pastures of Holm Oaks and Cork Oaks seem to drape over the land in front of us while a soft, rounded and wavy relief comprising different valleys stretches underneath. The most impressive valley is the *Rivera de Cala* which locates to the southwest and at the foothill of the *Sierra de Galapero* mountain range. The *Rivera de Cala* Valley also connects two Natural Parks: the *Sierra de Aracena y Picos de Aroche* and the *Sierra Norte de Sevilla*.

The trail leads us into the heart of one of the most important natural sites in Europe. In 2002, the area was classified '*Dehesas de Sierra Morena*' Reserve of the Biosphere to preserve the many important natural and cultural features in it. This is a natural site which is an example of the rural world in Southern Europe because of the high biodiversity in the region and the way cultural values are clearly attached to the site.

The trail continues along the mountains ridge yet it is now descending some important slopes. We will go across another country gate to carry on walking ahead and on the same path which is also functioning as a firebreak. Relatively deep valleys covered by pastures stretch on both sides of the trail while the Mediterranean thicket becomes much evident.



Free sheep livestock in a pasture

Changes in the use of land can be appreciated as the trail progresses. Now, the area we are walking in is not longer devoted to grazing pastures but to hunting purposes. The thicker and lush Mediterranean undergrowth provide food and shelter to wild autochthonous animal species like Deer and Wild Boars. These two species are the main target for big game hunting in many *cotos* located in the region such the one we are now passing by.

The trail starts descending quite steeply and takes some curves. On one curve to the left we will have to our right a peculiar structure built on masonry which is used for big game hunting. Big game hunting is known in the region as 'montería'. Hunting hounds are set free in the mountain hounding Deer and Wild Boars which run away from the dogs and come closer to the hunting places that are strategically located in the mountain. There, hunters are waiting and ready to shot down the animals. Paradoxically, big game hunting is a main source for income in many regions of Sierra Morena Mountain Range.

As the walk continues climbing down, the trail passes near a very fit valley to the left where we will see a seasonal brook and another artificial pond. The trail turns to the left where we will wade across the brook. Ignore another path that branches off right with no direction signs displayed.

After wading across the brook, we will continue ahead and along the brook's right riverbank. From here the trail goes through new pastures of Mediterranean undergrowth comprising Lavender, Montpellier Rockroses and White Rockroses. Soon the trail will come near the Rivera de Cala Natural Site to the right. We will notice the scarce riparian vegetation on the riverbanks in this section of the river which flows between pastures in Huelva, on the opposite shore, and in Seville on this side of the river.



Rivera de Cala Site

We continue walking along the trail and after crossing another country gate which is blocking the track we will be entering Almadén de la Plata municipality. Just a few metres after, we will wade across the Arroyo de la Huerta del Corcho Brook.

••• Km 7. Arroyo de la Huerta del Corcho Brook

At this point, we will find ourselves half way to finish this stage of the route. From here, the trail starts climbing up while winding through open pastures. After crossing another country gate, the trail goes bordering the top shore of a small pond and then continues ascending until it reaches another country gate that we will go across. There we will see the remains of a farmhouse, a new building and goat livestock.

We will pass by the left side of the building to head towards a group of silo barns with two country gates. We will go across the one to the left leaving it shut behind us. The trail winds through young pastures while having an extensive farming of Iberian pig to the left while to the right is the Arroyo del Burro Brook which flows through the foothills of the Sierra de las Laderas mountain range. It will keep our attention the dense vegetation of Gum Rockroses which covers the hills. In spring time, thousands white flowers will decorate those hills while providing the bees with the rich nectar that later will be made into honey. As the trail progresses, we will bump into another country gate that we will cross to continue ahead. The Sierra de las Laderas mountain range is still at sight; eventually Gum Rockroses will be replaced by Holm Oaks and Mediterranean scrub though.

The trail comes to a junction where we will take onto the path to the left known as Carril de Nava Redonda to continue walking ahead and to the right.

••• Km 9.4. Carril de Nava Redonda Path

The track starts a soft climbing to reach the top of a hill before coming in to another basin where it meets the Arroyo de la Vibora Brook that flows along the path. This path is named after the Cortijo de Nava Redonda, a farmhouse which is located on the left of the path.



Another milestone at the Camino de Santiago Route

Some 150 metres before coming to the countryside road that connects El real de la Jara and Almadén de la Plata towns, we will cross another gate and then wade across the Arroyo de la Vibora Brook to continue walking along the riverbank on the right. The track becomes a footpath that winds through an area covered with Holm Oaks wood and healthy Mediterranean undergrowth.

Still ascending and after crossing another country gate, we will see the road. Immediately after crowning the hill, the footpath starts descending having the Cerro del Gato Hill to the right. A few metres ahead, we will bend to the right to continue onto another path. After crossing over a recently built bridge, we will see the Casa de la Postura, a Country House.

The trail now goes around and to the left of La Casa de la Postura Country House while having behind and to the right a hill covered on dense Mediterranean woods and the public right of way along the foothill. We will go across another country gate and pass by some vegetable gardens on the right. The end of this section of the route is relatively close as we can tell by the many gardens in the area.

The path continues progressing southwest and passes by some artificial ponds. Soon after, we will spot to the left the Cerro de los Covachos Hill. Approaching to the hill, we will cross another country gate to carry on walking straight



Cerro de los Covachos Hill

ahead and along the path that now goes bordering the right side of the Cerro de los Covachos foothill.

••• Km 12.5. Cerro de los Covachos Hill

A few metres before the end of this stage of the route, the trail will leave behind and to the left the Cerro de los Covachos Hill which is a very interesting site because of the natural and cultural features on it, especially those related to the mining exploitation.

This marble outcrop has traditionally been very significant for the local economy. The hill originated in the Lower Cambrian age and had many clayey impurities as well as iron-containing materials. Several geological transformations converted those original materials into a veined marble of bluish and rosy shades combining with very dark bands. This shade of marble was very much appreciated in the past.

The hill almost got blown up by the mining works in the site. Once the mine closed down, many utensils from the Neolithic period were discovered in the Cueva de los Covachos, a cave inside the hill. Among others, the most peculiar feature inside the cave are thousands inscriptions carved on the cave walls. Most of those inscriptions are dated in the 17th century. One that repeats more is 'Antonio Apolinar' who could have been the priest of Almadén de la Plata Parish Church in the second half of the 18th century. The priest left his name carved on the rock up to eight times; seven times in 1769 and one more in 1764. Today, the access to the cave is severely restricted.

The trail continues straight ahead and through small vegetable gardens while approaching Almadén de la Plata town. We will pass by the bullfighting arena and then turn left to get into the town by Coso Street that leads us up to the Plaza del Ayuntamiento Square which is the end of this stage of the route.

Vía de la Plata Trail. Camino de Santiago



Tribute to José Luís Salvador

... The Camino de Santiago Route is perhaps the central character of the second stage of our route. This stage of the GR-48 fully matches a section of the ancient pilgrim route known as the Vía de la Plata. The Vía de la Plata trail stretches from the Cathedral of Seville to the Cathedral of Santiago the Compostela. All along this section of the GR-48 Trail, we will meet many pilgrims, most of them walking in the opposite direction and well fed by the landscapes of the region. Many of those pilgrims will be likely of spending some time with us and, sitting under the shade of a tree, tell us about the many stories happening to them throughout their pilgrimage.

The origins of the Vía de la Plata Trail are currently uncertain. It is believed that the route was used for tin trading from the North to the South in the Iberian Peninsula during the Tartessos period.

However, it is in the old Roman period when the route became a most important major road for

both military and commercial purposes. Historical reviews tell about the way Roman engineers managed to consistently keep the track direction. Deep valleys and sharp mountain passes were negotiated by means of advanced and sophisticated topographic tools.

Stone pavements were deployed for smoothing the ground surface and many of those are still visible in some sections of the track. In many cases, they were granitic rocks extracted from the nearby quarries. Especial mention in here to the significant marks caused by the wheels of the carts that were always travelling throughout the route and that still are visible in some sections of this paved road.

During the Middle Age and as the Christian Conquest moved down to the South, the route became safer and started to be used by pilgrims on their journey northwards Santiago de Compostela town.

STAGE 2:

ALMADÉN DE LA PLATA - CAZALLA DE LA SIERRA



Panoramic view of Almadén de la Plata Village

This stage of the route is the longest of the GR-48 route passing through Seville province. This 45 kilometres stage links Almadén de la Plata and Cazalla de la Sierra towns and covers a large area comprising some of the most dramatically sublime landscapes and singular natural sites in the region.

The track is in good conditions and it only deteriorates along a few kilometres. The profile of the first half is descending and the trail goes through the Berrocal Natural Site and wades across the Arroyo de la Calzadilla Brook before coming into the Viar Valley where the second half of the route starts off. The trail soon heads up, climbing through an impressive hill with astonishing views to continue with gentle ups and downs, and fantastic views of the mountains until reaching Cazalla de la Sierra beautiful town.

This demanding stage stretches a good section of the Sierra Norte de Sevilla Natural Park. The many different ecosystems in the area prove the rich biodiversity that we will come across along the trail. Many are the rivers and brooks that drain this area strongly shaped by the severity of most thirsty summers. Water streams, rivers and brooks are crucially important for the life in the area and turn to be real oases where life converges during great part of the year.

Many different civilizations had previously settled down in the area. Prehistoric civilizations used to hunting in the area; then Phoenicians walked up and down the paths and roads when trading their minerals and other local goods; Roman centuries built virtually indestructible paved roads which became a

major source for the development of Hispania; in Al-Andalus a network of connected vegetable gardens was carefully worked out; and last generations have thoughtfully continued looking after those impressive natural sites for our enjoyment at present time.

The *Cordel del Pedroso* Path which has been one of the most important communication roads in the area from Prehistoric periods will lead us towards the Viar River. ‘*Cordel*’ is the name given to certain traditional tracks used for livestock moving in the past. Sections of the trail will match dirt tracks, bridle paths and former countryside roads as well as the wavy path downward the Arroyo Tamujar Brook.

Certainly, this is a long yet attractive route that will surely make us feel some of the most magic and sincere sensations.

Stat: Almadén de la Plata
Finish: Cazalla de la Sierra
Distance: 45 Km
Time: 12 hours

Suitability:



MIDE evaluation:



Environment: Severity of the natural environment

2



Track Features: Difficulty in following the track.

1



Orientation: Guidance on the route directions.

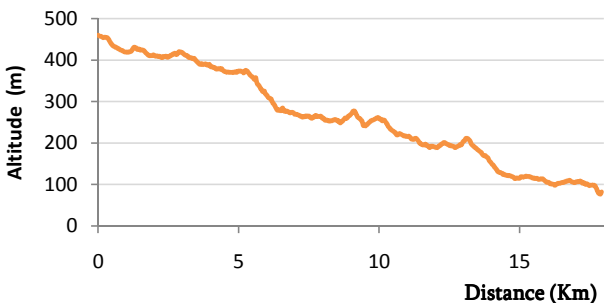
2



Struggle: Struggle required for accomplishing the route

5

Almadén de la Plata - Viar



ROUTE GENERAL DESCRIPTION

This stage of the route starts at Almadén de la Plata town centre. The town has traditionally been linked to mining works and ore extractions. From the Prehistoric time, the place has been home to many different civilizations which were strongly attracted by both the beauty and value of the bluish marble and the copper and silver deposits located in the underground. The tireless Phoenician and Greek merchants were first extracting the worthy ore from underneath the region. Then, Romans improved the old paths and transformed them into this silver-bearing paved road that linked important towns such Híspalis (Seville), Itálica (near Seville) and Emérita Augusta (Mérida). Later, the Arabs gave name to the place at that time fully orientated to mining works (apparently, the name *Almadén* comes from the Arabic word ‘*Almadin*’ that means either the miner or the mining site). Nevertheless, all those ancient civilizations took benefice from the area’s natural resources being silver used to make coins and the beautiful marble for building up marvellous temples.

The trail starts at *Andalucía* Avenue and towards El Real de la Jara town. Then it slightly turns to the right at *Palacios* Street to follow the indications towards



A local fountain

the *Cortijo El Berrocal* Visitors Centre. Soon the street will become a dirt path which is the *Carril de la Dehesa del Viar* traditional cattle route and that is also an important *vía pecuaria* known as *Cordel del Pedroso*. ‘*Vías pecuarias*’ are traditional paths and cattle routes which are used to transport livestock to and from pasturelands to market.

On having packed our backpack with the many tasting Iberian pig products, we will step by step leave behind the town. The trail passes by the town’s sewer filter system to the right which is well integrate into the natural land-



A detail of the walls on both sides of the trail

scape by a riverside wood comprising Weeping Willows and Black Poplar trees. Ignore another dirt path that branches off to the left and continue walking on the *vía pecuaria* path which will soon approach to Arroyo de las Calzadillas Brook while progressing on the left side of the brook. This brook is mainly fed with the water that runs down from the nearby hills covered with Cork Oaks known as *Risco del Gallo*.

The path continues descending and winds through productive open pastures for cattle breeding on one side and pastures with dense Cork Oak groves on the other one. A dark and thick reforested Pine grove shades on the light green colours of the Cork Oak woods. In here, the loss of soil is prevented by tree reforestation. If the deep slopes of these hills had no vegetation, erosion would greatly impoverish the substratum and even brooks and reservoirs could fill up to overflowing.

Dry stone walls and adobe walls, though sporadic, appear to resist wind and rain as if they were the ultimate keepers of those delicate pastures. Alongside the path we will come across to some structures for livestock moving through those mountains. Nevertheless, the trail continues straight ahead and on the same path that will eventually move away from the riverside wood now comprising Oleanders, Tamujos (*Flueggea tinctoria*), Fig trees and Black Poplars.

On leaving behind and to the left the main gate of the *Trinidad Country Estate*, the path will turn right in a wide curve to start climbing up through a natural pass carved in the rock by the brook's water which also cuts off the mount in two. The trail goes across this piece of natural engineering while heading towards the *Polana Valley* which is a beautiful natural site where many tiny water streams come to water into the *Calzadilla Brook*. Natural sites like this one are home to rich Mediterranean woods comprising mixed patches of Holm Oaks, Cork Oaks and Pine groves. The use of the many natural resources in

the area may be the reason for people moving to this area in the past. Some farmhouses such as the *Casa de la Polana* can be spotted in the area. Later, the trail will pass by this farmhouse which locates to the right.

Life conditions harden to the left of the trail due to the south orientation of the hillsides. In here walkers may pay attention to the way undergrowth species such Brooms, Rockroses and Lavender and Rosemary bushes adapt to the environment conditions. On the right side of the valley, Rockroses grow up under the Cork Oaks that cover the foothills of the *Loma de Don García Hill*.

The trail continues descending and the *Arroyo de la Calzadilla Brook* remains to the right side. This area was caught on wildfire time ago yet it will amaze the hikers the remarkable adaptation of Cork Oaks to such stressful situation. Cork Oaks have developed an elastic tough outer tissue –the cork– that completely covers the trunk acting as a real fireproof suit for the tree. Moreover, shortly after a wildfire occurs, Cork Oaks branches and leaves can sprout again and so the tree develops into a new one from its burnt wood.

••• Km 4.5. Cortijo El Berrocal Junction

The trail continues towards the *Cortijo El Berrocal Visitors Centre*. We will carry on walking straight forward ignoring another footpath that branch off to the right at the junction and that goes up to the Natural Park public facilities. To the right we will see a hill covered on Cork Oaks and Holm Oaks of recent reforestation in contrast to the allochthonous Eucalyptus groves that cover the opposite slope.

In the past times, an increasing interest on cellulose production transformed many mountain areas into large Eucalyptus groves. Today, there is a major intention for recovering autochthonous vegetation as we can see on this reforested area.



View of the top of the Viar Valley

In this case, the Mediterranean undergrowth is mainly represented by Gum Rockroses also known as 'Five Sores Rockroses' due to the dark round shaped mark on the plant's white petals. The greasy Rockroses appear to be firmly intended to remove the Eucalyptus groves from the area which ultimately were planted just for human beings' sake.

We will continue walking on the same path that now starts descending. Before climbing down, we will have the astonishing views of the valley that we will later enjoy. The valley starts at the softer hillsides which are covered by bushes and extensive pastures of annual herbaceous vegetation.

As the path progresses, we will leave behind and to the left the Loma del Puerto Hill from where the Arroyo del Ermitaño Brook flows down to the valley. The solitary Ermitaño farmhouse locates on the horizon and in the same direction. The path then will wide across the Arroyo de la Calzadilla Brook that will always flow by the left side of the path. A large Eucalyptus grove covers the hills on the right side where also can be spotted the shiny rounded granite outcrops known as 'berrocales' which is also the name of the Country Estate.

We will continue ahead and soon we will notice some changes in the landscape. On the slopes to the left, we will see Broom bushes and Palmettos spattering on the terraces made of dry stone walls which appear to defy the gravity and that once were cultivated.



Former terraces to cultivate slope land

In this section of the Arroyo de la Calzadilla Brook we will see some riverbanks resulting from materials dragging and the erosion caused by the river. On those banks we will see outcropping conglomerates composed of large-sized rounded fragments in a fine sand bed. The chaotic disposition of the fragments suggests a punctual and violent deposition of those materials during the rock formation process.

Just a few metres ahead, the path will pass by a small rocky step which is also formed by conglomerates and is located on a hill composed by volcanic

materials that supports dense Broom undergrowth as well as a pastureland of Gramineae grass and annuals.

We will leave behind and to the left the Casa del Romeral Country House while descending towards the Arroyo Gargantafría Brook which drains the fertile plain lands by the Cortijo de los Palacios Farmhouse. The farmhouse can be spotted to the left and after wading across the brook.

••• Km 9.2. Arroyo Gargantafría brooks

The Arroyo Gargantafría Brook will flow into the Viar River just a few kilometres downstream while creating deep ravines of impressive walls. The area solitude is especially attractive to animal species fully adapted to the environment such the Bonelli's Eagle.

We will continue walking straight ahead and on the same path. As the path is well marked with signposts, there will be no chance for confusion. The



The Viar Valley

path will take us through open pastures with scattering Wild Olive trees and the silvery Broom undergrowth. To the left and dominating the landscape is the Risco de la Salteneja a rocky cragg which is home to a small colony of Vultures.

As the walk progresses, we will leave behind and to the right the main gate of the Casa de Rafael Fernández Country House. The trail then winds through an area of thick and dense Mediterranean undergrowth comprising a large number of autochthonous species.

Plain lands start showing at the bottom of the Viar Valley. To the left we will have some Wild Olive trees of relatively recent reforestation and the Arroyo de la Barra Brook which flows down through pastures and groves.

As the path approaches to the *Cortijo del Viar* Farmhouse, we will see fighting bulls grazing about on those productive pastures.

•••Km 14.1. Cortijo del Viar Farmhouse

The *Cortijo del Viar* Farmhouse is located in the shade of high Eucalyptus trees. This large hacienda dominates a Country Estate known as *Dehesa del Viar*. Against popular believe, the Spanish word '*dehesa*' applies to any type of pastureland and not only to those with woodlands and lush undergrowth for the cattle. Some pastures, like this one, are just meadows.

The trail will continue straight ahead leaving behind and to the left the



Embalse de Melonares Reservoir

farmhouse. On both sides of the path, we will have meadows and pastures where thousands battles came to occur in the past.

In 2004, two very interesting large-sized rocks were accidentally found in different landmarks known as '*majanos*'; *majanos* are piles of rocks built by local people with the rocks and stones removed from the ground when clearing up the area. On those two rocks' surface which have been dated in the Bronze Age, were represented various scenes of crowned warriors carrying their weapons. There are many Prehistoric features splashing the region such dolmens, tombs and refuges. One can easily imagine about primitive people lifestyle.

The trail bears left leaving to the right another country gate and a footpath that goes towards the *Cortijo del Esparragal* Farmhouse and the Embalse de Melonares Reservoir. We will continue walking on the same path having to the right an ecological conservation area created to compensate after rich ecosystems

were flooded by the reservoir water sheet.

The path will get to the bridge located over the reservoir tails and the Viar River dam. In the reservoir there are some small islands fully covered by vegetation and healthy riverside forests of Black Poplars and Ash-Trees on their shores which are home to many animal species.

••• Km 17.5. Puente Viar Bridge

On having crossed the bridge over the dam, the path will match to a footpath to the left which goes bordering the reservoir right shore. We will have time to look at the riverside forest comprising many different species. In summer time, natural sites like this one become the ideal refuge, giving shelter to many animal species in the search for water. This element is also seen as providing stability to fragile ecosystems in critical situations as it helps to the development of more complex and permanent natural communities.

The especial fragility of those ecosystems is the main reason for the high level of protection poses in the area. The Sierra Norte de Sevilla Natural Park programme for the management of the park's natural resources has declared this area



Panoramic view of the Arroyo del Tamujar Valley

as '*Zona de Reserva*' (Preserved Area) under the category "A" which means this is an area specially protected and priority is given to biodiversity conservation. Activities and land uses are very much restricted in this area and, especial administrative authorization is required prior any activity.



Panoramic view of the Embalse de Melonares Reservoir

48 As the path progresses, it will wade the Arroyo del Tamujar Brook which unexpectedly flows down the ravines on the right giving shape to the border of the UPA Mounts which are public right of way. It is in here where the path climbs up while going through the hardest section of this stage. We will have to negotiate some short yet steep climbing of even 12% positive slope to finally get rewarded with the breathtaking views over the Viar Valley.

As the path climbs up, the landscape transforms into re-afforested Black Pine groves together with thicket woods comprising a Mediterranean undergrowth of Gorses, Rockroses and Lavender bushes. To the right, it remains the UPA Mounts steep slopes now converted into terraces for the sake of reforestation aimed to the intensive production of cellulose from Eucalyptus groves. Those terraces fully orientated to industrial purposes are clearly contrasting against those devoted to the conservation and protection of this natural site.

The path continues climbing and we will carry on walking on it ignoring another path that branches off to the left and that goes towards the Risco Nogal Site. We will turn around and have a look to the staggering views of the UPA Mountains steep slopes and the soft rounded hills on the Viar Valley, now far in the distance. The former are the last foothills of a mountain range that originated some 300 million years ago during the Variscan orogeny age, whereas the valley, of great geological interest due to its location, was the result of a continental Permian basin originated some 290 million years ago.

••• Km 22.6. Cortijo de UPA Farmhouse

The path continues climbing up and its sharp turns allow us to enjoy the beautiful views on both sides. As we approaching to the junction at the Cortijo de UPA Farmhouse, the path starts to drop down. We will carry on walking straight ahead at the junction.



Pastures and Rockroses

Pine groves are left behind and mixed pastures are again the main natural feature. As the walk progresses, these pastures of Holm Oaks and thick Pine trees with Mediterranean scrub will turn into open pastures fully devoted to cattle breeding. Big game hunting is also important in the area. The path levels off while approaching to a dense pine grove of reforestation. Then it will wind through a small-sized pasture for cattle breeding with some small artificial ponds. We will soon notice a slightly change of the substratum as it becomes a granitic surface.

The trail will pass by the Cerro del Acebuche Hill to the left and by the Cortijo del Cincho Farmhouse to the right. This farmhouse, fully oriented to cattle breeding, is located between meadows and pastures where the path winds through. We may spot cows and Iberian pigs grazing on the pasture yet up above in the sky are the silent and alert Vultures which are always ready for cleaning up any dead and putrefying flesh on the mount. We will be very fortunate if we manage to spot any Egyptian Vulture, the wisest of the Vultures and very much skilled on breaking other bird's eggs and to be fed on the removed white and yolk.

••• Km 30. Unfinished Road to Almadén de la Plata

Large pastures covering the rounded hills reach the horizon. The trail gently continues along and through Country Estates fully devoted to cattle breeding until it meets to a former unfinished countryside road which intended to link Cazalla de la sierra and Almadén de la Plata towns along the Viar River. When the path meets the road, we will bear right to continue walking on the side of this road with dry stone walls on both sides and that goes through Holm Oak groves converted into pastures for the cattle.

As the substratum changes, Cork Oaks and Holm Oak trees dominate the landscape and herds of Iberian pigs can be spotted placidly resting under the trees. To the right of the trail we will see some artificial ponds for the cattle. Just a few metres ahead and on the same side of the path, we will come in to a small valley in which La Atalaya Hill stands out. This is another public right of way hill that supports one of the area best preserved mixed pasture of Holm Oaks and Cork Oaks. With luck, we might watch some Black Vultures and Black Storks flying in the sky and up above our heads.

We will leave behind and to the left the Cortijo Llano Moreno Farmhouse and go across a bridge over a tiny brook. The trail will then go into another track that branches off to the right and is known as the Cordel de Cazalla a Santillana. After walking some 500 metres on this path, we will get to the bridge over the Arroyo Tamujar Brook.



Arroyo del Tamujar Brook

••• Km 35. Arroyo Tamujar

On having crossed the bridge, we will leave the original path and start walking upstream and between the brook shore and the border of a Country Estate located on the same side.

The seasonal character of this brook allows us to enjoy walking on a path that matches one of the most serpentine and isolated sections along the brook. The path literally does not exist for the next few kilometres and we will find ourselves walking on wild grass.

The brook vegetation is little developed yet there are some Oleanders, Hawthorns and Brambles on the riversides. In here, the outcropping bedrock



Colourful flowers of the meadow

is clearly visible onto the surface producing small-sized natural puddles and tiny waterfalls. In the surroundings, spattering Holm Oaks give shade to meadows of annual grass.

We will carry on walking alongside the brook and on either side according to our preferences. Then the brook bears left taking us to a pronounced meander while approaching a building on a soft hill on the right. We might also come across to some wire fences on the riverbed. If that is the case, we will not hesitate to jump over the fence or any other obstacle preventing from walking on the riverbed. Bear in mind that riverbeds are public right of way although we may choose looking for another access to go across the fence.

••• Km 38. Unfinished Road to Almadén de la Plata

We will continue walking ahead and by the riverbed until we come again to the unfinished countryside road that goes to Almadén de la Plata town. Once on the road, we will walk on the right side of it, passing by a Country House with an old vineyard on the opposite side. We will continue walking straight ahead until we meet another footpath that runs parallel to the road on the left side. We will continue ahead and on this new path until we come to another countryside road that goes to El Pedroso village.



Sierra de los Ganazos Mountain Range

At the junction, we will take on the road and to the right towards El Pedroso village. After some 100 metres, we will come into another footpath on the left side of the road that goes across the Arroyo de Matajudíos Brook. The path is surrounded by some Mediterranean undergrowth while running through smallholdings and gardens.

We will get to another junction where we will turn left to come again to the road. On the road, we will take to the right and towards Cazalla de la Sierra town.

From this point onwards, we will continue walking on the right side of the road until we get to Cazalla town. We will pass by the Cortijo del Vizcaino and the Cortijo del Cepero Farmhouses. Parallel to the road and to the right is the Arroyo del Sotillo Brook with a powerful exhibition of riparian vegetation that stands out between pastures and the Olive groves in the surroundings.

On having come to the junction with the road to the Embalse del Pintado Reservoir, turn to the right and towards Cazalla de la Sierra town which can be seen from here.

Still on the road, we will get to another intersection of roads and paths. We will go on the path that goes straight ahead and that runs next to some Black Poplars by the Arroyo de la Vega Brook that will act as a good host and will take us to the town centre where this stage of the route comes to finish.

Certainly, we have been walking through the best section of the mountain range.



'Dehesas de Sierra Morena'. The eighth Reserve of the Biosphere in Andalucía

... Within the MaB (Man and Biosphere) framework, UNESCO grants some areas as Reserve of the Biosphere due to their especial natural and cultural values resulting from sustainable development. This declaration is aimed to preserve those values as well as building on a greater solidarity between the world nations by means of the establishment of the World Network of Reserves of the Biosphere.

In 2002, the pastures located along Sierra Morena Mountain Range were declared the eighth Reserve of the Biosphere in Andalucía. The area covers some 450.000 hectares stretching the provinces of Huelva, Seville and Córdoba. The territory itself holds a great diversity of physical, human, managerial and administrative conditions resulting from centu-

ries of sustainable development and having on this type of ecosystem –the pasture- its greater exponent.

The term 'dehesa' (pasture) etymologically refers to a fenced area. However, today the word 'dehesa' closely refers to woodland that has been cleared of trees in order to transform it into a pasture and cultivated fields. A 'dehesa' is a pasture land with some trees and groves of Holm Oaks, Cork Oaks, Pyrenaian Oaks and Portuguese Oaks where cattle breeding, agriculture and woodland uses complement each other.

From the middle ages, human beings have constantly been shaping the area until its current morphology. Thanks to a deep knowledge of the area ecology, many different civilizations developed in the region and



benefited from the land uses. At the same time, natural resources were carefully preserved and protected in order to sustain the quality of the environment and its rich biodiversity.

The need for using the land for shepherding and for growing crops extensively shaped the region and, as the time passed by, a new ecosystem emerged from that peculiar combination. In the 'dehesa' uses are diverse and among others we will have pastures for sheep, cows and bulls; bushes and undergrowth for goats and hunting species; scrub fruits and acorns for feeding pigs; cork from the Cork Oaks...

The Dehesas de Sierra Morena pastures are also examples of a very interesting ecological balance. Wo-

odlands extract both water and nutrients from the deep ground. Then they are transformed into organic material by means of the verbiage thrown onto the ground surface. This favours fertilization and enriches the pasture which is used for cattle grazing. In turn, cattle also help to the soil fertilization with their dregs. Consequently, nutrients for the plants are again incorporated by the microorganisms. As we see, this is an ecosystem resulting from centuries of sustainable uses of the land that have facilitated the conservation of large areas which are today protected because of its rich biodiversity.



STAGE 3:

CAZALLA DE LA SIERRA -
CONSTANTINA

This stage of the route links Cazalla de la Sierra and Constantina, two of the most important towns in the area. Hikers will be delighted with the delicate natural exquisiteness of many areas which appear to be hidden between the many valleys and riverbanks that we will come across along these pleasant 18 kilometres. We will be walking in the heart of the Sierra Norte de Sevilla Natural Park where we will come to traditional gardens, charming valleys and fully developed riverbanks. In addition, hikers will be able to better understand the many different land uses deploy in a region rich in natural resources.

The trail will inconstantly be taking on different paths, footpaths and roads. The profile of this section of the route is soft and the track runs through rounded hills. This is a most time descending walk, though walkers should prepare themselves for a fairly stiff final.

This is a trail that will give the walker the chance for experiencing a clear landscape variation. The track will take us from areas covered on Mediterranean woodland and undergrowth to microclimates resulting from riverside environments supporting a most peculiar vegetation formation.

Start: Cazalla de la Sierra
Finish: Constantina
Distance: 18,5 Km
Time: 6 hours

Suitability:



MIDE evaluation::



Environment: Severity of the natural environment

1



Track Features: Difficulty in following the track.

1



Orientation: Guidance on the route directions..

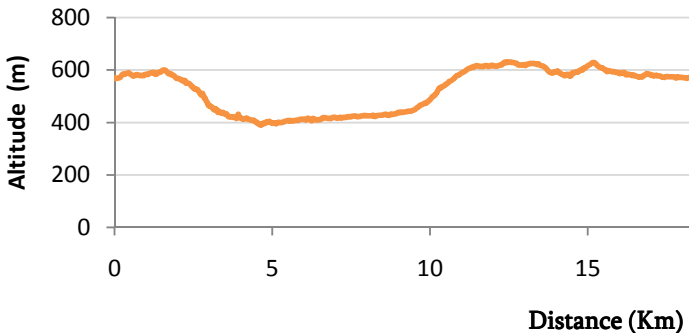
3



Struggle: Struggle required for accomplishing the route.

3

Cazalla de la Sierra - Constantina



ROUTE GENERAL DESCRIPTION

This stage starts at the Paseo del Moro Street which is to the south of the town centre. Walkers can easily get to this street by taking the second exit at the roundabout on the road to Seville and heading towards the town centre.

Cazalla de la Sierra holds the second larger population in the region. The town is head of the administrative area although it shares administrative functions with the other main towns.

First settlers in the area were those primitive hunters living in the Stone Age as many remains of chipped stone implements from the Palaeolithic period have been found in the nearby Cuevas de Santiago Cave. However, it is in the Neolithic period when the area was permanently occupied by large groups of settlers. Many utensils from that period such as jars, knives and even axes have even been found in the town centre.

The Carthaginians were interested in the metals of the region and, later the Romans will improve the standards of their villages by using the many mineral resources in the area. Nevertheless, it is in the middle ages when Cazalla de la Sierra is shaped into a proper town. The Fortress of almohade plant and the Arrabal de Azahín suburb are two clear references of that period. This stage of the route will eventually pass by the old houses that give character to the medieval suburb



Whitewashed houses built on the bedrock



Gardens at the Arroyo de la Vega Brook surroundings

On having left behind a public park, we will pass by the bullfighting arena to continue ahead while ascending a densely wooded avenue which goes up to the back of Nuestra Señora de la Consolación Church from the 14th and 15th centuries. As the walk progresses between whitewash houses, some of them incrustated in outcropping bedrock, we will get to the Chorrillo, a round shaped water trough and fountain where hikers may get some fresh water before leaving the town.

The trail will cross over a small bridge to go on the path known as Camino del Valle or Sendero de las Laderas. The first section of this stage of the route matches this traditional path. A breathtaking view of the town remains at the hikers' backs.

As the town fades off, the curves of the path will increasingly guide us through an area covered by gardens while approaching a valley. The valley restores the peace and the only noise that can be heard is that one from the patient gardeners who tenderly are looking after their grateful piece of land. To the right is the Arroyo de la Vega Brook watering the productive land and some spattering Country Houses which appear to be looking for tranquillity and at the same time they receive some kind of protection from the nearby town.

A former rounded threshing floor stands out in the valley. Probably, this was very much threshed in the past to separate the wheat seeds from the straw and so provide flour for the town. This job used to be done with the 'trillo' which is a threshing-board pulled by horses or mules. The time of the year when this work was done is highlighted in a popular proverb. As the saying goes: 'Cuando Junio llega, afila la hoz y limpia la era', which means 'When June comes, do sharp the sickle and clear the threshing floor'.

We will continue walking ahead and ignoring any other paths or footpaths. The trail is flanked by dry stone walls while winding through gardens, wheat plots, vineyards and Olive groves. Also, the landscape becomes slightly different as some pastures of Cork Oaks and Mediterranean undergrowth are now more visible.

••• Km 1.6. Climbing down Las Laderas Site

The trail will come to a junction where several footpaths leading to the nearby Country Estates meet. This is the point where the trail leaves the Arroyo de la Vega Basin to enter the Las Laderas Site. The trail starts descending and goes through the shady side of the hills. The vegetation around us turns different and now we will be walking between Larustinus bushes, Fig trees, Turpentine trees, and Portuguese Oaks; all they species likely for growing in humid and moisten sites.



Climbing down towards Las Laderas

This sloping area appears to regulate the way vegetation is arranged in every corner of this valley. The steepest areas, where the soil is less productive, are covered on the natural Mediterranean undergrowth and woods; whereas those more docile slopes are much likely for farming and other land uses. Beautiful small gardens appear to be hanging from the hillsides of the valley, creating a pleasant balance. Instead of being overpowered by human beings, nature appears to have been convinced by the rough but tender farmers' hands.

At some points, the path is covered by dense vegetation forming a green canopy which provides freshness to the hikers. Just a few metres ahead, the path turns into a footpath that goes across a small ravine that drains the water from the hillsides. We will have a fabulous view of the valley on the left. There, another threshing floor seems to be exposed to the winds which were very much helpful when winnowing (to remove straw from grain). The footpath continues descending through pastures and Mediterranean thickets on the shady side and Olive groves and plots on the sunny side of the hill. Some

Ferns cover both sides of the footpath and some Portuguese Oaks prevent the hikers from seeing the sky.

It is in these fresh places where sounds are much more pleasantly loud. Small insectivorous and grain-eating birds like Robins, Blue Tits, Chiffchaffs, White-throats and Nightingales lead delicate strophes with the accompaniment of the orchestra of the valley.

Hikers will meet some 'angarillas' (small country gates) blocking the path that must to be shut behind us. The path continues ahead and through a highland Olive grove in total fighting against the Ferns. Giant Cork Oaks stumps remain isolated in what should have been an original forest, similar to those most moisten ones in the province of Cádiz.

The path will come to an area where hikers will bump into some rocky outcroppings. Here it is clear the effect from the differential erosion caused onto a strata comprising rocks of different hardness. Those are marmoreal limestone rocks which are more resistant to erosion than the slates of the surrounding areas.



View along the valley

On having negotiated a significant difference of level, we will come to the bottom of the valley. We will go across a country gate to continue walking ahead and next to a brook with no vegetation on the riverbanks and that descends by the right side of the path. The brook also produces small ponds where pigs from a nearby exploitation come to lay down and refresh in the water. The surrounding areas comprise pastures of dense and lush Mediterranean undergrowth of Holm Oaks and Cork Oaks scrub.

On leaving behind the pigpen we will bump into a Black Poplars grove. The trees feet are totally into the water as they were a water pump with which they suck the valuable liquid.

The path becomes wider and more comfortable. From here it is possible to see in the distance and behind the railway line the Rivera del Huesna Valley. On having gone across another country gate, the path continues straight ahead and towards the riverbank until meeting a junction where it turns right to continue towards the Puente de los Tres Ojos Bridge over the Rivera del Huesnar.

We will be leaving behind both the Vereda del Valle Path and Las Laderas one. After crossing the bridge, we will bend left to continue walking upstream and by the river shore.



Railway line

••• Km 4.5. Puente de Los Tres Ojos Bridge, Rivera del Huéznar

This section of the route starts off at one of the most exquisite natural jewels in Andalucía: The Rivera del Huesnar River. The river together with the vegetation associated to the riverbed constitutes one of the best expressions of Mediterranean gallery forest in the province of Seville. The riverbed supports a permanent flow causing the ideal conditions on the riverbanks for growing plants that require a consistent intake of water.



A view of the Huesna River from the Puente de los Tres Ojos Bridge

As the path progresses, a change in the environment is clear. Water flows quietly and always in the shade. The pleasant silence is only disturbed by the noise of the running water some soft waterfalls. The gallery forest comprises Alders, Ash-trees, Black and White Poplars, European Hackberry Trees and Willows in the need for flooding their roots in the river shores. No doubt this is the ideal habitat for some exclusive animal species such as Otters which are fed on the Trout which are constantly diving away from Kingfishers and in the eyes of the White-Throated Dipper.

The path appears to be fighting for its own place since Brambles and Ferns stretch around and occasionally cover the path. They may be over 1.5 metres high at some sections of the trail. Other foreign species such as Cypresses and False Acacias Trees appear to have been invited to join this marvellous site.

Wide meadows open ahead and to the right of the path and from the dominant slopes of the hillside, a pasture of Holm Oaks and Cork Oaks does not take its eyes over us. As the walk progresses, the path comes to meet the countryside road to Constantina to go across and continues straight ahead while passing by a cluster of Country Houses.

At this point, the path matches a section of the Sierra Norte de Sevilla Vía Verde Trail which also matches a section of the Cañada Real de la Rivera del Huesna trail. A Cañada Real is a path or a trail that has traditionally been used in prior times to transport livestock to and from pastureland or to market.



Beginning of the Sierra Norte de Sevilla Via Verde Trail

The Sierra Norte de Sevilla Via Verde Trail has originally been a former railway line used for transporting minerals from the mining sites located at the Cerro del Hierro Hill. Today, it is a very popular track that is frequently used by many hikers, walkers and bikers due to its public use.

The path will pass by a parking area and by the recreation area known as Isla Margarita which is on the left side. Then it will softly bend to the right to continue ahead and through extensive pastures fully devoted to cattle breeding.

As the walk progresses, the path will make a U-turn to the left and we will come onto another path that branches off to the right and moves away from the riverbank. There we will find a waymarking sign of the Cordel de Cazalla y Extremadura Traditional Path.

••• Km 8.7. Cordel Cazalla y Extremadura Traditional Path

This new path will take us straight away into pastures while leaving to the left the Arroyo del Palo Brook as well as an area of recent reforestation of young Holm Oaks and Cork Oaks which is well protected by a charming dry stone wall. Small depressions that retain the water are very common all along this section of the path. Somehow, they are delicate ecosystems full of ephemeral life; a complicated interaction of tadpoles, newts, water snakes and water scorpions which appear to exist as long as the sun does not take minutes of their lives away while evaporating the water that sustains their existence.

The path starts climbing and winds through a new pasture. The walk will become more enjoyable if we pay close attention to some of the best specimens of Cork Oaks that we are going to see on this section of the route. Meanwhile, cattle appear to be very much pleased living on this rough and, at the time, tender land.

The path will leave behind and to the right the gate leading to the Arroyo del Palo Farmhouse and to the left a newly reforested Cork Oak grove which will



Sweet Chestnut grove

eventually give way to Olive groves. After this stiff climbing and as soon as the path levels off, it will start a pleasant and refreshing climb down until meeting Constantina countryside road.

•••Km 14. The A-455 Cazalla – Constantina Road

The path will go across the road and, after crossing a country gate, it will wind through pastures while approaching to a grove of Holm and Cork Oaks. Here, we will bear left to continue walking between a dense Sweet Chestnut grove on the right and a pasture on the left.

The Sweet Chestnut grove resulting from an applied reforestation management resembles an impenetrable shady jungle comprising sweet chestnut trees of very high tops and even upright and thin trunks. The wood from those Sweet Chestnut trees will be shaped into long rods which are used for beating the branches of Olive trees when collecting the fruits.

The path bends right and after crossing another 'angarilla' country gate it will come into a Cork Oaks grove with spattering small Olive trees. Just a few metres ahead, the path will meet with the A-455 Road to Constantina. We will come to walk on the road heading north and towards Constantina town.

After passing by many smallholdings and plots as well as gardens and vineyards, we will finally reach Constantina, a beautiful highland town where we will be delighted with good wine and good meat which can easily be tasted in any of the many friendly restaurants, taverns and bars in the town.

Riparian ecosystem types. The Rivera del Huesnar Site

••• The Sierra Norte de Sevilla Natural Park is divided by some relatively important rivers mostly circulating in a North-South direction towards the Guadalquivir River. From west to east, they are the Ribera de Cala River which is also the natural limit with the Huelva province; the Viar River of high ecological value; the Ribera del Huesnar River, and the Retortillo River.

Today, one of the most worrying side effects resulting from pollution is the progressively degradation of riparian ecosystems. Rivers and riverbanks spread over many kilometres stretching different territories and being exposed to multitude of undesirable impacts. Waters pollution, riverbeds modifications and an unfair exploitation of the natural resources are, among others, some of the most significant factors which make almost impossible to find well preserved and healthy gallery forests. However, the Ribera del Huesnar is one of the healthier and better preserved riparian forests in Andalucía. Three are the main parameters considered to evaluate the quality of this natural place: the structure of the vegetation associated to the river riverbed; the diversity of animal species living in it; and the excellent chemistry and biology of the river waters.

This is a constantly flowing river, a quality which facilitates certain environmental conditions needed for the development of some species likely of growing in damp grounds. Slight variations on those environmental conditions result in a natural organization of the riparian vegetation which distributes according to the plants needs for water and light.

Herein, Willows and Alder trees occupy the area nearest to the water sheet; in a second level and somehow separated from the riverbed they are White Poplars and Black Poplars trees; finally, in a more distant area, they are species that better resist the lack of water such Elm trees. Moreover, the adherent condition of shade benefices the growing of bushes and scrub which need little light and heat. At the same time, a range of well adapted climbing species develop in the area; many species climb over the trunks and up towards the highest tree tops while searching for light and heat. Among others, species such the Wild Ivy, Wild Roses, and the Wild Madder are perfectly adapted to this environmental conditions.

The place is also home to a wide variety of animal species associated to the river. From tiny aquatic insects to the playful Otters, located at the top of the food chain, many are the animals that take advantage of this well established hierarchical arrangement. Moreover, this peculiar natural site becomes an ideal refuge for the thirsty fauna of the area, especially in the harsh and dry summers, when many birds come to refresh themselves and to find their food in here.

In addition, the cultural and historical heritage of the area is largely represented by the many elements that can be found along the river. Watermills, fulling mills, dams and irrigation ditches appear to be silent witnesses of other times when different civilizations benefited from the natural resources of the area yet always bearing in mind its further conservation.

STAGE 4:

CONSTANTINA- LA PUEBLA DE LOS INFANTES



This is a long stage of the route that links two traditionally historic highlands towns. From the Stone Age up to today, these mounts and hills have been home to many different civilizations, especially to the Arabs. The breathtaking landscape surrounding this stage has come to us thanks to the way all those people interacted in the area.

The trail which is pretty comfortable, winds through traditional ancient gardens, rough highlands Olive groves, old Cork Oaks woods preserving their original qualities, large mixed pastures fully devoted to cattle breeding and deep valleys supporting a thick and lush Mediterranean undergrowth that is the ideal home to game species.

The path direction is SEE bordering the limit of the Sierra Norte de Sevilla Natural Park to later shift to SE direction and away from the park.

This stage of the route starts off on a little travelled road that links Constantina and La Puebla de los Infantes towns. After a few kilometres walking on this typical countryside road, we will take on the traditional 'vía pecuaria' known as Vereda del Alcomocal de las Ánimas which winds through some of the most astonishing areas within the park. The last section of this stage covers an area of noble Mediterranean scrub where some exquisite game species find shelter. These will later become the most succulent meals that can be tasted in any of the many taverns of the town where the stage finishes.

This will be the last stage of the route that fully covers an area located within the limits of the Sierra Norte de Sevilla Natural Park. The path is comfortable and in good conditions which will enhance hikers' enjoyment of the many magical natural sites along the trail.

Start: Constantina
Finish: La Puebla de los Infantes
Distance: 27,6 Km
Time: 8 hours

Suitability:



MIDE evaluation:

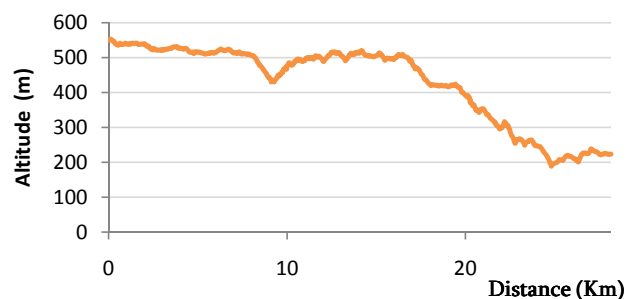
Environment: Severity of the natural environment. **1**

Track Features: Difficulty in following the track. **1**

Orientation: Guidance on the route directions.. **2**

Struggle: Struggle required for accomplishing the route. **3**

Constantina - La Puebla de los Infantes



ROUTE GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Constantina is the most populated town in the region. Today, they are almost 7.000 people living in the place although this is just a half of what it used to be in other past times.

The Celtiberians (Celtic-speaking people of the Iberian Peninsula in the final centuries BC) established the original settlement which was known as *Lacuni-murgi* to later become *Constancia Lulia* under the Romans Empire. In the middle ages, Fernando III, King of Castile, conquered the place to the Arabs which was passed onto royal control later on.



Arabic Arch

Walkers may chose to take a walk in this town before starting the hike. Because of the many interesting historical features in it, the place has been classified as *Conjunto Histórico-Artístico* (a legal designation which protects Spain's cultural heritage comparable to the British Conservation Area). The most important elements are La *Morería* Moorish Suburb, the Castle, the *Encarnación* Church (before the 15th century) and many Moorish style squares, streets and alleys.

This stage of the route will start at the town centre. From there, we will come in to *Antonio Silva Fernández* Street which branches off from the main avenue. This street will soon become the SE-157 Road or the SE-7103 Road to La Puebla de los Infantes town. As we leave the town and while walking on the side of the road, we will pass by rich and pleasant gardens and Olive groves. Then the road will pass by an arch made of reddish bricks with a curious inscription on it and a tomb stone resembling rectangular structure on the top. According to the local people, this element was built by the Arabs in the middle ages.

Surrounded by hundreds years old Olive groves, the road starts climbing up the softer slopes of this sunny side of the *Sierra de Gibarrayo* Mountain Range. Olive trees were originally from the ancient Mesopotamia although they were later spread out in the Mediterranean regions. On both sides of the road we will see some old country houses and farmhouses. Some of them have been converted into rural accommodations whereas others still remain as the gardeners' lively dwelling places.

On leaving behind some small brooks that slip down the hillside of the mountain range, we will pass by a patch of plots and smallholdings known as the *La Pesacara y Donadillo*. On the right side of the road, the Olive groves will eventually be substitute for Mediterranean wood and some small patches of forest comprising Pine trees and Cork Oaks scatter about on the siliceous substratum. *Laurustinus* (*Viburnum tinus*), Rockroses and Brambles bushes shape the lively boundaries of the Country Estates giving shelter and food to many animals that live in those isolated wood islands. An act of responsibility towards future generations should be the conservation of this natural vegetation in order to preserve the minimal biodiversity present in the cultivated fields of this intensely transformed area.

••• Km 5.4. Diversion to the vía pecuaria Vereda del Alcornocal de las Ánimas Traditional Path

On a sharp curve to the right, we will take onto a path which heads ever upwards and where there are many direction signs. This is where the *vía pecuaria* with such as disturbing name (the Souls' Cork Oak Grove Path) starts off. This traditional cattle route is also the southern boundary of the *Sierra Norte de Sevilla* Natural Park which remains to the left.

Both landscape and the path transform at sudden. The asphalt seems to surrender into the power of the ground earth and Olive groves appear to be scared of the enormous Cork Oaks and the noble undergrowth which now cover the thicket wood. Some 400 metres ahead the path meets another footpath that branches off at a turn to the right and that goes towards *Navalcollado*. We will ignore this path and continue walking straight ahead.



Cereal field and hay bales after the harvest

Autochthonous vegetation in good conservation conditions covers both sides of the path. These vegetal cover is actually acting as curtains which keep hidden the vast transformations occurring to the Cork Oak woods now fully converted into both irrigated fertile fields and cereal rainfed crops. Patches of Cork Oak woods mix up with cereal pastures and other type of rainfed crops yet scattering Cork Oaks –some of them 15 to 20 metres high- appear to gain ground to the crops. The path continues up and straight ahead leaving to the right first the Oreganal and then the La Manteca Country Houses.

On having left behind the plots, the path will come into a thick mass of Cork Oak wood and Mediterranean undergrowth comprising, among others, Strawberry trees, Alder Buckthorns (*Frangula alnus*), Gorses, Myrtle scrub and Laurustinus bushes. The top of the hills as well as the shady side of them seem to be perfect for the development of this lushly and healthy vegetation. The path continues descending and the many turns facilitate a most in detail look to the beautiful and deep ravine of hillsides draped by Holm Oaks and Cork Oaks together with the Mediterranean undergrowth.

••• Km 8.6. Bridge over Guadalbaccar River

The path continues descending until it gets to a bridge over the Guadalbaccar River. Here it will be a sudden transformation in the landscape. At the time, the ambient turns into a more spectacular atmosphere. In here, the severe Mediterranean climate turns into a gentle, fresher and even purest air which flows steadily through the arboreal dome of Ash-trees and Alder trees. By the pristine water of the brook which resembles a mirror, they are plenty of wood formations. Groups of Trout fish can be spotted in the riverbed moving from one side to the other, as children do in the school yard. All this is harmoniously seasoned with the exquisite birds singing on the riverbanks. Undoubtedly, this fairy and hidden natural place will remain in the walkers' memory even after this long trail finishes.



Bridge and Guadalbaccar River

Just a few metres ahead, the landscape will turn into pastures which will strengthen the subtle pleasure left in the walkers' feelings by the river forest.

Some 50 metres after crossing over the bridge, the path splits into two. There we will choose the path that branch to the right and continue ahead. The path will then go gently uphill while winding between huge Holm Oaks and Cork Oaks. As the walk progresses, a pasture land will gradually open up to home the many voluminous and succulent ruminants, the cows. To the left is the Lagar de Pedro Plaza Farmhouse with large facilities for the livestock.

The path continues winding between stout Holm Oaks and Cork Oaks. The main use of the land is cattle breeding and this is a condition which determines the landscape around us. The Mediterranean undergrowth is completely replaced by pastures where cattle are continuously grazing about, eating over 45 kilograms of grass per day.

••• Km 13. Cortijo de Gibla

The beautiful building is the main feature in this section of the stage. The essence of the traditional lifestyle still remains in this farmhouse as it does in most rural regions of this area. The farm comprises different buildings all they painted in white and yellowish; the top of the main building porch is covered up with grapevines and there is a paved yard and masonry walls enclosing a small garden.

Behind the farmhouse still remain some former mining sites where copper was

once extracted. From ancient time, ore extractions have been ongoing in the area because of the volcanic lithology of the region. Today, the many different mining sites are closed down due to low profitability.

The path is named after the farmhouse and it eventually will match the SE-158 road. Some 300 metres ahead, the path will go across the Arroyo del Tamujoso Brook having to the left a new pasture, this one in clear recovery thanks to a



Ongoing process of regeneration in the pasture

positive forest management which is strongly assisting the regeneration of the arboreal mass.

Holm Oaks new reproduction comes in the form of ‘*chirpiales*’ which are new Oaks growth sprouting under the eldest ones. The sustainability of this natural place comes from putting into practice this type of initiatives. The apparent tranquillity of these woods is constantly threatened by wildfires, plagues and even the unfair uses of the land which may at sudden turn down all the energy accumulated throughout hundreds of years by the woods.

The path continues straight ahead and passes by the *Casa del Alcomocal* Country House which locates to the left. The main natural feature in the area are large pastures fully devoted to cattle breeding and where the tasty Iberian pigs get well fed for the sake of our future enjoyment.

We will ignore a descending path that branches off to the right to further up swing left on another path that joins this one. Then the route will be entering La

Puebla de los Infantes municipal district. The town centre is just 12 kilometres far away from this point.



Iberian pig fattening on the open range near the *Cortijo de Gibla* Farmhouse

••• Km 16.4. Camino de Gibla Path and turn at the SE-158 Road

The path will reach a junction with different waymarking signs where we will swing right to continue ahead while having the *Regajo de la Cruzada* seasonal Brook to the left. From this point onwards the path will make a gradual descent until the end of this stage of the route.

The path will wind through large pastures of Holm Oaks and Cork Oaks while leaving behind and to the left the main access which leads to the *Cortijo Lagar Blanco* Farmhouse. The path then will continue ahead and away from the seasonal brook to reach an area located at the ridge of the *Sierra del Lobo* Mountain range from where we will have a view of the two majestic valleys on both sides of the hill.

We will find ourselves walking in the *Sierra Norte de Sevilla* Natural Park buffer area which boundary was marked by the other path. The landscape turns into a Mediterranean type and the hills are now covered mainly by Rockroses together with Strawberry Trees, *Laurustinus* bushes, Wild Olive trees, Gorses, Heathers, Jerusalem Sage, Kermes Oaks and Wild Asparagus bushes.

The right side of the path is covered with Strawberry Trees whereas on the left one a breathtaking valley opens to the walkers showing the wildest side of it. This dense thicket is home to many animal species such as Deer, Wild Boars,



Main access to the Cortijo Lagar Blanco Farmhouse

Foxes, Genets, Ferrets, Polecats, Otters, Mongoose, Rabbits, Water Voles, and small Mice. All they are depending on this vegetation that gives shelter and protection from the continuous threats of the wild life.

As the path continues descending and on a curve to the right, we will pass by a patch of Pine trees and the remains of the Casa de los Parias Country House just opposite to it. The thick shrubbery is now dominating different areas of this hill although some Olive groves will nail into the steep slopes of the foothills.

The path will increasingly approach the valley until it comes to the bottom of it. The Black Poplars tops appear to trace the Regajo de la Cruzada River.

The path will make a U-turn to the right to come into another valley. This is a valley of soft rounded slopes covered on open pastures of Holm Oaks and



Pine grove reforestation

Cork Oaks and fully devoted to cattle grazing. We will continue ahead and downhill while ignoring any other footpaths that join this one and that lead to many Country Estates in the area. La Puebla de los Infantes town is on the horizon while looking over the open valley.

Eventually, the path will meet and go across the well decorated Regajo de la Cruzada River which, in spring time, is fully coloured in the bright pink of the Oleanders flowers. Just a few metres ahead, and after leaving behind and to the right the Cortijo de la Goyarita Farmhouse, the path will go across the Arroyo de la Dehesilla Brook.

••• Km 22.5. Iglesia de Nuestra Señora de las Huertas

The path will leave behind the access to a Mudéjar style hermitage which holds a pilgrimage in June.

Olive groves appear to be gaining ground to the pastures as we approach to the highland town. In the spring, mixed crops of sunflower and cereals grow



Pilgrimage

around some isolated countryside buildings located in the area.

As the path progresses, we will leave behind and to the right the Cortijo de la Copera Farmhouse. The path will then wind through hundreds years old Olive groves until it meets the Arroyo del Toril Brook that supports some associated riparian vegetation. The Cortijo del Cuevo Farmhouse will remain on the left of the path though.

Some smallholdings and plots spread about together with some farms and barns which announce the proximity to the town where this stage of the route comes to an end.



Cork Oak Wood a ecosystem and a source for natural resources



●●● Alcomocal is the Spanish word for woodland comprising mainly Cork Oak trees and the associated Mediterranean undergrowth. Cork Oak groves located on those areas where natural conditions of the ground occur together with the adequate soil orientation, temperatures and rainfall facilitating the development of such woodland.

Mixed pastures of Holm Oaks and Cork Oaks are the main natural feature in the Sierra Norte de Sevilla Natural Park. There are just a few pure and original Cork Oak wood with a well developed associated shrub though. These trees formations are in better conservation conditions than Holm Oak wood since the uses of the land require less aggressive methods.

Cork Oak woodlands require of siliceous substratum and of both thermos-Mediterranean and meso-Mediterranean climates together with a well-balanced mixture of sub-humid and humid ombro-climate. Moreover, these woodlands sustain a range of associated Mediterranean undergrowth comprising a huge range of shrubby species such as Mastic bushes, Myrtle, Wild Olive trees, Strawberry Trees, Heathers, Ferns, White Nettles, Laurustinus bushes and Laburnum bushes as well as Oregano and Italian Buckthorns (Rhannus alaternus). The thickness and

density of the shrub will vary according to the rainfall in the area where the wood locates.

Cork Oaks are trees of the Oak family. They differ from Ilex or Holm Oaks because of the peculiar coverage of the trunk known as 'corcha' (cork). The cork is a natural structured formed by dead cells containing air that shield the tree from wild fire and changing temperatures and appears to be an excellent insulating cover to the tree.

Cork has traditionally been used to produce stoppers, especially those fitting in the neck of the wine bottles or similar. This region has largely benefited from a healthy industry related to cork production. Today, the most important factories locate in El Pedroso and Cazalla de la Sierra towns. Cork removing is considered a ritual rather than a job. It is done by hand during the summer and applies some traditional methods. In the driest days of the year, *corcheiros* (cork workers) carefully remove the cork only using their skilled and experienced hands and a special axe which is only used for cork removing. With the axes they produce many precise cuts along the trunk and they are always done to the right depth for not damaging the tree. This way the cork comes out in sheets called 'panas'.

STAGE 5:

LA PUEBLA DE LOS INFANTES - HORNACHUELOS



This last stage of the route connects both Seville and Córdoba provinces. The Retortillo River which links these two provinces is also the natural boundary between the Sierra Norte de Sevilla Natural Park in Seville and the Hornachuelos Natural Park in Córdoba province.

This is a long distance trail which step by step will take us from the lower fertile plain fields to some abrupt natural sites up in the highlands. However, the difference between the positive cumulative slope and the negative cumulative drop shapes up a quite accessible mountain cross section.

On this section of the route, hikers will have the chance for walking on different scenarios which cover from straightforward walks through fertile fields and easy hikes between domesticated pastures to demanding climbing walks through lush areas located up in the mountains.

The walkers' eyes will be delighted with the wonderful views they will come across while other senses are equally stimulated by the many different sensations they will experience throughout the journey. This is a long hiking section through a deep mountain range that will offer to the walkers many secrets hidden in the soft and rounded aromatic hills.

At the end, the province of Córdoba will reward the walkers with a most valuable offering. Hikers will enjoy the company of spectacular rivers and beautiful valleys before the journey ends in Hornachuelos town.


Start: La Puebla de los Infantes (Sevilla)
Finish: Hornachuelos (Córdoba)
Distance: 32 Km
Time: 9 hours.


Suitability:





* Mountain biking (roughly hard at some sections of the trail)

MIDE evaluation:

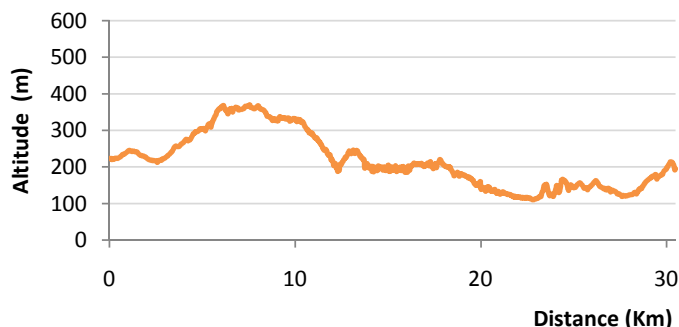
**Environment:** Severity of the natural environment

**Track Features:** Difficulty in following the track

**Orientation** Guidance on the route directions.

**Struggle:** Struggle required for accomplishing the route.

La Puebla de los Infantes - Hornachuelos



ROUTE GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The name of this town comes from the middle Ages when the king of Castile Alfonso X the Wise, granted his brothers and relatives (the '*infantes*' or princes) with these lands. Before that the site was called Cañebolo by the Visigoths and that name was kept during the period when the area was occupied by Arabs and Muslims who placidly dedicated to farming.

Some outstanding historical buildings can be seen and visited in many streets of the site. The high town area is dominated by the medieval Castle from the Christian period and Santiago Hermitage from the 13th and 14th centuries. The town medieval quarter appears to have developed around those two buildings together with Santa María de las Huertas Church from the 15th and 16th centuries. In addition, it is also worthy to pay a visit to Santa Ana Hermitage, a Mudéjar style building with transverse arches located outside the town and to the east. Moreover, there are a set of public sluice basins from the 19th century known as '*pilas*' which are the best preserved in the whole province of Seville.

This section of the route starts off at the Plaza Virgen de la Huertas Square which locates in the town centre newly widening area. A main avenue which comes to die in this square is Antonio Machado Street that comes from the entrails of the most historical and cultural area in the town.

From the Virgen de las Huertas Square we will take onto the Cánovas del Castillo Street to come out of the town and get on the SE-7104 Road towards the Embalse del Retortillo Reservoir. On having walked a kilometre or so, we will see a path that meets the road to the left and that is known as Camino de Las Navas de la Concepción Trail. Here there is a board where we can find relevant information about the natural features that the path will be passing through and by. The path will head up North and soon we will be walking through Olive groves and rainfed crops while heading towards the mountain range over the horizon.

The only autochthonous European Palm species, the Palmetto, spatters along both sides of the path and Mediterranean undergrowth is progressively gaining ground to the rainfed crops. In here, there is also a dramatic change in the substratum qualities passing from limy to a siliceous type which better sustains the development of Wild Iberian Pear trees and Holm Oak woodlands.

We will continue walking ahead and ignoring any other paths and footpaths that meet this one and that are the access to the many Country Estates in the area. As the path winds through pastures of Ilex and meadows, we will start climbing up the soft foothills of Sierra Morena Mountain Range.



Pastures and meadows

On having left behind and to the right the main access to the Cortijo de San Marcos Farmhouse, the path goes across a cattle grid. This is a structure consisting on several metal bars over a trench carved in the path preventing cattle from leaving the Country Estate. Then, the path continues ahead leaving behind and to the right another footpath that wades across a small brook.

The path continues winding through pastures and parallel to the bed of a temporary tiny brook on the right side which might supports some water in the raining season. The pasture is dotted with a larger number of spattering Holm Oak trees and some Cork Oaks. Soon, it will become a dense Mediterranean wood comprising Myrtle, White Rockroses, Gorses and Strawberry trees and where game species such Deer and Wild Boars find shelter and food.

We will leave behind and to the right the main gate at El Cantarero Country Estate to continue up ahead. On having crossed over another cattle grid, the path will wind through both San Agustín and Santa Ana Country Estates while heading northwest and progressively coming into pastures of Mediterranean undergrowth where Cork Oaks are increasing their number.

After crossing a lushly and dense Mediterranean woodland, an open landscape will show in front of us having a large meadow to the right. The beautiful Casa del Saucejo Country House also shows through some Holm Oaks.

••• Km 8. Casa del Saucejo Country House and Camino Alcornocal de las Ánimas Traditional Path

As the walk progresses, the path will meet the Camino Alcornocal de las Ánimas Traditional Path. In here, we just swing to the right and take onto this new path.

The path matches again the administrative boundary of the Sierra Norte de Sevilla Natural Park while having to the left the last protected areas within the park limits. The path will come to fit into a small ravine where a water trough reminds us the former uses of this cattle route. Cattle appear to be the real landowner of the area and some tame cows can be seen grazing about under the large tops of the Holm Oaks and Cork Oaks.

In here, the pasture appears to have an enviable condition of balance. Even some areas lack of Mediterranean undergrowth, the pasture seems to feel good after being released and refreshed by the hands of men and the continuous cattle grazing devoted in keeping it clear. Oaks trees appear to be huge chandeliers because of their wider tops. In fact, that shape is the result of successive tree pruning to favour a better acorn production as well as a wider shady area under the Oaks.

The path descends softly having to the right a small brook that will frequently be crossing across the path. As the path descends, the brook will be gaining flow until it becomes a most important natural feature down in the valley where it will be surrounded by a gallery forest comprising Black Poplars and other riparian species.



Casa de las Monjas Country House

As the walk progresses, the path will pass by the Casa de las Monjas Country House and its main gate flanked by two large earthen jars. The house is located on the right side of the path from where it seems to control the Arroyo de las Ánimas Valley.

The path will then lead us up North-East while bordering the hill where La Casa de las Monjas Country House sits to the left. The path continues descending looking for a much fresher area downhill and by the brook which is fitted between open pastures. The trail appears to suffocate by the dense undergrowth covering both sides of the path.

Just a few metres ahead and over the horizon will show up the Embalse del Retortillo Reservoir where the Retortillo River and the Arroyo de las Ánimas Brook together with hundreds of small brooks come to water in. The Arroyo de las Ánimas Brook remains to the right of the path.



Gorge by the Arroyo de las Ánimas Brook

••• Km 12.1. Cortijo de las Algeciras

The path will meet the SE-7104 Road and comes to die at this site opposite to the spectacular Cortijo de las Algeciras Farmhouse. There we will turn right to continue walking on the side of the road that now follows parallel to the reservoir shores.

We will take on a new path that branches off at one marked twist of the path and that comes to the Embalse del Retortillo Dam, some 3 kilometres away from this point.

This short walk on the side of the road is also a good opportunity to look at the impressive views of the reservoir on one side and the narrow ravines on the

other side. On every turn of the road, we will have the chance to look at two different water streams, all they north oriented and supporting dense riparian vegetation comprising Terebinth Trees that resembles of those in the jungle.



Embalse del Retortillo Reservoir

On the reservoir opposite shore is the impressive *Cortijo del Águila* Farmhouse dominating the Country Estate. This is one of the most important private Country Estates in the region which is fully devoted to big game hunting.

A few metres ahead and by the path we will bump into a waymarking sign which show us the right direction to get to the *Embalse del Retortillo* Reservoir viewing- point. We may be likely of spending some time to approaching to this balcony from where we will have a full view of the immense water sheet surrounded by the highland mountains. The view will make us to think about how important are reservoirs when collecting water for human consumption

although we may bear in mind the great negative impact that they poses onto the natural world. In here, it is not difficult to imagine all those mountains, hills, valleys and woodland which once were home to many different animal and plant species yet they are now drowned under the huge amount of contained water.

As the trail continues along the road, we will soon come to the reservoir dam.

••• Km 16.1. Embalse del Retortillo Dam

The immense stopper made of concrete which is the dam is also the boundary between Seville province and the Córdoba one. At the time, it is also the limit between the *Sierra Norte de Sevilla* Natural Park and the *Sierra de Hornachuelos* Natural Park.



Dam

We will have to the left a swampy brook and to the right a tiny riverbed which is controlled by some sluice gates. At the bottom of the massive dam wall, the Retortillo River continues flowing down but now on a concrete made riverbed, well decorated with some Oleanders though. Many animal species will never have the chance to discover how the river looks like upstream.

As the walk moves away from the dam, we will go back to walk on the countryside road. Cork Oaks start showing on both sides. We can tell that the cork has recently been removed because of the orange colour of the trunks.

The road matches the Cordel del Águila Traditional Path which is surrounded by pastures where the cattle is pleasantly grazing out. The negative cumulative slope leads the walk to the South-East while squeezing into a closed valley surrounded by rounded hills. The hills on the right side of the valley are covered with thick Mediterranean undergrowth which locates at the lowest section of the foothills comprising some Portuguese Oaks together with shrubby specimens such the Italian Buckthorn, Oleanders and Gorse bushes.

The path will continue matching the countryside road that now runs parallel to Barranco del Peco Ravine and until the Puente de la Esira Bridge.

••• Km 20.2. Puente de la Esira (or Algeciras) Bridge and the way-marked Sendero del Águila Path

Eventually, the road will cross over the bridge. After that, we will carry on walking along the road ignoring another path that joins to the left and that is known as Sendero Río Guadalupe Path. We will leave the road some metres further up to come onto another path that branches off right and is known as Sendero del Águila Path. This path continues parallel and onto the left riverbank of the Guadalupe River. From this point onwards, we will follow the many



Wild Olive grove

waymarking signs placed along the path which will lead us to Hornachuelos town.

The path will follow up and along the riverbank where hikers may feel well protected and refreshed under the shade of the green canopy. Between huge Holm Oaks and Cork Oaks trees yet nearest to the riverbed are those plants which need water. Among others, they are Willows, Brambles, and Laurustinus scrub.

As it happens to most rivers in Mediterranean climate regions, the hard weather conditions of hot dry summers and mild winters cause the rivers water sheet evaporation and consequently, a discontinuous riverbed is formed with ponds and disconnected pools. These pools shape and water volume will vary depending on the amount of sun they receive. Nevertheless, those seasonal pools become key habitats for many animal species conservation. Amphibians, reptiles, mammals and birds may be able to go through harsh summer periods and survive thanks to the water contained on those natural troughs.

In here, walkers will be able to contemplate the way trees find their own location alongside the river and according to their needs for water. This way, trees such Alder-trees, Elms and Ash-trees spread out up and downstream while



The path swings towards the Fuente del Puerco Fountain

looking for their opportunity for colonizing any single inch of the riverbed and even root themselves off in a more or less moisten substratum.

At night, many animal species such Deer and Wild Boars climb down from the nearby hills while searching for some water for either drinking or bathing. In addition, Otters leave their excrements on the prominent rocks on the river shores and even by the riverbed. That is a good sign for us to discover whether there are any Otters swimming in the river. Otters eat Crayfish, fish and

even small mammals and they are likely to spend most time swimming up and down stream searching for their food while keeping tide that section of the river.

Firmly standing out on the trees' branches are many birds which appear to be in constant defence of their territory. This pristine and transparent atmosphere over the riverbanks turns to be an excellent stereo dome where the birds' musical notes resemble musical arrows in battle. The area is specially tuned into the Nightingales singing. The birds' size does not match with the exaggerated sonority of their melodious strophes. Other birds living in this area are Wrens, Grey Wagtails, Robins, Kingfishers and Common Chiffchaffs. After a short walk along the river, the path will move away from it while again looking for the road.

••• Km 23.1. CO-5310 P.K.11 and Sendero del Águila

On having crossed the road, we will see another path with a Country Estate gate. Once on this new path, squeeze by just to the right before the gate and continue walking ahead and straight forward.

We continue along the path which now climbs quite steeply. The walk progresses between Oaks, Cork Oaks, Wild Olive trees and Rockroses and the ground becomes different as the path climbs up. The path is steep in parts and quite slippery on slime, sands, clays and loose rolling stones which make

walking on the main track which constantly goes up and down the hill while having a wire fence to the left and several white milestones on the right which are marking the ridge of the mountain.

The steep climbing will finish at the top of the hill where it is the *Mirador del Águila*, a half circle stone made viewing-point. There, we will have also another information board. From here we will have a full view of the valley with the *Guadalora River* at the bottom and hills covered with dense Mediterranean woods and undergrowth. Certainly, this is a very accurate perception of a most authentic Mediterranean landscape. This is a good place for breaking though. Then, the path will continue on having the Country Estate fence on the left and the first views of the *campiña* (fertile irrigated fields) down to the right.



Fuente del Puerco Fountain

The path winds through the last foothills of this section of the *Sierra Morena Mountain Range* and it continues along with gentle ups and downs while avoiding some ravines that come down from the higher hills. Then, the path starts descending through dense Mediterranean undergrowth and we will eventually bump into the *Fuente del Puerco Fountain*. Here, an information board tells about this stone made water trough built for collecting water from the spring located up above in the mountain. We may be likely to spend some time here and refresh ourselves before starting the last steep climbing of this stage

At the trough, we will continue walking ahead and looking for another path that passes by an area of rainfed crops to our right. On bordering this area, the path will pass by the remains of an old Country House on the left. After some 100 metres walk, we will bend left while the path winds between Wild Olive trees until a plantation of 'garrotes'. 'Garrotes' is the name given to Olive tree branches or sticks made of Olive tree wood which is obtained from an existing one that has been planted in order to grow new Olive trees by means of vegetative reproduction.



Plain field at the Guadalora Valley

harder this short climbing. The reward will be the staggering views of the *Guadalora Valley* from the top of the hill.

On this section of the stage it may be hard to follow the trail since the path deteriorates and sometimes may be mistaken with a firebreak. We must continue



Rainfed crops

Following the GR-48 Trail direction signs, the path continues ahead and between two countryside lanes, leaving behind and to the left the Mediterranean wood and to the right an Olive grove where the traditional system in the olive spread by "stake or stick" is in place. The path will match a section of another path known as *Cordel del Águila* and the *Camino de la Zumaya* one. This is a hard section of the route as the path surface becomes rocky and slippery. The path continues straight ahead and bordering the Olive grove to pass by two farm buildings and a former limestone quarry where limy rocks were burnt up to produce lime. The path heads up East while winding through an area of Olive groves and a Country Estate covered with Mediterranean wood and undergrowth. The olive grove will be left behind and it will be substituted by an Orange grove. Along the path and on the opposite direction we will see the waymarking signs of the *Cordel del Águila* Path. Just a few metres ahead, the path will come in to an area where private plots and rural houses locate by the road to Homachuelos.

••• Km 28.2. Villa Cristina Private Plots area by the CO-5312 Road

Without having to cross the road we will continue on a new path that heads left and to the North. The path runs parallel to a small natural pond clearly identifiable because of the isolated Oleanders of rose flowers.

The path bends left and goes beneath a low voltage electrical line until it gets to the Country House known as *Huertos del Fiel*. This is a short section of the route that matches the *Cordel de las Palmillas* Path. On having left behind and to the left the Country House, the path continues ahead passing by some goat pens on the right side. Homachuelos town is now on the sight. We will come to another path which is quite visible all time and that will take us into the town.

The path will come to *El Palmito*, a countryside road surrounded by private smallholdings and chalets. At the end of this road, we will turn right and onto *San Bernardo* Road. We will follow a descending path that branches off left some 70 metres after. This path will lead us into the *Paseo de Diego Escobar* Street and to the town centre where this stage of the route comes to an end and the GR-48 through Seville province finishes.



Herbs Uses: aromatic herbs; spice herbs; edible plants; and healing plants

••• Ethnobotany is the science that studies how people from a particular culture or region make use of autochthonous plants. For centuries, many doctors, pharmacologists and botanists have carefully collected information about the beneficial qualities of herbs and plants with regard to people's health and well being. Perhaps, the most relevant and influential work on this matter has been *De Materia Medica* by Pedanio Dioscórides Anazarbeo (Anazarbus, Cilicia, in Asia Minor, c. 40 - c. 90). The book had a huge spread in the middle ages and through the Renaissance period, becoming the most important manuscript on pharmacopoeia of the time. However, much of this knowledge was passed onto future generations by means of oral tradition and, consequently interesting qualities and uses of the herbs and plants may have gone lost while remaining only in our grandparents' memory.

Few are the plants from Mediterranean woods with no known uses since most of them are considered as beneficial for human beings. This way, we have aromatic plants which are used as essences in perfumery such as French Lavender (*Lavender stoechas*); Lavender (*Lavender latifolia*) and Rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*). Also herbs and plants that are used as spice herbs such as Thyme

(*Timus* sp.), Bay Leaf (*Laurus nonbile*) and Oregano (*Origanum vulgare*). Other plants are very important for honey production; among others, the most commonly used are Heather (*Heather* sp.) and Rosemary. Many are the plants and herbs used for healing and curative purposes. Among others, they are the White Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) which helps to avoid many heart diseases and constitutes an effective remedy to reduce the problems of nervousness; Ivy (*Hedera helix*) which is used to heal sores and wounds; Terebinth (*Pistacia terebintus*) as astringent; Marian Thistle (*Silybum marianum*) to raise the arterial pressure; Borage (*Borago officinalis*) useful to provoke sweat outs and as diuretic. Finally, many wild plants and fruits are used as food and can be eaten either cooked or raw. Among others, they are Elephant Garlic (*Allium ampeloprasum*), Cranberry (*Vaccinium myrtillus*), Marian Thistle, Common Sowthistle (*Sonchus oleraceus*), Asparagus (*Asparagus acutifolia*) and Plum (*Prunus domesticates*).

For many centuries, these natural resources, directly obtained from the mountain, were our forebears' only wealth. It is on us to sensibly care and respect the plants and herbs around us as since most of their properties and qualities are still unknown. Certainly, they may be of great help for all us and for future generations.

STAGE 6:

OPTIONAL STAGE RIVERA DEL HUESNAR - CERRO DEL HIERRO



This is an easy circular walk starting off and finishing at the junction between the Cañada Real de la Ribera del Huesna Traditional Cattle Route and the Cordel de Cazalla de la Sierra y Extremadura Traditional Path. On this stage, the route will take walkers through some of the most amazing natural sites in Andalucía before looping back to the junction.

This optional stage is highly recommended due to the many natural features on it. Among others, the breathtaking gallery forest along the Ribera del Huesnar River which step by step, will enhance walkers' senses; spectacular Holm Oaks and Cork Oaks pastures which are the base for the cattle sector economic structure. A cattle that produces some of the most exquisite food in the region; the sylvan aspect of the Huesnar Waterfalls and its waters defying the gravity which is registered as Natural Monument; the peculiar landscape surrounding the Cerro del Hierro Site, another Natural Monument of great historical and cultural heritage comprising some of the most valuable vegetal and animal species as well as geological features of no comparison. Certainly, hikers will find themselves walking through one of the purest representation of Mediterranean wood which remains almost as it were originally.

Moreover, this comfortable walk matches a well paved *vía verde* path which once was a mining railway connecting different mining sites in the region. As the path progresses, the trail will wind through the many different natural sites to be discovered on this journey.

This is a highly recommended route which will undoubtedly delight the most demanding hikers because of the many astonishing views and the rich variety of natural features on it. Not many hiking routes pass by two Natural Monuments.

Start: Bifurcation Cordel Cazalla-Extremadura
Finish: Bifurcation Cordel Cazalla-Extremadura
Distance: 27,6 Km approx
Time: 8 hours

Suitability:



MIDE evaluation:

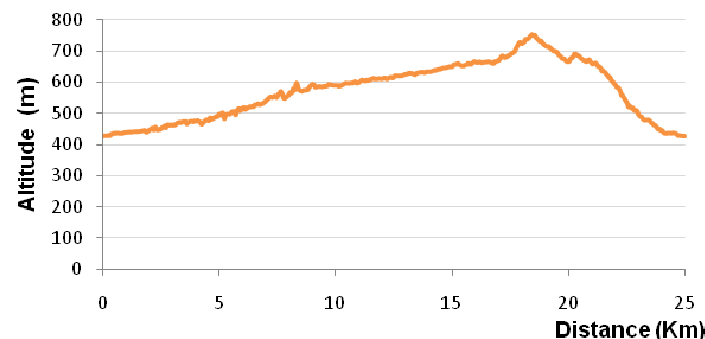
Environment: Severity of the natural environment

Track Features: Difficulty in following the track

Orientation: Guidance on the route directions..

Struggle: Struggle required for accomplishing the route.

Huéznar - Cerro del Hierro



ROUTE GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The stage starts and finishes at the junction between two traditional tracks for cattle moving: the Cañada Real de la Ribera del Huéznar and the Cordel Cazalla de la Sierra y Extremadura Path. We will get to this point by connecting with the Cazalla de la Sierra Road to Constantina town. After passing by Cazalla de la Sierra train station, we will turn left to take on the Vía Verde de la Sierra Norte de Sevilla Trail which will come to the junction where the stage starts off. No authorized vehicles are allowed from this point onwards and cars must be left on a car parking at the right of the path.

Once we have come to the junction, we will come onto the path to the left which is the Vía Verde Path, and that goes across the Arroyo del Palo Brook that comes to water into the Ribera del Huéznar River which flows to our right. We will continue walking along the Vía Verde Path now having the Ribera del



Meadows near the river shore

Huéznar River to our left. A few metres ahead, the path will go across the Arroyo de las Truchas Brook which is also tributary to the Ribera del Huéznar River.

The sound of the river will be a constant background noise along this section of the stage. Nightingales, Whitethroats, Golden Orioles, Wrens, Kingfishers and Grey Wagtails will bring to our ears the different shades of their singing.

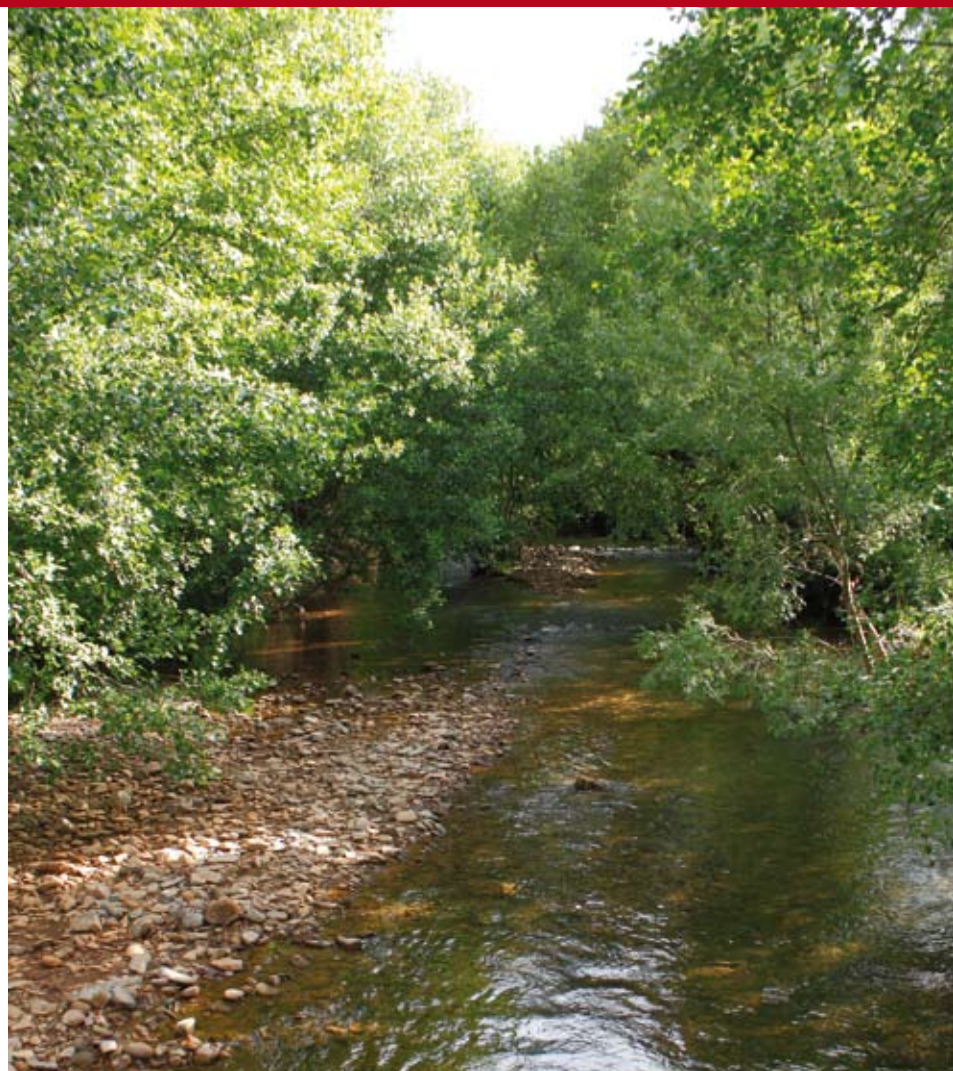
We will follow the path to the left and bordering the Ribera del Huesna Rest Area. Ignore the path which branches off to the right and that is the one that will follow when returning. Very lush and powerful riparian vegetation comprising Ash-trees, Black and White Poplars, Willows and Alder trees covers the left side of the path while on the right side there is a large pasture of Holm Oaks, Cork Oaks and grassland.

As the walk progresses, the path will move away from the riverbank and comes near to a rainfed crops field which is surrounded by a dry stone wall. We will continue walking ahead passing by a leaving behind a small Country House located by the path. The pasture to the right appears to be undergoing some reforestation works. This is a very common activity when trying to sustain these old pastures which appear to be exhausted after centuries providing natural resources.

90 However, livestock management is the key element for maintaining this peculiar ecosystem. The 'dehesa' constitutes itself a most amazing example for sustainable development. From the old times, natural resources have been exploited in a way that facilitates a continuous regeneration of the ecosystem. Consequently, the 'dehesa' management must bear in mind multitude of factors. The role of cattle is paramount in keeping down the excessive growing of both grasslands and bushes but also the mountain is constantly cleared and cleaned from excessive undergrowth. On the other hand, cattle help on fertilizing the soil and dispersing the seeds which are the basis for pastures improvement and development.



Bridge over the river



View of the Ribera del Huesnar River from the bridge

On leaving behind Los Prados pasture, the path will come closer again to the Ribera del Huesnar riverbanks while wading across the river. Again the site is clearly different to that we have just left behind. This is a much fresher area and the humidity and moist are obvious on our skin. The environmental conditions change radically allowing the growing and development of riparian plants such as the Elderberry, a peculiar tree of big white flowers and black mature fruits.

The path moves a few metres away from the riverbank. Ignoring a small tunnel on the left side, the path and bends right climbing up to the former railway which has been paved and that is a section of the Vía Verde Path. Between 1895 and 1970 trains circulated regularly on this area since ore from the Cerro del Hierro Mine was transported to Seville inland port. Then minerals were shipped to either the Scotch Blast-Furnace or to any other destination where the different owners of the mine were from.

Having the riverbank to the right, the path continues heading towards San Nicolás del Puerto town and progressing between former railway embankments. Massive Ash-trees and Poplars appear to be marking the limits of the riverbank. As the walk progresses, the riverbank narrows and fits in a steep valley of abrupt slopes.

As the path moves further away from the riverbank, the soil becomes limy. Species adapted to Mediterranean climate conditions will substitute those proper of the gallery forest and soon the path will be surrounded by Holm Oaks and Kermes Oaks as well as a range of Mediterranean undergrowth comprising Mastic trees, Steppe Rockroses, White Rockroses, Terebinth bushes, Jerusalem Sage, Gorse bushes, Montpellier Rockroses, Flax-Leaved Daphne bushes, Brambles and so many others.

The path meets and goes across the San Nicolás del Puerto Road to continue on the Vía Verde Path. As the walk progresses, the valley widens and so beautiful views open to the walkers' eyes. To the right is the Cortijo de la Paloma Farmhouse which dominates the landscape. Soft rounded sloppy pastures of Holm Oaks and Cork Oaks stretch down to the riverbank. To the left side of the Vía Verde Path and some pastures are under a regeneration process to shape the way they will be in the future.

The path gets to and goes across an iron bridge with wooden beams that leads the walkers under the lush canopy of a purest gallery forest. As if walking on a suspension bridge, walkers will have the chance to touch some leaves of the trees which appear to grow taller while searching for the scanty light they can get on their tops.



Terebinth Tree

This is a good point on the route to have a look at how species naturally locate in a gallery forest. At first sight, the forest resembles a chaotic jungle to the walkers' eyes. In fact, when we look carefully an elegant order is revealed. Occupying the first line of the riverbed are Alder trees and Willows since those are species well adapted to flooded grounds. Poplar trees (Black and White Poplars) are located in a second line and a bit further away from the riverbed. These are species with fewer need of water yet still they need certain dampness to fully develop. Finally, the Elm trees which resist well the lack of water are located at the most peripheral area as if they yield up the space to others.

And many are the animal species which find food and shelter in this type of ecosystem. The environmental conditions and the plants distribution compose an ideal habitat for birds such Golden Orioles, Grey Herons, Kingfishers, Nightingales, Junglefowls, Mallards, Blackbirds, Wagtails and Warblers.

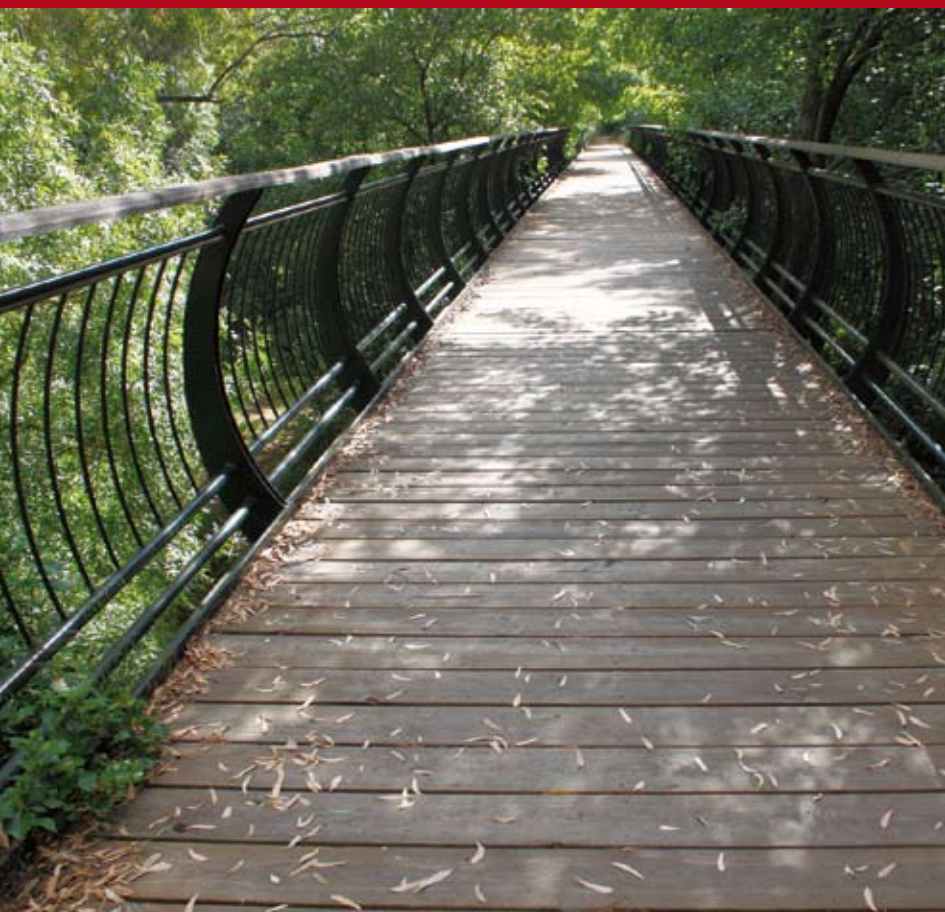


Vía Verde Path

••• Km 4.2. Rivera del Huesna Bridge

After crossing the bridge, the path continues ahead leaving behind and to the left the riverbank and soon will be winding through soft ravines. The gallery forest progressively will turn into Holm Oaks pastures which stretch up to the hills on the horizon. On leaving behind and to the right the Cortijo de las Moreras Farmhouse, the path starts climbing up allowing hikers to enjoy the breathtaking views (almost as seen from a plane) of the gallery forest on one side and of the Mediterranean forest on the other one. Small elevated viaducts help walkers out when saving the deep ravines resulting from the action of many small brooks and creeks that come to water into the Huesna River.

The 'cortás' (literally, the cuts) made to level the ground when the railway was built are a good place where to look at when studying the area geology. In



Rivera del Huesna Bridge

here, we will see layers of volcanic materials and slates with some marble incorporation.

The path continues ahead and some metres further up we will see the Batán de Onofre Fulling Mill and then the Cortijo de Batán Cumplido Farmhouse. In the past, both buildings were fully devoted to the cleansing of wool and other natural fabrics in order to make them thicker. A 'batán' is wooden machinery which originated in the medieval Islamic World. A water mill was built nearby the riverbed and the 'batán' machinery was operated by cams on the shaft of the waterwheel, which lifted the wooden hammers used for beating the cloth. The cloth was soaked in water since this added to the beating process caused the hair fibres to open up and lock together. The process used to take hours ensuring that all parts of the fabric were milled evenly. Woollen blankets and other types of natural fabric were done in fulling mills.

The path continues and passes nearby Olive grove on the left. Then it meets and goes across another path just where a former railway building of perfectly placed stones stands up. Opposite to this building there is a former manual water pump which has recently been restored for everyone's use and where walkers may quench their thirst.



Tunnel

The path which still matches the Vía Verde Path progresses between large trial pits and passes by the Cortijo de Batán Arena Farmhouse to the left.

The path continues ahead and will go across on a breathtaking viaduct. The views from this structure are impressive persuading the walker to silencing. From up here we will see to one side areas of rainfed crops and to the other side, the impressive and lush Huesnar riverbanks and the remains of the former Molino de los Nogales Watermill.

The path continues and soon will get to one of the region's more attractive natural site, Waterfall which is granted a Natural Monument. The site itself is almost hidden under the lush and powerful vegetation of the Ribera del Huesna riverbanks. This is a complex system of waterfalls on travertine rocks resulting from both the precipitation of calcium carbonate dissolved in water and the uneven ground. The sylvan landscape comprises spectacular natural ponds and pools under a canopy of Alder-trees, Elms and Black Poplars. Certainly, this is a natural site that should not be missed.

As the path moves away from the site, it heads North-East direction while tracing a soft curve to finally come into a beautiful and easy to walk in tunnel. Walking inside the tunnel will become a much interesting experience since the lack of artificial lights and the strong difference of temperature, sounds and eye sighting will allow the walkers to enjoy very special sensations.

Shortly after, the path heads towards San Nicolás del Puerto village while passing by the local cemetery which remains to the right side of the path.



Waterfall

••• Km 9.3. San Nicolás del Puerto village

One could say that History has built on the character of this village. Celts called the site 'Iporci' and later it will become 'Iporcila Villa de Fortuumade' for the ancient Romans. An interesting feature of the village is the Roman Bridge over the Galindón River which is outside the town and on the way to Alanís de la Sierra, a nearby village. Other interesting cultural features are a stone made Cross dated on 1575-1599 and the San Sebastián Church (Mudéjar style) which holds valuable gold works inside.

Some 400 metres ahead is the access to the area where locates the water source of the Ribera del Huesna River. The aquifer locates between layers of impermeable materials and water finds its way to the surface through a crack on the rock. The source comes out from underneath causing an impressive damp area.



Pastures

The path moves away from San Nicolás del Puerto village and surrounding area and winds through some mix pastures of Holm Oaks and Cork Oaks. It is obvious that we are crossing a region which vividly depends on and live from the pork industry. As the path progresses through the pastures, facilities for pork manufacturing become more visible and many specimens of Iberian pigs can be spotted grazing about in the pastures. In addition, livestock appear to be delighted on the many meadows which alternate with the pastures.

The peculiar rock formations giving shape to the Cerro del Hierro Hill are now easily spotted from the path.



The Parish-School

98 ••• Km 15.1. Cerro del Hierro Natural Monument and the former Mining Town

As the path approaches to the *Cerro del Hierro* Hill and to the right, we will see a former Victorian house which once was the Parish Church and School of the formerly mining town. Soon after, a cluster of buildings which used to be the engineers' houses locates to the left. The Victorian style buildings come from the late 19th century when a Scotch mining company established in the area. Scottish and English people strongly influenced the culture and costume of the region.

On passing the former mining settlement, the path approaches to the impressive lime rock formations. To the right we will see the former housing and accommodation for the English workers and their families which are locally known as '*Casas de los Ingleses*'.

The reddish colours and shades of the Iron oxide clearly contrast with the peculiarly shaped white limestone rocks. Here, the landscape turns into a different one every minute and the day light reflects impossible colour compositions as from other planets.

The path continues ahead while having the *Cerro del Hierro* Natural Monument to the left. The remains of the former mining town and mining structures scatter around the area. They are the legacy of the powerful mining activity in the past. For instance, the former loading platforms still stand on yet they appear pretty damaged and deteriorated. However, in the good times trains transported up to 1000 tons of ore to Seville where it was shipped.

The *vía verde* path will come to an end just after passing by the former mining site. Then the trail matches another dirt path that branches off to the right

and passes by a Country House. The dirt path is stony and dusty and climbs upwards to the top of a hill fully covered with a pure Cork Oak grove. The path then passes near a traditional Country House located by the Costantina-San Nicolás del Puerto Road. At this point, we will go across the road to continuing walking on the public right of way path which goes through the Las Barracas Country Estate.



Traditional country house

••• Km 17.5. Las Barracas Country Estate

After crossing the gate which is blocking the path, the trail continues climbing up a soft and rounded hill while winding through Cork Oak groves converted into pastures where patches of Mediterranean undergrowth intercalate. On having come to the mountain pass, the path levels off the contour line and we will enjoy the impressive views to the left. A valley widens in front of us and the head of the *Arroyo de las Truchas* Brook can be spotted on the valley lower area. Later, and as the walk progresses, the path will run parallel to that brook until it gets to the brook mouth which is already familiar to us.

We continue walking on the main path and ignoring any other footpath that may meet this one. The path comes into another valley and an abrupt change on the landscape can be perceived. Today, an Olive grove stretches uphill where in the past used to be Holm Oaks and Cork Oak woods. This is a clear example of nature transformation by means of human action.

The path which is now in good conditions, starts descending towards the *Cortijo de Las Barracas* Farmhouse. By the side of the farmhouse the path gets into a dense gallery forest on the shady bank of a brook. Soon after, the path starts climbing a quite easy hill slope winding through Olive groves until it gets to

another Country Estate gate. To the right, another hill fully covered with thick Mediterranean undergrowth and bushes will keep our attention.

The path surface deteriorates considerably and we will prevent from any undesirable accident by walking carefully. We continue straight ahead along the path and through pastures until the coming near to a small puddle. From here, the path will come into a deep ravine to continue straight forward leaving behind and to the right a former Country House.

The path starts descending after some tight twists we will have a beautiful view of the Ribera de Huesnar riverbanks at the bottom end of the valley. Eventually, the path levels off and become flat while winding through pastures and meadows. Eventually, we will find a Country Estate gate with two white columns the path will lead towards the El Acebuche Country Estate which is also the last section of this stage.

After crossing a last country gate, the path will join again the 'vía verde' path where we should turn left. Then, we will find ourselves walking again on the first section of this stage but in the opposite direction to go back to where this optional stage of the route started.



The dirt path through Las Barracas Country Estate



Cerro del Hierro Natural Monument

••• The ore deposits at the Cerro de Hierro Site have been exploited from the Old Roman times. Since then, every single culture settled in the area had pulled out the precious ore from the site, especially goethite (iron oxyhydroxide mineral) and barite schists. In the late 19th century and earlier 20th the site went through a time of greatest mining activity when the Scottish Company William Baird Mining and Co. Ltd. of Glasgow took over the exploitation. From that period are the remains of the former mining town and the so called Casas de los Ingleses (literally 'English people's houses') which are examples of the Victorian architecture.

The site is a Karst resulting from the dissolution of the limy rock by means of the action of water. The Cerro del Hierro Hill comprises a set of Cambrian limestone rocks, some of them are 100 metres thick. Those rocks formations originated some 500 million years ago. Then the area was a marine shallow environment in which calcite carbonate precipitated forming coastal bars similar to those in the Caribbean Sea.

Calcite crystallizations, the veins of hydrothermal carbonates and the changing colours are some very interesting characteristics of this type of rocks. Nevertheless, the peculiar way rocks are shaped into pinnacles, columns and hollows creates a magical network of intricate passageways, tunnels, blind alleys and caves which will vividly activate visitors' imagination. In addition, the typical Karst lapies also provides the area's impressive vertical rocky walls which are especially attractive to climbers.

The Cerro del Hierro is popularly called the 'Siberia de Andalucía' (literally, the Siberia of Andalucía) due to the extreme cold mountain microclimate in the area. The site is home to plant species such as the Laurustinus and Terebinth trees both likely of growing in shady and fresh environs. Special mention here to the Pyrenean Oak forests surrounding the site as this is a very rare tree species proper of humid and cold regions.

And for the animal species, birds are the most significant with a large representation of the Crag Martins, Red-Rumped Swallows, Blue Rock-Thrushes, Eagle-Owls and Black Storks which are considered to be the most authentic natural jewel in the region.

USEFUL INFORMATION

ALANÍS

... Accommodation

LA SOLANA DE LA CAPILLA

Ctra. Alanís-Cazalla, s/n
41380 Alanís
954 675 113

CASA ADRIANO

C/ Barrionuevo, 8
41380 Alanís
658 426 197

LOS GAVILANES

Ctra. Alanís-Fuenteovejuna, Km 32,5
41380 Alanís
955 954 034

NUESTRA SEÑORA DE LAS ANGUSTIAS

Ctra. de la Ermita, s/n
41380 Alanís
677 563 956

... Restaurants

CASA ADRIANO

C/ Barrionuevo, 8
41380 Alanís
658 426 197

ALMADÉN DE LA PLATA

... Accommodation

LAS GATERAS

Plaza del Reloj, 1
41240 Almadén de la Plata
657 650 632

ALOJAMIENTO RURAL EL ROMERAL

C/ Antonio Machado, 57
41240 Almadén de la Plata
954 735 453

LA SARTENEJA

Plaza de la Palmera, 12
41240 Almadén de la Plata
653 255 027

HOSTAL CASA CONCHA

C/ La Cruz, 8
41240 Almadén de la Plata
954 735 043

CAZALLA DE LA SIERRA

... Accommodation

CASA PALACIO S. XVI

C/ Llana, 2
41370 Cazalla de la Sierra
27 385 976

MARIPASA

Carril del Obispo, Km. 3
41370 Cazalla de la Sierra
954 884 567

RISCOS ALTOS

Ctra. Cazalla-Constantina, Km. 5,5
41370 Cazalla de la Sierra
669 861 636

TRASIERRA

Finca Trasierra
41370 Cazalla de la Sierra
954 884 324

ATALAYA DE CAZALLA

C/ Segunda, Acc. 1
41370 Cazalla de la Sierra
954 214 180

BERROCAL

Ctra. Real de la Jara, Km. 1
41370 Cazalla de la Sierra
954 884 422

CASITA DEL HORTELANO

Finca La Cartuja, s/n
41370 Cazalla de la Sierra
954 884 516

EL CORTADILLO

Ctra. Guadalcanal, Km. 3
41370 Cazalla de la Sierra
954 884 855

LA PLAZUELA

C/ Caridad, 4
41370 Cazalla de la Sierra
954 421 496

PARAISO DEL HUEZNAR-LA GARZA REAL

Ctra. Cazalla-Constantina, Km. 8
41370 Cazalla de la Sierra
609 512 579

PARAISO DEL HUEZNAR-LA TRUCHA

Ctra. Cazalla-Constantina, Km. 8
41370 Cazalla de la Sierra
609 512 579

PARAISO DEL HUEZNAR-MARTÍN PESCADOR

Ctra. Cazalla-Constantina, Km. 8
41370 Cazalla de la Sierra
609 512 579

CASA LA PATU

Cabo Martín, 2
41370 Cazalla de la Sierra
608 416 141

LAS NAVEZUELAS

Ctra. 432, Km. 43
41370 Cazalla de la Sierra
954 884 764

PALACIO DE SAN BENITO

C/ San Benito, s/n
41370 Cazalla de la Sierra
954 883 336

POSADA EL MORO

Paseo del Moro, 46
41370 Cazalla de la Sierra
954 884 858

VEGA DE CAZALLA

C/ Durillo, 6
41370 Cazalla de la Sierra
954 884 680

HOSPEDERÍA LA CARTUJA

Ctra. Cazalla-Constantina
41370 Cazalla de la Sierra
954 884 516

GRANJA ESCUELA EL REMOLINO

Ctra. De la Estación Km. 2
41370 Cazalla de la Sierra
954 884 902

••• Restaurants**CASA KINI**

Plaza Juan Carlos I, s/n
41370 Cazalla de la Sierra
954 884 483

CAFETERÍA RESTAURANTE MANOLO (MESÓN DEL MORO)

C/ Paseo del Moro, s/n
41370 Cazalla de la Sierra
954 884 706

POSADA DEL MORO

C/ Paseo del Moro, s/n
41370 Cazalla de la Sierra
954 884 326

AGUSTINA

Plaza del Concejo, s/n
41370 Cazalla de la Sierra
627 532 866

PALACIO DE SAN BENITO

C/ San Benito, s/n
41370 Cazalla de la Sierra
954 883 336

... Tourist office

OFICINA DE INFORMACIÓN Y TURISMO

Plaza Mayor, s/n
41370 Cazalla de la Sierra
954 883 562

... Active Tourism

DAUR ESQUI MONTAÑA Y DEPORTE, S.L

C/ Baños, 33
41370 Cazalla de la Sierra
639 477 526

LAS CABAÑAS DEL PINTADO

Carretera de Cazalla- El Real de la Jara, Km. 20
41370 Cazalla de la Sierra
955 954 011

CONSTANTINA

... Accommodation

LOS POZOS DE LA NIEVE

Finca Santa Bárbara A-455, Km. 17,5
41450 Constantina
955 669 266

APARTAMENTOS DE TENA

Alcolea, 5
41450 Constantina
955 881 046

LA QUINTA

Finca La Quinta
41450 Constantina
678 456 402

EL VENENO DE MÓSTOLES

Ctra. La Puebla de los Infantes, Km. 0,80
41450 Constantina
955 881 100

LA CASILLA

Ctra. Constantina-Cazalla de la Sierra, Km. 18
41450 Constantina
954 295 100

LAS ERILLAS

Sendero de los Castaños, s/n
41450 Constantina
955 881 790

CASA GRANDE

Ctra. Constantina-Cazalla, Km. 1
41450 Constantina
955 881 608

SAN BLAS

C/ Miraflores
41450 Constantina
955 880 077

GRANJA ESCUELA LA SIERRA

Ermita del Robledo km 3,5
41450 Constantina
955 954 098

LOS PALACIOS

Ctra. Constantina-Cazalla Km 18
41450 Constantina
954 295 100

ALBERGUE INTURJOVEN DE CONSTANTINA

Avda. Doctor Larraui, SN
41450 Constantina
955889500

... Restaurants

BULLHY BAR JUNIOR

C/ Mesones, 30
41450 Constantina
652 205 563

OLYMPO

Alameda, 14 B
41450 Constantina
637 230 904

••• Restaurants

CAMBIO DE TERCIO

C/ Virgen de Robledo, 51
41450 Constantina
955 881 080

MESÓN LA PIEDRA

Ctra. Constantina-Cazalla, Km. 21
41450 Constantina
955 881 409

TENA

C/ Juan Ramírez Filosía, 69
41450 Constantina
955 881 046

••• Tourist office

OFICINA MUNICIPAL DE INFORMACIÓN TURÍSTICA DE CONSTANTINA

Avda. de Andalucía, s/n
41450 Constantina
955 881 297

EL PEDROSO

••• Accommodation

LOS ÁLAMOS

Ctra. De Sevilla, Km. 29,5
41360 El Pedroso
954 889 611

EL CASTAÑO

Ctra. Cazalla Antigua, Km. 2,5
41360 El Pedroso
954 889 214

CORTIJO ALMAZARA QUINTANILLA

Ctra. A-433, Km 74
41360 El Pedroso
619 405 955

ALOJAMIENTO RURAL "CORTIJO LA LIMA "

Ctra. Antigua El Pedroso-Cazalla, Km 1
41360 El Pedroso
626 908 667

COMPLEJO TURÍSTICO RURAL SIERRA DE HUÉZNAR

Ctra.El Pedroso-Constantina, Km.10
41360 El Pedroso
902 105 570

MONTEHUEZNAR SPA

Avda. La Estación, 15
41360 El Pedroso
954 889 000

••• Restaurants

LA LOCANDA

Juan Carlos I, 2
41360 El Pedroso
954 889 765

SERRANÍA

Avda. Estación, 30
41360 El Pedroso
954 889 603

LOS ÁLAMOS

Ctra. de Sevilla, Km. 29,3
41360 El Pedroso
954 889 611

NORTECAZA

Ctra. Sevilla-El Pedroso, Km 60
41360 El Pedroso
954 889 087

TABERNA EL CRUCE

Ctra. Cazalla, 6
41360 El Pedroso
954 889 090

LA DEHESA

Ctra. de Cazalla, Km. 11
41360 El Pedroso
954 889 423

... Tourist office

OFICINA DE TURISMO DE LA SIERRA NORTE

Llano de la Estación, s/n
41360 El Pedroso
954 889 379

... Active Tourism

SIERRA NORTE ACTIVA

Ctra. El Pedroso-Constantina, Km 10
41360 El Pedroso
902 105 570

EL REAL DE LA JARA

... Accommodation

LA ERA

Ctra. Santa Olalla- Real de la Jara, Km. 7
41250 El Real de la Jara
635 501 819

MARÍA CARMEN BAYÓN BAYÓN

C/ Córdoba, 2
41250 El Real de la Jara
954 733 468

LA ENCINA

Polígono Industrial La Encina, Manzana I, Parcela 5
41250 El Real de la Jara
954 733 410

... Restaurants

LA ENCINA

Polígono La Encina, Manzana 1ª, Parcela 5
41250 El Real de la Jara
954 733 410

GUADALCANAL

... Accommodation

JOSÉ RAMÓN MÚÑOZ

López de Ayala, 3
41390 Guadalcanal
666 554 209

LA ENCOMIENDA

C/ Granillos, 8-10
41390 Guadalcanal
954 886 189

CASA DE LOS DIEZMOS

Antonio Machado, 11 A
41390 Guadalcanal
954 886 190

EL NOGAL

Carretera de Llerena, Km 16,8
41390 Guadalcanal
954 886 189

LA CASILLA

Ctra. Llerena, Km. 16,8
41390 Guadalcanal
954 886 189

LA FLORIDA DEL VALLE

Camino de la mina de Jayona s/n
41390 Guadalcanal
678 085 942

LA ZARZA

Carretera Llerena, Km. 16,8
41390 Guadalcanal
954 886 189

POZOBERRUECO

Pozo Berrueco, 12
41390 Guadalcanal
607 333 246

LA PUEBLA DE LOS INFANTES

... Accommodation

APARTAHOTEL LAS PALOMAS

Ctra. Lora-Puebla de los Infantes, Km. 16
41479 La Puebla de los Infantes
955 956 063

EL OLIVO

Plaza Virgen de las Huertas, 1
41479 La Puebla de los Infantes
954 808 103

LOS INFANTES

C/ Cánovas del Castillo, 51
41479 La Puebla de los Infantes
695 952 296

LA POSADA DEL INFANTE

C/ Raimundo Martínez
41479 La Puebla de los Infantes
954 808 043

... Restaurants

AGREDANO

Plaza de la Constitución 16
41479 La Puebla de los Infantes
954 808 043

LAS PALOMAS

Ctra. Lora del Río-Puebla de los Infantes, Km. 16
41479 La Puebla de los Infantes
955 956 063

LOS INFANTES

C/ Cánovas del Castillo, 51
41479 La Puebla de los Infantes
639 146 903

LAS NAVAS DE LA CONCEPCIÓN

... Accommodation

LA COLINA

Ctra. Constantina-Las Navas de la Concepción, Km 18
41460 Las Navas de la Concepción
955 885 421

LA MAJÁ

Virgen de Belén, 1
41460 Las Navas de la Concepción
955 885 029

LOS ABUELOS

C/ Sagasta, 27
41460 Las Navas de la Concepción
955 687 322

LA VALEROSA

C/ García Lorca, 1
41460 Las Navas de la Concepción
955 885 478

SAN NICOLÁS DEL PUERTO

... Accommodation

EL BATÁN DE LAS MONJAS

Vereda Moreras, Km 3,5
41388 San Nicolás del Puerto
955 954 163

ÁREA ACAMPADA EL MARTINETE

Ctra. antigua San Nicolas-Cazalla de la Sierra, Km 2
41388 San Nicolás del Puerto
955 886 533

BATÁN DE LAS MONJAS

Ctra. Estación de Cazalla, Km. 7
41388 San Nicolás del Puerto
955 954 163

LIST OF SPECIES

THE PLANTS WORLD

...Plants

African Tamarisk (*Tamarix africana*)
Alfalfa (*Medicago sativa*)
Beard Moss (*Usnea barbata*)
Bracken Fern (*Pteridium aquilinum*)
Bramble (*Rubus ulmifolius*)
Broom (*Retama sphaerocarpa*)
Butcher's Broom (*Ruscus aculeatus*)
Common Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*)
Common Rue (*Ruta graveolens*)
Common Sage (*Salvia officinalis*)
Common Smilax (*Smilax aspera*)
Common Thyme (*Thymus vulgaris*)
Dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*)
Elmleaf Blackberry (*Rubus ulmifolius*)
Flax-Leaved Daphne (*Dagne gnidium*)
French Lavender (*Lavandula stoechas*)
Gorse (*Genista hirsuta*)
Greasy/Gum Rockrose (*Cistus ladanifer*)
Honeysuckle (*Lonicera implexa*)
Italian Buckthorn (*Rhannus alaternus*)
Ivy (*Hedera hélix*)
Laurustinus (*Viburnum tinus*)
Lily (*Iris sp.*)
Maidenhair Fern (*Adiantum capillus-veneris*)
Mastic Thyme (*Thymus mastichina*)
Mastic Tree (*Pistacea lentiscus*)
Mediterranean Fan Palm (*Chamaerops humilis*)
Montpelier Rockrose (*Cistus monspeliensis*)
Mulberry (*Morus sp.*)
Myrtle (*Mirtus communis*)
Oleander (*Nerium oleander*)
Peony (*Paeonia broteroi*)
Prickly Pear Cactus (*Opuntia ficus-carica*)
Purple Osier Willow (*Salyx purpurea*)
Purple Phlomis (*Phlomis purpurea*)
Reed (*Juncus sp.*)
Rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*)
Sageleaf Rockrose (*Cistus salviifolius*)
Sphagnum Moss (*Sphagnum sp.*)

Spike Lavender (*Lavandula latifolia*)
Strawberry Tree (*Arbutus unedo*)
Tamujo (*Flueggea tinctoria*)
Terebinth Tree (*Pistacia terebintus*)
Tree Germander (*Teucrium fruticans*)
Tree Heath (*Erica arborea*) (*Erica australis*)
Trumpet Daffodil (*Narcissus sp.*)
White/Steppe Rockrose (*Cistus albidus*)
Wild Asparagus (*Asparagus acutifolia*)

...Trees

Almond Tree (*Prunus dulcis*)
Ash-Tree (*Fraxinus excelsior*)
Black Poplar Tree (*Populus nigra*)
Carob Tree (*Ceratonia siliqua*)
Cluster/Maritime Pine Tree (*Pinus pinaster*)
Common Alder Tree (*Alnus glutinosa*)
Cork Oak Tree (*Quercus suber*)
Eucalyptus Tree (*Eucalyptus globulus*)
Field Elm Tree (*Ulmus minor*)
Fig Tree (*Ficus carica*)
Hazel Tree (*Corylus avellana*)
Heath Tree (*Erica arborea*)
Holm Oak / Ilex Tree (*Quercus ilex*)
Honeylocust Tree (*Gleditsia triacanthos*)
Italian Stone Pine Tree (*Pinus pinea*)
Juniper Tree (*Juniperus oxicedrus*)
Kermes Oak Tree (*Quercus coccifera*)
Mediterranean HackberryTree (*Celtis australis*)
Narrow-Leaved Ash Tree (*Fraxinus angustifolia*)
Olive Tree (*Olea europea*)
Orange Tree (*Citrus sinensis*)
Palm Tree (*Palma sp.*)
Portuguese Oak Tree (*Quercus faginea*)
Pyrenean Oak Tree (*Quercus pyrenaica*)
Sweet Chestnut Tree (*Castanea sativa*)
White Poplar Tree (*Populus alba*)
Wild Iberian Pear Tree (*Pyrus bourgaeana*)
Wild Olive Tree (*Olea europea silvestris*)
Willow Tree (*Salix alba*)

THE ANIMAL WORLD

... Mammals

Common Genet (*Genetta genetta*)
Deer (*Cervus elaphus*)

Egyptian Mongoose (*Herpestes ichneumon*)
Fox (*Vulpes vulpes*)
Garden Dormouse (*Eliomys quercinus*)
Iberian Lynx (*Lynx pardinus*)
Otter (*Lutra lutra*)
Wild Boar (*Sus scrofa*)

... Birds

Azure-Winged Magpie (*Cyanopica cyanus*)
Beaudouin's Snake Eagle (*Circaetus gallicus*)
Bee-Eater (*Merops apiaster*)
Black Kite (*Milvus migrans*)
Black Sork (*Ciconia nigra*)
Black Vulture (*Aegypius monachus*)
Black-Eared Wheatear (*Oenanthe hispanica*)
Black-Shouldered Kite (*Elanus caeruleus*)
Blue Rock-Thrush (*Monticola solitarius*)
Blue Tit (*Cyanistes caeruleus*)
Bonelli's Eagle (*Hieraetus fasciatus*)
Booted Eagle (*Hieraetus pennatus*)
Chaffinch (*Fringilla coelebs*)
Cirl Bunting (*Emberiza cirlus*)
Common Blackbird (*Turdus merula*)
Common Buzzard (*Buteo buteo*)
Common Kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*)
Common Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*)
Common Nightingale (*Luscinia megarhynchos*)
Common Magpie (*Pica pica*)
Common Moorhen (*Gallinula chloropus*)
Common Snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*)
Corn Bunting (*Miliaria calandra*)
Dartford Warbler (*Sylvia undata*)
Egyptian Vulture (*Neophron percnopterus*)
Eurasian Crag Martin (*Ptyonoprogne rupestris*)
Eurasian Eagle-Owl (*Bubo bubo*)
Eurasian Jay (*Garrulus glandarius*)
Eurasian Wryneck (*Jynx torquilla*)
European Turtle Dove (*Streptopelia turtur*)
Golden Eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*)
Golden Oriole (*Oriolus oriolus*)
Goldfinch (*Carduelis carduelis*)
Great Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*)
Great Tit (*Parus major*)
Greenfinch (*Carduelis chloris*)
Grey Heron (*Ardea cinerea*)
Grey Wagtail (*Motacilla cinerea*)
Griffon Vulture (*Gyps fulvus*)
Hoopoe (*Upupa epops*)

Jackdaw (*Corvus monedula*)
Little Egret (*Egretta garzetta*)
Little Owl (*Athene noctua*)
Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*)
Melodious Warbler (*Hippolais polyglotta*)
Northern Goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*)
Red-Legged Partridge (*Alectoris rufa*)
Red-Rumped Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*)
Rock Bunting (*Emberiza cia*)
Sardinian Warbler (*Sylvia melanocephala*)
Short-Toed Eagle (*Circaetus gallicus*)
Song Thrush (*Turdus philomelos*)
Southern Grey Shrike (*Lanius meridionales*)
Spanish Imperial Eagle (*Aquila adalberti*)
Stone Curlew (*Burhinus oedicephalus*)
Stork (*Ciconia ciconia*)
Subalpine Warbler (*Sylvia cantillans*)
Tawny Owl (*Strix aluco*)
Thekla Lark (*Galerida theklae*)
Whiterumped Swift (*Apus cafer*)
Woodchat Shrike (*Lanius senator*)

... Fish

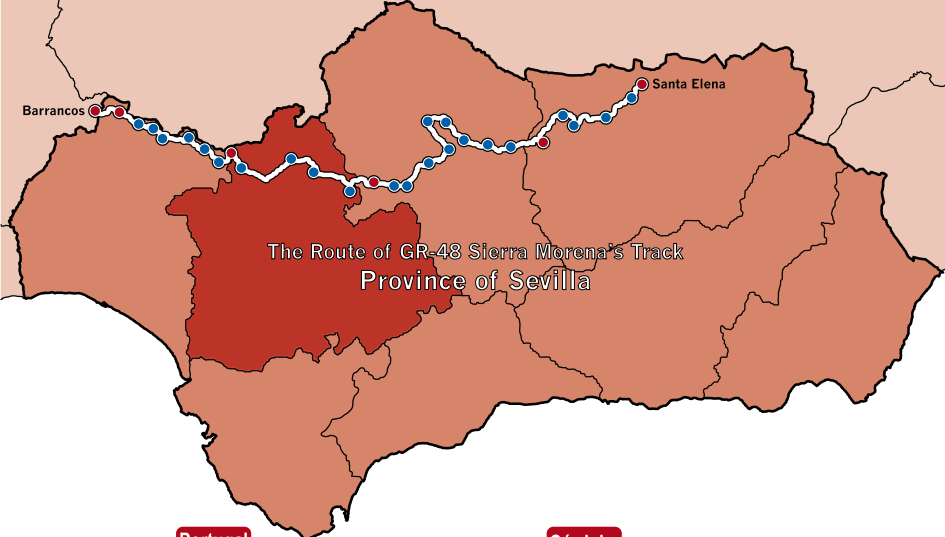
Barbel (*Barbus barbus*)
Common Carp (*Cyprinus carpio*)
European Barbel (*Barbus sclateri*)
Iberian Nase (*Chondostoma polylepis*)
Pardilla (*Rutilus lemmingii*)
Spined Loach (*Cobitis taenia*)

... Amphibians

Iberian Painted Frog (*Discoglossus galganoi*)
Bosca's Newt (*Triturus boscai*)
Pygmy Marbled Newt (*Triturus pygmaeus*)
Iberian Midwife Toad (*Alytes cisternasii*)
Iberian Water Frog (*Pelophylax perezi*)
Western Spadefoot Toad (*Pelobates cultripes*)

... Reptiles

Horseshoe Whip Snake (*Hemorrhois hippocrepis*)
Ladder Snake (*Rhinechis scalaris*)
Lataste's viper (*Vipera latasti*)
Montpellier Snake (*Malpolon monspessulanus*)
Ocellated Lizard (*Lacerta lepida*)
Viperine Water Snake (*Natrix maura*)



Portugal

● Barrancos

Huelva

- Encinasola
- Cumbres de San Bartolomé
- Cumbres Mayores
- Hinojales
- Arroyomolinos de León
- Cala
- Santa Olalla del Cala

Sevilla

- El Real de la Jara
- Almadén de la Plata
- Cazalla de la Sierra
- Constantina
- La Puebla de Los Infantes

Córdoba

- Hornachuelos
- Posadas
- Almodóvar del Río
- Santa María de Trassierra
- Cerro Muriano
- Villaharta
- Obejo
- Presa del Guadalmellato
- Adamuz
- Montoro

Jaén

- Marmolejo
- Santuario Virgen de la Cabeza
- Viñas de Peñallana
- Baños de la Encina
- La Carolina
- Santa Elena

The **GR-48 "Sierra Morena"** Path covers some 590 kilometers through the provinces of Huelva, Sevilla, Córdoba and Jaén in Andalucía although the route starts off at Barrancos, a small village in Portugal.

Four different rough guides have been produced for a better understanding and interpretation of this long distance trail. Each guide suits each one of the provinces covered by the GR-48 Path.

This guide is about the 160 kilometers trail which uses many traditional and historical paths and tracks through the Province of Sevilla. The trail comprises five lineal stages and a circular one (optional) through the *Sierra Norte de Sevilla* Natural Park. The main landscape features are pure Mediterranean forests and scrub together with pastures (*dehesas*) which are also registered UNESCO MaB *Dehesas de Sierra Morena* Biosphere Reserve. This is a region where Nature and tradition still relate harmoniously; where people incorporate natural values to their own lifestyle and personal development. Definitively, hiking in this region -*Sierra Norte*- will be an unforgettable experience.