

GR 48[®]

PROVINCE OF CÓRDOBA

ANDALUCÍA

SIERRA MORENA PATH



10 Trail maps

Scale 1:30000 and 1:75000

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GR 48®

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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 organization established by the following bodies: *Asociación Grupo de Desarrollo Rural Sierra de Aracena y Picos de Aroche*; *Asociación Grupo de Desarrollo Rural Sierra Morena Sevilla*; *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 Huelva, Sevilla, Córdoba and Jaén provinces.

ADIT Sierra Morena is supporting many activities and projects around hiking. From an environmental and healthy position, this outdoor activity appears to be an important tool for introducing the highland regions 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 Track' is a 590 kilometres of way marked route through the provinces of Huelva, Sevilla, Córdoba and Jaén in Andalusia. The starting point is Barrancos, a village located in Portugal at the border with Huelva province. 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 hiking topo-guide to some of the blissfully undiscovered walks in southern Andalusia. It has been designed for better appreciate the natural beauty and cultural aspects exhibited throughout the walk. The guide provides texts, pictures, sketches and relevant maps in order to facilitate the walking. It also features information on estimated times, distances, route and elevation profile, and difficulty of the walk as well as on the most interesting historical, cultural and ethnographical features located on the route. The reading will help the walkers to pay atten-



INTRODUCTION

tion 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 environmental 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 hiking topo-guide will certainly enhance the walkers' vision of the track as well as providing a complete picture of the journey.

Every section of the route is introduced with some general information about the natural world and how human beings have traditionally related to it in each province. Also included are detailed overviews of each the sites the walkers will find on their journey. We do believe that hiking stirs up complicity between the walker and the environment while uplifting the walker's 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 located along 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.

In general, this is an easy to follow route. Each section of the trial is suitable for mountain biking, horse riding or just walking. The technical difficulty of each section determines its length. Every stage of the route starts off and most finishes in a well-equipped small town, village or settlement 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 of culture and nature lovers.



PRESENTATION

PRESENTATION

HIKING

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GR-48 Córdoba

Hiking is a non-competitive sporting activity which takes place on rural tracks and paths. These paths are mainly endorsed by the different national Mountaineering Federations. In Spain, *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 signs and marks is posed on countryside paths, animal tracks, rivers alleys and rural roads. This system also facilitates and ensures walkers safety. So far, it could be said that hiking 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 BRIEF 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 Pédestre) was established and soon other countries as Germany, Netherlands, Belgium and Switzerland started to promote hiking as a way for sporting and doing tourism up in the mountains.

In Spain, this outdoor activity is managed by the FEDME (Federación Es-



pañola de Deportes de Montaña y Escalada) 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 waymarked trails.

PATHS HOMOLOGATION AND SIGN POSTING

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The FEDME is the body responsible for a footpath homologation. This means that the route are in place well marked and 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 tar-macs 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 cycling and horse riding.

In Spain, footpaths are classified into SGR (long distance paths), SPR (short distance paths) and SL (local paths).

- **SGRs.** Those are tracks 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. SGR routes that run through more than three European countries are classified as European International Path (E).

- **SPRs.** Half-day or one-day walks 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 interest.

- **SLs.** Those are easy walks which cover less than 10 kilometres.

• Waymarking



Finger pointer



Milestone or Milepost



Continue straight



Trail turn



Wrong direction

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 coo-

king 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 as 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 brimmed 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 flat appears to be a right walking rhythm.

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

OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH NATURE

- Fire is perhaps nature worst enemy. Along the walk, surely there will be designated areas where you are allowed to lit a fire. Obeying area regulations 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 properly. 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 in the cities, a logical and sounded relationship is set up between nature and hiking. An emphatic relationship is often established among hikers and 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 animals 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 between hikers which inform about the technical and physical characteristics of a trail. It is aimed to evaluate and unify the findings hiking trails allowing each practitioner to make a better choice.

The MIDE system uses a scale designed to 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 tool has been designed by experienced hikers so other hikers may

find the route that better suits to their physical condition and motivation. It is not all about information as the MIDE is also a tool for preventing accidents up in the mountains. The 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 y la Federación Aragonesa de Montañismo*) pondered over the need for expert information to be put in Procedures Manual in order to prevent accidents in the mountain. In 2003, the MIDE Handbook 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 low risk
- 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- Paths or signposting 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 –a river, a reservoir, etc, 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.

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Sample of a MIDE route rating:

5	5	4	3

More information:

www.euromide.info

www.fam.es

THE NATURAL WORLD

The GR-48 along the Sierra Morena Mountains in Córdoba appears to be an almost uninterrupted space that inescapably comprises nature, history, cultural heritage and population. Walkers will find themselves walking in a region which is a faithful reproduction of the natural environment.

GEOLOGY

Through the province of Córdoba, the route skirts along the mountains and occasionally drops down to the River Vega. Slates, greywacke, quartzite, and granite batholiths all they from the Palaeozoic Era are the type of rocks in the area.

On the initial stages of the walk and just at the edges of the Sierra de Hornachuelos Mountains, we will walk on calcareous remnants rich on marine fossils of the Miocene epoch. The following sections of the route, up to Almodóvar del Río, will run along the Guadalquivir River with younger beds containing an important metal deposit. The route will take us again upwards and toward the Santa María de Trassiera district where deposits from the Palaeozoic Era such slates and quartzite rocks are predominant.

Granite rocks and masses cover the surrounding areas of the Guadalbarbo Valley becoming the main geological feature of the Pedroches granitic batholiths.

At the final stage of the trail, we will find the most singular geological feature in the province: red sandstones of the Triassic age. In Montoro municipality the rocks are known as '*piedra molinaza*'. They have traditionally been used for the particular style of building in the region.

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FLORA. THE PLANTS WORLD

The omnipresent Mediterranean woods comprise a large scope of lush vegetation shaped by Holm-Oak groves and Mediterranean undergrowth of Rockroses, Mastic Thyme bushes, Wild Olive Trees and many others examples of Mediterranean scrub.



Iris flower

In the most western region Palmettos are very present thanks to the thermo-Mediterranean ground. Palmettos can be found even in Almodóvar del Río surrounding areas where they share land with Orange groves.

As we enter the sierra of Córdoba, the Mediterranean wood occurs with large pastures of Holm-Oaks and Cork Oaks, where livestock rearing is a very common activity.

There is also dense vegetation along the river banks in the mountains. There, permanent water courses such as the Baños de Popea and the Bejarano Brook irrigate the ever fresh gallery forests of alder and chestnut Trees.

The Guadiato River region to the north of Cerro Muriano district is the area of the most ancient dehesas of Ilex which alternates with Mediterranean shrub and mount Olive Tree groves at the surrounding areas of the Guadalbarbo River.

FAUNA. THE ANIMAL WORLD

Those devoted to studying the biology of amphibians and reptiles and amateur herpetologists will find a large range of amphibian all along the GR-48 route through Córdoba province. This area is home to some species which can be found only in the Iberian Peninsula. Among others, they are the Iberian Painted Frog, the Bosca's Newt, the Southern Marbled Newt, the Iberian Midwife Toad, the Iberian Water Frog and the Spadefoot Toad.



Common frog

Communities of (damselflies and dragonflies) are quite remarkable at some river banks such as the Bejarano Brook, the Yeguas River and the Guadiato River. Those communities have been exhaustively researched by various entomologists in the last twenty five years. Research shows the importance of some endangered species such as the *Macromia splendens*, the *Gomphus graslinii* and the *Oxygastra curtisii* which can be found in this area even they are quite rare species.

A quite relatively large number of carnivorous mammals live in the area yet they are very difficult to spot. We will be very lucky if we see any Fox, any Egyptian Mongoose or even the Otters. We may spot some Deer as they are very abundant and extent through most areas in the Sierra Morena mountain range. The Iberian Lynx, one of the jewels of the Iberian wild animal world, moves freely in some remote natural sites in the Sierra de Cardeña y Montoro Natural Park. Recently, a controlled number of Iberian Lynx specimens have been released in the Guadalmellato Valley located in Adamuz municipality.

Nevertheless, birds will be the most easily spotted animal species along this route. In fact, the track passes through some natural sites which are exclusively aimed to conservation and birdwatching. Moreover, some sections of the GR-48 partially match some other routes especially designed for wildlife watching, those included in the book *Birding and Nature Trails in Sierra Morena Cordobesa*.



Griffon Vulture

Big eagles such as Spanish Imperial Eagles, Bonelli's Eagles and the Golden Eagles are located in the most abrupt Mediterranean woods and mounts of the Sierra Morena mountain range. Goshawks, Short-Toed Eagles and Booted Eagles are very common in Pine woods, Holm-Oak groves and cork Oak groves. In open areas such as rain fed crops and fertile plain fields can be seen other common bird species like the Buzzard, the Kestrel and the Black-Winged Kite which is very rare in this area. Black and Griffon Vultures breeding colonies are also located in specific areas of the region which are perfect sites for Vultures watching all year around.

Large patches of Mediterranean undergrowth and scrub are home to Sub-alpine Warblers, Dartford Warblers, Sardinian warblers, Turtle Doves, Melodious Warblers, Red-legged partridges, Nightingales and Thekla Larks. The Blue Rock Thrush, the Eurasian Crag Martin, the Rock Bunting, the Eurasian Eagle-Owl, the Black-Eared Wheatear and the Kestrel are some of the bird species which can be watched in rocky ravines and on the sharpest crests of the mountains. We will be lucky if we watch the shiest White-Rumped Swift and the Black Wheatear flying over those areas.

River beds and river banks are home to colourful birds such as the Common Kingfisher, the Oriole, the European Bee-Eater and the Grey Wagtail. They are also perfect habitats for other birds like the Grey Heron, the Little egret, the Mallard, The Common Moorhen, the Snipe and the Cirl Bunting or even for scarce seasonal birds such as the shy Wryneck and the Black Stork.

Finally, Hoopoes, Azure-Winged magpies, Greenfinches and Little owls



Pebble paving on a traditional path

will be with us when passing through Olive groves and through crop fields and vegetable gardens.

THE HUMAN FOOTPRINT

As most stages of the GR-48 track uses of ancient paths and traditional cattle tracks, it is clear to what extent human beings have interacted with the natural environment. Dry stone walls are the physical borders of most of the footpaths and even walkers may find themselves walking on ancient Roman paved paths as in the surroundings of Montoro town.

We also need to keep in mind that the track runs through an area which other time used to be the border between the Christian and Muslim kingdoms. Bastions, castles, watchtowers and all sort of medieval military buildings will be common hallmarks on the region. Excellent examples of this historical heritage are the Cabrilla Watchtower and the Almódovar and Obejo castles.

Both water and olive oil mills will be very much present in many sections of the trail. The Cambuco Water Mill and the Molino del Rey one stand out among the many water mills found respectively in Hornachuelos and Posa-das environs. Other significant water mills in the area are: the Martinete Mill by the Bejarano Brook and off to Santa María de Trasierra village; the Molino del Gollizno in Adamuz town and the water mills over the Guadalquivir River in Montoro town. Of significant ethnological importance are the oil mills on the Montoro highlands. Some of those still keep the remains of the former system for pressing the olives and the counterweight tower. La Palmilla Oil Mill and San Camilo de Lelis (17th century) are good examples of those traditional buildings.

Villaharta's sour water fountains and spas are the magnificent legacy from a past clearly based on healing waters and health costume.

In addition, the subsoil on the area has traditionally been an important source for human development. The Cerro Muriano Mining Sites are a clear illustration of the area cultural and historical heritage.

TOWNS AND VILLAGES

HORNACHUELOS



Altitude: 185 m

Population: 4.684 (2009)

Hornachuelos is the second largest municipality of the province, only the capital Córdoba surpasses this district. The town is situated in the western region of the province and the huge municipal district stretches an important section of the Sierra de Hornachuelos Natural Park, named after the town. At hand from Córdoba, Écija and Sevilla -three of the most unique cities in Andalusia- Hornachuelos stands atop of one hill. This natural balcony, perched on the slopes of two gullies, is facing the source of the Bembézar River Reservoir, one of the most breathtaking landscapes of the Sierra Morena Mountains covered with Cork Oaks, Holm-Oaks and Willows, Ash Trees and Alders by the river-

side. The relationship established from centuries between human beings and nature in this region is the base for the economy. Cow and pig livestock, hunting industry and beekeeping have traditionally been the main activities although a flourishing industry related to rural tourism and outdoor activities is becoming an important source of incoming.

Hornachuelos rich architectonic heritage talks about the time when the town grew up around fortress like churches, abbeys or hilltop castles and bridges built to defend from the Portuguese. Whitewash Moorish resembled houses gathered around the Castle, the Armas square and the Old Wall, all they

from the 8th and 9th centuries. It is worthy a walk to the *Monasterio de Santa María de los Ángeles*. This today abandoned convent used to be a famous centre for religious communities spiritual seclusion. Its dramatic position on the steep hillside overlooking the Bembézar River is perfectly spotted from the Bembézar Reservoir.

The most popular events come to occur in the summer time. On July 11th is the festivity of San Abundio, saint patron of the municipality. Then, on August 2nd they joyfully celebrate *Nuestra Señora Reina de los Ángeles* festivity.

Source:

www.hornachuelosrural.com

City Council

Plaza de la Constitución, 1
957641051 / 957641052

Tourist Office

Antonio Machado, 6
957640786

Local Police

957641033 / 609602185

Guardia Civil (National Guard)

957640065

Medical centre

957641111

How to get there

• By Bus. Autobuses San Sebastián
Any queries about destinations and timetables:

957429030 / 957276771

Sierra de Hornachuelos Nature Park Visitors' Centre La Huerta del Rey.

San Calixto Road km 1,600
957 641 140

POSADAS



Altitude: 88 m

Population: 7.558 (2009)

The 'malena' town is located at the heart of the plain region known as La Vega del Guadalquivir River in Córdoba province and off Sierra Morena Mountains. Posadas is the base of the administration of the region. The city centre is about 30 Km. from Córdoba the capital of the province. Posadas's

municipal district landscape is a mixture of sierra (low mountains), vega (plain irrigated fields) and *campiña* (flat stretch of farm-land). The whole municipality joins the Sierra de Hornachuelos Natural Park which, is incorporated to the World network of the Biosphere Reserve as 'Dehesas de

Sierra Morena'. Moreover, nearby the town and in the buffer zone is 'La Sierrezuela', a very popular park where outdoors people benefit from the great historic and natural wealth of the area. Rivero de Posadas is its only 'aldea' (small village), located just 3 km. away from the district.

Posadas's economy is mainly sustained by both the goodness of the irrigated lands on the municipality and the Iberian pigs breeding and raising.

Posadas (Inns) name is after a long tradition of hospitality born from the village strategic location. The most singular feature of the district is a dolmen located in the above mentioned La Sierrezuela Park. However, a walk in the city reveals an interesting cultural heritage added to the natural heritage of this municipality. It is worthy to pay a visit to Santa María de las Flores Church (16th century), La Morería Neighbourhood (4th century) and the Marqueses de Villaseca Palace (16th and 17th centuries).

Source: www.Posadas.es

City Council

Plaza del Ayuntamiento, 1
957630013

Tourist Office

Plaza de los Pósitos, 3
957630378

Local Police

957630440 / 605841477

Guardia Civil (National Guard)

957630062

Medical centre

957630936

How to get there

- By Bus, Autobuses San Sebastián
Any queries about destinations and timetables: 957429030 / 957276771
- By train, RENFE. Any queries about destinations and timetables: 902240202 / www.renfe.es
- Taxi Services:
- Manuel Luján
689058165 / 957631620
- Taxi Cañero
600018094 / 666278052

ALMODÓVAR DEL RÍO



Altitude: 121 m

Population: 7.839 (2009)

The breathtaking omnipresent castle watches over a track of whitewashed houses that shapes this town.

Only 22 km away from the capital of the province Córdoba, Almodóvar del Río has an impressive natural he-

ritage thanks to its location. The municipality stretches across both the rich and fertile plain fields irrigated by the Guadalquivir River and the wealthy and exuberant woods up on the hills of Sierra Morena.

The exceptional ecological values inhered in the hills and low mountains of this municipal district are well preserved as they are an integral part of the Sierra de Hornachuelos Nature Park. Moreover, they are an important section of the Dehesas de Sierra Morena area which is incorporated to the World network of the Biosphere Reserve. The astonishing natural value of some riverside woods such as the one alongside the Guadalora Brook with Willows, Ash Trees and Alders and the Mediterranean woods of Cork and Holm Oaks and a rich undergrowth provide home for a fairly large array of wildlife.

The amazing landscape of this municipality invite to interesting walks which can start from some distinct places no far away the town. Within a stone's throw from Almodóvar is one of these sites, Los Llanos de Almodóvar del Río. Here we can stop at the Ethnologic Museum where the visitors may get a deeply understanding of the costume and lifestyle of past generations and the way people used to benefit from the nearby hills and mountains.

Atop of the La Floresta hill is the amazing Almodóvar Castle which is the most interesting architectonic unit

in this town. The town landmark is a not to be missed spot in the municipality as it has great architectonical features. The castle itself can be seen from really far way and it is an exceptional balcony offering a most complete view of the Guadalquivir River and its surrounding vega as well as the Sierra Morena closer hills.

Source: www.Almodóvardelrio.com

City Council

Plaza de la Constitución, 4
957713602 / 957713604

Tourist Office

ABC, 7
957635014

Local Police

957713701 / 610751161

Guardia Civil (National Guard)

957635027

Medical centre

957719576 / 957719577

How to get there

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957 27 67 71
- Taxi Services:
- Taxi Rafael Castilla
677411400
- Taxi Sacatacos
957713544 / 636145039
- Taxi Felipe
657715152

Ethnologic Museum

Los Llanos, km. 20,5
957635487 / 649452580 /
www.museoetnologico.com



SANTA MARÍA DE TRASSIERRA



This medieval small village is in fact a Córdoba neighbourhood. In the village there are some properties from the 15th century owned by nobility. In fact, Santa María de Trassierra was the residence for some illustrious people. The universal Christopher Columbus once lived in this village and walked on these streets. His lover, Beatriz Enriquez de Arana and their son Diego Colon lived here too and, years later the famous writer Luis

de Gongora set in here his parish church leaving behind a bunch of poems describing the beauty of the natural surroundings.

Special mention to the Mudejar (partly Gothic, partly Islamic style) and Gothic style church in the village. It is worthy to stop and visit it to admire its architectural features and the majesty of the altarpiece from the 16th century that it was probably brought up to here from the capital Cathedral.

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GR-48 Córdoba

CERRO MURIANO



Altitude: 693 m

Population: 2.500 (2008)

This small town and its municipal district are fully integrate in the Sierra Morena Mountains of Córdoba just 16 Km far from the capital of the province. The municipality de-

pends on two other municipal districts: Córdoba and Obejo.

Cerro Muriano has traditionally been connected to copper mining works.

Copper extractions were firstly carried out by old Romans that used to manage the many mines in the surrounding hills. In the 20th century, when the mining activity came to an end, Cerro Muriano people massively moved out. This social situation turned over when the Spanish Ministry of Defence set up a military depot off to this small town which, brought about a flourishing economy mainly based upon services. Cerro Muriano is surrounded by afforested Pine Trees woods. Those dense woods are a 'pulmón verde' for Córdoba capital city. The term 'pulmón verde' (green lung) applies to an area rich in vegetation which is close to an urban area.

Located on one of the municipality hills is a marvellous natural balcony which takes to visitors to the time when mine workings became a most important industry. Two other significant elements of its heritage are the

Old mine site Las Siete Cuevas and the Cerro de la Coja an archaeological site which be visited. The Cerro Muriano Copper Museum gives to the visitors a deep insight through the history and the traditional ways of extracting this mineral.

Source: www.obejo.es

Obejo City Council

Iglesia, 16

957369042/ 9573691

Local Police (Córdoba)

957455300

Guardia Civil (National Guard)

957251100

Medical centre (Cerro Muriano)

957354007

How to get there

- By Bus, Aucorsa (from Córdoba city). 957 764 676 / www.aucorsa.es

- Linesur

Any queries about destinations and timetables:

957 421 585 / www.linesur.com

VILLAHARTA



Altitude: 579 m

Population: 743 (2009)

This small municipality is located 38 Km north from the capital Córdoba. Villaharta is a charming easy for walking town perched in Sierra Morena and surrounded by beautiful Medi-

can terranean woods and olive groves. The beauty of the town and its relative closeness to the capital city are the main reasons why it is very popular for short break destinations.

A singular feature of this place is the weather. Villaharta high location and the many streams that flow on the municipality allow the growing of thick woods. This brings temperatures down and produces a fresher microclimate very much welcome by the people from the warmer Córdoba.

Walking is one of the very best ways to discover this beautiful municipality. A network of paths and trails run through stunning Holm Oaks and undergrowth woods. However, it is water the most significant element in Villaharta. Rich in minerals and with well known healing properties, Villaharta water streams and springs are said to be a source for health improving. Santa Elisa Thermals were the most popular among the many spas and thermal resorts in the municipality.

Worthy to pay a visit to this small town on the Corpus Christy Day when the streets of the town are covered with petals and coloured sawdust to created colourful pictures on the streets pavement.

Source: www.villaharta.es

City Council

Virgen de la Piedad, 1
957367135 / 957367061

Guardia Civil (National Guard)

(Peñarroya – Pueblonuevo)
957635027

Medical centre

957365542 / 670947560

Library

Avenida Andalucía, 2. 957367285

How to get there

By Bus, Linesur
957421585 / www.linesur.com

OBEJO



Altitude: 707 m

Population: 1.872 (2009)

Obejo is a tiny town located in the Sierra de los Santos a set of hills and low mountains in the Sierra Morena Mountains of Córdoba. It is 47 Km away from the capital of the province. Obejo population shares out in Obejo itself, Cerro Muriano and La estación de Obejo

(Obejo Station) a tiny village near-by Obejo town.

The economy has traditionally been related to the mining industry of copper, lead, silver and gold and to countryside activities such as cattle breeding, vineyards and

Olive groves, charcoal making and beekeeping. Today, the main source of incoming is the olive oil industry though. The natural heritage of this municipality has its major element in the landscape along the Guadalbarbo River course. The landscape turned from riverside woods of Oleanders and Tamujos up stream to Olive groves at the lower end.

Obejo Moorish origins are clear just walking around the town streets. A maze of narrow streets lined with whitewash houses that ends up at the top of the hill where the remains of the former Arab fortress, known as La Fortaleza crown this small town. The most attractive religious building of the municipality is San Antonio Abad Parish church (13th century), declared National Artistic Historical Monument in 1982. A visit to this small town is worthy any time of the year. However, it is especially interesting to

get here on any of the three dates when they dance La Danza de las Espadas (The Swords Dance). This dance is quite unique. Thirty two men wearing a traditional costume and swords dance around the dance master. The dance has its pick moment when the dancers perform 'el patatú' (the faint) that finishes with a mock execution of the dance master in which the swords are locked around his neck.

Source: www.obejo.es

Obejo City Council

Iglesia, 16

957369042

Medical Centre

957369016

How to get there

By Bus, Linesur

Any queries about destinations and timetables:

957421585 | www.linesur.com

ADAMUZ



Altitude: 240 m

Population: 4.419 (2009)

Northeast from the capital city, Adamuz is located in the Alto Guadalquivir region. This is a severe hill-country region with a sharply sloping landscape where Olive groves strongly stick to the ground to

produce a most high quality olive oil. The cultural heritage has in two elements its most significant value. One is the San Andrés Church from the 13th century and then restored and improved in the 16th century. The

other relevant architectural element is La Torre del Reloj (The Clock Tower). This feature is quite peculiar as it was partly built in 1556 and then finished in 1953.

However, it is the natural heritage of this municipality what makes it special. The town is surrounded by a network of sloping streams that are the main water supply for the Varas River and the Guadalmellato River, both flowing through the municipal district. In addition, there are many footpaths and trails that can be used to best appreciate the diversity and beauty of Adamuz countryside. One of the many routes to follow starts at the Navaluenga track to get to the Guadalmellato Reservoir. Soon walkers will find themselves trekking off into country Olive groves and thick Mediterranean woods. Then there is the Montes Comunales which is a 2,500 hectares public Country Estate. The almost untouched Mediterranean woods and mountain forests in this area are home for a range of protected wildlife as well as a per-

fect scenario for experiencing game howling. Therefore, game hunting is a quite important activity in the area. Finally, special mention to the many natural caves, another special natural resource recently turned into rural accommodations and refuges for hikers, rambblers and walkers.

Source: www.adamuz.es

Obejo City Council

Fuente, 1. 957166002

Tourist Office

957166496

Local Police

637513290

Guardia Civil (National Guard)

957106001

Medical Centre

957199621

How to get there

- By Bus, Linesur. Any queries about destinations and timetables:
- Taxi: Francisco Cuadrado Jiménez: 957166354 / 610729926

MONTORO



Altitude: 195 m

Population: 9.917 (2009)

Talk about Montoro is talk about the Guadalquivir River. This singular town is located 40 Km east

from Córdoba and between two important geographical features: the mountain range at the north

and the fertile plain at the south. Montoro municipal district is completely inside the limits of the Sierra de Cardena y Montoro Natural Park that is partly named after the town.

Olive groves stretch up to 80% of the growing fields. Top quality olive oil production is the base of the economy. However, recent years have seen an increasing flourishing tourism industry set out in the municipality with some rural accommodations, hotels, restaurants and adventure travel agencies.

Montoro is picturesquely located on a small hill, on the banks of the Guadalquivir River. In addition to the natural surroundings, the town itself is worthy to visit due to its particular beauty. Declared Historic and Artistic Site in 1969, Montoro is a grid of sharply sloping narrow streets where whitewash houses and 'molinaza' (red sandstone) stone buildings gather together to confer the town's exclusive attractiveness.

Montoro cultural heritage has its most relevant elements on Nuestra Señora del Carmen Parish Church (18th century), San Sebastián Church (16th century). San Bartolomé Parish Church (15th century); the Guadalquivir Bridge;

the remains of La Mota and Julia castles and the many coats of arms honouring the facades of many buildings.

Other interesting places for the visitors are the Archaeology Museum where are exhibited pieces from the many different groups historically settled in the municipality and the Pintor Antonio Rodríguez Luna Museum.

Source: www.montoro.es

City Council

Iglesia, 16
957160425

Tourist Office

957160089

Medical centre

957199738

Local Police

957161321

Guardia Civil (National Guard)

957160037

How to get there

- By Bus, Autocares Ramírez
957422177

www.autocaresramirez.es

Archaeology Museum

Plaza Santa María del Castillo de la Mota, s/n
957160593





GR-48 PROVINCE OF CÓRDOBA

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The letters GR stand for 'Gran Recorrido' (Long Journey). The origins of the GRs come from the time when human beings moved away from the seashores to explore the inland. The ancient trade routes became the ground for this type of long footpaths. A GR route is designed to avoid traffic roads, whenever possible. The trail covers some of the most stunning natural sceneries and many especially attractive country towns, villages and small villages.

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The GR-48 route covers over 180 kilometres in the province of Córdoba and through the Sierra Morena Mountains. Designed to be walked in ten stages, this GR connects both the Sierra de Hornachuelos Natural Park and the Sierra de Cardeña y Montoro Natural Park.

The trail gets into the province of Córdoba by Hornachuelos town and heads off to Posadas town. This is the southern area of the Sierra de Hornachuelos Nature Park, a section of the park where the mountains meet the fertile plain areas. Landscape is remarkable for the variety of scenery, a mixture of dry and irrigated land fields. Orange Trees and Mediterranean undergrowth mixed together to frame up the division line which is the track.

The Cañada Real Soriana track takes us to Posadas through a stunning natural strategic enclave. This is an area where many country paths meet. A junction of traditional paths dotted with watchtowers as La Cabrilla Tower, silent witness from the past watching over the landscape. This stage of the route comes to an end in Almodóvar del Río town where the main attraction is the bulwark with the Almódovar Castle surmounting a breathtaking hill.

The GR-48 will get back to the roughness of the Sierra Morena Mountains towards Santa María de Trassierra. Here walkers will submerge themselves into sheer Mediterranean woods spattered with Chestnut Trees where livestock is managed in country states as the Villalobos and the Porrada Country States. Moreover, this is an area with high level of rainfalls where we will eventually come across to areas of special natural and historical value as the

old roman Popea Baths and the surroundings of the Bejarano Brook. The walk follows through dense Pine woods and takes us to Los Villares Periurbano Park where we walk up to Torreárboles geodesic top. From here walkers will have a most impressive view.

On the 4th stage of the trial, we will head up north to get to Cerro Muriano village walking on a section of the Cañada Real Soriana which goes across a land of ever green Oak woodlands and that passes through El Vacar village and Villaharta small town. The later is well known because of the many healing thermals and spas in the municipality. The walk finishes in Obejo highland. Rough ecological Olive groves are the main natural feature alongside the Guadalbarbo River (the Berbers River). From the highlands we will go down into the Guadalmellato River Valley to walk through the reservoir where the endangered species the Iberian Lynx is recently being freed in.

Heading to Adamuz small town, we will walk on the roughness of the Mediterranean woods. The landscape will eventually turn into fickle rocky crests as we pass by San Francisco de los Conventos. As the walk progresses, the path will go down towards the Guadalquivir vega leaving behind Algallarín small village. Footpaths, dirt roads and even a section of a former roman road take us to Montoro. The outstanding monumental town is strategically built atop a hill on one of the most winding meanders of the Guadalquivir River.

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The last stage of the trial across Córdoba province will go through the rolling hills of the mountain range off to the Sierra de Cardeña y Montoro Natural Park southern limits. The path links farmlands where still remain some old Olive Oil Mills. The route most time follows the Cordel de las Vacas Bravas footpath. This historical path surrounded by an impressive environment will take us to the Yeguas River riverbanks which are the geographical limits to the province of Jaén. We will get to the end of the route in Marmolejo (Jaén province) a very popular town thanks to the healing properties of its waters and the famous thermal spa.

STAGE 1:

HORNACHUELOS-POSADAS



On this first stage, we will get inside Córdoba province through the southernmost limit of the Sierra de Hornachuelos Natural Park. The trial follows on from an old path that links both Hornachuelos and Posadas towns and that skirts alongside the rolling hills drawing a dividing line between the vega growing fields and the rough Mediterranean woodlands of Ilex, Wild Olive Trees and Palmetto.

There is a theory which tries to explain the origins of Hornachuelos toponym. It is to be said to come from the Mozarabic word 'fomix-icis' which has three meanings: 'underground dome', 'tunnel' or 'hollow rock'. All those meanings

share also the same root 'fornax' which was the name given by Mozarabs to a dome shaped pottery. The Spanish word 'hornacho', quite close to the toponym Hornachuelos, is used to identify the huge hole made in a mountain for minerals extracting. This theory makes sense with just a glimpse to the massive hollowed limestone rock where the town is settled.

The trail connects at some points with the Cañada Real Soriana. A 'cañada' is a network of paths and trails used historically to transport livestock to and from pasturelands to market. These paths were traditionally used twice a year when the animals were taken to both the summer grasslands and the winter ones. The Cañada Real Soriana network stretches from the Spanish northwest to the south-western areas of the country. The footprint on this path is a network of structures for livestock rearing left behind by human beings across the centuries. We will come across with the remains of water mills, roman bridges –as the one over the Guadalcarejo River-, dry stone walls, stone farmyards, and farmhouses.

In addition, we would like to recall of the marine fossils on the limestone rocks that can be spot along the walk. They are mainly *Pecten benedictus* mollusks from the later Miocene, a time when the area was covered by the sea.

Start: Hornachuelos town
Finish: Posadas town. A bridge under the AVE
Distance: 14 km
Time: 3 hours 40 minutes

Suitability:



29

GR-48 Córdoba

Difficulty: MIDE evaluation



Enviroment:
Severity of the natural environment.

1



Track Features:
Difficulty in following the track.

2



Orientation:
Guidance on the route directions.

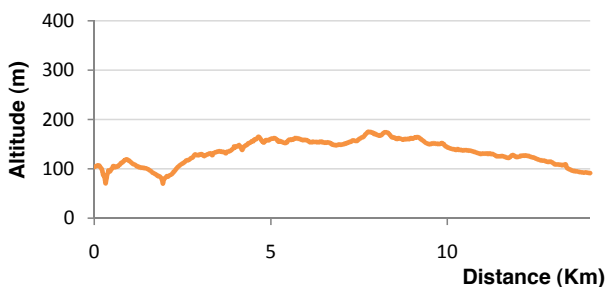
2



Struggle:
Struggle required for accomplishing the route.

3

Hornachuelos - Posadas



ROUTE DESCRIPTION

The walk starts at the 0 km on the CO-5314 road and at the Hornachuelos suburbs. From here we will walk 200 metres down towards the Bembézar Diversion Dam at the Bembézar Reservoir.

••• Km 0.2. The Bembézar Diversion Dam



The Bembézar River Diversion Dam

The Bembézar River spring locates in Extremadura territory and from there it flows north-south in the heart of the Sierra de Hornachuelos Natural Park. Many are the animal species that come to drink of the river waters and, on the riverbanks is easy to spot some of the most representative mammals of the park as red deer. In addition, migrant birds and seasonal birds can be watched on the Bembézar waters all year around. It is especially significant the number of birds that choose this natural enclave to pass the winter in, as it is the case of Cormorants. They migrate from Scandinavian countries to the southern Iberian waters in winter.

The Sierra de Hornachuelos Natural Park is one of the three natural parks located within the province of Córdoba boundaries. The park extends for over 60,000 hectares and is part of the Unesco Biosphere Reserve for the Sierra Morena mountain range. The park also includes some areas of the following municipalities: Almodóvar del Río, Hornachuelos, Posadas, Villaviciosa de Córdoba and a small area of Córdoba municipal district. In addition, the Huerta del Rey Visitors Centre is located in the park and quite close to Hornachuelos town. Some different routes, starting off at the Visitor's Centre, have been designed to show the beauty and magnitude of the Mediterranean woods. In Hornachuelos surrounding areas is possible to walk through different landscapes. From the rich biologically diverse of the evergreen Oaks groves and of some healthy patches of Cork Oaks groves to the splendid Guadalora River riverside



Watching wildlife in Hornachuelos

which supports one of the best European Nettle Tree patch in the province.

On route, we will leave behind us the Bembézar Diversion Dam to connect with the Sendero del Bembézar Path. As we walk on the path, we can have a look to the limestone slope on the right side of the path. This is the Natural Park limit and is mainly covered in moss and plants likely of growing on limestone grounds such the Common Maidenhair Fern, also known as *Cabello de Venus* (Venus' hair). This plant is popular as it has certain therapeutic properties and reported benefits when treating a variety of health problems, including detoxifying the liver and help with jaundice, easing kidney stones as well as shortness of breath.

The path becomes a soft slope and will take us to a junction. There we will take the road to the right which is the one that links Hornachuelos and Posadas towns. This countryside road goes through Orange groves and on its right side is the Los Corrales Country State. In here we could turn around and have a moment to enjoy a most beautiful view of Hornachuelos, the whitewash town firmly anchored to the massive limestone rock on which is stood.

••• Km 2. The Bridge over Guadalcarejo (or Guadalvacarejo) River

Next point of interest on our route is the bridge over Guadalvacarejo River. Downstream and on one side of the bridge there are the remains of an old roman bridge and on the other side the remains of the Cambuco Mill.

The mill was originally built in one of the many cavities of the ground caused as the result of limestone being diluted by the river waters. The stream has also carved the limy soil creating an intricate maze of caves and potholes. It is hard to spot the mill as its entrance is covered by rough Blackberry bushes. Inside it still remain two original millstones.



Olive orange groves near Nublos

••• Km 3.75. Atalaya de Nublos Track

At this point we will leave the countryside road and we will take the path to the left. This is Nublos Watchtower track and we walk on it most of the route. The track is the division line between the hills and the growing fields on the left. We will carry on walking on this path until we leave behind us the Nublos Watchtower farmhouses and its Palm Trees. Then the path winds through Wild Olive Trees, Carob Trees and Palmettos. We will have the impression that we walk on a path pitted of bedrock. Showy Thyme scrubs grow from within the many cracks on the limy soil stirring the walker's senses up.

••• Km 6. The Arbón Farmhouse

We will get to the *Cortijo del Arbón* Farmlands after leaving on our right an old well with two basins carved in limestone rock. On one of the basins side still can be seen the ramp used in the past as washing place. The farmhouse is surrounded by Hackberry Trees and an impressive ancient Fig Tree. The remains of the limestone rough dry stone wall which can be seen on one side of the farmhouse used to be a livestock yard as the 'cortijo' is quite close to the Cañada Real Soriana trail. Shortly after passing by the farmhouse we will connect to this track.



Arbón Well

We will walk on the Cañada Real Soriana path that comes from the vega fields on its way to Sevilla. This section of the path is a natural limit between the mountains and the vega fertile fields. On both sides of the path we can see the dry stone walls that mark off the legal width of the path. As we walk we get in Posadas municipality and the number of Ilex Trees increases. Most of the farmhouses that we will see alongside the path have been restored yet in some of them still can be spotted the remains of some hallmarks such sheep-fold, watering places and dry stone walls which were very useful in the past when sheep livestock rearing was the most significant activity in the area.

... Km 8.2. Los Rubios de Paterna Private Country Estate

We carry on walking on the path which skirts along the sierra. At this point, we will come across to some important country estates such 'La Dehesa de los Rubios de Paterna'. Vegetation increases and becomes a lush woodland of wild olive Trees and hundreds years old Holm Oaks. We may be tempted to have a rest in the shade of one of those ancient Trees. The landscape takes us back into time when under those impressive Tree



Watch for fossils along the path

tops transhumant herds and men used to take shelter from the suffocating heat. In addition, we may have a glimpse to the many prehistoric marine fossils spattering the limestone rocks formation that appears at the surface of the ground.

This is an area of great biodiversity as it is where two well distinguishable ecosystems converge on: the mountain and the rain fed crops. Hereby, the area is home for species from mountain habitats such Wild Boars, Common Genets and Egyptian Mongooses as well as for other species proper of cultures of dryness such Stone Curlews and Corn Buntings. In fact, the electrical line of low voltage that runs along the path acts as an exceptional watchtower where birds of prey as Kestrels and Shrikes perch. The path is becoming more passable in this section and it leads to some smallholdings. Ahead we can see now the Pine groves of La Sierra-zuela Park and Posadas town in the Vega fertile fields.



Woodchat Shrike

As the walk progresses, we will pass near some limestone quarries that have traditionally been used as provisional shelter for sheep and goats herds. To the right of the path the wavy agricultural lands bring to the walkers' mind a colourful palette, especially in the spring time.

••• Km 10.2. The tarmac path

As the number of Pine Trees increases on the mountain skirt, the dirt track becomes a countryside road while the soil alongside the track transforms into brown reddish colours. On both sides of the path can be seen rows of Olive groves. We have come to an area clearly transformed by human beings activities. The landscape is now a maze of farmhouses surrounded by small vegetable gardens, fruit Trees and familiar cattle developments.

We will walk across the countryside road to get to the bridge over the AVE (Spanish High Speed Train) railings. From the bridge we will take a

dirt road to the left. For about 1.5 kilometres we will walk on this path that goes alongside the train railings.

••• Km 12. The AVE service road

The AVE service road takes us to the A-433 junction (Posadas –La Sierrezuela- Villaviciosa de Córdoba). Here, we will take to the right and carry on walking on this path that takes us to a point under the AVE Bridge. This is Posadas's gateway and the end of the route.



Palmetto plant

Cañada Real Soriana



••• A 'cañada' is a network of paths or trails traditionally used to seasonal mustering livestock, especially sheep and goats. The 'cañada' was a most distinguishing feature in one's rural transhumant life. The paths were used to move the livestock between highlands in Castilla and lowland pastures as meadows and valleys in the south of Spain where winters are warmer. The history of 'cañadas reales' goes back to the 13th century. In 1273 the King Alfonso X the Wise conferred on those paths royal sole right and so they were institutionalised in law and came under the King's protection. Royal regulations about uses were placed on the 'cañadas' and taxes were charged to 'ganaderos' (livestock raisers) for using paths, bridges crossing and landowner states traversing. The width of a ca-

ñada real was set on exactly 'six ropes of forty five hand spans each' which is the equivalent to today 75 metres. Connecting to the cañada real they were many other paths as 'cordales' and 'veredas'. The former was a cañada real half width and the later a quarter.

The origins of sheep livestock migrations in Spain go back centuries. Thoroughly research concludes that pastoral transhumance, even seasonal migrations, was commonly carried out by ancient Iberians. In addition, the quality of wool from Turdetania and from Bética (Guadalquivir valley) was well recorded in old Roman trading reports.

The Cañada Real Soriana goes from Soriana to Sevilla. It is the longest of the nine paths that crisscross the Spanish soil. It links the Sistema Ibérico to Andalusia.

STAGE 2:**POSADAS-ALMODÓVAR DEL RÍO**

This stage is seen as a bridge between the Sierra de Hornachuelos Mountains and the Sierra de Córdoba Mountains. Most time the track runs parallel to roads and to the AVE railway yet it eventually connects with the *Cañada Real Soriana* trail.

Posadas town (Malenia in ancient Roman epoch) is located on the mountain skirt and close to the Guadalquivir Vega. On this stage we will walk through two different landscapes to finally get back to the lush rough mountains of Sierra Morena.

This is an area mainly altered by human beings activities and with a thick network of traffic roads and the AVE railway. Nevertheless, the walker may come across with some interesting culturally distinct units within the territory. This is the case of the many Moorish watermills and watchtowers, as La Cabrilla Watchtower. In addition, a most attractive feature is the magnificent landmark which is the Almodóvar Castle and the hill where it is standing on.

As we said above, the track connects to the *Cañada Real Soriana* and we walk on this track for a big while. Hereby, we will again bump into the remains of many features from a rustic past as coarse dry stone walls and resting places for the livestock.

Especial mention in here to two interesting features on this stage. One is an area of botanical interest where the path goes through 'Acebuches Centenarios', centuries- old Wild Olive Trees. A recognised importance has been posed on the Trees and they are registered as a singular exceptional natural feature in the province of Córdoba. Another peculiarity that we will come across with is the remarkable area shaped by the *Cañada Real Soriana* Recreation Area and the path over the Guadiato Old Bridge. The bridge is quite near the river mouth into the Guadalquivir River. From here we can have a look to the increasing Breña II reservoir.

Definitively this route will take us down to the Guadalquivir Vega while walking on one of the most ancient footpaths used historically to travel from Córdoba to Sevilla.

Starts: Posadas town
Finish: Almodovar del Rio town, opposite to the football pitch.
Distance: 8 Km
Time: 2 hours and 40 minutes

Suitability:**Difficulty: MIDE evaluation**

Enviroment:
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.





ROUTE DESCRIPTION

Our walk starts at the exactly point where it finished the previous track. This is at the junction between the AVE service road and the A-433 road (Posadas-La Sierrezuela Villaviciosa de Córdoba). For about 1 km, we will head east when walking on the path that runs parallel to the Ave works path. We will go then across the railway and over the bridge that takes us down to the Guadalbaida Brook.

37



White Storks

••• Km 1.3. Casa de los Molinos. Molino del Rey Watermill

At this point, the Cañada Real Soriana path wades through the Guadalbaida Brook near where the remains of an old watermill are. This watermill is known as the Molino del Rey (the King's Watermill) and today only the remains of the original tower stay on.

We can walk down to the stream where we may find prehistoric marine fossils on the limestone rocks.

This area, where many paths come to meet in, appears to have been quite relevant in past times when sheep herds were brought up to here to rest and to water. In fact, just a few steps ahead we will bump into a 'descansadero' (resting place) surrounded by centuries-old wild olive trees.



A centuries-old Wild Olive Tree

Descansaderos



●●● In past times, livestock breeders used to walk the herds from the highlands in the north to the pasturelands in the south. A network of paths for livestock moving was put in place and legally regulated to make easier the seasonal migrations. Those paths are known as 'vías pecuarias'.

The long transhumant journeys required some supporting structures such as resting areas for both the shepherds and the livestock, water troughs, and places where spend the night in. Most resting areas are called 'descansaderos' and they are located by paths and tracks junctions. The 'vías pecuarias' are legally regulated as "possessions of public use". This also applies to the many 'descansaderos' that can be found along the path.

So, all along the lineal layout of a 'vía pecuaria' people could find a network of supporting structures

similar to the service areas that today can be found along the motorways. Today the remains of some features proper of 'descansaderos' areas are revealed to the walkers as they hike in the country. Those can be stone water troughs, wells, fountains, rustic sheds even stone kilns.

Surely livestock breeders and shepherds used to rest their flocks or herds in the shade of the many centuries-old Trees that can be seen along the path. That is the case of this 'descansadero' where we are now. It appears to be located in a strategic location, just at the point where some dirt paths and tracks from Sierra Morena Mountains join the Cañada Real Soriana track. We may also believe that shepherds could be likely for resting by the riversides of the seasonal stream that flows through the area while waiting for the temporal flooding lessen or livestock watering.

••• Km 2.2. A Bridge over the A-431 road

We can stop by the bridge over the road A-431 and have a look to the impressive views across the hills. To the east and far away, the silhouette of the Almodóvar Castle appears against the sky over La Floresta Hill. The remains of a small watchtower known as La Torre de la Cabrilla can be spotted on the way to the Castle. This Moorish tower is a hallmark for walkers to clearly read the path direction.

We carry on en route. This section of path drops down and at a junction it meets a former countryside road and the AVE railway. We will pick up the AVE works path and continue on this track for almost the rest of the journey.

••• Km 3.8. La Cabrilla Tower

The AVE works path continues parallel to the actual train railway. We will pass by The Cabrilla Watchtower strikingly standing on a hillock to the left. The origins of this tower are back to 1267 when another tower known as La Atalayuela used to be located in here. As the time passed by, the original tower deteriorated. Between 1403 and 1406, the second chief magistrate of Córdoba, Doctor Luís Sánchez, got a new tower built to 'safeguard the road to Sevilla'. Today it is declared of Cultural Interest.

La Cabrilla Watch-tower



After having a glimpse to the tower, we will carry on walking on the path for a big while. On one side it is the railway and on the other fields of orange groves. Eventually, we will get to a point where the path meets the Guadiato River. Then we will pass a metal fence that we should shut behind us. We carry on walking on this side of the river and short after, we will get to the bridge over the Guadiato River which is where the Cañada Real Soriana path crosses over the river.

••• Km 6. Bridge over Guadiato River

After we have crossed over the river, we will be entering the Breña II Reservoir buffer area. Up to the north we can see the dam lower area. As we walk on the path we will get to a resting area where are displayed some stone sculptures spattering the area. This artistic work is a tribute to traditional transhumance undertaken by the students from the Dionisio Ortiz Art School in Córdoba. The stone made figures feature a sheep flock with some sheep and a ram.



Sculpture representing transhumant cattle

From this point the path ascends and ends up running parallel to the A-431 road. At a point, we will pass by a pedestrian path bridge over the road. This pedestrian path connects to a footpath that gets to the La Caballera Recreation Area. It is up to the walker to spend some time in this area and then get back to our original footpath. The path we follow is the former C-431 road today not in use. When we get to the Km 26, we will leave this countryside road to follow a footpath between the A-432 road and the limit of the Peña del Águila Country State.

This last section of the track appears to be less attractive. Nevertheless,

we still can find some interesting vegetation, especially shrub species such Palmetto, Jerusalem Sage and Yellow Broom. In the distance, now we can clearly spot the Almodóvar Castle and the impressive Peña del Águila country state standing on a hill and surrounded by healthy conifer woods. About 30 years ago the top of the hill was a granite outcrop and massive rocks and Spheroidal weathering of granite spattered the hill slopes. Today this area has been transformed into a residential resort for monastic life.

Eventually, we will get off to the Almodóvar F.C football pitch where our journey comes to an end.

STAGE 3:

ALMODÓVAR DEL RÍO- SANTA MARÍA DE TRASSIERRA



On this stage the track will take us from the plain fertile fields down in the vega to Santa María de Trassierra village, a neighbourhood of Córdoba located in the heart of Sierra Morena Mountains. This will be an ascendant walk where different landscapes follow one another.

41

It will get our attention the many areas for cattle rearing. We will walk across huge meadows and pasture lands where we may find scatterings of different Spanish breed of beef cattle –Retinta, Avileña and Parda-Alpina, grazing around in colourful and bucolic landscapes.

GR-48 Córdoba



Cork oak tree

Most part of the route happens together with the 'Vereda de la Porrada' path, one of the traditional paths for livestock transhumance in the area. The path winds through a public Country State and it is well defined by dry stone walls on both sides. Nevertheless, we need to be alert to the turns and crosses that we passed by.

The ascending cross-section of the track is the transition between a warmer Mediterranean area and another one which is much humid. Palmettos and carob Trees will give pass to evergreen shrubs such Durum and Strawberry Trees (*Arbutus unedo*) and meadows of Holm Oaks will be replaced by ancient Cork Oak woods. The limy lands on the mountains skirts will turn into darker slabs of slate and quartzite from the Palaeozoic era.

Certainly, this path acts as both the link and the transition between the vega fields and the foothills of Sierra Morena Mountains. The many shades that the walker will come across with in such environment will make up for the roughness and difficulties of this upward walking.

Start: Almodóvar del Río
Finish: Santa María de Trasierra
Distance: 22 Km
Time: 6 hours and 30 minutes

Suitability:



Difficulty: MIDE evaluation



Environment:
Severity of the natural environment.

1



Track Features:
Difficulty in following the track.

1



Orientation:
Guidance on the route directions.

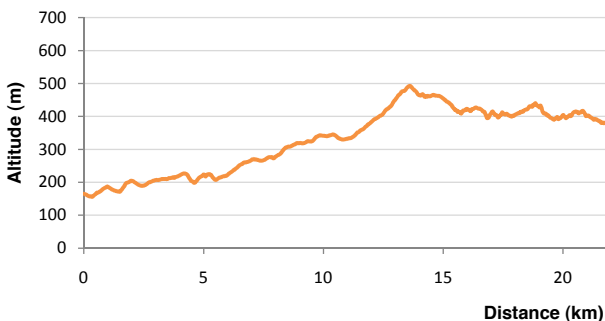
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Struggle:
Struggle required for accomplishing the route.

3

Almodóvar - Santa María de Trasierra



ROUTE DESCRIPTION

We will start this route in Almodóvar del Río town. We need to look back to the Ancient Roman Epoch to find the origins of this town. The town most attractive feature is the medieval castle standing on the Floresta hill.

Most of the route goes on the *Vereda del Chifle* footpath which will later become the *Vereda de la Porrada* path that connects to the *Cañada Real Soriana* track. At some point of the walk, the *Vereda del Chifle* path matches the *Camino de los Toros* path.

The dirt road is the former CP-159 road to Alisne. We will follow this dirt road leaving behind the motocross circuit that winds up toward the Alisne hill.

Almodóvar Castle



●●● This castle is protected by the Act on Spanish National Historic Heritage (*Declaración Genérica del Decreto de 22 de abril de 1949 and the Ley 16/1985 sobre el Patrimonio Histórico Español*). In 1993, the Andalusia Government posed special recognition on to every castle in the Andalusia territory and therefore on to the Almodóvar one.

This castle has a great importance in the Medieval Age. It is sitting atop a large hill (200 m high) called the *Cerro de la Floresta* along the Guadalquivir River. At that time the river used to be navigable and riverside boats used to sail up to the city. This strategic position played an important role when defending the city of Córdoba.

First thing it gets to the eyes are the two big towers, one is the Homenaje Tower and the other

is the Escuela Tower. The set is finished off by a crenellated structure with pyramidal forms. Dens and loopholes distributed by the building complete off the defensive elements.

In the Caliphal epoch, the castle played an important role during the Yemeni rebellious uprising against Abderramán I, the first Umayyad Emir of Córdoba. History tells us that the Islamic tribes, the Yemeni, started the rebellion in this castle yet they were soon after defeated nearby the castle doors.

In 1240 and under Fernando III reign, the castle was passed on to the Christians. During the reigns of Pedro I and Enrique II the castle became the Royal Residence. Later it will belong to the *Orden de Calatrava* which, years later will pass it on to the *Orden de Santiago*. In 1629, the king Felipe IV sold the castle to Don Francisco de Corral y



Guzman. Since then it has been owned by this noble family.

In the early 20th century, the Count of Torralba, at that time owner of the castle, commissioned some restoring works that lasted up to the Spanish Civil War. From that time onwards, the castle has been open to tourism. Today it is one of the few castles in Andalusia that can be visited by tourists.

The importance of this defensive building is other than the cultural interest. The castle is itself an exceptional balcony open up to landscape interpretation as it gives the chance to visitors for a perfect view of the transition between the campiña, the vega and the sierra landscapes.

••• **Km 3.5. Alisne Alto country estate**

After ascending the first steep slope of this track, we will find ourselves walking through a soft peneplain where the Alisne Alto Country Estate is located.

The track physical limits are dry stone walls on both sides. As this is a track legally measured, the path width is 21 metres (45 sticks). The dirt path is not even 6 metres width though. We will find that lush vegetation grows wild on the path and it is occupying those loose metres. A green belt made of Oaks, Wild Olive Trees, and allochthonous brushwood that in spring turn



Tree Germander flowers (*Teucrium fruticans*)

into a much colourful landscape when Steppe Rockroses, White Rockroses and shrubby Tree Germander's bloom out. Walking between these stone made bounds gives the walker a pleasant sense of protection.

The Breña II Dam catches our eye towards the Guadiato River slope on our

left side. From there many footpaths and dirt roads branch off towards the reservoir. Every now and then, in some sections of the path we will encounter Prickly Pear Cactus which, somehow are functioning as a natural barrier to the cultivated lands.

The singing of Goldfinches and Greenfinches increases as we walk between Olive Trees and Orange Tree groves which turned to be a perfect location for those birds nesting.

••• Km 4.3. Del Sapo Brook

We will wade across this brook over a small bridge. Despite the scanty flow of this seasonal stream, the watercourse is surrounded by a thick Bramble patch which is also home to little birds that find on the many insects and the autumnal fruits their source for food. The Bramble thorny vine shoots make up an ideal refuge for the birds too. No doubt about this is a perfect site for little birds watching.



The Subalpine Warbler a bird of dry open country with bushes and low shrub or Gorse

The Subalpine Warbler a bird of dry open country with bushes and low shrub or Gorse

It is remarkable the landscape transition. From this point onwards, Olive Tree groves and especially Orange Tree groves will become less visible to the walkers. Certainly, we will spot no more Orange Tree groves to the end of the route.

To the north, the 'Las Malezas del Gato' Country Estate can be distinguished on our left side and, looking down to the Guadiato valley, the 'Casas de las Minas de los Calderones' one. From here, we will descend towards the streambed where common rush plants evidence the nearby groundwater level. With

little luck, the always alert Shrike can be spotted on the wires and telegraphic posts around us. No doubt about, this section of the path is the most suitable residence for the shrike since the area comprises the improvised look-out posts, two Shrike specimens of White Hawthorn of great freightage on both sides of the path and a nearby lush meadow where catch its favourite preys (grasshopper, small rodents, snakes, small lizards...). Shrikes are also known as 'Butcher Bird'. Despite being not bigger than a Common Sparrow, a Shrike is capable for hunting small birds or mammals of its own size and then impaling their bodies on thorny stems as the White Hawthorn or the Iberian Pear ones. Later the meat will be broken up into fragments and serves as a 'pantry' to return later to make use of food portions.



Wild natural autumn berries on the Common Hawthorn

••• Km 5.73. Las Cobatillas country estate

The track connects at this point to the CP-242 countryside road. We will eventually take on this road to enter the 'Las Cobatillas' Country Estate main gate. On this section of the track and as we carry on walking, it is easy to distinguish slight changes in the landscape. Still the pasture land is the most significant feature yet we can advance a '*different dehesa*' ahead. In here, the track goes through pastures where some specimens of Holm Oaks intersperse with a much larger number of Wild Olive Trees. Gradually, the former will gain terrain to and finally will displace the later.

Walkers may be aware of how the uses of the land have changed. These country estates are mainly for cattle breeding rather than agriculture. Therefore the path name: 'Camino de los Toros' (Bulls track). There are many changes with regard to the vegetation too. As we approach the bridge over the Baldío Brook, some characteristic Mediterranean undergrowth are predominant such Rockroses, Jerusalem Sage and French Lavender. Certainly, we will see the last specimens of Palmettos as the area is the plant scope limit.



Cattle nearby Villalobillos Country Estate

••• Km 9.4. Access to Villalobillos country estate

47

The entry to Villalobillos Country State leads the walker to huge pastures lands. The dry stone wall on the left side of the paths marks the right direction to walkers. At this point, we need to pay attention to the track. 500 metres after crossing the main gate, we will swing left and slightly go downhill passing beneath the Villalobillos farmhouses. We will not longer be walking on the countryside road but onto the open pasture lands. The cattle, very much used to human beings around, look over the hikers' walk.

A nearby pasture shyly comes into sight to our left. The area is known as the *Huerta de los ídolos* since numerous Iberian figurines or 'idols' have been found in here. Glancing at this large fertile meadow make the walker to fantasize about the earlier ages of humanity and to understand why sites like this where chosen for human settlements in ancient times.

••• Km 11.57. Entering the Porrada country estate

We enter the Porrada Country Estate. At this point, walkers may notice how the dry stone wall on our side has progressively changed from limestone rocks to darker layers of slates. Far behind us are now the limy ground, the Palmettos, Orange groves and the lowlands fertile fields.

Now we will start walking through a different scenario: the sierra. Nevertheless, still they are some humble Olive groves of a very low production which much appear to be the ideal companion for the cattle. We



The Crested Lark is a bird of open country



Corn Bunting

will head on up towards the Porrada Country Estate. The path continues uphill and we must be likely of cooling our walk pace and enjoy beautiful views of the young dehesa we are entering in. In the distance, down in the vega remains the silhouette of the Almodóvar Castle atop the hill that shows between the Oaks.

As the path climbs up, vegetation gains coverage. The Holm Oaks that risk to the edges of the path give shelter to sunlight bushes as Yellow Bromom and Jerusalem Sage. Also the sense of hearing amplifies and we are



La Porrada Country Estate. Main access

much aware of the birds' twits around us and the cattle bells harmonising with the singings of Larks such the Crested Lark.

••• Km 13.9. The Porrada farmhouse

At this point we get to the end of the climbing and we may want to turn around to look at the Vega valley. To the north, other different landscape unit waits for us to discover it. We are now at the Santa María de Trassiera ridges and by the Artafi Mountain pass.

The Porrada is a group of restored farmhouses. This country state participates of both cattle breeding and agriculture. Horses, sheep and cows are gently grazing in the *dehesa* and between Olive Trees. The place appea-



Common Buzzard

red to be of exceptional importance in past times when livestock was seasonally taken from the highlands to the vega. The path we are walking on groves through the Country State and it is named after it. Two 'leagues of land' is the exact distance between this farmhouse and Almodóvar del Río town.

After reaching the top, the track descends slightly and the walkers may enjoy the walk through the meadow now dotted with some isolated Pine groves. As Machado said, 'these are lands for eagles'. It is remarkable the amount of birds of prey in the area. The isolated Trees are especially used as watchtowers by Buzzards that watch from the above the vast 'nava' where different races of cattle are fed.

The dry stone walls of the path will indicate the right direction to the walker, in order that they should veer right 90 degrees. Then we will climb up a short steep slope fenced off with wires and framed by thick Mediterranean undergrowth that takes us to the Matalagartos Brook. As the path descends, watch out for a fork at the end of it. The correct direction is marked by a lattice gate that will remain shutting behind us after we crossed.

50 ●●● Km 16.4. La Brazona country estate

Since we crossed the gate, we have been passing by a series of seasonal water streams and brooks. All they will water in the Matalagartos Brook. Every now and then we will spot by the watercourses shy riverside small



Cork Oak woodland in La Brazona Country Estate

well defined patches of Elms and Brambles mixed with Ivy and Rough Bindweed. On the ground, even those less careful walkers may spot some clear prints left by Wild Boars in their search for food.

Leaving aside a small reservoir for cattle watering, we will get to a *dehesa* where Cork Oak Trees are gaining terrain to Holm Oaks. The capricious forms of the Trees' partly naked trunks contrast with the green of the pas-

tures. Insectivorous birds like the Hoopoe surely find abundant food in the cattle droppings.

We will leave the Brazona's farmhouses standing on a hill to our right. Again the path drops down toward one of the stream beds that drain off this humid slope. It is clear that we are close to groundwater levels since the route is marked out by a series of water troughs for the cattle and even a washing sink-pile probably in use up to last century. Just a few meters ahead, a showy Cork Oak with three 'legs' will keep the walkers' attention.

The track appears to be a roller coaster taken the walkers to a trip where small rills and pastures follow one another. Cork Oak have clearly taken the place of Holm-Oaks. Beloved of sunny slopes, the specific thermophilous undergrowth of Broom, Gorse and the Greasy Rockrose emerge on those sections where some bedrock rocks show.

••• Km 17.9. La Jarosa junction

At the next junction, we will leave the Porrada footpath which will carry on ahead. We will then turn around 90 degrees and branch off left to head up north. Walking on a stream bed which is partially flooded in winter time, we will get to the border of the country estate. We will cross a gate and pass by another one to the left that enters Doña Carmen Lovacas' Country State. Unusual disparity between these Olive groves and the cork pastures.



The Parasol Mushroom

From this point ahead, walkers will find clear differences in the landscape. We are approaching district Trassierra, one of the most humid places in the province with high rainfall rates. Therefore, vegetation is that typical of wet and shady environments and is known as ombrophilous species. The track goes up and down and somehow becomes narrower as it goes through a forest that gains on vegetation cover with evergreen shrub of



Larustinus berries

Durillo (*Viburnum tinus*), Strawberry Trees, Heathers and Butcher's Brom. In autumn, eatable mushrooms such the Parasol Mushroom and the Wood Blewit can be found beneath this dense brushwood.

This section of the walk is exceptionally beautiful. It will be worthy to spend a little time walking around to enjoy the sight of this scarcely altered vegetation. Perhaps, this is one of the most attractive sections of this track.

52

••• Km 19.6. La Gamonosa country estate

The dirt track we have been following lately will turn into a countryside road at the junction by the Gamonosa lodgings. We are actually entering the surrounding areas of Santa María de Trassierra village and some housing developments increasingly follow one to another. In fact, this is not a big issue as we still may enjoy the sight of good specimens of Cork Trees and the shady Pine groves.

We carry on walking on the countryside roadup to get to a new junction where we will turn left. Shortly after, we may want to quench our thirst at the fountain by the countryside road. On fully entering the El Salado housing development our journey is almost about to finish. We will still have an agreeable descent through Pine groves and Mediterranean undergrowth of Strawberry Trees, Heathers and Durillo (*Viburnum tinus*). Time ago and not far from this point, there was an ancient snow cellar where snow from the higher areas in the mountains was stored in and kept for later distribution in the area.

This section of the track will come to an end as soon as we get to Arroyo Street which is the road that passes through and the access to Santa María de Trassierra village.

STAGE 4:**SANTA MARÍA DE TRASSIERRA-
CERRO MURIANO**

This section of the route links two small villages which are at the time two neighbourhoods of the city. The journey will take us through one of the sierra best preserved areas yet human actions on the form of housing developments and smallholdings break up the traditional sight of the mountain landscape.

The section goes along almost completely on the cattle route known as 'Vereda Pasada del Pino'. This traditional path starts off at Santa María de Trassierra, cross over the Bejarano Brook and goes through the Baldíos del Río and Alhondiguilla Country Estates to come to die off to Cerro Torreárboles at Cerro Muriano village.

Trassierra natural environment has been proposed to be declared as Natural Monument which is a figure of environmental protection given by the Governing Council of the Andalusia Government to those natural areas or natural elements because of their exceptional natural values linked to other traditional or cultural ones.

Later, once we have accomplished this section of the track, the impressive gallery forest along the Bejarano Brook, the Cork Oak trees pastures and the evergreen Pine groves of the Villares Park will long remain in our retinas.

Cerro de Torreárboles is the higher peak (692 m.) of the Sierra de Córdoba Mountains. The hill will be an exceptional watchtower for a complete sight of the Guadalquivir Valley and even the far-off southern Bética Mountains.

We will be crossing through municipal areas of Córdoba district. Still some natural places of the highest ecological value are preserved in these highlands, in spite of the pressure placed on the natural environment by human actions as large natural areas have been designate as recreation and picnic areas.

Start: Santa María de Trassiera

Finish: Cerro Muriano

Distance: 1.5 Km. approx

Time: 5 hours

Suitability:



* Horse riding and mountain biking (no recommended at Torreárboles section)

Difficulty: MIDE evaluation



Enviroment:

Severity of the natural environment.

1



Track Features:

Difficulty in following the track.

2



Orientation:

Guidance on the route directions.

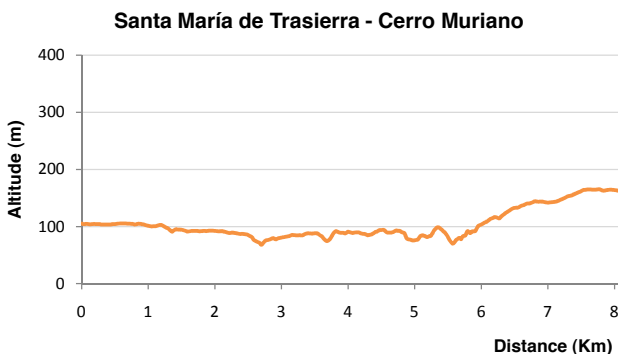
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Struggle:

Struggle required for accomplishing the route.

3



ROUTE DESCRIPTION

This stage of the route starts off at Santa María de Trasierra, a quite small village that is also a neighbourhood of the city even it is over 20 Km far away from Córdoba. Before discovering America, Christopher Columbus was living in this village. Years later, the illustrious poet Luis de Góngora was the parson of the village parish church and he wrote a famous poem about the beauty of the place titled 'Las Flores del Romero' ('The Rosemary Flowers').

The actual starting point will be at the eastern areas of Trasierra, just at the beginning of the Pasada del Pino traditional path. A sculpture of the



Sculpture of La Virgen de Trasierra. Stage 4 starting point

Virgen de Trasierra and a peculiar shop (half groceries, half bar) are two good milestones to locate the place.

For a while, we will be walking on a countryside road which eventually will enter to a relatively fresher area. The walk may be a bit more pleasant if we opt to walk on a section of the path that goes parallel to the road and where we will feel nursed by Strawberry Trees and Oaks.

After we mended a water-course, we need to pay attention to the junction ahead. There we will bend right to take the path towards the Bejarano Brook. For those in the mood for a longer walk we recommend to carry on walking on the original path for about 1 kilometre or so. They will get to the astonishing natural area known as the Baños de Popea (Popea Baths). This breathtaking enclave, one the most representative natural sites of the Sierra de Córdoba, comprises some paddles and waterfalls within an excellent gallery forest in great conservation. After this worthy roundabout, it is paramount to get back to the junction above mentioned.

Towards the Bejarano Brook, the countryside road will eventually turn into a foot-path, remaining the smallholdings at our back. To the right of the path and no far from it, we may be interesting on pay a short visit to another beautiful place. It is called *Fuente del Elefante*. The name of the place takes after an elephant sculpture from the Caliphal epoch (10th century) which up to 1888 was placed on a foot at the centre of the pond and today it is in the courtyard of the Museo Diocesano de Córdoba. The most peculiar quality of this sculpture is the actual animal. It is one of the few figurative Islamic statues. It is known that in the Islamic religion any representation of either human or animal body is banned. The history of the place also tells about how at that time every Islamic devout had an obligation to work in the place at least one week a year to help out with the expenses of the maintenance and works of the Aljama Mosque of Córdoba.

Back on the track and after crossing through the first gate, the Cork Oak trees pastures are a clear sign of the type of landscape we will be walking on. The shrub layer enriches with white leaved Rockroses, Rosemary and Spurge Flax shrubs. We should give especial attention to the vegetation about the fresher areas by the small water beds. When walking in au-



Natural site near the Bejarano River

turn, we will be able to moderately eat some red fruits from the Strawberry Trees. Watch out the amount of those fruits you eat as either it may produce you drowsiness or you may end up intoxicated.

Almost without noticing, the walk through this flat pastures land will take us to the Bejarano Brook valley. This is a very popular route for hikers and lovers of weekly walks up into the sierra. No surprise if you frequently hear these habitual walkers' polite greetings.

••• Km 3.2. Bejarano Brook

We come to a most highly interesting place where it is worthy to have a short break on the route. Just after wading across the brook we will spot two small gates. If we decide to go across the gate on the left, this is downstream, we will shortly after bump into the remains of the Martinete Water Mill. Originally the water mill used to be a Fulling mill for beating and grinding the minerals

First source of the Bejarano Brook





The remains of the Bejarano Farmhouse

extracted from the nearby mining works. Later on, it was transformed into a flour mill. The gate on the right open the access to a small waterfall located about 200 metres upstream and called *Primer Venero del Bejarano* (Bejarano Main Spring). Off to the waterfall still can be seen the remains of a stone built structure which once was the waters holder.

This spring never has stopped flowing. In the First century A.D. the ancient Roman built up by the flowing waters an impressive 18 kilometres aqueduct called Valdepuentes. For many centuries this spring was the main source for supplying water to the city of Córdoba. According to Professor Ángel Ventura calculations, in a daily basis the spring used to pour out from 20.000 to 35.000 m³ of water. This mega structure and water network also contributed to a better off on the city sewer system and, therefore the city raised the life standards compare to other important cities of that time. In the Islamic epoch the aqueduct was mainly used to supply water to the city palace of Medina Azahara.

The gallery forest located all along the Bejarano Brook comprises a rich variety of Alders, Elms, Hazels and some Willow Trees. Because of the moist, a range of climbing vines such Ivy and Rough Bindweed grows in the shade of the trees and between mosses and lichens which confers a sylvan look to the site. As it happens around any water course, the Bejarano Brook is also home for an endless number of birds which can be watched in the trees such as the Blackbird or the Oriole.

Either we opt to quench our curiosity upstream or downstream, we should get back to the original track. Then, we will carry on walking ahead leaving to the left the remains of the Bejarano farmhouses to go deep into a section of cork trees pastures and pine groves. The walker's attention will be caught by the enormous size of some of the trees stems.

As we wade across some of the Bejarano tributary streams, we get closer to the Alhondiguilla pasture lands. There the track changes course to the left and



Butcher's broom plant

will take us into a much bearable shady side of the mountains where again we will find some good specimens of humid Mediterranean undergrowth. Especial mention to the Butcher's Broom shrubs that now can be spotted between Strawberry Trees, Heathers and Durillo (*Viburnum tinus*) undergrowth. The Butcher's Broom is a low evergreen shrub with flat shoots resembling stiff, spine-tipped leaves. Small flowers and the showy red berries are borne singly in the centre of the false 'leaves' which is a botanical adaptation to prevent herbivores predation.

58

••• Km 5.62. La Alhondiguilla country state main entrance

We are now in the shade of huge cork groves and at the Alhondiguilla Country Estate main gate. The path stretches wider on the plain land; however the borders are still outlined by a much impressive cover of humid Mediterranean undergrowth.

From this point forward smallholdings are spreading fast on both sides of the path. This is a section of the route where housing developments are clearly spreading under the protection of Pine groves in good shape. After a steep climb, the path meets a junction where it becomes a countryside road. We will carry on walking ahead to the front. The track goes gently uphill and a few meters after, it joins the Córdoba – Villaviciosa road (CO-110).



Natural site nearby La Alhondiguilla Country Estate

••• Km 8.75. Assuan junction. Lagar de la Cruz and La Conejera

The PR Sendero Cuesta de la Traición meets our track at this junction. This is a traditional path where both an Ancient Roman Road and a *vía pecuaria* (cattle route) run along sections of the track. A ripple mark covers a section of that *vía pecuaria*. A ripple mark is a fossil beach. On this one still can be seen the wavy sand resulting from the sea waves rolling. Nevertheless, our track winds north about 100 meters towards Villaviciosa town. We will get into a dirt road at a flat section which is the Assuan parking area and the Villares road (CO-3404) junction. From this point, our track runs parallel to the right of Villaviciosa de Córdoba (CO-110) road.

This is a very popular track for mountain biking and the deep bike prints on the ground make the path almost impassable at some sections.

At the parking area the track is pretty wide yet it narrows and undergrowth cover increases on both sides of the track. This is a especially interesting section because of the rich Mediterranean undergrowth in the area which comprises large specimens of Strawberry Trees, Rockroses, Laurustinuses (Laurustines), Purple Phlomis (*Phlomis purpurea*).

The track goes across the road by the Rozales housing developments. It will still run parallel to the road but on the left side now avoiding the many curves of the road. Shortly before we get to the Chaparral Country Estate, the track will go across to the opposite side of the road having on the right side the impressive El Cordobés Country Estate. There we need to pay attention and, soon after crossing the road we will take a path on the right side. This pitted path will get to the Agua Brook or thalweg. The track then makes a U-turn to the right and away from the road to get to the Vereda de Linares path that goes parallel along the brook.

We will see some eucalyptus trees by the brook. However, as the track progresses and the valley narrows, an impenetrable belt of Brambles and Oleanders will substitute the Eucalyptus Trees. Still on the right side is the Cordobés country estate which was also known as La Conejera and that is completely devoted to bull breeding for bullfighting purposes. The track bears left at the point where the brook, parallel to our track, meets the brook that drains the Country Estate. At this fluvial junction we will see some specimens of Black Poplars and Ash Trees.

The track will progressively ascend and the brook will fit into a much more humid area where the Mediterranean undergrowth thickens with Brambles, Oleanders, Strawberry Trees, Larustinus bushes and some Ferns.



From there the track will head off into proper reforested area of Pine groves. It will turn to the right at the point where another two small brook thalwegs meet to each other. Then we will walk on a firebreak strip which will take us to the CO-3404 road border. We will follow up until we get to the kilometre 5 where, opposite the road, is the Villares Visitors Centre. At this point, we will take precaution and go across the road. From now on we will be wal-



60 The Saffron milk cap or Red pine mushroom

king parallel to the right side of the road and on a path which is actually a firebreak strip.

After negotiate a sharp steep climbing we will find ourselves walking on the surrounding areas of the Villares Periurbano Park. We will enter the reception area of the Centro Operativo Provincial del INFOCA (INFOCA Regional Operative Center) which is located between young Pine groves where mushrooms such Saffron ,Milk Cap are easily found in autumnal months. We



A view of Torreárboles Hill

will pass by the sport pitches to get to a fountain where we may quench our thirst. Then we will go into the Villares Park former entry.

We will cross through the recreation area always walking on the closer path to the road. As the walk progresses, we will leave the recreation area behind us. Here we need to be alert to the track since it will wind left and gradually climb up to the road border to come out through a country gate.

••• Km 15.75. La Calera lime kiln

La Calera is the remains of a former lime kiln where limestone rocks were melted off to produce lime. Scrub and timber were used to heat the boiler up. Today this ancient activity is not longer in use and only the remains of the former stone buildings persist like silent witnesses from the past times.

From this point onward, the geodesic peak of Torreárboles Hill will be our reference to carry on walking on the right direction. This peak is easily spotted due to the many telecommunication aerials standing on top of the hill.

Nevertheless, we may be alert to signposting along the path since many footpaths join this one and may invite to confusion. The track will get to an underground path below the Córdoba – Badajoz road. Just immediately after coming out of the underground path, we branch right and climb steeply up on a footpath which gets to a small pond with a Fig Tree nearby. We will look for a fence that sharply climbs up along the edge of the hill and gets to the top of Torreárboles Hill (692 m).

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Access to a former limekiln



Some snow on Torreárboles Hill summit

••• **Km 18.25. Torreárboles geodesic peak**

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After climbing up the hill we will find ourselves atop the highest peak of the Sierra of Córdoba and at almost 700 meters of altitude. We will have a breathtaking sighting of the Guadalquivir Valley, the Béticas and Jaén Mountain Range foothills and, in bright clear days the Sierra Nevada white summits.

After a well deserved break, we will go down this time on the opposite side of the hill and up to the Santa María de los Pinares Hermitage. There we will take a dirt path that will take us to the Muriano road junction and passes by a small picnic area near to a water well.

From this point onwards, we will carry on walking on the road. We will get to a roundabout yet we will keep walking abreast to get to Cerro Muriano village main road which is this stage of the journey finish.

It is really worthy to visit the mining site located off to the village. This area is declared as 'Sitio Histórico' (Historical Site) and is also included in the *Catálogo General Del Patrimonio Histórico Andaluz* (Andalusia General Historic Heritage Catalogue). The whole area was a mining exploitation from the Chalcolithic period (2800-1500 B.C) becoming an important raw-metal land-based mining site during the Roman occupation in Hispania. Later, in the 19th and 20th centuries, different British companies owned the mining sites until they were shut down in 1918.

This catalogued mining site covers an area of 24.8 hectares although the protected area around it stretches over 70.36 hectares. The whole site comprises deposits, shafts, mines, forge mills and other buildings where copper was transformed into different products, several buildings and other structures related to mineral transportation and the remains of former mining sites and settlements. There is an information board on this matter by the Museo del Cobre (Copper Museum) in the village.



Los Villares Periurbano Park



●●● Los Villares Periurbano Park is a 485 ha protected area comprising pine groves and Mediterranean woods. It is one of the areas included in the RENPA (Andalusia Natural Protected Areas Network) and the second large in the region.

A periurbano park is a figure of protection given to those natural public areas which are relatively close to an urban area and that are for people's uses and recreation.

Traditionally, Los Villares has been a place where people from Córdoba come to picnic and to enjoy the natural world. Over half million visitors come to visit the park every year. In 1990 was declared as Periurbano Park and restrictions about uses were put in place. Nevertheless, the park picnic areas and recreation area still serve to those likely for coming to the countryside to spend a day out in the wild or in Saint Lawrence Night when people come to watch the Perseidas Falling. But it is in bank holidays and, especially in Saint Raphael Day, the patron of the city, when people traditionally come to this place to do 'peroles' (a day out with friends and family eating and drinking and sharing a sort of paella meal at the end of the day).

The park is well equipped with some recreation areas, a camping site and a Visitors Centre. At the Centre, there is a permanent exhibition about the natural protected areas in the province which show in depth the southern humid areas; the Subbéticas Mountains, and the especial natural places of the Sierra of Córdoba such as the Homachuelos Natural Park and the Cardeña-Montoro Natural Park.

Nearby the Visitors Centre is the CREA (Centre for the Recovering of Endangered Species). The uniqueness of this place is that people can come to the centre and watch those animal species which cannot be put back into the wild world. The place is aimed to make people aware of both the actual situation where the fauna of Andalusia is and the current problems that wild animals have to face within the territory. Wild endangered animals such the Egyptian Vulture, Golden Eagles, Kestrels, Owls and Vultures can be looked at in the centre.

Another peculiarity of this park is the Umbría path. This is a footpath perfectly adequate for people with physical impairment which goes through 275 meters of Mediterranean wood and Pine groves.

STAGE 5:**CERRO MURIANO-VILLAHARTA**

This stage of the journey runs south – north and almost entirely parallel to the Córdoba – Badajoz national road. This is a section of the track where different routes have been historically used for livestock moving, and for commercial and military purposes. Certainly, this section of the itinerary has been marked by history. We will find ourselves walking on sections of Ancient Roman roads and onto the Cañada Real Soriana track which we met in previous stages of the GR-48 route.

This section of our route has an especial recognition as some sections of the track match to the Camino Mozárabe track. Crossing through Andalusia from Granada to Badajoz, the Camino Mozárabe is the southern branch of the Camino de Santiago famous route. On this section of our route we will frequently be following the typical yellow arrows used for waymarking the compostelanean route.

The landscape comprises never ending dehesas of Holm-Oak trees and much healthy and varied Mediterranean undergrowth along the track borders. A vegetation cover is in good conservation conditions despite the everlasting pressure posed on the environment by the traditional network of roads and paths.

In addition, all along the track hikers will come across with the remains of a rich cultural and historic heritage. Remarkable are the remains of the Vacar Castle. The castle strategic location tells us about the important defensive role played by the castle in safeguarding this track. Other cultural features are much related to the traditional relationship established by locals with the rich underground of the area. Two good examples of this are the Cerro Muriano Copper Mining Sites and the healing Spa Baths and fountains in Villaharta surrounding areas.

Certainly, the walker will easily grasp through all their senses the historical relevance and especial significance of this thousand-years-old track since the impression made by its uses and functions still is clearly perceptible in the area

Start: Cerro Muriano**Finish:** Villaharta**Distance :** 21.4 Km**Time:** 5 hours**Suitability:****Difficulty: MIDE evaluation****Environment:**

Severity of the natural environment.

1**Track Features:**

Difficulty in following the track.

1**Orientation:**

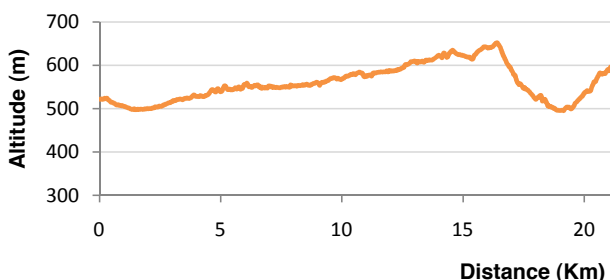
Guidance on the route directions.

2**Struggle:**

Struggle required for accomplishing the route.

3

Cerro Muriano - Villaharta



ROUTE DESCRIPTION

Cerro Muriano is a secondary village which municipality is shared by Obejo and Córdoba administrations. This is a place traditionally devoted to mining works. The mining work tradition widens over 5.000 years as the first copper extractions took place in prehistoric times and the last one was in 1929 when the Córdoba Copper Company Ltd. decided to closed down Cerro Muriano Shafts. The other main activity which has facilitated this small village enduring is the Euro Army Brimz XXI Military Depot. This army base occupies a large area within the municipal territory as they are many military barracks, arsenals and large shooting ranges.

This stage of our route starts off at Santa Bárbara de Cerro Muriano Parish Church. We will walk on the pavement at the right side of the N-432 road towards Badajoz. Just when we are about to leave the village and to our right is the Centro de Desarrollo Rural de Sierra Morena Cordobesa (Sierra Morena Cordobesa Rural Development Center) where we can get many information about this GR-48 route.

We carry on walking ahead and just opposite to the Guardia Civil quarter we will leave the road and go across the Córdoba-Almorchón former railway. Then, we will head up to the neighbourhood locate at the Camp boundary. From here, our route matches the Cañada Real Soriana track which in its turn, also matches both the ancient roman original road known as *Iter ab Corduba-emeritam* and the GR-40 trail. Shortly after, we will cross over the railings in order to get back to the track that runs parallel to the main road and passes in front the Military Depot.

... Km 3.2. Obejo Rail Station. Guadanuño Reservoir

Approaching to Obejo Old Station houses, the Guadanuño small reservoir remains to the left of the track. The CV-45 country road branches from there towards the Villares Periurbano Park. We will cross by the cluster of scattering houses which is this small village and left them behind us to keep walking on a footpath that runs left parallel to the road and through Ilex Trees on soft rounded slopes.



Pasture is a constant of the landscape along this section of the trail

Obejo Station is named after the small town located about 20 kilometres far away. Originally the station was aimed to provide water for the old locomotives and shunting engines operating in the area.

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On this section of the track, parallel to the left side of the road, vegetation appears to be less attractive. However, if we stop and look around we will find some interesting examples of Mediterranean undergrowth. In fact, over a dozen of different scrub can be found within less than 100 meters. The range varies from young pine trees to Holm Oak bushes, white Rockroses, Spanish Lavender, Spurge Flax bushes, Greasy Rockroses, Gorses, Mastic shrub steppe rockroses.

To our right we can enjoy an amazing view. Opposite to our path, the road and the railway and to the east, we can spot an impressive hill which appears to be draped by the granite boulder cluster that crops out on the hill outskirts.

Without much noticing, we will leave behind the houses and keep walking on the left flank of the National Roads Network Valdez Invernal facilities. The path turns into a pleasant track that winds through hundred years old Oaks while the sound of Magpies, Blue Tits and Great Tits is increasingly becoming more perceptible.

••• Km 6. A former level crossing. The Viaduct over the road

At this point of the route, we will reach the old level crossing that we will not cross. The remains of the level crossing keepers' former cabin are perceptible in the shade of some three thorns acacias.

As the former railway does, we will go under the viaduct over the road which, from this point ahead, will run next to the road and parallel to our right. The track will remain between the Dehesa del Campo country state main gate to the left and the abandoned railway to the right.

A former railway



trees occupy what long ago was the ballast base where trains once circulated on. In the rain season, the area turns into a flooded pasture land covered with reed so it is paramount to follow the track on the railings. Anyhow, it is easy to follow the track any time of the year yet we need to pay attention to the point where the track goes across the railway and enters the pasture lands.

Towards El Vacar village the track goes onto the road services path and passes by one of the Dehesa del Campo access gate. On passing by the local tarmac road that takes to the army arsenal we will get to El Vacar small village.

••• Km 11.45. El Vacar small village

Our path will carry on and get into El Vacar village main road. Three different municipalities of the province meet at this small village so the village territory is part of Obejo, Espiel and Villaviciosa de Córdoba municipal districts. This is a good place for breaking since it has good services such restaurants and toilets and where will be no difficult to find some drinks and food. In fact, the village is very popular within hunters and travelers and it has become an essential early stop for those searching for traditionally baked bread and healthy breakfast.

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El Vacar Castle

From the top of a hill, the remains of a castle from the Caliphal time keep our attention. The castle is known by three different names: El Vacar Castle; Mano de Hierro Castle and Dar-Al-Baqar Castle. It used to have an important function on safeguarding this at that time busy road. Today, only the rectangular shaped fortress and some of the thick mortar walls remain standing up. Originally it has eight towers, one at each corner and the other four at the flanks of which only some trimmed remains stay up. We will have no other choice that carry on walking off to the main road until we meet a thalweg covered on undergrowth. From there the path

will take us to a roundabout at the Villaviciosa (A- 3075) road. From this point onward, we will walk on the service road that goes ahead and up to a descending area.



La Matanza Slope

••• Km 14.5. La Cuesta de la Matanza slope

This slope is popularly known as *La Cuesta de la Matanza* (The Slaughter slope). The area is located at the left flank of the road and the path goes through a Mediterranean scrub especially of rock rose shrubs.

We will leave the service road and go to the lower side of the slope where we will take a post signed path known as *La Fuente del Cordel*. We will then slightly turn to the left from the path to visit this healing water spring. Close to this one is *La Belleza* Fountain, another spring with the same characteristics although this one is considered less important.

Back on the track, the path begins to descend and it will wade across different minor water courses where Reeds and Brambles break the monotony of the Mediterranean scrub. At the end of this descending walk, we will make a U-turn and go downwards to get across the road. There we will bump into the *Malos Pasos* Fountain shed. Over here our path still follows the *Cañada Real Soriana* and *Camino Mozárabe de Santiago* tracing.



Trail blazing



Los Malos Pasos Fountain Pavillion

••• Km 18.7. The Malos Pasos Fountain

The Malos Pasos Fountain is located within a set of springs known as the *Fuentes de Agua Agria* (The Sour Water Fountains). The name is given after the characteristic taste of the waters which also have therapeutic and healing properties. They are especially suitable for treating diabetes and renal colic. The main springs and fountains are: La Salud; Malos Pasos; Fuente Agria; La Boca del Infierno; La Lastrilla; Los Angelitos; Mananial del Cura; La Fuente del Cordel and La fuente de San Rafael.



Los Malos Pasos Fountain

The Malos Pasos Fountain is located by the Cañada Real Soriana. This especial location makes us to believe that in the past, livestock breeders and shepherds not only could have quenched their thirst with this water but also healed their discomfort.

The path heads towards Villaharta municipality leaving to the right the Santa Elisa Old Spa Bath which facade is in the shade of some old eucalyptus trees. After crossing a bridge over the Mimbres Brook, the path connects to a countryside road known as Pedrique's road which will pass by a granitic cross.

After crossing over another bridge, we need to be alert. 50 meters before getting to the road we will leave the path to carry on walking on a footpath to our right. This footpath runs parallel to the road and slightly climbs up through Oak Trees and Reeds to get to the top where housing developments and the village neighbourhoods will welcome us. We will pass by the football pitch to connect again to the Mimbres path which turns into a countryside road that winds left and takes us to Villaharta village, the end of this stage.

Camino Mozárabe



The Camino Mozárabe is a branch of the Camino de la Plata Jacobin Route from Mérida town. The Jacobin Route comprises many historical paths and tracks set up in the centre and southern areas of the Iberian Peninsula which were very important in the Middle Ages. This network of paths and tracks connected the big inner cities and important towns to the busy commercial ports located in Al-Andalus. The Camino Mozárabe connected Córdoba, at that time the capital city of the Caliphate, to the lands in Extremadura, herein the especial relevance of this track.

STAGE 6

VILLAHARTA-OBEJO



This section of the route connects two towns which are located at the heart of the Sierra Morena Cordobesa Mountains. This is one of the ancient traditional tracks which at some sections matched the Cañada Real Soriana. We will be walking in an area where Olive groves developments support the traditional livestock rearing on these highlands.

We will wade through the Guadalbarbo River also known as the Berber's River because Berber tribes settled by the river shores in the past. It would be presumptuous to think about how much bovine and ovine cattle breeding was improved by those Caucasian people who were so much skilled on livestock rearing and on cattle transhumance.

Along this section we will see how Olive groves and pastures lands follow one to each other. In fact, those land uses complement each other in a way that has recently facilitated the development of organic farming and organic livestock breeding in the region.

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Panoramic view at the beginning of the stage 6.

The cross-section of this stage is mainly made of continuous ups and downs and most time the track uses good quality paths, dirt paths and even a not very busy countryside roads. However, along some sections –especially from the Cañada Real Soriana descansadero and by the Monjas path, the track roughens and it turns to be just a narrow bad-surfaced cattle path.

The landscape will be a pleasant mixture of Oak groves, Olive groves coloured by the seasonal blooming and large pasture lands with many sheep herds grazing about. At the end of the stage will be the mountainous Obejo town standing atop a prominent slope. This stage of the route will illustrate the walker on how local people have traditionally built up their own history in this quarter of the Sierra Morena Mountains of Córdoba.

Start: Villaharta

Finish: Obejo

Distance: 18.2 Km

Time: 6 hours and 15 minutes

Suitability:



Difficulty: MIDE evaluation



Enviroment:

Severity of the natural environment.

1



Track Features:

Difficulty in following the track.

1



Orientation:

Guidance on the route directions.

2



Struggle:

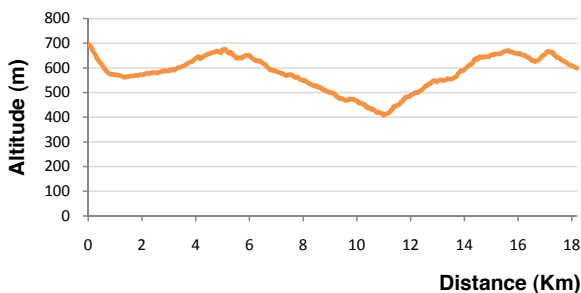
Struggle required for accomplishing the route.

3

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Villaharta - Obejo



ROUTE DESCRIPTION

This stage of the route starts off Villaharta village on the Pozoblanco (CO-6410) road. The tracing of the track will mark the western oriented half slope and will open a huge views of far away Pine groves and Olive groves. Before we leave the town we can have some water and even fill up our water bottles at the fountain that is outside the village.



La Serrana Recreation Area

74 ••• Km 1. Descansadero de La Serrana. The Monjas traditional path

Just two kilometres after leaving the village, we will bump into a picnic area which is located on a former rubbish dump. The place also marks the beginning of the Monjas track which will take us deep into the Sierra Morena of Córdoba Mountains. We will walk along the dump perimetral fence leaving to the left the sealed former dump and carry on walking towards the tiny brook that comes out from the picnic area. The track turns into a narrow footpath up to crossing the riverbed by a stony ford. Here we may spot the polished marks remaining in the stones after centuries of livestock moving in the area.

After wading across the brook, the path slightly ascends through a thick patch of Rockroses and connects to a countryside road that we will follow to the right. As the walk progresses on the countryside road, we will get to the Pavillo *farmhouses* having on our right the impressive Enjambradero Ravine covered by an Oak wood in good conservation and with a lush vegetation cover. The Pavillo Farmhouses are surrounded by smallholdings comprising Olive groves and Almond groves and perfectly limited by dry stone walls. Just passing by the farmhouses we will be alert to the track and bear left, directly away from the road, and into a dirt path.

Leaving behind the farmhouses, the dirt path skirts along a hill riddled with bushes and, it slightly drops down. In the distance, it is standing the chimney of the Chato Factory that indicates us the right direction. Today the factory is almost demolished though. We will carry on walking on this path until meet with a dirt track in good conditions that we will follow up for a big while. This dirt path will swing right towards the western region where the Guadalbarbo Valley is.



El Chato former oil press and mill

••• Km 4.6. The dirt track to Guadalbarbo. Llanos de Villaharta **75** plain lands

As the dirt track progresses, we will pass through some low plateaus of Olive groves and leaving to the right the main access to María Sabina Farmhouse. The track descends sinuously up to the valley and between some small water courses covered with Brambles and patches of Poplar Trees that break the monotony of the Olive groves.

We are now at the bridge over the Guadalbarbo River also known as The Berbers' River (wadi-baebat). We will cross over the river again in the next stage of the route and just before the river gets 'domesticated' in the Guadalmellato Reservoir. But for the present time, these waters continue

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The Guadalbarbo River

carving granitic and slate materials in a highland valley where riverbank forests of Poplars, Elms and Willows are the most relevant vegetation. Even in the summer time, we can see fish in this river waters which is a sign of a healthy and continuous stream. This is also the reason why otters have chosen the river banks to live in.

A good section of the river has been protected as Sites of Community Importance (LIC). This is a legal figure for protecting this natural stream where endangered fish species (such as *Barbus sclateri* and the *Chondrostoma lemmingii*) can still be found.



Tracks of otters

On having crossed the bridge, the path will ascend again to gain higher levels on the hill where open out the staggering views of the valley and of the Molinillo shady side. Riverbank vegetation winds through olive groves and Mediterranean shrubby. When the path almost reaches the top of the hill, we will enter again a poplar grove that gently shades off and refreshes the path which now runs parallel to the head of the brook. To the left, they are the Peliblancos and the Arruzas Farmhouses, both standing atop the hill.



Panoramic view near 'Peliblancos'



Former Treadmill

••• Km 9.7. The blood treadmill and the Arruzas farmhouse

At this point of the track, we are coming to the Arruzas gardens area where, at the left edge, an old well is located. Hundreds of years ago, water was pulled out using an hydraulic mechanism known as 'blood treadmill'. The movement of an animal treading an endless belt makes a set of gears work. This mechanism is linked to a set of buckets which with the water is pulled out from the well. Next to the place, there is an explanatory panel showing the functioning of this ingenious tool.

After having forded a hill, the track turns sharply to the left and we will be getting into the Fontanares Brook valley. This brook supports a small fertile vega of olive groves and cattle breeding mixed with some garden



Merino sheep: one main feature of this stage

plots. The Avispas Farmhouse is a good example of the large country houses that we will pass by.

A patch of Eucalyptus Trees will show us where the track meets the CO-0284 road at about the kilometre 34. In there we will bear right and head towards Obejo town.

••• Km 12. Obejo – Pozoblanco road

This is a section of the track that matches the main road. The number of smallholdings and countryside houses increases which indicates that we are approaching the town. In the past times this track was very busy as it linked up this highlands region to the Pedroches Valley.

Since we got into the Monjas track we have been walking through Pozoblanco municipal district that we will be leaving now as the walk progresses. The track winds as the road climbs up a steep slope. From there we will have good views of the area and even in the distance, we will be able to identify Obejo town standing on a hill to the south.

As the track drops down into a plain land, the walker will find themselves surrounded by a large *dehesa* which resembles those proper of the Pedroches region and where large sheep herds broadly graze on the pastures. La Vega large livestock exploitation is located just in the middle of the plain land and it is there precisely where we will leave the road to enter a dirt track that branches to the left side.

••• Km 16. The Vega pasture lands

This *dehesa* we are walking on is totally different to those on the slopes with olive groves we have previously passed through. Obejo village marks now the right direction. Soon after we approach the area known as the Morales gardens, we will leave this track.

We will then walk on another path that branches to the right and that begins as a soft slope which eventually will turn into a steep climb by the end of this stage. Certainly this climb is worthy since we will have a breathtaking view of the town and its surroundings. We will be already at Obejo town also known as ‘Sierra Morena Watchtower’.

Organic Olive groves



●●● Since years ago, the largest area of Organic Olive groves in Spain is located in the northern regions of Córdoba province. This area of Sierra Morena and the Pedroches Valley have traditionally been regions for livestock rearing and for an extensive farming of cereals proper of the pasture lands. In addition, the Olive groves low performance provided a high quality product though.

The transition from traditional Olive groves to organic ones was not a big deal because it has always been the less the possible use of chemical synthesis products in order to accomplish with the needs of the livestock breeding.

The section of the walk that goes from Villarharta to Obejo it is an

excellent opportunity for walkers to know better the landscape characteristics of these organic olive groves. On those slopes that drain into the Guadalbarbo River, a dense herbaceous cover is supported by extensive hillocks of Olive trees. We want to believe that thanks to the Berbers civilization this singular use of the land combining cattle breeding and farming has come to our time and still remains as the best of the land uses in the region.

The Organic Olive Oil produced in these highland valleys preserves some organoleptin characteristics which makes the oil to be distinguished as a great quality mark within the region. This peculiar communion between nature and traditional ways of land exploitation results into a sustainable and long-term viable scheme for the people living in these highlands.



Organic olive groves and horse breeding exist well together in the region

STAGE 7

OBEJO- GUADALMELLATO DAM



This stage of the route goes all along the Obejo Mountains outskirts. At some points, the track runs across deep valleys and matches ancient tracks and paths which linked the village to the Guadalquivir Valley. We will walk into the very complex geography of deep ravines and sharp gradients to which Olive groves stick into abrupt slopes that can be only reached with the help of pack animals.

The track is a north-south descending walk and some sections may present difficulties to bikers and even to unfitted walkers. But certainly, they will reward their effort with the breathtaking views of the Guadalbarbo Valley. The river appears to resist entering the Guadalmellato Reservoir which also creates a much worthy to contemplate landscape.

Besides the natural and ethnographic features that we will come across along the track, the most interesting one is the landscape itself. There are many spots from where we will be able to carefully look at the slopes powerful eroding activity and at the mountains singular physical geography. In addition, we will pass by some sections where it is remarkable the way the scrub have easily recovered from wildfire unfaithful attacks.

The memory of these astonishing views will remain in both the retina and the hiker's camera time after finishing the trail. We are just about to discover one of the most stunning areas of this so close yet so much unspoilt corner of the Sierra Morena Mountains.



The Guadalmellato River Dam

Start: Obejo
Finish: Guadalmellato dam
Distance: 22,5 km
Time: 6 hours

Suitability:



*Walking, horse riding and biking (suitable only in a few sections)

Difficulty: MIDE evaluation



Enviroment:
Severity of the natural environment.

1



Track Features:
Difficulty in following the track.

1



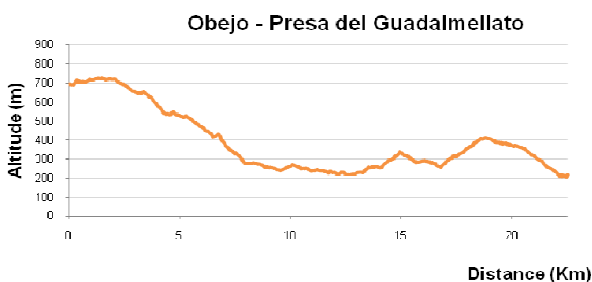
Orientation:
Guidance on the route directions.

1



Struggle:
Struggle required for accomplishing the route.

4



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ROUTE DESCRIPTION

Obejo is a highland town deeply nailed into the mountains of the Sierra Morena of Córdoba. Its greater attraction is the landscape itself. A flat track will take us to Castillo Street in the village where many staggered white houses mark the road to San Antonio Abad Church, a 13th century monument declared of historic and artistic interest.

Among other features, the most peculiar one is the San Benito pilgrimage. This is a most popular festival hold in the village -and very famous within the region- featuring the San Benito dancers who performance an ancestral dance with swords which is popularly known as the 'bachimachía' and that ends up with the mocking execution of the 'patatú' master.

Our track starts off at the paved street that takes to the cementery. This street goes between the Council Sport Center and the 'Vía Augusta' ru-



Almond flower

ral school to gently climb a soft slope leaving behind the town's white houses and the terrace gardens. There are some benches along both sides of the track. It will keep our attention some Junipers mixed with some Pine Trees, Rockroses and daffodils blooming in spring. Juniper is rare coniferous species which grows in sunny rocky hillsides but which is quite unusual within this region.

••• Km 1. Obejo cemetery

On having come to Obejo cemetery, we will go all around its oriental flank to get to a dirt path which goes up to an open space covered with Rockroses scrub and some dispersed Junipers. In winter time the patches of blooming almond groves paint on white the shrubby Mediterranean undergrowth. These fruit trees are laboriously located on terraces which have been cut into the hillside where every single span of fertile land is used.

The track drops down on one slope between two ravines, the Gato Brook and the Guadalbarbo River one. The two rivers course flow down towards the valley where both will come to die into the reservoir. 'Rasos' is the name given to the area on the surroundings of the Cerro del Conjuero Hill where young pasture lands with no trees are predominant. Magpies are growing in number as the walk progresses which tell us about the presence of livestock in the area. As we said before, stock farming is so much rooted in the region, though hunting activity is also very important in the area where Partridges and Wild Boars tracks are easily spotted.

We will come to a junction where we will bear right to take the path that goes into a bit more humid area by a small stream where bovine cattle can be seen pleasantly grazing between massive Oak trees.



Wild boar

The path descends the small stream and on one side we will have the Cerro del Conjuero Hill and on the other the tiny Del Viejo Brook covered of Brambles and Oleanders. This small stream starts flowing in here, between stony areas and hills.

At the lower section of the path, this will turn to the left and soon after we will meet a new junction where we will take the branch to the right. This appears to be a good place for breaking. Behind us there are the Conjuero slopes packed with a lush Mediterranean scrub of wild Olive Trees, Oaks and Rockroses bushes. Opposite to the small stream and scattering down the hillside, they are heaps of stones placed by farmers which shape the landscape into terraces and piles of stones.

This is also a good place for birdwatching. The physical geography of the valley suits birds of prey such the Buzzard that takes advantage of the currents of warm ascending air to rise with the minimal effort.

Back to the path, we will shortly meet another junction where we will not take the path that drops down but the one branching off to the left. The path

Griffon Vulture



will carry on skirting up to the gate of a private hunting land which is open most times and then climbs up to the Jabalies Hill Farmhouse. On the hills to our left, we will spot in the distance the *La Majada de la Vieja* cluster of farmhouses surrounded by remnants of Olive trees stuck to surviving between the scrub and the Mediterranean undergrowth.

●●●Km 5.4. Los Jabalies Hill small farmhouse and Cabeza Chica Hil



De los Jabalies Hill Farmhouse

Los *Jabalies* is a small traditional farmhouse hundreds of years devoted to sheep stock farming. From this place, we will head down and towards the Guadalbarbo Ravine which is clearly spotted in the distance and show us the right direction.

Two pyramidal shaped hills will merge at the end of this descending track. The one to the right is known as *Cabeza Chica* Hill and is totally covered with olive groves on this facing slope. On getting to the bottom of this hill, it is easy to turn aside the route so we need to pay attention to the following directions.

We will look for a gate enclosing a smallholding committed to horse breeding. There, we will come out of the path and enter the smallholding to walk between the stables and pass opposite to the chicken coop. Then be ready for a not very easy walk. We will take the path that goes up to the half of the hill outskirts. This path is not in good conditions and it is hard to follow. We will find ourselves walking on a sharp steep slope that goes along the north-western hillside of the *Cabeza Chica* Hill where we will find an olive grove spattered with almond groves that cover this abrupt slope. Then we will come out of the smallholding by going across the gate again. There we will connect with another path with a better surface despite the bad con-

ditions of the track. This section of the track is not so much suitable for biking on due to the abruptness of the slopes and hillsides.

The new path will drop down and after crossing another gate, we will get to the back of the *Americano Farmhouse*.

••• **Km 7.45. TheAmericano farmhouse**



DelAmericano Farmhouse

There are a few good reasons for stopping at the *Americano Farmhouse*. One is the landscape. The Guadalbarbo's back hillsides (the Calderas shady) are fully covered by excellent vegetation. Some of them support a Mediterranean wood in great conditions of conservation.

Another reason is to take the path that goes down towards a countryside road that connects Obejo town to the Guadalmellato River Dam.

Pasture lands and Mediterranean shrub are clearly gain terrain to Olive groves on slopes. We will pass across a gate to get to the countryside road which we will follow up until the end of this stage of the route.

Feeling much easy on the flat valley and once we get to a most comfortable road surface, we may turn around and look at the impressive hills we have already negotiated: *Cabeza Chica* to the left and *Cabeza Gorda* to the right. One covered on sloping Olive groves and in contrast the other one totally draped with Mediterranean scrub and shrubs. Between these two

hills is the Del Viejo Brook supporting a quite shy riverside vegetation of Tamujos (*Flueggea tinctoria*). Far away in the distance and between those two hills is the *Majada de la Vieja* Farmhouse.

••• Km 9.6. Bridge over the Guadalbarbo River and Guadalmellato reservoir tail ends

This will be no the first time that we wade the river since we did it on the previous stage from Villaharta to Obejo. However, this time, the so called 'the Berbers' River' presents a much larger current. A massive flooding stony plain includes most of the pasture land and a reckless wider flow speeds up towards the tail ends of the reservoir.



The Guadalbarbo River

The countryside road follows up on a false plain inner area surrounded by mountains. The hills on the right side support Los Puntales Hill shady side and a landscape which got on wild fire years ago. Later on, we will see to what extend the natural environment worsens because of the wild fire.

We will see some patches of Pine Trees and Eucalyptus Trees forestry by the surrounding areas of the Guadalmellato Reservoir tail ends. It will keep our attention the water sheet that spreads over the southern slopes of these mountains.

The countryside road will bear to the left and sinuously will move away from the reservoir tails. Then it will wade across brooks and a small brook that drops down Los Puntales Hill. From the top of this hill we will have an astonishing view of the reservoir. On the opposite shores of the reservoir, the quartzite crests of the Cuchillares Hill named after the many sharp edges of its summits.

••• **Km 15.70. The forest shed with a control barrier**



The Guadalmellato Reservoir

Just after reaching the top of the hill, the path starts to drop down and we will bump into a former forest shed by a barrier used in the past for traffic control. Pine and Eucalyptus forest is increasing as it is the number of animal species associated to this type of woods, especially birds such Eurasian Jays and Chaffinches.

These semi artificial masses of wood provide shade for the walker until we get to a fountain by the right side of the track. This is a rough stone built fountain over a rustic set of steps that lead us to the water source. This appears to be a good place for a short break. There is a stone made bench on each side of the fountain frontal where we may get some rest protected by the shade of some carob trees which are very common on this shady place.

Perhaps the most remarkable natural feature in this section of the route is the way the Mediterranean scrub and woods is gaining ground to the wild fire holocaust. It is easy to see how Strawberry Trees, Rockroses and Durillo (*Viburnum tinus*) shrubs are beginning to live in this place again. Views open out across the reservoir at the highest top of our ascending path. The surrounding areas enclosing the reservoir are a mixture of woods and noble shrubby woods with some Olive groves scattering over the place. On the opposite hillside will keep our attention Peñas Rubias, an impressive vertical quartz rock wall proudly standing between the mass of vegetation.

Still descending, new and amazing sceneries hint at the terrible spectacle that took place on the area due to wildfire. Where the track meets Los



Tracks of a former wild fire at Los Puntales

Puntales path, our track will make a U-turn to the left and head towards the Dam.

88

GR-48 Córdoba

Just a bit before the end of this stage, we will pass by the Los Puntales Bajos Farmhouse. This maybe is the last chance to look at the reservoir from above. Certainly, the site is a remarkable site from where we will have a most privileged sight of the reservoir. This descending track comes to die by the Guadalmellato Dam which is also the end of this stage.

In addition, we will love to mention here a singular action that has to come to occur on the Guadalmellato surrounding areas. From 2009 some specimens of Iberian Lynx were released in this area, where many of those singular animals used to live in a very far past. The specimens have been released within an enclosure for controlling their adaptation to a new environment before they are placed into the open wild. This has been possible thanks to the LIFE programme for the conservation of the Iberian Lynx. The LIFE programme is fully funded by the UE and managed by the Junta de Andalucía (Andalusia Government).



Mediterranean woods and wildfire

••• Wood fires are a sort of habitual news in Mediterranean countries and in summer time. For thousands of years, wildfire has been an attached factor to Mediterranean natural environments. However, the way Mediterranean vegetation relates to the natural world has facilitated the development of a range of

plants adaptations in order to preserve vegetation and to speed up woods regeneration soon after a wildfire event.

Most Mediterranean plants possess a great capacity for sprouting again after being under harsh stress. Some of them have really deep roots where the plant sto-

res the nutrients; they have also the roots well protected by thick structures as it happens to strawberry trees and heathers. For example, Mastic trees and Italian buckthorns are able for sprouting again on an isolated land just a few months after wildfire.

Leafy species such oak and carob trees have a quite much thicker stem covered by a hard bark. The most significant adaptation within these species is the cork oak tree. Cork oak trees have their stem wrapped with a suberin dense bark (cork) which protects the tree from fire.

Other plants have developed inner systems which confer to the plant a much prodigious capability to

disperse out after a wildfire. Clear examples are bushes from the Cistus family (rockroses) which fire resistant seeds (pirophyte seeds) can easily sprout after a wildfire.

A wildfire might destroy completely the woods yet these natural strategies above mentioned are put in place by the plants soon after a wildfire event and vegetation appear to rise from the ashes. This natural strategy is also a good example of how to overcome difficulty while fighting for surviving. One of the many lessons freely given to us by nature and that we should try not to forget.



White Rockroses are especially efficient at colonizing burned sites

STAGE 8

GUADALMELLATO DAM - ADAMUZ

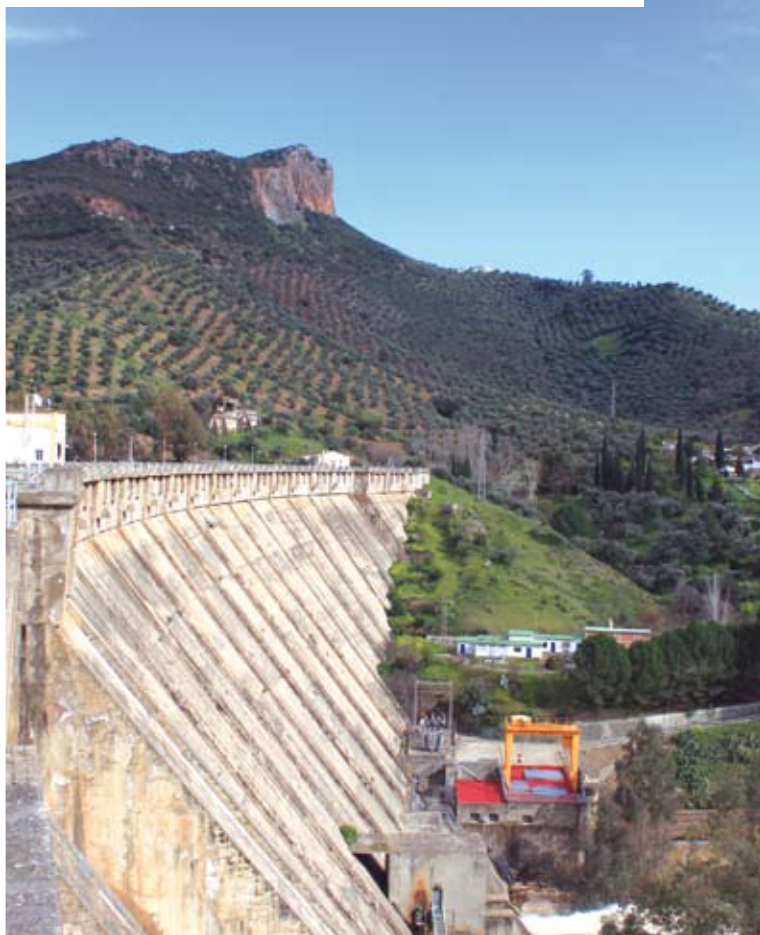


This stage of the track matches almost completely with an ancient track known as Vereda de Obejo- Pedro Abad which connected Obejo town to the High Guadalquivir of Córdoba region. This is an ideal track for hiking or mountain biking since the area is pleasantly quite and the road supports very low traffic.

On the first section of the track, we will still have the chance to enjoy the views over the Guadalmellato reservoir, at the heart of Sierra Morena of Córdoba Mountains. Olive groves cover up the fertile lower lands crowned by the rocky crests of the mountains which become really impressive at Los Conventos Country Estate.

Getting close to Adamuz village, the landscape starts to change and Olive groves cultures mix with dense Mediterranean shrub until transforming

The Guadalmellato Dam and Peñas Rubias Hills at the background



into ancient pastures. We will come across with some excellent cultural features which tell us about the importance of this path for people in the past moving from a place to another on this steeply and isolated area. This is also a place of peace and privacy especially for hermits retreat and for any one on soul-searching.

Start: Guadalmellato Dam

Finish: Adamuz

Distance: 14,8 km

Time: 4 hours

Suitability:



Difficulty: MIDE evaluation



Enviroment:

Severity of the natural environment.

1



Track Features:

Difficulty in following the track.

1



Orientation:

Guidance on the route directions.

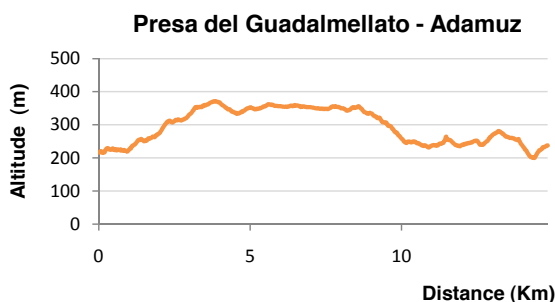
1



Struggle:

Struggle required for accomplishing the route.

2



ROUTE DESCRIPTION

In 1911 the Guadalmellato Reservoir was built over the river of the same name. In 1925, Alfonso XII, King of Spain, visited the place and the remains of a viewpoint place known as 'El Merendero de Alfonso XII' (Alfonso XII's merendero) still can be seen yet the place is almost covered by the waters. Encircling the waters is a thick area of pine and eucalyptus forestry which is pretty much appreciated by many fishermen that come to fish by the shores and in the shade of the trees.

This section of the path will star off at the edge of the dam. We will take a tarmac path having the reservoir waters to our left. On this first stage of the track we will still enjoy the relaxing views of the water sheet surrounded by mount steep slopes and Olive groves. Cormorants and Herons are easily located at the tail ends of the reservoir.



Grey Heron

On the slopes to the right, the Olive groves extend up to the highest areas of the mount where quartzite rocky crests are predominant. Scattering Almond groves spatter the steep olive groves given to the slopes a shade of whites and soft pink colours in winter time. At the talus by the road can be seen layers of strata clearly marked on the rock and nearby a continuous shrubby Mediterranean undergrowth of Rockroses, gorse bushes and heathers.

••• Km 3.8. Alto de los Morenos and the Retamarejo Country Estate gate

The route continues on up and away from the reservoir. The Doña Loba Alta House at the left edge is a place to enjoy the views. As we get deeper into this natural environment, different shades and colours imposed by the substratum become evident. On the highest areas of the mount, the scarce vegetation finds difficult to nail into the ground because of the quartzite rocky crests. Some foothills follow the sharply summits where a much fertile soil made up of red sands supporting some Olive groves on.

Jesús Rock at Los Conventos Country Estate



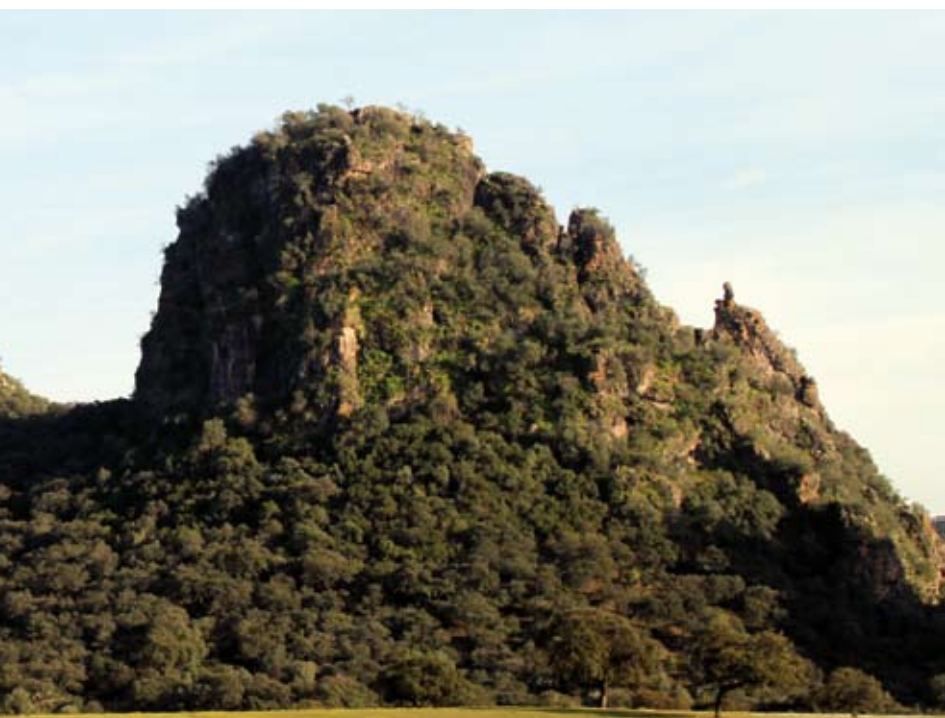
Some rocks dark texture is difficult to see due to the thick scrub stuck to the rock. Despite of being a type of rock from the Primary Age (350 millions of year ago), quartzite rocks are located at the highest areas of the mount showing a high resistance to erosion. This is because of the quartz, one of the harder minerals, contained in the rock. The landscape resulting from this type of rocks is that of irregularly shaped and impressive rocky walls and crests.

The track reaches its utmost point at Los Morenos Pass from where the Mediterranean wood starts gaining ground to the rocky areas promising broad pastures ahead.

••• **Km 3.9. La Roca de Jesús rock and Los Conventos rocks**

The track slightly descends and, en route, we will bump into Los Conventos Rocks. These are three impressive masses of rock standing on the Prados de la Nava meadow. The rock in the middle is called La Roca de Jesús. Between the rocks still remain the ruins of a former Abby known as San Francisco del Monte Convent. On the other side of the road are the lands of the Garciméndez Country Estate, very popular among hunters and fully committed to hunting purposes.

The history of the convent is totally attached to the Mozarabic people in the XV century. The place was fully active over five centuries and closed down in 1838. Well protected in this isolated natural enclave, the convent housed respectable monks such San Francisco Solano and even the catholic king of





The Kestrel is a bird of open country and rocky sites

Spain Felipe V lodged at the Abby in 1624. The monks arduously carved a stairway on the rock that gets up to the pinnacle of the mount where originally the monastery was located. A work of bricks on semicircular arches defying the height is the only remaining feature of the building.

Birds of prey are probably the only animals living in these rocky scarps. Among others is the White-Rumped Swift. This is a quite peculiar bird that passes winters in the sub Saharan areas and that can be spotted in the fewer places within the Spanish territory. The most remarkable about this bird is its singular behaviour since it is very skilled on ‘stealing’ the Swallows’ nests. In fact, this bird moves into the Swallows’ adobe made nest leaving at the entry an unmistakable sign, some white feathers.

••• **Km 7.7. San Francisco del Monte de los Conventos country estate main gate**

As our walk progresses, we will see the continuous fence made of prickly Three Thorns Acacia shrubs which is the border between the San Francisco



Wild Asparagus plant

del Monte de los Conventos Country Estate and the road. Again, new olive groves gaining ground to the dehesa where we will see some horses of the Spanish-Arabic race. We have already left behind and to the left side of the track a former shed with a water-well which resembles a typical country inn which still has the hoops where horses used to be fastened on the front walls.

We will pass by the entry of the country estate which is also the main access to Los Conventos rural accommodation named after the country estate. As we said above, Olive groves become the most important landscape feature. The track widens and alongside the track we will have patches of Mediterranean undergrowth comprising a good range of species proper of the sunny hillside such Mastic Tree (*Pistacia lentiscus*) bushes, Gorses and Spanish Lavenders. This is a good place for collecting Wild Asparagus, but only if we are hiking on this area in spring time.

The track suddenly winds down and the undergrowth will be enriched with species of 'noble undergrowth' such beautiful Strawberry Trees, Myrtle and Terebinth Trees to which Honeysuckles get entangled. This slight change in the vegetation is just a sight of another landscape ahead.



A bird of Mediterranean shrubs: the Great Spotted Cuckoo

••• Km 10.6. La Meca country estate access, Tamujoso Brook

At this point, the vía pecuaria known as 'Cordel de Córdoba a Villanueva' joins and matches up our track for almost two kilometres.

The natural environment is totally different now. We will see in front of us a sea of Eucalyptus and Pine groves spattering the Mediterranean shrubby wood. A light green mantle of Black Pine groves spreads to the

right towards the *Sierrezuela* Spurs. Another route that leads up to Villafraanca de Córdoba town and that occasionally run parallel to the AVE railings starts in this area. We will avoid it though.

The lower area of the mountains skirt is known as La Puente fertile plain where the Tamujoso Brook flows through. The name of the brook evokes the riverbank shrubby vegetation comprising Tamujos and Tamarix bushes located all along the brook riversides. In addition, Reeds spattering the entire plain indicate the proximity of groundwater level.

This is a good section for birdwatching, especially forest birds which probably are nesting in the nearby masses of coniferous. We may watch or, at least, listen to the Eurasian Jay or to the Chaffinch. But no doubt, at night we will clearly listen to the creepy hoot of the Tawny Owl. The track continues descending and passes beneath the AVE railings to get to another *dehesa* of similar characteristics as the one before. Here the Tamujosillo Brook flows through the plain and downstream will join up its big brother, the Tamujo Brook.

••• Km 12.2. Junction at the Descansadero de la Dehesa Vieja

This junction of different paths, tracks and ancient roads is a clear example of the relevance of those in the past. Here we must be clear about the direction of our walk. The *Vereda Obejo* – Pedro Abad, which is the track that we have been following the last two sections, continues away to the right leading down towards the Guadalquivir vega. We will leave the countryside road, which will make a U-turn to the left, and carry on walking up to the front on a dirt path that matches the ‘cordel’ path that goes from Córdoba town to Villanueva de Córdoba.

As the track follows up, we will get into a most beautiful and ancient *dehesa* cover by bushes of Moorish lavender. This is a natural area very popular for recreation, especially the weekends when locals come over. It is not rare to watch large flocks of Azure-Winged Magpies searching for the rest of food left behind by weekenders. This pasture land is also known as *Dehesa del Pavo de la Viña* because of the many vineyards that covered the area in the past.

Immediately after wading across the Parrosillo Brook, the track climbs up a soft slope where the pasture land of Oaks Trees is replaced by scattering country houses on farming fields. In front of us and in the no so far distance, the beautiful sight of Adamuz town indicates that this section of the route is about to end. However, we will pay close attention to the direction signs that show the way up to an area of gardens surrounding the Concejo Brook. By the brook still lasting the remains of a former water powered flour mill known as the Gollizno Mill. This mill has cleverly been included in a thematic route managed and designed by the Adamuz Town Council aimed to enhance the village cultural and anthropological heritage.

Nevertheless, this used to be a very popular area among the Adamuceños (people from Adamuz) because of the beauty of the place but also because it was a place for collecting fresh water. In the past, a small dam

or ‘azuda’ was built in a point of the water course in order to divert the water to another flour mill. The remains of this mill still stand up in the area and are very interesting from an anthropologic point of view.

After crossing over the Concejo Brook, we will bear left and onto a paved track that will take us to the junction of Obejo road and Córdoba Street that is into the village. This stage of the route finishes at the Plaza, the village main square.

Concejo Brook and the Water mill



••• The Gollizno Mill was a water-powered flour mill located in Adamuz. It is just one of the many water structures located by water courses in Sierra Morena. Recently, Adamuz Town Council was considering adding this type of water related structures to the town cultural heritage. They are not just old water mills but also all sort of supporting structures such irrigation ditches, water wheels and old stone sinks. All they can be found along the Concejo Brook riversides.

Gollizno Mill is structured in the following sections:

- The gristmill room: Located on the upper floor, this was the room where the grain was ground to get flour. The mechanism comprised two big millstones and an axle. The bed stone, called the ‘solera’, was fixed to the floor, while the runner stone, the ‘volandera’, was mounted on a separate spindle, driven by the main shaft. Actually, the runner

stone did the grinding.

- The carcavo: This was a dome shaped room located on the lower floor of the building. The water from the buckets built into the wheel came into this room where was led to the shaft broad blades known as ‘álambes’. The turning force produced by the water on the paddle wheel was transferred directly to the shaft and then to the runner stone, causing it to grind. The passage of water was controlled by a system of sluice gates that allow maintenance and some measure of flood control.

In the proximity of this mill there are other interesting features. One of them is a traditional well and its wheel which still keeps part of the original structure. Another one is a red sandstone stone sink where women from the surrounding villages used to sluice the clothes until quite recently. There are others minor features such an irrigation ditch and a sluice gate which were built in recent years and therefore might be less interesting to the walkers.



A former millstone used for grinding grain

STAGE 9

ADAMUZ-MONTORO



This stage of the route will take us closer to the Guadalquivir fertile plain lands. In fact, the stage finishes in Montoro where the river, fitted into a large meander, seems to shake hands with the Sierra Morena mountain range.

Most time the track will run through fertile plains where olive groves and irrigate fields are the landscape main features. Nevertheless, we will also pass by some remnants of oaks pastures also known as 'manchones' which are located by a small stream and where cattle and pigs stock farming still is an important activity.

The first section of the track matches a path that in the past connected Adamuz and Algarrarin municipalities. The latter is one of the many new settlement that were brought into place in the first half of the 20th century after the putting into irrigation the Guadalquivir basin. Those new settlements were established for housing the many seasonal labourers likely of being temporarily employed in the fields.

On this stage we will go across to the Guadalquivir River opposite bank. We will also walk on ancient Roman paved roads which tracing is somehow still in good conditions and that are partially used in Montoro surrounding areas.



Sunflower crops are very common in the vega areas

This section of the route will definitively take us back to the vega fertile fields with the inducement of the always inspiring company of the Guadalquivir River.

Start: Adamuz
Finish: Montoro
Distance: 15,6 km
Time: 4 hours and 30 minutes

Suitability:



Difficulty: MIDE evaluation



Enviroment:
Severity of the natural environment.

1



Track Features:
Difficulty in following the track.

1



Orientation:
Guidance on the route directions.

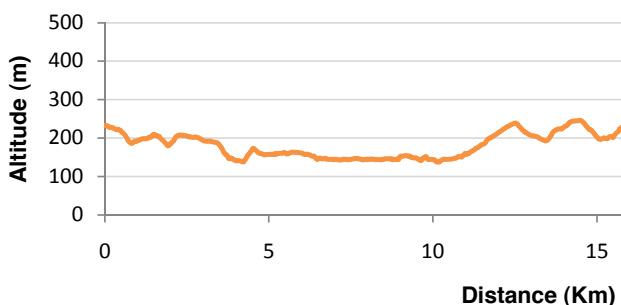
1



Struggle:
Struggle required for accomplishing the route.

2

Adamuz - Montoro



ROUTE DESCRIPTION

This section of the track starts off at Adamuz eastern area and by the CO-3102 road. This is a former track that connected to Algallarin pasture lands. Even Adamuz origins go back to prehistoric times, it is in the Middle Ages when the place becomes a relative important site due to its strategic location as one of the many country inns on the route that connected the capital cities of Córdoba and Toledo and then to Madrid on the Via de la Plata main track.



100

Dry stone wall of red sandstones known as 'piedra molinaza' in the region

GR-48 Córdoba

At the very beginning of this section, we will find ourselves walking on the countryside road and so we will have a chance to carefully looking at the stone walls parapet on the left which is a good example of the area rock formations where limestone rocks mix with red sandstones called 'molinazas' in this region. Those manmade structures bounding the road and the pasture lands are considered first rank rural wealth assets.

On wading across the Caño Brook, the track will climb up a slope to get to a junction on the top. There we will leave the road and carry on walking on the dirt path to the right that gets into pasture lands.

••• Km 1.4. La Mina Brook pasture land

The path we are walking on matches a former track that connected Adamuz and Algallarín towns. We will go through pleasant evergreen Oaks pasture lands, mainly pig stock farming orientated, which edges are colonized by some Steppe Rockroses, Asparagus and Rue bushes (*Ruta graveolens*).

This area is home for corvids such Magpies and Jackdaws. We will see flocks of those birds looking for food in the oak pastures and above the cattle. Birds of prey such Black Kites are also quite familiar to this environment where small leafy riverside woods appear to be good for these birds preying.



White Poplar leave in close detail

It is not a big task to wade through the Mina Brook, especially in the dry season. The brook supports a small area of riparian vegetation of Brambles patches crowned by Poplar Trees and where Blackbirds and Nightingales spread their resonant singing over the seasonal stream.

After climbing up another slope, the landscape opens out extensive olive groves. We will keep walking on the main track that goes down up to another small brook where the Pedro Gil Brook flows through. Again, the picture of ancient Oaks pasture lands fully committed to cattle breeding. A productive fertile plain of cereals and Alfalfa (*Medicago sativa*) spreads over the riverbanks though. This brook supports a quite substantial flow which makes harder wading across, especially in the rain season.

Several ancient paths and tracks come and join together at this ford. One of them is the track known as *Cordel de las Veredas* which runs north-south and joins La Barca Track to cross over the Guadalquivir River. Then it heads towards Alcurrucena and later to Pedro Abad town where it dies. Nevertheless, we will carry on towards Algallarín village and on a path made of pebbles. After a soft climbing the path will take us closer to some rain fed crops nearby the vega.

••• Km 4.5. Algallarín fertile plain land

A singular mosaic made of Olive groves and cultures of cereal such as wheat is the most significant landscape feature of this section. These



Irrigated fields along both sides of the Guadalquivir River

lands became irrigated fertile fields by the middle of the 20th century and still lasting are ditches and canals for irrigation. The path becomes a countryside road as we get close to Algallarin village where the proximity to the river becomes imminent.

The path will meet with the road at the village's suburbs. We will continue on the road for about 300 meters then we will turn to the left to get to a dirt path that makes a detour by the village southern area and leads to the Guadalquivir meander. To follow the right direction we will look for a line of Pine and Eucalyptus Trees to the left of the path and then, at the lowest areas of this section, an irrigation ditch which is visible throughout most sections of the track.



The remains of the former barge used to go across the river

We will go across a small road and continue parallel to the irrigation ditch, leaving aside the Junta de Andalucía Weather Forecasting Station. From this point forward we will get closer to the Guadalquivir River shores and then we will get to a place known as El Barco.

Up to the 1950s, a barge used to cross the river from this place to the opposite shore. This was the easier way for communicating between shores. Still here can be seen the remains of the boat framework and the tackle's wire.

We will get back to Algarrarín road walking between gardens and fruit trees. After passing the roundabout we will bear right and towards the bridge over the river.

••• Km 9.7. The bridge over the Guadalquivir River

This will be the first time during the entire route that our trail –the GR-48 track, crosses to the Guadalquivir River opposite shore. In fact, this bridge exemplifies the recent connection between both shores in this section of the river.



A blooming Willow

We should make a short break just in the middle of the bridge and, leaning on the bridge rail, spend some time interpreting the environment. Upstream, flowing down from the north is the Arenoso River joining up the Guadalquivir riverbed and the wall of the dam can be spotted on a second plane. In spite of the reservoir works, the river sustains some patches of in-line riverside forest, especially by the river's mouth. However, all along the flow, the Guadalquivir River does support a riverside wood in quite acceptable conservation. In swampiest areas Poplar Trees and Willows are the best examples of this wood.

In the distance, where the hills' slopes steepen and stretch down into the river, two big country houses standing out in the landscape are clearly spotted. One is the Loma del Barco and the other one is the Atalayuelas Mill.

Just after crossing the bridge, the road drops and we will swing to the left on a path that runs alongside the Olive groves boundaries. The track goes through an area partly occupied by a quarry until it meets with the Capillas former track.

••• Km 10.6. Capillas traditional path

Our path meets the Capillas Traditional Path by a gate to our left. We will go on this new track following upwards a small stream direction which will practically occupy this section of our route.

Limestone rocks outcrop on the slopes and spread over onto the very riverbed. The petrified remains of marine organisms such as shells and sea urchins can be spotted on the rocks surface. On the other hand, the



Lime rock outcroppings

calcareous dilution produced by the running waters creates oddly shaped holes and small basins along the river bed.

This cattle track brings some diversity to the monotonous Olive grove environment. Many birds such Lesser Whitethroats, Olivaceous Warblers and Redwings find protection and make their nests into the shrub on both sides of the track. The most important scrub on this section is Broom bus-



San José de Capillas Manor

hes spreading all over the climb and by the rill which leads us to the Capillas Hill highest area.

The track winds up through the hill and sometimes it becomes harder to follow the tracing. We will carry on walking by the row of Broom bushes until the top of the hill where to the right is the San Jose de Capillas Country House guarded by two Palm Trees and a set of Orange Trees behind the latticework on the front court.

In this section the track it is where the former stone pavement remains in better condition. Pebbles and boulders manage to draw a well defined



Stone walls are home to many invertebrates which are ideal food for birds such as the Lesser Kestrel

pavement. In many occasions these paved tracks have a Roman origin. We must not forget that we are approaching Montoro (former Epora), which became a federated city of the Rome Empire acquiring great significance at that time.



Perfectly designed paving on a traditional path

••• **Km 13.18. Los Bermejales path**

At this point, we will close to the end of this stage of the route. Here we will bear left leaving both the Capillas track and the Cantora Country Estate to take on a less busy track. This new track follows a small bridge and then rises up on a hillside and between dry stone walls plentifully covered with Mediterranean undergrowth and oaks. This is a very quiet and pleasant path which, at the end, will open to the walker a beautiful sight of the town. We will take delight in the track ancient stone pavement before it gets to the lower section where we will go back on a countryside road by La Huerta Mayor parking area. From there, we will take on the road that enters Montoro town, near the bullfighting arena which is where this stage finishes.

Even the stage has come to an end, you may chose to spend some time walking in this town, since there are many interesting historical monuments to see and the whole town has been declared a Historical and Artistic Site. The red sandstone (*pedra molinaza*) mixed with whitewash

walls gives character to the town centre. They are many sharply steep narrow streets that will take the walker up to many vantage-points that afford a clear view of the Guadalquivir River fitted meander circling the town.

Because of its particular beauty and singularity, this picture of the river embracing the town has become the municipality best visiting card. Moreover, the river proximity to the town facilitates a range of sport and free time activities including sailing up the Guadalquivir River and guided walks between water wheels and dams.



Ancient Roman roads

●●● Ancient Roman roads spread all over the Iberian territory. The first roads built in Andalusia by the Romans were for strategic purposes and they were to allow an army to occupy the area. For ease they tended to follow existing unpaved tracks. It was only later in the occupation that the rest of the network of paved roads was built and these were primarily for commercial purposes and for transporting huge masses of minerals. Today still remain few sections of some Roman roads and, it is in Montoro surroundings where we can take the pleasure of even walking onto those paved roads.

Most times Roman roads were

paved using local materials. Hereby, the sections of roman paths in the area are paved of the characteristic red sandstones known as 'piedra molinaza' in Montoro municipality.

In the Middle Ages, most of those ancient roman roads were used for cattle moving and so they have come to us as tracks of public uses. The regular moving of livestock transformed those hundreds years old roads borders into stone made parapets to prevent animals trespassing the nearby cultures. Today, those stones made walls are the platform where lush Mediterranean undergrowth nails into becoming home for many animal species from insects and myriapods to many insect-eating birds.



STAGE 10

MONTORO-MARMOLEJO



This stage is the last of our route in Córdoba province and the one that connects the provinces of Córdoba and Jaen. The Track matches almost completely another famous track known as *Cordel de las Vacas Bravas*. This is the traditional road that connected both towns, Montoro and Marmolejo, not only for cattle moving purposes but also as pilgrimage route to get to the *Virgen de la Cabeza* Sanctuary located in the Sierra de Andujar Mountains.

The skirt of Montoro Mountains is characterized by the reddish shades of the red sandstones (*piedra molinaza*) display not only in the landscape but also in many wealth assets such as bridges, stone fences, farmhouses, mills, wells, etc.

An added value that enriches the many interesting features on this stage of the route are the fluvial streams such as the Martín Gonzalo and Corcomé brooks and the Yeguas River all they flowing down in the area from the Sierra de Cardeña y Montoro Natural Park.



Even the *Cordel de las Vacas* Track has its limits perfectly fix, it is sometimes hard to determine exactly the path tracing as it may disappear or remains partially hidden under the dense shrub. Despite its length, this is a relative easy track with many variations of the cross-section, ups and downs, raising and descending slopes and sometimes, a rocky surface. Nevertheless, the trail is suitable for walking, horse riding and on some sections, for mountain biking.

We hope you enjoy this pleasant walk on this last stage through the province of Córdoba and, at the end of the route, find yourself imbued of the peculiarities of these hundred years old paths, tracks and ancient roads on the Sierra Morena Mountains.




Start: Las Donadas Bridge, Montoro

Finish: Renaissance Bridge and Spa Bath, Marmolejo

Distance: 23 km

Time: 6 hours


Suitability:




*

* Biking (no suitable on every section)

Difficulty: MIDE evaluation




Enviroment:
Severity of the natural environment.




Track Features:
Difficulty in following the track.

2

2



Enviroment:
Severity of the natural environment.

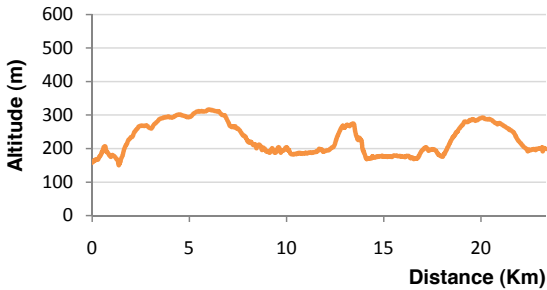


Track Features:
Difficulty in following the track.

2

3

Montoro - Marmolejo



ROUTE DESCRIPTION

This stage of the route starts off at La Donadas Bridge in Montoro. We will get to the Villa del Rio (A-3102) road from the Retamar neighbourhood located on the opposite shores to the town. On this first stage, the route matches the A-3102 road. The track ascends between the shooting range Pine groves and the tracks made by temporary water courses on the dark quartzite rock. Far behind us it remains the picturesque town of Montoro.

Traditional paved path near the Martín Gonzalo Brook



After passing under the N-420 road, the Guadalquivir valley opens to us as a blurred picture of gardens and smallholdings. The track continues descending until reaching the bridge over the Martín Gonzalo Brook.

••• Km 1.350. Bridge over the Martín Gonzalo Brook

This is a one only arch beautiful bridge built with red sandstone ashlar masonry. This is the point where the track moves away from the road and takes on a paved track that climbs up to the left.

The Martín Gonzalo is a seasonal brook which springs up at the heart of the Sierra de Cardena y Montoro Natural Park and at the Venta del Charco small village. As many other brooks in the area, this one supports some scarce riverside vegetation well adapted to flow variations comprising scattering Poplar Trees, spiky Tamujos and Oleanders.

This ancient roman road is a proper masterpiece. The entire track is carved on the rock and a hard work of pebbles traces off the road on which many cavalries and carriages once travelled by. Certainly, it is a shame the missing or destroyed pieces of the track on some sections.



The Ventorrillo de Chiriqui Country house

The paved track carries on ascending between Broom and Thyme bushes and some country houses. One of those buildings stands out because of the stone made threshold and ashlar. The building used to be a former country inn known as *Ventorrillo de Chiriqui*.

On reaching the top of the hillside, to the right of the path is one of the water mills located within the *Palmilla Baja* Country Estate limits. The mill has been recently restored though only the buttress and the red sandstone counterweight tower remain. Looking carefully at the tower joints we will see honey dripping down the dry stone wall from the honeycombs located inside the tower.

After passing the *Palmilla Mill*, we will bear left and walk some 50 meters on a road known as the *Encarná* that leads to the *Palmilla Alta*. Then we will go on a path that branches off right. The electricity tower and wires



The Rosines Brook Ford

makes a good hallmark to follow the right direction. Again the walker will find themselves delightfully walking on the pebbles paved road and on the dry stone walls on both sides of the track we will see some specimens of Kermes Oaks, Italian Buckthorns (*Rhannus alaternus*) and Myrtle bushes. A patch of Eucalyptus trees circling a small pond scarcely fulfil their original function and so, on every rainy winter, all sort of amphibians and toads choose this place for laying their eggs in the pool.

The track slightly drops through a thicker and dense Mediterranean undergrowth to finally get to wade across the Rosines Brook. The site is worthy for a short stop to contemplate the way the track fords the brook. This is an astonishing masterpiece of road engineering from the past: a set of

rocky slabs perfectly anchored in the riverbed and semi hidden between natural rows of Tamujos.

Just after wading across the Rosines Brook, the track continues until it meets with the A-3102 road at the kilometre 9. Sadly, we will leave behind the ancient paved road yet on both sides of the track still prevail the dry stone walls which mark the right direction. The track will follow up parallel to the main road until it gets to the Simona country house.

••• Km 4. La Simona country house

On a side of the road will keep our attention the impressive La Simona Country House. The building is easily spotted from the distance thanks to some high Washingtonians Palm Trees located at the front of the house and on a garden area well delimited by a beautiful latticework grating. In the garden and under the two lines of Palm Trees they are good examples of Iris flowers and Bamboo Canes. The Simona facade stands out because of its beautiful and elegant red sandstone masonry. It will keep our attention the mill's beam counterweight tower which once was enabled as a viewing-point with artistic hand-railings.

As the walk progresses, we will get into a plateau of Olive groves fully integrated In El Pago de la Nava. 'Pagos' are the rural districts in which Montoro Mountains are divided. El Pago de la Nava extends over a large plain land of Olive groves and contains many of the traditional mill for pressing olives, some of them turned into rural accommodations nowadays. We will come across to many signs indicating where those accommodations are.



A restored former mill

Eventually, we will get to a cross where many of those indications are placed and we will take on the asphalted path that takes to the rural accommodations Molino La Nava. The track, surrounded with scrub, will take us to Puertas Nuevas, a small cluster of country houses where once was a famous traditional country inn. In front of the San Juan de Puertas Nuevas Mill and decorating the site are two bulky millstones.

The countryside road track now heads on up towards *Molino de la Nava*. This cottage is classified as top category. One of the reasons why is such a quality place is that the building was restored yet it kept the original traditional features of the buildings in this region.

•••Km 7. Jarruña vegetable gardens

After passing by the Molino de la Nava, the tarmac track starts descending through thicker and lush undergrowth. Ahead are the La Roza Alta slopes and the track makes a 90 degrees turn to the right, leaving aside the remains of the Jarruña Gardens to run parallel to the Membrillo Brook.



Strange shapes carved into the Triassic 'Bunter' conglomerates

Soon Rockroses and Wild Olive Trees will be covering up the slopes by the stream and we will find ourselves descending between rocky walls emerging from beneath the bushes. They are the conglomerates of the Bunter. Those bulky rocks, formed by a type of stony concrete, will keep the walker's attention not just because of their outstanding size and odd shapes but also because of the yellowish colour of the lichens stuck to the rocks. This is also a good section for watching birds that live in rocky areas such the Eagle-Owl.



Nuestra Señora de la Fuensanta Hermitage

Just when the track is about to end, we will bump into the Corcomé Brook Valley and its fertile plain land. Again the track will make a U-turn towards the Fuensanta hermitage. The last Sunday of April, people from the region, especially from Montoro, come to worship one of the two saint funders of the town celebrating the pilgrimage in the Corcomé Valley. If we want to visit this hermitage, we will have to walk about 600 meters ahead and then come back to the tarmac track to finally get to a concrete path that will drop down toward the vega through country houses and gardens.

••• Km 8.7. Sevilla Gardens entry

The track continues on the opposite direction against the Fuensanta hermitage and goes upstream running parallel to the Corcome Brook. We will cross some country gates that will remain closed behind us.

We may want to have a look to the brook which turns into a set of isolated ponds in summer time that appear to be an oasis for aquatic wild animals. In addition, large flocks of noisy Azure-Winged Magpies pleased themselves in this area where they have water and many fruit trees, a perfect complement to their food habits.

The Corcomé Brook springs out at the Alto de Españares, at the heart of the Sierra de Cardena y Montoro Natural Park, which are registered the province's highest rain indicators. The brook's flow comes and goes at intervals; it brings life into the valley and relieves summer's dryness. The riverside vegetation comprises Tamujos, Oleanders, Osiers and Poplar Trees on those areas where the flow widen. On the river bed, reddish rocks tell us about the erosive function on the red sandstone.

We will soon get to a ford where it will be easier wade across the brook. Even it is not very usual; sometimes the flow levels up, especially on a long period of heavy rains. If that is the case, we will have to look for another better area to wade across the brook or even get back to the



A prickly spiny bush: the Tamujo (*Flueggea tinctoria*)

Once on the opposite shore, we will be alert to the indications at a crossroad. The area has traditionally been used for shepherds and livestock resting and it is known as the Misto. We will take on the main track to

the right opposite to the brook so we will back again on the *Cordel de las Vacas Bravas* Track. We will continue on that track for another 500 meters, and then bear left into a concrete path. This way we will enter the *Charco del Novillo*, another pago of Montoro Mountains.

••• **Km 10.69. Blanco Hermoso ravine**

Again we will find ourselves walking between dry stone walls and on a concrete path. On both sides of the path we will have Wild Olive Trees and young Oaks, and in winter time a startled of fluttering Thrushes. This humid environment favours the growing of Moss and Ferns on the rocks, giving a sensation of freshness to this section.

As the track climbs up, the Blanco Hermoso Valley opens in front of us with the country house of the same name on the right hills. To the north, on the opposite slopes are the blurred remnants of the *Escalera Vieja* Mill which are a perfect site for birds such Kestrels and the Jackdaws that use the hollows and fissures of the walls for nesting.

The path bears right yet we will continue ahead up to the front. The remnants of dry stone walls that follow up the thalweg tracing are a good



Corvids preferred habitat includes open fields

referent for us to get into the right direction. The road surface becomes stony and it is harder to walk on it due to the many cracks scarved on the land by water erosion. At some sections of this track, the path turns difficult to follow because of the dense undergrowth covering the tracing and we will have to walk on the nearby olive grove.

Soon we will reach the top of the hill where the path meets with Matapeiros Track shortly before joining the A-3101 road at the kilometre 4.



A Finger Pointer at the end of the Mataperros Path

••• Km 12. El Jondillo country state

On getting to the A-3101 road, the track bears right and matches the road until we get to a large parking area which is very popular among lovers of wild asparagus collection. There we will go across the road.

The path starts to descend towards the Guadalquivir River surrounding areas. This section of the route is only suitable for hiking as the path abruptly drops and winds sharply first one way and then another. Along both sides of the path there is a lushly undergrowth of broom and Mastic Tree (*Pistacia lentiscus*).



Blooming Rough Bindweed plant

The views from here are breathtaking. The Guadalquivir River works a deep and fitted meander, clearly marking out the lands of Córdoba and Jaen. The steepest hills scarcely support a most resistant scrub. To the right, on the reddish ground and between Olive groves, the San Camilo de Lelis impressive manor can hardly be spotted. This is a 18th century building in which still prevail the remains of both the original mill and the church yet both are totally abandoned today.

After negotiating this abrupt descending route, between huge blocks of red sandstone rocks, we will reach the river surrounding areas. Here the vegetation comprises patches of Poplar and Ash- Trees with fresh Ivy climbing on them. Nightingales, so abundant in these river-side groves, can be heard in the spring nights.

Once we get to the boundaries of the fluvial fertile plain land, we will look for a former irrigation ditch which is located parallel to the river-bed and that makes the limits with the nearby Olive groves.

••• **Km 14.55. The Yeguas River mouth**

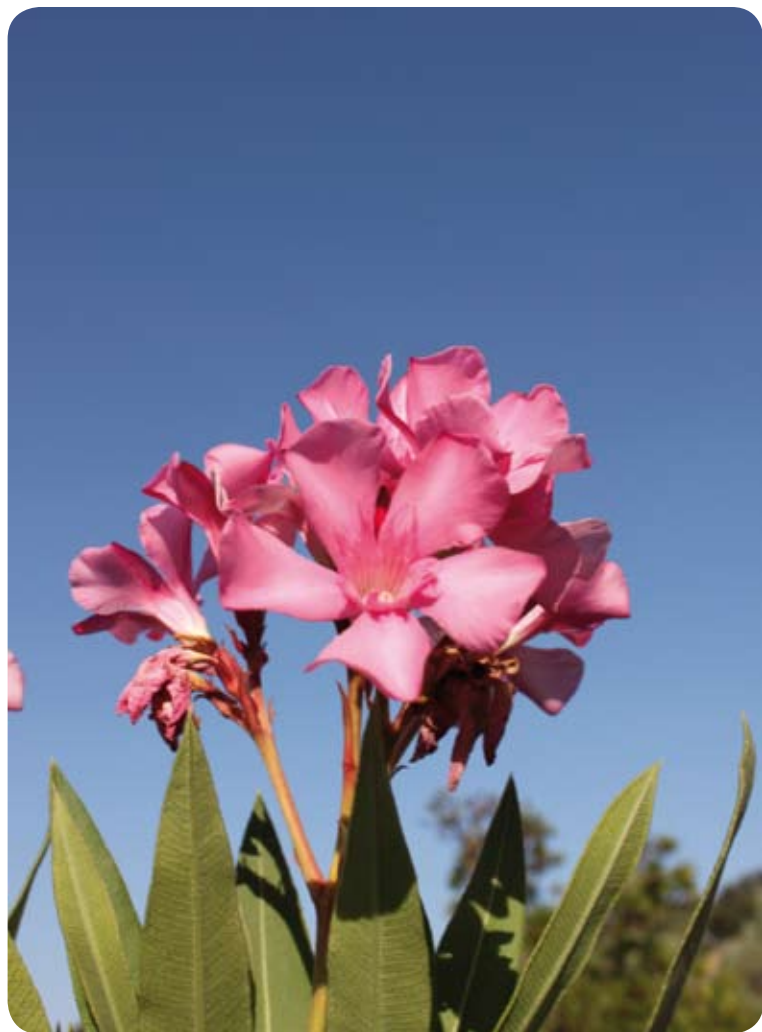
We have already come to the point where the Yeguas River meets with the Guadalquivir River. We can see from the path where the two rivers' waters mix together producing a range of different waters shades that soon will be fused.

A precious natural feature on this site cannot be overlooked. Some scattered specimens of Juniper can be spotted on this slimy plain. Junipers are trees or shrubs of pyramidal freightage which are not very frequent on southern regions as their normal distribution areas are those up in the north.



The Prickly Juniper

We will leave the Guadalquivir River companion by now to go upstream on a path that bears left and runs parallel to the Yeguas River. In the river bed and emerging from beyond the water sheet they are some big blocks of slate that appear to be polished by the action of the water flow. The river shores are packed up with exuberant vegetation comprising Tamarisk, Oleanders and Ash-Trees.



Oleander flowers

A few kilometres upstream it is the Yeguas Dam to adjust the flow level. In winter time, the river scarcely carries any water. However, water is released for irrigation purposes in summer which increases the river flow but also makes the water temperature to drop down some 5°C. This is a factor to bear in mind on the following section when we will wade through the river

••• Km 16.38. La Charca Grande ford

This is the point of the route where after fording the Yeguas River we will get into Jaen territory. If we were unable for fording the river because of the high flow, we should carry on walking upstream another 3 kilometres further on by the river side to get to the road by the dam that go across the river and towards Marmolejo town.

If we wade through the river at this point, we will find ourselves into Jaen province. The track makes its way through a patch of White Poplar trees heading uphill towards the valley on the left. There it will climb up parallel to the Cañuelo Brook Valley.

This is a thalweg with dense undergrowth of Lentisco and Kermes Oaks and excellent vegetation covering both sides of the path. This is a pleasant climbing through this green oasis where flocks of little birds whirl around the walker. Some Sarsaparillas climb up some White Poplar Trees located on the riverbank. The place is so humid that some vegetation and Poplar Trees are growing in the hillside. By the track borders are some fragrant plants such rosemary and Mastic Thyme bushes.

On reaching the top of the hill, a new large plain land of Olive groves opens up in front of the track.

123



Great quantity of aromatic plants and herbs along the path

GR-48 Córdoba

••• Km 17.60. Connection to the A-420 road

At this point the track connects to the countryside road. We have come to this point after a beautiful climbing which allows the walker enjoying a breathtaking sight of the Yeguas Reservoir water sheet and the foothills of the Sierra de Cardeña y Montoro Natural Park in the background. This



The Yeguas Reservoir and the Sierra de Cardena y Montoro Natural Park in the background

Natural Park of some 40.000 hectares symbolizes one of the best conservation areas in Sierra Morena Mountains. The Pyrenean Oak or 'rebollo' (*Quercus pyrenaica*) is without doubt the jewel of the park. This leafy species grow in a small section of the Natural Park which supports the single patch of Pyrenean Oaks within the province of Córdoba. The Yeguas Valley is the preferred habitat for some endangered animal species such the Iberian Lynx, the Iberian Wolf and the Spanish Imperial Eagle.

This protected natural area stretches within the limits of two different municipalities located in two different regions: Los Pedroches and Sierra Morena Cordobesa. This peculiarity enhances the natural and cultural values of the park. On one hand it is the granite landscape comprising paddocks and large pastures where traditional stock farming brings about the taste of one of the most historically and geographically acknowledged regions in the province. On the other hand, they are the red sandstone and the Olive groves which produce worldwide recognised top quality oil.

Our track continues to the right and parallel to the road towards Marmolejo town. To avoid walking on the road side, we can walk on the olive groves border. Nevertheless, this last section of the track is a very easy one since the track descends down to the Guadalquivir Vega lands.

As the walk progresses, the walker will soon spot Marmolejo town in the distance and the town's white houses standing out in the landscape. The Ecijano Country Estate and the farmhouse will keep our interest on the left side of the road. This is a farm exclusively committed to horse breeding and olive groves management. La Paz water spring is located by this Country Estate boundary and it is very famous because of its water commercialization.

The Guadalquivir Vega is on the sight again at the end of this serpentine road. This is an area with many water springs and fountains on both sides

of the river and where many recreation and picnic areas are located. Los Socialistas fountain is a very popular one.

This stage comes to an end at the gorgeous Renaissance Bridge located by the famous Marmolejo spa bath.



Renaissance Bridge in Marmolejo town

Olive Oil Mills in Sierra de Montoro



••• Olive Oil Mills are one of the most singular landscape features in Montoro country region. Olive groves are deeply rooted in the area. Therefore this type of countryside building has for many centuries been considered the first element for rural development.

Those peculiar structures were built on red sandstone ashlars and many of them still keep their original and singular architectonic features. Most of these mills have kept the mechanism and equipment yet they are not longer in use. A few olive oil mills

were working until quite recently though. Around the olive oil mill there was a cluster of different buildings such the store room, the warehouse, an oil cellar, the workers' house and the owners' rich manor.

An Olive Press works by applying pressure to the olives to separate the liquid oil and vegetation water from the solid material. The type of pressing technique employed in these 'factories' was quite traditional. The building consisted of the nut mill or crusher, and the press. The equipment comprised two massive millstones; one of them



San Camilo de Lelis Mill

was a cone shaped mobile stone working with animal traction.

First the olives were ground in the bed ('empiedro' or molino) into an olive paste using large millstones. The resulting paste was spread on layers of hemp fiber disks (capachos) which were stacked on top of each other, then placed into the press and pressed down. To increase the speed of percolation, water was run down the sides of the disks.

There are two different types of olive oil mill according to the shaft position: the lever press mill and the tower press mill.

• Lever press mill

This is the most ancient type of mill. The mechanism is based on the principle of the second grinding degree. This is a long wooden shaft fitted into one of the tower counterweight walls. The tower is the axis that offsets the opposing force from the 'quintal', a 2000 kilos massive stone. With the 'husillo', a sort of helical nut, effective power is applied to the end of the 'quintal' and, then the lever resistance is used for pressing down the fiber disks called 'capachos'.

Archimedes is said to have remarked of the lever: 'Give me a place to stand, and I will move the earth'. That is exactly the idea from which the counterweight tower makes sense. This rectangular solid stout tower forms a right angle with the pressing room and projects out of the building.

The walker will come across to some of those counterweight towers on the last section of the GR-48 route. Some good examples are the Palmilla Baja Mill; the Casería de la Simona country house which upper floor has been converted into a vantage point; and San Camilo de Lelis manor.

• Tower mill

By the middle of the 19th century a new and innovative pressing system became very popular. This new mechanism used to locate a heaviest weight on top of a pile made with layers of 'capachos'. This type of mill soon spread over in Montoro Mountain area where they became very popular.

USEFUL INFORMATION

ADAMUZ

••• Accommodation

- **APARTAMENTOS RURALES MOLINO ALMONA (Rural Apartments)**
C/ Almona, 3
14430 Adamuz
957 167 174
- **CASA RURAL LAS ADELFA (Cottage)**
Montes Comunes
14430 Adamuz
957 166 002
- **CASA RURAL LAS RATOSILLAS (Cottage)**
Montes Comunes
14430 Adamuz
957 166 002
- **CASA RURAL EL MADROÑO (Cottage)**
Montes Comunes
14430 Adamuz
957 166 002
- **CASA RURAL EL QUEJIGO (Cottage)**
Montes Comunes
14430 Adamuz
957 166 002
- **CASA RURAL EL ROMERO (Cottage)**
Montes Comunes
14430 Adamuz
957 166 002
- **HOSTAL SAN ANDRÉS (Guesthouse Hostel)**
C/ Concejo, 4 y 6
14330 Adamuz
957 166 238
- **HOTEL CORTIJO LOS CONVENTOS (Rural Hotel)**
Paraje Los Conventos (camino Adamuz a Obejo)
14430 Adamuz
957 630 286

... Tourist office

OFICINA TURISMO

Plaza de la Constitución, 3
14430 Adamuz
957 166 002

... Restaurants

RESTAURANTE EL CHAPARRO

C/ San Andrés, 10
14430 Adamuz
957 167 143

ALMODÓVAR DEL RÍO

... Accommodation

CAMPING MUNICIPAL LA BREÑA (Camping Site)

Finca La Breña
14720 Almodóvar del Río
957 338 333

AL-MUDAWAR

La Barca, 18
14720 Almodóvar del Río
605 085 616

HOTEL SAN LUIS (Rural Hotel)

Ctra. Palma del Río Córdoba, km. 21
14720 Almodóvar del Río
957 635 421

... Restaurants

CUEVAS BAJAS

Camino de las Cuevas del Guerra, s/n
14720 Almodóvar del Río
957 715 256

LA TABERNA

Antonio Machado, n° 24
14720 Almodóvar del Río
957 713 684

LOS MOCHOS

Ctra. Palma del Río, Km. 17
14720 Almodóvar del Río

PEPE LUIS

Vicente Aleixandre, n° 3
14720 Almodóvar del Río
957 713 616

RESTAURANTE EL CASTILLO

Paraje Las Palvas
14720 Almodóvar del Río

RESTAURANTE VICTORIA

Ctra. Estación, km. 48
14720 Almodóvar del Río
957 713 363

SAN LUIS

Ctra. Palma del Río, Km. 21
14720 Almodóvar del Río
957635421

TABERNA DEL CASTILLO

Castillo de Almodóvar, s/n
14720 Almodóvar del Río
957 634 055

LOS LLANOS

Ctra. Palma del Río, Km. 21
14720 Almodóvar del Río

PARQUE ACUÁTICO (aquatic park)

Ctra. Almodóvar del Río, Km. 23
14720 Almodóvar del Río
957 635 558

••• Tourist office

OFICINA MUNICIPAL DE TURISMO DE ALMODÓVAR DEL RÍO

ABC, 7
14720 Almodóvar del Río
957 635 014

••• Travel agency

VIAJES DESKONEKTA.COM

Carretera de la Estación, 5
14720 Almodóvar del Río
957 635 480

... Active Tourism

ACTIVE ANDALUCÍA

Rosario, 5
14720 Almodóvar del Río
957635 008

ANTALA GESTIÓN DEPORTIVA

14720 Almodóvar del Río
635421334

XTREME

Rosario, 5
14720 Almodóvar del Río
957 635 437

ESPIEL

... Accommodation

130

HOSTAL EL CRUCE (Guesthouse Hostel)

Ctra. Badajoz-Granada, Km. 240.
14220 Espiel
957 367 233

HOSTAL ANDALUCÍA

C/ Ramón y Cajal, 9
14220 Espiel
957 736 098

ALBERGUE RURAL ESTACIÓN DE ESPIEL (Rural Hostel)

Ctra. de la Estación, Km. 3.
14220 Espiel

HOSTAL JUAN CARLOS I (Guesthouse Hostel)

C/ Juan Carlos I, 2
14220 Espiel
957 363 277

... Restaurants

RESTAURANTE ANDALUCÍA

C/ Ramón y Cajal, 4
14220 Espiel
957 363 288

RESTAURANTE EL MESÓN

Ctra. Badajoz-Granada Km. 240
14220 Espiel
957 367 000

RESTAURANTE EL BODEGÓN

Polígono Industrial El Caño I, 17
14220 Espiel
957 363 589

RESTAURANTE EL CRUCE

Ctra. Córdoba-Almadén, Km 39
14220 Espiel
957 367 075

... Active Tourism

Active Tourism INTERNATURA

Ctra. de la Estación, Km. 3
14220 Espiel
606 321 990

HORNACHUELOS

... Accommodation

CASA RURAL EL ÁLAMO (Cottage)

Ctra. Comarcal, 141, Km 7,5.
14740 Hornachuelos
957 640 147

CASA RURAL EL MELOJO I (Cottage)

Plza. de la Constitución, 15
14740 Hornachuelos
957 640 629

CASA RURAL EL REFUGIO (Cottage)

C/ El Cantueso, 1
14740 Hornachuelos
957 714 640

CASA RURAL LAS PIEDRECITAS (Cottage)

Avd. del Guadalquivir, 44
14740 Hornachuelos
957 640 178

CASA RURAL CASA DE LAS CADENAS (Cottage)

C/ Pío XII, 1
14740 Hornachuelos
676 001 412

CASA RURAL CASA RETAMALES (Cottage)

Ampliación de Retamales, Parcela 17-C
14740 Hornachuelos
957 640 327

CASA RURAL EL BOSQUE (Cottage)

Finca Baltaures
14740 La Almarja (Hornachuelos)
957 640 593

CASA RURAL EL PINAR (Cottage)

C/ Diagonal, 1
14740 Mesas del Guadalora (Hornachuelos)
957 714 586

CASA RURAL HUERTA DE LAS MAYAS (Cottage)

Pasaje Huerta de las Mayas, s/n
14740 Hornachuelos
629 509 079

CASA RURAL LA ALMARJA (Cottage)

Ctra. Palma del Río, s/n
14740 Hornachuelos
616 418 772

CASA RURAL LA SIERRA (Cottage)

C/ La Higuera, 4
14740 Hornachuelos
957 640 661

CASA RURAL LA TORRE (Cottage)

C/ Camino San Bernardo, 21
14740 Hornachuelos
957 640 677

CASA RURAL MAJADA ALTA (Cottage)

Ctra. Palma del Río, Km. 2
14740 Hornachuelos
957 640 303

CASA RURAL MATÍAS (Cottage)

C/ Escalonias, s/n
14740 Hornachuelos
957 640 752

CASA RURAL MIRADOR DE LA ALAIDIA (Cottage)

Ctra. San Calixto. Km. 1
14740 Hornachuelos
957 640 039

CASA RURAL PUERTA DE LA VILLA (Cottage)

C/ Doctor Fleming, 12
14740 Hornachuelos
645 537 075

CASA RURAL VILLA MÓNICA (Cottage)

C/ La Almarja, 1
14740 La Almarja (Hornachuelos)
626 409 937

HOSTAL EL ÁLAMO (Rural Hostel)

Ctra. Comarcal, 141, Km. 7,5
14740 Hornachuelos
957 640 476

PENSIÓN EMI (Rural Lodging)

Avd. Guadalquivir, 4
14740 Hornachuelos
957 640 098

PENSIÓN EL KIOSCO DE LOS ÁNGELES (Rural Lodging)

Explanada El Kiosco s/n (Ctra. San Calixto)
14740 Hornachuelos
957 640 430

PENSIÓN LAS ESCALONIAS (Rural Lodging)

Las Escalonias
14740 Hornachuelos
957 714 578

...Travel agency

AGENCIA DE VIAJES HORNACHUELOS TRAVEL

C/ Castillo, 97 Bajo Derecha
14740 Hornachuelos
957 641 258

...Tourist office

OFICINA MUNICIPAL DE TURISMO DE HORNACHUELOS

Ctra. San Calixto, s/n
14740 Hornachuelos
957 640 786

MONTORO

•••Accommodation

HOTEL MIRADOR DE MONTORO (Hotel)

Cerro de la Muela.
14600 Montoro
957 165 105

HOTEL MOLINA PLAZA (Hotel)

Cta. N-420, km 56.4.
14600 Montoro
957 336 090

HOSTAL RESTAURANTE MONTORO (Hostel)

Ctra. Madrid-Cádiz, km 358.
14600 Montoro
957 160 792

CORTIJO LA COLORÁ (Cottage)

Ctra. Adamuz Montoro, km 9.
14600 Montoro
957 336 077

MOLINO DE VIENTO (Mill Cottage)

Fuensanta de Montoro
14600 Montoro
957 336 386

MOLINO SAN JUAN (Mill Cottage)

Paraje La Torrecilla, s/n.
14600 Montoro
957 176 246

CASA MAIKA (Cottage)

Salazar, 21.
14600 Montoro
957 160 273 / 636 035 552

MOLINO LA NAVA (Mill Cottage)

Camino del Membrillo, s/n.
14600 Montoro
957 336 041

MOLINA DE MESÍAS (Cottage)

Ctra. antigua Montoro-Cardena, km 12.
14600. Montoro
957 160 802

...Restaurants

EL RISQUILLO

N-420, Cardeña-Montoro km 52
14600 Montoro
957 160 626

RESTAURANTE BELSAY

Plaza del Charco, 20
14600 Montoro
957 162 591

RESTAURANTE CORTIJO LA COLORÁ

Ctra. Adamuz - Montoro km 9
14600 Montoro
957 336 077

EL CAMIONERO

Ctra. Madrid - Cádiz, km 357
14600 Montoro
957 160 324

LA PRIMERA

Avda. Doctor Fleming, s/n
Montoro
957 160 223

...Tourist office

CENTRO DE INICIATIVAS TURÍSTICAS DE LA COMARCA CORDO- BESA DEL ALTO GUADALQUIVIR

Plaza de Jesús, 11
14600 Montoro
957 161 484 / 957 160 500

OFICINA MUNICIPAL DE TURISMO DE MONTORO

Corredera, 25
14600 Montoro
957 160 089

...Travel agencies

VIAJES HALCÓN

Cervantes, 54
14600 Montoro
957 160 276

•••Active Tourism

LYNXAIA

Corredera, 35.
14600. Montoro
957 335 301

QUIVIROCIO

Cañete de las Torres, 2.
14600. Montoro.
620 536 416

SIERRA MORENA ECUESTRE

Huerta del zorro s/n
14600. Montoro
607 435 578

OBEJO

•••Accommodation

CASA RURAL LAS TINAJAS (Cottage)

C/ Cerrillo, 52
14310 Obejo
957 472 185

CASA RURAL EL MÉDICO (Cottage)

C/ Almocara, 11 y 13
14310 Obejo
686 892 064

•••Restaurants

RESTAURANTE LA X

C/ Carretera, 29
14310 Obejo
957 350 188

POSADAS

•••Accommodation

EL OLMO (Cottage)

Diseminado 521, comunidad Morales
14730 Posadas
957 630 233

EL PINAR (Cottage)

Camino Campillos, s/n
14730 Posadas
957 631 198

HACIENDA LA TORRE (Cottage)

Carretera Posadas a Villaviciosa, km. 10
14730 Posadas
957 338 082

LA ALAMEDA (Cottage)

Camino Campillos, s/n
14730 Posadas
957631198

LA SALUD (Cottage)

Finca La Salud
14730 Posadas
629 638 670

LA SIERREZUELA (Cottage)

Polígono 17 parcela 91
14730 Posadas
957 101 630

MANOLÍN (Cottage)

Paraje Murales, 2
14730 Posadas
667 258 408

RIVERO RURAL (Cottage)

La Salud, 20
14730 Posadas

AZAIT (Cottage)

Plaza de la Constitución, 7
14730 Posadas
629 846 652

HOTEL MARÍA

Ctra. Palma del Río, km. 31,5
14730 Posadas
957 630 000

HOTEL LA MELCHORA

María Auxiliadora, nº 2
14730 Posadas
957 630 173

●●●Restaurants

ALBAIDA

Avda. Andalucía, s/n
14730 Posadas
957 630 965

LA ESQUINA

Fernández Santiago, 53
14730 Posadas
957 630 720

LAS POSADAS DEL REY (MESON RURAL)

Mesones, 4
14730 Posadas
957 630 925

ROGELIO

Avda. María Auxiliadora, S/Nº
14730 Posadas
957 630 015

138 SIERRA NEVADA

Avda. María Auxiliadora, nº 2
14730 Posadas
957 631 904

●●●Tourist office

Tourist office DE POSADAS

Plaza de los Pósitos, nº 3
14730 Posadas
957 630 378

●●●Travel agencies

CENTRO INICIATIVAS TURÍSTICAS VEGA DEL GUADALQUIVIR

Plaza de los Pósitos, 1
14730 Posadas
957 630 877

NATURA SIERRA

Las Mohedas s/n
14730 Posadas
957 630 947

YAMUZA TRAVEL

Hernández de Santiago, 55
14730 Posadas
618 194 603

VIAJES GALACOR

Avda. Soldevilla Vázquez, 11 Bajo
14730 Posadas

SANTA MARÍA DE TRASSIERRA

•••Accommodation

HACIENDA LAS GAMONOSAS (Cottage)

Ctra. Córdoba-Villaviciosa, s/nº
14011 Córdoba
957 330 800

LA JAROSA (Cottage)

Urbanización El Salado
14011 Córdoba
957 330 800

EL QUEJIGO (Cottage)

Ctra. Córdoba-Villaviciosa, km.19
14011 Córdoba
606 126 431

HOTEL VILLA DE TRASSIERRA

C/ La encina, s/n
14011 Córdoba
957 485 472

•••Restaurants

EL CANDIL 2

Avda. Menéndez Pidal, s/nº
14011 Córdoba
957 492 125

CASA PEREA

Córdoba, nº 18
14011 Córdoba
957 411 283

EL CRUCE

Ctra. Trassierra, km. 9
14011 Córdoba

LA ENCINA

Ctra. Trassierra, km. 10
14011 Córdoba
957 283 303

LOS ALMENDROS

Ctra. Trassierra, km. 10,700
14011 Córdoba
957 330 000

VILLAHARTA

...Accommodation

CASA GALA

Avda. de Andalucía, n° 24
14210 Villaharta
957 277 060

FUENTE AGRIA

Balneario de Fuente Agria
14210 Villaharta
600 204 428

VILLA NEMESIO

Acceso Solana del Peñon,1
14210 Villaharta
957 722 055

...Restaurants

SANTA ELISA DE VILLAHARTA

Polígono La Nava, parcela 2
14210 Villaharta
605 912 064

VILLANUEVA DEL REY

...Accommodation

LA LAGUNA (Cottage)

Ctra. provincial 16 km. 1,7
14230 Villanueva del Rey
957 337 011

HUERTA DEL PASIL (Cottage)

Cta. Villanueva del Rey-Fuenteovejuna
14230 Villanueva del Rey
957 589 321

•••Restaurants

CAFE ESPAÑOL

Real, 9
14230 Villanueva del Rey
957 589 077

EL COTO

C/ Moral, 1-3
14230 Villanueva del Rey
957 492 166

RESTAURANTE MUNICIPAL

Carretera provincial, 16
14230 Villanueva del Rey
957 589 001

VILLAVICIOSA DE CÓRDOBA

•••Accommodation

SIERRA MORENA (Cottage)

Ctra. de Córdoba, s/n
14300 Villaviciosa de Córdoba
957 360 674

EL POLEO (Cottage)

Ctra. CO-110 Villaviciosa-Córdoba, km. 33,5
14300 Villaviciosa de Córdoba
957 360 300

ABUELO MARTÍN (Cottage)

Córdoba, 48
14300 Villaviciosa de Córdoba
654 056 492

EL ROMERITO (Cottage)

Finca La Tejera –Ctra. CO-110, km.22
14300 Villaviciosa de Córdoba
957 479 653

LA MOLINA DE LA CAMPANA (Cottage)

Polígono 33, parcela 20
14300 Villaviciosa de Córdoba
606 883 192

PUERTO CARRETAS (Cottage)

Paraje Puerto Carretas, s/n
14300 Villaviciosa de Córdoba
957 360 760

CASA MIRABUENOS (Cottage)

Finca Mirabuenos
14430 Villaviciosa de Córdoba
957 360 434

CORTIJO DE CAMAMA (Cottage)

Polígono 33, parcela 41-d
14300 Villaviciosa de Córdoba
616 408 873

PUENTE NUEVO (Cottage)

Parque forestal de Puente Nuevo, km. 8,5
14300 Villaviciosa de Córdoba
957 360 021

•••Restaurants

142 AL-ANDALUS

Tomás Carretero, nº 18
14300 Villaviciosa de Córdoba
957 360 002

ILUSIÓN

C/ Tomás Carretero, 9
14300 Villaviciosa de Córdoba
957 360 532

•••Active Tourism

AVENTURAS PUENTE NUEVO

Cta. A-433, km. 8,5
14300 Villaviciosa de Córdoba
957 360 727

FLORA

•••The plants world

Aladierno (*Rhannus alaternus*)
Alfalfa (*Medicago sativa*)
Asparagus (*Asparagus acutifolia*)
Blackberry (*Morus sp.*)
Bramble (*Rubus ulmifolius*)
Broom (*Retama sphaerocarpa*)
Butcher's broom (*Ruscus aculeatus*)
Common Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna Ehr.*)
Common Sage (*Salvia officinalis*)
Daffodil (*Narcissus sp.*)
Durillo (*Viburnum tinus*)
Fern
French Lavender (*Lavándula multifolia*)
Germander (*Teucrium chamaedrys*)
Gorse (*Genista irsuta*)
Greasy Rockrose (*Cistus ladanifer*)
Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*)
Heather (*Erica arbórea*)
Honeysuckle (*Lonicera implexa*)
Ivy (*Hedera hélix*)
Jerusalem Sage (*Phlomis purpurea*)
Juniper (*Juniperus oxicedrus*)
Lily / Iris
Lychen
Mastic thyme (*Thymus mastichina*)
Mastic tree (*Pistacea lentiscus*)
Montpelier Rockrose (*Cistus monspeliensis*)
Moss
Myrtle (*Mirtus communis*)
Oleander (*Nerium oleander*)
Osier (*Salix purpurea*)
Palmetto (*Chamaelop humilis*)
Portuguese or Spike Lavender (*Lavandula latifolia Medicus*)
Prickly Pear cactus (*Opuntia ficus-carica*)
Reed (*Juncus sp.*)
Rockrose (*Cistus ladanifer*)
Rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*)
Rue (*Ruta graveolens*)
Sarsaparilla (*Smilax aspera*)

Southern Maidenhair fern / Venus Hair Fern (*Adiantum capillus-veneris*)
Spanish Lavender (*Lavandula stoechas*)
Spanish Lavender (*Cistus salvifolius*)
Spurge Flax (*Dagne nidium*)
Steppe Rockrose (*Cistus albidus*)
Strawberry tree (*Arbutus unedo* L.)
Tamarisk (*Tamarix africana*)
Tamujo (*Flueggea tinctoria*)
Terebinth / Turpentine tree (*Pistacea terebintus*)
Thyme (*Thymus communis*)
White Rockrose (*Cistus albidus*)

•••Trees

Alder Tree (*Alnus glutinosa*)
Almond Tree (*Prunus dulcis*)
Ash Tree (*Fraxinus excelsior*)
Black Pine Tree (*Pinus nigra*)
Black Poplar Tree (*Populus alba* 'Bolleana')
Carob Tree (*Ceratonia silicua*)
Chestnut Tree (*Castanea sativa*)
Cork Oak (*Quercus suber*)
Elder Tree (*Sambucus niger*)
Elm Tree (*Ulmus minor*)
Eucalyptus Tree (*Fraxinus excelsior*)
European Hackberry/ Lote Tree (*Celtis australis*)
Fig Tree (*Ficus carica*)
Hazel Tree (*Corylus avellana*)
Holm Oak (*Quercus ilex*)
Honeylocust (*Gleditsia triacanthos* L.)
Kermes Oak (*Quercus coccifera*)
Oak (*Quercus robur* L.)
Orange Tree (*Citrus sinensis*)
Palm Tree (*Palm* sp.)
Pine Tree (*Pinus pinea*)
Portuguese Oak (*Quercus faginea*)
Pyrenean Oak (*Quercus pyrenaica*)
White Poplar (*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*)

Iberian Lynx (*Lynx pardinus*)

Otter (*Lutra lutra*)

Wild Boar (*Sus scrofa*)

Wolf (*Canis lupus*)

•••Birs

Azure-winged Magpie (*Cyanopica cyanus*)

Bee-Eater (*Merops apiaster*)

Black-Eared Wheatear (*Oenanthe hispanica*)

Black Stork (*Ciconia nigra*)

Black Vulture (*Aegypius monachus*)

Black-Winged Kite (*Elanus caeruleus*)

Blackbird (*Turdus merula*)

Blue Tit (*Cyanistes caeruleus*)

Blue Rock-Trush (*Monticola solitarius*)

Bonelli's Eagle (*Hieraetus fasciatus*)

Booted Eagle (*Hieraetus pennatus*)

Buzzard (*Buteo buteo*)

Chaffinch (*Fringilla coelebs*)

Cirl Bunting (*Emberiza cirlus*)

Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*)

Corn Bunting (*Miliaria calandra*)

Crag Martin (*Ptyonoprogne rupestris*)

Dartford Warbler (*Sylvia undata*)

Eagle-Owl (*Bubo bubo*)

Egyptian Vulture (*Neophron percnopterus*)

Golden Eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*)

Golden Oriole (*Oriolus oriolus*)

Goldfinch (*Carduelis carduelis*)

Goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*)

Greenfinch (*Carduelis chloris*)

Grey Heron (*Ardea cinerea*)

Grey Wagtail (*Motacilla cinerea*)

Griffon Vulture (*Gyps fulvus*)

Hoopoe (*Upupa epops*)

Jackdaw (*Corvus monedula*)

Jay (*Garrulus glandarius*)

Kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*)

Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*)

Little Egret (*Egretta garzetta*)

Little Owl (*Athene noctua*)

Magpie (*Pica pica*)

Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*)

Melodious Warbler (*Hippolais polyglotta*)

Nightingale (*Luscinia megarhynchos*)

Red-Legged Partridge (*Alectoris rufa*)

Rock Bunting (*Emberiza cia*)

Sardinian Warbler (*Sylvia melanocephala*)

Short-Toed Eagle (*Circaetus gallicus*)

Snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*)

Song Thrush (*Turdus philomelos*)
Southern Grey Shrike (*Lanius meridionalis*)
Spanish Imperial Eagle (*Aquila adalberti*)
Stone Curlew (*Burhinus oediconemus*)
Subalpine Warbler (*Sylvia cantillans*)
Tawny Owl (*Strix aluco*)
Thekla Lark (*Galerida theklae*)
Turtle Dove (*Streptopelia turtur*)
White-Rumped Swift (*Apus caffer*)
White Stork (*Ciconia ciconia*)
Woodchat Shrike (*Lanius senator*)
Wryneck (*Jynx torquilla*)

...Fish

Barbel (*Barbus barbus*)
Esclater's Barbel (*Luciobarbus esclateri*)
Iberian Nase (*Pseudochondrostoma polylopes*)
Pardilla (*Chondrostoma lemmingii*)
Spined Loach (*Cobitis taenia*)
Wild Common Carp (*Cyprinus carpio*)

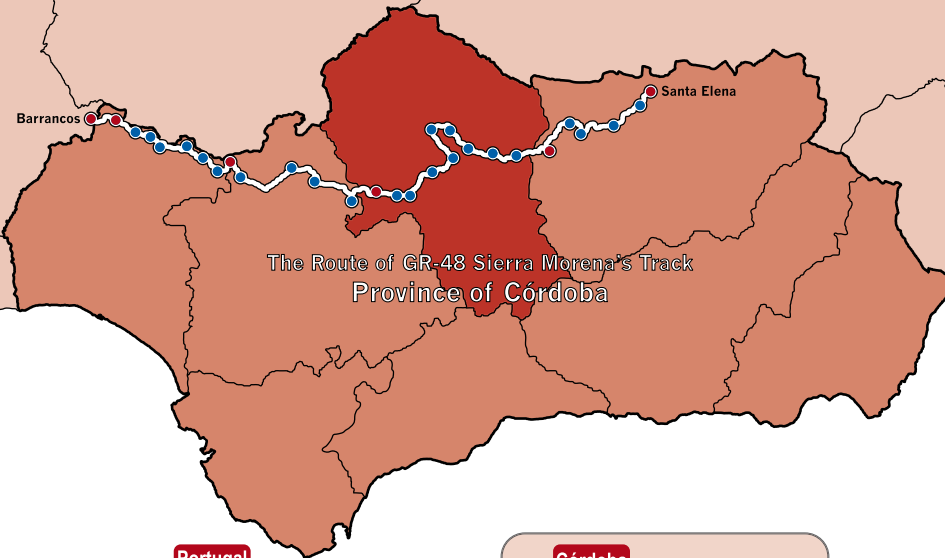
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...Amphibians

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

...Reptiles

Eyed Lizard (*Lacerta lepida*)
Horseshoe Whip Snake (*Hemorrhois hippocrepis*)
Ladder Snake (*Rhinechis scalaris*)
Lataste's Viper (*Vipera latastei*)
Montpellier Snake (*Malpolon monspessulanus*)
Viperine 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 kilometres. Starting off at Barrancos, a small town in Portugal, the trail goes through the provinces of Huelva, Sevilla, Córdoba and Jaén in Andalucía. In order to enhance walkers' knowledge and interpretation of the route, four separate guides have been produced which contain accurate information about the Sierra Morena Path through each province.

This rough guide describes the section of the trail that stretches some 180 kilometres through the province of Córdoba. This is a ten stages route which covers from the Sierra de Hornachuelos Natural Park to the Sierra de Cardena y Montoro Natural Park while passing through some sections of the green corridor that connects both protected areas.

The landscape comprises sections of the purest and lush Mediterranean Forest together with pastures and olive groves. This is a wild territory which is home to some endangered animal species like the Iberian lynx, the wolf, the black vulture and the Spanish Imperial eagle. Along the trail, there are some small towns and villages full of history and where tradition and nature are inextricably intertwined with the people's life.

Definitively this is an unforgettable experience that will take hikers along some intricate and hidden paths in the region of the Sierra Morena Cordobesa.