

WALKING IN CADIZ

THE GUIDEBOOK

8. SUBIDA AL PICACHO



ANNE MIDDELKAMP

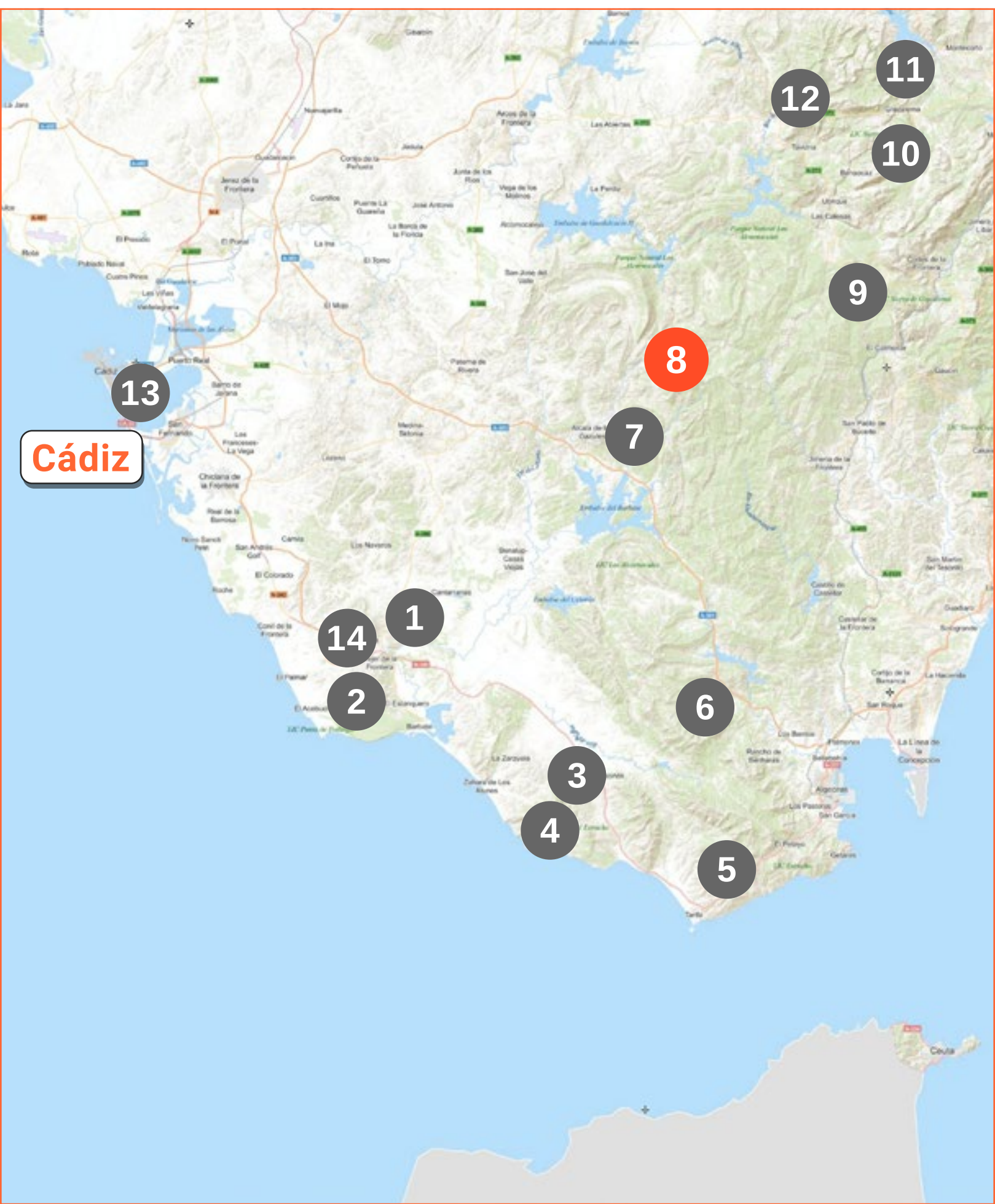
Walking in Cádiz

www.walkingcadiz.com

info@walkingcadiz.com

Overview walks

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8. Subida al Picacho

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The route

- Name: Subida al Picacho
- Where: Alcornocales Natural Park
- Type of walk: Linear
- Length: 7.8 km out and back
- Duration: 2 – 2.5 hours (without stops)
- Difficulty: Average
- Shade: More than half of the route
- Highest point: 878 m
- Lowest point: 383 m
- Path type: Marked, partly forest path, partly over boulders



The starting point of this hike is approximately 13 km north of Alcalá de los Gazules on the A375 / A2304 towards Ubrique. From Alcalá the road becomes winding and narrow. Watch out for oncoming traffic! Just before km marker 30 you can park the car at the Área Recreativa, picnic area El Picacho. Across from the picnic area is the start of the walk. Please Note: Bring enough water and food as Alcalá is the last place to purchase anything prior to the walk.



The map



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In short

Subida al Picacho is a fantastic hike in the heart of the Alcornocales Natural Park. In addition to the alcornoques, with their striking red-brown trunks where the cork has been stripped, you will find pine



trees, acebuches, gnarled olive trees, holm oaks, oleander and rhododendrons. The algarrobo with the long dark brown pods (carob tree) and the madroño, the strawberry tree, also grow here. The bright red coloured fluffy fruits of the strawberry tree are very tasty but you are not allowed to pick them, the tree is a protected species.



The walk



Because of the large boulders along the way, this is a favourite walk with our kids, who love to climb on top of them all along the route. The trail is easy to follow and automatically leads you up to the top, the Picacho, at 878 metres. A fantastic view awaits you here over the sierra, with the glittering waters of the Embalse de Barbate in the distance.



A few minutes after the start of the trail you arrive at the Laguna del Picacho, a lovely lake with ducks and a colourful spread of flowers in the spring. A little further on is a refugio, a resting place for shepherds, with an ancient bread oven. The path goes up gradually, leading you past meadows, over rocks and forest trails. You will cross a bridge over the river Garganta de Puerto Oscuro, and will hear water murmuring around you at more places along the trail.

On the weekend this is quite a popular hike, but on a weekday you will not meet anyone and only hear the sound of the





wind, the countless birds and faraway chimes of cowbells. At the halfway point you cross a narrow asphalt road. After this the path gets steeper, it's quite a climb, and just when you were wondering "are we not there yet?" there is a plateau on the left side of the path with a viewpoint. Definitely time for

a break! Here you have vast, impressive views over the green sierra and the lakes in the distance. The peak of the Picacho is still half an hour's walk and a solid climb, but well worth it! Please note, it can be very windy here! From here you can also go further and higher to the Aljibe, at 1,092 metres the second highest peak of the Alcornocales.

Go back the same way. Because of my near-sightedness, I bought Nordic walking poles and I find that very convenient when descending, because you have to watch your step with the gravel. Oh and yes: The



infamous pine processionary
caterpillar lives here as well, you
don't want anything to do with
them so watch out.



Medina Sidonia

Medina Sidonia is an elevated, beautiful white town, considered one of the oldest in Europe. It was the capital of the Islamic district of Sidonia and the birthplace of Admiral Alonso Perez de Guzmán, 7th Duke of Medina Sidonia, who led the Spanish Armada against England in 1588. Medina has a number of beautiful churches, although sometimes in a rather dilapidated state, imposing remnants of an old Roman road, a Moorish city gate and



many grand houses that bear witness to a rich past. Standing high above the town are the remains of a sturdy castle from the Roman era. From here you have a magnificent view, as far as the city of Cádiz! Medina is an undiscovered gem, you will hardly encounter any tourists. There is always something to do in the pleasant Plaza de España and don't forget to buy something sweet for the way back, because Medina is famous for its cookies and pastries such as the Alfajor, an Arabic delicacy.





Tips

Prehistoric cave

Past Benalup-Casas Viejas you will pass the lake of Celemín, with a large recreation area. To the left of it is a well-kept secret, the Tajo de las Figuras, a cave with Neolithic cave drawings. This cave is currently closed to the public according to the latest reports but you could venture. The walk of 20 minutes up to the cave is fun and you have a beautiful view. A2226 (Benalup direction Los Barrios) at km 7.



Where to eat

Venta Puerto de Galiz

Halfway between Alcalá de los Gazules and Ubrique, from the picnic area on the left, even deeper into the natural park is the famous venta 'Puerto de Galiz'. This roadside restaurant is particularly popular in autumn for its dishes with Jabalí, wild boar, and Venado, deer.

Venta Puerto de Galiz



Eating in Medina Sidonia

If you decide to visit Medina Sidonia, go to the lively Plaza España for tapas at Bar Cádiz or yummy, inexpensive dishes at Bar Ortega. For a more elaborate lunch or dinner, Venta La Duquesa (not a typical venta!) at the foot of the village or the even classier restaurant El Duque at the top of the town are good choices.

[Venta La Duquesa](#)

[Restaurant El Duque](#)



Where to stay

Casa Reza



A perfect base to explore the province of Cádiz is a stay in this very stylish town house in Medina Sidonia. Casa Reza is a fabulous modern hideaway in the old town. The villa has 6 bedrooms and 4 bathrooms, a big garden and swimming pool. It can accommodate up to 12 people.

Casa Reza



La Vista de Medina



The delightful self-catering suites of La Vista de Medina are located on the prettiest square of the old town, at the foot of the Roman castle of Medina Sidonia. From your terrace you have amazing views over the village and the coastline. Bar & restaurant on site!

[La Vista de Medina](#)



€ 10,- Cashback



When you indicate with your reservation (directly at the hotel, not through agencies) that this is 'Anne's Walking in Cádiz tip' and show this ebook upon arrival you'll receive € 10 Cashback or a € 10 discount!



Social media



Contact



Ardanza Travel & Media BV

PO Box 1089

1400 BB Bussum

The Netherlands

Tel: +31 (0)6 278 63 776

info@walkingcadiz.com

www.walkingcadiz.com

www.ardanza.nl

Walking
in Cádiz



**We hope you enjoy
your walks in Cádiz!**

If you have any comments or additions to the routes or a nice tip in terms of food or activities, then I would love to hear that! Please send an email to:

info@walkingcadiz.com



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[Studio Fijnbesnaard](#)

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