

WALKING IN CADIZ

THE GUIDEBOOK



ANNE MIDDELKAMP

Walking in Cádiz

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Introduction



Anne and Tommie
in the woods near
Betis



About the Author and the Very First Walking Guide to Cádiz!

My name is Anne Middelkamp. I was born 61 years ago in Friesland, The Netherlands. I have poor eyesight, and with these wobbly knees of mine, I never really considered myself much of a hiker! In my free time, I love going to the cinema, dancing, or reading a good book on the sofa with a glass of wine.

I met my love, Arco, 30 years ago, and we started a travel company and a family at the same time, and when the children were still young we emigrated to Spain. Wonderful Spain—wild and fascinating Spain! After five years in Catalonia, we moved to the opposite end of the country, to the province of Cádiz in Andalusia, in the far south.

We rescued an abandoned puppy named Tommie, who ran free around our huge garden in the countryside. When we moved to the nearby town of Vejer de la Frontera, I had to take the little dog out for walks.

Over time, our walks grew longer and longer. We roamed for miles along the endless beaches and into the green hills of the Costa de la Luz. On weekends, we drove into the vast and empty mountains of Alcornocales and Grazalema Natural Park. We took picnics, our husbands, our kids, and hundreds of pictures.

I thought it would be nice to write about these amazing and memorable walks and share the best of them with the whole world! So I did.

I hope you enjoy this beautiful, unspoiled corner of Spain as much as I do!

Anne Middelkamp

Vejer de la Frontera, February 2025



About this book



In this book you'll find 12 Nature walks in the province of Cádiz, all easy to medium level, 2 to 4 hours walking in the mountains and along the coastline. In addition there is a guide to the city of Cádiz and Vejer de la Frontera.

With every walk there is supplementary information including interesting facts, places to visit, where to eat and where to stay. Most recommended hotels offer a € 10 cashback (or discount) if you show this e-book upon arrival!

At the back you will find an overview of local companies that organize all kinds of great activities and experiences in Cádiz. Birdwatching, horseback riding on

the beach, cycling, jeep excursions in the Grazalema Natural Park or Doñana National Park, yoga, paragliding, whale and dolphin excursions and surfing, to name but a few.

€ 10 Cashback!

At the selected hotels and apartments you will receive € 10 cashback (or a € 10 discount) All you have to do is mention that this is an 'Anne's Walking Cádiz' recommendation while making your reservation (directly at the hotel, not through agencies) and present this e-book upon arrival!

Please check the websites of the various hotels for reservation conditions.



About the walks

The walks are for anyone with normal physical fitness. There's a climb in almost all of the nature walks but you don't need years of walking experience. Wear comfortable, strong-soled walking boots. I always take my Nordic walking poles, which I find very useful especially when ascending and walking over loose stones. Most of the trails are easy family walks although there are a few hikes with very steep drops, especially no 11, Cerro Coros. Walk no 6, Valdeinfierno, is accessible to wheelchair users. The walks can be made throughout the year with dry weather.

So, lace up those boots and let's go walking in Cádiz!



Province of Cádiz

Cádiz, 'El sur del sur' - The south of the south.



The province of Cádiz is located at the southernmost tip of Europe. Here you feel you can almost touch Africa across the shimmering ocean. Cádiz has a great variety of landscapes from the high peaks of the Sierra de Grazalema in the north, to the green rolling hills of the south, with their sea of sunflowers in the spring. On the Costa de la Luz, the coast of light, there are endless white sand beaches, high cliffs and hidden coves. There are wetlands and waves, fairytale forests, dolphins and whales to

spot and an amazing abundance of birds in the Strait of Gibraltar. In the province of Cádiz there are no less than 6 natural parks: Sierra de Grazalema, Los Alcornocales, Parque Natural del Estrecho, Bahía de Cádiz, La Breña & Marismas del Barbate and the Coto de Doñana Natonial Park. As you will discover, Cádiz is a paradise for birdwatchers and hikers!

Sherry and Flamenco. Palaces, Roman ruins and the fish market



You will find incredible cultural treasures in this region. Cádiz, the oldest port city in Europe, was one of the richest cities in Spain in the 18th century. The city of Cádiz has stately palace houses, Baroque churches, ruins of a Roman Amphitheatre and a world-famous carnival. This city has the oldest and best fish market in Europe.

Proud Jerez de la Frontera is a dynamic city that gained prosperity with its wine-making industry. Here you'll find beautiful bodegas, elegant mansions and the royal riding school. In February a world-famous flamenco festival is held here and you can enjoy daily performances in the small sherry 'tabancos' of the city. The two other sherry towns, Sanlúcar de Barrameda and El Puerto de Santa María have lovely old town centres, great seafood restaurants and exclusive bodegas. At Bolonia you will find remnants of a Roman



city on the beach, once home to thousands of inhabitants who got rich making Garum, a precious sauce made from rotten fish!

Irresistible, pure & authentic Spain

Cádiz is Andalusia in a nutshell, a distillation of everything that is best about this part of Spain. The Feria del Caballo in Jerez is the finest and most welcoming in the country, with its horses, proud riders and elegant señoritas in their 'traje de gitana', flamenco dresses. The white beaches of the Costa de la Luz are endless and divine. No high-rise buildings here, just countless fish restaurants and laid-back 'chiringuitos' for relaxing with a mojito or 'tinto de verano' with your feet in the sand at sunset. Cádiz has a plethora of pueblos blancos, beautiful white fortified



villages with castles on top, such as Arcos de la Frontera, Vejer de la Frontera, Zahara de la Sierra, Medina Sidonia, Grazalema, Jimena de la Frontera and Castellar de la Frontera. The addition 'de la Frontera' marks the limit to where the Moors ruled for eight centuries and everywhere you will find evidence of their outstanding cultural legacy. One coastal highlight is the popular fishing village of Conil de la Frontera, once home to the legendary nobleman and Spanish hero, Guzmán el Bueno. Tarifa, the southernmost town in Europe, is a raw, colourful and cultural town, popular with kite surfers because of its powerful winds.

Ah, that wind...

One of the reasons that the beaches of the Costa de la Luz are not fully built up is due to the wind that can blow mercilessly from time to time, sometimes for days on end. The offshore

Levante wind arrives from inland and when it does it is best to hide in one of the sheltered bays, at Caños de Meca, Conil or Roche. The onshore Poniente blows from across the ocean and provides a lovely breeze on hot summer days so it never gets as uncomfortably hot here as it does inland.

Cádiz,
a gastronomic feast!

Eating in Cádiz is a serious but very pleasant activity that people like to take their time over. Due to its long coastline, there is of course lots of seafood, but the beef stew of the local retinto meat is not to be sniffed at either. The cuisine is one of pure, honest ingredients and flavours with a pinch of North Africa: 'Pescaíto frito', fried fish, Almadraba tuna, beautiful retinto meat, cold soups such as gazpacho and salmorejo, famous



sherry wines and the rich fruit and vegetable harvest of the fertile soil. There is a tapas bar or a 'Freiduría' for a cone bag of fried fish on every street corner. In Jerez, head for the little sherry tabancos, or one of the many top restaurants for more elaborate gastronomic experiences.

Personally I couldn't be happier than with a crispy 'tortillita de camarones' accompanied by a cold, dry Manzanilla in a beach bar at sunset.

Learn more about
the province of Cádiz

[Turismo de Cádiz](#)

On the website of Turismo de Cádiz you will find a cultural agenda, an overview of all 83 beaches, A birding guide (see also the link at walk 3) and everything else you would like to know about the Province of Cádiz.

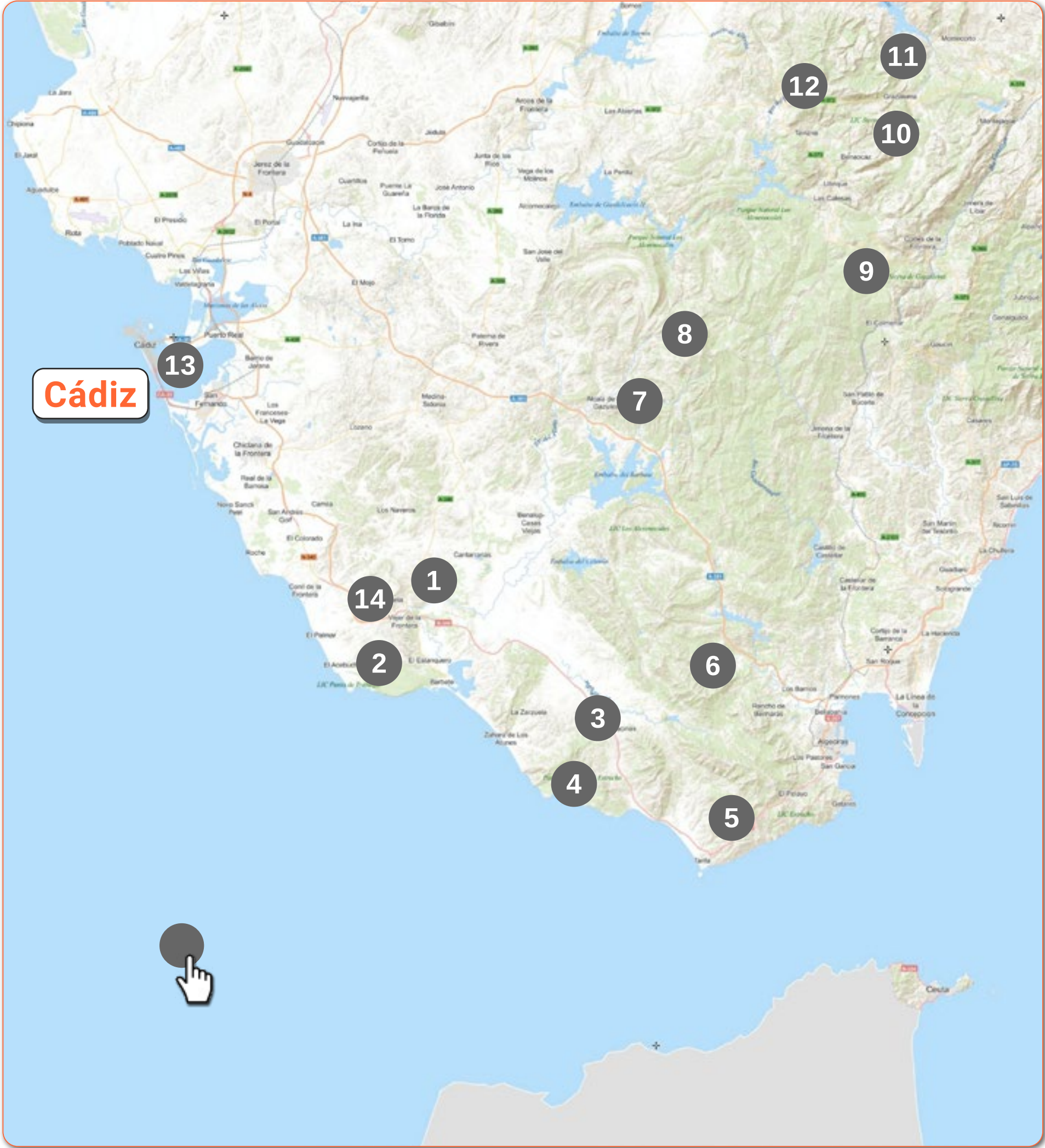


Where in Spain



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Overview walks



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1. Cerro de Abejaruco

Bee-eaters and predators
in the countryside
around Vejer de la Frontera

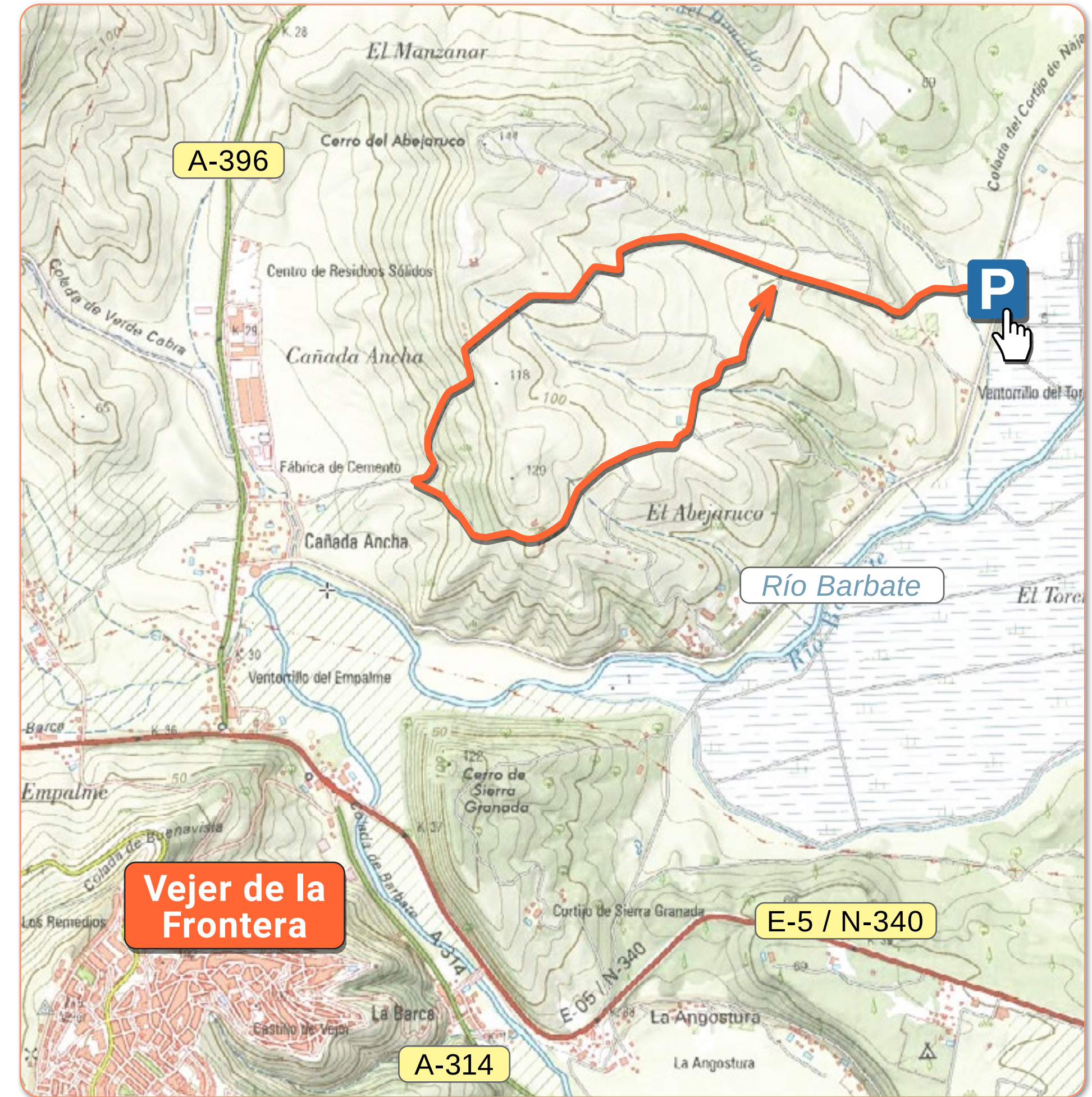


The route

- **Name:** Cerro de Abejaruco
- **Where:** Vejer de la Frontera, between Cañada Ancha and Libreros
- **Type of walk:** Circular
- **Length:** 4.5 km
- **Walking time:** 1.5 hours (without stops)
- **Difficulty:** Easy
- **Shade:** Little
- **Highest point:** 115 m
- **Lowest point:** 10 m
- **Path type:** Marked, mostly paved sandy path

Starting point: On the N340 near Vejer take the A396 towards Medina Sidonia. After 500 metres take the 1st exit to the right, at Venta El Rayo and the round Picadero (equestrian centre). Drive for about three kilometres on a narrow, winding road alongside the Río Barbate. After you pass a house with four chimneys and a dip in the road, there is a clearing on the left with a somewhat washed-out information board. You can leave your car here. There are no markings for the first ten minutes of the walk.

The map



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In short

This is my favourite walk in the immediate vicinity of Vejer, where I live. It is a marked path around the Cerro de Abejaruco, a 143 metre high hill. Along the way you have fantastic views of the pretty village of Vejer, the rice paddies, marshes and the former lagoon of La Janda. In the distance you can spot the peaks of the Alcornocales Natural Park. On a clear day you can see across the glistening ocean as far as Africa. If you are lucky you might meet a meloncillo, an Egyptian mongoose, which lives in the area.

This is where I used to live. A unique place that I thoroughly enjoyed. I loved the quietness, the views, the birds, the millions of sunflowers in the summer. But staying here was not doable with two children, it was too remote, we had no drinking water, the road was inaccessible during wintertime. After two years we moved into the village of Vejer de la Frontera.

The walk



This hike starts along the narrow, winding road to Libreros. From the parking place with a information board, take the track. You'll pass a few cortijos (farms). Go straight on. After about 500 metres, on your right you'll see the remains of an old Roman oven, closed-off with a metal fence. To the left of this oven, a narrow path descends to a well. This is where we used to collect all our drinking water for 2 years! Return to the main track and follow it straight ahead, at the fork in the road there is the first signpost, a white arrow on a red background which marks the path.

This route takes you through rolling hills and fields. The view is vast and the sky feels open and endless. In spring and autumn you can see thousands of storks on their migration to and from Africa. There are often vultures and with a bit of luck you can spot the abejaruco, the bee-eater, after which this area is named. This colourful bird is so small and fast that I mainly



recognize it by its sound and the way it flies, a funny kind of up and down dancing dive.

Halfway through the walk there is a fairly steep descent, part of this path is tarmac. From up here you have a beautiful glimpse of Vejer, and to your right views of the villages of Santa Lucía, La Muela and Cañada Ancha. At the bottom of the junction, take a sharp turn to the left, and walk the same distance back up! (Ouch, that's not fair!). But you're rewarded

with wonderful views of Vejer, the prettiest village in the world! At the top, the path at one point turns to the right, but you have to go straight ahead, along a trail flanked by bramble bushes and fields to your left. In the spring the grass grows knee high here and after rain it's turns quite marshy. After about a hundred metres you will see a bright white holiday home (our former house is along the lane to the right of it). Continue down the trail with bamboo growing high on both sides along with huge,



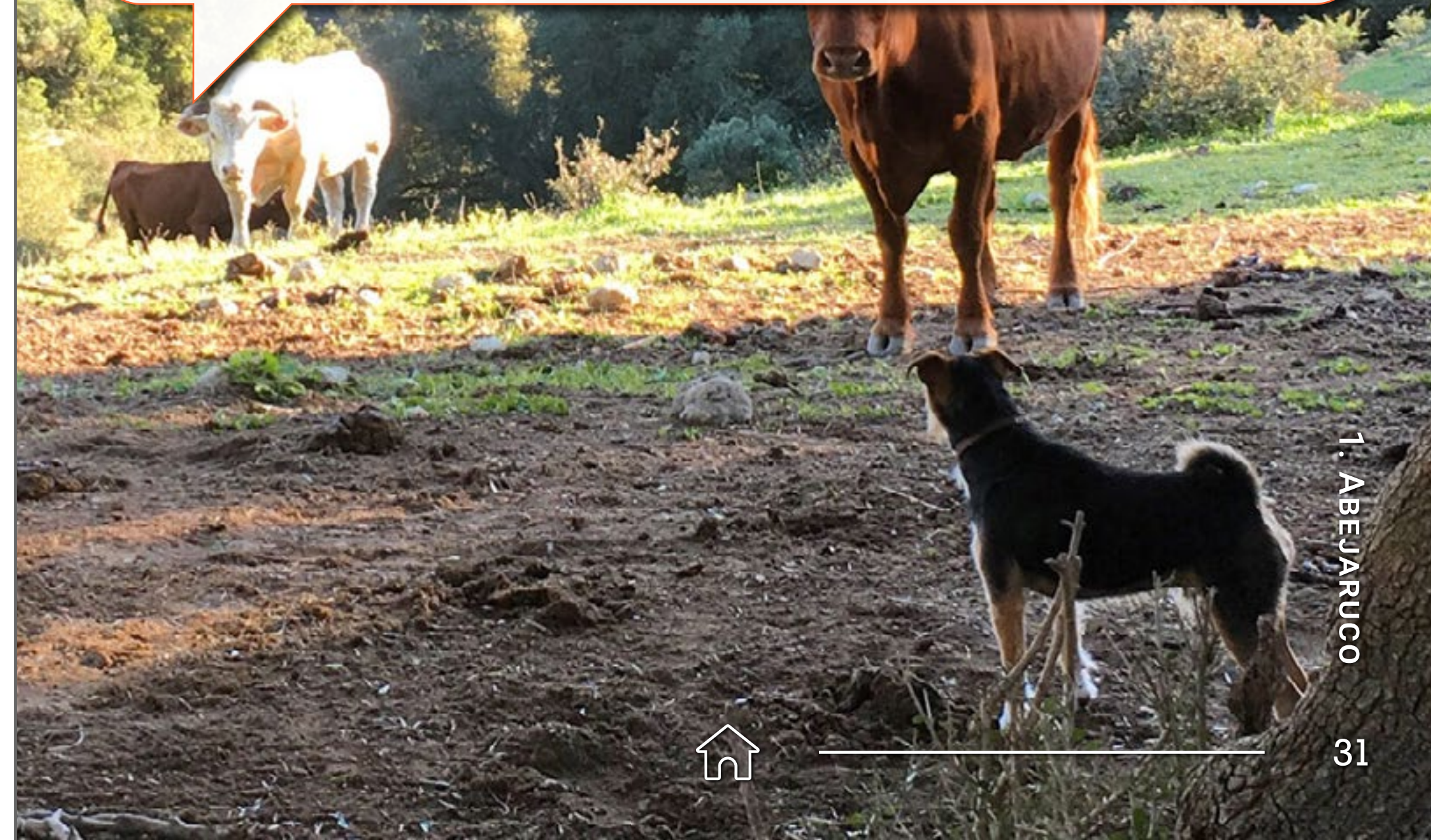
three metre high cacti. At the junctions take the right. The last 10 minutes of the walk is back on the same stretch on which you started.

Many edible things grow along this walk! You will find olive trees, figs, orange and almond trees, mulberries, blackberries and medlar, next to holm oaks, broom and mastic trees. Partridge is hunted here in the autumn and stray wild boars wander about in the undergrowth. A very special resident, which we sometimes saw slinking around is the meloncillo, the Egyptian mongoose. This rodent predator resembles a huge long-tailed weasel. It hunts rabbits, rodents, birds and insects during the day, but is best known for being immune to snake venom. It can grow up to 60 cm long, and give you quite a startle when you stumble upon it! Birds that live in this area, in addition to the bee-eater are partridges, the black kite, summer doves, goldfinches, storks and swallows.

Tip! In [this short video](#) about the magnificent birds in this region you'll also meet the meloncillo!

Sparkling water in Santa Lucía

Santa Lucía is a special, secluded village at the foot of Vejer de la Frontera. Access by car to the village from the N340 is only allowed with a turn to the right, you cannot take a left turn! On the main road into the village, you drive past a big power station and next come upon a veritable oasis. Bamboo, lush plants, amazing flowers, birdsong and the murmuring water of burbling streams. Marvellous! Santa Lucía has a Roman aqueduct, which was restored in 2019, and no less than five watermills. There's a nice walk near the aqueduct, ending at a small freshwater pool - highly recommended! Kids love it here, the perfect spot for a summer splash!



Where to eat

Tips

Restaurante Patria

A truly delightful spot for lunch and dinner and our family's favourite restaurant is Restaurante Patria owned by the amiable Thomas and Åse Donsø from Denmark. Their restaurant is located a 10 minutes drive from Vejer and has an attractive garden and terrace with fantastic views of the coast. There is an innovative menu of Mediterranean cuisine with a touch of Denmark. Great salads and delightful vegetarian dishes, too. Booking ahead is recommended.

[Restaurante Patria](#)

Venta el Toro

For a traditional Spanish breakfast of 'Media tostada con tomate' or an uncomplicated lunch you will be warmly welcomed at the oldest bar in Cádiz: Venta El Toro in Santa Lucía. The setting could not be more perfect with a nice terrace beside the river and colourful decor of, yes, toros and toreros; bulls and bullfighters. It's located on the only road in the hamlet so you can't miss it. The 'signature dish' of Venta El Toro; 'Patatas con huevos fritos' is famous for miles around.

[Venta el Toro](#)

Where to stay

Tips

La Botica de Vejer



In the old town of Vejer de la Frontera we like Hotel La Botica, tucked away in a quiet street behind the Plaza España. From its spacious roof terrace you have amazing views of the town and the area.

[La Botica de Vejer](#)

Finca la Hijueta



A great spot from which to explore the Costa de la Luz are the lovely holiday houses of Carin and Carlos: Finca la Hijueta, in the rural village La Muela. Hidden in the forest at the end of a country road, it's the perfect place to put your feet up!

[Finca la Hijueta holiday houses](#)



€ 10 Cashback!

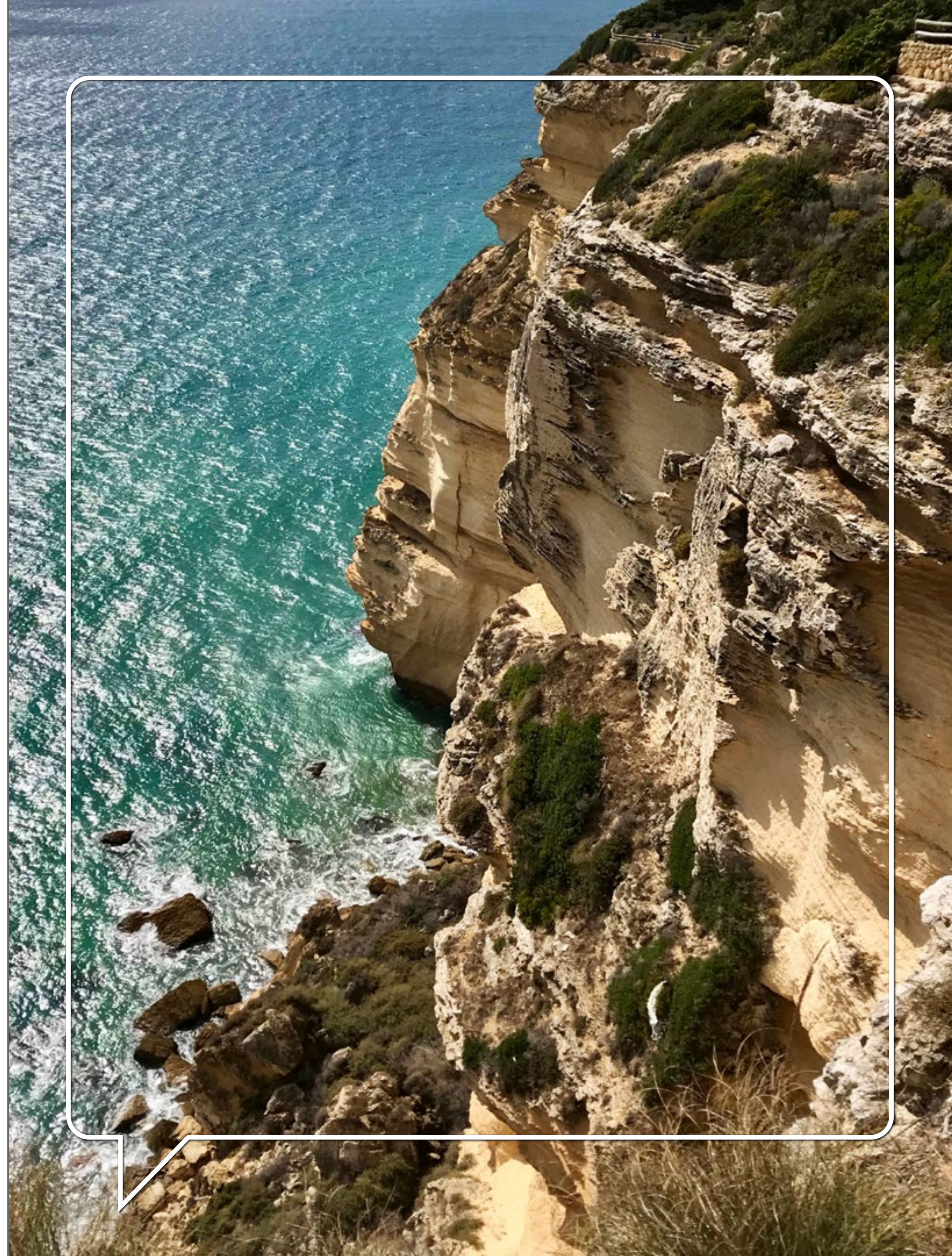


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2. Sendero del Acantilado

Along the highest cliffs
of the Costa de la Luz



The route

- **Name:** Sendero del Acantilado
- **Where:** Parque Natural La Breña y Marismas del Barbate
- **Type of walk:** Linear
- **Length:** 14 km out and back
- **Duration:** 3 – 3.5 hours (without stops)
- **Difficulty:** Easy
- **Shade:** About a quarter of the walk
- **Highest point:** 104 m
- **Lowest point:** 5 m
- **Path type:** Marked. First half paved dirt road, the rest forest- and sandy track

Starting point: The nicest way to do this walk is from Barbate to Caños de Meca (and back). Drive through the centre of Barbate and keep the sea to your left. Go past the beach called Hierbabuena. After about a kilometre, almost at the top of the hill, park your car in the first parking area on your left. There's room for at least 20 cars and this is where the marked trail starts.

The map



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The walk

In short

Sendero del Acantilado is an excellent walk along the cliffs between Barbate and Caños. Along the way you have spectacular sea views towards Tarifa and Africa. I love the combination of pine forest, expansive views and ocean breeze! At the end a few beautiful coves await in Caños de Meca, the perfect spot for a picnic. Along the walk you have some dizzying views from the cliffs that reach up to 100 metres high. There are railings so it is safe, but do keep an eye on your child, dog or lemming!





This is one of the longer walks but very enjoyable, with very little height difference, it's only steep at the end when you have to descend all the way to the beaches of Caños de Meca (and back up again!). The first half of the trail, up to the Torre del Tajo is a paved road, which is also no problem with a buggy. There is no shade on this section. This is a popular hike on weekends and holidays.

Halfway along the trail you will reach the highest point; the Torre del Tajo, the watchtower from the 16th century built with the purpose of spotting approaching invaders and pirate ships. This tower was witness to the famous and bloody naval battle led by Lord Nelson; The Battle of Trafalgar, in 1805. Lord Nelson, the greatest naval hero in British history, was killed here and his body was shipped back to England.

You can take a moment to ponder at the foot of the Torre whilst enjoying the views over the ocean and the dramatic cliffs. The walk continues westwards through the fragrant pine forest. There



are several trails, both footpaths and horse trails that intertwine, but if you keep the sea on your left you can't get lost. After about a total of 1.5 hours of walking you will reach the west side of the cliffs. Again one of my favourite views: Cabo de Trafalgar, the peninsula with the lighthouse. At this side of the hill there's beautiful, irregularly shaped juniper bushes, bent with the wind. Head down to the seaside village of Caños de Meca. At low tide you can walk along the small coves

flanked by high rocks and take a refreshing dip. Note that at high tide, these intimate bays are barely accessible.



The Battle of Trafalgar

The famous Battle of Trafalgar took place on October 21, 1805. The British Navy defeated the combined French-Spanish fleet here at Cabo de Trafalgar, thereby gaining Britain's sovereignty over the sea. Admiral Horatio Nelson, the greatest naval hero in British history, was killed in the sea battle. The French-Spanish fleet had nearly 3,400 deaths and 1,160 injured. Sixteen ships were destroyed, nine returned to Cádiz, four sailed to Gibraltar and four escaped. The English fleet suffered only 469 deaths. The message that Nelson was killed gave the English a hero they badly needed at the time. This British victory had consequences well into the twentieth century.

Read more about [The Battle of Trafalgar](#)



Tips

To the lighthouse

When you drive to Conil or Vejer de la Frontera through the pine forest and Caños de Meca it's worth visiting the famous lighthouse of Cabo the Trafalgar and stopping for a bite or a cold beer at Las Dunas, a cute bar resembling a goblin dwelling with a huge garden, open all year round.

A few kilometres past Caños de Meca, take the first exit to the left with the sign: 'Faro de Trafalgar / Playa. Las Dunas is located at the end of this dead end road. From here it is a lovely, fifteen minute walk to the lighthouse along the beach.

[Bar Las Dunas](#)

The largest dovecote in Europe

Inland from the coast, tucked away behind the pine forests of La Breña y Marismas del Barbate Natural Park, lies the 'Palomar de la Breña'. This is the largest dovecote in Europe! It is well hidden so it would not be discovered and plundered by pirates. Thousands of pigeons once lived in this huge 18th century building, in more than 7,700 nests. The birds were kept for their meat as well as for the production of gunpowder (made from the pigeon droppings). The dovecote can be visited free of charge. At the Palomar is a small hotel with a bar where you can get a drink and a tapa and where they'll be happy to give you more information about this quirky place.

[Palomar de la Breña](#)

Where to stay

Casas Karen



One of the 'pioneers' that built a small-scale, eco-friendly rural complex here in the 1970s is Karen Abrahams. 'Casas Karen' with its colourful cabañas is famous with travellers that seek an authentic refuge off the beaten track. Glamping but different!

[Casas Karen](#)

Hotel Madreselva



Hotel Madreselva lies at a minutes' walk from the pretty beach in Caños de Meca, with views of the Trafalgar lighthouse. The Hacienda-like hotel has a lovely garden, swimming pool and rooms with private terraces. All you need for a romantic getaway!

[Hotel Madreselva](#)

Tips

Palomar de la Breña



A lovely place to spend the night on the other side of the pine forest is the Palomar de la Breña, at the famous dovecote. Beautiful and quiet location with a view of the forest and rolling hills.

[Palomar de la Breña](#)

Where to eat

Restaurante Castillejos

There are several restaurants in the small town of Caños the Meca, but only a few of them are open all year round. One of our favourites is Restaurante Castillejos with its tempting menu and friendly, professional staff.

[Restaurante Castillejos](#)



€ 10 Cashback!



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3. Loma de San Bartolomé

Marvellous walk with phenomenal views
of Bolonia, Tarifa and Africa!

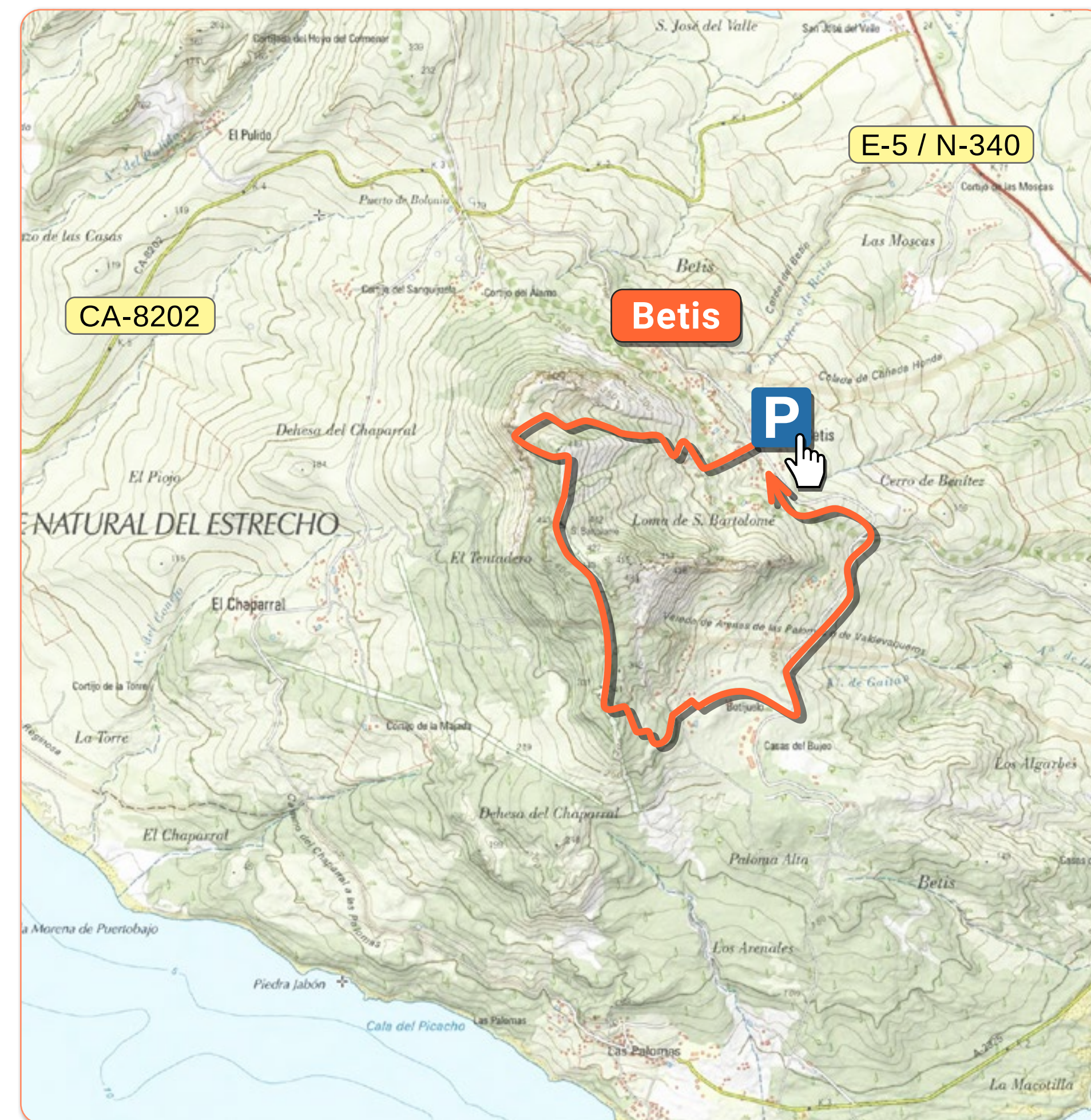


The route

- **Name:** Loma de San Bartolomé
- **Where:** From the hamlet of Betis, near Bolonia
- **Type of walk:** Circular
- **Length:** 6.5 km
- **Duration:** 2.5 hours
- **(without stops)**
- **Difficulty:** Average
- **Shade:** About half of the walk
- **Highest point:** 441 m
- **Lowest point:** 294 m
- **Path type:** Unmarked, partly over rocks, partly forest and sand path
- **Remarks:** Hiking on first part of this walk, in the climbing area is prohibited from March 1st to August 31st. See my notes below for alternatives.

The starting point of the hike is in the hamlet of Betis in the Sierra de San Bartolomé near Bolonia. On the N340, take the exit to Bolonia, the CA8202. After about 2,5 kms there is a turn to the left (note: this is not very clearly signposted). Drive up the mountain on the poorly maintained, narrow, winding asphalt road until you get to a collection of cottages and continue until a yellow sign to the right directs you up to 'Zona de escalada San Bartolomé, Zona de Arriba', there's a parking area at the top.

The map



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The walk

In short

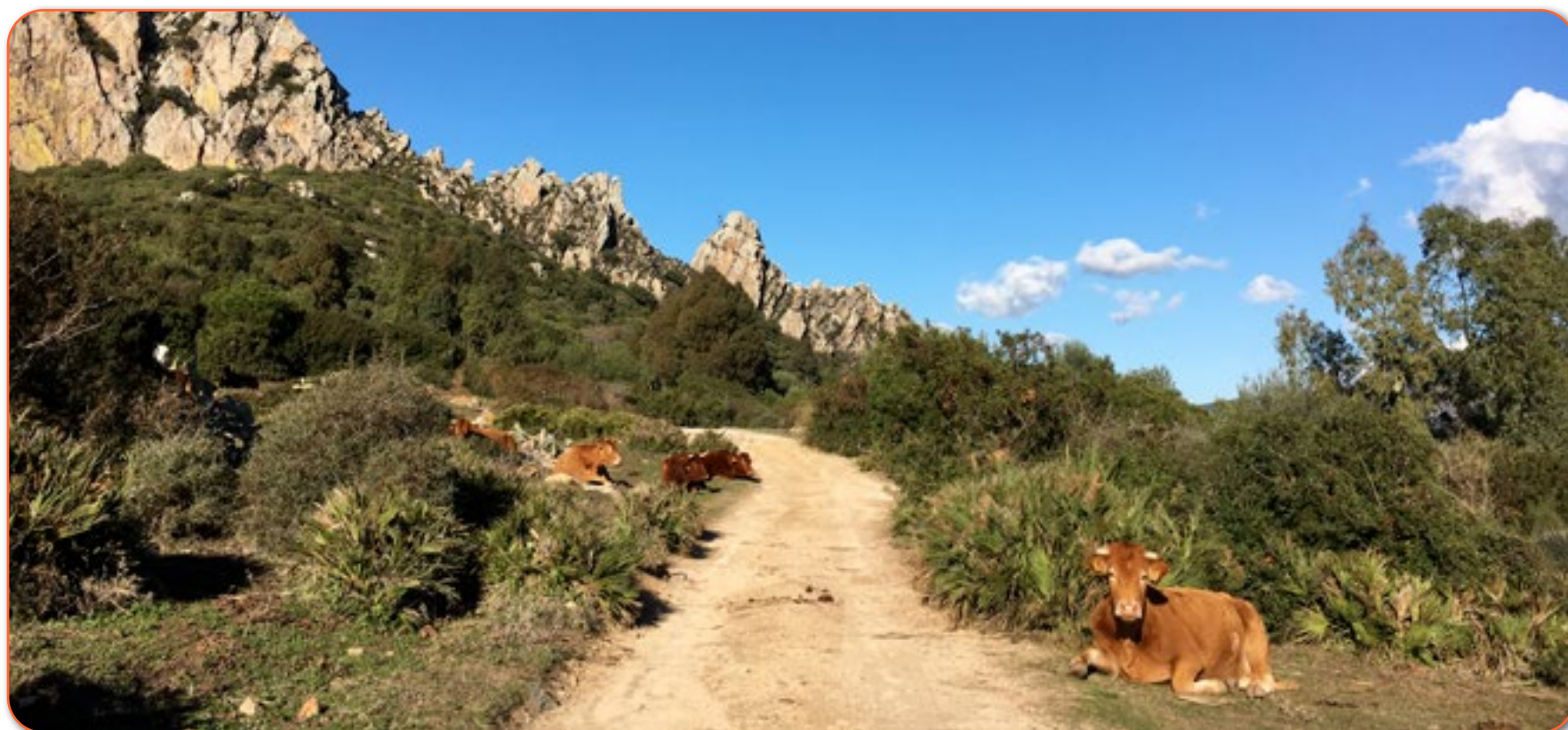
This is one of my favourite (secret!) trails. It takes you to the very edge of Europe in the south of Spain. High up in the Sierra de San Bartolomé with the Atlantic ocean and the impressive dune of Bolonia at your feet, vultures circling overhead and Africa visible across the water. Magical!



The starting point of the walk is a bit back from the car park. There are splendid views to the Sierra de Fates and Facinas in front of you and to your right Tarifa and the Valdevaqueros beach with its kite surfers. Across the ocean lies Morocco, with the imposing Jebel Musa mountain dominating the skyline.

Walk back a little on the main road and turn to the left where there is a tiny 'kiosko' to your right. There is a dirt road that rises and after a while you'll see an old, round brick oven on your left and the sign 'Tajo del Búho o Canuto del Arca' to the right. Follow this sign, pass the fence and walk towards these rock formations. The cow path through bushes is not always clearly visible but you can't go wrong. Near the rocks continue the hike uphill, with the craggy formations of Bordillos, Arapiles and Mosaico, to your right.

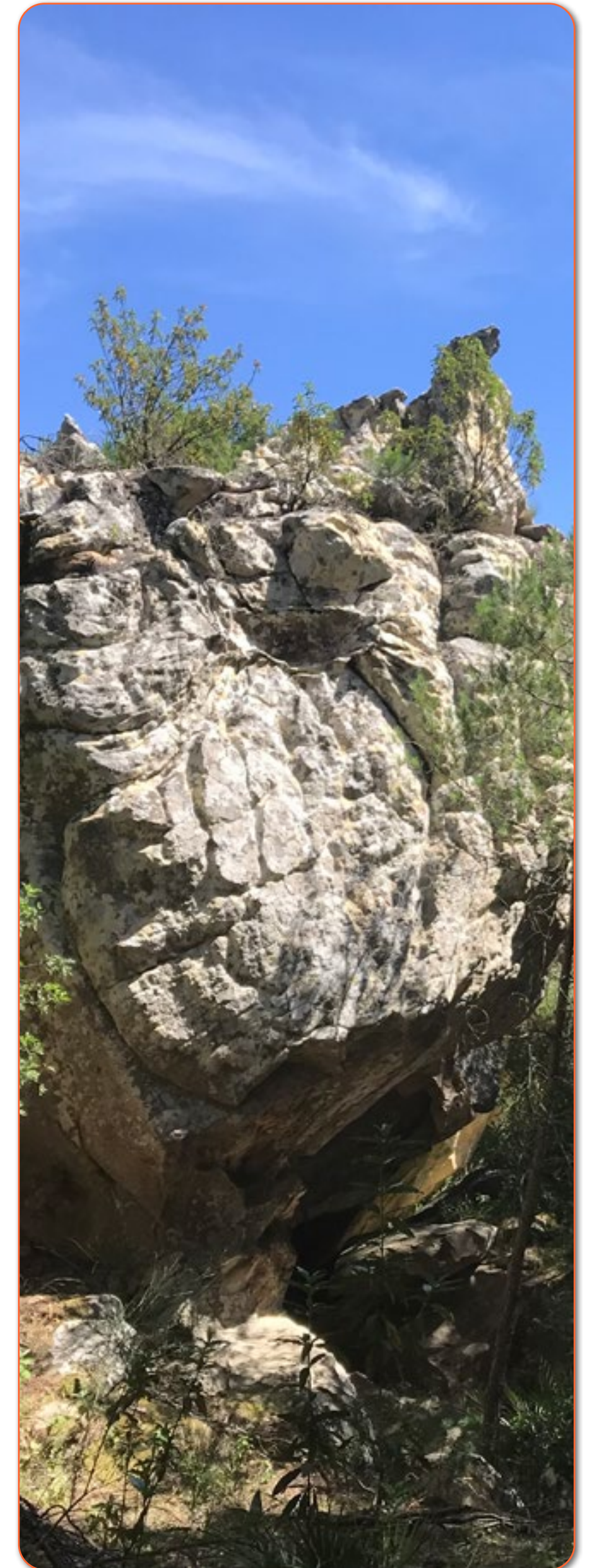
This first part of the hike, to the top, takes about half an hour. It leads over rocks and stones and through meadows



where cows graze, half hidden in the bushes. After rain, it can be quite boggy here and there. At the top you go through a cattle fence and... Wow! Unbeatable views. The ocean and woodlands at your feet, Bolonia with its massive sand dune to the right. Birds of prey circling above your head. Andalusia at its most wild and spectacular!

Perfect spot for a picnic in the sun

At this point you are at about a quarter of the way through this hike. Follow the path with the jagged mountain massif to your left. In this area, the Sierra de San Bartolomé, there are two caves with prehistoric drawings, the Cuevas del Betín and the Cueva del Barranco del Arca, but we have not discovered them yet, we will look for them next time! The trail leads you into a pine forest, with the rocks to your left you gradually descend. Follow the cairns, the man-made piles of stones that you will see quite often.



The walk continues closer to the rocks. At narrow and steep bits of the trail there are safety ropes. When you leave the forest you pass another cattle fence, to your right are some huge boulders. There's a path to the left that goes up a bit but take the path to the right instead, which leads downhill. From here you see the ocean, Valdevaqueros beach and Tarifa. Follow this path, which has some loose grit here and there and bends to the left. When you cross a small tarmac road, follow this downhill, past a well and a cute little house until you arrive at a wider tarmac road. Continue to the left.

This area is also popular with climbers and is known as the 'Zona de Arriba'. To the left there are green meadows where we often encounter languid grazing cows that stare at us disinterestedly. Soon there is a sign to the left to 'El Tesoro' a lovely restaurant with a huge terrace and beautiful

views (The restaurant is only open from Semana Santa, Easter, until October). Follow the path to this restaurant up for a bit, but take the 1st path to your right. There's a sign that says 'Camino sin salida' (Dead end street). Further down you pass some holiday homes that you would love to spend your summer in. When this sandy track ends there's a small cow path to your left. Take this and in five minutes you'll be back at your car.

If you miss the turn to El Tesoro, don't worry. You'll then end up at the tarmac road that leads you to Betis. It's a bit longer that way but you'll get there in the end!

Please Note: If you want to walk here between March 1st and August 31st: You can do the walk in reverse up to the lookout point in the west, and turn around there. You will notice a marked path (a white band on a pole) after the 'Zona de Arriba'. We have not tried it but it should be quite easy.



The one and only intercontinental Biosphere Reserve

This hike is located in the Parque Natural del Estrecho and is part of the 900,000 hectare 'Reserva de la Biosfera Intercontinental del Mediterráneo Andalucía-Marruecos' the only intercontinental Biosphere Reserve in the world, divided between the provinces of Cádiz and Málaga in Andalusia and Tetuán, Chefchouen, Ouzdane, Tánger and Larache in Morocco. This area is one of the busiest bird migration routes on earth and in autumn and spring you can spot tens of thousands of birds of prey that cross the ocean between Europe and Africa. Notable birds of prey are: black kite (> 80,000), booted eagle (> 10,000) and snake eagle (> 12,000). But you can also see huge flocks of black and white storks here. Other birds of prey that you can observe during their migration are griffon vultures, honey buzzards, sparrow hawks, harriers, ospreys and kestrels.

To learn about birds in the province of Cádiz this extensive guide is very useful: [Birding Cádiz](#)

Tips

Birdwatching

For unique, affordable birding and photography guided experiences in the Strait of Gibraltar and La Janda we recommend contacting Javier and Yeray from Birding the Strait in Tarifa. They organize various tours and tailor-made programmes for groups and individuals. Check their website for more information. (The pictures of the birds in this book are theirs).

[Birding the Strait](#)

Where to eat

In Betis there is only a tiny kiosk where - if open - you can buy some drinks, so take enough water with you.

Restaurant Otero

For lunch or tapas in Bolonia, restaurant Otero, on the beach right in front of the Roman ruins of Baelo Claudia is a great place!

[Restaurant Otero](#)

Restaurant Antonio

For an exclusive gastronomic experience, Restaurant Antonio in Zahara de los Atunes is "The place to be". According to friends, the best restaurant in the area.

[Restaurante Antonio](#)



4. Colada de la Reginosa & Baños de Claudia

Along Roman paths and the most
delightful lagoon in Southern Spain

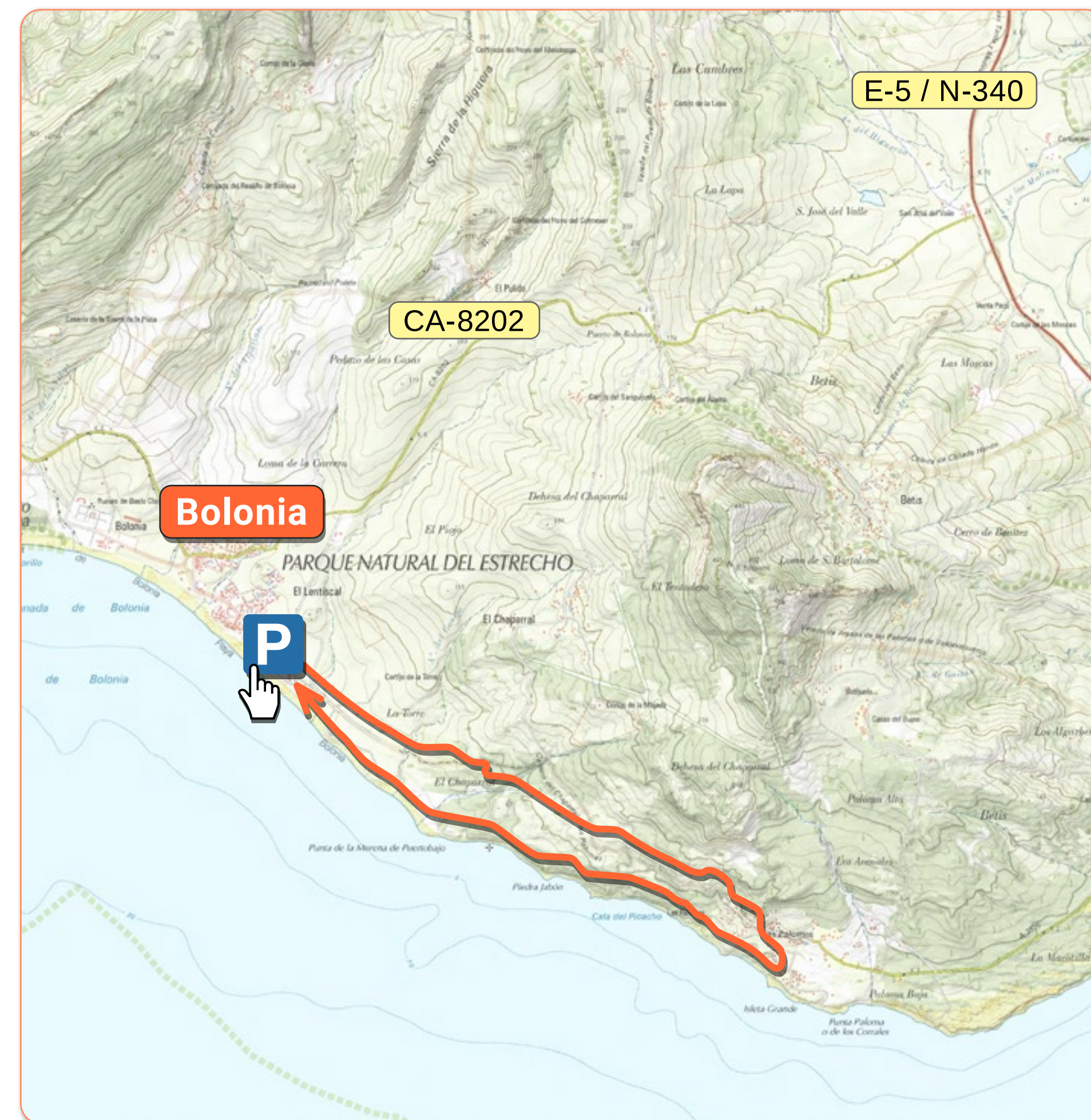


The route

- **Name:** Colada de la Reginosa & Baños de Claudia
- **Where:** Bolonia / El Lentiscal
- **Type of walk:** Circular
- **Length:** 11 km
- **Duration:** 3 hours (without stops)
- **Difficulty:** Easy
- **Shade:** Only the first half
- **Highest point:** 65 m
- **Lowest point:** 5 m
- **Path type:** Combination of sand track, beach and rocks
- **Remarks:** A section of the walk is part of the E9 / GR145 Arco Atlántico

The starting point of this hike is in El Lentiscal, near Bolonia. The fastest way to get there is on the E5 / N340. In the vicinity of Tarifa you take the (fairly sharp) exit CA8202 to Bolonia. Follow the narrow, winding road towards the ocean. In Bolonia, take the left turn to El Lentiscal. Drive to the end, parallel to the sea. On the left there is a large parking lot. The walk starts from here. Go through a stone gate (two walls) and follow the sand path up to the left, through a gate, into the forest. The first section of the trail is marked, but not the part back along the seashore.

The map



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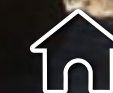
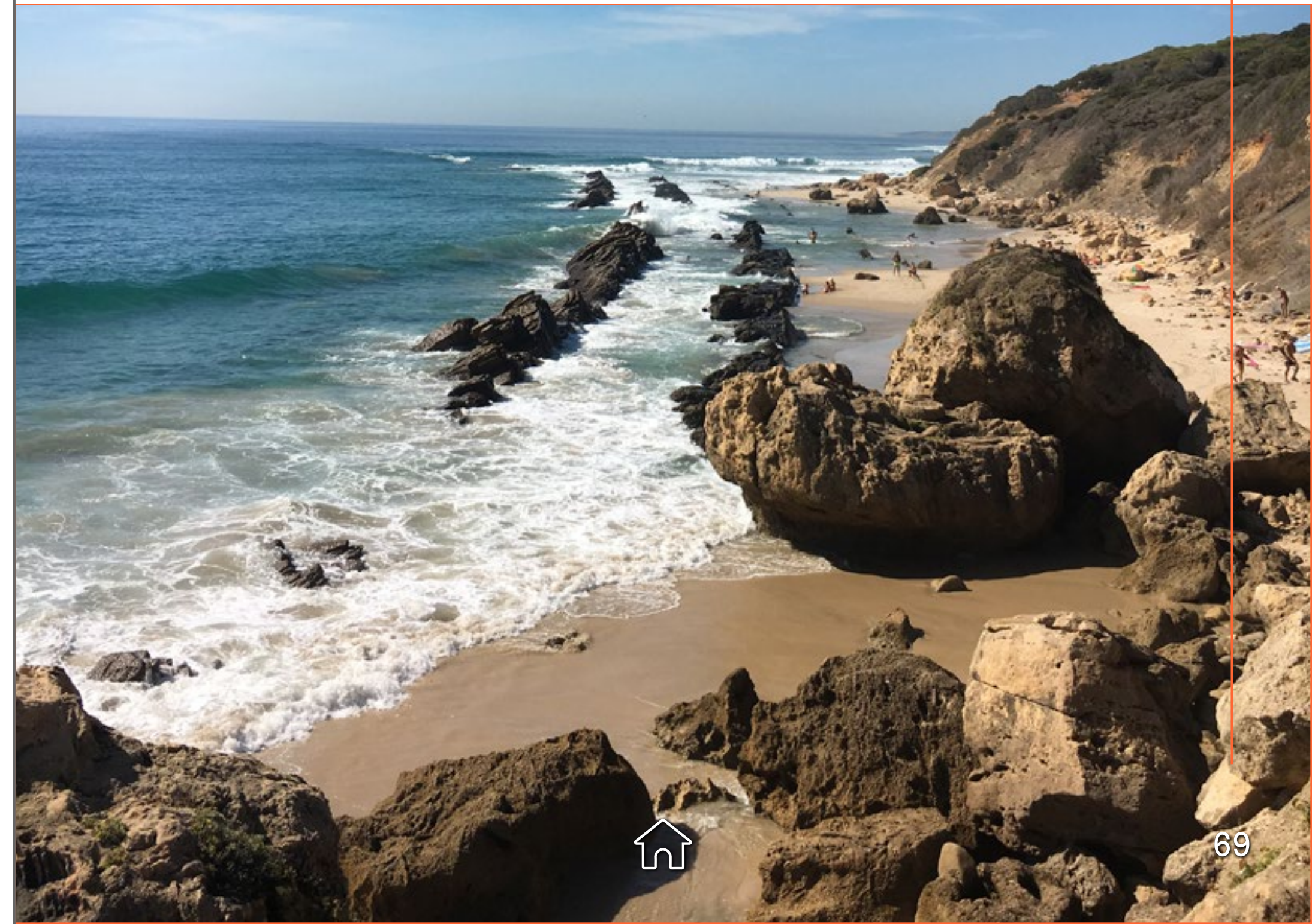


The walk

In short

Take a full day for this walk and the pretty bay, because it is wonderful here!

On my first visit I was really taken aback by the beauty of the landscape. From the narrow, winding road to Bolonia you will see the impressive rocks of the Loma de San Bartolomé ridge on the left and the Sierra de la Plata with the Silla del Papa (the Pope's throne) on the right at 458 metres. This is the highest point on the coast of Cádiz. After a 10 minute drive, Bolonia stretches out in front of you, a crescent shaped bay of Caribbean colour water flanked by an impressively high sand dune on the right. Wow.



The first half of the hike, about an hour's walk, leads you along Vía Pecuria, an ancient cattle path called the Colada de Reginosa from Bolonia to the east. The partly paved, partly loose sandy path goes through the pine and juniper forest of El Chaparral to Punta Paloma. This is said to be the ancient road connecting the Roman city of Mellaria to Baelo Claudia. It has been added to the European walking route network and recently marked with the GR145 / E9 signs. Along the way you have great views over the sea and the rock formations of San Bartolo and Paloma Alta. Along the route you can see the remains of one of the aqueducts, which brought water to Baelo Claudia and the vertical walls of the Roman quarries where the material was extracted for the construction of this ancient city. Here and there you can still see the remains of Roman columns. Other more recent traces of history are the bunkers from the civil war in the 1930s. Leaving the forest you see Africa across the sea and the mountain of Jebel Musa.

At the hamlet of Paloma Baja you pass the sign 'Fin de sendero', End of the Trail, and walk past some holiday homes until you reach the restaurant 'El Mirlo'. This is a great spot for a lunch or a well-deserved cold beer. Along the terrace of this restaurant the trail continues down to the beach Isleta Grande.

[Restaurant El Mirlo](#)



The second part of the walk is alongside the ocean. It takes you to rocky beaches where in parts you have to scramble over boulders, especially at high tide. Preferably do this walk when the tide is out. Alternatively, there's a slightly higher walking path that runs parallel. You pass various bays (Isleta Grande, las Hilera, Cala Picacho) until you arrive at Playa de los Bajos. Here you can see beautiful horizontal rock formations in the water (the geographical name is flysch abrasion platforms) that have created basins in the ocean. They are called 'Baños de Claudia', the baths of Claudia. From here you should be able to continue the rest of the walk right by the sea. When you see the first restaurants in Bolonia, turn right towards the parking area.

It goes without saying that you can't leave Bolonia without stopping at the ruins of Baelo Claudia, located on the west side of the bay. This is a really impressive site, with an amphitheatre where theatrical and musical performances are held in the summer. The accompanying free museum is well worth visiting. If you have time, take a walk over the ramps from the ruins and climb the huge sand dune.



Roman settlement Baelo Claudia

Bolonia is considered one of the most pristine bays in Andalusia and it certainly seems that way. A few thousand years ago this was one of the most populated beaches in Spain, boasting the largest Roman settlement so close to the sea: Baelo Claudia. Thousands of residents grew rich by making Garum, a precious fish sauce was made by letting fish and their guts rot for months! This location on the Strait of Gibraltar was very favourable for trade with the African continent. Baelo Claudia experienced its greatest prosperity between the 1st century BC and 2nd century AD. A tidal wave destroyed much of the city, and in the 3rd century it was attacked several times from the sea by Goths and pirates and eventually the settlement was abandoned in the 6th century. Now the ruins can be admired and there is an interesting, well-designed museum on site.

[Archaeological Site Baelo Claudia](#)



Tips

The Hermit Ibis, a mythical bird

A nice, somewhat longer route to Bolonia if you arrive from the west (Conil / Vejer) is along the shore, via Barbate and Zahara de los Atunes. Overhere, keep an eye out for a very exotic-looking feathered resident in this area: the Hermit Ibis or the Northern Bald Ibis (*Geronticus eremita*). This mythical bald-headed bird with a punk-like crest was considered a symbol of fertility by the ancient Egyptians and lived in North Africa, the Middle East and Europe. It was threatened with extinction



due to hunting and habitat loss, but a reintroduction programme was successfully launched a few years ago in Cádiz. Quite a few pairs now live in the rocks at the Barca de Vejer (there is a wooden lookout shelter on the other side of the main road). Others are nesting in the Sierra de Retín, between Barbate and Zahara de los Atunes.

[Northern Bald Ibis](#)



Where to eat

Tips

Chiringuito La Cabaña

On the beach in Bolonia you will find a great number of laid back 'Chiringuitos' – beach bars. We like 'La Cabaña de Bolonia', the very first one you encounter when you finish the walk. The menu is what you would expect: Spanish classics, fried fish, tapas.

[Chiringuito La Cabaña](#)

Restaurant Antonio

For an exquisite gastronomic experience, Restaurant Antonio in Zahara de los Atunes is 'The place to be'. According to friends, the best restaurant in the area.

[Restaurant Antonio](#)





5. Río Guadalmesí

A wonderful walk along
“The River of Women”



The route

- **Name:** Río Guadalmesí
- **Where:** Sierra de Estrecho, near Tarifa
- **Type of walk:** Circular
- **Length:** 6.6 km
- **Duration:** 2.5 hours (without stops)
- **Difficulty:** Easy
- **Shade:** Only the second half
- **Highest point:** 417 m
- **Lowest point:** 303 m
- **Path type:** Partially marked, paved dirt road & forest path

The starting point of this hike is at km 95 on the N340 between Tarifa and Algeciras. The walk starts at the Área recreativa El Bujeo, a large picnic area where there is plenty of space to park your car. Note: When you're driving from the west, from Tarifa, you have to drive past the exit to El Bujeo and turn back at some point because you are not allowed to turn left on this busy road. The trail starts from this picnic area, passing a few houses and after a bit, gradually going upwards to your right. The first five minutes you can still hear traffic, but after a few turns, there's nothing but silence and birdsong.

The map



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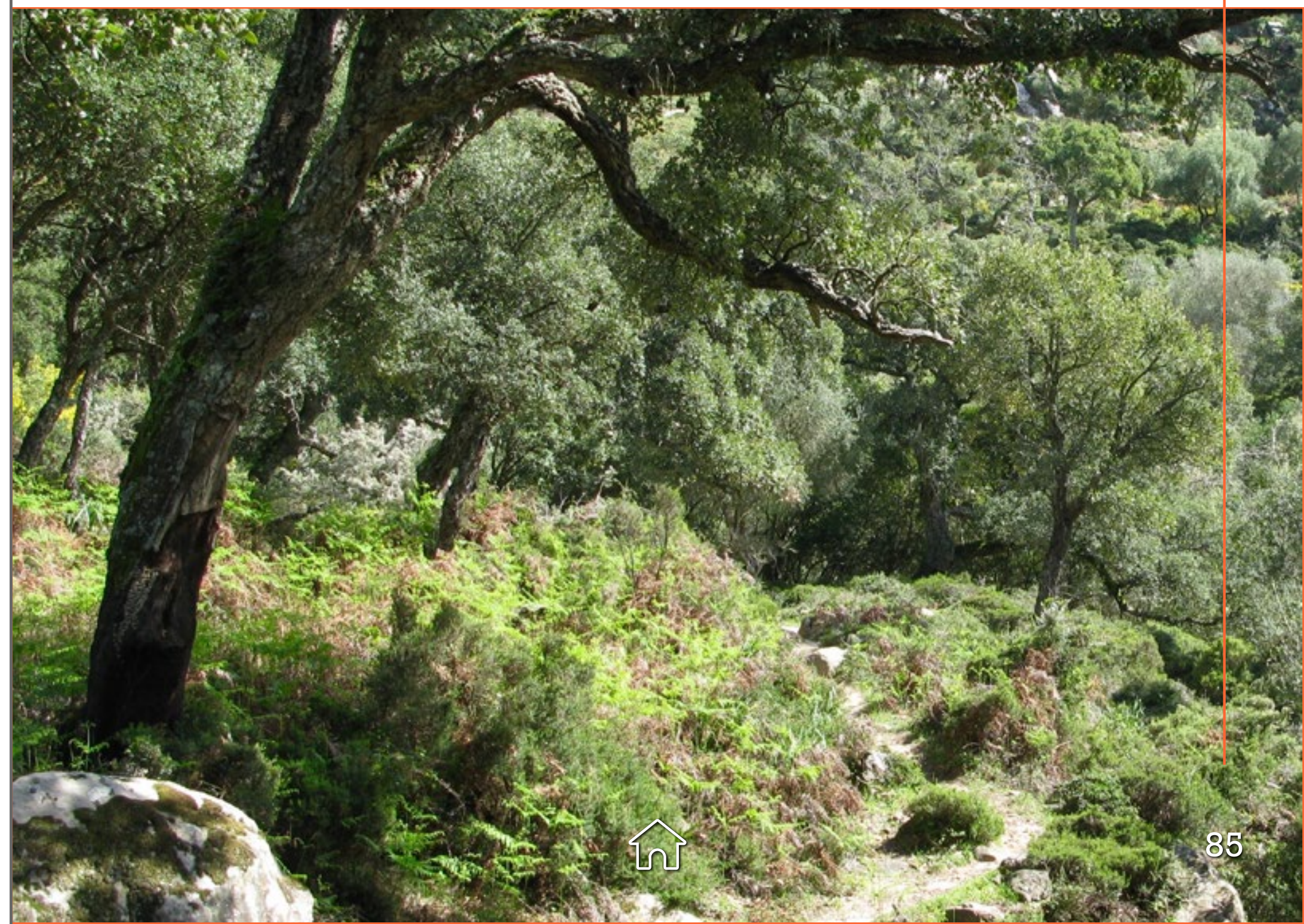
In short

Río Guadalmesí is a wonderful and easy hike. It starts from the busy road between Tarifa and Algeciras, but soon you're in an amazing and peaceful valley. The first half of the trail is along a wide dirt track, going gradually up and after that you descend through a delightful stretch of forest along the Guadalmesí River. Immerse yourself in the sounds of babbling water and chirping birds. Pure bliss.

The River of Women

Río Guadalmesí, in Arabic, meaning The River of Women, is a stream that rises high up in the mountains of the Sierra Luna and flows 600 metres down to the Mediterranean sea over a length of seven kilometres. Legend has it that women hid along this river from the pirates who raided these coasts and kidnapped many of them to trade as slaves in Africa.

The walk



The first half of the walk is on a wide, winding dirt road up to the tiny hamlet of Palancar. The path is flanked by alcornoques, cork oaks, and you have a beautiful view of the valley on your left.

After about 45 - 50 minutes you arrive at the top, where there is a bridge over the river Guadalmesí. At the bridge it is easy to find the trail down along the river. You can also choose to walk on a bit further towards the

neglected and overgrown farms of Palancar and then return to the bridge where the trail leads down. The descent alongside the creek is a real treat, with a few rocky bits here and there, but it's all quite uncomplicated. I hardly ever needed my Nordic walking sticks! Halfway down we found a perfect spot in the sun to eat our picnic. Paradise. Just leave me here. This is all I need: Birdsong and gurgling water, gnarled trees and green ferns, wild flowers and



an occasional vulture circling lazily overhead.

Laurisilva, Europe's last jungle

The combination of the sea fog that lingers in the mountains, the cold winds of the Poniente and the hot, dry winds of the Levante have created unique vegetation in this part of Spain. This type of forest is known as laurisilva, a remnant of a formerly widespread subtropical forest with evergreen trees and scrub. The mist from sea and high humidity allow plant species to grow here that are remains of the last European jungle. In addition to the characteristic cork oak of the Alcornocales, you will find strawberry trees, mastic trees, alder and heather. In the spring, the ground is dotted with daisies. I also discovered a flower I had never seen before, the Aspalathos, (Calicotome villosa), a thorny shrub with yellow flowers. The flower resembles broom but is larger. I learned that in ancient times these flowers were used to make perfume.



At the southernmost point of the walk you have a magnificent view of the 842 metre high Jebel Musa in Morocco. On a clear day this mountain looks so close, it's a sight that never fails to impress me. Continue along the path, it leads you to the left and after a rocky section you arrive back at the road where you started.





Tarifa

Tarifa is the southernmost town in Europe, just 14 km as the crow flies from Africa. A popular destination for kite and windsurfers, thanks to its consistently strong winds. Tarifa is raw, colourful and lively and has a lovely old town centre. This city takes its name from the Berber warlord Tarif ibn Malik who conquered the city in 710, after which the Moors ruled Tarifa for 6 centuries. This Arab past is still very visible as you wander through the maze of narrow streets. You can also visit the beautiful old Iglesia de San Mateo and climb the city walls at the Castillo Guzmán el Bueno for beautiful views.

From Tarifa you can spot dolphins, killer whales and whales in the Strait of Gibraltar. An unforgettable experience! We recommend the tours by Turmares.

Turmares

Ferries to Tangier in Morocco leave from here daily, a return ticket costs about € 70.00.

Ferries to Morocco

Tips

Beachbar El Chiringuito

El Chiringuito Lounge is a bright bistro perfectly set on the last curve of the beach looking out to the island. The food is excellent and they have a lounge inside and a terrace outside. It is funky with fusion food and great for sunset cocktails in their sandy chill out area with cool music in the background.

[Beachbar El Chiringuito](#)

Where to eat

Bar Rico and the market

Bar Rico is one of the oldest tapas bars in Tarifa and the perfect place for a tasty and cheap tapas at the bar. Calle Coronel Moscardó, 7. Also try the Mercado de Abastos, the central market on Calle Colón, for coffee, a Spanish breakfast and people watching. Only open mornings and not on Sunday.

Restaurant El Lola

Restaurant El Lola in the centre of town is very quirky and cool with flamenco dot decoration, a great atmosphere, a traditional menu and always a band or guitarist on the terrace playing tunes. The staff are characters and you really feel like you are in traditional authentic Spain here.

[Restaurant El Lola](#)

Restaurant La Favela

Restaurant La Favela is situated in a beautiful old, monumental building in the centre. Cool decoration and beautifully presented dishes including a good selection of vegetarian meals. Reservations for dinner recommended.

[Restaurant La Favela](#)

Where to stay

Guesthouse Dar Cilla



At the old city wall of Tarifa you'll find the monumental and beautiful guesthouse Dar Cilla, with smart studios and elegant apartments. From their huge roof terrace you have phenomenal views of the Strait of Gibraltar towards Africa across the water.

[Guesthouse Dar Cilla](#)

Tips

Cafe Azul

A fantastic place for brunch, smoothies and crepes is Cafe Azul. Your kids will love the food and the large portions at this very friendly eaterie.

[Cafe Azul](#)



€ 10 Cashback!

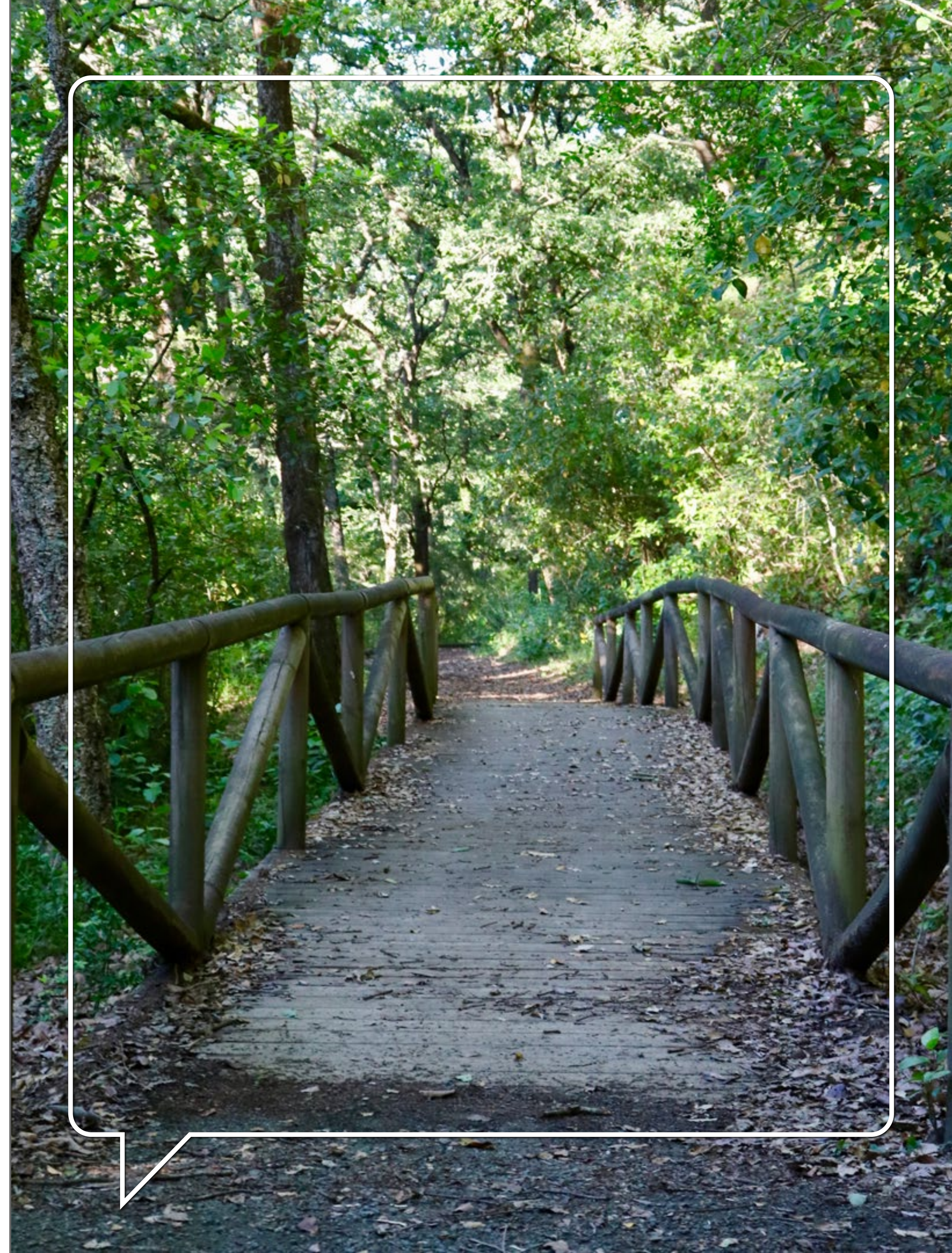


When you indicate with your reservation (directly at the accommodation, not through agencies) that this is 'Anne's Walking in Cádiz tip' and show this ebook upon arrival you'll receive € 10 Cashback or a € 10 discount!



6. Sendero Valdeinfierno

A lovely walk alongside a murmuring stream,
partially wheelchair accessible



The route

- **Name:** Sendero Valdeinfierno
- **Where:** Parque Natural Los Alcornocales
- **Type of walk:** Circular or linear*
- **Length:** 6 km, *630 m along the river is wheelchair accessible
- **Duration:** 2.5 hours (without stops)
- **Difficulty:** Easy
- **Shade:** About half of the walk
- **Highest point:** 195 m
- **Lowest point:** 125 m
- **Path type:** Marked, dirt road, forest path & wooden walkway
- **Remarks:** This walk is partially wheelchair accessible

The starting point of this walk is about 10 km west from Los Barrios. From the south you can either go past Medina Sidonia via the A381 to Los Barrios, or via the A2228 to Benalup Casas Viejas and from here the A2226 to Los Barrios. Both are equally long in terms of travel time. On the A381, take exit 73 'Camino y vía de servicio' which leads you to Valdeinfierno. After the exit follow the service road and signs to the walk. You can leave your car right here, in the first parking area. Or drive 2,5 km further up, to the second parking lot, at the start of the official walk. There's also a parking reserved at the wooden walkway here for visitors with reduced mobility.

The map



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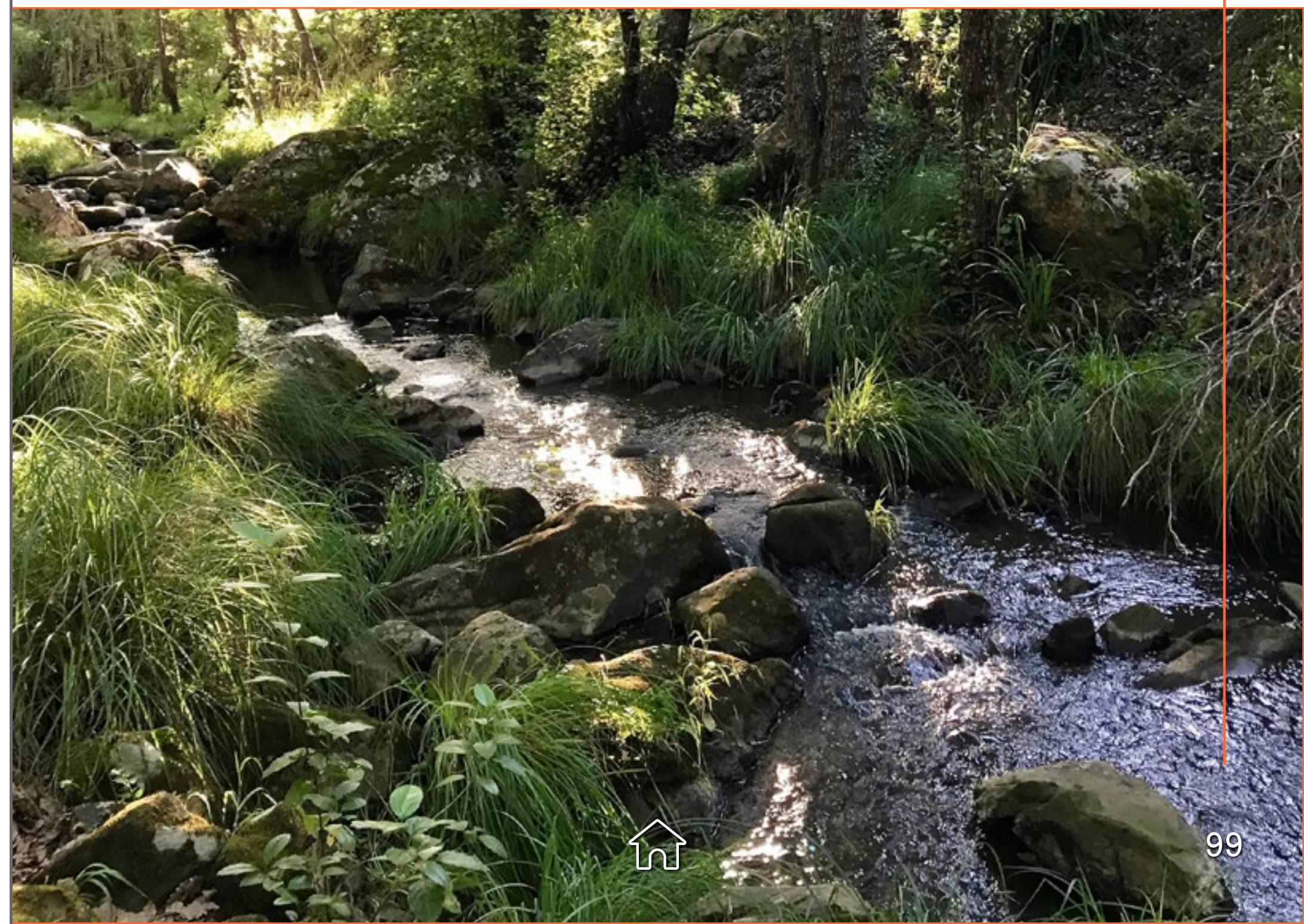


In short

Sendero Valdeinfierno is an agreeable and easy walk through a jungly valley along the river Valdeinfierno. This trail is partially accessible for wheelchair users. From the lookout point Mirador Valdeinfierno you have a great view over the valley and to the south you can distinguish the characteristic shape of 'The Rock', Gibraltar. The walk along the river is delightful with the sound of babbling water and chirruping birds, the fresh greenery, the ferns and the spring flowers. In autumn you will find numerous mushrooms and see the spectacular colours of the deciduous trees.

The name Valdeinfierno means Valley of Hell. This might be because of the very dense vegetation, which makes it almost impossible to cross the valley, but another story suggests that this name refers to a bloody encounter between Moors and Christians. The latter would also explain the name of a stream that flows into the Valdeinfierno river that is called: 'De Malas Pasadas' (From an evil past).

The walk



The first part of the walk is about 2.5 km on a dirt road with a slow ascent. It crosses the 'Cañada Real' (One of the traditional cattle roads in Spain) from San Roque to Medina Sidonia. After about 800 metres you will see a fence and a sign on the right to the "Mirador", this is where this walk ends. Go straight ahead for another 1,7 km until you see the ruins of a forester's house to your left. The official walk starts here. There is a second parking lot with space for about 15 cars. Visitors with reduced mobility can leave their

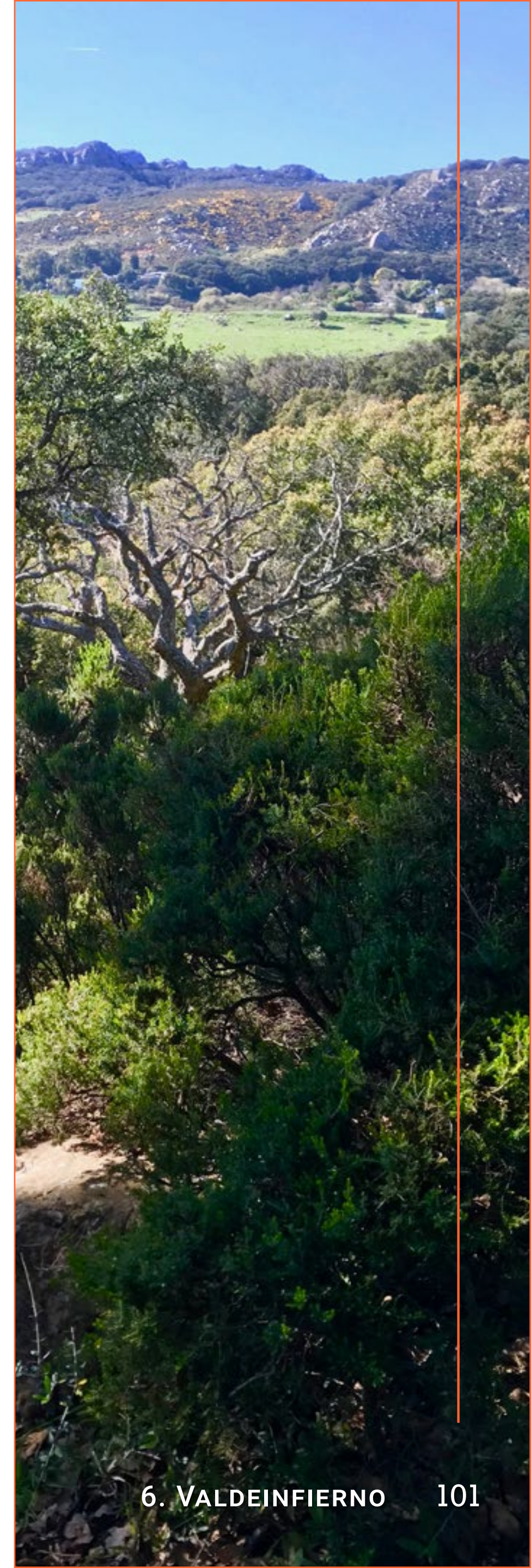
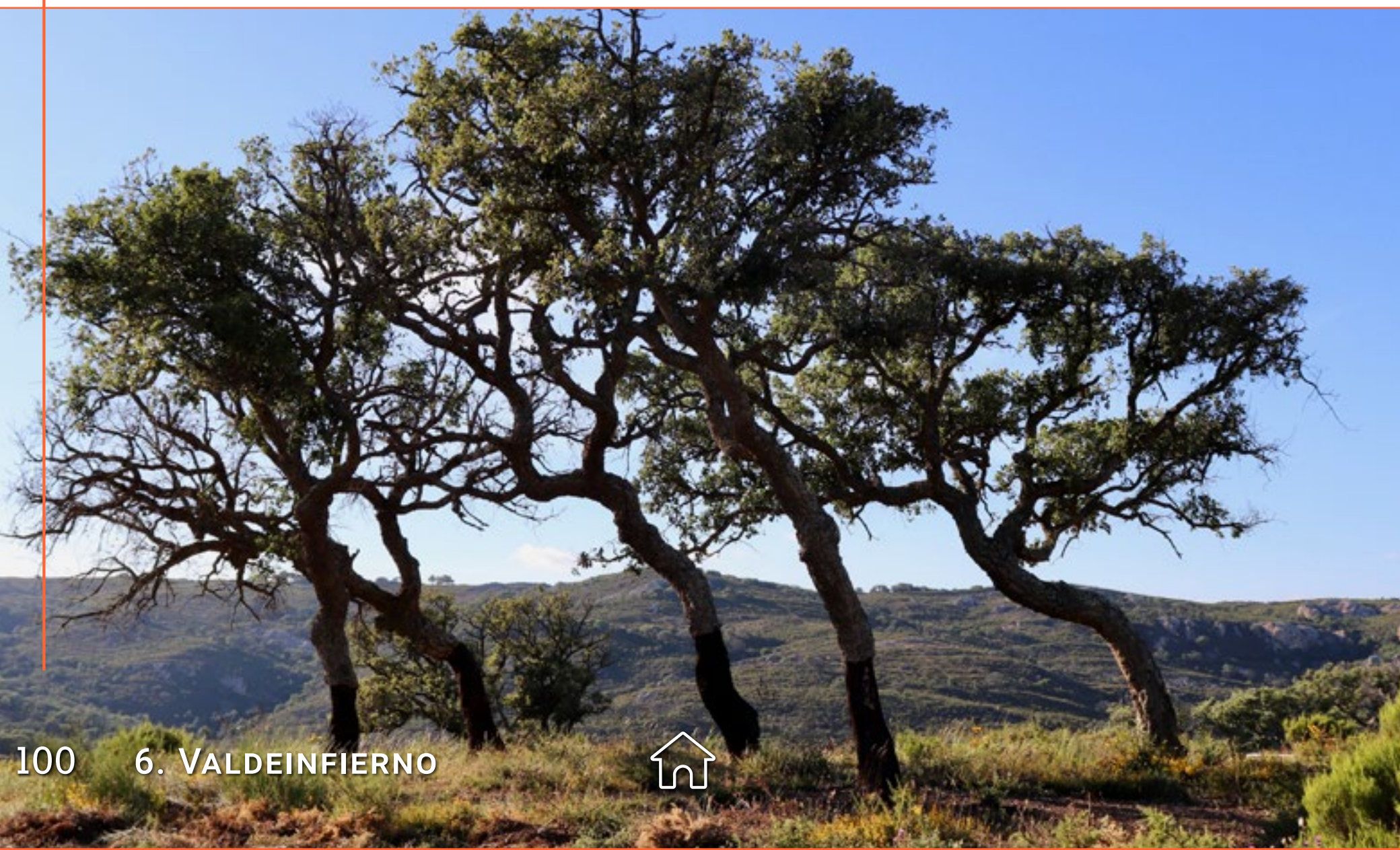
car close to the wooden deck. There are various information boards, also in Braille. A low wooden railing of 630 metres runs along this part of the walk.

Fairytale forest and vistas

At the end of the wooden walkway, the path continues straight on into a winding and sloping forest path, with springy, dense foliage. To your left runs the river where mossy alders extend their long twisted roots into the water. I love this part,

the tranquillity, the dappled light of the shady trees and the sound of water and birds.

After about a kilometre the trail leads up, away from the river and from here there are lovely wide views of the plain. In an open area there's an information board that explains about the extensive forest and valleys that surround you: The Loma de Valdespera, the Sierra Blanquilla, the Canuto de los Tajos. Hills and rocks and valleys with endless forests in which you could easily get lost. Instead, follow the trail until you arrive at a fence that connects this path with the hiking trail Corredor Verde Dos Bahías (a total of 93 km from Puerto Real to Los Barrios). After a bit you are back on the dirt road where you turn left or right, depending on where you left your car.



Parque Natural Los Alcornocales

Los Alcornocales Natural Park (165,000 hectares) is the largest natural park in the province of Cádiz and the most southern protected area in Spain. The park is formed by mountain ridges covered with Mediterranean scrub and formidable masses of cork oaks, the most important forests of this species in Spain. Closer to the coast, the sea mist forms a fairytale 'Bosque de niebla', a cloud forest with huge ferns and forest giants covered with mosses. The unique landscape here is the remnant of the last original European jungle, a formerly widespread, subtropical forest with the evergreen trees of the laurel family: the Laurisilva. The Alcornocales Natural Park is a vast and empty area, with only a few white villages such as Jimena and Castellar de la Frontera. At the visitor center El Aljibe just before Alcalá de los Gazules you will find a lot of information about the park and the many hiking possibilities.

[Visitor center El Aljibe](#)

Tips

Nearly in Africa

If you are staying on the Costa de la Luz and not in a hurry it's nice to drive back past Tarifa via Los Barrios and Algeciras. Near Algeciras, the largest port in Spain, there is heavy traffic, especially during the week, but you'll be rewarded with impressive views of the rock of Gibraltar along the way. Moreover, on the N340 between Algeciras and Tarifa you are as close as you can get to Africa from Europe with only 14 kilometres of water between you and Morocco! Stop at the 'Mirador del Estrecho' bar for best views. Please Note: You are not allowed to take a left turn on this busy and winding stretch so the safest thing to do is to drive on a bit further and turn at a next exit or at Tarifa.

Where to eat

Hurricane Beachbar

And, should you choose the above detour: The Hurricane Hotel, just a few kilometres past Tarifa, is a great place for lunch or a drink. The 'Chiringuito', beach bar has a self-service salad bar and a nice terrace overlooking the private beach with views to Morocco. The gardens are spectacular and the macaw parrots that live there have mastered the art of saying hello and swearing in many different languages!

Hurricane Beachbar



7. Ruta de los Molinos de Patrite

On the old cattle path
along the river
between Patrite and Jimena

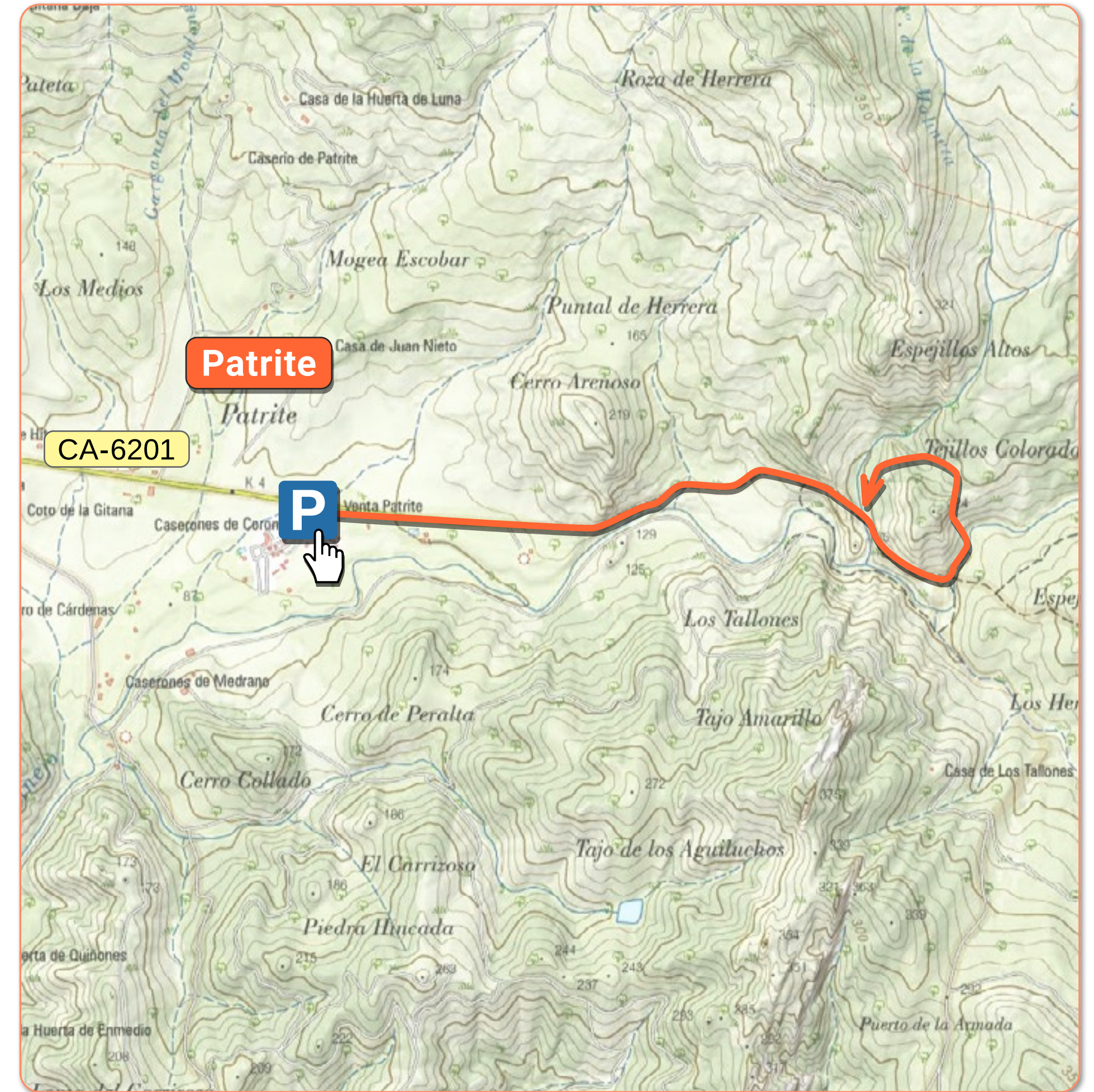


The route

- **Name:** Ruta de los Molinos de Patrite
- **Where:** Just outside Alcalá de los Gazules, Los Alcornocales
- **Type of walk:** Circular
- **Length:** 6 km
- **Duration:** 2.5 hours (without stops)
- **Difficulty:** Easy
- **Shade:** Not much
- **Highest point:** 193 m
- **Lowest point:** 107 m
- **Path type:** Partly marked, easy to follow path partly between and over boulders

The starting point of this trail is on the CA6201 near the campsite of Alcalá de los Gazules, a few kilometres north east of the town. Leave your car at the campsite. The first 500 metres is a tarmac road and after you go through the fence the official walk starts. After about 2 km you arrive at the ruins of a watermill and a sign 'Fin de Sendero' - End of the walk. Because of the beauty of the landscape we ventured a bit further on, up a hill and past a lake, read about it below.

The map



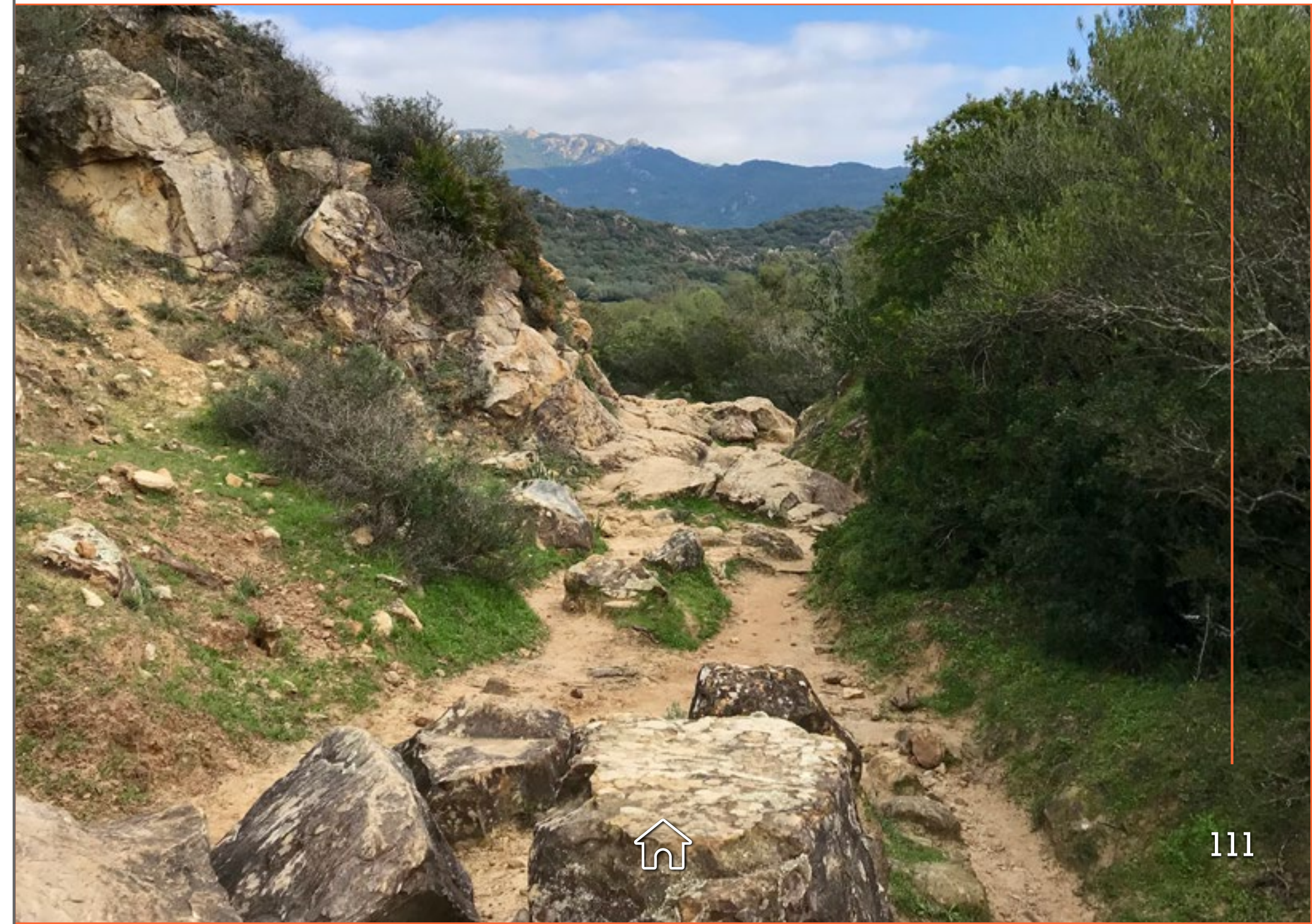
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The walk

In short

Looking for a pleasant walk for a lazy Sunday afternoon we came across this trail. What a lovely find! Impressive, photogenic scenery, a bit of clambering here and there, a river or two, ruins of old watermills, wild flowers, orchids and quite a few vultures sailing over our heads while we were having a picnic. A perfect combination! The location, a few kilometres outside the village of Alcalá makes this a popular walk and you will surely encounter other hikers at the weekends, especially in wintertime!



At the end of the tarmac road you pass a fence where there's an information board. A hundred metres further down, another information panel explains the working of the El Molino de la Pasada water mill. The first part of the walk is along a rocky trail, flanked by bushes and trees, with the sound of the Río del Montero river to your right. In the distance you can see the high peak of Mount Montero.

'De los Quintos'

This part, the Ruta de los Molinos, is the first section of the Vereda

de Patrite y Jimena, a 31 kilometre long footpath to Jimena de la Frontera. It is traditionally called 'De los quintos', 'The fifth'. In former days, young men from Jimena who enrolled in military service in Cádiz had to walk for two days to get there and this was the first stretch.

The path runs along the rivers Rocinejo and Montero and was widely used when the five water mills in this area were still in use.

A narrow channel that supplied water to the mills runs alongside the trail. After a while, the path curves a little further from the river



and you come across an open plain with an impressive pine tree to your right in the field. You have to cross this field. After rains it can be very boggy here! After the plain, the path ascends and you arrive at a Mirador, a viewpoint with an information board. You can spot the ruins of the Molina de Castro Abajo and have a great view of the vertical rocks that protrude from the mountain forest.

Rare orchids and daisies

Especially in spring it is a riot of colour here! A tapestry of pink, yellow, blue and white flowers. From daisies and marguerites to rare orchids such as the *Ophrys tenthredinifera*, the mirror orchid with its large, colourful petals. The air is scented with tree heather, broom, lavender, thyme and rosemary.

The trail continues over and along the sandstone rock formations with carved and eroded steps. You get the sense that a lot of feet have passed here throughout the ages.



A little later the path descends and you have to cross a gentle stream. It's a lovely spot with oleanders that grow on your left and right, the gentle babbling of water, butterflies and birdsong. After the creek the path slowly climbs. On the opposite side there's more of the peculiar vertical rock formations emerging from the forested mountain, called los Tallones. The path then descends slightly and this is the end of the official walk. An information board tells us that we have arrived at the ruins of the mills de Los Espartiores or Repartidores on the 'Vía Pecuaria Patrite-Jimena'. We have now walked about 2 kilometres. Time for a snack, our teenagers conclude. There's some rocks scattered about that we use as chairs.

Up hill to a lake

But after our break we don't want to go back yet, it's just too nice here! First we visit the river Montero. From our 'picnic spot' we follow

the sound of the water to our right, through a metal fence. Afterwards we walk a bit further on the 'Vía Pecuaria', with a fence to our right and then slightly to the left, climbing up the hill. From here there's fantastic views over the valley with the ruins of the 'Molino de la Pasada de Cantos' down below. At the top there is a somewhat boggy plain scattered with huge boulders, the Laguna de los Tejillos Colorados. After heavy rains this plain is filled with water. We cross this plain and continue along the path a little further north, past some giant cork oaks and up, where there's a couple of giant rocks from where we are met by another amazing view. From here follow the narrow, but visible track to the left and downhill. There's only one fork in this trail: take the one straight ahead. After about 5 minutes you are back at the main trail and the Arroyo del Espino, the small creek, the same you crossed before. After this, keep to the right, and walk back to where you started.



Ermita Santuario de Nuestra Señora de los Santos

About 5 kilometres southwest of Alcalá de los Gazules, on the south side of the A381 lies the Ermita Santuario de Nuestra Señora de los Santos. This sanctuary originally dates from the 14th century. At that time the inhabitants of Alcalá de los Gazules begged their patroness for protection during the Batalla del Salado. This fierce battle that was fought and won here in 1340, was one of the most crucial battles of the last era of the Reconquista. The church has since been a place of pilgrimage. The walls are covered with photos, paintings and drawings of devotees as a thank you to the virgin for answering their prayers. This is the largest and most interesting collection of votive offerings in Andalusia.

[Santuario de Nuestra Señora de los Santos](#)



Tips

The illustrious 'Venta'

When we still lived in Catalonia, I was completely unfamiliar with the term venta. These did not exist in the north of Spain. A venta is an unpretentious eatery along a main road. And there are an awful lot of them in Andalusia. They are generally not the most inviting-looking affairs with their plastic tablecloths and fluorescent lighting, but the menu, with a fair share of the typical fried dishes and local ingredients, is usually quite adequate for the hungry hiker.

The standard of ventas can range from rather underwhelming to surprisingly superb. A good rule of thumb is that if you see a lot of cars outside between 13:00 and 16:00 hours then the food is probably good and affordable. Don't count on gastronomic heights or a menu in English but many ventas sell all kinds of wonderful regional products and sometimes you can also stay overnight.




Tips

Where to eat

Venta Patrite

At the campsite where the above hike starts you will find Venta Patrite. It's an informal affair with dogs walking about and casual service but there's fine coffee and cake. Or go for lunch with homemade bread, chicharrones, (crispy pork scratchings), albóndigas (meatballs) or – when in season – venison in sauce. There are probably also a few vegetarian tapas on the menu.





8. Subida al Picacho

To the high peaks
of the Alcornocales Natural Park

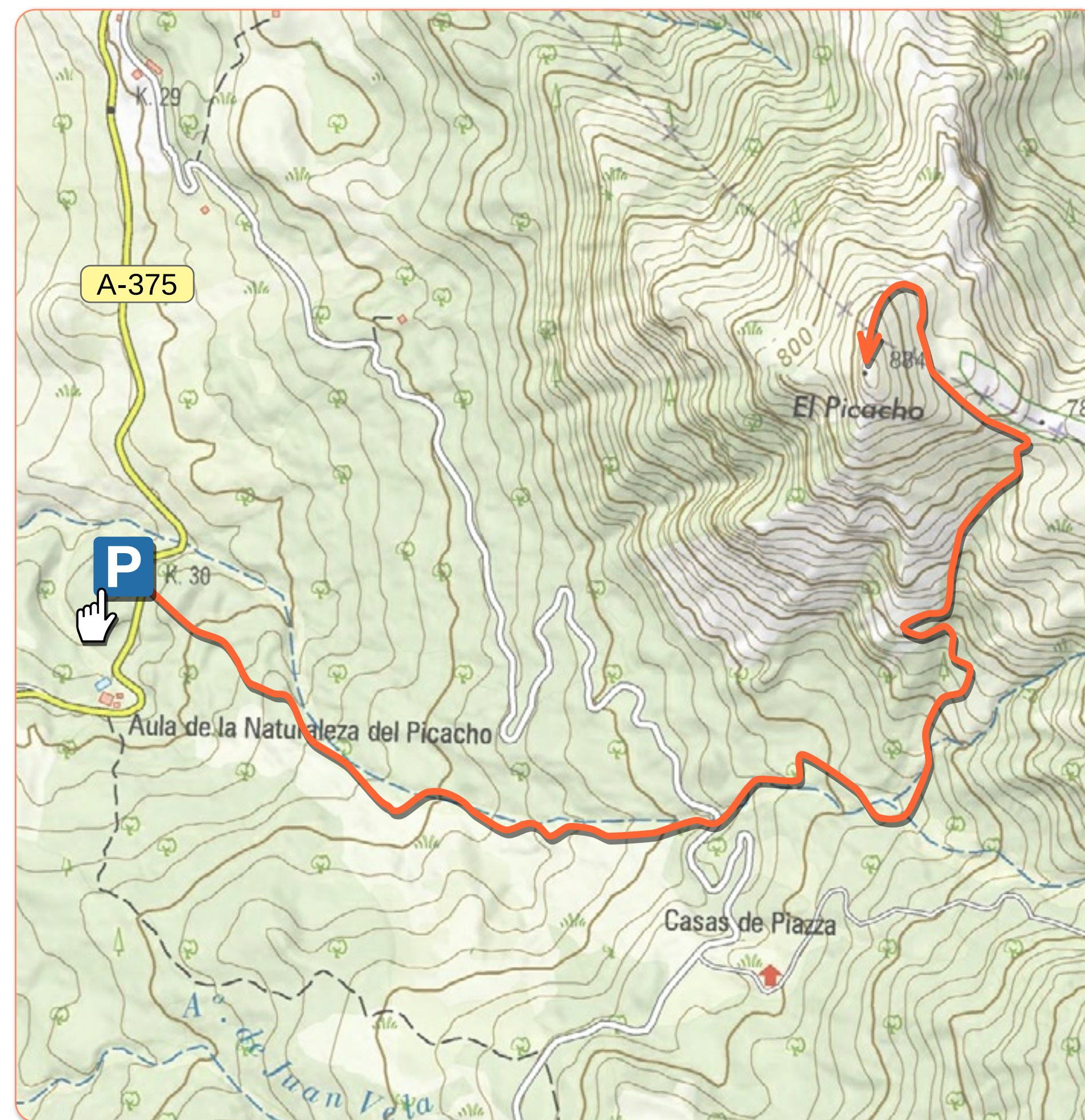


The route

- **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



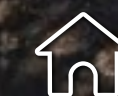
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The walk

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.





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 cross a bridge over the river Garganta del Puerto Oscuro, and 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](#)

Tips



€ 10 Cashback!

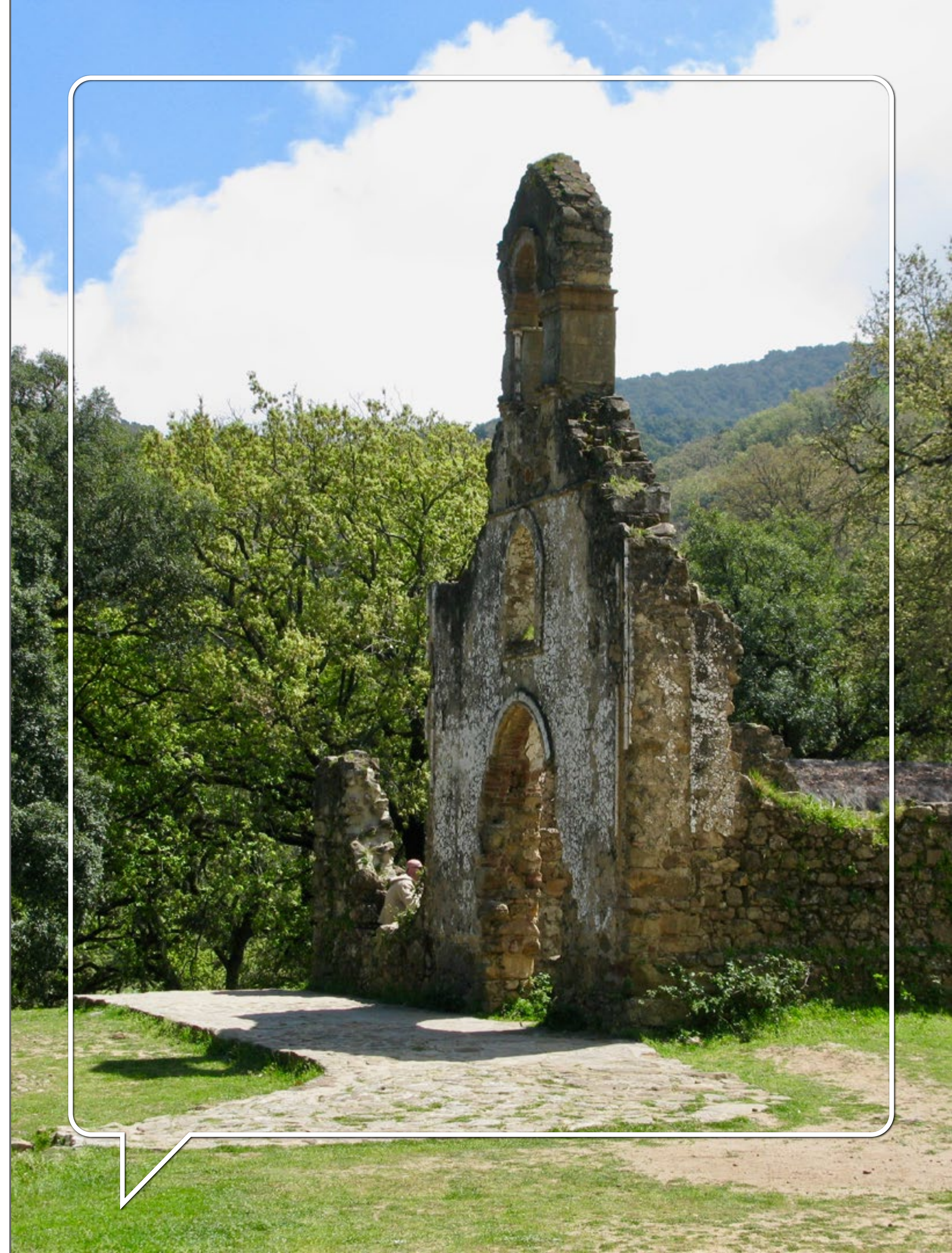


When you indicate with your reservation (directly at the hotel, not through agencies) that this is 'Anne's Walking in Cádiz tip' and show this ebook upon arrival you'll receive € 10 Cashback or a € 10 discount!



9. Sendero La Laguna del Moral

Walk with forest giants,
a lagoon
and a hamlet with a tragic history

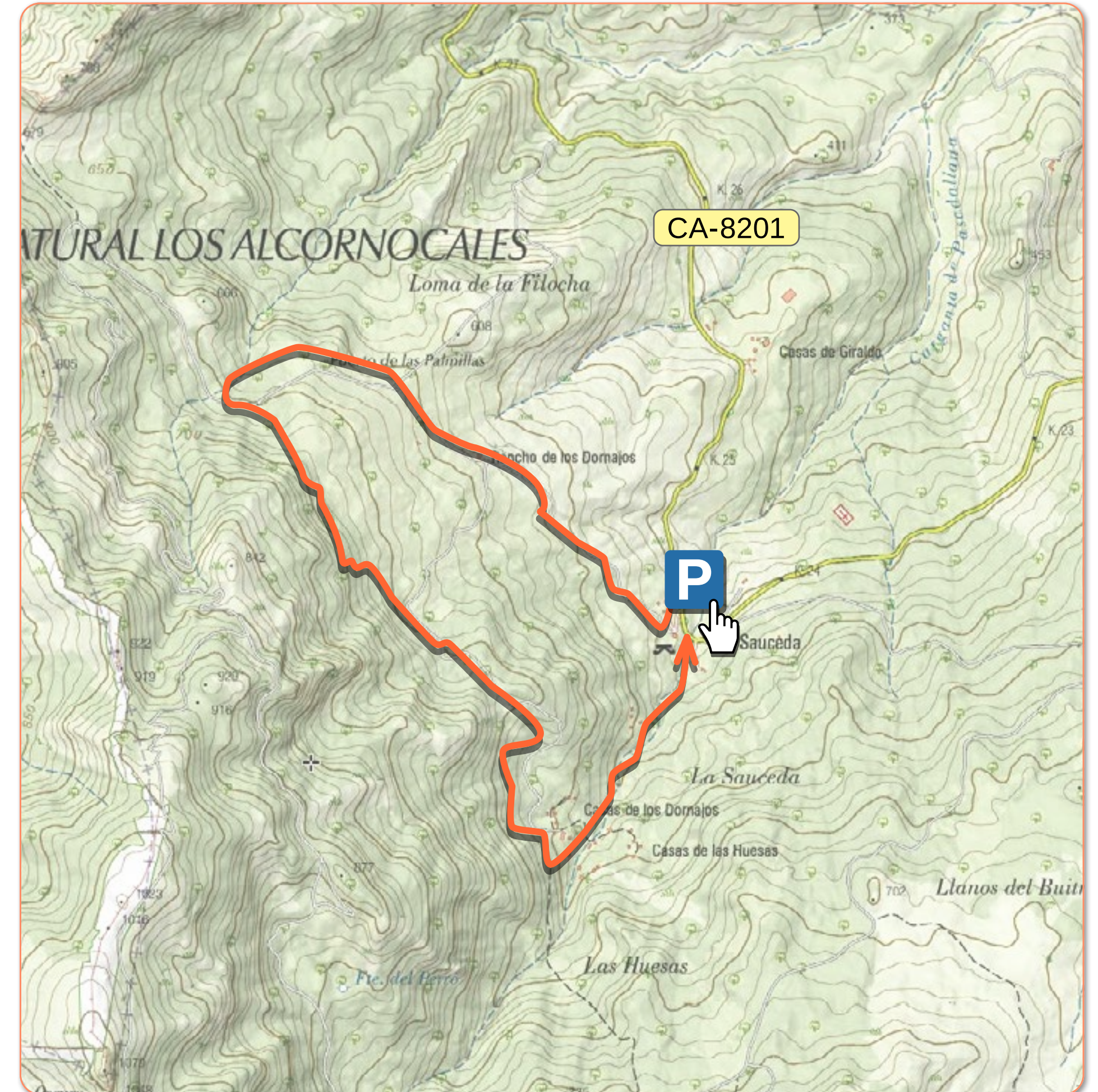


The route

- **Name:** Sendero La Laguna del Moral
- **Where:** La Saucedá, Cortes de la Frontera
- **Type of walk:** Circular
- **Length:** 6 km
- **Duration:** 3 hours (without stops)
- **Difficulty:** Easy
- **Shade:** Just over half of the walk
- **Highest point:** 685 m
- **Lowest point:** 503 m
- **Path type:** Well marked paved forest path

The starting point of the hike is in the municipality of Cortes de la Frontera, near Puerto de Gáliz. From Ubrique, Alcalá de los Gazules and Cortes de la Frontera it is about a 45 minute drive. From Puerto de Galiz take the C3331/CA8201 towards Área Recreativa La Saucedá. After about 5 kilometres you arrive at the La Saucedá recreation area. The walk starts here. There are approximately 20 parking spaces at the recreation area. About 30 - 40 metres to the right of the Nucleo Recreativa Ambiental you will find a sign to the beginning of the walk. This is just after the bend at a casa forestal, a farm.

The map



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The walk

In short

This walk takes you to an enchanting part of the Alcornocales Nature park, a green valley with a fairytale lagoon and ancient trees, great views of the mountains, up to the Sierra de Grazalema, but also silent traces of a tragedy from the Spanish civil war: the ruins of the village of La Saucedá that was destroyed by the German Luftwaffe.



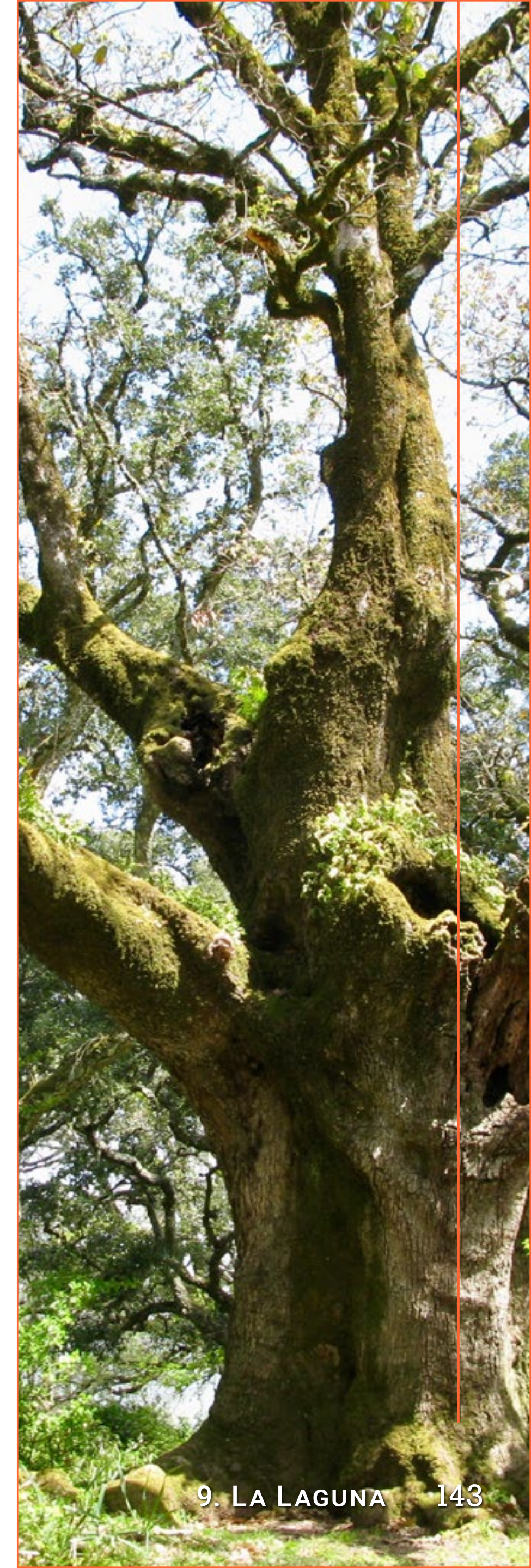


The first part of the walk, to the lagoon, gradually ascends along a wide dirt road. On your right you have beautiful views to the Sierra de la Nieves and the Grazalema Natural Park with the peak of the Torreón, 1,654 metres high. On either side of the road is pasture where cattle graze on the black 'bujeo' field. You pass twice through a gate and at junctions there are clear signposts to the laguna. A little higher up, the forest starts and the path

narrows. During this walk, notice the amazing, ancient and whimsically shaped gall and cork oak trees that remind you of the talking trees, Ents, straight out of the Lord of the Rings.

After about an hour's walking you arrive at the lagoon that is surrounded by quejigos, Portuguese oaks. The lake is named after the giant mulberry tree (moral) that once stood here. In the spring you can hear the croaking of frogs and spot newts. There's a fence around the lake to protect it from the goats and cows that roam here. The pond is not fed by a river or source and usually dries up completely in the summer.

After the lake you continue on the descending path to the left. Here the landscape is more open, with low scrub, huge ferns and small meadows. To the left of the trail is a fence that marks private farmland. From the higher parts you have some impressive views over the Sierra, the mountains. Scattered along the path you can find remnants of old buildings, their walls overgrown with weeds.



La Saucedá

The village of La Saucedá was bombed in the civil war in 1936. A large number of cottages were restored in 1989 and are now used for rural tourism with basic, communal facilities. In a clearing, an idyllic setting in the middle of the forest you come across the first group of thatched cottages, called Casas de los Dornajos. Next to them are the ruins of the Ermita. The façade, a solemn witness, is almost intact. This church must have been beautiful once.

The trail continues, over a bridge and along the remains of the flour mill 'La Menda'. Then there's a second group of houses, Casas de la Huelas and a larger building that serves as a shop and information centre. Next you cross a wooden bridge over the Pasadallana River and after a beautiful stretch through the gorge you return to the starting point.

It is such an idyllic corner, in these magic forests. A fantastic location for rural tourism, but learning about what happened here, I look at it through different eyes.



La Saucedá, the 'Guernica of Cádiz'

La Saucedá, a mountain top hamlet with its strategic location between two mountain ranges, was one of the last strongholds of republican resistance to the military coup of July 18, 1936 and was destroyed in the fall of 1936 by 4 bombers of the Condor Legion of the German Luftwaffe, the same legion that was responsible for the bombing of Guernica a few months later.

In 1936, La Saucedá had about 500 inhabitants and a socialist mayor. The village was growing and the construction of a road to Jimena de la Frontera had just commenced when the Civil War started. La Saucedá then became a refuge for Republicans fleeing from Franco's forces. At that time the village had two schools, three bread ovens, a flour mill and a church. After the bombing, rebel troops arrived, who then looted the village and set the rest of the remaining buildings on fire. Many of the residents were captured, tortured and killed at the nearby Cortijo de 'el Marrufo', an execution centre and one of the largest mass graves in Spain. In 2016 the 'Casa de la Memoria', a documentation and memorial centre, was opened in Jimena de la Frontera.

[Casa de la Memoria](#)





Tips

Jimena de la Frontera

Jimena de la Frontera, formerly Oba, was a sought-after stronghold because of its strategic location and fertile agricultural land between the two rivers the Guadiaro and Hozgarganta. On-site cave paintings are evidence of human habitation in the Bronze Age. The Roman fortified city, Oba, was so important that it had its own currency. In the city you can find stones with Roman inscriptions.

The Moors changed the name to Xemina. The heyday of the robust Islamic castle high above the river was in the 13th - 15th centuries, but its origins are much earlier. The castle is worth a visit. At the entrance is an 18th century weapon factory. You can drive almost to the top by car or climb up from the village on foot.

Where to eat

Restaurant Platero & Co

A delightful discovery is restaurant Platero & Co in Gaucín, run by the Dutch Barry and Hellen. fabulous, international cuisine prepared with finest local products (chestnuts, cherries, mushrooms, goat cheese, figs). From the terrace you have fantastic views over the Sierra de Grazalema.

[Restaurant Platero & Co](#)

Restaurant La Estación

San Pablo de Buceite is only a small village but has a famous restaurant! La Estación, in the former train station, has even been listed by the Guardian in a top 10 of train station restaurants!

[Restaurant La Estación](#)



Tips

Where to stay

El Diplomático Feo (No Cashback)

Some 30 kilometres south of La Saucedá, near the village of San Pablo de Buceite, Canadians Bruce and Ingrid run a charming guest house with a pool and fantastic views: El Diplomático Feo. They are both keen hikers and can give you excellent tips about the area.

[El Diplomático Feo](#)





10. Peñón Grande & Llanos del Endrinal

A fantastic hike into the heart
of the Sierra de Grazalema

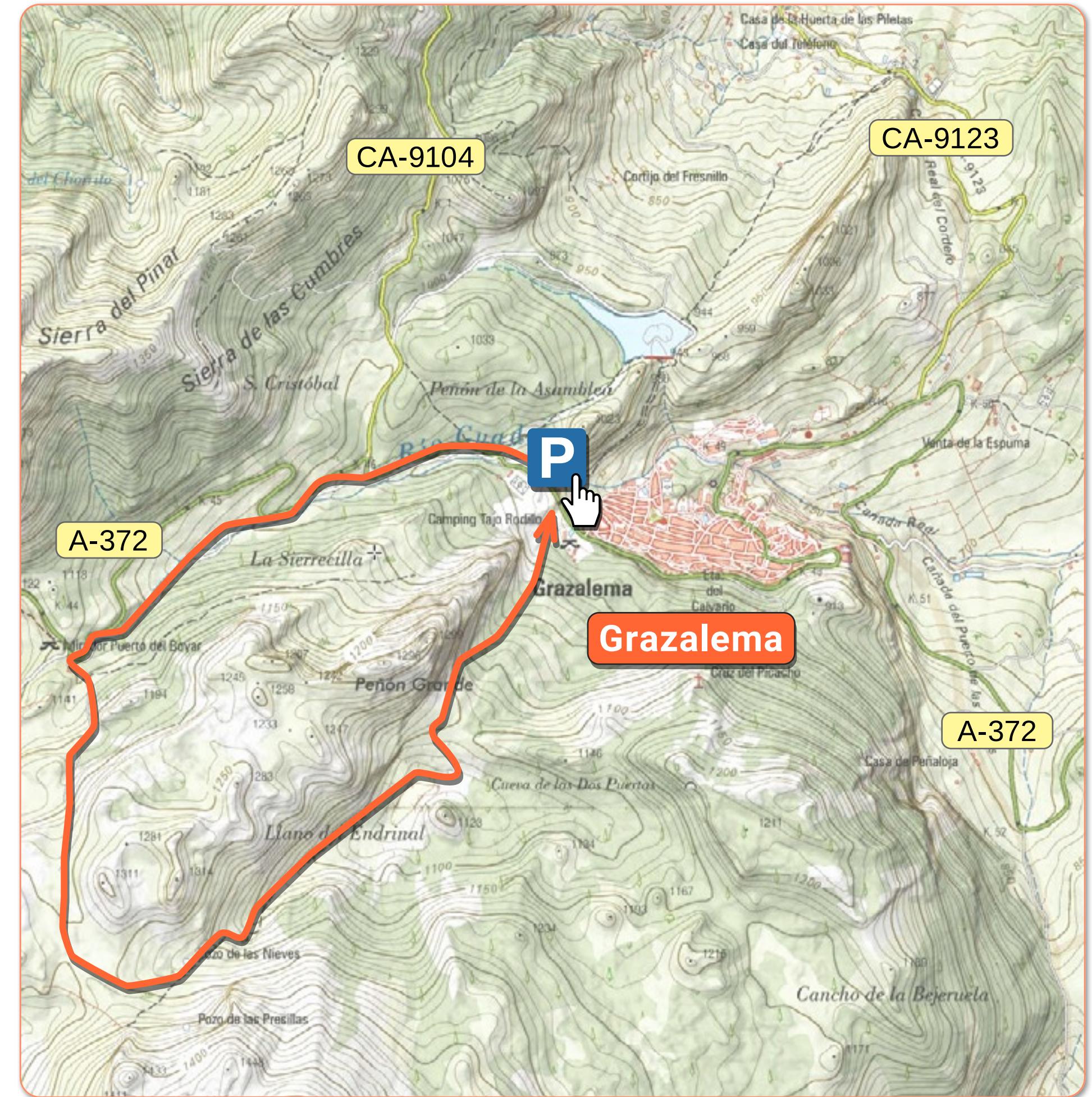


The route

- **Name:** Circular Peñón Grande, Puerto de las Presillas & Llanos del Endrinal
- **Where:** Parque Natural Sierra de Grazalema
- **Type of walk:** Circular
- **Length:** 7.5 km
- **Duration:** 3 hours (without stops)
- **Difficulty:** Average
- **Shade:** Here and there
- **Highest point:** 1.420 m
- **Lowest point:** 1.090 m
- **Path type:** Partly marked, easy to follow hiking trail. Over rocks, meadows and through forest`

This hike starts from the car park at camping Tajo del Rodillo on the A372 near the village of Grazalema. The first part is called 'Camino de los Charcones'. To get there you have to walk from the car park about 100 metres along the A372 to the west. Camino de los Charcones is a wide, slowly rising gravel path with the Peñón Grande on your left, rising 300 metres above you, a beautiful sight. After half an hour you are at Puerto del Boyar. Tip: From the "Mirador", the viewpoint, a little further to the right, you have fabulous views to the south, up to the Alcornocales!

The map



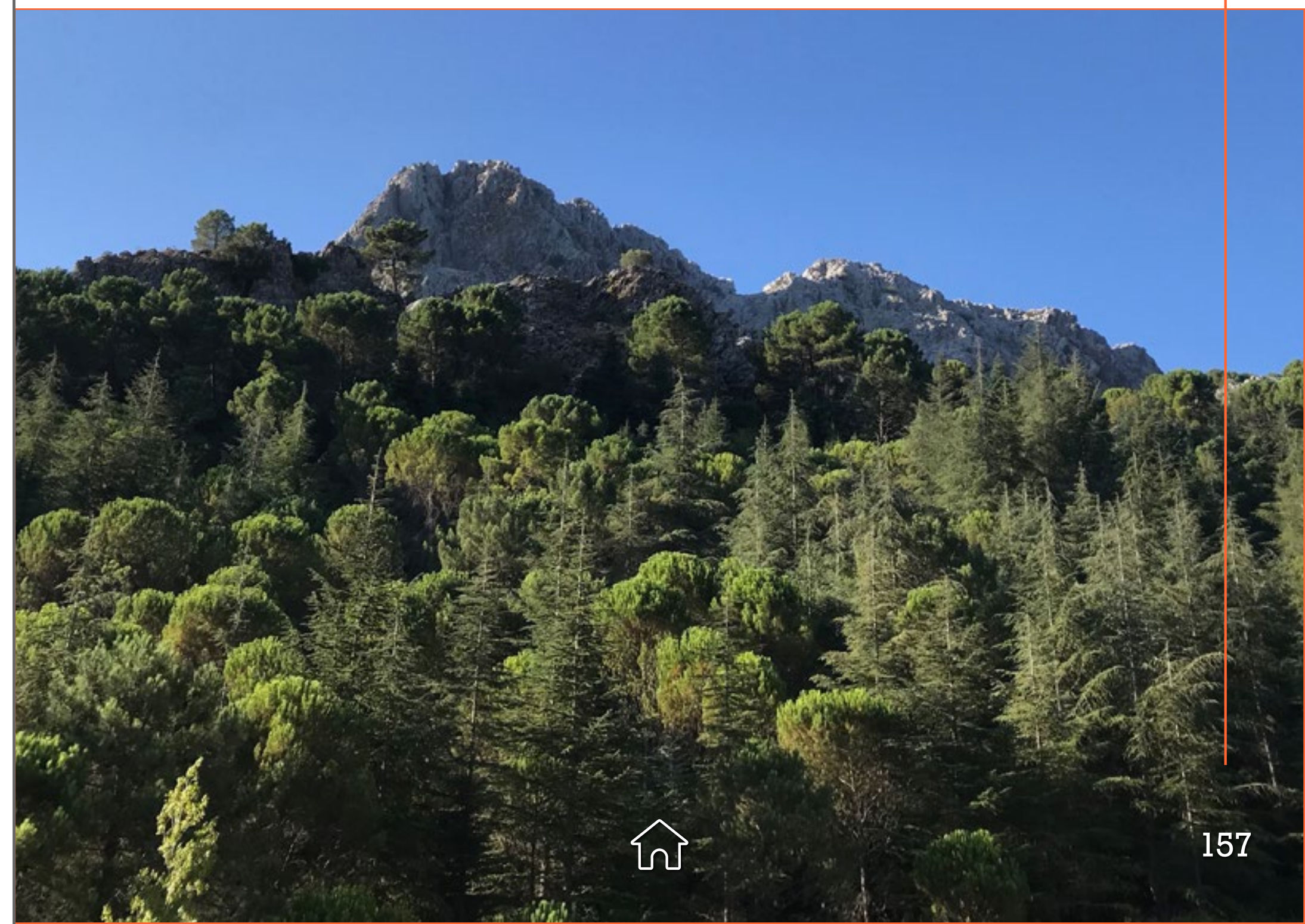
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The walk

In short

This is an excellent and varied hike with shady forests, lovely meadows and sturdy rocks and the rare Pinsapo tree. The walk brings you to the most characteristic part of the Parque Natural Sierra de Grazalema with the highest peaks of Cádiz; the Torreón at 1,648 metres, the Simancón at 1,569 metres and El Reloj at 1,535 metres. In winter it can get very cold here and you'll be walking through the snow. But we are 'fair weather walkers' and did this hike in high summer, at about 26 degrees with a refreshing cool breeze at the top.



After the first part of the trail, Camino de los Charcones, which takes about half an hour, you arrive at Puerto del Boyar. Go left through a gate at the picnic area and then slowly up through the pine forest. After fifteen minutes you arrive at a fork with a signpost, showing to the left the 'nacimiento del río Guadalete' the source of the Guadalete, the main river of Cádiz. And straight ahead to Puerto Presillas. Follow the latter.

Now you slowly go up on a rocky track that is very easy to follow. The view at the end over the vast plain of the Navazo Llano is amazing.

Slightly south on this plain lies the Calera del Navazo, a restored, fenced, lime kiln. Lime was extracted until the last century by heating limestone for 3 days and nights to high temperatures in a kind of igloo-like construction. The

lime was used to whiten the houses and to disinfect stables, water, sick animals and in some cases, people. Mixed with sand, it was used as cement.

Pinsapo and Pacharán

The hike continues to the left, zigzagging further up to the Puerto Presillas. Carved steps and flat rocks make the trail easy to follow. At the top you have reached the beautiful mountain valley Llanos del Endrinal, valley of the blackthorn. Through the ages this wetland has been in use by residents of the surrounding villages. You will encounter man-made features such as water basins, sheepfolds, snow pits and lime kilns. Also stone refugios, shelters, some restored and all seamlessly blending into the surrounding landscape. This is where the Endrino, the blackthorn grows. Pacharán, blackthorn liqueur, is made from its blue-black berries, which are picked after a frost for improved flavour.

The Llanos del Endrinal is a delightful part of the walk, through the valley



with its soft, springy carpet underfoot and the high peaks of the Sierra de Pinar to your right. A little further on you will see information boards about the Lapiaces, the surrounding landscape of exposed limestone. On the left you can discover a huge Pinsapo, Spanish fir, the only one in the valley.

At the end of the valley, follow the path along a fenced area where livestock are kept and water basins are located. Then you reach a T-junction with a signpost to Grazalema, the campsite or the Mirador. Your car is near the campsite so follow this route. The trail will lead you down, through a wood. In parts the track has loose stones and some larger rocks have slippery surfaces, so take care. At the end you pass a fence and you are back at the car park.



Underground rivers and prehistoric caves

The Grazalema Natural Park is a karst area. Karst is the geological phenomena in regions where limestone on the surface of the earth is dissolved by water. This process has formed sinkholes, caves, springs and underground rivers, such as the 8 km long Hundedero - Cueva del Gato system. The river emerges at ground level at the Cueva del Gato where you can take a bracing dip in the ice-cold water. Another unique place is the ancient and fascinating caves of Cueva de la Pileta, with its stalactites and stalagmites and 25,000 year old drawings of horses, goats and fish. The huge caves were discovered accidentally in 1905 by a farmer, José Bullón while collecting bat manure to fertilize his land. Inside a cave where he'd seen bats, he discovered bones, ceramic pots and drawings of animals that he had never seen before. Nowadays José Bullón's descendants give tours of the cave, in English too. Note: There is no electricity, you walk by the light of a lantern!

[Cueva del Gato](#) and [Cueva de la Pileta](#)



Tips

Jeep Tours in the Sierra de Grazalema

The best way to discover the secrets of stunning Sierra de Grazalema is to explore it in a Jeep adventure with guide and photographer Chris Mees. Climb into his sturdy, old Landrover for an unforgettable experience with highlights 'a la carte'! He will take you to waterfalls, peaks, gorges, hilltop villages as well as vulture-spotting and a visit to Ronda's famous wine bodega's too!

[Chris Mees Jeep Tours](#)

Cycling on the Vía Verde

In the north of the Sierra de Grazalema lies one of the most appealing Greenways in Spain. This old, unused railway from Puerto Serrano to Olvera is 37 kilometres long. We cycled it from Olvera because that way the path is downhill - from 450 to 150 metres. There's a great variety of landscapes along the route: hills and mountains, wheat fields and olive groves. En route you meet a large colony of griffon vultures on the Zaframagón rock. Halfway along the track sits the old train station of Coripe that is now a lovely restaurant and hotel. The many tunnels on this track, thirty in total, add a special touch to this experience. Some tunnels are lit, the shorter ones aren't. Be prepared: Inside the tunnels it is a lot cooler than out in the sun!

[The Sierra Greenway](#)

Tips

Takeaway cheese

The village of Grazalema has many restaurants and cosy terraces. We have not yet encountered any gastronomic delights but you can eat well, the traditional Spanish tapas are widely available. It's recommended that you don't leave without a piece of Payoyo, Cádiz's delicious traditional cheese. You can buy these and other fine cheeses at La Casa de la Abuela Agustina, Plaza pequeña 7.

Where to stay

Cortijo las Piletas



A warm welcome and a delightful stay awaits you at the postcard pretty Cortijo Las Piletas, a beautiful traditional Andalusian farmhouse transformed in a charming hotel, 15 minutes from Ronda. There are 11 rooms, most of them with a terrace. Beautiful gardens and a pool.

[Cortijo las Piletas](#)



€ 10 Cashback!

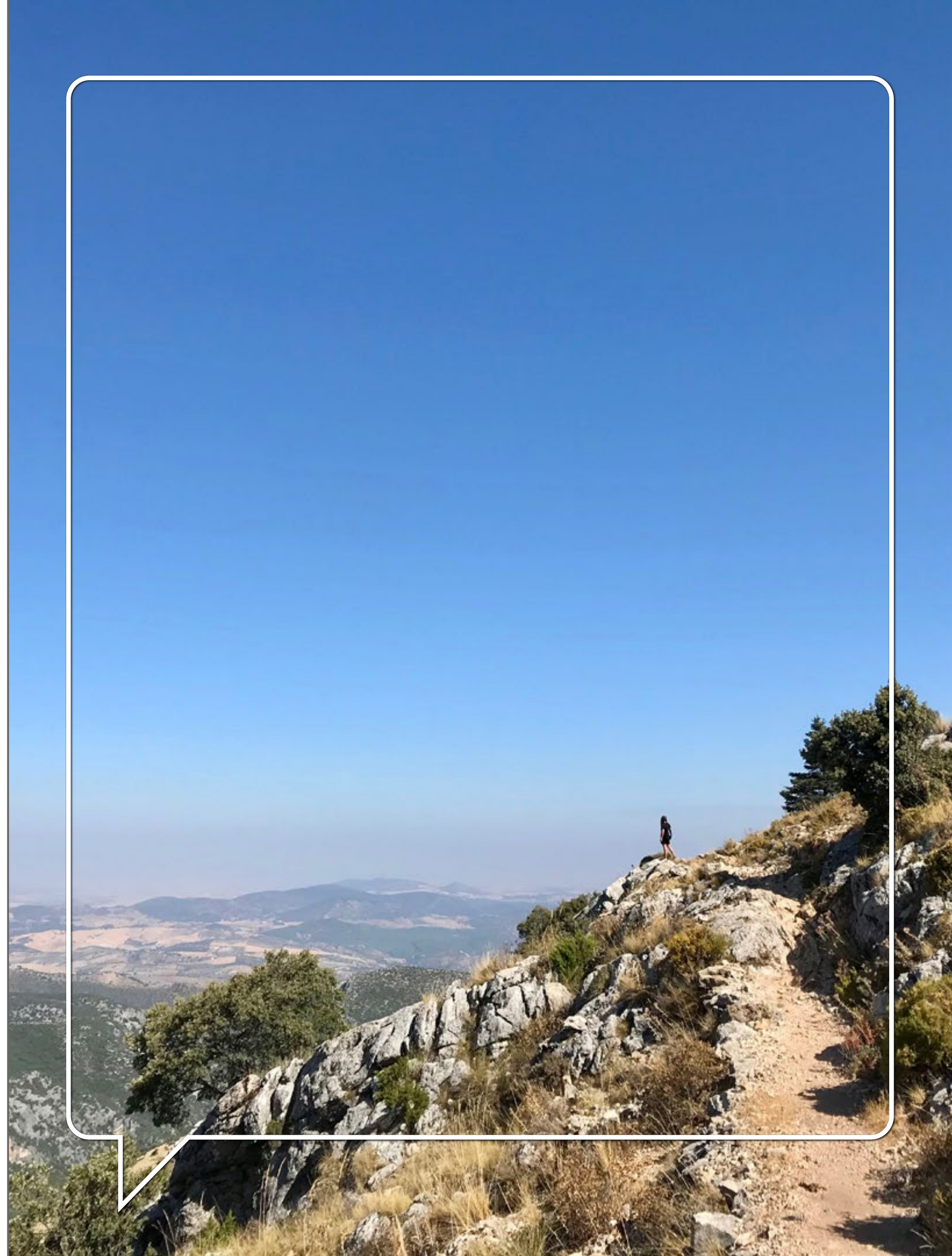


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11. Cerro Coros

An easy but memorable hike
with spectacular views!



The route

- **Name:** Cerro Coros
- **Where:** Parque Natural Sierra de Grazalema
- **Type of walk:** Circular
- **Length:** 3.5 km
- **Duration:** 1.5 hours
- **Difficulty:** Easy
- **Shade:** None
- **Highest point:** 1,326 m
- **Lowest point:** 1,191 m
- **Path type:** Unmarked but easy to follow (narrow) walking path, not suitable for small children

The starting point of this hike is at the parking area at the Mirador Puerta de las Palomas, halfway along the CA9104 from Grazalema to Zahara de la Sierra. There is ample parking space on the right side of the main road. To the left of the road you can walk up to the Mirador, a viewpoint, with information boards, which is fun to do first. Then you go through a green metal gate on the left side of the parking lot. The trail starts right there and runs around the mountain top. There is nothing further to indicate the walk, only a white sign that says Coto privado de caza, private hunting area. But you are allowed to walk this trail, we checked on the spot!

The walk



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The walk

In short

The CA9104, the narrow, winding road from Grazalema, to the picturesque Zahara de la Sierra that overlooks the azure lake is one of my favourite drives and we always leave our first time visitors in awe of the steep gorges, high peaks, magnificent views and countless vultures that nest on the grey rocks. Here we discovered a fairly uncomplicated but very rewarding trail!

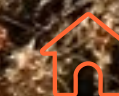


This hiking trail, the Cerro Coros, is not indicated anywhere and so we have unknowingly passed by it on several occasions during our visits to the Sierra de Grazalema. It is a beautiful goat track, very easy to follow and with amazing 360 degree views. The path is narrow here and there and with reasonably steep drops, but very easy for hikers who don't have an excessive fear of heights. This walk is not suitable for very small children. It undulates a fair bit with rocky parts and patches of loose scree, but it is all very doable.

The Pinsapo and 580 vultures at the Garganta Verde

At the beginning of the path you will see a few specimens of the so-called primeval fir, the Pinsapo or Spanish Fir, and soon you will have magnificent views of Zahara de la Sierra and the large lake. Across the water you can see the village of Algodonales at the foot of the Sierra de Lijar. After about 20 minutes you get to a fork. Take the path to the right, which goes up slightly.

Down in the valley, on this side of the water, lies the Cerro de Cambronera with the Garganta Verde gorge, home to one of the largest vulture colonies in Europe, about 290 pairs live in this natural park. The Garganta Verde is also the name of a splendid and famous hike for which permission must first be requested



at the visitor centre in El Bosque. This hike is not accessible all year round and the last, most spectacular part, through mountain crevices filled with water, can only be done under supervision.

‘Ramona’s bosom’

Across the lake of Zahara, a little to the right, you can see a mountain with two peaks, popularly called ‘Las Tetas de Ramona’ - the breasts of Ramona, but officially the peaks are called Tajo las Grajas (left) and Tajo Algarín (right). These mountains mark

the boundary between the provinces of Málaga and Cádiz. A ridge further to the right, Cerro Malaver, has the village of Montecorto at its feet. Behind it you can see the ‘Mesa de Ronda la Vieja’ in the distance with the Roman ruins and impressive amphitheatre of Acinipo at 999 metres. (Well worth a visit!)

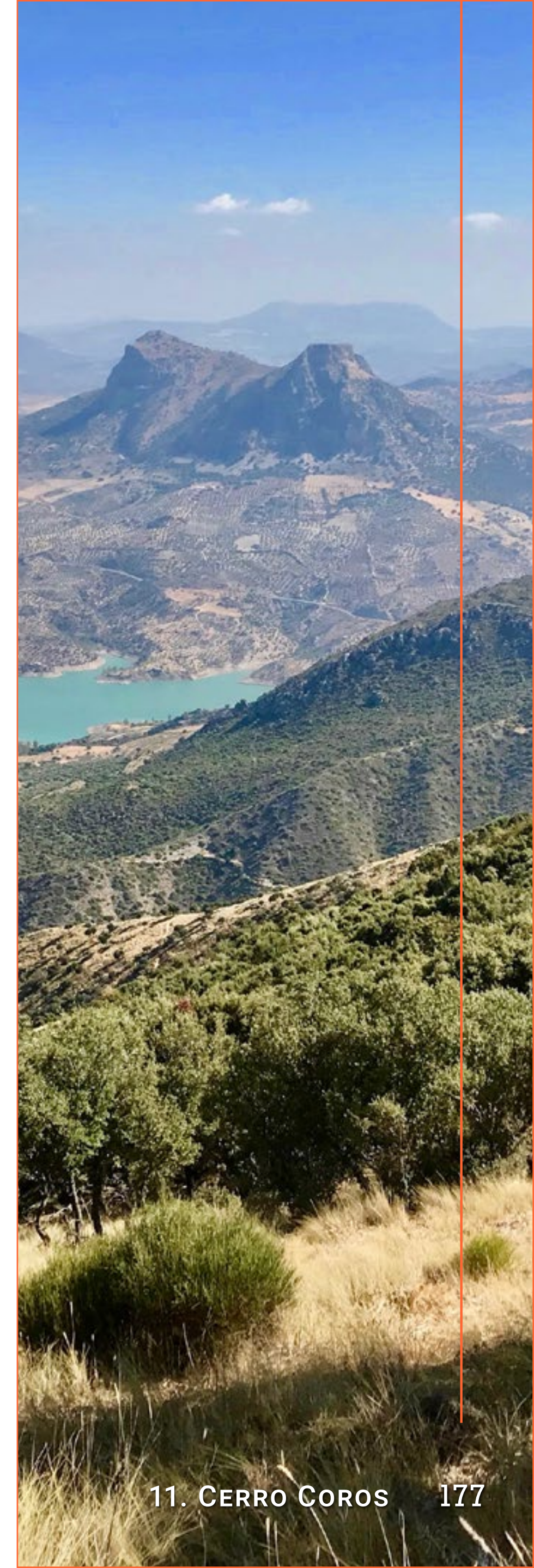
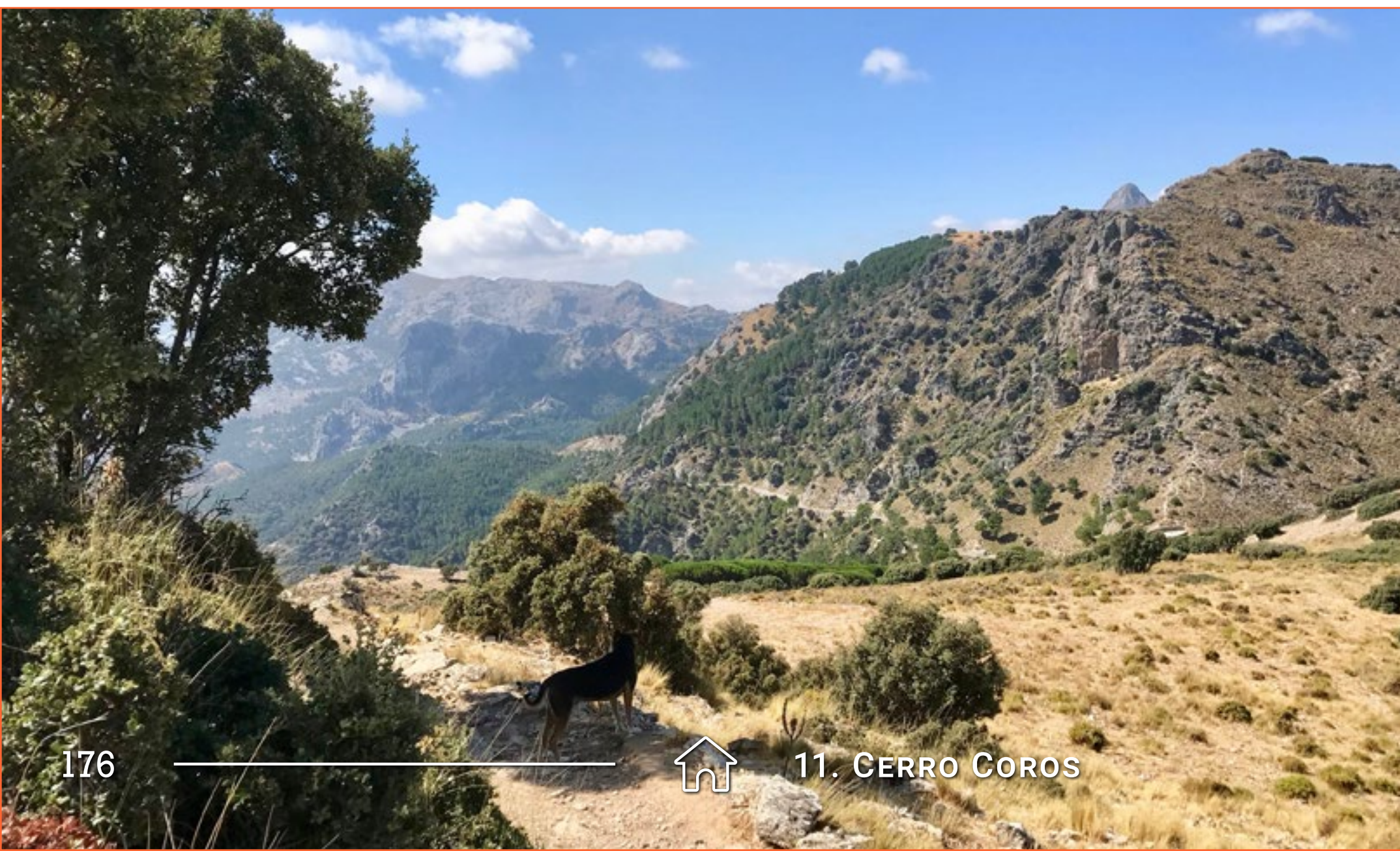
Archaeological Site Acinipo

After an hour of walking, the path leads you through some prickly bushes. Keep to the right here, don’t go left of the rocky mountain peak,

what our children tried at first. This is not part of the trail and a bit risky. The track goes up through the bushes with a bend to the right and then leads down to the left over fairly flat terrain. After this you go past a small white building and after another 50 metres on an asphalt path you are back in the parking area.

Don’t get blown away!

This walk was a real discovery! Please note, this trail is not recommended during strong winds because it is a very open landscape. We did this trek in August when, being high in the mountains, the cool breeze was a welcome respite. It was lovely and quiet, we did not encounter any other walkers.



The mighty griffon vulture

Griffon vultures. I love them. When you have bad eyesight like me it's not easy to distinguish birds but when these huge scavengers come sailing over our rooftop terrace in Vejer de la Frontera (and they often do!) I recognize them from a distance!

Interesting facts: The griffon vulture can grow up to 1 metre from head to tail. It has a wingspan of up to 2.8 metres. This bird can weigh up to 11 kilos and is one of the largest flying birds in the world. Griffon vultures are monogamous and live in groups. They lay 1 egg per year and the chick stays in the nest for half a year. Many vultures migrate to Africa in the autumn, because in wintertime, more carrion can be found south of the Sahara desert. They gather at Tarifa, where the distance across the water is the shortest. Sometimes as many as a thousand vultures circle overhead, waiting for the right thermal wind to cross the Strait of Gibraltar. An amazing spectacle!



Tips

Zahara de la Sierra

The province of Cádiz has many beautiful white villages, but Zahara de la Sierra is a real gem. This fortress town was built in the early part of Al-Andalus, the Moorish era, which lasted over 8 centuries, from 711 to 1492, in this part of Spain. Zahara is built on a 500 metre high hilltop and has a castle even higher up. This 13th century castle has been partly restored and can be visited. From up here

you have a great view of the lake, the mountains of the Sierra del Jaral and the white town of Algodonales across the water. Zahara de la Sierra is a pretty, very compact village, with about 1,500 inhabitants, with lively squares and a maze of steep alleys, remnants of the Arabic streetplan. It's best to leave your car at one of the car parks outside the town and walk into the centre.

Where to eat

Restaurant Al Lago

Our favourite restaurant in Zahara de la Sierra is Al Lago, on the outer edge of the village, with a view of the lake and ample parking. It has an extensive and surprising menu, with beautiful vegetarian options. I ate a delicious, cool gazpacho of melon and roasted vegetables with goat's cheese. The Moroccan spiced chicken was also very tasty. There is very nice, although more traditional food to be had in the centre of the village.

Restaurant Al Lago

Tips

Where to stay

Hotel El Horcajo



You'll find a comfortable stay at very reasonable prices in 'El Horcajo', a charming rural hotel with 26 rooms, swimming pool and restaurant. El Horcajo is peacefully situated in a pretty valley a fifteen minutes drive from Ronda.

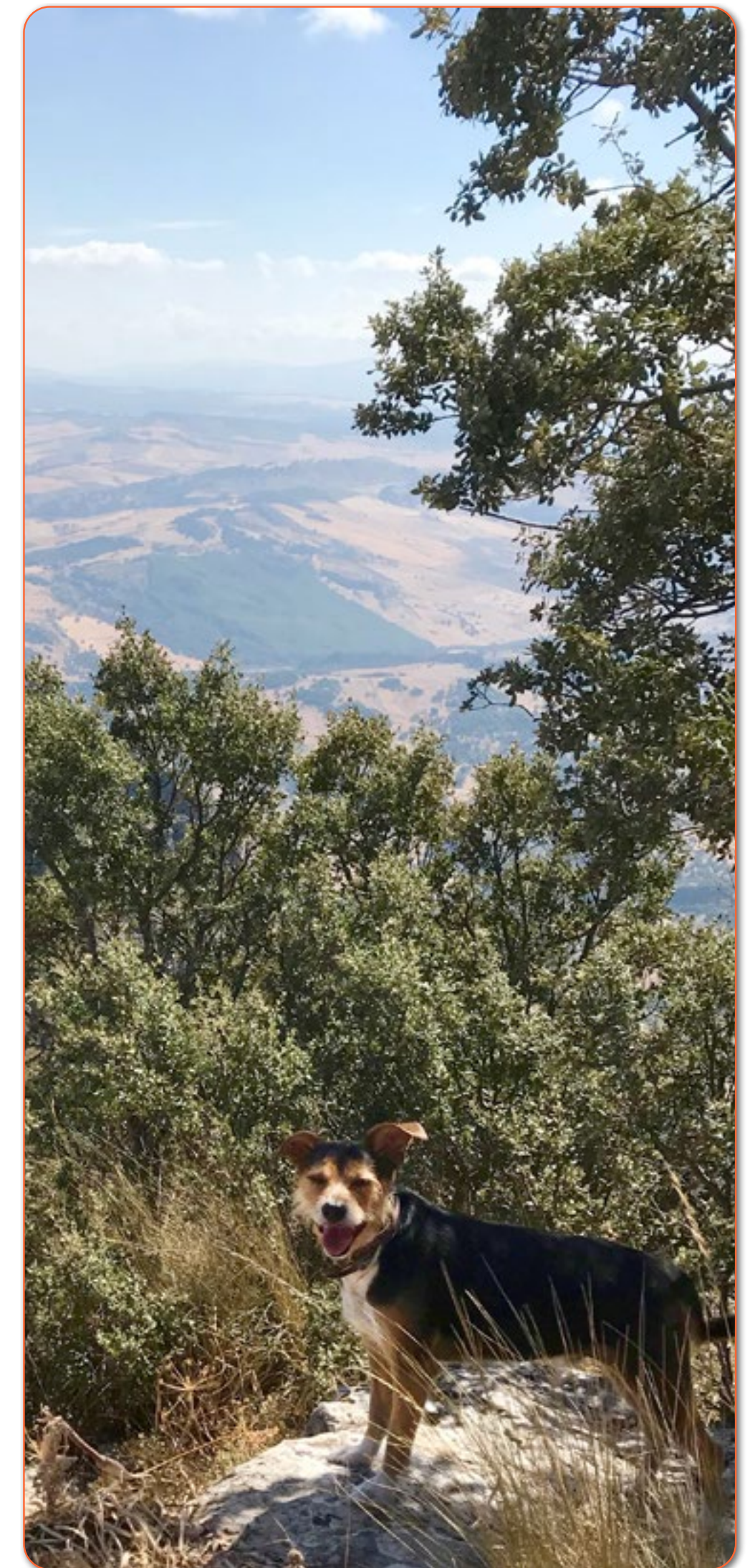
Hotel El Horcajo



€ 10 Cashback!

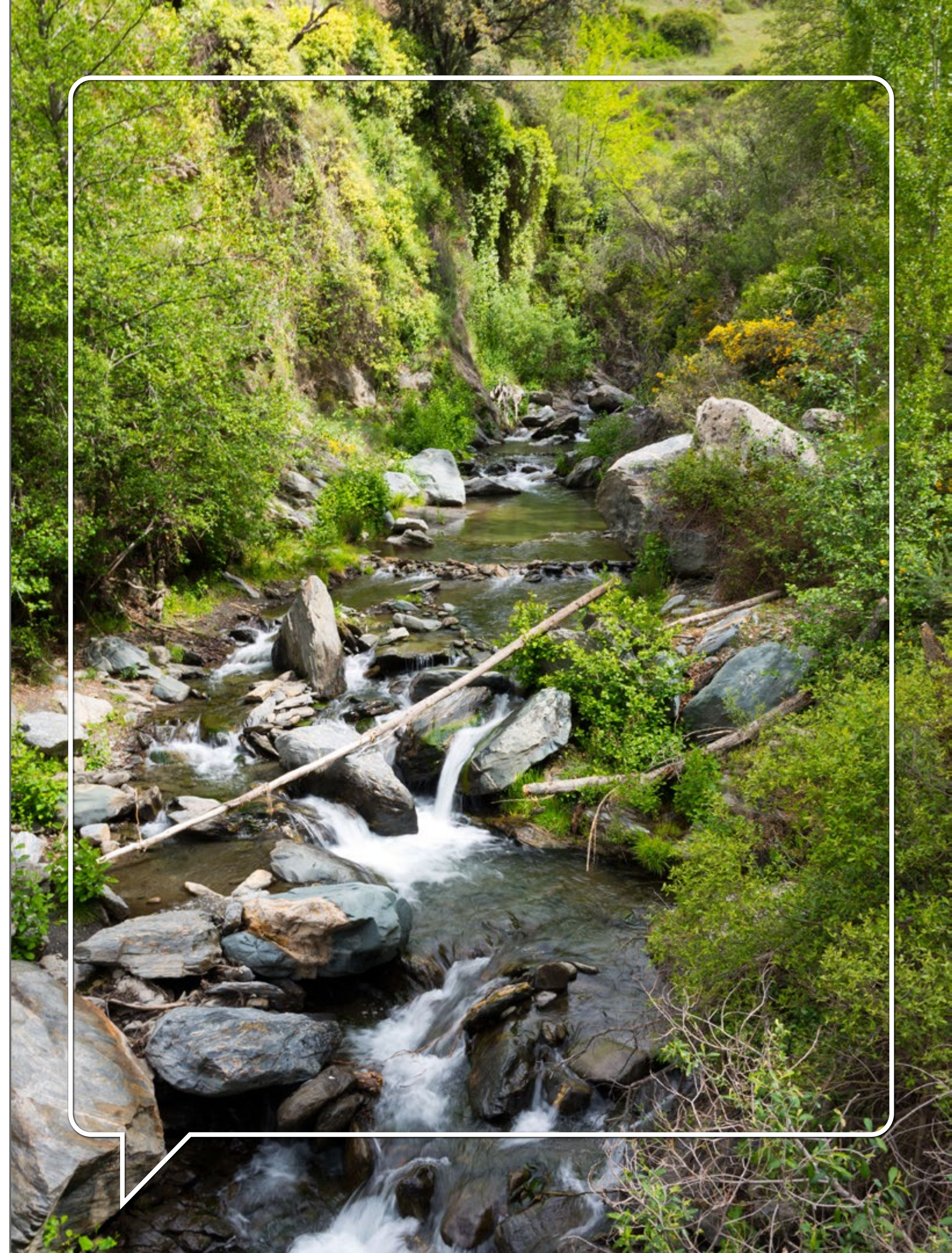


When you indicate with your reservation (directly at the hotel, not through agencies) that this is 'Anne's Walking in Cádiz tip' and show this ebook upon arrival you'll receive € 10 Cashback or a € 10 discount!



12. Sendero Río Majaceite

A lovely walk along
a babbling forest creek

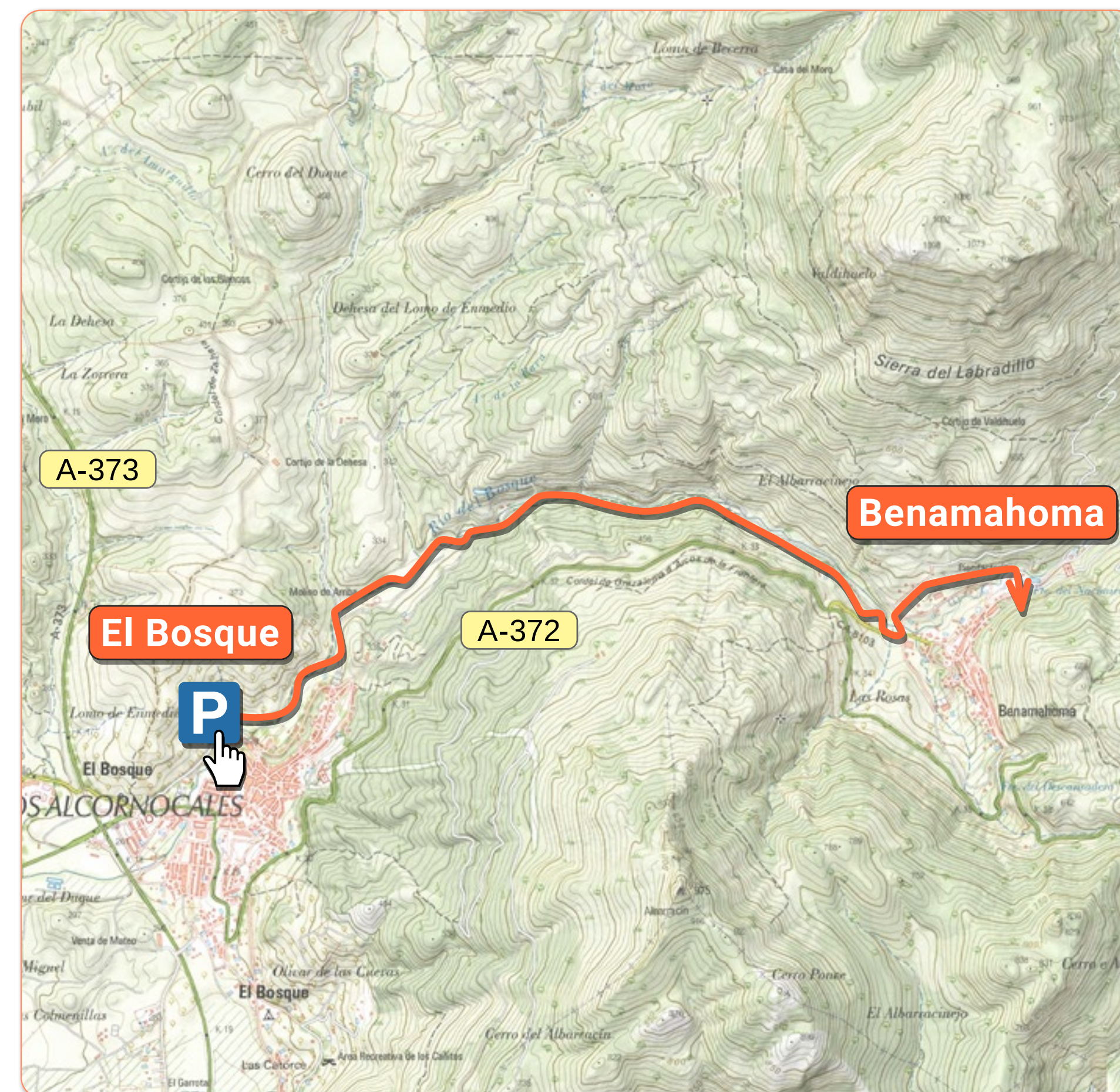


The route

- **Name:** Sendero Río Majaceite
- **Where:** From El Bosque to Benamahoma
- **Type of walk:** Linear
- **Length:** 11 km out and back
- **Duration:** 4 hours round trip (without stops)
- **Difficulty:** Easy
- **Shade:** Abundant
- **Highest point:** 450 m
- **Lowest point:** 265 m
- **Path type:** Well-marked forest path along the Majaceite River

The starting point of the hiking trail is in El Bosque, one of the white villages in the Grazalema Natural Park. Near the visitor centre of the Natural Park on Calle García Lorca, where you can easily park your car, walk about 600 metres to the start, next to the youth hostel El Molino de Enmedio. You can also start the walk in Benamahoma, but we chose to do the uphill part first.

The map



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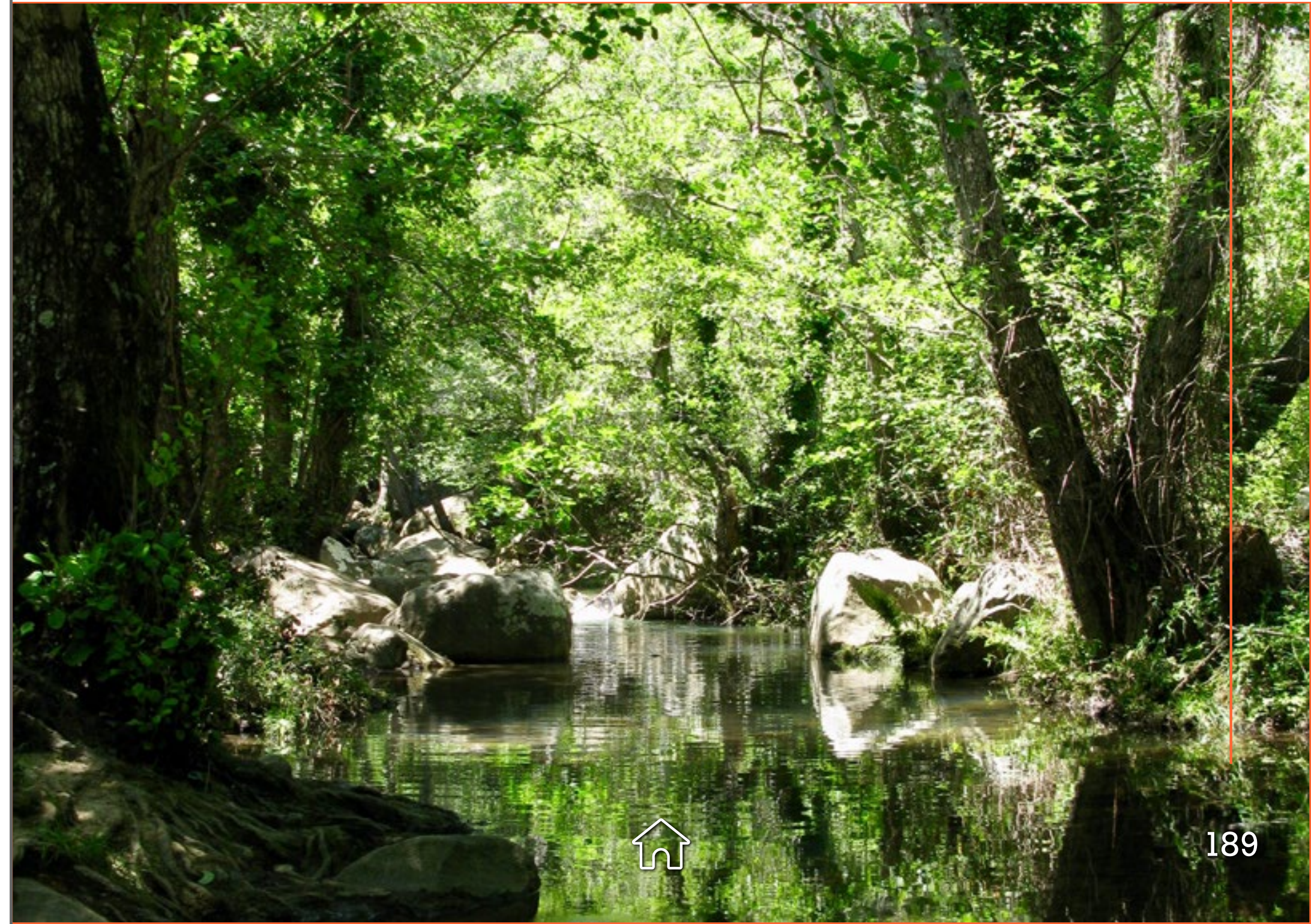


In short

Sendero Río Majaceite is a super easy but delightful walk along a babbling brook between the two white villages of El Bosque and Benamahoma (Benamahoma after the Arabic: Ibn Muhammad; 'sons of Mohammed'). It is situated between the Alcornocales Natural Park and Grazalema Natural Park. The Río Majaceite is the most southern river in Europe where trout swim and you can encounter otters too!

This is a popular walk and a lot of fun with kids, so it can be busy here on weekends and holiday periods. We walked this walk on a hot day in early September and met but a few walkers. We couldn't resist the temptation and plunged into the - ice cold - water a few times. Lovely and invigorating!

The walk



The walk starts on a wide track that runs parallel to the river. At the beginning of the trail you come across a dam and halfway there's an old 'fábrica de luz', hydroelectric power station. It's a lovely section past rolling, green meadows, orchards with fruit trees and olive groves. The fields are surrounded by mountains with the peak of the Albarracín being the highest, at 975 metres.

The relaxing sound of rippling water...

After a while you pass through the woods of poplar, willows, elm and ash. The dense vegetation of oleanders, blackberries, clematis and honeysuckle make the river inaccessible, but due to the course of the river dropping sharply you can hear the stream clearly all along this part of the walk. Even now, after summer, with no rain for months, there's still a pretty

powerful flow. I can listen to forest rivers for hours, its mesmerizing.

After a while the landscape opens up a bit and you pass a ruin of a watermill, one of the three in this area. Inside is a huge millstone that ground the grain. Further on you will come to a fulling mill. The world-famous Grazalema blankets were made in these mills.

After crossing the bridge to Majaceite, the Descansadero and Breña del Agua streams join the Río Majaceite. Follow the signs to the village if you are going for a bite to eat or a drink.

With our ever-hungry teenagers we entered the first restaurant we saw, La Tasquita del Majaceite, and that was just perfect because they had an outside terrace next to the stream. The menu had lots of classic dishes but we choose trout, which is fished on the spot! Only when serving the food, the waiter

discovered our dog Tommie. Oh no, a dog! This was not allowed at all! "Ay, señor, es un perro muy bueno!" - Well, go on then as long as he stays beneath the table, out of sight.



Arcos de la Frontera

Arcos de la Frontera, Arx-Arcis, High fortress, in Latin, sits spectacularly on a bare, rocky 185 metre high cliff in a vast plain by the river Guadalete. You get the best views when you are approaching Arcos from the South. Leave your car at the bottom of town because the higher up, the steeper and narrower the streets get, a nerve-racking mission! This pretty old town has splendid monuments such as Palacio del Conde del Águila and the Late Gothic Iglesia de San Pedro. At the Plaza del Cabildo are the beautiful Basílica de Santa María de la Asunción and the Parador of Arcos, a nice place to stay the night. You can also just go for a drink, from the terrace you have amazing views. At the Convento de Mercedarias Descalzas the nuns sell their famous biscuits through a turntable in the wall, to ensure that you can't see them!



Three grand walks in the Grazalema Natural Park for which you need permission:

Tips

Visitor Center El Bosque

For a number of hikes in the Sierra de Grazalema, you must obtain permission first from the visitor centre in El Bosque or the one in Grazalema. This can be done by phone or in person. This does not apply to the walks in this guide. If you want to take more challenging walks in the Sierra de Grazalema, the routes below are interesting. More information: El Bosque information services.

[El Bosque Visitor Centre](#)

1. Sendero Garganta Verde

The Garganta Verde is a spectacular gorge formed by the Bocaleones River ending in the Cueva de la Ermita cave. The gorge is home to a huge colony of vultures.

2. Sendero El Torreón

El Torreón, at 1,654 metres, is the highest peak in the province of Cádiz. The climb to the top (about 780 metres ascent) is tough. Hike from Mediterranean forest up the bare rock with ibex and mountain goats on the way.

3. El Pinsapar

Beautiful walk of about 5 hours through the forests of Grazalema to Benamahoma high on the northern slope of the Sierra del Pinar. Beautiful views of Ronda and the Sierra de las Nieves.

Where to eat

Mesón El Tabanco

Mesón El Tabanco in El Bosque is more traditional and has an extensive menu: Tapas, various “revueltos” (omelettes) with asparagus or mushrooms to steaks and, in season, game.

[Mesón El Tabanco](#)

La Divina

In El Bosque you have a wider choice, La Divina in Calle Cádiz, is a pleasant restaurant with a variation on traditional dishes and good vegetarian options.

[La Divina](#)

Tips

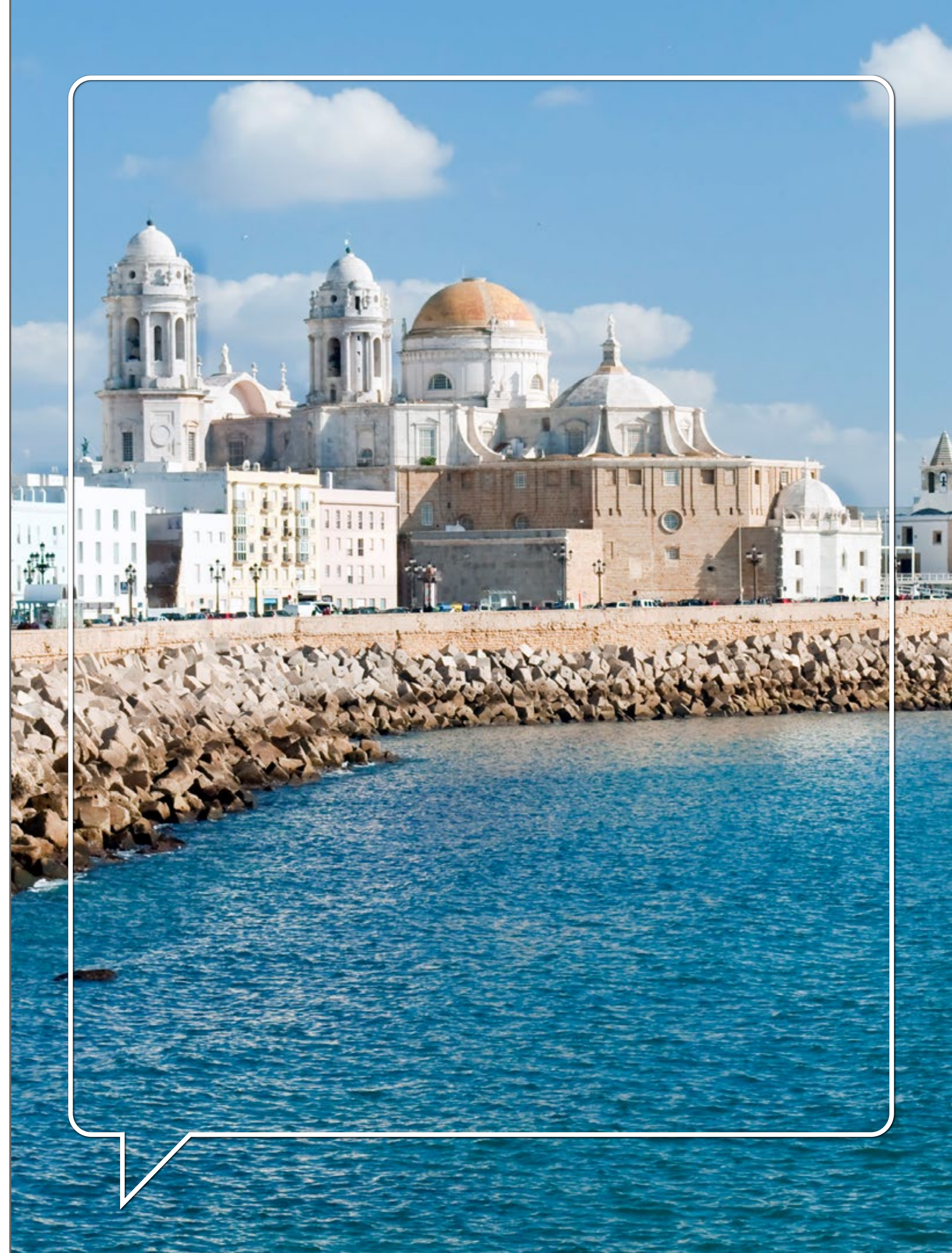
La Tasquita del Majaceite

Benamahoma has only 400 inhabitants so there is not much to choose from but we had a decent meal at the above mentioned restaurant: La Tasquita del Majaceite.

[La Tasquita del Majaceite](#)



13. City walk Cádiz

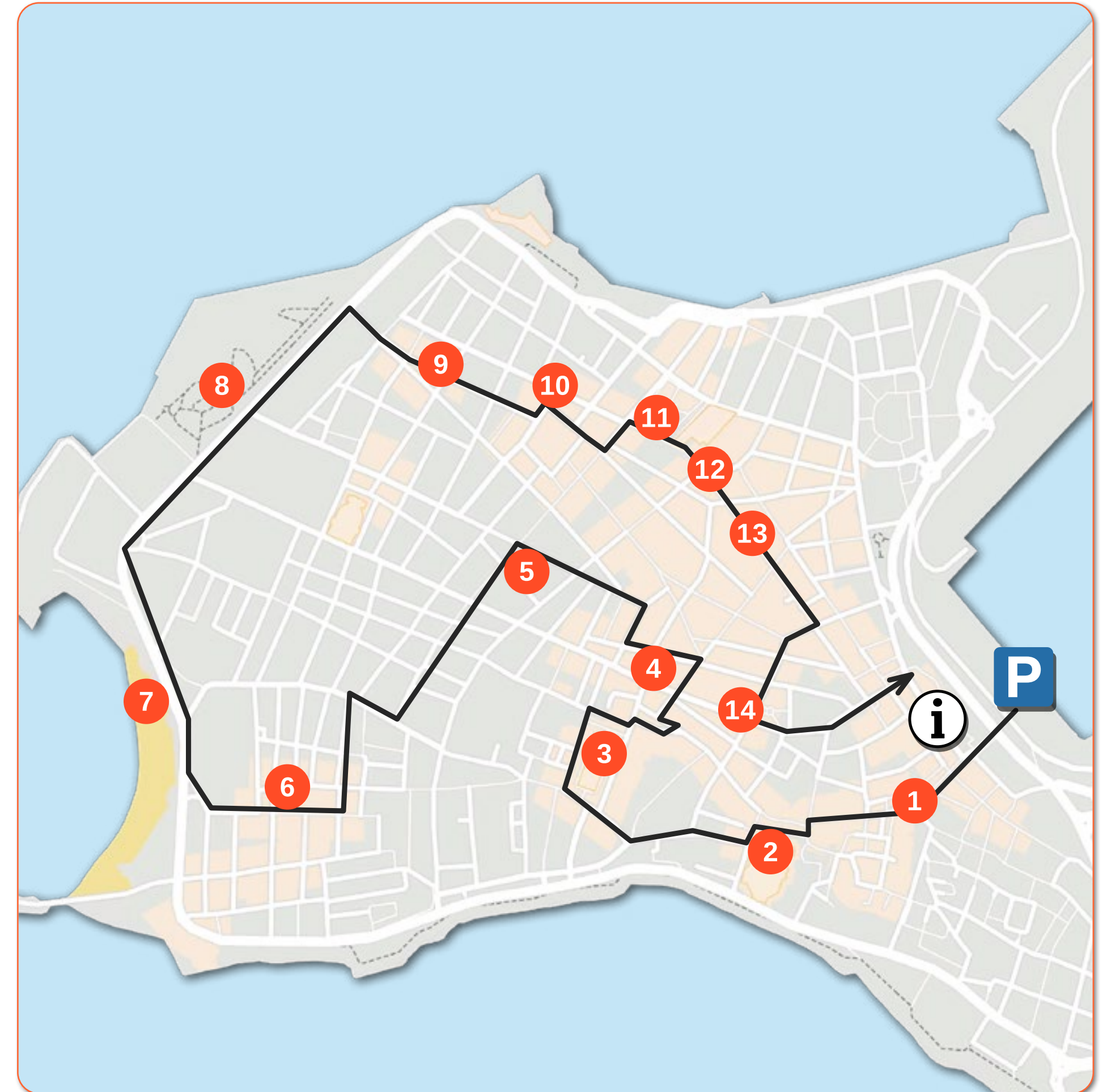


About Cádiz

Cádiz is one of the oldest cities in Europe and is situated on a peninsula in the Atlantic Ocean in southern Andalusia. Over 3,000 years ago Phoenicians founded a colony on a small island at the estuary of the Guadalquivir and called it Gadir; 'Walled city'. Inhabitants of Cádiz are called Gaditanos to this day still. From this strategic position trade with countries all around the Mediterranean was highly profitable and brought tremendous wealth. Merchants and explorers have left their imprint on the city over the centuries. The barely 2 square kilometres of the old town is packed with historical monuments, romantic squares, elegant mansions with peculiar watchtowers and splendid sandstone palaces. Cádiz is also a city of fishermen, flamenco and a notorious carnival. It's a pleasant, laid back town where the pace is slow and the air filled with flamenco music and the scent of the ocean, with a hint of fried fish of one of the many Freidurías. You can't get lost because you always end up at the waterfront eventually! Cádiz is the most enchanting city I know.



The map



The walk



1. Plaza de San Juan de Díos 📍

The starting point of the walk is the large Plaza de San Juan de Díos, where the town hall of Cádiz is located. This square was formerly known as the Plaza Mayor or 'De la Corredera' and back in the 16th century a lively trade in exotic goods took place here, with strange cargoes brought to Cádiz by the silver fleet (La Flota de Indias) from faraway places.

2. The Cathedral and the Teatro Romano de Cádiz 📍

The Cathedral is located in the oldest and very lively district of Cádiz: El Pópulo. The construction of this huge cathedral started in 1722 and lasted 116 years. With elements of Baroque and Neoclassicism and a beautiful golden dome, it is the focal point of the quayside. The interior is austere and there are a number of large, underground (and somewhat musty) crypts you can visit. Climb one of the two towers for great views of the city. Near the Cathedral are the remains of a Roman theatre. It was only in 1980 that these ruins were discovered, after a fire destroyed part of El Pópulo. Built in the 1st century





BC, Teatro Romano de Cádiz was one of the largest theatres of the Roman Empire and the oldest theatre in Hispania.

[Catedral de Cádiz](#)

3. Mercado Central 📍

The huge Mercado Central is one of the oldest markets in Europe. Located in the old monastery of Los Descalzos from 1837 with its gallery of columns. Within that arcade a new, functional hall has been built. Every morning, except Sunday, a colourful display of fresh fruits and vegetables, meat and an amazing variety of seafood are for sale.

A very tasty souvenir to take home is the dried tuna, mojama de atún, from Barbate. Stay for tapas with a cold beer, manzanilla sherry at lunchtime, or at night, when the bar-section is open. Don't leave without trying Cádiz's most acclaimed tapa and my all-time personal favourite: 'tortillita de camarones'- a shrimp fritter made of wheat and chickpea flour. Delicious!

Pirates, buccaneers
and watchtowers

4. Torre Tavira 📍

On your first visit to Cádiz, remember to look up often. At every turn there's a square tower on one of the monumental mansions. Some stand two floors high, some 3 or 4 stories. From these watchtowers you could keep an eye out for the merchant fleet, pirates or loved ones. Once Cádiz had 160 watchtowers and 133 still remain, which is quite exceptional. The tallest and most famous of these lookouts is the Torre Tavira with its Camara Obscura.





Through an ingenious mirror system you can spy upon the entire city. From the very top of Torre Tavira you can also spot a very beautiful tower, which is nowhere to be

seen from the ground. That's why it's called "La Bella Escondida" (the hidden beauty). A visit to Torre Tavira is really worthwhile. The English speaking guide points out the most emblematic buildings of the city and there are great views from the rooftop terrace! Please note: There is no lift, so it is a bit of a climb but you're here to walk aren't you?!

5. Iglesia Oratorio de San Felipe Neri 📍

The oratory of this baroque church has an impressive altar which holds the famous work of Murillo from 1680, 'la Inmaculada Concepción'. But the Iglesia Oratorio de San Felipe Neri is best-known for the fact that this is where the first constitution of Spain; 'La Pepa', was declared.*

*During the Napoleonic invasion of Spain, Cádiz became the last stronghold of the Spanish nation, heroically resisting the siege of French troops. For this reason, all the powers of the kingdom were transferred to the city and deputies from all territories of the monarchy (including Latin America and the Philippines) were summoned to write the first Spanish Constitution. The constitution was



declared in the Oratory of San Felipe Neri on March 19, 1812, the day of San José, and hence the nickname of 'La Pepa' that the gaditanos gave it (Pepe being a common nickname for José in Spain).



6. La Viña & Virgen de la Palma 📍

Barrio La Viña is so called because it used to be where the vineyards, las viñas, of Cádiz were located, outside the old town. It is a pleasant neighbourhood with small streets full of bars, restaurants and cafes. This is where you'll find the famous seafood restaurant El Faro and the colourful Taberna Casa Manteca. The prettiest street in La Viña is Calle Virgen de la Palma with its palm trees and the church of the patron saint, La Virgen de la Palma. La Virgen is worshipped because she apparently stopped the flood right in front of the church during the 1755 tsunami, which followed the Lisbon earthquake that devastated most of that city. A mark on the wall indicates that the water had already risen to 2.5 metres. A true miracle!

7. La Caleta, the delightful city beach of Cádiz 📍

Cádiz averages 300 days of sunshine a year and there's no better place to enjoy this than at La Caleta. It is lovely to while away a few hours at this charming bay with gently rippling waves, fishing boats, golden sand and the beautiful wooden Balneario, a former Spa, and nowadays

the ‘Centro de Arqueología Subacuática’. (Underwater Archeology Center). La Caleta is flanked by two imposing fortresses: Castillo de San Sebastián and Castillo de Santa Catalina. Both can be visited and are worth a detour. A famous movie star filmed at La Caleta is Halle Berry who, in one memorable scene, rose from the sea in her orange bikini in the Bond film “Die Another Day”.

a delightful nostalgic oasis with over 65 different kinds of trees

8. Parque Genovés 📍

The large botanical garden from the 18th century is a delightful nostalgic oasis with over 65 different kinds of trees. Palms and banana trees and others, with very exotic names such as the Pohutukawa, which grows up to 20 metres high with bright red fluffy flowers. And the “Casuarina equisetifolia”, the Australian pine tree, just to name a few. Between the gardens is a small “kiosko” with a terrace. An enchanting place with shaded seating areas and a refreshing ocean breeze.



9. Plaza Mentidero & Calle Veedor 📍

The small triangular Plaza Mentidero, between the botanical gardens and the larger Plaza de San Antonio is a special nook of the city. It’s inviting and breathes history. There are small terraces and eateries with fantastic tapas. The history of the square dates back to 1755 and a sign on the wall of the cafe ‘La Mentirosa’ says that this was the place where gossipers and loafers gathered to spread rumours and lies, hence the name ‘Mentidero’, gossip corner. Together with the district of La Viña, this square

plays a leading role during the Carnival of Cádiz, famous for its satirical topical songs. Also note the beautiful fountain at the end of the square.

10. Plaza de San Antonio 📍

In this spacious, open square you will find the slender Iglesia de San Antonio and the remarkable Casino Gaditano, a former gentlemen's private club from 1844. The Baroque style Casino has an impressive Mudejar patio and lavishly decorated interior rooms. There's a restaurant and a nice coffee bar. On the first floor is a stunning library, officially you are not allowed to peep around the corner, so don't tell anyone I told you.

11. Plaza de Mina 📍

Plaza Mina is one of the most attractive squares of Cádiz, with its beautiful old trees, terraces and playgrounds. This is where you'll find Pazza Mina, famous for its yummy, homemade ice cream. Also here is the 'Museo de Cádiz', the city's most important museum. It explains the history of Cádiz back to the first inhabitants. Highlights in the collection are the Phoenician sarcophagi. There are also countless objects from the Roman era. (Free entrance, closed on Mondays).



12. Plaza de San Fransisco 📍

Plaza de San Fransisco is one of the liveliest and most attractive squares for a drink and a bite to eat, with music and fiesta into the small hours of the morning. Admire the beautiful monastery of San Francisco from one of the large terraces. At the other side of the square Librería Raimundo is a delightful, dusty bookshop with antique and second-hand books and yellowing postcards.

13. Calle Rosario 📍

In the inviting Calle Rosario, (with great vintage clothing shops according to my daughter), there lies hidden a jewel of Gaditan neoclassical architecture: The Oratorium de la Santa Cueva. This temple consists of a very austere, underground church and over it an exuberant, colourful chapel with beautiful works of art, including wood sculptures by Gandulfo and Vaccaro and three paintings by Francisco de Goya. Joseph Haydn composed his work 'The Seven Words of Our Saviour on the Cross' for this chapel, which is considered one of the highlights of Spanish religious neoclassical architecture.

14. Plaza de Candelaria 📍

On the quiet, tree-filled Plaza de Candelaria, you come upon the only romantic Grand Café of Andalusia; Cafe Royalty. Richly decorated with gold and paintings by Felipe Abarzuza, it's a combination of faded glory and delightful kitsch. Definitely worth a visit to have breakfast or high tea! Also on this square is the outstanding restaurant of Dutch chef Leon Griffioen: Código de Barra, see dining tips!



Tips

Ya en tu Casa

If you would like to have Spanish delicacies sent home, go to Ya en tu Casa, located just off the Plaza de Candelaria. Italian Claudia and Diego have an excellent taste for the finest products this region has to offer.

[Ya en tu Casa](#)

Cycling in Cádiz

A great way to get to know a city is by bike and Cádiz is a perfect city for cycling! Go to Las Bicis Naranjas for bicycle rent and bike tours. Nice people, great service.

[Las Bicis Naranjas](#)

Flamenco

Cádiz and Jerez de la Frontera are the cradle of Flamenco. The best place in Cádiz for authentic Flamenco is Taberna Flamenca La Cava, with daily shows. Check their website for more info!

[Taberna Flamenca la Cava](#)

Tips

Restaurants

La Curiosidad de Mauro Barreiro

Young chef Mauro of La Curiosidad de Mauro Barreiro learned his trade here in Andalusia, but also in Barcelona, the Basque Country and Belgium! Excellent restaurant. A wonderful menu with very affordable local and international dishes. The 9-course tasting menu goes for less than € 50, but there are very yummy tapas too. A feast for the senses!

[La Curiosidad de Mauro Barreiro](#)

Código de Barra

At the small Plaza de Candelario sits the elegant gastronomic restaurant of Dutch chef Leon Griffioen: Código de Barra. It offers an imaginative menu of traditional Cádiz cuisine with a modern and innovative twist. An absolute must! Excellent wines including a wide choice of sherry.

[Código de Barra](#)

El Faro de Cádiz

Restaurant El Faro in the district of La Viña is a Cádiz institution. It all started back in 1964, when Gonzalo Córdoba sold the freshly brought in fish from La Caleta in a small tasca, a bar. That small tasca soon gained fame and over time expanded over several buildings. The classy dining rooms have crisp white linen tablecloths and the bar is a pleasant affair with superb tapas.

[El Faro de Cádiz](#)



Tapas

Bar el Veedor

Ultramarinos bar El Veedor, combines a shop (with colourful cans of fish and meat preserves on display), with a bar where tapas are prepared on site. Try a sherry from the barrel, a dry Manzanilla or the slightly sweeter Amontillado with their heavenly tortilla!

Calle Veedor, 10

[Ultramarinos bar el Veedor](#)

Tapas Bar Casa Pepe

In this no-frills bar you will be served typical Cádiz tapas made with the very best ingredients bought daily at the local market. Do try the delicious stews that are prepared in the tiny kitchen.

Calle de la Rosa 28.

[Tapas Bar Casa Pepe](#)

Tips

Minibar La Tabernita

La Tabernita is situated in the prettiest street of La Viña and another great place to eat tapas. The menu is not very extensive, but the price-quality ratio and the service are great. Excellent, varied wine list.

[Minibar La Tabernita](#)

La Tapería de Columela

It is always busy in this small tapas bar. There's an extensive tapas menu with both classic and hip tapas and even a separate Tapas para niños (children's menu). Excellent quality at low cost! Nice wines, too.

[La Tapería de Columela](#)

Where to stay

Tips

Hotel Casa de las Cuatro Torres



Hotel Casa de las Cuatro Torres, in the centre of the old town, is a stunning Palacete from 1736, with 12 rooms, 8 apartments and a watchtower with a magnificent view of the city and the ocean. This is Cádiz at its most authentic. Highly recommended!

[Hotel Casa de las Cuatro Torres](#)

Casa Bugambilla



Casa Bugambilla, on the beautiful, sunny Plaza de San Antonio, is a very nice, spacious and bright apartment suitable for 4 people. This lovely, recently renovated flat belongs to Minouche and Serge who also run the delightful Paraíso Perdido rural resort in the woods near Conil de la Frontera. The cash-back promotion applies to both their locations!

[Casa Bugambilla](#)

[Paraíso Perdido in Conil de la Frontera](#)



€ 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!



14. Vejer de la Frontera

‘La niña mimada del sur’



About Vejer

Vejer de la Frontera is a beautiful white fortified town that sits atop a 200 metre high hill, ten minutes from the virgin beaches of the Costa de la Luz. With her back to the sea and looking out over the mountains of the Alcornocales and the rolling fields of the former La Janda lagoon. Vejer is a classic pueblo blanco, with whitewashed houses surrounding the sandstone church, the castle and the Arab city walls. Vejer is also called “La niña mimada del sur” - the beloved damsel of the south.

I’ve been living here for eight years now and every day I love this amazing place and its sweet people more and more. I’m never leaving...

Besaro, Bashir, Vejer, an unyielding fortress

In Vejer de la Frontera traces of dwellings have been found from 800 BC, but this area has been inhabited much longer; cave art from Neolithic times (6500-3000 BC) has been found close by. The Romans called this town Besaro, the Moors Bashir. Due to its elevated position, Vejer was a strategic location, but the massive



fortress walls held back attackers and Vejer never fell into the hands of pirates and slave traders who plagued these shores. In the medieval times you could reach Vejer from the ocean by boat over the Río Barbate. La Barca de Vejer, at the foot, was the port and transfer point. From the year 711 on the Moors governed Vejer for more than five and a half centuries. Remnants of this rich culture can still be found, like the horseshoe-shaped gate of the castle, the city walls and the street plan. The Arab city wall has 4 gateways: the Arco de La Segur, Puerta de Sancho IV,



Arco de la Villa and Arco de la Puerta Cerrada. There are three watchtowers in Vejer: San Juan, Corredera and Mayorazgo Palace. Climb the latter for fantastic views!

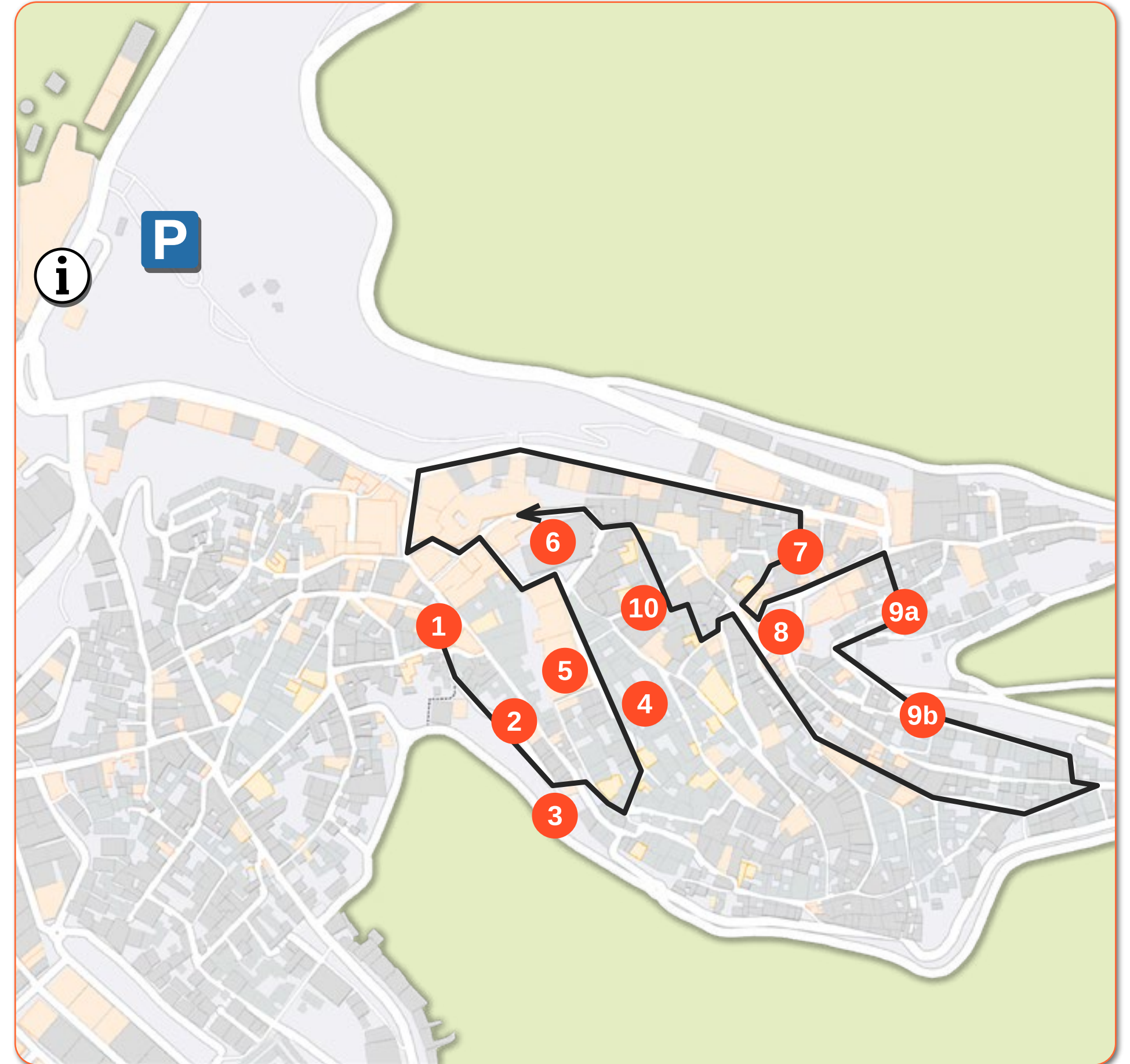
A walk in and around Vejer

You can walk all the way around the old centre following the Paseo de las Cobijadas, with a different view around each corner. Most of the old centre is car-free and you can wander here for hours. Pretty back streets include the Callejón Oscuro, Arco de las Monjas, the Judería. From Calle Tripería and Calle Arrieros you have a beautiful view of the old village.

On the outskirts of Vejer you will find a number of windmills that seem to come straight from Cervantes' Don Quixote.

It is almost impossible to discover all Vejer's jewels in one walk! We have highlighted a few places and leave you to discover the labyrinth of streets and alleys at your own pace. If you follow the numbers in order you'll get the best experience of this pretty town, enjoy!

The map



The walk



1. Scrumptious pastries 📍

Pastelería Galván is Vejer's oldest patisserie with delicious cakes from its own bakery. Many are still traditionally made of not much more than flour, eggs, water, a touch of oriental spices, heritage of the Arab past. The old-fashioned tearoom is covered with yellowing photos of the village, like the one of the bull on the Plazuela square that raced into the bar and scared the hell out of the guests.

2. 600 antique radios in a hidden away museum 📍

At no 26, Calle Juan Bueno, is the electric & souvenir shop of Ángel Tinoco, aged 81, historian and electrician who has been repairing radios and other equipment here in his workshop for years. Over time, many foreign radios were left behind, beyond repair because of the difference in voltage between Spain and the rest of the world. They became so numerous that Ángel made the collection into a museum. At the back of his store there is a room where the walls are covered from floor to ceiling with old radios and other electric devices. You'll definitely recognize ones your parents or grandparents had!



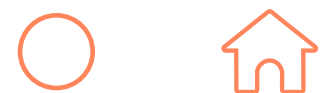
3. La Cobijada - the veiled one 📍

In this square you can see the statue of La Cobijada: the symbol of Vejer: A mysteriously veiled lady, completely wrapped in a black cloak. It resembles an Islamic garment, but the origin is Castillian, from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. A black robe covers a white skirt and a bodice, often lavishly decorated with lace, covering her up completely, except for the left eye.

Mysteriously
veiled lady

4. The castle 📍

In the 10th century Bashir, as Vejer was called then, had a medina, a kasbah and a mezquita and at the highest point of the walled city a Castillo was built. Of this small fortress, the horseshoe-shaped gateway has been preserved. It was the seat of the Gúzman dynasty and later of the Duques de Medina. The castle has a beautiful courtyard with fragrant jasmine. From the passage you have a beautiful view of the town. The castle is being restored in 2020.



5. Convento de las Monjas Concepcionistas and Arco de las Monjas 📍

Next to the Convento de las Monjas Concepcionistas with its Renaissance gate, nowadays the museum of Costumbres & Tradiciones de Vejer (Ethnology), lies the most photogenic street in Vejer: Arco de las Monjas. The arches of this alley were constructed to support the wall of the monastery after the earthquake of 1773.





6. Iglesia del Divino Salvador 📍

This church was built in the year 1300 at the highest point of town, over the remains of a Moorish Mezquita. Observing the arches and decorations you can distinguish two different periods in which it was built. Half Mudejar style, half Gothic. Next to the altar lie figures that are carried around the village during Semana Santa, the holy week, by both men and women, sometimes barefoot.

They are very heavy pieces and it takes a lot of concentration to manoeuvre them through the sometimes impossibly narrow and winding streets.

7. Casa del Mayorazgo 📍

Casa del Mayorazgo is a Baroque mansion from the eighteenth century with a medieval watchtower that served to warn the village against pirates and other enemies. Visits to the tower are free and from it you have beautiful views of the Plaza España, the old town and the ocean further south. To get to it you have to cross two pretty courtyards, where Manuel nurses the 400 pots of flowers. Don't forget to leave a small donation to help him keep this work up.

8. Plaza de España 📍

In the 16th and 17th century bullfights were held at the Plaza de España. The beautiful frog fountain in the middle with its hand-painted Sevillian tiles was built in 1957 and used to have goldfish swimming in it. Since then it has also been called Plaza de los Pescaítos (Square of the little fish). There are some inviting terraces on this square. The



nearby Italian restaurant La Piccolina is the place to head for a great Italian cappuccino and delicious croissants.

9. Some beautiful views 📍

A lovely continuation of the walk is to take the steep steps of calle Jesús at the first right towards the Calle Merced. Halfway you cross a beautiful alley full of flowers and pots, Cilla Vieja, but continue downhill and then to your right. From here walk up again past Pizzeria Isabela to [Calle Tripería and Arrieros](#) 📍 from where you have great views of the old village. Cross Calle Fuente and walk back to Plaza España via Palomina, Misericordia and San Juan.

10. Callejón Oscuro - Dark alleyway 📍

Go through the Arco de la Villa on the left into Canalejas and take the first street on the right, up the stairs, then immediately right again: Callejón Oscuro. That's fun! Via Calle Badillo you are back at the church. Pass the gateway the Arco de Segur, past our favourite pub with the vines, La Bodeguita. Go down the steep Calle Nuestra Señora de la Oliva back to the Plazuela.



Where to eat

For those visiting Vejer de la Frontera for the first time, the sheer number of excellent eateries is a pleasant surprise, here's a few of our favourites!

El Jardín de Califa

El Jardín del Califa remains one of the most popular restaurants in Vejer. Book a table in the beautiful courtyard and enjoy Moroccan-inspired cuisine. Excellent local wines.

[El Jardín de Califa](#)

Viña y Mar

Viña y Mar is Vejer's only sherry bar. There is a small menu with fine tapas and the best local meat and fish Ramón can lay his hands on. They boast an ample selection of interesting wines and over 40 different sherry-wines by the glass. The terrace is our favourite spot for watching people sauntering past.

[Viña y Mar](#)

Tips

Corredera 55

Corredera 55 is a welcoming restaurant with a great terrace on the pretty 'boulevard' of Vejer. Open all day for lunch and dinner. An innovative menu, tapas with a twist and international cuisine. Have yourself be pampered by Ellie Cormié and her amiable staff.

[Corredera 55](#)

La Piccolina

For a delicious breakfast with real cappuccino or an Italian lunch with fine pasta dishes and delicious salads, go to La Piccolina at the Plaza España. Inside there are only 3 tables, but outside is a nice terrace.

[La Piccolina](#)

Tips

Taberna la Judería

The snug Taberna la Judería in the prettiest alley of Vejer is a great place for an informal lunch or dinner. The staff are super nice, the creative menu has delicious vegetarian dishes too. Splendid local wines and there's a fantastic view over the village from the terrace.

[Taberna la Judería](#)



Tapas and Flamenco

Tips

Bar Caragato

At the Plaza del Paz you will find the Caragato bar where Flamenco performances take place on weekends. Lovely terrace under the trees on this flower-filled square.

[Bar Caragato](#)

La Bien Pagá

La Bien Pagá is a charming 'Flamenco tablao' where Flamenco performances are held at the weekends in high season.

[La Bien Pagá](#)

La Bodeguita

A lively hub under a canopy of vines right by the Arco de la Segur is the Bodeguita, our favourite pub, with live music on Friday nights.

[La Bodeguita](#)

Bar Poniente

Bar Poniente is our 'country pub' located just outside Vejer, on the Camino de Soldados. The wonderful garden and terrace area is the best place for enjoying sunsets over the ocean with a cocktail or watching paragliders hurl themselves off the hill right next to you!

[Bar Poniente](#)

Where to stay

Tips

Casa Shelly



Casa Shelly by Chris and Javier is a pretty boutique guesthouse in the old centre. There are 7 stylish rooms and an Andalusian courtyard with a fountain. The interior is a delightful mix of the two countries of origin of the owners: cool Swedish and lively Spanish.

[Casa Shelly](#)

Las Palmeras



Next to La Califa lies the monumental mansion Las Palmeras with a patio and a swimming pool. The large suites on the top floor with their private terraces are ideal for families.

[Las Palmeras](#)

La Casa del Califa



La Casa del Califa is a delightful hotel, spread over 11 historic buildings that are connected by corridors and stairs, a fairytale of a place! The Africa suite at the top is a beauty. A very hospitable and professional welcome awaits you. The hotel also has a famed restaurant.

[La Casa del Califa](#)



Outside of Vejer

Tips

Dehesa de Montenmedio

Located 6 km outside Vejer, on the N340 towards Tarifa, is the vast Montenmedio estate and the NMAC Foundation, an open-air contemporary art museum where you can admire outdoor sculptures and installations by national and international artists in the pine forest. In addition to the permanent collection, there are temporary installations. Workshops for children are held on weekends and holiday periods, in addition to theatre, dance and music performances.

[Fundación NMAC](#)

Horses and Golf

On the same estate you will find an 18-hole golf resort and an equestrian centre where in February and March the famous dressage and jumping event the Sunshine Tour is held with 1500 horses and 700 riders from 46 different countries. Even if you're not crazy about horses, it's fun to spend a sunny Sunday there and soak up the atmosphere of this world of high-level equestrian sport.

[Dehesa Montenmedio - Golf](#)



Tips

The beaches of Vejer

Vejer also has its own beautiful, sandy beach: El Palmar. A 12 kilometre drive through the gently undulating landscape brings you to this laid back spot. It's very popular with surfers, who make up the majority of the population outside the high season. El Palmar is backed by countryside and a line of low-rise buildings at the seaside, with perpendicular, sandy roads into the meadows. You may see cows wandering around on the beachfront promenade, where you will also find a number of excellent (fish) restaurants and cool beach bars. From here it is a nice walk along the beach to Conil and back (about 8 kms out and back)

Freetours Vejer

Photographer and guide Juan José Moreno offers tours in Vejer. When the tour ends you pay whatever you feel the tour was worth

[Freetours Vejer](#)





€ 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!



Activities and excursions



Apart from hiking, there is much more to experience at and around the Costa de la Luz! Below you will find my handpicked selection of interesting excursions and adventures. From birdwatching, dolphin excursions and flamenco shows to surfing and sherry tours.

Birdwatching



For unique, affordable birding and photography guided experiences in the Strait of Gibraltar and La Janda we recommend contacting Javier and Yeray from Birding the Strait in Tarifa. They organize various tours and tailor-made programmes for groups and individuals. Check their website for information and amazing images. (The pictures of the birds in this ebook are theirs as well).

[Birding the Strait](#)

Dolphin and whale watching excursion



At Tarifa, the Atlantic and Mediterranean meet and the nutrient-rich waters bring tuna, dolphins, killer whales and whales to the Strait of Gibraltar. From Tarifa you can marvel at dolphins and whales up close during a 2-3 hour boat trip. From April to October several boats leave daily.

[Turmares](#)

Bicycle rental Vejer and Conil



Cycling is very popular in Spain although there are few cycling paths along the main roads. Best to venture out to the hills and the beaches!

Below are two companies that rent out e-bikes, ATB, city bikes and fat bikes for the beach.

[Bicicletas Francisco Vejer](#)

[Conil Bikes](#)

Bicycle tours in Cádiz



Because of its location on a flat peninsula, Cádiz is a wonderful, compact city, perfect for exploring by bike! Go on your own or with a guide. There are various bike paths through the city and you always end up at the seaside!

[Las Bicis Naranjas](#)

Cycling the Sierra Green Way



North of the Sierra de Grazalema you can cycle one of the most beautiful Green Ways (Vías Verdes) in Spain. The track is 37 kilometres along the old Jerez-Almargen railway, through a very varied landscape from Puerto Serrano to Olvera with a large vulture colony halfway!

[Vía Verde](#)

Flamenco



The province of Cádiz and especially Jerez de la Frontera is the cradle of Flamenco. According to my good friend and guide in Jerez, Caroline Maas, the best Flamenco spectacles in town are performed in Tablao Puro Arte. Flamenco Cale is also a good choice and if you are looking for a small scale, cozy and authentic Andalusian experience go to Sherry Tabanco El Pasaje!

[Tablao Puro Arte](#)

[Flamenco Cale](#)

[Tabanco El Pasaje](#)

[Gids Caroline Maas](#)

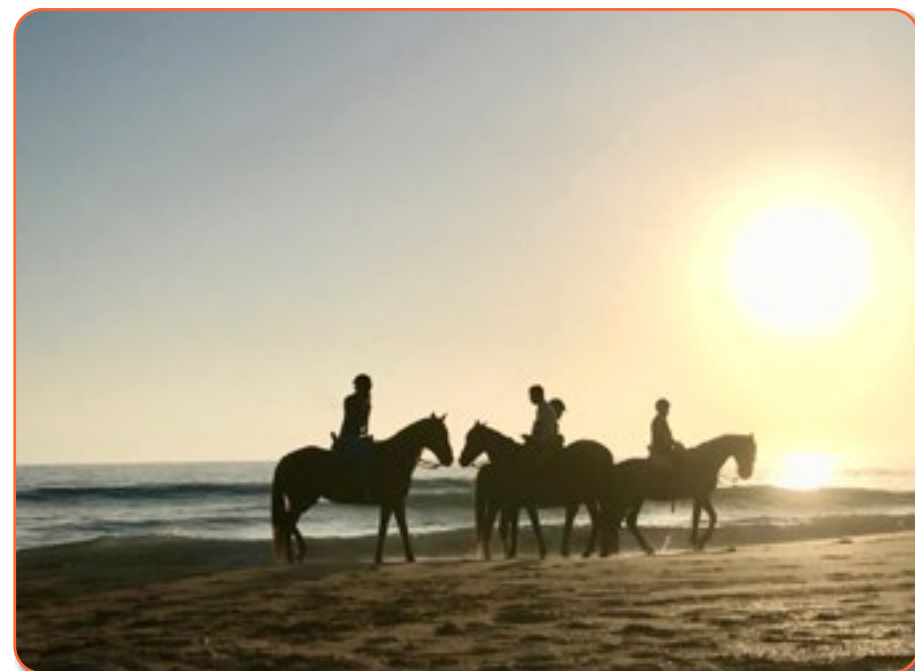
Food & wine tours and cooking classes



One of the delightful ways to get to know the culture of an area is through its local gastronomy and its wines. From Vejer de la Frontera, Scottish Annie B arranges unique introductions to the culinary highlights of Cádiz with her cooking workshops and food & wine tours.

[Annie B's Spanish Kitchen](#)

Horseriding on the beach



Horseback riding tours for beginners and advanced riders are organized from El Palmar. Beach rides along the seaside and through the dunes of la Mangueta beach at sunset. With English speaking guides.

[Cortijo Mangueta](#)

Jeep excursion in the Sierra de Grazalema



A great way to discover Ronda and Grazalema is to book a jeep excursion with our Flemish friend and photographer Chris Mees. Chris has lived here for over 20 years and his old green army Landrover will take you to places you would otherwise never have discovered! Tailor made tours for max. 5 persons.

[Chris Mees Jeep Tours](#)

Kayaking or sailing at sea



A fun day on the water is by renting a kayak or sailing boat! It is safe and easy to paddle on the sheltered waters off the Chiclana coast or sail to the Castillo Sancti Petri on the island!

[Sancti Petri Kayak](#)

Kitesurfing



The Río Salado in Conil, the bay of Trafalgar at Caños de Meca, the bay of Bolonia and the beaches of Los Lances and Valdevaqueros near Tarifa are the places for kitesurfing. Especially Tarifa, with its consistent strong winds, is a mecca for kite and windsurfers.

[Ocean Kite School](#)

Painting holiday by the sea



Artist Lucienne Frijns organizes painting holidays for beginners and advanced artists in Conil de la Frontera. The venue, her villa with its huge garden with ocean view, is a perfect location. You will be warmly received, pampered and professionally guided. English, German, Spanish and Dutch spoken.

[La Luce Painting Holidays](#)

Paragliding



Vejer de la Frontera is located on a hill of 220 meters. On the south west side, with a view of the Atlantic Ocean, you can soar in the air on a paragliding flight. A tandem flight at sunset is high on my own wish list!

[Paragliding Vejer](#)

Rock climbing and rappelling



Near Tarifa lies the impressive Cerro de Bartolo with beautiful rock formations. The Tajo del Búho with the Mosaico is very popular with climbers. Our kids learned the basics from Chris from Girasol Adventure and had a great time! Chris speaks English and German.

[Girasol Adventure](#)

Tree top adventures



In the pine forests near Conil de la Frontera is a nice Tree Top adventure park with 7 different circuits. Note: You must be at least 1.15 m tall and wear proper footwear, you will not be allowed to climb trees in flip flops!

[Entreramas Aventura](#)

Sherry tours



A tour in a sherry bodega with a wine tasting is not to be missed during your stay in Cádiz!

Three suggestions:

- Gonzáles Byass / Tío Pepe: Famous and a bit touristy but altogether quite good.
- Lustau: A big name with small scale & personal tours.
- Also highly recommended: Hidalgo La Gitana In Sanlúcar de Barrameda.

[Gonzáles Byass / Tío Pepe](#)

[Lustau](#)

[La Gitana](#)

Surf



The Costa de la Luz is very popular with beginner and advanced surfers and you will find many surf schools. Our favourites: Trafalgar Surf in Conil de la Frontera, where the English speaking Ramón, Ed and Joshua teach and A-Frame in El Palmar, with its own surf shop and a wooden yoga studio by the sea.

[Trafalgar Surf](#)

[A-Frame Surf School](#)

Wellness



After all that exercise and adventure nothing beats an extensive, relaxing massage or foot reflexology therapy. In Casa de Elefante, in the old town of Vejer, English speaking Daniel from Madrid and his team will take good care of you and you'll leave the place reborn!

[La Casa del Elefante](#)

Yoga



Where there is surf, there's often yoga too. Now I don't surf but I do love my yoga in the nice wooden yoga studios of A-Frame at the seaside in El Palmar and Nydo, in the rolling hills near Conil. Here, yogis Laura Palmer and Jana Doss, amongst others, give classes and workshops. Have a look at the websites below.

[El Palmar Yoga](#)

[Nydo Conil](#)

[Yoga teacher Laura Palmer](#)

[Yoga teacher Jana Doss](#)

Summary

Restaurants and places to stay

Most walks have tips on where to eat and where to stay. Below you will find them all listed, alphabetically by location.

Where to eat



Benamahoma

La Tasquita del Majaceite

Caños de Meca

Restaurante Castillejos

Bolonia

Restaurant Otero

Chiringuito La Cabaña

El Bosque

La Divina

Mesón El Tabanco

Gaucín

Restaurant Platero & Co

Cádiz

El Faro de Cádiz

La Curiosidad de Mauro Barreiro

Código de Barra

Columela Tapería

Tapas Bar Casa Pepe

Medina Sidonia

Venta La Duquesa

Restaurant El Duque

Bar Cádiz

Bar Ortega

Puerto de Galiz

Venta Puerto de Galiz

San Pablo de Buceite

Restaurant La Estación

Tarifa

Restaurant El Lola

Restaurant La Favela

Cafe Azul

Beachbar El Chiringuito

Beachbar Hurricane hote

Vejer de la Frontera

Restaurant Corredera 55

El Jardín del Califa

Taberna de Judería

Sherrybar Viña y Mar

La Piccolina

Restaurante Patria

Venta el Toro

Zahara de la Sierra

Restaurant Al Lago

Zahara de los Atunes

Restaurant Antonio



Where to stay

Receive € 10 Cashback with your reservation

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WHERE TO STAY

Cádiz

Hotel Casa de las Cuatro Torres

Casa Bugambilla

Caños de Meca

Casas Karen

Hotel Madreselva

Palomar de la Breña

Conil de la Frontera

Paraíso Perdido

Medina Sidonia

Casa Reza

La Vista de Medina

Sierra de Grazalema

Hotel El Horcajo

Cortijo las Piletas

Tarifa

Guesthouse Dar Cilla

Vejer de la Frontera

La Casa del Califa

Las Palmeras

Casa Shelly

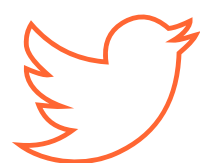
Finca la Hijuela

Hotel La Botica

Hotel Plaza 18



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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



The province of Cádiz, in the southernmost tip of Spain, has an amazing variety of landscapes. From the high peaks of the Sierra de Grazalema in the North to the rolling hills in the South, with millions of sunflowers in the spring. With marshes, cliffs, fairytale forests and extensive sandy beaches on the Costa de la Luz, the coast of light. Cádiz is a paradise for birdwatchers and hikers.

In this walking guidebook you'll find 14 wonderful hikes in the mountains and along the ocean and city walks in Cádiz and Vejer de la Frontera. Including interactive maps, where to eat and to stay and insider tips for interesting places to visit. To make your stay in Cadiz an unforgettable one you'll find an overview of companies that organize activities and adventures. From birdwatching, dolphin excursions and flamenco shows to surfing and sherry tours.

Present the ebook for € 10 Cashback at Anne's selection of places to stay!

