

WALKING IN CADIZ

THE GUIDEBOOK

3. LOMA DE SAN BARTOLOMÉ



ANNE MIDDELKAMP

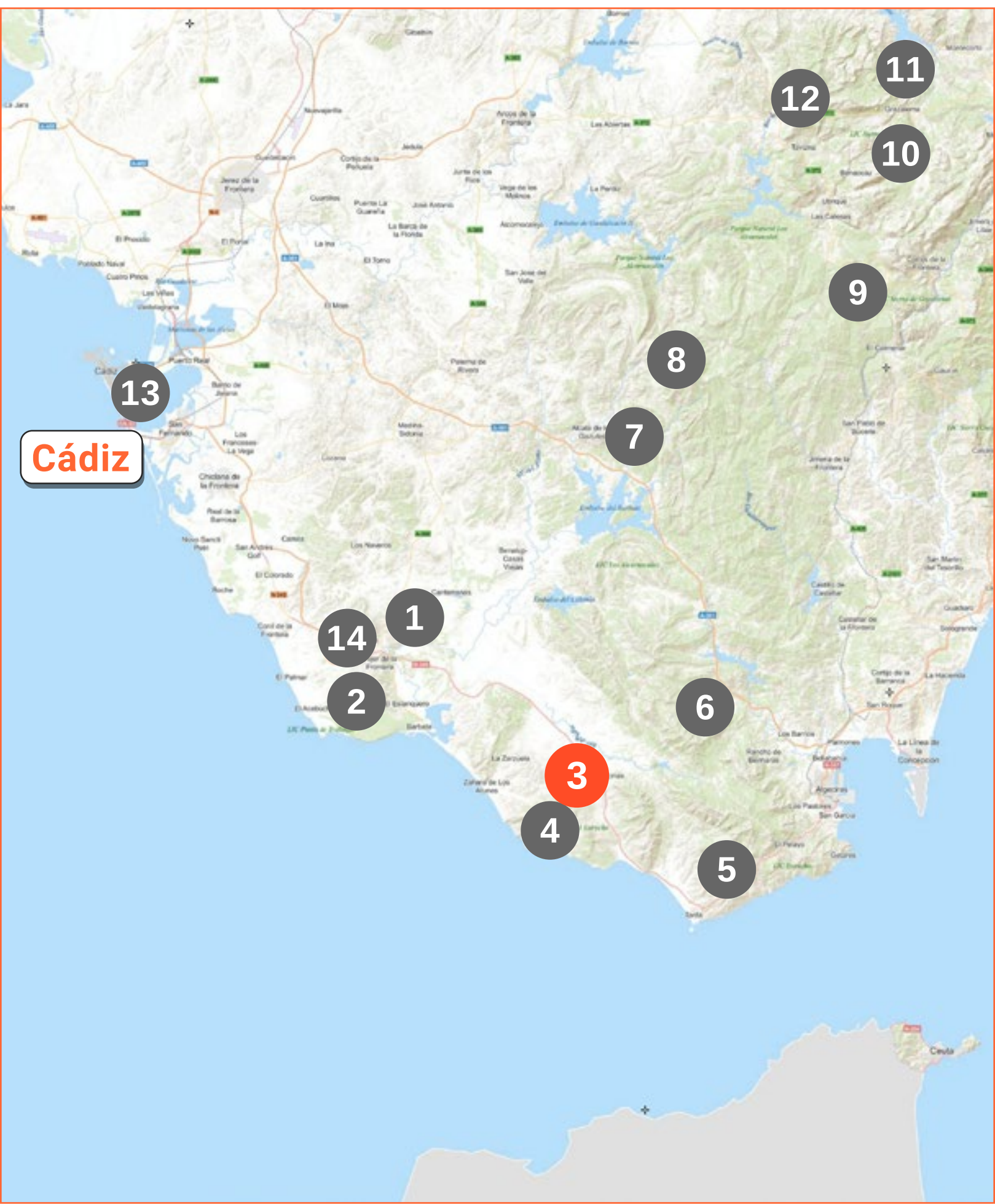
Walking in Cádiz

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Overview walks

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The route

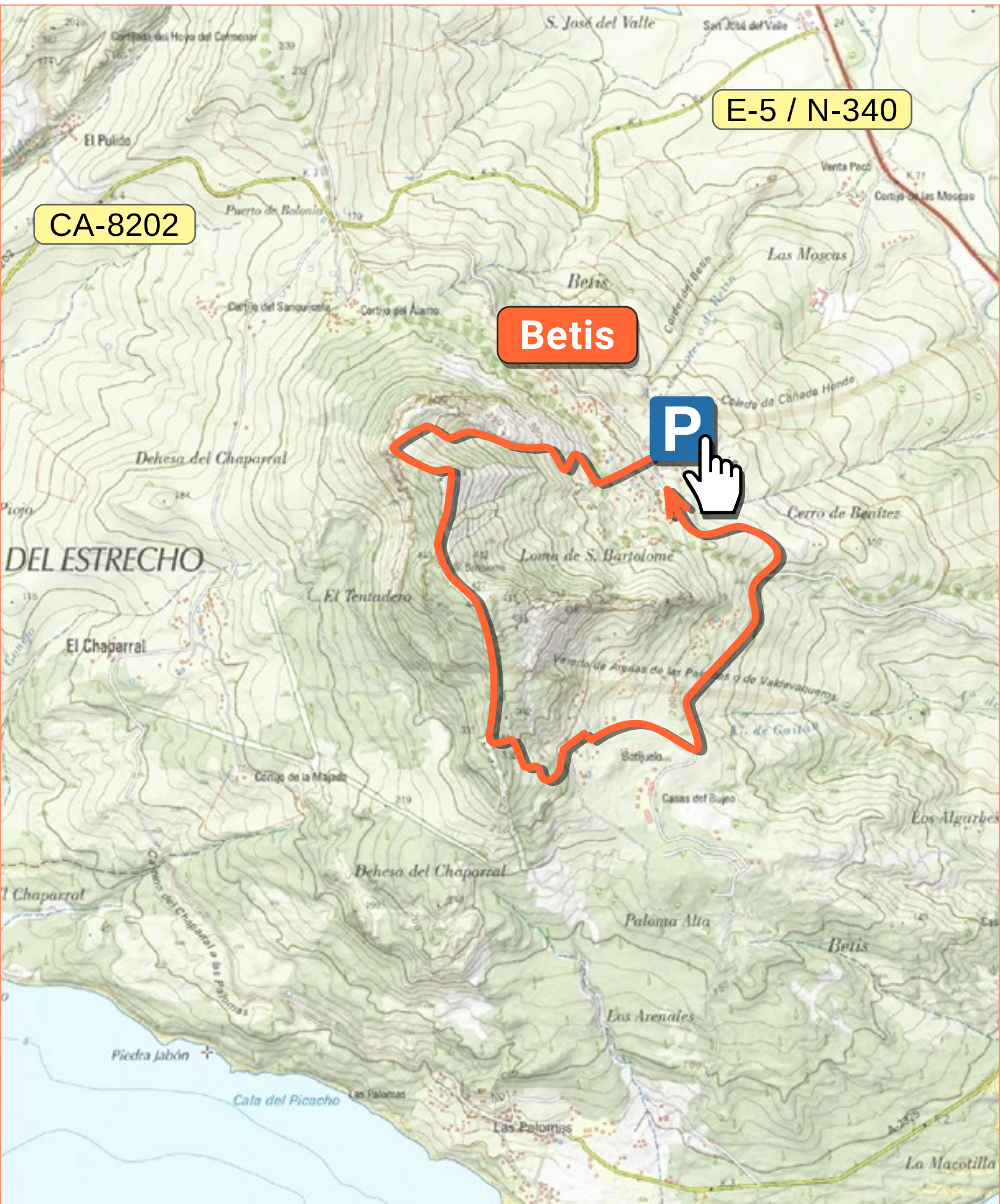
- Name: Loma de San Bartolomé
- Where: From the hamlet of Betis, near Bolonia
- Type of walk: Circular
- Length: 6.5 km
- Duration: 2.5 hours (without stops)
- Difficulty: Average
- Shade: About half of the walk
- Highest point: 441 m
- Lowest point: 294 m
- Path type: Unmarked, partly over rocks, partly 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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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 walk



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, Ouzzane, Tánger and Larache in Morocco. This area is one of the busiest



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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 kiosko 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



Restaurante 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



Social media



Contact



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Walking
in Cádiz



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

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

info@walkingcadiz.com



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