



Stage 8 CANILLAS DE ACEITUNO • PERIANA

THE STAGE IN SUMMARY

Stage 8 passes through the municipalities of Canillas de Aceituno, Alcaucín, La Viñuela and Periana, with varying distance between them. It follows the River Alcaucín down from the sunny north-western slopes of Sierra Tejada to the reservoir of La Viñuela. Then, following the valley of the River Guaro, it climbs once again, up to Periana. One obstacle it does avoid, where possible, is the network of roads between the reservoir and the Zalia (or Salia) and Don Manuel bridges.

The stage gets going on an attractive pathway (less so on a few urban sections perhaps) in a north-westerly direction. It connects Canillas de Aceituno with Alcaucín along the edge of the Natural Park of the Sierras Tejada, Almijara and Alhama. There is a noticeable difference between the sheltered woodland on the rocky slopes and the wild landscape beyond, with a scattering of country houses.

The path from Alcaucín to the end of the stage is mostly over unsurfaced or concrete tracks. The initial section follows the river of the same name, which turns progressively south from the Natural Landmark of the Tajos del Alcázar gorges. It flows through traditional agricultural land and the ever-present sub-tropical farmland. The Path then runs between two almost parallel roads, one towards Boquete de Zafarraya and the other linking Alcaucín with La Viñuela. It avoids these via El Cerrajón and its housing developments.

The route takes a sharp turn to the north-east along the reservoir's meandering boundary, keeping this on your left-hand side. The ground is soft and muddy here and there is little tree cover due to its proximity to the water's edge and housing developments. This changes from Las Mayoriales Recreational Area onwards, and the Path traces a gradual arc round to the north following the River Guaro and then the Arroyo de Cantarranas.

This dramatic change in the landscape brings the Great Path to a magnificent centuries-old olive grove. You will notice small plots of land separated by drystone walls all the way until Periana. Terraces cover many of the slopes, with colossal and age-old Carob trees, and are frequently bordered by Almond trees. ►



La Axarquía's ridges, the reservoir, Comares and Colmenar from the Path



8. CANILLAS DE ACEITUNO • PERIANA

The MA-4106 Roundabout in Canillas de Aceituno (NW) (625m)



The Cantillana Path in Periana (S) (480m)



29.7 km



8 h



765 m



870 m



Linear



On foot



5.9 km



21.1 km



2.7 km



Environment hazards



1

2

3

4

5

Navigation



1

2

3

4

5

Underfoot Conditions



1

2

3

4

5

Physical Effort



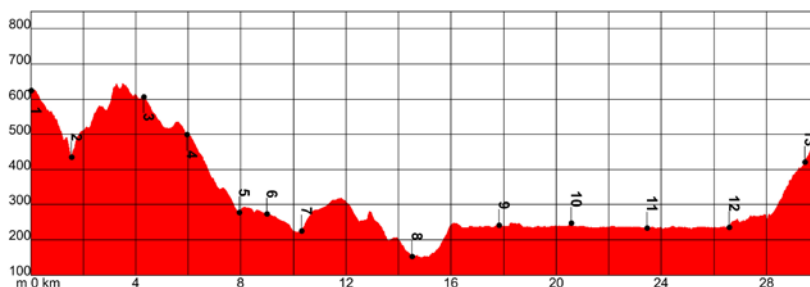
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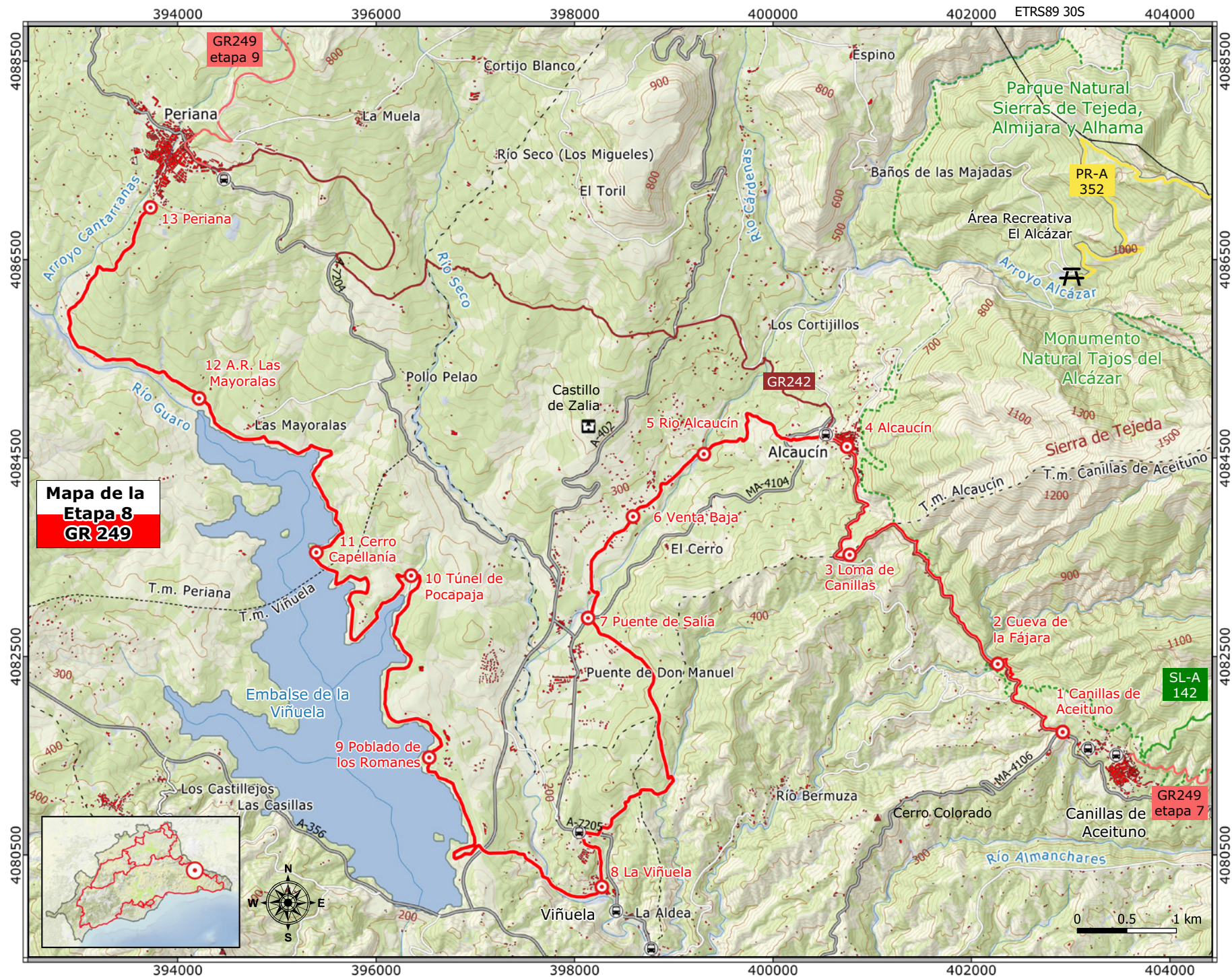


- Farm traffic circulating
- Crossing the A-7205, A-402, MA-4104 roads
- Crossing the Arroyo Fájara creek and the River Alcaucín

GR-242

Sierra de Tejeda mountains – Almijara Stage 1 – overlap until km 8.0
Link up in Periana, end of the stage.

P O I N T	X	Y	HEIGHT ABOVE SL	DISTANCE
1 Canillas de Aceituno	402920	/ 4081740	/ 625 m	Km 0,0
2 La Fájara Cave	402265	/ 4082425	/ 445 m	Km 1,5
3 Loma de Canillas mountain pass	400770	/ 4083525	/ 605 m	Km 4,2
4 Alcaucín	400745	/ 4084615	/ 500 m	Km 5,8
5 River Alcaucín	399305	/ 4084540	/ 285 m	Km 7,8
6 Venta Baja inn	398590	/ 4083910	/ 275 m	Km 9,0
7 Salía Bridge	398135	/ 4082890	/ 230 m	Km 10,2
8 La Viñuela	398275	/ 4080180	/ 155 m	Km 14,4
9 El Poblado de los Romanos (Roman Hamlet)	396535	/ 4081480	/ 245 m	Km 17,6
10 Pocapaja Tunnel	396355	/ 4083315	/ 245 m	Km 20,4
11 Cerro Capellanía	395395	/ 4083550	/ 240 m	Km 23,3
12 Los Mayoriales Recreational Area	394215	/ 4085100	/ 240 m	Km 26,4
13 Periana	393725	/ 4087025	/ 480 m	Km 29,7





ROUTE DESCRIPTION

Along the edge of the Natural Park

→ Up to km 6

The departure from Canillas begins with a 700-metre stretch along a concrete track, to then join a footpath through a Pine forest. This then crosses an irrigation channel and a few dry creeks before taking a steep downhill slope to the west, ending up at the bottom of the main valley. At kilometre 1.5, you cross a dried river bed, however at La Fájara cave, you meet two interesting watercourses: Los Tajos Lisos and that of La Cueva de Don Pedro (further west). There is an impressive overhanging rock, La Cueva de las Cabras as well as the cave, La Cueva de Don Pedro just underneath, with Oleanders on display. Having been explored to a depth of 1500 metres, these caves are known to empty naturally in times when groundwater is need of replenishing, but excess water flows directly into the River Bermuzas during the rainy seasons. The permanent natural spring, hidden under a rock, can be located by going down the stream bed a short way

Geopositioning work in the Natural Park



The route then rapidly gains height, goes through one of the many gates that line the boundary of the Natural Park and after passing the barbed wire fence, you keep this perimeter on your right-hand side. Going constantly uphill here, you encounter sections of cobbled path underfoot. You skirt the edge of dense woods for the most part, with some sections through Pine forest. There is a lime kiln on your left, among Esparto grasses and Rosemary bushes. A little further on, you come to a small cluster of houses, which you keep on your left.

On your way to the mountain pass, La Loma de Canillas (km 4.4), you approach another lime kiln surrounded by steep and rocky sides. At this pass, the obstruction of the Alcaucín quarry means the path takes a sharp turn to the south-west. Continuing along an unsurfaced track, you pass two water deposits, with some vineyards on either side. Close to a communications antenna, the track becomes concreted. From here, it drops down to the base of the quarry, where you gradually see more houses and arrive in Alcaucín.

The middle of the River Alcaucín valley

→ Up to km 14.4

Walking to the west, you cross the town's southern neighbourhoods and its famous fountains. After further housing developments, you cross the MA-4104 road and then drop down past country houses and fields with olive trees, used for grazing and cultivating cereals. At the Peña Rodera rocky outcrop, it changes course, gradually arcing round to the south, ►



Traditional and new plantations in the basin of the River Alcaucín



following the valley of the River Alcaucín. At kilometre 8.0, you cross the river at a section filled with reeds. Just below this and visible from a higher point in the track, is a pleasant river bed area densely filled with plants and sub-tropical plantations. On your left is one of the centuries-old Carob trees before you meet a crossroads in the track. A little further on is an enormous threshing circle and shortly after you arrive at the inn, Venta Baja.

A kilometre down the shoulder of the Old Granada Road, what was once a livestock track and is now tarmacked, you come to an olive mill in the opening around the Don Manuel Bridge. Take a track that goes down to the left and then cross the River Alcaucín again, where there is a forest of tall Eucalyptus trees. Keep the storage unit of Alpechín (olive oil lees) on your right and you come to the Alcaucín road again, precisely at the Salia or Zalia Bridge. If you look to the north, it is possible to see the all-important castle on a hillock, which the area is named after.

After crossing the road, the unsurfaced track of El Cerrajón takes you to the entrance of the Sol housing development. The track

levels out while straightening and passing by olive groves and an estate in ruins. You then come to a stream, which instead of crossing, you simply change direction from south to south-west, rising up to higher point that is concreted over.

A steep downhill section takes you a crossing point of the MA-7205. Once in the centre of La Viñuela, on Calle Granada (aprox. Km 14.4) make a 90° turn to the west, down Camino de la Fuente street or La Ruta del Agua (The Water Way). Having passed the ayuntamiento (Town Council) building, you will see information boards for the old lavadero (washhouse), El Pozanco pool, Lejos Fountain, the historic irrigation channel and other elements from its heritage linked to the Arroyo de los Cortijuelos stream.

Following the reservoir's border

→ Up to km 26.6

The hill of La Cuesta del Guaro is a pleasant enough place, primarily for its traditional country estates surrounded by olive trees. On top of this, the mountain pass where you cross the A-402, to look north to the ►



A water sports area on one of La Viñuela reservoir's inlets



emblematic gap of El Boquete de Zafarraya or north-west to the magnificent Sierra Tejada with the splash of white of Alcaucín on its slopes. This is an important section owing to its transit along the old railway line between Malaga and Ventas de Zafarraya, in use between 1922 and 1960. The cogwheel train used to climb up from the Los Romanes station (close to the hotel) to Periana, crossing and then running parallel to the road that we see now. There is a sharp bend in the track, which you follow and where you begin to see ever more services and numerous information boards.

Although the river management of the River Guaro (or River Vélez further downstream) dates back further, the construction of the dam was completed in 1986. The reservoir still didn't reach its full capacity of 165 hm³ until the 90s. Its real advantage lies in its supply of water to the coastal cities of La Axarquía and to the profitable agricultural industry of sub-tropical fruits, due to their high consumption of water.

The unsurfaced track that skirts the reservoir is just a few metres from the high-water mark, when it is completely full. In the photograph on this page, it was at 42% capacity in July 2018, hence being far from the Path.

The pathway that follows the reservoir edge goes from Las Monjas, all the way to El Castillejo on the other side of the water. It is the section close to La Viñuela which contains some of its most special enclaves. El Poblado de los Romanos (The Roman Hamlet) at kilometre 16.1, is one and is not difficult to find. Also of note is the old railway station, on a small hill to the east.

Continuing to the north, you pass close to one of this area's large farmhouses, named Vilches, next to a sluice gate on your right. Up ahead is the largest bend in the waterside track, which navigates the outlet of the Pocapaja tunnel. This carries water from the Salia, Bermuza and Rubite watercourses on the far side of the Loma de Zabato, to the north-east. Two limestone headlands either ►



side of the water indicate the start of the Periana municipality, at kilometre 22.6. It is also the location of the archaeological site, La Capellanía dating back more than two thousand years.



Periana's centuries-old Olive grove

→ To the end of the stage

The tail end of the reservoir is home to a small gathering of Tamarisk trees which have adapted to the salty gypsum soils. The rest of the landscape, however has evolved from swampy conditions into olive groves. Soon after the Piñero & Las Mayoriales estate, you arrive at the crossroads of the Recreational Area of the same name at kilometre 26.2. The well-groomed track to reach this has European Hackberry trees running alongside and is a detour of a few hundred metres. In contrast, the track to follow continues uphill and enters some of the Great Path's most spectacular agricultural land. The aged trunks of the century-old olive trees completely surround the Pathway. Despite some sections of wire fencing, the

tradition of dry-stone walls between land estates fortunately has been maintained. The same can be said for small stone terraces to reduce the gradient of the land and so the workload.

The vast majority of the scenery is covered by Olive trees, however it is the Carob trees which stand out most, being much larger despite being a similar age. At 250 metres above sea level, the small and wooded valley of the River Guaro on your left drops away. At the river's convergence with the Arroyo Cantarranas, the 13 kilometres of unsurfaced track since the head of the reservoir, come to an end and tarmac track takes over. This new track arches slowly to the north-east.

The steep slopes are enriched by centuries of hard work in creating farmhouses, rows of Almond trees, small agricultural plots next to watering pools and normally little in the way of vehicles coming and going. The houses to the south of Periana, at the crossroads with the Cantillana Path are the first sign of your arrival into the town and so, the end of the Stage. ■

Carob trees mixed with centuries-old olive trees on the track up from the reservoir

