

Stage 15 VILLANUEVA DE ALGAIDAS CUEVAS BAJAS

THE STAGE IN SUMMARY

Stage 15 runs through the northernmost region of the province of Malaga, coming into contact with the fertile plains of the River Genil. There is a reasonable climb up the hill, Cerro de la Cruz, which is where the three municipal areas of Villanueva de Algaidas, Cuevas Bajas and Cuevas de San Marcos meet. The route passes through the former two. It can be divided into two sections in terms of direction, with the first running north approximately to the halfway point and the other north-west. Both the distance and the gradients are quite manageable.

Given the setting, it seems more than appropriate that the route shares the stage with the Mozarabic Way, since the town at the start has a medieval chapel and an abandoned convent. Sections of three Long-distance Footpaths (GR in Spanish) that pass through this area, share this starting point.

The route passes through the village of La Atalaya and then climbs towards the country estates of Loma Vieja and Loma Nueva. It continues its way up until the border of the three municipalities, from where it begins its descent. Keeping to country tracks throughout, this section offers impressive views over the Genil valley. Passing through the hamlet of El Cedrón, it then heads once again close to the course of the River Burriana, to the stage destination.

A gully carved out of the rock where the town of Villanueva de Algaidas lies, (meaning New Town of the Forests), is an island in a sea of olive trees. This surviving crop is a remnant of the original vegetation which thrived in the shady conditions. You cross the watercourse over a late medieval bridge, still in use today, which leads on to the neighbourhood of La Atalaya.

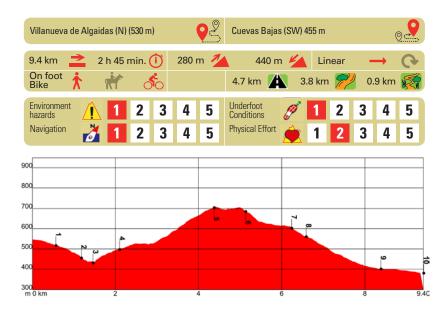
The panoramic views over three provinces from the viewpoint of El Cedrón are spectacular on a clear day. Passing through El Cedrón (with its Jewish origin) and visiting La Moheda, (founded by the Andalusians), the route offers an attractive image of traditional village life that has fortunately stood the test of time.







15. VILLANUEVA DE ALGAIDAS · CUEVAS BAJAS





- · Road traffic circulating along the country tracks
- Road traffic in El Cedrón and on the A-7300 road

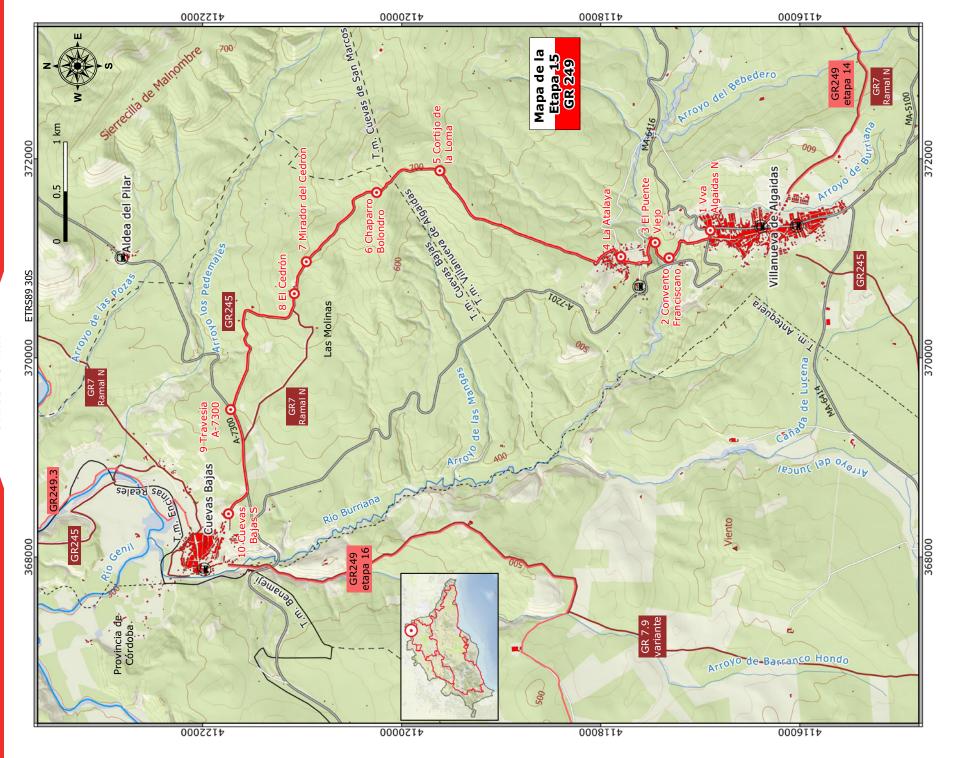
Variant 3 of the Great Malaga Path

Tarifa to Athens, Northern route – Almost total overlap

Tarifa to Athens - Links up in Cuevas Bajas (Variant)

Mozarabic Way of the Camino de Santiago – Total overlap

	P O I N T	Χ		Υ		HEIGHT ABOVE SL	DISTANCE
	1.Villanueva de Algaidas N	371280	/	4116900	/	530 m	Km 0,0
	2. Franciscan Convent	371005	/	4117315	/	465 m	Km 1,1
	3. El Puente Viejo – the Old Bridge	371155	/	4117455	/	445 m	Km 1,5
	4. La Atalaya	371015	/	4117800	/	510 m	Km 2,3
	5. Cortijo de la Loma estate	371880	/	4119615	/	700 m	Km 4,4
	6.Chaparro Bolondro oak tree	371660	/	4120250	/	685 m	Km 5,1
	7.El Cedrón viewpoint	370965	/	4120960	/	625 m	Km 6,2
	8.El Cedrón	370645	/	4121080	/	570 m	Km 6,5
	9.Crossing the A-7300	369480	/	4121720	/	405 m	Km 8,3
	10. Cuevas Bajas S	368435	/	4121739	/	380 m	Km 9,4





ROUTE DESCRIPTION

The River Burriana and the **Great Path**

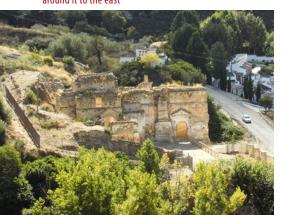
→ Up to km 2

Villanueva de Algaidas is actually made up of numerous semi-urban areas: El Albaicín, La Parrilla, Zamarra, Solana, Barranco del Agua, La Atalaya and Rincona. The main hamlet's location in a ravine is mainly down to the geography. It was easier to defend, is next to the watercourse and has sandstone building material nearby. This is the setting for the first two kilometres of the stage.

At the crossroads to the north of the village, you take a path going down towards La Atalaya. The path fords a small stream that has carved a channel into the sandstone and heads towards the ruins of the old convent. Similarly, the transit of countless horses and people has carved a deep pathway in the limestone rock, even with the horseshoe marks still visible after so many years.

Coming up on your left are the convent and the Mozarabic chapel, which is set into the rock and faces west. Meanwhile, the path descends to the right towards the river gorge. At the exit of the shaded gully is the

The old Franciscan Convent with the Path going around it to the east



Convent of Our Lady of the Consolation of the Woodland, which was built in 1566. Attached to the ruins of the convent is a Mozarabic cave chapel dating back to the around the 9th or 10th century, and can normally be visited easily.

The vegetation becomes thicker and more diverse in this section, which is protected by railings that allow you to get close to the sandstone cliffs. The River Burriana is called as such from Villanueva de Algaidas onwards and the pathway uses the Puente Viejo (Old Bridge) to cross it. This is a handsome structure with a main central arch and two lateral arches to allow for flood water.

The next section leads on to La Atalaya and there is an interesting lookout point over the route already covered. By the side of the path, you can see the hollows carved 130 131 out of the rock when the water level of the river was higher. The rock retains its attractive earthy yellow colour in these cavities, but turns a black ash colour in the cuts exposed to rainwater's oxidising action. There is luscious vegetation in the gully, with large Hackberry bushes and Elm trees standing out most.

La Loma de la Cruz and the farmhouses of Cuevas Bajas → To the end of the stage

As soon as you leave La Atalaya after a little meandering through its streets, you take a track off to the right and climb a steep slope, heading north along the Camino de las Algaidas track. Turn around occasionally to take in the panoramic views over the village and the Sierra de Arcas hills beyond, with its wind ▶



On the way down, keep an eye out for the Chaparro Bolondro, an impressive oak tree on the right, next to some houses. It is the largest in the area and so adored locally that it has its own information board further down at El Cedrón estate. This is not far on, but first there is the must-see of the lookout spot of El Cedrón at kilometre 6.2. It offers a guite exceptional and unrivalled view of the countryside of the provinces of Córdoba and Granada. There is a panoramic information board that explains the view well. As they say in the nearby Cuevas Bajas, this is the spot where 'Malaga overlooks the Genil valley'.

One of the beautiful corners of the farmhouse of El Cedrón



The gorge of the River Burriana, carved out through



During the descent, the pathway begins to turn west before reaching the country estate of El Cedrón, with its communal oven and its rich history. A dozen white houses line the main street with its cobblestones still visible, and along which the path goes. At the exit, there is a turn-off to La Moheda, which is also the route selected by the Mozarabic Way. The southern branch of the GR 7 takes a different route, to pass through Las Molinas.

The route enters the village from the southeast along Calle Archidona. You pass the main square with the church of San Juan Bautista with its exposed brick façade, the baroque clock tower and the belfry with three bells. The stage ends next to the River Burriana, almost at the point where it meets the Genil. It is on an avenue that is well signposted for hiking and other outdoor activities, including canoeing and rafting.