



Stage 27 • BENALAURÍA • GENALGUACIL

THE STAGE IN SUMMARY

The villages of the lower Genal Valley lie on both sides of the river and at a similar height, and are connected by ancient pathways that cross the network of streams. In this particular case, crossing the main river itself, while also advancing along its flood plains for almost four kilometres. This is primarily to connect the traditional paths that come down from Benalauría and climbs towards Genalguacil. The route heads mainly south as far as El Prado de la Escribana, then climbs east in the last stretch to the Stage's end.

The landscape is entirely forested, with a variety of dominant tree species, in particular Cork oaks and Maritime pines on the sunnier slopes, and Gall oaks and some Chestnut trees in the more shaded areas. The multi-species gallery forest plays an important role at the bottom of a very narrow and steep sided V-shaped valley, with underlying schist and slate.

Although there are a number of tracks for forestry maintenance, the route links together sections of traditional pathways, which succeed in making the steep slopes more manageable through numerous bends. These also tend to cross or connect up with country tracks fairly often. The walkways of the Genal are a highlight of the day, and these use metal structures to negotiate three rocky spurs. Meanwhile, a very steep irrigation channel that navigates another rockface here and has been fitted with safety cables.

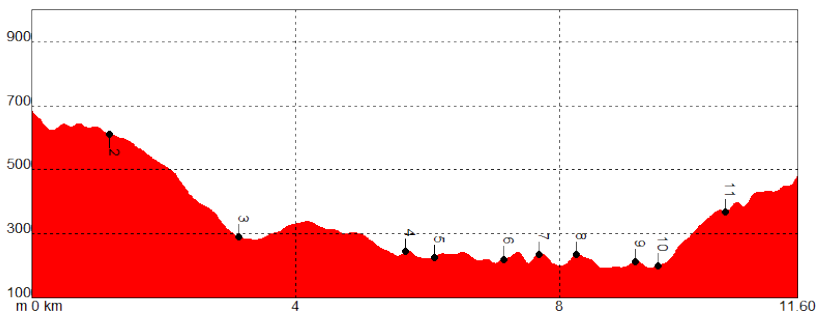
Approximately up to kilometre 2.9 is within municipal land of Benalauría, just before reaching the historic site of El Arábí. This brings you to that of Algotocín, continuing up until the San Juan bridge, since the River Genal separates this from the next municipal area, Jubrique. The section between the Hondo and the Perejilas streams (km 7.5) is the border between Jubrique and the Stage's fourth municipal area, Genalguacil. ▶

The pathway running through an abandoned field



27. BENALAURÍA • GENALGUACIL

Benalauría (C) (690 m)				Las Cruces (The Crosses), Genalguacil (495m)			
11.6 km		3 h 50 min.		370 m		540 m	
On foot				0.3 km		3.9 km	
Environment hazards				Underfoot Conditions			
Navigation				Physical Effort			
1		2		3		4	
1		2		3		4	



• Road traffic circulating before San Juan Bridge

- PR-A 236** Benadalid – Benalauría, links up at start
- PR-A 238** Benalauría-Algatocín & **PR-A 291** Jubrique-Benalauría, partial overlap
- GR-141** Great Path of the Serranía de Ronda, overlap up to La Escribana
- PR-A 240** Benarrabá - Genalguacil, overlap from La Escribana on

P O I N T	X	Y	HEIGHT ABOVE SL	DISTANCE
1. Benalauría (C)	297720	/ 4052220	/ 690 m	Km 0,0
2. El Bailadero	298275	/ 4051640	/ 610 m	Km 1,2
3. El Arabí junction	299020	/ 4050170	/ 290 m	Km 3,1
4. San Juan bridge	299075	/ 4049190	/ 245 m	Km 5,7
5. River Monardilla	299165	/ 4048875	/ 225 m	Km 6,1
6. La Estaca Plains walkway	299340	/ 4048285	/ 205 m	Km 7,2
7. Juan Ruíz irrigation ditch	299000	/ 4048005	/ 200 m	Km 7,7
8. Los Tejarejos walkways	298595	/ 4047825	/ 190 m	Km 8,3
9. Los Limones walkways	298280	/ 4047305	/ 180 m	Km 9,2
10. La Escribana recreational area	297875	/ 4047175	/ 185 m	Km 9,5
11. Las Viñas Hill	298720	/ 4047005	/ 375 m	Km 10,5
12. Las Cruces (The Crosses)	299470	/ 4046840	/ 495 m	Km 11,6

ROUTE DESCRIPTION **The 'Caminos' of Jubrique & El Arabí**
→ Up to km 6

From the Plaza del General Viñas in Benalauría, head east along the streets Iglesia and Cruz, until you reach the fountain of La Cruz, on a kind of balcony overlooking the Algotocín Way below. After a sharp bend in the road, once in the outskirts and surrounded by Almond trees, Olive trees and Prickly pears, you reach El Chorruelo fountain. You then turn south-east along a forest track, through ever more abundant Chestnut trees.

At kilometre 1.2, you come to the Bailadero area, a levelled off area for traditional festivals with outdoor gym equipment. From here, the PR A-238 breaks off to the right in the direction of Algotocín, which can be seen to the south-west. The PRA-291 then continues on from there to Jubrique, off to the left. Away to the east are the whitewashed houses of Alpandeire and Faraján, settled between the mountains and forested uplands. The route then makes a steep descent through a sun-blushed Cork oak forest with some Holm and Gall oaks. Pine trees become more plentiful once you leave the track (km 2.3),



The walkway of La Estacá plains above the clean waters

to take a very steep track off to the right.

At the 3-kilometre mark, a not so steep footpath goes off to the left to the Almenta mill, while the Great Path continues downhill until it reaches a country track, at a long bend. El Arabí is a junction of tracks where you take the path to the north-west. This makes another sharp turn when it crosses the Benjamuz stream.

The route continues through the considerable Cork oaks of the public uplands of El Coto and Vega del Río, until it reaches the MA-8305 road. This offers some excellent views to the north-east, over the Picado waterhole and the long straight stretch of the Genal past the Enmedio mill. The footpath now crosses the road twice, descends a steep-sided mound and reaches an old sawmill. Use the tarmac when crossing the bridge of San Juan over the Genal (km 5.7).

 **The walkways of the River Genal**
→ Up to km 9.5

Take the campsite track to go round the back of the San Juan Inn, before turning off onto a path that goes past the pretty mill of El Álamo. The route then follows the Genal, with Willows and Poplars on display. The next river you cross is the Monardilla, with plenty of European hackberry trees, Tamarisks and Oleanders. It climbs a little alongside the stream until it reaches the promenade-like El Ventorrillo, where it turns towards a deep oxbow lake. Few places on the Great Path have such a variety of trees and shrubs as here.

The uneven footpath then goes along the riverside, surrounded by dense woodland. After a narrow and winding footpath, you reach the track of the Juan Ruiz farm. There ▶

are some steps for a now non-existent bridge before reaching the Genal's tightest bend where the first walkways and steps are located (km 7.2), opposite the fertile plains of La Estacá.

After a water intake with plenty of Bear's breeches, you cross the Hondo stream, and come onto the extensive plains of Los Cuarterones, with only a few properties. The route follows the old irrigation channel, which is equipped with safety cables. Go over the Perejilas stream and up a steep slope to reach the much more open landscape of the Los Tejarejos plains. At the next walkway you come to, you climb some steps before going back down to the level of a disused irrigation ditch. This is on a fairly open area on the flood plains, called Los Duros with large Poplar trees, once through a gateway. There are large reed beds that lead on to the last walkway and steps, called Los Limones (km 9.2). This leads on to a ruined weir, before passing between a Poplar plantation, the river and some high slate cliffs. After going through another small gate, there is an optional diversion down a small track to the Escribana water hole (around km 9.5), an important meeting point of paths and tracks and recreational area.

 **The Shaded Route**
→ To the end of the stage

Instead of this, the Great Path takes on a stunning climb up the Cordel de la Umbría (the



The ancient footpath among Cork oaks with their cork recently harvested

Shaded Line) to the River Genal. The footpath was created by cutting into the slate, reaching above head height, particularly at the steepest part when it crosses the track to Los Duros.

Heading east and under a mixed forest of Cork oak, Gall oak and Pine trees, you pass a track that climbs to the left, to the Genalguacil road. The path continues to climb steeply until it reaches a small building and begins to flatten out little by little. The landscape opens out and there are numerous lookout spots over the Genal valley.

From a flat area with large Cork oaks, the sharp peaks of the Natural Park of the Sierra Bermeja come into view, while Genalguacil gets ever closer. To the south you can see the Sierra Crestellina and on a clear day, the Strait of Gibraltar. Benarrabá is on the other side of the valley, to the west.

The path runs between small fields and one last climb takes you past the Camino de los Limones on your right, over sections of traditional path and the access lanes to the properties. After the sports facilities of Genalguacil, you reach Las Cruces, where this stage comes to an end ■



Chestnuts just beginning to open up