

Stage PERIANA - RIOGORDO

THE STAGE IN SUMMARY

Stage 9 is the start of the Great Malaga Path's section through Malaga's Central Limestone Arc, lasting until Stage 12. Initially, it follows a wide upward curve through the municipality of Periana and its districts, to the north-east. It then turns west (and slightly south) from the village of Guaro on to Riogordo. In this second part, it runs along the southern slopes of the Alhama and Guaro mountain ranges, alongside numerous farmhouses which exist thanks to an abundance of springs. The third part runs through the valley of the River Sabar and the mountain pass of the same name.

The majority of the way is along unsurfaced tracks, including a section along the disused cogwheel railway line. It passes through the municipality of Periana for the first 11 kilometres, up to La Cueva country house. From there, it crosses the municipal boundaries multiple times between that and Alfarnatejo, with the path later forming the boundary between the two. From 16.5 kilometres onwards it runs through Riogordo.

The stage's highest point is near the turn-off to Marchamona (almost 900 metres above sea level), where it coincides with the GR 7-Tarifa to Athens. From the village of Guaro onwards, it adopts a very jagged profile, passing through an interesting area of dense Mediterranean vegetation and olive groves until it drops down into the River Sabar valley. It then climbs up to the Sabar mountain pass over clayey ground, to cross the A-7204 road and gradually work its way down to the end of the stage.

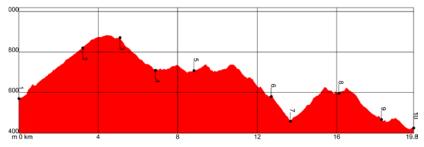
The villages seen along the route are worth a leisurely visit, although Marchamona is a way off the route. The waterfalls at the source of the river Guaro, near the town of the same name, are particularly noteworthy and especially in the rainy season. The country houses of Zapata and Las Monjas, perched between mountains and farmland, offer a very traditional image of integration in the natural environment.

The wild olive groves near the Zapata country house and the Cerrajón de los Baños mountain remind us of the Mediterranean forest with a multitude of creepers and evergreen bushes. Of greatest interest in the second part, are the River Sabar, the *Bujeo* soils with hundred-year old olive groves and the views towards the *Tajos* or rock faces.

The Gomer & Doña Ana rock faces from the area around the Sabar pass









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- Encountering farm vehicles
- Crossing main roads
- Crossing the River Sabar without a bridge

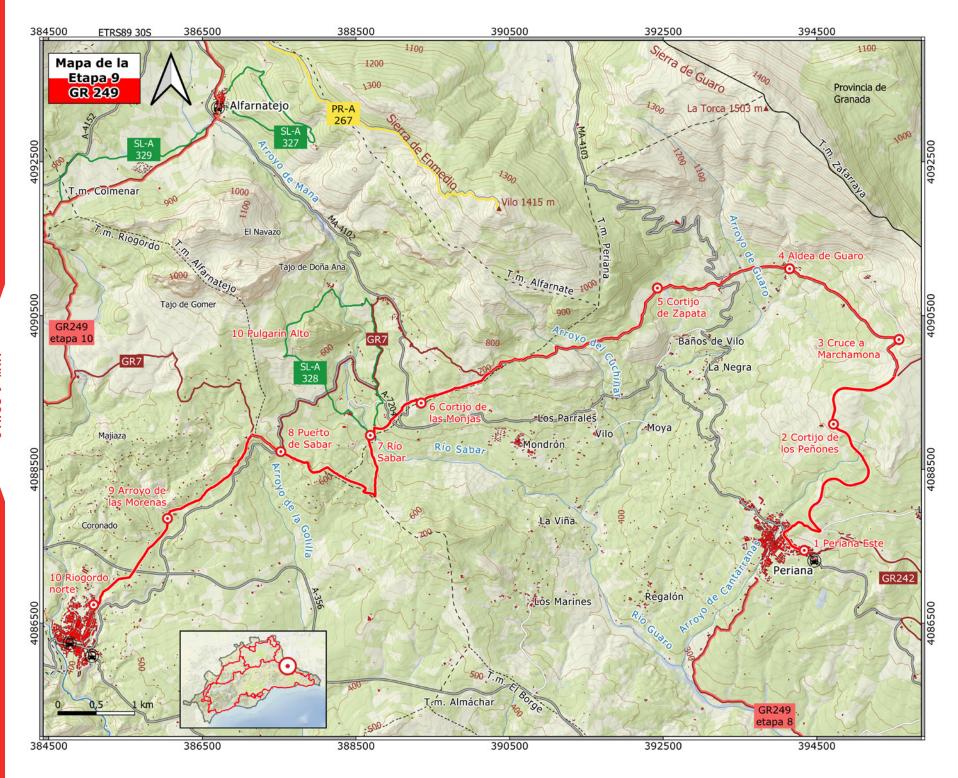


Links up at the start point

Partially overlaps from 4.5km mark and links up in Riogordo

Doña Ana & Sabar, links up at the River Sabar

P O I N T	Χ		Υ		HEIGHT ABOVE SL	DISTANCE
1 Periana east	394330	/	4087445	/	590 m	Km 0,0
2 Los Peñones estate	394721	/	4089083	/	825 m	Km 3,2
3 Marchamona turn off	395557	/	4090194	/	865 m	Km 5,1
4 Guaro hamlet	394155	/	4091107	/	730 m	Km 6,9
5 Zapata farmhouse	392425	/	4090858	/	725 m	Km 8,9
6 Las Monjas estate	389350	/	4089360	/	580 m	Km 12,6
7 Ríver Sabar	388685	/	4088940	/	470 m	Km 13.6
8 Sabar pass	387520	/	4088730	/	590 m	Km 16.1
9 Las Morenas stream	386045	/	4087860	/	480 m	Km 18.2
10 Riogordo north	385085	/	4086740	/	445 m	Km 19.7



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ROUTE DESCRIPTION



The route begins winding through the whitewashed houses of Periana, before taking a right-hand turn up a steep slope, off the main street of Calle Torre del Mar. It is part of an old livestock path which goes from the town to Boquete de Zafarraya and later connects to a wider track. Close to Periana and La Muela station, the path links up with the old suburban railway line, which it follows until km 4.5. This is the line that once ran from Malaga to Ventas de Zafarraya, completed in 1922 but dismantled in 1960. However, only a few sections of track and its infrastructure remain intact, such as viaducts and bridges.

The surface underfoot is fairly firm here and the unsurfaced track gently goes uphill. Further on, you pass by a quarry that has been converted into a landfill, while the path gradually becomes surrounded by limestone hills that the road cuts through to form channels.

Around the country estate of Los Peñones (3.2km), there are some excellent views of the lower Axarquía region, which the earlier stages of the Great Path pass through. A little further up, the track curves gradually

La Viñuela reservoir from the foot of the hills



round to the right, bringing a relatively high limestone crag into sight. Sheltered below is tall thicket of Oak, Weaver's, White and Spanish broom and Kermes oaks.

You pass the turnoffs to El Fuerte and Mezquita and climb up to a hilltop between the Mosquitos and de Lopez Peaks. At this point, you leave the old railway line. Note the fantastic views, both to the east and west along the Central Limestone Arc and the tall Aleppo pines which line the way and help reinforce the slopes.

The farmhouses & hamlets of Periana & Alfarnatejo → Up to km 11.5

After a sharp change of direction, the road drops down to the west and immediately passes the turn off to Marchamona on the right (km 5.1). Almost two kilometres on, the village of Guaro has a handful of dwellings and some 80 inhabitants who tend to both rainfed and irrigated fields and extensive livestock farmland. Apart from the more established towns, there are countless small properties here, ranging from farmhouses to large country estates. The route runs right along the foot of the mountain, with peaks rising 700 metres above the road, with occasional wooded slopes. The limestone comes into contact with clay, giving rise

to the numerous water sources and springs, such as the nearby Baños de Vilo.

At the Zapata farmhouse, the southern side of the Sierra de Enmedio is covered in dense woodland of wild Olive trees. The path becomes a forest

track, with successive branches leading off to the left (not to be taken), in an area of dense Mediterranean forest used for hunting. After one last hillock is the farmhouse of La Cueva, built into the side of a rock needle, the route continues along a secondary track to the west, and slightly to the south. It soon comes to pass the large country estate of Las Monjas on your left along a track of gravel and tarmac. Here there are a couple of covered wells that are so characteristic of the area.

It then crosses the MA-4102 road, which climbs to the right towards the nearby Pulgarín Alto & Bajo. Dropping down 200 metres alongside an olive grove, the route follows a small stream.

The River and mountain pass Sabar → To the end of the stage

Crossing the A-7204, it first runs along the stream bed itself and later a country track. Passing a farmhouse on your right, where it turns to the south and drops down to the River Sabar through farmland. The riverside vegetation is abundant here, with mainly Ash, Willow trees, Reeds and Oleanders, while Olive trees and hundred-year-old Carob trees with sinuous trunks are common on both banks.

After fording the river, it climbs some 100 metres in height along the wide dirt track that continues in the same southerly direction and

Alcaucin below the Tejada mountain range under cloud cover, and Periana



passes the abandoned La Botija farmhouse, which is on the left. At the top are multiple turn offs, where the path takes a north-westerly direction, over very clayey soil. Up to the Sabar pass, it continually takes the main branch along the crest of the hill, from where several concreted tracks branch off, with country houses and scattered Holm oaks. Below and behind you is Periana, while the rocky crags and the villages of the upper Axarquia can be seen from successive viewpoints, such as Comares and Colmenar. Now in descent, you carefully cross the same road once again, at its 18-kilometre mark, and come to is a small slope up to another high point, where it then turns south-west.

Up ahead to the north, the imposing massifs of Doña Ana and Gomer gorges stand out among olive groves and farmland.

The track starts off as concreted, passing country houses on both sides on its way down, and then becomes an earth track from close to the road, where there is refuse tip. In front now are the hills of the Montes de Málaga, along with the Santo Pitar and Comares peaks. Continuing through Almond and Olive trees, it soon reaches Las Morenas stream with its Rushes and Giant Reeds, which it crosses near a well. After a slight ascent, it continues

downhill, passing under the A-356 road, and at the crossroadsyou come to, turn right onto the main gravel track. With the stream on the left, the descent leads to the first houses, the tarmac appears and the Stage ends at the Camino Baños de Vilo, in Riogordo.