



Stage 10 RIOGORDO - ALFARNATE

THE STAGE IN SUMMARY

This route follows a large arc clockwise between Riogordo and Alfarnate, mostly in a northerly direction, but also partly north-west and above all north-east. It begins in the municipality of Riogordo up to the 8.8km mark, although two kms of this are through Colmenar, one of which at the source of La Santa stream and the other on the edge of the plains. It passes through Alfarnatejo for 4.7 kilometres, including the village itself, and then through Alfarnate from 13.5km in until the end.

The first part is through the small valley of Las Zorreras stream and the headwaters of the La Santa stream, close to El Bujeo and La Solana. The route then passes through the area of Auta and El Borbollón, climbing continuously through a densely forested landscape close to the towering rock faces. The third and the final sections run across the Llanos de Alfarnatejo and a mountain range, respectively, found between this village and Alfarnate, well-known as Malinfierno.

The Colmenar-Periana Corredor is an enormously interesting site from a geological perspective, due to a large diversity of rocks, among which clay and siliceous sandstones stand out. This is the setting for the two streams at the beginning and Las Cuevas stream (with the source of the Borbollón), which flow into the river Benamargosa. The plains and the limestone mountain range make up the catchment area of the river Sabar, which flows into the reservoir of La Viñuela.

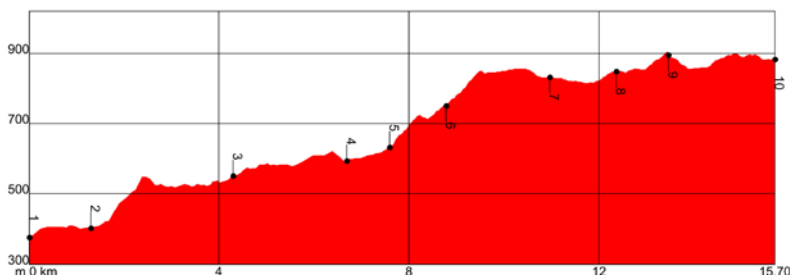
The large rock faces of Doña Ana and Gomer, with their jagged profiles and El Fraile, which closes off the area to the north, are quite exceptional. There are also mature Holm oak forests with Gall oaks and Turpentine. The Navas de Alfarnate and Alfarnatejo are flat cultivated areas between high mountain ranges at an average altitude of around 850 metres, with the two villages on its south-eastern flank. The altitude, the isolation provided by the amphitheatre of mountains and a very special climate give the whole area a mountain atmosphere in sharp contrast to the nearby Axarquía coast.

The Cortijo de Auta with the Tajos de Gomer and Doña Ana behind



10. RIOGORDO - ALFARNATE

Pulgarín Alto (S) (660 m)				Alfarnate (C) (885 m)			
15.6 km		5 h 20 min.		905 m		395 m	
Linear							
On foot				1.8 km		11.9 km	
1.9 km							
Environment hazards		1	2	3	4	5	Underfoot Conditions
Navigation		1	2	3	4	5	Physical Effort



- Road traffic circulating around the towns and on the mountain roads.
- Agricultural and forestry vehicles circulating
- Crossing a watercourse without a bridge

GR 7 E4

SL-A 329

SL-A 327

PR-A 267

Tarifa Atenas – partial overlap at the start

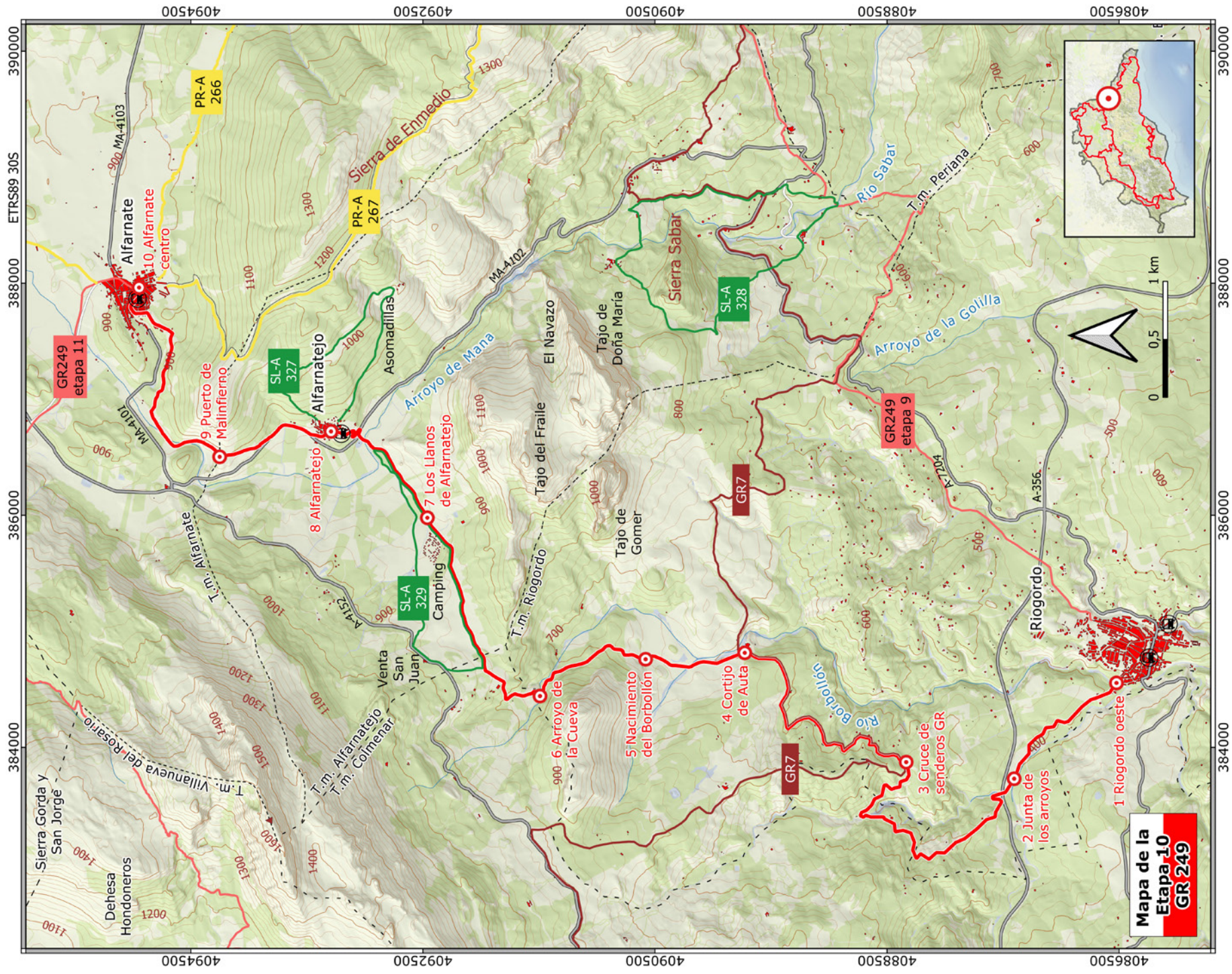
Venta de San Juan - partial overlap

Asomadilla & Navazo – links up at Alfarnate

PR-A 266 links up at the end of the Stage

P O I N T	X	Y	HEIGHT ABOVE SL	DISTANCE
1 Riogordo (O)	384555	/ 4086520	/ 380	Km 0.0
2 Meeting of the streams	383730	/ 4087405	/ 400	Km 1.3
3 Crossroads of tracks	383870	/ 4088335	/ 550	Km 4.3
4 Cortijo de Auta	384830	/ 4089720	/ 605	Km 6.7
5 El Borbollón spring	384775	/ 4090540	/ 630	Km 7.6
6 La Cueva stream	384440	/ 4091485	/ 760	Km 8.8
7 Alfarnatejo Plains	385980	/ 4092460	/ 830	Km 11.0
8 Alfarnatejo (C)	386720	/ 4093295	/ 845	Km 12.4
9 Malinfierno pass	386505	/ 4094230	/ 890	Km 13.5
10 Puerto de Malinfierno pass	386505	/ 4094230	/ 890 m	Km 14,4
11 Cerro de la Venta Hill	386595	/ 4094635	/ 850 m	Km 14,9
12 Alfarnate (C)	387955	/ 4094950	/ 885	Km 15,6

STAGE 10 MAP





ROUTE DESCRIPTION



The rivers of Riogordo

→ Up to km 6.7

The Central Limestone Arc of Malaga acts as a barrier against the northern winds, providing La Axarquía with an excellent climate. It also serves as a catchment area for rainwater, which drains off to the south and into the Mediterranean thanks to various springs. One of these water sources is Las Cuevas stream, which the route crosses at the start of this stage. The actual start is right at the confluence of the two main streams, and the route begins by following Las Zorreras stream, heading north-west. After turning left onto a dirt track, there is a slight descent, with the stream flowing down through an area of caves and cliffs; there are more olive groves and farmhouses on this bank than the other, and you soon pass a large threshing floor. Now level with the stream, just where the stream meets another called La Santa, it continues north-west, passing under the A-356 with a ford that can on occasion carry a fair quantity of water.

It then comes to a couple of bends and steep slopes, partly concreted over, with farmhouses and olive groves. After the 2.4km mark, you take a minor track to the right, which will take a long curve to the east and cut through successive gullies climbing up and down. The fords are usually concrete based, and the track has a light gravel surface. After passing the country estate of La Santa, the path crosses the main streambed, from

which the property took its name, among high limestone towers and centuries-old olive groves.

At the 4.2km mark, the route comes to the main track which was overlooked at the start and drops down a little. At the next junction, Stage 1 of the GR 7's southern variant parts and heads off to the north between Villanueva de Cauche and the village of Riogordo. The Path takes an easterly course, on a larger track than before the watershed divide, between country houses, each with their access roads. The multiple streams that can be forded without difficulty are tributaries of La Cueva stream, seen at the bottom of the valley heading towards the village at the start of the stage. A slightly steeper downhill section brings us to the Auta country estate, with the rocky outcrops beyond.



The cliffs and flatlands

→ Up to km 8.5

A sign here, tells us that the country house was the birthplace of Omar Ibn Hafsum, based on toponymic study. The river flowing nearby is a permanent watercourse, a wide green belt between the cereal fields of the hilly terrain, known for its rich biodiversity. From the road you can see the travertine rock formed from the calcium carbonate in the water, and its small waterfall formed from the platform created. At this hamlet built on this tufa limestone rock, which is in clear decline and has an enormous threshing floor, the path turns sharply northwards and begins ▶



The water mill at El Aceite and El Morrón de Malinfierno



another climb. You soon reach the source of the river Borbollón (km 7.6), at the foot of a small hill marked as an archaeological site and formed by greenish siliceous rocks of plutonic origin.

There is a sharp change in scenery when you enter the woodland of Holm and Portuguese oaks and Wild Olive trees. This occupies the whole southern side of the limestone outcrop situated between the Sierrecilla del Rey and the giant rocky masses of Los Tajos. On the far side of the valley to the right, in an area of limestone and clay are the ruins of the Farriñas and El Cuartillo Estates, both home to tragic historical events. There is also a well-known fountain, found among a patch of Elm trees and which usually has water flowing, even in summer.

Once at the crest of the pass, the route turns slightly to the north-east close to some electrical towers. A large field of very fertile red earth, product of the erosion of the limestone rock softens the landscape. On your right you pass limestone ridges covered in Holm oak forest and many Turpentine trees. Just further up, on the same side is the Tajo del Fraile.



From Alfarnatejo to Alfarnate

→ To the end of the stage

On the plain, you arrive at a crossroads next to some unfinished residential buildings. Smaller paths lead off on both sides and you must go down the one clearly leading to the nearby town. With farmland and properties on both sides, soon you come to the fountain of El Conejo (km 11.8) on your right, a multi-adventure park and the municipal swimming pool. You then cross the road from Pulgarín and continue north through the whitewashed hamlet of Alfarnatejo (km 12.4)

The pathway near the Cerro de La Venta peak



The two villages at the end of the stage occupy the areas of the plains with poorer soils, on the banks of the Sabar River and climbing the rocky slopes. Between the two is the Morrón de Malinfierno, the rocky spur of the Sierra de Enmedio to the north-west, where the path now climbs. These slopes are also covered by relatively young Holm oak forest, especially towards the bottom. El Morrón itself has sparse vegetation and Mediterranean Brome grasses, Gorse and White Rockroses cover the rocky crags with scattered Common Hawthorn bushes.

The Sabar River, known as the Arroyo de Palancar stream at this point, meanders around the mountains and comes to the ruins of an old olive mill and the well-known Charco del Aceite natural pool. Below the path is the old quarry which was converted into a refuse tip. Hereby begins a stretch of very mountainous pathway equipped with safety railings. The peak of Cerro de la Venta comes into view up ahead when you reach the river, with its northern slopes covered in dense vegetation. The footpath runs parallel to the river and gradually turns to the east. It then passes through an area with benches and turns sharply to the right to avoid the road through an area of old terraces, bordered by cobblestone pavement and dry-stone walls.

This shaded area is home to very interesting woodland and numerous almond trees. Meanwhile, the route enters the southern streets and heads towards the centre of the village, led by the omnipresent river, that is the backbone of life in Alfarnate, and so the end of the stage. ■