



Stage

17

# ALAMEDA • FUENTE DE PIEDRA

## THE STAGE IN SUMMARY

The stage's beginning and end, Alameda and Fuente de Piedra respectively, lie on a straight line running north-east to south-west. The hills of La Camorra or Mollina Sierra stand between them and opting for the southern side, the route follows a long curve round them heading gradually west. Initially, it takes the MA-6409 road before heading left onto unpaved country tracks. It climbs up to a small pass on the mountain side covered with Pine trees, before gradually curving round to the right. It passes through an area of woodland until it comes out into open countryside once again and reaches the source of the Santillán stream. Once on the plain, it runs along country lanes and crosses the AVE high-speed railway line, the MA-6410 and MA-6408 roads and the A-92 dual carriageway.

It then enters the village of Fuente de Piedra from the north, turns west and passes over the railway line, where it reaches the finishing post at the José Antonio Valverde Visitor Centre.

The route travels through the municipal area of Mollina from the start. The hills of its Sierra however, are too great an obstacle to be climbed and so by going around its southern side, you have the chance to see at least some of the vegetation that should cover it. It is possible to visit the two largest forests, on its eastern and southern fringes during the stage. Although there are some Holm oaks, it is Aleppo pines that make up most of the forest here. On the way down and just near an area of caves, there are some excellent panoramic views of the plains of La Vega de Antequera.

The recreational area at the spring of the Arroyo de Santillán is an oasis of greenery in the surrounding landscape. It has an extensive area open to the public which allows visitors to discover one of the main feeders to the Fuente de Piedra Lake. There are also splendid panoramic views. Very nearby is the Castellum de Santillán in Caperuzón, the Roman ruins of a residential villa dating back to sometime between the 1st and 3rd centuries AD, which was later walled. Between points 6 and 7, the route crosses the municipal area of Humilladero. ▶

**The Path as it passes through an abandoned Almond grove**





## 17. ALAMEDA • FUENTE DE PIEDRA

El Ventorillo, Alameda (E) (495 m)



The Lake, Fuente de Piedra (W) (420m)



18.6 km ➡ 3 h 55 min. ⌚

60 m ↗

160 m ↘

Linear ➡



On foot



3.9 km



14.7 km



0.0 km



Environment hazards



1

2

3

4

5

Navigation



1

2

3

4

5

Dificultad en el dzamiento



1

2

3

4

5

Physical Effort



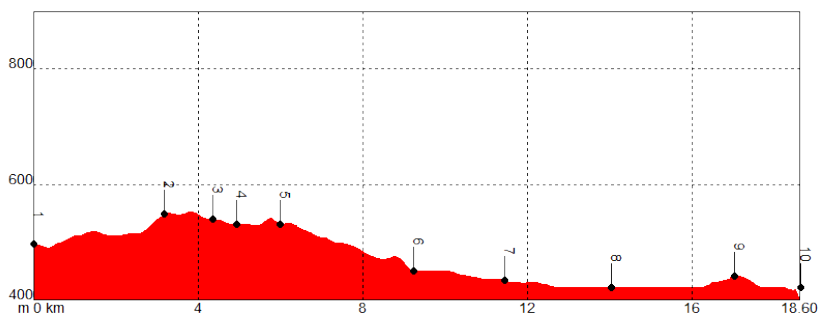
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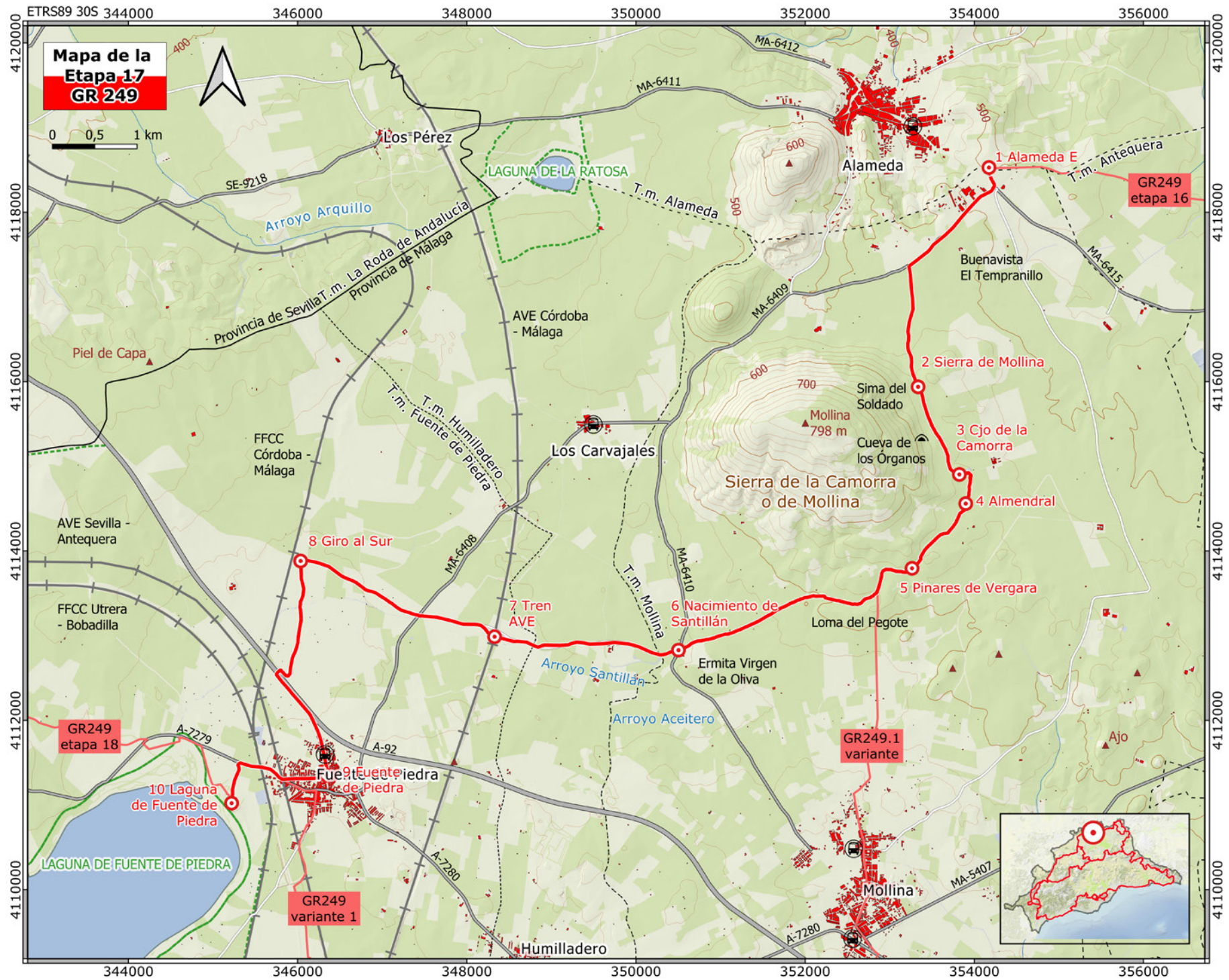


- Going along the MA-6409 road for 1.5km
- Farm traffic circulating along the tracks
- Crossing the MA-6410

GR 249.1

Mollina Variant, which deviates at km 6.5

| P O I N T                      | X      | Y         | HEIGHT ABOVE SL | DISTANCE |
|--------------------------------|--------|-----------|-----------------|----------|
| 1.Alameda E                    | 354173 | / 4118529 | / 495 m         | Km 0,0   |
| 2.Hills of the Sierra Mollina  | 353336 | / 4115939 | / 540 m         | Km 3,2   |
| 3.Cortijo de la Camorra estate | 353824 | / 4114904 | / 540 m         | Km 4,4   |
| 4.Almond orchard               | 353899 | / 4114560 | / 525 m         | Km 4,9   |
| 5.Vergara Pine Forest          | 353264 | / 4113796 | / 530 m         | Km 6,0   |
| 6.The Santillán spring         | 350503 | / 4112829 | / 455 m         | Km 9,2   |
| 7.AVE train line               | 349698 | / 4112901 | / 450 m         | Km 11,5  |
| 8.Sharp turn south             | 346036 | / 4113882 | / 420 m         | Km 14,0  |
| 9.Fuente de Piedra town        | 346340 | / 4111352 | / 440 m         | Km 17,0  |
| 10.Fuente de Piedra Lake       | 345220 | / 4111022 | / 420 m         | Km 18,6  |



## ROUTE DESCRIPTION


**The hills of the Sierra de la Camorra and Molina**
 Up to km 9.2

The first section of Stage 17 is along the road going to Molina and Fuente de Piedra from Alameda, which passes between the two mountain ranges. Starting from El Ventorrillo, the area named after the old roadside diner which stood here, next to the symbolic and busy crossroads. It also happens to be the meeting point of the three local municipal areas. You gradually leave Alameda behind, off to the right and the tarmac continues to the south-west until you have covered a kilometre and a half. The path then veers south through the area of Buenavista, through Olive trees and fields, also where it begins to steepen. It was in the nearby country house of Buenavista that José María El Tempranillo was killed in 1833 by another José María, El Barberillo, in one of Andalucía's the best-known events involving bandits.

Turning south off the road, you continue along tracks in good condition. Olive groves surround you once again while you climb up to the pass (550 metres above sea level, km 3.2). There is a small cluster of Holm oaks here, but Pine forest dominates the

landscape. The density of the woodland allows for little undergrowth, which is restricted to the edges of the forest where the larger Pines are also usually found.

Past the country estate of La Camorra to the east at kilometre 4.4, the path begins to go downhill, as does the condition of the track. It continues through an almost abandoned Almond orchard, with numerous vehicle tracks in the red clay soil. The heading then changes to south-westerly and a kilometre further on, the path enters forest consisting entirely of Pine trees, with Purple Jerusalem sage, Scorpion broom, Laurel-leaf rockroses and the occasional Mastic tree. The hills on the left are called Vergara and La Loma del Pegote. Both the Santillán stream and the Great Malaga Path dissect these two landmarks, through a section with the densest foliage around. The rest of the mountain range has suffered from forest fires to a varying extent.

The route's main attraction in terms of water, is actually the Sierra (the hills). While appearing to be dry, it holds the secret within of the numerous springs which arise from it, the most important of which is the Santillán stream. Many of the caves in its limestone rock have been explored. They are a fundamental part in the underground circulation of water, which is slowed and channelled by the karstification of the rock. The caves of Los Órganos are particularly significant for their length, as the Sima del Soldado and Las Goteras (naturally formed well-like caverns) are for their depth.

You pass two tracks that go down to the left, the second of which (with a ►

branch that goes up to a small water storage facility) is the Alternative Route to Fuente de Piedra via Molina and Humilladero. At about the 6.5-kilometre mark, the path splits and you take the fork that continues along the edge of the forest with a string of Olive groves on the left. The other branch passes through a narrow section of Pine forest on the hill of El Pegote. Surprisingly, the Sierra's influence ends here and the immense and magnificent Malaga countryside opens out in front of you.


**From the Santillán Spring to the Fuente de Piedra Lake**
 To the end of the stage

The water that seeps into the mountainside must flow out as soon as the geological conditions of the ground manage to expel it from the bedrock. It does this due to its impermeability and its underground contours. This is exactly what happens at the source of the Santillán stream, on the border between the municipalities of Molina and Humilladero. The Sierra itself produces numerous streams that flow out to the south, such as those of Berdún, Aceiteros or Santillán, with this last one having the largest flow. The route follows the course of the stream practically from its source to its mouth at the north-east end of the small lake.

Owing to either the fascination of, or the need for water, different cultures have settled in the region, drawn by the springs that have been here throughout history. It is the settlement of the Roman which stands out most, as the nearby archaeological site demonstrates. At present, Molina's water supply comes from boreholes near Santillán. This water source is a popular area to visit, and is also the location of a chapel dedicated to the Virgin of La Oliva.


 The official route crossing a young olive grove on red clay soils

When you cross the MA-6410 road and pass through the Recreational Area at kilometre 9.2, the route heads directly west and the terrain levels out. Although there are patches of Olive groves, rainfed land is the most common use of the agricultural land here. The path now has a few obstacles to cross, such as the AVE high-speed railway line at kilometre 11.5, an impressive project on many fronts. A little further on, you must cross the MA-6408 road, with great caution.

Close to the Malaga-Cordoba railway line, the pathway makes the day's most drastic change of direction. It bears south until it reaches the A-92 dual carriageway, passing underneath it. There are many wells dug for agricultural purposes in this final part of the route, in the area of Las Albinas, aptly named after the temporary waterlogging of the land.

You now approach Fuente de Piedra, and walk through its streets in a southerly direction and then to the west, turning at the famous fountain. To leave the village again, look for the overpass that leads to a car park, called Cerro del Palo, where the magnificent facilities of the Visitor Center, José Antonio Valverde and one of Malaga's icons, the Nature Reserve of the Fuente de Piedra Lake.


 The way along the edge of the Pine forest in the area of La Loma del Pegote