












# Stage 3

## Yunquera - Tolox

|  |        |   |   |   |                      |
|--|--------|---|---|---|----------------------|
| Estimated duration   | 3 h    |  |  | 1 | Environment Hazards  |
| Cumulative elevation gain  | 357 m  |  |  | 2 | Navigation           |
| Cumulative elevation loss  | 757 m  |  |  | 1 | Underfoot conditions |
| Aprox. distance  | 8,8 km |  |  | 3 | Physical Effort      |
| Trail type   | linear |  | Difficulty (MIDE scale): 1 to 5   |   |                      |
| Year-round conditions, estimated time according to MIDE criteria, without stops, 2018. Mode: On foot |        |   |   |   |                      |



ASPHALT

15%



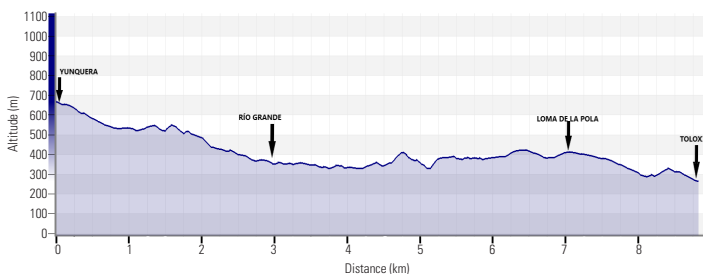
TRACK

85%



FOOTWAY

0%



| P O I N T                | X      | Y       | ALTITUDE | DISTANCE |
|--------------------------|--------|---------|----------|----------|
| <b>1</b> Yunquera        | 328274 | 4066670 | 665      | Km 0     |
| <b>2</b> Río Grande      | 328092 | 4065101 | 372      | Km 2,9   |
| <b>3</b> Loma de la Pola | 330738 | 4063216 | 392      | Km 6,9   |
| <b>4</b> Tolox           | 330212 | 4061974 | 265      | Km 8,8   |

**Maps** E/1:25.000 • 1051-II. 1051 IV.

**Access to the starting point.** Los Patos Mill, reachable from the centre of town along Calvario and Agua streets.

**Access to the finishing point.** San Roque Avenida. Entrance to Tolox along the A-7250 road.

### THE STAGE IN SUMMARY

The route of the GR-243's third stage between Yunquera and Tolox is a constant surprise in terms of scenery. The variety of rock formations and landscape undoubtedly serve to enliven the journey through terrain, which is constantly alternating between woodland and fields of crops. The modelling and carving out by the River Grande played a large part in the landscape's creation. In addition, the hydroelectric infrastructure on the River Grande is also on display. From the off-set, we will gradually cross the exemplary agro-system of the Plano river, a tributary of the Grande. We later reach the Castaño pass, the meeting point of several paths, as well as varied geology such as the extraordinary peridotites. After the resulting descent, we cross the River Grande, entering the areas of La Breña and La Pola, following the GR-243 signs through a network of agricultural and forest paths. This leads on to a viewpoint next to the municipality of Tolox's reservoir. It is also an excellent natural lookout spot to see the transition between the Sierra Parda mountains, covered with extensive Maritime pine forests, and the rolling fields of crops covered with woody varieties, with varying degrees of success. In this transition between forest and agriculture, Tolox is strategically located on the mound formed between the rivers Los Caballos and Alfaguara, expanding its motley and whitish urban centre, evidently of Andalusian origin.



▲ Los Patos mill

▼ Access the stage's GPS data here



### CONNECTIONS WITH OTHER ROUTES

- **SL-A 246:** The first hundred metres of the stage.

### A NOTE OF CAUTION

It is prohibited to pick fruits from the private land alongside the pathway. Not only is this private property, but they are the livelihood and way of life of local residents. Although there is limited road traffic, stay aware of passing vehicles to avoid any accidents. It is not permitted to walk along the irrigation dams, nor along those linked with the hydroelectric complex. On rainy days, it is advisable to wear mid-calf length walking boots, as some sections of the track can get muddy. Despite the short distance and keeping to tracks, be careful not to overdo it on the steep sections on the climb from River Grande to the rise of La Pola. A pair of telescopic poles will help here.

### ROUTE DESCRIPTION

At the end of Agua Street is the building of the old mill, Los Patos and several of its most significant elements, such as the double water channel and the aqueduct that crosses the street. It was used specifically for milling wheat, propelled by the waters of the river Plano. Upstream from this, is an interesting agricultural system made up of a web-like network of irrigation channels and terraces that follow the contour lines, held in place by thick dry-stone walls. Apart from the occasional vegetable garden, the terraces are home to Vineyards, Fig, Fruit and Citrus trees. In recent years tropical plants, especially Avocado trees, have become the crop of choice. It is a quite stunning setting; a seemingly masterful visual reading of an outstanding agricultural and cultural

▼ Terraced orchards



landscape. It combines well with the overbearing and harsh Sierra Cabrilla mountains and the white-washed village of Yunquera. Its travertine bedrock is subject to the raggedness of the slope's ancient method of multiple cropping. Water, soil and seed in perfect symbiosis. This is the Andalusian concept of the vegetable garden. Now it is called sustainability. From this site, we can also see the installations of the Yunquera waste water treatment plant.

At the valley bottom, we cross the modest Plano River and continue along the track towards the Castaño pass. This a meeting point of paths and an interesting site to appreciate the external geological processes and the overthrust faults of varied rock formations, including sedimentary, metamorphic and igneous rocks, such as the peridotites. We go straight over this crossroads, down a steep descent to the water's edge of the River Grande. Before crossing over, it is worth taking the short detour to the right to see the San Pascual power station building (**2.6km**).

“ The last quarter of the 18th century and the first half of the 19th century were golden periods for Malaga's industry, thanks to the enterprise and determination of several family groups, both local and foreign. This boosted different sectors such as the agri-food, iron and steel and textile industries. During this period of rapid growth and requirement for energy resources, a total of three power stations were set up on the banks of this river: San Pascual, San Augusto and San Eugenio. The San Pascual power station still has its gardens and architecture showing a certain grandeur. At the rear of the building is the Güichi, the steep stepped waterway connected to the dam, that channeled the water through the generator. Further on towards Tolox, we can see the colossal irrigation channel and other buildings such as the warehouses belonging to Taillefer, the Malagan company that was awarded the management of the electricity supply in those days. Eugene Taillefer, a French agricultural engineer, arrived in Spain, recruited by Manuel Gutiérrez de la Concha, Marquis of Duero, founder of an agricultural colony that became the town of San Pedro de Alcántara. Taillefer had important agri-food, timber and automobile businesses. ”



▲ The San Pascual power plant and the 'El Güichi' waterway

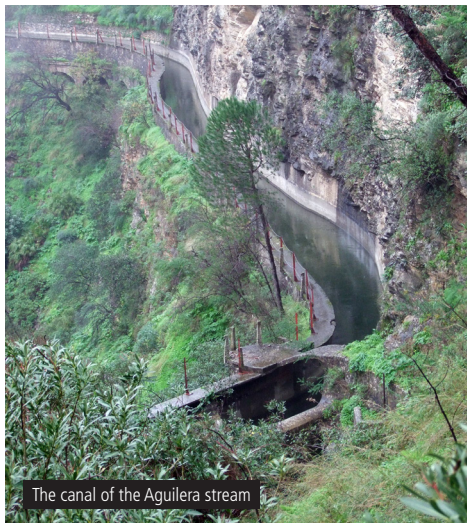
The track climbs up the steep slope to bring the irrigation channel into sight on one side, which is well fenced off. In Yunquera they call it 'the Dike.' We move away from the river and climb high enough to contemplate the enclosed valley with few arable fields. The surrounding pine-covered slopes are completed with Olive and Almond trees. Due to less agriculture, Holm oaks, Wild olive trees and Carob trees are reconquering territory, accompanied by a thick undergrowth. Along the riverbeds, due to the humidity and less exposure to the sun, Gall oaks grow freely.

On one side of the path, we can vaguely make out the remains of one of the derelict canals, small dams and the interesting small bridges crossing over to the other side. Further on, you will see an old entrance to a tunnel that was later deepened by a local in search of riches, hence its nickname, 'the Treasure Tunnel.' Shortly before the GR-243 turns south and leaves the River Grande, take extra care when crossing of the Aguilera ravine, which is quite rugged and surrounded by abundant vegetation. From the track, you go down a short but steep trail to the canal which carries water to the abandoned San Augusto power station. Be careful, the descent is not recommended for sufferers of vertigo or those not comfortable on unsteady terrain. A viaduct crosses the stream that plunges down to the River Grande in several waterfalls.





The gauging house



The canal of the Aguilera stream

“ The River Grande flows very close to the San Pascual power station through a spectacular cave. This impressive mountainous location can be reached by following the route of the SL-A 246, which coincides with the start of stage 3 of the GR-243. The area's rugged terrain and the abundance of water have allowed various canyon descents to be set up in recent years. The most vertical, located above the Zarzalones spring, is known as Agua Injerta. From the cave to the San Pascual power station is the fast-flowing canyon descent of Zarzalones, the most visited by fans of this outdoor activity. The dam's overflow channel was also installed above the power plant. For obvious reasons, it is known as San Pascual Canyon. The last one is the Aguilera Canyon, with an impressive initial vertical abseil of 33 metres, followed by others of 14, 17 and 9 metres respectively. Canyoning requires knowledge of alpine climbing techniques and a certain amount of experience. It is advisable to acquire the specialised services of one of the local active tourism companies in order to ensure the highest levels of safety. ”

Returning to the path, we continue between ridges covered with Olive and Almond trees, enjoying splendid panoramic views of the surrounding countryside. If we look closely towards one of the meanders of the River Grande, we can make out the attractive, reasonably large and country estate of La Puente, with an air of stateliness. Next to the main building there is a small chapel. Nearby, we can also see the beautiful bridge with a semi-circular arch over which one of the roads from Tolox to Yunquera used to pass, as shown on a map from the Geographical and Statistical Institute dated 1953.

La Pola ridge (**6.9km**), where we meet a crossroads and water deposit, marks the end of the climb. The reward is an enjoyable and easy track from here, following the gentler slope of the River Grande as it flows between farmed ridges towards the Guadalhorce Valley. To the south and west, the mountainous nature of the Sierra Parda persists, in stark contrast to the grey of the Tolox mountain range. Against this backdrop of green, reddish and earthy tones, the town centre of Tolox, our destination appears in all its splendour.

Before reaching the Avenida de San Roque in Tolox, we need to cross the Alfaguara River, which in this section and until it joins the river Grande in the area of Las Millanas, is known as the Almozara.

▼ The Treasure Tunnel



La Puente

