

# BENALMÁDENA • ALHAURÍN DE LA TORRE

#### THE STAGE IN SUMMARY

This Stage draws two large arcs in the Sierra de Mijas, climbing first to the north from the town of Benalmádena, through the gorge of El Tajo del Quejigal, following the same route as the previous stage. It then links a string of mountain passes together along the crest, which in turn separate the inland villages from those on the coast. It is a traditional pathway following a southwest-northeast direction. Finally, it heads towards Alhaurín de la Torre, down the ravine of the Zambrano stream, heading north again.

The first section is entirely through Benalmádena's territory until kilometre 5.5 at the Puerto Viejo pass, where it meets the municipality of Alhaurín de la Torre. The watershed forms the border between this and Benalmádena for some 300 metres, followed on by Torremolinos. It does so up to the Canuto pass (km 9.5), from where it enters Alhaurín de la Torre definitively.

The route can be considered relatively easy despite being semi-mountainous. This is down its use of the ancient paths used by mule drivers, coal merchants and country folk, which were designed specially to smooth out the steep slopes and thus access to the upper reaches. The highest point of the entire route is close to the Costa del Sol's rather unique fortress, on the Calamorro hill and is connected to Benalmádena by a cable car.

The pathway, on the other hand, passes through rocky areas, dolomitic sandbanks, Pine and Holm oak forests and plateaus of aromatic shrubs. Tracks are used on occasion, however it is mostly over very well-preserved footpaths.

The spectacular series of panoramic views over the slopes at the eastern end of Malaga's symbolic mountain range are one of this Stage's main attractions. The mountain passes indicate the border between municipalities, since the Sierra is an important part of each one's forestry and tourist heritage. This is especially true in terms of water resources and mining activities, with their obvious ramifications.









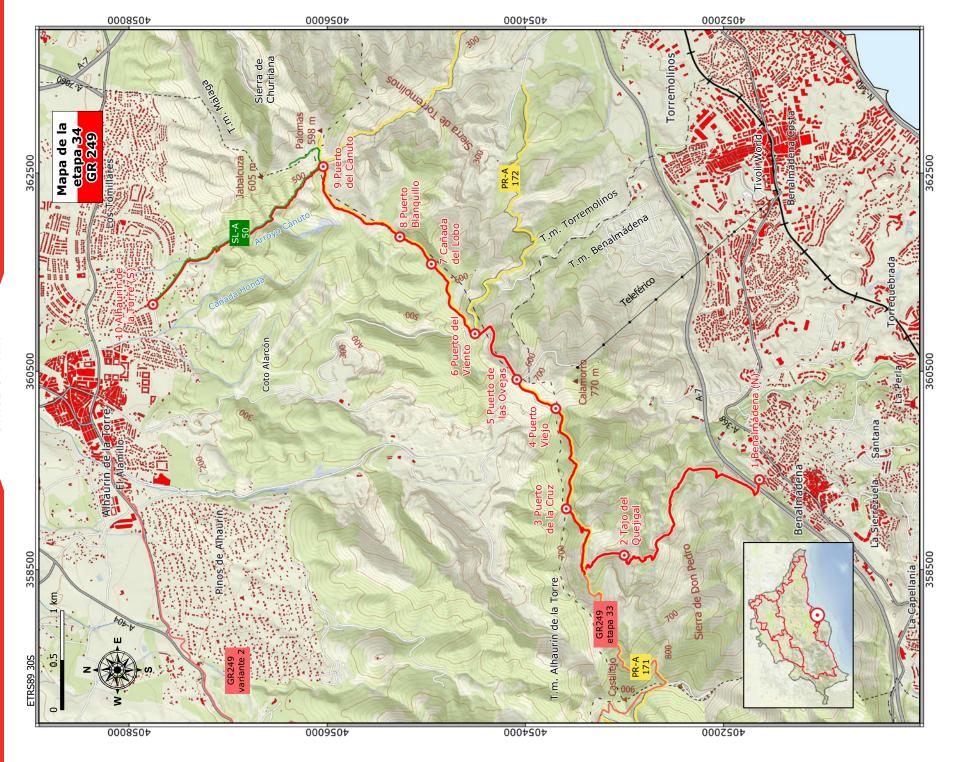
- · Road traffic circulating at the start and end
- Cyclists sharing the same pathway

Mijas Benalmádena, from the Tajo de la Sabia to Las Ovejas Pass

Los Puertos de Torremolinos passes, overlapping for 2.5km in the middle section

Jabalcuza hill, overlaps at the end

P O I N T	Х		Υ		HEIGHT ABOVE SI	DISTANCE
1.Benalmádena (N)	359405	/	4051635	/	290 m	Km 0,0
2.Tajo del Quejigal gorge	358645	/	4053000	/	500 m	Km 2,8
3.La Cruz pass	359110	/	4053585	/	635 m	Km 4,3
<b>4.</b> Puerto Viejo pass	360125	/	4053695	/	615 m	Km 5,5
<b>5.</b> Las Ovejas pass	360420	/	4054085	/	595 m	Km 6,0
6.El Viento pass	360880	/	4054510	/	565 m	Km 6,9
7.El Lobo ravine	361580	/	4054950	/	575 m	Km 7,8
8.Blanquillo pass	361855	/	4055265	/	530 m	Km 8,3
9.El Canuto pass	362565	/	4056040	/	520 m	Km 9,5
10.Alhaurín de la Torre (S)	361175	/	4057760	/	150 m	Km 12,3





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### 34. Benalmádena • Alhaurín de la Torre

#### ROUTE DESCRIPTION



Setting off from the northern part of Benalmádena, you take the path through a tunnel under the Mediterranean motorway, a drainage channel of the Hondo stream. Turn immediately right after exiting for a kilometre of gentle ascent alongside the AP-7S. A series of disused huts for the water network come up, while a link to the first municipal hiking route goes off to the left. After the fifth hut is the second junction with the pink route, which you also disregard, before the path takes a slightly more north-westerly course from the previous northerly. Under the Aleppo pines, the thin undergrowth of Esparto grasses, Carnations and Thistles gives way to a denser and taller undergrowth of Scorpion broom, Turpentine, Mastic, Mediterranean buckthorn and Juniper.

You pass an abandoned and shaded quarry and from there on the valley sides become steeper, while the path flattens out through the narrow valley. Just before the ford over El Quejigal stream is a rise with the best panoramic view of the rocky amphitheatre-like scenery below. El Quejigal gorge stands out with its tangled

trees, contrasting with the Oleanders and the stream's Rushes.

The route then passes along the confluence of the two streams at the head of the valley, where some Myrtles, Rosemary and Dwarf fan palms are to be found among the Pines. The sandy areas begin (km 2.7) and you cross a stream, to then negotiate a steep slope, eroded due to the lack of vegetation. This brings you to a high point with the junction of paths near La Sabia gorge, which is just a few metres behind the watershed. Take a right turn through Stone pines, leaving the route of Stage 33 behind.

## The mountain passes → Up to km 9.5

The incline gradually levels off and you leave the hill of El Moro behind you to the west, hedgehog-like thanks to its many antennae. The first of the passes is that of La Cruz (km 4.3), where the Great Path keeps to a height of 650 metres. There are decent panoramic views, firstly of Benalmádena and then the Calamorro hill beyond, while passing by Kermes oaks perched on the highest point of the day.

You reach El Puerto Viejo, (the Old Pass) where several routes up to El Calamorro from Benalmádena converge. The selected route goes along the northern slope, following



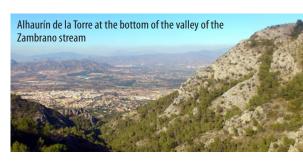
a power line and has views over the quarry of Sierra Llana, between the Blanquillo and El Pinar streams, with some terracing replanted with trees.

The next viewpoint is Las Ovejas pass (km 6.0), up to which a track climbs from La Miel stream. The branch off to the right leads up to the cable car station. This area of white sand is home to the upper courses of the Los Muertos and

El Saltillo streams, where you take a country track overlooking the coastline, instead of the footpaths. At the crossroads of the Puerto del Viento mountain pass, continue along the same track that goes up and over the hill.

Torremolinos town hall's tourist and environmental complex in the Cañada del Lobo ravine is the Great Path's next stop. Soon after this, you abandon the forest tracks in favour of a footpath that zigzags along a shallow limestone lapies, passing beside an old steel and concrete tower. This leads on to the Blanquillo pass (km 8.3), recognisable for its new fork that heads towards the Blanquillo stream and the quarries.

The terrain changes on the Ridge or Plains of Los Pajaritos, cleared of trees and with thicket of mostly aromatic and thorny plants. The descent starts while in a copse of tall Maritime and Aleppo pines, going past the livestock shelters of Tío Caliche (km 9.1) with panoramic views over the Guadalhorce valley. Near the rustic old farmhouse is another of the Public Upland's cairns, the next one being at El Canuto pass. This is undoubtedly a symbolic spot, and an obligatory stopping-off point on the traditional paths between Alhaurín de la Torre and Torremolinos. It is little surprise therefore that three types of certified footpaths converge here: the SL-A 50, the PR-A 172 and our GR 249.





The peaks of Las Palomas, to the east, and the Jabalcuza to the north are also accessed from here. The Great Malaga Path nevertheless, heads north-west and downhill where it enters the Zambrano ravine. The vegetation here becomes almost rainforest-like in appearance thanks to the very well-developed Mastic, Turpentine, Mediterranean buckthorn and Carob trees and the tangle of rough Bindweed (also known as Smilax) and other climbers. This dense vegetation contrasts heavily with the two rocky valley sides, of El Jabalcuza on the right and El Coto Alarcón on the left.

With the cables of a power line overhead, the valley gradually opens up as you cross the stony bottomed stream several times until you reach a plain covered with tall Pines. Among the fallen leaves and bushes, you can still see the terraced walls of the vineyards, abandoned more than a century ago, along with the occasional rustic property.

Crossing over the Zambrano stream just before it becomes a small gully, leads to an Olive grove and to a tarmac track further on, called the Camino de las Viñas (the Vineyards Way). This descends steadily towards Alhaurín de la Torre through plantations of subtropical plants and farmhouses that are gradually being replaced by the modern housing developments at the end of the Stage.