

RONDA BENAOJÁN TRAIN STATION

THE STAGE IN SUMMARY

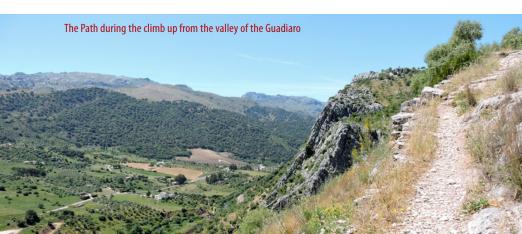
This next Stage of the Great Malaga Path makes use of the Los Molinos and the Old Ronda roads that connect the settlements at its start and end. The former road runs through the Hoya del Tajo, the depression at the foot of Ronda's gorge, through which the river Guadalevín flows. The path departs from the rocky cliff face, then heads mainly north until kilometre 2. It then turns west to climb the rocky slope on the other side of the valley, up to the passage of La Muela. During this intense start to the stage, you will see the old walls, the water mills, and the Puente Nuevo (New Bridge), one of Andalucia's most recognizable sights.

From this point on, it follows the traditional 'Caminos' or routes to Benaoján and to Montejaque, which both go down to the two rivers' confluence. However, this latter route diverts at the railway level crossing with no barriers (km 5), from where the GR-249 continues in a south-westerly direction.

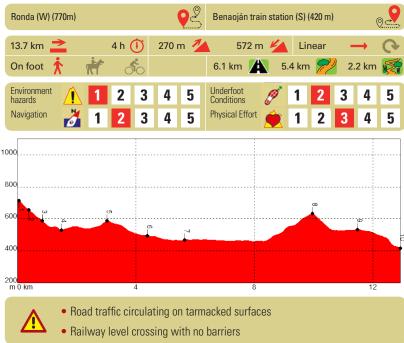
The Great Path accompanies the recently improved stretch of the Guadiaro River, but to reach Benaoján it climbs up an attractive pathway with cobbled sections to the Puerto de Ronda pass. Underneath this greyish slab of rock is the Hundidero – Gato Cave System. Before reaching the destination in the hamlet of La Estación (the Station) you pass through the village of Benaoján. From here, you take the footpath down to the River Guadiaro's edge once again.

The stage uses a variety of surfaces: tarmacked roads, country tracks, footpaths and paved footpaths. Overall, it is a very easy distance and has a saw-tooth profile with a couple of longer downhill and uphill sections.

The route stays within the municipal area of Ronda until kilometre 8, where it enters the Gibraltar Ford. The surface type changes here from track to footpath and this signals the beginning of the municipality of Benaoján, where it remains until the end. Finally, at the level crossing of the Algeciras to Bobadilla railway line, you enter the Sierra de Grazalema Natural Park.

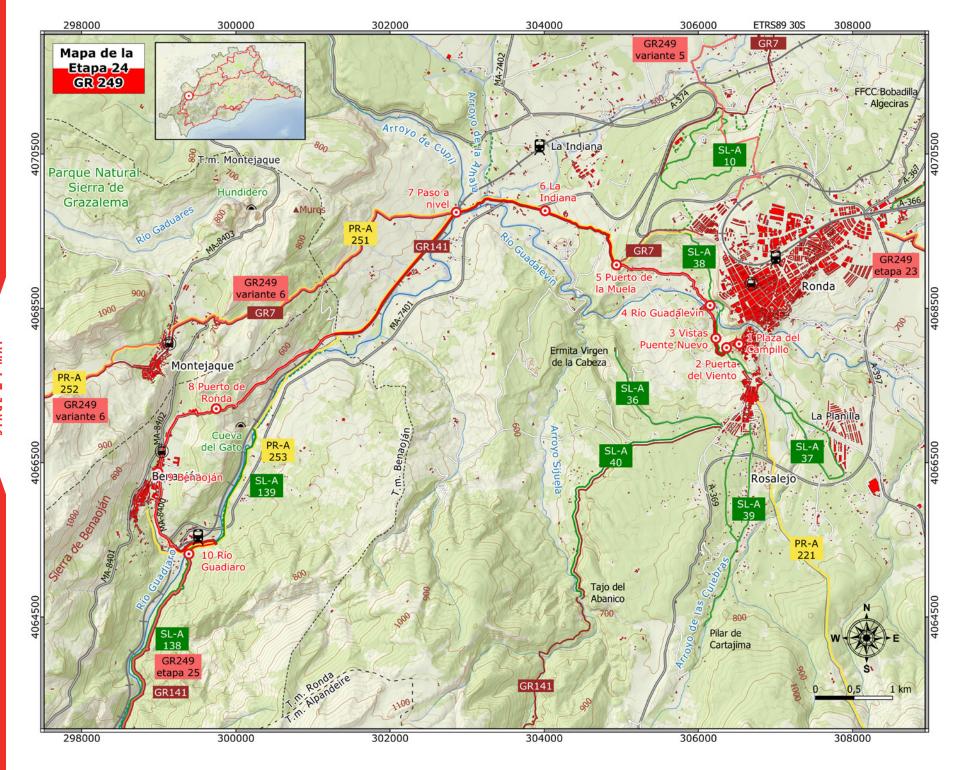






| GR-141 | Great Path of the Ronda Hills, overlap |
|----------|--|
| SL-A 38 | Loop of La Caldera — El Tajo mills, partial overlap |
| PR-A 251 | Ronda-Montejaque y PR-A 253 , Ronda-Benaoján, coincidencia parcial |
| GR7 E4 | Tarifa to Athens, partial overlap |
| SL-A 138 | River Guadiaro & SL-A 139 El Gato cave, link up at end |

| P O I N T | Χ | Υ | HEIGHT ABOVE SL | DISTANCE |
|--------------------------------|----------|---------|--------------------|----------|
| 1.Plaza del Campillo square | 306530 | 4068040 | / 770 m | Km 0,0 |
| 2.El Viento pass | 306365 | 4067990 | / 695 m | Km 0,4 |
| 3. View of Puente Nuevo bridge | 306225 | 4068115 | / 620 m | Km 0,8 |
| 4.River Guadalevín | 306150 | 4068540 | / 555 m | Km 1,5 |
| 5. La Muela pass | 304940 | 4069065 | / 605 m | Km 3,0 |
| 6.La Indiana | 304010 | 4069765 | / 500 m | Km 4,4 |
| 7.Level crossing | 302860 | 4069745 | / 475 m | Km 5,7 |
| 8.Ronda pass | 299745 | 4067200 | / 635 m | Km 10,0 |
| 9. Benaoján | 298990 | 4066375 | / 530 m | Km 11,5 |
| 10. River Guadiaro | 299390 / | 4065315 | / 420 m | Km 13,7 |
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24. Ronda · Benaoján Train Station

ROUTE DESCRIPTION



The route leaves Ronda by going down the well-known Camino del Campillo way. At a sharp bend and surrounded by Almond trees, the paved pathway passes by the access to the base of the Puente Nuevo bridge on your right. The two via ferrata climbing routes in the gorge also finish here. At the next turnoffnot far on, you reach the rammed-earth wall of the Albacara or Fortress. Keeping the access to the Cristo or Los Molinos gate on your right, the route heads off to the left, towards the gate of El Viento.

Roughly 500 metres on, you join the Camino de los Molinos track. This wide & cobbled road was built for the construction of the Ronda hydroelectric power station in the 1940s, precisely where it leads. There is a level section at the start of La Cuesta del Cachondeo (Joke Hill), which has one of the best views of the Puente Nuevo and the walls of the Tajo.

You then come to the entrance of a hostel and soon after, to two restored mills. Once you have passed the cobbled road turn-off to the right that leads to the power station, the irrigation channels of the River Guadalevín

The Gorge and its basin, from the start of the route in Ronda



give way to plots of farmland and orchards. There is then a steep descent down a concrete track. This brings you onto the flood plains of the Guadalevín river, which flows from the Sierra de las Nieves.

An uphill section takes you past more plots of farmland and Walnut groves to an interesting property that has preserved its unrendered medieval tower. You then continue past vineyards, country houses and an equestrian centre until you reach one of the natural exits of La Hoya basin, by the saddle of El Puerto de la Muela. The best views of the first 3 kilometres are from here.

El Mercadillo typical 'Dehesa' land & La Indiana Up to km 5

The gravel track then comes to an important crossroads, which links the two footpaths that come down from Ronda through the semi-urban park named Dehesa del Mercadillo. This wooded area of Stone pines with a few Holm oaks amounts to some 138 hectares.

The path then heads mainly west, leaving the Pine forest and soon comes to some old quarries and abandoned rubbish dumps. It then passes nearby the area's solid waste transfer site, which is on the right at a bend

in the road. You now come onto the 'Cañada Real', an ancient livestock track of the region of Campo de Gibraltar, which goes down towards La Indiana through farmland and past the chimney of an old olive press. Just before reaching the road, the old Parochial School is on your left. A small group of houses line the road in this hamlet of Hoyo Tabares. You

then leave the road at kilometre 5 to go down to the banks of the Guadalevín once again.

The River Guadiaro and the Old Road

→ Up to km 10

Downstream from the confluence of the Guadalevín and Guadalcobacín rivers, it becomes the Guadiaro River and the route turns south-west to follow it. After the ruins of a house on the Arroyo del Cupil stream, we reach the barrier-free level crossing of the Algeciras - Bobadilla railway line. Once over the other side, the GR-7 E-4 breaks off and makes its way towards Montejaque, while you continue parallel to the railway track, now within the Sierra de Grazalema Natural Park

There is a tall Ash tree near a spring that signals kilometre 7, almost as if it were a milestone. Right on the 8-kilometre mark, you leave the track and start along a footpath, near the Gibraltar Ford.

The first significant uphill climb is not far on, through the foothills of the Sierra del Algarrobo mountains, known as Los Pajarejos. A dense layer of White broom covers the landscape, along with Dwarf fan palms, Wild Olive trees and a few Holm oaks. Further on down, the river clings to the rockface, having flowed out of the Cueva del Gato cave system, which can be seen just below the path up ahead. You pass by an unauthorised access to the cave that drops down to the left. The pathway has cobblestones in the steeper areas, and is reinforced by dry

The River Guadiaro at El Charco de la Barranca



stone wall terracing. On reaching the Ronda pass, which is surrounded by Olive groves, you have already covered 10 kilometres.

Benaoján, between river and mountains

→ To the end of the stage

The way down to the plains of La Vega de Benaoján is on a wide concrete track with occasional exposed areas of the old cobblestones. Just on the left-hand side of the path, on a bend is the protective cover of a small sima or natural sinkhole. Continuing on, you pass the old Benaoján rubbish dump below you before arriving at the La Vega, (the valley floor) and its meandering stream of the same name. Going past farmland, warehouses and the cemetery, it is mainly tarmacked tracks as you cross the village from north to south, between kilometres 11 and 12 of the route.

The long avenue continues downhill after the Plaza de la Constitución. La Estación (the train station) of Benaoján can be reached by following the pedestrian walkway next to the Ronda road, passing the climbing walls and the via ferrata on your left. Above the source of the Cascajales stream, you can also see the end of the children's via ferrata, which starts at the river. The pavement ends at a viewpoint where there is a drinking water point, with excellent views of the hamlet of Benaoján station.

The pathway, known as the trocha, passes a small house and the pipelines of La Serranía hydroelectric power station on your left. From the houses, cross the level crossing and turn left. Via an irrigation channel you reach the pools of El Charco de la Barranca, where you cross the River Guadiaro over the stepping stones of the weir and turn right to reach the end of the Stage.