



Stage 25

BENAOJÁN TRAIN STATION • JIMERA DE LÍBAR

THE STAGE IN SUMMARY

Stage 25 runs along with the south-eastern boundary of the Sierra de Grazalema Natural Park, on the Cañada Real (an ancient livestock track protected by Royal Decree). The valley of the River Guadiaro follows a long and straight line, below limestone mountains. These tower 1,000 metres above the river, and rise to a height of 1,400 metres above sea level. The route passes over land belonging to Benaoján and Jimera de Líbar in almost equal proportions, while the Seco stream marking the approximate halfway point.

Heading south-west almost throughout, the path climbs above the running water below, to then drop down on several occasions. These undulations coincide with the main tributaries arriving from the left, the Agua, Fuente Enrique and Seco streams. In its central part, the route is fairly narrow and requires extra care and attention while walking along it. The rest is along a wide track or concrete and surfaced roads towards the end. The train can also be used to return to the starting point.

The route makes use of traditionally wider trails, and specifically the Cañada Real of the region of Campo de Gibraltar, from which it separates at the railway station. This has for centuries been one of the principal transit routes between the Campo de Gibraltar and the Ronda plateau. However, the proximity to the River Guadiaro and its flooding, made various expensive means of crossing necessary, such as small boats and rustic bridges. For this reason, the so-called Camino Inglés (the English Way) running along the watershed between this valley and the Genal, was the preferred route to reach Ronda from the south.

This area has been the scene of various military confrontations from Roman times to the end of the 19th century. The ruggedness of the landscape, its steep slopes, the Holm oak and Gall oak forests and a network of reasonably-sized tributaries, have also served as a refuge for bandits and fugitives. The turning point was the construction of the Algeciras-Bobadilla railway line from 1892 onwards. It utilises numerous tunnels and viaducts to cut through the valley's complex relief. The pathway also allows you to appreciate a well-maintained river with its gallery forest and a healthy population of easily visible fish, among which, the Andalusian barbels stand out most. ►

As a public Right of Way through the Natural Park, it is a popular trail for hikers



25. BENAJOÁN TRAIN STATION • JIMERA DE LÍBAR

River Guadiaro (435m)



Jimera de Líbar Fountain (S) (520m)



9.6 km

3 h

320 m

240 m

Linear

On foot

1.8 km

2.3 km

5.5 km

Environment hazards



1

2

3

4

5

Navigation



1

2

3

4

5

Underfoot Conditions



1

2

3

4

5

Physical Effort



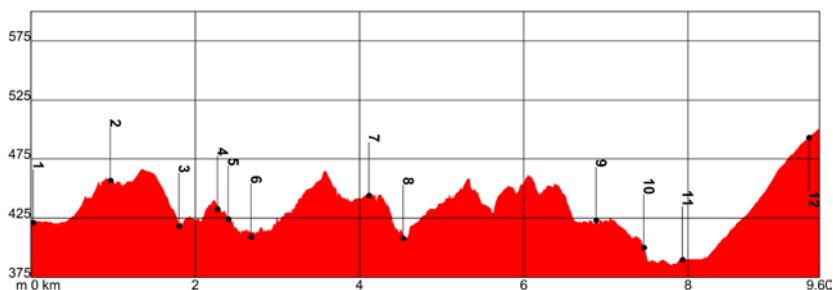
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2

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4

5



PR-A 253

Ronda - Benaoján

GR 141

Great Path of the Serranía de Ronda

SL-A 139

El Gato cave

PR-A 255

Jimera de Líbar - Cortes de la Fra.

SL-A 138

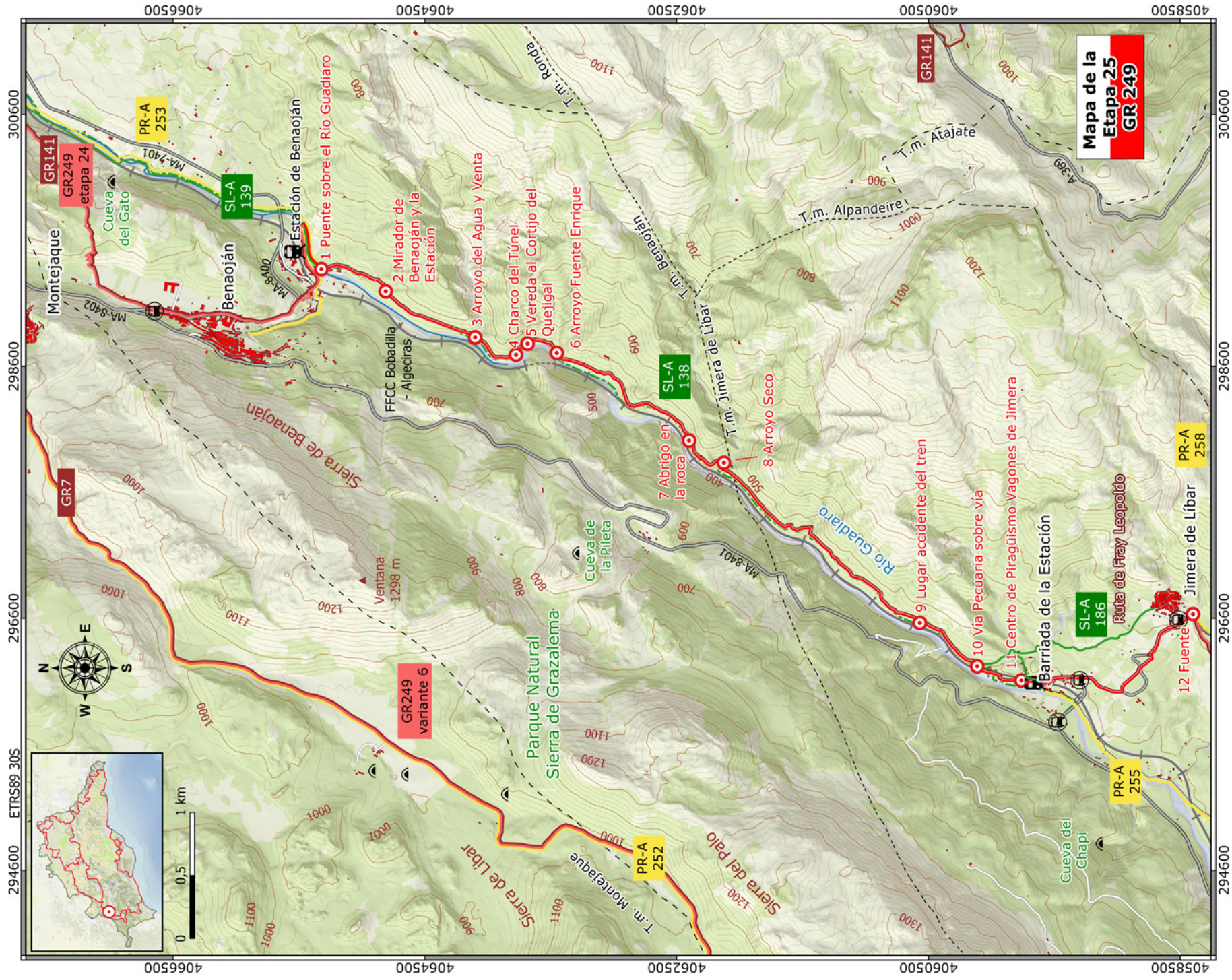
River Guadiaro

PR-A 258

Jimera de Líbar - Atajate

P O I N T	X	Y	HEIGHT ABOVE SL	DISTANCE
1.River Guadiaro	299371	/ 4065323	/ 435 m	Km 0
2.Viewpoint of Benaoján and the station	299196	/ 4064812	/ 465 m	Km 0,7
3.El Agua stream and estate	298829	/ 4064102	/ 425 m	Km 1,6
4.The Tunnel pool	298692	/ 4063777	/ 440 m	Km 2,0
5.El Quejigal estate footpath	298780	/ 4063685	/ 428 m	Km 2,2
6.Fuente Enrique stream	298707	/ 4063453	/ 415 m	Km 2,5
7.Rock shelter	298011	/ 4062402	/ 442 m	Km 3,8
8.Seco stream	297834	/ 4062125	/ 408 m	Km 4,3
9.Location of the train accident	296563	/ 4060569	/ 415 m	Km 6,5
10.Livestock track over the railway	296218	/ 4060113	/ 400 m	Km 7,1
11.Jimera station carriages	296106	/ 4059762	/ 390 m	Km 7,6
12.Fountain	296633	/ 4058399	/ 520 m	Km 9,6

STAGE 25 MAP





ROUTE DESCRIPTION



The Inns of La Cañada Real & El Campo de Gibraltar

→ Up to km 1.5

To the east of Benaoján Station and after the railway crossing, was the bridge over the Guadiaro, which was the start of this Stage before the flood. You set off to the south with a gentle uphill gradient. The opposite direction would take you back past the Cueva del Gato cave and the Charco de la Barranca pools. You then pass an Olive grove on your left and on the right, the Molino de Cecilio mill. When you come to a cobbled section of pathway, look out for La Venta de María Joaquina, one of the inns with accommodation and food for travellers along the region of Campo de Gibraltar's Cañada Real.

The country track leads on to a space which opens out in the wooded hills of Las Viñas, which is the stopping-off point of La Erilla Blanca. Further on there is a decent panoramic view north, over Benaoján and its hamlet. On the other side of the river, you can then make out the white houses of El Cortijo de la Fresnedilla and the buildings housing the drinking water pump.

A steep descent ends at the little bridge over the Arroyo del Agua stream and the ruins of an inn. It was built on a flattened area of limestone deposit, or tuff and which remained standing until the 1990s. Among the vegetation surrounding this inn, named Venta de Toribio, there are Fig trees and a Bay tree.



The narrow sections of the Guadiaro

→ Up to km 6.3

From here, the trail narrows and turns into a footpath that climbs up to a small hill in an area of pink marly limestone. About two kilometres from the start, there is a viewpoint overlooking the first railway tunnel and the River Guadiaro as it forms the pool of El Moro. This is where some elements of the battle of October 1869 took place, known here as La Reyerta. You pass the almost hidden Alpandeire Way on your left, then go down to the riverside, an area liable to flooding. This is an ideal spot to view the aquatic life, especially if you can avoid making any noise. The short stream from the source of Fuente Enrique also joins the main watercourse here. The remains of an old bridge that once took advantage of the narrower channel between its two rocky riverbanks, lie up ahead.

An uphill section, this time through the woodland of El Cortijo del Quejigal country estate, brings one of the most complex stretches in the construction of the railway line into view. In just a very short distance, the railway line required two tunnels, a large ditch and a bridge to cross the river over to the same side as the path.

Continuing in a south-westerly direction, you drop down again after going around the same hill the railway line runs underneath. The vegetation shifts to varieties accustomed to more sunlight, but the Gall oaks soon return. Among the vegetation which is easy to spot, are Scorpion brooms, White rockroses, Mastics, Spiny brooms, Turpentine, Wild roses and Common hawthorns. On your left, you then pass a couple of boulders that are sometimes used as a shelter from the rain. After ►

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some wooden safety railings, you arrive at kilometre 4.5, at the Arroyo Seco (or El Águila), which normally lives up to its first name of Dry Stream. The Cancha del Conio and its high cliff faces round off this little valley to the east, spanned by another railway bridge.

The subsequent climb brings the road between Benaoján and Cortes de la Frontera into view, higher up on the far side. It runs over the greyish limestone where the well-known cave of Cueva de la Pileta is found. Level with the path on the other side of the river, are the ruins of Cortijo del Parral country house. The aptly named El Palmarejo (Palm Grove) is on the same side as the path and so does not come into view. This woodland, in the process of regeneration is known as Las Carboneras, and is another fine example of mixed Mediterranean woodland. It is accompanied by a wide strip of riverside woodland along the Guadiaro. You then come to the Roza de María, recognisable by some dry Almond trees among thicket of White and Spiny brooms. A little further on is where an express train derailed in 1979, fortunately without fatalities. The event led to the making of a documentary, owing to the peculiar nature of the rescue of the submerged locomotive.



Jimera de Líbar and its farmland

→ To the end of the stage

The slope of Los Recovers, along with the steep embankment and drainage ditch of the railway line on the right lead on to an area where the valley opens out again. You cross the track over a wide iron bridge, built in 2013 to allow local farmers to drive their



The path accompanies the River Guadiaro, through luscious Oak forest

livestock along the Cañada Real. The path returns alongside the River Guadiaro, with its dense woodland and Walnut trees followed by the almost vanished Chapel to the Virgen de la Salud. Just below the footpath here, is a jetty at the bottom of some rapids, which is also the village's river bathing area.

You soon arrive at the Jimera de Líbar railway platform, where some carriages have been converted into a bar during summertime. To reach the other side of the track, go through the underpass and then take the pavement along the tarmacked section that goes up in a southerly direction. From the roundabout, take the pathway of slabs of stone with wooden safety barriers. You cross several Caminos or routes to the station, which have been signposted with orchid panels, serving as alternative routes. The entrance to the village is among Olive and Almond trees and passes the municipal swimming pool on the right. This ends at the Fountain in Jimera with a plaque from 1789, in the middle of the MA-8307 road, where the stage comes to an end. ■