

Stage S ESTEPONA · MARBELLA

THE STAGE IN SUMMARY

Stage 30 is almost entirely flat, being at sea level and only having a few gentle inclines. It heads east or slightly north-east between the towns of Estepona and Marbella. The municipal areas of these two towns meet at the Guadalmina River, after 13.7 kilometres.

The route sets off from the eastern part of Estepona's seafront boulevard, but soon runs close to the coast. The first 7 and a half kilometres is through the best-kept area and runs as far as the Guadalmansa Tower. Except for a few sections of pavements, there are kilometres of pedestrianised pathways, 6 bridges as well as some elevated boardwalk.

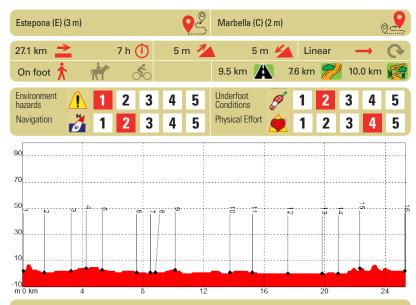
From there, up to kilometre 17, you continue along the beaches and dunes of the western Costa del Sol, with brief detours along the pavements of some residential developments. With some exceptions, this second part runs mostly over sand. There are a few larger watercourses to cross, which can have a reasonable volume of water, even in summer.

The remaining 10 kilometres run along the seafront boulevards of San Pedro and Marbella, at times paved, sometimes on wooden boardwalks, and at others over Albero sand or compacted earth. At least one side of the pathway always has landscaped gardens here. There are far fewer rivers in this second part and they tend to have much smaller volumes of water. Therefore, these can easily go unnoticed among the coastal urbanisation.

The route provides the chance to get to know the intricacies of Malaga's Mediterranean coastline's urban development. It is undoubtedly and intrinsically linked to tourism in almost every aspect. On many occasions, the public dominance over the maritime area reaches ludicrous proportions, on others the beach can be considered merely urban. Nevertheless, there are some landscapes of outstanding beauty amongst this, including remnants of nature as it used to be. A perfect example of this are the areas around the river mouths of Sierra Bermeja and the sand dunes of Saladillo and Matas Verdes. History is also present here; with numerous watchtowers dating back to medieval times, the early Christian church, and the thermal baths and village of Río Verde from the Roman period.



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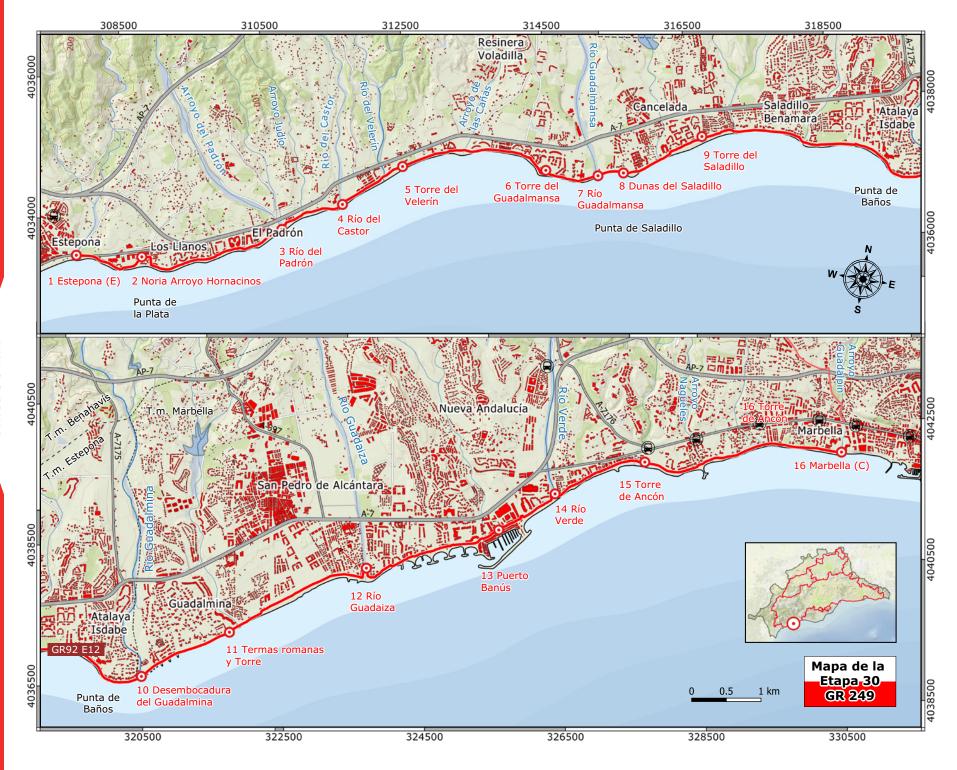




- Road traffic circulating on few occasions
- · Activities involving light vehicles and a kite-surfing area
- Wading through some watercourses

GR 92 E 7 Coastal Path, overlapping throughout

P O I N T	Х		Υ		HEIGHT ABOVE SI	DISTANCE
1.Estepona (E)	308450	/	4033560	/	3 m	Km 0,0
2.Hornacinos stream Ferris Wheel	309385	/	4033700	/	4 m	Km 1,2
3.El Padrón river	311305	/	4034445	/	2 m	Km 3,2
4. El Castor river	312105	/	4034950	/	4 m	Km 4,2
5.El Velerín tower	312860	/	4035635	/	7 m	Km 5,3
6.Guadalmansa tower	314905	/	4035940	/	2 m	Km 7,6
7.Guadalmansa river	315660	/	4035995	/	1 m	Km 8,5
8.El Saladillo dunes	316015	/	4036100	/	1 m	Km 8,8
9. Saladillo tower	317035	/	4036810	/	4 m	Km 10,1
10.Guadalmina river	320355	/	4036890	/	1 m	Km 13,7
11.Roman baths and tower	321490	/	4037735	/	1 m	Km 15,2
12. Guadaiza river	323275	/	4038990	/	0 m	Km 17,5
13.Puerto Banus	325060	/	4039860	/	0 m	Km 19,8
14.Verde river	325770	/	4040515	/	1 m	Km 20,9
15.Ancón tower	326960	/	4041190	/	5 m	Km 22,3
16.Marbella (C)	329730	/	4041825	/	2 m	Km 27,1





ROUTE DESCRIPTION

Coastal cliffs and pebble beaches

The stream of the Arroyo de la Cala and its beach are the starting point, and whose seafront boulevard you walk along for about 500 metres. This brings you to the wooden walkways over the large clay bank that constricts the tiny pebble beach. Lush vegetation covers this area while garden plants also thrive.

When you turn the cornerat Los Mármoles Point, there is a stretch of sand and pavement that leads away from the small beach of La Plata. You cross a bridge over the Hornacinos stream near a restored waterwheel, with a nearby aqueduct to supply water. The beach at La Plata Point is not of the highest quality due to its size and pebbles, but it is an excellent place to see seabirds and shorebirds, thanks to the relative peace and quiet.

One can deduce the existence of a waste water pipe here, mainly for the open trench cut into the hardened clay filled with rocks and sand. It forms a channel between the raised white manholes, standing a metre above the ground. The route then runs alongside a



private estate with a wide stretch of woodland that reaches up to the main road. Different materials are used for the pathway covering this next section, connected to the adjacent properties and their gardens.

The mouths of the rivers from Sierra Bermeja and the watchtowers → Up to km 7.8

After 3 kilometres from the start, you reach an area of much larger beaches as a result of, among other things, the numerous rivers that flow into them, each with a modern bridge. The first is El Padrón (or Paredón). characterised by its beds of reeds and canes. As a fine example of the evolution of the coast and its contrasts, the first medieval watchtower sits in the gardens of a luxury hotel. Meanwhile, there is a small vegetable patch on the beachfront, sheltered from the sea breeze by fences of reeds and native vegetation. Also protected here are the areas of Sea wallflower (also known as Sand stock), one of the most colourful coastal plant species.

El Castor Riveris very similar in appearance to the previous watercourse. It lends its name to the next Point and has the longest section of boardwalk. After you cross this, the Velerín tower comes into view on a rise (adapted for easier access). Despite not being as well preserved as the previous tower, it is of the same period, the start of the 16th century.

Then you come to a second boat yard with some traditional fishing boats and the winches used to drag them up the beach, away from the waves. On the beach, is an interesting bank formed of clay, that is home to some interesting plants and has



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a hardened upper crust. Nearby and next to a pumping station, a housing development is under construction. Then on the left, it varies between undeveloped fields or abandoned houses and, more frequently, landscaped housing developments, whose paths you continue along.

When you cross the Las Cañas stream (km 6.5) along its long, curving walkway, you come to a residential development with a large landscaped garden. The Guadalmansa (or Desmochada) tower is located here, with archaeological excavations at its base and one of the main landmark of the day. You then come to El Guadalmansa Point.

The beach & dunes at El Saladillo → Up to km 13.7

The mouth of the Guadalmansa, which is the first reasonably-sized river on the Stage, is not far on. The wide pool has formed here and is several hundred metres long, lined by riverside vegetation on both sides and has some interesting fauna. The area is also used for water sports. A little

further upstream is the main pumping station for the treatment of wastewater.

After 9 kilometres from the start, you arrive at the first area of sand dunes on the Costa del Sol, with traces of the vegetation that was once prevalent at the Saladillo point. The long list of species linked to these sandy environments along this entire stretch, are admirable. Some of these even reach just short of the shoreline. On the whole, there is at least one species in flower at any given moment, even in the height of summer. There are spectacular examples here, such as the Madonna lily or European sea rocket.

The Taraje stream is the next watercourse and leads on to the Saladillo tower (km 10.1). It is similar to those seen earlier, but located on a tarmac roundabout. At the Saladillo stream there is a wastewater pumping station and a little further on, another at the mouth of the Dos Hermanas stream, which displays some reasonably sized Poplar trees.







A little further on, after some Stone pines that are moulded by the wind, there is another dune system, called Matas Verdes (or Casasola). It is separated from the last of Estepona's coastal forests by a wooden fence that prevents access to a Pine forest with Cork oaks. In the clearings there is dense brush of Mastic trees, Dwarf fan palms, Phoenician junipers, African sandalwood, Spiny broom and Black hawthorn. A sign indicates that a second population of Posidonia is found on the seabed here, protected as a Site of Community Importance (SCI).

The Baños (or Casasola) Tower is the next landmark you come across. A fence stops you from entering, but it is the smallest in diameter along this part of coastline. It is the only one that is horseshoe-shaped, since its northern face is completely flat. This watchtower gives way to a narrow section at Baños Point and then to cross the river Guadalmina, where you enter the municipal area of Marbella, after a new pumping station at kilometre 13.7.

The Seafront Boulevards of San Pedro and Marbella → To the end of the stage

The green grass of the golf course beside the river quite literally touches the sand and at the end of a large beach is Las Bóvedas Tower. Exceptionally well preserved, this is found in a first class and very well cared for archaeological site, sharing the site with the Roman baths of Las Bóvedas. This is not the only surprise around the mouth of the Chopo stream (km 17). There is a collection of traditional boats and winches, which are located on a mound and point to a kind of fishing village under some Eucalyptus trees. The early Christian church of Vega del Mar is to be found here.

You cross the river Guadaiza while on San Pedro de Alcántara's seafront boulevard, followed on by that of Marbella until the end of the Stage. One of the aspects that makes this long stretch more captivating, is the variety of the path's design.

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The surfacing can be paved or cobbled, made of natural stone, Albero sand or wood. At different moments, you will encounter a safety barrier on the right, railings with various designs, jetties and breakwaters of boulders. Throughout this section, however, landscaped gardens are common and show a similar variety of styles. Although the housing developments and private properties are all set a varying distance back from the beach, in general they leave a fairly wide strip of land for the path or for relaxing on any one of the beaches.

Continuing on, the breakwaters and beaches of Nueva Andalucía lead on to El Duque Point, with its famous marina of Puerto Banús (km 19.8). Just before this however, the quadrangular tower of El Duque, of Muslim origin can be seen in a private garden. The Verde River is fairly wide at its mouth and has a large and deep expanse of water. Waterfowl, both wild and domesticated are easy to spot here and are very accustomed to

the non-stop movement of passers-by walking or exercising. As soon as you cross the river, look between the houses on the left bank for a plot of land not too far from the beach. This is the very important site of the Roman villa of Río Verde.

The last watchtower of the day is a little difficult to locate, being higher above the beach than the others, at Nabules Point. Found at kilometre 22.3, the Ancón tower is a similar size and structure. The large rise that the Tower sits upon is due to the fact that, among other things, the coast is very rocky here but still very flat for the first time in the stage. In effect, this tower has a much better base compared to others, which are more affected by erosion.

The end of the Stage gets ever closer as you continue along a long stretch of promenade of *Albero* sand and past an outdoor gym equipment. Cross the Nagüeles stream and you go past a beautiful Pine forest on the left at Casablanca beach and the route finishes at the mouth of the Guadalpín stream in the centre of Marbella.

The traditional fishing boats' winches and yard

