



ALTERNATIVE ROUTE

GR 249.1

# ALAMEDA • MOLLINA • HUMILLADERO • FUENTE DE PIEDRA

## THE STAGE IN SUMMARY

This interesting Alternative Route starts at kilometre 6.5 of Stage 17 of the Great Malaga Path, offering a second option to get to Fuente de Piedra. Instead of heading directly west from the Molina mountain range, take this branch to the south at the junction between the Santillán Pathway and the El Perezón Colorado Way. The route passes through the dry farmland of northern Málaga, and past three of nature's refuges along the way: the two mountain ranges of Molina and Humilladero, and the Fuente de Piedra lake.

In general, the route has a very gentle downhill profile, with only one section that climbs up to the highest point in the Pine forest of the Sierra de Humilladero, close to the halfway point. It runs through the municipality of Molina up until the quarry after roughly 7 kilometre. It then enters the municipality of Humilladero, which finishes just by the last houses in the town centre, where Fuente de Piedra's own land begins.

The stage goes south as far as Molina, including through its streets, heading straight towards El Puntal de la Sierra. When you come to an aggregate quarry, the route heads westwards along the wooded slopes of the Sierra de Humilladero. It then continues through this second village in the same direction, parallel to the gentle valley of the Charcón stream. However, you twice meet the railway, which cut through these fields to link the Province's capital with the interior of the Peninsula. The high-speed train line is first, which you pass underneath, and the second signals the path's final change of direction, this time to the north. The route reaches its conclusion at the village of Fuente de Piedra itself, since it links up with the original stage 17 at the central fountain and accompanies it to the Natural Reserve of the lake.

The whitewashed Andalusian villages on the route are exceptionally charming. Their churches stand out most, along with the network of streets, some small palaces and the manor houses, known locally as *case-rías*, scattered throughout the countryside. ►



Olive groves and the distant hills, from the Sierra de Humilladero



Km 6.5 of Stage 17 – El Pegote Ridge (520m)



Fuente de Piedra (W) (430m)



17.6 km



4 h 30 min.



150 m



260 m



Linear

On foot  
Bike

5.3 km



9.4 km



2.9 km

Environment  
hazards

1

2

3

4

5

Underfoot  
Conditions

1

2

3

4

5

Navigation



1

2

3

4

5

Physical Effort



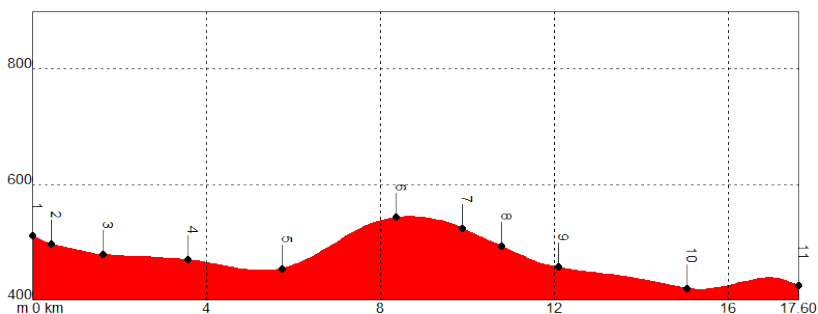
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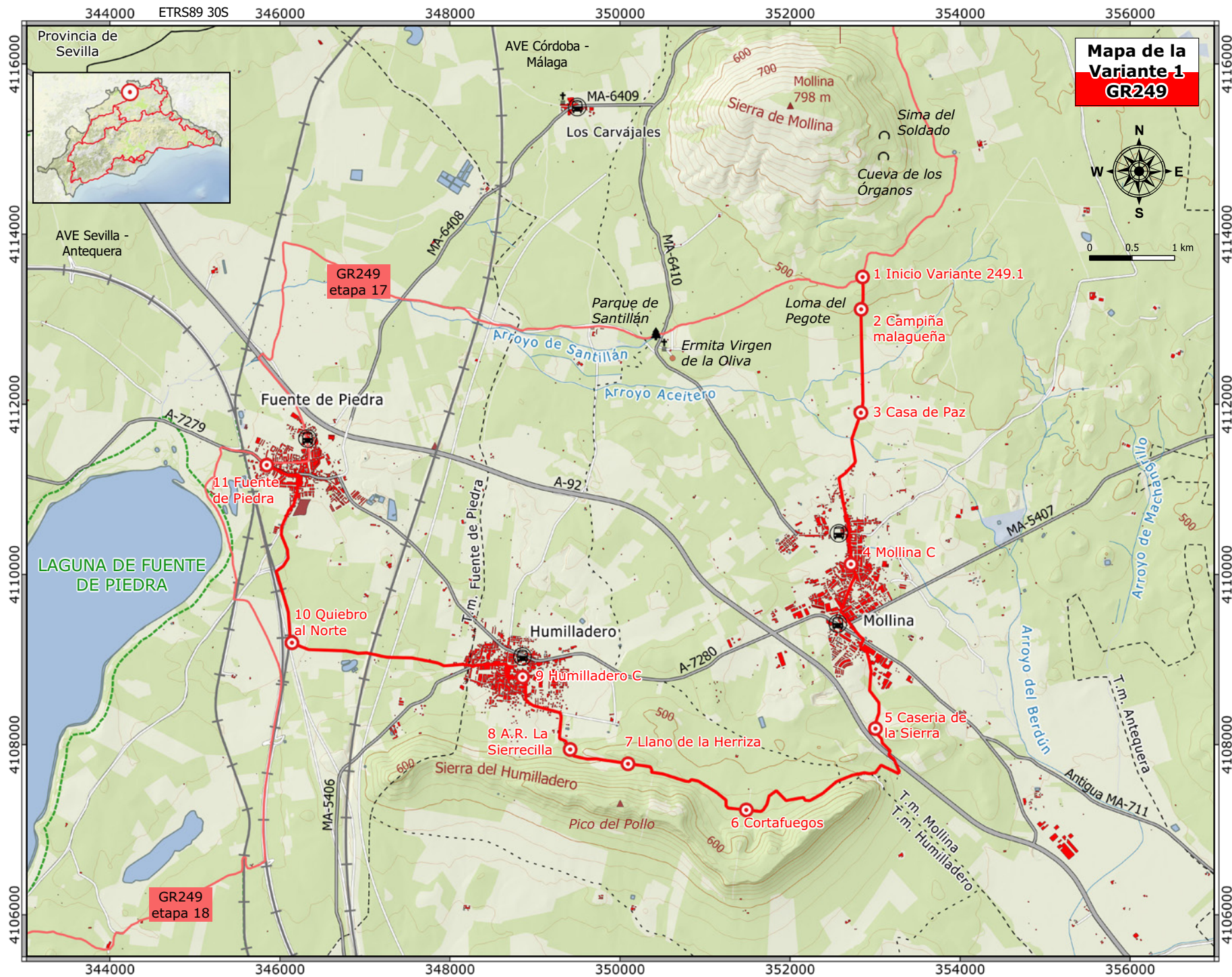


- Farm traffic circulating on the tracks
- Transit through urban areas
- Beehives in the Sierra de Humilladero

GR 249

Stage 17 – Overlap at the start and end of the Alternative

P O I N T	X	Y	HEIGHT ABOVE SL	DISTANCE
1.Start point	352853	/ 4113497	/ 520 m	Km 0,0
2.Málaga's open countryside	352836	/ 4113116	/ 505 m	Km 0,4
3.House of Peace	352833	/ 4111902	/ 485 m	Km 1,6
4.Mollina (C)	352716	/ 4110121	/ 480 m	Km 3,5
5.La Sierra estate	353004	/ 4108189	/ 470 m	Km 5,7
6.Firebreak	351485	/ 4107232	/ 530 m	Km 8,4
7.La Herriza plains	350094	/ 4107775	/ 505 m	Km 9,9
8.La Sierrecilla Recreational area	349414	/ 4107943	/ 490 m	Km 10,8
9.Humilladero (C)	348854	/ 4108793	/ 455 m	Km 12,1
10.Sharp turn to the north	346142	/ 4109197	/ 425 m	Km 15,1
11.Fuente de Piedra (W)	345845	/ 4111286	/ 430 m	Km 17,6





## ROUTE DESCRIPTION

### A peculiar landscape

The Sierra de la Camorra is the large landmass that dominates the Antequera Depression, crisscrossed by various ancient roads, which the route makes good use of on this occasion. The town of Alameda is closely linked to this Reserve of biodiversity, while similarly, the towns of Mollina and above all Humilladero are associated with the second mountainous area of the day, the Sierra de Humilladero. Following the road to Mollina and continuing on from Humilladero, the landscape has changed little since the olden days, with Olive trees, cereals and vineyards as the area's mainstay. At certain times, this medley of agricultural land comes together to form a quite spectacular landscape, only enlivened more by the frequent tending to that they require.

The greatest attraction of the day is the remarkable dividing line between the Olive groves and the Pine forests. This coexistence, which has now stabilised, has tended to fluctuate enormously given their fairly complicated relationship over the centuries.

Patches of replanted Pine forests can be seen for miles around during the stage. Although the woodland is overwhelmingly dense at times, in some clearings or on the edges are interesting areas of varied Mediterranean thicket, with Rosemary, Esparto grass, Laurel-leaf rockroses and Gorse. Occasionally, patches of Kermes oak crop up as forerunner to the original Holm oaks. Meanwhile, beneath the Aleppo pines are quite a few Wild Olive trees, which are very well adapted to this terrain.

### From the Sierra de la Camorra to Mollina → Up to km 3.5

The first three and a half kilometres lead to the centre of Mollina. Its church of Nuestra Señora de la Oliva (Our Lady of the Olive tree) and the adjacent convent of La Ascensión or La Villa estate are the main sights, upon both of which the town was founded.

The route begins by breaking away from Stage 17 at the gap between the main bulk of the Sierra and El Pegote hill. Also found here is the curiously named settlement of Perezón Colorado, which ►

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lends its name to the path and where an Olive grove now grows. There is a slight uphill section at the start, leading up to a rise looking down over the straight country track. You come to a clearing in the dense Pine forest, which is occupied by Kermes oak, Esparto grass, Laurel-leaf rockroses and Kidney vetch. It is also home to a large population of rabbits. They were given a helping hand by the hunters' associations, by constructing warrens for them since they make up a large part of the diet of the forest's largest predators. The finest examples of Aleppo pines grow on the outer reaches of the Pine forest (km 0.5), having access to more light and other resources. Almost like a curtain, they give way to the first view of the village of Mollina, in the distance to the south following the Perezón Colorado pathway.

Suddenly the Olive groves begin to take over, as is usual on all these gentle foothills. There are both older Olive trees and younger with three or four trunks. They may also be in full production of either green olives or olives for oil production, and are quite often only recently planted. There is a remarkable change in the landscape during this pleasant walk when you arrive at the famous vineyards of Mollina, occupying vast areas of land on these very red soils. It is no coincidence, therefore, that the long hill to the west as you cross the first stream with its grove of Elm trees is called Cerro Colorado (Flushed Hill), just as El Perezón (a shallow temporary pool) gives its name to the path.

Before reaching Mollina, the land's drainage pattern from the Sierra is the same as

Olive trees and vineyards on the red clay soil



that on Stage 17, despite having a smaller volume. You cross a pair of tributaries of the Aceiteros stream, which run parallel to the previous one and has the same destination, the Fuente de Piedra lake. At the second ford, the water has cut a deep channel in the red clay and you can spot stone walls supporting the banks here. The town of Mollina sits on top of a hill which also causes the watercourse to change course. One of these is La Zanjilla, whose spring the hill behind takes its name from, Cerro de la Fuente (Spring Hill). This small hill appears on your left once past La Sierra country estate.

A gentle climb takes you up to a rise where a well-known religious and youth initiative stands, the Casa de la Paz (the House of Peace), with superb views due to its location halfway between the forest and the village. A downhill section crosses a small but well entrenched stream and passes by the paths from Mollina to Alameda on your left and to Camorra on your right, where the Great Path follows small bends on each occasion. ►

The start of the alternative route, exiting the Pine woodland towards the open countryside





An information panel welcomes you to Mollina along Sierra de la Camorra street, connecting with Carreteros street. This brings you out onto the main square and Real (Royal) street. Then continue on to La Fuente Avenue, go around the industrial estate of El Castaño towards the south to finally join the country track again.



### From Mollina to La Sierrecilla through the Pine forest

➔ Up to km 10.8

On the immediate horizon you can see a striking abandoned building, La Sierra country estate and the hill of La Fuente. Between these two you must climb to the top of a rise where limestone strata resting on red clay have been hollowed out by rabbit holes. The next obstacle to overcome is the A-92 motorway, which you pass underneath and after a sharp turn to the west, you begin to climb, leaving the Olive groves behind you.

The track eventually turns into a footpath after passing the sand and limestone quarry on the left (km 7.1), actually the most easterly point of the Sierra de Humilladero. The forest soon completely surrounds you, but the fenced-in Olive grove is so nearby that you can appreciate the gravity irrigation ponds. The Aleppo pines were planted as part of the reforestation effort during the second half of the last century. They are very close together, and so it is not uncommon to see dead or fallen trees here. Rosemary patches occupy some of the clearings and you soon reach the highest point of the route (550 m), following the carved stone markers of the Public Uplands. Look out for the thicket of Esparto grass, Laurel-leaf rockroses and some broad-leaved bushes.

### The Path entering the forested area of the Sierra



There are a few gentle climbs and descents, while some well signposted forks in the track lead you into the forest. You are rewarded with views over the Olive groves with the backdrop of the nearby village of Mollina and the hills where the route started. In the clearing formed by an uphill firebreak (km 8.4), there are some beehives far enough away from the path and, not for the first time, a track brings you alongside a field of Olive trees. It is important to follow the signposting here, as you climb up to a rise once again, entering the Pine forest. Another firebreak brings the summit of El Pollo into view, the highest point of the Sierra de Humilladero. After passing the premises of the water intake, the landscape changes abruptly to reveal a wide, flat depression of grassland and Thyme. This separates the main peaks from an elongated ridge covered with very diverse scrubland, La Sierrecilla at km 9.9.



### From Humilladero to Fuente de Piedra

➔ To the end of the stage

Humilladero also takes advantage of the groundwater from its small range of hills, with a water catchment system right ▶



in the recreational area. Irrigation ponds are fairly common here too, with some reasonably large ones, and are used for drip irrigation of the young Olive trees.

The route overlaps with another offered by the local town council, and is lined by Pine trees providing shade. You soon come to the recreational area of La Sierrecilla, with the necessary facilities to spend a day in the countryside, but near to the town. The structure for the village supply water and the campsite lead on to the first houses on the 8th March Avenue, heading west. You soon join Loro Street and its Olive oil mill, with the church of Sagrado Cristo de la Misericordia as its destination. The route through Humilladero is completed along the streets Pablo Picasso, Capitán Velasco and the town's main road, the MA-5406. Interestingly, at the Guardia Civil barracks, you leave Humilladero to enter Fuente de Piedra. The border between municipalities is established precisely by the street you cross.

The next section of pathway is named Las Albinas, after either from the light-coloured clays or from their tendency to become waterlogged. The Great Path passes very close to two wastewater treatment plants which are very close to the Nature Reserve, hence the importance of their proper functioning. From Humilladero onwards, the Charcón stream is your reference, heading west again towards the saline endorheic lake (with no outflow), and some of the water treatment ponds that are in its drainage basin.

This is not an area with many irrigated fields, but nevertheless some traditional wells can be seen by the side of the path. In more than a few of them, it is possible to observe interesting amphibians swimming.

A rabbit leaving its burrow on the banks by the pathway



The path runs alongside some fields with little tree cover and some isolated houses until an arched tunnel allows you to pass under the high-speed railway line. Here you head roughly west and pass very close to the settling basins. When you come to the second railway line (km 15.1), the path turns sharply north. You go past numerous underpasses, which you do not take, since the gravel track eventually leads to a tarmac track going around the south-east side of large salt lake towards Campillos. The path however, runs along the hard shoulder as far as the first houses and the campsite in Campillos street.

In this final stretch, you join Andalucía Avenue, which you cross after turning west. Follow this to its junction with Juan Carlos I streets and Retamar street, where this interesting alternative stage comes to an end. ■