



Stage 2 RINCÓN DE LA VICTORIA • VÉLEZ-MÁLAGA

THE STAGE IN SUMMARY

La Axarquía's coastline begins directly to the east of the provincial capital and differs in landscape to that of the western. Although it is less densely populated by comparison, the appealing climate and the abrupt and mountainous terrain means the development is more concentrated closer to the coast. Mountain ridges stretch all the way to the sea, creating cliffs and crags that become an obstacle for hikers or, in the case of El Cantal, the main attraction of the area.

Stage 2 starts where the municipality of Rincón de la Victoria and its towns begin, from La Cala del Moral to Torre de Benagalbón. It continues along the Vélez-Málaga coastline (Chilches&Benajarafe) and then heads progressively inland to meander its way through the slate and chalk schist ridges. Passing by the outcrop, El Peñón de Almayate, it ends up on the fertile plains of the River Vélez. For the most part, the route follows an east-west line, coinciding with the N-340, just as The Great Malaga Path does on a number of occasions. The trail then heads north, following the River Vélez.

The GR-249 is designed to guide you in an easterly direction along the seafront boulevards, footpaths, tracks, sandy beaches, pedestrian walkways and roadsides. This diversity of the route plays a large part in the attractiveness of the stage, with its constant changes in trail surface, distance from and thus relation to the beaches and ultimately the landscape.

The Great Malaga Path is overflowing with History, with a capital 'H' thanks to its Phoenician settlements, Roman villas and factories, Arabic farmhouses, medieval watchtowers, 18th century forts and quarries connected by age-old tracks that inevitably became railroads.

Nature modestly survives on the sea cliffs and boundaries of the wider beaches in the form of attractive coastal plants. Pockets of rural and agrarian life prevail in the form of traditional irrigated crops on the flood plains of the River Vélez, land previously used to produce cane sugar for the refineries and sugar mills. ▶

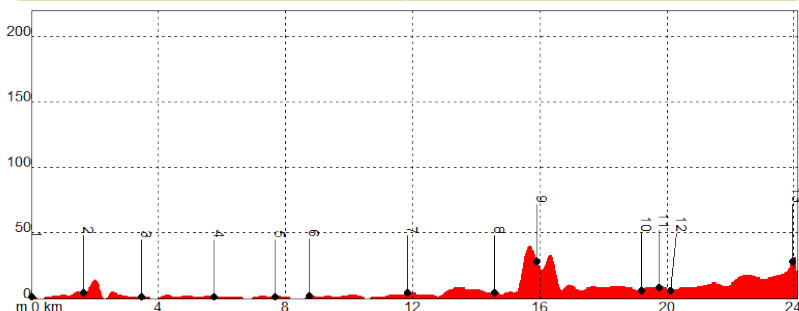


The route of the disused coastal railway line is shown by stations like that of El Rincón



2. RINCÓN DE LA VICTORIA • VÉLEZ-MÁLAGA

Arroyo Totalán – Cala del Moral (W) (8m)		Constitution Roundabout – Vélez-Málaga (SW) (25m)	
24.4 km	5 h 25 min	70 m	50 m
On foot	Bike	18.2 km	6.2 km
Environment hazards	Navigation	Underfoot Conditions	Physical Effort



- Use of roadside of the N-340 between Chilches&Benajarafe
- Road traffic circulating on final stretch
- Wading through a small stream on the beach
- 300m stretch along the river bed of the Arroyo de los Íberos

Three official pathways to the north of Rincón de la Victoria:

SL-A 82

Arroyo Granadilla – La Capitana

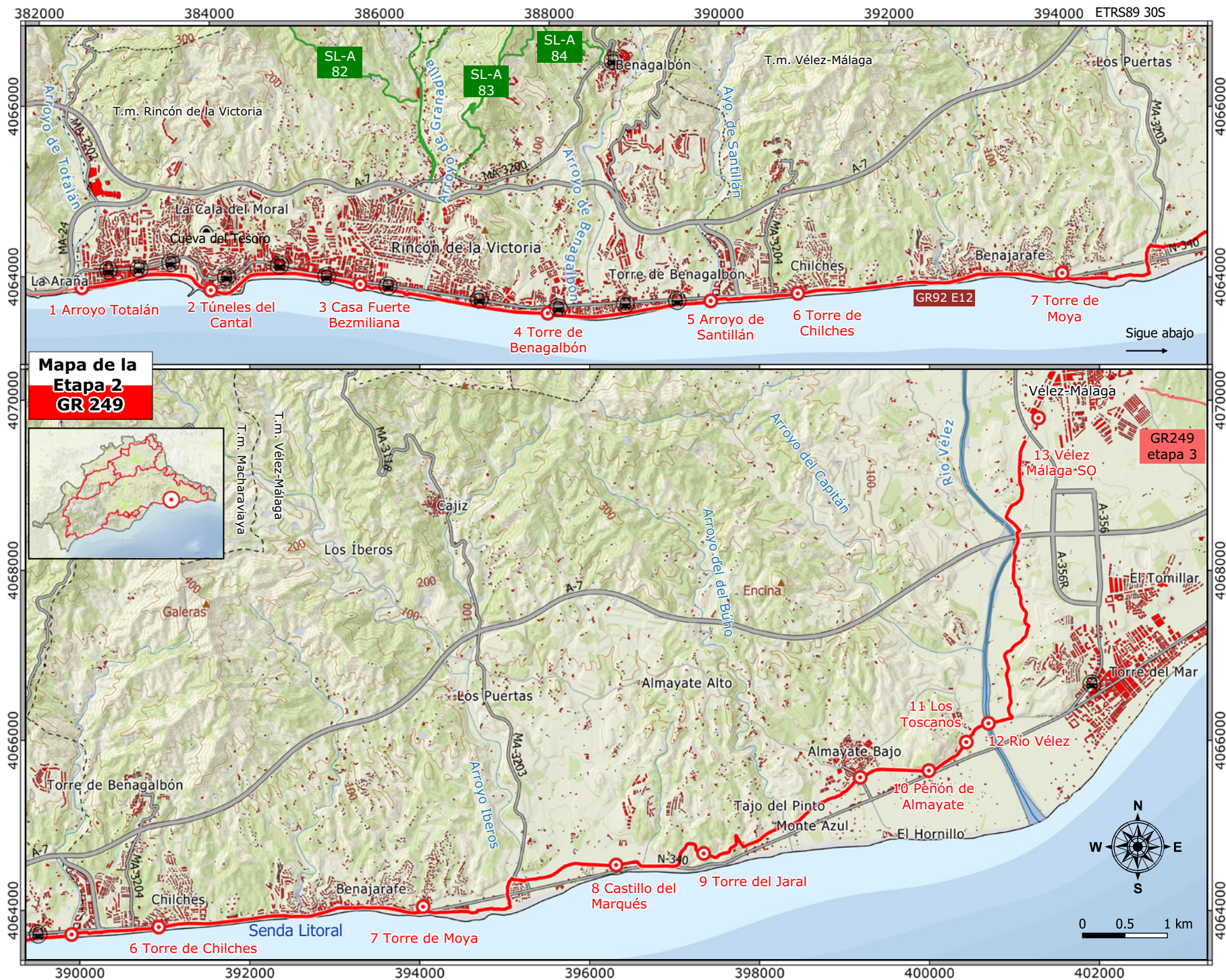
SL-A 83

Arroyo Granadilla – Tío Caña Hill

SL-A 84

Benagalbón Hill

P O I N T	X	Y	HEIGHT ABOVE SL	DISTANCE
1 Arroyo Totalán Waterway	382515	4063870	8 m	Km 0,0
2 Tunnels of El Cantal	384020	4063840	9 m	Km 1,6
3 Bezmiliana House Fort	385770	4063910	2 m	Km 3,5
4 Benagalbón Tower	387985	4063570	2 m	Km 5,7
5 Arroyo de Santillán Waterway	389900	4063710	2 m	Km 7,7
6 Chilches Tower	390925	4063795	3 m	Km 8,7
7 Moya Tower	394010	4063980	4 m	Km 11,8
8 El Marqués Castle	396300	4064535	2 m	Km 14,5
9 Jaral Tower	397345	4064670	29 m	Km 16,0
10 Almayate Rock	399990	4065640	3 m	Km 19,2
11 Los Toscanos	400430	4065980	1 m	Km 19,8
12 River Vélez	400690	4066200	3 m	Km 20,0
13 Vélez-Málaga SW	401185	4069650	25 m	Km 24,4





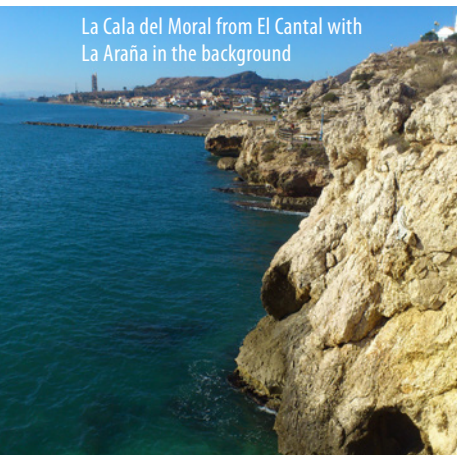
ROUTE DESCRIPTION

El Cantal Tunnels → Up to km 2

The stage starts on the eastern edge of the municipality of Rincón de la Victoria, indicated by the Arroyo Totalán watercourse. To the west of El Cantal is the town of La Cala del Moral, located on a kilometre long bay, with a boathouse at the near end. You then come to the seafront boulevard however, one option is to walk along the pavements of Paseo Blas Infante or another, highly recommended option along the compacted sand. This latter surface type is an excellent solution to many sporting needs and has been widely used throughout the town. Off to one side is the train station with its redbrick and stonework front.

The beach ends at a long groyne and from here, there is a slight incline up to the limestone hill of El Cantal. You can choose between the tunnels of Málaga's Suburban Railway Line, opened in 1908 and in use for 60 years, or alternatively the pedestrian walkways which, being slightly more elevated have excellent views of the Alborán Sea. A combination of both is also possible,

La Cala del Moral from El Cantal with La Araña in the background



however it is necessary to go through the longest and well-illuminated tunnel for the final leg, also having a separate lane for cyclists, roller-bladers and alike.

Along the beaches of Benagalbón, Chilches and Benajarafe → Up to km 12

Just above the entrance to the tunnel, perched on the rock is the medieval beacon of El Cantal. Just above the entrance to the tunnel, perched on the rock is the medieval beacon of El Cantal. This tunnel brings you out at El Rincón beach, perhaps La Axarquía's longest and widest stretches of sand. This section's outline is very similar to that at the start of the stage, with a sandy but firm track adjacent to the rows of houses with gardens. The streams are fairly insignificant here and hence are integrated into the landscape using wooden channelling. Cross the road just after the stage's second railway station, at kilometre 3.5, to visit the Bezmiliana Fortress House, dating back to the 18th century.

A little further on, you cross a slightly wider river bed without difficulty, named Arroyo Granadilla. The potential for foliage on the now non-existent dune system is shown by the large variety of plant species, and is protected from damage underfoot thanks to a small fence. After another station platform, almost at kilometre 6, look out for the medieval beacon on a roundabout 100 metres from the trail, from which the town of Torre de Benagalbón takes its name.

The Arroyo Benagalbón waterway is succeeded by that of Santillán, where the pedestrian bridge of the Great Path ►



Autochthonous plants next to the Path, typically found on dunes and beaches



has replaced the old railway bridge. The municipality changes to Vélez-Málaga and you pass the Chilches platform of the coastal railway (km 7.7), which despite the graffiti is architecturally well preserved.

The route then joins the track running parallel to the N-340 and with it comes a change in the surface type, though there is also a section through the dunes with African tamarisk shrubs. The first town in this new region is Chilches, with its own medieval beacon, easier to spot on this occasion. Before you reach the slightly longer beaches of Benajarafe, you pass some surprisingly traditional arable land and hamlets. The route's origins as a railway line become apparent once again by way of another station platform, well integrated into its surroundings and alongside the medieval beacon.

The half way point of the stage is clearly marked by the Moya Tower, an 18th century fortification (wider in size, km 11.8) from an era when the seaside development was merely a figment of the imagination and pirate raids were more typical. It sits upon a mound and next to it is an industrial chimney, a remnant of an old factory.

Towards the Rock of Almayate → Up to km 19

The path now heads towards the beach and its characteristically greyish sands, passing through some African tamarisk shrubs on the way and passing, an old house made from sandstone dimension stone on your left. There are a few interesting dune systems with reed beds, separated by a housing development, before coming to the Arroyo de los Íberos waterway. Here it is necessary to walk north along the dried up river bed, pass under the highway, then head east again along the jetty and continue along the Cajiz road (MA-3203). Once you reach the curve in the road, take the footpath that has orchards and subtropical plantations on both sides.

After crossing the Arroyo Almayate, there is a campsite and an exporter of avocado products, however the most important stop is El Marqués Castle. It has been reconverted into Málaga's School of Hospitality after various uses over the years. Constructed as a fort in 1766 to defend against attacks from the sea, it counted on four canons. Returning to the old railway line, you later come to the ►



The Jaral Tower seen from the bridge originating in the middle of the 18th century



unsuccessful beachside development of Niza Beach, which has left a large deserted area, except for roadways and gardens. From here, you follow a track in between slate hills which climbs up to the Jaral Tower at the top. The landscape is dominated by aromatic plants and thorn bushes, with some abandoned olive trees and a secluded Aleppo pine tree forest. Access to the 12-metre high, square-shaped watchtower is at kilometre 16.

The track now descends, passing over a bridge from the same era as the Moya Tower and the two forts passed earlier in the stage. A house made of sandstone blocks leads on to a steeply descending tarmacked road to a hamlet (Casas del Cabo). Leaving these behind, you return to the old railway line. This now runs through the market gardens of Tajo del Pinto, through the development of Monte Azul before entering a large clearing with deserted

citrus groves and where rabbits thrive. After crossing the Arroyo del Búho waterway, you arrive at Almayate Bajo and its station platform. This small town, belonging to the Vélez-Málaga district is famous for its market gardens and fisheries, its recently-discovered cave shrine and the so-called Seguro de Almayate, a privilege granted to inhabitants soon after the Christian reconquest, to settle within a league of the coast.

The most famous of the hills that surround the town is reached by crossing the MA-3120. The rocky outcrop, named El Peñón de Almayate or del Toro, after the black metal panel in the shape of a bull that sits on its summit, a relic from a pardoned advertisement campaign. The ridge is formed of sandstone & seashells, and has witnessed the lively coastal processes over the ages. It is this stone that was extracted to construct many ▶



of the ruined buildings nearby and more importantly, Malaga Cathedral between the 16th and 18th centuries. The relative ease of working with this stone was discovered in the 8th century BCE and continued almost up to the present day. Besides being a showcase of coastal fauna (above all molluscs), the Rock was well placed as a defensive stronghold above the now vanished bay of the River Vélez. The Phoenicians took advantage of this to construct the settlement of Los Toscanos, which can be seen to your left.



The Old Malaga Road

→ To the end of the stage

The upper slopes of the Rock cast their shadow over one of the drainage channels that used to irrigate the ancient fertile lands in what was the bay in Phoenician times. The plains of the River Vélez are among the most extensive and productive agricultural land in Malaga's coastal region. The subtropical Mediterranean climate owes itself to the shelter from the northerly winds that the mountain range of the Sierra Tejada & Almijara provide along with the Central Limestone Arc (el Arco Calizo Central), visible on the horizon. On a separate note, at the crossroads of Los Toscanos you can take the main road south, cross over the road and there, surrounded by the fields of fruit and vegetables is the 16th

century Manganeta Tower, albeit not in as good a condition nor the most spectacular of those already seen. The difference in height and distance from the sea between this tower and the Phoenician city illustrate the change in sea level and the sedimentation of the basin.

The trail takes a more northerly course from its previous north-easterly, as soon as the trail crosses the river Vélez, over the slightly mistreated railway bridge. To the right and in the break is the town of Torre del Mar and the access to the rivermouth of the river Vélez. Surrounded by irrigated farming plots and with the river bed to the left, from the hamlet of La Barranca, the capital of La Axarquía comes into sight up ahead. The view of Vélez-Málaga and its fortress' commanding position in the rolling hills, combined with the summits of the Sierra Tejada & Almijara are your reference point from now on.

When you approach the riverbed once again, keep the waterworks on your right, before passing underneath the A-7. The land use alternates between farmland and industrial estates owing to the proximity to the city. Ending up at Constitution Roundabout (Rotonda de Nuestra Constitución), the GR-249 passes over the A-356 turning progressively north-east. ■

The Rock of Almayate seen from the mouth of the River Vélez

