



Stage

14

VILLANUEVA DE TAPIA • VILLANUEVA DE ALGAIDAS

THE STAGE IN SUMMARY

Stage 14 connects the two villages in a straight line running east-west, interrupted in the middle by a wide arc to the south, with a long stretch along the Arroyo del Bebedero stream. The starting point is about 50 metres higher than the finish, while the route climbs to almost 900m above sea level. As a result, there is a significant cumulative drop however, this is not a major obstacle. It crosses over the municipal borders of the two Villanuevas several times, although it runs beside the Arroyo del Bebedero for three and a half kilometres through the area belonging to Archidona. Almost the entire route uses the network of agricultural unsurfaced tracks.

At the start, the Path bypasses the Sierra del Pedroso, brushing past its northern edge in the process. A long section continues through hills of Olive groves with traditional farmhouses, reaching the highest point of the day, before linking up with the MA-5100 road. Then, along the bottom of the valley, it follows the course of the Bebedero stream for several kilometres, gradually curving to the northwest. Passing through the area of Malabrigo, it starts to climb out of the bottom of the valley to then return sharply to the west. It makes contact with the Camino del Albaicín, very close to the end of the stage.

The Sierra del Pedroso stands out in satellite images like an island, due to its very clearly defined boundary and being a significant ridge with its summit at 1,024m. Surrounded by a sea of Olive trees, the karstic ridge itself is covered by dense Mediterranean shrubs and Holm oaks. In addition, it appears to be attempting to reconquer its surroundings with its large Oak trees and Dehesa pastures mixing in with the crops.

The Bebedero stream can be considered another type of island, in this case linear, sustaining rich vegetation with its clean waters. The valley is in the Rondán region and boasts substantial woodland, preserved thanks to the extreme gradient of both its eastern and western valley sides. ▶

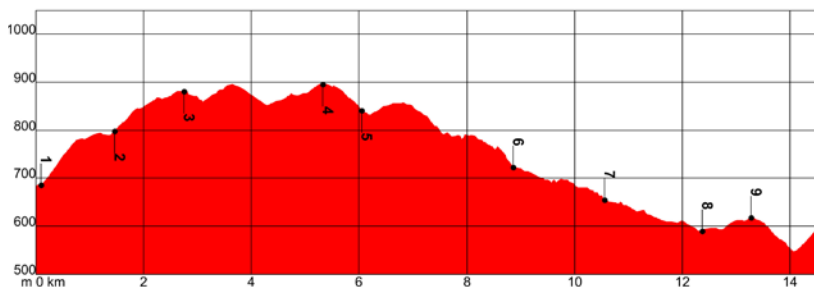
Villanueva de Tapia from the start of the Stage, with the Central Limestone Arc in the distance





14. VILLANUEVA DE TAPIA • VILLANUEVA DE ALGAIIDAS

Villanueva de Tapia (SE) (670 m)		Villanueva de Algaidas (SE) 620 m	
14.8 km	4 h 15 min.	410 m	470 m
Linear			
On foot			
Bike		3.7 km	11.1 km
0 km			
Environment hazards	1	2	3
Navigation	1	2	3
Underfoot Conditions	1	2	3
Physical Effort	1	2	3



- Road traffic circulating along the farm tracks
- Crossing and the crossroads of the A-5100 road

GR-7 E-4

Almost complete overlap, except the final portion

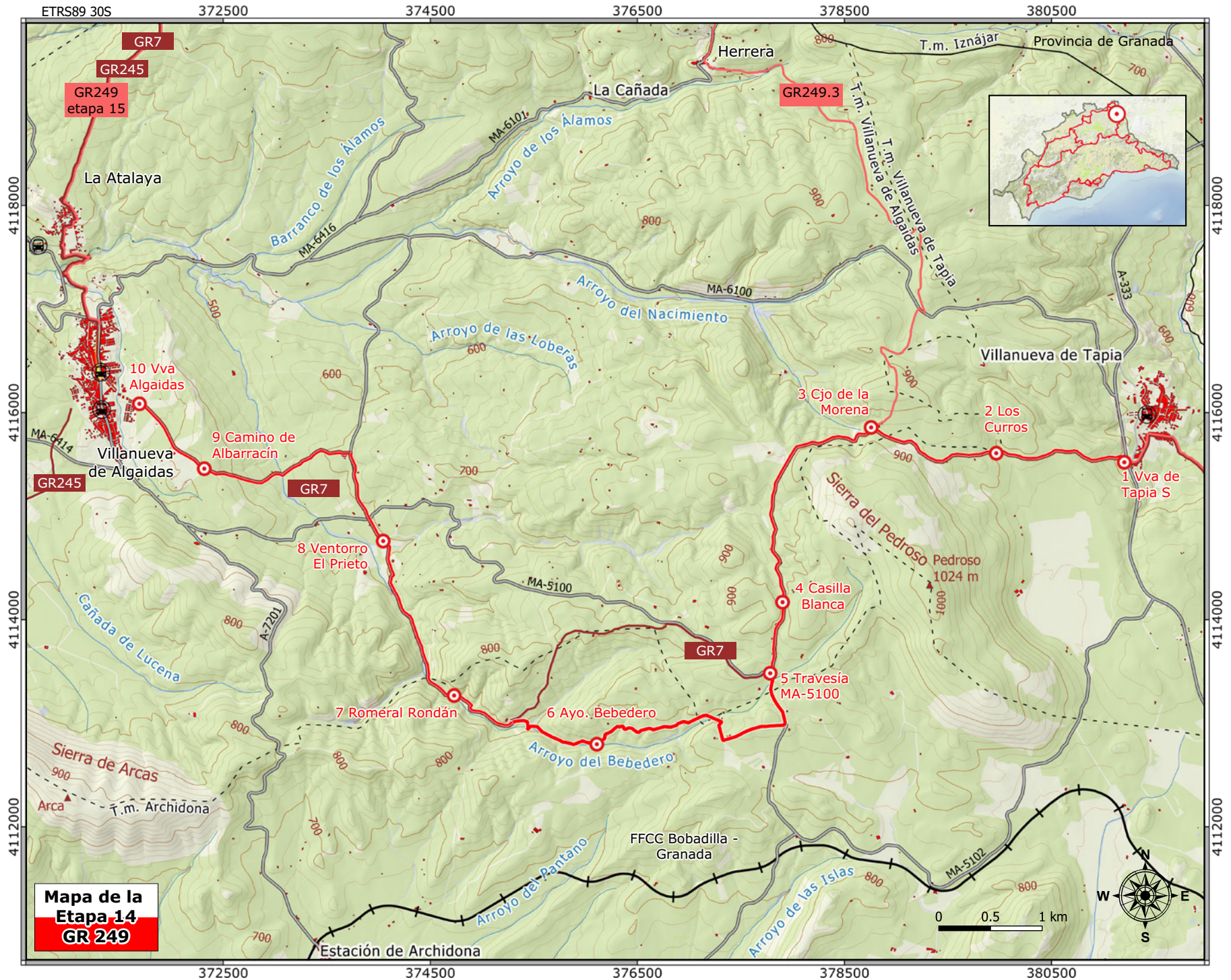
Alt. Route 249.3

Overlap until km 2.7

GR 245

Mozarabic Way of the Camino de Santiago – links up at the end of the stage

P O I N T	X	Y	HEIGHT ABOVE SL	DISTANCE
1. Villanueva de Tapia S	371590 /	4116085 /	670 m	Km 0,0
2. Los Curros ruins	379966 /	4115608 /	785 m	Km 1,4
3. Cortijo de la Morena estate	378758 /	4115857 /	875 m	Km 2,7
4. Casilla Blanca (White House)	377903 /	4114169 /	895 m	Km 5,2
5. Crossing MA-5100	377783 /	4113483 /	845 m	Km 6,0
6. Arroyo del Bebedero stream	376108 /	4112798 /	720 m	Km 8,8
7. Romeral Rondán	374730 /	4113268 /	660 m	Km 10,5
8. Ventorro el Prieto inn	374045 /	4114759 /	600 m	Km 12,3
9. El Albarraçín Way	374045 /	4115458 /	620 m	Km 13,2
10. Villanueva de Algaidas N	371306 /	4116776 /	620 m	Km 14,8



Mapa de la Etapa 14 GR 249



ROUTE DESCRIPTION

The Sierra del Pedroso and the Dehesa pastures of Holm Oak

→ Up to km 2.7

The steep climb from Villanueva de Tapia, up the livestock track of El Entredicho is through mature Olive groves with occasional gullies going off on each side. These are caused by erosion from sporadic and intense rainfall run-off. Keeping the Sierra on your left as you approach it, you pass a group of houses in ruins known as Los Curros (km 1.4). Shortly after, you pass the ruins of Casilla de la Sierra, an old farmhouse in an excellent strategic position, with views of La Nava and the shady slopes of the Sierra del Pedroso. A young Holm oak forest with numerous Kermes oaks covers the sharp lapies (limestone pavement) with a thick layer, making it difficult for hunters and mountaineers, the area's most frequent visitors to reach the summit.

Interestingly enough, the Holm oaks that have made it down from the Sierra and close to the road tend to be smaller, while those in the middle of the Olive groves, on the right side of the road are larger. These are remnants of the area's more glorious

La Casilla de la Sierra in the isle-like forest of the Sierra del Pedroso



past. In spite of the human influence on the environment, a certain balance has been maintained in order to prevent soil erosion. So, natural woodland is left to occupy ravine bottoms, field boundaries, steep scree slopes, rocky outcrops and inclines.

The country house of El Cortijo de las Morenas is found at the iconic northern corner of the Sierra, just at the start of the El Infierno ravine (km 2.7). To the right of the path, the rugged river channel carries water north and is filled with dense vegetation. It later flows into the Bebedero stream before entering the village of the Stage's destination. The farmhouse here is a fine example of a traditional construction, with an interior courtyard and cobblestones at the front, to fend off the abundant mud in the fields. You later pass a modest orchard with a few fruit trees: Quince, Walnut, Apricot, Fig, Pear and Persimmon trees. Alternative Route 3 also splits off here.

Farmhouses surrounded by Olive groves

→ Up to km 6.6

A short way past the farmhouse, there is a ninety-degree turn to the south. From here onwards, the vegetation begins to change. Once you enter the municipality of Villanueva de Algaidas, Olives become the sole crop and only occupy hills of a certain size. This path has been used for centuries as access to the mountains and properties, the reason for it being lined by numerous houses and farmhouses. Next to the track, the country houses of Los Cascabeles and Los Isabelicos are

125

126



close together. A little further on, next to the crossroads to Villarto, we find the Casa Blanca and the country houses of Aranda, Moreno and La Casilla. This marks the highest point of the route, at 900 metres above sea level.

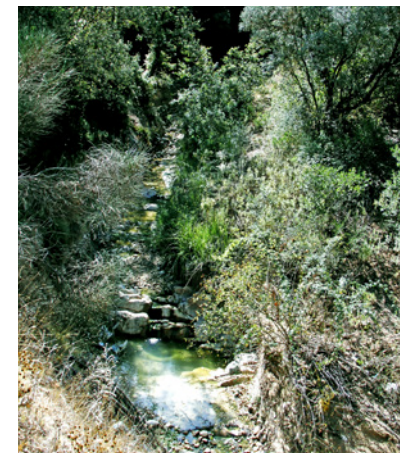
The Arroyo del Bebedero stream

→ To the end of the stage

Continue on down until you meet the MA-5100 road, which you walk along for some 500 metres, with El Endrinal (Blackthorn bushes) below you, and then take a country track to the right, heading west.

At the bottom and close to some warehouses and farmhouses, you cross the Arroyo del Bebedero stream. You then continue parallel to the stream, but halfway up the valley side before dropping down to the water's edge (km 8.8). Rich woodland with many Holm oaks covers this area. You reach a larger track, whose bridge crosses the stream twice and then you begin the descent once again, on the right bank. Dense natural vegetation of Holm oak and Gall oak trees surrounds the pathway, which becomes diverse and varied woodland closer to the stream. This small watercourse emerges from the western flank of the Sierra del Pedroso hills and follows the Great Path's route and soon narrows considerably. There is then a pool from a small spring, followed by the water mill, El Molino Pozo. In front of this are other buildings, also in ruins. On the

The Arroyo del Bebedero stream with its interesting waterside woodland



opposite side of the valley, you can see a wide band of Gall and Holm oaks on the steep clay escarpments, stretching down through Olive groves to the stream's edge. The riverbed here is compacted due to the high load of carbonate minerals, which led to the existence of a crayfish population in the past. The limestone strata underlying the clays can also be seen.

The most sheltered area is known as Rondán and Malabrido. As the valley widens out, new houses appear along the way, Los Mateos, Los Peláez Castle and Venterro el Prieto (an old inn) (km 11.8). These stray from the stream until you reach the Albaicín. Taking the left-hand fork and making a sharp 90-degree turn, you keep the property to the south and head downhill in a westerly direction, through Olive trees.

The route crosses the Bebedero stream again close to a group of buildings, where it climbs a little and comes to the Stage's finish at the Peña de Villanueva de Algaidas hill. ■

A mosaic of Olive trees and Holm oaks in rocky surroundings

