



THE STAGE IN SUMMARY

From the area around Los Pescadores mountain pass, Alternative Route 249.2 is the best option to travel along the northern slope of the Sierra de Mijas (or Blanca), through the towns of Alhaurín el Grande and Alhaurín de la Torre. The ridge's southern side is covered by Stages 32 to 34, which pass through the territory of Mijas, Benalmádena and Torremolinos. In any case, there are multiple options to combine these, passing from one side of the Sierra to the other via the mountain passes of the main ridge.

This alternative route heads north-east until kilometre 2.9, where it skirts the town of Alhaurín el Grande. It then climbs eastwards towards the Forestry House, found at the bottom of Las Palomas ravine along a long curve in the track. At the spring of El Acebuche, the path heads east again until it reaches the viewpoint between the rockfaces of El Horno and El Caballo. From here onwards, the cobbled path winds its way south to La Encina mountain pass.

Ancient footpaths are most common up to this point, but from here to the Jarapalos spring, you continue along a wide forest track, heading eastwards again. The final part of the route drops down to the north along a footpath through forest, to then finish along gravel tracks. This final stretch heads eastwards, which is the overall direction of this alternative route.

The northern side of the mountain range has the most shade, and so the forest at the bottom of the ravine tends to be wilder. There is a wide range of biodiversity of Mediterranean scrub and creepers winding up tree trunks. The route also passes through some of the finest groves of Holm oak in the process of regeneration, with many clumps already producing acorns.

The surroundings of the Forestry House are particularly note-worthy, with Pine forest of Las Grajas mountain pass and the springs of Jarapalos and El Acebuche. These are highly significant places that are appreciated by locals and foreigners alike, and obligatory stopping points for hikers and lovers of outdoor sports. ►

El Camino de la Sierra pathway after considerable snowfall





Puerto de los Pescadores (E) (330 m)



Alhaurín de la Torre (SW) (130m)



26.9 km



8 h



820 m



1.020 m



Linear



On foot



6.4 km



11.7 km



8.8 km



Environment hazards



1

2

3

4

5

Underfoot Conditions



1

2

3

4

5

Navigation



1

2

3

4

5

Physical Effort



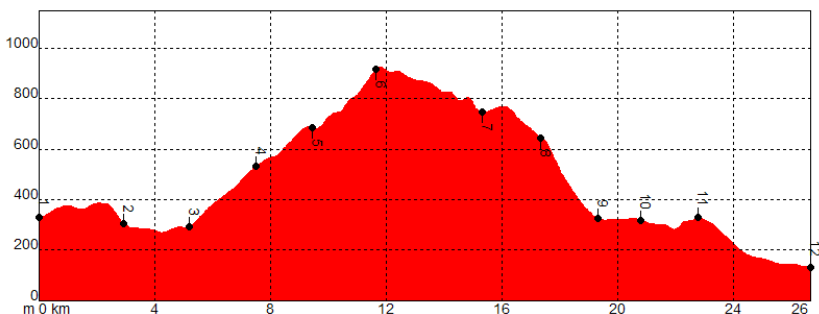
1

2

3

4

5

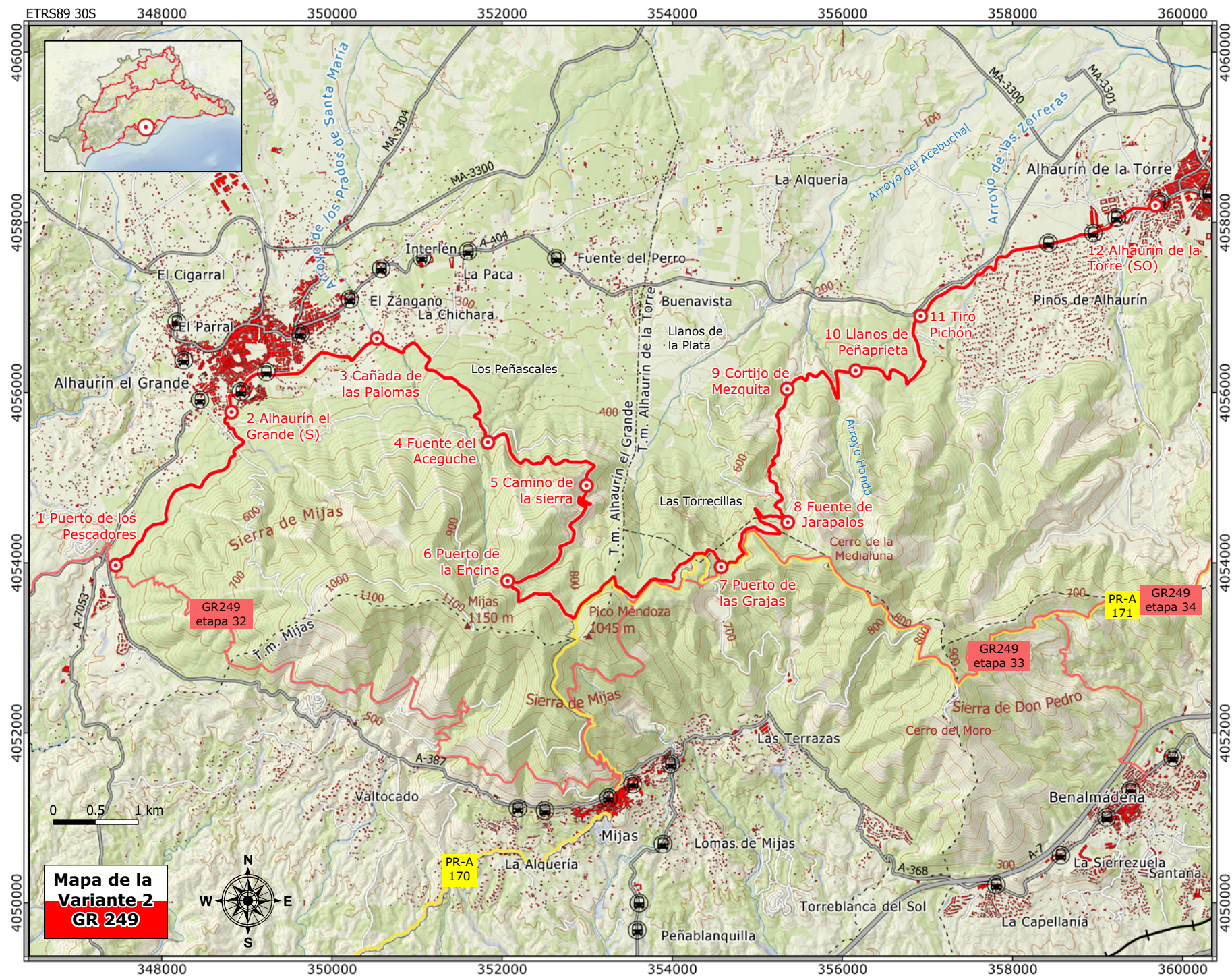


- Road traffic circulating at the start and end
- Cyclists sharing the same trail, including the footpaths

PR-A 171

Mijas – Benalmádena and Stage 33 of the GR 249 overlap on the ridgeline for 3km

P O I N T	X	Y	HEIGHT ABOVE SL	DISTANCE
1.Los Pescadores pass	347460	/ 4053970	/ 330 m	Km 0,0
2.Alhaurín el Grande (S)	348820	/ 4055770	/ 315 m	Km 2,9
3.Las Palomas gorge	350530	/ 4056635	/ 290 m	Km 5,2
4.El Acebuche spring	351835	/ 4055415	/ 530 m	Km 7,5
5.Camino de la Sierra way	352990	/ 4054910	/ 680 m	Km 9,5
6.La Encina pass	352065	/ 4053785	/ 930 m	Km 11,7
7.Las Grajas pass	354575	/ 4053950	/ 745 m	Km 15,3
8.Jarapalos spring	355360	/ 4054475	/ 645 m	Km 17,3
9.Cortijo de Mezquita estate	355350	/ 4056040	/ 325 m	Km 19,3
10.Peñaprieta plains	356160	/ 4056260	/ 320 m	Km 20,8
11.Alhaurín Pines	357320	/ 4055985	/ 335 m	Km 22,8
12.Alhaurín de la Torre (SW)	359680	/ 4058200	/ 130 m	Km 26,9



Mapa de la Variante 2 GR 249

ROUTE DESCRIPTION

 **From Los Pescadores pass to Las Palomas gorge**
 ➔ Up to km 5.2

The Alternative route 249.2 sets off from kilometre 37.9 of Stage 32, just after crossing the A-387 Mijas road where it meets the A-7053. Both the original and the alternative routes travel eastwards, but the Alternative takes a more northerly course, going through a Pine forest that becomes lush as it progresses. At the beginning there are many Esparto grasses, especially in the clearings of the forest. Passing some beehives to your left, you climb slightly along the path that cuts across a large firebreak running up the crest of the ridge to the summit.

A slight descent takes you down to a large plateau and a covered well just where the track joins another. This goes either up to the Mijas peak or down to Alhaurín de la Torre's Camino del Tejar (Tile Factory Way) and you take this latter direction. There are a couple of huts and a power line that follow the ravine, with its own pathway laid out. Instead of going down to the nearby houses via a gully with high rockfaces, you climb

up a stony path that leads back to this tarmac track and to Nacimiento street (km 2.9).

Turning left onto Giner de los Ríos and taking the first right, you come to the Alhaurín el Grande road (in fact a street), which you continue along to the north-east for about 2 kilometres. At the roundabout next to the small park of La Libertad, the MA-404 descends sharply, and 4.5 kilometres from the start, you take the Camino de Montánchez road. Several signposted roads run through this upper part of the town, connecting the farmland and residential areas with the mountains. At the next junction, continue straight on taking the Ardalejos branch, passing by the Arquita del Agua road, and after crossing the Peñón Gordo branch there is another limestone cut that restricts the forest above.

Once you enter the Las Palomas gorge, the tarmac finishes and you start a steep climb alongside the dry riverbed full of aromatic plants. A short way on, it turns to the left, climbs over some rocks, goes around a rural house and eventually enters the forest. ▶

Pine woodland and Esparto grasses in the area around Los Pescadores pass



The spring of El Acebuche (or El Aceguche) and its pools used by amphibians for reproducing



 **The Forestry House and El Camino de la Sierra way**
 ➔ Up to km 11.7

The Chichara track is one of the main roads linking the north-east of Alhaurín el Grande with the mountains. It forks immediately to the right towards Las Palomas gorge and the plateau the route has already passed through. This area of Los Peñascales is extremely interesting for its maze-like formations of reddish-coloured breccia rocks. The next track that you pass on your left, does not go uphill but heads down to an old tree nursery. Continuing through Pine forest, with rainfed fields on the right, you come to a bend and leave the track to reach El Aceguche (or El Acebuche) spring (km 7.5). At this interesting spot there are several pools for wildlife and a crossroads on the right that leads the short distance uphill to the Forestry House.

Continue along the footpath to the north-east. A small and steep slope and two firebreaks in a row provide views first of the plains of Alhaurín and then of the

Bay of Málaga. The creepers beneath the Pines have created a jungle-like scene, with mature undergrowth of Turpentine, Bracken and Laurustinus, one of which is exceptionally large. You then come to three scree slopes in a row, created by a limestone rockface that towers above the path. The steep incline here has meant retaining walls have been built.

You then continue through a tunnel of Holm oaks that have a decent future ahead of them and the largest of scree slopes under the exposed rockface of El Horno. When you reach a clearing under the power lines, you get some excellent views of the Guadalhorce valley, its towns and the surrounding mountains. Then, turning south (km 9.5), the path runs below the rockface of El Caballo, larger than the previous one but a natural continuation of it. This was the most difficult section of path to construct, since the rocky terrain and steep slopes made it necessary to build long stone walls along with the winding pathway to soften the climb. ▶



At few other places is it as easy to appreciate the efforts involved for the mountain workers of the day.

After some spectacular bends, the path deteriorates in the upper part, initially because of rock falls from unstable slopes and later when passing under some reddish rockfaces. The fenced in Mediterranean vegetation suddenly gives way to a young Maritime pine grove on dolomitic sands, with as drastic a change of shrubbery too. The Juniper bushes with Mastic trees, Dwarf fan palms and Kermes oaks are replaced by Esparto grasses with White cistus as it gradually bends towards the south-west.

The track running through the mountain passes

➔ Up to km 16

The La Encina pass at kilometre 11.7 is the highest point of this alternative route, at 930 metres above sea level. From here, you begin to make your way along the network of tracks that crown the ridgeline between Pico Mijas (just above you to the south) and La Media Luna hill. You soon take a left, when straight ahead would take you along the sandy path up to the peak, while the track to the right goes down towards Los Peñascales, which you have already passed. A little further on and after a gully, the PR path (standing for short distance footpath in Spanish) from Mijas joins from the right.

Just before the junction with the track of Stage 32, this alternative route is diverted along a narrow stretch of pathway so that it

Impressive views over the Guadalhorce valley from the Camino de la Sierra way



runs below and parallel to the previous track shared with the PR. After a short distance through the dense Pine forest, you briefly join the track and its yellow route markers. You soon descend along a north facing slope down a timber extraction track until it links up to the track again and the two footpaths. This important landmark here is Las Grajas pass (km 15.3), with its characteristic and easily-recognisable Pine tree.

The mixed forest of conifers and oaks border a gentle uphill slope, along which you continue straight on. You pass by the branch which Stage 33 and the PR-A 171 take and climb up to the southeast. At the next rise, there is a comprehensive panoramic view of the Central Limestone Arc and the Guadalhorce region.

The country estates (Cortijos) of Jarapalos and La Mezquita

➔ To the end of the stage

While on this track, you come to the final descent. Directly ahead of you is the track from Tiro Pichón to Jarapalo crossing the escarpments high up. Above and to the ►



south-east the Pine covered Jorado Hill, where the other certified footpaths head. There are two large bends in the track, the second of which brings you above an abandoned quarry with better views to the west of Las Minas stream and the El Águila gorge in front. Below you are a pool and a limekiln among the trees, before reaching the Jarapalos spring (km 17.3), with its tall pillar and drinking fountain at its base. From here, do not follow the main track that climbs up to the right across the ravine, but take the track which passes in front of the old tree nursery, now converted into an arboretum, which the pool provides water for and has a couple of chestnut trees by the access road.

At the first bend, you turn off the track on to a narrow path that descends steadily down the Fuente de la Higuera stream. First cross one of its tributaries, which is shrouded in vegetation. The changing type of ground gives rise to plants unsuited to more basic soils, such as Heather, wild Strawberry trees and Myrtles, nevertheless some lime kilns still appear by the side of the path. Cross over the main river channel and the valley

begins to open up, bringing some of the properties of Cortijo de la Mezquita estate on the opposite slope into sight. Where this meets the track, there is an attractive clump of Poplar trees next to the gate at kilometre 19.3.

The route turns from south-easterly to easterly, following a track closed off by a gate. Nearby there is an old water channel that is cut off by the bank, while the path flattens out and continues past some tall Pines over the Hondo stream, with its lush vegetation. This soon brings you to the plains of Peñaprieta (km 20.8). A side road leads off to the ravine, but you continue straight on following the bends of the Solana stream until you reach the Tiro Pichón crossroads. Take a track that goes off to the right, cross another track (going to the Jarapalos fountain) and go over La Breña ravine. On the other side is the higher part of the Pinos de Alhaurín housing development. To reach the centre of Alhaurín de la Torre, follow Manuel Alexandre street, turning from north-east to east, to end up at Viña Grande avenue, where this alternative route finishes. ■

Chestnut trees in a leafy area of Jarapalos

