

Stage VÉLEZ-MÁLAGA • TORROX

THE STAGE IN SUMMARY

Stage 3 continues east along La Axarquía coast, linking up the neighbouring towns in the two main river valleys in the region, both named after their respective towns Interestingly, it passes through the municipality of Vélez-Málaga, Algarrobo and again Vélez, where Mezquitilla Point roughly indicates the midway point. Once over the River Güí, the route enters the municipality of Torrox.

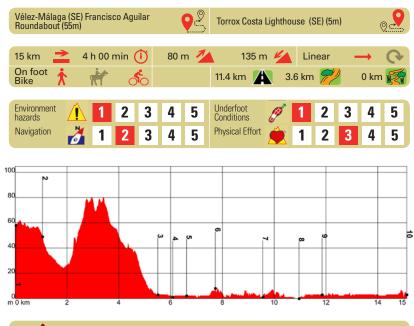
The initial section, distinguishes itself from the largely coastal route, by running almost four kilometres inland. The middle section then breezes over a number of smaller rivers flowing south into the Alborán Sea. Some of these are only short, but the Rivers Algarrobo, Güí and Torrox have their sources in the mountains of the Sierra Almijara, meaning larger volumes of water and more intriguing river mouths.

At first, the route makes use of the smaller roads, taking a southeast course in between subtropical plantations and golf courses. You later amble along the seafront boulevards through numerous towns and then along the verges of the N-340. In addition, there are sections of sand, the walkways of La Ferrara beach and the dried river bed of the River Torrox.

The coastline of La Axarquía is considerably less built-up than Malaga's western stretch, with a greater focus on agricultural land use, much of it under plastic greenhouses and in subtropical fruit groves. This has meant that few pockets of nature remain, these include its river mouths and some of the last remaining dune systems on the eastern Costa del Sol. Owing to its superb climate, a number of Mediterranean civilizations have arrived on these shores, leaving the region with archaeological sites of the highest order. The strategic and industrial importance of the Province's history is exemplified perfectly by the site of the Roman ruins and its visitors' centre, next to Torrox lighthouse.



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Crossing smaller waterways without a bridge
Road traffic circulating



GR92 E12 – Links up from km 5.5 onwards.

Puerta Verde in Vélez-Málaga for 1.4 kilometres at start of the stage.

P O I N T	Х		Υ		HEIGHT ABOVE SL	DISTANCE
1 Avenue of the Old Malaga Road	402487	/	4070123	/	55 m	Km 0,0
2 La Maroma and Sierra Tejada Viewpoint	403420	/	4069835	/	55 m	Km 1,0
3 The Fountain of Pilar	405200	/	4068738	/	5 m	Km 3,4
4 Algarrobo or Sayalonga River	406245	/	4067109	/	4 m	Km 6,0
5 Mezquitilla Shrine	406740	/	4067064	/	1 m	Km 6,6
6 Mezquitilla Point or Whales Point	407789	/	4066800	/	9 m	Km 7,7
7 Lagos Tower	409544	/	4066766	/	6 m	Km 9,5
8 Güí or Huit Tower	410834	/	4066486	/	6 m	Km 10,9
9 The Winches at El Morche	411640	/	4066169	/	8 m	Km 11,8
10 Torrox Point and Lighthouse	414511	/	4064926	/	9 m	Km 15,1





ROUTE DESCRIPTION



The third stage of the GR-249 sets off with a south-easterly heading from the Francisco Aguilar Roundabout, next to the sports centre named after the footballer Fernando Hierro. Passing by abandoned olive groves and unirrigated land, the stage begins with a gentle slope down a compacted-earth track. This runs alongside a tarmacked road and is separated by a sturdy wooden fence. You then pass some exercise stations for light physical activity, but the first landmark of note is an old building in ruins on the far side of the main road with stonework arches and plinths and rammed earth walls. The magnificent peaks of the Sierra Tejada and their mottled grey tones can be seen to the east. Most prominent here is the peak of La Maroma, among the highest in Málaga.

Continuing on, you then pass the track towards the ridge of Loma de Bentomiz and its fortress on your left and soon reach the Arroyo Seco river (km 1.7). Here, you walk south along the normally dry river bed, taking extra precautions if there are chances of storms. A short distance on, you cross over to the eastern bank and make a 90° turn, passing by the plant nursery Los Bambúes. The route then goes uphill to find the entrance to, and go through the underpass of the A-7/E-15 motorway. On exiting, you pass close by a golf course housing development with tarmacked roads. A change of municipality and the terraces of fruit groves emerge once again, on Cerro Era, complete with water storage pools. At the end of the asphalt road, the Old Algarrobo Road continues straight on, however the Great Path takes a right, to head directly south. Continuing on through the winding streets of La Caleta, you arrive at the well-known fountain of Pilar, then ▶



La Nueva or Derecha Tower with its stairway access



Walking the pathway along the cliffs between Mezquitilla and Lagos



cross the N-340 to soon arrive at the beach. with La Caleta Port to the west. This latter landmark is well worth a visit and is easily reached via the Coastal Path, which the GR-249 shares its way with from here on.

Along the coastline of Vélez-Málaga, Algarrobo, Torrox → To the end of the stage

The route continues to the southeast, along the seafront boulevard of Algarrobo Costa. It follows a pathway that is separated from the sand by a low wall, alongside a row of houses on a one-way tarmac road. Remarkably, traditional small businesses and two-storey family houses here remain under the same roof, maintaining a tradition from the end of the 20th century that has all but died out on the Málaga coastline.

Typical seaside boulevards and residential blocks with garden areas gradually begin to crop up. A visit to the grounds of the apartment block just to your left before crossing the Algarrobo or

Sayalonga River is recommended, to visit the 16th century watchtower. Known as Torre Ladeada (Lopsided Tower), del Mar (of the Sea) or del Portichuelo (Porthole), it fell into disuse well before its time, due to weak foundations and the onslaught of the wind and sea. Its 18th century replacement, found on the other side of the main road is named Torre Nueva (New Tower) or Torre Derecha (Right Tower). It boasts a staircase on the north side, added subsequently, leading directly to the upper-level entrance. It is one of the few visitable and an application to the Algarrobo Town Council is required. Returning to the stretch of sand by the mouth of the River Algarrobo, you cross the wide section of the river over a delicate pedestrian bridge with a ramp and stair access. Phoenician ruins have been discovered on both sides, but separated by the river. During the period from the 9th to 6th centuries BCE, the much higher sea level created a large inlet, where the

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Phoenician elevated settlements of Morro de Mezquitilla and Chorreras were found. In addition, the western side of the river was home to the Necropolis of Trayamar, which along with the two settlements are protected as Cultural Heritage Sites, since 2010. The fast-flowing river in its upper reaches, originates in the Sierra Almijara mountains, before flowing through Canillas de Albaida, an area visited during Stage 7.

Tucked away between tall buildings and hiding behind some gardens and sports facilities in the neighbourhood of Mezquitilla, is the elongated chapel of the Virgen of Fátima. Also worthy of mention is the fishing boat beach mooring, with its metal winches on the beach and fishing nets spread out in the sun.

You enter the municipality of Vélez-Málaga once more, where the coastal belt becomes considerably more stretched out and multiple breakwaters appear. After passing the Arroyo Mamelucos waterway, the widened pathway travels parallel to

the N-340, runs through Las Ballenas (Whales) Point or Morro de Mezquitilla. Not far on, a decent uphill section provides some rewarding views back to Mezquitilla and Lagos, from the top of the slaty cliffs. Wild poppies, Asteriscus maritimus and prickly shrubs make up most of the vegetation cover here. You then pass close by the previously mentioned archaeological sites before coming into Lagos.

On entering the town, you are welcomed by a string of majestic monkey puzzle trees. Among the village's most appealing sights are traditional fisherman's houses found just metres from the beach. Also of note are its river mouth and the Lagos Tower, situated at the top of a rockface, almost 50m above sea level, on the far side of the motorway. This 16th century watchtower has a large crack in its southern side, however retains part of its plasterwork with linear decorations.

The next section of pathway continues between the cliff face and the main road, ▶



soon arriving at Cachín Beach. Walking along the pathway adjacent to the main road, you then cross the River Güí over an attractive wooden bridge at kilometre 11.1, which indicates the end of the section through Vélez-Málaga municipality. The first town you come across in Torrox municipality is that of El Morche, home to the white Güí or Huit Tower situated on a rocky headland, 40 metres above sea level. Undeniably similar in its workmanship to the previous tower and perhaps it is not the easiest to access from the current position. The edifices and various structures, both public and private do tower over this part of the beach.

After passing traditional houses overlooking the beach, you arrive at El Morche's seafront boulevard, which is your cue to leave the sand. On your right, before crossing over the Arroyo Manzano, stand two winches that were originally used to haul in the fishing nets during the 20th century. You then come to an unlikely yet mistreated dune system some 500 metres long, which serves as a relic of the former

landscape. It is well worth crossing over to the beach side, on one of the walkways, in order to appreciate the Carraca Dunes, the last in La Axarquía. The route resumes along the very long beaches of Las Lindes and Ferrara and their seafront boulevards to Torrox Lighthouse and the Point of the same name (km15.5).

Sheltered by the Lighthouse's viewing platform, which resembles the bow of a ship is the easily-identifiable Roman site. Just next to this is Torrox Lighthouse, which was built in 1864, stands at 26 metres tall and dominates the rocky point on which it stands. Incidentally, this rocky point juts out further into the Mediterranean Sea than any other of its type. There is a visitors' centre for the site of the city of Caviclum within the lighthouse grounds, also dedicated to other adjoining structures such as the ceramics workshop, necropolis, baths and the salting and garum fish sauce factories.

Stage 3 of the Great Malaga Path draws to a close at the mouth of the River Torrox, one of La Axarquía's longer watercourses.



