

Technical Details of a Typical Stage

Following on from the description in **THE STAGE IN SUMMARY**, is the Technical Information relating to each stage, next to a fold out map. This section offers a synopsis of the Stage using numerical data, expressed using easy-to-understand icons.

STARTING POINT (NSEW Zone) (Height above SL m)		End Point (NSEW Zone) (Height above SL m)	
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The **Starting Point** and **End Point** are almost always in a settlement of some kind and normally on the outskirts. These are both identified in the first box, along with the more precise locations of the first and final markers (North, East, South or West) and their Height above SLeS in metres.

Distance (km)		Duration		Acc. elevation gain		Acc. elevation loss		Route type		
Suitable mode					Tarmac (km)		Track (km)		Path (km)	

The subsequent boxes describe **various technical details** of each stage's route, such as the Distance, the estimated Duration necessary, the **Cumulative Elevation Gain** and **Loss**, the **Route Type** (linear or circular), the **Recommended Method(s)** (on foot, on horseback, by bicycle) and the **Surface Type** found along the stage.

AVERAGE DATA of the Great Malaga Path

19,3 km		5 h.		590 m		615 m		Linear		
Hiking					4.2 km		10.8 km		4.3 km	





This box displays the average data for the 35 Stages of the Great Path, to give a reliable portrait of what a typical Stage looks like. In general, the average length is 19.3 kilometres, which should require just over 5 hours to complete. For the 675 kilometres of the parent route, it is estimated to take about 190 hours of walking, or about 23 days walking at 8 hours per day, which is a manageable goal. If we include the 11 Stages of the 5 Alternative Routes, then the total length of the GR 249 is 942 km, which would require a total of 30 days to complete.

Malaga is a very mountainous province and this is reflected in the average Cumulative Elevation Gain and Loss of 590 and 615 metres respectively. The cumulative totals are very high, exceeding 20,000 metres each, without taking into account the Alternative Routes.

As expected, the Stages are linear, although that does not mean to say circular routes cannot be created on numerous occasions using the other Certified Hiking Routes shown on the maps and numbered in the text.

It is worth noting, there are few Stages recommended for mountain biking or on horseback, for the rider of average ability. Hiking is therefore the most appropriate activity for the Great Path. Sometimes cycling or horse riding is not possible for only a short stretch, however it cannot be recommended because your safety is not 100% assured.

M.I.D.E. DATA (Average difficulty of the Great Malaga Path)

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

In order to describe the **Stage Difficulty**, a tool recommended by the Spanish Federation for Mountain & Climbing Sports (FEDME) is used called **Excursion Information Method**, known by its acronym **MIDE** in Spanish. This takes into account the level of physical exertion and the technical difficulty of the route in normal conditions using **4 parameters**, each on a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high).

The category of **Environment Hazards** takes into account the quantity of adverse factors that may affect the hiker, from a list of 18 possible. These range from a total of one or two for Level 1, and up to more than eleven for Level 5. This list covers situations such as rock or snow fall, a considerable temperature drop at night, the possibility of slipping or falling down a slope, technically difficult sections, the distance walking to inhabited areas, the likelihood of adverse weather conditions, the proven existence of potentially dangerous animals or being forced to abandon the route for whatever reason. The average figure for The Great Malaga Path is 1.6, which is circled in the Pictogram. Merely on 8 occasions does it reach level 3, usually during mountain stages.

Navigation on the route is the second item evaluated and in this GR 249, and has an average of **1.8**. This is logical given it is a certified route and so is sufficiently signposted throughout. Ratings 1 and 2 correspond to pathways that have well defined or signposted crossroads. Levels 4 and 5 indicate that it is necessary to have a good idea of orientation, and know how to navigate with GPS, to use maps or even to avoid and detour around obstacles in the terrain to continue along the route. Of course, these latter



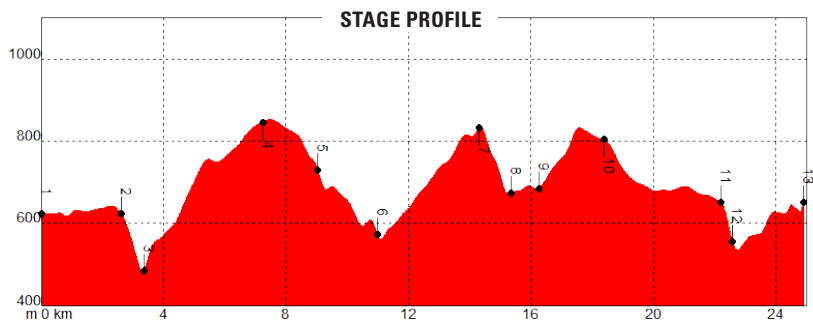
extremes are never the case on the Great Malaga Path. In fact, only two stages are estimated that the navigation on the route is rated 3, which is a medium level of difficulty.

As for the **Underfoot Conditions**, the Great Path does not reach levels 4 and 5 either, and only three stages reach level 3. The upper levels imply scrambling may be necessary, using your hands to support yourself for some shorter sections. The average score of 3 refers to uneven terrain, with uneven steps and stony ground. These are characteristic of the larger limestone mountains of Malaga. The resulting average is also very low, at **1.7**, which means relatively even terrain or with low steps that allow you to choose the length of your step.

With regard to the **Physical Effort** required to complete the Stage, an average of **3.1** has been estimated, meaning an average level. These calculations are closely related to the gradients, distance and type of road surface. Level 1 of effort signifies 1 hour of activity and level 5, more than 10 hours. The walking speed is estimated to be 5 km/h for tracks and roads, 4 km/h on well-maintained bridle paths and footpaths and 3 km/h for uneven terrain and footpaths in poor condition. Likewise, the calculation for elevation gain is about 400 metres climbing in one hour and 600 metres for the descents. The amount of effort required for the Great Malaga Path is normally due to the climbs, descents and the length of the stages rather than to other factors. Due to this, there are only 14 stages out of 49 with a level 4 in physical effort and one with a level 5, which in this case can also be divided into several sub-stages.

An information board and signpost with arrows at the start of a Stage





The **Stage Profile** is one of the graphic tools that help to understand each stage better. The vertical axis displays the height above sea level in metres and on the horizontal axis, the distance in kilometres. The most interesting thing is in the numbers that identify the **Waypoints** and you can see their **description, position on the map, Height above SLe** and **distance** from the start in the table at the bottom of the same page. The perfect complement to all this information is the **Fold-out Map** on the following page, where the points are all mapped out.



• Caution, to take into account

One of the main concerns of Malaga's Regional Council is the **Hiker's Safety**, so when there is any kind of danger it is indicated next to the **Caution icon**. There are now fewer and fewer occasions when it is necessary to ford the streams and rivers, thanks to the construction of pedestrian bridges, especially over the larger waterways. Potential hazards can generally arise when close to road traffic or due to circumstances related to weather conditions or relief.

GR-245

SL 109

PR-A 119

Coincidence and / or connections with other trails

This is very valuable information, which is also reflected in the attached map. This is thanks to the very extensive Network of Certified Footpaths in the province of Malaga, allowing circular walks to be created or areas bordering the Great Malaga Path to be explored. The Local Footpaths (SL) appear on the map in green, the Short Distance Footpaths (PR) in yellow and other Long Distance Footpaths (GR) in a slightly darker shade of red than the official one. Each one is listed with its name, where it links up or overlaps (partially or totally) and is identified with its code on the map.