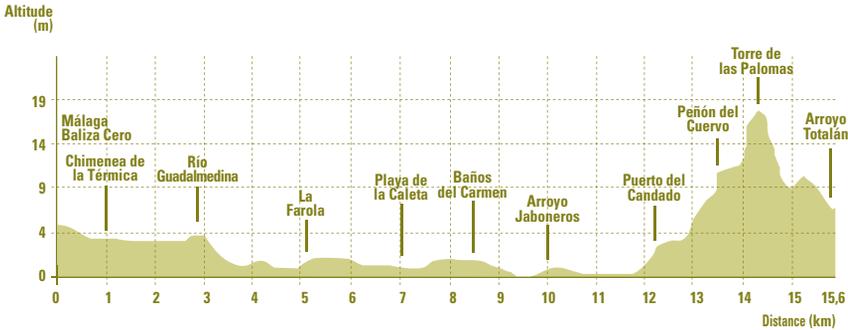


1 MÁLAGA • RINCÓN DE LA VICTORIA

The ramble begins

 ESTIMATED TIME
3 hours 20 minutes



LONGITUDE (km)		ALTITUDE AND ELEVATION (m)			
Length	15.6	Accumulated ascent	40	Final altitude	7
Ascent km	2.0	Accumulated descent	35	Maximum altitude	23
Descent km	2.4	Maximum difference	23	Minimum altitude	0
Flat km	11.2	Altitude at starting point	6	Average altitude	4

» Summary of this Stage «

The first stage of the Great Path of Málaga is eastbound along the coastline towards the region of Axarquía. This is a very accessible part of the itinerary, especially because of its shortness but also because of the very few ups and downs. In order to connect western Málaga and La Cala del Moral in the Rincón de la Victoria, one must follow a gentle arch to the north and east along the borders of the Ensenada de Málaga and, of course, all through Málaga city, walking mainly along the beach boardwalks. Gradually you will start walking through the different coastal districts of Málaga, from the centre to El Palo with the traditional “chiringuitos” (beach bars) and beach restaurants with the traditional “espeteros” (long sticks full of fish or squid placed vertically close to the fire for grilling). The Almería road marks the end of this coastal landscape as Puerto de Candado port comes into view, so does the overwhelming cement factory called Cementera de la Araña, together with a few cliffs.

The road enters one of the remaining cliffs through a tunnel. In the final section the beautiful sea coves return, including the one named Peñón del Cuervo (Raven’s Rock), however the highest point here is the Las Palomas watchtower at 23 meters high. The walk continues alongside the 340 Carretera Nacional road on its right shoulder and stops next to the limestone cliffs of the Cala de Moral at the small bridge which takes you safely to the other side of the Arroyo Totalán stream which constitutes the border between city limits of Málaga and Rincón de la Victoria.

 Roughness of the environment	 Navigation in this stage	 Walking difficulty	 Effort required				
1	1	1	2	10.3	4.4	0.9	x 0

Pictograms description MIDE, pages 11 & 17

» Highlights of this Stage «

At the very beginning Gr-249 offers the possibility of exploring practically the entire coastal fringe of the capital. After a long period of being forgotten, Málaga of the 21st century welcomed the new millennium by opening up towards the Mediterranean Sea, the sea which has always lent Málaga its status of an important city. Various projects show this new focus on the port area, sparking many controversies at the same time; the walk subsequently takes you through these new areas. Meanwhile, the Guadalmedina River has been waiting its turn to claim its importance from an environmental and public use point of view, which it fully deserves as one of the great backbones of the city.

The planning model of this part of the western Málaga coast has been modified over many years and in this way Málaga's identity of a fishing centre has been preserved, the identity which has given the city a way to exist whilst adapting to a new reality. The walker has a chance to see such iconic places as the port and the lighthouse, the beaches of La Calera, Pedregalejo and El Palo, and the numerous "chiringuitos", traditional beach bars which are also trying to find their place and a new look at the beginning of this century.

The last part of the itinerary of Stage 1 holds a few surprises of a different nature, from unspoilt wildlife sites harbouring exclusive botanical species to the perfectly preserved medieval beacon towers, through industrial buildings at the foot of the beach or enchanting secluded beach coves.

- **Starting point:** Kilometre Zero at the Paseo Marítimo Antonio Banderas in Málaga.
- **Access to starting point:** Málaga can be reached by the Autovía Del Mediterráneo, the Mediterranean motorway following direction east-southeast. There are motorways leading from the north towards the Antequera region and the rest of the capitals of the Andalusian provinces: the A-45 and AP-46, passing through the Puerto de las Pedrizas. Coming from the Guadalteba and Serranía de Ronda regions, take the A-357 direction west.
- **Finish point:** Bridge over the stream in La Cala del Moral, a town in Rincón de la Victoria.
- **Access to finish point:** Rincón de la Victoria is located between the N-340 coastal motorway and the A-7S ring road. Here the MA-24 branches off in the direction of Rincón de la Victoria or La Cala del Moral, the latter marking the end of Stage 1.
- **Possible "escape routes":** At all times it is possible to abandon the itinerary and head straight down towards the N-340 using any of beach access roads. The N-340 is a coastal road which offers intercity bus stops and other city services.
- **No return point:** You are close to being half-way through Stage 1 in Los Baños del Carmen. Considering the many possible "escape routes" before you reach Los Baños del Carmen, it is reasonable to keep walking from this point rather than trying to return.
- **Maps:** The first part of the stage is covered by map **1053-III** (Málaga). At the kilometre 11.2 you must change maps to the **1053-IV** (Rincón de la Victoria).
- **District boundaries:** The whole of Stage 1 leads through Málaga city limits, up to El Arroyo Totalán at the finish point (km 15.6) where you enter the city limits of Rincón de la Victoria.



Close to Km Zero, a sculpture spelling *La Misericordia*

• Enjoy the walk safely

The first stage poses very few potential dangers. All stream crossings are done using bridges; pedestrians have the right of way on the various “Paseos Marítimos”, the beach promenades. Normally you should not have any problems getting drinking water; there are some public drinking fountains available on the way. As you leave the El Palo beaches behind, you are walking along the shoulder of the N-340, which is narrow especially if you encounter a cyclist, which is a possibility.

Finally, the cultural landmark, Las Palomas watchtower at the Acantilados del Cantal cliffs, has no protective railings (at the time of writing this guide). There is a steep drop on the southern side of the tower. Take extreme caution while taking pictures.

• Connections to other footpaths and trails

The GR-92 or E-12 (Senda del Mediterráneo) runs in stages through the Province of Málaga, and one of those stages, about 167 kilometres long, leads through this area. The part which coincides with the GR-249 starts at El Arroyo Totalán and ends at the famous Málaga lighthouse. Logically, the waymarking of the Malaga province GR takes you in the opposite direction to the GR-249.

The capital offers a couple of useful Pequeño Recorrido (PR, short distance) footpaths which give you a good idea of the hilly countryside around you. One of them is the PR A-114 Ciudad

Jardín Puerto de la Torre, 17 kilometres long, one way. The path was adapted in 2012 and it starts in the city. The start and finish points are connected by the city bus network and both points connect with the GR-249. The PR’s attractions include unusual views of the city and the Agujero and Limonero Reservoirs.

At km 4.3 of the main itinerary, at the level of the Málaga Port, there is another public walk, the A-119 PR Sendero del Mirador. It begins at the Ayuntamiento (City Hall) and

is somewhat longer, about 26 kilometres, also it is a bit more demanding than the previously mentioned PR as it leads up to Montes de Málaga. This walk is appealing because of the sea views over the Mar de Alborán, the opportunity of walking up to the Parque Natural de los Montes de Málaga and the descent amongst the old mills through the valley of the Arroyo de Jaboneros. After 10 kilometres of walking, in the delta of the Jaboneros Stream, the PR and the GR connect again.

There are a couple of important historical references which should be mentioned. There used to be two ways to travel east out of Málaga which faced many construction difficulties due to the mountainous nature of the east coast. One was the Carretera de Almería, a scene of bloody historical events in the past, as referred to by a quite vague information panel found between El Puerto del Candado and El Peñon del Cuervo. The other was the Tren Litoral, coastal train which led out of Málaga, ran along the coast through tunnels and across bridges and then climbed to Vélez Málaga up to Boquete de Zafarraya to continue to Granada Province. The train line was built by the Suburban Railway Company of Málaga at the beginning of the last century. The old station of origin was an eclectic two-toned building at the entrance to Málaga port from the Plaza de la Marina.

The GR-249 passes this historical building which nowadays houses the Instituto de Estudios Portuarios, and this isn’t the last time the walk will follow the now non-existent train lines.

THE RIVERS AND THE WATER



The Málaga Cathedral and the new boardwalk as seen from the port

The main watercourse of Stage 1 is the Guadalmedina River, which crosses the walk at the very start of the journey. Originally the river was known as the Río de la Ciudad, the City River, and indeed Málaga has been built on both sides of it. The river reaches the sea in the western part of the port, practically in the city centre. Málaga and its river have shared a difficult past and despite recent efforts, there is still no solution of how to integrate the river into the modern city combining conservation and exploitation. The Guadalmedina has its source in the Sierra de Camarolos in Central Limestone Arch, El Arco Calizo Central, and flows south along the Natural Park of the Montes de Málaga on its left side. This Natural Protected Area was created when pine trees were planted as part of a reforestation and water conservation plan, which also included construction of dams and two reservoirs: El Agujero and El Limonero.

The plan was triggered by the violent flooding in September 23, 1907, which resulted in many deaths and extensive property damage. This was just one of the last in the series of events caused by deforestation. An additional problem was the necessity to abandon the hillside plots dedicated to vine

growing due to the epidemic of phylloxera. Growing vines was the main force behind the nineteenth century Málaga's economy, with additional profits coming from marketing as well as selling the main product. Today the whole length of Guadalmedina is channelled as it crosses Málaga and the river harbours small numbers of fish where it is deep enough. This does not always happen as the river climbs for nearly 50 kilometres. The river runs through fragments of galleried woods, remnants of what the river banks should look like. From the bridge across the access motorway to the port, between Puente del Carmen and the railroad, it is easy to find large mullet fish browsing around in the still waters of the delta as well as some sea birds seemingly not bothered by the traffic noise.

Other watercourses which cross the Gran Senda de Málaga at this stage are smaller, however they form an integral part of the city's fabric.

El Arroyo Toquero flows into the sea at La Caleta and it is barely perceptible to the walker. Next you will pass by the Arroyo Jaboneros,

A fisherman at Los Baños del Carmen and the Malagueta beaches in the background



which comes from Los Montes de Málaga. The riverbed is quite wide; however there has still been some flooding, especially during torrential rains. From the bridge across the stream you can make out in the distance El Monte San Antón, a limestone outcrop which is quite iconic to the “malagueños”. There are a few reed beds and small clumps of tamarisk here and there; little more can be sustained in the stream delta due to its entirely urban character. The bank of the watercourse is used as a footpath, the PRA-119 and a place to stroll or walk your dog.

El Arroyo de Gálica, its waters significantly reduced during the summer season, flows into the sea at the El Palo beaches, while the Judío stream ends at the Peñon del Cuervo. Both streams trickle off the shale slopes that the Autovía del Mediterráneo motorway cuts through; this gives the names of the streams some exposure, as the high road bridges have been named after them.

El Arroyo Totalán marks the end of Stage 1 of the walk and the start of the city limits of Rincón de la Victoria. It is quite a long watercourse which comes from the Totalán village (named after the stream) in the Axarquía region and then flows through the district of the Málaga

Los Baños del Carmen



province area called Olías. The vegetation along the stream delta consists of thick cane and of some tree copses upstream. On the right bank of the delta, bordered by the N-340 road, there are a few reddish limestone outcrops whose origins partially stem from cliffs shaped by marine environment and gullies carved out by flowing water. The outcrops have been used by a rock-climbing school.

Finally, it is noteworthy that the Gran Senda de Málaga passes over, from time to time, waste water channels leading from Málaga city. The proximity of houses to the coast calls for the use of 26 pump stations to carry the waste water up to the two main water treatment facilities situated on the left bank of the Guadalhorce (quite close to the start of Stage 1) and at the Peñon del Cuervo (km 13.3) about a kilometre inland along the Arroyo del Judío valley. Drinking water management in Málaga is completed at the main stations for drinking water Estaciones Potabilizadores El Atabal, Limoneros y Pilones, which store drinking water mainly from the three El Chorro reservoirs, from La Viñuela in La Axarquía and the Concepcion one in Marbella.

Arroyo Jaboneros and Monte de San Antón



WALK DESCRIPTION

» The urban coast

Kilometre Zero is at the Paseo Marítimo Antonio Banderas, in the vicinity of Diputación Provincial de Málaga, the sundial and the sign for La Misericordia beach, named after the nearby hospice, Casa de la Misericordia, Asilo Provincial y Hospicio. An institution which dates back at this location to the beginnings of the 21st century, which also served as a hospital during the Moroccan war and as the Málaga Provincial Council job training centre for the children from the working class project in Huelin district.

This above mentioned district stretches to the east and it owes its name to a British descendant Eduardo Huelin Reissig who built a village to house the workers of his sugar cane factory. However, the factory chimneys at this point are evidence of the past existence of La Ferrería de Constancia, an ingenious manufacture related to the steel and iron industry, supplied with iron ore from the Sierra Blanca in Marbella. One of these chimneys is visible at the beginning of the walk and it is the tallest one of the Málaga coast at a height of 104 metres and known as Chimenea del Plomo (Lead Chimney) named after the lead smelting factory "Los Guindos" which was located below, or the Mónica chimney, named after a painting and a lovely story left on the chimney by a love struck man in 1993.

The Huelin neighbourhood and its beaches witnessed the industrial eruption in Málaga when textile, flour, tobacco and railroad factories were opened. Nowadays this is just another residential area and its main feature is the park El Parque del Oeste. The beach is famous for a fun event which is enjoyed both by locals and visitors: the so-called Melillero Wave, a surprising phenomenon for the normally calm

sea, caused by the passing ferry headed for Melilla or Ceuta.

The Paseo Marítimo promenade, named after Málaga's celebrity Antonio Banderas, continues under the name of Antonio Molina who came from the Huelin district. Then a recently opened path to the right, between the two chimneys, leads to Monumento al Espetero, a monument dedicated to the Costa del Sol's traditional work of grilling sea food on long sticks. Next, along the Paseo de Antonio Machado, having crossed the train line which comes into the port, cross the somewhat neglected Guadalmedina river (km 2.9), pass by the monuments to Torrijos and Cenachero and Estación Suburbana de Autobuses at the Muelle Heredia and arrive at the symbol of Málaga's new image, el Palmeral de las Sorpresas. The port, having been opened to the city, has lent the place a new kind of sense of space and clarity, as proved by the hundreds of passersby strolling underneath the awning and along the two piers Muelle Uno and Muelle Dos.



Sierra de Mijas from El Palo beach



Kilometre mark on the N-340

In the Palmeral de las Sorpresas on Muelle 2 there is the Aula del Mar, opened in 1989 in a space provided by the Guild of Fishermen. It has become an institution on the Andalusian coast thanks to the activities related to environmental education, conservation of coastal ecosystems and the recovery of marine species, especially turtles and cetaceans. They currently manage the Alborania Museum, which is highly recommended.

It is worth a detour to see the only lighthouse in Spain with a feminine name: La Farola instead of the usual masculine El Faro; abandon the northeast direction and head south to the Espigón del Puerto which cuts into the Alborán Sea. This is a good spot to gaze at the most popular Málaga view: the oblong shape of the Alcazaba, La Coracha and the Castillo de Gibralfaro leaning against the Cathedral, popularly known as “La Manquita”.

At the Paseo Marítimo de la Farola a sign indicates the beginning of the GR-92 E-12 while our GR takes you along the pavements and the different levels of the Paseo Marítimo leading you along close to the sand. From the Playa de la Malagueta continue to La Caleta beach (where you follow the road

as it veers eastward). At the Pedregalejo beach, you can visit another historical place; its restoration project is currently generating intense discussions amongst politicians and citizens alike; Los Baños del Carmen. This Marine Spa with its exceptional location in an extensive wooded area can be found at km 8.6 and it takes you almost immediately to another local symbol, the Nereo shipyard.

Just before the start of the Paseo Marítimo del Pedregal (the walk swerves to get to the beach and passes it on the right) are the old dry docks, centuries-old workshops, a museum and an Escuela Taller (a training workshop). In 2008 the Ministry of Culture declared the carpentry of the beaches of Ribera de las Playas de Pedregalejo as part of Andalusian historical heritage. One of the craft's star achievements are the jábega boats, traditional fishing boats whose shape and decoration suggest Phoenician origins and which can still be seen navigating the eastern coasts of Málaga.

The embankment of the old railway line reveals the geological composition of the cliff





Walkway adopted by the GR-249 to skirt the first sea cliffs

» Nature haven in an archaeological sanctuary

El Arroyo Jaboneros marks the dividing line between the beaches of Pedregalejo and El Palo while Arroyo de Gálica gives way to the beach Playa del Dedo on the Paseo de la Generación del 27. As it leads further away from the big city, the walk regains the atmosphere of ancient rural fishing communities of the two Málaga neighbourhoods, which today have been devoted to leisure, restaurants and tourism. And then the landscape changes, leaving behind the port Puerto del Candado (km 12.2) and gradually ascends to the highest elevation of Stage 1, along the road barriers of the N-340. Construction was slowed down here because of a hill formed by limestone ridges. At the foot of the hill a pedestrian walkway has been built. The vegetation on this slope, rising between the rocks of the coast and the road, consists of spiny broom,

gorse, esparto grass, Mediterranean dwarf fan palm, and some herbs mixed with the more marine species such as the Sea Daisy (*Asteriscus maritimus*) or the interesting endemic *Limonium malacitanum*.

The surprising views over to the Playa del Peñon del Cuervo are spectacular in contrast with the landscape that has been left behind and, above all, which is about to come next. In the middle, there is a prominent crag resembling a peninsula and the delta of the Arroyo del Judío. The beach is actually an isolated cove between the previous and current hill which reaches into the sea. The tunnel of the Carretera de Almería penetrates the hill where the Paseo de los Canadienses commemorates the work of the mobile blood transfusion unit of the Canadian Dr. Henry Norman Bethune who came from Valencia in support of the people fleeing via the Almería road in 1937. The cement factory Cementera de la Araña



La Playa del Peñón del Cuervo with its rocky outcrop which divides the beach in two

provides the counterpoint to the emerging natural landscape, with its metal towers and the ground limestone dust covering everything, a price to pay for the production of this building material which was in such high demand at the beginning of the century on the Costa del Sol.

The rocky point topped with the Las Palomas watchtower located at km 14.1 km and at the highest altitude of the day, dominates the view with its haughty presence on a rise from where you can see the major part of the coastline forming the first and second stage of the Great Málaga Path. This very well preserved watchtower dating back to the 16th century is almost 11 metres high, built on two floors on top of the rock bed, as it is customary for such buildings. The bulk of the construction is based on stone joined together with limestone mortar, but the finish and the vault are made using strong ceramic brick. You can easily distinguish the two machicolations, one of

them supported by stone corbels and the staircase to the upper floor. In both rooms there is a fireplace to generate smoke and flames used in signalling other towers.

But it is not only this medieval tower which is willing to talk about history, above all is the so called Complejo del Humo, a complex of shelters and caves in the cliffs of Los Tajos de la Araña which provide numerous data on the prehistoric population of the coast. Next to the tower there is the Interpretation Centre and Museum of the cave complex, where you can find contact numbers and opening hours.

In any case, to imagine the potential of this place you would have to go back in time when the sea level was tens of meters higher than the current one, there were meadows and coastal forests to

Torre Atalaya de las Palomas



provide the early humans' diet of molluscs and crustaceans with complementary ingredients. The humans would have been protected by the mild climate and night fires lit in the shelters amongst the rocks. The current use of the same cliffs by the rock climbers from the so-called Escuela de la Cala de Moral generates some controversy.

In order to reach the very end of Stage 1 at the Arroyo Totalán, walk a little further along the road, passing by the exclusive Iberian populations of *Maytenus senegalensis* bushes, mixed with Rock Samphire (*Crithmum maritimum*) and Searocket (*Cakile maritima*) in the sandy soil. Ahead and on the other side of Arroyo Totalán, the extensive beaches of La Cala del Moral and Rincón de la Victoria await. ◉



Peñón del Cuervo and the Sierra de Mijas



Rock Samphire growing on a seaside cliff

LIST OF GPS POINTS OF THIS STAGE (UTM)

1 Km Zero at the Diputación Provincial de Málaga	30S 0371113 4061373	5 m	2 Chimenea del Parque del Oeste	30S 0371306 4061739	5 m
3 Monumento al Espetero	30S 0371461 4062008	4 m	4 Bridge over Río Guadalmedina	30S 0372624 4063748	5 m
5 Monumento al Cenachero	30S 0373181 4064420	1 m	6 La Farola and breakwater of Puerto de Málaga	30S 0373643 4064036	2 m
7 Arroyo and Playa de la Caleta	30S 0375210 4064953	0 m	8 Baños del Carmen	30S 0376583 4064860	1 m
9 Arroyo Jaboneros	30S 0377982 4064541	2 m	10 Puerto del Candado	30S 0379861 4064118	4 m
11 Peñón del Cuervo archeological site	30S 0380468 4063857	5 m	12 Peñón del Cuervo	30S 0380820 4063912	13 m
13 Las Palomas watchtower	30S 0381427 4063794	23 m	14 End of Stage 1 at Arroyo Totalán	30S 0382501 4063870	8 m