

Gaucín Route II: “Alrededor del Hacho” - Around El Hacho

Difficulty: Easy/Medium
 Time: 2 hours 30 minutes
 Distance: 8 Kms
 Terrain: rough paths and tracks
 Ascent/descent: 290m
 Wikiloc ID: 59672430

A circular walk, which passes through pine and cork oak forests, bordering the lower slopes of El Hacho. Spectacular views of the Guadiaro Valley, west of Jimena, south of Gibraltar and north of the Genal Valley. The hike can be done in either direction, the counter-clockwise version begins with a steady uphill climb, while the clockwise version begins with a 25-minute walk along the road. These instructions are for the counter-clockwise walk.

The route is marked with Roman numeral II (on ceramic plaques), and also with two blue stripes of paint. Part of the walk follows the GR141 (marked with red/white/yellow stripes). The first part of this walk overlaps with Routes I and XI.

Please close all gates, whether you find them open or closed. There is an abundance of loose livestock on our routes (sheep, goats, pigs, cows) and you are reminded that according to Spanish law it is obligatory to keep dogs on a lead in public spaces at all times. Wear suitable footwear and carry sufficient water, especially in the summer months.

THE WALK: Start at the Gaucín petrol station and walk up the small road to the right of the petrol station, which is called “Camino del Montoro”.

Walk only a few metres along the road by the terraced housing and opposite Nos. 10 and 12 there is a signpost on the left. Climb up here to find a small path that winds around the back of the petrol station and then bears right. There is a red/white/yellow marker on the fence in front of you.

This rocky path widens and climbs steadily towards the peak of El Hacho ahead. After a few minutes climbing you pass a red metal gate and some dogs in a large caged kennel by a house on the right. When the path forks, keep to the left fork (there is a wire gate across the right fork) and keep climbing on a well-trodden rocky path uphill. The path is clear and easy to follow. After a short wooded section you reach an open area and two electricity pylons – the ‘col’ of El Hacho - properly named “El Puerto de Los Hinojales”. There are lovely views of Gaucín and Cortes de la Frontera. *About 30 minutes to the col.*

Carry straight on, following a narrow path at the same level past a white/red/yellow post on the left marked “GR141” and then a Roman numeral “I” on a rock on the left. Walk through the woods on a good path past some large rocks on the right until you reach a signpost.

At the signpost keep following the main path straight on (marked on the signpost to “El Colmenar and Estación de Gaucín”) and after 3 minutes pass through an old wire and post gate (which is usually open). Go straight on after the gate, and follow the path to a grassy area and a pylon, after which the path goes to the left downhill. Five minutes from the pylon you pass some concrete posts with blue stripes, a limestone oven and another pylon, and shortly afterwards you meet a GR141 gate.

Pass through the gate and turn left onto the track.

After 2-3 minutes you come to a rocky gully ahead. Walk down here between the rocks, past a white/red/yellow marker on the rock on the right. Follow the rocky path around to the left and head towards a fence ahead with a sign “Coto Privado de Caza”. Follow the main path around to the right. **At a small junction where the route is a little unclear, bear left and downhill via a small rocky gully** (do not take a small path into the trees straight ahead). There is red and white paint to mark the way.

Cross a streambed and **take the wider right fork when the path splits**, then follow the path that is just above a streambed on the right. **Pass through a gate** marked with blue stripes and white/red/yellow paint.

At a small junction further on you will see a red and white cross on the path. **Here you need to drop downhill to the right** – there is a rock below you on the right, marked with blue stripes and red/white/yellow paint, and a circular rock pool. Shortly after this you meet a gate by a white house for forest guards.

About 1 hour 10 minutes to here.

Go through the gate, ignore the sign: “IX Via Ferrata Sierra del Hacho” ahead on the corner of a wall, and turn right, walking downhill on the track. In a couple of minutes you meet a vehicular track, a pylon on the left and a large rock in front.

Turn left onto the track, passing the pylon on your left and peach coloured gateposts to “Labranzuela” on the right. Ignore a red/white cross on the left and walk along the vehicular track past a concrete water deposit, past a gate on the right to “El Peso No.2” and **through a black metal gate**.

Shortly after this gate, when you see three pylons close together, LEAVE THE TRACK by a large green and white electricity building, taking the grassy track going uphill on the left. Head up the obvious route to the ridge ahead. *There may be livestock here so keep dogs on a lead.*

When you get to the top of the ridge at an open grassy area with a small building on the right and a fallen-down pylon on the left, bear left and you will see a concrete track ahead and a water station on the left. Turn right by the water station and follow the concrete track. You are walking around the slopes of El Hacho, with the mountain on your left and the main road below to the right.

At a junction keep straight on and go through a wire gate. At the next small junction keep left on the main path, and then after passing some ruined farm equipment in the field below, you need to keep to the lower (right) path at another junction. (The left track goes uphill to a quarry area).

From here stay on the main track, and keep going in the same direction as before (parallel to the main road below you on the right). There are plenty of blue paint markings to guide you. When you see a white cliff face straight ahead, look for a blue arrow pointing to the right. **Drop down here to the right, and then turn left – always following the blue paint markings.**

Pass through a wire gate and keep following the small rocky path downhill. **When you reach a more open area with a large carob tree on the right and a ruin ahead, turn right by the piles of stones**, and you will soon emerge on the main Gaucin road.

Cross the road and turn left to return to the petrol station.