

Gaucín Route I: “La Cumbre del Hacho” - Climb to the summit of El Hacho and the “Sendero Sierra del Hacho” circular route.

Difficulty: Medium
 Time: 3 hours including photo stops
 Distance: 7 Kms
 Terrain: rough rocky paths, some steep climbing
 Ascent/descent: 480m
 Wikiloc ID: 36795385

A climb to the summit of El Hacho, the 1011m mountain overlooking Gaucín. You will be rewarded for your efforts with fabulous views of the surrounding countryside. Do not attempt if the summit is in cloud – you should be able to see the top from the petrol station.


The walk is marked with Roman numeral I (on ceramic plaques), as well as signs saying “Sendero Sierra del Hacho” and 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 II and XI.

Please leave all gates as you find them: keep dogs on a lead whenever livestock is loose and when passing near or through private property. 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. 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 number “I” on a rock on the left. Walk through the woods for about 5 minutes, past some large rocks on the right until you reach a signpost  indicating “GR141 to El Colmenar and Estación de Gaucín” (straight on), or “Sendero Sierra del Hacho” (to the left). Take note of this location, because you will return to it later in the walk.

Leave the main path here and go left and uphill on the “Sendero Sierra del Hacho” towards some wooden fencing and an old lime pit, along with an explanatory signpost about the “Calera de los Hinojales”.

Now keep following a well-defined rocky path, which zig-zags up the mountain towards a large rock ahead. At a sort of ‘T-junction’ where the way is unclear and the large rock is directly ahead and above you, **go to the left, towards a large jutting out rock you can see ahead.** You will then see a blue “I” on the rock ahead. The path turns right and goes around the large rock, using a handrail of chains, to reach a viewing platform with great views of the Guadiaro valley and the village of Cortes de la Frontera.

After a photo stop here, keep winding up the zig-zag path again and just after a series of shallow stone steps you will arrive at a little ridge.

*At this ridge you may notice to the left a large rock with a safety rope attached. **This is the “Tajo Bermejo” and is NOT part of the townhall route due to the extremely steep drop and risk to walkers.***

So from the little ridge, turn right and follow the rocky zig-zag path uphill, until you come to a large flatter area with a signpost ahead, indicating “Sendero Sierra del Hacho” to the right.

DON'T go to the right at first – because if you **follow a small obvious path TO THE LEFT**, heading for the highest rocky point you can see – you will arrive at the East peak of Hacho. There are fabulous views of Gaucin, and you can see as far as Gibraltar and Africa on a clear day. Behind one of the rocks you will find a green tin - a geocache containing a ‘Visitor’s Book’. *About 1 hour to here.*

From this peak go down to the signpost again, then climb up to the row of trees on the ridge ahead. As you approach the trees you will see a trig point to the left of the path. This is the West peak of Hacho (at 1011m the highest point).

N.B. TAKE CARE: *there is a deep ‘sink hole’ near the trig point so if exploring around here, or with children/dogs please be very careful. When standing at the trig point (with Gibraltar behind you) a short way further on and slightly downhill there is a fence ahead. **The sink hole is near here.***

From the trig point with Gibraltar behind you, return to the path, which goes left and downhill, heading down the highest point of the ridge towards a jutting out rock ahead.

Follow the rocky path, which goes steeply downhill. After about 15 minutes it flattens out a little and then starts to follow the highest point of the ridge. There are stunning views on both sides. In a couple of places the way is not entirely clear but just keep to the highest point along the rocks and you’ll soon pick up the path again. You pass by a fence corner on the right. Shortly after this you arrive in a more open area. **Turn right towards a fence** and a gate you will see on the right. **Pass through the gate.** *About 1 hour 45 minutes to here.*

After passing through the gate, follow the obvious path, which goes to the right and then goes left and downhill by a fence; there may be goats here. After about 10 minutes going downhill on the rocky path, through woods and with a fence on your right, the path leaves the fence and turns to the left.

There are Roman numeral “IX” signs from here, which indicate the Via Ferrata (Iron Way) and do not mean that you have gone astray. Keep on the main path, ignoring any side options, until you meet a signpost at a small junction, with a wider path ahead. **Turn RIGHT**, following the “Sendero Sierra del Hacho”. Just after the signpost, the path through the woods splits – **keep to the left fork** and follow the main path through the woods, until you meet another junction just after a electricity pylon. Turn right and follow the path, which winds around a valley and then climbs up through a rocky gully and meets a wider track. There are red/white markings here.

Follow the wider track straight ahead, and in only 2 minutes you will see a wire gate on the right with red/white markings. Be careful of barbed wire above the gate. **Pass through the gate** and follow the path through the woods, and in about 10 minutes you will arrive at the signpost * from earlier in the walk.

Go straight ahead, retracing your steps to the “Col” and then downhill to the petrol station.
Approximately 3 hours total, including rest and photo stops.