

Gaucín Route III: “La Adelfilla” - To the Ermita

Difficulty: Medium Time: 2h 30m Distance: 7 Kms Terrain: Tracks and rough paths Ascent/descent: 360 m Wikiloc ID: 51167444

This walk provides spectacular views of the Genal Valley and beyond, and takes you via the Ermita (chapel) of Gaucín's patron saint San Juan de Dios (La Adelfilla). The walk goes downhill to the chapel and climbs back up to the village via one of the ancient mule tracks.

The route is marked with Roman numeral III (on ceramic plaques), and also with two blue stripes of paint.

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: The walk starts at Bar Esquinita in the centre of the village, this is close to Unicaja Bank and the village pharmacy.

Walk past the pharmacy, then immediately fork left down Calle el Pino, by a row of signs indicating “*Ermita de La Adelfilla*”; *Camino de Gibraltar*” and “*Hotel-Restaurante La Fructuosa*”. This road is also known as the Camino Real, which is an ancient right of way built in Roman times.

As you leave the final houses there is an informative sign about “La Ermita” on the right. Follow the concrete track steeply downhill. At a right hand bend by two pylons ignore the left option and follow the track downhill to the right; there is a green/white marker post and a ceramic “III” on the left. Keep on the main track downhill, ignoring various roads to properties left and right.

When you reach a junction of tracks with a sign on the left to “Finca Alborán” take the right hand option, passing a small electricity building (with a “III” marker on the side).

About 15 minutes to the Finca Alborán junction.

Stay on the main track, past fields and a green metal gate on the right. At the next junction by two pylons, another small electricity building and a “III” marker, follow the track around to the right and slightly uphill. Just after this the driveable track curves around to the right and up to a private property.

Go straight on up the smaller, rough track. The cobbles underfoot show that this section is part of the original Roman road.

Continue over the brow of the hill and then steeply downwards. Ignore any off-shoots to left or right; you pass some rough brush fencing on the right, and later you pass a private property called “La Higuera” with cultivated olive trees. After about 15 minutes going downhill on the rough track you will arrive at an open area of grass, a white building ahead (toilets) and a huge pile of boulders on the left.

About 45 minutes to the Ermita.

Walk downhill to the right to view the chapel, which was constructed in 1960 and commemorates one of the two Patron Saints of Gaucin. In late August it is used for the annual Romeria when villagers carry religious artefacts from Gaucin down the Camino Real. There are shady seats for a snack and a drink.

Now retrace your steps uphill to the large boulders and the toilet building. Take a grassy track going uphill to the right of the toilet building, pass through a row of large rocks, and shortly afterwards fork left at a small junction.

Follow this stony path, which zig-zags uphill and then flattens out. Stay on the main path, ignoring any side options (which go to electricity pylons). After a rocky scree section there are great views of Gaucin village above you.

Shortly after this you arrive at a small clearing, where the main path bends around to the right. **LEAVE THE MAIN PATH HERE and take the smaller path straight ahead, by a green/white marker post.**

After another 5 minutes the path bears around to the right and then meets a wider track. **Turn hairpin left onto this track;** this is marked by a small cairn on the apex of the hairpin. After passing a ford across a stream the track climbs upwards; ignore a track to a finca on the right. The track zig-zags uphill towards large rocks you can see on the hillside ahead.

About 10 minutes from the ford, you pass the large rocks and then reach a red metal gate. It is locked but there is a gap at the left side of the gate and you should be able to squeeze through. You arrive at a well-maintained vehicle track. *About 1 hour 30 minutes to here.*

(Shorter return to the village - if you turn LEFT onto the vehicular track here you will eventually arrive at the "Finca Alborán" junction you passed earlier in the day. Turn right and follow the concrete track uphill back to the start of the walk.)

For the complete route you will take a more interesting - and shadier - route back to the village via an old cobbled mule track.

Turn RIGHT onto the vehicular track and walk downhill for 2 minutes. **At a right hand bend look very carefully for some blue stripes and blue arrows on the left of a small streambed, and a green/white marker post.** *If you reach a green electricity box, a junction of tracks and gates to a large house then you have missed the mule track and you should retrace your steps for just a couple of minutes.*

Follow the rocky mule track uphill, always keeping to the main obvious route; there are occasional green/white markers. After about 20 minutes on the mule track you reach a more open area with a fence ahead. Turn left and follow the path uphill, which becomes grassy with meadow flowers on either side. It then joins a concrete track and winds past some farm buildings and allotments.

When you reach a white wall ahead, turn left. At the next corner turn right and uphill toward a rough brick building, and after one final bend you enter the village on Calle Casares.

At the next corner by a water fountain, you will pass an excellent grocery shop called Alimentación Andrades on the right. Go straight on here and uphill to emerge at the Town Hall and Bar Zorro, where you can enjoy some welcome refreshments.