



# SIERRA BLANCA INTERESTING SITES

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## ROUTE PROFILES

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MAR MEDITERRÁNEO



ISTÁN - OJÉN - PRA 167	
Difficulty: High Type: Linear	Length: 11.5 km (one way) Duration: 5 h (one way)

The route begins at the *Hotel Altos de Istán*. Next to the hotel there is a lane that heads upwards and takes you to a water tank, where you turn left towards the stream you can see to the east. To get there, follow the lane and go through an old quarry, then descend to meet the stream. This stream is called *Juan Inglés* (on the maps it will appear as *Molinos river*), and you will meet it at the *Nacimiento Del Rio Molinos*. The first part of the route goes upwards. Take care not mistakenly follow any of the creeks or gullies that branch off *Juan Inglés*. The first notable tributary appears around 1,000m into the walk, where you must first go right and then straight ahead. Common sense should be used here.

Around 3,000 metres into the walk, at an approximate altitude of 835 metres, there will be a dried up stream filled with stones that you should not take, opting instead for the path on the left, which shortly leads to another important crossroads. In this case, we will take the path on the right, to reach a more level area and, a little higher up, after one last and hard upwards incline, the mountain pass. From this point and you can see the *Juanar Plains* and make out the end of the first section you will reach after going down the path and entering a small pine grove. Before reaching the farmhouse, go straight over the crossroads, following the lane. Not long down this lane, you will find a farmhouse that is currently a mountain goat sanctuary.

From the *Juanar* farmhouse take the lane heading downwards towards the left along the lane, and, about 1,000m in, a path to the right indicates the beginning of the road. At this point the olive trees have given way to a patch of pine trees. The path that will take you to Ojén is known as the *camino del cerezal* ("the cherry tree path"). The cherry tree path winds as it descends through a valley covered with lush vegetation, in contrast to the path you have followed so far. As you descend, the path gets bigger and the unevenness starts to smooth out. Soon, you will reach a crossroads. Take the left-hand path and continue your descent towards the road, which will pass through a tunnel providing access to the cherry tree house. After passing a wire fence, the path becomes a lane. There is a fork in the road; you can take either, since both lead to Ojén.

### COMMON SPECIES



### GENERAL INFORMATION ON THE SIERRA BLANCA NETWORK OF PATHS

*Sierra Blanca* is part of the southern foothills of the Baetic mountain range and is located between the municipalities of Istán (to the West), Ojén (North and East) and Marbella (to the South).

It is a small mountain massif that stands out on the *Costa del Sol* due to its greyish-white colour and the characteristic shape of one of its highest peaks (*La Concha* - "the Shell"). The most characteristic mountains in the *Sierra* are *La Concha* (1,215 m), *Cerro Lastonar* (1,275 m) and *Pico del Juanar* (1,181 m)

With the approval and implementation the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC of the European Union the mountain range of *Sierra Blanca* was declared an SCI (Site of Community Importance) with code ES6170011, forming part of the Natura 2000 Network. Recently it has been proposed that *Sierra Blanca* should become part of the *Sierra de las Nieves* Natural Park, with which it already shares a western border.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Respect the tranquility of the countryside as you pass through so as not to disturb the surrounding fauna and make it easier to spot them.
- Take your rubbish to the nearest bin. You can also pick up any rubbish you find and contribute to improving our environment.
- Gather all the information you can about the route, maps, route description, etc.
- Wear appropriate footwear and material, bring enough water.
- Be careful not to go out alone and inform your family and friends of your plans. Take a fully-charged mobile phone.
- All the *Sierra Blanca* and *Sierra Canucha* trails have steep slopes so it is necessary to go well equipped.
- Marbella has unique corners for you to discover, enjoy!

### LINKS OF INTEREST

- Departments of Environment and Tourism, City Council of Marbella:**  
<http://medioambiente.marbella.es/>  
<http://turismo.marbella.es/>
- Provincial Council of Malaga:**  
<http://www.gransendademalaga.es/es/>  
<http://www.caminitodolrey.info/es/>  
<http://www.sendaiboral.es/es/>  
<http://www.malaga.es/es/turismo/naturaleza/ds-1/tp-0/>
- Sierra de las Nieves**  
<http://www.sierranieves.com/40rutasymapasbusquedatodas.asp>
- Andalusian Mountain Federation:**  
<http://www.fedamon.com/index.php/home-6>
- Mujeres en las Veredas (Walkina Women):**  
<http://mujeresenlasveredas.blogspot.com/>
- Birds:**  
<http://avesdemarbella.blogspot.com/>  
<http://www.birdingmalaga.es/es/>



AYUNTAMIENTO DE  
**MARBELLA**  
DELEGACIÓN DE TURISMO  
DELEGACIÓN DE MEDIO AMBIENTE

JUANAR - LA CONCHA - PRA 168	
Difficulty: Medium-High Type: Linear	Length: 6.7 km (one way) Duration: 2:30 h (one way)

The walk begins at the *Refugio de Juanar* hotel or from a little higher up, where a barrier prevents cars from accessing the route. From there, take *Juanar's* main track until you reach the *Juanar* farmhouse, today the mountain goat sanctuary. Once you are in the farmhouse, take a lane to the right goes downhill, amongst olive trees. Shortly after descending, the road opens. Follow the left side. This enters a small forest of Monterey pine trees, which you walk through until reaching a crossroads that allows you to reach Istán if you continue forwards. Turn left, still amongst the pines, but with no descent this time.

Clearly, the route begins to become a ramp, more and more steep, which coincides with the change in ground: the lane turns into a wide path, which then becomes a narrow and winding route that runs through Mediterranean vegetation. At the end of the slope, you will find a hill called *Puerto de las Allanás*: 19. To the left, there is a path that leads to the summit of *Juanar* (1,184 m), better known as *Cruz de Juanar* ("the Juanar Cross").

From the *Puerto de las Allanás*, you can see the ridge that you will be walking along to the West. Start walking downhill along a path that may sometimes get lost if you do not pay attention to it. This path leads onto the aforementioned ridge. Turn west, skirting along its southern slope where it is made up of gentle hills. Shortly, you will find a more steep area, with walls. We are in the *Salto del Lobo* ("the Wolf's Jump"), probably the most difficult area on the entire route. We pass through it carefully on the right-hand side, with caution as it gains altitude. You will reach the peak that gives this passage its name and, once you have passed this, you will find yourself on the gentle hills of the ridge once again.

Continue your walk along the left-hand side of the hills and, shortly, you will find yourself on the slopes of *Cerro Lastonar*. At 1,279 metres, this is the highest peak in *Sierra Blanca*. With a slight deviation to the right we will reach the summit. The rest of the way to *La Concha* is the most beautiful part of the route. The ridge becomes a bit thinner and the hills give way to a more aerial path to which you should pay special attention. Soon, you will reach the peak of *La Concha*, from which you can admire the entire coast and the nearby *Concepción* reservoir.



Cherry blossoms, Juanar. March/April

VEREDA DEL FARO	
Difficulty: Medium Type: Circular	Length: 5.8 km Duration: 2 h

This trail begins in the area known as *Puerto Rico Bajo* 2. The road becomes a lane with a chain that prevents access to vehicles. Continue along this lane and about 300 metres in we find sign-post 3 where you have to leave the lane and turn right towards *Puerto Rico Alto-Ojén*. The path ascends between pines and thicket until reaching the *Cabañiles* valley where another direction post 33 is located.

From here, continue to the left towards *Puerto Rico Alto*, gaining a little altitude that gives you unbeatable views of the *Travertine Gorge*. This section ends in the ruins of *Casa de la Finca* 4, which is next to an abandoned fruit-tree plantation. Here, you will find another signpost and the path coincides with the climb to *Juanar* until, a few metres later, you will reach the dry bed of the source of *Puerto Rico Alto* 5. You will find a signpost that indicates that you should turn left towards *las Pitas* mountain pass. Continue until you cross the stream that goes down through the ravine and from there you will ascend up the slope of the *Casetas* hill before reaching the *Pino* mountain pass.

There are fantastic views from the *Pino* mountain pass. You will then descend through the mountain pass and cross the *Laja* gorge, ascend again up the *Lobo* hill and arrive at the *Pitas* mountain pass. In the mountain pass, you will find signpost 26 that tells you that you should turn left towards the *Golandrinas* mountain pass or the *Faro* route looking for the *Gitanos* viewpoint 27.

Return to the path and continue downhill steeply to the *Golandrinas* valley, where you will find another signpost 28 near the *de Santillana* mountain pass 29. Here, you will follow the signs to *La Montaña*.

Go down via the *Santillana* gorge until you reach the *Montúa* clearing, where you will find the last signpost 30, and from there descend to the *Puerto Rico Bajo* car park, where trail 2 ends.



Puerto Rico Alto, Juanar summit and Salto del Lobo

MARBELLA-ISTÁN - PRA 140	
Difficulty: Medium Type: Linear	Length: 8.9 km (one way) Duration: 3:30 h (one way)

From post 37 at the start in the *Pinar de Nagüeles*, continue along the road and, after passing two large houses, turn onto the first street on the left in the direction of post 38 pole that indicates the direction to Istán.

Shortly after starting the climb along the *Camino Viejo de Istán* (the Old Istán Road), the *Nagüeles* Spring can be found on the left. This section was paved relatively recently and along the whole route you can see the light drawpits that connect the *Nagüeles* area in Marbella with the *Cerros del Lago* area in Istán.

Always keep to the right while following the edge of the public *Sierra Blanca* forest until the asphalt ends and an unpaved track starts on the right. This is a good place to leave the car if you do not want to walk the previous section.

As soon as you start along this track, you will ascend until you see a few pine trees to the right that survived the great fire that hit the southwest slope of the mountains in August 1991. Continue along the lane and about 400 metres in, this skirts the mountain to the right; from this point you already have an excellent view of the *Legua* Quarry (*Cantera de la Legua*).

Following the path, you will reach a short and steep ascent. At the end of this, you will reach a more level area where the Municipality of Marbella ends and the Municipality of Istán begins. At the end of this level area there is also a patch of cork oaks that survived the fire.

The path continues to the right up an even steeper slope until you reach the *Legua* Quarry viewpoint 36. Before arriving at the viewpoint you can see some towers in ruins that used to be the transport system for the quarry stones that were used in the construction of the *Concepción* Reservoir.

From the *Legua* Quarry, continue along the forest track in the direction of the neighbourhood of *Cerros del Lago*. Approximately 100 metres in, you will find *Placas del Cura* (climbing area) on your right, and about 300 metres from the quarry, also on your right, you will see the marker of the PR-A route, in yellow and white, on a stone on the slope of the track. At this point you will leave the forest track, and embark on an ascending path that is the PR-A 140 (Marbella - Istán), as indicated by a marker.

You will begin the ascent, now walking amongst the vegetation (low brush), until you arrive at the *Llano del Almendral* (*Almendral plain*). The journey continues passing very close to the old fence of a goatherder, from where you will descend to reach a cork oak grove. Cross the *Cuevas* Stream and go uphill along the path until you come out next to a light transformer, now on an asphalted road without finished buildings. (Urb. *Sierra Blanca* Country Club). From this light transformer, go uphill for about 200 metres until you reach the water tank. Behind this tank, the track becomes a path and you continue the upwards climb until it culminates in the *Puerto de Mají* (*Mají* Mountain Pass).

From here, you will descend to cross the *Cañada de Monchalbán*, and then start another ascent until you reach the *Puerto de la Majada de Cosme* (*Majada de Cosme* Mountain Pass). Here, the path turns into a track.

Continue forward until you cross the *Salto del Puerco* stream, and soon after you will pass through a cork oak grove that you must go through towards the *Cañada del Tajo Bermejo*. From here, the track becomes a path again after a few minutes.

Between ascents and descents, you will arrive at *Pascual* mountain pass, which runs along the base of the *Bermejo* gorge, then cross the *Castillejo* stream, leaving the *Bermejo* gorge behind.

Continue descending through a small forest and then follow the fence of a private estate that will take you directly to the A-7176 Marbella-Istán road, where you will find a post indicating the PR-A-140, showing that there are only 2 km left until the end of the route.

Go along the A-7176 - Marbella-Istán road, for about 500 metres (staying carefully on the edge of the road). After several bends, leave the A-7176 on your right, along a concrete track with several steep climbs. After under 500 metres you will arrive at a junction with a signpost and a sign with indicating various destinations of the PR-A, including that of the *Hermitage of San Miguel*, indicating that we have 900 metres left to finish the PR-A 140 - Marbella-Istán route.

### ISTÁN - LA CONCHA - PRA 135

Difficulty: High Type: Linear	Length: 5.6 km (one way) Duration: 3:30 h (one way)
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The route begins just above the *Altos de Istán* Hotel, to the left of the fenced-off water tank. Here, the unpaved track starts, and you will find a sign with information about the route. A few metres from this, you will see a sign-post indicating PR-A 135 and PR-A 139, where you will turn right.

About a minute from the beginning of this stretch another similar post will appear on your left, indicating the PR-A 139 Istán - *El Picacho*, and the PR-A 135 Istán - *la Concha*. Continue forwards in the direction of PR-A 135. Here, the path ascends until it reaches the *Pilones* plain.

The next section, also ascending, takes you to *Currito* mountain pass via a path that is difficult to distinguish. (From here, you could return to Istán, following the path that appears on your left in the direction of *El Picacho*).

The route continues, turning to the right, until you reach the second mountain pass, *Puerto Ventana*, which is U-shaped. In this section the path is easier to follow, both due to the downwards direction along the sierra as well as the gentle climb to the *Lomilla de Enmedio*.

From here, following a short climb, you will arrive at *Puerto Hilito*, with a large solitary pine as a reference point. (Be careful to watch out for natural reference points so as not to lose your path). Continue onwards until you pass the *Gracia León* mountain pass and shortly after crossing the *de la Fuentezuela* gorge you will ascend to the *Ciñentes* mountain pass. Then cross the *Castillejo* gorge, the last gorge before arriving at the *Corralillos* mountain pass, where the path, which is difficult to distinguish, also becomes physically difficult.

From here, find the *Espolón* summit (*Cresta del Espolón*), which links to the *Concha* rope (*Cepillo del Enebro*). Here there is no clear path, only boundary markers (milestones) that indicate the direction of the route. At this point we connect with PR-A 168 *Juanar - La Concha*. From here it will take about 15 minutes to reach *El Pico de la Concha* (*la Concha* peak - 1,215 m).

MARBELLA - PICO DE JUANAR - PRA 169	
Difficulty: Medium Type: Linear	Length: 6.7 km (one way) Duration: 3 h (one way)

This trail begins in the area known as *Puerto Rico Bajo* 2, 1.

The road becomes a lane with a chain preventing access to vehicles. Continue along this lane and about 300 metres in you will find sign post 3. Go onwards towards *Puerto Rico Alto* looking for the next post 4.

Continue along the lane and 400 metres in you will find the *Nuestra Señora de la Paz* spring on the right. A little further up, the lane forks and you should continue on the right-hand path until you find a signpost that indicates the path that goes to the right. The road begins to climb the slope and takes you to the travertine gorge that we see from the front; this formation is known as the *Puerto Rico* shelters.

The trail sharply zig zags upwards at this point until it reaches a tanker (white hut) that channels the source of the *Puerto Rico Alto*. On the travertine gorge you will find a plateau known as *Puerto Rico Alto*. At this point you should see the ruins of the *Casa de la Finca* and an abandoned plantation of fruit trees. Here, you will find another post 4 that indicates the correct path to *Juanar*, leaving the path of Ojén to the right.

A few metres later we find the *dir riverbed* at the source of *Puerto Rico Alto* 5, continue north towards *Juanar* leaving the *Puerto de las Pitas* to the left. We continue ascending to the next signpost where the path that goes up to *Casa del Guarda* 6 is on the left. Continue towards *Juanar*.

Follow the climb without stopping, the views getting bigger. On the left you can see the *Juan Benitez* gorge first and, behind it, *Pico de Juanar* peak, and, on the right, you can see the *Tajo Negro* gorge. Almost at the end of the climb, you will find the signpost of the path that leads to *Juan Benitez* mountain pass 7, you should continue towards *Juanar*. When you reach the hillside of the *Juanar* peak, there should be some signposts that indicate the ascent to the peak 8 and 100 metres to the south, the *Puerto de Marbella* or *Macho Montés* viewpoints.

The last stretch of the climb, and the hardest, is just 1 km and, whilst ascending in zigzag, you will see excellent views of the *Juanar* plains and the beach. Nothing compares to the views you will have when you reach the Peak. From there you will have an excellent panoramic view of the surrounding mountains: *Sierra de Ronda*, *Sierra Canucha* and, on clear days, even *Sierra Nevada*.



Cruz de Juanar (Juanar Cross) Juanar

NAGÜELES-BUENAVISTA-LOS MONJES	
Difficulty: Medium-Low Type: Linear	Length: 4.4 km (one way) Duration: 2 h (one way)

The route begins at signpost 37 that is next to the Trail Start Panel in *Pinar de Nagüeles*, which directs you to the right, the lane that goes to *Buenavista* Mine 36.

Take the main lane that goes up through the pine forest and pass several branches to the left and right that you don't take. When this lane turns to the left and begins to descend, the path you should take goes up to the right and goes uphill, parallel to the *Piedras* stream. Little by little this enters the *Encinas* gorge.

Halfway up, you will find signpost 35. From here, you can go up to the *Buenavista* 36 Mine that is about 800 metres away. When you descend you will continue towards *Los Monjes*, following the path that goes to the right and descends until you cross the *Piedras* stream.

Crossing the stream, the path continues until it reaches a lane where you will turn left to climb up to the *Pilones* mountain pass. You will then descend to the *Pilones* valley and then ascend once more to the *Mochileros* mountain pass.

From the mountain pass there is a steep descent to the *Rana* valley, where you can find signpost 34. Continue straight in the direction of Ojén, then climb until you reach the *Camoján* mountain pass, from which you can enjoy magnificent views of the coast. From here, the path heads downhill to the *Ermita de los Monjes* 11.

In the ruins of the *Hermitage*, you will find another signpost, which indicates Marbella to the south. From here, the route is the same as the "Path of the Monks" route



Pico de la Concha (la Concha peak)

MARBELLA-OJÉN - GR 249 (GRAN SENDA MÁLAGA. ETAPA 31)	
Difficulty: Medium-High Type: Linear	Length: 17 km (one way) Duration: 05:45 h (one way)

The route begins at the mouth of the *Guadalpín* stream and ascends near to the *Palacio de Congressos*. A short journey next to the *Ramón Gómez de la Serna* Street takes you across *Ricardo Soriano* Avenue and you will head north-west along *Avenida Jaime de Mora and Aragón*. About 800 metres in, you will cross the AP-7 motorway. At the roundabout after the motorway, turn left onto the *long Buchinger* Avenue. This ascends north-west and becomes *Albino* Street, which leads to the disused quarry that has been converted into the *Nagüeles* Auditorium.

After about 3 km you will see two large stones on the right of the path and a sign indicating the start of the *Cara Sur de Sierra Blanca* path 37. Go onto this battered lane between slim *Aleppo* pine trees with *carob* trees and olive trees. Leave the *La Concha* gorge on the left. The track has numerous branches, but you should follow the central one, which ends up becoming a path. You will climb decidedly through the *las Encinas* gorge to crossroads 35. Here, turn right and go down a small section, cross the *Piedras* stream and go upwards to the *Pilones* mountain pass, where there are many beehives. Another descent and a subsequent ascent will lead you to conquer the *Mochileros* mountain pass. A third descent leads to crossroads 34. The route that goes south leads to Marbella, to the *Cascada de Camoján* neighbourhood, whilst the one on the left is the Great *Malaga* Path, which ascends the *Janta* gorge, one of the richest areas in vegetation due to its shade. Here is the first important climb, the *Camoján* mountain pass (km 5.4), which is a beautiful observation point. To the east, in the direction of the route, you can see the *Calaña* gorge where the hermitage is and the *Juanar* Cross on the horizon. To the south, you can see the Bay of Marbella in all its splendour with the Strait of Gibraltar, the Rock of Gibraltar and the North African Rif coast all visible on clear days.

You will then make a slight descent towards the north, on a hillside that was affected by fire where *esparto* grass fields thrive. In contrast, the valley floor is covered by a dense pine forest. To get there, you have to take a somewhat complicated route that has rope handrails and then you will reach the *Hermitage of the Monks* (*Ermita de los Monjes*) 11 (kilometre 6). There is very little left of the building, but the individual rooms are somewhat distinguishable, thanks to the cleaning done by volunteers both on the building and the access roads. The second important ascent leads to the *Cruz* mountain pass 25. Still overlooking the *Monjes* gorge, the path ascends to the north along the western slope of the ridge, leaving behind the *Puerto de la Cruz* crossroads 24 until reaching a new crossroads, located in *de las Pitas* mountain pass 26 (km 7.4), which is also identified by a sign. You must turn to the east and descend to the *Laja* stream and then ascend to the *Pino* mountain pass, another exceptional vantage point.

During the steep descent, you can see the area of *Rico Alto* mountain pass with its neat grove, the reddish cut from the front of the "fossil" waterfall and the path that goes east, which you will use later. The *de Puerto Rico* stream (km 8.5), 5 the old ditch, a limestone quarry and some ruins 4 come after each other between the two crosses that mark the PR A-169 that comes from Marbella and continues towards *Juanar*. From the *Golandrinas* mountain pass to *Puerto Rico*, the *Faro* route and the GR-249 share the journey, although the former is going the opposite direction. Between white rock roses, a easier stretch starts towards the *Cabañiles* valley 33, where a new crossing leads to *Puerto Rico Bajo* and meets the PR A-169. After the *Cabañiles* valley, which gives its name to an old road that emerges from the Great *Malaga* Path, you arrive at the *Acebuches* mountain pass 32, in a somewhat more deforested area.

Soon, you can see a wide levelled trough; this is one of the *Peñoncillo* mines, the one at the highest altitude. There is a milestone at kilometre 10.8, just above another of the open pit mines. This is where you suddenly turn from heading north to heading east. A thin wire fence separates the forest space from the first luxury developments. The route follows the boundary of the territory for a large period of time. After successive ascents and descents next to the cherts, you reach an area of highly developed pine trees of three species: stone, maritime and *Aleppo* pines.

Finally, you will see Ojén (just after a landslide of white marble from a higher-up quarry) and you will reach the burnt area. The slope is very steep, abruptly interrupted to the right by the slope of the road. The vegetation becomes spectacular in the hills that surround the *Tajo Negro* stream. This is the most diverse area in terms of plants along the entire route, in strong contrast to the areas affected by the fire. The pine forest with olive trees is not very developed, but the thicket acquires jungle-like proportions through a mixture of all the noble species that have appeared throughout the day. You will know you are close to the end when you reach the first water tank. You will reach the hill with the antennas, take a lane that goes down to the road, pass underneath this road and, after a series of sharp bends, reach the western area of Ojén where stage 31 of the Great *Malaga* Path ends.

SENDA DE LOS MONJES	
Difficulty: Low Type: Linear	Length: 2 km (one way) Duration: 45 min (one way)

The trail starts at *La Fabricuilla* 9, just above *Xarblanca* School, where there is one of the 4 trail start panels that are located along the southern face of *Sierra Blanca*.

The path starts at the panel, descending to the *Calaña* stream. Cross this and turn right until you find a wall that apparently cuts through the path. Go around this wall to the right hand side and, a few metres in, the path will appear again, clearly sign-posted.

In this first section, you will find two paths, one that goes up the slope and another that runs parallel to the stream. These join together a little further on. If you choose to go down to the stream you can visit some pools where you can bathe if time permits.

After leaving behind a plain with a small pine forest, continue on the left until you reach signpost 10 that indicates that you should continue parallel to the stream towards *Los Monjes*.

In this section, the path continues to climb little and, at several points, requires you to cross the river bed. Be careful not to lose the path in the places where you have to cross.

On the last ascent before reaching the ruins of the *Ermita de los Monjes* (Hermitage of the Monks), you will see an *Aleppo* pine on your left with an impressive appearance. At the end of the small ascent, you will reach a level area where the ruins of the *Ermita de los Monjes* 11 are located.

Once here, you can extend your route if you have strength or return along the same path to *La Fabricuilla*.

SENDA JOSÉ LIMA (POZUELO) - PRA 178	
Difficulty: Medium-Low Type: Circular	Length: 5.9 km Duration: 2:30 h

The route starts in the car park located about 50 metres from the *Refugio de Juanar* hotel (this is reserved for hotel customers). Take the road that you accessed the carpark from, heading downhill, for approximately 800 metres. On the left you will find a path indicated to be *José Lima* path, which you will take.

The path briefly descends between common gorse, reaching a dry stream that runs parallel to the road. After crossing the stream, the path begins a prolonged ascent up the eastern face of the *Sierra Blanca*. As you ascend, you can see the *del Olivar* valley behind, and the *Cerro Nicolás* peak in the background. The road continues upwards, less steep in some places and more in others, until reaching the hill where you can enjoy a beautiful mountain landscape on your right-hand side.

The ascent continues immersed in a trough with diverse Mediterranean vegetation. You will continue until you reach the *del Pozuelo* source. This is approximately 2.5 km into the route, which started in a pine and holm oak forest. The source is not in good condition and, as well as a watering hole, depending on the time of year, there may be a small water pipe in which you can cool off. The *Pozuelo* mountain pass is located about 350 m from the source, and the path ascends fairly steeply between the trees and shrubs.

The route continues along the sign-posted path along the north-west face of *Sierra Blanca*. You can see the beautiful *Verde* River valley from here. You will reach the small forest of *pinasops*, a botanical relic, native to the Mediterranean forest and endemic to the mountains of Cádiz and Málaga.

The *Gurupalo* summit rises on your right, and you will slowly descend its slope, enjoying magnificent panoramic views. At sunset, it is common to cross paths with herds of mountain goats. You will continue along the road turning slowly towards the south. The *Fulanaja* peak will appear in front of you, and marks a deep ravine that ascends towards you. Next, you will see *Nicolás* peak, where the vegetation becomes low scrubland and thicket. The road ascends until it reaches a crossroads with a wide forest track, where a steep descent begins (due to the steep slope) to the forests surrounding the hotel. The route can be done in the opposite direction, but the steep climb at the beginning makes us advise against it.

