

GOOD PRACTICE



Please leave rubbish in the bins provided

Walk on the marked trails

Please respect private property

Please refrain from making noise

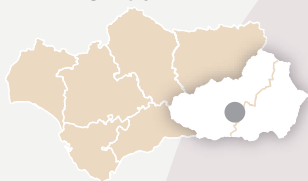


Capturing animals is not permitted

Starting fires is strictly forbidden

Plant collecting is prohibited

Emergency phone: 112



GRANADA
ALMERÍA
SIERRA
NEVADA
PARQUE NACIONAL
PARQUE NATURAL

MORE INFORMATION

El Dornajo Visitors' Centre.
Carretera Sierra Nevada, km. 23. 18196 Güéjar Sierra (Granada).
Tel. 958 34 06 25.
ventanadelvisitante.



UNIÓN EUROPEA
Fondo Europeo Agrícola de Desarrollo Rural



Junta de Andalucía
Consejería de Sostenibilidad,
Medio Ambiente y Economía Azul

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Trail

Puente Palo



OTHER CONSERVATION SCHEMES



ROUTE

Linear walk

LENGTH (ONE-WAY)

4 km

ESTIMATED TIME (ONE-WAY)

2 hour and 30 minutes

DIFFICULTY

High

TYPE OF TRAIL

Track, path and stony roads

LANDSCAPE / VEGETATION

Reforested pine forest, oak grove with holm oaks, chestnut trees and a rich undergrowth. Riparian vegetation. Panoramic views over the valley of the Chico river and the peaks of the Sierra Nevada.

SHADE

Frequent

SPECIAL AUTHORISATION

Not required

RECOMMENDATIONS

Carry drinking water and sun protection in summer and wear suitable clothing and footwear.

PROVINCE / MUNICIPALITIES

Granada / Soportújar

SHEETS OF MTN MAP 1:50.000

1042

START / END COORDINATES

36°56'32.27"N, 3°24'20.90"W

36°58'1.25"N, 3°24'40.11"W



HOW TO GET THERE

From the Autovía de la Costa Tropical (A-44), take the A-348 towards Lanjarón-Las Alpujarras. Just before reaching Órgiva, take the A-4132 towards Soportújar. After passing the village of Soportújar, at a crossroads next to the Ermita del Padre Eterno, take a tarmacked track to the left. After 5 km, 300 metres past the forest house of Soportújar, you will find the beginning of the trail.



PARKING

There is no car park at the beginning of the trail, although you can park your vehicle nearby.



PUBLIC TRANSPORT

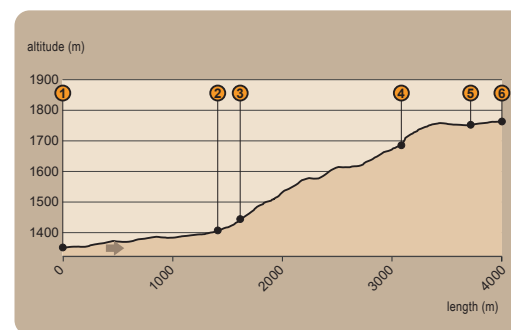
There is no public transport to the start of the trail. The main company running regular bus routes in the area is Alsa (tel. 902 42 22 42; www.alsa.es).



OTHER TRAILS

The Natural Park offers a number of routes for hikers. Among the nearest trails to this one are: Lanjarón - Tello, Pueblos del Poqueira, Acequias del Poqueira and La Cebadilla.

PROFILE OF ROUTE



MAXIMUM GRADIENT

417 m

MAXIMUM ALTITUDE

1756 m

MINIMUM ALTITUDE

1339 m

THE IMPORTANCE OF REFORESTATION IN SIERRA NEVADA

The altitude of the peaks of the Sierra Nevada, with more than 20 peaks exceeding 3000 metres, its proximity to the sea and changing climatic conditions have led to the torrential ravines and watercourses in the Sierra Nevada National Park and Natural Park. Before human intervention, the massif was covered by a abundant and varied vegetation that protected the slopes. Deciduous forests occupied the whole of the mid-mountains. After the expulsion of the Moors, the new settlers, who came mostly from dry lands, used the agricultural and livestock systems they knew, clearing the forests for pasture and crops. The territory became desertified.

The unprotected steep slopes, with a substratum of slate on which large areas of limestone and clayey loams ride, turned them into a death trap. Floods, flash floods and landslides became a constant in the region. The human drama reached its peak in the 19th century. In a single night, the course of the Chico river went from 2 to 200 metres wide, the territory known as Rehundido, through which the Puente Palo trail runs, was devastated by a mud snake as thick as a medium-sized building and the size of 150 football fields. On the other slope, the village of Barjas disappeared forever.

Reports from the time read: "...Two clouds met on the horizon and began with such strong detonations and lightning that seemed like the end of the world", "...God be the one to mitigate our sorrows...; the farmers are as if dead, not wanting to go out, because the early fruits, those who have not disappeared from the farms have been buried in the floods...", "The villages of Órgiva, Bayacas, Carataunas, Soportújar and Cañar are in a state of ruin". Between 1925 and 1935, reforestation work was carried out. Those works put an end to the torrential nature of the Chico river and turned this ravine into one of the lushest enclaves of the Sierra Nevada National Park and Natural Park.



On a summer night in 1860, a moonless and starless sky exploded deafeningly over the basin of the Chico river, devastating the villages of Cáñar, Bayacas, Carataunas, Soportújar and Barjas with thunder and lightning. Without warning or any light other than the glare of the lightning, hail and rain were hurled furiously over the land, causing a gigantic mudslide that swept away farmhouses, mills and bridges and made crops, animals and entire villages disappear, such as the village of Barjas, which disappeared forever buried under tons of mud and stones. It was neither the first nor the last deadly storm that devastated the villages of the Alpujarra and destroyed the fertile plains of Órgiva, Vélez de Benaudalla and even those of Motril and Salobreña.

The protective forest

So it was here, in the Chico river basin, that the first reforestation of the Sierra Nevada was carried out to stop the devastating landslides that threatened the towns. The Puente Palo trail goes up the river valley immersed in lush vegetation resulting from those works, takes us to one of the nurseries where forestry plants were produced and, after crossing the river, ends at the Puente Palo recreational area, built in the 1980s by the former Institute for the Conservation of Nature (ICONA).

The starting sign [1] is located 300 metres from the Casa Forestal de Soportújar, at a crossroads, practically opposite the ravine where the village of Barjas used to stand. The place is surrounded by firs, pines, cypresses, willows, oaks, holm oaks and even some sequoias, like the one next to the path information panel. In the left lane, a chain prevents vehicles from passing. A few metres further on is the old Prado Grande Forestry House. The path crosses the ridge and, accompanied by the trills of forest birds, enters the forest.

The path climbs gently for the first kilometre and a half. In some sections, tree roots can be seen holding the earthen slopes with their woody toes. Where the vegetation allows, the following can be seen: the Cáñar hill, the



Cerrillo Redondo and, leaning to the right, the Tajo de los Machos peak, at the foot of which lies the glacial valley that gives rise to the Chico river.

The old Montechico nursery

Following the markers, the path comes to one of the many ravines that cross the Chico basin: the Cerezo ravine [2]. Ash, willow and alder trees weave a cool, shady canopy here. Ferns, mosses and other aquatic plants thrive in the shelter of these trees and the moisture provided by the watercourse. With the sounds of the water and the clattering drumming of the great spotted woodpecker, the path reaches the old Montechico nursery [3], where the track ends.

Montechico was one of the first nurseries to be created in the Sierra Nevada and was in operation until the 1990s. Nowadays, it has been recovered as an arboretum and many Andalusian varieties of chestnut tree are studied and cultivated there.

The path continues along the left flank of the arboretum, heading north. The narrow path up the hillside also brings you closer to the



forest. Interspersed among the repopulated pines are oaks, chestnut trees, large holm oaks and a rich undergrowth of gorse, hawthorns, silver broom, thyme, rosemary and marjoram. If you pay attention, you may come across the common woodpecker, chaffinch or coal tit in the pine forest. Among the honey oaks, it is possible to hear the sweet psuit psuit psuit psuit of the nuthatch, perhaps interrupted by the harsh voice of the jay.

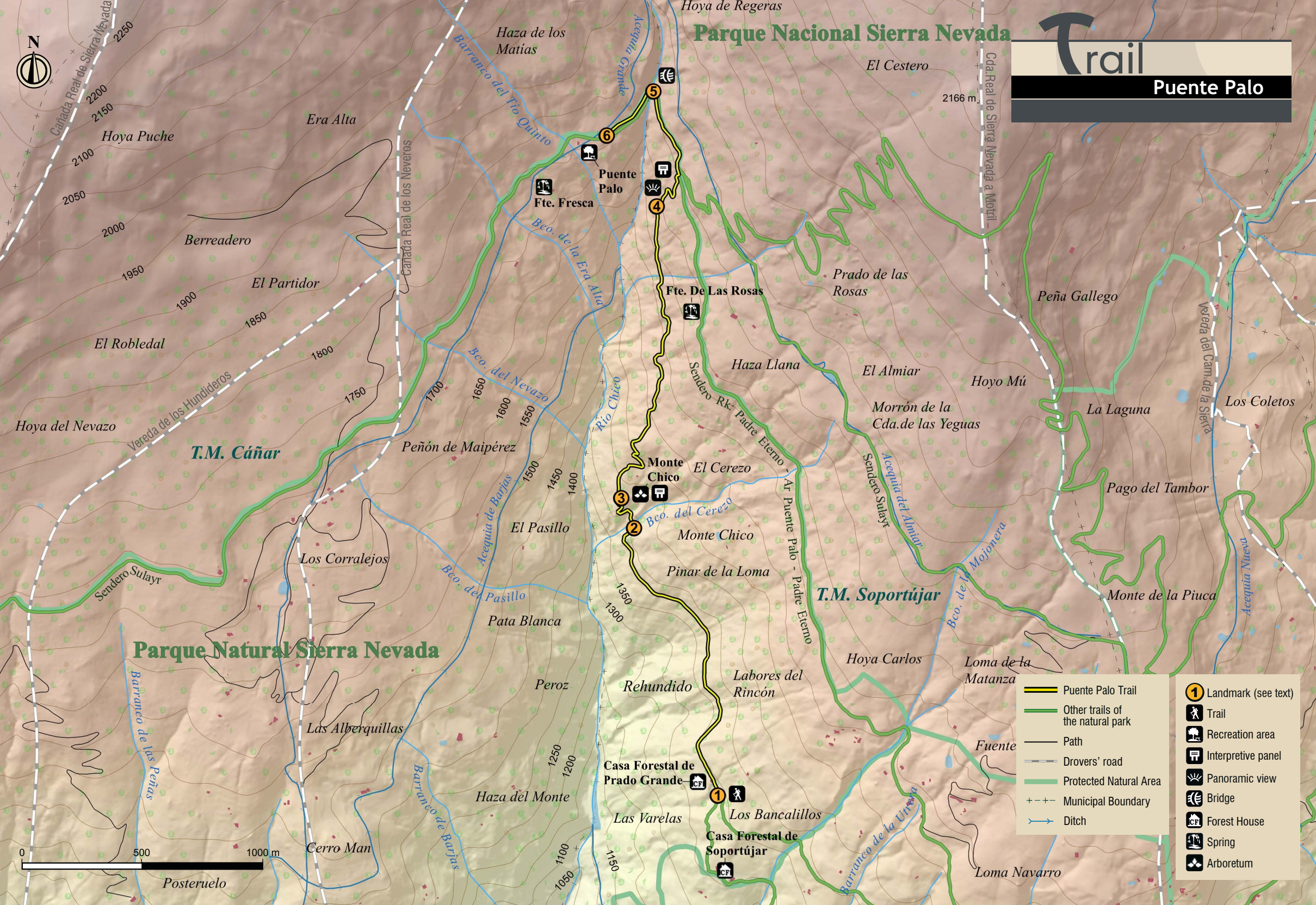
Where the vegetation clears, you can admire the powerful silhouettes of the booted eagle, the common buzzard or the golden eagle soaring through the sky over the spectacular valley of the Chico river [4]; here an information panel will tell you about the magnificent oak grove of Cáñar, as well as the extreme conditions of sunshine, wind and cold to which the high mountain scrubland has adapted.



Palo Bridge

After 250 metres, the path leads to a wide track, which accesses section 17 Postero Alto-Peña Partida, of the GR-240 SULAYR. From this point on, the slope becomes gentler. Take the track on the left and head towards the bridge that crosses the Chico River [5], bordering the National Park boundary. In the vicinity of the river, among the riverside vegetation, dippers and the pied wagtails may be spotted. After refreshing yourself, continue along the track towards the Puente Palo recreational area [6] through a Scots pine forest, the presence of which constitutes the southern limit of this species in the northern hemisphere.





Trail

Puente Palo

- Puente Palo Trail
- Other trails of the natural park
- Path
- Drivers' road
- Protected Natural Area
- Municipal Boundary
- Ditch
- Landmark (see text)
- Trail
- Recreation area
- Interpretive panel
- Panoramic view
- Bridge
- Forest House
- Spring
- Arboretum