

The path gets into the bank forest again in order to cross the creek. Before leaving this second trail, under the willows, you will be able to visualise interesting fern species, such as the royal fern (*Osmunda regalis*) and the marsh fern (*Thelypteris palustris*). Behind them, the **cork oak forest** shows up.

Large-sized centenarian trees extend their branches all over a shady and exuberant environment. Mixed up with the cork oaks (*Quercus suber*), you will observe extraordinary species of tree strawberry trees (*Arbutus unedo*) and other noble thicket species, such as narrow-leaved phillirea (*Phyllirea angustifolia*) and myrtles (*Myrtus communis*). Under the trees, you will find a dense layer of brackens (*Pteridium aquilinum*) that enhance the freshness and the thickness of the area.

Here, the soil is dark and rich, accumulating plenty of organic matter. In these more humid and sheltered areas, **peat bogs** are formed, valuable and extremely fragile biotopes lodging very rare vegetal communities characterized by the presence of dorset heath (*Erica ciliaris*), dwarf gorse (*Ulex minor*) and numerous herbaceous species typical of humid environments.

In the last stretch of the path, several branches of the creek, locally known as “algaidas”, present a great vegetal density including species such as the cyperus sedge (*Carex pseudocyperus subsp. lusitanica*), and great fen-sedge (*Cladium mariscus*), among other. Next to these algaidas, there are numerous specimens of white poplars (*Populus alba*), which can be found along the whole course.



We remind you that the following actions are forbidden:

-  Abandoning the path
-  Driving bicycles
-  Disturbing the environment
-  Entering pets
-  Throwing rubbish
-  Making disturbing noise

The conservation of this singular sites depends on all of us Thank you for your co-operation



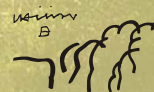
For further information, please visit the Centre for Visitors:

- Acebuche: 959439629
- Palacio del Acebrón: 671593138
- Rocina: 959439569
- José Antonio Valverde: 671564145
- Fábrica de Hielo: 956386577
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CONSEJERÍA DE MEDIO AMBIENTE

3. The Charco de Acebrón Path









Located centrally in the Protected Area of the Rocina Creek, the site you will be visiting is a calm and placid place. A luxuriant vegetation forms the backdrop to the creek that, at this spot, forms a small pool that is locally called “Charco” (puddle).

On the banks of the Charco you will find one of the most peculiar buildings in this territories: the Acebrón Palace. Built in 1961 by Luis Espinosa Fontdevila as a private residence, it is now one of the Centres for Visitors of the National Park. The exhibition contained in the building will allow you to get acquainted with the cultural and ethnographic events occurred in Doñana and to have a close up view of some of the characters who played the leading roles.






The pedestrian's path starts very close to the palace. It is approximately 1.5 km long and will lead you well into the protected area and to the scenarios that have distinguished these forests for years and centuries.

The first and, perhaps, most singular one is the **Gallery forest**, an extraordinary vegetation formation where botanic relics of the tertiary period have survived by seeking refuge in these narrow and sheltered places. In other more human epochs, these were extensive and tangled forests that grew under lianas and creepers. Nowadays, it is concentrated in a few channels and creeks, as well as in the small brooks feeding them.

-  Trail
-  Path
-  Acebrón Palace
-  Parking

Total length: 1,5 km
Low Difficulty
Estimated time: 45 min



-  Free water
-  Pine forests
-  Gallery forest
-  Marsh vegetation plus trees
-  Cork oak forest and vegetation of the banks

The forest appears splendid during the springtime and in the summer. After the flowering season, which takes place between December and April, the new leaves form a green canopy that encloses the site and creates a shady and fresh environment.

Big narrow-leaved ash trees (*Fraxinus angustifolia*) flank the entrance, locating themselves on the banks, very close to the water. The ash tree forest is found on dark soils that are rarely flooded but remain fresh all the time. These very large trees, with complex leaves and a rough trunk, have been submitted to intensive use since remote times.

Traditionally considered as an ornamental species, it has also been praised for its value in furniture carpentry and as cattle food. In the old times, ash trees were attributed a good number of medical properties (diuretic, antirheumatic, laxative, antipyretic, tonic), but they have now fallen into disuse as medicinal plants.

“... they are a valuable medicine against the poison of the fierce serpents and to such an extent that one will never see a poisonous animal under its shade.”

Dioscórides de Laguna



Further on, the willow forest covers almost the whole course. The trail will allow you to watch closely to the willows (*Salix atrocinerea*), locally called “Zaos”, and alder buckthorns (*Frangula alnus sbsp. baetica*), an endemic species of western Andalusia representative of the tertiary flora that still survives in these fresh and humid areas. Along with the latter, several climbing species can be found: honeysuckles (*Linocera periclymenum subsp. hispanica*), wild grape-vines (*Vitis vinifera subsp. sylvestris*) or common smilax (*Smilax aspera*) constitute a vegetal mass where numberless small birds are hidden.

Behind the forest on the banks, the **pine forest** of stone pines (*Pinus pinea*) shows up. This is a dryer and more elevated soil that was planted with eucalyptus some decades ago. Now, after the elimination of the exotic species, the native vegetation has been recovered.

Diverse woody species, such as the hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*), mastic tree (*Pistacia lentiscus*), halimium (*Halimium halimifolium*), rock rose (*Cistus libanotis*), broom (*Stauracanthus genistoides*) or flax-leaved daphne (*Daphne gnidium*) form the copse under the pine forest and continue to colonise the territory little by little.