

GOOD PRACTICE



Please avoid making noise



Please leave rubbish in the bins provided



Walk on the marked paths



Please respect private property



The capture of animals is not permitted



Collecting rocks and minerals is not permitted



The capture of animals is not permitted



Starting fires is strictly forbidden



Open camping is not permitted

Emergency phone: 112



ALMERÍA



MORE INFORMATION

Las Amoladeras Visitors' Centre.
Ctra. AL-3115 Almería-Cabo de Gata. km 7. Almería. Tel. 950 16 04 35.
ventanadelvisitante.



UNIÓN EUROPEA
Fondo Europeo Agrícola de Desarrollo Rural



Junta de Andalucía
Consejería de Agricultura, Ganadería,
Pesca y Desarrollo Sostenible

PARQUE NATURAL
Cabo de
Gata-Níjar

trail

Vía Verde de Lucainena
a Agua Amarga



OTHER CATEGORIES OF PROTECTION



ZEPIM
Zonas Especialmente Protegidas
de Importancia para el Mediterráneo



Organización
de las Naciones Unidas
para la Educación,
la Ciencia y la Cultura



Red Española de
Reservas de
la Biosfera



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



UNESCO
Global
Geoparks

• ROUTE

Linear

• LENGTH (OUTWARD)

6,5 km

• ESTIMATED TIME (OUTWARD)

2 hour and 30 minutes

• DIFFICULTY

Low

• TYPE OF TRAIL

Dirt path

• LANDSCAPE / VEGETATION

Marsh vegetation

• SHADE

Little or none

• SPECIAL AUTHORISATION

Not required

• RECOMMENDATIONS

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

• PROVINCE / MUNICIPALITIES

Almería / Carboneras / Níjar

• SHEETS OF MTN MAP 1:50.000

1046 - Carboneras

• START / END COORDINATES

36° 56' 48,90" N/1° 55' 36,40" O

36° 56' 30,76" N/1° 56' 36,19" O



HOW TO GET THERE

From Carboneras take the AL-5106 southbound towards Agua Amarga. After about 7 km, we take a track to the right and after a few metres we find the los Ventorrillos farmstead, where the trail begins.



PARKING

There is a car park with about 12 parking spaces at the start of the trail.



PUBLIC TRANSPORT

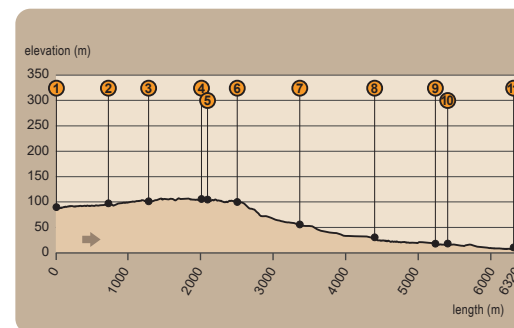
The principal companies running regular bus routes in the area are ALSA - Alsina Graells (tel. 902 42 22 42; www.alsa.es), Autocares Bernardo (tel. 950 25 04 22; www.autocaresbernardo.com) y Frahemar (tel. 950 26 64 11; www.frahemar.com). It is not possible to access the trail by public transport.



OTHER TRAILS

The natural park has an extensive offering of marked trails. Those nearby include San Pedro - El Plomo - Agua Amarga and Mesa Roldán. The trail shares much of its route with the long-distance trail GR-143, continuing along the greenway towards Vélez Blanco, María and the province of Granada

PROFILE OF ROUTE



• MAXIMUM GRADIENT

100,9 m

• MAXIMUM ALTITUDE

107,3 m

• MINIMUM ALTITUDE

6,4 m



THE MINING RAILWAY

The important iron deposits on the north face of the Sierra Alhamilla exceeded the capacities of the animals used to transport the mineral. A narrow-gauge railway was built to cover the distance between Lucainena de las Torres and Aguamarga. The 36 kilometres of this mining railway made it the longest in the province of Almería and it transported the metallic heart of the mountain to the boats waiting at the coast.

The mining train transported millions of tonnes of iron, which were loaded to boats and brought to the major industrial centres of Europe. The loading dock for the mineral, built sheltered from the winds and storms of the Levante in the beautiful inlet of Agua Amarga, was in operation between the years 1896 to 1942. Its remains are included in the General Catalogue of Historical Heritage of Andalusia. You can visit them, on the edge of the cliffs, and imagine the frenetic activity that fed the furnaces of history.



Trail Vía Verde de Lucainena a Agua Amarga

The greenways are old railway tracks restored as routes for walkers and cyclists. This trail takes advantage of those iron arteries of the railway linking Lucainena de las Torres and Aguamarga, showing us one of the most unique landscapes of Cabo de Gata. A landscape of ravines and ramblas, dry, hard, steppe, but nonetheless full of life, the wounds and marks of the efforts of its people to survive.

In The Footprints Of The Old Mining Train

The welcome sign stands alongside the *Los Ventorrillos* farmstead [1], a simple construction with thick walls, flat roofs and small windows on a whitewashed façade, like so many others dotted around the park.

Leaving the marine blues and green and the cliff profile of the coast, we walk along the old railway towards the interior. The trail is flanked by what's left of a narrow, shallow ditch. As if it had eaten away at the bones of the landscape, erosion has sculpted a series of clear-coloured, organic shapes on the outer limestone layer of the walls. Further on we can make out a number of cave dwellings in these same walls and, taking due precaution, numerous Asian mud-dauber wasp nests.

As the ditch comes to an end, the view opens up in all directions [2]. The cropped outline of the Sierra Alhamilla separates us on the horizon from the Taberna desert, Europe's only desert, checked on the other side by the mountains. The same mountains from which millions of tonnes of iron were extracted before being transported on this railway to the awaiting boats at the loading dock in Agua Amarga.

Coral reefs above an underwater volcano

On the right, to the southeast rises the relief of the Mesa Roldán. What seems an ordinary mountain is actually an underground volcano covered with coral reefs in a totally different marine context. 7 million years ago, the warm waters of that old sea were more



than 200 metres higher than today's levels. The corals proliferated on the sides of the volcano, whose peak was just about at water level, creating table-like relief we see today.

The trail continues along the greenway, crossing one of the best conserved meadows of esparto grass in Almería. This is an important ecosystem, which contributes to the creation of soil and control of erosion, constituting a fundamental habitat for the flora and fauna of the coastal steppe. The Thekla lark, corn bunting, European greenfinch, common kestrel, the jewelled lizard, chameleon, hare, badger, many types of snakes, snails and scorpions are just some of the species that make a home here.

Between the natural vegetation, which in addition to the esparto grass is comprised of thyme, rockrose, black hawthorn, matagallo, palmetto, silver broom, etc. we can make out some geometric stands winding in parallel to the path. These are old, terraced cultivations buttressed by balates (stone walls that support the terraces), taking advantage of the humidity of the dells. We'll get a closer look further on up the road.



After a little over half a kilometre, supported by the thick supporting wall of the railway, the trail passes over the head of a steep ravine; the Barranco Hondo [3]. The panorama that opens up to the left is another sea of esparto grass, swaying incessantly over the waves of the relief.

Channelled between the remains of the old trench, to the left at the first major crossing [4] and to the right at the next [5], the trail reaches high thick walls [6], which serve as support for the railway. At this point we depart from the greenway and head south, taking the path to the left.

A stark landscape

Over the next 300 metres, the gradient becomes more pronounced and rockier. Take care not to slip as you can be easily distracted by the impactful white mass of the hills ahead. Erosion and the extraction of aggregates have excavated the carbonated materials of these banks, accentuating the bareness of the landscape.



As we advance along the trail, we find the odd olive tree and old abandoned terraced cultivations forming a rough mosaic. Contrasting with the remains of the old cultivations, after passing the crossroads at the Médico farmstead [7], the train enters an area of modern plantations. These new plantations accompany us for some eight hundred metres, practically all the way to the Los Viruegas farmstead [8]. The trail turns ninety degrees to the left and continues along the course of the *rambla*, or dried out riverbed, that passes at the foot of the farmstead.

We stick to the rambla for the remainder of the route, except for a couple of short diversion to avoid the most difficult sections. Elephant grass, salao, fig trees, sorrel, fennel and catchfly all grow



here, drinking the water we cannot see but that runs in the subsoil of the apparently dry riverbed. We pass a meander [9] on whose walls we can find some marine fossils. Some 150 metres ahead stands the millennial olive tree of Pozo Hondo [10], catalogued as a singular

tree. We cross the last 900 metres with the ocean winds whirling through curves of the *rambla*.

Where the rambla crosses the road, with our senses heightened to the wild beauty of this extreme land, we reach the end of the trail [11].



Trail

Vía Verde de Lucainena a Agua Amarga

- 1 Landmark (see text)
- Georesources
- i Information point
- Trail
- Viewpoint
- P Parking
- Panoramic views
- Farmstead
- Sites of ethnographic interest
- Fountain
- Singular Tree

- Vía Verde de Lucainena a Agua Amarga Trail
- Other trails of the natural park
- Road
- Path
- Natural Space