GOOD PRACTICE



Please leave rubbish in the bins provided



Walk on the marked paths



Please respect



private property



CÁDI7 MÁLAGA



The capture of animals

is not permitted

Starting fires is

Fishing is

prohibited

not allowed

strictly forbidden

Plant collecting is

MORE INFORMATION

Cortes de la Frontera Visitor's Centre Av. de la Democracia s/n. Cortes de la Frontera. Málaga. Tel 952 15 45 99 ventanadel**visitante**









OTHER CATEGORIES OF PROTECTION





• ROUTE

Linear

• LENGTH (OUTWARD)

2.2 km

• ESTIMATED TIME (OUTWARD)

1 hour

DIFFICULTY

Low

• TYPE OF TRAIL

Compact track and eastern path from stony surface.

LANDSCAPE / VEGETATION

Brief route through limestone terrain with occasionally steep gradient. Mediterranean vegetation and riverside forest in proximity to the river. The most notable feature is the Cueva del Gato, the most important karstic formation in the Sierra de Ronda, Other landmarks and sites of interest include the pontoon bridge, the Cuatro Paradas mill and the medieval road.

• SHADE

Scant

SPECIAL AUTHORISATION

Not required

• RECOMMENDATIONS

Carry drinking water and wear suitable clothing and footwear.

• PROVINCE / MUNICIPALITIES

Málaga / Benaoján

SHEETS OF MTN MAP 1:50.000

1050 - Ubrique

• START / END COORDINATES

36° 42' 45,38"N - 5° 14' 44,37"O 36° 43′ 43,15"N — 5° 14′ 16,06"O



HOW TO GET THERE

From Benaoján, head towards the train station. Then cross at the level crossing and in a few metres you will reach a bridge over the river Guadiaro. The trail starts at this point.



PARKING

There is a carpark with some 20 places at the start of the trail.



PUBLIC TRANSPORT

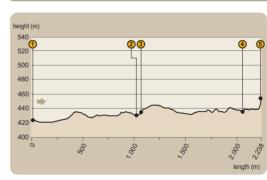
The main companies running regular bus routes in the area are Los Amarillos (tel. 902 21 03 17) and Transportes Generales Comes S.A. (tel. 902 19 92 08). The nearest train stations are in Cortes de la Frontera. Jimera de Líbar. Benaoján and Ronda (check services and timetables at www.renfe.es or by telephone on 902 24 02 02).



OTHER TRAILS

The start of the trail coincides with the River Guadiaro Trail. Moreover, the nature park offers other nearby routes like Los Llanos de Libar and El Pimpollar trails.

PROFILE OF ROUTE



MAXIMUM GRADIENT

35 m

MAXIMUM HEIGHT

455 m

MINIMUM HEIGHT

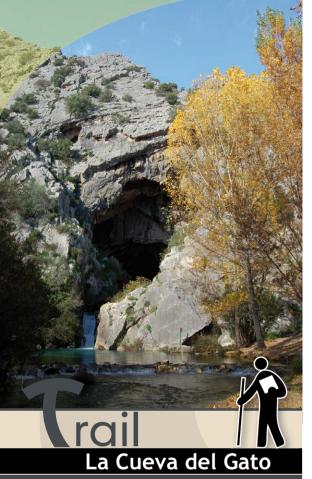
420 m



WATER SPROUTS IN THE HIGHLANDS

The river Gaduares sees its surface flow disappear as its waters are drained before reaching the the mouth of the Hundidero, and for more the thirteen kilometres it continues underground before reemerging at the Hundidero Gato complex, appearing at the mouth of the Cueva del Gato, one of the most important upwellings of the Sierra de Grazalema, with an average flow of 500 litres per second and several waterfalls as it flows towards the Charco

The Cueva del Gato, frequented by man from at least the Palaeolithic age (18,000 years ago), as demonstrated by the cave paintings and an important archaeological site that is home, in its rocky crags and walls, a wide array of birdlife from doves, swifts, crag martins and house martins to redbilled choughs and more. As well as these species we can find black redstarts, grey wagtails, short-toed eagles, griffon vultures and Egyptian vultures. It is an imposing places and care must be taken to watch our step on the slippery steps up to it.



To the Cuatro Paradas mill

Our route begins at the station in Benaoián, a relatively new village that emerged thanks to the arrival of the Bobadilla-



Algeciras railway. From the train station, we take the road that runs parallel to the railway line, descending towards the valley, until we reach a level crossing. Cross the level crossing with due care and continue along the street down to the river (see [1] on the map).



After crossing over the bridge we reach a fork in the path. The path to the right is the River Guadiaro Trail and on the left is our trail on a paved path among the oleanders, brambles and other riverbank scrubland alongside river Guadiaro. In a few minutes we reach the Charco de la Barranca a pool caused by a dyke across the river.

The track soon passes under the bridge of the road joining Benaoján and Ronda. We pass a few orchards and soon, after crossing the Torre del Moro stream, we reach the Cuatro Paradas mill [2], which retains much of its original structure, including four buckets or stops that turned the four wheels.

On the trail

The path narrows and become a stony track as it begins a short rise [3].

The route runs alongside the river Guadiaro, with a rocky mass on the left causing an island in the river, where if we stay quiet we can easily observe some water birds that inhabit these areas, such as the grey heron, great cormorant, mallard and nightingale.

In a few minutes we reach the Cueva del Gato hotel, opposite which is a wooden bridge crossing the river Guadiaro [4].



We make our way along the remains of a medieval path, built on an old Roman road that ran through the Guadiaro valley and connect the Roman cities of Carteia, in San Roque, and Acinipo, in Ronda.

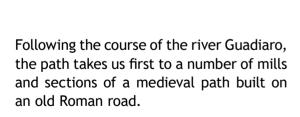
A wooden walkway continues after the bridge, suspended just above the turguoise, crystalline waters that flow fro the Cueva del Gato; these are the waters of the river Gaduares, a tributary of the Guadiaro. We cross under a railway bridge and the mouth of the Cueva del Gato cave appears before us.



Once inside the cave, the setting immediately justifies the visit. The Charco Frío [5], a pool of cool crystalline water invites you to rest in the shade of one of the trees on its shore.



This is where our trail ends, although under the base of the wall we can see how a flight of steps carved into the rocks can take us to the bridge right in the mouth of the cave. Here a sign informs us that it is prohibited to advance any further as this is a dangerous cave that requires special authorisation and expert knowledge. The return journey is back along the same path.



Then water, almost always hidden in these mountains, appears at the greatest upwelling in all of the Serranía de Ronda, at the Cueva del Gato, giving this place its unique charm. The birds seek shelter in a spot on the walls, brightening up our stay, hypnotised by the fresh and crystalline waters.



