

GOOD PRACTICE



Please leave rubbish in the bins provided



Walk on the marked paths



Please respect private property



Please avoid making noise



Open camping is not permitted



The capture of animals is not permitted



Starting fires is strictly forbidden



Access with motor vehicles is not allowed

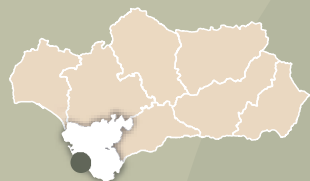


Plant collecting is not allowed



Releasing dogs off leash is prohibited

Emergency phone: 112



CÁDIZ

La Breña y Marismas del Barbate

MORE INFORMATION

Barbate Information Point. Puerto Deportivo de Barbate s/n. Barbate. Cádiz. Tel. 956 45 97 80.

ventanadelvisitante.



UNIÓN EUROPEA
Fondo Europeo Agrícola de Desarrollo Rural



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

PARQUE NATURAL

La Breña y Marismas del Barbate



Trail
Torre de Meca



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

OTHER CATEGORIES OF PROTECTION



• ROUTE

Circular

• LENGTH

4,3 km

• ESTIMATED TIME

1 hour and 45 minutes

• DIFFICULTY

Low

• TYPE OF TRAIL

Sandy path / track

• LANDSCAPE / VEGETATION

Dense pine forest on sandy soil, accompanied by junipers, savines and retamas. Mediterranean scrubland.

• SHADE

Plentiful

• SPECIAL AUTHORISATION

Not required

• RECOMMENDATIONS

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

• PROVINCE / MUNICIPALITIES

Cádiz / Barbate

• SHEETS OF MTN MAP 1:50.000

1073

• START / END COORDINATES

36° 11' 38" N - 5° 59' 40" W

36° 11' 38" N - 5° 59' 40" W



HOW TO GET THERE

The start of the trail is located at the Majales del Sol recreation area, on kp 16.3 on the A-2233 between Conil de la Frontera and Barbate (approximately 1.9 kilometres from Los Caños de Meca).



PARKING

There is parking in the Majales del Sol recreation areas.



PUBLIC TRANSPORT

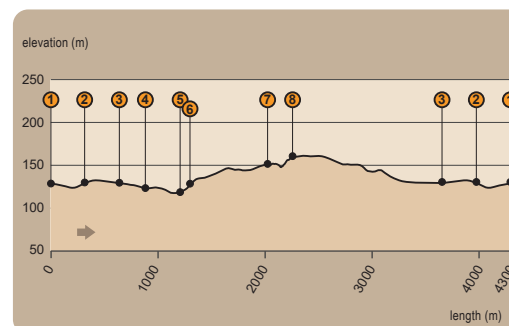
It is not possible to access the trail by public transport. The principal company running regular bus routes in the area is Transportes Comes (tel. 902 19 92 08; www.tgcomes.es). You can also obtain information at the Comes office in Barbate (tel. 956 43 05 94).



OTHER TRAILS

La Breña y Marismas del Barbate Natural Park has several trails to discover the park. The closest trails include the Sendero Torre del Tajo, Sendero del Acantilado and the Sendero del Arroyo Mondragón.

PROFILE OF ROUTE



• MAXIMUM GRADIENT

44 m

• MAXIMUM ALTITUDE

161 m

• MINIMUM ALTITUDE

117 m



A BRAVE WATCHMAN AT THE GATES OF THE ESTUARY

Long before mobile phones, the old settlers built a rosary of watchtowers to raise the alarm in the event of pirate attacks on the coast. They were built at strategic points along the Andalusian coast, some five hundred years ago. The Torre de Meca is one such tower, built in the 19th century to improve the communication between the nearby Torre del Tajo and Torre de Trafalgar. Its function was to conduct vigilance and alert, with fire at night and smoke signals by day, to the presence of Turkish-Berber ships or any ship flying the jolly roger.

Talk about pirates today sounds quaint, romantic or even charming. But centuries ago, for those living on the coast, piracy had little romance or charm about it and was a terrifying and bloody reality. Privateers captured thousands of ships. Thousands of people died decapitated, and many were sold on the Muslim slave market.

The Torre de Meca rose over seventy-four metres above sea level. The entrance door was accessed with one's back to the ocean and six metres above the ground via a ladder which was pulled up. Looking at it, one can almost hear the pounding heartbeat reverberating against the domed walls of the interior and the watchman's cry of "Moors on the coast!" on a loop, with eyes fixed on the spyglass and the blood rushing to his head.



Trail Torre de Meca

Of wind and sand

For millennia, these winds have been whipping the dunes at will throughout the territory of La Breña, shaping the relief and creating curious formations like the Tombolo of Trafalgar. The works to Secure the sands, which began in the 19th century with the Repopulation of the stone pine, kept the wind in check and changed the landscape for ever. The evidence is there to be seen along the trail.

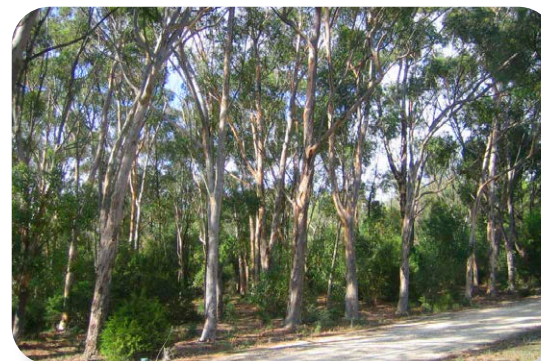
The route begins at the Los Majales del Sol recreation area [1], in the middle of the most expansive pine forest in Cádiz. It's a dense repopulated stone pine forest on sandy soil [2] accompanied by the odd Aleppo pine and scrub like mastic, large-fruited juniper, Moorish rockrose and retama.

On the first section, the terrain presents a gentle gradient, with the path lined with palmettos, olive trees and black hawthorn. We pass a cross on the left [3] by which we'll re-join the path on our return.



An Australian controversy

Some 700 metres from the start, a refreshing scent indicates the proximity of La Breña arboretum [4], an experimental plantation of up to 12 eucalyptus species. Few plants have been the subject of quite as much controversy as the utilitarian eucalyptus, whose characteristics raise sympathies and animosity in equal measure. We invite you to get to know it a little better and make your own judgement (you can find a pamphlet at the arboretum: www.ventanadelvisitante.es).



Before reaching the cross where the trail meets the Camino a Caños de Meca [5], you can spot some large savines among the eucalyptus as well as olive trees and shaggy sparrow-wort. From their vantage points in the trees, many birds such as the blackbird, blue tit and European goldfinch provide the soundtrack for our journey. Turning left at the fork in the path, we cross a fire break [6]. It's the first of several firebreaks, straight line cut across the forest, that we will cross. Crossing the firebreaks, we can really appreciate the magnitude of the dunes that covered the area before the plantations. We can also spot the roots of the trees, which secured the sands together with other bush plants.



The Tombolo and the Tower

Past the first firebreak, the terrain hardens before we reach the next one. After crossing, a small sandy path rises some 150 metres through the pine forest that covers the dune; the terrain is rather irregular, with roots and stones making the ascent difficult. Almost by surprise, the trail arrives at the Torre de Meca [7]. This watchtower was erected in the 19th century, maintaining the style of those built in the 16th. From here we can descend to the viewpoint. The clearings in the vegetation offer a preview of the views that await [8]: the Tombolo Natural Monument of Trafalgar and Caños de Meca.



From this point we begin our descent back to the recreation area; and the trail continues to penetrate the forest. In the thicket, palmettos, mastic, retamas, olive trees, junipers and savines re-emerge, as well as numerous species of fungus, which have attracted quite an interest over recent years. The aromas of the forest, lavender, rosemary and thyme accompany us while we forge a path amid the green blanketed of the lower part of the pine forest. We cross the last firebreak and in little more than 500 metres we return to the track on which we began, and which leads us back to Los Majales del Sol.

The watchtowers have dotted the Andalusian coast for five hundred years to defend against pirates, privateers and Berbers. These watchtowers, like the Torre de Meca, which you now have to opportunity to discover, took on special importance in the areas around the Strait of Gibraltar.

The strategic location of La Breña made it especially important from a defensive perspective and also conditioned its very nature and physiognomy. The influence of the strait and the turbulent encounter of the Atlantic and Mediterranean waters result in a constant presence of violent ocean winds.



Trail

Torre de Meca



- Torre de Meca Trail
- Other trails of the natural park
- Road
- Path
- Firebreak
- Natural Space
- 1 Landmark (see text)
- Recreational area
- Viewpoint
- Watchtower
- P Parking