

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



Fishing is prohibited



Plant collecting is prohibited

Emergency phone: 112

GRANADA
ALMERÍA
SIERRA
NEVADA
PARQUE NACIONAL
PARQUE NATURAL

MORE INFORMATION

Laujar de Andarax Visitor's Centre. Carretera Laujar de Andarax-Berja, km.1.

04470 Laujar de Andarax (Almería). Tel. 950 513 548.

El Dornajo Visitors' Centre. Carretera Sierra Nevada, km. 23. 18196 Güéjar Sierra (Granada). Tel. 958 340 625.

ventanadelvisitante.

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

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Trail

Río Grande
de Bérchules



OTHER CONSERVATION SCHEMES



• ROUTE

Circular

• LENGTH

14 km

• ESTIMATED TIME

6 hours

• DIFFICULTY

High

• TYPE OF TRAIL

Forest path and track

• LANDSCAPE / VEGETATION

Rural landscape of terraced crops and orchards. Mid-mountain ecosystems. Steep cliffs. Reforested pine forest. Riparian vegetation. Panoramic views over the river ravine.

• SHADE

As you pass through various types of landscape and vegetation, depending on the time of day and season, sometimes there are areas of shade and sometimes not.

• SPECIAL AUTHORISATION

Not required

• RECOMMENDATIONS

The best times to visit are spring and autumn. Bring drinking water, hiking shoes, a hat and sun protection. During the rainy and melt season, special care must be taken, as the current is stronger than it appears (it is not advisable to cross if the river is above knee height). The last few kilometres run along a steep path down the ravine, which can be dangerous in fog, rain and wind.

• PROVINCE / MUNICIPALITIES

Granada / Bérchules

• SHEETS OF MTN MAP 1:50.000

1027, 1028, 1042 y 1043

• START / END COORDINATES

36° 58' 45" N, 3° 11' 25" W

36° 58' 42" N, 3° 11' 24" W



HOW TO GET THERE

Take exit 175 of the A-44 motorway which links Granada with the Costa Tropical, and head towards Las Alpujarras on the A-346 road. Then continue along the A-348, the A-4127 and finally the A-130 to Bérchules. The path starts in the upper part of the village, at the end of Calle García.



PARKING

There is no parking available at the start of the trail. It is advisable to leave your car at the entrance to the village as there is a public car park.



PUBLIC TRANSPORT

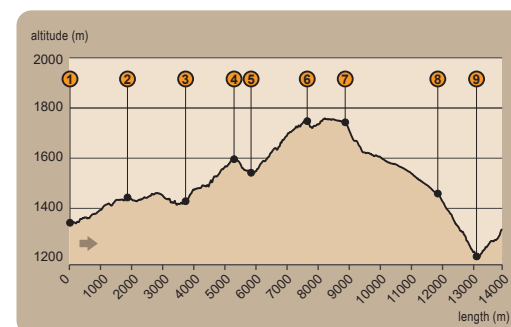
The main companies running regular bus routes in the area is Alsa (tel. 902 42 22 42; www.alsa.es).



OTHER TRAILS

In this area there is access to section 7 of the GR-240 SULAYR, called Trevélez-Lastonar.

PROFILE OF ROUTE



• MAXIMUM GRADIENT

559 m

• MAXIMUM ALTITUDE

1758 m

• MINIMUM ALTITUDE

1199 m

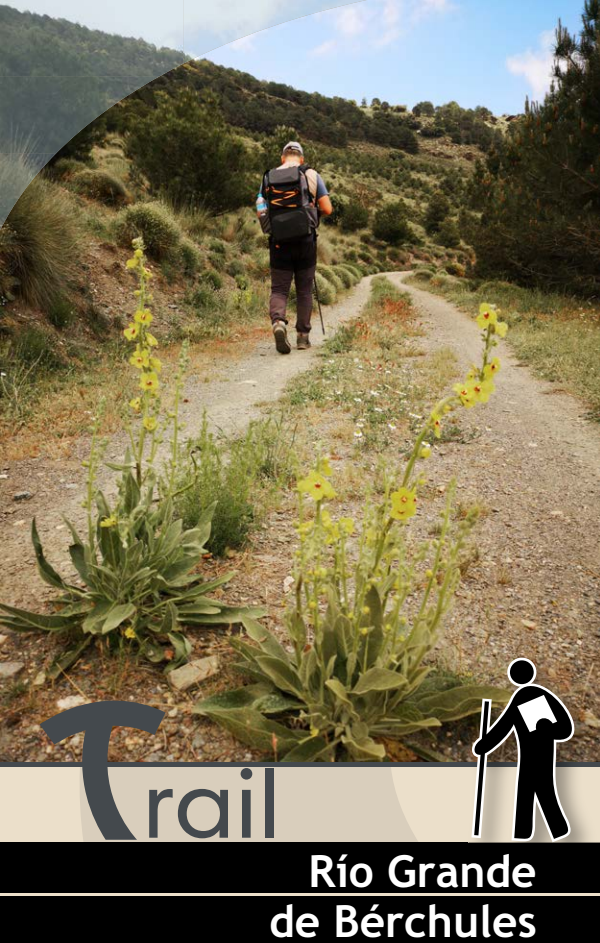
ABEN ABOO, THE LAST MUSLIM KING OF THE PENINSULA

"The 46,000 soldiers of the Tercios de Flándes led by Juan de Austria, which Philip II launched to crush the Moorish rebellion, entered the Alpujarra with "blood and fire", razing the forests, setting fire to the fields and slitting the throats of anyone who crossed their path. What brought the Alpujarras War (1568-1571) to an end, however, was the cowardice and treachery of Aben Aboo's own men, who ended his life in a cave in the Tajos del Reyecillo.

But who was Aben Aboo, and why such a bloody and unequal war?

The last Muslim stronghold on the Iberian Peninsula comprised the present-day provinces of Granada, Malaga and Almeria. After the conquest, the Catholic Monarchs handed over the Alpujarra to King Boabdil, in compensation for his surrender. In the signed Capitulations, the maintenance of the property of the Muslims and respect for their beliefs and traditions were assured. But the agreement was repeatedly reneged on. Land was confiscated from the people and religious conversion was made compulsory, sowing the seeds of the uprising, which culminated in the Moorish rebellion.

Diego López Abenabo or Aben Aboo was a resident of Mecina Bombarón, whose cousin, Aben Humeya, led the Moorish uprising. Despotic, suspicious and tyrannical, Aben Humeya lost the support of his supporters and eventually his life. Aben Aboo took his place as king of the Andalusians. With scimitar in hand, he spread the rebellion through Almería and the Axarquía region of Málaga, and tried to expand it to Valencia and Murcia. Philip II then began the siege of the Alpujarra. Six months later, he managed to corner the insurgents in the mountains. With the treacherous stabbing of Aben Aboo, the struggle of a peasant people against the largest empire in the world came to an end.



The magnificent elevations of the Sierra Nevada create a wall for the cloud fronts that cross Andalusia from the Atlantic and the Mediterranean. In the violent encounter with the mountains, especially above 2500 m altitude, these oceanic fronts spew water in the form of snow. The Grande de Bérchules river rises in one of those snowdrifts on the spine of the Sierra Nevada, towards the southern slope, between the Tajo de los Machos and the Peñón del Puerto. Downstream, it is joined by the river Chico and together, after cutting through the landscape at the foot of the village of Bérchules, they give rise to the river Guadalfeo. 71 kilometres later, after irrigating the orchards of the Costa Tropical, the Guadalfeo flows into the Mediterranean, closing the cycle of water that returns to its source.

The soul of the territory

But the soul of the mountains, of the rivers, of any territory, is in their stories, in their deeds, in their human dramas. And the Río Grande de Bérchules is one of the most historically interesting trails, with natural and scenic landscapes that can be explored in the Alpujarra.

To get to the start you have to go through the village of Bérchules, its terraced houses of slate and launa (grey clay from Andalusia), its labyrinthine streets, its squares and fountains, its washing places. During the Nasrid reign of Granada, Bérchules enjoyed fame and wealth for its production of silk, wine and vegetables, but above all, silk. And following that route, along the old road that the muleteers used to follow to export silk, the path leaves the concrete pavement of Calle García [1] to take a dirt track. With the sounds of the irrigation ditch and the song of finches, pipits and bee-eaters, the first stretch of the path coincides with the local Junta de los Ríos path. For 2 kilometres, the route runs through terraced orchards of fruit trees, tomato and cereal crops, threshing floors, farmhouses and ponds.

Around a bend, in the Montina ravine [2], the path separates from the main track by an inconspicuous path off to the right. The trail continues along it, going up and down the pleated slope of the ravine, crossing not only the hillside, but also the territories of struggle and tragedy. On the other side of the river stands the violent scene of the treachery and death perpetrated against the last king of Andalusia: the Tajos del Reyecillo. Accompanied by ferns, silver broom and some of the 120 species of butterflies that live in the Sierra Nevada, the path crosses the irrigation channel several times. The growing roar of the water gives away the proximity of the rivers.



Junta de los Ríos detour

The trail crosses the Chico River over a concrete footbridge, a few metres from its thundering confluence with the Grande River at the “Junta de los Ríos” [3]. Right there, in the middle of the fork, stand the ruins of an old Andalusian silk factory, which still possesses its horseshoe arch.

From here, the path goes up a cobbled path, leading away from the noise of the water and into the valley of the Grande River. Reverberating between the walls of the ravine, it is possible to hear the piercing sounds of the peregrine falcon, the chirping sparrow or the solitary rock thrush. And you may also be surprised by a Bonelli’s eagle soaring overhead or, crossing the hillside, a mountain goat.

Los Tajos del Reyecillo

After 1.5 kilometres the route comes to a crossroads [4], where departs from the local footpath.

Take the path on the right and zigzag down in search of the river Grande [5]. The trail crosses to the left bank through the cold waters of the river. Once in the National Park, it ascends through Las Umbrías, heading south. The path leaves behind the trills and gurgles of the blackbird, wren and kingfisher, which live in the riverside woodland. It then enters a forest of Scots pine, where you may hear the drumming of the great spotted woodpecker or the cheerful, singing warble of the citril finch. The trail climbs up the superb Tajos del Reyecillo cliffs so you can enjoy, from just above, a spectacular panoramic view over the valley of the Grande de Bérchules river [6].



In 370 metres you will come to the highest point of the path and, in another 800 metres, you will leave the track and the pine forest on a small path [7] that goes off to the right and descends steeply through the mountain. Where the arboreal dome ends, the view extends, grandiose, over a mosaic of crops, the village of Bérchules, the slopes of the ravine, the Sierra de Lújar, the Contraviesa and the Mediterranean.

Tiny before the grandeur of the relief, the path descends following the markers to a track to the left. After 2.5 kilometres, you will come to the shaded area of La Cabrera [8]. The village seems within easy reach, but it is on the other side of the slope and although there are only 2 kilometres to go, you have to cross the ravine. 20 metres after the farmhouse, the trail connects with the GR-7, leaving the track and heading towards the river [9] along a steep slope. This is the wildest part of the trail. Above your head, you will see the open vastness of the sky and mountains. And underfoot, the overwhelming depths of the river and the ravine. Climb down the steep wall following the signs. Cross the riverbed over a small bridge. And between ash, elder, chestnut and walnut trees, climb the 800 metres uphill to the village of Bérchules.



