



ALTERNATIVE ROUTE GR 249.6

STAGE 2: MONTEJAQUE - CAÑADA DEL REAL TESORO

THE STAGE IN SUMMARY

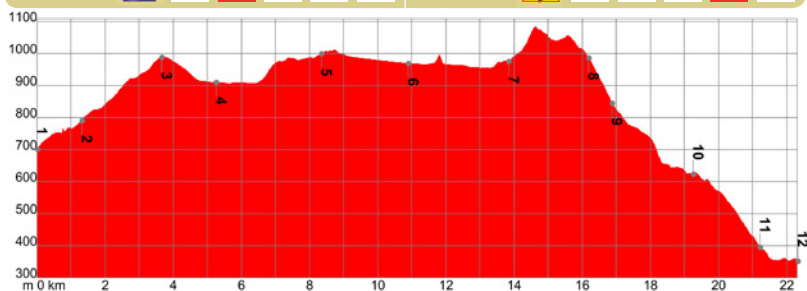
This middle stage of the Alternative Route is very mountainous, maintaining a considerable altitude, and linking the village of Montejaque with two of the settlements of Cortes de la Frontera, the main village and La Cañada del Real Tesoro, also known as Estación de Cortes. The direction is mainly south-west, with a gentle turn to the south at kilometre 13, when it leaves the plains of Llanos de Líbar for good.

Although it runs mainly through the municipalities of the villages at the start and end, in the area of the Cufría fountain it crosses into the municipality of Benaoján for just over 2 kilometres, along cattle trails. The spring of La Fuente de Libar is of great geographic interest, being where these three municipalities meet up with Jimera de Líbar and Villaluenga del Rosario, which the route goes through for 900 metres. Up to kilometre 18.5, in the town of Cortes de la Frontera, the route runs within the Sierra de Grazalema Natural Park.

The majority of the route is at around 1,000 metres above sea level, through an area which, although frequented by hikers, must be considered mountainous. The highest point is at Los Machos pass, at around kilometre 14.6 and at 1,080 metres above sea level. Apart from the fantastic scenery of the Sierras de Líbar, and being a true birdwatching paradise, the main interest of the route is geological. Practically all of the different components of karstic modelling can be appreciated, including one of the largest poljes in the province and several torcales (karst towers). From a historical point of view, the dolmen of Líbar, the village of Cortes el Viejo and the Casa de Piedra (Stone House) are of particular interest. In such a mountainous landscape, the string of springs, country houses and kilometres of dry-stone walls are the ethnographic landmarks that stand out most.

The farmed plains of El Pozuelo





- Road traffic circulating
- Mountainous areas without drinking water
- Roaming livestock
- Fording seasonal streams

PR-A 252

GR 7

PR-A 255

PR-A 237

GR 141

PR-A 244

Montejaque – Cortes de la Frontera – overlap throughout

Tarifa Atenas, overlap until km 11.8

Jimera de Líbar – Cortes de la Frontera, links up at the end

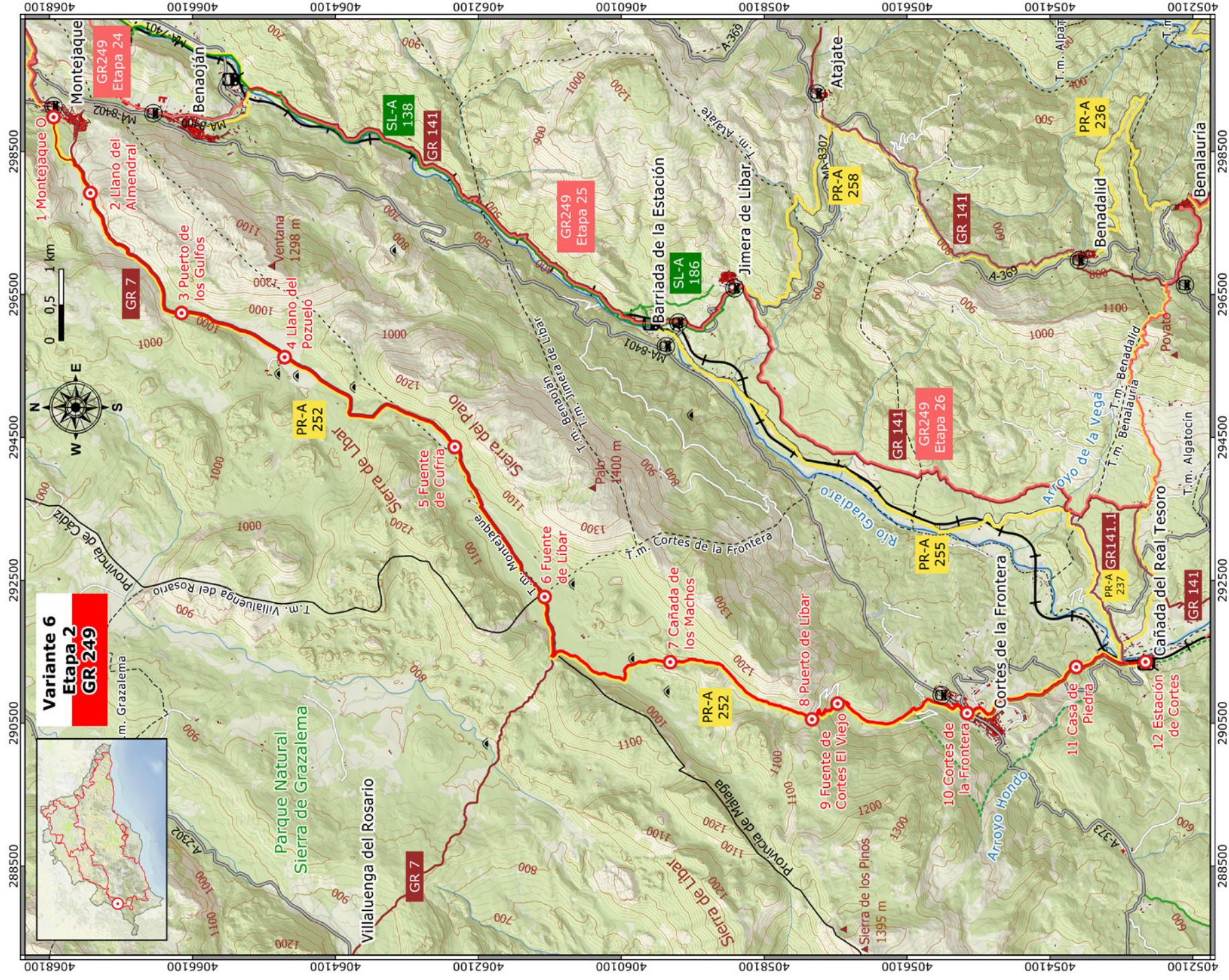
Benalauría – Cañada del Real Tesoro, links up at end

Great Path of the Serranía de Ronda, overlap at end

Gaucín – Cañada del Real Tesoro, links up at end

P O I N T	X	Y	HEIGHT ABOVE SL	DISTANCE
1.Montejaque (W)	298985	4068045	700	Km 0,0
2.El Almendral plains	297920	4067530	790	Km 1,3
3.Los Gulfos pass	296240	4066255	990	Km 3,6
4.El Pozuelo plains	295625	4064810	910	Km 5,2
5.Cufría spring	294365	4062430	1.000	Km 8,3
6.Líbar spring	292265	4061175	970	Km 10,8
7.Cañada de los Machos ravine	291355	4059415	975	Km 13,8
8.Líbar pass	290555	4057430	985	Km 16,1
9. Cañada de los Machos ravine	290775	4057070	845	Km 16,8
10.Cortes de la Frontera	290640	4055260	625	Km 19,1
11.Casa de Piedra	291285	4053730	395	Km 21,3
12.Estación de Cortes (N)	291360	4052760	350	Km 22,3

ALT. ROUTE 249.6-2





DESCRIPCIÓN DEL RECORRIDO

Towards Los Gulfos pass → Up to km 2.3

Climbing continually to the south-west, the route sets off along the Camino de Líbar, a partly tarmacked track that leaves the whitewashed village of Montejaque below. It passes by the drinking water tanks and an interesting resting spot frequented by the village's elders. There are some minor tracks that turn off to the right when Olive groves takes over the landscape. Close to some tall reddish-coloured cliffs on the left are some livestock enclosures (Corrales) with a couple of orchards. This is the general trend for the next stretch, limestone cliffs that reach their highest point at the Tajo del Fuerte on the left and cultivated plains and meadows around the country estate of El Almendral on the right. On the other side of the flat valley floor, first the double summit of El Hacho de Montejaque and then the Tajillo del Almendral.

After this gentle ascent, the slope steepens while crossing a very rugged area. The track does not follow the original route of the old road, which can be seen a little further down, wedged between the

Montalate mountain range to the north and that of Juan Diego to the south. In the latter you can see the rocky towers of a small torcal. After crossing a cattle grid, you start to see many more Holm oaks, reaching the plains of María Paula and, after a gentle bend that leaves a track on the right, you reach Los Gulfos pass at an altitude of 990 metres, with its large Holm oaks.

The plains of Llanos de Líbar → Up to km 13.4

Over the next 800 metres the route descends some 70 metres in height, while a quite stunning landscape opens out up ahead: El Pozuelo plains surrounded by steep grey-coloured mountains. This is a large flat area, stretching 2 kilometres up ahead and 500 metres across at its widest point. The country estate that the valley takes its name from is in the middle, on the right. It is mostly arable farming land, but also has livestock, with cows, sheep, goats and Iberian pigs. At the southern end, go through a gate to enter a traditional 'Dehesa' pasture land of Holm and Gall oaks that are hundreds of years old, occupying the plain of El Valdío. ►

Retinto cattle resting on the track on the Plains of Líbar



The depression of Hoyo de Cortes and the Líbar outcrop from the track

You now come to climb again, following a gentle curve to the left, until you cross a cattle grid that indicates that you are entering (km 7.3) the Public Uplands of Dehesa Boyar de Benaoján. Here, the Holm oaks are even larger, and a little further on you pass by the first watering place, the Cufría spring, which remains on the meadow to the north, a little further on in front of a derelict building.

You then reach just over 1,000 metres above sea level, when several smaller tracks split off on both sides, while you cross another cattle grid. Enter the municipality of Montejaque, you can see Líbar country estate, far off to your right. The three and a half kilometres of meadows of the Llanos de Líbar begin, with the Sierra del Palo mountains to the south and those of Líbar to the north. These rise up some 400 metres up above the Path. Walking alongside the barbed wire fence of a private estate where the dolmen (Los Pocillos) is located and heading south-west, we ignore the branch to the right that leads to the fire-fighting reservoir and its heliport. The main landmark on this section is the

Líbar spring (km 10.9), a waterhole where five municipalities and two provinces converge. The seasonal stream creates a large pond, with hundreds of frogs and other amphibians, and runs alongside the stone wall that separates Cádiz from Málaga. In contrast to the straighter design of other walls starting from this point, this one is rather sinuous and windy.

Cattle are usually found here, coming to drink or rest during the day; look for a gate to the north and follow a zigzagging little path that climbs and goes through a gate, without going over the pass, towards which the GR 7 heads, the Tiro de la Barra. You then go downhill after turning east, through the cleared Holm oak grove on the hillside, with Los Correos country house up ahead in the distance. Once again on a track on the levels, there is a second 90-degree turn (to the east and then to the south) that goes around a stone wall boundary (km 13). You then come to the complex of channels that drain this enormous flat and wide-open area, and a little further on to a small narrow path at the end of the meadow. ►



Through Sierra Blanquilla

→ Up to km 19

La Cañada de los Machos is the name given to the string of small holes, as they are known locally, which are in fact sinkholes located above chasms sealed over by clay. Still at the bottom of the little valley, you must then climb steadily up a mountain path for about 400 metres to reach the highest point of the day, at a height of 1,080 metres. There is now a gentle descent surrounded by scrubland and Holm oak woodland to reach a track. This is the access road to the old country house of Edmundo, the ruins of which can be seen below, on the other side of the first Hoyo de Cortes, a more recent dip in the land used for livestock.

Take the lane that goes off to the left before abandoning it after 250 metres, heading towards a cobblestone pathway that continues over level ground. In this part there are many Maple trees and a karstic landscape with well-developed limestone pavements. To the right is the rugged outcrop of Peñón de Líbar and to the left, the hill of Las Arenas with its cave. Further on and below you is

the second rounded Hoyo de Cortes. After a section along a narrow pathway, a rough track heads off to the crossroads at the Líbar pass (990 metres, km 16.1). The main track you cross would take you to the Sierra de los Pinos mountains, but the highlight of the day for hikers, is the traditional cobblestone pathway that you turn onto here. It eases the downhill slope and crosses the hard to make out village of Cortes el Viejo, whose main spring is where the track rejoins (km 16.9). The route, however, continues south.

Follow this track for exactly one kilometre along the so-called Valle and when you reach its end, you join a path going off to the left, which is the traditional path. This meanders again and soon reaches the previous track, passing through Olive groves, leaving the Natural Park towards the hamlet of Cortes de la Frontera.



The River Path

→ To the end of the stage

Wind your way through Cortes de la Frontera, past the bullring and down towards the ring road. From there you head ►

The pond of Fuente de Líbar in autumn time





south, down a lane with a watering trough alongside, through an entirely different landscape to that of the mountains.

At the next junction, take the wider track that passes a pillar on the right and an unfinished housing estate on top of the rocky hill. When the slope becomes steeper, the track turns concreted and runs along wire fences of the small adjacent farms. This is varied terrain, where red marlaceous limestone is joined by the sandstone hills of El Aljibe (with Cork oak groves) and clay. Cross over the A-373 road at kilometre point 58.3 with care, to encounter the ancestral cobbled road once again. Until here, it had been replaced by the track.

This route has been selected from the many Caminos running along the River Cortes, traditional paths that fan out from the town centre to the productive farmland

at the bottom of the valley. The reason for this track's existence, which coincides with the PR-A 255, is the unusual Casita de Piedra (meaning Stone House), a true archaeological landmark. It was a Mozarabic hermitage, later used as a wine press and is carved into a large block of sandstone with the door facing south-east. In front of it is the brickwork of an adjoining house that left the imprint of the gable roof in the rock. The descent continues, passes next to a whitewashed house and crosses a stream. Here it comes to the Algeciras to Bobadilla railway line, which you pass underneath, under a pretty bridge. In a gentle turn from south-east to south-west along a main track, with the Guadiaro River and its orchards on the left, you soon reach the Cañada del Real Tesoro, where the stage ends. ■

The Casa de Piedra or Rock House on the cobblestone path

