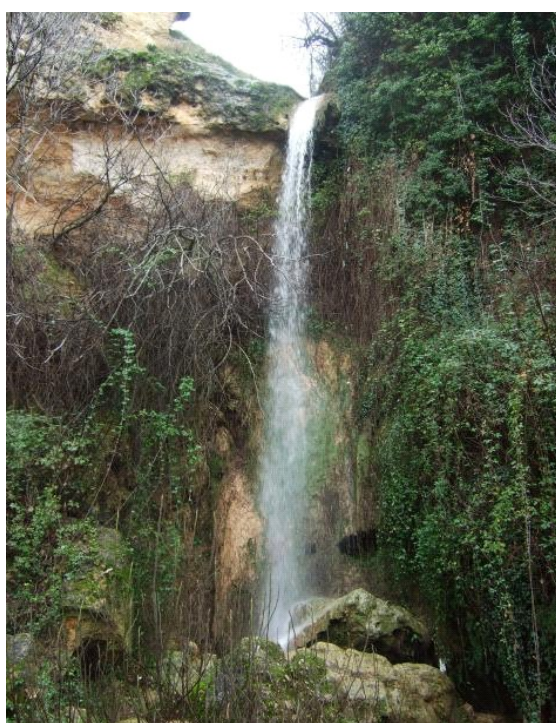




Molino la Ratonera

THREE LONGER WALKS FROM THE MILL



WITH DIRECTIONS, DURATION AND LENGTH OF WALK



Walks from Molino la Ratonera

There are steep sections on some of these walks so please wear boots or stout shoes. There is a right to roam in Spain, but please show respect for our neighbours' property by not taking fruit, almonds etc and not invading privacy when the owners are working their land. Always carry sufficient water and sun protection.

1 Circular walk to La Viña

Distance: 13 km (8 miles) Duration: 3 hours

Summary: This walk takes you up stream along the south eastern side of the La Viña valley. You cross the river at the village of the same name, head north, west and then south west along the other side of the valley before crossing the river again and returning to the mill.

From the mill entrance, turn left (North) and ascend the hill, following the main track. Ignore the smaller track which goes straight on at the sharp bend and keep to the main track. Onwards and upwards until you come to an old cortijo, partially renovated, with swimming pool (Cyrillo's). On up the hill eventually reaching the large, white cortijo, Cortijo El Llano. There has been a dwelling on this site since Roman times and the track you have followed is an ancient drovers' road, pre Roman, known as a via pecuaria. In front of the cortijo is a large threshing circle - an "era".

At Cortijo El Llano go completely past the house and garages and then follow the track as it bends to the right. Follow the track through the olive groves until you come to a metalled road with a steep hill facing you.

Turn left here and follow the road downhill, across the bridge and up the other side until you come to a right turn. Take this so that you are heading more or less north once again. After 2 kilometres you reach a tee junction with a large oak tree on your right. Turn left here and you are now on the town hall 'Ruta 9'. Follow this track until the tee junction (2 more km), turn left and head for the start of 'Ruta 6' marked by an information sign. Turn left once again. After another 2 km you reach a farm where a concrete track heads uphill. Follow this if you want to look at the ruined mining village on Sierra Ojete. If not follow the main track round to the left. Follow the main track until you reach Cortijo Los Roperos. "Los roperos" means "the clothiers" and that would seem to be a family tradition as the present owner runs the clothing factory in Zagra. Follow the brick walled track and descend the hill to the bridge which crosses the La Viña river. At the next junction, turn left and follow the track back to the mill.



2 The Pesquera valley circular walk

Distance: 10km (6.25 miles) Duration: approx 2hour 30mins

Summary: This walk takes you across the saddle at the southern end of Sierra del Ojete and down into the beautiful valley of the Pesquera river where you will see the impressive Torre Pesquera, the ruins of an 9th century Moorish castle which was taken by the Christians in 1423. You then follow a valley back up to the Sierra Ojete where you have panoramic views of the La Viña river valley and return to the mill.

Turn right (South) from the mill entrance, follow the track to the T junction, turn right and continue past Cortijo los Roperos. Follow the main track round to the right until you see a metal water tank on the right. A little past this a track branches off to the left. Take it and follow it up the hill. Always stick to the main track and do not follow apparent branches into the olive groves. Near the saddle in the hills, where the track begins to peter out you will see the rocky crag to the right. You will see a fence with a gate at the foot of the crag. Aim for the gate but keep a few metres below the fence. As you get level with the gate you will see an olive grove ahead, below and to the right where a track ends. Aim for this track and follow it all the way down to the road. During the descent you have panoramic views into the Pesquera valley, the road bridge and the ancient tower. Once on the road turn right and head down hill to the left hand

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bend and take the track which heads off to the right. Follow this track to a tee junction and turn right following the track behind a partially ruined farmhouse. You are now heading up a small valley with the watercourse on your right. At the confluence walk between the watercourses and then ignore the one to your left. Watch out for the green roof of a steel shed appearing briefly above the olive trees ahead. This is where you are heading. Fences close in on both sides but keep following the watercourse up. As you near the top you will see a fenced island of scrub and oak trees – keep to the right of this. At the summit you will see the metal shed. Walk round it to the right and then follow the track on the left. You are now looking up the La Viña valley (where the mill is). At the bottom of the concrete track turn right and follow the track back to the mill. As you walk along the western side of the valley you will see the mill below you.



3 Circular Walk to Algarinejo

Distance: 24km (15 miles) Duration: 6-7 hours

Summary: This walk is a gem and worth the distance. It starts with the ascent to 830 metres between El Chite and Cerro Ramos. There then follows a gentle descent into the lush Pesquera river valley which you follow to the town of Algarinejo. From the town you follow the Vía Pecuaria de Realenga on the gruelling ascent to 900 metres by the Ermita de Las Eras. From here you enjoy a gentle descent to La Viña and La Ratonera with views over Malaga and Cordoba provinces. This walk includes a 35-40 minute road section but there is very little traffic and it is worth it to make the circular walk. Do not attempt this walk after prolonged heavy rain as you may not be able to cross the river.

Note: Take a copy of the Algarinejo town plan so that you can find the start of 'Ruta 2'.

Turn right (South) from the mill entrance, follow the track to the T junction, turn right and continue past Cortijo los Roperos. Follow the main track round to the right passing a small white cortijo on the left with another almost opposite. Continue along this track until you reach a farm that is in use. From here you join the town hall 'Ruta 6' and carry on on the main track. After a further 1.8km you reach a junction in the track marked with the information sign for route 6. You have now been walking for 5 kilometres.



Here you turn left on to town hall 'Ruta 5' and start a gradual descent to the Pesquera valley. The high mountains you see in front of you are the Sierra Subbetica in Cordoba province with peaks up to 1570 metres. The signing on this part of the walk is poor but do not turn off the main track until you reach a concrete garage at a tee junction. Turn right here. Shortly after this turn you cross a bridge above a waterfall – note the water channel running along the hillside.

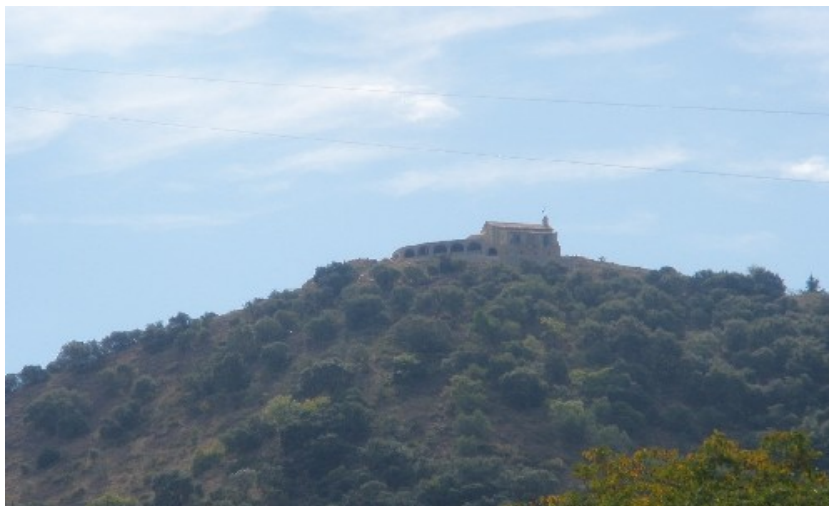
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This is known as an acequia and was an method of transporting water large distances for irrigation and so transforming the fertility of the landscape. Many of these channels were constructed by the Moors during their 700 year occupation. A bit further down this track you will see a narrow gorge with waterfall joining the main stream. You will shortly reach La Venta, a small settlement in the Pesquera valley with fertile fields and towering willows. Near the bridge/ford you will see the information sign for 'Ruta 4'. This suggests that you should stay on the right hand side of the river but you will find the path disappears. As an alternative cross the river, and follow the track upstream. When you see a track leaving to the right and heading for olive groves, take it and follow it down to the river. Thread your way through the olives keeping near the river. After a few minutes the olives finish and you will see an open field and a footbridge. Do not cross the footbridge – you are now back on 'Ruta 4'. Turn left at the junction and you will shortly reach the Algarinejo road. Turn right for the 3.5km to the town where you will find a good selection of bars serving a 'menu del dia', a set 3 course menu at a very reasonable price. This first section of the walk will have taken you two and a half to three hours to cover the 13 kilometres.

After lunch head out of the town on 'Ruta 2' where you can take the 10 minute diversion along the Arroyo de Zurreon to



see the waterfall pictured right. Return to the main river and continue until you come to a new bridge. Turn right here where you will see the sign for Via Pecuaria de Realenga. After a few minutes into the climb you will see the Ermita de Las Eras on the top of a hill (pictured below).



This is where you are heading and you are treading an old Roman road. At a number of points you will see wooden poles with black arrows – follow them but generally keep heading for the Ermita. You actually bypass the Ermita when you get to the top but this 2km ascent will have taken you between 1 and 2 hours to get to a height of 900 metres. At the end of this section you reach the junction with 'Ruta 5' where you turn right. Now follow this track. Where it splits take the left fork and on past a tee junction with a concrete track (the end of 'Ruta 9') until the junction with 'Ruta 6' (you were here earlier this morning). Turn left and then when the track turns sharp right(0.5km from the junction), you branch off to the left and head for La Viña. After 1.5km you enter the village and head down for the bridge over the river. As the road ascends you will see another road ascending on your left. Just past where they meet and marked with an electricity pylon take a track to the right. You are now heading back to the mill. You will shortly come to Cortijo el Llano where you proceed past the house and continue. Do not take the long straight track that is perpendicular to the cortijo! Only 2.5km more to do. Ahead of you the houses on Sierra Ojete come into view and you soon come to our neighbour Cyrillo's cortijo with the newly built section. Follow the track round to the left and the mill will soon be visible.