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RIOMALO CTR. LAS HURDES BY BIKE

ROUTE 3: VALLE DEL MALVELLIDO

AND SIERRA DE LA CORREDERA



Tip: Circular

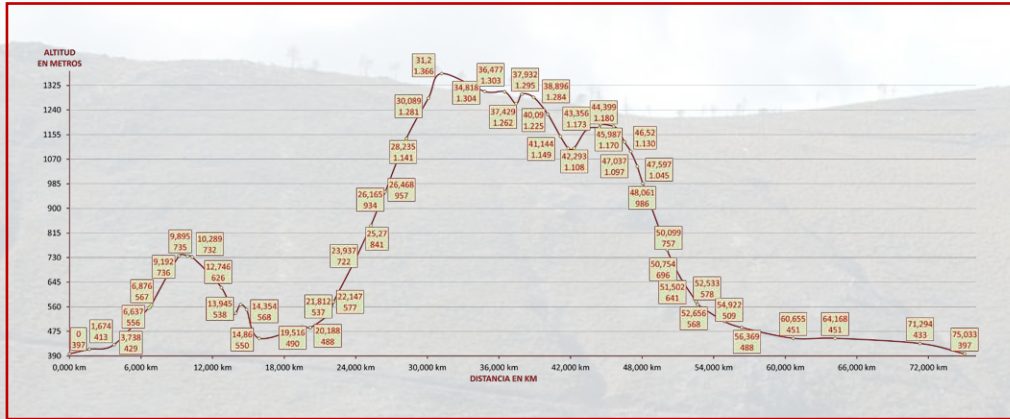
Distance: 75 km.

Difficulty: Very high

Highest point/ lowest point: 1.366 /397 meters

Recomended season: from February to November

INTRODUCTION AND ITINERARY



NOTE 1: The routes proposed by CTR Riomalo are ready for expert hikers, cyclists and canoeists. CTR Riomalo is not responsible for the lack of experience of travelers or if the climatic conditions complicate their difficulty. The routes are all public and if there is any restrictions in specific seasons, they are specified in the own itineraries. Hikers should take into account all the indications made in the routes, as well as be extremely careful in complicated areas and, of course, respect the natural and historical heritage of the area.

NOTE 2: This booklet is a property of Riomalo CTR and the producer, Esther de Aragón, so much in design, as in text and graphic content. Wildlife photos belong to the professional photographer David Santiago (www.davidsantiagofoto.com).



This route is the longest and most complicated of all bike routes that we propose. However, it reaches some of the most spectacular landscapes of Las Hurdes. After taking the first path, the route leans over the valley of the Ladrillar and when it descends from the Collado de los Ladrones to Rubiaco, it will be showing a very different panoramic of a new valley, the Hurdano, between Nuñomoral and Rubiaco.

After crossing both "alquerías", the route will reach Cerezal and the valley of the Malvellido river, starting a spectacular ascent to the Sierra de la Corredera. The climb is strong; we must remember the path begins at 537 meters high, near Cerezal, and it rises up to 1.366 meters, under the peak Solombrero, where the Malvellido river springs up.

From that point we recommend to look out the north side, where the Hurdano river begins to flow and that is the destination of our route 7 of hiking. From these places the views open a wild and craggy landscape and so beautiful as the one that our path shows while going on the

contour lines of the slopes and crossing the different streams that descend from the top of the Sierra, including the Malvellido itself. The path approaches the high peaks of the Pico Solombrero or the Tiendas, both between 1.575 and 1.600 meters; from these places we can also admire the Sierra de Francia, raising its top above the Sierra del Cordón, to the northeast. The latitude of these areas does change the color of the environment, as the quartzite is more abundant and shares space with the eternal slate of Las Hurdes, but nature is unforgettable and, in places, heart-breaking.

In these high spots there were many chestnut-trees, as indicated by our photos. The area was burned some years ago, unfortunately, but the forest works have gradually returned the natural look to the mountains. On the other hand, they have not lost any of its beauty and magnificence, in spite of the changes they have suffered.

It is necessary to emphasize about the height of the proposed itinerary, because this section of the route is usually icy, even snow-covered, du-

ring the months of December and January, so that the route should not be realized in winter. From the place where the path cross the Sierpe stream to the viewpoint that we will speak right away, the way can be complicated.

The route, before beginning the descent, reaches a viewpoint over the Malvellido river. From this point we will see the craggy course of the Malvellido and El Gasco and Fragoza, the most remote hamlets of Las Hurdes, those which surprised the world for nearly a century by the oblivion to which their inhabitants had been subjected. Today, fortunately, the urban layouts and the old houses remain



only as a memory of the past, adapted to the environment, the houses of slate restored, camouflaged with the complicated natural environment. We also can see the tiny terraces by the course of the Malvellido; their striking location still amaze, as their size and shape. Being in Las Hurdes and not wander around El Gasco, Fragoza and Martilandrán is like not being in Las Hurdes, because they collect a little of the past of the region, the reason for its appearance and isolation, but also the reason of its natural beauty. These villages keep part of a sad past, a story that curiously marked the soul of people from Las Hurdes, but it also made them as strong as kind and noble.



PLACES OF HISTORICAL INTEREST



Riomalo de Abajo. Our route begins and ends in Riomalo de Abajo, one of the doors of Las Hurdes. Next to the confluence of the Ladrillar and Alagón rivers, the traveler can see the beautiful meanders of the latter, boundary between Salamanca and Cáceres. The natural solitude of the lands to the south, where the Sierra del Cordón rises, makes Riomalo one of the most used destination by travelers from which to explore the region, besides being a place from which to reach the reservoir of Gabriel y Galán on boat or canoe, even to swim in the natural pool of the Ladrillar river.



Its people retains some interesting features traditional architecture and the Riomalo Rural Tourism Center, comprising a hostel, a camping, a set of stone and wood bungalows and a restaurant with a renowned cuisine, both creative and traditional, based on traditional products. This way, dishes as well known as the kid goat, grilled or roasted, seasonal mushrooms and desserts of honey, chestnut and so on.



Rubiaco, Nuñomoral y Cerezal: The first two villages extend close to the Hurdano river, after it has received the waters of the Malvellido. Petroglyphs, grave of Celtic origin and Latin letters, besides a known castro, are some of the signs that have shown an ancient settlement in Las Hurdes, well, that and the many traditions that have survived in this area about water sources that keep nymphs or deities. Nuñomoral is the municipality's head and together with Rubiaco are located next the Hurdano river. Meanwhile, Cerezal is

located near the joining of the Hurdano and the Malvellido. It has a dam, near the village, that collect the waters of the streams that spring up in the vicinity of the Arrobiey; the spot is small and very beautiful and it is the destination of another route.

El Valle del Malvellido: If the chronics talked for a long time about the inaccessibility of Las Hurdes, they did with insistence about the ravine of the Malvellido, a craggy course with some of the most remote "alquerías" of Las Hurdes: El Gasco, Fragoza and Martilandrán. You can only reach them by a road that ends in El Gasco, going up the Malvellido from the village of Cerezal. From that place, the landscape is immersed in a disturbing series of mountains that fall vertically to the narrow and deep





riverbed of Malvellido, whose course turns around the slate, trying to free itself. The river goes increasing its volume with water of the streams that make their way down between rocks from the heights of the mountains. And if somebody can speak of terraces in Las Hurdes, it is more obvious the lack of land, that Unamuno said, among the narrow riverbed of the Malvellido and how this fact has forced people, for many centuries, to extract every meter from the mountains in which to plant olive and fruit or create their small orchards.

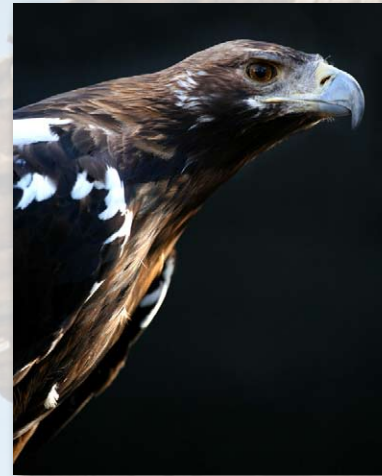


Both Martilandrán as Fragoza, whose name conveniently graphic explains the narrow physiognomy of this land, are "alquerías" that unhook his hamlets in vertically and preserve the old houses of slate. Fragoza has the Cottolengo, charitable institution that takes the name of an Italian saint and that it did, and it continues doing, a great welfare work. The road ends in El Gasco, a remote village of incredibly narrow streets, twisted and with steps to save the differences of level. These streets are flanked by houses of slate, the same as today a craftsman makes in miniature. The unusual beauty of the place invites to walk through the town center, as well as to reach two nice places nearby: the Volcano and the waterfall of the Miacera, but that is a question of the natural section, the first, and of a hiking route that is on the website, the second.



NATURE

Our route hides some of the most spectacular landscapes of Las Hurdes, beginning in Riomalo, close to the Alagón river and the southern foothills of the Natural Park of the Batuecas and Sierra de Francia. The route soon gets into the Sierra del Cordón, getting nice views of the valley of the Ladrillar, at first, until it changed the slope from the Collado de los Ladrones. The horizon delineates the summits of the mountains, while the lower areas show the closed valleys, crossed by different streams that engaged in digging the slate. The slopes are populated by pine trees, but also of the eternal and abundant arbutus. Very important is the existence of a yew forest near Cerezal, but it also will be a question of another route.



evidences of impactite in Spain. Tests carried out by optical microscopy, electron microscopy, diffraction analysis of X-ray and chemical composition, it is a vesicular glass with abundant quartz and minimal amounts of Ringwoodite, a high-pressure polymorph of olivine. The chemical composition matches with the metasedimentary substrate. With all this evidence, the



The region has a well-preserved variety of ecosystems; this fact led to protect most of the region with the figures of ZEPA (Zone of Special Protection of Birds) and SCI (Site of Community Interest).

Al over our route It is not difficult to watch many birds, some protected by being threatened or endangered, as the imperial eagle and the golden eagle, the black stork, the black vulture, the owls or the herons, to name a few. The route passes through areas where it is not difficult to see some of those species, but they are just a small example of this natural paradise and the species that Las Hurdes keep.

ABesides, the route goes around the called "Volcán del Gasco", declared Place of Scientific Interest. Taking some lines of the Decree of Declaration: "The area is under study; one theory suggests that constitutes one of the few proven



outcrop of rocks pumiceas of El Gasco is interpreted as as a possible result of a hypervelocity impact of a small meteorite. The scientific interest of the "Volcano" of El Gasco is that constitutes the only outcrop in the Iberian Peninsula with rocks of this type.

Also, the likely presence of Ringwoodite identifies it as a unique place worldwide. If the origin of these rocks is confirmed, is undoubtedly the educational value of the outcrop because it constitutes a resource of great educational value for future generations and for the general public because the contribution about the information on the importance of the meteorite impacts in the evolution of the Earth and the solar system".

NOTE: Remember, traveler, you are in a region of high natural sensitivity. Your step ought to be careful, in order to preserve the physical space and biodiversity. Then you can come back and look for places where you feel part of nature and at peace with that surrounds you. And welcome!

