



RIOMALO CTR.
LAS HURDES BY BIKE
ROUTE 4: VALLES DEL HURDANO
AND ALAGÓN. SIERRA DEL ROMERO

Tipe: Circular Distance: 60 km. Difficulty: High
Highest point/lowest point: 702/397 metros
Recommended season: All year round



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NOTE 1: 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!

NOTE 2: 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 3: 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).



E This route crosses some of the most emblematic spots that surround Riomalo de Abajo. Among them, the Sierra del Romero, the valleys of the Hurdano and Alagón rivers.

All over the route the landscapes will open endless over the horizon of mountains of the southern area of Las Hurdes, extending as far as La Pesga and the mountains of the same name, even as far as the reservoir of Gabriel y Galán and the southern foothills of the Natural Park of Batuequilla - Sierra de Francia, in the area known as Arca y Buitrera.

The route begins in Riomalo CTR and takes the road for some kilometers. It takes a path in the Portilla Pino that goes above the road and through the slopes of the Sierra del Cordón, towards the valley of the Hurdano river, that we will see before starting the descent. The route will also look down at Vegas de Coria.

A few hundred meters later, the route leaves the main road to reach a bridge over the Hurdano river. After crossing the bridge, it will undertake a long ascent, leaving on the right the "alquería"

of Batuequilla, a nice place because of its appearance and very especial location. The path will climb the slope of La Peña de la Pared, towards the Barranco del Arrolamúa, in which a small dam collects water of that stream. Shortly thereafter, passing Vegas de Coria above it, the route returns to take a road, at the Portilla de la Buen Agua. And from a "portilla" to another, until the "Alta", where the route takes another path to reach the Sierra del Romero.

The panoramic then will change completely, because we will replace the Hurdano river by the places where the reservoir of Gabriel y Galán receives the waters of Los Ángeles River.

The slope of the Talar will help to change the valley, returning to the Hurdano river again, towards Arrolobos. This area of Las Hurdes, quiet and beautiful, will help us to twist between the slopes of the Sierra del Cordón, accompanying the Alagón river, towards the Melero, the beautiful meander that is near Riomalo de Abajo, end of our route.



PLACES OF HISTORICAL INTEREST



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 deserts of honey, chestnut and so on.

La Batuequilla. The village is one of those idyllic places left in Las Hurdes, despite its past abandonment. Today some people have returned and repaired a few traditional houses. The hamlet still has its old threshing floors.

Arrolobos is a small “alquería” that is located close to the Hurdano river. Its graphic name reminds those times when there were wolves in Las Hurdes. The nice meadow of the river still keeps the old threshing floors and the village has many traditional houses of slate. People from Arrolobos always were keen on fishing, to the point that they were formerly engaged in this task and in the sale of the fishing all over the region.

The remains of two more alquerías next to the reservoir of Gabriel y Galán are barely perceptible. On the other hand, Cabaloria is perfectly visible from Riomalo de Abajo, in Salamanca lands. The first hamlet is Arrofranco, a few kilometers from Arrolobos, on the edge of the waters of the reservoir and along the ravine of the same name. The second one is Martinebrón, also on the edge of the reservoir, before reaching the Melero, but in the opposite side of



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



the river. Cabaloria, meanwhile, will be visible at the end of the route. It is a depopulated “alquería” located in the Sotoserrano term (Salamanca), which owes its origins, according to some researchers, to the presence of gold and exploitation in Roman times. It was abandoned following the construction of the reservoir of Gabriel y Galán, in 1965, although it has never been flooded.

NATURE

This proposal comes at very different places of Las Hurdes. Among the Sierra del Cordón and del Romero there are big differences, since the second seems to be the end of the narrow lands of Las Hurdes, opening the landscapes towards the south and the reservoir of Gabriel y Galán. However, its eastern landscapes return to be the usual in Las Hurdes, showing perspectives over the closed valley of the Hurdano river.

Among both mountains, the route runs through the slopes of the Peña of la Pared, under the emblematic peaks of what was formerly known as the Sierra de la Mula. The route crosses a beautiful place where the waters of the ravine named as Arro-lamúa are collected. Below the dam, within walking distance, there are petroglyphs, prehistoric engravings that you can find all over the region.

Las Hurdes are one of the best natural destinations of our country. In fact, virtually all of the region is declared a Special Protection Area (SPA) because the conservation of ecosystems. Among them, the Alagón prints a special natural value to our route, which is inhabited by many eagles and vultures. As important fact, there are specially protec-

ted species that fly over these lands, as the black vulture and the black stork. Furthermore, in the area you can be lucky enough to see some otters or to observe and hear the roaring of the deer in the rutting season



Regarding vegetation, the traditional forest is composed of oaks, cork oaks and holm oaks. In addition: Ash-trees, willows, alder-trees, black poplars, junipers and especially arbutus. The mountains of Las Hurdes always have color and when it is not the red or the white of the heathers giving tones, the slopes look white because of the big flowers of the rockrose, or yellow because of the broom or the “carquesas”, the purple of the “cantueso”. The inhabitants have always made honey from these flowers. The honey is excellent and well known.

No less important is the large amount of mushrooms that the pine forests have in autumn, a paradise for connoisseurs..Chestnuts and olives are equally been used traditionally. People from Las Hurdes have traditionally made desserts with chestnuts and today repopulations of chestnut-trees are being doing in some zones, combined with other species of fruit trees.

One of the most common and nice pictures of Las Hurdes is when their arbutus are full of delicious red fruits in late autumn and early winter, coinciding for some days the beginning of the new flowering with the fall of the mature fruits..

The reforestation of pine has also shaped the landscape, while the non-native vegetation is represented by species such as eucalyptus or mimosa.

