

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
- Plant collecting is prohibited

Emergency phone: 112



JAÉN



MORE INFORMATION

Llano de las Américas Visitor Centre.
Carretera JA-7102 Santa Elena - Miranda del Rey, Km 2. 23213 Jaén.
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PARQUE NATURAL
Despeñaperros

JAÉN
Trail
Castañar de Valdeazores



OTHER CATEGORIES OF PROTECTION



• ROUTE

Linear walk

• LENGTH (ONE WAY)

2,9 km

• ESTIMATED TIME (ONE WAY)

1 hour and 15 minutes

• DIFFICULTY

Moderate

• TYPE OF TRAIL

Road or footpath

• LANDSCAPE / VEGETATION

Riverside vegetation, Mediterranean vegetation and pine, chestnut and oak forests.

• SHADE

Frequent

• SPECIAL AUTHORISATION

Not required

• RECOMMENDATIONS

Carry drinking water and sun protection in summer and wear suitable clothing and footwear.

• PROVINCE / MUNICIPALITIES

Jaén / Santa Elena

• SHEETS OF MTN MAP 1:50.000

862 and 863

• START / END COORDINATES

38°24'3"N, 3°30'29"W

38°24'11"N, 3°32'15"W



HOW TO GET THERE

To get to the starting point of the trail, take the old N-IV in the direction of Jaén and exit at kilometre 248.6 (about 250 metres past the Jardinillos restaurant).



PARKING

There is no car park at the beginning of the trail, although you can park your vehicle nearby.



PUBLIC TRANSPORT

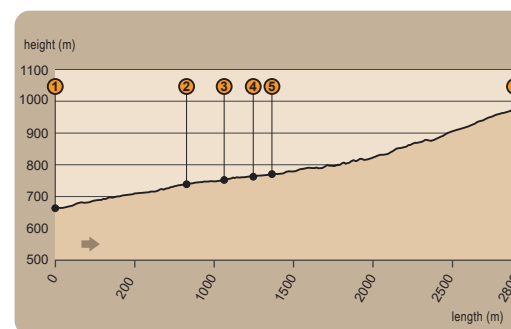
While it is not possible to access the trail by public transport directly, you can reach Santa Elena (Jaen) by bus. From there you can travel by taxi. The main bus companies in the area are the Consorcio de Transporte Metropolitano de Jaén (955 038 665) or Autocares Grupo Samar (902 25 70 25 www.samar.es).



OTHER TRAILS

In the Natural Park there are other signposted trails near to this one: the Barranco de Valdeazores trail, the Barranco de la Niebla trail and the Cueva de los Muñecos trail.

PROFILE OF ROUTE



• MAXIMUM GRADIENT

307 m

• MAXIMUM HEIGHT

971 m

• MINIMUM HEIGHT

664 m



IS HUNTING A RESOURCE?

The fact that hunting in Despeñaperros has been a resource since Palaeolithic times is reflected in the paintings in its caves and caverns. Some of the most recognisable prehistoric images are hunting scenes, in which human figures can be seen thrusting their spears and arrows through the sketched bodies of galloping deer.

Nowadays, hunting continues to be one of the main economic resources in the area, together with forestry activities such as obtaining wood from thinnings, extracting cork or collecting pinecones, honey, firewood and mushrooms. The most important big game species are deer and wild boar, and the most important small game species are rabbits and partridges.

Our ancestors hunted all over the land for food, clothing, ornaments and tools. They did not need rules or regulations to maintain the ecological balance, as they themselves were part of the ecological balance. Today, that natural sanctuary that once occupied the entire Iberian Peninsula has been relegated to more or less extensive islands of wildlife. Responsible hunting, practised in accordance with regulations, is more than a resource, it contributes to regulating animal populations and preserving the stability of ecosystems.



Trail Castañar de Valdeazores



Going up the ravine through its forests

The start sign [1] is next to a gate, near the old national road N-IV. The path ascends parallel to the stream along a dirt track, which in some sections coincides with the water conduit that supplies the Despeñaperros gardens, and enters a mixed forest with maritime pine (*Pinus pinaster*) from the reforestation of the 1960s. Interspersed with the pines are holm oaks, cork oaks, oaks and gall oaks. With the exception of pine trees, all other species develop naturally.

The slope is constant but gentle, allowing you to enjoy the ash and alder woods that flank the stream. Nearby, you will see the tracks of deer and wild boar, which choose the quietest moments of the day to quench their thirst in solitude in the waters of Valdeazores. Other signs of the importance of the site for fauna are: the fresh, disturbed earth, rooted around in by wild boars; the branches of some mastic, wild olive or even holm oak plants, foraged by deer; and the droppings of foxes, martens and genets. In 800 metres, you will come to a marshland [2] surrounded by hackberry trees and other plants of the riparian forest, which dams the water of the stream. You might surprise an Iberian pond turtle swimming in the small dam or sunbathing in the surroundings, and discover more tracks and signs of small and medium-sized animals.

Continue along the path, which runs parallel to the road [3], except in some sections, where it runs above it. The water for the pipeline comes from a spring that emerges ahead and supplies several fountains, popular for the purity of the water. Sharpen your senses and you will hear the nuanced sounds



of forest birds intertwined with the singing flow of water between the pebbles and the cool, rising murmur of the air in the ravine.

Val-de-azores

A little further on, over the quartzite crag on the right, you will be able to make out the majestic flight of large birds of prey such as the imperial eagle and the griffon vulture. While in Valdeazores, you may come also across the goshawk, which is a bird of prey with a highly skilled at flying in the thick forest: it stalks its prey (birds and small mammals) from the branches of the trees and swoops over them in an agile low dive.

In 200 metres, you will come to the first of the numerous crossings that the path makes over the Valdeazores stream [4]. As the trail switches slopes, the pines and holm oaks on the sunny side of the mountain mix with the riverside vegetation and the first chestnut trees begin to appear. Here you may spot roe deer, wild boar, red deer and even mouflon and the odd ibex.



The spectacle of life

Soon, you will pass some enormous chestnut trees [5] that guard a trickle of water and, hidden and protected by their powerful roots, the source of the spring itself. The multicoloured spectacle of ochre and life that, especially in autumn, pulsates through Valdeazores cannot be described. It's not just the chestnut trees; gall oaks, Pyrenean oak, whitebeam and Iberian pear explode in a thousand shades, colouring the surroundings with a resplendent palette of greens, reds, oranges, browns and yellows, and perfuming the forest with that particular aroma of the autumn months of fallen fruit, ripe

chlorophylls and dry leaves. A vibrant and essential festival of life, it reveals nature's cycles of death and renewal with raging and moving beauty.



From the shady side to the sunny side and from the sunny side to the shady side, the trail crosses the stream as many as six times. The last part of the path is steeper and runs along the left bank of the ravine. This stretch is accompanied by pines, holm oaks, junipers, broom, rockroses and other species of the Mediterranean scrub. The path ends [6] on the Las Correderas trail, coinciding with the turning point of the Barranco de Valdeazores trail.



Sculpted by the constant erosion of river water, the valley of Valdeazores is one of the most environmentally valuable places in Despeñaperros. Its rugged slopes are home to a rich and biodiverse vegetation, the importance of which was already emphasised in early botany treatises. The floristic richness of the ravine favours the diversity and abundance of birds, mammals, amphibians, reptiles and other animals. This is also the only chestnut grove in Despeñaperros. So you are entering a privileged and vulnerable space, classified as one of the areas with the highest level of protection in the Natural Park. The trail goes up the ravine zigzagging along the bed of the stream, crosses the spectacular patch of chestnut trees that gives it its name and ends on a forest track, right where it joins up with the Barranco de Valdeazores path.



Trail

Castañar de Valdeazores

-  Castañar de Valdeazores Trail
-  Other trails of the natural park
-  Road
-  Path
-  Boundary of Natural Space
-  Railway
-  Landmark (see text)
-  Georesources
-  Trail
-  Rural house
-  Fountain
-  Spring

