

## GOOD PRACTICE



Please avoid making noise



The capture of animals is not permitted



Please leave rubbish in the bins provided



Starting fires is strictly forbidden



Walk on the marked paths



Open camping is not permitted



Please respect private property



Plant collecting is not allowed

Emergency phone: 112

CÁDIZ  
MÁLAGA



PARQUE NATURAL  
Los Alcornocales

## MORE INFORMATION

El Aljibe Environmental Complex: Office of Los Alcornocales Natural Park: (Tel. 856 58 75 08 / 671 53 72 13), Visitors Centre (Tel. 685 12 26 86) and Botanic Garden. Carretera A-2228, de Benalup-Casas Viejas a Alcalá de los Gazules, km 31. 11180 Alcalá de los Gazules. Cádiz.

ventanadelvisitante.

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UNIÓN EUROPEA  
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Junta de Andalucía  
Consejería de Agricultura, Ganadería,  
Pesca y Desarrollo Sostenible

CÁDIZ-MÁLAGA



Los Alcornocales  
trail

Los Prisioneros



## OTHER CATEGORIES OF PROTECTION



NATURA 2000



Organización  
de las Naciones Unidas  
para la Educación,  
la Ciencia y la Cultura



Red  
Española de  
Reservas de  
la Biosfera

### • ROUTE

Linear

### • LENGTH (OUTWARD)

5.2 km

### • ESTIMATED TIME (OUTWARD)

2 hour and 30 minutes

### • DIFFICULTY

Moderate

### • TYPE OF TRAIL

Path or forest track in some stony sections (with some sharp gradients).

### • LANDSCAPE / VEGETATION

The landscape transforms and we find ourselves emerging from the cork oak forest and surrounded by strawberry trees, an undergrowth of ferns, rockrose and other plant species, to mountain scrubland in some sections. As we ascend higher, the views become more spectacular, encompassing the entire Bay of Algeciras.

### • SHADE

Scant

### • SPECIAL AUTHORISATION

Not required

### • RECOMMENDATIONS

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

### • PROVINCE / MUNICIPALITIES

Cádiz / Algeciras

### • SHEETS OF MTN MAP 1:50.000

1078

### • START / END COORDINATES

36° 7' 3" N - 5° 28' 37" W

36° 6' 19" N - 5° 30' 27" W



## HOW TO GET THERE

The trail starts at El Cobre, in Algeciras, at the same point as the Sendero Río de la Miel. From the N-340, at the roundabout at kp 101.5 take the exit towards the Cortijo Real industrial estate (pgno. industrial Cortijo Real). AT the next roundabout, take the second exit along Avenida de Algeciras and turn right onto Calle Antonio Barrero. Turn left on to Calle Maestra M<sup>o</sup> Luisa, and after the start of the trail is some 300 m ahead.



## PARKING

There are no park cars in the area. For security reasons, it is prohibited to park on the access road. Please leave your vehicle at the parking spaces near the town.



## PUBLIC TRANSPORT

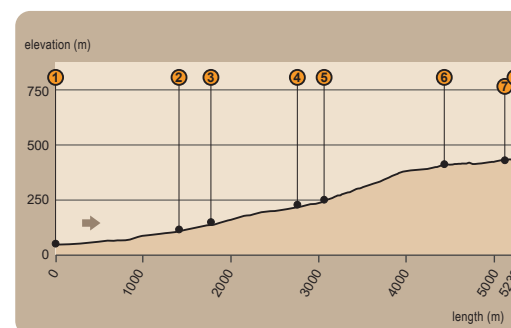
It's possible to reach the El Cobre neighbourhood where the trail begins using the Algeciras city bus system. The principal company running regular bus routes in the area is Transportes Comes (tel. 902 19 92 08; www.tgcomes.es). The nearest train station is in Algeciras (check services and timetables at www.renfe.es or tel. 902 24 02 02).



## OTHER TRAILS

Los Alcornocales Natural Park offers several trails to discover the park. Those closest include the Sendero Río de la Miel and the Sendero Garganta del Capitán.

## PROFILE OF ROUTE



### • MAXIMUM GRADIENT

388 m

### • MAXIMUM ALTITUDE

436 m

### • MINIMUM ALTITUDE

48 m



## WALKING ON HISTORY

The Camino de los Prisioneros forms part of a network of paths plotted after the outbreak of the Second World War to prevent attacks in the areas surrounding the Strait. This network of lanes was built on the sweat and blood of thousands of young people taken from Franco's concentration camps.

The path upon which the trail runs was built by the 22nd Disciplinary Battalion and is cut between the Sierra del Algarrobo and El Bujeo, within the boundaries of the Los Alcornocales Natural Park.

The so-called "Disciplinary Battalions of Worker Soldiers" were formed from 1940 with political prisoners of the Spanish Civil War. The hard work, lack of hygiene, hunger, cold and illness, and diseases such as typhus fever, "green lice" disease and diarrhoea cost the lives of many before the battalions were dissolved in 1942.

When you walk the trail and feel the harshness of the sun in the absence of any shade or a tough ascent, you know that you are walking on something more than the sandstone rock of the mountains; you're walking on a piece of history.



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Pesca y Desarrollo Sostenible



# Trail

## Los Prisioneros

### From Algeciras to the sky

The trail starts in the [1] Algeciras suburb of El Cobre, at a gate that appears closed but is open for pedestrians. The first kilometre and a half runs on a rising forest track shared with the Río de la Miel trail. The trails diverge at a crossing [2]. Los Prisioneros continues along a stony track to the left, rising constantly to the finish line at 440 metres above sea level.

As you advance, you will distinguish the gnawed trunks of the cork oaks [3], forming small forests along with some strawberry trees and different Mediterranean scrubland species. The bareness of the cork oaks attests to the survival of an important traditional activity here: cork extraction. This ancestral resource was exploited as far back as the middle ages by squads of specialised workers.



### Carved by pick and shovel

Through the next few crossings, we stay on the main path, always rising to the right. Tall, gnarled cork oaks mark El Manzanete forest



house [4], built with the local sandstone. The trail continues along the lane to the right. We pass a gate and cross the area known as Los Tres Pinos; a particularly emblematic area for scouts groups in the 1970s.



Through the spiny broom, aulaga, heather and kermes oak, the trail advances over the hills of the Sierra Algarrobo along the Camino de los Prisioneros [5]. The gradient steepens sharply here, rising two hundred metres in less than a kilometre and a half. On one of the cement block serving as a guard barrier along the way reads: “Here were released the soldiers of the 22nd Disciplinary Battalion, belonging to Region Five, 22-2-42”.

### Peak views

The lane, which zig-zags up Monte Comares, is well delineated and also serves as a firebreak. As it rises, the mountain scrubland transforms the landscapes, with views of the Rock and the Bay of Algeciras becoming more spectacular as the wind blows. The gradient culminates at the mountain pass of Puerto de Comares [6]. Fortunately, you can take in the majestic flight of the booted eagle, the short-toed eagle and the griffon vulture. Although if anything has the potential to leave you open mouthed in awe it’s the seasonal migration of the millions of birds that use the Strait of Gibraltar as an intercontinental pass on their migratory journeys.

From here, the gradient eases up and the trail runs at over four hundred metres above sea levels, through the valley of the river Miel [7]. This final section



offers a privileged perspective of canuto or gallery forest along the river, ensconced between the Algarrobo and the hill of Las Esclarecidas. The canuto is one of the most iconic ecosystems of Cádiz. It’s a riverside forest that develops in conditions similar to those of the Tertiary: mild temperatures, high environmental humidity and dense vegetation with numerous creeper species and others that have disappeared from the rest of Europe such as the rhododendron. Hazelnut trees, dogwood, holly trees and laurel with a spectacular development find shelter in the narrow gorge, one of the last strongholds of laurel forest on the Iberian Peninsula.

After a few dozen metres, we reach the “unfinished bridge” [8]. The stone bridge was supposed to connect the military road of the Strait with the Valley of Ojén but in late 1942 the special units belonging to the 22nd Disciplinary Battalion were dissolved. As a paradox of destiny, the unfinished bridge marked the end of the prisoners’ efforts, the end of the Camino de los Presidarios and, now today, marks the end of our trail.



The Sendero Los Prisioneros is a tough, multifaceted and unique trail. Tough due to its steep gradient and multifaceted and unique because it will reveal the rugged and exuberant landscape of the coastal mountains of Los Alcornocales; the ocean and wind environment of the Strait, with its invisible routes, revealed by cetaceans and birds during migration periods. And it also reveals the cultural and geographic landscape, reflected in the panoramic views of Algeciras, the Rock of Gibraltar and Jebel Musa on the African side. Los Prisioneros is, definitively, a route through history and nature, enjoyed all the more the better your fitness. It is recommended to carry water, sun protection and binoculars.

# Trail

## Los Prisioneros



	Los Prisioneros Trail		Landmark (see text)
	Other trails of the natural park		Trail
	Road		Panoramic views
	Path		Bridge
	Natural Space		Fountain