

GOOD PRACTICE



Please leave rubbish in the bins provided



Walk on the marked trails



Please respect private property



Avoid making noise



Capturing animals is not permitted



Starting fires is strictly forbidden



Plant collecting is not permitted

Emergency phone: 112



JAÉN



MORE INFORMATION

Llano de las Américas Visitor Centre.
Road JA-7102 Santa Elena - Miranda del Rey, Km 2. 23213 - Jaen
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ventanadelvisitante.



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OTHER CATEGORIES OF PROTECTION



• ROUTE

Circular Walk

• LENGTH

5 km

• ESTIMATED TIME

2 hour and 30 minutes

• DIFFICULTY

High

• TYPE OF TRAIL

Forest path and track

• LANDSCAPE / VEGETATION

Mediterranean forest of holm oaks, cork oaks and gall oaks with a rich undergrowth. Replanted pine forests. Panoramic views over the gorge and the spectacular quartzite formations known as Los Órganos.

• SHADE

Frequent

• SPECIAL AUTHORISATION

It is not permitted to touch the cave paintings or to carry out any action that could cause their deterioration. Authorisation is not needed to walk on the trail.

• 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° 23'11"N, 3° 30'37"W



HOW TO GET THERE

From the old route of the N-IV, in the direction of Cádiz, 50 metres on the right after the tunnel. If you are coming from the Aldequemada junction, use the tunnel as a reference point and turn off to the left before reaching it.



PARKING

There is an promenade at the beginning of the route, which can be used as a car park.



PUBLIC TRANSPORT

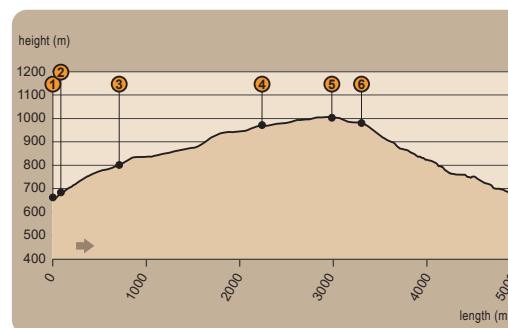
You can get there by bus to Santa Elena (Jaén) and then travel by taxi. The main bus companies in the area are Consorcio de Transporte Metropolitano de Jaén (955 03 86 65) or Autocares Grupo Samar (902 25 70 25 - www.samar.es).



OTHER TRAILS

In the Natural Park, the following paths are close to this trail: the Barranco de Valdeazores trail, the Castañar de Valdeazores trail and the La Cueva de los Muñecos trail.

PROFILE OF ROUTE



• MAXIMUM GRADIENT

352 m

• MAXIMUM HEIGHT

1007 m

• MINIMUM HEIGHT

655 m



NATURAL MONUMENT OF 'LOS ORGANOS'

Like a sculptor releasing the carvings enclosed in the stone, water, time and wind have sculpted the huge quartzite columns that stand in the gorge like the organ pipes of a great cathedral. This rock spectacle is one of the highlights of the Despeñaperros Natural Park and was declared a Natural Monument in November 2001.

But how was it sculpted?

Slowly but surely, like everything that is made to last. The process began 500 million years ago, when the enormous forces of the earth compressed, scorched and deformed the sands and clays that the rivers carried to the sea until they recrystallised. From the transformation of the sands, quartzite was formed, and from the metamorphism of the clay, slate was formed. The tectonic movements continued for millions of years, causing the mass of vertical quartzite strata to emerge from the ancient sea, which back then covered half of the peninsula. These strata were interspersed with softer, more easily eroded slate levels.

It was then, with the rocks exposed to the air, that the river, the rains and the wind came into action, carving out the spectacular geological landscape we know today. The erosive action of these agents gradually eroded the slate strata until the much harder and more resistant quartzite was released. The chromatic contrast of the yellowish, saffron-coloured lichens against the leaden grey of the rock only adds to the magnetic attraction of this magical place.

JAÉN

PARQUE NATURAL
Despeñaperros

Trail

Barranco de la Niebla



Consejería de Sostenibilidad,
Medio Ambiente y Economía Azul



Trail

Barranco de la Niebla

The relief of cliffs and cliffs, of horizontal peaks and valleys that characterises the Despeñaperros Natural Park is the result of the ancient and constant fluvial erosion on the rocks of the massif. These rocks are not very permeable, so any seasonal rainfall, instead of filtering into the ground, runs over the surface, feeding the waters of rivers and streams. The Barranco de la Niebla is one of those watercourses that runs torrentially from autumn. The trail runs along the left flank of the ravine, ascending through forests of holm oaks, cork oaks and repopulated pine woods, to approach one of the most spectacular landscapes that the Despeñaperros River has sculpted on the quartzite: the Los Órganos Natural Monument.

Sacred territory

In addition to its geological and natural heritage, Despeñaperros has an extraordinary historical and cultural value. Since prehistoric times, numerous civilisations have settled in this gorge, leaving us an important legacy in the form of sacred sites, bronze statuettes and cave paintings, which bear witness to the mystical perception that our ancestors had of this territory.

The trail starts near La Niebla fountain [1]. It crosses the ravine by means of some concrete pylons to help hikers traverse it and, parallel to the riverbed, begins the ascent up a steep slope. From the path, you will be able to see hackberry trees, alders, wild olive trees, rockroses and numerous brambles overhanging the rugged ravine to your left.

Shortly thereafter, the trail crosses a steep path on the right with logs arranged as stairs [2]; this is the path that we will take back. Leaving the path with the logs behind you, continue along the path to the left. Pines, holm oaks and cork oaks with an undergrowth of junipers, strawberry trees, heather, shrubby germander, lavender, rosemary and lavender bushes follow one after the other



on the right. The proliferation of rockroses conceals the numerous cork extraction routes that are still in use today.

Exploding stones

700 metres from the start of the trail, the path passes through one of the quartzite cliffs [3] that often form in the Park's watercourses. These valley bottoms are shady places where water accumulates and temperatures reach the lowest levels. When water that has penetrated the fissures in the quartzite freezes, it bursts the rock like a glass bottle left in the freezer. You will find several of these crags along the way.



Between forests and gorges

The trail continues climbing through the *Pinus pinaster* forest (commonly known as the maritime or cluster pine), dotted with holm oak and cork oak on the sunny slopes and Pyrenean oak and gall oak, with their seasonal range of greens and ochres, in the shady areas. chaffinches, bluetits, jays and other forest birds like the goldfinch and the hawfinch provide the background music through the branches with their song. You will also be able to hear the drumming of the woodpecker resounding on the trunks, the sudden startled flight of the Iberian magpie or the fleeting scurrying of the squirrels

Where the slope becomes gentler, the pine forest opens up and the path overlaps with that of Barranco de Valdeazores [4], to continue together up to the highest point, Collado de la Aviación



[5] and, some 350 metres further on, to the viewpoint of Los Órganos [6]. Collado de la Aviación is a small air surveillance post built during the Civil War, used as a shelter for shepherds and as a fire-fighting post. In the immediate vicinity, there is an impressive group of junipers. Red-rumped swallows and large birds of prey such as the booted eagle, the griffon vulture and even the occasional Egyptian vulture are easily spotted from here.



However, the best observation point is the viewpoint of Los Órganos itself: a high, overhanging rocky balcony, which is reached by crossing a copse of holm oaks and pines.

The panoramic view over the Despeñaperros Gorge and the Los Órganos Natural Monument is spectacular. It faces east, towards the Cerro del Castillo. This place was sacred for the Iberians, the gods resided here and people came to pray and make offerings.

From the viewpoint you can see Santa Elena and, meandering in the background, the Despeñaperros river, with the motorway and the railway on either side. The trail separates from the Valdeazores trail and begins a steep descent along a narrow path. You will continue to enjoy splendid views and, probably, the flight of a griffon vulture from the colony living in Los Órganos. The trail passes near the Vacas del Retamoso cave, one of the many caves and shelters that dot the sierra where cave paintings have been found. It is signposted and can be accessed a few dozen metres from the path. The trail then returns to the starting point, be careful not to slip or fall.



Trail

Barranco de la Niebla



Parque Natural Despeñaperros

- Barranco de la Niebla Trail
- Other trails of the natural park
- Road
- Road in tunnel
- Path
- Railway
- Railway in tunnel
- Boundary of Natural Space
- 1 Landmark (see text)
- Georesources
- Viewpoint
- Trail
- Panoramic views
- Fountain
- Natural Monument
- Rural house

