GOOD PRACTICE

- Please leave rubbish in the bins provided
- Walk on the marked paths
- Please respect private property
- The capture of animals is not permitted
- Starting fires is strictly forbidden
- Fishing is prohibited
- Plant collecting is not allowed
- It is not permitted to collect rocks or minerals
- Fossil collecting is not permitted

Emergency phone: 112

CÓRDOBA

PARQUE NATURAL
Sierras Subbéticas

MORE INFORMATION

Santa Rita Visitor's Centre
Ctra. A-339 Cabra-Priego km 9.2, Cabra. Córdoba
Tel. 957 50 69 86

ventanadelvisitante

Cueva de los Murciélagos (Bat Cave) Ecomuseum
Ctra. CO-6210, km 3,8,
Zuheros. Córdoba
Tel. 697 95 63 84

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Production and photography: Grupo Entorno, Federación Andaluza de Montañismo and Environment and Water Agency

UNIÓN EUROPEA
Fondo Europeo Agrícola de Desarrollo Rural

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

CÓRDOBA

PARQUE NATURAL
Sierras Subbéticas

Trail
Río Bailón

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

OTHER CATEGORIES OF PROTECTION

NATURA 2000

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Sierras Subbéticas UNESCO Global Geoparks

- **ROUTE**

Linear, with the possibility of running in both directions, from Nava de Cabra to Zuheros (descending route) and from Zuheros to Nava de Cabra (ascending route).

- **LENGTH (OUTWARD)**

12 km

- **ESTIMATED TIME (OUTWARD)**

4 hour and 15 minutes

- **DIFFICULTY**

Moderate

- **TYPE OF TRAIL**

Path

- **LANDSCAPE / VEGETATION**

Plain surrounded by limestone hills (polje), gall oak groves, holm oak groves, abandoned farmhouses and orchards, springs, limestone cliffs, canyons, caves.

- **SHADE**

Scant

- **SPECIAL AUTHORISATION**

This trail requires the authorisation of the management of the Natural Park. This authorisation can be sent through the electronic headquarters of the Regional Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Sustainable Development or by register, with 15 days' notice.

- **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Carry drinking water and wear suitable clothing and footwear. Walking sticks and cap. Avoid hot days.

- ***PROVINCE / MUNICIPALITIES***

Córdoba / Cabra y Zuheros

- ***SHEETS OF MTN MAP 1:50.000***

967 - Baena
989 - Lucena

- ***START / END COORDINATES***

37º 29´ 0,76" N — 4º 22´ 33,7" O
37º 32´ 27,58" N — 4º 19´ 3,16" O

HOW TO GET THERE

There are two entrances to the trail: In Cabra: From the A-339 Cabra-Priego de Córdoba road, at Venta de los Pelaos, a winding road (CO-6212) leads up to the Ermita de la Virgen de la Sierra. On the right side, before reaching the top of the Picacho, there is a dirt track, which is the beginning of the River Bailón Trail. In Zuheros: From the CO-6203 road, you can access the car parks located next to the bridge over the River Bailón, which are in the lower part of the village of Zuheros. This is the starting point of the River Bailón Trail.

PARKING

At the beginning of the trail, before descending to the bottom of the polje, there is an esplanade where you can park your vehicle. There are alternative car parks at the Ermita de la Virgen de la Sierra, at Venta de los Pelaos, and at the start of the trail in Zuheros, next to the bridge over the River Bailón.

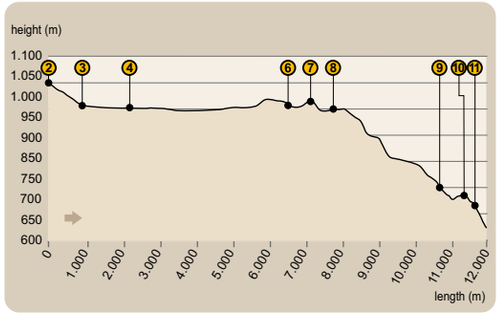
PUBLIC TRANSPORT

You can reach the village of Cabra by bus (Autocares Carrera, tel. 957 500 302, www.autocarescarrera.es), but the only way to the start of the trail is by private car or taxi.

OTHER TRAILS

There are two trails very close to each other: the Sendero de los Pelaos and the Sendero de la Ermita. The first section of the Buitreras trail, which connects Luque with the A-339 road at Carcabuey, is also relatively close to this trail.

PROFILE OF ROUTE



- ***MAXIMUM GRADIENT***

419 m

- ***MAXIMUM HEIGHT***

1.039 m

- ***MINIMUM HEIGHT***

620 m

LA NAVA POLJE

La Nava polje in Cabra is one of the most spectacular landscapes of the Subbética and one of the great poljes of Andalusia. A polje is a closed depression in the form of an elongated valley with a flat bottom, formed within a limestone massif. Its origin involves both the geological structure and the dissolution of the limestone rock by the action of rainwater. In the case of the origin of the Nava de Cabra, the depression was created by the action of normal faults that sunk part of the land. The dissolution of the limestone rock gives rise to clayey residues, which are not very permeable and accumulate at the bottom (terra rossa), favouring the seasonal flooding of the polje and the creation of a flat bottom.

From the Picacho de Cabra you can appreciate the grandeur of the Polje of La Nava

Trail

Río Bailón

One of the greatest assets of the Natural Park is its karst landscape, in which practically all the geological forms resulting from the dissolution of limestone rocks are present, both on the surface (poljes, sinkholes, limestone pavements, canyons, springs) and underground (caves and chasms).

The path follows the River Bailón from its source, and crosses two important landscapes of karstic origin: the polje of La Nava in Cabra and the Canyon of the River Bailón, two geological gems that we will discover along the route.

The diversity and importance of these geological formations and landscapes led to the Sierras Subbéticas Natural Park being declared a European and Global Geopark in 2006, a status endorsed by UNESCO.

La Nava Polje

We will start our route in the vicinity of the Picacho de la Sierra de Cabra (check [1] on the map) (1216m). We recommend a visit to the Ermita de la Virgen de la Sierra [2], located on the summit of the Picacho, also known as the Balcony of Andalusia, from where we can find the three morphostructural units of Andalusia: Sierra Morena (Hercynian Massif), the Guadalquivir Basin and the Betic Mountain Range (of which the Sierras Subbéticas form part). At the beginning of the path, we descend along a track that passes near the ruins of Cortijo Nuevo and Cortijo de la Virgen [3], until we reach Polje de la Nava, an extensive plain located at an altitude of almost 1,000 metres above sea level.

Once we enter La Nava we will see numerous springs, water troughs, huts and corrals, as this plain has been used to feed livestock since millenary times, due to the fertility of its soil. Today you can see the flocks of sheep and goats that continue to graze peacefully in this place, providing the milk from which the magnificent artisan cheeses of the Sierras Subbéticas are made.

In the vicinity of La Nava we will see large specimens of gall oak

Taking a leisurely stroll along the path that crosses La Nava, we reach an area known as El Registro [4], populated by large gall oak trees, which in autumn decorate the landscape with their yellowish tones.

On our left we leave a small bridge over which the River Bailón flows and, after a walk across the plain, we leave the path for a few moments to go up the waters of the Fuenseca stream and visit the spectacular waterfalls known as the Chorreras [5]. These are located in an area with normal faults, which divide the polje into different heights, with Navazuelo being at the highest point.

We will retrace our steps to enter a dense holm oak forest between the Chaparral and

Las Chorreras is one of the most visited places in the Natural Park

Zapateros hills, which mark the boundary of the Polje of La Nava, where we will walk in a westerly direction. On leaving the holm oak grove, to the right of the path, near the Pedro Rebolla farmhouse, we will find a patch of clear land surrounded by holm oaks. It is a palaeodoline, a very ancient doline that formed at a time when limestone emerged from the sea, was eroded into a large circular hollow, and then submerged again [6]. An explanatory panel explains the origin of this curious formation. Very close to the palaeodoline we will find the Fuenfría spring [7], an ideal place to take a break and refresh ourselves. On this trail it is possible to observe the griffon vulture (Gyps fulvus), Bonelli's eagle (Hieraaetus fasciatus) or the peregrine falcon (Falco peregrinus).

We will definitely abandon the path to make a change of course and continue along a path heading north. After leaving the Cortijo de la Fuenfría on our right [8], the path narrows and enters the depths of another holm oak grove that surrounds the path.

Canyon of the River Bailón

As we leave this forest, geology once again takes centre stage on the route, as we come across the Canyon of the River Bailón, a spectacular gorge carved out by the river, where the water has shaped a surprising landscape with enormous rocky walls. There are also numerous shelters in the canyon, such as the Cueva del Fraile [9] (Friar's Cave), so called because of a rock inside it that resembles a hooded monk.

Cerro de los Murcielagos from the Canyon of the River Bailón

The path follows the course of the River Bailón between tamarisk trees, hawthorns, fig trees, brambles, waterfalls and pools. It crosses the river on a couple of occasions and then leaves its waters behind to continue along the slope on the left bank. From between the two rocky walls that make up the Charco Hondo, the village of Zuheros begins to appear, with its imposing castle, offering us an unforgettable sight [10]. After passing these cliffs we descend to Zuheros, which offers us another panoramic view before finishing the route. As a complement to this route, we recommend a visit to the nearby Cueva de los Murciélagos [11], a Natural Site of Andalusia since 2001. This cave is approximately two kilometres long, although only 25% of it is prepared for tourism. It contains spectacular rooms the walls of which are covered with speleothems (stalactites, stalagmites, flags, etc.) and is one of the most important Neolithic sites in Andalusia, with interesting examples of schematic cave art.


Trail
Río Bailón
N
Zuheros
Las Cruces
De Zuheros
Cueva de
los Murcielagos
Arroyo del Horcajo
CO-6203
CO-8209
Las Buitreras
Arroyo de
Arroyo del Moreno y Zarzilla
Río Bailón
ABREVIA 1129m
1122m
1010m
1062m
1103m
1172m
1017m
1024m
1199m
1016m
1074m
1217m
Parque Natural Sierras Subbéticas
Cortijo y Patios Cueva de la Tosca
Cortijo de
las Melladas
Cortijo de
la Ventilla
Cortijo de Fuenfría
Cortijo el Barranco
Cortijo de Pedro Rebolla
Cortijo de
Don Francisco Camacho
1108m
1169m
1265m
1188m
Arroyo de Navahermosa
Cortijo El Dornajuelo
1125m
LOBATEJO II 1379m
Cortijo de los Tirillas
Cortijo de los Benítez
Ermita de Nuestra Señora
de la Sierra
Cortijo de la Virgen
Cortijo Nuevo
1126m
La Ermita
0
500
1.000 m
1 Landmark (see text)
Information point
Viewpoint
Ecomuseum
Natural site
Interpretive panel
Church
Farmstead
Fountain
Cemetery
Town Hall
Historic complex
Río Bailón Trail
Other trails in this Natural Park
Road
Path
Livestock trails
Electricity line
Natural park boundary