

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

Emergency phone: 112

CÁDIZ MÁLAGA



PARQUE NATURAL Los Alcornocales

MORE INFORMATION

Natural Park Office Los Alcornocales

Pza. San Jorge n.º 1. Alcalá de los Gazules. Cádiz. Tel. 956 41 86 01.

El Aljibe Visitors' Centre. Ctra. CA-2112. Alcalá de los Gazules - Benalup

Casas Viejas km 1. Alcalá de los Gazules. Cádiz. Tel. 956 42 05 29

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OTHER CATEGORIES OF PROTECTION



ROUTE

Circular

LENGTH

0,9 km

ESTIMATED TIME

45 minutes

DIFFICULTY

Low

TYPE OF TRAIL

Path. Loose materials on the surface

LANDSCAPE / VEGETATION

Mountainous area with steep valleys and lush vegetation. Great floristic and ecological variety. Different types of wetlands. Wide panoramic views.

SHADE

Plentiful

SPECIAL AUTHORISATION

Not required

RECOMMENDATIONS

Carry drinking water and wear suitable clothing and footwear.

PROVINCE / MUNICIPALITIES

Cádiz / Alcalá de los Gazules

SHEETS OF MTN MAP 1:50.000

1063 - Algar

START / END COORDINATES

36° 31' 18,90"N – 5° 39' 00,69"O



HOW TO GET THERE

At km 13-14 on the A-2304 road (Alcalá de los Gazules-Ubrique), you will find the El Picacho recreation area, where the trail begins.



PARKING

There is a car park with some 15 places at the start of the trail.



PUBLIC TRANSPORT

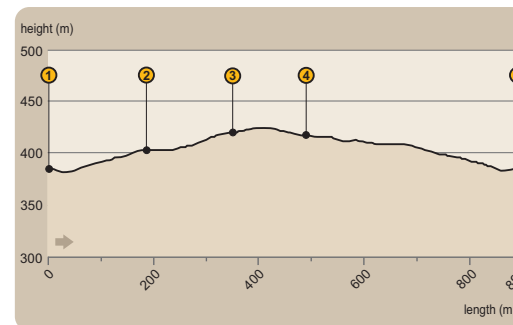
The principal company running regular bus routes in the area is Transportes Comes (tel. 902 19 92 08; www.tgcomes.es).



OTHER TRAILS

Other interesting trails start at the El Picacho recreation area: Travesía del Aljibe, Subida al Aljibe and Subida al Picacho.

PROFILE OF ROUTE



MAXIMUM GRADIENT

43 m

MAXIMUM HEIGHT

425 m

MINIMUM HEIGHT

382 m

EIGHT PERCENT OF THE WORLD'S CORK

The bark of the cork oak, cork, has a series of peculiarities that have always allowed it to be used for multiple purposes.

Its elasticity and watertightness make it the most suitable product for the production of stoppers in the wine industry. Its origins date back to the mid-17th century, when the Benedictine monk Pierre Perignon was looking for a stopper that would prevent the evaporation of his highly prized wine. In western Andalusia, large areas of cork oak groves have been maintained, precisely because of the profitable use of this tree. In the natural park it covers all the soils known as Aljibe sandstones, giving rise to a thriving industry based on cork stripping, the action of stripping the trunk of its bark, without damaging these trees.



At around twenty-five or thirty years old, and eighty centimetres in circumference, the cork oak is ready for the first uncorking. From copper to red colour, its trunk acquires different shades until the bark is regenerated, which will allow a new harvest, repeated every nine or eleven years, during its more than three centuries of life.

The proper management of these forests means that today they can be considered a good example of sustainable use, producing up to eight percent of the cork of the entire planet.

CÁDIZ-MÁLAGA



Garganta de Puerto Oscuro



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



Garganta de Puerto Oscuro

The Picacho lagoon, a well-known landscape of the park

Our route starts right in front of the recreational area El Picacho (check [1] on the map).

The trail climbs along a very marked stretch that in a few minutes offers us the opportunity to contemplate one of the most beautiful postcards of this natural park: the Picacho lagoon [2] and its peak with the same name in the background.

It is an obligatory stop to breathe in the tranquillity of its surroundings and enjoy its good state of conservation, with a floristic and ecological variety that provides diverse habitats for the abundant fauna.



This lagoon is seasonal, having water during the rainy season and then drying up during the summer period. Despite its shallow depth and the stones deposited at the bottom, it is home to a rich fauna, including several species of toads, some of which are endangered, and newts. It also gathers flora that needs a high degree of humidity, such as filamentous algae that can be observed on its edges.



The encounter with a recent past, in the footsteps of the inhabitants of this mountain range

We resume our trail and soon find an old bread oven [3]. It is not unusual to find this element scattered throughout the natural park, bearing witness to the human activity that took place in these mountains. Charcoal burners, cork makers and muleteers made their living here.



The roe deer is the most southerly cervid in Europe. It is also known as the forest elf, due to its shy and elusive nature, which confines it to well-preserved habitats without environmental disturbance. Only its peculiar sound, the "bark", can warn us of its presence.

The path runs through a large cork oak grove, which is home to a rich variety of Mediterranean plants. We can also find wild olive trees intermingled with mastic trees, rockroses, heather, chamois, etc., giving shelter to a very diverse fauna.

Although not very abundant, if we are lucky, we might see, on the run or with powerful hops, the Moorish roe deer, especially adept on scrubby slopes, such as those around us.

It is easier to watch the flight of some of the many birds that build their nests on the nearby cliffs or slabs, exploring their hunting grounds.



Descent into the gorge from which the *canuto* takes its name

The path leads us in the direction of the Picacho, but we will soon leave this direction to descend to the gorge of Puerto Oscuro [4], a tributary of the River Barbate and the final stretch of our route.



On the banks, and even in the bed of the stream itself, we will find the characteristic riverside vegetation of the so-called *canutos*. The showy rhododendron stands out among them, with intense green, lance-shaped leaves and normally pinkish flowers in clusters. It is part of the laurel forest that has survived the climatic changes that have occurred here millions of years ago.

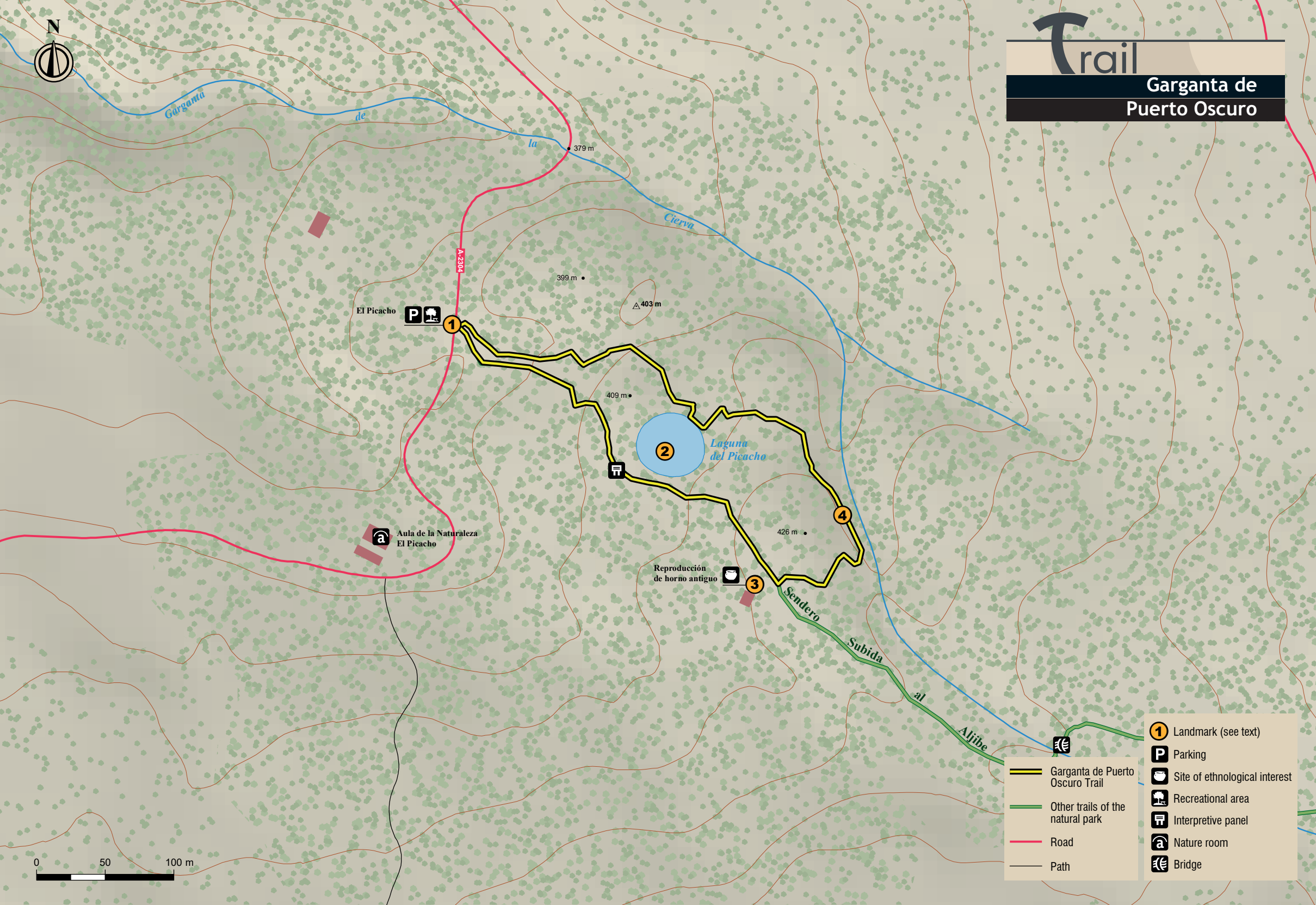
Little by little, we move away from the river until we reach the lagoon again and continue our descent towards the starting point.

A trail that is as short as it is intense in emblematic images of the natural park. First the Picacho, the unmistakable silhouette of these mountains, and the lagoon in which it is reflected, at its foot. Then, a leafy cork oak grove, so green that it seems to belong to other latitudes, dotted with interesting remains. And finally the gorge and the canuto de Puerto Oscuro, the spectacular source of the River Barbate.

There can hardly be more reasons for a nature lover to take on a trail like this.

Trail

Garganta de Puerto Oscuro



- Landmark (see text)
- Parking
- Site of ethnological interest
- Recreational area
- Interpretive panel
- Nature room
- Bridge
- Garganta de Puerto Oscuro Trail
- Other trails of the natural park
- Road
- Path