

## GOOD PRACTICE



Please avoid making noise



Please leave rubbish in the bins provided



Walk on the marked paths



Please respect private property

Emergency phone: 112



Open camping is not permitted



The capture of animals is not permitted



Starting fires is strictly forbidden



Fishing is prohibited



Plant collecting is not permitted



Bathing is not permitted



CÁDIZ MÁLAGA



## 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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## OTHER CATEGORIES OF PROTECTION



### ROUTE

Circular

### LENGTH

5.9 km

### ESTIMATED TIME

2 hours

### DIFFICULTY

Low

### TYPE OF TRAIL

Compacted track and path. Loose materials on the surface.

### LANDSCAPE / VEGETATION

Agricultural and mountain landscape Cork oak forest. Riparian forests with common alder, ash, laurel and Portuguese oak. Panoramic view of the Bay of Algeciras.

### SHADE

Frequent

### 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° 8' 4" N - 5° 29' 5" W

36° 8' 4" N - 5° 29' 5" W



### HOW TO GET THERE

The trail begins at kilometre point 2.74 of the CA-9208, which reaches the settlement of El Cobre, from the crossing with the CA-9209, passing the Botafuegos equestrian club and the prison of the same name.



### PARKING

There are areas available for parking.



### PUBLIC TRANSPORT

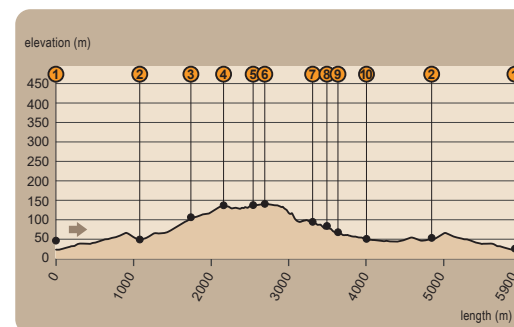
It is not possible to access this trail by public transport. The principal company running regular bus routes in the area is Transportes Comes (tel. 902 19 92 08; www.tgcomes.es). The nearest train station is in Algeciras (check services and timetables at www.renfe.es or tel. 902 24 02 02).



### OTHER TRAILS

Los Alcornocales Natural Park offers several trails to discover the park. Those closest include the Sendero Rio de la Miel and the Sendero Los Prisoners.

### PROFILE OF ROUTE



### MAXIMUM GRADIENT

118 m

### MAXIMUM ALTITUDE

141 m

### MINIMUM ALTITUDE

23 m



## THE FOG, THE GORGE AND THE CAPTAIN

The story of how the Garganta del Capitán got its name takes us to the fog. The antediluvian laurel forests, the prehistoric tombs, the waterfalls, the wells, the old mills the gorge itself and even the legend of the Captain all owe their origin to the fog. The fog that conceals in its vaporous form its secret power.

The fog of Los Alcornocales originates in the violent encounter of winds loaded with humidity and the mountains, with a north-south orientation in the Sierra de Cádiz. The Botafuegos stream is born, literally in the sea fogs; pure Mediterranean dragged by the easterly winds and condensing once again the Llanos del Juncal and the Sierra de Ojén and the Sierra de la Luna. For centuries, the waters of the stream pierced the soft sandstone of the mountains, forming the Garganta del Captain (the Captain's Gorge).

This same fog has maintained, encapsulated in the mountains of the Strait of Gibraltar since the last Ice Age, a type of subtropical forest that has disappeared from the rest of the European continent. And in this hazy, biodiverse land it found a home for all time, surviving to today through its funerary monuments, its traditional constructions and legends.

CÁDIZ-MÁLAGA

PARQUE NATURAL  
Los Alcornocales



Garganta del Capitán



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



## The port of Europe

The train begins [1] along a track that skirts the side of Matapuercos. Close to the start there is gate that allows for pedestrians and authorised vehicles to pass but prevents livestock from escaping. You'll likely encounter goats, horses or the autochthonous retinta cow grazing on the surrounding fields. It is also likely struggle to make out the outline of the hills, obscured on the horizon by the dancing, cotton-like fog that plays such a crucial role in the very existence of this place.

The trail rises along a gentle gradient over the first kilometre. It crosses the line of vegetation that borders the Fuente Santa [2] and continues along the main path to the left. On the way back, we'll take the same lane, taking the rack on the right.

As we delve further into the mountains, the gradient steepens. On a curve in the path [3], the view opens up towards the Bay of Algeciras, the port of Europe; a global meeting place of exchange, crossings and circulation. Even on a hazy day, you can make out the cranes of the commercial port,



one of the largest on the Mediterranean, above the outline of the buildings. Behind the port, backstopping the view is the profile of the unmistakable leviathan of the Rock of Gibraltar and that known as Yebel Tariq to the Muslims and one of the columns of Hercules to the classical world.

## Traces in stone of presence and death

We continue to ascend along the dirt and stone path, with the mountainous pyramid of the Hoyo de Don Pedro observing us in the background. The cork oaks become more frequent and more exuberant [4]. Their sanguineous bareness reveals the persistence of the old cork extraction process. Coinciding with the highest peak on the trail, we reach the Llano de las Tumbas [5], a wide and diaphanous space that was used as a cork yard.

On the right of the esplanade, a sign indicates the trail that runs to the anthropomorphic tombs [6], excavated into the sandstone rock in the Bronze Age, although some dispute that, claiming their origin to be Phoenician, late Roman or medieval. Locals refer to them as the tombs of the Moors. It is a sacred worship and burial site and like so many funerary landscapes in the areas around the Strait, it tells us off the importance of this borderland territory, between the seas and two continents, that has seen contact between different cultures and beliefs since prehistoric times.



## The Garganta del Capitán

Returning to the plain to continue our trail, we now start to descend into the depths of the Garganta del Capitán. After some two hundred metres, there is sharp change of course leading us to the east and, deep in a gallery forest, through a tunnel of alders [7]. Hazelnut trees, ash trees, laurels, Portuguese oaks and different species of mosses and ferns make up this extraordinary laurel forest known as a *canuto*. The humidity of the atmosphere and the singsong patter of rain on rock reveal the proximity of the Botafuegos stream.

A new signal on the path leads us to the "Tumba del Capitán" or Captain's Tomb [8]. Legend disputes as to whether the stone conceals the remains of a local miller or an illustrious captain who became a bandit. The inscription reads Gabriel Moreno, who died at the age of 77, a suspiciously long life for a bandit.

Surrounded by ferns, alders and creepers, we continue downstream between the sandstone rocks in the channel. Alongside the stream, practically engulfed by the vegetation, we suddenly encounter the runs of the Molino de las Cuevas [9], the first of the flour mills on the trail. On the banks of the stream, we reach the next mill, the Molino de San José [10], also in ruins, alongside a second building, the Molino de Papel, where kraft paper was manufactured.



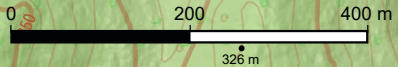
The trail departs the Botafuegos area and, taking a livestock trail, emerges at the meeting with the Fuente Santa stream [2]. From here, we take the original forest track which leads us to the end of the trail.

The maritime winds, the north-south disposition of the relief and the sandstone nature of the mountains are the artifices of this surprising, attractive enclave known as Botafuegos or the Garganta del Capitán. The path, one of the finest in the Natural Park, is a path laden with beauty and history, inviting you to explore these ancestral lands and the spectacular nature of Los Alcornocales. In addition to the iconic cork oaks, along the path you'll find the Tertiary laurel forests with alder, ash and laurel and Portuguese oak, prehistoric tombs, polyphonic waterfalls and old flour mills.



# Trail

## Garganta del Capitán



- Garganta del Capitán Trail
- Other trails of the natural park
- Road
- Drivers' road
- Natural Space
- Landmark (see text)
- Mill
- Sites of ethnographic interest
- Parking
- Panoramic views
- Fountain