



RIOMALO CTR. LAS HURDES BY BIKE

ROUTE 1: MELERO AND SIERRA DEL CORDÓN

Route 1 bike
Type: Circular
Distance: 34,5 km.
Highest point/ lowest
point: 397/655 meters
Difficulty: Low
Recommended season:
All year round





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NOTE 1: Remember, traveler, you are in a region of high natural sensitivity. Your step ought to be careful, in order to preserve the physical space and biodiversity. Then you can come back and look for places where you feel part of nature and at peace with that surrounds you. And welcome!

NOTE 2: The routes proposed by CTR Riomalo are ready for expert hikers, cyclists and canoeists. CTR Riomalo is not responsible for the lack of experience of travelers or if the climatic conditions complicate their difficulty. The routes are all public and if there is any restrictions in specific seasons, they are specified in the own itineraries. Hikers should take into account all the indications made in the routes, as well as be extremely careful in complicated areas and, of course, respect the natural and historical heritage of the area.

NOTE 3: This booklet is a property of Riomalo CTR and the producer, Esther de Aragón, so much in design, as in text and graphic content. Wildlife photos belong to the professional photographer David Santiago (www.davidsantiagofoto.com). The pictures of the bikes belong to Joaquin Villén.

INTRODUCTION



If we have invited to access to the Mirador de la Antigua and the Melero in our hiking proposals as a classic walk, our first bicycle route can not be less, although its size is enlarged with the complete return to the southern slopes of the Sierra del Cordón

Of course, we reaffirm the idea that the contemplation of Melero is obliged for any traveler who comes to Las Hurdes. If there are some places to visit in Las Hurdes, the Melero is one of the first in the list of the most visited. The image of the Alagón River writhing in unlikely meanders is gone around the world.. The spot has been photographed endlessly, and it goes on being, as it has been painted, but this question can't surprise anybody, because the natural beauty of Melero never disappoints. And it does not matter how many times a person takes a peek at it, its changes do always mute the viewer, its different shades and lights, its wild nature ...This route is one of the most beautiful that a nature lover can do.

Across the Alagón, the bank, practicable, favored the construction of villages such as Cabaloria

and Martinebrón, both from Salamanca, whose boundary is the river itself. Today, the former is abandoned and Martinebrón is on the flood zone of the reservoir of Gabriel y Galán, but it had life until the last century and the bank provided excellent wheat to its inhabitants, something with a great value in a land of slate, as the hurdana, which could not produce bread, so necessary in our diet.

From the other bank, the route will observe the beautiful land of Arca and Buitrera (foothills of the Natural Park of the Batuecas - Sierra de Francia), and it will be accompanied by the Alagón, which sinuous course we will see going far towards the reservoir of Gabriel y Galán. Then the route will follow the arm of the Hurdano river, that also flows into the Alagón and the reservoir: Underneath the path, there was also a small and depopulated village, called Arrofranco.

After passing over Arrolobos, an "alquería" that crosses our fourth route, the itinerary will lead to Portilla Pino, on the road to Riomalo, where it will end, specifically in Riomalo CTR. Nice route!

THE ITINERARY



PRIMERA PARTE

The route begins in Riomalo CTR, in Riomalo de Abajo, and goes towards the well marked Melero and Mirador de la Antigua. Right there is where the Ladrillar river dams in a natural pool for the warmer months. A pleasure in the middle of this paradise!

The concrete road and the course of the Alagón meet later and the route begins an ascent towards the spot known as "La Llaná". At the same point where the concrete becomes a path, the route continues straight ahead, not down. If we took the one that goes down, we would come to the edge of the Alagón and the Melero. However, our journey goes towards the Mirador de la Antigua, offering a superb panoramic of the Melero, Arca and Buitrera and the meander.

After the Mirador de la Antigua, the route follows the course of Alagón. The path is comfortable and hardly has variations of altitude, while it goes skirting the Sierra de el Cordón; the river below, following its sinous course towards the embalse of Gabriel y Galán, visible in the distance.

At the height of the remains of Martinebrón (located on the opposite bank of Alagón), the route leaves the direction wearing and run bet-

ween the mountains to save the valley of the Hormigosa stream. After doing north for a while, the track returns to do south to reach the Collada of Helechoso, a name that it shares with the stream and the mountain. The river that runs under the path is now the Hurdano, joining its waters to one of the arms of the reservoir of Gabriel y Galán. A little further down the route leaves the remains of the aforementioned Arrofranco and continues towards Arrolobos, a beautiful "alquería" that one of the routes, the number 4, crosses following the course of the Hurdano.

EL FINAL

Our journey again changes its direction, in order to skirt the foothills of the Sierra de Valhondo, and looks for its end toward the road and Riomalo CTR.

Before taking the asphalt our route has little to do with the previous zones, since the environment opens slightly at the end and this fact has helped the people of the area, because they have been able to build the terraces to plant olive and fruit trees. And although the arbutus is present in all the way, the latter area has very beautiful specimens.

RIOMALO DE ABAJO AND THE DEPOPULATED "ALQUERÍAS"

There are two villages to which we ought to make a reference, the first one is Riomalo de Abajo, one of the doors of Las Hurdes. Next to the confluence of the Ladrillar and Alagón rivers, the traveler can see the beautiful meanders of the latter, boundary between Salamanca and Cáceres. The natural solitude of the lands to the south, where the Sierra del Cordón rises, makes Riomalo one of the most used destination by travelers from which to explore the region, besides being a place from



which to reach the reservoir of Gabriel y Galán on boat or canoe, even to swim in the natural pool of the Ladrillar river.

Its people retains some interesting features traditional architecture and the Riomalo Rural

Tourism Center, comprising a hostel, a camping, a set of stone and wood bungalows and a restaurant with a renowned cuisine, both creative and



traditional, based on traditional products. This way, dishes as well known as the kid goat, grilled or roasted, seasonal mushrooms and desserts of honey, chestnut and so on.

The second reference is Cabaloria, that it will be visible during the first part of our route. It is an abandoned alquería, located in the Sotoserrano term, from Salamanca, which owes its origins, according to some researchers, to the presence of gold and exploitation in Roman times. It was abandoned following the construction of the reservoir of Gabriel y Galán, in 1965, although it has never been flooded.

As for Martinebrón and Arrofranco, of which we have previously spoken, were depopulated when the construction of the reservoir of Gabriel y Galán, as well as Cabaloria, although their remains are less visible because Cabaloria still retains some houses, while only remain some walls upright of Arrofranco y Martinebrón .

Arrolobos, meanwhile, we leave it for now, since it is barely visible in this route.





The region of Las Hurdes is one of the best natural destinations of our country. In fact, almost all the area is declared a Special Protection Area (SPA) for the conservation of ecosystems.

The Alagón prints a special natural value to our route, which is flown by diverse eagles, vultures, griffon and black.

Furthermore, in the area you can be lucky enough to see some otters or to observe and hear the roaring of the deer.

We must remember that the Alagón marks the boundary between Salamanca and Cáceres in the area of our journey; the bank of Salamanca belongs to the Natural Park of Las Batuecas-Sierra de France, in the area called Arca and Buitrera.

Regarding vegetation, the traditional forest is composed of oaks, cork oaks and holm oaks. In addition: Ash-trees, willows, alder-trees, black poplars, junipers and especially arbutus. The mountains of Las Hurdes always have color and when it is not the red or the white of the heathers giving tones, the slopes look white because of the



big flowers of the rockrose, or yellow because of the broom or the "carquesas", the purple of the "cantueso". The inhabitants have always made honey from these flowers. The honey is excellent and well known.



Chestnuts and olives are equally been used traditionally.

One of the most common and nice pictures of Las Hurdes is when their arbutus are full of delicious red fruits in late autumn and early winter.

The reforestation of pine trees has also shaped the landscape, while the non-native vegetation is represented by species such as eucalyptus or mimosa.

