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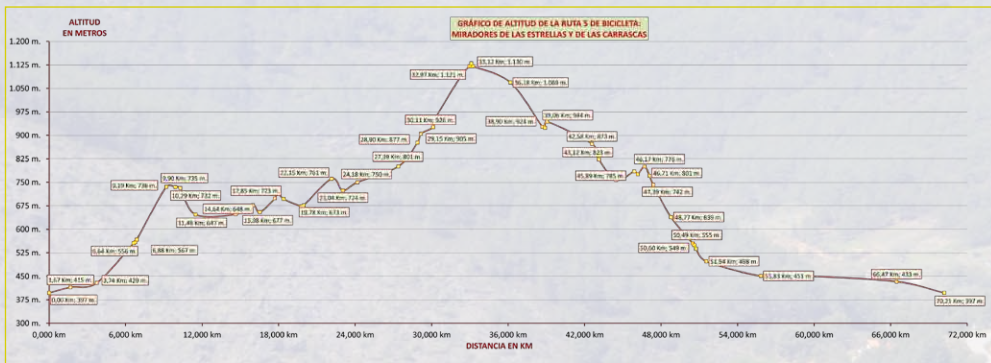
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RIOMALO CTR.
LAS HURDES BY BIKE
ROUTE 5: SIERRA DEL CORDÓN.
MIRADORES DE LAS CARRASCAS
Y LAS ESTRELLAS



Type: Circular Distance: 70 km. Difficulty: High
Highest/lowest point: 1.130 / 397 meters
Recommended season: All year round



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).

INTRODUCTION AND ITINERARY



In our routes we have walked through the Sierra del Cordón using different slopes in order to ascend the valley of the Ladrillar, to look the valley of the Hurdano or to surround its southern slopes and watch the Alagón and the reservoir of Gabriel y Galán. This time, our route goes and comes back through both slopes of the Sierra del Cordón, but reaching their higher zones. It will be only a few meters away the summits of Arropájaro and Pico Cordón and will reach the Mirador (viewpoint) de las Carrascas and de las Estrellas, where Las Hurdes end, just to the north. Both viewpoints are magnificent to observe the high valleys of the Hurdano and the Ladrillar and to know the almost impossible location of “alquerías” as Robledo, Carabusino, La Huetre or Casares de las Hurdes.

In addition, our route will touch the known as “Ruta de Alfonso XIII”, a walk through Las Hurdes that reaches some of the villages visited by the king, although we have the impression that it does not completely match with the itinerary.

Our route leaves the road and takes a path a few kilometers far from Riomalo de Abajo, in the

Portilla Pino, getting into the Sierra del Cordón. After circulating around the eastern side of the mountain, until the Collado de los Ladrones, the route will change the valley of the Ladrillar to the valley of the Hurdano. From that point Rubiaco, Nuñomoral and Aceitunilla will progressively be appearing below, while the path will pass under the summits of Arropájaro and Pico Cordón to reach the road from Riomalo de Arriba to the Puerto de los Casares.

The Mirador de las Carrascas will offer some stunning panoramic of the two valleys mentioned above. The Mirador de las Estrellas will do it over the valley of the Hurdano river, here called on this stretch “de los Casares”. The views from this viewpoint are magnificent. In fact, the photos made from this point were seen around the world long time ago, by the hundreds of tiny terraces that people had taken out of the mountains to cultivate their small orchards. Today, nature is once again the owner of the area, which has changed the impact of perspective, perhaps less sad, because people from Las Hurdes, fortunately, live less forgotten and inside a natural paradise.

As important fact, we have given a difficulty of HIGH to our path because of the difference of altitude between the start and the middle of the route and its length. In addition to the 75 km., of which half are down, the route begins at almost 400 meters and reach 1.169, which means that goes up nearly 800 meters, but it does progressively.

In the middle of the route, before leaving the road and taking a path again, there is a sign post that indicates the direction of a wonderful place, the dam of "Majá Robledo", which is outside of this route as a matter of kilometers, but you can find it in our hiking routes. The return of that proposal is only for walkers, but the landscapes are among the most impressive of Las Hurdes.



Returning to our itinerary, it passes close to the Miradores (viewpoints) de Las Carrascas and Las Estrellas (Stars), graphic name given its altitude. Then, the route goes back into a path and starts the return gradually descending, along the hillside of the mountain, reaching Nuñomoral, where you will take the road to go by asphalt at the end of the route, in Riomalo CTR, Riomalo de Abajo.

or roasted, seasonal mushrooms and desserts of honey, chestnut and so on.

Already on track, we will glance from the mountains to the bottom of the valley of the Ladrillar river, specifically to **Las Mestas**, an important place of traditional communication between the region and Las Batuecas, La Sierra de Francia and La Alberca.

When the route changes the slope, it leaves some "alquerías" below, as **Rubiaco**, whose lovely physiognomy suggests a quiet, almost idyllic place, where the Hurdano river opens, so visitors can enjoy the valley. **La Horcajada** is close, much more into the mountains and is a hamlet that was almost abandoned and that still preserves the traditional architecture.

Then **Nuñomoral** will appear, head of a large municipality extending over the villages of the Malvellido and a part of the valley of the Hurdano river, until **Vegas de Coria**, besides **Aceitunilla**. Public buildings and church followed the patterns of traditional buildings and that guarantees a beautiful image.

We talked about **Aceitunilla** and we will see its remote location in the middle of our route, at

the bottom of a new valley and under high mountains. It is also a beautiful hamlet, with houses of traditional architecture. We will have a nice picture of it from the path.

When our route reaches the Miradores de las Carrascas and las Estrellas, it will be at the highest roads in Las Hurdes, the one that connects the region with Ciudad Rodrigo, and the other one that runs along the valley of the Ladrillar river, from the Puerto de los Casares. Around us, incredible views of the Sierra del Cordón, Sierra de la Granjera, de la Canchera, de la Corredera, of the Picos del Cordón, Tiendas y Solombrero, and the Lombo de la Antigua... besides the Peña de Fracia in the horizon: A great show for the senses.

Also, from the viewpoints, we will see nice villages that spread out on the ground in a unlikely way: **Robledo, La Huetre, Carabusino, Casares de las Hurdes, Heras and Asegur**.

Our route will return to enter track next to **Carabusino** and it will offer some wonderful pictures of the high valley of the Hurdano river. Later it will get into road, in **Nuñomoral**, and after arriving in **Vegas de Coria**, the route will look for its end, in **Riomalo de Abajo**.

PLACES OF HISTORICAL INTEREST



Riomalo de Abajo. Our route begins and ends in 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



NATURE

The Sierra del Cordón marks the axis of our route, since it moves northwestward to ascend and contrary to return, although the outward runs through higher altitude lands.

As we have said in all of our routes, the region of Las Hurdes is one of the best natural destinations of our country. In fact, almost all of it is declared a Special Protection Area (SPA) because the conservation of its ecosystems.

As important fact, there are specially protected species of birds that fly over these lands, as the black vulture and the black stork. Furthermore, in the area you can be lucky enough to see some otters or to observe and hear the roaring of the deer in the rutting season.

It is not difficult to observe many birds, some protected by being threatened or endangered, as the imperial eagle and the golden eagle, the owl or the heron, to name a few. The route passes through areas where it is easy to see some of those, but they are just a small example of the natural paradise and its species that Las Hurdes keep.



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.

No less important is the large amount of mushrooms that the pine forests have in autumn, a paradise for connoisseurs..Chestnuts and olives are equally been used traditionally. People from Las Hurdes have traditionally made desserts with chestnuts and today repopulations of chestnut-trees are being doing in some zones, combined with other species of fruit trees.

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,



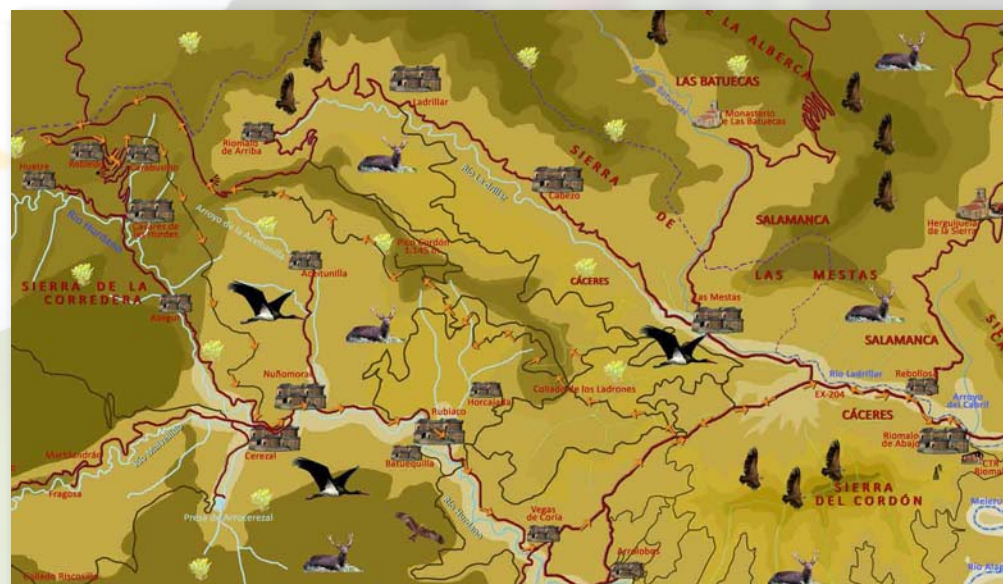
coinciding for some days the beginning of the new flowering with the fall of the mature fruits...

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

As far as the itinerary concerns, besides the Sierra del Cordón, the route overlooks the valleys of the Ladrillar and Hurdano. Both rivers spring up in the northern mountains of Las Hurdes. The Ladrillar flows under the Pico Espinal, in Riomalo

de Arriba, a zone that is clearly visible from the Mirador de las Carrascas. The Hurdano begins its course as river de los Casares, or Hurdano, and it is named only Hurdano when it receives waters from the Malvellido, in Cerezal; the river springs up in the Sierra de la Canchera, above the dam of Majá Robledo.

The courses of both rivers are very closed and narrow, except for the area where the Hurdano crosses Nuñomoral and Rubiaco, because the valley is more open in this area.



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