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RIOMALO CTR. WALKING LAS HURDES

ROUTE 1: MELERO. MIRADOR DE LA ANTIGUA

Route 1
Type: Circular
Distance: 6,7 km.
Difficulty: Media
Time:
All year around



INTRODUCTION



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 ...

Walking around Las Hurdes anybody can conclude that there are phrases as certain as graphic. The first one may be that where nature can't provide, it is nonsense to squeeze the land. This statement is evident in the area of our first route. In another shore of the Alagón river, there were people who established some settlements

like Cabaloria and Martinebrón, both in Salamanca, whose boundary is the river itself. Today the first one is abandoned and the second one is part of the flood zone of the reservoir of Gabriel y Galán, but it had life until the last century.

However, the South of the Sierra del Cordón, which stands as a backdrop of Riomalo, extends to the West and saves dispersed remains of pens and beehives which are already part of the landscape, but nothing more. The land is hardly productive and perhaps that feature is what has allowed to keep the nature, as wild as astonishing, overflowed by vultures, griffon and black, eagles and kites. Meanwhile, The Alagón river digs the mountain for the East and is perfect for watching and listening the rut of the deer, an unforgettable and dramatic natural challenge that takes place in autumn, when the summer ends and the mountains fill with sounds.

Note: The contents of this leaflet is a property of Riomalo CTR and the producer, Esther de Aragón. The pictures of animals belongs to David Santiago (www.davidsantiagofoto.com)

RIOMALO DE ABAJO AND CABALORIA

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.



THE ITINERARY



FIRST 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 a paradise!

The concrete path continues parallel to the course of Alagón to the point no. 4, where there is one of the indications of “Verea de los Pescadores” (Fishermen). If you were abandon the concrete road and follow the path, you would go at the place known as “Junta de los Ríos” and the edge of Alagón.

From this point begins the ascent. Soon, in the area known as La Llaná and after taking a short cut, the route enters a fire-break, and a sharp climb to the mountain begins (point 6). Breathtaking views just reveal while climbing the hillside. Arriving at the antenna (item 7), you can see Riomalo, down, enclosed between high mountains in the valley. During the ascent, the sights will expand over the Sierra del Castillo, the Sierra Las Mestas, a part of the Natural Park of Las Batuecas y Sierra de Francia and, of course, over a part of the Sierra del Cordón, the Alagón river, the area of the Natural Park called Arca y Buitrera and the reservoir of Gabriel y Galán,

gliding towards the small and unforgettable Granadilla.

When the route begins the descent down the mountain (point 9), you will just have some views of the meander, Melero. The strong descent leaves the zone of pines and overlooks sweeping views of the Sierra de Béjar, snowy during the winter months.

In addition, light is one of the most attractive aspects of Las Hurdes. Perhaps it is because the omnipresent slate reflects thousand hues when the sun strikes it. Along this route, as it is usual in many other places of the region, the atmosphere becomes almost blue, even magic due to the beautiful and unusual thing.

SECOND PART

We have realized two similar routes. Both of them begin and end at Riomalo CTR and the first one is shorter than the second. This booklet is dedicated to the shorter one and it has a different return, because it arrives at the Mirador de la Antigua, located on the slopes of Lombo de la Antigua, just above El Melero, the meander to which we have referred previously.

The central zone is surrounded by the river and it is known as the Island, while El Melero is the meander own. After passing the viewpoint,

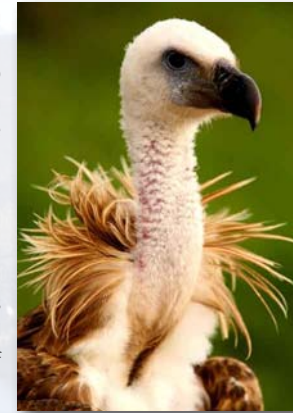
the route continues back among pines, following the contours of the mountains to reach the road

and go back by the same way towards Riomalo CTR, following the bank of the Ladrillar river.

THE NATURE

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 po-

plars, 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.

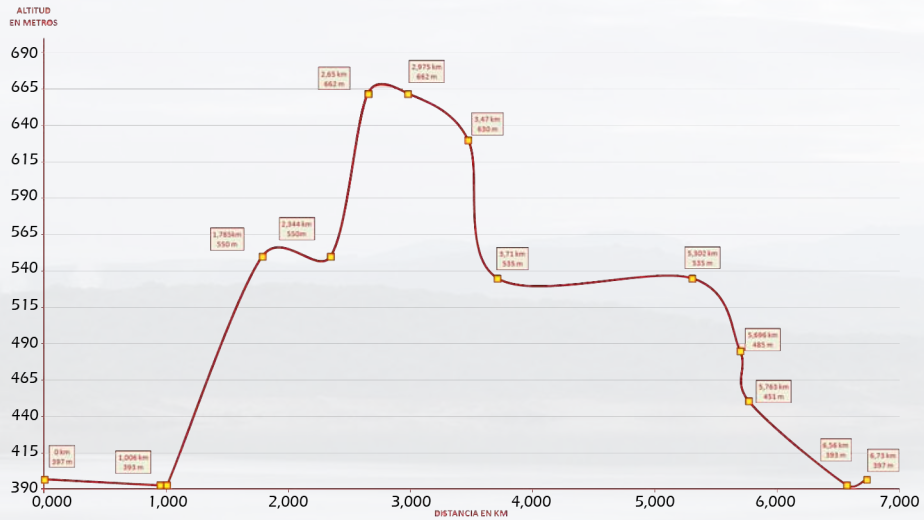
Chestnuts and olives are equally been used traditionally.

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



NOTE: 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: 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.



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