



VISIT GUIDE 2026

Caminito del Rey

Ardales · From 75€

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History & experience

ORIGIN & HISTORY

From Industrial Lifeline to Royal Icon

GOOGLE **4.7** ★★★★★ 40 536 reviews

TIQETS **4.6** ★★★★★ 196 reviews

The story of the Caminito del Rey begins in **1901**, when engineers and workers started carving a precarious path into the sheer rock face of the Desfiladero de los Gaitanes. This industrial artery was essential for transporting materials to build the Chorro and Gaitanejo hydroelectric dams, serving as a lifeline for the construction crews working in isolation high above the Guadalhorce river. For four years, men walked this narrow ledge, balancing on concrete slabs and metal rails, creating a route that would become legendary for its extreme danger.

In **1921**, the path gained its famous name during a royal visit by King Alfonso XIII, who crossed the walkway to inaugurate the Conde del Guadalhorce reservoir. Although the king's presence immortalized the trail, the path was subsequently abandoned by the hydroelectric company, leading to decades of neglect. The concrete plates deteriorated under the harsh weather, cracking and crumbling, while loose rocks threatened walkers with fatal falls. By the late 1990s, the site had earned a grim reputation as one of the most dangerous paths in the world, claiming several lives before authorities finally closed it to the public in 2000.

For over a decade, the Caminito remained sealed off, accessible only to daring adventurers using makeshift via ferrata equipment. In **2014**, a major restoration project began, funded by the Andalusian government and the province of Málaga. Engineers constructed a new, secure walkway directly above the original structure, preserving the historic silhouette while ensuring modern safety standards. This ambitious rehabilitation required installing 14 kilometers of steel cables and thousands of wooden crossbars, blending contemporary engineering with the site's rugged character.

The path reopened to the public on **March 17, 2015**, transforming a perilous adventure into an accessible family hike. Today, the restored walkway allows visitors to experience the same breathtaking views that once terrified workers, but with complete peace of mind. The addition of a glass balcony overlooking the gorge at 100 meters height has become the iconic symbol of this successful revival, bridging the gap between the site's dramatic past and its vibrant present.

THE EXPERIENCE

Stepping onto the Caminito del Rey is like entering a living postcard of the Spanish countryside. The air is crisp, carrying the scent of wild herbs and the distant rush of water far below. As you begin the ascent, the towering limestone cliffs of the **Desfiladero de los Gaitanes** frame your view, creating a sense of scale that is both humbling and exhilarating. The light filters through the narrow canyon, casting long shadows that dance across the ancient rock faces, enhancing the dramatic atmosphere of the journey.

Walking along the suspended walkway, you feel a unique connection to history and nature. The path hugs the cliff face, offering unobstructed views of the **Guadalupe river** winding through the valley below. Every step reveals a new perspective on the geological wonders of Ardales, from intricate rock formations to lush vegetation clinging to the crevices. The experience is not just a physical challenge but a sensory immersion, where the sound of wind and water combines with the visual spectacle to create a truly unforgettable moment in time.



PREPARE YOUR VISIT

Practical information

ADDRESS

Located 6 km from the Ardales crossroads. Main access via Puerto de las Atalayas. Parking available (2€/day).

OPENING HOURS

Seasonal opening (spring to autumn). Time slots vary by month; check the weather on the morning of as wind can cause cancellations.

FARES

View ticket options and conditions.

VISIT DURATION

Allow 1h30 to 2h for the crossing of the walkways. Add the time for the walking approach and the return by local shuttle if you do not have a car.

PHOTOS

Photography freely allowed, including on the glass balcony. Avoid overly powerful flashes to avoid disturbing other visitors on the narrow sections.

AUDIENCE

Ideal for families with children aged 8 and over. The route is secure but requires good physical fitness and suitable footwear.

HOW TO GET THERE

Access & transport

**Car**

Malaga-Costa del Sol Airport metro or station (132 min) · Airport Axarquia (203 min)

**Bike**

Malaga-Costa del Sol Airport metro or train station (181 min) · Axarquia Airport (279 min)

LOCALISATION

Où se trouve Caminito del Rey ?



 El Caminito del Rey – 29550 Ardales

 36°55.909' N, 4°47.397' O



ORGANIZATION

Understanding the Route Structure

Starting Point: Puerto de las Atalayas

Your journey begins at the Visitor Welcome Center, where tickets are verified and helmets are distributed. This area serves as the logistical hub for the hike, providing essential information and restrooms. From here, you start the walking approach towards the first section of the walkway, gradually ascending into the canyon.

The Main Walkway Section

This is the core of the experience, featuring the 3-kilometer path carved into the rock and supported by metal structures. You will traverse sections of concrete slabs and modern walkways, with railings ensuring safety. The path offers continuous views of the gorge and the river below, requiring steady footing and attention to the terrain.

Glass Balcony & Exit: El Chorro

Near the end of the route, you reach the iconic glass balcony, a transparent platform overlooking the 100-meter drop. This spot is ideal for photography and experiencing the full depth of the canyon. After this highlight, the path leads to the exit point near El Chorro, where you can take a shuttle back or continue exploring the southern entrance.

ACCESSIBILITY



Disabled Access

Not suitable for wheelchairs due to the topography and narrowness of the path.



Families

Accessible to children aged 8 and older, accompanied by an adult and with proof of identity.



Audio guide

French, English, Spanish



SELECTION

Must-See Moments on the Path

01

Mid-route Highlight

The Glass Balcony

This transparent floor section offers a vertiginous view of the gorge, making it the most photographed spot on the trail. It provides a clear look at the river 100 meters below, emphasizing the height and exposure of the path. Visitors often pause here to capture the stunning depth of the canyon.

💡 The balcony was added during the **2015 restoration** to enhance the visual impact without compromising safety.

02

Northern Section

Conde del Guadalhorce Reservoir View

As you approach the northern part of the hike, the path offers panoramic views of the large reservoir created in 1921. The contrast between the calm blue water and the rugged cliffs creates a picturesque scene. This section is particularly beautiful during sunset, when the light reflects off the water surface.

💡 King Alfonso XIII inaugurated this reservoir in **1921**, giving the path its royal name.

03

Historic Sections

Original Concrete Slabs

Certain parts of the path still feature the original concrete slabs from the early 1900s, now reinforced with modern supports. Walking on these historical elements connects you directly to the industrial past of the site. The texture and wear of the slabs tell the story of decades of use and weathering.

💡 These slabs were originally used to transport materials for the **hydroelectric dams** built between 1901 and 1905.

04

Mid-Canyon Crossing

Suspended Bridge

A short suspended bridge crosses a narrow section of the gorge, adding an element of thrill to the hike. The gentle swaying of the bridge requires careful stepping but offers a unique perspective on the canyon walls. It is a key moment where the feeling of suspension is most pronounced.



Before the restoration, this section was considered one of the most **dangerous points** due to lack of handrails.

05

Cliff Face Sections

Rock Carved Passages

Sections of the path are literally carved into the living rock, following the natural contours of the cliff. These passages offer intimate views of the geological strata and the resilience of the stone. The narrowness of these sections enhances the sense of adventure and proximity to the edge.



Workers used basic tools to carve these paths, demonstrating remarkable **engineering skill** in difficult conditions.

06

Southern Approach

Viewpoint Overlook

Near the El Chorro exit, there is a designated viewpoint that looks back over the entire length of the path. This vantage point allows visitors to appreciate the scale of the hike and the complexity of the route. It is a great place to take final photos before descending.



This viewpoint was expanded during the **modern restoration** to accommodate larger groups safely.

07

Lower Canyon Walls

Vegetation Cliffs

The lower parts of the canyon are adorned with hardy plants that thrive in the rocky environment. Observing these green patches against the grey stone adds color and life to the landscape. It highlights the biodiversity of the Ardales park even in such harsh conditions.



Some of these plants are endemic to the region, showcasing the **unique ecosystem** of the gorges.

08

Rest Areas

Shelter Points

Small shelters are placed along the path to protect walkers from sun or rain. These structures are designed to blend with the natural surroundings while providing necessary comfort. They serve as brief respite points during the longer stretches of the hike.



The design of these shelters mimics the **traditional Andalusian architecture** found in nearby villages.

TIPS

Essential Tips for Your Visit

TIMING

Book your slot for the morning to avoid crowds and benefit from cooler temperatures. Check the weather forecast on the day of your visit, as strong winds can lead to cancellations.

PARCOURS

The route is one-way from Puerto de las Atalayas to El Chorro. Plan your return logistics (shuttle or car) before starting, as you cannot backtrack easily.

PAUSE

There are no restaurants on the path itself. Pack a light picnic or eat beforehand, as there are limited options at the endpoints. Restrooms are available at the start and end points only.

AUDIOGUIDE

An audioguide is available in French, English, and Spanish. It provides valuable historical context about the construction and the royal visit, enhancing the overall experience.

BILLET

Purchase tickets online well in advance, especially during peak season. Distinguish between entry-only tickets and guided tours with transport from Málaga based on your needs.

PHOTO

Position yourself carefully at the glass balcony to capture the depth of the gorge. Avoid using powerful flashes to prevent disturbing other visitors on the narrow sections.

ENFANTS

Ensure children are at least 8 years old and physically capable of walking for several hours. The route is not suitable for wheelchairs or strollers, so keep belongings light.

CONFORT

Wear closed-toe, non-slip walking shoes; flip-flops and heels are prohibited. Bring water and comfortable clothing, as the sun can be intense and there are few shade spots.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

FAQ

Do you really need to book in advance?

Yes, advance booking is mandatory as only 1,200 visitors are allowed per day. Tickets go fast, especially in high season. Ideally, book several weeks in advance to ensure your slot.

View ticket options and conditions.

[View ticket options and conditions.](#)

Can I cancel if the weather is bad?

[View ticket options and conditions.](#)

Is there a current promotion?

Promotions depend on the chosen operator. Watch for offers for groups or early morning departures. Always compare the total price (including transport) rather than just the entry fee.

How long does the visit take?

The crossing itself takes 1h30 to 2h. Allow extra time for the walking approach before the checkpoint and the return shuttle. The total duration of the excursion from Málaga can reach 5 to 6 hours.

DID YOU KNOW?

Anecdotes & curiosities

The Royal Name Origin

The path owes its name to the inaugural visit by **King Alfonso XIII** in 1921. He crossed the trail to open the Conde del Guadalhorce reservoir, immortalizing the site in history. Before this event, it was simply known as the workers' path.

Cinematic Fame

Before its restoration, the original walkways served as a filming location for the movie '**Von Ryan's Express**' in 1965. Starring Frank Sinatra, the film brought international attention to the site's dramatic scenery, contributing to its later popularity among tourists.

Engineering Marvel

The 2015 restoration involved installing **14 kilometers of steel cables** and thousands of wooden crossbars. The new walkway was built directly above the old one, preserving the original structure while ensuring modern safety standards for families and solo travelers alike.

Industrial Heritage

Built between 1901 and 1905, the path was originally an industrial artery for constructing the **Chorro and Gaitanejo dams**. It transformed from a functional work tool into a tourist attraction, reflecting the shift from industrial utility to recreational value in the region.

AROUND THE MUSEUM

After completing the hike, the area around **Puerto de las Atalayas** and El Chorro offers plenty of opportunities to extend your day. You can explore the Los Ardales Natural Park, which is rich in local wildlife and diverse ecosystems, perfect for a relaxed stroll before or after the main attraction. For dining, several restaurants in Puerto de las Atalayas serve traditional Andalusian dishes, allowing you to refuel with local flavors like gazpacho or paella. If you wish to delve deeper into the region's geology, the nearby grottoes and trails provide additional insights into the natural history of the area. Don't forget to check out the visitor center for maps and guides that can help you plan further excursions into the surrounding mountains and valleys.



Leaving the Caminito del Rey, you carry with you more than just memories; you hold a piece of Andalusian history in your heart. The blend of **dramatic landscapes** and rich heritage makes this hike a profound experience. Whether you are an avid hiker or a curious traveler, this path offers a rare opportunity to connect with the past while enjoying the present. Do not miss this chance to walk in the footsteps of kings and engineers, standing on the edge of the sublime.