

When the long hot summer is over and autumn begins, the villages of Valle del Genil wake up again. Chestnuts must be harvested! For us at least as important: the clusters of chestnut trees are colored in all shades of ochre before the leaves fall. It's time to visit this neighborhood and take a walk. Century-old trees, beautiful avenues and beautiful views.

We chose the village of Pujerra as our starting point, but we could just as easily have chosen one of the other white villages in the area. All are part of the "Bosque de Cobre", literally translated: the copper forest.

The best time to visit this Bosque de Cobre is somewhere between the second week of November and early December. In June, the trees are in bloom, and in October, chestnuts are harvested everywhere. After that, the leaves lose their green color, and the forest gets its golden yellow and coppery color. The paths then fill with the first leaves and those of the trees are colored in all shades of ochre. When exactly depends on the weather conditions in November. Choose a sunny day when the sun's rays fall through the trees.

Also nice for a nice car ride

Pujerra, but also Igualeja, Cartajima, Juzcar, Parauta, Alpandaire or Farajan, all located in the Alto Genal, are definitely worth a visit during this period. By car you can take a grand tour. Perhaps combined with a short walk to the "centenarios", the impressive trees over 100 years old (see walking, but 10 minutes walk, but do not underestimate it: this is exactly the part that climbs the steepest) and to finish with a good Spanish lunch. Also important.

Valle del Genal and chestnuts

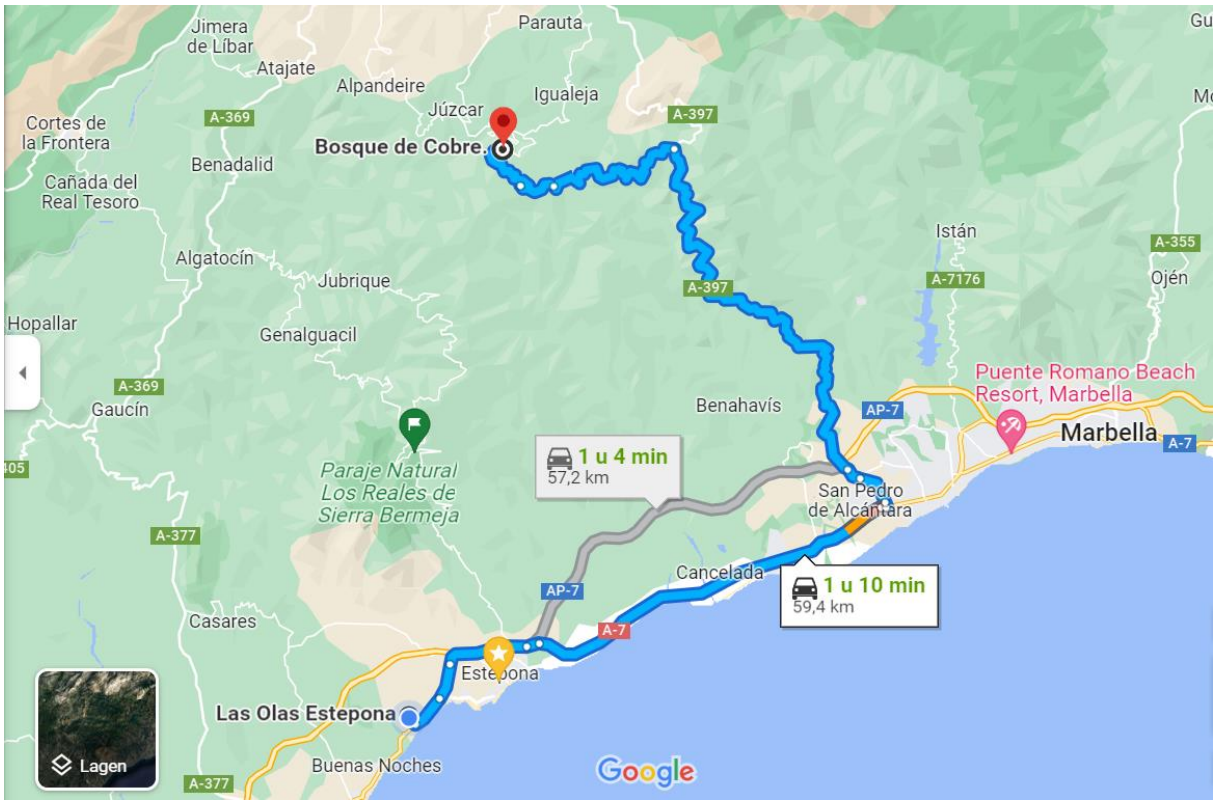
The Genal Valley, named after the river that runs through it, has a mild climate with influences from the Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean. Every year there is a lot of rainfall, more than 1000 1/m, comparable to that of the Sierra de Grazalema.

This climate and the terrain of the Genal valley are extremely conducive to the growth of chestnut trees. Chestnuts from the Genal Valley are among the most appreciated in Spain due to the quantity, the fact that the harvest takes place early and the excellent quality.

The harvest in October

For several years, most of the chestnuts in the Genal Valley have been marketed through a cooperative whose facilities, located in the municipality of Pujerra, are among the most advanced in terms of technology in Europe. In 2016, a new chestnut sterilization line was commissioned with our own resources and with the help of the EU, which tripled the speed of production and made cleaning much more environmentally friendly.

Starting point of the walk



To reach Pujerra from the motorway (A7 N340) follow the A397 towards Ronda, after Venta El Madrofio, we branch off at Puerto El Madrofio (between km26 and 2 7, half an hour from San Pedro) to the Camino de los Anadillos. A slightly narrower road, much more winding, but completely asphalted.

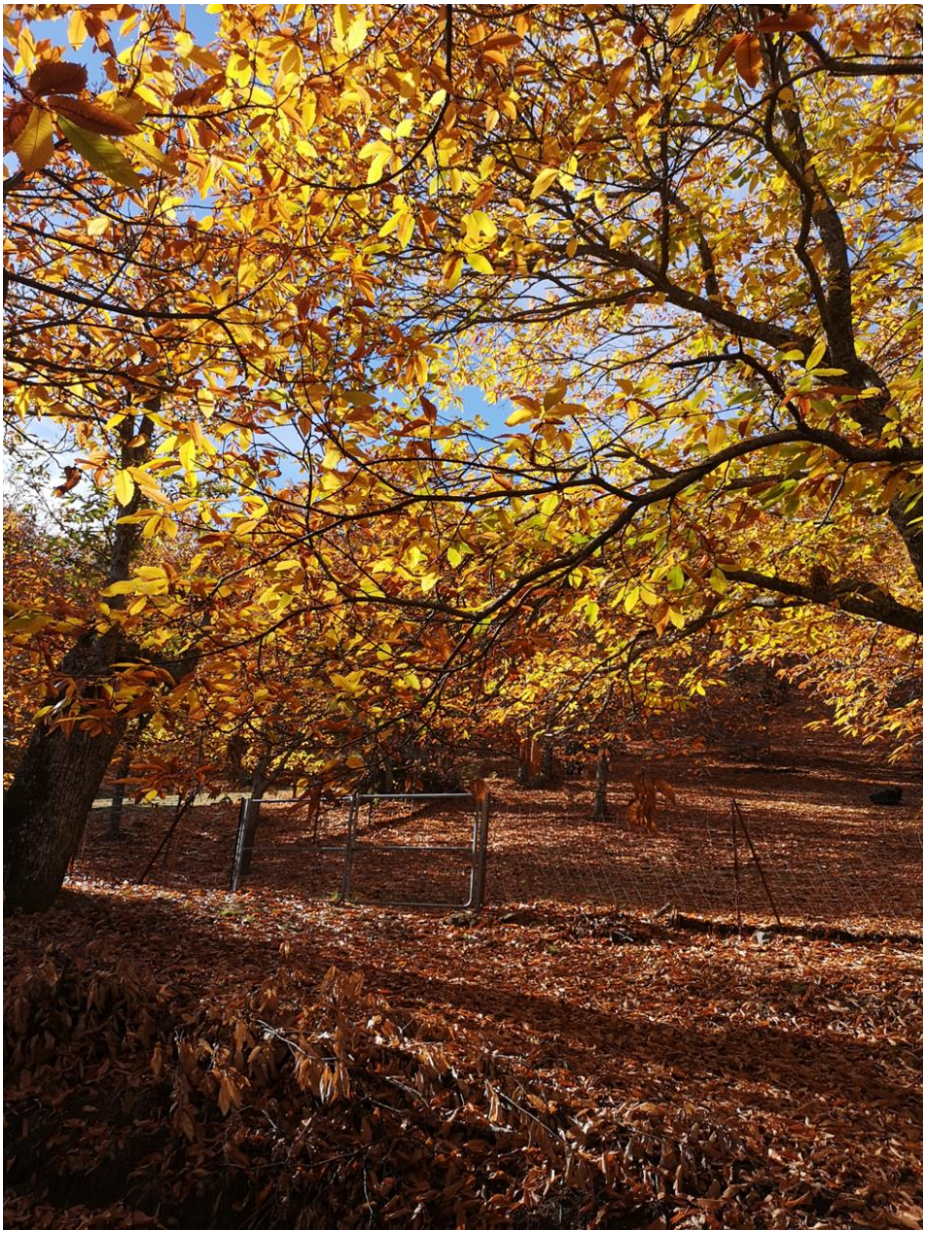


After 10minutes by car we reach the first chestnut forests and the views are impressive in all directions. Finally, we reach Pujerra. As soon as the houses start, we turn right (where the dead ends straight). We now follow Calle Alta to the first house on the left with the sign "bienvenido" in front.

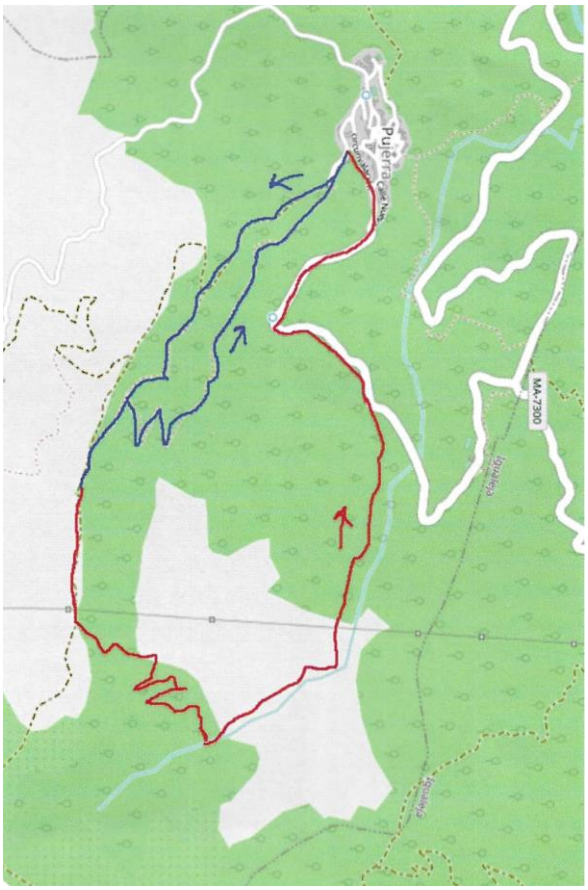


Here we leave the car behind us and start the walk.

Because the route is not equipped with turn signals along the way, you can download the walk to your mobile using the code Wikiloc.



The walk



In blue (Wikiloc 15560036)

Circular 3.7 km. 138m elevation gain, medium level (1.5hours)

In red (Wikiloc 44325587)

Circular 6.8 km (2.50 to 3 hours)

We go up the road, first on a steep slope for about three minutes. As soon as it becomes a little flatter, the first "centenarios" already appear, trees several hundred years old. After about 7 minutes, before the turn at the edge of the path is the oldest. However, we took much more time on the first part because this path is not to be despised for photographers with a beautiful autumn sun. El Abuelo, with huge roots, is estimated to be 500 years old

The Castafio Santo, in Istán, is even estimated between 800 and 1000 years old. This has a circumference of 13.5 meters. It is interesting to think that these trees in history could already be found in this same place and what everyday life was like at the time. ⋯.



After another 6 minutes comes the first fork, we take the left path, almost immediately we follow this path to the right where it climbs again. After about 12 minutes, we find a tree in the middle of the path. Again, it's photo time!!! From there we climb for a while until we arrive on a larger gravel path.

We turn left to quickly reach a point that gives a view of the Mediterranean Sea and with a little luck the coast of Morocco.

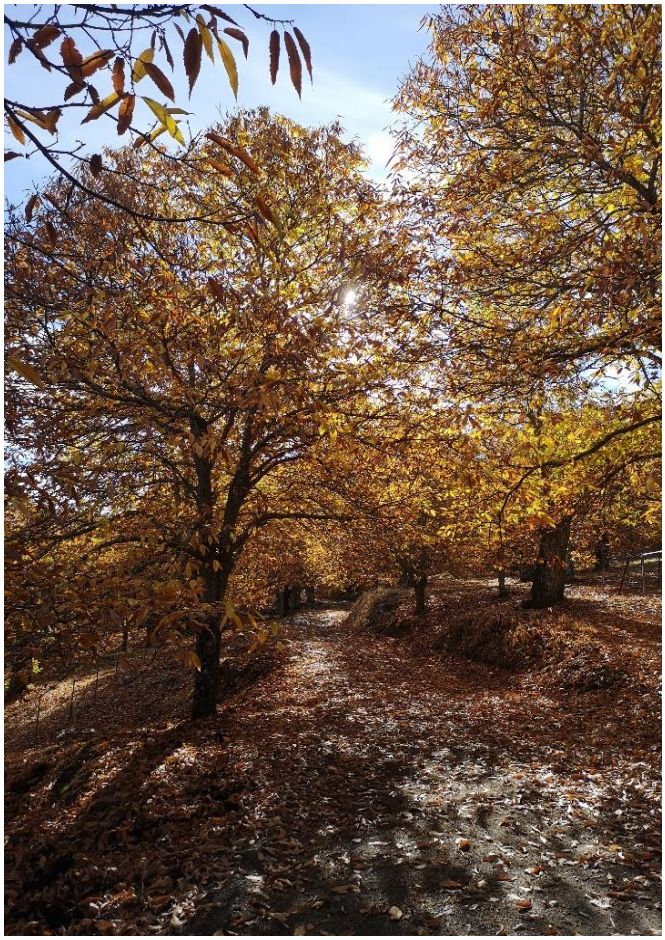
Here we turn around, go back and turn right at the first exit. We pass again "the tree in the middle of the path": At the T-junction (13 minutes) we take the path on the left. The path here is messy with lots of rocks and sometimes a few holes. We found a wild boar that had just dug but fled in terror. We go down the curves. Five minutes later, we see a river on our right below. We have to rely on that point at the end of the day. The path passes here with a left turn, but we don't. We walk straight on a smaller path to a point where we can cross the arroyo.

About the tree trunk? We will not be able to do that. We find another point. This part requires some attention, but only makes the hike more fun.



Now we follow the path to the other side, along the river on the left. We enjoy the beautiful views of Cartajima in the distance and the chestnut forests around Pujerra.

After passing Fuente de la Toma, a number of concrete structures, we take the concrete path on the left. Nice and easy walk so we can shamelessly enjoy the surroundings. We pass chicken coops and finally reach the car.



On the way to Igualeja

No non-stop walk lunch. That's why we drive from Calle Alta to the MA-7300 towards Igualeja. Once arrived in Igualeja, we follow the road through the village to turn right at some point towards 'Nacimiento Rio Genal' Here is a parking space and on the other side of the river a beautiful terrace in the sun.

Nacimiento Rio Genal

The Nacimiento in Igualeja is at the origin of the Rio Genal, one of the most important rivers in the region. At this point, water flows through a triangular hole in the huge limestone mass. When rain feeds the underground spring, water gushes from the hole in the river.

Igualeja has been connected to this place since time immemorial, the center of the activities of the inhabitants.

Return

After this tour we drive the MA-7300 through the village towards Pujerra, after about 1 km there is a left turn towards the A-397 (Ronda). After 5 km you can turn right towards the coast.

Holidays

Of course, it will be fun if you can connect the promenade to the Fiesta de la Castafia in Pujerra. This takes place during the first weekend of November: roasted chestnuts, Mistela (spicy liquor), almond cake, regional dishes, music and a market. Look on the Internet for the program. Also from other villages. But be careful, the leaves must already be discolored, otherwise you have to go around twice.