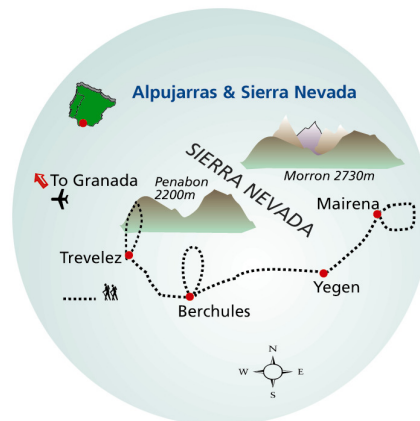


### Spain: Hiking in Hidden Andalucia

Tour code: JAW

Revised: Oct 08

On this tour we concentrate on the more remote and unspoilt sector of the Alpujarras east of Trevelez. We believe the character and charm of villages such as Berchules, Yegen and Mairena compare favourably with more accessible, and consequently more visited, places such as Pampaneira, Capileira and Orgiva. The countryside is still typical of the Alpujarras: compact villages of flat-roofed, whitewashed houses perch on terraces or cling to the steep southern slopes of the Sierra Nevada, commanding extensive views across to the Sierra de Gador and the Mediterranean Costas beyond; each village is fed by and depends on Acequias, long channels constructed long ago by the Moors to bring clean fresh water from springs far away up in the mountains. The acequias are (for the most part) still carefully maintained by the village authorities. Above the acequias the landscape is parched and brown in summer (except where there are patches of oak or pine woodland); below the acequias the irrigated terraces are intensively cultivated and dotted with vast and spreading chestnut trees. As you walk the Camino Real (Royal Trail) linking the villages of the eastern Alpujarras you may be able in season to pick nuts, figs or mulberries from wayside trees. Another fruit crop widely cultivated in this area are autumn raspberries. There are opportunities to walk up peaks of the Sierra Nevada massif such as Penabon and Morron (2756). This leisurely self-guided walking tour makes use of 4 centres, so you don't move on each day; but when you do your luggage is transported so you walk light.



#### Travel Information

**Arrival:** We have published in our brochure flights to Malaga with British Airways, you will find low cost airlines fly to Granada directly, and there are several airports that you can use for this tour, the options are as follows:

- 1) Direct flights with Ryanair from Stansted to Granada, the flights operate every day. Ryanair also operate flights from Liverpool to Granada. Monarch Airlines also have several flights a week. Obviously these can and do change so we would recommend double-checking this.
- 2) Direct flights with a number of airlines, British Airways, Easyjet etc flying to Malaga. Take a taxi to Malaga bus station. The bus operates every hour on the hour from Malaga to Granada, journey time is approx 1.5 hours.
- 3) Easyjet, Ryanair, Monarch and My Travel all operate flights on various days to Almeria.

**End of Tour:** You will be taken back to Granada/Almeria to continue your journey home.

#### Level of Difficulty

The tour is graded moderate; the terrain is not difficult but there are some long ascents and descents. This self-guided tour is not available to single travellers.

**Fitness:** The walking should present no difficulty to anyone in good general health who is accustomed to hiking.

**Waymarks:** The itinerary follows well-used footpaths, mule tracks, unsurfaced forest roads and occasional short stretches of tarmac roads. Signposting is poor and there are few waymarks apart from the GR7 long distance trail. It is necessary to be able to use a 1:25,000 topographic map (same scale and similar degree of detail as on UK OS Pathfinder maps) in conjunction with our specially researched and written route notes. GPS maps are available and you can hire the GPS from our ground operators on arrival.

#### General Information

**Baths:** it is not normal for your room to have a bath, the main reason being that it takes up a lot of space, some hotels/guesthouses may have a separate room in the house where a bath is available to guests, but in the main it is showers.

**Breakfast:** in countries such as France/Italy/Spain/Greece etc are usually coffee and toast/croissant, if you want more for breakfast then we would suggest you purchase some food the night before. It is important for you to tell us if you have any dietary requirements when you book your holiday so that we can inform everyone that you are staying with.

**Language:** When travelling in less frequented areas you will not necessarily come across people speaking English.

Remember you have left home to find things different, take a phrase book and learn some Spanish.

**Luggage:** When staying in hotels, sometimes your luggage will have been taken to your room awaiting your arrival. However don't be surprised if your luggage is waiting for you to take it up to your room.

## Accommodation & Meals

7 nights bed and breakfast, together with 4 evening meals (of which 3 are at Mairena and 1 in Yegen) and 3 packed/picnic lunches in Mairena. On other days evening meals and picnic lunch materials can readily be obtained locally.

❑ **Night 1:** Mairena. A renovated and modernised village house with a garden and pool. David & Emma your hosts offer a real personal touch to everyone's holiday. They have been known to take clients out on local walks or to see the olive mill and local watering system etc. The house is furnished throughout with local antiques. Each bedroom has a balcony with a spectacular view and en suite facilities. Lunch and dinner is provided. Dinner is served on a candlelit terrace or in cold weather by an open fireplace with olive wood for fuel. If you arrive late on day 1 and miss lunch, lunch will be provided before departure on day 8.

❑ **Night 2:** Yegen. A typical hotel of this region with a small pool. Rooms have en-suite facilities. An evening meal is included in the hotels own atmospheric restaurant.

❑ **Nights 3 & 4:** Berchules. A small family-run 2 star hotel, all rooms have en-suite facilities. The hotel is renowned for its restaurant with local specialities such as partridge in picante sauce but we do not include dinner here, as there is a selection of restaurants in the village to choose from.

❑ **Night 5:** Trevelez. A small family-run pension in the upper part of this prosperous high-mountain village. All the rooms are en-suite.

❑ **Nights 6 and 7:** as nights 1 in Mairena with 2 evening meals and lunches included.

## Baggage Transfers

On days that clients walk on to new accommodation (days 2,3 and 5) baggage is transferred to the next night's stop. On the afternoon of day 6 clients with their baggage are transferred from Trevelez to Mairena.

## Outline Itinerary

❑ **Day 1:** Arrive Mairena (1083m). Before dinner there will be time to look around the village: a typically Moorish style cluster of flat-roofed houses with oddly shaped chimneys. The gleaming whitewash is a particularly attractive feature, although it is said to be a relatively recent addition to the Alpujarras villages.

❑ **Day 2:** Mairena to Yegen (1050m). The walk follows the Camino Real (Royal Way) westwards from Mairena along the southern flank of the mighty Sierra Nevada range. After descending for lunch at Valor you continue to the very attractive village of Yegen (pronounced 'Yeah-hen'), perched on a ledge with an immense view. The British writer and celebrated (at least among the Spanish) historian of Spain, Gerald Brenan lived in Yegen for more than 13 years during the 1920s and 1930s and was visited there by Virginia Woolf

and other members of the 'Bloomsbury Group'. Brenan wrote about Yegen and the eastern Alpujarras in South from Granada. 5 to 6 hours walking.

❑ **Day 3:** Yegen to Berchules (1350m). The walk continues along the Camino Real. Beyond the hamlets of Montenegro and Golco you ascend to the larger village of Mecina Bombaron. You cross a ridge before descending to cross the Rio Chico and a final short ascent to Berchules, a beautiful and unspoilt village with a lot of character and fine views. 5.5/6.5 hours walking.

❑ **Day 4:** Out and back walk from Berchules. A walk up the valley from Berchules to Junta de los Rios. You follow a Moorish acequia (aqueduct or waterway) to the meeting point of the Rio Chico and the Rio Grande, where there are the ruins of a Moorish silk mill. 3.5 hours walking (with option of extending the walk).

❑ **Day 5:** Berchules to Trevelez (1550m). Today's walk traverses high grassland typical of the Alpujarras, before descending steeply through pine forest to Trevelez. As you descend the great mass of Mulhacen (at 3479m the highest peak in mainland Spain) looms ahead of you across the valley. Trevelez claims (as do several other villages) to be the highest in Spain; nobody however disputes the superiority of its Serrano hams, which benefit from long curing in the cool mountain air. 6/6.5 hours walking.

❑ **Day 6:** Circular or out-and-back walk from Trevelez, followed by afternoon transfer back to Mairena (included in tour price). Possible walks from Trevelez include: (a) in clear weather: Penabon peak; this easy summit, similar to Skiddaw or Blencathra in the English Lake District, lies on a branch ridge leading south from the main Sierra Nevada ridge; about 7 hours walking; or (b) in any weather: a walk up the deep valley of the Rio Trevelez. A good trail leads for many km into the heart of the Sierra Nevada National Park. You can follow the path to a height of 2000m or more with no fear of losing the way; 5 to 6 hours walking; or (c) a shorter intermediate walk following another good trail with fine views on the west side of the Rio Trevelez valley to the Rio Culo de Perro (don't ask what the name means!); 4 to 5 hours walking. In the afternoon you will be met at the hotel in Trevelez and transported with your baggage by road to Mairena for the remaining two nights. This transfer takes about one hour.

❑ **Day 7:** A walk near Mairena. One possibility in good weather is the ascent of one or more of the peaks above Mairena on the main Sierra Nevada ridge: Morron peak (2756m) and possibly also San Juan peak (2730m). In this case use can be made of transport from Mairena to the Puerto de la Ragua (2038m). It is a steep ascent to the summit. During the long more gradual descent back to Mairena it is possible to observe mountain goats, wild boar and deer, which roam freely at these heights. Peak of Morron 5 hours walking, Peak of San Juan 8 hours walking. There are also low-level walks in the vicinity of Mairena.

❑ **Day 8:** Depart Mairena after breakfast. We can arrange extra nights in Granada for those who would prefer a longer stay.