Routes in the Nature
Caminito del Rey - Formerly the world's most dangerous footpath

Until recently, this almost 8-kilometre path near Malaga (Andalusia) was considered to be one of the most dangerous in the world. Today the path has been completed refurbished, and although it is safer now, there is something that has not changed – it offers a unique experience crossing 100-metre-high walkways that have been built across gorges. Take one of the best selfies ever. You’ll never forget the views!

If you decide to take this path, there are probably some things you would like to know. The path is in the south of Spain, and you can get there from the municipalities of Ardales or Álora (you can ask for tourist information once you are there). The path goes through the beautiful natural area of the Desfiladero de los Gaitanes, which is 700 metres deep. The Guadalhorce River flows through this area. The panoramic view of this natural canyon sculpted by the river will captivate you. The route is 8 kilometres, of which 4.8 are access paths and 2.9 are walkways. There are many plant and animal species living in this area (mountain birds such as the Egyptian vulture, griffon vulture and golden eagle; Spanish ibex, foxes, dormice, etc.). If you’re in luck, you might be able to spot some of them.

Why visit the Caminito del Rey?

In the early 20th century, a canal was planned from the northern reservoirs to El Chorro, so a hydroelectric power station could make the most of the uneven land. This meant that there had to be a path to maintain this canal, and it was known as "Caminito del Rey" because the works were officially opened by King Alfonso XIII. However, humans have been living in this natural area since prehistoric times, as we can see from the large amount of Neolithic sites.

How long does it take to walk the path?

Plan your walk well, because the path is linear and it takes about 4-5 hours. In any case, there is a shuttle bus service between the north access and the south of the route.
Do I have to buy tickets? How do I get there?

You do need to buy tickets and you can book them on the official website. This site also has useful tips for your walk and information on official opening times and how to get there (as well as by car you can come by train, because El Chorro station is close to the Caminito and there are trains from Malaga).

And what can I do once I finish the Caminito?

You can make the most of your visit and explore the districts of Guadalteba, Antequera and Guadalhorce Valley. If you fancy even more active tourism, there are many companies that organise water activities in the reservoirs nearby, or you can walk part of the Gran Senda de Málaga path. But if you prefer something more urban and cultural (or a dip in the sea, depending on the time of year), don't forget that the city of Malaga is less than 50 kilometres away.

How can you arrive at the path?

You can come by train or by road. If you choose a train, currently, RENFE train service offers regional trains on daily basis to El Chorro. The access to the path by road creates two problems. Firstly, there are no car parks, and transit is difficult because the roads are actually service roads, which are narrow and curvy. Both of the problems are under consideration of the Municipalities of Álora and Ardales and the County Council of Málaga. The road from Álora to the path is possible to follow only through small villages, such as Las Mellizas and Bermejo, and it is narrow and very curvy for more than 20 km. The second and recommendable option is the road that comes from Ardales. Nevertheless, for now and at least until August 15th, the road that connects El Chorro Train Station with another exit of El Caminito del Rey that stretches to the King's Chair, at the Guadalhorce Reservoir, will be getting refurbished from Monday to Friday, and will be open only at weekends.

What is the opening time?

**October 25th to March 27th:** from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.  **April 1st to October 24th:** from 10 a.m. to 17 p.m.  
*Open* from Tuesday to Sunday.  *Closed*: every Monday, January 1st, and December 24th, 25th and 31st

It can be closed because of the weather (rain, strong wind) or repair works. In that case, the only way to obtain official information about it is through the web page of the path. Therefore, please do check it from time to time, above all, on the day of visit.

Who is responsible for the path?

There is a committee that consists of the members from the Málaga County Council, and Ardales and Álora Town Councils. This committee will monitor and make necessary changes after having estimated this tourist attraction evolution. Therefore, these conditions can vary over the next few months.

What is waiting for us?

El Caminito del Rey is part of a spectacular natural beauty spot. This already makes it breathtaking and attractive, although the path is more than just a walk in the hills. The boardwalks and a hanging footbridge that stands at 105 metres height, as well as steep walls, make many visitors feel inevitably dizzy. The path is hazardous because of the heights and its very narrow parts. It was refurbished so it could be used for active tourism in natural surroundings. Therefore it is risky and requires certain level of physical effort and skillfulness, which is accepted by tourists who come to follow the route. Visitors are not risking their lives at all, but they must be aware of the strong impression this place might make on them. This is why this path is so attractive.
One of the best ways to cool down on a hot summer’s day is to take a walk along the Rio ChilIar from Nerja. Unusually for Andalucía, this route is most suitable for walking during June, July and August, as there is plenty of shade, plus the river to keep you cool.

The scenery is spectacular and there are birds, butterflies, dragonflies, wild flowers, grasses and even sugar canes to be spotted along the way. If you’re really lucky, you might even catch sight of a mountain goat. This is a very popular walk for visitors and locals alike, and can get quite busy, especially at weekends.

As you progress, you will criss-cross the river many times until eventually you have no option but to wade through the water. The riverbed is very stony, sometimes with pebbles and often with boulders, which can make your feet sore after a couple of hours walking – so don’t wear flip-flops or they will float away in the water.

As you walk, the current is flowing towards you from the mountains, so at times you will need to take care not to slip on the wet (and sometimes mossy) river boulders. This is where a walking stick might prove handy.
Eventually you will reach a very narrow section of the gorge where you can touch both sides at the same time. Here is where you will encounter the first set of rapids (cahorras), which are easily negotiated with care, and where there are knee-deep pools in places. You will become aware of the roaring sound of the river.

A little further on, the gorge widens out again, and there are plenty of places to eat a picnic and take a cool swim in one of the natural pools, filled with crystal clear water.

The river walk up the Rio Chillar is suitable for families as children love splashing in and out of the water.

Don’t worry about getting lost on the river walk, as you just follow the river bed and, because you return the way you came, you can make the walk shorter if you want to. We walked up at a strolling pace, past the narrow gorges, had a swim in the pool, stopping a couple of times along the way and returned to the cement factory in under 4 hours.

The river walk continues on past where we stopped, until eventually you reach a dam, where there is a series of refreshing waterfalls for you to bathe beneath.

What to wear?

It’s best to wear shorts or, at the very least, something you don’t mind getting wet. You should wear strong, comfortable walking shoes or trainers to protect your feet and ankles as often you will be wading somewhere between ankle and knee-deep in water, particularly when negotiating the gorges.

What to take?

Sunscreen, a hat and plenty of water. A stout walking stick will prove useful, too. You might also like to take a towel, swimwear, camera and a picnic.
How to get there?

On foot: You can walk down to the river bed from just behind the bus station on Avenida de Pescia in Nerja. At the roundabout near the bus station, walk to the end of Calle de Joaquín Herrera and follow the path down to the river.

You will then need to walk up towards the cement factory, always keeping the river on your left, past gardens, avocado groves, builder’s yards, caves and fincas. Eventually the valley begins to narrow and you can begin to really enjoy the beauty of the pine trees on the steep slopes of the Sierra Tejeda, Almijara and Alhama National Park.

By car: If you want to save a couple of kilometres by taking your car to the start of the river walk, drive east along Avenida de Pescia from the bus station, towards Maro. At the roundabout go straight ahead – you will see Iranzo supermarket on your right and, a little further on, Nerja Health centre (Centro de Salud) on your left. At the next roundabout (which is signed to Burriana beach to the right), turn left (inland) onto Calle Julio Romero. After two hundred metres or so, bear right onto Avenida la Constitución and follow this road as it climbs uphill. A little further along, where the road forks, stay on Avenida la Constitución which is to the right.

Look out for two large electricity pylons on top of concrete blocks on your left, and you should turn left here, between the pylons onto Calle Mirto. On your right there a large, free car park where you can leave your car whilst you do the river walk.

You can drive closer to the start of the river walk (though parking is more restricted and there is a danger of being towed away and fined if you park in the wrong place). If you want to park closer to the river – drive past the row of houses on your left and continue until you see a fork in the road. Take the right fork towards the mountains, and follow the newly concreted road which slopes downwards and underneath the motorway bridge.

Soon after you drive underneath the motorway bridge, there is a large lay-by on your right with parking for 6-8 cars. After this, the track becomes narrower and more stony, but you can keep driving until you reach the end of this track, just before the old, abandoned cement factory on your right.

Can you see the abandoned trainers hanging from the wire, above the gates? This is also where the official car park is, with parking for 63 cars (at a cost of €1). As you can see, sometimes, the car park was locked. There is another large lay-by (with parking for 10 cars) just outside these gates, where we parked our car.

I wouldn’t recommend you abandoning your vehicle just anywhere at the side of the track down here (other than the two lay-bys I have mentioned) as they are likely to be towed away at a cost to you of between €100 and €600.