



Introduction

Welcome to Casares Walks! The 20+ routes in this series explore the spectacular landscapes and townscapes within the 62 square miles of the district of Casares, in the province of Málaga.



Sierra Bermeja



Sierra Crestellina

Casares is distinguished for the diversity of its landscapes and wildlife. Situated between the Straits of Gibraltar, the Serranía de Ronda mountain range and the coast, Casares forms a meeting point between three different types of landscape. They are all part of the Andalusian Network of Protected Natural Areas.

One is the Sierra Bermeja Nature Park, a massif of volcanic origin whose name derives from the reddish colour of peridotite, the predominant rock in the area.

Then, to the west of the Sierra Bermeja, lie the limestone formations of the Sierra Crestellina. This massif has been declared a Protected Natural Area, and owes its name to the jagged and crest-like shapes of its peaks. It provides a home and nesting place for beautiful birds of prey, the griffon vultures, whose majestic flight can be seen from different points in the district.

Thirdly, between the sierras of Bermeja and Crestellina the limestone formations

blend with the peridotites, creating an unusually rich area, the Monte del Duque. Its lush forests of holm, cork and gall oaks form part of the Natura 2000 Network. The area has been named a Site of Community Interest because of the rich variety of flora and fauna to be found there.

To the south lies the Sierra de la Utrera, an impressive labyrinth of limestone karst formations.

And to the west and southwest, through a dramatic change in scenery, lie the rivers Genal and Guadiaro, watering fields of citrus fruits and other crops. The rivers lie in fertile valleys surrounded by hills with pastures and Mediterranean scrub, mastic trees, wild olives, and cork oaks.



Casares

Commanding this area, crowned by the remains of an Arab fortress, is the picturesque town of Casares with its white Moorish houses stacked up on a crag, and narrow and labyrinthine lanes winding between them.

Casares has been described as a cross-road of cultures: there is evidence of prehistoric settlement in the rocky shelters and caves of the surrounding hills, and the area has been settled successively by Phoenicians, Iberians, Romans, Arabs, and the Catholic Monarchs and their successors. The history, culture, and vitality of this community have led to its nomination as a site of historic-artistic interest.