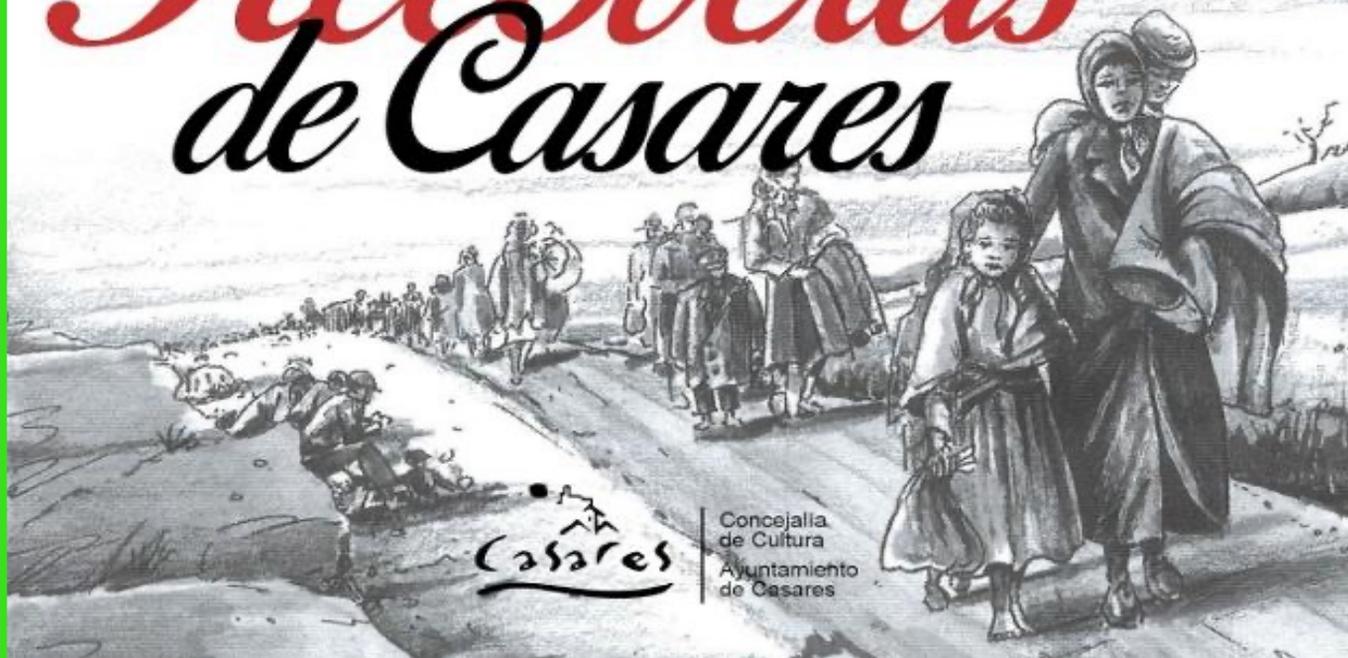


Ruta de Las Recoveras

casares
walks

Recoveras de Casares



The first walk to commemorate the Ruta de las Recoveras took place in October 2017 and was researched with meticulous care beforehand. It was organized into three stages and guided by experts. This has been repeated in October of every year since then except 2020. Walkers can select one or more stages or cover the entire distance. Every October the Ayuntamiento de Casares invites applications from those wishing to take part. The routes have varied from year to year according to prevailing conditions.

Special thanks for advice to Ana Mora, granddaughter of Gertrudis La Recovera; Rocío Ruiz, Councillor for Tourism; Manuel Galán, expert guide, who researched and rediscovered the exact route followed by Las Recoveras; and Javier Martos, expert route planner and guide.



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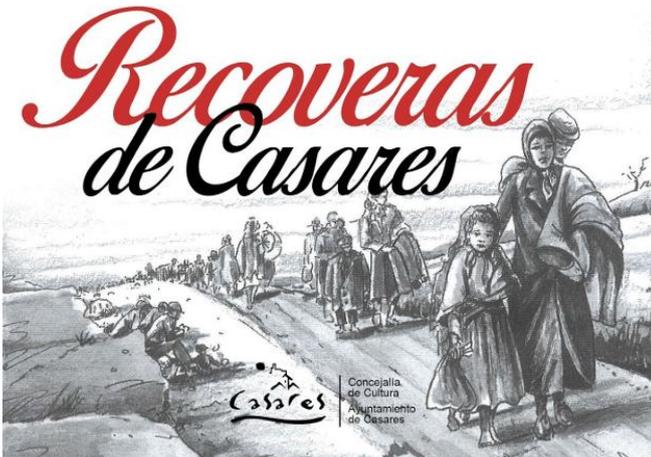
Map: Mapa Provincial 200, scale 1:200,000

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Ruta de Las Recoveras

The History



The “recoveras” were the women - and there were also men - who took the route between Casares and Gibraltar to sell local products and buy others to resell afterwards on their return.

Gertrudis Carrasco of Casares was one of these. At the outbreak of the Civil War, Gertrudis was forced to flee with her three children, between 2 and 9 years old, her husband Manuel, who was a rifleman – and a committed republican - and her mother-in-law. On arriving at Málaga, they lived through the tragic episode of La Desbandá – the flight from Málaga along the road to Almería, under bombardment by Italian and German warships and planes. Manuel was arrested and shot. Gertrudis returned to Casares and had to resort, like most widows, to this work to support her children.

The only way the recoveras of Casares could reach La Línea was on foot. So they walked the 49 kilometres to bring products of the village: for example, sausages, oil, eggs and soap. They slept at La Línea and the next day walked back to Casares with what they had bought in Gibraltar, such as tobacco, coffee, preserves, butter, oil lamps and glassware.

The recoveras finally stopped using the route in 1969 when the border with Gibraltar was closed.

Manuel Galán, a cartographer, has reconstructed these historical routes with the help of descendants of the recoveras of Casares. They have identified stopping points such as farmhouses and buildings.

In the words of one granddaughter of a recovera:

“The Ruta de Las Recoveras is much more than a track, it is the path that bears the imprints of the steady but tired and harassed feet of these brave women. A 49 km journey that many widows of the Civil War walked between Casares and La Línea de la Concepción.

“This route collects the testimony of those people, their dignified struggle to face this dark time of humiliation, injustice and pain so that it never gets forgotten.

“Many parts of the different routes they took to protect their cargo from military controls go through spaces that still conserve their great natural beauty”.

Manuel Galán adds: “In tracing the course of this route, we have tried to be faithful to history, passing by the farmhouses and areas once described by Grandmother Gertrudis. This is in spite of subsequent years of brutal urban development, the usurpation of public roads, and the privatization or fencing around many farms that prevent us from reproducing the exact path in its totality.

“The Ruta de Las Recoveras now serves as a lasting tribute to these brave, strong people”.

During the weekend of October 28 and 29, 2017, the people of Casares paid homage to their forebears, and on October 29, 44 people walked the “Ruta de Las Recoveras”, of whom 13 managed the full distance to the border with Gibraltar.

Without a doubt, there is today a greater awareness of the enormous effort that the work meant for those women and of the dignity of their struggle. It is essential to retain this legacy for the sake of our collective memory, and for the historical record.