

Sierra de Libar

Although within the Natural Park of Sierra de Grazalema this area is geographically separate from the Sierras around Grazalema – separated by the plains of the Llanos de la Republicana – and merits its own section. Barren in nature – the vegetation is generally limited to stunted holmoaks – it really consists of two rugged limestone ridges, running in a north-south direction, separated by the fertile hidden valley of the Llanos de Libar. To the western side it falls steeply to the valley of the river Guadiaro, while to the south the lone peak of Los Pinos marks the limit of the Llanos de Libar.

The eastern ridge offers some of the finest ridge walking in the region, though the terrain is not easy – this is rocky ground, karstic limestone at its best. There are three main peaks in this ridge. The northerly one, Ventana (1298m) is not the highest, but is well-located and offers some of the finest views – down the Libar valley to the south, across to the Sierra de Grazalema to the west and to the Sierra de las Nieves to the east. To the south, across the Puerto de Cufrio lie the dramatic limestone stacks of Las Pilas del Tunio (1322m) and the highest points of the ridge, El Palo (1400m) and Cerro Martin Gil (1397m). Further south, at the head of the Libar valley, is Los Pinos (1397m), best approached from Cortes de la Frontera.

The western ridge is more rugged and less hospitable to walkers, though the area south of Puerto del Correo has a real feel of remoteness and a remarkable network of veredas (old drovers tracks). The ascent to El Salamadre (1303m) in this area is well worth the effort

Montejaque is a pretty village in a stunning setting at the north end of the Libar range and is the starting point for walks down the Llanos de Libar and across to Grazalema. Its twin village, Benaolan, is less attractive, having been the centre of the local embutidos (pork products) industry, but it is an excellent centre for exploring the entire region, being just 10 minutes from Ronda, on the railway line (much used by walkers) and has 3 good hotels and a variety of eating options.