

Sierra de Grazalema

There are two principal ranges in the Sierra de Grazalema, to be found to the north and south of the road connecting Grazalema and El Bosque. These are the Sierra del Pinar to the north and the Sierras of Endrinal and Caillo to the south.

In the Sierra del Pinar we find the highest point in the Natural Park, El Torreón (1648m) in a ridge which runs west from Grazalema to Benamahona, which also includes the prominent peak of San Cristóbal (1556m). To the north of this ridge are expanses of pine forests and some of the finest examples of the rare pinsapo trees. Unfortunately, from a walkers standpoint, much of the area is declared a protected reserve and permits are required to walk the limited range of paths to which public access is allowed (see routes section for information on obtaining permits). To the north of this zone is the attractive village of Zahara de la Sierra with its castle, vibrant village square with bars and restaurants and spectacular views over the lake of the same name.

To the south of the road lies an area with easy access and extremely varied and scenic walking. The bare twin karstic peaks of Simancon and Reloj (1550m) are emblematic of the area, while there are attractive routes through the oak forests in the Sierra de Endrinal and on the more open southerly slopes, leading down to the villages of Villaluenga del Rosario and Benaocaz. These are two of the smallest, highest and most attractive of the pueblos blancos in this part of the Serranía and are well worth a visit. Between lies some stunning hidden valleys – unseen from the roads – and some more walking routes around the peak of Navazo Alto (1395m).

Grazalema itself is a large village occupying a dramatic setting on the eastern slopes of the sierras. Popular with tourists, it has a wide range of bars, restaurants and artisanal shops. In addition to the pinsapo trees the area is famed for its cork oaks and the sight of newly-stripped trees is commonplace. Their prevalence in the area is due to a micro-climate which gives Grazalema the right to claim the highest rainfall in Spain. But do not be put off by this statistic – it is seasonal to the months of early winter and spring and is remarkably local – just 5kms to the east the rainfall is a fraction of that of Grazalema itself!