

## Introduction - Walking around Lanjarón

Lanjarón is often described as the 'Gateway to the Alpujarra'. It is renowned throughout Spain both for its mountain water and as a spa resort. Until recently less well known by British and northern European visitors, it is an ideal place to base a walking holiday. The area is characterised by steep valleys scoured by rivers and streams hurtling down the mountainside from the snow covered slopes above, many of which rise to over 3000 metres. Traditional farming has left a legacy of terraced valley sides, dotted with small buildings or cortijos, which were the summer residence of village farmers. The Alpujarra was one of the last outposts of the Moors when they ruled Spain many years ago. They left a legacy of attractive villages, built in a style unique to this part of Spain, together with many miles of acequias, a complicated system of irrigation, which remains to this day.

The town nestles in the foothills of the mountains, on the edge of a spectacular gorge and with views south to the Mediterranean sea. It has a pleasant climate and enough facilities to offer the opportunity to relax and re-charge the batteries after a hard days walking. The walks described in this guide are designed to enable a visitor to Lanjarón to experience the wide range of scenery in the vicinity of the town, and none involve more than an hours drive; some of course start from the town itself. We include walks in the Alpujarra, Lecrin valley and Monachil, just south of Granada (this could be combined with a visit to the Alhambra).



## Walk 1 Ridge on Southside of Lanjarón

2 hours

*Includes a short section of walking along a road, but well worth it for the "off road" sections.*

From the the centre of town, walk eastwards along the main street in the direction of Orgiva. Leave the town behind and continue along the main road. After approx 500m beyond the town, you pass a bar on the right. Shortly after this is an obvious sharp left hand bend with a parking area on its right at the start of the ridge.

From here continue for a few yards in the direction of Orgiva, past some buildings to where a track takes us off to the right. After about 50m along the track it is possible to scramble back up to the right to the ridge (pylon). Our way on follows a faint track along the edge of the ridge with occasional red paint markers.

After about 1.5km the ridge descends to a cortijo (goat farm). Go around the right hand side of the farm and pick up a track at the pylon. 50m ahead of you are some old baths collecting spring water. The path down into the gorge is just beyond them on the right.

Follow the obvious path as it zigzags downwards, here you can see spectacular views of the cliffs. After crossing the acequia keep descending to a bridge across the rio. (The bridge is made of tree trunks with earth on top!)

After crossing to the rio turn right and continue along the valley with olive trees on your left and bamboo on your right. The path becomes bounded by stones on either side.

Shortly, a white cortijo appears on the left, just after this the path turns left and passes to the right of a stone cortijo. The path now becomes a stone and cobbled mule track that zigzags up the hill in an enjoyable and spectacular fashion past an old stone farm building.

Passing the Cortijo Mistral, the path becomes a concrete road. Just before the new bypass is reached, the road to the castle is off to the left. From here, either follow the bypass and road directly back to your starting point or take time to explore the ruins of the castle.

After the moors were expelled from Granada in 1492, the Moorish King Boabdil was exiled to the remote region beneath the southern slopes of the Sierra Nevada. The Arab castle of Lanjarón, built on what was thought to be an almost unconquerable hill below the town, was attacked by Fernando, the Catholic leader on 8<sup>th</sup> March 1500, leading to the death of a round 300 Muslims. Soon after this, the Moors were finally expelled from Spain.

**Walk 2 A circular walk in the hills above Pinos Del Valle including ascending to the "Ermita" Approx 3hours**

*(Easy except for the climb up to "Ermita" !)*

To get to Pinos del Valle from Lanjarón, follow the road westwards to the motorway; go straight across the first roundabout, then follow signs to Pinos at the second. The road crosses a dam, then bends steeply up to the right and into the village of Pinos. Drive through the village, taking the righthand fork at a junction (recycling bins on the left). At the top of the village, you reach a t-junction, turn right here and around 100m further on is the parking area beside the wash house and sports ground.

**Section 1 Pinos to the "Ermita"**

The walk starts from the public "Wash house" besides the small sports ground at the top end of the village.

Walk up past the washhouse and turn left on a good track, concrete initially. After about 100m the track bends steeply round to the right past a quarry. (Ignore another track, which continues straight on). The road is now a dirt track.

After another 100m take the signed footpath off to the left up through the woods. This path continues in many zigzags up to the "Ermita" . Approximately 45 minutes from the starting point.

*Note: For a short way on the ascent, two plastic pipes run up alongside the path, where these finally leave our upward path, turning leftwards along another track, this will be our route when descending from the "Ermita".*

**Ermita de Santo Cristo del Zapato.** Called the hermitage of 'of the shoe' because it has a shoe painted in white at its feet, this pretty building is worth the climb. It is the focus for a procession of local people during the romería celebrations on 3<sup>rd</sup> May each year, when you may also see people dressed in traditional flamenco costumes and men show off their horses.

**Section 2 The "Ermita" back to Pinos Del Valle**

Unfortunately there is no relatively easy way or nice way of descending from the monument other by descending the way we went up. We retrace our steps to the top of the plastic pipes and turn right along a marked path (red or orange and white stripes). The plastic pipes cease after about 5 minutes when they reach a large "deposito" (water tank). We continue, mostly gradually downhill along the path. The path is mainly obvious to follow, though after about 40 minutes the descent through a forested area finds the path a little obscured. The orange and white stripes on the trees are useful at this point. Shortly after this section we reach another well-defined path.

Turn left along this path and follow it as it mainly contours the hill. Eventually this brings onto a drivable dirt track (bee hives at it's start). Follow the main dirt track initially level, then downhill, taking the right fork to join a tarmac road.

Turn left and follow the road back to Pinos Del Valle and our starting point. This road is mostly quiet with few motor vehicles. However exercise care along the road.

**Walk 3**      **A circular Walk around Lanjarón**  
(Approximately 5-5 1/2 hrs)

This walk can be done as a whole, or in sections. A good way to explore the town and its suburbs.

**Section 1.** Lanjarón Tourist information office to the GR7  
(1hr 50mins)

We start our walk from the tourist information office, which is opposite the "Spa" buildings at the top or western end of town.

Proceed along the main street towards town past various gift shops and hotels until we reach a mini roundabout just past hotel /restaurant el Sol (which is on your left). At the mini roundabout we turn right and follow signs for the Mirador (viewpoint). A series of broad steps eventually take us down to the mirador. Here is a fine view of the castle, the last one to be held by the Moors.

From the mirador take a level path along towards the bypass. Just after the roundabout sign, a road bends steeply down to the right, follow this. After approximately 50m there is a kink in the road where the way on to the castle turns right (an option excursion). Our walk turns left down a track, which passes several cortijos. We pass to the right of the Cortijo La Mistral and the road now becomes a mule track, which zigzags down to the Rio Lanjarón.

At the bottom of the descent, the path comes onto level ground, beside a stone cortijo. The path continues straight ahead for 50m to the river (Rio Lanjarón). Here the path turns right and runs alongside the river. For a while the path is bounded on both sides by stones then runs back along the river, with bamboo plants on the left and olive trees on the right. After about 10minutes in the Rio, a bridge is reached over the Rio Lanjarón.

Cross the river and head up and left. After a short way on an acequia is crossed. The path now zigzags steeply up until a flat area on top of the gorge is reached. Here there are three old baths collecting spring water. A short track leads to a pylon by the farm. Pass to the left of the farm.

Our intended way is to follow a faint path that runs along the edge of the cliff top. Numerous red paint splodges mark the way, though essentially a line keeping close to the cliff edge is the way (for those unable to contemplate walking alongside such a big drop, the dirt track on the right runs more or less parallel but without the superb views).

Just prior to the end of the cliff top path we reach a pylon. The way directly ahead is barred by a building and a small quarry, we need to turn rightwards and scramble down to the dirt track before joining the main road at 'The bend'.

From the bend in the road, we need to follow the road back in the direction of Lanjarón (left) for approximately 15 mins. First we pass a bar on our left, and then we come to a track on the right signposted Ermita de la Cruz and GR142 Orgiva.

### **Section 2. GR142 to Rio Lanjarón (1hr 55mins)**

Start walking up the road sign posted GR142. After approximately 50m the road bends to the right, our way is straight on picking up a cobbled mule track on the right just before some gates. Upon reaching a dirt track turn right then turn left again in 10m up a concrete track.

After a left hand bend the concrete finishes beside the entrance gates to a cortijo. Continue for a further 5m, as the track bends left we pick up a steep dirt track with marker poles at its start. This leads up to another driveable dirt track.

Turn left along the dirt track road and take the immediate right fork, which gently ascends and ignore any footpaths and tracks for a considerable distance.

### **Section 3 Rio Lanjoron Via Acequia to Lanjarón (1hr 25min)**

Reaching the drivable track in front of the concrete structures turn left. After about 100m there is a fork in the track, take the right hand fork. This leads up to the acequia (where the track bends right scramble up to join the watercourse). This is the Acequia de la Cecarta.

We take the acequia and follow it leftwards. Don't be put off when the water flows into pipes for a short distance. It soon becomes "natural" again flowing past peoples houses and allotments with plenty to see. Cross the dirt track and keep following the acequia.

There is a short narrow section followed by a cobbled mule track crossing the acequia. Keep on ahead. Another dirt track is crossed; keep along crossing further tracks until the acequia appears to become abandoned where another mule track crosses. Here we turn left and downhill on the mule track.

We cross directly over a dirt track road with a farm wall on our left. Where the wall finishes we turn left parallel to another dirt track road, which we eventually join. We join the track for approximately 20m and take the right fork descent towards town. We then come to another drivable dirt track adjacent to a cortijo. Turn right along this. In about 10 minutes we come to a T-junction. Turn left and follow this back to the old water-bottling factory about 200m above our starting point at the Tourist Information.