



**OUR BUMBLE**  
**EXPLORING EUROPE IN OUR**  
**MOTORHOME**

BY JOANNE, CRAIG & PEANUT



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SPAIN



Panoramic view of Antequera

## EL CHORRO TO ANTEQUERA

### SATURDAY 18 APRIL

Up bright and early, so we could make the most of the single track road and the warm morning light. Marg said turn right but Craig went in to stubborn mode and turned left. Well you've never seen anything like it. You'd think we were traveling on a quad. Bump, bump, bump. I clung on for dear life and Peanut took shelter under the hatch. Next minute we were looking down on Caminito del Rey! Craig had clambered Vin up the side of a bloody mountain and now we were twice as high as the bridge. Maybe we should have kept those hard hats after all!

The tiny, narrow road provided some wonderful vistas across the valleys. Everything was fine until we got stuck in a small village. The power cables were too low for Vin and so we had to do several shuttles in and around town to get to the other side. Craig is a brilliant driver and not sure I could do half of what he does.

Once in Antequera we headed straight for a Lidl. An hour later we were full of food and beverages.

The town of Antequera is quite big but inside lots of historic streets and churches. On top of the hill, a 13th century castle built on a Roman fort with lovely fortress wall and nicely kept gardens.



Everywhere was shut and the streets were empty but we couldn't figure out why? We eventually found out that tomorrow is religious festival and so everyone has shut shop so they can prepare for the celebration.

On the way back to Vin, we noticed quite a few christenings. Mostly babies but we did spot a few children too. All the little girls wore traditional dresses including a christening bonnet. I haven't seen an old fashioned bonnet for years! You know the one's I mean with full on chin strap (yes mother those bonnets you made us all wear!)

Later that day, Vin's alarm played up. We couldn't get the thing to switch on and then switch off. A problem for tomorrow!





Drinking fountains of Antequera.

## ANTEQUERA

### SUNDAY 19 APRIL

Today, is a religious festival and groups of people and families were all making their way to their church in the centre of town. We followed the crowds and along the way we passed a 'keep fit' session in the middle of a park. Looked strange seeing 100's of people dancing away in the park to very loud music. A little further along, several football matches and a kiddies adventure park. Once in the town centre, it was full of people dressed in their best bib and tucker. The only bit I didn't quite get was the ladies wearing thick, natural coloured tights. Young and old alike but they looked awful, I suppose a bit like support or granny stockings.

We kept on going toward towards the sound of the brass band. Right in the middle, the children's walking day parade. Each parish had a little float with a religious statue, carried by a group of young boys. Followed by a load of little girls all dressed in traditional Spanish lace walking day dresses and veils. The little girls looked so beautiful and the detail on the lace, so delicate and pretty. It remind me of St Richards walking day. I used to love dressing up, taking part in the parade and eating jelly and ice cream. Have to say, I don't remember anything about the church mass just the fun bit and the party!



*Below: My sister on her walking day, circa 50 years ago*



We hunted high and low for the church of Carmen but never found it. Or we don't think so but in this rabbit warren of churches anything is possible. The centre has a round two dozen churches and each one doesn't have a sign or plaque to tell you the church name. How strange is that. Anyway, the walk around the town was very nice.

Back in Vin and we decided to go and fill up with GPL. Spain doesn't really have many GPL stations, so when we spot one, we fill up. We also went to the dolmens, which just looks like a mound of dirt with trees around the base. Inside the mound are buried chambers from around 2.000 BC.





After our little jaunt we decided to go back to the free aire in Antequera and give the fresh water tank a cleanse plus the outside of Vin. We did the outside and ditched the fresh and grey water. After a thorough clean we filled the fresh water up but by gosh the tap was slow, it took for ever. Once full we moved to one of the bays and bash! Poor Vin got his underside pipe bashed on a raised kirb. Craig checked the pipe and everything surrounding it but it was too difficult to see if anything was damaged because of all the water on the underside plus everything was still dripping. Not s lot we could do but hope and pray it's ok.

We had a lovely evening doing our own thing. Craig twiddled with some photos and I listened to some of my favorite tunes.

My favorite photo of the day. A beautiful little girl all dressed in traditional ivory lace.



## El Torcal

# ANTEQUERA TO EL TORCAL

## MONDAY 20 APRIL

Peanut was desperate for his morning tiddle but we couldn't let him out. "Hold on old chap, we will have is sorted in a minute". "Whimper". The alarm was playing up again and off some reason the remote control wouldn't work. Everything was OK according to the manual. We checked the batteries, all OK. Craig checked the voltage and a few other bits before dismantling the device, so we could at least let Peanut out for pickle before he wets Vin. If Peanut could sigh with relief then trust me, he sighed and don't think I've ever seen him cock his leg, so quick.

Before we forget, we both checked the underside of Vin and phew, no leaks! Looks like the bash from yesterday hasn't done any damage.

After breakfast Craig installed the alarm keypad in an accessible but not visible place, so at least we can active and deactivate without the remote. I filled the fresh water and emptied the loo, a chore that doesn't get any easier the more you do it. It is a horrid job and hate it with a passion but rather that than a smelly motorhome. Certainly makes you appreciate the domestic bog.



Today's theme is weird rock! Only a short drive from Antequera and we were in the national park of El Torcal. The drive up was great but looking back down the hill was the best, the views were stunning.

At the top we meandered along the road driving through strange rocks. The best way the describe this place is one huge, lump of limestone rock. Over the years the rain has battered the rock to form weird and wonderful formations. Not long and we were parked right on top. We had a couple of walks around the national park (morning and then again in afternoon) and it was hard going at times clambering over the rocks but we did see some lovely and unusual shapes. In many ways it felt like you were walking through a giant puzzle trying to find the best path to follow and the best way out. Some rocks looked like stacked pancakes whilst others just looked like gigantic skipping stones. We also spotted the red mountain deer and a weasel.

At one point, there were a load of muddy tree roots that created a sort of staircase. It

**Left: Photo's of our walk around El Torcal National Park**



triggered thoughts about when I was a toddler and my sister, Shikha put me in her bicycle bag and took me down to the valley. She parked the bike against a tree and told me not to move. Off she went to meet her friends and left me all on my own. The bike fell over and I fell out. I remember clambering up a steep valley with massive tree roots that stopped me from sliding all the way back down. She was not impressed when I found her...not sure if it was because I was black as the ace of spades or because she was eyeing up a potential boyfriend lol.



El Torcal is quite high up at 1280 m, so whilst we had nice blue skies the air was still rather cool. Perfect temperature for clambering over rocks, walking around the countryside that feels more like an outer space film set.



Left: Mountain Deer  
Above: El Torcal Monument



By 9pm everyone had pretty much left and we were admiring the silhouette shapes of El Torcal.

Have you opened the tap, Craig?

Yeah, I forgot to empty it at Antequera. It was full to the brim with fresh water, so tight better emptying now.

Well we've become a watering hole for the local herd.

What do you mean?

Look out the door and you'll soon see

Jesus, there are loads of them

I know

Craig, turn the tap off

No point now it will nearly be empty

Have you seen the size of this bull

Yeah but look at the size of the horns, I hope it doesn't come any closer

Oh shit, I think they are starting to battle for water

Think we better move before they puncture Vin

Yeah, I don't fancy being amid a bull fight

With that we quickly secured everything and slowly drove off. We moved to another part of the car park but it was no good they kept on coming. Nothing for it, we will have to moooooove down the road and with that we drove about 1 km down the road to a small but secluded lay by.

Don't think we will make good Matadors!



On route to Viñuela

## EL TORCAL TO VIÑUELA

### TUESDAY 21 APRIL

After a freezing cold and very windy night we have a wonderful sunrise with stunning cloud formations amidst the mountain range. A bit too hazy for a photo. Oh nearly forgot to say, the alarm is working a treat, so we are guessing it was interference but having the keypad as back up worked well.

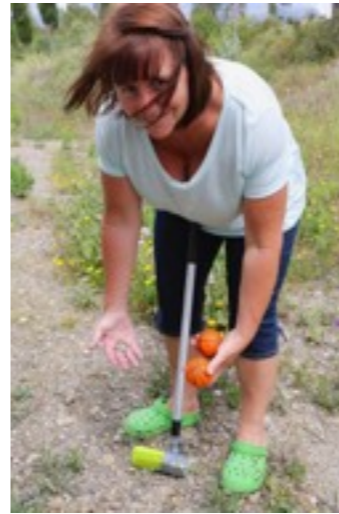
We are off to Granada but want a few stops along the way to break the journey. The map didn't show anything interesting except a possible stop at a lake. As we travelled towards our next location, we passed field upon field of poppies. Striking red flowers against

green fields and blue skies, looked very colourful and catching. We passed through a few tiny villages and once again, they were very pleasant and inviting. The great thing about Spanish villages is the fact everyone just mucks in and keeps the village clean. Today, ladies were planting flowers and the fellas were sweeping the roads. We have yet to come across an awful town with shabby streets or boarded up houses unlike (sadly) some of the towns in the UK.

At the lake we struggled to find access to the low road and ended up going quite a few kilometers in the wrong direction before we could turn around. Once on the low road we headed towards the waters edge and spotted a recreational area. Quite a large

grassland with plenty trees for shade. Inside loads of picnic benches, brick bbq points, rubbish bins and fresh water. Brilliant, this will do nicely. We dodged a few low hanging trees and bobbled about on the bumpy uneven road but eventually we found a perfect spot. Tucked away round a large mound of colourful wild flowers., so no one could see us. With a lovely view of the lake and surrounded in wild flowers we had a spot of lunch.

Then we opted for a game of golf. We can just imagine both our fathers they would be well pleased and so wish they could be here to give us some guidance. Golf, we hear you say! Yes, GOLF. We didn't quite have all the tools but that didn't matter, Mr Fix it will sort it. We had a course all to ourselves and we wanted to play golf. Craig got the handle from the mop, the plastic scrubbing brush and with a bit of gaffer tape we had our club. Small foam ball from our tennis kit and a two bottle tops for t's and we were ready. The course was a little overgrown in places but it didn't stop us. We had a great afternoon just messing around and laughing at each other's inability to hit a bouncy ball in a straight line.



To end the day, we had half a nice stroll around the lake. I say half because on the way back we ended up off the track, clambering across thorn bushes and weeds, which were covered in all sorts of bugs. Hate feeling insects crawling all over me, it drives me mad but Craig seems to find it highly amusing.



Mid morning coffee stop and what a view

## VINÜELA TO ARENAS DEL REY

WEDNESDAY 22 APRIL

Oops Peanut had a slight accident and pickled on the floor. Craig was furious and went off on one because he thought the electric box might be damaged. Fortunately it wasn't but non the less it had set the mood for the day.

As we left Vinüela we took the high road and climbed up and over a hill. From 300m to 1200m in half an hour, passing nothing but lorries carrying vegetables and fruit. Once on top of the hill you could see why, a massive fertile land that stretched for miles and miles of nothing but crops. The fields were all worked by hand and you

could see the farmers and the workers carefully but meticulously tending to the crops. Just before we began our descent, we stopped for a cuppa and admired the views. Not long after we'd set off.....Craig, look over there, snow! You own me £1 for spotting the Sierra Nevada first. I was all giddy. He glanced over and muttered, I am driving. Clearly the mood from this morning hadn't shifted.

We arrived at Arenas del Rey, which is another big lake. We parked up on a quiet spot and admired the view before taking a walk. It was like a ghost town and not a soul around. Where is everyone? The dam itself was mighty elaborate and impressive. Built in 1954 and clearly designed as a tourist attraction but unfortunately the



tourist never arrived and since then it's glamour has slowly faded away. . It was an ok spot for a stopover but it was soulless and its on days like this you really miss your friends and family. It feels like ages since we've had Internet access or a phone signal and right now, I really wish I could hear mums voice. The best bit about today was the fresh lemon and sugar pancakes. Craig's a good cook and some days he just cooks the perfect stuff.



Top: our camping spot on Arenas Del Rey

Bottom Left: Look down at the dam

Bottom Right: The lake, so beautiful but soulless

# SOULLESS LAKE TO GRANADA

THURSDAY 23 APRIL

We couldn't wait to get up this morning and set off for Granada. I don't know where, when or how the fascination with Granada started but it's always been a place I have wanted to visit. Well today, I get to see it and I understand it's as good if not better than Seville.

The snow capped mountains of the Sierra Nevada led us all the way to Granada. Majestic and inviting as you slowly drive closer towards them. On route, we stopped off for a brew at a cemetery in the middle of nowhere. I don't know why Craig finds them so fascinating but I believe its a trait passed down from his mother. Whilst Craig wandered around taking photos, I had a look at the headstones. The majority of the people in there lasted well in to their 80's even the ones from 1850, so guess this area is doing something right.

A quick stop at Lidl before heading straight to Alhambra. The car park at the top seemed pretty expensive and upon closer inspection we were right. €3 for the first minute and then €0.05 per minute thereafter with a maximum charge of €28. Wow, think we will find another parking spot. As we drove down passed the entrance, a chap pointed out a free parking space. Craig did a quick shuffle to squeeze us in but as soon as we stepped out we noticed the disabled signs. The chap said it would be ok but parking in disabled bay is a no no for us and we pulled away. Craig followed the signs for the centre despite my advice and





Both photos from cemetery

yeah you guessed it, it became a tight squeeze with everyone taxi driver giving us daggers. Craig hates city centres and Granada was no exception. On the bright side, I got to see quite a few of the attractions of Granada, which is not a patch on Seville, I might add. In fact, it should not be compared to Seville, it is completely different. Granada does not have the same atmosphere and buzz like Seville.

By lunchtime, we were parked up on a retail park on the outskirts of Granada, fed up with the city and with each other. Craig scoured the maps and downloads looking for a decent place to park, which would be close enough to the main attractions. Craig always tries to do his best and when things aren't perfect as he planned, he gets frustrated. It's Craig meticulous attention to detail that gets us in to some of the most wonderful and amazing places, but in city centres it's not that easy. In times like this, I will settle for anything, I am not fussed but Craig will not lower his standards and so I just become another frustration suggesting sub standard options that to most folk would be fine. If I suggest options he looks at me if though I have grow three heads and if I keep quiet, I not helping! If men have PMT then this week, Craig's got it with cherries on top. And I suppose if you ask Craig, he will say I have PMT too! For the next hour or so we both wanted to kill each other. Yep, we are a normal couple with our ups and downs. Even Peanut was grumpy and fed up bumping in to everything. To top it, we grounded the motorhome in a massive pothole and got stuck in the middle of a roundabout. Today is probably one of the worst days of the trip, so far.

We finally found somewhere on the outskirts. Not ideal but it was clean, quiet and pretty good view... all things considered. I noticed a signal on my phone! I telephoned mum only to be deflated when I got her answer phone. I tried my sister, Mandy but for some reason it would not connect. Do you ever have days when you just want to scream? An hour later and the phone rang, it was mum. It was so nice to hear her voice, her friendly, loving voice was a pure tonic and just what I needed.

Early evening, we had a cycle in to the centre and up to Alhambra. We passed lots of things but we had no real interest, the emotions of today had got the better of both of us, we exhausted and fed up with Granada.



## The City of Granada

# ALHAMBRA

## FRIDAY 24 APRIL

Beep, beep, beep. Okey alarm, hold your horses, we are coming to turn you off. Beep, beep, beep. It's been a while since we've had to get up at 5.30 and nothing quite starts an early start like an annoying alarm clock. A quick shower and a brew before making sure Peanut had everything for several hours in his own.

At 6 am the streets of Granada are dead as a dodo, so it made our long walk to Alhambra easier. At a rather brisk walking pace, it took us about an hour and a half to reach Alhambra. Half the journey was flat and the half the journey was up a steep hill. By the time we

reached the top I was shattered and ready for bed, again. We made our way straight to the credit card queue, which to our surprise wasn't too bad. I guess around 100 people before us. The cash queue was a lot busier but still a lot quieter than expected. Tickets for Alhambra are limited to 8.000 per day, so it gets busy very quick. Outside of the peak season they don't allow any reservations, so it's a case of turn up and hope for the best. At 8am promptly, the kiosks opened and Alhambra burst in to action. Half an hour later and we were the proud owners of two Alhambra tickets. Total cost of €15.40 per person for all 3 attractions and a dedicated time slot of 10.30 for the palace. Yippee we are in!



**The gardens of Generalife**



The Alhambra is the jewel of Granada and it's been on my bucket list for a while. Alhambra means red castle and it sits on a hill, towering over Granada with the Sierra Nevada snow capped mountains as its backdrop. The palace, the fortress, the small city and the gardens all started in 1238 under the control of the Nasrites. In 1492, the city was conquered and Alhambra became a Catholic court. A number of additional buildings appeared including a church and another palace. It's also in this year they signed the Reyes Catholicos expelling all Jews and Muslims who wouldn't convert to Catholic. I remember this from my school days and how anyone pretending to convert would be exposed to Isabel's Spanish Inquisition. In 18th century it fell in to neglect and in 1808 Napoleon used Alhambra for his barracks. In 1870, the Alhambra was declared a national monument and since that point they have carefully restored it. The original buildings are all Arabic and based around the Muslim ideal - heaven is a garden nourished by running water. As a result, the whole place is surrounded by lush gardens, elaborate fountains and water features. The best way I can describe it, it's like a garden city with a couple of palaces, summer houses,



churches, communal baths, archways and all protected by a huge fortresses.

Here are some of our best photographs, hope you enjoy.

Alhambra was great and I hate to say this, but it didn't wow me. I was so looking forward to seeing Alhambra and maybe the history and mystery that surrounds it created half the attraction?

We walked it all the way back to Vin, I was knackered. On a positive side it can only do wonders for my glorious (fat) figure! Peanut was excited to see us and much to our delight he'd managed to hold himself for 8 hours. We made a big fuss of him and Craig made a fuss of my feet with a bowl of cold water. Ah heaven.

Later that day we cycled to the vets where we'd booked Peanut in for his annual jab. Mr Jose Alfonso greeted us at the door and welcomed us in with open arms. He was



**Top: Craig overlooking the palace and museum.**

**Bottom: Carlos V Palace**



rather a large chap and clearly got a sweat on taking a few strides. In the examination room Mr Jose was a serious chap. He noted all the details and serial numbers down in Peanut's passport before walking over to the stainless steel tablet. The room was plastered with certificates and qualifications of Mr Jose, who clearly graduated from the university of Granada. Once ready, he got me to hold Peanut whilst he nervously jabbed him in the butt.

To left: photo's of the palace

Bottom right: me on top of fortress overlooking Granada





### Inside the Palace

Top left: ceiling, look at the shape.

Top Right: windows looking out to the gardens

Bottom: intricate detail on the doors and archways



**That's where we are off to!**

## GRANADA TO LANJARON

### SATURDAY 25 APRIL

The dramatic arrival in to Granada had left its mark and although I enjoyed Alhambra, I didn't fancy seeing anything else. I would rather move on than go back through those horrid streets that caused such an uproar. Anyway, we are more country folk than city dwellers! So with that we planned our exit.

A quick Lidl stop before setting off on our Las Alpujarras route in search of some stunning scenery and great valleys. The villages were first established in 12th century by the Berber refugees from Seville and then later the Moors. On one side the snow capped

mountains of Sierra Nevada and on the other, the smaller sierras of Gador and Lujar. The deep rivers and rich soil created ideal farming for the Berbers who set up intricate terraces and irrigation system, which is still used today.

Marg the Tom Tom had a little barmy sending us round in circles (Granada even got to Marg) but eventually got her act together and got us on the high road to Lanjaron. Once out of Granada it didn't take long for the roads to vertical. Half way up and we turned off (due to another cock up by Marg) and ended up at a rather nice lake and dam. Nothing for it, a spot of lunch overlooking the water. With full bellies we set off but first a drive around the dam. We



**Bronze statue and water fountain at Lanjaron**



turned left, went down a steep bend and then ground to a halt. The road hadn't been used for a long time and it was completely overgrown. We looked further down the track, it got worse and so we decided to give this road a miss. Craig couldn't turn Vin around as the road was too narrow, so he had to reverse up hill and round a corner. I jumped out and ran ahead for any on coming traffic. As usual, Craig did a sterling job reversing Vin to safely.

Back on track and not long before we were in the middle of a wind farm. Normally you pass the turbines at base level but not here, the road wound around and straight through the middle of the farm, so we got pretty close to the blades. It felt very odd indeed. Every time we turned a tight bend we were greeted with whooshing blades. It felt like we were in the middle of the 'war of the worlds' and any minute David Essex would burst in to song and the tripods would hurl fire bombs. Once out of danger, it wasn't long before we reached our first stop Lanjaron. We parked on the outskirts and our initial impressions weren't that great. Concrete flats with bars and shutters at every window. We weren't too sure if the trek in town was going to be



worth it. We ploughed on and once on the Main Street things started to look up. We walked up and down the street and alleys and the place started to grow on us. Little alleys that led to beautiful courtyards all decorated in spring flowers. The most bazaar but well maintained house was built under the road! Imagine the road for a roof...bet your always tired...bun bun. The town of Lanjaron is famous for its spring water and everywhere you look there are taps spurting our fresh, mountain chilled spring water. Lanjaron is to Spain as Buxton is to England...bottled water in every supermarket and newsagents across the country. In addition, the village baths offer natural spa facilities which attract all the crinkly owd buggers in the summer months.

After our walk we filled Vin with lovely spring water and soaked the bedding and all the chair covers. Then we drove a couple of kilometers out of Lanjaron to a lay by that overlooked the village and all the terraces, which looked like layers of rich green wedding cake. It was a wonderful view, if not a little scary because of the sheer drop as we peered over the ledge. Behind a gushing waterfall with what looked like a potential nice walk. Then we

spotted an old gentleman and his Jack Russell clambering down the rock at the side of the waterfall. He came over, we smiled and said hola. He gave us one almighty grin with a wee chuckle that made his one remaining bottom tooth wiggle frantically. Then he started to waffle. We explained we only speak a little Spanish but that didn't matter, he was adamant he wanted a conversation. We smiled and nodded and tried hard to follow his gist. We think he said it was mating season for the mountain goats and he was looking to catch a few males and take them to market to make a few bucks. But knowing us he probably said I've lost my dentures, you don't

happen to have a set that I could borrow? With El Uno Peg a dot in the distance and the washing on full soak we opted for a nice glass of wine. What better way to end the day and watch the sun set behind Lanjaron... well until the midges heard we were in town!

Our parking spot overlooking Lanjaron. Vin parked on the edge of a cliff. The photo doesn't show it but between us and the town is one almighty drop



# OLAH

This week, I have spent more time under the motorhome than before and with dripping water, its been a rather damp week. Thankfully though no lasting damage!

We had a few problems with our alarm and so this weeks tip...if you arrange an alarm to be installed ask the engineer to install the keypad in an accessible but hidden place. If your remote packs up or you are in an area that interferes with the infrared signal then you have an alternative way of activating and deactivating the alarm. No pictures

Towards the end of the week the table handle lost its thread. I tried to fix it but didn't have the right bolts, so now on the look out for a rubber door wedge to slide in the runners and stop it sliding around. Somehow, I don't think I will one in Sierra Nevada!



Underside of the table

# OLAH!

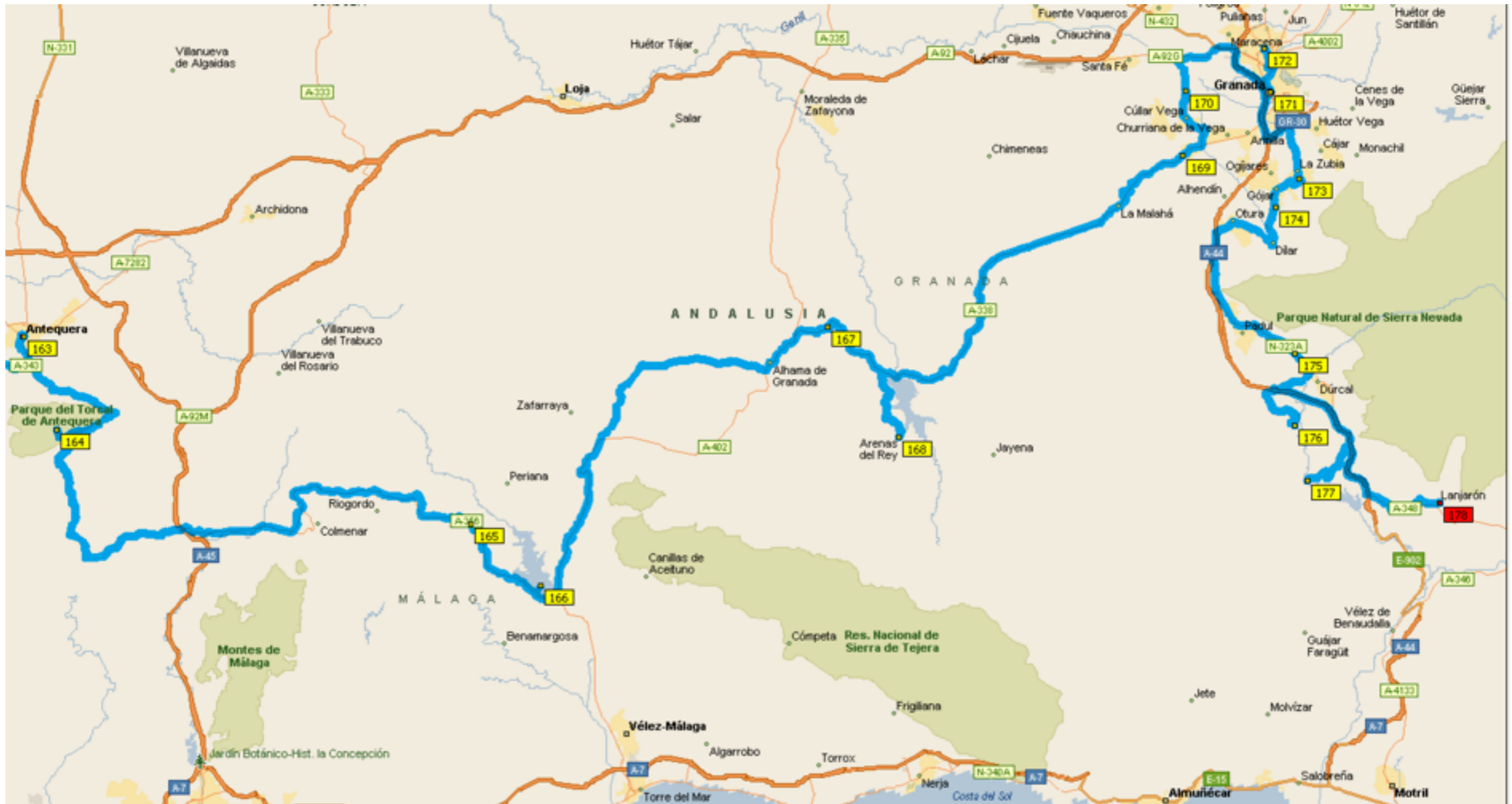




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## OUR ROUTE, THE LAST 8 DAYS

# Antequera to Lanjaron



# OUR TOP 10 PLACES



1. SEVILLE



2. EL CHORRO



3. SALAMANCA



4. EL ROCIO



5. BELEM, LISBON



6. ALVOR



7. MAFRA



8. EVORA



9. MERTOLA



10. LAGOS

# OUR HIDDEN GEMS



1. PRAIA DO MARINAH



2. PRAIA DO ARRIFES



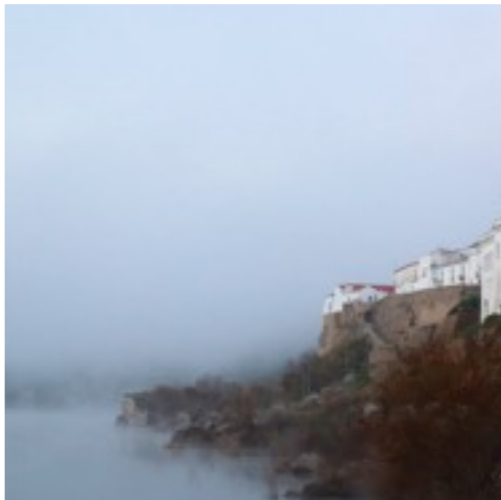
3. PRAIA DO  
CARVELHO



4. PRAIA DO  
ALMARGEM



5. VILA DO BISPO



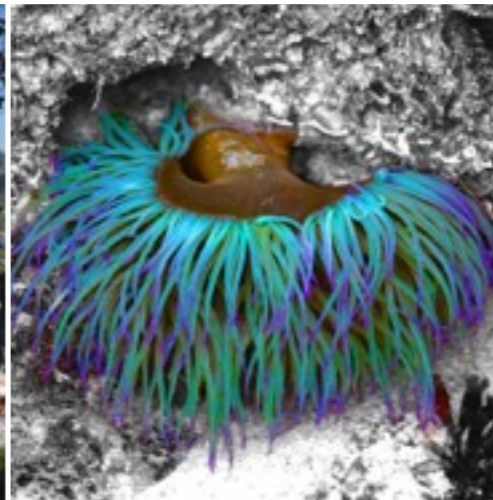
6. MÈRTOLA RIVER  
BANK



7. PRAIA DO AMADO



8. MONTEJAQUE



9. PORTO COVO



10. ILHA DO FARO