

Path Alhama de Murcia – Gebas

GR 252-1

<p>- <u>Departure Point:</u> Alhama de Murcia (Jardín de los Patos), 185 m altitude.</p> <p>- <u>Arrival Point:</u> Gebas (the viewpoint), 429 m. altitude.</p> <p>- <u>Approximate Distance:</u> 11.23 km.</p> <p>- <u>Approximate Duration:</u> 4 or 5 hours walking.</p>	<p>- <u>Physical Difficulty:</u> Medium.</p> <p>- <u>Ascent and Descent Drop:</u> 448 m.</p> <p>- <u>Cartography:</u> Map 933-III of Alhama de Murcia. Esc. 1/25000 of the IGN.</p> <p><i>More information:</i> www.sierraespuna.com</p>
<p>- <u>Observations:</u> This walk is a variant of the GR 252 and links up Alhama de Murcia with Gebas through <i>La Sierra de la Muela</i> coming out at its top. From there we can admire the massif of Sierra Espuña and also the <i>Guadalentín</i> valley. To see this valley, we have to walk down the south side until the canal road at the intersection between the Tajo and Segura rivers. This road keeps going at the right side and cross the <i>Cojos</i> and <i>Hondo</i> ravines until arriving to <i>La Casa de la Fuente de los Arrieros</i> and finally in Gebas.</p> <p>We can also make a visit to Gebas for the viewpoint in the protected site of Los Barrancos de Gebas, a group of ravines and watercourses that, finally, flow down in the Embalse de Algeciras.</p>	

From *El Jardín de los Patos* in Alhama, we will walk up by the Feria Street, running alongside the Bishop Church *San Lázaro* and the Archaeological Museum "*Los Baños*". At the left hand side of this museum, we will walk by *Vergara Pérez Street* (before "*Empedrá Street*") until we reach *La Fuente del Caño*, from where we will keep to the right hand side by the stairs until the Castle's Hill. From under the ruined great wall, we will continue along the way by a small canal. During the Muslim era, this canal had carried water from the Collao springs to the urban centre.

The Castle's Hill has preserved one of its defensive towers and its surrounding great wall, as well as its little canal and ceramics remains. It is better not to touch anything knowing that, every summer the Town Hall promotes a work camp whose aim is to restore the Castle. The way narrows when it becomes closer to a group of cypresses. Normally, we would go down by the path that leads us to the Hermitage *Candelaria*, but we will continue straight by the way that turns to the left by the *Cuesta del Salto* path. This path hides the irrigation piping devices and electric cables. We then arrive at the gate of a citric orchard, from which we will start the ascent to *La Muela* by the path rehabilitated by *Natursport* and by the Environment Committee (Km 2.25 / Alt. 275m). We will go up by a path with a wooden handrail towards *La Muela*.

Along this part of the route, we will see a very varied landscape. The path goes up between pine trees that are the result from a reforestation program. Some of the pathways have stone steps and the path will turn to the right (next to the panoramic view sign), down in the direction of a sandstone wall which is the nesting place of many birds.

After walking on floorboards, we take the way to the Hill of *La Muela* (Km 3.67 / Alt. 452m) which we will walk by on the left hand side. (Information sign). Thus, we reach *La Casa de la Muela* (Km 4.08 / Alt. 487m). We take the path at the left hand side that, after 3 minutes leads us to the viewpoint of *La Muela* from where we can admire Alhama and its market gardens. Here we can see a panoramic view board elaborated by both, the secondary school "*Miguel Hernández*" of Alhama and *Natursport* during a campaign for the natural and cultural recovery of the site.

Taking the path that starts from the house, we will easily walk down towards *Sierra Espuña*, passing on the right side a cross (Km 4.75 / Alt. 457m) and crossing a landing strip of a program against the forest fires (Km 5.09 / Alt.477m).

On the high hills of the South side of *La Muela*, we pass by on the left side another cross (Km 5.56 / Alt. 457m) and we go down until reaching the asphalted road of the canal intersection between the Tajo and the Segura rivers that we will follow at the right side (Km 5.98 / Alt. 477).

This solitary road hides a canal for 1.4 km, surrounding the North side of *La Muela*. Carrying on down this path until you will find a straight way back before a sign "maximum speed 40".

This is the point from where we will leave the asphalted path (in the same bend), to walk down on the left side by a path through the pines. We will follow this way until crossing the ravines

of Los Cojos and linking up with a path on the other side that take you up to a field of almond trees that we walk alongside on the right. There is not any path.

After a short while, we will enter a pathway (Km 7.60 / Alt. 379m) that carries on up until arriving on a flat with pines, that turns at the left side on a cultivated ravine. On a high point (Km 7.88 / Alt. 379m) where there is a cross at the left, we will walk down on the right next to some orange trees and to a white hut, until entering on to the path to *La Cañada del Cucharón* (Km 8.07 / Alt. 385m) from where we will turn to the right seeing Gebas at the bottom.

Further along (Km 8.86/ Alt. 357 m), the path hides the pipeline "Cartagena -Pradollano", finishes up by the ravine named Hondo. We will have to cross it - there is not a path so until we go up the road in front, we will keep to the left side. Be careful with the bed of the ravine because usually it carries water and the mud can be unpleasant. We cross the watercourse of Algeciras that comes down from El Berro and flows into the Embalse de Algeciras. A long time ago, in the house at the right side, there was a spring named Los Arrieros, where usually the traders had a rest. Without leaving the asphalted road, we arrive to Gebas Bajo (rural cottages) and we carry on up, following the GR 252 sign, until reaching the Hermitage of Gebas, where there is a monument for the pilgrims. (Km 10.71 / Alt. 425 m)

Following the road with streetlights, we walk pass by the houses of El Mojon, where there is a path on the right side until we see the viewpoint of Gebas. Further on, we will go through to the landmark that determines the frontier between Alhama and Mula. We will then arrive at the restaurant called "El Mirador", which finishes the variant with the GR 252 walk that links Mazarron y Caravaca. (Km 11.23 / Alt. 429 m). From this point, we can follow the GR 252 towards El Berro and Totana or onwards to Casas Nuevas and Caravaca de la Cruz. This latter is a pilgrimage way to Santa Cruz.

