

# Spain : El Chorro

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This book belongs to:

**Cover photo:** Paul Phillips on *Arabesque (7a)* -  
*page 113* - Escalera Arabe. Photo: Mike Hutton

**This page:** Dave Henderson on *Madre  
salvaje (7c)* - *page 215* - at Sector Triangulo,  
Desplomilandia. Photo: Mark Glaister

AWESOME WALLS CLIMBING CENTRES, INFLUENCING THE CLIMBING WORLD SINCE 1999!

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# AWESOME WALLS

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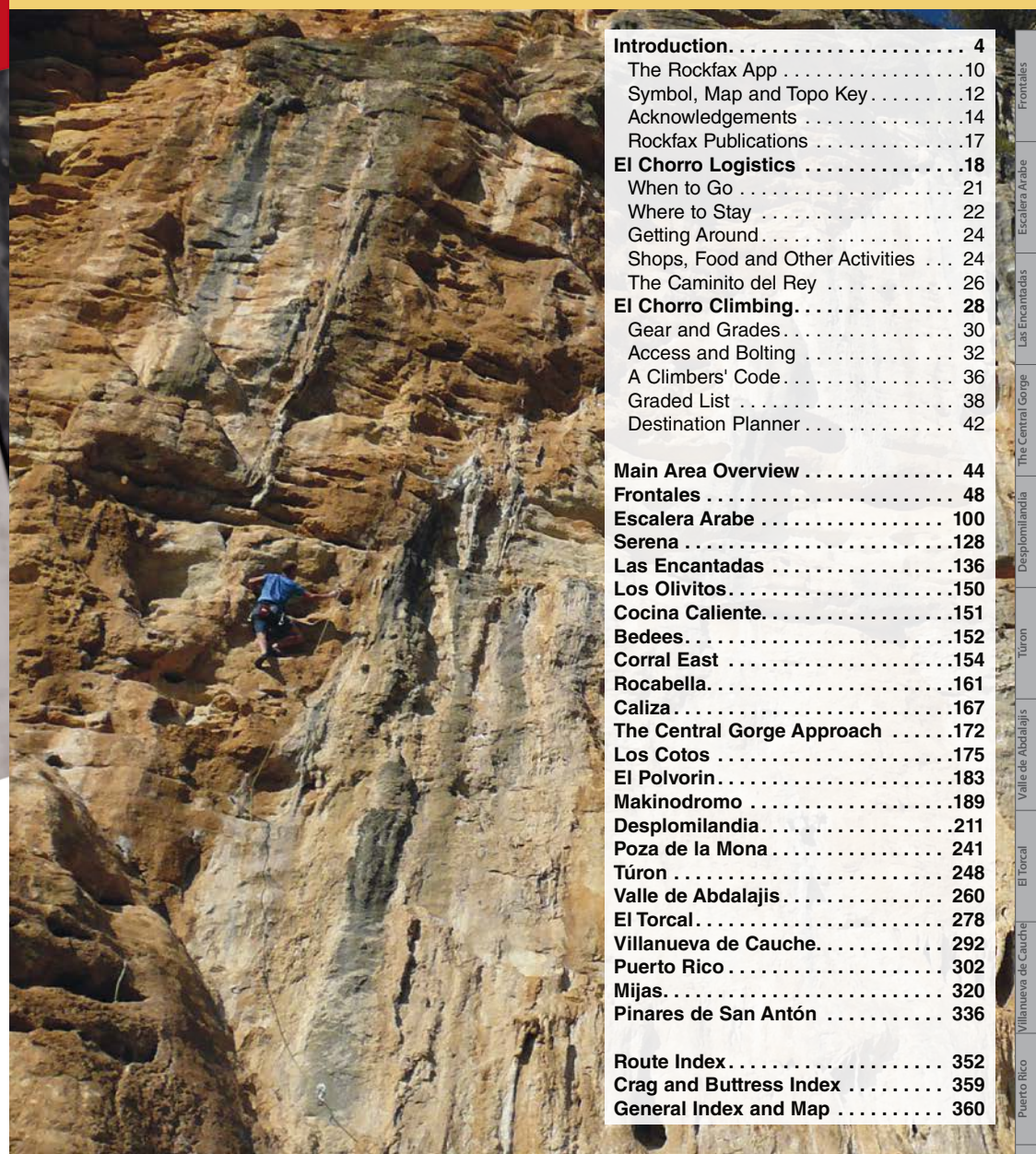


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Duncan Booth making the most of some cool evening conditions on *Al hauria* (7a+) - page 204 - at El Chorro's most famous crag, Makinodromo. Photo: Mark Glaister

### Guidebook Footnote

The inclusion of a climbing area in this guidebook does not mean that you have a right of access or the right to climb upon it. The descriptions of routes within this guide are recorded for historical reasons only and no reliance should be placed on the accuracy of the description. The grades set in this guide are a fair assessment of the difficulty of the climbs. Climbers who attempt a route of a particular standard should use their own judgment as to whether they are proficient enough to tackle that route. This book is not a substitute for experience and proper judgment. The authors, publisher and distributors of this book do not recognise any liability for injury or damage caused to, or by, climbers, third parties, or property arising from such persons seeking reliance on this guidebook as an assurance for their own safety.

Frontales  
Escalera Arabe  
Las Encantadas  
The Central Gorge  
Desplomilandia  
Túron  
Valle de Abdalajis  
El Torcal  
Villanueva de Cauche  
Puerto Rico  
Mijas  
Pinares de San Antón



Ola Stepien on the beautiful slab of *Julay lama* (5c) - page 253 - at Túron. The focus of the climbing covered in this book is the cliffs around the village of El Chorro. These have plenty to keep most people happy for many visits and the advantage of being reachable without having a car. However, if you do have a car, the area has some great crags like Túron relatively close by. A day away from El Chorro is a definite bonus when you can come to places as beautiful as this and with quality climbing to match. Photo: Mike Hutton

Lying just 50km from the shores of the Mediterranean and the Andalucian city of Málaga, El Chorro is one of the world's best known climbing destinations. Back in the 1980s, it was one of the first venues in Europe to be equipped with sport routes, with the initial developments being close to the village and within the gorge itself. Since then, the number of crags and routes has multiplied at a steady rate and now extends across the impressive Frontales cliffs that loom over the village. Beyond this the Andalucian landscape provides limestone and crags aplenty, many the equal of the best on offer around the village. Some of these tremendous near neighbours, such as the higher crags of El Torcal, Túron and Desplomilandia, and the coastal tufa-clad Puerto Rico are covered in this Rockfax - all are within a reasonable drive of El Chorro for day visits.

The single and multi-pitch routes on offer and the grade range of the 1584 climbs covered in the guidebook, will satisfy all who are planning a visit. The routes range from world-class hard routes, through a vast selection of superb mid-grade pitches, to an ever-increasing number of sectors and whole crags that give climbers operating in the easier grades plenty of choice. As well as the plethora of single-pitch sport climbs there is an increasing number of multi-pitch fully-bolted lines, with a number of routes of up to around ten pitches across the grade range.

The small village of El Chorro, sitting at the base of the massive gorge, has become the centrepiece of climbing over the years. Local accommodation businesses have popped up aimed at catering for the specific needs of climbers and there is now a great choice of places to stay, ranging from large guesthouses to small self-contained villas and apartments - see p.22.

Following the re-opening of the Caminito del Rey in 2015, the area has undergone a major boost as a tourist destination and the village is now a bustling centre. A consequence has been the restriction of climbing in some of the older climbing areas like the Lower Gorge itself, although luckily the increase in routes available elsewhere has more than compensated for this.

The region has much to discover beyond climbing. The coastal fringe is heavily developed for tourism, but the inland mountains are a total contrast, dotted with classic Andalucian villages that are excellent places to soak up some of the area's relaxed culture and eat at the many bars and restaurants. Conversely, the cities of Sevilla and Granada offer an opportunity to sample Spanish city life at its grandest.

El Chorro's reputation for top notch sport climbing, stunning countryside and its near-perfect 'off season' climbing weather make it an ideal destination. Whether you are a first-time winter sun seeker or long-term visitor returning looking for something new to do, you will be assured of some great climbing and the opportunity to bask in the undoubted charm of this lovely part of the world.

### Previous Rockfax Publications

Rockfax has been producing information for El Chorro since as long ago as 1994 when we published a set of yellow topo cards. After that, it took third billing in three editions of the popular *Costa Blanca, Mallorca, El Chorro* guidebook which spanned 1996 to 2001. In 2008 El Chorro got its own dedicated Rockfax authored by Mark Glaister. This current edition *Spain : El Chorro* marks 25 years of coverage and its contents reflects not only the changes in numbers of routes, venues, fashions and advances in guidebook production, but also the massive shift in El Chorro's development brought about by a changing world and the restoration and resurgence of the Caminito del Rey as a globally renowned tourist site. The information in this book will be published in print and digitally simultaneously with its inclusion in the Rockfax app. The digital version will allow us to update the information more regularly as the development of this outstanding climbing area continues.

#### El Chorro (topo cards)

*Rab Anderson, Mike Owen and Alan James - January 1994*

#### Costa Blanca, Mallorca, El Chorro

*Alan James, Alan Cameron-Duff and Rab Anderson - September 1996*

#### Costa Blanca, Mallorca, El Chorro

*Alan James, Alan Cameron-Duff and Rab Anderson - November 1998*

#### Costa Blanca, Mallorca, El Chorro

*Alan James and Mark Glaister - April 2001*

#### El Chorro

*Mark Glaister - December 2008*

#### Spain : El Chorro

*Mark Glaister - December 2018*

### Other Publications



#### Marbella, Guia de Escalada

*Pedro Soto Guerrero - 2012*

A pamphlet-style guide to ten crags in the Marbella area including Puerto Rico. The other crags covered offer multi-pitch trad and sport climbing.



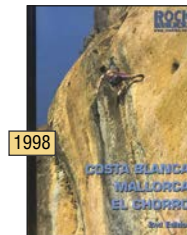
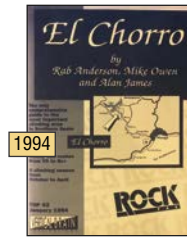
#### Andalucía, Guia de Escalada Deportiva (2nd Edition)

*by David Munilla, Ediciones Desnivel - 2013*

A large guidebook of drawn topos covering a vast amount of the climbing in Andalucía. The approach descriptions to the crags are reasonably accurate, but it has no details on the quality or style of the climbs.

**Cartowall.com** - An interesting website that has online topos based on high resolution images. A good place to visit for new route information, access information and news of local climbing events.

**bernabefernandez.com** - A web site run by a prominent local climber with good topos especially for the multi-pitch routes.



Theo Moore showing full concentration on the crucial steep moves of *Cosas caseras* (7a) - page 233 - on Buena Sombra at Desplomilandia. This crag is the most popular place to head for when it gets really hot offering both altitude and shade. It is an even more attractive spot when you consider the beautiful outlook and the possibility to stop off at one of a number of fine restaurants by the lake at the end of the day. Photo: Mike Hutton

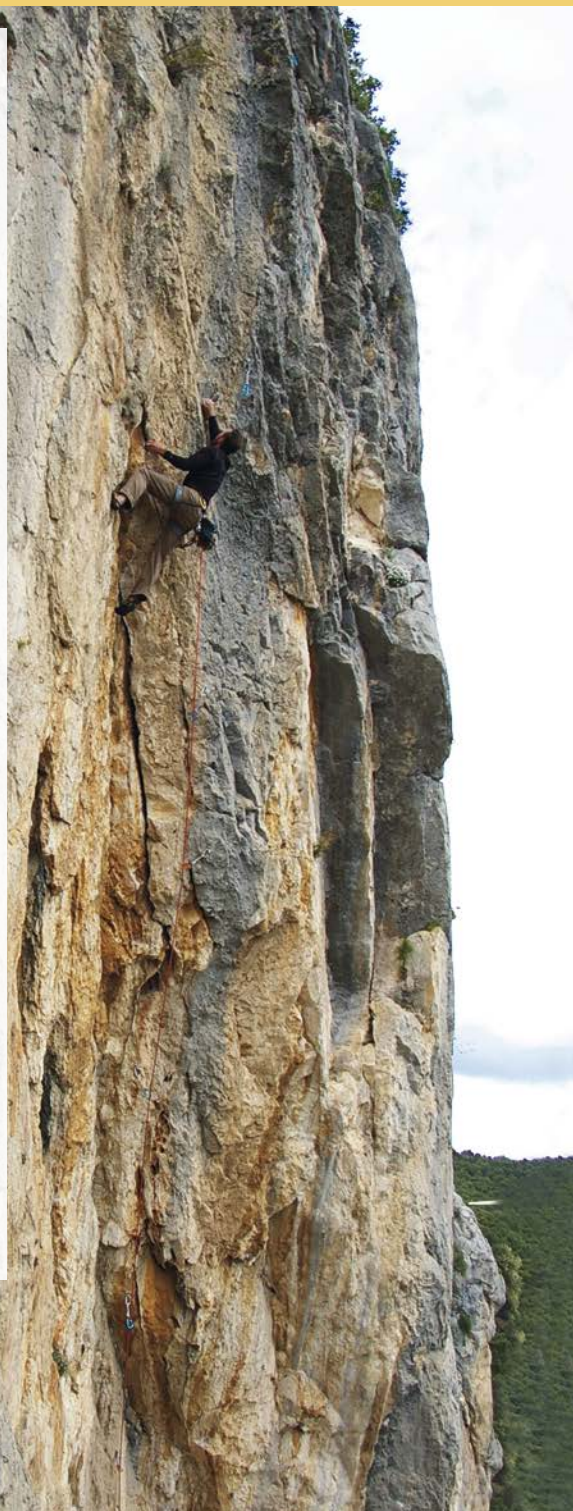
### New Developments

New route development in El Chorro is not often recorded publicly and getting hold of names and grades can be difficult. In many cases we have decided grades and quality simply by climbing the routes, however this isn't always possible with some of the harder routes and very recent additions. We have included routes in this book without grades and some also have a '?' star symbol. Obviously this isn't very helpful information, but we think it is better to include these routes giving people an indication that something has been developed and, importantly, linking it to a name and location. This makes it easy for people to report names, grades and quality and we appreciate all feedback.

**Route Names** - Our regular practice when we don't know route names is to give made-up names to aid in identification. In most cases the new names are simply descriptive and hopefully inoffensive. We are very keen to change the route names when we become aware of the correct version. We have done this with a lot of routes in this guide which now have their true names given by their first ascensionist and not the ones we made up back in 2008. If you become aware of the names/grades for any of the unknown routes, or have strong opinions on routes where we have given a grade and star rating, then please let us know and we will update the information database we maintain for this area.

The best place to give feedback is through the route listing on the UKC Logbook pages [ukclimbing.com/logbook](http://ukclimbing.com/logbook). The app version of the data in this book will be updated from time to time with new developments as we become aware of them.

Moving out of the steep corner of the sustained 6 Estrellas (6c) - page 104 - on sector McClaud at Frontales. This buttress was one of the major new developments following the last guide in 2008 and has a great set of routes which have become popular. Photo: Sophie Baring



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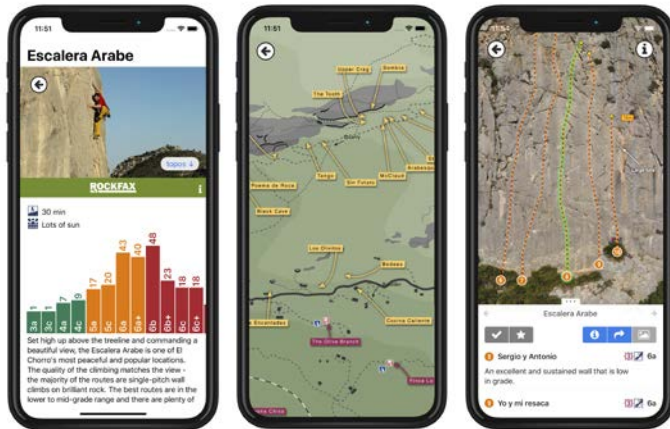
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Tum  
Valle de Abdalais  
El Torcal  
Villanueva de Caucite  
Puerto Rico  
Mijas  
Pinar de San Anton

The Rockfax App brings together all the Rockfax climbing information with UKC Logbooks and presents it in a user-friendly package for use on Apple iOS devices (Android version to follow).



The heart of the App is the Rockfax crag and route information covering individual crags, or bundles of crags, in 'areas' which correspond roughly to printed guidebooks. From the end of 2018, the main data is sold by subscription so that you can purchase access to all the Rockfax guidebook information for a period of time, from one month to yearly. Once you are subscribed, you will have access to every digital Rockfax guidebook for the period of your subscription. You can download the main data and store it on your device, so you don't need any signal to be able to read the descriptions and see the topos and maps. There is also plenty of free data available without subscription, enabling you to get a really good impression of what the App is like without shelling out any money.

The Rockfax App itself is a free download and incredibly useful in its own right. It contains a detailed crag map linked to the UKClimbing crags database (currently with basic information and route lists for around 20,000 crags worldwide). The map also displays all the 4,000+ listings from the UKClimbing Directory of climbing walls, outdoor shops, climbing clubs, outdoor-specific accommodation and instructors and guides, amongst others.



To find the App, search for 'Rockfax App' in Google or on the appropriate store.

### UKC Logbooks

An incredibly popular method of logging your climbing is to use the [UKClimbing.com](http://UKClimbing.com) logbooks system. This database lists more than 443,000 routes and nearly 20,000 crags; so far, more than 37,000 users have recorded almost 6 million ascents! To set up your own logbook all you need to do is register at [UKClimbing.com](http://UKClimbing.com) and click on the logbook tab. Once set up you will be able to record every ascent you make, when you did it, what style you climbed it in and who you did it with. Each entry has a place for your own notes. You can also add your vote to the grade/star system which is used by guidebook writers from many publishers to get opinions on grades and quality of routes. The logbook can be private, public or restricted to your own climbing partners only.

The Rockfax App can be linked to your [UKClimbing.com](http://UKClimbing.com) user account and logbook so that you can record your activity while at the crag and look at photos, comments and votes on the routes. To do this you will need a 3G/4G data connection. You can also look at the UKC logbooks to see if anyone has climbed your chosen route recently to check on conditions.

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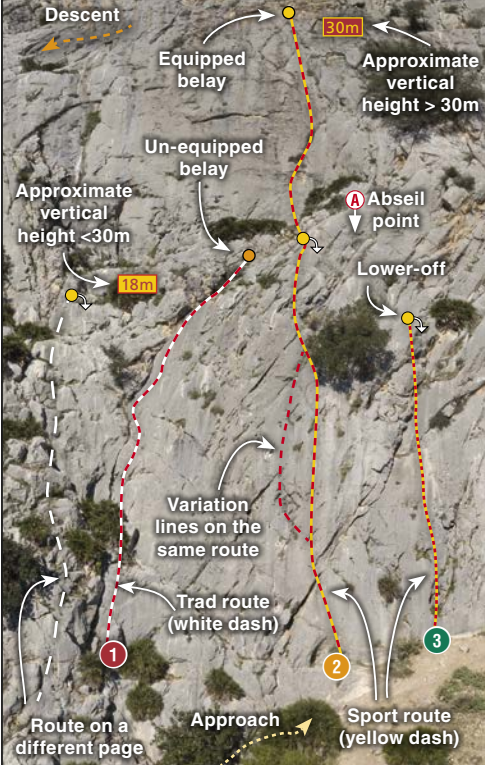
Route Symbols

- A good route which is well worth climbing.
- A very good route, one of the best on the crag.
- A brilliant route, one of the best in the area.
- A significant route which is one of the best of its type and grade in the book.
- A recent route, or one for which there is little information about quality and/or grade.
- Technical climbing requiring good balance and technique, or complex and tricky moves.
- Powerful climbing; roofs, steep rock, low lock-offs or long moves off small holds.
- Sustained climbing; either lots of hard moves or steep rock giving pumpy climbing.
- Fingery climbing with significant small holds on the hard sections.
- Fluttery climbing with big fall potential and scary run-outs.
- A long reach is helpful, or even essential, for one or more of the moves.
- Loose rock may be encountered.
- A small or full rack of gear is required.
- A route which shouldn't be climbed because of access restrictions.

Crag Symbols

- Angle of the approach walk to the buttress with approximate time.
- Approximate time that the buttress is in the direct sun (when it is shining).
- The buttress can offer shelter from cold winds and it may be a good suntrap in colder weather.
- The buttress is high and exposed to the wind.
- Some routes on the buttress may be possible in the rain.
- A buttress with some multi-pitch routes on it.
- Some or all of the routes may be affected by a restriction. Check the crag information for details.
- Deserted** - Currently under-used and usually quiet. Less good routes or a remote area.
- Quiet** - Less popular sections, or good buttresses with awkward approaches.
- Busy** - Places you will seldom be alone. Good routes and easy access.
- Crowded** - The most popular sections of the most popular crags which are always busy.

Map and Topo Key



**Parking GPS Locations**

GPS 36.910650  
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Parking spots are marked with blue GPS boxes and a QR code. Scan the QR code with your phone camera, and it should open into a navigation app which will take you straight to the parking. You can also add the coordinates manually if required.



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El Torcal  
Villanueva de Cañete  
Puerto Rico  
Mijas  
Píñares de San Antonio

It is now more than 25 years since I first visited El Chorro and the changes that have taken place are quite astounding and continue at a pace. The major differences are the amount of climbing on offer, the development of the Caminito del Rey and the changes in El Chorro itself. However, one thing has not changed - it is still a brilliant place to climb.

There are many people who have helped with the guidebook, but first I must give a huge thank you to all those who have put up the many climbs covered in this book for all to enjoy and keeping El Chorro in the premier league of world-class climbing destinations - it's hard work but you have done a great job. With this book we will be supporting the funding effort for bolting in the area - see p.34

Two people who have been especially helpful are Nico Rando from the *Federación Andaluza de Montañismo* (F.A.M.) and Manuel Gómez Trujillo from the *Asociación Andaluza de Escaladores* (A.A.E.E.) who have helped with access, names and grades and other information.

We are very grateful to all those who have contributed to the documentation of information in the area. The bulk of the work in the earlier Rockfax editions was undertaken by Mike Owen and Rab Anderson, which was based in part on Chris Craggs' *Andalucía Rock Climbs* (1992). Other local guides have been produced by Pedro Garcia, Juan Carlos Perez, Javier Romero Rubiols and David Munilla. The Puerto Rico climbing is covered in the Marbella guidebook by Pedro Soto Guerrero. The excellent web based CartoWall is a very useful resource that often is updated with new lines, sectors, crags and access information.

Thanks especially to all who have helped with the previous guidebooks and to the following for contributing to this edition: Paul Cox, Bridget Glaister, John and Stella Adams, Phil Haigh, John and Jen Warner, Bev Jowett, The UKC/H crew, Victoria Da Ga, Ola Stepien, Susan at Almona Chica, Mel and Gary at The Olive Branch, Ruth Gibson, Steve James, Matthew Thompson, Tobias Getz at Climbing-Lodge, Juan Hofer at Finca La Campana, Helen and Alan at Finca Los Llanos, Paul Harrison, Silvia Fitzpatrick, Steve Crowe.

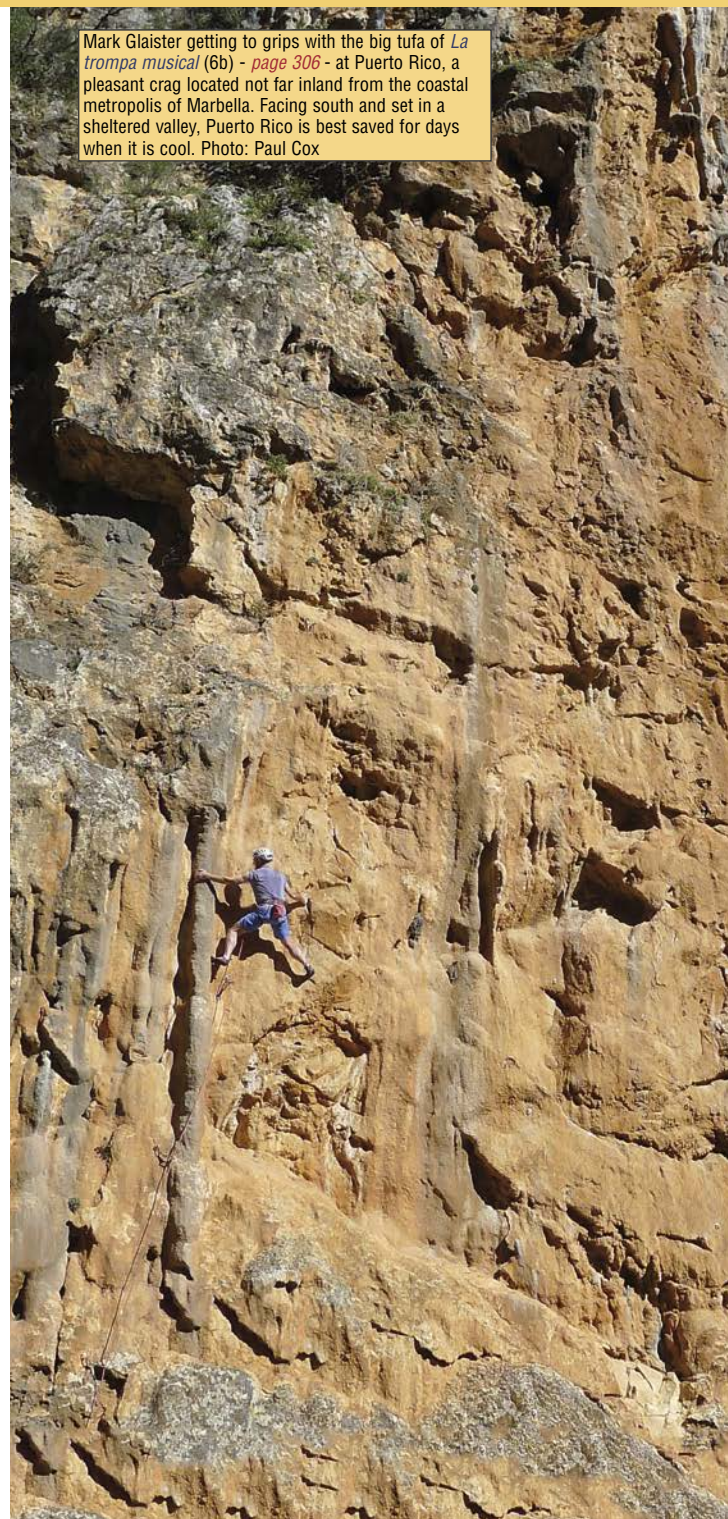
Special thanks to Sophie Baring and Misha Bruml for their input and enthusiasm for the climbing in El Chorro.

The photography in this book has been supplemented with some stunning contributions from Mike Hutton, Chris Dainton, Dave Pickford, Keith Sharples, Sam Parsons, David Plews, Sophie Baring, Kieran Duncan, Matthew Thompson, Misha Bruml, Paul Cox, Steve Crowe and Mike Delderfield.

Thanks also to Sherri Davy for her work with the advertising, Alan James, and Rebecca Ting for her proofing.

*Mark Glaister, October 2018*

Mark Glaister getting to grips with the big tufa of *La trompa musical* (6b) - page 306 - at Puerto Rico, a pleasant crag located not far inland from the coastal metropolis of Marbella. Facing south and set in a sheltered valley, Puerto Rico is best saved for days when it is cool. Photo: Paul Cox



Rockfax is grateful to the following companies who have supported this guidebook.

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**Guías de el Refugio** - p.35  
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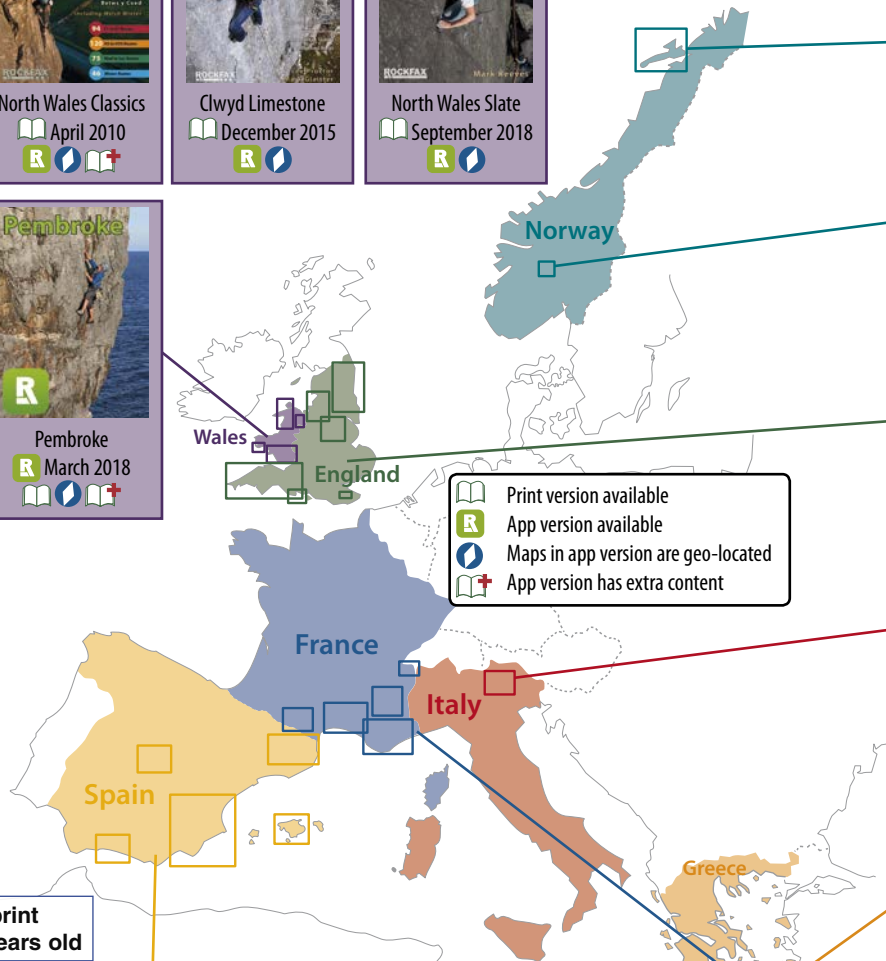
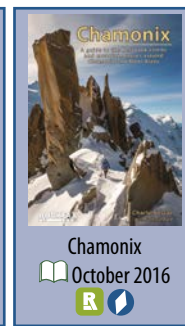
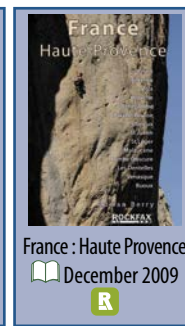
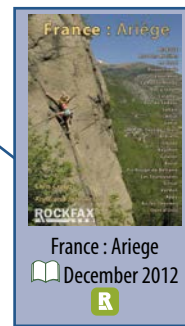
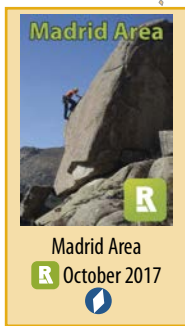
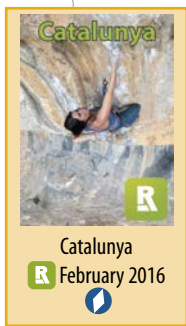
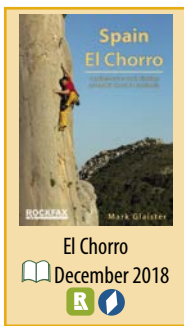
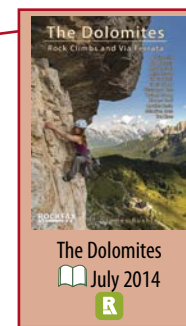
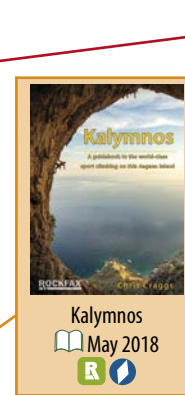
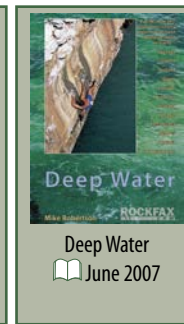
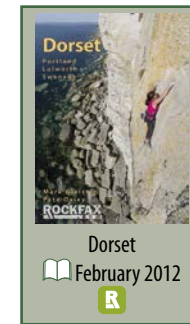
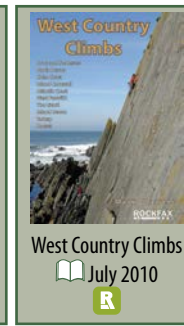
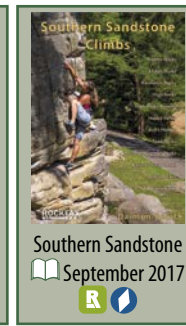
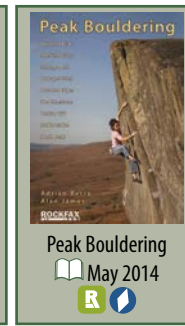
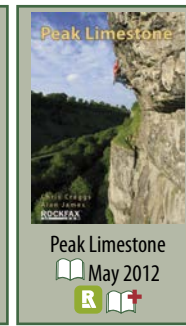
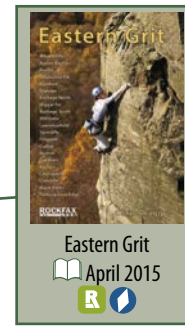
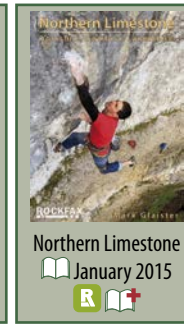
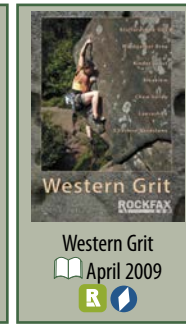
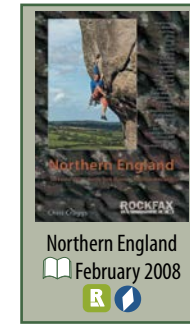
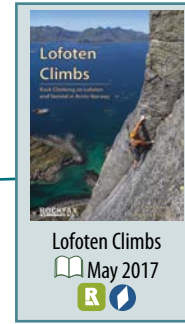
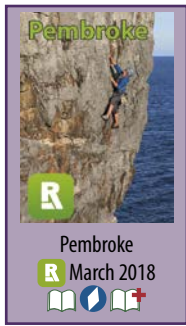
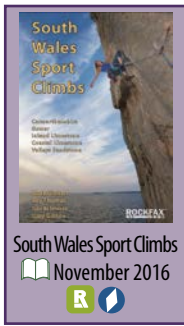
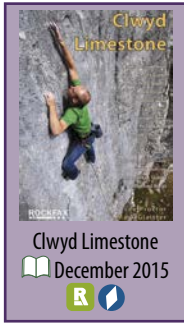
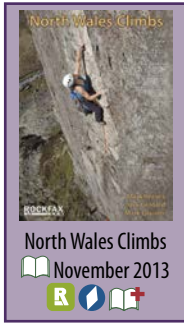
**La Almona Chica** - p.37

**The Climbers' Shop** - p.9  
[climbers-shop.com](http://climbers-shop.com)  
[joe-brown.com](http://joe-brown.com)

**The Rock Climbing Company** -  
inside back cover  
[rockclimbingcompany.co.uk](http://rockclimbingcompany.co.uk)

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# El Chorro Logistics



Victoria De Ga on the 11 pitch *Rogelio* (6a) - page 124 - at sector Suiza, Escalera Arabe. Since the last Rockfax book to El Chorro was published, a number of fully-bolted multi-pitch routes have been added to the walls on Frontales and Escalera Arabe. These cover the full grade range and include a number of excellent routes at 5c/6a. Photo: Dan Bailey



Alan James heading for the mini-summit on the well-positioned face of *Magigi* (5c) - page 107 - at the top of the steps on Escalera Arabe. Photo: Martin McKenna

### When to Go

The best weather for climbing is normally to be found between the middle of October and the beginning of May. During this period the air temperatures can be perfect and the options of sun, shade and/or altitude can be utilised to keep the ambient temperature comfortable. In the winter months it can be cold so a warm coat and hat are essential, but there are plenty of good sunny crags available so it is certainly worth considering in December, January and February. El Chorro is at its best in the autumn and spring, although it can get very hot so shorts, sun cream and a sun hat should not be forgotten. Wet weather does occasionally close in, but the chances of a complete washout are low and there is usually somewhere dry to climb. Summer from June to mid-September is worth avoiding as inland temperatures can hit a stifling 40°C! If you do get caught during a hot spell, the shade at Desplomilandia or the altitude of El Torcal might be cool enough to venture out on to the rock without frying - check the Destination Planner on p.42.

El Chorro Averages	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Temperature (maximum)	15	16	18	20	24	30	35	34	30	24	18	15
Temperature (minimum)	6	7	8	10	13	17	20	21	18	15	10	8
Sunny days / month	10	11	11	11	12	21	26	24	17	13	11	11
Rainfall in mm / month	90	82	74	51	35	13	2	4	18	64	100	99
Wet days (>0.1mm) / month	7	6	6	6	4	3	2	1	3	7	6	6

### Getting There

The closest major airport to El Chorro is Málaga International Airport. This is one of the best served and most popular airports in Europe, with flights from all major European destinations throughout the year. Prices are some of the cheapest available to any climbing destination in Spain.

### Travel Insurance

It is strongly advised that travel, medical and rescue insurance is taken out before undertaking a trip. If you are in any doubt, just ask someone who has had cause to use it! You should also make sure you have an EHIC (European Health Insurance Card), but following Brexit there may be changes to the arrangements relating to the EHIC.

### Public Holidays

It is well worth taking note of the Spanish public holidays as most of the shops, bars and cafes are closed on these days and public transport will be very limited. 1st January (New Year), 6th January (Epiphany), 28th February (Andalucia Day), March/April (Good Friday), 1st May (Labour Day), 15th August (Assumption), 12th October (National Day), 1st November (All Saints' Day), 6th December (Spanish Constitution Day), 8th December (The Immaculate Conception), 25th December (Christmas Day).

Frontales  
Escalera Arabe  
Las Encantadas  
The Central Gorge  
Desplomilandia  
Turon  
Valle de Abdalajis  
El Torcal  
Villanueva de Cauche  
Puerto Rico  
Mijas  
Pinares de San Antonio

Frontales  
Escalera Arabe  
Las Encantadas  
The Central Gorge  
Desplomilandia  
Turon  
Valle de Abdalajis  
El Torcal  
Villanueva de Cauche  
Puerto Rico  
Mijas  
Pinares de San Antonio

## Climbing Guesthouses

There are a number of excellent refugio/guesthouse-style set-ups in El Chorro that offer a good standard of accommodation and are fully geared towards the rock climbing market (during the climbing season). A big advantage for those travelling on their own is that there are always plenty of other climbers staying at these spots and many of the crags can be reached on foot. The three places listed below also offer self-catering apartments.

### Climbing-Lodge - *outside back cover*

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[Climbing-Lodge.com](http://Climbing-Lodge.com)

### The Olive Branch - *inside front cover*

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[olivebranchelchorro.co.uk](http://olivebranchelchorro.co.uk)

### Finca La Campana - *see p.31*

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Tel: +34 626963942

[fincalacampana.com](http://fincalacampana.com)

## Apartments, Villas and Cottages

There are many accommodation options available in the immediate surrounds of El Chorro. These vary from small cottage-style terraces, to huge villas complete with pools. Plenty of it is within walking distance of the crags and El Chorro village for those without a car. The surrounding villages and towns also have many places of all shapes and sizes to rent and will be of interest to those looking for a broader selection of shops, eating and cafe/bar options such as those in the bustling towns of Álora, Ardales or Valle de Abdalajís. The cost of accommodation is fairly reasonable and you should look for figures from around €100 to €150 per person, per week.

### Casa El Chorro - *see p.35*

Email: [info@casaelchorro.com](mailto:info@casaelchorro.com)

Tel: +34 609694302

[casaelchorro.com](http://casaelchorro.com)

### Cortijo Don Rodrigo - *see p.37*

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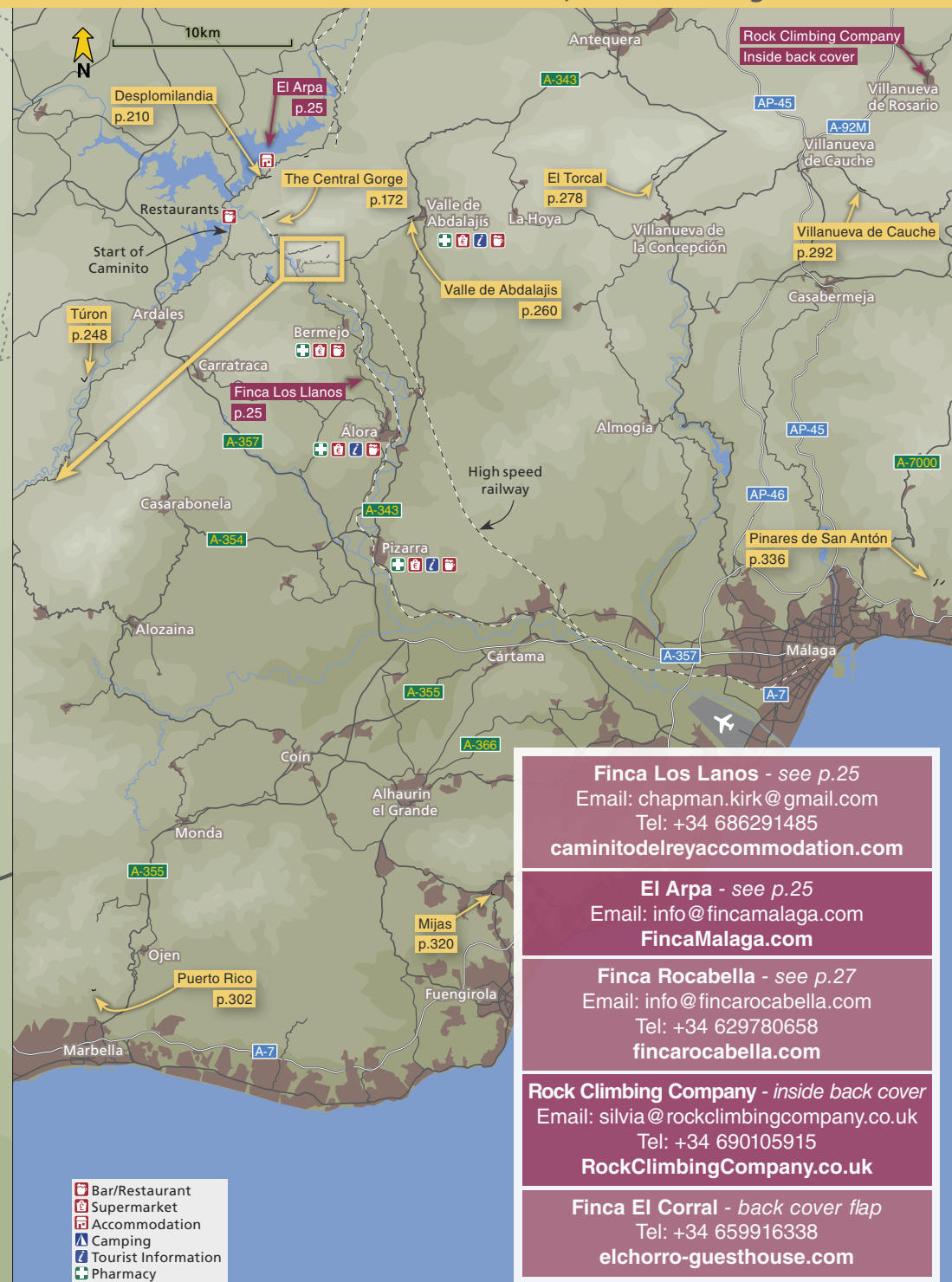
[cortijodonrodrigo.wixsite.com/elchorro](http://cortijodonrodrigo.wixsite.com/elchorro)

### La Almona Chica - *see p.37*

Email: [laalmonachica@gmail.com](mailto:laalmonachica@gmail.com)

## Camping

Camping is available at The Olive Branch and Finca La Campana. The campsite in El Chorro itself has now closed.



### Finca Los Lanos - *see p.25*

Email: [chapman.kirk@gmail.com](mailto:chapman.kirk@gmail.com)

Tel: +34 686291485

[caminitodelreyaccommodation.com](http://caminitodelreyaccommodation.com)

### El Arpa - *see p.25*

Email: [info@fincamalaga.com](mailto:info@fincamalaga.com)

[FincaMalaga.com](http://FincaMalaga.com)

### Finca Rocabella - *see p.27*

Email: [info@fincarocabella.com](mailto:info@fincarocabella.com)

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[fincarocabella.com](http://fincarocabella.com)

### Rock Climbing Company - *inside back cover*

Email: [silvia@rockclimbingcompany.co.uk](mailto:silvia@rockclimbingcompany.co.uk)

Tel: +34 690105915

[RockClimbingCompany.co.uk](http://RockClimbingCompany.co.uk)

### Finca El Corral - *back cover flap*

Tel: +34 659916338

[elchorro-guesthouse.com](http://elchorro-guesthouse.com)

## Getting Around

A car is advised to make the most of a visit. This will enable you to reach some of the excellent more distant areas like Túron, Desplomilandia, Valle d'Abdalajís and the coastal crags. The road network in and around Málaga is very good and it takes about an hour in good traffic to drive from the airport or train station. The roads through Álora and up to the top of the gorge have been resurfaced and are excellent. As soon as you get off these though, the surface is significantly worse and care is needed on the road up from the village of El Chorro to the main climbing spots. Some of the crags require the final approach to be made on dirt tracks; none are particularly bad to navigate, but care should be exercised during or after heavy rain when they can become rutted and eroded. Driving in the Natural Park on the 'Haza del Río' (the track up to Escalera Arabe and Frontales) is not permitted and fines are heavy - best avoided even if you do see others driving up there.

## Without a Car

El Chorro lends itself to those on a tight budget, or those who wish to climb without making use of a car. Travel by train from Málaga to Álora is relatively straightforward, frequent and cheap. The train service to El Chorro itself is more reliable now that the Caminito has been opened, although still only three each day. If you are stuck in Álora, it is easy to catch a taxi or hitch a lift to El Chorro. There is a bus service that leaves for El Chorro from the swimming pool. For more information see -

[andalucia.com/province/malaga/el-chorro/caminito-del-rey-getting-there](http://andalucia.com/province/malaga/el-chorro/caminito-del-rey-getting-there)

From the accommodation near El Chorro, it is possible to walk to many of the major cliffs such as Las Encantadas, Frontales, Escalera Arabe and even the Central Gorge. For the crags further afield, hitching a lift is a real possibility, as is hooking up with others with transport in one of the climbers' guesthouses.

## Food Shops

There is a small supplies shop in El Chorro village that has the basics, but it is quite pricey. The next closest is in Bermejo where there is also a pharmacy. The best place to shop is in Álora which has a lot of options including a large supermarket.

## Climbing Shop

**Aventur El Chorro** - There is a small climbing shop up the hill from El Chorro village. It stocks gear, boots, ropes, chalk and the guidebook. It is on a minor road past Las Encantadas - see map on p.22

## Eating Out

The most popular places in El Chorro village itself are an open air bar at the railway station (a good spot to hang out after climbing) and the pleasant restaurant and terrace bar at the La Garganta Hotel. Non-residents can also get a good hearty climbers' meal at the Olive Branch if you book in advance. A little further out is Restaurant Rocabella (on the road to Valle de Abdalajís). Further again is the Rancho Grande restaurant at Las Mellizas and Restaurant Kontiki at Bermejo. The restaurants up at the lakes, on the road to Desplomilandia and the start of the Caminito del Rey, are popular and have beautiful views over the lakes. For the greatest choice of restaurants and bars, head for Álora. Valle de Abdalajís and Ardales are also worth a look especially if travelling back from further afield.

## Guided Climbing and Instruction

**Rock Climbing Company** - *inside back cover*  
Email: [silvia@rockclimbingcompany.co.uk](mailto:silvia@rockclimbingcompany.co.uk)  
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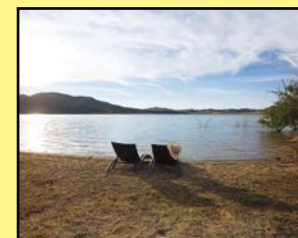
## Other Activities

Walkers and mountain bikers will find that the hills and mountains of El Chorro, Sierra de las Nieves and El Torcal provide plenty of potential. Horse trekking is available in El Chorro itself - [horseridingelchorro.com](http://horseridingelchorro.com)

Studio apartments with private kitchen, private bathroom, large terrace and panoramic view of the lake.



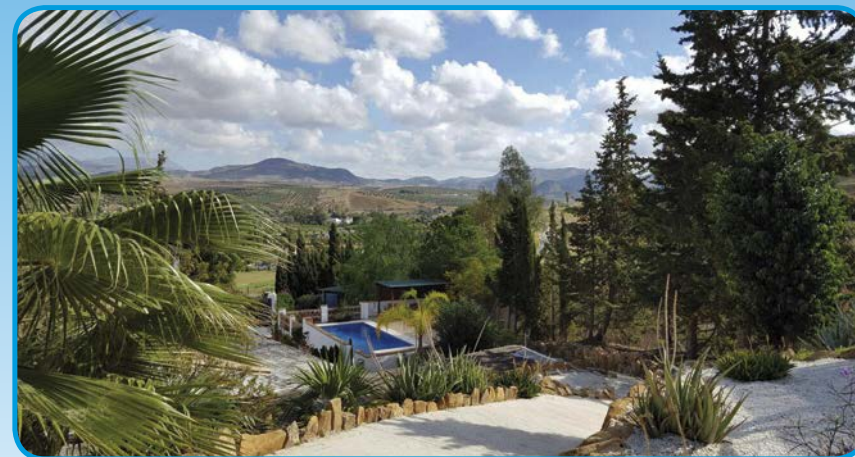
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## Finca Los Llanos and Casa Los Olivos - Álora

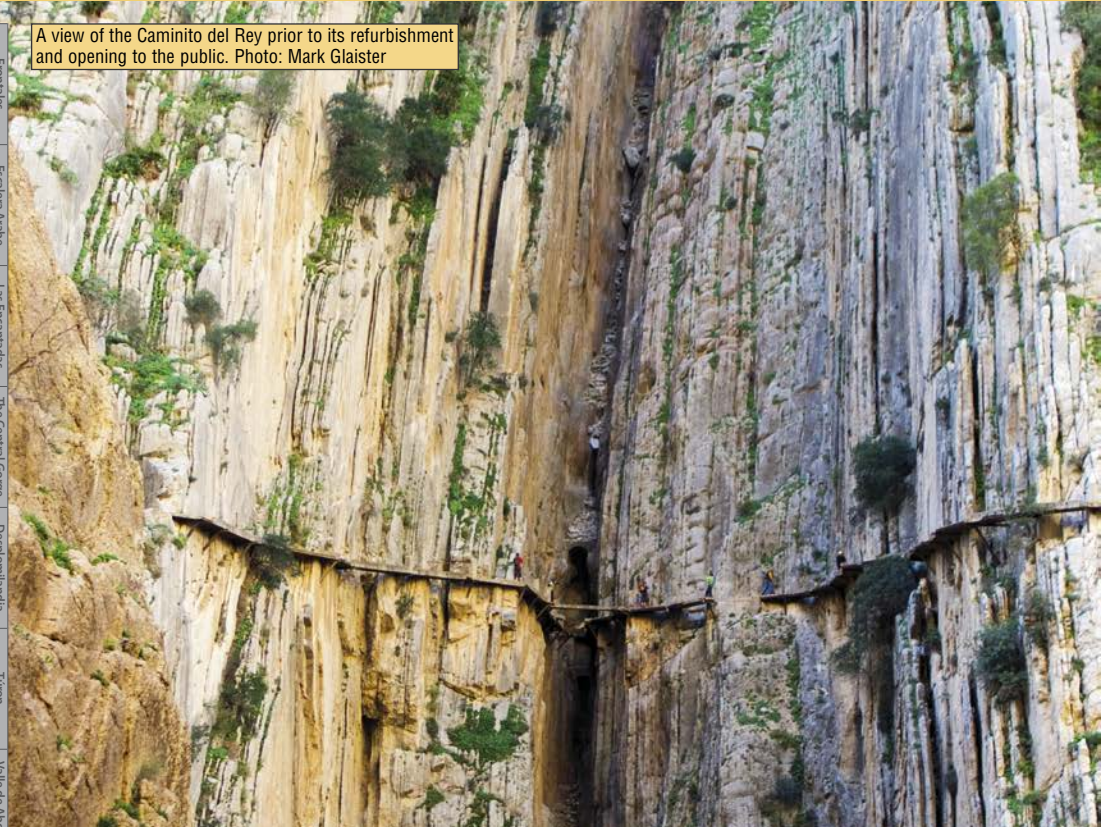
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A view of the Caminito del Rey prior to its refurbishment and opening to the public. Photo: Mark Glaister



**The Caminito del Rey**

The old walkway was built between 1901 and 1905 to allow workers on the hydroelectric power stations in the area to access the gorge - the Desfiladero de los Gaitanes - for maintenance and inspection. In 1921 King Alfonso XIII visited the area to open new dam developments and walk the gorge. After this the walkway became known by its present name Caminito del Rey ('the king's little way').

During the early climbing developments in the 1980s the walkway provided a memorable and exciting method of reaching the walls inside the lower gorge and some great routes were put up. Even in these early days the walkway itself was rapidly deteriorating and becoming evermore risky as sections went missing each year! Eventually, in around 2000, the first section of the walkway was removed to prevent public access. Climbers however are far harder to keep away so activity continued even after the first section had become more difficult to negotiate. Later the decision to re-develop the walkway as a tourist attraction was made and work started in 2014 and in March 2015 the Caminito del Rey was re-opened to the public.

The new walkway remains an extraordinary undertaking and is billed as one of the world's most impressive walks. As a consequence it has become a major tourist attraction and is extremely popular. Access to the walkway is only from the northern entrance to the gorge and numbers are strictly limited. Booking is essential at most times - [caminitodelrey.info/en](http://caminitodelrey.info/en). The consequence for climbers is that we can no longer access the climbs in the lower and upper gorge. This has removed a few great routes, but many had fallen into disrepair and neglect anyway.



**Finca Rocabella**



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 Miras  
 Pinar de San Antonio

# El Chorro Climbing

The wealth of climbing on offer in El Chorro and beyond is vast, and has been a draw for climbers from all over the globe during the past three decades. Here Paul Phillips bridges out on to a shadow, midway up the popular crack climb *Bladerunner* (6a) - p.112 - on the Upper Crag at Escalera Arabe. Photo: Mike Hutton

## Gear

For most of the sport routes in this book you will need around 12 to 18 quickdraws and a single rope. There are some very long pitches and extensions where you may need many more quickdraws, so take care to equip yourself properly.

**Ropes** - A 70m single rope is advised and an 80m is an even better option. A 60m rope may get you up and down many of the routes, but it is much safer to use a longer rope - there are a lot of pitches across the grades in El Chorro that are longer than 30m. The multi-pitch routes can mostly be abseiled on a doubled 80m rope (or two 50m ropes if that is your preference) but check the descent information carefully since there are exceptions.

**Other Gear** - Beyond these essentials you may find tape useful for bandaging your fingers if the prickly rock starts to take its toll. For multi-pitch routes a small sack with a water bladder and a long-sleeved shirt is a good idea. It is also strongly recommended that you wear a helmet.

## Route Lengths and Lowering Off

The photo-topos have approximate heights indicated at specific points. These are guideline heights only and it is important to remember that crag bases are not always level, people stand in different places when belaying and belays can be moved when routes are re-bolted. Many climbers don't even know the exact length of their rope, having chopped ends of worn rope off in the past. The golden rule is be on your guard on longer pitches and **ALWAYS TIE A KNOT IN THE END OF THE ROPE TO PREVENT DROPPING A CLIMBER WHEN LOWERING THEM.**

## Colour Coding

The routes are colour-coded corresponding to a grade band:

**Green Spots** - Everything at grade 4c and under. Good for beginners and those wanting an easy life.

**Orange Spots** - 5a to 6a+ inclusive. General ticking routes for those with more experience.

**Red Spots** - 6b to 7a inclusive. Routes for the experienced and keen climber.

**Black Spots** - 7a+ and above. The hard stuff!

Sport Grade	British Trad Grade (for well-protected routes)	UIAA	USA
1	Mod Moderate	I	5.1
2	Diff Difficult	II	5.2
2+			5.3
3a	VDiff Very Difficult	III-III	5.4
3b			5.5
3c	Sev Severe	III+	5.6
4a	HS Hard Severe	IV-IV	5.7
4b			5.8
4c	VS Very Severe	IV+	5.9
5a		V-V	5.10a
5b			5.10b
5c			5.10c
6a			5.10d
6a+			5.11a
6b			5.11b
6b+			5.11c
6c			5.11d
6c+			5.12a
7a			5.12b
7a+			5.12c
7b			5.12d
7b+			5.13a
7c			5.13b
7c+			5.13c
8a			5.13d
8a+			5.14a
8b			5.14b
8b+			5.14c
8c			5.14d
8c+			5.15a
9a			
9a+			

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**Crag Access**

Since the publication of the last Rockfax guidebook in 2008, there have been significant changes to access in the El Chorro area, and further afield. The most significant is the closure of climbing in the gorge itself (both the upper and lower) following the refurbishment of the Caminito del Rey and its opening to the public. A review by the Andalucian authorities has now defined where climbing can and cannot take place, most significantly in and around El Chorro and at El Torcal. Below are the main points relating to access that climbers need to be aware of when visiting.

**Driving on the 'Haza del Río' to Frontales and Escalera Arabe** - The 'Haza del Río' is the track which goes from the bend by the water tank below Las Encantadas, below Frontales and Escalera Arabe and on to Serena. In the past this track has been used by climbers to get close to Frontales and Escalera Arabe in their cars. You may still see both visiting and local climbers' cars driving and parked on the track, but it is not allowed - you may get fined and it may damage future access for climbers.

**Escalera Arabe** - There are two fenced off areas on the east side of Escalera Arabe on sector Suiza and El Navegador Pillar. It is forbidden to climb in these areas because of protected flora. The fences are sometimes in disrepair, but this doesn't change the regulation.

**El Corral East** - The walls of El Corral East have a seasonal restriction due to nesting birds. No climbing from 1 March to 30 September.

**Loja** - Loja is a crag to the northeast of El Chorro that was included in the last guidebook. Most of the climbing at this crag has now been banned for environmental reasons and it is not included in this book.

**Desplomilandia** - All the areas covered in this book have no restrictions. The huge wall to the east has two developed areas - Tajo del Cabrero and Sécotor Metecaña. Climbing is not allowed on these two areas from February 15 to August 31 because of nesting birds.

**Asociación Andaluza de Escaladores (Andalusian Climbers' Association)**

Asociación Andaluza de Escaladores is a voluntary organisation that supports climbers' interests in Andalusia. Its aim is to maintain access to climbing areas by working with climbers, new route developers, environmental groups and landowners seeking a sustainable climbing development while respecting the flora and fauna of the natural crag environment.



A.A.E.E.

[www.escaladoresandaluces.com](http://www.escaladoresandaluces.com)

Asociación Andaluza de Escaladores

Rockfax is pleased to be associated with the Asociación Andaluza de Escaladores. We have made a significant financial contribution towards their work and we encourage climbers to become members for the nominal fee of €10/year. You can find out about their activity on the website - [escaladoresandaluces.com](http://escaladoresandaluces.com)

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[www.borealoutdoor.com](http://www.borealoutdoor.com)

**The Caminito del Rey** - Access to the walkway is now restricted to the paying public and no climbing is allowed in both the upper and lower gorge. This includes access to the famous routes on the Africa Wall and the multi-pitch route *Zeppelin*. Climbing is still permitted in the central gorge at El Polvorin, Los Cotos and Makinodromo.

**Caminito Climbers' Day Pass** - Climbers are supposed to be able to get to the central gorge using the Caminito for free. The idea is that you can simply turn up at the main northern entrance gate early in the morning with your climbing gear and proof of insurance, and you will be escorted to the central gorge area opposite El Polvorin. You need to be picked up later in the day at a pre-specified time. In practice this is not always the case and the regulation appears to be somewhat sporadic. Additionally, it does make for a very long walk-in to the climbing plus the hassle to drive round and the need to finish at a specified time, but it is a unique way of getting to the climbs if it works.

**Railway Tunnels** - Walking through the railway tunnels is banned and the entrances are blocked off with large sections of fencing and occasionally by guards posted at the tunnel entrances at popular times. Although this has made the approach to the climbing at El Polvorin, Los Cotos and Makinodromo longer, these crags can still be reached at all times without the need to use the tunnels - see p.172. You will still see people going through the tunnels, but it is against the regulations and fines are sometimes imposed.

**Wild Camping** - Wild camping is not allowed. The only current camping is at the Olive Branch and at Finca La Campana - see p.22. The old camping area near the village is currently closed.

### New Routes

If you want to develop and bolt new routes then you need to first get permission. The best place to check is through the Federación Andaluza de Montañismo. You can email them on [malaga@fedamon.com](mailto:malaga@fedamon.com) (use Google translate and refer to areas in this book).

### Bad Gear

If you find routes with bad or missing bolts then please let people know. The best way to do this is email Federación Andaluza de Montañismo on [malaga@fedamon.com](mailto:malaga@fedamon.com); report it to the Olive Branch, Finca La Campana or the Climbing-Lodge; or email [info@rockfax.com](mailto:info@rockfax.com).

### Bolt Funding

Developing and re-equipping of routes in El Chorro is funded by local climbers, local businesses and the *Federación Andaluza de Montañismo* (F.A.M.). This is an expensive and time consuming activity. In conjunction with the Olive Branch, Rockfax is supporting a bolt fund which will enable climbers to contribute to the bolting effort. The money from the fund will go direct to the F.A.M. The fund will be promoted by Rockfax on [UKBoltFund.org](http://UKBoltFund.org) and through the Olive Branch website. Some of the proceeds from the sale of this book will go towards this fund.



UKBoltFund.org is maintained by UKClimbing/Rockfax.



We can cater for you  
if required

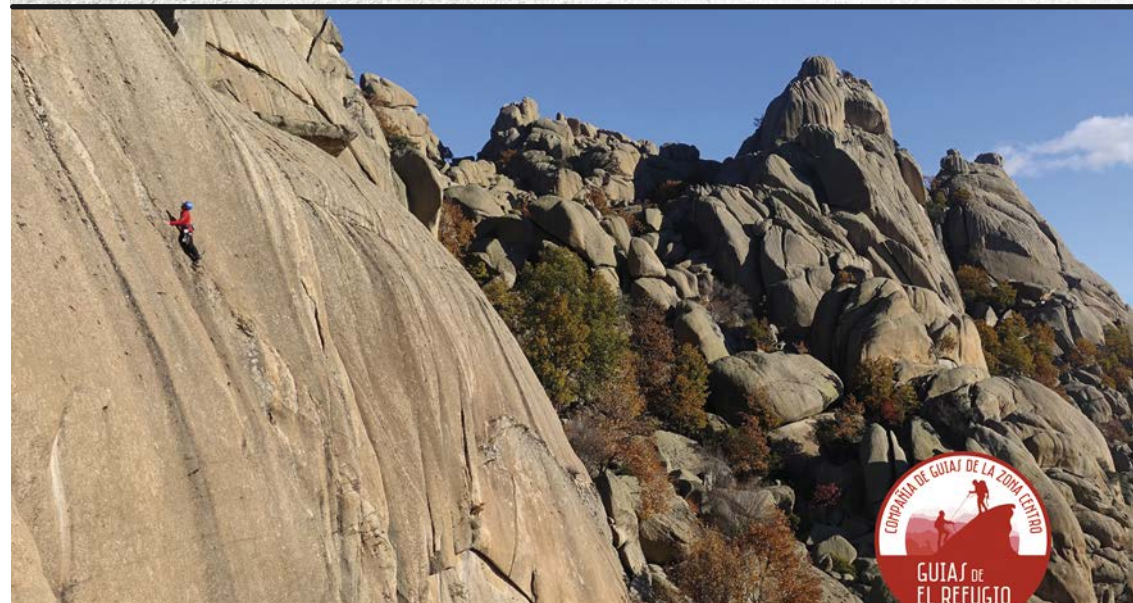
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### A Climber's Code

**Park considerately** - Don't block access and be prepared to walk a bit further or head elsewhere if nearby parking is not available.

**Stick to the approach paths** - Avoid short cuts. Many crags are on, or close to, private land and access has been withdrawn in the past due to the actions of some lazy climbers taking short cuts.

**Keep the noise down** - Some of the crags are close to houses (and landowners) and areas popular with walkers (like the Escalera Arabe) who are out for some peace and quiet.

**Take all rubbish home** - Leave only footprints and take out everything you bring to the crag as well as rubbish dumped by other less considerate folk.

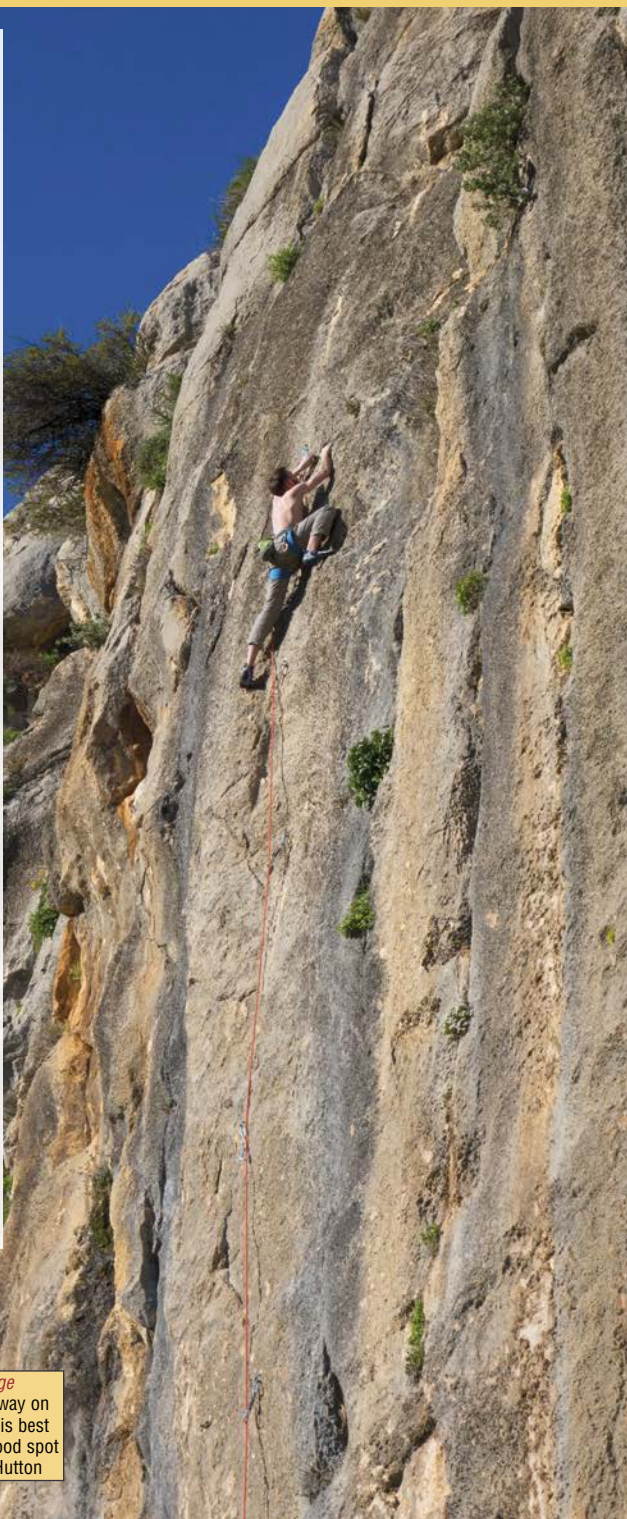
**Avoid leaving valuables in cars** - Car theft is not a big problem in El Chorro so let's keep it that way by leaving the cars empty when we are out for the day.

**Don't light fires** - A simple rule - no fires at any time!

**Sanitation** - If you have to go to the toilet when out, make sure you go well away from the crag and any water sources, bury your waste and carry out any paper.

**Large groups** - If visiting in a large group, don't hog routes with lots of top ropes and try to car share to avoid filling up parking spots.

Martin McKenna on the fingery face climb *Seis* (7a+) - page 256 - on the West Face, Túron. The West Face is tucked away on the opposite side of the crag to the huge slabs that Túron is best known for, and gets the sun later in the day making it a good spot to head for once the sun goes off the slabs. Photo: Mike Hutton



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Photo: Alan James

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This is a graded list of the best routes in the book. It has been compiled from votes on UKClimbing. Some of the routes are new and haven't received many votes, others you may well disagree with - that is the nature of graded lists. If you feel strongly then go onto [UKClimbing.com/logbooks](http://UKClimbing.com/logbooks) and register your vote so that we can make the list more accurate in future. What is certain is that these are all great routes which are well worth climbing.

**8b+**

<sup>Top 150</sup> Cous Cous . . . . . **.170** . . . 201  
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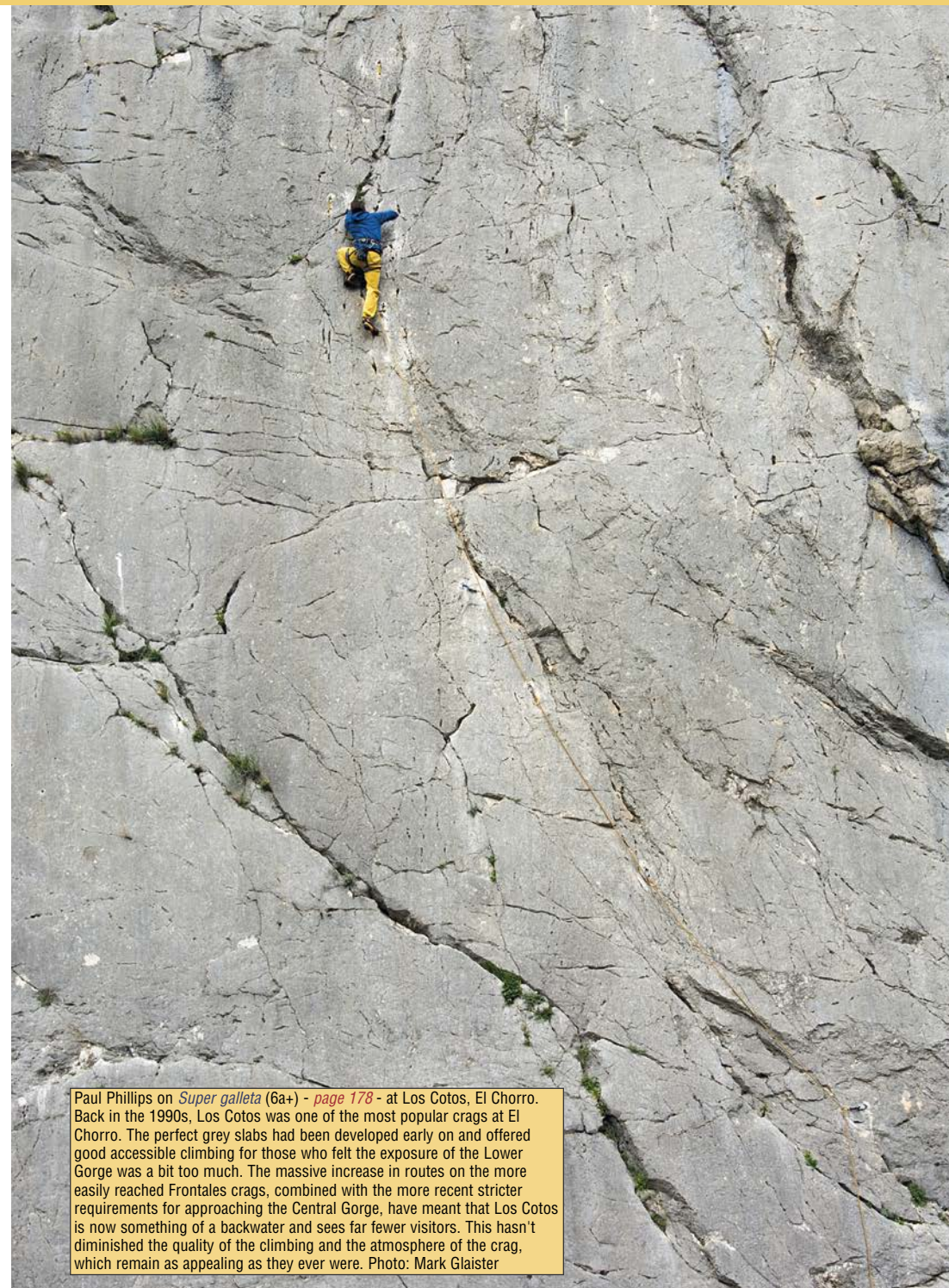
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Paul Phillips on *Super galleta* (6a+) - page 178 - at Los Cotos, El Chorro. Back in the 1990s, Los Cotos was one of the most popular crags at El Chorro. The perfect grey slabs had been developed early on and offered good accessible climbing for those who felt the exposure of the Lower Gorge was a bit too much. The massive increase in routes on the more easily reached Frontales crags, combined with the more recent stricter requirements for approaching the Central Gorge, have meant that Los Cotos is now something of a backwater and sees far fewer visitors. This hasn't diminished the quality of the climbing and the atmosphere of the crag, which remain as appealing as they ever were. Photo: Mark Glaister

Frontales  
Escalera Arabe  
Las Encantadas  
The Central Gorge  
Desplomilandia  
Turon  
Valle de Abdalajis  
El Torcal  
Villanueva de Cauchel  
Puerto Rico  
Mijas  
Pinares de San Antón

Frontales  
Escalera Arabe  
Las Encantadas  
The Central Gorge  
Desplomilandia  
Turon  
Valle de Abdalajis  
El Torcal  
Villanueva de Cauchel  
Puerto Rico  
Mijas  
Pinares de San Antón

Frontales	Escalera Arabe	Las Encantadas	The Central Gorge	Desplomilandia	Túron	Valle de Abdalajis	El Torcal	Villanueva de Cauche	Puerto Rico	Mijas	Pinares de San Antón								
<b>Frontales</b>	<b>Escalera Arabe</b>	<b>Las Encantadas</b>	<b>Las Encantadas Area</b>	<b>Desplomilandia</b>	<b>Túron</b>	<b>Valle de Abdalajis</b>	<b>El Torcal</b>	<b>Villanueva de Cauche</b>	<b>Puerto Rico</b>	<b>Mijas</b>	<b>Pinares de San Antón</b>								
<b>231</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>104</b>								
<b>11</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>3</b>								
<b>49</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>45</b>								
<b>78</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>34</b>								
<b>84</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>16</b>								
2 - 30 min	25 - 40 min	10 - 12 min	3 - 4 min	3 - 10 min	20 - 25 min	2 - 4 min	Roadside	90 min	80 min	60 - 75 min	5 - 15 min	5 min							
Lots of sun	Lots of sun	Lots of sun	Lots of sun	Lots of sun	Morning	Sun and shade	Not much sun	Lots of sun	Afternoon	Lots of sun	Evening	Evening							
Pushover	Pushover	Pushover	Pushover	Pushover	Pushover	Pushover	Pushover	Pushover	Pushover	Pushover	Pushover	Pushover							
Wet	Wet	Wet	Wet	Wet	Wet	Wet	Wet	Wet	Wet	Wet	Wet	Wet							
Hot	Hot	Hot	Hot	Hot	Hot	Hot	Hot	Hot	Hot	Hot	Hot	Hot							
Cold	Cold	Cold	Cold	Cold	Cold	Cold	Cold	Cold	Cold	Cold	Cold	Cold							
A massive cliff above the village of El Chorro. Its many sectors cater for all, with routes across the grade range both single and multi-pitch.	One of El Chorro's premier areas perched high above the valley and packed with many superb climbs. There is plenty in the lower grades.	A small crag with well-bolted pitches in the lower and mid grades with a stunning vista. Gets lots of sun but can also pick up a breeze.	A striking crag composed of blank-looking faces and offering some exceptional wall climbing across the grades. Almost roadside access.	A trio of pleasant easily-accessed buttresses with plenty of routes in the lower and mid grades. Good for a quick hit.	A reasonable crag with a handful of worthwhile lines and one low-grade multi-pitch climb. A bit of a walk to get there. Bird restricted in spring.	An unusual rocky ridge of good rock that has lots of lower-grade climbs. Very quick access with sun and shade available.	A roadside crag that is better than it looks. The rock is good, the routes fairly popular and the crag is in the shade all day.	A remote set of extensive slabs. Little visited due to the long approach. Worth the trek as some routes are very good, if you like slabs!	A fantastic wall of vertical, lightly featured rock lined with some tough 30m wall climbs in the 6s. A long approach, but worth it.	One of Europe's most famous cliffs - a mecca for the eighth grade climber. There has been a lot of new development over the last decade.	A popular venue with many outstanding single-pitch lines that get lots of shade. A good place to head for if it gets too hot.	A long shady crag not far from the road with lots of routes across the grades. Nowhere near as popular as its neighbour Desplomilandia.	A fantastic set of huge slabs are the main attraction, set in an enchanting environment. There are some harder vertical routes too.	A popular area close to El Chorro with a lot of excellent and quite deceptive climbs on near-vertical walls split by cracks of all sizes.	A high plateau of heavily eroded limestone that is a good place to head in hot weather. The climbs are well bolted but no pushover.	Close to the road, but quiet and packed with hard wall climbs. Enough routes in the 6s on its flanks to merit an away day from El Chorro.	An extensive crag of tufa located in the hills inland from Marbella. A very hot spot best reserved for cool weather. Fun climbing.	A series of open faces with good views and a dank shady ravine located in the tourist mecca of Mijas. Some like it, some hate it!	Two faces set high above Malaga. Lots of face climbing and a few steeper sections. Sun or shade can be found throughout the day.
<b>52</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>243</b>	<b>252</b>	<b>264</b>	<b>282</b>	<b>294</b>	<b>306</b>	<b>324</b>	<b>341</b>

A view of El Chorro village and reservoir with the long ridges of Frontales and Encantadas just above it. The mountain behind is Pico de la Huma (1191m) and in the far distance you can see Valle de Abdalajis and even El Torcal. Photo: Mark Glaister



Frontales  
Escalera Arabe  
Las Encantadas  
The Central Gorge  
Desplomandia  
Turon  
Valle de Abdalajis  
El Torcal  
Villanueva de Cauche  
Puerto Rico  
Mijas  
Pinares de San Anton

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