

THE FUENGIROLA RIVER BASIN

The Fuengirola River is the result of the confluence of several watercourses that originate from the wide arch of the Sierra Alpujata, covering a catchment area of 118 km². Like other rivers of the coastal belt, it is less than 20 km long.

Its main tributaries are the rivers Ojén and de las Pasadas. The first flows from the west, collecting water from the deep ravines beneath the Cerro Castillejos, with an altitude of 1074 m, and the second is joined from the east by the waters flowing from the Albuquería natural reserve. Bear in mind that the stretch of the river de las Pasadas that we are going to explore is known as the Alaminos.

The great environmental value of the Fuengirola River arises from the complex rock formations of the places it flows through. Thus, the upper course behaves like a Sierra Bermeja river and benefits from the ecosystems typical of peridotite rocks. The middle course runs between a series of limestone and dolomite intrusions, such as the Barranco Blanco natural reserve mentioned above, and, finally, before flowing into the sea next to the historic Castillo de Sohail castle, the river slows down in the alluvial plains where a man-made landscape still remains, with traditional market gardens and orchards with a variety of fruit trees. It is therefore no surprise that such a mosaic of habitats has earned recognition in the Special Plan for the Protection of the Physical Environment of the Province of Málaga, and that the lower course is part of the Natura 2000 Network.

Its natural assets include the presence of serpentine endemic plants such as *Galium viridiflorum*. These diverse environments benefit groups of insects, especially dragonflies, of which there are many different species, some as interesting as *Oxygastra curtisii* and *Gomphus graslinii*. Some stretches of the middle course have a well-preserved riverine woodland, including the presence of willows (*Salix pedicellata*). Some invasive species such as Spanish cane and tree tobacco occupy large stretches along

the river in degraded areas or floodplains. The proximity of a large city like Fuengirola and intense tourist activity has altered the estuary. However, the regulations now governing this stretch, together with the installation of a walkway along the river, has greatly improved the appearance of this natural reserve.

Freshwater pools in the Fuengirola river basin: *Charco de Barranco Blanco and charco del Infierno.*

Other bathing areas in the Fuengirola river basin:

Poza de los Huevos. Río de las Pasadas: *Downstream from the Barranco Blanco natural reserve, in Mijas, there are a number of giant's cauldrons fed by an upwelling of sulphurous water. Access is from km 5.1 of the MA-3303 (Coín-Puerto de los Pescadores), down a dirt track that takes you to the riverbank in just over 3 km. There used to be facilities for bathing here, known as the Baños del Puerto, of which there are still some remains, such as a swimming hole with steps carved into the rock.*



Río de las Pasadas / Coín

CHARCO DE BARRANCO BLANCO**HOW TO GET THERE**

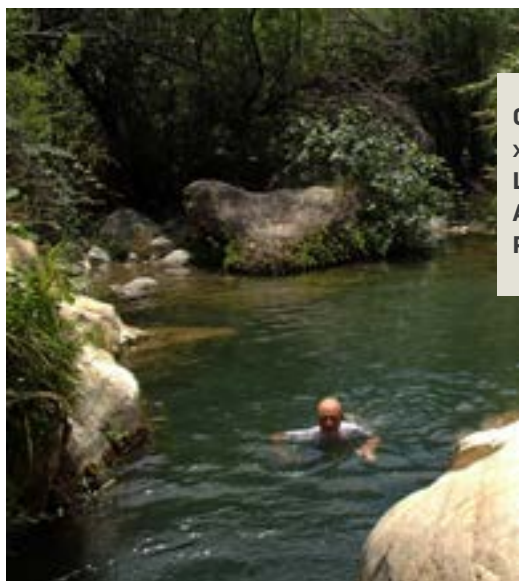
Locate the Puerto de los Pescadores pass, where the roads A-7053 (coming from Fuengirola), A-387 (coming from Mijas and Alhaurín el Grande) and MA-3303 (towards Coín) meet. On the latter road, take the southbound track between kilometre 4 and 5. Park in the first layby, as access is only allowed on foot during the summer season (from 15th June to 15th October) due to the risk of fire. Walk downhill through a pine forest with Mediterranean dwarf palms, cistus, mastics and junipers. After 2.3 km, you will reach the bridge that crosses the Alaminos River, where the pool is.

INTERESTING FACTS

The footpath leading to the pool is very steep and slippery. Once you reach the edge you will be surprised by an 11 m high waterfall over a very polished tufa feeding a small crystalline pool. The seepage springs of the shady walls host an interesting colony of maidenhair fern (*Adiantum capillus-veneris*) and green mosses. Under the waterfall there is a small cavity. The surrounding vegetation consists of oleanders, canes and willows. If you would like to explore the higher course of the river, you can walk the PR-A 338 trail, starting from the bridge. The site has been declared a Unique Spot of the Province of Málaga.

Please Note

The pool beneath the waterfall is not deep anywhere and it is easy to walk in, as the bottom consists of small very rounded pebbles. Be careful when accessing the grotto, as the ground is rather slippery. The pool that precedes it, of a similar size, is deep and you will not be able to stand in the water. Jumping from the rocks is not recommended. There are no comfortable places on the banks to lie on, but the rocks, which are very rounded, are good to sit on. To escape the crowds, we recommend visiting the area very early, at dusk or on weekdays.



Coordinates:

x: 344341 / y: 4053107 / z: 203 m

Location: convoluted

Access: complicated

Protected Area: not included