



# Molino la Ratonera

## **THREE CYCLE ITINERARIES FROM THE MILL**



**WITH DIRECTIONS AND DISTANCES**



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## Cycle itineraries from Molino la Ratonera

### 1 Circular route to La Viña

Distance: 13 km (8 miles) all off road.

Summary: This ride is all on tracks and takes you upstream along the south eastern side of the La Viña valley. You cross the river at the village of the same name, head north, west and then south west along the other side of the valley before crossing the river again and returning to the mill.

From the mill entrance, turn left (North) and ascend the hill, following the main track. Ignore the smaller track which goes straight on at the sharp bend and keep to the main track. Onwards and upwards until you come to an old cortijo, partially renovated, with swimming pool (Cyrillo's). On up the hill eventually reaching the large, white cortijo, Cortijo El Llano. There has been a dwelling on this site since Roman times and the track you have followed is an ancient drovers' road, pre Roman, known as a via pecuaria. In front of the cortijo is a large threshing circle - an "era".

At Cortijo El Llano go completely past the house and garages and then follow the track as it bends to the right. Follow the track through the olive groves until you come to a metalled road with a steep hill facing you.

Turn left here and follow the road downhill, across the bridge and up the other side until you come to a right turn. Take this so that you are heading more or less north once again. After 2 kilometres you reach a tee junction with a large oak tree on your right. Turn left here and you are now on the town hall 'Ruta 9'. Follow this track until the tee junction (2 more km), turn left and head for the start of 'Ruta 6' marked by an information sign. Turn left once again. After another 2 km you reach a farm where a concrete track heads uphill. Follow this if you want to look at the ruined mining village on Sierra Ojete. If not follow the main track round to the left. Follow the main track until you reach Cortijo Los Roperos. "Los roperos" means "the clothiers" and that would seem to be a family tradition as the present owner runs the clothing factory in Zagra. Follow the brick walled track and descend the hill to the bridge which crosses the La Viña river. At the next junction, turn left and follow the track back to the mill.



### 2 The Pesquera valley circular route

Distance: 27km (17 miles) 16km on road with some long climbs,

Summary: This route follows the river down stream and then joins the road for the climb out of the La Viña valley. Once in the valley of the Pesquera river you will see the impressive Torre Pesquera, the ruins of a 9th century Moorish castle which was taken by the Christians in 1423. You then climb up to Fuentes de Cesna and follow the road towards Algarinejo before turning off at La Venta and climbing back off road towards the Sierra Ojete where you have panoramic views of the La Viña river valley and return to the mill. Do not attempt this ride after prolonged heavy rain as you may not be able to cross the river.

At the mill entrance, turn right (South) and follow the track to the tee junction. Turn right and ascend the hill to Los Roperos. Shortly after you pass the cortijo, turn left and follow the track down towards where you will see the meeting of several tracks. Turn right and follow the track uphill, but always keeping in a southerly direction (ie away from the mill). As the track descends and straightens you will see a cortijo on your left. Keep straight on on this track and you will soon reach the main road (Zagra to Fuentes de Cesna). Turn right and head uphill out of the La Viña valley. You now start your descent into the Pesquera valley where, on crossing the river you come across the ancient tower. Follow the road uphill once more on the long climb to Fuentes de Cesna.. At the village continue on the main road following signs for Algarinejo and enjoying the long descent. After the tee junction where you turn right the road joins the valley of the Las Morrajas river. Just after the 24km marker turn off the road on to a track on your right. Follow the track as it doubles back and then climbs briefly before dropping down to La Venta. Cross the Pesquera river and turn right for the climb back up 'Ruta 5'. Keep on this track until you reach a tee junction where you should turn left (you are still on 'Ruta 5') and continue the climb until you come to the information sign for 'Ruta 6'. Turn right here and follow this track downhill. After another 2 km you reach a farm where a concrete track heads uphill. Follow this if you want to look at the ruined mining village on Sierra Ojete. If not follow the main track round to the left. Follow the main track

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until you reach Cortijo Los Roperos. "Los roperos" means "the clothiers" and that would seem to be a family tradition as the present owner runs the clothing factory in Zagra. Follow the brick walled track and descend the hill to the bridge which crosses the La Viña river. At the next junction, turn left and follow the track back to the mill.

### 3 Circular route to Algarinejo

Distance: 29km (18 miles) 10km on road with one long climb.

Summary: This ride is a gem. It starts with the ascent to 830 metres between El Chite and Cerro Ramos. There then follows a gentle descent into the lush Pesquera river valley which you follow to the town of Algarinejo. From the town you follow the road out towards Montefrío and Loja. After 7km you turn off the road once more and enjoy a gentle descent to La Viña and La Ratonera with views over Malaga and Cordoba provinces. Do not attempt this ride after prolonged heavy rain as you may not be able to cross the river.

Note: Take a copy of the Algarinejo town plan so that you can find your way out.

Turn right (South) from the mill entrance, follow the track to the tee junction, turn right and continue past Cortijo los Roperos. Follow the main track round to the right passing a small white cortijo on the left with another almost opposite. Continue along this track until you reach a farm that is in use. From here you join the town hall 'Ruta 6' and carry on on the main track. After a further 1.8km you reach a junction in the track marked with the information sign for route 6. You have now been riding for 5 kilometres.



Here you turn left on to town hall 'Ruta 5' and start a gradual descent to the Pesquera valley. The high mountains you see in front of you are the Sierra Subbetica in Cordoba province with peaks up to 1570 metres. The signing on this part of the ride is poor but do not turn off the main track until you reach a concrete garage at a tee junction. Turn right here. Shortly after this turn you cross a bridge above a waterfall – note the water channel running along the hillside. This is known as an acequia and was a method of transporting water large distances for irrigation and so transforming the fertility of the landscape. Many of these channels were constructed by the Moors during their 700 year occupation. A bit further down this track you will see a narrow gorge with waterfall joining the main stream. You will shortly reach La Venta, a small settlement in the Pesquera valley with fertile fields and towering willows. Near the bridge/ford you will see the information sign for 'Ruta 4'. This suggests that you should stay on the right hand side of the river but you will find the path disappears. As an alternative cross the river, and follow the track upstream, over the hill and join the Algarinejo road. Turn right for the 3.5km to the town where you will find a good selection of bars serving a 'menu del dia', a set 3 course menu at a very reasonable price. On this first section of the ride you will have covered 13 kilometres.

After lunch head out of the town and join the Montefrío/Loja road. At the Montefrío junction turn right for Loja. After a climb to 900 metres and half a kilometre after km post 27 you turn right on to a track signed as the start of 'Ruta 5'. The church you will have seen perched on a hilltop is the Ermita de Las Eras.

Now follow this track. Where it splits take the left fork and on past a tee junction with a concrete track (the end of 'Ruta 9') until the junction with 'Ruta 6' (you were here earlier this morning). Turn left and then when the track turns sharp right (0.5km from the junction), you branch off to the left and head for La Viña. After 1.5km you enter the village and head down for the bridge over the river. As the road ascends you will see another road ascending on your left. Just past where they meet and marked with an electricity pylon take a track to the right. You are now heading back to the mill. You will shortly come to Cortijo el Llano where you proceed past the house and continue. Do not take the long straight track that is perpendicular to the cortijo! Only 2.5km more to do. Ahead of you the houses on Sierra Ojete come into view and you soon come to our neighbour Cyrillo's cortijo with the newly built section. Follow the track round to the left and the mill will soon be visible.