

# Walking in the Sierra Nevada



Self Guided Walking Itinerary Number 7

## **To The Poqueira Refuge 2500m** *5 to 6 hours medium*

An easy mountain itinerary though not to be underestimated. Avoid if the weather forecast is bad. 400m of ascent on the way in 150m of ascent on the return. Refreshments can be bought at the refuge. Some of the best views of the Sierra Nevada can be enjoyed from this route.

To reach the road head at Hoya del Portillo, follow the road through Capileira and continue without deviation until you can go no further. This is initially a tarmac surface, which becomes dirt track, but is generally passable throughout the year for most vehicles. Alternately book a place on



the National Park Interpretation Service bus from Capileira, which runs most weekends between April and October, and mid-week

during the summer months.

The road head is 'guarded' by the National Park who have a hut on the edge of the car park. At the side of the hut is a path which takes you uphill through the pine trees to a fire-break. Follow this emerging after approximately 30 minutes (as the forest thins, don't be tempted onto the fire break too soon, as this is much harder walking).

Where the path emerges you will see a sign to the Refugio Poqueira – 2 hours and Puerto Molina. Puerto Molina is the outcrop of rocks which can be seen at the top of the firebreak; amongst these are a National Park interpretation boards and a viewpoint



viewpoint detailing the various mountains in the National Park and even beyond to Africa, which can be seen from here on a clear day.

Our way on is to follow the signs to the refuge; cross the firebreak and descend slightly towards more trees. At the edge of the trees, follow the track rightwards and enjoy the views on to both the refuge and mountains beyond. The route is marked by occasional wooden signs.



At a junction of tracks, bear right uphill, soon leaving the broader track to follow a path rising gradually leftwards.

Eventually the Poqueira Refuge can be seen in the distance beneath. A track comes into view leading to a farm and the hut. Another obvious and waymarked path forks left, and leads downhill to join the track. This is the way on to the refuge.

If for any reason you want to cut the walk short, stay on the level path which shortly leads to a higher point on the track. Turn right here and head uphill steeply for a short distance to a junction. Turn right here and follow the dirt track road back to Puerto Molina (1 hour) then descend to the path through the forest re-tracing your steps back to the car park (3.5 hours in total).



Following the track to the Poqueira Refuge, we cross a stream and start an uphill section towards the farm. Fork right just

before the farm and a short pull over a col leads to the refuge.

### The return journey

Standing on the steps at the front of the Refuge, our way leads downhill. A faint path passes the hut's septic tank, from where a better path and large cairn can now be seen. This is our route. We descend following many zig zags, down towards the Cortijo de Las Tomas. The Cortijo can be seen for quite a distance before it is reached.

200m before the Cortijo, we reach the acequia Alta. Here turn left and follow the water channel for just over 5 km. If the acequia is dry, then walking is quite straight forward, as you can either walk in the bed of the acequia alternatively follow the more exposed path alongside the water. This is particularly enjoyable in spring and early summer, when the water is flowing and flowers cover the ground around the watercourse, but at other times the views down the rio Poqueira more than make up for the lack of water.



If the water is flowing, and you are a bit uncertain about the sometimes exposed path along it's bank, it is possible to proceed to the

Cortijo de Las Tomas and take the undulating path leftwards, signed 'sendero acequias' as far as the Cortijo Corrales de Pitres, where the path almost meets the acequia.

Just about 3km along the acequia, a track crosses and the acequia goes through some pipes. After this it passes the Cortijo Corrales de Pitres (see above). A further 2 km on along the acequia, another track crosses, and the water is piped again.

From the cortijo, continue along the path. After approximately 10 minutes there is a



short stiff climb up to cross a ridge. After crossing the ridge, it is necessary to ascend the easiest line back to the acequia.

Follow the acequia to where it is piped under a track.

Here we leave the acequia and follow the track uphill, initially to the left and then to the right. Where the path bends left again STOP. Facing uphill, there are a series of crags. To our right there is a ridge with a series of rocky outcrops. We need to head diagonally right to a lone boulder on the ridge.

Set your compass to a bearing of 164 degrees and following this bearing, pick the easiest line up and across the slope to reach the lone boulder. (Not as bad as it looks!)

Continue beyond the boulder, following the same line, until in approximately 50m you meet the ridge and on to the remains of a ruined building from where you can see the firebreak – approximately 100m.

At the firebreak, turn right and go downhill for approximately 20m to where a path leads left into the forest and back to Hoya de Portillo.