

Gaucin Walks I: Climb to the summit of El Hacho

Difficulty: Medium to difficult

Time: 2 hours

Terrain: rough paths, some steep climbing and some scrambling

Vertical climb/descent +/- 400 metres

A climb to the summit of El Hacho, the 1011m mountain overlooking Gaucin. You will be rewarded for your efforts with fabulous views of the surrounding countryside. Do not attempt if the summit is in cloud – you should be able to see the top from the petrol station.

Part of this walk is marked with two blue stripes; part of the walk also follows the GR141 (marked with red/white/yellow stripes) and part of the walk is marked with Roman numeral I (on ceramic plaques or blue paint).

Please leave all gates as you find them: keep dogs on a lead whenever livestock is loose and when passing near or through private property. Wear suitable footwear and carry sufficient water, especially in the summer months.

We welcome any feedback/comments to: gaucindaywalks@gmail.com

THE WALK: Start at the Gaucin petrol station and walk up the small road to the right of the petrol station, which is called “Camino del Montoro”. There are two ceramic plaques on the corner of the wall in front: “Ruta I - Sierra del Hacho” and “Ruta II – La Claridad”.

Walk only a few metres along the road by the terraced housing and opposite Nos. 14 and 16 there is a metal gate on the left. Climb up just before the gate to find a small scrubby path that winds around the back of the petrol station and then bears right. You will see two blue stripes on a rock and a red/white/yellow marker on the fence ahead.

This rocky path widens and climbs steadily towards the peak of El Hacho ahead. You are walking between two fences. After a few minutes climbing you pass a red metal gate on the right and some dogs in a large caged kennel. Around the corner when the path forks, keep to the left fork (there is a wire gate across the right fork) and keep climbing on a well-trodden rocky path uphill. Where the path splits you can take either route; the left option up the rocks is a little easier, and is marked with white/red/yellow paint on a rock, but the right (lower) option soon joins it again. After a short wooded section you reach an open area and two electricity pylons – the ‘col’ of El Hacho - properly named “El Puerto de Los Hinojales”. There are lovely views of Gaucin and Cortes de la Frontera. *About 30 minutes to the col.*

As you arrive onto the flat ‘col’, and **before** a white/red/yellow post marked “GR141” go steeply uphill to the left on a rough narrow path, following a wire fence (keeping the fence on your left). After a few metres you will see a post with a red and white cross – you can ignore this as it is indicating that this particular route is not on the waymarked GR141.

Keep climbing steeply with the fence on your left, following the rough path until the fence ends. Look up to see a group of rocks on the left, and a very large jutting-out rock on your right. Climb straight up some steeper 'steps' in the rocks, using the easy hand holds, keeping well to the left of the jutting-out rock, and you soon come out onto a small flatter area where you can catch your breath and admire the views below. *About 45 minutes to here.* **Turn around and note what the route looks like from above because you will return the same way.**

Now head uphill again, heading directly for a solitary tree you can see above, and keeping well to the left of the jutting-out rock. There are a couple of rough goat paths. When you arrive at the solitary tree, the rough path veers to the left towards a boulder and the ridge; it then zig-zags uphill, and you should now head for the row of trees on the ridge ahead.

When you come into a more wooded area, keep heading uphill and slightly left towards the ridge, keeping to the left of some larger rocks. **When you arrive at the ridge, note the point at which you emerge from the trees, as this will be your return route.**

Now head left towards the highest rocky point you can see – this is the East peak of Hacho. Climb round to the right of the rocks for an easier route to the peak and behind one of the rocks you will find a geocache and a 'Visitor's Book'. There are fabulous views of Gaucin, and to Gibraltar and Africa. *About 1 hour to here.*

From this peak, with your back to Gaucin village and Gibraltar to your left, go down across the grassy/rocky area ahead, then climb up slightly to the row of trees ahead. As you approach the trees you will see a trig point. This is the West peak of Hacho (and at 1011m the highest point).

N.B. TAKE CARE: there is a very deep 'sink hole' near the trig point so if exploring around here, or with children/dogs please be very careful. When standing at the trig point (with Gibraltar behind you) a short way further on and slightly downhill you will see a fence ahead, with a large flat area of limestone 'pavement' just to the left of the fence. **The sink hole is directly beneath this, by the fence.**

To return to the village, retrace your steps and go back via the same route.