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Guide To Frigiliana

Introduction

Situated 300 m above sea level, and occupying 39.74 sq km, with a population of over 3,500, and enjoying spectacular panoramic views, Frigiliana is the epitome of the Spanish whitewashed village (or pueblo blanco), and indeed has been voted 'The prettiest village in Andalucia'.

The name 'Frigiliana' is believed to have Roman origins, signifying 'place of the ash tree' (Fraxinus, in Latin), although, needless to say, there are alternative explanations put forward, the most prominent being that it derives from a Roman land owner named Frexinius.

The reason for its white colouration is threefold. Firstly, the colour white is holy in Catholic beliefs, and therefore when the Christians took over a village from the Islamic Moors, they painted it white for God to see that it was now a Christian village. Secondly, the lime that is used in the whitewashing of the walls has an antibacterial effect, repelling insects that could otherwise destroy their construction. The third reason is of course that white reflects the heat more effectively, and hence makes the houses cooler in the summer. Having said all of this, it is only since 1971 that Frigiliana has actually been as beautifully white as it is now – under a law imposed by the then mayor.



Sometimes Frigiliana is known as the 'Village of the Three Cultures', as represented by the symbol opposite. This is intended to reflect the hundreds of years in which Muslims, Christians and Jews lived here in complete tolerance and harmony. However, as the series of twelve ceramic plaques show, this was not to last! Thankfully, though, this situation is now repaired.

Frigiliana's street names reflect Spain's rich heritage. Perhaps the most striking visually is C/ Zacatín (meaning 'Clothes Market'), together with streets named after several legendary Spaniards, thus Calles Pablo Ruíz Picasso, Federico García Lorca and Cervantes. More recent people who have given their

names to streets here are Carlos Cano, a popular singer-songwriter, Rafael Alberti, a writer and poet from Cádiz, and Blas Infante, a writer and politician, originally from Casares. Then of course there is also C/ Hernando El Darra, named after the 16th Century nobleman, who fought long and hard against King Felipe II, and who is also referred to in the ceramic plaques.

History

The caves around here were undoubtedly occupied by prehistoric man, and subsequently Phoenician settlers, who began to build here in about 900 BC. They were subsequently followed by Romans, although the only remnant of this is a drinking fountain (which features in our 'Tour of Frigiliana').

Next the Romans were followed by the Moors, in 711 AD, following a Muslim invasion of the Iberian Peninsula. The Moors were responsible for creating the irrigation system that has so benefited the area from an agricultural point of view, in addition to developing the basic layout of the village that remains to this day.

Then in 1492 the Catholic Kings finally drove the last Moors out of Spain, those agreeing to become Christians (known as 'Moriscos'), being allowed to remain, although still subject to cruel persecution. Ultimately about 8000 Moriscos took refuge in the heights above what is now Frigiliana, and on 11th June 1569 were routed by the Christians, in the bloody 'Battle of Frigiliana' which serves as the inspiration for most of the ceramic plaques whose presence is so central to any tour of Frigiliana.

Christian settlers then occupied the village, reaching 3000 inhabitants, before being caught up in the Napoleonic Wars early in the 19th Century. In 1916 construction of the road between Frigiliana and Nerja was begun. Then in the 1930s the Spanish Civil War came to the area, and the Republicans burned many church treasures.

For many years the surrounding Sierras became a battleground between the left-wing Republican rebels and the Governmental Civil Guard, until peace finally descended in the 1950s. Times then became so hard that many villagers moved to the cities, or emigrated abroad. More recently an era of prosperity has arrived, largely based on agriculture (and now, of course, tourism).



Just to set the record straight though: its beautiful cobbled streets, picture left, symbolically constructed of classic Muslim and Moorish patterns, might lead you to believe that you are witnessing a really valuable relic from the past. However, the truth is that the streets were composed only of dirt and gravel until only about 50 years ago, when the cobbled streets were carefully inserted.

A similar background applies to Frigiliana's classic ceramic plaques, (of a very ancient-looking design, and depicting a critical part of the village's history). However, these plaques were installed as recently as 1982, in order to vie for the National Award for Beautification – in which they gained first place!

Main Features

Probably Frigiliana's most memorable general features are the sheer beauty of its cobbled streets, referred to above, its whitewashed houses, festooned with plants and flowers, its views, and numerous excellent shops, bars and restaurants.

Then Frigiliana's main individual features are probably its sugar factory, El Ingenio, its 17th Century Church, its series of iconic historical wall plaques (around which our tour, below, is based) and the location of its original Muslim castle on the hillside behind Frigiliana.



El Ingenio: mainly using dismantled stones from the old Muslim Castle, construction of this enormous – 2000 square meter – building, picture left, was begun in the early 1500s as a stately home for the Manrique de Lara family, the biggest land owners in the province of Málaga. It was only much later converted into a sugar factory, producing syrup from cane sugar, miel de caña. For centuries the cane sugar molasses was exported to Cuba for the making of rum, with El Ingenio becoming the last such factory in the whole of Europe, when this global business collapsed. In fact, at one time there

were four great mills dominating the hillside above the village. Using water power, they used to grind grain as well as sugar cane. To the right of the factory can be seen a vertical aqueduct that was used to fuel the water wheel that powered the whole factory.



The Church (La Iglesia de San Antonio), shown left: Construction work finished in 1676, directed by Mason Bernardo de Godoy. It was built on the ruins of an old hermitage, and again funded by the Manrique de Lara family. Built in Renaissance style, it has a cross-shaped nave that divides it into three different aisles, the main such being covered by a magnificent moulded ceiling in the Mudéjar style. Interestingly, its bell tower, to the right, is the original minaret from when the building served as a mosque.

Regrettably, since the Catholic Church became very closely aligned with the Fascists during the Civil War of the 1930s, it was sacked by the Socialists in 1936, when they gained control of the village. Hence virtually everything in its interior only dates from the 1940s onwards.

The Twelve Plaques: these plaques depict that most celebrated moment in the history of Frigiliana, when the Moors revolted against the oppressive Christians, subsequently suffering a huge defeat (a full description of these plaques, and their English translation is given in Appendix I).

Castle Hill: Originally of Moorish construction, there is little left to see of the castle itself. Rather, it is to be considered as a reasonably challenging climb, up to Frigiliana's highest point, from which the very best views can be enjoyed. Details of this climb, and its route, are given in Appendix II.

Most guides to Frigiliana concentrate solely on the old (historical) part, ignoring the, almost mirror image, new village towards the southwest. However, if you have time, there is no detriment to taking a brief look around here as well, potentially walking out along C/ San Sebastián, and returning along the higher C/ Príncipe de Asturias.

Further Information

Getting there: The easiest way to get to Frigiliana is by car, there usually being parking spaces along the ring road leading to the El Ingenio junction. A taxi ride is obviously a possible alternative. There are buses from Nerja, but not all that frequent. The other way is of course to take one of our several Nerja-Frigiliana walking routes!

Weather: Frigiliana is claimed to have 320 days' sunshine every year. To find the next 14-day forecast log on to <https://en.eltiempo.es/frigiliana.html> .

Weekly Market: Every Thursday, just below El Ingenio, there is a market selling almost everything from clothes to fruit and veg, handicrafts to handbags.



Archaeological Museum – this is situated just inside the new village a short walk from the junction of the two parts of Frigiliana. It is located in the Casa del Aperio, which also houses the tourist office. Thus, on heading out towards the new part of the village from El Ingenio, bear left at the Restaurant/Bar Virtudes, as seen on the left, before heading up the hill for about 100 metres, until the museum comes into view on your right. The museum displays the history of Frigiliana, from Neolithic times up to the present day, with numerous interesting remains.

Festivals: Spain in general, and Andalucia in particular, is noted for its festivals and fiestas. Do be aware, though, that dates can change from year to year (especially religious holidays), and therefore you should always check first.

Three Kings – 5th and 6th of January. The annual parade starts at dusk, and the following day is virtually an alternative for Christmas Day itself.

Carnival – February. Traditionally centred around Shrove Tuesday, The Carnival provides a last opportunity to let loose before the 40 days of Lent.

Semana Santa/Easter Week/Holy Week – this is a spectacular time, with impressive processions throughout the village over the entire weekend.

Fiesta de San Antonio – June 13th. This includes the annual feria.

Festival of the 3 Cultures – last weekend in August. This celebrates the coexistence of the Christian, Jewish and Moorish cultures, in a mixture of fiesta, culture, gastronomy and music, together with street theatre. Recently more than 35,000 people attended during the week.

All Saints – 1st of November. In Catholic theology, this day is to offer prayers for those in purgatory (who haven't been allowed into heaven yet).



Finally, Tourist Trains have been introduced in a number of municipalities in Andalucia, including Nerja and Frigiliana. In Frigiliana, picture above, it starts (and finishes) near El Ingenio and takes you on a relaxing sightseeing tour of the village.

Walking around Frigiliana

The countryside around Frigiliana is quite spectacular, and our website which hosts this Guide – www.NerjaWalking.com – describes numerous such. In particular, we have reconnoitred a number of different routes between Nerja and Frigiliana, allowing numerous different 'there-and-back' combinations, offering the possibility of stopping off half way to enjoy a delightful lunch in Frigiliana itself. Other routes involve heading off to the north, including visiting the iconic village of Acebuchal, and also exploring the varying countryside close to the village itself.

The Tour Of Frigiliana

In order to take in all (or at least virtually all) of the features that make Frigiliana so interesting, we have designed a walking route through the (old) village that takes these in. This is also marked up on the map that is provided following the Appendices to this document.

The central feature of any tour of Frigiliana has to be its iconic series of twelve ceramic wall plaques, which depict that most celebrated moment in the history of Frigiliana, when the Moors revolted against the oppressive Christians, subsequently suffering a huge defeat (a full description of these plaques, and their English translation is given in Appendix 1). As a consequence, we have built our suggested tour around an itinerary that follows these plaques in chronological order, with occasional digressions as we go along to take in further features of interest. In this way virtually everything that you might wish to see in Frigiliana can be incorporated into one structured tour.

During high season, if you get caught here behind a coach load of tourists then you can be in for some delays, and our original plan was actually to follow the route in reverse. However, since the key point of the route is that it follows these plaques, and since they really ought to be followed in chronological order, we have stuck to the classic anti-clockwise circuit.



All of our walking routes to and from Frigiliana, and indeed this Tour of Frigiliana itself, begin and end at the roundabout just below the junction between the old and the new parts of the village, with the ancient molasses factory – El Ingenio – just above, picture above left Turn right here and walk up the ramp to the area just below the factory.

The first item of interest is a small circular coin-in-the-slot 'theatre' (El Teatro Mecánico) just on the first corner, picture above right. We don't actually know how this relates to the history of Frigiliana (if it does at all). One of its windows is entitled 'The Moor and his Parrot' and the other shows two old Frigilianians (almost life-sized) sitting around a table. There are actually further similar such machines deeper into the historical heart of the village, although not very easy to spot.



Before heading up into the old village itself it is worth just walking up by the right hand side of El Ingenio, to look out over the wall to your right, where you will get a splendid view of the hills behind, and of the river valley below (which is where our Nerja-Frigiliana (2) and (5) routes come in), pictures above. Slightly further up, alongside the factory itself, is a nicely located café, also giving a closer view of the aqueduct. El Ingenio itself is worth a closer look as well, if only to visit the extensive 'gift shop' on the ground floor.



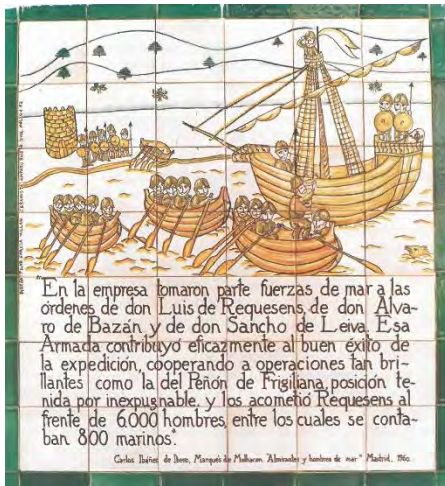
Rather than head up into the village direct from El Ingenio itself, however, you should drop down again onto the parallel road below – C/ Real – in order to view the most recent set of wall plaques, picture above left, which depict Frigiliana's agricultural heritage. The first such plaque, as might be expected, deals with the manufacture of cane sugar molasses. The second concerns the production of sweet Muscatel wine, so renowned that, although there is a strict prohibition on the consumption of alcohol under Muslim law, this ruling was completely ignored in this region. Grapes and raisins form the basis of the third plaque, and olive oil that of the fourth. These plaques, together with their literal translation, are described in more detail at the end of Appendix I.

Then, as you start off up the hill, you may, with some difficulty, be able to spot a huge rock off to your right, way up beyond the roof tops, picture above right. This is the Rock of La Sabina that came plunging down the hillside from the area of the Muslim castle high above the village, during a series of devastating earthquakes in 1884, which killed about a quarter of the area's entire population. Then in 1936, during a further earthquake, it moved another half metre, scaring the population below to a considerable extent. It has since been pinned into place, using iron rods, and hopefully will now stay put for a while.



Continuing on up the hill you will see a series of arches to your left, that are the remains of Los Reales Pósitos, a Granary, picture above left, which was built here in the 17th Century, as the village began to be rebuilt following the devastation caused by the revolutionary conflict here in 1569 (as depicted by the series of twelve ceramic plaques which form the core of our Tour).

At a junction further up (the driveable part continuing off to the left) there is a distinctive shield bearing the coat of arms of the Montellano family, one-time owners of El Ingenio, picture above right. We need to turn right here, up a series of steps, now following C/ Hernando El Darra, (named



after a native of Frigiliana, who was the military leader of the Moorish rebellion). We now begin our tour of the twelve ceramic plaques, which follow closely on one another.

Each plaque, as left, contains a different picture, followed by a text description written in a poetical Spanish that even native Spaniards find difficult to translate accurately.

However, in Appendix I we do our best to provide you with a literal translation, together with further background information. In total they provide a tightly-knit description of a brief, but highly critical period in the history of Frigiliana.



Plaque No 1: Map of the Area. As you climb up C/ Hernando El Darra you will come to the first plaque after about 20 metres, on the right hand side of the street. Essentially this is a map of the area in the mid-16th century, and sets the scene for the saga that follows.



Plaque No 2: Muslim Society. Proceed a further 40 metres up this street, and then turn left through an ancient arch, just past house No 11, plaque No 2 being situated immediately on the left (and which is easy to miss). This plaque depicts the period of Muslim occupation.



Plaque No 3: Seeds Of Revolution. On exiting this archway, back onto the main street, turn left and you will come across the 3rd Plaque 10 metres further up, effectively on your left. This plaque describes the conflict that resulted when the Christians undertook the banishment of the Moors from the area, and specifically depicts numerous Moors being chained and tortured, following the start of their rebellion.



Plaque No 4: The Great Prayer Meeting. Continue up the street another 20 metres, to encounter the next Plaque on your right. This plaque depicts a Muslim prayer meeting held to discuss their resistance to the Christian pressure, at which they were warned that further rebellion could end in disaster.



Plaque No 5: Martín Alguacil. Continue up the street for a further 40 metres to the next plaque, situated on your right. The Moors chose as their leader a man named Martín Alguacil, seen here waving a crimson flag.



Plaque No 6: The Depopulation. Continue on up the street for a further 30 metres to reach the next plaque, straight ahead. This depicts the depopulation of the whole Axarquia region, as the Moors were driven out.



Plaque No 7: Hernando El Darra. Continue on up the street, and turn left onto C/ Alta, stopping in front of Plaque No 7 on your right. It was El Darra who now took over the leadership of the rebellion, and who attempted to rally the population locally, taking up a defensive position on the mountain of El Fuerte – the ‘Rock of Frigiliana’.



Plaque No 8: The Attack. Continue up C/ Alta until you reach Plaque No 8, straight ahead. The plaque is situated slightly on your right, best viewed by taking a brief detour up to the right, as the main street heads downwards. The plaque depicts Christian naval forces, under the command of Don Luis de Requesens, storming the Rock. 6000 men were involved in this initially unsuccessful attack on the Moorish garrison.



Plaque No 9: The Defence of El Fuerte. Now continue along C/ Alta for a few more metres until reaching Plaque No 9 on your left, just around a corner. This is one of the most dramatic scenes, showing the Moors rolling millstones on axles down onto their attackers. Then if you stop in front of house No 37, you can get a good view of 'El Fuerte' itself, picture above right.



Continuing along C/Alta look out for some (out of the many to be found throughout Frigiliana) of the 'Hands of Fatima' – very characteristic door knobs, as shown in the pictures above. Often they can be seen to be holding a pearl – the beginning of life in the Muslim faith.



Plaque No 10: The Muslim Women. Continue on, as the street now slopes downwards, where you will see Plaque No 10 on your right. Many Moorish women fought as bravely as their menfolk, and, on being defeated, chose to throw themselves off the mountainside, rather than be captured.

From this point, looking down to your left you can see all the way down the famous C/ Zacatín, or Market Street, the base of which we will pass later on, as we return along C/ Real.



Plaque No 11: The Final Toll. Continue on up the street to the penultimate plaque, on your left. When the battle was eventually lost, more than 3000 Moors were captured and led off to slavery.



Plaque No 12: The Aftermath. Continue along the street for 30 metres, and then turn left down C/ Garral on some slightly uneven steps until reaching a small café courtyard on your right, where the final plaque can be seen. This plaque dramatically depicts the aftermath of the conflict – essentially a deserted mountainside strewn with corpses.

This concludes the sub-tour of the ceramic wall plaques, and we can now continue on to view many more interesting architectural, and other, features of Frigiliana.



You could now just continue down C/ Garral, until you come out on C/ Real once again, by the side of the imposing San Antonio de Padua church. However, our route takes a somewhat more interesting diversion here in order to take in several more key features that are missed by most visitors. Thus continue on to the right here from this courtyard, turning down Callejón del Inquisidor, picture left above, passing an old fountain to your right, picture right above. This street takes its name from the fact that this was the route that those called before the Inquisition were forced to take, during the period recounted in the twelve plaques. The actual trials took place at the top of the street, with punishment being immediately meted out to those found to be guilty (about 99% of

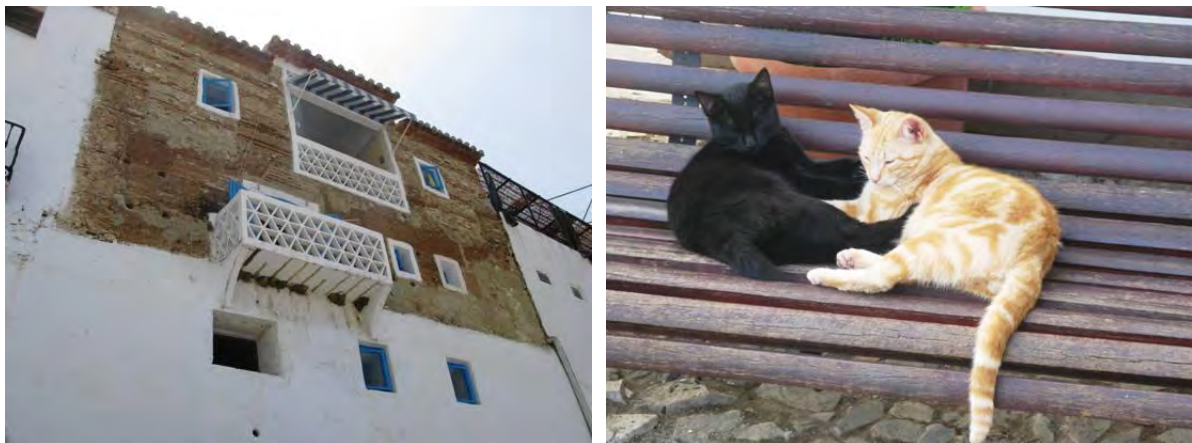
those accused) in the small plaza below. These punishments ranged from whipping, to being burned at a stake, and being skinned alive and then dipped in brine. Just stand here quietly and try to imagine what once took place in this very spot! Further down this street, now somewhat wider, and named Callejón de las Ánimas, is where the old Muslim cemetery used to be. Its name, in Arabic, means 'ghost' or 'phantom', and many sightings of ghosts have, perhaps unsurprisingly, been claimed to be made here over the subsequent centuries. A local legend has it that if you see a procession of ghosts walking on this street on All Saints Eve then you will be the next to join them!

Leaving this horrific scenario behind, we turn right at the bottom of the street, and down the steep hill named C/ Chorruelo, which, if continued along, would bring you out at the north-west end of the village, meeting up with the ring road that runs along its south side. However, we need to turn left after about 20 metres, opposite to the 'La Alegría del Barrio' restaurant, leading down to three (or, as we shall see, four) classic features.



First, on your left is the Fuente Vieja, or Old Fountain, picture above left, originally built by the Muslims, and restored in 1640. This restoration was carried out by Manrique de Lara, the fifth Lord of Frigiliana and the fountain bears his coat of arms. However, the filigree flowers on either side are all that is left over from the original Muslim design. It was originally designed to provide a water supply for both the population of the town and also for the livestock.

This is followed, on your right, by a much more ancient (over 2000 year-old) Roman fountain, picture above right. The water here is labelled as not drinkable, although this is not held to be true by any of the locals ('Health & Safety Rules strike again!). The source of the spring that feeds this fountain is somewhere up in the mountains, and it is said to have never run dry in over 2000 years.



Further to the left, and high above the street, is La Casa Sin Pintura, an unusual unpainted house wall, picture above left. It is said that when the house's owner died in 1906, his widow refused to leave the house – for the remaining 42 years of her life. She only painted the areas that she could reach by hand from inside, and hence it has remained as you see it today for over a century. Her children continued the tradition, and, in the early 1970s, the town hall denoted it as a historical site, to be kept like this into the future.

On making your way back up to C/ Chorruelo, if you are a pussy lover then you will be pleased to meet several such sunning themselves along the way, picture above right.



Turn right uphill, once back on C/ Chorruelo, very shortly entering La Plaza de Iglesias, or Church Square, where you can, if you like, stop off for a welcome drink, or even a meal, at the Restaurant named La Taberna del Sacristán, picture above left, before exploring the (Christian) church, with its Muslim Minaret, picture above right. On leaving the church square, heading east, you will shortly see the striking C/ Zacatín up to your left (a photo of this can be seen in Appendix II).

You can now make your way back to your start point, continuing east along C/ Real, and then downhill again towards El Ingenio. Along the way, about 100 metres from the church, and opposite to the Town Hall, is one of the oldest buildings in Frigiliana – El Torreón, picture below left.



Originally used by the Muslims as a military barracks, this became a granary after the Christian reconquest. An interesting feature within its courtyard area is an ancient vase, picture above right, exhibiting the 'Three Cultures' sign mentioned in our introduction.



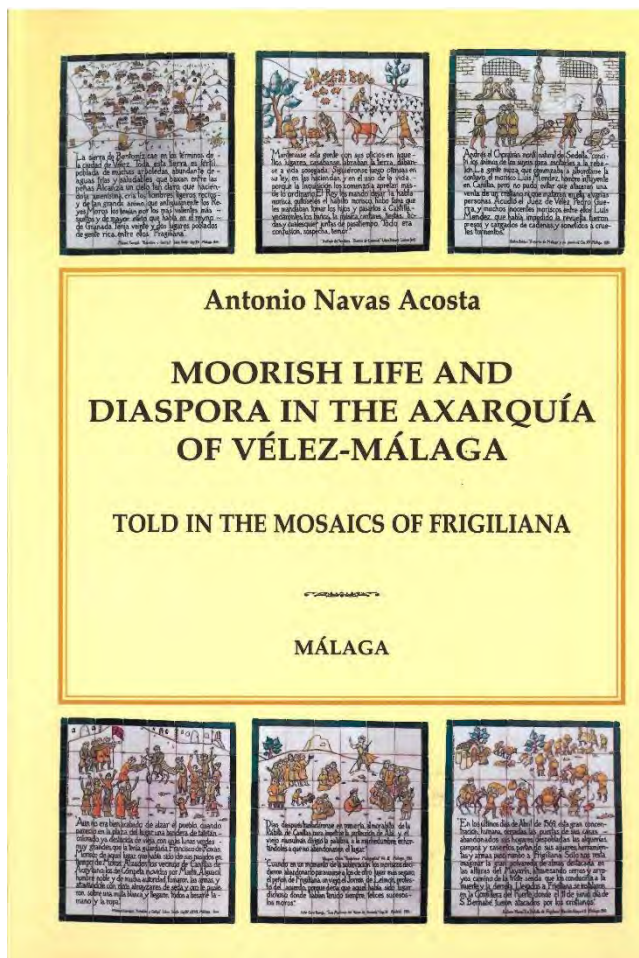
Further on, just before descending down to El Ingenio once more, if you turn right onto Callejón del Agua, between street numbers 43 and 45, and then shortly afterwards turn right again, you will come out just above the Botanical Gardens. These were opened in 2010, the idea being for them to bring together a variety of plants which have been used by the residents of Frigiliana over the past centuries, whether for food, as medicines, for the making of baskets, footwear, paper and perfumes or in the silk industry (which reached its peak in the Moorish era).

Alternatively, you might like to extend your tour to include the top of the hill above Frigiliana which once housed an original Arab castle, although it is a somewhat more challenging walk than the previous stroll through the village itself. In fact, there is now virtually nothing left of this original Arab castle – El Castillo de Lizar – since its stones were mostly taken to construct other buildings in the village, including El Ingenio. See Appendix II for details of this separate walk option.

Appendix I: The Plaques

These twelve ceramic plaques depict a critical part of the village's history.

In the 16th Century the Christian rulers of Spain (albeit very much in a minority) began to oppress the majority Moorish inhabitants to an unacceptable extent. The Moors revolted against this oppression, only to be clamped down upon even more severely. In The Axarquia region the Moors then chose to set up camp on the mountain of El Fuerte, also known as 'The Rock of Frigiliana'. The Christians then attacked, and eventually crushed the rebellion, after suffering considerable losses on both sides, in what became known as the 'Battle of the Rock'.



Of ancient-looking design, these plaques were actually installed as recently as 1982, in a successful effort to win first place in the National Award for Beautification.

Written in somewhat poetic and elderly Spanish (to tie in with their supposed antiquity) they can defy accurate understanding even by native Spanish speakers, and hence their translation is always somewhat subjective.

We have followed our translation with some further background information on each particular situation depicted, but for the most complete description available you cannot do better than to consult:

“Moorish Life And Diaspora In The Axarquía of Vélez-Málaga”, by Antonio Navas Acosta, published in 1999, and available in various shops in Frigiliana: see left.

About 21 years after the above-mentioned twelve, and very dramatic, historical plaques were created, a further four new mosaics were designed by the same artist, although this time they focused more on Frigiliana's agricultural history. These are located just below the El Ingenio factory, at the beginning of our guided walk. Their details follow those of the original twelve, below.

Plaque No 1

Map Of The Area



Marmol Carvajal 'Rebellion and Punishment' – Sixth Book, Chapter XV, Malaga 1600.

Literal translation:

“The mountain range of Bentomíz lies within the boundaries of the town of Vélez. All of this land is fertile, and covered with many trees, and cold healthy water tumbles down in abundance between the rocks. The brightest of skies breeds robust, agile people of such great spirit that in the past the Moorish Kings deemed them to be the bravest, most daring, and outstanding men in the kingdom of Granada. There were 22 settlements, inhabited by prosperous people, and amongst these was Frigiliana.”

Further Background:

Essentially this is a map of the area in the mid-16th century. The mayor of Vélez-Málaga had ceded the entire area to the King and Queen of Spain in 1487 after an eighteen-month siege of the town. The 22 villages under the area's control were separated into two regions, Frigiliana being the capital of those in the east of the region, including Nerja, Torrox and Cómpeeta. The people who lived here were known as 'Aguanosos', or 'water people', reflecting the abundance of water to be found in the mountain nearby, leading to the region's agricultural prowess.

Plaque No 2

Muslim Society



Hurtado de Mendoza 'The War of Granada' Book One, Lisbon 1627

Literal Translation:

"Supporting themselves with their skills, these people married, worked the land and led tranquil lives. Then came offences against their law, their households and way of life, as the Inquisition began to harass them more than usual. The King prohibited the Morisco tongue and Morisco dress, and it is said that their children were ordered to be taken away to Castile. Their baths, music, songs, fiestas, marriages and any leisure meetings were banned. All was confusion, suspicion and fear."

Further Background:

During the 8th to 16th centuries the most historic section of the village was constructed, embodying the purest form of Moorish architecture in Spain. The Jewish and Christian minorities lived in separate neighbourhoods, called *adarves*, and plaque no 2 is situated just in the entrance to one of these – where Jewish carpenters dwelt. Then in 1492 King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella issued a decree, forcing the Jews and Muslims to either convert or be expelled from Spain. If they converted they became known as 'Conversos' and 'Moriscos', respectively. Then in 1566 King Phillip II outlawed even the smallest forms of Muslim worship, and indeed prohibited the speaking of any language other than correct Castilian Spanish (even though few Christians could actually speak this themselves). No wonder that confusion, suspicion and fear then ruled.

Plaque No 3

Seeds Of Revolution



Guillen Robles. 'History of Malaga and its Province'. Chapter 15 Malaga 1873

Literal Translation:

"Andrés el Chorairán, an outlaw from Sedella, whipped up his people's emotions, inciting them to rebel. The Morisco, Luis Méndez, an influential man from Canillas, restrained the increasingly restive young folk, but he could not stop them attacking a Christian's inn in which they killed several people. Pedro Guerra, the Vélez judge, arrived, and many innocent Moriscos, including Luis Méndez, who had opposed the revolt, were taken prisoner, chained and cruelly tormented."

Further Background:

This plaque describes the events of the winter of 1568-9. Many of the Muslims who had refused to convert headed into the hills to conduct a guerrilla war against the new Christian rulers. When the rebel gang attacked Pedro Guerra's inn they murdered him, his wife, and seven guests. The Christian judges (who represented those in power, despite the population remaining 85% Moorish), used this event as an excuse to punish Moors in general, not just those involved in the revolt. This event then became a flash point in the rebellion.

Plaque No 4

The Great Prayer Meeting



Vasque Otero "Tradiciones Málagaenás" vol III Malaga 1953, and Julio C Baroja "The Moriscos of the Kingdom of Granada" Chapter IV Madrid 1976

Literal Translation:

“A few days later they made a pilgrimage to the hermitage of La Rábita de Canillas to beg the protection of Allah. An old Moslem addressed the crowd, exhorting them not to abandon the place.

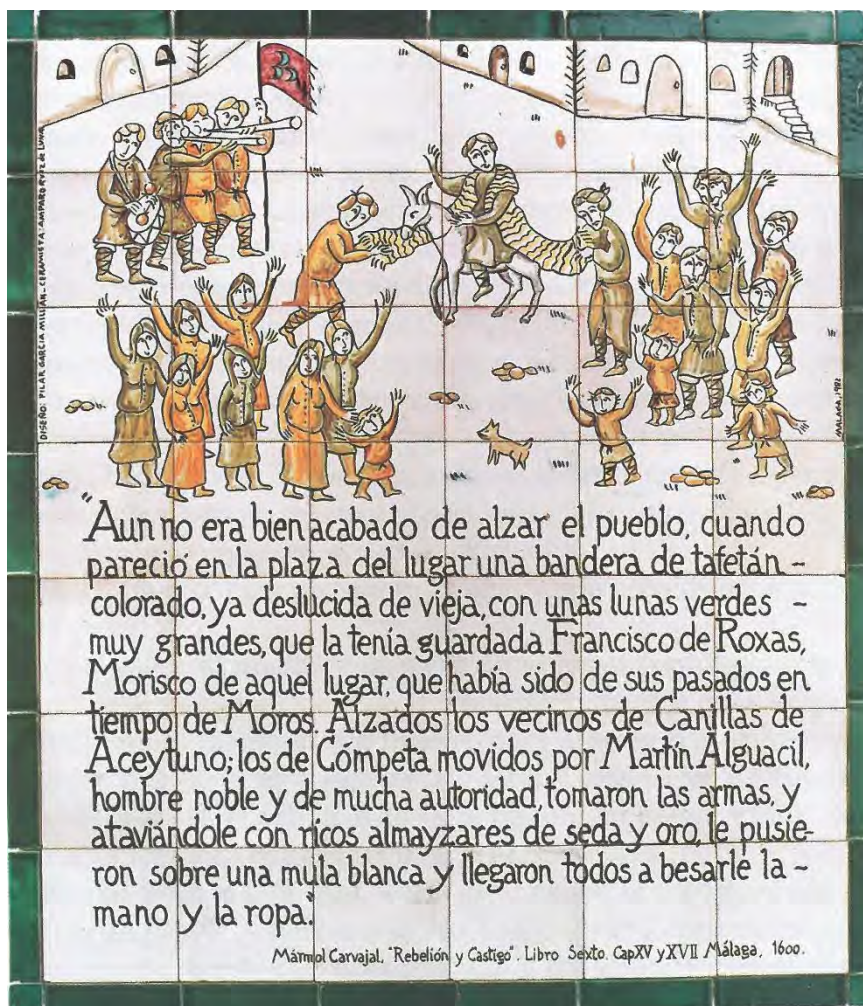
During the rebellion the Moriscos decided to quit the place so as to unite with others at the Rock of Frigiliana, a safer spot, but an old man, El Jorrón de Leimón, objected, saying this had been a happy place where the Moors has always enjoyed good fortune.”

Further Background:

The Muslim leaders decided to hold a meeting in Canillas de Albaida, on a mountain called La Rábita, a very holy place for Muslims. After they had prayed here for three days and nights, a very strong and vocal minority persuaded the entire group to rebel. Jorrón de Leimón pleaded with them to remain on La Rábita, prophesying that descending on the Rock of Frigiliana would only result in terrible bloodshed, a prophecy that was tragically to be fulfilled within weeks.

Plaque No 5

Martín Alguacil



Marmol Carvajal 'Rebellion and Punishment' Book 6 Chapters XV and XVII Malaga 1600

Literal Translation:

“The people had yet to rise fully in revolt when a faded old flag of red taffeta, decorated with very large green moons, appeared in the Plaza. It had been kept by Francosco de Roxas, a local Morisco, and had belonged to his ancestors in Moorish times. Canillas de Aceituno’s people had risen up. Those of Cómpeeta, stirred up by Martín Alguacil, a noble man of great authority, took up arms. Dressing him in rich silks and gold, they put him on a white mule, and all came to kiss his hand and clothing.”

Further Background:

The Moors chose as their leader a man named Martín Alguacil, a wealthy and powerful native of Cómpeeta. When he rode into the plaza in Competa, to be accepted as their champion, Francisco de Rejas made a powerful statement by proudly waving his red Muslim battle flag, it being a capital offence to be in possession of such.

Plaque No 6

The Depopulation



Antonio Navas 'The Battle of Frigiliana' Magazine Jabega No 9 Malaga 1975

Literal Translation:

“In the last days of April 1569, having abandoned their homes, farms and hamlets, this great throng, carrying household goods, tools and arms, set off for Frigiliana. We can only imagine the multitude, on the heights of the Matarín, crossing hills and gullies, on the sad route that would lead to death and defeat. At Frigiliana they established themselves on El Fuerte, the mountain where, on June 11th, San Bernabé's day, they were attacked by the Christians.”

Further Background:

This plaque shows the exodus and depopulation of the (predominantly Moorish) towns of the Axarquía. In the top left corner you can see a man locking his house for the last time, a house which had probably been in his family for 25-30 generations. More than 95% of the Moors heeded Alguacil's call, leaving deserted villages behind them, as they came to Frigiliana. They believed the rock – El Fuerte – to be very easily defensible, and, having fresh water supplied naturally, they believed that they could hold out forever against the Christians.

Plaque No 7

Hernando El Darra



Mármol Carvajal 'Rebellion and Punishment' Book 6 Chapter XVII Málaga 1600

Literal Translation:

“As they thought that they would be better off all together on the Rock of Frigiliana, which was very strong and near the sea. They sent word to those in the Sedella stronghold that they should come to join them. They named as their leader Hernando el Darra, who was considered by them to be very noble because his ancestors had been governors and constables of Frigiliana.”

Further Background:

Hernando El Darra and Martín Alguacil were very good friends, both coming from wealthy Moorish nobilities. Very opposite in personality (El Darra was an extremely quiet man), they got along very well together. El Darra had already secured victory in a number of small battles with the Christians. His current plan was to have the people gather, make and steal as many millstones as possible, to use as weapons in the ensuing battles.

Plaque No 8

The Attack



Carlos Ibañez de Ibero, Marqués de Mulhacén 'Admirals and Seamen' Madrid 1960

Literal Translation:

"Naval forces under the command of Don Luis de Requesens, Don Alvaro de Bazán and Don Sancho de Leiva took part in the campaign. This fleet made a powerful contribution to the expedition's success, cooperating in brilliant actions such as that of the Rock of Frigiliana, a position said to be impregnable. Requesens stormed it at the head of 6,000 men, including 800 sailors."

Further Background:

In fact a group of about 1500 men from Málaga decided to attack the Rock of Frigiliana on May 28th 1569, but with disastrous results: 170 of their number were killed or wounded, with little damage inflicted on the Moors. Several Christians were captured during the battle, and later released. However the Moors had the idea of marching a group of their soldiers in front of them, and then had them circle around and come past again, wearing different uniforms, in order to trick the Christians into thinking that thousands of Moorish reinforcements were arriving. However Requesens was not put off by this and wrote a letter to King Phillip II requesting formal permission to attack. In fact he got impatient and attacked anyway just a few days before King Phillip's reply arrived ordering him to refrain. The attack was successful, but only at a very high cost in life, as described in the following plaque.

Plaque No 9

The Defence of El Fuerte



Perez de Hita 'Civil Wars of Granada' Second Part CH XIV Madrid 1631

Literal Translation:

"The Christian standards started rising up the slope at full speed, but the Moors began their defence hurling down many rocks, and a devilish invention. They had prepared many mill wheels, piercing them with long beams, and they hurled these straight down on the Christian troops climbing the hill, and there was not one of these wheels which did not carry off 50 soldiers if they were in their path."

Further Background:

El Darra was a brilliant military strategist, and knew the region well. Hence he knew exactly where the attack would take place, through a narrow bottleneck. The above mill wheels on their long axels were completely decisive in the first battle, and held the Christians at bay for three days in the second such. Legend then has it that The Christians then gathered together groups of thirty to fifty goats, tying lanterns around their necks. The goats were then marched up the narrow passage, simulating a huge nocturnal attack, and the Moors responded by using up most of their ammunition. As a consequence they were overcome the very next morning.

Plaque No 10

The Muslim Women



Marmol Carvajal 'Rebellion and Punishment' Sixth Book Ch XXIV Málaga 1600

Literal Translation:

“There were some Moorish women who fought like brave men, helping their husbands, brothers and sons. And when they saw that the fortification was lost, they threw themselves off the roughest cliffs, preferring to die smashed into pieces rather than fall into Christian hands. Others had the spirit to escape, jumping like goats from boulder to boulder with their children on their shoulders.”

Further Background:

Women in Muslim days lived very traditional lives, their work being limited to cooking, cleaning and rearing their children. However the Christians also required them to work in the fields – which produced some very tough women with a consummate hatred for the Christians. Indeed the latter described these women as the toughest fighters they had faced in their entire careers. The plaque shown here shows their subsequent escape over the boulders, following their defeat.

Plaque No 11

The Final Toll



Perez de Hita 'Civil Wars of Granada' 2nd Part Chapter XIV Madrid 1631

Literal Translation:

"With the stronghold captured and sacked, more than 3000 were made prisoner. Within the fort 500 died, most of them old men, and almost 1300 women and children. More than 600 Christians were wounded and more than 300 soldiers were killed. The plunder was great and many Moorish women and boys were taken as slaves, although all was at the cost of Christian blood."

Further Background:

The picture shows the captives being led off, the faces of the small children reflecting their heading towards a lifetime of slavery. About 1300 Moors actually managed to escape.

Plaque No 12

The Aftermath



Literal Translation:

“A heart breaking silence descended on the farmhouses of Frigiliana. There remained the abandoned hillside, the corpses, and the lively voice of Martín Alguacil:

“If we should die fighting to defend our freedom, mother earth will receive back what she produced, and he who has no grave to shelter him will not lack the sky to cover him. God forbid that it should be said of the men of Bentomíz that they had not the courage to die for their homeland”

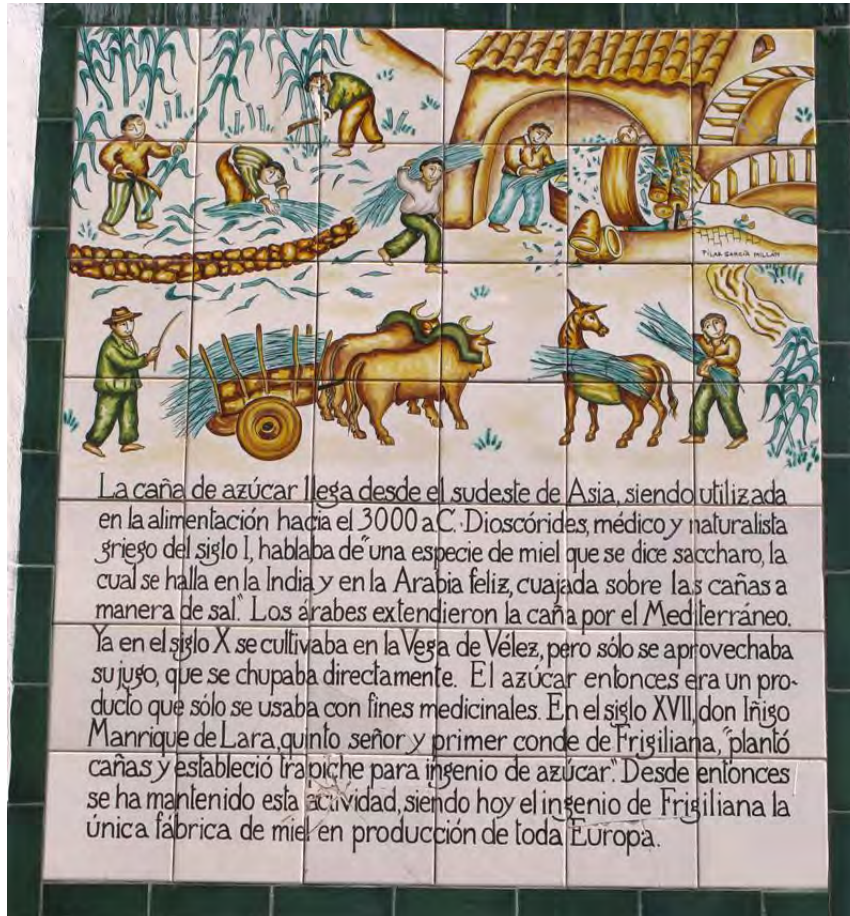
Further Background:

After the battle there was no life left in the villages of the area. The plaque shows the Muslim moon setting over the lands for the last time, with corpses littering the mountainside. In fact it is likely that Alguacil died in the battle, but el Darra managed to escape, and continued to raid Christian establishments for almost a year, before being tracked down to the beach at Maro (just east of Nerja). However, although a number of his companions were caught and executed, el Darra still managed to escape!

The Four New Plaques

Their descriptions, below, are largely based upon an article written by ex-Frigiliana tour guide, David Riordan shortly after they were installed. They are described here as seen from left to right.

The Cane-Sugar Molasses Industry



Literal Translation:

“The cane sugar molasses came from the southwest of Asia, where it had been used for food since 3000 BC. Dioscorides, a 1st Century Greek physician and botanist, spoke of ‘a type of honey called saccharo, the same type found in India and happily in Arabia, where they condensed it out of the sugar cane in the manner of salt.’ The Arabs extended the sugar cane throughout the Mediterranean. By the 10th Century it was cultivated in the fertile valley of Velez, but only to take advantage of the juice, which one sucked directly. Sugar was then a product that was only used for medicinal reasons. In the 17th Century, Iñigo Manrique de Lara, the fifth lord and first count of Frigiliana, ‘planted sugar cane and established a mill for a sugar cane factory’. Ever since they have maintained this activity, whereby today the cane sugar factory of Frigiliana is the only factory in all of Europe still in production.

Wine Making



Literal Translation:

“The cultivation of the grapevine began in Asia Minor where there were many vineyards situated in a cradle known as ‘vitis vinifera’. Probably before 600 BC, the Phoenicians brought varieties of wine to Greece, Rome, and the Eastern Mediterranean. In Muslim Málaga and in the Axarquía, the cultivation of vines helped the society flourish. In 1050, the caliphate of Málaga, Idris II, was well pleased drinking the extraordinarily sweet Málaga wine, called ‘xareb-al-malaquí’. According to Medina Conde, the wine of Málaga was very similar to that which Pliny the Elder called ‘Diachyton’, which was made by the wine grapes passing seven days in the sun and stomped underfoot on the eighth. The wines of Málaga were famous for their special qualities. In the 18th Century, they were exported to England, Northern and Eastern Europe, and America.”

Further Background:

Although Muslims have a strict prohibition on the consumption of alcohol, this was consistently ignored here in the Axarquía, simply because the Muslim leaders liked this wine so much. After all, the theory went, if Allah hadn’t wanted them to drink it, then he wouldn’t have made it so good. However in the 1880s phylloxera attacked the local vines, and production was only re-established by importing vines from California, although the taste was never the same, and the market never recovered its historical popularity.

The Grapes and Raisins



Literal Translation:

“The muscatel grapes of Málaga are the most famous of the sun-dried grapes and raisins in the world, for their huge size and sweet exquisite flavour. They have been grown in the Axarquía, where for years they have cared for their elaboration and presentation. Traditionally, the highest quality raisins were presented in clusters classified as first class, ‘calite imperial’, or second class, ‘calite royal’. The picked raisins were classified into seven categories: inspected, half inspected, cleaned up, ordinary, small, rubbish and cochaque. Since the 18th Century until the first third of the 20th Century, the production of raisins was a basic pillar of the Málaga economy. The wine business gave occupations to thousands of men and women in the delicate work of manipulating the fruit, which was exported to practically every European country and the Americas.

Further Background:

Pliny the Elder (mentioned in the previous mosaic) commented on the vines of Southern Spain that ‘they must be under-propped with forks, for otherwise they will not bear their own burden, so fruitful they be. They delight greatly to grow near the sea, where they may have the vapours of the sea to breath upon them: and indeed their very grapes have a scent and smell of a brackish dew.’

Olives



Literal Translation:

“The manner of cultivating the Olive (*European Saliva Oil*) probably came from the eastern Mediterranean from the Phoenicians or the Greeks, who settled in these lands already filled with forests of small wild olive trees. In the first Century, Columela was said to have grafted proper olive trees onto the smaller wild olive trees, the ‘acebuche’ which were everywhere. Between the 2nd and 3rd Centuries, the ‘Bética’ olive oil gained a fine reputation and practically all was exported to Rome, the capital of the world. As well as the cooling uses, they used the oil for light, to make cured ham and as a medicine. Nowadays it is well known for its goodness in preventing many infirmities of the cardiovascular system. The olive tree has long symbolised the Mediterranean and has also come to symbolise reconciliation and peace.

Further Background:

Frigiliana’s olive oil is amongst the highest quality that can be found anywhere in the world. But one of the dirty secrets of the olive oil business is that over half of all the olive oil produced in Andalucía is exported to Italy, which then sells it in boutique bottles for high prices. In 2002 Italy exported more than one and a half times the amount of olive oil that they produced domestically.

Appendix II Castle Hill



Note that this walk is not be considered as just a casual extension of our 'Tour of Frigiliana'. Although the latter can be undertaken wearing flip-flops, the Castle Hill climb is a serious undertaking, requiring proper walking shoes.

From the Plaza de la Iglesia, instead of heading all the way along C/ Real, back to your start point, you need instead to turn left almost immediately on leaving the church, up the extraordinarily scenic (if somewhat steep) C/ Zacatín, picture left, coming out at the top close to Plaque No 10 again.

Then turn right here, along C/ Alta, keeping straight on until you reach C/ Santo Cristo.

The location of a bar/restaurant on your right hand side provides an excellent viewpoint to the south, and, on descending down a steep slope further on you will come to the 'Garden Restaurant'.

You might well choose to take a break here for a drink or an excellent meal.



To climb the Hill, ascend by the side of the restaurant area, picture above left, the original cobbled surface soon turning into an old cobbled mule track, picture above right, following a sharp left turn, which then zig-zags upwards through orchards and landscaped gardens.



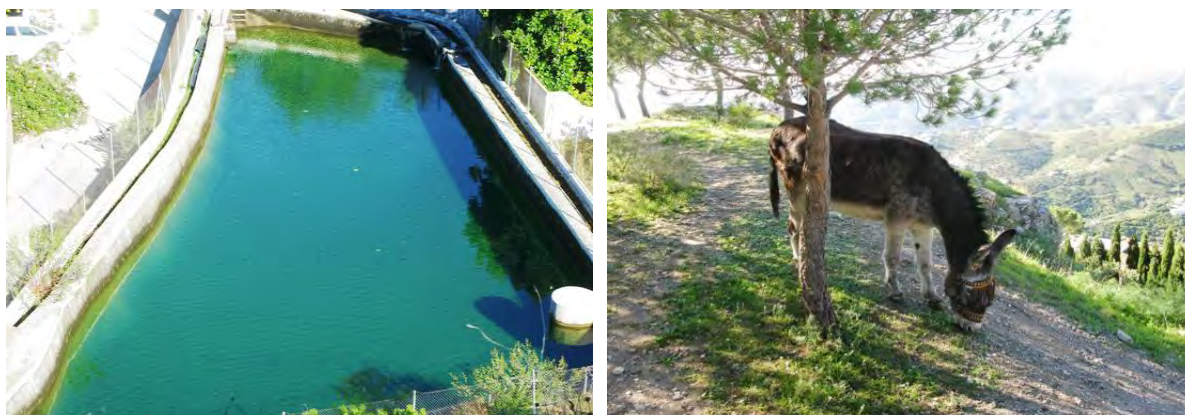
The path is fairly rough here, as it winds upwards, somewhat bizarrely passing a number of abstract sculptures, for example pictures above.



It then comes out at a semi-circular view point, to your right, picture above left, from which there are excellent views of the surrounding mountains and the Higuieron Valley down below, picture above right.



Continuing upwards, through the pines, you will reach a similar view point on your left, picture above left, overlooking the village, picture above right, and the hill country to the west.



Continuing on to the summit, at the north end of this top area where the castle was originally located, you will see the Lizar reservoir down below, picture above left. [From here you can continue on to ascend El Fuerte (The Stronghold), as described in the iconic series of 12 plaques.]

It is likely that you will share your time on this top area with a number of mules, picture above right, which are probably best not approached too closely, since it is claimed that they may bite. From here it is actually possible to take a different return route, heading down from this top viewing area, but it is not all that easy a route to find.



Accordingly, we recommend returning by the route that you ascended, turning left when you reach the Garden Restaurant once more, heading down to a further south-facing viewpoint. From here, and to your left you can see the El Ingenio factory, picture above left, while to the right is a fine view down to the sea, picture above right

From here go right, down a fairly steep path, turning left at the bottom, back onto C/ Real, not far above your original start point of El Ingenio.



In addition to the 'SpainAway' side of our business, to be found at www.SpainAway.com, we also operate in Africa, through www.AfricaAway.com, organising game viewing and walking safaris in a wide range of countries. In particular we specialise in trips to Zambia, the most iconic (and safest) of all African destinations, incorporating, as it does, the famed Victoria Falls. See www.ZambiaAway.com.



More recently we have developed a number of serious walking safaris of our own in both Zambia (see www.ZambiaWalkingSafaris.com), Kenya, Tanzania and Botswana.

These complement our Spanish walking itineraries described in our www.NerjaWalking.com.



Further activities that may be undertaken in Africa include boating, fishing and photography, with perhaps the most popular being simply to relax on an idyllic tropical beach on Zanzibar or Lake Malawi.

For further information on any of our activities simply email bookings@TheAwayCompany.com.

MAP OF FRIGILIANA (Old Village)

↑ Acebuchal

- A El Ingenio
- B Church
- C Castle
- D Botanical Gardens
- E Museum

Ceramic Wall Plaques
Numbered 1 – 12

