

## A trip to Casares

We pass Estepona westwards and follow the coast road. We could have turned left at the roundabout a drive along a small country road but we take the faster coast road. When you come to Finca Cortesin roundabout take to the right Calle de Casares. You will have the luxury golf course on both sides of the road. There are usually not so many players on this rather difficult golf course.



We are looking for the 10 kilometer sign as we are going to lunch at the picturesque restaurant Forge in the mountains around Casares. In the middle of a curve we see the sign Finca Forge. A steep road up to the parking. The restaurant is nestled in the nature and has views over the hilltops. It is a charming place to eat at. Inside they are playing jazz music and the decoration follows the same theme. It is very home like. The menu is wide spread from curries to Beef Bourguignon. I chose a Moroccan Tagine. The English owners have lived in Morocco and the dish was perfect with the right seasoning. The prices are lower than on many restaurants along the coast.

After 13 kilometers we are looking for a sign saying ceramic. We are going to visit the Swedish ceramist Agneta Larsen. Once more we are going up a steep road up the hill. After a hundred meters we see Agneta standing in the door greeting us welcome. In the old stable she has her gallery. The ceramics are inspired by birds, woman faces, and animals around Casares. Agneta invites us into her home for a glass of wine. A charming house with views over the valley and the hilltops. She takes us to her workshop. It is here she sits and creates her works of art. There is a lot of experimentation with colors before she is satisfied.



We continue the road upwards another few kilometers. The village of Casares is a traditional Andalucian white village perched high on a mountain top with winding narrow streets and spectacular views. Its two three hundred white-walled, red-roofed houses, rising up the far side of a deep rocky gorge. Often you can see large birds flying over the top of the village. Being one of the last Muslim strongholds during the occupation by the Moors the village is swathed in history. As you look out across the greenery and hills you can see Gibraltar and beyond that Africa.



Within the village you have everything you could need. There are many shops, restaurants, cafés and bars, many with beautiful views. The approach road to Casares takes you to the top of the village. Unless you actually live there most visitors tend to park here and then take one of the cobbled (steep) paths down into the village itself. As you

descend you pass the cute white washed houses that line the streets until you reach the main square in the shadow of the village's church. On the opposite side of the approach road, if you look over the top, you will see the remains of the fort that once protected its Moorish occupiers. Try to find a small bar and eat local tapas.

Being in a protected area, around the village of Casares there are many nature walks that you can take to explore the surrounding countryside and look at the local wildlife in their natural habitat. It will only take you 15 minutes back to the carretera. Or you can go on to the village of Gaucin and drive down to the village of San Roque. This will take at least an hour and another hour back to Marbella.

