



The remains of Brother Diego rest in the Hermitage of the Virgin of the Rock in Mijas in recognition of the work he carried out throughout the 26 years, during which time the villagers' devotion to the Virgin had been rebuilt and increased.

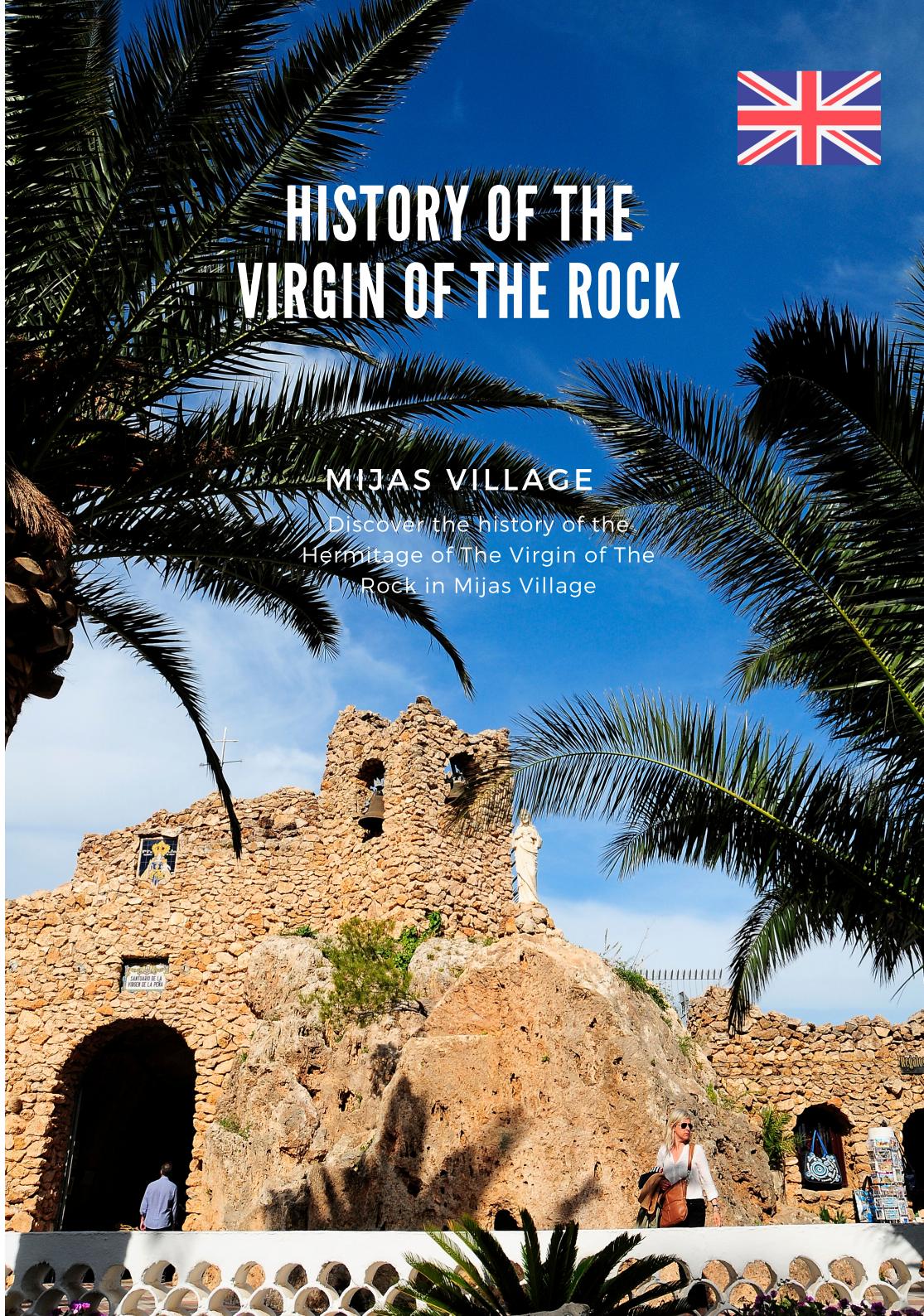
The Hospice of Brother Diego prospered until 1831, when Mendizábal ordered the secularization of religious orders and appropriated their property; The hospice was closed and the Barefooted Carmelites left Mijas. Abandoned, the Hospice collapsed; it was stripped by vandals over the years. Many used the materials of the hospice to build their houses; everything except a reconstructed tower and a wall section of the chapel.

## AT PRESENT

Today only a few scattered stones point to the site of the little Brother's dream, but the Sanctuary of the Virgin of the Rock, which he carved with his own hands, remains a monument to his faith. This is visited by natives and visitors throughout the year, thus being one of the most important tourist attractions of the town.



Avda. Virgen de la Peña, 2A, 29650 MIJAS (Málaga)  
Email: turismo@mijas.es Web: turismo.mijas.es / www.mijas.es  
FaceBook: Turismo Mijas  
Telf.: 952 58 90 34



# HISTORY OF THE VIRGIN OF THE ROCK

## MIJAS VILLAGE

Discover the history of the  
Hermitage of The Virgin of The  
Rock in Mijas Village

## THE DISCOVERY

In 1586, some children, whilst peacefully looking after their herd of goats, suddenly heard a voice calling them. Surprised, they turned their heads to where the voice was coming and saw at the window of the tower a lady with a child in arms. The lady told them to go home and tell their parents and the priest that she had been trapped in the tower for more than five hundred years and that she needed their help to free her, and then she disappeared into thin air. Quickly, the children returned home to tell their parents what had happened. The children heading home, sad and thoughtful, and seeing their father how apathetic they were, asked them what the matter was. They confessed what had happened. The father, hearing such words, was stunned and immediately informed the priest, the authorities and the neighbours. Then they went to the tower where the lady had appeared. Their father, being a mason, began to hit the wall until it broke. It was then that Peter, the father of the children, saw what was inside and with a broken voice said: "Jesus, here she is", and then fainted to the ground due to the commotion. The priest presented the Blessed Virgin to the people of the village, whom prostrated themselves to the ground, and greeted her with Hail Mary.



Inside the hollow where the Holy Image of the Virgin was found, were two rare silver candlesticks, two relics of custody, apparently known as "copon", and other jewellery, as well as the file on the history of the Image. That was when the Virgin consecrated herself with the name of "The Virgin of the Tower".

The return of the Virgin brought great joy to Mijas, but although the testimony of the two children who had witnessed the apparition of the Virgin was already in the Town Hall, the men of the town did not hurry to obey the request of the Virgin having her own chapel, on the rock under the Castle of "La Peña". On the contrary, the project was paralyzed for 70 years, and perhaps, it would still be so if it were not for the faith, perseverance and love of the Virgin of a pious hermit, Brother Diego.

## THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE SANCTUARY

One day in 1656, after having tried for many years to interest the civil and ecclesiastical authorities, the little hermit took his beak and attacked the rock. At first the villagers laughed at him, later on they began to pity him. The townspeople brought him water, bread and cheese, but did not help him with his task. Brother Diego did not faint; day after day, during the following 26 years he incessantly excavated the hard rock and gradually his enormous act of faith earned him the respect and admiration of the entire village. When he finished the Shrine of the Virgin in 1682, he was invited to a meeting of the Council to be honoured.

Brother Diego took the opportunity to propose to the council that the Castle of "La Peña", which had been abandoned for more than 100 years and was almost in ruins, be repaired by the Village and turned it into a Convent-Hospice of the Barefooted Carmelites.