

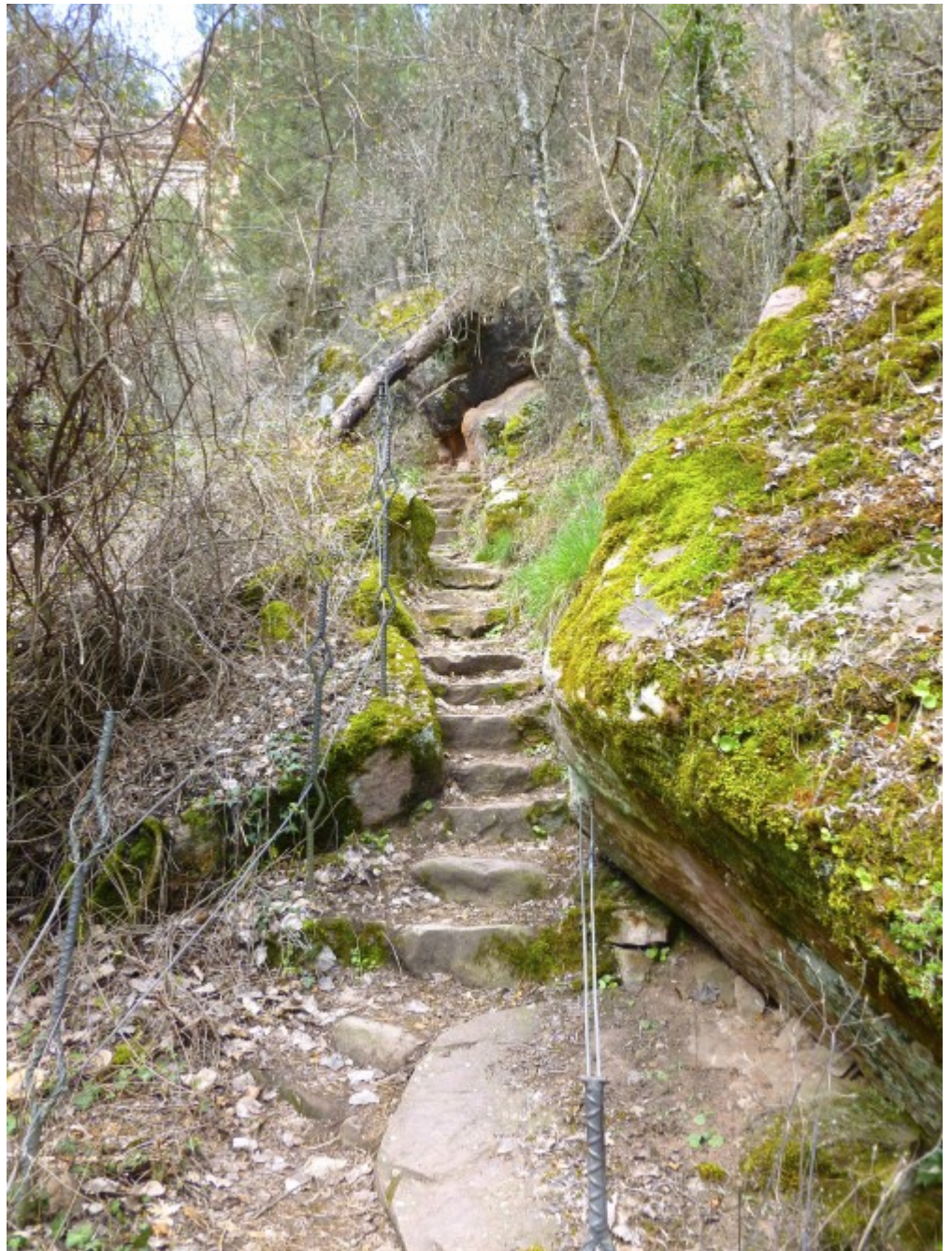
Barranco Virgen de la Hoz (Parque Natural del Alto Tajo) in Guadalajara

No plans for the weekend? Here's a great alternative to barhopping it up in Madrid. Last Sunday, my friends and I decided to discover other **natural beauties of Spain**; get out of the city and smell some fresh air. So we drove to the province of **Guadalajara** to visit what our friend, Carlos, describes as "**the mini Grand Canyon of Spain**".



Just a few hours drive east of Madrid lies one of the country's most beautiful natural parks, the **Alto Tajo**. Inside

this park, you'll witness nature's grandeur, the orange and red cliffs of **Barranco Virgen de la Hoz**. Views from the top of **these cliffs** make you feel as though you've been transported



to Arizona.

With **270 handmade stone steps** ahead of us, our non-athletic friends got worried. But as we walked up, we arrived at a series of “miradores” (lookout points) where we could rest, and take in the views; totally worth it. As we looked down, we could see the side streams of the **Río Gallo** (river) winding below the majestic **Barranco Virgen de la Hoz's** burnt-orange-colored cliffs.



What I liked most about **Barranco Virgen de la Hoz** is that you don't have to be a professional alpinist to make it all the way up. So there are no excuses to enjoy a really nice journey to the top.





Along

the path, the views get better and better.



Finally, after about an hour's climb, we reached our

destination.





Smile!

Oh well,
time to go back to reality. Good bye **Barranco Virgen de la Hoz**, hope to see you again soon...



Before we headed back to Madrid, we went to the breathtaking **Monasterio de Piedra**, where we saw hundreds of waterfalls. We could call it Spain's "**mini Niagara Falls**". More about that later...