

A good place to finish off your training or learn to thermal
Technical and interesting XC flying across hills and flatlands
A perfect spot to start or finish the European season

◀ ▼ SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Algodonales is a mecca for finessing thermalling skills and racking up the hours for new pilots
Photos: Fred Gustafsson



The picturesque village of Algodonales in southern Spain sits nestled below the burly Sierra de Lijar mountain. It's a European mecca for beginner and low airtime pilots who come to one of the numerous English, German or Spanish schools. During the days, shuttles from the various companies run up and down the hill ferrying clients, and in the evening the town square is full of pilots excitedly sharing their adventures in one of several cheap eateries on the main square.

It's a good place to go to get your training signed off over an intensive week of guaranteed weather. If the weather at home is frustrating, low airtime pilots can come to progress and clock up hours with guided XC, SIV or paramotor conversion courses.

For pilots who are already in the XC game, there are some big distances and triangles to be flown here too when the day delivers.

The sea breezes from the Mediterranean and the Atlantic battle it out, sometimes creating convergence areas that allow for big flights northwards.

The easterly and westerly winds that sweep the Strait of Gibraltar and North Africa sometimes encroach this far north and can blow the site out for several days. But typically it's smooth early in the day and ideal for beginners. In peak season it builds by 2pm with punchy 5m/s thermals pushing up, even through the stronger winds, to 3,000m.

Low pressure systems can bring some pretty brutal inversions, but you can still enjoy mellow sunset flights that sometimes deliver restitution. The landscape of irregular rocky limestone peaks and undulating fields will test your hill and flatland flying techniques on every flight.