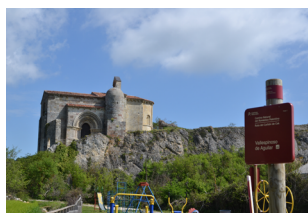
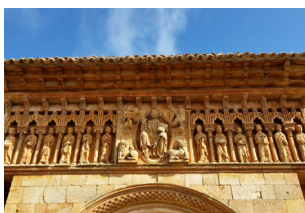


Románico palentino Nature Trail





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Title:

Románico palentino Nature Trail.

Edit:

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Secretaría General Técnica. Centro de Publicaciones.

Proposing unit:

Dirección General de Desarrollo Rural, Innovación y Formación Agroalimentaria
Subdirección General de Regadíos, Caminos Naturales e Infraestructuras Rurales.

Design and layout:

Tragsatec. Grupo Tragsa

NIPO: 003-26-088-X

Online store:

www.mapa.gob.es
<https://servicio.mapa.gob.es/tienda/>

e-mail:

centropublicaciones@mapa.es

Catalogue of AGE Publications:

<https://cpage.mprgob.es/>

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 GOBIERNO DE ESPAÑA	MINISTERIO DE AGRICULTURA, PESCA Y ALIMENTACIÓN	SUBSECRETARÍA
		SECRETARÍA GENERAL TÉCNICA DIVISIÓN DE ARCHIVOS Y PUBLICACIONES

Guide to the
NATURE TRAILS
of Spain



Románico palentino Nature Trail

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The Palentinian Romanesque Nature Trail combines a rich cultural heritage with the stunning landscapes and environmental relevance of North-Western Palencia. The trail uses the old road that linked the mining areas in the Orbó, Castillería and Vergaño Valleys to the Canal de Castilla, in Alar del Rey. This road was used to transport coal to Palencia and Valladolid.

The name chosen for this Nature Trail highlights the importance of this artistic style in northern Palencia. The mountains of Palencia are home to a high concentration of Romanesque art, with more than fifty small churches located within a few dozen kilometers, blending the simplicity of rural Romanesque art with the landscapes of these foothills of the Cantabrian Mountains.

The peak of construction activity occurred during the second half of the 12th century and the early 13th century, with the Church playing a leading role under royal patronage. Even as the Gothic style began to spread throughout the rest of Europe, this region remained faithful to its Romanesque tradition.

This nature trail, around 103 kilometres long, has a main route, the “Ruta del Carbón de Cok” (Coke Coal Route), whose name refers to one of the traditional uses of the trail. This route takes the traveller through 66 kilometres of crop plains and hills covered with holm oak meadows and pine reforestation areas, up to the first foothills of the Cantabrian Mountains, at the Fuentes Carrionas y Fuente Cobre-Montaña Palentina Natural Park.

This natural area consists of limestone mountains, featuring a high mountain range with steep peaks and sparse vegetation where the Carrión River originates (in the Fuentes Carrionas lagoon), and a zone of gentler slopes, where deciduous forests of oak and beech abound, and where the Pisuegra River originates, in the area known as Fuente del Cobre. This natural park is also home to some of the northernmost juniper groves in Europe and serves as a refuge for some very characteristic animal species, such as the brown bear and the chamois.

Two alternative routes, 14 and 22.5 kilometres long, respectively, complete this nature trail. The first one goes from Santibañez de Ecla to Payo de Ojeda, and the second one goes from Cozuelos de Ojeda to Dehesa de Montejo. Both of them depart from the “Ruta del Carbón de Cok” and complement the main route, helping travellers discover the rich Romanesque heritage of Palencia, one of the places with the greatest number of examples of Romanesque art in Europe.

MIDE is an information system that evaluates and quantifies the technical and physical demands of different excursion routes. The aim is to unify the assessment of the difficulties offered by the different routes in order to allow cyclists, walkers and hikers to make the most informed decisions.

The **MIDE** system is composed of two blocks of information:

Assessment of four different aspects of difficulty: severity of the natural environment, orientation on the route, difficulty of the journey and the amount of effort required. These ratings, from 1 to 5 points and from low to high, are based on different concepts which are interpreted in the table on the following page.

Basic information on each route: timetable, cumulative positive difference in altitude, cumulative negative difference in altitude, horizontal distance covered, annual season in which the assessment is carried out and type of route (outward, return, circular and crossing).

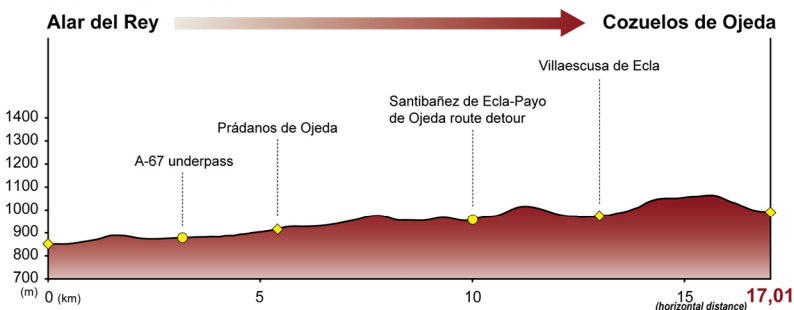
ROMÁNICO PALENTINO NATURE TRAIL

STAGE 1 ✂ ALAR DEL REY → COZUELOS DE OJEDA (COKE COAL ROUTE)

MIDE

Harshness of natural environment	2	⚠	Upward gradient	447 m	⬆
Guidance along the route	1	🗺	Downward gradient	310 m	⬆
Route difficulty	1	🔧	Route length (actual distance)	17,04 km	➡
Amount of effort needed	3	🏃	Time	5 h	🕒

◆ town ● point of interest



Example of MIDE application

Environment Severity of the natural environment



1. The environment is not risk-free
2. There is more than one risk factor
3. Various risk factors
4. Substantial risk factors
5. Many risk factors

Route Orientation on the route



1. Well-marked trails and crossings
2. Pathways or signage indicating continuity
3. Requires the identification of geographic features and cardinal points
4. Requires off-path navigation
5. The route is interrupted by obstacles that must be overcome

Terrain Difficulty of te- rrain



1. Flat surface
2. Bridleways
3. Stepped paths or irregular terrain
4. Necessary to use hands or jump to maintain balance
5. Necessary to use hands to progress

Efforts Degree of effort re- quired



1. Up to 1 hour of total walking
2. Between 2 and 3 hours total walking
3. Between 3 and 6 hours total walking
4. Between 6 and 10 hours total walking
5. Between 6 and 10 hours total walking

Calculated according to the MIDE criteria for an average hiker with a light load

The **MIDE** method is recommended by the Spanish Federation of Mountain Sports and Climbing (FEDME).

More information at www.euromide.info



RECOMMENDATIONS

- Do not bury rubbish or litter in nature. Keep it until it can be deposited at a collection and recycling site.
- Never light fires or throw away lit cigarettes.
- Remember to always close gates, fences and gates behind you to prevent livestock from escaping.
- Never walk on crops. Use the footpaths.
- Respect the marked trails. Shortcuts only lead to serious erosion that can lead to the disappearance of the traditional path.
- Keep your dog on a lead at all times. This way you avoid disturbing domestic animals and mean you can see more wildlife.
- Respect and care for water sources and streams. Water is life.
- Do not camp outside the designated campsites.
- Defend nature and remember that the extinction of a plant or animal species is irreversible.

**HELPING TO CONSERVE THESE NATURE TRAILS
IS TO KEEP OUR CULTURAL HERITAGE ALIVE**

The stages of the nature trail proposed in this Guide are independent of each other, with the only common link being that they constitute an approach to the habitat they pass

Colour indicative of the Geographical Sector in which it is located

Name of the Nature Trail

Name of the stage of the Nature Trail

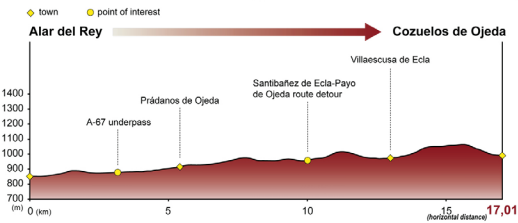
MIDE profile of the Nature Trail indicating different degrees of difficulty, slopes of the route, time required to complete the route, highlights of the route and total distance

Introductory text

ROMÁNICO PALENTINO NATURE TRAIL

STAGE 1 ✂ ALAR DEL REY → COZUELOS DE OJEDA (COKE COAL ROUTE)

MIDE			
Harshness of natural environment	2	⚠	Upward gradient 447 m ⬆
Guidance along the route	1	🗺	Downward gradient 310 m ⬆
Route difficulty	1	🏃	Route length (actual distance) 17,04 km 🚲
Amount of effort needed	3	🏋	Time 5 h ⌚



LEAVING CANAL DE CASTILLA BEHIND TO MOVE INTO LA OJEDA

The main route of the Palentinian Romanesque Nature Trail uses an old road that linked the mining areas of the Orbó, Castillería and Vergaño Valleys and the Canal de Castilla, in Alar del Rey. This road was used to transport coal to Palencia and Valladolid. This first stage of the trail starts at Alar del Rey, winding through crop plains, gullies, pine forests and meadows. It goes through Prádanos de Ojeda, Santibáñez de Ecla and Villaescusa de Ecla, ending at Cozuelos de Ojeda.



The Pisuerga River as it flows out of Alar del Rey

through and therefore offer an approach to the nature, history, culture and traditions of our country, while at the same time attempting to promote a call for conservation.

STAGE 1 ALAR DE REY + COZUELOS DE OJEDA



Docks on the Canal de Castilla, near the start of the path

Photograph of the route, layout, monuments or natural highlights, with respective informative caption

CANAL DE CASTILLA

The Canal de Castilla is one of the most important civil engineering projects from the 18th and 19th centuries in Spain. Its main purpose was to establish a river transport system and a communication channel solving the isolation of the Castile and Leon plateau, mainly due to a difficult terrain and a deficient and poorly maintained road network.

The Canal runs through the provinces of Burgos, Palencia and Valladolid, in the Autonomous Region of Castile and Leon. For years, one of its main functions was to enable the transportation of wheat from Castile to the northern ports, and from there to other markets.

At first, the Canal was conceived as a network of four channels that would link Segovia with Reinos. Eventually, only three branches (Northern, Southern and Campos branches) were built. The branch going through the province of Palencia (the Northern branch) is the longest one.

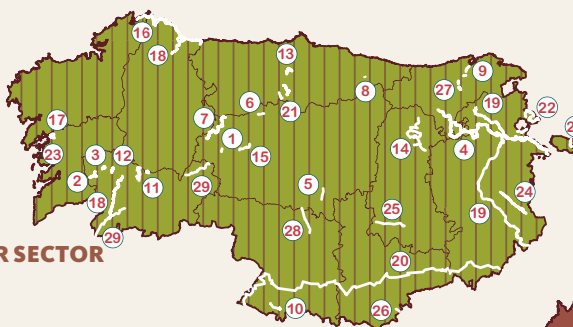
Although it was soon replaced by the arrival of the railway, the Canal continued to prove itself very useful, since it was used as the driving force for the locks used in mills and for agricultural irrigation. Navigation stopped in 1959, and its main use is now agricultural irrigation. More recently, the important architectural heritage of the Canal de Castilla has meant that it has been promoted as a tourist landmark.

Table with historical or anecdotal information on some aspect of the Nature Trail

I. NORTHWEST PENINSULAR SECTOR

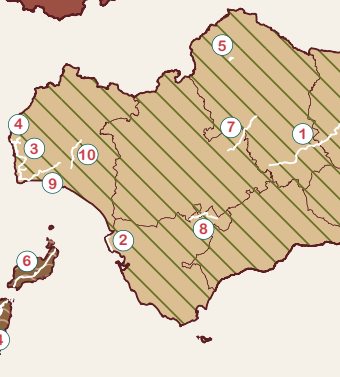
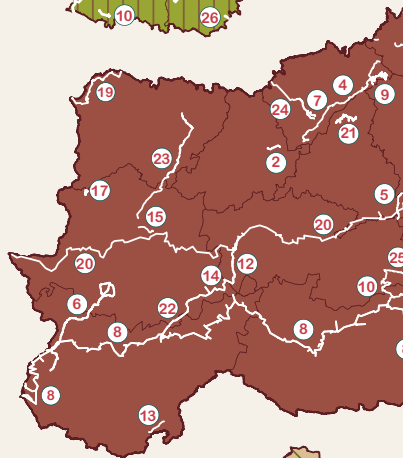
- Cacabelos - Quilós (1)
- Carballada de Avia (2)
- Dos Arrieiros (3)
- Ebro (4)
- Esla (5)
- Laciana. Villablino to Villaseca section (6)
- Mirada Circular: Ancares Leoneses from Guimara to Balboa (7)
- Muñigo - Covadonga (8)
- Pas (9)
- Sayagués Agricultural Landscape (10)
- La Ribeira Sacra (11)
- River Barbantiño (12)
- River Nalón (Fuso to Tuñón) (13)
- Románico palentino (14)
- Ruta de la Conquista (15)

- Cantabrian Sea Route (16)
- The ecological routes of the Catoira River (17)
- San Rosendo (18)
- Santander - Mediterráneo (19)
- Senda del Duero (20)
- Senda del Oso (21)
- Senda del Pastoreo (22)
- Sendas en Abalo (23)
- Sierra de la Demanda Greenway (24)
- Tren Secundario de Castilla (25)
- Eresma Valley Greenway (26)
- Toranzo Valley (27)
- Vía de la Plata (28)
- Via Nova (29)



VI. CENTRAL PENINSULAR SECTOR

- Agua Soriano. Antonino Route (1)
- Campo Azálar (2)
- M^a Cristina canal and branches (3)
- Cañada Real Soriana Occidental (4)
- Cañada Real Soriana Oriental (5)
- Corredor Cáceres-Badajoz (6)
- Eresma (7)
- Guadiana (8)
- Beech and Oak Forests of Riaza (9)
- Wetlands of La Mancha (10)
- Júcar (11)
- La Jara (12)
- La Jayona (13)
- Las Villuercas (14)
- Monfragüe (15)
- Renacimiento (16)
- Rivera de Acebo (17)
- Santander-Mediterráneo (18)
- Senda del Duero (19)
- Tajo (20)
- Lozoya Valley (21)
- Vegas del Guadiana (22)
- Vía de la Plata (23)
- Eresma Valley Greenway (24)
- Villacañas to Quintanar de la Orden or El Trenillo (25)

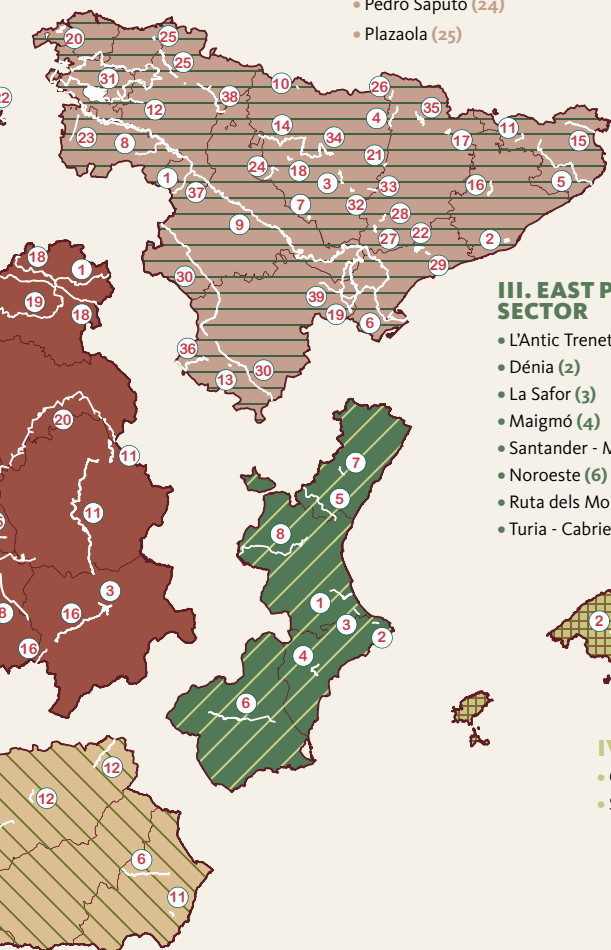


VII. CANARY SECTOR

- Anaga-Chasna (1)
- La Gomera Coasts (2)
- La Gomera Peaks (3)
- Fuerteventura (4)
- La Palma (5)
- Lanzarote (6)
- Traditional Trails of El Hierro (7)

II. NORTHEAST PENINSULAR SECTOR

- Agua Soriano. Antonino Route (1)
- Anell Verd (2)
- Camí de l'Aigua (4)
- Carrilet (5)
- Carrilet de la Cava (6)
- Castejón de Monegros (7)
- Cidacos (8)
- Ebro (9)
- Embalse de Lanuza (10)
- Ferro i el Carbó Greenway (11)
- Basque Navarre Railway Greenway (12)
- Guadalaviar (13)
- Hoya de Huesca (14)
- La Muga (15)
- La Séquia (16)
- Les Mines (17)
- Loreto y el Canfranero (18)
- Matarraña - Algars (19)
- Montes de Hierro Greenway (20)
- Montfalcó al Congost de Mont-rebei (21)
- Muntanyes de Prades (22)
- Oja (23)
- Pedro Saputo (24)
- Plazaola (25)
- Port de Vielha (26)
- River Segre and Utxesa reservoir (27)
- Riu (28)
- Ruta del Glorieta (29)
- Santander - Mediterráneo (30)
- Senda del Pastoreo (31)
- Sierra de San Quílez (32)
- Sifón de Albelda (33)
- Somontano de Barbastro (34)
- Sort i la Vall d'Àssua (35)
- Tajo (36)
- Tarazonica Greenway (37)
- Val de Zafán (39)



III. EAST PENINSULAR SECTOR

- L'Antic Trenet (1)
- Dénia (2)
- La Safor (3)
- Maigmó (4)
- Santander - Mediterráneo (5)
- Noroeste (6)
- Ruta dels Molins d'Aigua (7)
- Turia - Cabriel (8)



IV. BALEARIC SECTOR

- Camí de Cavalls (1)
- Son Juny (2)

V. SOUTHERN PENINSULAR SECTOR

- Aceite (1)
- Entre Ríos (2)
- Guadiana (Natural Path) (3)
- Guadiana Greenway (4)
- Guadiato (5)
- Guadix-Almendricos (6)
- La Campiña (7)
- La Sierra (8)
- Litoral (9)
- Los Molinos del Agua (10)
- Lucainena de las Torres to Agua Amarga (11)
- Renacimiento (12)

ROMÁNICO PALENTINO

NATURE TRAIL



ROMÁNICO PALENTINO NATURE TRAIL

PAG.

COKE COAL ROUTE.

STAGE 1 • ALAR DEL REY → COZUELOS DE OJEDA 19

STAGE 2 • COZUELOS DE OJEDA → VADO 23

STAGE 3 • VADO → CONEXIÓN CON GR-1 29

ALTERNATIVE 1.

ROUTE • SANTIBÁNEZ DE ECLA → PAYO DE OJEDA 35

ALTERNATIVE 2.

ROUTE • PERAZANCAS DE OJEDA → DEHESA DE MONTEJO 41



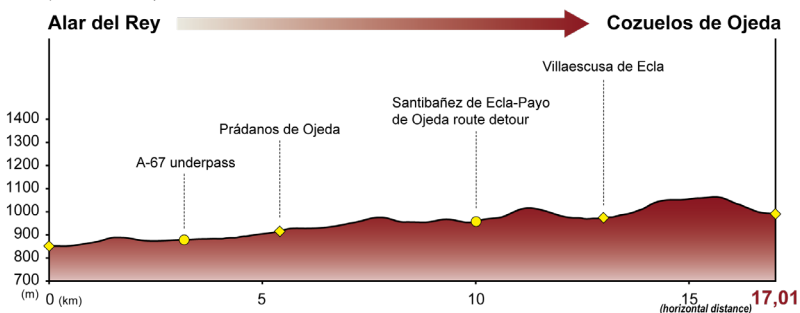
The route begins at the source of the Canal de Castilla

STAGE 1 ✂ ALAR DEL REY → COZUELOS DE OJEDA (COKE COAL ROUTE)

MIDE

Harshness of natural environment	2	⚠	Upward gradient	447 m	⬆
Guidance along the route	1	🗺	Downward gradient	310 m	⬆
Route difficulty	1	🖋	Route lenght (actual distance)	17,04 km	➡
Amount of effort needed	3	🍏	Time	5 h	🕒

◆ town ● point of interest



LEAVING CANAL DE CASTILLA BEHIND TO MOVE INTO LA OJEDA

The main route of the Palentinian Romanesque Nature Trail uses an old road that linked the mining areas of the Orbó, Castillería and Vergaño Valleys and the Canal de Castilla, in Alar del Rey. This road was used to transport coal to Palencia and Valladolid. This first stage of the trail starts at Alar del Rey, winding through crop plains, gullies, pine forests and meadows. It goes through Prádanos de Ojeda, Santibáñez de Ecla and Villaescusa de Ecla, ending at Cozuelos de Ojeda.



The Pisuerga River as it flows out of Alar del Rey

This first stage of the Coke Coal Route starts near the docks of the Canal de Castilla, where coal was once loaded in order to be carried to other regions. A few metres from the panel marking the beginning of the trail, there is a bridge allowing the traveller to stand straight over the canal and see the docks and, in the distance, the very beginning of the Canal de Castilla.

This nature trail goes north-west, leaving Alar del Rey behind, crossing the railway tracks and then leaving a branch that goes to the beginning of the Canal de Castilla on the right. It then crosses the Pisuergra river over the “Puente de las Monjas” and continues along the N-611 road for a few metres before crossing it near some farming buildings. Later on, the paved route is replaced by a dirt road, which is also used to access private properties. This kind of road will be the most frequent one along this route, except when the trail goes through towns and areas with gravel paths.

After a couple of well-indicated intersections, the route reaches the passage under the A-67 motorway among crop fields. It then goes through a similar landscape up to the P-223 road, which must be crossed in order to enter the town of Prádanos de Ojeda. Although the trail follows a clear route in Alar del Rey, there are other towns which are full of winding streets, so the traveller must pay special attention to the signals showing the direction of the nature trail.

The trail barely enters Prádanos de Ojeda, as it goes down Pozo Street and then leaves the town. However, the Corazón de Jesús Square and the parochial church of San Cristóbal are worth visiting, even though the trail must be left behind for a few metres. This Romanesque and Renaissance church, started in the 12th century and finished between the 15th and 17th centuries, is located on the highest place in the town.

When leaving the town, the landscape is still dominated by crops, but the path soon ventures into an area of gentle hills covered with a dense mass of black pine (*Pinus nigra* subsp. *salzmannii*). Later on, the trail goes through a holm oak forest (*Quercus ilex*). Further ahead, crops appear again, announcing the proximity of Santibáñez de Ecla.



Close-up of directional signs in the towns



The Coke Coal Route briefly goes through Santibáñez, arriving through Camino Escuelas and leaving the town before reaching Calle Real. However, the church of San Juan is worth leaving the trail for a while in order to admire it. One of the other routes complementing the Palentinian Romanesque Nature Trail starts at this town: the route going from Santibáñez de Ecla to Payo de Ojeda. Having passed by Santibáñez, the path turns right and arrives at a gully in the heart of a holm oak forest. Later on, this landscape alternates with pastures and crops up to the point where the route crosses San Andrés stream, in the outskirts of Villaescusa de Ecla.

From the moment the P-255 road is reached and up to the point this town is left behind (crossing the San Andrés stream again), this stretch of the trail is shared with vehicles, so the traveller must be cautious. If you want to continue discovering the Romanesque heritage of this area, you can visit the church of Santa Elena.

Villaescusa de Ecla is left behind, leaving the path that goes to the Desfiladero del Diablo and the Cascada de Cervigona aside. However, both of these places are worth visiting if you have extra time. The trail then continues running among pastures and bushes and goes up to enter a pine forest.

Later on, it goes downhill, and a cross on top of some rocks (Peñatorrecilla) announces that Cozuelos de Ojeda is near, just around the hill. This town will be end point of the first stage of the Coke Coal Route.

Although this stage ends after crossing the Cozuelos stream, a visit to the church of Nuestra Señora de la Asunción, on the outskirts of the town, is highly recommended. This is a Renaissance building with interesting heritage inside. There, the remains of a possible “conjuradero de nublos” are preserved - a peculiar and very interesting building from an ethnographic and historical perspective.



Docks on the Canal de Castilla, near the start of the path

CANAL DE CASTILLA

The Canal de Castilla is one of the most important civil engineering projects from the 18th and 19th centuries in Spain. Its main purpose was to establish a river transport system and a communication channel solving the isolation of the Castile and Leon plateau, mainly due to a difficult terrain and a deficient and poorly maintained road network.

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Although it was soon replaced by the arrival of the railway, the Canal continued to prove itself very useful, since it was used as the driving force for the locks used in mills and for agricultural irrigation. Navigation stopped in 1959, and its main use is now agricultural irrigation. More recently, the important architectural heritage of the Canal de Castilla has meant that it has been promoted as a tourist landmark.

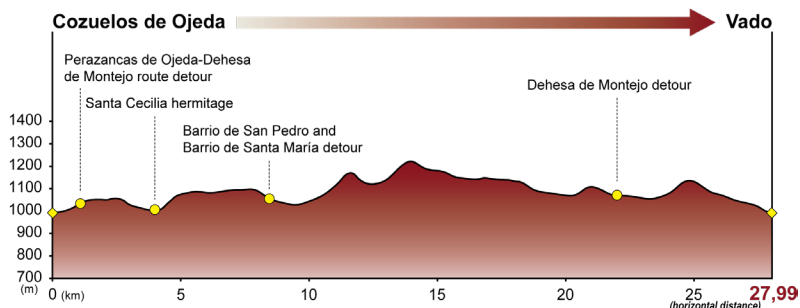
STAGE 2 ✂ COZUELOS DE OJEDA → VADO (COKE COAL ROUTE)

MIDE

Harshness of natural environment	2	⚠	Upward gradient	741 m	⬆
Guidance along the route	1	🗺	Downward gradient	742 m	⬆
Route difficulty	1	🖋	Route lenght (actual distance)*	32,37 km	➡
Amount of effort needed	4	🍏	Time	9 h 35 min	🕒

◆ town ● point of interest

* Total length of the route, including alternatives and/or branches



THE TRAIL GETS HEIGHT IN LA OJEDA AND VALDIVIA

The longest of the three stages making up this trail goes through the north-eastern borders of La Ojeda region, allowing the traveller to enjoy some amazing panoramic views in the ascent (La Ruya, Peña Umoma). The trail goes across the towns of Cozuelos de Ojeda, Vallespinoso de Aguilar, Dehesa de Montejo and Vado. A branch of the trail also lets the traveller peek in the lands of Aguilar de Campoo and sight its reservoir, as well as visit Barrio de San Pedro and Barrio de Santa María. The route passes by different hermitages and churches, allowing the traveller to discover the rich Romanesque heritage of the province.



The second stage of the Coke Coal Route starts where the previous stage ended, next to an information panel right after crossing the Cozuelos stream. The route leaves this town behind among pastures and crops, going up a slope until it gets to a crossroads. The other route at this intersection is the Perazancas de Ojeda-Dehesa de Montejo Route, one of the additional routes completing the Palentinian Romanesque Nature Trail.

Leaving this fork behind, the trail runs through gentle hills, among pastures, cereal and forage crops, reaching the path linking the PP-2131 road with Vallespinoso de Aguilar. The route shares a few hundred metres with this road (caution, traffic shared with vehicles) and then enters the town, where there is a rest area.

This trail will take the travellers to the hermitage of Santa Cecilia, which dates back to the 12th century. This hermitage was declared a historically relevant building in 1951 and restored in 1957, boasting an elaborate façade. Besides, the rocks where it was built will allow the traveller to enjoy stunning panoramic views over Vallespinoso and its valley. The trail then goes up the valley among pastures, bushes, and scattered trees and crop fields.

About four kilometres from Vallespinoso, a branch of the trail allows the traveller to go around the mountain and visit Barrio de San Pedro and Barrio de Santa María, two districts of Aguilar de Campoo. Almost one kilometre later, this branch goes back to the main trail.



Chapel of Saint Cecilia



Hoopoe (*Upupa epops*), amongst the farmland

As the main route goes up the side of the mountain (La Ruya Mountain), trees become increasingly scarce and are replaced by scrub. At this point, an intersection is reached with a path leading to a photovoltaic power plant and to the windmill that the travellers could see in the ascent. This is a good place to make a stop and enjoy the great panoramic views over the region of La Ojeda, to the southwest, and over the peaks in the Fuentes Carrionas and Fuente Cobre-Montaña Palentina Natural Park, to the north.

The path continues going up for a couple of kilometres before it starts going down to the P-227 road, which is reached after a sharp turn to the left. Having crossed this road, the route runs along the hillside among Pyrenean oaks (*Quercus pyrenaica*), pastures and crops. Leaving the Pyrenean oak forest behind and going only among pastures, the route descends to the town of Dehesa de Montejo. Before reaching the town, a path on the right must be taken, next to the panel that indicates where the Perazancas de Ojeda-Dehesa de Montejo Route joins this main route again.

After crossing the P-227 road once more, the path goes up to Peña Umoma and just above La Estación, where a sign tells the traveller more about the breath-taking views of the high mountains of the range of Fuentes Carrionas, in the Cantabrian Mountains.

The route then goes down to an intersection with a dirt path, where travellers must go left. After crossing a railway track (caution, this level crossing has no barriers), the trail leads directly to the town of Vado among pastures. This second stage of the trail ends at the entrance of the town, near a branch leading to Cervera de Pisuerga (2 km), a town worth visiting due to its interesting historical heritage.



View of the Aguilar reservoir from the Santa Eulalia chapel

ALTERNATIVE ROUTE THROUGH BARRIO DE SAN PEDRO AND BARRIO DE SANTA MARÍA

You will find the start of this branch of the trail about four kilometres after exiting Vallespinoso de Aguilar, in this second stage of the Coke Coal Route. This alternative route will allow you to discover these two districts of Aguilar de Campoo. After a gentle slope, the path starts to meander down among pine reforestation areas, with the reservoir of Aguilar at sight. First, the traveller enters Barrio de San Pedro, on the north-western side. The route then reaches a street leading directly to the Romanesque church of San Pedro. Although it is originally from the 13th century, different parts were added to this church throughout the 15th-18th centuries.

The aforementioned street goes out the town and crosses the PP-2132 road. The route then continues for almost another kilometre, up to a branch on the left leading to the hermitage of Santa Eulalia. This is a simple Romanesque temple from the late 12th century or early 13th century which was declared a Historical-Artistic Building in the 1960s.

This trail continues to Barrio de Santa María, linking with a street leading to a square where the travellers will find the next stop on their discovery of the Romanesque heritage: the church of La Asunción, dating from the 12th century, which was also modified in the following centuries and declared a Site of Cultural Interest in 1992.



Chapel of Santa Eulalia

After visiting the aforementioned church, which is a must, the route leaves this district through the street going left of the road where the traveller came. A path is reached that soon becomes a steep uphill path. Before entering the Vallejo de la Gorgoria gorge, travellers can look back in order to admire the reservoir of Aguilar again and to get a different view of the hermitage of Santa Eulalia, isolated among pastures. After walking through the gorge for over one kilometre, this alternative route joins the Coke Coal Route again, about one kilometre after the point where it started.



Views of the Santa María neighborhood, from the path leading up to the main road



Altarpiece of the Chapel of Saint Anne, in the Church of Saint Mary in Cervera de Pisuerga

CERVERA DE PISUERGA

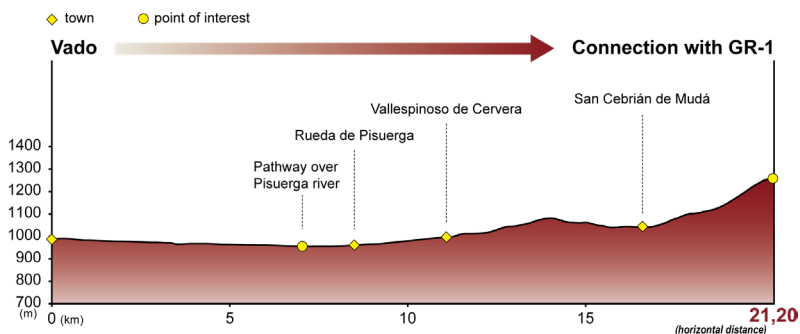
Only two kilometres before the end of this stage, the traveller will find the town of Cervera de Pisuerga. This town is one of the main tourist and commercial centres in the Palentinian Mountains, as well as being the administrative centre of this vast region. Today, this town mainly focuses on tourism, since the reservoir of Ruesga and the Parador Nacional Fuentes Carrionas are near the town. However, it used to be it was also an important mining site, with anthracite and pyrite mines.

Among the historical heritage of Cervera de Pisuerga, the church of Santa María del Castillo must be remarked. This is a Gothic church holding valuable altarpieces, such as the one in the chapel of Santa Ana (with a painting by Juan de Flandes, *The Adoration of the Magi*), or the Renaissance altarpiece). Another remarkable landmarks are: the rock hermitage of San Vicente, surrounded by a necropolis (8th and 11th centuries) and located in the district of Vado, near the Pisuerga river; the Casa de los Leones, a nobleman palace with two ornate shields in the façade (now is the local library); the Cervera palace, which is now the Piedad Isla ethnographic museum; the arcaded square; and the palace used as the Cultural Centre today.

STAGE 3 ✂ VADO → CONEXIÓN CON GR-1 (COKE COAL ROUTE)

MIDE

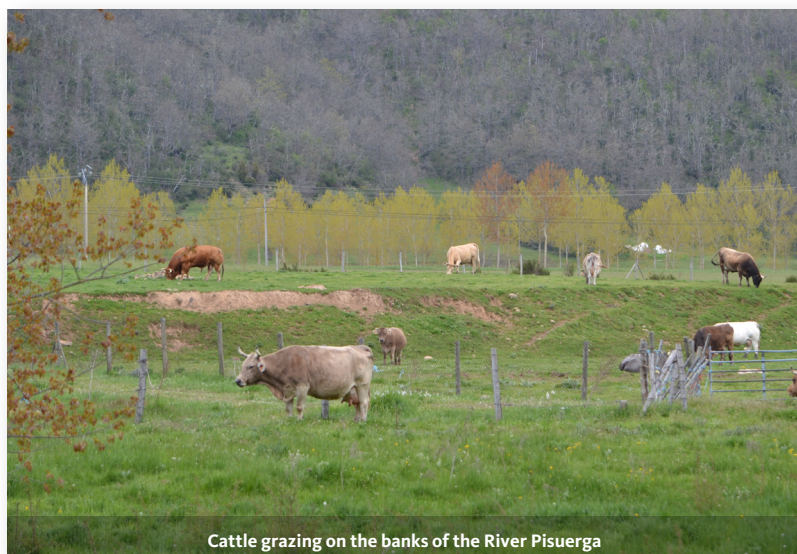
Harshness of natural environment	2	⚠	Upward gradient	618 m	⬆
Guidance along the route	1	🗺	Downward gradient	285 m	⬆
Route difficulty	1	🖋	Route length (actual distance)	21,23 km	➡
Amount of effort needed	4	🍏	Time	6 h 18 min	⌚



GOING INTO FUENTES CARRIONAS Y FUENTE COBRE-MONTAÑA PALENTINA NATURAL PARK

The last stage of the Coke Coal Route begins accompanying the Pisuerga river for more than a third of its course. Then, it runs north in search of the Palentinian Mountains and the Fuentes Carrionas and Fuente Cobre-Montaña Palentina Natural Park. This stage does justice to the trail's name, since it offers the travellers the chance to discover more Romanesque treasures, such as the churches of San Cristóbal (Rueda de Pisuerga), San Juan Bautista (Vallespinoso de Cervera) and San Cornelio and San Cipriano (San Cebrián de Mudá).





Cattle grazing on the banks of the River Pisuerga

Starting right where the previous stage of the trail ended, the third stage goes through the district of Vado and General Mola street and then Fuente Vad street. The trail leaves the town through the latter, after visiting the parochial church of San Sebastian, a Gothic building restored and expanded during the Baroque period. Leaving the last houses behind, the traveller can climb the rocks on the right to access a viewpoint offering great panoramic views of Vado and the mountain massif in the background.

The path runs along the Pisuerga river for the next eight kilometres, allowing the traveller to discover a new type of landscape: the gallery forest. Willows, elms, and especially poplars will accompany the travellers for this stretch of the trail, allowing them to admire the Pisuerga river when the track approaches it or when the forest

PISUERGA RIVER

This tributary of the Duero river has its source in the glacial valley of Covarrés, between the peak Valdecebollas and the Sierra de Híjar, in Sel de la Fuente, near the town of Brañosera (Palencia). After flowing underground for 3,000 meters, it reappears iatn Fuente del Cobre (Cueva del Cobre). In its upper course, it runs along the Palentinian mountains up to to Aguilar de Campoo, flowing along the Palentinian Romanesque Nature Trail when going through the town of Cervera de Pisuerga and Alar del Rey.

This famous trout river has a catch-and-release fishing area between Liñerzana and Salinas de Pisuerga (Preserve of Quintanaluengos), which is renowned for the number and size of its specimens.



After leaving the river behind, the path leads back to pastures and fields

is less thick. At one point, just near a bend of the river, there is an information panel providing additional information on this tributary river of the Duero.

Farther ahead, a fork is reached where a branch crossing a bridge over the Pisuerga river leads to Ligüerzana. From this point, the trail goes eastwards, getting away from the river for a while and going among crops and meadows where cattle graze. After a few kilometres, the route passes by Quintanaluengos, another district of Cervera which can be accessed from some of the following crossroads. This dirt path eventually ends next to a recreational area in Barcenilla de Pisuerga, whose church, and particularly its high tower, are almost visible from Quintanaluengos.



On arrival in Barcenilla de Pisuerga, the tower of the Church of Nuestra Señora de la Asunción stands out



A foal being shod, in Vallespinoso de Cervera

This church, Nuestra Señora de la Asunción, dates back to the 16th century, although it has a Romanesque baptismal font. The trail then leaves the church on the left and continues through a street opposite the area where the travellers have just come from.

This street arrives in a square where the travellers must take a bending street to the left. Then, a path on the right must be taken, crossing a dry branch of the Pisuerga river that used to serve a currently abandoned hydroelectric power station. Later on, the route goes through a pedestrian bridge over the river. The nature trail starts running northwest, now using a track near the river, with the gallery forest on the left and the crops and meadows on the right. A small trail departs from the right of this track, crossing the Mudá stream and going near a poplar grove, a football field and a rest area on the way towards the town of Rueda de Pisuerga.

The trail enters this town near the parochial church of San Cristóbal. Although it was modified in later centuries, this church still has the foundations of its unique nave and its façade from the 12th century. The route then leaves the town after crossing the CL-626 road, following a street on the left which immediately becomes a dirt path ending in another path where the travellers must turn right. Finally leaving the Pisuerga river behind, the path enters a new landscape, running among hills and valleys carved by streams; among bushes, meadows, durmast oak and Pyrenean oak forests (*Quercus petraea* and *Q. pyrenaica*). Almost half a kilometre after leaving Rueda, the route crosses the Vallespinoso stream, which will accompany the travellers on their way towards the namesake town. As the route approaches this town, the travellers will see the hermitage of Nuestra Señora del Valle on top of a small hill on the left.

The route enters Vallespinoso de Cervera through the south of the town, getting into a square with a rest area, a basin and a livestock crush. Although the path goes through the town, following the street to the left of this square, the traveller will find the church of San Juan Bautista, from the 14th century, right in the centre of this small town.

The nature trail leaves the town following the PP-2126 road for a few metres, then going on a gravel track on the right, after crossing a stream. Before leaving the town, the traveller can visit the aforementioned hermitage of Nuestra Señora del Valle, about 600 metres following the road south.

Always with the same stunning landscapes on sight, the route enters an area of old mining tradition, mainly of coal. However, the mines are closed today, so the industry has now shifted towards tourism activities.

A mine which can be visited by tourists, as the one which already exists in Barruelo de Santuyán, is being planned. The coal drying area in the mine of Barrio de San Miguel became an astronomical observatory known as “Mirador de las Estrellas”, or Stars Viewpoint.

MIRADOR DE LAS ESTRELLAS

The “Mirador de las Estrellas”, or Stars Viewpoint, is located in a former coal drying site dating back to 1956. It was refurbished in 2006 as an astronomical observatory, allowing for its preservation as a significant example of industrial architecture. This building is intended at spreading the history of the mining area and understanding the work done by miners.



Mirador de las Estrellas, a former mining site converted into an astronomical observatory

The path from Vallespinoso and San Cebrián de Mudá is not as obvious as in other stretches of this stage, since there are three intersections where the traveller must change paths. However, they are well indicated so that travellers do not get lost. After the first intersection, the route goes over the Verruenza stream, and after the last change of direction, the traveller can see the “Mirador de las Estrellas” on the right. Then the route goes straight until it enters San Cebrian de Muda, the last town the traveller will visit during this stage and along the nature trail.

The route enters this town through Terreno street, turning right on the first intersection up to the City Council square. Before starting the last stretch of the trail, the traveller can cross the PP-2125 road and visit the church of San Cornelio and San Cipriano, the last Romanesque church along the Coke Coal Route. This building dating back to the 13th century is located on a promontory overlooking the town and it was declared a Site of Cultural Interest in 1993.

The route leaves the square following Rosario street, which becomes a dirt track soon after leaving the last houses of San Cebrián behind. The path goes up in what is one of the hardest parts of the trail. Later on, 1.5 kilometres after the town, a branch leads to the Nature Reserve and Interpretation Centre of the European Bison. A few metres ahead, the nature trail also enters the Fuentes Carrionas y Fuente Cobre-Montaña Palentina Natural Park, the meadows and the scrub being replaced by a thick oak forest.

For the last 2.5 kilometres of this stage, the trail keeps going up through the oak forest, reaching the highest point of the Palentinian Romanesque Nature Trail (1,340 m). The peak Valdecebollas (2,143 m), close to the source of the Pisuerga river, is clearly visible from the clearings left by trees. This is particularly true at the end of the trail, a mountain pass where the Coke Coal Route crosses the GR-1 path, which the traveller can take, going down and left, to arrive in the nearby town of Herrerueta de Castillería.

NATURE RESERVE AND INTERPRETATION CENTRE OF THE EUROPEAN BISON

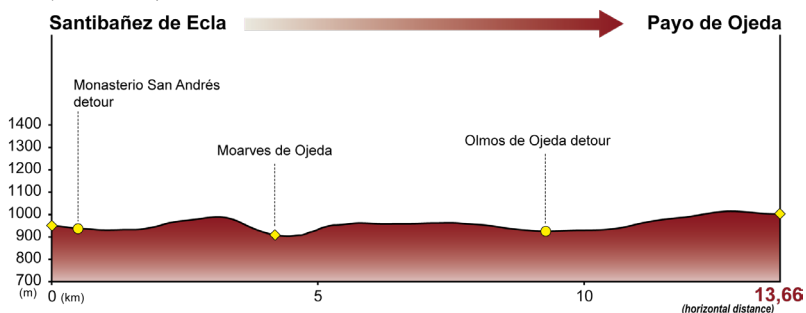
The Nature Reserve of the European Bison (*Bison bonasus*) is located on a plot of 20 hectares of oak forest and meadows. It offers its visitors the opportunity to see several specimens of European bison in semi-freedom, and to find out more about them at the Interpretation Centre. The main goal of this project is the recovery of this animal, because there have not been any free European bison in the world since 1927.

ROUTE ✂ SANTIBÁÑEZ DE ECLA → PAYO DE OJEDA (ALTERNATIVE 1)

MIDE

Harshness of natural environment	2 	Upward gradient	285 m 
Guidance along the route	1 	Downward gradient	240 m 
Route difficulty	1 	Route length (actual distance)	13,68 km 
Amount of effort needed	3 	Time	4 h 

◆ town ● point of interest



ROMANESQUE MONASTERIES BETWEEN FARMLANDS

This 14-kilometre route is one of the two routes complementing the Coke Coal Route, within the Palentinian Romanesque Nature Trail. It goes through the uneven terrain of La Ojeda, among landscapes shaped by the river Burejo, surrounded by crops, oaks and pines. Beautiful examples of Spanish and European Romanesque are hidden in this region, such as the monasteries of San Andreas and Santa Eufemia.



On the way to Olmos de Ojeda

SANTA MARÍA AND SAN ANDRÉS DE ARROYO ROYAL CISTERCIAN ABBEY

Commonly known as the monastery of San Andrés de Arroyo, this abbey is an exquisite example of the Cistercian rural art and one of the most popular monuments of the Palentinian Romanesque. It was founded in 1181 to host a community of Cistercian cloistered nuns, and the first written references about it appear in a privilege-granting document by Alfonso VIII of Castile, who continued increasing the heritage of the monastery with numerous donations.

As it is usual in Medieval monasteries, the church and cloister are surrounded by a wall with a large gate. At the entrance, a pillory with a simple design, reminiscent of the civil and criminal jurisdiction of the abbess of San Andrés over various towns of the area, is preserved.

The cloister is the most stunning area in the monastery, and one of the wonders of Hispanic Medieval art. The Chapter House is the most remarkable of the cloistered rooms. The former abbesses Ms. Mencía and Ms. María are buried in it.

The church has a single nave with a transept and three apses with large windows. The main entrance is located on one side, as it was usual in female monasteries, and it has an arcade on one side that goes along the north wall, made up of a series of round arches.

The confiscations of the 19th century affected the preservation of the monastery, but the ensemble was declared a Site of Cultural Interest in 1931, which led to important restoration works. Today, the cloistered nuns inhabiting the monastery make tea cookies, pastries and other confectionery products that visitors can buy. The monastery also offers a mixed guest accommodation service with very limited spaces.

This stage begins in the town of Santibáñez de Ecla, at the intersection between Camino de Escuelas and Real Street, next to the panel marking the start of the route. The trail goes down Real Street and through the town, leaving the church of San Juan on the left. Dating back to the 14th century, this church is a perfect example of the survival of the Romanesque style during the Gothic period in Palencia. Then, the trail reaches the PP-2226 road. From this point, the traveller must be cautious, since this stretch is shared with motorized traffic for 180 metres.

At the first intersection, the route takes a path appearing on the right and goes along the PP-222 road. This is the closest spot to the stunning Monastery of San Andrés, one of the most popular landmarks of the Palentinian Romanesque, really worth visiting. In order to get to the monastery, the traveller can follow the PP-2226 road up to its intersection with the PP-222 road and then turn left.

The vegetation growing along the San Andrés stream makes it difficult to see the monastery from the road, but a few metres ahead, there is a bridge going over the stream and leading to a street where the information panel is located. From this point, the travellers will get a great view of the monastery, and they will be able to skirt its walls to the right and arrive at its entrance.



Church of San Juan in Santibáñez de Ecla



Church of St John the Baptist, in Moarves

Back on the trail, the path continues on even ground parallel to the PP-222 road and to San Andrés stream, flanked by crops, brooms and holm oak forests, until it gets to the PP-2225 road. Before reaching this road, it crosses a small footbridge and turns left at the intersection. The route then goes through a 200-metre stretch shared with vehicles up to the intersection with the PP-222, so the travellers should take extra precautions again.

The route crosses the PP-222 road and begins a slight ascent perpendicular to the road. For two and a half kilometres, the trail alternates gravel pavement and dirt paths, running through uneven land with gentle slopes, among crops and oak forests, crossing several forest tracks on its way towards Moarves de Ojeda. As the travellers approach this town, the path begins to go down the slope, and pine and holm oak forests appear.

When the route reaches Moarves, it is easy to see the signs leading to P-277 road, which goes through the middle of the town. The church of San Juan Bautista is near the road – a late Romanesque church declared Historical and Artistic Heritage in 1931. Its façade is crowned by a stunning frieze, with the twelve apostles flanking Christ and surrounded by the symbols of the four evangelists: the man (Mathew), the lion (Mark), the ox (Luke) and the eagle (John).

Going around the church, the trail leaves Moarves through the opposite side, heading west. The Burejo river, the main river in the region, is about 250 metres away. After crossing it, the trail starts going up and follows a semi-circular route to the right. For over three kilometres, the route goes through even paths with gravel pavement, mainly flanked by cereal crops. After kilometre number 7, the gravel path ends in a dirt track at a well-indicated intersection. The route continues turning right and going slightly down for two kilometres and a half, leading to Olmos de Ojeda.

One kilometre before reaching Olmos de Ojeda, an intersection appears that allows the traveller to go to Payo de Ojeda or to continue towards the town and visit the town centre or the Monastery of Santa Eufemia (about 2 km away).

The nature trail continues running among crops towards Payo de Ojeda for three kilometres, reaching an intersection where it goes right. Besides cereal crops, there is also a small area with reforested pines in this stretch of the route.

Finally, the path turns left at an intersection in order to follow the last, straight stretch towards Payo de Ojeda. About 500 metres ahead, the trail crosses the PP-2233 road and then goes straight to the church of Santos Justa and Rufina, with a Romanesque façade and baptismal font.



Church of Saint Rufina and Saint Justa

SANTA EUFEMIA

The Romanesque church of Santa Eufemia (historical-artistic monument since 1931) is the only vestige of what once was the monastery of Freiras Comendadoras de Santiago, and it is one of the most important enclaves of the Spanish Romanesque. The current building dates back to the 12th century, but it has pre-Romanesque origins. The property of this building, which is private, is not related to the confiscations. It was traded by the Comendadoras, which gave up the monastery in exchange for land in Toledo.

The church, which has a Latin cross plan with only one nave, is full of details, such as the rich decoration of its columns and capitals, or the main altar, formed by a huge flat stone supported by capitals, which were part of the missing cloister. The church also has two stone sepulchres: the first one, with lilies and lions carved in stone and crowned by the sword, belongs to the Infanta Ms. Sancha Alfonso; the other one belongs to a crusader.

The church also holds a small museum, attached to the north wall, with a collection of the remains of the missing cloister.

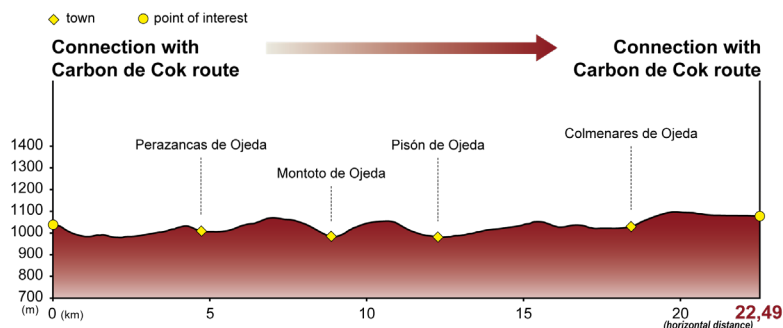


Monastery of Santa Eufemia de Cozuelos

ROUTE ✂ PERAZANCAS DE OJEDA → DEHESA DE MONTEJO

MIDE

Harshness of natural environment	2 	Upward gradient	538 m 
Guidance along the route	1 	Downward gradient	503 m 
Route difficulty	1 	Route length (actual distance)	22,53 km 
Amount of effort needed	4 	Time	6 h 48 min 



THE ROMANESQUE HERITAGE OF THE NORTHERN REGION OF LA OJEDA

This 22.53-kilometre route is one of the two alternatives completing the Palentinian Romanesque Nature Trail. It departs from the Coke Coal Route, past Cozuelos de Ojeda, and goes through the north of La Ojeda region, between the plains of Tierra de Campos and the rocky wall formed by the first peaks of the Cantabrian Range. In Dehesa de Montejo, the path rejoins the main route.



This alternative route starts at an intersection located at kilometre 18 of the Coke Coal Route, in its second stage, next to an information panel about the nature trail. The surface of this stretch of the trail alternates between dirt and gravel paths.

The route starts going down the Camino de la Lagunilla de la Vegauna to get into a wavy landscape, a mosaic of pastures and crop fields, mainly cereal, potato and garlic. At the end of the first descending slope, and coinciding with kilometre number 1 of this stretch, the route reaches a well-indicated fork, where the path continues to the right through a gravel road, passing over the little Valdizma stream.

The trail soon turns left, heading perpendicularly towards the P-227 road until it reaches a new intersection, before kilometre number 2. At this intersection, the route turns right and continues running along the road and among crop fields for approximately nine hundred metres, up to a new intersection appears soon after passing by the Agua stream.

Even though the road continues to the right, travellers walk for 200 metres to the left in order to visit the striking hermitage of San Pelayo, next to the road. This is one of the oldest monuments of the Palentinian Romanesque and is really worth visiting. It holds the remains of the most remarkable Romanesque paintings in the province, where the apostles and the figures of the months of the year can be seen. The apse shows Lombard bands as decoration, something very unusual in Palencia. In the façade, capitals and shafts from a former Mozarab or Visigoth building were used.

Back to the intersection, the route continues towards Perazancas de Ojeda for two more kilometres, going around a hill on the right, near the town. The route continues through the meadow of Agua stream, following a wavy gravel road to the left, until the route of Perazancas de Ojeda is reached. From this point, the town area can already be seen, and the route turns left and starts going down in search of road P-227.

Before reaching the road, the route goes over the Tarabás River, next to the washing place of the Fuente de los Tres Caños. From here, the bell tower of the church of Asunción can be seen. In order to get to it, the route takes the road to the right up to the first intersection and then turns left through a cobbled street, where there is an information panel. The church of Asunción has the original façade of the Romanesque temple; a remarkable Romanesque work with figures of musicians decorating the central archivolt. On the inside, it holds an interesting Gothic Christ, as well as a Romanesque baptismal font.

The route continues through the same street up to an intersection, where it goes straight on through a concrete street, leaving a cereal plot to the right. The 5 kilometre point is placed on the border of this plot.



Musicians on the archivolt of the church in Perazancas

The route leaves the town through the west side, turning almost perpendicularly to the right, through Henares Pérez Street. On the outskirts of the town, the road surface is gravel again and the trail runs among wavy crop fields again, towards Montoto de Ojeda.

Two kilometres from Perazancas, there is a well-indicated fork, from where the trail continues to the left in a slight ascending slope for approximately two hundred metres, up to a new fork, where the road branches off and continues to the right. From this point on, a slight descent starts through a gravel road among pastures, crops and holm oak areas, down to the church of San Esteban, located on a small hill at the entrance of Montoto.

THE CHURRA SHEEP BREED

Along these routes of the Románico Palentino Nature Trail we can find flocks of churra sheep breed. It is an indigenous breed characterised by its very rustic nature currently increasing in number and present along the entire Castilian plateau. It specialises both in the production of milk (highly appreciated for the production of cheese) and meat (from which a high-quality young lamb meat is obtained). The breeding of these animals contributes to the maintenance of a traditional and extensive livestock model in our land.



The road leading to Montoto. View of St Stephen's Church

After visiting the church, a late 12th century temple which was substantially modified in subsequent centuries, the route turns right through the first intersection and goes to the town, which is by the riverside of the Montoto River. The trail then crosses the town through the bridge over the river and leaves it through the west side, going up through a dirt slope.

On the way towards Pisón de Ojeda, the landscape starts becoming steeper as the travellers get closer to the Palentinian Mountains, which can be seen on the background. For the rest of the route, the reforestation pine areas become more and more frequent, interspersed in the mosaic of crops and holm oak woods.

The route crosses the town of Pisón de Ojeda through Mayor Street. Before arriving at the Burejo River, which is crossed through a bridge, the travellers can make a stop and visit the church of San Pelayo, on top of a slope on the left. This is a simple temple from the early 12th century, but remodelled later, including its restoration during the 1980s.

After crossing the river, the route continues through Mayor Street until it ends at road PP-2223 towards Amayuelas de Ojeda. Later on, it continues through Camino de Pisón de Ojeda and then through Camino de la Pedrera, which follows the course of the Fuente el Moro stream. The route abandons the course of the stream by turning right, up to a fork a bit farther on. Here, the Camino de Pisón goes straight on and the route continues to the left through Camino del Nogal, among rural lands, heading northwest and parallel to road PP-2223. At this point, the Burejo River flows between the route and the road again.

When the Camino de El Nogal finishes, the route turns right, crossing over the Burejo River, to join an access path to rural lands that is adjacent to PP-2223, and continues through it until it ends up in the road entering Colmenares de Ojeda. It shares the path with said road for 200 metres, going through a bridge over the Valdeur stream, then turning and going into the town among several houses through the second street to the left.

In Colmenares, the path passes by the church of San Fructuoso, dating back to the 16th century. Its 12th century baptismal font is one of the most impressive in the province, and it is the main remain of the former Romanesque church, which was replaced by the building that can be seen today.

Leaving the church and Colmenares, the route heads northwest through a concrete road that soon becomes a dirt path. It continues up to an intersection of several roads, where it makes a right angle turn to the right and goes along the PP-2223 road.

From there, it crosses the road and turns left going along the other side of it, until an intersection is reached at the entrance of Dehesa de Montejo. On the left-hand side, the church of San Pelayo can be seen, at the entrance of the town and next to the graveyard. This church was originally built in the 12th century, but completed between the 15th and the 17th. The possibility of visiting the protected natural space of Tejada de Tosande, 5 km away, is also indicated at this intersection. On the right, the travellers will see the panel marking the end of this route, where this stage rejoins the Coke Coal Route.



Church of San Pelayo in Dehesa de Montejo

LA TEJEDA DE TOSANDE

North-west of Dehesa de Montejo lies la Tejada de Tosande, a protected natural space which is included in the Fuentes Carrionas y Fuente Cobre-Montaña Palentina Natural Park, declared as such in the year 2000.

This small relict grove, integrated into a wide beech forest, is one of the most remarkable concentrations of yews in Spain. It is located in the northern slope of Peña Horacada, in heights between 1,300 and 1,500 metres.

La tejada de Tosande is one of the most important yew groves in the Iberian Peninsula, not only due to the number of trees (over seven hundred), but also due to the longevity of many of them. This can be seen in the perimeter of their trunks, some of which exceed three meters.

To discover this forest, you can walk the route PR-P 03 “Senda de la Tejada de Tosande”, 11 kilometres long and with an average duration of 5 hours. This route can be accessed from a parking lot near the kilometre 2.2 of the regional road CL-626 from Cervera de Pisuerga to Guardo.



End of the stage and junction with the Cok Coal Route

- **PALENCIA TOURISM PORTAL**

(<http://www.palenciaturismo.es/>)

979 70 65 23

- **PALENCIA PROVINCIAL COUNCIL**

(<https://www.diputaciondepalencia.es/>)

979 71 51 00

- **CONSORTIUM FOR THE TOURISM MANAGEMENT OF THE CANAL DE CASTILLA**

(<http://www.canaldecastilla.org/>)

979 81 07 63

- **EUROPEAN BISON RESERVE AND INTERPRETATION CENTRE**

(https://bisonbonasus.com/index_en.html)

979 60 58 23

- **ALAR DEL REY COUNCIL**

(<http://alardelrey.es/>)

979 13 30 01

- **PRÁDANOS DE OJEDA COUNCIL**

(<http://pradanosdeojeda.es/>)

9979 13 33 62

- **SANTIBÁÑEZ DE ECLA COUNCIL**

(<http://santibanezdeeca.es/>)

979 14 20 15

- **AGUILAR DE CAMPOO COUNCIL**

(<http://aguiardecampoo.es/>)

979 12 20 05

- **DEHESA DE MONTEJO COUNCIL**

(<http://dehesademontejo.es/>)

979 18 40 33

- **CERVERA DE PISUERGA COUNCIL**

(<http://cerveradepisuerga.es/>)

979 87 00 02

- **SAN CEBRIÁN DE MUDÁ COUNCIL**

(<http://sancebriandemuda.es/>)

979 60 58 85

- **OLMOS DE OJEDA COUNCIL**

(<http://olmosdeojeda.es/>)

979 14 24 23

- **PAYO DE OJEDA COUNCIL**

(<http://payodeojeda.es/>)

979 14 24 18



Since 1993, the Nature Trails Programme of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food has the main objective of re-conditioning old unused infrastructure (railway lines, livestock trail or traditional paths), to give them new life as spaces for citizens to use and enjoy.

This guide offers detailed texts and accompanying maps for the nature trails completed to date, which are one of the best ways of getting close to nature and discovering the culture and traditions of our territory.