



CAMINO MOZÁRABE DE SANTIAGO EN CÓRDOBA

ETAPA 2. BAENA- CASTRO DEL RÍO (18 km / 4½hr)

By the banks of the Guadajoz

Admittedly a short route for the pilgrim, but probably advisable as the distance to the capital (54 kms) could be excessive for one day's walk. Another recommendation: before setting out, breakfast on toast trickled with Baena's superb cold-pressed olive oil, emblem of the town, which gives its name to the oil's Denominación de Origen (PDO).

Set out on the road to Cañete de las Torres towards River Guadajoz. Once past the olive oil cooperative Jesús Nazareno, ignore a small road that forks right to Fuentidueña, and pass instead beneath the new section of the N-432, ignoring another right fork that goes to las Ermiticas. A little later turn right onto a path between gentle slopes of the ever-present olive groves. Return to the road and later cross the Guadajoz by the La Maturra bridge. Turn left onto a narrow road used mainly by farmers. There unfolds a succession of grain fields, pasture, and some eucalyptus groves. The river twists and turns, coming close then receding, while dotted amongst the meanders stand whitewashed cottages – Izcar is an example – reminders of days gone by when these fields were tended by countless gangs of farmhands, long since replaced by machinery.

Keeping to the road while flanked on both sides by fertile farmland, you arrive in Castro del Río. The town reposes serenely on banks of the Guadajoz. The ancient walls of its la Villa quarter, legacy of Roman and then Muslim occupations, bear testimony to the town's singular strategic position. Churches worth visiting: 15th century Iglesia de la Asunción with its fortified tower, as well as Iglesia de Madre de Dios and Iglesia de Jesús Nazareno.