



CAMINO MOZÁRABE DE SANTIAGO EN CÓRDOBA

ETAPA 3. CASTRO DEL RÍO - CÓRDOBA (DIRECT) (36 km / 9 hr)

An ocean of grain

This leg of the journey starts by the Civil Guard barracks and the path known as Camino de la Polonia and Camino de Cordoba. The olive tree may have figured prominently up till now but from here on the main feature will be vast fields of grain and sunflowers. The path rises and falls continuously during the day's walk through this great sweep of rolling land named Campiña Baja. The road rises sharply amid olive groves and veers left to emerge onto the Bujalance road. At a crossroads 5½ km from the starting point, we take the left fork, a narrower path marked Cordoba.

Carry on along this road – at times along the old road– rejoining River Guadajoz at the Cortijo de Cubas farmhouse. Awaiting further ahead on the left is the spectacular silhouette of Espejo and its castle. Stay on this right bank until you reach Castillejo de Teba farmhouse, near the hill Colina de Ateguia, which is topped by the ruins of the historic Roman town Ateguia. Cross the narrow road, and a few metres later cross a track, until you come to a little bridge over the stream arroyo Fontalba and the remains of a Roman road, reminders that this was once the Campiña road connecting Cordoba with Jaen and Granada.

Ignoring paths that appear on both right and left, keep straight on, and continue to keep straight on at the junction where a narrow road which forks left for the village of Santa Cruz, some 6 kms off. A bridge of similar construction, though obscured by reeds, stands in the Trinidad stream. The path, sometimes flat and sometimes rolling, is flanked by fields of grain and sunflowers. With just a few kilometres to go, Cordoba comes into view, stretched out in the foothills of Sierra Morena. In these first city streets, look out for the tiled signposts bearing the scallop shell and yellow arrow, which guide pilgrims towards the Guadalquivir, across the Roman Bridge and from there to the Mosque, veritable jewel of Muslim art in Spain.

Let the the Jacobean Way signposting guide you through San Francisco and San Pedro, a couple of of Cordoba's most emblematic quarters, and you'll come to the Church of Santiago, where the parish priest keeps a pilgrims' register and will stamp your Pilgrim's Passport. A swift sightseeing tour next morning will allow you to set out after lunch for Cerro Muriano, some 18 km away.