



## CAMINO MOZÁRABE DE SANTIAGO EN CÓRDOBA

### **5. CERRO MURIANO-VILLAHARTA (21 km / 5 ½ hr)**

#### **Meadowland and brush**

Start on the right side of the old N-432 to Badajoz opposite Cerro Muriano's Iglesia de Santa Bárbara, which will be on your left. Soon afterwards go off this road at the Guardia Civil barracks, to cross the abandoned Almorchón railway track and walk through the Barriada del Campamento. From here to Villaharta the leg coincides with the drover's way Cañada Real Soriana, and with trails GR-40 and GR-48. Crossing the railway track again, you'll find yourself near the road once more. Use the footpath on the right to stay parallel to the road, and pass the main gate of the military base. Just 3½ km from the starting point you reach disused Obejo station, passing railway buildings on either side. To the left there's a view of the small reservoir Embalse de Guadalupe.

A gate blocks the path some 500 metres after the last houses, near a Ministry of Development facility. Skirt the building on its right side and head towards the road. Continue along the roadside for about 100m until the signposted path appears again on your left. The terrain is typical Mediterranean scrub composed mainly of rockrose and holm oaks, crisscrossed by the occasional stream-bed, which can make the going slightly uneven. After 1½ km you've reached the eastern limit of the Guadiato Valley, and the landscape changes significantly. Ahead lie oak-dotted pastures used as grazing for sheep and cattle. Cross the new highway by the underpass. The main road will accompany you on your right, while the railway line will gradually move to your left. Six kilometres from the underpass, as you walk parallel to the old road (which will be on the right), you come to tiny El Vacar, hamlet of Espiel. Its Muslim castle, visible from over 1km away, guards the roads to Extremadura and Castile. Under the watchful gaze of the fortress positioned on the hill on the left, keep the old road on your right while following the path that runs parallel to it. Notice the reappearance of the holm oaks together with rockrose and other species typical of the Mediterranean scrub.

This means that you're out of the Guadiato Valley and back in Sierra Morena. You are still on the drover's way Cañada Real Soriana and the GR-40 and GR-48 trails. With the approach road into El Vacar always on your right, (except for a small section when it will be on your left after crossing it once at a housing development, and again at a filling station) the path leads to the main road's service lane, which you follow as far as the Cuesta de la Matanza, 4½ km after the exit road from El Vacar, where there are several information boards about the Camino de Santiago. To your right, the hills of Obejo in the distance. When the old road starts to descend, a path marked Ruta Mozárabe appears on the right. On the way down you'll pass Fuente del Cordel, the first of two ferruginous springs. After 1½ km, cross beneath the N-432, also marked with Jacobean Way signposting. You won't be returning to this highway again, because today and tomorrow your path heads northwest.

On the other side of the highway the view to the left is Villaharta (pop. 600), its whitewashed houses reclining on the foothills of the Sierra del Enjambradero, while further ahead stand several disused pavilions. Walk towards these, veering right and following the GR signs. After a short while the second spring, Fuente de Malos Pasos, appears in the middle of a bend. Below



the pavilions now, and after some 500m, you join the dirt track. The right fork would take you to Pedrique, home of sculptor Aurelio Teno's residence-museum. But you take the left fork, to pass a handsome stone cross a little further ahead. Another 500m on, before you reach the road (and Restaurant Santa Elisa, which houses the valves of those ferruginous springs) that ascends towards the village, take a little path marked GR to the right. Not long after passing a house on your left, cross the road and follow a path flanked by boulders. Two kilometres later you've arrived.