

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PATH OF THE "CINCO VILLAS" (PRC-AV49)

The description of the route has been made starting in the village of Mombeltrán, and doing it counter-clockwise.

THE SECTION: BETWEEN MOMBELTRÁN – SANTA CRUZ DEL VALLE

P.K. 0.00 Starting from the Plaza of the town hall in Mombeltrán, where there is a two spouts fountain, under a large arch, and going along Dr. Justo Revuelta street, we end up in a large Plaza known as "The Corredera", in which and on its left side the old pilgrim's Hospital of San Andrés stands out. We cross the Plaza, going out of it on the opposite side, in the place known as "la Puerta de la Villa" (by the street with the same name). A little farther the street widens, we pass two fountains on the right, and we continue along a cemented path. This path is known as the "Cuesta de la Villa", it goes very steeply down, and in about 500 meters we arrive at a cattle trail, being the "Cañada Real Leonesa Occidental" (Western Leon's Royal Cattle Trail).

We continue going right on the "Cañada Real", we walk over the "Sequeros" bridge on the "Vita" river and 200 meters farther ahead we come to a diversion going left, leaving the cattle trail and taking a wide path that crosses the river "Prado Latorre" on a concrete and wide bridge. A little farther we find three paths; one that goes to the right, another one that keeps going straight for which we will continue, and the third one to the left that takes us to a private lot in which we will find the ruins of the ancient convent of "N^a Señora de la Torre".

The path becomes narrower and with a stone pavement. This part of very steep ascent is specially beautiful during the spring, with all the ash-trees covered with new leaves and the meadows completely green. The path zigzags climbing the sloping ground and we end up on a local crossroads, that goes from "Mombeltrán" to "Santa Cruz del Valle" villages. We continue for about 400 meters along this road to the left (going uphill) till we see a deviation to the right where we take a narrow stone paved path. A few more meters going up along this narrow path we end up on a crossing with a wider path, which we will take going to the left.

We soon end up in "Santa Cruz del Valle". We take the street on the right (of the Church), passing near the emblematic jurisdictional "rollo", the Hermitage of "San José", and the church. This way we will arrive at the Plaza of the Constitution, in which the "Casa del Reloj" (the Clock House) stands out, this being the old pharmacist house and actually being the Museum of Contemporary art and a point of tourist information. Here we also have the fountain of "El Tajón". P.K. 2.65 (52 minutes).

The section: SANTA CRUZ DEL VALLE – SAN ESTEBAN DEL VALLE

P.K. 2.65. Starting from the "Plaza de la Constitución" of Santa Cruz del Valle by the "Estrecha" street, a narrow street situated on the opposite side of the "Casa del Reloj" (a red brick characteristic building). We soon turn right by an alley which leads us to the "Real" street. We keep going to the left and arrive at the "Plaza de la Soledad", with a park having the same name and a municipal hand-ball court. We leave the plaza on its highest point and take the forestry road by the col of "La Solana", paved with asphalt in this urban stretch, that we will follow to the right.

At 100 meters we will see the deviation on our right, by a narrow dirt path that goes round a house. Here we find the board with the map and the technical characteristics of this stretch, and a dried-up fountain. The path, narrow and sometimes stone paved, goes past olive groves and cherry-trees, slightly

ascending. It gets into a luminous and open pine woods, and then, in a few more meters leading again to the forestry road of “La Solana”.

Now we continue towards our left, along the road, during about 150 meters. Soon, we arrive at a very close road bend for which we leave the road and take a wide dirt path on our right. From here on, there are two kilometers of a very well outlined path, because it's the old linking way between “Santa Cruz del Valle” and “San Esteban del Valle”, along which we will see numerous deviations to the right and to the left that we will not follow (all of them are well marked).

Although the country properties with olive groves are prominent, we will also see vineyards, pine trees, and even some parts with chestnut-trees. All of this stretch has a very smooth profile. We will reach a cemented path right by the “almazara” (olive oil processing mill) of “San Esteban del Valle”; a crossing which we will follow on our left.

In less than 100 meters we will find a nice sheltered picnic spot, with beautiful views of the “Barranco” (Valley). Here is the board that describes the section that we just have walked. Here we have arrived at the local road of “Santa Cruz del Valle”, on our left, and “San Esteban del Valle”, on our right. Before continuing to the right to get to “San Esteban del Valle”, we can take a left turn for a moment and go up to the vantage-point of the hermitage of “San Andrés” on the hilly side that you can see of the mentioned road crossing. This is one of the best vantage-points of the “Barranco”.

Following the path along the road down towards the right we can see in the background “San Esteban del Valle”, this being the end of this second section. On arriving at the village, and just before the road crosses the stream of “Mazardones”, we take a deviation to the right by a wide and cemented street. At the end of the street we find a fountain called “la fuente Calleja”, and a little metal bridge for which we will cross the “Mazardones” stream.

We continue straight up along the “Real” street, till we reach a sloping Plaza, after which we will continue on our right (still beint the Real street). We reach the “Plaza de España” with the town hall and the odd “Pilón”, a two sput fountain with a huge granite ball in its middle. P.K. 6.55 (1 hour 17 minutes from the previous point).

THE SECTION: SAN ESTEBAN DEL VALLE – VILLAREJO DEL VALLE

P.K. 6.55. Starting from the “Plaza de España”, by the town hall and the famous “Pilón” (fountain), and going north along “San Pedro Bautista” street, we pass by the hermitage of the “Santo” leaving it on our right and will go along the street till we reach a wide roads crossing, known as “Cuatro Caminos”. We cross a small garden that has a statue of “San Pedro Bautista”, and we get to the local road from “San Esteban” to “Mombeltrán”. We cross it and continue along a cemented street which is just across. We end up again on the same road, we cross it and continue along a cemented street (with some houses on the left).

Here we find the board that describes the section that we are going to cover. This street (now almost a path), takes us to the river pool and the Chocolate Factory park, a nice resting spot with tables, water, and a good shade during the summer months. The path, cemented, crosses the stream called “garganta Juarina” by a nice stone bridge, and in a few more meters takes a turn to the left. This new path is not cemented and in part has a nice stone pavement and then also becomes a dirt path.

It smoothly rises mainly among olive groves, it passes close to a fountain and it leads to the road from “San Esteban del Valle” (on the left) to “Villarejo del Valle”. We continue to the right a few meters, we cross the river (“garganta del Placero”) by the road, and just after it we turn right to continue by a dirt path. This little path goes up to a promontory, being it the last part of the back-bone that divides in two

the sierra of "Villarejo", and goes down to the other side, already in the little valley of the stream of "Prado Tablada", where it meets "Villarejo del Valle".

On our way down to this stream, we first cross the above mentioned road. Already by the stream, and just after crossing it by a little stone bridge, we find a fountain. We keep walking along the path going uphill, by a perfectly stone paved section, to arrive at the outskirts of "Villarejo" in an area where all the paths are cemented. We arrive at a crossing where we turn right, already inside the village, first by the "Río" street and then "La Molineta" street.

We go under a passageway and we exit on the "Mayor" street for which we continue going left, to arrive at a nice "plaza" with a mediaeval structure and the local church. P.K. 9.25 (53 minutes from the previous point).

THE SECTION: VILLAREJO DEL VALLE – CUEVAS DEL VALLE

P.K. 9.25. Starting from "Villarejo del Valle", we are situated at the foot of the church, then we go up the street and leave the church on our right (La Estrella street). This street leads into another, the street of "N^a Señora de Gracia", for which we continue on the left. Almost at the end of this long street, and on our right, we will be watching for a fountain which remains below the level of the street.

The street ends up by the hermitage of "N^a Señora de Gracia", and right on its façade, we will see the board of the path that describes this section, and tells us which way to go. This is a dirt section of the path and on its first few meters it is blanked by stone walls making a lane of it. This way we arrive at an obvious crossing for which we'll continue on the right by a dirt path with a very steep gradient. In the middle of this slope, we will momentarily take a little detour going to a vantage-point (being marked) by a flight of stone steps: the vantage point of the "mesita del Calvario" (Calvary table), with beautiful views of all of the "Barranco". We continue by the dirt path, without taking any of the secondary deviations coming out of it, till we get to a "Y" crossing (by a cherry trees grove) for which we will continue on the right.

At this moment we will be changing a hydrological river basin, leaving behind the valley of the stream "Prado Tablada", and entering into the valley of the stream (garganta) of the "Puerto" (called river "Pasaderas" in this area). The path slopes down till it gets to a cemented path, which we will follow to the right, ascending it. Already very near "Cuevas del Valle", there is a deviation to the right by another cemented path, which we will not take, instead we will continue straight through.

This way, we enter the village on its lowest part, crossing the river "del Puerto" by a narrow and thin stone bridge. The cemented path (almost already a street), goes up and leads to the national road N-502 (to Talavera on the left and to Avila on the right). We cross the road, and just in front of us we will see the board that describes the section for which we came in.

We continue by a narrow path that takes us right into the village, and following it, we will get to the "Real" street. To our right we have the center of the village, and to our left the continuation of the path. It is advisable to visit the village, for which we propose the following basic visit: ascend by the "Real", "Soportales", "del Río" streets till the "Plaza del Puente", and return by the same "del Río" street now by the "Ayuntamiento Viejo" (old town hall), the "Plaza Vieja" (Old Plaza), and again the "Real" street down to the end of it. In the lowest part of the "Real" street, and by the cemetery there is the fountain of "San Sebastián", and the starting point of the section of the path to Mombeltrán. P.K. 11.55 (45 minutes from the previous point).

THE SECTION: CUEVAS DEL VALLE – MOMBELTRÁN

P.K. 11.55. We start from the fountain of “San Sebastián” in “Cuevas del Valle”, on the lowest part of “Real” street, in front of the cemetery. We go up by the stone paved street of the “Calzada Romana” and, at the middle of this stretch we turn left to take a wide dirt path. On this crossing we have the board that describes this section.

The path rises stumbling among chestnuts, patches of pine trees, and specially country properties with olive groves, by an obvious path, and with some turnings to country properties on both sides, which we obviously will not take. After a small descending section, and a close bend to the left of the path, we will turn right by a small path. We can see that this small path crosses a small ravine and enter the pine woods.

After a flat section in the pine woods, we will arrive at a crossing for which we will continue on the right, on an ascending path towards the right, which ends up on a wider path. This path is really an “arrastradero” (an old pine tree hauling) which is the name given here to the hauling of pine trees after being cut down).

This is the highest point of the whole path. We follow the “arrastradero” (really being a good path), on our left, going up along a few meters. We will notice that the sign post is telling us to go left, leaving behind the “arrastradero” to go down by a nice path that zigzags and goes by a pool, that in the old days was used to water the walnut trees that were in this area.

We then join a wide path, just on a close bend, which we will take going left and down hill. A few meters farther and going past a little patch of pine trees, we leave this wide dirt path to turn right and take a new path that, first among pine trees, and then among vineyards, goes along flat land for a good part of the path. Here we have good views of the whole “Barranco”.

The path finally descends among country properties and joins a cemented path, which we will follow on our right. A few more meters farther, the path will become a dirt path, and we will encounter a turn to the right, which we will not follow. At this point of the path, there is a good look out point. A little farther, the path goes into the pine woods and crosses the river “del Herradero” by a rustic wooden bridge.

At about 100 meters ahead from the bridge, we find a fountain close to the riverbed on our left, although there are times where no water comes out of it. The narrow path for which we continue, always in the shade of the pine woods, leads us to a five paths crossing, for which we will take the first one on our right, that goes up to the top of a hill. At about 100 meters, almost at the top of this hill, we leave the wide path for which we were walking and we take a detour to our left by a narrower path.

The path comes out of the pine woods and descends rapidly, among private country properties with mainly olive groves, till it reaches a cemented path. We follow the path for only about 100 meters, to then leave it again on a bend to the left, and take a wide dirt path, being obvious, as if we were going straight through.

This path first goes round the pine woods that we see on our right, and then gets into it, by a nice track. We will go past a little rocky hill, for which the path zigzags bordering it, and a little after that we leave the pine woods behind, and we cross several olive groves. The path flattens a bit when we come out to a crossing with a wider path, that we take to the left and immediately (a short 50 meters) comes out to the cemented path that we previously left behind.

We now follow it to the right, and in approximately half a kilometer of very steep descent, we come out to the local road from “Mombeltrán” to “El Arenal”. We cross the road and continue by the cemented street that is just across. 200 meter farther ahead we arrive at a double crossing of cemented streets for

which we will first go to the right and immediately after, to the left. At this point we come to a resting area with a fountain and the board showing us the section that we have just completed. From here on, we will continue by the streets "Matorral", the "Plaza Parrancano" (with a fountain in it), the street "Elena Ruberte", and this way we get to the main road N-502 (close to another fountain). We cross it and go down a few stone steps and then arrive at the "Calle Mayor", that we will follow to the right and this way we'll get to the starting point of the path, in the "Plaza del ayuntamiento" (Plaza of the Townhall). P.K. 16.75 (1 hour and 42 minutes from the previous point; 5 hours and 30 minutes the whole path).