

Pilgrim Guides to Spain #2: The Camino Mozárabe or Via de la Plata, B: Granada to Mérida, 2009 ed. - Updates

Thanks to Thomas Dunskus for this report - received 26th November 2013: Lodgings on the Camino Mozárabe.

"In late October and early November I walked on the above trail, from Cordoba to Torrefresneda (in excellent weather)."

1) Page 31 – " You may want to inform your readers that there is now a very pleasant hostel at Cerro Muriano, run by a Dutch couple. It is almost like somebody's home, with altogether seven beds in several rooms. As the building is located somewhat off the main street, it is good to establish contact first. "

Gert-Jan and Maria Suzanna van Geldere-Verstraten, Telephone +34-691923145. E-mail: gjvangeldere@gmail.com. Free contribution.

2) Page 42 – " At Campanario, there is now an albergue rural in the old train station buildings, very cozy and comfortable. The former freight shed has been converted into a restaurant, offering (late) lunch and dinner. If you order breakfast before retiring, you will be given a bag with a generous load of coffee (or tea ...) in a thermos bottle, plus bread, butter jam, etc. Roughly twenty beds, distributed over several rooms. "

Thanks to Rob Steele for this report:

Overall I found the new Confraternity guidebook on The Camino Mozárabe to be excellent and only have a few notes to add.

1) Page 34, last paragraph, There is now a yellow arrow on a stone that sends you right down a short path (Before you reach "The junction with a wide un-surfaced road") This cuts the corner and brings you out onto the same wide un-surfaced road mentioned in the guide, but instead of turning right you simply cross it and continue down the Camino de Tierra. (There is a sign but it was overgrown when we passed)

2) Page 36 – The route leaving Alcaracejos. We couldn't find "The garage and the house number 20" so went to the local tourist office to make enquiries as to which way the route went, they suggested that we followed the road as far as Villanueva del Duque, So that is what we did picking the route up at The Ayuntamiento at Villanueva del Duque

3) Page 41 – Albergue at Former Railway Station at Quintana de la Serena, Although the Albergue was closed when we passed, (Good Friday) it did look as though it was still in use as an Albergue with some upstairs windows open and made up beds visible

4) Page 43 – again we couldn't find the route as suggested from La Haba to Don Benito, we followed Calle Jesus out of La Haba as per instructions but couldn't find the track leading to Don Benito, we asked a few people but they didn't know about it either so ended up following the road.

5) Page 45 – Routes out of Medellin - Sorry to say that the instructions for this day didn't make any sense at all. We crossed the Puente Medieval and picked up the left turn onto the stony track as per instructions, this led us onto a minor road (Not the EX206 – however we didn't know this at the time) we turned left onto the minor road and

followed it, after approximately 1.5k we crossed The Arroyo la Galpaguera (Old medieval Puente visible about 50m to right) as mentioned in the confraternity guidebook "Route B via Santa Anna" so at this stage thought that we were on route !! We continued on this minor road for approximately another 1.5 k and there was a yellow arrow pointing right up a dirt road, not wishing to be diverted onto the route "A" which involves wading the Rio Bordalo we ignored this arrow (With hindsight this would probably have taken us directly to Santa Amalia (Where we wanted to go)) and continued down the same minor road for approximately another 2k and entered the village of Yelbes (We were actually expecting to be in Santa Amalia) As in was April and we didn't fancy the idea of having to wade The Rio Bordalo so we made our way back across open country as directly as we could to Santa Amalia where we again picked up route "B" – when we eventually crossed the road bridge over the Rio Bordalo on the road to Torrefresneda we looked down and the river appeared to be Very Deep and we then realised that we had made Exactly the right decision Not to wade it – I urge other walkers to also consider their options very carefully !!

So to recap the route avoiding wading the Rio Bordalo - Cross the Puente Medieval out of Medellin and very soon take a left turn onto the stony track as per instructions.

Where the stony track meets the minor road turn left, after approximately 1.5k, cross The Arroyo la Galpaguera (Old medieval Puente visible about 50m to right) continue on this minor road for approximately another 1.5 k and you will see a yellow arrow pointing right up a dirt road, take this and this will bring you to Amalia, Continue on route towards Torrefresneda as per instructions in the Confraternity Guidebook.

6) Finally, The Confraternity Guidebook suggests "That you avoid the Semana Santa" As this was my only window of opportunity to walk this Camino, I took the chance and ignored the advice. But I have to say that I had No major problems with finding accommodation and personally I found walking the route during Semana Santa really enhanced my Camino, especially coming across the parades in both Castuera and San Pedro de Merida. I know that it wouldn't do if everyone walked the route at this time, however, as this is still a fairly quiet one, then if you want to do a Camino during this period then I would suggest that walking The Camino Mozárabe during Semana Santa is at least for now a viable option.

Obtaining "Credentials" in Granada in Cordoba

You can obtain your "Credentials" in Granada, Before leaving England I searched both guidebooks and the internet and couldn't find out any information on this subject so made it a bit of a mission once there.

Credentials are available weekdays only from The Office of the Cathedral, This is an old building on the opposite side of the Cathedral to the main public entrance (The one you pay to see the Cathedral – we were initially told that you had to pay to go inside the cathedral and the office was inside !! – I was going to see the inside of the cathedral in any case so nothing was really lost)

The Building is unmarked I have posted a photo on this link here

<http://members.virtualtourist.com/m/p/m/440b50/>

It is a distinctive Terra-Cotta colour and has a large studded door with an arched top and poplar trees growing outside -You go into the building and there is an enquiry desk in front of you, we made enquiries here and were met with a somewhat vague response but someone in the office to the left realised what we were looking for and took us up one floor and the office that deals with issuing the Credentials is located to the front of the building. Cost is 2 Euro

Credentials are reported to be available in Cordoba, again, only on weekdays and again from the office of the Cathedral. (I had a friend join us in Cordoba and made enquiries on his behalf about obtain his credentials, Unfortunately as it was a Saturday we were unable to obtain any but I was assured that they would have been available from the office of the Cathedral on any weekday) To find the office, stand with your back to the main entrance to the cathedral courtyard, turn left, and first left, you are now heading for the old Roman Puente across the river, the tourist office is to your right and the office of the Cathedral is in the next building towards the river

Accommodation report

Granada

Hostal Alcazaba ideally located in the centre of Granada
C/ San Juan de Dios, 38

I paid 22 euro per night for a small single en-suite room and was very satisfied.

You can book through <http://www.hostels.com>

Right on the Camino route in Granada

Moclin

Albergue La Brisa,

Right on the route in the centre of Moclin

No food available at Albergue but Excellent food in bar on square opposite

Alcala la Real

Hostal Rio de Oro **

Again right on the route, 40e for twin and 23e for single

Food available in downstairs bar / restaurant

Cello available in bar on square

Alcaudete

Hostal Hidalgo **

Nice Hostel on the way into Alcaudete

Food available in downstairs bar / restaurant

Again right on the route, 40e for twin and 23e for single occupancy in a twin

Cello available

Baena

Pension Los Claveles, Calle Juan Valera 13

Good Pension in the centre of Baena

No food available at Pension but plenty of choices of restaurants in Baena

Cello available

Castro del Rio

Perigrino Only Accommodation

For Perigrino Accommodation in Castro del Rio contact the friendly local police (Office behind Ayuntamiento) – They actually gave us a lift in their patrol car out to the Sports Hall on the outskirts of the town where we were accommodated in the changing room for the football pitch. Lots of hot showers as well as toilets and wash basins but no other facilities (You have to provide your own mattress and sleeping-bag)

We were given a key to the room so all our belongings were secure and there was no

charge for the accommodation.

Cello available from the one restaurant in town (Opposite Ajuntameinto)

Cordoba

As we were walking over 40k into Cordoba (So therefore we were arriving in the evening) I thought it was prudent to book my accommodation ahead hear, I chose The **Senses & Colours Bagdad Backpackers Hostel**, Calle Fernández Ruano 11, Córdoba.

It was a good decision as we did arrive late and having pre-booked beds at the busy time leading up to Semana Santa potentially saved us a lot hassles.

We opted for Dormitory accommodation and at 15e per person it was cheap enough. Slightly cramped dorms but beds were comfortable with sheets provided and there was one bathroom with hot water between 8 of us.

Great Location right in the centre of Cordoba in a 200 year old building.

Value for money yes – but extreme comfort no !!

Cello available at tourist office opposite Cathedral

Cerro Muriano

Bar X, Calle Carretera 25

Right on the route in the centre of this small town

We took a triple room at 45e (15e each)

Food available in downstairs bar / restaurant

Cello available

Rooms are clean and well furnished as well as having a TV and have private bathrooms with lots of hot water.

957 350188

Villaharta

Hostal El Cruce

Nice Hostal, on main road just before you enter village (Slightly off route, turn left when you reach N432 instead of crossing it, then you pick the route up on the outskirts of the village the next morning.

We paid 22e each for single occupancy of nice twin rooms

Good food available in the downstairs bar / restaurant

Cello available

Rooms are clean, well furnished and have a TV and have private bathrooms with lots of hot water

957 367233

Alcaracejos

Hostal La Amistad

Ctra Pozoblanco 31

Just of route near the main crossroad in the centre of the village.

We paid 16e per person (Two sharing a twin and one in a single)

Food available in downstairs bar / restaurant

Cello available

Good cheap accommodation in the centre of Alcaracejos

Rooms are clean and have a TV and have private bathrooms with lots of hot water

957156008

Hinojosa del Duque

Hostal El Cazador

Avinda Marques de Santillana (Main road entering town and on route)

We paid 18e (again two people sharing a twin and one in sole occupancy of another twin)
Food available in downstairs bar / restaurant
Cello available
Excellent accommodation on main road entering Hinojosa del Duque
Rooms are clean, well furnished and have a TV and have private bathrooms with lots of hot water
957 140443

Monterrubio de la Serea

As Easter (Samana Santa) was almost upon us and as there was only one Hostal listed in the confraternity guide for Monterrubio we rang ahead to book accommodation, Unfortunately, My Spanish isn't as good as it might be but we established that the Hostal was full but it appeared that alternative accommodation was going to be made available for us. This turned out to be in the "Casa Parroquia" – a house owned by the parish church.

When we arrived in Monterrubio a guy called Max spotted us and took us to the Casa Parroquia which was close to the church on Calle Virgen du Guadalupe, It had a hot shower but we had to provide our own mattresses and sleeping-bags, we were given a key to ensure that our belongings were safe and the next morning we were asked to put the key through an open window in the house next door. again there was no charge.

Castuera

Hotel Paraiso
Calle Santa Ana 15 (Right on the route through town)
We paid 30e for two sharing a twin and 18e for one person sole occupancy in another twin
Food available in downstairs bar / restaurant
Cello available
Rooms are clean, well furnished and have a TV and have private bathrooms with lots of hot water
924 787601 / 760248

This was now Maundy Thursday, but as Castuera is a fair sized town and as there were three options for accommodation listed in the Confraternity Guide we didn't book ahead. However we wondered if we had made a mistake by not doing so when we found the first Hostal to be full and another one was 3k out of town, however when we tried The Hotel Paraiso they managed to find us rooms. This turned out to be an excellent decision as soon after we arrived the Samana Santa Procession passed right past the hotel so we had a birds eye view.

Campanario

Perigrino Only Accommodation
For Perigrino Accommodation in Campanario contact the friendly local police (Office alongside Ayuntamiento) – They gave us a lift in their patrol car out to the Sports Hall on the outskirts of the town
Hot showers as well as toilets and wash basins but no other facilities (You have to provide your own mattress and sleeping-bag)
We weren't given a key to the room, The Local Police let us in and showed us how to get out through the fire escape which self locked behind us, so all our belongings were secure. After we had eaten we were instructed to ring them back and someone would pop out and let us back in again !!
Again there was no charge for the accommodation.
Cello available form local police

Don Benito

Hostal Galicia (Highly Recommended)

Plaza Sanchez Cortes (Just off route in the centre of town in the next square along from the church)

We paid 20e each and all took single occupancy of twin rooms

Excellent Food available in downstairs bar / restaurant (Menu del Dais only 8e!!)

Cello available

924 803528

One of the Nicest Hostal's we stayed at on the entire route, Very Friendly Family run establishment (Owners actually came from Galicia) Very Pilgrim Friendly.

Rooms are clean, well furnished and have a TV and have private bathrooms with lots of hot water

Medellin

As it was Easter Sunday and there was only one Hostal listed for Medellin, we decided to ring ahead to pre-book our accommodation, It was just as well that we did because The Hostal Rio was "Officially" closed, however the owners (Who didn't live on the premises) agreed to come and open it up for us and rent us a room when we arrived. We duly telephoned them on our arrival and within 10 minutes they came and rented us our room. We thought that it was a little expensive at 45e for 3 of us sharing a rather cramped triple but never-the-less were grateful to the owners of the Hostal for opening it up for us.

No food available at the Hostal (I think there would have been had it not been "Officially" closed) but a few choices of restaurants / bars in town where Cello's are also available.

Rooms are clean and as well as having a TV and have private bathrooms with lots of hot water.

Hostal Rio is located on Calle Pedro de Alvaredo 42 near the Puente Medieval and right on the Camino

924 822670 / 661 268494

San Pedro de Merida

Hostal Juan Perro

On old main road near petrol station

We paid 50e for two of us sharing a twin room

Excellent Food available in downstairs bar / restaurant (Menu del Dais only 8e!!)

Cello available

924 325010 / 325198

Hostal Juan Perro was the only accommodation listed in the Confraternity guide, slightly more expensive than we were used to paying but a really nice Hostal

Rooms are clean, well furnished and have a TV and have private bathrooms with lots of hot water

Merida

Hostal Buena

Calle Calvario

We paid around 40 e for a twin and 25e for a single

Cello available at Tourist Office.

We spotted this little Hostal on a side street just off the route as you approach the centre of Merida so went in to make enquiries, a fairly simple Hostal with small slightly cramped rooms but in a quiet location and prices set very fair. As my trek-mate was only staying

the one night and I was staying for 3 nights, we arranged to share a twin room on the first night and then for myself to move into a single for the next two nights. Friendly owner, centrally located and a good choice for budget accommodation in Merida. If you are continuing on "The Via de la Plata" then continue down Calle Calvario to the end, cross the road and go under the underpass under the railway, cross the park by The Old Roman Aqueduct and you will pick up the route on the other side of the park.