

Join El Cid and his men through old 11th-century Islamic borderlands. Feel like a medieval knight, re-enacting his trials and battles across inland rural Spain with contrasting natural scenery that will not fail to amaze you.

The first conquests and battles

Banished by King Alfonso VI of Castile, El Cid left Castile and under the cover of darkness entered the territory of the Islamic taifa kingdom of Toledo, which today is the province of Guadalajara. He avoided Atienza (a 'very strong' rock, according to the poem *El Cantar*) and went on to the Henares valley, where the exiled men captured a fortified village: **Castejón de Henares** or perhaps **Jadraque**. They went through **Anguita** and continued north-west across the desolate Layna moor, to the Jalón valley. There, they imposed the law on the local population by force and conquered Alcocer, near **Ateca**. In retaliation, an army from Valencia with 3000 cavalymen confronted El Cid and his men. The latter won and pursued the defeated generals to the gates of **Terrer** and **Calatayud**.

This route also follows part of the itinerary taken by Jimena, her daughters and El Cid's men in their journeys to Castile and Valencia. Its epicentre is the frontier fortress of **Medinaceli**.

What will you find?

Atienza and Medinaceli were important sites in the Andalusian Middle March. They were highly militarised posts in charge of defending the frontier. Between 1085 and 1104 they succumbed to the Leonese and Castilian offensive. Immersed in vast territories, with a small population and frequented by bandits and armed groups of different kinds, they remained very dangerous places.

In the early 12th century, Medinaceli was the axis that separated the Castilian lands of the taifa kingdom of Zaragoza,

a brilliant Islamic court whose princes, patrons of El Cid, stayed independent until they were conquered by the Almoravids in 1110. In 1120, King Alfonso I the Battler of Aragon took Calatayud and the Jalón valley. However, the area did not lose its borderlands nature and was the setting of conflicts between the kingdoms of Aragon and Castile.

Traces of the past are seen in the numerous castles, walls and towers that travellers will encounter: especially the castles of Atienza, Jadraque, Pelegrina, Sigüenza, Medinaceli, Montuenga de Soria, Monreal de Ariza and, above all, Calatayud; one of the most important walled Islamic towns in Spain. The route goes through four places that are listed as historic and/or artistic sites: Atienza, Sigüenza, Medinaceli and Calatayud, as well as small, quiet rural villages. It is in this section, in the Jalón valley in the province of Zaragoza, where you will see the first examples of Aragonese Mudejar architecture, on the World Heritage List.

The route is characterised by the variety in the relief. It begins in the hills of Atienza, at 1,320m altitude, and ends in the Jalón valley, in Calatayud, at 536m. It crosses natural places like the Maranchón and Layna moorlands, juniper woods and the banks of the River Jalón. If you have the time and energy and wish to see the River Dulce Ravine, on the exit from Sigüenza (after 1.5km), head towards Pelegrina (less than 10km there and back), where you will obtain a panoramic view of the impressive limestone canyon where the Félix Rodríguez de la Fuente made many of his nature films.

▼ Montuenga de Soria



The Way of El Cid Consortium is promoted and funded by the following provincial deputations:



FILE



Distance 268 km



Estimated time 3/4 days



Accumulated climb 3.320 m



Accumulated descent 3.950 m



Physical difficulty Medium



Technical difficulty Low

Route and signposting

We have designed a route that is perfectly adapted to gravel bikes, along country tracks with a firm surface, comfortable lanes, tarmacked tracks and lonely roads. **It is not signposted precisely for gravel bikes, but the route coincides largely with the MTB and hiking ways**, so you should pay attention to the signposting in those sections. **We recommend you download the track or the app.**

	Continuity mark	Wrong direction
GR 160 section (hiking and MTB routes)		
Non-GR section (hiking and MTB routes)		
MTB section (MTB route)		

Road sections

Part of the route follows secondary roads with little or sometimes no traffic. In any case, do not forget to ride carefully and make yourself visible to vehicles.

	E	F	M	A	M	J _N	J _L	A	S	O	N	D
Mean temperature Max/Min	7° -2°	9° -1°	12° 0°	14° 2°	19° 6°	24° 9°	30° 12°	29° 12°	24° 9°	17° 5°	11° 1°	8° -1°
no. of hours of light per day	09:31	10:37	11:55	13:20	14:30	15:08	14:51	13:50	12:29	11:08	09:53	09:14
Mean rainfall	40	40	33	60	70	47	22	25	37	46	54	54

Monthly mean data for the town of Medinaceli, which can act as a point of reference for the high part of The Borderlands

The Letter of Safe Conduct

The Letter of Safe Conduct is the credential on which travellers collect the stamps of the towns they go through. It is free and can be obtained in Tourism Offices or in our head office:



Consorcio Camino del Cid
C/ Madrid 24, 09002 Burgos
info@caminodelcid.org
Tel.: 947 256 240





Download from our website all the updated information: maps, topoguides, tracks, accommodation, stamping points, etc.



DISPONIBLE EN
Google Play



Consíguelo en el
App Store

Download the Way of El Cid travel app. It is free and is ready to work in places with no wifi signal.

◀ In red, the towns that are mentioned in the poem *Cantar de Mio Cid*

Advice and recommendations

- ▶ Do not set out without **tracks** and the **topoguides**.
- ▶ Avoid surprises; **book your accommodation in advance**.
- ▶ You will be going through lonely scenery with small villages: think ahead and prepare food and spares.
- ▶ Use a helmet and reflective clothing. **Make sure you can be seen**.
- ▶ This is not a race. Judge your **strength** and **technique** and do not lengthen the stages unnecessarily.
- ▶ Keep the **topoguide** at hand and check it if you have any problems.
- ▶ Wear the **helmet**.
- ▶ **Respect the signs**; they're for everybody.
- ▶ Remember that **rain** and **tall vegetation** can make cycling hard in some sections.

Stages (268 km)

1. Atienza - Sigüenza (87,2 km)
2. Sigüenza - Medinaceli (83,3 km)
3. Medinaceli - Calatayud (98 km)

Services

- Passport stamping offices
- Accommodation (hotel, hostel,...)
- Wellcome point
- City information centre
- Chemist's
- Train station
- Repair shops

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GOBIERNO DE ESPAÑA
 MINISTERIO DE INDUSTRIA, COMERCIO Y TURISMO

Plan de Recuperación, Transformación y Resiliencia
 Rutas Culturales de España



Edita:
Consortio Camino del Cid
C/ Madrid 24, 09002 Burgos

We would be very grateful if you can send us any comments, errors or experiences to info@caminodelcid.org

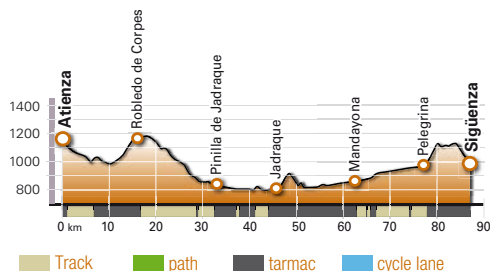
The Borderlands

Gravel Travel Guide

Atienza - Sigüenza

May 2025

UTM Desarrollos



Distance	87,2 km	Accumulated climb	1.025 m	Earth / Tarmac / Cycle Lane	43 / 57 / 0 %
Physical difficulty	Medium	Accumulated descent	1.210 m	Signposting	in hiking and MTB sections
Technical difficulty	Medium	Estimated time	6 h	IBP	Difficulty index 69

Atienza

(434 hab.)



km 0

6,8 km

Naharro

(2 hab.)

km 6,8

9,7 km

Robledo de Corpes

(45 hab.)

km 16,5

We start the stage together with the **hiking and MTB route** from the lower part of the town on the *old road to Ayllón*. An arrow points to a short track to the *CM-110 road*, which we go across and carry on straight ahead on the *Camino de la Mina*. We should pay attention to several junctions that we must ignore and continue on the main track. It comes to a narrower part and continues on the right of the *Escobar stream*. Stay alert because we'll come to an arrow pointing to an **MTB section**, as the **hiking route** turns on to a path on the right not suitable for cyclists as it goes up a steep hillside.

Start of MTB section (9 km)

Leaving the turning to the **hiking route** behind and continue on the track following the **MTB signs**. It soon crosses the stream on a platform (bridge) and starts a short climb to the village of **Naharro** and its lovely church.

We go through the village along the main street to the *CM-1001 road*, next to the bus stop. We stay on the road, with a good surface but practically no hard shoulder, and take care with the light traffic. After a downhill section, the road goes up the *Hierro ravine*. At the top of the climb, it connects with the **hiking route**, which turns on to a track on the right together with the **MTB route**. We don't take this turning and continue on the road.

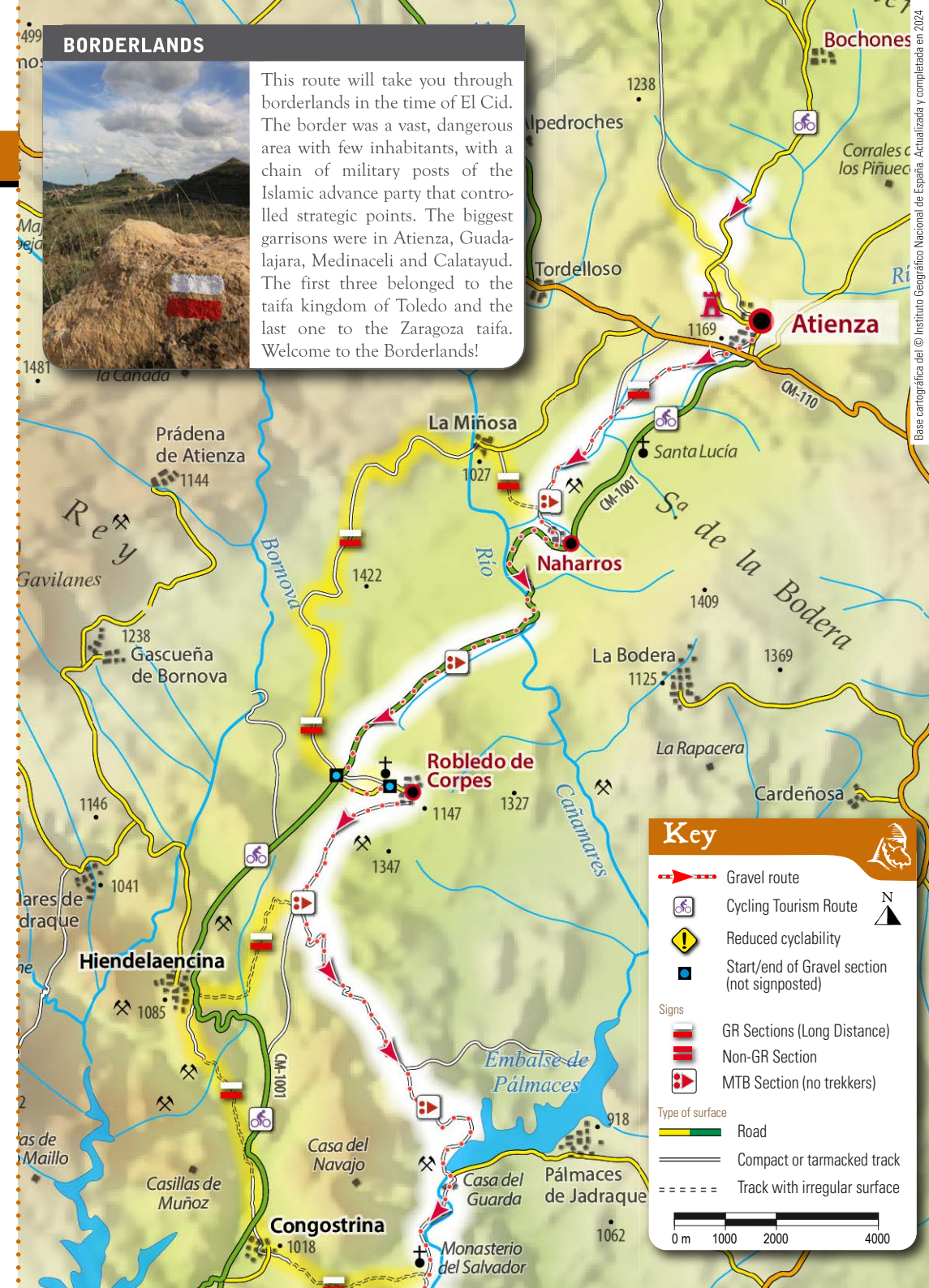
Short section without signs: our route leaves the hiking and MTB route

From the crossroads we stay on the quiet road to Robledo. The hiking route soon joins us, when we come to the *Soledad Hermitage* and the *cemetery*, and we follow the road to the village.

BORDERLANDS



This route will take you through borderlands in the time of El Cid. The border was a vast, dangerous area with few inhabitants, with a chain of military posts of the Islamic advance party that controlled strategic points. The biggest garrisons were in Atienza, Guadalajara, Medinaceli and Calatayud. The first three belonged to the taifa kingdom of Toledo and the last one to the Zaragoza taifa. Welcome to the Borderlands!



Key

- Gravel route
- Cycling Tourism Route
- Reduced cyclability
- Start/end of Gravel section (not signposted)
- GR Sections (Long Distance)
- Non-GR Section
- MTB Section (no trekkers)
- Type of surface
 - Road
 - Compact or tarmacked track
 - Track with irregular surface

0 m 1000 2000 4000

Robledo de Corpes

(45 hab.)

km 16,5



km 16,2

km 4,3

km 32,8

km 37,1

km 4

km 41,1

km 5,4

km 46,5

km 4

km 50,6

km 54,7

km 7,9

km 62,6

Castilblanco de Henares

(16 hab.)

Jadraque

(1.417 hab.)

Bujalaro

(47 hab.)

Matillas

(104 hab.)

Mandayona

(300 hab.)

We leave it on **Alta Street**. At the exit, at a crossroads, turn right and stay on the same track. As we move away, the surface becomes stonier, with a brief uncomfortable section. We come to a crossroads where an arrow points to the start of a **signposted MTB section**.

▶ Start of MTB section (11,4 km)

We turn off the **hiking route** at a track on the left. It goes down through a dense pinewood to **Pálmaces reservoir**. We cross over the dam and take a road on the right. We soon come to the **warden's house**, where we take a track on the left that goes down to the **River Cañamares**. We leave the track there to avoid getting wet, as it crosses the watercourse twice, **and continue on the footbridge and a path/track 1.3km long through the thick undergrowth**. Once we've got past those obstacles, we re-join the track with a good surface and make good progress with no difficulties till we come to the ruins of **San Salvador monastery**, where we link up with the **hiking route**.

We re-join the **hiking route**, which comes from **Congostrina** and connects with the track we've been following. It leads us to **Pinilla** with no problems.

□ Section without signs: the route abandons the signposted hiking and MTB route

At the entry to the village, we turn off the **hiking and MTB route** (which takes a path next to the river), and follow the **GU-159 road** to **Medranda** without any difficulty.

We take a section of the **hiking and MTB route** from the park next to the bridge to an earth footpath parallel to the **river**. After a curve, we quickly reach the road opposite the **cemetery** and follow it without turning off it until we come to the **Castilblanco access road** (bridge).

□ Section without signs: the route abandons the signposted hiking and MTB route

In **Castilblanco**, we briefly leave the **hiking and MTB route** along a track with a good surface at the end of **Mayor Street**, where we turn left. The track goes past the **cemetery**, re-joins the **hiking and MTB route**, and goes down to the **CM-1000 road**. We follow the track for a short time parallel to the road until we finally join it. We won't leave it until we reach the entry to **Jadraque**. We come to a roundabout where we carry on straight ahead and go down to the **River Henares** and the railway line.

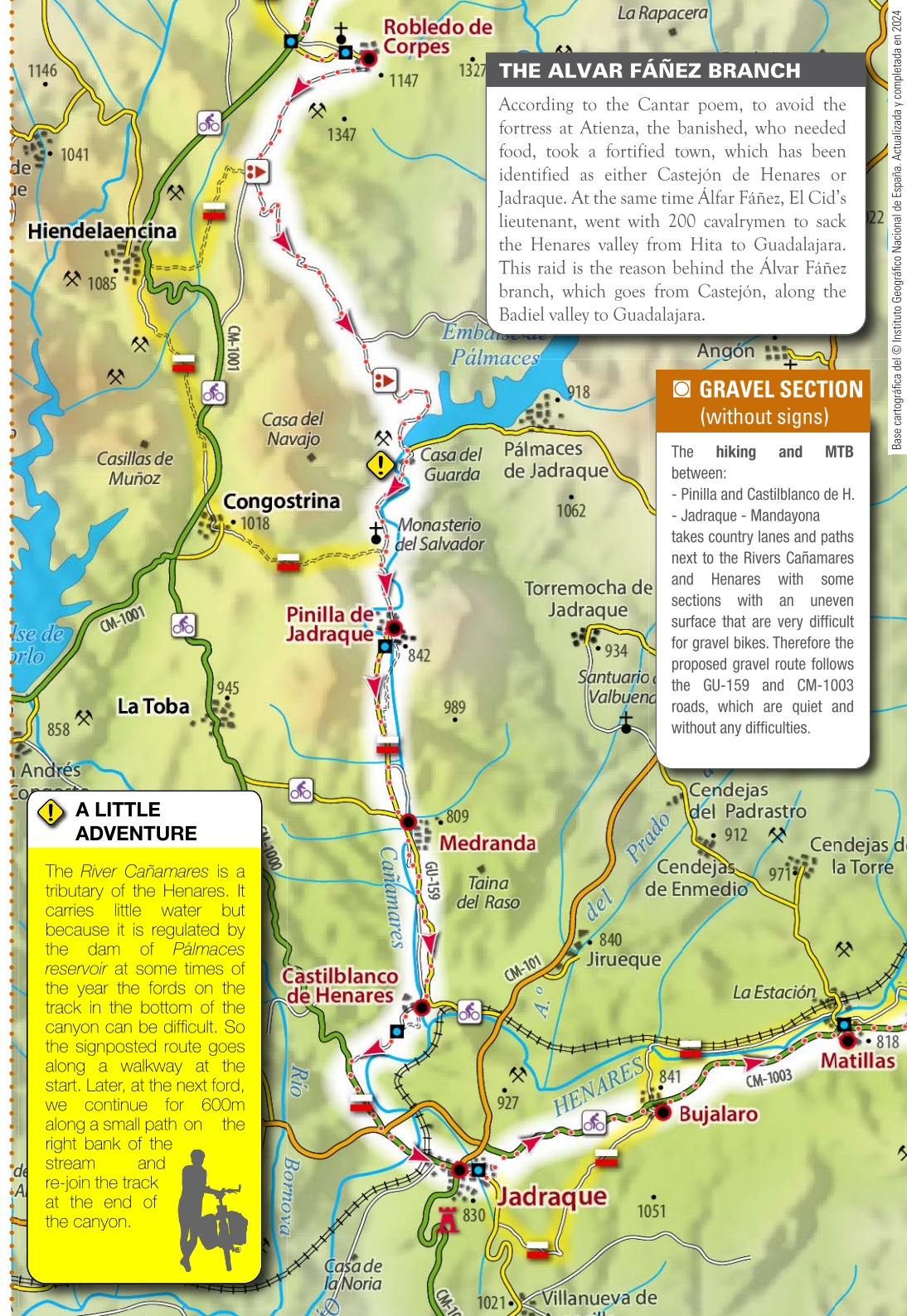
We go from the town centre up **Mayor Street** and **San Roque Street**, where we leave the **hiking and MTB route**.

□ Section without signs: the route abandons the signposted hiking and MTB route

We continue to the bull ring and the industrial estate to reach the **CM-1003**, which we take on the right uphill. After a climb, we'll descend rapidly to **Bujalaro**.

At the entry to the village we'll cross the **hiking and MTB route**, which turns on to a track next to the washing place, but we follow the road through the village. It goes down the **River Henares** valley and is flat as far as **Matillas**.

At the roundabout we briefly cross the **hiking and MTB route**, but we stay on the **CM-1003**. Half way along, we meet the start of the **Álvar Fañez Branch** at the turning in **Castejón de Henares**, but we'll follow the road to **Mandayona**.



THE ALVAR FAÑEZ BRANCH

According to the Cantar poem, to avoid the fortress at Atienza, the banished, who needed food, took a fortified town, which has been identified as either Castejón de Henares or Jadraque. At the same time Álvar Fañez, El Cid's lieutenant, went with 200 cavalymen to sack the Henares valley from Hita to Guadalajara. This raid is the reason behind the Álvar Fañez branch, which goes from Castejón, along the Badiel valley to Guadalajara.

□ GRAVEL SECTION (without signs)

The **hiking and MTB** between:

- Pinilla and Castilblanco de H.
 - Jadraque - Mandayona
- takes country lanes and paths next to the Rivers Cañamares and Henares with some sections with an uneven surface that are very difficult for gravel bikes. Therefore the proposed gravel route follows the GU-159 and CM-1003 roads, which are quiet and without any difficulties.

! A LITTLE ADVENTURE

The **River Cañamares** is a tributary of the Henares. It carries little water but because it is regulated by the dam of **Pálmaces reservoir** at some times of the year the fords on the track in the bottom of the canyon can be difficult. So the signposted route goes along a walkway at the start. Later, at the next ford, we continue for 600m along a small path on the right bank of the stream and re-join the track at the end of the canyon.



Mandayona

(300 hab.)

Aragosa

(28 hab.)

La Cabrera

(14 hab.)

Pelegrina

(20 hab.)

Sigüenza

(4.708 hab.)



At the entry, we re-join the **hiking and MTB route**. We leave from *Real Street* at the exit from the village along a track on the left next to *La Chorrera Spring*. It crosses a bridge over the *River Dulce*. At the *old paper factory*, we turn right and, after crossing an irrigation channel, we turn right again at a crossroads that takes us to the *River Dulce*. We join the road next to the junction for **Aragosa** and continue along it for 150 m before turning right on to a track through a poplar grove. We return to the road and soon come to **Aragosa**.

We go through the village and go along a winding track that runs parallel to the river in the **Natural Park of the River Dulce Ravine**. There is no confusion about the route as it always follows a track in the bottom of the impressive ravine between awesome limestone walls. The track has a good surface but in some places it may be get more difficult **because of puddles and mud**. The track passes a few metres from the hamlet of *Heros*, the old factory of paper money, and carries on to **La Cabrera**.

We cross the *River Dulce* over the medieval bridge that leads to the church. From the *football pitch*, we take a track (to the cemetery) for a few metres and then turn left next to some buildings. The track quickly becomes path that we can ride along.

Section without signs: the route abandons the signposted hiking and MTB route

After about 400m, we leave the **hiking and MTB route** at a turning on to a farm track on the left that crosses the river and continues along the valley, away from the river, to a crossroads at the feet of **Pelegrina**, where we re-join the **MTB route** but not the **hiking route**.

Start of MTB section (10 km)

We go past the turning for the **hiking route** and continue uphill on concrete following the **MTB signs** to the access to **Pelegrina**. We go up the road and come to a junction with the *GU-118*. Here we can turn off for 600 m to go to the *Félix Rodríguez de la Fuente look-out point*. Turn left towards **Sigüenza** on the *GU-118*. After a shooting range, the **hiking route** crosses the road, but we ignore that and stay on the tarmac to the *CM-1101*. We turn right and go rapidly downhill to enter **Sigüenza**.

GRAVEL SECTION (without signs)

The **MTB Way of El Cid route** between La Cabrera and Pelegrina takes country lanes and paths next to the River Dulce with sections with an uneven surface that are very difficult for gravel bikes. Therefore the proposed gravel route follows a country lane without signs on the other bank of the river.



El river Dulce; a natural stage



This beautiful canyon carved in the limestone moorland of Alcarria is one of the most interesting parts of the Way of El Cid and was the natural setting for many of Félix Rodríguez de la Fuente's documentaries. The crystalline water in the river favours the growth of leafy riverbank vegetation while the limestone escarpments are full of shelters where vultures, eagles and choughs build their nests.

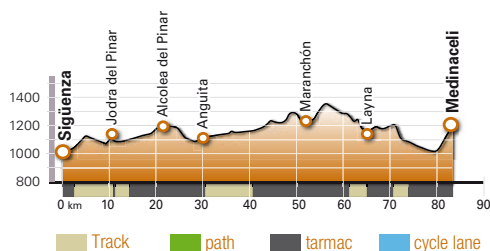
The Borderlands

Gravel Travel Guide

Sigüenza - Medinaceli

February 2025

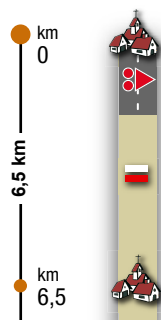
UTM Desarríos



FILE	Distance 83,3 km	Accumulated climb 1.260 m	Earth / Tarmac / Cycle Lane 34 / 66 / 0 %
	Physical difficulty Medium	Accumulated descent 1.060 m	Signposting in hiking and MTB sections
	Technical difficulty Low	Estimated time 6 h	IBP Índice dificultad 81

Sigüenza

(4.708 hab.)



Barbatona

(15 hab.)

We set off by re-joining the **hiking and MTB route** next to *Sigüenza castle*. At first we ignore the GR signs, which would send us on a short path between rocks, to go down to the road (MTB section signposted after 250m) and *El Oasis recreation area*. From there we go along a pleasant tarmacked track next to the *Vado stream* through a dense pinewood. We reach a crossroads where we turn right off the tarmac, cross the stream and take the middle track that starts a climb. Pay attention to the signs at several turnings until we come to the main track at the top, on the edge of the pinewood, which takes us to the proximities of **Barbatona**.

Barbatona

(15 hab.)

Jodra del Pinar

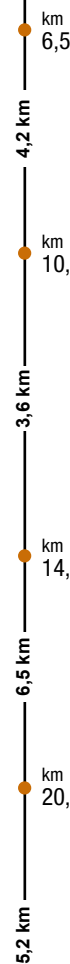
(4 hab.)

Estriégana

(12 hab.)

Alcolea del Pinar

(329 hab.)



We leave the village behind and head for the *CM-110 road*, which we cross and continue on the track opposite towards the south, parallel to the *Tejares stream*. Take no notice of several turnings. We come to the *River Dulce*, which we cross over a bridge and change direction towards the north-east. The track runs next to the river in a lovely gorge with vertical walls. We separate from the *river* and start a short climb to **Jodra**.

We leave **Jodra** from the *church* and go down the road to the village and the *River Dulce*. We go over the bridge and turn off the road on to a track on the right towards the north-east. It carries on with the river on the right **between crop fields** **but some sections might be more difficult in spring because of the tall vegetation**. We come to a crossroads at a bridge over the *river*, which we cross and continue on the left. The track keeps to a north-east direction with the river now on our left. We join a better maintained track that soon leads to the *GU-171 road*, next to **Estriégana**.

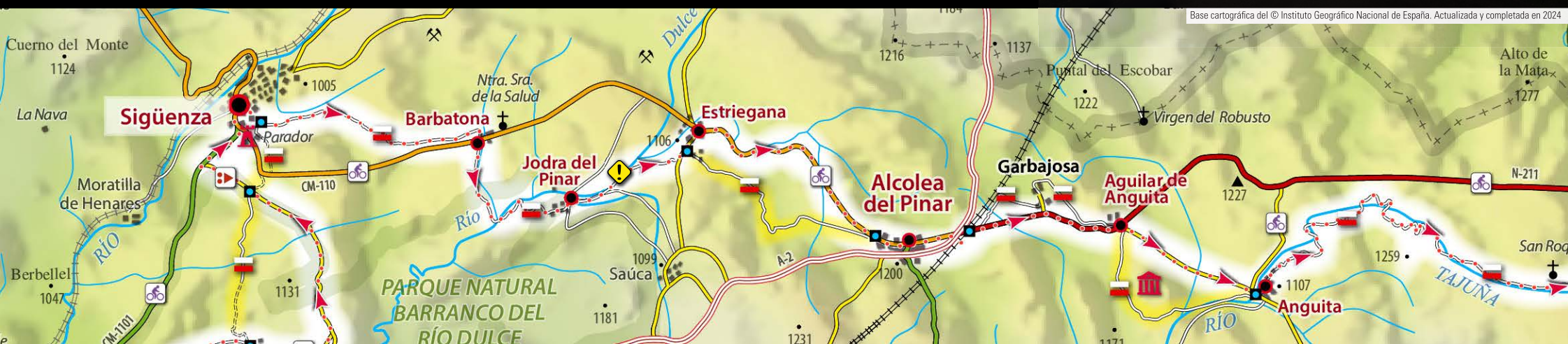
At the entry to the village, an arrow points to the **hiking and MTB route**, which goes along an old road with a poor surface. We avoid that by staying on the *GU-171 road*.

Section without signs: we leave the hiking and MTB route

After a few metres we come to the junction with the *CM-110*. We take the road on the right and go up the valley of a small stream to approach **Alcolea del Pinar**, where we connect once more with the **hiking and MTB route**.

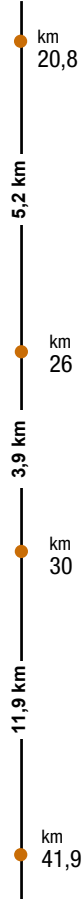


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Alcolea del Pinar

(329 hab.)



Aguilar de Anguita

(17 hab.)

Anguita

(157 hab.)

Luzón

(64 hab.)

We leave **Alcolea** on *Real Street* and the *C-114 road* (the old N-2) towards Zaragoza. When we come to the crossroads, we turn right (towards Teruel), cross the bridge over the motorway and reach a roundabout.

Section without signs: the route abandons the signposted hiking and MTB route

There we leave the **hiking and MTB route** (which follows a path to Garbajosa) and stay on the N-211 road, with a wide hard shoulder and a good surface, but taking care with the traffic. It is flat in the first section as far as the turning to **Garbajosa**, and then starts a gentle slope down to the crossroads at the access to **Aguilar de Anguita**.

From the crossroads on the *N-211*, we take the *GU-936 road* towards **Anguita**, which coincides for a few metres with the **hiking and MTB route**, which turns off at the first turning on the right, next to an arrow. We keep on the quiet road to reach **Anguita**, next to *Soledad Hermitage*, where we re-join the **hiking and MTB route**.

Set off from *San Pedro Church* on *Hoz Street* and the road for a few metres, and at the exit take an earth track with a good surface on the right. After about 200 m, turn right and cross *River Tajuña* at a bridge. The track follows the *river* in an area of great beauty. The valley becomes narrower and surprises us with curious caves as we cycle in the shade of dense poplar groves. We cross a bridge over the *river* and after a sharp bend the track crosses the *river* again and seems to diverge a little from the water-course. However, we return to the *river*, which we cross again, and the valley slowly widens, once more with crop fields. We carry on near the river without turning off the main track which acquires a tarmac surface at a junction. We go past *San Roque Hermitage* and soon come to **Luzón** next to a fountain

Luzón

(64 hab.)

Ciruelos del Pinar

(29 hab.)

Maranchón

(213 hab.)

We leave **Luzón** from the crossroads at the entry to the village and take the *GU-947* towards **Ciruelos del Pinar**.

Section without signs: the route abandons the signposted hiking and MTB route

We turn off the **hiking and MTB route**, which goes towards **Maranchón** on tracks and paths with difficult surfaces for our bikes. The quiet road follows a small stream and continues to **Ciruelos del Pinar** without any complications.

From *Mayor Square*, we take the *Maranchón road* and start a gentle climb up the *GU-945 road*; with very little traffic we can ride and enjoy the scenery at the head of the *River Tajuña* valley. After 3km we go by the woodland at the *Fuente picnic site* at *Recuévano*, which is perfect for taking a break. The road goes on without any difficulties to **Maranchón** and at the entry to the village we meet the **hiking and MTB route** again.

Key

- Gravel route
- Cycling Tourism Route
- Reduced cyclability
- Start/end of Gravel section (not signposted)

- Signs
- GR Sections (Long Distance)
 - Non-GR Section
 - MTB Section (no trekkers)

- Type of surface
- Road
 - Compact or tarmacked track
 - Track with irregular surface

Gravel section (without signs)

The **hiking and MTB Way of El Cid** route between Luzón and Maranchón takes country lanes and paths with an uneven surface that are very difficult for gravel bikes. Therefore the proposed gravel route follows a quiet road to Ciruelos del Pinar.

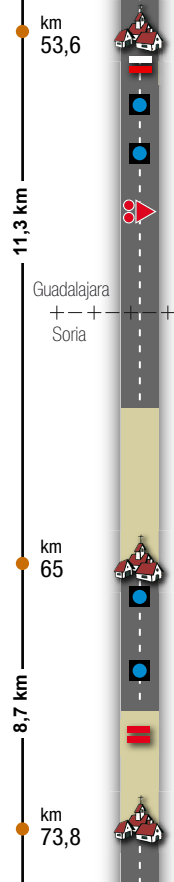
The caves of Anguita

According to the Cantar poem, El Cid went past the Caves of Anguita. The caves, which travellers can easily see, are in a rock that stands above the village. The route then continues to Luzón through the lovely gorge

of the River Tajuña. This was the only route for medieval travellers going to Medinaceli or Molina de Aragón, which is the reason for the various Islamic watchtowers, as in Anguita and Luzón.

Maranchón

(213 hab.)



We get on our way again on the **GU-405 road** (to **Arcos de Jalón**). When we reach the cemetery, an arrow points to the **hiking and MTB route** along a track with a poor surface, so we ignore that and stay on the road.

☐ Brief section without signs (400 m)

After a couple of bends we come to a sign at the start of an **MTB section**.

▶ Start of MTB section (10 km)

We go past the turning to the **hiking route** and continue on the road following the **MTB marks**. It goes slowly uphill between juniper woods and wind turbines until we reach the aerials and start on a long straight road that goes slightly downwards. A sign shows we're entering the *province of Soria*. Pay attention because in 2km you must turn off the tarmac on to an earth track on the left. It's a maintenance road for the windfarm with a good surface where you have to go straight ahead. After a climb, you come to a crossroads. Take the track opposite for **⚠ a rapid descent** to **Layna**.

☐ Section without signs

We leave **Layna** and turn off the **hiking and MTB route** to stay on the SO-411 road towards **Medinaceli** on a slow quiet climb to the moor. At the junction with the access road for **Urex de Medinaceli**, we re-join the **hiking and MTB route** and continue with them on the road through a tunnel under the high-speed railway line. After 400m, we take a turning on the left and soon start an impressive descent on a track to the head of the **Pradejón stream** towards the north-west. When we reach the valley bottom we soon go through a poplar grove to **Arbujuelo**.

Layna

(49 hab.)

Arbujuelo

(8 hab.)

Arbujuelo

(8 hab.)

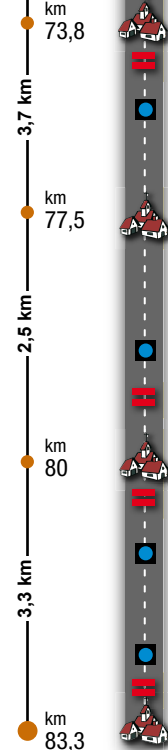
Salinas de Medinaceli

(47 hab.)

Barrio la Estación de Medinaceli

Medinaceli

(679) hab.



We leave the village on the road. Keep alert because after 800 m the **hiking and MTB route** turns off (it goes along a track with a rough surface next to the stream and parallel to the road).

☐ Section without signs

We soon meet the **SO-41 road**, which we take towards **Medinaceli** and quickly come to **Salinas de Medinaceli**.

The road leaves **Salinas de Medinaceli** behind on our left although we can go to the village in several places practically without needing to turn off our route. On the way out, we'll see the interesting saltworks with the magnificent view of **Medinaceli** in the background. Follow the road, which crosses a bridge over the motorway and connects again with the **hiking and MTB route** next to a fish farm. We stay on the road as it crosses a bridge over the railway line and connects with the **N-II** at the start of **Barrio de la Estación**.

At a signposted junction in **Madrid Avenue** in **Barrio de la Estación**, we take the turning to Medinaceli on the SO-132 and start a short but tough climb up the road.

☐ Brief section without signs (2 km)

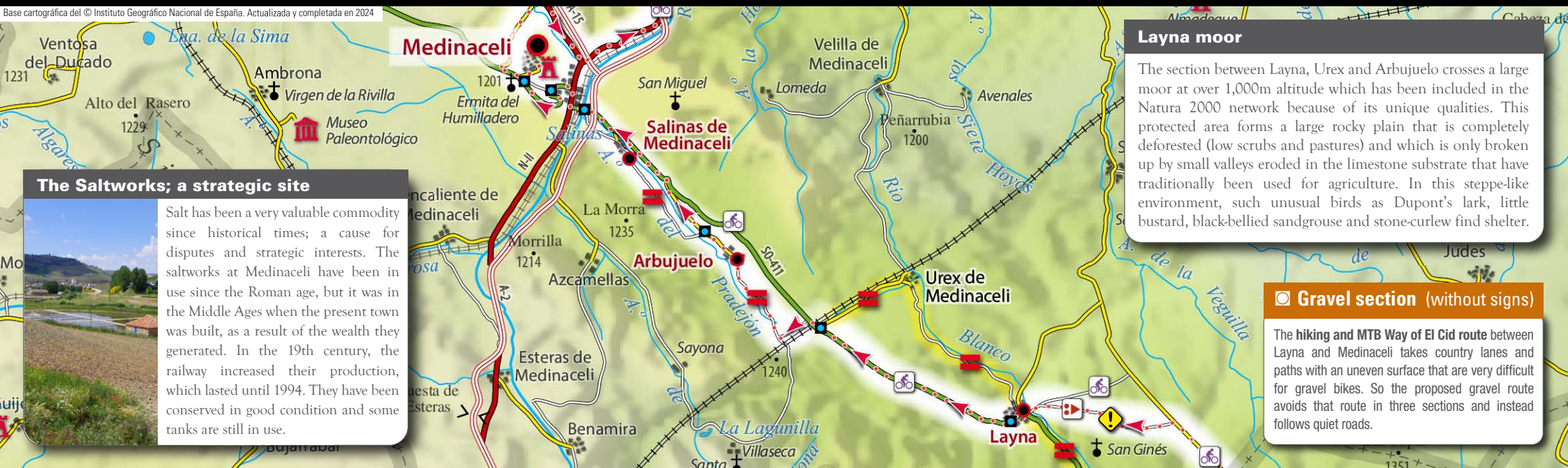
Just as we leave the village, on the first bend, an arrow indicates that the **hiking and MTB route** turns briefly on to a track with a steep slope and rough surface. We ignore that and re-join the route higher up next to **Humilladero Hermitage**.

The last section to the **Roman arch** and the medieval village is along the access road to **Medinaceli**.



When we enter the **province of Soria**, the signs **change from GR to No GR** (from White-Red marks to Red-Red marks).

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The Saltworks; a strategic site

Salt has been a very valuable commodity since historical times; a cause for disputes and strategic interests. The saltworks at Medinaceli have been in use since the Roman age, but it was in the Middle Ages when the present town was built, as a result of the wealth they generated. In the 19th century, the railway increased their production, which lasted until 1994. They have been conserved in good condition and some tanks are still in use.

Layna moor

The section between Layna, Urex and Arbujuelo crosses a large moor at over 1,000m altitude which has been included in the Natura 2000 network because of its unique qualities. This protected area forms a large rocky plain that is completely deforested (low scrubs and pastures) and which is only broken up by small valleys eroded in the limestone substrate that have traditionally been used for agriculture. In this steppe-like environment, such unusual birds as Dupont's lark, little bustard, black-bellied sandgrouse and stone-curlew find shelter.

☐ Gravel section (without signs)

The **hiking and MTB Way of El Cid** route between Layna and Medinaceli takes country lanes and paths with an uneven surface that are very difficult for gravel bikes. So the proposed gravel route avoids that route in three sections and instead follows quiet roads.

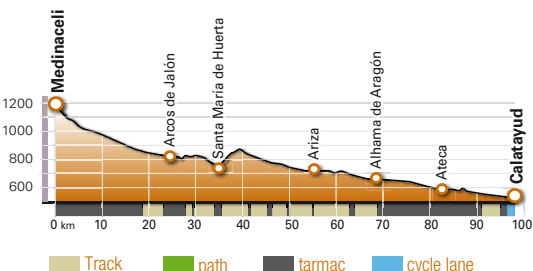
The Borderlands 3

Gravel Travel Guide

Medinaceli - Calatayud

May 2025

UTM Desarrolla



	Distance 98,1km		Accumulated climb 430 m		Earth / Tarmac/ Cycle Lane 44 / 54 / 2 %
	Physical difficulty Medium		Accumulated descent 1.050 m		Signposting in hiking and MTB sections
	Technical difficulty Medium		Estimated time 5 h 55 m		IBP Difficulty index 46

Medinaceli

(679 hab.)



Lodares

(12 hab.)



From **Medinaceli** we go down the road to the junction at the *Humilladero Hermitage*, where we turn off the **hiking and MTB route**.

Sections without hiking or MTB signs

We keep on the *SO-132* road towards **Maño de Medinaceli**. After 800m we turn on to the *SO-P-4000* road which goes down to the *N-111* and continues towards **Medinaceli**. The route partly re-joins the **hiking and MTB route**, which turns off at a bridge following the *track to Corvesin*. We stay on the road again as far as **Barrio de la Estación**, where we take the *N-II* with a wide hard shoulder and hardly any traffic to **Lodares**.

Lodares

(12 hab.)



Jubera

(population: 5)

Somaén

(44 hab.)



Arcos de Jalón

(1.525 hab.)



Aguilar de Montuenga

(19 hab.)

Montuenga de Soria

(79 hab.)



In **Lodares** we join the **hiking and MTB route** that heads to **Jubera** along the *old N-II* all the way. With a wide hard shoulder and little traffic, the road goes through an area of great beauty where the *river Jalón* cuts down between vertical walls of rock.

The way carries on comfortably and quickly along the *old N-II road*, which winds through the gorge that the *river Jalón* has carved in the rock, and offers views of great beauty. The arrival at **Somaén**, perched defiantly over an escarpment, astonishes travellers, who reach the village by turning off the road at a bridge over the *Jalón*.

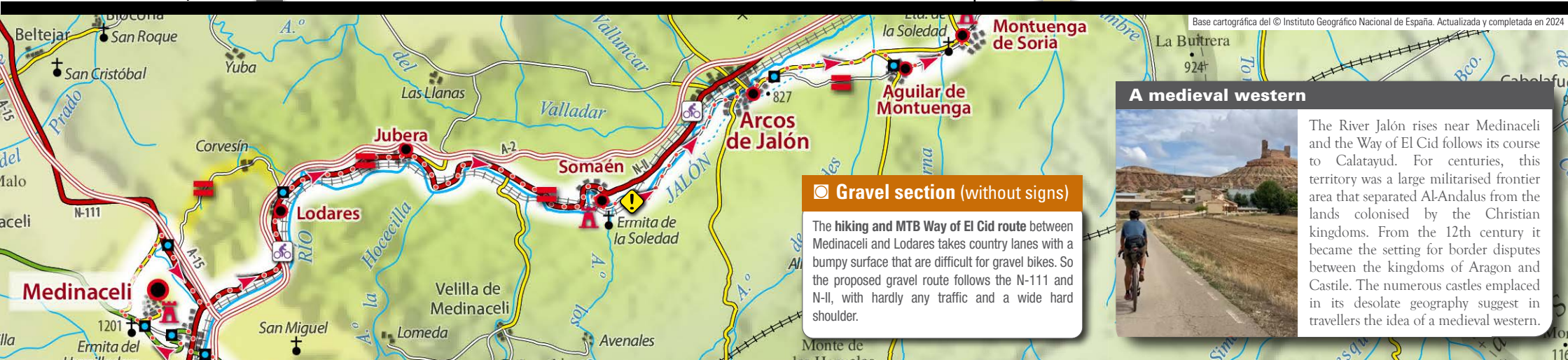
We set off again from *Mayor Street* on a track with a good surface next to *Soledad Hermitage*. It leads away from the village between the railway line and the dense riverbank vegetation by the side of the *Jalón*. The track soon crosses the railway at a level crossing without a barrier and after a short descent we come to a crossroads and turn right. We go on without turning off the main track, always in the *Jalón valley* between crop fields and heading north-east. On a flat comfortable track, we reach **Arcos** and enter the village along *Calvo Sotelo Street* together with the *Maranchón road*.

We leave **Arcos** on the road to *Aguilar de Montuenga*. 200m after the cemetery, the **hiking and MTB route** turns on to a stony track on the right, but we stay on the road.

Section without signs: the route abandons the signposted hiking and MTB route

The *SO-P-3008* road is narrow but with hardly any traffic it quickly leads to the junction with the access to **Aguilar de Montuenga**. After a short climb we enter the village, where we re-join the **hiking and MTB route**.

In **Aguilar**, we take a track that starts from *Eras and Sol Streets* in the east of the village, next to the exit arrow. There are no doubts about the track, which goes between fields, as the silhouette of **Montuenga** and its castle can be seen. We come to the road at a crossroads, but we continue on the track without turning off and soon come to the *drinking trough of Santa Bárbara* and, after a descent, enter the village next to *Soledad Hermitage*.



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A medieval western



The River Jalón rises near Medinaceli and the Way of El Cid follows its course to Calatayud. For centuries, this territory was a large militarised frontier area that separated Al-Andalus from the lands colonised by the Christian kingdoms. From the 12th century it became the setting for border disputes between the kingdoms of Aragon and Castile. The numerous castles emplaced in its desolate geography suggest in travellers the idea of a medieval western.

Gravel section (without signs)

The **hiking and MTB Way of El Cid** route between Medinaceli and Lodares takes country lanes with a bumpy surface that are difficult for gravel bikes. So the proposed gravel route follows the *N-111* and *N-II*, with hardly any traffic and a wide hard shoulder.

Key

- Gravel route
- Cycling Tourism Route
- Reduced cyclability
- Start/end of Gravel section (not signposted)

- Signs
- GR Sections (Long Distance)
 - Non-GR Section
 - MTB Section (no trekkers)

- Type of surface
- Road
 - Compact or tarmacked track
 - Track with irregular surface

0 m 1000 2000 4000



Arcóbriga, a celtiberian town

Before you reach Monreal de Ariza, 1.5km off the way you can visit the archaeological site of Arcóbriga, an old Roman town with a Celtiberian origin that existed until the 3rd century AD. The ruins that have been unearthed include some of the most important buildings in that time, such as baths, a basilica and defensive walls. A route is marked around the site with explanatory panels and the access is along an earth track following the PR-Z 90 path.

Montuenga de Soria

(79 hab.)

Santa María de Huerta

(246 hab.)

Torrehermosa

(73 hab.)

Monreal de Ariza

(175 hab.)

From *Norte Street*, we take a track that goes round *castle hill*. Another track joins us on the right and we go down to a crossroads where we turn right. With a good surface, the track continues with long straight sections between cereal fields. Ignore small turnings to reach the village without any difficulties.

Leave the village on the *road to Torrehermosa (SO-P-3010)*. At the exit, take a track on the right with a good surface that leads to the province of Zaragoza, where **the signs for the Way of El Cid become red and white (GR)**. There are several junctions with other tracks, so pay attention to the signs to avoid any mistakes. The track goes down a small valley to a crossroads where it joins the *PR-Z 90* and we turn right towards the village.

We go to the swimming-pools, where we take a track on the left that at first follows the road and then crosses it. It is flat, with a good surface, and heads north on the right bank of the Cañada stream. We don't turn off it until we come to the road.

Brief section without signs (1 km)

We leave the **hiking and MTB route** as we turn right on to the road. After 1km, we turn off the tarmac and take a track on the left that soon re-joins the **hiking and MTB route**. We come to a junction with the *Huerta track* and turn right. We soon come to another turning to the *Celtiberian site of Arcóbriga*, but we stay on the track and continue towards the north-east and the entry to **Monreal de Ariza** next to the road.

Monreal de Ariza

(175 hab.)

Ariza

(1.059 hab.)

Cetina

(564 hab.)

We exit **Monreal de Ariza** on *Mayor Street*, which goes through the village together with the *PR-Z 90 trail*. Ignore a track on the left that leads to the *cemetery* and continue to a calvary next to the tip. The track is well-maintained but has a stony surface. It takes us to the valley of the *river Jalón* between fields and the rough ground on our right. The *PR-Z 90* turns left but we keep on our track. We come to a pinewood and junction, turn left and go downhill to a *Roman bridge* over the *river Jalón* that leads to **Ariza**.

After visiting **Ariza**, we continue on our way from the *Roman bridge* over the *river Jalón*. We take a tarmacked track that soon comes to the *Cabolafuente road*. We cross the road and continue on the track opposite towards the east. Follow the main track without turning off to a crossroads where we go straight ahead on the *track along the Zarza drover's road*, with the *Jalón valley* at our backs. The track goes between cereal fields with some areas of bare hills as we continue towards the east and the entry to **Cetina**. In the *Pellejero ravine*, a few trees appear in line along its banks. The track goes gently uphill to *Puntal del Cuerno*, and we avoid a turning on the left. We gradually approach **Cetina**, which is hidden behind a small ridge. We go past the *cemetery* on our left and climb between scattered old farm buildings. We enter the village on *Arrabal Street* next to *San Juan Lorenzo Hermitage*.

Cetina
(564 hab.)

km
63,5



We leave the village from the *Virgen de Atocha Hermitage* and the *old washing place*, on a track with a good surface. After a short descent, we come to the *Jalón valley*. We won't leave the valley until we come to **Alhama**, riding between orchards and fields. The railway line is on our left and we gradually approach it until we are next to it. Shortly after the *Covatillas Ravine*, the track turns away from the railway and ends at the road to *Alhama station*, near the town.

Alhama de Aragón
(925 hab.)

km
69,9



We come to the bridge over the *River Jalón* that divides the town in two. We go on for a few metres along *Constitución Avenue* and, when we come to the *railway tunnel*, we turn off the **hiking and MTB route**.

Section without signs

We go through the town on *Aragón Avenue* to a junction with the *N-2 road*. We take the road on the left and enjoy the ride along it, thanks to its wide hard shoulder and little traffic. After 2km, the **hiking and MTB route** joins us again and together follow the road. We avoid going through a small tunnel by taking a track on the right that returns to the road at the other end of it and we continue without turning off to **Bubierca**. We enter the high part of the town, next to the town hall.

Bubierca
(59 hab.)

km
75,3



At the *town hall*, we leave the **hiking and MTB route** and stay on the *N-2 road*.

Section without signs

We'll make good progress on the comfortable *N-2 road* which enters the narrow *Jalón valley*. As we approach **Ateca**, we turn off the road on to the *A-1501 road* where, just after crossing the river, we re-join the **hiking and MTB route**. We continue on a tarmacked track on the left, parallel to the railway line, which leads to **Ateca**.

Ateca
(1.697 hab.)

km
82,9



Ateca
(1.697 hab.)

km
82,9



After visiting **Ateca**, we go to *España Square*, where we take *San Blas Avenue*. As it leaves the town it becomes the *N-2 road*. When we come to *San Blas Hermitage*, we leave the **hiking and MTB route**, which turns off the road on to an uphill track.

Section without signs

We follow the *N-2 road*, which goes past *Ateca station* and a small industrial estate. After a little more than 1.5km we briefly join the **hiking and MTB route** which, after crossing the road, takes an earth track on the right. We'll stay on the tarmac without turning off, making quick progress on a road with a wide hard shoulder and light traffic. We soon see the *striking hill of the Enchanted Moor* where archaeologists have located the ruins of *Alcocer Castle* and we can visit it by going up an unsignposted track. Then we carry on along a road without any difficulties to **Terrer**, where we re-join the **hiking and MTB route**.

Terrer
(550 hab.)

km
90,5



From *Constitución Avenue (N-2 road)*, we continue along *Estación Street*, which becomes a tarmacked track outside the village. After crossing the *river Jalón* it comes to a crossroads next to the railway line. There we take a track with a good surface on our left that runs parallel to the railway. We avoid turnings to a couple of bridges that we'll see, until we come to some factories and reach a roundabout at the access to the *A-202 road*. We follow a track parallel to the road, but it soon comes to it and we turn left. After a little over 150m, when we've crossed the *bridge over the river Jiloca*, we should turn off the road on to a track on the left. It connects with the *Jalón riverside path* that leads us quickly and comfortably along a cycle lane to *La Serna Park* in the heart of **Calatayud**.

Calatayud
(19.677 hab.)

km
98,1



Spa waters



Several hot springs have been known and used in Alhama since antiquity. The only thermal lake in Spain is precisely in this town. The water rises throughout the year at a constant temperature of 32° and several native mollusc species live there, adapted to the water temperature.

