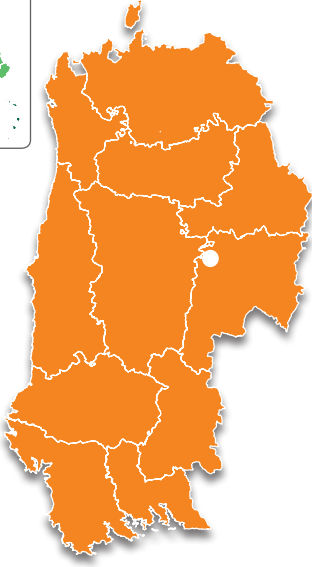
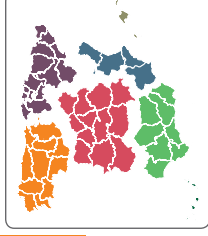




Guide to the  
**Nature Trails**  
of Spain



SECTOR  
**NORTHWESTERN PENINSULAR**

SECTOR  
**NORTHWESTERN PENINSULAR**  
**NATURE TRAIL**  
**VIA DE LA PLATA. BARCIAL DEL**  
**BARCO-MAIRE DE CASTROPONCE SECTION**

1. This almost 25 kilometre long section leaves from the Barcial del Barco station, on the outskirts of the town in the province of Zamora.
2. Leaving the silo behind, it does not take long before the route crosses the Via de la Plata route, which is a tourist-cultural route. Shortly afterwards road N-610 is passed underneath, and a kilometre later a meander in the River Esla is reached. During the first part of the journey towards Benavente, a series of walkways and bridges are passed over which enable the route to pass over rural paths, ravines and streams. The first of all of these is a slightly larger than 50 metre bridge over a ravine that flows into the Esla
3. The river and the trail separate for a kilometre and a half during a journey in which the old railway platform is elevated on a slope, among the crops on the flood plains of the River Esla. Shortly before meeting again, the trail enters a production poplar grove (the manufacturing of wooden panels from this tree is one of the region's most relevant industries) and later a gallery forest with willows, ashes and hawthorns. The River Esla is crossed by means of an impressive viaduct made of more than 250 m of steel and granite masonry, built in 1932 and reformed in 1949.
4. On the other side of the river, the landscape of crops and walkways over streams and trails is repeated, passing next

- to a detour via which Villanueva de Azoague can be reached. After leaving the sugar industry to one side the trail reaches another bridge and enters Benavente after it passes under a road. Until arriving at the station of Benavente, the trail leads along a headland upon which the old town sits on the right, under the watch of the Caracol Tower and the Los Molinos creek, an arm of the River Orbigo. The station of Benavente is finally reached. In a well-served station, the travellers' building has been restored as a hostel for pilgrims, and the station's surroundings have been converted into a gardenised rest area.
5. After crossing road ZA-P-15, the route continues along an area of poplars and orchards, in the company of the Los Molinos creek. After passing over the road via a bridge, the trail enters the Mosteruelo meadow, vast Mediterranean vegetation dominated by evergreen oaks. Before passing below road A-52, the nature trail will have passed the Via de la Plata route on two occasions.
  6. The road also marks the end of the meadow and the town of Villabrazaro is immediately reached. The traditional wine cellars carved into the hills, which are very usual in the towns in this area, really grab the attention upon entering the town. Once again with the landscapes of crops (above all corn fields and some vineyards), with the occasional presence of wooded areas and brambles, which give welcome shade in the heat, the Reguero creek is crossed.



Parador de turismo of Benavente



The trail crosses the Mosteruelo meadow



End of this section of the trail, near the provincial border

#### **BETWEEN RIVERS ESILA AND ÓBRIGO VALLEYS**

Setting off among crop land (corn, sunflower, vines, etc.) from the platform at the old Plasencia-Astorga railway line, this section of the Via de la Plata Nature Trail involves the transition between the plains of the River Esla and that of its tributaries, the Orbigo and the passing from Tierra de Campos region to the Benavente y los Valles region, both in the province of Zamora. The name of this nature trail could not be more fitting to its route, as on various occasions it coincides with the Via de la Plata Route.



Since 1993 the Ministry for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food's Nature Trails Program aims to restore former transport infrastructures such as railway tracks, cattle trails and traditional routes, for public use and enjoyment.

These routes take us to the countryside to discover the biodiversity and beauty of our precious natural heritage, and discover the villages, sights, traditions and people that are part of the unique cultural landscape of our country.

We invite you to visit them and offer you the keys to enjoy the trip. In this brochure you will find a brief description of Via de la Plata Nature Trail. Barcial del Barco-Maire de Castroponce section and the map for the journey, along with recommendations to make the most of this experience. We only ask one thing of you: do not forget to leave everything as you found it. The conservation of these pathways is also your responsibility.

#### **TELEPHONES OF INTEREST:**

- Barcial del Barco Town Council: 0034 980 64 00 37
- Benavente Town Council: 0034 980 63 94 45
- Maire de Castroponce Town council: 0034 980 65 01 11





