

TELEPHONES OF INTEREST:

- Baños de Montemayor town council: 0034 927 48 80 12
- Puerto de Béjar town council: 0034 923 40 20 19
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INFO

DE

NATURE TRAIL

VÍA DE LA PLATA. BAÑOS DE MONTEMAYOR - BÉJAR SECTION

CROSSING FROM CÁCERES TO SALAMANCA ALONG THE SLOPES OF THE SIERRA DE BÉJAR MOUNTAIN RANGE.

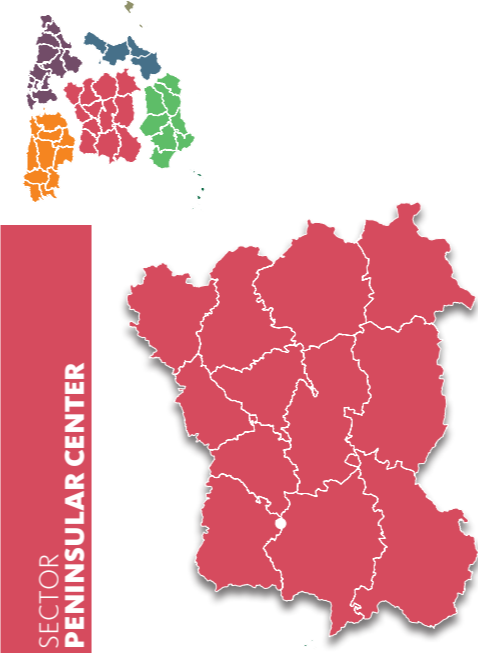
This section of the Vía de la Plata Nature Trail follows the route of the old Astorga-Plasencia railway line, which runs at a mid-slope level along the sides of the western edge of the Béjar mountain range, declared in 2006, alongside its neighbouring mountain range La Sierra de Francia, as a Biosphere Reserve. The Vía de la Plata Route, is a tourist-cultural trail based on the Roman trail between Augusta Emerita (Mérida) and Asturica Augusta (Astorga), which lends it its name, and it runs parallel to the nature trail for a large part of the journey.



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 Vía de la Plata Nature Trail. Baños de Montemayor-Béjar 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.



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NATURE TRAIL VIA DE LA PLATA. BAÑOS DE MONTEMAYOR-BÉJAR SECTION

- Starting from the municipal boundary between Hervás and Baños de Montemayor, the old station of Baños de Montemayor is reached after some two kilometres. The trail crosses the road from Baños de Montemayor to La Garganta (care must be taken, the road is very winding and thus visibility is not good) to then enter a forest with a mix of deciduous trees that cover the slopes of the mountain range, and this will accompany the trail until it reaches Béjar.
- After a kilometre and a half, a walkway over the River Garganta is reached, this is a small water course that was used to turn the mills at Baños de Montemayor, and just a few metres later the first of the route's tunnels is reached. At more than 200m long, the tunnel is artificially lit (although it is advisable to carry a torch). After the tunnel, the trail takes a wide curve in which the vegetation on the left opens up, allowing for spectacular views of the valley.
- Just under a kilometre after leaving the tunnel the provincial (and autonomous) boundary is crossed between Cáceres and Salamanca, and after kilometre point eight the station of Puerto de Béjar is reached.
- Continuing the route, the N-630a is crossed, now close to Puerto de Béjar, and the town can be reached from some of the paths that lead from the right of the trail. Leaving Puerto de Béjar behind, the trail continues without the landscape changing for 3 km, until the outskirts of Cantagallo are reached.
- Cantagallo is left by passing under another road which provides access to the town, leaving the trail boxed in between the motorway on the left and the N-630a road on the right. The trail returns to the company of a broadleaf forest, and crosses below the road.
- Road N-630a is crossed again, this time over a metallic bridge, and then the Béjar station is reached. The nature trail passes under this town through an almost 400 m tunnel, perfectly converted and lit. Upon leaving the tunnel, the River cuerpo de Hombre is crossed via a bridge. It does not take long to reach the route's final tunnel, which is less than 200 m long, after which the last of Béjar's factories are left behind. After passing below the A-66 motorway and going around an industrial park via a wide curve, the valley of the River Cuerpo de Hombre is also left behind.
- The trail changes between being accompanied by dense deciduous forests and Pyrenean oak and ash forests and pastures in which cattle graze. Glancing backwards, the peaks of the Sierra de Béjar mountain range can be observed and in the east, in the background, the silhouette of the Sierra de Francia mountain range can be made out.
- After crossing under road SA-220, there is only 1400 m to go before the municipal boundary between Béjar and Navalalmoral is reached.

Although this section of the Nature Trail ends here, Navalalmoral de Béjar is less than a kilometre away, and the town council had cleared the railway in order to provide access to the town centre.

LAS SIERRAS DE BÉJAR Y FRANCIA BIOSPHERE RESERVE

The Las Sierras de Béjar y Francia Biosphere Reserve, is located in the south-east of the province of Salamanca, on the border with the provinces of Avila and Cáceres. Although in biogeographic terms this is located in the Mediterranean region, there are various areas that have a clear Euro-Siberian influence, and consequently this area has great natural richness, with interesting places in which both regions come together.

The oak and holm oak forests are present throughout the Reserve, and alongside them there are the famous holm oak, oak and ash pastures in the cooler areas. There are also chestnut forests in many places. Next to these representative formations, there are also some remarkable ones, such as the Madroño de Miranda del Castañar forest, the areas of Holly in the Honfía forest in Linares de Riofrío and the Quercus robur forest in San Martín del Castañar.

The large variety of flora provides a high diversity of habitats populated by more than 5,000 species of invertebrates and 300 vertebrates. Two endemic species stand out among these for their importance: the ray-finned fish and the lizard of the Peña de Francia, as well as keystone species such as the salamander, the black and griffon vultures, the Bonelli's eagle, and mammals such as hunting species for example boar, deer and the Iberian lynx.



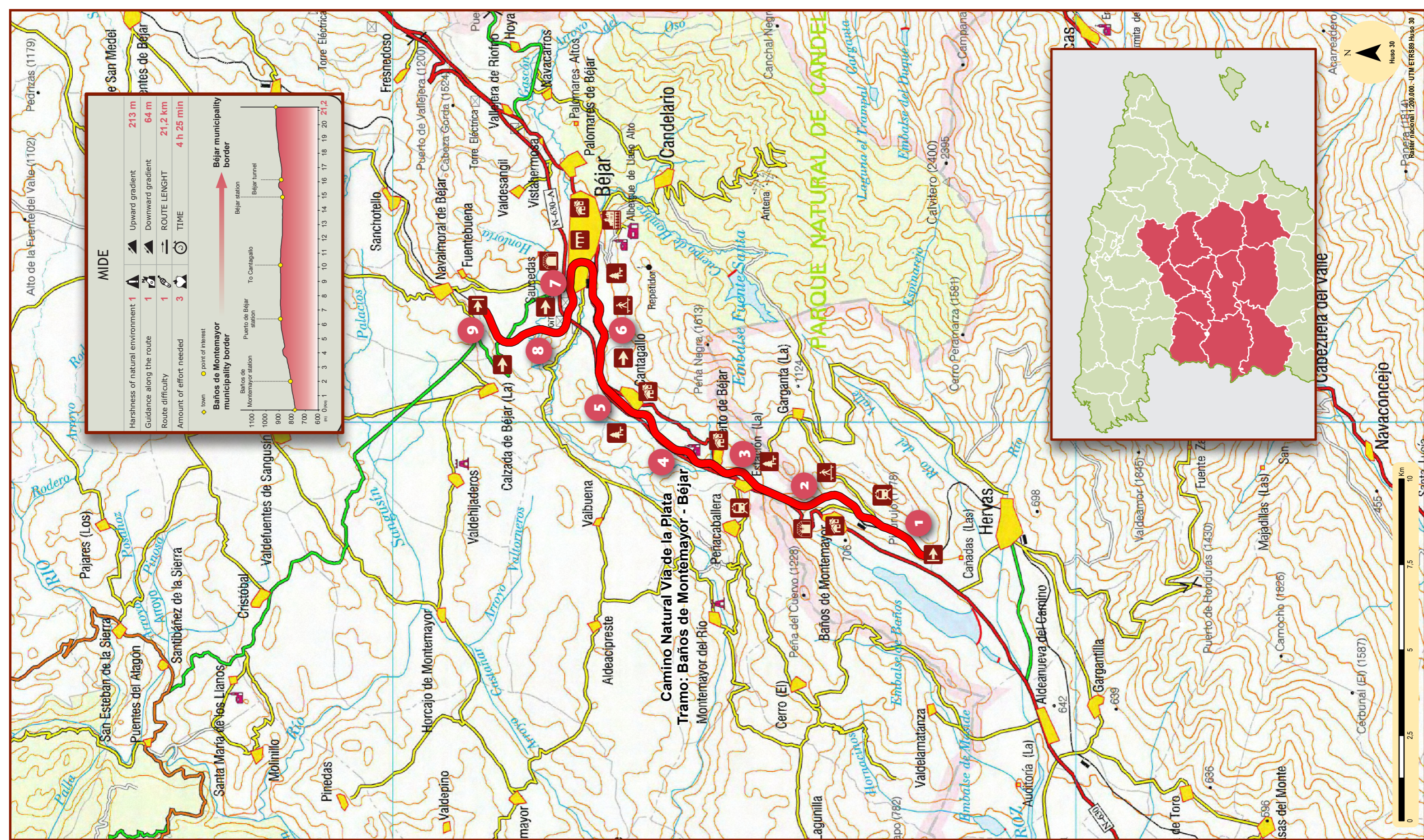
Panoramic views of Béjar from the former train station



Views of the peaks of the Sierra de Béjar mountain range from the nature trail



Baños de Montemayor Station



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NATURE TRAIL VÍA DE LA PLATA. BAÑOS DE MONTEMAYOR-BÉJAR SECTION

- Starting point
- End of trail
- Rest area
- Town
- Station
- Walkway
- Underpass
- Bridge
- Monumental area