



Panoramic view from the recreational area



Cattle around the trails



Church of San Pedro Apóstol
in Bernuy-Salmero

CAÑADAS REALES: FROM TRANSHUMANCE TO LEISURE AND PRESERVATION

Being 90 Castilian varas wide (about 75 metres), the Cañadas Reales are the largest cattle routes. In the past, thousands of heads of cattle went through these "natural motorways" in order to seize the seasonal pastures and take shelter from harsh winter conditions. The gradual disappearance of the old profession of transhumance has endangered the rich natural and cultural heritage associated to these trails.

The values being instilled in today's society demand more and more that these trails are used and recovered, not only to be used as outdoor leisure areas, but they are also important in order to preserve the biodiversity, since these trails act as biological corridors linking valuable natural areas and isolated populations of threatened or critically endangered species.

7. In this last stretch of the route the traveller will face the steepest slopes of the trail, crowned southeast by

the seasonal Mediana River, where typical riverside vegetation of willows and ashes can be seen.

6. After leaving Prado Casares stream behind, the route reaches a holm oak meadow with outstanding large ancient trees. There, the traveller can see traditional drinking troughs for cattle and several shepherds' huts. The trail continues showing the traveller unique slate outcrops while going down towards the riverbed of the seasonal Mediana River, where typical riverside vegetation of willows and ashes can be seen.

5. Beyond this point, the landscape starts changing and becomes a moorland scattered with holm oaks, where sheep herds and many birds of prey can be usually seen, as well as small passerine birds, such as the black-eared wheatear and the crested lark. When kilometre number nine is reached, the outlines of the Cuesta and Malagón Ranges can be sighted to the left and right, respectively.

4. Inside the town centre, the church of San Pedro Apóstol is well worth a visit. It preserves Romanesque-Moorish remains and its bell tower is made up of the former defensive watchtower of Bernuy. The traveller can also visit the Prado de las Cruces Dolmen, as well as thirteen others that have not been excavated. All these dolmens are part of a megalithic cemetery considered as a place of Cultural Interest. Once Bernuy is left behind, the route continues crossing road AV-500 through a flyover, from where a four-kilometre descent starts towards Prado de Casares stream.

3. The trail turns left heading southwest, and after a traffic signal for bicycles, it continues through a gentle upward slope that enters an oak forest. Later, the traveller reaches a natural terrace, from where the meadows of Aldeagordillo and the Gansino can be sighted, opposite to a magnificent holm oak forest. Here, the traveller can take a break in a recreational area before continuing downhill towards a landscape of weathered red bedrocks (large granite rocks) where the holm oak forest opens out and gives way to a scrub landscape formed by lavender, retama and brooms, in one of the flattest stretches of the trail.

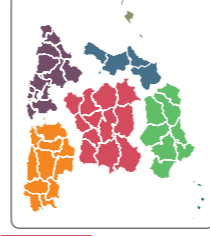
2. Once kilometre four is reached, a two-kilometre gentle descent leads the visitor towards the nearby town of Bernuy-Salmero. In this stretch, one can usually observe the circular flight of griffon vultures. The intersections of several paths announce the proximity of this town, which is entered through a narrow street leading to the fountain square, this being one of the two only water supply points of the route.



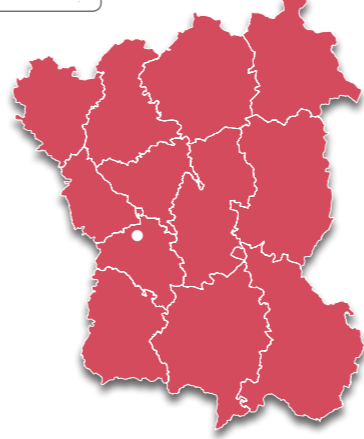
A CATTLE ROUTE TOWARDS THE MOORLAND

This nature trail's route belongs to the Cañada Real Soriana Occidental, a former cattle route and an important ecological corridor. The route begins in Ávila and continues eastbound for about fourteen kilometres towards the town of Urraca de Miguel.

Ávila, which has been declared a World Heritage Site, was one of the main Castilian cities in the Middle Ages thanks to trade and to the thriving textile industry developed around wool. Back then, thousands of heads of merino sheep crossed its walls following the numerous cattle routes, many of which are now protected areas.



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Since 1993 the Ministry for Agriculture and Fisheries, Food and the Environment'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 the Campo Azálvaro Nature Trail 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:

- City council of Ávila:

0034 920 35 40 00

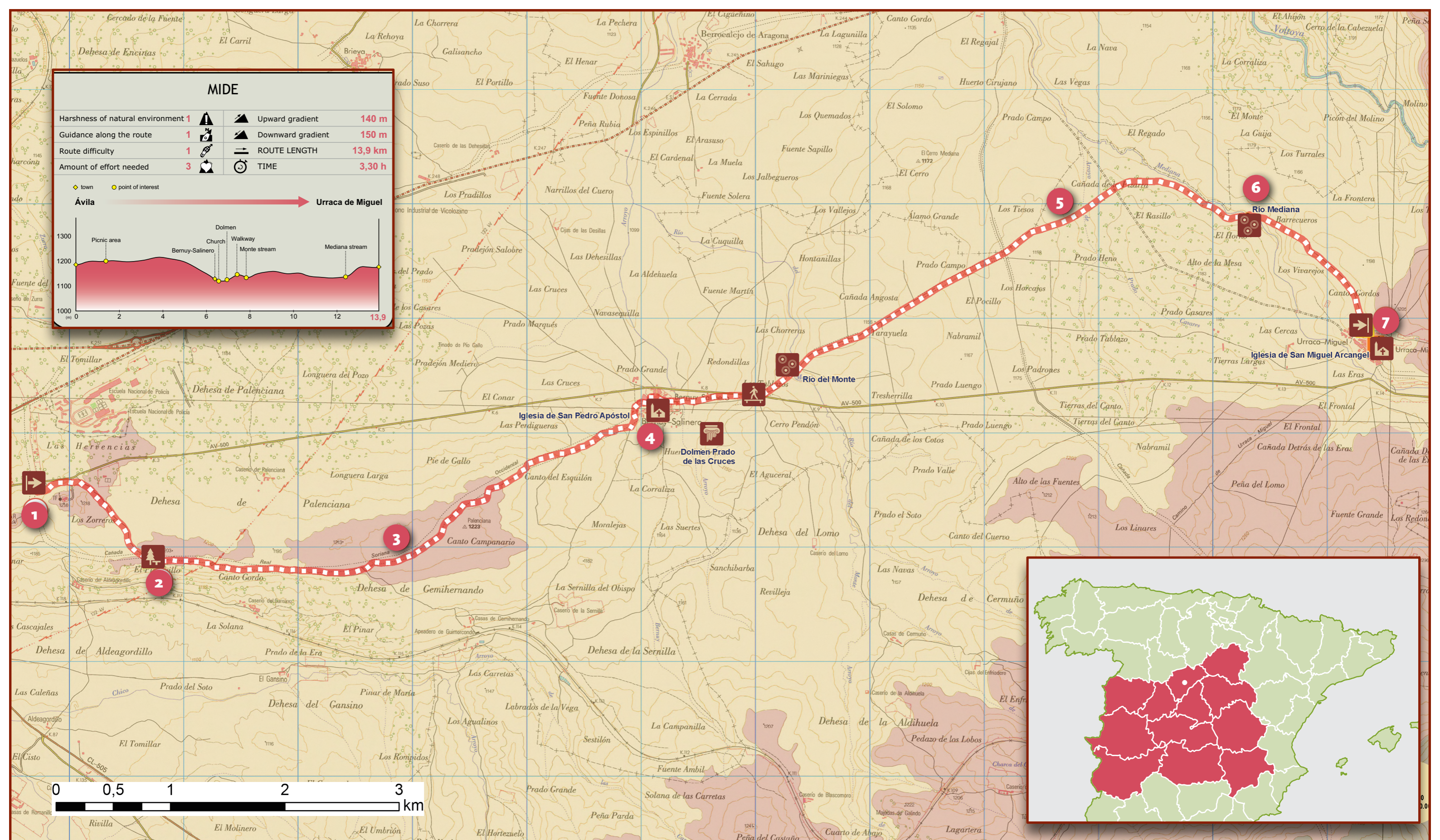
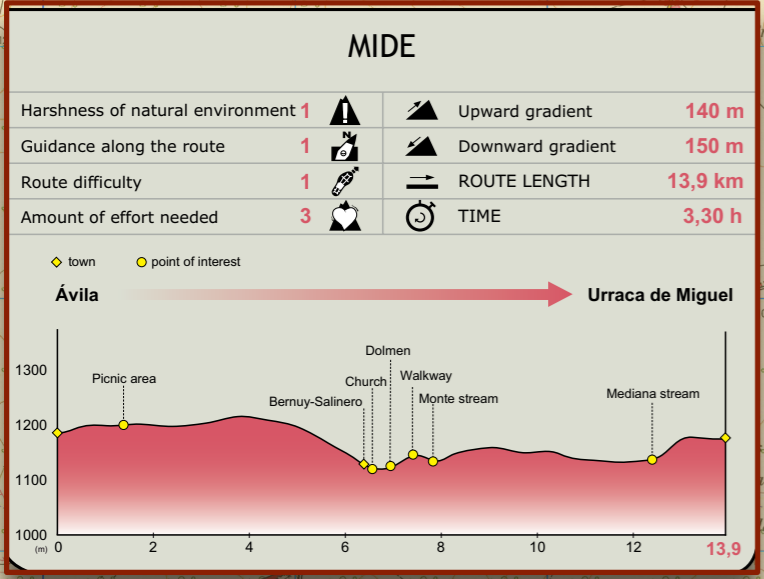


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NATURE TRAIL
CAMPO AZÁLVARO

- Starting point
- End of trail
- Rest area
- Religious building
- Walkway
- Archaeological site
- Otros puntos de interés