

PART TWO LOS CALLEJOS - VEGA DEL PUERTO - CORAO (19 KMS.)

Here, in the second part of the route, you are at the entrance to the Valley of Ardisana, a beautiful stretch of the Llanes countryside where the green carpet, patterned with fields and trees rises up on both sides of the river Riensena.

This second section of the Camín del Oriente, (The Eastern Route) takes you to the boundary of the borough of Llanes, where it meets the neighbouring borough of Cangas de Onís. Here you will travel over a historic route, the Roman roadway of Piedrafita, which amazingly, is well preserved. The next part of this section of the route is the village of Corao.

Taking up the route again, next to the water purifier, you travel upwards towards the village of Los Callejos, (Los Caleyos), as they call the village. It belongs to the parish of Santa Eulalia, and celebrates its fiesta on 8th of September. In the church façade, notice the Santina, This is the image of the Virgin of Covadonga. Los Callejos has traditionally been a region of roofers, a trade which was important in its time, but totally lost at the time of the great Spanish emigration to South America.

Passing by on the right of the church, you walk up towards the higher part of the village and later, then on to the water tank and the high part of the village. Here you can see the pathway we have just covered, which has been a traditional route for generations. From here you can see Peña Llabres and the sea on your left also you can see Rioseco, Vibaño y La Herrería, as well as a beautiful view of the villages of Los Callejos with the backdrop of the unmistakable sheer sided mountain, Naranjo de Bulnes.

Leaving the route on the left hand side, and crossing a meadow, we change direction towards the west and head in the direction of La Cabaña de Robléu, carrying on along some farm labourers' tracks which cross the fields. Like all good walkers, it is important to remember not to tread on the crop if we are doing the route in summer.

A small will, which has a type of gateway on the left, leads you to some meadows which slope downhill. You have to go down, keeping to the right hand side of the field until you arrive at Las Casinas. Behind these houses, you go out via a path which goes up to another will where there is a small group of old houses, Rabios. The views from here of the Picos de Europa are excellent. Later the pathway descends quite sharply towards a new villages here in the valley, that of Riocaliente

In this type of route you can't ignore a village like Riocaliente. Its traditional architecture here is well worth a look and you find it in the quarter of the hórreos". There are more than fifteen of these grain stores and bread stores, amongst these there is the great house of La Casona de

El Entregal, built in 1906 with Indiano money in the Classic style. One member of the village has a house and garden full of animals and reptiles in a sort of private zoo.

In the village next to the bridge the river Riensena our route turns right, coming out next to a cornfield. It is surprising to see a flock of ostriches in an area of land which has been fenced in. Far from running off afraid, they come up to you and try to peck at you. It is an unexpected but interesting initiative on this route to Covadonga.

After visiting these long necked birds, the route is less defined and goes close to the river for some distance, going in a zigzag path through a little wood. It goes up for a short distance and drops again to cross a stream from where it comes out into open land again, taking a wider path that soon takes you to Mestas, a name which indicates

the confluence of two rivers hereabouts, the Riensena and the Piedra Hita. For those walkers who would like to do the route in two days instead of the recommended three, Mestas is a good place to stop for the night, since it has a hotel. Next to the bridge which leads to the road, there is a place where you can try all sorts of Asturian delicacies, such as corn tortillas with minced meat, straight from the stove! Our route crosses the road and climbs upwards by means of a little path. This comes out by a field and a house (with the householder's permission) and gives access to the little village of Llumedián, situated in the lowest point of the Sierra de la Cubeta. The route goes down steeply from here across fields and goes directly to the little village of Telledo (Teyeu), where you get on the ancient and royal road of Piedrafita (or Piedrahita). This part of the road was, in the eighteenth century one of the most used roads, being the obligatory route from Llanes to Cangas de Onis and to Oviedo.

Gaspar Melchor de Jovellanos, makes a reference in his diary of 23rd September 1790 about his trip on this route from Llanes to Covadonga. Later he made the return trip on the 8th August 1791, which journey he referred to as the "Great Journey".

According to Sánchez-Albornoz, this roadway at Piedrafita was open in Roman times and formed part of the arterial route from Lucus Asturum to the territory of Cantabria via the Roman town of Cuesta Iguedo

(Táranu-Llenín). The roadway fell into disuse with the building of the road alongside the river Las Cabras, between Meré and Ortiguero, which was built in 1778.

The roadway we are following, between Llanes and Covadonga, (el Camín del Oriente, the Eastern Route), has been renovated for the walker and the pilgrim and is now in good condition.

Picking up where we left off, we take up the route by passing between the tightly packed houses of Telledo. We are going through the valley of the river Piedra Hita, along the wide pathway. The views from here are somewhat closed in, due to the steep sides of the Sierra de la Cubeta and the mountains of Hibeo. The path travels along flat for a while as it crosses a stream, which you will have to cross using the stepping stones.

Later, the route takes a turn south and picks up the Roman road again, at the joining of three valleys, a little bit further on. This area has some lovely pines which you see as you cross the paved area of the original road. Going up you reach a coll, which gives you time to take a breather before the pathway flattens out again, affording beautiful views of another inland valley and, in the background, northwards, the sides of Benzúa, under which you are walking at the moment.

We continue gaining height, going up the sides of the mountain. On the other side of the valley you will see another track, almost at the same height as the one we are on, which goes to the same place, the puerto (mountain pass) of Piedrafita. This is indicated on maps as the coll of la Vega del Puerto, a flat area of pasture land between mountain tops which goes from el Hibeo to La Galguerosa and Busto Vela. This area marks the boundary between the boroughs of Llanes and Cangas de Onis and, if we go up, we will see on the other side some of the houses of the little village of Cuerres.

As you go down from here the pathway is not very clear and you should look out for the red and white signs to guide you through this narrow valley. It doesn't take long from here to reach the source of the river Piedrafita and a cabin. Carry on along the newly restored roadway. Our route now goes down below the little village of Cuerres, in the parish of San Martín de Grazanes. Passing a short stretch where the river runs over the pathway and crossing it again via the stepping stones, just a bit further on, you come out on the road. This was, in times gone by, the Royal road, where horse drawn carriages

used to pass and where there is a hostelry, one of the three on this route, the hostelry at Cangas, at Cuerres and at Mestas.

From here there is a stretch of asphalt, some 2.2km in length which we are forced to use on this route, there being no other option. This stretch takes us up to Llenín, and so leads us to Cuerres and Tárano. The paved road/ Royal road used to go up here, avoiding difficult stretches along the precipitous sides of the mountains.

They say that the locals of Llenin used to go and work in the high pasture in their carts, but not without a little apprehension! On more than one occasion carts have tumbled down the mountain, taking their contents with them!

From Llenín, the view towards the central massif and the western part of the Picos de Europa is stonening. It also allows you to see the La Cruz de Prieta, which is where this route goes. In addition you can see the land of the region known as Los Gamundos, and the summits of the Cabezo Llorosos and El Jascal. There is a road which runs between Llenín and Tárano. However you will also see on leaving the village, a path on the left which avoids the asphalt on this brief stretch up towards Tárano.

You take the left hand path going out of the village along the wide track that, after the last few houses, goes slowly upwards, skirting el Cerro Iguedo. This summit is easy to recognise because of the aerals on the top of it. In this part of the route you can see a good number of mountains, known to the Asturians as el Pierzu de Beleño, la Mota Cetín, etc.,

When it is obvious that we are going downwill again, on the left you will be able to see the valley of the river Chico, where the road goes towards Labra (a village on the other side of the valley.) and la Collada de Igena in the general direction of Nueva de Llanes. Although this route seems at first sight a little long, you cover it quickly and with hardly any effort, reaching the village of Corao-Castillo (Corau-Castiellu.) The village has some lovely examples of rural architecture, such as the Grand House of the Soto-Labra family from 1763. One of the annexes is a chapel, although nowadays in ruins. Even so, the house can be enjoyed for what it is and it forms a marvellous group with the house of the Cuervo family from the sixteenth century, as well as those of the Cantera and Cueto families.

A short stretch of road takes you up to Corao, a village with a long history. You cross the road and pass in front of the Grand House of the Frassinelli family, where "The Illustrious German of Corao" used to live, D. Roberto Frassinelli y Burnitz, of whom more in the next section of the route.

The Grand House, from the seventeenth century, has a garden and a plot of land and was an experimental allotment which belonged to the botanist, Frassinelli. The land had many varieties of apples, medicinal plants and vegetables etc. It burned down and the majority of it was ruined at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Opposite the Grand House, take the route which leads towards the centre of the village, and continue on towards the parish church, with its bell tower. Here we finish this section of the route, next to the bar, Abamia, and the famous chestnut grove of Corao

You have now completed the longest part of the route, GR.105.2, so now, a little rest

