



a route of tunnels and bridges





*An experience
of contrasts*



“Camino de Hierro” is a pedestrian route running along a section of the railway that has been closed to trains; it combines the grandiosity of the most representative civil engineering of the 19th century with a rare natural beauty.

On this path you will discover the vertigo of bridges suspended over impossible gorges, the half-light of tunnels drilled in the living rock, and the extent of landscapes which form part of a unique ecosystem.

This daring proposal offers you something different, an experience of contrasts of light, perspectives, and sensations.

In short this is a journey of stone, iron, and water.

☐ *Left-hand page: El Lugar Bridge.*

☐ *ght-hand page: Valiente Bridge.*





the route

“Camino de Hierro” is located in the north-west corner of the province of Salamanca in the district of Abadengo, in the heart of the natural park of Arribes del Duero and bordering on Portugal.

The former station of La Fregeneda in the landscape of Valdenoguera is the starting point for the Iron Road. Here there is a car park and a space for visitor reception. The route, which runs alongside the railway line, starts from here.

At the beginning and scarcely 500 metres from the station we go through tunnel number 1, which is the longest on the route with a length of over 1.5 km. When you come out of it a series of tunnels and bridges begin which mark out the way on a gentle downward slope.

The itinerary runs alongside impressive crags and the course of the River Agueda until it runs into the Duero at the only river quay of Castilla y León.

Once you get there a means of transport will take you back to the starting point: consult the timetable.



📍 Poyo Valiente Bridge. 📍 International Bridge. 📍 Entrance to tunnel number 5.

information of interest

HOW TO GET THERE:

- From Salamanca: the C-517 road via Vitigudino and Lumbrales.
- From Ciudad Rodrigo: the SA-324 and C-517 roads from Lumbrales.
- From Barca D'Alva (Portugal): the N-221 road (Portugal) and the CL 517 road (Spain).

DISTANCE:

- “Camino de Hierro”: Station of La Fregeneda - Vega Terrón Quay: 17 km (one way).
- Short route: Station of La Fregeneda - Tunnel number 3 (alternative path) - Station: 8 km there and back.

DURATION:

- “Camino de Hierro”: 6 hours approx.
- Short route: 3.5 hours approx.

DIFFICULTY:

Average. Descending path alongside the railway track.

RECOMMENDED SEASONS:

Spring and autumn.

TAKE CARE:

People who suffer from vertigo.

RETURN TRANSPORT:

A means of transport will take you back from the Vega Terrón Quay to the Station of La Fregeneda (included in the price of the ticket).

STARTING POINT:

The Station of La Fregeneda is the compulsory starting point for the route

GPS coordinates:
40.989276, -6.837019
40°59'22.0"N 6°50'14.6" W





*over a
century of
history*

The “Camino de Hierro” route consists of the 17 final kilometres of the old railway line from La Fuente de San Esteban to Barca d’Alva. It was known as the Duero Line and was built between 1883 and 1887 to facilitate the connection between Salamanca and Oporto.

Over 2,000 workers took part in the operation which was a tough challenge, mainly on this final section as a result of the technical solutions which had to be implemented in order to overcome the rugged relief of the area.

The 20 tunnels and 10 metallic bridges stand out and some of the latter are of the Eiffel school; together with other heritage elements they led to the declaration of this great work of civil engineering as an Asset of Cultural Interest in the year 2000.



▣ El Lugar Bridge. ▣ Coming out of tunnel number 20. Venancio Gombau archives, Salamanca Town Council.
▣ El Lugar Bridge. Venancio Gombau archives, Salamanca Town Council.



the personalities of the story

The main promoters of the construction of this railway line were the Syndicate of the Banks of Oporto created by the Portuguese government and the Association of Traders of the same city. Both obtained the necessary financing for the project. It was Mr Henry Burnay and Mr Ricardo Pinto da Costa who formed the Rail Company of Salamanca to the Portuguese border and took charge of the construction of the line and its initial exploitation.

The determination of Ricardo Pinto da Costa in the implementing of this project led to his being named Count of Lumbrales. This town is the location of the “Territorio Vetón” Visitors’ Reception Centre of in the house which bears his name and shows his importance in the construction of this magnificent work of engineering.

Another champion of the cause was the member of the Spanish Cortes for the Vitigudino district and resident of Hinojosa de Duero, Mr Adolfo Galante.

A special mention is also due to the workers who took part in the construction of this impossible route. They were the major executors of the project, with over two thousand railway labourers taking part on some construction stages.



▣ House of the Count of Lumbrales. ▣ Ricardo Pinto da Costa and his wife Maria Francisca Bartol.



a major work of engineering

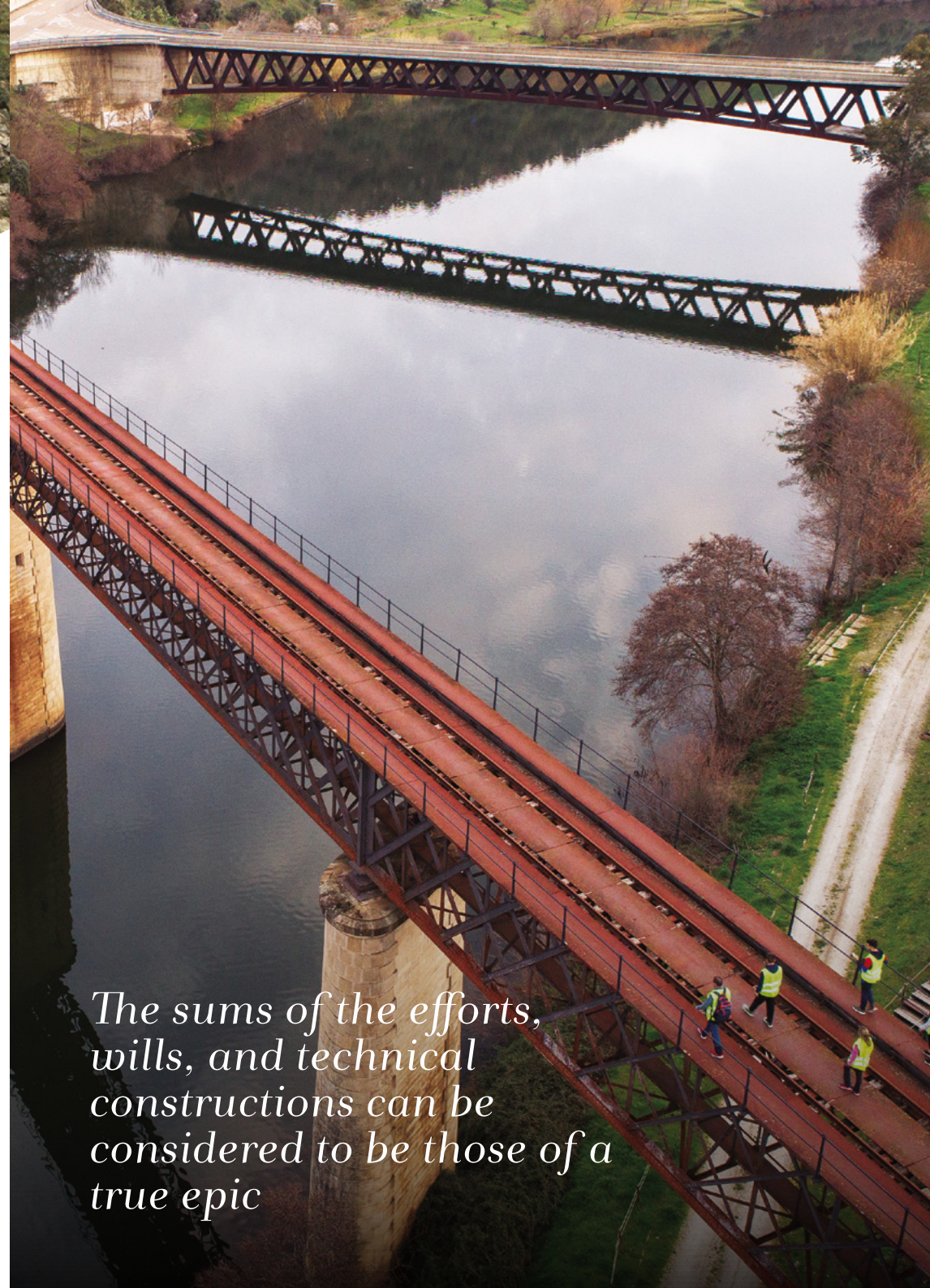
The spectacular nature and the value of this industrial treasure lies mainly in the technical solutions which had to be implemented in order to adapt the route of the railway to the rugged relief of Las Arribes del Duero, in particular on the 17 km from the station of La Fregeneda to the Portuguese border which today make up the hiking route.

This infrastructure has also been called “the imposible Camino de Hierro” for two reasons: the technical difficulties of the route which meant that the geometric restrictions of the track had to be compatible with the major relief obstacles, and the need for major economic resources to meet the huge investments.

The complex and risky undertaking became a reality at a time of economic shortages and poorly developed technology. The enormous difficulties of the rugged and broken terrain were overcome by a succession of bridges and tunnels which are true works of art. These unique constructions are part of the legacy of the industrial heritage of the late 19th century.



📍 Bridge over the Valiente Stream. 📍 Coming out of tunnels 6 and 7. 📍 Right-hand page: Bridges over the Agueda River.



*The sums of the efforts,
wills, and technical
constructions can be
considered to be those of a
true epic*



the tunnels and bridges

The passage through the 20 tunnels excavated in this last section of the railway that can be explored today is no less spectacular. They have a combined length of over 4 km. Tunnel number one, which was built to pass the La Fregeneda road, stands out with its length of 1.5 km together with tunnel number 3 which is U-shaped.

The type section of the tunnels consists of a vault in the form of a round arch and straight walls covered with masonry.

The ten bridges which mark the route have the main girders built in the form of diagonal struts. Once the stonework, braces, and piles were executed the frame was assembled in sections. They were designed and manufactured in Belgium and France; indeed the metallic parts were sent piece by piece. There was an exception to this building process in that the international bridge over the River Agueda was designed by Portuguese engineers; the metallic structure was brought up the River Duero.



📍 Tunnel number 6. 📍 Tunnel 6 Poyo Valiente. 📍 Las Almas Bridge.



the natural surroundings

The “Camino de Hierro” is located in the Arribes del Duero nature reserve which is an exceptional environmental enclave; it was declared a Biosphere Reserve in 2015. The River Duero and its tributaries have eroded impressive river canyons under Mediterranean climate conditions.

A large part of this route runs parallel to the embedded course of the River Agueda, a rugged landscape of crags and rocky places which is the habitat of birds of prey such as golden and Bonelli’s eagles and Egyptian and griffon vultures.

Tunnel 3 is another environmental asset as it is here that some 12,000 bats roost and breed; this is one of the most important colonies in the Iberian Peninsula. During the breeding season in early summer this tunnel is closed, although an alternative path allows the visitor to continue the walk.

📍 Duero Canyon. 📍 Bats. 📍 Griffon vulture.



tickets only on the Internet

Access to the route is only possible
by acquiring tickets from the website
www.caminodehierro.es

On this website you will find
practical information on the visiting
options and the transport back to
the station of La Fregeneda.

Don't forget to consult it so you can
plan your trip and the conditions of
access.

Groups should consult the
conditions.

tourist information

LA FREGENEDA

Plaza de España, 1.
923 521 199
www.lafregeneda-ayto.es

Vega Terrón Visitors' Centre Vega Terrón Quay

HINOJOSA DE DUERO

c/ La Laguna, 32
923 515 003
www.hinojosadeduero.es

LUMBRALES TERRITORIO VETÓN (ROUTE OF HILL-FORTS AND BOAR STONE STATUES) VISITORS' RECEPTION CENTRE

Casa del Conde
C/ Ricardo Pinto da Costa, 1.
923 512 270
www.salamancaterritorioveton.com

SAN FELICES DE LOS GALLEGOS

Plaza de España, 12.
923 521 517
www.sanfelicesdelosgallegos.es

SOBRADILLO CASA DEL PARQUE ARRIBES DEL DUERO

Torreón de Sobradillo
Plaza del Castillo, 58. Sobradillo
923 522 048
www.patrimoniounatural.org

ARRIBES WINE ROUTE www.rutadelvinoarribes.com

SALAMANCA PROVINCIAL TOURIST OFFICE www.salamancaemocion.es

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www.clubviajeroarribesdelduero.es

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CAMINO
DE HIERRO
La Fregeneda
Vitigudino
Lumbrales
Salamanca
Ciudad Rodrigo

PORTUGAL

Muelle fluvial de
Vega de Terrón



Las Almas
Bridge

Agueda River

Los Poyos
Bridge

Los Riscos
Bridge

Los Poyos
Bridge

Puente del
Lugar

La Fregeneda

Fregeneda
train station

Puente del
Lugar

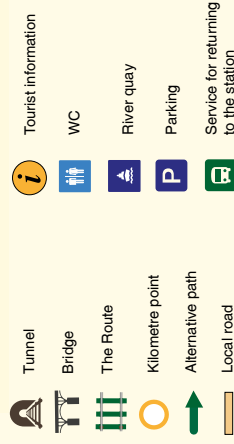
PORTUGAL

Pingallo Bridge



We advise you to take:

- 1 Plenty of water
- 2 Sun protection cream
- 3 A hat or cap
- 4 Some form of food
- 5 Clothes and footwear suitable for hiking
- 6 A reflective safety vest and also a torch



MIDE (Excursion Information Method)

Camino de Hierro

Timetable	6h	3 to 5	Severity of the environment
Accumulated ascent	0 m	1	Orientation in the itinerary
Accumulated descent	330 m	3	Difficulty of access
Horizontal distance	17,0 km	3	Amount of effort needed
Route type	Crossing		

All-year-round conditions; estimated times according to the MIDE criterion, without stops.



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Diputación
de Salamanca

www.caminodehierro.es