



01 Orihuela - Murcia: along the Banks of the River Segura

Distance: 24 km

Walking time: 6 hours

Cycling time: 2 hours 30 minutes

It's a six-hour walk from Orihuela to Murcia, or **24 kilometres** to be more precise, and in general this first stage of the **Camino de Levante is one which is known to give particular pleasure to both pilgrims and other walkers.** If you're not in a hurry to reach the City of the Cross, take the time to stray off the main route and be surprised by the wealth of churches, sanctuaries and museums, all of them home to a surprising array of relics within their walls.

Most pilgrims complete the stage in one day, **starting in Orihuela**, close to the Catedral del Salvador in an area with a large number of religious buildings, ideal for a spiritual journey and one of self-discovery. Those with time to spare will prefer to spend around 8 hours along the route, stopping at the Iglesia de las Santas Justa y Rufina, the archaeological museum and the house which was lived in by the great poet Miguel Hernández, all of them in the centre of Orihuela (which is in the province of Alicante).

From here signposts take you **across country into the Region of Murcia**, where the route follows the River Segura. This is one of the most vital features of the region, and the Tajo-Segura water supply canal can be seen shortly after passing Beniel. One of the last outlying districts before reaching the city of Murcia is El Raal, a quiet place which has nowadays become a dormitory town outside the regional capital.

Throughout this stage, keep your camera close at hand, especially if you are completing the Camino de Levante at **Easter or Christmas or during September**, when the Moors and Christians festival is held. Unless you have witnessed these annual fiestas, the water wheels of the "huerta" farmland and the Living Nativity Scene of El Raal, you can't really say you have seen Murcia, the city where the stage ends!