



MIDE SL - MU 21

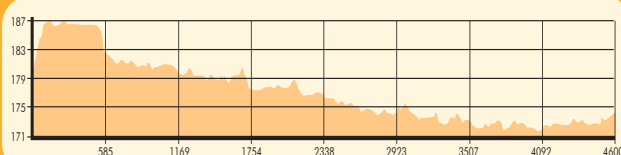
	MEDIO	2	There is more than one risk factor.
	ITINERARIO	2	Paths or signage indicating continuity.
	DESPLAZAMIENTO	2	March by lanes of the orchard and some path next to the acequias.
	ESFUERZO	1	More than 1 hour and a half of effective march.

TECHNICAL DATA

-  **INICIO / FINAL:** Church Garden
-  **DISTANCE:** 4,600 km.
-  **APPROXIMATE DURATION:** 1h y 30 min, aprox.
-  **MINIMUM HEIGHT:** 35 m.
-  **ACCUMULATED DROP:** 10 m.
-  **MAPPING:** Mapa de Orihuela. Escala 1:25.000 - IGN



PERFIL SL - MU 21



SEÑALIZACIÓN DEL SENDERO

-  Continuidad del sendero
-  Cambio de dirección
-  Dirección equivocada



Ayuntamiento de Murcia



Federación de Montañismo
Región de Murcia

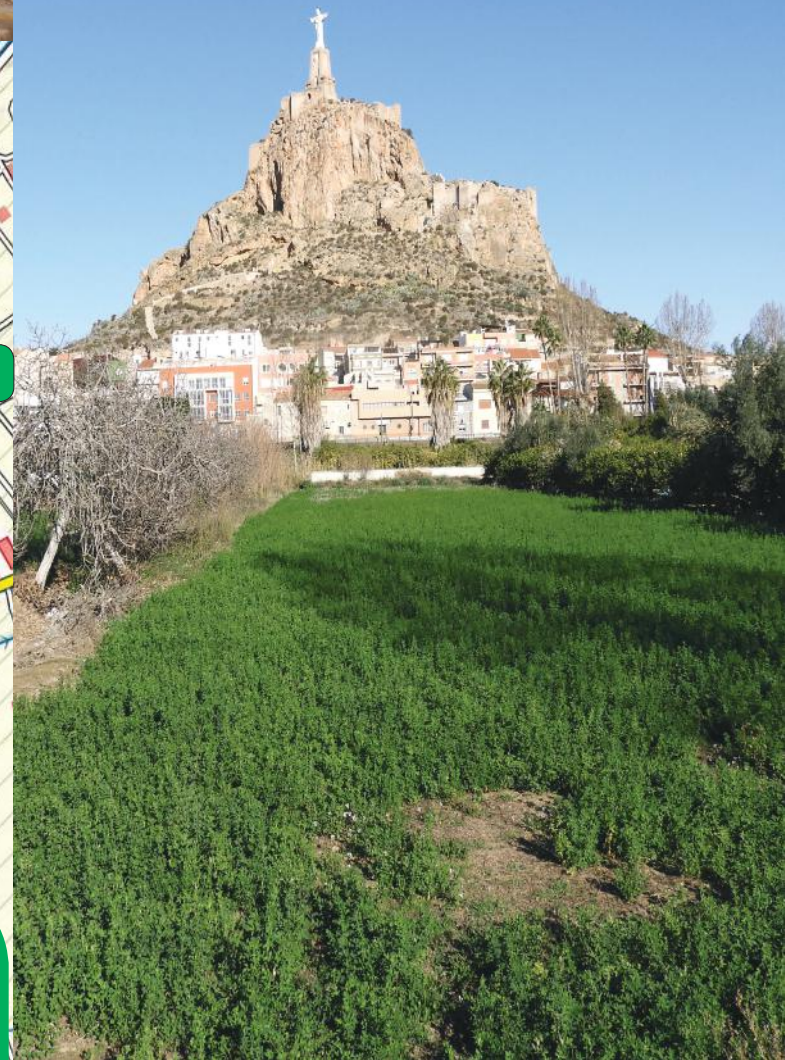
Realización técnica:



SL - MU 21



Path of Huerta de Monteagudo





Live the huerta...

This circular walk takes us through the western area of the Huerta de Murcia, the historical market gardening lands surrounding the city, through the rural district of Monteagudo. Along our way we shall find out how the irrigation system of the Huerta is managed, learn the names of the irrigation and drainage channels which crisscross the area, recognize the most frequent crops depending on the time of year, discover how in

some parts farming methods have evolved and become familiar with the values associated with the Huerta de Murcia as far as nature, culture and ethnography are concerned.

Our route commences near the Azarbe de Monteagudo, an irrigation channel, and carries on towards the spring known as the Fuente de San José, at La Cueva, part of the rural district of Monteagudo. From there we walk among orange and lemon trees as far as another channel, the Azarbe del Norte, where we have a fine view of the allotment-type plots, and then go on where you will probably be surprised to learn how an “acequia” stems from an “azarbe”, as for the last kilometer we follow the Acequia de Casteliiche, enjoying the real typical feeling of life in the Huerta as we go along through surroundings which evoke past times in the Huerta. All the way we see the rocky Cerro de Monteagudo presiding over the countryside in this little-known and peaceful part of the Huerta.

Traditional irrigation network



While the “acequias” branch out and narrow down on their way to carry the water to the fields, the azarbes flow into each other and increase in size as they leave the irrigated plots. There are also the escorredores, little channels running alongside the plots, to carry off surplus water which filters down through the earth after irrigation, stopping the ground from becoming water-logged. Several escorredores can be linked up to form “azarbetas”, and these in turn become landronas, azarbes or meranchos.

Lastly several azarbes together form an Azarbe

Mayor: the Azarbe Mayor del Norte, on the north bank of the river, and on the other, the Azarbe de Beniel, which flows on as far as the Orihuela rural district.

“Azarbes” are the drainage channels of the Huerta: they carry off the water left over from irrigation and flooding and take it downstream to water other fields or channel it back into the river. In this way they play an essential rôle: they act as a drainage system in case of flooding.

El Partidor de la Cueva: the starting-point of two irrigation channels

In the Huerta, the water which is used for irrigation, which flows down the acquias, is known as “aguas vivas” or living water, and what is collected up after irrigation and flows down the azarbes is known as “aguas muertas” or dead water.

Well, here is one of the cases where the dead water turns into living water as the Azarbe de Monteagudo is divided into two acequias, the Brazal Alto de la Cueva, to the left and the Brazal Bajo, to the right.

The strong boards which you can see here are used to share the water into either acequia according to the different shifts: from Monday to Thursday until 2pm for the Brazal Alto and from Thursday until Sunday for the Brazal Bajo. If the boards were not used all the water would flow into the Brazal Bajo due to gravity.

The foreman of the Azarbón and of these two acequias makes sure that the flow and the boards work properly and that turns are taken in proper order. Did you know that further on the Brazal Bajo can send water into the Azarbe Mayor? And so if there is too much water around because of flooding, the amount of water in the river bed can be reduced.



Azarbe del Meranchín

You are now by the Azarbe del Meranchín. The water which flows down this merancho comes from the end of the Acequia Aljada, which we shall be seeing later, and from different landronas which collect surplus water from fields in the area. The Huerta, besides being a highly productive agricultural system, also holds different valuable aspects of nature. This is a good moment to have a look at some of them.



Many trees associated with life in the Huerta

Alongside vegetables for the market, there are many other types of plants in the Huerta. On the banks of the better kept acequias trees such as poplars, willows, elderberries, ashes and elms grow naturally together with reeds, bulrushes and horsetail. Near the houses and on the edges of the fields which are kept in the traditional way we find pomegranates, pear, mulberry, fig and medlar trees, and even walnuts trees, called nogueras in the Huerta.

There are other traditional types of fruit trees, too, some of them on the verge of extinction, such as the nispolero, the dwarf pear or the blood orange. And, as you will be able to see when you look towards the horizon, date palms stand out, a real emblem of the identity of the landscape of the Huerta.

Fuente de San José:

This quiet corner used to be a bustling place where neighbours of all ages, especially the women, met together. Why? because of the spring.

A spring with lots of clean, cool water
People from La Cueva and the nearby hamlet of Las Lumbreras gathered here for the plentiful cool, clean water which bubbled up at this spring. They say that you could fill your water-pot in just three seconds!

A place to wash your clothes and chat

The busiest time was on a wash-day. As you can see, there were two wash-houses. In one the women from Las Lumbreras did their washing and in the other the women from La Cueva.



This was because when you had walked along laden down with your basket full of dirty clothes, your bowl and soap, you were ready to lay down your burden and you did so at the first wash-house you reached. They would help each other to deal with the heavy wet sheets, standing one on either side of the tank and twisting them to squeeze out the water.

They brought their own washing-lines along with them, too, and tied them to the trees to hang the clothes on. Meanwhile the children ran about looking for frogs and crawfish.

Beside working, they made time for joking, songs and chitchat at a time when women did not have much chance to go out and have fun.