

Via Verde Ojos Negros
once carried iron ore to
the coast by rail



Three days in Spain

Where: Spain
Who: Colin Farnworth
When: September 2025

When I read an account in Travellers' tales about riding C2C from Valencia to Santander on Spain's vías verdes, I thought: "I could do that!" I persuaded my friend Nigel to join me and booked the plane and ferry tickets. But then life threw me a curve ball: aged 69, I became a carer. The retiree's freedom to disappear on the bike was gone.

Nigel understood. He didn't fuss about the new trekking bike he'd bought for the trip, nor that our flights to Valencia were non-refundable. But it nagged at us both. So we decided to book return flights and to plan an adventure that I had time for: we would still ride C2C but both coasts would be the Med. By flying in and out of Valencia, we could cycle the Via Verde Ojos Negros, a greenway that once carried iron ore from

the hills to the coast by rail.

Our ride would start in Teruel, which has a train station but, at that time, no train. The bus replacement wouldn't take bikes. The local bus company would if we paid the driver cash. Our bagged bikes went in the luggage hold. Three uphill hours later we were on our way.

In three days of cycling, we almost had the path to ourselves. It was downhill most of the way and easy riding. The surface varies between smooth tarmac and rough gravel, so we were glad of our wide tyres. On many occasions we found our way blocked and signs telling us to go no further. We ignored all of these and always found a way through. We were glad of the time to divert to hostleries along the way, and to be able to return to the Hotel Olympia where our bike boxes were waiting.

Back in Bristol we could reflect on all the things that could have gone wrong but didn't. We had grabbed an adventure!

On home ground

Where: Aberdeenshire & Moray
Who: Vivienne Hutchings
When: May 2025

With a forecast of settled weather, a two-day window of opportunity and a bike space available on the train, I set off for a 60-mile ride around Aberdeenshire and Moray. I'd visit some family and places with childhood memories.

I left Huntly at midday and pootled along quiet roads through forest and moorland, by rivers renowned for fishing, and past established estates known for their wildlife and outdoor pursuits. I camped just outside Dufftown at a peaceful campsite.

The next day I followed country roads through the Moray villages of Newmill, Knock and Rothiemay. I enjoyed the undulating agricultural landscape around the high point of Knock Hill, before crossing back into Aberdeenshire for the last leg of my journey.

Now that I'm older, I realise I can no longer cover as much ground. But I was pleased to be out exploring, thankful for what I can still achieve.



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