



Costa Blanca



Europes best winter sun rock climbing venue

Self-catering
Ensuite rooms
Bunks & camping
info@theorangehouse.net

0044 1752 690292

www.theorangehouse.net

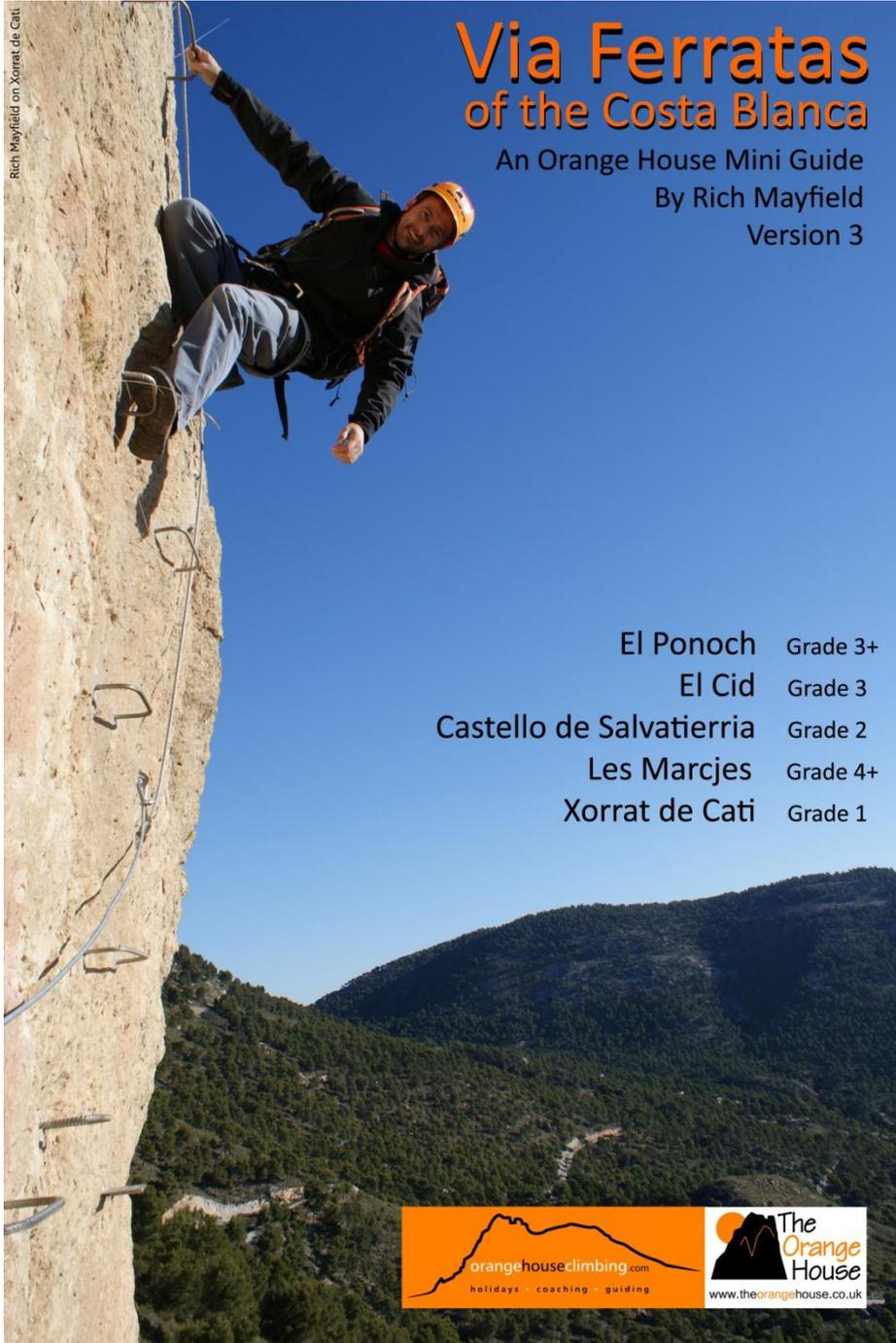


www.theorangehouse.co.uk

Rich Mayfield on Xorrat de Cati

Via Ferratas of the Costa Blanca

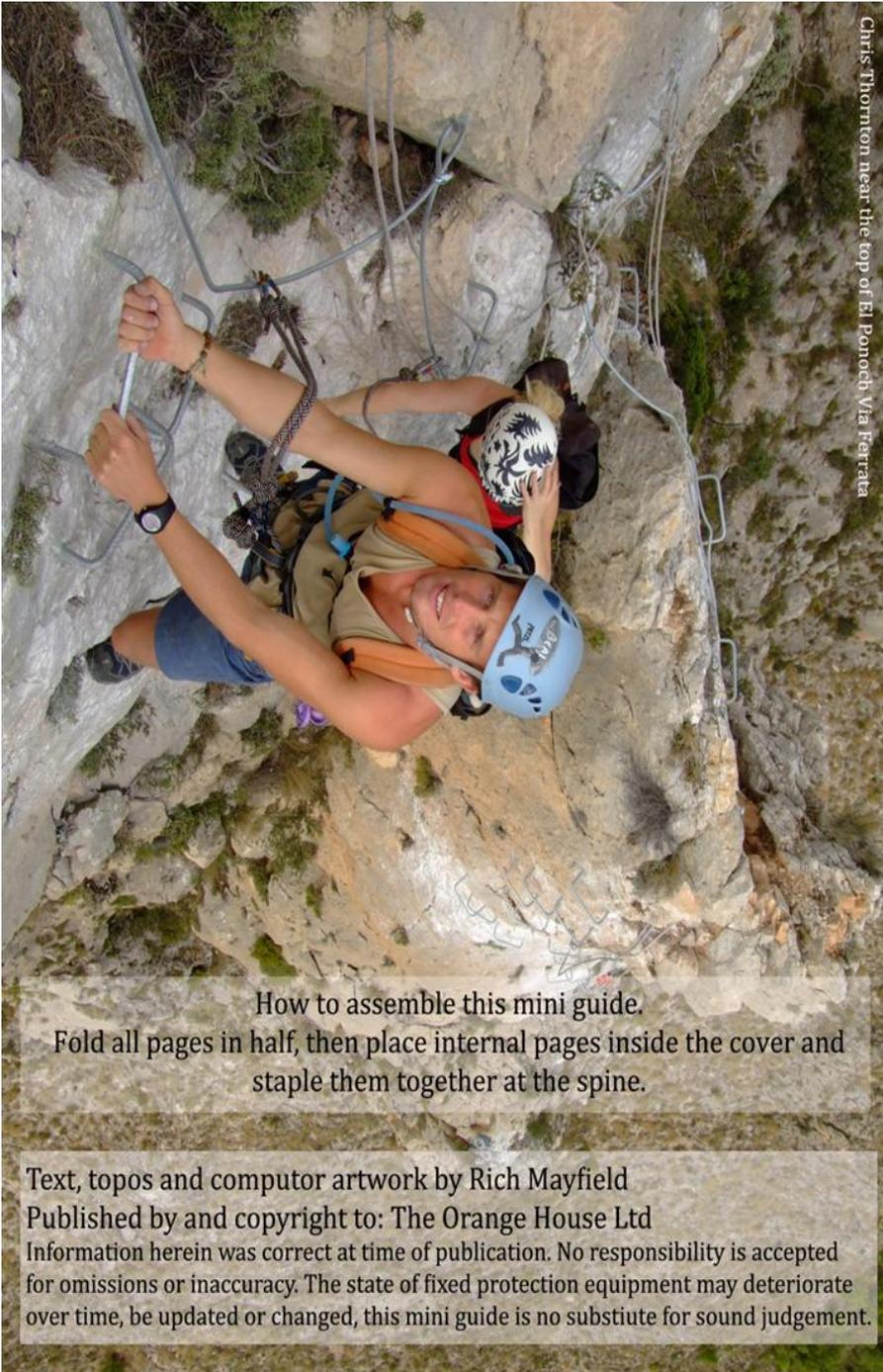
An Orange House Mini Guide
By Rich Mayfield
Version 3



- El Ponoch Grade 3+
- El Cid Grade 3
- Castello de Salvatierra Grade 2
- Les Marcjes Grade 4+
- Xorrat de Cati Grade 1



www.theorangehouse.co.uk



Chris Thornton near the top of El Panocho Via Ferrata

Via Ferratas of the Costa Blanca

What is a Via Ferrata?

A **via ferrata** is Italian for Iron Road (in German *Klettersteig*). A mountain route which is equipped with fixed cables, staples, ladders, and bridges. The use of these allows otherwise isolated routes to be joined to create longer routes which are accessible to people with a wide range of climbing abilities. Walkers and climbers can follow via ferrata without needing to use their own ropes and belays, and without the risks associated with unprotected scrambling and climbing. These via ferratas have been equipped by a number of organizations as tourist attractions.

What equipment do I need?

All the via ferratas described here require the use of a Harness and a Kinetic Impact Shock Absorber (KISA). In the event of a fall this allows the Fall Factors to be within tolerances of your equipment and body. It is highly dangerous to use slings. Using slings may result in equipment failure, personal injury or death.

Helmets are highly recommended, these are large limestone cliffs with some degree of looseness, other parties above you, or large wild animals like goats and wild boar could dislodge rocks. Approach shoes or light weight walking boots are fine.

Be aware that these routes travel through the mountain environment. On a fine day sun screen and sun glasses are a necessity, but if the weather turns bad; warm and water-pooof clothing will be needed. It is not uncommon to have snow on the tops of the higher mountains in the winter. Thunder storms in August to October are very common and you are attached to a huge lightening rod! Pay particular attention to the weather forecast, you have been warned!

This link offers advice but if you are unsure consult a guide:

www.petzl.com/files/all/en/activities/sport/tech-tips-via-ferrata.pdf

Facebook here for more info and pictures

<http://www.facebook.com/home.php?#!/profile.php?id=100001200374713>

The Orange House hires KISA & helmets or by prior arrangement guiding/instruction to enquire: sam@theorangehouse.co.uk

How to assemble this mini guide.

Fold all pages in half, then place internal pages inside the cover and staple them together at the spine.

Text, topos and computer artwork by Rich Mayfield
Published by and copyright to: The Orange House Ltd
Information herein was correct at time of publication. No responsibility is accepted for omissions or inaccuracy. The state of fixed protection equipment may deteriorate over time, be updated or changed, this mini guide is no substitute for sound judgement.



El Ponoch. Grade 3+ (extension 5)

Getting there. 15 minutes from the Orange House.

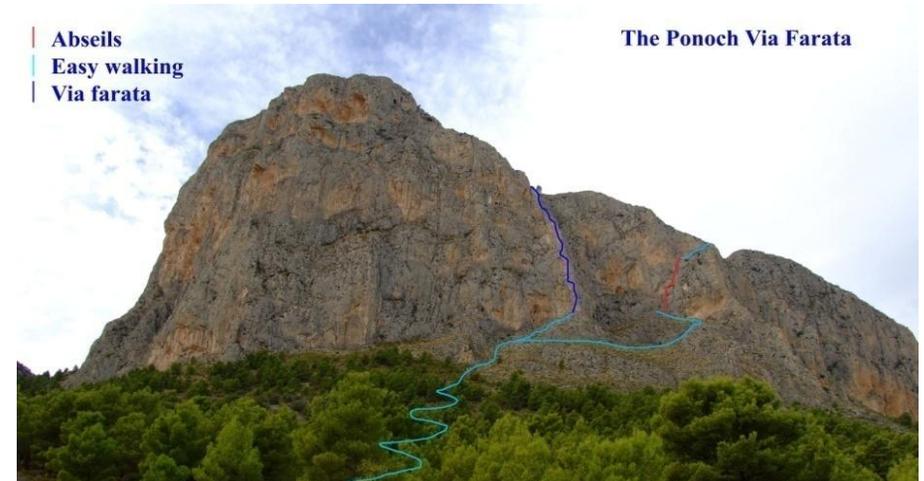
Situated on the huge Ponoch above the Village of La Nucia, 15 minutes drive from The Orange House and Benidorm. This is a very well equipped route providing a steep and exposed climb on good glued in metal steps, protected by a plastic coated wire. Abseil descent, or continue via scrambling to the summit and walk back to The Orange House.

From the House. Head down the CV767 to the Goat roundabout, turn left, go straight over 4 more roundabouts turning left at the fifth onto the CV70.

Or from the A7. Take the Benidorm junction onto the N332 South, take the first exit onto the CV70.

Via Ferrata Grades

- Grade 1 Easy:** Walking with a cable for protection on exposed sections, not steep or sustained may be horizontal. **Descent:** Easy walk off. Low level with easy access from top and bottom.
- Grade 2 Moderate:** Cable for protection with some rungs for hands and feet, easy angled rock with regular large ledges for rests. **Descent:** May have steep or exposed walk off. Easy access to the bottom.
- Grade 3 Difficult:** Cable for protection with long sections of steep rock with rungs for hands and feet, on easier sections use of rock climbing holds maybe required. **Descent:** May have Via Ferrata sections or easy scrambling, may require use of rope. Remote access at top.
- Grade 4 Very Difficult:** Cable for protection with long and sustain sections of vertical climbing, short sections of over-hanging rock. Use of rock climbing holds on vertical ground between rungs. Difficult and long reaches and moves between rungs. Sustained sections of over-hanging rock. **Descent:** May have via ferratas, abseiling or exposed scrambling. Likely to be above 1000m altitude. Remote access top and bottom.
- Grade 5 Severe:** Cable for protection, with very sustained sections of steep and over-hanging rock with little or no possibility of resting, on easier sections few rungs rock climbing skills will be required. May require the use of rope on scrambling section where no cable is installed. **Descent:** May have multi-pitch abseiling, via ferratas & scrambling. Remote geographically isolated by cliffs at top or bottom. Likely to be above 1000m altitude.



Then stay on the CV70 for 10km first heading to La Nucia then Guadalest until you reach yet another roundabout sign posted for an urbanization called Polop Paradis take this junction. At the top of the hill turn left and keep going until you reach a large green building, car park and helipad.

Walking in 20 minutes.

From the green building take the path crossing the dry river bed on the right. Follow the well marked path up-hill to the base of the Via Ferrata.

The Via Ferrata 250m 40 to 50 minutes.

Steep at first and eases off after 30m, it does not get any harder than this. The steep sections are short with good rest afterwards. Follow the wire until it finishes. Move right and either scramble over the scree or scramble up a short wire section to the path.

Descent 40 to 50 minutes.

At the top of the VF follow the obvious path to the right dropping down with three short VF sections, at the third section the abseils start. Abseil 25m to a ledge big enough for 4 or 5 people. Abseil 32m to the floor. This can be done on a 60m rope if you're heavy or swing to the left and scramble the last few metres. Both pitches can be easily done together with two 60m ropes. Retrace your steps back to the car.



The start of Ponoch

Half way up on the pinnacles

Starting the abseils

Variation one. Scramble to the top of the Ponoch cliff. 1 hour more & Grade 5

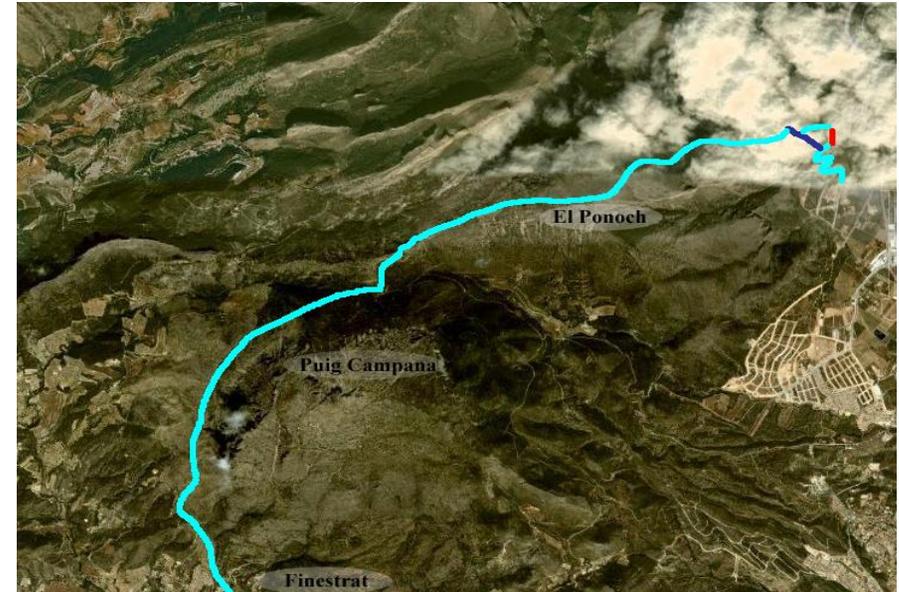
From the top of the VF walk along the path 20m to a junction that leads uphill and back towards the ridge. 8m scramble onto the ridge. 30m scramble up the left hand side of the ridge to some trees. 20m scramble behind the trees to a corner and climb this to tree belays on the ridge edge. 12m scramble up and left to a tricky short crack and then ledges leading leftwards. 25m move leftwards along the ledges and scramble up easy but loose rock to a small amphitheatre. 15m exit the amphitheatre on the right via a steep but short corner at V Diff (sport grade 3) belay up and left. Easy walking now leads up the hill and an obvious amphitheatre that appears down to the right.

Descent 30 minutes.

Enter the amphitheatre near its top and follow the path down to trees and double bolt rings. 35m abseil, can be done on a 60m rope by down climbing the last few metres. Follow the scree run back to the top of the VF, and descend the normal route.

Variation two. Walk back to Finestrat 3-5 hours:

From the top of Variation One walk up hill until the top of the mountain. Follow the ridge passing two large re-entrances on the left to the summit of El Ponoch. This is mostly over very sharp limestone pavements with some large holes around, so take your time and watch out for your ankles. Descent from the summit on a reasonable path back towards the Northern slopes of Puig Campana.



At the T-junction in the path turn left and descend a short (20m) rocky section. At the large flat Col and sign post head south on a good path, passing the tin mountain refuge on the right. The path contours dropping slightly for 3km until it reaches a tarmac road. Follow this downhill towards Finestrat Village. Go straight over at the cross roads in the village, turning left downhill passing the Casa de Cultura on the left. At the roundabout at the bottom of the hill go straight over and The Orange House is on your right.

El Cid Grade 3

The first Via ferrata on the Costa and one of the longest days, it meanders up the massive face of Cid taking the line of least resistance.

Getting there. 60 minutes from the Orange House.

Join the A7 towards Alicante. Go through the toll and continue along the A7 until the junction with the A31 to Madrid. Leave the A31 at Petrer take the second exit on the roundabout under the A31. The "Cami" (small rural road) runs along the A31 for a few hundred metres before a sharp right turn towards to hills. Stay on this road for 2.7km. Turn off the road onto a dirt track, (not too bad for hire cars) and follow this to a chain, park here. This chain is new it was possible to drive along the dirt road to the very start.

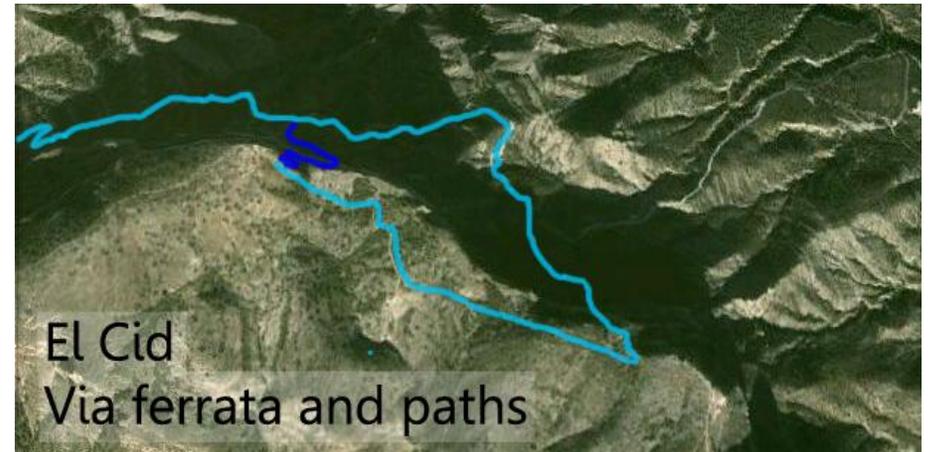


Walking in 45 minutes.

Walk up the road for about 2km until the Via Ferrata appears on the right. An insitu rope marks the start.

The Via Ferrata 400m. 1-2 hours.

Follow the very obvious path with short VF sections here and there. Until a steep but short section appears as the cliff starts to steepen. The route now traverses left for quite some way to a major right to left raising fault line. Follow this fault line with some interesting moves to grassy ledges. It now meanders through some caves with some loose rock, take care! The last section is the most exposed, traverse off to the left and the top. Note: there is talk of a variant finish here, but at time of writing is not installed. At the plaque the via ferrata finishes, it is a short walk to the summit on the right.



Descent 90 minutes.

Turn left at the top and walk down hill until the path becomes a very rough dirt road. Follow this for 1.2km, until it's possible to break off to the left on a good but narrow path. This then traverses back under the cliffs and slowly drops onto the dirt road you have parked on.



Note. This is the oldest VF on the Costa Blanca so care should be taken as some of the equipment is getting old. Some sections also pass through areas of loose rock, so particular care should be taken by large groups who might be spread out over a wider area, or other groups below you.

Climbers nearing the top of El Cid



The first bridge of Castello de Salvatierra



Castello de Salvatierra Grade 2

A short but really interesting trip with two wire bridges, not sustained with large ledges to rest. A good introduction to via ferrata.

Getting there, 1hr 20 minutes from the Orange house.

Join the A7 towards Alicante. Go through the toll and continue along the A7 until the junction with the A31 to Madrid. Take the second Junction for Villena, at the end of the slip road; take the left onto the CV799 under the A31. Take the sharp right at the roundabout just after the flyover. Straight over the next round about keeping right, after 150m take the left next to a large concrete wall, up the hill for 50m and park in the trees over-looking the village.



Walk in 15 minutes.

Walk along the fenced in area on a good path until you come to a large sign post pointing uphill to the VF. Go to a col at the top of the hill. A VF leads off to the left. This is really just for confidence and to show you the way.

The Via Farrata 55m 25 minutes.

Ascend the right hand pillar, near the top of this a wire bridge leads left onto the next pillar, follow this to the top. This is the most interesting VF on the Costa but it is also the shortest which is a shame. This could be combined with a half days climbing at Sax or Reconco.



Castello de Salvatierra

Variation one.

Or, step down the VF wire to the right go down and around the corner to another VF and climb this finishing at the bridge on the above VF, this is slightly steeper.

Decsent Three options.

One: Descend one of the VF and retrace your steps. 35 minutes

Two: Abseil with a 60m rope through the gully between the two pinnacles. Not really worthwhile.

Three: Walk up the ridge to the summit, turning left at the top between the telecommunications towers, walk down hill on a concrete road for 150m. Where a good path leads along the top of the steep ground on the left, until a junction and sign post, take the first left which gradually contours back down the hill to the car park. 40 minutes.



Les Marcjes Grade 4+

An interesting route with a bridge to start, short but with some very difficult moves on the middle section, perhaps the hardest on the Costa

Getting there. 1 hour 15 minutes from the Orange House.

Join the A7 towards Valencia. Take the exit posted for Tavernes, Xeresa and Xeraco at junction 60. Join the N332 towards Tavernes, direction Valencia. Drive through Xeraco after 8km take the turn off onto the CV50 to Tavernes de la Valldigna. Go under the motor way and over the first round about. At the next round about on the out skirts of town take the second exit on a small metaled road signed Cami de la Dula. Immediately after a super-market on the right, turn right and park at the top of the hill. It is possible to park a few hundred metres closer, but this is a maze of one way streets.



Walk in 45 minutes

Follow the road towards town for one hundred metres to a sharp left in the road; go straight on up some long steps to a wide cobbled stone path which runs along the top of the town. Large crash barriers and storm drains protect the town from storms. After 200m the cobbles finish, continue for a further 1km, where the path narrows on the edge of town, carry on in the same direction passing a signed path on the right to Zona de Escalada PRV40, this is where the descent joins the approach path. Continue on the path on the PRV40 towards Senda Dels Amoladors which turns right and zig-zags up a barranco, after 350m on a sharp right bend, the Via ferrata starts at a wire bridge.

The Via Ferrata 1 hour 15minutes 120m

Five metres off the bend twin bolts are located, either solo down climb 6 metres to the wire bridge (scary) or top rope/abseil. Cross the bridge, traverse right and climb spaced plastic coated rungs until the ground becomes less steep and the cable finishes at 30 metres. Follow the path to the base of the large square cliff, heading right and up slightly. The next VF section starts from a small cave with a wooden plaque tucked away in some bushes. Hard and power full moves for 3 metres gains the cable. At 15 metres another hard step up and left is encountered where the use of a natural horizontal crack is needed to make a long reach to a metal rung. Continue up to a rather un-nerving traverse left for 5 metres. Although still steep the VF eases with no more difficult moves to the top. Follow a rough path for 100m to a col and flat area. The last VF section ascends is a 15 metre buttress, with prayer flags at the top. Follow a rough path uphill past some plastic coated rungs but no cable, until you join a good wide path. John Trythall scrambles down to the bridge.



Descent

Turn right on this path and follow it back into the barranco, where it starts to zig-zag back down the hill. Either follow the path back to where you left it at the start of the VF. Or, turn left at the sign posted for Zona del Escalador Cingle de L'Aigua and follow this rough path past the climbing area to where it joins the approach path. 1Km on the good path brings you back to the car.

John Trythall, Jane Edwards & Anita Grey start the main section.



Xorret de Cati Grade 1

The easiest and shortest via ferrata on the Costa, great for kids or the nervous, could be coupled with easier climbing at Forada or a walk.

Getting there. 1 hour from the Orange House.

Take the A7 south towards Alicante, exit at junction 12 signed posted the Universitat. Take the A77 towards Alcoy which then turns back into the A7. Continue for 25km exiting at CV815 signed posted Castalla. After 300m turn left on the roundabout by the petrol station. After 700m turn right. After 250m turn left. After 650m turn left and follow the road to the top of the hill and drop down the other side. Go straight on at the small roundabout and park in the huge car park next to a large building. Approximately 8.5 km

Walk in 20 minutes

Leave the car park heading north and uphill along a good path which is signed posted for Xorret de Cati Via Ferrata.



The Via Ferrata 30 minutes 50m.

Starts steeply but quickly eases. After 25m a chain and ledge is gained this is a good place to top rope any nervous people. A 15m vertical wall leads to another ledge. The VF now traverse right gains 5m in height then traverses back left and finishes.

Descent

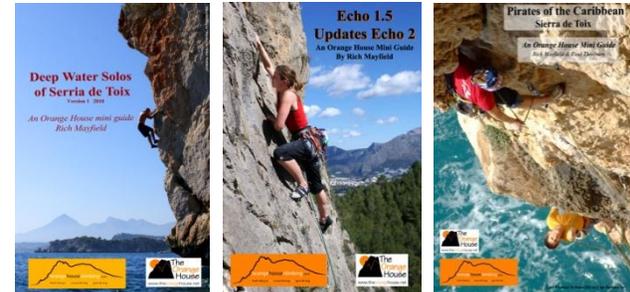
Walk away from the cliff edge to where a gully on the right leads back to the base via a short length of cable. Retrace your steps back to the car park.

Or by abseil, it is possible to abseil the whole height of the cliff in one go 50m, or take a mid height belay. Double bolt chains abseil stations.

Adam Hocking enjoying Xorrat de Cati



More topos available to download.



More Via Ferratas to follow in this series are
Rellue & Aventador