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Climbers starting the Ponocho Via Ferrata



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# Via Ferratas of the Costa Blanca

An Orange House Mini Guide  
by Rich Mayfield

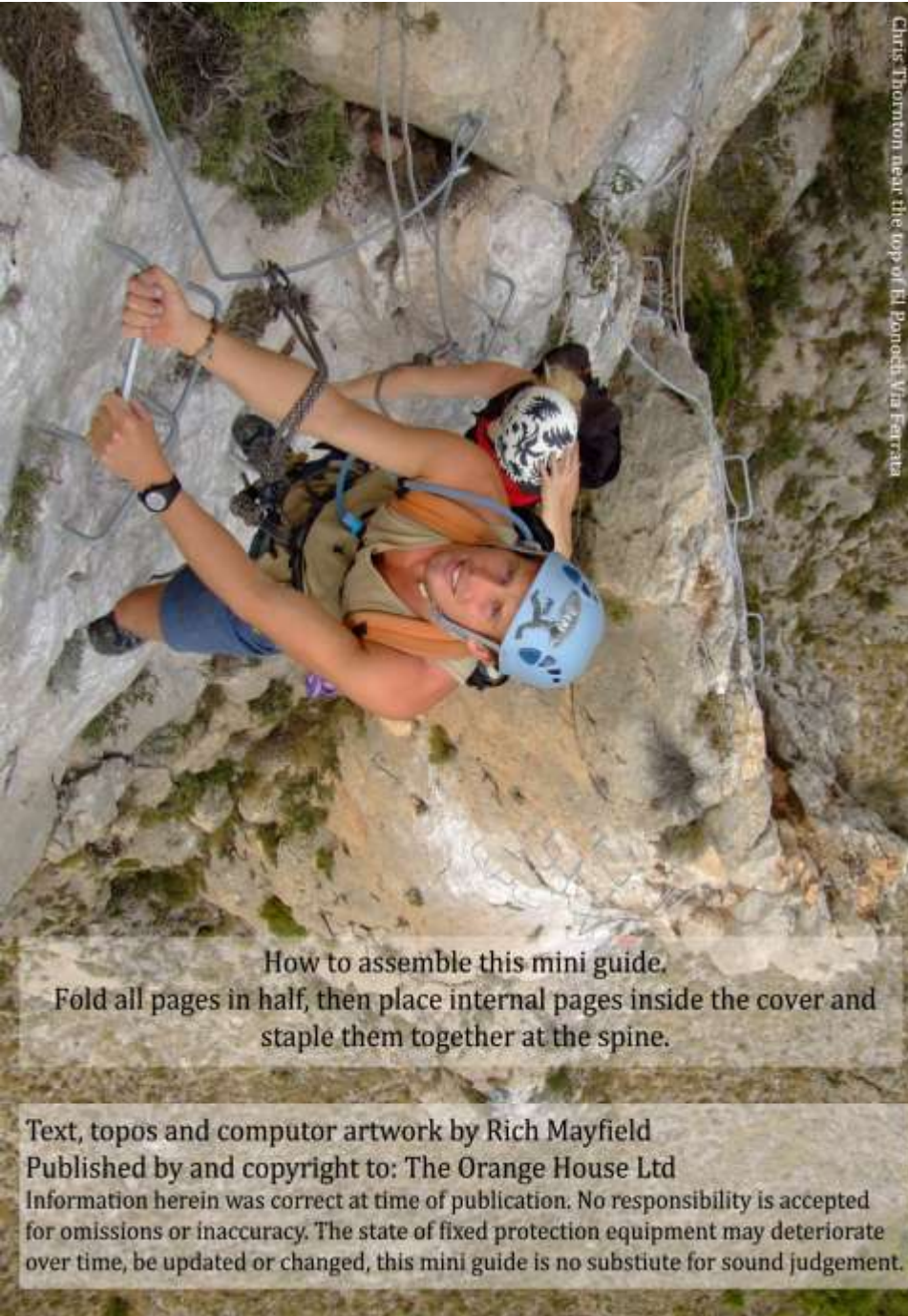


Routes covered in this guide

El Ponocho  
El Cid  
Castello de Salvatierra



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Chris Thornton near the top of El Ponocho Via Ferrata

## El Ponocho.

Situated on the huge Ponocho above the Village of La Nucia, 15 minutes drive from The Orange House and Benidorm. This is the best 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.



### Getting there. 15 minutes from 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.

**Then** stay on the CV70 first heading to La Nucia then Guadalest for 10km until you reach yet another roundabout sign posted for an urbanization called Polop Paradis. 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.

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.

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### 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 passed two 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. To the top of the Ponoch cliff. 1 hour.

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.

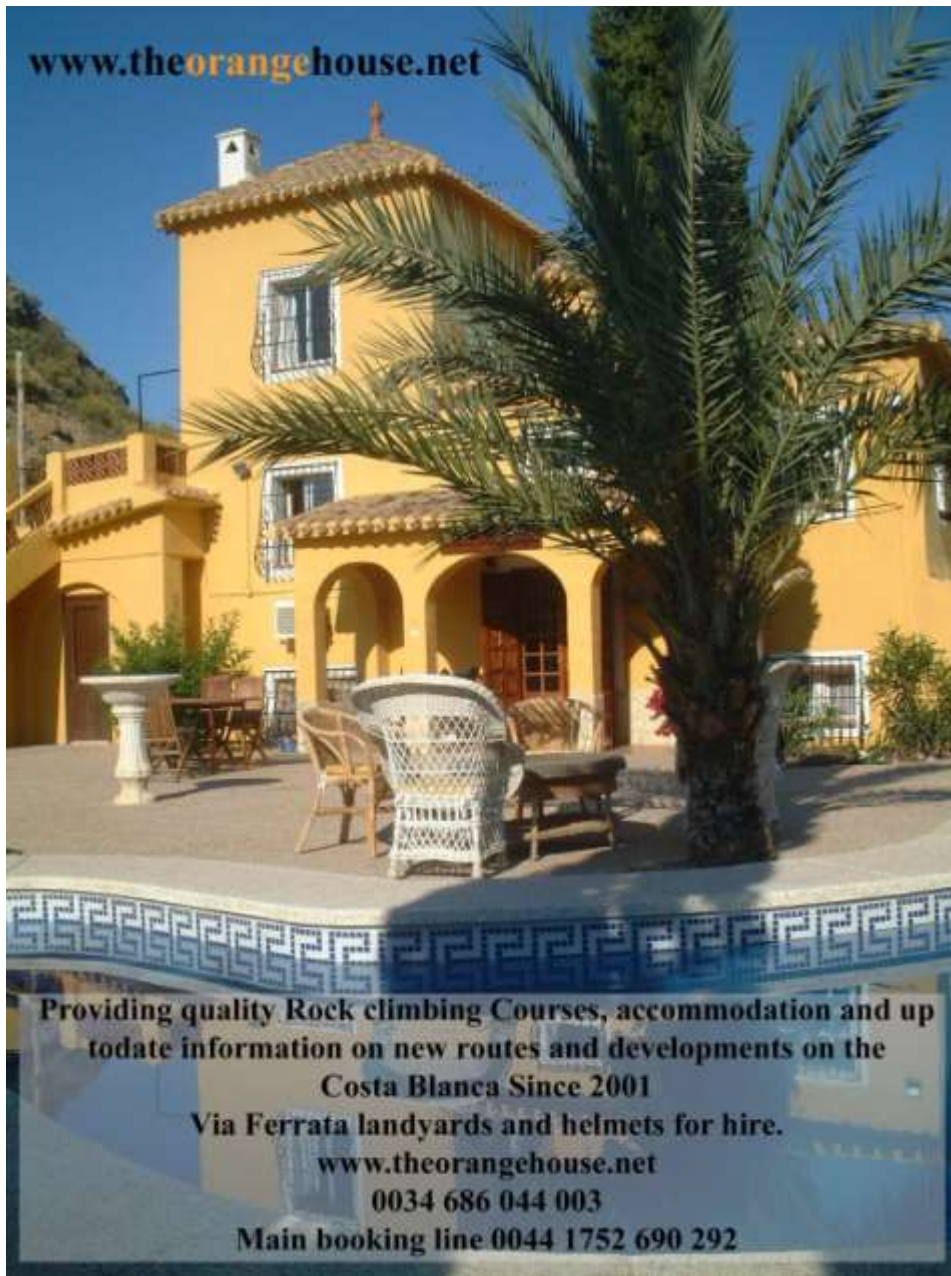
### Descent 30 minutes.

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. 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 a 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

**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 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 for a further 2.4km and park under the huge face.



**Walking in 5 minutes.**

Follow the track for 50m until an obvious steep footpath with insitu rope appears on the right.

### The Via Ferrata 350m. 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. Follows this with the odd difficult move if you get it wrong to some 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.

### Descent 50 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 path. This then traverses back under the cliffs and slowly drops onto the dirt road you have parked on.



The grassy ledges two thirds of the way up



On the raising fault line

### 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.

## Castello de Salvatierra

### 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 Villanova, take the left onto the CV809 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 overlooking the village.



### Walk in 20 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 Ferrata 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.



**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.

**Descent 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.

**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.



On the wire bridge half way up

Start of the steep section

In this series.



Coming soon!

