

COSTA BLANCA MOUNTAINWALKERS - WALK DESCRIPTION

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Walk description originally prepared by:-	Ralph Phipps	
Last Updated	3 rd October 2013	
Title of Walk	Espitau to Vielha via Puerta Vielha	
Location of Start (include name of nearest village/town at start of description)	Vielha South of the Vielha tunnel on the N230	
Key Statistics for walk - Distance in km	14	
Key Statistics for walk - Ascent in m	1000	
Key Statistics for walk - Walking time and total completion time including any stops	4hr 45mins 6hr 38mins	
Key Statistics for walk - Grade (using CBMW system)	VS/B	
Grid reference of start point (if known)	Lat:- 42.627297, Long:- 0.762808	
Directions to Start	Drive to the southern end of the tunnel from Vielha on the N230 and execute an about turn. Drive north and take the skip road to the "Old" tunnel – also marked for Dangerous Loads - peilgrosas – and then a further slip road up to the old hospital (espitau) which had been used as a refugio until recent years. (now closed). Park in the large car park there.	
Short walk description	A demanding but always interesting ascent up to a col followed by a short scree descent and then a beautiful walk down the valley to Vielha. Most easily completed with a car shuffle. Buses only leave very early in the morning!	
Full Walk Description	Elapsed Walking Time/Distance so far	
From the car park follow the signed track as it leaves to the NW		
Enjoy the views up the valley and keep your eyes peeled for a finger post pointing uphill and to the R along an initially thin footpath. (To Vielha – 5hrs, 13kms!!!)	650m, 10mins	
A little way up this has been damaged by sheep and goats and it is difficult to keep to an easy line. The zig-zags have disappeared under scree but even so it is possible to pick a reasonable way up on the LHS of the main gully until quite suddenly the footpath reappears more certainly as it reaches a finger post and ventures to the L and into a very picturesque cirque.	1.6km, 37mins	

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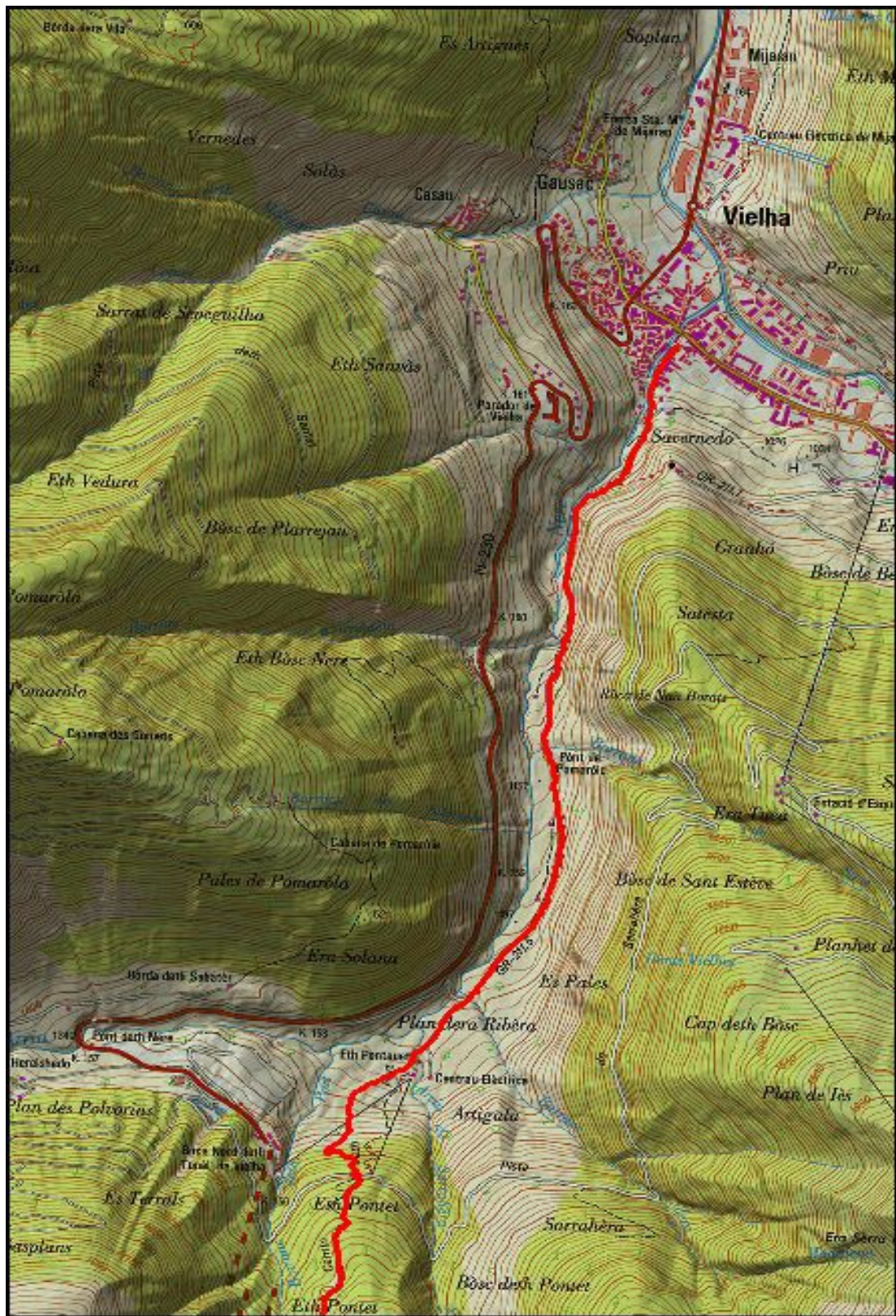
<p>The track is quite well defined again now as it trends leftwards and upwards in the cirque with fabulous views all around to reach a small stream crossing. Shortly after this stick faithfully to the track for the best route ignoring short cuts made up the slope.</p>	2.2km, 53mins
<p>The zig-zags persevere now to reach a less steep area with 2 sets of tunnels visible in the slope on the R of the main valley. They are less exciting to view than they look from a distance and are blocked off after only a few metres.</p> <p>Continue up on more gentle ground now with a col above visible as our next objective.</p>	
<p>We reach a gun emplacement with small shelter area</p>	3km, 1hr 15mins
<p>and continue upwards to soon reach a point just below the col where the track tends rightwards without ever cresting the col itself.</p>	3.7km, 1hr 38mins
<p>Follow this round and up steadfastly across some scree and moving below the mountain crest to move up a rocky ramp before arriving at the summit of the main col.</p>	5.1km, 2hr 15mins
<p>Now the path below is easy to see as it makes its way down steep scree for some time before reaching a more level grassy area with a large boulder which we pass on the LHS. (Look out for the raspberry crop if there at the right time of year!)</p>	5.8km, 2hr 33mins
<p>Reach a viewpoint down to a lake on the RHS.</p>	6.9km, 2hr 53mins
<p>Shortly after this we make our way down the LHS of a distinctive ridge which you can see heading steadily downhill and as it levels off a little the path crosses to the RHS of this ridge and continues down.</p>	
<p>A little way down this take care to ignore animal paths heading off downhill to the R and continue around a small switchback which takes us briefly around a knoll before returning to the RHS and continuing.</p>	
<p>Once you reach a large cairn</p>	8.2km, 3hr 21mins
<p>the time to abandon the ridge has arrived and you should head off down to the R before following the less distinctive track across rough ground towards a stream crossing marked with a large red cross.</p>	
<p>(If confused by the indistinct tracks earlier than this will serve as your destination. Lower than this and also visible from above is a circular sheep fold wall and we pass directly below this)</p>	
<p>Cross a stream bed at the red cross and make you way down any of the several braided tracks that diverge from here. In general it is best to take the lower ones.</p>	
<p>In any event all of them head steadily downwards making their way to a small cabana (like a bothy).</p>	9km, 3hr 37mins
<p>Move to the L of this and pick up a clear track which you follow down above a stream below your LHS.</p>	
<p>Further down is a finger post at a junction indicating that we should continue downhill to the L.</p>	
<p>When you reach a second junction with a large boulder in the middle of the RH steeply descending track you can take this to avoid a longer loop if you wish.</p>	9.7km, 3hr 49mins

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<p>When this re-joins the main path you can continue on a footpath going more steeply downhill to avoid a loop and this emerges then at a viewpoint with timber fence.</p> <p>Move a little to your R and take the steeply descending footpath to your L. This covers a few metres of rough ground before easing its slope a little. Continue down this through the trees.</p> <p>When you finally reach a track, turn R and downhill.</p>	<p>9.9km, 3hr 53mins</p>
<p>Reach a cross roads with a cabin on the LHS and a couple of benches where you cross over a bridge and continue ahead.</p>	<p>10.8km, 4hr 10mins</p>
<p>Further down a better track joins us from the L having left the main road a little above. Continue straight ahead.</p>	<p>11km, 4hr 14mins</p>
<p>The track become concreted and easily continues down to the town and you pass the tourist info office and then the town hall (ayuntamiento on the LHS to reach the town centre.</p>	

Walk Recommendations or restrictions	Summer route only
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Route followed is outlined in Red – Part 2



Route followed is outlined in Red – Part 1

