

## **COSTA BLANCA MOUNTAINWALKERS - WALK DESCRIPTION**

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<b>Walk description originally prepared by:-</b>	Ralph Phipps	
<b>Last Updated</b>	8 <sup>th</sup> October 2013	
<b>Title of Walk</b>	Hospital de Vielha (Espitau) to Refugio Restanca	
<b>Location of Start (include name of nearest village/town at start of description)</b>	Hospital de Vielha at the south end of the tunnel from Vielha on the N230.	
<b>Key Statistics for walk - Distance in km</b>	14	
<b>Key Statistics for walk - Ascent in m</b>	1075	
<b>Key Statistics for walk - Walking time and total completion time including any stops</b>	5hrs 40mins 8hrs 40mins	
<b>Key Statistics for walk - Grade (using CBMW system)</b>	VS/C	
<b>Grid reference of start point (if known)</b>	Lat:- 42.627297, Long:- 0.762808	
<b>Directions to Start</b>	Hospital de Vielha at the south end of the tunnel from Vielha on the N230. Park near the old hospital buildings accessed from the approach road to the OLD tunnel (indicated for dangerous loads).	
<b>Short walk description</b>	A fantastic adventure into the high mountains initially along the GR11 and then diverging to more challenging terrain alongside 2 lakes with a col between them.	
<b>Full Walk Description</b>	<b>Elapsed Walking Time/Distance so far</b>	
Walk away from the car park in a slightly south of east direction and after leaving the buildings behind and passing the old chapel on the RHS the surface disappears and you are walking on grassy track.		
Walk around the end of the shoulder to reach a fingerpost indicating the Refugio de Conangles on the R (which we ignore) and continue upwards towards a small stream bed which we cross.		400m, 9mins
Turn slightly R and steeply uphill to find the first of many R/W markers where the path braids into many options. Generally keep high and soon emerge steeply uphill onto a broad track on which we continue for a short while.		650km, 16mins
Just before a bridge look out for the R/W markers indicating a turn L still on a broad track for a short while.		1km, 22mins

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<p>Follow this up through the trees as it deteriorates into a footpath and with some braiding of paths it rises to arrive at a flatter area in a high corrie with ideal looking camp sites.</p> <p>As the ground begins to steepen again the main valley swings slightly left and then the path itself moves further left up a steeper slope.</p> <p>Soon we leave the tree cover after some zig-zags and move left across more open terrain. After turning a few small bluffs take care after a further 4/500m to look out for a distinctive path junction where a level path continues ahead while our R/W marked path turns obliquely R and steeply uphill across rugged terrain.</p>	<p>1.5km, 32mins</p>
<p>The path is now very clear and moves across the flank of the mountain above you to the L and moves steadily towards the col.</p> <p>Once you have reached this descend on the other side and immediately see a small tarn on the RHS. Drop a little and climb up again to pass a small spur and shortly after this you will get your first site of a large lake – Estany de Rios (or Lac de Rius) – with fantastic scenery all around.</p>	<p>3.1km, 1hr 18mins</p>
<p>Walk along side the lake with several diversion to avoid steep cliffs until finally you reach the end.</p> <p>Here look across to your R to see a fainter path marked with a R/W cross (confirming that the GR route does not go this way).</p>	<p>4.2km, 1hr 53mins</p>
<p>Follow this faithfully as it rises steeply for a short while and then twists and turns its way through knolls and around small lakes to finally run on the LHS of the main lake – the Lac Tort de Rius.</p> <p>The going is hard and requires careful navigation along the lake and then towards the end of the lake the path strikes uphill to the L with cairns to reach a col.</p>	<p>6.1km, 2hr 32mins</p>
<p>Getting down the other side is tricky with small sections of steep scrambling before it finally opens up to easier terrain with zig-zags going down.</p> <p>Towards the bottom be sure to turn to your R to walk across the large outflow of sandy scree that decorates the upper part of the lake.</p>	<p>9.7km, 3hr 56mins</p>
<p>Once clear of this the path turns L and splits into different braids. All will take you eventually to the other end of the lake, but the challenge is to find the route that is least difficult and involves the least ascent at this late stage of the day. Inevitably you will have to execute some ascending/descending and some scrambling across large boulder fields which will make your progress slow and tortuous.</p> <p>Eventually however you will arrive at the end and by threading through a couple of knolls you soon get your first view of the Lac de Restanca below you with its refuge lying beside it.</p>	<p>10.5km, 4hr 15mins</p>
<p>Follow the zig-zags down on much easier terrain now to join a path that leads over 2 bridges and then wanders over some meadows before again descending with more steepness and difficulty to reach an easier path around the lake to the refugio.</p>	<p>12.6km, 5hr 5mins</p>

### **Walk Recommendations or restrictions**

For experienced mountaineers only. Requires overnight accommodation at the Refugio on completion.



**Route followed is outlined in Red**

