

COSTA BLANCA MOUNTAIN WALKERS - WALK DESCRIPTION

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Walk description originally prepared by:-	Ralph Phipps
Last Updated	25 th Sep 2015
Title of Walk	GR11 – Day 24. Refugio Renclusa to Refugio Conangles via Tuc de Molieres
Location of Start (include name of nearest village/town at start of description)	Benasque Refugio Renclusa to the N of the village in a remote mountain location.
Key Statistics for walk - Distance in km	18
Key Statistics for walk - Ascent in m	1150
Key Statistics for walk - Walking time and total completion time including any stops	6 8
Key Statistics for walk - Grade (using CBMW system)	VS/B/Scr/X
Grid reference of start point (if known)	Lat: 42.670444, Long: 0.652083
Directions to Start	The N260 runs E-W along the central par of N Spain. From this find the A139 heading N to Benasque. Follow this road past Benasque for several kilometers and 2km before it ends take a concrete road dropping to the R and signed to Hotel Hospital de Benasque and La Besurta. Continue to the car park at La Besurta and walk from here following the signs to the Refuge – about 1 hour.
Short walk description	A high level crossing of a Pyrenean ridge with a short passage of scrambling to descend and remote rocky mountain fastnesses.
Full Walk Description	Elapsed Walking Time/Distance so far
<p style="color: red;">Note:- At the time of writing (Sep 15) the GR11 route from Benasque to Vielha (Conangles) is challenged by the absence of accommodation. A new refuge -Cap de Llauset – is under construction but until it is finished (Autumn 16?) the leg is too long for ordinary mortals and camping would be necessary.</p> <p style="color: red;">The alternative provided by this route and the previous leg is to cross a high and rugged pass from Renclusa via Barranco Escaleia and walk down to Conangles from Tuc de Molieres to the south side of the Vielha tunnel.</p> <p style="color: red;">The previous day's route up from Puente de San Chaime has nothing much to</p>	

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commend it being a long walk along forest tracks and so transport to the Hotel de Hospital de Benasque is assumed as a starting point with a walk up to today's starting point – the Refugio de Conangles!

Exit the Refuge and turn L slightly uphill for 50 m or so to find a fingerpost with a sign pointing L to Collado Renclusa with R/W markers. Take this path to reach the Col.

500m, 15min

Walk down the other side soon looking into a large river valley and at the bottom turn R at a finger post working around the RH edge of the plateau. (May be wet after prolonged rain!)

1.6km, 36min

Near the top edge of this cross a stream L using a bridge and then another immediately after.

2.4km, 48min

Make sure you are going to head up the correct valley. From here you must head just S of E across level ground but with a waterfall down rocks in the near distance.

Near to these rocks you turn R joining a good path that has come up from La Besurta on the far bank of the stream and start to climb up in zig-zags.

As the slope eases you are heading ESE and you continue up a rugged mountain valley to pass a mountain lake (sometimes dry) on your RHS.

4.3km, 1hr 23min

Take care here to look out for the correct valley now. There is a sign on a boulder pointing to Molieres and this is what you need following cairns initially SE and later SSE to reach a second thin lake which you pass on the R.

5.1km, 1hr 38min

After a more level stretch and yet another lake work more steeply up with some short patches of scrambling SE to reach a further lake in a craggy fastness and here turn R to head SE still steeply uphill and now across rock slabs as you continue ahead.

6.2km, 2hr 4min

Above yet another lake (which you may not see) you turn SSE to head steadily up a scree and slab filled valley towards Tuc de Molieres.

It is vitally important here to find the correct coll here because descent on the far side is quite tricky – use the gps track!

Eventually you reach a thin rocky ridge with rock impediments and spires jutting up in all directions. This is the Collado de Molieres at about 2940m with the summit of Tuc de Molieres just to your R at a little over 3000m

8.4km, 3hr 4min

Look around for routes down. There are at least 3 and the route nearest to Cap de Tora (further away from your direction of travel) provides the easiest descent.

Scramble down a little with care to find a zig-zag path descending across scree for a short while and then replaced by a cairned route across boulder fields to the E.

The going remains difficult for some time as you search about looking for the best route down but in any event you are aiming for the valley floor.

There is respite to the steepness as you pass the series of 4 pater-noster lakes

10.3km, 3hr 53min

and a small cabin comes in to view high above us on the LHS. Once clear of these our path wanders off to the NE aiming for apparently easier going. However once you reach a patch of difficult iron laden rock scree the path turns in zig-zags to avoid crossing this and to find a route down.

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Finally clear of the worst of the rocky going the path continues down to reach a short down scramble almost IN the Cascada de Molieres

12.4km, 4hr
42min

and then at last the slope eases into grassier terrain.

Continue down hill to reach a wooded and bouldery section which has many cairns but still requires careful navigation to find the best route and then walk down beside the series of waterfalls to emerge in a grassy plateau.

13.5km, 5hr 5min

Here you pick up a track and follow this out towards the road and the end of the road tunnel from Vielha.

There are choices once you reach a fork at a rising section of track.

14.9km, 5hr
26min

Go L and cross above the tunnel to the old closed Refugio at Espitau de Vielha and then follow the path S on the E side of the valley to reach the Refugio de Conangles

OR, perhaps easier at the end of a long and demanding day.....you can take the R fork to reach the tarmac road and follow this S to reach a large parking area on the LHS with a sign to the refuge just across the bridge. (gps route does this!)

Walk Recommendations or restrictions

Experience of mountaineering and scrambling required.

This topographic map depicts the Sierra de Guadalupe region, highlighting the international border between Spain and France. The terrain is characterized by dense contour lines and several mountain peaks. Notable locations include Plan d'Aiguallut, Tuca de la Rencusa, and Tuca d'Aiguallut. The map also shows the course of the Riu de Guadalupe and other smaller water bodies. A scale bar indicates a distance of 500 meters.



