

## **COSTA BLANCA MOUNTAIN WALKERS - WALK DESCRIPTION**

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<b>Walk description originally prepared by:-</b>	Ralph Phipps
<b>Last Updated</b>	19 <sup>th</sup> October 2015
<b>Title of Walk</b>	Bielsa tunnel to le Plan via Puerta Vieja and the Valle de Gela.
<b>Location of Start (include name of nearest village/town at start of description)</b>	Bielsa, Tunnel south entrance car park on the A138 heading N to France.
<b>Key Statistics for walk - Distance in km</b>	12
<b>Key Statistics for walk - Ascent in m</b>	770 (but 100m descent!)
<b>Key Statistics for walk - Walking time and total completion time including any stops</b>	4.33hr 6hr
<b>Key Statistics for walk - Grade (using CBMW system)</b>	S/B
<b>Grid reference of start point (if known)</b>	Lat:- 42.720631,Long: 0.198692
<b>Directions to Start</b>	<p>From northern Spain, E of both Jaca and Sabinanigo take the A138 north to find Bielsa village. Continue N on the A138 towards France passing the small village of Parzan on the way. Drive through the tunnel and into France and down the valley to arrive at a Signposted track on the LHS and a parking area on the RHS just before a zig-zag bend. Leave car here and return to Spain!</p> <p>The car park at the S end of the tunnel (from where the walk starts) is IMMEDIATELY as you exit the tunnel on the LHS beyond the management building. In theory this L turn is illegal (and signed so) but in most cases there will be such light traffic as makes this unimportant.</p>
<b>Short walk description</b>	<p>A high level walk over a Pyrenean pass used by families to escape the clutches of Franco during the Spanish civil war. There are information boards at the French end of this walk and also at the town hall in Bielsa explaining the significance of the "Bolsa de Bielsa" - that is the pocket of resistance of Bielsa.</p> <p>The views from the pass and as you descend into France are unparalleled.</p>
<b>Full Walk Description</b>	<b>Elapsed Walking</b>

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	<b>Time/Distance so far</b>
At the far end of the building as you enter the car park there is a small fingerpost on the LHS pointing up the hill. (PR HU 182)	
Follow this up in steady zig-zags and pass above the waterfall which will have been evident from the car park and as you ascend to reach a glorious hanging valley with improving views into the heart of the mountains.	
Keep to the RHS of this as you rise steadily to reach a small hut (Cabaña Valle de Pinarra) with a Camino de Santiago sign on it.	2km, 53min
Reach a junction with finger-post where we keep L.	2.8km, 1hr 17min
Continue ahead into the valley with a view of the col becoming more visible until you finally complete a tight set of zig-zags to reach the col with its memorial plaque and small sentry hut.	4.1km, 1hr 54min
Descend over the other side into France and continue ahead using the most obvious line where there are options. (They all lead down to the valley floor).	
A little way beyond the remains of a sawn off post there is one steeper and more heavily eroded section where care is required but in general this is a good path which delivers us without pain to the valley floor.	
Below the eroded section as we turn back to the L there is a further junction with finger-post where we continue ahead.	6.5km, 2hr 43min
When we reach the valley floor the path moves L a little to run parallel to the L flank but about 50m away .....	7.9km, 3hr 10min
and as you continue down you pass a fenced corral on the RHS and then cross the river to find a path continuing ahead on the R bank.	
This soon passes a ruin which has been washed away by previous floods and a hut higher up on the bank on the RHS and as you pass this you reach a track on which you continue ahead. (Avoid taking the track up to the R to a second house)	
Soon the valley narrows considerably into a dramatic gorge and you pass a bridge on the LHS and continue ahead.	9.3km, 3hr 30min
Eventually after descending still further you emerge onto the road with the information boards on your LHS before the road and the car parking a few metres down the road on the L.	
<b>Walk Recommendations or restrictions</b>	None

**Route followed is outlined in Red – Not much French map available!!**

