



Discovering Hondón

A walk between History and the vineyards

TREKKING

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The Hondón area (Tondón or Dondón according to some authors) is located inside a meander formed by the Ebro River.

** It is a simple itinerary, suitable for everyone, which can be completed in less than 3 hours, with a few stops. We have the possibility of shortening or lengthening it, depending on the places we want to visit. We will discover the remains of a castle, rock tombs, a beautiful "guardaviñas", a nice walk along the Ebro riverbank, and all this in places dominated

by beautiful vineyards and lovely views of the Sierra deToloño.

Most of the itinerary runs along good paths and agricultural ways. It is especially advisable in spring and autumn to enjoy the colors that Nature offers us at that time. If we do it in summer, the walk along the Ebro riverbank will offer us relief with the shade of its poplar groves, and we have the opportunity to cool off in two fountains that we will find during the circuit.

* Suitable for mountain bike.

***TIME REQUIRED:** From Haro, we need at least 3 hours to complete the total circuit, although it can be shortened if we wish, starting the itinerary at the medieval bridge of Briñas.

** I am going to relate a general tour, with some possible variants, and you can choose the itinerary you want to do, depending on your possibilities, the weather, or the desire to walk..

***REMARKS:** *I am going to use the name of Hondón for the whole meander, although each part has different names (Carabriñas, Perdigón, Hondón / Tondón, Callejas, ...), because it is the one I have always heard from my parents and the residents of Haro since I was a child. I am not the appropriate person to question the denominations given to that area by other authors and historians.*

As for the Briñas bridge, contrary to what many people believe, and can even be seen on some maps, it is not Roman, but from the end of the 13th century.

ITINERARY:

To start this itinerary, and if we leave from Camping de Haro, we must return towards the town center, up to the bridge over the Río Tirón (3'). Without crossing it, we take Calle Cantarranas on the left, to the right of the Rioja Santiago winery. There are informative signs that indicate several wineries, among them, Bodegas Bilbaínas. We must continue down that street to the door of this winery (8').

Although we are making a small detour of about 3 or 4 minutes, it is worth it to be able to contemplate in the gardens of this winery, three beautiful specimens of **giant sequoias**, which are now more than 100 years old, and cataloged as **Singular Trees from La Rioja**.



We continue to the right, under the beautiful sequoias, until we reach the small square of the train station and continue the cobbled street on the right. When we reached a flyover to the left under the train track, we pass it and now continue on the left following the road that goes to Vitoria. On our way we pass the Muga, Gómez Cruzado, La Rioja Alta, López de Heredia and finally Roda wineries, before passing a bridge over the Haro ring road (18').

Just after crossing this bridge, we take to our left an old road in bad condition at the moment, that after passing through a livestock pavilion (* care for loose dogs), descends towards the **medieval Bridge of Briñas** (25'). We can see it before arriving, as well as the Cerro del Castillo on your right, where the remains of the **Torre de la Estrella** are. As we descend, we see on our right a

first path that enters a vineyard, with a sign indicating Bodegas Bilbainas, Vicuania. Further down we have another path to the right where we can climb the Tower and return at the end of our tour through Hondón.



Shortly before reaching the bridge, on the left, we can see a stone monument as a tomb, where, according to an inscription, rest the remains of several militiamen killed in one of the Carlist battles that took place in the year 1834.

CERRO DEL CASTILLO y TORRE DE LA ESTRELLA

If we want to visit the remains of the Torre de la Estrella, at the top of Cerro del Castillo, we must take the path to the right, shortly before this monument. To go up and down there, it will take 15 or 20 minutes. The effort of the ascent is minimal, and it gives us the satisfaction of getting a nice panoramic view of the surroundings of Hondón, the bridge, the river and the Montes Obarenes and the Sierra de Toloño. We climb a few meters along this path and when we reach the beginning of a vineyard, we leave it to go towards the hill on the left edge.

A narrow path helps us to climb the last few meters of the summit. There we can appreciate what remains



of the Star Tower, as well as some of its angles that give it that name.



Observing from the summit the continuation of our itinerary towards the east, we can see on top of a small hill, the **guardaviñas** that we are going to visit later, where the **rock tombs** are located. At the moment, we return by the same route up to the medieval bridge.

Now we take the **medieval bridge** as the starting point of the itinerary through Hondón (0h.).



At the end of the bridge, which we have arrived by car or walking from the campsite in 25', we have some signs that indicate some routes, as well as a signpost that informs us a little about the place and its

history. We are going to follow along the path of the GR-99 of the Senda del Ebro that continues on the right side of the river, under Cerro del Castillo. It is a wide path and we are going to see some indications GR-99 (posts and marks painted in red and white). We are going to have a beautiful panoramic view of the bridge, recently restored.

About 5' from the bridge there is a path to the right that walks up to some vineyards. This path allows us to visit the guardaviñas and the rock tombs, as well as come back to the medieval bridge at the end of our tour.

GUARDAVIÑAS and ROCK TOMBS.

- To get to the beautiful guardaviñas and calmly visit the rock tombs, we must add about 20' more to the itinerary.



For it, we take the mentioned path and walk up until we arrive a kind of hill, from where another path to the left take us to the guardaviñas located at a high point. We get there from the main way in just 5'. To the right and behind the guardaviñas, we see some stone slabs. This is where we can find several of the rock tombs in this area, some of them quite well preserved.

The most curious of all is maybe an upright tomb, which however is not among those slabs but under a stone mound next to a high voltage tower that we can see on the other side of a vineyard, behind the guardaviñas. To get to it we can cross the vineyard (respecting the private farmland) and descend the stone mound through the

most accessible site.



We can also get there more easily, when we return from the guardaviñas to the main path.

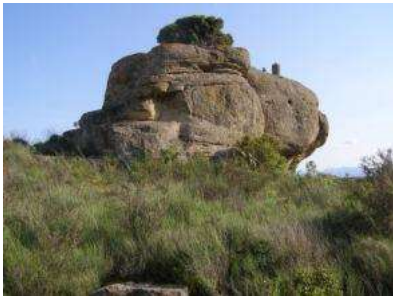
In that case, we watch when going down, a path to the right that goes up towards two high voltage towers. That path leads us right under the second tower, where the upright tomb is, on a rock wall.

Once we have returned to the main path (* on the map called "Camino de Enmedio"), We continue along it to the right. At 7 'from the bridge, we leave another path to the right where the GR-99 marks continue and that crosses the meander towards the bridge on the road to Labastida.



A little further on (10') we are located to the left of the **"Round Stone"**. It is a small promontory crowned by rounded rocks, with a small tree and a concrete cairn at the top.

There is no a special attraction to go up there, but we can see a better panoramic view of the surroundings, but if we want to go up, we just have to turn off to our right, cross the vineyard and find the best access to the highest point (on the left and behind, in the final stretch). 7 or 8 minutes are enough to go and return to the main path.



Already on our way we continue, seeing Briñas on the other side of the river. A little further on we passed a booth in a vineyard, and (12') later we see a construction on the right, like a bunker. It is a building of Bodegas López de Heredia, where it seems to have some calados. There is another path that goes to the other side of the Hondón meander.



We continue along the Camino de Enmedio, and immediately pass on our left (14') the Camino de Carabriñas, parallel to our path but closer to the riverbank.

Now the path begins to turn to the right and we come to a large building under construction (16 'from the bridge), in a small pine plantation, where we can find in the facade a good fountain to cool off.



From here we must decide if to continue on the internal part of the meander between vineyards and farmland, or if we prefer to walk near the Ebro riverbank along a good path next to a poplar forest.

WALK ALONG THE DAM AND THE EBRO RIVERBANK -



**This option allows us to enjoy a good shade if we are doing the tour in summer. Also, if we go in silence and we are observers, it is quite likely that we have the chance to see some beautiful gray heron, ducks, storks, or some other birds, frequent visitors in this area or the river*

- If we choose to continue along the river bank, we must go from the building directly towards the bank. Once there we can see the dam built several years ago, and that caused some controversy with the population of Briñas. From here we can continue along the path on the right that takes us almost to the entrance to Haro, shortly before Bodegas Muga in about 35 minutes.





We also have the possibility to abandon the path at several spots. About 10 'from the dam (* at this location there is usually a tractor to pump water), we could go up to the farmland on our right and go to the other fountain mentioned, continuing along the main path.

cement ditch), and return along the route that returns to the medieval bridge.

At about 25' we pass under the Labastida road bridge. A couple of minutes after passing it, we can go up the road (by a kind of

If our purpose is to walk back to Haro, we continue along the river walk, and about 30 'from the dam we arrive at the starting point of this walk, indicated with a sign from the Government of La Rioja and two posts that prevent the passage of vehicles. There we have a fenced fruit orchard, where we can still continue another 5' more on the right, until we reach the road, almost in Bodega Muga.

If we continue along the main path from the building, we will arrive at the Labastida road, next to the bridge over the Ebro, in approximately 20'. Halfway, we pass another fountain, as well as several crossroads that we are going to ignore, but that would also allow us to return to the medieval bridge of Briñas.



A few meters before the Labastida road, after passing a farm, we have the path where we are going to return to the medieval bridge. Here we see again the posts with the indications of the way GR-99 of the Senda del Ebro.

Through there we would return without any problem in just 20', passing between the guardaviñas on the left and the Piedra Redonda on the right.

But we are going to return directly, avoiding this detour.



To do this, we follow the posts, but only a few meters (just one minute), until the first curve to the right. Now we are going to leave the path to go up towards some vineyards. After go up a few meters we reach a vineyard that we skirt to the left of it and we continue going up along path stretches through a uncultivated plot. Immediately we are on a better path that goes a little later goes to the left. We follow it on a short flat stretch until we find another crossing on the right (6' from the road). From here we can see above us the guardaviñas at the top of a small promontory.

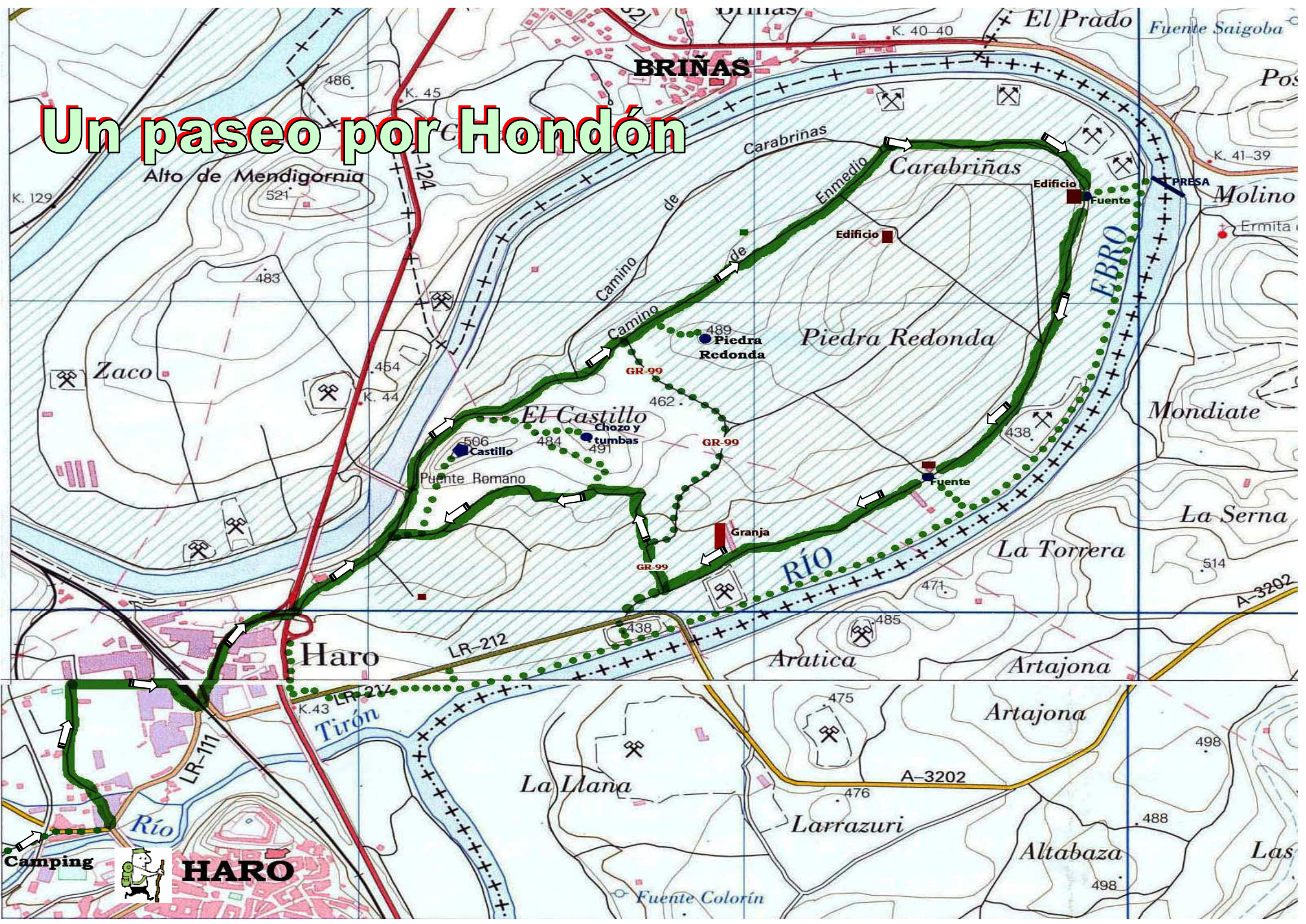
We can continue along this path that passes between Cerro del Castillo and the guardaviñas, after passing the small hill, and after a short descent, it connects with the main path that returns to the medieval bridge (15 'from the

Labastida road).

We can also ignore this crossing on the right, continue to the left, and going around Cerro del Castillo go out again to the medieval bridge, with a little less rise, also in about 15 minutes from the Labastida road. This path ends at the Briñas bridge, after passing the monument to the Carlists.

If we have started the tour on the medieval bridge, here we conclude it. If we have started in Haro, we return by the same itinerary already known.

Un paseo por Hondón



* Author's note.

I'd like to make a little introduction to these routes.

First of all, I want to make it clear that I am just a simple mountain enthusiast, and that I am not qualified enough to make technical comments on flora, fauna, history and other similar topics.

For that reason, I prefer to leave such matters to more capable people. I apologize for any mistakes I may have made in referring to some names of municipal districts, historical facts, or any other name used by me, when making these routes.

I am simply an unconditional lover of Nature in all its facets, and I have always regretted the lack of sensitivity that politicians have shown in everything related to these issues.

The Haro region and the Rioja Alta have privileged places where you can enjoy natural environments, sometimes unknown by the inhabitants of the area. In spite of having a great landscape and fauna richness, at an institutional level, there has always been an absolute lack of any kind of printed information about trekking or mountain routes in our region, which shows how little interest has been taken in it.

However, the reality is that at the grassroots level, there is a great fondness for it. This is demonstrated by the large number of people who every Sunday take their backpacks and go to the mountains. Also, the two existing mountain associations in the town, counting at present the Toloño Sports Association (to which I belong), with more than 300 members.

For that reason, I have always tried to collaborate as much as possible, to spread that richness in the mountain environment in which I usually move.

On one occasion, I coincided in a mountain activity with the manager of Camping de Haro, Carlos Contreras, and during a short conversation, I voluntarily and totally disinterestedly accepted the commitment to facilitate some routes. In this way, people who visit our city and the camping, and wish to do trekking or mountain, or simply know our environment, can have at their disposal, a minimum of information to do so.

As I promised, and although these simple routes are the work of an amateur, I hope they are useful for those who, like me, share that interests in Nature. Les ofrezco en principio estos pocos itinerarios que en un futuro próximo, irán ampliándose con otras rutas futuras.

Before I finish, I'd like to ask everyone who makes these routes **MAXIMUM RESPECT FOR ANIMALS, PLANTS, AND NATURE IN GENERAL. WE MUST NOT IN ANY WAY DEGRADE THE ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH WE ARE.**

Neither should we forget that on some occasions, we will be passing through areas close to private properties (vineyards, farm fields...etc), or through places with a great cultural and historical richness, which we will also have to respect.

Finally, if anyone wishes to contact the author of these routes, for any suggestion, additional information, or any criticism, they can do so at:

www.pablovozmediano@yahoo.es or on the telephone number **699 001252** (Pablo Vozmediano Salazar).