



Haro - Bilibio

Por el Agua del Puerto y la Calzada Romana

Pablo Vozmediano Salazar

TREKKING

***TIME REQUIRED:** We need approximately, at normal pace, **1h. 20´** to get to the area of **Los Riscos de Bilibio**. To go up the hermitage of and the mountain mailbox, it takes another 15 minutes more. There is a little longer alternative (15´ more), which allows us to go near a nice guardaviñas (chozo), restored in 2012 by the City Council of Haro.

You can do the complete itinerary in about **3 and a half hours**, at a leisurely pace.
If we go back by the road, 1 hour is enough.



Itinerary:

It is the best option to walk from Haro to the Riscos de Bilibio, avoiding the road as much as possible. This itinerary allows us to complete the route without almost going by the asphalt and mostly between vineyards. Most of the main path is marked with red and white marks and some wooden signs of the GR-99 of the Senda del Ebro.

***Starting Point: Camping de Haro.**

To start this itinerary, and if we get out of Haro from **Camping de Haro** (0h.), we must go to the bridge over the River Tirón, in the direction of the town (3´). Here we take Calle Cantarranas on the left, next to the Rioja Santiago winery. There are informative signposts that indicate several wineries, among them, Bodegas Bilbaína. We must continue along that street to the door of this winery (8´). Before following with our walk, we can see in the gardens of this winery three beautiful specimens of **giant sequoias**, cataloged as Singular Trees of La Rioja, and which are more than 100 years old.



When you reach the entrance of the winery, the asphalt ends and a path continues on your left. Just a minute from the winery door, we arrive at an open breach in the terrain on the right, formed by what was once the pass of the Bobadilla railway (Haro - Ezcaray / 10´). We can see a wooden palisade that goes up to the right, as well as some white and red marks of the GR-99 of the Senda del Ebro. These marks are going with us throughout our itinerary to San Felices.

We go up a kind of steps on the ground, following the wooden palisade towards the farmlands of the upper part, and continue next to the palisade, until we reach a wide path coming from the right (the access is closed because it is a private land of a winery), just next to a bridge over the old railway line (12´).

This path goes to the left and ends at the Haro - San Felices road. We are not going to continue there, we are going to take another path in front of us, which is directed towards a power towers line. We pass under the power towers line and a little up ahead the path turns to left again, ending at the Haro - San Felices road (20´).



When we reach the road, we must follow it just a few meters to the right, and before it makes a left turn, we take a path that descends on its right, on the other side of the protective fence of the road. This path is a stretch that was once a **Roman road**, and where we can still perfectly appreciate some details of its trace as we descend towards the bottom of the ravine.

We can clearly see some large slabs on the ground, as well as the carved rock to gain that passage, before reaching the end of the ravine, where there is still a bridge (also said to be Roman), hidden by vegetation. We cross that bridge over the small ravine and we already have the road over us again, which has made several bends to get here. The path goes to the left and comes out onto the road.

*** Here we can take the variant that goes through the restored guardaviñas or chozo (hut).**

If we don't want to do this variation, we're not going out on the road yet, but under it and on its right, we go to the train track that we have a few meters. We cross the train track (26') and follow along a path that continues parallel, a few meters on its right for about 5 minutes, and then later, cross it again and get back on the road (32').

Now we cross the road, without following it, and take a wide path that goes up to a bridge that crosses the highway. We go over the bridge (on our right we see a Bodegas Muga shed) and continue along this path. A little further on (about 9' from the highway (40')), we ignore a path that goes up to the right, towards a concrete block hut that ends at a plantation. We must leave this crossing and go straight ahead, just 2 more minutes. We are placed under a pine tree on our right, on some stone slabs. After passing under this pine tree, the path makes a sharp bend to the right, and from that bend we see that two other paths begin.

**** This is the point where the variant described later is connected, and which comes from the alternative itinerary through the guardaviñas.**

We follow the right bend behind the pine, ignoring these paths. After the bend (42'), the path already takes direction to the mountain. We pass again under a power line and next to another small brick hut (52'), quite abandoned, but that can be useful in case of an occasional downpour. We follow going up, until we finally reach the wide, semi-asphalted track (57') that comes from the left of Villalba (Camino del Estepal), and take us to the Riscos de Bilibio without possible loss.

With the mountain on our left and the vineyards on our right, we enjoy this last stretch, which was apparently also a Roman road, but of which no trace of that construction is visible today.

Shortly before arriving San Felices, we can see on our left over the pines, the modest but beautiful silhouette of the Peña Colorada.

Finally, we arrive at the bridge that allows us to cross to the right over the highway and go up to the place known as Riscos de Bilibio. Up to here we have spent **1h. and 20' from Haro**.

If we want to go up to the hermitage, the monument to San Felices, or the mountain mailbox, we have two options. The easiest way, from the bridge over the highway, is to go towards the recreational area, following the steep asphalt path, and after a few meters take the detour on the left indicating the hermitage, which will take us to it and to the statue of San Felices in just under 15' of steep climb (1h. 35' from Haro).

The hermitage can also be reached, going to the top of the recreational area, following the road to its end. We go up until the last large roofed concrete

table. Above it, we take a good path, which gains altitude going around the right of the base of the great wall of the statue of San Felices. It surrounds the wall while going up, until we are also situated on the access stairs to the hermitage and the

monument. There we have a kind of viewpoint with beautiful views over the Obarenes, Las Conchas de Haro, the Sierra del Toloño and much of the Rioja Alta wine region.



The views to the north, unfortunately, are too deteriorated due to the ofitas quarry, the highway, the road and many other things that have slowly been spoiling the landscape without any administration doing anything about it, in spite of its landscape wealth and the fact that it has been declared a **Special Bird Protection Area (ZEPA)**.

If we want to reach the mountain mailbox, we must descend to another nearby rock, a little lower than the San Felices monument. To this end, after going back down the stairs of the viewpoint and the entrance of the hermitage, we take a small path that goes to the left towards a kind of little hill on the ridge. Through this little hill we can also descend to the southern hillside, to the recreational area, with a little caution.

But to go up to the mountain mailbox, we do not go down but up a small path on the right of the little hill, also with caution, the few meters that separate us from the mailbox. This one is located on a rock that protrudes into the void, and seems not to inspire too much confidence, but the fact is that it's been that way for many years and it still hasn't fallen...

Water: We can get water for the return, in the recreational area, under the saint monument. There are several fountains next to the tables. On the way until here, there are no reliable fountains at present.



*** VARIANT BY THE GUARDAVIÑAS / CHOZO:**

This variant allows us to pass by a nice guardaviñas (or chozo), restored in 2012 by the Haro City Council, and after a short detour, return to the main route (adding about 15 minutes).

To do this, after going down the stretch of the Roman road, and after passing the small bridge and the poplar grove, we must go to the left, leaving the train track on the right. We go out to the road (0'), towards the left, and take a wide path on the other side, which goes under the highway. Soon we will see a white hut on our right with the Muga logo and a sign indicating "Los Arenales" (3').



Afterwards, we arrive at a small house that we leave on our left (5'). Following the path behind it, a couple of minutes later we ignore a crossing on the left (9'), and we arrive without loss at the beautiful guardaviñas/ chozo, recently restored. (12 minuts from the road).



If we look to the left of the guardaviñas, behind a vineyard, we will see a small rocky promontory, and if we get close to it, we can see some remains of what could have been a stone wine press.

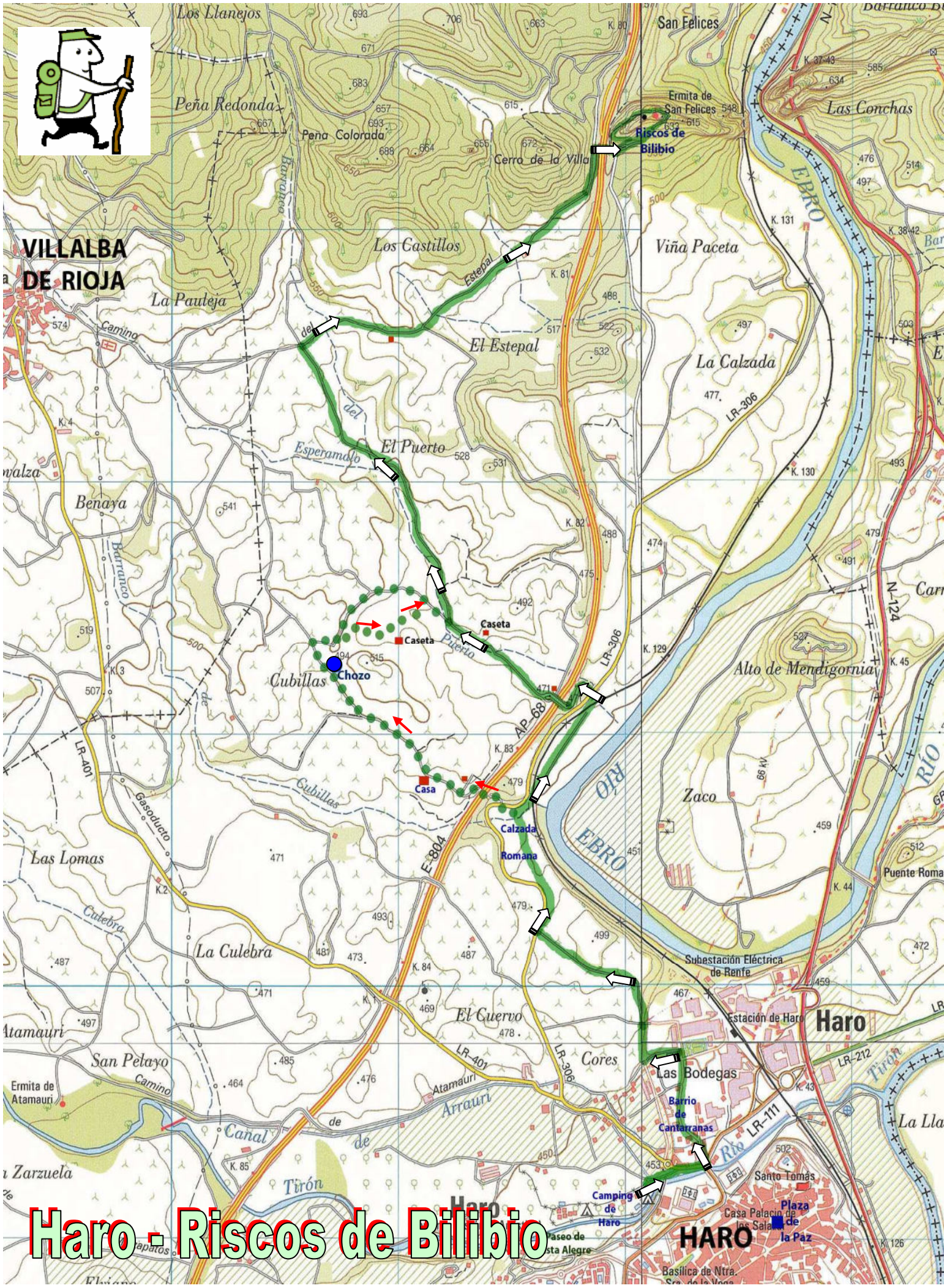
To connect from the chozo with the main route to San Felices, we have several options using the network of agricultural paths.

The easiest is, after passing the chozo, about 100 meters away, take a path on the right that goes up for a minute and then at the top, makes a left turn (we can see several recently planted olive trees). We take the bend to the left and just 20 meters away, we have a path that descends to the right towards some vineyards that have a concrete hut in the middle. We go down to a few meters before the hut, and without reaching it, we take a path that goes through the middle of the vineyard (there is a signpost of Bodegas Muga that calls this place "Valdinero"). This path, after crossing the vineyards, connects with the main itinerary to Bilibio, in just 10 minutes from the guardaviñas, at a crossing under a pine tree above some stone slabs.



Now we simply have to follow the marks of the GR-99 of the Senda del Ebro which continue towards San Felices along the route mentioned at the beginning.

From the San Felices highway, after crossing the railway track, we would arrive here in just 8-9 minutes.



Haro - Riscos de Bilibio

* 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).