



Bilibio Route

Obarenes Mountains

Pablo Vozmediano Salazar

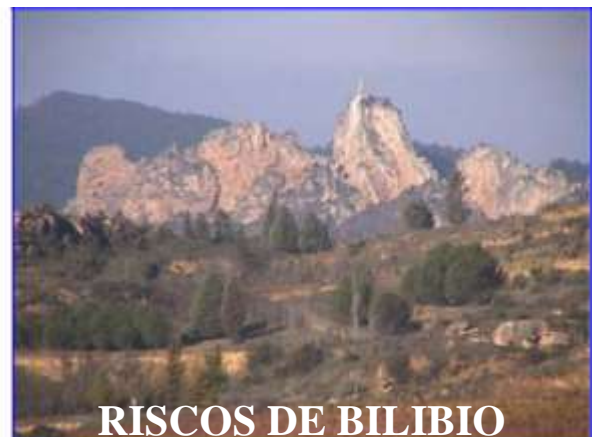
TREKKING

****It is a easy hiking route, suitable for everyone, which can be done in a maximum time of 4 hours, at a leisurely pace. It runs through beautiful landscapes of the Obarenes Mountains, and along good roads, which allow s, if we wish, to do it on a mountain bike, or on horseback.**

* **START POINT:** Recreational Area of Riscos de Bilibio, 6 kms from Haro.

* **TIME REQUIRED:** It takes approximately 3 to 4 hours at a normal pace to complete tour. There are several ways to shorten it, depending on the choice of each one.

* **How to get there by car from Camping de Haro:** To reach the Riscos de Bilibio, we must leave Camping de Haro until the paved road that comes from the center town and heads towards San Felices and Villalba. We continue along it, leaving immediately the deviation to Villalba on the left, we continue approximately 4 kms., until a new deviation to the left where we are going to ascend by a narrow asphalted road, until the location of the Riscos de Bilibio. We can park next to the bridge over the highway, or go up to the small parking lots in the recreational area, under the statue of San Felices.



A few kilometres from Haro is the location of **Los Riscos de Bilibio**, well known and loved by the citizens of Haro (Jarreros), where every year the **Wine Battle** is celebrated on 29 June.

Much has been written about the history of this place that goes back to the existence of a Roman defensive fort called Castellum Bilibium, as well as the existence of the village of Bilibio, between the 5th and 10th centuries.

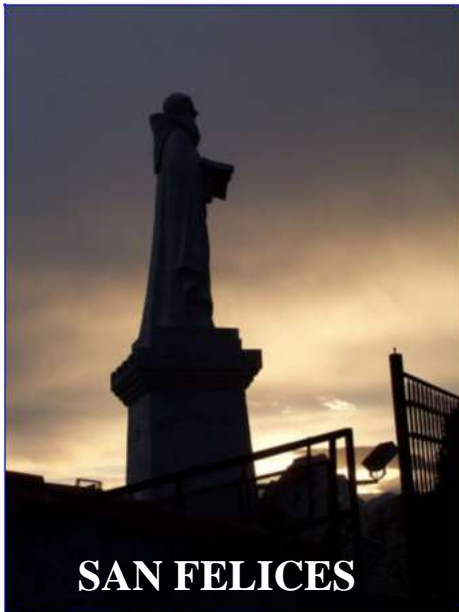


In this place San Felices spent much of his life as a hermit, accompanied by San Millán, whose teacher he was, before finally resting his remains in the Monastery of San Millán de Yuso.

Taking this place as a starting point, we can make one of the most beautiful natural routes offered by the Obarenes Mountains in the Rioja Alta.

It is at this place, over the motorway bridge at 550 meters altitude, where we begin this itinerary through the Obarenes Mountains. This tour offers us different options, depending on the possibilities of each one. The marked way, forming an eight in its route, allows us to make it complete, or to divide it in two parts, and other possible variants.

It is possible to explore it on foot, by mountain bike or on horseback, and although some stretches could be traversed in other motor vehicles, it would be advisable that this does not happen, to avoid degrading such beautiful landscapes with noise and smells of fuel.



SAN FELICES

Before starting the tour, we can visit the hermitage built in honour of San Felices in 1710 (the first dates from 1694) and rebuilt in 1862 and 1942.

It is located at the top of the Riscos de Bilibio, and offers us a magnificent view of the **Conchas de Haro**, natural pass of the Ebro and separation of

the **Sierra de Toloño** and the , which end here.



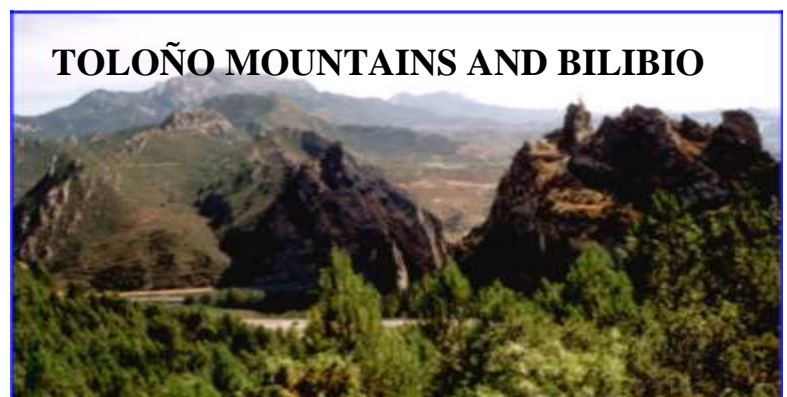
SAN FELICES HERMITAGE



VULTURE COLONY

If we're a little lucky we might see a colony of vultures that frequents the area. We must not forget that we are in a area classified as special protection of birds (ZEPAS), despite the continuous degradation that the environment has been suffering in recent years, due to the exploitation of a quarry, the construction of the motorway, the installation of antennas, power lines ... etc.

Despite all these aggressive actions, this area of the Obarenes Mountains still has a rich vegetation and fauna that is worth preserving.



TOLOÑO MOUNTAINS AND BILIBIO

We continue the route crossing the bridge over the motorway and following a good path on the right, which after several bends and a first ascent, already places us at a certain height, entering the first pine forests and with a fantastic view of the Riscos de Bilibio and the Sierra de Toloño behind us. This first ascent is followed by a more relaxed stretch between pine trees, following another short ascent to another small hill (666 meters).

A few meters before this, and after having started this last slope, we have on our left the path, which would allow us to leave the main route, and take the other alternative.

If we have chosen the main route, once on a first hill, we descend towards a lower hill and before the Pucherillo Fountain. The aforementioned hill (631 mts.), would be the connection point of the main route, if we choose to make only half of the route. We continue descending to the right and we leave aside what was once a welcoming fountain, and unfortunately no one has bothered to restore it.

It is a pity that despite its name, and the effort made by some people to avoid it, water has stopped flowing at the Fuente del Pucherillo several years ago, without knowing very well what the reason was.

We continue descending among oaks, holm oaks and the occasional farmlands, until we reach the old salt mines and the abandoned village of Herrera (560 meters). Here there is a stream to the right of the path, next to a bend and shortly after the ruins of the last houses, but we are wary of the potability of its water.



After a strong ascent of about 300 meters, after passing by some artificial caves, we arrived at the entrance of the Herrera Monastery, inhabited by Camaldolese monks. If you want to visit, you must go on Tuesdays, Thursdays or Saturdays from 9:30 to 11:30. and from 15:30 to 17:30, as indicated on the front door.



The path continues between the oak grove in a slight ascent, until you reach a crossing with another well marked path (630 meters), which goes to the right to San Juan del Monte. We continue to the left. We go on with a long ascent, leaving the summit of the Monte Rave of 862 meters to the right, and passing next to the water intake of "Portillo", to reach the hill of the same name. We are at an approximate height of

714 meters, being the highest point of the whole route.

Here we can enjoy a beautiful panoramic view of Villalba and a large part of the Rioja Alta, besides a well-deserved rest, as we have already done the hardest part of the tour.

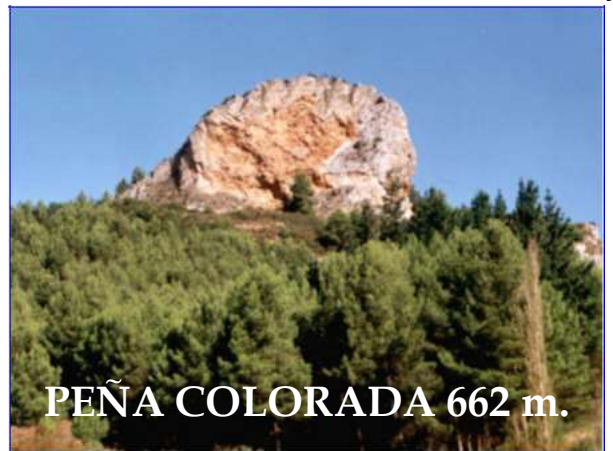


RESERVOIR EL PORTILLO

From this natural hill, the route is relaxed with flat stretches and a slight descent. We leave on our left Peña Escalera of 810 meters. We pay attention to a crossing on our left, and after a last and short ascent, we continue descending, to approach again the hill of Pucherillo, passing between pine trees.

Once here, we take the right at a crossing, towards the south and in a short time we find a new crossing (525 meters) between farmlands and vineyard, known as "Agua del Puerto". If we make the descent by bicycle, we must take the appropriate precautions in this stretch, due to its slope.

Here we go to our left (East), and along good paths (we can see Peña Colorada on our left), we return to the starting point at the Riscos de Bilibio, completing the route for a stretch of that is believed was the old Roman road that connected Haro and Miranda



PEÑA COLORADA 662 m.

***Suggestions:**

- It is advisable to take water with you, although it can be taken at the Riscos de Bilibio fountains, which have been conditioned some years ago. As we have already mentioned, the Pucherillo Fountain is dry. In Herrera there are some streams, but we do not know their potability, so we will just use them to refresh ourselves.

- If you are going to do the route on a mountain bike, it is **totally advisable to wear a helmet**, especially on the descents.

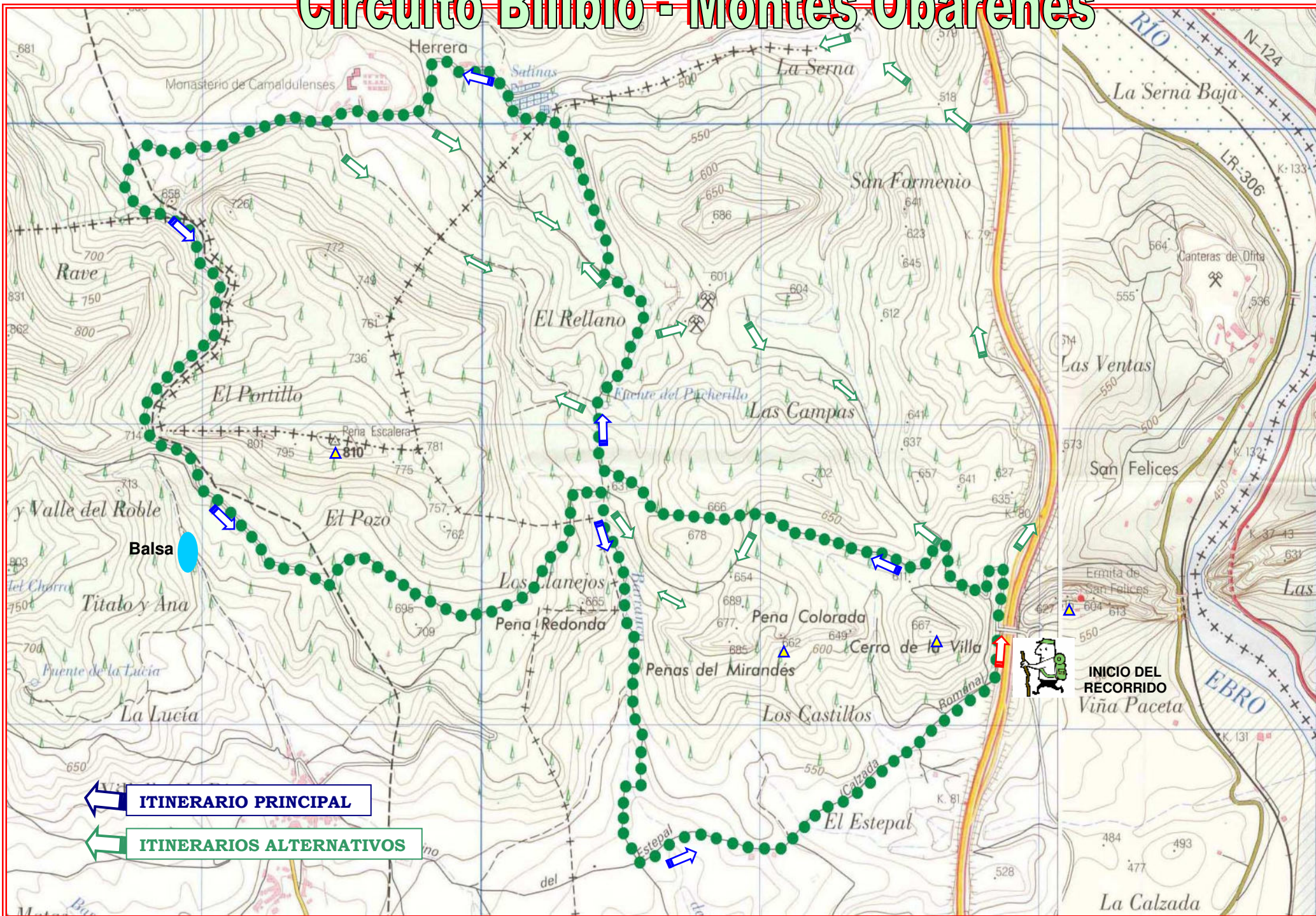
-Let's not forget at any time, that we must respect Nature. Let's not abandon any waste, avoid making unnecessary noises, respect the plants and animals that we can find.

* **Signposting**: Once there were green and white marks, which today are practically imperceptible.

* **Distance**: 16 kms. approximately.

* **Times and distances are approximate.**

Circuito Bilibio - Montes Obarenes



ITINERARIO PRINCIPAL

ITINERARIOS ALTERNATIVOS

INICIO DEL RECORRIDO
Viña Paceta

* 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).