



MOUNTAIN

## Toloño 1.277 mts. From San Ginés (Labastida)

Pablo Vozmediano Salazar

- \* **SATARTING POINT:** San Ginés Natural Park (650m).      **ALTITUDE:** 621 mts.
- \* **TIME REQUIRED:** 1h. 10' for the ascent, at a quiet pace and 45' for the descent.
- \* **DIFFICULTY:** Easy.    \* **CARTOGRAPHY:** Map 170-I (Labastida) esc. 1:25000 of the I.G.N.
- \* **REMARKS:** We are not going to find water on this route. We can take it next to the San Ginés hermitage.

El Toloño has a wide range of possibilities, concerning ascent itineraries. But this is probably the most frequented due to the proximity of Labastida and Haro. This is not the easiest one, as the most reliable access is probably the one that starts from the road from Ribas de Tereso to Peñacerrada. But we are going to describe in general terms the ascent from the beautiful and well-kept place of San Ginés, where we can also get our water supply at the fountain next to the hermitage.

To arrive at San Ginés if we are coming from Haro, when we reach the Stop sign in Labastida, we turn to the left towards Vitoria until a street before a roundabout, on the right-hand side. There are some signs indicating San Ginés Natural Park. We leave the town along this street and we already place on the paved path that goes in 2 or 3 km. to the hermitage and recreational area of **San Ginés**.

There is large car park, a fountain, tables, some playground equipment and good shade in the summer. Also, in the summer season a bar usually operates behind the hermitage.

We take the San Ginés car park in Labastida as our starting point.

**0h. – San Ginés car park (650 mts.).** At the end of the car park, in the left corner, there is a bifurcation of paths. The one on the right goes to the Toloño (there are some stone landmarks). The widest track on the left goes towards the western slope of Toloño, San Cristóbal and Salinillas, passing by the place known as “Tabuérniga”. At the bifurcation we follow the narrowest path, which goes straight to the mountain, we pass a water intake hut, which we leave on our right after 3'. We follow towards the base of the mountain, and after approximately 7', we leave the main path to take a stony path that goes to the left and passes under some holm oaks. This is a small short-cut of the same track we just left.

We are gaining altitude along this path and soon we reach a path that comes from the right (11'). We follow it to the left, and after about 40 meters, we leave it to continue ascending along the path that comes out from the right edge and continues gaining altitude among some small pines.

**1.a \* We can also continue along that path and connect with the path further up. To do this, we continue along this one for about 8' more, until we find a crossing with another path on the right. If we continue going up through this crossing, we connect in about 10' with the path of the normal way of San Ginés (30' from San Ginés).**

Following our route, in a couple of more minutes (13') we cross a new track and the path continues gaining altitude on the left diagonal, with a greater inclination. After about 21', we arrive at a flat area where the ascent gives us a break. The path becomes wider and we can contemplate below on the left a beautiful panoramic view of the River Ebro on its course through Briñas and Haro.

We ignore a wide path that comes from the right, as well as the wide path that descends from the left (see 1.a, above). Now we continue without losing altitude towards the western slope of Toloño. After 25' we leave a new detour to another path to our right and continue along the path (or rather a firebreak) towards the rocks in front of us. We also leave on the left a steep firebreak (28') that descends towards Tabuérniga.

The path gets steeper at 30' and during 10', it barely give us a break. They are a succession of short slopes, somewhat pitiful. At about 40', we leave a bifurcation on the right that takes a short-cut a stretch of the path, which here makes a short left turn. A little further up they connect and if you wish, you can continue shortening another small stretch.

**Ruins of the Humilladero Hermitage 1,060 m / 46'.** In this place, better known by some of us as "The 3 walls" (as only three walls remain of the hermitage), our itinerary converges with the one coming from Ribas de Tereso and with another variant that goes up from San Ginés and where we will go down later. There is a beautiful view from here, especially towards Las Conchas and the Obarenes Mountains to the west.

Behind the three walls we can see the path that goes up decidedly to the mountain. It passes by a small grove and after a few meters, a flanking to the right begins, gaining altitude quickly, now by a mountain path that crosses channels on the slope, formed by erosion. We are in **1h.** next to the ruins of the **Monastery of Toloño**, on its right side, where we can still see some well-preserved remains of it, as well as some deep circular **refrigerators** built in ashlar stone, a few meters below and to the left (SW) of the monastery. After leaving the ruins on the left and crossing a wire fence, we arrive at some open fields, located on a wide plain and where we can usually find cows or horses.

We must cross these open fields leaving the ruins of the monastery behind us (the path gets lost in the grass here ...) and try to locate a red paint mark on a rock in front of us on the other side of the open field. We can also find traces of other yellow and white marks. There we can take up the stony path again and it is going to be difficult to lose it again. It gains altitude again among the boxwood bushes and immediately passes a hillock before the main summit.

From the top of this small hillock, we have a beautiful panoramic view of the open fields, the ruins of the Monastery of Toloño and the **Peña del Castillo** (a large isolated rock, which has a letterbox, and is located behind the ruins of the monastery, and which can be reached by climbing on some of its sides).

Once we have passed this small hillock, we follow another short flat stretch and we already see the summit in front of us, surmounted by a Cross with a letterbox, a small metal pyramid and another letterbox on its right. We are in the border between La Rioja and Álava. **We have spent 70' to reach the Toloño** at a quiet pace.

The views from this summit, if we have good visibility, are magnificent. To the south we can see practically all of Rioja Alta, with the meanders formed by the Ebro river in Briñas, Gimileo and Briones, in the foreground, and in the background from the Sierra of Cebollera to the Sierra of la Demanda and San Millán. To the west, we see Mount San Cristóbal and the end of the Sierra of Toloño, sinking into the Conchas de Haro, as well as a large part of the Obarenes Mountains being lost in the distance in the province of Burgos. To the north, Euskadi, with the green and wooded lands of Alava in the foreground, and with the unmistakable silhouettes of Gorbea, Anboto, Aizkorri and many other well-known mountains. And to the east, we have the rest of the Sierra of Toloño, with the wooded summits of Atxabal, San León, Eskamelo, and the rugged peaks of Palomares, Cruz del Castillo ... etc., before merging with the Sierra de Codés in Navarra.

**\* Toloño has other heights also known as Toloño, in its extreme west, (we know it as the Los Angeles letterbox, at 1,252 meters), and in its extreme east, known as Peña del León, at 1,206 meters, as well as the Peña del Castillo at 1,262 meters, all of them with letterboxes.**

#### **\*\* DESCENT ALTERNATIVE:**

We can make the descent by the same route in about **45'**, or by the other alternative that we comment below, and that goes down more directly to San Ginés from the Hermitage of the Humilladero.

In the past it was a widely used path, but nowadays less people are coming up by this path, so there are already stretches that are starting to be closed. In any case, you can use the path without any problem.. \* If the branches are wet it is preferable to discard it.

Once again in the ruins of the Hermitage of El Humilladero (**0'**), we go down a few meters to the south, to the path that goes up from Ribas de Tereso, leaving on the right the path where we have gone up before. We follow the Ribas path to the left for barely 20 meters, until we find a small footpath that goes out to the right and enters little by little among the small forest of holm oaks.

The footpath runs mostly through forest and at **13'** we reach a forest path. After 30 or 40 metres, we must go out to the right, and look again for the continuation of the path on its left side, where it continues descending steadily for 2' until another path that we simply have to cross (15') and continue descending again along the path. It continues losing altitude quickly and we cross a new path again (20').

Finally, in **23'** we are already on the base of Toloño, on the wide path that descends to the San Ginés car park, where we arrive in about **29'** from the Hermitage of El Humilladero.

# Pictures of the tour

## Starting in San Ginés





Peña del Castillo and Monastery



Neveras



Monastery and Peña del Castillo



Monastery Ruins



Route from the Monastery to the summit



Toloño Summit



Toloño Letterbox



Toloño Summit







# Toloño por San Gines



**San Gines**  
650 m.

**Toloño O.**  
1.252 m.

**P. del Castillo**  
1.262 m.

**Peña del Agujero**  
**TOLOÑO**  
1.271 m.

**Monasterio del Toloño**  
(ruinas)

**Ruinas del Humilladero**

**Peña La Cruz**

**Terralatee**

**San Gines**

**A Ribas de Tereso**

**Rincon del Soto**

**Las Ginebras**

**La Atalaya**

**Catarrillo**

**Uriar**



## \* 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](mailto:www.pablovozmediano@yahoo.es) or on the telephone number **699 001252** (Pablo Vozmediano Salazar).