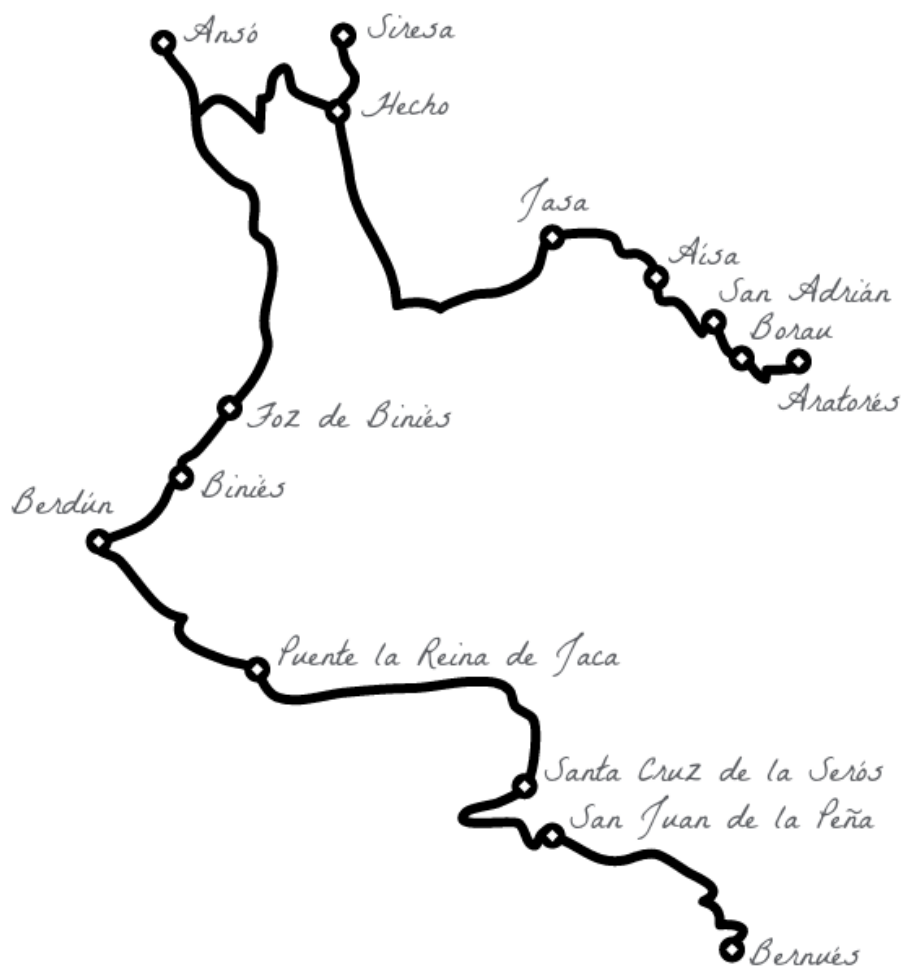




# Origins of the Reino Route

This route leads us to the **greenest valleys of the Aragonese Pyrenees**: *Hecho* and *Ansó*. The Atlantic influence on the climate, with more rain and milder temperatures, together with the lower altitude of the mountains, give these valleys a softened aspect that contrasts with the rest of the Aragonese Pyrenees.

The leisurely tour of these beautiful places will also allow us to discover the origins of the **Reino de Aragón**, by visiting places such as the impressive *Monasterio de San Juan de la Peña* with its royal pantheon and the valleys that resulted in the birth of Aragón.





## Directions and points of interest

Congratulations, you are going to enjoy the slow driving route "**Origins of the Reino Route**". Follow the directions that we give you below and don't miss any of the details of these really marvellous places. **Let's go!**

## DEPARTURE

This route begins in Aratorés, which is 1.5 hours by car from Huesca heading towards Jaca, then France.

## *Aratorés*

**Aratorés** is a small town that sits on a plain, at the foot of the *Sierra de los Ángeles* and not far from the *Aragon River*. It is one of the villages in the valley that has known how best to preserve the **traditional architecture** and its **rural surroundings**. A walk through its quiet streets allows you to contemplate a good sample of well-preserved or restored buildings of interest. Its highlights are the *parish of San Juan Bautista*, of **Roman origin** (12th century), extended and reformed in the baroque era. However, the best known feature of the temple is the **stone incrusted on the outside**, next to the façade, dating back to the **year 901** and deriving from an old hermitage near the town.

**Services:** Accommodation

### Point 1

Starting the route in Aratorés, you travel 3.7km along the winding road to the west until you reach Borau. Halfway down, there is a roundabout.

## *Borau*

**Borau** is a town located more than 1,000 metres above sea level and crossed by the *River Lubierre*. It has the status of a **village**, which indicates its importance in the past as a population centre. The traces of that splendour are present throughout the **town centre** in the façades of some of its buildings and in the entity of many of the houses, which have been restored with an exquisite taste.

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Its narrow cobblestone streets full of details, its **church from the 16th century** keeping watch from the top of the town, the slate roofs and slabs, and the **Pyrenean chimneys**, make it one of the best preserved nuclei in the area. **Borau** is also an excellent starting point for a stay in the *Pyrenees*. A few kilometres from *Jaca* and the ski resorts of *Astún*, *Candanchú* and *Le Somport*, it also offers an extensive **network of marked trails**.

**Services:** Restaurant, Accommodation

## Point 2

From Borau, you head north for 1km until you reach a dirt road on the right towards the Hermitage. This is signposted.

## *Chapel of San Adrián de Sasabe*

Very close to *Borau* is **San Adrián de Sasabe**, which was one of the **most important monasteries of the Early Middle Ages**. Only the **beautiful Roman church** currently remains as the only vestige of the monastery that existed there. The first Episcopal headquarters in Aragon is located at the confluence of two ravines, in a strange place that is unlikely as a location for any building, so some powerful reason must have been responsible for its promoters deciding to build it there.

It is a **Roman temple (10th century)** which, like the nearby chapel of *Iguácel*, combines the styles of Lombard Romanesque and Jaques, which points to the different periods of its construction. It has good capitals and some inscriptions of great interest and is one of the most important monasteries in the history of Aragon. According to the legend, this monastery was also one of the locations of the **Holy Grail** in the Pyrenees on its trip to *San Juan de la Peña* and later to the *Cathedral of Valencia*.

## Point 3

Return by the dirt road to the main road; where you turn right heading northwest until arriving at Aísa.

## *Aísa*

**Aísa** gives name to one of the **most beautiful and unknown valleys of the Aragonese Pyrenees**. The town is located more than 1,000 metres above sea level south of the *Aspe peak*, one of the most spectacular landscapes of the Pyrenees.

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The prestigious **ski resort of Candanchú**, the most veteran ski resort in the country, is also integrated into the extensive municipality. The nucleus of **Aísa** stands out for its excellent state of conservation of a good part of its houses and for the careful renovations that have managed to remain faithful to the unmistakable style of popular mountain architecture. Slate roofs, beautiful chimneys and façades with exposed stone are reproduced with pleasant harmony throughout the town centre. This town, together with *Jasa, Aragüés del Puerto, Ansó, Hecho and La Canal de Berdún*, make up the ***Protected Landscape of the Natural Park of the Western Valleys***.

**Services:** Restaurant, Accommodation

#### Point 4

The section from Aisa to Jasa is especially winding, including some very narrow sections. From Aísa, turn left and take the A2605 north for a total distance of 9.8km.

## Jasa

The small municipal area of **Jasa** is hidden on the left bank of the *Osia river valley between mid-mountain lands dotted with forests*. The **town centre** sits on the edge of a terrace overlooking the mouth of the *Larrigo ravine*.

The parish church of *Nuestra Señora de la Asunción* stands out in a group of traditional mountain architecture. Embroideries, such as the *Sandiniés*, are spread across the municipal area, which complete the panorama of traditional architecture. A network of **traditional trails** and modern tracks allow access to any corner of the municipality, highlighting the beautiful views that are found at the top of the *Sierra de Luesia*, the top of which can be accessed comfortably by the road from *Aisa*. Part of its municipal district is occupied by the ***Natural Park of the Western Valleys***.

**Services:** Restaurant, Accommodation

#### Point 5

From Jasa, turn left and join the road that comes down from Aragüés del Puerto, another of the Pyrenean jewels (A2605). Upon leaving, you cross the Osia river. You then go west until you join the A176 where you turn right going north to Hecho. This section is 14.8km.

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## Hecho/Echo

The **Valle de Hecho/Val de Echo** is one of the places in the **Pyrenees** that is worth discovering. Besides having splendid natural surroundings, in which there are still animals such as the **brown bear** or the **bearded vulture**, the inhabitants have known how to preserve their traditions and culture. The variety of the Aragonese language, the *cheso*, is one of its jewels. The **Selva de Oza** is one of the most beautiful corners of the Pyrenees. A beautiful mixed forest formed by firs, pines and beech trees. Other unique places are the spectacular *congesto de la Boca del Infierno*, the *valle de Guarrinza*, covered with green meadows.

The village of **Hecho/Echo**, which gives its name to the valley, stands out for its well-preserved urban complex, famous for its particular traditional architecture. Walking through its streets means discovering a stone architecture, in which doors, walls, windows, balconies and chimneys are bestowed with their own personality. The church of *San Martín*, of Roman origin and from which you have a beautiful view of the city centre, the *Casa Mazo ethnological museum*, where you can admire the traditional costumes worn by the *chesos* until the end of the 20th century, or the open-air contemporary sculpture museum, make up an attractive enough panorama worthwhile stopping to visit.

**Services:** Restaurant, Accommodation, Petrol Station, Camping

### Point 6

From Hecho, take the road heading north after leaving by Calle Cruz Alta. It is then 2.4km to the Monastery of Siresa.

## Siresa

A few kilometres from *Hecho/Echo* is the impressive **Roman monastery of San Pedro de Siresa** (9th century). Its Carolingian origin testifies to the influence of the Frankish Kingdom in the **origins of Aragon**. The current **parochial church** is the only testimony of the monastery of *San Pedro*.

The external appearance of the building is captivating and its remarkable dimension expresses its past splendour. It has a Latin cross layout, a semicircular apse and a unique western portico. Several

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blind semicircular arches cover the body of the nave with strong buttresses that reinforce its power. The access by the foot area stands out for the **beautiful tympanum** with the traditional crimson. The temple, together with the **beautiful town of Siresa** which surrounds it, is one of the most unique urban complexes in the entire *Jacetania*. The tradition affirms that the Aragonese monarch **Alfonso I the Battler was baptised in the baptismal font**.

**Services:** Restaurant, Accommodation

#### Point 7

From Siresa, you take the road back towards Hecho, go past it and turn right at Paseo San Antón, turning right and taking the A176 towards Ansó.

## *Ansó*

**Ansó** is a **monumental village**, a living example of the Pyrenean folk architecture. This village has one of the best preserved urban centres of the Aragonese Pyrenees. Declared a **Historic Site, BIC** and included in the list of **most beautiful villages in Spain, its houses of defined architecture have an abundance of galleries, balconies, archways and typical chimneys that crown the wide roofs of the Ansofana roof tile**.

Among its houses and streets, which are born from the stone collected from the river, there is a **medieval tower** from the 14th century and the parish church of *San Pedro* (16th century). The Ansofians have managed to preserve their customs and traditions and proof of this is the clothing, one of the richest and most varied of the Peninsula. The **Ansofano suit** is **one of the oldest in Europe** and the hallmark of the valley. The costume and its history can be found in the **Museum of Costume of Ansó**.

The *hanging valley of Aguas Tuertas* (with a **megalithic dolmen** 5,000 years old) or the *Ibón de Estanés*, with emerald coloured waters, are just two examples of the splendid landscapes that we can admire in its municipal area.

**Services:** Restaurant, Accommodation, Camping

#### Point 8

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From Ansó, you return by the A176 heading south. After a while, the road continues into the A1602, heading towards Berdún. This route is 16.2km long and crosses over between the left and right banks of the Veral River with some spectacular scenery.

## *Foz de Biniés*

The **Foz de Biniés** is a spectacular **canyon** located between *Berdún* and *Ansó* that has been declared a **Site of Community Importance** (SCI) and forms part of the *Protected Landscape of Las Foces de Fago and Biniés*.

This **great fluvial gorge** of about 5 kilometres in length has been opened by the *Veral River* for centuries as a result of the erosion of limestones that form its bed. The result is a surprising landscape that results in one of the most beautiful gorges in the whole of the *Pyrenees* with vertical walls more than 200 metres high. **Mixed and deciduous forests** decorate the mountains together with impressive oaks and holm oaks. At the end of the road, to the north of the ravine in the direction of *Ansó*, we find the **viewpoint of La Foz de Biniés**, equipped with wooden benches and a panel with information on the birds that can be spotted.

### **Point 9**

This section continues from the previous. After reaching a high point, there is a road to the left leading directly to Biniés.

## *Biniés*

The town of **Biniés** is located at the entrance to the Ansó valley, bordering on *Hecho* and *Navarra*. In its urban centre two buildings stand out: the **parochial church of baroque style** and the **castle-palace of Los Urriés**.

The **church**, dedicated to *San Salvador*, consists of a nave with side chapels. The tower is square and composed of two bodies. The **castle**, which looks out over a wide landscape through which the *Veral River* flows, is privately owned and has a quadrangular base of small dimensions, the angles of which have four towers that are taller than the mural canvases that unite them. This castle-palace is considered one of the most important medieval strongholds of the region.

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## Point 10

To get to Berdún, return by the same road from Biniés and rejoin the A1602 road. Turn left and head southwest for 4.8km. Here you leave behind the Pyrenean landscape, the Foz de Binies and fields of almond trees and you reach a cereal plain.

## *Berdún*

The hamlet of the village of **Berdún** is grouped on the top of a hill from where the extensive cereal fields of the Berdñun Canal are dominated. This town is declared a **Site of Cultural Interest of the Camino de Santiago**. Walking through its streets you can still see the remains of its old wall, as well as one of the four gateways that it once had.

It has an interesting **urban centre**, where the abundance of coats of arms and shields on the houses tell us about its importance in history. Magnificent façades and other architectural and decorative details can be seen in mansions and manor houses, such as the *Marqués de La Cadena and Esclarín*. Among its buildings, the **monumental church of Santa Eulalia**. It is a large building made of stone and brick along different construction phases. In the interior, the balustrade of the choir and its lectern, eave and ashlar stand out, as well as the baroque organ and the main altarpiece dedicated to *Santa Eulalia*.

**Services:** Restaurant, Accommodation

## Point 11

Heading south through the Plaza Mercadal, you go down and leave behind the town of Berdún to rejoin the N240 for 9km.

## *Puente la Reina de Jaca*

**Puente la Reina** is the capital of the municipality that also includes *Santa Engracia* and *Javierregay*. It is a modern population centre that emerged spontaneously in a privileged location at the crossroads to *Pamplona, Jaca, Huesca, valles de Hecho, Ansó* and also *Aragüés del Puerto and Jasa*. This modern agglomeration takes its name from an ancient medieval bridge, the remains of which are hidden

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approximately a kilometre upstream of the current one. In the same plot of the modern neighbourhood, there was the town or village called Osturit or Astorito in medieval times. Astorito was the royal seat. The Kings of Aragon owned buildings there as well as rural properties. Mentioned in the Codex Calixtino, from the 12th century, it was considered one of the essential stages of the Camino de Santiago in Aragon. Donated to the monastery of Veruela, it became the property of the *jacetana* church in the 13th century, and was later depopulated.

**Services:** Restaurant, Accommodation, Petrol Station

### Point 12

Leaving Puente la Reina de Jaca and crossing the Aragón River, you follow the N240 eastwards. You then take the turning on the right for the A1603 towards Santa Cruz de la Serós and San Juan de la Peña. This section is 13.2km.

## *Santa Cruz de la Serós*

**Santa Cruz** is one of the localities of Aragon that has best preserved its traditional architecture, with stone houses topped with the typical tile roofs, beautiful fringed chimneys crowned by the famous scarecrows, windows, balconies, roofs... But in **Santa Cruz** don't miss out on a visit to the two temples: the **monumental church of Santa María** and the **church of San Caprasio**. With striking shapes, *Santa María* is one of the jewels of the **Aragonese Roman period** of the 12th century and its multi-storey bell tower is, without a doubt, the most spectacular of the Roman period in Aragon. The church has survived practically intact, while the various dependencies of the old monastery were disappearing with the passage of time. In the lower part of the town, the *church of San Caprasio* is also remarkable as a prototype of the Roman period variant of the 11th century.

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**Services:** Restaurant, Accommodation

### Point 13

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From Santa Cruz de la Serós, you retake the A1603. This section is 8.2km along a winding road to the old and new monasteries of San Juan de la Peña.

## *San Juan de la Peña*

A few kilometres from **Jaca**, the **old monastery of San Juan de la Peña** shines with its own light in the list of medieval jewels. To visit this monastery, hidden under a gigantic rocky mass, is a chance to travel back in time to the cradle of the most legendary Aragon. This **authentic jewel of Roman period art** is one of the most emblematic monuments of **Aragon** for its extraordinary historical and artistic value, as its walls were witness to the origins of the **Reino de Aragón**.

Inside, with its extensive chronology, which begins in the 10th century, the primitive Mozarabic church stands out, the so-called *Pantheon of Nobles*, the upper church, consecrated in 1094 and the beautiful *Gothic chapel of San Victorián*. But above all, the **beautiful Roman period cloister stands out**, where the capitals represent biblical scenes of great expressiveness, and the **Royal Pantheon**, of neoclassical style and built in the 18th century. This pantheon houses up to **27 tombs**, among which *Ramiro I, Sancho Ramírez and Pedro I* are found.

**Services:** Restaurant, Accommodation

### **End of route**

Continuing along the same A1603 for 11.3km, along more winding stretches, you reach Bernúes, from where you can join the main Aragon Kings route (Reyes de Aragón) on the A1205.

## *Bernúes*

**Bernúes** is located on a hill on the **old royal road from Zaragoza to Jaca**, to the *south of Peña Oroel* and the *Sierra de San Juan de la Peña*.

It is a typical example of a town-street, the **urban area** preserves remarkable samples of popular domestic architecture like *Casa Bisús*, *casa infanzona* from the 17th century, or *Casa Gairín* from the 18th century. The *parish church of San Martín de Tours* is a baroque building with a rectangular layout, its walls lined internally with polychromatic stuccos that mask the humbleness of its building. The altarpieces of its chapels and especially the **main altarpiece** dedicated to La Asunción contribute to this. Over the entrance door there are the remains of a **Romanesque Christ** of unknown provenance.  
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