

Sierra del Jaido from Argovejo

Journey:	Circular
Way:	- On foot (6 h.)
Length:	12.6 kms.
Ascent slope:	1,050 m.
Descent slope:	1,050 m.
Recommended:	- spring - summer - autumn
Difficulty of the route:	High
Route:	From Argovejo en la Ermita de Nuestra Señora de Pereda to Ermita de Nuestra Señora de Pereda

Surrounding the Leonese Riaño reservoir, sharp limestone ridges rise that create a spectacular dolomitic landscape where the mountaineer will have serious difficulties choosing which one they want to travel through. To the south of the dam rises the Jaidos or Janos alpine massif, between the towns of Argovejo, Las Salas and Remolina. Touring the ridge formed by Los Jaidos, Peña Caballo and La Muga becomes a spectacular and aerial activity that will satisfy the most demanding mountaineers. The circular route that starts from the Hermitage of Nuestra Señora de Pereda de Argovejo is a most complete activity where we will travel along an old Roman road, beautiful beech forests and sharp, aerial limestone ridges. The route begins one kilometer before reaching the Leonese town of Argovejo at the Hermitage of Nuestra Señora de Pereda (1000 m). We begin walking north following the Camino Real del Esla, marked as hiking route PR-LE 36, an ancient Roman road that follows the valley of the Esla River. After two kilometers of pleasant walking, in the Remanganes meadows, we will have to turn sharply towards the east and begin to climb some steep ramps that will take us to a large canal that closes at the Saltadero pass. In this section we must pay close attention to the milestones to follow the best possible route.

The key step in the ascent to the Jaidos or Janos ridge is called El Saltadero. An ancient step semi-carved into the rock used by shepherds who traveled with their flocks along these steep cliffs. If the rock is dry, there will be no more problem than grabbing good holds and being impressed by the aerial nature of the step. On the other hand, if the rock is wet and slippery, you will have to redouble your attention and take precautions such as securing the passage with a rope or giving up the climb altogether.

The Saltadero pass is easily recognized by some large cliffs on its right that look like the head and hands of a nun praying, with a little imagination of course. The pass itself is a narrow ascending ledge, used by ancient shepherds, that crosses a rocky plate and has equipment (plates and straps) in case we want to secure it with rope. The difficulty is not very high but the exposure is high and it can be a good test to see if we can face the rest of the route with peace of mind. Once over the pass we follow a straight channel, Corte Clara until we reach our first peak of the day, Peña Caballo (1762 m). To continue along the ridge we go down to a narrow hill where we will find some curious stone formations and then we face the most complicated pass on the route, a narrow canal that takes us to the short northwest ridge of the first Jaido or Jano (1798 m). To reach the second Jaido or Jano we descend towards the southeast crossing rocky strips until we reach another hill. A little below the hill we look for a narrow turn that helps us cross a rocky ridge and enter a channel that ends very close to the summit. At the end of the canal we travel a short stretch of aerial ridge to reach the highest point of the route, Pico Jaido or Jano (1821 m).

The Jaidos or Janos seen from the Muga. The one on the left is the highest with its 1821 meters high.

A toponymic mystery arises with the names of several of the peaks that form this sharp mountain range. Although the National Geographic Institute names the highest peak as Jano, the inhabitants of the area call it Jaido, a toponym that could derive from the large beech forests that cover its slopes (hayedo - faedo - jaido). Also, according to the IGN map, we find two summits named Caballo at the beginning and at the end

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of the ridge. Could this place name come from a stone shaped like a horse's head at the beginning of the ridge? Who knows! The fact is that these toponymic mysteries will give food for thought to those who visit these rocks and if curiosity is great it is a good option to ask the townspeople of the towns to see what they tell us. From this panoramic vantage point we see our last objective on the crest, La Muga. To get there we go down the southern slope of the ridge and surround a height (1724 m) to a wide grassy hill where the ascent to the last summit of the day begins. On simple rocky terrain we reach a first elevation (1794 m) and after a small hill we reach La Muga (1804 m) where we find a small tower built with stones at the highest point. To get down from this summit we use the south face since the ridge is too difficult to continue on.

View of the two summits of La Muga from the descent of Jaido or Jano. You can see the small tower of rocks on the highest summit, the one on the right.

In this way we arrive at the great Collada de Celada (1619 m). We now continue along the ridge towards the southeast, skirting several limestone peaks to a point where the mountain range makes a turn towards the south, we climb to a small elevation (1677 m) to say goodbye to these beautiful mountains. It is time to leave the ridge and begin to descend towards the southwest through the wide head of the Arroyo de Llampas valley. Looking for the best steps through the vegetation we arrive at an area where several streams meet and there is a hut (1250 m). From there a track takes us down the valley without loss to Argovejo (1060 m). And traveling just over a kilometer by road we finish our journey arriving again at the Hermitage of Nuestra Señora de Pereda (1000 m).

ADDRESS AND MAP LOCATION

- **Postal address** Argovejo (Crémenes). NaN. León