

## Picos, Pilgrims and Posadas

### A GPS View of Cycling in Northern Spain

Here is some GPS documentation of the cycling trip to Northern Spain organized by Ottawa-based Cycleventures in September 2004. The trip was graded as difficulty level 2 to 3, but was generally acknowledged, *ex post*, as being closer to 3 than 2. For my first cycling tour ever, it was challenging but very enjoyable. The efforts were eased by perfect weather and were rewarded by magnificent scenery and wonderful people.

The tour included 11 cycling days and two rest days. During the 11 cycling days we covered over 800 km, at altitudes ranging from sea level to 1609 meters, with climbs as great as 1,400 meters and descents of over 1,300 meters. We crossed at least seven mountain passes. The average daily climb was over 1,100 meters, with total ascents exceeding 1,400 meters on three different days. The average daily descent was also over 1,100 meters, and there were two days in which it exceeded 1,800 meters. There were two consecutive days of 100 km of cycling, plus or minus measurement error. For a novice cyclist from Bangkok, where altitude generally varies by less than 3 meters above and below sea level, there were no easy days.

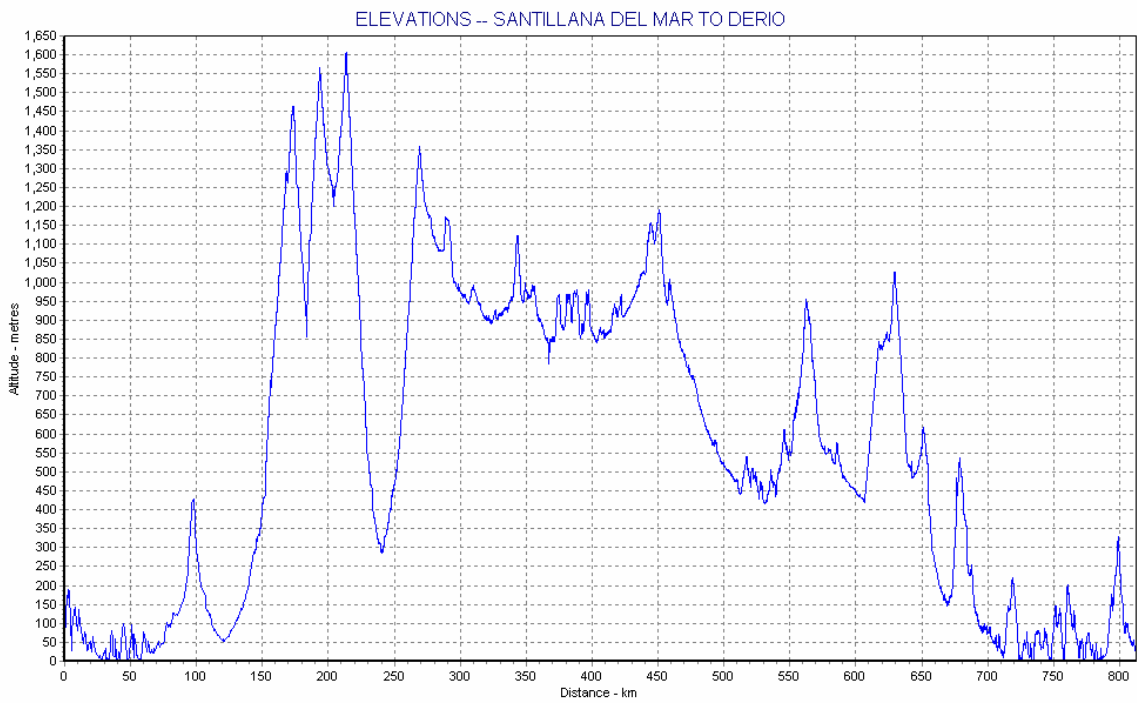
The table presents some basic summary data.

Trip Summary				
Date	Ascent (m)	Descent (m)	Net Climb (m)	Distance (km)
7 Sep	650.2	669.9	-19.7	47.2
8 Sep	658.5	609.0	49.5	68.2
9 Sep	1,593.1	742.3	850.8	62.9
10 Sep	1,271.7	1,837.0	-565.3	56.5
12 Sep	1,424.3	813.7	610.6	79.9
13 Sep	1,220.0	1,249.1	-29.1	89.0
15 Sep	842.5	1,241.9	-399.4	100.6
16 Sep	1,386.2	1,438.1	-51.9	97.1
17 Sep	1,460.8	1,803.1	-342.3	89.9
18 Sep	1,227.5	1,226.2	1.3	67.6
19 Sep	812.9	871.1	-58.2	48.3
<b>Total</b>	12,547.7	12,501.4	46.3	807.1
<b>Daily Average</b>	1,140.7	1,136.5	4.2	73.4

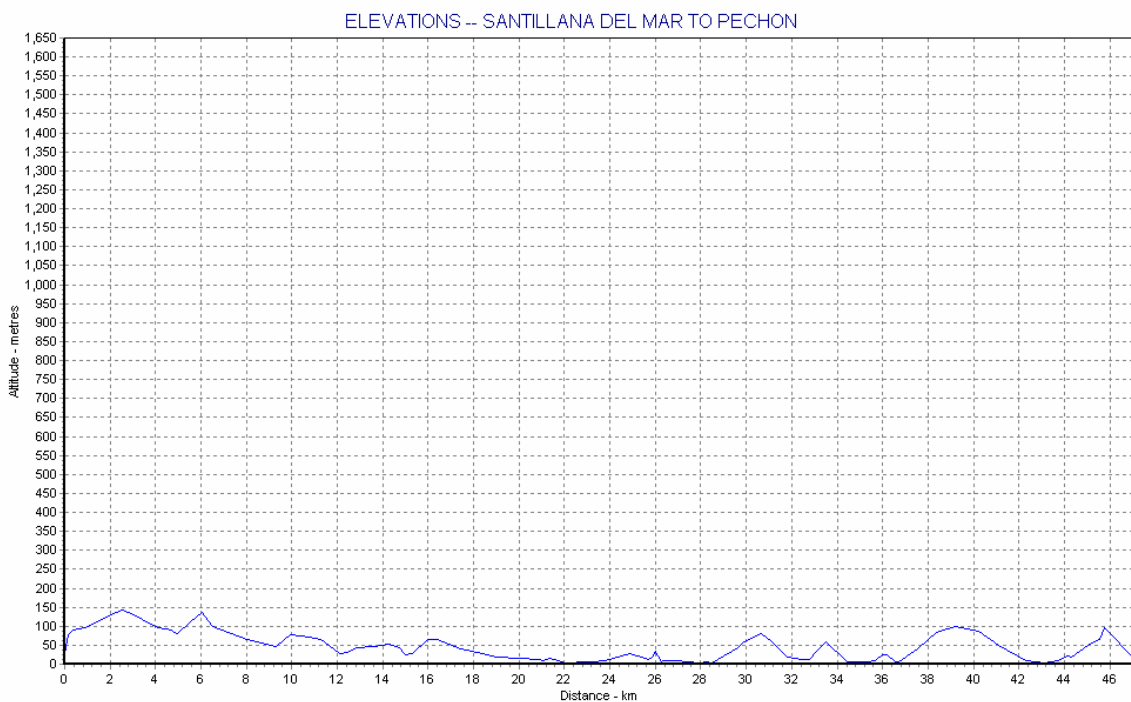
The cycling route started in Santillana del Mar, about 120 km west of Bilbao on the Bay of Biscay. It began along the hilly coastal roads to the small town of Pechon and then turned inland into the Picos de Europa, stopping in Villanueva, Posada de Valdeon, Potes and Aguilar de Campoo. We then emerged into the interior “plains” and the Rioja region (Burgos, Haro and Estella) and back into the heart of Basque country (Azpeitia and the seaside, cliff-perched Elantxobe) before returning to Derio on the outskirts of Bilbao.

The following pages show GPS tracks and elevation charts of the trip. The first charts show the entire trip and the subsequent ones show the same information on a day-by-day basis.

### Trip Overview

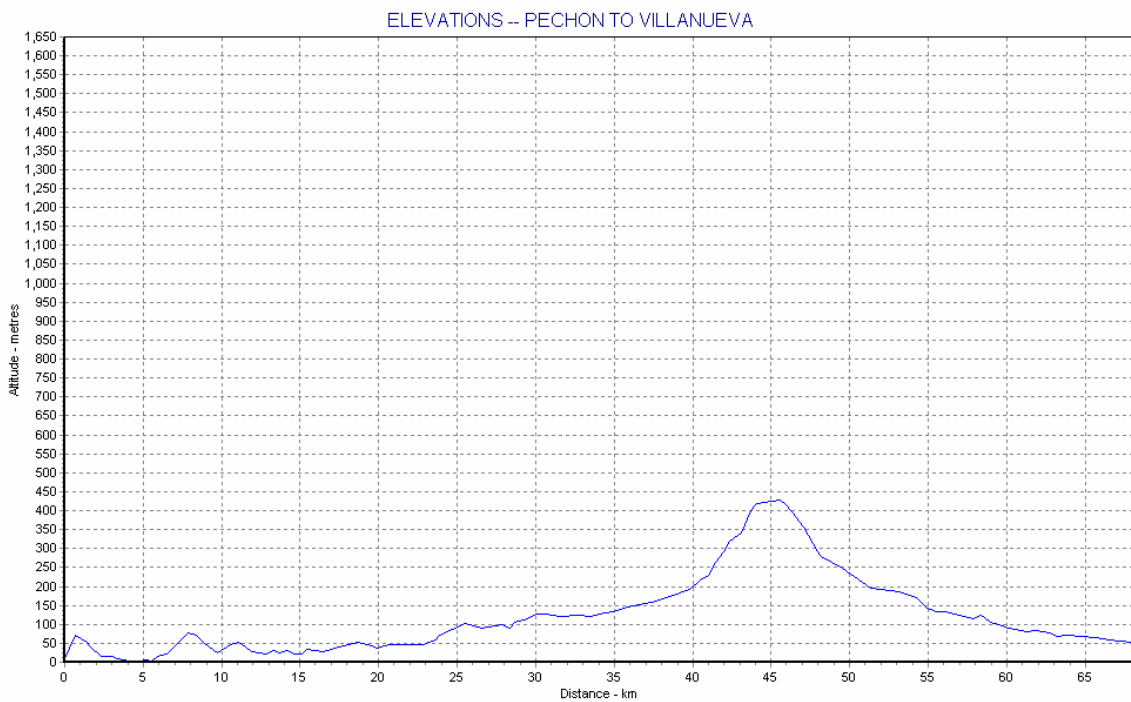
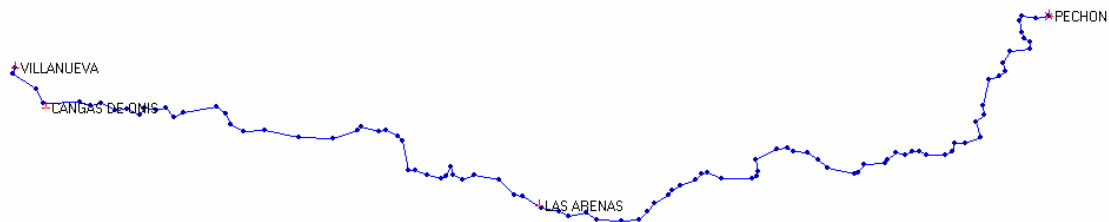


### Cycling Day 1: Santillana del Mar to Pechón



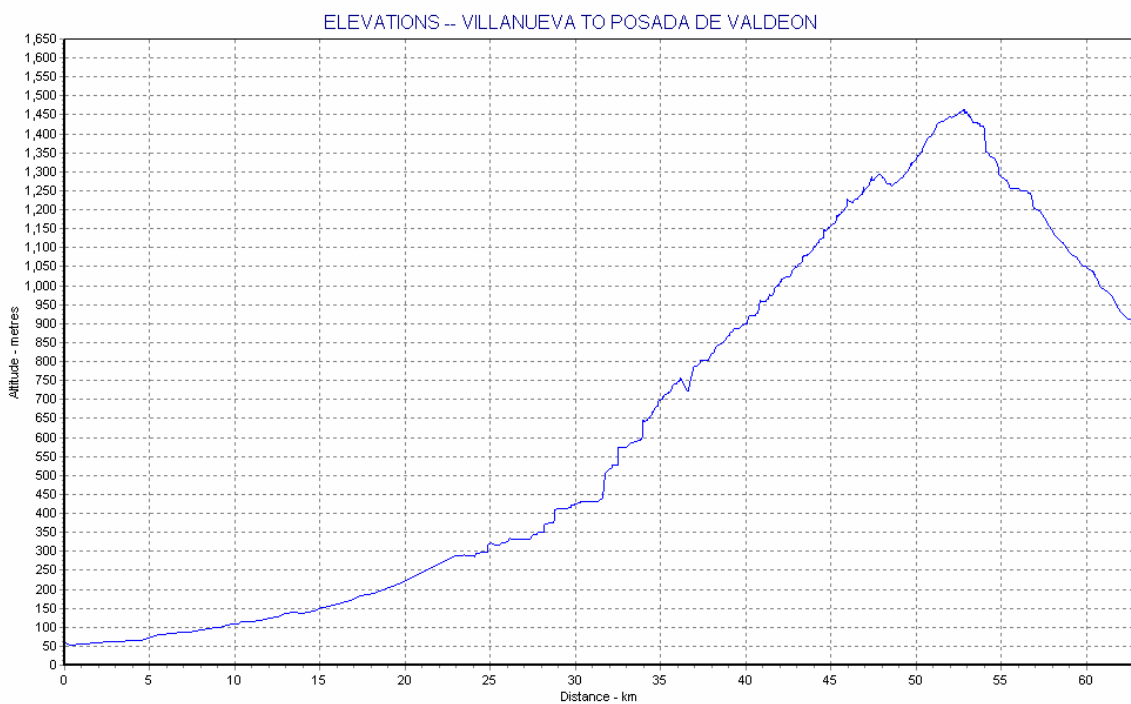
(distance: 47.2 km; ascents: 650 m; descents: 670 m)

### Cycling Day 2: Pechôn to Villanueva



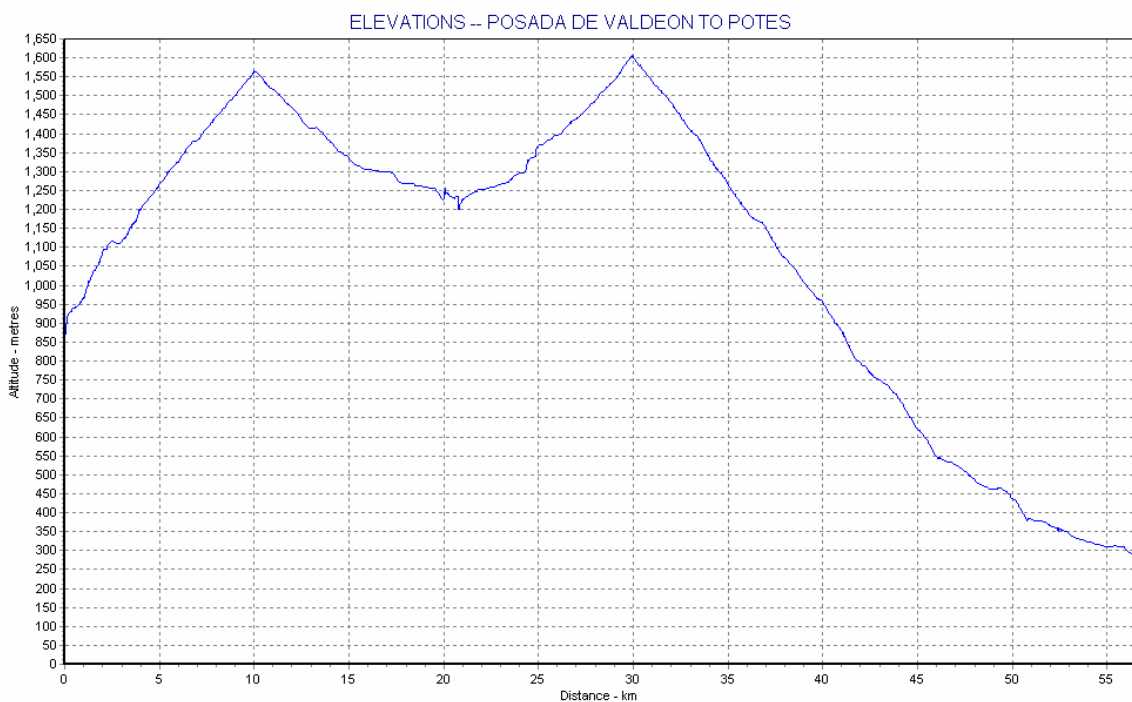
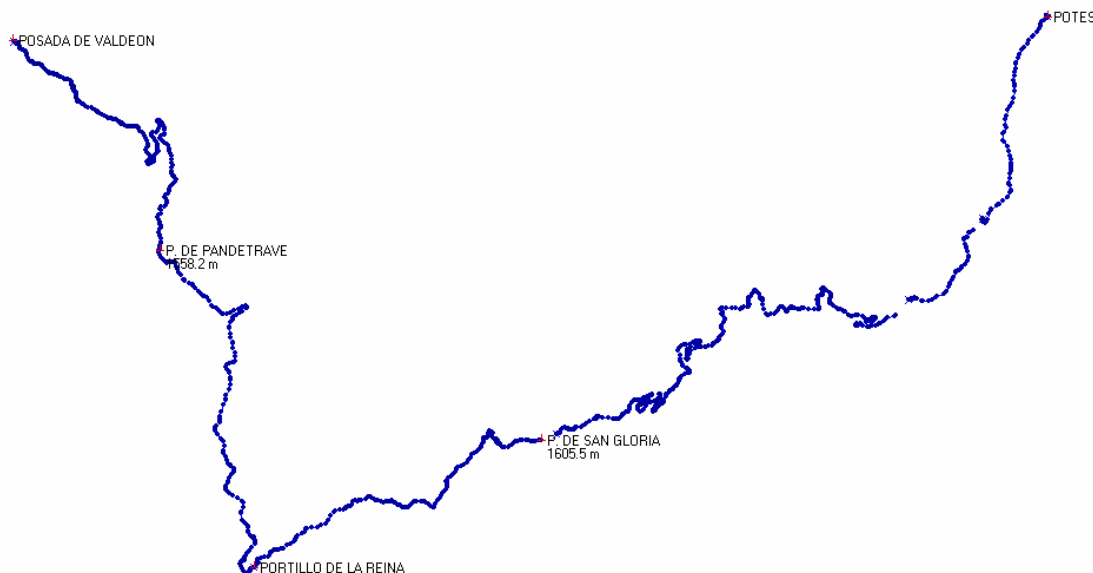
(distance: 68.2 km; ascents: 659 m; descents: 609 m)

### Cycling Day 3: Villanueva to Posada de Valdeon



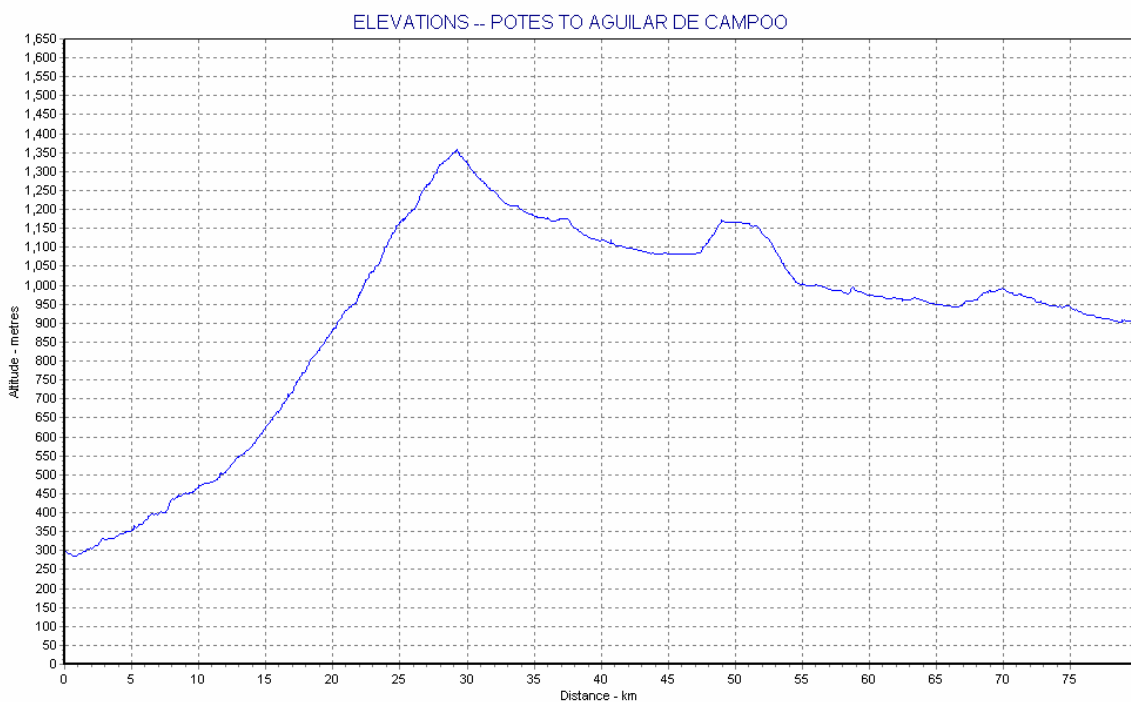
(distance: 62.9 km; ascents: 1,593 m; descents: 742 m)

### Cycling Day 4: Posada de Valdeon to Potes



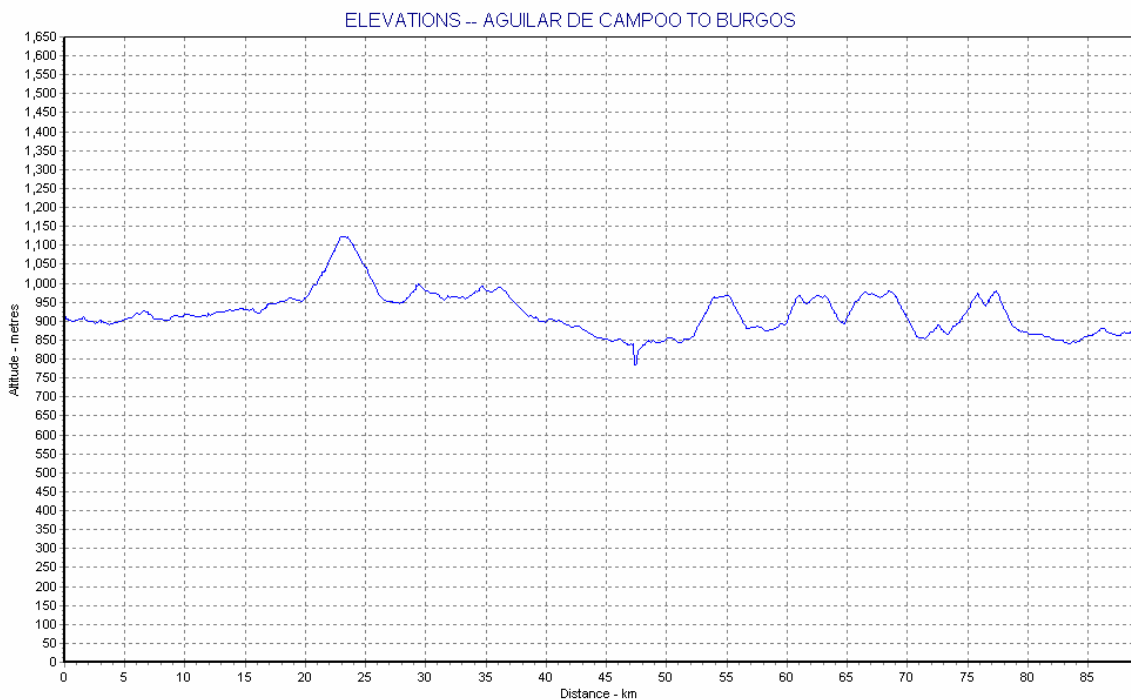
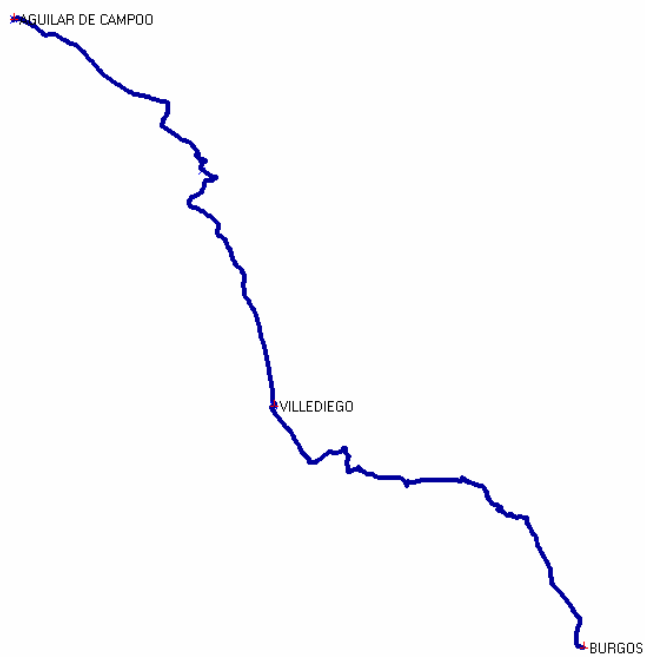
(distance: 56.5 km; ascents: 1,272 m; descents: 1,837 m)

### Cycling Day 5: Potes to Aguilar de Campoo



(distance: 79.9 km; ascents: 1,424 m; descents: 814 m)

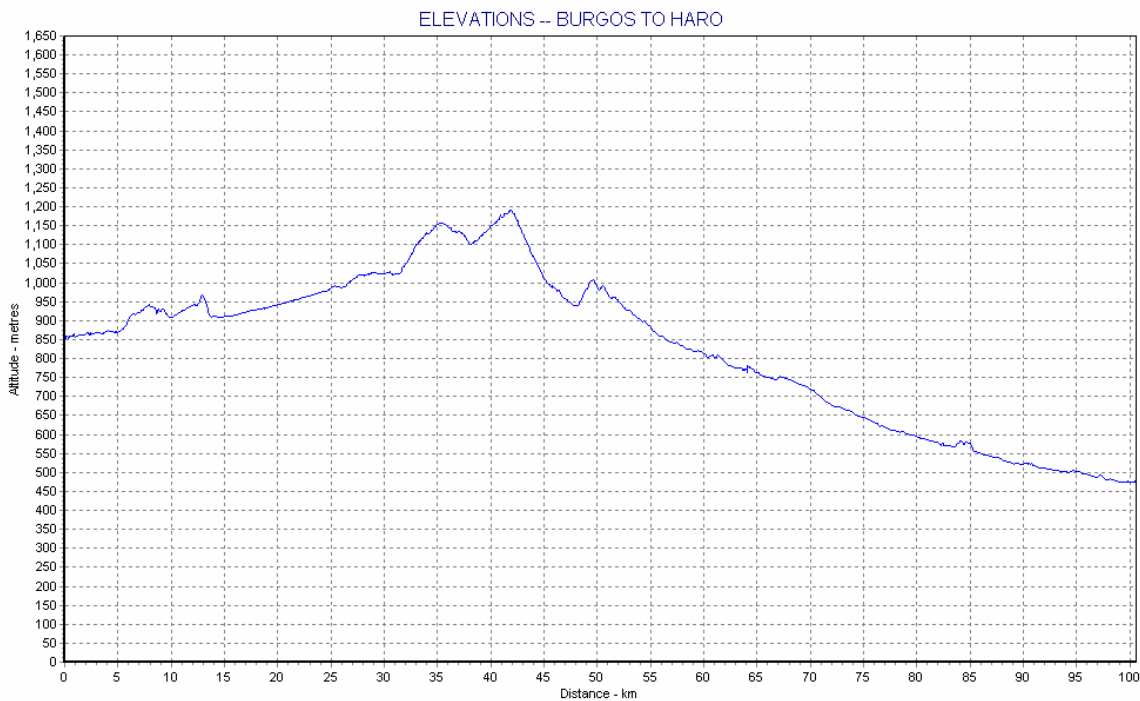
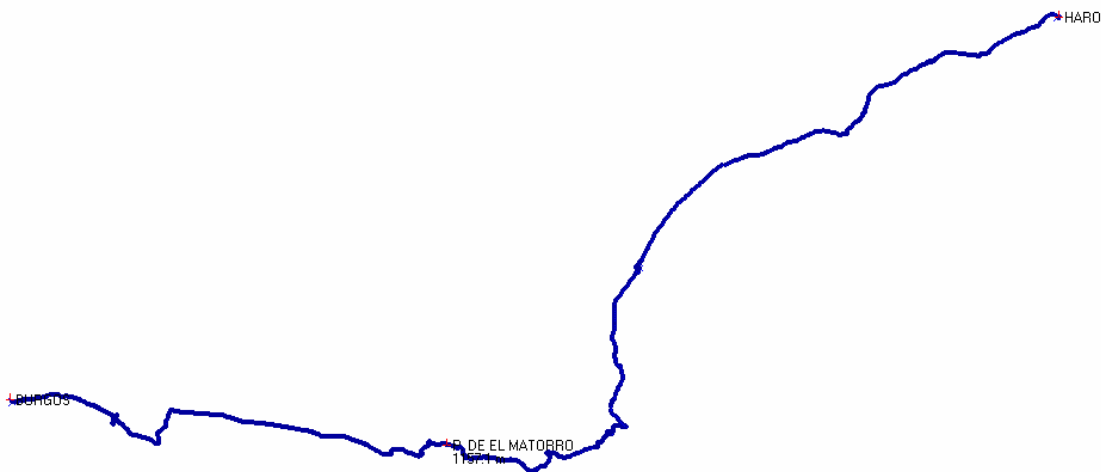
### Cycling Day 6: Aguilar de Campoo to Burgos



(distance: 89.0 km; ascents: 1,220 m; descents: 1,249 m)

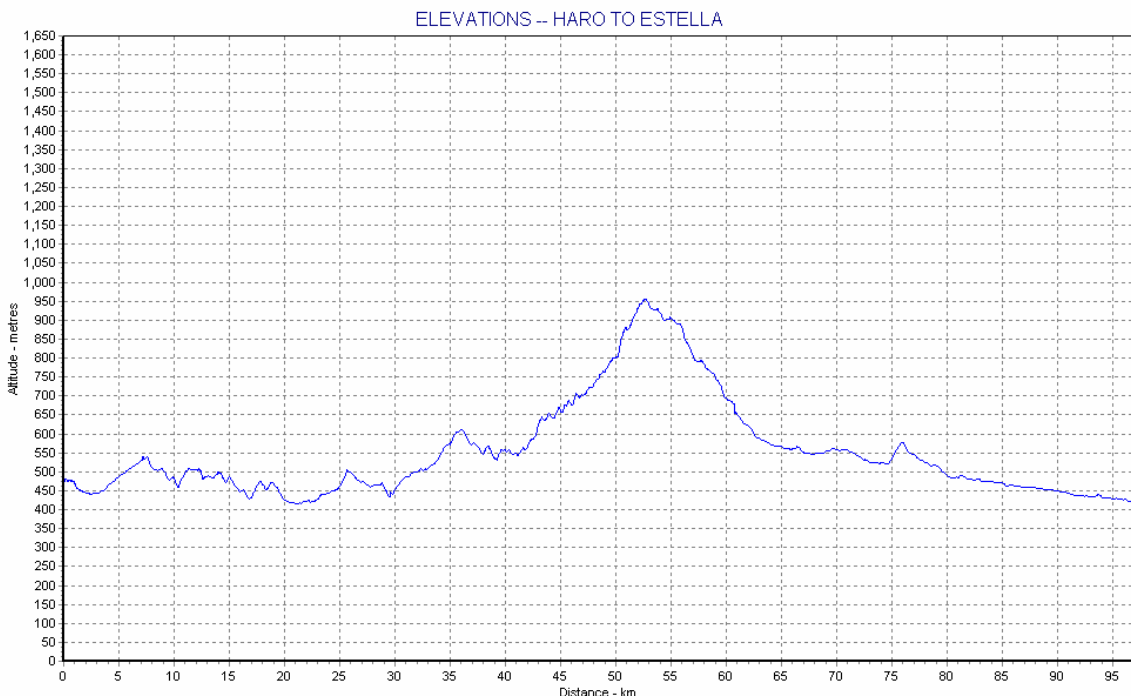
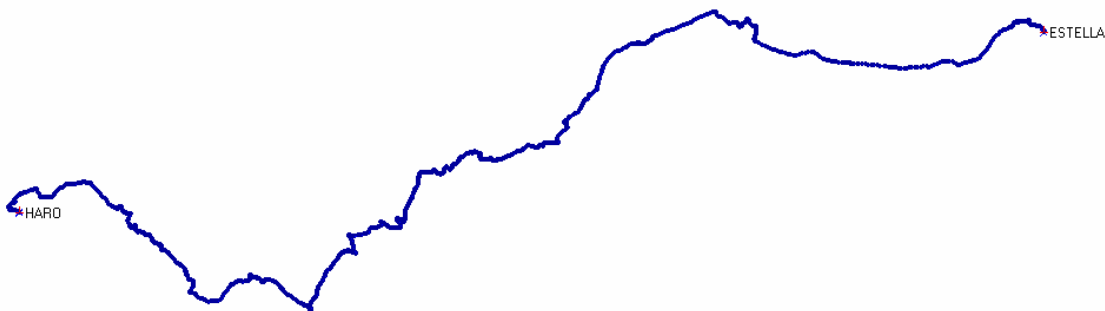


### Cycling Day 7: Burgos to Haro



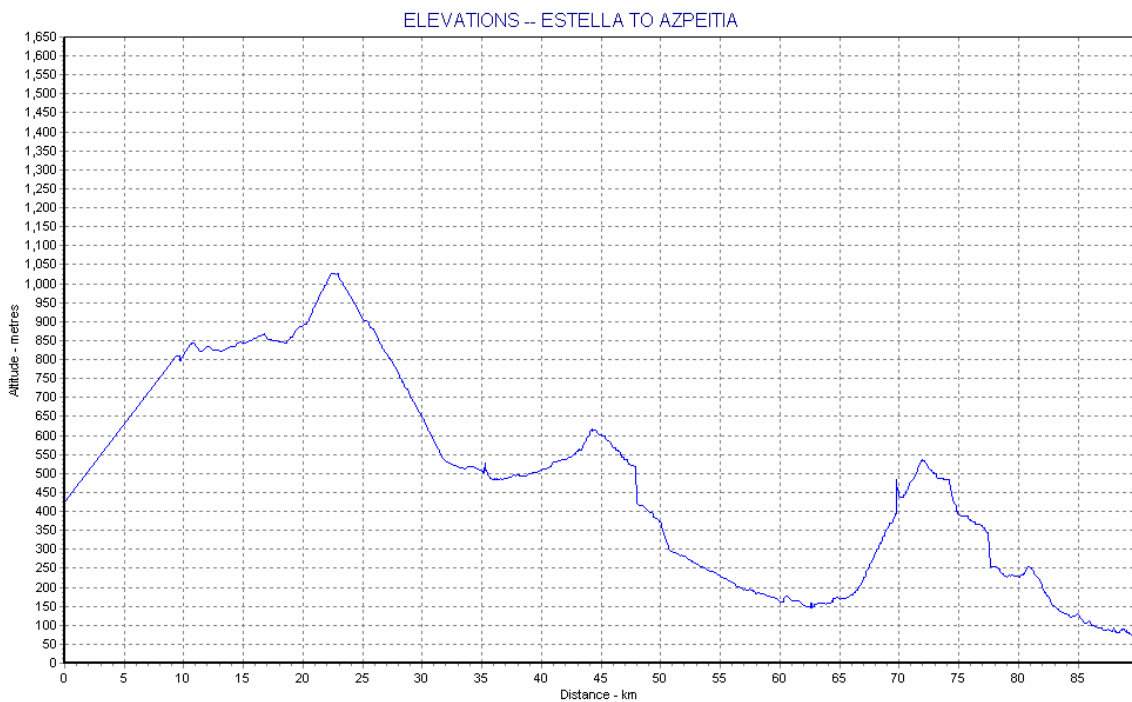
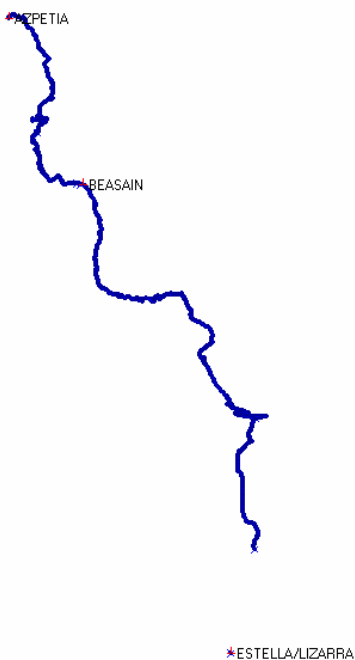
(distance: 100.6 km; ascents: 843 m; descents: 1,242 m)

### Cycling Day 8: Haro to Estella



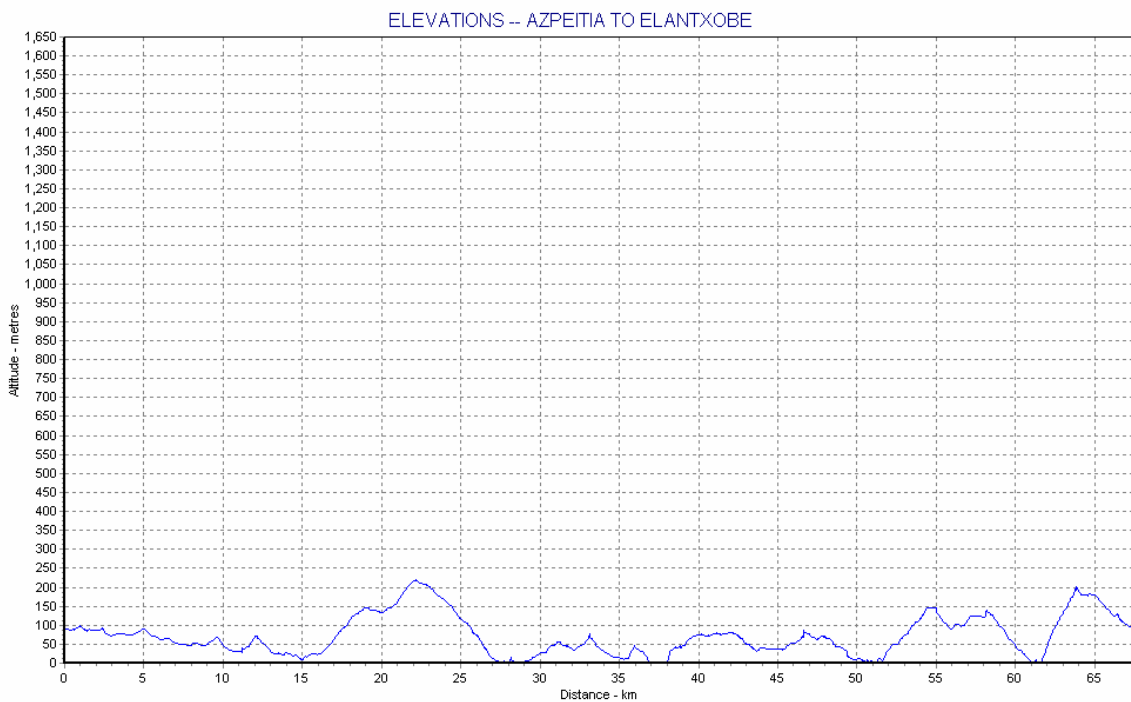
(distance: 97.1 km; ascents: 1,386 m; descents: 1,438 m)

### Cycling Day 9: Estella to Azpeitia



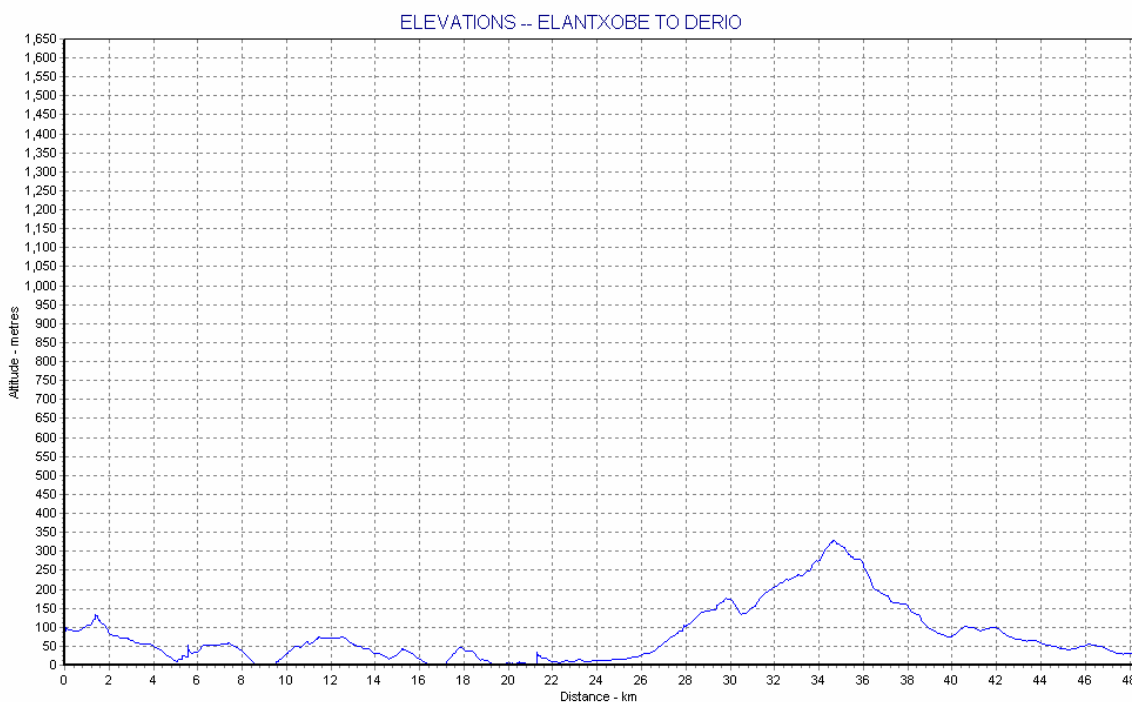
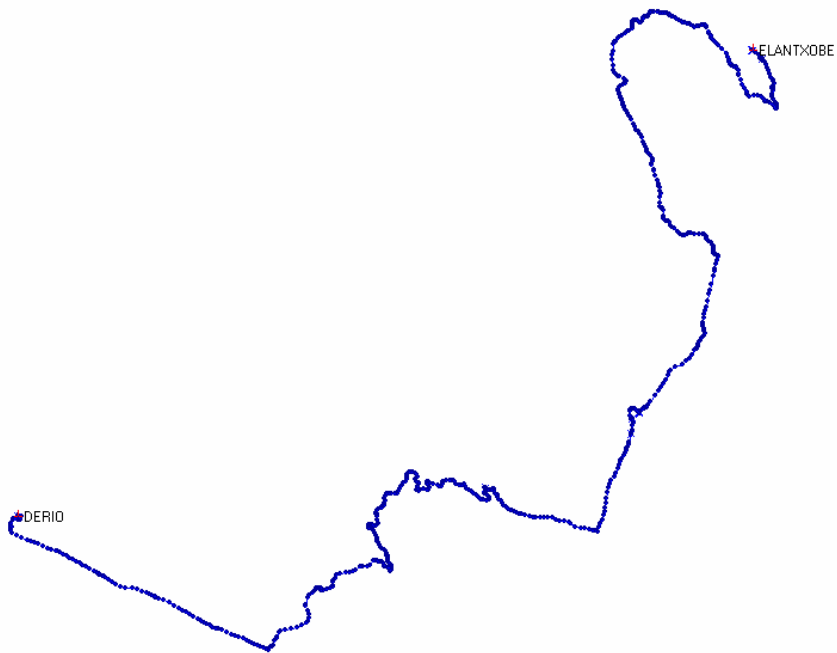
(distance: 89.9 km; ascents: 1,461 m; descents: 1,803 m)

### Cycling Day 10: Azpeitia to Elantxobe



(distance: 67.6 km; ascents: 1,228 m; descents: 1,226 m)

### Cycling Day 11: Elantxobe to Derio



(distance: 48.3 km; ascents: 813 m; descents: 871 m)