

This route begins in the Basque city of Irún right in the middle of the Puente de Santiago bridge on the border of France and Spain where you will see your fist Camino Marker, the famous yellow arrow and the shell, the Norte makes its way along the northern coast of Spain, passing through the provinces of Vizcaya, Cantabria, Asturias, and Galicia before reaching its final destination in Santiago de Compostela.

Along the way, pilgrims can experience the rugged beauty of the northern coast, with its towering cliffs, sandy beaches, and picturesque villages.

The Norte is the second most popular route among pilgrims; over 9,000 people every year take on the Camino de Norte on foot, bicycle or even horseback. They walk alone, with a partner, or in groups. However you take on the Camino, there's always a great sense of community, and you'll always see pilgrims passing each other with a welcome of 'Buen Camino!', to wish you well on your journey.

Even though it is called the Camino del Norte which translates to the "Way of the North" in English you walk due West along the coastline most of the way passing through Irun, San Sebastian, Bilbao, Santander and Gijon, finally turning South West and inland at Ribadeo once you enter Galicia.

If you're looking for a challenge, then the Norte is a good choice, as it's not just a walk on the beach. The trail typically goes back and forth between the coast and the mountains, sometimes you'll hike on some steep cliffs that graze the coast.

The highlights of the route are not only the spectacular rugged coastline scenery, but also larger cities of San Sebastian and Bilbao, and the smaller towns like Castro Urdiales and Santillana del Mar medieval towns built between the 14th and 15th centuries.

In Güemes the Albergue del Abuelo Puerto is a Camino del Norte institution. It's hosted by Father Ernesto, an 80-year-old priest who has been hosting for over 20 years. He grew up in the albergue he now hosts, although he has remodeled and built many additions since then. He can host up to 100 pilgrims, and every night he tells his story of how it all came to be.

Quite a few pilgrims walking the Norte end up switching Caminos right after Villaviciosa or Gijon and head down to Oviedo and walk the Camino Primitivo, the so-called Original Camino.

On the Primitivo route, you can expect a lot more trekking through mountains, valleys, and rivers. If you're hoping to have an isolated experience, take the Primitivo. It's not as popular as the other routes and can have some muddy trails.

If you carry on the Norte past Gijon you will see a change in the scenery, gone are the large cities and industrial areas, from now on small villages and towns and rural landscape abound. About a week after Gijon, the Norte leaves the coastline behind and bends off inland towards Santiago de Compostela at Ribadeo right after you enter Galicia.

From here you pass through typical Galician countryside, eventually joining the busy Camino Frances at Arzua.

Everyone walks the camino for their own reason... No matter what yours is, you will be rewarded with memories that will live on forever, the Camino is so much more than a simple walk through Spain.

Wishing you a Buen Camino!!

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Camino Getting Ready to Go: The Basics

When to go:

When the best time to go is one of the biggest questions one will encounter when planning a Camino. A typical walk along the Camino del Norte from Irun to Santiago usually takes anywhere from 30 to 40 days depending on route and one's own walking pace.

Giving yourself a few rest days in between and at the end of your walk will also determine how long you should plan your trip for and are highly recommended.

Weather wise the best time of the year to walk are Spring - April through June and Fall Mid September to early November. The worst time to walk is August because of the weather on the Norte, but because August is the major holiday month in Spain, which makes finding accommodations much more difficult, specially on the last few days of the Norte join the Camino Frances which becomes very busy by this point as many people start their walk in Sarria and can be near to impossible to find accommodations on in August, as the Camino delNorte, Primitivo and Via de la Plata all merge into the Frances towards the end.

If you want solitude and don't mind the cold, rain or snow then the winter months are a good time to enjoy the camino. Services and albergues will be fewer so you may have to resort to staying in a Hostal every now and then but usually there will always be one Albergue open at the end of each stage. During rainy seasons, the trails can get a little muddy, so invest in a good poncho and some waterproof boots and maybe some foldable walking poles.

There is a list of albergues that gets updated regularly available online published by Aprinca click here to get it.

Physical preparation:

Preparing yourself physically for the Caminos stresses on your body is near to impossible, but as long as you are in a reasonably healthy state and are used to walking a few kilometers a day you should be able to make it all the way to Santiago. Walking 10 to 30 kilometers for 6 to 8 hrs a day is not easy, but it also is not the hardest thing in the world as long as you follow a few simple rules.

Before you head out on your camino be sure to walk at least 5 to 10 kilometers every other day before setting out. Do a trail day hike in the woods with all the gear. Test your backpack and make sure it is a good fit. If you can stand a full day hiking without a problem you should be ready. But remember:

- Wear proper fitting and well broken-in footwear.
- Make sure your backpack weighs as little as possible. (aim for less than 10% of your body weight)
- Walk at your own pace... it is not a race.
- Listen to your body.
- Know your limits.

Listen to your body and know your limits... I have seen countless pilgrims half my age push themselves too far, not get very far...Don't be one of them!

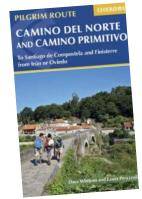
Aches and pains will happen, but as long as you pay attention to them and don't try to ignore the messages your body is sending you should, you will be fine. It's when you don't pay attention to the warning signs and just keep on pushing yourself beyond your limit day after day that your body will finally let you know it has had enough and prevent you from going any further, taking day or two break so that your body can heal is way better than having to break off your camino or breaking yourself...

Know when to stop and rest, pace yourself...remember it is not a race!

Guide Books, Maps and Apps:

Guidebooks such as Wise Pilgrim or Pilgrim Route's guides are great help If you want to know more about the route you are on and its history along the Frances. Most guidebooks include extensive information about the towns and villages you will pass through and also have detailed maps and route profiles so that you will be able to see what to expect ahead.

The only real negative about guidebooks is that they tend to weigh a lot.. Usually more than 2 or 3 tshirts! For this reason I recommend smartphone app such as Buen Camino, Gronze or Camino Ninja instead, as they provide much os the same information and don't weigh you down, but also give you the added benefit of having a live map so that you always know exactly where you are, which is very helpful when you are wondering if you are actually still on the correct route.



Book Guides: Apps for iPhone: Apps for Android:

A Pilgrim Guide Series Wise Pilgrim Series Buen Camino
Camino Ninja
Wise Pilgrim
Camino Tool
Gronze

Buen Camino Camino Ninja Wise Pilgrim Camino Tool Gronze

Finding your way:

Whilst guidebooks and maps will help you plan your journey, you really don't need them as getting lost on the Camino is virtually impossible, not only because there are many apps to help you navigate the route, but because a priest called Elías Valiña drove across the whole north of Spain on his Citroën GS packed with yellow paint, painting bright yellows arrows to indicate the right way at the various tricky crossroads along the trail leading to Santiago.

Nowadays they have become an ubiquitous symbol of the camino... and can be found everywhere from t-shirts to bandanas.

After a day or two you become an expert at spotting the arrows that are basically everywhere from lamposts to trees to rocks...



Lodging:

There are some amazing places to stay along the camino in Spain ranging from simple rustic country houses to ultra modern 5 star luxury hotels.

Hotels and Hostales range from 1 to 5 stars, and Albergues the most common lodging used by pilgrims on the camino come in three categories: Municipal, Private and Donatio.

Municipal Albergues are usually run by the town or city they are in and are usually quite basic i in their offerings. In Galicia most albergues are run by the Xunta de Galicia and are usually very nice and modern.

Private Albergues tend to be more comfortable than the Municipal ones and offer blankets and washing machines, but are also more expensive. Most albergues have a kitchen where one can cook, most private albergues will offer a communal dinner and basic breakfast at an additional charge.

The distinctions between Hotels and Hostels depend on the services offered. Some Hostels are as good as 5 Star hotels.

Then there are also Casa Rurales or Posadas, which are more like a B&B's and are usually only found in rural areas.

My favorite place to sleep are Paradores Nacionales which are government run hotels that usually are found in fantastic historic locations. They are a bit more pricey, but definitely worth splurging for every now and then.

One question that arises, on a recurring basis with pilgrims who have never walked the camino before is whether or not it is necessary to make reservations for their accommodation in advance. The answer is simple, you can improvise and look for accommodation on arrival, or you can take the bookings made at home, it depends on what kind of experience you want to live, since having accommodation previously reserved on the Camino de Santiago has its advantages, but it also has some disadvantages.

The main advantage of booking accommodation is that you avoid having to search for a place to sleep at the end of a long day's walk, and that you are also able to forward your baggage ahead if you don't want to carry it. But by doing so will also be less flexible to spontaneously change your plans and the adventure factor of your trip will be gone.



In the holiday season and in August when most of Spain takes their Summer vacation, it is a good idea to book ahead a day or two ahead, as it can sometimes be quite difficult to find a free bed. But as long as you stay flexible or don't mind paying a few euros more you can always get a bus or taxi to the next larger town and stay there and then backtrack the next morning, but rest assured you will never be left out on the street without a place to sleep at night.

If you want the most authentic Camino walking experience, you definitely will want to stay in Albergues as often as possible. Some albergues function solely as a place for you to sleep. Other albergues have hosts who make your stay a memorable experience, such as the Albergue del Abuelo Pueto in Guemes or at the old railroad stations in Deba and Novellana.

The dorm rooms usually can sleep anywhere from 4 to 40 people, and cost anywhere from €8 to €15 euro for a bunk bed per night. They are the cheapest option when walking the camino.

Most Municipal Albergues require you to have a sleeping bag or sleeping bag liner as no blankets are provided. Some charge €1 extra for disposable sheets. Most private albergues provide blankets and sheets, some even provide you with a fresh towel.

At Municipal Albergues lights are out at 10 pm and you have to leave by 8 am the next morning, and will not be able to stay a second night unless it is an emergency.

Also most Albergues Municipales require you to have a *Credencial de Peregrino* in order for you to stay and don't accept reservations. The Credencial is a passport you get at the start of your pilgrimage, that you get stamped wherever you stay. You always have to show your credencial and passport when checking in. You can call after 1 PM and usually they will tell you if they have beds available... but you cannot reserve a bed or pay by credit card.

A few of the Albergues along the camino are donation based, which means that they are funded by the donations that pilgrims give. Many people believe that they can get away with leaving no or very little money... and because of this they are becoming fewer and fewer due to the fact that some pilgrims equate a donation to being free...



Albergues are a nice place to meet and hang out with fellow pilgrims seeing most pilgrims are exhausted from the day's walk. They are very nice and quiet after 10 PM... Except for the occasional snorer, so bring earplugs!

If you are walking with another person, getting your private room is not much more expensive than getting two bunks at an Albergue, but you will be missing out on the camaraderie that develops when staying at them which is a big part of the camino experience.

Most hotels and albergues have washers and dryers, municipal ones mostly only offer some kind of hand washing facility and drying line. Washing machines can cost anywhere from €5 to €6 and Drying about €2 to €4.

Accomodation Prices range:

Albergue Municipal: €8 to €15
Private Albergue: €10 to €20

Donativo Albergue: €8 to €12 Donation

 Hostal:
 €15 to €50

 Hotel:
 €30 to €150

 Parador Nacional:
 €70 to €350

Hotel Booking Sites and Apps:

Bookings.com Hostelworld.com Hotels.com Trivago.com Agoda.com

<u>Paradores.es</u> <u>Gronze.com</u>

NOTE: If you are walking a camino in the winter be sure to get the Aprinca list of Albergues that are open click here to get it

Eating and Food:

Northern Spain has some of the best restaurants and food of Europe, but if you stick to eating the Pilgrim Menu and eating in the albergues along the camino every night you would never know.

Most albergues offer a communal dinner in the evening, which is a nice way to spend your evening meeting and exchanging stories with your fellow pilgrims after a long day's hike. While it is a nice experience, most of the time the menu is the same no

matter where you go: soup, salad, a main dish usually consisting of some kind of meat that comes with french fries and then a desert of flan or tarta santiago... and plenty of red wine and casera to wash it all down with.

Usually the meal will cost about 12 to 15 Euros and while this is not much, after a few evenings you will notice that not only are all places serving you the same basic meal it all pretty much tastes the same...

You can usually do way better for the money eating out at any restaurant in town.

The same goes for breakfast... Most albergues offer very basic breakfast of toast, jam and coffee that costs you way more than a good coffee and croissant and fresh orange juice in a bar. Spain has



fantastic cafe's in most any town or village along the camino where you can get good cafe con leche for about 1.20 € to 2.50 €, starting as early as 6.30 AM in the morning. If you are hungry for a snack a slice or Tortilla

or a Bocadillo de Jamon or Queso will usually hold you over till the next meal and will only set you back 3 or 4 euros.

During lunch hours from 1 till 4 pm most restaurants serve a "Menu del Dia" which usually includes a starter, main dish and dessert and includes a drink (wine) and bread.... Sometimes they even include a coffee. A decent menu will usually run anywhere from 10 to 15 € ,but you get so much food that you usually will not have to

eat dinner and usually the food is exceptional. If you are not all that hungry you can also order a $\frac{1}{2}$ Menu.

Be sure to try the Pintxos in the Basqe country, typically pintxos have several components piled high on a slice of bread, all held together with a toothpick. In Asturias the Fabada, a bean soup and Sidra are both absolutely delicious! Galicia is known for its Octopus (Pulpo a la Feira) and the Caldo Gallego broth soup and the Pimientos de Padrón, delicious tiny green peppers.

Finding a good restaurant or cafe is easily done using Google Maps or asking the host at your albergue or hotel

Getting there and away:

Getting to your starting point along the Camino Norte is pretty easy. San Sebastian - Iruna is well connected to other international airports. Iberia and Vueling are the major Spanish airlines serving these cities from Madrid, but Ryan Air and Easyjet offer very inexpensive flights from many cities in Europe.. Getting into town is pretty straight forward as both are on the bus or taxi.

AIR: There are several cities with airports that you can fly into along the Camino Norte other than San Sebastian/Donostia - Irun; Bilbao, Santander, Gijon - Oviedo.



RAIL: Getting to your starting point by rail is pretty straightforward. The main train line between Madrid and San Sebastian on the AVE high speed service, to get to Irun / Hendaya you need to switch to the Renfe Cercanias service which runs several times every hour.

Renfe is the Spanish Rail line that runs trains from Madrid. As of 2021 there are several new low cost choices such as IRYO and Ouigo that may serve Santiago soon. If you travel from Madrid North you will be leaving the Chamartin Train Station which is reachable via the Madrid Metro. There are various different train services: AVE is the high speed rail service. Usually it is a bit more expensive than the rest. Intercity and ACLEA are the other options.

All the other towns and villages along the camino del Norte are well connected by the Renfe Cercanias rail, which are slower and less expensive, but usually run several times a day.

If you plan on leaving Santiago de Compostela by rail at the end of your Camino, be sure to book your train ticket well in advance as it is not unusual for the trains leaving Santiago to get fully booked days ahead, especially during long weekends and holidays. For timetables and reservations:

RENFE Ouigo IRYO

BUS: Buses in Spain are very reasonable and literally every little town has a bus stop that will get you to the next larger city. Avanza and Alza and Fliixbus are the major bus companies operating in Spain. In Galicia Monbus runs the intercity lines. Tickets can be purchased on the bus. If you are traveling long distance you will need to book the ticket in advance.

The new bus station in Santiago is now conveniently located next to the train station.



For timetables and reservations:

ALSA AVANAZA MONBUS FlixBUS

Taxis are available almost anywhere along the camino. If you need you can call one to pick you up anywhere along the camino if you become tired or can not walk any more. Most local taxis advertise their numbers along the camino.

Safety, Health & Insurance:

Spain is a very safe country, but petty crime still happens, so beware of your belongings at all times even in the albergues. Always carry your passport and cash on you, do not leave them in your hotel or albergue dorm when you are not there.

To keep my passport and extra credit cards safe, I use a hidden rf blocking pocket from Eagle Creek that attaches to my belt and tucks it into my pants. For the nighttime or when going to the shower I have a small Pacsafe safe-pouch that I can attach to the frame of the bed where I can put all my valuables in.

https://www.eaglecreek.com/ https://pacsafe.com/

Doctors, dentists and Hospitals and Clinics in Spain are of international standards and are much less expensive than the USA. Most big cities have hospitals and smaller towns have emergency clinics that are called Ambulatorios. Most every town and village will have a pharmacy that can be spotted from afar because of its neon green cross. Bigger towns usually have at least one that is open 24 hrs and its location will be posted at ones that are closed as "Farmacia de Turno".

It is a good idea to have travel insurance with emergency repatriation coverage in case needed.

The Emergency Services Telephone number in Spain is 112

Money:

Spain and runs on the Euro. Credit Cards are accepted at hotels and most restaurants. Use banks to exchange money as exchange houses usually charge very high exchange rates. ATM's work very well and even the smallest towns usually have a bank and ATM. La Caxia and Unicajal charge the lowest ATM fees, Santander, if you use Charles Shwab Debit Card you pay no withdrawal fee, which can be as high as €7 to €8

Calculate on spending at least anywhere between €30 to € 50 a day.

Business Operating Hours:

Spain runs on EST European Standard time which is 1 hr ahead of GMT, but beware that Spain is famous for its sesta time, which means that from 1.30 to 4.30 pm most all shops CLOSE!

Restaurants, bars and cafes do not close and stay OPEN.

To most first time pilgrims this is very confusing.

It is also worth noting that most municipal albergues will not let you check in till after 1.30 pm even if you arrive early some will not even store your luggage, they close their front door at 10 pm and you must leave by 8 am

Store Opening hours: 9 am to 1 pm - 4.30 till 8.30 Bank hours: 8 am to 1 pm Restaurant Opening hours: Lunch 1 pm till 4.30 pm, Dinner 8 till 12 pm. Cafe Opening hours: 6 am till 8.30 pm Bar Opening hours: 9 am till 1 am Albergue Municipal: Check in 1.30 Check out 8 am Door Closed 10 pm

Cell Phone and Wifi Service:

Most every cafe, bar and albergue and hotel in Spain offers free wifi. If you need to ask for a password ask for the "clave" If you have an unlocked cellphone simply buy a local prepaid SIM Card from Movistar, Vodaphone or Orange upon arrival at the airport in Madrid and add call minutes and data as needed. It will save you a lot of money in data and roaming charges in the long run. A 30 day unlimited call and text plus 15 gb data cost about €20.

Pilgrims Passport - Credencial & Compostela Certificate:

Every pilgrim on the Camino should carry his Passport and also a Pilgrims Passport or Credencial, which serves as proof that you are a pilgrim and also that you have walked the Stage s. In Municipal Albergues and Pilgrims Albergues it is required. It is a good idea to get one beforehand as many times it is quite difficult getting one along the way.

The Credencial is like a passport that gets stamps at every Albergue or Hotel with their stamp, their unique stamp and date of passage which serves as proof that you have walked that Stage.



In order to get your Compostela Certificate that states that you have completed your pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela you need to **get 2 stamps a day on the last 100 kms of Camino**.



Bars and restaurants along the camino will also offer stamps making this requirement a pretty fun experience.

When you arrive in Santiago de Compostela you can get a very pretty Pilgrims Certificate with your name written in latin issued for free at the Pilgrims Office which is located just below the Plaza of the Cathedral. For an extra 3 euros they will give you an official distance certificate, in case nobody believes you walked so much.

Collecting the stamps along the way is a fun exercise and will bring back good memories when you go over them years later.

You can purchase a Credencial in advance online from <u>Casa Ivar</u> and they will send it to you, else the Tourist office or Cathedral at your starting point are your best places to try to get one.

Camino Packing Guide

What to Pack for your Camino:

Two of the biggest mistakes people make when setting off on the Camino is overpacking and overthinking what they will need for a long walk on the Camino. I myself was very guilty of this on my first camino, this is why I am including a basic packing checklist as a guideline for you to follow so that you do not make the same mistake..

Weight is your biggest enemy when walking, if you don't pay attention to how much you are carrying in your backpack sooner or later your body or feet will pay the price...

A good rule of thumb is that **your pack should not weigh more than 10%** of your body weight. If you stick to that rule you will definitely have a much more pleasant and easy walk.



One thing you should know, that I didn't, is that there are washing machines or laundromats most anywhere you will stay along the way, so clean clothes are never a problem.

Many "pro" pilgrims only pack one extra change of clothes and do a quick hand wash upon of their t-shirt and underwear and socks upon arriving at wherever they are staying; whist this is a great strategy if you want to walk with the least amount of weight and clothes, you will be forced to do your wash every day and will be worrying if your clothes will be dry by morning.

I personally recommend having 3 sets of underwear and t-shirts and socks, and 1 pair of long or convertible pants and some short pants, that way you don't have to be washing every day and get more time to explore and relax.

As far as footwear I highly recommend that whatever you decide to take boots or trail runners, you walk at least 100 km in them before you start your walk, that way you will not have as many problems with blisters and sore feet. High quality hiking socks are the second most important blister prevention tool, I can't stress this enough... do not use cheap tube socks... you will pay the price in blisters!

Having a pair of flip flops will make the walk to and from the showers in the albergues more pleasant and also give you feet some fresh air and relief after a long day's walk. I personally like to take two pairs of shoes either 2 trail runners or a pair of boots and trail runners, just so I can give my feet a break and change every now and then.

As far as sleeping bags go, most Municipal Albergues require you to use one or to use a sleeping bag liner as they do not provide blankets. Most provide you with disposable sheets that really are terrible, so taking a sleeping bag or liner for the summer months is recommended, as it will weigh you down.

Just remember that each liter of water and all those snacks you carry also count to the total weight...

Luggage - Backpack Forwarding - Transport:

You can always tell a true pilgrim from the rest as they most always are lugging their big backpack along as opposed to strolling along with a small day pack. Many short term or weekend pilgrims opt not to walk with their backpacks and have their luggage forwarded on from one stage to the next as they walk the Camino.

Using the luggage transport service is a good option if you have any physical ailments or problems or simply don't want to burden yourself with a large backpack.,

One thing to keep in mind is that you need have to have a specific location (hotel or private albergue) to send your luggage to, so you will need to make a reservation at a hotel or private albergue, as Municipal Albergues do not accept reservations or luggage (they are on a first come first served basis) and will not accept your bags if you are not there.

The cost per bag is anywhere from €5 to €12 depending on service and time of year. In the summer most routes offer this service, in the winter months the service is limited and more expensive.

If you have an onward trip that doesn't involve backpacking after you arrive in Santiago de Compostela an option is to send your non backpacking luggage to the Correos in Santiago or else send it to Casa Ivar in Santiago for safe keeping till you arrive. Once you finish the Camino you will be able to pick up your suitcase in the office that Correos has next to the Cathedral of Santiago (Rúa do Franco, 4). They store them for up to 45 days so you can walk the Camino calmly and worry-free. There is a small per day fee that they charge, but you will have the peace of mind knowing your luggage is safe and sound.

If you just want to leave your backpack somewhere for a few hours while exploring Santiago the Pilgrims House offers free backpack storage.

For more information on all of these these services visit:

Transport:Storage:CorreosCasa IvarJacotransPilgrims House

Caminofacil

Camino Packing Checklist

☐ Hiking Backpack	28L to 40L - ca. 10% of your body weight when full
CLOTHING:	
☐ 3x T-Shirts	Merino or Quick Dry Wicking Synthetic. Avoid cotton (Heavy & Slow Drying
☐ 1x Long sleeve shirt	For protection from sun and cold.
•	
☐ 1x Long Hiking Pants	Or Convertible Pants - Flexible and Light and fast drying
☐ 1x Hiking shorts	
☐ 3x Underwear	Ex Officio Wicking - Fast Drying
☐ 1x Sweater - Fleece	Polartec or Smartwool
1x Warm Down Jacket W	From October to May
1x Light Rain Jacket	For in town or light drizzles and windy Stages
☐ 1x Backpacking Poncho	Over backpack type will keep you and your backpack dry!
1x Hat or Wool Cap	Sun / Cold protection
☐ Gloves W	From October to May
FOOTWEAR:	
_	Do ours to brook them in well before cetting out on your comine!
☐ 1 x Hiking Boots☐ 1x Trail Runners	Be sure to break them in well before setting out on your camino!
	For albergue showers and airing feet
☐ 1x Flip Flops☐ 3 x Good Hiking socks	For albergue showers and airing feet
3 x Good Hiking socks	
IMPORTANT: Your feet expand and flatten	out considerably from walking many hours a day, so it is a good idea that you purchase
your footwear one size larger than you norm	nally would. I also recommend taking 2 pairs of shoes, either one boot and one trail
	ce not to have to wear the same shoes all the time, especially after a long days walk
· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	are going to be the most important protection against blisters and sore feet, so be sure cheap 10 pack tube socks they will make a big difference. I recommend Wigwam and
	more expensive at first but you will not be paying the price later.
SLEEPING:	
☐ Sleeping Bag W	Required in some Albergues.
☐ Sleeping Bag Liner S	For warm weather instead of Sleeping bag
☐ Pillow Case	Also can double as a laundry bag.
☐ Earplugs	To get rest in Albergue

BATHING:	
☐ Quick Dry Towel☐ Toiletry Kit	Most albergues don't offer towels Toothbrush, Razor, Travel Size Toothpaste, Soap + Shampoo,
HIKING GEAR:	
☐ Hiking Poles☐ Knee Support Braces	They will give you extra support on downhill and on the uphill sections If you have problems with your knees I recommend taking a pair
☐ First Aid Kit ☐ Sunscreen S&W ☐ Lip Protection	Ibuprofen, Vaseline, Compeed, Band Aids, Blister & BandageTape
☐ Water Bottle/Camelback	750cc to 1L Remember that each liter of water is 1 more kg you carry
☐ Headlight / Flashlight	For early morning start - Night in dorms
□ Phone□ Camera□ Headphones	Chargers, Cables and Adapters Chargers, Cables, SD Card, Batteries
☐ Watch - Fitness Tracker	Charger
NON ESSENTIAL EXTRAS:	
☐ Hiking Umbrella☐ Swiss Army Knife	For sun and rain / drizzle
☐ Gaiters	Keeps gravel and mud out of boots and pants
☐ Power Bank	For extra charge for phone and other electronics
☐ Compression Sacks☐ Backpack Rain Cover	Keep things organized and save some space in your backpack
☐ Guide Book - Apps	I recommend apps over books as it can weigh as much as 3 t-shirts!
☐ Small Day Pack	Small bag or backpack for shopping - sightseeing trips
NOTE: If you forgot anything or need to rep	lace any hiking gear, Decathlon is a major sporting gear chain that has large outlets in

NOTE: If you forgot anything or need to replace any hiking gear, Decathlon is a major sporting gear chain that has large outlets in Sevilla, Merida, Caceres, Salamanca and Ournese. They stock pretty much anything you may need for hiking at very reasonable prices. You can also buy on Amazon.es and ship to their drop boxes that are available in most big cities in Spain.

Decathlon.com

Amazon.com

Rei.com

W= Recommended in Winter S = Recommended in Summer

Camino del Norte Stages

Stage 1

Irun > San Sebastian

Services: A,H,S,R,B,C,P,Ti - Bus,Train,Air

Population:186.665 Province: Gipuzkoa Region: Pais Vasco

Airport: EAS

Stage Distance: 26 km - 14 miles Stage Difficulty: Moderate Terrain: Long uphill after Irun Walking Surface: Street, Dirt path

Scenery: City, Fields, Sea

Highlight of the Day: Views of Irun Biscay Bay Boat ride over the river, Streets of San Sebastian

-Cathedral - Old Town

Stay: Irun: <u>Albergue de Perregrinos</u> - Donativo

San Sebastian: Albergue A Room in the City **** W&D,K





Stage 2

San Sebastian > Orio

Services: A,H,S,R,B,C,P

Province: Gipuzkoa Region: Pais Vasco

Stage Distance: 16 km - 10 miles

Stage Difficulty: Easy Terrain: Mostly flat

Walking Surface: Street, Sidewalks, Road

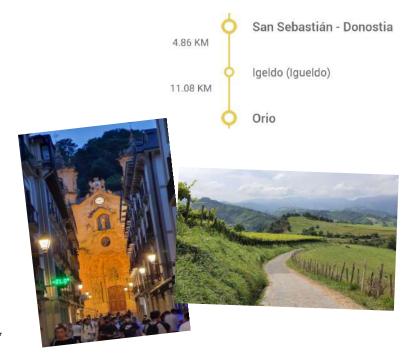
Scenery: City, Seaside, Villages

Highlight of the Day: Views of Sea

San Sebastian Bay

Stay: Alberque San Martin W,V

Eat: Akaitz Taberna, Asador San Martin****



Orio > Zumaia

Services: A,H,S,R,B,C,P

Province: Gipuzkoa Region: Pais Vasco

Stage Distance: 22.2 km - 13.8 miles

Stage Difficulty: Moderate **Terrain:** Mostly flat but

Walking Surface: Street, Sidewalks, Dirt Path

Scenery: City, Seaside, Villages

Highlight of the Day: Views of Sea,

Zumaia Cliffs

Stay: Albergue Convento San Jose

Pension Goiko W, K

Eat: Taberna Taosa





Stage 4

Zumaia > Barrio de Irribiri

Services: A,R,B
Population:na
Province: Vizcaya
Region: Pais Vasco

Stage Distance:

Stage Difficulty: Moderate

Terrain: Mostly flat but steep uphill at the end

Walking Surface: Dirt Path

Scenery: City, Seaside, Villages, Forest

Highlight of the Day: Views of Sea

Stay: <u>Albergue Izarbide</u> D, C **Eat:** Communal dinner

3.58 KM
Elorriaga
5.13 KM
Itziar
3.45 KM
Deba
4.78 KM
Barrio de Ibiri



Barrio de Irribiri > Marquina -Xiemen

Services: A,H,S,R,B,C,P

Province: Vizcaya Region: Pais Vasco

Stage Distance: 23.9 km - 14.9 miles

Stage Difficulty: Moderate **Terrain:** Mostly flat but long

Walking Surface: Street, Sidewalks, Dirt Path

Scenery: Forest, Villages

Highlight of the Day: Dinner at Taberna Antestogi

Stay: Pension Txomin - Etxebarria W, K

Hotel Antesogi

Eat: Antestogi Taberna





Stage 6

Markina Ximena > Guernica

Services: A,H,S,R,B,C,P Rail,Bus

Population:16.972 Province: Vizcaya Region: Pais Vasco

Stage Distance: 29.9 km - 18.6 miles

Stage Difficulty: Moderate

Terrain: Mostly flat or downhill but long

Walking Surface: Dirt Path, Road, Sidewalks,

Scenery: Forrest, Villages

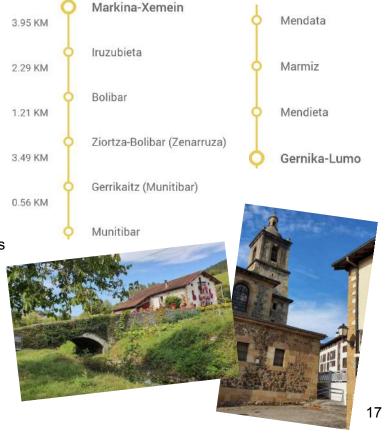
Highlight of the Day: Rural scenery and villages

Stay: Bilbao - Albergue Latroup Granja*****

Fantastic albergue!!! B, C

Note: As there were no rooms or beds available in Guernica I took a train to Bilbao

and returned the next morning



Guernica > Bilbao

Services: A,H,S,R,B,C,P,Ti, Air,Rail,Bus

Province: Vizcaya Region: Pais Vasco

Airport:BIO

Stage Distance: 32.6 km - 20.3 miles

Stage Difficulty: Moderate

Terrain: Mostly flat or downhill but long

Walking Surface: Dirt Path, Street, Sidewalks,

Scenery: Forrest, Industrial, Urban

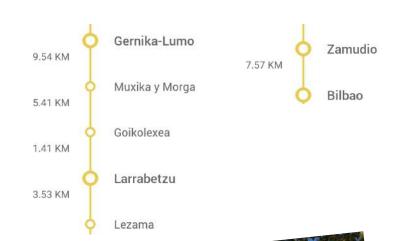
Highlight of the Day: Exploring Bilbao on Bicycle

Guggenheim - Architecture of Bilbao

Stay: Albergue Latroup Granja****

Fantastic albergue!!!

Shop: Decathlon in City Center for hiking gear.





Stage 8

Bilbao > Portugalete

Services: A,H,S,R,B,C,P,Tr

Population:45.862 Province: Vizcaya Region: Pais Vasco

Stage Distance: 11.9 km - 7.4 miles

Stage Difficulty: Very Easy

Terrain: Flat

Walking Surface: Street, Sidewalks,

Scenery: Urban, Industrial

Highlight of the Day: Crossing the Bizakaio Zubia Hanging Bridge

Stay: Hostal Santa Maria





Portugalete > Onton

Services: A,H,S,R,B,C,P

Population: na Province: Cantabria Region: Cantabria

Stage Distance: 17.6 km - 11 miles

Stage Difficulty: Easy Terrain: Mostly flat

Walking Surface: Street, Sidewalks, Bicycle - Walking Path,

Scenery: Villages, Seaside

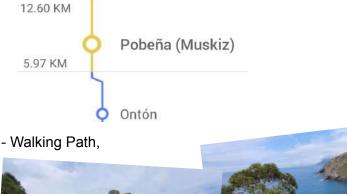
Highlights of the Day: Seaside Walk

Pedestrian Tunnel

Stay: Albergue Tu Camino Onton W, B, D **Eat:** Communal Dinner at Albergue****

-= Official Route

-= Alternate Scenic Route



Portugalete



Stage 10

Onton > Laredo

Services: A,H,S,R,B,C,P
Population: 111.148
Province: Cantabria
Region: Cantabria

Stage Distance: 32.4 km - 20.4 miles

Stage Difficulty: Easy **Terrain:** Mostly flat

Walking Surface: Road, Walking Path,

Scenery: Villages, Countryside

Highlight of the Day: The albergue...

Stay: Monasterio Monjas Trinitarias B Inc

-= Official Route

-= Alternate Scenic Route





Laredo - Güemes

Services: A,H,R,B Population: 277 Province: Cantabria Region: Cantabria

Stage Distance: 28.8 km - 17.9 miles

Stage Difficulty: Easy Terrain: Mostly flat

Walking Surface: Road, Walking Path,

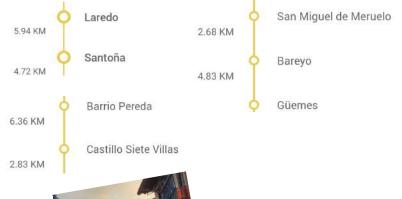
Scenery: Villages, Countryside

Highlight of the Day: Boat Crossing - The Albergue...

An institution of the camino!

Stay: Albergue del Abuelo Pueto**** W&D, B, L, D, C

Eat: Communal dinner at the Albergue





Stage 12

Gűemes > Santander

Services: A.H.S.R.B.C.P.Ti - Air, Bus, Train

Province: Cantabria Region: Cantabria

Airport:SDR

Stage Distance: 20.5 km - 12.8 miles

Stage Difficulty: Easy **Terrain:** Mostly flat

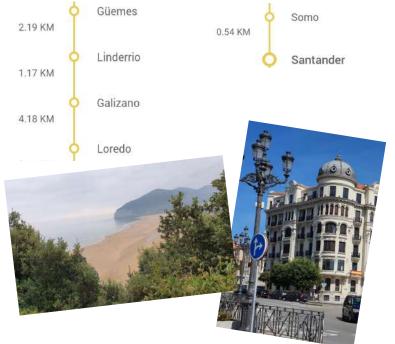
Walking Surface: Road, Walking Path,

Scenery: Villages, Beach

Highlight of the Day: Ferry into Santander

Exploring Santander

Stay: <u>Albergue Enjoy Santander</u> W, K, V **Eat:** <u>Cafe Suizo</u>, <u>Mercado Municipal</u>



Santander > Santillana del Mar

Services: A,H,Pa,S,R,B,C,P,Ti

Population: 4.176 Province: Cantabria Region: Cantabria

Stage Distance: 19.7 km - 12.3 miles

Stage Difficulty: Easy Terrain: Mostly flat

Walking Surface: Streets, Road

Scenery: Streets, Industrial Zone, Villages,

RuralCountryside

Highlight of the Day: Exploring Santillana,

Cuevas de Altamira UNESCO SITE

Stay: Hotel Los Infantes***** B

Parador Nacional Gil Blas**** B,L,D

Albergue de Peregrinos El Convento K,W

Eat: Parador Gil Blas

Shop: Decathlon Just outside of Santander - Near Camino

Stage 14

Santillana del Mar > Comillas

Services: A,H,S,R,B,C,P

Population: 2.156
Province: Cantabria
Region: Cantabria

Stage Distance: 20.1 km - 13 miles

Stage Difficulty: Easy

Terrain: Mostly

Walking Surface: Road, Walking Path,

Scenery: Villages, Countryside

Highlight of the Day: Sunrise in Santillana Exploring Comillas, Swimming in Comillas

Stay: Pension La Aldea W,K

Alberque La Huella del Camino W, B





Comillas > Colombres

Services: A,H,S,R,B,C,P

Population: 1.385 Province: Asturias Region: Asturias

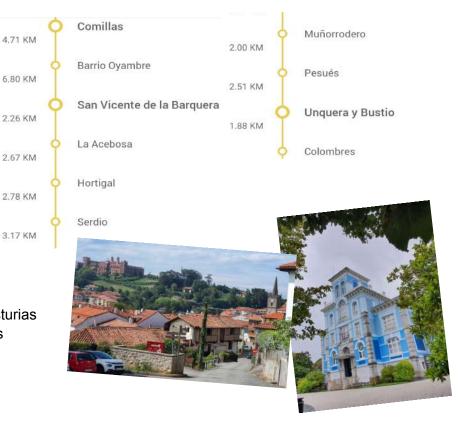
Stage Distance: 32.34 km - 20.1 miles

Stage Difficulty: Moderate

Terrain: Mostly flat - Steep final streach **Walking Surface:** Road, Walking Path, **Scenery:** Villages, Countryside, Rivers

Highlight of the Day: Crossing over into Asturias Indianos Houses and Museum in Colombres

Stay: Albergue El Cantu W



Stage 16

Colombres > Llanes

Services: *A,H,S,R,B,C,P* **Population:** 13.609

Province: Asturias **Region:** Asturias

Stage Distance: 26.2 km - 16.3 miles

Stage Difficulty: Easy Terrain: Mostly flat

Walking Surface: Road, Walking Path,

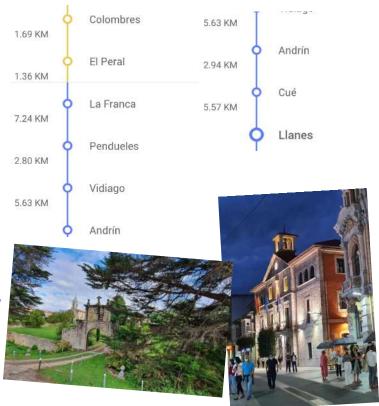
Scenery: Villages, Countryside

Highlight of the Day: Exploring Llanes

Stay: Alberque La Casona del Peregrino B,K,V

-= Official Route

-= Alternate Scenic Route



Llanes > Villahormes

Services: A,H,R,B Population: na Province: Asturias Region: Asturias

Stage Distance: 14.4 km - 9.2 miles

Stage Difficulty: Easy

Terrain: Flat

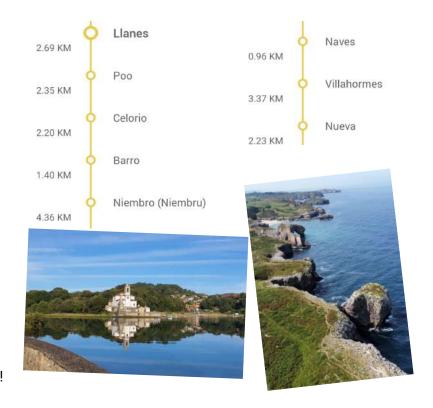
Walking Surface: Road, Walking Path,

Scenery: Villages, Countryside

Highlight of the Day: Taking it easy!

Stay: <u>Albergue Villahormes</u> W&D,B,L,D **Eat:** <u>BBO Burgers Bar</u> - Very good burger!

Sidreria Ludi - Very good menu del dia!



Stage 18

Villahormes > Vega

Services: A,H,B
Population: 3.507
Province: Asturias
Region: Asturias

Stage Distance: 23.5 km - 14.6 miles

Stage Difficulty: Easy

Terrain: Hilly

Walking Surface: Road, Walking Path,

Scenery: Villages, Countryside

Highlight of the Day:

Stay: Alberque Tu Casa Vega**** W,B,K

Fantastic tiny albergue!

Eat: Communal Dinner at Albergue





Vega > Villaviciosa

Services: *A,H,S,R,B,C,P*Population: 14.578

Province: Asturias
Region: Asturias

Stage Distance: 32.1 km - 20 miles

Stage Difficulty: Moderate

Terrain:

Walking Surface: Road, Walking Path

Scenery: Forest, Villages, Rural Countryside

Highlight of the Day: Villaviciosa Old Town

Stay: Hotel Casa Espana B,L,D



Note: Many pilgrims switch to walk the Camino Primitivo that goes from Oviedo to Santiago. The bendoff is about 4 km outside of Villaviciosa at La Parra - Grases

Stage 20

Villaviciosa > Peon

Services: A,H,S,R Population: na Province: Asturias Region: Asturias

Stage Distance: 20.6 km - 12.8 miles

Stage Difficulty: Moderate

Terrain:Long steep uphill stretch mid way **Walking Surface:** Asphalt Road, Path,

Scenery: Villages, Forest, Rural Countryside

Highlight of the Day: Bendoff to Oviedo!

Stay: Alberque Peon W&D,R,B,L,D

They pick you up and drop you off on camino.

Eat: Communal dinner at Albergue





Peon > Gijon

Services: A,H,S,R,B,C,P,Ti - Air, Bus, Train

Population: 271.908 Province: Asturias Region: Asturias

Airport:OVD

Stage Distance: 23.7 km - 13.6 miles

Stage Difficulty: Easy Terrain: Mostly downhill

Walking Surface: Dirt Path, Roads, City

Streets

Scenery: Forest, Villages, Countryside

Highlight of the Day: Walking along th Gijon

beach promenade

Stay: Silken Hotel R,B,L,D,Pool



Stage 22

Gijon > Aviles

Services: A,H,S,R,B,C,P

Province: Asturias Region: Asturias

Stage Distance: 25.7 km - 16 miles

Stage Difficulty: Easy **Terrain:** Mostly flat

Walking Surface: Streets, Road, Walking Path,

Scenery: City, Industrial Zone, Villages, Eucalyptus Forest, Rural Countryside

Highlight of the Day: Centro Niemayer

Stay: Alberque Pedro Solis W,B,K,V





Avilés > Muros de Nalón

Services: A,H,S,R,B,C,P

Population: 1.846 Province: Asturias Region: Asturias

Stage Distance: 22.5 - 14.2 miles

Stage Difficulty: Easy

Terrain: Mostly

Walking Surface: Road, Walking Path,

Scenery: Villages, Countryside

Highlight of the Day: El Castillo

Stay: Albergue Casa Carmina****

You can sleep in a Horreo here! W&D,B,D

Eat: Casa Zoilo - Good Menu del Dia





Stage 24

Muros de Nalón > Novellana

Services: A,S,R,B Population: 317 Province: Asturias Region: Asturias

Stage Distance: 25.1 km - 15.6 miles

Stage Difficulty: Easy Terrain: Mostly flat Walking Surface: Road

Scenery: Villages, Green Countryside

Highlight of the Day: Sunrise in Muros

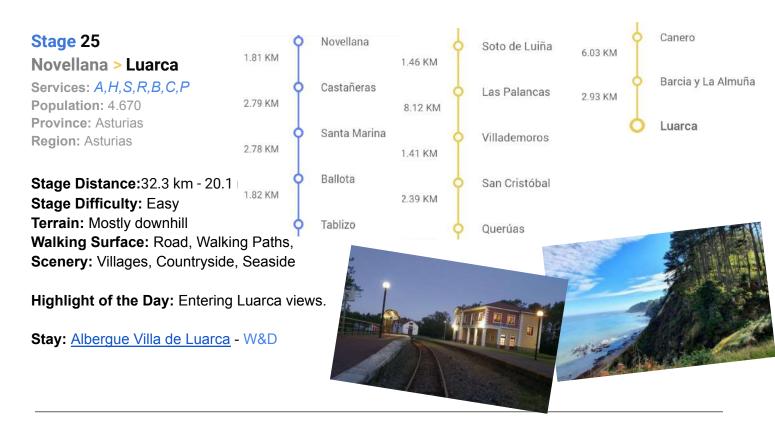
The Old Train Station Albergue!!!

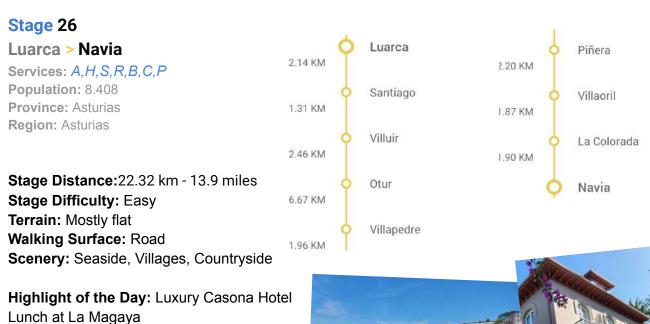
Stay: <u>Albergue Novellana</u> **** Super nice albergue! W,B,D,K,V

Eat: Communal Dinner

-= Official Route-= Scenic Route







Stay: Hotel Casona Naviega ***** B,V

Eat: La Magaya***

Navia > Ribadeo

Services: A,H,Pa,S,R,B,C,P,Ti

Population: 8.408 **Province:** Asturias Region: Asturias

Stage Distance: 35.7 km - 22.2 miles

Stage Difficulty: Easy, but long

Terrain: Mostly flat Walking Surface: Road

Scenery: Seaside, Villages, Countryside

Highlight of the Day: Ribadeo -Crossing bridge into Galicia

Stay: Hostal Santa Cruz

Parador Nacional de Ribadeo B,L,D

Eat: Parador Nacional



Stage 28

Ribadeo > Mondoñedo

Services: A,H,S,R,B,C,P

Population: 3.609 Province: Lugo Region: Galicia

Stage Distance: 37.3 km - 23.2 miles

Stage Difficulty: Easy **Terrain:** Mostly flat

Walking Surface: Road, Walking Path,

Scenery: Villages, Countryside

Highlight of the Day:

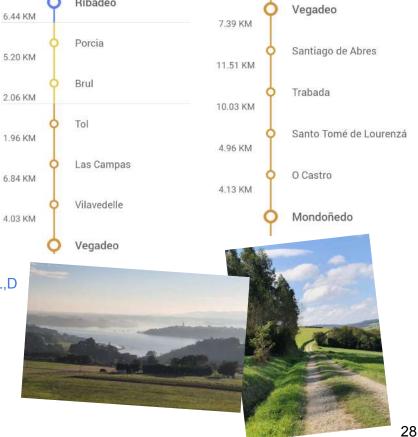
Stay: Albergue Hotel Montero**** W&D,B,L,D

Eat: Albergue has restaurant

-= Official Route

—= Alternative Route

-= Scenic Route



Ribadeo

Mondoñedo > Villalba

Services: A,H,Pa,S,R,B,C,P,Ti

Population: 96.000 Province: A Coruna Region: Galicia

Stage Distance: 35.2 km - 21.9 miles

Stage Difficulty: Easy Terrain: Mostly flat Walking Surface: Road

Scenery: Villages, Countryside

Highlight of the Day: Villalba

Stay: Albergue As Piedreiras W&D,K

Parador Nacional de Villalba

Eat: Parador Nacional



Stage 30

Villalba > A Pobra de Parga

Services: A,H,R,B,C,P
Population: 96.000
Province: A Coruna
Region: Galicia

Stage Distance: 27.6 km - 17.2 miles

Stage Difficulty: Easy Terrain: Mostly flat

Walking Surface: Road, Walking Path **Scenery:** Forest, Villages, Countryside

Highlight of the Day: Hostel and its

surrounding village

Stay: Albergue Parga Natura **** W&D,B,D,K

Fantastic Albergue!! Great Garden! **Eat:** Communal Dinner at Albergue

-= Official Route

-= Alternative Route





Parga > Sobrado dos Monxes 7.02 KM

Services: A,H,S,R,B,C,P

Population: 96.000
Province: A Coruna
Region: Galicia

Stage Distance: $26.2 \text{ km} - 16.3 \text{ miles}^{2.75 \text{ KM}}$

Stage Difficulty: Easy Terrain: Mostly flat

Walking Surface: Walking Path, Road

Scenery: Villages, Countryside

Highlight of the Day: Morning walk in fog.

Exploring Sobrado

Stay: Monasterio Sobrado dos Monxes

Hotel San Marcos B Inc **Eat:** Bar Real - Good Menu del Dia





Stage 32

Sobrado dos Monxes > Arzua

Services: A,H,S,R,B,C,P,Ti, - Bus

Population: 6.315 Province: A Coruna Region: Galicia

Stage Distance: 22.5 km - 14 miles

Stage Difficulty: Easy Terrain: Mostly flat

Walking Surface: Road, Walking Path, **Scenery:** Villages, Rural Countryside

Highlight of the Stage: Morning walk in dark.

Joining the Camino Frances!

Stay: Albergue Tres Abetos W
Albergue Cima do Lugar W&D

Eat: Furancho da Santiso - Good Menu

-= Official Route -= Camino Frances



Arzua > Santiago de Compostela

Services: A,H,Pa,S,R,B,C,P,Ti, - Bus,Train,Air

Province: A Coruna Region: Galicia

Airport: SCQ

Distance Walked: 39.7 km - 24.7 miles

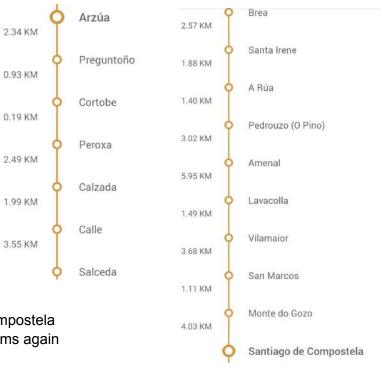
Stage Difficulty: Easy

Terrain: Mostly flat but with some hills

Walking Surface: Road, Walking Path, Streets

Scenery: Villages, Hilly Countryside

Highlight of the Day: Arriving in Santiago de Compostela Getting Compostela - Meeting up with fellow pilgrims again



Worthwhile Seeing and doing:

Pilgrims Mass at Cathedral Cathedral Museum

Portico de la Gloria Tour

Pilgrims Museum

Coffee at the Parador

Tea in garden at Costa Vella Hotel

Visit the Pilgrims House

Sunset on the Cathedral Plaza

Walk to Finisterre!

Don't miss:

Get your Compostela!

Eating at A Horta de Obratorio

Pilgrims Mass



Stay: Albergue Seminario Menor***** W&D,B,K,V 15 min walk to Cathedral Cheap single rooms

Seminario Mayor*** B,L,D By Cathedral - Pilgrims get when asking when reserving

<u>Hotel Alda Aligia</u>**** W&D,B Central - Cozy rooms. <u>Parador Nacional</u>**** B,L,D By Cathedral - Splurge

Hotel Costa Vella *** B Center - Hotel with very nice garden

Eat: A Horta d'Obratorio (Michelin Guide Recommended) Reservation needed

Casa Manolo - Good for groups

Enxebre - Close to Cathedral - Parador

Relax: Cafe La Morena - Great Coffee

Cost Vella - Nice Garden - Quiet Spot

Pilgrims House - Luggage storage - Quiet Spot - Camino Debrief

Services Codes: A= Albergue H= Hotel Pa= Parador S= Supermarket R= Restaurant B= Bar C= Cafe P= Pharmacy
Ti= Tourist Info W= Washing Machine W&D= Washer-Dryer B=Breakfast L=Lunch D=Dinner K= Kitchen V=Vending
Machine D\$ = Donativo
***** = Fantastic Worth a visit!

I hope you enjoyed this guide and that you get good use out of it. If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact me at rolf@magener.com