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CAMINO FRANCES ST JEAN TO SANTIAGO



INFORMATION ABOUT THE CAMINO FRANCES

THE CAMINO FRANCES

The **Camino Frances to Santiago** is the busiest pilgrim route, the closer we get to the city of Santiago de Compostela, as almost all the routes that cross Spain end up converging at one point or another with this one.

The original route was the Via Tolosana, which comes from France and crosses the Pyrenees mountain range via the Somport pass in Huesca and is known as the Aragonese or Franco-Aragonese Cano de Santiago.

LINK

It owes its origins to the three main Jacobean pilgrimage routes in France, the **Via Turonensis, the Via Lemovicensis and the Via Podiensis**, which come together at **Saint Jean Pied de Port**, from where they then cross the Pyrenees through the **Roncesvalles Mountain Pass**.

Once in **Spanish territory**, it crosses over the northern Peninsula to the western end, and picks up other pilgrims along the way who are following other Camino de Santiago routes from all different parts of Spain.

DISTANCES AND SERVICES

This route passes through 141 towns with **various types of facilities** and, on average, there is a town with at least one bar or grocery store **every 5,6 km**.

This is a very important fact, as it indicates that we are going to pass through **a large number of towns**, both big and small, **where we can eat, drink and sleep**.

The Camino Frances crosses the north of the Iberian Peninsula from Saint Jean Pied de Port, the last French village, to Santiago de Compostela. A total of **760 kilometres** divided into 33 stages of approximately **25 kilometres each**.

STARTING POINTS OF THE CAMINO FRANCES

The **Camino Frances** is the route of the Camino de Santiago par excellence. It is the most traditional and most popular route. The Camino Frances is the most well-known path in the world, to a large extent because it is recognised on the **UNESCO World Heritage List**.

Each pilgrim chooses a starting point according to the time they have available or their physical condition.

Both **Saint Jean Pied de Port** and **Roncesvalles**, the first Spanish town on The Camino Frances, after passing through the **Pyrenees Mountains**, are considered as traditional starting points. However, Burgos, Leon, O'Cebreiro or Sarria are also common starting points among the pilgrims who travel along The Camino Frances.

GENERAL INFORMATION

TIPS AND ADVICE FOR THE CAMINO

- Start the day early
- Have a good breakfast
- Carry energy-dense food for the trail
- Have your main meal after finishing the day's stage
- Pay attention when travelling on the road
- Watch your valuables
- Always dry your shoes
- Do not use new shoes, use double socks and prevent foot sweat with talcum powder, this will help to avoid blisters
- Wear your backpack correctly
- Keep your phone's battery charged
- Protect yourself from the sun and stay hydrated

BAGGAGE:



GENERAL INFORMATION



HISTORY

The origin of the Camino Frances began with the discovery of the remains of **Santiago the Great, the apostle**, in the 9th century.

According to the traditional account, the discovery was made by **Bishop Teodomiro, from the diocese of Iria Flavia, in the year 813.**

In the place where the remains of Santiago the Apostle were found, the Asturian monarch Alfonso II the Chaste ordered a church to be built, which today has become the **Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela.**

From that very moment, many Christians decided to travel on pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela to pay their respects to the Saint.

This devotion caused people from all over the world to travel through the lands surrounding the heart of Galicia.

The ***Codex Calixtinus*** helped to increase its popularity by describing its main routes and encouraging not only the European working classes to follow this route in order to fulfil promises and penances, but also great figures from all walks of medieval society.

Nowadays, the Camino Frances a Santiago is the most popular route.

TYPICAL OF THE CAMINO FRANCES

On this first stage of the Camino Frances, you will be able to sample the best of the typical cuisine found in the French Basque Country and Navarre.

IT'S ALL ABOUT DRINK!

One of the highlights of this stretch of the Camino Frances is the variety of drinks with a long tradition of artisan production: don't miss **Navarre wine, pacharan or cider.**



WINE

Navarre (D.O.) was known above all for its rosé, but now it is also known for its extensive range of wines.

PACHARAN

Fruity liqueur made from macerated blackcurrant.



CIDER

Obtained from apples, this drink is typically from the **Basque Country and the French Basque Country.**

Basque Gateau

Don't miss the delicious Basque Gateau, filled with cream!



TASTE HIGH QUALITY CHEESES!



OSSAU-IRATY

This famous Pyrenean cheese has a **Protected Designation of Origin (D.O)** because it is made from the milk of specific breeds of sheep: The Manech and Vasco-Bearnese breeds.

IDIAZABAL

Another Basque-Navarran D.O cheese with a spicy, but not a bitter taste.



RONCAL

Also made from raw sheep's milk, this cheese comes from the Roncal Valley in the Navarran Pyrenees.

What to taste in Basque-French and Navarran gastronomy?

SANTIAGO CAKE

This almond tart is usually eaten in summer, as 25th July is the feast day of Santiago Apostle. The most important detail is the cross sprinkled with sugar.



TYPICALLY, FROM SANTIAGO

GALICIAN-STYLE OCTOPUS



The star dish

Galicia is famous for its exquisite seafood.

Santiago de Compostela is an ideal place to discover seafood restaurants and places specialising in octopus.

MEAT

Roast veal
Lamb chops
Grilled steak
Free-range chicken, either stewed or roasted
Bacon with turnip greens

FISH AND SEAFOOD

Baked monkfish
Baked hake
Galician Style or Baked Codfish
Fish (white tuna, sea bass, hake, etc.)
Galician style octopus
Conger eel
Shellfish (barnacles, spider crab, crab, etc.)
Caldeirada (Fish stew)
Octopus, cockles and codfish empanadas (pasties)

DESSERTS

Filloas (Galician pancakes)
Almond cake
Easter cake
Cream biscuits

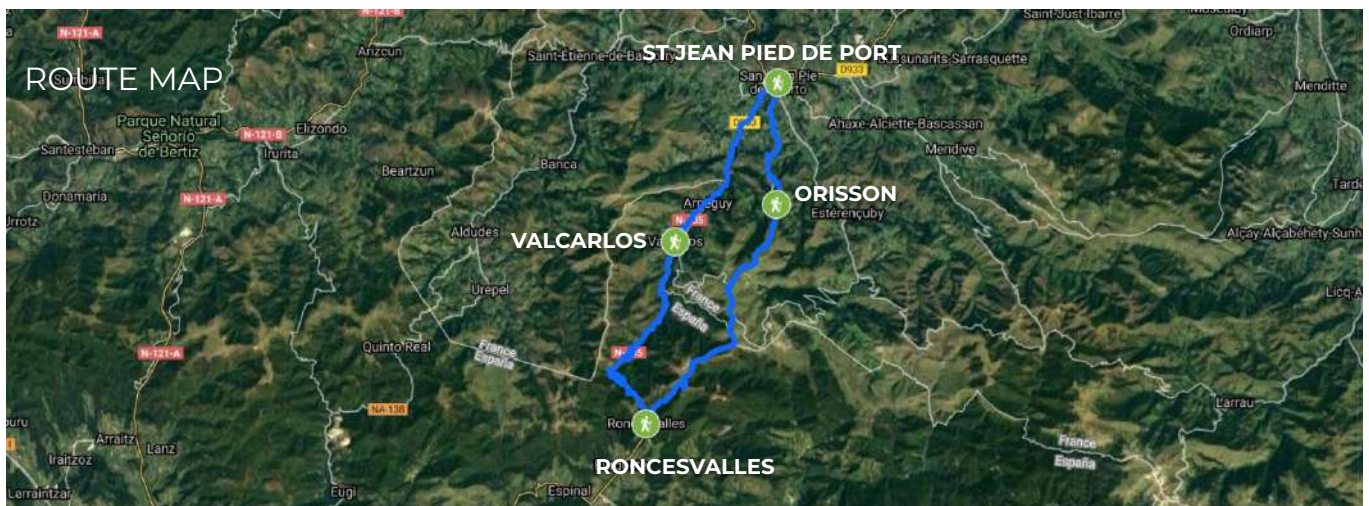
What to try in Galician gastronomy?

ST JEAN PIED DE PORT - RONCESVALLES

There are two options for the first stage of the Camino Frances:

Option A - VIA ORISSON: The gradient is tougher and requires more physical preparation, but the spectacular mountain scenery is rewarding.

Option B - VIA VALCARLOS: It is easier and safer, but runs mostly close to the national road.



STAGE PROFILE

OPTION A: ST JEAN TO RONCESVALLES VIA **ORISSON**

↑ 1282 m · ↓ 504 m



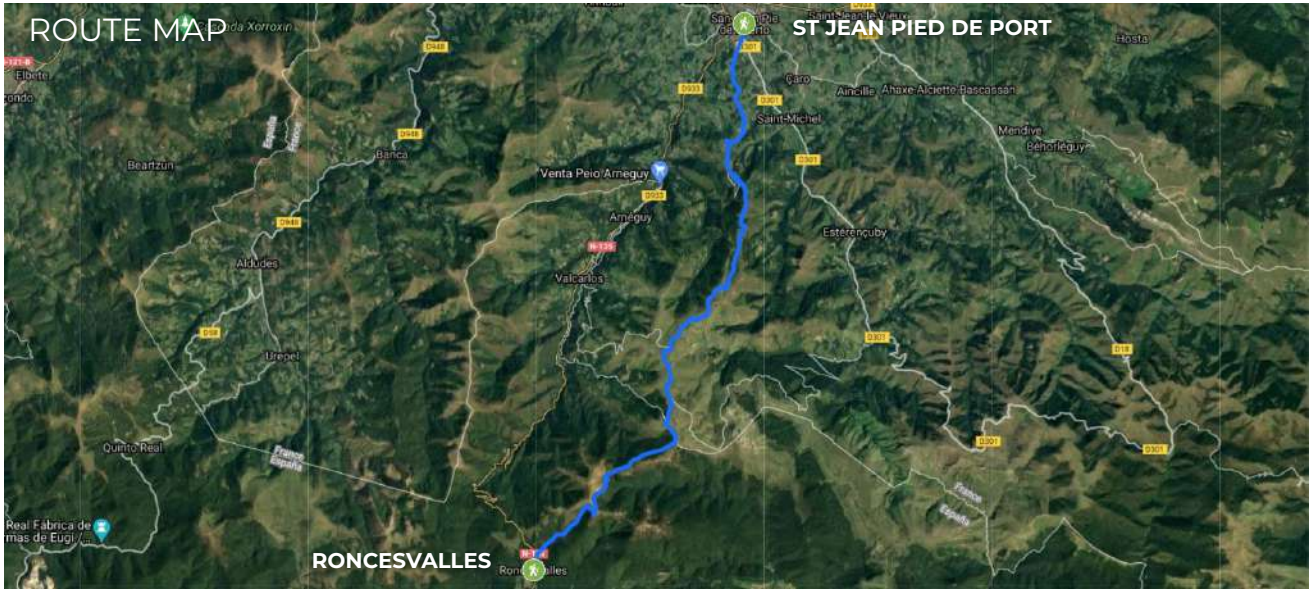
OPTION B: ST JEAN TO RONCESVALLES VIA **VALCARLOS**

↑ 925 m · ↓ 147 m



ST JEAN PIED DE PORT - RONCESVALLES

OPTION A: VIA ORISSON



STAGE PROFILE

↑ 1282 m · ↓ 504 m



PLACES OF INTEREST ON THIS STAGE

This first stage of the Camino Frances is also the hardest and has the most **spectacular landscape**.

Its main itinerary, known as the **Napoleon Route**, it crosses the mountain passes of Cize, **ascending from 180 metres of altitude at Saint Jean Pied de Port to the 1,430 metres of the Lepoeder Pass**, and then descending through a spectacular beech forest down to 945 metres at **Roncesvalles**.

It is recommended to go via Valcarlos in winter. The route is **perfectly signposted**, has no dangerous roads or aerial paths, but in case of dense fog, we must be careful not to get lost.

In 2010, the signs were updated with numbered posts, and at the **Lepoeder Pass**, there is a small refuge that has a communication system for emergencies. We must have enough time to face possible contingencies.

ST JEAN PIED DE PORT - RONCESVALLES (A)



Aerial view over St Jean with the Pyrenees in the background



Wall of the Medieval Citadel of St Jean



Pilgrim walking the first section of the Camino Frances in the Basque Pyrenees

ROUTE

0,0 km Saint Jean Pied de Port (All services)

It should be noted that in France that the Camino is marked with marks of the **GR-65** in red and white, but you can also see some yellow arrows.

We will begin the march on the **medieval bridge over the River Nive**.

Thus we accede to the Rue d'Espagne, a commerce and handicraft district whose conservation is oriented to maintain its historical aspect.

We continue straight ahead for 100 metres and then, on the right-hand side, a local road with a pronounced slope, which is marked with the name of "**Route de Napoleon**".

This was the passage of the Napoleonic troops during the invasion of Spain, which coincides with the **Via Aquitaine, the ancient Roman road from Bordeaux to Astorga**.

We continue along the local road.

5,0 km Honto

When leaving the village of **Honto**, we cut through a path that is on the left hand that, still having a hard slope, saves us a prolonged curve in the road.

We go back to it and followed it until we reach **Orisson**.

ST JEAN PIED DE PORT - RONCESVALLES (A)



Statue of the Virgin of Biakorri in Orisson



Pilgrims sheltering from the sun on the way to the Bentartea Pass



Roldan Fountain

7,6 km Orisson (Bar, Restaurant)

We continue along the same road, which has little traffic, in an environment of alpine meadows typical of the Pyrenees.

About four kilometres ahead, and if the day is clear, we will see on the left-hand side, the **Virgin of Biakorri** (the protector of the shepherds), located on a rock on which some pilgrims deposit their offerings.

We continue 5.1 km to **Arnéguy** leaving it on the right (we can follow it if we want to link with the diversion to Valcarlos).

We continue straight on the same road. 2.0 kilometres later, we leave the road.

We then continue along a path to the right and pass by the **Urdanarre Cross**.

After 1.4, we reach **Bentartea Pass**, where we find the **Roldán fountain**, which reminds us of the officer of Charlemagne defeated with his army in 778 by the Basques.

16,2 km Collado de Bentartea

We leave the **Roldán fountain** on the left and follow a track through a beech forest, parallel to a wire fence (the border boundary) until reaching the stone pillar that marks the entrance to **Navarre**.

Then, on the right, we take the track that runs along the northern slope of the **Txangoa** and **Menditxipi** mountains to the **Lepoeder Pass**.

If the visibility is good, we can see the **tiny centre of Roncesvalles**.

ST JEAN PIED DE PORT - RONCESVALLES (A)

• 20,2 km Collado de Lepoeder

There are two possible itineraries to go down towards **Roncesvalles**.

The first itinerary, the most direct, is through a beautiful beech forest on **Mount Donsimon**.

In a pronounced descent, following the marks of GR (you have to be cautious if there is fog because it is not difficult to become disorientated).

We must go down to the right of the road and take then the road exits to the left, crossing the same road a few metres later.

The second itinerary is diverted along to the **Ibañeta Pass**; we can follow both the road and go directly down the road that goes down the right of the road, to the Ibañeta Pass (Monument to Roldan and Chapel), from where we complete the descent following a path to the left of the national road.

• 23,9 km Roncesvalles (Bar-restaurant, Tourism Office)

The town has its founding associated with the Jacobean route and, together with O Cebreiro, **is one of the most traditional places on the Pilgrim's Way.**



Pilgrims on their way to the Lepoeder Pass



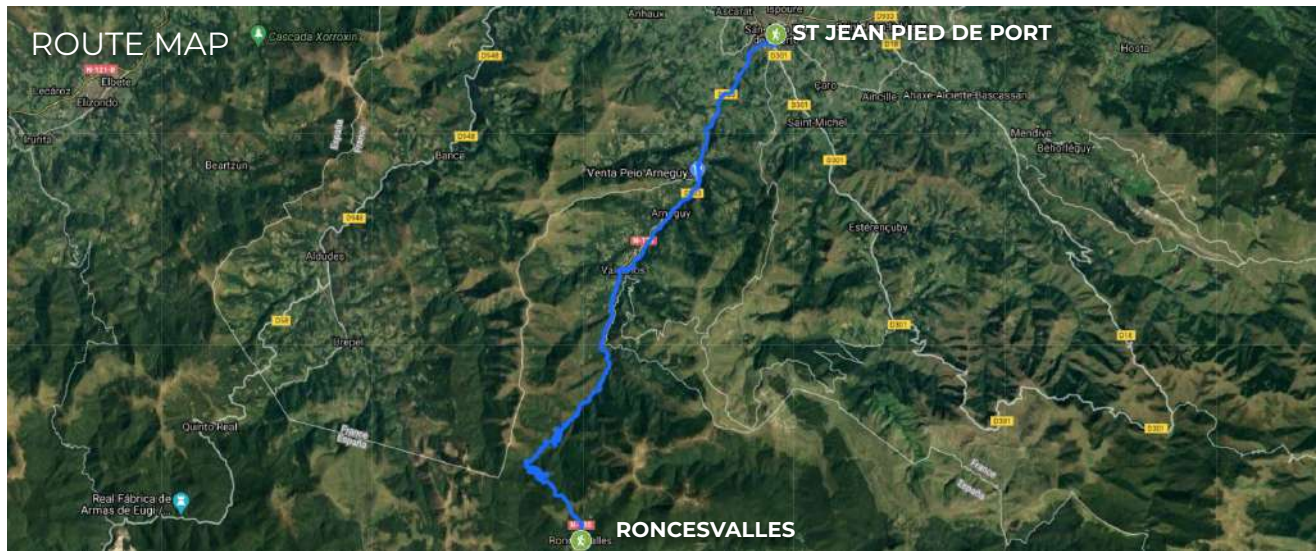
Cloister gardens at the Collegiate Church, Roncesvalles



Collegiate Church of Santa Maria de Roncesvalles

ST JEAN PIED DE PORT - RONCESVALLES

OPTION B: VIA VALCARLOS



STAGE PROFILE

↑ 956 m · ↓ 178 m



PLACES OF INTEREST ON THIS STAGE

The **Camino** that **passes through the Valcarlos Valley** runs along the **national road** practically at all times and is at a lower altitude than Napoleon's Route, which is why this is the recommended option if we are following the Camino in bad weather or during the snowy season, or if we simply don't feel confident enough in our own level of physical ability.

There have been **alternate Camino routes that have opened** in recent years that allow us to avoid having to walk along the **roadsides** of the national highway.

It is worth mentioning that during today's stage we will find food services both in **Arnéguay** and **Valcarlos**.

ST JEAN PIED DE PORT - RONCESVALLES (B)

ROUTE

0,0 km Saint Jean Pied de Port (All services)

After crossing the **Nive River**, we come out on the Rue d'Espagne, pass through the **Porte d'Espagne** gate y continue straight for about 100 meters.

To head towards **Valcarlos** we turn right to follow along the **Chemin de Mayorga**, which ends up on the D933 national road.

We follow it for 700 meters, take a street to the right and cross a bridge over the **Nive d'Arneguy River**. We continue walking on the right hand side of the road and the river.

6,8 km ahead we arrive at Ventas Arnéguy, on the **Spanish-French border**; here there are large shops, bars and restaurants.

In front of **Venta Peio** we take a dirt path on the right that will bring us to the town of **Arneguy** in 1.4 km.

8,2 km Arneguy (Bar, Store, Restaurant)

In Arnéguy we will have to cross the river and the border once again (entering **France**) and follow a small asphalted path; the road and the river will be on our right hand side.

Before arriving at **Valcarlos**, we cross the river on a pedestrian bridge and re-enter **Spain**.



Reflection of the bridge over the River Nive in St Jean



Village of Arneguy, France



Wooded section near Valcarlos

ST JEAN PIED DE PORT - RONCESVALLES (B)



Path on the Camino between
Valcarlos and Roncesvalles



Signposting on the Camino to
Valcarlos



Pilgrim on the Camino to
Roncesvalles

11,4 km Valcarlos (Bar, Store, Restaurant)

We leave **Valcarlos** and walk along the shoulder of the **N-135** road. We take a path that later comes out onto the N-135 again, at km 63.

From here, follow the road carefully and then cross the bridge over the **River Chapitel** up to kilometre point 61, and a few metres further on, on the left, there is a well-signposted turn-off back to the Camino.

Later we descend on a local road to **Gainekoleta**, a small village that belongs to Valcarlos. We take a path that later leads back to the N-135 national road.

4.3 km later we will have reached the Roncesvalles mountain pass (**Puerto de Ibañeta**) at 1,057 m, where the **Hermitage of San Salvador** is located.

22,0 km Puerto de Ibañeta

We arrive at **Roncesvalles** after heading downhill on a trail to the left of the national road.

11,5 km Roncesvalles (Bar-restaurant, Tourism Office)

RONCESVALLES

⇒ **Collegiate Church of Santa María de Roncesvalles:** A clear example of the French Gothic style in Spain, the Church of Santa María began its construction between 1215 and 1221 under the patronage of the Navarrese King Sancho VII El Fuerte (“the Strong”).

Much of the temple was rebuilt during the seventeenth century.

It consists of one floor with three naves and a **sculpture of the Virgin of Roncesvalles** in the presbytery, carved in wood and bathed in silver in Toulouse in the 14th century.

The historical building of the Collegiate also houses the **cloister, with a square design** that was erected during the first half of the seventeenth century.

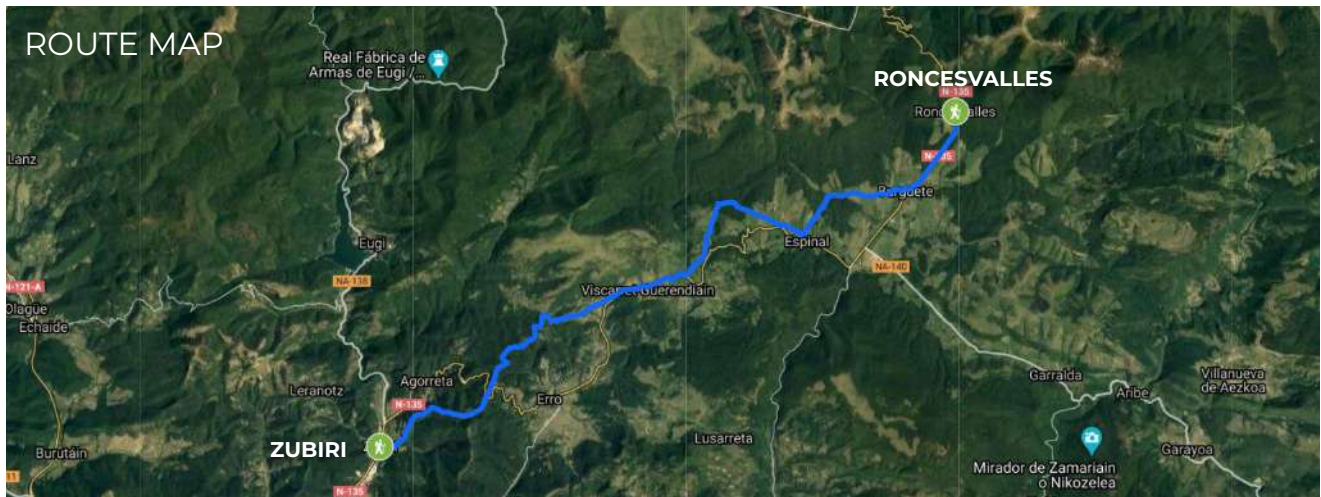
Adjacent to the cloister is the **Royal Pantheon** (13th century), where the remains of King Sancho and his wife Clemencia de Tolosa rest.

The Collegiate Church holds a daily mass in several languages for the “blessing of the pilgrim”.

⇒ **Chapel of Santiago:** Small Gothic building from the 13th century. It was a parish church until the 18th century and was restored in the 20th century.

⇒ **Chapel of the Holy Spirit:** Also known as Charlemagne’s Silo, this is the oldest building in Roncesvalles. Dating back to the 12th century, pilgrims have been buried within.

RONCESVALLES - ZUBIRI



STAGE PROFILE

↑ 217 m · ↓ 633 m



PLACES OF INTEREST ON THIS STAGE

Today's magnificent stage takes place in the **Navarrese Pyrenees mountains with their subdued silhouettes**, in the midst of alpine meadows and wet forests of beech, oak and pine trees.

The route is typical of **highlands**, with trails, dirt roads and rocky sections. There are no dangerous or complicated parts, and the Camino is really well marked.

Some parts of the trail may become muddy if there are heavy rains; if it becomes too difficult, **we can use the N-135 road as an alternative**, making sure to be cautious when walking alongside it.

Although this stage mainly heads **downhill**, there are **two important climbs** to consider (see the elevation profile graph); the second, after exiting **Lintzoain**, is the hardest part due to the steep initial incline.

We will cross several farming villages, all of which have restaurant services, except for Lintzoain. **We must stock up on water for the 8 km stretch between Lintzoain and Zubiri**; however, in Puerto de Erro there is a caravan-bar open from Easter to mid-October.

RONCESVALLES - ZUBIRI

ROUTE

0,0 km Roncesvalles (Bar, Restaurant, Tourism Office)

When leaving **Roncesvalles** on the N-135, we take a path on the right hand side of the road. This path advances through a forest of oaks and beech trees called the **Sorginaritzaga Forest** or “Oak Grove of Witches”.

Continuing on for 100 m, you can see the **Cross of the Pilgrims** on the other side of the road, a Gothic cross brought here in 1880.

It's important not to stray away from the Camino (there is a somewhat confusing marker), we want to make sure to always stay to the right of the road just a few meters from it.

This bucolic walk ends when we arrive at the warehouses of the **Ipetea industrial park**, where we turn left to come out on the N-135 and enter into **Auritz/Burguete**.

2,8 km Burguete (Bars, Stores, Health Center, Pharmacy, ATM)

We cross through **Burguete** along its main street. There are a couple of bars in the town that open early, the first is located next to the church and there is another 100 meters further down.

After the Parish Church of **San Nicolas**, next to a bank we will turn right and cross a footbridge over a stream that descends towards the **Urrobi River**.

After we will begin to walk uphill on a wooded trail.

After **2,6 km**, during which we will encounter several water sources in rudimentary stone fords and climb a steep hill, we come out on a paved path from where we will already be able to see the scarlet roofs of **Espinal**, the first village in the **Erro Valley**.



Roncesvalles to Zubiri



Doorway of an old building in Burguete



Balconies full of flowers in the village of Burguete

RONCESVALLES - ZUBIRI

continuing on from Burguete

We make our way into the town center to come out on the **N-135** next to the modern **Church of San Bartolome**.

1,1 km later we will have reached **Espinal**, we start to head uphill on a wooded path.

♦ 6,5 Espinal (Bar, Store, Medical Clinic)

We head off to the right (we will find a bar and a bakery immediately after) and continue along the sidewalk.

After a crosswalk we turn left and climb to the top of Mezkiritz on different trails.

There is a carved image of the **Virgen of Roncesvalles** (km 8,2) on the roadside.

When crossing the road, we must pay attention and take the Jacobean route, as it is easy to get mixed up and take another path that leads to the **Altos de Errebelu**.

A metal gate marks the entrance to the beech forest.

A last stretch, paved to keep the mud away, brings us to the roadside, where an artificial trail leads to **Bizkarreta**, which used to be the end of the stage in the 12th century thanks to the existence of a pilgrims' hospital.

1,7 Alto de Mezkiritz (924 m); here we cross the N-135 national road.

We then descend on a wooded trail that is deteriorated in some sections.

3,3 Bizkarreta.



Main street in Burguete



Church of San Bartolome in Espinal



Signposting in Espinal

RONCESVALLES - ZUBIRI



Bizkarreta/Gerendiain



Lintzoain



Path in Alto de Erro

◆ 9,1 km Bizkarreta/Gerendiain (Bar, Store, Medical Clinic)

There is a bar at the entrance on the left hand side. We leave the village next to the **Tiendica de Biskarret** store and head to the town of Bizkarreta Lintzoain, approximately 2 km away.

◆ 13,4 km Lintzoain (All services)

Once in **Lintzoain** we pass by the pediment and turn right to take a very steep concrete path.

We then continue on a gravel trail – a marker indicates the four remaining kilometers until reaching **Alto de Erro**– and then follow along a narrow trail.

The first hills are the hardest but the incline gradually gives way and the road widens.

There are even pleasant sections heading downhill, like the one that will take us to **Alto de Erro** itself, where we will then cross the **N-135**.

4,5 Puerto de Erro (803 m); here we cross the N-135 road and proceed downhill along different types of paths to Zubiri.

3,5 Zubiri; we cross the bridge over the Arga River to enter the town and follow the Camino leaving the bridge off to our right.

◆ 17,8 km Alto de Erro

We continue heading uphill; later on we will find ourselves back next to the **C-535**.

RONCESVALLES - ZUBIRI

• 21,5 km Zubiri (All services)

The name of the town “**Zubiri**” means “next to the bridge” and refers to the bridge from the 14th century over the Arga. It is known as the “**Bridge of Rabies**”, since, according to tradition, **Santa Quiteria** (who was the protector of this disease) is buried under its central pillar, and it was believed that animals would be cured or become immune to this disease if they circled the central pillar three times.

In the Middle Ages it was also called the “**Bridge of Paradise**”, as it saved people from a dangerous river.

The local church, dedicated to **Saint Stephen Protomartyr**, is a newly built temple. The original building was destroyed during the Carlist War.



Gateway full of flowers in Zubiri



Pilgrims crossing the river on the Puente de la Rabia Bridge

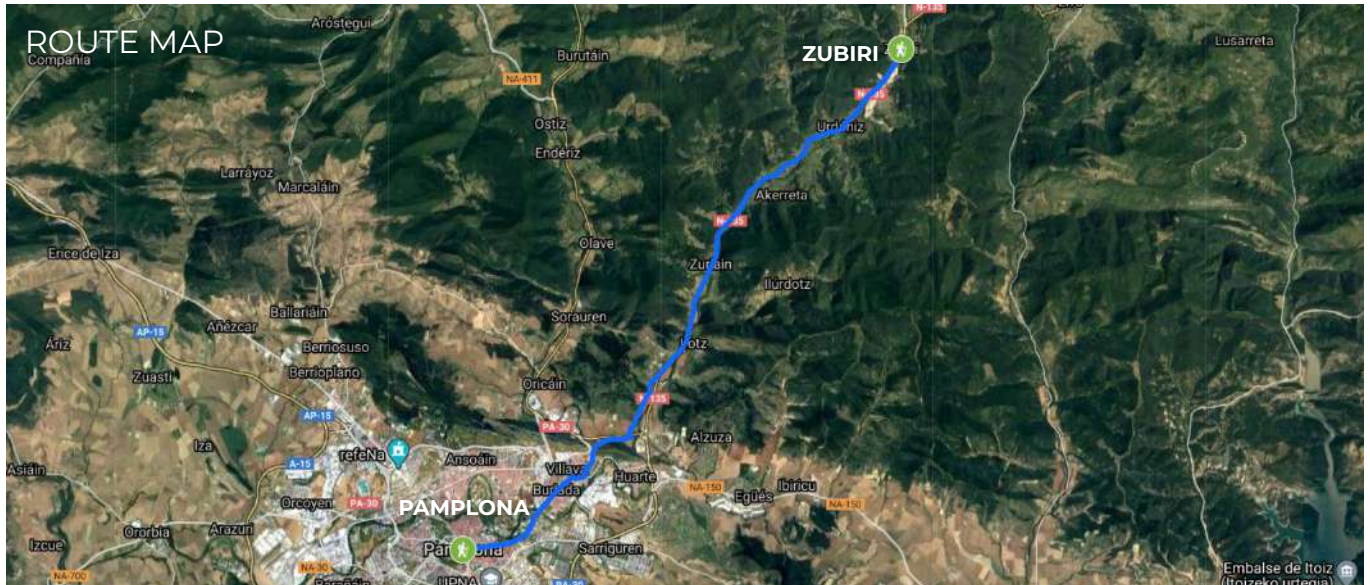


Bell tower of the church of San Martin in Zubiri



Medieval bridge in Zubiri

ZUBIRI - PAMPLONA



STAGE PROFILE

↑ 72 m · ↓ 148 m



PLACES OF INTEREST ON THIS STAGE

This stage is short and relatively flat; many pilgrims stretch it out to **Cizur Menor**, 5 km from the center of Pamplona.

In the first part of the stage we cross a beautiful stretch on the **banks of the Arga River**, along paths that wander through beech and pine trees. The last 4.5 km are fully urban.

In the event of heavy rainfall, the trails may become muddy between **Larrasoña** and **Zabaldika**. Both the option that goes up to Zabaldika and the one that passes through Huarte are properly marked.

The main cultural attraction of this stage is centered around **Pamplona**, which is the capital of Navarre and is a welcoming city with many parks and gardens.

Also of interest is the **bridge and basilica in Trinidad de Arre**. In Trinidad de Arre, the Baztan Way (Camino de Baztan) which begins in Bayonne (France), merges with our French Way (Camino Francés).

ZUBIRI - PAMPLONA

ROUTE



Zubiri



Pilgrims on the Camino Frances to Pamplona



Navarran landscape on the Camino Frances between Zubiri and Pamplona

0,0 km Zubiri (All services)

Today we get back on the Camino crossing the same bridge we used to enter **Zubiri**.

We start out walking parallel to the **Arga River** valley alongside a magnesite factory, located 1 km after the start of today's stage.

We walk up the road, around the perimeter of the company, then descend a flight of stairs to leave the industrial area behind.

After this, we continue in the same direction along pleasant roads, passing through the villages of **Ilarratz** (km 2,9) and **Ezkirotz** (km 3,7), (both with a drinking fountain) before arriving at **Larrasoaña**.

Larrasoaña is only two kilometers away. This village is a solitary town along the Jacobean route, backboneed by its **San Nicolas Street**, which owes its origin to the founding of a monastery back in the 10th century.

5,5 km Larrasoaña (Bar, Store, Supermarket, Medical Clinic)

We exit **Larrasoaña** on the same bridge we used to enter it. With the **Arga** to our right, we make our way up to the small village of **Akerreta**.

If we come from **Zubiri** the itinerary does not go into this town, as it is separated from the Camino by the **Arga River** and the **Bandidos Bridge**.

A short climb will take us up to **Akerreta**.

ZUBIRI - PAMPLONA



Main street in Akerreta



Views over the village of Akerreta



Typical entrance found in Zuriain

• 6,1 km Akerreta

At the top of the village is the **Church of the Transfiguration**, which still holds on to medieval elements such as its tower, doorway and the baptismal font.

We pass by the rural hotel and after a gate and a stretch of gravel we reach a local road and cross it.

Sheltered between trees and scrub we go off in search of the **Arga River** and quickly descend down to its shore, almost being able to touch the water.

Glued to the riverbed we continue until reaching the **Bridge of Zuriain**.

• 9,2 km Zuriain (Bar)

We leave **Zuriain** walking alongside the **N-135** national road and continue for 600 meters until we take a road on the left. Shortly after we cross the Arga River once again.

• 11,2 km Irotz (Bar)

Leaving the **Church of San Pedro** off to one side, we follow a path until arriving at the Iturgaiz Bridge of Romanesque origin that was rehabilitated last century.

The trail is located right at the exit to the left hand side of the Arga Riverside Walk.

There are two different signposts making this turn off very confusing.

The Riverside Walk marks 14 kilometers to Cizur and just above, at the entrance of a narrow trail, it points to **Arre** and **Villava/Pamplona**.

ZUBIRI - PAMPLONA



Bridge in Irotz



View of the street of Irotz with the Church of San Pedro in the background



Medieval bridge over the River Ultzama in Trinidad de Arre

continuing on from Irotz

The one marked as **Arre** is a narrow trail that makes its way in between the Riverside Walk and the road and enters Zabaldika, where you can continue straight or cross the N-135 to make your way up to the **Church of San Esteban**.

The trail that follows the Riverside Walk and the one that leaves from **Zabaldika** take you to a picnic area located on the other side of the N-135 (Km 12,9).

Here we can find tables, barbecues and other facilities that encourage you to take a break from the Camino.

The route forks off here, and we will take the trail that continues straight and leads us up a path towards the old manor of **Arleta**, which is currently just a bunch of old houses in ruins.

We say goodbye to the **Esteribar valley** and later avoid crossing a ring road thanks to another underground passage.

We go down to the bridge over the **Ultzama River** and the **Hermitage of Trinidad de Arre**, which still has its Romanesque apse.

• 16,0 km Trinidad de Arre

We cross the medieval bridge over the **Ultzama River** and turn left.

• 16,4 km Villava (All services)

We then continue on the Mayor de **Villava** Street, **Miguel Indurain's** birthplace.

Upon leaving we cross the road and continue straight, passing several roundabouts, until we link up with **Burlada**.

ZUBIRI - PAMPLONA

• 17,5 km Burlada (All services)

We cross through the town on its **Main Street** and slightly after we will reach a mechanic where we will go to the right to cross a pedestrian walkway next to a few nurseries.

After the crossing, we will follow the pavement markers for the Camino, continue for a few meters towards the right and then turn left onto a walkway.

This is the Camino of **Burlada**, which leads to **Pamplona**, the first city of the Camino.

A kilometer and a half later we cross the **Magdalena Bridge** over the Arga River.

The Camino continues to the right towards a passage regulated by traffic lights.

We continue along the moat of the walls, specifically next to the **Bastion of Our Lady of Guadalupe**, to cross a drawbridge followed by the Portal de Francia, dating back to 1553.

This leads to the **Carmen streets**, where on the right sidewalk we will find the private pilgrim shelter, Casa Ibarrola, and the La Navarrería. When we come to the end, a sign tells us to turn left on the De Curia Street, where **the Caminoteca** is located, a store specializing in materials and products for pilgrims.

• 21,8 km Pamplona (All services)



Municipal Palace of Burlada



View of the tower at the Cathedral of Santa Maria la Real between the buildings, Pamplona



Plaza del Castillo, Pamplona

PAMPLONA

One of our recommendations is to take a tour around **the Old Town** and wander through its bustling streets, the same streets the bulls run down in **the famous bullfights of San Fermin**.

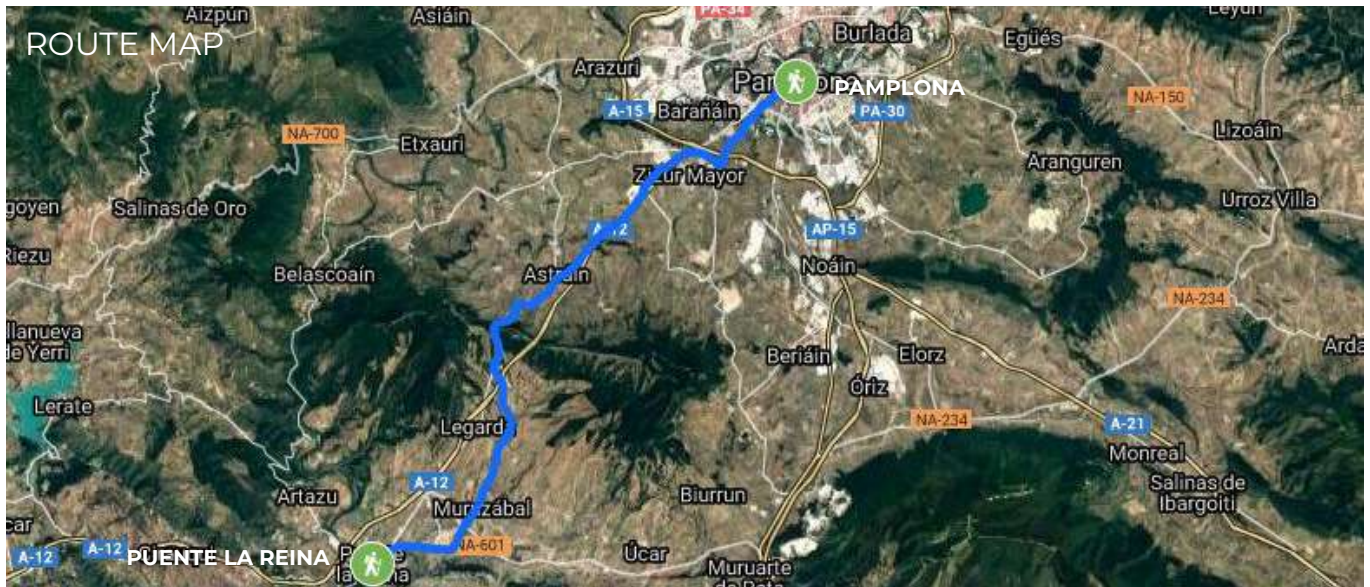
You can cover the distance separating the corrals from the Cuesta (hill) of **Santo Domingo** and make your way to the **bullring**.

In the same direction you can pass by the square with the **Town Hall** and walk up the Estafeta Street, where you should **try the delicious “pinchos”** (small traditional finger food that usually comes on bread).

The **Castillo Square and San Nicolás Street** have excellent food, and the **San Jose Square and El Redín**, both next to the cathedral, are a must-see.

The **Cathedral of Santa Maria** presents an unusual Gothic style as a substitute of the original Romanesque style, that is nothing like the neoclassical facade by Ventura Rodríguez, which hides a **beautiful cloister** that you will have to stop and see in front of the **Puerta Preciosa** (Beautiful Door) **of the Barbazan Chapel**.

PAMPLONA - PUENTE LA REINA



STAGE PROFILE



PLACES OF INTEREST ON THIS STAGE

We start today's stage climbing the **Sierra del Perdón**, which has a wind farm on its hills; the ascent lasts for only 260 meters and is very gradual, except for one steeper section at the end. Our way down will be more difficult and rocky.

The **Alto del Perdón** is an incredible lookout: behind us we can see **Pamplona** and the **Pyrenees**; in front, the extensive Navarra plain. Near the end of the stage we can choose to take a detour and visit the magnificent **hermitage of Santa Maria de Eunate**.

PAMPLONA - PUENTE LA REINA

ROUTE



Pamplona Town Hall



Streets in Cizur Menor



Views over Zariquiegui

0,0 km Pamplona (All services)

From the square where the Town Hall is located, we follow San Saturnino Street and Mayor (main) Street, we cross the **Ciudadela Park**, continue along Fuente del Hierro Street and leave Pamplona through the **University of Navarra campus gardens**.

3.0 **Medieval bridge of Azella**, on the **Sadar River**. We cross it and take a footpath parallel to the road to **Cizur Menor**. Heading slightly uphill, we cross several bridges in a row over the **Elorz River**, the train tracks and the **AP-15** highway.

4,9 km Cizur Menor (All services)

When leaving Cizur Menor we cross a small park diagonally and follow **Santiago Street** in a residential area. We then continue along trails among fields of grain, heading slightly uphill. We cross the **NA-6004** road.

4.1 Detour to **Guendulain**. This is an abandoned small village that will be 250 meters off to the right. Only the ruins of the church and a small palace remain.

Zariquiegui is 2.0 km further ahead on the same trail.

11,0 km Zariquiegui (Store)

After about forty minutes walking up a gradual hill, we are taken to **Alto del Perdon**. Shortly before we passed by the **Fountain of Reniega**, which nowadays is almost always dry; according to a legend, the devil tempted the pilgrims with water from this fountain in exchange for renouncing their faith.

PAMPLONA - PUENTE LA REINA

13,3 km Alto del Perdon (Store)

We start to head downhill, with the first section being very steep. Further down it levels out and we can walk more comfortably among fields of grain.



Road to the Alto del Perdon

16,8 km Uterga (Bar, restaurant, store)

We continue walking with relative ease, first on a farming path and then on a rural trail.



Streets in Uterga

19,5 km Muruzabal (Bar, restaurant, store)

In the middle of the town of Muruzabal, we can find the well-marked turnoff to the magnificent Romanesque **hermitage of Santa Maria de Eunate**, which is only 2.4 km away. It is worth visiting, although it lengthens today's stage by 3.2 km.

From the hermitage you can go directly to **Obanos** following the final stretch of the **French Way through Aragon**, or even go to Puente la Reina. If we decide not to visit Eunate, we continue to Obanos on a dirt path, to the right of the road.



Views of Muruzabal

21,3 km Obanos (Bar, restaurant, store)

We head down to the **NA-6064** provincial road, cross it and pass by a few houses with gardens.

We come out on the old national road at the **Jakue Hotel**, at the entrance to **Puente la Reina**.

23,6 km Puente la Reina (All services)

PUENTE LA REINA

The town was named after the Romanesque bridge over the **Arga River**, which was ordered to be built by **Queen Doña Mayor** for the passage of pilgrims.

Places of interest:

⇒ Church of the Crucifix:

the Jacobean route passes under the porch that unites this church with the convent.

Santa Maria de los Huertos, as it was known in its early days, was built at the end of the 12th century. In the 14th century, A Gothic nave was added to the main Romanesque one, which holds a Germanic carving of crucified Jesus Christ. The main entrance is elaborately decorated with various motifs.

⇒ Church of Santiago:

As you walk down Mayor (main) Street, it's impossible not to notice the tower, which seems to practically touch the sky.

It was built at the end of the 12th century, but its appearance was set in stone with the remodeling that was done in the 16th century.

You should stop in front of the poly-lobed main entrance that faces Mayor Street and the Gothic carving of **Santiago Beltza**.



PUENTE LA REINA - ESTELLA



STAGE PROFILE

↑ 352 m · ↓ 272 m



PLACES OF INTEREST ON THIS STAGE

One of the most beautiful stages in Navarra was drastically altered by the construction of the A-12 highway, whose layout was designed without taking the ancient route into consideration.

Today we walk mainly along dirt roads; only the short but steep climb to **Mañeru** is worth highlighting.

PUENTE LA REINA - ESTELLA

ROUTE



Views of the bridge at Puente la Reina



Streets in Mañeru



Buildings in Cirauqui

0,0 km Puente la Reina (All services)

At the end of **Mayor Street**, we arrive at the famous bridge, which we use to cross the **Arga River** for the last time.

We turn left and cross the **NA-1110** to take a street that becomes a dirt path a little further on. We walk along the bottom of a wide valley.

3.0 On a dirt path we face a difficult hill that will take us to the **A-12** highway. Then, after a gradual descent, we reach **Mañeru**.

4,4 km Mañeru (Bar, restaurant, store)

We leave on **Forzosa Street** (which leads to the cemetery); we can soon spot the unmistakable silhouette of **Cirauqui** on the horizon, which we'll reach on trails among vineyards.

11,0 km Cirauqui (All services)

We leave Cirauqui along the remnants of an **old Roman road**, we cross the aforementioned Roman bridge and, shortly after, cross the **A-12** highway on a bridge.

We continue along the countryside, with gentle hills.

3.6 We cross the **A-12** highway on an underpass. In 300 meters we cross it again on another underpass.

0.8 We cross the **Salado River** on a medieval bridge. In 250 meters we cross the **A-12** highway once again on an underpass, beginning the climb to **Lorca** on a dirt trail.

PUENTE LA REINA - ESTELLA

• 13,2 km Lorca (Bar, restaurant, store)

We cross **Lorca** in a straight line and continue making our way along comfortable agricultural paths, with the national road and highway to our right. Shortly before reaching **Villatuerta**, we cross the **A-12** highway on an underpass.



Houses in Lorca

• 17,8 km Villatuerta (Bar, restaurant, store)

We continue walking with no real difficulties, first on an agricultural path then after on a rural trail.



Views over Villatuerta

• 22 km Estella (All services)



Views over Estella



Church of San Pedro de la Rua, in Estella

ESTELLA



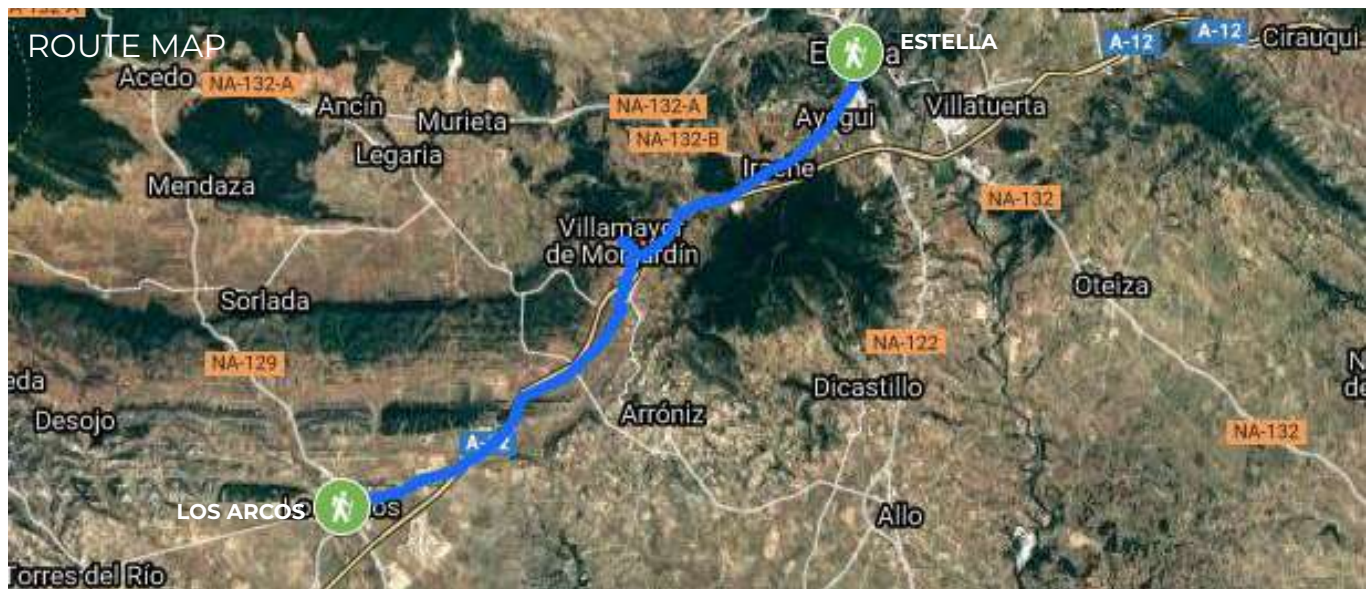
The name Estella comes from the word **Lizarra**, which means “**star**” in the Basque language. Estella is known as the “**Toledo of the North**”, for its rich historical and artistic heritage.

Located in the **Ega River valley**, it owes its existence to the Jacobean route, which it has served for centuries.

A few places of special interest included the **churches of San Pedro de la Rua** (12th century), **Santo Sepulcro** (14th century), **San Miguel Arcangel** (12th century), **Santa Maria Jus del Castillo** (12th century) and **San Juan Bautista** (12th century).

The **Palace of the Kings of Navarre** is an excellent example of civil Romanesque architecture from the 12th century. The **Convent of Santo Domingo** (13th century), at the foot of the old Castle of Lizarra, was founded by the Navarrese king, **Teobaldo II**.

ESTELLA - LOS ARCOS



STAGE PROFILE

↑ 321 m · ↓ 301 m



PLACES OF INTEREST ON THIS STAGE

Today's stage is placid, with moderate hills and comfortable dirt paths. Keep in mind that in summertime the section from **Villamayor de Monjardin** to **Los Arcos** has hardly any shaded areas.

ESTELLA - LOS ARCOS

ROUTE



Views of the River Ega, in Estella



Streets in Ayegui



Monastery of Irache

0,0 km Estella (All services)

We continue along **La Rua Street**, which we came in on yesterday.

We continue along San Nicolás Street and **Carlos VII** Street; once we reach a roundabout, slightly to the right of the road, we take a footpath heading uphill.

Ayegui is the town after Estella.

2,0 km Ayegui (All services)

We leave from the **San Pelayo Square**, where a sign tells us to turn left to cross the NA-1110 road and make our way up to the **Monastery of Irache**. If we continue straight from this square, we will take the shortcut (that doesn't cross the road and saves us 300 meters).

3,3 km Monastery of Irache

We continue on in the same direction and in 600 meters we turn on a path to the right, walking along the perimeter of a residential complex. When we reach the **Irache Hotel**, we cross the **NA-1110** road.

5,0 km Irache (Bar, restaurant)

We walk along the town's main street (there is a campsite with a bar-restaurant); at the exit we cross a road and continue along a pleasant wooded path.

ESTELLA - LOS ARCOS

8,5 km Azqueta (Bar)

On a path to the right of the road, we walk downhill for a bit before facing a 100-meter climb in only 1.5 km. 300 meters before reaching Villamayor de Monjardin, we pass by the original **Fountain of the Moors** (13th century), in a Gothic style.



Signposting of Azqueta

10,4 km Villamayor de Monjardin (Bar, restaurant, store)

We leave from the lower part of the town, taking an agricultural path.

2.1 **Road to Urbiola**; there is a fountain. We cross the road.

We continue walking close to the **A-12** highway, on comfortable agricultural paths among crops. Further ahead we get away from the highway to walk around a small mountain range on the right, on a beautiful and secluded stretch.

2.0 **Road to Olejua**. We cross the road and walk away from the **A-12** highway. In 2.8 km we make two left-right turns at right angles.



Views of the Church of San Andres Apostol, in Villamayor de Monjardin

5.1 Shaded pine forest. A good place to rest, although some disrespectful pilgrims have littered the area with cans and plastic. Later we enter **Los Arcos** on the long Mayor Street.

20,7 km Los Arcos (All services)

Here we can find the well-preserved medieval town and the magnificent **Church of Santa Maria** (12th century), which holds a mass dedicated to pilgrims every day. The **Portal de Castilla** (17th century), at the exit, was one of the doors of the old walls that protected the town.



Streets in Los Arcos

LOS ARCOS - LOGROÑO



STAGE PROFILE

↑ 335 m · ↓ 394 m



PLACES OF INTEREST ON THIS STAGE

At this stage of the Camino de Santiago, we say goodbye to the region of Navarre to enter **La Rioja**, the land of wine. Today, one of the most important rivers on the Iberian Peninsula will cross our path, the long and mighty **Ebro River**. Today's journey ends in **Logroño**, but before we get there, we will have to tackle several hills.

LOS ARCOS - LOGROÑO

ROUTE



Views of the façade of the Cathedral of Santa Maria la Real



Plaza de Santa Maria



Streets in Sansol

0,0 km Los Arcos (All services)

From the **Santa Maria Plaza** we cross the Portal de Castilla and the bridge over the **Odrón** River.

We pass by the cemetery and continue straight on a nice dirt path. We continue walking parallel to the **NA-1110** road, which will be on our left.

3.6 We leave the path behind; we turn right upon reaching a small stone building.

1.9 **Sansol road**. We continue on the left hand side of the road.

6,8 km Sansol (All services)

When leaving Sansol, we cross the NA-1110 road, walk downhill on a trail and cross a road on an underpass followed by the **Linares River** on a bridge, then we walk uphill to **Torres del Rio**.

7,6 km Torres del Rio (Bar, restaurant, store)

We depart from the upper part of the town. As we leave the cemetery is on the left and we will follow paths and trails along rolling hills. We cross the **NA-1110** road.

2.7 **Hermitage of the Virgen del Poyo** (16th century). We come out once again on the road, follow it around a curve and take a path on the right. Further ahead we cross another road and begin to walk downhill to the ravine of **Mataburros**.

LOS ARCOS - LOGROÑO

continuing on from Torres del Rio

3.8 We cross the NA-1110 road. We cut across one of the road's curves and end up parallel to it, walking straight to **Viana**, a town that we can see at the bottom on a hill. At the entrance there is a small park with a fountain; on the right we make our way up to the **Old Town**.



Street in Torres del Rio

18,0 km Viana (All services)

The route crosses the Old Town and descends along San Felices and Fuente Vieja streets. When leaving Viana, we cross the NA-7220 road and, shortly after, the N-111 national road.

3.0 **Hermitage of the Virgen de las Cuevas.** Here we can find a rest area with a fountain. At the exit we take a dirt path to the right.

1.5 We cross the N-111 national road on a raised footbridge. Walking parallel to it, we walk through a pleasant wooded area and, after passing a paper mill, we turn left to walk through three underpasses between the N-111 national road and the A-13 highway. Here we leave Navarra to enter the **Autonomous Community of La Rioja**.

We continue up the western slope of **Mount Cantabria** on asphalted trails that are in good condition.

Then, on our way down to the Riojan capital, we are no longer welcomed by Dona Felisa, who disappeared at the end of 2002. She was an endearing lady who offered "water, figs and love" to all pilgrims. Now her daughter continues the tradition, who also stamps the "Credencial, or Pilgrim Passport, and sells snacks.



Views of the streets of Viana



Views over Viana

LOS ARCOS - LOGROÑO



Street in Viana



People walking through the streets of Logroño



Views of the market square of Logroño

continuing on from Viana

At the end of the long downhill climb we enter **Logroño** on the **stone bridge** over the **Ebro River**, the most important river of the entire French Way due to its size. Keep in mind that the Camino doesn't pass by the Cathedral of Santa Maria; from Rua Vieja Street we have to take **Mercaderes Street** on the left.

28,9 km Logroño (All services)

LOGROÑO



The capital of **La Rioja**, the first city on the Camino in this autonomous community.

The current **Puente de Piedra** (meaning, "stone bridge") dates back to 1884, and replaced the old stone bridge that was built in the 11th century by Alfonso VI, King of Castile and Leon.

On **Rua Vieja**, the entrance to the Old Town, is the Romanesque Church of **Santa Maria del Palacio** (12th century), the **Fountain of the Pilgrims** (17th century) and the Church of **Santiago El Real** (16th century). This last one has a statue of the Apostle Santiago (15th century) on the facade that evokes the battle of Clavijo.

Sites worth visiting in the urban center include the Cathedral of **Santa Maria La Redonda** (15th century), Gothic, with two twin baroque towers. Behind the cathedral, on San Bartolome Street, is the Church of **San Bartolome** (11th century), the oldest in the city, with a beautiful Gothic facade.

Apart from visiting monuments, we also recommend visiting some of the famous streets filled with tapas bars, a habit that is deeply ingrained in the city; **Laurel Street**, with a great selection of bars, is the best example.

LOGROÑO - NAJERA



STAGE PROFILE

↑ 418 m · ↓ 315 m



PLACES OF INTEREST ON THIS STAGE

Today's stage, 29.5 km long, is one of the longest. However, the layout of the route with moderate climbs, as well as the beautiful scenery that accompanies us, make it a stage that is not difficult to complete.

We cross a wine-growing territory with wide valleys and gentle mountains. There are two progressive and moderate climbs: The **Alto de la Grajera** and the **Alto de San Anton**.

LOGROÑO - NAJERA

ROUTE

0,0 km Logroño (All services)



Views of the Cathedral of Santa Maria de la Redonda



Pilgrims walking through the streets of Logroño



House in the middle of the vineyards on the route between Logroño and Navarrete

We start off on the stage that departs from the Rioja capital on **Ruavieja Street**, which meets up with **Barriocepo** Street and leads us to **Santiago Square**. Here the Church of Santiago stands tall.

Shortly after, once we've walked under the arch of the "**Puerta del Camino**", we reach a circular fountain at the beginning of **Marques de Murrieta** Street. We will continue on for just over a kilometer along the sidewalk until reaching the train tracks. Three hundred meters ahead, after arriving at a **Nissan dealership**, we turn left to continue towards **San Miguel Park**.

In the middle of gardens, we reach the tunnel of the ring road and immediately after come to the Greenway that leads to **La Grajera Park** (km 3.5).

A section of the trail is surrounded by conifers. After passing a playground and a sports area, we encounter the dam of **the Grajera reservoir**. This area is used recreationally by people for fishing, walking, snacking or resting (km 5.8).

After the dam you will soon arrive at the environmental didactic classroom and you will cross over the boundaries of the park on an asphalted path that makes its way through soft hills populated with vines.

With the detour to the golf course off to one side (km 8) we start to tackle a demanding hill that provides us with some magnificent views. In the foreground we can see vines, followed by a mass of trees surrounding the reservoir, with Logroño in the background.

With this formidable view we reach the top (km 9.2) and make our way down towards **Navarrete** next to a metal fence sewn with crosses that have been left by the pilgrims.

LOGROÑO - NAJERA

continuing on from Logroño

The silhouette of an Osborne bull also accompanies us on the way down, and once back on flat ground we finally cross over the **AP-68** to reach the ruins of the pilgrim hospital of **San Juan de Acre**, founded around 1185 by Doña Maria Ramirez.

A straight section separates us from **Navarrete**, a town of potters located on a hill called Tedeon.

La Cruz Street surrounds the town center and heads up to the Church of la **Asuncion**. Navarrete has plenty of establishments where we can satisfy our strong appetite, which is to be expected after three hours of walking.



Pilgrims walking towards Navarrete

♦ 12,7 km Navarrete (All services)

Next to the church we continue walking along **Mayor Alta Street** and through **Arco Square** to then turn left onto Arrabal Street and continue straight along **San Roque Street**.

After the cemetery, we take a path close to the vines, olive groves and fruit trees that populate the private gardens. The path ends next to the **Sotes Wine Co-Operative**, where we cross the road that heads to this town.



Views over Navarrete

♦ 16,1 km Sotes (Bar, pharmacy)

We take an asphalted path that reaches the edge of the highway. Parallel to the A-12, we continue on until reaching the detour that leads to **Ventosa** (km 18.1). Here we have the possibility to head to this town or continue straight. We choose to visit Ventosa and travel the 1.3 kilometers that separate us from this town, following the clayey path.



Church of San Martin, in Sotes

LOGROÑO - NAJERA



Views over Ventosa



Pilgrims on the path leading from Ventosa to Najera



Landscape around Najera

19,5 km Ventosa

We arrive at the **LR-341** and the Camino continues along the shoulder without, paradoxically, accessing the center of **Ventosa**, where the Church of **San Saturnino** stands. Shortly after, next to the **Alvia Winery**, a stony path leads us to the **top of San Anton** in a short and easy climb.

From this vantage point, the view clears and we can see the **Najerilla valley**, clayey terrain covered with twisted branches arranged on separate terraces of scrubland. The panoramic view also shows us Najera, appearing nearby but actually quite far away (km 21.2).

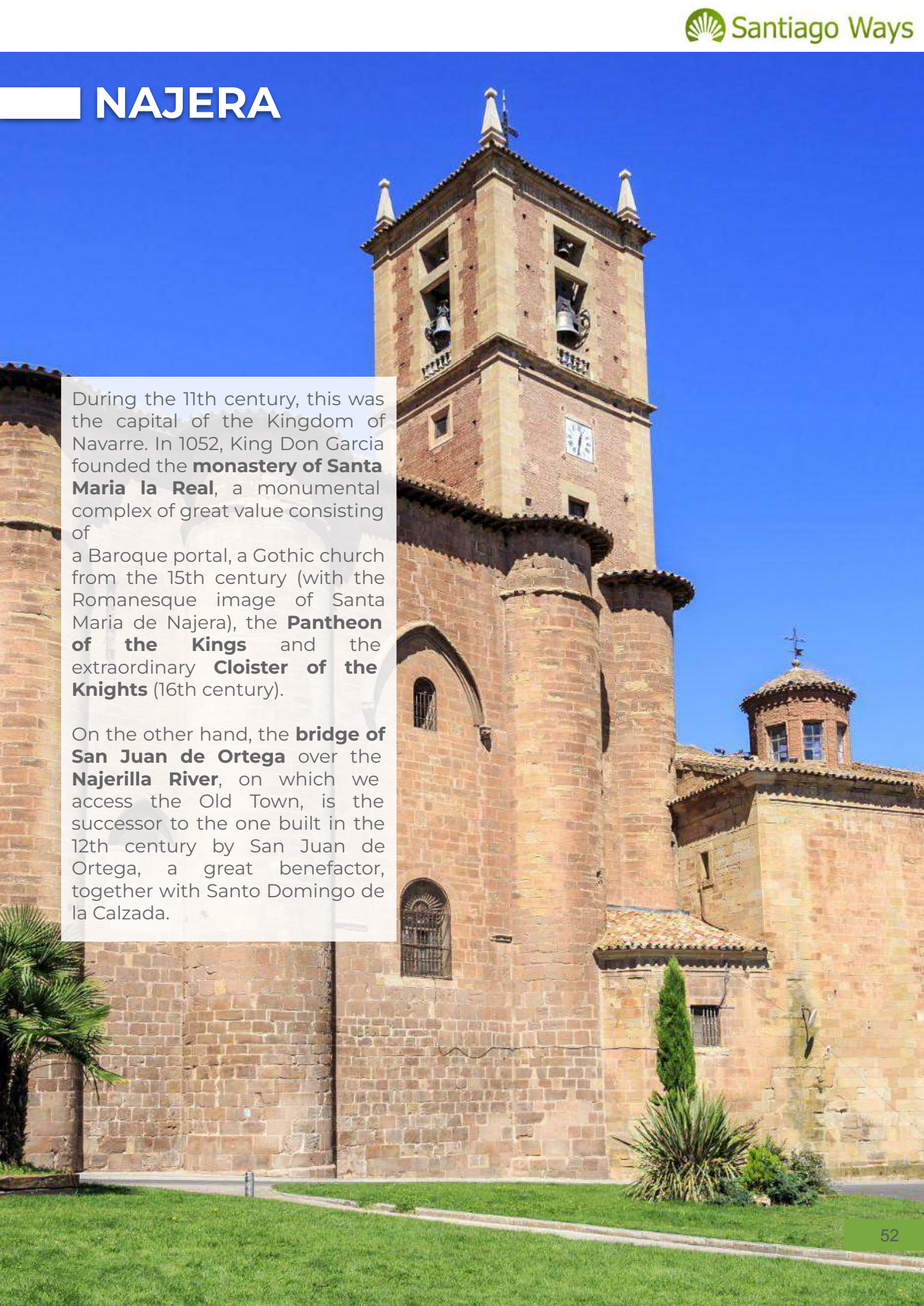
We head down to the passage that crosses the N-120 and continue on to a telephone repeater, located in the **Poyo de Roldan hill**, enclave where the legendary fight between **Roldan and the giant Ferragut** took place. We also come across a "guardaviñas", a circular construction that served as a refuge for farmers and that was used by field rangers to guard their crops (km 25).

We still are unable to see Najera and, after passing by an aggregates factory, we cross the **Valde River** on a small wood and concrete bridge (km 26). We move away from its course and finally in a kilometer and a half we cross the **N-120** (be very careful) to enter Najera. However, we still have two kilometers of city walking.

We pass by the sports center and continue along **Logroño and San Fernando avenues** until the bridge over the **Najerilla River**.

26,4 km Najera (All services)

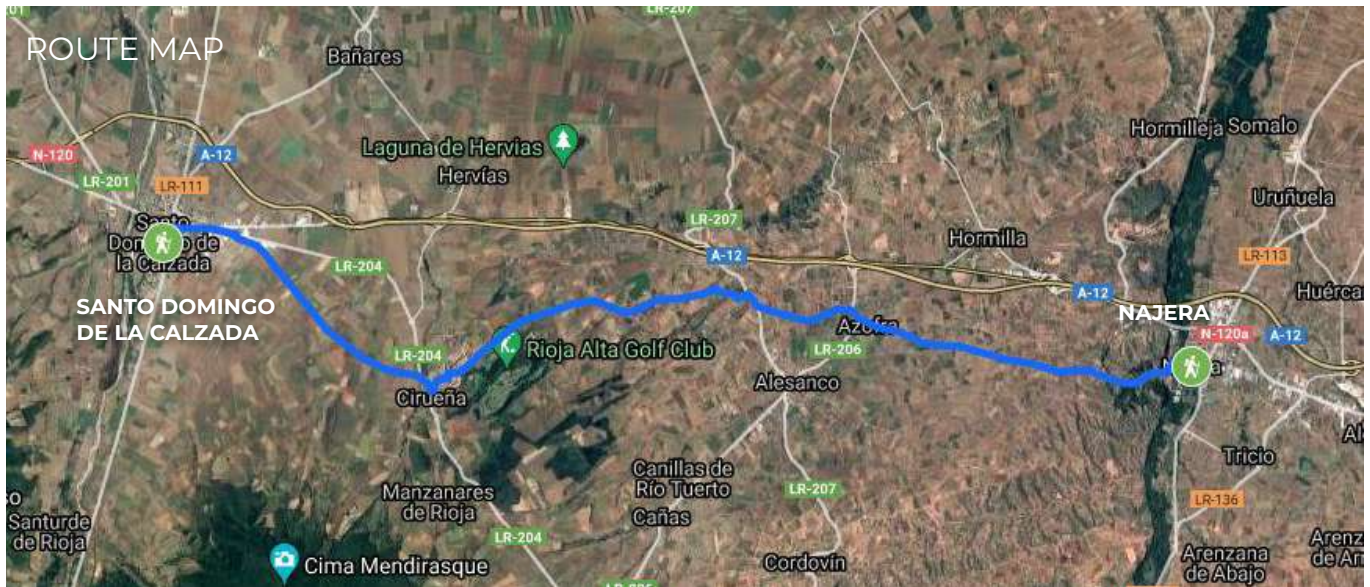
NAJERA



During the 11th century, this was the capital of the Kingdom of Navarre. In 1052, King Don Garcia founded the **monastery of Santa Maria la Real**, a monumental complex of great value consisting of a Baroque portal, a Gothic church from the 15th century (with the Romanesque image of Santa Maria de Najera), the **Pantheon of the Kings** and the extraordinary **Cloister of the Knights** (16th century).

On the other hand, the **bridge of San Juan de Ortega** over the **Najerilla River**, on which we access the Old Town, is the successor to the one built in the 12th century by San Juan de Ortega, a great benefactor, together with Santo Domingo de la Calzada.

NAJERA - SANTO DOMINGO DE LA CALZADA



PERFIL DE LA ETAPA

↑ 355 m · ↓ 199 m



PLACES OF INTEREST ON THIS STAGE

This stage, 21 km long, is simple and relatively flat. We will be walking through gentle rolling hills. The route mainly follows agricultural trails (some of which have been paved, somewhat altering the landscape), in which the vineyards give way to fields of grains.

Those pilgrims who are interested can take the opportunity to visit the magnificent **monasteries of Santa Maria de Cañas and San Millan de la Cogolla** (also known as the monasteries of Suso and Yuso), which are located nearby; this detour, following the road, extends the route by 15 km.

This detour begins in **Azofra**, on the **road to Alesanco**, and goes back to the Camino upon reaching **Cirueña**. We must bear in mind that our journey today will take place on paths surrounded by fields, and we will cross long stretches that offer no protection from the sun.

NAJERA - SANTO DOMINGO DE LA CALZADA

ROUTE



Views over Najera



Santa Maria la Real Monastery, in Najera



Plaza España, in Azofra

0,0 km Najera (All services)

After an urban hike, we will leave Najera on **Costanilla Street**, which runs next to the monastery of **Santa Maria La Real**.

We leave Najera on a clayey path. Soon we will leave an agricultural warehouse off to one side and will cross over the **Pozuelos or Valdecañas stream** (km 1.8).

Back on land, we finally reach an asphalt path (km 3.8) that leads directly to **Azofra**, a farming village located on the fertile plain of the **Tuerto River**. The best proof of its Jacobean past is the founding of a hospital in 1168 and a cemetery for pilgrims.

5,7 km Azofra (Store, pharmacy, bars)

The Camino crosses through **Azofra** on Main Street, where all of the facilities are located. It's important to keep in mind that **Cirueña**, the next town with any amenities, is 9.3 km away.

We say goodbye to the town next to the Real Casona de las Armas, former residence of an illustrious family that has been restored for tourism.

At the exit, we follow a short section of the LR-206 and after arriving at the **Los Romeros fountain**, we head off to the left to continue the day's journey walking on trails. After more than a kilometer, we come across a pillory from the mid-16th century, symbol of justice (km 7.2).

NAJERA - SANTO DOMINGO DE LA CALZADA

continuing on from Azofra

In the next few kilometers the route approaches the **N-120** and crosses the **Alesanco** road (km 8.9). As for the landscape, the grain fields progressively claw away at the vineyards, a sign that **Castile** is nearby, although we won't say our final goodbye to the La Rioja region until tomorrow.

After a steep kilometer, we arrive next to a picnic area (km 13), a good place to take a break and eat something mid-stage.

In just ten minutes we will find a golf club and a residential complex that has been built on the outskirts of Cirueña, a town that we will reach shortly after.



Streets in Azofra

15,0 km Cirueña (Bar)

The Camino quickly passes through Cirueña on **Bajero Barrio Street**. At the exit we find a short stretch of road that leads to another trail through farmland (on the left after crossing the roundabout to the west).

After some gentle hills, we discover **Santo Domingo de la Calzada**, where the cathedral's Baroque tower stands tall like a watchtower. The prologue to Santo Domingo includes several warehouses (km 19.5).

Then we continue along the access road that leads to **12 de Mayo Street and Main Street**.



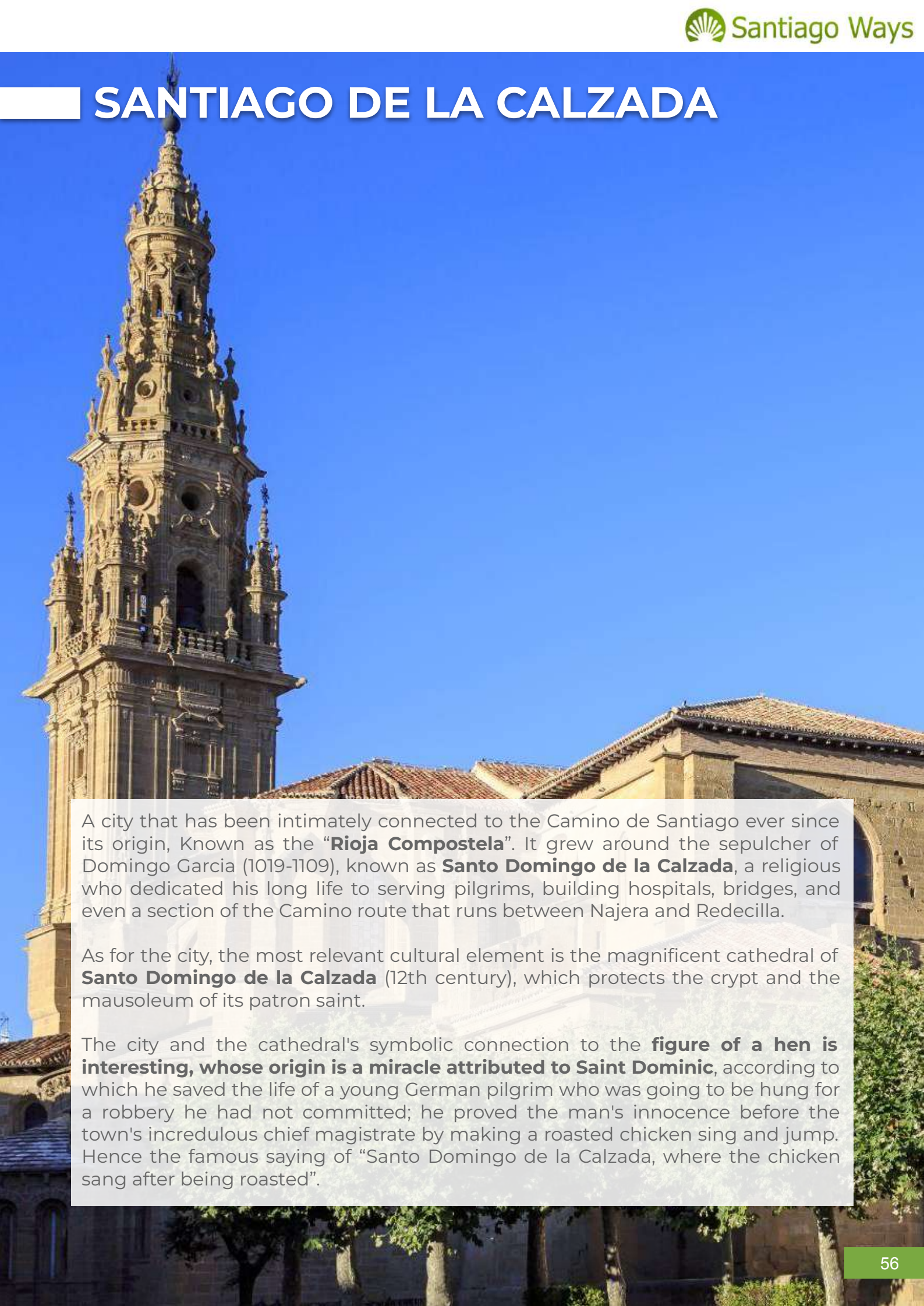
Houses in Cirueña

21,5 km Santo Domingo de la Calzada (All services)



Main square in Santo Domingo de la Calzada

SANTIAGO DE LA CALZADA



A city that has been intimately connected to the Camino de Santiago ever since its origin, Known as the **“Rioja Compostela”**. It grew around the sepulcher of Domingo Garcia (1019-1109), known as **Santo Domingo de la Calzada**, a religious who dedicated his long life to serving pilgrims, building hospitals, bridges, and even a section of the Camino route that runs between Najera and Redecilla.

As for the city, the most relevant cultural element is the magnificent cathedral of **Santo Domingo de la Calzada** (12th century), which protects the crypt and the mausoleum of its patron saint.

The city and the cathedral's symbolic connection to the **figure of a hen is interesting, whose origin is a miracle attributed to Saint Dominic**, according to which he saved the life of a young German pilgrim who was going to be hung for a robbery he had not committed; he proved the man's innocence before the town's incredulous chief magistrate by making a roasted chicken sing and jump. Hence the famous saying of “Santo Domingo de la Calzada, where the chicken sang after being roasted”.

SANTO DOMINGO DE LA CALZADA - BELORADO



STAGE PROFILE

↑ 302 m · ↓ 179 m



PLACES OF INTEREST ON THIS STAGE

A relatively short stage (22.7 km) with very moderate hills; our route continues to make its way mostly through farming land, mainly on dirt paths, accompanying the axis of the **N-120** national road.

The hill that is halfway between Grañón and Redecilla will represent the border separating the regions of La Rioja and Castile and Leon.

In this stage, we will find fountains, bars and restaurants, except for in Vitoria de Rioja.

SANTO DOMINGO DE LA CALZADA - BELORADO

ROUTE



Cathedral in Santo Domingo de la Calzada



Aerial view of Santo Domingo de la Calzada



Views of Grañon

0,0 km Santo Domingo de la Calzada (All services)

Before starting today's stage, we can enjoy breakfast at one of the **several pastry shops in Santo Domingo de la Calzada**. One of the **traditional pastries** are the 'ahorcaditos', which will give us the energy we need for today's stage.

Following **Mayor Street** and **Rio Palomarejos** Street, we are taken to the hermitage dating back to the beginning of the 20th century, which gives us access to the bridge over the **Oja River**, almost 150 meters in length and supported by 16 arches. Today only the enclave remains of the primitive ford built by Santo Domingo, as its current structure dates back to the mid-eighteenth and twentieth centuries.

After crossing it, we head off on a trail to cross the **LR-201**. Six hundred meters ahead we do the same with a stretch of the N-120 (km 1.7).

We continue to walk parallel to the national road for several kilometers until we turn left and head towards Grañon, the last town in the La Rioja region. There are several shops and bars located around its main street.

6,4 km Grañon (Bars, store, pharmacy, medical center, ATM)

At the exit of Grañon, we once again get back on the farm trails that make their way through the grain fields. We will find rows of poplar trees growing along the banks of rivers and streams that will help to alleviate the journey with their shade.

Two kilometers ahead, an informative sign welcomes us to **Castile and Leon**, an autonomous community that will accompany us for the next two weeks (km 8.8).

SANTO DOMINGO DE LA CALZADA - BELORADO

continuing on from Grañon

We are now in the province of Burgos and before landing in **Galicia**, we will first have to pass through **Palencia** and **Leon**. From the sign, you can see **Redecilla del Camino**, the first Castilian village that we will reach once we've completed a long straight section and crossed the **N-120** road.



Landscapes in Grañon

10,4 km Redecilla del Camino (Bar, store)

At the entrance to the town, there is a 'rollo jurisdiccional' (a stone column) and a tourist office that offers extensive information on the Camino de Santiago that passes through Castile and Leon. On **Main Street**, the parish church of the Virgen de la Calle has an interesting baptismal font from the twelfth century. When exiting **Redecilla**, we will once again cross the **N-120** and then walk over the **Relachigo River**, heading to the next town of **Castildelgado**.



Streets in Redecilla del Camino

12,0 km Castildelgado (Bar, store)

We approach the town on El Cristo Street and Mayor Street until reaching the **Plaza Mayor**, where we can find the Church of San Pedro and the Baroque **hermitage of Santa Maria del Campo**.

We leave Castildelgado on Camino de la Cuesta Street, and on a paved trail parallel to the national road we arrive at **Vitoria de Rioja**, where **Santo Domingo de la Calzada** was born in 1020.



Estrada Logroño - Vigo en Castildelgado

14,0 km Vitoria de Rioja

We continue to follow a dirt trail until meeting up with the never-ending path attached to the national highway (km 15.5).

SANTO DOMINGO DE LA CALZADA -BELORADO



Streets in Vitoria de Rioja



Views of Villamayor del Río



Panoramic view of Belorado

continuing on from Vitoria de Rioja

We follow it until Villamayor del Río. At the entrance there is a small park and a rest area where we can take a moment to recover before completing the final leg of the stage.

17,4 km Villamayor del Río (Bar)

We exit the town on **Real Street** and get back on the trail to head to the center of **Belorado**.

22,5 km Belorado (All services)

Historical city located in the **Tiron Valley**. The Church of Santa María (16th century) grabs our attention at the entrance, with interesting altarpieces and several representations of Santiago, along with the Church of San Pedro (17th century) in the Plaza Mayor square.

The liveliest and most unique area in the town in the Plaza Mayor square, with irregular geometry, porticoed houses and emblazoned facades.

BEORADO - SAN JUAN DE ORTEGA



STAGE PROFILE

392 m · ↓ 154 m



PLACES OF INTEREST ON THIS STAGE

Today's stage (24 km) is divided into two distinctive parts: in the first, which ends in **Villafranca Montes de Oca**, we will follow the same pattern as in yesterday's stage, walking through farmland along the axis of the **N-120**; in the second section we face the long and lonely crossing of the **Montes de Oca** mountains, in a wooded area, with a drop in altitude of 200 meters during the first 3 kilometers.

The climb is strong at the beginning, but becomes progressively more moderate. After, except for a steep but short climb to cross a small ravine, we come back to flat land on wide trails, until reaching the final gentle descent to **San Juan de Ortega**.

BELORADO - SAN JUAN DE ORTEGA

ROUTE

0,0 km Belorado (All services)

To leave Belorado, we have to cross **Hipolito Lopez Bernal Street** and **Camino de Santiago Avenue**, to then cross the N-120 as well as the **Tiron River** on a wooden pedestrian bridge (km 1.1), parallel to which is a stone bridge known as **El Canto**.

On a trail separated from the N-120 by the channel of Retorto, a tributary of the **Tiron River**, we continue to walk comfortably until reaching **Tosantos**. Just before arriving, there is a rest area with several tables and barbecues.

4,7 km Tosantos (Bar)

Crossing the town, it's possible to see the **chapel of the Virgen de la Pena** on the other side of the N-120, located on a rocky escarpment.

From Tosantos, a short section will take us to the next town: **Villambistia**.

6,6 km Villambistia (Bar)

We are greeted by the parish of **San Esteban**, from the 17th century. According to legend, the water that flows from the source of the four pipes is said to have powers. Apparently, in order to restore vitality and get rid of fatigue, there is nothing better than soaking your head in the water.

Once we've passed Villambistia, with nothing else worthy of pointing out, we head to **Espinosa del Camino**, which we reach after bypassing the **N-120**.



Main square in Belorado



Houses in Tosantos



Views of Villambistia

BEORADO - SAN JUAN DE ORTEGA

8,2 km Espinosa del Camino (Bar)

Here the condition of the trail worsens a bit until we reach the ruins of the **Mozarabic Monastery of San Felix**, where tradition places the mortal remains of **Count Diego Rodriguez Porcelos**, founder of Burgos (km 10).

Past the ruins, the route turns towards the left in search of the uninviting shoulder of the national road, which will take us to **Villafranca Montes de Oca**.



Landscapes in Espinosa del Camino

11,7 km Villafranca Montes de Oca (Bar, store)

Once in this town, 12 kilometers separate us from **San Juan de Ortega**, or almost three hours of walking, so is advised that you stop for lunch or prepare food for the crossing of the **Montes de Oca** mountains. This used to be a risky place where dangers hid behind every bush. However, despite it being a very solitary section, it currently offers lots of nature and quietness.

We leave the **N-120** behind, walk up to the **Church of Santiago** - which has a baroque carving of the Apostle - and we pass by what used to be the **hospital of the Queen or of San Antonio Abad**.

The beginning is steep and you should take your time. The ascent continues until reaching a viewpoint over the **La Demanda and San Millan mountains** along with the **Mojapan** fountain, where the climb will begin to ease up (km 13).

Surrounded by oaks, junipers and heather trees, the trail continues its ascent, first to a repeater and then to a monument honoring those who died during the Civil War (km 15.2).



Pilgrim walking along a path on the outskirts of Villafranca Montes de Oca



Villafranca Montes de Oca

BELORADO - SAN JUAN DE ORTEGA



Houses of Villafranca Montes de Oca



Signpost to San Juan de Ortega

continuing on from Villafranca Montes de Oca

Then the trail begins to head downhill until reaching the bed of a river, after which we will have to face a short but steep hill. The trail with loose gravel now becomes a wide forest trail surrounded by pine trees, which we will have to tackle for the remaining seven and a half kilometers until arriving at the **monastery of San Juan de Ortega**.

• 23,5 km San Juan de Ortega (Bar)



Stone bridge and House of Sciences, in San Juan de Ortega

SAN JUAN DE ORTEGA



The set of buildings in this town have been classified as “**Goods of Cultural Interest**” in Spain since 1931 and they belong to the municipality of **Barrios de Colina. Juan de Ortega** (1080-1163), the saint from Burgos, became a disciple of **Domingo de la Calzada** and, before his pilgrimage to Jerusalem, he collaborated on and helped with the construction of hospitals, churches, bridges, etc.

When he came back, in the same location, he built the church with the name of San Nicolas de Bari. In his testament, written in 1152 and preserved in Ortega as a precious relic, he recalls the building of the **Church of San Nicolas**, how thieves lived there and how he instituted a community of Canons Regular of **Saint Augustine**. Inside the church there is a Romanesque capital with a lancet window that only receives light on the two equinoxes: March 21st and September 21st.

SAN JUAN DE ORTEGA - BURGOS



STAGE PROFILE

↑ 146 m · ↓ 294 m



PLACES OF INTEREST ON THIS STAGE

Following the Camino's original route, today's distance will be 25.8 kilometers.

The first half of the stage is a pleasant walk in the vicinity of the **Atapuerca Mountains**; the second half is a cumbersome and drawn-out entrance into the capital, which forces us to walk three and a half kilometers in an industrial park.

The end of the stage materializes at the foot of the **Cathedral of Burgos**: one of the most important monuments of the entire Camino de Santiago and in all of Spain.

In the Atapuerca Mountains, a few kilometers off of the Camino, we can find the most important prehistoric sites in Europe, declared a **World Heritage Site**.

Today we will find bars and restaurants in all of the towns we pass through.

SAN JUAN DE ORTEGA - BURGOS

ROUTE



Façade of the San Juan de Ortega Church



Atapuerca archaeological sites, declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO



Sunset at the Church of San Martin Obispo, in Atapuerca

0,0 km San Juan de Ortega (Bar)

We leave the monastic complex and arrive at a regional highway where a wooden cross stands.

There is a historical variant that is hardly ever traveled, heading off to the left through **Santovenia de Oca, Zaldueño and Ibeas de Juarros**.

We continue straight ahead and take the path that makes its way through a wild pine grove, heading straight towards **Ages**.

4,7 km Ages (Bar)

We say goodbye to Ages and its traditional architecture and we start off the day on the shoulder of the road that leads to **Atapuerca**.

Close to this town are the famous archaeological sites, called the “cradle of the oldest humans in Europe”.

6,1 km Atapuerca (Bar)

The road divides the town in two and acts as a main street. Before leaving the town, we get off the asphalt and turn left on a stony path. This trail continues on through scrubland and, after passing a farm, it begins an easy uphill climb until reaching a **large wooden cross**.

A yellow arrow at the base of the pole encourages us to continue walking parallel to the wire fence. A geodesic vertex - at an altitude of 1077 meters - marks the beginning of the descent into the valley of the **Pico River**.

Looking down we discover a quarry and even further down is the city of **Burgos**. On the way down, we take a turnoff to the left that heads to **Villalval**.

SAN JUAN DE ORTEGA - BURGOS

• 10,5 km Villalval

With the image of the collapsed church, we leave the town on a country road that soon takes us to **Cardeñuela Riopico**.

• 12,3 km Cardeñuela Riopico (Bars)

Two kilometers ahead we reach **Orbaneja**. This town has a reception center for pilgrims.

• 14,3 km Orbaneja Riopico (Bars)

We continue along the road and pass over the AP-1 highway. Shortly after, about two hundred meters ahead and next to some single-family homes, we find two signposts. The first one tells us to head straight and goes towards **Villafria**, and the other that heads off to the left (painted, with the “Rio” option) goes to **Castañares**.

We have to decide which one to follow. In this dossier we have chosen the **Villafria** option that, although it passes through an industrial landscape, is the route that most pilgrims follow.

• 17,9 km Villafria (All services)

Here, along the sidewalk of the old **N-1**, we begin the long journey through an industrial zone.

It will come to an end after 3.5 km. When leaving the industrial park, we will be at the entrance to the city of **Burgos**, passing through the **Gamonal neighborhood**.



Views of Villalval



Streets in Cardeñuela de Riopico



Houses in Villafria

SAN JUAN DE ORTEGA - BURGOS



Streets in Villafria

continuing on from Villafria

We continue straight on **Vitoria Avenue** until reaching the **Telefonica** building, where we turn slightly to the right along **San Roque Street** and then to the left, on **Obdulio Fernandez Street**. We continue to follow this street to the end, to then turn right on **Cantabria Avenue**.

Immediately after we turn to the left along **Calzadas Street** and then we continue straight on **San Juan, Avellanos and Fernan Gonzalez streets**.

After traveling 4.1 km, we will have reached the **Cathedral of Santa Maria**.

• 25,7 km Burgos (All services)



Cathedral of Santa Maria, in Burgos



Panoramic view of Burgos

BURGOS



Founded in 884 by Count **Diego Rodriguez Porcelos**, the city acquired major commercial importance throughout the 11th century, when it became the capital of the Kingdom of **Castile**.

The **Santa Maria Cathedral**, in a Gothic style, whose construction began in 1221 by order of King **Fernando III El Santo**, is one of the most important artistic monuments of the Spanish state. The two identical towers erected between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries are really incredible to see, along with the extraordinary south portal known as the Sarmental Portal, the choir of the central nave (16th century), the Golden Staircase (16th century), the main altarpiece (16th century), the Condastable Chapel (15th-16th centuries) and the cloister (13th century). It was declared **World Heritage Site** in 1984.

Along with the cathedral, the city offers its visitors many other interesting tourist attractions: the **San Juan Arch** (13th century), the **Gothic Church of San Esteban** (13th century), the **Gothic Church of San Nicolas** (15th century), the **Church of Santa Agueda** (15th century) and the **Santa Maria Arch** (16th century).

Outside the Old Town is the magnificent **Abbey of Santa Maria la Real de las Huelgas** (12th century), and on the same Camino route exiting Burgos we can also find the **Royal Hospital** (12th century), both founded by **Alfonso VIII**.

Three kilometers from the center, and away from the Camino, is the extraordinary **Miraflores Charterhouse** (15th century), in a Gothic style, built by **Queen Isabella of Castile** as a royal vault for her parents, Isabella of Portugal and Juan II.

BURGOS - HORNILLOS DEL CAMINO



STAGE PROFILE



PLACES OF INTEREST ON THIS STAGE

Unlike our entry into the city, characterized by long distances through an industrial setting, our departure from Burgos is comfortable and relatively fast.

Shortly after, we will begin to follow long dirt trails with loose rocks that will take us into the vast grain fields in **Castile**.

This land corresponds to the beginning of the **plateau**, and is only a small sample of what awaits us.

Today we will find few places with shade and, in the summer, the hot sun is notorious for beating down on pilgrims. On the other hand, in winter, the stages of the Camino that pass through this region can often be very cold.

BURGOS - HORNILLOS DEL CAMINO

ROUTE

0,0 km Burgos (All services)



Aerial view of Burgos



Bridge of Santa Maria, Burgos



Streets in Tardajos

We start off the stage behind the cathedral, on **Fernan Gonzalez street**. We head to the **horseshoe** arch of San Martin, which was built in a Mudejar style and was remarkably restored in the 20th century.

After the arch, we turn left to go down some stairs to **Emperador street**. A little further ahead, we continue on the left along **Villalon street**, which ends at the **Paseo de la Isla** promenade by the river.

We cross the **Arlanzon** River and turn right, following its course. Walking straight, right next to the **N-120** road, we continue along Palencia avenue, Jose Maria Villacian Rebollo avenue (next to Parral Park) and Villadiego street, to then arrive at the turnoff marked as "**Los Guindales. Vivero Forestal**" (km 3).

We follow it, heading off to the right, and then continue straight along **Benito Perez Galdos street**. The city ends at the forest nursery and the pavement turns to dirt.

The Camino doesn't enter Villalbilla but instead turns right to cross the **Molinar stream**.

We continue to cross the bridge over the ring road and head towards the **Arlanzon viaduct**, an engineering project belonging to the **A-231** highway that we will pass underneath.

We cross the river and get off the road onto a walkway that runs parallel, which will take us to **Tardajos**.

BURGOS - HORNILLOS DEL CAMINO

11,5 km Tardajos (Bar, store, pharmacy, ATM)

In Roman times, Tardajos was, or could have been, a "mansio" (building where travelers could spend the night) of the Roman road that connected **Clunia** (the municipality of Coruna del Conde in Burgos) with **Juliobriga** (the current Reinosa).

We go through the town on Del Mediodia street, passing through the Plaza Leandro Mayoral square, followed by Real Poniente street.

We travel by road to the nearby **Rabe**. On the short journey, we pass by the **Urbel River**. This river, which runs for more than 50 kilometers through the province of Burgos, has a low water volume but overflows easily, flooding its banks.

13,4 km Rabe de las Calzadas (Bar)

On **Santa Marina street**, we go past the fountain - decorated with scallops - to the **Plaza Francisco Riberas** square, and come out on Baldomero Pampliega.

Now, the only thing that awaits us is the **Castilian plateau**, with its long, straight sections at more than 800 meters above sea level, in the lone company of vast fields of grain with countless partridges, larks and other birds that enjoy living among the crops.

Almost three kilometers from **Rabe**, on the right, is the **Praotorre fountain**, where tables have been set up so that you can take a break (km 15.4).



Views over Tardajos



Landscape near Tardajos



Street in Rabe de las Calzadas

BURGOS - HORNILLOS DEL CAMINO



Sign at the entrance to Tardajos



Backpack on a haystack on a plateau at Hornillos del Camino



Street in Hornillos del Camino

continuing on from Rabe de las Calzadas

The trail continues with its manageable ascent until reaching a flatter area, from where it is possible to access the valley that acts as the backdrop for the municipality of Hornillos (km 17.9).

The incline of the hill, your own inertia and the weight of your backpack will require you to take caution as you walk down the rocky slope, nicknamed "**Matamulos**".

After crossing a road and the **Hormazuela River**, we enter **Hornillos del Camino**.

• 21,8 km Hornillos del Camino (Bar, restaurant, store)

The town's main street, which goes in the same direction as the Camino, makes the town's historical connection to the Camino de Santiago even more apparent. There used to be a hospital for pilgrims here in the Middle Ages, attached to the French monastery of Rocamadour. Another interesting site is the Gothic church of Santa Maria.



Path near Hornillos del Camino

HORNILLOS DEL CAMINO - CASTROJERIZ



STAGE PROFILE



PLACES OF INTEREST ON THIS STAGE

Today's stage begins in Hornillos del Camino and, before reaching **Hontanas**, we will have crossed two small plateaus on long and solitary dirt trails. The landscape is similar to that of the previous section, while later on we will follow the **valley of San Anton** until arriving at **Castrojeriz** on its local road.

Today we must also take precautions with the sun, especially during the first half of the stage. In summer we will need to bring enough water with us and avoid walking during the hottest hours of the day.

This stage has a total distance of 20 kilometers.

HORNILLOS DEL CAMINO - CASTROJERIZ

ROUTE



Landscapes between Hornillos del Camino and Hontanas



Pilgrim walking from Hornillos del Camino to Hontanas



Convent of San Anton

• 0,0 km Hornillos del Camino (Bar, restaurant, store)

Five kilometers after Hornillos, we find a **Cross of Saint James** (km 5.0).

• 10,5 km Hontanas (Bar, store)

After one more hour of walking, we arrive at **Hontanas**. The name of the town comes from the Latin word 'fontana', or fountain in English.

Real de Hontanas street leads us to the **BU-P-4013** road, which we will immediately leave behind to take a path that heads off to the right.

Passing next to the ruins of a tower, we reach the road. This road has no shoulder and instead there is a row of ash trees whose shade will help to make the walk more bearable.

Soon, in the background we will be able to see the ruins of the convent of **San Anton**, whose arches rise above the road. It was founded in 1146 by Alfonso VII and is where the Hospital Brothers of St. Anthony used to treat those who were sick with an infectious gangrene commonly known as "St. Anthony's fire". The cause of this disease, now well-known, was a fungus that altered the rye grain.

• 16,1 km Convent of San Anton

After passing through the Gothic double arch, which is the only part of the ancient monastery still standing, we tackle the more than 2 kilometers that follow a straight line all the way to **Castrojeriz**, the last village in Burgos on the Camino de Santiago.

• 19,9 km Castrojeriz (Bar, restaurant, store)

CASTROJERIZ



The town is half-moon shaped, on the slopes of a hill overlooked by a primitive castle.

Some of the places worth visiting are the **Collegiate Church of the Virgen del Manzano** (11th century and restored in the 18th century), the **Church of Santo Domingo**, Gothic in style and with a 16th century Plateresque façade, and the **Plaza Mayor**, with its arcades.

In the town you can also visit the **Collegiate Church of Santa Maria del Manzano**, with its museum of sacred art, the churches of **San Juan** and **San Miguel de Tabanera**, as well as the **Convent of Santa Clara** and the remains of the **Arch of the San Francisco Monastery**.

Apart from religious architecture, the town has an **ethnographic museum** and the **Gutierrez Barona house**.

CASTROJERIZ - FROMISTA



STAGE PROFILE



PLACES OF INTEREST ON THIS STAGE

A unique and unforgettable stage for those who enjoy silence, solitude and never-ending fields.

We continue to follow long dirt trails that provide no protection from the sun; as for the rest of the stage, the only difficulty regarding the terrain is the tough climb to the **Alto de Mostelares peak**, after leaving Castrojeriz, with an elevation gain of 145 meters in just 1.7 kilometers.

From Alto de Mostelares we will get an incredible view of the endless plateau that stretches out before us.

The total distance of this stage is 24.5 km.

CASTROJERIZ - FROMISTA

ROUTE

0,0 km Castrojeriz (Bar, restaurant, store)



Castrojeriz



Views of Castrojeriz



Signposting on the Camino de Santiago near Puente Fitero

On **Real de Poniente street**, we leave Castrojeriz to face the climb to **Teso de Mostelares**, a geographical landmark and what will be an unforgettable memory from your pilgrimage to Compostela.

The steep hill begins meters after crossing the **Odrilla River** on a wooden bridge. One kilometer and three hundred meters later, we will have gained 140 meters in elevation, from 775 to 915 meters above sea level. At the top we are received by a geometric shrine.

We then cross the **Mostelares** plateau to begin slowly exploring the vast landscape of the **Tierra de Campos** region, also known by the nickname of "the granary of Spain". A region full of dovecotes, rich in hunting and brimming with art.

The trail, which is a white and dazzling line to the sun, will lead us through favorable terrain for 4 kilometers to the picnic area next to the **"Piojo" (louse) fountain**.

Next we take the road for nine hundred meters that goes to Itero del Castillo, then we get off it on the left to arrive at the old parish of San Nicolas and immediately after we will reach the **Fitero Bridge** over the **Pisuerga River**. This is where Burgos ends and **Palencia** begins.

9,0 km Puente Fitero

A rural path on the banks of the **Pisuerga** River takes us to **Itero de la Vega**, the first town in Palencia on our journey. The **hermitage of Nuestra Señora de la Piedad**, from the 13th century, is the first monument we will encounter. Once in the village, we find the **church of San Pedro**.

CASTROJERIZ - FROMISTA

11,1 km Itero de la Vega (Bar, store)

We cross Itero on **Santa Ana street** and, after crossing a road, we continue for a couple of kilometers along the trail until reaching the **irrigation canal of Pisuerga**.

Almost two kilometers later, after a slight hill, we can see **Boadilla del Camino** in the background, which we will reach after traveling for another four kilometers.



Gothic scroll in Boadilla del Camino

19,0 km Boadilla del Camino (Bar)

We leave Boadilla del Camino on its **Main street**, shortly after which we will take a path that will pass by the last buildings in the town, to then turn left to head towards the **Canal of Castile**. This engineering masterpiece was conceived by the Marquis of Ensenada (1702 - 1781), an enlightened statesman and politician. The purpose of the fluvial network of canals, built between 1753 and 1849, was to transport the Castilian grain to the Bay of Biscay using barges pulled by draft animals.



Fields near Fromista

Our path runs parallel to the Canal for more than three kilometers and reaches a set of locks that allows boats to get over a drop of more than fourteen meters. We cross to the other side of the Canal and enter the town of **Fromista**.

24,6 km Fromista (All services)

In the center of this town there is a tourist information point, and you should also pay a visit to the **Romanesque church of San Martin**, which was built in the 11th century. Also worth highlighting are the **churches of San Pedro** (15th century) and **Santa Maria del Castillo** (14th century).



Church of San Martin de Tours, in Fromista

FROMISTA - CARRION DE LOS CONDES



STAGE PROFILE



PLACES OF INTEREST ON THIS STAGE

A simple and flat stage, which once again meanders through grain fields. The official Camino route goes in a straight line along a path that follows the **P-980** provincial road, which can be somewhat monotonous.

This stage has a total distance of 18.8 kilometers.

FROMISTA - CARRION DE LOS CONDES

ROUTE



Views of Fromista



Poblacion de Campos



Street in Revenga de Campos

0,0 km Fromista (All services)

When leaving Fromista, we will have to cross two roundabouts, located between the bridge over the **A-67** highway, in order to then take the trail that runs parallel to the road. In this section we will find Jacobean route markers, placed in twos. We will be accompanied by the nearby passage of cars, along with some of the pilgrims who are completing the Camino by bicycle.

The first town that we will reach is **Poblacion de Campos**.

3,5 km Poblacion de Campos (Tourist Center, bar, store)

At the exit, before crossing the **Ulcieza River**, pilgrims have the option to take the alternative variant that runs through **Villovieco** and later on ends up reconnecting with the official Camino route. The other route, and the one we recommend following, is the original route that, after passing the river, gets back on the trail until reaching the next town of Campos.

7,0 km Revenga de Campos (Bar)

We cross **Revenga** on **General Amor street**, and pass by the **church of San Lorenzo**, whose tower is normally inhabited by stork nests.

When leaving the town, we continue on the trail that takes us to **Villarmentero de Campos**.

9,1 km Villarmentero de Campos (Bar)

This small town has a bar at the entrance and a rest area at the exit where some pine trees provide shade. We continue on to **Villalcazar de Sirga**, a town that we will pass through off to one side, but that deserves a visit.

FROMISTA - CARRION DE LOS CONDES

• 13,2 km Villalcazar de Sirga (Bar, store)

In the square is the Templar church of **Santa Maria la Blanca**, built at the end of the 12th century.

We leave Villalcazar de Sirga and get back on the trail. In this final section we will find a few irrelevant hills. There will be no more interesting sites to see until reaching **Carrion**.



Camino de Santiago in Villalcazar de Sirga

• 18,7 km Carrion de los Condes (All services)

Due to its heritage, this is considered to be the most important city of the section of the Camino de Santiago that runs through the province of **Palencia**. In the Middle Ages, it was a prominent center that provided pilgrims with assistance. At the entrance, we pass the **monastery of Santa Clara** (13th century).

In the center of town is the Romanesque **church of Santa Maria del Camino** (12th century), whose portico commemorates the tribute legend of the hundred maidens; according to this legend, the hundred maidens were saved by a herd of bulls from being delivered to the Arab King Miramamolin as a tribute of war.



Pilgrim on the way to Carrion de los Condes



Old bridge in Carrion de los Condes

CARRION DE LOS CONDES - CALZADILLA DE LA CUEZA



PLACES OF INTEREST ON THIS STAGE

Today's stage, from Carrion de los Condes to Calzadilla de la Cueva, is the longest and without intermediate villages of the whole of the **Camino Frances**.

We will walk along long straight roads through cereal fields, except for the first few kilometres, which are over local roads, and for the rest of the day we will walk along dirt tracks which, in the event of rain, can easily become waterlogged.

CARRION DE LOS CONDES - CALZADILLA DE LA CUEZA

ROUTE



Main square in Carrion de los Condes



Church in Carrion de los Condes



Views of Calzadilla de la Cueva

0,0 km Carrion de los Condes (All services)

On Jose Antonio street, followed by Esteban Collantes street and Pina Blasco street, we reach the **Carrion River** and the **Benedictine monastery of San Zoilo**, a Camino de Santiago hotel and Study and Documentation Center with a Jacobean library that is open to the public.

On the road leading out, we find the **N-120**, which we cross to then take **Villotilla street** at kilometer 2 of the day's stage. The local road has little traffic.

Three kilometers from where it starts, on our right we leave behind the property that was once the **Abbey of Benevivere** (km 4.8) and eight hundred meters ahead we say goodbye to the road to walk along the **Via Aquitana**, a Roman road that connected Bordeaux to Astorga and that still preserves a part of its original layout two thousand years later (km 5.6).

Almost two and a half kilometers after crossing the road, we arrive at a stone sign that informs us of the passage of the "**Cañada Real Leonesa**", one of Spain's long-distance routes used by transhumant herders to drive cattle from summer pastures (Leon) to winter pastures (Extremadura) and vice versa.

12,4 km Cañada Real Leonesa

More than four and a half kilometers later, we will finally arrive at **Calzadilla de la Cueva**.

17,2 km Calzadilla de la Cueva (Bar, restaurant, store)

CALZADILLA DE LA CUEZA - SAHAGUN



STAGE PROFILE



PLACES OF INTEREST ON THIS STAGE

During today's route we will cross small valleys, which will make the level of difficulty slightly higher compared to the previous sections.

Our route along the Camino de Santiago moves away from the road and continues to make its way through beautiful oak forests to later reach vast fields of grain.

We will cross the **Valderaduey River** in the **province of Leon** and then will arrive at **Sahagun**, famous for the **church of San Lorenzo**, a highly recommended visit.

This stage has a total distance of 22 kilometers.

CALZADILLA DE LA CUEZA - SAHAGUN

ROUTE

♦ 0,0 km Calzadilla de la Cueva (Bar, restaurant, store)

To continue our journey, we will have to go around the town to then meet up with **Mayor street** that will take us to the **N-120**. Once on the national road, we cross the **Cueza River** and head to a path that runs parallel to it.

The turnoff to **Santa Maria de las Tiendas**, an old hospital known as the Gran Caballero, is followed by a stretch of approximately three kilometers that gains an insignificant 50 meters of elevation.

Then, in a gentle descent, we cross the **N-120** once again to enter the small town of **Ledigos**.

♦ 6,2 km Ledigos (All services)

The parish church (16th century) is dedicated to Santiago, and inside there are three representations of the saint: of the pilgrim, the apostle and Matamoros.

We leave Ledigos walking parallel to the national road, which we cross once again to return to the walkway for the last time that leads to **Terradillos de los Templarios**, a town that takes its name from the Knights Templar who guarded the now non-existent San Juan Hospital in the same town.



Streets in Calzadilla de la Cueva



Pilgrims walking through Ledigos



Views of Ledigos

CALZADILLA DE LA CUEZA - SAHAGUN



Landscapes near Terradillos de los Templarios



Calle Real in Moratinos



Views of San Nicolas del Real Camino

9,6 km Terradillos de los Templarios (Bar, store)

We leave behind the old Templar commandery of Terradillos on a trail that ends up at the **P-905**, also marked as the **P-973**.

A short stretch of road gives way to a trail that makes its way through grain fields and rows of poplar trees. This landscape will accompany us all the way to **Moratinos**, the second-to-last village on the Camino de Santiago in the region of **Palencia**, which offers dug-out wine cellars and adobe houses.

12,9 km Moratinos (Bar)

Upon reaching the **church of Santo Tomas de Aquino**, we turn right and leave the town. There are only 2.5 kilometers left before arriving at **San Nicolas del Real Camino**, the last town in Palencia.

15,4 km San Nicolas del Real Camino (Bar)

At the exit of San Nicolas, we'll go over the **Sequillo River** and turn right to take the pilgrims' trail that leads to the shoulder of the **N-120** road. 150 meters to the north is the **A-231**, the highway of the Camino de Santiago.

On the trail we will cross over the border from **Palencia to Leon**. We continue walking parallel to the **N-120** and after crossing it we will pass over the **Valderabuey** River on a stone bridge. We thus access a tree-lined esplanade where the hermitage of the **Virgen del Puente** is located, in a Romanesque-Mudejar style.

CALZADILLA DE LA CUEZA - SAHAGUN

continuing on from San Nicolas del Real Camino

The Camino now leads us to Sahagun. Avoiding the **N-120** on an underpass, we access the center of this town in Leon. After **Ronda de Estacion street**, we cross the bridge over the train tracks and continue to follow the streets of **La Herreria and Antonio Nicolas**.

• 22,3 km Sahagun (All services)



Landscapes between San Nicolas del Real Camino and Sahagun



Marker stone on the Camino de Santiago in Sahagun



Views of Sahagun

SAHAGUN

This city arose around an important monastery founded in the 10th century on a sanctuary dedicated to the martyrs and saints **Facundus** (origin of the name Sahagun) and **Primitivus**.

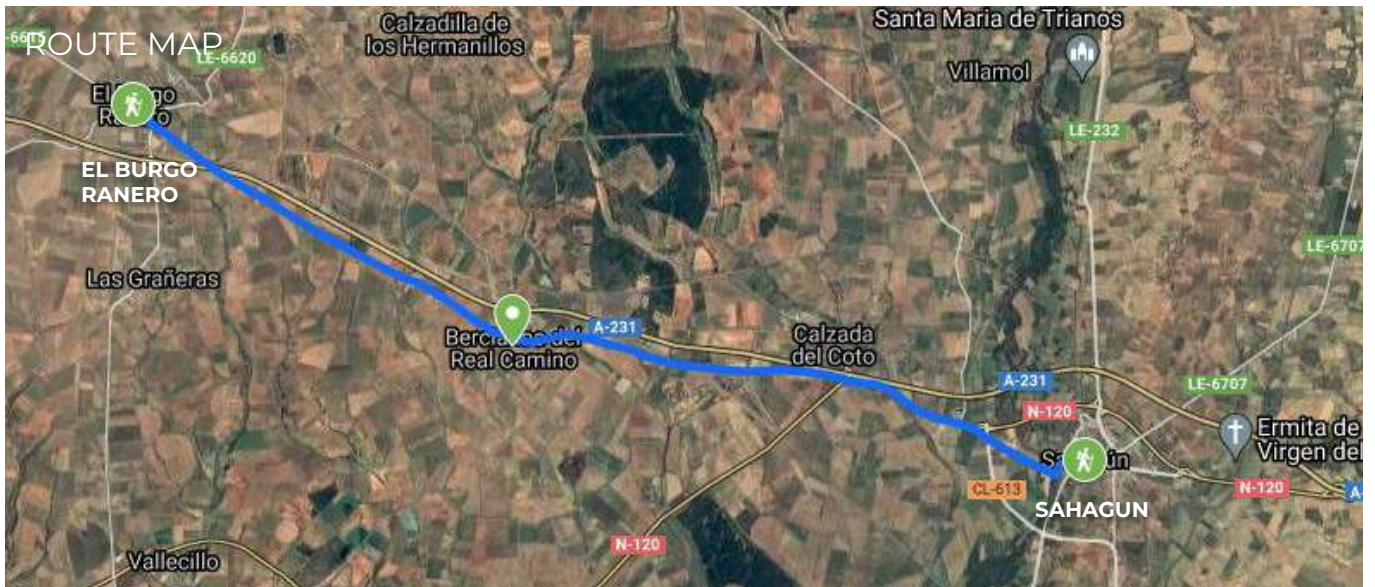
At the time, when it was run by the **monks of Cluny**, this was the most important monastery of the entire Peninsula. Today the only thing that is left is the **Arch of San Benito**.

The city of Sahagun is known for the Mudejar and Romanesque style of architecture with a Mozarabic influence, which replaced stone with brick and wood; the most significant examples are the **churches of San Tirso** (12th century), **San Lorenzo** (13th century), and the **Peregrina** (13th century).

Another site worth mentioning is the **Museum of the Benedictine Mothers**, which has a large collection of gold and silver artwork and an image of the **virgin Mary** dressed in pilgrim guise.



SAHAGUN - EL BURGO RANERO



STAGE PROFILE

↑ 82 m · ↓ 32 m



PLACES OF INTEREST ON THIS STAGE

Today we will continue making our way through the region of **El Paramo**, with a landscape that is similar to the previous days: flat land with vast fields of grain.

Almost all of today's stage takes place on walking trails for pilgrims, outlined with chalk lines, in which a row of trees has been planted with the commendable intention of providing the pilgrims with a bit of shade.

This stage has a distance of 17.6 km.

SAHAGUN - EL BURGO RANERO

ROUTE

0,0 km Sahagun (All services)



Arch of San Benito, Sahagun



Church of La Peregrina, in Sahagun



Bridge that crosses the River Cea, in Sahagun

The landmark we can use here to mark the beginning of the stage is the **San Benito arch**. We head south for 50 meters until reaching **Antonio Nicolas street**, which we then follow to start off the day.

When leaving Sahagun, we cross the **Cea River** (a tributary of the Esla River) on the **Canto Bridge**.

The day continues along a tree-lined path that runs parallel to the **N-120** access road. Upon reaching the national road, before passing the detour to **Mayorga**, the trees will disappear and the path turns into a walking trail. Skirting the vegetation that separates us from the road, we cross a stream and half a kilometer later we cross the **N-120**.

Shortly after, next to a bus shelter, a stone sign warns us of the two alternatives we are presented with: continue straight towards **Bercianos** and **El Burgo Ranero**, or take a detour through **Calzada del Coto**.

We continue straight on the **Royal French Way** ("Real Camino Francés" in Spanish). A dirt trail protected by the shade of sycamore trees will accompany us for the next kilometers.

Right next to it is a paved path used by pilgrims traveling by bike. The journey to Bercianos del Real Camino is quite monotonous and, after an hour's walk, we will get to see the **hermitage of Nuestra Señora de Perales** on the left (at kilometer 8.5 of today's stage).

Later, after crossing a stream and with the cross in memory of German pilgrim **Manfred Kress** on one side, we enter **Bercianos del Real Camino**.

SAHAGUN - EL BURGO RANERO

• 10,0 km Bercianos del Real Camino (Bar, store)

At the entrance to **Bercianos**, we are greeted by a fountain decorated with a scallop. We cross the town on its **Main street** surrounded by adobe, the basic construction material used in the traditional architecture of these first towns in the region of Leon.

In Bercianos, a couple of grocery stores and a bar will allow you to regain your strength before facing the last part of the stage. We leave the town to get back on the trail with the sycamore trees, where we will also get to admire the small plots with grapevines that dot the fields. After two kilometers we arrive at a rest area next to the **Olmo stream** (km 25.1).

Later on, the tree-lined path makes its way to a viaduct of the **A-231** highway (km 28.7) and then goes to **El Burgo Ranero**.

We cross a road and, at the point where we can see a crucifix dedicated to children, we enter this town.

• 17,4 km El Burgo Ranero (Bars, store, pharmacy)

The end of today's stage is **El Burgo Ranero**, a peaceful town of only 765 inhabitants located on the railway line that goes from **Venta de Baños to Leon**.

Here we can find amenities such as bars and a store. Its most significant building is the **church of Santo Tomas de Aquino**.



Pilgrims walking towards Bercianos del Real Camino

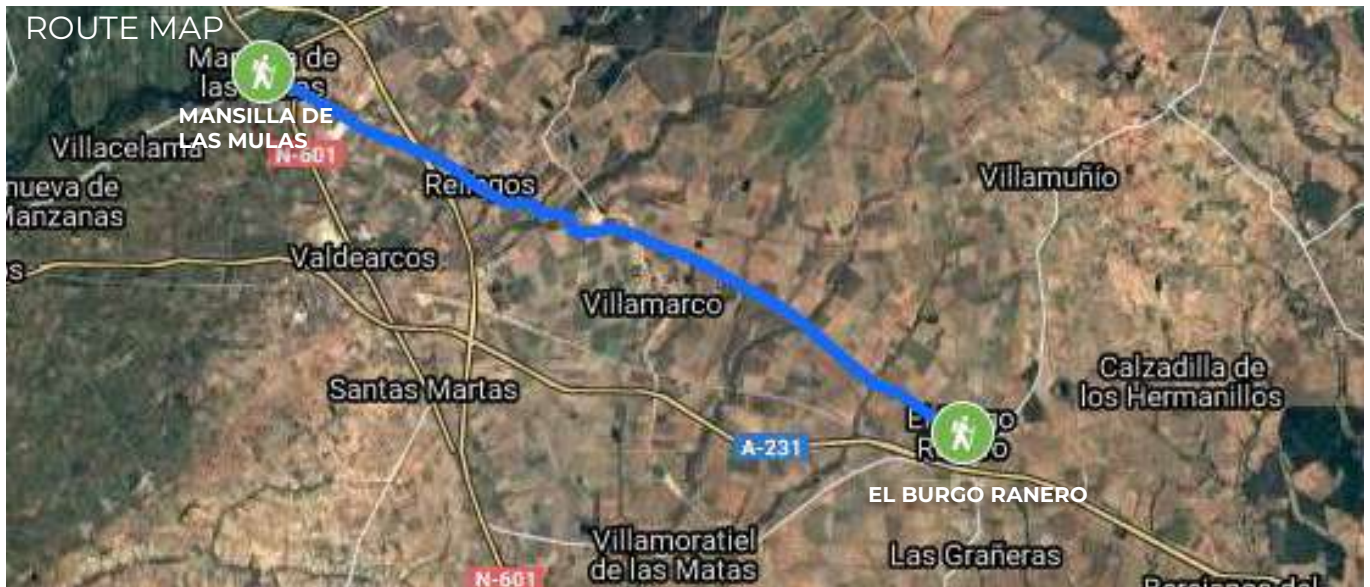


Path to El Burgo Ranero



Pilgrim walking from Bercianos del Real Camino to El Burgo Ranero

EL BURGO RANERO - MANSILLA DE LAS MULAS



STAGE PROFILE

↑ 12 m · ↓ 92 m



PLACES OF INTEREST ON THIS STAGE

Only two stages separate us from our arrival to **Leon**. The landscape continues to follow the trend from previous days.

Today we will end up on the path that runs parallel to the road, sheltered by the shade of the sycamore trees. We will become familiar with the characteristic wine caves in **Reliegos**, which are common in many Castilian locations. In addition to the grain fields, we will be able to see some extensive irrigation systems.

This stage has a total distance of 19 kilometers.

EL BURGO RANERO - MANSILLA DE LAS MULAS

ROUTE



El Burgo Ranero



Cross in El Burgo Ranero



Resting area for pilgrims located between El Burgo Ranero and Reliegos

0,0 km El Burgo Ranero (Bars, store, pharmacy)

When leaving El Burgo we find the **Laguna de la Manzana** or “Apple Pond”.

We get back onto the tree-lined path of the **Royal French Way**, walking through a landscape that is very similar to yesterdays: impressive plains with crops, mostly flat and with almost completely deforested.

Two and a half kilometers after El Burgo Ranero, we pass a rest area located on the edge of the stream of the La Granja valley (km 2.5), and two kilometers later, in a small valley, another stream flows: the **Valdasneros** (km 4.5).

In half an hour, the trail and a flight school for ultralight aircrafts will be on our left (km 7), and a kilometer later we can see the turnoff to **Villamarco** (km 8). We are given a break from our straight course when the trail curves and crosses under the train tracks (km 10.6).

In the following valley, we pass the **Valdearcos stream** and after a slight hill, we head down to the town of **Reliegos**.

At the entrance, we will find a few traditional wineries made of brick and adobe that, although they are used to store wine, are mainly used as a meeting point.

We cross **Reliegos** from one side to the other, walking along the tree-lined trail of the Royal Camino, where a meteorite struck in 1947.

EL BURGO RANERO - MANSILLA DE LAS MULAS

• 13,0 km Reliegos (Bar)

We leave the fronton court off to one side to be immersed once again in the sycamore trees and grain fields, decorated by the giant sprinkler irrigation structures.

There is a saying in Spanish that establishes the distance between Reliegos and Mansilla at approximately one league.

Nearly four kilometers after Reliegos, after passing under the power line towers, we find a rest area on the edge of the wooded trail (km 16.7).

We say our final goodbyes to the artificial trail, cross the **N-601** (road from Adanero - Leon) on a viaduct and go around an irrigational canal to then enter **Mansilla de las Mulas**, a town that ends today's stage.

• 18,9 km Mansilla de las Mulas (All services)

A charming walled village in the valley of the **Eisa River**. Of all its rich heritage from the past, the only things still standing are the **churches of Santa Maria** (13th century), of San Martin (13th century) and the **hermitage of Nuestra Señora de Gracia**.



Streets in Reliegos



Path arriving in Mansilla de las Mulas



House in Mansillas de las Mulas

MANSILLA DE LAS MULAS - LEON



STAGE PROFILE

↑ 124 m · ↓ 88 m



PLACES OF INTEREST ON THIS STAGE

Today the Camino runs close to roads with a large volume of traffic; the general atmosphere makes it easy to perceive the presence of a big city. However, we will also find other sections where the calm and silence will surprise us.

Fortunately, the beautiful city of **Leon** and especially its magnificent cathedral will make up for any unpleasantness.

This stage has a total distance of 18.5 kilometers.

MANSILLA DE LAS MULAS - LEON

ROUTE



Views of the N-601 road, on the outskirts of Mansillas de las Mulas



Houses in Villamoros de Mansilla



Medieval bridge in Puente Villarente

0,0 km Mansilla de las Mulas (All services)

The Camino route crosses through **Mansilla** and takes us to the bridge over the **Esla River**. As soon as we cross the bridge, we will have to take a path that goes off on the left and continues parallel to the N-601 national road, next to the irrigation canals, corn fields and the occasional acacia tree.

In about an hour, we will arrive at **Villamoros de Mansilla**.

4,6 km Villamoros de Mansilla (Store)

At the entrance, we leave the protection of the trail behind to tackle the shoulder of the **N-601** road.

We pass by Villamoros on the road to then get back onto the trail that runs parallel to it, thus arriving at **Puente Villarente**, where we cross the **Porma River** next to the medieval bridge.

We then cross through the town of **Puente Villarente** that has many amenities, following the route of the **N-601**, which splits this town in two.

6,0 km Puente de Villarente (All services)

If we follow the sidewalk on the left, when we arrive at the offices of the **Caja España bank**, we use the crosswalk and continue walking on the right sidewalk.

When we reach the Avellaneda Restaurant, we distance ourselves a bit from the N-601 to take a trail that heads off on our right. Following this trail, we cross the **Arriola canal**, crossing a road further on that goes to Sanfelismo, after which we continue straight ahead.

MANSILLA DE LAS MULAS - LEON

continuing on from Puente de Villarente

After a steep hill, at the beginning of which is a covered rest area, we will reach Arcahueja.

10,4 km Arcahueja (Bar, restaurant, store)

After this town, the section gets tougher with several ups and downs. With the turnoff to **Valdelafuente** on one side, we get to the top of a small hill and continue towards an industrial park located right by the **N-601** road.

On a pedestrian walkway that was made at the beginning of 2010, we cross the junction of the N-601 road and head towards **Puente Castro**, a suburb of Leon separated from the city by the **Torio River**.

We enter **Puente Castro** on Simon Arias street, we cross Madrid avenue and continue to the right along Victoriano Martinez street and then through the **Plaza Tomas Mallo** square to reach a footbridge, crossing the Torio River. To the right is the eighteenth-century stone bridge.

Once we've passed the river - now in Leon - we take **Alcalde Miguel Castaño street** and follow it for 600 meters until reaching the two-way Fernandez Ladreda avenue. We are now immersed in the city of Leon.

19,3 km Leon (All services)



Streets in Arcahueja



Aerial view of Leon



Plaza Regla, in Leon

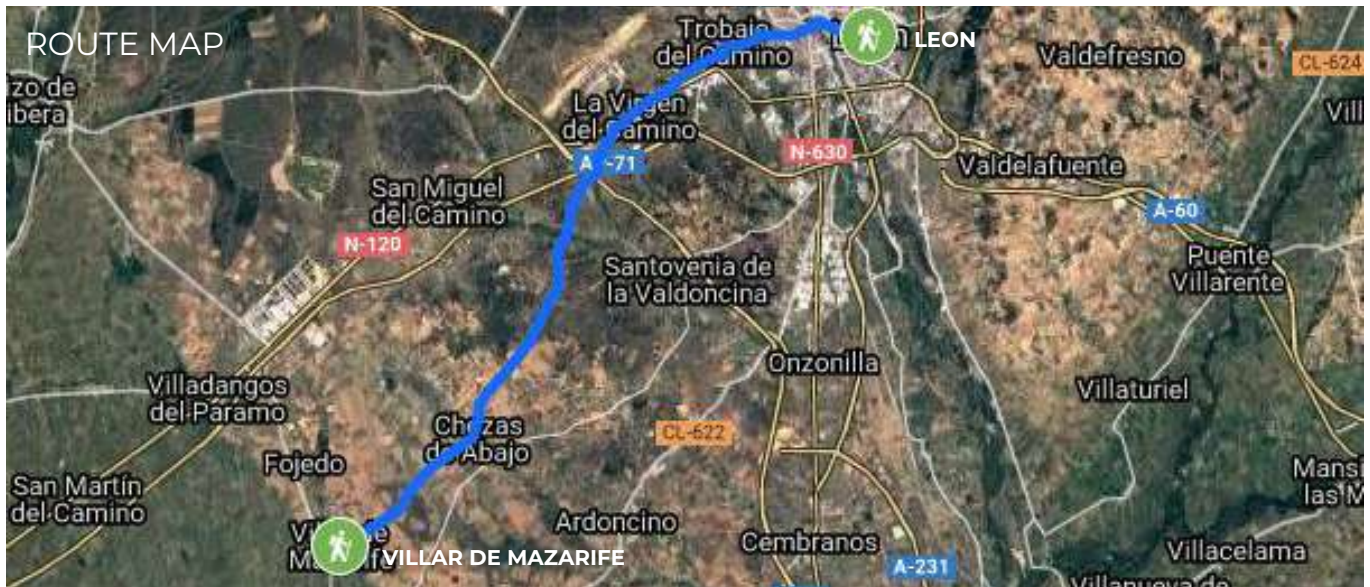
LEON

Of Roman origin, it was the important camp of the **VII Gemina legion**. It was conquered by the Arabs in 717, reconquered by **Alfonso the Catholic** in 742, and again razed to the ground by Almanzor in 988. When recovered by **King Alfonso V**, it became, in the 11th and 12th centuries, the capital of the **Christian kingdom**.

Places of interest:

- ⇒ **Santa Maria Cathedral:** dating from the 13th century and of French inspiration, it is considered one of the jewels of European Gothic architecture. It is a superb 13th century building, located on the highest point of the old town, and is characterised by its colourful stained-glass windows. Its museum houses works of art from all periods, from prehistoric times to the present day.
- ⇒ **Basilica of San Isidoro:** from the 11th century, and no less extraordinary than the cathedral, it is an excellent example of Spanish Romanesque architecture, with vaults decorated with valuable 12th century paintings, and the magnificent royal pantheon, where the remains of twenty-three kings and twelve princes rest.
- ⇒ **Monastery of San Marcos:** an enormous building constructed between the 16th and 18th centuries on the remains of an old pilgrims' hospital. Its Plateresque facade (16th century) and the Renaissance cloister (16th to 18th centuries) are worth mentioning. Today it houses a luxury Parador Hotel and is also home to the Museum of Leon.

LEON - VILLAR DE MAZARIFE



STAGE PROFILE

↑ 158 m · ↓ 123 m



PLACES OF INTEREST ON THIS STAGE

After leaving Leon and reaching the town of “**La Virgen del Camino**” (km 7,1) we opt for the **Villar de Mazarife** instead of Villadangos del Páramo.

The beginning of this stage has an urban section, and then advances through cultivated areas and open fields away from the urban areas and the main roads, and it is also a flat route.

LEON - VILLAR DE MAZARIFE

ROUTE



Cathedral of Santa Maria de Regla of Leon



Bridge of San Marcos



Street in Trobajo del Camino

0,0 km Leon (All services)

In front of the cathedral we take the pedestrian street **Sierra Pambley**, we immediately turn right on Damaso Merino Street and, shortly after, we cross Cervantes Street to continue along the small alley called Ordoño IV.

We come out on Cid Street and on the right we will reach a square where the **Basilica de San Isidoro** stands. With a left-right turn, we continue on Ramon y Cajal Street, passing in front of the **Roman Wall**; then we turn left onto Renueva Street and continue straight on Suero de Quiñones Avenue until reaching **San Marcos Square**, in front of the old Convent of San Marcos.

We cross the **Bridge of San Marcos** over the **Bernesga River** and continue straight along Quevedo Avenue, the old national road.

Later we cross the train tracks on a pedestrian walkway before entering **Trobajo del Camino**.

3,8 km Trobajo del Camino (All services)

We follow the national road for 800 meters, turn left on **Sira Sampedro Street** and soon after we come out on the same road; we cross it and walk up **Camino de la Cruz Street**.

We continue to walk on the road next to an industrial park until coming out on the **N-120** national road, which we will follow until entering **La Virgen del Camino**.

LEON - VILLAR DE MAZARIFE

7,1 km La Virgen del Camino (All services)

We cross the national road on the crosswalk in front of the Virgen del Camino Sanctuary. From here we must be careful not to get confused, since the signage is somewhat unclear: we take the first street on the right, which heads downhill parallel to the national road and, 400 meters ahead at a half-roundabout is the aforementioned fork.

In order to take the main road through **Villadangos**, we must continue straight ahead, however in order to follow the variant through Villar de Mazarife, we have to turn left.

So in order to follow this route option, we turn left and 100 meters ahead we take a dirt road on the right.

In 1.6 km we cross the **LE-30** highway bypass on a bridge. In a few meters we pass under the **A-66** highway and enter **Fresno del Camino**.

After 0.8 km, we arrive at **Fresno del Camino**; the town center is 250 meters ahead on the left.

9,5 km Fresno del Camino

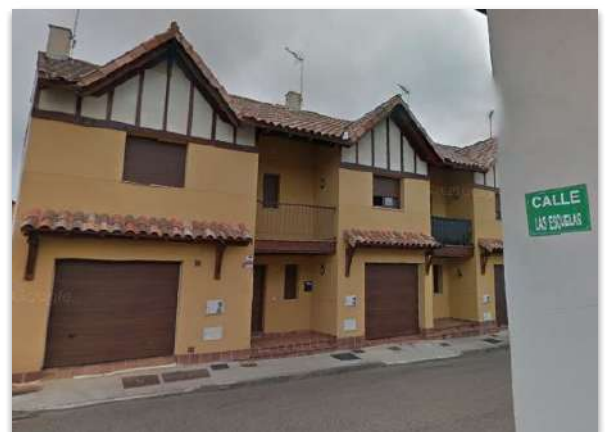
We follow the same local road and shortly before arriving at **Oncina de la Valdoncina**, we cross over the railroad track.



Street in La Virgen del Camino



Houses in Fresno del Camino



Views of Calle Las Escuelas, in Valverde de la Virgen

LEON - VILLAR DE MAZARIFE



Oncina de la Valdoncina



Houses in Chozas de Abajo



Views of Villar de Mazarife

11,0 km Oncina la Valdoncina

At the exit we take a wide dirt path; we head back into peaceful and isolated surroundings that are so highly appreciated by pilgrims, making our way through fields of grains, bushes and standalone trees.

16,6 km Chozas de Abajo (Bar)

As an interesting fact, Chozas de Abajo has a model airplane airfield where you can sometimes see these amazing models flying in the sky.

At the town's exit, we take the local road to Villar de Mazarife.

20km Villar de Mazarife (All services)

The town, which belongs to the municipality of **Chozas de Abajo**, it owes its origin to **Mazaref**, head of the Mozarabic family from Cordoba who, with approval from the kings of Leon, undertook the task of repopulating these locations.

One of the sites worth seeing is the town's **parish church**, built with thick walls of mud covered with mortar, the museum of the painter and sculptor Monsignor, which exhibits some of his works of art, as well as the telegraph and telephone museum run by **Don Angel**, in the old house called "**Casa Antolin**".

Also worth seeing is the mural welcoming pilgrims at the entrance of the town that depicts the church surrounded by the apostles.

VILLAR DE MAZARIFE - ASTORGA



STAGE PROFILE



PLACES OF INTEREST ON THIS STAGE

This stage follows the theme of the previous day up until reaching **Hospital de Orbigo**: flat, with similar landscapes, which will then change to a slightly mountainous terrain after days of walking on flat land.

However, this will be nothing compared to what awaits us during the coming stages of the French Way. The town where we will finish the stage, **Astorga** (known in Roman times as **Asturica Augusta**), is the most representative location of the day's stage due to its history and heritage. Among other sites, we can admire the cathedral and the **Episcopal Palace**, work of the architect **Antoni Gaudi**.

VILLAR DE MAZARIFE - ASTORGA



Landscapes of Villar de Mazarife



Views of Villavante



Streets in Villavante

ROUTE

0,0 km Villar de Mazarife (All services)

We cross the town heading in the same direction; at the exit we follow a local road, which makes its way through extensive farmland.

After travelling for 6 kilometers, we cross the road from **Bustillo del Paramo** to **San Martin del Camino**; we take a dirt path ahead.

When we've reached **Villavante**, we turn right to enter the town; if we don't want to enter the town, we can continue straight along the same path.

In 3.7 km we will arrive at **Villavante**.

9,7 km Villavante (Bar, restaurant)

At the exit of Villavante, we cross over the train tracks and turn left, walking for a few meters in parallel to the tracks.

We cross over the **AP-71** highway, following the **CL-621** road. We immediately take a dirt path on our left.

Later we will walk around a factory, cross the **N-120** national road at a roundabout and continue straight on **Constitucion Street** until reaching the center of **Puente de Orbigo**, which we will reach after having walked for another 2 kilometers.

VILLAR DE MAZARIFE - ASTORGA

♦ 14,5 km Puente de Orbigo

When we reach the town, we will arrive at the bridge on a cobbled street on the river's edge surrounded by low houses. The beautiful medieval bridge that crosses the **Orbigo River**, called **Paso Honroso**, is the longest of the Jacobean route (310 meters).

The view from here of the river and its vegetation, with the town of **Hospital de Orbigo** on the other side, is truly a beautiful sight.



Views of the streets of Hospital de Orbigo

♦ 14,9 km Hospital de Orbigo (All services)

Worth seeing in this town is the **Church of San Juan de la Orden de los Caballeros Hospitalarios** (16th century).

Just outside the town we find a turnoff: we can continue straight on a monotonous path next to the national road, or we can turn right towards **Villares**, a much more interesting and beautiful path.

The first option is 1.2 km shorter, but even so, the decision is clear: the best option is through Villares. Both paths converge at the **Santo Toribio crucifix**. So we turn right, following a dirt path.



Houses in Hospital de Orbigo

♦ 17,5 km Villares de Orbigo (All services)

At the exit of Villares we cross a local road and take a trail that makes its way up a hill; we then head down to **Santibanez** on a local road.



Medieval bridge in Hospital de Orbigo

VILLAR DE MAZARIFE - ASTORGA



Streets in Santibañez de Valdeiglesias



Street in San Justo de la Vega



Views of the Cathedral of Astorga from the Plaza Espana

• 19,9 km Santibañez de Valdeiglesias (Bar)

At the **parish Church of La Trinidad**, we find the beautiful carvings of **San Roque** and **Santiago Matamoros**.

At the exit we take a path to the right, heading uphill, and continue to walk with a few farms on the left.

On pleasant dirt paths, with modestly steep hills, we cross through forests of oaks, pines and cottonwoods.

6.5 Santo Toribio crucifix (905 m). We can already see Astorga and, in the background, the Montes de Leon mountain range with the peak of Teleno jutting out.

We head downhill and enter San Justo de la Vega on Real Street.

• 27,8 km San Justo de la Vega (All services)

We cross **San Justo de la Vega** on the same Real Street, we pass over the **Tuerto River** on a metal footbridge next to the national road, we head downhill on the right and continue to walk behind a factory.

We pass by a small Roman bridge and return to the national road to then cross the train tracks on a pedestrian footbridge.

Once we've reached a roundabout, we continue straight ahead; at the end we turn left and in a few meters we take a street to the right that heads steeply uphill, reaching **San Francisco Square**.

• 30,5 km Astorga (All services)

ASTORGA

Called **Asturica Augusta** by the Romans, this was an important enclave where two of the most strategic Roman roads converged: **Via Trajana** and **Via de la Plata**.

The city still holds onto many vestiges of its Roman past. Later on, in the third century, it was the episcopal see and an important center of trade. Regarding its connection to the Jacobean route, at one point during the Middle Age it had more than twenty pilgrim hospitals.

Astorga is currently the capital of the **Maragateria** region.

The **Cathedral of Santa Maria**, whose construction began in 1471, is built in a Gothic style and inside features a lovely high altarpiece (16th century) and impressive stained-glass windows.

The two great towers of the cathedral are a distant reference point for pilgrims. The magnificent and unique **Episcopal Palace**, the work of Gaudi, is currently home to the **Los Caminos Museum**. It is worth visiting the **Plaza de España** Square, where we will find the Town Hall (fagade from the 17th century) and its traditional clock (18th century) with the figure of two "maragatos" or people from the Margateria region.



ASTORGA -RABANAL DEL CAMINO



STAGE PROFILE

↑ 310 m · ↓ 31 m



PLACES OF INTEREST ON THIS STAGE

Today we will leave behind the extensive Castilian plain and begin the ascent to the **Montes de Leon** mountain range passing through the **Maragateria** region. The ascent is gentle and progressive until reaching **Rabanal del Camino**.

ASTORGA - RABANAL DEL CAMINO

ROUTE



Plaza España, in Astorga



House in Valdeviejas



Calle del Sol, in Valdeviejas

0,0 km Astorga (All services)

Astorga has a significant number of pastry shops that sell a delicious variety of products. After eating at one of these shops for breakfast, we will begin the stage.

With our back to the facade of the **Astorga Town Hall**, we cross the **Mayor Square** to continue on **Pio Gullon Street**, located to the left of the square.

After crossing Garcia Prieto, we continue straight on Postas Street followed by Santiago Street. Leaving the **Episcopal Palace** off to one side, we walk past the cathedral and take Porteria Street.

After Porteria we turn right and go straight ahead for about 400 meters on **San Pedro Street**. We cross the street on a crosswalk and head in the direction of **Castrillo de Polvazares** and **Santa Colomba de Somoza** following De Los Martires Street.

On a path that continues parallel to the **LE-142**, we head slightly downhill until reaching **Valdeviejas**, where the **Ecce Homo hermitage** is located, built in the 18th century and completely restored in 2007. The hermit gets up early, stamps and also provides pilgrim passports ('credenciales').

2,6 km Valdeviejas (All services)

We leave the hermitage behind and cross the **A-6** highway (northwest highway that connects Madrid with Arteixo in A Coruña) on an overpass.

At the foot of the LE-142 is a path that will take us to **Murias de Rechivaldo**, a town in the Maragateria region that we will enter after crossing the **Jerga River**.

ASTORGA -RABANAL DEL CAMINO

4,7 km Murias de Rechivaldo (Bars)

We leave Murias de Rechivaldo on a gravel path surrounded by scrub and broom. Two kilometers of walking straight leads us to cross the **LE-142** (km 7.3), a road that we will leave behind on a trail next to the **LE-CV-192**.

About half an hour later, on a steep climb we will reach the center of **Santa Catalina de Somoza**. This was also the old town of mule drivers, with sturdy houses that have double doors and that were always painted a primary color.



Views of Murias de Rechivaldo

9,3 km Santa Catalina de Somoza (Bars)

We cross the town on Real Street and at the exit we get back on the path next to the **LE-CV-192** that, heading barely uphill, will take us to the town of **El Ganso**.

Between the towns of Santa Catalina de Somoza and El Ganso there is a wooden cross that was placed here to replace another older one that had deteriorated.

In El Ganso, after passing a few bars, we turn left to pass by a fountain and the **Church of Santiago**.



Church of San Esteban, in Murias de Rechivaldo

13,4 km El Ganso (Bars, stores)

We will leave the turnoff to **Rabanal Viejo** and **Maluenga** off to our right (km 17.5), and after the **Rabanal Viejo River**, we will say goodbye to the road to take a trail that heads uphill among oak trees.



Façade in Santa Catalina de Somoza

ASTORGA - RABANAL DEL CAMINO



Views of El Ganso



Calle Real, in Rabanal del Camino



Views of the Church of Rabanal del Camino

continuing on from El Ganso (Bars, store)

We walk alongside a fence topped with crosses made from sticks, where many pilgrims stop to place their own.

The monumental 'oak tree of the pilgrim' used to be located on the left, known by the nickname "**Carballo de Fonso Pedredo**". A Jacobean myth says that it was knocked down by the wind a few years ago.

Also on the left we will leave behind the Hermitage of **Cristo de la Vera Cruz**, owned by the neighborhood council (km 19.7).

We get away from the **LE-CV-192**, which merges at this point with the **LE-142**, to enter **Rabanal del Camino**. The ninth stage of the Codex Calixtinus started from Leon and ended in Rabanal del Camino.

• 20,4 km Rabanal del Camino (Bars, store)

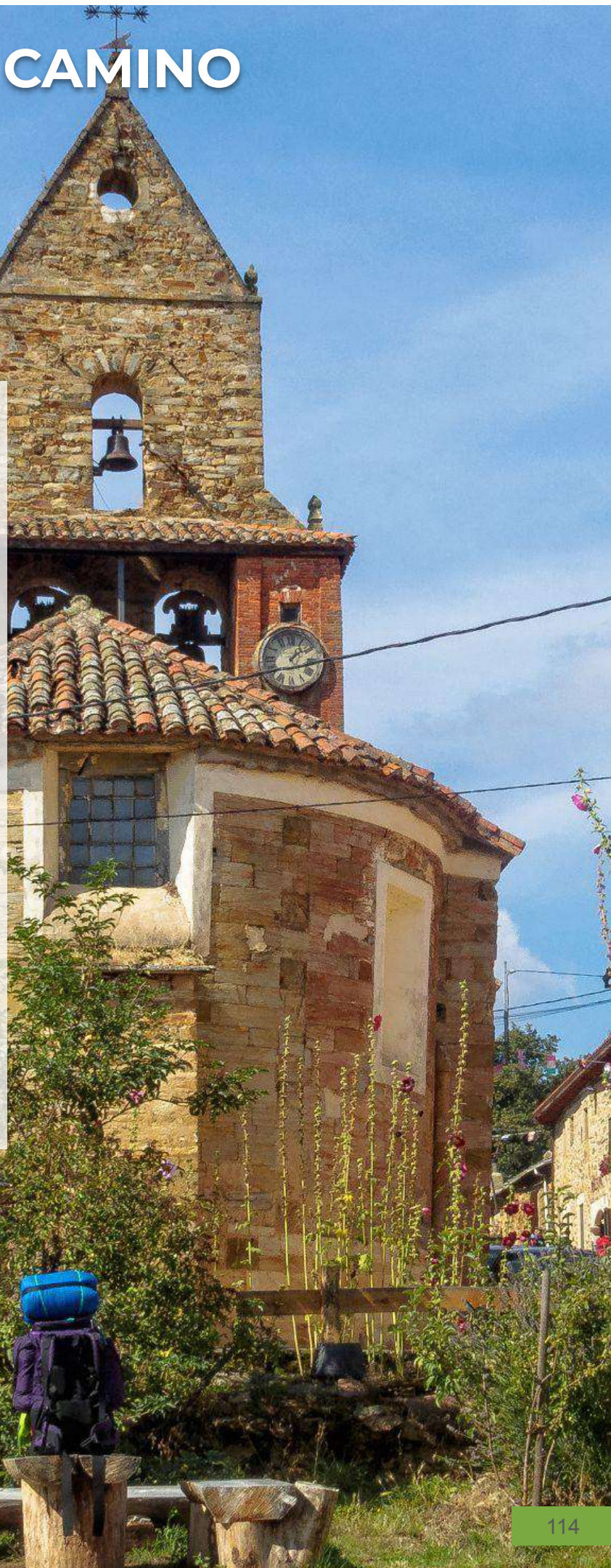
RABANAL DEL CAMINO

A strategic location in which the pilgrims used to gather together to face the dangerous crossing of the **Monte Irato** mountain.

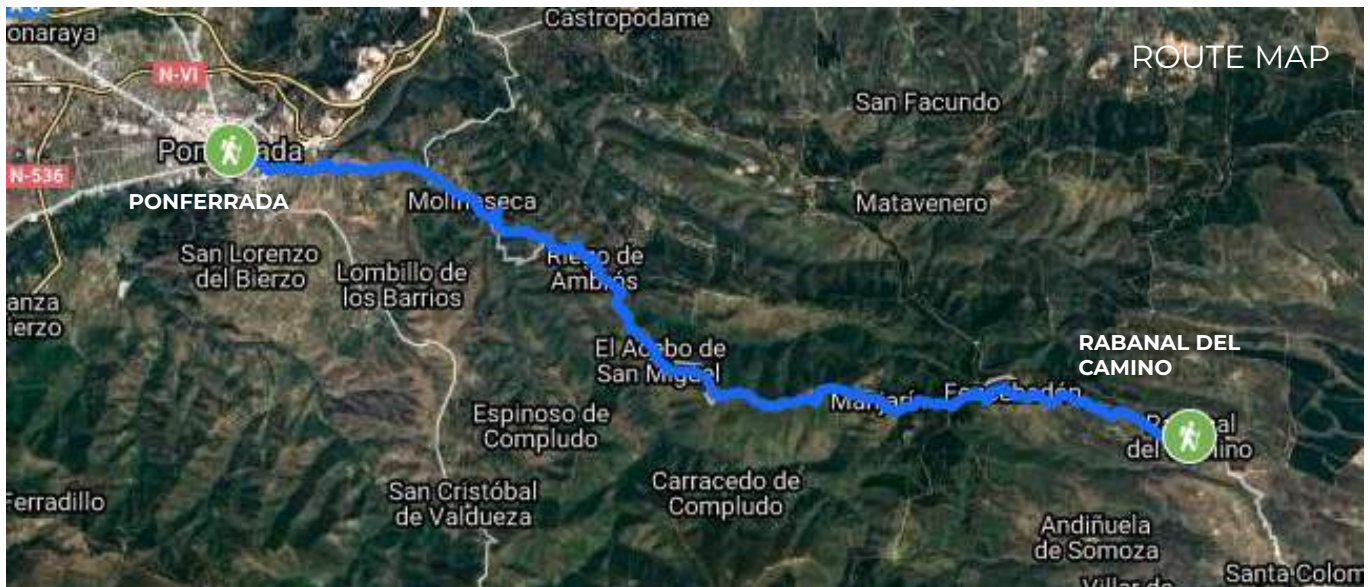
During the Middle Ages, the Templar monks, who played an important role in protecting the pilgrims, built several hospitals and churches here.

At the entrance of the village we can see the **Hermitage of San Jose** (18th century), with an image of **Santiago**, and in the upper part of the village, the Church of Santa Maria (12th-13th century), with a Romanesque style and the characteristic bell gable (single-walled belfry).

Before entering the village, we find the **Hermitage of Vera Cruz**, built out of ashlar and covered with Arab tiles on the roof in the 17th or 18th century.



RABANAL DEL CAMINO - PONFERRADA



STAGE PROFILE



PLACES OF INTEREST ON THIS STAGE

During this wonderful stage, we will cross the **Montes de Leon** mountains, a natural barrier between the regions of **Maragatería** and **El Bierzo** (we must be careful in winter given the altitude and the weather).

We set off on a strong uphill climb to the **Iron Cross**; we continue for 6 kilometers along trails with moderate hills, reaching the altitude of 1,505 meters (the highest point of the French Way) and finally we will begin our long descent to **Ponferrada**, with a steep slope upon our arrival at **El Acebo**.

The Iron Cross is one of the most evocative and powerful enclaves of the entire Jacobean route, despite its simplicity. For hundreds of years, millions of people have thrown a stone at this cross that they have carried with them from their place of origin. This Christian custom is based on the idea of getting rid of all evil.

RABANAL DEL CAMINO - PONFERRADA

ROUTE



Street in Rabanal del Camino and the church in the background



Pilgrim walking towards Foncebadon



Palloza, an old and traditional hut in Foncebadon

0,0 km Rabanal del Camino (Bars, store)

We cross the main street in Rabanal del Camino to arrive at a washing place, where we take a trail among the pine trees. Cyclists have the option to continue following the LE-142 road. There are a few stretches where they will have to push their bike.

A kilometer later we cross the road and continue along the path on the left. We arrive at a fountain.

We walk uphill for a short section to the **LE-142** road, a good vantage point from where we can look out on the silhouette of Astorga and the Maragateria region. A path that crosses over the road takes us for 3.5 kilometers to the center of **Foncebadon**, a ruined town settled on **Mount Irago**.

5,6 km Foncebadon (Bars, store)

We say goodbye to Foncebadon heading uphill among fallen walls and the church, whose steeple always welcomes the first light of day.

At the exit we take the path on the left, which heading slightly uphill takes us to the **LE-142** road.

Walking along a path parallel to the road, which runs alongside a small forest, then we reach the **Iron Cross** (km 7.5).

Located at an altitude of exactly 1,500 meters (the highest point of the French Way in Spain), it is nothing more than a small iron cross supported by a disproportionate wooden mast.

RABANAL DEL CAMINO - PONFERRADA

continuing on from Foncebadon

One of the traditions is to turn our backs to the cross and throw a stone at the existing pile. A gesture that can be traced back to the Galician harvesters when they traveled to Castile to work in the grain fields, along with the muleteers and the transhumant shepherds (km 2.2).

In 1982, a chapel was erected next to the cross that was dedicated to the apostle **St. James**. From this point we continue to walk along the trail that runs parallel to the **LE-142**.

Rowans (*Sorbus aucuparia*), a deciduous tree that is easily distinguishable by its thick clusters of red berries, will surround us as we walk.

10,1 km Manjarin

The route will almost always run parallel to the road.

During the first 3.5 kilometers the route flattens and heads slightly uphill, leaving the **Communications Military Base** off to one side, located under **Pena Llabaya** and abandoned in 1990.

A kilometer further down from the Base, we begin to really head sharply downhill overlooking Ponferrada (from a distance we can make out a black dot corresponding to the tower of Rosaleda that is over 100 meters high).

The trail is rocky with a steep incline (cyclists are advised to follow the road).

After these seven kilometers, the Camino ends up in **El Acebo**, the first town of **El Bierzo**.



Old church near Foncebadon



The Chapel of Santiago, near Foncebadon



Pilgrims arriving at Manjarin

RABANAL DEL CAMINO - PONFERRADA



Streets in El Acebo



Views of El Acebo



Church of Santa Maria Magdalena, in
Riego de Ambros

17,2 km El Acebo (Bar, store)

Residents of this village lived tax-free in exchange for placing eight hundred stakes to indicate the way for travelers.

In this Bercian town surrounded by cytissus shrubs and pastures, we can find a store where we can buy sandwiches and an inn where we can take a break from the stage, which we've already completed more than 40% of.

Leaving El Acebo we come across a graphic sculpture by **Eulogio Pisabarro** in memory of **Heinrich Krause**, a German pilgrim who died on the Camino.

In the past, pilgrims would follow the road for almost two kilometers until reaching **Riego de Ambros**. We will continue to walk on asphalt, however a path has been created that we will take 1.3 km after the crossing to **Compludo**, avoiding a stretch of walking on the road.

Finally, just like in the past, we get back onto the trail that runs parallel to the road, after which we will reach the town.

We cross **Riego de Ambros** from one end to the other (this town belonging to the municipality of Molinaseca is about 600 meters long), passing by the **San Sebastian square**.

20,6 km Riego de Ambros (Bar, store)

Slate roofs and wooden balconies give way to a trail that makes it way down under the shade of chestnut trees and the coolness of the **Prado stream**.

RABANAL DEL CAMINO - PONFERRADA

continuing on from Riego de Ambros

Once in open fields, we arrive back at the road's shoulder (km 16.4), which we will then leave behind once again to begin a tortuous descent that will take its toll on our tired muscles.

Right next to some cottonwood trees, which are fed by the **Pretadura stream**, we reach the **LE-142** (km 19.2).

At the foot of the road is the **Sanctuary of the Virgen de las Angustias**, from the end of the 17th century, which gives way to the medieval bridge over the **Meruelo River**, on which we will enter **Molinaseca**.



Pilgrim walking towards Molinaseca



Bridge crossing the River Meruelo, in Molinaseca

25,3 km Molinaseca (Bars, stores, pharmacy, ATM)

We cross the town on Real Street to come out on **Fraga Iribarne Avenue**, next to the **LE-142**.

We leave the road behind after passing a tennis court. We turn right and take a path that advances close to the **Meruelo River**. Be careful, because once you reach the road (km 22.5) you won't have to continue along the path that runs parallel to this road by the **Patricia housing development**.

A somewhat hidden route marker below the left shoulder of the road points us in the right direction. A track with a few slopes leads to **Campo**.



Houses in Molinaseca

29,2 km Campo (Bar)

Settled in the Middle Ages, Campo has a Roman fountain, the **hermitage of Santo Cristo** and the **parish Church of Nuestra Señora de la Encina**.

RABANAL DEL CAMINO - PONFERRADA



Pilgrim on the Camino de Santiago

continuing on from Campo

We leave Campo walking alongside the **Boeza River**, which flows to the right. Several neighborhoods escort us until we cross the river (km 26.4) and four hundred meters ahead we cross the tracks to complete the twenty-second stage with our arrival at **Ponferrada**.

• 35,1 km Ponferrada (All services)



Aerial view of Ponferrada



Panoramic view of the castle of Ponferrada

PONFERRADA

This is the capital of the **El Bierzo** region.

Its origin dates back to the eleventh century, when the strategic wooden bridge over the mighty **Sil River** was reinforced with iron, a material that is abundant in the region, receiving the name of “**Pons Ferrata**” that then influenced the town's current name, Ponferrada.

Among the most interesting monuments the town has to offer, we can highlight:

- The magnificent **Templar Castle** (12th-14th centuries), excellently preserved, testimony to the presence of the warrior monks, protectors of the pilgrims.
- The **baroque Church of San Andres** (16th century).
- The **basilica of Our Lady of the Evergreen Oak** (16th-17th centuries), patron saint of El Bierzo.
- The **Clock Tower** (16th century), located in one of the gates of the old medieval wall.
- The **Town Hall Square** whose baroque building dates back to the 18th century.



PONFERRADA - VILAFRANCA DEL BIERZO



STAGE PROFILE

↑ 202 m · ↓ 210 m



PLACES OF INTEREST ON THIS STAGE

The entire stage takes place in the **region of El Bierzo**, a wide valley (the “Hoya del Bierzo”) surrounded by mountains and with a microclimate that is milder than the plateau.

Without any significant hills, we make our way along nice asphalted paths and dirt trails. Most of the route is without shade and in summer the temperature rises easily.

The towns we cross have many facilities due to the daily influx of visitors and locals.

PONFERRADA - VILAFRANCA DEL BIERZO

ROUTE

0,0 km Ponferrada (All services)

We begin describing the stage on the **Castillo Avenue**.

Heading towards the west, in the direction of Santiago, we find the **Church of San Andres** just before the castle of the Templar knights, which we can walk around by taking the Gil and Carrasco Street, right after passing the church.

At one point, the pilgrims travelling on bicycles continue off to the left and the walkers to the right until reaching the **Square of the Virgen de la Encina**.

Once in the square we turn left and go down the stairs of **Rañadero Street**. We arrive at Puebla Avenue where we cross the **Sil River** (km 1.2).

We later turn right on **Rio Urdiales Street**, after which we turn right again on the never-ending De Las **Huertas del Sacramento** Avenue, where the **Fountain of Pimenteiras** is located.

Further on, when you reach the roundabout with the monument dedicated to **blood donors**, turn right onto Avenue de la Libertad.

The **National Museum of Energy** is located at number 46, a space dedicated to fostering scientific learning.

The exit from Ponferrada consists of a long detour since instead of continuing on towards the west, we head north to where **Compostilla** is located. We arrive at the **Red Cross** facilities and later cross a small passageway that takes us to the **Town Hall Square**.



Plaza Mayor, in Ponferrada



Church of San Andres



Views of the Basilica de la Virgen de la Encina

PONFERRADA - VILAFRANCA DEL BIERZO



Streets in Compostilla



Buildings in Compostilla



Street in Columbrianos

3,7 km Compostilla

When passing by the neo-Romanesque chapel, we continue straight on the **IV Avenue**, to then turn left and immediately after to the right on the **Tercera Transversal**, where we will pass by sports fields.

We leave the town of Compostilla on an asphalt path and cross the national road through a tunnel (km 4.7). The vicinity of the **Church of San Esteban** and the first houses of **Columbrianos** is clearly recognizable by the presence of grapevines. The El Bierzo region boasts excellent conditions for growing grapes, since it has been nestled in a plain surrounded by mountains that prevents the passage of the Atlantic climate. The red wines are made with the Mencia variety.

Upon reaching the Church of San Esteban, we follow a mild descent down to cross the **CL-631** and thus enter to the center of Columbrianos.

5,5 km Columbrianos (Store, bar, pharmacy)

We walk by the **Chapel of San Blas and San Roque** and leave Columbrianos on a paved path that forks off to the left.

The Camino continues among single-family homes and small plots where the residents go about their day to day.

At the entrance to **Fuentes Nuevas** we will see a cross with the **figures of the pilgrim Santiago and the Crucified Christ** who welcome walkers.

PONFERRADA - VILAFRANCA DEL BIERZO

8,1 km Fuentes Nuevas

We enter the village on **Valiña Street** where the **Hermitage of the Divine Christ** is located.

We leave Fuentes Nuevas and continue along a paved road towards the town of **Camponaraya**. It takes us roughly 20 minutes to pass through Camponaraya (about 1.5 km long), crossing over the **Reguera del Naraya River** in the middle.

We pass by a few houses with gardens, and come out on the old national road where the Jakue Hotel is located, at the entrance to **Puente la Reina**.



Crops in Columbianos

10,5 km Camponaraya (All services)

We leave the village and pass by a wine cooperative and a rest area.

On a gravel path we reach the A-6 highway, which we will cross on a raised overpass.

The next stretch is the most relaxing of the day. **The Hoya (Valley) del Bierzo** offers us its best landscape, dotted with vineyards and cottonwood trees everywhere we look.

Two and a half kilometers ahead (km 14.3) we carefully cross a road and continue along the shoulder of another road until reaching the site of the **El Bierzo Denomination of Origin Regulating Council** (km 14.9).

The Camino descends and enters **Cacabelos** on Cimadevilla Street. After passing the **Church of Santa Maria** - which still has its curved Romanesque apse - we continue along until reaching the **Cua River**, a tributary of the Sil.



Views of Camponaraya



Street in Camponaraya

PONFERRADA - VILAFRANCA DEL BIERZO



Views of Cacabelos, on the banks of the River Cua



Sanctuary of the Virgen de las Angustias, Cacabelos



Bridge in Villafranca del Bierzo

16,6 km Cacabelos (All services)

After crossing the **Cua River**, we encounter the **Sanctuary of the Quinta Angustia**.

In order to reach **Pieros** we must conquer a steep hill alongside the **LE-713** road.

18,5 km Pieros (Bar)

We continue along the side of the road. Further on, at the **intersection to San Clemente**, there is a sign indicating that we should take the variant to the right that goes towards **Valtuille de Arriba**. This variant follows paths that are not the official Camino de Santiago route and is somewhat longer.

The official route follows the shoulder of the road, which we will leave behind at km 20.8 following the indication of a Jacobean milepost.

On a gravel road called **La Virgen**, we pass by the **A. Nogueira sculpture studio** to then tackle a steep climb that gives way to a few ups and downs before reaching the first houses of **Villafranca del Bierzo**.

Once on our way down, we pass by the Romanesque **Church of Santiago**, which presents us with its **Puerta del Perdon** ("Door of Forgiveness").

We arrive at the castle and, on the right hand side, we walk down a set of stairs and continue along the Salinas and Rinconada Salinas streets to Agua-Ribadeo Street.

20,6 km Villafranca del Bierzo (All services)

VILAFRANCA DEL BIERZO

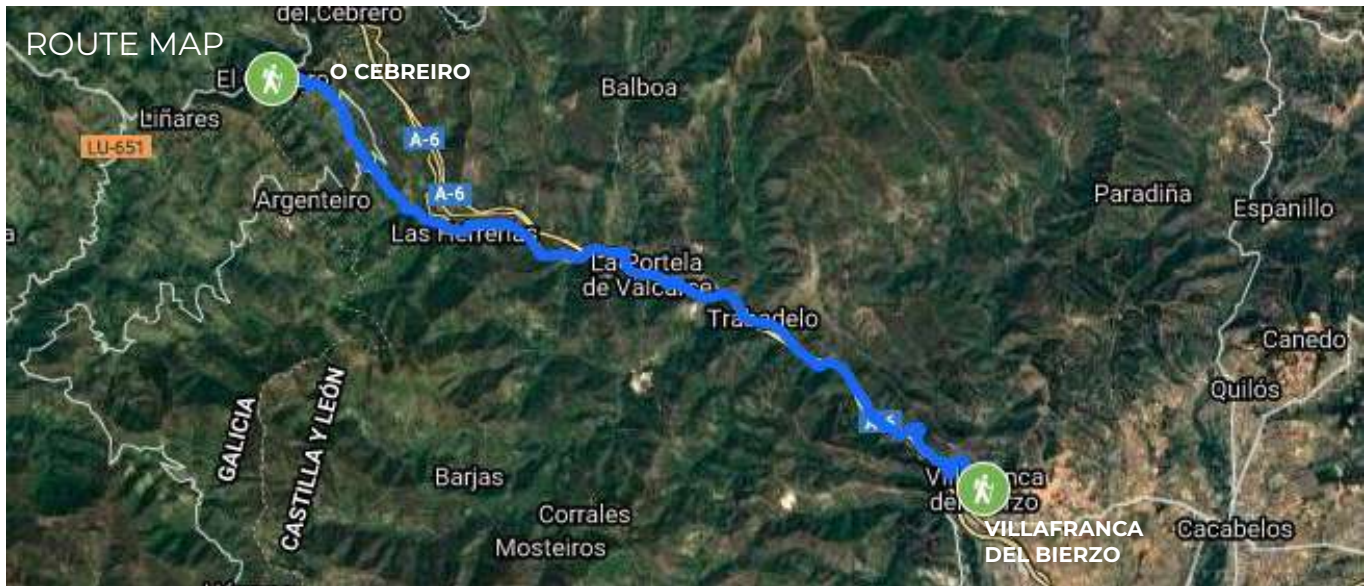
Cultural capital of the **El Bierzo** region, located at the junction of the **Burbia and Valcarlos Rivers**, this town has an urban development with important historical heritage.

It was populated by French merchants (origin of the town's name) in the days of **King Alfonso VI** and, in the eleventh century, was home to the **French Cluniac Reforms**.

The **Romanesque Church of Santiago** (12th century) is located at the entrance, famous for its **Puerta del Perdón** ("Door of Forgiveness"), where helpless pilgrims could be granted the plenary indulgence during the Jubilee, thanks to a privilege granted by Pope Calixto III in the 15th century.

Other monumental buildings include the **Castle of the Marquises de Villafranca** (16th century), the **Gothic Church of San Francisco** (13th century), the **Convent of San Nicolas** (16th century), and the **Collegiate Church of Santa Maria** (16th century). The route runs along **Del Agua Street**, with palaces and noble houses such as the **Torquemada Palace** (17th century).

VILAFRANCA DEL BIERZO - O CEBREIRO



STAGE PROFILE

↑ 875 m · ↓ 82 m



PLACES OF INTEREST ON THIS STAGE

Today is a mountainous stage during which we will climb a mountain of over 700 meters. We could say that today is the crowning stage of the French Way. We are going to leave Castile and Leon to enter **Galicia**, specifically passing by the parish of **O Cebreiro**.

O Cebreiro is an old village with traditional "palloza" style dwellings that have been renovated due to their touristic appeal. We will be accompanied by the more heavily populated area around the **Valcarlos River**, which is divided by the **N-VI** and **A-6** roads.

We won't start to really notice the climb until kilometer 21 of the stage, once we've passed the "Hospital" neighborhood.

The steepest part of the section is from **Las Herrerías to Laguna de Castilla**, where we will climb 480 meters in only 5.7 kilometers.

VILAFRANCA DEL BIERZO - O CEBREIRO

ROUTE

• 0,0 km Villafranca del Bierzo (All services)

We set off on the beginning of today's stage from the **main square of Villafranca**. We will head west on Yedra Street and turn right, heading north, on Agua Street.

After passing through Villafranca del Bierzo on Agua-Ribadeo Street, we turn ninety degrees to the left up the **Zamora** hill (until reaching Santa Catalina Street), we pass by the pilgrim monument, cross the **Burbia River** and continue along the streets of La Concepcion and Espiritu Santo. We exit Villafranca on the latter street and continue for a kilometer along the shoulder of the road, which follows alongside the Valcarce River.

We then arrive at a pedestrian walkway, protected by a wall that is less than a meter high, which continues sandwiched between the **A-6** highway and the **N-VI** road (km 1.8).

On this pilgrimage trail we pass under several viaducts of the A-6 highway (km 4.1) before taking the detour to **Pereje** once we reach pk 410 of the N-VI road.

We carefully cross the national road and take the access road to arrive at the first town of the day, Pereje, escorted by cottonwood trees and large chestnut trees on the **bank of the Valcarce River**.

• 5,3 km Pereje (Bar)

We cross the town to end up once again on the pedestrian walkway.



Views of Villafranca del Bierzo, on the banks of the River Burbia



Castle of Villafranca del Bierzo



Church of Santa Maria, in Villafranca del Bierzo

VILLAFRANCA DEL BIERZO - O CEBREIRO



Camino de Santiago in Pereje



Views of Trabadelo



Sculpture of Santiago Apostol, in
Portela de Valcarce

continuing on from Pereje

After one kilometer and six hundred meters we find the **Trabadelo** rest area (km 6.9), and a kilometer further up we cross the **N-VI** road once again to take the turnoff to this town.

Finding ourselves back next to the **Valcarce riverside** forest, with incredible chestnut trees, we make our way to Trabadelo, with all the necessary facilities for stopping to take a break along the Camino.

9,7 km Trabadelo (Bar, store, pharmacy)

We leave the town, with the **turnoff to Pradela and Sotelo** to our right, and this time we walk approximately one kilometer on a paved path above the national road.

Having passed a stream that feeds the **Valcarce River** (km 10.5), we meet up with the pedestrian walkway again, on the edge of the **N-VI** road.

One kilometer and seven hundred meters more drops us in **La Portela de Valcarce**.

13,7 km La Portela de Valcarce (Bars, store, ATM)

After La Portela, having walked only 300 meters next to the N-VI, we take the detour to **Ambasmestas** and **Vega de Valcarce**.

First we arrive at Ambasmestas, where the **Balboa and Valcarce Rivers** meet.

VILAFRANCA DEL BIERZO - O CEBREIRO

• 15,0 km Ambasmestas (Bars, store)

We then make our way into **Vega de Valcarce**, a service town for the valley with its **Church of la Magdalena**.

• 16,5 km Vega de Valcarce (All services)

This village is the municipal capital of the **Valcarce Valley**, in a strongly Galician geographical and linguistic area.

We get the chance to delight in the poetic view of the half-ruined **Castle of Sarracin** (11th century), up on a hill. There is a nice path that goes up to the castle, even though it's not open to visits.

We now head to **Ruitelan**. At this part of the stage we have only gained 171 meters of altitude. The base of the port is nearby.

• 18,6 km Ruitelan (Bars)

At the exit of Ruitelan the incline becomes slightly steeper, a small glimpse of what is to come later on.

A little bit higher up to the left, we take the detour that goes down to **Las Herrerias**.

Before arriving at this small town, we cross the **Valcarce River** over a stone bridge.



Streets in Ambasmesetas



Views of Vega de Valcarce



N-VI in Vega de Valcarce

VILAFRANCA DEL BIERZO - O CEBREIRO



Las Herrerias



Pilgrim on bicycle in Las Herrerias



Road signs heading towards La Faba
and O Cebreiro

20,1 km Las Herrerias (Bars, store)

We cross the town until reaching the **“Hospital” neighborhood** (km 20.8), a continuation of the former town that takes its name from the old hospital for English pilgrims.

The true ascent to **O Cebreiro** begins after leaving behind this group of houses.

On the way up, we should take the trail that heads off to the left of the asphalted path.

Cyclists must continue straight on the asphalt (km 22).

Once on the path, we get a quick break from the steep incline until it decides to rear its head again after crossing the **Refox stream** on a somber path that continues to follow a steep ascent under the canopy of the deciduous leaves of the chestnut and oak trees. This scenario brings us closer to **La Faba**.

23,5 km La Faba (Bar, store)

After **La Faba** we slowly leave the comfort of the shade behind to venture out onto open grasslands overlooking the Atlantic forests.

The great panoramic views influence our perception of the climb, which will become slightly easier until we reach the last town in Leon on the French Way: **Laguna de Castilla**.

VILAFRANCA DEL BIERZO - O CEBREIRO

25,9 km Laguna de Castilla (Bar)

The first Jacobean milestone marking the distances appears approximately 700 meters further up. It reads 152.5 and carries the inscription "**Os Santos**" (of the Teso dos Santos).

Four hundred meters later, the Camino bids farewell to Leon, the province with the most kilometers of the French Way route: no fewer than 214.4.

We finally step into **Galicia** (specifically **Lugo**). The crowning stage is about to come to an end (km 27). Tired, we overcome the last kilometer until arriving at the **pre-Romanesque Church of Santa Maria La Real**, which welcomes us to **O Cebreiro**.



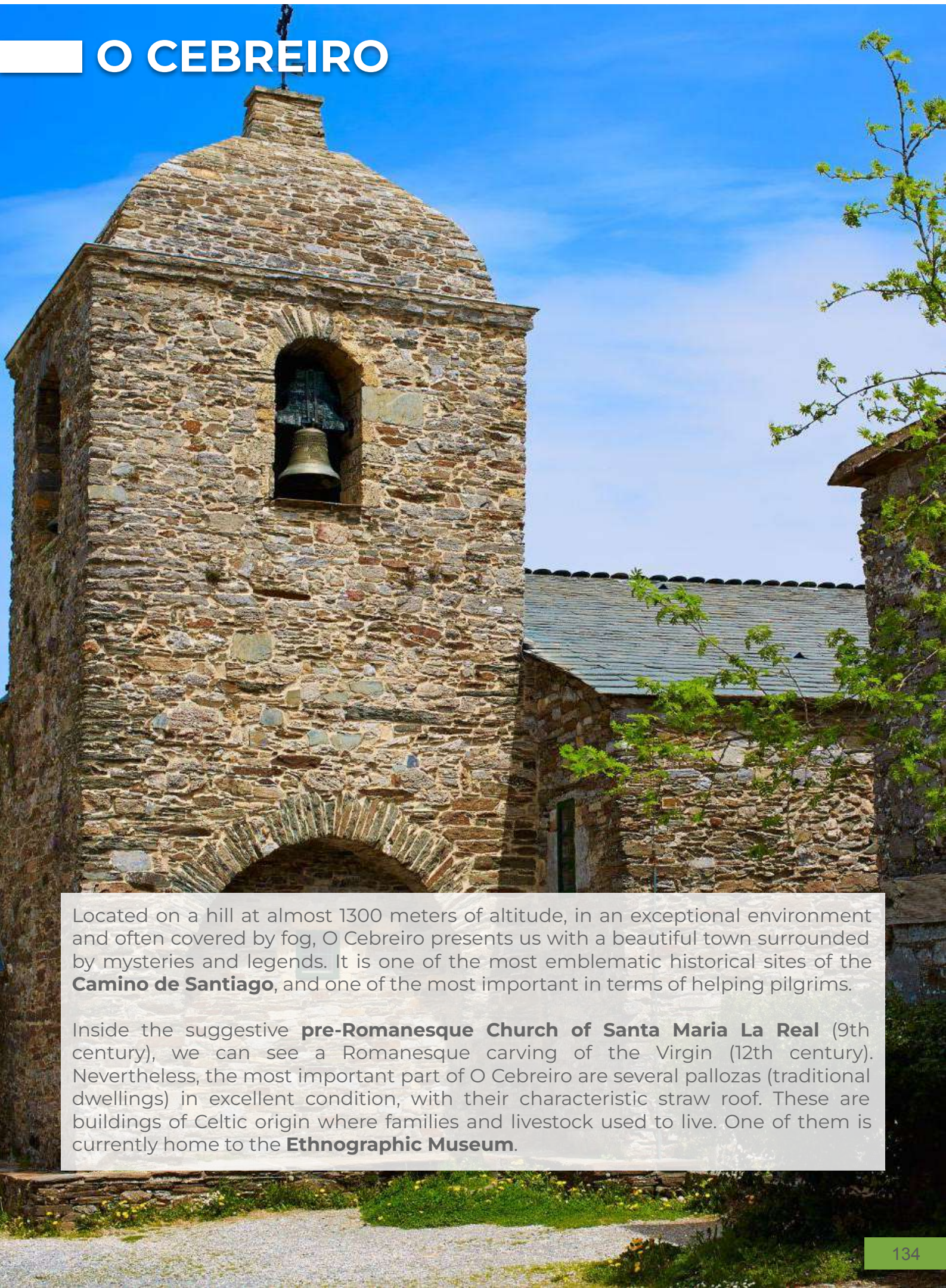
House in La Faba



Pilgrim walking the Camino de Santiago on the outskirts of O Cebreiro



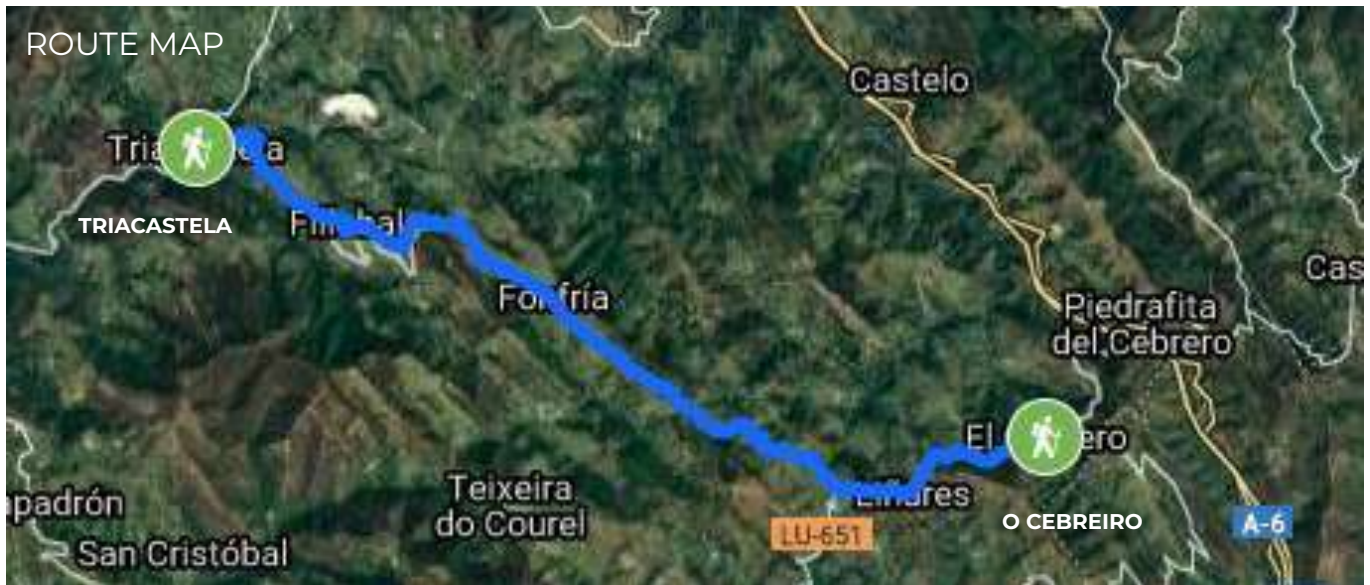
O CEBREIRO



Located on a hill at almost 1300 meters of altitude, in an exceptional environment and often covered by fog, O Cebreiro presents us with a beautiful town surrounded by mysteries and legends. It is one of the most emblematic historical sites of the **Camino de Santiago**, and one of the most important in terms of helping pilgrims.

Inside the suggestive **pre-Romanesque Church of Santa Maria La Real** (9th century), we can see a Romanesque carving of the Virgin (12th century). Nevertheless, the most important part of O Cebreiro are several pallozas (traditional dwellings) in excellent condition, with their characteristic straw roof. These are buildings of Celtic origin where families and livestock used to live. One of them is currently home to the **Ethnographic Museum**.

O CEBREIRO - TRIACASTELA



STAGE PROFILE

↑ 184 m · ↓ 820 m



PLACES OF INTEREST ON THIS STAGE

Today we will tackle the first stage that takes places entirely within Galician territory, passing through the **Sierra dos Ancares** mountain range; we will walk almost exclusively on dirt paths, following the axis of the provincial road **LU-633** up to **Alto do Poio**, which is reached by a short and steep climb; the hills are moderate but frequent.

Later we will continue downhill until reaching **Triacastela**. More than three quarters of the stage takes places at an altitude of over 1000 meters; which is why fog, blizzards and snowfall are a constant sight during winter.

The different locations or villages form part of the different parishes that belong to the Galician municipalities, which here are called "concellos".

O CEBREIRO - TRIACASTELA

ROUTE



Views of O Cebreiro



Landscapes near Liñares



Views near Liñares

0,0 km O Cebreiro (Bars, store)

Sheltered by the mountainous vegetation, we ascend from 1296 meters to 1370 meters (the highest point of the French Way in Galicia) in the vicinity of **Teso da Cruz** and the **Area Mountain**.

From here we make our way down to a wide forest path (km 1.5). This leads to the first parish of the day.

To the south, to the left of the forest trail, the view consists of endless hills of ferns, oaks, chestnut trees and pastures that make up the **Serra do Courel** mountain range. The forest trail leads to the foot of the **LU-633** road, where the **parish of Santo Estevo de Liñares** is located with a pre-Romanesque church bearing a single nave.

3,2 km Liñares (Bar)

After the temple we cross the **LU-633** and take a path very close to the road that shades us with its beech and holly trees, and other Atlantic species.

We don't take long to arrive at the first peak, **San Roque**. On the other side of the LU-633, at 1270 meters of altitude and in front of a wide panorama, rises the sculpture of a medieval pilgrim walking into the wind. It was immortalized in bronze by the artist Jose Maria Acuña (km 4.1.).

The path follows the route of the LU-633 and makes a slight descent to 1250 meters.

Subsequently, a false plain takes us to **Hospital da Condesea**, the second inhabited town of the day.

O CEBREIRO - TRIACASTELA

continuing on from Liñares

In this town we will most likely come into contact with the “Galician blondes” for the first time.

5,7 km Hospital da Condesa (Bar)

We leave this village of cowboys and continue along a ditch next to the guardrail of the **LU-633**.

Later we take the turnoff to Sabugos and **Temple**, but we immediately say goodbye to the asphalted section and take a trail that leads us to **Padornelo**. This is the kingdom of stone and slabs of slate.

8,1 km Padornelo (Bar)

At the exit of this small parish we face a short but steep slope by which we reach the **Alto do Poio**.

8,5 km Alto do Poio (Bars)

More than three kilometers of trail next to the **LU-633** separates us from the following town.

This stretch is almost entirely flat, as we will only descend 45 meters. We then arrive to **Fonfria**, another village belonging to **Pedrafita do Cebreiro**.

11,9 km Fonfria (Bar)

We cross Fonfria and follow the inseparable **LU-633** road back to the path that leads us through an identical landscape to **O Biduedo**, 2.4 kilometers away.

Throughout this section we will descend exactly one hundred meters (km 14.3).



Old buildings in Hospital da Condesa



Signposting Alto do Poio



Small chapel near Fonfria

O CEBREIRO - TRIACASTELA



Landscapes near Fillobal



Streets in Triacastela



Views of Triacastela

14,3 km O Biduedo (Bar)

After O Biduedo, which belongs to the Concello of Triacastela, we begin to notice the descent. We are only 6.8 kilometers from the end of the stage and we still have to descend approximately 530 meters.

On the way down, the route attempts to break away from the LU-633 and avoid the road's twists and turns.

A pronounced curve allows us to see the **Oribio Mountain**, 1443 meters high. To the right, at the bottom of the valley, is **Triacastela**. The village after **O Biduedo** is **Fillobal**.

17,3 km Fillobal (Bar, store)

After Fillobal we cross the road and continue heading downhill surrounded by trees to cross the road again a kilometer later, next to a small picnic area.

We then enter **Pasantes** (km 18.8), a village with a chapel and residents selling raspberries.

The journey continues to the village of Ramil (km 20.1), with a century-old chestnut tree on the edge of the path, practically glued to **Triacastela**.

20,8 km Triacastela (All services)

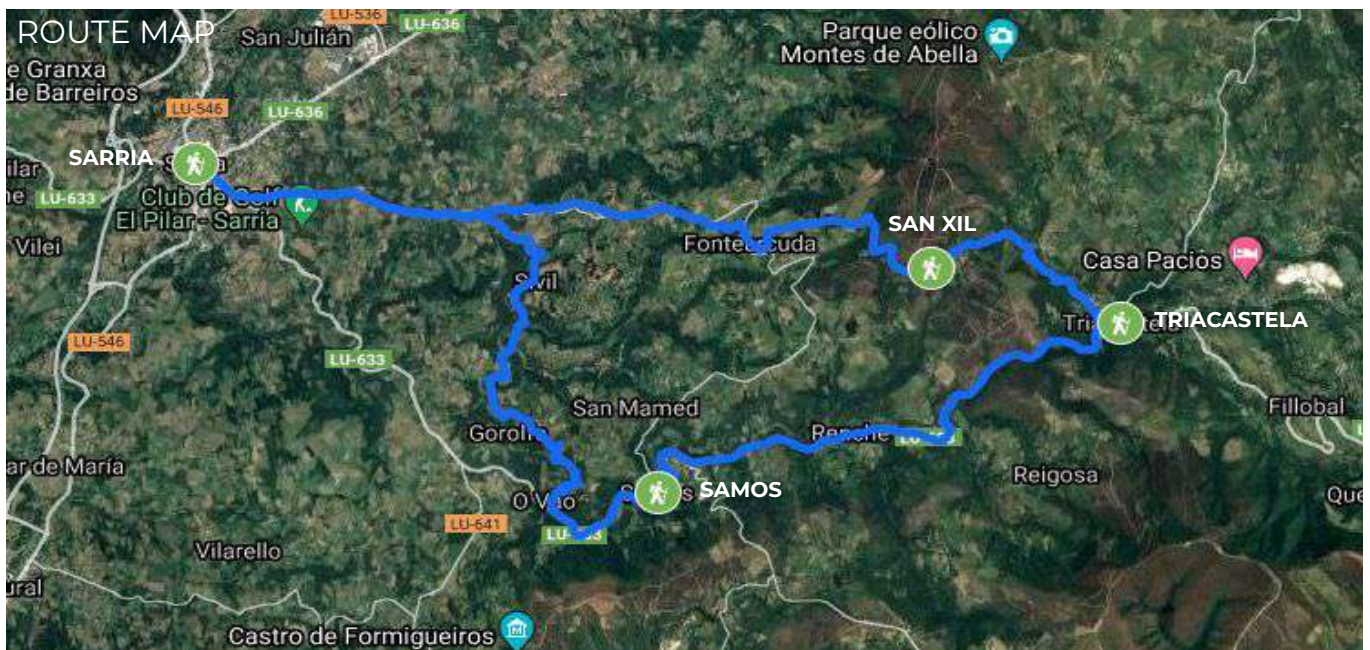
It is believed that the name of this town may come from the existence of three castles, but the truth is that there is no trace of their existence. What remains are remnants of a pilgrim prison, located in the lower part of the old **Casa do Concello** (town hall).

TRIACASTELA - SARRIA

From Triacastela, there are two routes to help you reach Sarria:

Option A - VIA SAN XIL: you can go through beautiful landscapes covered with oak and chestnut trees that together form part of one of the most beautiful valleys on the Pilgrims' Route to Santiago de Compostela.

Option B - VIA SAMOS: although it is longer, it visits the extraordinary **Benedictine Monastery in Samos** and passes through magnificent oak and chestnut forests next to the **River Oribio**.



OPTION A: TRIACASTELA TO SARRIA VIA **SAN XIL**

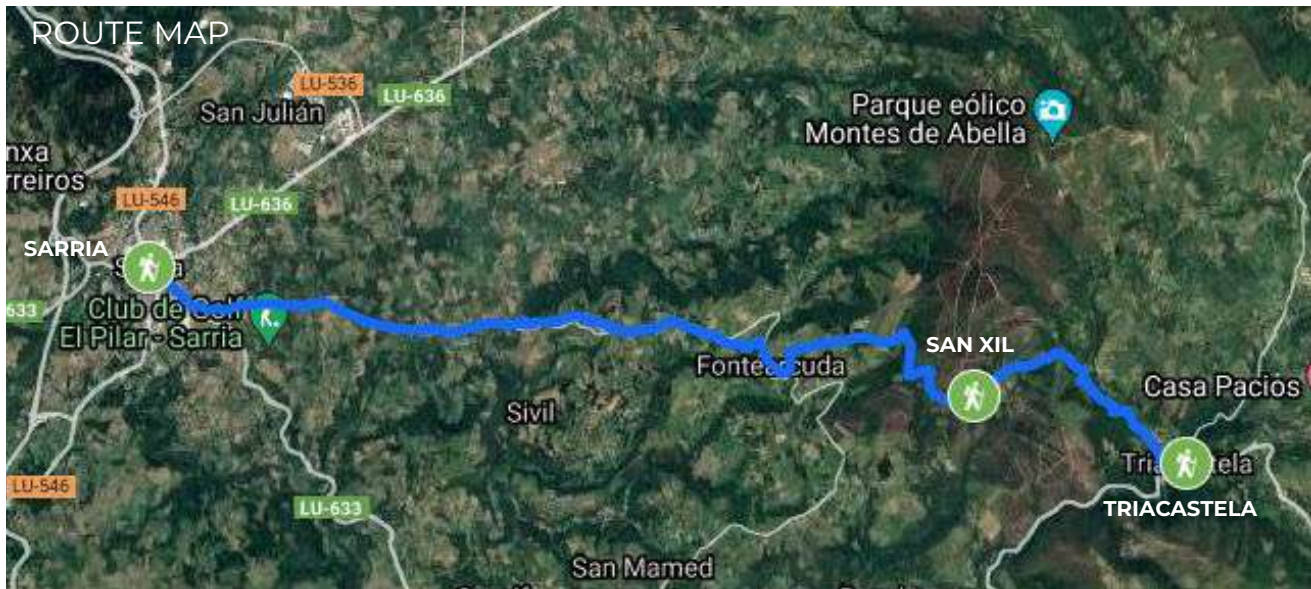


OPTION B: TRIACASTELA TO SARRIA VIA **SAMOS**



TRIACASTELA - SARRIA

OPTION A: SAN XIL



STAGE PROFILE



PLACES OF INTEREST ON THIS STAGE

By this route, today's stage is 18.5 km long. On the route, we will find frequent markers that will indicate the distance that is left to reach the tomb of Santiago the Apostle. On this variant, the pilgrim path runs most of the route parallel to the road but crosses one of the most beautiful valleys of the Camino Frances.

TRIACASTELA - SARRIA

ROUTE

0,0 km Triacastela (All services)

At the exit of Triacastela we turn right and cross the **LU-633**.

To the right, slightly farther up, is the detour to **San Xil**. We take it and, after a short stretch, we abandon the road to the right and continue along a paved path.

Later we take a path that leads to **A Balsa**.

2,2 km A Balsa

Now on a steeper hill, we continue to be surrounded by lush oak trees until reaching the road once again at **Fonte dos Lameiros** (km 3.3).

Another steep asphalted hill takes us to **San Xil**. The town is on the left and the only thing we'll find here is a soft drink vending machine at the foot of the road (km 3.9).

The route continues its ascent on the road, at first heading slightly uphill, followed by a steeper climb until reaching the surroundings of the **De Riocabo peak** (km 5.5).

At the top we leave the road behind to enjoy the most beautiful stretch of the stage. We are escorted by corridors of chestnut trees, oaks and birch trees. The descent to **Montan** - a village that we barely get to see - is dangerous.



Plaza de la Diputacion, in Triacastela



Aerial view of Triacastela



Traditional houses in Triacastela

TRIACASTELA - SARRIA



Landscapes in Montan



Crops in Fontearcuda



Group of hikers near Furela

7,8 km Montan (Bar, store, pharmacy)

We continue heading downhill until reaching the village of Fontearcuda, where the Jacobean marker reads 121.5 kilometers.

8,5 km Fontearcuda (Bar, store, ATM)

The Camino heads down from Fontearcuda until reaching the road and crossing it (pay attention to the signage because you have to look for the marker), after which we follow a path that avoids the long detour the road takes that passes by the **Zoo**.

We pass a stream and continue along the path that heads back to the road. The dense oak and chestnut trees give way to the meadows. We finally reach **Furela** on asphalt.

10,4 km Furela (Bar)

We pass through the middle of the town and cross the road next to the sign that announces the entrance to the **Concello of Sarria** (km 10.7).

We have one kilometer before getting to **Pintin**.

11,7 km Pintin (Bar)

The Camino continues alongside the **LU-5602** road and crosses it one kilometer later to make our way into a wooded section that cuts across a prolonged curve.

We go back down to the road.

TRIACASTELA - SARRIA

• 13,1 km Calvor

Five hundred meters later we briefly separate from the **LU-5602** to enter Aguiada.

• 13,6 km Aguiada (Bar)

After leaving the village, we return to the side of the road along a parallel path and, further on, the path leaves the **Airexe** crossroad to one side.

To the left of the road is the parish of **San Mamede do Camiño** (14.9 km).

With views of Sarria, the dirt path continues on next to the **LU-5602**, going up and down small hills. We pass by the 114 km marker at **Carballal** with the crossing to **Ferreiros** to our right.

We immediately arrive at the **Vila de Sarria** camping site and we leave behind **Mendros** to the right.

We then enter **Sarria**, the place many walkers choose to start their pilgrimage, as it is just the right distance needed to receive the "Compostela" pilgrim certificate.

Jose Sanchez Street leaves us at the beginning of Calvo Sotela Street, which we cross to continue straight on **Do Peregrino Street**. We cross a bridge over the **Sarria River** and move into Benigno Quiroga, to then turn next to the **Peregrinoteca** store. A staircase goes up to the entrance of **Main Street** ("Rua Mayor").

• 17,8 km Sarria (All services)



Landscapes arriving at Calvor



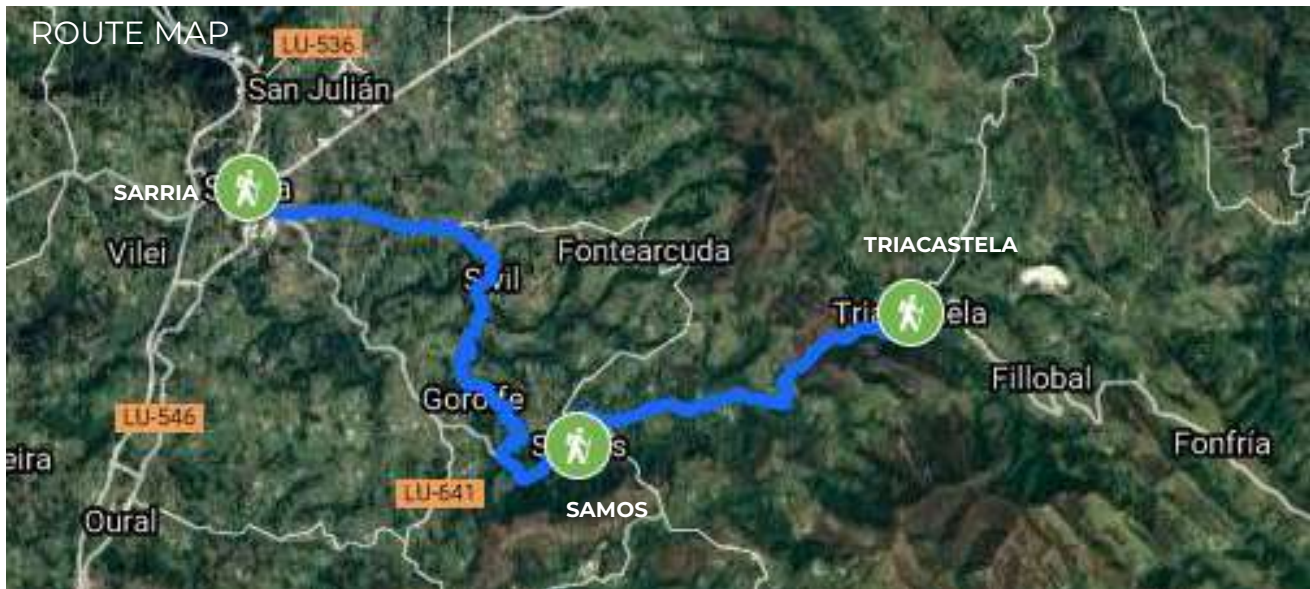
Cattle next to a house in Aguiada



Typical houses of Sarria

TRIACASTELA - SARRIA

OPTION B: SAMOS



STAGE PROFILE

↑ 263 m · ↓ 508 m



PLACES OF INTEREST ON THIS STAGE

By this route, today's stage is 25 kilometres. We will not find the Jacobean markers every half kilometre, but many of the yellow arrows do feature. On this variant, the pilgrim path runs along the **River Sarria** (or River Oribio) and advances through spectacular chestnut and oak forests.

TRIACASTELA - SARRIA

ROUTE



Signposting of the Camino de Santiago in Triacastela



Views over San Cristovo do Real



Landscapes near San Martiño do Real

0,0 km Triacastela (All services)

At the end of the long **Camilo Jose Cela Avenue** we turn left (turning to the right goes through San Xil); we come out on the **LU-633** road and follow it on the left. We cross the road to enter **San Cristovo do Real**.

4,0 km San Cristovo do Real (Bar)

A beautiful wooded path, to the right of the road and the **Oribio River** (which we cross twice), takes us to **Renche**.

5,6 km Renche (Bar)

When leaving Renche we cross the **Sarria River** (which is the same as the Oribio River, but called Sarria from here on out), we make our way up to the tiny village of **Lastres**, and we follow a beautiful narrow trail (these types of trails are called "corredoira"): we are in deep rural **Galicia**, with beautiful, shady riverside forests.

7,3 km Freituxe

We cross **Freituxe** and after making our way over a modest peak we descend into the next village.

8,6 km San Martiño do Real

At the exit of San Martiño we cross the **LU-633** road through a tunnel and go directly down to **Samos**. The views of the monastery are magnificent.

TRIACASTELA - SARRIA

10,2 km Samos (All services)

The small town of **Samos** was born in the shadow of the splendid Monastery of St Julian, the **Monastery of Samos**, one of the most important in all of Galicia. Founded in the 6th century, it has been home to monastic life for almost fifteen uninterrupted centuries.

Following El Salvador Street and a hundred meters from the monastery, there is a small slate pre-Romanesque Chapel "**El Salvador**", also known as the **Chapel of the Cypress** (9th century), in a Mozarabic style. Attached to the chapel is a towering cypress that has been around for thousands of years.

We make our way out onto the **LU-633** provincial road, which crosses Samos and passes through the small villages of **Foxos** and **Teiguin**. Just ahead of Teiguin we cross the LU-633 road to take a trail on the right, heading uphill.



Monastery of San Julian, in Samos



Views of Samos

13,4 km Pascais

We turn left to continue along a narrow "corredoira" trail.

15,3 km Gorolfe

The valley gradually opens.

We follow several asphalted trails, leaving the small village of **Reiriz** to our left.

18,6 km Sivil

Both villages are separated by a short walk, with a modest hill.



Buildings towards Pascais

TRIACASTELA - SARRIA



Buildings near the LU-P-5602



Pilgrims walking towards Sarria



Church in Sarria

19,9 km Perros

A short climb takes us to the **LU-P-5602** road: we cross it to enter **Aguiada** and meet up with the route that passes through the **San Xil valley**.

20,5 km Aguiada (Bar)

After leaving the village, we return to the side of the road along a parallel path and, further on, the path leaves the **Airexe** crossroad to one side.

To the left of the road is the parish of **San Mamede do Camiño** (14.9 km).

With views of Sarria, the dirt path continues on next to the **LU-5602**, going up and down small hills. We pass by the 114 km marker at **Carballal** with the crossing to **Ferreiros** to our right.

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24,7 km Sarria (All services)

SARRIA



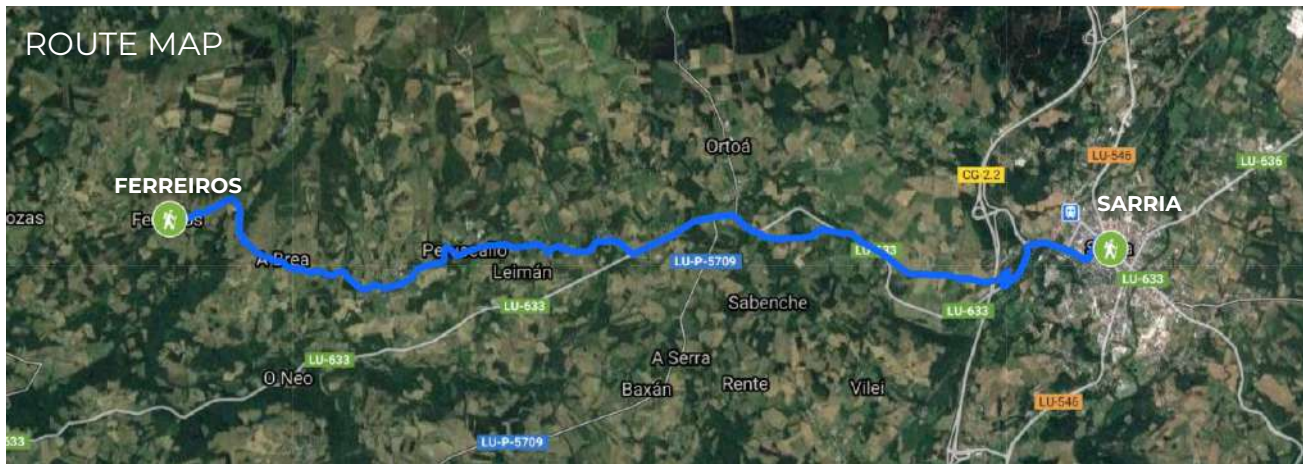
This is the capital of the county that bears the same name, and the largest city of the entire **French Way in Galicia**, apart from **Santiago de Compostela**.

The old town, with narrow medieval streets, is located in the upper part next to the **Castle of Sarria** (14th century), only a tower and part of the wall remain.

The most important monuments in the city are: The **Romanesque Church of Santa Marina** (13th century), fully restored; The **Church of El Salvador** (11th century), with a Romanesque structure and a Gothic portal; the **Magdalena Monastery** (on the Camino trail at the exit), with a Gothic-style church; and, lastly, the four-eyed Romanesque bridge called **Ponte Aspera** (13th century), over which we cross the **Pequeño River** (also called Celeiro) at the exit.

Sarria has become an important starting point for the Jacobean route, since it is located just over 100 kilometers from Santiago, the necessary distance to be able to receive the “**Compostela**” pilgrim certificate.

SARRIA - FERREIROS



STAGE PROFILE

↑ 240 m · ↓ 48 m



PLACES OF INTEREST ON THIS STAGE

An interesting stage without any specific difficulties worth noting: **there are many hills, however they are moderate.** Today we travel through rural Galicia, among meadows and leafy forests of oaks and chestnut trees, making our way through numerous small villages.

Today it will be easy to find supplies; we will find bars and restaurants in numerous villages throughout the stage.

Some guides talk about **Barbadelo** as if it were a village or town: it is actually a parish that is made up of several “places” or villages, each with their own names.

SARRIA - FERREIROS

ROUTE



Chapel of San Salvador in Sarria



Monastery of La Magdalena in Sarria



Old quarter in Sarria

0,0 km Departure from Sarria

We take the Calle Mayor street up to the **Hermitage of San Salvador** where we turn right, then afterwards we follow a paved road in the direction of **Barbadelo**, with the **Monastery of la Magdalena** (and pilgrim hostel) on our right.

1,1 km Ponte Aspera

We cross over the Pequeno River on the medieval bridge, **Ponte Aspera**. Then we pass under the viaduct of the **Lugo-Monforte** road and go over a railway crossing.

We will start off with a beautiful climb, where we will get to enjoy the view of some impressive oak trees.

2,5 km Vilei (Barbadelo)

This village has a rest area with vending machines for soft drinks and snacks, as well as a **proof-of-passage stamp**.

We continue in the same direction; shortly after we will leave behind the **Church of Santiago de Barbadelo**.

4,2 km O Mosteiro (Barbadelo)

We follow the asphalt path.

SARRIA - FERREIROS



Fortress in Sarria



Pilgrims on foot in the Parish of Barbadelo between Sarria and Ferreiros



Camino Frances between Barbadelo and Ferreiros

5,2 km Rente

Once we arrive at this small township with 12 residents, we continue along the same path.

5,9 km A Serra (Bar-Store)

We cross the road and continue straight. Further ahead we will pass by a fountain decorated in rather bad taste, and shortly after we will arrive in front of the entrance to the **Molino de Marzan**.

7,3 km Molino de Marzan

We turn right on another dirt path. 0.6 km C-535 Road; we cross the road and continue straight.

8,2 km A Pena (Belante)

We continue on the same path.

9,1 km Peruscallo

We cross the village without changing direction.

10,1 km Cortiñas

We continue on in the same direction along a peaceful country.

11,3 km A Brea

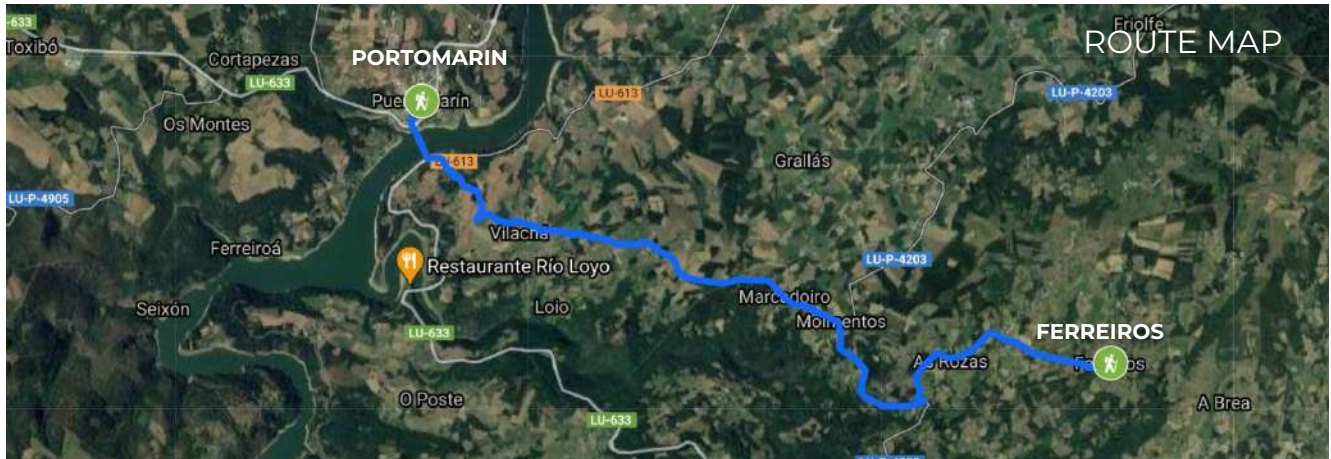
We follow the same path.

12 km Morgade (Bar)

We continue along the same path; here we will find the **100 kilometer marker**.

12,9 km Ferreiros (Bar)

FERREIROS - PORTOMARIN



STAGE PROFILE

↑ 115 m · ↓ 375 m



PLACES OF INTEREST ON THIS STAGE

Between and Ferreiros we pass the **100 kilometer marker**: this is **the distance we have left before reaching the tomb of the apostle Santiago**. Up until the beginning of 2016, this marker was in **A Brea**.

In **Portomarin** you don't have to pass through the town's center in order to continue on the Camino: past the reservoir we follow the road to the left, and 200 meters further down, we will find the well-marked exit for the Camino.

The **medieval town of Portomarin** disappeared in 1963 under the water of the **Belesar reservoir**. Buildings of the most important historical value were moved to the modern city: the robust Church of San Nicolas, the Las Nieves Staircase and Chapel (at the entrance), etc.

FERREIROS - PORTOMARIN

ROUTE

0,0 km Ferreiros (Bar)



A Granary (unofficial symbol of Galicia) in Ferreiros

We pass by the **Casa Cruceiro** hostel and continue straight, downhill. The parish of **Ferreiros** and the town of Paradela both owe their name to the blacksmiths in the town that nailed the shoes of pilgrims and repaired horseshoes.

The **Church of Santa Maria de Ferreiros** was brought to **Mirallos** stone by stone around 1790, and is a humble temple with a beautiful Romanesque doorway that rests on two lion head recesses.

0,6 km Mirallos (Bar)



Asphalted road in Ferreiros

Leaving behind **Ferreiros** and descending on an asphalted path, we will find the cemetery and **Church of Santa Maria** on our left.

We continue on in the same direction and, shortly after, we will head to the left of the road.

1,1 km A Pena (Bar)

We continue on parallel to the local road.

1,9 km As Rozas

At the exit we take a dirt path to the right of the road.

3,3 km Moimentos

We come out at a local road and soon head off to the left.



Pilgrim walking towards Portomarin

FERREIROS - PORTOMARIN

4,0 km Mercadoiro (Bar)

We follow a dirt path in the same direction, then turn left next to a small road. A few meters later we abandon the road to the left heading downhill.



Courtyard in Mercadoiro

5,6 km A Parrocha

At the exit we head off on a path to the right, going downhill, reaching **Vilacha**; nearby (away from the path) are the remains of the **Monastery of Loio** (the pre-Romanesque church still remains), where the most important Order of Santiago was founded in the twelfth century with the noble intention of protecting the pilgrims.



Sunrise on the way to Portomarin

6,9 km Vilacha (Bar)

At the exit we cross a local road and, a little further on, we take a path on the left that brings us down to the LU-613 road: we follow it to the left where we will then cross a long **bridge over the Belesar reservoir**.

For those who wish to stay on the Camino, once the reservoir has been crossed, they must take the road on the left and follow it for 200 meters, then cross one of the reservoir's tributaries on the path leading out.

The others will climb the stairs of the old medieval bridge and pass under the **chapel of Las Nieves**: we then follow the Rua do Peregrino street and turn left on the Calle Diputación street to reach the **Church of San Nicolas**.



Bridge in Portomarin

FERREIROS - PORTOMARIN



Chapel of Las Nieves in Portomarin



Rose window of the Church of San Nicolas in Portomarín

9,1 km Portomarin (All services)

The old city of Portomarin disappeared in 1963 when it was flooded by the waters of the Belesar reservoir, which fell victim to the construction of a hydroelectric power plant.

The modern city was built at the beginning of the sixties and the buildings with the most historical value were fortunately moved: the solid and robust

Church of San Nicolas (12th century), built by the Order of Malta; the **Romanesque gateway** (12th century); the staircase of the medieval bridge and the **Las Nieves Chapel**; and, lastly, the traditional **Berbetoros** country house (17th century).



PORTOMARIN

Despite having 2000 years of history, Portomarin is younger than many pilgrims. Why?

Very easy, this charming pilgrim town was for centuries situated on the **banks of the River Miño**.

However, in 1963, the construction of the Belesar Reservoir, in the locality of Chantada, forced flooding in the zone in which Portomarin was located.

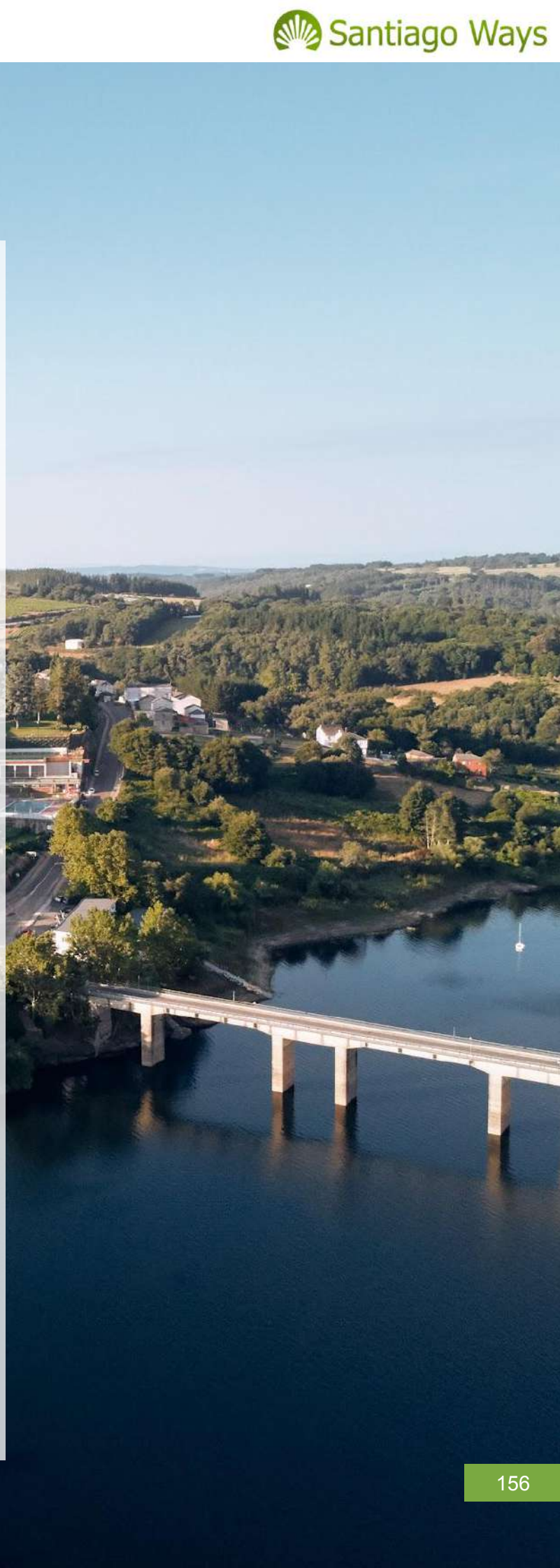
The village moved, since then to the hillside, on which it is currently located. This is why it is said that **this millennial village is only 50 years old**. However, not everything is new in Portomarin.

During the construction of the new Portomarin, the people of this town moved the most emblematic buildings, stone by stone.

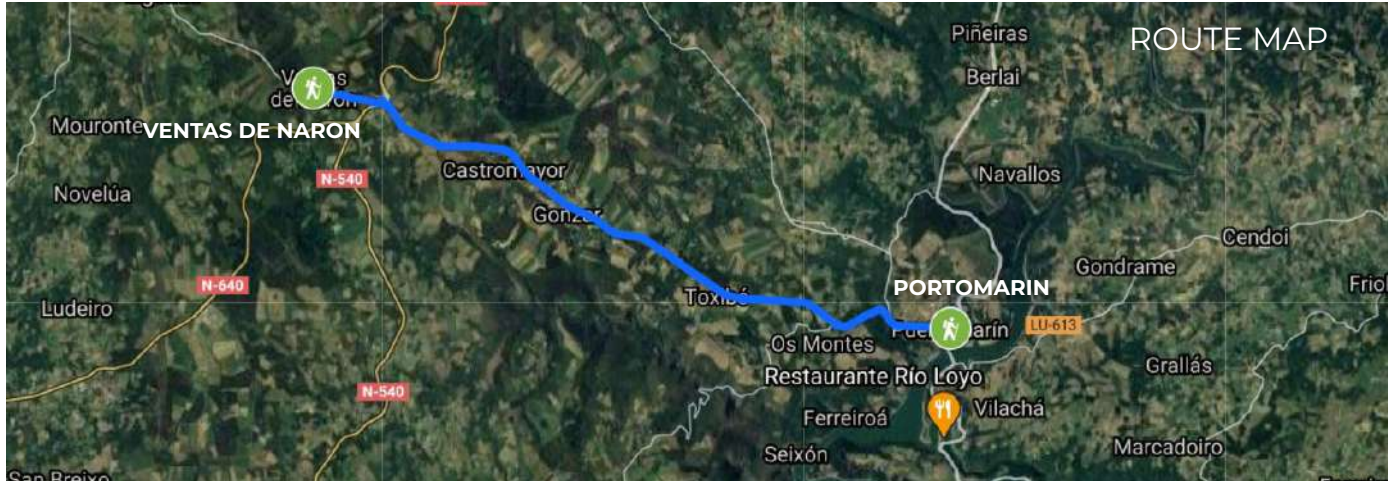
It was laborious work, but they saved from many of its buildings of historical value from flooding, like, for example, the **Church of San Nicolas**, that of **San Pedro**, the **stairway** or the **Chapel de las Nieves**, the **Manor of Count Maza** and that of **Dos Pimentales**.

At present, when the marsh level falls, from the beautiful bridge that gives access to Portomarin you can still see the remains of the old town. Something like Atlantis!

It is because of the above, that in Santiago Ways, we like to refer to Portomarin as **a town reborn: a charming place that re-emerged from its stones**.



PORTOMARIN - VENTAS DE NARON



STAGE PROFILE

↑ 350 m · ↓ 38 m



PLACES OF INTEREST ON THIS STAGE

Today the route follows the same pattern as yesterday, moving through rural areas and crossing small villages. All the hills are generally moderate, and in the first half of the stage we will make our **ascent from 350 to 750 meters of altitude**.

Gonzar, almost 8 km from **Palas de Rei**, is the first halfway town with restaurants: there is a bar-restaurant. Many of the villages we will pass through after will have at least one bar.

PORTOMARIN - VENTAS DE NARON

ROUTE



Church of San Nicolas in Portomarin



Pilgrims leaving Portomarin



Views of the village of Gonzar

0,0 km Portomarin (All services)

In front of the **Church of San Nicolas**, we make our way down the beautiful **Rua de Compostela** street with its arches, we then follow the **Chantada Avenue** and, at the end, we turn left on the **C-535 road**: we follow it for a few meters until crossing a bridge over one of the reservoir's tributaries. We turn to the right and begin to make our way up a nice path.

We continue **2.8 km along the C-535 road** until reaching a factory: we cross the road and walk parallel to it. Later on, we cross the road again.

Walking another **1.9 km** we find ourselves in **Toxibo**: a tiny village, without any services, which will be to our left. **To the right of the path we can find a beautiful granary ("horreo") with a stone base and a wood enclosure with a cross on the front.**

4,7 km Toxibo

We continue straight, heading uphill; later on we will once again end up next to the **C-535**.

7,9 km Gonzar (Bar)

We continue straight on a **dirt path**, uphill; later we will come out on a local road and follow it to the left.

PORTOMARIN - VENTAS DE NARON



Pre-Roman fort, Castromaior



Aerial view of Castromaior



Young pilgrims on the Camino

• 9,2 km Castromaior (Bar and guest houses)

Now we face a steep uphill climb of approximately 700 meters along the C-535 road. We continue parallel to the road and later we will abandon it to the left.

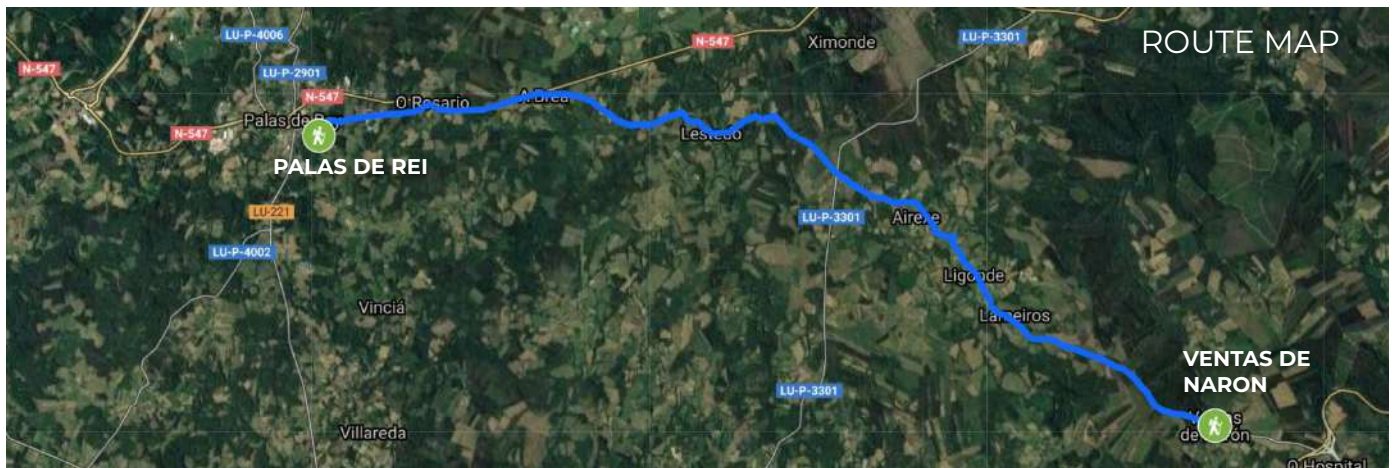
In 1.6 km we will arrive at **Hospital da Cruz**, village of the parish of **San Mamede de O Rio**, also belonging to Portomarin.

• 11,5 km Hospital da Cruz (Bar)

At the exit we take the bridge on the C-535 that passes above the N-540 national road.

• 13,0 km Ventas de Naron (Bar)

VENTAS DE NARON - PALAS DE REI



STAGE PROFILE

↑ 105 m · ↓ 246 m



PLACES OF INTEREST ON THIS STAGE

At the exit of **Portos**, 200 meters from the village, we have the option to take a detour on the right to visit the interesting **Monastery of Vilar de Donas** (2.3 km off the path). It belonged to the Order of Santiago. A neighbor has the keys and acts as a guide.

VENTAS DE NARON - PALAS DE REI

RECORRIDO

• 0,0 km Ventas de Naron (Bar)

We exit **Ventas de Naron** on a path that runs parallel to a local road.

We will arrive at **Previsa** in 2.1 km: a tiny village, without any services. We follow the same path.

0.6 km **Lameiros**: this is another tiny village, without any services. Here we can find the original stone cross of Lameiros ("cruceiro de Lameiros"), **next to an impressive oak tree**, which dates back to the 17th century. We continue straight and in 500 meters we arrive at **Ligonde**.

• 3,2 km Ligonde (Bar)

Ligonde is a parish belonging to the Spanish municipality of **Monterroso**, in the province of Lugo. It is part of the **Ulloa region**.

There is evidence of its existence in pilgrim itineraries and guides dating back to the tenth century.

The most remarkable site is the **Pilgrim Cemetery**. We have records of a **Hospital that existed** up until 1753.

We continue straight on the same local road and shortly after we head off to the left.



Recovered chapel in Ventas de Naron



Monastery of Vilar de Donas



Village of Ligonde

VENTAS DE NARON - PALAS DE REI



Stone marker before arriving at Palas de Rei



Young pilgrim on the way to Palas de Rei



Aerial view of Palas de Rei

4,1 km Airexe (Bar)

We get back on the usual path next to the local road.

1.1 km We cross the **LU-P-3301** road.

6,2 km Portos (Bar)

We continue straight along the local road.

6,8 km Lestedo

We continue along the local road. | 0.9 km **Os Valos**: a tiny village, no services.

8,9 km A Brea (Lestedo)

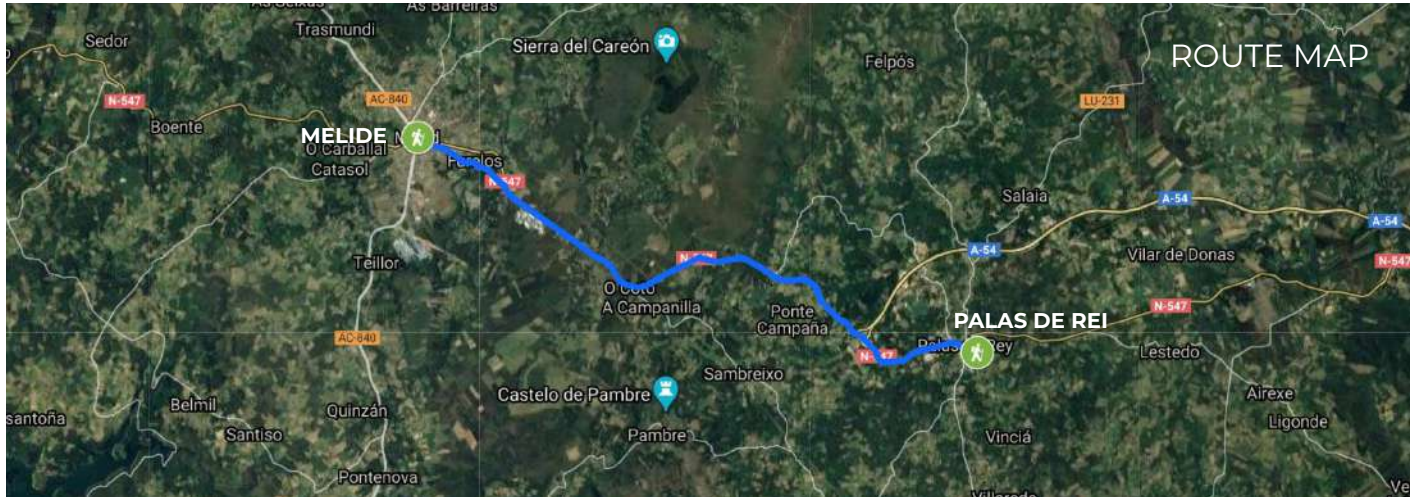
We continue to the left of the N-547 national road.

1.3 km **O Rosario**: this is a small village, no services. We descend on a path to the left of the national road. In Palas we head downhill and cross the **Ourense and Compostela** avenues.

11,8 km Palas de Rei

Of pre-Roman origin, it became an important enclave for helping pilgrims during the Middle Ages. One of the highlights here includes the **parish Church of San Tirso**, with a Romanesque doorway from the 12th century.

PALAS DE REI - MELIDE



STAGE PROFILE

↑ 162 m · ↓ 285 m



PLACES OF INTEREST ON THIS STAGE

Today's stage will be full of **uphills and downhill**s, especially once we leave **Melide**, due to the numerous streams that run across our path. We follow the axis of the N-547 national road, which we will cross several times.

We will find restaurants every few kilometers. In **O Coto** we will enter the **last province of the Camino de Santiago: A Coruña**.

PALAS DE REI - MELIDE



Aerial view of Pambre Castle in Palas de Rei



High cross in Palas de Rei



Pilgrims near Palas de Rei

RECORRIDO

0,0 Palas de Rei (All services)

From the **Pilgrim's Crossing**, in the lower part of the town, we cross the N-547 national road and make our way into an alley: 250 meters farther down we cross the N-547 again on a crosswalk and, soon after, we continue on parallel to the road.

Soon we turn off on a path to the right, we pass through **Carballal**, and we cross the national road once again before heading off to the left and leaving it behind.

3,4 km San Xulian do Camiño (Bar)

We continue on in the same direction on a beautiful "corredoira" (the old routes that connected villages). At the entrance to **Ponte Campaña** we cross the **Pambre River**.

4,4 km Ponte Campaña

We continue along the same "corredoira" path.

5,6 km Casanova (Bar)

We continue on in the same direction, along a beautiful forest path: We arrive at **O Coto**, next to the N-547, on a small local road.

PALAS DE REI - MELIDE

• 8,4 km O Coto (Bar, store)

We take a dirt path up ahead, with the national road off to our right.



Inside the village of Palas de Rei

• 9,0 km Leboreiro

At the exit of **Leboreiro** we cross a beautiful medieval bridge over the Seco River. We continue straight on a dirt path; later on we will cross an industrial park, with the N-547 to our right. We take the **Old Bridge** ("Ponte Velha") into **Furelos**.



O Coto

• 13,0 km Furelos (Bar)

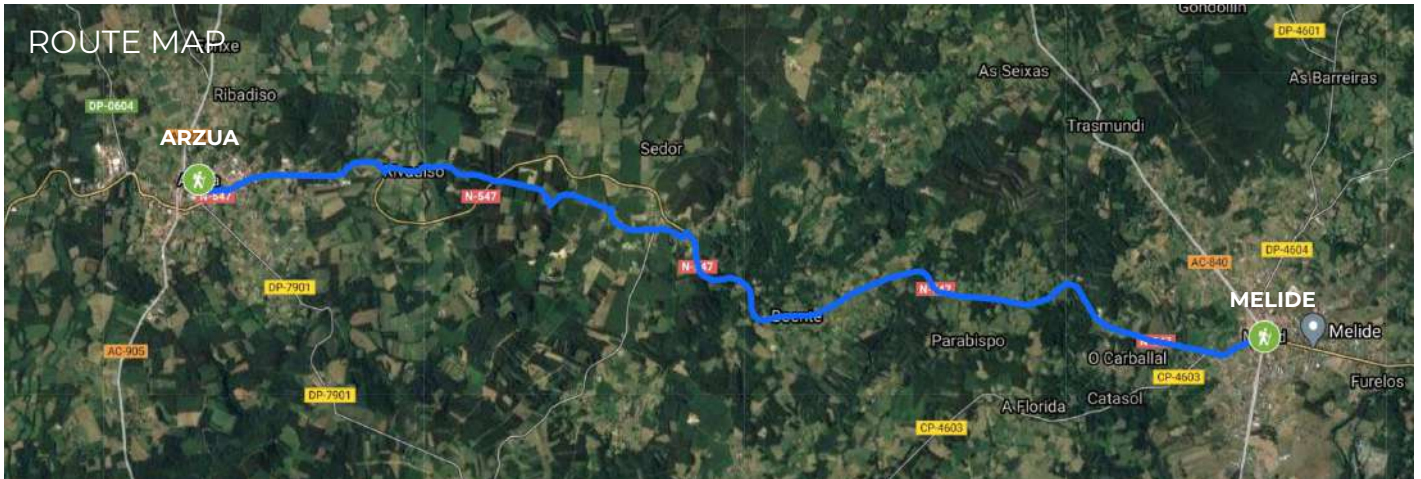
We cross through **Furelos** and continue uphill on a path that will take us to **Melide**; once in the city we will end up on the N-547 and follow it to the left.



Furelos Bridge, Melide

• 14,4 km Melide (All services)

MELIDE - ARZUA



STAGE PROFILE

↑ 225 m · ↓ 282 m



PLACES OF INTEREST ON THIS STAGE

Today's stage will be full of **uphills and downhills**, especially once we leave Melide, due to the numerous streams that run across our path.

In **Melide**, located halfway through the stage, a tradition of pilgrims and tourists is to try the excellent Galician octopus, paired with the authentic Ribeiro wine, served in the well-known "Pulperia Ezequiel" restaurant and the "Pulperia A Garnacha" restaurant. Both are centric and on the way.

The **Primitive Way** ("Camino Primitivo") joins up in **Melide**; and, in **Arzua**, the **Northern Way** ("Camino del Norte") also merges with our route.

MELIDE - ARZUA



View of the village of Melide



Church of Santa Maria de Melide



Fountain in Boente

ROUTE

0,0 km Melide (All services)

At the roundabout in the center of **Melide** we turn right to take the narrow Calle San Pedro street. We leave Melide, cross the N-547 national road and, a little further on, we turn right, passing by the **Romanesque Church of Santa Maria** (12th century).

Then we continue on through a thick forest of oaks, pines and eucalyptus trees, walking up and down several hills.

3.4 km N-547 national road: without crossing the road, we continue parallel to it for 150 meters until leaving it behind to the left.

5,6 km Boente

We take a street to the right of the national road and proceed along a dirt path.

0.9 km N-547 national road: we cross the road on an underpass. Later on, a steep hill will take us to the next village.

7,9 km Fraga Alta (Castañeda)

0.7 km **O Rio**: there is a rest area here. We turn left; later on we will cross a bridge over the N-547 and descend into the beautiful valley of the **Iso River**.

MELIDE - ARZUA



Cross in Fraga Alta



Bridge over the River Iso, Ribadiso da Baixo



Family on the road to Sarria, suitable for all ages

• 11 km Ribadixo da Baixo (Bar)

Continuing in the same direction, on a steep climb, we cross the N-547 national road **via a tunnel** and turn on a street to our right that will take us along the same national road: walking parallel to the street, we arrive at **Arzua**.

In the middle of the city, where the courts are, we take the Cimo do Lugar street to the left, which runs parallel to the road.

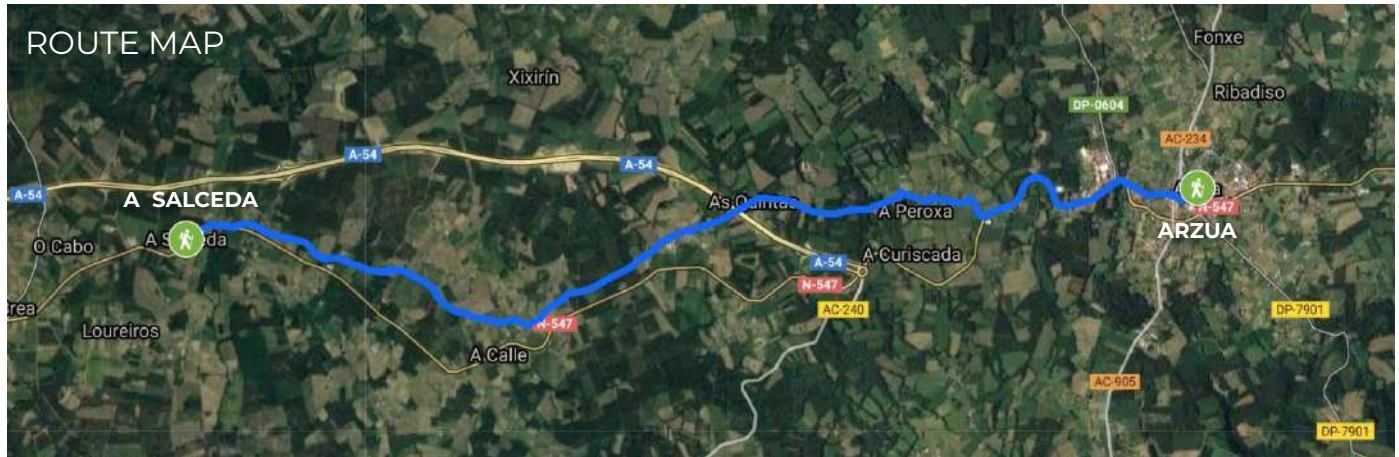
• 14,1 km Arzua (All services)

Here the **Northern Way**, coming from Irún, joins the **French Way**.

In the old town we find the Convent of La Magdalena (14th century), an old inn for pilgrims, which is currently in ruins.

Located nearby is the modern parish church, under the patronage of Santiago.

ARZUA - A SALCEDA



STAGE PROFILE

↑ 129 m · ↓ 159 m



PLACES OF INTEREST ON THIS STAGE

A comfortable stage that is relatively flat: we travel on long wooded trails, crossing through forests and over prairies.

We will find restaurants in all villages that are of a reasonable size.

For those who are anxious to see more, the stage can be extended to **Monte do Gozo**, or even to **Santiago de Compostela**, although in this case it's an extra 38.7 kilometers.

ARZUA - A SALCEDA

ROUTE

• 0,0 km Arzua (All services)

We leave **Arzua** on the Do Carmen street: we continue along on a dirt path, heading downhill.



Arzua

• 2,1 km Preguntoño

When leaving **Preguntoño** we cross the N-547 national road on an underpass.

1.0 km A Peroxa: we cross the tiny village and make our way into a **beautiful forest of oaks and chestnut trees**.

1.8 km As Quintas: another tiny village.



San Paio Santuario, Preguntoño

• 5,7 km A Calzada (Burres)

We continue on in the same direction.

• 7,5 km Outeiro (Boente)

At the exit we take a dirt path on the right hand side of a road.

1.6 km **Boavista**: we go straight across the small village.

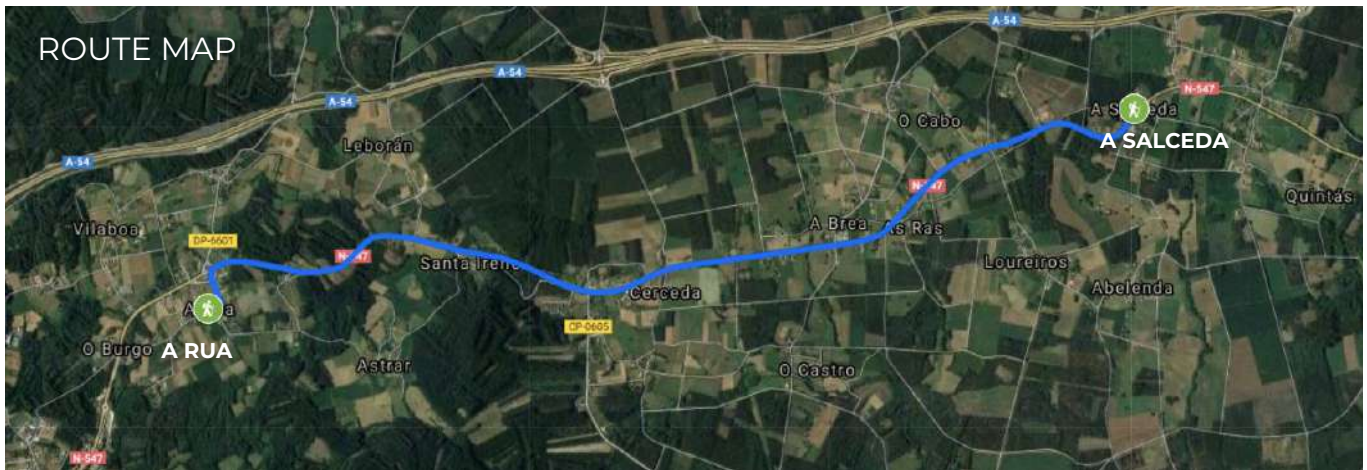
When we reach **Salceda**, we come out next to the N-547.

• 11,3 km A Salceda (Bar, pharmacy 500m away)



Representative shell of the Camino de Santiago

A SALCEDA - A RUA



STAGE PROFILE

↑ 57 m · ↓ 149 m



PLACES OF INTEREST ON THIS STAGE

This stage is short, and practically all of it is downhill.

The quickest route is to follow the **National road (N-547)**, on which we will pass through the villages of **A Brea** and **Santa Irene**.

If you don't like walking on the road, at the A Salceda exit, you can turn off towards **El Cabo** and follow secondary roads and paths between crops, although this option is a slightly longer distance.

There is a picnic area just before reaching **A Rua**.

A SALCEDA - A RUA

RECORRIDO

• 0,0 km A Salceda (Bar, farmacia a 500 m)

Upon leaving **Salceda**, we head to the right of the national road.

0.5 km We cross the N-547 national road where there is an agricultural machinery workshop.

1.1 km We cross the N-547 national road once again.

• 2,0 km A Brea (O Pino)

As we exit **A Brea** we head back to the N-547 national road; walking parallel to it uphill.

1.6 km **O Empalme** (Alto de Santa Irene): we can find restaurants here. We take a path on the right side of the national road.

1.0 km **Santa Irene**: the village is to the left of the national road (off the route).

• 4,6 km Santa Irene

1.2 km We cross the N-547 on an underpass.

• 6,4 km A Rua (O Pino) (Bares)



Hermitage of Santa Irene

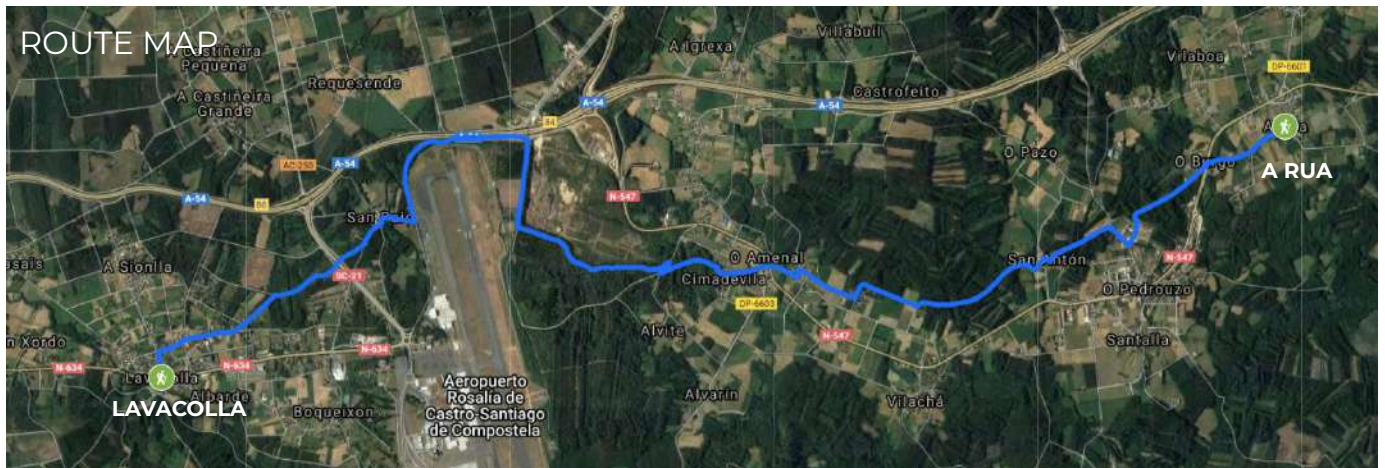


The scallop shell, typical of Galician waters and symbol of the Camino de Santiago



Group of pilgrims in a wooded section of the Camino to Sarria

A RUA - LAVACOLLA



STAGE PROFILE

↑ 173 m · ↓ 149 m



PLACES OF INTEREST ON THIS STAGE

A comfortable stage that is relatively flat. Upon our arrival to O Pedrouzo, we end up on the N-547 national road; to continue on the Camino de Santiago, we cross the road and continue straight; to go to O Pedrouzo we take the road to the left.

Getting a good night's sleep tonight will put us in a good position to wake up early and arrive tomorrow in time for the **Pilgrim's Mass**, which is officiated **every day at 12 o'clock in the Santiago de Compostela Cathedral**.

On a side note, regarding the name: **O Pedrouzo** is a town in the parish of Arca and the municipality of **O Pino**. It is also the capital of the municipality.

A RUA - LAVACOLLA

ROUTE



Chapel in O Pedrouzo



Forest path in O Pedrouzo



Hotel Amenal

• 0,0 km A Rua (Bars, guest houses, cottages)

We pass straight through A Rua.

0.6 km N-547 national road: to continue on the Camino, we cross the road and continue straight, or to go to **O Pedrouzo** we take it to the left.

• 1,6 km O Pedrouzo (O Pino) (All services)

From the national road, we turn right onto the Rua Concello street (past the **O Pedrouzo** bar) and, when we reach the soccer field, we turn left on a dirt path.

1.0 km **San Anton**: a tiny village that we will cross without changing direction.

• 4,9 km Amenal

We cross the N-547 on an underpass and continue straight. We pass through the forest where there was a plan to build the **O Pino** industrial park, something that **was very controversial at the time: it didn't end up being built because the developer went bankrupt**. Later on we come out on a trail and turn right.

We continue for 2.5 km until we reach a roundabout: we don't enter the roundabout but instead turn left, without getting off the dirt path. Parallel to the N-634 **we walk along the Santiago de Compostela Airport** (the biggest in Galicia), until taking a local road on our right.

A RUA - LAVACOLLA

• 8,8 km San Paio (Bar)

Upon exiting **San Paio**, we cross the SC-21 highway via a tunnel: we continue straight, first on a wooded trail and after on an asphalted road. Later we pass by the **Church of Lavacolla**, before heading downhill next to the N-634 national road.

• 11,1 km Lavacolla (Bar, store, pharmacy)



Path leading to San Paio



Bar in San Paio

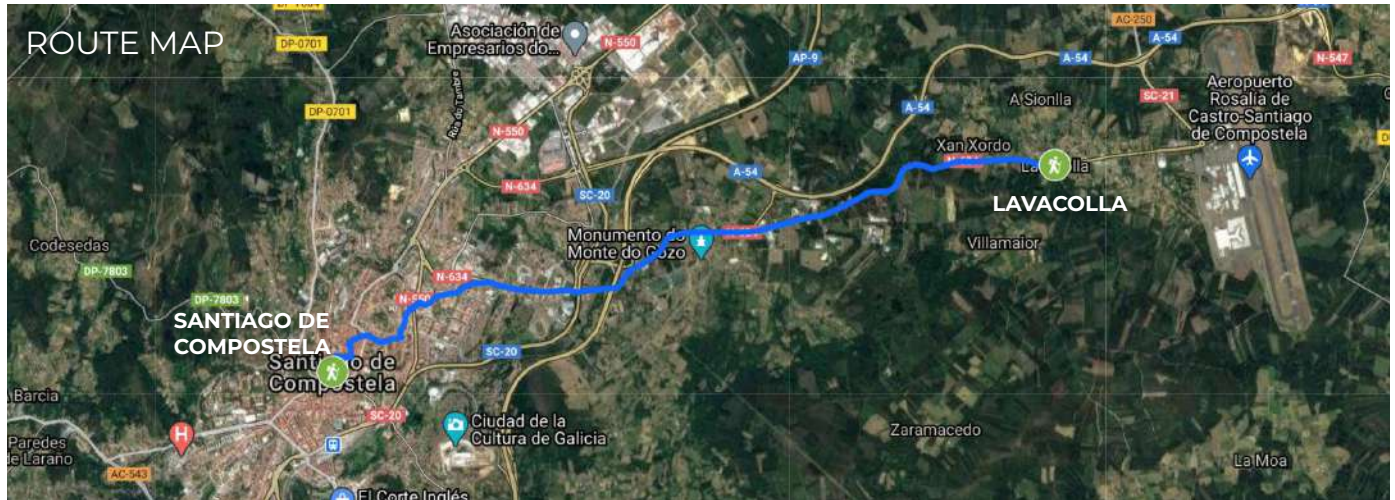


Church of Lavacolla



Views of Santiago de Compostela Airport

LAVACOLLA - SANTIAGO



STAGE PROFILE

↑ 111 m · ↓ 160 m



PLACES OF INTEREST ON THIS STAGE

This stage is **relatively flat**; the climb to **Monte do Gozo** is only moderately steep. We will find restaurants in almost all of the towns.

In the **Pilgrim Reception Office** (rua Carretas, 33) near the Cathedral, **we will be given the Compostela certificate for pilgrims**, once our **credential stamps** are used to verify that we have completed the last hundred kilometers on foot, or the last two hundred if we have travelled by bicycle.

LAVACOLLA - SANTIAGO



Pilgrim in Lavacolla



Monte do Gozo and in the background, the Statue of the Pilgrims



Statue of the Pilgrims pointing the way

ROUTE

0,0 km Lavacolla (Bar, store, pharmacy)

We cross the N-634 national road and take a local road in the direction of **Vilamaior**: we immediately cross a bridge over the **Sionlla River** and continue on the asphalted road uphill.

1,3 km **Vilamaior**: We continue on in the same direction, going uphill.

1.6 km Galician Television broadcasting center. Shortly after, we walk (left-right turn) in front of the RTVE broadcasting center.

We finally end up on a road, which we will follow to the right for a few meters before turning left onto San Marcos street.

5,0 km San Marcos (Bar, store)

We continue in the same direction, downhill; the **Monte do Gozo** complex is on the left.

5,5 km Monte do Gozo (Bar, store, ATM)

We continue straight ahead and go down a few stairs until reaching the Ponte de San Lázaro road/avenue. Going across several bridges, we cross over the AP-9 highway, the train tracks and the bypass.

After the last bridge, we continue straight for one kilometer on the Rua de San Lazaro street, in the neighborhood that has the same name.

LAVACOLLA - SANTIAGO



Aerial views of the Plaza de Obradoiro Square



Pilgrim resting, with Santiago Cathedral in the background



Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela

continuing on from Monte do Gozo

2.1 At a semi-roundabout with a monolith with four lights, we make a slight left turn on the Rua do Valiño street and, in the same direction, we follow the Rua Fontiñas street and then the Rua da Fonte dos Concheiros street, we cross Lugo Avenue and continue along the Rua dos Concheiros street and the Rua de San Pedro street, which then **places us at the gates of the Historic Quarter.**

From here we continue straight on the Rua das Casas Reais street and, once in the Cervantes Square, we turn right on the famous Rua da Acibecheria street.

There is a lot of intense emotion after so many kilometers and hard work, and now there is nothing that can spoil our triumphal entry into the **Obradoiro Square.**

The ritual climb of the Cathedral's steps will put an end to what has probably been one of the most intense and unforgettable trips of our life. A true turning point.

• 9,9 km Santiago de Compostela

SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA

End of the journey

SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA it is located in the province of A Coruña, one of the four provinces in the autonomous community of Galicia.

Born and raised around the tomb of the Apostle, it is **one of the three holy cities, along with Jerusalem and Rome.**

The Historic Center of Santiago de Compostela is one of the **best preserved** in Europe. In the Plaza del Obradoiro we find the Pórtico de la Gloria, a Spanish Romanesque masterpiece.

The cathedral of Santiago de Compostela, begun during the 11th century, is an all in all monumental building, and it protects **the saint's tomb** in the same place where a shepherd discovered it in 813.



There are several traditional ancient rituals that the most dedicated pilgrims must follow, which include:

- **Attending the Pilgrim's Mass** at 12 noon.
- **Placing a hand on the base of the mullion of the Portico of Glory** in the cavity that has been carved for this purpose, representing a symbolic union between all pilgrims throughout history. In order to preserve the monument, this rite is no longer permitted, but it is part of the tradition.
- **Embracing the image of the Apostle** in the High Altar.
- **Going down to the crypt** where the tomb of the Apostle is kept.



WHAT TO SEE IN SANTIAGO

The essence of the city is truly felt by wandering through its **Historic Quarter**, where we will discover countless **churches, evocative squares, beautiful hidden corners and ancient streets of old manor houses**, with each day full with life thanks to the numerous tourists and pilgrims. Discovering the charms of the city and visiting the most interesting sites will require a stay longer than one day.

Plaza del Obradoiro



The **Plaza del Obradoiro** is the most important in the Galician capital.

The square welcomes all pilgrims in their last steps before reaching the monumental **Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela**.

The **Portico de la Gloria** of the cathedral is an architectural jewel of enormous value and unsurpassed beauty; a Spanish Romanesque masterpiece (12th century).

There is the ritual of placing your hand at the base of the mullion, the column that supports the weight of the lintel in the center, making a wish or thanking you for having arrived.

Pórtico de la Gloria of the Cathedral of Santiago



The Botafumeiro



The **Botafumeiro** is a large mobile censer located in front of the High Alter that is part of the liturgy and is a sight worth seeing.

It is performed on specific solemn occasions or when someone interested in seeing it in operation requests it and pays for it. Fortunately, there is almost always someone who has previously requested that it be used during a service.

¿QUÉ VER EN SANTIAGO?

In addition to the Cathedral, there are other places (churches, convents, monasteries, civil buildings...) that are also worth visiting, such as: the **Hostel of the Catholic Monarchs** (15th century), the former royal hospital founded by these kings; the **Palace of Gelmírez** (12th – 13th centuries); **the Monastery of San Martín Pinario** (11th century); **The School of San Jerónimo** (16th century); the **Fountain of the Horses** (18th century); the **Puerta de Platerías** (12th century), the square bearing the same name; and the **Palace of Roxoi** (18th century).

The **Parador de los Reyes Católicos**, in Galician '*Hostal dos Reis Católicos*' is also located in the Plaza del Obradoiro.

It was built under the order of the Catholic Monarchs after their visit to Santiago, in order to help sick pilgrims.

Parador de los Reyes Católicos



University of Santiago de Compostela

The **University of Santiago** de Compostela has more than 500 years of history.

It was founded in 1495, by Lope Gómez de Marzoa.

OUR CLIENTS' REVIEWS

I highly recommend this company ★★★★★

"If you are planning a Camino pilgrimage I highly recommend this company. Very professional yet personable. The accommodations they arranged for me across Spain on my Camino were very good. They are reliable and provide good value. I would use them again if I plan my next Camino".

Jerry Campbell

Excellent experience ★★★★★

"Excellent experience with Santiago Ways team, all that was promised accomplished to the last detail, the transportation, the hotels choices, the path segment choice, the information provided, the luggage transfer just a perfect vacation".

Thamir Shemer



4,9/5 Google Reviews



5/5 Tripadvisor