

Camino 101

An introduction to the Camino de Santiago





Pruitt Layton

Camino Frances	2015	Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port to Santiago
Camino Dos Faros	2019	Laxe to Muxia and Finisterre
Camino Portuguese	2022	Porto to Santiago (Coastal)
Camino Norte	2025	Irun to Bilbao
Camino Primitivo	2025	Oviedo to Santiago

Cheryl Smart

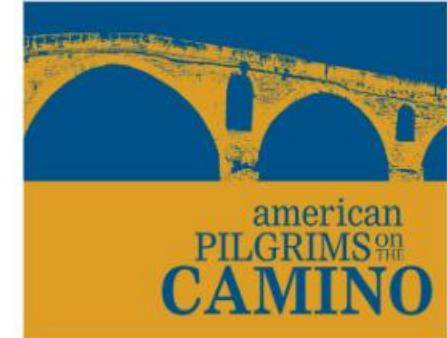
Camino Frances	2015	Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port to Santiago
Bray Celtic Way	2024	Bray to Dublin (Ireland)
Camino Finchale	2024	Finchale Priory - Escomb (England)
St James Way	2025	Reading - Southampton (England)
Camino Inglés	2025	A Coruña - Santiago

Tina Strickler

Camino Frances	2018	Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port to Santiago
Camino Frances	2025	Favorite 100km Astorga to Samos

American Pilgrims on the Camino

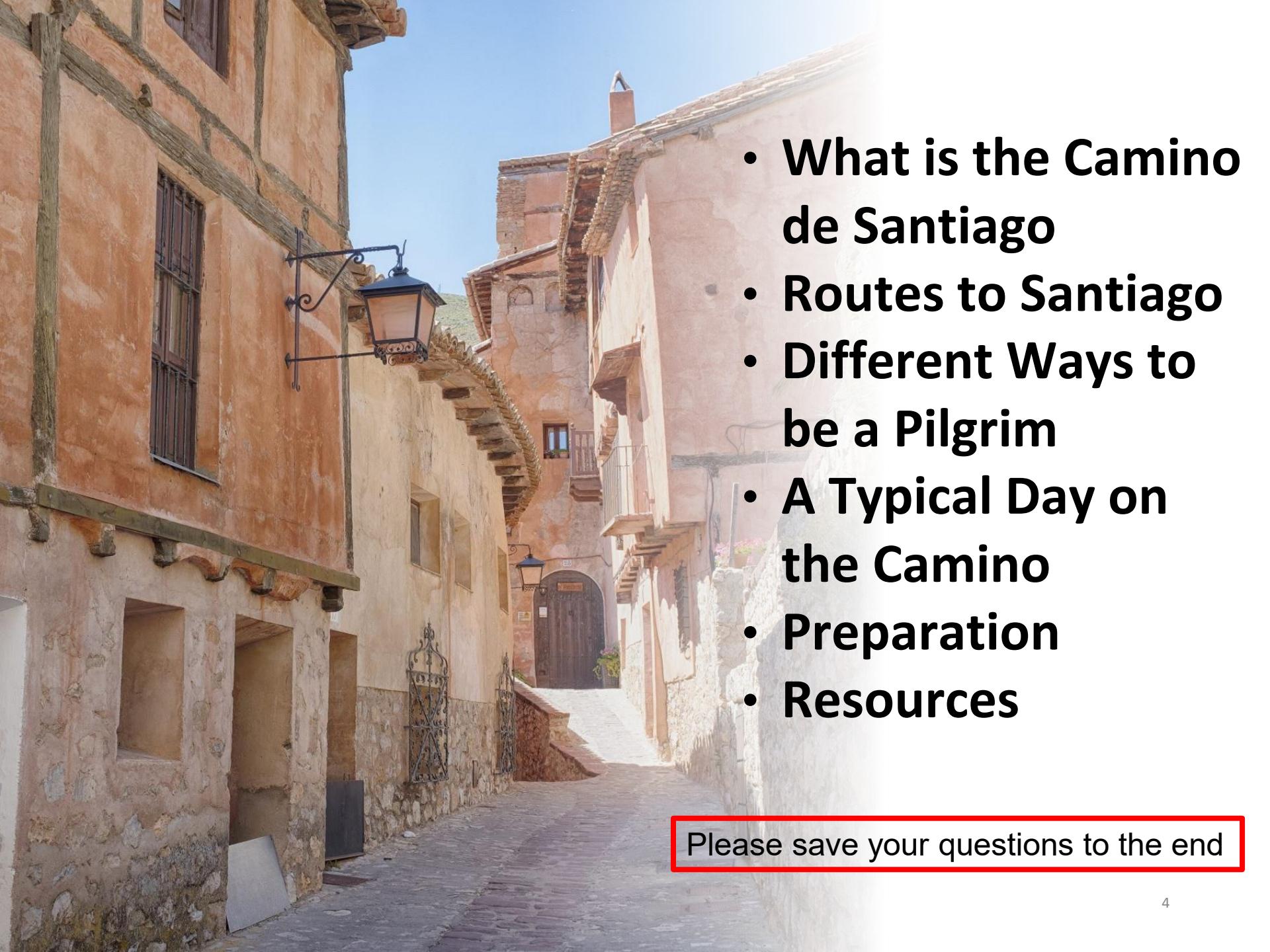
- National organization 501(c)(3) – all volunteers
- Supports pilgrims & pilgrimage
 - 60 chapters across all 50 states
- **Provides grants to support Camino infrastructure**
 - 31 grants in 2025 totaling \$160,700
- Provides approved credentials
- Website of extensive resources: www.AmericanPilgrims.org
- Facebook group



Valley of the Sun Chapter

- Activities planned and led by volunteers
- Share Camino information with Phoenix metro community
- Offer informal mentoring to new pilgrims
- Provide support and camaraderie for returning pilgrims
- Host activities in the local area (26 hikes in 2025)
- Facebook group, monthly newsletter

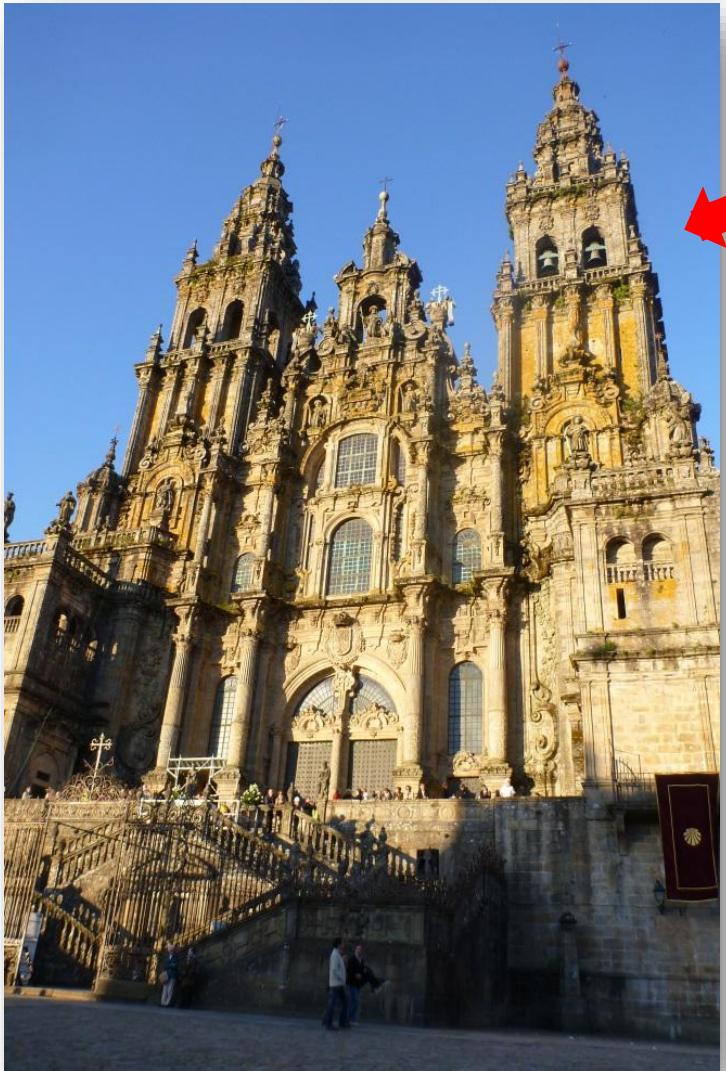
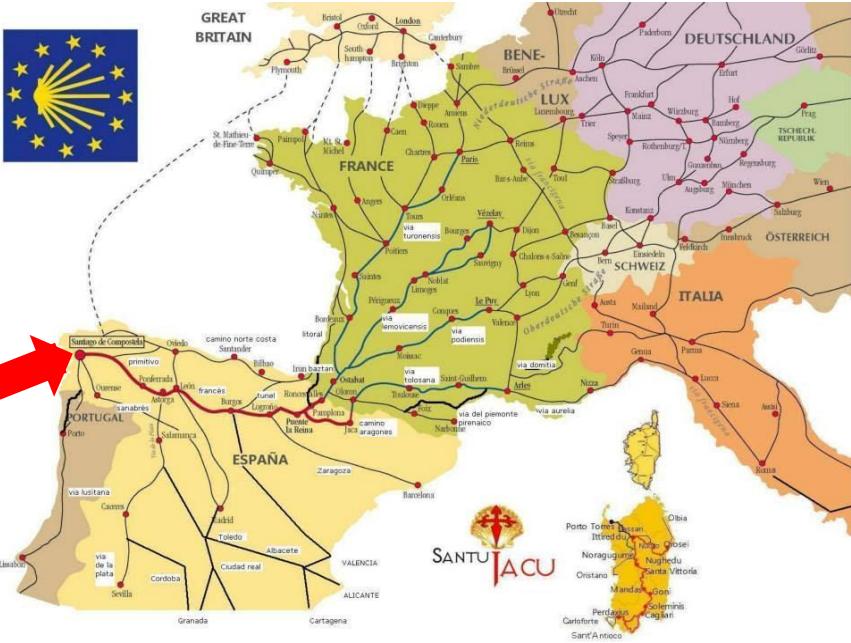




- **What is the Camino de Santiago**
- **Routes to Santiago**
- **Different Ways to be a Pilgrim**
- **A Typical Day on the Camino**
- **Preparation**
- **Resources**

Please save your questions to the end

What is the Camino de Santiago?



The Last Supper

painting by Leonardo da Vinci



James the Greater

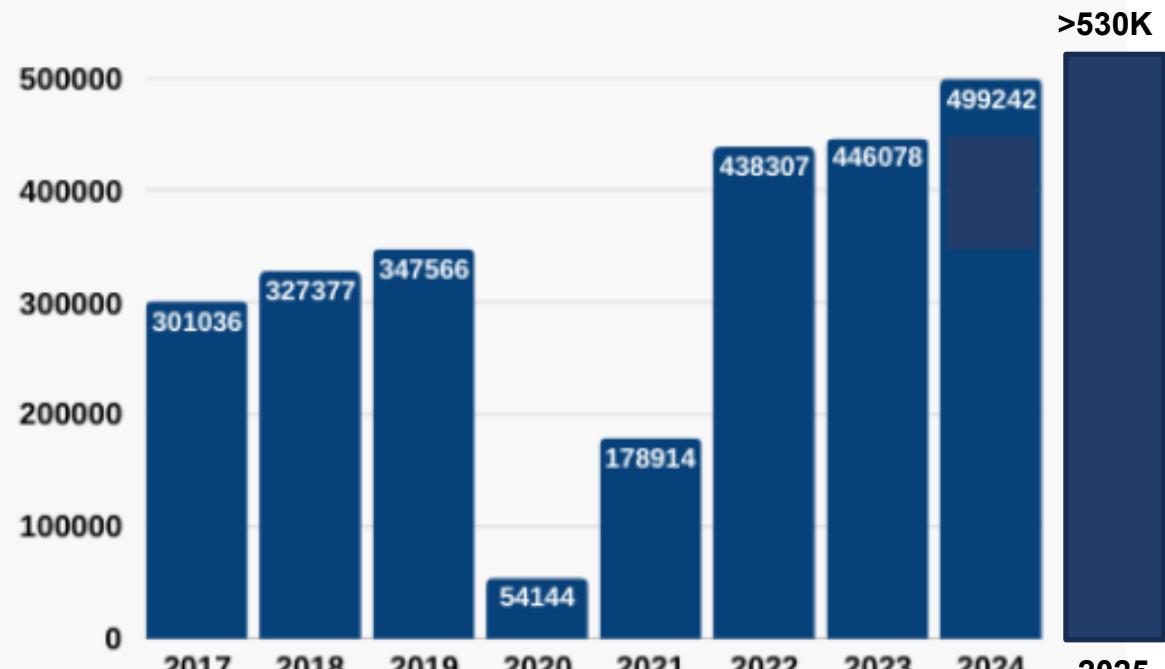
History



- **44** – Apostle James martyred by King Herod
- **814** – Tomb discovered near present day Santiago.
- **820** - First recorded Camino pilgrimage
- Middle ages - pilgrimages became very popular
 - Rome, Jerusalem, Santiago
 - Popularity peaked in 11th and 12th centuries
- Fell from favor due to plagues, wars, religious reformations.
- **1940s** - Franco's program of National Catholic Consolidation promoted Spain's Catholic history and the cult of Saint James.
- **1984** - Don Elias Sampredo - waymarked the Camino Frances with yellow arrows.
- **1985** – Santiago declared UNESCO World Cultural Heritage Site.
- **1993** – Camino Frances declared UNESCO World Cultural Heritage site.



TOTAL COMPOSTELAS RECEIVED



SOURCE: PILGRIM'S RECEPTION OFFICE

Credential and Compostela

Credential/Pilgrim's Passport - official document to recognize you as a pilgrim

- Required to stay at an albergue or buy pilgrim meals.
- Available from American Pilgrims



Compostela – completion certificate issued to pilgrims who:

- Make the pilgrimage for religious/ spiritual reasons.
- Walk at least 100km and walk the last stage into Santiago.
- Bike at least 200km (excludes ebikes)





Why Walk a Camino?

- Spiritual and Religious
- Looking for new challenge – physical or mental test
- Health and exercise – kickstart a new lifestyle
- History and culture
- Diverse experience – learn more about another culture
- Get away from daily life and connect with nature
- Expand social experiences
- Bucket List

Your goals make your camino unique



Who walks a Camino?

Compostelas issued in 2025	530,044
Women/Men	54% / 46%
Spain/US	43% / 8%
Pilgrims by Age	
>65	12%
46-65	41%
18-45	39%
<18	8%

Many routes lead to Santiago



2025 Pilgrim Statistics

>525K Compostelas Issued

Top 12 Countries

Spain
USA
Italy
Germany
Portugal
United Kingdom
Mexico
Ireland
France
Australia
Canada
Brazil

Most Popular Routes

Frances
Portugues Central
Portugues Coastal
Ingles
Primitivo
Norte

Top 5 Starting Points

Sarria
Tui
St Jean Pied de Port
Ferrol
Porto



CAMINO DE SANTIAGO

How do you pick your Camino?

Considerations:

- How much time do you have
- Budget
- Health & Overall Fitness
- Solace or Socialize
- Physical Challenge or Leisure
- Flexibility or Reservations
- Economy or Comfort
- Spiritual Renewal (Holy Year, 100km)
- Others: History, Nature, Family Roots

Camino Francés

- † *Most popular route (46% 2025)*
- † *Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port (SJPP) to Santiago - 490 miles (800 km); 30-35 days*
- † *Sarria–Santiago 65 miles(100km); 5 days*
- † *Average 15 miles/day walking average 6 hours*



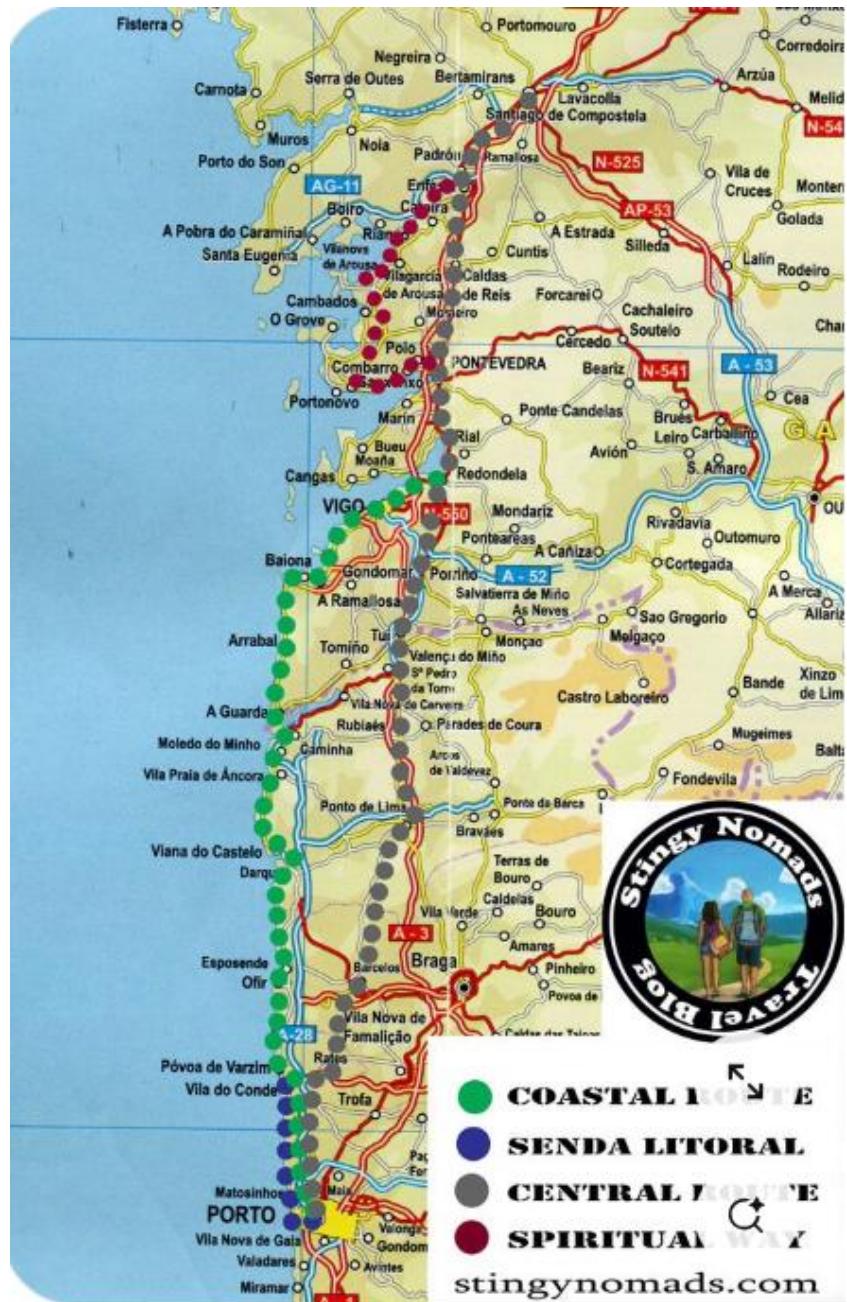
Camino Portuguese

- † 2nd most popular & fastest growing route (36% 2025 - 19% central and 17 % coastal)
- † Lisbon to Santiago
 - † Ave. 24 days /400 miles (640 km)
- † Porto to Santiago
 - † Ave. 10 days /150 miles (240 km)
- † Tui to Santiago
 - † Ave. 5 days /65 miles (100 km)



Camino Portuguese

- † From Porto there are two choices, the Coastal route and the Central Route. There is also a spiritual variant (Variante Espiritual)
- † The coastal route has less hills and lots of boardwalks and beaches
- † Portugal has a lot of cobblestones
- † The spiritual variant can include a boat ride re-creating the final leg of the journey of St. James remains



Camino Inglés

- † 3rd most popular – 5.7% 2025
- † Ferrol to Santiago
- † Avg 5 days/75 miles (120 km)

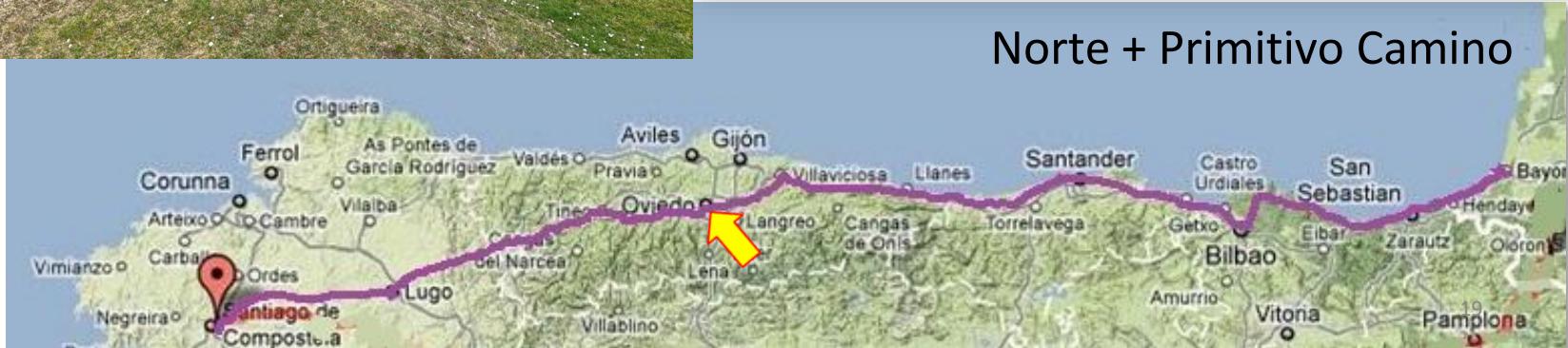


Camino Primitivo

- † 4th most popular – 5.3% 2025
- † Rural mountainous route
- † Ave. 14 days /220 miles (353 km)

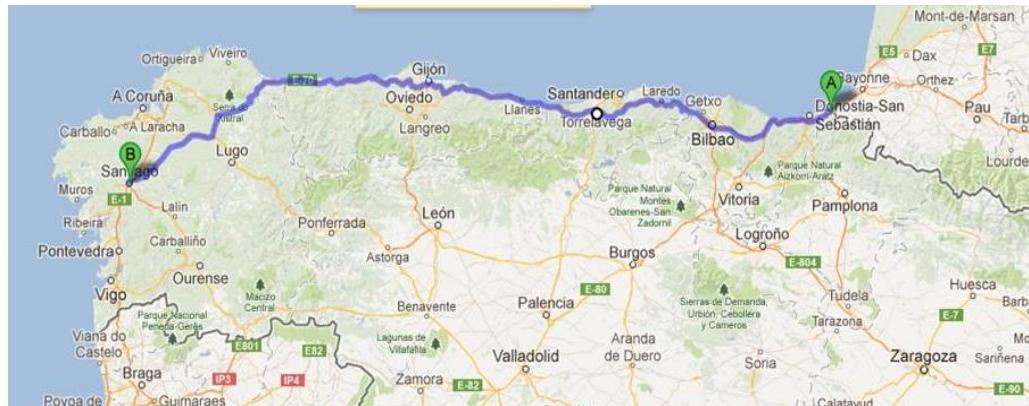


Norte + Primitivo Camino



Camino Norte

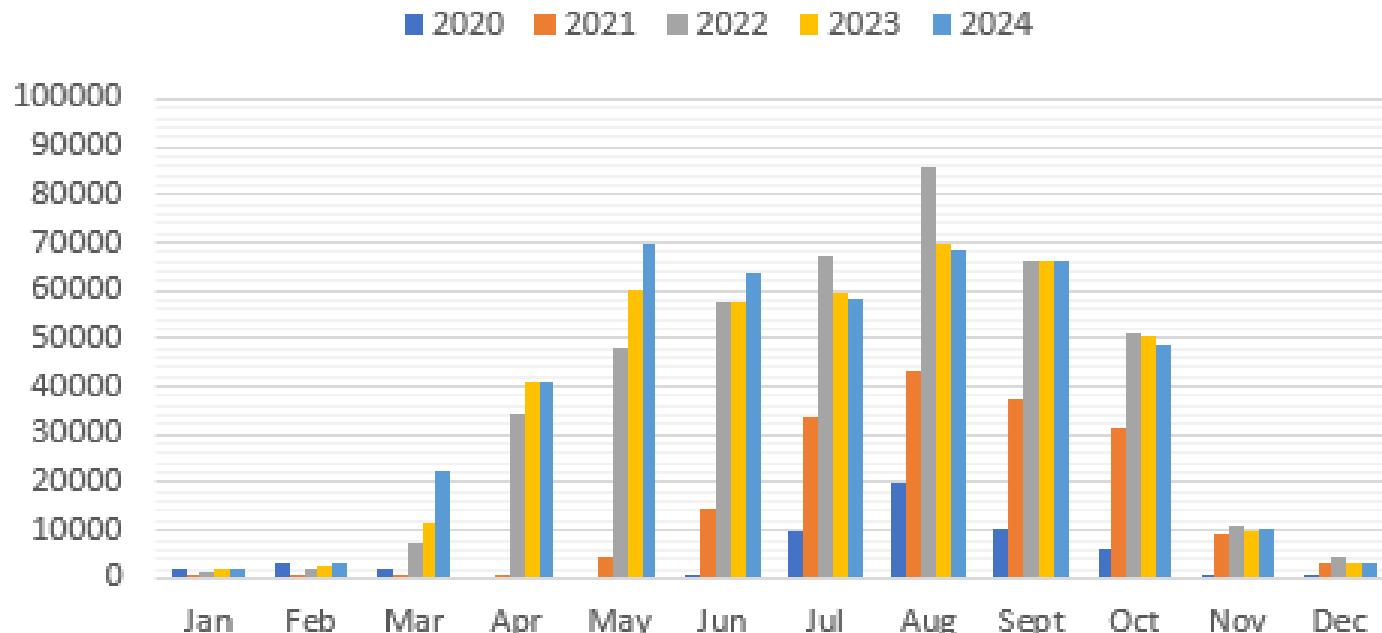
- † 5th most popular – 4% 2025
- † Ave. 33 days/ 510 miles (820 km)
- † Ocean vistas & resort towns



When to go?



Compostelas Issued



(source <https://oficinadelperegrino.com/en/statistics-2/>)

'Monthlypilgrims 2020-2024' file



Making your Camino your own

- Traditional Pilgrim experience on the Camino Frances. Carry your backpack, stay in rustic albergues, walk the entire route.
- Alternative Camino experiences. Ship your backpack, stay where it's comfortable, walk any of the Camino's.

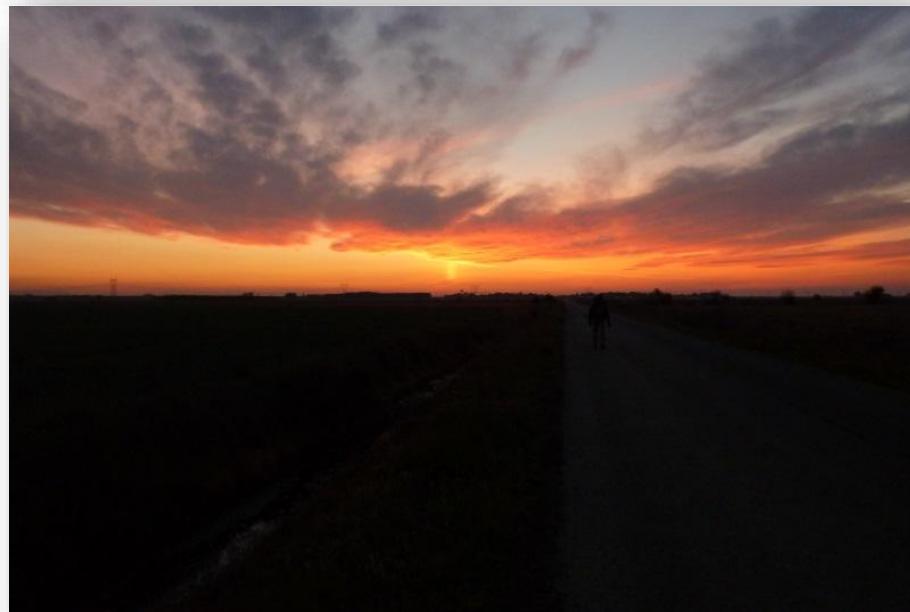
Traditional Pilgrims Day - Camino Frances

How do you know where to go? Just follow the arrows!



Traditional Pilgrims Day - Camino Frances

Up at sunrise, on the Camino early. Carry your bag, stay in Albergues



Traditional Pilgrims Day - Camino Frances

Coffee, breakfast early / Spain cafes open ~ 9am



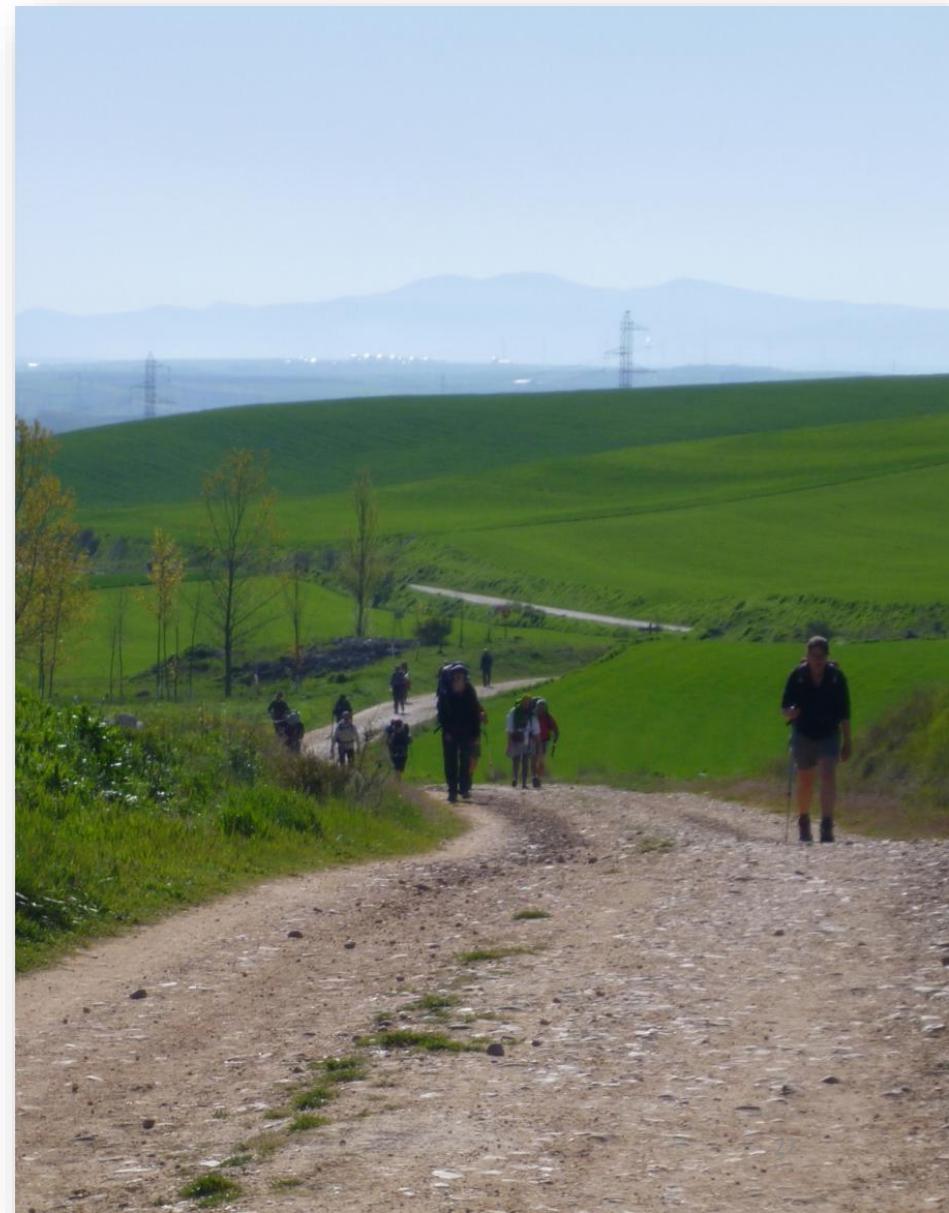
Traditional Pilgrims Day - Camino Frances

Stop for 2nd Breakfast.



Traditional Pilgrims Day - Camino Frances

Walk 6 to 8 hours a day. Pass thru 4-6 villages/towns each day



Traditional Pilgrims Day - Camino Frances

Stop early afternoon. Stay in Albergues.

Check in, hiking shoes and sticks stay outside
sleeping areas.

Find bed and do laundry.



Traditional Pilgrims Day - Camino Frances

Explore the town & dinner. Daily Pilgrim meals.



Menú del Día

1 Plato

Sopa de verdura
Sopa de pescado
Judías verdes
Macarrones
Ensalada

2 Plato

Ternera en salsa
Filete de ternera
Lomo de cerdo
Pollo asado en salsa
Calamares a la romana
Lenguado con salsa
Huevos fritos con jamón
Huevos fritos con chorizo
Huevos fritos con bacon
Huevos fritos con queso

Postres

Pastel de la casa
Flan de huevo casero
Kratillas
Cuaquadas
Yogurt
Helado
Fruta

Day Menu

1 Starter

Thick vegetable soup
Fish soup
Green beans
Macaroni
Salad

2 Main dish

Veal with sauce
Fillet of veal
Pork chop
Chicken with sauce
Squid
Sole in sauce
Fric eggs with fried bacon
Fric eggs with sausages
Fric eggs with ham
Fric eggs with cheese

Dessert

Home made cake / tart
Home made caramel
Custard sing
Card
Yogurt
Ice cream
Fruit



Traditional Pilgrims Day - Camino Frances

Prepare dinner when kitchens are available



Special Diets

Spain is a country of meat eaters

.8% vegan / 4% vegetarian / 7% flexitarian

Greater chance of vegan options in larger cities on Francis. Research restaurants in cities on the internet

Tour companies - cheese sandwich

Carry a card with your diet restriction written in Spanish. No Carne, No pollo. Ask if there are any other foods available.

Most soup bases are beef, chicken, or pork even if a vegetable soup.

Learn food names in Spanish.

European breads are made with white wheat – lower gluten level.

You are a guest on the Camino. Don't expect restaurants to meet your needs. Have a back up plan.

TAPAS RANKED*

www.tasteatlas.com/tapas



BEST

★ 4.5+



GAMBAS À LA PLANCHA
4.7



BOQUERONES
EN VINAGRE
4.6



GAMBAS AL AJILLO
4.6

GREAT

★ 4.0+



PATATAS BRAVAS
4.3



CROQUETAS DE JAMÓN
4.3



ALBÓNDIGAS
EN SALSA
4.3

OK

★ 3.5+



CROQUETAS DE POLLO
3.9



PINCHITOS
3.8



ANGULAS
3.6

WORST

★ <3.5



TIGRES
3.3



ESPINACAS CON
GARBANZOS
3.3



BERENJENAS
CON M
3.4

*According to TasteAtlas audience

Traditional Pilgrims Day - Camino Frances

In bed by 9pm. Up at sunrise and start again!



YOUR CAMINO!

WAKE. WALK. EAT.

WALK. 2nd BREAKFAST. WALK.

LODGING. FEET/PHARMACIA.

EXPLORE. VINO. EAT.

REFLECT/CONNECT. SLEEP.

REPEAT





Alternative Camino – Independent

**Reservations & private
rooms available**

- Private Albergues
- Casa Rurals (like B&B's)
- Private Homes
- Room Rentals
- Hotels
- Check Airbnb.com & booking.com

Ask if Pilgrim's rate is available



www.JACOTRANS.com

Alternative Camino Bag Transport – Lighten Your Load

- Private Baggage transport - Jacotrans
- Correos – Spanish Postal Service
- 7-10 euros per day
- Details in most accommodations

Tour Companies



- Many tour companies available – compare offerings
- Ask fellow pilgrims about their experiences – use our Facebook page to post questions. Many other Facebook groups to post questions.
- Search American Pilgrims on the Camino fb “tour company”
- Consider Camino Ways, Santiago Ways, On Foot Holidays
- Compare packages and prices. Different currencies & exchange rates.

“Pampered Pilgrim?”



Organized Pilgrim Experience

PROS

- Pre planned
- Know You Have a Bed
- Better Sleep
- Nice Hot Showers
- Bring More
- Carry Less Weight
- English Speaking

CONS

- Less Flexible
- Unable to Stop Whenever
- More Expensive
- Bring More (Too Much)
- Smaller Pilgrim Family

Hybrid Camino

Between the traditional and organized experience lies the hybrid.

Requires your research and planning

- **Pre-book hotel/AirB&B stays** via Booking.com or direct. Some may be off the Camino path.
- **Easy to ship your bag** when you know where you are staying next
- **Your schedule** - stop where you want and when you want knowing you'll have a room.
- **Eat** what you want and where you want – not limited to prearranged meals. But be aware of times.
- **Start and end your day** as you feel like it.
- **Stay at albergues** on a limited basis (limits ability to ship a bag)



Facilities

WATER

- Potable Water Available - *Frances*
- Buy in Cafes - ESPECIALLY if you use bathrooms
- 2 Liters typically sufficient (most days)
- Bladder or Bottles
- Consider Bottle w/ Straw



NATURE CALLS

- LEAVE NO TRACE
- Some routes will have days where facilities are limited
- Bring toilet paper from lodging each morning
- Products for women



Money

MONEY

- Spain uses Euros
- ATM (cajero automático) machines in larger towns. Check which banks have reduced fees before you leave.
- Many albergues & bars are **cash only**
- Exchange larger bills in super mercados / grocery stores
- Minimum 2 debit/credit cards. Tell bank you are out of US.



BUDGET

- ~ 30 Euro/day Traditional - Very economy
- ~ 30-50 Euro/day - Comfort
- ~ 70 Euro/day - Very Comfortable

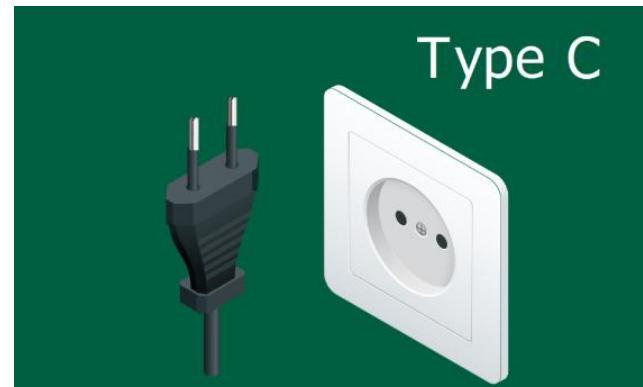
Search American Pilgrims on the Camino FB 'budget'



Communication and Electricity

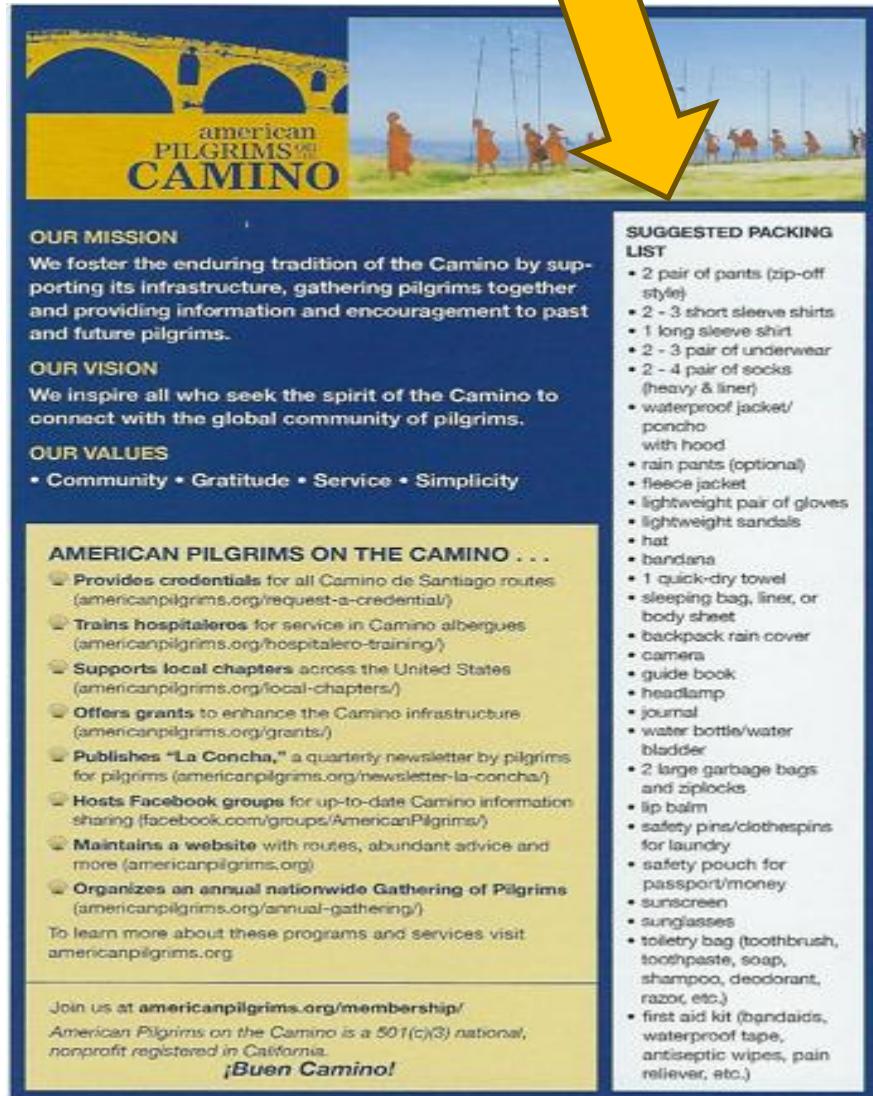


- † Wi-Fi (WeeFee) everywhere
- † Take a power bank.
- † No international plan? Turn off your data!
- † Consider Pre-paid Spanish sim card.
- † Consider buying a disposable phone in Europe.



Spain uses Type “C” plugs

What to bring?



The screenshot shows the homepage of the American Pilgrims Camino website. At the top is a banner with a bridge and the text "american PILGRIMS CAMINO". Below the banner are sections for "OUR MISSION", "OUR VISION", and "OUR VALUES". The "OUR MISSION" section states: "We foster the enduring tradition of the Camino by supporting its infrastructure, gathering pilgrims together and providing information and encouragement to past and future pilgrims." The "OUR VISION" section states: "We inspire all who seek the spirit of the Camino to connect with the global community of pilgrims." The "OUR VALUES" section lists: "Community • Gratitude • Service • Simplicity". A large yellow box on the left contains a list of programs: "AMERICAN PILGRIMS ON THE CAMINO . . .", including "Provides credentials for all Camino de Santiago routes", "Trains hospitaleros for service in Camino albergues", "Supports local chapters across the United States", "Offers grants to enhance the Camino infrastructure", "Publishes "La Concha", a quarterly newsletter by pilgrims for pilgrims", "Hosts Facebook groups for up-to-date Camino information sharing", "Maintains a website with routes, abundant advice and more", and "Organizes an annual nationwide Gathering of Pilgrims". Below this box is a note: "To learn more about these programs and services visit americanpilgrims.org". At the bottom of the page is a footer with the text "Join us at americanpilgrims.org/membership/ American Pilgrims on the Camino is a 501(c)(3) national, nonprofit registered in California. ¡Buen Camino!" and a yellow arrow pointing to the "SUGGESTED PACKING LIST".

SUGGESTED PACKING LIST

- 2 pair of pants (zip-off style)
- 2 - 3 short sleeve shirts
- 1 long sleeve shirt
- 2 - 3 pair of underwear
- 2 - 4 pair of socks (heavy & liner)
- waterproof jacket/poncho with hood
- rain pants (optional)
- fleece jacket
- lightweight pair of gloves
- lightweight sandals
- hat
- bandana
- 1 quick-dry towel
- sleeping bag, liner, or body sheet
- backpack rain cover
- camera
- guide book
- headlamp
- journal
- water bottle/water bladder
- 2 large garbage bags and ziplocks
- lip balm
- safety pins/clothespins for laundry
- safety pouch for passport/money
- sunscreen
- sunglasses
- toiletry bag (toothbrush, toothpaste, soap, shampoo, deodorant, razor, etc.)
- first aid kit (bandaids, waterproof tape, antiseptic wipes, pain reliever, etc.)

- † Try everything before you go.
- † Wear your shoes in the rain, heat & cold.
 - † Do you still like them?
- † Washing your clothes in the sink.
 - † Did they dry overnight?
- † Walk with your pack fully loaded.
 - † Is there room for snacks & lunch?
- † Goal ~ 10% of your body weight

Don't overthink it



Shoes – *the best shoe is the one that fits your feet.* Try on different brands and different types.

Packs – *you want the one that fits your body.* Try on different brands. Have it fitted. Use packing cubes. Train with pack on your back.

Rain gear – *consider ease of getting on & off.*

Clothes – *technical fabrics – avoid cotton.* REI, 32 Degree(Costco)

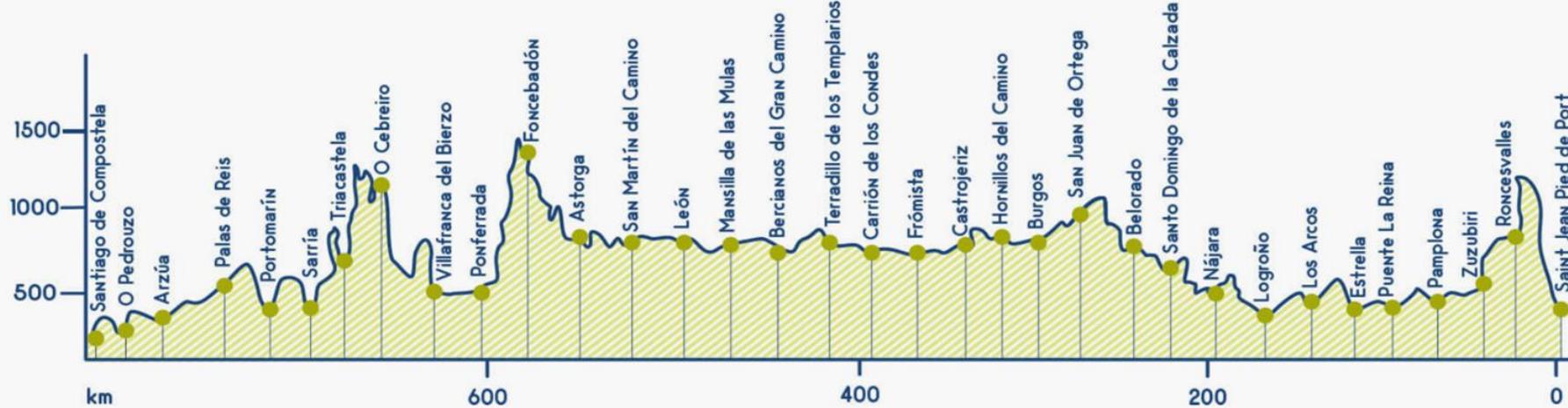
Bedbugs – *be aware.* Permethrin (Amazon, REI). Check your bed. Put nothing on bed.

Footcare – *be prepared!*

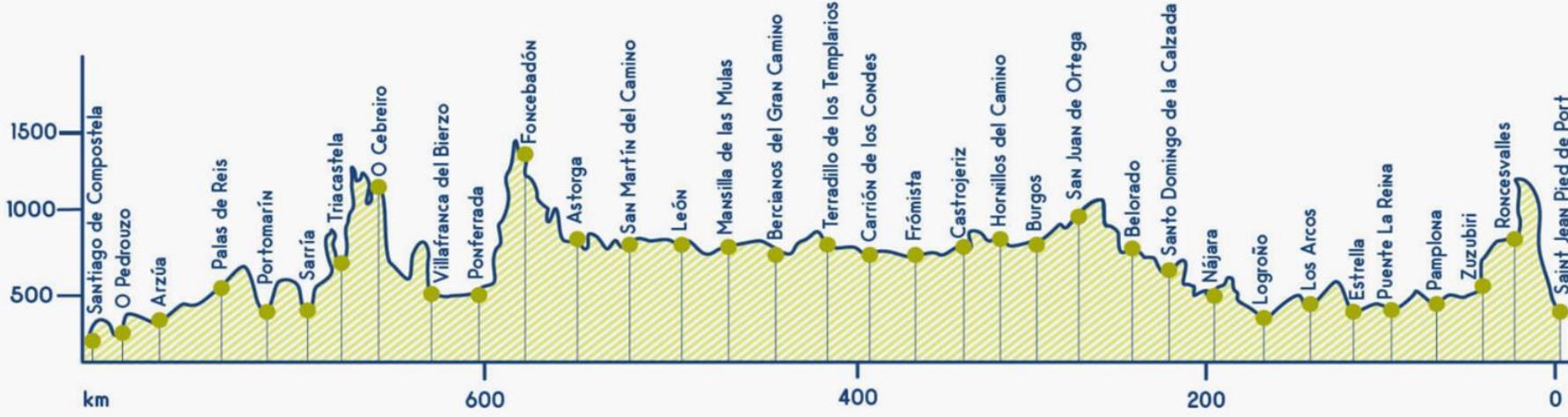
Getting there – *investigate.* Fly into major city and use local transportation to get around. Fly into one city and out of another. Consider travel insurance.

Training

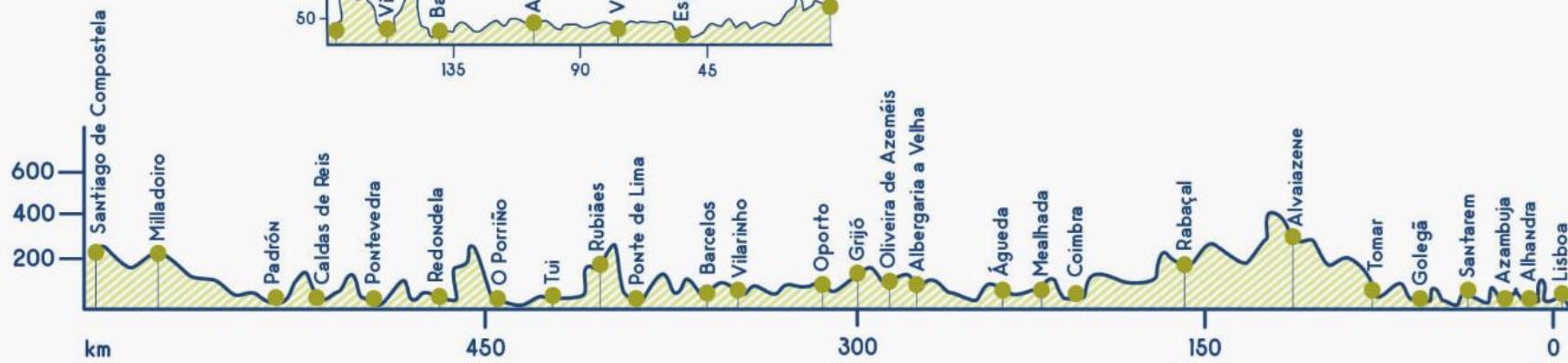
- **Metric in Europe. Meters, not Feet**
- **Train with Backpack**
- **Hill training** (Ridgeline, National Trail, Piestewa Peak, Tom's Thumb, Bell Pass, Silent Sunday at South Mountain to Towers, Picket Post, Peralta)
- **Walk 2 days back-to-back** 10 miles each day - even if along canal path.
- **Walk every day** with 1 long walk per week.
- **Add 10% to long walks each week.**
- **Walk to Grocery Store, Church, Chiropractor, etc.**



Elevation Gain – Frances vs Portugues



Variante por la costa



But be extra thoughtful about...

Your camino goals. Plan your camino so you achieve them.

Training your mind as well as your body.

Overcoming challenges is part of the journey.

Passing Through but communities and people live there & depend on pilgrims.



Travel Companions

Discuss your reasons for walking.

- Do your companions respect them, and do you respect their reasons?

How will you get along for 5 days, 10 days, 35 days?

- Personality differences: introvert or extravert, driver/competitive vs laid back/enjoy the scenery
- Physical differences snoring, eating, when to take & what kind of rest breaks

How will you each handle the unexpected?

The Camino is 49% physical/51% mental



THE WORLD NEEDS MORE PILGRIMS!!!

- Overcome challenges, fear or anxiety (pain, language, weather, etc.)
- Touched by Pilgrims Across Ages
- Knowledge that You Are Not Alone
- Shed Your ID to Become a Pilgrim
- Tapped Into Simple Life
- Met Amazing People from All Over the World
- Benefitted from the Generosity of Others
- Recognized Your Blessings
- Experienced Grace
- Gained Insight into Burdens Carried & Shed by Yourself and/or Others
- Restored Hope in Fellow Mankind
- **TRANSFORMED...RENEWED...**



Tips for beating the crowds on the Frances

- Start on a week day
- Don't stay in the towns recommended in the Guide Books
- Wait for the surge to pass
- Take a taxi back and forth
- Get started early to get to your destination before the crowds, especially if staying in donativos
- Any 100 kms instead of from Sarria
- Invierno route option



New travel requirements coming

- EES and ETIAS serve different purposes.
- EES (Entry/Exit System) – gradual rollout began Oct 12. An automated system for registering non-EU nationals entering and exiting the Schengen area. Captures biometric info; photographs and fingerprints.
- ETIAS (European Travel Information and Authorization System) is a pre-travel authorization system for visa-exempt travelers. Planned launch late 2026.

Additional Resources



The header of the American Pilgrims on the Camino website. It features a yellow top bar with the text "JOIN US", "REQUEST A CREDENTIAL", "DONATE", and "MEMBER LOGIN". Below this is a blue navigation bar with the "american PILGRIMS ON CAMINO" logo on the left. The logo includes a stylized bridge icon and the text "american PILGRIMS ON CAMINO". To the right of the logo are menu items: "AMERICAN PILGRIMS", "PILGRIMAGE PLANNING" (which is highlighted with a yellow box), "THE CAMINO", "LOCAL CHAPTERS", "ANNUAL GATHERING", and a search icon.

www.americanpilgrims.org

Pilgrimage Planning - information you need to plan a Camino - route overviews, how to prepare, packing list.

Guidebooks

A Pilgrims Guide to the Camino De Santiago – John Brierley is most popular

Apps

Camino Ways, Buen Camino, Wise Pilgrim, Wisely: Camino Forum Places AlertCops App – allows you to call for help in your preferred language

Website

Camino de Santiago Forum – www.caminodesantiago.me

Luggage storage in Santiago

Casa Ivar - <https://casaivar.com/luggage-storage-in-santiago-de-compostela/>

Facebook: CAMIGAS - A Buddy System for Women on the Camino

Valley of the Sun Chapter - Upcoming Activities

Hikes

- Jan 17 - Usery Mountain
- Jan 24 - Tempe stroll
- Feb 7 - Browns Ranch (Scottsdale Preserve)
- Feb 21 - Estrella Mountain
- Feb 28 - Goodyear Stroll
- Mar 20, 21, 22, 23 - Are You Ready series



Live Presentations

- Jan 20 - Camino 101 Paradise Valley REI
- Jan 22 - Camino 101 Chandler REI
- Feb 12 - Camino 101 Chandler REI
- Feb 17 - Camino 101 Paradise Valley REI
- Mar 12 - Camino 101 Chandler REI
- Mar 17 - Camino 101 Paradise Valley REI



Zoom Presentations

- Feb 19 - Zoom meeting – Camino 201/Packing



[Join our mailing list or follow us on Facebook for details](#)

Keep in contact with us

JOIN OUR CHAPTER/EMAIL US: phoenix@americanpilgrims.org

FACEBOOK

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/valleyofthesunpilgrims>



American Pilgrims on the
Camino - Valley of the Sun
Chapter

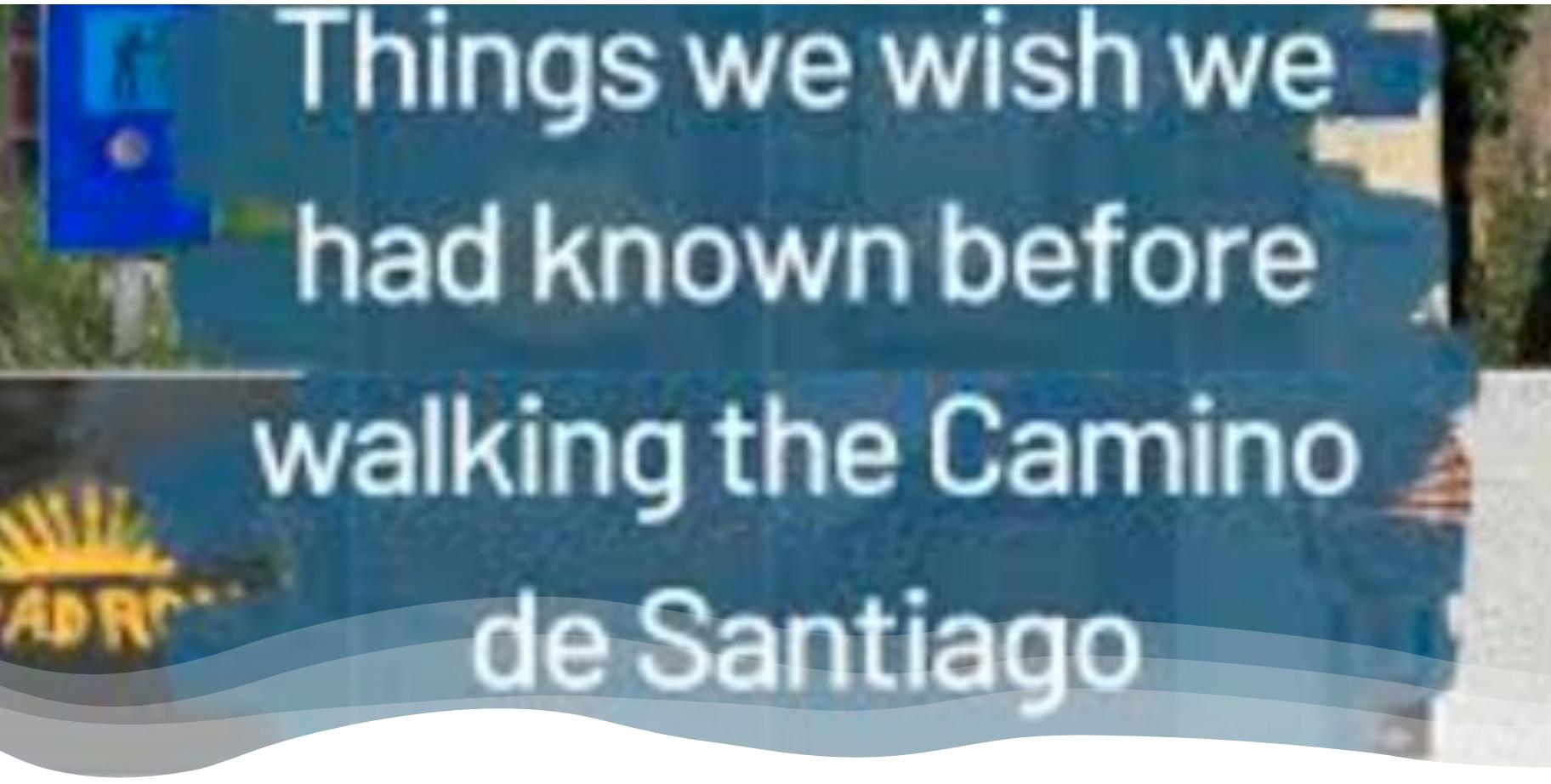


VALLEY OF THE SUN CHAPTER PAGE

https://americanpilgrims.org/iwpmap_directory/valley-of-the-sun/

CHAPTERS CALENDAR

<https://americanpilgrims.org/calendar/>



Things we wish we
had known before
walking the Camino
de Santiago

QUESTIONS?

ULTREIA



phoenix@americanpilgrims.org