



Camino Francés

General Description: Far and away the best known and most traveled of the routes. Three of the main routes through France feed into the Francés north of the Pyrenees and a number of the routes in Spain join the Francés at various points along its length. Approximately 775 km (from St. Jean Pied-de-Port) or approximately 750 km (from Roncesvalles) to Santiago de Compostela. Starting typically in either Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port in France or in Roncesvalles in Spain and traveling through Pamplona, Puente de la Reina, Logroño, Burgos, León, Astorga, Ponferrada and Sarria to Santiago.

Waymarking: Extremely well marked with painted yellow arrows as well as plaques and signposts, the latter usually with stylized scallop shell symbols.

Terrain: Quite varied terrain beginning with the ascent and/or the descent of the Pyrenees, then passing through the rich vineyards of La Rioja, the vast *meseta* (the high, flat, exposed tableland between Burgos and León), then into the Montes de León before crossing the high pass of O Cebreiro into the province of Galicia where many river valleys are crossed.

When to go: The route is traversed at all times of the year primarily because there are at least minimal services available year round. However there is very likely to be snow in the winter months and early spring in the Pyrenees, the Montes de Oca (east of Burgos), the Montes de León and in Galicia. Most of the route, but especially the *meseta*, is extremely hot in the summer months of July and August. We recommend checking out the [climate tables](#) on the Online Resources page.

Accommodation: Among all the routes, the Camino Francés has without question the most highly developed infrastructure with plentiful sleeping accommodations of all types—pilgrim albergues and *refugios* operated by associations and governmental units and as private businesses, *hostales*, small hotels and several high-end hotels in the Spanish government's *parador* system. Some camping in the summer. Food options are plentiful. Generally facilities are only rarely further apart than 10 km.

Guidebooks: There are numerous guidebooks on the Camino Francés, too numerous to do all the authors justice. We would invite you to close this page and then look at our Books page under Resources.

Internet links: The Camino Francés being far and away the most popular route, there are countless websites devoted to it. We suggest finding our Online Resources page under Resources. [The Confraternity of Saint James](#) has an overview. The [Xunta de Galicia](#) has a section with extensive information on that portion of the Camino Francés within Galicia including history, tourism, albergues, other services and Santiago itself. [Godesalco](#) has a most interesting and useful route planner for the Camino Francés. One can download an elevation profile as well as a customized file containing stages.

Video links: From the Camino video series produced by the Spanish television channel TVE:

[Camino francés, part 1](#), 0:27:02, narrative in Spanish, 2004, Somport-Jaca-Puente la Reina-Estella-Logroño

[Camino francés, part 2](#), 0:26:59, narrative in Spanish, 2004, Logroño-Burgos-Frómista-Carrión de los Condes-Sahagún

[Camino francés, part 3](#), 0:27:39, narrative in Spanish, 2004, Sahagún-León-O Cebreiro-Sarria-Santiago de Compostela

Other remarks: The Camino Francés is far and away the most traveled of all the routes. This could be a positive or a negative depending on the time of year and your desire to be with other *peregrinos*. In the summer months and especially in the period leading to and following Santiago's Feast Day, July 25th, accommodations will be quite stressed, particularly in the last 100 km (from Sarria). If you have started upstream from Ponferrada, it is possible to split off on the Camino de Invierno and avoid the post-Sarria scene altogether.

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