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Walking Guide to the
CAMINO DE SANTIAGO
History, Culture, Architecture

Gerald Kelly

2024 Edition

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List of places with pilgrim hostels

Important cities and towns are highlighted like this

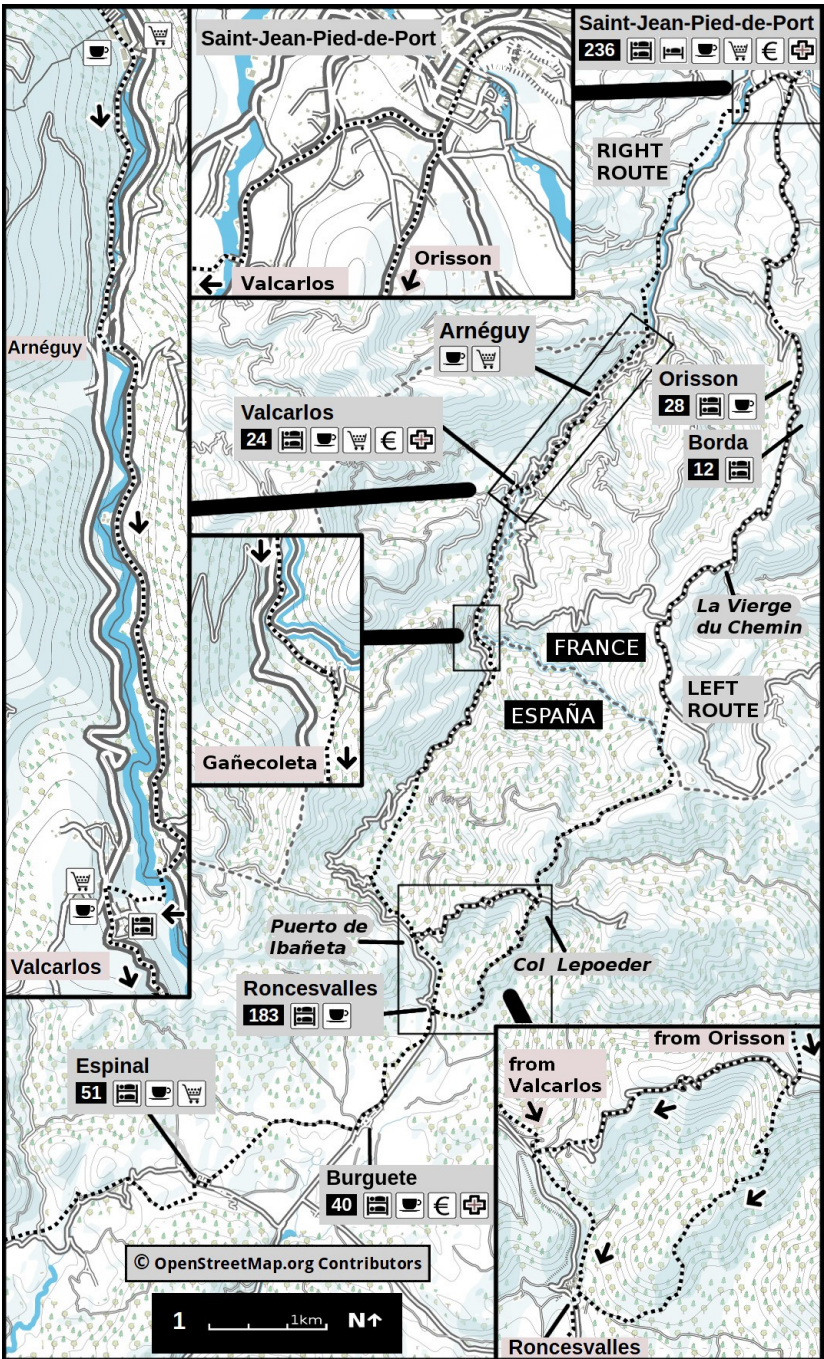
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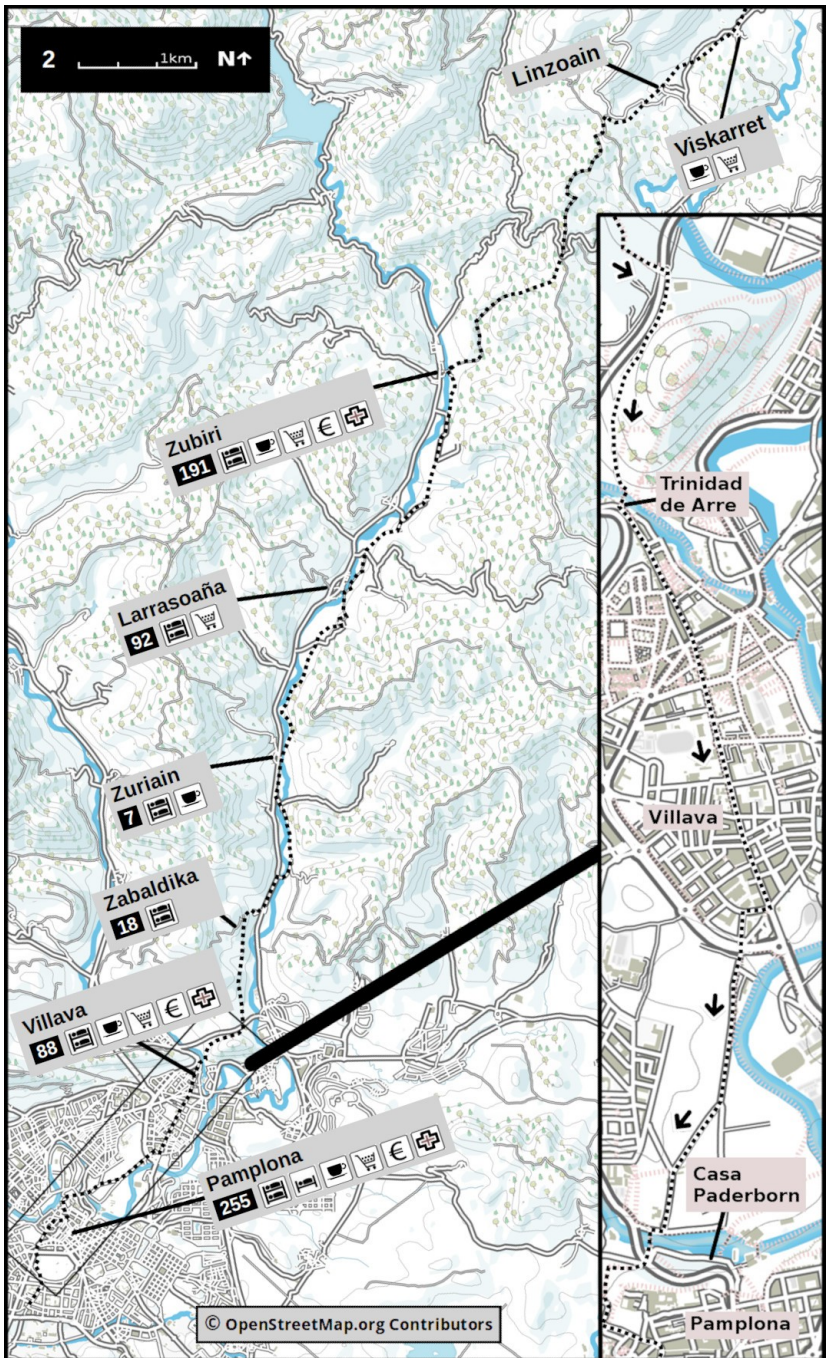
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WALKING NOTES

Map 1

The walk from Saint-Jean to Roncesvalles is often described as the most difficult stage on the Camino Francés, and although there are two possible routes, neither of them is a stroll in the park.

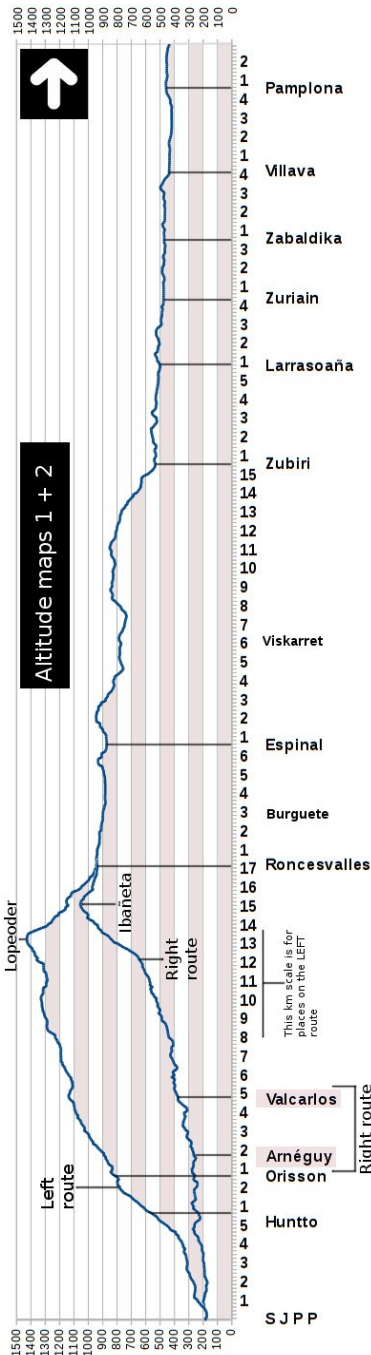
By far the most popular (and most difficult) route is the track over the pass at **Lepoeder** (described here as the *Left* route, but also sometimes called the *Route Napoléon*). It starts with a steep 630m climb over 7km to **Orisson**, altitude 800m. After that there's a less steep, but still tiring, 650m climb over 13km to **Lepoeder**, altitude 1450m. Followed by a steep 500m descent to **Roncesvalles**.

You can make this stage easier by staying overnight in **Orisson** (reservation recommended) and spread the stage over two days. Also, for the descent to **Roncesvalles** there is a gentler alternative to the traditional route which branches right towards **Puerto de Ibañeta**.

If that all sounds too much like hard work there's always the **Valcarlos** route (described here as the *Right* route). The climb on this route is fairly gentle until about 6km after **Valcarlos** where it begins to ascend steeply 400m over 5km, to **Puerto de Ibañeta**, altitude 1057m. After that it's an easy stroll down to **Roncesvalles**.

Both routes are difficult in snow or high winds and the *Left* route is officially closed in winter.

Follow the advice given by the Pilgrims Office in Saint-Jean and you won't go wrong.



Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port / Donibane-Garazi

Many of Saint-Jean's pilgrim albergues are on *rue de la Citadelle*, the main street in the historic centre of the town, about a 10 minute walk from the railway station. They are listed here starting at the southern end (up near the Pilgrims Office).

REFUGE MUNICIPAL / ACCUEIL PÈLERIN

Municipal | 32 beds | 12€ | Up rue de la Citadelle, near the top on the left. The historic starting point of the Camino for generations of pilgrims. Register in the Pilgrims Office a short distance down the street. Microwaves. One private double room. Website www.terresdenavarre.fr Open 14:00

GÎTE DE LA PORTE SAINT-JACQUES

Private | 6 beds | 27€ | **March to October** | At 51 rue de la Citadelle beside the Municipal Albergue. In a nicely renovated village house. Run by an Australian pilgrim. Website www.giteportesaintjacques.com Tel 06 30 99 75 61 Open 14:00

BEILARI

Private | 14 beds | 42€ | **March to October** | (formerly *L'Esprit du Chemin*) at 40 rue de la Citadelle opposite the Pilgrims Office. Communal evening meal where pilgrims introduce themselves, vegetarian options. They also do packed lunches. Very popular. Reservations accepted. Website www.beilari.info Tel 06 30 02 86 67 Open 14:00

GÎTE D'ETAPE MAKILA

Private | 8 beds | 30€ | **March to October** | At 35 rue de la Citadelle. Laundry facilities. Private rooms. Tel 06 63 10 13 46. Website makila-saintjean.com Open 15:00

GÎTE LE LIÈVRE ET LA TORTUE

Private | 13 beds | 20€ | **March to October** | At 30 rue de la Citadelle. Laundry facilities. Communal evening meal. Breakfast. Private rooms. Tel 06 59 13 52 25 Open 16:00

GÎTE ESTEBAN ETXEA

Private | 12 beds | 19€ | **February to November** | At 29 rue de la Citadelle. Communal evening meal. Private rooms. Tel 06 38 22 80 05 Open 15:00

GÎTE ULTREIA

Private | 11 beds | 25€ | **March to October** | At 8 rue de la Citadelle. Kitchen. Run by two ex-pilgrims. Private rooms. Reservations from their website www.ultreia64.fr Tel 06 80 88 46 22 Open 15:00

These albergues are not on *rue de la Citadelle*. Following the Camino through the arch and across the bridge and you come to *rue d'Espagne*.

GÎTE BIDEAN

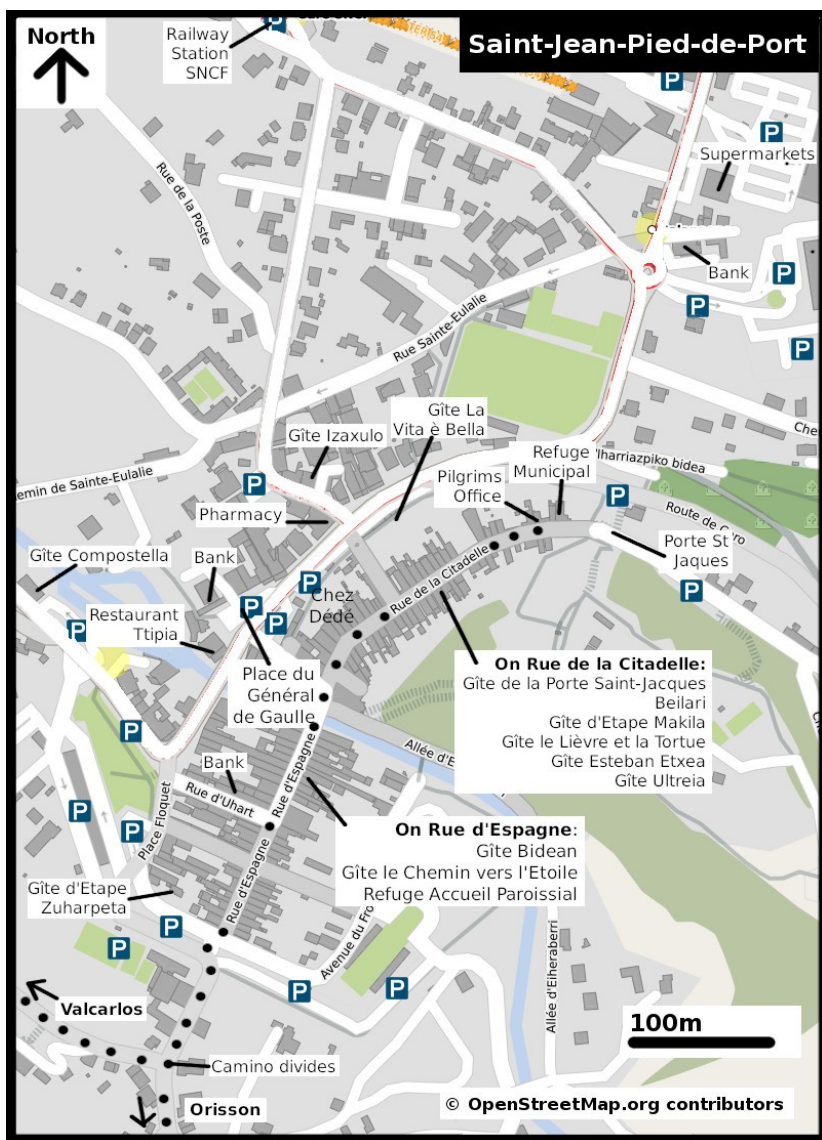
Private | 12 beds | 19€ | At 11 rue d'Espagne. Communal evening meal. Breakfast. Private rooms. Tel 06 70 29 66 66 Open 15:00

GÎTE LE CHEMIN VERS L'ETOILE

Private | 46 beds | 23€ | **January to October** | At 21 rue d'Espagne. Laundry facilities. Evening meal, breakfast. Website www.pelerinage-saint-jacques-compostelle.com Tel 06 70 20 82 13 Open 14:00

REFUGE ACCUEIL PAROISSIAL / MAISON KASERNA

Parish | 14 beds | 25€ | **April to October** | At 43 rue d'Espagne. Reported friendly with good food. Tel 05 59 37 65 17 Open 15:00



GÎTE D'ETAPE ZUHARPETA

Private | 16 beds | 32€ | March to October | From rue de la Citadelle follow the Camino across the bridge then after about 200m turn right into rue Zuharpeta. Café / restaurant. Tel 06 21 30 03 05 Open 15:00

GÎTE IZAXULO

Private | 18 beds | 21€ | April to October | On avenue Renaud, on the way from the railway station, just before Place du Trinket. Laundry facilities. Breakfast. Private rooms. Tel 05 24 34 19 00 Open 15:00

GÎTE LA VITA È BELLA

Private | 10 beds | 19€ | April to October | On Place du Trinket. Laundry facilities. Communal evening meal. Breakfast. Private rooms. Tel 06 38 59 91 83 Open 15:00

GÎTE COMPOSTELLA

Private | 14 beds | 21€ | March to October | On route d'Arnéguy, to the right of the Camino after crossing the river. Kitchen. Breakfast. Private rooms.

Tel 05 59 37 02 36 Open 14:00

LA COUILLE NAPOLEÓN

Private | 10 beds | 18€ | On the LEFT route of the Camino 800m after Saint-Jean. Evening meal. Breakfast. Private rooms. In a traditional Basque farm house.

Tel 06 62 25 99 40 Open 16:00

INFORMATION Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port has all the facilities you're likely to need. There is a wide variety of accommodation ranging from pilgrim albergues to luxury hotels, many of which are along the steep, cobbled *rue de la Citadelle*, and the parallel *Place du Général de Gaulle*, both about a 10 minute walk from the railway station. There are also many restaurants in this area. The **Pilgrims Office / Accueil St Jacques**, near the top of *rue de la Citadelle*, provides **Credenciales**, information and advice on weather conditions and help finding accommodation, etc., open until 22:00 in summer. There's a **Carrefour supermarket** on *Avenue du Jaï Alaï* and a **bank** on *rue d'Uhart*. On *Place du Général de Gaulle* there's a **Tourist Office** and a **pharmacy**. There are also several hiking equipment shops. **Restaurant Ttipia** on Place Floquet does a good *menu du jour* (excellent *confit de canard*). **Restaurant La Vieille Auberge - Chez Dédé** on rue de la France has been recommended, it's between Place du Trinket and rue de la Citadelle.

SIGHTS **Rue de la Citadelle** is the centre of the old town of Saint-Jean and the main thoroughfare used by pilgrims down the centuries. At its north end is **Porte St Jacques / St James Gate** where pilgrims arriving from points north enter the town. At its south end is **Porte d'Espagne / Spanish Gate**, where pilgrims heading for Spain depart. The wooden-framed houses lining this medieval street are testimony to its place in history. Today, as for centuries, they house establishments dedicated to serving the pilgrims who pass as regularly as the seasons. Etched on their façades are their construction dates, some of them in the post-revolution Republican calendar. At the bottom of the street is the church of **Notre Dame du Bout du Pont / Our Lady at the End of the Bridge**, which is in 14th century Gothic style and was built by **King Sancho VII el Fuerte** (the strong) of Navarra. Passing through the clock tower arch of **Porte d'Espagne** brings you to the **River Nive** (or *Errobi* in Basque) and a good view of the 17th century **town walls**. At the top of the rue de la Citadelle the **Citadelle** itself looks down on the town from above **Porte St. Jacques**, it too dates from the 17th century.

HISTORY *The town of Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port dates from the 12th century when it was founded by Sancho VII in the shadow of the Castle of Mendiguren which stood on the site of the current Citadelle. It was from the first a fortified town, guarding the northern approach to the Kingdom of Navarra and serving as a waystation for travellers and pilgrims crossing the Pyrenees. The town and its hinterlands changed hands several times down the centuries as French and Spanish kingdoms struggled for supremacy in the region, eventually becoming capital of the French Kingdom of Lower Navarre in the 16th century. After the French revolution the Kingdom of Lower Navarre was abolished along with the privileges of the local royalty and the town was temporarily renamed Nive-Franche. In the Religious Wars / Guerres de*

Religion in the 16th century it was the scene of a bloody struggle between Catholics and Protestants. The railway line from Bayonne was completed in 1889. Today Saint-Jean is a major tourist centre in the modern département of **Pyrénées-Atlantiques** which takes in the whole of the French Basque Country and part of Gascony.

PLACE NAME *St John at the Foot of the Pass. Its name in Basque is Donibane-Garazi / St John of the locality Garazi. Its original name in Spanish is slightly different, Santa Maria Cabo el Puente / St Mary at the End of the Pass.*

Between here and Roncesvalles there are two routes. The (lower) **RIGHT** route goes through Valcarlos, and the (higher) **LEFT** route goes through Orisson. If you're walking outside the summer months it's important to ask in the Pilgrims Office about weather conditions. Both routes are difficult in snow or high winds and the **LEFT** route is **OFFICIALLY CLOSED** from the beginning of November until the end of March (ignoring this may lead to legal sanctions). Remember that in mountainous areas such as this, weather conditions can change very quickly.

Leaving Saint-Jean walk down rue de la Citadelle, under the arch of Porte d'Espagne and up rue d'Espagne, continuing straight under another arch and up a hill for about 100m until you reach a junction with a small sign on a lamppost indicating where the two routes divide.

RIGHT ROUTE VIA VALCARLOS

TOTAL LENGTH 23.5km

TOTAL ASCENT 1,530m, DESCENT -758m

Turn right on to Chemin de Mayorga and continue straight until you come to the main road which you follow to the left. After about 600m turn right on to a small road, clearly signposted **Valcarlos / Luzaide** and **Roncevaux** (French for Roncesvalles).

6.8km to the Spanish border, marked by a gaudy shopping centre and petrol station. Walk towards the petrol station and continue straight.

1.6km to Arnéguy, shops, cafés and restaurants. The Camino crosses the river into France again and continues on a minor road through the village of Ondarroa, where it crosses the river again back into Spain.

RIGHT 11.5km (4h12m) to Valcarlos / Luzaide

ALBERGUE MUNICIPAL

Municipal | 24 beds | 15€ | Past the church then turn left, walk past the old school building on the left and then down some steps. Ask for door code in the shop / bar Ardandegia, the town hall or tourist office. Kitchen, laundry. The hospitalero calls in the evening. Nice albergue. Tel 685 510 435

INFORMATION Shops (the one attached to café Ardandegia is the best for groceries), cafés, pharmacy and a bank.

SIGHTS Valcarlos' village church is dedicated to St James. The presence of the border doesn't take from the fact that the culture on both sides of the border is Basque. This region has many fine examples of **Basque farmhouses**. These sturdy, square buildings traditionally had an area for farm animals on the ground floor and accommodation for people above.

HISTORY *The history of this region is closely linked to the history of Charlemagne, an 8th century French king credited with uniting France's fractious kingdoms and extending its rule throughout Western Europe. El Puerto de Ibañeta is where Charlemagne crossed the Pyrenees to begin his attempted liberation of Spain from the Moors. At a place later named la Croix de Charles, he is said to have fallen to his knees and prayed, his face turned towards Galicia. It became a tradition for French pilgrims to place a small cross in the ground there. Valcarlos, whose Spanish name*

is a direct reference to him, is where he was camped when he heard of the defeat of his deputy **Roland** at the **Battle of Roncesvalles** in 778. Charlemagne was returning to France, when the rearguard of his army, commanded by Roland, was attacked and defeated by a Basque force which made off with the gold they were transporting. This is the battle referred to in the song **La Chanson de Roland** which perpetuates the myth that the attackers were Moors. The Valcarlos route, which today is often referred to as an 'alternative', became popular among pilgrims during the middle-ages due to the improved security provided by the construction of pilgrim albergues along its length. Recently the other (more scenic) route has become far more popular.

PLACE NAME Valley of Carlos, a reference to Charlemagne. In Basque its name is *Luzaide*.

Follow the main road for 2.4km until the Camino veers left on to a minor road and passes through the village of **Gañecoleta** before rejoining the main road after 1.7km. It then follows the main road for another 2.3km before veering left on to a lane. From there it's 4.1km of wooded, mountainous terrain to the top at **Ibañeta** (apart from one place where the Camino briefly meets the road again). **Off-road parts of this route may be difficult in snow, in which case it's advisable to stick to the road.** From the peak it's 1.4km down to Roncesvalles.

At the summit of the **Puerto de Ibañeta**, beside a small modern chapel, is a monument to **Roland (Roldán** in Spanish) and the **Battle of Roncesvalles**. Although the current chapel is very recent, there has been a chapel here since the middle ages. When there was fog or snow the chapel bell was rung to guide pilgrims who had gotten lost.

LEFT ROUTE VIA ORISSON

TOTAL LENGTH 24.6km

TOTAL ASCENT 1,465m, DESCENT -694m

This route is sometimes known as **le Port de Cize** or the **Route Napoléon**. It follows the route of the **Via Traiana**, a Roman road linking Bordeaux and Astorga. In the early days of the Camino Francés this was the most popular route. Its popularity declined during the late middle-ages.

2.4km to Honto / Hontto

Ferme Ithurburia, to the left of the Camino. Evening meal. Breakfast. Laundry facilities. Singles/doubles from 70€. Tel 05 59 37 11 17

LEFT 7.5km (3h32m) to Orisson

REFUGE ORISSON

Private | 28 beds | 43€ | April to October | On the Camino on the right in an isolated location. Laundry facilities. Café / restaurant. During peak times they open another building (Kayola). It's advisable to reserve well in advance. Website www.refuge-orisson.com Tel 06 38 26 97 38 Open 12:00

INFORMATION Café with sandwiches, Basque cakes, etc.

LEFT 0.6km (0h18m) to Borda

ALBERGUE BORDA

Private | 12 beds | 42€ | April to October | On the Camino on the left. Communal evening meal. Private rooms. Good reports. Reservations from their: Website www.aubergeborda.com Tel 06 61 92 97 43 Open 14:30

3.8km after Orisson at a place called Pic d'Hostatéguy you'll pass the statue of *La Vierge du Chemin* with (weather permitting) panoramic views of the western Pyrenees. From there it's another 8.9km to the highest point at altitude 1427m, after which it's another 4.2km down to Roncesvalles.

Welcome to Spain and Navarra!

There are two options when descending into Roncesvalles, the most popular route to the left is quite a steep descent through the forest, while the route to the right is slightly longer, descending more gently along an unpaved road via the church at Puerto de Ibañeta.

LEFT AND RIGHT ROUTE REJOIN IN RONCESVALLES

RIGHT from Valcarlos 12.0km (5h30m)

LEFT from Borda / Orrison 16.1km (5h50m) to

Roncesvalles / Orreaga

ALBERGUE DE PEREGRINOS DE RONCESVALLES

Monastery | 183 beds | 14€ | In a newly renovated part of the old monastery. Microwaves, laundry facilities. Breakfast. Run by volunteers from the Dutch Camino Association. Stupendous, modern facilities. In winter pilgrims are accommodated in the main monastery building. Reservations on www.alberguederoncesvalles.com During busy periods booking ahead is a good idea. Tel 948 760 000 Open 14:00

INFORMATION Cafés, restaurants which do pilgrim menus and several hotels.

Tourist Office in the old mill, beside the road up from the main entrance to the monastery. There is a special **blessing for pilgrims** during the final mass which starts at 20:00 Monday to Friday and 18:00 at weekends.

FOOD The restaurants in the hotels all do **Pilgrim Menus**. If you reserve the albergue you can reserve a meal at the same time. The local trout speciality is usually on offer. In the albergue there are vending machines with snacks. The café of Casa Sabina opens at 07:00.

SIGHTS Often referred to as a village, in reality Roncesvalles consists of little more than a (mostly disused) monastery surrounded by a number of establishments which cater to passing pilgrims and tourists. It has a permanent population of about 25. The village referred to in historical documents is actually Burguete (original known as Borgo de Roncesvalles), 2.8km further along the Camino. Roncesvalles monastery has several churches. The one most in use today is the **Iglesia de la Real Colegiata de Santa María** (near the summer albergue) which dates from the 13th century, although it was substantially reconstructed in the mid-20th. It was built by the same **King Sancho VII** who founded Saint-Jean. It is Gothic, similar to Notre Dame de Paris, and is one of the earliest examples of Gothic ecclesiastical architecture in Spain. Above its main altar is the beautiful statue of **La Virgen de Orreaga**, made of wood and covered in silver leaf. To one side is a statue of **Santiago Peregrino**. The **Capilla de Sancti Spiritus** or **Silo de Carlomagno**, on the main road in front of the monastery, dates from the 12th century and is probably the oldest building in Roncesvalles. It is an octagonal funeral chapel where masses were traditionally said for pilgrims who died in the monastery's hospital. Beside it is the small Gothic **Iglesia de Santiago** or **Iglesia de los Peregrinos**, which was reconstructed during the 20th century. Today it houses the bell which previously guided pilgrims to the **Puerto de Ibañeta**. There is also a **Museum** containing many historic objects related to the Camino including the relics of up to thirty saints! The monastery's

cloister is of relatively recent and unremarkable construction and houses the earthly remains of the aforementioned **King Sancho VII**. The old and much lamented pilgrim albergue is across the road from the monastery's main entrance. The forest of **Sorgintzaren** between Roncesvalles and Burguete was reputed in the 16th century to be the base of a coven of witches. Rumours of witchcraft were widespread throughout northern Navarra at that time leading to nine people being sentenced to burn at the stake by the **Inquisition**. **Burguete** features in **Earnest Hemingway's** novel *The Sun Also Rises*.

HISTORY Throughout history waves of invaders including Romans, Celts, Barbarians and Goths have passed this way taking advantage of the relative ease with which the mountains can be crossed. In their footsteps came hordes of pilgrims, making Roncesvalles an important and symbolic Camino landmark at the gateway to Spain. Since its creation the monastery of **Nuestra Señora de Roncesvalles** has always been heavily influenced by French religious orders and belonged for a time to the monastery of **Sainte-Foy de Conques** which is on the *Chemin du Puy*. In medieval times pilgrims could stay for three days in bad weather in order to give them time to recover from the hardships of the Pyrenees. While here they could avail services such as beard trimming, foot washing and, if they were feeling plush, a bath!

PLACE NAME Ronces, prickly shrub common in this area, valle means valley. Its name in French is *Roncevaux* and in Basque it's *Orreaga*.

2.8km (0h43m) to **Burguete**

ALBERGUE LORENTX

Private | 40 beds | 20€ | On the Camino on the left. Kitchen, laundry facilities. Breakfast. Tel 623 286 129 Website *lorentxaterpea.com* Open 14:00

INFORMATION Cafés, bank, pharmacy - however, most things will be closed if you're passing through early in the morning. Several cafés on and near the Camino open for breakfast.

The Camino takes an abrupt right turn at the red Santander sign.

3.4km (0h59m) to **Espinal / Aurizberri**

ALBERGUE HAIZEA

Private | 30 beds | 17€ | On Calle Saroiberri, left at the main road. Café / restaurant. Breakfast. Private rooms. Reservations from their website *www.hostalhaizea.com* Tel 948 760 379

ALBERGUE IRUGOIENEA

Private | 21 beds | 13€ | **Easter to October** | On Calle Oihanilun in Barrio Santiago which is left at the main road. Laundry facilities. Evening meals (mixed reports). Breakfast. Private rooms. Also pickups from Roncesvalles. Reservations from their website *www.irugoienea.com* Tel 622 606 196 Open 14:00

INFORMATION Café (although not particularly welcoming) on a small square to the right, bakery and shop, all on the Camino.

5.2km to Viskarret, new café **Bar Dena Ona** before the village and the traditional **Bar Juan** on main square with its amazing tortillas. Small **Covirán supermarket** on your left at the end of the village. 1.9km to Linzoain, after that it's 7.8km to Zubiri with a steep descent into the valley of the river Arre. The Camino continues straight along the riverbank and doesn't go through Zubiri which is on the other side of the bridge.

15.0km (4h32m) to **Zubiri**

ALBERGUE RÍO ARGA IBAIA

Private | 20 beds | 15€ | In the first building on the left after you cross the bridge. Kitchen, laundry facilities. Private rooms. Website www.alberguerioarga.com
Tel 680 104 471 Open 13:00

ALBERGUE ZALDIKO

Private | 24 beds | 15€ | **March to October** | On the right after you cross the bridge. Microwaves, laundry facilities. Breakfast. Cramped dorms. Website www.alberguezaldiko.com Tel 609 736 420 Open 12:00

EL PALO DE AVELLANO

Private | 57 beds | 20€ | **March to October** | Turn right at the church on to the main road, Avenida de Roncesvalles, it's on the right. Laundry facilities. Evening meal. Breakfast. Private rooms. Website www.elpalodeavellano.com Tel 666 499 175 Open 13:00

ALBERGUE SEGUNDA ETAPA

Private | 12 beds | 16€ | **March to October** | Just past *El Palo de Avellano*. Laundry facilities, microwaves. Breakfast. Website www.alberguesegundaetapa.com
Tel 697 186 560 Open 13:00

ALBERGUE DE PEREGRINOS DE ZUBIRI

Municipal | 70 beds | 12€ | **April to October** | Across the road from *Albergue Segunda Etapa*. Basic kitchen with coffee and snack machines. Renovated in 2019. If locked call 628 324 186 Open 13:00

ALBERGUE SUSEIA

Private | 8 beds | 16€ | **April to October** | Continue past the Municipal then past the municipal pool, after about 200m it's on a street of new houses on the left called Calle Murelu. Laundry facilities. Private rooms. Website www.alberguesuseia.com
Tel 679 667 603 Open 13:00

INFORMATION Shops, cafés, pharmacy (past the municipal pool and right) and a bank. On the square in front of the church, **Bar Baserri**, does a good Pilgrim Menu.

Bar Valentín after the bridge turn left, opens at 07:00.

SIGHTS Entering Zubiri you will cross the **Puente de la Rabia** or **Rabies Bridge**, so named because of the local legend that herding animals around its main pillar three times would cure them of rabies. The origin of this legend appears to come from the belief that a local saint, Santa Quiteria, was buried beneath the bridge. Fiestas first weekend in August.

PLACE NAME *Zubia / bridge, herri / village. Basque.*

The Camino bypasses Larrasoaña. If you want to visit the village turn right to cross the bridge.

5.3km (1h37m) to **Larrasoaña**

ALBERGUE DE PEREGRINOS DE LARRASOÑA

Municipal | 52 beds | 10€ | **April to December** | Turn left at the church and continue to the main square. Kitchen. In two buildings a short distance apart. Run by the local community. Tel 626 718 417 Open 13:00

ALBERGUE SAN NICOLÁS

Private | 40 beds | 16€ | **March to October** | Turn right at the church, it's just past the shop on Calle Sorandi. Kitchen, laundry facilities. Evening meal. Breakfast. Good reports. Website www.alberguesannicolas.com Tel 619 559 225 Open 12:00

INFORMATION Colourful shop with Camino staples, turn right at the church on to Calle San Nicolás, and continue for 200m.

SIGHTS Larrasoaña is a pretty village and worth the short detour. It is considered a good example of a **pueblo calle**, having a layout where the village was built along a main street lined by tall houses, rather than developing haphazardly around a church or monastery. The objective of this form of urban planning was to encourage a nucleus of economic activity in the centre of the village. There are also some beautiful examples of typical Basque houses. The village church, Iglesia de San Nicolás de Bari, is Baroque.

3.7km (1h09m) to **Zuriain**

PARADA DE ZURIAIN

Private | 7 beds | 13€ | March to October | On the left just over a bridge. Café / restaurant. Laundry facilities. Evening meal. private rooms. Tel 699 556 741

INFORMATION Café.

3.1km (0h54m) to **Zabaldika**

ALBERGUE PARROQUIAL DE ZABALDIKA

Parish | 18 beds | donativo | April to October | A little off the Camino, watch out for the sign pointing right across the road and up a steep path (easy to miss). It's beside the church mentioned in the next paragraph. Kitchen, laundry facilities. Communal evening meal. Breakfast. Positive reports. Website malele11.wixsite.com/zabaldika Tel 619 436 863 Open 13:00

SIGHTS The 13th century Romanesque church of **San Esteban / St Stephan** in Zabaldika sits at the top of a steep hill with a view over the valley of the Río Arga. The main altar is 17th century with polychrome painting, typical of the region around Pamplona. It features the Virgin Mary and St Stephan in its centre, flanked by other saints. A spiral staircase leads to the tower where the smaller of the two bells, which was cast in 1377, is believed to be the oldest in use in Navarra. The nuns don't mind if you ring them!

3.5km (1h05m) to **Villava / Atarrabia**

HERMANOS MARISTAS / TRINIDAD DE ARRE

Parish | 34 beds | 10€ | In the building on your right as you cross the bridge over the river Ultzama. Kitchen, laundry facilities. This albergue is in a beautiful old building and has a nice enclosed garden. Mass 20:00 in the albergue's Romanesque chapel, **Santísima Trinidad**. Tel 691 619 028 Open 15:00

ALBERGUE MUNICIPAL

Municipal | 54 beds | 19€ | After the Parish continue along the Camino and it's to the left on Calle Atarrabia, signposted. Laundry facilities, microwaves. Evening meal. Breakfast. Website www.alberguedevillava.com Tel 649 713 943 Open 12:00

INFORMATION Shops, cafés, banks and a pharmacy on or near the Camino. **Día supermarket**, turn right off the Camino on to Calle Padre Murillo and keep walking until you see it to your right. **Panadería Taberna**, also right on to Calle Padre Murillo, opens early for lovely coffee and pastries.

SIGHTS The **bridge** you cross over the Río Ultzama was built in the 13th century and has six segmental arches. The **Via Traiana** intersected here with another Roman Road which came down from the Baztán Valley. Villava is the birthplace of the famous cyclist **Miguel Induráin** who in 1995 became the first person to win the Tour de

France five times in a row. Just before crossing the bridge another route to Santiago called the **Camino de Baztán** joins the Camino Francés. The Camino de Baztán starts at the cathedral in Bayonne and takes about six days to arrive at this point. It is fully waymarked and there is a number of pilgrim albergues and other accommodation available. A free guide to it is available by contacting the author at caminoguide-contact@gmail.com

PLACE NAME *Villava comes from the Latin, villa nova / new town. Atarrabia is its Basque name.*

It's suburban streets from here to Pamplona. The Camino turns right shortly before a roundabout with a fountain in the middle and crosses a main road and turns right again. The 'zig-zag' footbridge over the river is the quickest way to Casa Paderborn, otherwise continue straight along the riverbank to Puente de la Magdalena.

4.5km (1h15m) to **Pamplona / Iruña**

PLEASE NOTE: during the Festival of San Fermín (6 - 15 July) most accommodation in Pamplona will be booked out months in advance.

CASA PADERBORN

Private | 26 beds | 10€ | March to October | A little off the Camino before the city walls. Cross the zig-zag bridge or turn left immediately after Puente de la Magdalena. It's on the banks of the river. Run by German volunteers. Laundry facilities. Breakfast. Small garden by the river. Website jakobusfreunde-paderborn.com
Tel 948 395 423 Open 13:00

ALBERGUE CASA IBARROLA

Private | 20 beds | 20€ | On the Camino on the right as it enters the old city. Kitchen, laundry facilities. Space-agey capsule beds, good facilities, positive reports. Website www.casaibarrola.com Tel 692 208 463 Open 12:00

ALBERGUE DE PAMPLONA / IRUÑAKO ATERPEA

Private | 22 beds | 18€ | On the Camino on the left. Kitchen, laundry facilities. Breakfast. Spacious, modern dorms. Website www.alberguedepamplona.info
Tel 685 734 207 Open 11:00

PLAZA CATEDRAL

Private | 35 beds | 18€ | Opposite the cathedral a little to the left of the Camino. Kitchen, laundry facilities. Breakfast. Website www.albergueplazacatedral.com
Tel 620 913 968 Open 12:00

JESÚS Y MARÍA

Municipal | 112 beds | 11€ | closed Christmas | Left of the Camino on Calle Compañía, turn left at Calle Curia. Kitchen, laundry facilities. Under the management of ASPACE, an organisation which offers employment to people with cerebral palsy. Comfortable, modern. Pamplona's oldest pilgrim albergue. Tel 648 008 932 Open 12:00

ALBERGUE DIOCESANO

Religious | 14 beds | donativo | May to October | Right of the Camino at the end of Calle Mayor, at Calle Recoletas, 1 (Betania Centro Cultural). Communal evening meal. New in 2023. Open 14:00

INFORMATION Pamplona, with a population of 197,000, is the biggest city on the Camino Francés and has all services you're likely to need. **Tourist Office** on Plaza Consistorial next to the **Ayuntamiento / Town Hall**. **Supermarket Carrefour** on Calle Mayor which is on the Camino, open all day and Sunday morning. **Pilgrim shop Caminoteca** on Calle Curia, open from 07:00 every day March to October, has everything for pilgrims, run by pilgrims from Hungary. **Locutorio / Call Shop** for SIM cards, internet, printing, on Calle San Lorenzo, right off Calle Mayor. Free **WiFi** on Plaza del Castillo. If you need to forward excess luggage there's a **Post Office / Correos** on Paseo Sarasate, just south west of Plaza del Castillo, open Monday to Friday 08:30 to 20:30 and Saturday 09:30 to 14:00. There are also hotels to suit everyone's pockets. However, **beware!** Pamplona is popular for party / stag / hen weekends and some of the accommodation around the centre also caters to this clientèle. The famous **running of the bulls / encierro** takes place here during the **San Fermín** festival from 7 to 14 July, during this time this otherwise pleasant and beautiful city becomes *Backpacker Hell*.

FOOD Pamplona is a good place to sample typical Navarran cuisine, such as **Alcachofas con Almejas / Artichokes with Clams**, or the vegetarian **Borraja con Patata / Borage with Potatoes**. Several restaurants on Calle San Nicolás, just west of Plaza del Castillo do regional specialities and also have cheap *menús del día* (from about 11€). **Restaurante Catachu** on Calle Lindachiquia is good. Historic **Café Iruña** on Plaza del Castillo was a favourite Hemingway haunt and, despite being a tourist attraction, is also a good place to try the *tapas / pinxos*. **Bodegón Sarria** on Calle Estafeta is good for *pinxos*. Restaurant **Mesón El Caballo Blanco**, on Calle Redin, beside the cathedral, has been recommended, as has **Bar Oreja** on Calle Joaquín Jarauta. For vegetarian food **Sarasate** on Calle San Nicolás has been recommended, it's above a fish shop / *pescajería*. On the same street **Restaurante Baserri** is also recommended. **Café Valor** on Paseo de Saraste has delicious *Churros con Chocolate*.

SIGHTS The imposing 16th century **city walls**, which you pass through at the **Portal de Francia / Gate of France** are a reminder of Pamplona's importance in the history of this region. The site of **Pamplona Cathedral** was originally occupied by a temple to the Roman gods. This was replaced by a series of churches until the present cathedral was built in 1501. Originally entirely Gothic in style, both inside and out, an unadorned neo-Classical western *façade*, completed in the 18th century, now conceals the original Gothic *façade*. Inside at its centre is the mausoleum of **King Carlos III** (the Noble) and his wife **Leonora de Trastámara**. The dog and lion at their feet symbolise loyalty and royal lineage. On the main altar is a 12th century wood carving of **Santa María la Real**. The **Kings of Navarra** were traditionally crowned kneeling before this altar. A door from the cathedral gives access to the **cloister** which was completed in 1375, pre-dating the current cathedral, and is considered one of the finest Gothic cloisters in Spain. The cathedral's north tower contains a twelve tonne **bell** called Maria which is the largest bell in regular use in Spain. The **Cathedral Museum** adjoins the cloister. Among other objects on display are carvings of medieval musical instruments, similar to the carvings on the *Portica de la Gloria* in Santiago. Cathedral, cloister and museum 3€ with *Credencial*. It opens at 10:00 and closes at 19:00 in summer and 17:00 in winter. The **Ayuntamiento** is on the Camino. It dates from the mid-18th century and has an ornate Baroque *façade*. Behind it to the right is the **municipal market**, great for fresh fruit. To visit the elegant centrepiece of Pamplona, the **Plaza del Castillo**, take a left off the Cam-