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Walking Guide to the

CAMINO DE SANTIAGO

History, Culture, Architecture

Gerald Kelly
2027 Edition

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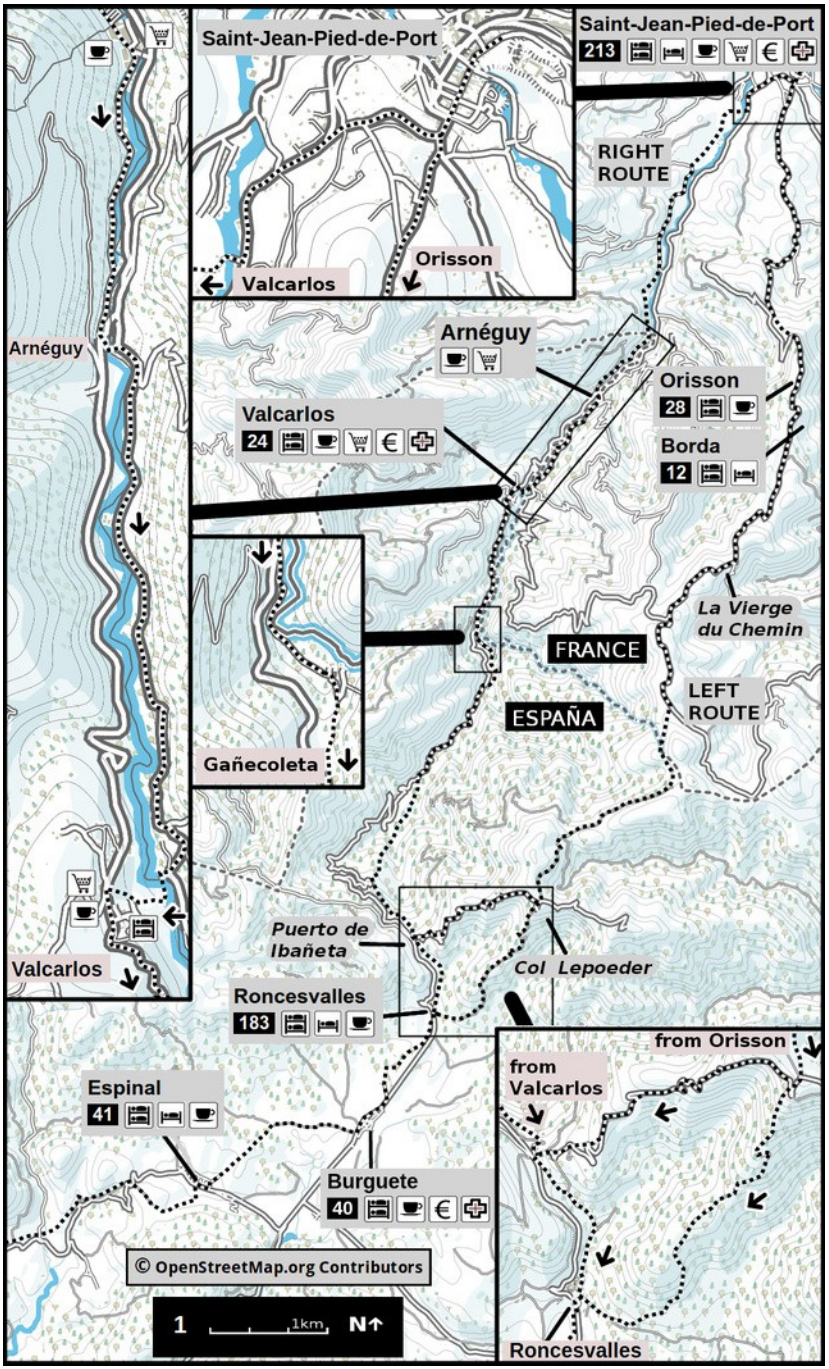
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Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port
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from Orisson
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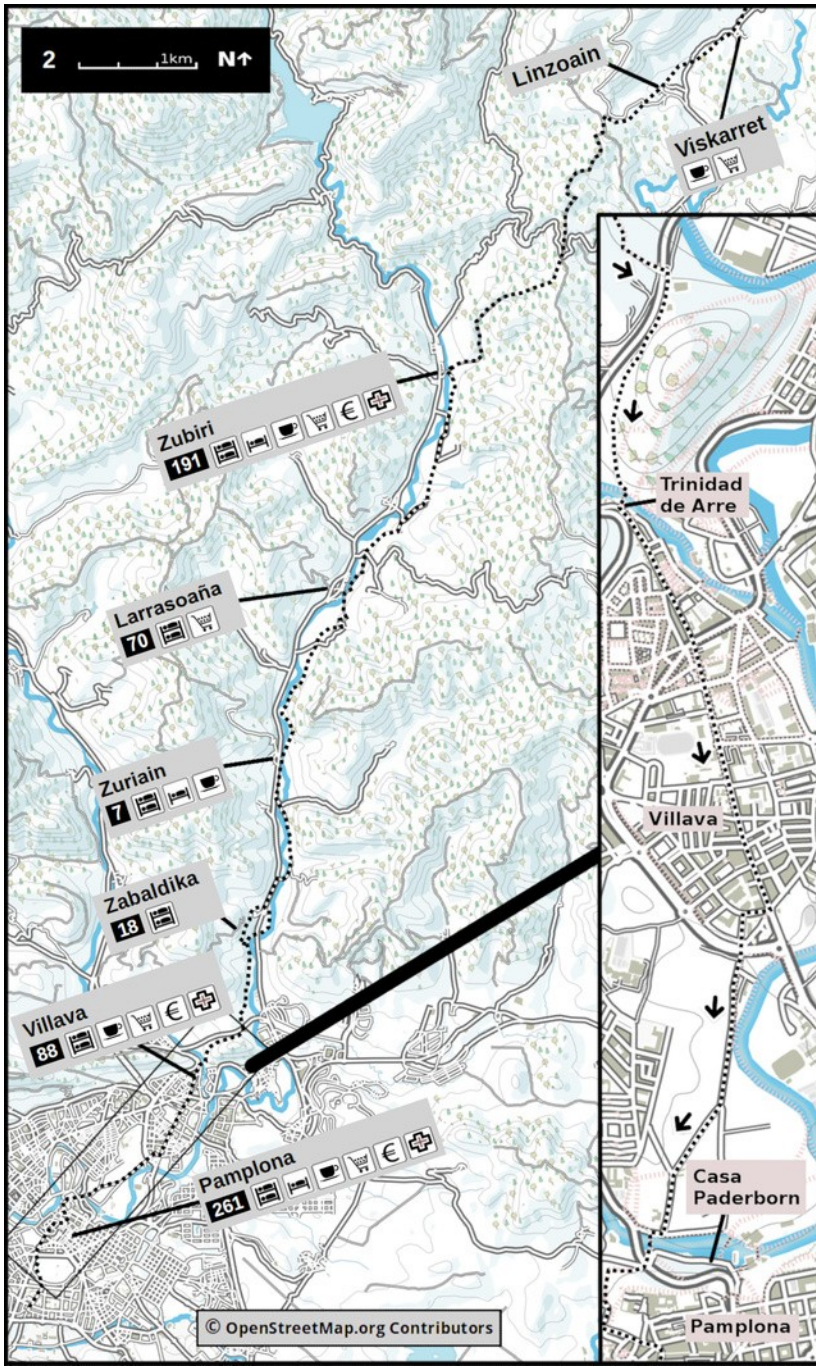
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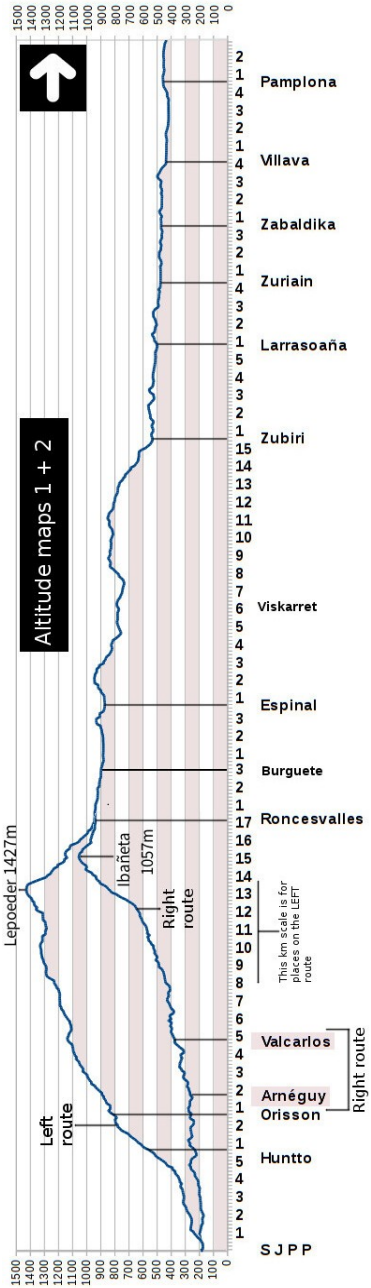


WALKING NOTES

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 route is the track over the pass at **Lepoeder** (called here the *Left* route, but also known as the *Route Napoléon*). It starts with a steep 660m climb over 7.5km to **Orisson** (altitude 800m). After that there's a less steep 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** or **Borda** (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**.

The **Valcarlos** route (described here as the *Right* route) peaks at **Puerto de Ibañeta** (altitude 1057m) which is 400m lower than **Lepoeder**. However, the total amount of climbing is about the same as the Left route because between Saint-Jean and Valcarlos there are frequent small ups and downs.

After **Valcarlos** it ascends steeply 400m over 5km to **Puerto de Ibañeta**. After that it's an easy walk 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, they will be aware of walking conditions and the weather.

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

Altitude: 175m. Map .

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).

(1) REFUGE MUNICIPAL / ACCUEIL PÈLERIN | **Municipal | 32 beds | 16€ | March to November** | 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

(2) GÎTE DE LA PORTE SAINT-JACQUES | **Private | 14 beds | 49€ | Easter 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 15:00

(3) GÎTE BEILARI | **Private | 14 beds | 47€ | 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 15:00

(4) GÎTE LE LIÈVRE ET LA TORTUE | **Private | 13 beds | 24€ | 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

(5) GÎTE ESTEBAN ETXEA | **Private | 12 beds | 23€ | February to November** | At 29 rue de la Citatelle. Communal evening meal. Private rooms. Tel 06 38 22 80 05 Open 15:00

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

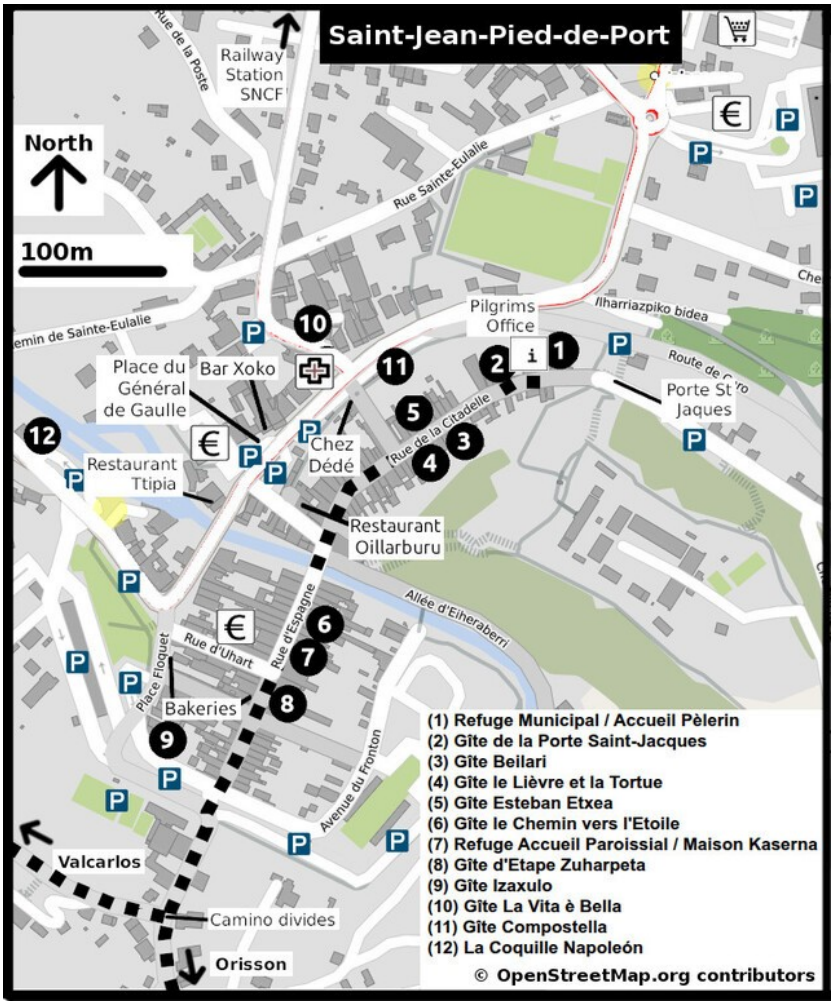
(6) GÎTE LE CHEMIN VERS L'ETOILE | **Private | 46 beds | 30€ | March to October** | At 21 rue d'Espagne. Laundry facilities. Evening meal (groups only), breakfast. Website *www.pelerinage-saint-jacques-compostelle.com* Tel 06 70 20 82 13 Open 16:00

(7) REFUGE ACCUEIL PAROISSIAL / MAISON KASERNA | **Parish | 14 beds | 25€ | April to October** | At 43 rue d'Espagne. Reported friendly with good food. Website *www.paroisse-saint-jean-pied-de-port.com Tel* 05 59 37 65 17 Open 15:00

(8) GÎTE D'ETAPE ZUHARPETA | **Private | 16 beds | 29€** | From rue de la Citadelle follow the Camino across the bridge then after about 200m turn right into rue Zuharpeta. Café / restaurant. Website *gitezuharpeta.fr* Tel 06 21 30 03 05 Open 16:00

(9) GÎTE IZAXULO | **Private | 18 beds | 25€ | Easter 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

(10) GÎTE LA VITA È BELLA | **Private | 10 beds | 27€ | Easter to October** | On Place du Trinket. Laundry facilities. Communal evening meal. Breakfast. Private rooms. Website *la-vita-e-bella.fr* Tel 06 72 10 04 63 Open 15:00



(11) GÎTE COMPOSTELLA | **Private** | **14 beds** | **26€** | **March to October** | On route d'Arnéguy, to the right of the Camino after crossing the river. Kitchen. Breakfast. Private rooms. Tel 06 21 37 18 31 Open 14:00

(12) LA COQUILLE NAPOLEÓN | **Private** | **10 beds** | **22€** | **March to October** | 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

INFO Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port has all services. 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 (Pilgrim Passports)**, information and advice on weather conditions and help finding accommodation, etc., open all day and 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. **Bakeries** that open at 0700 on rue d'Espagne (which is also the Camino) and another one turning right on rue de la Fontaine then left at the end. ● **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 on a narrow street between Place du Trinket and rue de la Citadelle. **Restaurant Oillarburu** has also been recommended, it's on run de l'Eglise, bottom of rue de la Citadelle. **Bar Xoko**, on Place du Trinquet, is a nice spot for an apéritif and people watching.

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 23.4km
TOTAL ASCENT 1530m / 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 720m 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 shopping centre and petrol station. Shops, cafés and restaurants. Walk towards the petrol station and continue straight.

1.2km to Arnéguy. The Camino crosses the river into France again and continues on a minor road through the village of Ondarrola, where it crosses the river again back into Spain then up a steep hill to Valcarlos.

RIGHT ROUTE Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port ➔ Valcarlos
Distance: 11.5km (4h12m) | Total ascent: 527m / descent: -337m

RIGHT 11.5km 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

INFO 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 24.3km
TOTAL ASCENT 1465m / 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 ROUTE Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port → Orisson
Distance: 7.5km (3h32m) | Total ascent: 663m / descent: -43m

LEFT 7.5km to: ***Orisson***

REFUGE ORISSON | **Private | 28 beds | 50€ | 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 13:00

INFO Café with sandwiches, Basque cakes, etc.

LEFT ROUTE Orisson → Borda
Distance: 0.6km (0h18m) | Total ascent: 58m / descent: -17m

LEFT 0.6km to: ***Borda***

ALBERGUE BORDA | **Private | 12 beds | 50€ | 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 ROUTE Valcarlos → Roncesvalles
Distance: 12km (5h30m) | Total ascent: 998m / descent: -421m
LEFT ROUTE Borda → Roncesvalles
Distance: 16.1km (5h50m) | Total ascent: 722m / descent: -634m

RIGHT 12km | LEFT 16.1km to: *Roncesvalles / Roncevaux / Orreaga*

ALBERGUE DE PEREGRINOS DE RONCESVALLES | **Monastery | 183 beds | 15€** | 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 their website *www.alberguederoncesvalles.com* During busy periods booking ahead is a good idea. Tel 948 760 000 Open 14:00

INFO 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 hoards 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.*

Roncesvalles ➔ Burguete
Distance: 2.8km (0h43m) | Total ascent: 4m / descent: -53m

2.8km to: ***Burguete***

ALBERGUE LORENTX | **Private | 40 beds | 17€ | March to October** | On the Camino on the left. Kitchen, laundry facilities. Breakfast. Tel 623 286 129 Website *lorentxaterpea.com* Open 15:00

INFO Cafés, shop (open 08:00, closed Sunday), bank, pharmacy. 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.`

Burguete ➔ Espinal
Distance: 3.4km (0h59m) | Total ascent: 54m / descent: -73m

3.4km to: ***Espinal / Aurizberri***

ALBERGUE HAIZEA | **Private | 20 beds | 17€ | March to November** | On Calle Saroiberri, left at the main road. Café / restaurant. Breakfast. Private rooms. Reservations from their website *www.hostalhaizea.com* Tel 948 760 379 Open 16:00

ALBERGUE IRUGOIENEA | **Private | 21 beds | 15€ | 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 698 943 009 Open 14:00

INFO Café on a small square to the right, bakery, both 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.

Espinal ➔ Zubiri
Distance: 15km (4h32m) | Total ascent: 314m / descent: -655m

15km to: ***Zubiri***

ALBERGUE RÍO ARGA IBAIA | **Private | 20 beds | 17€** | 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 12:00

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 | 17€ | 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 | 16€ | March to November** | Across the road from *Albergue Segunda Etapa*. Basic kitchen with coffee and snack machines. Website *concejodezubiri.es If* locked call 628 324 186 Open 12:00

ALBERGUE SUSEIA | **Private | 8 beds | 20€ | Easter 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

INFO Shops, cafés, a pharmacy (past the municipal pool and right) and a bank. On the square in front of the church, **Café / Bakery Arrasate** opens early and does nice tortillas. **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.

Zubiri ➔ Larrasoaña
Distance: 5.3km (1h37m) | Total ascent: 117m / descent: -153m

5.3km to: ***Larrasoaña***

ALBERGUE DE PEREGRINOS DE LARRASOAÑA | **Municipal | 30 beds | 15€ | April to October** | Turn left at the church and continue to the main square.

Microwave. Recently renovated. Tel 626 718 417 Open 13:00
ALBERGUE SAN NICOLÁS | **Private | 40 beds | 18€** | **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 14:00
INFO 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.

Larrasoaña → Zuriain
Distance: 3.7km (1h09m) | Total ascent: 92m / descent: -115m

3.7km to: ***Zuriain***

PARADA DE ZURIAIN | **Private | 7 beds | 20€** | **Easter to October** | On the left just over a bridge. Café / restaurant. Laundry facilities. Evening meal. private rooms. Website *laparadadezuriain.es* Tel 699 556 741 Closed Tuesdays
INFO Café.

Zuriain → Zabaldika
Distance: 3.1km (0h54m) | Total ascent: 51m / descent: -58m

3.1km 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 14:00
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!

Zabaldika → Villava
Distance: 3.7km (1h10m) | Total ascent: 95m / descent: -135m

3.7km 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 19:30 and 8.00 in the albergue's Romanesque chapel, **Santísima Trinidad**. Website *alberguetrinidadearre.com Tel* 691 619 028 Open 15:00

ALBERGUE MUNICIPAL | **Municipal | 54 beds | 21€** | After the Parish continue along the Camino and it's to the left on Calle Atarrabia, signposted. Laundry facilities, microwaves. Evening meal. Breakfast. Website *aterpevillava.org* Tel 649 713 943 Open 12:00

INFO 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 Ulzama 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 *caminoguidecontact@gmail.com*

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

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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.
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Villava → Pamplona
Distance: 4.5km (1h15m) | Total ascent: 53m / descent: -32m

4.5km 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.

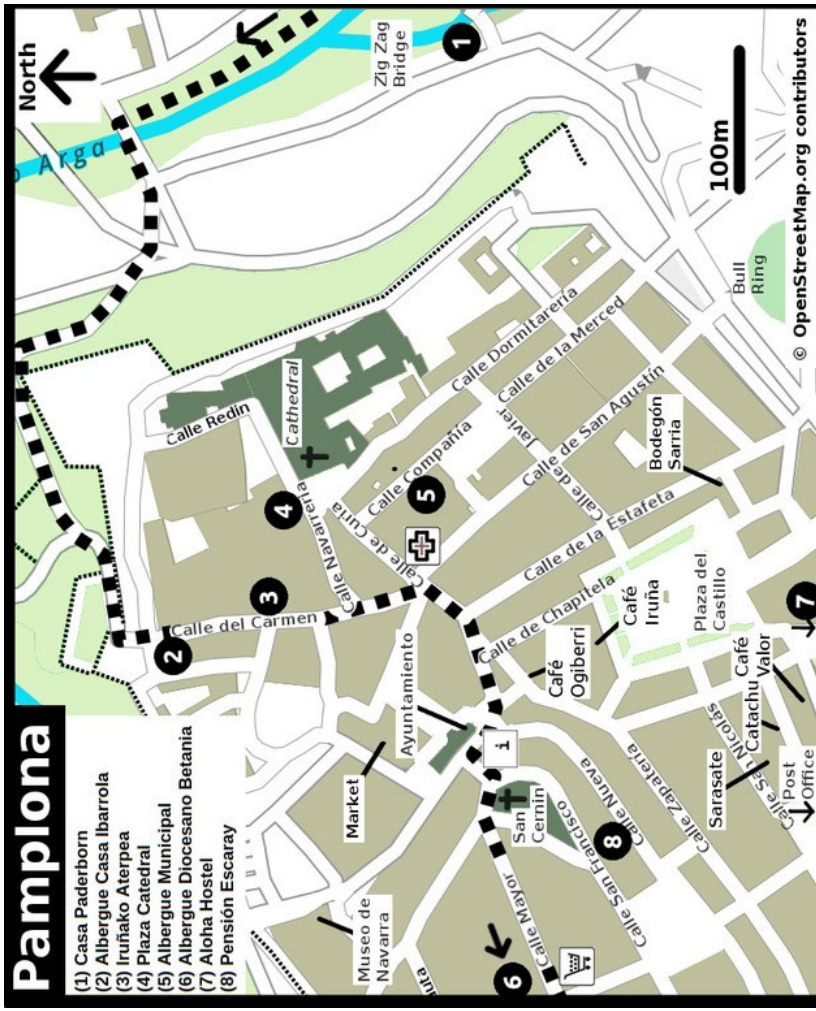
(1) CASA PADERBORN | **Private | 26 beds | 10€ | March to October** | A little off the Camino before the city walls. Cross the zig-zag bridge or turn left immediately after Puente de la Magdalena. It's on the banks of the river. Run by German volunteers. Laundry facilities. Breakfast. Small garden by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

(2) ALBERGUE CASA IBARROLA | **Private | 20 beds | 29€** | 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 948 223 332 Open 12:00

(3) ALBERGUE DE PAMPLONA / IRUÑAKO ATERPEA | **Private | 22 beds | 20€** | On the Camino on the left. Kitchen, laundry facilities. Breakfast. Spacious, modern dorms. Website *www.alberguedepamplona.info* Tel 685 734 207 Open 13:00

(4) 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

(5) JESÚS Y MARÍA | **Municipal | 112 beds | 12€ | 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

(6) ALBERGUE DIOCESANO BETANIA | **Religious | 20 beds | donativo | March 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 13:00

(7) ALOHA HOSTEL | **Private | 26 beds | 25€** | Leave Plaza del Castillo by its south west corner, walk down Avenida San Ignacio to a roundabout, it's on Calle Sangüesa opposite and a little left. Kitchen, laundry facilities. Website *www.alohahostel.es*
Tel 648 289 403 Open 13:00

Pensión Escaray on Calle Nuevo is a family run guest house in the centre a couple of minutes walk from Plaza del Castillo, it has singles from 25€ and doubles from 45€.

Popular with pilgrims. Tel 948 227 825

INFO 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**. At the southern end of Plaza Consistorial is **Café Ogiberri** which opens at 0630 with coffee and croissants. **Supermarket Carrefour** on Calle Mayor which is on the Camino, open all day and Sunday morning. **Pilgrim shop Caminoteca** on Calle Curia, open from 08:00 every day March to October, has everything for pilgrims, run by pilgrims from Hungary. **Public toilet** 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 has 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 overcrowded and chaotic.

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 15€). **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. **Bar Oreja** on Calle Joaquín Jarauta has been recommended. For vegetarian food **Sarasate** on Calle San Nicolás has been recommended, it's above a fish shop / pescaderia. **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 Camino on to Calle de Chapitela and walk

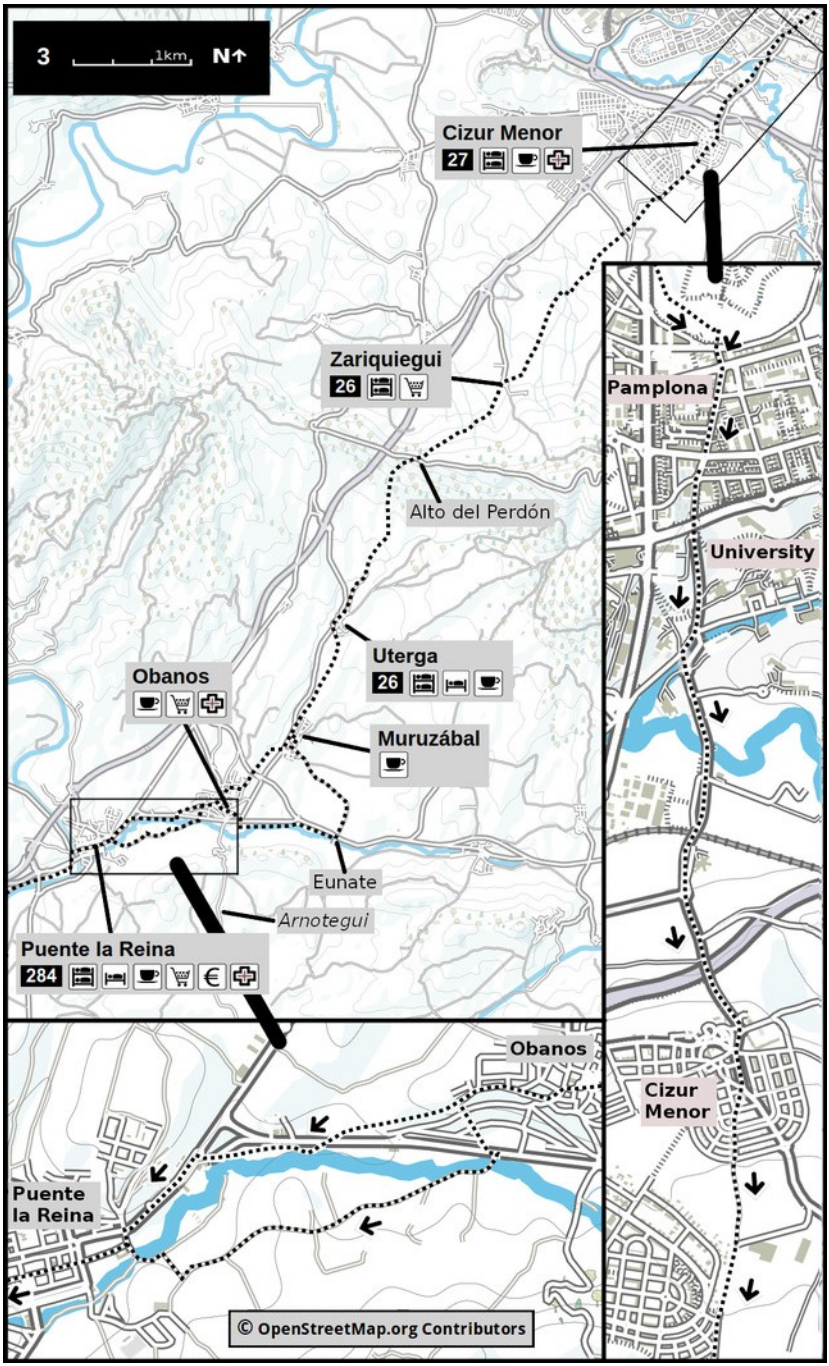
about 50m. ● The Gothic 12th century **Church of San Cernin** (also known as **San Saturnino**), on the Camino just past the Ayuntamiento, is where **San Fermin** was baptised. The adjoining **Capilla de la Virgin del Camino** has a silver statue of the virgin in question (patroness of the city). The 12th century fortified church of **San Nicolás** has both Romanesque and Gothic elements. It houses an enormous Baroque organ. The **Museum of Navarra / Museo de Navarra** on Calle Santo Domingo, has a good collection of historical artefacts from Roman times onwards, including both Hispanic and Mudéjar art, admission 2€. On the Camino just after the centre you will pass, on your left in a park, the **Citadel / Ciudadela,** which dates from the 16th century and replaced a fortress which originally stood on the Plaza del Castillo as the city's main defence. ● Further out near the edge of the city you will pass through the campus of the private **University of Navarra** which was founded by **Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer**, the founder of **Opus Dei**. For an interesting insight into this strange and secretive organisation make a short detour to visit the statue of **La Virgen del Camino**. Turn right off the Camino when you see the CIMA building and, crossing the major road junction, pass between CIMA and the building to its right, and continue for 200m until there's a footpath going down to the left, follow this and you'll see the grotto on your right. Sit and watch for a while. To rejoin the Camino just continue on this path down the hill.

HISTORY *The Roman city of **Pompaelo** was founded on the site of a Basque village called **Iruña** in 74BC by General Pompey (Pompeyo Magno). The Romans had good relations with the native Basques and introduced progressive urban planning and agricultural techniques to the region. Their successors the Visigoths found relations with the natives more difficult when they arrived in the 4th century, but nevertheless ruled over the city until the early 8th century when it came under Muslim rule for about fifty years, until this was interrupted by the arrival of Charlemagne who lay siege to the city and placed it under the control of his allies. ● Pamplona's location on an important access route to Iberia and on the fault line between several ethnic groups, led to it being divided into walled neighbourhoods known as **burgos** (boroughs) in which each group was confined to its own area with contact between them mostly limited to commerce. The **Navarrería** district, around the cathedral, was the Basque area, other areas were set apart for Franks and Jews. These divisions lasted until **King Carlos III** (el Noble / the Noble) abolished the boroughs and had the walls separating them torn down. ● In the 19th century the old city's southern walls were demolished and work began on the construction of the modern city centre to the south. ● Today Pamplona is a prosperous city and the capital of the Autonomous Community of Navarra. It has a per capita income well above the Spanish average.*

PLACE NAME *Pompaelo, Latin, after the city's founder the Roman General Pompey. Its Basque name, Iruña means simply the town.*

If you get lost leaving Pamplona head for the Ciudadela fortress at the corner of Avenida del Ejército and Avenida del Pio XII. The path beside the park, with the fortress to your left, is the Camino. It's clearly marked. Several cafés around here are open early.

The land between Pamplona and Cizur Menor is the site of the mythical battle between **Charlemagne** and the giant Muslim leader **Aigolando** said to have raged for days. It ended in victory for Charlemagne.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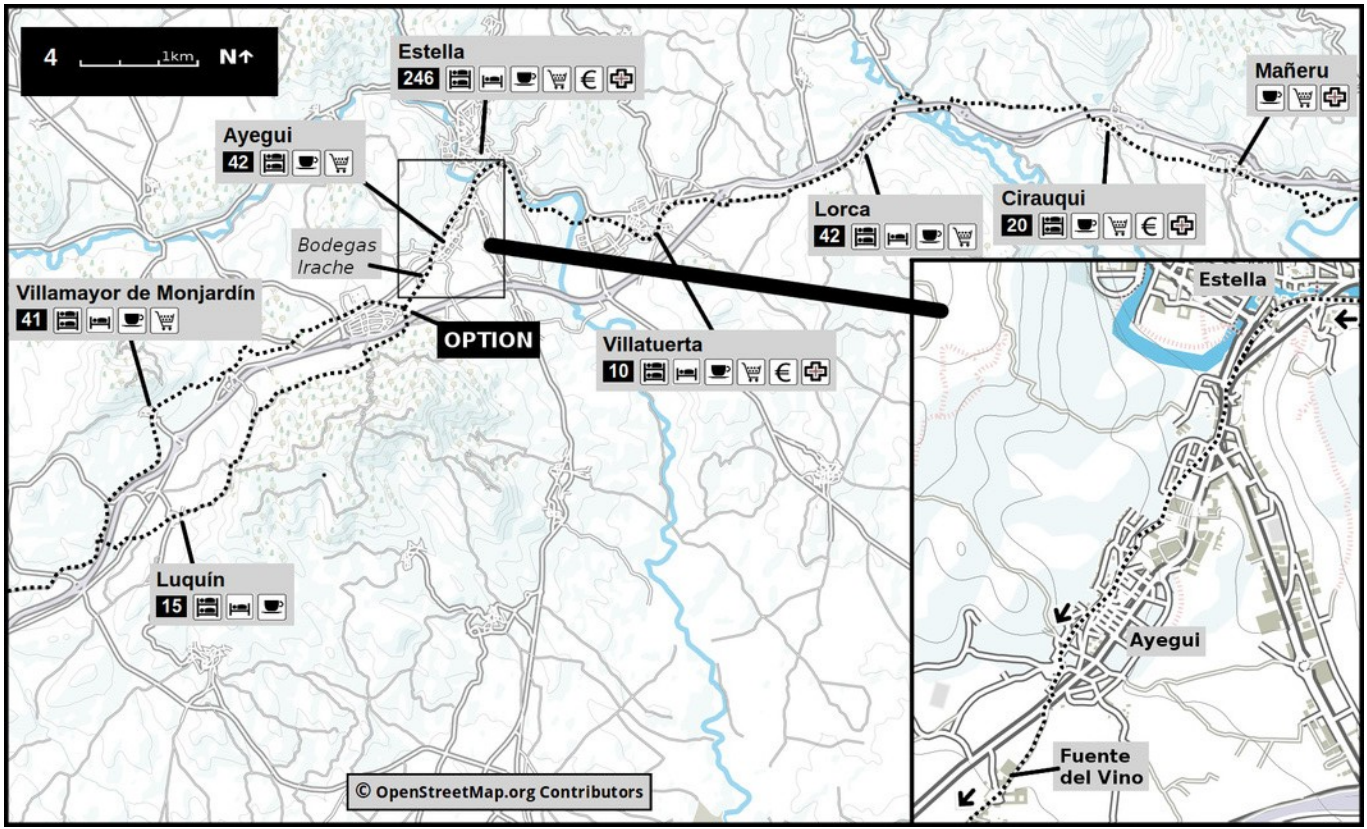
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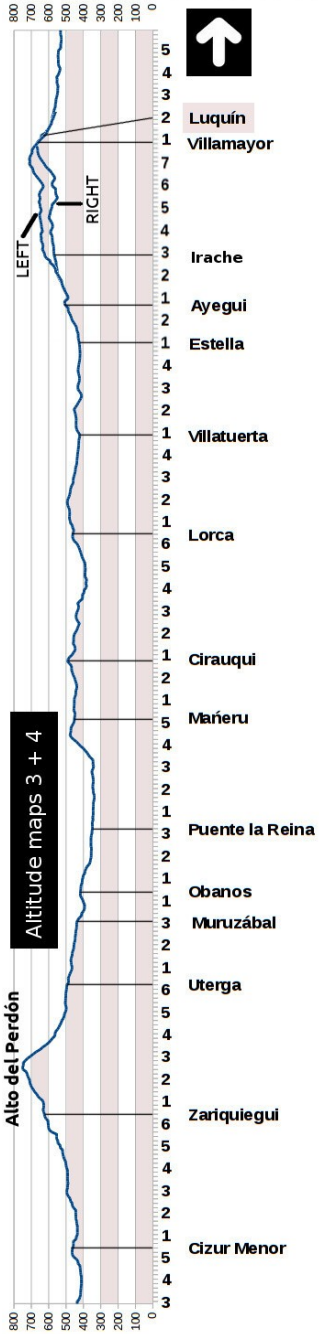

WALKING NOTES

Map 3

After **Cizur Menor** climb 300m in 8km to the **Alto del Perdón**. Then a steep 200m descent over rocky ground to **Uterga**.

Map 4

There's a sharp 100m climb before **Mañeru**, and then many small ups and downs before you get to **Estella**.

After the wine fountain in **Ayegui** and just before Irache there are two ways: go **Right** to pass through **Villamayor de Monjardín**, and then continue on to **Los Arcos**, or go **Left** to pass through the forest to **Luquín** and onwards to **Los Arcos**.

Both routes are approximately the same length, the left route is slightly hillier.

Pamplona → Cizur Menor
Distance: 4.9km (1h25m) | Total ascent: 76m / descent: -73m

4.9km to: *Cizur Menor / Zizur Txikia*

ALBERGUE SANJUANISTA | Religious | 27 beds | 10€ | May to October | Beside the church on your left as you enter the village. Kitchen. Good reports. Tel 616 651 330 Open 12:00

INFO Cafés and a pharmacy. The restaurant **Asador El Tremendo** does a Pilgrim Menu. Fiestas Exaltación de la Santa Cruz 14 September, San Andrés Apóstol 30 November.

SIGHTS The unassuming, suburban village of Cizur Menor was a base for the **Knights Hospitaliers** and the **Order of Malta** from the 12th century, and there has been a pilgrim albergue here since the 13th. The Romanesque fortress church, **Iglesia de San Miguel Arcángelo**, also dates from the 13th century. On your way through you'll pass the village **frontón**, a two-sided concrete enclosure used to play a Basque ball game called **pelota** which involves hitting a ball against the end wall using a curved, scoop-like stick. It's the fastest (non team-sport) ballgame in the world. A type of handball is

also played.

PLACE NAME *Smaller Cizur, as opposed to neighbouring Mayor / Greater. Cizur is a hispanisation of the Basque name Zizur, which is related to the word zintzur, narrow gap between mountains.*

From Cizur Menor it's a 300m climb to the peak of the Alto del Perdón.

Cizur Menor → Zariquiegui
Distance: 5.9km (1h58m) | Total ascent: 197m / descent: -32m

5.9km to: ***Zariquiegui / Zarikiegi***

ALBERGUE SAN ANDRÉS | **Private | 26 beds | 15€ | Easter to October** | To the left of the Camino at the church. For check-in go to the second shop, *La Tienda de Peregrino*. Microwaves. Laundry facilities. Website *www.alberguezariquiegui.com* Tel 626 161 183

INFO Small shops.

SIGHTS **Zariquiegui** has some beautiful Basque houses with wide arched doorways. The village church, **Iglesia de San Andrés**, was originally 12th century Romanesque, today only the south entrance is original. It contains a Gothic Virgin and Child.

Shortly before you reach the peak of the **Alto del Perdón**, where the windmills tower above you like something from a modern-day Don Quijote, you'll pass a drinking fountain. This is where, according to legend, the devil appeared to a parched pilgrim and offered to buy his soul for a drink of water. The pilgrim, no doubt having weighed up his options, decided in view of the unspeakable (and eternal) horrors that awaited him in hell that he could probably manage another while without a drink and politely declined. Whereupon, in a blinding flash of light, St James himself appeared and striking the ground with his staff brought forth a raging torrent of fresh water. Thus saving the pilgrim from a thirsty walk to the next village.

Today, unfortunately, of that raging torrent only a trickle remains.

The peak of **Alto del Perdón** has fantastic views of the route already travelled and the adventures yet to come. At the top is a flat, cut-out **sculpture of medieval pilgrims** on their way to Santiago. The inscription reads:

Donde se cruza el camino del viento con el de las estrellas

Where the way of the wind meets the way of the stars

Observe how the fauna has begun to change from northern European to Mediterranean. Before long you'll begin to see grapevines growing beside the Camino.

There is a steep descent on loose gravel from **Alto del Perdón**. It must be tackled with care.

Zariquiegui → Uterga
Distance: 5.8km (1h49m) | Total ascent: 144m / descent: -273m

5.8km to: ***Uterga***

CASA BAZTÁN | **Private | 26 beds | 16€** | on the Camino on the right. Kitchen, laundry facilities. Evening meal. In a nicely renovated village house. Private rooms.