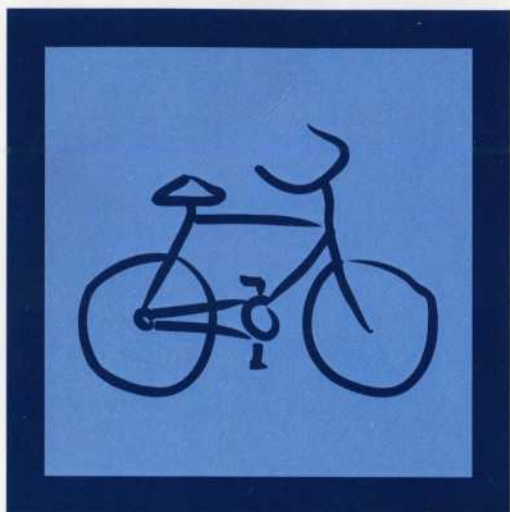
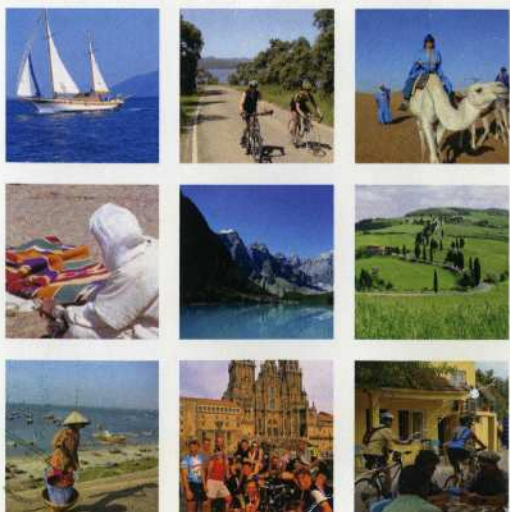


Great Explorations



Cycling Vacations Worldwide



Camino de Santiago



"The Camino de Santiago is one of the three great journeys in the world"
James Michener

Vamonos!

GREAT EXPLORATIONS

A brief history of the Camino de Santiago

The great pilgrimage to Santiago has quite a history. At one time, the various roads which led here through France and northern Spain were collectively known as *El Camino de Santiago* ('The Way of St. James' or 'The Pilgrim Route'). They were lined with monasteries and charitable hospices for the benefit of pilgrims.

Villages also sprang up along the route, and an order of knights was founded for the pilgrims' protection. There was even a guidebook ~ the world's first ~ written by French monk Aymery Picaud who recorded useful travellers' information such as water sources and places to stay. The shrine at Compostela Cathedral was visited by such historic figures as Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain, Francis of Assisi, and Pope Paul II, among others.

It was an extraordinary phenomenon in an age when most people never ventured beyond their own town or village. Why did they come?

Some had their own reasons: social fashion, adventure, the opportunity for marriage, or even for crime. But for most pilgrims, it was simply a matter of faith. They believed that the tomb beneath the high altar at the Compostela Cathedral held the mortal remains of James, son of Zebedee and Salome and first cousin of Jesus Christ; and that St. James's miraculous power would shorten if not prevent their time in purgatory.

Saint James

The legend begins with the claim that Saint James came to Spain to spread the gospel after Christ's crucifixion. He had a vision of the Virgin in Zaragoza and returned to Jerusalem but was beheaded by Herod Agrippa. His body should have been buried in the Nile Delta. But legend has it that two of James's disciples took his remains to Jaffa, where a boat appeared, without sails or crew, and carried them to Padra, twenty kilometres downstream from Santiago.

The voyage took only seven days ~ a miracle in itself ~ since, as Ford wrote in 1845, "the Oriental Steam Company can do nothing like it."

The body was lost and forgotten for the next 750 years, then rediscovered at Compostela in 813 A.D., a time of great significance for the Spanish church.

For context, consider that over the preceding century, the mostly Muslim Moors (North Africans) had swept across the Iberian Peninsula and gained control over all but the kingdom of Asturias (now northern Spain). In the process they introduced a concept entirely new to the west: *jihad* , or holy war. Even after his death, they drew great strength from the idea that a bone from the Prophet Mohammad (whose death in 632 A.D. was still within memory) was preserved in the Great Mosque of Cordoba.

Accordingly, the rumour that Saint James's bones lay buried under an altar on a site traditionally linked with his name was particularly opportune.

That site ~ a hillside named Compostela (from the Latin *campus stellae* , meaning field of stars) after a hermit encountered visions of stars there ~

GREAT EXPLORATIONS

gained such renown that the king of Asturias (coincidence?) came to pay his respects, built a chapel, and adopted Saint James as the champion of Christian Spain.

Within decades Saint James apparently appeared on the battlefield alongside King Ramiro I who swore the saint had fought at the Battle of Clavijo (844) and had personally slaughtered 60,000 Moors. Over the next six centuries it is said the "Santiago Matamoros" (Moor-killer) manifested himself at some forty battles, even assisting in the massacre of American Indians in the New World.

This seems an incongruent image for a man many contemporary Christians see as a humble fisherman-evangelist; but it presented no problems to the Christian propagandists of the day who portrayed him (in myth and art) as a knight on horseback who dispatched hordes of swarthy, bearded Arabs with a single thrust of his sword.

The myth of Santiago was strongest during the age of the First Crusade (1085 A.D.) and the Reconquest; people wanted to believe, and so it gained a kind of truth.

The path and its pilgrims

During the Middle Ages, the route was highly travelled. However, the Black Plague, the Protestant Reformation and political unrest in 16th-century Europe led to its decline until by the 1980s, only a few pilgrims arrived in Santiago annually.

However, since then, the route has attracted a growing number of modern-day pilgrims from around the globe. It was declared the first European Cultural Route by the Council of Europe in October 1987, and the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela was also named a UNESCO's World Heritage Site in 1993.

Keep in mind that Camino de Santiago is not a single trail; it can take one of any number of pilgrimage routes. As with most pilgrimages, the Way of Saint James begins at one's home and ends at one's destiny.

As you begin your "pilgrimage" towards the Cathedral of Santiago, put yourself into the hearts and hopes of those who traveled this same path over the last 1,000 years.

Listen for their voices, consider what the path and countryside tell you, and perhaps, ponder what you ask of it.

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DAY 1 ARRIVE IN PAMPLONA (no cycling on this day)

Dinner included

Depending on when you arrive to Pamplona, you'll want to relax some and prepare for your trip. Your guide will meet you at 7 pm in the hotel lobby take you on a walking tour of Pamplona. The following morning, he will take you to our bike storage and arrange bike fit etc. to ride together on this first biking day.

Meal recommendations are only if you wish not to follow the group. Otherwise your guides take care of restaurant choices.

RECOMMENDED DINNER

Bodegon Sarria; Estafeta, 52 T.948.22.77.13.

Friendly staff and great selection of tapas. Nice selection of wine and beer by the glass.

Casa Otano; Calle de San Nicolás, 5. T.948.22.70.36

Pamplona (population 191,000) has been the capital of Navarra since the 9th century and before that, a fortress town defending against those 'north of the Pyrenees'. Most everything you'll want to visit is in the old center, called the *casco antiguo* with its many churches and massive citadel. Its center is Plaza del Castillo, a tree-lined square lined with cafes. The Turismo (open 10:00 to 5:00) is at Avenida Roncesvalles 4, just off Plaza de Toros de Pamplona.

Monuments in Pamplona include the Cathedral de Santa Maria built from the 14th to the 16th century (the façade was added in the 18th century), with its most impressive cloister and high altar. Enter The Museo Diocesano via the cloisters (Monday to Saturday: 10:30am to 5pm Saturday 10:30am to 8pm, Sunday 10:30am to 8pm . Information: 948 212 594). Behind the cathedral is an old area of the city known as La Navarrería. Nearby, on c/ Santa Domingo in a magnificent old hospital building is the Museo de Navarra (Tues-Sat 9:30 am-2 pm & 5-7 pm Sunday 11-2 pm. Price 2€). Inside you'll find much on the history of Navarra, mozaics and an art collection including a Goya piece. The area around the Citadel, with its parks and gardens is recommended.

Part of the walls remain to the north and east, while to the south modern districts have emerged with long avenues lined with pretty buildings (**Paseo de Sarasate**), squares with arcades decorated with basins (**Plaza del Castillo**).

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IMPORTANT INFORMATION

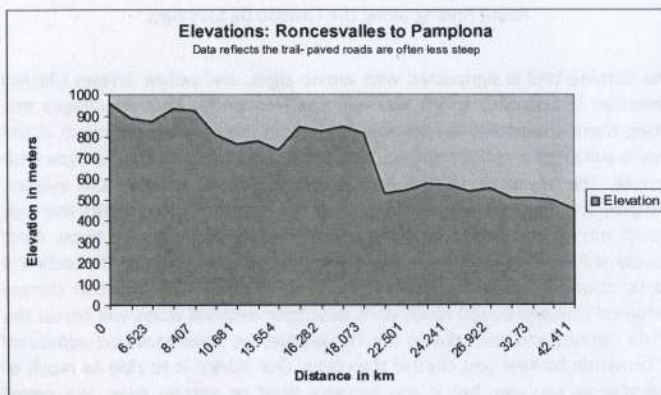
Route finding along the Camino de Santiago.

The Camino trail is signposted with amino signs, and yellow arrows (*flechas amarillas* in Spanish), which you will see frequently. Even in villages and cities, there are arrows to lead you through; in the countryside, much of the trail is suitable for cyclists and you can decide how much of the trail you wish to ride. The advantage of the trail is that it is often shorter, and quieter, bringing you into towns and villages past the historical monuments that you would miss if you took the paved roads. Having said that, we know most people will want to ride the moderate sections of trail and not the technical parts, choosing instead paved roads. Keep in mind that you can choose between trail and paved roads each day. Your detailed maps will reveal the route options and each day in the Travelogue, we have provided additional information to help you choose the route. Our advice is to ride as much of the trail as you can, but if you become tired on certain days, the paved routes are generally quite a bit easier and so feel free to ride those.

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DAY 2 RONCESVALLES TO PAMPLONA: 42 km

Lunch en route and dinner included



After breakfast, we'll be transferring to Roncesvalles (please be at reception at 9:00). In Roncesvalles, we'll visit the monastery here and collect our pilgrim's passports or *credenciales*. You can begin riding, choosing between the trail or the road. Whichever you decide, you can have a picnic lunch in Zubiri on the Gothic bridge that spans the river Arga.

Overview of the ride:

Much of the trail between Roncesvalles and Pamplona is single track and some of it can be technical, especially when there have been recent rains as the clay soil makes for slippery conditions. Our recommendation is to ride the paved route on this day and make this an easy first day, unless you enjoy some technical trail riding.

RECOMMENDED DINNER

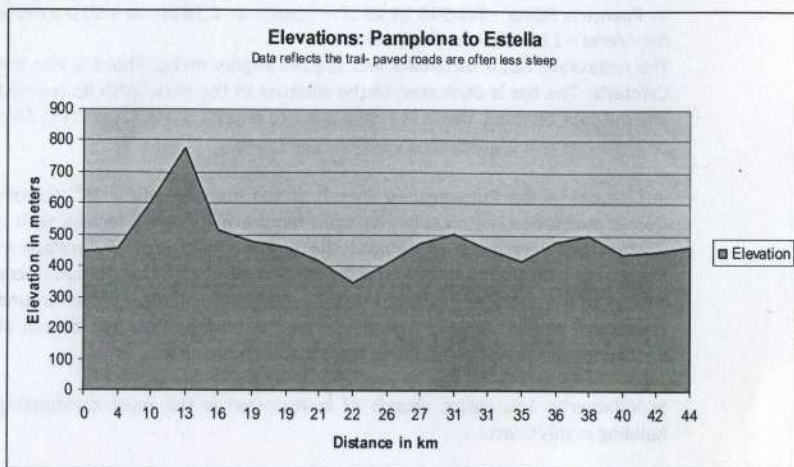
San Ignacio Restaurant at Ave. San Ignacio, 4. (Tel. 948.221.874).

One of our favourite restaurants in Pamplona.

GREAT EXPLORATIONS

DAY 3 PAMPLONA TO ESTELLA: 44 km

Lunch on your own and dinner included



Overview of the ride:

Riding west from Pamplona, you'll ride paved roads to Cizur Mayor from where you can join trail. The climb up to the Sierra del Perdon is challenging but lovely. The descent though, is somewhat technical so unless experienced, you might prefer the paved road that goes from the Puerto del Perdon to Muruzabal before re-joining the trail.

After lunch, we recommend taking the paved road until Maneru; this section of the trail is only for advanced riders.

After Lorca, we suggest taking the trail into Estella.

Puente la Reina:

Reaching Puente la Reina, you'll cross the famous bridge (originally named Puente de Arga, but re-named 'Puente la Reina' for its sponsor, probably Dona Mayor, wife of Sancho III).

Also in Puente la Reina, is the Iglesia del Crucifijo which was founded by the Templars (the knights who were entrusted with protection of the pilgrims from 1142 until their suppression in the 14th century). The church was expanded in 1447 by the Hospitallers and features a Romanesque statue of Santa Maria de las Huertas and a magnificent carved wooden crucifixion.

Lunch recommendation:

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We suggest a picnic lunch in Puente La Reina before the old bridge, below to the right.

Otherwise, there is a restaurant in the Hotel Jakue, at Carretera de Pamplona in Puente la Reina - Tel. 948 34 10 17 – Open from 1.30 pm to 3.30 pm every day Menu – 12€-31€ - Cuisine traditional

The restaurant has a successful and specific pilgrim menu. There is also the Cafeteria: The bar is dedicated to the wineries in the area. With its covered and outdoor terraces, this is the ideal place to enjoy a snack. Open from 7am to 11pm, serving a wide range of drinks and tapas.

In Cirauqui, is the Romanesque Church of San Roman, with a 13th century Gothic multilobed main portal. Its main feature is its ogival façade, with a waving arch very much resembling the one in the church of Santiago in Puente de la reina. The Votive altar inside it is one of countless roman traces which can be found in Cirauqui. Cirauqui's solid looking houses center around the church of San Roman, and include among their number the church of Santa Catalina de Alejandra dating from the XIIIth century.

In Villatuerta, the parish church of la Asuncion is the most outstanding building in this town.

Estella was the headquarters in the 19th century for the Carlists during the civil war. Plaza de los Fueros is the center of town, but most of the interesting buildings are in the Barrio San Pedro de la Rua. The Palacio de los Reyes de Navarra, built in Romanesque style in the 12th Century houses an art gallery with works by Gustave de Maeztu (Tues-Fri 9:30am-1pm; Sat-Sun 11am-2pm, free. www.museogustavodemaeltu.com).

The church of San Pedro de la Rua can be visited by appointment (through the Turismo). From the former Ayuntamiento, an elegant 16th century building opposite the palacio, c/ de la Rua leads past many old merchant mansions.

RECOMMENDED DINNER

Asador Astarriaga (Tel. 948.550.802, www.asadorastarriaga.com)

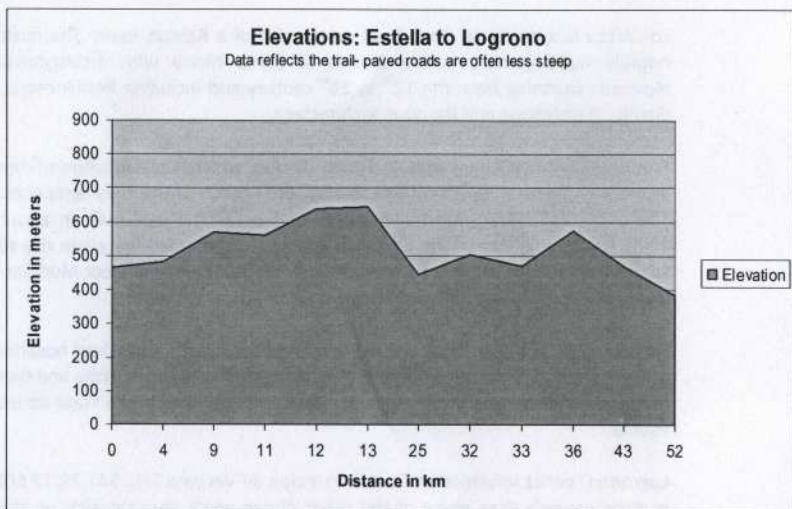
Regional and seasonally fresh picked, fruit, vegetables, mushrooms, etc. kind atmosphere. Wide choice of traditional dishes as well as modern cuisine.

Bar Izara; Calle de la Calderería, 20. T. 948.55.06.78

GREAT EXPLORATIONS

DAY 4 ESTELLA TO LOGRONO: 52 km

Lunch and dinner on your own



Overview of the ride:

We recommend taking the trail today from Estella all the way to Los Arcos. From Villamayor de Monjardin to Los Arcos, you will cover 12 kilometers without coming across a single town or village. From Torres del Rio we recommend staying on the paved road to Logrono.

Along the way...

As you leave Estella, you won't want to miss the Bodega Irache where pilgrims can restore themselves at a fountain with a choice of water, or the fine Navarrese wine at no charge. The monastery of Irache and the Benedictine community were here as far back as 958, and may date back to Visigothic times. In the 17th century it was granted the status of a university, when a wing and cloister were added. In Villamayor de Monjardin, you can see the Fuente de los Moros (Fountain of the Moors) from the 13th century and restored in 1991.

Lunch Recommendation in Los Arcos:

In Los Arcos, there is a nice picnic spot after the river at the end of the town, with a grassy area and benches next to the river.

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If you prefer a restaurant, an option is *Mavi* at Carretera Sesma, 2. Tel 948 640 081 (traditional cuisine) or *Sidreria Suetxe* at calle Carramendavia. Tel 948 441 175.

Los Arcos is a medieval town built on the site of a Roman town. The most notable building here is the Church of Santa Maria with architectural elements spanning from the 12th to 18th century and including Romanesque, Gothic, Plateresque and Baroque architecture.

From here, you continue west to Torres del Rio, which is the location of one of the architectural jewels on this stretch, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The unusual Romanesque building, tall and octagonal was built in about 1200. Its resemblance to the chapel in Eunate (further east) has given rise to speculation that it, too, is a funerary chapel. Inside, the magnificent Mudéjar-inspired (Moorish), star-shaped cupola is geometrical perfection.

Further west, is Viana, once a thriving market town with a pilgrims' hospital as early as the 13th century. There are many grand mansions in Viana and two municipal palaces, one in the Plaza del Coso and the other in the Plaza de los Fueros.

Logrono (Tourist Information Center: Príncipe de Vergara Tel.: 941 29 12 60) is more modern than many of the other places you'll pass through on the Camino, and with its elegant streets and squares it is a lovely place to overnight. It does have a somewhat lively older section as well. Easily seen from a distance, the 16th century Gothic church of Santiago el Real is impressive enough. Don't miss the statue of Saint James, astride a stallion above the main entrance. Edwin Mullins, in his book *The Pilgrimage to Santiago*, describes this as "equipped with the most heroic genitals in all Spain, a site to make any surviving Moor feel inadequate and run for cover." The church of San Bartoleme and cathedral of Santa Maria la Redonda are also worth visiting.

For museum goers, the Museo de la Rioja (Tues-Sat 10 am-2 pm & 4-9 pm) has a lot of religious art collected from abandoned monasteries and 19th century paintings on permanent loan from the Prado.

Restaurants recommended in Logrono (OYO):

Logroño is the place to go if you prefer your dinner to come as sociable, sharing plates of chorizo and battered squid. Logroño offers an endless array of tiny eateries and bars that are lined up on the central Calle (street) Laurel and the adjacent streets, such as Calle San Juan.

Calle San Juan is probably your best bet for eating with lots of tapas bars including the *Berones* and *La Cueva* (+34 941 24 27 48 Calle San Juan nº 13)

Katia de Kabanova (at Benemérito Cuerpo de la Guardia Civil 9 E in Logroño - Tel. 941 21 29 95 - closed 2nd half of August and Mondays. Menu 25 to 32€) takes its name from an opera written by a Czech composer, it boasts a

GREAT EXPLORATIONS

single dining room with a good layout and modern appearance. Market based menu, daily set menu and tasting menu.

Tryp Bracos at Bretón de los Herreros 29, Tel. 941 22 66 08
Menu 15 €- Cuisine traditional

Bar Soriano (at Travesía Laurel 2 in Logroño - Tel. 941 22 88 07. Famous reputation for mushrooms pintxos

Leitos, c/ Portales 30, Tel. 941.21.20.78.
One of the best restaurants in the city.

La taberna de Baco (at C/. San Agustín 10 in Logroño - Tel. 941 21 35 44.
Great pintxos as well as a big pilgrims' data display.

Meridiana, c/ Villamediana 27 is also good.

Terete, c/ Lucrecia Arana 17

Beethoven, Calle del Santo Tomás, 3. Tel. 941.31.11.81

As an alternative to traditional restaurants, we recommend an evening of tapas bars; **Calle Laurel** has several that are superb, such as:

Pulpería la Universidad -9 Calle Travesía del Laurel, Tel. +34 676 97 22 06-
www.callelaurel.org/bares-de-logrono/bar-la-universidad

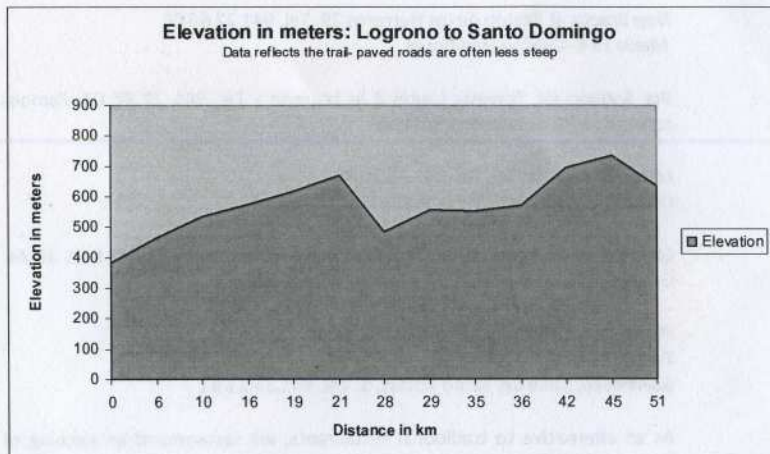
and **La Aldea** (1 Calle Travesía del Laurel).

Shellfish Paradise. Order a *vino tinto* or *caña* (pronounced *canya* - beer) and the specialty of the house will be served along with it.

GREAT EXPLORATIONS

DAY 5 LOGRONO TO SANTA DOMINGO DE LA CALZADA: 51 km

Lunch en route and dinner included



RECOMMENDED LUNCH: Resto Los Parrales in Najera

Overview of the Ride:

Today, we recommend riding the trail from Logrono all the way to Santo Domingo. This entire section of the camino is enjoyable for cyclists, thus avoiding the need to cycle along the N-120.

Along the way...

Clavijo, 18 km from Logrono is the location of one of Spain's best-loved and most symbolic ruined castles, the Castle of Clavijo, which sits on a forbidding rock. Associated with the Reconquest of Spain and the intervention of St. James, who appeared as the Moorslayer at the Battle of Clavijo in 834. The story of St. James' appearance to the king in a vision is a legend well-kept in Spain. Najera, further along means 'place between the rocks' in Arabic and was reconquered in 923 by a joint Navarrese and Leonese army.

Navarrete stands on the banks of the Ebro, in a fertile valley with marshland fields. The baroque towers of the cathedral are copied by those on Santa María del Palacio, and San Bartolomé, making an admirable show.

Lunch Recommendation in Najera:

As you cross the bridge over the river into Najera over on the left you'll see the terrace of the restaurant **Los Parrales**, an ideal spot for lunch. They begin

GREAT EXPLORATIONS

serving at 1:00 so if you are early, stretch out on the grass for a *siesta* until then!

Restaurant Parrales
Calle Major, 52 Najera
T. 941.363.735

Built at the mouth of a bridge on the road to St Jacques, Najera was the capital of the kingdom of Navarre until 1076, when La Rioja was joined to Castille.

Monastery of Santa María La Real

Pl. Santa María la Real E - 26300 Najera

Phone +34 941361083

Open Mon-Sat. 10am-1pm and 4-7pm; Sun and Hols 10am-12:30pm and 4-6pm June 1-Sep 30

Opening times Open Tue-Sat. 10am-1pm and 4-5:30pm; Sun and Hols 10am-12:30pm and 4-5:30pm Oct 1-May 30

Last tour 30min before closing. Closed Mon (except summer), 1 and 6 Jan, 17 Sep and 24, 25 and 31 Dec.

Rates 3€.

Founded in 1032 by the King of Navarre. The galleries in the cloister stand against the cliff face. In the church, note the Royal Pantheon (16C), the tomb of Blanche de Navarre (12C) and the 15C stalls in the coro alto.

Azofra is a small town with the typical pilgrimage town layout: houses lined along the Pilgrim Road. There is some XII th century documentary evidence that there once stood, adjoined to a church dedicated to saint Peter, a pilgrim's hospital and cemetery.

Santa Domingo de la Calzada takes its name from a saint who lived here in the 11th century and devoted his life to assisting travelers and improving the camino (paved roads, built bridges, tended the sick - this man was talented!). The Cathedral holds his tomb in its crypt and a pair of caged chickens to entertain you. Actually the chickens are from a legend about a German pilgrim who reportedly resisted the advances of 'an innkeeper's daughter'. Unimpressed, she falsely accused him of theft, for which he was put to the gallows. He was kept alive by Santo Domingo to the surprise of the local judge who was eating roast at the time and said "He is as alive as the chicken on my plate", after which the chickens flew away (or something like that).

Cathedral

Pl. del Santo E - 26250 Santo Domingo de la Calzada

Phone 941 34 00 33

Opening times Jul 1-Sep 30: Open Mon-Sun 9am-7.10pm.

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Oct 01-Jun 30: Open Mon-Sun 10am- 7:10pm

Rates €3.50.

The building is Gothic except the ambulatory and the Romanesque apse chapel. In the right transept is the tomb of St Dominic. The retable of the main altar (1538) by Damian Forment is remarkable.

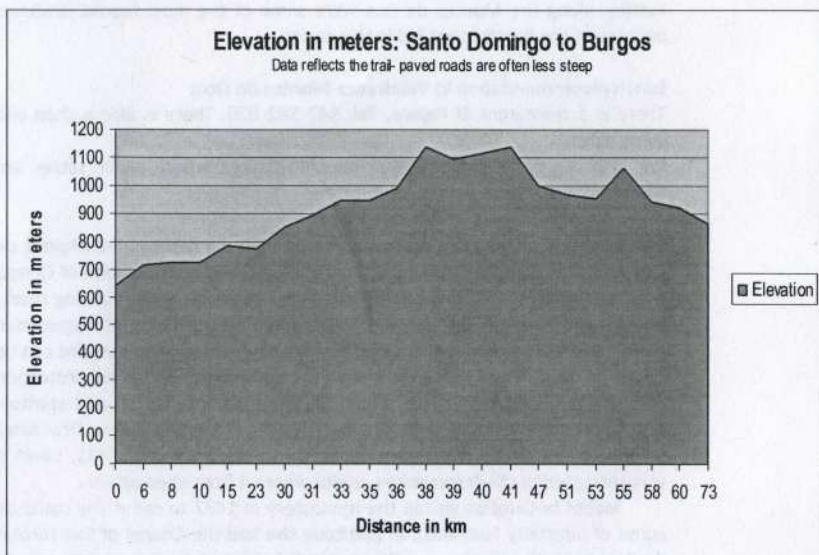
Every year, a medieval market takes place in the old town at the same time as the festivals of the Constitution and the Immaculate Conception. (6 and 8 of December).

Beside the Cathedral is the original pilgrims' hospice, now converted to a *parador*. This Parador has been in existence since 1928 and was built on the site of the former pilgrims' hospital. There is also a *parador* called Santa Domingo de la Fresneda.

GREAT EXPLORATIONS

DAY 6 SANTO DOMINGO DE LA CALZADA TO BURGOS: 71 km

Lunch and dinner on your own



Overview of the ride:

Today, this is a long ride and we recommend you start early in the morning. From Santo Domingo, we recommend taking the paved road to Belorado (22 km) as the trail is very challenging. From Belorado to Villafranca Montes de oco, we also recommend you take the road. From Villafranca to the Monumento a los Caibos, if you choose the trail, there is a tough obligatory climb but it is now half paved and hard gravel. Right after the Monumento a los Caibos, this section of the trail can be muddy when wet. After Atapuerca, if you choose the trail, there is a tough obligatory climb followed by a downhill that is somewhat technical but not too tough. You can choose the paved road along the Vena Rio to Burgos, which is quicker but not as scenic.

Leaving Santa Domingo, you will first come to **Grañon**, a frontier town between the kingdoms of Castile and Navarre. In the center of town is the Monastery of San Juan Bautista, over whose church of the same name stands, built in the 14th century.

GREAT EXPLORATIONS

Redecilla is another village with a parish church which houses one of the jewels of the pilgrimage, a Romanesque baptismal font dating from the 12th century.

Further along the Montes de Oca were some of the most feared stretches because of the bandits that hid in this region.

Lunch recommendation in Villafranca Montes de Oco:

There is a restaurant *El Pajaro*, Tel. 947 582 029. There is also a shop and some cafes.

We also suggest a picnic in San Juan de Ortega where picnic tables are available.

The sanctuary of **San Juan de Ortega**, situated in the heart of the Montes de Oca was dedicated to helping pilgrims. It was named after St. John of Ortega who was born in 1080 in a nearby village. He spent his years building roads, bridges and hospitals for pilgrims. He founded a community of Augustinian monks and built a chapel and a pilgrims' hospital although no remains can be found. In 1138, Pope Innocent II took the community under his protection and in 1142, Alfonso VII (to whom St. John was confessor and spiritual confessor) endowed him with all crown estates in the Montes de Oca. After St. John's death, the monastery declined in popularity until 1431, when it was entrusted to the Jeronymites, under whom it flourished again.

Isabel la Catolica visited the monastery in 1477 to see if she could be cured of infertility (she was). In gratitude she had the Chapel of San Nicolas de Bari built. St. John's magnificent tomb is intricately carved with scenes from his life. The beautiful monastery church was completed in the Gothic style.

Arriving in **Burgos**, (population 170,000) look for defensive towers ('burgos') that mark the spot where the town was founded in 884. Because of its strategic location, Burgos enjoyed intense commercial intensity and was made the capital of Castille. In the 15th century, there were more than 32 hospitals here and several more religious communities helped care for the large numbers of pilgrims that passed through.

After passing through the 13th century Puerta de San Juan you arrive to the magnificent **Gothic Cathedral** started in 1221 by Fernando III and finished in the 16th century. This cathedral is one of the most outstanding artistic monuments in Spain.

The points of interest in town include the Santo Cristo de Burgos, the 15th century Capilla del Condestable by Simon de Colonia, the Escalera Dorada, the portals, the cupola and the rose window. Other monuments worth seeing include the 15th century Gothic church of San Nicolas, the Church of Santa Gadea or Santa Agueda, the remains of the Castle, the 13th century Puerta de San Esteban, the Church of San Gil, the Casa del Cordon and the Gate and Arch of Santa Maria, finished in 1553 by Francisco de Colonia.

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Arco de Santa Maria

Pl. del Rey San Fernando E - 09003 Burgos

Phone 947 26 53 75

Opening times Open 11am-2pm and 5pm-9pm. Sun 11am-2pm. Closed Mon and hols.

This 14C door was changed in the 16C during a visit by Charles V. Very popular item in town, it shows the great characters of Burgos: Diego Porcelos Rodríguez surrounded by two semi-legendary judges who led the business of Castile in the 10C and Count Fernan Gonzalez and El Cid stand by Charles V.

The Hospital del Rey is the most important hospital in the city and can be seen on the way out of the city. It was built in 1195 but what you'll see today is from the 16th century.

Restaurants Recommended in Burgos (OYO):

La Cabaña Arandina at Sombrerería 12 E La is in the most popular area for tapas.

A low lodge-type construction, with a wooden ceiling, contemporary decoration and a terrace in summer. Full menu of tapas and larger bar snacks.

Meson el Avelano: c. Avellanos 3 Bajo (Tel. 947250635). Cozy, family *castizo* traditional home

Casa Ojeda: Calle Vitoria, 5 - Plaza del Cordón (tel: 947 20 90 52). Very charming place, tasty scents of cooked dishes and the perfume of the most exquisite wines for more than a century.

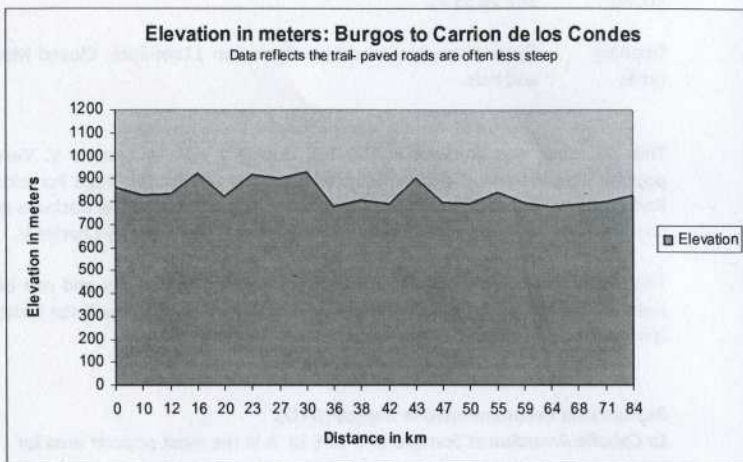
La Competencia: Calle de San Lorenzo, 30. Tel: 947.20.79.82

Mesón El Morito: Calle Diego Porcelos 1. Tel. 947.267.555. Bread toast delicacy.

GREAT EXPLORATIONS

DAY 7 BURGOS TO CARRION DE LOS CONDES: 84 km

Lunch en route and dinner included



RECOMMENDED LUNCH: *La Taberna* in Castrojeriz (see below)

Overview of the ride.

The ride today is also a long day thus an early start is recommended. From Burgos to Castrojeriz, we recommend taking the trail as you will pass along beautiful fields. Be careful in the small section after passing the river Ayo de San Bol to Hontanas can be very muddy if wet; we suggest you take the road for this small section. (see map for more details) After having lunch in Castrojeriz, we suggest you take the paved road to Fromista, Strong riders can take the trail if they wish but keep in mind that this is a long day. From Fromista until Carion de los Condes take the paved road.

West of Burgos is Hontanas (from the Latin 'fontanas' meaning fountains) with a village church from the 14th century. Further along, you'll pass the 14th century Monastery and Hospital of San Anton, now a ruin. Founded by a French noble named Guerin in St. Didier-de-la-Mothe in 1095. Castrojeriz has many monuments attributed to the pilgrimage but it is perhaps better known as the center of many skirmishes between Saracens and Christians. On entering the town, you'll pass the former Collegiate Church of Santa Maria del Manzano, remodelled in the 18th century over the original 13th century Gothic structure.

Lunch recommendation in Castrojeriz:

GREAT EXPLORATIONS

One of the best restaurants in the region definitely merits a stop for lunch: **La Taberna** (Calle real de oriente, Tel. 947.377.120)

Wonderful family run tavern with great food, filled with local flavor. Listen to the owner talk about his experience meeting Paolo Coelho. Great red wine.

Itero de la Vega ('vega' means fertile valley) is reached over the Pisuerga river by the famous Puente de Itero, a majestic eleven-arched Romanesque bridge. In Boadilla del Camino, the Parish Church of the Assumption is worth a visit. Works of art include a 16th century high altarpiece, and a 14th century Gothic baptismal font. Standing behind the church is a Gothic village cross that is decorated with scallop shells ~ a symbol of the Camino. On the way to Fromista, the route parallels the Canal de Castilla for a few kilometres, engineered in the 18th century for the transport of cereals, irrigation, and grinding corn.

Former Celtic town **Fromista**.

Many pilgrims heading for Santiago de Compostela used to stop at Frómista on the way. This town used to have four hospices at their disposal and enabled them to do pious deeds at the Benedictine monastery of St Martin, of which only the church still stands today, at the centre of a great square.

It was inhabited by Romans before being resettled in the 10th century when Dona Mayor, Countess of Castile and wife of King Sancho III 'the Great', founded a Benedictine monastery here. The famous church of San Martin is the only surviving part of the monastery complex and marks a climax in the development of European Romanesque style. The ornamentation is superb: the interior is decorated with carved capitals, and look outside for 315 wonderfully carved architectural corbels. Some say the church was "over-restored" at the end of the 19th century.

Carrion de los Condes is reputed to be the place where , prior to the Reconquest, Christians were forced to surrender 100 virgins annually to their Moorish overlords. This is depicted in the portal of Santa Maria. The church of Santiago also has some carvings of note, the best being those above the door, depicting trades and professions of the middle ages. The third main monument is the Monasterio de San Zoilo, located over a 16th century bridge. A side-room off the cloister contains the tombs of the counts of Carrion for whom the town is named. The monastery has been restored to include a hotel, one of the most impressive along the route.

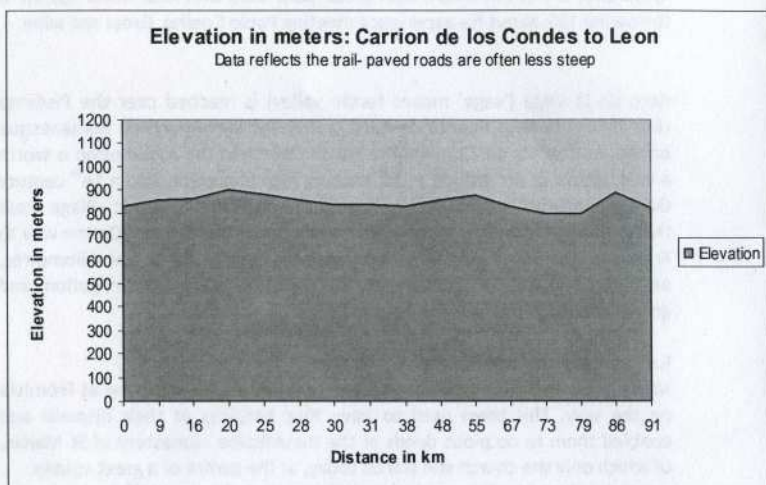
INCLUDED DINNER:

At the hotel Real Monasterio San Zoilo.

GREAT EXPLORATIONS

DAY 8 CARRION DE LOS CONDES TO LEON: 91 km

Lunch en route and dinner included



RECOMMENDED LUNCH: Picnic in Mansilla de las Mulas.

Overview of the ride:

Today is a very long day of riding and we suggest an early start. From Carrion de los Condes, we recommend taking the paved road and avoid the trail to Sahagun- watch for traffic entering Leon and follow camino signs through town.

In Sahagun, a monastery was founded as early as the 9th century but it was Alfonso VI a pupil and later refugee who turned Sahagun into the Spanish equivalent of France's Cluny. Aided by royal favours and endowments from Alfonso VI, Sahagun became the most powerful monastery on the pilgrims' route. Of the former Monastery of Santos Facundo y Primitivo, all that remain are a 19th century tower and 12th century Chapel of San Mancio. Of particular interest is the magnificent museum at the Benedictine convent of Santa Cruz which has some outstanding pieces.

Mansilla de las Mulas was a center for buying and selling horses and cattle and the Plaza del Grano (Grain Square) recalls this farming and stockbreeding tradition. There is not much to suggest the former splendour of the town except perhaps the Parish Church of Santa Maria which dates from the 18th century. It does make for an ideal picnic spot along the river (see route instructions)

GREAT EXPLORATIONS

Leon (population 147,000) is as lively a town as there is on the camino, in part because of its present-day university but also because of its tremendous monuments; the stained glasses in its Cathedral; and its Romanesque wall paintings in its Royal Pantheon. The stained glass windows were created in the 13th century and are 'equal to any masterpiece in any European cathedral'.

Says Edwin Mullins,

"It is not simply that Leon Cathedral has the best stained glass in Spain which it does: to enter the chill, twilight interior of this place and look round in the gloom until, by chance, the sun chooses that moment to come out is, I felt, to comprehend something of the hold which the Christian faith has been able to retain over so many people for so long. In general, Spanish churches are exceptionally dark, and in my view exceptionally oppressive; and Leon is no exception - until the sun comes out. Then more than any building I have ever set eyes on, it seems to burst into fire."

From the Plaza de Santo Domingo, Avenida de Ramon y Cajal leads to the church of San Isidoro and the Royal Pantheon of the early kings of Leon and Castille. The Pantheon (Tues-Sat, 10 am- 1.30 and 4-6.30, 350 psts) was built between 1054 and 1063 as a portico off of the church and is one of the earliest Romanesque buildings in Spain. In the 12th century, the vaults were covered with 'some of the most significant, imaginative, and impressive paintings of Romanesque art.'

The Monasterio de San Marcos offered a place of rest for pilgrims before carrying on west. The original monastery was built in 1168 for the Knights of Santiago, one the groups that lead the Reconquest and protected pilgrims (presumably from bandits). It later became no more than a men's club, but for a time (before Isabella in 1493 suggested that Ferdinando become Grand Master), it was a powerful group which threatened the crown. This monastery has been converted to a 5-star hotel and is thus now somewhat difficult to visit.

RECOMMENDED DINNER:

Parrilla Louzao: Calle Juan Madrazo, 4. Tel: 987.27.14.32

Houbi: Calle Cardiles 2. Tel: 987.073.126 or 987.176.1189.

GREAT EXPLORATIONS

DAY 9 LEON (DAY OF REST)

Lunch en route and dinner on your own

And on the 9th day, St. James said, 'rest'. We recommend you sleep in today. We have planned a walking tour with Lourdes Ruiz and she will meet you in the lobby.

Restaurant recommendations in Leon:

The liveliest bars and restaurants can be found in a small square of **San Martin** and the small narrow streets that surround it (*barrio humedo*). You'll get a *pincho* with every drink you order but my advice (if this is dinner) is to stick to *cortos* (short beers) or you'll get drunk before you get full!

Others that we can recommend include:

Café Carmela, c/ Cano Badillo, 7. Lively café.

Casa Pozo, Plaza San Marcelo 15. Excellent bodega located behind the ayuntamiento; menus under 2000 psts.

Restaurant Fornos, c/ Cid 8. Great food and atmosphere. Closed Sundays.

Bar La Cepedana, c/ Mariano Dominguez Berueta (simple and inexpensive).

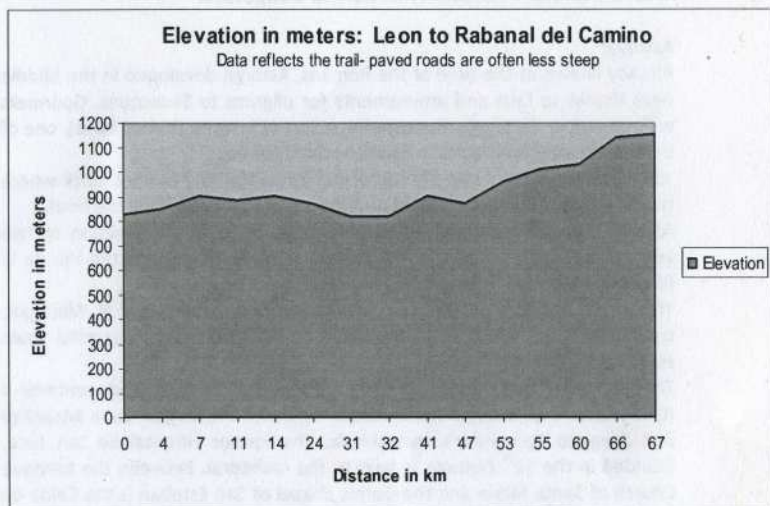
Meson Leones del Racimo de Oro, Cano Badillo 2. An authentic and inexpensive *meson* with a good 1200 psts menu.

Nuevo Racimo de Oro, Plaza San Martin 8. Slightly more formal and expensive than others but very good.

GREAT EXPLORATIONS

DAY 10 LEON TO RABANAL: 67 km

Lunch on your own and dinner included



Overview of the ride:

Leaving Leon, watch for traffic and follow the signs carefully, getting off of the N-120. We recommend you follow the pilgrim trail. We suggest having a picnic in Puente de Orbigo, which is down to the right of the bridge

We then suggest taking the trail until Astorga. Watch for mud when it is raining. You can also have lunch in Astorga where there a very good restaurant called Las Termas, please see below for more information.

After Astorga, take the small road detour to the town of Castrillo de los Polvazares. Do not miss the turn off for the trail after visiting the town. Choice of paved road or trail all the way to Rabanal del Camino.

Leaving Leon, you'll ride through the stark Leonese plain known in Spanish as the 'paramo' which was used by pre-Roman people.

Romans substituted the word 'campus' which is where the name 'Tierra de Campos' comes from.

Further along you arrive to the village of Puente de Orbigo with its famous bridge over the River Orbigo. It was the site of several famous battles including one between the Swabians and the Visigoths in 452 and one between the Moors and the army of Alfonso III 'the Great' (c. 900). In 1434 a famous incident occurred here when a Leonese knight persuaded 9 other knights to join him in challenging any adventurers who dared cross the bridge to joust with them. Over 30 days, the Leonese and his knights won

GREAT EXPLORATIONS

duels with French, Italian, German, Portuguese and Spanish contenders (there were no Canadians entered but I suspect that would have done well). After the contest finished they all went to Compostela.

Astorga:

Already known at the time of the Romans, Astorga developed in the Middle Ages thanks to fairs and amusements for pilgrims to St-Jacques. Gourmets will remember Astorga's **mantecadas**, a sort of brioche (butter buns), one of the most famous delicacies in Spanish pastrymaking.

On **Plaza Mayor**, note at the top of the **Town Hall** the famous clock where two Maragatos (a cross of Goths and Moors) in costume chime the hour.

Astorga was an important Asturian enclave, being at the junction of two important Roman roads, the Via Traiana from Bordeaux and the Via de la Plata from Merida.

The city's hallmark is the pair of clockwork figurines in full Maragato traditional dress, which strike the hours on the clock on the beautiful Town Hall façade.

The cathedral was started in 1471 in the Gothic style, and contains a Renaissance high altar, a Romanesque figure of the Virgen de la Majestad and Gregorio Fernandez's Inmaculada. The former Hospital de San Juan, founded in the 12th century, is next to the cathedral. Between the baroque Church of Santa Maria and the Gothic chapel of San Esteban is the Celda de las Emparedadas, the cell in which loose-living women were held, to whom pilgrims would traditionally give part of their food. Opposite the cathedral stands Gaudi's neo-Gothic Bishop's Palace, built between 1889 and 1913.

Palacio Episcopal

Pl. Eduardo Castro E - 24700 Astorga

Phone 987 61 68 82

Opening times Open 11am (10am 21 Mar-18 Sep)-2pm and 4-6pm (8pm 21 Mar-18 Sep). Closed Sun and Hol.
Last tour 45min before closing.

Rates Combination ticket includes the Museo de los Caminos museum: 2.50 €.

This curious pastiche of a medieval palace was built in 1889 with the inspired imagination of Gaudí. The palace houses the Museum of the Roads (Museo de los Caminos), an exhibition of medieval art on the theme of pilgrimage to St-Jacques-de-Compostelle.

Lunch Recommendation in Astorga:

Las Termas at Calle Santiago 1 E - Astorga - Phone 987 602 212 - closed Mondays Meal prices - menu aprox. 24-32€ - Cuisine regional- it offers typical regional dishes and specialties, such as Cocido Maragato, the regional variety of Spain famous chickpea stews, at reasonable prices.

GREAT EXPLORATIONS

Further along, you'll want to detour to **Castrillo de los Polvazares**, a typical Maragato village that has been totally restored. It is famous for its 'cocido maragato', a type of stew. In El Ganso, you will see straw-roofed dwellings for the first time, which have been used since prehistoric times.

Rabanal del Camino was an important stop on the Pilgrim's route as it was the last chance to halt before the arduous climb up the 'Monte Irago'.

RECOMMENDED DINNER:

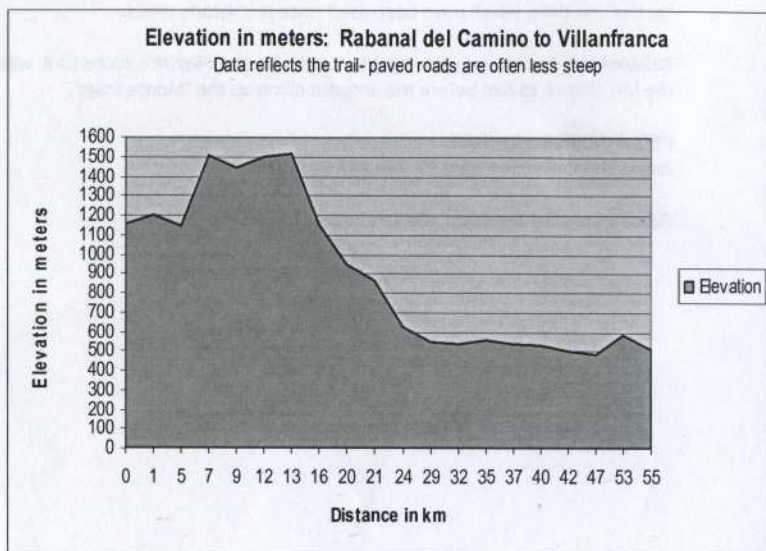
Juan Luis; Calle San Pedro,49. Tel: 987.61.90.27

Restaurante Las Termas; Calle Santiago 1. Tel: 987.60.22.12

GREAT EXPLORATIONS

DAY 11 RABANAL TO VILLAFRANCA: 55 km

Lunch and dinner on your own



Overview of the ride:

From Rabanal del Camino you can take the trail but the section from Majarin to Ponferrada should only be taken by advanced riders. The Road LE-142 follows the trail. In Molinaseca, there is a beautiful spot for lunch beside the river, just after crossing the bridge. You can also have lunch in Ponferrada. See below.

From Ponferrada to Villanfranca del Bierzo, we recommend taking the trail as it does not have any major difficulty.

Close to the top of 'Monte Irago' is the desolate ruined village of **Foncebadon**, where the hermit Gaucelmo built a hospital and hostelry here for pilgrims to stay before crossing the arduous Foncebadon pass. The summit is crowned by the Cruz de Ferro at 1504 meters, a simple yet symbolic monument that pilgrims add a stone to. This tradition actually predates even Roman times; Romans called these stone heaps, 'mounts of Mercury', after the god of travelers. It was Gaucelmo who added the cross sometime in the 11th century.

GREAT EXPLORATIONS

Descending to **Molinaseca** you'll pass a Romanesque bridge into town, which features many historic mansions. Its most outstanding monument however, is the magnificent neoclassical Church of San Nicolas.

Restaurants recommendation for lunch:

In Molinaseca: **Meson real**. Carretera Ponferrada-Astorga Km. 6 – 987 453 166.

For a 12 euros menu, you will have chorizo, fried potatoes, peppers and traditional sausage.

In Ponferrada: **Restaurante Burbia** - Av. Astorga, 9. Tel: 987 424 976.

Traditional cuisine. Menus from 15 Euros.

In **Ponferrada**, you will pass by the impressive Templar castle, one of the finest examples of Spanish military architecture in Spain. Unfortunately, it is rarely open when we pass through. Other monuments include the Convento de los Concepcionistas and the Town Hall, reached through the Arco del Reloj which is crowned by a clock tower, the famous Torre del Reloj.

Cacabelos, destroyed by an earthquake, was rebuilt in 1408 and features one long road, 'calle de los Peregrinos', with houses lining the route. On the way out of the village, you might be interested in seeing inside the Santuario de la Quinta Angustia, which has an altarpiece portraying Baby Jesus playing cards with St. Anthony of Angustia. Also in Cacabelos is an Archaeological Museum which has displays of Roman and pre-Roman artifacts.

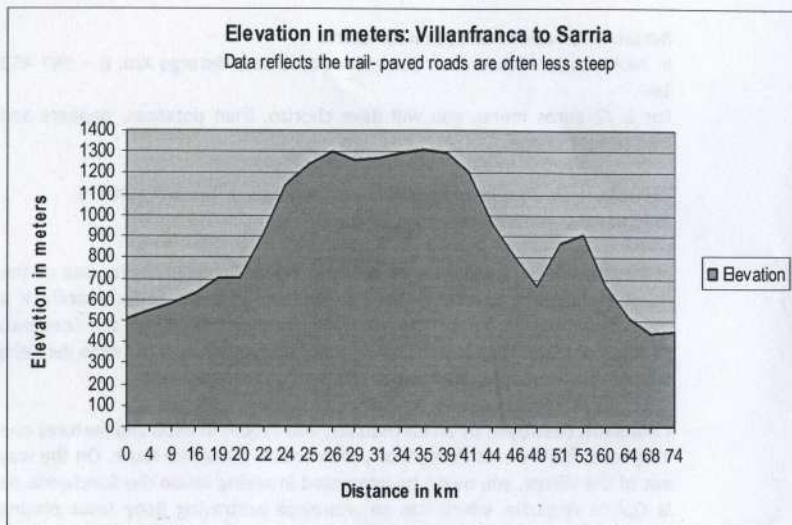
Villafranca del Bierzo is described in one guide book as "where pilgrims on their last legs could chicken out of the final trudge." Actually it is more than this but pilgrims did have the option of presenting themselves to the Puerto del Perdon (door of forgiveness) at the church of Santiago and receive the same benefits as going all the way to Santiago (it must have been tempting). The church of San Francisco is worth visiting with its beautiful Mudejar ceiling and unusual well. The impressive castle is in private hands and cannot be visited.

The Church of San Nicolas (now a modest hotel) has a magnificent façade that is imitation of the Gesu at Rome and was originally a Jesuit college founded by the Marques of Villafranca at the beginning of the 17th century.

GREAT EXPLORATIONS

DAY 12 VILAFRANCA TO SARRIA: 74 km

Lunch en route and dinner included



RECOMMENDED LUNCH: in O Cebreiro (see below)

Overview of the ride:

From Villafranca to San Julian, there is some flat riding for one hour on the paved road. From Las Herrerias to Cebreiro the trail is nearly impossible to climb on bike; even the paved road is challenging and we recommend you follow the old highway through La Laguna de Castillo. Alternatively, slightly less steep (but longer) is to follow the paved road signed to Pedrafita de Cebreiro.

We suggest lunch in O' Cebreiro at La Celta at the end of the town to the left. Both trail and paved road are nice from O Cebreiro to Padornel; after Padornel, the trail should only be taken by advanced riders until Triacastela. From Triacastela to Sarria, there are two choices of trails. The trail on the right can get technical and be challenging but is fun and scenic. The trail on the left is easier but long and less interesting...

The Valcarce valley had a number of *castros* or fortresses, whose lords extracted taxes or tolls from pilgrims, despite being declared illegal by King Alfonso VI. One of the more prosperous towns (at least in former times) that you will pass through is Vega de Valcarce, which because of its position at the head of the valley, was privileged.

GREAT EXPLORATIONS

Reaching **O Cebreiro** at an altitude of 1293 meters is at a spectacular site. The simple, ancient Church of Santa Maria la Real is one of the landmarks here and is of pre-Romanesque construction. Inside you will find the statue of Santa Maria la Real. On her saint's day (8th of September), up to 30,000 pilgrims visit her shrine. The 12th century chalice and paten on display are priceless and commemorate the 'Miracle of Cebreiro'. Legend has it that a pilgrim appeared from a snowstorm for communion but the monk here despised him for bothering to come; the sacramental bread and wine turned into the flesh and blood of Christ inside the paten and chalice. You will also notice the straw-roofed dwellings, or 'pallozas' here.

Restaurant recommendation for lunch:

In O Cebreiro : *Venta Celta* - end of the town to the left.

Casa Carolo - O Cebreiro 14 - 982 367 168

Triacastela (a name that means '3 castles') was founded in the 9th century. The 18th century Church of Santiago, is a reconstruction of an earlier Romanesque church. There were several pilgrim's hospitals here and in one of them, there was said to include a prison (for misbehaving pilgrims). The route branches afterwards and the route we usually take, passes Samos with its wonderful monastery (one of the most ancient in Spain). It was originally founded in the 6th century by the Apostle of Galicia, San Martin Dumienne. Although the small Mozarabic Chapel dates from dates from the 9th or 10th century, most of what you see is from the 16th and 17th, thus the styles you see are predominantly Renaissance and baroque.

Sarria was first mentioned as far back as the 6th century but was made famous during the Golden Age of Spanish art and literature because two of its inhabitants, the writer Fray Luis de Granada and the sculptor Gregorio Fernandez, part of whose work can be admired at various points along the pilgrimage route. The old part of the town stands on the side of a hill, above which sits a castle. This castle was destroyed during the 'Irmandinos wars' in the 15th century. These 'wars' were rebellions of the local people against the nobility which escalated into a civil war. The Monastery of La Magdalena was founded as a hospital in the early 13th century by the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem. It is presently run by Mercedarian monks.

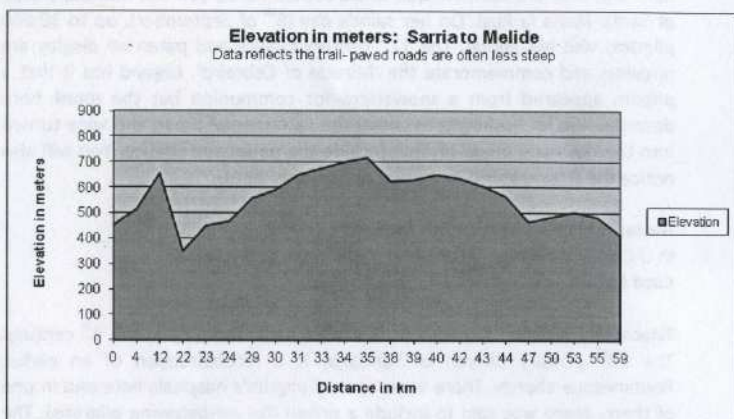
Dinner recommendation:

Restaurant Roma; Calvo Sotelo 2. Tel. 982.530.005

GREAT EXPLORATIONS

DAY 13 SARRIA TO LEBOREIRO: 55 km

Lunch en route and dinner included



Overview of the ride:

We recommend taking the trail from Sarria to Portomarin as it is a beautiful section though farming hamlets. Please be careful as the stretches along the *corredoiras* can be dangerous when muddy. The alternative would be either to take the various local tracks linking the hamlets, or to go round on the C535 which leads directly to Portomarin.

There is a picnic spot in the park on our left when climbing into Portomarin. If it is raining, there are restaurants in town, please see below.

From Portomarin all the way to Leboeiro, the trail is suggested and has few difficulties other than the ascent of Monte San Antonio.

Some trips stay in Lugo at the Balneario de Rio Pambre or in Melide - see your accommodation list.

Along the way...

Around lunch-time you'll reach **Portomarin**, after crossing the river Mino. In 1956 work began on the Belesar reservoir and the old village and remains of the bridge were submerged. In 1962, the new Portomarin was inaugurated and the Church of San Juan was actually moved stone by stone to its present site from one on the river. It is an example of Romanesque architecture consisting of a wide single-aisled nave and a single rounded apse. It has three portals, a lovely rose window on the western side and is fortified with battlements and four towers.

Restaurant recommendation in Portomarin:

There is a picnic spot in the park on our left when climbing into Portomarin.

GREAT EXPLORATIONS

Casa Ferreiro – Rua de Progresso – 982 545 017

Casa Perez – Praza Aviacion espanhola – 982 545 040. Specialty: *anguilas*

Posada del camino – Rua de Lugo, 1 – 982545081.

Good service, traditional cuisine, opened for 20 years.

In **Vilar de Donas**, you'll find another Romanesque church, this one a national monument. It dates from 1184 and among its features is a portal in the form of a splayed arch with richly carved capitals. There are three stone statues on the porch and additional treasures inside. These include tombs of several knights of the Order of St. James, 15th century frescoes representing King Juan II and Queen Maria of Aragon, Gothic in design, are unique in Spain.

Despite **Palas de Rei** not possessing many monuments the surrounding area is rich in churches and other artifacts. After leaving Lugo, you'll enter the province of A Coruña to Leboreiro, which was an important stop on the route.

INCLUDED DINNER:

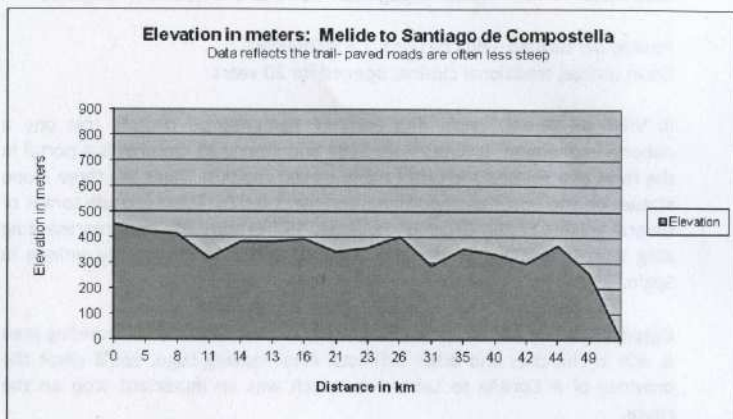
Pulperia Ezequiel. Ctra de Lugo 48. Tel: 981.50.52.91

To taste the Melide-famous "*pulpo a la Gallega*"!

GREAT EXPLORATIONS

DAY 14 LEBOREIRO TO SANTIAGO: 58 km

Lunch on your own and dinner included



Overview of the ride:

This is your last day of riding and there are a few hills before you reach the city! We recommend taking the trail as it is quite negotiable and does not have any major difficulty. You can stop for a picnic in Salceda or there are restaurants in Arzua, Santa Irene and Arca do Pino or you can have a late lunch in Santiago. See Below.

From **Leboreiro**, you'll pass through smaller towns including **Furelos** across a magnificent 'ponte velha' or medieval bridge. **Melide** is particularly rich in pre-Roman artifacts but it is not known when the city was built.

Lunch recommendation:

In Arzua:

El retiro – Calle. Lugo – Tel. 981 500 554.

Meson do Peregrino – c/ Ramon Franco, 7 – Tel. 981 500 145.

Restaurant and cafeteria. Traditional cuisine. Menus *del dia* (meal of the day) and *a la carte*.

In Santa Irene:

Empalme – santa Irene Junction – 981 511 109

In Arca do pino:

Regueiro – Avda Santiago, 33.

GREAT EXPLORATIONS

Castenada is the site of the furnaces where lime was prepared for use in the construction of the cathedral in Santiago. Pilgrims would bring stones from their walk and deposit them here for use in the furnaces. Further along, you'll pass through hamlets hidden away in eucalyptus trees. Labacolla, now famous for the airport was mentioned in Picaud's guidebook, "And there is a river called 'Lauamentula', because in a leafy spot along its course, two miles from Santiago, French pilgrims on their way to Santiago take off their clothes and, for the love of the Apostle, wash not only their private parts ('mentulas'), but the dirt from their entire bodies".

Apparently they wanted to be good and clean before getting their first view of the Holy City of Compostela, (population 105,000) which you will see from the Monte de Gozo.

Reaching **Santiago** itself, pilgrims entered the 'Puerta del Camino' and on along the present-day Rua das Casa Reais and the Rua das Animas, across the Plaza de Cervantes and up the calle de la Azabacheria. This route was packed with 'money-changers, innkeepers, and merchants of all descriptions.' Today the main square is known as Plaza de la Azabacheria, after the workshops of craftsmen specialising in jewellery (azabache) which was once found here.

Standing in the Plaza de la Azabacheria, you face the north façade of the cathedral.

Cathedral

Pl. del Obradoiro E - 15705 Santiago de Compostela

Opening times Open 10.30am-1.30pm and 4pm-6.30pm (8pm Jun-Sep).

The Cathedral was built in the 11C but from the outside has all the characteristics of a baroque building. The Façade of the Obradoiro is a baroque masterpiece by Fernando Casas y Novoa dating back to 1750. The central building has some magnificent sculptures surrounded by high towers. In the narthex, the Portico de la Gloria is exceptionally beautiful and harmonious. It was made by Master Mateo at the end of the 12C. Many other delights await you inside. Typical of pilgrimage churches, this houses some sumptuous objects, such as the botafumeiro, an immense censer, the main altar with a statue of Saint Jacques, and the crypt and treasury that has a monstrance by Antonio de Arfe. Via a little lateral doorway, you can enter the rooms devoted to archaeological digs, the library, the capitulary room and the rooms in the upper gallery where tapestries designed by Goya, Bayeu, Rubens and Teniers hang.

Walking from here around the cathedral through the Arco del Obispo you come to the grandiose Plaza del Obradoiro which is lined with some of the finest monuments of the city.

GREAT EXPLORATIONS

As you face the cathedral, on your left is the Hostal de los Reyes Catolicos, formerly the pilgrim's hospital founded in 1492 after the reconquest of Grenada. This was designed in the plateresque style. It was a functioning hospital until 1954. To your right is the Colegio de San Jeronimo, founded by Archbishop Fonseca in the 16th century. It is now the Rectorate of the Santiago University. Behind you is the neoclassical façade of the Placio de Rajoy, now the town hall. Finally, facing you is the spectacular Obradoiro façade, completed in 1750 by the Galician architect, Fernando de Casas y Novoa. Crowned by soaring twin towers, it shields the old Romanesque exterior and the beautiful Portico de la Gloria.

The history of the cathedral goes back many centuries. Between 830 and 840, King Alfonso II commissioned a modest church to be built over the tomb of St. James. In 899, Alfonso III had a basilica built over the original church but this was razed by Moors in 997. In 1000, Bishop San Pedro de Mezonxo ordered construction of a new church and in 1075 work began on the present building. Designed Romanesque, it is thought that previous works were drawn on, including the Toulouse cathedral, the Church of San Martin at Fromista, the Church of Santiago at Carrion de los Condes, and San Isidoro at Leon. Prominent artists including Bernardo, Esteban, and the great Master Mateo worked on this project. Aymery Picaud describes it as follows:

"In this church there is no fault; it is admirably constructed, large spacious, light, with harmonious dimensions, well proportioned as to length, width and height; it is more splendid than words can express..."

The Puerta Santa remains closed and only opens during Holy Years (when the 25th of July falls on a Sunday). Work on the Torre del Reloj started in 1316, and was completed in 1680 by Domingo de Andrade. The crown jewel is the Portico de la Gloria, placed in 1188, where biblical scenes are represented in pure poetry; this is considered the masterpiece of Spanish Romanesque art. On the central column is the carved with the Tree of Jesse (Christ's family tree), above which sits St. James, welcoming each weary pilgrim. If you make your way down the nave to the High Altar, under it, you'll see where the tomb of St. James exists. This was discovered between 820-830. Facing the High Altar, you have before you the rather overpowering baroque alcove surrounding the throne with St. James dressed as a pilgrim. Above it, you'll see the famous gigantic silver censer known as the botafumeiro which is swung at special masses. The fragrant smoke that emits served a dual purpose of fulfilling a ritual but also purified the air that must have been fairly rank from the mass of pilgrims constantly packed into the cathedral.

Dinner recommendations in Santiago de Compostella:

'16' O Dezaseis; Rua San Pedro, 16. Tel. 981.564.880.

This restaurant was featured in the NY Times and is a casual hip eatery with sea-food options. *Empanada* with tuna and *pimento*, octopus... and delicious

GREAT EXPLORATIONS

desserts. Our area manager Daniel recommends you ask for a *queimada*, a traditional Galician brew...

Bierzo Enxebre; Troia 10 E. Tel. 981 58 19 09.

Cuisine traditional - Cosy restaurant with a bar, where they serve tapas and wine by the glass. Also, three rustic dining areas distinguished by stone walls and wooden beams.

Dos Reis; Praza do Obradoiro 1 E. Tel. 981 58 22 00

Meal prices menu approx. 41€ - Cuisine regional - The Dos Reis restaurant has enormous stone arches and serves up regional dishes.

DAY 15: Departure

You can depart any time after breakfast.

GREAT EXPLORATIONS

Food and Wine of Spain: A Primer

You'll find lots of variety and good traditional cooking in the regions in which we will be traveling. Breakfast is generally very light, orange juice, coffee and pastries. Lunch is generally served between 1:00 and 3:00 and dinner seldom before 9:00 pm! Fortunately, there are often tapas bars with appetizers to 'tide you over' if you are used to eating much earlier. We've provided here some menu translations that may be helpful so that you don't end up with ox tails when you were expecting chicken!

Menu translations

General

Beer	una cerveza
Bread	pan
Butter	mantequilla
Cheese	queso

Salad	ensalada
Shrimp	de gambas
Green	de lechuga
Potato	de Patata
Cucumber	de Pepino
Tomato	de tomate

Fruit

Strawberries	fresas
Apple	manzana
Orange	naranja
Banana	platano

Other

Chips	patatas fritas
Lemon	limon
Coffee	café
Black coffee	café solo
Dessert	postre
Fish	pescado
French fries	patatas fritas
Fruit	frutas
Ice-cream	helado
Ketchup	salsa de tomate
Lettuce	lechuga
Meat	carne
Milk	leche
Water	agua mineral
Mustard	mostaza

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Oil	aceite
Olive oil	aceite de oliva
Pepper	pimienta
Potatos	patatas
Poultry	pollo
Rice	arroz
Rolls	panecillos
Salad	una ensalada
Salt	sal
Sandwich	bocadillo
Seafood	mariscos
Soup	una sopa
Spaghetti	espaguetis
Sugar	azucar
Tea	un te
Vegetables	verduras
Wine	vino

Vegetables	Cocido (cooked)
Cebolla	onion
championes	mushrooms
pepino	cucumber
tomate	tomato
zanahorias	carrots

Meat	
carne de buey	ox
carne de cordero	lamb
carne de cerdo	pork
carne de ternera	veal
chuletas	chops
jamon	ham
rabo de buey	ox tails
pollo	chicken
rinones	kidneys

How Cooked	
al horno	baked
a la parrilla	grilled
poco hecho	rare
regular	medium
muy bien hecho	well done

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Wine

Cosecha refers to young wines in their first or second years. Probably fresh and fruity.

Crianzas are wines in at least their 3rd year (at least 1 year in oak and several months in bottle).

Reservas are vintages that have been aged for at least 3 years with at least 1 year in oak.

Grand Reservas have had at least 2 years in oak and 3 years in the bottle.

Very good years (and thus more expensive) in this part of Spain were '75, '78, '81, '82, '91, '94, '95, '01, '02, '03, '04, '05,

As in all of our trips, you'll probably find yourself contemplating wines at some point during the trip. We provide here our guide to wine tasting in case you find it helpful.

Wine: Study, Swirl, Sniff, Sip, Swallow

While there are as many theories about wine tasting and how to decide if you like certain wines, we have always found that letting your taste buds decide and ignoring convention is your best guide. However, for those who wish a little 'technical assistance, here is what the 'experts' say:

1. Colour: Look through the wine towards a source of light. You're looking for clarity and colour. Clarity is obvious, but colour is more complex. A young red wine is purple-red and the colour softens with age to become more orange-red.
2. Smell: Swirl the wine around and smell in one inhalation. Close your eyes and concentrate: what do you smell? Eleven main groups of smells are associated with wine, ranging from fruits to plants, herbs and spices, and even toast or cigar box, so if asked what you are smelling, use your imagination. Swirl the wine around and smell it again; the agitation will release a different range of bouquets and will oxygenate the wine, which is especially necessary to give red wine its best taste.
3. Taste: Take a sip, swirl it around in your mouth and then (here's the hard part) draw in some air to bring out the flavour. The first rule of thumb is pleasure. After that, it gets more complex, with different parts of the tongue detecting different tastes. Check the wine is not too acidic, and that the tastes are balanced. Again, all sorts of words are used to characterize the palate of wine: young wines may taste the wood in wine matured in oak barrels. If you're drinking with someone who knows more about wine than you do, don't be afraid to ask questions. Wine makers, especially, are always happy to initiate newcomers into their passion. After tasting, swallow the wine. Better wines often leave a long aftertaste.

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Travelers Information

Drinking Water in Spain

Tap water is almost always safe to drink in Spain. If you prefer bottled water, it is widely available. When cycling, the rule of thumb is to drink 1 L per hour; sipping little and often is the key. Commercial sport-drinks such as Gatorade or Aquarius (the main Spanish brand) are an excellent way to satisfy your hydration needs, electrolyte replacement and energy demands in one. Make sure though, that you drink plenty of water as well!

Cycling Nutrition:

The main part of your diet should be carbohydrates rather than proteins or fats. While some protein (for tissue maintenance and repair) and fat (for vitamins, long-term energy and warmth) is essential, carbohydrates provide the most efficient fuel. They are easily digested into simple sugars, which are then used in energy production. Less refined goods like pasta, rice, bread, fruits and vegetables are all high in carbohydrates. Eating simple carbohydrates such as chocolate will give you immediate energy, however because they are quickly metabolised, you may get a sugar 'high' and then a 'low'. For cycling it is better to base your diet around complex carbohydrates, which take longer to process and provide 'slow-release' energy over a longer period.

Cycling Health:

Almost everyone will experience 'sore bum syndrome' at some point in their cycling lives. The best advice we can give is to wear padded bike shorts. Hopefully you will have some experience riding the distances and for the length of time you will on trip.

If you are experiencing knee pain, the first thing to check is that your seat height is set correctly (your seat may be too low). For riders who use clipless pedals, you should also check the alignment of your cleats.

Knee pain is also common among cyclists who pedal in too high a gear. For touring, the ideal cadence (the number of pedal strokes per minute) should be between 70 and 90. Try to maintain this regardless of the gradient. It's always a good idea to stretch before an activity such as cycling. Pain in the hands, neck and shoulders is a common complaint and is usually caused by leaning too much on your hands. You can prevent this by wearing padded gloves, and by varying your hand position frequently.

Medical Health

Sun, Heat & Cold:

It is very important to guard against sun-burn; use high protection sun-screen in the sun and wear good sunglasses. Mild sunburn can be treated with calamine lotion or aloe vera.

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Dehydration is potentially dangerous but easily preventable. Refrain from drinking too many caffeinated drinks; instead drink lots of water and sport drinks.

Heatstroke is a serious condition and occurs when the body's heat-regulating mechanisms break down and the body temperature rises to dangerous levels. Hospitalization is usually essential but in the interim, ensure the person inflicted is kept cool and drinks plenty of fluids.

Hypothermia occurs when the body loses heat faster than it can produce it and the core temperature of the body falls. To prevent hypothermia dress in layers with a waterproof outer layer and be sure to eat plenty of high-energy foods. To treat hypothermia, get the person into dry clothing and give them lots of hot fluids.

Medical treatment/ ambulance Dial 112

Traumatic injuries

We provide here guidance on basic first-aid but remember that unless you are an experienced first-aider and confident in what you are doing, it's possible to do more harm than good. Always seek medical help if available, but if you are far from any help, follow these guidelines:

Cuts and Other Wounds

If you suffer a fall from riding there is always the chance of infection, so you should always clean the wound using antiseptic wipes if available. Deep or dirty wounds need to be cleaned thoroughly:

- Clean your hands before you start
- Wear gloves if you are cleaning somebody else's wound
- Use bottled water or an antiseptic solution
- Embedded dirt and other particles can be removed using tweezers or by squirting water
- Dry wounds heal best, so avoid using creams that keep the wound moist.
- Dry the wound with clean guaze before applying a dressing which will protect it from dirt etc.

Any break in the skin makes you vulnerable to a tetanus infection- if you didn't get a tetanus injection before you left, do so immediately

Major Accident

- Keep calm and think through what you need to do and when
- Get medical help urgently; send someone to call '15'
- Call out to the casualty to see if there is a response
- Check for a pulse, breathing and blood loss
- If necessary (no breathing or no pulse) and you know how, start resuscitation

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- Do not move the casualty if a spinal injury is suspected
- Take immediate steps to control any obvious bleeding by applying direct pressure to the wound
- Make the casualty as comfortable as possible and reassure them
- Keep the casualty warm by insulation them from cold or wet ground

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Riding Safety

- Ride on the correct side of the road and on trails, let walkers have priority.
- Ride in single file and always keep to the extreme right, unless you are turning right or passing
- If in a group, break into smaller groups (2-4 riders) to allow vehicles to pass more easily
- Pull completely off the road or path when you stop to converse or consult maps
- Use hand signals to indicate turning, obey traffic signals
- Never ride the wrong way down a one-way street
- Always yield to pedestrians
- Keep a suitable distance from parked cars

Fixing a flat:

Before you leave, pack the following: a spare inner tube (or two) suitable for your bike, tire levers, pump). Be sure your pump is set up for the valve type on your bike (some pumps work with both). Finally if you have a 'quick patch' (these don't require glue) and you do not have a spare tube, holes or pinches can be easily and quickly repaired.

A word about tubes: tubes come in one of two valve types. "Presta" valves are most common in Europe: they're thinner and have a small round nut at the top that must be unscrewed slightly so that the tube can accept or let out air. "Schrader" valves are wider, same as the valve on North American car tires; to deflate Schrader valves remove the valve cap, and use your fingernail or a thin stick to press the pin inside the valve.

Now to changing the tube:

1. Take the wheel off the bike by unhooking the brakes near the wheel, then loosening the axle skewer. If it's a rear wheel, it's a good idea to change the gear into the smallest gear beforehand to get the chain away from the skewer axle.
2. Deflate the tire completely if it isn't already
3. If the tire has a Presta valve, remove (and keep!) the valve locknut that secures the valve in the rim.
4. If the tire is loose enough you remove it with your hands; otherwise use tire levers to pry the tire over the rim
5. Before inserting the replacement tube, inspect the inside of the tire visually and with your fingertips to see if there is any glass or anything still in the tire.
6. Pump up the new tube a little bit, then insert it into the tire starting with the valve (make sure the valve is straight)

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7. Work the rest of the tire back into the rim with your tire levers if necessary
8. If the tire is a Presta, replace the valve locknut
9. Pump up the tire, replace valve cap
10. Position the tire back on the bike, tighten axle skewer, hook up brakes
11. Ensure wheel turns straight and doesn't rub against brake pads; if so, loosen axle skewers and re-position wheel on the bike.



Tipping

Regarding gratuities for your Great Explorations guides, we are often asked what is appropriate. An amount of 100€ per guide per person (200€ total assuming two guides) for a trip of this length is not unusual but is at your discretion.

GREAT EXPLORATIONS

We hope you enjoyed your trip. We wish you a safe trip back home, and hope that you will keep a fond memory of the Camino...

Thank you for joining us, and we hope to have you travel with us again,

The Great Explorations Team

Explore your world



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