



Spain

The Road to Santiago



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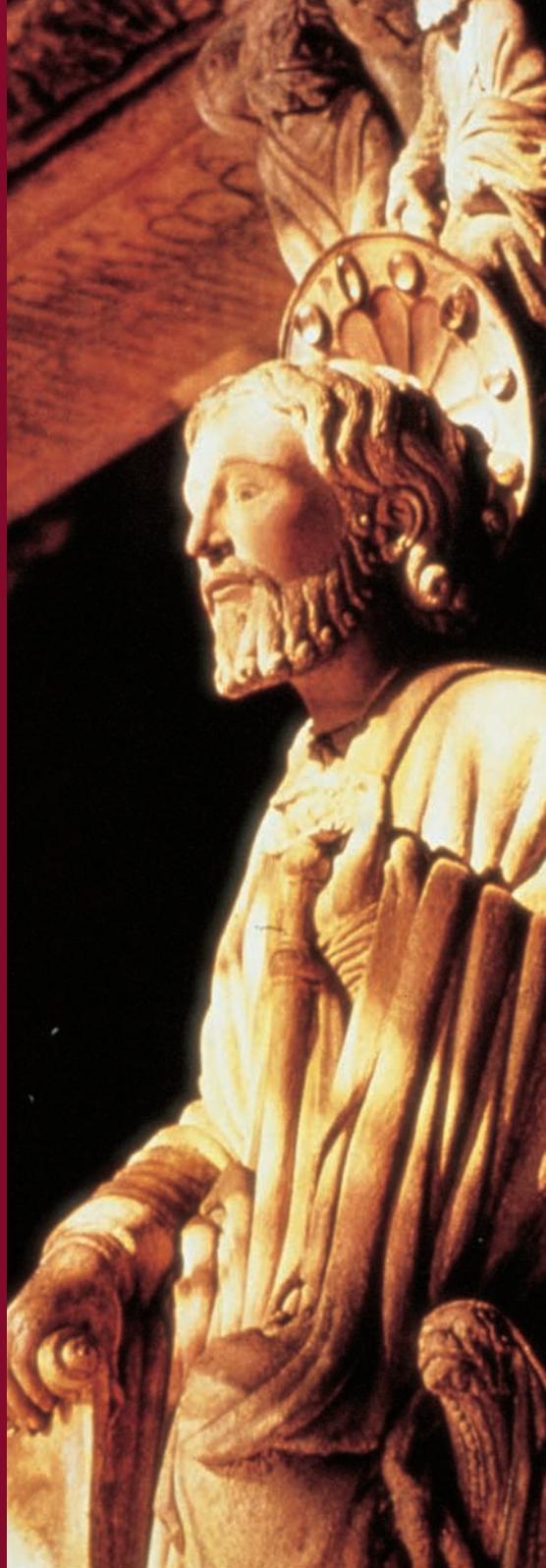
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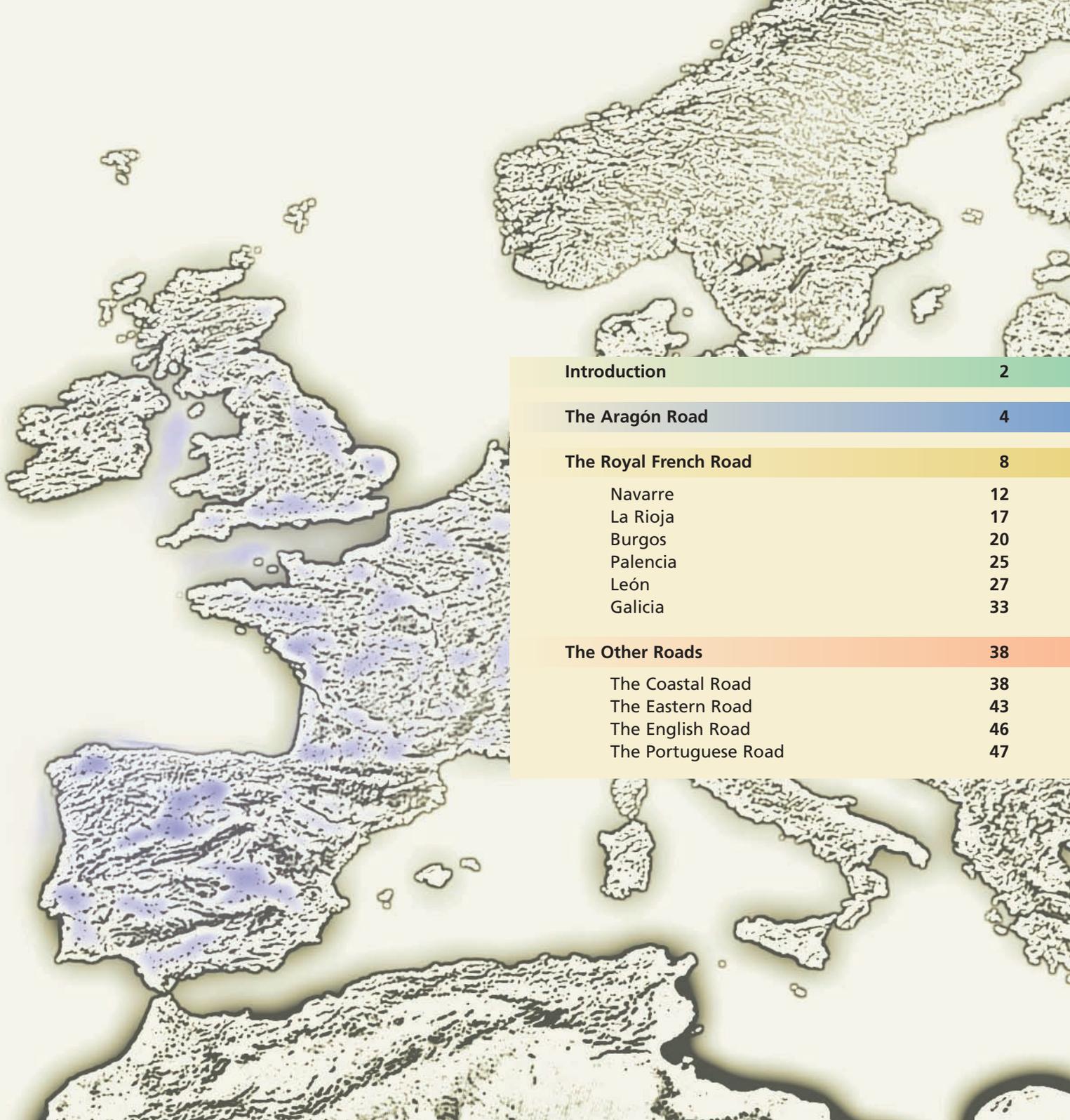
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Spain

The Road to Santiago





Introduction 2

The Aragón Road 4

The Royal French Road 8

Navarre 12

La Rioja 17

Burgos 20

Palencia 25

León 27

Galicia 33

The Other Roads 38

The Coastal Road 38

The Eastern Road 43

The English Road 46

The Portuguese Road 47

Introduction

In the year 813, in the land known as "world's end" in Galicia, a hermit named Paio (Pelayo) discovered the tomb of Saint James the Elder, "Son of Thunder". According to the legends, James (Santiago in Spanish) the Apostle came to Spain on a long ministry to evangelize the northern part of the Iberian peninsula. Later he was beheaded in Palestine and his body was placed by two of his disciples in a stone boat which miraculously set sail with no pilot, reaching the Galician coast. After journeying up the Ulla river, the boat marooned at Padrón. After many vicissitudes, the body was buried on mount Libredón. Little by little all was forgotten until a bright star shone guiding the hermit to the field where the saint was buried. With this lovely legend, it is no wonder the Apostle's tomb has become a sacred goal of the Christian religion since its discovery. A magnet, as strong as Rome and Jerusalem at times, Compostela attracted pilgrims from all over the world who wanted to follow the route of the stars of the Milky Way to secure forgiveness for their sins. The Emperor Charlemagne is considered by popular tradition to be the inaugurator of the Jacobean Way.

The Road to Santiago (also called the Way of St. James) has been declared a World Heritage Site, and in addition to spiritual significance, it holds other historic values, such as having been the backbone of European cultural unity. The routes to Compostela started out in Sweden, Poland, the Low Countries, Ireland, Great Britain and Turkey, and all of the branches merged in France to continue on as a single road to Galicia. Pursuing the route of the sun and the stars, this incessant stream of people that flowed across the fields of the world received the name of "pilgrimage" from the poet Dante. Human traffic intensifies each Jubilee year; this is when the Apostle's Feast Day (July 25th) falls on a Sunday. Hence, a Jacobean Holy year occurs every 6, 5, 6 and 11 years, which will be in 2004, 2010, 2021, etc.

A pilgrim undertakes this journey to search and find not only himself but also others at each stage, each inn, and at each *monjoie* (a small mound of stones marking each intersection) until arriving at the Altar of the Apostle. Compostela is the final destination of the adventure. This lovely thousand-year-old city is the deserving goal and reward for the hardships endured on Europe's most legendary pilgrimage.

The Pyrenees mountain chain is the real starting point of the journey. The European pilgrimage routes converge in the mountain passes: the Via Lemosina (from Vezelay and Limoges), the Via Podiensis (Le Puy) and Via Turonensis (from Tours to Bordeaux) reach the Pyrenees in Navarre, while the Via Tolosana (Toulouse) leads to the mountain pass of Somport in Aragón.



● Modern-day pilgrim

The Aragón Road



The Via Tolosana ascends the Somport pass (1,632 m.) into Spain from Toulouse, crossing the ancient region of Bearn. This pass opens the way to **Candanchú** and **Canfranc**. Next to the latter rises the castle known as Coll de Ladrones. Nothing is left but the ruins of the fortress and what was once "Campus Francus", but other development projects have turned these towns into famous winter resorts.

Rocky terrain alternates with asphalt along the route leading to the well-preserved **Jaca Castle**, a 12th century fortification which rises on the Pyrenees route and announces the approach to the once powerful capital of the Kingdom of Aragón, **Jaca**. Although many modern amenities can now be found, there is no forgetting that in the 11th century Jaca was the birthplace of kings. Its very soul is preserved in the grandiose Romanesque Cathedral of San Pedro, extremely important during this period in history. Within the cathedral, the Diocesan Museum houses an extraordinary collection of priceless medieval painting (Romanesque and pre-Gothic). The Church of Santiago, a Benedictine Monastery and a medieval bridge are other examples of the architecture recalling the past splendor of Jaca. But its power lasted much longer, as evidenced by the Ciudadela (citadel), a magnificent example of military architecture, built by order of Philip II in the 16th century. Its characteristic pentagonal shape can be seen from far off.

At the exit to the town, the Gothic stone bridge of San Miguel marks the route towards the South, which a little later is

● *La Ciudadela in Jaca (Huesca)*



● *Valley of Canfranc (Huesca)*

confirmed by a cross. The difficult path that descends the mountainside and traverses streams and rocky river beds is compensated by picturesque mountain scenery. Appearing amid the mountains is **Santa Cilia de Jaca**, a modest well-preserved town which housed a monastery in the Middle Ages. Nearby, we find the small town of **Puente la Reina de Jaca**, and a turnoff goes to Berdún. Although the town's origins have been lost in time, it still maintains the character of a medieval hamlet with a special attraction for visitors.

Avoiding the asphalt road, the pilgrim route continues by **Arrés**, **Mianos** and **Arteida**. After crossing the Yesa reservoir, the route approaches **Sangüesa**, a privileged town owing its prosperity to the pilgrim road. The town's former political



● *Javier Castle in Sangüesa (Navarre)*

relevance can be seen in its ensemble of monuments, from the handsome mansions built by noble families lining the Rúa Mayor, the finest of which is the Palace of the Prince of Viana, to the religious architecture. The collegiate Church of Santa María la Real deserves special mention. Here the image of “Santa María de Rocamadour” is venerated, a tradition introduced by the pilgrims from the shrine of the same name in southern France. The Church of San Francisco displays a notable Gothic cloister, while in the Church of Santiago, an authentic array of Romanesque and Gothic figures are depicted in Jacobean themes. Our attention is also drawn to the polychrome tympanum of the south portal depicting the Apostle in pilgrim attire with a profusion of cockle or scallop shells. In addition to the singular constructions throughout these lands, they have also been blessed with a privileged landscape. And although this may require extra effort on behalf of the pilgrimage walker, it also rewards the steadfast with marvelous views, such as the one enjoyed from the **Alto de Loiti**, which presides over the mountainous terrain looking East at the gorge carved by the Irati river near Lumbier. Further ahead we pass

next to the Higa de Monreal; an impressive mountain in the form of a cut-off cone with a panoramic view of the promising valleys of Navarre announcing the proximity of **Puente la Reina**, where we meet up with the French Road again. On our descent, we come across another Gothic stone bridge from pilgrimage days.

Several kilometers before leaving the Aragón Road behind, the ancient route leads the pilgrim to **Nuestra Señora de Eunate**, a curious small church founded by the Templars. Its octagonal shape recalls the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem. The different sides draw our attention and are surrounded by unusual open arches which also gave rise to the name (in the Basque language, *eunate* means “one hundred doors”). Only **Obanos** is left before travelers can reach one of the main goals. It is here in this town where they say Saint James performed one of his most famous miracles: the miracle of Saints Felicia and Guillén, also called the Mystery of Obanos, in which an angel persuades the pagan Count of Burgundy Guillén to repent his sins and embrace the Jacobean faith and become a hermit. The promise of the Apostle’s divine intervention encouraged pilgrims to continue their journey, as well as the flat terrain and imminent merging with the stream of people along the Royal French Road.

● *Puente la Reina (Navarre)*



The Royal French Road



The most traveled of the pilgrimage routes leading to Santiago de Compostela is the Royal French Road which joins the Vías Lemosina and Podiensis in the Pyrenees of Navarre, as well as part of the Via Turonensis that prefers the inland route to the coastal one.

Luzaide-Valcarlos and **Orreaga-Roncesvalles** are the first towns in Navarre pilgrims encounter. These names bring back memories of all the myths associating the Emperor Charlemagne with the origin of the pilgrim road. In fact, penitents can follow the steps of the famous emperor starting in Valcarlos, where it is said that he camped after the defeat of his army at the hands of the Moorish king of Zaragoza. Stories tell that after gathering up the body of his nephew Roland and burying him, Charlemagne fell to his knees at the **Alto de Ibañeta** where an angel showed him the way of the stars as the only one leading to forgiveness. An historiated cross marks the spot and “speaks” of that moment, as well as hundreds of other small crosses that many other devoted Christians have placed as they passed by.



● *Church of Santiago in Orreaga-Roncesvalles (Navarre)*

● *Luzaide-Valcarlos (Navarre)*



In the Pyrenees, the Carolingian imprint is everywhere and can be observed along this entire itinerary in the geography (V-shaped gorges that Roland is said to have slashed open with a blow from his sword) as well as in the man-made structures, such as the monasteries of San Salvador de Ibañeta, which once housed the so-called Chapel of Charlemagne and the Hospital of Roland. We must also add the most recent contributions, including a monolith and an interesting collection of Roland’s weapons: the sword called “Durendal” and a pair of war clubs in Ibañeta. At the foot of a steep mountain, in the neighboring woodland town of Roncesvalles, scene of the bloody battle chronicled in the *Chanson de Roland*, Bishop Sancho de Larrosa was influenced by the pilgrims’ interest in the mountainous Ibañeta in the Middle Ages. Here he founded the Royal Collegiate Church of Nuestra Señora de Roncesvalles, a building which although restored, shows clear signs of its Gothic beginnings. It housed a hospital and channel house for pilgrims called the Silo of Charlemagne, which traditionally has been associated directly with the Carolingian battle. The Renaissance-style chess set of Charlemagne is



● *Erro (Navarre)*

displayed in the Treasury. A little farther ahead, the road passes next to the pilgrims' cross, a traditional votive monument.

When time permits, some travelers prefer to leave the legendary road and take the one inaugurated by Napoleon. It was said that Napoleon had wanted to avoid the same thing happening to his troops as had befallen the rearguard commanded by Roland, so he took advantage of the mountain passes the shepherds followed in the spring. This is a stretch of lovely countryside with magnificent views. The itinerary starts out in the French town of Saint Michel Le Vieu and passes through a beech tree forest in search of the Collado Lepoeder (1,440 m.) From here, cutting through the mountains, you arrive at Poyo de Roldán (the Spanish name for Roland) in the Alto de Ibañeta. In addition to largely avoiding the modern roadway, this route offers travelers the opportunity to relax and admire the majestic Pyrenees mountains.

After having overcome the obstacle presented by the mountain peaks, a second stage is initiated and leads towards the lands of Pamplona. This wooded stretch is dotted with towns, such as the seigniorial **Auritz-Burguete** and **Erro** with its Gothic chapel, as well as other more modern ones, including **Zubiri**. In **Larrasoña**, an important past can be deduced by the ruins of the monastery and the hospital. Travelers once again come upon some of the

artistic treasures the pilgrim road of St. James has to offer, as is the case of **Puente de los Bandidos**, a modest town over the Arga river. Medieval pilgrims often tried to avoid it, and this contributed to the creation of myths, widespread and false, of the dangers in Navarre. But time does not pass in vain, and modern-day travelers know with certainty that they are stepping into one of the most pleasant spots along the Jacobean geography.

The Zabaldika bridge announces the arrival at **Arre**, where recent restoration efforts have reclaimed the ensemble called the Trinidad de Arre with its church, bridge and pilgrim inn, in addition to other traditional buildings, such as the mills next to the river. A little further ahead, the town of **Villava** (home of the world-famous cyclist Miguel Indurain) reminds travelers they are at the gateway to one of the most hospitable stopping places, the city of Pamplona.

● *Pilgrim fountain in Orreaga-Roncesvalles (Navarre)*



Entering **Pamplona** (Iruña) should be done grandly as befits this two thousand-year-old city that has preserved its age-old charm. To begin with, the medieval bridge of Magdalena must be crossed, a long-standing Jacobean tradition (cross with an image of the Apostle to the side), to then continue skirting the ramparts. Custom dictates that travelers first proceed to the cathedral, where the doors of the Hospital of San Miguel were once open to pilgrims. The French Gothic cathedral, with an elegant neoclassical facade, was built over the ruins of a Romanesque church. Of interest in the interior are the lovely Gothic cloister and entranceway, as well as the ambulatory bordering the apse, characteristic of pilgrim churches.

The rest of our visit to Pamplona takes us along the Calle de la Curia to the beginning of the Calle Mayor, where the Romanesque Church of San Cernin stands. Presiding over the portal is a figure of the Apostle Saint James. The pilgrimages to Santiago have made a lasting impression on this city. Its patron saint is the "Virgen del Camino" (Virgin of the Roadway) (with a chapel in the Jacobean Church of San Cernin) and figures of the Apostle may be found in all of its temples, including the Church of Santo Domingo (from the doorways to the high altarpiece).



● *Pamplona's Cathedral*

On the other hand, the modern-day pilgrim is given precise indications for the pilgrim route (arrows with stars) on signs with the street names. The road of St. James also passes in front of the Church of San Lorenzo, where we find the famous chapel of San Fermín.

To leave Pamplona, the Vuelta del Castillo that skirts the well-preserved fortress of the Ciudadela and the University must still be crossed before reaching the bridge over the Sadar, where travelers can return to their solitary wanderings.



● *Pamplona*

The route from the capital of Navarre is pleasant to walk and rich in artistic treasures. Fine examples of Gothic architecture may be seen in **Cizur** (Church of San Andres), **Astrain** and **Legarda**, among others. We now reach the point where the two routes (Navarre and Aragón) merge to form a single path known as the Royal French Road, just outside the small town of **Obanos**, a prelude to Puente la Reina.

Puente la Reina (literally queen's bridge) is entered by the Calle Mayor, flanked with ancestral homes and mansions with coffered ceilings. Also opening its doors is the Church of El Crucifijo, which is connected to a pilgrim inn by a Gothic arch. On the same street stands the Church of Santiago el Mayor, which houses the celebrated sculpture of the Apostle St. James popularly known as "el Beltza". The Calle Mayor also provides the exit to Puente la Reina by crossing the bridge that gives the town its name, a lovely curved Romanesque construction consisting of six arches.

Signs are strategically posted in all of Navarre and help pilgrims to head in the direction of Estella with no problems. Small villages can be found along the way. **Cirauqui**, a modest town perched on a hillock, is a charming hamlet displaying medieval influences in the design of the streets and the coats of arms adorning the



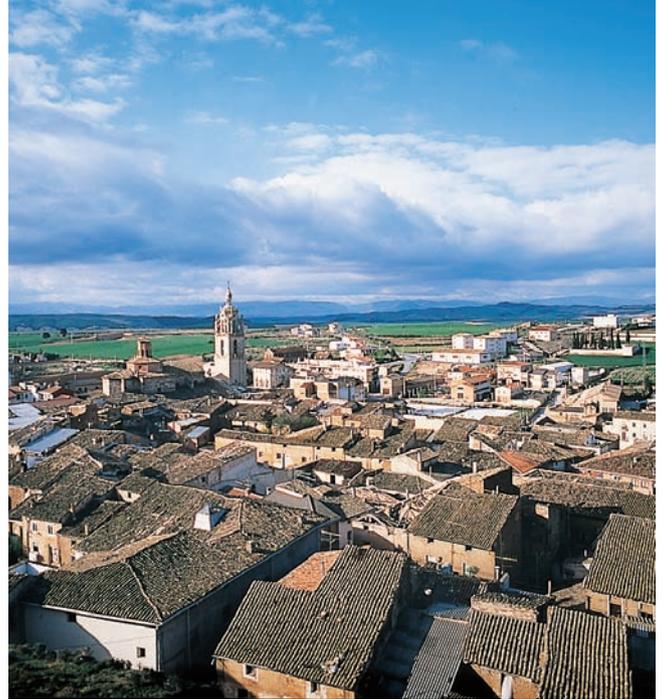
● *Monastery of Irache*

● *Church of Santa María in Viana*

houses. It would be worthwhile to take some time to stroll around the town. Here we also find the Church of San Román, Romanesque in origin with Cistercian influences, which still houses a Roman altar. A modest bridge completes the artistic ensemble in Cirauqui and leads us to a much restored Roman road which helps us descend the hill.

Estella (Lizarra) is the next goal and has been called “the Toledo of the North” because of the wealth of monuments. Pilgrims should pass first by the Church of San Miguel in Excelsis, a Romanesque temple with strong Gothic influences (late 12th century). Of special interest is the North portal with fine sculptures (Pantocrator, Saint Michael, etc.), as well as the Gothic altarpiece in the interior. Continuing along the urban route, we pass by the Renaissance fountain of La Mona before coming to the palace of San Cristóbal (Plateresque facade) and the palace of the kings of Navarre, one of the finest examples of civil Romanesque architecture in the Iberian peninsula adorned with legendary battle

● *Church of San Miguel. Estella*



● *Los Arcos*

scenes. The lengthy list of monuments in Estella also includes the parish churches of the Santo Sepulcro, San Pedro de la Rúa, Santo Domingo, El Puy, etc. and concludes with the basilica of Nuestra Señora de Rocamadour.

With Estella, travelers leave behind the last big city in Navarre and now proceed towards Logroño in the region of La Rioja. But still, the rich fruit tree orchards and vineyards of the fertile Navarre valley must be crossed. The first surprise on the next stretch is the fountain of Irache. By its side is the lovely Visigothic Monastery of Santa María la Real.

The main highway now coincides with the authentic pilgrim road of St. James and skirts by towns with strong historic flavor, such as the small fortified Carolingian Villamayor de Monjardín (stories say it was taken by the emperor with the big beard), or the Roman town of **Los Arcos**, a showcase of different architectural styles. The Romanesque Church of Santa María displays a Gothic tower and cloister and baroque ornamentation in the interior.

In the Church in **Torres del Río**, the tradition of the octagonal ground plan from the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in the Holy Land reappears. Like the hermitage in Eunáte, the temple of the



● *Logroño's Cathedral*

Santo Sepulcro once had an enormous lantern in the top of the tower which served as a "lighthouse" for the pilgrims.

In **Viana**, the pilgrim road bids farewell to Navarre. In this fortified former border town, it is worthwhile to take a walk and see the lovely Church of Santa María, basically Gothic in style (tower, nave, aisles and vaults) with the later addition of a baroque ambulatory and apse chapels. The spirit of Caésar Borgia is said to wander through Viana. He was buried in the atrium of Santa María although his remains are presently not accounted for. A monument in his honor keeps the memory of this devotedly religious man of his times from being forgotten.

The Hermitage of Las Cuevas (former 13th century pilgrim hospital) and pine woods announce the proximity of a river and with it, the entrance into La Rioja.

La Rioja

La Rioja is a small autonomy favored by history and nature, which has played an important role in the formation of the Way of St. James. It should not be surprising that the entrance into these lands is so promising. After crossing the bridge providing access to the region, the countryside unfolds into farmlands and orchards bearing reminders of the tender vegetables (asparagus, artichokes and bell peppers), the tasty fruits (cherries, pears, and peaches) and the universally prestigious wines produced here. If any one of these items could accompany a meal of roast lamb served in the traditional manner, or at least some cold cuts from the mountains (ham cured in paprika), the meal would certainly be a delight.

Logroño is entered by crossing the Ebro by a stone bridge. This small city has grown as the road of St. James has needed it. Not in vain, it has been said that La Rioja is the land most deeply rooted in the traditions of the Jacobean route, as seen by the wealth of monuments and the legends found here. A walk through the city begins at Santa María del Palacio. Although built in the 10th century, very little remains of the original structure. The most remarkable feature is the spired tower known as "La Aguja" (the needle), in addition to the Gothic transept and Renaissance altarpiece and some 18th century frescoes with scenes from the Passion of Christ. Nearby is the Cathedral of Santa María la Redonda, a 15th century octagonal church erected over a medieval one. The parish Church of San Bartolomé is older and of interest, along with the primitive Gothic style, is the sculptured doorway depicting St. Bartholomew, the finest of its kind in La Rioja.

● *Monastery of Yuso in San Millán de la Cogolla*



No truly Jacobean city could be without a church dedicated to Saint James. In a southern portal, Santiago el Real displays a modest Renaissance image of St. James the pilgrim, although this is overshadowed by a monumental baroque sculpture of St. James the Moor-slayer (Santiago Matamoros), a defiant figure on horseback which recalls the battle in nearby Clavijo. The hermitages and parish churches in Clavijo revere St. James's intervention in 844 when according to tradition, the Apostle descended from the sky mounted on a white charger to fight against the Moorish leader Abderrahman, leading the Christians to victory.

The solitary fields of La Rioja reach to **Navarrete**. The architectural remains of the former pilgrim hospital now serve as a Gothic portal to the cemetery. On the road heading to Nájera, travelers can still find reminders of the legendary French knight Roland (Roldán in Spanish) in the town of **Poyo Roldán**.

Nájera is a good example of the close relationship between political and spiritual forces in past centuries. The coastal route of the Way of St. James was required to pass through here by order of the king since Nájera was a Royal Court.

The Monastery of Santa María la Real, now pertaining to the Franciscan order, has a magnificent cloister and a Royal Pantheon of the kings and princes of Navarre and León and where the remains of Blanca de Navarre (Queen of Sancho III and mother of Alfonso VIII) were also laid to rest. It was also a refuge for pilgrims, and in the interior, a miraculous image is worshipped. Legend has it that one day a hunter pursued a dove that disappeared into a hidden cave and found a statue of the Virgin illuminated by an oil lamp, and at her feet the dove rested next to a pot of lilies.

Miracles, Jacobean or not, are abundant in these lands beginning in Clavijo and centered in Santo Domingo de la Calzada, a nearby town, which can be reached either directly by



● *Santo Domingo de la Calzada*

following the pilgrim route or by letting yourself be driven by your own curiosity as the pilgrims often did. In days of old, when time was not a factor, the zealous had no problem with short detours, past **Azofra** towards the monasteries of **San Millán de la Cogolla**, **Yuso** and **Suso**, World Heritage sites, and also the nearby one of **Santa María de las Cañas**, all at the foot of the mountains. Pilgrims were not compelled by artistic or historic curiosity as people are today. However, their religious fervor as to the relics preserved in the sanctuaries was extraordinary.

The plains lead us in the direction of **Santo Domingo de la Calzada**. The entire town is the result of the work of St. Dominic, a local hermit and primitive 11th century engineer who spent his life building roads and bridges in the area to facilitate the pilgrimage. The town is rather small but well-endowed with old walls, a Roman road, the Casa del Santo, which shelters travelers, and a Parador hotel to lodge the most demanding visitors.

In the Cathedral of San Salvador, in addition to the Saint's tomb, the great curiosity is the live cock and hen kept in a cage to commemorate one of the most celebrated miracles associated with St. James protecting travelers. According to the stories, a hen was roasted and came alive again to prove the innocence of a young pilgrim wrongly accused of theft and thus, the saying goes:

*“Santo Domingo de la Calzada,
where the hen crowed after being roasted”.*

The town is exited by a stone bridge built by the saint, in order to head in the direction of **Grañón**. This is the last town pertaining to La Rioja and travelers can still delight in the mystic arts that flourish in this region. In the interior of the parish church, a fine Renaissance altarpiece can be admired.



● *Altarpiece in Church of La Asunción in Navarrete*



● *Santovenia de Oca*

Burgos

Although the entrance into the region of Castile may seem somewhat capricious (a sign in the middle of the pilgrim road), the landscape soon reveals to travelers that they are stepping into a land very different from the La Rioja lowlands. This is now the province of Burgos, and from now on and through the small towns, endless plains of grains unfold beneath the sun. A few small red hills stand out on the flatlands and isolated towers of parish churches proclaim the proximity of another town. Occasionally, even before a tower can be distinguished, the long silhouette of a stork is visible.

The sobriety of the landscape and the apparent unpretentiousness of the towns should not be misleading because beneath some of these stark exteriors, a treasure may be hiding. This occurs in the first town, **Redecilla del Camino**. The church houses a Romanesque baptismal font with Byzantine influences. St. Dominic was baptized in another font in the Church of Viloria.

A little farther ahead, we enter into **Belorado**, an ancient Jacobean town evidenced by the architectural remains, including a bridge in ruins and the former Hospital of La Misericordia. It still preserves the hermitage of Nuestra Señora de Belén, which rises

over ruins, and the churches of Santa María and San Pedro. In the heart of the town, Belorado has an arcaded Plaza Mayor where pilgrims can enjoy a refreshing rest.

The next stop is **Villafranca de Montes de Oca**. The name recalls echoes of past splendor of when it was a bishop's see. The prestigious Hospital of San Antonio Abad has been abandoned to its fate. Villafranca was also a point to be feared at times due to the Oca mountains. Once a difficult journey because of the dense underbrush, today this has been remedied and even constitutes a pleasant stretch to travel for its diversity and cool temperatures, providing only moderate difficulty at the Alto de la Pedraja (1,150 m).

San Juan de Ortega is at the edge of the mountain chain. Founded by the saint who gave it its name, the village was once thronged with pilgrims. The proverbial hospitality continues in our days with a large inn and a welcoming bowl of garlic soup for new arrivals. San Juan is also credited with the origin of the present monastery containing the saint's shrine, as well as the Renaissance chapel of San Nicolás de Bari. In the monastic church, a curious Annunciation on a capital depicting the biblical scene is illuminated at the beginning of spring, when a ray of light from a small opening enters at dusk.

● *San Juan de Ortega*



After leaving San Juan de Ortega, several alternatives are possible, although perhaps it would be advisable to keep to the traditional route. This is the route that traverses **Agés**, **Atapuerca** (famous for its prehistoric archeological finds) and **Cardeñuela**. The traveler finds himself once again before the vast plains of Castile and León studded with woodlands, and only a short distance from the busy city of Burgos.

There were towns that grew up because of the pilgrim road, but the main Jacobean route was purposely designed to go to **Burgos**. The old Castilian Royal Court was so important that its monarchs were able to get the main route to reach this point even though at first, the pilgrim road ran along the Cantabrian coast.

In the city of Burgos, pilgrims should begin by walking along the route marked by tradition. Entrance is by the streets of Vitoria, Covadonga and Las Calzadas, soon reaching the Plaza de San



● *Castrojeriz*

● *Burgos' Cathedral*



Juan. Here stood one of the thirty hospitals that opened its doors to shelter pilgrims; today converted into a cultural center preserving only a Gothic doorway. Next door is the Gothic Church of San Lesmes (St. Adelelmo was a saintly monk from the French Abbey of Cluny). The church has a notable south doorway and a Plateresque pulpit.

The Puerta de San Juan lets us continue on the streets of San Juan, González Avellanos and Fernán González, situating us in front of the cathedral. This impressive Gothic structure has an airy lightness that belies its formidable size. This elegant Gothic Cathedral of Santa María has been declared a World Heritage Site. The artistic wealth is exemplified in the famous main facade with its two characteristic towers topped by openwork spires. The interior, well-illuminated by splendid stained glass windows, opens upon a central nave with two aisles, an ambulatory and a lovely octagonal central lantern.

When we depart Burgos and cross the stone bridge, called Puente de los Malatos, which spans the Arlanzón river, a short walk will lead to the Hospital del Rey. This was the most important hospital on the pilgrim route together with the one in Compostela. Of special interest are the fine examples of the Plateresque style (portal) and a profusion of Jacobean images beginning with the sculptured doorway. The Monastery of Las Huelgas Reales is found nearby.

Oblivious to the asphalt road and the passing of centuries, the pilgrim route continues from **Hornillos** to **Hontanas** and then runs parallel to the dried-up river bed of the Garbanzuelo.

Palencia

Soon we come upon the romantic ruins of the Convent of San Antón. The religious order is no longer in existence, but for centuries it enjoyed a certain prestige because it was said that they knew how to cure gangrene.

Castrojeriz is a typical example of a pilgrim road town. The two kilometers bordering the pilgrimage road include shops, a collegiate church dedicated to the Virgen del Manzano (with important Romanesque and Gothic elements, such as a rose window and portals), a Plaza Mayor, the Church of Santo Domingo (exhibiting Flemish tapestries with designs by Rubens) and the traditional hall-church of San Juan.

The upcoming stretch to Frómista (the next staging point) holds a surprise; a climb to the **Colina de Mostelares** (1,400 m.) whose ascent, peak and descent mark each crossing. From high up, **Itero del Castillo** can be seen, the last town in the province of Burgos, and the Pisuerga river, which indicates the entrance to Palencia.

Leaving Itero del Castillo, the eleven-arched stone bridge of Fitero marks the route that must now be taken across the fertile land of Tierra de Campos from Itero de la Vega to Frómista.

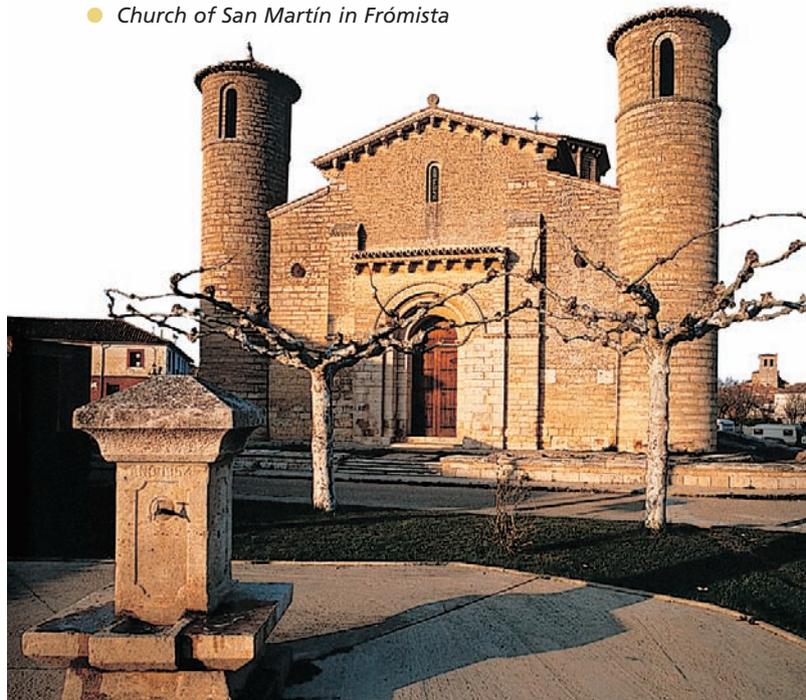
Itero de la Vega, a riverside town, has a modern inn, in addition to the classic Hermitage of La Piedad with a figure of the Apostle St. James. Next is **Bobadilla del Camino**, artistically more relevant for its Isabelline stone pillar (called a *rollo*) and its notable Renaissance church.

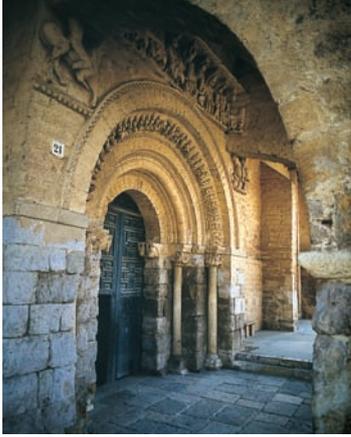
The famous French pilgrim chronicler, Aymeric Picaud concluded his sixth stage with the arrival at **Frómista**. A halt here in a pilgrim's journey was brought about more often by the Church of San Martín than out of any sensation of weariness. This graceful church is an unparalleled example of Romanesque architecture and presents a mixture of simplicity and richness of forms typical of this particular style. Remains of the Jewish quarter can be seen nearby in a synagogue. The fervor of the pilgrims can also be felt in the former Hospital of Palmeros and in the Renaissance Hospital of Santiago. Also in the surprising little town of Frómista, we find the Gothic churches of San Pedro, Santa María del Castillo, and Santiago.

● Church of Santa María la Blanca in Villalcázar de Sirga



● Church of San Martín in Frómista





● *Church of Santa María del Camino in Carrión de los Condes*

Villalcázar de Sirga surprises travelers with a huge temple consecrated to Santa María la Blanca. In the interior, there is an array of styles visible, from the impressive Gothic tombs to Renaissance sculptures, and even Visigothic elements.

The next stop is **Carrión de los Condes**. The Calle de Santa María passes at the entrance by the ancient Church of Santa María del Camino and in the center of the town, by the Romanesque Church of Santiago. The remarkable carved frieze above the doorway has been considered to be among the best Jacobean art along the pilgrim route. A walk down by the river allows us to see, from the other side, the beauty of the Romanesque Monastery of San Zoilo. The tombs inside compete with the Renaissance cloister for our attention.

The pilgrim road follows the highway to the river and afterwards passes through farmland letting us view the nearby reddish tablelands of the surrounding countryside. These are moments meant for solitude and meditation where travelers can learn to appreciate the simple beauty of the land wherever it may be. Following the highway, to the left are the towns of **Calzada de los Molinos** (the striking images of St. James in its Mudejar church are definitely worth seeing), **Cervatos de la Cueva** and **Quintanilla de la Cueva** (Roman remains). **Calzadilla de la Cueva** is the next town, reached either by the path or the paved road. Its name refers to the Roman way that crossed through the town.

Next we have **Ledigos**, **Terradillos de Templarios**, **Moratinos** and **San Nicolás**, making this brief stretch to the border with León a pleasant journey with brick buildings and modest parish churches along the way.

León

Upon arrival in the province of León, travelers come to a crossroads. However, a pedestrian path to the right leads to the bridge over the Valderaduey river which serves as the border. At the other end, the Hermitage of the Virgen del Puente opens onto the town of Sahagún, the first of a series of towns that has played a large role in the traditions of the Jacobean route, as well as in the history of Spain.

The town of **Sahagún** grew up around a Cluniac abbey dedicated to San Facundo (hence the town's name). From those glorious days, only some remains are preserved today, including the arch of San Benito and the Torre del Reloj (clock tower). But although the town felt the effects of the abandoned abbey, the splendor of a bygone era can still be seen in the Mudejar Romanesque styles of some of its temples: the Chapel of San Mancio and the shrine of La Peregrina (the image of the Virgin is now in the Benedictine museum) are perhaps the best examples, but the Churches of San Tirso and San Lorenzo are also good illustrations.

The pilgrim route, which descends towards the Cea River and then crosses it, abandons the highway at **Calzada del Coto**. Here there is a fork in the route: the route called the Calzada de los Peregrinos follows the rocky solitary Roman road to the right, while the Royal French Road to the left crosses the towns of El Burgo Ranero and Reliegos, where both routes join together to proceed to **Mansilla de las Mulas**. The French Road has a larger number of rest stops along this way.

● *Arch of San Benito in Sahagún*



The walls encircling Mansilla de Mulas speak of a time when the town was strong and strategically important. These were years of continuous territorial battles, and the town on the banks of the Esla river built thick strong walls for protection. Mansilla once housed a monastery and seven churches within its walls crowned by battlemented towers and enclosed by four gates. Only two gates are preserved, called Arco de la Concepción and Arco de San Agustín (the pilgrim route to leave town).

From now and until reaching the city of León, capital of the province, the land is scattered here and there with historic remains. As an example, in the vicinity of **Villamoros**, there is a *castro* (an Astur fortification the Romans conquered in the first years of our era). A little further ahead, we cross the curved **bridge of Villarente** spanning the Porma. The bridge is so large that it has seventeen arches from different periods. At the other end of the bridge, a pilgrim hospital is still standing.

● *Bishop's Palace in Astorga*

Only **Archajuela** and **Valdelafuente** separate the traveler from León now, but first the **Alto del Portillo** (1,200 m.) awaits, marked by a modern cross. From here, the imposing towers of the Cathedral of León are visible. The descent from the mountain ends at the Castro bridge, and after crossing the Torío river, our journey leads into the Jewish quarter. We are now in the city of **León**.

The traveler will never really know for sure if the importance of the Courts attracted the pilgrim road or if the road itself is what shaped the capital of the former Kingdom of León. But what we do know for certain is that the pilgrimage route to Compostela travels through the capital of the former Kingdom of León just as it did through Castile, Navarre, and Aragón. Furthermore, in the case of León, the capital was disputed first between Oviedo and later between Burgos.

But thanks to its own efforts, the Kingdom of León became prosperous and powerful, still evident in the city we see a thousand years later. We begin by crossing the bridge over the Torío river, and should continue on the Calle Alcalde Miguel Castaño to the Plaza de Santa Ana. The Calle Barahona leads to the ramparts,

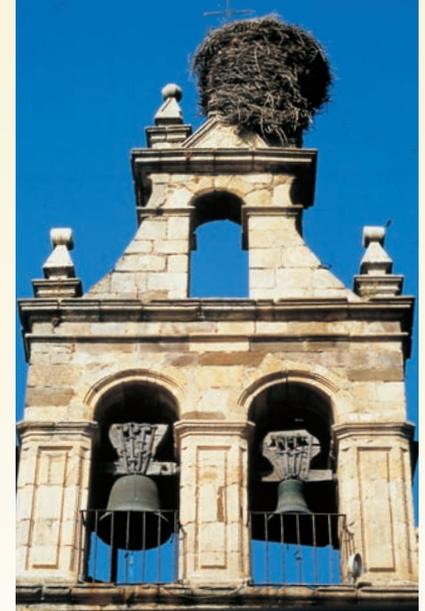


and within the walls we find the Plaza del Mercado. On this square stands the Romanesque temple of the patron saint, Santa María del Camino, which received pilgrims at the south door called the Puerta del Perdón (Door of Pardon). The cobbled streets lead to the Cathedral of Santa María de Regla, considered the finest example of the Gothic style in the Iberian peninsula. The stained glass windows are beyond compare. The cathedral was erected over the site of ancient Roman baths and later constructions (Romanesque and Mozarab). The devout would most certainly have passed through the magnificent ambulatory to reach the Chapels of Santiago and the Virgen Blanca.

Before departing via the Calle de la Abadía to regain the Jacobean route, it would be an excellent idea to linger a little longer in the city to visit some of the other exceptional sights. Only this way can we be sure to see the Calle de la Rúa with its handsome mansions on both sides and further ahead the striking building called Casa de los Botines by the world-famous architect Antonio Gaudí.

The Calle de Renueva, outside the walls, leads to the Convent of San Marcos (now a luxury Parador hotel), as well as the pilgrim hospital. In front of the building, there is a majestic cross from the Alto del Portillo, which in spite of its beauty, still cannot eclipse the superb Renaissance facade of the convent.

● *Collegiate Church of San Isidoro in León*

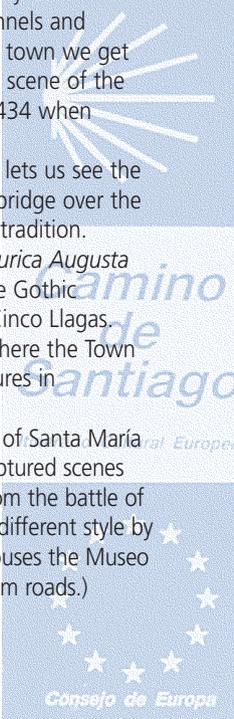


● *Sanctuary of the Quinta Angustia in Cacabelos*

Pilgrims must cross the San Marcos bridge over the Bernesga river to leave the city and continue towards the lands of the Páramo. The halfway point of this stretch is marked by the tower of a modern temple, the shrine of the Virgen del Camino with spectacular bronze sculptures by Subirachs. Past **San Miguel de Camino**, the wide plains of the Páramo begin. Today their harshness is mitigated somewhat by irrigation channels and cornfields. Next is **Hospital de Órbigo**, a pleasant town we get to by crossing the famous bridge of Paso Honroso, scene of the Honorable Passage of Arms, a name acquired in 1434 when knights jostled here for the love of a maiden.

The high plateau in the lands of La Maragatería lets us see the lovely town of **Astorga** in the distance. A Roman bridge over the Tuerto river announces a town with a strong Latin tradition. Numerous remains of the former Roman town *Asturica Augusta* are found in the center of town. Here also rises the Gothic convent of San Francisco and the Hospital of the Cinco Llagas. Our walk continues to the arcaded Plaza Mayor, where the Town Hall stands with a curious clock displaying two figures in traditional Maragato dress which strike the hour.

In the vicinity, we find the Late Gothic Cathedral of Santa María with a profusion of stained glass windows and sculptured scenes (including the heroic Maragato figure Pero Mato from the battle of Clavijo). Nearby, the Bishop's palace exhibits a very different style by the Catalan architect Antonio Gaudí. This palace houses the Museo de los Caminos (a museum of the Roman and pilgrim roads.)



On our approximation to the region of Galicia, the low mountains of León guide us from **Rabanal del Camino** to the mining town of Ponferrada. Along this stretch of the road, travelers will encounter one of the most interesting Jacobean customs, the *monjoies*, also known as *milladoiros* in the northwestern part of the peninsula; in the **Puerto de Foncebadón**, a cross on a mound of rocks marks the route and invites travelers to make their contribution to the pile. From the heights of the mountain pass (1,517 m.), there is a magnificent view of the fertile highlands of the Bierzo.

In the vicinity of Ponferrada, the charming village of **Molinaseca** draws our attention to the chapel of Las Angustias and other well-preserved monuments, including a Roman bridge and arcaded streets with handsome old mansions. The Hermitage of San Roque marks the exit from Molinaseca and the imminent entrance into Ponferrada.

Ponferrada is an old mining town steeped in history. From the memory of the first bridge reinforced with iron (Pons Ferrata) to the castle of the Knights Templar, everything is a reminder of a defensive past. The well-preserved castle exterior no longer hides any mysteries (three walls, twelve towers, etc.) Further below in the old quarter, we find the Hospital of La Reina, a Renaissance inn near the Church of San Andrés which houses the figure of Christ of the Templars. Ready to leave, pilgrims will have to pass by the basilica of the Virgen de la Encina (lovely baroque tower) alluding to a miraculous apparition.

The next stretch passes amid the fertile fields of the Bierzo and soon reaches **Cacabelos**. In addition to lending its name to the wines of the area, the town also houses the Church of Nuestra Señora de la Plaza, as well as an interesting Archeological Museum.

At the end of this stretch of the pilgrim road is **Villafranca del Bierzo**. A pilgrim too ill or who was prevented by other valid reasons from completing this pilgrimage to Compostela could gain the same indulgences here and avoid the rest of the journey. As might be expected, there is a Romanesque Church of Santiago, with the ever-present Puerta del Perdón (Door of Pardon). Nearby, the Convent of San Francisco (the monks produce their own wine) presides over the descent to the old quarter, where the streets are lined with beautiful ancestral mansions. Toward the other side, we find a round-towered castle with iron gates and robust walls.

As pilgrims cross the turbulent Valcarce river leaving the fertile fields of cherries behind, they step into highlands to wind through mountains until **Ruitelán** in preparation for the last great confrontation: the conquest of the region of Galicia via O Cebreiro.

Galicia

And finally Galicia, the land that shelters the human remains of the Apostle St. James. Fertile mountainous terrain, harsh at times, but always gratifying, as pilgrims can verify when from the Alto de Pedrafita they bear left and continue climbing to arrive at **O Cebreiro**. This village preserves some typical *pallozas* (primitive thatched-roof stone dwellings), some inhabited until recently. A modern *palloza* belongs to one of the rural tourism establishments in the town. Another older one has been converted into a museum, which opens mornings and afternoons, with free admission.

In O Cebreiro, it is compulsory to visit the church housing a Holy Grail in which the wine and hosts were transformed into the blood and Body of Christ, a miracle that took place around the year 1300. The church bells also chimed during the winter to orient the pilgrims in the fog. A stop at the inn of San Giraldo de Aurillac is a must, without a doubt the most visited one since Roncesvalles. It has been open since the 11th century, with an interruption of a little more than a hundred years.

Next we head for **Liñares** (lovely unpretentious temple of Santo Estevo, which once belonged to the monks of O Cebreiro) and continue climbing to the Alto de San Roque first, and then to O Penedo, in order to reach **Hospital, Padornelo** (Pinguela fountain

● Primitive "pallozas" in O Cebreiro

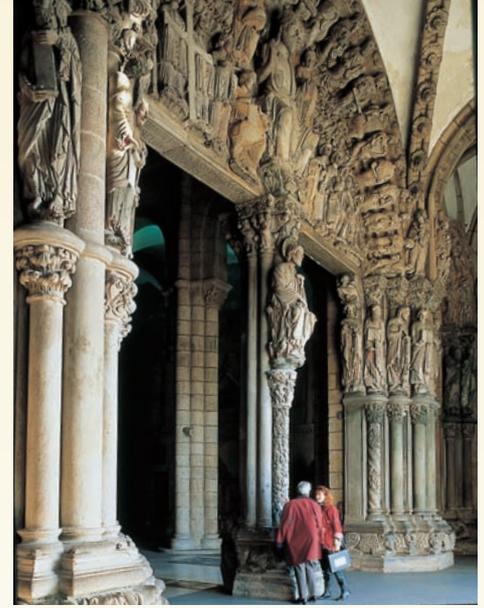




● *Convent of La Magdalena in Sarria*



● *Church of Santiago in Barbadelo*



● *Pórtico de la Gloria.
Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela*

and the Church of San Xoán) and still farther up **Poio** at 1,335 m.

Now at last, the time has come to go down. Through **Fonfría** (which also had a hospital) and **Biduedo** (chapel dedicated to St. Peter), we descend to **Triacastela**, and here a succession of hills begins, with signposts to keep us from losing the way.

At last we have finished the eleventh stage of the *Codex Calixtinus*, generally considered to be the first travel guide. It was written by Aymeric Picaud, the French cleric, and describes the glories and hardships of the journey to the shrine of Compostela. In the days of Alfonso IX, it received a strong impetus. The town has a church reconstructed at the end of the 18th century over another Romanesque one of which the apse and buttresses are still standing.

The easiest route goes through **A Balsa** (hermitage) and **San Xil**. Another equally traveled route but a somewhat longer one goes by the massive **Monastery of Samos**. Here a hermitic community, favored by the religious hierarchy, built an abbey that eclipsed the rest of the town. The well-known erudite Benito Feijóo resided and taught in Samos. Better known as Father Feijóo, he was born in the 17th century in the Galician province of Ourense and formed an important part of Galician history. The monastery almost burned down in the beginning of the second half of the 20th century. Fortunately, it was rebuilt and pilgrims can still visit its two cloisters: Feijóo and Nereidas.

One branch or the other leads to **Sarria**, a city founded by Alfonso IX with the name of Vilanova de Sarria. In one of life's paradoxes, the king lost his life here when he passed through on his way to Compostela. A stop is recommended in order to admire the castle, the Convent of La Magdalena, the Churches of Santa Mariña and El Salvador, and why not take some time to browse at the local antique shops.

From here we go to **Barbadelo** (a church with a notable facade and Romanesque towers), passing afterwards through **Morgade** (interesting fountain and the remains of a hermitage), **Mirallos** (temple which was moved here in the 18th century from another location by the inhabitants) and **Vilachá**.

Next is **Portomarín**. The old town was submerged beneath the waters of the Belesar reservoir. The new town, although not as charming as the older one, preserves the same church on the highest point of a hill that once stood in the valley. The Church is devoted to San Nicolás and the battlements on the upper portion of the structure recall a time when the cross and the sword were not rivals.

Leaving **Castromaior** with its Romanesque temple and **Vendas de Narón** with the Hermitage of La Magdalena behind us, we come to **Palas de Rei**, a prelude to the town whose historic center has enjoyed special protection throughout centuries, **Melide**. A tour of the city is warranted to see the



● *Pilgrim refuge in Portomarín*

chapel of San Roque (at the entrance) with a transept considered for decades to be the oldest in Galicia. Afterwards, the Museum da Terra de Melide should be visited to then proceed to the Plaza del Convento, where the Church of San Pedro (fine medieval sarcophagi) and the 17th building housing the Town Hall stand. At the exit of the town, the 12th century Church of Santa María points in the direction of the pilgrim road which descends to the peaceful valley of the Iso river. There we find a medieval bridge and the Hospital of San Antón.

We now walk along the streets of the cheese capital called **Arzúa** with the Gothic Church of La Magdalena and the Church of Santiago. Lying ahead is the last stretch before we reach Compostela. We should not expect grandiose monuments here but small villages instead, in addition to the fountain of the Francés and the *pazo* (country manor) of San Lázaro at the exit of Arzúa. There is another beautiful fountain in Santa Irene with a chapel from the early 18th century. There are no longer steep inclines, and thus we arrive at **Lavacolla**, where the pilgrims washed in the river before finishing the last descent leading to **Monte do Gozo**. From here, it is possible to distinguish the silhouette of the towers of the Cathedral of Santiago.

In the center of **Santiago de Compostela**, we make our way on the Rúa de San Pedro to the Porta do Camino, and then go up the Rúa de Casas Reais until reaching the Plaza de Cervantes, where long ago they once held a busy market. Pilgrims now find themselves in the historic quarter of Santiago, within the now vanished walls, and a few steps from the Azabachería facade on the street of the same name. If pilgrims have come in a Jubilee year (when the Apostle's Feast Day of July 25th falls on a Sunday), the Santa Ana gate in the apse will be open. Declared a World Heritage Site, the impressive Cathedral houses the silver coffer with the remains of Saint James. We must not leave the premises without fulfilling the age-old rituals of touching the columns on

the Pórtico de la Gloria (a masterpiece of European Romanesque art), or knocking our head against the statue of master-craftsman Mateo (author of the Pórtico) or embracing the bust of St. James (over the altar). Now the pilgrimage will definitely have been worthwhile.

● *Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela*



The Other Roads

All roads led to Compostela. Although the most well-traveled route was the French Road, there were many others originating from all over the Iberian peninsula, and they formed deviations that ran through diverse lands. These routes opened up new pathways far from the masses and have provided an opportunity to see other lesser known places and monuments of unquestionable beauty and historic value.

The Coastal Road

Of all the reasons to undertake this route, the ones most often cited are those of the celebrated French pilgrim Aymeric Picaud, who only tried to avoid the dangerous lands of Navarre. However, given the hospitality and attractive countryside found in this region, we must also remember that the first pilgrims who traveled to Compostela dared only venture along the coast because these were the only areas at peace in the turbulent period of the first millennium. This was generally the case until



● Tolosa (Guipúzcoa)

Burgos became a Royal Court. In addition, on the route to Santiago, pilgrims were always in search of the protection of new relics, and many of them were located in the Astur Kingdom. For many different reasons, a large number of pilgrims journeyed to the Apostle's resting place from Bayonne, France crossing the Basque Country, Cantabria and Asturias.

The Iberian peninsula would be entered at Irun, which had a pilgrim hospital. From there, the Bidasoa was crossed by a wooden bridge, replaced now by a more modern one. Although not on the Jacobean route, the proximity of **Donostia-San Sebastián** is a good reason to see this lovely city. In Hondarribia, the Hermitage of Santiago, along with the rest of the historic-artistic ensemble, can be admired.



● Zumaia (Guipúzcoa)



● *San Julián de los Prados in Oviedo (Asturias)*

● *Monastery of El Salvador in Vilar de Donas (Lugo)*

From **Oiartzun**, a detour from the main route through **Tolosa** and **Vitoria-Gasteiz** went to Burgos. On this journey, special attention is warranted at the towns of **Armentia**, **Miranda de Ebro** and the monumental **Briviesca**.

But the route continued along the Basque coast via **Orio**, where the Hermitage of San Martín de Tours still stands. In **Zarautz**, the Church of Santa María la Real houses the “tomb of the pilgrim”, according to tradition. The route proceeded from **Zumaia** to **Guernika-Lumo**, where a baroque hospital that shelters pilgrims is still standing. **Bilbao** was the next stop, a traditional Jacobean town, with its Cathedral of Santiago built over another temple. Here the Gate of the Pilgrims can be found. The popular shrine of the Virgen de Begoña should not be overlooked.

All along the coast of the Basque Country, hospices for pilgrims and hermitages devoted to the Apostle, as well as Jacobean sculptures (such as Santiago Matamoros of Santa María de Portugalete) can be found.

In the region of Cantabria, examples are just as plentiful. Among them, the ones in **Santoña** (old hospital in addition to the Late Gothic Church of Santa María del Puerto) must be mentioned. Not too far away, the hospitable town of **Santander** can be found. Along with the treasures of religious architecture (the cathedral was erected over the temple of the Cuerpos Santos), the charming city itself has to be mentioned. The palace of La Magdalena must not be overlooked.

A short distance away from the town of **Santillana del Mar**, a historic-artistic ensemble itself, the prehistoric caves of Altamira are located. In addition, the Romanesque collegiate Church of

Santa Juliana is a landmark for those heading towards the French road at Frómista.

San Vicente de la Barquera, a border town, preserves two hospitals that housed pilgrims long ago. Here Asturias is entered. In addition to the hospital at the modest harbor town of **Llanes**, there is the Romanesque Monastery of San Salvador de Celorio to see before going to **Ribadesella** (Churches of Santa María Magdalena and Nuestra Señora de la Guía; Tito Bustillo cave).

The mountains signal the proximity of **Oviedo**. The capital of the Asturian Kingdom was a preferred goal for many pilgrims. The attractions included the Cathedral of San Salvador, whose incalculable artistic wealth only finds an echo in the pre-Romanesque temples situated in the surrounding area. The influx of travelers created a deviation that went to Oviedo from León, crossing the Puerto de Pajares (pass). From the site of the Royal Asturian Court (which helped spread the idea of the Way of St. James throughout the world), the western route was regained by two alternatives: the first went down through Los Oscos until reaching **Grandas de Salime**, crossing the port of Acebo to get to the lands of Galicia via **Fonsagrada**. It later descended to **Castroverde** (Church in Vilabade and Church of Santiago in Castroverde) and **Vilar de Donas** in the vicinity of Lugo. The other alternative took the Puerto de La Espina (pass) from where the Galician border was reached by crossing the Eo river by boat from **Castropol**.

Ribadeo (the Romanesque chapel of the Virgen del Camino; artistic buildings such as the Pazo de los Moreno), the first

● *Mondoñedo (Lugo)*



The Eastern Road



● *Church of Santiago and crosses in Baamonde (Lugo)*

Galician town, received in its harbor the pilgrims coming from the North. They continued along the coast until **Foz** (Church of Santiago), but not without first passing by the incredibly beautiful beach of As Catedrais.

In Foz, the route proceeded inland to **Vilanova de Lourenz** (Monastery of Santa Mara de Vilanova: tomb of Count Santo), through the mountains, arriving at the monumental **Mondoedo**, today a lovely ensemble of monuments. The descent towards Vilalba (Church of San Roque, Ethnographic Museum, Tower of the Counts of Andrade) led to **Baamonde** (Church of Santiago, crosses and a modern sculptural grouping).

A medieval bridge in the old **Parga** would set the pilgrim on the way to **Sobrado dos Monxes**, where an imposing Cistercian monastery (Santa Mara) stands, a compendium of architectural styles. Next is Arzua (Church of Santiago and pilgrim hospital) where the French Road can be joined.

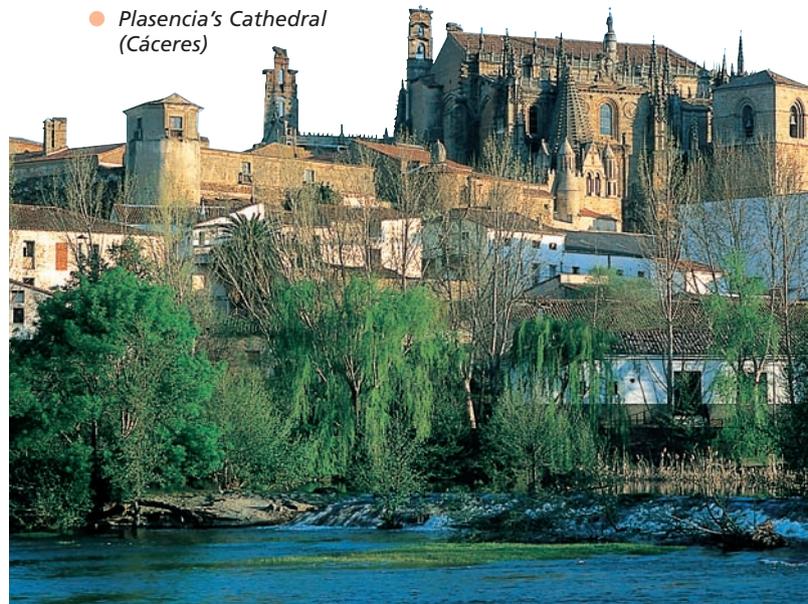
This route originated in the southern part of Spain and proceeded through Extremadura, Salamanca and Zamora to the lands of Ourense. It coincided with the Silver Route, the Roman communications route that ran from Seville to Astorga and then to Cantabria.

This route could begin at any point in southern Spain. However, many situate the starting point in the city of **Seville** (Convent of the Order of Santiago). From here the route would pass through **Zafra**, **Merida** (Extremeenan capital of the Order of Santiago; extensive Roman architectural remains) and the monumental city of **Caceres** until reaching **Plasencia** (Church of Santiago de las Batallas).

In any event, **Salamanca** was the chief congregation point of this route. Here, branches came together from vila (through Pearanda de Bracamonte and Alba de Tormes) and from Extremadura, heading North from different southern locations. Salamanca is an historical-monumental city. Meriting special attention are the two cathedrals (Catedral Vieja and Catedral Nueva), as well as the University, the old quarter and a church devoted to Santiago.

Zamora is a monumental city (Church of Santiago and other edifices of the same religious order; pilgrim hospitals). A little

● *Plasencia's Cathedral (Caceres)*



further ahead, a fork in the road leads to Astorga via **Benavente** (Church of Santiago and Hospital Order) or either continues through the mountainous lake region of **Puebla de Sanabria** towards Ourense.

Galicia is entered by crossing the pass called Puerta de A Canda (shrine in Lubián), and shortly **A Gudiña** is reached (Church of San Martiño). The plains lead to Verín, joining up with another branch originating in the Portuguese town of Chaves. The modern town is overlooked by medieval fortifications, including the castle of Monterrei, and the Romanesque church devoted to Santiago. The ruins of the pilgrim hospital near the castle are easily identifiable.

The route coincides with the highway until **Xinzo de Limia** and skirting the dried-up lagoon of Antela (legends tell of a submerged city at the bottom), leaves behind **Sandiás** (Flemish paintings in Santo Estevo) and ascends to **Allariz**. Birthplace of kings, this city has a magnificent historic-artistic ensemble, also considered of great ethnographic value. Of interest is the Romanesque Church of Santiago and the civil architecture (Jewish quarter and bridge).

The route crosses a thermal fault in **Santa Mariña de Augasantas** (Romanesque Church of Santa María; in the vicinity a temple and anthropomorphic tomb) and continues towards Ourense.

● *University and “New Cathedral” of Salamanca*



● *Allariz (Ourense)*

The capital of the province has a long Jacobean tradition which materializes in the cathedral doorway (almost a twin to the Pórtico de la Gloria in Compostela). The entire old quarter of Ourense is a lovely historic-artistic monumental complex, and this beauty is further enhanced by the Churches of Santiago and the Convent of San Francisco (Gothic cloister). The Roman origins of the city derive from the thermal springs of As Burgas. And although this means a detour from the designated route, before leaving these lands, it would be worthwhile to visit the monasteries of the gorge of the Sil river: Santo Estevo de Ribas de Sil and San Pedro de Rocas.

The route to Santiago goes from Ourense to **San Cristovo de Cea** (the best bread in Galicia is made here, and nearby is the historic-artistic Monastery of Oseira). A few kilometers away is **Dozón** (a former Benedictine abbey and now a Romanesque church) and **Silleda** (nearby, the sanctuary of Nosa Señora do Corpiño in Vila de Cruces and a little further ahead, the ruins of the Monastery of Carboeiro).

The cross at **Bandeira** precedes arrival at **A Granxa** (Pre-Romanesque church and Mons Illicinus of Jacobean legend), a symbolic stone's throw from **Pico Sacro**; towers of the Cathedral of Santiago can be seen from the summit.

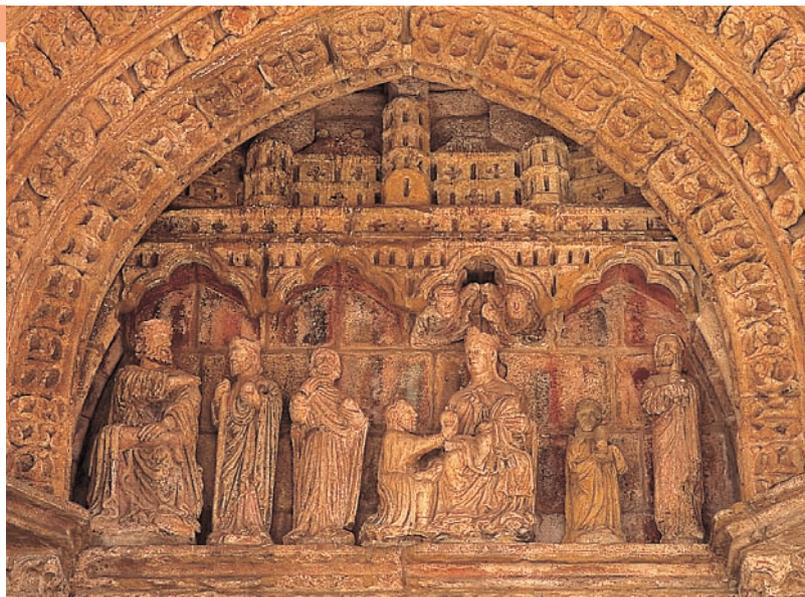
The English Road

This is the name of the route taken by the pilgrims from the British Isles to the ports in northwest Galicia and from there by foot to Compostela. The road reached its peak of popularity starting in the 14th century.

From the port of O Parrote in **A Coruña**, the pilgrims set out for the Romanesque collegiate church of Santa María and the Church of Santiago to ascend to the **Alto de Eirís**. They often traveled to **O Burgo**, which was also another landing point. In **Cambre** is the church with an ambulatory and baptismal font which tradition says was brought from the Holy Land. The route continued through **Sigrás**, **Calle** and **Bruma** where it joined up with the branches from the ports of **Ferrol** and **Neda**.

Pilgrims having trekked to one of these two towns, crossed the bridge over the Eume and headed to medieval **Pontedeume** (tower of Andrade, Church of Santiago). Via Perbes, they arrived at **San Martín de Tiobre** (Romanesque temple) and passed over the Ponte Vella bridge to get to the town of **Betanzos** (historic-artistic ensemble; notable Romanesque Church of Santiago). Through **Requián**, they reached **Bruma**, a meeting point with the branch from A Coruña.

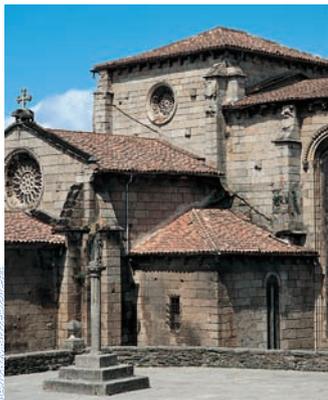
From here, the route continued south and crossed the Tambre through **Sigüeiro**, near San Marcos, where it met the French Road to enter into Compostela.



● Main façade. Tui's Cathedral (Pontevedra)

The Portuguese Road

The Portuguese were also familiar with the phenomenon of pilgrimages to Santiago. Instead of following a single route, however, they set out from various points to meet either in Chaves, where they went to Verín and connected with the Silver Route, or in Valença do Minho. Those who chose the second alternative crossed the Miño in boats and ended up in Tui or nearby (there is still a village called Hospital) and proceeded North through Pontevedra and Padrón.



● Church of San Francisco in Betanzos (A Coruña)



Addresses and Telephone Numbers of Interest

International telephone prefix ☎ 34

Tourist Information: TURESPAÑA www.spain.info

Spanish Federation of Associations of the Road to Santiago
Rúa Vieja, 3 bajo. Logroño

Paradores de Turismo (Tourist Parador Hotels)
Central Reservation Office. Requena, 3. 28013 Madrid
☎ 902 547 979 ☎ 902 525 432 www.parador.es

Local Tourist Offices

Astorga: Glorieta Eduardo Castro, 5 ☎ 987 618 222 ☎ 987 603 065

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Burgos: Plaza de Alonso Martínez, 7 ☎ 947 203 125 ☎ 947 276 529

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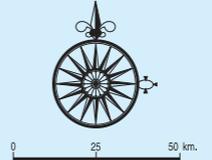
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