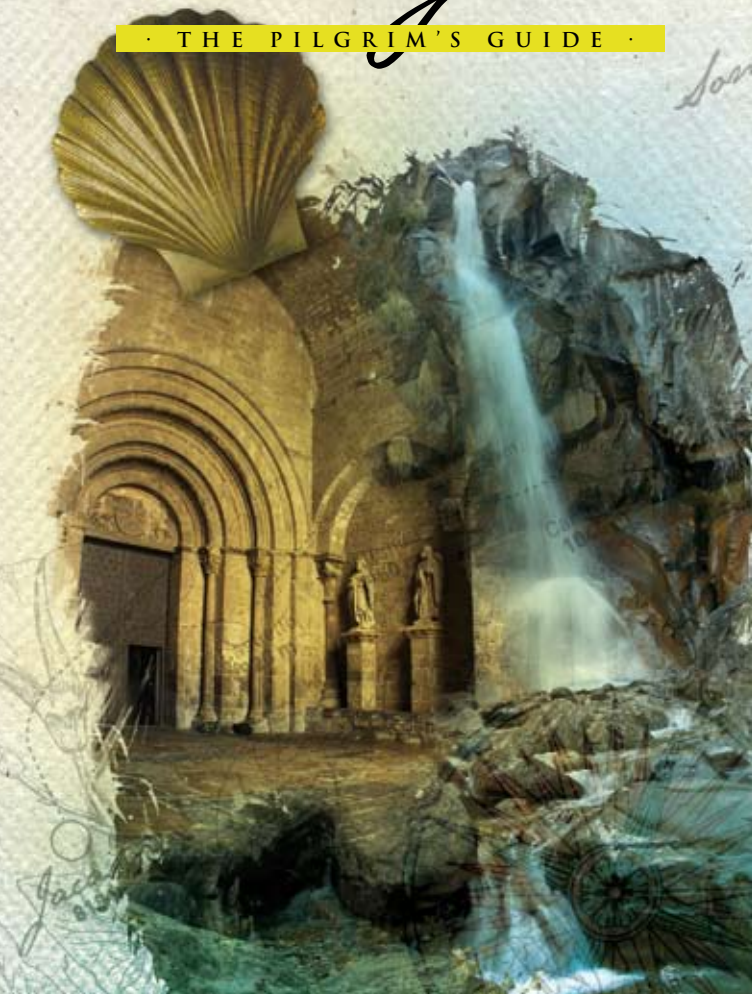


ENGLISH

*The Way of  
St. James  
in  
Aragón*

· THE PILGRIM'S GUIDE ·





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# Altreia!

The star route invites you to discover the Road to Santiago on its path through Aragon, by day and by night. In 1609, Galileo Galilei observed the wonders of the heavens for the first time through the telescope. This discovery opened up a whole new world of possibilities, but to the naked eye, the stars, with their brightness and imaginary forms, had captured the imagination of mankind for centuries. On quiet nights, many civilizations have noticed a white band crossing the firmament. It is the Milky Way, the galaxy which our solar system belongs to. In the Middle Ages, it served as a guide in the darkness towards Finis Terrae. Many have seen the route to Compostela reflected in it.



*Agua Tuerta, Echo valley*

2010 is the Jacobean Holy Year and the setting for its opening is Jacetania, a land which captivates with its light and its landscapes, the art and hospitality of its people. It is an Aragonese district with a history linked to that of the Road. Those who walk on it are part of it, but also those who live alongside it, those who cross it every day with their herds and those who wait in the sparsely populated areas to relieve the weariness of the pilgrim.

We will now introduce you to the route with the main novelties introduced in 2009 after a conscientious effort of archaeological research by the Government of Aragon. The current route is much truer to the original one, it is of great artistic and patrimonial interest, and is very well marked. Kilometres of historical road have been recovered which had been swallowed by the vegetation, buried and forgotten. Houses, lambing pens, bunkers and corrals have been renovated, which serve the pilgrim who seeks protection from the cold and storms. Walkways have been built on ravines which flooded, observation points and open air eating places, the paths

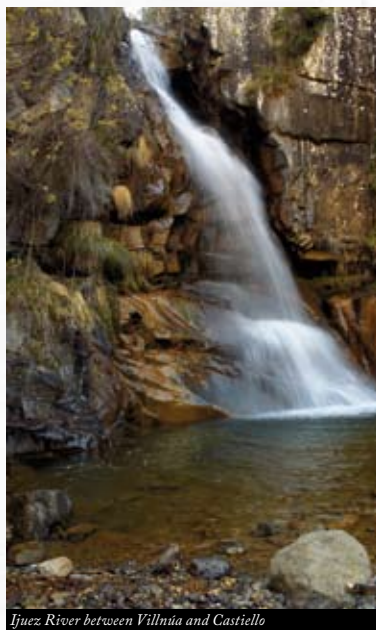
have been cleaned, and the places where mud accumulated have been smoothed over. If after reading this book, anyone is inspired to walk the road, gaze at the sky with new eyes or simply takes a journey in their imagination, the authors will have succeeded in their aim.

Over one thousand years ago, devotion and passion for adventure drove travellers from all over Europe to visit the tomb of the apostle Santiago (St. James) in Compostela. With his invisible footprints, they traced paths which, coming from diverse origins, converged at a single destination. Today, this route has been awarded the titles of Premiere European Cultural Itinerary, World Heritage and Main Street of Europe, but its main achievement is being alive. It is a religious symbol but it is also a place of encounter for cultures, languages and traditions in the midst of an array of idyllic ever-changing landscapes which put the pilgrim to the test. Churches and cathedrals, bridges and entire villages grew long ago, overlooking a route which fell into disuse for centuries but which re-emerged vigorously.

The road, for each individual, has a beginning and an end, but it is not the type marked by guidebooks or traditions. Each person chooses their starting point and the possible turnoffs but it is important to bear in mind that the Vía Tolosana has been an attraction for centuries. This is the Latin name that was given to the southernmost of the four routes of the Road to Santiago in France. It comes out of Arles and passes through Toulouse and Olorón before going over the Pyrenees through the Somport Pass. When it touches Spanish soil it is none other than

the French Road on its way through Aragon although many call it the Aragonese Road. It descends through the valley of the Aragon to Jaca and enters through the Berdún Canal, to exit through Undués de Lerda toward Puente la Reina de Navarra where it converges with the Navarran Road, which is the continuation of the other three coming from France.

At this point, please allow us to greet you in the way the pilgrims usually do: *Ultreia!* And you will answer *Et suseia!* Walk onward! and upward!



*Ijuez River between Villnúa and Castiello*

## *Why Aragon*

*If I were a pilgrim I would choose this route for...*



*Tubo de la Zapatilla, Candanchú*

For its unique landscape, for its interesting history, the beautiful Roman architecture and the rich culture. For the best starry nights, for its authenticity and for its people. Aragon overflows with nature, crystalline lakes and green high mountain meadows. Breathe life in paradise-like valleys such as the valleys of Aragón, Ansó, Echo and Aragües del Puerto, in its wooded sierras and complex canyons and ravines which contrast with

nearly abandoned plains sprinkled with hospitality such as those of the Berdún Canal. These are privileged landscapes filled with flowers of every colour and inhabited by roes, wild boar, squirrels, griffin vultures and bearded vultures. From a bird's-eye view, so much beauty is dizzying.

In Aragon we find the highest peak of the Pyrenees, the Aneto, 3,404 metres elevation. Almost as high, the Posets and Monte Perdido invite one to adventure. Mountaineering, climbing, hiking, horse riding, kayaking, rafting or canyon descent. There is more, and year-round. Spelunking, golf, air sports, ice skating, orientation, mushing or skiing in all its versions. The spas are the best way to obtain bodily peace, following the example of the pilgrims of old. No price can be put on losing oneself in the clean skies of villages and roads which are free from the luminous pollution of the cities. Every inch of this land speaks for itself.

In Aragon, the marks left by history are indelible. There are still megalithic monuments, cave paintings, and Iberian villages. From the Roman era, there still remain bridges, great hydraulic works, mausoleums and solid walls. The imprint of Islam lives on in the Palace of the Aljafería of Zaragoza and on the route of the Mudejar monuments scattered throughout a large part of the territory.

During the 11th century, small Roman churches were built with Mozarabic influence throughout the Serrablo. The Christian Kingdom of Aragon dates back to the Middle Ages. The symbol of its birth is the monastery of San Juan de la Peña, near Jaca, whose cathedral rises up majestically in the road. A road whose route is linked to the birth of the County and the Kingdom of Aragon. The first kings fomented the necessary infrastructures and benefitted from the human and economic resources provided by the flow of travellers.



*On the road to Arrés*

This land has an artistic heritage thousands of years old. From the Roman to the Baroque, including the splendour of the Gothic, Mudejar or Renaissance. Aragon explodes with passion during Holy Week and vibrates with the patron saint festivities, the most representative of which are the Pilar Festivals of Zaragoza. Today, a journey through the details of this territory guarantees that one will learn about modern cities and villages with a rich past populated by noble, kind and hospitable people. This land of harsh climate and deep-rooted customs has been the cradle of Aragonese geniuses such as Miguel Servet, Joaquín Costa, Santiago Ramón y Cajal, the sculptor Pablo Gargallo, the film director Luis Buñuel, the writer Ramón J. Sender, the painter Antonio Saura or his brother the director Carlos, also Saura. The most universally known, the genius from Fuendetodos, is Francisco de Goya.

Faith, nature, art, tourism, or adventure. The French Road, passing through Aragon, has it all. It maintains the essence of other times; it is beautiful, peaceful, and authentic. To take it from France, it is necessary to pass through Olorón, which, we should add, has a pilgrims' shelter. From there, the route ascends gradually to Borce, where a steeper slope begins, until reaching the Somport Pass, with an elevation of 1,640 metres. The view is incredible, both by day and by night. Thus begins an unforgettable four-stage adventure, which does not necessarily take four days, through Aragonese lands. Have a good journey!

## Star Route

Many pilgrims "find themselves" along the road, possibly because they have time to enjoy the smallest details...and the largest. After a hard day or prior to starting a new day, the silence of the night is comforting. If the clouds and the moon allow it, a spectacular sky lights up, inviting pilgrims to lose themselves in it. It is easy to discover a band of pallid light with irregular edges which crosses the firmament. Far from the glow of the cities, shining in all its splendour is the Milky Way, the galaxy that the Earth belongs to; its relation with the Road to Santiago was already expressed in writing in the 12th century in the Calixtine Code. The sun is one more star among billions. Unique and special, as is each pilgrim, although he or she is one more among millions throughout history.

A Greek legend has it that Zeus disguised himself as the husband of a woman named Alcmena and from their encounter a child was born that was called Hercules. When the wife of Zeus found out, she tried to kill the baby with two serpents but the little one strangled them. Zeus commanded the god Hermes to put Hercules in the lap of Hera when she slept. He wanted him to be suckled with the food that would make him immortal. On awaking, Hera moved the child away suddenly and the milk spilled on the floor, forming the Milky Way, the road of milk.

In the Middle Ages, the Road of the Stars was the map written in the firmament, the guide through darkness to Finis Terrae. Today, it is known that the heavens move, and so does the luminous route of this milky band that does not lead to Santiago but does accompany the traveller and make the journey unforgettable. Depending on the time



*Milky Way*



Jaca, 24/12/09 at 00:00

of year and the time of night, the Milky Way may point in any direction; thus, to identify the route toward the west one has but to walk toward the sunset or, if it is night, seek the Polar Star in the north.

At the latitudes through which the Road to Santiago runs, the Milky Way shows itself in all its splendour in the short summer nights, much more discreet in winter and almost disappears completely in spring, when it hardly stands out over the horizon. From the East with the Three Marys, a trio of stars which shine in alignment upon the east horizon. According to Greek mythology, they form another bright constellation: the belt of Orion, the legendary giant who walks on the celestial dome. On the opposite side, to the west, three stars make up the beautiful summer triangle. The brightest is called Vega; above it is Deneb and the third is Altair.

In the middle of the Milky Way, another group of stars draws an M or a W, depending on how it is viewed. It is the constellation of Cassiopaea. The legends says that Cassiopaea was a pretty and vain queen of Ethiopia who Poseidon, god of the seas, punished by making her remain in the heavens forever. Between Cassiopaea and Ursa Major, the Polar Star always faithfully indicates the north.

The road of the stars ends in the constellation of Canis Major, where Sirius stands out as the brightest star of the universe that we can see in the night. Five thousand years ago, it governed the Egyptian calendars. Its iridescent reflections, greenish or red, captivate the viewer. There is also a Canis Minor to which Procyon belongs. According to mythology, both identify with the dogs of Orion, the valiant hunter who was placed between celestial bodies with his most beloved dogs.

On viewing the Milky Way, one sets out on a journey through constellations which captivate the viewer, such as Gemini, formed



Jaca, 24/06/09 at 00:00

by two stars very close to each other and of similar magnitude, almost twins, an allegory to brotherly love. The Auriga constellation, according to mythology, he who carries the reins, the shepherd of the goat that suckled Zeus, the discreet Cepheus, or the constellation of the Swan whose shape is reminiscent of the cross of Santiago or a bird with its wings spread. Aquila also looks like a bird, the four stars of Sagitta trace an arrow and Scorpius, the scorpion which, according to mythology, was placed on the firmament in memory of the one which came out of mother Earth and pursued Orion until it killed him.



Ursa Major

The southernmost part of the Milky Way which can be seen from the Road to Santiago coincides with the constellation of Sagittarius, whose brightest stars seem to trace the silhouette of a centaur stretching his bow.

To enjoy the Milky Way, one must let the pupil of the eye become used to the dark for about ten minutes. It is able to go from four to eight millimetres in width in that time, to drink in the nocturnal landscape. Binoculars can be very useful at night. They will allow us to discover star clusters, see Jupiter and its four Galilean satellites, the moons



Orion Nebula

or the craters and the lunar seas. One only needs to control the pulse, lean with one's arms on a window, lie down, use a tripod or use the old trick of stepping on a string and pulling it upwards to control the inclination.

The sky changes in every season. In autumn, we can better observe Andromeda, the Summer Triangle, the Corona Borealis and the Ring Nebula. In winter, Orion, the Orion Nebula and the Pleiades, who are the frost princesses. In spring the Lion and the Whirlpool Galaxy. The Milky Way spreads out in its immensity, showing the entire road that lies before us. Good night!

## A road with long history

Step by step, since time immemorial, men have walked roads in search of the ends of the Earth. Many situated it in Finisterre and saw the Atlantic as the sun's tomb. In their journeys, they found bodily peace in thermal springs and spiritual peace following the tracks of the stars of the Milky Way. However, it was in the year 813, in the midst of the Muslim invasion of the peninsula, with the Christian side fragmented, that the story of the Road to Santiago began.



Bridge at Canfranc

According to the tradition, a hermit named Pelayo saw a shower of stars fall upon the Libredón forest. He related the story to the Bishop of Iria Flavia, Teodomiro, who, at the illuminated place discovered a marble

arch with human remains. By divine revelation, he knew that they were the remains of St. James (Santiago) the Elder. One of the twelve apostles who Herod Agrippa had beheaded in Jerusalem, in the year 42, for preaching Christianity. As was the custom, his disciples Athanasius and Theodore stole the lifeless body of the master to bury it in the lands he had evangelized. After a one-week journey to remote Galicia, they buried him in the cemetery of an old Roman fortress at the point on which, seven centuries later, Pelayo cast his gaze. Teodomiro told King Alfonso II the Chaste what had occurred, and the king went there quickly from Oviedo, backed by his main nobles. On arriving at the Field of Stars, Compostela, he gave the order to raise a simple church of masonry and mud to mark the holy place. Another church would be built upon the tomb of Santiago prior to the great Roman cathedral which was begun in the year 1073 under the mandate of the Bishop Peláez.

Immediately pilgrims began to arrive from the entire continent, utilizing the Roman ways. Step by step, they worked to make a road. The first documented pilgrimage in history was protagonized by the Archbishop of Puy en Velay, named Gotescalco. In the year 950, he travelled there, accompanied by a large entourage.

The Christian kings of the peninsula needed military support, money and men which could come from the other side of the Pyrenees; thus, they decided to promote the Jacobean route. Between 1077 and 1090, Alfonso VI of Castile and Sancho Ramírez of Aragon built bridges, ways and hospitals, erected monasteries and cathedrals. They granted protection and privileges to the walkers and the road to Santiago became the main route, preferred above Jerusalem and Rome. The action of the clergy was of key importance. The Cluny monks fomented pilgrimages, promoted hospitality and controlled strategic points such as San Juan de la Peña.

Millions of Europeans walked to Santiago de Compostela. Some at their own initiative, and others under order devoted several years to travel a route of which many made their lives. The sepulchre of the only apostle buried in Europe mobilized and strengthened the Christian faith in the north of Spain. From the 9th century until its decline in the 13th century, the road lived times of splendour. With it, there was a resurgence of commerce, the movement of money and the increase of population. Feudal serfdoms were relaxed and the cities were created and promoted while the nobility stagnated.

To speak of the Road to Santiago is to speak of the origin of Aragon. Based on this way of travelling, the action of the first monarchs was carried out; this natural route attracted knights and artisans, merchants and pilgrims who gave life to the incipient Aragonese economy. The three pillars: Saint Cristina of Somport, Jaca, with its cathedral and the monastery of San Juan de la Peña. In addition, there was the road and military infrastructure which kept the route open and safe.



*Wetland forest. Castille*

The Pyrenees are the land entry gate to Spain. Until the year 1000, the main road followed the route of the old Roman way Bearn-Caesaraugusta. It crossed the Palo Pass, 1,940 meters elevation, passing through the monastery of Siresa and descended through the valley of Echo to the Berdún Canal. It spanned Roman ways and medieval bridges which today can still be walked. There were many other accesses such as the one which crossed the Pyrenees through the Gave D'Ossau, it exceeded the 1,792 metres in elevation of the Portalet and descended through the beautiful valley of Tena to Biescas to then go toward Jaca.

At the end of the 10th century, the walkers substituted Palo with Sumus Portus, the Somport Pass, 1,640 metres elevation. The improved orography of the terrain made it transitable practically year-round. The prestige of the hospital of Santa Cristina established this pass as the main one and configured this stretch of the French Road. From Somport it passed through Canfranc and Jaca, which Ramiro I converted into the capital of the Kingdom of Aragon in the year 1035. The pilgrims continued to Puente la Reina and entered Navarran land through Sangüesa.



*Royal Pantheon of San Juan de la Peña*

The definitive boost that made the road the great pilgrimage route of the 12th and 13th centuries was the granting by Rome of the Compostelan Holy Years, which allowed pilgrims to obtain full indulgence or forgiveness for their sins. Pope Calixto II granted the Compostelan church the Full Jubilee of the Holy Year and Alexander III declared it perpetual.

The Road to Santiago was consolidated as the most important way of religious pilgrimage. This and much more. A way of life, cultural exchange, a movement for renewal of economic, artistic, political and religious ideas. Artisans and merchants established themselves along the route and thus began the urban centres or burgs. The majority of the new residents were foreigners; all were called Franks, and received important privileges in the founding charters of their cities. First the Roman, and then the Gothic era filled the road with art, a road which also exported the Muslim heritage. In 1987, the European Council named it a European Cultural Itinerary; in 1993, the UNESCO declared it World Heritage.

The Jacobean route inspired the first tourist guide in history. In 1139, Aymerich Picaud, a French clergyman who was chaplain of Vezelay, wrote the Codex Calixtinus or Calixtine Code, which tells in full detail about his pilgrimage to Santiago and gives recommendations to those who wish to do the same. It owes its name to the Pope Calixto II, who ordered its compilation.

In a document of 1312, another custom of the era is reflected; the French gentleman Yves Lebreton made a pilgrimage in the name of the countess of Artois, who, in this way, did not have to leave the comforts of her castle. There are more details with history. In

1488, the Catholic Kings travelled to Compostela to honour Santiago Matamoros (Moor-slayer) symbol of the expulsion of the Arabs from Spain.

The black plague killed nearly one-third of all Europeans in the 14th century; the lack of safety on the roads, along with Protestantism and the religious wars of the 16th century emptied the Jacobean route. In the midst of this climate, the Archbishop San Clemente hid the remains of the apostle, in 1588, for fear that they would be stolen. The relics were lost until, in 1879, Cardinal Payá y Rico found them under a dome thanks to renovation work. Years later, Pope Leon XIII confirmed their authenticity but it was necessary to wait until the last quarter of the 20th century to "dust off" the Road to Santiago. If the walkers of medieval times were moved by faith, today, other incentives are added. Personal motives, therapy against the routine, or stress, tourism, art, adventure. Anonymous and famous persons have shared the route for centuries.

Saint Francis of Assisi came with the masses. Matilde the daughter of the king of England Henry I, arrived by sea in 1125 after being widowed of the German emperor Henry V. In the 15th century, the pilgrimage of knights left anecdotes such as that protagonized by Hainault de Werchin, who announced that he would challenge any gentleman who did not separate himself more than twenty leagues from his route. In 1668, the Italian prince Cosme de Médicis visited Santiago accompanied by forty persons. In 1989, Juan Pablo II became the first pope to make a pilgrimage to Santiago in the history of the holy city. There are those who have wanted to tell their experience to the world. The actress Shirley Maclaine put her journey into a book which was very successful in the United States; the Brazilian Paulo Coelho wrote *The Pilgrim of Compostela*.



*Peirón de Abay, in La Solana*

Today, walkers of all types converge; persons who seek to find other landscapes, other people, and themselves. The script is written as one travels. Beyond objectives and proposals, each one establishes his own route. Today the high Pyrenean valleys are crossed, above all, through two points: Somport and Roncesvalles. Both ways are found in Puente la Reina de Navarra, descend to La Rioja and then go into the north of Castile. The road covers sierras and plains, gullies and river banks, lands of wolves and wild boar, grouse, griffon vultures and bearded vultures. The route winds through forests and steppes which run through Burgos, Plascencia and Leon to reach Galicia. Unforgettable.

## *The pilgrim, the meaning of the road*

A pilgrim is one who walks in strange lands. This, at least on paper, because on the Road to Santiago, this word is filled with content. Pilgrims are considered to be those of yesterday and those of today, those who are moved by faith or to fulfil a promise, those who want to escape from the stress, live an adventure, to learn about art or landscapes. Each one has his motives and plans his own route. On horse, bicycle, or on foot. Some run more than they walk; others stop to enjoy each detail. There are those who pass with their eyes closed because they feel the road only as a means and there are those who open them wide to enjoy every last rock. The pace does not matter. As in a relay race, all meet again and again in the shelters and there is a special connection of friendship between them. They all end up being infected by the Jacobean spirit.

In the Middle Ages, people fled from the starvation and illnesses in this world and believed in the survival of the soul in the next. For the majority it was difficult to travel, to learn and to aspire to having many material goods, so they centered their attention on spiritual things to attain salvation after death. The first pilgrims sought forgiveness for their sins, martyrdom or a miracle. Later on, many understood this route to be a personal act of mortification. Santiago passed before Jerusalem and Rome as a destination and the French Road became the main place of encounter for ideas, cultures and European peoples.

Throughout the route, the devotee found an extraordinary way of worshipping God. Others fulfilled a promise made during a serious illness or danger. Starting in the 11th century, there were pilgrims who hired themselves out, who were paid wages, and those who travelled by order of a testament to pray for the soul of the deceased. The canon of Nantes, Pierre Dorenge, ordered that a "poor person go to Santiago of Galicia in my name and at my expense and deposit there an offering of one gold franc".

Not a few pilgrimages were ordered as penance after confession, as a means of obtaining plenary indulgence. The courts could impose the punishment on criminals of travelling the road instead of going to jail. Many ill and physically or mentally disabled persons risked not only the health of the soul but also that of the body. For them, Compostela was a dream that they enjoyed on starry nights, following the trail of the Milky Way. Leaning on their crutches, carried on horseback, or

grasping their guides, they moved forward with the hope of coming near the miraculous body of the apostle Santiago.

In the Middle Ages they prepared in body and soul prior to setting out on their adventure. They confessed, prayed and carefully looked after important material aspects such as the obtaining of safe conduct for exemption from taxes and tolls, and many even wrote their will. The departure of medieval pilgrims was a great event. For protection during the journey, the majority departed in a group from such varied places as Arles, Orléans or Le Puy. The entire village bid them farewell after a religious act in which they and the garments they were to wear received the blessing. There are those who say that a tenth never returned again from this journey through places with unknown languages and customs. The lack of hygiene, contagion of illnesses, water and food that was scarce or in poor condition, robberies, the uncertainty as to finding lodging, and abuse in the tolls, added to the difficulty of the journey, at times were unbearable.

To avoid being confused with beggars or vagabonds, a common dress was adopted: a round hat with wide brim, a short coat that was not bothersome when walking, a leather cloak or cape for protection from the cold and a gourd to hold water. The footwear had to be strong and comfortable; even so, they became so worn that cobblers shops multiplied along the route. They carried a tall staff with an iron tip and the small basket or pouch, an inseparable bag in which they kept food, money, documents, safe-conducts and other personal items. They obtained the Vieira or scallop shell in Compostela to

accredit the success of their deed. In the 12th century, there already existed a business in Santiago that sold souvenirs of lead, tin and jet shells. When two pilgrims met, they greeted each other saying "ultreia" which means "let us walk onward"; the other answered "et suseia", that is, "and upward".

The marks made on the staff by the innkeepers served to count the days each traveller had stayed in a shelter.



*Santa Orosia Procession*

There were self-serving individuals who took unfair advantage of the situation. Merchants, medical students who practiced in the hospitals along the road and false pilgrims who were ensured of attention and alms. Under the Jacobean guise, thieves, deserters, prostitutes and hustlers wandered through the world without working, living off of charity. But they were not the only ones who sharpened their wits. Some innkeepers

added water to the wine, overcharged or served food in bad condition. After all, their customers were only passing through. In 1133, the merchants of Compostela were admonished for charging travellers more than regular customers. False clergymen appeared who, in reality, were expert con-men. Among the travellers there were also adventurers who were drawn by reading the tales of knights or the legends of the Holy Grail.

It was easy to disguise themselves among so many pilgrims of every condition. Saints, kings, knights, bourgeoisie, artisans, merchants, peasants. Lonely travellers, or travellers surrounded by a great entourage, on foot or horseback, unmasked or incognito, they set out on a long, hard route travelled by many. Travellers did not have maps, signs, paved roads or bridges. At times, they had to negotiate the waters of a river or weather the rains, storms and blizzards without adequate clothing or footwear. Often, their roof was the star-filled sky; their only weapon, a faith capable of moving mountains. They spoke different languages, they had different currencies and they moved through small kingdoms in which war and revolts were frequent.

To protect the walkers, it was decreed that no one could harm them in the Council of Leon of 1114. Actual excommunication was ordered for those who robbed them, in the Council of Letran of 1123. During their journey they were exempted from paying tolls and gate tolls and, in their country of origin, the goods they left were protected. However, in spite of the good intentions, at the end of the Middle Ages, with so many disguised wrongdoers, these laws were relaxed and Felipe II forbade the use of the typical dress of the pilgrim.



*Replica of the holy grail. San Juan de la Peña*

Today, on the road, diverse languages continue to be spoken, but what reigns above all these are the hospitality and generosity which the vast majority understand and practice. A trail of signs make the traveller feel accompanied even if travelling alone. Staffs and scallop shells can be seen and the pilgrims have the support of the autonomous administrations and the shelters which are found along the route. Each one has his motive. The road captivates all who walk it. It envelops them in its aura, gives them moments of peace, purity and forgiveness for sins.

Upon arriving in Santiago, the medieval travellers confessed, took communion, and they were granted the Compostela to certify their pilgrimage. The oldest of which there is a record dates back to 1321. In the Basilica of the apostle, they stood watch over his body before the tomb the first night, and afterwards they put on the silver crown of the image of Santiago. Today, the material preparations tend to have greater emphasis than the spiritual ones but the reward is the same. The Compostela is received and, before the sculpture of the apostle, the prevailing tradition is the embracing of the saint, which consists of going up behind the high altar and kissing or embracing the image. At that moment, the pilgrims are overcome with emotion.

Millions of invisible traces have been left throughout history on main routes and branches, dirt tracks and paved roads, royal roads, bridlepaths, Roman ways and livestock trails full of experiences. Every pilgrim leaves something on the road and takes something. Always.



*Walking down the Berdún Canal*

## *Thinking about the road*

Before walking the road it is necessary to think. The reasons are not important; it is a pilgrimage and this is what transforms it into a unique experience. Along the route, some shelters await the walker. They are managed by persons who devote their lives to serving others. In the thoroughfare villages an inherited virtue is practiced: hospitality. This merits gratitude, not demands.

The first thing to decide is how to travel the Road to Santiago. The majority travel it on foot although some take cars as support. Another option is the bicycle, taking into account that the stage of Somport to Jaca is beautiful but somewhat difficult. A third way is by horse but, in this case, stables and feeding of the animal must be planned. The same is the case if those who are walking have a donkey, as in ancient times.



*Stamp on the credential*

The price may help in making the decision. The road is not free. It is estimated that walking or by bike, it may cost about twenty-two euros daily if sleeping in public shelters, eating fixed price meals and dinners are improvised. Eating in restaurants and spending the night in private hostels, the expense may vary from thirty to fifty euros a day. On horseback, the amount goes up to one hundred or one hundred and fifty euros daily, depending on whether the animal belongs to the traveller, if a support vehicle is required or the services of specialized businesses are hired.

The best time of year is from April to June and the months of September and October, although the majority choose summer because it is when they have their holidays. In that time of the year,

the greatest enemies are heat and full shelters. The months of October through March are ideal for very prepared pilgrims who are not afraid of the cold and know that some shelters close.

It is recommended that the credential be requested at the starting point. It is important because without it, it is not possible to sleep in the establishments for pilgrims. Moreover, it is necessary to train for several days with the boots and the backpack that is to be worn, loaded. Walking must be done rationally, without running or going too slow. Those who leave usually do so in the first two days, discouraged by painful blisters or tendinitis.

## *Backpack*

It must weigh five or six kilos to be a good travelling companion, instead of a burden. On the road, it is possible to buy everything, although it should be remembered that from Jaca to Sangüesa there is not a single automatic teller machine.



The backpack must be comfortable, with belts on the waist and on the chest, side and upper pockets. Personal objects must be put into it in an orderly way, classified by plastic bags of different colours which not make noise and prevent the contents from getting wet. The heaviest things must be at the bottom. The sleeping bag, change of clothes, raincoat, cap or hat, canteen, first aid kit, safety pins, ropes, strips with mountain lock, clothespins, some food, etc.

## *Sleeping bag:*

Recommended if travellers intend to spend the night in pilgrim refuges or shelters. In summer, it does not need to be thick. It is necessary to remember to take a mat. If the travellers are going to camp out, a tent will also be needed. A tent is particularly useful for groups.

## *Foot wear:*

It is best to take more than one pair; they should be light, resistant and the foot should be used to them. Solid trainers which allow the foot to breathe or trekking boots are ideal. The socks must be the appropriate type and must be worn properly to prevent chafing. Flip-flops for the shower which dry quickly will allow the foot to rest in the shelters and accompany in the touristic part of the journey.

## *Clot hing:*

Comfortable, practical, light and should breathe well. Carry little, easy to wash and quick-drying. In

addition to the clothes worn, a couple of seamless t-shirts, trousers (the detachable type are very appropriate), a jacket or polar fleece jumper, underwear, a bathing suit, a pair of technical socks to prevent blisters, a cap or hat, rain coat which protects from the cold or cape, a scarf for the neck and a lightweight track suit. Depending on the time of year, warm clothes. Sunglasses.

It is best to carry a pillowcase for hygienic reasons, reflective strips to place on clothing, detergent for washing it, clothespins for hanging it up and large safety pins for hanging it on the outside of the backpack if on the following day it is not dry.

## *"Bordón"*

The bordón is a staff which facilitates walking. It has always been the symbol of the pilgrims but it has many more functions. It helps to set the pace, to balance the spinal column, to check muddy terrain, to prevent slipping in descent and is useful for intimidation if necessary. There are those who prefer the traditional type and others who defend the telescopic staffs used for the mountains.



## *Water and food*



A small amount of food must always be carried; above all, nuts, fruit or chocolate and a canteen or water bottle and isotonic drinks. The type bought in powder form is very useful. There are fountains throughout the route, but they may be dirty, due to the livestock and some are difficult to find. It is best to carry an abundant supply of water, particularly in the crossing of the Berdún Canal and in the sierra of San Juan de la Peña where there is considerable distance between the villages, and there are very hot summers.

Food should not be carried for more than one day. It is better to begin the hike with a large breakfast. The sugar level in the blood must be maintained with the help of snacks: energy bars, nuts or raisins; chocolate causes thirst. In addition to water, drink infusions such as tea or coffee. At the end of the day, it is recommended to have an abundant and healthy dinner. Taking a set of flatware can be useful if the kitchens in the shelters are used.

## First Aid Kit

A light bag with a small bottle of iodine, cloth plaster, sterile gauzes, bandages, aspirins, antidiarrhea pills, an anti-inflammatory cream and a sun protection cream, tweezers, insect repellent and a small flask of ammonia to relieve stings (ice on the area helps to reduce the inflammation).



## Toilet kit

Must be filled with miniature-sized personal hygiene products. Ear plugs, shampoo, body soap, deodorant, comb, toothbrush and toothpaste, nail clipper, moisture cream, a quick-drying towel, scissors, thread and needle.



## Additional material



A lighter, a small forehead torch to move around at night inside the shelter, a small knife, toilet paper, paper tissues, a watch with alarm, mobile phone and charger.

A plastic bag with cords to hang from the neck makes it easier to have a guidebook and the maps handy and to prevent them from damage and from getting wet.

It is not good to carry much money. Remember the documentation: I.D. card, Social Security card, credit card and pilgrim credential. Moreover, a small notebook, pen, a camera that does not take up much space and a mini-radio. All of this can be put into the classic waist pouch.

The family should have an idea of the route and the telephone numbers of the information offices in order to locate the pilgrim in emergency situations. In case of an accident, contact the nearest post of the civil guard.



Being affiliated provides the best accident insurance for taking excursions and mountain biking.

## Signage

The route is very well marked with yellow arrows and indications of the GR 65.3, thanks to the work of the institutions and the friends of the Road. The distance between the marks depends on the stretch but at the most it is one hundred and fifty metres. If anyone gets lost, the best thing to do is to return to the last sign or crossing. Be careful, because it is easy to become distracted when travelling in a group.



*The signs accompany the traveller throughout the entire route*

## Shelters

The shelters for pilgrims make the Road to Santiago unique as compared to other hiking routes. It is only possible for those who are making the pilgrimage on foot, on horseback or by bike to sleep in them, and they must accredit this with the credential. Walkers have preference over cyclists and horse riders. Some do not have working hours but others do not open until the early afternoon, demand silence after 9 p.m. and ask that the travellers leave early the following day. It is only possible to stay one night in them, except in case of illness.

In the past, they were maintained thanks to voluntary donations but there are more and more places that charge between five and ten euros to spend the night. The price usually covers the right to use municipal services, such as the swimming pool. The pace of the walk does not matter; the pilgrims normally meet up at the shelters.

They are cosy and hospitable places, where there is always someone to chat with, and where rest after an exhausting day is always comforting. The amiable innkeepers listen, clarify doubts and solve problems. When they are filled in summer, there is usually always a house available, a camping area or if necessary, the floor of a sports centre to spend the night.

## *On foot*

Anyone can be a pilgrim on foot but embarking on this adventure involves a great physical effort; thus, it must be well planned. Normally there are stages of between twenty and thirty kilometres if in training, but it is no problem to break up the days. If there are health problems, the assistance points must be previously located. Each person's journey must be designed according to the time available, the starting points, means of transport to travel there, climatic conditions, and travelling companions. It is necessary to think not only about the journey to the destination, but also the return.

One must be prudent and know how much effort to put into the journey, depending on physical capabilities. Prior to departing, it is best to take increasingly long walks and, if possible, with the backpack loaded with all the absolutely necessary equipment which is to be carried. It is a good way to decide what can be left at home.

## *By bicycle*



*Difficulties in crossing the Ijuez River*

Cyclists substitute the backpack with a rack upon which they place the sack, the mat and a couple of bags with food or a patch spray. A couple of saddlebags on both sides of the rear tire contain the rest of the equipment which includes cycling shorts, helmet and gloves. They must weight a maximum of ten kilos in the case that a tent is carried. The poles are placed on the bar. The utensils for repairs (patches, rubber, screwdrivers, spanners and spare tubes) are usually placed in the triangular case which adapts to the bicycle frame; the pump also has its place, as does the water bottle. It is advisable to include another with isotonic drinks. Documentation, a map, sun cream and money in a wallet attached to the handlebar on in a backpack that does not get in the way. The lock must be tied to the seat. In the shelters there is a place to store the bicycles.

It is best not to carry weight on the back and to learn before departing to pedal with the kilos that the bicycle must carry, particularly in ascent and descent. The bike must always be well illuminated with lamps and additional reflectors in case there is a storm or limited visibility. The clothing must make the pilgrim visible on the road. There are reflective patches for saddlebags, rack, tyres and even light under the seat.

The tyres must not be inflated too much to prevent blowouts in potholes. It should be borne in mind that the tread wears considerably with the weight. Blocking the suspension on the ascents helps to prevent loss of effort. Abundance of water.

Prior to departure, it is best to train at least three months in advance all the terrains and to take a reliable bicycle. At the most eighty kilometres are covered daily. Cyclist pilgrims are seen more and more, particularly between twenty and forty years of age. The age increases, for example, in the case of the Dutch, who are accustomed to this means of transport, who even include folding chairs in the baggage.

## *On horseback*

Any horse, donkey or mule can travel the road if it is healthy, in form, well-shod, well trained and is not frightened by cars and dogs.

The rider must be equipped with reflective vest, riding crop, helmet, gloves, trousers, gaiters, sunglasses sun protection cream, raincoat with hood that covers the hindquarters, warm clothing depending on the time of year, a padded nylon vest and waxed three-quarters length jacket. For the horse, it is necessary to take a waterproof breathable blanket, saddle, blanket, sweatshirt, bits, stirrups, cinches, saddlebags, bandages and protectors, reins, head, halters, hobbles, accessories for cleaning of helmets and brushing, a bucket, some bags of granulate and tars for the helmets. The food and stable for the horses to spend the night must be planned, avoid access to large cities and use dual carriageways as little as possible. Most pilgrimages on horseback involve a support car or are included in organized journeys. It is only necessary to ride during the day, in line and to dress with reflective strips.

Long stretches are not best; there should be a pace of five or six kilometres per hour, stopping to rest. The French Road on its passage through Aragon is perfect for horse riding except for a small stretch

around Canfranc where there are many loose stones. Experience and trained horses are needed because otherwise, they will become very tired. The journey from Somport to Compostela takes about twenty-five days.

## *By car*

This is not considered a pilgrimage. These usually serve as support vehicles. In these cases, it is recommended to get the car serviced prior to departure, to respect the signage, the speed limits, caution at all times and above all, to be careful with the pilgrims travelling on foot or on bike who, at times, must walk on the shoulder. There are also those who travel the road on quad or motorcycle, although, in these cases, the motivation is usually adventure, all are finally impregnated with the spirit and the magic of the Jacobean route.

## *The credential*

Serves to identify the pilgrim. It is a cardboard passport which consists of fourteen pages which open in the shape of an accordion. On them are placed the stamps with the certification of passage in shelters, parishes and associations of the Road to Santiago. It includes a letter of presentation and a space in which, when the pilgrimage is finished, the Santiago Pilgrim's Office places the date and the stamp, the time granted the Compostela. It is only for travellers on foot, bicycle or horse who wish to make the pilgrimage with Christian meaning, even if only in the spirit of a quest. It is absolutely necessary to access the shelters that offer the Christian hospitality of the road and to request the Compostela in the cathedral of Santiago.

It can be obtained and stamped in the Tourism office of Canfranc, in the church of Santiago of Jaca and in the Association of Friends of the Road to Santiago of this town; also in the shelter of Santa Cilia, It is best to leave home with the credential. It is given at the association of Friends of the Road nearest the address of the pilgrim.

There exists a university Jacobean accreditation which is made up of two documents. One is the credential of the university pilgrim on which the seals must be placed of the universities through which the chosen route goes and it allows overnight lodging at the shelters. The other is the University Compostela. Both serve to obtain services and advantages in lodging, transport and purchase of guides. Some centres give credits of free configuration to those who, after travelling the road, present a work associated with it [www.capus-stellae.org](http://www.capus-stellae.org).

## *The Compostela*

It is the document that certifies having travelled the road por devotionis affectu, voti vel pietatis causa, that is, for devotion, vow or piety. It is only granted to those who make the pilgrimage to the tomb of the apostle, at least the one hundred last kilometres on foot and on horseback or two hundred on bicycle. The disabled must arrive in a wheelchair without a motor.

In the ninth century, a venera or scallop shell was given, which could only be acquired in Santiago. It was more difficult to forge the letters of certification issued in the 13th century in which the Town Council confirmed that the bearer had reached the Compostelan cathedral. The current Compostela is derived from them, a document in Latin issued by the Office of the Pilgrim of Santiago in name of the Church. There is a different document for those who travel the road for non-religious reasons.

## *Holy Year*

It is a privilege granted by Pope Alexander III in 1179 through the bula Regis Aeterna. In it, the church of Compostela is granted the grace of the Jubilee, which is forgiveness of all sins of the faithful, every time that the 25th of July, the day of Santiago, falls on a Sunday. To obtain this grace the faithful must travel in a Holy Year to Compostela by any means of transport, visit the cathedral, pray, confess and take communion. The cycle of Jacobean years is 6-5-6-11; thus, after the one of 2010, the following are celebrated in 2021, 2027 and 2032.



Peregrino

# Stage 1

## From Somport to Jaca.

### Natural beauty



Half of the landscape that envelops the pilgrim is made up of sky, a different one in each season. The road of earth seems to be the reflection of the star-filled Milky Way, which lights up the night in the celestial dome. Far from the luminous contamination of the cities, the Somport offers beautiful dawns which compete in beauty with its occasional orange sunsets. 6 a.m. is a good time to begin a stretch if one wants to watch the night fall. As a backdrop there is a horizon of impressive mountains.



Jaca in the shadow of the Peña Oroel

Crossing the Pyrenees has always been one of the main challenges for the pilgrims. From France, they arrived, coming from diverse places and they came together at passes such as Somport, the Summus Portus. They walked down the old Roman way which, starting in the 11th century, became a well-travelled route for pilgrimage to Compostela. When, in the 16th century, travellers stopped passing through, it continued to operate as a business route. In the past it was a large, beautiful zone, although inhospitable, with terrible blizzards. Today, there is a shelter with unforgettable views where one can sleep comfortably before starting the stretch of the French Road through Aragonese lands.

At 1,640 metres elevation, the Somport pass marks the border between France and Spain, between the valleys of Aspe and Aragon. In an imposing silence, the spectacular views on both sides of the Pyrenees are breathtaking. Next to the now unused customs post, placed on a small rock, a white chapel with the virgin of the Pillar and a cross of Santiago bids the traveller farewell. The route begins on the left side of the N-330. A simple monolith at the base of the road announces the passage of the French Road through Aragon. There remain eight hundred fifty eight kilometres to reach Compostela, almost one hundred of them through Aragonese territory. The yellow arrows which mark the Jacobean route will be of great help. They share protagonism with the white and red markers of the GR 65.3 and, in some stretches, with those of the GR 11 which crosses the Pyrenees from east to west, from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic.

Some succinct signs with indications of the GR 65.3 are the introduction to a dance of steps fenced by a wooden rail. Knees are put to the test in a brusque and beautiful descent through the forest. Depending on the time of year, the snow or mud which forms after the intense rain converts the land into a slippery field. Be careful. (This is the original route but those who prefer a more comfortable one can take the road to Candanchú).

The path which winds around the side leads to the ruins of the Santa Cristina hospital. Today it is just a pile of rocks, but in the Middle Ages, it was one of the great centres for lodging of walkers. Thus states a monolith with plaques written in several languages. Its construction was finished in 1078 and it lived its greatest splendour in the 12th and 13th century, when it came to have several delegations. In the Calixtine Code, the guide of the medieval pilgrim, the clergyman Aymerich Picaud described it, along with those of Jerusalem and Rome, as one of the three hospitals in the world of extraordinary usefulness.

In the hospital of Santa Cristina, the exhausted pilgrim received a warm greeting, water and protection against thieves. At the very place where blizzards and thick fog made the journey an authentic hell. Some saved their lives here; others were buried in a small cemetery which was built next to the chapel. Comforted in body and soul, the walkers set out for Compostela or back to their faraway homes.



*Ruins of the Santa Cristina Hospital.*

Legend has it that two French knights, Arnovio and Sineval, exhausted after crossing the hard, steep slopes of the Aspe valley, covered with snow and terrified by the howling of the wolves, called upon Saint Cristina: "Ora pro nobis!" and in the midst of the haze, there appeared a small house with a smoking chimney. There they found heat, rest and abundant food which alleviated their ills. They promised that, on returning to the tomb of the apostle, they would build a refuge for walkers. On setting out the following day, they

saw a white dove with a golden cross in its beak which marked lines in the snow at the point where they were to build it. The story spread far and wide. They received many donations and, instead of the modest structure they had planned on, they built a luxurious one with the grants of Pedro I of Aragon and Count Gastón IV of Bearn. Pedro I donated lands and granted privileges to those who were associated with the monastery. Alfonso I gave them the tithes of his lands in Arañones, a palace in Canfranc, a mill, a bakery and allowed the animals of Santa Cristina and those of the travellers to graze in the countryside.

At 1,550 metres elevation, governed by a community of Augustinian canons, the Santa Cristina hospital was a building complex built around a Roman church. The monastery had houses and guest houses along all the routes that led to Santiago. The crisis came in the 16th century with the wars between Huguenots and Catholics which devastated this Pyrenean zone and forced the monks to leave. In 1707, during of the war of Succession, a devastating fire destroyed the splendour of the third greatest hospital in the world. Its last signs of life were as an inn for travellers, until an attack by the French army reduced it to rubble, on October 27th, 1808.

The historic itinerary recovered in 2009 leads through the right bank of the Aragon River to just before Canfranc Station, except for some small incursions on the left, such as the one at this point, at the bridge of Escarné or of Santa Cristina. It is very well marked. The Aragon River will be a faithful companion of the pilgrim to Sangüesa in Navarre. It begins as a thin line of water in a shining mirror located at an elevation of 2,078 meters, the glacial lake of Escalar or of Las Ranas. It is a neighbour of the glacial lake of Las Truchas. Inhabiting these high mountain lakes are the common frog, the brown frog and the Pyrenean frog. It is also possible to find a great variety of trout, triton salamanders, toads, and common salamanders. According to the legend, the lake bed is populated by mythological beings.

To reach the headwater of the Aragon River it is necessary to start from the zone of Truchas of the enchanting ski resort of Astún crowned by La Raca with its elevation of 2,284 metres. Any time of the year is good. The entire route can be done on foot or most of it by ski lift and walking only the last half hour. In the winter, the most adventurous usually choose skis or snow shoes. In the summer, there are an ever-increasing number of enthusiasts of excursions in all their versions: hiking, canyoning, rafting, and mountain biking or climbing.

The murmur of the Aragon accompanies one of the most silent and spectacular stages, which invites the pilgrim to inner travel.

The beautiful shapes of the glacial lakes are lost in thick forests and soft pastures visited by herds of cattle, sheep and horses. The clearings are sprinkled with colourful gentians, orchids, lilies, martagon and edelweiss. Along the river and in the streams, lively white-throated dippers and slithering triton salamanders play. The luckiest early risers can meet up with a salamander, a marmot or chamois. In the sky, Egyptian vultures, griffon vultures, golden eagles and bearded vultures.

Erosion has shaped a peaceful landscape in which, at this point of the road, the buildings of the Candachú ski resort, the oldest in Spain, can be seen. In 1928, the first skiers arrived, attracted by the snow which had brought so many complications in these places until then. One of the loveliest and completely protected from the wind, it offers options for both experts and beginners. Not everybody dares to go down the Tubo de la Zapatilla or Loma Verde. Winter skis, boards, snow shoes, and sleds give way to other adventures throughout the rest of the year. In summer, those fond of landscapes enjoy riding through the air on the ski lifts, and on land, walking or riding bicycles. Hundreds of options for the whole family in this zone, well-equipped with hotel, hostel and restaurant services which include nurseries for the youngest walkers.

The pilgrim leaves the castle of Candanchú to the right upon an isolated rocky mountain at an elevation of 1,565 metres where it was built in the 13th century. It fulfilled its purpose of defence and collection of customs duties well into the 16th century. Today there are remains of the floor and the elevation of its west wall. Soon afterwards appears the bridge of Castellar, better known as the "Puente del Ruso", very near the road.

Starting here, the limestone and sandstone rocks complicate matters for the pilgrims travelling the road on mountain bike, who have the option of continuing on the paved road. The others



Astún

must follow the indications which suggest crossing the road, the ravine of Rioseta and going down a rather abrupt path which crosses through a marvellous forest and passes by a few bunkers. For half a dozen years, Republican soldiers and prisoners, by order of Franco, dug out caves and erected these buildings of concrete camouflaged in the landscape. They formed the P Line which defended the border from possible French invasions. They never came to be used but today they have been recovered as emergency shelters which allow the travellers to shelter themselves from the storms or take a break under cover.

Delightful authentic routes have been put together, recovered from the Jacobean route in the midst of spectacular view of the circus of Rioseta mixed with the peaks of the Águila, Lecherin, Aspe and Tuca Blanca. All of them are slender, with elevations of between 2,000 and 2,500 metres. A stone plaque is placed next to the road in memory of the soldiers who died, buried by an avalanche in February 1947 when they returned from maneuvers.

Canal Roya owes its name to the reddish colour of the rocks which close it off to the north. The trees do not look out of place because here the Scots pine and red pine with its orange bark is abundant. Looking out on the other side in France is the impressive peak Midi d'Ossau, of volcanic origin. On the meadows, the cows satisfy their hunger among ash, black poplar and plants that release pleasant fragrances.

The Coll de Ladrões was built at the end of the 19th century upon another older one to defend this border valley. Blending in with the surroundings, two buildings stand, covered with local rock. There was a baking oven, a stable, a tank and an inner stairway with three hundred and seventy-five steps which led to a secret escape gallery. Dug out of the rock, the artillery defences occupied four openings facing north to which the powder keg must be added. Abandoned in 1961, it has recovered its splendour.

Curious stairs return the pilgrim to the Jacobean adventure which continues through the old town of Arañones, today Canfranc



Carlina



*Bunker in the valley of the Aragon*

Station. From the Roldán bridge there are two possibilities indicated: The one on the left, which runs through the Paseo de los Melancólicos, which is quiet and very beautiful, particularly in autumn and is closer to the original route, and the one on the right, which crosses the centre of the village and is perfect for those who need to buy anything. The church of Canfranc Station was erected in 1969 and bears the name of its architect, urban planner and painter, Miguel Fisac.

The original road rests under the great international station which was erected to join Spain and France by rail through the Central Pyrenees. Built between 1910 and 1925, it is of modernist design, with palatial air, and has as many windows as there are days in the year. Declared a Historical Artistic Monument, its horizontal design makes it unique in the midst of so much natural verticality. The most modern materials: iron, glass and steel were used to model this piece, crowned with the traditional snow-proof slate roof of the zone. In order to build it, it was necessary to divert the course of the Aragon River. With an enchanting mountainous background, in that era, it was promoted as being "larger than the Titanic". Inaugurated by Alfonso XIII, it began operation in 1928. Fourteen years before, in a grim and solitary landscape, the rail



*Canfranc Station – surrounding area*

tunnel had already been built which saw the passing of the train until 1970. In that year a goods train derailed on the bridge of Létanguet and rail transport to France crumbled.

The roads converge again upon leaving Canfranc Station at the bridge of Secrás. Immediately appearing on the scene then is the modern eight-kilometre Somport road tunnel which was inaugurated in January 2003 to join the valleys of Canfranc and Aspe. The Jacobean route passes right before the mouth of the tunnel. Thus, the pilgrims must move with great caution here and in the next five hundred metres. On this stretch, another tunnel is crossed on the way to Jaca. On leaving the route it descends to the bottom of the Aragon River.

Again two possibilities appear: The one on the right is less recommended, in spite of continuing on the road that is almost the original one and the Torre de fusileros can be seen, which was erected in the 19th century to prevent possible attacks. It is a surprising elliptically shaped defensive structure, impregnated with a certain medieval air. Its well-cut ashlar, the pit, its four floors and the galleries with arrow slits adorned with bows transform it into a building with charm which is used now for interesting expositions. The other option is on the left bank of the river up to the Arriba bridge of Canfranc Village or Quemado. The historical Jacobean route disappeared under the national road 330 but pilgrims have the opportunity to see the original road of the Porciocas or Porcieucas which stretches between beautiful grassy meadows and small plots that the neighbours farmed. Those who choose this route plunge into the environment that was experienced on the original route. They had a similar width and the same type of cobblestone.



*Torre de fusileros ("Riflemen's tower")*

The surroundings are marvellous, and this makes it necessary to take some time here. Right at the entrance of Canfranc Village the ascent begins through the forest and the pasture to the glacial lake of Ip. Another recommended excursion is the frozen grotto of Los Lecherines, where the stalactites compete in beauty with the stalagmites and the ice pillars seem to support the ceiling of the small cave.



*Church of Canfranc Village*

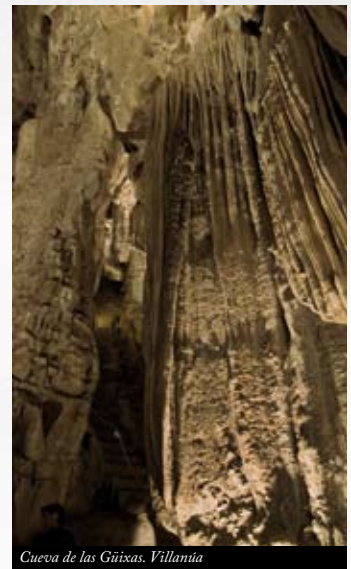
Assumption of the 16th century which held four beautiful Baroque altarpieces in its side chapels. Placed high upon a rock are the remains of the ancient castle enlarged by Tiburcio Spannocchi in 1592. This is the same engineer who erected the tower of La Espelunca on the Santiago Road itself which ran under the domed passage of the defensive structure. Also worth visiting is the tower of Aznar Palacín or the monument complex of La Trinidad founded by the merchant Don Blasco de Les in the 16th century to serve the poor and pilgrims. What is priceless is being able to still find chickens and roosters walking through the streets.

Primitive Canfranc fulfilled the functions of surveillance, border and customs control. Campo de Francos was a place where the residents did not pay taxes and they were forgiven the debts they had with the Law. In exchange, they were responsible for the cleaning and maintenance of the Jacobean route, offered safety, lodging, food and attention to the travellers. Business spread along Calle Albareda where some houses still have large bay windows which were used as shop windows. In 1944, Canfranc was at the point of disappearing, devoured by a powerful fire. Some traces remain of the steep slate roofs, the wide portals and the Gothic bay windows that made Canfranc unique, a singular village with its street – a road four hundred metres in length. One leaves Canfranc by crossing the Abajo Bridge, the Cemetery Bridge or the Trinidad Bridge. Medieval, rebuilt in 1599, it is one of the most highly valued figures of the Road to Santiago.

Up to Villanúa, the new village, pilgrims have the honour of walking one of the best-preserved stretches of the Road to Santiago. This town also grew up as a result of the Jacobean route. Pedro I donated it to the monastery of Santa Cruz de la Serós and later

to various nobility. On the great rock of Castellón is the remains of a small medieval fortress from which the route was defended and protected. Slightly further down, surrounded by bushes is the dolmen and, following a rocky trail, the famous cave of the Güixas appears. Both are covered by the formidable massif of Collarada with its elevation of 2,886 metres, painted white by the snows a large part of the year. Within a radius of seven kilometres, two more dolmens can be enjoyed, those of Letranz and of Tres Peñas or Las Diez Campanas. This privileged spots exhibit their prehistoric imprints, invite us to practice spelunking and captivate with their legends. It is said that in the cave of the Güixas, the witches celebrated their coven rituals under the moon and the stars.

A bridge welcomes the visitor to Villanúa. It is a pleasure to stop before the stately mansions that exhibit their coats-of-arms, the old town hall, the fountain with four spouts or the parish church which cuts the sky with its straight lines. Dedicated to Saint Stephen, it was erected between the 12th and 18th centuries with two buildings of different size. Peace dissipates if the pilgrim encounters the nostalgic and charming Canfranero train rolling down the old railway.



*Cueva de las Güixas. Villanúa*



*Dolmen near Villanúa*

The clean and restored road passes next to the dam. It is said that at this point there was a wooden bridge that the French troops burned at the end of the War of Independence. Before reaching the Grotto Information Centre, there is a testimony in stone of what was a pilgrim hospital that finally died for lack of use. As a suggestion, on leaving Villanúa, a path invites the traveller to take a pleasant walk to the incomparable Fuente del Paco. A fountain, watering trough, outdoor eating area and a small refuge are lost in a marvellous mixed forest of pines, firs and beeches. In the autumn sunsets, it is touching to listen to the cry of the deer. This is a magical place, the ideal point of encounter for excursionists, mushroom hunters and game hunters.

On leaving Villanúa, in a rest area, a cross erected by the Atades association stands out, and across from it is the Señorío de Aruej, mentioned for the first time in 1031. Its mission was to defend the Roman way from enemies coming from the north. The lord of Aruej before free men, with lands and rights recognized by the crown. Today, it is a postcard picture with a Roman church, several manors and a fortified tower.



Salida de Villanúa con Collarada de fondo

From Villanúa to Castiello, the Friends of the Road to Santiago of Jaca recommend the walkway that runs alongside the road to the recreational centre of the Scolapians. At this point, we cross the national road and there is a small ascent which ends in Villa Juanita. The road looks out over a stone country house and continues by one of the livestock roads made by the moving livestock in their continual pilgrimage. So we arrive in Castiello, which will soon inaugurate a shelter for pilgrims.

## Recommended excursion



Before entering one recommended excursion: In Villa Juanita the Jacobean route is abandoned to take the steep road which runs

to Aratorés, set on a small hill, with unforgettable views. Then appears Borau, a villa which in the past was well-known with regard to agriculture, livestock and forestry. Today, it stands out for its delightful old quarter with well-renovated houses and narrow, cobbled streets. The stone roof tiles and typical Pyrenean chimneys add even more charm to this place, to which we must add the parish church, of rural 16th-century Aragonese style. A Paradise for lovers of adventure sports who are attracted by the pure, crystalline waters of the Aragon and its tributaries and for those who seek art in landscape or rock.

Going down the path which runs parallel to the narrow road going to the valley of Aisa and turning back to the Lubierre River we reach the monastery of San Adrián de Sasabe. In a lovely setting, at the end of the 11th century, a precious jewel was erected that was an important monastic centre of the Middle Ages and episcopal centre of Aragon. Lombardo-Jaca style, after years buried, in part due to the effects of its neighbouring ravines Calcón



San Adrián de Sasabe

and Lupán, today there is a hermitage which contains thousands of histories inside its walls. At this distance from heaven, three bishops of Huesca were buried and the Holy Grail was kept, the chalice used by Jesus in the last supper.



Castiello is entered by the Calle Santiago. The road crossed this place with the name of a castle in which the tower of the Roman church of San Miguel stands out. Here, one of the greatest treasures of the Jacobean route is kept, in which Castiello is famous for being the village of the one hundred relics. Legend has it that a pilgrim bearing a great sack was about to continue on the route after spending the night in this place when he fell dead. The villagers went to help him and to their surprise, they saw him come back to life. The story repeated itself four times; if he left the village, he died and he returned to life when he was taken back to it. It was then that he said that an old man had asked him to carry a sack on the Road to Santiago, although it would increase in weight.

After what had happened, he assumed that the load had to remain in Castiello.

On opening the package, relics appeared, and among those named is a splinter of the cross where Jesus Christ was crucified and a thorn from the crown they placed on him. They are kept in the high altar of the church of San Miguel inside a silver chest. The key is kept by the mayor and it is only opened on the first Sunday of July so that all who wish to can view them.

Next to the parish church are the remains of the old medieval fortress, before continuing down the Calle Santiago. Next to the old restored washing place is the fountain of Casadioses, adorned with a shell. The majority of the pilgrims take a break at this point to refresh themselves before continuing to the N-330. On leaving Castiello, immediately after crossing the bridge over the Aragon River, the route continues to the right and a walking ramp designed in 2009 crosses the course of the Ijuez River, famous in the past for putting many pilgrims in a difficult situation. Following this route, we reach Torrijos, and from there, Jaca and a rest after a hard day are only a short distance away.

## Recommended excursion



If we continue down the road, we cross the railway at an elevated crossing which ends in the entrance to the lush, cool valley of La Garcipollera, ancient vallis Cepollaria or Valley of the Onions. We are welcomed by the hermitage of Santa Juliana and from there, we must walk a couple of hours to view Santa María de Iguácel, art in rock. A rectangular building covered with wood, a semicircular apse and beautiful wall paintings are capable of moving the visitor. It was erected in 1072, it was a nuns' monastery but today it is a charming hermitage that invites the traveller to take a turnoff.



Exterior del abside de Santa María de Iguácel

The work fields and pastures of La Garcipollera were divided into terraces when Yosa, Bergosa, Larrosa and Acín were inhabited. In Bescós, the Government of Aragon had one of the main experimental plots devoted to mountain livestock farming in

existence in Spain. Today, there is only life there and in Villanovilla which has had a strong resurgence and offers cosy accommodations in its shelter and in several country houses. Throughout the zone, there is a predominance of thick vegetation, the result of forest repopulation in the second half of the 20th century. Pines and black poplars, oak trees, willows, almond, cedar and apple trees make up a special landscape sprinkled with mulberries, blueberries, holly, and boxwood. Squirrels, rabbits, hares, moles and chamois flee on detecting any unknown presence. Bearded vultures, golden eagles, common buzzards and red kites exhibit their flight while, in the national game reserve, deer and wild boar have become used to the people they find when they go down to drink from the crystalline waters of the Ijuez River.



Hermitage of San Cristobal, Jaca

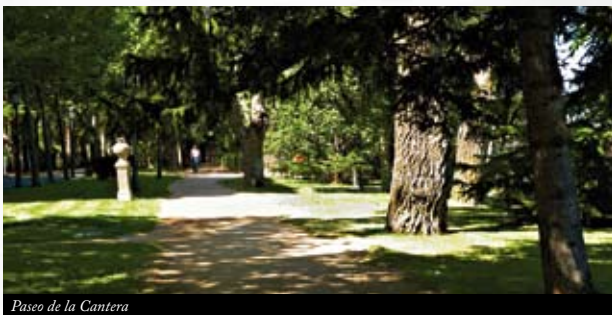
The entrance to Jaca is a most peaceful one. The path veers off the road for a moment and the traveller is received by the hermitage of San Cristobal, amid the vegetation. A simple building of common construction erected in 1796 in masonry with cornerstones and finished with a curious brick wall extension. Opposite it, a fountain of cool water and a bench receive the pilgrim while the saint, patron of walkers, protects him. Next to it, a medieval bridge, also bearing the name San Cristobal, built to cross the ravine of Rapitán and to connect the Jacobean route which comes from Somport to the capital of Jacetania.

A slope followed by some ladders take the walker to the Banco de la Salud (Bank of Health), located at the beginning of the marvellous walkway of La Cantera. A beautiful spot which for centuries was supported by an enormous elm which died victim of graphiosis and possibly due to giving out so much vitality. It is said that the pilgrims stood under its shade and the Tree of Health restored the strength that had been consumed throughout the Jacobean route. Only one cross remains in the place where a church was erected, documented in the 12th century and the hospital of San Marcos, a centre outside the city walls where pilgrims with any pestilence were cared for before entering the city. There, a mark of wood indicates two possibilities.

Those who decide to go straight on will see Jaca from the inside. The road of San Marcos is taken by the leafy avenue of France to the crossing with the avenue of Jacetania where the north wall of the city no longer in existence, extended. From there to the square of San Pedro to enjoy the cathedral, Calle Bellido, Jacobean shelter, the business street Calle Mayor and Sancho Ramírez to the square of Marqués de Lacadena. Calle Ferrenal, the church of Santiago where the credential is obtained and stamped, Calle del Coso to come out on the avenue of Regimiento Galicia. A path of bronze shells on the ground serves to guide the visitor on his journey through the city.

The route on the right allow us to avoid entering the centre and suggests taking the Paseo de la Cantera and the road of Mocorones to the hermitage of La Victoria, a place of encounter with those who enter Jaca. Both proposals are worth the trouble.

The Paseo de la Cantera is one of the parks that surround the perimeter of Jaca. It is real delight to lose oneself among masses of boxwood, juniper and wild roses. It is a pleasure to find merry sparrows and robins and even squirrels that play among the horse chestnut, pine and maple trees. On summer nights, the scops owls and blackbirds softly sing while a bat flutters in pursuit of the insects that are attracted to the light of the street lamps. By day, the red kites fly low and the vultures sail on the air currents which form over the valley of the Aragon River. The end of the journey connects with the Rompeolas, an observation point on the Paseo de la Constitución with superb views of another bridge with a hermitage – San Miguel hermitage. Late medieval of three eye joined Jaca with the Road to Santiago which ran by the right bank of the Aragon River at its passage through Abay, Ascara, and Javierregay. A cross indicates the route to the walkers who choose this route. It is the perfect setting to stop to pray or rest. From the observation point, the Berdún Canal can also be observed, which will be the protagonist of the following days of walking and the shapes of small traditional villages such as Guasillo, Asieso, Banaguás or Araguás del Solano which contrast with the grandeur of the Collarada peak which the traveller already knows.



*Paseo de la Cantera*

The first stage of the Vía Tolosana in Spanish territory ends in Jaca. Here, the pilgrims of Somport met with those who had crossed the Pyrenees through the Portalet, the other pass further to the east, which runs near the ski resort of Aramón Formigal.



*Central hall of the cathedral, Jaca*

Jaca was the first city of the Road to Santiago, capital of the kingdom of Aragon and centre for the Aragonese bishops. A cathedral was needed and construction on the cathedral of San Pedro began in the second half of the 11th century, the head and the feet at the same time. The first Roman cathedral of the peninsula became an obligatory place to stop for those who set out for Compostela. Several fires made reforms necessary in the 15th and 16th centuries. At the top of the belfry, a white flag is flown which is

replaced every May 3rd and is full of meaning. It is a symbol of the triumph of the resurrection and of peace; some say that it serves to protect the city from storms and others say that it was raised in the Middle Ages when Jaca enjoyed good health to make this known to visitors. Saints have passed through here such as Saint Francis of Assisi, Kings such as Louis VII of France or Edward III of England, nobles and millions of anonymous pilgrims. For many years, the bells of the cathedral have rung thanks to long ropes which pulled on the bell clappers. They reached down to a bench installed in the house of the bell ringers which is still found inside the temple. From a small window, they monitored the high altar and thus, always rang the bell at precisely the right moment.

The position of the cathedral is an allegory of the medieval traveller who, moved by faith, left his reality for what he wanted to attain. In the Middle Ages, sinners could not enter celebration of thanksgiving until they had fulfilled their penance and received absolution. The pilgrim took conscience of his condition in the entrance portal. Between archivolts and columns illustrated with carved chapitels, stone seats were distributed upon which they displayed themselves in view of all as penitents. The Trinitarian chi-rho of the drum is a key piece in the Jacobean route. Among images of bears, basilisks and lions, it says that, once evil is eliminated, God protects man.

Under it there is a column located to the left of the main portal which shows a deep notch in the shaft. There are those who say that it was dug by the kisses and caresses of so many pilgrims. Although it is less poetic, it seems that it is due to the custom of the faithful of drying the hand on leaving after wetting it with holy water.

Inside the cathedral, the three halls with five sections each, the cross and three apses are the perfect setting for a group of semicircular arches upon cross-shaped cylindrical pillars. The Jaca ajedrezado and the balls that brighten the bases of the interior supports also set style. On the central apse, the chancel was decorated by Friar Manuel Bayeu, brother-in-law of the genius Goya. In the west wing, the chapel of Saint Orosia stands out for its beauty.



*Bust of Saint Orosia in Yebra de Basa*

Orosia was a princess of Aquitania who was beheaded by a group of Muslims, in the mountains of Yebra. They killed all of her entourage. Many years later, a shepherd named Guillem found the undecomposed body of the young woman. Wherever he passed with it, bells began to ring and the flowers in the field gave off their best aromas. The head was kept in Yebra de Basa. Every June 25th that moment is relived in a procession which begins

the day before with the rosary of the men and the tolling of bells. From the parish church part of the route to the hermitage with the skull of the saint leaning on a silver bust of the 16th century. The participants combine processions and dances along an emotional route of sanctuaries. The colour is provided by the dancers, dressed in bright costumes and flower hats. They dance the ancient dance of Saint Orosia, striking their boxwood sticks to the beat of the whistle and psaltery. On the same day, in Jaca, where the body lies, the same instruments are heard during the procession in which between dances, the participants carry the silver urn containing the relics of the saint on their shoulders. The bishop shows them along with the mantles of Saint Orosia for their veneration. Afterwards, they are put in the centre of the main altar of the cathedral, along with the remains of Saint Indalecio, disciple of the apostle Santiago, and of Saint Félix and Saint Voto founders



*Whistle and chicotín in the procession of Saint Orosia*

of the monastery of San Juan de la Peña.

The cloister of the cathedral is filled with life by the Diocesan Museum, one of the most important collections of medieval wall painting in the world. Some experts have called it the Sistine Chapel of Roman painting. It is a privilege to be able to see the works rescued from the churches of many abandoned villages, brought together, as well as architectural elements and objects used in liturgy

full of historical meaning. The museum began operation in 1963 and, after several restorations, it is exciting to see the polychrome wood carving of the Virgin of Iguácel from the beginning of the 12th century, the mural groups of Bagüés, Ruesta and Navasa, from the 11th and 12th centuries, or the stone sarcophagus of Sancho Ramírez, natural son of Ramiro I.

Today, pilgrims visit the cathedral guided by faith but also by their love for art or adventure. In addition to stamping their credential, they receive encouragement and blessings with the hope that here they will discover something that will change their lives.

After praying, the medieval pilgrims left through the south door, on which the chapitels represented gratitude and happiness as reflected in that of the musicians. Etched in the stone of the wall, the Jaca rod has remained for centuries; with it, merchants and buyers checked that the measurement used was correct. In the inviting square which opens there, market was held every Tuesday under the arches.

To attract the residents and merchants, King Sancho Ramírez declared a fuero (law granting special rights) in 1077 which granted privileges to the new residents, who he called franks, that arrived in Jaca. They did not have to pay tribute to the king and they were considered free citizens. With them began the Burnao or Burgo Nuevo (New Burg), a business district which sprang up outside the walls, parallel to the Road to Santiago and with clear intention of opening up to the outside world. Jaca came to have up to twelve pilgrim hospitals, shelters, churches which today no longer exist and artisans of all types.

Sixteen cobblers, the majority along the Calle Bellido, served the travellers with sandals, boots and galoshes when there was mud. Jaca began to prosper. And even came to coin its own currency, the sueldo jaqués. There were three bath houses so that the pilgrims, residents and visitors could wash in shifts.



*The Citadel of Jaca*

The knight commander Tiburcio Spannocchi chose the Burnao to erect the Ciudadela (Citadel) Seen from the air, it has the appearance of a star. It is a perfect pentagon surrounded by walls, bulwarks, moats and other fortifications. The castle of San Pedro is a military construction ordered around 1592 by Felipe II to defend Jaca from a possible French invasion. But strangely enough, history only had it enter into battle during the war of independence when the Spaniards tried to recover it after the French occupation. Spannocchi designed a fortress with capacity for a garrison of one hundred men with elaborate defences. The moat is crossed with a three-arch bridge plus a drawbridge. After passing through a door covered by a coat-of arms, access is gained to the interior, with an impressive Baroque portal of the 18th-century church and the parade ground full of arches. Inside, there is a collection of more than thirty-two thousand lead figures which are exhibited in twenty-three historical scenes. In the case that it were not possible to enter Jaca because it was in quarantine or if the pilgrim arrived late and found the doors closed, he could spend the night in two cellars in the interior of the Citadel which pertained to the church of Santa María de Burnao, no longer in existence. Outside, the perimeter can be walked around on the slopes which is a very pleasant walk, visiting the family of deer which live in the moat, in which it is said that there was never water. From there, there are wonderful visits to the Peña Oroel (1,769 metres elevation) crowned by a cross that can be seen from afar. A peak that will accompany the pilgrim for a good distance.

The Jacobean route is always present in the life of Jaca. In the 11th century, the quarter of Santiago was full of artisans and merchants at the service of the travellers. Today, punctually, every afternoon at eight, a mass is celebrated in the church of Santiago where the blessing is given to the pilgrims. It is a temple with the appearance of a basilica that was rebuilt in 1088 upon a previous one and has a belfry tower with windows that look outside. At the beginning of the 17th century, the Roman church was much deteriorated and it was restored by the Dominican order. They granted it the double advocacy of Santiago and Santo Domingo and reoriented it. The first one had three apses erected toward the east. The Dominicans would cut the apses and would open up in this wall the entrance door, as it is today, locating the presbytery on the opposite end. The new high altar faces the west and the tower is on the space of the head. All of this was to mark the road toward the tomb of the apostle located eight hundred seventeen kilometres to the west of Jaca.

A short distance away, the Dominican order built their convent, on the present Calle del Coso. Cut in stone on the front is the dove with the cross in its beak and the legend Santa Cristina ora pro nobis, in remembrance of the hospital of Santa Cristina of Somport which the Dominicans ran in 1613. Today this coat-of-arms presides over the entrance to the school of Las Hermanas de Santa Ana (the Sisters of Saint Ann), who occupied it in 1887.



*Portada del convento de las dominicas de Jaca*

In 1555 the nuns of the monastery of Santa Cruz de la Serós moved to Jaca and to lodge them, the monastery of the Benedictines was erected, at the end of the Calle Mayor, next to a section of the old wall. The underground church of Santa María was known as the church of San Salvador and is a building covered with a dome and decorated with Roman paintings. The high church granted to the religious order the brotherhood of San Ginés in 1579. Only the Roman front remains because it was enlarged in 1730. Kept inside is the sarcophagus of Doña Sancha, daughter of king Ramiro I of Aragon. The sepulchre was brought to Jaca from Santa Cruz de la Serós in the 17th century. It is made of stone decorated on its four sides with scenes of the life of the deceased and the ascension of her soul. It is considered the best funeral piece of the Aragonese Romanesque.

The parish church of Carmen merits another visit, built by the Carmelite order in the mid-17th century.

With a mixture of late Gothic and Baroque, this temple with Latin cross plan with manierist front of worked stone. Standing out



*Altarpiece of the dormition of the virgin, Church of Santiago, Jaca*

inside is the baroque main altarpiece and a carving of Santiago of the 18th century, from the church of Ruesta.

A powerful sculpture remembers the first king of Aragon, Ramiro I, next to the square of Marqués de Lacadena. Next to it, a slender 15th-century stone tower has proved to be versatile. Some call it Jail Tower because it held prisoners for a time; others call it Clock Tower as the city clock was installed at its top. It has also been the Tower of Merino, who was the king's representative in Jaca,



*Ramiro I at the Clock Tower, Jaca*

administered his income and collected taxes. Today it is the headquarters of the Pyrenees Work Community.

The district of Jacetania offers endless possibilities in tourism, sports, culture and gastronomy which make it an irresistible destination for the general public. The university champions of winter sports met in Jaca during the Universiadas of 1981 and 1995. In 2007, the

Olympic Festival of European Youth was held there. In summer, many students heed the call of the University of Zaragoza, which promotes courses in Jaca, Echo and Ansó. The European Academy of Jaca, which organizes the Royal Institute of European Studies of Zaragoza, has already become a tradition. The Spanish High Council for Scientific Research (CSIC) has a centre here in the Pyrenean Institute of Ecology. Since 1948, it has carried out studies on ecology and traditional Pyrenean agriculture and livestock farming, which are known throughout the world. The PIR Festival of Pyrenean music and culture is held in beautiful places such as Aragües del Puerto, Jasa, Echo or Ansó. The International Festival on the Road to Santiago offers an interesting repertory of ancient music which spans from the Middle Ages to the baroque era. In odd-numbered years, the whole world looks to the city of Jaca, with its Pyrenees Folklore Festival, a torrent of cultures united by folklore and respect for one's neighbour.



*Folklore group in the festivals of Jaca*

The municipal pilgrims' shelter is in the Calle Conde Aznar, in the centre of the old quarter. Installed in the old hospital, it is famous for its friendly and peaceful atmosphere. There are several additional shelters, such as the shelter of the Escuelas Pías (Pious Schools), run by the Scolapian Fathers.

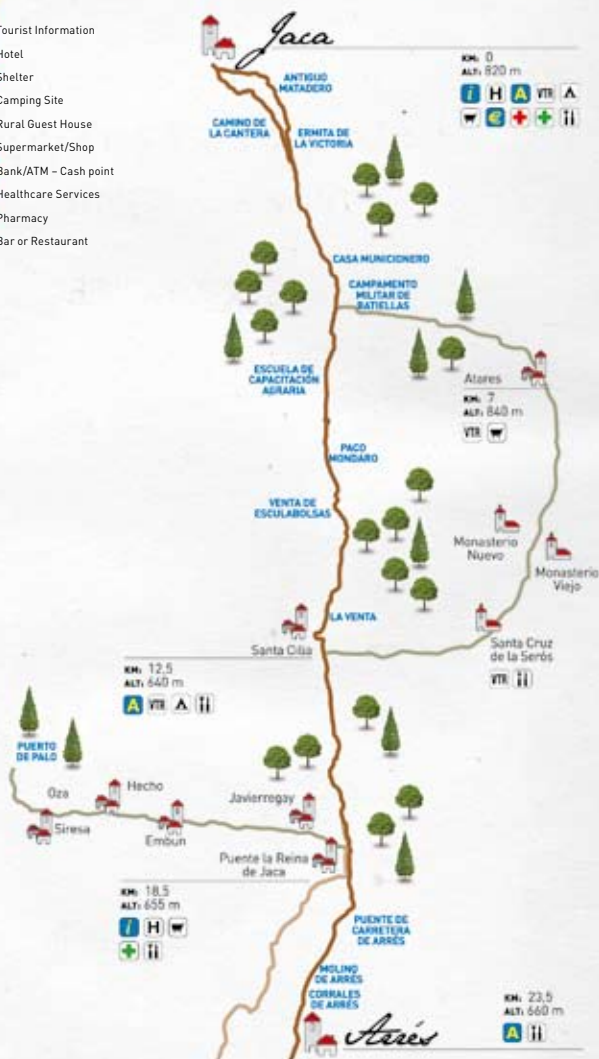
The entire city can be seen from mount Rapitán, which is accessed by a narrow, winding road. At the top is the fortress of Rapitán, which has stood there since the 19th century. Built at the same time as the fortress of Coll de Ladrones in Canfranc, it was a formidable challenge to move over the difficult orography of the terrain. A long, heavy hemp cable was manufactured in order to ascend the canyons through this route. The walls of this fortress still serve as a reminder of the deaths of many republicans shot in the first days of the Civil War. Today Jaca is full of life.

# Stage 2

## From Jaca to Arrés.

### Change in landscape

- Tourist Information
- Hotel
- Shelter
- Camping Site
- Rural Guest House
- Supermarket/Shop
- Bank/ATM - Cash point
- Healthcare Services
- Pharmacy
- Bar or Restaurant



Dawn comes silently to Jaca. In the past, the pilgrim left the city through the Puerta de los Baños (Door of the Baths), which no longer exists, taking the Camino Real to Navarre. Before departing, it is advisable to obtain money for the next three days because there will be no automatic teller machines until reaching Sangüesa. From the refuge, one can go down the Calle Mayor to the end, cross over and continue on the left side down the avenues of the Primer Viernes de Mayo and Regimiento Galicia to reach the N-240. After passing the petrol station, we cross to continue down the left side of the national road next to the old municipal slaughterhouse. Helpful yellow arrows guide the pilgrim to a walkway bordered by pleasant aromatic plants and small bushes. When this ends, a path begins next to the road which leads to a cemetery and the hermitage of La Victoria. A simple building of the 19th century built upon an 18th-century temple which burnt down during the War of Independence. It was dedicated to Our Lady of Mocorones. This was the name of the esplanade where, according to tradition, the brave men and women of Jaca defeated the Arab invaders in the year 761. Today that event is remembered on every "First Friday in May". The intense day begins with all eating an early-morning meal of ribs, longaniza sausage, breadcrumbs and eggs. For dessert there is cake and wine. Afterwards, there is a parade of



*Almuerzo en el Llano de la Victoria. Primer viernes de mayo*

Christians, artisans, and farmers dressed in colourful flower-hats, to the beat of the blunderbusses, accompanied Aznar in his triumphant entry on horseback into the city. At mid-day the anthem of Jaca is sung before the plateresque façade of the city hall. The emotion is stronger than the song in itself.

We must cross carefully to take a livestock path which descends among cool wooded areas and simple houses with many stories to tell. It is a pleasure to advance and view well-kept farms and gardens full of fruit trees and colourful flowers. After going one and a half kilometres, we must cross the road again to reach a foot bridge over the Gas River which allows us to reach the Casa del Munciero. A short distance away is Las Batiellas, a field used for military maneuvers. Later, in Santa Cilia, a magnificent shelter awaits.

But first, the following comment: Only twenty-two kilometres from Jaca is the magnificent monastery of San Juan de la Peña. From the capital of Jacetania, there is no bus. The most advisable thing to do to not become lost is to take a taxi or follow the direction marked around the N-240 Jaca-Pamplona to go through Esculabolas. At this point there was a pilgrims' hospital and an inn that served travellers.

How do we get there on foot? Following the Road to Santiago, eleven kilometres from Jaca, past the Hotel Aragón, we take a road which branches off to the left and leads to Santa Cruz de la Serós. From there to San Juan de la Peña there are two options: to follow the paved road without entering Santa Cruz, or to go to the Church of Santa María. Opposite this temple part of the road of El Escalar which leads to the Old Monastery.

There is a direct route which passes through Atarés but the traveller is strongly advised to not take it because it is beautiful and peaceful but very difficult and complicated. Many get lost. The best thing to do is go by car over the road or simply enjoy the intricate paths on paper.

## Recommended excursion

\*EXCURSION DIFFICULT IF DONE ON FOOT



Each step on the path is a step forward toward origins. Atarés is a hospitable village, well-kept and full of natural charm. The stone roof tiles appear suddenly, crowning the stone houses; even the woodfired oven exudes charm. The remains of the castle served to erect the tower of the parish church of San Julián, in the 17th century. The legend has it that Saint Julian was a hunter, and an animal he hunted revealed to him that he would finally kill his parents. So that this would not occur, he fled to a faraway kingdom where he married the royal heiress. When the parents learned this, they went to his house and their daughter-in-law gave them their room and their bed. When Julian returned, the terrible prophecy was fulfilled. Repentant, he spent the rest of his life as an innkeeper, helping pilgrims to cross a dangerous ford. A curious sculpture in the church of Atarés shows the saint holding a gun. Recently, a wood sculpture of the virgin appeared, dating back to the 12th century.

Welcome to a peaceful and pure place where the 35 residents meet every Saturday for dinner. The water of its fountain allows the traveller to be refreshed and to fill his canteen before going on his way on the street of the square which leads to the Atarés ravine. History catalogues it as one of the southernmost settlements of Aragón when it was a county at the beginning of the 9th century. The hermit who appears in the legend about the origin of San Juan de la Peña was from this village.



San Julián in Atarés

Behind the pilgrim is the silhouette of the Peña Oroel against the sky. This peak, which carries the name of the Count Carolingio Oriol, adorns the landscape of many villages of Jacetania. In all cases, it captivates with its reddish, yellow, bluish or white colours, depending on the time of day and the season of the year. It is said that the Reconquest in Aragon began when bonfires on its peak so indicated; there are those who believe that it is magical, as it is the third vertex of a triangle with San Adrián de Sasabe and San Juan de la Peña. Other claim that in its depths there was a mine or a treasure and that the name Oroel comes from "oro" (gold). It is beautiful seen from both far away and near. The steep aggregate slopes peek out between forests of pines, firs, beeches and Holm oaks. After almost two hours of pleasant ascent, we reach the



Jaca near the Peña Oroel

great cross which crowns the peak. But this is another, separate excursion. On the horizon we can see the Peña Forca, Bisaurín, Aspe, Collarada, Telera and Tendeñera. A few metres below, awaiting us in a hollow is the hermitage of the Virgen de la Cueva (Virgin of the Cave), to which a procession is made at the end of May.

Among dense forests of pine, Holm oak, gall oak and boxwood, mushrooms abound in a zone which is ideal for wild boar, foxes, genets and roe deer. In the sky, griffon vultures and bearded vultures.

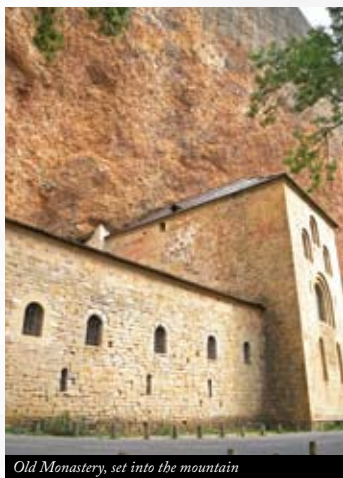


*Main façade of the New Monastery*

In the meadow of San Indalecio appears the New Monastery, a great building of brick and wood from the end of the 17th century. It had to be built after the damages caused to the Old Monastery by the humidity - which caused painful joint illnesses to the monks - the freezing temperature and a terrible fire which broke out in 1675.

The design of the building

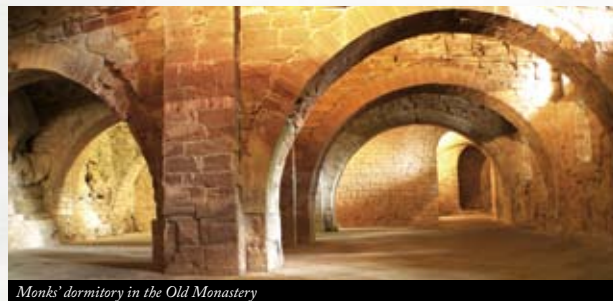
is one of the most sophisticated of monastic architecture in the Modern Age, for its symmetry and the organization of space. It is a baroque building complex ordered in a great rectangle centered on two inner cloisters and on a large outer patio of honour. Opening on to it were church, the portal and the Abbot's residence, where a modern guest house was installed which invites to plunge into the most absolute repose. The church of San Juan stands out with its three halls, half a dozen chapels and a great stone façade framed by two side towers and crowned by a triangular court wall. A small reinforced brick wall protected the entire complex. Before leaving, today, we can travel in time aboard the Interpretation Centres of the Monastery and of the Kingdom of Aragon.



*Old Monastery, set into the mountain*

Only ten minutes away is the remains of the Old Monastery which began to be built under a formidable crag in the 10th century. Sancho el Mayor re-founded it with the Benedictine law in the first third of the 11th century. Only two floors remain of its former extension, which are accessed from a square hall, from where it is possible to descend to the old Mozarabic monastery or ascend to the Romanesque part.

A few steps lead to the lower floor, the oldest part, where we can visit the hall of the council, or the monks' dormitory. It is a large room divided into four parts by semicircular arches supported on cruciform pillars, covered by round arches, and with little natural illumination. The popular legends of the zone situate water torture in one of its corners; this was water which fell rhythmically on the captive on his forehead without him being able to move, sleep, or drink. On this same floor is the first pre-Romanesque church of the saints Julian and Basilisa, founded in the year 920. It consists of two identical halls separated by horseshoe arches which are supported on a small column. In the apsidal chapels, there are remains of Romanesque fresco paintings with Byzantine influence. A stairway connects the Mozarabic church to the north annex which was made in the 11th century in order to build the upper temple. Two testimonial bay windows illuminate this zone which becomes an abbatial pantheon with five burial laudes.



*Monks' dormitory in the Old Monastery*

From the entrance hall, a wide stairway leads to the upper floor, to the Romanesque complex which began to be built in the times of Sancho Ramírez, in the second half of the 11th century. The stairway opens into a square uncovered atrium containing the pantheon of the nobles where the Count of Aranda has his final resting place. It is one of the most complete of its kind with its rows of tombs with archivolts, varied decoration full of symbolism on the headstones and a valuable collection of necrological memories. Opening into the north wall are the buildings making up the residence of the abbot. There is also access to the old kitchens and ovens next to which is the zone of royal necropolis. Ramiro I, the first king of Aragon, chose the monastery to be the royal pantheon and his remains rest there along with those of his successors, Sancho Ramírez and Pedro I.

On that same floor is the church of San Juan, also known as Alta (High), as it is built on the old Mozarabic church. It consists of a single hall which narrows to the feet, crowned by three apses joined to the rock which serves in part as a roof.

From this point the old sacristy is accessed, which was converted into a royal pantheon by order of Carlos III. Here, the kings of Aragon and Navarre were buried for five hundred years. The current decoration is from the 18th century.



*Maite, the hospitalera (innkeeper) of Santa Cilia*

Returning to the church, we can continue the visit through the 12th-century Romanesque cloister, the only one in the world housed under a rock which is transformed into a charming natural dome. Its uncovered arches, and the expressiveness of its chapitels which narrate history in stone, transformed it into a unique place of prayer for the Cluny monks. The

chapitels tell the story of the creation of Eve, the temptation of Adam and how they were cast out of paradise, the period of the childhood and public life of Jesus, they tell of John the Baptist and present marvellous fantastic birds. On the south side of the cloister awaits the harmonious and delicate chapel of San Victorián of flaming Gothic style with a marvellous façade. In the opposite angle of

the cloister is the neoclassical chapel of the saints Voto and Félix, the last structure which is added to the Romanesque monastery. These stones have witnessed the birth of the Kingdom of Aragon and the passing of the Holy Grail. According to the tradition, the chalice that Christ drank from in the last supper was brought by Saint Lorenzo from Rome. The bad times came with the War of Independence and the disentrailing. Today this national monument stands out on the rock and marvels all who go to see it..

Legend has it that a young man named Voto went hunting in these lands and, when he was running after a deer, he fell down a ravine at mount Pano. He called on St. John the Baptist and miraculously, his horse landed softly on the ground. Precisely there, in a cave, he found a hermitage devoted to the saint and inside was the body of the hermit Juan de Atarés. He went to Zaragoza, sold all his goods and retired to the cave along with his brother Félix to continue the work of his predecessor. The chapel grew in fame and became a place of retreat and prayer. This was the origin of San Juan de la Peña.

It seems incredible that in the middle of the dense forest there could be so much artistic wealth, but this is only the beginning. Nearby, at Santa Cruz de la Serós, awaits its impressive women's monastery. It is not only beautiful; its walls enclose thousands of stories. Behind them lived the three daughters of Ramiro I: Doña Urraca, Doña Teresa and Doña Sancha.



*Cloister of the Old Monastery*



*Pilgrims' souvenirs*

Their sarcophagus was moved to the church of the Benedictines of Jaca. Finally, there is the church of Santa María which charms with its four-section tower, its cross with octagonal dome and the façade with chi-rho and inscriptions very similar to that of the cathedral of Jaca. Inside there is an image of Christ crucified to the left of the high altar before a niche of polychromed stone representing the cycle of the road: the sun, the moon, the stars and a great shell on high. It is moving to look upon.

The other Romanesque jewel that awaits on exiting the village is the church of San Caprasio decorated with a blind arcade and pilasters joined to the thick wall. In the past, it belonged to San Juan de la Peña. At Santa Cruz de Serós, we can enjoy well-made popular architecture finished with fabulous chimneys adorned with witch-scarers. We can enjoy this and garlic toast, cured ham or fried eggs which raise anyone's spirits. In this area there is no refuge but there are country guest houses and many kind people who are accustomed to being hospitable with the pilgrims. Nevertheless, there are only a few kilometres left to reach Santa Cilia, where a friendly shelter always opens its doors to us.



*Well next to San Caprasio, in the background, Santa María*



## *Santa Cilia-Arrès*

To return to the Road to Santiago, we must return to the N-240, at the location of the Hotel Aragón. Going straight up, we reach Santa Cilia, a village which must also have been linked in the past to the monastery of San Juan de la Peña. Today, hang-gliders and light aircraft adorn the sky, based at the airfield of this locality which carries the name of the patron saint of musicians, Santa Cecilia, Cilia in Aragonese. It is a perfect square of streets in which the bridge over the Aragon River stands out, where toll was charged to the shepherds of the migratory flocks and the parish church of San Salvador which was built in the 18th century over a previous structure. Its square tower rises above five buildings connected by an inner patio which make up the palace-priory of Santa Cecilia. Here lived monks who operated a mill and received tithes and income from the possessions that the monastery of San Juan de la Peña had in the Bergún Canal. This 15th-century palace boasts details such as its large portal with the coat-of-arms of San Juan de la Peña, a beautiful Gothic geminate window or an original chimney which resembles a face.



*Sunset from the banks of the Aragón, Santa Cilia*

Dwellings with a medieval atmosphere and interesting façades compete in beauty with simple cobblestone houses adorned with balconies and flowered windows which invite to a pleasant walk. The smell of the bakery attracts hungry stomachs who succumb to the pleasure of tasting delicious bread, cake or homemade cupcakes. Such foods can be washed down with cool water from the fountain or stopping off at a bar. The shelter awaits, always ready with its reception and the dormitory zone. On the upper floor, there is a large hall with an enormous game board for the game known as la oca (the goose) on the wall and a pigeonhole where the visitors can express their feelings. Some affirm that the

game of the goose is the symbolic, encrypted guide of the Road to Santiago.

Maite, the innkeeper, devotes her life to serving those who pass through; she feels proud when someone says she has treated them better than their own mother. The youngest person to ever lodge at the shelter was a charming 6-month-old German baby. There are those who come on foot, others by horse or on donkey, and all with the desire to talk after walking in silence. Maite has the support of all the neighbours united by the same virtue: hospitality.



*Messages from pilgrims*

About ten kilometres separate Santa Cilia from Arrés. In terms of time, somewhat less than three hours. In 2009, recovery began of a stretch of historical stone road which is almost intact, with side walls up the river, to eliminate the asphalt up to Puente la Reina de Jaca. Until it is ready, we must continue toward Pamplona on the right, over a livestock trail

alongside a well-travelled road. In these cases, the best thing to do is concentrate on the journey to the interior to avoid the worldly noise. Either do this, or keep ourselves busy observing the vultures that fly over the rubbish tips, the little birds that, at a much lower altitude, give us their cheerful songs or the fragile butterflies. All this without taking our eyes off of the yellow arrows which indicate the route, painted by the friends of the Road to Santiago on tree trunks, rocks or directly on the ground.

Before reaching the camp site, we cross a bridge to the left of the road and a narrow walkway a kilometre and a half long. Again, we cross to the right to plunge into a pleasant forest where the pilgrim enjoys the shade, the clean air and the landscapes which nature shows him. The traveller has the opportunity to leave a record of his passing through. Stone on stone, spontaneously, the walkers have built lovely sculptural mounds which defy gravity



*Llano de los Mojones, Puente la Reina*

and the children who occasionally pass by. It is the testimony that the road is forged step by step.

After this pretty stretch between bushes, we can see a great arched bridge over the Aragón River which gives its name to the locality of Puente la Reina de Jaca. To continue to Arrés, we must take a turnoff before we cross the bridge. Be careful for the trucks. You only have to go into Puente la Reina if you want to enjoy the services it provides or enter the valley of Echo to see the monastery of Siresa. This changes plans because it involves an excursion of around thirty kilometres only to get there. It is hoped that a lovely branch which will reach the monastery of Leyre will be recovered.

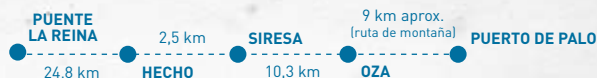


*Puente la Reina*

Astorito, today Puente la Reina, was an important medieval villa which, like Bailo and Jaca, served as an occasional residence for the itinerant court of the 11th century. Next to the modern bridge there are remains of another medieval bridge that was built over a roman bridge when the Royal Aragonese family promoted the repair and creation of roads and infrastructures. Travellers, pack animals and livestock had to pay the bridge toll, a toll that was charged on the bridges to those who crossed them. The queen to whom the name of this village refers to must have been Felicia de Roucy, the second wife of Sancho Ramírez. Her dowry included the royal silks of Bailo and Astorito with its valuable bridge. It is the ideal place to restore energy in one of its taverns. It is not known what the exact location of Astorito was but it is believed that it was abandoned in the 15th century. In the 20th century, the current Puente la Reina was made which continues to be a place of encounter and crossroads. In the past, pilgrims converged here that came from Jaca, Siresa and Zaragoza-Bailo. Today, it continues to be an intersection of the roads of Jaca-Pamplona, the one that goes to Ayerbe and the one that goes to the valleys that are further to the west in the Pyrenees, the greenest and coolest. The waters of the Aragón Subordán come from there, mixing with those from the Aragón at Puente la Reina.

# Recommended excursion

\*RECOMMENDED EXCURSION ON FOOT OR BY CAR



## The cool valley of Echo and Siresa



*Boca del Infierno, Entrance to the Selva de Oza*

In Puente la Reina de Jaca, a road begins that goes over the valley of Echo, following the route of the waters of the Aragón Subordán. Javierregay meets the visitor, then Embún and ahead remain the authenticity of Aragües del Puerto, Jasa, Urdués, Echo, Ansó, and Siresa.

These are cobbled villages with sturdy architecture and noble folk. Its residents are devoted to traditional work, heirs of a history and customs of places where nature

commands and man obeys. And this has been the case since prehistoric peoples built megalithic monuments such as the more than two hundred circles of stones occupying the Corona de los Muertos (Crown of the Dead), in the Selva de Oza. The pine and fir woods visited by species such as the wall creeper, the rock ptarmigan, the ermine or birds of prey such as the northern goshawk and the Eurasian sparrowhawk. Perfect to become one with nature, the cross-country ski pistes of Lizara can also be climbed on ice. More adventure in Linza and Gabardito or practicing cross-country skiing through the Bozo, the Foratón or the brilliant Bisaurín with its 2,688-metres. On the high plain of the Llano de Lizara, the Osia River becomes the Chorrota waterfall and it cuts through a land of prehistoric discovery. Paths lead through the valley of Los Sarrios to the lakes of Cantal and the glacial lake of Estanés.

The stone is a pleasure to view in the city centre of Echo and the surrounding area. Formidable façades with numerous and varied

details offer large balconies with unforgettable views. The castle of Acher is a capricious geological formation which resembles a fortress surrounded by rocky walls upon sides with a bright red colour. The locals still speak cheso and reproduce their music, dance and costumes of the past. The same is the case in Ansó where up until a few years ago some still wore the traditional costume regularly. The last Sunday of August the Exaltation of the Ansoano Costume is celebrated. As typical as the red roof tiles crowned by chamineras, chimneys that reach heights of four metres in defiance of the law of gravity.



*City centre of Echo*

The Peña Forca is the setting for Siresa where the monastery of San Pedro stands patiently. A place where pilgrims are treated exquisitely, as Saint Eulogio said in the year 848. The church which is preserved was built in the 11th century and was reformed two centuries later. Behind these solid walls there came to live one hundred and fifty monks guided by charity, humility and magnanimity. The fame of its library spread across frontiers. In this abbey, Alfonso I el Batallador was baptized and educated. During the visit, it is recommended to observe the Latin cross plan, its semicircular and domed apse and the cross in three sections. So austere is this national monument that its only decoration is reduced to a bevelled cord and blind arcade. Inside, there are interesting altarpieces from the 15th century and a exquisite crucified Christ from the 18th century.



*Young Ansoana*

The legend says that the Holy Grail also passed through San Pedro de Siresa. The sight of the monastery illuminated at night with the stars creeping across the sky is moving.



*Liquid Spectacle at Agua Tuerta*

The landscape from any point is incomparable. The narrow, dark Boca del Infierno is paradise for the lovers of risk. The Selva de Oza cheerfully shows its firs and beeches which, in Guarrinza, give all the protagonism to the ravine of Acherito which descends from the impressive glacial lake. Following the road, we reach Aguas Tiertas, which boasts a dolmen and the source of the winding Aragón Subordán, on the north face of the sierra Bernera. The water forms capricious meanders, as though it doesn't want to leave. All this beauty belongs to the Valles de la Jacetania Natural Park.

These lands were of key importance in the formation of the Kingdom of Aragon; moreover, they became the most important passage through the Pyrenees until the end of the 10th century. The pilgrims crossed the Puerto de Palo (Palo Pass) at 1,940 metres elevation, following the Roman way that connected the French Bearn with Zaragoza. They crossed the valley and, in Puente la Reina de Jaca, turned to continue toward Navarran territory.



## *Destination Arrés*

Going back, prior to the side trip through the valley of Echo, the steps had stopped at the entrance to Puente la Reina. Without crossing the bridge, we go on straight down the Huesca road, the N-240, and at 400 metres' distance, take a turnoff to the



*Innkeepers in Arrés, volunteers*

right to continue toward Arrés for three hard and uncomfortable kilometres. There remains less than one hour of walking down a path that is authentic, solitary and with a few shadows which draw capricious figures on the arid ground. On sunny days, this part of the route requires us to drink large amounts of water and to be well protected.

Arrés was a royal villa and belonged to the dowry of the queen Emesinda. Standing upon a rocky crest of mount Cerbero from the remains of the castle we can observe the Bailés and the



*Puerto de Palo*

Berdún Canal. The views impress newcomers. Next to the castle, in the 16th century, the parish church of Santa Águeda was built and the fortification was rebuilt using late Gothic models. On the edge of the Road to Santiago, a flour mill was installed and the monastery of Santa Columba in the 10th century. Some residents performed the duties of monks; peasants served pilgrims and the needy. In the 11th century, it became the property of the monastery of Leyre and it was transformed into a small lodging centre for travellers.

Today, the shelter, behind its sturdy stone façade, encloses a warm and friendly interior which invites the visitor to rest and relaxed conversation. It opened its doors thanks to the help of volunteers who worked on the rehabilitation of the old masters' house, loaned by the city council of Bailo. It is run in the winter by the personnel of the inn and from May through October, by volunteers from different points of Europe committed to the Road to Santiago. With no timetable, with homemade meals in the inn available at any time, this inn operates with voluntary donations thanks to the Federation of Associations of the Road.

The pilgrim in Arrés feels right at home. It is true that there are few services but this is compensated for by the hospitality and generosity of the thirty-three residents. They are devoted to agriculture, livestock farming and snow tourism and are delighted that people come to give life to the village. Arrés invites the visitor to enjoy the silence. Pure, beautiful, clean, peaceful.



*Arrés, typical Pyrenean construction*

# Stage 3

## From Arrés to Artieda. The value of small things

- Tourist Information
- Hotel
- Shelter
- Camping Site
- Rural Guest House
- Supermarket/Shop
- Bank/ATM - Cash point
- Healthcare Services
- Pharmacy
- Bar or Restaurant



Dawn in Arrés is empty and solitary, with no sign of people or birds, dogs or cats. The important thing in the world is each step and each beat of the staff. This stage is flat and without difficulty but with few shadows, very lonely and with a lot of time for thinking. The blue of the sky makes up half the landscape. At ground level, the green and ochre tones enhance the beauty of the Corona de Berdún and the Pyrenees on the horizon. Throughout the day there will be a succession of villages standing on hills with the Aragonese steppes at their base. All these towns have suffered numerous tribulations throughout their history, they have fallen and they have risen. The worst threat is the lack of population. The red kites hover over animal remains that have been scattered after the passing of a car. The peaceful and hospitable people of this area are used to watching the world pass by.

This part of the French Road through Aragón is the one that best reflects the medieval spirit of pilgrimage in spite of the fact that the route of those times was swallowed up by the waters of Yesa. From Arrés we must go down to a farm road. In the stillness the pilgrim walks through green wheat fields that turn golden in summer, the living of those who inhabit this hard land. Soon we reach a livestock farm which offers rural lodging. Before the Pyrenees, the landscape is made up of the sierras of Orba and Leyre separated by a deep cut dug at the Esca River. This mountain pass surprises us with steep slopes of up to five hundred metres elevation with boxwood, kermes oaks and tranquillity, beneath the watchful eyes of buzzards, bearded vultures, eagles and Egyptian vultures.

The road advances through the left bank of the Aragón River which flows set between lines of slender black and white poplars. On the other bank stands Berdún on a long hillock, as if to remind the traveller that he is not alone. Its strategic position makes it a natural link between the Pyrenean valleys, a point of encounter for people and customs.





*At the top of the hill, Berdún*

To the left are the mounts of Samitier, Parueta and Peña Nobla. After leaving the trail for a path to the right, small eroded hills begin to appear. Soon we cross the paved road which joins Berdún and Martes. Unmistakable, because there is a letterbox at the crossing and plans for orientation.

It is not necessary to enter Martes but whoever does so will find a charming place built in stone and tile with enchanting spots, lovely chimneys, and the Gothic church of La Asunción, at the end of the 15th century, with its slender tower, domes with star-filled crosses and a beautiful collection of altarpieces. It is called Martes (Tuesday), like the day of the week and almost like the Roman god of war or the red planet. It could not be anything else, with the reddish sunsets given to the view by the Berdún Canal, a wide valley coloured with the gray of the loamy materials, at times so eroded that they form typical ditches in the zone known as carcavas. In this area, corrals and calving, farrowing and lambing pens as a refuge for the pilgrim who has the opportunity to touch the popular architecture with his own hands.



*Pozo en Martes*

Before him there opens a straight dirt road which runs along a long plain decorated with fields of grain. It appears to be a lunar landscape. There comes a moment when the meseta ends and the route descends to a water course to cross the ravine of Sobresechos over a footbridge, with a flow of water even in summer. Right at

the end, the province of Huesca ends and the province of Zaragoza begins. Erosion has transformed the terrain. There are more hills and ravines such as that of Calcones that the pilgrim had to wade across until the footbridge was installed. The original track is kept practically intact at the back of the San Martín farm where they are delighted to give help and conversation to all who need it. Soon we reach Mianos, another pretty village set upon a hill. Alfonso II ordered it rebuilt on this hill in 1170 after the war destroyed a previous Mianos. At the very top a fortified enclosure was built which, with time, gave its space to a palace and to the church of Santa Ana of medieval origin, enlarged in the 16th century. Outside the chapel of Our Lady of the Arch guards as a treasure the 16th-century altarpiece devoted to San Sebastián. As is the case with many in the zone, at some time, the parish church belonged to the priory of San Juan de la Peña. Under it, on the hillside, the houses were terraced. Next to the road, the ruins of the inn of Mianos which served travellers in the 18th century. Today there are no services for the traveller but the local residents are friendly and hospitable.



*Barranco de Calcones*

The pilgrim passes Mianos, advances on the left of the river with the water of the reservoir of Yesa and the sierra of Leyre on the horizon. A bit further ahead he reaches the crossing with the road which leads to Artieda. At this point there is an informative sign. As soon as the curve is passed on the left in light ascent a road that is not well marked is taken, coming to Artieda. In the medieval era, this town was located further below, on the river bank, with the church and the houses distributed along the Camino Real, as the local residents call the Compostelano Road in this area. They have always lived in relation to it because it gives them life. People are life and the pilgrims who pass through are life. It was a royal villa and in one of the Navarran invasions, the old village was destroyed and the new one was built on a hill facing the Aragón River.



*Mianos seen from above*

From outside, Artieda is seen as a harmonious and well-cared-for place which is appealing to enter. The sensation is confirmed on walking its cobblestone streets. There is a registered population of less than one hundred, but among the population there are young people who work on the farms, in carpentry, taxi service, and two rural guest houses or in the pilgrim shelter built by the Government of Aragon, making use of the old abbey. The tower belfry of the church of San Martín, of Romanesque origin, stands out against all the other buildings; the old hospital, the bakery, the square and several hermitages. It is well worth the trouble to stop before the portal of the old palace of Los Pagos or Los Diezmos ("The Payments" or "The Tithes")



*Church of Artieda*

Inside the slender tower, an Interpretation Centre for the Road to Santiago links the natural and spiritual setting that surrounds the Jacobean route with the stages of the life of human beings. On each floor, the atmosphere, the light and the sound of a season of the year is recreated, as symbols of childhood, youth, maturity and old age. A number of sensations which invite us to think and feel. We climb the tower in the same way as we walk the Road to Santiago and as the life of a human being passes: with

immaturity, lack of knowledge and enthusiasm at the beginning and with judgement, determination and knowledge at the end. The belfry is the light-filled destination, with the best views of the Berdún Canal. Views of the great Pyrenees, the mixture of green and blue waters of the reservoir, the sierra of Leyre with its monastery and the entrance to the wild valley of Roncal bathed by the Esca, another of the tributaries of the Aragón.

These are the lands of the Alta Zaragoza, the northernmost territory of the district of Jacetania. It belongs to the province of Zaragoza. With a tradition of agriculture and livestock farming, the landscape is made up of wide fields and the abrupt passes formed by the Esca River in its descent toward the Aragón. These waters and those of the reservoir invite us to practice water activities such as fishing, sailing canoeing or canyoning. Birds such as the bittern or the bee-eater do not fail to notice the smallest detail of events in this territory. The buzzards, landing on the grain fields, are a magnificent sight to behold.



*Spiral staircase of the tower of the church of Artieda*

In Yesa, there flows a spring of thermal water in the remains of the ancient spa of Tiermas, which returns miraculously for health starting in September when the water descends from the reservoir. The charming urban centres of the villages, hermitages, churches and old noblemen's houses watch the Road to Santiago go by.

Artieda is a good place to observe how the day fades away and the sky lights up. We can spend the night at a shelter or in a rural guest house. In all cases, they have achieved the creation of a warm and friendly environment with the furnishings and details that make Pyrenean homes unique. The source of the warmth is the hospitality of the local residents.

Any sandwich made with loving care for the pilgrim is a delight to the taste buds. But we should by no means rule out discovering the typical dishes that have been served and are served all along the road in the territory of Alto Aragón. The engrudo de Jaca, which is cod or the mountain asparagus which are cooked with lamb, stewed beef, chicken a la chilindrón and beritaco, a type of sausage. Homemade chacinas, rabbit, hen or game, migas de pastor (shepherd's breadcrumbs), roast lamb, thistle, borraja and crespillos. Any homemade dessert of village bakery or the besitos, lazos, jaqueses, condes, and other marvels of the pastry of Jaca are the perfect final note. Sincere gastronomy, loving and straightforward which conquers all stomachs. We only need to wash it down with any of the rich and varied wines of the four Aragonese Designations of Origin. The day has been long but it has been worth the trouble.



*Albergue Artieda*

# Stage 4

## From Artieda to

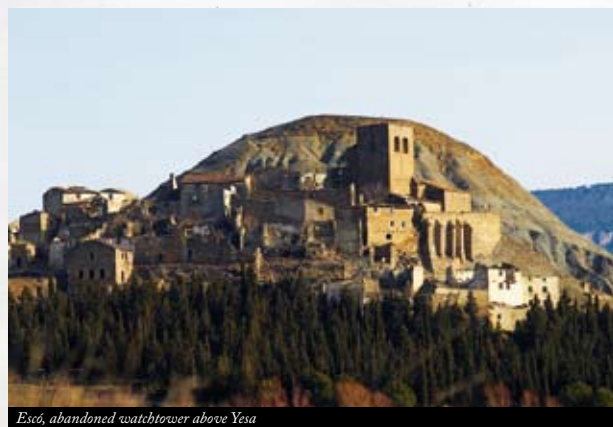
### Undués de Lerda.

#### Blue farewell

-  Tourist Information
-  Hotel
-  Shelter
-  Camping Site
-  Rural Guest House
-  Supermarket/Shop
-  Bank/ATM - Cash point
-  Healthcare Services
-  Pharmacy
-  Bar or Restaurant



Today, the pilgrim begins his last stage through Aragonese lands but he will return to family and friends to do all the recommended excursions and visits pending. Clarity envelops him while he descends to the plain to continue on the regional C-137. Having gone over the long, monotonous plain sprinkled with charming villages perched on curious hills, the wild rosebushes, daisies and other plants brighten the road which continues along the left bank of the Aragón River. From Artieda, there are ten kilometres remaining before us. The first three kilometres pass through this road on a land of gray loam of fragile consistence. Three hundred metres after passing the landmark which indicates kilometre 28, we take a turnoff through the countryside which goes through a narrow path among pine and oak woods. After again crossing the road, the route winds between the road and the Yesa reservoir.



Escó, abandoned watchtower above Yesa

Yesa quenches the thirst of the irrigation of Bardenas and the lovers of water sports but flooded cultivated lands and caused the abandonment of villages such as Ruesta, Escó and Tiermas. The latter two look out on the other side of the reservoir from two promontories, on the limit between the districts of Jacetania and Cinco Villas. At the end of the summer, the level of Yesa drops, allowing the ruins of the old village which the dam swallowed up in 1959. The historical stone bridge which was an obligatory point on the Road to Santiago, the nostalgic silhouette of the hermitage of the Pilar and its adjoining necropolis. Tiermas was an important villa founded by Pedro II in 1201. A short distance from the Navarran border, it fulfilled its defensive mission and obtained benefits from the kings. Every September, the spa of Tiermas also returns. The name comes from the natural hot water

that flows from the ground at 37° C and which bathers have taken advantage of since Roman times. The pilgrims were allowed, by royal privilege, to alleviate their ailments caused by the difficulty of the road by bathing in these waters.



*Ruins of Tiernas*

Picaud, in his Codex Calixtinus, cited these "royal baths which flow hot constantly". Today the gifts of this free spa are praised for fighting rheumatism, respiratory and skin problems.

Two kilometres before arriving at Ruesta, the route goes near the monastery of San Juan de Maltray which finally pertained to San Juan de la Peña. Of the abbey founded in the 10th century, only the hermitage of San Juan remains standing. The wall paintings are preserved in the museum of the cathedral of Jaca. Then Ruesta appears by surprise crowned by the silhouette of its impressive castle ruins of which there remain two slender towers. Under it is a ravine which made this place inaccessible from the north and the west. In 1035, in the testament of Sancho III, it appears as



*Cross and apse of Ruesta*

one of the four main defensive enclaves of Aragón along with Samitier, Petilla and Loarre. Between the 11th and 13th centuries, Ruesta stood out as a city-market which offered every service to the visitor. There were four churches, two hospitals for pilgrims and an important Jewish quarter from where the castle and the bakery were administered. At the gates of the city, merchant and commercial tolls were charged. From the height of the castle, Ruesta must have been witness to the arrival of terrible invasions; today, peace reigns there and the Regal River empties into the Aragón. Little remains of the past economic splendour of the zone and the importance it acquired as a natural passage point.

In the past, the pilgrims went up to this village-fortress and lodged in the priory of Santiago, located at the exit of Ruesta. From there, they went down to a stone bridge over the Aragón, crossed to the other side and continued their journey through Tiernas. Today nothing remains of the priory or of the bridge and Ruesta invites us to imagine what it was like when it had more than one hundred inhabited houses before the farmlands were swallowed up

by the dam. A layer of abandonment buried the village and the castle that seemed impenetrable. Silence fell on this territory until, in 1988, the Ebro River Basin Authority ceded it to the union Confederación General del Trabajo for its recovery. CGT fights to recompose the shreds of this beautiful enclave and convert it into a libertarian village and a sociocultural eco-village. They want to show that it is possible to live differently, that utopia can be a reality. Little by little, it is coming back to life. Located next to the church, Casa Valentín and Casa Alifonso have become two youth and pilgrim shelters with capacity for sixty-four persons; they offer all services and are integrated in the Network of Shelters of the Road to Santiago. The route passes through the village which boasts a lovely fountain protected underneath a dome. It descends toward the blue waters of the reservoir to the Regal River which is crossed by a wood footbridge to enter the campsite. This is a large camping area set among woods and vegetation with capacity for two hundred and fifty persons, which opens in summer.

A dirt trail is the introduction to an ascent of 400 metres through the pine woods of the Peña Musera. The fountain of Santiago awaits along with giant oaks. From there we soon reach the hermitage of San Jacobo or Santiago. Apparently, it was a monastery given to the French monks of the abbey of Selva Mayor that had a guest house to serve travellers. It has two halls. The one with the chapel is narrower and ends in a straight apse; the one with the shelter is wider and a stone bench runs along the side walls. A chapel of the door shows three human figures who could well be pilgrims.



*Ruesta con el castillo en lo alto*

On the outer walls, some rocks are placed in spike form, a typical adornment of the Romans and infrequent in Romanesque. The views of the abandoned village are breathtaking.



*Regal River in Ruesta*

Ruesta is promoted as a vacation centre and attracts a good number of visitors. In addition to the cultural activities that are organized, its landscapes suggest numerous options for lovers of adventure, art and nature. A short distance away is the Navarran castle of Javier or the medieval Sos del Rey Católico and Uncastillo, in the midst of clay flatlands. In Sos, King Ferdinand the Catholic was born in the castle of Sada. With regard to Uncastillo, as its name indicates, the villa and the castle are

one. Half a dozen Romanesque churches, intricate streets and ancestral houses with an incomparable landscape explain why these surroundings are an authentic Territorial Museum. The monastery of Leyre awaits upon the sierra. The legend tells us that the abbot Virila, originally from Tiermas, was in the forest listening to the song of a nightingale when he went into ecstasy. On awakening, he went to the monastery of Leyre and discovered that three hundred years had passed.

The Aragonese foz of Biniés and very nearby, the Navarran Lumbier and Arbayún fascinate with their magic beauty. Foz comes from the terms fauce or mouth, both concepts quite descriptive. In Biniés, high limestone walls over two hundred metres high enclose a short stretch of the Veral River. Nesting on the ledges and in the hollows are griffon vultures, Egyptian vultures and



*Travelling the Road by bicycle*

bearded vultures. At ground level, trout, otters and blackbirds. The play of light has designed part of the landscape. Kermes oak, gall oak and buxaceae inhabit the sunny zones. Willows, purple willows, lindens and poplars rise up next to the river course. More suggestions throughout the zone: fishing, nautical and adventure sports, ala delta, photography routes, mycology, hiking, mountain biking and the Aragonese and Navarran Romanesque route.



*Undués de Lerda*

Undués de Lerda is the last Aragonese village where the Road to Santiago appears before continuing through Navarran lands. Tranquillity reigns in a beautiful place where some thirty persons live. The pilgrim has the privilege of entering the village walking on a stretch of the Roman way that has been intact for two thousand years. But be careful, because with rainy weather, the access is very slippery and falls can cause injuries. Within there are cobbled streets and large squares and beautiful dwellings of ashlar with adorned coats of arms. Red rock predominates in the buildings which display elegantly decorated façades and windows. Gothic construction and two 18th-century palace-residences show the

importance this locality had in the past; it controlled the border commerce between the kingdoms of Aragón and Navarre and was open to the cultural and social tendencies which entered through the Jacobean route. The city hall was installed in an austere and compact building of masonry and brick of the 15th century.



*Elevated pulpit in the church of Undués de Lerda*



*Tower of the church of Undués de Lerda*

The great church of San Martín, from the 16th century, deserves our attention; inside it is preserved an interesting 18th-century baptismal font. The old chaplaincy from the end of the 15th century, austere and simple, was renovated and operates as a shelter. It has a capacity of 104 persons; it has a restaurant, a shop with fresh products, a large dining room with fireplace, meeting halls, fields for games and access to the municipal swimming pool. Adriana, a 24-year-old Navarran girl, manages the shelter. She is used to seeing many walkers. Today she cooked lentils and stew. The pilgrim needs filling meals. Always with a smile on her face, the travellers tell her she is earning heaven. Before seeing it tonight, there is time to visit the surrounding area of Undués de Lerda. The Faola fountain boasts mineral properties. There is also a medieval snow deposit and Roman salt mines in the Salinas ravine.

Adriana helps the pilgrim to review the map. From Undués to Sangüesa there is a distance of eleven and a half kilometres. Undués is left behind for a dirt trail which descends to cross the narrow road of the Bardenas Canal. Between grain fields and hills covered with kermes oaks, a great landmark indicates the border between Aragon and Navarre. Set on a hill is the hermitage of Nuestra Señora del Socorro. The trail runs to the left of the abandoned town of Ull and soon we arrive at Sangüesa where there are automatic teller machines and all services.



*Adriana, the innkeeper of Undués de Lerda*

The adventure through Aragonese lands comes to an end. Never had I looked at the sky in that way and never had I looked so much within as on the Road to Santiago. It has been a pleasure.

## *Aragon, crossroads*

The territory of Aragon is a place of encounter for people, languages, cultures, traditions and roads. A numerous variety of these converge and diverge.

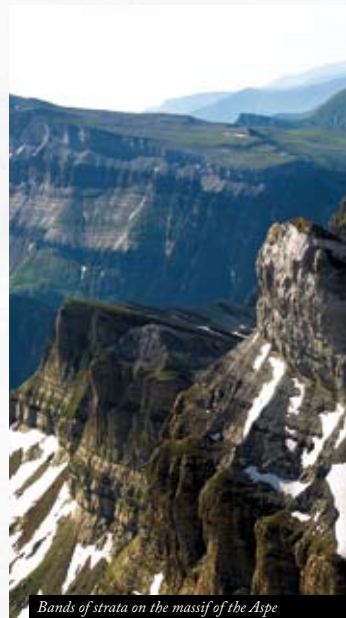
The **French Road** has protagonized a large portion of these pages. However, there are more steps through the Pyrenees and other marvellous trails which run through Aragonese lands:

- The **Catalan Road** which crosses Aragon from east to west.
- The **Jacobean Road** of the Ebro which utilizes the entire drainage basin of the river.
- The **Valencian Road** which, coming from Castellón, ascends the mountain ranges of Teruel to the valley.

## *The French Road and the steps through the Pyrenees*

The French Road is the oldest and best known. There is a main route and there are numerous branches. The first entry to Aragon through the Pyrenees was made utilizing the Roman way which crossed the Palo pass and descended through the valley of Echo where the monastery of San Pedro de Siresa was built.

Later on, the current route was developed. From the Somport pass it goes down through the valley of Aragón crossing localities which arose or grew around the road such as Canfranc, Villanúa, Castiello, Jaca or Santa Cilia.



*Bands of strata on the massif of the Aspe*



*Monastery of Obarra*

At Puente la Reina there are two options. The first is entering through the Berdún Canal and crossing several villages until reaching Undués de Lerda, the last village before entering Navarre. From here we can continue through Yesa or through Sangüesa until connecting with the route that descends from Roncesvalles to Puente la Reina de Navarra. The

second option from Puente la Reina de Jaca is to continue to Huesca, crossing next to the La Peña dam, in the shadow of the Mallos de Riglos and through Ayerbe. It is also possible to go down to the Ebro valley crossing Cinco Villas, through Romanesque churches and castles.

In addition to the main road that comes from France, there is the one that crosses the Pyrenees through the Portalet. It descends through the Tena valley to Sabiñanigo, next to the Romanesque-Mozarabic churches of Gavín, Susín, Busa and Lárrede. From there, to Jaca or to Huesca.

The Bielsa tunnel provides access to beautiful landscapes such as those of the Ordesa and Monte Perdido National Park, a short distance away from the medieval Aínsa. From here we can go through Naval and El Grado to the Torreciudad sanctuary or continue the route which crosses the Guara Sierra and Canyons Natural Park, passing by lovely Alquézar.

A last way of entry from France is the Viella tunnel, in Lérida. The road continues through the Benasque valley, sprinkled with the highest peaks on the peninsula, and descends to Graus, very near Torreciudad; or through the Ésera valley and passing through the monastery of Obarra and the abbacy of Roda de Isábena. Next to Graus, the Barasona reservoir offers numerous possibilities for tourism. In Barbastro, we find its outstanding Renaissance cathedral, the museum and other buildings which invite us to take a pleasant stroll.



*Cloister of Roda de Isábena*

## *The Catalan Road*

Each pilgrim traces his own path and the Catalan Road offers a great variety of possibilities.

1. The Catalan Road through San Juan de la Peña. It covers - before reaching Aragon - the monastery of Monserrat, Igualada, Cervera, Tárrega and Balaguer. In Aragon, it enters through Monzón, Barbastro, Huesca, Loarre, San Juan de la Peña and Santa Cilia to connect with the stretch of the French Road.

Medieval pilgrims visited it, utilizing the route of the Roman way which joined the cities of Ilerda (Lérida) and Osca (Huesca). Today it displays a mosaic of colourful landscapes with fruit trees, fields of grain, large pastures and majestic Mallos. Monzón is the head of the district of the Cinca Medio. The Templarians, as their legacy, left a magnificent walled castle. The tastes of Renaissance architecture are displayed in the palace-



*San Pedro el Viejo, Huesca*

residences of Pano and Zaporta in addition to the small palace of the Fortones, the Town Hall building and the house of Los Luzán. The Romanesque abbacy of Nuestra Señora del Romeral catches the eye with its Mudejar-style belfry tower. Monzon also boasts of the Gothic of San Juan and the baroque façade of the church of San Francisco but particularly, of the fact that the politician and thinker Joaquín Costa was born here.

In Barbastro, the Crown of Aragon originated with the union of Petronila and Ramón Berenguer IV. The cathedral of La Asunción is a 16th-century work but it displays details from the end of the Gothic period, remnants of the Aragonese Renaissance and plateresque decoration. Inside, there is an outstanding unfinished altarpiece by Damián Forment. Also found in the capital of the district of Somontano is the house of Los Argensola, two poet brothers. The Episcopal palace, the churches of San Julián and San Francisco and the baroque churches of the Scolapians, Capuchinas and Missionaries must be seen. Walks through its friendly old quarter are very pleasant, and the visit to the sanctuary of the



*Loarre Fortress*

virgin of Pueyo with paintings by Bayeu.

The wine of the Somontano Designation of Origin flows in this zone of undulating lands.

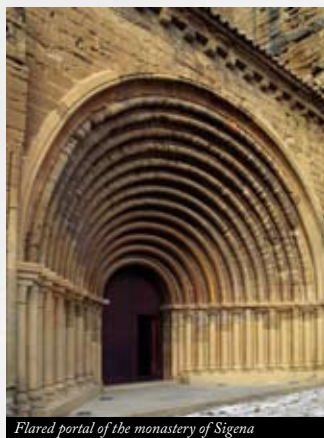
Huesca is the capital of the province, an ideal city for exploring streets, sitting in its outdoor bars and restaurants and tasting its famous pastry.

The Gothic cathedral was built on an Arab mosque and inside it is the altarpiece sculpted in alabaster by Damián Forment. Almost opposite is the city hall, a delightful Renaissance palace and, very nearby, in the University square, the Provincial Museum. In the Romanesque church of San Pedro el Viejo lay the sepulchres of Ramiro II el Monje and Alfonso I el Batallador.

From there to the spectacular San Juan de la Peña, witness of the birth of the Kingdom of Aragon and the passage of the Holy Grail. Built under a rock, the Old Monastery survived fires and freezes until the New one was built alongside, in the meadow of San Indalecio, considerably sunnier. The landscapes are incredible. Santa Cilia awaits a short distance away, with its perfect square of streets, its bridge over the Aragón River where shepherds of migratory flocks were charged toll and the parish church of San Salvador which was built in the 18th century over a previous structure. Here, the Catalan Road converges with the French Road.



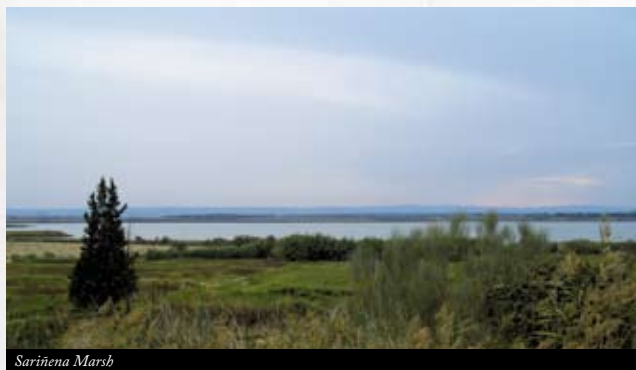
*Alabaster altarpiece of the Huesca Cathedral*



*Flared portal of the monastery of Sigüenza*

2. The Catalan Road through Zaragoza covers the same route as that of San Juan de la Peña on the stretch that runs from the monastery of Monserrat to Tárrega; it then comes to Lérida and enters Aragon through Fraga. From here Huesca can be reached by passing through Sigüenza and through Sariñena or there is also the option of returning to the valley toward Zaragoza, crossing the sierra of Alcubierre to exit through Tudela going in the direction of Logroño.

Fraga invites us to stroll through its medieval city centre full of structures with coats of arms, wooden eaves and stone portals such as the palace of the Governor and the houses of Junqueras, of the Scolapians, Foradada and of Monfort. The parish church dedicated to Saint Peter, built over a mosque in the 12th century, mixes Romanesque, Gothic, and Mudejar architecture. The old church of San Miguel awaits at the top of the Castell, where the Muslim castle was located. The tower of Los Frailes, an old Muslim fortress, was renovated in the 14th century by the Templarian knights. We go back in time in Villa Fortunatus, a building complex from the decline of the Roman Empire divided into three parts with different structures dating between the 2nd and 7th centuries.



*Sariñena Marsh*

The monastery of Sigüenza is a solemn and enormous women's monastery which was founded by Queen Doña Sancha, wife of Alfonso II. Of Romanesque-Gothic style, it was built between the 12th and 13th centuries to lodge the noble ladies of the kingdom. Burnt during the civil war, this national monument captivates the visitor at its door; impressive, Romanesque, decorated with fourteen archivolt.

Sariñena appears like an oasis in the midst of the Monegros with its spectacular marsh, where we have the pleasure of viewing its varied flora and fauna, particularly the aquatic birds.

3. There is another option which coincides with the N-11 and it involves passing through the arid steppe of Los Monegros, solitary and austere. Once in Zaragoza, the route follows the course of the Ebro River up to Tudela.

## *The Jacobean Road of the Ebro*



*The Ebro between Caspe and Chiprana*

The Jacobean Road of the Ebro utilizes the course of the river in all its versions. By water, in the Middle Ages, the rowers navigated to Santiago following the course of the river. In the passes of Tortosa, pilgrims met coming from the Mediterranean countries, crossed the Catalan Gadesa and entered Aragon where they went through Caspe and Zaragoza. Upriver, they continued to Logroño, where they connected with the French Road. For many years, this way of

pilgrimage was not used, but today, it has been recovered thanks to the promotion by institutions and friends of the road. The aquatic landscapes are beautiful. In Catalan territory, the Ebro Delta boasts a natural park, a large wet zone of more than 7,700 hectares, where dozens of bird and plant species are concentrated. On entering Aragon, Ribarroja displays the spectacle of the Aiguabarreig or mixture of water. It is a point where the Ebro, the Segre and the Cinca converge after playfully flowing for kilometres through reed beds and islets. The famous rowers of Oxford train in the Mequinenza reservoir every year, attracted by the tranquillity and qualities of the zone.

By land, the pilgrims follow the route from Tortosa to Gandesa, then Fabara, Caspe, Chiprana, Escatrón, Monasterio de Rueda, Sástago, Alborge, Alforque, Cinco Olivas, Velilla, Gelsa, Quinto, Fuentes de Ebro, El Burgo, La Cartuja Baja and Zaragoza. From here the road of the Ebro joins the Catalan Road to continue through Alagón, Cabañas, Luceni and Mallén toward Logroño, where it connects with the French Road.

The route is full of villages with an important story to tell and noble people with the desire to share. According to tradition, in Zaragoza, the Virgin appeared to Santiago next to a pillar. On that spot was built the Basilica of Nuestra Señora del Pilar (Our Lady of the Pillar), the first Marian temple of Christianity. At that moment, the apostle was accompanied by Saint Indalecio who is presented by tradition as the son of Caspe. He travelled with the apostle on his return to Palestine and, on passing through the city of the Compromise, he founded the second church of Christianity devoted to Maria.

In Caspe, the remains of the Roman mausoleum in Miralpeix are preserved, next to the Abbacy of Santa María. The Gothic castle was the official residence of the knight commanders of the order of San Juan. In its halls, in the 15th century, the king was chosen for the Crown of Aragon in the famous Compromise of Caspe. The Abbacy of Santa María la Mayor is one of the best Gothic churches in Aragon.



*Abbacy of Caspe*

The great plain of Monegros contains a group of salt marshes that is unique in Europe. The salt marsh of Chiprana is recognized as being of international importance. More than thirty hectares and paleocanals of sandstone create an irregular shape sprinkled with islets and long peninsulas. Five metres deep and salinity that is double that of the sea. In this case, the supply of underground water ensures that it never dries up. Next to it, it is relaxing to view the marsh of Las Rocas and the field of the Farol, a silted wetland covered with reeds.



*Cistercian Monastery of Rueda*

Escatrón appears through olive groves and coal. The driving force of this village has been its thermal power plant. Jaime I arrived by sailing down the Ebro and arrived at this port, Felipe IV also passed through here on his way to Catalonia. Particularly notable on the old wall is the door of the Arch of Santa Águeda; there are two lovely hermitages and the church of La Asunción. Very nearby awaits the monastery of Rueda, one of the three Cistercian monasteries of Aragon. The bank of the Ebro was the perfect place to locate it in 1202, distant from everything but dominating a large and rich territory. Of different styles and eras, the oldest buildings such as the refectory, heating, kitchen and novitiate quarters are from the 13th century. During the 16th century, there was enlargement and improvement. The Mudejar tower is from the 17th century. It was abandoned in 1835 with the disentraining of Mendizábal. Today it is restored and cosier than ever. The inn occupying the Abbatial palace invites the visitor to stay.

Concentrated in the quarries of Sástago is the greatest amount of alabaster in the world. There is much to see: the baroque church of Nuestra Señora del Pilar, the castle of La Palma, the hermitage of El Pilar and the defence tower called El Tambor due to its cylindrical shape.



*Texture of alabaster*

Alborge is a producer of oil with Designation of Origin. The church, also from the 17th century, is devoted to Saint Lorenzo. There are remains of a Muslim castle which controlled the river traffic. There is a snow deposit dug in the rock and crowned by a stone dome, remains of an Arab water wheel and an oil mill. The best views are those seen from the observation point of Tres Aguas. In the neighbouring Alforque, particularly notable is its Gothic parish church of San Pedro which became a granary after the Civil War until its multiple wounds were healed. The house of Gros or Tomé was owned by a wealthy family of the 19th century. In it pure oil was prepared in vats of glazed tile that can still be viewed. There are two basins, one devoted to the virgin of the Pillar and the other to Saint Barbara; in processions, she is asked to give rain. Cinco Olivas appears between olive trees and traditions. The church of Santiago was built with mud walls and

brick in the 17th century. The Civil War destroyed its altarpieces but a beautiful baptismal font survived in alabaster.

In Gelsa, it is a pleasure to stroll among its kind people, particularly on the Calle de los Cubiertos, where the houses on both sides of the street are joined, making one roof or cover. The parish church of San Pedro Mártir de Verona, the Moorish quarter and above all, the thousand-year-old savin, must be seen. The meaning of the name Quinto is to be found in its Roman origins. This would be the quinto miliario, five miles would separate this place from the first colony founded by Rome in the valley, Lérida Celsa.

Pina boasts its Mudejar and the parish church of Santa María. It is the old church of the Franciscan convent of San Salvador which began to be built in brick in the 16th century in Gothic style, and was finished in the 17th century with baroque nuances and was crowned with an elegant, high tower. Today, it is used for the cultural activities of the village. From the hermitage of San Gregorio, a beautiful territory is viewed, sprinkled with places such as La Retuerta de Pina, an intricate group of flat-bottomed ravines, with notably ever-green savins on their peaks and sides.

Fuentes de Ebro is a village full of life and traditions which are displayed in processions, dances and popular festivals. It is famous for its sweet onions which are not spicy or cause tears on cutting them. The streets are ordered around a central square with the late-Gothic style church with nuances of Mudejar in the tower and the palace-residence of the Counts of Fuentes, parents of Ramón Pignatelli, promoter of the Imperial Canal of Aragon.

El Burgo de Ebro is pleasant with its low houses and its 16th-century Mudejar parish church. In the sanctuary of Nuestra Señora de Zaragoza la Vieja, Roman remains have appeared. Very nearby, we find the spectacle of nature is unleashed in the Natural Reserve of Los Galachos de La Alfranca, Pastriz, La Cartuja and El Burgo de Ebro. A wet cloak of vegetable and animal life which is well worth viewing.

In La Cartuja Baja, the streets came from



*Shrine of the Virgin of the Pillar, Zaragoza*

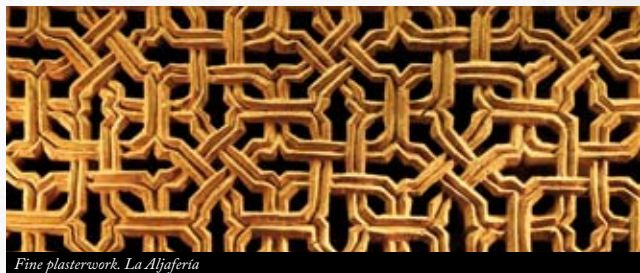
the galleries and corridors that surrounded the monastery of La Inmaculada Concepción (The Immaculate Conception) which Alonso de Funes de Villalpando founded in 1634. The quarter and the abbey where the monks lived until they were expelled in 1835 breathes peaceful harmony. The new owners rented the premises to farming colonists. Its façade is impressive; behind it, hidden from view, is a Renaissance and baroque inner patio. A church, inn, tower and sacristy, refectory, cells, sculptures and paintings signed by Francisco Bayeu preserve the essence of silence.



*Square of the Cathedrals, El Pilar and La Seo*

Zaragoza appears at a crossroads, where the Ebro, Huerva, Gállego and Imperial Canal converge. Proud of its Roman past, it exhibits what remains of the walls, the thermal baths, the river port or the Roman theatre. The Aljafería shows the times of splendour. It was built by the Arabs in the 11th century as a paradise of leisure, surrounded by gardens and irrigation channels and they filled it with artists, scientists and intellectuals. In 1118, with Alfonso I el Batallador, Christianity and the Aragonese

monarchy arrived. The story of the Seo, neighbouring structure of the other jewel, the Basilica of the Pillar, had begun. With the 16th century came the splendour, the Lonja (Market) was built, along with the church of Santa Engracia, the houses of Los Morlanes, of La Maestranza, the palaces of the Counts of Morata, Argillo, Armijo, the palace of Sástago and the Patio de la Infanta. Later came the profound urban reform of the 19th and 20th centuries and the modernization of the 21st century. To all this, we must add other churches and museums, squares such as that of Los Sitios which recalls the heroic resistance to the French or the monument to Justice, a typically Aragonese figure. More than two thousand years of history together goes a long way. So does the Jacobean Road of the Ebro.



*Fine plasterwork. La Aljafería*

## *The Valencian Road*

1. A first branch comes from Castellón and enters the Maestrazgo among sierras of wild beauty and villages with history such as Mosqueruela, La Iglesuela del Cid, Cantavieja, Mirambel, Castellote, Calanda and Alcañiz. There it bifurcates. A first route goes to Zaragoza, passing by the Iberian town of Azaila and, from there on, follows the course dictated by the Ebro River. The second goes from Alcañiz to Caspe, passes through the reservoir of Mequinenza and, from there, goes around the Monegros to reach the Aragonese capital.



*Porch and city hall of Cantavieja*

2. A second branch comes from the Ebro Delta. It enters Aragonese territory through Calaceite, goes to Alcañiz and Caspe and remounts the river to Escatrón, contemplates the monastery of Rueda and from there goes to Zaragoza.
3. The third part, from Sagunto and Valencia, and remounts the course of the Turia River to Teruel. A variation of the route turns off to Castile through the wooded sierra of Albarracín visiting beautiful places such as Bronchales and Orihuela. The other follows the course of the river Jiloca crossing Calamocha and Luco de Jiloca to Daroca. From there, it divides. A first road goes through Paniza, Cariñena, Longares, Muel and María de Huerva to Zaragoza. The second crosses Morata de Jiloca, Paracuellos and Calatayud before entering the province of Soria or continuing toward the Aragonese capital.

Aragon is a crossroads. If on paper, they look promising, with your feet on the ground, much more so. The breeze caresses, it smells of earth.

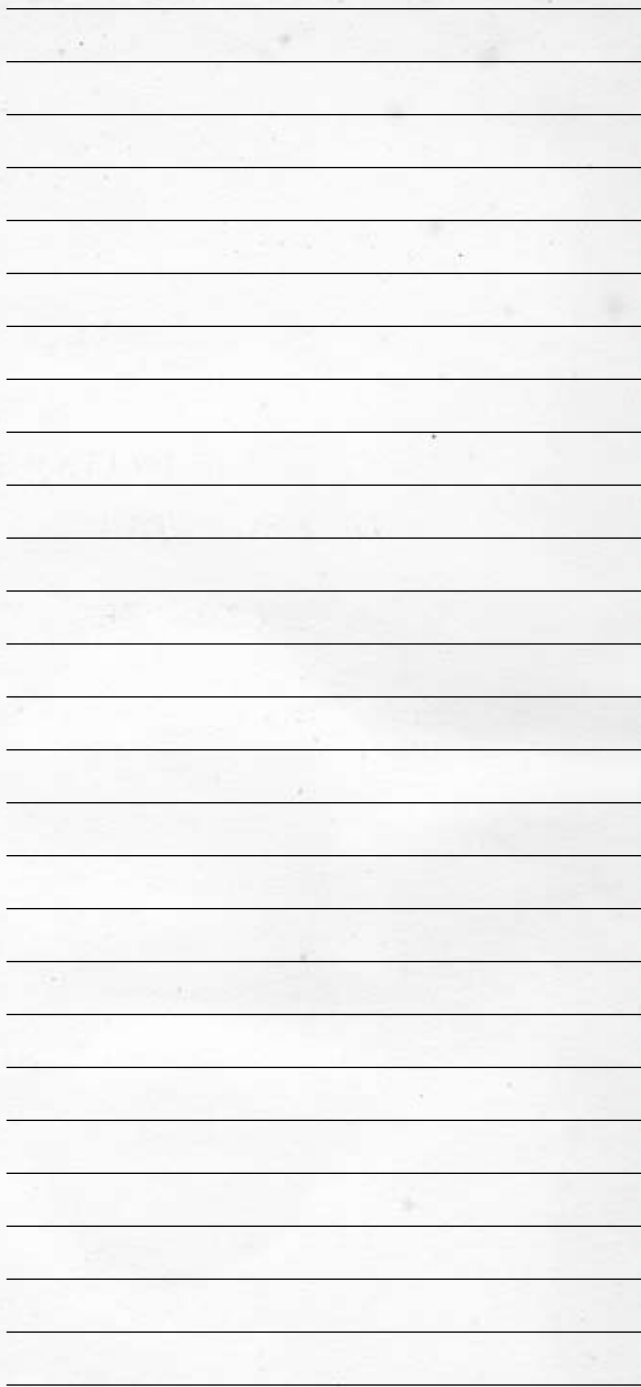
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Notes



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| STAGE | KM      | POINT                     | ELEV. | ITEMS OF INTEREST                                                                                                                                                              | TO | H | SHL. | CAM. | RGH | SHIP | AT. | HS | PH | B/R | tel | No Town/Hall.             | Address                                       | Shelter | Tel. No. Shelter |
|-------|---------|---------------------------|-------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|---|------|------|-----|------|-----|----|----|-----|-----|---------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|---------|------------------|
| 1     | 0       | Somport                   | 1650  | Border, general views, Obelisk Road                                                                                                                                            |    |   |      |      |     |      |     |    |    |     |     |                           | Albergue Aysa - Carretera de Francia          |         | 974. 373 023     |
| 1     | 1.5     | Candanchú/Astún *         | 1600  | Ski resort, mounts, surroundings                                                                                                                                               |    |   |      |      |     |      |     |    |    |     |     | 976 364 679               | Refugio Albergue Valle del Aragón             |         | 974. 373 222     |
| 1     | 7.5     | Canfranc Estación         | 1200  | Train station, Coll Ladrones, Canal Roya, Santa Cristina                                                                                                                       |    |   |      |      |     |      |     |    |    |     |     | 974 373 029               | Albergue Pepito Grillo - Fdo. El Católico 2   |         | 974. 373 123     |
| 1     | 11.8    | Canfranc pueblo           | 1160  | Torre Fusileros, Bridge Convent/Church                                                                                                                                         |    |   |      |      |     |      |     |    |    |     |     |                           | Refugio de Canfranc - Albareda, 19            |         | 974. 372 010     |
| 1     | 16.5    | Villanúa                  | 985   | Collarada, Fountain of Parco. mushrooms, Guixas Cave, Dolmens, Urban centre, Church of San Esteban, Carving of Santiago                                                        |    |   |      |      |     |      |     |    |    |     |     | 974 378 004               | Albergue Tritón -Plaza Mediodía s/n           |         | 974. 378 281     |
| 1     | 16.9    | Aruej                     | 970   | Church ruins and pardinas                                                                                                                                                      |    |   |      |      |     |      |     |    |    |     |     | Villanúa Town Hall        |                                               |         |                  |
| 1     | [desv.] | Sasabe                    |       | Church of San Adrian                                                                                                                                                           |    |   |      |      |     |      |     |    |    |     |     | Jaca Town Hall            |                                               |         |                  |
| 1     | 23.5    | Castiello de Jaca         | 920   | Church of San Miguel, Garcipollera, Old quarter, Horse riding, Sasabe, Iguacel, Horses, Calle de Santiago (Roman walk way)                                                     |    |   |      |      |     |      |     |    |    |     |     | 974 350 025               |                                               |         |                  |
| 1     | 31      | Jaca                      | 820   | Cathedral, Church of Santiago, Ciudadel, Town Hall, Festival, First Friday of May, Rapitan, Diocesan Museum, Benedictine Convent and tomb of Doña Sancha, Bridge of San Miguel |    |   |      |      |     |      |     |    |    |     |     | 974 355 758               | Albergue de peregrinos - Conde Aznar          |         | 974. 360 848     |
| STAGE | KM      | POINT                     | ELEV. | ITEMS OF INTEREST                                                                                                                                                              | TO | H | SHL. | CAM. | RGH | SHIP | AT. | HS | PH | B/R | tel | No Town/Hall.             | Address                                       | Shelter | Tel. No. Shelter |
| 2     | 0       | Jaca                      | 820   | Cathedral, Church of Santiago, Ciudadel, Town Hall, Festival, First Friday of May, Rapitan, Diocesan Museum, Benedictine Convent and tomb of Doña Sancha, Bridge of San Miguel |    |   |      |      |     |      |     |    |    |     |     | 974 355 758               | Albergue de peregrinos - Conde Aznar          |         | 974. 360 848     |
| 2     | 7       | Alarés                    | 840   | Church and wall and castle remains                                                                                                                                             |    |   |      |      |     |      |     |    |    |     |     | Jaca Town Hall            |                                               |         |                  |
| 2     | 15[det] | Santa Cruz de la Seros    | 788   | Romanesque churches, urban centre                                                                                                                                              |    |   |      |      |     |      |     |    |    |     |     | 974 361 974               |                                               |         |                  |
| 2     | 19.5    | San Juan de la Peña [det] | 1115  | Low and high Monastery, Interpretation Center, Natural Park, San Salvador                                                                                                      |    |   |      |      |     |      |     |    |    |     |     |                           |                                               |         |                  |
| 2     | 9.5     | Binacua                   | 760   | Romanesque Church                                                                                                                                                              |    |   |      |      |     |      |     |    |    |     |     | Sta Cruz de la Seros T.H. |                                               |         |                  |
| 2     | 12.5    | Santa Cilia               | 640   | Fishing, Air field, Palace-residence, Mount Cuculo, Church, Air field                                                                                                          |    |   |      |      |     |      |     |    |    |     |     | 974 377 168               | Refugio de Santa Cilia - Calle del Sol nº 8   |         | 639 853 534      |
| 2     | 18.5    | Puente la Reina           | 655   | Bridge                                                                                                                                                                         |    |   |      |      |     |      |     |    |    |     |     | 974 377 201               |                                               |         |                  |
| 2     | 23.5    | Arrés                     | 660   | Church and urban centre                                                                                                                                                        |    |   |      |      |     |      |     |    |    |     |     | 974 348 129               | El Portillo                                   |         | 974. 348 129     |
| STAGE | KM      | POINT                     | ELEV. | ITEMS OF INTEREST                                                                                                                                                              | TO | H | SHL. | CAM. | RGH | SHIP | AT. | HS | PH | B/R | tel | No Town/Hall.             | Address                                       | Shelter | Tel. No. Shelter |
| 3     | 0       | Arrés                     | 660   | Church and urban centre                                                                                                                                                        |    |   |      |      |     |      |     |    |    |     |     | 974 348 129               | El Portillo                                   |         | 974. 348 129     |
| 3     | 15.7    | Mianos                    | 615   | Santa Ana church, Romanesque carvings                                                                                                                                          |    |   |      |      |     |      |     |    |    |     |     | [Bailo T.H.]              |                                               |         |                  |
| 3     | 20.5    | Artieda                   | 555   | Church and House Hospital                                                                                                                                                      |    |   |      |      |     |      |     |    |    |     |     | 948 887 222               |                                               |         |                  |
|       |         |                           |       |                                                                                                                                                                                |    |   |      |      |     |      |     |    |    |     |     | 948 439 341               | Albergue - Calle Luis Buñuel, 10              |         | 948 439 316      |
|       |         |                           |       |                                                                                                                                                                                |    |   |      |      |     |      |     |    |    |     |     | 649 813 552               |                                               |         |                  |
| STAGE | KM      | POINT                     | ELEV. | ITEMS OF INTEREST                                                                                                                                                              | TO | H | SHL. | CAM. | RGH | SHIP | AT. | HS | PH | B/R | tel | No Town/Hall.             | Address                                       | Shelter | Tel. No. Shelter |
| 4     | 0       | Artieda                   | 555   | Church and House Hospital                                                                                                                                                      |    |   |      |      |     |      |     |    |    |     |     | 948 439 341               | Albergue - Calle Luis Buñuel, 10              |         | 948 439 316      |
|       |         |                           |       |                                                                                                                                                                                |    |   |      |      |     |      |     |    |    |     |     | 649 813 552               |                                               |         |                  |
| 4     | 6.5     | Ruesta                    | 510   | Santiago Hermitage, Castle, Nature                                                                                                                                             |    |   |      |      |     |      |     |    |    |     |     | 948 888 113               | Casa Valentin y Casa Alfonso [frente iglesia] |         | 948 398 082      |
| 4     | 23.8    | Undues de Lerda           | 665   | Church, Town Hall, Salt marshes                                                                                                                                                |    |   |      |      |     |      |     |    |    |     |     | 948 888 105               | Albergue - c/ Herrería, 1                     |         | 948 398 082      |

\*Candanchú belongs to the municipal area of Asa (Town Hall Tel. No. 974. 365 758)

**TO:** Tourist Office

**SHK:** Shelter for pilgrims

**RGH:** Rural Guest House

**SHIP:** Shop

**CAM:** Camping area

**AT:** Automatic Teller or Bank

**PH:** Pharmacy

**B/R:** Bar/Restaurant

**HS:** Healthcare service



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