

# ca mi no olvi da do

Guide



**Camino  
Olvidado  
a Santiago**

The mountain  
as witness

# ca mi no olvi da do

## The “Forgotten Route” to Santiago

When the tomb of St James the Apostle was discovered during the reign of Alfonso II of Asturias, a wave of pilgrimage began that continues to this day. Pilgrims from all over Christendom went to Compostela via different routes: first along the difficult paths of the Cantabrian coast, and then through the passes of the Cantabrian Mountains, taking advantage of the old roads established by the Romans. With the consolidation of the Kingdom of León to the south of the River Douro and the securing of the border with Moorish territory, the French Way became increasingly popular, with the other routes fading into the background.

One of those early routes is the ‘Camino Olvidado’, or ‘Forgotten Route’, a beautiful trail through the southern Cantabrian valleys. As it passes through Burgos, there are amazing forests, waterfalls and the evocative forms of the rocks shaped by water. In Palencia, there’s an outstanding group of Romanesque churches that undoubtedly gave shelter to more than a few pilgrims. León, meanwhile, boasts magnificent landscapes, a reflection of the age-old coexistence between human and environment, now recognised with the designation of several biosphere reserves. The route continues through the tranquil and untamed valleys to reach the stunning region of El Bierzo and town of Villafranca del Bierzo, the ‘village of the French’, so called due to the influx of French pilgrims following the establishment of a Cluniac monastery here in the late 11th century. Here, pilgrims unable to reach Compostela can gain indulgences at the Puerta del Perdón or ‘Door of Forgiveness’ of the Church of Santiago.

The Camino Olvidado is a uniquely beautiful route, full of sensations and experiences.

CAMINO OLVIDADO A SANTIAGO 2019

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“Camino Olvidado a Santiago” cooperation project

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Coordination and implementation:  
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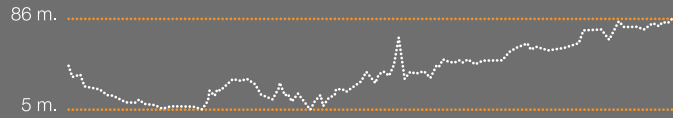
The route of the **Camino Olvidado** by section



## Bilbao – Güeñes

25,3 Km

### Stage 1



The Camino Olvidado (the Forgotten Way) begins just outside Santiago Cathedral in Bilbao. This stage starts with a beautiful walk along the river banks, passing the area of the Guggenheim as we gradually move away from the big city.

After passing Puente del Diablo (Devil's Bridge), the Camino Olvidado diverges from the Camino del Norte (Northern Way) and continues to Alonsotegui, where we are welcome to rest and enjoy some of the town's famous pinchos (canapes).

We go through Sodupe and finish this stage in Güeñes, where 'El Bosquecito' bonsai museum and the magnificent Santa María Church, with its beautiful main entrance, are well worth a visit.



Guggenheim. Bilbao

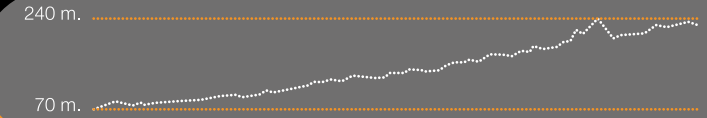


El Diablo bridge. Castrejana

## Güeñes – Nava de Ordunte

22,9 Km

### Stage 2A



A comfortable and easy stage. After a pleasant walk to Zalla, we head to Balmaseda, where we can visit La Encartada Beret Museum, Balmaseda History Museum, and the Passion Play Centre.

Also, the town has a host of historic landmarks, such as Urrutia Palace, San Severino Church, Puente Viejo or Old Bridge, also known as La Muza Bridge, and Horcasitas or Buniel Palace.

Leaving the province of Vizcaya behind us, we cross Las Oleas Bridge to enter Burgos and head to Valle de Mena after passing through El Berrón. From there, we continue on to Santecilla and take the turn-off for Nava de Ordunte (on the right), which marks the end of this stage.



Church of San Severino. Balmaseda



Landscape. Ordunte

## Güeñes - Villasana de Mena

27,5 Km

### Stage 2B

385 m.

70 m.



A comfortable and easy stage. After a pleasant walk to Zalla, we head to Balmaseda, where we can visit La Encartada Beret Museum, Balmaseda History Museum, and the Passion Play Centre. Also, the town has a host of historic landmarks, such as Urrutia Palace, San Severino Church, Puente Viejo or Old Bridge, also known as La Muza Bridge, and Horcasitas or Buniel Palace.

Leaving Vizcaya behind, we enter Burgos by Las Oleas Bridge and pass through El Berrón on the way to Valle de Mena. From there, we head to Santecilla and continue going straight (under the railroad tracks) on the path, which takes us up a beautiful hill and across a stream, under the shade of a thick forest, to the town of Menamayor. From there, we'll walk down to Villasana de Mena, our destination, an important village with all the services and a point of intersection between the Camino del Valle de Mena and Camino Olvidado, which share the same route until Bilbao.



Villasana de Mena



Route. Menamayor

## Nava de Ordunte - Espinosa de los Monteros

34,4 Km

### Stage 3A

782 m.

228 m.

After leaving Nava, we continue along the edge of the Ordunte Reservoir, and once in Alto de El Carel, we head down to Ordejón until we come upon the Taranco hermitage, in whose founding charter, according to several historians, the word 'Castile' appears written for the first time.

We continue on the Camino through Hoz de Mena on the way to Concejero, where we'll discover the two shields of the knights of Santiago and Arceo before taking the very well-preserved medieval road, Real Camino de las Enderrozcas, to the waterfalls of Hijuela.

This stage is spent listening to the sound of water rushing through the trees of a beautiful forest before we take on Alto del Cabrio. We'll pass by the century-old oak trees of Villasante and continue on to Loma de Montija and to Espinosa de los Monteros, a city with a wealth of architecture, whose palaces, defensive towers, churches, houses with coats of arms, castles, etc., are well worth a visit.



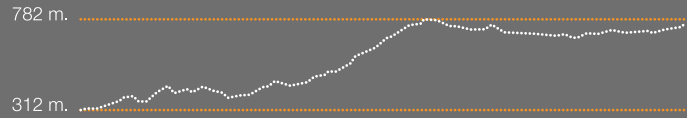
Concejero



Ordunte reservoir. Nava de Ordunte

## Villasana de Mena - Espinosa de los Monteros 28,1 Km

### Stage 3B



Waterfall. Hijuela



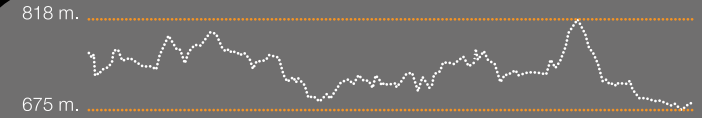
Medieval road "Real Camino de las Enderrozras"

We leave Villasana for Caniego, walking uphill through Ordejón de Mena and downhill until we come across the Taranco hermitage, in whose founding charter, according to several historians, the word 'Castile' appears written for the first time. We continue on the Camino through Hoz de Mena on the way to Concejero, where we'll discover the two shields of the knights of Santiago and Arceo, before taking the very well-conserved medieval road, Real Camino de las Enderrozras, to the waterfalls of Hijuela.

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## Espinosa de los Monteros - Santelices 24,9 Km

### Stage 4



We'll start this stage on the banks of the Trueba River, taking the Sonsierra trail to the Ojo Guareña Natural Monument Area. In Quintanilla de Rebollar, a town that has conserved the traditional architecture typical of northern Burgos, we find the Casa del Parque de Ojo Guareña information centre. Continuing on the Camino, we'll arrive at the town of Quisicedo, whose church is dedicated to Santiago (St. James).

From Quisicedo, the Camino takes us along the Senda del Valle to Villabáscones, where we can't miss the necropolis of anthropomorphic tombs carved out of the rock, which were probably constructed by the earliest settlers of the area.

We enter the village of Entrambosríos, where the Camino splits into two directions: one takes us to La Engaña Tunnel and the other, a shorter route, takes us directly to Santelices on a trail through a thick forest.



Anthropomorphic tombs. Villabáscones

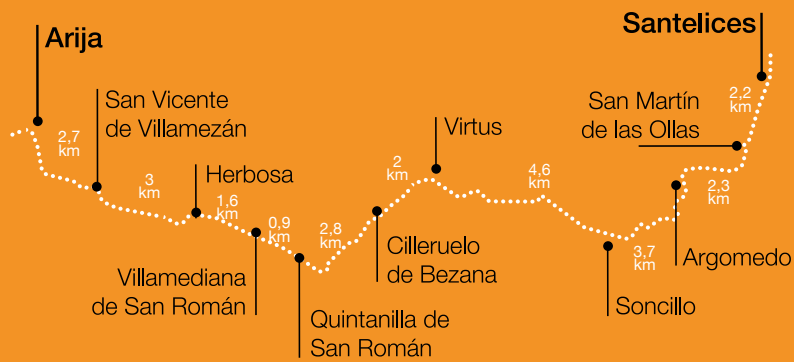


Square. Espinosa de los Monteros

## Santelices – Arija

25,8 Km

### Stage 5



We start this stage by crossing the Engaña River along a viaduct, an old, unfinished railroad track that has been converted into a natural path.

Continuing to San Martín de las Ollas, we continue to climb steadily until we come upon a curious stone bridge. We keep climbing until we reach Argomedo and then Soncillo, a town with a variety of rest services.

The Camino continues, now more relaxed, through different towns until we reach Arija, where we can enjoy the natural fine sand beaches of the Ebro Reservoir, which divides this town into two neighbourhoods, the Upper or Old District and the Lower District, known as Barrio de Vilga.



Viaduct. Valdeporres



Beaches. Arija

## Arija – Olea

31 Km

### Stage 6



The Camino snakes around the Ebro Reservoir, an opportunity to enjoy the beautiful reflections on its waters. Upon leaving that area, we'll come across a sign welcoming us to Cantabria.

We pass through Bimón, the first village on the Cantabrian itinerary, and enter a mountainous area. We continue through a forest of oak trees on the way to Villafria and then Retortillo. The ruins of the Roman settlement of Juliobriga are an indelible reminder of history, and its performance centre, which recreates life in one of the villas of the ancient city, is well worth a visit. The Camino continues uphill through a beautiful beech forest. On the way down, after passing the railroad, we reach Cervatos and its magnificent Collegiate Church of San Pedro, an erotic Romanesque jewel. In Cervatos, the Camino Olvidado intersects with the Camino de la Calzada, which arrives from Suances in the North.

After taking the overpass across the highway, we begin our final ascent. When we reach the summit, our route continues in the direction of Olea, the end of this stage.



Railway bridge. Arija



Roman settlement of Julióbriga. Retortillo

## Olea – Aguilar de Campoo

24,3 Km

### Stage 7



Leaving Olea, the route takes us past Santa Eulalia Church and through a fresh meadow. After passing a spectacular Roman bridge on the road between Pisoraca and Portus Bleium, we'll reach Casasola and enjoy the view of the standing stones, known as 'La Matorra I and II', in the distance. We'll head to Las Henestrosas after passing through Quintanilla and Quintana.

The Camino follows a dirt road through multi-coloured fields with a variety of green tones, and each one seems brighter than the next. Cuenca is the last Cantabrian village on our route. We enter Nestar, in Palencia, by crossing a Roman bridge known as Puenteperdiz, and follow the trails and a stretch of highway to Grijera. Then the Camino takes us down a dirt road to Aguilar de Campoo, a beautiful villa with an impressive castle, la Colegiata, with seven doors. It's worth getting lost in the streets of this beautiful monumental city, where the Camino Olvidado diverges from the Camino de La Calzada, which continues south to Carrión de los Condes.



Roman bridge. Nestar

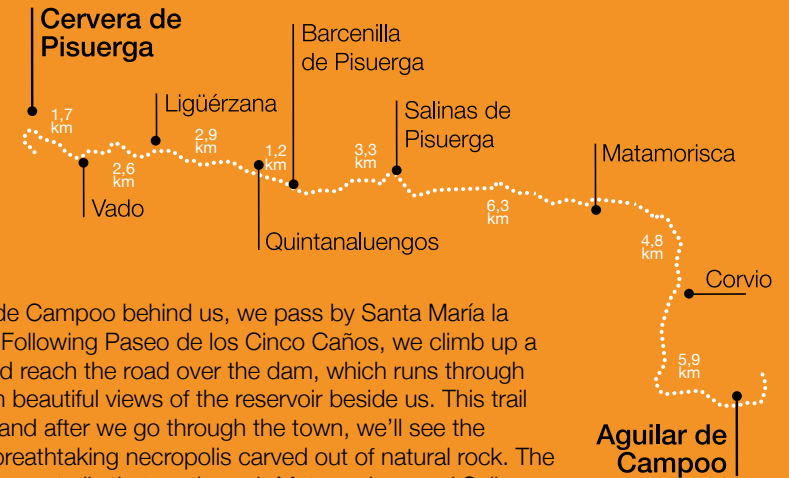
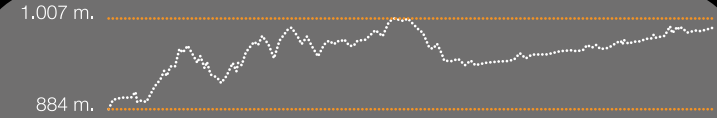


Church of Sta. M<sup>a</sup> la Real  
Las Henestrosas de las Quintanillas

## Aguilar de Campoo – Cervera de Pisuerga

28,7 Km

### Stage 8



Leaving Aguilar de Campoo behind us, we pass by Santa María la Real Monastery. Following Paseo de los Cinco Caños, we climb up a stepped path and reach the road over the dam, which runs through a pine forest with beautiful views of the reservoir beside us. This trail leads to Corvio, and after we go through the town, we'll see the impressive and breathtaking necropolis carved out of natural rock. The Camino continues on trails that go through Matamorisca and Salinas de Pisuerga. From that point, along the right bank of the Pisuerga River, a pleasant road takes us to Barcenilla de Pisuerga. After passing through Quintanaluengos and Ligüérezana, we arrive in Vado.

On the way to Cervera de Pisuerga, we'll go by the hermitage of San Vicente, also known as Cueva de los Moros. The village of Cervera de Pisuerga is majestically beautiful. We can visit its emblazoned palaces, manor houses, two ethnographic museums, La Cruz hermitage and Castillo Church.

This is where pilgrims travelling from the south to venerate the 'Lignum Crucis' at Santo Toribio de Liébana cross the Camino Olvidado.



Medieval bridge. Salinas de Pisuerga



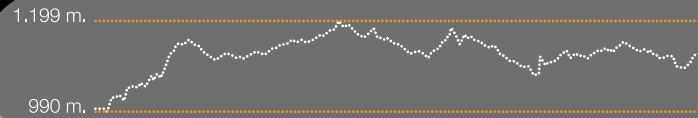
Necropolis. Corvio



## Cervera de Pisuerga – Guardo

39,3 Km

### Stage 9



Pico El Fraile. Santibáñez de la Peña



Baptismal font at the Church of San Juan. Guardo

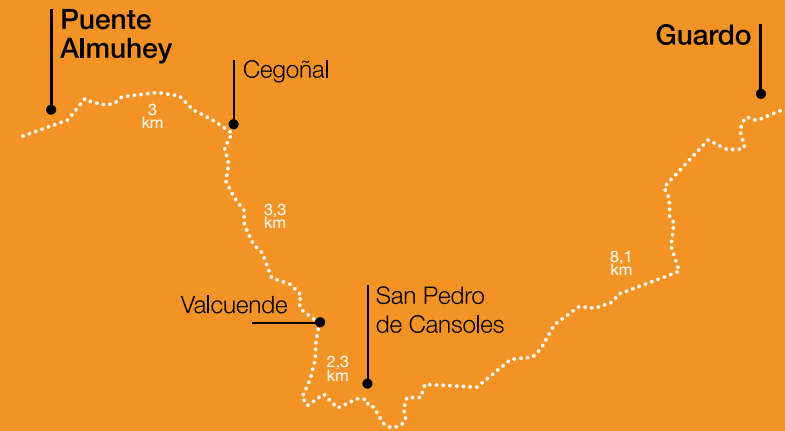
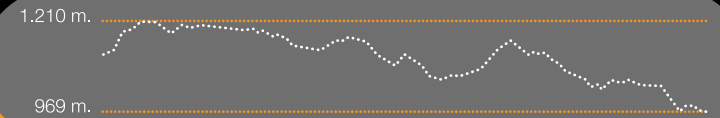
From Cervera de Pisuerga, an oak-lined path takes us to Tosande Valley. There, the Tejada de Tosande Forest is home to some hundred-year-old yew trees. Crossing this valley, we continue toward Cantoral de la Peña. We go through Cubillo de Castrejón and arrive at Traspaña de la Peña, which receives us with its slender cross landmark. From there, we head to Villanueva de la Peña and continue to Tarilonte de la Peña.

After crossing the train tracks once again, we'll reach Aviñante de la Peña and continue on to Santibáñez de la Peña, passing San Román de Entrepeñas on the way. After going through Las Heras de la Peña, we reach Villanueva de Arriba and then Muñeca, the town just before village of Guardo, where we can discover the Romanesque baptismal font of San Juan Church and the baroque Casa Grande. Guardo offers all the necessary services for rest and recreation.

## Guardo - Puente Almuhey por San Pedro de Cansoles

16,7 Km

### Stage 10A



Oak grove. Cegoñal



Route between Cegoñal and Puente Almuhey

From Guardo, we'll climb to the Cristo del Amparo hermitage and follow trails and comfortable firebreaks through pine forests, oak groves and meadows until we reach San Pedro Cansoles.

Following the Cañada Real Leonesa Oriental nature route, we enter the province of León and head to the town of Valcuende. From there, after a short stretch on the highway, we return to trails and paths through oak groves and pastures until we reach Cegoñal. There, a beautiful forest trail leads us to Puente Almuhey, where, according to the Catastro of Ensenada census, there was once a hospital for pilgrims in a place known as Puente de Muhey.

We can visit the Romanesque hermitage of Nuestra Sra. De las Angustias (Our Lady of Sorrows), where we discover the Cross of the Order of Knights of the Hospital of Saint John of Jerusalem and a medieval bridge.

## Guardo - Puente Almuhey por Velilla del Río Carrión

31,7 Km

### Stage 10B

1.584 m.

979 m.

We leave Guardo and head to Velilla del Río Carrión, where we can admire the Tamaric Fountains. This trail takes us through a vast forest of beech and oak trees to the summit of Collado de Torales, which separates Palencia from León.

The path slopes gently downhill on the way to Caminayo. We continue our Camino to Morgovejo, La Sota and Valderrueda, crossing the Cea River to enter Puente Almuhey, where, according to the Catastro of Ensenada census, there was once a hospital for pilgrims in a place known as Puente de Muhey.

We can visit the Romanesque hermitage of Nuestra Sra. De las Angustias (Our Lady of Sorrows), where we discover the Cross of the Order of Knights of the Hospital of Saint John of Jerusalem and a medieval bridge.



Fuentes Tamarici. Velilla del Río Carrión



Reredos. Chapel of Las Angustias. Puente Almuhey

## Puente Almuhey - Cistierna

21,2 Km

### Stage 11

1.319 m.

956 m.



From Puente Almuhey, a beautiful stage awaits the pilgrim. We follow the Tuérjar River upstream to San Martín de Valdetuérjar, whose 12th century church tells a story with its curious representations of mermaids. According to the old legend, St. William, or San Guillermo, turned two pilgrim women into mermaids as a punishment for having seduced some monks.

A few kilometres away, nestled in the spectacular landscape, the Santuario de Nuestra Señora de la Velilla (Shrine of Our Lady of Velilla) invites us to enjoy a moment of calm. The Camino continues uphill through a grove of ancient oak trees, becoming a narrow path in the foothills of the Peñacorada Mountains.

Following the trail of the Roman legions, the route avoids the mountain pass and winds through a grove of pine trees restored by reforestation, continuing downhill towards Cistierna.



Shrine of the Virgen de la Velilla. La Mata de Monteagudo



Route of the Legions. Cistierna

## Cistierna – Boñar por Yugueros

27,7 Km

### Stage 12A

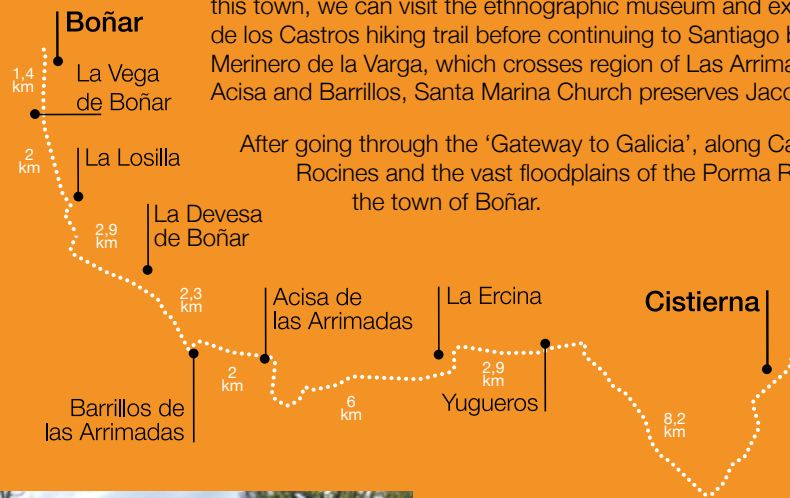
1.182 m.

868 m.

The Camino leaves Cistierna, passing by the Cruz del Molino landmark, and continues across the Esla River by way of Mercadillo Bridge. It intersects here with another Jacobean route, the Camino Vadiniense (the Vadinian Way), named after the pre-Roman settlers of these mountains, which links to the Santo Toribio de Liébana Monastery, where the relic of the True Cross is kept.

But the Camino Olvidado continues to the west, taking us uphill through an oak grove towards Yugueros, whose Iglesia del Salvador (Church of the Saviour) is well worth a visit before we continue on to La Ercina. In this town, we can visit the ethnographic museum and explore the Ruta de los Castros hiking trail before continuing to Santiago by way of Cordel Merinero de la Varga, which crosses region of Las Arrimadas. Between Acisa and Barrillos, Santa Marina Church preserves Jacobean evidence.

After going through the 'Gateway to Galicia', along Camino de los Rocines and the vast floodplains of the Porma River, we enter the town of Boñar.



Route. Yugueros



El Mercadillo bridge. Cistierna

## Cistierna – Boñar por San Pedro de Foncollada

30,3 Km

### Stage 12B

1.182 m.

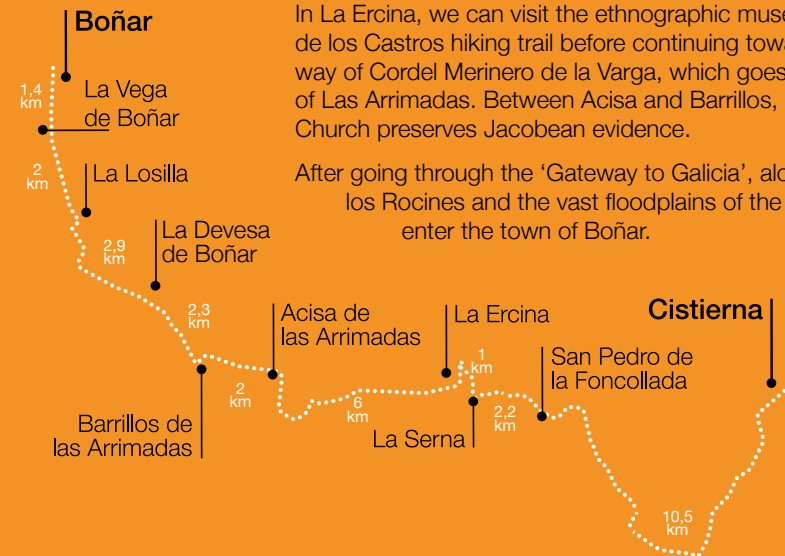
915 m.

We take Mercadillo Bridge across the Esla River near the Cruz del Molino landmark and the old Shrine of San Bernabé, continuing towards Modino until we reach a junction on our right, which takes us to the San Pelayo hermitage.

The Camino continues uphill, through forests of pine, holm oak and oak trees to San Pedro de Foncollada, where pilgrims once found refuge in a monastery that has since disappeared.

In La Ercina, we can visit the ethnographic museum and the Ruta de los Castros hiking trail before continuing towards Santiago by way of Cordel Merinero de la Varga, which goes across the region of Las Arrimadas. Between Acisa and Barrillos, Santa Marina Church preserves Jacobean evidence.

After going through the 'Gateway to Galicia', along Camino de los Rocines and the vast floodplains of the Porma River, we enter the town of Boñar.



Church of Santa Marina  
Acisa – Barrillos de las Arrimadas

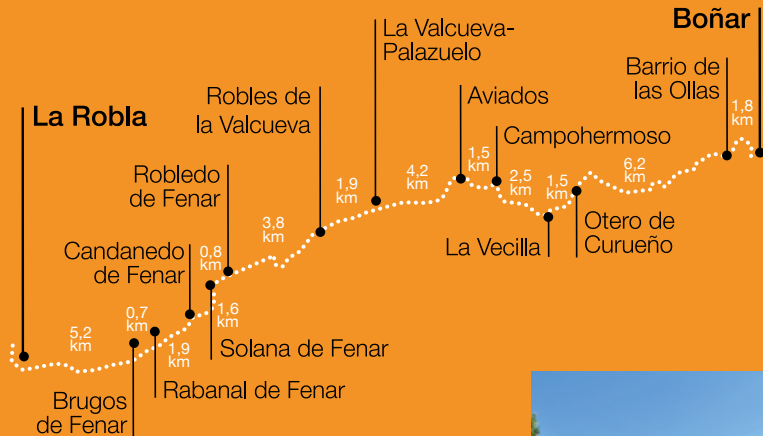
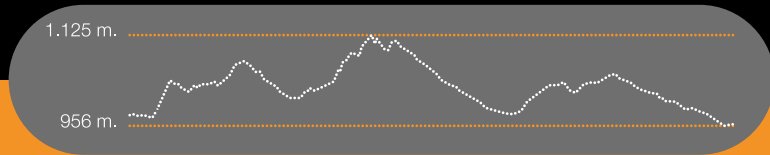


El Negrillón square. Boñar

## Boñar - La Robla

33,6 Km

### Stage 13A



Departing from Boñar, the Camino takes us across the Old Bridge, or Puente Viejo, located near the pilgrims' hospital. This stage has two versions, and in this case, the route goes to La Robla, levelling out across the floodplains of some of León's most famous trout-fishing rivers: the Porma, Curueño, Torío and, at the end of the day, in La Robla, the Bernesga.

The route offers spectacular landscape, old roads, some towers and castles and remote villages with beautiful bell towers and manor houses. Here and there, we find evidence of mining activity, as it snakes through one of the regions that, from the late 19th century, supplied coal to the incipient Basque steel industry.

In La Robla, the Camino Olvidado merges with the Camino de San Salvador, a busy medieval route between León and Oviedo travelled by pilgrims to venerate the precious relics of the Holy Chamber in the Cathedral of Oviedo before continuing on to Compostela.



Torreón. La Vecilla

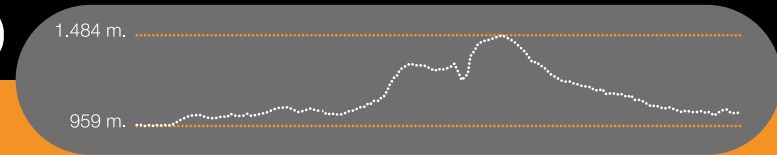


Ermita de Boinas. Robles de la Valcueva

## Boñar - Vegacervera

27,3 Km

### Stage 13B



Departing from Boñar, the Camino takes us across the Old Bridge, or Puente Viejo, located near the pilgrims' hospital. In this version, the stage is more mountainous and runs to Vegacervera.

After taking the Roman bridge across the Curueño River to Valdepiélago, we follow a Roman road uphill into the heart of the mountain. From there, we can see the Valdorria hermitage amid the rocks and the town beside it, under the shadow of Valdorria Peak.

We proceed towards the foot of Peña Galicia Mountain, and as we continue to descend, the town of Correcillas finally appears. We go downhill to Villalfeide, with its medieval bridge and its Romanesque church, which will take us to Vegacervera in the heart of Los Argüellos Biosphere Reserve, with its impressive gorges and delicious cuisine. Here, we can stop and visit the famous Valporquero Cave.



Roman road. Valdorria

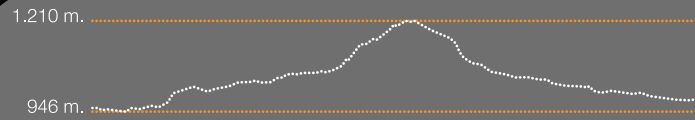


Medieval bridge. Villalfeide

## La Robla – La Magdalena

16 Km

### Stage 14A



La Robla



Route. Carrocera

Continuing to the west, we leave La Robla behind us, taking the overpass across the N-630 in the direction of Llanos de Alba. Soon, among outcrops of grey limestone, the characteristic Pyrenean oak groves so typical of these areas appear, announcing that the Cantabrian peaks are near.

On a moderate uphill stretch, we pass the villages of Sorribos, with its emblazoned house, and Olleros, both part of Alba, the medieval territory to which they were assigned.

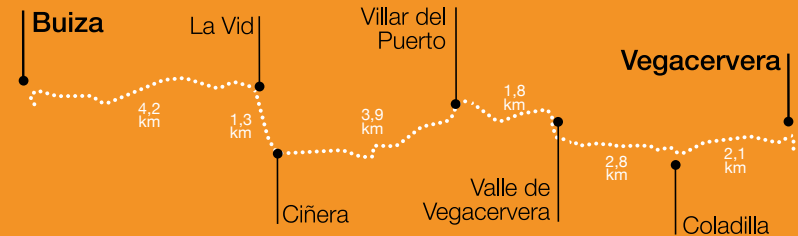
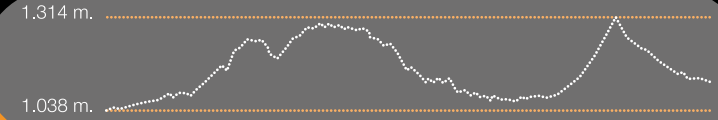
After reaching the peak of the hill on our way to the Luna River Valley, we follow a trail to the towns of Carrocera and Santiago de las Villas and continue along a comfortable path to Otero de las Dueñas, whose name refers to the lost Cistercian female monastery of Santa María.

The end of the stage, La Magdalena, is only 2.5 km away.

## Vegacervera – Buiza

16,1 Km

### Stage 14B



El Faedo. Ciñera de Gordón



Square. Vegacervera

From Vegacervera, the Camino begins with a steady climb to Coladilla. At the entrance of the village, the shells adorning the arch of the door on Santa Engracia Church evoke its Jacobean tradition. As we continue to gain altitude, we leave Valle de Vegacervera and Villar del Puerto behind us. Then we begin a steep descent that takes us through Hoces de Villar, with its colourful pots, and El Faedo Forest, a magical forest of hundred-year-old beech trees, to Ciñera de Gordón, now in the Bernesga Valley.

Our route continues to La Vid, guarded by its watchtower, and goes uphill once again to the Buiza pass, among beech and oak groves. The stage ends in Buiza, with its emblazoned houses and the old San Antón (St. Anton) hospital for pilgrims.

In Buiza, the Camino Olvidado merges with the Camino de San Salvador, the transited medieval route taken by pilgrims from León to Oviedo to venerate the precious relics of the Holy Chamber in the Cathedral of Oviedo before continuing on to Compostela.

## Buiza – La Magdalena

27,6 Km

### Stage 15B

1.671 m.

978 m.

Winding along the Folledo River and downstream, near the Casares, the Camino leaves Beberino behind and continues to La Pola de Gordón; the waters in its vicinity flow into the Bernesga River. This stage cuts through the Biosphere Reserve of Alto Bernesga, which stands out for its unique scenery and outstanding natural wealth and cultural heritage.

After the village of La Pola de Gordón, the path goes uphill again. The mountain seems like an insurmountable obstacle, but the incredible scenery helps us to meet the challenge. One of the biggest surprises of this tough and challenging stage is Los Calderones Gorge, a narrow limestone gorge that leaves nobody indifferent. Following the brook, which bubbles happily but soon disappears into the ground, we arrive in Piedrasecha before continuing onward to Viñayo and Otero de las Dueñas. On the last stretch towards La Magdalena, it coincides with the route of stage 14 A.



Buiza

Route  
Los Barrios de Gordón



Los Calderones. Piedrasecha

## La Magdalena – Riello

17,4 Km

### Stage 16

1.292 m.

977 m.



Cordel de las Merinas



Villayuste

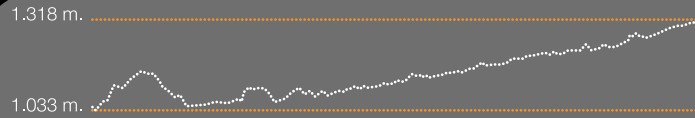
This is another beautiful and somewhat mountainous stage that starts on an oak-lined, slightly uphill trail along the old Cordel de Merinas (sheep's path). After going through a series of replanted pine and oak groves and clearings, we head downhill to Villayuste and Lago de Omaña, little villages that still maintain the flavour of traditional life, and then to Oterico.

Taking a path parallel to the highway, we soon arrive in Riello, a charming town that is the county seat of the Omaña River Valley, which borders it, in the heart of the Biosphere Reserve of the Omaña and Luna Valleys.

## Riello – Fasgar

28,7 Km

### Stage 17



Leaving Riello, we go through a leafy oak grove to Pandorado and its venerated Marian hermitage, which is full of traditions. The Camino continues downhill to the beautiful village of La Omañuela and along the magnificent banks of the Omaña River, between alder trees and fresh meadows. Then it follows the river's course from one bank to the other, through a series of villages with hermitages, churches and shrines.

Then we reach Valle Gordo, whose Barrio de la Puente features a magnificent medieval bridge that some attribute to the Romans; it's a similar story in Vegapujín, where evidence of a road has been preserved, and in Fasgar with its stone and slate houses, many bridges and its hidden hermitage of Santiago in the idyllic spot of Campo de Santiago, where the clamour of a battle won against the Muslims during the Reconquista still resonates.



Route. Valle Gordo

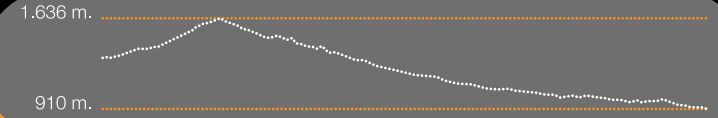


La Omañuela

## Fasgar – Igüeña

18,5 Km

### Stage 18



This stage begins with a long climb that is rewarded by the spectacular trail amid forests of mountain ash, birch, holly oak and yew trees.

The Abedul fountain with its three spouts of refreshing water is a great place to rest and recover. When we reach the top, we can see the Gistredo mountain range in front of us, including the Catoute, the Tambarón and the Pico del Agua. Down below, we can enjoy the amazing view of the great Campo de Santiago Valley with its beautiful hermitage.

The path follows the stream, which we'll cross several times until we reach Colinas del Campo de Martín Moro Toledano, a monumental town declared an Asset of Cultural Interest that is as charming as its name is long. We follow the Camino until we reach the town of Igüeña, our destination for today.



Campo de Santiago. Fasgar

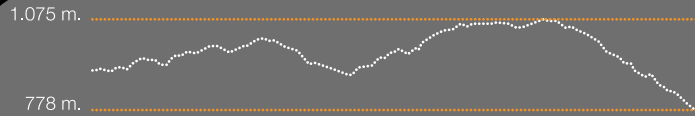


Hermitage. Colinas del Campo de Martín Moro Toledano

## Igüeña – Labaniego

18,7 Km

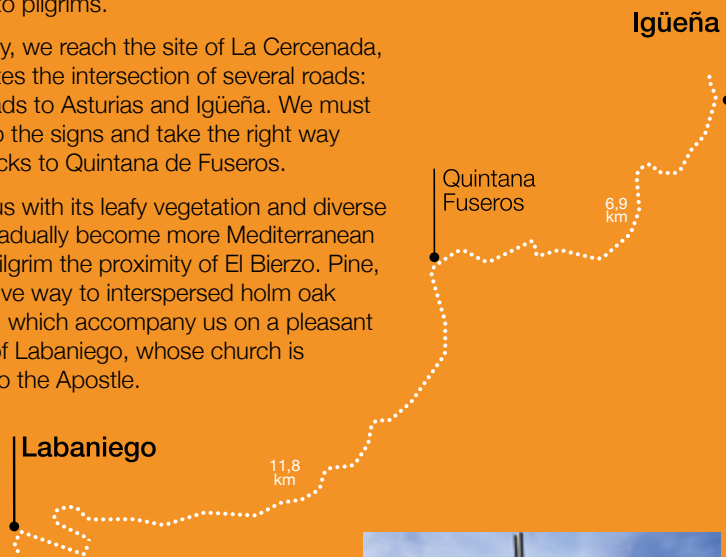
### Stage 19



Another mountain stage starts in Igüeña, although it's not as rough as the previous one. The Camino takes us through an oak grove up a steep hill; if you look closely, you can see some anthropomorphic tombs and ruins of what was once the monastery of San Martino, believed to have provided assistance to pilgrims.

A short distance away, we reach the site of La Cercenada, where a cross indicates the intersection of several roads: Vía Nova with the roads to Asturias and Igüeña. We must pay close attention to the signs and take the right way along the farming tracks to Quintana de Fuseros.

The valley surprises us with its leafy vegetation and diverse woodlands, which gradually become more Mediterranean to announce to the pilgrim the proximity of El Bierzo. Pine, oak and holly trees give way to interspersed holm oak and strawberry trees, which accompany us on a pleasant journey to the town of Labaniego, whose church is dedicated to Santiago the Apostle.



Route. Labaniego

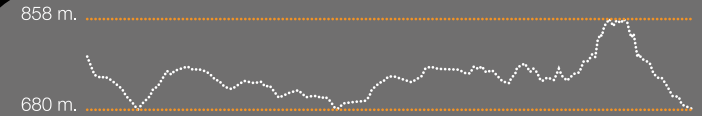


Cross ending in fusils. Quintana de Fuseros

## Labaniego – Congosto

18,5 Km

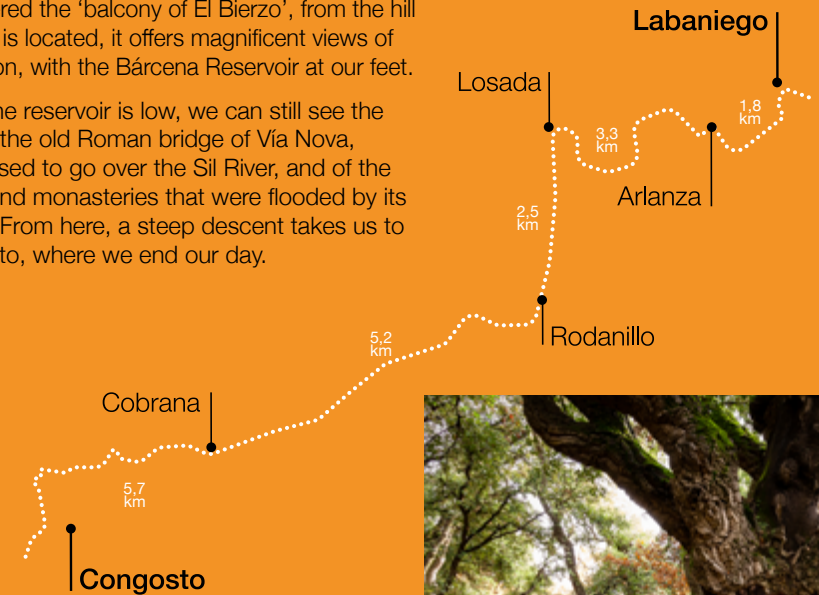
### Stage 20



From Labaniego, the chestnut trees keep us company for a good part of the Camino to Arlanza, after we cross the Noceda River. But soon the scenery changes, and we go from the mountains to sunny plains full of fruit trees and grape vines. This is the way to Losada and onward to Rodanillo with its cross landmark. The route continues along the farming tracks to Cobrana, where the Zofrerol botanical route introduces us to a forest of cork oaks on the way to the Virgen de la Peña shrine, another point of reference on this Camino.

Considered the 'balcony of El Bierzo', from the hill where it is located, it offers magnificent views of the region, with the Bárcena Reservoir at our feet.

When the reservoir is low, we can still see the ruins of the old Roman bridge of Vía Nova, which used to go over the Sil River, and of the towns and monasteries that were flooded by its waters. From here, a steep descent takes us to Congosto, where we end our day.



Santuario de la Virgen de la Peña. Congosto



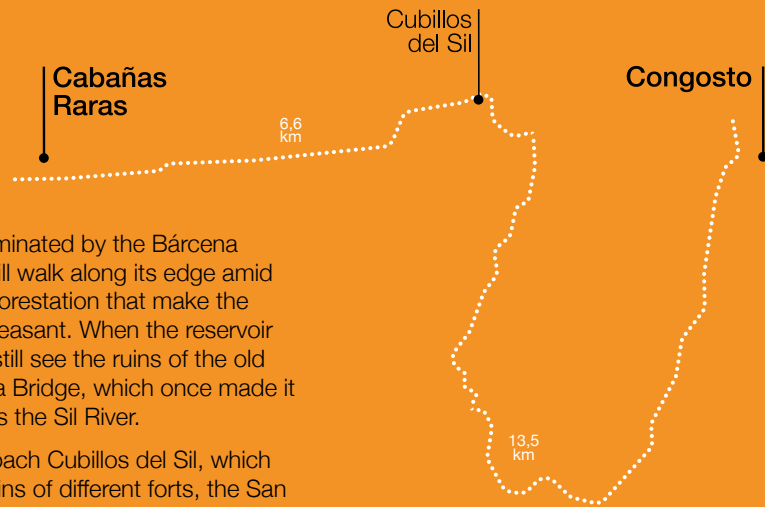
Zofrerol. Cobrana



## Congosto – Cabañas Raras

20,1 Km

### Stage 21



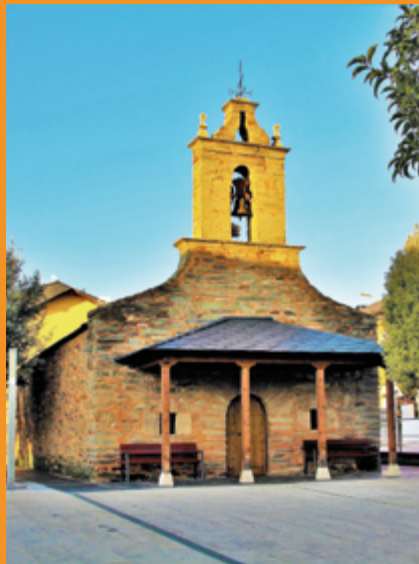
The stage is dominated by the Bárcena Reservoir: we will walk along its edge amid areas of pine reforestation that make the Camino more pleasant. When the reservoir is low, you can still see the ruins of the old Roman Via Nova Bridge, which once made it possible to cross the Sil River.

We slowly approach Cubillos del Sil, which maintains the ruins of different forts, the San Roque hermitage, San Cristobal Church, and some beautiful examples of traditional architecture.

We follow the Camino across two other bridges, also of Roman origin, to finish the stage in Cabañas Raras.



Barcena reservoir. Cubillos del Sil

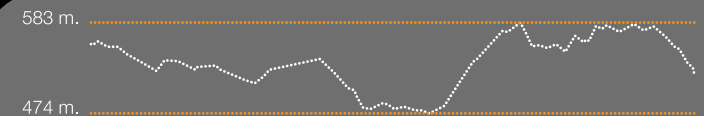


Hermitage of San Roque. Cubillos del Sil

## Cabañas Raras – Villafranca del Bierzo

16,7 Km

### Stage 22



The Camino now winds through chiefly agrarian landscapes dotted by orchards, fruit trees and extensive vineyards. In these lands, exclusive products flourish: Reineta apples and Conference pears, tasty peppers, cherries, chestnuts and the increasingly valued wines of the Bierzo appellation of origin.

This nearly flat route is easy and becomes especially peaceful in the autumn, when a thousand shades of colour pigment the horizon. It goes from Cabañas Raras to Magaz de Abajo and then Cacabelos. Here, the old bridge across the Cúa River continues to help the pilgrims on their way; and it is also used to cross the river by those on the Camino Francés (French Way).

They continue together to Villafranca del Bierzo, the 'villae francorum' so closely linked to Jacobean tradition: Santiago Church and its Gate of Forgiveness allow pilgrims who are unable to reach Compostela to gain the Jubilee indulgence.

It is worth taking a break to enjoy the villa's interesting monuments and rich cuisine in this final stage of the Camino Olvidado in Leon.



Route through vineyards. Magaz de Abajo



Puerta del Perdón. Iglesia de Santiago  
Villafranca del Bierzo

# Other routes to Santiago in northern Spain

Northern Way

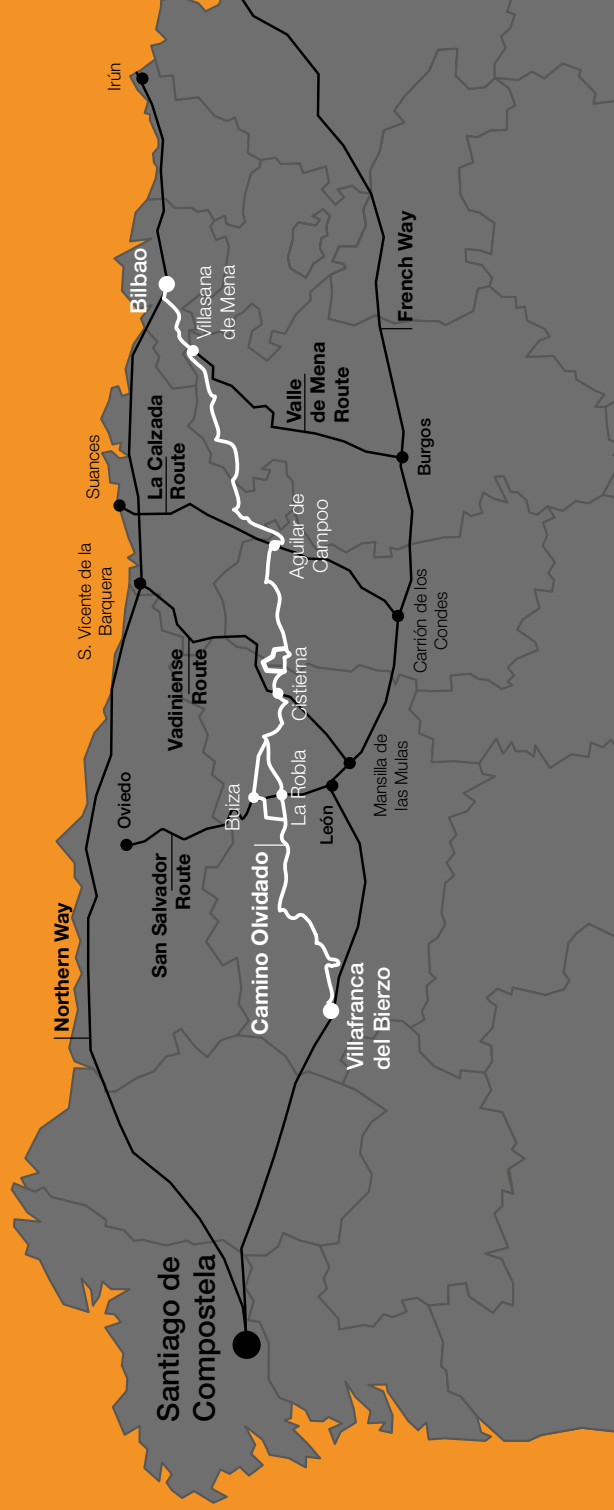
Valle de Mena Route

La Calzada Route

Vadiniense Route

San Salvador Route

French Way



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