

Camino de Santiago Recommendations

Recommended Albergues:

- **L'Esprit du Chemin in St. Jean Pied de Port:** This is a very quaint albergue with great hosts although the hosts may be different now. We had a toast where everyone got to introduce themselves, say where they were from and share their reason for walking. You can stay here 2 nights (reserve). You may also order a packed lunch for your first day.
- **Refuge Orrison (7km from St. Jean Pied de Port on the Napoleon Route):** I didn't stay here, but it's an option to break up the Napoleon Route into two days. There are rooms here, but you can tent-it in the back yard too. Reserve ahead!
- **Albergue Roncesvalles (Old Monastery):** If you arrive late like I did you may get to stay in the overflow (old monastery) which is fantastic! The ambiance is beautiful and there is lovely cultural music playing at night and in the morning. Normally pilgrims stay in the newer more modern section. Very supportive hosts too!
- **Trinidad de Arre in Arre:** This is an 11th century church which has been converted to an albergue. The keeper here is very passionate about the place. He told me that pilgrims have been staying here for 800 years! There are pilgrim blessings here too although I didn't make it in time for that. It also has a large courtyard for socializing. Nice place!
- **Camino del Perdon in Uterga:** It was hard to pass this albergue on a hot day when pilgrims were enjoying a cold beer on the patio! Uterga is small, but it's a very nice, clean town. You may order lunch and dinner here at the bar, but there is no breakfast option.
- **La Casa Magica in Villatuerta:** I loved this place! The guidebook said it had a masseuse and a healer although for us these services came in the form of a pilgrim. It is a very quaint albergue and very clean. The meal was excellent! There are laundry machines here as well.
- **Shelter San Anton Abad in Villafranca Montes de Oca:** I stayed in the dorms, but this place also has a fancy hotel side and a nice dining room. Very nice!
- **Municipal Albergue in Burgos:** This is a very large albergue. There are laundry facilities here, but no blankets!
- **Jacques de Molay Albergue in Terradillos de los Templarios:** This is a templar-themed albergue with a nice garden to sit in and a large patio. The dining room is nice. There is only hand-wash laundry here though.
- **Santa Maria Albergue in Carrion:** If you want a religious experience, stay here! You can receive prayers from nuns and a blessing from a priest. This albergue is run by nuns and a communal dinner is included.
- **En el Camino in Boadilla del Camino:** This place is like a little oasis! There is a large grassy area to lounge around in and a pool to dip into. It has a nice ambiance and a glass of vino is only 1 euro. Salud! The meals are also very good here.

- **Paradores Hostel in León:** This is the place the characters in the movie, *The Way*, stayed. It's very fancy and you may be ready for some luxury by this point! See the website at <http://www.parador.es/en/paradores/parador-de-leon>.
- **Albergue Don Alvaro in Sarria:** This albergue has a nice courtyard garden to enjoy. It also has a kitchen and laundry machines. Later on you might be lucky enough to take part in a sing-along around the fire.
- **The Last Stamp Hostel in Santiago:** This is a clean hostel and close to everything in Santiago which is a must if you will be out on the town celebrating! There is a kitchen here if you are eating in. It's a little more than you will be used to paying along the way, but that's Santiago! It's cheaper than others places here though.

Other neat attractions and things to do:

- **The Church of Notre Dame du Bout du Pont in St. Jean Pied de Port:** Mark the birth of your journey by lighting a taper candle here.
- **The House of the Gods:** This is a cantina before Astorga and it is a great place to take the pack off and sit for a while. Free food and drink for the pilgrims! There are lots of inspiring messages written on the walls here too.
- **The Wine Fountain in Estella:** You must stop here! The winery fills the fountain up every day and is free for pilgrims.
- **The Pilgrims Monument:** This is a landmark you pass between Pamplona and Uterga. You may recognize it from the movie, *The Way*.
- **Cruz de Ferro:** This is an important point on the Camino. It's the big pile of rocks with the pole and cross on top. Bring a special rock from home and leave it here along with things you wish to lay to rest.
- **Half Way Certificate:** Stop at the Santuario de la Peregrinos in Sahagun to get it.
- **Santa Maria de León Cathedral:** Check for organ concerts here. The one I went to was fantastic!
- **Burgos Cathedral:** There is a self-guided tour here.
- **Quemalda, A Galecian Tradition:** If you have a chance to enjoy this traditional drink, you should. Ask for it if you are staying anywhere that has a bar. It's a combination of a Spanish liquor called Orujo, lemon peels and coffee beans. You light it on fire and brew it for approximately 20 minutes. It's a really neat to experience and it tastes so good!
- **The Door of Forgiveness in Villafranca del Bierzo:** Ancient pilgrims who were sick or injured could receive absolution here like they could if they made it all the way to Santiago. A tidbit of interesting history!

Popular destinations along the way:

These were some popular destinations along the way. I starred the places where albergues were full when I walked in late September through October. You may want to book ahead. I didn't have a problem in the other places however I didn't stay in Pamplona or Viana.

- Pamplona
- Los Arcos *
- Viana
- Logroño *
- Nájera *
- Burgos
- Castrojeriz
- Boadilla del Camino (only for albergue)
- Carrion
- León
- Astorga
- Villafranca del Bierzo
- O'Cebreiro
- Sarria

If you have any questions about anything, please send me an e-mail at taniaveitch555@gmail.com. I would be happy to offer any tips, advice or encouragement.

Buen Camino!!