

The Camino Guide – Vía de la Plata

This guide covers the Vía de la Plata from Seville to Astorga. It does not cover the Camino de Santiago which branches from the Vía de la Plata and arrives in Santiago through southern Galicia.

Format

Information is presented in the following text formats:

Information about the route and things you will meet between hostels are given in this format. Distances given in this format should be ignored when calculating distances between hostels.

Other information is in this format.

The following information is given about hostels: **whether it is private, religious, etc. (how many people it sleeps, the cost, opening dates – if none given then it's open all the time) its name.** eg.

Private hostel (24, 10€, March to October) Albergue Zaldiko

When the Camino splits you will see a divider like this before the description of each branch:

LEFT ROUTE

Waymarkings

A map of Spain is useful but not essential on this Camino. Navigation is aided by the facts that:

- * you're walking north most of the time (at least as far as Granja de Moreuela), and...
- * this Camino follows an ancient transport route dating at least from Roman times and important to this day. The old Roman road has been replaced by the N-630 national road and its more recent replacement the A-66 motorway, appropriately known as the Ruta de la Plata. If in doubt follow them.

Waymarkings between Seville and Astorga are basic but functional. Everywhere you will find painted yellow arrows like on the Camino Francés. However, it's important to note that the arrows are sometimes far less frequent than on the Camino Francés and are sometimes only to be seen at points where the Camino turns. So basically, if you don't see an arrow keep going straight, but keep your eyes peeled.

The Via de la Plata is different from the Camino Francés in that it was originally a Roman Road. The present day Camino follows the route of this Roman Road for part of its length. The official waymarkings reflect this. In Extremadura, as well as the yellow arrow, the Camino and the Roman Road are marked by blocks on the ground with a coloured tile on one side and a representation of the arch in Caparra on the top pointing in the direction which you must follow. The tiles are coloured yellow (for the Camino) or green (for the Roman road) or bi-coloured where the Camino follows the Roman road.

In parts of Castilla y León you'll see stone pillars with the name of the Camino written in Spanish and Arabic.

In some place along the route the original Roman waymarkings are still present. Known as *miliarios* these are stone columns about 1 metre high which originally had writing on them giving such information as: emperor under whose reign the road was built, the distance to Rome or another important city on the road. These stones were placed one Roman mile (1,481m) apart. See: es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Miliario

Dogs

Dogs can be a problem on parts of this Camino. Unlike on the Camino Francés, dogs on the Vía de la Plata are not used to

having a steady stream of walkers passing their door every day. As a consequence they can be more territorially defensive. The best defence is a stout stick. You're unlikely to have to use it since dogs in rural areas are well aware of how much a stick can hurt and all you have to do is show it to them. If you get stuck without a stick bend down and pick up a few stones. They understand that too.

How to calculate distances

The numbers to the left of the text before the placenames are distances in kilometres between pilgrim hostels (or, in the few cases where there is no hostel, some other accommodation). Use these numbers when calculating the length of stages. Other distances given in the text are only indicative and should be ignored when calculating distances between hostels.

Assumptions

Some of the hostels on this Camino are basic. However, unless otherwise stated, all of them have the following:

- Beds with mattresses
- Toilets
- Showers
- Drinking water

Any other facilities are mentioned in the guide. eg. Hot water, kitchen, heating.

If it doesn't say that there's a shop/restaurant/café in the town/village then assume there isn't.

Likewise, always assume there is no place to buy food or drinks between villages and that some villages have no facilities of any type. Even if there are shops and cafés never assume they'll be open. Bear in mind that shops in rural Spain usually open from 0900 until 1200 and again from 1700 until 2000 and that these times vary. They are also usually closed, or have greatly reduced opening times, on Sunday and Monday.

The guide was written on the basis of walking the Camino in February – March 2009. So some of it won't be relevant to people walking in other seasons.

Measurement units

All distances are given in the metric system (kilometres and metres) and all times are given in the 24 hour clock (0900 = 9am, 1800=6pm). Most people walk an average of 4km an hour.

Versions

May 2011: updates to Embalse de Alcantara, Carcaboso
April 2011: new hostel in Guillena, updates to Monesterio, Casar de Cáceres
February 2011: new hostel in Almadén de la Plata, updates to El Real de la Jara, Fuente de Cantos, Monesterio
January 2011: Torremejía
December 2010: updates between Guillena and Casar de Cáceres
November 2010: Aldea del Cano
October 2010: updates between Cáceres and Salamanca
May 2010: Galisteo
April 2010: Benaventa and Astorga
March 2010: misc updates
December 2009: updates from Cáceres to Salamanca
November 2009: updates from Seville and Cáceres

Seville

Seville is a large city and all services are available. You can get a *Credencial* from the office of *Amigos del Camino de Santiago en Sevilla* at *Calle San Jacinto nº 25, Portal 6, Local 4, 41010, Sevilla*. They are open Monday to Thursday, November to March 1800 to 2000 and April to October 1900 to 2100. If they're not open there's generally a notice on the door telling you where you can get one. Their website is www.viaplata.org. Alternatively, *Credenciales* are also available in Castilblanco and Monesterio. There's no pilgrim hostel in Seville however there are lots of cheapish backpacker type places. Two good options are *Hostal Nuevo Suizo* on *Calle Azofaifo* a few minutes walk north from the cathedral and *Triana Backpackers* in *Triana*, on the opposite side of the river from the city centre. Both can be booked from www.hostelworld.com

The Camino begins outside the cathedral and crosses Triana bridge before veering right along Calle San Jorge and Calle de Castilla (where there's a Día supermarket which opens at 0930). It's marked with yellow arrows but they're easy to miss in the city. After this the arrows become easier to spot.

After crossing the bus/cycle bridge you have the option to continue straight through the suburb of Camas or to go right to bypass it (muddy in wet weather). Don't let the grimness of this first part get you down, things improve once you're out of the city.

5km Camas. Shops, cafés.

5km Santiponce. Shops, cafés.

You will need to ford a stream which can be swollen after wet weather. Depending on how much it's rained you may be able to cross if you walk a short distance up or downstream and find a place where fallen trees and overhanging branches make it possible to cross without getting your feet wet.

If the stream is too swollen you'll have to make a detour to your left to a road-bridge about 2km away.

Continue straight ahead into Guillena crossing another smaller stream.

23 Guillena

Municipal hostel (20, 5€) new hostel still in the Sports Centre *Polideportivo* on *Avenida de la Vega*, but now upstairs from the café with access directly from the street. Passing *Plaza de España* where there are banks and a shop, continue straight behind the church past the office of the *Policía Local*, straight down the hill until you see a large gate in a high wall on the right through which you will see a mini-soccer pitch and a café. If it's closed ask in the café for the key. If the café is closed ring the phone number which is posted on the door and ask for *la llave del albergue*. The police will come and open it for you.

Alternatively there's **Hostal Francés** on *Avenida de Andalucía*, the main road through town, en suite, airconditioning for 15€. See: <http://www.hostalbarfrances.com>

The café in the *polideportivo* does an expensive and uninspiring evening meal. It's worth exploring the other options around town. There are several shops and bakeries around town.

Leaving town turn right out of the *polideportivo* and then right again to cross some waste ground, a river valley and then up the slope to the left on an unpaved road to leave town via an industrial area.

20 Castilblanco de los Arroyos

Municipal hostel (24, 5€) Hot water, electric heaters. Ask for the code to open the hostel at the *Repsol* petrol station at the entrance to the village. The hostel is up a road just past the petrol station on the right. Early 2010, reported dirty.

The restaurant *Casa Laura* across the road does a hearty pilgrim menu. Up *Calle de Federico García Lorca* opposite the petrol station is a shop and at the top on the right is a hotel which also

does food. Follow the main road and veer left to come to the centre of the village where there are shops and bakeries. *Café El Refugio* across the road from the hostel is usually open for breakfast. There's a tourist information near the hostel which issues *Credenciales*.

Follow the main road north out of the village towards...

29 Almadén de la Plata

This is a long and tiring stage mostly along the side of a road.

Continue on the road for about 18km until you come to a place known as *Finca el Berrocal* where you will see arrows pointing you to pass through a gate on the right into the *Parque Natural Sierra Norte*. From here it's unpaved roads to Almadén. If the main gate is closed there's another a pedestrian gate to the right which may be open. It is not visible from the road. Otherwise you can follow the road all the way.

Keep something high-energy in reserve for the last couple of kilometres. You will need it.

Municipal hostel (16, 5€) Hot water, heating, blankets, kitchen. Follow the arrows through the village to the hostel. Contact the *hospitalera* Manuela on arrival, she lives at no. 22, across the street. Nice hostel. The ground floor is reserved for pilgrims although there's loads more beds upstairs.

Private hostel (5, 10€, February to November) *La Casa del Ralój* on the Camino going through the village on *Plaza del Reloj*. Laundry Facilities, kitchen.

Restaurant *La Espuela* does a pilgrim menu for 7€, information in hostel. Or *Bar Concha*, which is good but a bit more expensive. Shops and banks.

Leaving the village you'll pass by the bull ring. Be careful because there aren't many yellow arrows.

16 El Real de la Jara

Right of way problems on this stage were resolved several years ago.

Municipal hostel (12, 10€) Hot water, kitchen, fireplace. It's the first building you come to on the left when you arrive in the village. Go to the Tourist Information Office to get the key – instructions on the door. Lovely, cosy hostel. **Reported closed in February 2011. Please send update if you have any more information.**

Alternative accommodation in *Mason Restaurante La Encina*, 20€ for a private room and good food. Continue walking past the hostel and at the bottom of the street turn left and follow the signs through an industrial park.

Shops, cafés, restaurants, banks in village. The café in *Casa de la Cultura* does meals.

Entering Extremadura

22 Monesterio

The pilgrim hostel is closed. There are various other options in the town, *Hostal Moya* on the left, 20€ for a single room. *Hostal Extremadura* further along on the right, 15€. Some rooms are cold. *Hostal Pilar* is warm – when their heating is working. *Bar Restaurante Extremadura* (not related to *Hostal Extremadura*) also has rooms to rent.

Restaurant *Pilar* advertises a pilgrim menu which is to be avoided at all costs. *Hostal Moya* has an OK restaurant. Good reports about restaurant *el Rinconcillo*, although it was closed in early 2011 for renovations.

Cafés, shops, banks, etc. are along the main road. The Tourist Information has information about the Camino, ask for their *Guía Del Caminante*.

Some misleading waymarkings on this stretch – follow the yellow arrows in preference to any "official" markings.

22 Fuente de Cantos

Reported permanently closed in February 2011. Please send update if you have any more information: Municipal hostel (20, 10€ or 12€ with breakfast) Hot water, heating. In a converted convent. A bit hard to find, before entering the village look to your left and you'll see a high building with a bird's nest on its peak. That's it. Large, impressive hostel. Laundry facilities (although the staff seem to want to keep it secret), free internet. Alternative accommodation in *Apartamentos Rurales* on *Calle Llerna 40*, ask in *Restaurante Asador*. *Café El Charro* on *Plaza del Olmo* is a friendly place with good food. *Restaurante Asador* has also been recommended. Shop and bank near the church.

25 Zafrá

Don't miss the left turn before the level-crossing. Follow the old railway tracks into town through the railway yard and past the old railway station.

Municipal hostel (20, 10€ or €12 with breakfast) follow the Camino through the town to get here. Kitchen, hot water, heating. Nice hostel and friendly staff.

Supermarket and restaurant with pilgrim menu nearby, ask at reception.

Zafrá is a sizeable town with all facilities available. Restaurant *La Rebotica* on *Calle Boticas*, comes highly recommended, although it's not cheap.

4 Los Santos de Maimosa

Municipal hostel (40, €3) hot water, kitchen. Ask in the Tourist Information Office in the town hall *Ayuntamiento* which is open Monday 1000 to 1400, Tuesday to Friday 0930 to 1400 and Saturday 1100 to 1400. Otherwise ask in the *Policía Local*.

Shops and cafés in the village close to the church.

Be careful following the Camino through this town, it twists and turns a bit.

8 La Almazara

Private hostel (15, 10€ or 12€ with breakfast) *Albergue La Almazara*. It's about 500m off the Camino but it's well sign-posted. Kitchen. They do meals and breakfast of which there are good reports.

5 Villafranca de los Barros

No hostel. However, there are several other cheap options. *Hostal los Amigos* on *Calle Arias Montano 39*, no sign outside, just knock, 15€. When entering town cross the bridge on to a shopping street, turn left at *Hotel Diana* and cross another bridge then turn left at the orange trees and then 2nd right. Another option is *Casa Perín*, 20€ for an individual room, possibly cheaper for groups. Follow the Camino through town until you get to *Plaza de la Coronada*, where there is a church on your left, it's on your right on the corner. Alternatively, *Hotel Diana* has nice rooms for 30€. *Hotel Diana* has a restaurant which is recommended and a café which is open in the morning. Also Jero's, on the square opposite the church, does a good menu. Shops, banks, etc. near *Hotel Diana*.

25 Torremejía

Municipal hostel (18, 10€, mid-February to November) Just opposite the main entrance to the church in a beautifully renovated historic building. Recently reopened. Kitchen. Alternative accommodation in *Hotel Melenium* on the main road, singles 15€, doubles 25€. They have a restaurant that does a good (but pricey) evening meal. There is now a private hostel in town which charges 12€ for a dorm bed, although standards are reported to be low.

There are cafés and a small shop near the main road and a *Día*

supermarket in the same building as *Hotel Melenium*.

15 Mérida

It's a straight run into Mérida. In bad weather you have the option of following the main road

Municipal hostel (20, 6€) Turn left after crossing the bridge, the hostel is to the left of the road beside the river past the new bridge. Hot water, vending machine for coffee, etc. No admissions before 1600 and turfed out at 0800 so if you want more time to explore the city you might consider finding a hotel. *Hostal Bueno* comes recommended. It's on *Calle Calvario*, which is up *Calle de Almendralejo* which is straight up from the new bridge. Singles 25€.

Restaurants around *Plaza de España*.

This is a large town with all facilities. Leaving town there's a shop, follow the sign that says "Farmacia 50m". On the right on *Avenida Vía de la Plata* there is a café/bakery, *Horno Santa Eulalia*, which is reputed to do the best Napolitanas (chocolate Danish) in the world.

There are buses to points throughout Spain from the main bus station which is south of the river across the new bridge.

There's some confusion about the right route to follow when leaving town. Avenida del Lago brings you straight to the reservoir. However, ask advice locally about alternatives.

After passing the reservoir *Embalse de Proserpina* there's a stretch with poor waymarkings. You follow a small paved road for about 2.5km until at a certain point, shortly after a house on the left, you leave the paved road onto an unpaved one on the left. This turn-off is easy to miss and poorly waymarked.

15 Aljucén

Private hostel (12, 10€) Walk straight into town until you come to *Bar Sergio* on a corner on the right, or the *casa rural* a little further down. Ask there for the keys. The hostel's 200m away up past the church, it's signposted. Hot water, kitchen. Very nice hostel.

Bar Sergio is a friendly place and does good food. There's a shop but it doesn't open until 1000, no fruit. The Roman baths do a pilgrim discount, see www.aqualibera.com

19 Alcuéscar

Religious hostel (17, donativo) In a monastery, *Los Esclavos de María y los Pobres*, on your left before the town. Generous evening meal provided.

There's a supermarket up the hill towards the village on a street to the right. *Restaurant Alta Cuesta* is to be avoided at all costs.

The Camino continues to the left just after the monastery.

20 Aldea del Cano

Municipal hostel (13, 5€) *Miliario del Verdinal*. Ask in *Restaurante Las Vegas* for the key, it's right next door. Kitchen, laundry facilities, hot water, heating. 9 beds, 4 mattresses. Beautiful, newly renovated hostel.

Restaurante Las Vegas has a good *menú del día*. Small shops in the village.

11 Valdesalor

No pilgrim hostel but you're welcome to sleep in the town council's chambers. Ask at the *ayuntamiento* which is just to the right of the church. Knock on the door on the left just inside the entrance. Mattresses on the ground, hot water.

The restaurant at the *Repsol* petrol station does mediocre food. They're open for breakfast.

There's a small shop in the village and a couple of cafés.

If you don't stay here it's a long, long walk into Cáceres, plus you won't have time to visit the city.

Entering Cáceres is quite confusing because the Camino disappears. Head for *Plaza Mayor* where you can pick it up again. A map would be helpful if you can get one.

11 Cáceres

Municipal hostel (40, 18.50€ or 20€ with breakfast) *Las Veletas*. On *Calle General Margallo, 36*, on the Camino after *Plaza Mayor* and left. Very good reports.

Municipal hostel (70, 16€ or 18€ with breakfast) *Albergue Municipal Ciudad de Cáceres*, on *Avenida de la Universidad*.

The guesthouse *Albergue Turístico Las Veletas* at *Calle Margallo 36*, has singles for 14€, it's on the Camino after *Plaza Mayor* and comes recommended.

Tourist Information Office on *Plaza Mayor*. They can also give you a map to help you find your way out of the city.

Restaurant *El Figón de Eustaquio* on *Plaza de San Juan* serves up excellent quality local cuisine, if you feel like splashing out.

Cáceres is the capital of Extremadura and is a major city with all facilities. There are several supermarkets on or near the Camino entering the city. On the way out there are none.

From Plaza Mayor you can get back on the Camino on Calle General Margallo.

Between here and Casar de Cáceres it's mostly an unpleasant walk along a busy road with poor waymarkings.

10 Casar de Cáceres

Municipal hostel (20, free) Follow the Camino into town until you come to the *ayuntamiento* on your right, the hostel's on your left. Ask in *Bar Majuca* for the keys. Kitchen, laundry facilities, heating, hot water. The first room suffers from being too close to the toilets with their noisy extractor fan. Otherwise magnificent!

Bar Majuca is friendly and does food. A *Churrería* past the church opens early.

You'll pass a supermarket on your way into town.

Continue along the main street to leave town. No facilities on this stage.

21 Embalse de Alcántara

Municipal hostel (26, 15€ with breakfast) About 600m to the left of the Camino from the main road. Hot water. Magnificent setting beside the reservoir. Their café does Italian food and breakfast. Good reports. Website: www.embalsedealcantara.com They closed briefly in April 2011 due to problems with water supply, however they are now open again.

Hostal Lindamar is reported closed.

11 Cañaveral

Municipal hostel (6, donativo) Stay on the main road in the village until you come to *Hostal Málaga*, ask there for the key. The hostel's on the street which goes down-hill just before *Hostal Málaga, Calle Gabriel y Galán* number 3, upstairs on the right. No hot water, freezing, filthy.

Hostal Málaga does an appallingly bad evening meal, better to search for another option around town. A *Churrería* across the road is open in the morning and does churros the traditional way (greasy).

6 Grimaldo

The village is about 1km off the Camino. The distance measurements are from this turn-off. Turn right to pass under motorway. Signposted.

Municipal hostel (12, donativo) Beside beside a *Bar Grimaldo* on the main road. Hot water. The *hospitalera* does meals and breakfast in *Bar Grimaldo*. Good reports.

18 Galisteo

Problems persist in early 2011 with misleading waymarkings before Galisteo. Pay close attention to waymarkings be aware that there are places where they contradict each other.

Private hostel (10, 6€) *El Trillo*. Assuming you entered town by the clever route – walk up the hill towards the walled town, don't enter the town but continue straight around the walls to the other side where straight ahead you will see the building that used to be *Mesón Rusticiana*, directly behind it, to the right, is the hostel. Hot water, kitchen.

A new municipal hostel was completed in 2009 however as of May 2010 it has not yet opened due to a lack of furniture. It's very modern and has 30 beds and is expected to cost €3.

Bar Los Inmigrantes is a welcoming place and does good food and rents rooms. There is a supermarket just inside the main gate into the walled town and a bakery a couple of doors down from the hostel.

The Camino around Galisteo is confusing, with some authorities claiming Galisteo isn't even on the Camino. Best to seek guidance locally.

10 Carcaboso

May 2011 reported closed, please send an update if you find it open: Private hostel (8, 11€) Ask in *Bar Vía de la Plata* on the main road. Hot water.

Bar Vía de la Plata does evening meals and breakfast. *Restaurante Caparra* reserves a warm welcome for pilgrims and does an excellent *menú del día* and meals in the evening. They have also begun offering rooms for 20€. Shop on the main road by the small park.

Leaving Carcaboso the "official" Camino turns right to take a long circular route around a hill which brings you, after about an hour, back to very close to where you started out. You may be able to avoid this by continuing straight and following the faded waymarkings.

10 turnoff for Oliva de Plasencia

At a point on the Camino known as *Vente Quemada* 10km from Carcaboso you can continue straight to arrive in the Roman city of Caparra in 6km. Or you turn right and walk 6km off the Camino to *Oliva de Plasencia*...

Municipal hostel (18, 15€ with basic breakfast) Call in advance to 647 40 18 77 or ask in the library *biblioteca* in the *ayuntamiento* for Monica who takes care of pilgrims and speaks English. The hostel is down a street opposite the *ayuntamiento* and right at a square.

A café with no name (although possibly called *Bar Caparra* or *Bar Sebas*) down hill from the square does good *raciones* and *bocadillos*. If the café is closed, Monica may do a simple evening meal. There's a shop opposite the *ayuntamiento* but it doesn't open every day.

Leaving Oliva you can take another signposted route which takes you directly to Caparra in 6km. Visiting Oliva means 6km of extra walking.

In Caparra there are public toilets and vending machines for snacks and drinks.

Parts of the route after Caparra may be impassible after rain. Ask locally.

24 Aldeanueva del Camino

34km from Carcaboso.

The Camino on this stretch has changed considerably due to a recently built motorway.

At a certain point a waymarking indicates to go right under a motorway bridge and a sign points straight to Restaurant *Parilla*. If you go straight and follow the road to Aldeanueva you'll avoid a lot of messing around.

Municipal hostel (8, donativo) On the left as you walk into the

village. Positive reports of new *hospitaleros* 2010. Hot water, heating.

Bar Sebas on the main road does good food. There's a shop on the main square on the Camino. *Bar España* opens early.

The Camino to Baños is along the side of a road.

9 Baños de Montemayor

Municipal hostel (12, 10€) To the right of the Camino as you walk through town at *Calle Castañar 40*. Kitchen, hot water, heating. Some reports that this hostel only opens irregularly. The town has restaurants, cafés, shops.

Entering Castilla y León

11 Calzada de Béjar

Private hostel (12, 8€) *Alba-Soraya*, on your left as you enter the village. Comfortable, spacious hostel, fireplace, kitchen, hot water. The friendly (and talkative) owner lives in the village on the square beside the church. Her phone number is normally stuck up someplace otherwise wander into the village and ask where she lives. She does a good evening meal and breakfast.

There's a bar behind the church which has limited opening hours.

19 Fuenterroble de Salvatierra

Religious hostel (10, donativo) Walk through the village and it's on your right at a junction. Very mixed reports about this hostel – depending on who the *hospitalero* are.

There is a guest house at the start of the village called *Casa Rural Paqui* where spaces may be available for €40. Alternatively, Guijuelo is a 6€ taxi ride away and has more accommodation.

A café near the hostel does meals in the evening. The café next door (which is closed) has a small shop (which opens late in the morning).

There are two possible routes on this stage, the one to the right avoids San Pedro and brings you straight to Morille. The distance is about the same.

26 San Pedro de Rozados

Private hostel (14, 15€) *VII Carreras* for a double room with bathroom *en suite*. Washing facilities, Internet. Evening meal and breakfast available. Luxurious.

Private hostel (10, 10€) *Casa Miliario*, on *Calle del Rosario*, in the centre of the village. Luxurious hostel, heating, hot water, beds with sheets, towels.

Shop and cafés in the village. A nearby *Casa Rural* does meals.

4 Morille

Municipal hostel (6, 6€) Just to the left of the *ayuntamiento*. Keys from *Bar Isa* next door. Hot water, heating.

Bar Marco and *Bar Isa* do food.

There are reports of a new hostel in Morille – more info please!

18 Salamanca

Municipal hostel (16, donativo) Follow the metal plates in the ground after crossing the bridge and climbing the hill into the old city. Those with "A" point to the hostel. It's right beside the cathedral. Kitchen (microwave), hot water, heating. Excellent hostel. It usually opens at 1700 however in off-peak times it's better to call one of the numbers on the door.

Salamanca is a big city and all services are available.

15 Calzada de Valdunciel

Municipal hostel (8, donativo) Follow the Camino through the village and turn right just after the community centre. For the keys see the instructions on the door (although they might not be entirely accurate). The *hospitalera* works in the library which is near the church. Kitchen, hot water, heating. Beautiful, cosy

hostel.

Bars, shops and restaurant *Joaquín* which does a pilgrim menu, although some pilgrims complain that it's over-priced.

19 El Cubo del Vino

Municipal hostel (16, 6€) Turn left onto *Calle Toro* and continue 150m, the hostel is on the right. Kitchen, heating, hot water.

Cafés and a restaurant *Santo Domingo* which is also open for breakfast.

13 Villanueva de Campeán

Municipal hostel (16, 6€) Near the school on *Calle Nueva Era 5*, near the church. Kitchen.

The bar in the village does food.

16 Zamora

Municipal hostel (36, donativo) Follow the Camino in to the town, up a hill and it's around a sharp bend on the right. Kitchen. Excellent facilities. Opens from 1200 to 1300 so you can leave your bag and then from 1700.

Zamora is a large town with all services. On *Plaza Mayor* there is a bakery and a *Churrería* which is open in the morning also on Sunday. The following businesses give discounts to pilgrims: hotels AC, NH, Meliá Horus, Rey Don Sancho, Casa Aurelia and El Henar, and restaurants Sancho 2, Las Aceñas, La Manzana Verde, La Fontana, Serafín, El Mirador, Sócrates y Casa Bernardo.

Leaving the town there is a couple of supermarket cafeterias which are open 24 hours. There is also a point where a sign points in both directions. Go right.

17 Montemarta

Municipal hostel (20, 5€) Turn right when you see the sign for *Restaurante Asturiano* then left on to the main road. The hostel is on the right after a couple of hundred metres. Contact information on the door.

Restaurante Rosamary is very welcoming and does good food. There are shops in the centre of the village.

14 Riego del Camino

Municipal hostel (15, donativo) On *Calle España* when you arrive at the main road turn left for the hostel or right for the bar. A second left turn gets you on the Camino out of town. The bar does food.

6 Granja de Moreuela

Municipal hostel (8, 5€) Cross the main road at the pedestrian crossing, to your right there is the community centre which has a café, ask there for the key. The hostel is in the same building. Hot water. Basic.

The aforementioned café does substantial meals and opens about 0900 for breakfast. There are two small shops in the village, one near the church and the other on the main road on the same side as the hostel northwards.

Thank you everybody who sent updates and corrections and if you haven't sent them yet please do so by emailing info@caminoguide.net Remember, this guide is free for everyone and it's kept up-to-date by people like you! If you're leaving the Vía de la Plata and heading towards Galicia then Buen Camino! I hope one day to be following in your footprints.

Beside the church is a sign which marks the point where the Camino Sanabrés divides left from the Vía de la Plata to follow a course through southern Galicia to Santiago. Right the Vía de la Plata continues to Astorga and points north.

17km Barcial del Barco, café. Shortly after the village a disused railway line goes off to the left. *In theory* it should be possible to follow this directly to the municipal hostel in Benaventa. However, this has not been confirmed recently!

Just after a village called Castropepe you will cross a road and on your left is a shed and an unpaved road leading to the left. Waymarkings indicate that you should continue straight however, if you go left down into the valley, under the first two bridges you can rejoin the Camino by crossing the 3rd (oldest) bridge and save yourself a couple of (ugly) kilometres.

25 Benaventa

There's an information board just before the town with a map of the Camino as it passes through the town. Try memorizing it.

Municipal hostel (7, free) In the old railway station. Reported to be open (sometimes) but very poorly maintained. Ask for the key in the house of the Stationmaster *Jefe de Estación*. Waymarkings in the town are a disaster. On the way into town there are several cheap hotels.

One alternative which has been recommended is the private *Albergue Tina Carabajo* at *Ronda de Madrid, No 19*, telephone 689 742 486.

This is a large town with all facilities.

Leaving the town you need to follow *Avenida Donantes de Sangre* and *Carretera de la Alcubilla*.

8 Villabrázaro

Municipal hostel (25, free) Ask in *Bar Real*, which you can't miss on your way in. *Bar Real* does meals.

7km Maire de Castroponce, café.

13 Alija del Infantado

Municipal hostel (12, free) Go to *Calle Alta 7* for the keys. Walking down the main street you'll see a sign pointing up left for *Albergue de Peregrinos*. Follow it, veer right towards a church then left under an arch, *Calle Alta* is straight up, look for a metal garage door. The hostel is 2 minutes walk away, from number 7 go down then first right then straight past the cave buildings, it's on your left above a café. Basic facilities but due for renovation. The bodega you passed on your way in does meals. *Café la Rúa* does a free tapa with every drink – otherwise no options for food in the village. There are shops and banks on the main street.

19 La Bañeza

Municipal hostel (36, €4) Signposted to the right shortly after entering the town. On *Calle Bello Horizonte*. The keys are with a lady who lives in number 20 across the street. Hot water, washing

facilities, kitchen. Excellent hostel with lots of photos from the local Camino Association's various pilgrimages.

La Bañeza is a big town with all services.

Restaurante Madrid on *Plaza Obispo Alcolea* does a good evening meal.

22 Astorga

In Astorga the Vía de la Plata and the Camino Francés converge.

Private hostel (22, 6€) *Camino y Vía*. On the right before entering the town, beside the railway tracks.

Municipal hostel (145, 5€) *Albergue de Peregrinos Siervas de María*. On the left on *Plaza San Francisco* just after you enter the walled town. Kitchen, laundry facilities, Internet. New hostel with excellent facilities.

Private hostel (110, 7€) *San Javier* on *Calle Portería*, near the cathedral. Kitchen, laundry facilities. Wood burning stove when it's cold and a hearty breakfast available. The noise from the wooden floor in the dorm can make sleeping difficult.

Astorga is a large towns with all facilities.

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* Send us your feedback and experiences. We love to hear from fellow pilgrims.

* Also, most valuably, send us any information which you think is missing from this guide and any corrections, updates and suggestions.

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This guide is being constantly updated so check back before you travel for the latest version.

Information is available on our website at www.caminoguide.net and also access to our other services like our guide to Camino Spanish and menu translator, our guide to the Camino Francés and how to travel to and from various points on the Caminos.

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