

Walk Through Spain and Portugal from 1/26—3/22/2026

Results of Week 3: 2/9—2/15/2026

During this week we collectively walked 415 miles and had 14 participants. Sources for photos are given in smaller font near the image. You can click on images to increase their size for a better view. The green line  on map of Spain and Portugal indicates places we visited each week. A magenta line  on the entire map is our proposed route for our 8 week walk map with major cities marked with magenta dots. **Note: This document is copyrighted by K. Scharer, 2026, except where other copyrights are noted.**

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After our trip to the Monastery Santa Maria de Montserrat last Sunday, we continued on Monday morning, heading northwest to Zaragoza, a city in Basque country which is known for the Apparition of the Virgin Mary to the Apostle James, the Greater as Our Lady of the Pillar. Of all the apparitions of Our Lady reported over the centuries, this is perhaps the most unique, since it is said to have happened before her Assumption into Heaven, while she was still on this earth and living in Jerusalem. Saint Mary Agreda told of her vision of the Apparition to St. James in her writings in the 1600's. She wrote that in the year 40 AD, James the Apostle was praying at a nearby stream. He was despondent over his failure to win many converts despite his efforts. Our Blessed Mother appeared to him on a pilar and gave him a statue of her. Mary left him with instructions to build a church in her honor at that very place in which the event occurred. Further, Mary instructed that her image on the pilar was to be the name of the church. It was Mary who sent James into that region of the Roman Empire to tell the people of Hispania about her Son, Jesus. And then when he was most discouraged, she came to rescue St. James and asked him to build a small chapel near the Ebro river in Zaragoza. St. James followed her instructions and the chapel became the first Marian shrine in history. St. James returned to the Holy Land after building the

chapel. This apparition is the earliest one approved by the Church and the only known one while Mary was still alive. The chapel became known as Our Lady of the Pillar, or Nuestra Señora del Pilar. The chapel was replaced by larger churches over the centuries; the present stunning basilica was erected in the 17th century. The statue and pillar remain in the basilica just as they were given to St. James, although the pillar has been covered in metal. For Adoration, people are able to see an exposed section of the wooden pillar behind the altar.



Moahim, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons, nighttime photo with Basilica reflected in the river , left.

The Basilica is the second most visited pilgrimage site in Spain. That the Church has survived all these centuries is almost a miracle, in itself! During the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), the three bombs were dropped on the Basilica but none of them exploded.



David Abián, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons, right, Our Lady on the Pillar The statue of Our Lady of the Pillar is 15 inches tall and sits on a column of Jasper in a setting above the main altar of the Basilica. The pillar is now covered in silver and gold. The rear portion of the pillar has been left uncovered and is visible from behind the altar for Adoration.



CARLOS TEIXIDOR CADENAS, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons, close up [photo of the Virgin of the Pillar, left. The city of Zaragoza served as the capital of the province of Zaragoza. It was settled prior to the first century BC when the Romans arrived and created a colony on the site. In 1118, after being conquered by the Christians, it grew into the spiritual and political center of the Kingdom of Aragon.

Currently it has the 4th largest population in Spain with the metropolitan area having about three-quarters of a million people living there.



Escarlati, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons, the Cathedral at night. After visiting the Lady of the Pillar, we went to the Cathedral of the Savior, which was built on the site of a former Mosque. The original church was begun in 1140 in Late Romanesque style. In addition, the site had two cloisters, a refectory, an archive, and a nursery. Construction of this original cathedral continued throughout the 1200's. The Cathedral served as the site where all the Kings of Aragon to be crowned from 1204 until the 1400's. Charles I in 1518 was the last Aragon King crowned in the Cathedral.

Fernando, edited & retouched by Escarlati., CC BY-SA 2.0, via Wikimedia Commons, right image, transept, with the 16th-century chapel of Gabriel Zaporta.

Various additions and renovations have occurred over the years, of course. The building was named a Cathedral in 1318 and the church was renovated in Gothic style although some elements of the original church remained. The dome fell in 1403 and was replaced. In the 16th century the chapel of Gabriel Zaporta, shown above, was added. It has been renovated and repaired several more times over the centuries.



Next, we went to see the Arabian Aljafería Palace, shown below, which was built during the second half of the 11th century. The palace was the residence of Abu Jaffar Al-Muqtadir who was the Arab ruler of the city. The palace currently is the place where the regional parliament meets and conducts business. The Palace is the only remaining, intact building remaining from that era in the city and is one of the three best examples of Spanish-Muslim architecture. It currently has legal protection and is included in the World Heritage Site known as the Mudejar Architecture of Aragon.



Fernando, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons, left.
Turol Jones, un artista de cojones from Villanueva del Cascajal, República Independiente de Mi Casa, CC BY 2.0, via Wikimedia Commons, interior, right.

Today, the old buildings are mingled with modern day architecture which can be seen in various places in the photo, below left.
Matthias Bethke, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons



But it was time to continue on our pilgrimage, this time heading north and slightly west to Roncesvalles, a small village in Navarre. It is in the Pyrenees, about 13 miles from the French border. As you can see in the pictures below, this is a SMALL village. But it is used to dealing with pilgrims. It has been doing so for centuries. From here, we officially began our Santiago de Compostella Pilgrimage. But we explored this quaint place first.

Jialvx, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons , below, left.



The village played an important role in Spanish history in 778 during the Battle of Roncevaux Pass. Charlemagne and his French army had invaded Spain and destroyed the city walls of Pamplona, the capital of the Basque region. The French then retreated back toward the French border when a large contingent of Basques trapped a part of Charlemagne's army in a high mountain pass in the Pyrenees near Roncevaux.

The entire rearguard of Frankish lords was cut off, fought with the Basques, and were killed.

One of the Lords killed was Roland, one of the French commanders. The tale of his death brought him increased status and his legend grew making him into a role model of the greatest knights of Charlemagne's army. His legend was glorified in numerous written works at that time and some current writings also. After hearing this background story at the tourism office, we proceed to investigate the village sites.



Hayden Soloviev, CC BY 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons , right The Church of Santiago and Chapel of Sancti Spiritus, seen at right is the oldest building in the village. The Chapel was built in Romanesque style during the 1100's. The Church of Santiago, or the Pilgrims' church, which stands next to the chapel, was built in the early Gothic style during the following century. We briefly visited both the chapel and the church before heading

for the Collegiate Church of Roncesvalles.

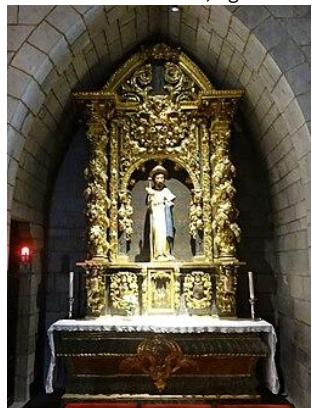
The Collegiate Church of Roncesvalles, right, was built as a hostel and hospital to serve the needs of the pilgrims who pass through the village with the church attached to the complex. Most sources suggest that the collegiate



church was founded in Roncesvalles because it had always been the place of passage between Pamplona and France; so, it just was logical to offer a hostel at the village.

First the hospital and hostel were built. Then the Collegiate Church of Santa María, right, was built French Gothic style. Hayden Soloviev, CC BY 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons, right. As has typically happened with these older churches, Santa María suffered fires and was rebuilt several times. There were also major renovations in the 1500's and 1600's.

Interior of St. Mary's Church, right. Brian Adamson, CC BY 2.0, via Wikimedia Commons, right.



Statue of Saint-James in the Santa María Church of the royal collegiate of Roncesvalles Cherubino, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons, left

We enjoyed touring the small village but then it was time to rest and get ready to begin the Camino de Santiago tomorrow!

The next day, we continued walking the pilgrimage path of the French Way of the Camino de Santiago. Including Roncesvalles, we will have 32 stages to reach Santiago de Compostela, often just called Santiago. However, we will not stop overnight in each place but stop to see a few sights before moving on since we combine our miles each week. Stages vary in length and difficulty but are usually between 15 and 20 miles per stage. From Roncesvalles, we walked southwest through the Spanish Pyrenees to Zubiri, the next stage. Zubiri is a small village, with a



population of about 45 people, as you can see from the image below. The little village appeared in a valley as we descended from the mountain. Although there is not lot to see there, we were able to have a meal before resuming our walk to Pamplona. We passed over the Arga River several times via similar to the one in the picture left since the Arga runs from Zubiri to Pamplona

but the river zig-zags across the trail. Rabia Bridge, which spans the course of the River Arga. Tothh417, CC0, via Wikimedia Commons, above left.

Pamplona is the first major city on our Camino route. I think many of us may associate this city with the running of the bulls and bullfighting, but the running of the bulls occurs in July and bullfighting does not begin until April or May, so we didn't have to decide if that was an activity we wanted to see. Pamplona is in the Basque region of Spain.



Fernando, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons, Cathedral of Saint Mary of the Assumption Pamplona, below, left and interior, right. The 15th century Cathedral of Saint Mary of the Assumption, left and right, is of Gothic design. It was built on the site where at least three other churches had stood. During Medieval times it was the location for the crowning of the Navarre kings, as well as the final

resting place for some of those kings. The site was also used for Navarrese Parliament sessions between the 1400's to the 1600's. Kent Wang, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons, main



altar, below left. Reliquary Shrine , right, Attributed to Jean de Toul, also written Jehan de Touyl in one source from 1328, CC0, via Wikimedia Commons., We

attended Mass while we were here before exploring the beautiful church and cloisters.

An important festival here is called the Sanfermines festival. It lasts for 9 days to honor Saint Fermin of Amiens. The Saint is believed to have

been born to a Roman Senator in Pamplona in the mid 1200's. Fermin was converted to Catholicism by Saint Honestus and he was later baptized by Saint Saturninus of Navarre at a small well. Now that well is called the small well of Saint Cernin, the Navarre name of Fermin.

St. Fermin is the Patron Saint of Pamplona. He worked hard at spreading Christianity through northern Spain and southern France, despite the persecution against Christians by the Romans during the Diocletian Persecution era. He later was named Bishop of Amiens, France. In 303, he was arrested by the Romans and under torture, refused to renounce his faith. He was beheaded and thus became a martyr for the Church. While St. Fermin lived in third century, his name does not appear in any known writings until the 800s. And there is not anything in Pamplona written history about his veneration until the 1100's.

There are some miracles attributed to St. Fermin. One was that a sweet smell occurred around his grave, that ice and snow melted off his grave from the fragrance, that those who were ill were cured if they went to his grave, and that nearby trees leaned toward the grave. These are recorded in the *Legenda Aurea*. He was first buried in Pamplona but his remains were later transferred to the Cathedral in Amiens,

France.

FilpoC, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons, St. Fermin statue, left and the Church of San Lorenzo, right. The Sanfermines festival has international recognition because of the event known as the running of the bulls. As the bulls are herded from the fields where they had been grazing to the bull ring, they run down the city's old quarter streets where runners, typically dressed in white and red with red neck scarves, run in front of hefty bulls while trying not to get gored or run over by the herd. If you have ever watched the running on TV, you will have seen people trying to avoid the bulls by grabbing window grills or other objects

to pull themselves out of the way while the bulls pass. There are bull fights in the bullring on later days as well as many fiesta, during this time. Why is St. Fermin celebrated by this event and during this festival? There has been some confusion in history about St. Fermin's death. One of the legends was that he was dragged to his death by a bull as his penalty for refusing to renounce his religion. This is what actually happened to St. Saturninus in 257, long before St. Fermin's death in 303 but because of the relationship between the two men, the story seems to have been transferred in some legends to St. Fermin. The folks of Pamplona began the running of the bulls to celebrate St. Fermin.



Pamplona Bull ring, ©by Sarah Hubert. In Pamplona, the Sanfermines festival begins 7/7 and lasts 9 days. Bull fairs typically take place in July, so even though St. Fermin feast day is in September, in Pamplona he is celebrated on 7/7.

While we were in Pamplona at the wrong season for the running of the bulls, there were many other sights to visit. We headed, as usual, to the Cathedral of Pamplona, the Cathedral of Saint Mary of the Assumption. It is a fifteenth century building in



Gothic style, while the facade is considered to be Neo-classical in design. It is a replacement for prior churches built on that spot. With the cathedral is a lovely, serene cloister from the 14th century. There is also a Diocesan Museum which was not open while we were there.

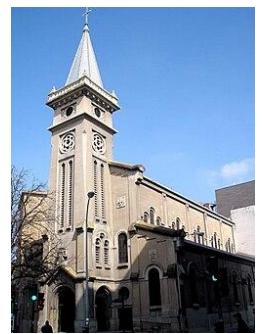
Fernando, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons left; Kent Wang, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons, center, main altar, and choir stalls and right, altar from the side.



After seeing the cathedral, we visited two other churches. First was St. Sernin Church, also



sometimes called St. Saturnino. Eaeaea, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia, left. It is from the 1200's and it is also of Gothic design. We also went to Saint Ignatius of Loyola Basilica, right. Zarateman, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons, right. St. Ignatius was a Spanish soldier and was injured in battle in Pamplona. He was born in the Basque region of Spain. The Basilica is located in the place where St. Ignatius convalesced from his battle wounds and where he decided to become a priest. He is known as one of the seven founders of the Jesuit Order.



Pamplona has a history similar to the rest of Spain, with various different rulers, Moorish invaders, etc. One of the remnants of this history are the remains of the old city walls. As we walked around the city we happened upon a remaining section of the walls. The walls were breached at least once and partly destroyed in the process. Miguillen, CC BY 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons, right

We continued on the French way after exploring Pamplona,



next passing through Puente la Reina. We walked over the bridge shown left, known as the Queen's Bridge.

Piotr Tysarczyk, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons, left



This is an 11th century bridge, Puente la Reina means bridge of the queen. The bridge was built specifically for pilgrims on the Camino. The photo left gives the impression that the bridge is constructed of circles; the lower part of the image is simply the reflection of the top part in the water. The bridge is actually 6 arches with pilings that go into the riverbed. It crosses the Arga River. As we walked to the next stage, we noticed a

change in flora. We began to see fewer fields of grain and more olive trees and vineyards as we got closer to the stage known as Estella.

Estella was established in 1090. As the Camino passed through it, Estella became an important stopping point for pilgrims. There are several Catholic churches in town for pilgrims and citizens to attend Mass, as we did. We attended Mass at the Church of San Miguel. There is also a convent in the town.



Iglesia de San Miguel artwork and altar, Mattana, CC BY 2.0, via Wikimedia Commons, left and left, below; Krzysztof Golik, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons, San Miguel Church exterior, center; Estella Bridge and St. Peter's on the hilltop. Jaume, Public domain image, right below. After Mass, we explored a bit and then proceeded to Los Arcos. As we walked the 12 and one half miles to Los Arcos, we

passed through more olive trees, some wooded areas, and even some places that looked deserted. Los Arcos is the next stage on the Camino. Cereal grains are still grown in the area.



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Zarateman, CC0, via Wikimedia Commons, view of Los Arcos from hillside; Alfonso Para from Barcelona, Spain, CC BY 2.0, via Wikimedia Commons, Basilica of Santa Maria, center.



In Los Arcos, we stopped to see the Basilica of Santa Maria, center. It is the oldest church in the town. The Basilica was first built by the Romans as a mausoleum or crypt in the 200's but was converted to a Catholic Basilica in the 400's as Catholicism became more accepted in Spain. The church builders use other architectural pieces from nearby old Roman cities in transforming the crypt into the Basilica. During excavations under the Basilica,

evidence of the area being used for both Christian and ancient Roman burials were found. Romanesque style paintings from the late 1100's can be seen in the chancel. Santa Maria Basilica sits on the southern side of Plaza de Santa Maria. On the other sides of the square are edifices from the 17th century. As the major square of the city, it is where the main interactions among the populace occur daily. After a walk around the square we continued on our pilgrimage, heading for Logroño.

As we proceed westward, we left the Navarre region and entered the La Rioja region, wine country, heading for Logroño about 18 miles away from Los Arcos. However, we had some pretty steep slopes to deal with along the way. The vineyards of this region produce the best wines in all of Spain. When we reach Logroño we saw our first major river along the Camino, the Ebro.

Logroño sits on the right bank of the Ebro and is the capital city of the region. It is a fairly large city with a population of 200,000 in the metro area. Logroño has a Co-cathedral, Santa María de la Redonda

and that was our first stop in the city. Fernando, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons, left;



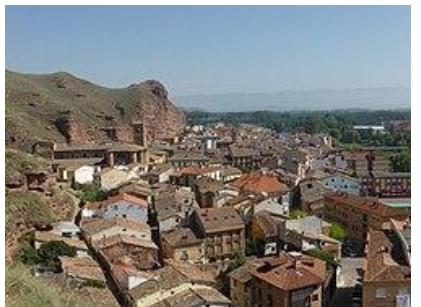
Zarateman, CC0, via Wikimedia Commons: center left Santa Maria, Center right, artwork on façade, right, Chapel of the Blessed Sacrament.

After our visit to the Co-cathedral, we explored a bit more as we walked through the city. One of the sights

that could not be avoided was the river, shown below, since it is a dominant feature of the city. At night, each arch in the bridge is lit with a different color light, producing a rainbow effect, although the colors are not in the correct order for a true rainbow, it is still very pretty. We enjoyed a meal of

Spanish Tapas—little bites. The city also has a seminary and several other churches but we needed to continue on our way to the next stage, Nájera, about 26 miles away.

Nájera is set among some rocky hills as the picture below shows. CARLOS TEIXIDOR CADENAS, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons, picture of town right. Nájera is still in the La Rioja province. As we walked along the town we climbed up and down some steep streets. There is a beautiful monastery we visited here as well as the parish church. The town itself was settled by the Romans; later it was ruled by Muslims and they gave the name to the town. Nájera means the town built between two rocky hills. At one time the town was the capital of a Kingdom known as Nájera–Pamplona. Now it is known mostly as a stage of the Camino. It was a multicultural town for a long time, with Spanish, Arabic and Jewish populations but currently the population is mostly Spanish but it serves pilgrims from many countries. We stopped to see a few religious sights here.



Zarateman, CC0, via Wikimedia Commons, Altar of the Santa Cruz Parish Church, left.



CARLOS TEIXIDOR CADENAS, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons, Santa Cruz Parish Church, left and 3 pictures of the monastery below. Gothic exterior of the church's apse, below, left. Cloisters of the Monastery, center, and altar, right



After visiting the church and monastery, we headed toward the next stage, Santo Domingo de la Calzada, about 18 miles away. As we walked along the Camino, we again saw mostly fields of grains and other types of agricultural produce. And as we neared Santo Domingo de la Calzada, we begin to see the town in the distance. Lucas

Martinez Farra..., CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons, Santo Domingo.

PMRMaeyaert, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons, Cathedral and free-standing bell

tower, left. Luis Villa del Campo from Madrid, Spain, CC BY 2.0, via Wikimedia Commons , Statue of Santo Domingo



We visited the Santo Domingo de la Calzada Cathedral, first. Santo Domingo was known for aiding the Camino pilgrims who were traveling through the town and the town is named after him as is the Cathedral. Domingo was a peasant and a shepherd. He tried to enter the Benedictine order in two different place but was refused admission in both places. Instead, he decided to live as hermit near the town, now named after him.

Then in 1039, he began helping the bishop of Ostia, who was sent to the area by the Pope to help the people of La Rioja and Navarre fight a locust plague that was destroying crops. The Bishop, Gregory, after working with Domingo decided to ordain him. With the Bishop's help, Domingo constructed a bridge over the Oja River, which the Camino pilgrims had to cross near the town.

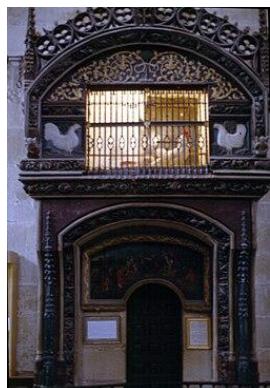
When the Bishop died in 1044, Domingo returned to his previous hermitage area and began clearing the area to build a paved pathway which became the principal route of the pilgrims. Then he was joined by Juan de Ortega and together they built a stone bridge as a replacement for the wooden one. Finally, they built a building to serve as a hostel for the pilgrims. It is called the Casa del Santo and is still

in use today. Domingo and Juan began building a church in 1099, supported by Alfonso VI of Castile. The church, now the cathedral, was consecrated in 1106.

Domingo died in 1109 and was buried in his church and later the church was renamed for him. It was elevated to the status of a cathedral in 1230. Because of his calling fore developing public works, he is the patron saint of Civil Engineers in Spain.

Several miracles of healing have been attributed to Santo Domingo. Several reports indicated that the healed person had visited his tomb or the cathedral. But perhaps the most intriguing miracle involves a rooster and a chicken. In the 14th century, a German man, aged 18, was on the Camino pilgrimage in a hostel with his parents when a young señorita invited him to engage in sexual activity which the 18-year-old declined. Because she was angry at the rejection, the señorita hid a cup of silver in the bag of the young man and then informed on him to the authorities. The punishment for stealing this cup was hanging.

The parents went to retrieve his body from the gallows when they heard his voice telling them that Santo Domingo had saved him. His parents went to the magistrate to tell him of this and the magistrate replied that their son was as alive as the cooked rooster and hen the magistrate was eating. And right then the two birds jumped from the magistrate's plate and began to jump around clucking and crowing.



In the Cathedral of Santo Domingo, a rooster and a hen are displayed constantly in a cage in the choir loft of the cathedral. They are white birds with red combs and wattles, descendants of the original birds. A flock of the birds are kept in a chicken coop and cared for by the confraternity of Santo Domingo outside of the city. And they are rotated from the cathedral monthly to the less confining chicken coop. Gerd Eichmann, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons

After visiting the cathedral, we headed out on the next stage to reach Belorado. As we walked we noticed a change in scenery from wine country to grain and produce fields as we enter Castilla y León province. Also gone are the steep hills of the last stage. But the town of Belorado is shaded by the Sierra de la Demanda, a mountain range. We made a quick stop at the Church of Santa María before moving on, shown left and right.



Zarateman, CC0, via Wikimedia Commons, church façade left. MiguelAlanCS, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons, right, interior.



After our stop at the church, we continued on to San Juan de Ortega. Once we reached the village of Villafranca del Bierzo, we began climbing the Montes de Oca (a mountain). From the mountain we can catch glimpses of San Juan de Ortega, which is only a small hamlet. Its primary fame is that the Monastery of San Juan Ortega is there.

We learned about San Juan when we were in Santa Domingo de la Calzada. San Juan who helped Santo Domingo build the stone bridge on the Camino, the pilgrim's hostel, and the Cathedral. And Santo Domingo is believed to have helped San Juan build the Monastery located in the hamlet of San Juan de Ortega. This monastery was likely built to help the Camino pilgrims. The Augustinian-ruled Order of St.



Jerome provided the staff for the Monastery until about 1835 when it was abandoned. Of note, the monks who were there developed an important pharmacy which helped out those in the surrounding area.

Jaume, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons, monastery left. Zarateman, CC0, via Wikimedia Commons, right, the church.



In the early 1800's the area around the monastery declined and the hamlet had few inhabitants. But as the increase in Camino pilgrims began in the 1980's, the monastery was gradually restored and now has about 50 beds and a café for pilgrims.

The church of the monastery is late Romanesque in style. The tomb of San Juan de Ortega is in the



church. Over time there have been additions and renovations. For example, Isabella I of Castile ordered Gothic arches to be added to the church in the 1400's as well as a chapel of St. Nicholas. Carlospalacios, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons, altar, left. After exploring the Monastery and having some time to pray at the church, we left the hamlet and resumed our pilgrimage, heading for Burgos, one of the major cities along the Camino.

This section of the Camino is mostly flat so the walking is easy.

Seventeen miles later we reached Burgos. This city is the starting point of the Arlanzón river. It is in Burgos that several tributaries come together to create the mighty river. Burgos is the capital of the province with the same name. It has about 175,00 residents. Jardoz, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons, overview of the city of Burgos. Burgos was settled around 844 but by the 1200's it was an important center of commerce in the north of the Kingdom of Castile. But by the 1600's, the city underwent a decline. During the second quarter

of the 20th century, the city became operations center for Franco's dictatorship during the Spanish Civil War. Since 1964 the city has grown significantly economically.

Eduardo Elúa, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons, Cathedral façade, left. JoJan, CC BY 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons, Cathedral altar piece, right.



Our first stop was at the Holy Metropolitan Cathedral Basilica Church of St Mary of Burgos, AKA the Cathedral or St. Mary's. The cathedral is the third church built in its location. It was begun in 1221 in French Gothic style. The layout is that of a Latin Cross. Major renovations embellished the Cathedral in the 1400's and 1500's, including dome of the transept and the spires on the main facade. In the 1700's Sacristy was renovated and the front doors also enhanced. The cathedral contains many pieces of artwork by renowned Spanish artists, including painters, sculptors, architects, and glassmakers. We enjoyed looking at the lovely interior and went to Mass here.



Next, we headed to the Abbey of Santa María la Real de Las Huelgas. The abbey was formed in 1180 and is about a mile outside of the city. Lourdes Cardenal, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons, right.



Many royal weddings have been held at the Abbey; these were not only between Spanish royalty but included royals from other countries. It has also been the burial site for many royals from the area. Then we continued on our pilgrimage, stopping at a small village known as Santo Domingo de Silos. We stopped to see the Abbey there. It is from around the 10th century during the occupation of the area by Visigoths. The church has been



renovated over time. Gerd Eichmann, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons, Abbey Santo Domingo de Silos, left. The Abbey declined following Muslim raids but was restored under the leadership Santo Domingo de Silos, who was abbot of the monastery between 1041 and 1073, and after whom it was later named. In 1835, all of the Spanish monasteries were closed, including this one. A group of French Benedictine Monks reopened it in 1880.

Thanks for participating! Your Tour Director, Kathy Scharer