

Camino Resources



This list of Camino resources is based on our experiences to help you get started planning your own adventure. No guarantees about how current it is.

Organizations & Forums

- [American Pilgrims on the Camino](#) is a great place to start. They also have local chapters—ours in Tacoma was invaluable to us. Membership is a good investment. You can also buy your credential in advance from them.
- Facebook groups or other online groups can be extremely helpful. The American Pilgrims sponsors a Facebook group for walkers and another for bikers. We found independent ones for the Via Podienses and Camino del Norte that had very specific information that you won't find in a guidebook.
- Ivars forum at www.caminodesantiago.me is probably the most comprehensive and active online forum.

Guidebooks

Guidebooks come in both Kindle and hardcopy versions. We've used both styles.

- We've used [Cicerone](#) guides for the Via Podienses (Le Puy to the Pyrenees via GR65), Camino del Norte, and The Way of Saint Francis. Each comes with GPX files to upload for navigation. Cicerone now has a guide for the Camino Frances—with the Finisterre route-- written by accomplished guidebook author, Sandy Brown.
- *A Pilgrim's Guide to the Camino de Santiago (Camino Francés)* by John Brierly is published by [Camino Guides](#) and is very commonly used.
- For the Via Podienses route we found that it worked best to use the Cicerone book and a local guidebook, *Miam Miam Dodo GR 65 Section 1*. *Miam Miam Dodo* is in French but has a more detailed list of lodgings. Section 1 covers Le Puy to Cahors. You can buy it in advance or wait till you get to France. Then buy Section 2 Cahors to the Pyrenees towards the end of Section 1 to save weight. The Cicerone guide provides much more background on this Camino.

Lodging

Typical pilgrim lodging in Spain is an albergue—a hostel like situation with multiple beds in a room. The equivalent in France is called a gîte. But you can also stay in hotels. Most of the time you can walk into a town and find lodging, but during busy seasons, in more remote areas, and closer to Santiago, it pays to book ahead a day or two.

- The guidebooks above have detailed lists of lodging. Many are updated yearly and have interim updates available online.
- **Booking.com** is our favorite website/app for short term stays.
- **Airbnb** is good for longer stays—mainly at the beginning and end of the trip.

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- **Buen Camino** and **FarOut Guides** (see apps list below) also have lodging information.
- Consider splurging and staying in a Parador at least once—hotels built in historic Spanish buildings. More info at <https://paradores.es/en>

Maps

The guidebooks mentioned contain great maps. On some routes being able to load GPX tracks so you can navigate using your smart phone is very helpful. The Camino Frances is well marked but we found being able to use GPS was invaluable on other routes. Dennis uses the Gaia GPS and Laurie uses Wikiloc Buen Camino and FarOut Guides are also good options.

Packing List

We have a detailed packing list on our Camino resource page at worldrovers.com/planning-your-camino. It has explanations of what we chose and why, along with some brands. Good starting point to help you develop a list that works for you.

Language

If you don't speak the local language, you can often get by in English. However, it's easier and a sign of respect if you learn at least some phrases. There are many options, but our favorites are:

- **Duolingo** is a fun, language training app.
- **Pimsleur** is an audio focused training method. They sometimes have free trials at pimsleur.com or, your local library might have lessons available to check out.

Health Insurance

Check to see if your insurance company covers you overseas. If it doesn't, we'd encourage you to consider a plan to cover you for serious injuries. Forbes.com publishes a guide. For our 1000 mile Camino and a three month stay in Europe we used IMG, but research to see what is best for you. We've had to make visits to doctors several times and the cost of the visit and prescriptions were reasonable so we didn't make a claim. Pharmacies are also very helpful.

Apps

In addition to apps already listed consider:

- **Buen Camino**. Maps, routing, stage planner, lodging, alerts, bars and restaurants, etc.
- **FarOut Guides**. Similar to Buen Camino, but also has social media check in options.
- **WhatsApp** is very commonly used to connect and communicate with other pilgrims and even used for lodging reservations.
- **Relive** lets you create a short video tracking your path, complete with selected pictures. Great for sharing with friends and family back home.

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- **Rome2Rio** is good for seeing transit options such as buses and trains, especially in country.
- **Google Translate** is helpful when you don't know the local language.

Finance

You will need cash on the Camino. We have ATM cards that allow us to withdraw from an ATM and refund the fee. Be sure to use an ATM in a secure location at a recognized bank. In Spain Santander, BBVA, and CaixaBank are good choices. In France we used Credit Agricole and BNP Paribas most of the time. One time we used an ATM at a mini-mart in Scotland and it ate our card—and we could not get it back. We also carry two credit cards, from different companies in case one has an issue. You'll want whatever card you use to have NO foreign transaction fees. In our most recent Camino we found the digital Wallet app to be very useful and secure. We use Alaska and Barclay cards, but Laurie is looking into a Capital One travel card that might be good. Being away from home for an extended period makes it important to plan for regular life payments to be handled without a lot of dependence on you. We use autopay, prepayments and online payments to ensure regular life is not a mess when we get home.

Mentors

If you ask around, you're likely to find someone who has walked the Camino and most of us are passionate about helping others. Our first mentor was a friend of Laurie's aunt who had us over to dinner to share advice and stories. On a trip to Dry Tortuga we struck up a conversation with a fellow tourist—who had previously walked the Camino. He's the one who gave us great advice about the benefits of Merino Wool. Caminoists are everywhere.

Haircuts

On an extended Camino, you may need a haircut or trim. If you bring a picture of what you'd like your hair to look like, that will help get past any language barriers. Never hurts to have a Spanish speaking friend write a description of your cut.

Video

The Way starring Martin Sheen is a romanticized version of the Camino but still fun. *Six Ways to Santiago* is a documentary that better deals with the reality of the way.

There are many YouTube vlogs but one of the best is @Efren. He has done many of the Caminos and you can get a day-by-day guide to routes. You may find yourself remarking, "I remember this from Efren."

Books

Good books on the Camino or Spain include:

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- *Walking to the End of the World: A Thousand Miles on the Camino de Santiago* by Beth Jusino. This is the book that inspired us to do our 1000-mile pilgrimage across France and the northern coast of Spain.
 - *The Way, My Way* by Bill Bennett
 - *A Furnace Full of God: A Holy Year on the Camino de Santiago* by Rebekah Scott
 - *Guernica* by Dave Boling. A novel that is also a great introduction to the Basques.
 - *The Basque History of the World: The Story of a Nation* by Mark Kurlansky. Fascinating book about the Basques. Gives you great background on the region where the Camino Frances starts
 - *I'm Off Then* by Hape Kerkeling. Written by a famous German comedian. Funny and the inspiration for many German pilgrims.
 - *Ghosts of Spain: Travels Through Spain and its Silent Past* by Giles Tremlett. Great book about Spanish culture and the civil war.
- And many more...

We hope you find this list helpful as you embark on your own adventures.

Buen Camino



Dennis & Laurie Brooke

List available at worldrovers.com/planning-your-camino