

A Fresco Start Chapter 1 Tour

- an adventure from our backyard -

9 days / 8 nights. The First 141 km to Santiago



All good endings start with a great beginning! Some years ago, a group of my friends from Spain and I began walking the entire Camino de Santiago. As we all work, have families and other commitments, we decided to tackle our goal by doing portions of the trail over the course of many weekends. We hope to finish in 3 years' time! My original days of guiding in 1999 had me walking through the tiny villages of the Pyrenees from Roncesvalles, the start of the Way in Spain. Being back on the trail following the yellow arrows has inspired me to make good on an idea that I have been touting for years. I am happy, proud and above all excited to present to you A Fresco Start Chapter 1!

In addition, we also understand that people do want to walk the Camino, BUT....

→ Would rather not sleep in albergues, the communal dormitories available along the trail. Some pilgrims enjoy having their own bedrooms with a door, an en-suite bathroom, and plenty of hot water!

→ Do not want or cannot carry all their belongings with them. In fact, they enjoy being able to add some extra weight to their load and have some creature comforts, such as that iPad!

→ Are nervous and scared! Coming to a foreign country to walk for a couple of weeks is daunting, no matter how many books and web forums you have read. You want more than just an Orientation Packet sent to you in the mail – you want a LIVE person to answer your questions and help you take those first steps on your journey.

→ Don't want to eat alone. Independence can be great when traveling, but it is also nice to have some occasional companions to share those tales from the trail and a meal or two!

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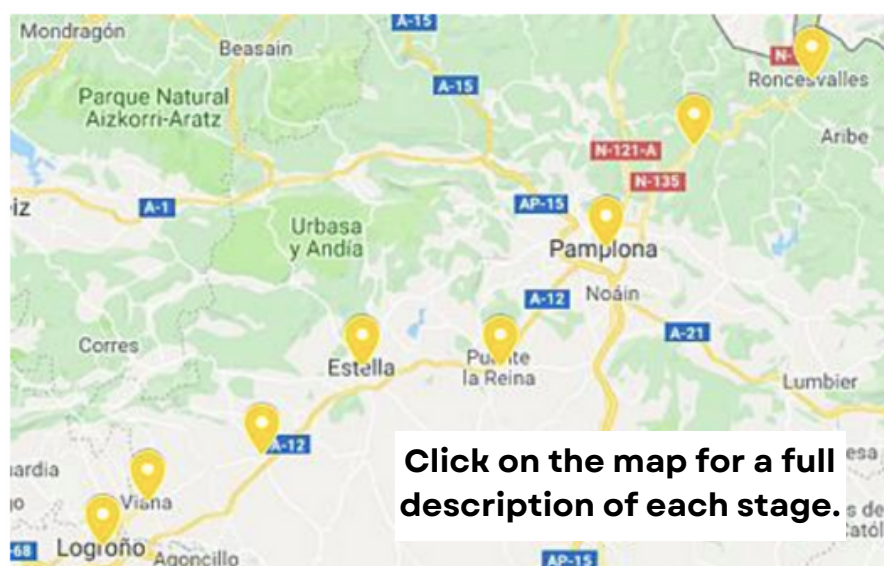
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With these thoughts in mind, we created our “Fresco Start Self-Guided Walk Tours”. On this journey, you will cover the first 141 km of the trail on foot as you start from the town of Roncesvalles. We will take care of your hotel arrangements, breakfasts, and luggage transfers as you go along the trail. All walking will be from inn to inn, so no need for shuttles in taxis or regrouping points at the end of the day.



Remember, A Fresco Start Camino means just that – a Fresco Tours guide will meet you at the Start! On the first evening in Roncesvalles, we will personally meet you to give you an Orientation Meeting, hand out your Welcome Packet that includes the Pilgrim’s Passport, and take you out for a fine meal of local cuisine! On the very next morning, your guide will be on hand to answer any questions that may have popped up overnight and walk with you out of town to help get your “feet wet” and introduce you to the symbols and markers of the Camino! Just a bit of experienced guidance, before you head out on your own!



Click on the map for a full description of each stage.



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Day 1 : Roncesvalles

In the afternoon, your Fresco Tours guide will hand out your Orientation Packets and review all the materials to get you ready for your Pilgrimage on the Camino de Santiago! Afterwards, we will take a walk around Roncesvalles, where we attend a moving Pilgrim's Mass. The blessing at the end is an appropriate way for you to start your journey. Afterwards, we have our first night's feast – perhaps some trout, like the ones Hemingway used to catch in the local river!

Dinner included



Day 2: Roncesvalles to Zubiri

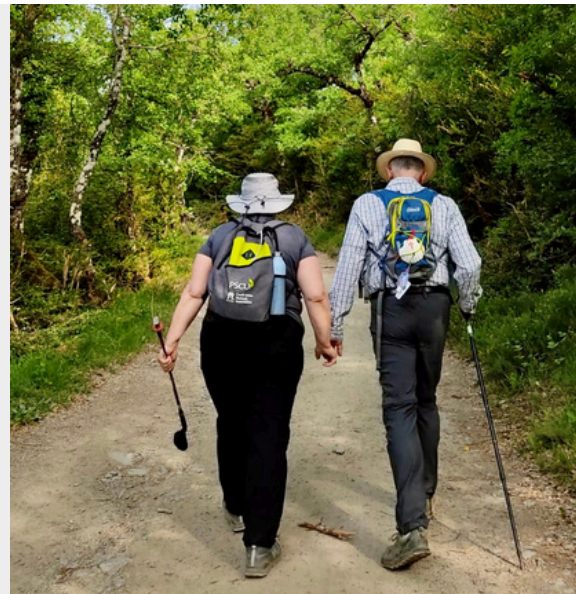
With our boots and scallop shells on, your Fresco Tours guide escorts you out of town following various Camino markers and the famous yellow arrow. You follow the yellow arrow through pastures and fields that make this part of Basque Navarra so famous for its local fresh produce. You walk by “caseríos”, giant stone farmhouses that have been in the same family for generations and generations. Tradition is the theme here! Entering Zubiri, you come across the Gothic bridge known as “La Rabia,” which was used by farmers in a ritual to prevent their livestock from developing rabies (rabia).

Breakfast included / Walking: 22 km or 14 mi

Day 3: Zubiri to Pamplona

This morning, you continue to Larrasoaña, a town with strong ties to the Camino as it was mentioned in the 12th century Codex Calixtinus, the official Camino guidebook of the time! You work your way into Pamplona, where you come across the 15th century Cathedral of Santa María la Real, with its beautiful cloisters and interesting façade. Navarra's patron saint is San Fermín, and in keeping with tradition, this energetic university city is always filled with tourists and locals, ready to keep the festivities going!

Breakfast included / Walking: 21 km or 13 mi



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Day 4: Pamplona to Puente la Reina

You leave Pamplona and make your way to Cizur Menor, where you can see the Church of San Miguel Arcángel. To get the blood going, the Camino gives you your first steady climb to the crest of the Alto de Perdón, where you can enjoy the views of the surrounding valleys. Following the scallop shells, you come to Puente la Reina, named in honor of Doña Mayor, who had the bridge built to make sure pilgrims coming from the French & Aragonés routes, could continue walking safely.

Breakfast included / Walking: 25 km or 15 mi

Day 5: Puente la Reina - Estella

Leaving Puente la Reina, you walk through rich agricultural fields of olives, grapes, almonds and fruit trees and will suddenly find yourself along ancient Roman roads and bridges leading into Lorca. After a few ups and downs, you enter the once magnificent town of Estella, where you can still see evidence of its importance in the 11th century as a merchant town. Pilgrims were also greatly respected, and their rights specifically protected in Estella's town charter.

Breakfast included / Walking: 22 km or 14 mi



Day 6: Estella – Los Arcos

Walking out of Estella, you come across the ancient Benedictine Monastery of Irache, where the winery still honors the ancient tradition of providing free wine to pilgrims! Have a sip, but not too much as you still have km ahead! The tower of the 12th century Church of San Andrés lets you know you've arrived in Villamayor de Monjardín, before continuing on to Los Arcos, whose ancient entrance was known as the Gate of Shells and was the access point to the Jewish quarter.

Breakfast included / Walking: 22 km or 14 m



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Day 7: Los Arcos to Viana

Your walk today takes you through kilometers of vineyards. While in Torres del Río have a look at the Iglesia de Santo Sepulcro, attributed to the Knights Templar and known for its special acoustics, before continuing to Viana. Viana is an energetic town with a lot of Camino history, including the 13th century Church of Santa Maria, where Cesare Borgia is buried. Borgia was said to be the illegitimate child of Pope Alexander VI, and he was killed while defending Viana in 1507.

Breakfast included / Walking: 19 km or 12 m



Day 8: Viana to Logroño

Seven days of walking, 141 kilometers, and you arrive to Logroño, the capital of La Rioja, and famous for its superb red wines. Today is a shorter walk, so it would only be appropriate to spend the afternoon sampling some of the Rioja's fine wines in this buzzing university city! Also, make sure to visit the 14th century Cathedral of Santa Maria la Redonda, known for its twin towers (Las Gemelas). Congratulations - you've completed the first chapter of your Camino!

Breakfast included / Walking 10 km or 6 mi

Day 9: Logroño/Tour Ends

After breakfast, your tour has come to an end. Safe travels!

Breakfast included / Walking: 19 km or 12 m



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DATES AND PRICING



Scan or click the QR code to Book.



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WHAT'S INCLUDED?

Orientation Meeting:

A Fresco Tour guide will hand deliver your Orientation Packet and give you a detailed meeting on the first night in Roncesvalles. Your Welcome Packet is filled with all the materials you'll need to transform into a pilgrim: Your credentials (Pilgrim's Passport), a scallop shell, daily maps of the route, a guidebook with historical information of the villages that you will pass through, and a few other goodies for the trail! We will answer any questions that you have before starting your journey to Santiago and on the next morning, lead you out on The Way! Minimum of 3 people for this service to be provided.



Accommodations:

Eight nights in a combination of 3 & 4- star hotels, restored manor homes, and small inns located on the Camino. All rooms have their own bathrooms. We have chosen places for their hospitality, comfort, and location.

*Keep in mind that as you will be walking through rural countryside, the availability of 3 & 4- star hotels all along the route is not possible.



Meals:

All breakfasts are included with your hotels. We have arranged that they will be supplemented from the standard Spanish breakfast of coffee & toast. The first night of the itinerary, our guide will take you for dinner at one of our favorite places in Roncesvalles - wine and beer included. Afterwards, we will provide you with a list of places along the Camino with food recommendations. Let us know if you have any dietary restrictions and we can ask our hotels to accommodate for those as well!



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WHAT'S INCLUDED?



Limited Group Size:

Although this tour is Self- Guided, we have limited the size of each departure to 16 passengers. Availability is on a first come, first serve basis.

Luggage transport:

We will arrange for the transfer of 1 suitcase / piece of luggage (20 kg or 45 lb) per person between your hotels on your walk along the Camino. If you require more than 1 bag, please contact us for details.

Guided Visit:

In Santiago, our local art historian will provide you with a guided visit of the Cathedral and the surrounding squares. A minimum of 5 people is necessary for this service to be provided.

Pre / During / Post Service:

We are here to help! Need assistance with hotels prior to or after your trip? Bus tickets to Roncesvalles? Returning from Logroño? Questions about what to wear? Need a taxi while on the trail? Based in Spain, we are here to make sure that your trip runs as smoothly as can be – please don't hesitate to ask for our help!



BOOK HERE

