Confraternity of Saint James

Pilgrim Guides to Spain

6. Madrid to Sahagún

Max Long

2013
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1. To make a donation, through the donation facility in the bookshop section of the website;

2. To send comments and corrections, based on their experience of the route, to maxstephensonlong@gmail.com; and

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The arrival at Sahagún after over three hundred kilometers of dusty tracks and sunny, sweaty days offers little in the way of comfort or congratulation; indeed, Sahagún, particularly in the summer months is a typical town lying along the Camino Francés to Santiago, along which thousands of pilgrims flock year after year. However, for those who wish to carry on to the ultimate goal of Santiago, the town offers all the provisions and necessities that a pilgrim could need, as well as marking roughly the half-way point on their journey to the holy city.

Many will be shocked by the great contrast of walking practically alone for hundreds of kilometers from Madrid, only to be surrounded by dozens fellow travelers on the “Pilgrim Highway”. Yet the path that lies ahead is both aesthetically and spiritually pleasing to the pilgrim. After all, in the words of Antonio Machado,

Caminante, no hay camino, se hace camino al andar.

### Accommodation

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<tr>
<th>Hotel/Hostal/Restaurante</th>
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<td>987 780 078</td>
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<td>Hostal Escarcha (€)</td>
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### Foreword to the Third Edition

The Third edition of the Guide in English to the pilgrimage from Madrid to Sahagún pays tribute to the changing nature of the route itself, which was created in 1999 with the publishing of the Spanish Guide to the route by the Asociación de Amigos de los Caminos de Santiago de Madrid. This new edition builds upon the remarkable work of Marigold and Maurice Fox, who wrote the first guide in English in 2000, and John Walker, who released the second edition in 2010.

The Foreword to the First Edition stated: “The authors are indebted to the Amigos of Madrid for creating a route so amenable to walkers, well waymarked and almost exclusively on paths, tracks, cañadas and a Roman road. Enormous effort and care has gone into designating a route which is scenically attractive and varied, has places of religious and cultural interest along the way and which can be walked by an averagely-fit person without recourse to tent, public transport or taxi. The pilgrim infrastructure is as yet embryonic but the Amigos are encouraging the villagers to provide pilgrims if not with a bed, at least with a “roof and floor” for the night. And the Amigos have made local people along the route aware that they live on a modern pilgrim route and, as a result, pilgrims are well-received.”

In over 10 years since the First Edition, the route has developed in a number of ways. The waymarking has improved to the extent that walking directions are almost superfluous. The number of albergues has significantly increased and hostels and hotels have closed or opened. The number of pilgrims using the route has also increased, although with numbers still below 500 walkers per annum, this is negligible when compared to the Camino Francés.

This edition takes account of these changes. This is truly a route where you can simply follow the yellow arrows. Therefore walking directions have been kept to a minimum, although walking notes have been expanded in those areas of the route which have been altered in recent years. There is more accommodation available on the route now and up-to-date details are provided. One novelty in this Third edition is the separation of the stage into 14 comfortable stages, each of which include useful altitude graphs.
This is a very picturesque route with much local interest. Marigold and Maurice Fox did extensive research for the First Edition and provided a comprehensive description of the history, buildings and sights along the route, which was later expanded and updated in the Second Edition. This has been retained in full. Therefore, rather than being a completely new Guide, this Third Edition is in large part an updated re-presentation of the excellent information contained in the First and Second Editions.

Central to the writing of this edition have been the many contributions received by multiple pilgrims who have wished to contribute to the development of this guidebook. In this sense the guidebook is truly a source written by pilgrims for pilgrims, and is thus perfectly adapted to the daily necessities of walkers along the Camino.

This Third Edition will be published as one of a series of Guides available in printed form or to download from the Confraternity of St James. Pilgrims who use the Guide are invited to send further information and updates on the route to the current Editor: maxstephensonlong@gmail.com

**The Confraternity of Saint James in the United Kingdom**

The Confraternity of Saint James in the UK is the largest and oldest English speaking association of pilgrims. The Confraternity promotes the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela and provides support and services to pilgrims.

Amongst these services are: Practical Pilgrim Days - where around the country they provide an opportunity for potential pilgrims to learn more; a regular members' bulletin; and a bookshop and library. The Confraternity also promotes research and provides a bursary to young people undertaking research into the movement around St James and they offer help to elderly, frail or disabled people who might otherwise be unable to undertake the pilgrimage.

The Confraternity publishes guides to many of the routes to Santiago and also runs two refuges for pilgrims at Rabanal del Camino (on the Camino Francés) and Miraz (on the Camino del Norte).

See more at [www.csj.org.uk](http://www.csj.org.uk).

Before reaching Grajal de Campos, a new rail bridge means that there are very few arrows. Walk straight ahead, beneath the new bridge, leading to a road which crosses the river straight ahead. Take a left and cross the river to travel straight to Sahagún, or walk up to the town on the right if you wish to visit Grajal de Campos.

**4 kms to Grajal de Campos** - bars, shops, buses and RENFE with trains to Palencia to León. Grajal de Campos is picturesquely grouped around the arcaded Plaza Mayor and the church of San Miguel with a Mudéjar south portal. There are two castles - the imposing square sixteenth century military fortress with huge round corner towers, and the castle-palace of the Marqueses de Grajal, built around 1540 in imitation of that in Alcalá de Henares which abuts the Plaza Mayor.

Having crossed the river, be sure not to take the first right, which leads to the main road to Sahagún, but rather carry on a little further, where you will find a *mojón* indicating the way to the right and on to Sahagún.

**6 kms to Sahagún** - bars, restaurants, shops, banks, a post office, RENFE (Palencia to León) and occasional buses.

It is hard to believe that Sahagún was once the place of the principal and most powerful Cluniac - Benedictine monastery in Spain, renowned for its pilgrim hospitality. The monastic buildings were destroyed by fire in the nineteenth century and the stones auctioned off. All that remains is the tower and part of the north apse, transept and vault. The upper, seventeenth century, section of the south portal of the Chapel of San Mancio, also part of the monastery, is now incorporated in the triumphal *Arco de San Benito* across *Avenida Doctores Bermejo y Calderón*. Sahagún possesses several red-brick Mudéjar churches. The finest of these are: the restored Romanesque *San Tirso*; *San Lorenzo*, also Romanesque (open for Mass at weekends only); and the Gothic-Mudéjar *La Divina Peregrina*, originally the church of a Franciscan monastery. In the museum of religious art in the Monasterio de Santa Cruz the Virgen Peregrina can be found, after which La Divina Peregrina is named.
Stage 14: Santervás de Campos - Sahagún (18 km)

The final stretch to Sahagún is neither particularly exciting or special, apart from the obvious pleasure that lies ahead for pilgrims; for some, Sahagún marks the end of a long, strenuous yet enjoyable journey that is coming to an end; for others, Sahagún is merely the beginning of a new adventure as walkers delve into the new experience offered by the much-travelled Camino Francés.

On the way out of Santervás there are two, clearly indicated options.

1) The first option is to follow the arrows to Melgar de Arriba, 6 km away where there is an albergue with five beds (Tele: 983 785 003). There are also shops and a bank. From there, there remain 2 km to Arenillas de Valderaduey.

2) The second option, and now the official path, is to follow the arrows straight to Arenillas, firstly along a road and then along a pleasant path which keeps a river to our left, 6 km to Arenillas.

Arenillas de Valderaduey - no facilities. The Ermita del Cristo del Humilladero.

There is a fountain on the way out of the town where cold, fresh water can be obtained. From Arenillas, a pleasant path parallel to the river takes us to Grajal de Campos.

The CSJ can also provide a Pilgrim Record (or Credencial) for members - www.csj.org.uk/how-to-get-a-credencial.htm

Statistics – Pilgrims walking or cycling the route from Madrid

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(Source: La Oficina de Acogida al Peregrino of Santiago de Compostela)

Internet resources

A lot of information is available on websites and blogs. Here is a selection:

http://www.mundicamino.com/
Information on the routes to Santiago with a section on the route from Madrid.

http://www.demadridalcamino.org/
The website of the Association of Amigos of the Camino to Santiago from Madrid. In Spanish. With details of the route and the Spanish guidebook available. They also post yearly updates on accommodation which can be useful to print out and take on the route.

http://www.caminosantiago.org/cpperegrino/cpalbergues/caminomadrid.html
Another website. The information is not always up to date.

http://todosloscaminosdesantiago.com/caminodemadrid
A very helpful and informative website with a section on the Madrid route.
A new tourist guide in Spanish published by the local authority in the province of Castilla and León, also available in print in some albergues.

For all maps of Madrid

Blog with slideshow of photographs of the route and an account of walking the route.

An accurate and detailed online map of the route

Accommodation

For a route which passes through so few towns and villages, the frequency and amount of accommodation is quite remarkable and the average walker should secure a bed without recourse to transport. There are now many more albergues than in the past and these are all listed in this Edition. Normally you should have few problems finding a bed but be aware that hostals may be full on Saturday nights or on public holidays or festivals - Semana Santa and the period around the Spanish National day, 12th October, in particular.

Much like on the other pilgrim routes, albergues are generally run on a donation-only system; it is the pilgrim who decides what price he or she is to pay. This, however, does not mean that albergues are free; they are run and maintained only through the contributions of the different walkers who use their services. It must be remembered at all times that hospitaleros (Those in charge of looking after the albergues) are providing a laudable voluntary service, and must be treated with due respect.

Hotel/hostal and albergue names addresses and telephone numbers are given in each location. This key provides a rough guide to prices: 70 – 100 euros: (€€€) || 40 – 70 Euros: (€€) || Less than 40 Euros: (€).

Description: Run by Irene, who runs a pilgrim shop next door. Meals can be provided for a donativo. Ask for the key at Calle MAyor, 25
Price: 5 euros for the night, 2 euros for breakfast. Extra charge in winter for heating
Tele: 983 785 196
Stage 13: Villalón de Campos - Santervás de Campos (21 km)

Follow the arrows out of town, passing an ancient fountain, before turning left at a crossing shortly after, taking a country track across fields to Fontihoyuelo.

9 kms to Fontihoyuelo - no facilities.

12 kms to Santervás de Campos - albergue, a bar and shop. Twelfth-century Mudéjar-Romanesque church of Los Santos Gervasio y Protasio. The church was originally associated with the Cluniac Benedictines but the monks left after a disastrous fire which destroyed all the Mudéjar-Romanesque church except the fine apses and tower. The outer two apses are red-brick Mudéjar, the central one is stone-Romanesque. The nave and west end have been rebuilt - externally in “neo-Mudéjar” style and internally in Classical style which grates somewhat with the Mudéjar east end. The church has been well-restored. Inside is a twelfth century Romanesque painted wooden Cristo which was damaged in the fire but has been restored and repainted and, in the south apse, a Romanesque font.

Albergue
Albergue Municipal de Santervás (24 beds)
Directions: In the Plaza Juan Ponce by the Iglesia St Gervasio.

Shops, bars, restaurants
There is a fair sprinkling of bars, restaurants, shops, banks, post offices and telephones along the way and these are indicated in the Guide. Note that there are stretches, particularly in the forest, where these facilities may be fifteen to twenty kilometres apart. There are effectively no facilities crossing the Puerto de la Fuenfría in the thirty-one kilometres between Cercedilla and Segovia. Pilgrims are advised to take food and water with them on most of the stages.

Water
There are not a lot of water fountains (fuentes) along this route and pilgrims are advised to ensure they have adequate supplies when setting out. Where there are bars water is freely available and some towns and villages have fountains. Fountains in the fields are usually for animals and you should assume the water is not for human consumption unless there is a sign to the contrary. The sign to this effect will say “No Potable” i.e Not Drinkable, or conversely “Potable” – Drinkable.

Buses, trains and taxis
Outside the main towns and off main roads public transport is very infrequent and often inconveniently timed and routed. Colmenar Viejo, Manzanares el Real, Navacerrada and Cercedilla are all linked to Madrid by either frequent buses or rail or both. In practice, you will need transport only in an emergency and this means a taxi: most bars will oblige and obtain one for you. Taxis cost about €1 per kilometer.

Banks, post offices and pharmacies
These are available along the route but not in every town or village.

Telephone
Public telephones are ubiquitous, with instructions in English. Alternatively you can arrange to get a Spanish mobile SIM card in Madrid, but this is not deemed necessary.

Useful Numbers:
Emergencies: 112
Police: 091
Guardia Civil: 062
Fire Service: 080
Non-urgent health information: 902 106 102
Red Cross: 91 335 4444

Tourist offices

There are dedicated offices in the towns and in the Ayuntamiento elsewhere.

Pilgrim Credencial and stamp (sello)

Members of the Confraternity can obtain from the CSJ secretary a pilgrim record or Credencial. This is a document which, when stamped at albergues, churches, monasteries, bars, hotels, hostels, Ayuntamientos, police stations etc is a proof of passage and presented to the cathedral authorities at Santiago, can help in obtaining your Compostela, or Certificate of Pilgrimage. You can also obtain a Spanish Credencial from the Amigos de los Caminos de Santiago de Madrid at their office at Calle Carretas 14 just off the Puerta del Sol in the centre of Madrid. A Credencial is also available in the Sacristy at the Church of Santiago which is located in the Plaza Santiago near the Cathedral and Royal Palace. Pilgrims must be in possession of a Credencial to be allowed to sleep in the albergues along the way.

Waymarking

This route, like all other pilgrim routes in Spain, is marked by the characteristic yellow arrows of the camino which pilgrims are so accustomed to and even come to cherish. These are maintained on a yearly basis by the Asociación de Amigos de los Caminos de Santiago de Madrid, and are generally painted yellow arrows placed in all sorts of places - lamps, rocks and walls are common examples. However, the route is now also indicated through the use of vieiras, the pilgrim shell, symbol of the Camino. On this route, it is the open side of the shell which generally points in the direction of the path, although there are some exceptions to this in places where shells have been placed incorrectly. The mileage on the milestones changes from province to province, sometimes indicating the remaining kilometers to Sahagú and sometimes to Santiago.

Follow an old train track parallel to the main road, straight to Villalón de Campos.

5 kms to Villalón de Campos - bars, restaurants, shops, a post office, banks, a tourist office and buses to Valladolid. There is a Gothic-Mudéjar church of San Miguel and the Rollo de Justicia, for which the town is known. The Gothic-Renaissance Rollo, a National Monument, was carved by stone masons from Burgos Cathedral and is richly covered with scallop decoration. A second Mudéjar church - the red-brick church of San Pedro - has a south portico similar to that of San Lorenzo in Sahagún. There are adobe buildings, one with a fine Mudéjar window (in the Plaza de San Juan) and old arcaded streets.

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<td>Hotel Venta del Alón</td>
<td>C San Juan, 6 Villalón de Campos 47600</td>
<td>983 740 951</td>
<td><a href="mailto:ventadelalon@ventadelalon.es">ventadelalon@ventadelalon.es</a></td>
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Albergue

Albergue Municipal Villalón de Campos
Location: Follow yellow arrows, towards the end of the village
Description: Pleasant albergue with 10 beds, hospitalero, living space and kitchen. Highly recommended, open from 15:00.
Price: Donativo
As you follow the arrows out of Medina de Rioseco a new way along the canal is marked.

11 kms to Tamariz - a tiny farm village with a stunning part wall of an old castle, Franco signs still visible on buildings and a friendly bar.

From Tamariz carry on to Cuenca de Campos, approximately 8 kms. The route from Tamariz is on a rather unpleasant, although barely used, asphalt road.

8 kms to Cuenca de Campos - A bar, post office and buses to Valladolid and León on the carretera. Red-brick Mudéjar church of Los Santos Justo y Pastor and second Gothic-Mudéjar church of Santa María del Castillo. Small shop in the ayuntamiento.

Accommodation
Bodega la Tata (€) has 7 rooms and a restaurant.
Location: San Pedro, 1
Tele: 983 761 131 615 063 588

Albergue
Albergue Municipal de Cuenca de Campos
Location: Calle Domingo Vero, 3
Description: 30 beds. Two dorms, fully equipped kitchen and lounge room with TV
Price: 6 euros (one euro more in December for heating)

Getting there
Madrid is easily accessible by bus, train and air.

Getting back
See CSJ Guide to the Camino Francés to continue to Santiago de Compostela. For those who wish to return to Madrid from Sahagún, there is a frequent train service between the two cities.

When to go
The high meseta suffers nine months of severe cold and three months of stifling heat. Avoid the summer (July to early September) when it can be extremely hot - temperatures are similar to those on the Camino Francés between Burgos and León at that time. Long stretches of the route have absolutely no shade and are so lonely are they that there will be no-one to offer help if you need it. Take plenty of water (you may not be able to replenish supplies en route) and wear a hat. Spring or autumn is the best time to make the journey. There are long hours of daylight (shorter in autumn), the weather is cool but it can also be windy and wet so you need to be appropriately equipped. The Puerto de la Fuenfria should be snow-free but bad weather may strike at any time. If necessary, the stage from Ceredilla to Segovia can be walked by road or on public transport. Winter will be severe and bitterly cold with short days and snow on the Sierra de Guadarrama. See the CSJ booklet “Winter Pilgrim” by Alison Raju.

Maps
Madrid to Sahagún is contained within the single Bartholemew RV Euro Map, sheet 1/2 North-West Spain, scale 1:300,000 widely available in U.K. bookshops. So few are the towns and villages in this part of Castile, that a surprising number are shown on the map and, even occasionally, the larger farms too.

Obtainable in Spain and from Stanfords and other specialist U.K. map centres, are larger scale maps in the MOPT series, scale 1:200,000 and even 1:25,000 if you are a lover of maps. The latter are beautifully produced and extremely detailed but each covers only a day’s walk!

Another option is to plot the route on Google Maps (maps.google.com) and print these for the way.

A small selection of five maps have been included for the first time in this edition. These have been printed courtesy of IDEE and are intended mainly for reference purposes rather than navigation.

**Language**

Castillian (Spanish) is spoken all along this route. Most local people speak little English and so pilgrims are advised to learn some basic Spanish in order to ask directions, order food and book accommodation.

**Personal safety**

Despite the fact that so little of the Madrid route is along roads, do not forget basic road safety. Make sure you can always be seen - especially in the dark, in twilight and in wet or overcast weather - wear brightly coloured clothing and try always to face oncoming traffic. It is advised that walkers travel with care in the dark, as it is easy to miss signs with little visibility. Walkers should also remember that virtually the entire route is cyclable and that many of the tracks are also used by farm and forestry vehicles, all of which can surprise you from behind.

In emergencies the telephone number to call is 112 and, given the isolated nature of some of the stages of this route, it would be wise to carry a mobile telephone.

**Summary of the Route**

The way from Madrid to Sahagún designated by the Amigos de los Caminos de Santiago de Madrid was never a major historic pilgrimage route but there are documented accounts of pilgrims who passed that way. Regained from the Moors early in the Reconquest, Madrid grew in size and prosperity to become a medium-sized town by the time Felipe II chose it as his capital in the sixteenth-century. Its population and economy grew further and today Madrid is a

Stage 12: Medina de Rioseco - Villalón de Campos (24 km)

The official route from Medina de Rioseco now follows the canal out of the town. Follow the arrows out of town then turn Right at the canal and keep straight on following the canal for approx 8 kms, on the left hand side. The path is straight and signed with arrows, bollards and occasional bird watchers' notice board. Continue past the old weir, until the arrows show you when to exit at the third bridge. There is a dilapidated building, an old mill and a turning point for boats. Then for approximately 3 kms follow the small asphalted road across the country to Tamariz. There are more bird guides and a viewing "hide" which can provide shelter.

**NOTE:** There is also an older, alternative route marked via Berrueces and Moral de la Reina, although it is less pleasant. Another alternative is to walk to Tamariz first, and then on to Villalón de Campos via Moral de la Reina, although this is reportedly poorly marked.
The second is the Church of Santiago. If you see no other church interior on your pilgrimage from Madrid to Sahagún, this you should see. The church of Santiago is a Renaissance church of 1533 designed by Rodrigo Gil de Hontañón. The west front (with scallop shell escutcheons) is, however, unmistakably Classical and the south portal, by Miguel de Espinosa, is a florid Gothic-Plateresque. There is a statue of Santiago Peregrino in a niche above the south portal and tiny scallop shells on the posts around the south terrace. Inside, the gilded retablo mayor by Joaquín Churriguera is stunning. Although gilded high Baroque Rococo may not suit all tastes, it is worth concentrating on the painted panels between the gilt for here is probably assembled the most complete series in Spain of paintings of the Life and Legend of Santiago. And unusually, the retablo is well-lit and easy to study. Surrounding the retablo are representations of the twelve Apostles.

Accommodation

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Albergue
1. Albergue Monasterio de Santa Clara  
   Location: Ctra. Nacional 601 (On the other edge of town, over the bridge)  
   Description: 10 beds, 2 toilets, 3 showers, washing machine, fully equipped kitchen  
   Price: 7 euros  
   Telephone: 983 700 982

major, modern, European capital city. With the renewal of interest in the Jacobean pilgrimage in the twentieth-century, especially its huge popularity in recent years, the Madrid Amigos decided to create this route to enable pilgrims from Madrid and central Spain to journey to the Camino Francés without taking transport. The route is about 320kms long and can be walked in about 12 days. However, Segovia, Simancas (for Valladolid) and Medina de Rioseco merit more than a brief visit.

The way is excellently waymarked throughout, so detailed walking directions are generally not necessary. Where they are needed Walking Notes have been provided in this Edition. Physically, the route is easy to walk. With the exception of the climb over the Sierra de Guadarrama, there are no hills or gradients of any significance. Graphs of the elevations throughout the route have been included in this edition, although these are to be read with caution as they merely indicate the height difference between towns rather than being an accurate relief graph of the route.

Remarkably for such a direct route - almost a straight line from Madrid to Sahagún - there is virtually no road walking. The route uses footpaths, Vias Pecuarias (VPs), cañadas, farm and forestry tracks and even a short stretch of paved Roman road, and the paths are clear and well maintained. As a consequence, the journey is stress-free and one which lends itself to reflection and contemplation, a true pilgrimage route. But the corollary is that there are fewer towns, villages or pilgrims than on other routes with the exception of parts of the Via de la Plata, which the Madrid route closely resembles.

Madrid to Segovia

Pilgrims can start their journey at the church of Santiago in the centre of Madrid, at the Plaza Castilla, in the Paseo de la Castellana (reachable by Metro) or at Fuencarral (reachable by metro) in the Northern suburb. Very quickly the pilgrim is in open countryside, on a vast treeless plateau with enormous fields of cereals stretching as far as the distant Sierra de Guadarrama. For the first hundred kilometers, the way goes gradually up towards the foothills of these mountains, crossing vast agricultural plateaux, wide poplar-lined river valleys and high granite moorland, and it passes two embalses. The camino follows cañadas or Vias Pecuarias, the ancient drove roads and tracks, here marked by small concrete cubes on which are
painted a picture of a cow and the letters VP. Sometimes these are enclosed by drystone walls, sometimes by wire fences - but never by canes from which the word cañada is derived.

After the ancient towns of Colmenar Viejo and Manzanares el Real, come the modern holiday towns of Navacerrada and Cercedilla at the foot of the Sierra de Guadarrama, popular recreational and walking centres for Madrileños. As the mountains get nearer, the countryside becomes more “alpine” and more wooded so that beyond Cercedilla you are into the vast pine forest which clothes the Sierra de Guadarrama. Cercedilla is the walkers’ gateway to the Puerto de la Puenfria, the pass to Segovia. The walk entails a stiff climb of 650m in eight kilometers followed by a gradual descent through endless pines to within sight of Segovia. Here you leave the mountains behind and there are only a few hills to come. The final stage into Segovia is along the Cañada Real.

Segovia to Simancas

Segovia occupies a dramatic site on a spur between the rivers Clamores and Eresma with its Alcázar perched on the point of the spur rather like the “prow” of a ship. From the path, you can see behind you the magnificent Segovian skyline, its towers, churches, cathedral and Alcázar all the way to Zamarramala. The way forward at first crosses a high rolling agricultural plateau and goes through small isolated farming hamlets, but it soon rejoins the valley of the Eresma and follows the river and its tributary, the Voltoya, to its confluence with the Adaja, eighty kilometres on, almost to the Duero. Sometimes the path runs beside the courses of these poplar-lined rivers; sometimes it diverges from them across fields. Santa Maria la Real de la Nieve, the first place of any size beyond Segovia, stands on a slate plateau above the valley but the way soon descends towards the Eresma again and into an area of low sandhills and pine forest through which the river and its tributaries flow in deep ravines. The pines are not the black pines of the Sierra de Guadarrama but stands of magnificent umbrella pines. The sandy paths which cross the Castilian pinares makes the journey hard underfoot. The forest is not continuous - vast tracts of pine trees are interspersed with equally vast open spaces, some cultivated, some grazed. The way continues thus through Nava de la Asunciön, Coca, Alcazarén, Valdestillas and Puente Duero to Simancas where the pine forest stops as abruptly as it began.

Key: Phone Alfredo (675 946 882) on weekdays, or David Martin, the mayor on weekends (635 440 521).
Price: Recommended donation of 5-7 euros.

Be wary when leaving Castromonte. A new road means that cyclists can travel 11 km along a road on to Valverde de Campos. For those walkers who prefer keeping off the asphalt, be attentive for the yellow arrows. Turn right off the road after crossing the Sequillo River, and follow a bushed path before rising to a cross roads, where one takes a left. After a very long, straight stretch along a country track, a yellow arrow points to the right, and then shortly after to the left, along a track which descends into Valverde de Campos.

9 kms to Valverde de Campos - fuente and a bar.

A few hundred meters outside of Valverde de Campos, turn right off the road, and reach an old abandoned house, and follow an old train track (tracks no longer visible) to the left, which eventually, after crossing the road again, leads to Medina de Rioseco.

5 kms to Medina de Rioseco - Medina de Rioseco is a quiet town with some pleasant plazas and the main street is lined by shady arcades. Medina de Rioseco is the main town of the Tierra de Campos, the Gothic Fields. Historically its economy was founded on sheep and cereals, still economically important today. Furthermore, Medina de Rioseco is known surprisingly as Ciudad de los Almirantes - the City of the Admirals - surprising for the city is some two hundred kilometres from the nearest sea. Alonso Enríquez made the city the admiralty headquarters of Castile on April 19th 1424! The admirals financed a grand Convent of San Francisco, consecrated in 1520, although only the conventual church which contains the tombs of the Enríquez family remains, but it is now closed. A second grand church, the Herrera-style church of Santa Cruz was renovated in the late 1990s, and now houses the “Museo de Semana Santa”.

The town boasts two more churches, both well worth seeing.

First the church of Santa María de Mediavilla, a Gothic hall church dating from 1490 - 1520. Besides fine retablos, grilles and the polychrome and gold stucco funerary Capilla de los Benavente, the church possesses a very fine organ and a very fine organist. Some of Medina de Rioseco’s renowned pasos are also to be found here.
Stage 11: Peñaflor de Hornija - Medina de Rioseco (24 km)

The route to Castromonte follows straight country roads, flanked by wide fields on either side, with little shade. About 5 km out of Peñaflor there exists an option to visit the Monasterio de la Santa Espina, a 12th Century monastery founded by Alfonso VII’s sister, which is clearly signposted.

For those continuing towards Castromonte, a tree line becomes visible in the distance, which the route enters, and, after passing a large pigsty to the left, emerges back out into the open. From here the spire of Castromonte’s church is visible in the distance.

10 kms to Castromonte - two bars, a shop, a fuente, the delightful Plaza de la Constitución and the imposing church of la Purísima Concepción with its slender spire.

Albergue:
Location: The albergue is at the entrance to the village, in a restored village school. There is a sign on the front wall: “GRUPO ESCOLAR VALVERDE – MONTES 1930”. This albergue has been renovated to a high standard and is very well equipped, with a kitchen and washing machine. There are around 30 beds.

Simancas to Sahagún

Just before Valdestillas, you leave the valley of the Eresma and cross the lands of the Duero, so long the frontier between Christian and Muslim Spain and the only major river crossed by the route. Beyond the Duero, the pilgrim enters the Tierra de Campos, the Gothic Fields which extend all the way to Sahagún. The Gothic Fields is archetypal meseta, a huge area of virtually treeless plateau, of enormous fields cultivated with cereals. Sometimes the soil is sandy, sometimes chalky but often thin and stony so the camino is frequently lined with heaps of stone and flints rather like cairns guiding the way. In the chalky areas there are steep-sided ravines to cross and many of the villages are spectacularly sited on spurs almost entirely surrounded by chalk cliffs. Why the area should be called the Gothic Fields is unclear. The Visigoths occupied all of Iberia and were not particularly concentrated here - their Spanish capital was Toledo. However, Wamba (Bamba) in the centre of the area has legendary connections with the Visigothic King Wamba. Villages are few in the Tierra de Campos - but those that exist are visible far ahead, their red-brick Mudéjar church towers peeping above the skyline - Ciguñuela, Wamba (Bamba), Peñaflor de Hornija, Castromonte and especially the memorable skyline of Medina de Rioseco. In such a flat landscape, distances can be misleading. Then comes more meseta and the villages of Moral de la Reina, Cuenca de Campos, Villalón de Campos, Fontihoyuelo and Santervás de Campos. Here you join the banks of the river Valderaduey for a few kilometers to Grajal de Campos and the final stretch over the hills to Sahagún.

Stages of the route

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<tr>
<td>El Goloso</td>
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<td>18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tres Cantos</td>
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<tr>
<td>Colmenar Viejo</td>
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<td>35</td>
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<td>Manzanares el Real</td>
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<td>Mataelpino</td>
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<td>57</td>
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<td>Navacerrada</td>
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<td>Ceredilla</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puerto de la Fuenfría</td>
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</table>
The distances between the places are those calculated by the Asociación de Amigos de los Caminos de Santiago de Madrid in their guide - as are the distances in the main body of this guide.

**Recommended Day-by-day stages**
The route can be comfortably walked in 14 daily stages, which are set out in this booklet as follows:

1. Madrid - Tres Cantos: 23 km
2. Tres Cantos - Manzanares el Real: 27 km
3. Manzanares el Real - Cercedilla: 19 km
4. Cercedilla - Segovia: 31 km
5. Segovia - Añe: 21 km

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<thead>
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<td>Valseca</td>
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<td>Los Huertos</td>
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<td>Pinilla-Ambroz</td>
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<td>Santa María la Real de Nieva</td>
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<td>Coca</td>
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<td>Castromonte</td>
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<td>Tamariz</td>
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<td>Arenillas de Valderaduey</td>
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<td>Grajal de Campos</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sahagún</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

San Salvador and the Gothic parish church of Santa María, whose imposing tower is visible across the plateau. There are bars, shops, banks and a post office.

**Albergue**

**Albergue Municipal de Peñaflor de Hornija**

*Location:* Plaza Mayor, 1

*Description:* Four places plus a mattress, toilet, hot water and shower. Keys from Bar Hornija. Public swimming pool nearby.

*Tele:* 983 565 102
niche along the south wall. Attached to the north side of the church, and reached through a door in the north wall, is a Capilla Mozárabe which has a single column and palm vaulting reminiscent of the famous palm vaulting of the Ermita de San Baudilio de Berlanga. There are fourteenth century wall paintings in the chapel. Finally, off the now-disappeared former cloister is a charnel house full of gruesome skulls and bones - the victims of pestilence and war.

Peñaflor de Hornija can be seen from a long distance. There are 2 ravines to cross just before the village, which are deep and hard-going. From a distance this can be misleading, as the town looks painfully close! In inclement weather it is possible to avoid the climb up the steep track into Peñaflor by taking the left fork at the base of the cliff. This path will lead you around the base of the spur and rejoin the camino on the opposite side.

6. Añe - Nava de la Asunción: 23 km
7. Nava de la Asunción - Villeguillo: 17 km
8. Villeguillo - Alcazarén: 18 km
9. Alcazarén - Puente Duero: 25 km
10. Puente Duero - Peñaflor de Hornija: 26 km
11. Peñaflor de Hornija - Medina de Rioseco: 24 km
12. Medina de Rioseco - Villalón de Campos: 24 km
13. Villalón de Campos - Santervás de Campos: 21 km
14. Santervás de Campos - Sahagún: 18 km

This schedule is merely a suggestion: alternative accommodation is available in towns in between those mentioned above, and each walker is invited to proceed at his or her own pace. One of the beauties of the pilgrimage is the freedom to walk as far as one’s body or mind sees fit; that is the true spirit of the Camino.
The Route

Stage 1: Madrid - Tres Cantos (23 km)

Madrid, capital of Spain, is a modern metropolis famed for its cosmopolitan culture and for its museums of classical and modern art. The site has been occupied from pre-historic times and stands at the crossing of two ancient Roman roads - Toledo to Zaragoza and Toledo to Segovia. At the time of the medieval pilgrimage, Madrid was a medium-sized settlement clustered around a Moorish Alcázar constructed in 854 by the Emir of Toledo as defence against a Christian attack from the north on Toledo. The capture of the Alcázar by Alfonso VI of León in 1083 brought the settlement into Christian hands at an early stage of the Reconquest and the repopulation of the town led to a thriving agricultural and commercial economy and a probable doubling of its inhabitants to about 25,000 by the mid-sixteenth century. This, together with its strategic position, good communications and independence from powerful religious and political factions, led to Felipe II’s choice of Madrid as the seat of government in 1561. Madrid prospered and grew further in population although it was neither a particularly grand town nor an episcopal See (until 1885).

At Simancas you leave the pine forests and the lands of the Duero for the Tierra de Campos, the Gothic fields. From here to Sahagún is all meseta; a vast tree-less plateau, sometimes chalk, sometimes sand, enormous fields and overwhelming skies.

6 kms to Ciguñuela - bars, shops, a pharmacy and occasional buses to Torrelobatón and Valladolid. Pilgrim statues in town centre.

Albergue
Albergue de Peregrinos La Casa del Maestro (4 beds)
Location: Calle Las Eras, 24
Description: Modern, spacious room, fully equipped kitchen, good bathroom. Four beds
Tele: 983 593 000

7 kms to Wamba (Bamba) - bars, a butcher, bakery and occasional buses to Torrelobatón and Valladolid.

Wamba is a beautiful limestone village, well-restored and very charming. Go up Calles Zapico and de la Cruz to the far end of the village where, to the right, is a large cobbled plaza, Calle de la Iglesia and the church of Santa María (or Nuestra Señora de la Asunción). The church is well worth a visit for it is one of the gems of the Madrid to Sahagún route, visually pleasing, historically interesting and unusual. The village of Wamba takes its name from the Visigoth King Wamba. Some sources say that Wamba was elected successor to King Recceswinth here in 672 and that he took the oath of allegiance on the tomb of his predecessor who is buried in the church. However, there is no evidence of Recceswinth’s burial in the church.

The church of Santa María dates from 928. In the twelfth century it became a Commandery of the Hospitallers of Saint John who established a monastery. The church now consists of a square Mozarabic east end (from the church of 928); a Romanesque tower and west end from the twelfth-thirteenth century church; and a later Classical-style south portico. Inside is a nave, two aisles and three square apses. There are Mozarabic horseshoe arches in the apses and the chancel arch with round-headed Romanesque arches and capitals along the nave. By the south door is a Roman-Visigoth font from Córdoba. There is a tenth century Romanesque bas-relief of a cross and tenth century pre-Romanesque wall paintings around the apse. A statue of San Roque Peregrino with scallop shells is in a
Stage 10: Puente Duero - Peñaflor de Hornija (26 km)

The route to Simancas is along a sandy path parallel to the main road - it is easier to take the cycle track beside it.

6 kms to Simancas - the Roman town of Septimanica, on a major crossing of Roman roads, and an episcopal see since 927 as well as an important defensive site along the line of the Duero - is a picturesque old hilltop town grouped around the church of El Salvador with its huge Romanesque tower and castle. Originally Moorish and then taken by the Christians, the castle was rebuilt by Alfonso III in “château-style”. In 1545, Felipe II designated it the “General Archive of the Kingdom” which it remains today - some thirty-two million documents in fifty-two rooms.

There are bars, restaurants, shops, banks, a post office and two frequent suburban bus routes to Valladolid.

Accommodation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hotel Simancas (€€)</th>
<th>Hostal La Abuela (€)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ctra. Nacional 620</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tele: 983 590 363</td>
<td>Tele: 983 590 375</td>
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By the end of the twelfth-century there were ten parishes within its walls, one of which was Santiago el Mayor. The Medieval church of Santiago, built over a former Moorish mezquita, was demolished by Joseph Bonaparte (brother of Napoléon) to increase the open space around the Palacio Real. The present church of Santiago dating from 1811 is on Calle de Santiago very close to site of the Medieval one. The Medieval street pattern can still be seen to the west of the Plaza Mayor in the former Moreia or Moorish Quarter. Here there are two Mudéjar churches with red-brick towers - San Nicolás de Servitás (Plazoleta de San Nicolás) and San Pedro el Real o el Viejo (Costanilla de San Pedro) which is also built on the site of a Moorish mezquita.

There are three documented accounts of eighteenth century pilgrims who passed along parts of the route between Madrid and Sahagún created by the Amigos. Nicolas Albani (Viaje desde Napolis a Santiago de Compostela, 1743) went from Madrid to El Escorial, then from Segovia to Valladolid along the Amigo’s route before diverting to Palencia, “losing himself” and joining the Camino Francés at San Nicolás de Moratinos near Sahagún. In 1750, the Frenchman, Santiago Baza and the Italian, Juan Dano, who were in trouble with the law in Oviedo, also travelled from Madrid to El Escorial and then along the Amigo’s route as far as Medina de Rioseco.

In the Plaza de Santiago, very close to the church of Santiago, is the church of the Comendadoras de Santiago of 1668, a monastery founded in the early sixteenth-century by Iñigo Zapata y Cárdenas. Inside is a retablo of Santiago Matamoros by Lucas Jordán (1695) and a statue of Santiago Peregrino by Antonio Pereda (1660). The church is a fitting place to start your pilgrimage and you can obtain your first stamp here.

Accommodation

All the facilities of a capital city. Hotels and hostels in all price brackets.

Tourist Offices

Nowadays there are Information booths at Madrid Airport and the main bus and train stations.
The Municipal Office of Tourist Information is at Plaza Mayor, 3. 
**Telephone** 913 665 477.

Street maps of the city are available at tourist offices and in the 
receptions of hotels and hostels.

The route plotted by the Amigos starts at the Church of Santiago in 
the Plaza de Santiago near the Cathedral and Royal Palace. 
Waymarking with yellow arrows begins at the 
Plaza Castilla, in the 
Paseo de la Castellana, 6.5 kms from the Church. The waymarked 
route goes from there past Fuencarral, 11kms from the Church, on 
the way to Tres Cantos, 23 kms from the church. There is a metro 
station at both the Plaza Castilla and Fuencarral.

If you decide to walk from the Church of Santiago simply follow a 
map of the City until you see the first yellow arrow on the lampstand 
outside of the Rodilla Restaurant in the Paseo de la Castellana.

You may decide to take the Metro to this point. There are a number 
of exits from the Metro station. The easiest way to locate the starting 
point is to face in the direction of the two ‘leaning’ towers which 
dominate the area, so that you can see on the left hand side of the 
road beyond them four huge modern glass office blocks. Move over

9 kms to Puente Duero - a neat and tidy modern town with lots of 
low brick houses and small workshops which line the Cañada de 
Valdestillas, the way into the town and to the Duero and the 
picturesque medieval bridge over the river known locally as 
pucelana. There are bars, restaurants, shops and buses to Medina 
del Campo and Valladolid.

**Albergue**
Albergue Peregrinos de Puente Duero
*Location:* Calle Aniago, 4 - a wooden hut just before crossing the bridge, to the left.
*Description:* One of the most pleasant albergues on the camino, run by Arturo, President of the Valladolid Association, with a live-in hospitalero all year round, 7 beds, kitchen and a very pleasant, homely atmosphere. Orchard and quiet garden area. Not to be missed.
*Telephone:* 678 318 188
*ajova_s@yahoo.es*
Stage 9: Alcazarén - Puente Duero (25 km)

5 kms to “Brazuelas”. Follow the camino and after an easy walk on a clear sandy path through the woods you exit at “Brazuelas” - a picturesque, ochre walled complex of farmhouse, broiler houses, farm buildings, a chapel, palomars and a private ethnographical museum. It is also the mid-way point on the camino between Madrid and Sahagún. This is marked by a modern pilgrim Cruceiro with Jacobean sculptures around the base, including the Translation of the Relics of Santiago and the tomb of the Apostle in the crypt of Santiago Cathedral.

2.5 km later the route takes a left along a road, before crossing the Eresma river for the last time, and later taking a turn to the right, along a country track which eventually leads to a pleasant rest area below the Siete Iglesias hermitage. This is a shady area with benches provided which are suitable for eating. Immediately after we cross the Adajo River over the Puente de Piedra, a low-lying bridge that may get flooded in the wetter months of the year. From here the route is straightforward to Valdestillas.

9 kms to Valdestillas - bars, restaurants, shops, banks, a post office, buses and RENFE - Medina del Campo to Valladolid suburban service. There is the Gothic church of Nuestra Señora del Rosario.

11 kms to Fuencarral (from the Church of Santiago)

If you decide to depart from Fuencarral, take the metro, line 8, to the Fuencarral station. Facing the exit steps from the metro, go diagonally right across a small car park (keeping the metro wall to your left) and left through a small passage to Calle Braille. Turn right to the junction with Calle Anastasia López and left up to the junction with Calle de Sant Cugat de Valles. Cross over Calle de Sant Cugat de Valles onto a small tarmac road. This is the Paseo de las Alamedillas which leads to a small park where you will pick up the yellow arrows.

The route crosses an old railway bridge before joining the “Antiguo Camino del Pardo”, which leads practically all the way to Tres Cantos. The early part is dominated by the huge walled estate of Monte El Pardo, former royal hunting ground and residence of General Franco. For a considerable distance before reaching Tres Cantos the wall will be on your left. The route eventually joins a cycle track which runs along a busy a motorway. On the edge of Tres Cantos there are two footbridges crossing the motorway. If staying in Tres Cantos for the night, cross the second footbridge, opposite the
Hotel Foxa, and follow the yellow arrows to the centre of the town. If simply seeking water or provisions this may be a long detour. There is a regular bus service to and from Madrid, as well as a Cercanias train stop.

12 kms to Tres Cantos – an industrial town with banks and a pharmacy. Often referred to as Madrid’s Brasilia, this planned “satellite city” was commissioned under Franco in 1971, and has since expanded to house 41000 inhabitants. Two large supermarkets offer ample supplies for pilgrims.

Accommodation

**Albergue**

*Location:* In the Centre of the town, in the basement of the Ayuntamiento

*Price:* Donativo

*Description:* 4 beds, 2 showers, generally comfortable although basic. On the down side, pilgrims are asked to leave before 6.30 a.m. There is a coffee machine and a snack dispenser which can be used for breakfast. It is wise to phone in advance if arriving in the late afternoon.

*Telephone:* 912 93 80 00

**Hotels:**

This leads to the church, the Iglesia de Santiago Apóstol.

**Accommodation**

<table>
<thead>
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<td>Ctra. de Madrid</td>
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<td>Tele: 983 609 234</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Albergue:**

*Location:* A yellow house on the road on the way into the town, opposite Bar Duran.

*Description:* 8 beds, shower, toilet and a kitchen with microwave. Keys can be obtained in the Bar Real, near the Plaza Mayor, or in the tourist information centre. Cleaned and maintained regularly.

*Telephone:* 912 93 80 00

Both sets of towers remain in view
Stage 8: Villeguillo - Alcazarén (18 km)

The route to Alcazarén from Villeguillo is pleasant, if only slightly monotonous. The route is well waymarked, and initially goes through more dense pine forests, before emerging at a main road, where pilgrims must choose whether to take the road to the right, crossing the Eresma river and following along its east bank in more sandy pine forests, or cross the road straight on. Due to the difficulty of walking in the sandy pine forests, walkers are advised to take the second option.

The walk follows country tracks along a heavily irrigated estate, passing the old town of Valviadero, a small group of houses with a chapel, now uninhabited. With Valviadero to our left, we continue along the track, which eventually reaches a short stretch of pine forest before joining a road into Alcazarén.

Walkers are advised that this is a long stretch during which there are no opportunities to collect water or provisions until Alcazarén.

18 kms to Alcazarén - bars, restaurants, shops and buses to Olmedo and Valladolid. Ruined Mudéjar red-brick church of San Pedro. Restored Mudéjar church of Santiago. Follow the arrows into Alcazarén. Turn right at the Monument to the Discovery of America.

NOTE: An alternative route has now been opened up from San Sebastián de los Reyes, starting from the Iglesia de San Sebastián, which includes a pleasant walk along the wall of the Dehesa Boyal park, before joining the main route just before reaching Tres Cantos. San Sebastián de los Reyes can be reached from Madrid by bus or Cercanías train. The route is very well waymarked. Being 19km in length, it is a suitable distance for a first day of walking, and could be an option for those unwilling to walk the relatively unpleasant first stage from Madrid.

Walking notes (in Spanish only) can be obtained here: http://www.ssreyes.org/acces/recursos/doc/Servicios_municipales/Medio_ambiente/366919858_2632010101943.pdf

From the Cercanías station Alcobendas - San Sebastián de los Reyes, walk down the avenida de España and take a left at the Calle Real, before taking the third street on the left, which leads to the Plaza de la Iglesia, from where the route is well signposted.
Stage 2: Tres Cantos - Manzanares el Real (27 km)

From the footbridge into Tres Cantos, take a left into a country track, immediately following the arrows to the right, along a track parallel to the motorway, which eventually descends to a river (usually dry in the summer). The route follows the river practically all the way to Colmenar Viejo, before taking a left along a country road which enters Colmenar Viejo via the cemetery. There are no fountains on the route, so take plenty of water. Follow Calles de las Huertas and Santa Ana into the centre.

12 kms to Colmenar Viejo - an ancient hill-top town, with a casco antiguo (old town centre) crowned by the splendid Gothic church of the Asunción de Nuestra Señora and several chapels. The church was founded by the Mendoza family, the powerful lords of much of the lands around Manzanares el Real, including Colmenar el Viejo. Their wealth and patronage is clearly visible in the size of the church and in the magnificence of its architecture, carved portals and retablo mayor. There are banks, shops and a pharmacy. There is also a local museum (Plaza del Maestro Alemida, 1) which is well worth visiting.
La Resinería (€€)
Calle Los Cinco Caños, 2
Tele: 921 586 534 || 921 586 006

Casa Rural La Era (€
€€)
Avenida de Icona, 26
Tele: 921 586 153 || 667 114 300

Refugio Municipal de Coca (4 beds)
Avda de Juan Pablo II, 42
Tele: 921 586 011

Albergue:
Refugio Municipal
Description: Full house, plenty of room, former teacher's house. Cleaned and decorated frequently. Microwave but no real kitchen. Pick up the key from Charo, who lives nearby. Sign on the door detailing instructions of how to collect key, which can be collected in House Number 19, roughly 100 meters from the camino.
Price: 5 Euros Donation

7 kms to Villeguillo - There is an imposing red-brick church of San Pedro Apóstol with an evening Mass and warm welcome for pilgrims. There is a bar which does lunches and even late lunch for pilgrims. Albergue: Phone mayor first for key and directions. The albergue is on the opposite edge of the village, so it is suitable for pilgrims with horses or donkeys. The albergue is modern with a fully equipped kitchen with fridge and microwave. There are 2 bathrooms.

Albergue:
Albergue de peregrinos de Villeguillo
(20 beds), Paraje de El Terrero
Tele: 921 583 104 || 921 583 077
677 534 266 || 921 583 102
638 154 916

Accommodation
No Albergue in Colmenar Viejo. One option is to take bus 753 back to Tres Cantos and then return in the morning.

Hostal El Chiscon (€€)
Calle de los Frailes, 89
28770 Colmenar Viejo
Tele: 918 452 847

Hostal Chabeli (€)
Boteros, 6
28770 Colmenar Viejo
Tele: 918 451 165
Mob: 0626 882 237

Madrid - Colmenar Viejo
Base Map – IGN topo maps from IDEE
Follow the arrows from the church of the Asunción de Nuestra Señora in Calle Isabel la Católica. Look out for shells on the walls as arrows are sometimes cleaned while removing graffiti. Soon the town comes to an end and you are out on rocky granite moorland. Ahead stretches the white camino and, in the far distance, the Sierra de Guadarrama to which you are heading. From here to Manzanares el Real the way largely follows walled cañadas, excellently waymarked, easy walking with only the occasional rocky scramble. In Spring there is an abundance of wildflowers.

**Walk towards the mountains you will eventually cross**

**15 kms to Manzanares el Real** - a delightful town with a long history. Vestiges of Druid, Roman and Visigoth civilisations remain in the area, but the town itself was founded in 1248 after the Reconquest, by citizens of Segovia. When Alfonso X incorporated it into his kingdom, it became El Real de Manzanares, reaching its zenith in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries under the powerful Mendoza family who were awarded estates in the area for services to the crown. Diego Hurtado de Mendoza received El Real de Manzanares from Juan II at the end of the fourteenth century and proceeded to build a castle - its ruins, the Castillo Viejo, lie beside the camino. But it was the grandson of Diego Hurtado de Mendoza, the first Duque del Infantado, who built the present castle in the late fifteenth century around a thirteenth century hermitage whose Mudéjar apse is visible in the castle walls. The castle is a superb example of Castilian military architecture extended and embellished as a residential palace under the second Duque del Infantado by Juan Gúas. But the Mendozas occupied the castle for less than a

**Stage 7: Nava de la Asunción - Villeguillo (17 km)**

After Nava de la Asunción, there is a mojón with two arrows (A and B). More information would be helpful on these two routes, but most pilgrims agree that B is the safest option.

**10kms to Coca** - the Iberian Cauca, birth place of the Emperor Theodosius I (though he is also claimed by the Andalusian town of Italica). Today, Coca is famous for its extraordinary fifteenth century Gothic-Mudéjar red-brick castle, a truly fantastic creation of crenellated towers and turrets arranged symmetrically around double square walls. The castle was built by Moors on the orders of Bishop Alonso de Fonseca who had been given permission to build by Juan II. The Gothic church of Santa María La Mayor is of particular pilgrim interest. High above the retablo mayor is a statue of Santiago Peregrino with staff, gourd and scallops. A marble grave slab on the chancel floor is carved with scallop shells and a fanciful adaption of the sword of the Order of Santiago. There are also two fine marble tombs of members of the Fonseca family, the owners of the castle. Coca retains a short stretch of its medieval walls and the Arco de la Villa, the town gate and the Mudéjar Torre de San Nicolás. There are bars, restaurants, shops, banks, a post office and buses to Segovia.

**Accommodation**
Margarita at the local bakery (pastelería) offers pilgrims a “Pilgrim Tart” and a stamp.

Albergue:

Albergue de Peregrinos
Plaza de Toros de Nava (4 places)
Plza José Mata
Tele: 921 580 036
Key from Margherita at the Pastelaría (Bakery) Rosana, Elias Virseda, 21
Tele: 921580 993

Family quarrels caused it to be abandoned and it lay in ruins until the first restoration works in 1914. It was declared a Historical Art Monument in 1931. The castle is now owned by the Comunidad de Madrid, the Regional Council and used for public functions, conferences, exhibitions and so forth and can be visited on conducted tours only. Also to be seen are the Ermita of Nuestra Señora de la Peña Sacra (containing an albergue) and the fifteenth-sixteenth century church of Nuestra Señora de las Nieves.

Manzanares el Real is now a major tourist centre for Madrileños with lakeside sporting and recreational facilities and many kilometers of footpaths long and short in the mountains of La Pedriza. Walking is a long tradition in the area - the Cañada Real Segoviana of 1273 from Gibraltar to Soria passes nearby and between Manzanares el Real and Cercedilla, the camino from Madrid to Sahagún makes use of the great Sendero de Largo Recorrido GR10 from Valencia to Lisbon (600 kilometres). While the town is not on a historic pilgrim route, pilgrims certainly passed through. The town's tourist literature contains a picture of a very nineteenth century looking pilgrim crossing the Sierra de Guadarrama with a hat covered in shells, a long staff topped by a gourd, plus-four style trousers and his possessions carried in a sack over his shoulders.

The town has many facilities: shops, banks, post office, pharmacy, medical centre and an albergue.

Accommodation

Albergue:
Location: The albergue is within the walls of the Ermita de Peña Sacra, located on a hilltop 2 km from the town centre, with magnificent views. Pilgrims are warned that they must call in at the vicar’s house (Casa del Cura) in the main plaza in Manzanares in order to enquire for the key, and must return the key to the same place the next morning. Pilgrims are warned that the albergue is often not open on weekends
Casa del Cura opening times: 16:00-18:30
Price: 5 Euros
Description: Fully equipped and large kitchen, over 20 beds, 2 showers, very comfortable albergue with great views. Take provisions up from the town.

Warning: Recent reports suggest that this albergue has now been closed, in which case pilgrims will have to seek alternative forms of accommodation.
private albergue which does not charge a fixed amount, but is run on donativos instead.

The path to Nieva goes along an old cattle path which runs parallel to a road which we keep on our left.

2 kms to Nieva - bars, shops and buses to Segovia and Coca. The village is an attractive blend of slate and brick houses with pantile roofs, their small gardens enclosed by slate walls. But its jewel is the Romanesque-Mudéjar church of San Esteban. It has a pure Mudéjar brick apse and tower and a Renaissance south portico. The interior has been restored.

Accommodation:

The path to Nava de la Asunción ventures into the so-called Tierra de Pinares, travelling through thick pine forest with sandy paths which makes walking difficult at times. Traditional pine sap collection is visible all along the way, with deep cuts in the trees and clay bowls attached which collect the slowly dripping sap. On the entrance to the forest there is a pleasant pick-nick area.

Before reaching Nava de la Asunción, the camino is blocked by a large, roughly rectangular sand quarry. It is necessary to turn right, then left along its long side and left again to rejoin the route.

10 kms to Nava de la Asunción - larger than Santa María la Real de Nieva and more modern, with many red-brick buildings including the huge church of La Asunción de Nuestra Señora, originally late-Mudéjar but since much rebuilt. There are shops, bars, restaurants, banks, a post office, and buses to Segovia and elsewhere.
Stage 6: Añe - Nava de la Asunción (23 km)

6 kms to Pinilla-Ambroz - There are no facilities.

5 kms to Santa María la Real de Nieva - An old village dominated by its church of Nuestra Señora de la Soterraña. Though sadly disfigured by new residential building, the village has a charming old centre with an arcaded central plaza. The Gothic church is a delight. Formerly the church of a Dominican monastery founded in 1393 by Enrique III and his wife, Catherine of Lancaster, it has a finely carved north portal and a lovely white limestone Romanesque-Gothic cloister with recently restored capitals. There are bars, restaurants, shops, banks, a post office and buses to Madrid, Segovia and elsewhere.

Accommodation:

Albergue
Albergue de Peregrinos de Santa María la Real de Nieva (6 beds)
Calle Fuensanta, 1
Tele: 921 594 667 || 619 772 412 (Javier Gonzalo), 686204141 (Jose Antonio de Pedro)

Description: Pleasant small albergue run on donations with good showers and a kitchen. The albergue is housed in an old barn where migrant workers used to sleep at harvest time. Perhaps the only

Stage 3: Manzanares el Real - Cercedilla (19km)

From Manzanares el Real the way now runs north-westwards along the foothills of the Sierra de los Porrones, the southern edge of the Parque Regional La Pedriza. We follow a series of country tracks running parallel to the Sierra, which can be seen on the right all the way to Mataelpino, 7 km ahead.

7 kms to Mataelpino - a bank and shop. Bar opens 9 am.

Accommodation

Hotel las Gacelas (€€€)
Paseo de San Sebastián, 53
28490 Becerril De La Sierra
Tele: 918 538 000

After Mataelpino, the route becomes more inclined, with a couple of steep climbs before following a mountain road into Navacerrada.

7 kms to Navacerrada - set in a bowl above the small Embalse de Navacerrada. From the embalse there is a good view of the Sierra
de los Porrones. The church of the Navidad de Nuestra Señora, probably seventeenth century, and a few surrounding houses are all that remains of the old village. The town has a bank, post office and pharmacy, as well as numerous bars and restaurants.

**Accommodation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hotel</th>
<th>Phone</th>
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<tr>
<td>Hotel La Barranca (€€€)</td>
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<td>Ctra. Pinar de la Barranca, s/n 28491 Navacerrada</td>
<td>918 560 000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hotel rural Las Postas (€€€)</td>
<td></td>
<td>M-601 Navacerrada</td>
<td>918 560 250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotel Nava Real Restaurante (€€€)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Calle de las Huertas, s/n 28491 Navacerrada</td>
<td>918 531 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hacienda Los Robles (€)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Avenida de Madrid, s/n 28491 Navacerrada</td>
<td>918 560 200</td>
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</tbody>
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To leave Navacerrada, turn right up the Calle de la Iglesia and take Calle de Abel which goes steeply uphill through the more affluent outskirts of the town. Turn right at the top for 200m and, at an electricity post, left and scramble up two very steep sandy banks through pinewoods onto the carretera. The pathway is marked all the way to Ceredilla, where it eventually descends into.

Lovingly cared for, although not always open to the public. There is a fully enclosed small west porch, a shelter for the pilgrim against rain and sun and perhaps even for the night. Continue downhill to the rails of the now-disused Segovia to Medina del Campo railway.

Be vigilant for waymarks. The route follows the line of the disused railway to the right of the fence. Keep straight on for approximately 2kms to the road bridge. Turn left over the railway and follow the arrows, which lead you on a path immediately to the right.

**9 kms to Añe:** a small town with bar.

**Accommodation:**

There is a small albergue here, but there have been mixed reports concerning its state of repair. One shower, poorly kept. Remove your own waste, as it is not frequently cleaned.

*Telephone:* 921566363
Church of Vera Cruz leaving Segovia.

3 kms to Zamarramala - a shop and bar.

**Albergue:** Beds are provided for the pilgrims in the Ermita de San Roque at the entrance of the village, from where some of the most breathtaking sights of the Segovia skyline can be enjoyed. The cost for the night is 3 euros, and keys have to be collected in the bar La Alcaldesa (C/ Oriente, 2) in the centre of the village. There is no water or electricity, but toilets and showers are provided in the village centre, and torches are arranged around the ermita to provide lighting. A very basic, but altogether comfortable place to sleep. 6 beds

*Telephone:* 659667818 / 670291871

5 kms to Valseca - a bar and bakery with a small shop. Church of Nuestra Señora de la Asunción.

**Albergue:** In the old school, donativo. Reportedly in a poor state.

4 kms to Los Huertos - set in poplars in the valley of a tributary of the Eresma. It has a bar and shop and a large church also dedicated to Nuestra Señora de la Asunción set in poplars in the valley of a tributary of the Eresma. A kilometer or so after Los Huertos you pass, to your right, the small squat and heavily-butressed Ermita de Nuestra Señora. The exterior of the building is rather ordinary, but the interior is very beautiful and

5 kms to Cercedilla - like Navacerrada, a collection of urbanizaciones and holiday houses although it is larger and has an old centre. There are a couple of hermitages and the parish church of San Sebastián. The town is another popular walking centre for Madrileños. There is a frequent train service to Madrid as well as all other facilities.

**Accommodation**
Pilgrims will almost certainly stay in Cercedilla or begin the next stage to Segovia here

**Albergue:**
*Location:* In the local Polideportivo (sports complex), at the entrance to the town
*Price:* Donativo
*Opening times:* Mo-Fr 3:30pm, Sa 4:30pm. Sundays open from 10-14h
*Description:* The Ayuntamiento provides pilgrims with a room in the polideportivo, a comfortable space with sleeping mats provided and good showers, although pilgrims are warned that provision is very basic.

*Telephone:* 91 852 35 92

**Other Options:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hostal Aribel Longinos (£)</th>
<th>Albergue Villa Castora (£)</th>
<th>Hostal La Maya (£)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Calle de Emilio Serrano, 71</td>
<td>Carretera de las Dehesas, s/n</td>
<td>Calle de la Carrera del Señor, 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28470 Cercedilla</td>
<td>Tele: 918 520 334</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tele: 918 521 511</td>
<td>Email: 918 521 267</td>
<td>Tele: 918 521 267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Follow signs to the Renfe station – the hostal is beside it)</td>
<td><a href="mailto:alb.juv.villacastora@madrid.org">alb.juv.villacastora@madrid.org</a></td>
<td>(3km outside town)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Stage 4: Cercedilla - Segovia (31km)

The route through Cercedilla is well waymarked. The way crosses the thickly wooded Sierra de Guadarrama and is 31kms long. The first 8kms, a steep uphill climb of around 650m to the Puerto de la Fuenfría (1796m), the pass over the mountains, is a mountain walk. Some of this is on the old roman road, the Calzada Romana, while some of it follows the more recent Calzada Borbónica. In winter the pass will almost certainly be blocked by snow. After this it is downhill all the way to Segovia. Pilgrims will probably see recreational walkers or mountain-bikers but otherwise the area is devoid of villages or farms. Take food and ample water although there is at least one working fountain after the Puerto de la Fuenfría. The walk is exceptionally wild and beautiful - scenically the high point of the Madrid route.

Be careful not to get lost on the way up to the Puerto de la Fuenfría - follow the yellow arrows from Cercedilla along a mountain road which eventually becomes the Calzada Romana. The route follows both the Calzada Romana and the Calzada Borbónica all the way up to the summit. Beware of the yellow dots painted on the trees which indicate the "Ruta de Schmidt", which runs parallel to the camino route before going up the mountain to the right, leading to the Puerto de la Fuenfría.

Stage 5: Segovia - Añe (21 km)

To leave Segovia, cross the Plaza Mayor diagonally left and follow Calle de Marqués del Arco past the cathedral and along Calle de Daoiz towards the Alcázar to Plazuela de Juan Guás following it round to the top of the Calle del Pozo de la Nieve. You will see arrows on the way leading you uphill to the distinctive 12 sided church of the Vera Cruz on the Carretera de Zamarramala on the northern edge of the city. The church was founded by the Knights Templar (1204-8) on the site of a Roman temple and its design is modelled on the church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. To the basic twelve-sided structure are added three Romanesque apses and a sturdy square Romanesque belfry. Inside is a double-storey twelve-sided chamber, replicating the exterior in which knights kept vigil with their weapons on the altar.

The route is well waymarked.
On entering the town, the yellow arrows disappear. Look for metal shells on the ground or simply ask for the “aqueducto”, where there is also a tourist office in the plaza.

**Accommodation** – many hotels and hostals at all prices – rooms also available around town – this is only a selection of those available:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hotel Acueducto (€€)</th>
<th>Hotel El Gato (€€)</th>
<th>Hostal Soto Palacio (€)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Avenida del Padre Claret, 10 40001 Segovia Tele: 902 250 550</td>
<td>Plaza del Salvador, 10 40001 Segovia Tele: 921 42 32 44</td>
<td>Calle de Segovia, 15 40154 Segovia Tele: 921 485 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotel Los Linajes (€)</td>
<td>Hotel Las Sirenas (€)</td>
<td>Hostal Juan Bravo (€)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calle del Doctor Velasco, 9 40003 Segovia Tele: 921 460 475</td>
<td>Calle de Juan Bravo, 30 40001 Segovia Tele: 921 462 663</td>
<td>Calle de Juan Bravo, 12 40001 Segovia Tele: 921 463 413</td>
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<tr>
<td>El Hidalgo Hostal (€)</td>
<td>Hotel Infanta Isabel (€€€)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calle de José Canalejas, 5 40001 Segovia Tele: 921 463 529</td>
<td>Plaza Mayor, 12 40001 Segovia Tele: 921 461 300</td>
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</table>

8 kms from Cercedilla to the peak of the mountain at Puerto de la Fuenfría.

From here there are practically 23 kms of downhill walking along snaking mountain tracks and paths which eventually descend into open fields, which, with the town already in sight over 10 kilometers ahead, the route crosses before reaching Segovia.

**Alternative:** One option is to take a slight detour to stay in Valsaín, Before arriving at the Fuente del Pastor, about 10 kilometers before Segovia, there is a split - the branch to the right is on asphalt and used by bikes. Take it. Two or three kms further on, you come to another intersection. Take the path on the right, which takes you downhill and into Valsaín. There is a hostal and a Casa Rural to stay in in Valsaín, and the short walk (13 km) to Segovia the next day leaves ample time to visit the town.

**23 kms to Segovia.** Segovia became an important Roman town in 80 B.C. at the junction of two important military roads. The town was a bishopric under the Visigoths, then occupied by the Jews and by the Moors until the Reconquest in 1085. The town was a favoured residence of the Castilian monarchs, the meeting place of the Cortes (Parliament) and Isabel la Católica was formally proclaimed Queen...
of Castile here. But Segovians had no love for Carlos V and enthusiastically embraced the rising of the Comuneros in 1520 in which the Romanesque cathedral was totally destroyed. From the Middle Ages to the mid-seventeenth century, the northern meseta was the most densely populated and richest part of Spain with an economy based on cereals and livestock. Sheep provided Segovia with its greatest period of prosperity as an important centre of wool manufacturing from the mid-fifteenth to the mid-seventeenth century, only to decline as a result of, amongst other reasons, the severe fiscal regime of the House of Austria. The city then became somewhat of a backwater and even today retains a village-like atmosphere. The old town is a collection of barrios, small villages each grouped around its Romanesque church, and rocky cuestas reach almost to the “prow” of the Alcázar on the northern and south-western sides.

Segovia’s long history has bequeathed the city with a heritage rich in monuments - the city is a World Heritage site. Strangely though, the only major Roman legacy is the monumental aqueduct brilliantly engineered such that the huge granite blocks of which it is constructed are held together without mortar. Dating from the reign of Augustus and restored by Trajan as well as by the Catholic Kings to repair the damage caused by the Moors, the aqueduct was in use until modern times. The Jews left a small Judería to the east of the present cathedral and a small synagogue; the Moors laid the foundations of the Alcázar; and the Christians built the “Iglesias Porticadas”, the distinctive galleried, Romanesque churches, the cathedral and the Alcázar itself.

The galleried churches constitute a local architectural style and although the largest concentration is found in Segovia itself, many examples also occur in villages throughout the provinces of Segovia, Soria, Rioja and Navarra. The purpose of the porticos is not known. One theory is that they were meeting places - for local municipal affairs and governance - the villages of north-eastern Castile were governed under fueros (local laws granting certain privileges) awarded after the Reconquest or perhaps for the weavers’ and merchants’ guilds. There are about a dozen of these churches, all of a similar design - rounded apse, sturdy belltower and a small portico usually on the south side but sometimes on three sides and often with fine capitals. Each is of interest. San Justo contains splendid Romanesque frescos of Christ Pantocrator and the Passion in the semi-dome of the apse. San Esteban has the finest and tallest belfry - “Reina de las Torres Españolas” and San Millán and San Martín are the largest and grandest overall. San Martín is of particular interest for pilgrims, with a very worn and weathered capital of the fight between Roldán and Ferragút on the north portico while inside, in the Capilla de los Herreros, are statues of Santiago Apóstol and Santiago Alfeo.

The cathedral, to designs by Juan Gil de Hontañón and, on his death, by his son Rodrigo Gil de Hontañón, is the last great Gothic cathedral in Spain. In design and grand conception the cathedral is similar to Salamanca cathedral by the same architects. Work began in 1525 and was completed in about 1590. The cathedral has a vast apse, all spikes and crockets, a plain west façade and a high belfry. Inside there is the usual central arrangement of main chapel, choir and retrochoir and the outer aisles and ambulatory are lined with small, dark chapels, each behind its firmly-locked grille. One, mid-way along the south aisle, is the chapel of Santiago with a retablo of the Life of Santiago, including Santiago Matamoros, the Calling of the Apostle by Christ, the Martyrdom of Santiago, the Translation of the body from Palestine to Galicia and so on. There is also a cloister (the Hontañóns are buried here) and a cathedral museum.

The Alcázar perches like a stately ship on the “prow” of a crag high above the Clamores and Eresma rivers. Originally a simple Roman and later Moorish stronghold, after the Reconquest it served to defend the new frontier between Christian and Muslim Spain. Successive monarchs transformed the simple fort into a grand late-Romanesque-Gothic palace. The building seen today reflects the complete rebuilding by Juan II and Felipe II’s addition of the slate-roofs and spires. In 1862 the Alcázar almost completely burned down. Rebuilding of the exterior to a faithful copy of the original was completed in 1896 but refurbishment of the interior was delayed until 1951. Interestingly, the interior refurbishment is not necessarily a copy of that destroyed; where possible, the restorers have taken original ceilings, furniture and furnishings of contemporary date to those destroyed from other buildings in the province and installed them here. For example, the Mudéjar coffered ceiling in the chapel comes from the village of Cedillo de la Torre. Also in the chapel is a retablo of Santiago Matamoros.

This is a large town with all facilities including rail links.