

Ultreia et Suseia! The Newsletter.

Vol 3, No 3.

August 2023, Christchurch Camino Group



'On the Camino I have learned to live day-to-day, not in the future.' Elana Frananillo Ortiz

Editorial

Setting Aside Time for a Camino

There are a number of factors which might be operating when deciding how much time to set aside for your Camino. Those taking leave from work or household commitments are limited by the time allocated. People between jobs or those who are retired may have more flexibility. Experience has taught me that more on the Camino is usually better. One way to gain a feeling of time is to suspend making return arrangements for the journey from Santiago de Compostela to the international departure point. Delaying reservations will usually see a small increase in the fare. However having the luxury of time on the Camino is well worth it regarding cost/benefit. Remember it is all about the journey!

If there is 'spare' time following the arrival in Santiago, a further short Camino may be walked. I have walked the Camino Ingles and the Variante Espiritual in 'left over' time. If you are walking in the warmer months, or indeed would like some down time to reflect on the experience, a holiday in Muxia, or if finances allow the Canary Islands is recommended.

Ultreia Suseia
Philip

Image: The San Salvador

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Noticeboard

Scheduled 2023 Christchurch Camino Group Meeting Dates

The following is the remaining scheduled meeting date for 2023: Monday 20 November in the Sydenham Room of the South Library.

Newsletter Camino Items of Interest

Please submit any items of Camino interest for consideration of inclusion in our quarterly Newsletter to Philip at: chchcaminogroup@gmail.com

Christchurch Camino Walking Group

The Christchurch Camino Walking Group meets on the third Sunday of the month, usually at 10 am. The walks are a mixture of flat and hill walks around Christchurch and surrounding areas. They provide an opportunity to try out new walks, and exercise with people who share a love for the Camino. Walks are usually completed by around 3 pm.

Please contact Cecilia for more information and to join the separate mailing list:

chchcaminogroup@gmail.com Limited to people who have walked, or intend to walk Caminos.

Advice Given to Pilgrims

We wish to emphasise that all information and answers given by our presenters, organisers, meeting participants and via the newsletter are provided in good faith, and have been found to work for them/us on that particular occasion.

The information provided is a starting point for your research so that there is a range of possibilities to investigate and adapted to suit individual circumstances.

Camino Meeting 21 August, 2023

We gathered in a warm Sydenham Room on a wet and cold evening. The following **Apologies** were received: Deb, Sandra, Gemma, Elma, Clare and Steve, Elizabeth, Colleen.

After the **Welcome** and **Introductions** those who had completed a Camino since our last gathering were invited to participate in the **'Returning Pilgrims' Ceremony.**
An opportunity was provided for returned pilgrims to **recount a highlight** of their Camino. Following this those pilgrims departing before our next meeting on November 20 were invited to participate in the **'Departing Pilgrims' Ceremony.**

During **Things to Share:** Gythlian reminded us about John Brierley's recent death and how indebted thousands of pilgrims are to him for his inspiring guidebooks. They were unique in that they made provision for the inner and outer journeys. A daughter (Gemma) who has been assisting him with the guidebooks in recent years is set to continue his work. See the Camino Café YouTube video, **'Future of the Camino Guides w/ John and Gemma Brierley.'** The Camino Café Podcast also has a series featuring John, **'John Brierley -The Camino: A Path of Awakening.'**

Philip recommended, **'Pilgrimage A Medieval Cure for Modern Ills,'** which is a recent addition to the Christchurch City Libraries shelves. (See Book Reviews section.)

Pauline shared a website: www.CaminoQuestions.com The writer, Tim, lives in Molinaseca, Spain. He has a list of soul searching questions which can be copied or downloaded and worked on before, during and after your Camino.

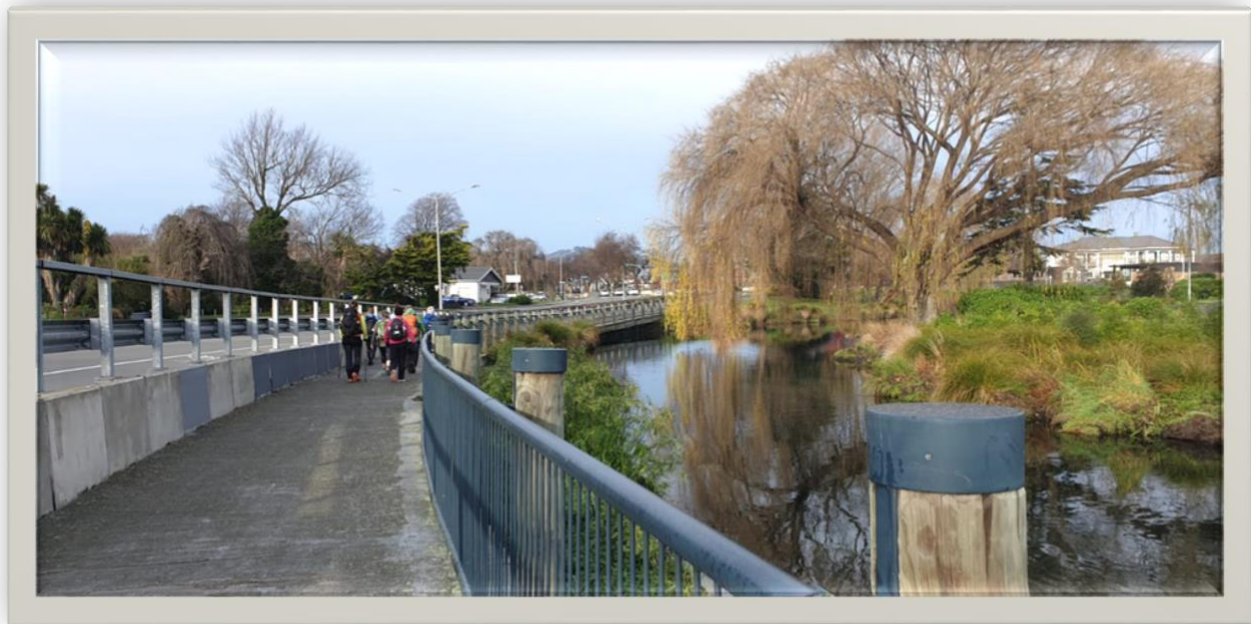


Image: The Walking Group on the Te Ara Otakaro Avon river walk in July. Photo; MarieTherese.

Cecilia presented the **Christchurch Camino Walking Group Report.** This covered the group's activities since our April meeting. The following walks were undertaken, some in inclement weather: April; Harry Ell - Worsely's Spur – Adventure Bike Park, May; Quail Island, June; John Britten Track, July; Te Ara Otakaro Avon River Walk to New Brighton (and return by bus). August; Diamond Harbour Circuit from Church Bay The September walk is scheduled to be in the Southshore area, returning along the beach. To join the mailing list write to Cecilia: chchcaminogroup@gmail.com

We were treated to three **Camino Journey Presentations**. Marie-Therese was first with ~ **“A different option for walking the Portuguese Camino.”**

If you are a bit older, maybe travelling solo and want just a bit of support, there is a different option for doing your Camino. This might involve more money than you will hear bandied about as a budget, but it might be something to consider...

Marie-Therese chose Mac Adventures for her Portuguese Camino along the Central Route from Porto to Santiago de Compostela. She previously utilised their services on the Camino Frances and was impressed with their level of service and reassuring backup when required. An efficient luggage service was provided leaving Marie-Therese with a very manageable day pack. As she had before and after family visits this solved the luggage storage issue. The package included a good level of accommodation and breakfast. Sometimes transport to and from a more suitable hotel off Camino was provided. Pilgrims dining at the hotel would include her so that “eating alone” situation was resolved.

She took two stones from the Waimakariri and released them at suitable sites in Portugal and Spain. A blessing was received at St Anthony's church.

To help find her way and supplement the yellow arrows Marie-Therese utilised “Map My Walk.” She also made use of the Polar Steps app and produced a beautifully bound book of her adventures. Marie-Therese estimated that her daily cost was in the region of \$150. See Mac Adventures website: macmacsadventure.com

Up next was Ngaire with ~ **“Walking the Camino Frances,”** Being interruptible and resilient meant my Camino was uniquely mine...

Ngaire had 4 reasons for making her pilgrimage along the Camino Frances: contemplation, healing, solitude, prayers. She first heard of the Camino 12 years ago and knew instantly that this is what she needed to do. Family circumstances prevented her from fulfilling this dream until this year. She took a rest day in St John Pied de Port to recover from travelling, and then it was up to Orisson for the night. Before leaving home she had decided to carry a day pack and have her luggage transported. This 2 day climb over the Pyrenees was the only rain experienced.

And she arrived at Roncesvalles cold, wet and hungry.

At albergue Hogar Monjardin, at Villamayor de Monjardin, Ngaire was invited to join the team as a hospitaliera for a week. She had detected the beautiful Christian atmosphere and decided to say “yes.” This meant that later she would need to bus for 100 km to the other side of Burgos in order to meet return travel commitments. The work at the albergue was full on, the hours long and the whole experience both memorable and worthwhile.

On her journey she met up with Sally and Alec whom she had met at one of our meetings. At Cruz de Ferro instead of placing a stone she wrote a poem as she climbed the rock pile. As a solo walker she felt safer out in the countryside than in the cities, and tended to avoid walking through them where possible. Ngaire had her bag transported and she estimated at €6 per day the total cost was around \$500.

Finally we heard from Hammond with ~ **“Is it a Good Idea to Start Your Camino Portuguese in Lisbon?”** I walked the Camino Portuguese starting from Lisbon 3 months ago on 12 May and upon reflection it probably wasn't the best idea to start from there because...

Well the answer turned out to be he would recommend starting in Santarem due to the nature of the trail from Lisbon eg. Industrial areas. From Tomar he took the bus off trail to Fatima. This he found to be a very interesting experience which he recommends. Hammond selected the Senda

Litoral Camino from Porto and mentioned the 15 km section along boardwalks over the sand and adjacent to the sea. He joined the Central route and then walked the Variante Espiritual. Following the boat ride he walked to Santiago de Compostela! (29.3). Here he met up with his son and set of for a tour of Southern Spain. Next time he would build more rest days into his itinerary. He recommends the use of Pacer Poles and carrying a stretchy washing line and 8 pegs. Hammond has a blog site: thecuriouskiwi.co.nz where more of his Camino exploits may be found.

Due to an IT glitch we were running overtime when we reached **Small Group Discussion time**. There was still time for a cup of tea and a catch up before **Packing Up** at 8.55 pm.

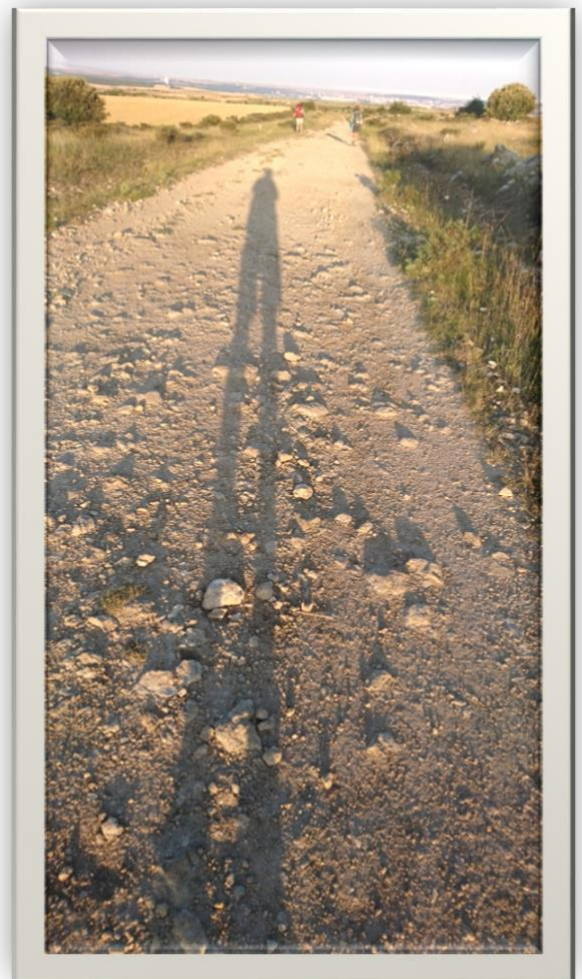
Featured Article Pondering 'Time' on the Camino

When we place our first foot on the Camino we are stepping on to a path steeped in "Time." As we walk and synchronize with the rhythm of the land we can become part of it, in harmony with our surroundings.

With a knowledge of past events we can be immersed in that experience by grounding ourselves in place. In standing at the end of the Hospital de Orbigo bridge we can visualize Don Suero's duel. If we tune ourselves in to past energies we may become part of the experience.

The long distance Camino has a special place in my heart. Here the quality of time appears to change. We are stepping out of time. The ancient Greeks named this Kairos, meaning the right, critical or opportune moment, with a qualitative permanent nature, as compared with Chronos which measured time passing. I first became aware of the observance of time in its Kairos form when participating in a powhiri at a local marae. The appointed time for its commencement had come and gone. I was advised that all was well and the ceremony would get underway in due course. Eventually a garden gate opened and a kuia emerged and made her way across the road to take her place on the paepae. Shortly afterwards the karanga calling us forward rang out across the valley.

We can gain an awareness that we have more time on the Camino and one's vocabulary may harmonise with a change of pace. Words like saunter, perambulate, meander, stroll, amble, may enter our lexicon. Frederic Gros in his book 'A Philosophy of Walking,' states that, 'For pilgrims, outside becomes the place where stability exists, the arrival point or indoors becomes the variable.' This is how the ordinary shorter walk differs from a long distance pilgrimage. He goes on to say, 'You leave one lodging for another, but continuity, what lasts and persists, comes from



the surrounding landscapes, the chains of hills that are always there.' This article has helped me understand why I'm imbued with a special feeling as I make my way westwards. **'A Philosophy of Walking,'** Frederic Gros Christchurch City Libraries, 128.4 GRO (2 copies).

Walking With Focused Awareness

In this article Nancy Frey articulates a specific experience of *walking in awareness*. We might ask ourselves why this focus on being in the now? Why implement measures to only acknowledge and quieten our thoughts, rather than be led by them? Richard Rohr, a Franciscan American priest in an article entitled, 'Finding God in the Depths of Silence,' Sojourner Magazine, March 2013, says, 'Silence is often a momentary revelation of your deepest self, your true self, and yet a self that you do not yet know.' I think people surround themselves with busyness, noise and distraction because they are afraid of what the silence may reveal. Perhaps they might not like aspects of themselves which are revealed. And yet this is the ideal time to examine them and let go. The temptation when walking the Camino is to bring these patterns of avoidance behaviour with us. We might have ear pods and a Camino playlist which unfortunately will keep us firmly anchored in the pleasantly familiar. We might idle the kilometres away engaging in incessant chatter. Brave is the pilgrim who can stride off deliberately seeking solitude and silence, increasing the likelihood they will encounter grace and presence. That being said, being open to encounters with other pilgrims is also an important part of the journey. Listening to their stories and sharing yours often leads to insight and clarification. So a balance of silence and solitude and engagement is ideal as we make our way.

'Keeping the Camino Flame Alive in Your Heart,' by Nancy Frey, walkingtopresence.com
Nancy Frey shares a method for returned pilgrims to enter or access the stored inner landscape of our Camino experience. The simple to follow instructions best performed in an area of nature near your home are listed in paragraph 2.

Reference

Both articles may be found on Nancy Frey's walkingtopresence.com website.

Utilising Time Differently on the Camino/Benefits of Disconnecting From the Grid

'Although changing habits of mind is difficult, it can be done. It is within the power of each of us as individuals and as families and as workers to make changes in our way of living to restore our inner lives.' Alan Lightman

In this small book Lightman is comparing his adult life to his childhood where he had a different notion of time. Then, he recounts, he would follow turtles to find out where they were going. This freedom from time pressure allowed his mind to contemplate such questions as, 'Do tadpoles know if they will turn into frogs?' In his book he doesn't mention the Camino when he lists possibilities for recapturing some of this downtime. However his comments are relevant. On the Camino we have the ideal opportunity to luxuriate in the spaciousness of time. Sure we have a few chronos time commitments like curfew! I had become aware of the creeping insidiousness of connectivity, particularly on my second Camino some 2 years later where the use of mobiles and iPad had become more prevalent. I began to notice that I was checking for internet connection before stopping at a café and albergue. On my 2019 Camino I deliberately sought out two albergues without power. The experience at both was memorable. What better than a

candlelight dinner and Impromptu concert with everyone fully present? This freedom from connectivity is a Camino gift. Accept it gratefully!

'In Praise of Wasting Time,' Alan Lightman, 158.1 LIG, Christchurch City Libraries, [1 copy]

The Conundrum of the Present Moment

John O'Donohue puts it brilliantly, 'Being fully present in the Now enables us to fully reconnect to our intuitive wisdom as the varied terrain of our inner landscape is traversed.'

In 2011 while motoring down the Sangkor River in Cambodia I was immersed in a different culture. The primitive conditions of the riverside dwellers was exposed as we literally sailed through their living room. My senses were alert and continually being stimulated. I was deeply moved by this experience and was totally present to what was happening around me. Circumstances had brought together a small group of travellers who had a spiritual connection. I began to record my experiences.

Stillness

The transition is made.
Imperceptibly I move into the stillness of 'Now'
where there is no future and no past.

Others are called into my presence attracted
by invisible rays of energy. We dance like
moths and move into the light. There is no
future, and no past.

At times I am drawn to others, some ancient
recognition?
We share deep and intimate thoughts as we
travel through the landscape.
Another call is heard, and answered. There is
no future, and no past.

The process is repeated.
Old souls exchange greetings and enrich the
occasion with new understandings. There is no
future, there is no past.
Just 'Now!'

© Philip, 2011



Image: The Meseta

What is this present moment and the place called 'Now' that I attempt to describe in the poem 'Stillness'? Is it real? Is that state between the past and future a reality? Or is it a hypothetical construct?

'Do not dwell in the past, do not dream of the future, concentrate the mind on the present moment.' Buddha

'The present is the time associated with the events perceived directly and in the first time, not as a recollection or a speculation. It is a period of time between the past and the future, and can vary in meaning from being an instant to a day or longer.' Wikipedia.

So according to Wikipedia and Buddha the present moment or 'Now', does exist! On the Camino I find that walking for hours per day over weeks through stunning landscapes enliven my senses. I am very much present, and open to all that is around me, but am I inhabiting the present moment?

What I do know is that with the step away from 'real life' it is easier to put the past and future aside while walking and not so easy once home!

Researching this topic informs me that: 'Presentists hold that only the present moment is real or exists whereas the eternalist holds that every moment is equally real or extant.'

It would appear that the 'present moment' is a hypothetical construct which allows for the description of a state of increased presence. A state unfiltered by an active 'thinking mind.' This doesn't detract from the fact that being on, and walking long distances on the Camino greatly assists the pilgrim to be fully present and gain the feeling they are walking towards a deeper presence.

References

'The Problem of the Now,' aeon.co/amp/ess John Martin Fischer, University of California.

Camino Group Follow Up Newsletter, Vol. 2. No. 4. 'The Camino as a Path of Mindfulness.

This brief article which previously appeared in Vol 2. No. 4. included some references to step by step pathways towards the 'present moment.' These references have been included below.

Mindfulness Resources:

'Peace is Every Step, The Path of Mindfulness in Everyday Life,' Thich Nhat Hanh, Christchurch City Libraries, Downloadable Audiobook,



'You Are Here, Discovering the Magic of the Present Moment,

' Thich Nhat Hanh,

Fishpond.co.nz, \$NZ 25.88

"You can practise 'I am here,' through mindful breathing and mindful walking. ...'With each step you take, you arrive in the here and now....take your steps mindfully....co-ordinate your steps with your breath. As you breathe in,

you practise

arriving.'

'Five-Minute Mindfulness Walking - essays and

exercises for mindfully moving through the world. Douglas Baker Christchurch City Libraries 158.12 BAK This is an eminently readable book on walking and mindfulness. Baker concludes with the following, 'A walk taken with intention reinforces mindfulness. As you set out, pause and close your eyes, focusing your mind on the intention you wish to bring to fruition.' A very worthwhile read.

e-Book/Book (free/donation e-book, book \$18 plus postage in NZ)

'Walking in Wisdom, A Journey into the extraordinary richness of the present moment,' by Tarchin Hearn, greendharmatreasury.org (available free) Book version, \$18, plus postage. A simple, easy to read and powerful step by step guide to accessing the present moment via a series of walking meditations. Highly recommended.

Making the Most of the 'Now' Construct

Richard Rohr in his book, **'The Naked Now, Learning to See as the Mystics See,'** gives a practical exercise (p170) in the art of 'Practising Awareness.'

- With your *senses* (not mind) focus on one single object until you stop fighting or resisting it with other concerns. This should lead to *an initial calmness in your body and mind.*
- *Choose not* to judge it. This should lead to a *simple JOY in the object itself.*
- Listen to the object. Allow it to speak to you. Speak back to it with respect and curiosity. Allow objects to initiate and speak their truth. This will lead to the beginnings of *LOVE for the object, or event, and a sense of loving kindness within yourself.*
- A kind of *contented spaciousness* and *silence* will normally ensue. This is a form of nondual consciousness.

This gives the pilgrim a framework for entering a holy/whole moment, the gateway to experiencing the universal. Completing the steps is designed to calm the body and mind so that the seeker is fully grounded, leading to a state of non-judgement. With this comes a sense of loving kindness and a crossing of the threshold into *presence*, a state of contented spaciousness and silence, which is a form of non-dual consciousness.

Reference

'The Naked Now, Learning to See as the Mystics See,' Richard Rohr, Christchurch City Libraries, 248.22 ROH, (4 copies)

The Gift of Time

One of the benefits of being on the Camino and walking is the gift of time. The pilgrim's task each day is to keep walking in a westerly direction. This generates oceans of time to experience the countryside and notice life as it rolls by, all at a walking pace.

'In India, time is like the flow of a river. We just stay in the moment. Time is abundant. It is not like money. It is not going to go away.' Tejinder Billing.

Throughout the day there will be periods of quiet contemplation, where the pilgrim is walking alone. At other times they will be engaged in deep conversation with passing pilgrims, traversing subjects that at home wouldn't be broached even with a life long friend. And why is this? As

mentioned earlier time is plentiful and there is also a sense of community. Pilgrims have a common sense of purpose and destination. Over time we meet people on successive occasions, maybe over a meal. A trust builds and our guard is lowered. The experiences we all have resonate deeply and further develops a common bond. This leaves an indelible mark on our soul which we seek to replicate once home.

In '**Buen Camino! A Father-Daughter Journey from Croagh Partick to Santiago de Compostela,**' Natasha says, 'Most definitely, the biggest gift the Camino gives to you is time. I have come to realise and understand things I have never noticed, and all they needed was time.' p187

'Buen Camino! A Father-Daughter Journey from Croagh Patrick to Santiago de Compostela,' Natasha and Peter Murtagh, 946 MUR, Christchurch City Libraries, [3 copies]

Time and the Camino

Breakfast

The pilgrim often has a choice. Wait for the breakfast offered by the albergue, for a fee, or begin walking and find a café or bar. Experience has shown that stopping at the first open establishment can be a good policy! I often have two breakfasts. Sometimes a bar will have packaged muffins and cakes. Later I will stop for toast and jam, or pincho de tortilla as a second breakfast. It makes a break, gives a chance to socialise and I still end up losing weight!

Curfew

Albergues usually have a 10 pm curfew and lights out. It is respectful to pack the night before. Or if caught out by an early lights out, take your bag into a common area in the morning to pack. Have a headlight which has the red light facility when checking for misplaced items around the bunks. The doors are often locked to prevent early (4.30 am!) departures.

Evening Dining

Things usually get underway around 9 pm in Spain. This is usually too late for pilgrims, see curfew above, so search out establishments which offer a Pilgrims' Menu beginning around 6.30 pm until 7.30 pm. This allows time to get sorted before 'lights out.'

Lunch Time

Lunch, which can be a pretty substantial offering ceases at around 3 - 4 pm. I find it interrupts the flow of the pilgrim day to stop and eat, plus its tempting to drink wine when it's on offer! If an early arrival into a town with sightseeing attractions is engineered then a substantial lunch might be an option. On a normal day I enjoy a picnic under a suitable tree.

Siesta

Siestas are an integral part of the Spanish culture and places go dead from mid afternoon. (3-5 pm). So it's best to get to grips with the implications. There is usually a total shut down so replenishing food stocks and first aid supplies can take some planning.

In the early evening things come back to life when *paseo* occurs. This is when the locals begin strolling around, mingling in the town squares etc. This is also when churches tend to be open in larger towns. Also shops will be open until around 8 to 9 pm.

Saturdays, Sundays and Mondays

I have found services can be curtailed on Saturdays, Sundays and Mondays. Visiting a supermarket if one is open usually sees most needs met.

Fiestas

Be aware of closures of services during Fiestas. Keep your ear to the ground while walking as pretty much everything can be closed.

There are always places to eat.



Image: Festival in Leon

Time and Space

The Camino offers the space for pilgrims to make their pilgrimage. The Frances route in particular is richly resourced. Within the stunning landscapes and beautiful built environments locals and pilgrim hospitalerios from around the world who have answered a call to service, play a huge role in supporting walkers. By devoting a period of time away from the various roles and demands of their lives pilgrims are able to enter the liminal space the Camino provides.

Whatever their motivation and reasons for walking these pilgrims step out to face with the support of fellow pilgrims allsorts of challenges; extreme weather events, challenging terrain, and possible injury, on their quest to reach Santiago de Compostela some 800 kms to the west.

Trail Magic on the Way of Saint James

In her article, 'Trail Magic on the Way of Saint James,' Beebe Bahrami discusses several instances of Camino magic as she walked. She puts this down to non-linear travel and synchronicity.

Reference: 'Trail Magic on the Way of Saint James,' perceptivetravel.com

Time of the Year to Walk the Camino

The best months of the year to walk the Frances is between April and November. For mountainous and exposed Caminos like the San Salvador and Via de la Plata check carefully for local conditions. Both the Pyrenees on the Frances and the Aubrac Plateau on the Chemin Le Puy are subject to snow in April. The most popular months are reputed to be July and August as they coincide with summer holidays, so the 'bed race' could be an issue, although staying in in between towns solved this issue for me. A recent trend is for the shoulder seasons to become increasingly popular.

Seasonal Change

I have noticed when undertaking longer Caminos, 1200 - 1600 km, one walks through a change of seasons. There might be sleet in the higher areas, and further along poppies and other spring flowers. And later remnants of the harvest.

The following poem was written on a break from the heat of the day cycling through the various Angkor Thom temples near Siem Reap in Cambodia. It echoes my growing sense of ease, and peace on the Camino.

Poem

Ancient Stones

I sit atop an entrance step waiting, listening feeling for ancient vibes.

A threshold beckons.

Will I follow in the rapid footsteps of the elderly monk already screened by the green lichen encrusted stones?

I wait and watch, and wait. He reappears, and with rapid gait is gone!

I am seeking slow, and deliberate. Calm and wait awhile.

© Philip, 2011

It's About Time, A Call to the Camino de Santiago, Johnnie Walker, 2019, Kindle \$US9.30, Paper back \$US 14.44, Amazon. This is a compact little book filled with treasure.



Camino Memoirs by Route Update

The following memoirs have been reviewed in our newsletters since the original list was published in November 2021.

Various Routes

10 Paths to Santiago: Ten Personal Stories About Walking the Camino Told by Pilgrims from Around the World, Marianne Sommer, 946 SOM, 2022, Christchurch City Libraries, [3 copies]

Frances

I'll Push You, A Journey of 500 Miles, Two Best Friends, and One Wheelchair,' Patrick Gray, Justin Skeesuck 263 GRA, Christchurch City Libraries, [2 copies], eBook available from Christchurch City Libraries.

'Buen Camino! A Father-Daughter Journey from Croagh Patrick to Santiago de Compostela,' Natasha and Peter Murtagh, 946 MUR, Christchurch City Libraries, [3 copies]

'The Way of the Gardener. Lost in the Weeds Along the Camino de Santiago,' Lyndon Penner, Christchurch City Libraries, 946 PEN, [3 copies]

'Estrellas Moments of Illumination Along El Camino de Santiago: a memoir,' Suzanne Maggio, 2021, Christchurch City Libraries, 946 MAG [4 copies]

'I Got up and Walked the Camino De Santiago With My Other Half, April – May 2015,' David Till, Susan Till, 2020, Christchurch City Libraries, 946 TIL, [4 copies]

'Go Your Own Way: Following in the Footsteps of Martin Sheen, 2020 on the Way of St James,' John Lloyd, Kindle, US\$3.27

'The Pilgrimage, A Contemporary Quest for Ancient Wisdom,' Paulo Coelho, Christchurch City Libraries, 946 COE, [4 copies]

A Contemplative Camino: Four Ways to Solitude, Stillness, and Silence, Kate King, 2021, Kindle, \$ US 4.82

'Steps Out of Time, One Woman's Journey on the Camino,' Katharine B Soper, 2013, Kindle US \$6.74

Frances/Arles

'The Way of the Wild Goose: Three Pilgrimages Following Geese, Stars and Hunches on the Camino de Santiago,' Beebe Bahrami, 2022, Christchurch City Libraries, 203.5 BAH, [4 copies].

Del Norte/Primitivo

'The Man With the Camino Tattoo, Searching for Sanctuary on the Camino de Santiago,' Dermot Breen, Kindle, \$5.04.

Portuguese 'Sauntering to Santiago: The Camino de Santiago for Slow Walkers,' Kenneth Cline, 2019, Kindle \$US 6, (Coastal Route)

Variante Espiritual (on Portuguese)

'Sauntering the Variant Espiritual of the Camino de Santiago, Kenneth Cline, Amazon Kindle, and Paperback.

Via de la Plata/Sanabres 'Happiness Is That Way: 55 Days on the Camino Via de la Plata,' Cici Edwards-Jensen, Mike Jensen, Christchurch City Libraries, 946 EDW, [2 copies]

Le Puy-en-Velay 'The Field of the Star. A Pilgrim's Journey to Santiago de Compostela,'
Nicholas Luard [from a private collection.]

Camino Stories

Locked Out! Missing the Curfew

I had a bad blister. A Dutch Camino veteran offered to help. We made our way after a long dinner to his accommodation. He had arrived in the late afternoon to find no room at the inn! A kindly old lady had offered her front room. And this is where my Camino Angel performed his good deed. Gratefully I made my way back to the albergue. Oh no, the lights had been extinguished. I had inadvertently missed the 10 pm curfew. And I was greeted by a locked door! Thoughts of a cold, uncomfortable night played out in my mind. A circumnavigation of the building didn't help. There were no open windows that I might attempt to enter. While reflecting on the situation and considering my options I noticed a pilgrim making his way to the toilets. I knocked on the window. I heard the welcoming unlatching sound. Gratefully I made my way inside and headed towards my waiting bunk. Another lesson learned!

An Emergency Call Said, 'Time to Come Home.'

My first Camino in 2013 lasted 7 days. I had reached Torres del Rio when I received the phone call which changed everything. My father was dying. Immediately I terminated my Camino and began a quick return to New Zealand and his hospital bedside.

As I looked at the pilgrims making their way towards Logrono out of the taxi window I felt my life as a pilgrim slowly ebbing away. Upon reflection those seven days had irrevocably changed my life. I had tasted the Camino, been fully immersed in the experience. If I didn't make it back I was satisfied. It is my firm belief though, that at least three weeks 'through hiking' brings its own rewards. The more time one has to walk and become enveloped in the experience the greater the likelihood of transformation. Total immersion for days on end allows time for internal processes to work their magic. I returned later that year to St Jean Pied de Port to recommence my Camino, and inner journey.

Things to Do in Leon

Leon is a magnificent reward for making it across the meseta. 'An extra day would allow you time to explore its many treasures.' John Brierley. The City was a Roman military garrison and has had Visigoth, Moor, and Christian conquerors. Brierley's guide has a map of the old city with the key sights and treasures indicated.

- Visit the **cathedral** and marvel at the medieval stained glass windows
- Visit the **Basilica de San Isidoro** and view the murals from the 12th
- Dine in the **medieval quarter**
- Photograph Guadi's **Casa de Botines**.
- Walk passed **San Marcos** with its plateresque façade on the way out near the bridge over the Rio Bernesga. **Image:** Stained glass windows, Leon cathedral.



Leon is on the Camino Frances and is also the starting point for the Camino San Salvador.

Camino Tip

Purchasing Lunch While on the Trail

Be aware that establishments may prepare a bocadillo for you, even when there is no evidence that this might be possible. I've been surprised when a bocadillo has magically appeared following an order being placed by a Spanish speaker.

Resources

Gronze (Spanish) Camino Website

Another excellent resource is the Gronze website. (Just press the English tab and the text will convert from Spanish.) It contains valuable information on the following Caminos: Frances, Portugues, del Norte, Via de la Plata, Primitivo, Fisterra and Muxia. Each stage includes an outline of the terrain, walking distance and accommodation including prices for dorms and private rooms, plus availability of meals including prices. Just click on the title for services provided, bed numbers etc. The Gronze website is especially important now as it is constantly updated due to the impact of Covid. There is also a blue 'Booking' tag which links directly with [booking.com](https://www.booking.com)

Christchurch City Libraries

Try accessing the library catalogue utilising pilgrimage in the subject line, as well as 'Camino de Santiago.' This will produce a comprehensive list of the library network's holdings on the topic. This includes books, e-books, and DVDs.

Reviews

Books

'Pilgrimage A Medieval Cure for Modern Ills,' Dave Whitson, 2022, Christchurch City Libraries, 203.5 WHI, [4 copies]

Dave Whitson is well qualified to author this book. He has written 3 Cicerone Camino guides, conducts student Camino pilgrimages, and hosts, 'The Camino Podcast,' which focuses on pilgrimage.

In this academic study he surveys research on the benefits of walking, particularly in nature. 'We have to shake the sedentary self and break away from the tyranny of screens, if we are to recover our collective health.' p 17

'Participants reported greater enjoyment following the outdoor walk and expressed a greater intent to repeat the experience.' p 27

"When we walk together, we feel rejuvenated and connected; the exercise, far from an ordeal, becomes a pleasure.' p 30

Health benefits were found to increase where the walking was undertaken in nature compared with urban environments. Of particular interest is the inclusion of pilgrim stories to illustrate points being made. For example the memoir, 'Into the Thin: A Pilgrimage Walk Across Northern Spain,' by Stephen Drew is cited and a conversation with its author adds veracity.

He examines pilgrimage from around the world, eg. Mecca, Varanasi, and draws on the writings of pilgrims eg Timothy Egan, Guy Stagg, Phil Cousineau. (These books are all in the Christchurch City Libraries collection.)

A very interesting, readable, well researched book which might help returned pilgrims bring further clarity and meaning to their Camino.

Film ~ Kanopy (Free via your library card)

Common Roads – Pilgrimage and Backpacking in the 21st Century (2013), [1.35.19] Two Swiss young packbackers feature alternately as they travel, one through SE Asia, the other on the Camino Frances. The cinematographer (this was his PhD) cuts between the two, showing similar scenarios and experiences. This is further enhanced by reflections to camera. A really fascinating documentary, particularly interesting for me as my own spiritual journey has taken place in both locations.

YouTube

'Almeria Mozarabe Camino 2020,' Sara Dhooma, YouTube, [13 videos]

Sara provides plenty of insights into this alternative starting point for the Via de la Plata and Sanabres Caminos.

'Camino Sanabres,' Dennis Tam, Canadian Company of Pilgrims, YouTube, 2016, [29.31] Mary Virtue discusses her experiences walking the 386 km Camino Sanabres.

Camino Talks with John Brierley Part 2 – The History of the Camino,' Follow the Camino, YouTube [12.03]

An interesting history of the Camino including pre-Christian. John also comments on commercialisation and is supportive of commercial companies assisting pilgrims who require it.

'Camino de Santiago FULL Documentary, (Camino Frances,) vanhalla adventures, YouTube, [1.25.25]

This is one of the better compilations of daily vlogs. The full version is available on the vanhalla YouTube site. Excellent cinematography and great drone shots.

Crystal has an engaging manner and speaks frankly and reflectively to camera.

'Camino de Santiago, The Whole Camino Frances from St Jean to Santiago, Harry James Roth, YouTube, [42.53]

This is a compilation of his episodes. What is unique is that Harry is a professional photographer and includes excellent stills to great effect. He had a focus on how quickly he walked each section.

'Camino Etiquette,' Anniesantiago13, YouTube, [27.23] Lots of great ideas.

'Hontanas - A little treasure on the Meseta – Camino de Santiago, Hikingways, YouTube, [8.32]

An interesting vinaigrette on this Meseta village of 60 people.

'Can I Get Lost on the Camino,' AnnieSantiago13, YouTube, [4.31] Some basic information.

‘Camino Talks with John Brierley – Part 3 - The Camino Pilgrim,’ Follow the Camino, YouTube [11.18]

An informative discussion covering types of pilgrims, preparation for the inner and outer journey.

‘The Fast Hiker Channel,’ recommended by Marie-Therese. Lots of useful information.

Podcast

Dave Whitson produces occasional podcasts on pilgrimage. **‘Rewalking the Via Podiensis, Part 1,’** The Camino Podcast, February 13, 2023, [

Host Dave Whitson has recently written a Cicerone guidebook for Via Podiensis.

Episode 67 – **‘Three Decades of Pilgrim Stories,’** The Camino Podcast, [1hr.1m] Dave Whitson interviews Nancy Frey author of ‘Pilgrims Stories,’ and owner of

www.walkingtopresence.com, and onfootinspain.com (personal Camino group travel) websites.

An interesting discussion including walking with a formal group and the impact of connectivity on your Camino, and how to minimise the effect.

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[Back copies of the newsletter have been archived on our website. www.chchcamino.net]

'We can experience nothing but the present moment, live in no other second of time, and to understand this is as close as we can get to eternal life.' P D James



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