

Completed a 12 day hike starting October 31 to November 12, 2025 of the Camino starting Burgos to Ponferrada. There are some changes in the Camino. I have added over 90 new photographs for this trip. Here are the highlights of the trip.

October 29 Madrid - Obtained the pregrino credential at Iglesia Parroquial de Santiago y San Juan Bautista in Madrid near the Plaza Mayor de Madrid. Check the hours at www.santiagoysanjuan.org . You can also obtain the credential at the Burgos municipal albergue. As in St Jean Pied de Port, Roncesvalles, Pamplona, Logroño, Leon, Ponferrada and other locations.

October 31 Madrid to Burgos

Took the ALSA bus from Madrid to Burgos at about 10 am. This is a pleasant 3 hour trip. Weather was cooler, in the low 50's, & sky was overcast. The Municipal Albergue at Burgos is in wonderful shape. The number of peregrinos around 35. Open yer around. Very centric. Limited kitchen.

November 1 Burgos to Hornillos

Light rain all day. Tested my new raincoat from REI - Fjallraven which is lightweight and it passed several rain tests. Tested a new Gregory 65 ltr backpack which passed the test. Tested new hiking shoes, won't name the brand, but this one failed the test somewhat miserably after the 2 weeks. It did not have enough foot support with backpack weight. Next time I go back to Merrell or Oboz. The trip from Burgos to Hornillos was longer than expected. The hike is uphill after Rabe and noticeable. I left Burgos at 8am and ended up arriving at Hornillos at close to 5pm. I stopped at Tardajos and Rabe de la Calzada for lunch. The meseta starts at Rabe. The expanse of the Meseta is of incredible proportions. The Meseta lasts until Astorga. After Astorga it is the Bierzo.

Hornillos is scant of restaurants so I had a late lunch at Rabe at a bar near the fountain. Hornillos was a pleasant surprise. There has been so much negative news about the Municipal albergue. It turned out not to be true. The albergue has been improved downstairs with new bathrooms, a new basic limited kitchen & new sleeping accommodations. The new albergue fee is now 14 euros.

November 2 and 3 and 4 Hornillos to Castrojeriz

Early morning hike to Castrojeriz. The hike is uphill after Hornillos and noticeable. Hornillos has a small population but I observed that old abandoned structures are being renovated. Reached Hontanas before noon. Was planning to stay at Hontanas, but the traditional albergue of El Puntido was closed. It was open all year before. The municipal albergue was closed with no hourly sign. I decided to keep walking to Castrojeriz. Made a stop at the ruins of San Anton. This is also an albergue open April to October. It was being closed today for winter season. This albergue has no electricity. Spoke to the person in charge of the albergue. Today would be the last day of the 2025 season.

Kept walking to Castrojeriz. The hike is fairly flat. Again I walk mostly on the road and watch out for cars. The trail has been improved before arriving Castrojeriz. Many small private albergues are closed for the season. Some restaurants as the Meson, which is my favorite are also closed. But other restaurants are open. Arrived late to Castrojeriz, after 4pm. Found space at the Municipal Albergue which is well kept. It was a sunny day so I washed some clothes and hung them outside. I stayed 2 extra days at Castrojeriz to visit the Roman Castle.

On the 3rd day I took the bus from Castrojeriz to Fromista at 6pm. The hill after Castrojeriz is very challenging and I have walked the hill before, so I opted for the bus. A one hour trip to Fromista. It was evening, dark and cold when I arrived to Fromista. At Fromista I spoke a while with the lady in charge of the municipal albergue. The albergue still had space at 7 pm. That is the wonder of walking the Camino during winter season. Fromista is open year around. It has a small kitchen.

November 5

Fromista to Carrion de los Condes

Started the walk early morning to Carrion. There are 3 small villages on the way before Villalcazar. There was light rain that day. Villalcazar has a nice bar with food choices. I just had some Sidra and kept walking to Carrion de los Condes. Arrived at Carrion around 1 pm. Stayed at the wonderful Nun Albergue Espiritu Santo. They have a great kitchen with all facilities so I bought some food to cook at the Lupa supermarket near the town Plaza and cooked early at around 3:30 pm.

The kitchen tends to get crowded after 5 pm so it is best to cook early. The Convent also had a good peregrino activity at around 6pm. There were about 25 peregrinos. The heating is very good.

November 6

Carrion de los Condes to Mansilla de Mulas

The bar at Carrion which sells the bus tickets was closed for vacation, so I waited for the ALSA bus at around 12 noon. There was no bus stop available to Mansilla de Mulas on the way to Leon. When I arrived at Leon, I took the bus to Mansilla. A short 34 minute trip. The bus station at Leon has been fully renovated. When I arrived at Mansilla, I headed to the original albergue municipal. To my surprise it was closed with a sign of a new municipal albergue which is more on the outer limits of village.

I found the new municipal albergue. It is to be a new temporary albergue until the original is renovated. But the original has been torn down and it does not look like anytime soon the debris will be removed with a new structure built. There is a funding problem here. The temporary albergue does not have a full kitchen. The original albergue had all facilities. The new albergue is also much smaller than the original. I stayed and enjoyed the evening. The albergue was full of peregrinos.

November 7

Mansilla de Mulas to Leon

Early start at Mansilla de Mulas. It was an overcast, cold, windy & light rain day until Leon. Made some stops along the way. Arrived at Leon about noon.

Arrived at the Leon nun monastery at about 1 pm. A sign at the entrance that it was closed from November to January. What a surprise. Fortunately I found an albergue run by the Franciscan order – Albergue San Francisco de Asis. I had never known of it. It was an easy walk from the nun Albergue. Walk on the same street as the nun albergue, but walk in the opposite direction of the Cathedral. The old section ends with a nearby fast food burger and large street with a park opposite of the Monastery. The Monastery is absolutely huge. It has a good value priced cafeteria. The rooms are also much better. No more than 4 occupants with a full bathroom and shower at each room. The albergue is an alternative to hotels. The price is 10 euros per night and much cheaper than an expensive hotel in Leon. Pilgrims and tourists can stay at the albergue.

November 8 Leon to Astorga

Took the 10 am bus from Leon to Astorga. Arrived early before the opening time of 2 pm so I stopped at a bar and had an Orujo de Yervas. I had limited time during this trip and wanted to walk the Bierzo from Astorga to Ponferrada. Stayed at the Astorga albergue close to the Roman ruin house. This albergue has full kitchen facilities and washing facilities as well as a wonderful balcony with a view of the country side. It is open most of the year. I went to the local supermarket Gadis near the main town square and bought some food to cook at the albergue. As usual, I cook early before 5 pm. I also washed all the clothes in the backpack at the albergue. They have industrial washers and dryers at this albergue. Spent some good time at the porch near the washing machines and enjoyed the porch balcony.

November 9 Astorga to Rabanal del Camino - Bierzo Country

Started early morning. There are several small villages along the way. You have Santa Catalina de Somoza, El Ganso and Rabanal. The hike before Rabanal del Camino is steep uphill and become noticeable. Arrived Rabanal at around 3 pm. Stayed at Albergue Pilar. Still open year around. Had a great lunch at el Meson Refugio. It looks like they are going seasonal with vacations from December to March. Rabanal is one of my favorite villages. I would not walk past Rabanal to Foncebadon. Albergue Guacelmo is open during the season.

November 10

Rabanal del Camino to El Acebo

Started early morning to El Acebo. The hike to Foncebadon is a noticeable steep hike. Made a stop at Foncebadon for some coffee and then hiked to the Cruz de Ferro which is among the highest points of the Camino. Then continued to El Acebo, a mostly downhill hike. The hike before el Acebo is a rough hike with a stone trail. I walked most of the portion on the road. The highway is not frequently traveled.

After the bend around the mountain with the antenna I walked mostly on the road. I should have walked on the road the entire way into El Acebo.

Just use caution on the road and stop off the road when there is vehicle traffic.

El Acebo is an ideal stop before Ponferrada. I split this hike into 2 days because the entire hike between Rabanal and Ponferrada is more than 40 kms and the rock trail is difficult. Stayed at the Albergue Casa Peregrino at El Acebo. This is a wonderful albergue with spectacular views of the mountains and Ponferrada. It too looks like it is going seasonal after November. My choice to stay at El Acebo. A spectacular hostel at the height of the mountains.

November 11

El Acebo to Ponferrada

Started the hike early morning. This time I hiked the road all the way into Molinaseca and Ponferrada. Arrived Ponferrada at around 1pm. The walk from Molinaseca was a slow uphill walk that seemed forever. At a neighborhood I waited at the bus stop and took the bus for the remainder of the trip to the albergue. Ponferrada is a Municipal Albergue well run by volunteers with a full kitchen. An early arrival allows for a visit to the Templar Castle. Ponferrada has good connections by Bus and Renfe train to big cities and small villages including Villafranca del Bierzo which is the next stop after Ponferrada.

November 12

Ponferrada to Madrid

End of this short journey. Trip # 25 of the Camino. I had not travelled anywhere after 2019. Trips were too complicated with the Covid. My first trip anywhere after 2019. Took the Renfe train to Madrid. A stopover train change in Leon. A train is much more convenient for a 5 hour trip. As usual, wash your clothes when you complete the Camino. Nothing worse than traveling with dirty smelly clothes. Travel with clean clothes during the Camino.