



Fostering the enduring tradition of the Camino

Camino *primitivo*

General Description: In addition to those pilgrims arriving at the French-Spanish border via the [Ruta de la Costa](#), many medieval pilgrims on the Camino *francés* left that route at León to travel north to the cathedral in Oviedo and the Camino *primitivo* (meaning "early") was the shortest route to return to the *francés* from there, 285 km from Oviedo through Lugo to Melide where it joins the [Camino francés](#).

Waymarking: Waymarking is variable although it is reported to be extremely good from Oviedo to the Galician border which is about half the route. Yellow arrows and splashes of yellow paint appear.

Terrain: This is a difficult route as it passes over the western end of the Cordillera Cantábrica with a number of ascents and descents of 6 to 8%.

When to go: Weather on the Camino *primitivo* is a product of the mountains and the sea and as such can be harsh, even in the summer. It is suggested that the *primitivo* be attempted only during the summer months. Climate tables for [Oviedo](#) and [Lugo](#).

Accommodation: There are a number of pilgrim albergues along the route as well as some *hostales* and *pensiones*.

Guidebooks: Dave Whitson and Laura Perazzoli: [The Northern Caminos: Norte, Primitivo and Inglés](#). Chris Lennie & Eric Walker, The Confraternity of Saint James: [Los Caminos del Norte, F: Camino Primitivo](#). (2013). Manuel Otero Menéndez, Asociación de Amigos del Camino de Santiago de Astur Galaico del Interior: [Guía Camino Primitivo](#) (Spanish).

Internet links: The [Confraternity of Saint James](#) has an overview of the Camino *primitivo*. The [Xunta de Galicia](#) has a section with extensive information on that portion of the [Camino primitivo within Galicia](#) including history, tourism, albergues, other services and Santiago itself. There is a [site](#) maintained by Eric Walker that has good material on the [Camino primitivo](#).

Video links: The organization Where Is Asturias has two videos on the part of the *primitivo* within Asturias: [The Original Way of Saint James](#) and [The Route of Saint James Familiarization Trip](#).

Other remarks: The mountain scenery is very dramatic in places, especially Grandas de Salime. "Primitivo" means 'early' or 'original' not 'primitive'.