

How to reach "Maison DONAMARIA" B&B

1 chemin d'Olhonce
right next to the
Eyheraberry bridge, or
pont Romain
Cell : 0033 661 902 921



Knocking at the door
For a welcome

If I am available, for an
arriving time by night, or bad
weather, I can pick-up you at
train station.

For that, I need your exact
arrival time, or you can join me
by cell,
when you arrive at train station.
I need 5 minutes by car.

- From Train Station to Donamaria B&B : 1500 m – 15 minutes walking.
- From Donamaria B&B to the Church (center) : 500 m – 5 minutes walking.
- From Donamaria B&B to the starting Camino : 300 m – 3 minutes walking.



- Walking from train station, join Tourism office, on the same side cross through the old walls by the gate of Navarre, you will see the church in front of you, on your right, cross through the second gate of Notre Dame, don't cross the church bridge, turn left along the river, don't cross the little wood bridge, continue along the river, then cross the stone bridge "Pont Romain", turn left, just 30 m more you arrived.



You come from
far away ?

After a long trip
You need to
relax !

Depends your fitness, training and preparation, you have 3 choices :

After a first night at Donamaria (by higher route Napoléon) :

1 - Cross at once the Mountain range Pyrénées

For sleeping in Roncesvalles (it is necessary to book) :

- The magnificent “Albergue de Perigrinos” (you need a sleeping bag, they don’t offer a blancket to avoid bedbugs problems), and pilgrims office.

www.alberguederoncesvalles.com

Phone : 0034 948 760 000 – 948 760 029

- Hotel “La Posada”

www.laposadaderoncesvalles.com

Phone: 0034 948 760 225

- Hotel “La casa Sabina”

www.casasabina.es

Phone : 0034 948 760 012

- Hotel “Roncesvalles”

www.hotelroncesvalles.com

Phone : 0034 948 760 105

2 - Split into two the stage, and spend one night in “Anberge d’Orisson”

www.refuge-orisson.com

Phone : 0033 559 491 303

2 h hours walking from Donamaria and 5 hours before Roncesvalles.

3 – Stay two nights in Donamaria and start until Roncesvalles. Have the opportunity to take a rest, visit St.Jean PP, quietly make your final preparation.

Suggestions for your preparation

:

Wise choice:

- footwear
- rucksack
- apparel
- walking poles

- **Walking Poles** : Use two poles for extra support, keep you comfortable for the duration of your hiking activity.

- Use poles reduces impact and load on joints (knees, ankles, hips and spine), enhances balance and stability, reduces muscle fatigue and regulate the rhythm and breathing. Pain in your knees makes for quite an unpleasant hike, for insurance, think in advance of bring along 1 or 2 knee bandages.

- **Bedbugs** : Some pilgrims are bitten by bedbugs insect, often with painful and unpleasant consequences. It is better to bring a spray.

- **Footwear** : there is absolutely no need to wear high mountains shoes. Unless you have ankles problems (mid shoes), low shoes type trail waterproof, breathable and “vibram” are perfect. Don't forget, you have to cross several cities and long flat stages. He better not start with his new shoes, to use them before, it can avoid blisters.

- **Rucksack** : choice a hiking rucksack between 40 to 50 li +. The right weight is between 8 kg (summer time) and 12 kg (autumn and winter time) with sleeping bag, water and food. In a bag is everything you need, including the fear of lack. It is important to keep just what you need. Less is already the most. Remember, you wear your whole life pilgrim on your back ! When packing, **always** with all storage areas open, spread evenly the weight on each side, pack tightly with a few gaps as possible, try to avoid fixing anything to the outside (poles are the exception). You have to pack in the low area light items (sleeping bag), in the middle heavy items, on the top, items that may be required quickly.

Backpack fitting : the strongest muscles in your body are in your legs, so you have to carry the weight through your legs and not your shoulders. The aim is to have the weight distributed 70-80% on the hips, 20-30% on the shoulders. The pack should be comfortable, stable and be sat close against the back. Backpack is for use outdoor, don't forget it in a store or house, and place it on the floor.

- **Apparel** : it is recommended to choose **quickly dry apparel**. Close-fitting and breathable clothing in general. Good hiking socks against blisters, good waterproof and windproof jacket. Light waterproof pants with lateral zip, easy and quickly to wear if its starts to rain. Poncho is a very baggy clothing, fly in the wind with areas exposed to rain !

Practical Information :



The day before leaving, an eye on weather forecast

To the choice of itinerary

Depending on weather conditions and physical fitness :

Pilgrims must decide on either the lower Valcarlos road or the more dramatic higher route Napoléon. Sometimes the higher route can be very dangerous.

You could encounter stormy weather accompanied by snow storm, strong wind, thick fog and sometimes corridor avalanches.

Weather forecast :

In Saint Jean PP (180 m)

<http://www.viewweather.com/w1893694-weather-forecast-for-saint-jean-pied-de-port-aquitaine.html>

In Bentarte pass (1340 m)

www.viewweather.com/w1781825-weather-forecast-for-col-de-bentarte-spain-general.html

In Roncesvalles (944 m)

<http://www.viewweather.com/w1764977-weather-forecast-for-orreaga-autonomous-region-of-navarre.html>



Why adopt the ostrich's policy ?



Travel light is travel easy

For this stage you can carry your rucksack by a special taxi from St. Jean PP to Roncesvalles and keep with you a small backpack. You must book one day before :

Useful and pretty cheap service.

EXPRESS BOURRICOT

Caroline speak English
Her small company is a special pilgrims taxi and luggage taxi.

www.expressbourricot.com


cell :

0033 661 96 04 76

Assistance to plan your camino

www.resa-camino.com

We love this

 pilgrims guide in English :

“Walking the Camino de Santiago” by Bethan Davies & Ben Cole

Pili Pala Press

Cross mountain range Pyrenees A pilgrim's dream



This narrow and straight chain of mountains, join Atlantic ocean to Mediterranean sea, and stretches for 430 km. The highest mountain is "Aneto" alt 3404 m, some 200 km east of the Saint Jean PP. The vicissitudes of history erected a border between France and Spain, dividing the Basque country into parts from 1659.

The lofty peaks of the Pyrenees attract clouds like a magnet. Two weather influences, one from any storms Biscay bay, the other from soft and high winds south "Foehn" effect. In autumn and winter the pass may be snowbound, although it's rarely impassable for long period of time. The end of May 2013, it was necessary to wear chain by car to join Roncesvalles from Ibaneta pass alt 1040 m. The weather can change very quickly, and can be unpredictable at any time of year. Sometimes is better to bring gloves and warm headdress. Route Napoléon is an exposed route in bad weather, easy to get lost in fog or caught in snow, and every year pilgrims get into trouble along this trail. Start from Saint Jean, take things slowly and be prepared to take the alternative Valcarlos route in bad weather.

When the weather is fine, the more dramatic Route Napoléon offer fabulous view of the Pyrenees and the mountains' harsh reputation seems overplayed.

The great wildlife and bird watching : large groups of griffon vulture (2.40 m) , if your are lucky, the extremely rare Lammergeier vulture (the greatest of all 2.75 m), red kite (1.50m), buzzard (1.20 m), chough ,and woodpeckers...

Between may to September you cross a huge grazing of thousands sheep "Manex blackhead", and hundreds half-wild horses "pottok", with all the life of shepherds around. At the end of October, is the season of hunting migratory pigeon. In November is the great migration of cranes (2.20m). When the weather is bad, they follow too the Valcarlos valley to cross Pyrenees...

Along the route Napoléon you can see remarkable trees like old sweet chestnut, Pyrenean oak, beech, old hawthorn twisted by the wind, and whin.

This path is rich in history from the first settlement by the shepherds from Neolithic period (some 4000 years ago) with remains of tombstone "Cromlech", the bulwark of "Zerkupe rock" and shelter cave for shepherding.

The Basques passed over by successive waves of invaders from the Neolithic, Celtic, Vandals, Roman, Visigoth, the Moors (Muslim people), Emperor Charlemagne and his Franks. All of them cross the Pyrenees mountain by the same way like pilgrims today.

The Basque land is isolated, mountainous, wooded and wild, difficult to cross and unsuitable for settling. The Basque people knew preserved its traditions, folk cultures, and above all, its unique language "Euskera". Many historians believe the Basques are thought to be the original Europeans.

"Europe was born in pilgrimage and Christianity is their mother language" Goethe.

The Moors, invaded the Iberian peninsula in 711, and stay almost 8 centuries (3 centuries in France). The history is closely linked between Saint James "Matamoros" (Moors killer) and the Emperor Charlemagne. The Emperor was on his way home after sacking Pamplona in 778, part of a brief campaign to extend Christian territory on Muslim lands, when a part of his army was attacked and defeated by understandably and furious Basques. This battle gave birth, 3 centuries later, the legendary "Song of Roland" in the middle age. This song is the glory of Charlemagne and the reconquest of Muslim territory. In the text, the Basques becomes Moors, and the song became a propaganda tool by pilgrims to Santiago through Spain.

Back to Donamaria main pilgrims page : http://www.donamaria.fr/pages/pilgrimspage_en.php



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