

FRENCH WAY OF SAINT JAMES **WORLD HERITAGE**

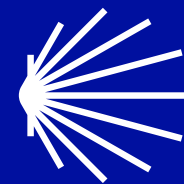
YOUR PILGRIMAGE,
**OUR
LEGACY**



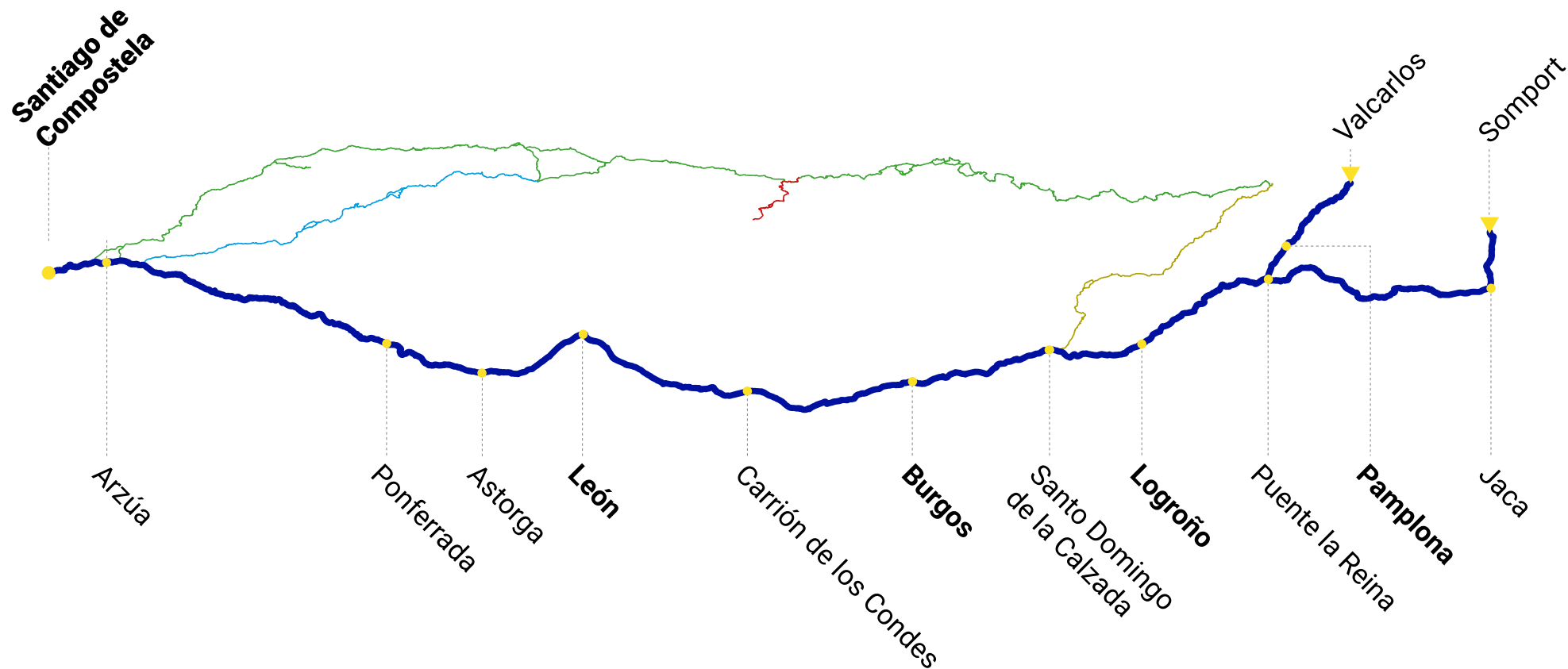


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**Caminos de Santiago
de Compostela:
Camino Francés y Caminos
del Norte de España**
Patrimonio Mundial desde 1993



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A HERITAGE FOR HUMANKIND

The French Way of Saint James in Spain was inscribed on UNESCO's **World Heritage List** in 1993. This recognition highlights its outstanding universal value and the need to protect it for future generations.

Since the discovery in Galicia, during the 9th century, of the tomb of the Apostle St James, millions of pilgrims have traveled this route, keeping it alive to this day.

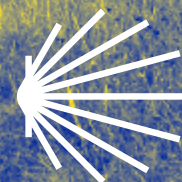
Two access points connect the route in Spain with the rest of Europe: Roncesvalles (Valcarlos Pass) and Canfranc (Somport Pass), joining each other in

Puente la Reina (Navarre) to continue to Santiago de Compostela.

In 2015, UNESCO extended this recognition to other pilgrimage routes in the Peninsula, such as the Original Way, the Coastal Way, the Basque Country-Rioja Inland Route and the Lebaniego Way, thus extending the World Heritage network to almost 1,500 kilometers.

The Way of Saint James, along with the Kumano Way in Japan, are the only two pilgrimage routes with the World Heritage recognition.

Throughout the year 2024, nearly half a million pilgrims have stamped *La Compostela*, the accreditation of having completed the Way upon their arrival in Santiago.



A CULTURAL LEGACY CONNECTING CENTURIES OF HISTORY

The French Way of Saint James is a cultural **corridor that has united Europe** for over a thousand years.

The pilgrimage led to the construction of buildings to meet the spiritual and material needs of pilgrims, which leave **traces all along the Way**, a testimony to centuries of tradition and faith.

Romanesque churches, Gothic cathedrals, hospitals, monasteries, bridges, and fountains have not only endured the passage of time, but have also endowed the territories through which the Way passes with identity and character.



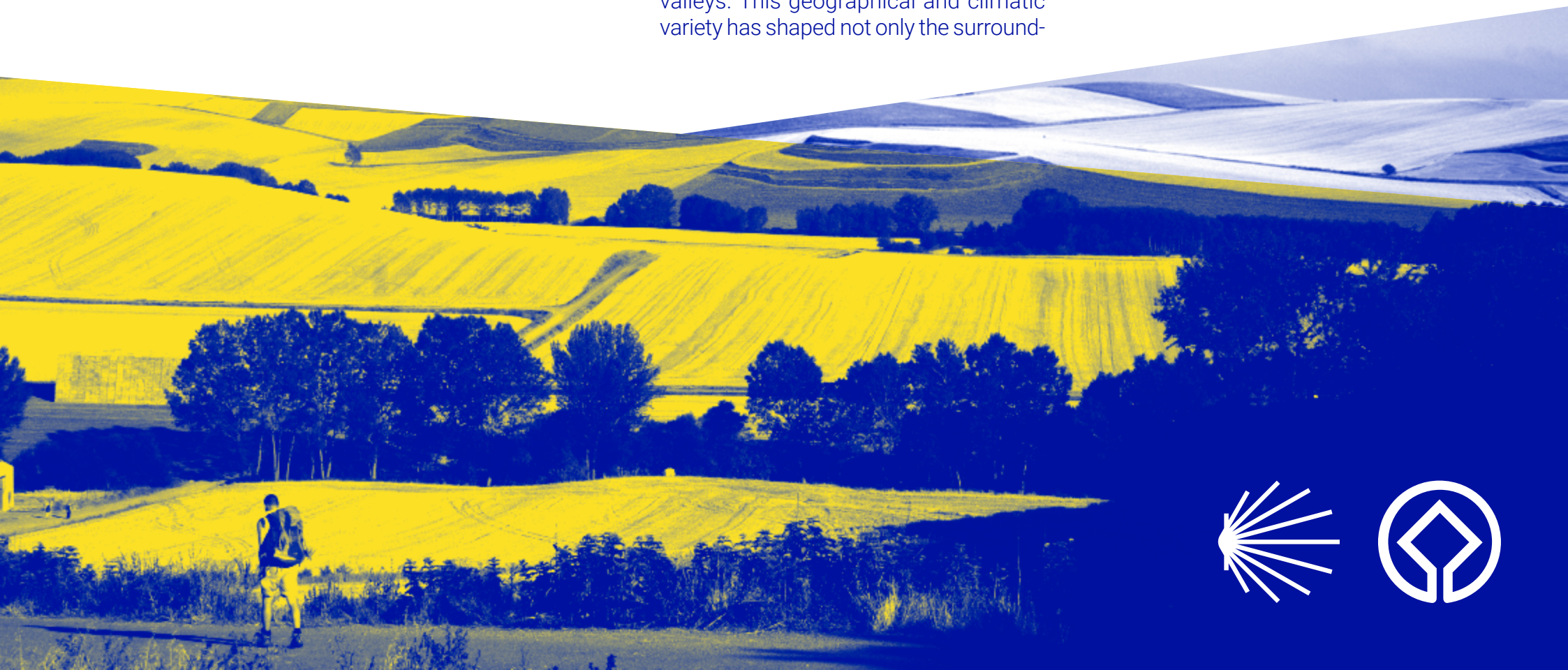
LANDSCAPES THAT ACCOMPANY **THE WAY**

The landscapes that the French Way of Saint James traverses reflect the identity and diversity of its natural and cultural heritage, constituting also an essential element of the pilgrimage. The journey through areas of great visual and symbolic richness adds to the pilgrim's experience, as **the route is as important as the destination.**

Throughout the Way, 24 types of landscapes can be identified - from mountain ranges to depressions, plateaus and river valleys. This geographical and climatic variety has shaped not only the surround-

ings, but also the ways of life, creating a mosaic of landscapes that accompany and transform the pilgrim.

These landscapes are characterised by architectural landmarks that consolidate its heritage value, but they are not its only defining elements. Isolated hermitages, medieval bridges, villages born under the protection of the route, and rural constructions linked to the use of the territory provide further richness to the character of the Way.



FLAVORS OF THE WAY

The foods and cuisine of the French Way of Saint James are a **journey from the senses towards knowledge**. Each stage allows the pilgrim to discover foods produced in family farms, linked to the use of the environment, and present in recipes passed down from generation to generation: cave-aged cheeses, smoked

sausages, wood-fired bread, native legumes, and traditional sweets are part of a gastronomy that can only be enjoyed by traveling the route.

We discover new flavours and new words that give a name to what we eat, often lacking a translation: *boliches*, *pochas*, *fardelejos*, *morcilla*, *fabiola*, *cecina*, *filloa* or *grelos*. Names that identify products and dishes inseparable from the identity of each place.

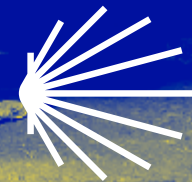


HOSPITALITY

Those who travel the Way find a spirit of hospitality in it that transforms the journey into an experience of welcome and fraternity.

Since the Middle Ages, monasteries, pilgrim hospitals, and hostels (*albergues*) have provided shelter, food, and assistance to those walking to Compostela. A tradition that remains alive in hostels, parishes, and private homes, where hosts and neighbors continue to welcome pilgrims.

The hospitality of the Way can be found in the accommodations, shared among the pilgrims when they travel together, and in the greeting “*¡Buen Camino!*”, an expression that encapsulates the essence of the Way’s hospitality: a permanent welcome and a wish for a good journey.

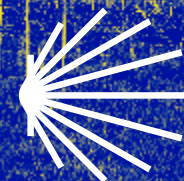


TOWNS ALONG THE WAY

The Way of Saint James has given rise to **numerous localities that were born and grew** under the shelter of pilgrims' passage, shaping a unique identity that can still be perceived in their urban layout.

Regardless of the climate or topography, the layout of these wayfaring towns follows a common pattern: a main street—often long and straight—coinciding

with the Way's route. Houses, arranged in a row, whose facades face the Way. At some point along this street, stands the village church, linked to the pilgrimage since its origin. Its tower is the first sign the pilgrim sees from afar and the last vestige left behind when resuming the journey.



HISTORY AND LEGENDS

The Way of Saint James is woven with stories where **the real and the fantastic intertwine**, shaping an imaginary in which miracles, apparitions, and extraordinary feats coexist.

The very discovery of the tomb of the Apostle St. James was enveloped in a shower of stars. Since then, legends have accompanied the pilgrims, providing meaning to their efforts and strength to their faith. In each section of the route, a story awaits to be discovered: the hen

that sang after being roasted in Santo Domingo de la Calzada, the bridge that the devil tried to destroy in Puente la Reina, or the Virgin who came to the aid of a pilgrim in Alto del Perdón.

These stories connect the pilgrims with those who preceded them, keeping the magic of a route where time folds and the past remains alive in every stone, every step, and every story.





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