

# **THE CAMINO INGLÉS AND RUTA DO MAR**

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# THE CAMINO INGLÉS AND RUTA DO MAR

TO SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA AND FINISTERRE  
FROM FERROL, A CORUÑA OR RIBADEO

by Dave Whitson and Laura Perazzoli

## CICERONE

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Front cover: Near Calle de Poulo (Inglés, Stage 4)

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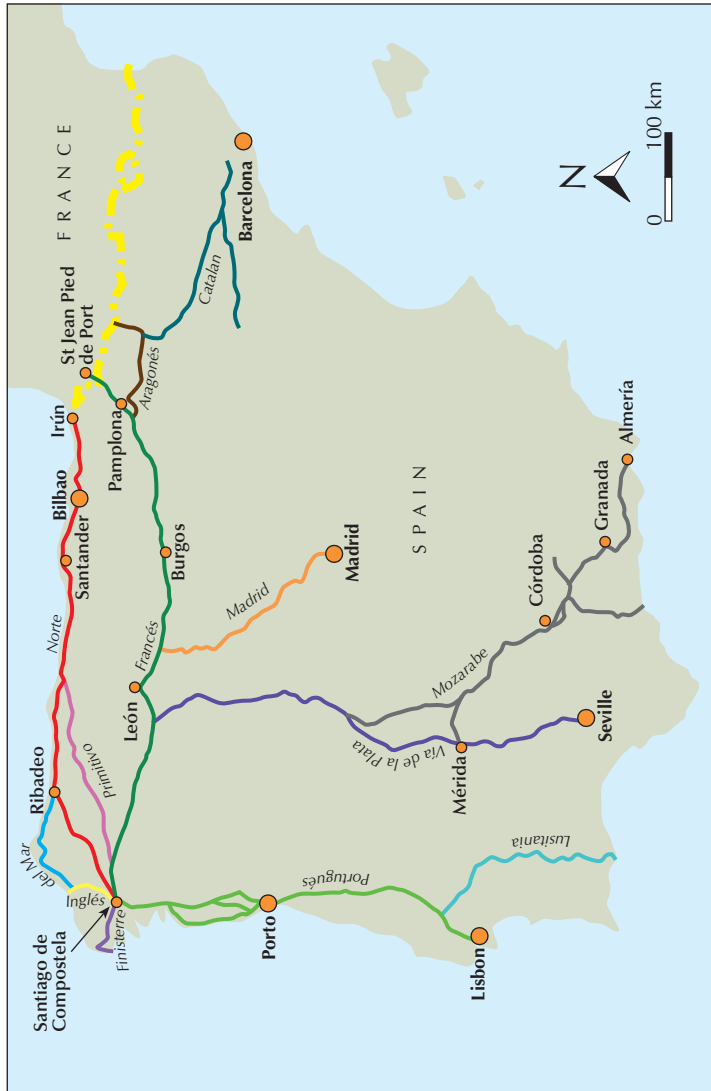
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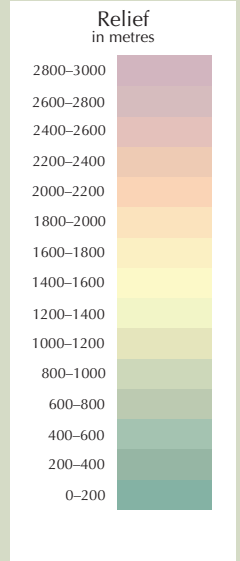
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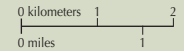


Symbols used on route maps

- route
- alternative route
- direction of route
- start/alternative start point
- finish/alternative finish point
- start/finish point
- alternative start/finish point
- woodland
- urban areas
- station/railway
- albergue/other accommodation
- campsite
- bar/café
- all facilities
- pharmacy
- building
- church or cathedral
- supermarket/grocery store
- bus station/bus stop
- rail station
- pilgrim info/TIC
- fountain
- airport



SCALE: 1:100,000



Town map scales vary – see individual maps

Contour lines are drawn at 100m intervals and highlighted at 200m intervals.

GPX files

GPX files for all routes can be downloaded for free at [www.cicerone.co.uk/1006/GPX](http://www.cicerone.co.uk/1006/GPX)

Santiago Peregrino, atop the cathedral in Santiago de Compostela



## ROUTE SUMMARY TABLES

Camino Inglés					
Stage	Start	Distance	Total ascent	Total descent	Page
1	Ferrol	29.5km	457m	457m	
2	Pontedeume	20.7km	563m	537m	
3	Betanzos	25.7km	749m	384m	
4	Hospital de Bruma	24.7km	273m	437m	
5	Sigüeiro	16.2km	264m	238m	
<b>Total</b>	<b>Santiago de Compostela</b>	<b>116.8km</b>	<b>2306m</b>	<b>2053m</b>	
	Alternative start at A Coruña	33.6km	902m	528m	

Ruta do Mar					
Stage	Start	Distance	Total ascent	Total descent	Page
1	Ribadeo	17.8km	149m	178m	
2	Praia das Catedrais	21.8km	357m	369m	
3	Foz	32.8km	538m	532m	
4	San Cibrao	29.7km	832m	833m	
5	Viveiro	31.2km	1054m	1052m	
6	Cuiña	20.9km	669m	542m	
7	Teixido	36.4km	918m	1057m	
<b>Total</b>	<b>Xubia</b>	<b>190.6km</b>	<b>4517m</b>	<b>4563m</b>	

Camino Finisterre					
Stage	Start	Distance	Total ascent	Total descent	Page
1	Santiago de Compostela	20.5	501	592	
2	Negreira	34.1	601	492	
3	Olveiroa	32.2	468	728	
<b>Total</b>	<b>Finisterre</b>	<b>86.8km</b>	<b>1570m</b>	<b>1872m</b>	
	Muxía extension	52.7	991	1334	



*The camino after Betanzos (Inglés, Stage 3)*

## INTRODUCTION

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The rain in Spain falls mainly in Galicia, making the Iberian Peninsula's northwest corner a lush and verdant outdoor lover's paradise. Blessed with richly forested lands, rippling hills crisscrossed with gurgling creeks, and medieval stone villages nestled snugly in their midst, Galicia would be a desirable destination for walkers even if it were bereft of any historical or cultural significance. Of course, just the opposite is true; Galicia is home to one of the great pilgrimage sites in the world, Santiago de Compostela, and the most famous branch of the Camino de Santiago, the Camino Francés, draws nearly 200,000 pilgrims annually, with many pilgrims continuing onward to the coast of Finisterre and Muxía.

While the scenery of the Galician portion of the Camino Francés is stunning, it can be challenging for some to fully enjoy this walk due to the surging pilgrim traffic. Those seeking the best of both worlds – Galician grandeur and peaceful, contemplative walking conditions – have been drawn in recent years to the Camino Inglés, a much shorter pilgrimage that originates on the northern coast, either in Ferrol or A Coruña. The Inglés, so called because it was popular with pilgrims traveling via boat from the British Isles, offers many of the same qualities that make the Francés so

popular, including reliable waymarking, consistent pilgrim hostels, and the opportunity to earn the Compostela in Santiago, a certificate that confirms and commemorates your pilgrimage.

For those seeking even greater solitude and sublimity, and possessing an adventurous streak to match, look to the Galician coast between Ribadeo, where the Camino del Norte turns inland, and Ferrol, where the Inglés begins. Over the last two decades, historians have diligently revealed the pilgrim roads that wound through this stunning terrain in the Middle Ages, providing an alternative approach to Santiago that passes through San Martiño de Mondoñedo, likely the oldest cathedral in Spain, and Viveiro, one of Galicia's most important ports. It also integrates another major pilgrimage site, San Andrés de Teixido, before joining the Inglés. While not yet recognized by the archbishopric of Santiago as an 'official' camino, and lacking the pilgrim infrastructure of those peer routes as a consequence, it offers some of the most striking and memorable scenery of any camino in Galicia, with dramatic cliffs, idyllic beaches, and evocative Romanesque shrines.

The majority of pilgrims begin their walk on the Camino Inglés in Ferrol; the route spans 116km and takes four to six days to complete. Alternatively,

it is possible to initiate the Inglés in A Coruña, in which case the walk covers 75km. Distances on the Ruta do Mar are not as tidy, as there are many variants that allow for customization. Our recommended approach between Ribadeo and Xubia (near Ferrol on the Camino Inglés) runs 190km, but we include roughly 400km of routes to combine in crafting your adventure. Finally, the 87km continuation to Finisterre after Santiago is generally handled in three days, with an optional fourth-day extension to Muxía.

#### THE STORY OF SAINT JAMES

While countless pilgrimage shrines exist within the Catholic world, three cities stand out as major

centers of pilgrimage. Two are obvious: Jerusalem is intimately associated with the life of Jesus, while Rome houses the relics of saints Peter and Paul, not to mention Saint Peter's Basilica. The third center, situated in an otherwise forgotten corner of Spain, is much more surprising. Santiago de Compostela, in Spain's northwestern region of Galicia, has a history built on equal parts rumor and legend.

Of Jesus's 12 apostles, perhaps less is known about Saint James (or Santiago) than any other. The brother of John and the son of an assertive mother, James is known for his temper and for being one of Jesus's first followers – and the first to be martyred. However, mystery surrounds James's

life between the crucifixion of Christ and his own death. Spanish legend asserts that he brought the good word to the Iberian Peninsula, but with minimal success, winning very few followers. That said, on his subsequent return to the Holy Land he fared worse; he was decapitated by Herod Agrippa in AD44.

After James's death, the story goes, his disciples smuggled his body to the coast, where it was placed on a stone boat – lacking sails, oars, and sailors – and put to sea. Amazingly, and perhaps under the guidance of angels, this boat maneuvered westward across the Mediterranean and north into the Atlantic, before ultimately making landfall at Padrón on the Galician coast. Once there, two

disciples met the boat, took James's body, and eventually buried him in present-day Santiago de Compostela. And then, almost eight centuries passed.

In 813, the hermit Pelayo had a vision in which a star shined brightly on a nearby field. Digging there, Pelayo made a stunning discovery: the very bones of Saint James, buried and forgotten so many years earlier. The timing couldn't have been better for the local Christians. With the Moorish conquest of the Iberian Peninsula nearly complete, their armies enjoying victory after victory behind the 'arm of Mohammed', the Christian Kingdom of Asturias in northern Spain was in dire straits. However, according to legend, the



Santiago de Compostela's cathedral (Inglés, Stage 5)



Iglesia de Santa María, Neda (Inglés, Stage 1)

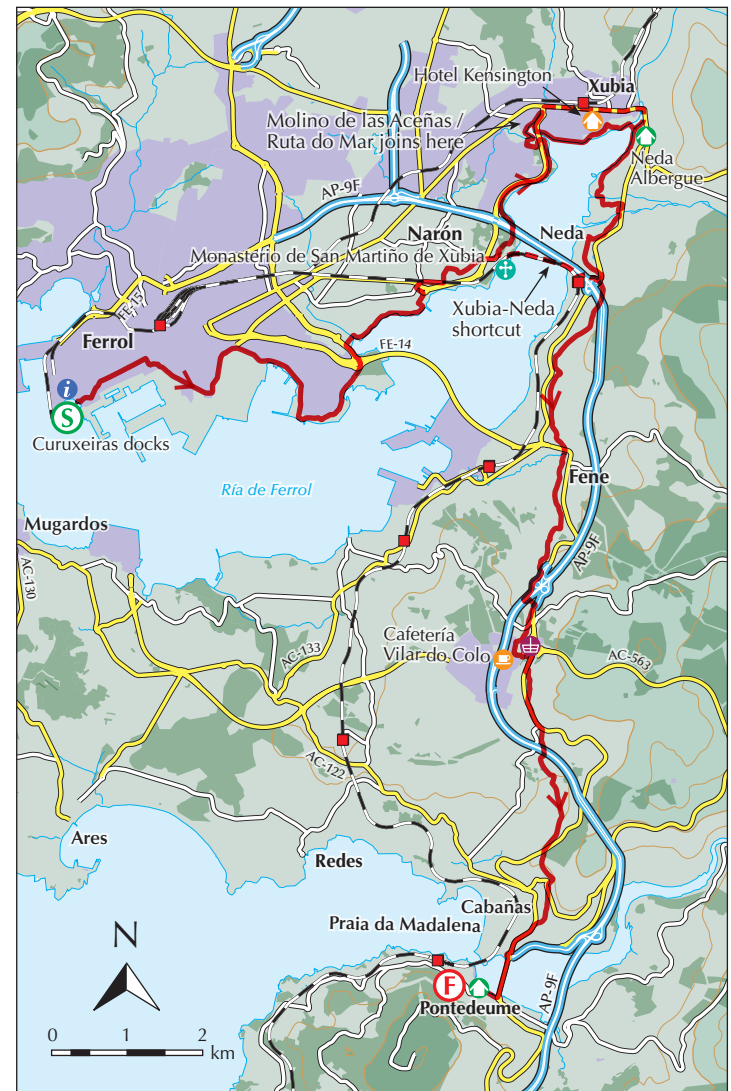
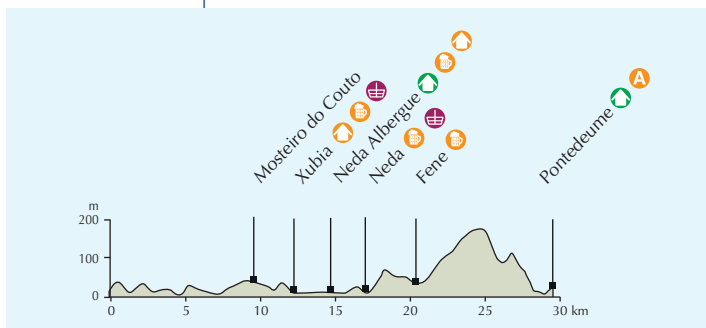


## STAGE 1

## Ferrol to Ponteume

<b>Start</b>	Curuxeiras dock, Ferrol
<b>Finish</b>	Albergue de Peregrinos, Ponteume
<b>Distance</b>	29.5km
<b>% unpaved</b>	27.9%
<b>Total ascent</b>	457m
<b>Total descent</b>	457m
<b>Terrain</b>	2
<b>Route-finding</b>	3
<b>Pilgrim accommodation</b>	Neda, Ponteume

The Camino Inglés begins at the ocean's edge at the port of Ferrol. Begin your walk at the dock of Curuxeiras and continue through the town center before returning back toward the water. Enjoy the beach and sea views before heading inland, when the walk leads through the industrial and suburban outskirts of Ferrol on the way to Neda. After a short stint through gentle hills, the end of today's walk returns to the coast once again; the beach is just off-route as you skirt the edge of Cabañas and follow the long bridge into Ponteume, where the albergue enjoys a waterfront location. While the waymarking is generally reliable, urban walking can always be a little tricky (cars like to park in front of waymarks!), so pay close attention.



## FERROL

All facilities. RENFE/FEVE station. **Hostal La Frontera** (singles €22–26, doubles €30–34, meals available, @, c/San Andres 4, tel 881 953 036), **Hostal Porta Nova II** (singles €18, doubles €30, c/Naturalista López Seone 33–35, tel 981 359 772), **Hotel Silva** (singles €27–32, doubles €36–44, triples €43–51, quads €50–58, open all year, @, Río Castro, tel 981 310 552), **Hotel El Suizo** (singles €49–55, doubles €56–62, breakfast available, @, c/Rúa Dolores, tel 981 300 400). The main tourist office is located near the train station in the Praza de España, making it an easy visit after arrival (open daily in summer 1000–1300, 1700–1900, reduced hours in off-season, tel 981 944 251). A second turismo, oriented toward pilgrims, is located next to the Inglés’ starting point in the port (open daily in summer 0900–1300, 1500–1930; in off-season, open Mon–Fri 0930–1230, Sat–Sun 1000–1300, 1600–1800; tel 981 944 252). Credenciales are available from both turismos, as well as the concatedral (€2).



Ferrol has long been an important port city, given its strategic military position, naval academy, and its major shipbuilding facilities. It was also the launch-point for the (ultimately unsuccessful) Spanish Armada in 1588. General Francisco Franco was born here, and from 1938 to 1982 the name of the city was officially changed to ‘El Ferrol del Caudillo’. Its seafaring history is evocatively presented in the **Museo Naval Ferrol** (open Mon–Fri 0930–1330, Sat–Sun 1030–1330),

located in former prison barracks in the port. Its model ships, including a stunning one of the *Santa María Magdalena*, are worth the visit. The **Concatedral de San Xiao** shares the episcopal see with Mondoñedo’s cathedral on the Camino del Norte. A relatively recent construction, dating to the 18th century (and built on the remains of an earlier Romanesque temple), the concatedral unusually adheres to a Greek cross layout, instead of the Latin norm. Castle-lovers with time on their hands should make the 15-minute drive out to **Castelo de San Felipe** (1000–1400, 1600–2000), situated on the coast to the west of Ferrol.

The Camino Inglés begins from Ferrol’s central port. ▶ The first stone waymark is just before the arch leading to c/Carmen Curuxeiras. The route through Ferrol is well marked, leading from the port past the Igrexa de San Francisco and then along Rúa Real to the Praza de Armas. Wrap through Praza da Constitución, Praza das Angustias, and leave the old town on Rúa Taxonera (quickly becoming Avda Macmahon). Following a windy stroll through Ferrol’s sprawl, arrive at the coastline 3.5km from the port; this becomes your close companion for much of the walk to Neda’s albergue.

The next 6km generally proceeds along wide sidewalks and coastal promenades, with periodic opportunities to drop down closer to the waterfront. Pass the waterfront Ermida de Santa María de Caranza and its neighboring Praia de Caranza, then cut under the expressway. A large shopping complex is on the other side, with two major supermarkets. A very brief inland jaunt follows, navigating around train tracks and passing through O Vila de Fiasca, with waymarks leading straight through the neighborhood and then downhill to the 12th-century church of **Monasterio de San Martiño de Xubia** (Mosteiro do Couto), formerly part of a larger Benedictine monastic complex.

## Shortcut

Those seeking a shorter day can pursue a shortcut here, turning right and crossing the pedestrian bridge over the Ría de Ferrol. Just before the **Neda station**, turn left and

To earn the Compostela, it is essential that you obtain your first stamp before leaving Ferrol: this could be from the concatedral, the turismo, your accommodation, or a bar.



*Monasterio de San Martiño de Xubia*  
(photo: Joe Williams)

then right immediately after, passing under A-8. Cross N-642, turn right, and then left immediately after, rejoining the official route. This trims 6.4km off the day's walk.

Continue straight past the church, forking right soon after to return to the riverside track. After a pleasant coastal stretch, the route runs alongside FE-11, before wrapping back under it and arriving at the old mill (Molino de las Aceñas) on the riverside, 2.6km from the church. Yet another shortcut is possible here, continuing straight over the river alongside FE-11 and rejoining the Inglés on the other side. Cross a small stone dam, proceed 500 meters along the river, and then face another decision. ◀ If you'd like to access the shops, bars, and accommodation in neighboring Narón and Xubia (**Hotel Kensington** – singles €21, doubles €29, meals available, sello, Ctra de Castilla 832, tel 981 387 326; **Hotel Marcial** – singles €22, doubles €33, meals available, c/Río Pereiro 6-8, tel 981 384 417), turn left and then right immediately after. Follow this until you cross a bridge; turn right on the other side and join a riverside pedestrian track. Alternatively, turn right and remain on the coastal promenade (**fountains**). After crossing a pedestrian bridge, rejoin the other route and arrive at the

### NEDA ALBERGUE (14.5KM)

**Albergue de Peregrinos** (€6, 28 beds, open all year, kitchen, tel 629 224 622/981 390 233). **Pensión Maragoto** is just north, on the highway (singles €15–27, doubles €29–40, Avda do Xubia 12, tel 981 347 304).

Following 1km more on the promenade, veer inland, wrapping around the Iglesia de Santa María (sello from adjacent parish building) and a playground. Join c/ Paraíso, which becomes Rúa Real, and proceed into

### NEDA (2.1KM)

Bars, grocery, pharmacy. Internet and sello in **Casa da Cultura**, on the main road.

The Gothic **Igrexa de San Nicolás** dates to the 14th century, but was subsequently refurbished in the baroque style. It is a site of local pilgrimages on Mondays (known as 'St Nicholas Walks'), for those seeking intervention from the so-called 'lawyer of difficult cases.'





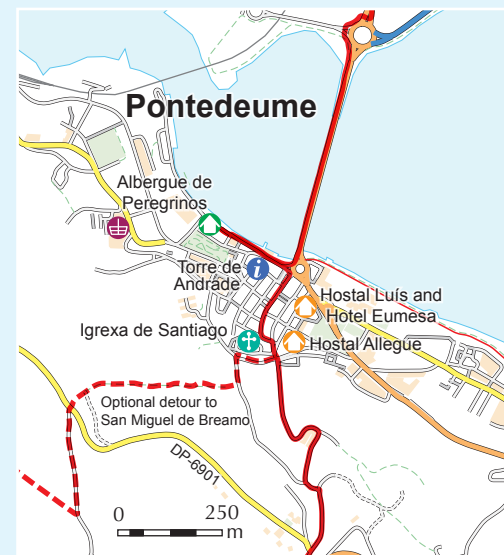
*Neda's Albergue de Peregrinos*

Leaving Neda, the route also leaves the coast, climbing into the modest hills. Quiet, minor roads proceed roughly parallel to AC-115, crossing the expressway and then delivering you into **Fene (bars)** 3.7km later. Two pilgrim-friendly bars offer meals and sellos at the highway crossing, and the Casa do Concello soon after offers a sello as well.

The walk continues roughly parallel to N-651, following minor roads southward through Perlio and Mundín. Just 1.1km later, fork onto a footpath, passing under the Viaduct Romariz. Emerge on the edge of an industrial center 2km later, with **Cafetería Vilar do Colo** on your right at a roundabout. Turn left at the roundabout, then right onto N-651, briefly joining the highway before forking left uphill. After a second stint on N-651, the camino veers right shortly after Bar Victor onto a path. Cross the expressway and then begin the day's final descent, enjoying excellent views of Pontedeume unfolding beneath you. The route skirts the edge of **Cabañas (bar)**, a pleasant beach town, joining N-651 once more to cross the Río Eume. Turn right immediately after the bridge and proceed 200 meters to the albergue in

## PONTEDEUME (12.9KM)

All facilities. **Albergue de Peregrinos** (€6, 20 beds, open all year, W/D, @, Avda de Marina, tel 981 433 039), **Hostal Allegue** (doubles €30–40, c/Chafaris 1, tel 981 430 035), **Hostal Luís** (doubles €25–42, c/San Augustin 12, tel 981 430 235), **Hotel Eumesa** (€70–80, includes breakfast, Avda da Coruña, tel 981 430 925).



A picturesque town situated between hills and the Río Eume. The powerful Andrade family originated in Pontedeume in the Middle Ages, influenced the town's development, and commissioned many of the city's (and region's) architectural gems. Its 18th-century **Igrexa de Santiago** includes the tomb of Fernando de Andrade, an acclaimed military figure from the 16th century.

The **Pontedeume Bridge**, with 14th-century origins but a current structure dating to the 19th century, was commissioned by Fernán Pérez de Andrade, the family patriarch. It originally had 116 arches and a chapel located between arches 21 and 22. The **Torreón dos Andrade**, located in the town center, is all that remains of the grand 14th-century Pazo dos Condes. Currently the tower houses Pontedeume's tourist office and the Andrade Interpretation Center. The 12th-century **Igrexa de San Miguel de Breamo** is an impressive

early Romanesque church situated 3km outside of town; legends suggest that it was built over a Celtic temple's remains. Another story claims that its rose window's 11 tips harken back to the 11 Knights Templar who guarded it.



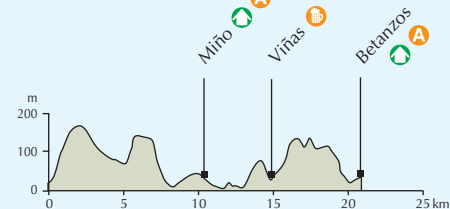
Pontedeume and its impressive bridge

## STAGE 2

### Pontedeume to Betanzos

<b>Start</b>	Albergue de Peregrinos, Pontedeume
<b>Finish</b>	Albergue de Peregrinos, Betanzos
<b>Distance</b>	20.7km
<b>% unpaved</b>	26.7%
<b>Total ascent</b>	563m
<b>Total descent</b>	537m
<b>Terrain</b>	4
<b>Route-finding</b>	1
<b>Pilgrim accommodation</b>	Miño, Betanzos

Bid farewell to the coast's beaches and ports, instead turning inland toward green hills and peaceful villages. Prepare for a steep climb out of Pontedeume, for which you will be rewarded with great views of the city below. Those who have time could consider detouring to the early Romanesque church of San Miguel de Breamo, nestled on the hillside above Pontedeume. The route continues through the countryside, offering one significant rest stop for food and supplies in Miño, before eventually leading to the medieval town of Betanzos. Betanzos is a major highlight of the Inglés, with lively plazas, shady parks, and a lovely historic core.



### Coastal alternative

A coastal alternative is possible between Pontedeume and Miño. It's unmarked, but includes a lengthy section of footpath, two extended beaches, and some minor highway walking (mostly with sidewalks). To join it, walk to Pontedeume's train station, cross the tracks, and find the footpath at the far side of the platform. This approach is 2.8km longer than the official route, but often quite lovely.

Backtrack from the albergue and proceed uphill through town on c/Real. Turn left just before the Igrexa de Santiago, then right onto c/San Agustín. ▶ Proceed uphill, making a series of well-marked turns as you leave town. Some 2.6km from the albergue the ascent concludes; turn left downhill, passing a picnic area. The next 2.4km is mostly off-road, with quite varied scenery, including an arbor, woods, a short highway stint, and a golf course. Turn left and cross AP-9/E-1.

To visit San Miguel de Breamo, instead pass behind the church and follow Rúa Fontenova south, before turning right on a footpath soon after.