

## Instructions & Information:

### Accommodations survey, Saint Jean Pied de Port to Pamplona

May and September are the two busiest months on the Camino Francés starting in Saint Jean Pied de Port, and finding places for a group of up to 11 people can be a bit tricky – if you don't plan ahead. So that's what we will do – plan ahead!

To do that, I need each person in the group to complete a survey on their accommodation preferences for the time we are together.

Once I have your responses, I will send you specific instructions for how to make the reservations for what you have chosen. **Please do not make any reservations yet!**

A few things to know:

- A. In general, the places available from Saint Jean Pied de Port to Pamplona are a bit more expensive than what you will find further down the trail. So please don't panic if these five stops seem to challenge your budget a bit; prices will be somewhat lower once you get to and past Pamplona.
- B. The places I have chosen are some of the most reasonably priced on this section of the Francés route, and they will give you an idea of the variety of options you will find throughout your journey.
- C. If for any reason you don't like the places I have chosen, you are, of course, welcome to make your own reservations at other places. For example, if you want to stay in private rooms but you want something fancier than what I have selected, just let me know and I will be happy to make some suggestions.

If you do make any of your own reservations, please be sure to let me know that you do that, so I don't hold another room or bed for you at one of the properties I have selected.

- D. My thought here, and for every stage we are together, is that I want you to have the experience you are imagining, right from the start. So, if you are planning to stay in shared dorms, you can start right away with that. If you are planning to stay in private rooms, same thing. And if you are planning for a mix of dorms and private rooms, then you have a choice from the very start.

The implication, then, is that for a couple of the nights we are together, pilgrims in our group will be staying in different places. Early on in leading groups I discovered that we still have plenty of time together, during meals and while walking the trail, and I will have some get-togethers planned for us in Saint Jean Pied de Port. Also, this will help facilitate meeting other pilgrims outside of our group, who may become friends and walking buddies by the time we reach Pamplona.

Okay, let's get moving on these choices.

For the purpose of this discussion, you may want to have on hand either an app, a guidebook, or a map of the Camino Francés. Having one of these resources available will allow you to see where the towns and villages are located relative to each other.

## Instructions & Information:

### Accommodations survey, Saint Jean Pied de Port to Pamplona

Here is a quick review of our plan. When you are with the group, we will be walking the following stages:

Day 1: Saint Jean Pied de Port to Refuge Orisson

Day 2: Refuge Orisson to Roncesvalles

Day 3: Roncesvalles to Zubiri

Day 4: Zubiri to Pamplona

## Saint Jean Pied de Port

I have selected several places in Saint Jean Pied de Port, to give us options for both private rooms and dorm rooms.

**Gite La Vita e Bella** – [website](#), [Google maps](#)

For those who want to keep their costs low and stay in shared dorms, my go-to place is Gite La Vita e Bella. La Vita has dorm beds and also one double room, and all guests use shared bathroom facilities. The host, Sandrine, is fabulous – likely one of the most delightful and welcoming hosts you will encounter on the Way.

**Maison Errecaldia** – [website](#), [Google maps](#); and **Maison Donamaria** – [website](#), [Google maps](#)

Both offer private rooms with private bathrooms. These rooms can be shared by two people, or you can have one of the rooms all to yourself.

Maison Errecaldia is run by a Belgian couple who have cycled the Camino, and the house is available in both May and September.

Masion Donamaria is run by a French woman who has walked several of the Camino routes, and this house is available only in May, because she is on the Camino in the fall.

These hosts all speak English, all three of these places serve breakfast to their guests, and the cost of breakfast is included in the prices listed in the survey.

## Day one: Refuge Orisson

We will be staying our first night on the trail at the popular Refuge Orisson. It is essential to reserve your spot at the refuge well in advance.

Orisson offers beds in shared dorm rooms. When you make this reservation, be sure to select the six-bed dorm option, if available, as those rooms have the best beds. If the six bed dorms are not available, the second choice is the 8-bed dorm.

Orisson also has two “chalets” that sleep up to two people. If you need something more private than a six-bed room, then you may want to book one of the chalets. I don’t think any of them have heating or insulation,

## Instructions & Information:

### Accommodations survey, Saint Jean Pied de Port to Pamplona

which could make for a cold night. Also, the bathrooms are in the neighboring building, which is accessed by walking a few to a bunch of steps outside. So, the word *chalet* may be a bit of an overstatement; they are more like rustic cabins.

Blankets are provided in all the rooms at Orisson, but still, it can get cold in the mountains.

If neither of the two room options at Orisson work for you and you feel you need a private room with a private bathroom, you do have the choice to stay the night again in Saint Jean Pied de Port. That would mean that you would walk to Orisson on day one, then take a taxi or the mountain shuttle back to Saint Jean in the afternoon or evening, and then arrange for another taxi or shuttle to bring you back to Orisson the next morning. If you think that might be the way you want to go, let's talk. I will share more details with you on how that option would work.

Bookings for Refuge Orisson usually open in November or December for the following year, so if you are completing the survey before then, just check NO for now. I will get the booking instructions to you as soon as they open reservations for next year. And if you are completing the survey after December and you haven't yet booked Orisson, please do so as soon as possible to ensure there is a bed for you.

Refuge Orisson – [website](#), [Google maps](#)

## Day 2: Roncesvalles

On our second day on the trail, we will walk from Refuge Orisson to the small town of Roncesvalles, which is the first place pilgrims come to once they enter Spain.

Roncesvalles has a large *albergue* and three places offering private rooms. The *albergue* has more than 200 beds spread out over three floors and the basement. Beds on two of the floors are arranged in four-bunk cubicles, each with a locker, reading light, and power point. Beds on the top floor are single bed cubicles. It isn't possible to select which floor you will be on; rather beds are numbered and are assigned in order as pilgrims arrive.

Albergue Roncesvalles – [website](#), [Google maps](#)

I have selected the hotel next door to the *albergue* as the preferred place with private rooms, as it has the nicest facilities and the best prices in the town, and it is closer to the *albergue* than the other two options. Another thing I like about the hotel is that it is actually two properties in one, and one of them offers apartments instead of hotel rooms. The apartments give you a bit more room if you are sharing the space with someone in the group.

I have already reserved a block of private rooms and apartments at the hotel, so I just need to know if you want to have a room for yourself or if you would like to share with another pilgrim in the group. When we get closer to our meet-up date, I will transfer your room into your name.

## Instructions & Information:

### Accommodations survey, Saint Jean Pied de Port to Pamplona

Hotel Roncesvalles – [website](#), [Google maps](#)

On the survey, please indicate your first and second choices for Roncesvalles – dorm bed, shared private room, or private room for only you.

### Day 3: Zubiri

On our third day of walking, we will walk to the town of Zubiri.

In Zubiri we will stay at an *albergue* that offers both shared dorm beds and private rooms, plus one of the best pilgrim dinners in town.

Albergue El Palo de Avellano – [website](#), [Google maps](#)

If we need more than their two private rooms, I also reserve rooms at one of the pensions or guesthouses in town.

The question for Zubiri, then, is do you want to stay in the shared dorm room, or would you like to be in a private room? And if you would like to have a private room, do you prefer to share a room with someone or have it to yourself?

On the survey, please indicate your first and second choices for Zubiri.

### Day 4: Pamplona

On our final day on the trail together we will walk to our first Spanish city, Pamplona.

Many pilgrims choose to take a rest day in Pamplona, to enjoy the city, take the walking tour, and attend to any pilgrim chores like laundry, visiting the post office, shopping for gear and food, and purchasing a Spanish SIM card for their smartphone. You may also want to attend a mass in one of the many churches in the center of Pamplona. I highly recommend taking a rest day in Pamplona, by the way, if only to enjoy this beautiful Spanish-Basque city.

Whether or not you take a rest day in Pamplona may influence where you want to stay. When you stay in an *albergue*, in most cases you need to exit the facility by 8am or 9am, and you aren't allowed back in until noon or 2pm or even later. If you will take a rest day in Pamplona, you may want to stay someplace with private rooms, as they will be open and accessible all day on your rest day.

There are many *albergues* in Pamplona, and I will suggest several options. You will then be able to choose where you stay based on your budget and preferences.

## **Instructions & Information:**

### **Accommodations survey, Saint Jean Pied de Port to Pamplona**

The nice thing about Pamplona is that if you will be staying in an *albergue*, you don't have to decide where you will stay now. In fact, you can even wait until we are on the trail to book a bed at one of the *albergues* in Pamplona.

If you want a private room in Pamplona and you are good with a shared bathroom, I recommend my go-to pensión, Pensión Escaray. That is where I will be staying, by the way, and I will reserve a block of rooms for the group.

Pensión Escaray – [website](#), [Google maps](#)

If you would like something more upscale, something with a private bathroom, I will have some suggestions for those places, as well, and will send you booking instructions once I have all the surveys back.

Please indicate your first and second choices for Pamplona.

Once you are done with the survey, go ahead and note any questions you have about these accommodation options and submit your survey.

Once I receive your survey, I will get back to you with our next steps. Reminder: please do not make any reservations yet!

That's it for now. If you would like to start to look at booking accommodations for after Pamplona, go to the module on *Booking Accommodations* in the Part 2: Getting Ready section of your online course. There's no rush, though, as most places on the Francés route will open bookings in January or February for that next season.

Thank you for completing your survey. This is happening!