

El Camino San Olav



A Walker's Guide

By Alf Alexander Pedersen

aka AlexWalker

tel +47 930 26993

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Introduction.

The way of San Olav is an easy 3-day walk from Burgos to [Covarrubias in Spain](#), to the tomb of the princess Kristina of Norway. [See details here](#).

On purpose, I have named this guide “A Walker's Guide”, since this route is not a pilgrimage as such; There is no saint or holy place at the end, only the tomb of a Norwegian princess, 800 years old. But it is a nice, tranquil and easy walk thru pleasant and undisturbed landscapes in rural Spain.

A nice break from the noise of the Camino Frances, if you want a couple of days in solitude. No bed race here...

Getting a credential, map & info.

The Tourist Office in Burgos can supply you with a credential containing space for sellos, and route info, and a brochure containing a map; all with glossy paper, so you'll need to let your sellos dry for a few minutes :-)

Note that some of the information in those papers may not be totally correct/updated (see more further down in this guide), but all in all, together with this guide, you should have no problems getting there.

Some Sellos:



Shops/Water.

There are no shops on this Camino. The villages are small, so you eat in your Casa Rurales, have them prepare your breakfast/lunch, and eat some in the bars that exist. If you need more, you buy it in Burgos and carry it. Always carry enough water, as I only found 2 working fountains.

Language

You will need some basic Spanish, at least for booking, directions, foods, etc. Also, by being able to communicate at basic level at least, your walk will be much more enjoyable, IMHO. There is no much understanding of English in rural Spain.

Albergues/ATMs.

There are no albergues on this Camino, only Casa Rurales. And no ATMs. There should be one in Covarrubias, but bring enough cash for drinks, food and Casa Rurales.

Resources on the Internet.

There is an interesting and informative piece of info regarding the route and its surroundings obviously recorded by another walker on the website Wikiloc.com.

The tourist office in Covarrubias has a [website in Spanish only](#).

The San Olav chapel has [its own website](#) with info on opening times etc. All is in Spanish, but the keepers are Norwegians and will understand English if you use their contact form. Check opening hours. E-mail address: info@capilladesanolav.com

The world's largest English-speaking forum on the different Caminos in Spain is www.caminodesantiago.me/community.

It has a separate section on [El Camino San Olav](#). Ask and get answers there.

There exists a nice [website for this Camino](#) in English, Spanish & Norwegian. Very good descriptions of the villages en route, and a good map service, but not always precise regarding the route and stopping places. However, very interesting, and complementary to this guide.

Planning tips

This will normally be a 3-day walk. The chapel is open only on Saturdays and Sundays, so if you start from Burgos on a Thursday or Friday, you will be able to attend to the Sunday sermon. Check beforehand if there actually is a sermon the actual Sunday. Also, the church in Covarrubias with the sarcophagus with Kristina is, is closed on Tuesdays.

Waymarkers.

The way is normally marked with dark poles, some red painting and a San Olav cross on top. They are not big, so keep your eyes open. A few of them have been stripped of the San Olav cross by what we must call “touristigrinos”, but the red paint is still there to follow. You will also find some stone markers. Just follow the San Olav cross.

Ordinary



Stolen



Stock

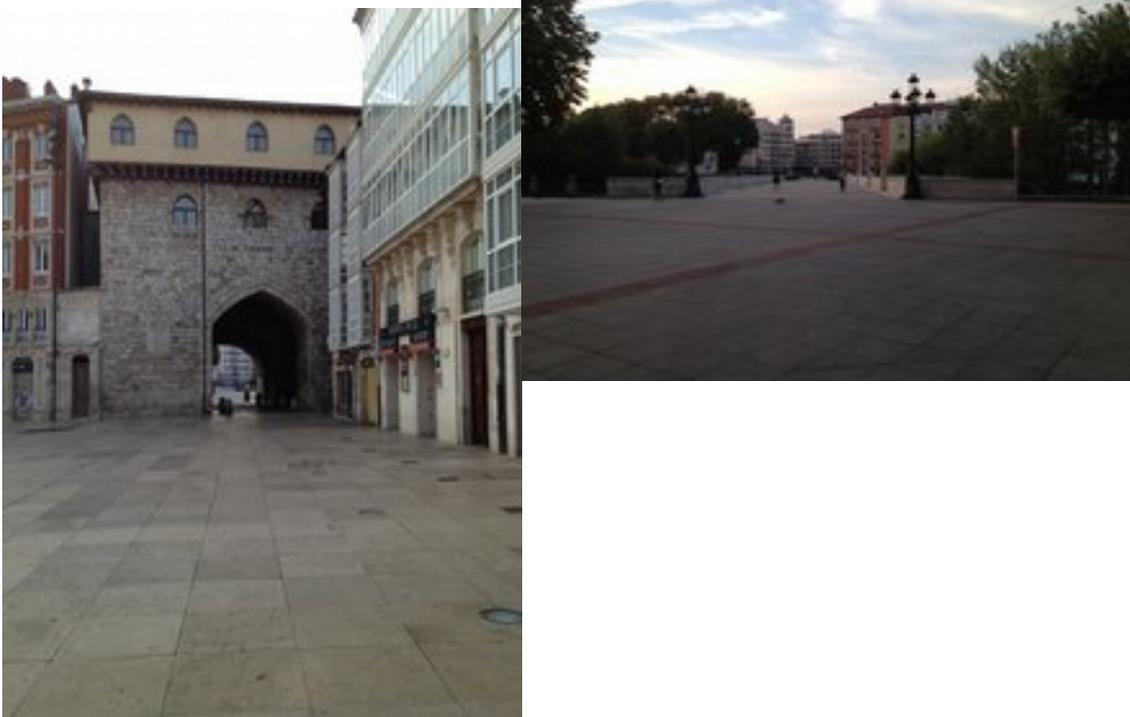


Arrow (difficult to see!)



The way out of Burgos.

From the plaza Mayor, in front of the Burgos Cathedral, you walk through the City gate and cross the bridge of Santa Maria:



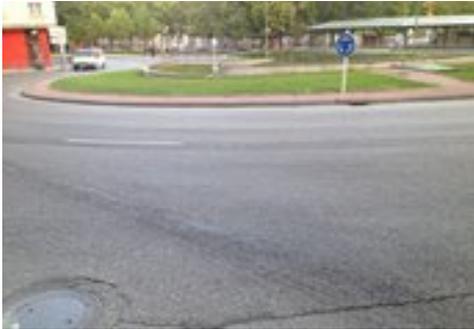
The way out of Burgos is waymarked along the Calle del Carmen: take right after the bridge and follow Calle del Carmen to the left; but I followed the Calle Madrid, which is simpler: When you have crossed the bridge, the Calle Madrid is straight ahead:



The Burgos bus station is in the building to the left.

Follow the Calle Madrid straight on. This guide describes the route via Calle Madrid.

When you arrive at a large roundabout, take the right hand street, to the right of the the red building:



After a short walk you will pass a small park to your left. Just go straight on, passing a large building (pictured here is looking back after having passed it):



Shortly after, you will find the first waymarker of San Olav. From this point, the way is well marked to Los Ausines (see details later). As you walk on out of Burgos, you will have a trafficked road out to your left (the BU-800). After a few 100 m. you will find the first marker of San Olav:



You are on your way!

DAY 1

1. Burgos-Cardenadijo Ca. 5.6 kms

After the exit from Burgos, this is an easy walk on a plain stretch. Shortly after the namesign of Cardenadijo, you come to a small crossing. If you want a rest, take to the left and then take the first street to right to get to the only bar/cantina. It was closed when I passed on a Saturday morning, so no details on the beer.

2. Cardenadijo-Modubar de la Emparedada Ca. 5.3 kms

A simple walk through an open landscape. A 500 m. dark tunnel may seem a bit frightening, but it is easy and safe walking. So far, the San Olav shares the path with the Vias Verdes, but at Modubar de Emparedada they separate. Pay close attention to the sign at the crossing: San Olav is down to the right. After 100 m., there is a working fountain for filling up your water.

The guide you get from the Tourist Office in Burgos indicates that there is a bar/restaurante and a Casa Rural here. They are all closed down, and it looks permanent.

3. Modubar de la Emparedada-Modubar de la Cuesta Ca. 3.8 kms

Pay attention: From here you walk on a paved road, but there are no more markers all the way to the end of the day in Modubar de San Cibrían! I may have missed a marker?

Just follow the asphalt road. There are some ups and downs, but nothing difficult.

2 kms after Emparedada you come to an unmarked T crossing. Take to the right.

After 300 more m. another crossing, marked Modubar de la Cuesta/Los Ausines. Follow the sign and take right. You are still on asphalt, but the traffic is insignificant.

After a while you arrive at a church shortly after the top. Leave the road and pass the church, walking down to the village. At the bottom, you will find a friendly bar with real beer from the tap, and food.



4. Modubar de la Cuesta-Modubar de San Cibrian Ca. 4.5 kms

From the bar, you find the gravel road of the San Olav that leads straight to Modubar de San Cibrian, your stay for the first leg of your Camino San Olav. Just go out from the bar and take left. This is an easy path.



Shortly after Modubar de la Cuesta, you come to a crossing. Take right:



In San Cibrían you find the Casa Rural la Cerca, your stay for the first night. Priced at 30 Euros + food, ca. 15 Euros. Rooms have bathtub. Nice garden. Dinner. You decide what you want to have for dinner in cooperation with the friendly and talkative hostess Mauri Rodrigo. Bath tub, great bed, great company, and good food here. Time for a tub dip with a glass of red :-)



For booking (preferably a day or two in advance), contact Mauri at phone no. 637 853 566.

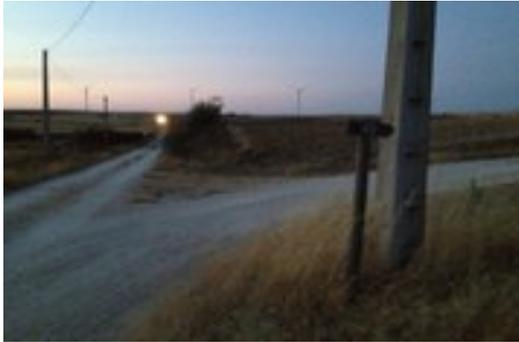
Real beer from the tap here. A relief.

From here, the road is well marked all the way to Covarubbias, with a few exceptions described in this guide.

DAY 2

5. Modubar de San Cibrian-Los Ausines Ca. 3.5 kms

On your way just out of San Cibrian there is a small sign that is easy to overlook, especially in the dark. Take right. The same after ca. 1 km. more. So far, the way is well marked.



Right before Los Ausines you pass a chapel, then it is down to Los Ausines. Upon arrival here, there are **no markers**. I have spoken about this to the Tourist Office in Covarrubias, who said they would notify the proper authorities to get it fixed.

In Los Ausines, there is a non-functional fountain. And nothing more.

6. Los Ausines-Revilla del Campo Ca. 6.4 kms

Standing on the paved road after coming down from the chapel, you take left. After ca. 100 m. you pass a sign saying Camino El Cid (shared by the San Olav here), and after 1 km you come to a small café (closed Sunday morning). Continue on the paved road: after a right turn, you enter an endless stretch that leads straight into Revilla del Campo.

7. Revilla del Campo-Quintanalaria Ca. 4 kms

Simple walking, well marked. In Revilla del Campo you follow the signage and take to the right in the crossing inside the village. (If you follow the main road a further 200 m you will come to a friendly bar with sello. Only bottled beer here, unfortunately).



Continuing on the camino, after crossing a small bridge, hold to the left through a small village. Here the camino is well marked, and it is flat walking.

In Quintanalaria there is a small bar at the far end of the village, Only bottled beer, unfortunately. Very friendly. The village has its own multilingual library (!) with an eager librarian. You can sit there and read. The barkeeper will arrange for access for you. The bar is only marked with a San Olav cross + chairs outside. Also a visigothic church.

Multilingual library in a tiny village:



After the village there is a short ascent, and thereafter flat walking.

8. Quintanalaria-Cubillo del Cesar Ca. 3 kms

This is a small village with a casa rural and bar, unmarked. You have to actively take right and then left (leave the camino) into the village and ask your way. The hostess Carmen Heras is the only person I met on these 3 days of walking who could speak rudimentary English.

This is the only option for an overnight stay other than the two I used, described in this guide, but you have to call and book well on beforehand, because there is no shop (as always) in the village, and Carmen needs to go to Burgos for shopping before you arrive. Carmen speaks basic English; enough to communicate.

Booking info:

Casa Rural Roblejimeno, c/o Carmen Heras,

phone no. 628 692 459

<http://www.roblejimeno.com/>

carmenheras@roblejimeno.com

Only canned beer in the bar here, unfortunately.

Actually, if the weather is hot (or rainy), it might be a good idea to take a stop here, doing the San Olav in 4 short days in stead of 3. After all, I walked in very hot weather (+35C, 27 kms) that day, and had to pay for it in the afternoon (more on that later..).

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9. Cubillo del Cesar-Cubillejo de Lara 3.7 kms

After a short ascent, you have 1 (short) hour of peaceful, tranquil walking through a forrest on a ridge.



Fountain beside the church in Cubillejo de Lara.

10. Cubillejo de Lara-Quintanilla de las Vinas 3 kms

Upon arrival to Cubillejo de Lara, the camino continues to the left. 200 m on paved road, then a gravel path. Flat terrain. In Quintanilla there are 2 bars. Real beer. Bar La Cantinilla is very friendly, and the barkeeper will most likely have a photo of himself with you. Many locals attend this bar.

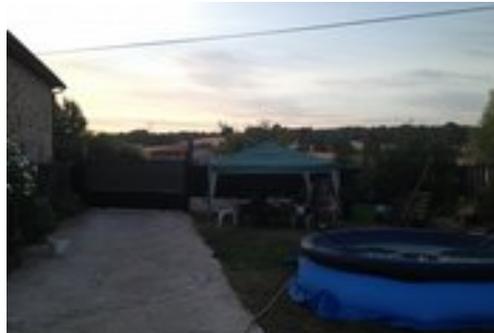
11. Quiantanilla de las Vinas-Mambrillas de Lara 4 kms

This is also a flat stretch in the valley, and well marked. Unfortunately I couldn't walk it bc of a near heatstroke in +35C, and the friendly barkeeper in bar La Mantinilla arranged for a private transport. But overlooking the valley from the mountain the day after, it was obvious that this was an easy walk.



Mambrillas de Lara was my 2nd stop on this walk. I stayed at the Casa Rural Rincon de Alfoz, c/o Ana Garcia Alonso
phone no. 655 845 118

Incredibly friendly hostess and husband.



The village has a nice local busy bar with real beer.

Dona Ana will be more than happy (she actually suggested it, thanks) to take you for a 10 mins easy walk to see the dinosaur park, with its more than 140 million years old petrified footsteps of these ancient giants:



Amazing!

DAY 3

12.Mambrillas de Lara-Chapel of San Olav 11 kms

From the Casa Rural, you walk past the bar towards the road N-234 and cross it, then after passing the large white farmhouse to your right, you come to a fork where you take left:



You then start the ascent to cross the mountain in front of you. It is well marked, but pay attention: The markers are not always easy to see. The ascent is fairly steep in places. From the top of the mountain you have great views in all directions, back to the valley as well as the way to Covarrubias, all downhill from here:



Again, pay close attention to the waymarking: Shortly after passing an old abandoned stone farmhouse (It is the only building on the whole day's walk, so it is easy to understand), there is a marker to the left: Follow it to the San Olav Chapel. If you miss it and walk straight on, you will walk directly into Covarrubias, and you will have to walk back on the road to get to the chapel.

There is *nothing* on this stretch: No cafe, no village, no nada. But the stretch itself is peaceful and beautiful. Trust the content of your backpack.

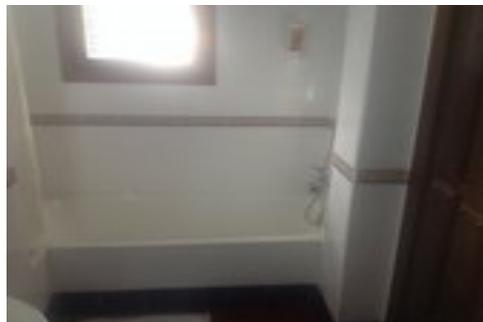
One can have different opinions about the architecture of the chapel of San Olav, but it is really nice on the inside:



The couple to the right are Oyvind and Kari, a Norwegian couple who were instrumental in establishing the San Olav Foundation to build the chapel. He is vice president of it and the caretaker of the chapel. They can be reached through the [Tourist Office in Covarrubias](#) or [their own website](#).

13.Chapel of San Olav-Covarrubias 3 kms

An easy walk from the chapel to the main road, where you take right to walk into Covarrubias. On the way into town, ca. 10 mins before, you will find the Hotel Dona Sancha on your right side, which was recommended to me by Beate, and which I highly recommend myself. 33 Euros for a top quality room with a bathtub: Just check in!



You enter old Covarrubias through the town gate:



To the right inside the gate tower, you will find the tourist office.

In the park outside the Collegiate church is a statue of Kristina:



Inside the church is the sarcophagus. Note that it is placed in a separate atrium, behind a door covered by a red curtain: You need to ask to be let in there, which is no problem at all. This is where Kristina, the ancient Norwegian princess, is sleeping:



The Norwegian flag, together with a Spanish one, are honouring the old princess.

Epilogue.

In Covarrubias, I first ignored Kari's advice to check into the hotel mentioned above. Even if it was September, I had difficulties finding a room inside the city; everything was occupied, so I walked back to the hotel, and they had a fantastic room for me. Book in advance, is my advice. This city is a popular tourist destination.

Hotel Dona Sancha,

Phone no. 947 406 400.

They claim to have a discount for walkers of the San Olav. Prices were 33 Euros for the room; 37 Euros incl. breakfast when I stayed there.

But of course, there are many nice and rustic places inside the city walls; feel free to explore and make your own choice.

Return to Burgos will be by bus, which normally leaves from the street outside the city gate at 9.00 AM. Check with the Tourist Office. It is a ca. 40 mins bus ride.

If you like, you can walk on 22–23 kms further south to [Santo Domingo do Silos](#), (Spanish only) famous for its monastery and its singing monks. It is just a good day's walk. And there should be an albergue there, if you need one. Or you can stay in the monastery, I am told. But [check it out](#) (in English).

From there, the bus leaves for Burgos every morning (check). It is not a part of El Camino San Olav, but since you are in the neighbourhood... Here is some [information in English](#).

I hope this guide has inspired you to take the walk of El Camino San Olav: It is well worth it!

