Camino Packing Guide

What to Pack for your Camino:

Two of the biggest mistakes people make when setting off on the Camino is overpacking and overthinking what they will need for a long walk on the Camino. I myself was very guilty of this on my first camino, this is why I am including a basic packing checklist as a guideline for you to follow so that you do not make the same mistake..



Weight is your biggest enemy when walking, if you don't pay attention to how much you are carrying in your backpack sooner or later your body or feet will pay the price… A good rule of thumb is that **your pack should not weigh more than 10%** of your body weight. If you stick to that rule you will definitely have a much more pleasant and easy walk.

One thing you should know, that I didn't, is that there are washing machines or laundromats most anywhere you will stay along the way, so clean clothes are never a problem.
Many "pro" pilgrims only pack one extra change of clothes and do a quick hand wash upon of their t-shirt and underwear and socks upon arriving at wherever they are staying; whist this is a great strategy if you want to walk with the least amount of weight and clothes, you will be forced to do your wash every day and will be worrying if your clothes will be dry by morning. I personally recommend having 3 sets of t-shirts and socks and underwear, and 1 pair of long or convertible pants and some short pants, that way you don't have to be washing every day and get more time to explore and relax.

As far as footwear I highly recommend trail runners on the Ingles as it is very flat, that said whatever you decide to take boots or trail runners, you walk at least 50 km in them before you start your walk, that way you will not have as many problems with blisters and sore feet. High quality hiking socks are the second most important blister prevention tool, I can't stress this enough… do not use cheap tube socks… you will pay the price in blisters!

Having a pair of flip flops will make the walk to and from the showers in the albergues more pleasant and also give you feet some fresh air and relief after a long day's walk. I personally like to take two pairs of shoes either 2 trail runners or a pair of boots and trail runners, just so I can give my feet a break and change every now and then.

As far as sleeping bags go, most Municipal Albergues require you to use one or to use a sleeping bag liner as they do not provide blankets. Most provide you with disposable sheets that really are terrible, so taking a sleeping bag or liner for the summer months is recommended, as it will weigh you down.

Just remember that each liter of water and all those snacks you carry also count to the total weight…

IMPORTANT: Your feet expand and flatten out considerably from walking many hours a day, so it is a good idea that you purchase your footwear about one size larger than you normally would. I personally recommend taking 2 pairs of shoes, either one boot and one trail runner or two sets of trail runners as it is nice not to have to wear the same shoes all the time, especially after a long day's walk. Next to your shoes, your socks are going to be the most important protection against blisters, so be sure you use good quality hiking socks, not the cheap 12 pack tube socks… good socks make a big difference. I recommend Wigwam and SmartWool or Decatlon Merino Wool socks, they may be a bit more expensive at first but you will not be paying the price in blisters later.

Luggage - Backpack Transfer Service & Storage:

You can always tell a true pilgrim from the rest as they most always are lugging their big backpack along as opposed to strolling along with a small day pack. Many short term or weekend pilgrims opt not to walk with their backpacks and have their luggage forwarded on from one stage to the next as they walk the Camino.

Using the luggage transport service is a good option if you have any physical ailments or problems or simply don't want to burden yourself with a large backpack.,



One thing to keep in mind is that you need have to have a specific location (hotel or private albergue) to send your luggage to, so you will need to make a reservation at a hotel or private albergue, as Municipal Albergues do not accept reservations or luggage (they are on a first come first served basis) and will not accept your bags if you are not there.

The cost per bag is anywhere from €5 to €12 depending on service and time of year. In the summer most routes offer this service, in the winter months the service is limited and more expensive.

If you have an onward trip that doesn't involve backpacking after you arrive in Santiago de Compostela an option is to send your non backpacking luggage to the Correos in Santiago or else send it to Casa Ivar in Santiago for safe keeping till you arrive. Once you finish the Camino you will be able to pick up your suitcase in the office that Correos has next to the Cathedral of Santiago (Rúa do Franco, 4). They store them for up to 45 days so you can walk the Camino calmly and worry-free. There is a small per day fee that they charge, but you will have the peace of mind knowing your luggage is safe and sound.

If you stay at the Seminario Menor in Santiago, you can lock up your backpack for several days in the lockers on the ground floor for only €2. Else if you just want to leave your backpack somewhere for a few hours while exploring Santiago the Pilgrims House close to the Cathedral offers free backpack storage for a few hours.

For more information on all of these these services visit:

Transport:
Correos
Jacotrans
Caminofacil

Storage in Santiago:
Casa Ivar
Pilgrims House

Camino Packing Checklist

☐ Hiking Backpack		28L to 40L - ca. 10% of your body weight when full

CLOTHING:

☐ 3x T-Shirts		Merino or Quick Dry Wicking Synthetic. Avoid cotton (Heavy & Slow Drying)
☐ 1x Long sleeve shirt		For protection from sun and cold.
☐ 1x Long Hiking Pants		Or Convertible Pants - Flexible and Light and fast drying
☐ 1x Hiking shorts		
☐ 3x Underwear		Ex Officio Wicking - Fast Drying
☐ 1x Sweater - Fleece		Polartec or Smartwool
☐ 1x Warm Down Jacket	W	From October to May
☐ 1x Light Rain Jacket		For in town or light drizzles and windy Stages
☐ 1x Backpacking Poncho		Long sleave front zipper type that goes over backpack is easy to put on!
☐ 1x Hat or Wool Cap		Sun / Cold protection
☐ Gloves	W	From October to May

FOOTWEAR:

☐ 1 x Hiking Boots		Be sure to break them in well before setting out on your camino!
☐ 1x Trail Runners		For summer months and asphalt sections.
☐ 1x Flip Flops		For albergue showers and airing feet
☐ 3 x Good Hiking Socks		Merino Wool are best

SLEEPING:

☐ Sleeping Bag	W	Required in some Albergues.
☐ Sleeping Bag Liner	S	For warm weather instead of Sleeping bag
☐ Pillow Case		Also can double as a laundry bag.
☐ Earplugs		To get rest in Albergue

TOILETRIES & FIRST AID:

☐ Quick Dry Towel		Most albergues don't offer towels
☐ Toiletry Kit		Toothbrush, Travel Size Toothpaste, Razor, Soap + Shampoo, Q Tips
☐ First Aid Kit		Ibuprofen, Vaseline, Compeed, Band Aids, Bandage, Blister Tape
☐ Sunscreen	S&W	
☐ Lip Balm		With SPF Protection

HIKING GEAR:

☐ Water Bottle or Camelback	750cc to 1L Remember that each liter of water is 1kg you carry!
☐ Hiking Poles	They will give you extra support on downhill and on the uphill sections
☐ Knee Support Braces	If you have problems with your knees I recommend taking a pair
☐ Gaiters	Keeps gravel and mud out of boots and pants
☐ Headlight / Flashlight	For early morning start - Night in dorms

ELECTRONICS:

☐ Euro Plug Adaptor	Most electronics are 110 - 220 V so no voltage converter needed
☐ Phone	Chargers, Cables, Check your roaming fees & international packages!
☐ Camera	Lenses, Chargers, Cables, SD Cards, Batteries
☐ Headphones	
☐ Watch - Fitness Tracker Charger	

NON ESSENTIAL EXTRAS:

☐ Umbrella	For sun and rain / drizzle
☐ Swiss Army Knife	
☐ Power Bank	For extra charge for phone and other electronics
☐ Compression Sacks	Keep things organized and save some space in your backpack
☐ Backpack Rain Cover	
☐ Guide Book - Apps	I recommend apps over books as it can weigh as much as 3 t-shirts!
☐ Spoon, Fork, Knife	For on the go eating - The plastic ones you get on airline work great
☐ Small Day Pack	Small bag or backpack for shopping, sightseeing trips

NOTE: If you forgot anything or need to replace any hiking gear, Decathlon is a major sporting gear chain that on the Ingles has large outlets in A Coruna and Santiago. They stock pretty much anything you may need for hiking at very reasonable prices and are of decent quality. You can also buy on Amazon.es and ship to their drop boxes that are available in most big cities in Spain.

Decatlon.com

Amazon.com

Rei.com

W= Recommended in Winter S = Recommended in Summer