

☐ **The foolish man seeks happiness in the distance;
The wise man grows it under his feet.**

J R Oppenheimer

30 94.7 km (58.8 ml) – Santiago

PORTOMARÍN – PALAS DE REI

	----	19.8	----	80%
	----	4.8	----	20%
	----	<u>0.0</u>		
Total km		24.6 km		(15.3 ml)

 (^1,050m + 5.2 km = **29.8** km)

Alto  Sierra Ligonde 720m (2,362 ft)

<   > Gonzar 7.7 km – Hospital **11.0** – Ventas de Narón **12.6** km – Ligonde **16.3** km – Eirexe **16.9** km – Portos **19.1** km – Os Chacotes **23.4** km.



☐ **The Practical Path:** A day of varied terrain as we start by climbing up a peaceful woodland path on the recommended camino *complementario* (the 'official' route via S. Roque is 0.7 km longer and all by road). Both routes join on the main route LU-633 which we have to cross on several occasions [!] before leaving it to climb around *Castromaior* (well worth the short detour) and the *Sierra Ligonde* descending to Portos which offers us the detour to Vilar de Donas. Then comes a gentler climb around the side of *Rosary Heights Alto Rosario* to drop down finally to Palas de Rei. Prepare for an early start if you intend to take the longer detour to Vilas de Donas.

☐ **The Mystical Path:** Will you make time to detour to this mystical resting place of the Knights of Saint James? Here effigies of the knights in their armour are watched over by the beautiful frescoes that adorn the walls of this sacred temple dedicated to Saint Saviour. A pilgrim must travel on two paths simultaneously. The tourist will look for the stone altar – the pilgrim an altered state. The one seeks sacred sites – the other in-sight. Will you make time today to detour into the inner mystery?

☐ **Personal Reflections:** "... *The incessant rain pounds down as heavy as when it started a week ago. The country is awash; roads have turned to rivers. I sat for a while at the base of the ancient oak and felt its solid support and in the same instant knew that my period of silence was ended. I don't know how long I been in this altered state, induced as much by physical exhaustion as any ecstatic revelation. And I don't know how long they had been there but they helped me to my feet and we embraced in love and respect for the experiences we had each invoked; 3 pilgrims from 3 different countries but part of one family. I found it hard to speak after such a long spell of silence but a blessing was given and returned. Until that moment I had not noticed the ancient wayside cross silently witnessing this loving reunion of fellow pilgrims ...*"



0.0 km Portomarín from albergue ❶

Option [1] make your way back down to the main road at roundabout **or** via Av. Chantada and take the bridge over the río Torres [**0.4 km**]. **Option [2]:** Turn <left for the longer 'official' road route via Club Nautico and San Roque or right> for the peaceful woodland path to join the pilgrim track by the main road. Cross over by the abandoned *Fábrica* (alt. route joins from the left) and re-cross by Aviporto



fertilizer plant in **Toxibó**. Continue past woodland picnic site [**F.**] and **option [3]:** <left for alt. track to Gonzar or continue alongside the main road (same distance).

7.7 km Gonzar *café Descanso Peregrino* provides the first café in nearly 8 km so is often busy. It adjoins **Alb. ❶ Gonzar Xunta.[28÷1]** €6 also directly on main road. Around the corner (100m) **Alb. ❷ Casa Garcia Priv.[30÷5]+** €10+€35 ④ 982 157 842 traditional village house with covered courtyard (see photo) in quiet location off main road with *Café*. Continue along main road and turn off <left onto track past the new **Alb. & café Ortiz Priv.[16÷1]** €10 ④ 982 099 416.

1.2 km Castromaioir Romanesque church of Santa María. **Pª Casa Maruja** ④ 982 189 054. Continue up steeply past *Café O Castro*. **Detour: (150m):** to visit the ancient Castro inhabited from the 4th century BCE to the start of the Roman occupation. Wonderful 360° views of the surrounding countryside. Continue through woodland into:



2.1 km Hospital de la Cruz where the N-540 cuts through this ancient village (its medieval pilgrim hospice no longer visible) but hospitality awaits at **Hs El Labrador** €30+ ④ 982 545 303 & restaurant. **Alb. Hospital de la Cruz Xunta.[32÷1]** €6 another conversion of a school building by the main road (N-540 Ourense – Lugo) take the minor road flyover to the next village:

1.6 km Ventas de Narón **Alb. ❶ Casa Molar Priv.[18÷2]+** €10-30 ④ 696 794 507 traditional stone house with restaurant and bar. **Alb. ❷ Cruceiro Priv.*[22÷2]+** €10-30 ④ 658 064 917 also with popular restaurant and bar. Tiny stone chapel *Capela de Magdalene* with picnic area adjoining. [*The area was scene of a fierce battle in 840 between Moor and Christian but there is nothing here now to disturb the peace beyond pilgrim chatter in the cafés*]. Now we start to climb the Sierra Ligonde to the highest point of today's route (720m) passing dog kennels *perreras Alejo* before dropping down past *Bar Prebisa* to the ancient hamlet of **Lameiros** with the *Antiguo Hospital de Peregrinos* (now a private house–right) and just beyond the ancient *Casa da Carneiro* which provided hospitality to, no less than, the holy Roman emperor Charles V and also King Philip of Spain while on his way to marry Mary Tudor.

3.7 km Ligonde equally ancient hamlet long associated with the camino with its *Cementerio de Peregrinos* and humble hospitality at **Alb. ❶ Fuente del Peregrino Priv.[20÷2]** €-donativo ④ 687 550 527 basic facilities with communal meal prepared by voluntary hospitaleros. **❷ Escuela de Ligonde Muni.[20]** ④ 679 816 061 skilfully restored hostel with all facilities. [*Ligonde was also formerly a*

significant medieval stop on the way]. Igrexa de Santiago has a Romanesque porch. Opposite the Albergue is a short track down over the río Ligonde passing café-restaurant *Casa Mari Luz* (right) up past church and cruceiro into:

0.6 km Airexe Alb. ① Airexe Xunta.

[20÷2] €6 former school building at crossroads with all facilities. To the rear is ② **Eirexe Priv.[6÷1]+** –€10 © 982 153 475 with bar-menú. At the crossroads is restaurant *Meson Ligonde*. Continue on quiet country road passing splendid 17th century wayside cross (left) by gnarled oak tree in the ancient hamlet of **Lameiro** with its diminutive capela San Marcos. We now climb gently to a crossing of 5 roads with fine views of the surrounding countryside before dropping down into **Portos Alb. A Paso de Formiga** (Ants Way!) **Priv.[8÷1]+** €10–€25 © 618 984 605. Continue s/o to:



2.2 km Opción Detour Portos A Calzada / Alb.& café A Calzada Priv.[10÷1]

€10 © 982 183 744 with separate stone pavilion at the rear and tranquil garden and picnic area (recently closed; check for re-opening).

Detour: 4.6 km (there and back). **Vilar de Donas.** National monument and ancient seat of the Knights of Santiago. Closed Mondays and holidays (check in A Calzada for opening times). The Church of El Salvador is primarily 14th century but its origins go back to the formation of a nunnery here in the 10th century (hence the appellation Donas). The stone effigies of the knights and its unique frescoes (see photo under reflections) are hauntingly expressive. **Directions:** Turn right off the camino (opposite A Calzada) along quiet country lane across the main road **[1.1 km]** (N-547 Palas de Rei – Lugo) passing rest area *área de descanso* (right) for remaining **[1.2 km]** to:



2.3 km Vilar de Donas – Igrexa San Salvador.

Take time to soak in its ancient history and to savour its treasures lovingly attended by the knowledgeable guardians. Return the same way.

From **A Calzada** continue along pathways into and through the hamlet of **Lestedo** **[0.6 km]** **CR Rectoral de Lestedo** €60+ © 982 153 435 converted from an original pilgrim hospital, then priests house *casa rectoral* and finally to this modernised gem with rooms from €60. Dinner available. We pass village cemetery and then **Os Valos, Mamurria** and on to **A Brea** **[1.8 km]** **Meson A Brea** on the main N-547. A short woodland path at the back of the restaurant takes us up to **Alto Rosario** **[0.9 km]**. *[Here, before the trees were planted, you could see the sacred peak above Santiago Pico Sacro and on entering the hamlet of Rosario pilgrims would start to recite the Rosary, hence the name]*. We now pass through the hamlet which adjoins the main road before entering the suburbs of Palas de Reis and its delightful municipal parkland **[1.0 km]** *Área recreativa de Os Chacotes*.