Day 3
Thursday
August 28, 2025

Larrasoana to Pamplona
Destination: Albergue Plaza Cathedral

Time on Trail: 4 hours, 30 minutes
Distance Traveled: ¨About 10 miles¨ (16 km)

Speed: ¨About” 2.2 mph (3.6 km/h)
Pace: ¨About¨ 27 minutes/mile (17 minutes/km)



Note on Terrain Graph: Another somewhat deceptive chart. The one drop at 3 hours looks dangerously steep. It was only about 200 feet (61 meters). Though it was indeed steep, it was not as cliff-dropping as it looked (and was along a smooth paved walkway). Also note the flat section at the end - Jim forgot to turn off the app after we had arrived at our albergue and were just walking around Pamplona.

Jim’s Daily Trail Report:
¨Nice short walk today. The weather has been really good, no higher than 75, and the sun has been playing peek-a-poo, with a slight breeze, so I really couldn’t ask for better. Whoa … Mike just said, ´I don´t need games.´̈

As JIm mentioned, this was a nice short walk today. We didn't get started until after sunrise - what would prove to be a rare late start on the trail. We made a quick stop at the supermercado, to show Valerie the store and buy some snacks for the trail and take a morning photo to send back home..

Shortly after leaving the supermercado, and inspired by the words of the grocer the night before,I made the startling statement that Jim commented on: ¨I don´t need games.¨

That from a man whose game collection numbers over 6,000 games…. One brother commented, ¨Is he running a fever?¨ Another one texted, ¨You sure they didn't switch Mikeś during the cab ride?¨ To be honest, that commitment to a simpler, more frugal lifestyle lasted only till Santiago. By the time we arrived in Finnisterre, I was placing game orders on line, knowing they would arrive about the time I got home….



Our morning photo in the court of the Supermercado, with flags of many nations



A nice section of the trail to start the day

Nothing too remarkable about the trail. Mostly crushed gravel and packed dirt, we did walk one long uphill stretch with widely spaced steps of railroad ties. And a long winding downhill stretch, a combination of flagstones and cement.. Neither was particularly steep, but they were far longer than any similar hillsides back home. And after days and days of paths, the stairs were a surprising challenge to my knees, forcing me to lift my legs higher than I normally do on a path.





We were discovering that there were very few truly flat sections of the Camino!

We also encountered trail cats for the first time. A pair of black cats strutted up and circled our legs as we walked one wooded section of the trail, and some black kittens were visible nearby. Adorably affectionate, Jim offered them some jerky and Valerie provided some loving strokes. We would see friendly feral cats and kittens often from then on walking the Camino, usually in or near the towns and villages.

We also came upon a small herd of horses (and ponies?) clustered near the trail, separated from us by a barbed wire fence and protected by a border collie.




We didn't see much wildlife on the Camino, but domesticated animals were abundant

We did make a brief stop for a bathroom break and something to eat in Arre. We also stopped in a small church on the outskirts of Pamplona, just over another river bridge. Arreko Trinitatearen Basilka, it dates back to the 13th century. It was our first church visit, and it impressed me with how well it was preserved. It had sense of simple sanctity and history. And it gave my passport its first ¨church¨ sellos



We arrived in Pamplona quite early, around noon, after crossing an impressive bridge and circling some tall ramparts that reminded me of those in Julich before entering through a stone gateway. At one of the plazas at the outskirts of Pamplona, we passed the Danish jail guards, not looking too happy. It was the last time we saw them. I wonder how far they were planning on going, and how far they actually got. As with Becka yesterday, I began to realize that many fellow pilgrims will only touch my life briefly, a simple meeting remembered, and their fates will be forever unknown.

Pamplona was our first actual city on the Camino. Busy, crowded, full of narrow streets, small stores and bustling crowds. It was surprising because of a lack of car traffic in our area of the city. Additionally, the streets are generally narrow and paved with cobblestone, and the cars and pedestrians share the street. There are no sidewalks or curbs or gutters.

The residences along the street are colorfully painted and very picturesque, rising three stories high on both sides of almost every street, often with small stores on the street level.



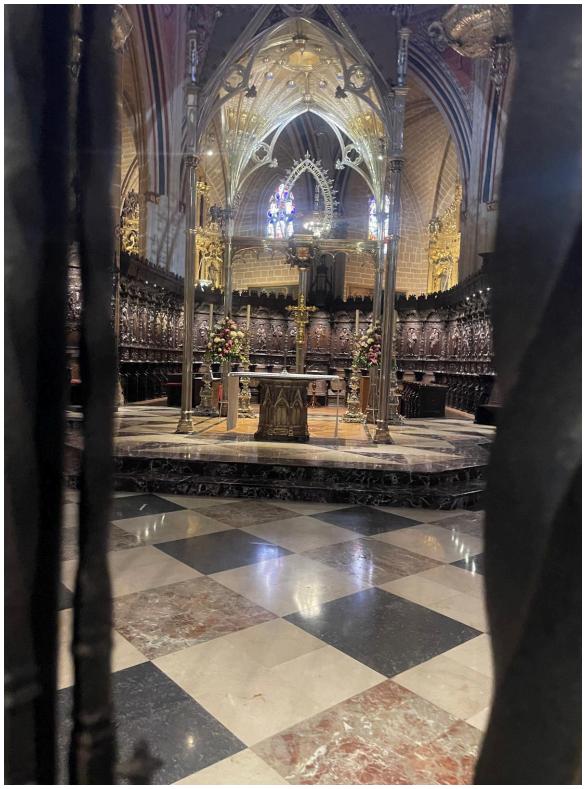


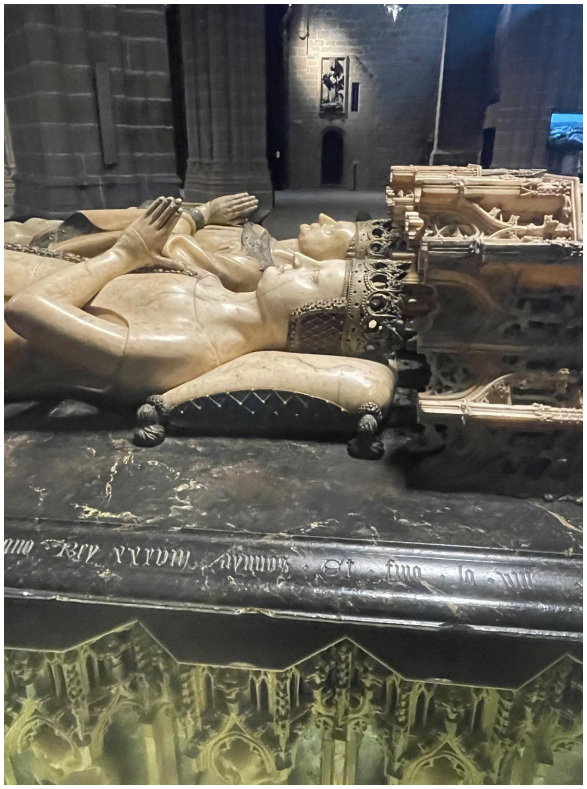
We found streets like these typical in the historic areas of most cities we visited

Our albergue was not open yet when we arrived in Pamplona, so we toured the cathedral - my first Spanish cathedral. Having just recently toured larger cathedrals in Cologne and Aachen, I probably was not as inspired as I might have been otherwise. The immensity of the building, and the grandeur of the artworks were impressive. But throughout my Camino, I felt more inspiration from the small, quiet, often run-down town churches than any of the cathedrals.









After touring the cathedral, we walked around the shopping area, and I found a hiking supply store (which were present in every city we visited). There I upgraded my small leather pouch for a slightly larger backpack, not much bigger than those used by kids. I was now able to carry my raincoat and a few other items that might come handy on the trail. I would later leave the leather pouch in the lobby of our albergue, passing it along to the next pilgrim who might need it.

And then we had dinner in a modern outdoor cafe right on the cathedral plaza.

Our albergue was also right on the cathedral plaza. We stayed in a large dorm - I believe there might have been 16 pilgrims in our small room.

It was here that we met an older couple from Nova Scotia, Richard and his wife Chris. (By ¨older¨, I mean relative to most other pilgrims. They were, I am sure, younger than Jim and me.) This was the only time we stayed in the same albergue with them, but our paths would cross frequently during our entire Camino.

We also decided that Valerie should skip the next section of the Camino. She had been bothered by a blister since the mountainside hike on Day One, and had managed to persevere without complaint despite the pain. But the blister had persisted, and the day ahead was going to be a tough one, with a long uphill climb followed immediately by a long rocky downhill descent. So she would spend the morning resting in Pamplona, then take the local bus to meet us in Puente La Reina tomorrow afternoon.

Tonight was one of our noisiest nights on the Camino, with pilgrims staying out and enjoying the nighttime attractions of Pamplona till the albergue curfew (10PM?) Additionally, young native Pamplonian revelers continued to make noise right outside our basement windows until well past midnight. One of the shortcomings about staying at an albergue in the heart of a big city. (Of course, a younger pilgrim might view this as an attraction rather than a problem!)