Day 6
Sunday
August 31, 2025

Estella to Los Arcos
Destination: Albergue Los Arcos

Time on Trail: 6 hours
Distance Traveled: 13 miles (21 km)

Speed: 2.2 mph (3.5 km/hr)
Pace: 27 minutes/mile (17 minutes/km



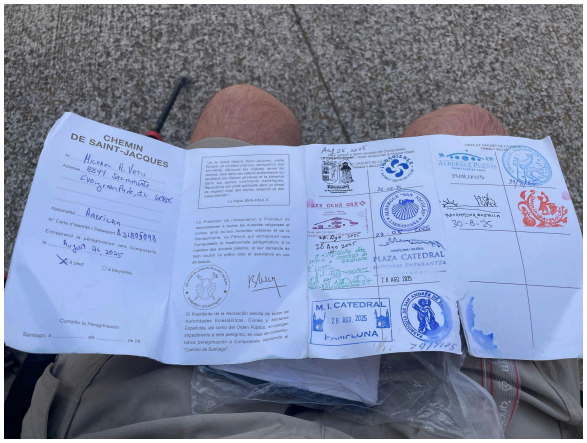
Note on the Terrain Graph: This looks like an impressive climb and descent, but itś actually a rather smooth gradual incline: 800' (244 meters) over 3 hours followed by a similar decline over the next 3 hours. Almost all on nice dirt and gravel trails. Not much shade, but perhaps our easiest day so far.

Jimś Daily Trail Report
¨86 miles in 6 days so far. 414 miles to go. We should be breaking 100 miles tomorrow.¨

Valerie's Comment:
¨Terrible news: I lost my soul on the Camino today.
Uncle Jim gave me his duct tape.¨

This was a relatively short day. We left Estella at 6:45 AM, long before any of the many local churches had their first Sunday morning mass. The first few miles were mostly the suburbs of Estella, And the first notable attraction was La Forge De Ayegui - a trailside working blacksmith shop offering sellos and assorted Camino handmade ironwork - medallions, jewelry, bracelets.

Soon afterwards we reached the Bodegus Irache, and one of the more famous attractions of the Camino - The WIne Fountain. Established by a local winery, it offers free wine to pilgrims. I guess our group of pilgrims were not aware that the tradition is to use one's Camino scallop shell to take a small sample. When we arrived, people were using their water bottles. And by the time we arrived at 8AM, all I could get were a few drops of the wine in the cap of my water bottle. Jim and Valerie didn't even try.



My Camino passport after 6 days.
La Forge De Ayegui sello on right in red.



The famous Bodegus Irache Wine Fountain.
Free wine for the early morning pilgrims.
(Photo from Google)

It was shortly after The Wine Fountain when our English friend, Lucy, passed us as we were walking through the Bodegus vineyard. She greeted us with a friendly "Buen Camino" and the report that she did indeed sleep better the previous night. That was the last time we saw her on the Camino. Hopefully she had a few more enjoyable days on the trail before she headed back to her home in England.

At the next town, Azqueta, we stopped at a wonderful little cafe bar - L'Antorcha. It has a jukebox, a bunch of card and board games, and a nice selection of food and refreshments. It even had a foot massage bath outside .





It was always nice to come across funny signs in English.
Perhaps there were funny signs in SPanish as well, but I wouldn't know.

It was as we were leaving Azqueta that Valerie “lost her soul.” The sole of her right hiking boot came completely off. And we still had almost 10 more miles to go that day. Fortunately, Jim had a supply of bright orange duct tape handy in his backpack for just such emergencies. He managed to tape the sole back on. And although it required a couple more re-applications of tape, the shoe managed to stay together until we reached our next destination - Los Arcos. (We felt this was another example of ”The Camino provides”. We were fortunate that Jim had the tape, and that we were close enough to a major town where another pair of shoes could be purchased, and that it happened on the last day of Valerie’s time on the Camino.)

So Valerie had to hike to Los Arcos with a few blisters on her feet and a sole that was coming loose. And she did it without complaint. To be fair - the boots she was wearing were 15 years old. So she WAS pushing her luck to begin with.)







Though Valerie expressed sadness over her ¨Lost Sole¨, she hiked on without complaint

A little further along the trail we passed the village of Villamayor de Monjardin, which is known for its humorous slogan “It is not a town, nor is it great, it has no monks, nor a garden.”

It was on the trail heading into this village that I stopped briefly to take a peek inside a lone stone open-faced structure on the side of the trail. I had no idea what it was. When I looked inside, I saw that it was some type of public pool, with a wide bank of steps, like a bleacher on a football field, leading down to a large still pool of water at the bottom. One guide book identified it as The Moorish Fountain. The effect was a quiet, cool refuge from the heat of the bright sun. What a wonderful idea for someone to build such a refreshing trailside oasis. And even nicer is the fact that someone had maintained it for so long. Inside, sitting near the bottom of the steps, was one young man, singing an acapella hymn, his clear voice echoing in the peaceful chamber. I didn’t want to intrude, so I left after a few minutes, refreshed by the unexpected pleasure of the sound of his voice. We met again in an albergue over a game of cards and he introduced himself as Topi..



The ¨Moorish Fountain” near Villamayor
(Photo not mine, from Google)



Inside the Fountain, Topi singing a hymn
that echoed inside like a choir

Also in Villamayor de Monjardin, Valerie took a photo of Jike on the lap of a statue of The Pilgrim - a familiar figure appearing in many forms all along the Camino.

And shortly later on the trail she noticed a thumb-sized plastic Jesus figure standing atop one of the Camino milestones. “Everybody needs a little Jesus!” We spotted a couple more Little Jesus’ along the way to Santiago.



Everybody needs a little Jesus on the trail



Jike resting in the lap of The Pilgrim

From Villamayor de Monjardin, it was a long hike with no rest stops until we reached Los Arcos. Mostly a mix of forests and wheatfields. I do remember one section where the Camino was supposed to follow a two lane road around two edges of a large wheatfield. But, tired rebels that we were, we defiantly scurried diagonally straight across the wheatfield, following a path already previously trampled by other equally tired pilgrims. I remember there was a local police car passing nearby, causing us some concern that we were trespassing. It was also on this path that Topi, the singer from the Moorish Fountain passed us by. He was much faster than we were.

We arrived at Los Arcos before our Abergue opened for the day, so the three of us did a quick tour of the town, seeking rest and refreshment. This being a Sunday afternoon, the whole town seemed out for lunch. There was a large group of pilgrims in the town plaza enjoying a boisterous meal - mostly the group from England that JIm and I first saw on the top of Alto de Perdon, including Bethan and Jason. It would have been nice to be invited to join the festivities, but as yet we knew none of them. Instead, on the suggestion of Gene (whom we met on the second day back in Larrosoana) we left the plaza for a busy restaurant nearby.

It was fortunate that we did, for we had no sooner finished our meal there than we saw a bus pull up and start to load passengers. Since Valerie had planned to take a later bus to Logrono for her the end of her Camino, it seemed providential for her to take this early bus rather than just wait 5 hours in our hostel. Since she still had her backpack with her, we quickly

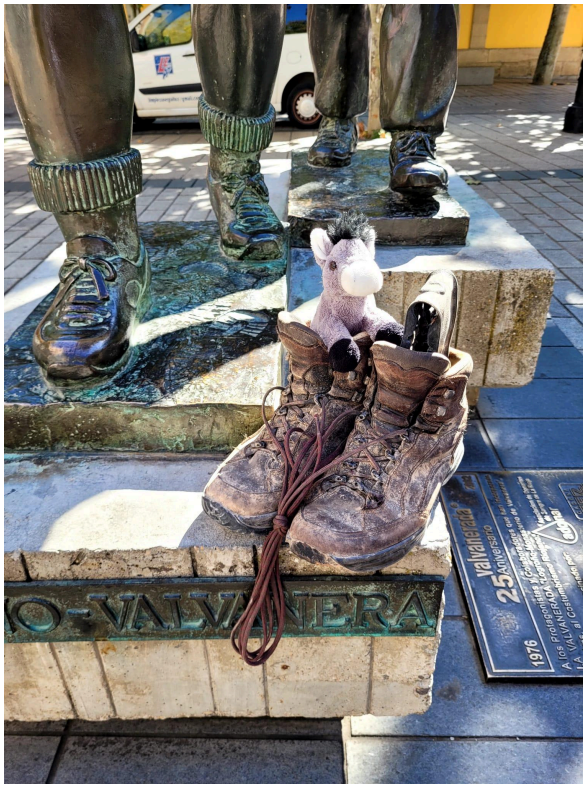
said our goodbyes and she was off to Logrono, where she would catch an early train back to Germany early Monday morning.



Though we didn´t get a final goodbye photo, this was taken on on our last morning together on the Camino.

It was a blessing having Valerie with us the first 7 days of our Camino. One which we had not originally planned. Her help getting us adjusted to the language and culture differences allowed Jim and me to enjoy the early days of the Camino without the stress of acclamation. Her laughter and good humor at our Vrtis jokes was like music to our ears. Her persistence without complaint despite blisters from day one was admirable. Her insistence at taking so many photos during those seven days saved so many memories that would otherwise have been lost. And her little donkey Jike was a quiet but ever-present animal companion. (Jim claimed that I kidnapped Jike in an early part of our Camino. I have no recollection of doing so, so I deny it. And Jike never said a word about it if I did.)





Valerie sent us these photos the next day, taken in Logrono before she left home. She left her battered hiking boots at a statue there of the Camino pilgrims. She did take Jike!

I really have no memory of the hostel in Los Arcos. I believe it was just a small entrance along a row of residences, with a dorm room on the third floor.

Valerie's departure marked the end of the first phase of our Camino. For the next two weeks we would be on our own. Valerie's youngest sister Anja and Anjaś fiancee Asef would join us in a couple weeks, just beyond Leon.

Tomorrow would start a new month. It was almost as if we were starting a new journey.

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