

# Susan and Ralph Alcorn's Caminos Norte and Primitivo presentation handout

## Devices we carried

- iPad mini with cell service chip – mostly used airplane mode, but sometimes the T-Mobile data/cell service was useful.
- LGG4 smartphones – T-Mobile service. Useful as we didn't have to change number for callers from home, but a local chip that had a Spanish phone number would be better if you wanted a local person, i.e. albergue host, to call you back. They will call back a Spanish number, but not necessarily your T-Mobile number, which would be an international call to them.
- Compass
- Canon digital SLR

## Mandatory Websites (must reads if you are going to walk one of these routes)

- To find albergues, alternate routes, elevation profiles: [gronze.com](http://gronze.com) as an example, drill down to [gronze.com/etapa/irun/san-sebastian](http://gronze.com/etapa/irun/san-sebastian)
- Our show handout – you can also find this link on [backpack45.com/healing\\_miles.html](http://backpack45.com/healing_miles.html): [backpack45.com/pdf/npsshowhandout](http://backpack45.com/pdf/npsshowhandout).
- [Rome2Rio.com](http://Rome2Rio.com) a very useful site for estimating ways, time and costs for getting from point to point.

## Useful Websites

- [WisePilgrim.com](http://WisePilgrim.com) They have apps on the Norte and Primitivo, and their website has accurate accommodation info.
- [americanpilgrims.org](http://americanpilgrims.org) National organization of pilgrims – good info, recommend joining
- [americanpilgrims.org/northern-california-chapter](http://americanpilgrims.org/northern-california-chapter) local chapter of American Pilgrims – events
- [.americanpilgrims.org/silicon-valley-california-chapter](http://.americanpilgrims.org/silicon-valley-california-chapter) Silicon Valley chapter of American Pilgrims
- [facebook.com/groups/Peregrinos.Northern.California](http://facebook.com/groups/Peregrinos.Northern.California) Facebook page of local chapter - events
- Ours [backpack45.com/healing\\_miles.html](http://backpack45.com/healing_miles.html) and [Susan's Hiking Tales and Tips Newsletter](#) (monthly) – email her to get it.

## Books:

- *The Northern Caminos: The Norte, Primitivo and Inglés routes* a Cicerone Guide by Whitson and Perazzoli (the one we used, available in both hardcopy and on Kindle) isbn 978-1852847944. (We also had the Kindle reader on our devices.)
- The Wise Pilgrim Guide to the Camino del Norte 978-8469756980
- The Wise Pilgrim Guide to the Camino Primitivo – promised soon
- Susan's new book on Caminos Norte and Primitivo, *Healing Miles*. Both a day to day account packed with facts and a personal memoir with an overall theme about long distance hiking while dealing with parental care and our own aging bodies.

## Supplemental Books – try to look at a sample of all of these before buying

- Ray Jardine's *Trail Life* –The foundation of lightweight backpacking 978-0963235978
- Laurence Gonzales - *Deep Survival: Who Lives, Who Dies and Why* 978-039335371 good book on unintended risks. We always include the two above books in any presentation on long distance hiking. The risks are less on a long European trek, but they are still there. These classic books are worth reading.

## Apps

- **Wise Pilgrim** has apps for many pilgrim routes. Search on Wise Pilgrim in your App Store or your Google Play Store and they will pop up. The price will vary by route, but no more than \$5 and worth it. You need Norte and the Primitivo apps.
- **Maps.me** is an app that lets you preload maps when you have wifi access. Once the maps are loaded you can use the app in airplane mode, a huge battery saver, and in locations you do not have cell service or data access the app will still work. It has similar functions to Google Maps – shows current location and surroundings on a map.

- **Bookings.com** – there is also a website, but the app is more convenient while walking. This will find the middle range accommodations – not the albergues or agriturismo or the high end b&bs, but all the hotels and similar places. We would usually book a day ahead if we were not staying in an albergue. (on private albergues we would reserve if we could). This is most important for weekends. Telephoning the location directly might get a better rate, but our language skills are not up to negotiating.

### When to go

- We walked in both April – May – June and Sept – Oct. Colder in the spring, but beautiful. Days were long. Many overcast. Some rain in both seasons, so carry full rain gear. July Aug will be hot, and the Norte beaches are popular, and accommodations scarce, so I would avoid that season.

## Some things we thought were important but too detailed for a slide.

### Other

- I had entered all the towns from the Whitson guide into a Google Sheets spreadsheet, and used that to decide daily stopping points. We carried the hardcopy and if I made changes, I'd update the Google Sheets version from one of the devices. We could also email this to family so they knew where we planned to be.

### How to get there

- Irún, the start of the Norte is on the Atlantic at the border of France and Spain. You can get there easily from Paris, Madrid, Barcelona or intermediate points, usually by train, but you can fly into San Sebastian, just a few miles from Irún. Use [rome2rio.com](http://rome2rio.com) to check your options.
- Oviedo, the start of the Primitivo, or Villaviciosa, the point on the Norte where the route splits off to the Primitivo, about 3 walking days before Oviedo. Oviedo is inland, but the airport that serves both Oviedo and Villaviciosa is the Asturias airport, on the coast. From here you can taxi to Villaviciosa, or take public transport to Oviedo. This is a little more complicated access than to the Norte start. Use [Rome2rio.com](http://Rome2rio.com) to look at your choices.

### Costs

- Town stops - food and hotel rooms are a big variable. For two of us, we averaged about 100 to 150 euros per day. A minimum would be about 35 euros per person per day. If you stay in private albergues, you will be paying about 20 euros per person and you still need food for the day.
- Daily lunch and snack cost per day 20 euros + per person.
- Travel to and from the start and end of the route to your entry/exit airport – 1 or 2 days at each end. Use [rome2rio.com](http://rome2rio.com) to view the choices and costs. For example Paris to Irun, start of the Norte - \$100 to \$180 by train, 6 hours; rideshare \$67, 9 hours, etc.

### Lessons Learned

- Do a detailed plan, but be prepared for change.

### Contact Susan and Ralph

[Backpack45@yahoo.com](mailto:Backpack45@yahoo.com) – email to ask Susan for her monthly backpacking and hiking tales and tips newsletter

Susan's books: *Healing Miles: Gifts from the Caminos Norte and Primitivo*, *Patagonia Chronicle*, *Camino Chronicle*, *We're in the Mountains*, *Not Over the Hill* on Amazon