

Sheet 2: Porto – Valença (Tui)

The **Camino Portugués (Porto – Santiago)** remains largely unchanged since the original guide was published in 2005 and the forest fires that ravaged the North of Portugal in 2006/7 did little damage to the route itself. There has been an increase in the number of pilgrims walking the route (5,508) which is now second only in popularity to the Camino Francés (79,396) However numbers are still low (only 6% of the total arriving in Santiago) and the route remains blissfully un-crowded.

The increased 'traffic' has brought some advantages for pilgrims with improvements to existing accommodation and several new hostels (listed below). The new popularity has, however, led to an unseemly scramble by various bodies (voluntary, religious & government) that want to become 'the' pilgrim authority. This has led to confusion and a dispersal of energy and focus. Gnostic wisdom reminds us that "We are very capable of wearying ourselves. The strain of constant judgement is virtually intolerable." A Course In Miracles T42,3/47.

Note p.34/35: Office [1] This has now closed and Djalma has returned to Brasil. Efforts are being made to revive the association and, in the meantime, a pilgrim *credencial* may be available from Pato Cycles at the corner of Rua Sra do Porto and Rua do Monte dos Burgos. Office [2] is also closed. Best bet is to collect a credencial from the Albergue in Rates with its welcome pilgrim accommodation – the first in Portugal and managed by the energetic and helpful Nuno Ribeiro.

Of constant concern are the waymarked routes out of Porto city itself along busy and dangerous roads. The beaches along the Atlantic coast to Vila do Conde make a wonderful *stage 1* alternative. While it is not waymarked you can't get lost if you keep to the coast. Go barefoot and paddle your way up the coast but avoid swimming as currents can be dangerous.



Pilgrim on Coastal Alternative

Add p.41: Other Options: From your accommodation in Porto take the metro, bus or taxi to Mercado (*Ponte Móvel*) in Matosinhos. This is an ideal place to start as one symbolically leaves the city over the bridge and the delightful coastal route starts at the *Praia Leça da Palmeira*. It is a full (but manageable) day to Vila do Conde (c. 23 km) but leave early as sand (and wind) slows the pace. Use the cliff paths and boardwalks where provided. There are cafes and restaurants all along the route.

Note p.58: Option 3 (pink panel) is the preferred route to Rates from Vila do Conde. In Junqueira pass the welcoming café (left) and continue over crossroads turning left at Igreja Matriz São Simão (see photo below).



Note p.67: Monte Franqueira - if you take this alternative route note the way continues *over* (not under) the motorway.

Note p.70: Barcelos the Albergaria do Terço now offers a pilgrim discount. The pilgrim accommodation in the hospital São João de Dios (on the northern outskirts) may no longer be available. Check before proceeding there 253-808 210.

Add p.96: Pensão S. Roque: A new '**official**' pilgrim hostel has been opened at Rubiaes (1.1 km further on) also on the main road. This is now the recommended stop for this stage. The converted accommodation is modern and spacious with good kitchen, dining, sitting area and outside patio. One large dormitory sleeps 26 in bunk beds and there are ample ladies and gents toilets and showers. Bar/ Restaurant *Bom Retiro* lies 500m downhill, close to the Ponte Nova which has a cafe/ shop (you pass it the next day – a good place for breakfast).



New Pilgrim Hostel – Rubiaes

Add p.102: Valença Option: A new pilgrim hostel has been opened adjacent to the fire station *Bombeiros* at the top of the road opposite the main entrance to the fortified town. Kitchen, dining, living area and 30 beds in 4 rooms with adequate showers and toilets. While located on the busy main road it is convenient for exploring the old walled town and is often sparsely occupied as most pilgrims push on to the hostel in Tui. (see sheet 1: Tui-Santiago)



New Pilgrim Hostel – Valença