

## Episode 92: The Original Way

### Summary

Nick and Wendy talk about walking the Camino Primitivo - the Original Way - of the Camino de Santiago in Spain. They talk about the people they met along the way, the difficult weather conditions, and the spirit of the *camino*.

### Transcript

Nick: Today Wendy and I are talking once again about the Camino de Santiago, or the Way of St. James, the pilgrimage trail to Santiago de Compostela in Spain. And last year we recorded a special series about walking the Camino Francés, and this year, we decided to walk another trail, but a different trail.

Wendy: Yeah, so this one is called the Camino Primitivo, which is called that basically because it's the very first *camino*.

Nick: Right, so it's usually translated as the Original Way in English and the king of Asturias walked it in 814 AD, so it's a 1200-year-old trail, and we decided to do that, uhh, just these past couple of weeks.

Wendy: Mmm-hmm.

Nick: So it's a much shorter trail, which is helpful, I think, especially, uhh, because you have problems with your feet.

Wendy: Yeah, yeah, I developed a problem with my feet on the Camino Francés last year and it still hasn't gone away, so I was pretty worried about how that was going to go this time. And it went OK. I didn't have nearly as much pain as I did last year. Uhh, but I was still ready to be done by the end of the thirteen days, which is how long it took us to walk the Camino Primitivo.

Nick: Right, so the Primitivo starts in a city called Oviedo, and that's in the region of Spain called Asturias, and we had never been there before. And so, firstly, it was really nice to visit Oviedo and see some of the attractions there before we started walking.

Wendy: Mmm-hmm.

Nick: And so there are a lot of old churches there which date from around the ninth century. Umm, it's also got a very good tradition of cider, and so there are cider bars all over the city.

Wendy: Yeah, that was a surprise! I didn't know about that aspect of Asturian culture, uhh, but we enjoyed it.

Nick: Yeah, and they also have an unusual way of pouring the cider. So you go into one of these cider bars and they'll just pour you a very small amount at a time. You basically buy the whole bottle, but then you have a lot of glasses of it. But they will ... umm, the guys will come along when they want to refill your glass, and they will pour it from a height. And so the bottle is, I don't know, two metres above the glass, but they're able to pour it successfully into the glass, and then that's just part of the ritual of what they do.

Wendy: Yeah, so they basically hold the bottle way up above their heads and hold the glass down below their waist. And they pour it and it all goes into the glass. So, yeah, it's part of the show, part of the spectacle, and, uhh, it makes it a lot of fun.

Nick: For sure. So the Camino Primitivo takes you through Asturias, as we mentioned, and also Galicia, which is where Santiago is. So it's a much shorter trail. It was ... we thought it was about 311 kilometres, but when we got our certificate at the end it said 334 kilometres, so we scored an extra 23 kilometres out of that. Umm, last year we walked, uhh, nearly 800 kilometres, so it was much shorter. And, really, because you only go through these two regions, and the regions are quite similar, I feel, in landscape, (it) didn't have the variety of the Camino Francés, but it had its other advantages instead.

Wendy: Yeah, I really enjoyed this one. Uhh, there are far fewer people that do the Camino Primitivo compared to the Camino Francés. The Francés is definitely the most popular one. So there were really only a handful of<sup>1</sup> people who were walking it at the same time as us, and so we saw the same people every day. We were staying in the same *albergues*, the same pilgrim's hostels, each night. We were eating dinner together as a group each night. And so we became a really close-knit<sup>2</sup> group and got to know these people quite well really quickly. And that was a very special part of it for me.

Nick: Yeah, between, I guess, the evening of day two until about the evening of day nine, yeah, we spent a lot of time with these people. And there were about, probably, twelve of us who were doing the same stages. Yeah, and it was really great, because on the Francés there are so many people - and you meet a lot of people and you make your connections - but there are so many people you don't meet as well. Or you'll talk to someone and they'll say, 'Oh, did you ... do you know these other people from so-and-so, such-and-such...?' And you'll say, 'No, we didn't meet them.' And you'll meet people that other people don't meet. Umm, but on the Primitivo, yeah, it was different because everybody knew everybody

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<sup>1</sup> a handful of: a small number or amount of

<sup>2</sup> close-knit: tightly united

and we all knew each other by name and that was really nice. I think that was ... the spirit of the *camino* really came out as strong as it ever has for us just, uhh, within that group.

Wendy: Yeah, and it wasn't sure if it would, because for me the *camino* is the Francés. That's always the *camino* that I had heard about, and so I didn't really know what this other *camino* was going to be like and if it was going to have the same spirit. But it definitely did and I think it was perhaps even stronger.

Nick: Yeah, I think that smaller group really helps in that way. Umm, and the fact that on the Primitivo, there are fewer *albergues*, and so you're sometimes almost locked in to a particular stage. Whereas on the Francés you can do whatever you want in terms of where you sleep, because there are places to sleep every few kilometres. So you can choose the next village or maybe a village before where other people go and things like that. On the Primitivo you have less choice that way, and so in the end most of us did the same days every day. And then that was nice because then you would catch up<sup>3</sup> at the end of the day. Sometimes people would leave before you, or after you. Sometimes you would see them on the trail and walk with them, or sometimes you wouldn't. People have their different rhythms<sup>4</sup>. Umm, there were a couple of people in our group who walked faster than us, so we tended not to<sup>5</sup> see them during the day but we would catch up with them again at night. So it was just a great atmosphere and experience that way.

Wendy: Mmm-hmm. And we stayed in some really nice *albergues* too. One in particular, where they cooked a communal dinner for us and everyone ate together and that was our third night, so it was pretty early on and that was when we really got to know some of these people that we then continued to walk with, uhh, the rest of the way.

Nick: Yep. So the weather was a bit of a challenge for us this time.

Wendy: It was.

Nick: We walked in late May / early June, which is the same time that we started the Francés last year. But Asturias is in the mountains, and both Asturias and Galicia are very green places, and that also means they're very wet places.

Wendy: Yep, the ... all that greenery needs, uhh, needs rain to grow and so we got a lot of rain. And that was tough. It was also quite cold. It was colder than I expected and so, I mean, sometimes it was just a little drizzle<sup>6</sup>, just very light rain.

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<sup>3</sup> catch up (phrasal verb): meet to discuss recent news or events. See also: Episode 15.

<sup>4</sup> rhythms: movement patterns - usually related to music and dance, but in this case, how fast people walk

<sup>5</sup> we tended not to: we usually didn't

<sup>6</sup> drizzle: light rain

And that was fine, we got used to that. But there were a couple of days when we had to walk for hours in quite a hard rain and it was really cold and miserable and that was probably the biggest challenge.

Nick: Yep, for sure. Umm, day two was very wet and so we walked in hard rain, like you said, for about four hours. Uhh, and actually ... but it was that evening that we started to meet some of these people who we would walk with, and so it really turned around very quickly for us. Because, you know, it was a tough morning, that morning of day two, but then by the evening we met all these lovely people, and we were in a beautiful *albergue* in the countryside that night as well, and so suddenly it all changed, it all turned around. And then really the next seven days or so, we didn't get rain. In Asturias, it was very foggy and misty. Umm, we had complete cloud cover every day. And sometimes the visibility wasn't that good. So it didn't ... there was no sun at all, basically, in Asturias for the week or so that we walked there. But, yet it was so atmospheric and, kind of, mystical, and I really loved that part of it.

Wendy: Yeah, I think you were enjoying the mist<sup>7</sup> and the fog<sup>8</sup> by the end.

Nick: Yeah, for sure. And then later when we got into Galicia, we had one sunny day, which was our day into a town called Lugo, and then later we had a couple of rainy days. And so the last part of it, I didn't enjoy as much. Umm, we took a rest day in Lugo and most of the people we were walking with did not, and so we lost track of<sup>9</sup> them for the last four days after that. But then we met up with them in Santiago at the end, and that was really great to have that reunion. And it's one of the great things about the *camino* is, yeah, seeing the people you met along the way at the end. And then you can swap<sup>10</sup> stories and stay in touch and that was really great.

Wendy: Yeah, that was fantastic. Umm, and it was surprise to see them in the square when we arrived in Santiago, because I thought that most of them had arrived the day before us, but in the end we all arrived, for the most part, on the same day. We just hadn't been walking together for those last three or four days.

Nick: Yeah, and so we were able to catch up. We all went out and had drinks together and some of us had dinner together and, umm, and that was a really nice way to end it, I think. And because the group was so close throughout the whole way, it was great to be able to meet as a group. I think when we were on the Camino Francés, we, you know, made friends with certain people, we didn't have a large group of everybody kind of together. And so that made a different experience and a special experience this time.

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<sup>7</sup> mist: extremely light rain suspended near the earth's surface

<sup>8</sup> fog: low cloud that obscures visibility

<sup>9</sup> lost track of (to lose track of): to fail to keep up with or to keep informed about

<sup>10</sup> swap: exchange, trade

Wendy: Yeah, that's true.

Nick: Right, so after two *caminos*, there are many more.

Wendy: There are.

Nick: Umm, I have this image that I really like to look at. It's a map with lots of different trails. And so - who knows? - I'm sure there are more *caminos* in our future, so maybe next year we'll try to do another one.

Wendy: I think that we will!

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Nick: Finally, a reminder that if you enjoyed this episode and if you're interested in the Camino de Santiago, be sure to check out our special audio series called The Way, that we recorded last year when we walked on the Camino Francés. You can find all the information you need at <http://www.englishin10minutes.com/theway>.

## Comprehension Questions

1. What was unusual about the cider bars in Oviedo?
2. Which two reasons did Wendy give for being a bit worried about walking the Camino Primitivo?
3. What was the weather like in Asturias?

## Exercises

*Use the words and expressions in the footnotes of the transcript to fill in the gaps.*

1. In the early morning, there can be a lot of \_\_\_\_\_ and you often can't see 10 metres in front of you.
2. They hadn't seen each other for a long time but they finally arranged to have lunch together one day and \_\_\_\_\_.
3. I've been to Barcelona \_\_\_\_\_ times. I like it but it's not my favourite Spanish city.
4. A famous movie from the 1980s, based on a true story, is called *Gorillas in the \_\_\_\_\_*. It's about a woman who devotes her life to studying and helping gorillas in the jungles of Africa.
5. Boys in America often like to collect baseball cards and \_\_\_\_\_ them with their friends.
6. On our recent holiday in Europe, \_\_\_\_\_ have breakfast. Instead, we got up early and explored the cities we were in while it was still quiet.
7. We prepared for it to rain a lot but in the end it was just a \_\_\_\_\_.
8. Even though they live in different parts of the country now, they're a very \_\_\_\_\_ family. Both adult sons come home at least once a month.
9. We wanted to visit another museum in the afternoon but after lunch we just \_\_\_\_\_ time and we didn't make it before it closed for the day.
10. Samba has nine different \_\_\_\_\_, some of which are more complex than others.

## Discussion Questions

Discuss these questions with a partner or in the [English in 10 Minutes Listeners group on Facebook](#):

1. Would you like to walk the Camino Primitivo? Why or why not?
2. Do you like foggy and misty weather? Why or why not?
3. Do you like cider? Why or why not?

## Answers

### Comprehension Questions

1. The waiters poured the cider from a height in an interesting way.
2. She was worried about her feet because she hurt her feet on the Camino Francés last year, and she was worried that the spirit of the *camino* would not be the same.
3. It was foggy and misty every day, and it rained sometimes.

### Exercises

1. fog
2. catch up
3. a handful of
4. *Mist*
5. swap
6. we tended not to
7. drizzle
8. close-knit
9. lose track of
10. rhythms