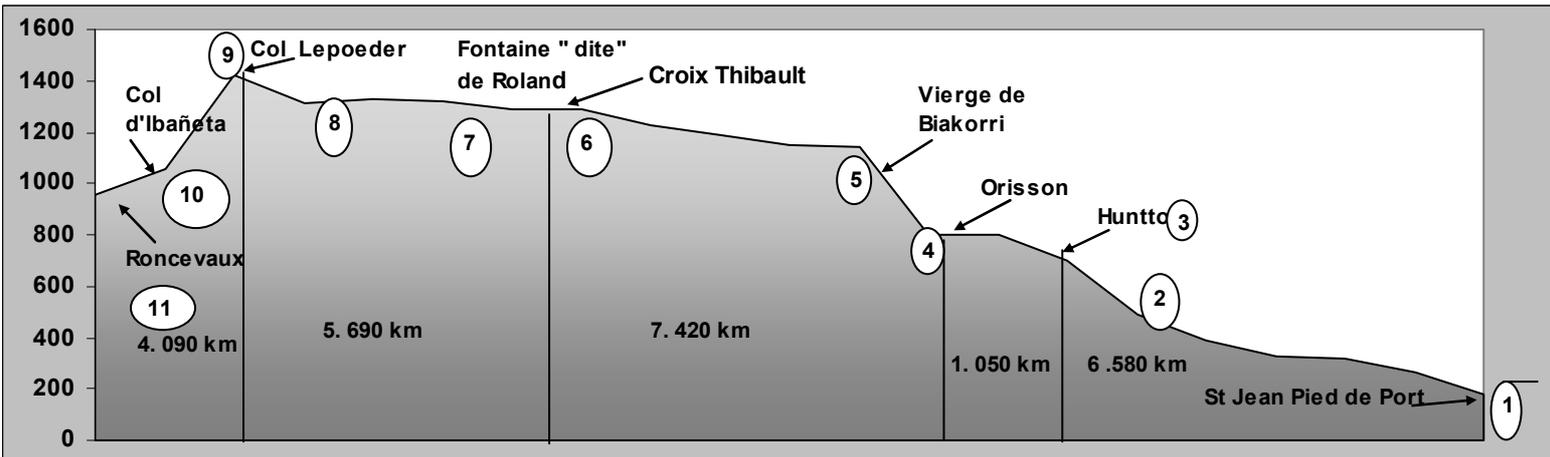




SAINT-JEAN PIED DE PORT – RONCEVAUX BY THE CIZE PASSES



Itinerary : GR65 to the border, then at Bentarte Pass, the GR12 to the right to Ibañeta Pass via the Lepoeder Pass.

Elevations: gain: 1240 meters; loss: 469 meters

Average time for this section/segment: 7 to 7 1/2 hours (not counting any stops) - **Distance:** 24.830 kilometers (by GPS)

150 meters after la Porte d'Espagne, a signpost on the wall indicates: route Napoleon and the Cize Passes straight ahead (GR marking and the waymarking for the Way of Saint James) or the way to Valcarlos on the right (green marking and the waymarking for the Way of Saint James).

After a steep slope, the grade eases up considerably for 3 kilometers, until Erreculus, a farm, where the climb to Huntto (2) begins. The slope climbs steadily for 2,800 km, it's best to maintain a reasonable rhythm and not rush.

Half-way up, after passing the inn at Ithurburua (a shelter, you have to book), leave the paved road briefly as it curves to the south to continue the climb on a winding dirt road as far as the viewpoint (3), where you pick up the paved road at the fountain.

The Kayola refugio is on your left as you continue up the road, just after the orientation table (sleeps 10, kitchen, reserve at the Orisson refugio).

The road climbs again for several hundred meters, then becomes almost flat as far as the refugio at Orisson (4), where you can find refreshments (half board by reservation, public toilets)

From there, the course climbs progressively, ignore the tracks that go off to the right and left towards the shepherds' huts and follow the red and white GR marking and the waymarking for the Way of Saint James.

At kilometre 11 410, a little off the trail, is the Biakorri Virgin (5) protectress of the shepherds.

The course continues to climb progressively, with some long flat spots, even some gentle descents as far as the Thibault cross (6). Here you abandon definitively the pavement and take a wide track to your right (big sign Roncevaux) that climbs towards the little pass to the west of the peak Leizar Atheka.

After the pass, the track is almost flat, it crosses the border and arrives at the Fountain of Roland (7) (last water source until Roncevaux). 200 meters farther on, at Bentarte Pass, the signage directs you to the right, onto the GR 12 the GRT7 and Orreaga-Roncesvalles. The track crosses a forest, gently undulating, to reach the Izandorre Pass (8), there is a refugio equipped with an emergency radio telephone.

Notice after crossing the border the numbered wooden milestones every 50 meters with the emergency number 112; at milestone 38, your cell phone connects to the Spanish network.

After the pass, the track climbs progressively to reach the Lepoeder pass (9), the highest point at this stage. After admiring the Roncevaux Abbey down in the valley, DO NOT go down the difficult track straight ahead in the forest, it is advisable to take the GR 12 to your right, which follows, with several shortcuts, the old route that descends towards the Ibañeta Pass (10), passage of the international route to Arneguy.

At the Ibañeta Chapel, the track on your left descends into the forest to reach the Abbey of Roncevaux (11) in 1,340 km.

IMPORTANT ADVICE:

A reasonable departure time to do this stage is between 7 and 8 a.m.

You can read the weather forecast concerning the Cize passes at the pilgrim welcome center in St Jean Pied de Port. (specialised service of Météo France).

Respect the document "Proper Conduct in the Basque mountains" (see at the back)

SUPPLIES : take a picnic and some water for the climb, the evening meal at Roncevaux (there are 2 restaurants near the abbey, you need to reserve for a "pilgrim menu") any necessary medicine and first aid kit. Bars open in Burguette (4 km) in the morning for breakfast.

Shops in St Jean Pied de Port: from 8.30 a.m. to 12 p.m. and from 3.00 p.m. to 7.30 p.m.—Bakeries open at 7.00 a.m.

LODGING AT RONCEVAUX:

The pilgrim welcome center at the monastery is open from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. Price of a bed at the monastery refugio: 10€. No kitchen.—2 Hotels near the abbey—Possible lodging in Burguette (4 km).

Tourist Office in Roncesvalles: 00 34 948 76 03 01.

