



BY DR MARGARETHA MONTAGU - 2026

CAMINO DE SANTIAGO

30 ARTICLES IN 30 DAYS

Walking the Camino de Santiago: Recommendations for durable and comfortable walking shoes for varied terrain

Walking Shoes for the Camino de Santiago: Recommendations for durable and comfortable shoes for varied terrain — A Shoe Buying Checklist

[5-day Camino de Santiago Walking Adventures in the Southwest of France](#)

Full guide: [The Right Shoe for the Road](#) | [MargarethaMontagu.com](#)

TERRAIN & ROUTE SUITABILITY



Handles mixed surfaces

The Camino Francés mixes paved roads, dirt paths, gravel tracks, and ancient cobblestones.



Suitable for the Pyrenean crossing

The first stage from Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port involves steep climbs — grip is essential.



Appropriate for day-long mileage

Expect 15–20 miles per day. Not every shoe is built for that volume.



Lightweight enough for multi-day use

Heavy boots add fatigue fast. Trail shoes or lightweight hikers are usually ideal.

FIT & SIZING



Tried on at end of day

Feet swell during the day — end-of-day fitting reflects your walking foot.



Worn with Camino socks during fitting

Merino wool or moisture-wicking socks change the fit. Bring the real thing.

Half-size larger than usual
Feet swell further on long walks. Extra room prevents black toenails.

Roomy toe box confirmed
Toes should splay naturally. Pinching at the front causes blisters quickly.

No heel slip
Heel slippage = blisters. Walk around the shop — the heel should stay put.

Width is comfortable
Wide-footed walkers should try wide-fit options from Brooks, Hoka, or New Balance.

CONSTRUCTION & FEATURES

Multi-directional lugs on outsole
Grip in multiple directions handles mud, gravel, and wet stone.

Cushioned midsole for shock absorption
Thousands of steps per day — a good midsole protects knees and hips.

Breathable upper
Critical for warm-weather walking. Mesh or engineered knit uppers reduce heat.

Adequate arch support for your foot type
Flat feet and overpronators should prioritise stability models (e.g. ASICS GT-2000).

Durable enough for 500+ miles
Running shoes may not last — choose shoes designed for walking distance.

WEATHER READINESS

Waterproof or GORE-TEX version considered
The Pyrenean stages can be wet even in summer. Soggy feet at mile 2 is grim.

Season-appropriate breathability
Summer pilgrims need airflow; spring/autumn pilgrims need warmth and water resistance.

Second pair of lighter shoes packed
Sandals or packable shoes for evenings at the albergue — your feet will thank you.

SOCKS & ACCESSORIES

Merino wool or moisture-wicking socks chosen
Merino regulates temperature and resists odour — a pilgrim's best friend over multiple days.

Socks are seamless or flat-seam
Seams across the toe box are a surprisingly common cause of blisters on long days.

Two pairs of socks per day planned
Changing socks at the midday rest stop dramatically reduces blister risk.

Blister kit packed

Compeed plasters, Bodyglide or Vaseline, and a sterile needle — hope you won't need them, pack them anyway.

 Spare insoles considered

Lightweight aftermarket insoles (e.g. Superfeet) can transform the fit of an otherwise good shoe.

BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

 Set a realistic budget before shopping

Quality walking shoes typically range from £80–£200. Skimping here is a false economy over 500 miles.

 Factored in the cost of socks and insoles

Good merino socks run £15–£25 per pair. Budget for 3–4 pairs minimum.

 Considered buying two pairs for the route

Alternating between two pairs each day extends the life of both and lets each dry fully overnight.

 Checked for end-of-season sales

Serious savings are available in January and July sales — worth timing your purchase if possible.

 Avoided false savings on unbranded shoes

An unknown brand at half the price that fails at week two costs more than a quality shoe bought once.

PRE-CAMINO TESTING

 At least 4–6 weeks of training walks completed

Start with short walks and build up to full-day mileage before departure.

 Worn on varied surfaces during break-in

Mimic Camino conditions: mix pavement, gravel, and inclines in your training.

 No new blisters in training

If blisters appear in training, address the fit before committing to the route.

 Soles show even wear pattern

Uneven wear can signal a fit or gait issue worth addressing with an insole.
