

Future Training Opportunities

Do you know someone who would like to serve as a volunteer hospitalero? If so, please let them know about two upcoming training opportunities.

The first will be in Menlo Park, CA, **January 13-15, 2012**. Simply click [HERE](#) for information about how to register online.

Another training will be offered in conjunction with the **March 2012 Annual Gathering** to be held in Winter Park, FL. Check our [National Gatherings](#) page for additional details.

And did you know there is an American Pilgrims Hospitalero Training Scholarship Program? The goal of the program is to make hospitalero training financially feasible for all members of American Pilgrims. If you know someone who is interested in training to be an hospitalero, and might qualify for a scholarship, please direct them to the [Grant Program](#) page of the American Pilgrims website.

And don't forget: If you are interested in helping to plan or host a training in your area, please let us know!

American Pilgrims Hospitalero News

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!Hola, Hospitaleros Voluntarios!

Wow, what an October I had in Spain! I took part in cooking meals for almost 600 pilgrims representing 40 countries, met with representatives from hospitalero groups from as far away as Japan and as near as Sarria, and was fortunate enough to attend a pilgrims' mass in the Santiago cathedral on a day when the *botafumeiro* was brought out. I just love the smell of that incense!

The two weeks I spent as volunteer in Bercianos were two of the absolute best weeks of my life. I came away feeling as if my soul had been cleansed and my heart filled to overflowing. My partner at the parochial albergue in Bercianos was Linda Heiderer, a fellow American Pilgrims volunteer. Linda and I had a lot of fun and received many heartfelt hugs and kisses from happy pilgrims as they set off for their next day's walk.

After my volunteer time I was fortunate to attend the ninth annual International Congress of Jacobeo Associations in Valencia, Spain. In attendance with me were the incoming Chair of American Pilgrims, Carlos Mently, and Board members Cherie Pagett and Annette Argall. There were representatives of French, Japanese, and British Camino organizations as well as members of many regional Spanish Jacobeo groups. The contacts we made there will pave the way for American Pilgrims to provide yet more support to both pilgrims and the infrastructure of the Camino.



Daniel finds a few moments to relax during his busy month in Spain.

The conference included three full days of academic presentations, much valuable interaction between international representatives, and a very lively panel discussion on the merits of pilgrimage. American Pilgrims was recognized for our generous grant program. Additionally, our hospitalero program was given a warm welcome by many of the attendees. Of particular note was an invitation from the head of the Astorga association. He told me that members of American Pilgrims would be warmly welcomed as volunteers in their albergue.

While in Santiago I attended a luncheon hosted by Lydia Smith of *The Camino Documentary* where I met the head of the Sarria Camino association. From that meeting has come an open invitation for our members to volunteer at two albergues in the Sarria area.

After such a wonderful month in Spain, my soul is full to overflowing. The stories, the smiles, the tears, the hours spent with pilgrims and fellow volunteers . . . all of it adds up to one of the best experiences of my life. I am very happy to call myself hospitalero.

*Daniel DeKay
Hospitalero Training Coordinator*

Hospitalero Postings for 2011

So far we know of 14 American Pilgrim hospitaleros who volunteered in Spain this year, some at more than one albergue. A big "Thank you" to all for committing your time and energy in support of pilgrims from around the world as they make their way to Santiago. Your dedication and hard work are much appreciated.

Elias Rodriguez	Estella	July 1-15
Ross Torsrud	Albergue Anfas, Estella	July 18-25
Jacqueline Torsrud	Albergue Anfas, Estella	July 18-25
Jane Carter	Zamora	August 1-15
Dick Carter	Zamora	August 1-15
Elias Rodriguez	Monastery of Samos	August 1-15
Carol Green	Santo Domingo de la Calzada	August 15-31
James Green	Santo Domingo de la Calzada	August 15-31
Rosann McCullough	Refugio Gaucelmo, Rabanal	September 1-15
Gene McCullough	Refugio Gaucelmo, Rabanal	September 1-15
Rennie Archibald	Foncebadon	September 15-30
Daniel DeKay	Bercianos	October 1-15
Linda Heiderer	Bercianos	October 1-15
Virginia MacDonald	Ponferrada	October 1-15
Heather Knight	Santo Domingo de la Calzada	October 16-31

If your name should be on this list, or if you know someone whose name is missing from our records, please let us know.

The Michael Wyatt Hospitalero Service Grant Program

The goal of the Michael Wyatt Hospitalero Service Grant is to assist members of American Pilgrims to realize an hospitalero volunteer service experience and hence allow them to "give back" to the Camino. The \$400 grants are meant to partially fund members of American Pilgrims for travel from the U.S. to Spain in order to serve as volunteer hospitaleros at a Camino albergue for a minimum of two weeks. The hospitalero assignment must be completed by the end of the calendar year following the award.

The grant program is named after Reverend Michael Wyatt who served as Chair of the American Pilgrims Board of Directors from 2006 - 2008. His insightful, wise, enthusiastic and caring leadership was a key factor in American Pilgrims' ability to blossom into a truly national organization. Michael passed away in July 2009.

If you know of anyone who might qualify for a service grant, please direct them to the [Grant Program](#) page of the American Pilgrims website for additional details and contact information.



Reverend Michael Wyatt, whose smile conveys the enthusiasm he brought to American Pilgrims' efforts to support the Camino. The Hospitalero Service Grant Program is named in his honor.

Volunteer Opportunities

Want to volunteer in Spain next year? There are many albergues along the various Camino routes that could use your help. In deciding where to volunteer, we encourage you to contact fellow volunteers about their experiences. Additionally, here are some contacts to get you started. All are for refugios operating on a donation basis.

- ✦ **Federación Española de Asociaciones de Amigos del Camino de Santiago:** hospvol@caminosantiago.org. Trains and assigns volunteers to a network of refugios along the Camino Francés and Vía de la Plata. You can apply directly to the Federación, or contact us at hospnews@americanpilgrims.com and we will send you a copy of their application.
- ✦ **Confraternity of St. James:** rwardens@csj.org.uk. Operates Refugio Gaucelmo in Rabanal del Camino, and Refugio de Peregrinos de Miraz on the Camino del Norte.
- ✦ **Albergue Paroquial de Fuenterroble:** aviaplata@terra.es. Located on the Vía de la Plata, and funded in part by donations from American Pilgrims.
- ✦ **Albergues in Foncebadón and El Acebo:** rkansas@terra.es. Beginning this year, volunteers for these two albergues will be assigned through Rafael Canseco, at the above email address, rather than through the Federación. Please contact Rafael directly if you are interested in working at either albergue.

The following albergues on the Camino Francés, while not operating on a donation basis, have expressed a warm welcome to any American Pilgrim hospitaleros who are interested in volunteering. They can be contacted directly via the websites and email addresses listed.

- ✦ **Albergue de Peregrinos Siervas de María:** www.caminodesantiagoastorga.com/index.php?modulo=2. Located in Astorga and operated by the *Asociación de Amigos del Camino de Santiago de Astorga*. For more information, contact asociacion@caminodesantiagoastorga.com.
- ✦ **Casa de Carmen:** www.acasadecarmen.com. A private albergue located in Barbadelo. For more information, contact acasadecarmen@hotmail.com.
- ✦ **Paloma y Leña:** www.palomaylena.com. A private albergue located in San Mamede del Camino near Sarria. For more information, contact Paloma y José Antonio (Leña) y Diego at contacto@palomaylena.com.

New Albergue in Monasterio ~

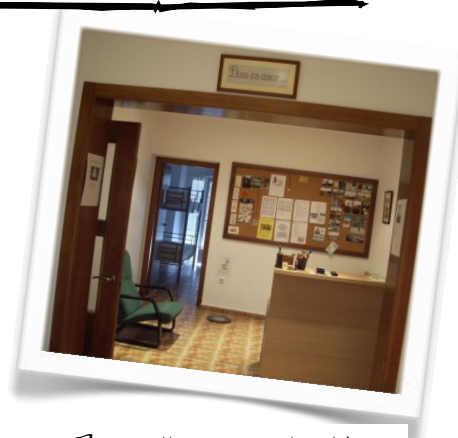
I am writing to let you know about a new albergue just opened in Monasterio, on the Vía de la Plata, about two days' walk north of Sevilla. The Camino passes right in front of the albergue, which is on the 2nd floor of the parish priest's house.

Father Miguel Angel Garcia Encinas is a young priest who I met on the Camino Francés in 1996. He has since walked almost every year, taking along groups of youth and adults from the villages where he has been posted. Upon being moved to Monasterio, he realized that the rectory had plenty of room for an albergue and set to work with the diocese of Badajoz and the local parish of San Pedro Apostol to bring his dream into reality.

The albergue is situated in the centre of town, where there are many services for the pilgrim: information office, supermarket, pharmacy, public internet access, etc. It has six bunk beds in three rooms, enough to accommodate 12 pilgrims, a kitchen, washrooms and showers, laundry and terrace. The albergue also displays a collection of original art and prints created by pilgrims (mine among them!)

Miguel Angel would be so happy to welcome volunteer hospitaleros (he is in touch with the Federación Española

listed above under Volunteer Opportunities) and pilgrims alike. He says that after walking the Camino so many times, it is his turn to serve in a new way – as hospitalero. He does understand and speak some English, but is more comfortable communicating in Spanish. If you write in English, he can probably find someone to help with translation. He may be contacted at mangelencinas2000@yahoo.es.



*Reception area in the newly opened pilgrim albergue in Monasterio
Photo by Wanda Sawicki*

*Wanda Sawicki
London, Ontario,*

Postcard from Grañón ~

This past summer I had the good fortune to serve as an hospitalero voluntario in the albergue in Grañón, La Rioja. I started the 15-day volunteer commitment (my *quincena*) on May 1, an important date in Spain because it is the feast of Saint Joseph the Worker, a national holiday. It is also the feast day of Our Lady of Carrasquedo, the local patroness of the surrounding villages and farm lands. My first day on the job was celebrated with church bells, fireworks, incense, solemn processions and music that lasted till the wee hours of the morning. It was an auspicious start.



*Pilgrims
prepare a
communal
meal at
Grañón.
Photo by
Emilio
Escudero*

The orientation I received from the Italian couple I was relieving could not have been warmer, more generous, informative and calming. This husband and wife team were great teachers and absolute dears. To my surprise and profound satisfaction, my experiences were everything I was told they would be. And, as foretold, I also encountered a few very difficult times which I managed to get through, perhaps in part, because I had been prepared for them.

My American Pilgrims training in the states and my on-site orientation had forewarned and prepared me for most of these challenges. They helped me not to lose sight of those wonderful experiences I was having, to focus on the importance of living in the moment, and to keep a laser-like attention on the importance of the role of the hospitalero. It's a difficult role, but one that can have a tremendous influence on helping to make the Camino experience for each pilgrim a better one and, for some, a profoundly positive one.

My good fortune to have been assigned as a novice hospitalero to an albergue like Grañón became clearest to me on my very last day there. That morning, after turning over the keys to the new hospitaleros and walking out the front door of the albergue with my backpack on and my sights set on where I was going next, I was overwhelmed with all sorts of thoughts and feelings: relief, nostalgia, the pain of good byes, gratitude, good times - even great times - and a profound sadness and sense of loss. I was leaving a place where I had made a difference, exactly what I'll never know, but it doesn't matter. I was leaving a place where I had done my best, where I had grown as a person, and from where I would take memories of positive life experiences that far outweigh the efforts expended to meet my challenges.

On reflection, these feelings and memories of being an hospitalero are not unlike those that I experienced in the crucible of walking my own Camino to Santiago. I would do it all again in a heartbeat.

Emilio Escudero
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Postcard from Santo Domingo de la Calzada ~

My wife and I volunteered at Santo Domingo in August, absolutely the wrong time of year for a first-time hospitalero. Half of Europe, it seems, is on vacation and streams of people came through our albergue with its 150 beds. One night we had 180! The albergue is in a new building and it has a reputation along the Camino as a 5-star operation, which indeed it is. But there was none of the quiet and intimacy I thought I might experience with the peregrinos. I really felt like the harried desk clerk of a modern motel. It did not help that the *Cofradia* who operate the place and have an enormous financial investment in the facility micromanaged the volunteers.

But there were good moments as well. Some of the townsfolk who volunteered there were wonderful people and because we saw them daily, we got to know some well. A high point was when a nearby restaurant owner, Antonio, took several of us into his kitchen and taught us how to make tapas. We have kept contact with one of the members of our team of four, a German woman, and visited her in her home later in the summer. Those kinds of happier things remain in memory, but one lesson seems to be that hospitalero service is a special kind of challenge.

I've arranged to volunteer again but at an albergue of my own choosing, one where I stayed five years ago as a peregrino.

James Green
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Postcards from Bercianos ~

For two weeks, Bercianos del Real Camino, a dusty village just west of Sahagún, was my Camino home. My volunteer partner, Daniel De Kay, and I served as hospitaleros at the 48-bed albergue that sits at the edge of town and dates back to the 1700's. Its adobe walls, rough-hewn doors, stone-patterned floor and iron-barred windows still stand.

It is a parochial albergue and one of the few remaining on the Camino that offers a communal evening meal, prayer service, and breakfast, all provided for from the *donativo* box affixed to the wall in the entry way.

Yes, Daniel and I worked long hours mopping, cleaning toilets, changing sheets, and dealing with bed bugs, to name just a few of our daily chores. But the gifts we received far outweighed what we gave of ourselves.

For me one of the most delightful parts of the day was the preparation of our evening meal. Each day at 6:00 pm a cadre of pilgrims gathered in our dining room to chop and slice for that evening's three-course meal. As our guests helped with the meal prep, they sang along to our music, talked and laughed with one another and sometimes even danced to the more rollicking tunes we played. Overall, they delighted at the chance to join in on some home cooking.

After dinner another lovely part of our evening routine commenced. We dubbed it Songfest. For this we directed our pilgrims to gather with their fellow countrymen and choose a song to sing to all who had gathered for the evening meal. Glee prevailed as we heard pilgrims share special songs from their heritage. Each night the laughter and heart-felt applause showed us that song touches us all and a song shared is a tiny bit of grace at the end of a long day on the Camino.

The hugs, cheek kisses and kind words we heard as we sent our pilgrims on their way each morning touched Daniel and me deeply. We were bolstered and lifted as we rolled up our sleeves for the morning's work ahead of us. Amazing. A 17-hour work day and it was the best job I've ever had.

Linda Heiderer
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Linda's
famous foot
massage
Photo by
Daniel DeKay

The albergue occupies what used to be the local priest's home, a purportedly 250 year-old adobe on the western edge of the village. Sunsets from the albergue are spectacular, so much so that we would interrupt dinner between the salad and main course to herd everyone outside to watch the sun move through it's evening colors.

We had bunks for 48 and floor space for many, many more. I think the most we had one night was 52. There is a separate room dedicated as a chapel. We were fortunate enough to have very warm support from Jorge, the local priest. He came by from time to time for a meal, and led the chapel service a few times. The rest of the time "Father Daniel" would lead the service, barefooted and wearing whatever cleanest shirt he had.

Our days were long ones – up at 6:00 am to heat the milk for coffee, to bed around 11:00 pm. After breakfast and seeing the pilgrims off into the cool, pre-sunrise dawn, we'd sweep, wash dishes, do laundry, clean bathrooms, go food shopping, make beds, and meet the neighbors at the daily bread delivery.

Once we opened the albergue door in the early afternoon, the rest of our day was full with checking in people and orienting them to the albergue, helping with sore feet, blisters, tendonitis and dehydration, and listening to many stories that were at times funny or tugged at one's heart, or just provided the opportunity for pilgrims to shed tears of frustration or sorrow. In the late afternoon we'd begin choreographing the dinner preparation. So many people wanted to help that I often felt like an air traffic controller . . . would you do this, you can work at that table, please wait just a moment, here's how the dish sterilizer works, there's the knife drawer, the pantry's down that hall, use those big bowels for salads, and so on.

By far the two most exciting things that happened for pilgrims were the afternoon foot massages that Linda gave (so good that she, in fact, received a marriage proposal from one of the appreciative recipients!) and the evening sing-alongs, also led by Linda. After dinner Linda had everyone in stitches as she introduced the sing-along. She'd group folks by country or language, and then tell them they had five minutes to come up with a song to sing to the rest of us. The evening's entertainment included Korean folk songs, Algerian flute music, and a professional French violinist who graced us with a delightful piece he composed while on the Camino. At the end of the evening Linda and I would lead the group in a rendition of *We Shall Overcome*. It was very emotional to be singing such a meaningful song with pilgrims from literally all over the world.

Our evening chapel was a warm, ecumenical celebration of the Camino experience shared in many languages. It usually ended with everyone holding hands and singing *Amazing Grace* together. It sent us all to bed feeling calm and ready for a good night's sleep.

Daniel DeKay
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Postcard from Foncebadón ~

I returned to Foncebadón this year to a number of changes. The most important was a new bunk bed for the hospitalero! Firm, no broken springs . . . most excellent. For those of you who know the place, you'll be interested to know that the chapel has been moved to the overflow room and vice versa. Only five mattresses are available for overflow pilgrims. Fortunately, a new private albergue has opened. The price is right at €7 and many of my overflow folks went there instead. Some had the gall to check us out and move to the new place . . . but they missed some fine home cooking. A nice person built a colorful stone cross located on the wall across the road from the chapel door.

The cows are no longer wandering through town knocking over the laundry, but we had a goat incident worth mentioning. Every afternoon a herd of 10 goats lead by a nanny with a loud bell wandered past the albergue. The group would climb the ruins across the road and eat leaves from trees growing inside. Great entertainment! One evening the creatures came through while we were eating inside. Unfortunately an Australian lady had left her shoes on the lower steps and one was stolen by the goats. Bummer! She taxied to Ponferrada the next day and bought another pair.

We served 325 pilgrims from 32 nations. It was more fun than 2010 (which is difficult to believe) because I had particular experience in Foncebadón, which is useful. Also, we were housing 20 to 25 pilgrims instead of the 35 we had each day in 2010. I started making popcorn in the afternoons which was a hit. Music from my iPhone helped fire folks up in the morning and colored beads and beads with letters on them were popular in the evenings for making bracelets. That was an idea from my Camino veteran daughter and a good one.

It's an albergue where you can provide a lot of service. I'd recommend it to anyone who can afford to rent a car for the duration. Feel free to contact me if you'd like additional information. I'll be back in 2012.

Rennie Archibald
Lafayette, CA
shineon2000@hotmail.com



*Pilgrims enjoy cooking and crafts
at Foncebadón
Photos by Rennie Archibald*



Tips For Hospitaleros

Thanks to Karen Hypes of London Ontario, Canada
for the following tips:

- ♦ If you are working at a "donativo" albergue, try to keep some smaller Euro bills, (5's, 10's, 20's) on hand for change so the pilgrims can leave something in the donation box. It was amazing how many pilgrims only had a €50 note.
- ♦ Write basic check-in info on a paper in several languages: opening/closing times, Mass schedule (if one), time of dinner/breakfast, etc. It helps if pilgrims can read in their own language what you're trying to tell them. Get some pilgrims to help you translate.
- ♦ Be sure to introduce yourself to the pilgrims at check-in and let them know you are a "voluntario." It really sets a positive tone.

Postcard from Estella ~

May 14: Quite a surprise greeted us when we reached the Albergue San Miguel which was to be our home and work station for the rest of the month. We showed up two days early with the intention of offering our help and learning the ropes of running this albergue only to learn that the previous hospitaleros had run for the hills the week before. Within 10 minutes we were handed the keys to this little pilgrim kingdom and on our own with less than an hour before we were to open the doors to the arriving pilgrims.

May 15: We are getting our schedule and efficiency down to a science. Up at 5:00 am to make coffee and lay out the breakfast. Pilgrims are usually gone by 7:30 and we start the cleaning: first, breakfast dishes and kitchen, then wipe down all the plastic bed and pillow coverings, sweep and mop all the floors, launder towels and cleaning cloths. Next the bathrooms are mopped, scrubbed and wiped down and left with lots of toilet paper. Then we go grocery shopping and get back in time to open the doors to pilgrims by 1:00 pm. Dinner prep happens throughout the afternoon with the help of pilgrims and we serve dinner outside on the patio at 8:00 pm, clean-up, a glass of wine and it's 10:30 and bed.

May 17: "Have You Got Your Teeth?" We have come to realize that our morning farewell needs to be refined. Buen Camino, bon route, bonne courage are just not helpful enough. Today we had so many pilgrims return to collect things they had left behind or thought they left behind. Now we need to say "If you can't find that first yellow arrow, check!, Do you have your glasses?," or better still "Do you have your teeth?" Seriously we had one dear confused gentleman who had to bicycle back to us because he had forgotten his teeth!

May 21: I think it's been said that stress doesn't build character but that it reveals character. Either way we are character building every day. Once again we had an 11 am line-up and the albergue was *completo* by 3:00 pm but the pilgrims just kept coming. We had to direct the latecomers to the "overflow" dorms at the parish and then bulk up the menu to serve close to 40.

May 26: The kindness and generosity of one pilgrim to another is wonderful too. A young South Korean girl returned to us in the morning after realizing that she had forgotten the crucifix that she slept with at night. It was nowhere to be found. An elderly French man then dug into his first aid kit and pulled out a small leather pouch. Inside was a beautiful crucifix attached to a delicate beaded bracelet. I'm sure it had sentimental value to him but he generously gave it to the oh-so-grateful Korean girl. Camino magic at work again!

May 28: Our stint as hospitaleros, with only four more days to go, may be winding down, but there is certainly no winding down on the job. That is an observation, not a complaint. Each day's pilgrims have the same needs as those before and some maybe have even more. Although the routine and pattern of the day is the same, it never gets old. This albergue is a new experience for each pilgrim and each pilgrim is a new experience for us too.

May 30: It's touch and go but chances are we'll run out of time before we run out of "nice." Just one more day to go. Our replacement hospitalera, Maria from Germany, arrived early this morning so we have all day to show her our routine and then she can develop and refine her own way of doing things.

June 1: Bilbao, Spain.

During our 17-day stay in Estella we served 521 pilgrims from 35 different countries. Physically, we may have left Albergue San Miguel, but mentally and emotionally, we are still marking time by what we would be doing if we were still there or what we think Maria, our replacement, is doing. It's 8:45 am and we are enjoying a café; Maria should be finishing up the cleaning and mopping. It's 3:00 pm and we are heading back to the hotel for a nap after crepes and wine; Maria would be signing in pilgrims. It's 8:45 in the evening – we're having *pintxos* and wine in a Basque *taberna*; Maria would be finishing up the dinner chores and setting up for breakfast . . . and we're happy!!



*Karen Hypes, ready to welcome pilgrims
at the albergue in Estella
Photo by Dayton Hypes*

*Dayton and Karen Hypes
London Ontario, Canada
dhypes@rogers.com*

Postcard from Rabanal del Camino ~

For the fourth year in a row, we were hospitaleros at Refugio Gaucelmo. We love this place and enjoy all of the pilgrims who come to spend the night. There are always some memorable pilgrims who touch your heart and soul in a special way. The two new monks since last year, Father Javier and Father Pius, are wonderful and we really enjoyed their company as well as attending the evening vespers and the occasional Mass.

There is always a lot of work to do after the pilgrims leave, in order to have the refuge spic and span for the new arrivals. This year there were three of us together September 1-16. Our colleague from England, Paul Kew, is a chef in his working life and he cooked some wonderful things for us and frequently made great desserts for the pilgrims. In addition, Gene made Tarta de Santiago twice for the afternoon tea while we were there. We all worked well together and enjoyed each other's company. Our eating out schedule required that one of us always remain behind at the refuge to mind the store and, so that no one ended up eating alone every evening, we set up a rotation. This kind of thinking is especially important for couples who serve with others.

Gaucelmo's afternoon tea at 5:00 is very special as it gets the pilgrims together to share their day and for us to talk more with them. Many of the pilgrims come knowing this is on the agenda and they love it.



Evening twilight settles over the refugio.

We are now using disposable sheets and pillowcases. The pilgrims really like them, and it is lots less washing for us to do. The only problem is that there is no way to recycle the items in the village so they go in the waste. Some of the pilgrims take them along for a future night when there are suspicious looking beds. Bedbugs are a continuing problem on the Camino, and though we didn't have any in our refuge, a number of pilgrims came in with bites and we treated their belongings before they were checked in. In fact, we went through this five of the 15 days we were there! It is a long process and everyone was very grateful that we could help.



Floral tribute created by hospitaleros Gene, Rosann and Paul in honor of the feast of Corpus Christi

Photos by Rosann McCullough

The above photo shows the floral host and chalice design we made for the chapel (la Iglesia de Santa Maria de la Asunción) on Corpus Christi. We had seen these in a few places along the Camino when we walked, and that day we looked around Rabanal for some sign that someone was going to do this. Seeing nothing, we hospitaleros gathered up every single rose bloom in Gaucelmo's garden and we created the figure in the plaza outside the church. We did this without asking the advice or permission of the monks in the monastery in Rabanal - something which began to worry us as we finished it. About that time the two monks came out of the monastery headed down to the other church in the village. They came over with sort of a worried, quizzical look on their faces. "Oh boy. Now we've done it. A serious ecclesiastical faux pas." It quickly developed that they were concerned that the wind would blow the petals away and they said we should move the figure into the church in front of the altar! Whew! Relief! So that was our gift to the village that Corpus Christi.

Betty and Dugald McDougall from England with whom we have worked at Gaucelmo for two of the past summers followed us as hospitaleros at Gaucelmo and they came a day early so we could spend some time together. We will volunteer with them again next July. An incredible experience!

*Rosann & Gene McCullough
Denver, CO*

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Tarta de Santiago

Walking the Camino de Santiago, as soon as you enter Galicia, you will see Tarta de Santiago on essentially every menú del peregrino. Gene McCullough baked tartas twice for the afternoon tea shared with pilgrims at Refugio Gaucelmo in Rabanal del Camino. Here Gene shares his recipe for this delightful dessert. Make it and transport yourself back to Santiago de Compostela!

Ingredients

- ✦ 10 tbsp butter softened
- ✦ 2 cups sugar, divided
- ✦ 4 eggs
- ✦ $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp almond extract
- ✦ 12 oz almonds (whole with skins or blanched and peeled)
- ✦ $1\frac{1}{4}$ cup flour
- ✦ 1 lemon, juice and finely grated rind
- ✦ cream of tartar
- ✦ powdered sugar

Preparation

- ✦ Preheat the oven to 350° F
- ✦ Grease a round 10"-12" pan with at least a two-inch lip or line the bottom with a greased round of parchment paper. A spring-form pan is highly recommended.
- ✦ Toast the almonds, tossing in a dry skillet until they are slightly brown.
- ✦ Grind the almonds in a food processor with 1 cup of the sugar as finely as possible but without bringing out the oil.
- ✦ Separate the eggs.
- ✦ In a bowl beat the butter and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sugar until fluffy. Then add the egg yolks one by one and continue beating for about 5 minutes.
- ✦ Add the almond extract.
- ✦ Combine the flour and ground almonds. Then add this slowly to the butter, egg yolk and sugar mixture. This will be very thick.
- ✦ Grate the lemon peel and squeeze the juice into the batter.
- ✦ Beat the egg whites with a bit of cream of tartar until they hold soft peaks.
- ✦ While gradually adding the last $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sugar, continue beating until the whites hold medium stiff peaks.
- ✦ Stir about $\frac{1}{4}$ of the egg whites into the batter and then carefully fold the batter into the remaining whites. The result will still be quite thick.
- ✦ Carefully pour the batter into the pan, smooth the top and bake for 50 to 60 minutes until the top is golden and a knife or toothpick comes out clean when inserted in the center. Loosely cover the pan with a sheet of aluminum foil during the end of the cooking if it begins to brown before the interior is set.
- ✦ After the tarta cools, run a thin knife around the edge, remove from the pan, invert and peel off the parchment paper. Then re-invert proper side up on a cake plate.
- ✦ The traditional cake is decorated with the Cross of the Order of Santiago. You can use a stencil and then dust the top with powdered sugar.
- ✦ Serves 15 to 20 people.



*Lucky pilgrims at Rabanal get to sample Gene McCullough's Tarta de Santiago.
Photo by Rosann McCullough*

Bulletin Board



Stay in touch!

Please send us stories and photos about your hospitalero experiences and any plans for working next year. Submission deadline for our next issue is March 30, 2012. Send your submissions to:

hospnews@americanpilgrims.com

You can also help us update our files. We want to make sure we have your correct contact information, as well as an accurate record of American Pilgrims volunteer experience. Bring us up to date on any volunteer assignments and future plans. Send your updates to:

hospnews@americanpilgrims.com



Your intrepid newsletter editors Martha and Lin walked the via Francigena earlier this year. Here you see us arriving at St. Peter's Basilica... weary, but still smiling after our four-month journey from Canterbury to Rome.

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(Check the bulletin board under Forums for postings from fellow hospitaleros.)



Tips Wanted

We'd love to hear your quick tips for a well run albergue. Send us your ideas, suggestions or links to informative websites, and we will publish them in upcoming editions of the newsletter. Send your submissions to: hospnews@americanpilgrims.com.

