

Pilgrims' rights as consumers




XUNTA DE GALICIA
CONSELLERÍA DE
INNOVACIÓN E INDUSTRIA

 INSTITUTO
GALEGO DE
CONSUMO

Introduction





The Pilgrims' Way to Santiago is an age-old route which is still growing today. Thousands of people come to Santiago every year, whether for religious or other reasons. Even though the traditional way of coming is on foot, horseback or bicycle, we should highlight the growing importance of what is called "Santiago tourism", which involves different means of transport to come to Santiago de Compostela. All these people, whatever their motivation might be and whatever means of transport they might use, spend money at many points along the route.

As part of its function to guide and inform consumers, the Consumers' Institute of Galicia has published this easy-to-use guide to provide people travelling along the Pilgrims' Way to Santiago with useful information about their rights as consumers and the best way to exercise these rights.

The guide includes a series of practical recommendations with special emphasis on the basic information people travelling the Pilgrims' Way to Santiago will need when they use public transport, buy something or make use of the main services they will come across along the route. Consumers should be informed about the different ways they can exercise their rights and so the guide also contains a summary of ways to resolve conflicts related to purchases, taking into account the peculiar nature of transnational complaints.

The content of the guide is rounded off with advice on how to prepare the Pilgrims' Way to Santiago and some brief health recommendations which might prove to be of use for all those who are somewhere on one of the many routes which make up the Pilgrims' Way to Santiago.

Contents



1	The routes making up the Pilgrims' Way to Santiago	6
2	General information on the Pilgrims' Way	8
	Advice for preparing the Pilgrims' Way to Santiago	
	Brief health recommendations	
	General information on prices and payment	
3	What you should know about... ..	18
	Public transport	
	By air / By road / Trains / Taxis	
	Accommodation, catering and tourism services	
	Accommodation and catering establishments / Hostels / Wild camping	
	Shopping	
	Sales promotions / Automatic sales / Street vendors / Food	
	Services	
	Banks / Post / Mobile telephones / Public telephones	
	Dry cleaners and laundries / Car hire / Petrol stations	
	Car parks / Vehicle repair garages	
4	How to resolve consumer conflicts	38
	Administrative complaints	
	Arbitration	
	European Consumers' Centre	
5	Directory	44

1

The routes making up the Pilgrims' Way to Santiago



After the discovery of the Apostle Saint James' (Santiago) tomb in the 9th century in Compostela, the Pilgrims' Way to Santiago became an important route for pilgrims and thousands of people started to come along **different routes** from the most diverse points in Europe. All these routes together are known as the **Pilgrims' Way to Santiago** or **St. James' Way**.



2 General information on the Pilgrims' Way



The Pilgrims' Way to Santiago came to life around a thousand years ago when pilgrims from all over Europe came to the Apostle's tomb for spiritual and religious reasons. Nowadays people travel the route for religious, academic, artistic and sporting reasons, or simply to enjoy the great monumental, landscape and cultural wealth.

Walking the Pilgrims' Way to Santiago for religious reasons enables you to obtain the **Compostela**, the official certificate issued by the Cathedral of Santiago to those people who not only declare that they are travelling the Pilgrims' Way to Santiago for religious reasons but also meet a series of requirements, which include travelling at least 100 kilometres on foot or on horseback or at least 200 kilometres on a bicycle and can prove this on arrival.

The way to prove the route you have covered and thus get the Compostela is by presenting the **Credencial do Peregrino (Pilgrim's Credentials)**. This is a paper issued by the Archbishopric of Santiago de Compostela and which can be obtained at official outlets, such as pilgrims' hostels, friends of the way associations, tourist information offices or parish churches along the route. The Credentials are stamped once or twice a day with the date at hostels, parish churches or other establishments with a stamp in order to certify the days of pilgrimage completed. This paper is essential to get into hostels or special accommodation for pilgrims, provided there is room.

If for whatever reason you cannot get a Credential you can use a route diary with signatures and stamps at each stage along the way.

You can obtain further information about these papers at pilgrim hostels and tourist information offices you find along the Pilgrims' Way to Santiago. You can also visit the web site www.xacobeo.es

Advice for preparing

You should be correctly equipped according to the time of year you choose to do the route, your individual characteristics and whether you are walking, cycling etc. In general you should bear the following points in mind:



Rucksack

It should be light and comfortable. Do not fill it with unnecessary objects or things you can acquire along the way. The straps should not rub against your skin. It is a good idea to put things inside your rucksack tidily so you can find them when you need them. If you decide to do the route by bicycle, the weight should be balanced so you can ride as comfortably as possible.



Footwear

Use comfortable, good-fitting walking shoes or boots, with good heel support and non-slip soles. If possible, use shoes you have already worn and so know they are comfortable.

When choosing footwear, pay attention to what is on the label as this tells you what each part is made of – the instep, the lining, the insole and the sole. The label should be clearly visible and fixed to at least one boot of each pair and should not be confusing.

At each shoe shop there should also be a poster in a visible place to explain the meaning of the pictograms which are used on the label (parts and materials used).

Don't forget to take some flip-flops to use in the shower and to rest at the end of each stage.



Clothes

Clothes should be suitable for the kind of weather. In summer, light cotton garments and in winter an anorak, gloves and woollen garments, and a hat for the cold in winter and for the sun in summer. Just as with footwear, the label on clothing should contain, among other details, sufficient information about its nature, composition and use, as well as instructions for use.



First aid kit

There are chemists in the main towns along the route, so your first aid kit should only contain what is essential, e.g. scissors, sticking plaster, cotton and elastic bandages, alcohol, disinfectant, anti-inflammatory cream, aspirins or paracetamol.



Walking stick

This can be very useful for walking on slippery ground.



Pets

If you are travelling with pets it is important to:

- Make sure they are vaccinated and treated for fleas and that this information figures on your pet's health card, which you should take with you.
- Plan and adapt your route and stages according to accommodation which accepts pets.



ON HORSEBACK

Remember that your companion has special needs, and so:

- Make sure both of you are fit to do the route.
- Take the horse's health card, showing all the vaccinations – and make sure he has had all the necessary vaccinations for the different territories you will be going through on the way as the requirements might vary according to the country you are in.
- Make sure the horse has enough food and drink of the right kind, and that he gets enough rest.
- Plan and adapt your route and stages before starting according to information about accommodation where horses can stay, or possible accommodation for horses near the route.



If you are disabled, apart from the general recommendations for all pilgrims, you should:

- Find out before you leave about the difficulties a disabled pilgrim might come across and accessibility at the different services along the Pilgrims' Way to Santiago (hostels, catering establishments etc).
- Take spare parts for your wheelchair or tips for your crutches if necessary and think about having a support car.
- Be very careful when crossing roads if you have difficulties hearing and if you can't see well always walk with someone else, as there are crossroads, diversions and rough ground.

Brief health recommendations

Pilgrims should always **travel with their health card.**

- If you come from another member state of the European Union, **it is a good idea to have a European Health Card.**
- If you come from a country which is not part of the European Union, **some countries have agreements with Spain;** you should find out before coming if your country has such an agreement **and then come with all the correct papers.**
- **The telephone number for accidents and emergencies is 112.**

For further information please see the web site www.112.es.



There are various health recommendations which you should observe:

1 Train beforehand and bear in mind that you should plan the stages of the route according to your physical possibilities. Ration your strength and take frequent or long rests as you need them. It is not a good idea to reach the limits of your strength.

2 Avoid direct sunlight on your head to prevent sunstroke and dizziness – use a cap or hat. Try to avoid travelling when the sun is strongest (at midday) so that you don't get burnt or dehydrated from sweating too much, get used to the sun gradually (especially if you come from a country with a different climate), use sun tan lotion, hydrating creams and sun-glasses which protect your eyes from ultraviolet radiation.

3 If you are travelling by bicycle **use a helmet and reflective vest.**



4 Drink bottled water or drinkable water from a public supply; you should not drink water from streams, rivers, springs or fountains if you are not sure it is drinkable. We would recommend drinking at least 2 litres per day to avoid dehydration. You can also buy isotonic drinks whose sodium and potassium salts can be beneficial for a healthy adult.

5 Eat fresh food 4 or 5 times a day instead of having one large meal. Fruit and vegetables should be washed with drinking water. If you carry pre-cooked food or food you have prepared previously, make sure it is correctly preserved.

6 A daily shower or bath and drying off not only ensures correct personal hygiene but is highly recommendable for rest and to avoid maceration of the skin and fungal infections. Do not share personal toiletries such as razors or tweezers.

7 It is essential to take care of your feet to avoid blisters; use clean dry cotton socks which fit well to avoid rubbing.





General information on prices and payment

- 1 For most products and catering services the seller can **fix the price freely**. All establishments are obliged to provide information about prices (including taxes) for products and services. **Sales prices therefore have to be shown on lists or posters or with clearly visible labels**. The price has to be unmistakable, clearly legible and is binding.
- 2 The **previous quote** is a written document which should be given to the client before certain services are agreed upon – it shows how much it will cost to obtain this service and lets the client decide if he/she wishes to contract the service. This is why **it is always recommendable to request a quote**.
- 3 Whenever you **pay** for any product or service, **legal currency should be accepted**. If the establishment **expressly accepts debit or credit cards you can use this method of payment**, although in many cases not all cards are accepted.
- 4 **An invoice or receipt is the document you obtain to prove that payment has been made** and is **essential if you wish to make a complaint afterwards**. If the amount paid for the product or service is less than 3,000 Euros, a ticket or receipt is valid instead of an invoice.

3 What you should know about ...



Public transport

It is always a good idea to check **the general conditions of each transport company** to see the specific aspects which might influence your journey, such as checking in baggage, travelling with a bicycle or with pets and the transport service conditions to be met.

By Train

Train **tickets** are **transferable**, but if you lose them no duplicates will be issued.

You can take **15 kg of baggage free** and it is only checked in on certain trains. **Bicycles** can be taken on High Speed or Long Distance trains which have couchettes or bed compartments, but they have to be packed. On other trains you can normally take one per person, although no bicycles are accepted on some routes and on certain days. It is a good idea to check bicycle transport conditions with the company.

If your train is **delayed** you are entitled to compensation, according to the train and the delay. If you miss a connecting train because the first one is delayed, the train company has to pay the necessary accommodation and subsistence.

If the train is cancelled, in general you can choose between reimbursement and changing the ticket.

Don't forget that in the event of **loss, theft or damage to baggage** you are entitled to an compensation from the train company according to the kg missing or damaged.

By plane

A **plane ticket is personal**, i.e. it can only be used by the person whose name is on the ticket. Airline companies can request proof of identification on boarding.

Remember that if you want to **cancel or change the dates of your trip**, the airline can charge you fees. There are fares which do not allow cancellation or changes; it is important to bear this in mind before you buy your ticket.

You should also be aware that:

- *If there is a delay of two hours or more on your flight* the airline company has to provide food and drink, and accommodation if the departure of an alternative flight is the following day.

If the delay is longer than 5 hours you are entitled to the reimbursement of the ticket price, within the following seven days.

- *If your flight is cancelled*, you are entitled to reimbursement or alternative transport and food and drink. In some cases you are also entitled to compensation; the amount depends on the flight distance.
- *In case of overbooking*, the airline company first asks if anybody wishes to voluntarily give up their seat in exchange for certain benefits and the right to reimbursement or alternative transport. The company can only deny boarding against passengers' will if there are not enough volunteers, and in this case passengers denied boarding are entitled to compensation.



As far as **baggage** is concerned, you should not forget the following points:

- Before you leave get information about baggage conditions; the number and weight of cases permitted by each airline you are travelling with.
- Each airline company has its own conditions for checking in special baggage. If you are going to check in your bicycle, in some cases you will have to take it in special packaging or simply take it apart and disinflate the tyres, packing it as indicated. Some companies have special fares for this kind of item.
- In case of loss or damage you have to fill in a damage complaint form immediately, at the airline information desk or the holding agent at the airport.



By road

Bus or coach companies are not obliged to give change for notes exceeding 20€ in value.

Keep any public transport tickets until **the end of your journey** as the inspector might ask to see them at any time.

Transport of baggage and parcels:

- Baggage up to 30 kg is included in the fare.
- The amount to charge for excess baggage is freely decided by the transport company.

In case of **loss of or damage to baggage** compensation is paid according to weight.

Taxis

Taxis should have a **taximeter** and a device which is lit up and visible to show the fare which is being applied on all routes.

The taxi service starts when you get in, unless you have contracted the service by radiotaxi or by telephone, in which case the service begins at the point the taxi starts from.

Fares should always be shown in a visible place inside the car so users can see them clearly.

Taxi drivers have to give **change** for notes up to 20 Euros and should provide a receipt for the service provided if so requested.

Taking luggage up to **50 kg is free** in 4-seater cars, and up to 60 kg in larger vehicles.

Accommodation, catering and tourism services

One of the biggest concerns for a pilgrim starting out on the way is where he/she is going to sleep; there are various different possibilities along the Pilgrims' Way to Santiago.

Accommodation and catering

Each establishment provides different services, such as accommodation, food, drinks or leisure services. Before you contract accommodation or other services **you should be aware of the conditions and services on offer**, as there is a great variety.

The prices for the different services should be displayed in detail and in a visible place which is easy to identify. Menus should also be displayed outside restaurants.

Don't forget to check the times when restaurants serve food **as it is not the same everywhere**.

If you have a **firm booking for accommodation** and cannot use it because the establishment has already given the room to someone else, you are entitled to accommodation in another establishment of the same or a higher category in the same area, if there is one. Should this not be possible, they have to accommodate you in any other establishment and pay you compensation for the damage caused.

Hostels

Most hostels are exclusively for **pilgrims who are travelling on foot, bicycle or horseback**, and you have to show the Pilgrim's Credentials to get in.

Each hostel has its own features, characteristics and operating rules. Don't forget to check them. Remember that staying in many of the hostels you will find along the way is not free – you will have to pay a small amount to spend the night there.



As a general rule places are given on a **first come first served basis**; priority is given to those travelling on foot and to the disabled, then to those travelling on horseback, on bicycle and finally to those who have a support vehicle on their pilgrimage.

In principle **you can only stay for one night**, although exceptions are made in cases where they can be justified (e.g. in case of illness).

Just about all hostels have **wash basins, hot water showers and a place to wash clothes and hang them out to dry**. Some have a kitchen with utensils pilgrims can use. More and more have washing machines and tumble dryers (which you have to pay to use) and Internet access. **Don't forget that hostels are not hotels** and if you plan to sleep in one you should take your own towel and toiletry items.

For further information about the Regional Government of Galicia's (Xunta de Galicia) network of hostels you can consult the pilgrims' web site at www.xacobeo.es

Wild camping

The different regions the Pilgrims' Way to Santiago passes through have **their own rules and regulations** which you should check in each case.

You should always **respect a minimum distance** from towns, conservation areas, protected landscapes, camp sites, river banks, lakes and marshes, dry river beds or other areas which could flood, the shoreline, roads, drinking water collection sites and the Pilgrims' Way to Santiago itself.

Check at the Tourist Information Offices in each region for further information.

Shopping

When you buy something remember that unless the product is faulty you cannot change it or get your money back unless this is expressly stated.

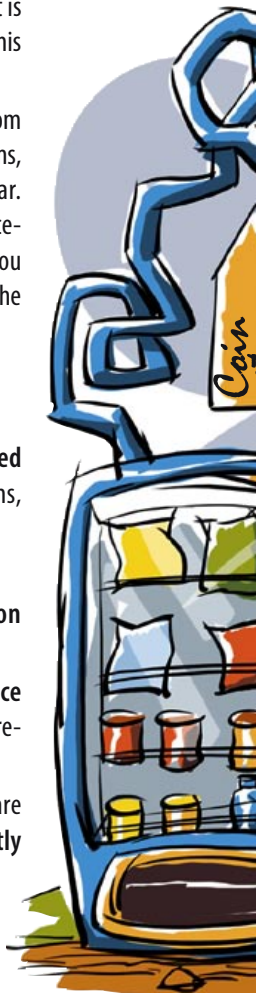
Remember that products have a legal two-year guarantee from the moment you purchase them, except for second hand items, whose guarantee can be less but never less than one year. During this period you can demand the repair or the replacement of the item. If this is impossible or disproportionate, you can agree to a lower price or to return the item and get back the money you paid.

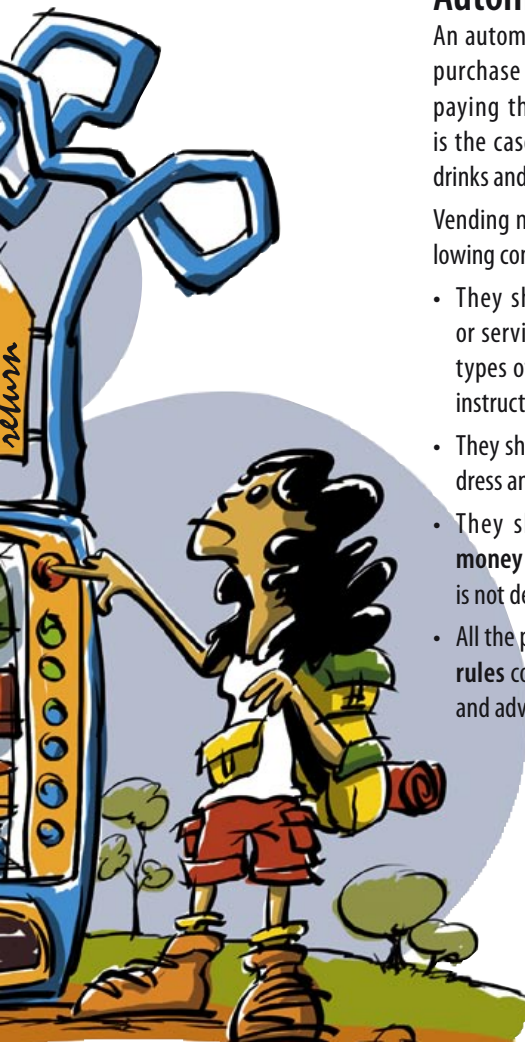
Sales promotions

This is when shop owners advertise their products at a **reduced price**. These are special ways of selling: sales, promotions, clearance sales and sales with gifts.

When you buy something for a special price check that:

- Advertisements specify the **duration of the promotion** (starting date and end date).
- When items are sold at a reduced price the **previous price and the reduced price** should both be displayed, or the reduction as a percentage.
- If items at a regular price and items at a reduced price are both for sale in the same shop, they should be **sufficiently separated** so as not to lead to confusion.





Automatic sales

An automatic sale is when you make a purchase by activating a device after paying the corresponding price. This is the case with vending machines for drinks and food, among others.

Vending machines should meet the following conditions:

- They should **indicate** the product or service they are selling, the price, types of coins or notes admitted and instructions for use.
- They should **identify the owner** (address and telephone number).
- They should **automatically give money back** if the product purchased is not delivered.
- All the products they sell should **meet rules** concerning labels, presentation and advertising.

Street vendors

Street vendors operate **outside permanent commercial establishments**, in markets or places installed for this purpose.

Vendors have to display their personal data, their municipal authorisation and an address in a visible place. They should also sell products which comply with health and quality regulations.

Food

Don't forget to read the **labels on food as they can provide you with very useful information**. They should show, among other things, the ingredients and the weight of the product, the use-before or sell-by date for perishable products, the identification of the product batch and the country of origin when this is outside the European Union. The product characteristics, its origin, composition, where it was obtained from and the sell-by date should be clearly visible.

When a food product label or advertisement mentions the fact that it has **nutritional properties**, information regarding the energetic value and the nutrients (proteins, carbohydrates, fats, fibres, sodium, vitamins and mineral salts) should be provided.



Services

When contracting services, it is a good idea to **carefully read** all the **contract** clauses before signing it, so that you know in advance what you will be committed to.

Don't forget to **keep a copy of the signed contract**, as well all the documentation the businessperson provides you with, including **advertising** as this is legally binding. Keep the **ticket or invoice** too, as you will need it if you wish to make a complaint.

Banks

Banks provide a whole series of services which can be **very useful on the Pilgrims' Way to Santiago**, e.g. bank drafts, debit or credit cards and cash dispensers or telephone banking services. It is a good idea **to consult the conditions for different services with your bank**.

When you carry out an operation at a cash dispenser the bank can charge a **commission**, but it should inform you about it and let you know the amount.

In relation to the **use of cash dispensers in a country which is not the pilgrim's home country**, the following recommendations should be taken into account:

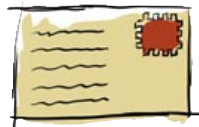
- Use debit cards to get cash at the cash dispensers instead of credit cards, as withdrawing cash with the latter involves a higher commission.
- Before leaving get information from your bank about their branch office network along the Pilgrims' Way to Santiago and the commissions you will be charged for withdrawing cash, bearing in mind that commissions will be lower in a network your own bank belongs to.



- Bear in mind that within the European Union banks are obliged to charge the same commission in any of the member states.

Regarding the **use of cards**, you should take various precautions:

- Memorise your personal identification number (PIN) and **do not write it on the card or near it.**
- **Sign the card** on the back so you will be able to identify yourself as the card holder.
- Take your **National ID Card or passport to show it together with the card.**
- **Act quickly** in the event of card loss or theft and inform the service provided by the bank as soon as possible.



Post

While doing the Pilgrims' Way to Santiago there are different **kinds of postal services** (e.g. ordinary mail, registered post, express post or fax) which you may need to use. **Get information about each of these services and the cost** in order to determine which one best meets your needs at a given moment.

You can find information about the different postal services, conditions and guarantees at the web site www.correos.es

Mobile telephones

It is a good idea **to choose the mobile phone system**, whether a **prepaid card or a contract**, which best fits each persons' needs.

Invoices must be **detailed** and payment by seconds.

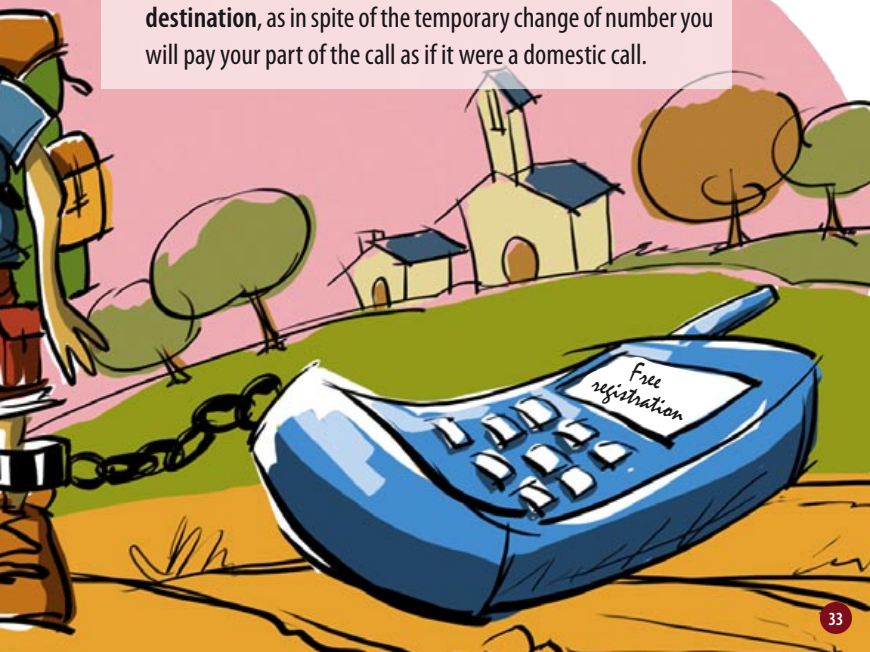
Remember that if there is a delay of over a month in the payment of an invoice **the service might be temporarily interrupted**. If the delay is over three months or more than one temporary interruption is accumulated, the service could be suspended permanently.

Remember that you can ask to cancel your telephone contract the same way as you took it out, and from that moment the company has a maximum time in which to end the contract.



As for making or receiving phone calls from abroad (**roaming**), the following recommendations should be taken into account:

- Before leaving it is a good idea to **look at the offers provided by your operator and contract them in advance**. It is also recommendable to check the rates of the different operators at your destination and pre-programme your mobile to operate with the cheapest.
- During the trip, **obtain information about the cheapest time to talk on the phone** and as far as possible talk at that time.
- Another good option is to **buy a SIM card in the country of destination**, as in spite of the temporary change of number you will pay your part of the call as if it were a domestic call.





Public telephones

It is a good idea to consult the rates before using the service – they should be made visible by the commercial establishment.

Calls must be charged by the second.



Dry cleaners and laundries

When using a dry cleaners or laundry, bear in mind that:

- When you leave a garment to be cleaned they should give you a **deposit receipt**.
- When you **pick the garments up you have to present the deposit receipt**, which will be given back showing that payment has been made.

In case of **damage** to the garment **due to the service provided**, the **dry cleaners** have to compensate you with the amount specified on the deposit receipt. There will be no compensation if the possibility of damage to the garments as a consequence of the service is expressed on the deposit receipt.



Car hire

When renting a car the following points should be observed:

- Most car rental companies have **their own web site** which enables you to access the general contract conditions and rates, book cars and pay on-line or when you pick up the car.
- **Petrol is never included in the price**, which is why at the end of the rental the car must be returned with the petrol tank in the same conditions as when you took it and at the time and place specified in the contract.

- It is always **recommendable**, when picking the car up, **to carefully check for any damage** (bodywork, hubcaps etc.) and include it in the contract so that nobody can make you responsible for the repair work. Neither should you forget to verify that the car has the compulsory pair of triangles and a reflective vest.



Petrol stations

Check the information posts or posters at the entrance to the **petrol station**. They provide information which can be useful, such as:

- **Price** per litre for the different kinds of petrol and diesel, indicating their octane content.
- **Opening hours**.
- The expression “AUTOSERVICIO” (self-service) when you have to fill your own vehicle.
- The **means of payment** accepted.
- There should also be texts or pictograms showing **users’ rights and obligations** (no smoking or naked lights, lights and the engine should be turned off when filling up, distance to the next petrol station etc).
- If it is not possible to supply a certain kind of petrol in the facilities this information should be communicated by displaying a poster in a perfectly visible and legible way, on which can be read the text “FUERA DE SERVICIO” (“**Out of order**”), showing the kind of petrol which is not available.

Car washing services should display, among other things, information about how the machine works, how much it costs and at what times the service is open, on a poster or board at the entrance to the facility.



Car parks

At both **car parks** where you book a place and in those where you pay according to how long you leave your car there the **owner** has to:

- **Provide access to a space for parking** the car.
- Give you a **parking receipt**.
- **Return the car in the same condition it was received.**
- Display prices, timetables and rules for the use and functioning of the car park in a visible place before you agree to park your car there. In public car parks **the price will be charged by the minute and can never be rounded up** to time units not effectively taken up or used.

Don't forget that car parks, as a general rule, are not responsible for car accessories (CD players or mobile phones).

To avoid problems, it is always recommended **to respect regulations and instructions regarding the use and safety** of the car park.



Car repair garages


If you are going to do part of the Pilgrims' Way to Santiago by car and you have a breakdown, follow these recommendations:

- Check the **prices** for each hour of labour and for specific **services**.
- It is a good idea to ask for a **written quote** for the repairs or services required, but remember that once the quote is requested, if you do not accept it the garage is entitled to charge you for preparing it.
- The garage is obliged to give you a **repair invoice**, even if the repair is covered by a guarantee.
- All repairs and fitting work carried out in any garage have a **guarantee** of 3 months or 2,000 kilometres, whichever is reached first. Nevertheless, if the spare parts are covered by a longer guarantee period, it is this period which will be applicable.

4

How to resolve consumer conflicts





When problems or conflicts arise in consumer relations, **it is recommendable to take the following steps:**

In the first place it is convenient to **explain the complaint and the specific request directly to the commercial establishment** where the product was purchased, to the person who provided the service or to the corresponding customer service department, to try and reach a **friendly agreement**. If it is not possible to reach an agreement, it is necessary to repeat the claim in writing, so that written evidence is available.

When it is not possible to solve the problem in a satisfactory way like this, you can **try again to reach a friendly agreement through mediation**, which in the field of consumer relations can be done by either local or regional authorities or a consumers' association. The mediator will try to reach a compromise with both parties in the conflict, until an agreement is reached under which the problem can be considered as solved.

Go to the Consumer Arbitration System, or go to Court. Each of these options can be done directly or through a consumers' association. Look for advice, both from consumer advice bureaux and consumers' associations, about which is the best way to exercise your rights. **Do not let time pass as in some cases there are time limits to claims.**

Certain establishments have a customer service department, which you should contact first:

Banks have a Customer Service Department and in some cases a Customer Ombudsman, whom you should contact within 2 months of the event you wish to complain about. For further information please visit the web site www.bde.es

Postal operators have a customer service department to receive and resolve claims, complaints or problems users may have had with their service. For more information please visit the web site www.correos.es

Mobile phone services have a customer service department which you should contact within one month of the event you wish to complain about.

Transport Arbitration Committees were set up in all the regions of Spain with the main purpose of resolving complaints of a commercial nature related to land transport and auxiliary and complementary transport activities. For further information about how they work you can obtain information at the different Transport Arbitration Boards. The Transport Arbitration Committee Board of Galicia's headquarters are in Santiago de Compostela; you can obtain further information at the web site www.cptopt.xunta.es

Administrative complaints

As a general rule for making a complaint at the various consumer entities, **a written form should be presented**, indicating the origin of the problem or the reason for the complaint. The ticket or purchase invoice should be enclosed, as should the advertisement, if applicable, and receipts and guarantees. To present a complaint you can write a letter or fill in a complaint form.

Providers of goods and services in Galicia are obliged to have **complaint forms**. Nevertheless, **each region has its own regulations** for complaint forms, indicating the kind of establishment which is obliged to have them and provide them to consumers.

Each complaint form consists of a set of **3 carbon pages of different colours** (white for the administration, green for the person who makes the complaint and yellow for the shop or establishment). Your own personal data, the establishment data, what happened and what you are claiming for (a replacement, to get your money back) should be expressed very clearly on the complaint form.



Arbitration

Consumer arbitration is an **extrajudicial and voluntary way** to solve disagreements which might arise between consumers and business people or professionals in a quick, efficient and free way.

When a company or a professional **displays the Consumer Arbitration System symbol** in the establishment or in its advertising, consumers know they can go to arbitration to solve any consumer conflicts which might arise with this company or professional.

To request arbitration all you have to do is **fill in a very simple form** and present it directly at the Consumer Arbitration Board, through a Municipal Consumers' Information Office (OMIC in Spanish) or at a Consumers' Association. Please **specify clearly what you are requesting and state your commitment to accept the decision of the arbitration board.**

Once you have requested arbitration, a proposal will be made to the other party to designate the Arbitration Committee to study the case – this proposal must be expressly accepted (unless the other party is subscribed to the consumer arbitration system through a Public Offer Compliance).

The procedure comes to end with a decision which is binding.



The European Consumer Centre

The European Consumer Centre is a **advice bureau for consumers from any Member State of the European Union** who need information or assistance regarding the purchase of an item or the use of any service in a country other than his/her own.

Its functions are to **advise consumers and intervene in transnational** complaints and claims.

The European Consumer Centre in Spain has a **network of computer terminals and computer-linked offices** in strategic places with large numbers of tourists. Touchscreens provide information with no need for the physical presence of other people.

To obtain **further information** please see the web site www.cec.consumo-inc.es, where there is also a list and a map of the Telematic Office network.



5 Directory

To obtain further information you can go to the **General Directorates and Agencies for Consumer Affairs in each different region**. You can also use the Municipal Consumer Information Offices (**OMIC**) or **Consumers' Organisations**.

In Galicia, the **Instituto Galego de Consumo** (Galician Consumer Institute) offers consumers information via its free phone number **900 23 11 23** and its website **www.igc.xunta.es**. The address is: Rúa Gonzalo Torrente Ballester 1-5 baixo, in **Santiago de Compostela** and it has offices at the following addresses:

- Edificio Servizos Múltiples Monelos, s/n. 15071 **A Coruña**
- Praza Camilo José Cela, s/n. 15403 **Ferrol**
- Edificio Administrativo Ronda da Muralla, 70. 27003 **Lugo**
- Avenida de Zamora, 13 baixo. 32005 **Ourense**
- Travesía da Eiriña, 7 baixo. 36004 **Pontevedra**
- Praza da Estrela, s/n. 36201 **Vigo**

You might also need any of the following addresses and telephone numbers:

- **PILGRIMS' WAY MANAGEMENT OFFICE: S. A. de Xestión do Plan Xacobeo**
Pavillón de Galiza – San Lázaro • 15703 Santiago de Compostela
Phone: 981 57 20 04 • (www.xacobeo.es)
- **GENERAL DIRECTORATE FOR TOURISM: Dirección Xeral de Turismo**
Praza de Mazarelos • 15703 Santiago de Compostela
Phone: 981 54 63 77 • (www.conselleriaiei.org)
- **GENERAL DIRECTORATE FOR TRANSPORT: Dirección Xeral de Transportes**
Praza de Europa, 5A - 2º Andar (Fontiñas) • 15703 Santiago de Compostela
Phone: 981 544 581 • (www.cptopt.xunta.es)
- **GALICIAN HEALTH SERVICE: Servizo Galego de Saúde**
Edificio Administrativo San Lázaro s/n • 15703 Santiago de Compostela
Phone: 981 542 737 • (www.sergas.es)
- **BANK OF SPAIN (Complaint Service): Banco de España**
C/ Alcalá, 48 • 28014 Madrid
Phone: 91 338 65 30 • (www.bde.es)
- **POST OFFICE (Customer Service Department): Correos**
C/ Vía Dublín n.º 7 (Campo de las Naciones)
28070 Madrid (www.correos.es)
- **GENERAL DIRECTORATE FOR CIVIL AVIATION: Dir. General de Aviación Civil**
Paseo de la Castellana, 67 • 28071 Madrid
Phone: 91 597 83 21 • (www.fomento.es)
- **SPANISH AIRPORTS AND AIR NAVIGATION: Aena** (www.aena.es)
Customer Helpline: 902 404 704
- **GENERAL DIRECTORATE FOR INSURANCE: Dirección General de Seguros**
Paseo de la Castellana 44 • 28046 Madrid
Phone: 91 339 70 00 • (www.dgsfp.mineco.es)
- **CUSTOMER SERVICE FOR TELECOMMUNICATIONS USERS: SETSI**
C/ Capitán Haya, n.º 41 • 28071 Madrid
Phone: 901 33 66 99 • (www.usuarioteleco.es)

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www.igc.xunta.es
900 23 11 23



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