

Iberian Traveler

Flying to Pamplona – You can only fly into Pamplona (PNA Noáin airport) via Iberia, or its subsidiary Air Nostrum, with connections from Madrid and Barcelona.

IBERIA has revised its web page making it far easier to book flights to Pamplona and the rest of Spain. The airline has also initiated some very attractive discounted airfares on the Madrid-Pamplona and Barcelona-Pamplona routes via **AIR NOSTRUM**, some as low as 124 euros roundtrip, including taxes and fees. Regular fares can run as high as 430 euros roundtrip on the Madrid-Pamplona route. The steepest discounted Madrid-Pamplona airfare is for the 4:50 pm flight, with a return flight at 7:00 am. The least expensive fare from Barcelona to Pamplona departs at 2:00 pm with a return departing at 9:15 pm. These flights may be very practical for those staying in Madrid or Barcelona prior to arriving in Pamplona. Please note that discounted fares on the Madrid and Barcelona routes are limited. This is a very popular route during the fiesta. Check the IBERIA web site (www.iberia.com) for the most current flight information and schedules on its English page. Be sure to join the "Iberia Plus" program if you are not already a member of the American Airlines or another One World frequent flyer program.

An alternative to flying to Pamplona from Madrid or Barcelona, is to fly to the smaller regional airport of San Sebastián-Donostia, in the village of Hondarribia, with 8 non-stop flights daily from Madrid and 4 from Barcelona. Once there, you can then either rent a car, take a taxi or a bus (from San Sebastian), or we can arrange a private transfer to Pamplona.

Flying to Bilbao – Bilbao, Spain's leading business center of the Basque Country, is located 130 kms northwest of Pamplona on the Basque coast and is served by a number of international carriers. SpanAir (www.spanair.com) and Air Europa (www.aireuropa.com) also offer daily service to Bilbao from various airports within Spain and on connecting flights from the rest of Europe and North America.

Flying to Bilbao is often the least expensive option when traveling to Pamplona. There are five daily Iberia flights from Barcelona beginning at 11:30 and ten from Madrid beginning at 6:50 am. Spanair also offers seven non-stop daily flights from Madrid and four from Barcelona. In addition, there are non-stop and connecting flights into Bilbao from England (Heathrow & Stansted), France (CDG Paris) and Germany (5 locations), Belgium (Brussels), Italy (Milan) & Portugal (Lisbon).

Once you arrive at Bilbao, you can either catch the bus from the city Termibus terminal, which will bring you to Pamplona in about two hours at a very reasonable cost, rent a car, hire a taxi, or we can arrange for a private transfer. A private transfer is the fastest way to reach Pamplona from the Bilbao airport, and economical for four or more people.

By train – There is excellent train service from either Barcelona or Madrid to Pamplona (<http://www.renfe.com>).

There are three trains a day from Barcelona. Reservations are required.

- The Covadonga (Talgo) departs daily at 7:03 am, arriving in Pamplona at 12:16 pm.
- The Miguel de Unamuno (Talgo) departing daily at 12:30 pm, arriving at 6:30 pm.
- The Pio Baroja (Estrella - sleeper) departs 6 days a week at 10:30 pm, arriving at 5:34 am.

Currently, first class passage on the Talgo costs 41.00 euros one-way, while first class passage on the Estrella cost 39.50 euros plus 71.00 euros per person for the deluxe double compartment. The first class compartment single supplement is 103.00 euros.

There are three daily departures from Madrid's Atocha Station. Advanced reservations are absolutely essential for these trains.

- The first Talgo leaves at 7:15 am, arriving in Pamplona at 10:55 am. *Does not run on Sundays*
- There is a 2:10 pm departure, arriving at 5:38 pm. *Operates seven days a week*
- The last train departs at 7:30 pm arriving at 11:09 pm *Does not run on Saturdays*

Tourist class costs 46.50 euros one-way and first class is 71.50 euros.

Paris to Pamplona by train – There is an overnight train departing Paris-Austerlitz station at 11:14 pm, connecting in Hendaye and Irún (at the frontier) the following morning, arriving in Pamplona at 12:32 pm. This train cannot be booked on the SNCF web site (<http://www.voyages-sncf.com>), but it can be booked at Rail Europe (<http://www.raileurope.com/us/>) or through your travel agent.

There are several daily trains, the TGV, from Paris-Montparnasse to Biarritz. Bookings are generally available 90 days in advance through the SNCF web site (<http://www.voyages-sncf.com>).

- 8:20 am, arriving in Biarritz, via Bordeaux, at 2:14 pm.
- 10:10 am, arriving at 3:02 pm.
- 12:15 pm, arriving at 5:27 pm.
- 12:15 pm, arriving at 7:27 pm.
- 2:20 pm, arriving in Biarritz, via DAX, at 8:43 pm.
- 3:50 pm arriving at 8:43 pm.
- 6:50 pm, arriving at 12:16 am.
- 11:14 pm, arriving at 6:54 am.

Driving from Madrid – The most direct route recommend by mappy.com is to take the A-2 from Madrid (direction Zaragoza) as far as Medinaceli (exit 150) where you will pick up the N-III and head to Soria. At Soria, you take the N-122 as far as Tudela. Here you have the option of taking the A-15, the motorway (Autopista) directly into Pamplona, or following the N-121 into the city. The N-121 becomes Avenue Zaragoza once you reach the city limits. It also leads you directly to our main hotel, the H. Avenida. This route, as suggested by viamichelin.com, is 409 kms in length, and one we've used many times over the years. The trip will take

The Scarlet Macaw "Adventures in Travel"

4-1/2 hours, but we highly recommend a two-hour lunch stop at the Soria Parador, or in the village of Cintruénigo at the acclaimed Hotel-Restaurante Maher (<http://www.hotelmaher.com>). This Michelin rated restaurant provides an excellent introduction to great Navarran cuisine. Closed Sunday night and Monday.

Driving from Barcelona – From Barcelona head west to Lérida (Lleida), then past Zaragoza toward Logroño. At Exit 17, take the A-15 Autopista to Pamplona. This route covers 483 kms and should take you around 5 hours. There is another more picturesque Pyrenees route through Huesca and Jaca but adds about an hour to your driving time. Both connect to the A-15 and finally to the N-240 (Avenida Zaragoza) into Pamplona. If you follow the more scenic Pyrenees route we suggest lunch in Jaca at La Cocina Aragonesa at the Hotel Conde Aznar. If you decide to spend the night, we suggest the Sos del Rey Católico Parador (<http://www.parador.es>), about one hour east of Pamplona. This historical monument set in a charming medieval town, the birthplace of Ferdinand of Aragón, is an excellent place to spend a restful night amidst the beauty of the surrounding countryside.

Driving from San Sebastian-Donostia – It is an easy hour's drive in from the Basque coast following the A-15 for a distance of 82 kms, entering the city of Pamplona from the northwest.

Driving from France – You have two main options.

Coming from the coast, the Biarritz-St. Jean-de-Luz area, either drive to San Sebastian, following the A-15 or take the N-121 from Irún at the border through the more scenic Bidasoa Valley, which brings you into the city from the north. This route is about a 1-1/2 hour long driving from the airport or train station in Biarritz.

If driving in through the area between Toulouse and Pau, head towards St. Jean-Pied-de-Port and take the N-135, following the pilgrims' route of Saint James over the Pyrénées at Roncesvalles, arriving in Pamplona 76 kms away. This drive usually takes at least 1-1/2 hours and connects to the N-121 as you enter Pamplona from the north.

Parking in Pamplona – Parking has always been a problem during the fiesta, even with the addition of several new parking facilities around the city, including a new parking garage under the recently renovated Plaza del Castillo.

The city has designated the majority of street parking spaces as paid parking only, so please be advised that if you are parked in a blue zone, there is a time limit, and it is enforced 24 hours a day. We advise you to drop your rental car off when you arrive and pick up another car when you leave. Rental cars can be dropped off at either the airport or at a downtown location.

- There is limited free parking available in front of the Hotel Avenida's café, reserved for the hotel's use, and 6 underground guest parking places. The hotel does not accept reservations for the parking garage. Parking is available on a first come, first served basis only.
- The H. AC Ciudad de Pamplona has some free parking spaces available on the street in front of the hotel, but it offers guest parking in the underground garage across the avenue. Spaces must be reserved in advance, especially for the festival opening and the weekend.
- The H. Albret has a limited number of guest parking spaces in the lot adjacent to the hotel. They also have an underground garage. Reservations are required.

Rental Cars – National-Atesa, Europcar, Avis and Hertz are the three companies with offices in the city and the airport. Hire a car through them directly or through the broker, Auto Europe.

Traveling by Autobús – Bus service in Spain is very comfortable, affordable and efficient. Pamplona is served by Conda (<http://www.conda.es>) from Madrid and Vibasa (<http://www.vibasa.es>) from Barcelona. Reservations are highly recommended.

There is also daily bus service from Bilbao as well as San Sebastian-Donostia.

**¡Viva San Fermín! ¡Gora San Fermín!
See you in Pamplona for Sanfermín 2006! ¡Ya falta menos!**

