



## Via Francigena

Today, we can retrace the ancient **Via Francigena** road thanks to a travel diary. This was written by **Sigeric**, an English abbot who recorded the eighty lodges, shelters or inns that welcomed him along the way back from his pilgrimage to Rome, where he had been ordained the Archbishop of Canterbury. Written in 990, Sigeric's diary is now considered an authoritative source that defines the most philological history of the Via Francigena.

In the year 1000, thousands of pilgrims took the road to the Holy Land: western Christianity went on pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and prepared to reconquer it with the first Crusade of 1099. People travelled for the remission of sins, for heavenly rewards or simply for personal divine economic profit. The Via Francigena represented a strategic junction of the roads of European faith: pilgrims from the north, from France, followed it to reach Rome and then beyond, toward the ports of Apulia and ships for the Holy Land. Italian pilgrims followed it north along the Tyrrhenian coast to Luni, where they set sail for France and then took the road to Santiago de Compostela, the other Medieval pilgrimage destination. The Via Francigena was **the first European interstate**, a means of important communication **that moved art, culture, commerce and languages**.

Today, other wanderers follow it: for some it's the trip of a lifetime; others are drawn by faith or new forms of spirituality; some take it to absorb visions, meetings and memorable landscapes. *"Walking - writes Rebecca Solnit - is how the body measures itself against the earth.* But it's also a way for people to rediscover themselves as human, together, instead of as individuals: every road holds the traces of those who have passed, with an infinite constellation of variables, chance and will. Along the Via Francigena, all these constellations intertwine, transforming every pilgrim's walk into an unforgettable experience.

  
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Gambassi Terme

  
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Gambassi Terme is found between the 30th and 31st stops of [San Miniato](#) and [San Gimignano](#). The stretch from San Miniato to Gambassi is 24 kilometres, with a rest area and water fountain at the Pieve di Coiano church. San Gimignano is 13 kilometres from Gambassi, with a refreshment area at the Pancole Sanctuary.