

# Camino Symbols & Signage Overview

*How to Follow the Way Using Arrows, Shells, and Other Trail Markings*

## Why This Matters

You don't need GPS or constant phone checks to stay on track. The Camino is one of the best-marked walking routes in the world—if you know what to look for. This guide introduces the most common trail symbols so you can walk with confidence.



## The Yellow Arrow

The most iconic symbol on the Camino, the **flecha amarilla** (yellow arrow) points the way forward.

- Found on: walls, curbs, trees, fences, signs, sidewalks, and buildings
- Follow the **tip of the arrow**—not the base
- Often hand-painted, occasionally faded—keep your eyes open

**Pro Tip:** If you haven't seen a yellow arrow in a while, backtrack to the last one and check again. They appear regularly, especially at turns.



## The Scallop Shell

The **vieira** (scallop shell) is the traditional symbol of the Camino and is used in two ways:

1. **Decorative marker** to confirm you're on a Camino route (carved in stone, tiles, signs, etc.)
2. **Directional aid:** in some regions (e.g., Galicia), the **rays of the shell** point toward Santiago

**Important:** On directional signs, walk **in the direction the lines/rays converge**—not toward the open fan.

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## 📍 Modern Trail Signage

In addition to arrows and shells, you may see:

- **Metal posts or signs** labeled “Camino de Santiago”
- **Stone markers with kilometer distances** (especially in Galicia)
- **Wayfinding stencils** or stickers added by local municipalities or businesses
- **Mojón**: Concrete posts with yellow arrows and shells (Galicia especially)

## 🛑 Confusing or Conflicting Symbols

- In towns with **multiple Camino routes**, signs may diverge—double-check route names
- Local tourism trails may also be color-coded—stick to **yellow arrows and shell markers**
- Sometimes arrows get **repainted or redirected** by locals for commercial reasons—use your judgment

## 💡 Pro Tips

- Don’t walk with your head down—look up, around, and behind at intersections
- Take a **photo of your current map or stage** each morning (just in case)
- If in doubt, ask a fellow pilgrim: “¿Camino?” or “Santiago?” with a point will do

