

ITINERARY

1st Day MADRID • LEÓN

Arrive León. Afternoon walking tour of the two great monuments associated with the pilgrimage years the frescoes at San Isidoro Church and the Cathedral compared to Chartres. Relax before dinner in the old quarter. Overnight: Parador San Marcos D

2nd Day LEÓN • ASTORGA • PONFERRADA • VILLOFRANCA

Begin your journey on the Camino after breakfast. Follow the Via de la Plata/Silver Route to Astorga; see the Roman excavations, Gaudi's bishop's palace, and taste the famous cakes of the Maragatas. Full lunch en route. Cross the fertile El Bierzo Valley, criss-crossed by vineyards. Stop to see the Door of Forgiveness in Villafranca, then continue to your overnight stay in the vineyards. Sample the wines of the newly emerging appellation el Bierzo over dinner at the palace. Overnight: Palacio el Canedo. B L D

3rd Day VILLOFRANCA • OCEBREIRO • TRIACASTELA

Over breakfast, study your walking maps, and lace up your boots. Ascend the pass to Cebreiro by vehicle, site of one of the great miracle stories of the Camino; explore the Celtic thatched village and visit the shrine church. Continue to Alto do Poio, which marks the highest pass; below the pass lies the Capilla San Roque, and below that Fonfría, from where you'll begin walking, with your cellphone and picnic in your daypack. Glorious views stretch out beneath you as you descend to Triacastela/ three castles; no castles remain in this 9th century village but a lovely 18th century church still stands at the end of the path. Meet your guide at trail's end for a detour to visit the Monastery at Samos before continuing to your overnight outside Triacastela. Dinner in the village. Overnight: Casa Pacios B PICNIC D 14KM

4th Day TRIACASTELA • SARRIA • PARADELA

After breakfast, your guide will take you back to the outskirts of Triacastela, near San Xil, from where you'll set off for the walk to Sarria. At Furela, a finely carved capital can still be seen, dedicated to San Roque, one of the patron saints of pilgrims. On arrival in Sarria, proceed to the Calle Mayor, a beautifully preserved medieval street in the heart of the old village. Your guide will meet you at the Parish Church of El Salvador, a Romanesque structure, built in the 11th century. Beyond you have the fortress of Sarria, dating to the 14th c, and the Magdalene convent, which once housed a hospital. From here, continue to Paradela and your overnight stop. Dinner at the manor house. Overnight: Casa Cimadevila B PICNIC D 15KM

5th Day PARADELA • SARRIA • PORTOMARIN

After breakfast, your guide will transfer you back to the outskirts of Sarria, at Mouzós, to walk the Camino to Portomarin. Along the Way today you have the beautiful Romanesque portal on the Church of Santiago at Barbadele. At Marzan, you'll pass a molino/mill. The village of Brea is

Saranjan Tours

Camino de Santiago



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mentioned in the Codex Calixtinus. You'll pass the ruins of the Monastery at Loio, seat of the Knights of Santiago in the 12th century. When you reach Portomarín, you cross the River Miño on a Roman bridge and then ascend to the 12th c village, moved stone by stone when the river was diverted to flood the plain. San Nicolás Church stands as a 13th c fortress, and belonged to the Order of St. John of Jerusalem. Meet your guide at the inn, unless you need a transfer earlier. Relax over dinner at the inn with a view. Overnight: Pousada Portomarín B PICNIC D 15.6KM

6th Day PORTOMARIN • GONZAR • VENTAS DE NARÓN • LAMEIROS • PIDRE

Set off after breakfast from the inn. Today Gonzar is a ghost town, but was a parish seat in the Middle Ages. Castromaior is so named as the site of another castro/Celtiberian hill fort; today you can see a Romanesque church in the village. Hospital is named for its medieval hospital, offering both refuge and care to pilgrims. Ventas de Narón is mentioned in the Codex Calixtinus, site of a 9th century battle between the northern Christian kingdoms and the Arabs. Stop to see the hermitage of Santa María Magdalena at Ventas. From here, call your guide, then walk on the last stretch to Lameiros, and meet at the chapel dedicated to St. Lazarus. Detour to see the lovely Church of Vilar de Donas, with frescoes, before continuing to your rural guest house. Dinner in the countryside. Overnight: Casa Parada das Bestas B PICNIC D 14.7KM

7th Day PIDRE • PALAS • MELIDE

After breakfast, your guide will transfer you back to the Camino, to Palas, conclusion of the 12th stage of the Way according to the Codex Calixtinus. Walk on, from Palas to Melide. Meet your guide at the 12th century Church of San Pedro, with its distinctive Romanesque portal. Since the Middle Ages, this town has been an important market center. From here, drive on to your rural guest house and dinner. Overnight: Casa de los Somoza B PICNIC D 15.2KM

8th Day MELIDE • ARZUA

After breakfast, your guide will drop you back in Melide to begin walking. As you cross the River Iso, watch for the ancient hospital, so welcome to medieval pilgrims. Call your guide as you approach Arzua. Transfer to your guest house for dinner and overnight. Overnight: Casa A Painza B PICNIC D 13.4KM

9th Day ARZUA • LAVACOLLA • SANTIAGO

After breakfast, your guide will transfer you along the Camino to Lavacolla, where pilgrims traditionally bathed prior to entering the Holy City. Your guide will meet you in Santiago at the Cathedral. On arrival, you'll obtain your Compostela/Pilgrim's Certificate, and final stamp. After a visit to the Cathedral and light lunch, you may opt to return to the hotel for a couple of hours before returning to explore the city. Enjoy an afternoon walking tour of Santiago. Celebration dinner tonight. Overnight: Hotel San Clemente B L D 13KM

1⁰th Day SANTIAGO

Explore the river lands of Galicia, the Rias Baixas today—an ancient Celtic site by the sea, a fishing village that is today a National Monument to the horreós, and a private hosted winery visit and tasting. You'll have time to swim, weather permitting. Sit down to special farewell dinner at the parador tonight. Overnight: as above B D

1¹th Day SANTIAGO • MADRID

Transfer out for flight to Madrid. B

INCLUDES:

- Hotels or similar, double occupancy, with breakfast
- Meals per itinerary-picnic lunches for walking days
- Entrances and tours per itinerary
- Fully escorted by English-speaking driver/guide
- Airport/train transfers in & out León & Santiago
- Walking maps & Cell phone

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The pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela in north west Spain owes its origin to the discovery, in Galicia, of the tomb of the Apostle James the Great early in the 9th century.

The Camino de Santiago (the Way of St. James) is a network of pilgrim routes stretching across Europe that come together at the tomb of St. James in Santiago de Compostela (the cathedral). It has existed for over a eleven hundred years.

The name "Compostela" comes from Latin campus stellae or "field of the star," making Santiago de Compostela "St. James in the Field of the Star."

The pilgrimage can take one of any number of pilgrimage routes to Santiago de Compostela. Traditionally, the Way of Saint James begin at one's home and ended at the pilgrimage site in northwest Spain.

The most popular route is the Camino Francés which stretches almost 500 miles from St. Jean-Pied-du-Port near Biarritz in France to Santiago. Spanish routes are the Camino Inglés from Ferrol and A Coruña, the Via de la Plata from Seville and Salamanca, and the Camino Portugues from Oporto.

The scallop shell found on the shores in Galicia, has long been the symbol of the Camino de Santiago. Over the centuries the scallop shell has taken on mythical and metaphorical connotations.

2010 was last Holy Year. St James's Day (25 July) on a Sunday, the cathedral declares a Holy or Jubilee Year. Depending on leap years, Holy Years occur in cycles of 6, 5, 6 and 11 year intervals.

Walking the Camino is not difficult - most of the stages are fairly flat on good paths. The main difficulty is having to walked continuously for 10, 20 or 30 days.

In the past, people undertaking a religious pilgrimage could earn a plenary indulgence by making the pilgrimage. The Church had a system of rituals to atone for temporal punishment due to sins; penance. A pilgrimage was a appropriate form of expiation for some temporal punishment and penance could atone for those who were guilty of certain crimes.

But, there are other travellers, who walk the route for non-religious reasons: travel, sport, or simply the challenge of walking in a foreign land for weeks.

The compostela is a certificate of accomplishment given to pilgrims on completing the pilgrimage. To earn the compostela the participant needs to walk a minimum of 100 km.

A Pilgrim's Mass is held in the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela each day at noon for pilgrims. Pilgrims who received the compostela the day before have their countries of origin and the starting point of their pilgrimage announced at the Mass.

Documentation Information Catholiques Internationales expects the Way of St. James to attract over 200,000 pilgrims during the Holy Year. In 1987, "Camino de Santiago" was declared the first European Cultural Route by the Council of Europe.

