

The Way of St James – El Camino

11 days – Tour 70

Madrid, Foncebadon, Iron Cross, O Cebreiro, Sarria, Portomarmn, Palas de Rei, Arzua, Arca do Pino, Monte do Gozo, Santiago de Compostela (St. James)

Welcome to one of the oldest and most important Christian pilgrimage routes in the world!

The Way of St. James – El Camino Pilgrimage in Spain - (This is a Walking Tour)

Santiago de Compostela is the final resting place and tomb of St. James. While you will be removed from the routine of your everyday life, rest assured you will be taken care of with outstanding accommodations, meals and transportation with van/bus driving parallel to the path you walk each day. Should at any point you feel tired, need water, or any medical assistance, it will be readily available to you at check points that are set up along the way on your path.

“Tourists pass through places, places pass through Pilgrims”

YOUR TRIP INCLUDES:

- † 9 nights at First Class 4-stars hotels & quaint Inns: (or similar)
 - ~ 1 night: Hotel Catalonia Gaudi, Madrid
 - ~ 1 night: Hotel Alfonso IX, Sarria
 - ~ 1 night: Pousada de Portomarin, Portomarin
 - ~ 1 night: Palas de Rei
 - ~ 2 nights: A Painza, Arzua
 - ~ 1 night: Hotel Amenal, Arca/O Pino
 - ~ 2 nights: Hotel Compostela, Santiago de Compostela
- † Breakfast daily
- Lunches
- † Dinner daily
- † Professional local Catholic Tour Escort
- † Catholic Priest & Mass daily
- † Sightseeing and admissions fees as per itinerary
- † Transportation by air-conditioned motor coach
- † Vehicle available to assist pilgrims who are unable to complete any leg of the journey
- † Hotel taxes and service charges

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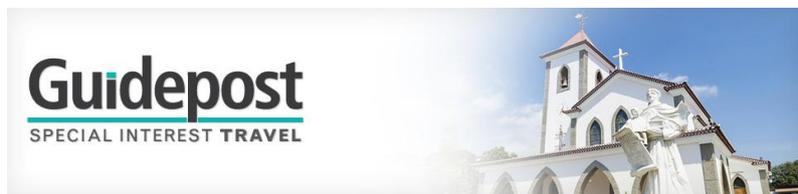


**** This is a Walking Pilgrimage ****

Important notice: this itinerary involves an average of 13-17 miles daily of walking/hiking. It is essential that participants be in fit condition in order to complete the journey. We will have assistance vehicles (motor coach) available to assist pilgrims who are unable to complete a particular leg of the journey.

Day 1, Arrive Madrid

Upon arrival in Madrid you will be greeted by your driver and transfer to the hotel. In the afternoon we will visit the Capital city of Spain. We will see the Royal Palace, Plaza Mayor, Retiro park, and the Prado Museum. Dinner and overnight in Madrid.



Day 2 - Madrid – Foncebadon – Iron Cross – O Cebreiro – Sarria (Walking day, 3 miles / 4.8 km)

After breakfast, we will make our way from Madrid to Sarria, the point of entry to the beautiful landscapes on the oriental side of Galicia such as Ancares and Caurel. Along the way, we will walk through Foncebadon and stop by the "Iron Cross" which is a monument where all of those who take on this walk, lay a stone. Before arriving in Sarria, you will walk through O Cebreiro, located in the middle of the mountains, and with 1300 meters under your feet, it makes for a wonderful panoramic view. This village has been a very important pilgrimage sight always due to the Eucharistic Miracle that took place there. Dinner and overnight in Sarria



Day 3 - Sarria - Portomarín (walking day, 14.3 Miles / 22.88 km)

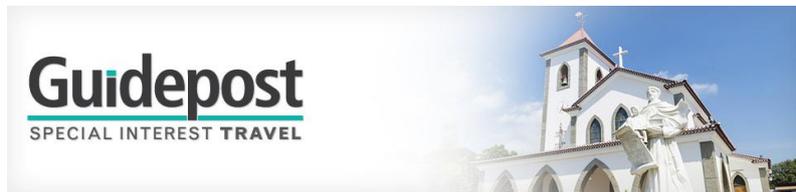
After breakfast we will go to the Pilgrim Office to request our Pilgrim Passport and we will start our walking pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela. In the spirit of St James the Apostle, we become authentic pilgrims, journeying along an outer road (and the road within). Our walking trip will finish in Portomarín. The town, which dates back to the Roman Age, was an important halt along the Route in the Middle Ages. The old Portomarín lies beneath the waters of the dam built in 1962. But before flooding the town, many monuments were moved, stone by stone. Such was the case of the church-fortress of the Knights of San Juan of Jerusalem, who once run the old hospital that lies beneath the waters of the Miño river, along with the old Medieval and Roman bridges. Dinner and overnight at Portomarín.

Day 4 - Portomarín - Palas de Rei (walking day, 15 Miles / 24km)

Breakfast in the hotel. From Portomarín we'll set off into the woods on our journey towards Palas de Rei, once an important town in the Middle Ages. It had a Royal Hospital and the church of San Tirso stands on its lands, with a Romanesque portal. On the hilly walk we'll continue through field and forest passing countless granaries, hórreos, and wayside crosses or cruceiros (usually depicting on one side Christ and the other the Virgin), both very characteristic of the Galician landscape. Evening at leisure. Optional visit to the Monastery of Vilar de Donas, the fine Romanesque temple that stands majestically is remarkable for its Gothic paintings from the 16 C, and the busts of the "donas" or ladies that founded the house and its central apse in the 14th-century. The temple also treasures several sarcophagi of Knights of the Order of Santiago along with a stone restable that depicts the Eucharistic miracle of O Cebreiro. Dinner and overnight at Palas de Rei.

Day 5 - Palas de Rei - Arzua (walking day, 18 Miles / 28.8km)

Breakfast in the hotel. The walk sets off from Palas and ends up at a the bustling small town of Arzua. We finish our day with a visit to Melide. This town is crucial to the Route, because it is the place where the French and the Oviedo Routes converge. At the entrance to the town there is a crossroads from the 14 C,



one of the oldest in Galicia. The present Parish Church was the former church of the Monastery of Sancti Spiritus. It contains stately sepulchres. Worthy of note are also the small chapel of San Roque, with its transept from the 14-century, and the Romanesque church of Santa María. Today we also pass from Galicia's Lugo province to Galicia's A Coruña province. A Medieval bridge leads pilgrims to Ribadiso, before arriving at Arzua, the next halt on our journey. Surrounded by beautiful scenery we see the Gothic Chapel of Magdalena, the only part of the old Augustinian monastery that has come down to us. The little town is famous nowadays for its Galician cheese factories. The chestnuts and oaks give way to eucalyptus. Dinner and overnight in Arzua.

Day 6 - Arzua (day of rest)

Today we will take a break to rest our bodies and tired feet. After Mass you will have time at leisure to relax and reflect on your journey thus far. Dinner and overnight in Arzua.

Day 7 - Arzua - Arca do Pino/Rua (walking day, 11 Miles / 17.6 km)

After breakfast we will continue our trek to Arca do Pino, the largest community before Santiago, immersing ourselves in the fragrant eucalyptus groves. We'll picnic en route. After arrival in Arca, you can take a quiet walk around this village. The emotion is reflected in the faces of the pilgrims. The tiredness accumulated during the pilgrimage is not apparent. Many things are on the pilgrims minds: The list of all the sights to see in Santiago, the visit to the Apostle, the intention to pick up the document that certifies that the Route to Santiago has been made. Optional visit to the grandiose Monastery of Sobrado, Galicia's first Cistercian monastery and dedicated to the Virgin Mary. Renovations in the 17th and 18th centuries amply embellished the façade, church and side chapel. Dinner and overnight in Arca do Pino.

Day 8 - Arca do Pino - Monte do Gozo - Santiago (walking day, 14 Miles / 22.4 km)

After breakfast we set out to make the last and final stage of our journey to reach the famed city of Santiago. En route we'll stop for our picnic on the Monte del Gozo (Mount Joy) from which the spires of the Cathedral are first visible. We will soon arrive at the Cathedral, the destination we have been yearning to reach. This architectural masterpiece is the most important Romanesque monument. After arrival in the Cathedral square and saying thanks to God for taking care of us during our pilgrimage, we'll check into our hotel. Free time. Dinner and overnight in Santiago de Compostela.

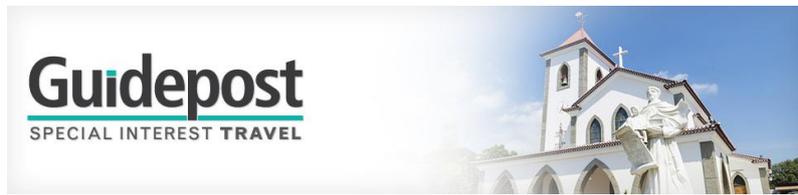
Day 9 - Santiago de Compostela

After breakfast we will visit and celebrate Mass at the Cathedral of St. James, one of the finest examples of architecture in all of Europe. Access to the Doorway of Glory is via the Obradoiro façade. Once in its interior, we will be carried away by the emotions produced by the sight of so many extraordinary valuable works of art. Tradition invites us to perform some rites: The most important and meaningful one is the hug to the Saint, go under the main altar and visit the crypt where the relics of St. James are preserved. After free time for lunch we continue our visit to the city of Santiago: Obradoiro Square, Fonseca Palace, Gelmirez Palace, Franco Street, etc. Evening at leisure. Dinner and overnight in Santiago de Compostela.



Day 10 - Santiago de Compostela – Onward Journey

Breakfast in the hotel. In the morning we will say hasta luego (see you soon or good bye) to our new friends. We transfer to Santiago Airport for our return flights.



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*Although this is a **"walking tour"** – rest assured that everything will be taken care of by 206 Tours! On your pilgrimage, you will be staying at **fabulous hotels**. You will have a **driver & vans following your group** as well as transporting your luggage. Furthermore, if you feel the need to complete a walking segment via transportation, you can simply **climb aboard our bus or van as needed**. Enjoy **excellent meals** throughout the pilgrimage and you will have an **assistant and a guide at your side** from start to finish.

The History of El Camino

The Way of St. James or St. James' Way, often known by its Spanish name, el Camino de Santiago, is the pilgrimage to the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela in Galicia in north-western Spain, where legend has it that the remains of the apostle, Saint James the Great, are buried.

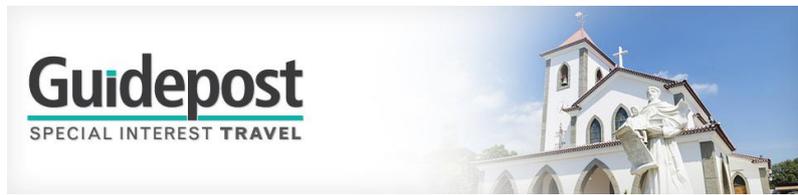
The Way of St James has existed for over a thousand years. It was one of the most important Christian pilgrimages during medieval times. It was considered one of three pilgrimages on which a plenary indulgence could be earned; the others are the Via Francigena to Rome and the pilgrimage to Jerusalem.

Legend holds that St. James's remains were carried by boat from Jerusalem to northern Spain where they were buried on the site of what is now the city of Santiago de Compostela. There are some, however, who claim that the bodily remains at Santiago belong to Priscillian, the fourth-century Galician leader of an ascetic Christian sect, Priscillianism, who was one of the first Christian heretics to be executed.

There is not a single route; the Way can take one of any number of pilgrimage routes to Santiago de Compostela. However a few of the routes are considered main ones. Santiago is such an important pilgrimage destination because it is considered the burial site of the apostle, James the Great. During the Middle Ages, the route was highly travelled. However, the Black Plague, the Protestant Reformation and political unrest in 16th- century Europe resulted in its decline. By the 1980s, only a few pilgrims arrived in Santiago annually. However, since then, the route has attracted a growing number of modern-day pilgrims from around the globe. The route was declared the first European Cultural Route by the Council of Europe in October 1987; it was also named one of UNESCO's World Heritage Sites in 1993.

Today tens of thousands of Christian pilgrims and other travellers set out each year from their front doorstep, or popular starting points across Europe, to make their way to Santiago de Compostela. Most





travel by foot, some by bicycle, and a few travel as some of their medieval counterparts did, on horseback or by donkey (for example, the British author and humourist Tim Moore).

For groups of 20 or more, you may choose your own departure

