

# WALK THE CAMINO

Specialists on the Camino de Santiago



## Your Guide To The Camino



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# Map of the Camino De Santiago



THE CAMINO DE SANTIAGO IS A LONG DISTANCE TRAIL, STRETCHING NEARLY 500 MILES, FROM THE FRENCH TOWN OF ST JEAN PIED DE PORT TO SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA IN GALICIA.



THE FINAL 100 KM / 74 MILE SECTION OF THE CAMINO DE SANTIAGO IS THE MOST POPULAR ITINERARY



City of Santiago de Compostela

Guided Tours Spring Autumn

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Via de la Plata, Galicia Spain

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Gentle Steps Camino Frances Best Seller

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Gourmet Camino La Rioja

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# MORE CAMINO ROUTES IN SPAIN AND BEYOND

## Camino Primitivo, Asturias & Galicia Spain

Known as the Original Way, the trail starts at the Cathedral of Oviedo through the interior of Asturias and Galicia to meet the Camino Frances at Melide and on to Santiago. It owes its origin to the pilgrimage of King Alfonso II of Asturias in the 9th century. This road is attracting experienced camino walkers by virtue of its beautiful landscapes, level of challenge and very rural atmosphere. You will encounter more livestock and farmers than walkers.

## Camino Finisterre, Galicia Spain

As an extension to walking the Camino to Santiago, having rested for a couple of days in Santiago, some clients wish to undertake the final leg of the route to Cape Finisterre or even further to Muxia on the Atlantic Coast. Another option is to simply choose to transfer here by taxi from Santiago and enjoy a beautiful day walk to the ocean, with an additional night or two spent locally, before your return home. A walk on the beach, searching for your own scallop shell makes for a superb ending to the whole experience. Walk the 97 km route to Finisterre over 7 days. You can also continue to Muxia over 2 extra days. This path makes for a stand alone journey for those that are looking for a new Camino, or seek a quiet & more remote route.

## Camino de Santiago on Horseback

We offer riding tours of the Way of St James on the Camino Frances, as well as in the Portuguese Way, the Via de la Plata, the Northern Way and other lesser-known Caminos. Join a programmed group or organising your own private tour (minimum group size of 2). Your fully-supported Camino by Horse tour includes airport pick-up, full board accommodation, horses and equipment, tour guide, support vehicle, luggage transfer. We also have tours for couples where one rides and the other doesn't. Please ask us for details.

## Le Puy Route, France

The Via Podiensis from Le Puy-en-Velay, via Conques and Cahors to Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port in the Pyrenees, takes up to 6 weeks to complete. But you can do shorter sections. From Le Puy the trail crosses the highlands of the Massif Central and then the green pastures of the south west and the Pays Basque which have a gentler but damper climate. The terrain is varied and very scenic, at times demanding and rarely flat. Spring and Autumn are recommended, avoiding the height of summer. The medieval villages and chateaux that dot landscapes are a treat for the eyes and the local cuisine, wine & cognac a treat for the palate!

## Via Francigena - The Last Section to Rome, Italy

This is the Road to Rome. Discover 2000 years of history and culture on the Via Francigena. Prepare for an amazing journey - from the first to the last step. On arrival at Rome's Monte Mario Belvedere - aka Mount Joy - you finally set eyes on the dome of St. Peter's Basilica - and then follow the River Tiber to Piazza San Pietro. The Via Francigena walk is an amazing journey along the final 100 kms from the hilltop town of Montefiascone. You can walk the ancient pavements of the Via Cassia, parts of which are still intact after 2,000 years. Experience Lazio's green and hilly landscape, as you make your way from one ancient village to the next, along this last section of the Via Francigena to Rome. You will be eligible to claim the TESTIMONIUM certificate on presentation of your pilgrimage document at St Peter's Basilica.

## Via Francigena - Heart of Tuscany, Italy

Discover the Tuscan Heart of Via Francigena. This medieval pilgrimage route can be thought of as the "Camino to Rome" and the Tuscan section is simply the most enchanting of all. Our route combines cities such as Lucca, Siena and San Gimignano with smaller, beautiful villages like San Miniato and Colle Val d'Elsa. This itinerary allows you to discover the best that the Via Francigena Tuscany has to offer. Another of the hidden gems of the Via Francigena, is the fortified hilltop village of Monteriggioni, then make your way along the legendary white paths of Siena. Finally through wonderful landscapes and fortified villages you will arrive at Buonconvento.

## Assisi Way, Italy

Follow the paths of St Francis of Assisi and discover traces of hermitages, chapels and crosses in a landscape of shady forests, orchards, olive groves and fields of wheat and barley. Visit historic towns and villages and taste many traditional dishes from the local cuisine. This is a journey from Città di Castello with its palaces to the town from which the story of Francis began - Assisi. Assisi is rich in religious heritage and culture: see the frescoed churches or soak up the ancient history with a visit to the Roman forum "Asisium".

## Extend your journey from Assisi to Spoleto

The historic path wanders through the magnificent countryside of forests, fields, vineyards and olive groves. A hilltop medieval town is never far from sight. Here it feels like time stands still. This part of Italy is famed for the endless variety of its local cuisine - truly a taste of heaven.

# Planning Your Camino

## Casas, Hotels, Pensions & Paradors

You will most likely be staying in a range of accommodation on the Camino - but always in private rooms with en suite facilities and breakfast provided. From family run pensions to grand country mansions, the Paradores hotels which have been created in special places, such as grand historic buildings, each place has it's own character and a warm welcome.

Our accommodation partners are hand-picked and well known to us personally. All lodgings are usually situated on your path as you are walking the Camino de Santiago. If your budget allows, we can suggest some superb accommodation upgrades, as we regularly work with the very best establishments on & off the Camino.

## Your Board & Lodging

We advise you to book you on a Bed & Breakfast basis. This allows you to decide where, when and how much you wish to eat and spend. it's a chance to soak up the atmosphere, rubbing shoulders with both international walkers and local people. You'll enjoy a wider variety of local dishes. But, you can also request half board.

## Can I Walk The Camino Alone?

Yes. Many clients regardless of age or gender prefer or choose to walk alone. The Camino can be an intensely social experience - so you don't need to be alone. You are guaranteed to meet fellow travellers. The camaraderie of the Camino is legendary. But at the same time, you can enjoy your own space and the peace and tranquility of the Way.

## What If I Need A Day Off?

Many people will need the odd unplanned rest day - we'll help you - just call us. It might be as easy as getting you on a bus or taxi to the next stop where you can catch up with your itinerary. We're here to help. Additional transfers / overnights will carry extra charges.

## Our Commitment to You

We believe that our high level of personal service and customer care offers the best in the local food, culture and history.

## Daily Luggage Transfers

This daily service is organised so that all you have to worry about is carrying a day sack with your essential items. Our transport company offers an excellent service. We send you a tag for your bag in your Pack. If you prefer to carry your own pack, we'll deduct that service and recommend you travel light.

## Walk The Camino Travel Pack

We may well be the ONLY Company to send you a comprehensive travel pack with a guide book to your home address, prior to travel. Other companies will email your notes or leave information to collect at your first hotel. We know you prefer to review all your arrangements and have everything in your hand before you leave home.

### • Our Travel Pack Includes:-

- Guide Book with Maps for Your Camino Route
- Maps to your hotels from the Camino
- Credencial (pilgrims passport)
- Baggage Labels
- Packing List
- Your Camino Notes - with all your essential info
- Contact Cards for our 24:7 support service
- Tickets for local transfers
- Hotel vouchers for check in
- Camino Phrases Booklet
- All Items Inside A Heavy Duty Waterproof Pack

## Top Tips

### A Rest Day Once A Week

If you are walking more than 2 weeks on the Way, it really is worth taking time off from walking every now and again. Your feet are probably not used to walking long distances day after day, so they will thank you for a day off.

### Mobile Phone / Cell Phones

It's important to check with your provider that you have a cost effective package for your trip. If your phone is unlocked, buy a Spanish sim card on arrival.

## How To Book

You can do this by email - [info@walkthecamino.com](mailto:info@walkthecamino.com) or by phone. You can also request a call back at a convenient time. Payments are by bank transfer or credit card.

**20% Deposit to Secure Your Booking**

**80% Balance payable 8 weeks Prior to Travel**

# PRACTICAL ADVICE 1

## When Should You Go?

### Spring

Life returns to the Camino from March with establishments reopening and the number of walkers peaks towards the main Spanish festival of the Year - Holy Week or Easter. Witnessing Holy Week in a Camino city or town is something special - even the smallest village takes part in processions and events. For many this is the perfect time to walk. Temperatures range from 10-20C, the countryside is full of Spring colour, but showers are still a distinct possibility especially in Galicia.

### Summer

From June-August weather is the most reliable, but it can rain at any time of the year in Galicia, and the meseta can be uncomfortably hot from June to August and temperatures can range from 15-40C. Albergues are crowded throughout the peak season, and hotels may be fully booked in destinations popular with tourists. Many regions along the Camino come alive from June onwards with traditional festivals. **July 25** is the liveliest time to be in Santiago de Compostela for the `saint's day "Día de Santiago", when the Plaza de Obradoiro in front of the cathedral is lit up with a magnificent fireworks display. The end of summer marks the start of the harvest and food-based fiestas pop up everywhere.

### Autumn

This is also the perfect time for many as the weather is often mild, although sometimes wet. Temperatures are usually around 15-25C reducing as the season progresses. It can be the joker in that pack - you could have clear, dry, bright and colourful autumnal days or a mix of everything.

### Winter

We limit our Camino activities in winter to areas with the best services and access to ensure your safety and enjoyment. The majority of accommodation closes for rest & refurbishment, so if you want to walk the Camino, we suggest sticking to the Sarria to Santiago route. Santo Domingo de la Calzada is lovely for a Xmas break on the Camino with it's artisan festival & nearby ski resort. As are the iconic Camino cities - Pamplona, Burgos, Leon and of course Santiago.

## Getting Your Itinerary Right for You

- We tailor our itineraries to cater for a range of clients with different walking abilities.
- Our **GentleSteps** of the last section breaks 115km/74 miles into mini sections of easy walks.
- You can walk as much or little as you like - from **Pamplona, Logroño, Burgos, León, Astorga, Ponferrada** or **Sarria** which are the most popular places to begin. It's up to you...
- You can choose to walk the the entire route in stages, perhaps over a 2-3 year period - or as and when you have free time.

## Getting There And Back

Your choice of Spanish Airport will depend on where you begin and end your journey.

**Madrid** is the best entry point for Transatlantic and International clients, then take a bus or train to the main Camino centres of **Pamplona, Logroño, Burgos, León, Astorga, Ponferrada Sarria** and **Santiago**. If you start at **Roncesvalles**, train to **Pamplona** and take a bus or we can arrange a taxi transfer.

**Santiago Airport**:- Last Section Camino Frances, Last Section Camino Portugues, Camino Finisterre, Via de la Plata, Ruta del Mar & Camino Primitivo.

**Paris or Biarritz**:- Full Camino Frances from St Jean Pied de Port:- From **Paris** TGV train to **Bayonne**, then local train to St-Jean; or **Biarritz** and take an airport bus to Bayonne and train to St Jean. (Or taxi transfer).

**Bilbao Airport** has good links to Logroño, Burgos and León.

**Barcelona Airport** is a popular alternative to Madrid for return international and transatlantic flights.

**Porto Airport**-for the 2 week **Camino Portugues Paris** or **Toulouse** for the Le Puy - Chemin Jacques du Compostelle.

## **WE CAN BOOK YOUR TRAIN TICKETS**



## PRACTICAL ADVICE 2

### Sections of the Camino Frances

The Camino makes its way on mainly undulating terrain, through 4 regions and an ever-changing landscape; from St Jean Pied de Port in the foothills of the French Pyrenees, over the Spanish border heading ever west to Santiago de Compostela.

**Navarra** The Pyrenees presents perhaps the most challenge of the entire Way. The Pyrenees are simply wonderful in good weather, with incredible views and eagles circling overhead. The route over the tops is a challenge for all - bit if you are able, it's very rewarding. We offer you options, so you can ease yourself into the Camino, rather than push too hard, too far and too high in the first day. On the other side of the mountains, you descend by way of the rolling hills of Navarra towards Pamplona. **Start Roncesvalles or Pamplona**

**La Rioja** The province is dominated by the Río Ebro, which drains the water from a vast area of northeastern Spain, and the camino follows a natural corridor into the heart of Spain between the Sierra de la Demanda to the south and the Sierra de Cantabria to the north. The Montes de Oca are the last major hills before the city of Burgos and the meseta beyond. **Start Logrono**

**Castille Leon** The flatlands of Castille Leon are called the "meseta" or plateau - with intense agriculture as far as the eye can see. Many pilgrims expect the meseta to be a long flat boring expanse of nothing, but it has a beauty of its own with a horizon that stretches endlessly across seasonally green or yellow wheat fields. Summer temperatures soar - so if you are walking here in the height of summer be well prepared. Eventually, the Cordillera Cantábrica range of hills marks the end of the meseta. The range is not terribly high but it can be wet, misty or foggy. **Start in Burgos or Leon**

**Galicia** Spain's greenest and wettest region has pastures that support dairy herds. The province gets an average of 2m annual rainfall and is scored by deep river valleys. Its oak forests offer the walker protection from the elements all year round. From Santiago, you make your way across the headland to the Atlantic coast and Finisterre. **Start in O Cebreiro or Sarria**

### Camino Food & Drink

On the Camino you'll find local dishes prevail - tasty, homemade and substantial enough to sustain a weary traveller. They are also very inexpensive. The Spanish do not sit down to lunch before 2pm, but on the Camino, lunch is 1pm - 3pm. Dinnertime is usually from 9pm but again available from 8pm on the Camino - and in some places from 7pm. Pilgrims menus and "menú del día" are everywhere and offer great value. 3-course set meal that includes bread and usually wine. These are excellent deals from €8 - €15.

Many people shop for picnic lunches of fruit, cheese, cold meat, pastries, olives and fresh bread. Cafés and bars at lunch serve bocadillos, half baguette sandwiches stuffed with a range of fillings and larger plates of hearty food. Breakfast varies from place to place from a simple snack with coffee to a huge buffet spread. In summer, early starts mean you may begin walking before breakfast - but when the cafes open you'll find pan tostada (toast) and pastries, juice and coffee. We do inform your lodgings of your dietary needs, however you will need to remind places as you go. Spain in general, is much better at catering for vegetarian beyond the standards of salad, cheese, bread and potatoes!

### THE WINES OF SPAIN

La Rioja is Spain's most important wine-producing area, producing smooth, oak-aged wines at low prices. There are also really super reds from the **Navarra, Bierzo** and **Ribera del Duero** regions. Galicia's cooler climate produces excellent white wine - **Albariño** whites - unoaked and crisp perfect to compliment seafood. The cloudy **Ribeiro** wine will likely be new to you, but also delicious. If you like light beer ask for a caña, if you want a small draught beer. **Mahou** is the best of the bunch, but you'll also find San Miguel and Cruz Campo. In summer, tinto de verano, is a refreshing mix of red wine and lemonade served over ice.

### DAILY BUDGET

We recommend you budget around €20-25 per day for lunch and dinner. More if you decide to go a la carte in a city restaurant. You will find ATMS in the larger towns and cities, so there is no need to carry a lot of cash.

