

## The way of Saint James

An 8 day group hiking tour from Sarria to Santiago de Compostela

**Tour Code:** SP01W



The spirit of Santiago has been living along the streets of Spain for over 1000 years, up to the place where, in the 9th century, hermit Pelagius arrived following a star, which indicated him the tomb of St. James. Today, millions of pilgrims, driven by the pursuit of solace and forgiveness of sins, by the desire of looking into their own souls, or, simply, by the pleasure of walking along ancient footpaths, discovering evocative places, history and above all themselves.

Along the way, there are many signs from yellow arrows to blue ceramic tiles with a yellow shell, because pilgrims, over the centuries, used to pick up the shells of St. James on the beaches of Galicia to state that their pilgrimage took really place.

During this exciting tour, you go through villages with houses covered by typical slate roofs and tiny churches, footpaths in lush forests of eucalyptus and the green Galician countryside, springs and small water streams, sweet ascents and descents until you get to the Cathedral of Santiago, at the end of a spiritual trip which regenerates the soul, body and mind. This walk follows the Camino Francés, the most important itinerary among those, which are part of the St. James Way, now Unesco world heritage.

This stretch of St. James Way will allow you to get the Compostela, the official pilgrim's certificate of completion for this epic journey. The last day is dedicated to Fisterra, where pilgrims came to see the 'End of the Earth' and collected the shells as a reminder and proof of their pilgrimage. The fishing village is an ancient port on the Costa da Morte, a place where many ships wrecked on the rocky cliffs. Today, for the pilgrim, the most

extreme point is the place where the Finisterre lighthouse and the milestone or stone of the "zero kilometre" of the Camino de Santiago de Compostela are located.



**Difficulty: 3**

Stretches of significant length. This tour is suitable only for expert walkers with good physical condition. Walking time from 4,5 hrs to 7,5 hrs. Not suitable for children. Daily distances between 19 km / 11,8 mi and 28 km / 17,4 mi with average differences in height.

Total km: 116 km / 72 mi

**Participants:** from 1 person

**Dates 2024:**

19/04; 26/04; 14/06; 21/06; 14/07; 09/08; 16/08; 13/09; 11/10

## **Program in Short**

Day 1 Arrival at Sarria

Day 2 Sarria - Portomarin (23 km / 14,3 mi)

Day 3 Portomarin – Palas de Rei (25 km / 15,5 mi)

Day 4 Palas de Rei-Arzua (28 km / 17,4 mi)

Day 5 Arzua – O Pedrouzo (21 km / 13 mi)

Day 6 O Pedrouzo – Santiago de Compostela (19 km / 11,8 mi)

Day 7 Excursion Finisterre

Day 8 End of tour after breakfast

## **Program day by day**

### **Day 1 Sarria**

Individual arrival in Santiago de Compostela. Meeting of participants and guide at the airport. Transfer by private bus to Sarria in the evening (10 pm), who arrives more late at the airport, will have a transfer by taxi (supplement). Handing over of your pilgrim kit. Sarria, above all in the Middle Ages, was an important pilgrim centre, as evidenced by the monastery of La Magdalena and the many Romanesque churches of the surroundings. In this place, you will have time to arrange your things and close your eyes, thinking that, on the next day, an intense and unforgettable adventure in the heart of Spain, towards Santiago, will begin.

Overnight with breakfast in Sarria

### **Day 2 Sarria - Portomarín**

After breakfast, we leave the hotel and start walking together along the footpath from Sarria to Portomarín. We go up the Rua Maior and stop at the church of Santa Mariña to stamp the Credential, a travel document for the stamps (sellos) you collect in several places of the Camino. In the end with this credential you get the “Compostela” In Santiago, de Compostela.

We have just started our journey, but there is already a lot to see: the characteristic signs of the albergues, pilgrims' coves, the parish church of Salvador, the tower of the ancient wall and the convent of Madalena, founded in the 12<sup>th</sup> century as a hospital for pilgrims.

We walk down, crossing a medieval bridge, then up through a woodland of century-old trees, and reach the church of Santiago de Barbadelo, national monument since 1976 and one of the best examples of Romanesque-Galician style.

We pass Morgade, where there is just one house and cross Ferreiros, a little village named after ironworkers (Ferreiros), because here pilgrims could tighten the horseshoes. There is also Vilachá, a rural farmer's village with the ruins of the Monastery of Loio, cradle of the knights of the order of Santiago. Finally, you go down towards the Rio Miño and arrive to Portomarín, a little city dominated by the impressive fortress-church of San Juan.

The first stretch came to an end. Surely tired but satisfied, you will enjoy your meal.

Overnight with breakfast and dinner in Portomarín.

Distance: 23 km / 14,3 mi

Ascent / descent: +300m – 390m

Difficulty: medium

### **Day 3 Portomarín - Palas de Rei**

With a special wish of “buen camino”, the group gets ready for the second stage of the way, which leads to Palas de Rei, which owes its name to a hypothetical royal palace built in its vicinity. We leave Portomarín walking over a bridge for pedestrians and we continue until Gonzar, followed by Castromaior, known for its Romanesque church situated next to a little stream, and Lameiros with the small chapel of San Marcos, nestled among century-old oaks. We are almost at Stat Ligonde. The knights of the Order of Santiago had protected this stretch until Palas de Rei since 1184. The hostel of this village welcomed Emperor Carlos I and his son Felipe II, the most famous pilgrims of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. For the more fit walkers under us it is possible, with a short detour, to visit the monastery of Vilar de Donas. This church is one of the most typical examples of Galician Romanesque style and here some relics of the knights of the Order, in charge of protecting the route, have been buried. Before we end today’s walk, we visit the church of San Tirso, situated at the entrance of Palas de Rei, a delicate example of a melting of different architectural styles, like Romanesque and neoclassical. Arrived at the hotel we have dinner together. Tomorrow you will face the longest stretch of the whole journey.

Overnight with breakfast and dinner in Palas de Rei.

Distance: 25 km / 15,5 mi

Ascent / Descent: + 380m -170m

Difficulty: medium

### **Day 4 Palas de Rei-Arzúa**

Today, a very famous pilgrimage monument, wishes us a good walk while we leave the centre of Palas Rei to go towards Arzúa. The French Way leaves Palas and goes in the direction of Campo dos Romeiros, a traditional meeting place for pilgrims, and reaches the medieval little village of Leboreiro. The route continues through small villages, woodlands and crossing the medieval bridge of Furelos, which brings you to Melide. This town has an important and rich religious and artistic heritage, with the famous Pulperia Ezequiel. Moreover in Melide, the “Primitive Way” merges into the “French Way”.

After this pleasant break, we continue our way along dirt roads, stone paths, little streets, past villages with sweet ascents and descents, flat stretches, forests of eucalyptus and always accompanied by the green Galician countryside. In Arzúa, the “Northern Way” merges into the “French Way”. Arzúa is known for its hospitality and for its delicious cheese, but before we settle at our hotel for dinner and overnight, you should visit the church of Santiago de Arzúa, a modern parish temple which hosts two different figures of the Apostle, one depicting him as pilgrim and the other one as a fierce matamoros (killer of Saracens).

Overnight with breakfast and dinner in Arzúa.

Distance: 28 km / 17,4 mi

Ascent/Descent: + 100m – 270m

Difficulty: average

### **Day 5 Arzúa - O Pedrouzo**

Emotions continue to rise because we are approaching Santiago de Compostela. We walk through woodlands, little villages and passing many different medieval buildings. Often the villages we pass look nameless, but you will know where you are if you look at the milestones that mark the Way.

Once we get to O' Pino, you will be attracted by a curious visual effect among the thick mixtures of plants in the woods, pines and fir trees planted in perfectly symmetrical rows. Today, the way passes through corners of intense natural beauty, to reach the top and the famous Capilla de Santa Irene, then the little town of O Pedrouzo.

Have dinner and relax, because tomorrow the way reaches the top of its beauty and you will live a most intimate and overwhelming experience: the arrival to Santiago de Compostela.

Overnight with breakfast and dinner in O Pedrouzo

Distance: 21 km / 13 mi

Ascent/Descent: + 80m – 190m

Difficulty: easy

### **Day 6 O Pedrouzo - Santiago de Compostela**

Before we get to Santiago, we pass several "historic places", among which the Lavacolla and Mount do Gozo, where on top a monument is dedicated to pilgrims and here you can admire the spires of the cathedral.

Arrival in the hotel in the early afternoon. At about 4 p.m. we will have a guided tour through Santiago with the possibility to take part in the evening's pilgrim's mass.

We enter the city from the quarter of San Lázaro, and reach the walls of the historic centre.

We cross the Praza Cervantes and reach Piazza dell'Obradoiro... then finally in front of you, the architectural beauty and spiritual strength of the Cathedral of Santiago.

The Cathedral was built in the year 813 (according to other versions, 820 or 830), after the discovery of the relics of Apostle James under the bush of Mount Libredón. A hermit guided by heavenly signs, found them. Today's Romanesque cathedral is the fourth sacred building built above the ancient tomb.

In this temple of spirituality pilgrims pray, visit the relics of St. James, the museum and archaeological excavations, they climb up the stairs to the roof to admire the stunning view, take part in the invocation of the Apostle and see, just in some periods, the surprising commuters' route in front of the major altar of Botafumeiro. It is right here that you will receive the Compostela. Your tour leader will be available for those who wish to go to the pilgrim's office and to get the well-deserved Compostela.

Overnight with breakfast and dinner in Santiago de Compostela

Distance: 19 km / 11,8 mi

Ascent/Descent: +100m – 120m

Difficulty: easy

### **Day 7 Santiago de Compostela - Muxía - Capo Finisterre**

After breakfast, free morning to visit Santiago and the "Portico della Gloria", and to take part in the pilgrim's mass of Midday.

In the afternoon, there is the excursion to the coast. For our group a private tour is guaranteed with a minimum of 6 participants, otherwise it is possible to take part in an excursion with a local operator. First we stop and visit Muxía, and its “Church of A barca”, which commemorates the stone boat by which, according to the tradition, the Virgin Mary came to Spain to encourage Santiago in his missionary efforts: the sanctuary lies on a cliff. The tour continues up to Capo Finisterre, with its magic promontory, where pilgrims gather and admire the sunset on the Atlantic Ocean from the westernmost point of Spain. Numerous rocks of this promontory are associated with religious legends. Dinner is with fish products; in the late evening, back to Santiago.

Overnight with breakfast in Santiago and dinner in Finisterre

### **Day 8 End of the tour**

After breakfast say goodbye to the group members and end our services

### **Hotels**

Overnight stays are in medium quality tourist accommodations (Hotels or Pensión) situated in the points of departure of the several stages (5 nights) and in the centre of Santiago (2 nights). All accommodations are cosy and comfortable, but simple, mainly family run. All rooms have private bathrooms. Smaller hotels do not have telephone or Tv in room.

### **Prices per person 2024:**

In double room € 1.050

In single room € 1.270

Supplement: € 70 in case you are too late for the transfer from the airport of Santiago to Sarria

Discount of € 30 p.p. if you book with minimum 4 people

### **The tour includes:**

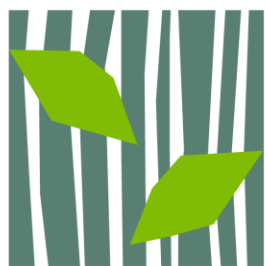
- 7 nights in hotels of medium-good quality (Hotel and Pension). Room with private bathroom.
- Breakfast
- Transfer from airport Santiago to Sarria (if you arrive after 22.00, there will be a supplement (€ 70) and a taxi transfer is organized / no dinner)
- 6 x dinner (water and wine included, except in the first dinner-last day dinner with fish dishes / no dinner in Sarria)
- Luggage transportation from hotel to hotel (backpack-suitcase up to 20 kg)
- Tour leader/ guide in Italian-English during the walks in Spain
- Guided tour in Santiago (half day)
- Excursion on the Atlantic Coast
- “Pilgrim’s kit” with detailed information about the route, Credential of the Cathedral of Santiago and T-shirt.

### **The tour does not include:**

- The journey to Santiago and the journey back home



- Lunch
- Entrance fees
- Extra transfers during the walking tour to shorten the route
- Personal extra
- All which is not clearly specified under “the tour includes”



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