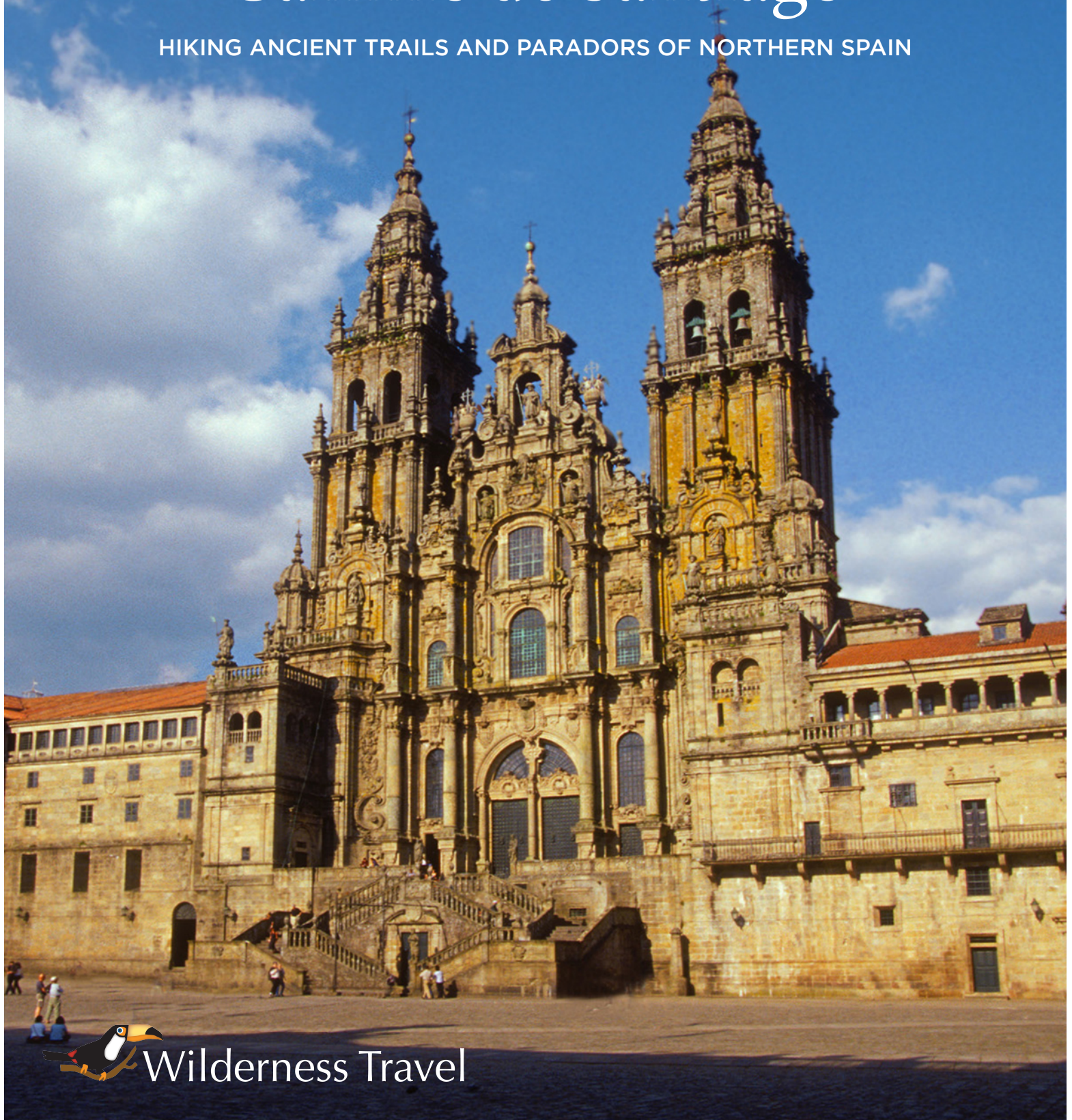


Pilgrim's Way: El Camino de Santiago

HIKING ANCIENT TRAILS AND PARADORS OF NORTHERN SPAIN



Wilderness Travel

Overview



TRIP DETAILS AT-A-GLANCE

- Length:** 9 days
Arrive: Burgos, Spain
Depart: Santiago de Compostela, Spain
Lodging: 8 nights inns, manor houses, and paradors
Meals: All meals included except 1 dinner
Activity: Cultural, Walking, Hiking & Trekking
Trip Level: 1 2 ③ 4 5 6

7 hiking days on easy to moderate trails, some steep sections, 3-8 hours a day, van support

QUESTIONS?

Our Area Specialists are your single point of contact and would be happy to answer any questions about your trip!

800.368.2794 | 510.558.2488

HIGHLIGHTS

- With decades of experience on the Camino, we've honed this itinerary to perfection!
- Hike the most scenic portions of Spain's El Camino in nine well-paced days
- Complete the final stretch at Finisterre, walking the sands barefoot in true pilgrim tradition
- Enjoy Trip Leaders who ensure the traditions of the Camino are very much a part of your journey
- Stay in historic hotels, including the 5-star Parador dos Reis Católicos, a 15th century monastery in Santiago's central square

Introduction



Be part of a thousand-year-old pilgrimage—El Camino de Santiago—across a landscape alive with legends. Our perfectly designed journey showcases the very best landscapes and villages along this famous trail all the way to Finisterre, mythical Kilometer 0, where we make the traditional barefoot walk on the beach. Our paths wind through foothills and forests and past exquisite Romanesque and Gothic churches. Trails are marked with scallop shells, the symbol of St. James. One of the joys of this journey is sharing the trail with pilgrims from all over the world. Along the way, we are welcomed in our carefully selected hotels, including two nights at the acclaimed Parador dos Reis Católicos in Santiago. Our expert Trip Leaders bring the history and heritage of El Camino alive with every step, right down to introducing you to the delicious specialties of each region you travel through. Buen camino!

TRIP DATES

September 3-11, 2024
September 10-18, 2024
September 13-21, 2024
September 20-28, 2024
October 4-12, 2024
May 2-10, 2025
May 9-17, 2025
May 20-28, 2025
May 30-June 7, 2025

September 2-10, 2025
September 9-17, 2025
September 12-20, 2025
September 20-28, 2025
September 23-October 1, 2025
October 3-11, 2025

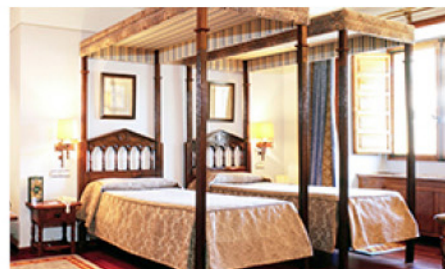
What Makes WT's Pilgrim's Way Special?

TRAVEL WITH THE CAMINO EXPERTS We have decades of experience on El Camino and have honed this itinerary to perfection. The key to your experience? Our expert Trip Leaders who bring the history and heritage of the Pilgrim's Way alive for you with every step, from sharing traditions of the trail to insights into the culture and history of these beautiful regions of Spain—right down to introducing you to the delicious specialties of each region you travel through, and which wines to pair with them! Traveling with a small group of like-minded pilgrims, with plenty of flexibility built in, is the ideal way to experience this wonderful journey, and your team of expert Trip Leaders keeps everything running like clockwork so you can fully savor your experience of El Camino.



UNIQUE ITINERARY DESIGN We've designed this itinerary so that in just nine days you can enjoy the very best portions of northern Spain's El Camino, while avoiding sections that have been impacted by modern development. You'll travel through a tremendous variety of landscapes, past innumerable fascinating historic and architectural treasures, including the cathedral at Burgos, a Gothic masterpiece. Our goal is to allow you to have your own experience of El Camino, so we give you flexibility and options throughout the journey. Hike along with your expert Trip Leaders as they share their phenomenal knowledge of the culture and history of the route. If you wish to shorten your day's hike in order to explore the villages where we'll overnight, our support van is available several times each day with refreshments or to give you a lift.

BEAUTIFULLY SELECTED ACCOMMODATIONS We have chosen a delightful balance of comfortable family-run guesthouses, small hotels, monasteries, and spectacular paradors, including two nights at the superb 5-star Parador Dos Reis Catolicos right on the pilgrim's square in Santiago. Each night's lodging has been carefully selected for the convenience of its location, quality of its cuisine, and commitment to friendly service.



OUR TRIP LEADERS SAY...

"Where to begin? It is such a spirited, friendly, communal experience—we have incredible camaraderie within our groups, and with other pilgrims along the trail. That is such a highlight—on one trip we met people from 60 different countries! We hike only the prettiest, most historic parts of the route from Burgos to Finisterre, and ending at the ocean is just incredible. Our days are full, but not too full—you also have personal time to journal or explore the towns and villages. The trails are in excellent condition—no uneven or tricky terrain. You get to just enjoy the walking, and all of the meaning of being part of a 1,100-year-old pilgrimage. One of the things our travelers love the most is collecting the stamps in their 'Pilgrim's Passport' at churches and cafés along the way. It really shows your progress along the trail, and gives you such a sense of accomplishment when we reach Kilometer 0. Buen Camino!"

-Trip Leader, Rob Noonan



Our Route to Santiago

WHY WE HAVE CHOSEN THE CAMINO FRANCES

For thousands of years, pilgrims have made the journey on foot to the sacred Cathedral of St. James in Santiago de Compostela, Spain, via numerous trails coming from all over Europe and even as far away as Jerusalem. Once they reach Spain and Portugal, most pilgrims funnel into a few main trails, with the classic “Camino Frances” (French Way) being the most popular. This is the route that Wilderness Travel has chosen, selecting the most beautiful hiking sections for our journey.

The full pilgrimage takes several months to complete, and even just walking the full French Way is a month-long journey, from its starting point in St. Jean Pied de Port on the Spanish border. Our 9-day trip begins in historic Burgos and follows the absolute best portions of the trail across northern Spain, bypassing busy urbanized and industrial areas and highways, focusing instead on the stunning landscapes and most venerated sections of the route. Our journey winds through foothills

and forests, past ancient monasteries and exquisite Romanesque and Gothic churches, with scallop shells, the symbol of Saint James, marking our way. One of the joys of this journey is sharing the trail and hearing the stories of the other pilgrims who come from all over



the world to hike El Camino. The shared goal is reaching the Cathedral of St. James, which reputedly holds the apostle’s remains, is a monumental triumph and the ritual of hugging the Apostle performed inside the cathedral can be especially profound. The cathedral holds a noon and evening mass that all pilgrims are invited to attend, and we may even witness the moving spectacle of the traditional botafumeiro ceremony.

OUR SPECIAL FINISH: FINISTERRE

We strongly believe your pilgrimage should conclude, as it has for countless pilgrims across the centuries, in legendary Finisterre, “the end of the earth” in Latin, and the famous Kilometer 0 of El Camino. This craggy promontory where jagged cliffs meet the wild sea was believed by Romans to be the doorway to the “great beyond,” and where pre-Christian cultures believed the sun died as it set each night over the Atlantic Ocean, to be reborn again in the East the next morning. Seeing the Atlantic Ocean for the first time after so many miles is tremendously moving, and Wilderness Travel pilgrims walk the final two miles barefoot along the sands of Langosteira Beach, collecting seashells as mementos of their completion of El Camino. We’ll celebrate the successful conclusion of our journey in the hilltop fishing village of Finisterre, indulging in a well-deserved bounty of spectacular Galician seafood. It is said that combining this meal with the local albariño wine offers a small taste of the divine.

Benefits of the Camino Frances

- This was the principal traditional route and thus has the most impressive churches and other significant pilgrimage stops along the route.
- The scenery is exquisite, with a great variety of landscapes as we traverse historic regions of northern Spain, from the high plains of Castile to mystical Galicia.
- The hiking is over easy to moderate terrain, with well-marked paths throughout.
- There are more pilgrims here than on other routes, and this is what you want! One of the highlights of the Camino is the camaraderie, the sense of walking in the footsteps of history, and for many, the sense of a shared spiritual journey.
- This route has the best selection of accommodations, including historic monasteries and inns. In Santiago, we will have two nights in the exquisite Parador de Santiago de Compostela, founded in 1499. From its terrace looking right over the square in front of the Cathedral, we'll witness countless pilgrims reaching the emotional conclusion to their journey.
- There are great options for dining along this route. We share a wonderful array of Spanish cuisine (and wine!), including renowned Galician seafood with you.



What About Other Camino Options



- Camino Frances
- Camino Portuguese
- Camino del Norte
- Camino Primitivo

CAMINO PORTUGUES

This is the second most popular route, which gained prominence in the 14th and 15th century as coastal towns grew in wealth from the sailing expeditions to Africa and the New World. The Camino Portugues starts in Lisbon or Porto and has two variations, one following the coast and the other heading inland. Many churches, chapels, and monasteries dedicated to St. James dot the inland route. Unfortunately, this route generally follows, or is not very far from the highway routes up the coast, and much of the traditional path now goes through highly urbanized areas.

CAMINO DEL NORTE

Also known as “The Coastal Route,” this option travels along the northern coast of Spain past Bilbao, Santander, and Gijon before turning southwest at Ribadeo. This route does enjoy scenic coastal and mountainous sections, and is considerably less traveled, but the hiking is much more difficult with a lot more up and down, and much of it is on pavement and passes through a number of touristy coastal towns. Rainy weather is much more common along this route.

CAMINO PRIMITIVO

Crossing the Cantabrian Mountains, this is the most difficult pilgrimage route, until the point where it joins the Camino Frances for the final stretch to Santiago. It begins at Oviedo, in Asturias, and was first walked by King Alfonso II in the 9th century. The mountain weather makes the hiking more challenging, with a fair amount of rain and muddy terrain to be expected on any departure.

A Day on the Trail

The trail follows everything from country roads to cow paths as we travel through rural regions that see few outsiders aside from pilgrims. Of course, all hiking days are a bit different, and the weather always has the final say, but the following is a sense of a typical day on the trail. On Days 1 and 2, there are a great number of fascinating cultural sites, and we'll stop to meet with local experts as we explore the Old Quarter and Cathedral in Burgos, the exquisite Romanesque church of San Martin in Frómista, and the 9th century San Isidoro Basilica in Leon. This makes for a gentle start to the trip, as the hiking on these days is limited. There will be cultural sites all along the way, but on the following days there is significantly more hiking. This can be tailored to your preferences, adding more hiking time when possible or, with our van support, you can shorten the hiking time as you wish.

From 7:30 am, a buffet breakfast is served by our hotel, with fruit, bread, whole grains, cold cuts, cheese, butter, ham, olive oil, tomato, yogurt, as well as coffee and tea. Our drives to the trailheads are relatively short, about 20 minutes, and we're off!

9:30 am to 1:00 pm: Our morning hike is usually about 4 hours, with stops along the way for interesting architecture, a coffee stop, and photo ops of the beautiful landscapes—this is a wonderfully photogenic part of Spain. We usually hike until 1:00 pm, although when the van meets us mid-morning with water and snacks, folks can catch a lift if they wish.

Lunch starts late in Spain—no earlier than 1:00 or 1:30 pm, and is usually enjoyed in a small restaurant close to the trail. These are the typical restaurants where pilgrims stop to eat, and they give us a great chance to be part of the community. Pilgrims come from all over the world to hike El Camino, and are always very friendly and willing to share their experiences. Some of the items you'll see on the menu are hearty soups, a

variety of cheeses and hams from the region (including jamón serrano), salads, pimientos del padrón (roasted green peppers), trout served the Spanish way (expect to see the whole fish!).

Afternoon hiking is a bit shorter, from around 2:30 pm to 5:00 pm, though you can catch a ride in the van if your legs are tired. Our total hiking time and distance each day is about 7-8 miles, or 5-6 hours. On Day 5 we'll encourage everyone to hike the full 14 miles. This is the traditional length of a hiking day on the pilgrimage. We've chosen the most beautiful day of scenery to do this, and we'll hike from hotel door to hotel door as true pilgrims do (a shortened version of this day's hike is also offered).

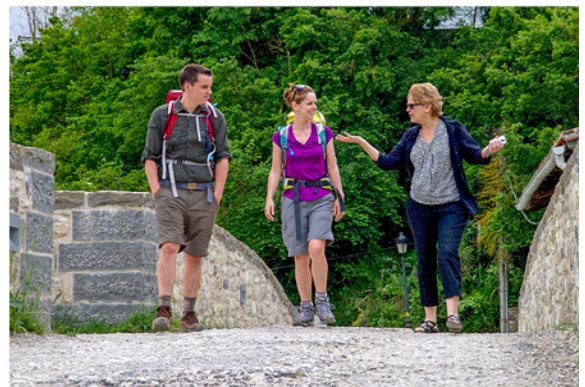
We have a couple of hours in the afternoon to explore our new location, and our Trip Leaders love to walk the back streets and share the architectural wonders—our route is filled with some of the finest Romanesque architecture in Europe. We may even stop in at a bar for tapas—a late afternoon snack is always welcome as the dinner hour is notoriously late in Spain!

Dinner is around 8:00 pm, and this is about the earliest we can get reservations. It is normal in Spain for people to go out to dinner at 10 pm or later. While we know you'll need your rest, we urge you not to miss experiencing the great cuisine of these regions, from lamb to fresh seafood.

Our hotels are often in historic buildings and because of this the rooms are not always of uniform size. Our Trip Leaders always do their best to assign rooms so that all participants experience an equal advantage throughout the trip. Single rooms, as is common throughout Europe, are always much smaller than double rooms.

CAMINO TIP

Bring a stone from home (a small one!) to place below the Cruz de Hierro. This pilgrimage tradition symbolizes leaving behind past sorrows, and the start of a new phase of life. We'll hike to Cruz de Hierro on Day 3 of our journey.



Itinerary



Overnight: Monasterio San Zoilo

An atmospheric Benedictine monastery in a serene country setting, this historic property has been artfully transformed into a unique hotel. It was founded in the 10th century and rebuilt in the 16th century with the addition of a beautiful Gothic cloister. It is still church-owned and has a functioning church within it. There are two restaurants, a lovely open courtyard, and an excellent staff.

Meals: L, D

Hiking Details: 4.5-7 miles, 1.5-3 hours, 600 feet ascent, 600 feet descent

Driving Time: 1.5 hours

DAY 1 BURGOS, SPAIN / HONTANAS / FROMISTA / CARRIÓN DE LOS CONDES

Welcome pilgrims! We meet at 9:00 am in historic Burgos and receive our pilgrim's passport for the symbolic journey ahead. The Kingdom of Castile was born in this charming town, which marked the Moorish frontier in 884, and Burgos remained the capital of Castile until 1087. The riverside promenade, El Paseo del Espolón, is one of Spain's loveliest, and the Old Quarter of Burgos is dominated by a masterpiece of a Gothic cathedral which has been recognized as a World Heritage Site. We enjoy a tour of the cathedral then drive to our trailhead on the Castilian meseta (high plain). As we start our hike, we begin to see the trail markers of El Camino with stylized yellow scallop shells, the symbol of St. James. We join in with pilgrims from around the world to hike through the Castilian landscape, and approach the remote village of Hontanas on foot, with lunch in a little pilgrims' restaurant.

From Hontanas, we head to Castrojeriz, passing the 14th century ruins of St. Anthony's Monastery, then continue to Frómista, a key pilgrim stop since the days of the Codex Calixtinus and the next important pilgrimage stop after Burgos. We pass humble villages of adobe and a Romanesque church. We visit Frómista's perfect Romanesque church, the golden San Martin, founded in 1035 and restored in 1893. The church is now a national monument, its barrel-vaulted interior full of extraordinary sculptural detail of occult and medieval symbols. We overnight in the ancient town of Carrión de los Condes, with its two 12th century Romanesque churches. Our accommodation is in a restored monastery converted into a splendid hotel.

Itinerary



Overnight: Hotel Spa Ciudad Astorga (or Eurostars Vía de la Plata)

Just steps from Antoni Gaudí's Episcopal Palace of Astorga, the Hotel Spa Ciudad Astorga is a lovely place from which to explore the churches, convents, and the chocolate museum of Astorga or simply kick back with a glass of Tempranillo.

This boutique hotel offers 33 small yet modern rooms with Wi-Fi and views of the courtyard. The hotel's own tapas bar, with high wooden tables and a brightly-colored tile floor, invites you to sample the local specialties of the region.

Meals: B, L, D

Hiking Details: 2.5-4.5 miles, 1.5-2.5 hours,
300 feet ascent, 100 feet descent

Driving Time: 2 hours

DAY 2 LEÓN / ASTORGA

A journey across the treeless plains of Castile brings us to the engaging city of León. One of our visits will be to the city's 9th century San Isidoro Basilica, famed for its superb Romanesque Royal Pantheon and 12th century frescoes. We also enjoy time to stroll around León's leafy squares and the city's French Gothic cathedral, with its treasury of superb walls of stained glass. From León, we drive to the Medieval stone bridge in Hospital de Órbigo and begin our hike on the Camino. We'll enjoy lunch in a lovely countryside town before we head to our hotel in the walled city of Astorga. In the late afternoon, we visit the pilgrim museum, housed in a fairytale neo-Gothic palace designed by famed architect Antonio Gaudí in 1889. Like León, Astorga had its own bishopric by the 3rd century and remained important throughout the Middle Ages because of the pilgrimage, as evidenced in its fine medieval architecture.

Itinerary



Overnight: Parador Villafranca del Bierzo

Located in the pilgrim town of Villafranco del Bierzo, this 28-room hotel has been refurbished into completely modern style, with large, spacious rooms. While not offering the historic ambiance that most paradors do, it is nevertheless a very comfortable accommodation with air-conditioned rooms and a restaurant. If you have time, take a dip in the hotel's small lap pool, perfect for those who like to stretch those walking muscles.

Meals: B, L, D

Hiking Details: 8.5 miles, 5.5-6.5 hours, 1,100 feet ascent, 250 feet descent

Driving Time: 1 hour

DAY 3 RABANAL / CRUZ DE FERRO / VILLAFRANCA DEL BIERZO

We begin hiking the most historic part of El Camino today, and enjoy our interactions with the many pilgrims along the trail. Engaging with these pilgrims from around the globe is one of the highlights of the journey. From Rabanal del Camino, we climb a path through the woods to emerge on a dramatic moor of heather and Scotch broom, typical of the wild landscape. In this rugged and isolated region, we hike past ancient slate- or thatch-roofed houses and tiny villages abandoned long ago as people moved to cities and towns. Our hike ends at the famous Cruz de Ferro, an iron cross mounted on a 40-foot wooden pole atop Monte Irago and one of the most emblematic spots on the pilgrim trail. For a thousand years, pilgrims have carried a single stone here from their homeland to place below the cross and make a wish—don't forget to bring a stone from home! In the afternoon, we head to the charming town of Villafranca del Bierzo, which in its heyday had six pilgrim hospices and eight monasteries. The town's 12th century Romanesque church is famed as the place where pilgrims too ill to continue to Santiago could touch the church door to receive the same blessings as those who continued all the way. Indeed, there is a cemetery next to the church where many pilgrims are buried. From here, we walk along vineyards to the peaceful Parador de Villafranca.

Note: The hiking distances listed after each day are for trip members who hike the itinerary as described, accompanied by one of the Trip Leaders. Using our support van or taxis, however, you can hike less than the indicated mileage when possible. If you do decide to hike less, you will be spending the extra time exploring our next town (perhaps enjoying a cafe) on your own.

Itinerary



Overnight: Hotel Alfonso IX (or Hotel Roma 1930)

Set beside the Río Sarria on the appropriately named Rua do Peregrino (Pilgrim Street), this modern 60-room hotel is centrally located and convenient to shops, cafes, and the Old Town. There's a swimming pool for a dip after a long day of walking, and the hotel's restaurant has a varied buffet breakfast that will keep you well fueled for the day.

Meals: B, L, D

Hiking Details: 7 miles, 4.5-5.5 hours, 1,300 feet ascent, 200 feet descent; Optional 1.5 mile extension

Driving Time: 1.5 hours

DAY 4 O CEBREIRO / SAMOS / SARRIA

The province of Galicia has a Celtic heritage similar to that of Brittany in France or Cornwall in England. Celtic invaders around 1000 BC found a home here that was similar to the green, rain-swept land they had left. Most of Galicia is settled in tiny farming villages with populations of less than 200. Granite walls surround little plots of land and fields of cabbage, and we see *horreos* (granite granaries) set up on pillars to protect them from rodents. Many remote crossroads feature sculpted granite crosses. Today's hike follows a branch of El Camino that leads to the mystical Celtic village of O Cebreiro, which once ranked with Roncesvalles as a resting place for pilgrims. This mountain-top village has a 12th-century Romanesque church, ancient Celtic *pallozas* (oval stone huts with conical straw roofs), and a small Benedictine monastery that was built over an ancient Celtic temple. O Cebreiro is associated with the ancient legend of the Holy Grail (the chalice used by Jesus at the Last Supper). Legend has it that during the 14th-century, as a monk served communion at the church, the wine in the cup turned to blood, and this event became known as the Miracle of the Holy Grail. After lunch, we drive to the hamlet of San Cristóbal de Real and hike to Samos, with its majestic 6th-century Benedictine monastery still active with 30 monks in residence. A 20-minute drive brings us to Sarria, a town with a medieval core where two branches of El Camino meet. Our hotel is set near the El Camino in the heart of town.

Itinerary



Overnight: Hotel Ferramenteiro

This simple hotel is well situated right on the Camino in the small town and charming of Portomarín, which is often filled with fellow pilgrims. Guest rooms are small and have either balconies or terraces with views over the green hills and out over the Rio Mino, where in the morning you can watch the pilgrims crossing the bridge to start their day's hike.

Meals: B, L, D

Hiking Details: 14 miles, 7.5-8.5 hours, 900 feet ascent, 1,000 feet descent

DAY 5 SARRIA / PORTOMARIN

From Sarria, we begin our day's hike toward the whitewashed town of Portomarín. This is one of the most spectacular stretches of the entire pilgrim trail, with green, gently rolling countryside and lovely hamlets. Jewel-green fields and ancient stone walls line the way and we see farmers tending their small herds of cows. We arrive in Portomarín in the afternoon. Most of the town is new, but the main square has medieval facades, transported here from their original location in 1966 to save them from being inundated by a new dam. Amazingly, the entire church of St. Nicolas was dismantled, stone by stone, and brought here and reconstructed in the corner of the main square. After our successful pilgrim day, we enjoy a celebratory drink in Portomarín's main square.

Itinerary



DAY 6 GALICIAN COUNTRYSIDE

We head into lovely rural Galician countryside on backroads that pass through hamlets and farms flanked by ancient grain silos built of granite. The eucalyptus forests here herald the proximity of the ocean. The churches along the way are small and fascinating, and numerous wayside crosses testify that Christianity is deeply anchored in the land of Galicia. Tonight's hotel is set in the splendid countryside of A Coruña.

**Overnight: Pazo Santa María
(or Hotel Lar da Moto, Pazo de Sedor)**

Nestled in the countryside just outside Arzúa, this restored historic manor house dates back to 1742. Guestrooms are well appointed, and there are beautiful gardens and a fountain—a lovely retreat. The restaurant serves traditional Galician dishes.

Meals: B, L, D

Hiking Details: 8.5 miles, 4.5-5.5 hours,
400 feet ascent, 500 feet descent

Itinerary



Overnight: Parador de Santiago de Compostela

Adjacent to Santiago's soaring Romanesque cathedral is the 5-star Parador de Santiago de Compostela, one of the oldest hotels in the world. Staying at this parador brings you into the heart of Santiago's rich history. It's location right on the central square makes it a great place for people watching—sit with a glass of wine looking out over the square and the cathedral of St. James as pilgrims reach the conclusion of their long journey, a moment of extraordinary emotion. The breakfast buffet is legendary here, from chocolate churros to fine Serrano hams and cheeses.

Meals: B, L

DAY 7 SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA

In the morning, we head into Santiago, where all roads lead to the vast central plaza and extraordinary twin-towered limestone cathedral containing the remains of St. James. Santiago is one of Spain's most beautiful cities, built of golden granite and declared a national monument in its entirety. We have a guided visit upon arrival and the rest of the afternoon is free if you wish to explore town or attend the daily noon or evening mass held for pilgrims in the cathedral. Even people who are not religious are moved by the emotional nature and pomp of this spectacle, with the organ music swelling into the vaulted ceilings and the jostling crowd of pilgrims from around the world joined in song. If we're lucky, we may see the dramatic swinging of the huge, smoking botafumeiro, a 200-pound incense burner hauled up a pole by eight red-robed priests. As it is swung from one side of the cathedral to the other, the smoking incense often glows—quite a spectacle! (Our local sources will keep us posted if this will occur while we're here). Witnessing the scene as many pilgrims conclude their journey is tremendously moving. Dinner is on your own this evening, and your Trip Leader will be happy to recommend restaurants according to your tastes, as local or as fancy as you wish to go! We overnight in a most impressive parador in the heart of town.

Itinerary



Overnight: Parador de Santiago de Compostela

Meals: B, L, D

Hiking Details: 3-6.5 miles, 1.5-3 hours, 500 feet ascent, 300 feet descent

Driving Time: 2.5 hours

DAY 8 FINISTERRE / LANGOSTEIRA BEACH

Walking right from our hotel, we thread our way through Santiago's medieval streets to the outskirts of the city. Crossing the River Sarela, we traverse a lovely oak forest to reach a tiny village, looking back for a glimpse of the towers of Santiago's cathedral. Setting out on the dramatic last kilometers of El Camino, we get our first vision of the Atlantic Ocean, and the goal of our pilgrimage. We'll visit the Finisterre Lighthouse, with its famed Kilometer 0, as countless pilgrims have through the centuries. This is an extraordinary moment for all who have walked the Way, and a wonderful experience to share. At Langosteira Beach, we'll take off our shoes and walk the final stretch of El Camino barefoot along the sands. We'll have a celebratory lunch of fresh seafood at a cozy restaurant at the end of the beach. Our accommodation is the extraordinary 5-star Parador de Santiago de Compostela (Hostal dos Reis Catolicos), one of the most beautiful hotels in the world, built in 1499 by King Ferdinand and Queen Isabela and set adjacent to Santiago's soaring Romanesque cathedral. We gather this evening for our Farewell Dinner.

Meals: B

DAY 9 DEPART

We depart after breakfast and transfer to the airport for departure on homeward-bound flights.

Pricing

TRIP COST

Prices are per person, based on double occupancy

2024

\$5,195 (10-15 members)

\$5,595 (4-9 members)

Single Supplement: \$685

2025

\$5,395 (10-15 members)

\$5,795 (4-9 members)

Single Supplement: \$775

Please call for future years pricing

Please call for future years pricing

To offer the lowest possible cost, our trips are priced according to the number of participants on the trip. All costs are per person, based on double occupancy. If you wish to have a single room, you must pay the single supplement fee. Please note that Wilderness Travel staff, or guests of Wilderness Travel such as travel writers, photographers, or leaders-in-training, are not included in the tier pricing count.

PAYMENT TERMS

At time of reservation: \$600

90 days prior to departure: Balance

CANCELLATION & TRANSFER FEE SCHEDULE

Up to 91 days prior to departure: No Charge!

61-90 days prior to departure: 25% of trip cost

46-60 days prior to departure: 50% of trip cost

45 days or less: 100% of trip cost

TRAVEL INSURANCE

We highly recommend you purchase travel insurance. You can take advantage of a comprehensive Travel Protection Plan designed for Wilderness Travel by Travelex, or purchase other insurance on your own. See our website for details:

www.wildernesstravel.com/insurance

TRIP COST INCLUDES

- Expert leadership of a Wilderness Travel Trip Leader and local guides
- Accommodations in inns, manor houses, and paradors
- All meals included except 1 dinner as indicated in Detailed Itinerary
- A glass of wine or beer with dinner
- All ground transportation and baggage handling from meeting until departure
- All activities as indicated in Detailed Itinerary

TRIP DOES NOT INCLUDE

- Travel to and from the arrival and departure location as indicated in Detailed Itinerary
- Additional hotel nights outside the trip's scheduled dates
- Optional gratuities to Trip Leaders or staff
- Optional travel insurance
- Other expenses of a personal nature (some alcoholic beverages, laundry, etc.)

CURRENCY EXCHANGE RATE

Because the prices published for our program are set so far in advance of the trip dates, we are occasionally faced with exceptional cost increases and/or currency fluctuations that affect the actual cost of running the trip. In most years, no price changes are necessary. However, we do reserve the right to raise or lower the trip price if there is a significant change in costs or exchange rates. If this is the case, your final invoice will reflect the difference in trip cost.

Arrival & Departure

ARRIVAL & MEETING PLACE

Suggested Airport: Madrid-Barajas Adolfo Suárez Airport (MAD)

Suggested Date & Time: Anytime prior to Day 1

Meeting Place: You will meet your Trip Leader in the lobby of Hotel NH Collection Palacio de Burgos in Burgos at 9:00 am on Day 1.

Trip members are responsible for meeting the Trip Leader in the hotel lobby at 9:00 am on Day 1. Due to the early morning rendezvous, we recommend arriving in Burgos the night before.

The easiest way to travel to Burgos from Madrid is via bus or train. Buses depart hourly from Terminal 4 at the Madrid Barajas Airport to Burgos, with a stop in Burgos close to our hotel, and takes 2.5 hours and costs approximately €40. Visit ALSA Bus company (www.alsa.es/en) for information. Trains from Madrid to Burgos is approximately 2.5 hours by Alvia fast train or 3.5-4 hours by the normal train. Visit Rail Europe (www.raileurope.com) for reservations and ticketing or Spanish National Railway (www.renfe.com/EN/viajeros). NH Collection Palacio de Burgos Hotel from the Burgos train station is 5 miles, approximately €15, by taxi.

DEPARTURE

Suggested Airport: Santiago de Compostela Airport (SCQ)

Suggested Date & Time: Day 9, after 9:00 am

On Day 9, a morning transfer will be provided at 7:30 am from the Parador de Santiago de Compostela to the Santiago de Compostela Airport. (There is a breakfast buffet at the Parador starting at 7:00 am.) It only takes 20 minutes to get to the airport and you don't need to be there until 90 minutes prior to departure for domestic flights (a minimum of 45 minutes is required for luggage check-in).

Trip members departing earlier or later in the day are responsible for transferring on their own. Taxis are available for direct hotel to airport service (9 miles, approximately €25). If you are flying via Madrid we suggest a flight from Santiago to Madrid.

INTERNATIONAL AIR TRAVEL

If you would like assistance booking your flights, there are many online consolidators for booking travel, but for more personal help arranging air transport, you can contact Exito Travel at 1-800-655-4053 in the US or 1-800-670-2605 in Canada. They are very adept at putting flight itineraries together, to even the most far-flung places. More information can be found on Exito's website at exitotravel.com.

Please remember that the name on your airline ticket must match the name on your passport exactly, and your passport must be valid for at least six months after your date of return to the US. Please do not purchase your tickets until you are confirmed on the trip (as specific as arrival and departure details could change) and we have sent final arrival and departure instructions.

Once your tickets have been purchased, please forward us a copy of your email flight confirmation from the airline. It is your responsibility to ensure your flight times coordinate with the arrival and departure logistics for this trip.

MADRID AIRPORT

Please note there are several terminals in the Madrid Airport. Terminals 4 and 4S are completely separate from Terminals 1, 2 and 3. To transfer between them, exit the airport and take the free 15-minute shuttle. To transfer between terminals 4 and 4S, take the free 3-minute shuttle. Between terminals 1, 2 and 3 you can also walk, but the airport is large. Please be aware of the terminal you are arriving and departing from and plan your connection time accordingly, allowing time for flight delays into Madrid.

See these websites for more information: gomadrid.com/transport/barajas-airport-terminals123.html and gomadrid.com/transport/terminal-4.html

Trip Leaders

Wilderness Travel Trip Leaders have a passion and a joy for creating an unforgettable journey. We are extremely proud of them and the incredible travel experiences they make possible. For more information, including client comments about them and which specific trips they will be leading, please visit wildernesstravel.com/leaders.



ROB NOONAN

Rob Noonan came by his love of nature and the mountains early, adventuring throughout most of the Americas from Alaska to Tierra del Fuego and later earning a degree in environmental studies from Prescott College in Arizona. He has guided our Patagonia journeys since 1994, our hikes in the spectacular European Alps since 2007, and he is also our "northern ambassador" to Iceland and Greenland. In between trips, Rob lives in Flagstaff, Arizona, where he enjoys hiking and river rafting.



PATRICIA RACZKOWSKI

Patricia Raczowski was born in Canada of a Spanish mother and Polish father and has lived in Spain since she was ten months old. Her first taste of the mountains came in high school, when she went on monthly hikes with the nuns from her school in Madrid, and she spent her senior year as an exchange student in Washington State, living with an American family. After going to veterinary college in Madrid and practicing as a veterinary nurse in England, her love of nature pulled her back to Spain. You can often find Patricia engaging with the locals along the trail and in towns, as she often she knows everyone along the way, from hotel and restaurant staff to local guides. She lives in the south of Spain in the high mountains of Granada (Sierra Nevada), and when not guiding, she heads out on her own adventures, hiking and traveling around the world.



DAVID ATELA

David Atela is a geologist, secondary school teacher, and author of numerous books about Spain's mountains. With roots in Bilbao, he has devoted his life to promoting the wild environments of the north of Spain, from the Pyrenees to the mountains of Cantabria. David has led trips for WT for the last 12 years and is a warm and gifted leader as well as an expert on the Camino de Santiago, with an encyclopedic knowledge of that region and its traditions. When not guiding, he lives in the south central Pyrenees, where he enjoys skiing, rock climbing, and long hikes.



SANTIAGO BEJARANO

Santiago Bejarano trained in Environmental Sciences in his native Ecuador and began his guiding career by bringing visitors to the jungle and highlands of Ecuador and the storied Galapagos Islands, where he worked as a naturalist. He later moved to Britain, which has been his home now for many years, and divides his time between Ecuador and Europe. Santiago guides for us on the high trails of the Alps of France, Italy, Spain, and Switzerland and into the epic fjords of Norway. "Guiding gives me the chance to be a link between cultures and to share my passion for nature. It also allows me to spend a lot of time in a place I really love—out in nature itself." He is fluent in English, Spanish, and German.

Trip Leaders



HAYA BLANCO

Haya was born in Santiago de Compostela in 1984, and has been in love with all things Galician ever since. She studied Fine Arts at the University of Salamanca and Pontevedra, then returned to Galicia, where she earned her Master's degree in Secondary Education at the University of Vigo. With her artistic soul and passion for adventure, Haya was a writer and illustrator of children's books when she discovered that working as a travel guide is the perfect fit for her. When she's not sharing her love of Spain with fellow adventurers, she continues her artistic work in her studio. Haya also works as a guide at Santiago de Compostela's Contemporary Art Museum.



MARIAN GIBERT

Marian Gibert was born in Bilbao, Spain, grew up in Venezuela, and later lived in Britain, where she studied Business Administration at Cambridge. She also lived and worked in a ski resort in the Swiss Alps, picking up the Swiss-German and French languages along with her fluent English. Her passion for outdoor sports led her to operate, at age 23, her own mountain hotel in a small village in the Alpujarras, where she guided horseback riding and mountain biking trips. "My passion is to be outdoors sharing the traditions, culture, art and gastronomy of the areas we visit. One of my favorite trips is the Pilgrim's Way. Since I walked alone from the French Pyrenees to Santiago de Compostela, I got addicted to that trail and every chance I have, I walk a few stages." After backpacking on six continents, Marian has settled in France. When not guiding, apart from exploring new hikes with her daughter and shepherd dogs, she is learning Euskara, the language of the Basque Country.



SOFIA JALDO

Sofia is an Andalusian to the core, and has a great love of her home city of Granada in Southern Spain. As a graduate of the University of Granada in Technical Architecture, she shares her time between restoring heritage buildings in the historic city center and spending time in the outdoors—mountain biking, hiking, and climbing—she enjoys a bit of everything! She also loves traveling and has trekked in India, the Dolomites, and the Pyrenees, as well as toured parts of Cuba and Portugal by bicycle. She says that meeting people from other cultures opens her mind and heart, and finds that working as a Trip Leader is the perfect combination of all of her passions—incredible architecture, amazing landscapes, outdoor adventure, and meeting fellow travelers.

What to Expect

WHAT THE TRIP IS LIKE

This trip is rated **Level 3, Moderate**, according to our trip grading system. You will need to be comfortable hiking 14 miles a day and being on your feet for up to 8 hours a day. You will also need to be able to keep up with the moderate but steady pace of the group as there are no alternative hiking options available. Trail conditions, weather, and the group's level of fitness can affect hiking times and pacing.

Average Hiking Day

- 8 miles
- 4-6 hours
- 1,000 feet gain/loss

Challenge Day

- Day 5 - 14 miles, 8.5 hours, 900 feet gain, and 1,000 feet loss

TERRAIN

Our hikes are over easy to moderate terrain, with well-marked paths throughout. We will occasionally walk a few miles on pavement, but most of the hiking will be on dirt paths. The first two days of the trip include a half day of hiking and a half day of learning about the history of the Camino in the local towns. The rest of the days include a morning hike until around 1:00pm and an afternoon hike from 2:30pm until 5:00pm.

GETTING IN SHAPE

We strongly urge you to train for your trip, as your enjoyment will be highly dependent on your level of fitness. The best training for a hike is to hike, especially over hills or rough terrain. Next best are running, swimming, bicycling, or other cardiovascular exercise. Stair climbing machines are excellent preparation for hiking uphill. Your feet should also be well prepared—make sure your hiking boots are sturdy, comfortable, and thoroughly broken-in.

WEATHER

While we have timed our trip for ideal hiking weather, you should be prepared for a variety of conditions. In spring and fall, the days are usually warm and dry but not too hot. Nights can be quite cool. There is typically sunshine, but showers can occur at any time.

ACCOMMODATIONS

You will be welcomed each night in our carefully selected hotels and paradors, including two nights at the extraordinary Parador Dos Reis Catolicos. While not luxurious, the rest of our accommodations are in nice hotels that are comfortable and well located on the Camino. Since they are often in historic buildings, the rooms are not always of uniform or international size. Our leaders do their best to assign rooms in a fair way so that all participants experience an equal advantage throughout the trip as a whole. Single rooms can be requested but are not always available, due to the limited space in the hotels. If you prefer a single room, please make your request as early as possible.

What to Expect

CUISINE

A buffet breakfast is served at our hotel each morning with fruit, bread, whole grains, cold cuts, cheese, butter, ham, olive oil, tomato, yogurt, coffee, and tea. We'll enjoy lunches in cafés or restaurants along the trail that offer local foods including cheeses, fresh vegetables, salamis, ham, fresh fruit, and bread. These are the typical restaurants where pilgrims stop to eat, and they give us a great chance to be part of the community. Pilgrims come from all over the world to hike El Camino, and are always very friendly and willing to share their experiences. Some of the items you'll see on the menu are hearty soups, a variety of cheeses and hams from the region (including jamón serrano), salads, pimientos del padrón (roasted green peppers), and trout served the Spanish way (expect to see the whole fish!). We often don't convene for our lunches until around 1:00 pm as lunch starts late in Spain. Dinner is at our hotel or a nearby restaurant and includes other local specialties like lamb and fresh seafood. Please note that in Spain, the dinner hour is considerably later than what it is in the US. We do our best to secure early reservations for our groups, but most often the evening meal will be at 8:00 pm.

TRANSPORTATION

Our van will transport the group's luggage, so you only need to carry a daypack for items you need during the day (rain gear, sweater, camera, water bottle, etc.). Trip members are always free to skip a day's hike and travel to the next destination in the support vehicle (or remain at the hotel if we are not transferring that day).

HIKING DETAILS BY DAY				DRIVING DETAILS
DAY	MILES	HOURS	ELEV. ASCENT/DESCENT	HOURS
1	1.5-3 hours	4.5-7 miles	+600'/-600'	1.5 hours
2	1.5-2.5 hours	2.5-4.5 miles	+300'/-100'	2 hours
3	5.5-6.5 hours	8.5 miles	+1100'/-250'	1 hour
4	4.5-5.5 hours	7 miles (+ optional 1.5 miles uphill)	+1300'/-200'	1.5 hours
5	7.5-8.5 hours	14 miles	+900'/-1,000'	
6	4.5-5.5 hours	8.5 miles	+400'/-500'	45 mins
7	.5 hours	0.5 miles		50 mins
8	1.5-3 hours	3-6.5 miles	+500'/-300'	2.5 hours
9				25 min to airport

AVERAGE DAILY MAX/MIN °F												
	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Leon	45/32	48/34	54/36	57/37	64/43	73/50	73/54	79/54	75/50	63/45	52/37	46/34
Santiago de Compostela	54/41	54/41	57/43	61/45	64/48	70/54	75/57	75/57	72/55	66/50	59/45	54/43
RAINFALL - INCHES												
Leon	2.4	2.5	1.5	2.1	2.0	1.5	1.0	0.7	1.6	2.2	2.4	2.4
Santiago de Compostela	9.5	9.0	6.4	5.3	5.0	2.9	1.3	1.6	4.1	6.9	7.2	9.1

Additional Information

CHOOSING THE RIGHT TRIP

Adventure travel often involves exotic destinations, unusual levels of physical exertion, or activities you may not have participated in previously. We work hard to help you choose the right trip for you, paying attention to your individual interests, abilities, and needs. If you have questions about the level of comfort or any of the activities described in this itinerary, please call Wilderness Travel at 1-800-368-2794 or email us at info@wildernesstravel.com. Europe Manager or email us at europe@wildernesstravel.com.

REFERENCES

We'd be happy to put you in touch with a past client that has traveled with us.

VISIT OUR WEBSITE

At www.wildernesstravel.com, you can book your trip online or find out about added departures, last-minute deals, and one-time Limited Edition adventures that aren't listed in our catalog. You can also access our complete library of detailed itineraries filled with enticing photos and videos, read bios of our Trip Leaders, find descriptions of trip accommodations, and check real-time availability of any trips that interest you.

Toucan Club Rewards & Discounts



MEN'S T-SHIRT



WOMEN'S T-SHIRT



PATAGONIA SYNCHILLA FLEECE VEST
+ KLEEN KANTEEN 27OZ WATER BOTTLE



PATAGONIA R1 PULLOVER

We are very proud to have one of the highest rates of repeat travelers in the business, and have established the Wilderness Travel Toucan Club to reward you for your loyalty. For more information, please visit the Toucan Club page of our website at www.wildernesstravel.com/toucan.

Here's how it works:

YOUR FIRST TRIP

As a first-time traveler, you receive a lightweight Wilderness Travel T-shirt and set of durable WT Luggage Tags. On subsequent trips, we're happy to send you a new WT T-shirt and set of Luggage Tags by request.

YOUR SECOND TRIP

A top quality Wilderness Travel stainless steel water bottle by Klean Kanteen and a cozy Wilderness Travel fleece vest by Patagonia (\$100 value).

YOUR THIRD TRIP

A versatile Wilderness Travel R-1 pullover by Patagonia (\$130 value).

YOUR FOURTH TRIP

Discounts on the cost of your trip begin! You receive a 4% discount on the tour cost.

FIVE AND MORE TRIPS

You receive a 5% discount on the base trip cost. On your sixth trip, you receive a 6% discount, and so on up to your 10th trip. The maximum discount is 10%, with a ceiling of \$500.

Note: Due to special pricing considerations, Toucan Club discounts do not apply to our Private Journeys or Special Events. However, your participation on these trips does count toward your Toucan discount on future departures of Wilderness Travel's regular adventures.

TERMS & CONDITIONS

Toucan Club travel discounts cannot be used in conjunction with any other discount, unless otherwise specified. Discounts are deducted from the base trip cost and shown on the final invoice. The base trip cost is the main land/tier cost and does not include single supplement fees, extensions, internal airfare, or other additional charges. Bonus gifts (T-shirts, luggage tags, vests, water bottles, and pullovers) will be mailed approximately three weeks prior to trip departure. Terms and conditions of Toucan Club bonuses are subject to change or cancellation at the discretion of Wilderness Travel, Inc.

Traditions of El Camino

THE PILGRIM'S WAY

El Camino de Santiago—the way of St. James—is the name for the hundreds of miles of collective pathways that have guided pilgrims to the holy city of Santiago de Compostela for more than 1,000 years. The reason for the great pilgrimage was (and still is, for many) a matter of faith in the miraculous power of St. James.

Legend has it that St. James, first cousin of Jesus and son of Salome, came to Spain at some point after Christ's crucifixion to preach the gospel. Seven years later, he returned to Jerusalem, where he is thought to have been killed by Herod Agrippa. The legend continues that a miraculous boat without crew or sails then carried his body to the harbor of Padron, about 10 miles from Santiago. In 813, the bones were rediscovered under a buried altar at a spot on a hillside where a hermit claimed to

have seen visions of stars. The hill was thereafter known as Compostela ("field of stars"), and Alfonso II, the king of Asturias, built a chapel on the site. In the following decades, St. James appeared as a vision—a knight on horseback—in many Spanish battles against the Moors, first at the Battle of Clavijo in 844. Before long, the cult of Santiago was born.

The belief in the miracle of St. James was at its height during the First Crusade (1085). The French took to this belief with relish because it united them with the Spaniards against Moorish invasions. The four major paths of El Camino started in France at the medieval towns of Vézelay, Tours, Le Puy, and Arles, and crossed the Pyrenees to converge in northern Spain at Puente la Reina, a bridge built in the 11th century to aid pilgrim crossings. Here the paths joined to form a united path to

Santiago. The total distance from France is about 500 miles.

The scallop shell symbol you'll see along the route to Santiago has ancient mythical associations with the pilgrimage. It symbolizes the end of a long journey to the sea as well as resurrection and rebirth in the sea. The Spanish name for the scallop shell, *venera*, is also associated with Venus, the goddess born in the sea. Even the name for the delicious French dish Coquilles St. Jacques (baked scallops served on a shell) comes from the tradition of French pilgrims walking this route.

The typical garb of a medieval pilgrim on El Camino was a long cape, a brimmed hat with scallop shells attached to it, a walking staff, and a gourd to carry water. Many pilgrims took several months for the trip, stopping to visit the shrines that were built along the way.



Some carried with them the world's first travel guidebook, the *Pilgrim Guide of 1130*, written by a French monk named Aymery Picaud.

The medieval faith in relics, such as the bones of a saint, held that such objects were a direct link to the divine and were possessed of magical powers that could induce miracles, obtain forgiveness for past sins, and perhaps even purify the soul. Pilgrims of the past, after a journey of months, and sometimes much longer, would receive the coveted compostela when they finally arrived at the Compostela Cathedral, a document that gave the bearer remission from purgatory.

THE PILGRIM PASSPORT

At the beginning of the trip, you will be given a document known as the "Pilgrim's Passport," which you will carry

with you and can have stamped at points along the journey, including monuments, churches, and restaurants. Each of these places has a unique stamp (sello) with its own design, color, and pattern. The stamped passport is a continuation of the medieval tradition that allowed pilgrims to pass safely from one region to another.

In Santiago de Compostela, the Pilgrims' Office offers a certificate of completion, La Compostela, written in Latin, only for those who have completed the camino for religious or spiritual reasons. To earn it, walkers (and pilgrims on horseback) must also have completed at least the last 100 kilometers (and cyclists must have completed at least the last 200 kilometers) all in one stretch, without skipping any areas. We can't promise that you will get the certificate because we skip many stages in order

to travel from Burgos to Santiago in a week. We also skip some stages during the last 60 miles where the path goes through industrial areas. But you are welcome to go the Pilgrims' Office with other walkers and try your luck with the clerk in charge to get La Compostela. Of course, just the experience of being on the camino and sharing it with others is a good reason for the journey itself, and the Pilgrim Passport is a beautiful souvenir to take back home, with all its stamps and dates indicating all the places on the route we have visited. Remember to bring along a stone from home to place at the foot of the Cruz de Hierro on Day 3. This tradition symbolizes leaving behind one's past sorrows, and starting life anew.

BUEN CAMINO—"Good Journey"!



Travel Notes

Travel Notes



WILDERNESS TRAVEL HAS BEEN AWARDED:

Best Travel Specialists in the World: *Conde Nast Traveler*, 2024, 4-time winner

World's Best Tour Operators: *Travel + Leisure*, 11-time winner

Best Wildlife, Hiking & Walking Trips: *AFAR Magazine*, 3 years in a row

Best Adventure Travel Companies: *USA Today*

Trip of the Year: *Outside Magazine*, 9-time winner

50 Tours of a Lifetime: *National Geographic Traveler*, 9 years in a row

Best Adventure Travel Companies: *National Geographic Adventure*, 3-time winner

Please be advised that California has established a Travel Consumer Restitution Fund under the California Seller of Travel Law that took effect January 1, 1996. This fund is designed to protect consumers from unscrupulous practices by discount airfare ticket sellers or air charter operators. Unfortunately, this law does not cover non-California residents and, even in the case of California residents, it does not cover any foreign travel where the foreign "providers of transportation or travel services" are not in compliance with the Sellers of Travel Law (compliance being defined as registered as a Seller of Travel in California and a participant in the Travel Consumer Restitution Fund). Thus none of Wilderness Travel's tours qualify and we are required by law to advise each client that they are not covered by the California Travel Consumer Restitution Fund. California law requires sellers of travel to maintain a trust account or bond. This business has a trust account. California Seller of Travel #100769640

While as accurate as possible at the time of printing, this itinerary should be considered an approximate indication of the schedule and scope of activities and trip routing, rather than an inflexible schedule of events; it is subject to change due to circumstances beyond our control. This trip is subject to the Limitation of Liability and all the terms and conditions as detailed in the General Information section of the Wilderness Travel Catalog.

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