



## THE EXPERT FOR THE WAYS OF ST JAMES

### The Way of Saint James of Compostela (spanish part) CAMINO FRANCES From León to Santiago de Compostela



**T**his is the final section before your arrival at Santiago de Compostela. The scenery you pass through has a beautiful diversity and you leave behind you the seemingly endless 'meseta castellana'.

The hills of León, the first relief that you reach, are welcome. Your route takes you through villages which are typical of the area and full of charm: Rabanal del Camino, Molinaseca, Ponferrada, Portomarín and even the renowned stage taking you to O Cebreiro, which marks the entry into Galicia.

What can be said of the splendid heritage which you encounter throughout the whole length of your journey: the famous bridge of the Hospital de Orbigo, the magnificent Astorga, the monastery of Samos...

Then you will arrive in Galicia, a region bearing the marks of celtic culture, where you can experience with intensity the final stages of the great pilgrims' way of Saint James of Compostela. Entering the town of Santiago and progressing towards the Monte de Gozo are likely to be emotional experiences. You will pass through the Porta do Camino, and then enter the streets and alleys of the old city. Your arrival into the huge space in front of the cathedral will mark the climax of your long and beautiful journey along the pilgrims' routes of the St James Way to Santiago de Compostela.



15 Days, 14 Nights, 13 Hiking Days.

### DAY 1 : LEÓN 820 m

Check in to your hotel, which is in the middle of the town of León. Take the opportunity to admire the impressive cathedral, a high point of Spanish gothic architecture, the basilica of San Isidoro, the ancient royal pantheon and, in addition to all these, the Casa de los Botines, a work of the Catalan architect Gaudi. Overnight stay and half board.

### DAY 2 : LEÓN - HOSPITAL DE ORBIGO 823 m

This stage takes you to Hospital de Orbigo and its famous Romanesque bridge (20 arches, 204m long). The first silhouettes of the Picos de Europa mountains start to appear on the skyline. It is possible to hire transport to shorten this stage of the walk. Overnight stay and half board.

*Walking time: ≈ 9h, 35 km.*

### DAY 3 : HOSPITAL DE ORBIGO - ASTORGA 870 m

The walk takes you to Astorga, a splendid little town. Take the time to look at the town's architecture: the beautiful cathedral, the bishop's palace designed by Gaudi. Overnight stay and half board.

*Walking time: ≈ 4h, 17 km.*

### DAY 4 : ASTORGA - RABANAL DEL CAMINO 1153 m

Today you are walking through the region of la Maragatería. You will cross the hills called the Monts de León before arriving at Rabanal del Camino, a charming little stone-built village. Overnight stay and half board.

*Walking time: ≈ 5h, 20 km.*

### DAY 5 : RABANAL DEL CAMINO - PONFERRADA 530 m

First you pass the celebrated Cruz de Ferro, a high point of the walk where every pilgrim puts down a stone. Then you tackle a downhill section going due west, going through Manjarín, El Acebo and then Molinaseca. You arrive at Ponferrada, where you can admire its chateau, which has a Scottish appearance. Overnight



stay and half board.

*Walking time: ≈ 7.5h, 32 km.*

## **DAY 6 : PONFERRADA - VILAFRANCA DEL BIERZO 500 m**

This day's walk takes you through the middle of the plain of Bierzo before you reach Villafranca del Bierzo. This pretty little town is a staging post on the Camino Francés and has a church dedicated to Saint James. Overnight stay and half board.

*Walking time: ≈ 6h, 25 km.*

## **DAY 7 : VILAFRANCA DEL BIERZO - O CEBREIRO 1296 m**

Today we set out on the so-called 'queen' of the stages of the St James Way. This is the climb up to O Cebreiro, an emblematic village of the Way. At the same time it is also the entry into Galicia which is marked by buildings called "Pallozas", dwellings of Neolithic origin which now have thatched roofs. Overnight stay and half board.

*Walking time: ≈ 8h, 27 km.*

## **DAY 8 : O CEBREIRO - TRIACASTELA 662 m (transfer and night in Samos)**

The stage starts beautifully on the crest of a ridge. Then the Way goes down into the green countryside of Galicia, well-wooded with pines and eucalyptus. Finally you reach Triacastela. From Triacastela, you take a taxi to Samos. Overnight stay with half board at Samos.

*Walking time: ≈ 6h, 23 km.*

## **DAY 9 : TRIACASTELA - SARRIA 454 m**

A taxi will transport you to Triacastela, Between Triacastela and Sarria, there are two possible routes. One goes via Samos and its monastery; the other goes through the villages of Montán and Pintín. Overnight stay and half board.

*Walking time: ≈ 5h, 18 km.*

## **DAY 10 : SARRIA - PORTOMARÍN 387 m**

This stage takes you through the heart of Galicia, where green is the predominant colour. You will see the horreos, grain stores perched on four pillars. Passing through bewitchingly beautiful landscape you arrive at Portomarín, a drowned village which has been rebuilt on higher ground. Overnight stay and half board.



*Walking time: ≈ 6h, 23 km.*

## **DAY 11 : PORTOMARÍN - PALAS DE REI 565 m**

The way takes you through eucalyptus plantations between Portomarín and Palas de Rei, a major crossroads in the old days. Overnight stay and half board.

*Walking time: ≈ 6.5h, 25 km.*

## **DAY 12 : PALAS DE REI - ARZÚA 389 m**

This is an undulating section passing through verdant Galicia. Here you can admire the beautiful traditional houses called 'pazos' with their raised granaries. You cross many watercourses before arriving at Arzúa. Overnight stay and half board.

*Walking time: ≈ 8h, 29 km.*

## **DAY 13 : ARZÚA - LAVACOLLA 300 m**

The next to the last stage before you reach Santiago de Compostela. The staging post is at Lavacolla, where pilgrims used to follow the ritual of washing their feet in the river. Overnight stay and half board.

*Walking time: ≈ 7.5h, 29 km.*

## **DAY 14 : LAVACOLLA - SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA 260 m**

This is the final stage, rich in emotion and crowned by the arrival in Santiago, which UNESCO has declared a World Heritage Site. You go over the Monte de Gozo which gives you a view over the whole city. You approach the city centre through the suburbs seeing many interesting sights on your way: the cathedral and the Plaza de Obradoiro, the Hostal de los Reyes Catolicos, the cloister and the archbishop's palace and the Palace of Raxoi... Overnight stay and half board.

*Walking time: ≈ 2.75h, 12 km.*

## **DAY 15 : SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA**

End of the trip after the breakfast.

### **Note:**

1 - It will not be possible to alter the places where you are accommodated or the order of the walking stages etc (for obvious organisational reasons). Once the day's walk has started, you are expected to continue the day's programme as arranged, except where



exceptional circumstances intervene (for example, safety issues linked to adverse weather conditions.

2 - If you wish to shorten a walking stage, you will need to contact and pay for any taxis used when the occasion arises.

## > DATES

From April 1 to October 31, at your convenience and subject to hotel availability.

**Please indicate on the booking form any other dates that would suit you (e.g.: possibility of postponing the tour by one or more days before or after...); this is in case one or more accommodations are fully booked on the chosen dates, as well as your dietary requirements.**

We also ask you to **book as early as possible**. We don't have any reserved places in the accommodations, and some of them may be fully booked several months in advance.

## > PRICE COVERS

- The transfers on J8 and J9 between Triacastela and Samos
- Half-board for all accommodation
- Luggage transfer between each walking stage
- Topo-guide available (1 topo-guide per room booked).

## > PRICE DOES NOT COVER

- Picnic lunch
- Insurance,
- Drinks and personal expenses
- Transfers from your home to the meeting point and dispersal
- Registration fees (+15€ per person)
- Shipping costs abroad (+20€ per file)
- The priority processing fee for any registration on D-15 (+45€ per file)
- Shuttles or cabs to pick up your car or to shorten certain stages
- Parking fees.



## > ARRIVAL / DEPARTURE


You will be met at your hotel in León in the late afternoon, the day before your first day's walk.

If you wish to leave your car in León: hotel parking lot (subject to availability), otherwise private paying parking lot near the hotel; here's information on parking in León (aparcamiento):

Parking San Marcelo, plaza de Santo Domingo, tel. 0034 987 23 40 13, approx. €20 per day (no discount).

Your stay ends in **Santiago de Compostela** after breakfast.

## > LEVEL

 From 4h to 8h walking per day on mountainous terrain once past Astorga; then, in Galicia, undulating terrain without difficulty, no more than 300 m ascent per day (except the climb to O Cebreiro from Villafranca, about 800m ascent).

## > ACCOMMODATION

In 1\*, 2 \*\* and 3\*\*\* (Spanish tourist classification) hotels and “casas rurales”. In some accommodations (rare and exceptional cases), the shower and WC may be on the landing. We will inform you. Dogs are not allowed.

When accommodation is very busy:

Some accommodations may be fully booked on certain dates. In this case, and for your comfort, accommodation / stages may be modified with your agreement.

## > MEALS

Breakfast is served relatively late by French standards, usually from 8:30 am. If you wish to have breakfast earlier, check with each hotel the day before if this is possible.



Be aware that Spanish culinary habits are sometimes quite different from French ones. And meals are delayed by up to 2 hours on the French schedule (breakfast around 8.30am-9am and dinner around 9pm).

## > LUNCH

Packed lunches are not included in our prices. You'll find plenty of food and drink along the way.

## > LUGGAGE TRANSPORT

Only your gear for the day and a picnic lunch. Luggage is transported by vehicle. We ask you to bring only one piece of luggage per person, NOT EXCEEDING 13kg; beyond this number (1 bag) and weight (12kg), the transporter may charge you a supplement at the end of the tour, or categorically refuse to transport your luggage if it is too bulky.

If you are part of a group, we ask you to indicate on your luggage tags the NAME of the person responsible for the group (the person who booked the tour).

## > ACCESS

*As train and bus timetables are subject to variations throughout the year and depending on the day of the week, we invite you to contact the various public transport operators directly to prepare your journey to and from the meeting point.*

### \*How to come :

 -by train

 -by car

 -by plane

### \*RETURN

 -by train

 -by bus

 -by plane



## > TRAVEL FILE

A topoguide is provided on payment of the balance (**1 copy per room booked**): it contains descriptions of the paths (the entire route is signposted) and comments on villages, monuments, etc. As well as the travel pack containing all the documents you need for your tour: luggage tags, practical information sheet with logistical details and accommodation addresses.

If you would like an additional travel pack, you will be charged + 20€ / pack.

## > TAKEOUT LIST

- a small rucksack for a picnic and the day's essentials
- a small first-aid kit (plasters, double skin, eosin, alcohol...)
- a pair of "medium mountain" walking shoes (beware of new shoes)
- sunglasses, sun cream and hat
- rainwear
- Light shoes for the evening
- a water bottle: it's important to drink 1.5 to 2 litres of water a day
- a knife
- torch (not essential)
- a pair of binoculars (optional)
- newspaper for your shoes if they get wet
- tissues
- a needle, a small amount of thread and one or two safety pins
- Masks
- hydro-alcoholic gel.

## MORE DETAILS AT THE SUBSCRIPTION

