

Join us on a Pilgrimage to

El Camino - *The Way* of St. James - Spain



May 8 – 18, 2023

\$5,009 PER PERSON FROM **SAN FRANCISCO (SFO)**

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 SCAN ME

SAMPLE DAY-BY-DAY ITINERARY

Day 1: Monday – May 8 – Depart for Madrid

Board your flight from San Francisco for your overnight flight(s) to Madrid. Dinner and breakfast will be served on board.

Day 2: Tuesday – May 9 - Arrival Madrid

(Tour Day: 2 miles | 3.2 kilometers | 4,500 steps)

Upon arrival in Madrid, you will collect your luggage in the baggage claim area, and continue to the Arrival's Hall where you will be greeted by your driver. Transfer to your hotel. In the afternoon you will walk to the Cathedral of Almudena where you will celebrate Mass, followed by a tour of the Cathedral. We will continue our walking tour of Madrid to include the exterior of the Royal Palace. Walk through the Plaza Mayor, Puerta del Sol, and we make a final stop at the Church of Saint James. Return to your hotel. We will enjoy a nice meal before having a restful overnight in Madrid before your walking tour begins.

Day 3: Wednesday – May 10 – Madrid - Foncebadon – Iron Cross – Ocebreiro – Sarria

(Walking Day: 2.8 miles | 4.5 kilometers | 6,500 steps)

This morning, you will enjoy breakfast and then transfer to Sarria. Sarria is located in the northwest of Spain and is noted for being the entry point to the oriental side of the region, Galicia. Your transfer will end and you will begin on foot from Foncebadon. In the eleventh century, this village was a common resting place for pilgrims on El Camino due to its hospitals, hospice, and church. Currently, the structures that have served so many are now in ruins. While in Foncebadon, you will walk to view the "Iron Cross." This Cross is a common pausing place for pilgrims as they leave a stone at the foot of the cross to symbolize a sin or burden that they are leaving behind. Your tour continues as you leave your burdens behind and continue onward to the village nestled in the mountains, O Cebreiro. Many pilgrims pause at this site due to the Eucharistic Miracle that occurred in the year 1300. Additionally, be sure to have your cameras ready as this village is suspended 1,300 meters in the air and provides a breathtaking panoramic view. Your first walking day culminates with a delicious meal and an overnight in Sarria.

Day 4: Thursday – May 11 - Portomarin – Palas de Rei

(Walking Day: 15 miles | 23.5 kilometers | 35,000 steps)

This morning, you will enjoy breakfast at your hotel and journey from Portomarin, through the woods to the Palas de Rei. This was a noteworthy town in the Middle Ages, as it contained a Royal Hospital and the church of St. Tirso. As the rugged walk continues, you will continue through fields, forests, and granaries. Additionally, you will see a prominent characteristic of Galician Landscape, Los Cruceiros. These wayside crosses depict Christ and the Virgin Mary. Dinner and enjoy a restful overnight in Palas de Rei.

Day 5: Friday – May 12 – Sarria – Portomarin

(Walking Day: 16 miles | 25 kilometers | 37,500 steps)

Today is the day that your walking pilgrimage (El Camino) to Santiago de Compostela officially begins! With the guidance of Our Lord, and through the spirit of St. James the apostle, you will become an authentic pilgrim by journeying along the physical road, as well as, the spiritual one. Your first official day of walking will culminate in Portomarin. This town dates back to the Roman Ages and was an important halt along the route in the Middle Ages. Due to the creation of a dam in 1962, the Old Portomarin is currently underneath the Mino River. As a result of the dam creation, many of the old buildings were moved, brick by brick. Among these buildings is the Church of St. John of Jerusalem. In Medieval Times, this church was strategically set along the route of El Camino in order to protect the tomb of Santiago. At Portomarin, you will enjoy dinner followed by an overnight.

Day 6: Saturday – May 13 – Palas de Rei – Arzua

(Walking Day: 18.2 miles | 29 kilometers | 44,000 steps)

Breakfast will be served at your hotel. Your pilgrimage continues as you will travel from Palas de Rei to the bustling small town of Arzua.

Before arriving in Arzua, your group will stop at Melide. This town is a crucial point of El Camino because it is where the French and Oviedo routes converge. Upon arrival in Melide, you will notice the old roads that date back to the fourteenth century, which are some of the oldest in the region of Galicia. After lunch, you will leave the Lugo province and enter into the province of A Coruna. As your group continues to Arzua, you will cross the beautiful, medieval bridge over the Iso River to Ribadiso. Following your visit to this Chapel, your day will culminate with the arrival in Arzua, where you will enjoy dinner and an overnight.

Day 7: Sunday – May 14 – Arzua

(Rest Day: 4.5 miles | 7.2 kilometers | 10,500 steps)

Today, you will take a break to rest your bodies and shake off any fatigue. After Mass, there will be time to reflect on the journey thus far and to spend at your own leisure. Dinner and overnight will be provided in Arzua.

Day 8: Monday – May 15 – Arzua – Arca de O Pino

(Walking Day: 14.2 miles | 22.8 kilometers | 33,000 steps)

Your journey is almost over as you walk to the largest community before Santiago, Arca de O Pino! Upon walking this route, you will immerse yourselves in the fragrant eucalyptus groves and experience the breathtaking scenery. At a point throughout your walk, you will stop and enjoy a picnic lunch. Following lunch, you will continue your journey and arrive in Arca de O Pino. As you explore this village, you will notice joy etched on the faces of the pilgrims. Although they have traveled a long distance, they are not weary. With God and St. James guiding their paths, excitement and anticipation continues for their arrival in Santiago.

Day 9: Tuesday – May 16 – Arca de O Pino – Monte del Gozo – Santiago de Compostela

(Walking Day: 10.4 miles | 17 kilometers | 25,000 steps)

Today, you will culminate the walking portion of your journey! Before arriving at your final destination, you will first stop for Mass on Mount Joy (Monte del Gozo). You will know that you are approaching Santiago because, at this point, you will be able to see the spires of the Cathedral. Following lunch, you will complete your walking journey and arrive at the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela. Upon arrival, feel free to say a small prayer in thanksgiving to Our Lord for keeping you safe throughout the walking pilgrimage. At this time, you will check-in to your hotel and enjoy free time to explore Galicia's capital, Santiago. This evening you will enjoy a marvelous dinner, followed by a very restful overnight in Santiago de Compostela.

Day 10: Wednesday – May 17 – Santiago de Compostela

(Tour Day: 8.2 miles | 13.1 kilometers | 19,200 steps)

This morning you will awaken in the beautiful city of Santiago de Compostela! Formed by Galician granite, the Cathedral is one of the finest architectural examples in Europe as it encompasses Romanesque, Gothic and Baroque styles. Additionally, the Cathedral contains numerous and valuable pieces of art that truly captivate the eye. Upon entering the Cathedral, the tradition will lead as you will hug the dazzling statue of St. James. Following this intimate embrace, you will descend into the crypt where the Patron Saint of Pilgrims' relics is kept. Following your visit, you will enjoy free time for lunch on your own before your sightseeing tour of the city. Some stops on your tour include the Obradoiro Square, Fonseca Palace, Gelmirez Palace, Franco Street, and much more. Your evening will be free to spend at your leisure until a final dinner with your group. You will spend a final overnight in Santiago de Compostela.

Day 11: Thursday – May 18 - Return Home

Your last day in Spain will begin with breakfast at your hotel, followed by a transfer to the Santiago Airport for your return flight(s) home to San Francisco. You will say 'hasta luego' (see you later) to your new friends made on this journey.