

The Camino of Santiago de Compostela & the Way of Saint James

11 days / 9 nights

Pilgrimage has a long tradition in many religious traditions. The Camino or “The Way” across Northern Spain to the Cathedral and burial spot of Santiago or Saint James in Northwestern Spain has almost a 1000 year tradition in the Catholic/Christian faith. As a walking pilgrimage it is a grace-ful and joy-ful journey. Making it with friends or with a community of companions in faith makes the pilgrimage even more enjoyable and fruit-ful. As the recent film “The Way” starring Martin Sheen demonstrated so well, pilgrims may start out with certain hopes and goals and discover other graces and blessings totally unexpected. Sharing the journey in a faith-filled retreat and Eucharistic context enhances the depth and power of the experience. Along the camino, at meals, and in the evenings there will be plenty of time for community and friendship.

Our 11-day pilgrimage includes:

- Half-day sightseeing of Madrid and an afternoon visit of the Prado Museum
- 6-days of walking the *Camino*—approximately 10 miles per day
- Daily Retreat talk/reflection and Eucharist
- Receiving of the *Compostela* certificate at the cathedral for having completed at least 100 kms. of the *Camino*
- Great Pilgrims’ Mass at the Cathedral of Santiago in the morning on the final day
- 4-hour guided tour of Santiago in the afternoon
- Great experience of community on the *Camino* with our own group along with other pilgrims from all over the world. Prayer, faith-sharing, socializing, and more.
- Use this retreat/pilgrimage to grow your faith and to appreciate firsthand the history of the Catholic faith lived.
- Breakfast and dinner each day plus a van to transport luggage.

Day 1: Saturday, May 2: Departure from the USA

Our pilgrimage begins with an overnight flight to Madrid, Spain.

Day 2: Sunday, May 3: Madrid

Welcome to **Madrid**, the capital and largest city in Spain! Although we will find Madrid a modern city, we can’t help but be captivated by its rich history, art and spirit. Some contend that the original name of Madrid was "Ursaria" ("land of bears") due to the high number of these animals found in the adjacent forests, which, together with the strawberry tree (madroño), have been emblems of the city from ancient times. We begin our day by visiting many of its remarkable landmarks including the **Prado Museum** which hosts one of the finest art collections in the world including important paintings from Velazquez and Goya among others, classical statues purchased from Italy, medieval religious treasures and even some Romanesque frescoes. We will also explore Buen Retiro Park, founded in 1631, and the immense **Royal Palace of Madrid**. We’ll then check-in to our hotel for dinner and overnight in Madrid.



Day 3: Monday, May 4: Madrid to Sarria

Today we will travel to **Sarria**. We will take a panoramic tour of the city before visiting the **Monastery of Samos**, one of the most important Monasteries of Spain because of its influence on the history and culture of the region. In the middle ages it was the wealthiest and most powerful monastery on the peninsula and educated the sons of nobility along with maintaining an important pilgrim’s hospice, a pharmacy, a forge and many farms. It was severely damaged in a 1536 fire, rebuilt over 200 years, and then in 1951, a fire destroyed the library and monastery refectory. We enjoy a welcome dinner and retire to our hostel for an overnight stay.

** Our 6-day walking pilgrimage begins tomorrow – approximately 10 miles per day **



Day 4: Tuesday, May 5: Sarria, Brea & Portomarín (6.7 miles)

We arise today and enjoy breakfast at our hostel before heading towards Portomarín. Our first stop of the day is in **Brea** to visit the *Church of San Salvador*, then we continue on to **Barbadelo** and the *Church of Santiago*. After enjoying lunch on our own, we will travel through the beautiful Galician countryside to **Ferreiros** where we will visit the *Church of Ferreiros*. Tonight, dinner and overnight will be in **Portomarín**.



Day 5: Wednesday, May 6: Vilachá & Eirexe (10.5 miles)

After breakfast we will make our way to **Vilachá** to visit the *Church of St. Nicholas* (San Xoán) before continuing to **Eirexe** for dinner and overnight.

Day 6: Thursday, May 7: Eirexe to Casanova (8.3 miles)

We depart from Eirexe this morning after breakfast and continue to the *Church of San Xulian do Camino*. We then visit *The Church of Vilar de Donas*, which was once part of the Villar de Donas Monastery and derived its name from being a women's-only monastery. It was passed on to the Order of Santiago and became a very special place where the most important members and leaders of the order were buried. We will then travel to **Casanova** for Dinner and overnight.



Day 7: Friday, May 8: Furelos, Melide, Boente, & Rivadiso da Baixo (12.85 miles)

We take leave of Casanova to visit the *Santa Maria Church* in **Leboreiro**, the *Lady of the Snow Church* in **Furelos**, then over the hill to **Melide**. Here we will visit the *Church of the Holy Spirit* and the *Church of St. Mary*. We will then continue to **Boente** to visit the *Parish Church Santiago*. Our final destination today is **Rivadiso da Baixo** where we will enjoy dinner and an overnight stay at our accommodations.



Day 8: Saturday, May 9: Rivadiso da Baixo to O Pedrouzo (13.85 miles)

After breakfast we make our way to **Arzua** to visit the gothic-style *La Magdalena Chapel* which was founded in the 14th century. We then press on to **As Barrosas** to visit the *St. Lazare Chapel* and **Santa Irene** to visit the Hermitage. We will end up in **O Pedrouzo** where we will have dinner and overnight at our accommodations.



Day 9: Sunday, May 10: O Pedrouzo to Santiago de Compostela (12.43 miles)

We travel today through beautiful green countryside, farms and forest to **Santiago de Compostela** via Monte do Gozo.

Day 10: Monday, May 11: Santiago de Compostela

We awake in **Santiago de Compostela** and after breakfast, enjoy a 4-hour guided tour of the city. The remainder of the day is at leisure to relax or visit the city. We will make our way down the narrow streets of the city to **the shrine of St. James** in the *Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela* known in English as the Way of St. James and in Spanish as the Camino de Santiago. The cathedral, built on the spot where the remains of the Apostle James were said to have been found. It is here that we will attend the Great Pilgrims' Mass and also receive our *Compostela* Pilgrim Certificate. We will have much to ponder as we admire the beauty of the sculptures and architecture, and pay tribute to his mortal remains. At the end of the day, we will enjoy a farewell dinner and our final overnight stay in Spain.



Day 11: Tuesday, May 12: Depart for Home

We leave our hotel and head for the airport to return to the U.S.

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