

Follow the Camino – The Way of St. James

Day 1 Arrive Lisbon

Welcome to Portugal! Upon clearing customs, transfer as a group to your hotel. Take some time to rest and relax before this evening's included welcome dinner at the hotel. (D)

Day 2 Lisbon – Santarem - Fatima

Sightseeing with a Local Guide features visits to JERONIMOS MONASTERY and the CHURCH OF ST. ANTHONY. Afterwards, depart for Fatima and while en route, visit the CHURCH OF THE HOLY MIRACLE in Santarém, site of a famous Eucharistic Miracle. Then, visit OUR LADY OF FATIMA SHRINE with the tombs of the visionaries, and the CHAPEL OF THE APPARITIONS, where the Virgin Mary appeared to three children in 1917. Enjoy dinner at your hotel and later, perhaps join this evening's rosary and candlelight procession at the Our Lady of Fatima Shrine, or attend Mass, held every day at 6 pm at the basilica. (B,D)

Day 3 Fatima – Braga - Sarria

Journey north this morning and stop in Braga, one of the oldest Christian cities in the world and nicknamed the "Portuguese Rome." Enjoy a unique experience as you ride the water funicular, built in 1882, to reach the Bom Jesus do Monte (Good Jesus of the Mount) sanctuary. See the unique zigzag stairway that is dedicated to the five senses—sight, smell, hearing, touch, and taste—and the three theological virtues—faith, hope, and charity. Later, cross into Spain and head for Sarria where tomorrow you will start your walking pilgrimage. Tonight, dinner is included at a local restaurant. (B)

Day 4 Sarria – Portomarin (Walking Day 14.3 Miles)

After breakfast we will go to the PILGRIM OFFICE to request our PILGRIM PASSPORT and we will start our walking pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela. In the spirit of St James the Apostle, we become authentic pilgrims, journeying along an outer road (and the road within). Our walking trip will finish in Portomarin. The town, which dates back to the Roman Age, was an important stop along the Route in the Middle Ages. The old Portomarín lies beneath the waters of the dam built in 1962. But before flooding the town many monuments were moved stone by stone. Such was the case of the church-fortress of the Knights of San Juan of Jerusalem, who once ran the old hospital that lies beneath the waters of the Miño River, along with the old Medieval and Roman bridges. Dinner and overnight in Portomarin. (B,L,D)

Day 5 Portomarin – Palas de Rei (Walking Day 15 Miles)

Breakfast at the hotel. From Portomarín we'll set off into the woods on our journey towards Palas de Rei, once an important town in the Middle Ages. It had a Royal Hospital and the church of San Tirso stands on its lands, with a Romanesque portal. On the hilly walk we'll continue through fields and forests passing countless granaries, hórreos, and wayside crosses or cruceiros, both very characteristic of the Galician landscape. Dinner and overnight in Palas de Rei. (B,L,D)

Day 6 Palas de Rei – Aruza (Walking Day 18 Miles)

Breakfast at the hotel. The walk sets off from Palas and ends up in the bustling small town of Arzuza. Today we also pass from Galicia's Lugo province to Galicia's A Coruña province. Surrounded by beautiful scenery we see the GOTHIC CHAPEL OF MAGDALENA, the only part of the old Augustinian monastery that has come down to us. The little town is famous nowadays for its Galician cheese factories. The chestnuts and oaks give way to eucalyptus. We finish our day with a visit to MELIDE. This town is crucial to the Route, because it is the place where the French and the Oviedo Routes converge. At the entrance to the town there is a crossroads from the 14th century, one of the oldest in Galicia. The present Parish Church was the former church of the Monastery of Sancti Spiritus. It contains stately sepulchers. Worthy of note are also the small chapel of SAN ROQUE, with its transept from the 14-century, and the ROMANESQUE CHURCH OF SANTA MARÍA. Dinner and overnight in Arzuza. (B,L,D)

Day 7 At Leisure in Aruza

Celebrate Mass this morning before spending the balance of the day at leisure. Tonight, dinner is included at a local restaurant. (B,D)

Day 8 Aruza – Arca do Pino/Rua (Walking Day 11 Miles)

After breakfast we will continue our trek to Arca do Pino, the largest community before Santiago, immersing ourselves in the fragrant eucalyptus groves. After arrival in Arca, you can take a quiet walk around this village. Dinner and overnight in Arca do Pino. (B,L,D)

Day 9 Arca do Pino/Rua – Monte do Gozo – Santiago de Compostela (Walking Day 14 Miles)

After breakfast we set out on the final stage of our journey to reach the famed city of Santiago. En route we'll stop for fantastic views on the MONTE DEL GOZO (Mount Joy) from which the spires of the Cathedral are first visible. We will soon arrive at the CATHEDRAL, the destination we have been aspiring to reach. After arrival in the Cathedral square, and saying thanks to God for taking care of us during our pilgrimage, we'll check into our hotel. Dinner and overnight in Santiago de Compostela. (B,L,D)

Day 10 Santiago de Compostela

After breakfast we will visit and celebrate Mass at the CATHEDRAL OF ST. JAMES, one of the finest examples of architecture in all of Europe. Access to the DOORWAY OF GLORY is via the Obradoiro façade. Tradition invites us to perform some rites: The most important and meaningful one is the hug to the Saint, go under the main altar and visit the CRYPT where the relics of St. James are preserved. After free time for lunch we continue our visit to the city of Santiago: Obradoiro Square, Fonseca Palace, Gelmirez Palace, and Franco Street. Dinner and overnight in Santiago de Compostela. (B,D)

Day 12 Santiago de Compostela – Lisbon, Portugal

Today return to Lisbon. There you will overnight and prepare for your departure tomorrow. (B)

Day 13 Depart Lisbon

Your tour ends today with an included group transfer to the airport for your return journey home. (B)