

CAMINO DE SANTIAGO

APRIL 23-MAY 2, 2019



Western
UNIVERSITY • CANADA



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SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP TRAVEL

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SUMMARY OF ITINERARY

Date	Activities	Accommodation	Meals
Tue April 23	Welcome to Madrid, Spain! Introductory Informal Walking Tour Evening Insider's Tapas Tour of Madrid	Las Letras Gran Vía	D
Wed April 24	Drive from Madrid to Sarria via Astorga	Hotel Alfonso IX	B, L
Thu April 25	Walk on Camino begins! Stage: Sarria - Portomarin (22km)	Pousada De Portomarin	B, L, D
Fri April 26	Stage: Portomarin - Palas de Rei (23.9km)	Pousada De Portomarin	B, L, D
Sat April 27	Stage: Palas de Rei - Melide (12km)	Casa de los Somoza	B, L, D
Sun April 28	Stage: Melide - Arzúa (12km)	Pazo Andeade & Casa Brandariz <i>(Note: For 16 guests we will stay at Pazo Andeade; for more we will need to book additional rooms at Casa Brandariz)</i>	B, L, D
Mon April 29	Stage: Arzúa - Arca (20km)	Pazo Andeade & Casa Brandariz <i>(Note: For 16 guests we will stay at Pazo Andeade; for more we will need to book additional rooms at Casa Brandariz)</i>	B, L, D
Tue April 30	Stage: Arca- Santiago (19km)	San Francisco Hotel Monumento	B, L
Wed May 1	Private tour of Santiago de Compostela Farewell dinner	San Francisco Hotel Monumento	B, D
Thu May 2	Farewell Spain!		B

DETAILED ITINERARY

Tue April 23rd, 2019

Daily overview

Welcome to Madrid, Spain!
Introductory Informal Walking Tour
Evening Insider's Tapas Tour of Madrid

Accommodation: Las Letras Gran Vía
Meals: D

Details

Welcome to Madrid!

Our representative will meet you in the arrivals lounge and you will have a private transfer to your hotel. Check-in to your hotel.

This evening, our guide will meet you at your hotel and together you will enjoy the architecture, history and anecdotes of Spain's capital through a light introductory tour of the city. You will see some of the capital's most impressive sights, such as the Plaza de Oriente and the historic quarter including the 17th-century Plaza Mayor, a wonderful Baroque square lined with arcades filled with picturesque cafes.

Walk through the peaceful Plaza de la Villa where the City Hall stands and the narrow streets of Madrid of the "Austrias", named after the Austro-Hapsburg dynasty, which came to rule over in 1561. Much of the Austrias neighbourhood today is a gastronomic center, with traditional favourites aplenty, including the famous Botin, the oldest restaurant in the world. The nuns of the Convento nearby occasionally offer their homemade cakes too!

Follow the tour with an evening of tapas... In a nutshell, tapas in Madrid means tradition, and this includes the atmosphere, not just the food. In charming small bars in the heart of Madrid's charismatic old Austria's area, sample hearty food in manageable portions, helped down with some pleasingly potent wines, and amidst the joyous hullabaloo of the welcoming Madrileños. The variety is extensive, encompassing varied meats, cured hams, fish, seafood, the obligatory Spanish potato omelette and other inventions... 'tapear' in Madrid is a fun and recommendable alternative to the full-blown sit down meal.

Who better than a local resident to show you the ropes into the world of Spanish food? Our accompanied tapas tour will allow you to discover the intricacies and/or delightful simplicity of Spanish cuisine amidst informal, authentic settings. All tapas and drinks are included in the tapas tour. ¡Buen provecho!

Approximately 4 hours, in the afternoon/evening. E.g. from 6-10 p.m.

Please note:

- The guide is not an official guide and therefore cannot enter monuments nor museums with you but the idea is that this is an intro to the city to get your bearings and learn about some of the areas in the center.
- For those clients who attended the pre-trip, tonight's tapas tour explores a different area of Madrid and different tapas restaurants.

Tue April 24th, 2019

Daily overview

Drive from Madrid to Sarria via Astorga

Accommodation: Hotel Alfonso IX

Meals: B, L

Details

Today, you will depart Madrid and head to Sarria. The drive will take approx. 4.5 hours. You will stop in Astorga for lunch.

Astorga is rich with the heritage of its past. It was the capital of the legendary Iberian tribe of the Astures. It was also an important Roman city and key stop along the Pilgrims Way in Medieval times. City highlights include the Roman walls, the Cathedral and the neo-Gothic Bishop's Palace built by the Catalan architect Gaudí.

You will enjoy lunch at a rustic restaurant, which features highly acclaimed hospitality, fruity Bierzo wines and specialties such as "Cocido Maragato". After lunch, you will continue to Sarria.

As we leave the town, we will be able to enjoy panoramic views of the Sierras in the distance. You will pass through the villages of the Maragatos.

This part of the Camino has a unique culture owing to the mysterious origins of its inhabitants. The beauty and simplicity of their villages, Castrillo de los Polvazares, Santa Catalina de Somoza or Rabanal del Camino, adds to the magnificent natural surroundings, making your first contact with the Camino an unforgettable journey.

You will drive through some emblematic places connected with the history of the Camino. The Cruz de Ferro (Cross of Iron), a humble monument, yet one of the Camino's most significant, is situated on the highest point of the Pilgrims Way at 4,933 feet above sea level.

This geographic location divides the Maragatería from the Bierzo, a region protected by high mountains. The resulting microclimate is said to be the reason for the excellent quality of its wines and farm products.

Upon arrival in Sarria, check in to your hotel. Dinner is on your own. You can either explore this charming town or enjoy dinner at the hotel's restaurant.

Thursday Apr 25th, 2019

Daily overview

Walk on Camino begins!

Stage: Sarria - Portomarin (22km)

Accommodation: Pousada De Portomarin

Meals: B, L, D

Details

Today we start the first stage along the Camino Frances!

Stage: Sarria - Portomarin (22km)

Level: Moderate

Walking this section of the Camino is considered by many to be the highlight of the trip. We traverse a maze of tracks and footpaths through enchanted forests, granite hillsides covered in gorse, heather and broom and a patchwork of primitive farms worked as they were a thousand years ago.

After crossing the River Miño, we enter Portomarín. In 1962, the old village was submerged to create a reservoir. The town's treasure, the 13th Century Church of San Juan (once belonging to the order of St. John of Jerusalem), was moved stone by stone by the townspeople to higher ground where the current town of Portomarin is located.

Enjoy a pilgrim's lunch in Portomarín – Our picnic lunch outside a pilgrim's refuge includes local cheese, ripened red tomatoes, crusty loaves of bread and cured jamon.

Check in at your hotel in Portomarín where you will stay for the next 2 nights.

We dine this evening at a restaurant called Santa Mariña (+34 982 54 51 05; Travesia Santa Mariña, 1, 27170 Portomarín, Lugo). The restaurant is located in a Casa Rural surrounded by vineyards, vegetable gardens and horse stables on the banks of the Miño. The hospitality of our hosts, Mario and Olga, combined with their home-grown produce provide a perfect backdrop for a memorable meal. We take part in the tradition of the queimada, a magical fiery brew made with coffee beans, sugar and a grappa-like liqueur called orujo. (According to Mario, the queimada fortifies the mind, body and spirit of weary pilgrims!)

Friday April 26th, 2019

Daily overview

Stage: Portomarin - Palas de Rei (23.9km)

Accommodation: Pousada De Portomarin

Meals: B, L, D

Details

Stage: Portomarin - Palas de Rei (23.9km)

Level: Moderately high

Today we trace quiet paved roads past small villages, cruceiros (carved granite crosses that served to mark the Camino in medieval times), horreos (stone granaries), and tiny Romanesque churches. The abundance of Romanesque architecture in this area makes it one of the most important regions for art historians in all of Europe. Our destination is Palas de Rei, a town once inhabited by Visigoths, Celts and Romans. Its name is derived from the

Visigothic king, Witiza who held court here (Palas de Rei meaning, The Palace of the King in Gallego).

At lunch today in a local pilgrim's restaurant, we enjoy the camaraderie of other pilgrims on their way to Santiago de Compostela, many from Europe but others from more far-flung corners of the globe.

In the afternoon, you will take a short shuttle back to Portomarin.

Dinner will be served at your hotel.

Saturday April 27th, 2019

Daily overview

Stage: Palas de Rei - Melide (12km)

Accommodation: Casa de los Somoza

Meals: B, L, D

Details

Stage: Palas de Rei - Melide (12km)

Level: Moderate

Today we take a short shuttle to Palas de Rei where we start walking.

Our shady path weaves through pine, oak and eucalyptus forests dispersed with tiny villages. On the Camino, local people feel honoured to see peregrinos pass through their village. The only traffic we are likely to encounter is that of gentle, lazy cows returning to village barns in the late afternoon.

In Furelos, we cross the magnificent ponte velha, a medieval bridge with four arches spanning the river. Soon after we arrive in Melide, a town dating back to pre-Roman times and where the former monastery houses interesting 15th century frescoes depicting St. James the Moor-slayer

For lunch we will dine at Pulpería Ezequiel (+34 981 50 52 91; Rúa Cantón San Roque, 48, 15800 Melide, A Coruña, Spain; www.pulperiaezequiel.com). Here you will try the Galician style octopus, known in Galicia as "polbo á feira". This is without a doubt one of the most popular dishes of Galician traditional cuisine. On your way to Santiago you'll find countless places where to try it, but Ezequiel is a classic!!!

Finally, check in at your hotel and relax. Dinner will be served at your hotel.

Sunday April 28th, 2019

Daily overview

Stage: Melide - Arzúa (12km)

Accommodation: Pazo Andeade and Casa Brandariz (Note: For 16 guests we will stay at Pazo Andeade; for more we will need to book additional rooms at Casa Brandariz)

Meals: B, L, D

Details

Stage: Melide - Arzúa (12km)

Level: Low

After Melide, the Camino passes through Boente and Castañeda and arrives at Arzúa, a cheese-making village with the important attraction of rural and active tourism, especially in the vicinity of the reservoir of Portodemouros.

The road is easy to walk on and in very good condition at this stage. It is composed of a mixture of earth and stone together with small-asphalted roads or tracks between towns, with gradual climbs and descents, alternating with flat stretches.

In Boente there is a fountain with four pipes and a Calvary, separated from the church by the main road. From there we reach Ribadiso by a bridge over the River Iso. After Ribadiso, the Camino follows the road to Arzúa, the land of cheese par excellence.

Arzúa is the last big village on the road a bit further than 30km from Compostela. In the centre of the village is the Church of La Magdalena, which a few years before belonged to the Convent of the Agustines who supported an important hospital in Arzúa.

Check in to your hotel and relax. Dinner will be served at your hotel.

Monday April 29th, 2019

Daily overview

Stage: Arzúa - Arca (20km)

Accommodation: Pazo Andeade and Casa Brandariz (Note: For 16 guests we will stay at Pazo Andeade; for more we will need to book additional rooms at Casa Brandariz)

Meals: B, L, D

Details

Stage: Arzúa - Arca (20km)

Level: Low

After a restful sleep deep in the countryside, we set off through heavy eucalyptus forests dotted with small hamlets. Our way today is idyllic and peaceful, as we grow closer to our final destination. The Pilgrim's Way weaves through sweet-smelling eucalyptus groves and neatly sowed fields and vegetable patches.

We depart from the town of Arzúa by the Rúa do Carme. In this stage the landscape is of meadows and woods (carballos (oaks), eucalyptus, fruit trees and cultivated fields). We cross the River Raído and then pass through several hamlets: Cortobe, As Pereiriñas, A Taberna, some with Jacobean echoes such as A Calzada, A Rúa, Ferreiros — again a

reference to the ancient trade of those engaged in shoeing horses among other functions — and A Salceda.

When ready, you will shuttle back to your hotel in Arzúa. Dinner will be served at your hotel.

Tuesday April 30th, 2019

Daily overview

The last stage of the Camino!

Stage: Arca- Santiago (19km)

Accommodation: San Francisco Hotel Monumento

Meals: B, L

Details

Stage: Arca- Santiago (19km)

Level: Moderate

After breakfast, you will have a short shuttle back to Arca. Here you will start your last stage of the Camino.

One tradition we do take part in is the ascent to Monte de Gozo (The Mount of Joy), where pilgrims catch their first glimpse of Santiago de Compostela. Excitement builds as we get closer to the Holy City. Following now familiar yellow arrows and Camino markers to the Cathedral, we arrive in the Plaza del Obradoiro - the heart and soul of Santiago and a place of constant activity.

Exuberant groups of pilgrims stand in awe in front of the grandiose façade of the Baroque Cathedral. Wrought-iron balconies and granite homes and public buildings lend a medieval air.

Some pilgrims have traveled for months, on foot like us or by bike or horseback. Though distinct reasons (cultural, adventurous or spiritual) compel us to experience this ancient pilgrimage - we arrive in Santiago united by our quest.

Check-in to your hotel, and relax; you have completed the Camino! Tonight you are free to dine wherever you would like.

Wednesday May 1st, 2019

Daily overview

Private Half Day Tour of Santiago de Compostela

Farewell dinner

Accommodation: San Francisco Hotel Monumento

Meals: B, D

Details

Today you will enjoy a private half-day tour of Santiago de Compostela.

Known to trekkers and pilgrims over the centuries as the culmination of the legendary pilgrim's trail Camino de Santiago (Saint James' Way), the magical medieval city of Santiago de Compostela was, until the 18th century, the most important pilgrimage destination in the entire Christian world. It remains a bewitching and alluring town that combines majestic medieval architecture, a buzzing café culture, and a storybook historic center where ancient

monuments, modern boutiques and wonderful restaurants rub shoulders along narrow cobblestone streets.

According to legend, the remains of the Apostle St. James were found in 813 on the site of the present Cathedral by the bishop of Iria Flavia, and by the mid-10th century masses of pilgrims were traveling from all over Europe to visit his shrine. During the tour you'll traverse the ancient lanes, visiting the open-air market of Plaza Los Abastos and of course the Cathedral where St. James's remains lie. From the center of Plaza de Obradoiro, with the Hostal de los Reyes Catolicos to your left, the immense size of the Cathedral's Baroque facade can be appreciated. You may also visit the museum "Pobo Galego", which offers a good insight into the Galician way of life and especially the influence of the sea in Galician culture.

Tonight we will enjoy a celebratory farewell dinner at a traditional restaurant in the old quarter.

Thursday May 2nd, 2019

Daily overview

Farewell Spain!

Meals: B

Details

This morning, you will be transferred to the Santiago de Compostela Airport where you can depart for your international flight home.

¡BUEN CAMINO!

ACCOMMODATION

Along the Camino accommodation is scarce. We always select the best hotels possible without getting far away from the original path. We use mostly small, family-run hotels and rural inns in stylishly restored historic buildings. All rooms have en-suite facilities and modern fittings. All properties are chosen for comfort, character, location and overall quality.

Before and after the Camino, we use hotels in restored historic buildings in great locations, just steps from the magnificent cathedrals.

All rooms are Double Standard rooms.

Hotel de Las Letras, Madrid

1 night: April 23-24

+34 915 23 79 80

Calle Gran Vía, 11, 28013 Madrid

<http://www.iberostar.com/hoteles/madrid/iberostar-las-letras-gran-via>

A great 4* boutique hotel on bustling Gran Vía, borders the Letras neighbourhood, which is known for its association with well-known Spanish writers, poets and philosophers. Public areas feature glazed tiles, canopies, the original wood-and-iron elevator from 1917, a wooden staircase, and stone carvings. The rooms, painted in tones of ochre, orange, or burgundy, have high ceilings, wooden floors, indirect lighting, and over-the-top modern bathrooms. There is a charming rooftop terrace bar open to the public that's quite popular in the summer, and you can also enjoy contemporary Spanish food in the popular restaurant-lounge at street level.

Hotel Alfonso IX, Sarria

1 night: April 24-25

+34 982 53 00 05

Rua Del Peregrino 29, 27600 Sarria Lugo

<http://www.alfonsoix.com/en/the-hotel.html>

The Alfonso IX is a modern hotel located right on the Camino by the banks of the river, a 114 km walk from Santiago. Ideal for Pilgrim's Rest in the heart of the province of Lugo. A four-star hotel with modern and functional facilities, located in a new building.

Posada de Portomarin, Portomarin

2 nights: April 25-27

+34 982 54 52 00

Av. Sarria, 27170 Portomarin, Lugo

<http://www.pousadadeportomarin.es/>

The Hotel Pousada de Portomarin is the oldest hotel in Portomarin. It is an excellent choice for a stay in one of the jewel-cities of the Camino de Santiago de Compostela. The Pousada boasts comfort, fine décor and beautiful views over the Miño river.

Casa de los Somoza, Melide

1 night: April 27-28

+34 981 50 73 72

O Coto, S/N, 15800 O Leboeiro, Melide, A Coruña

<https://casadelossomoza.com/>

This former Galician farmhouse exudes charm, warm hospitality and excellent home-cooked food. In the heart of the Camino de Santiago Francés, Casa de los Somoza is your ideal place to rest after a long day.

Pazo Andeade and Casa Brandariz, Arzúa*

2 nights: April 28-30

**Note: For 16 guests we will stay at Pazo Andeade; for more we will need to book additional rooms at Casa Brandariz*

Pazo Andeade - <http://pazodeandeade.com/>

+34 981 51 73 59

Place of Casa Grande, nº 1, Santiago de Andeade, 15824 Touro - A Coruña

Casa Brandariz - <http://casabrandariz.com/>

+34 981 50 80 90

Calle Dombodan, s/n, 15819 Arzúa, La Coruña

These hotels are two Pazos from the beginning of XVIII completely renovated keeping the authentic structure of the local architecture.

Hotel Monumento San Francisco, Santiago

2 nights: April 30-May 2

+34 981 58 16 34

Campillo San Francisco 3, 15705 Santiago De Compostela, La Coruña

<http://www.sanfranciscohm.com/>

Located 150m from the Cathedral, in the historic center of Santiago de Compostela, San Francisco Hotel Monumento offers its clients the tranquility and silence of a Franciscan convent of the 18th century combined with all the services and amenities of a 4-star hotel. This XVIII century building was named a site of cultural interest by UNESCO. It perfectly combines original architectural elements with modern furnishings and amenities. This combination makes this hotel a unique one in the city, full of functionality, design and history.