



Self-Guided Walking on the Camino de Santiago Trip Notes

 **Ways to Travel:** Self-Guided
 **Destinations:** Spain
 **Programmes:** Walking & Trekking

Trip Code:
W10CS



11 Days Land only
Min age: 12

Trip Overview

The Camino de Santiago de Compostela is one of the world's oldest pilgrimage routes, and in 1987 was declared the first European Culture Route. Since Apostle James' tomb was discovered in the ninth century, the route has also been known as 'The Way of St James'. The symbol of the scallop shell, typically found on the Galician shores, marks the way. On completion of at least 100km of the route, it is a great tradition to receive a certificate or 'compostela'. Taking a self-guided walk along the Camino is a perfect way to meet travellers from all over the world, as they journey from far and wide to walk this important route.

At a Glance

- 10 nights in 2 to 4-star hotels
- 9 days point-to-point walking
- Altitude max. 1300m, average 700m
- Self-guided holiday. Min age 12 yrs

Trip Highlights

- Follow one of the most ancient pilgrimage routes in the world!

- Stay in converted water mills, hilltop monasteries and stylish farmhouses
- Soaring cathedrals, Roman bridges, country chapels and thatched Galician villages
- Poppy-sprinkled wheat fields, orchid-rich water meadows, pine-scented woodland

Is This Trip for You?

Activity Level: 3 (Moderate)

This is a moderate walking holiday because of the distance covered each day rather than the altitude change or the terrain. There is lots of classic Galician countryside to enjoy, rural paths and hamlets with cafes and restaurants for pilgrims along the route. Walks on this holiday are on village streets, country lanes, farm tracks and rural paths. Walking days are approximately 5-6 hours with ascents up to 700m (2400feet) and may involve some scrambling. You should be used to walking all day.

As this is a self-guided holiday there is no group and no leader. There may be others on the same departure date as you, but you will not be organised together. You are provided with route notes for each day, which begin with an overview of the walk and advice on lunch, followed by detailed instructions. The route notes contain a 24 hour emergency assistance telephone number should you need it and in emergencies, the hotels are normally able to dispatch a taxi or pick you up themselves. They may wish to charge for this service.

Group

As this is a self-guided holiday there is no group and no leader. A local agent/representative is on hand to assist you and will meet you at the beginning of the week to go through the route notes and point out particular places of interest. Your luggage is transferred from point to point and route notes and maps are provided. The route notes contain a 24-hour emergency assistance telephone number. In an emergency, the local representative is normally able to dispatch a taxi or pick you up themselves. They may wish to charge for this service.

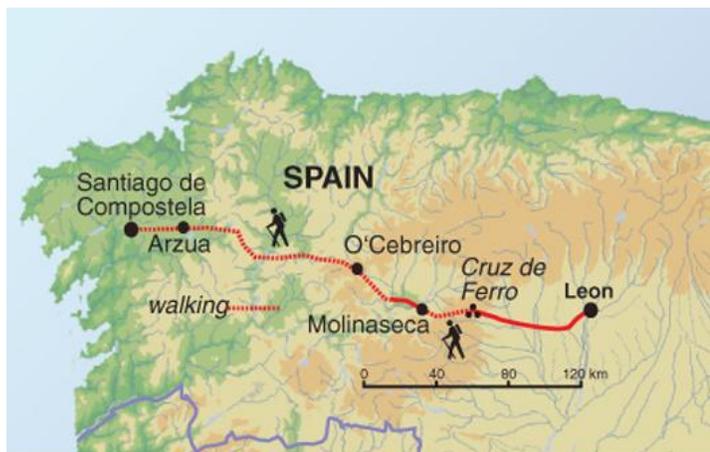
Please note: the walking and luggage transfers that are included in this tour are subject to at least 2 people (in total) booked on the departure. A supplement (payable in advance) to cover these transfers and sole occupancy of a room will apply if only 1 person travelling on a departure date.

Adult min age: 12

Min group size: 2

Max group size: 6

Itinerary



Land Only

Start City: Leon

End City: Santiago de Compostela

Land Only Itinerary

Day 1

Start Leon.

Arrive at your historic hotel in the heart of Leon. There are lots of restaurants and tapas bars on your doorstep, so we've left the choice up to you for dinner tonight.

Comfortable Hotel

Day 2

Trek from Cruz de Ferro to Molinaseca.

Your day starts with a guided tour of Leon's magnificent gothic Cathedral which is often called the 'House of Light' and a visit to the Basilica of San Isidoro, one of the most important Romanesque churches in Spain and resting place of Leon's mediaeval monarchs. You will then receive your pilgrims passport. We then provide a transfer (1hr) to Cruz de Ferro, the highest point on the Camino, marked by a pre-Roman cross. The Camino winds downhill through fragrant pines where once the Knights Templar protected pilgrims from bandit attack. A path lined with wild chestnuts, cherries, peppers and fennel leads to riverside Molinaseca, known to be one of the most beautiful villages on the Camino.

Two options: Distance 8km/5mi, approx. 2 hours walking or 19km/12mi, approx. 4 hours walking.

Comfortable Hotel

Meals included: Breakfast

Distance covered: 19 km / 12 miles

Activity (hours): 4

Day 3

Ascend the Rio Valcarce Valley to O'Cebreiro; sunset viewpoint.

After a short transfer (30 mins), you ascend the Rio Valcarce valley, climbing into moody oak woods strung with lichen and strewn with early purple orchid. O Cebreiro is a 11th Century village in the heart of the Cordillera Cantabrica. Walk to the viewpoint above the village for a perfect sunset and views over four ranges of hills then return along the narrow, cobbled streets, past traditional thatched houses known as pallozas.

Comfortable Hotel

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Distance covered: 15 km / 9 miles

Activity (hours): 5

Day 4

Walk between villages overlooking the Monastery of Samos; continue to Sarria.

After a short transfer we drop you off at Triacastela. As the Camino meanders between heather-clad villages overlooking the Monastery of Samos, you can hear the bells ringing. On reaching Sarria - the antiques capital of Galicia, you'll be whisked to Javier and Raquel's elegant country rectory (10 mins), complete with chapel and al fresco dining patio area.

Comfortable Hotel

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Distance covered: 18 km / 12 miles

Activity (hours): 5.5

Day 5

Head up the Celerio Valley; descend into Portomarin.

A Roman bridge leads out of Sarria up the Celerio Valley, where you'll traverse the hamlets of the southern flank of the Sierra del Paramo. Descend into Portomarin - the original village was drowned by the Belesar Reservoir, and some remains still shimmer below the surface!

Comfortable Hotel

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Distance covered: 23 km / 15 miles

Activity (hours): 7.5

Day 6

Walk up Torres Valley to the delightfully rural farmhouse at Lestedo.

Drop into Portomarin's church then follow the Torres stream, passing between cornfields lined with ox-eye daisies. Stamp your Pilgrim Passport in country churches dedicated to the Order of St James before arriving at your beautifully restored rectory.

Comfortable Hotel

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Distance covered: 21 km / 14 miles

Activity (hours): 7

Day 7

Hike to O'Coto via Palas del Rei.

Country lanes lead past fortified farmhouses into the hillside town of Palas de Rei (Palace of the King) as you enter the province of A Coruna. You'll pass typical, raised Galician granaries, and chickens scamper across narrow streets as you enter vineyards, with views east to the Montes del Vacaloura.

Comfortable Hotel

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Distance covered: 14 km / 9 miles

Activity (hours): 4

Day 8

Leave hamlet of O'Coto; walk to Arzua.

Today's first stop is Melide - a thriving country town where tavernas brim with locals enjoying Galician seafood in specialist pulperias (octopus restaurants). Drop into the Romanesque church to admire the frescoes, before lanes lined with bright yellow celandine bring you into the lively market town of Arzua. Continue on to your elegant manor house, surrounded by tranquil countryside, just outside the town.

Comfortable Hotel

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Distance covered: 21 km / 14 miles

Activity (hours): 6

Day 9

From Arzua walk to a converted watermill in Rua.

Arzua's colonnaded streets lead into open country where local farmers wear berets as they tend vines and build haystacks with pitch forks. Your route rises and falls through river valleys, crossing rushing streams. This evening you can marvel at Javier's breathtaking converted water mill, where original machinery has been turned into spectacular period features.

Comfortable Hotel

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Distance covered: 19 km / 12 miles

Activity (hours): 5

Day 10

Walk to Santiago via Monte do Gozo; visit the cathedral.

Excitement mounts as you set off towards Monte do Gozo (Mount of Joy), where pilgrims of old caught their first glimpse of the spires of Santiago. On reaching Santiago's historic centre, congratulations are everywhere as a steady stream of pilgrims reach their journey's end below the cathedral's spectacular Baroque facade. Drop into the Pilgrim Office to collect your certificate if you wish, before checking into our historic hotel near the old marketplace - still a riot of colour!

Comfortable Hotel

Meals included: Breakfast

Distance covered: 21 km / 14 miles

Activity (hours): 6

Day 11

End Santiago de Compostela.

Enjoy Santiago and the cathedral before taking a taxi to the airport (pay locally approx 15 euro). Alternatively, stay on for extra nights to explore this beautiful historic city. Walking through the old streets of Santiago is a fantastic way to spend your time here, with Romanesque, Gothic and Baroque buildings lining the old town's streets and plazas.

Meals included: Breakfast

Accommodation

Hotels



In the evenings, you'll stay in a diverse range of properties including converted watermills, stylish farmhouses and a restored parish house - all of them packed with period features. Please feel free to ask us for more detail about where you'll stay.

Room Upgrades:

Room upgrades may be available on request for a supplement on the final night; prices start from an additional USD\$15 per person per night (based on 2 people sharing) - please enquire at the time of booking for further details and prices. Upgrades available at select hotels only (not for the entire duration of the tour).

All prices are based on 2 persons sharing, so if there is an odd number of people traveling in your party or you are traveling alone, there will be a compulsory supplement for a single room for the tour duration. For a solo traveler there is an additional charge to cover transfer costs.

Where a single supplement is available, paying for a single only guarantees a room for single use. It does not always mean a twin or double room will be provided for sole occupancy.

Single supplement from \$403.00 USD

Food & Transport

Eating & Drinking

All breakfasts and 7 dinners are included.

Dinners are either taken at the hotel, or left open, where there is a good choice of restaurants.

Transportation

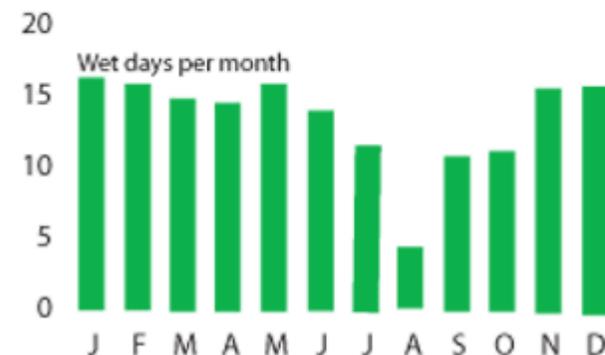
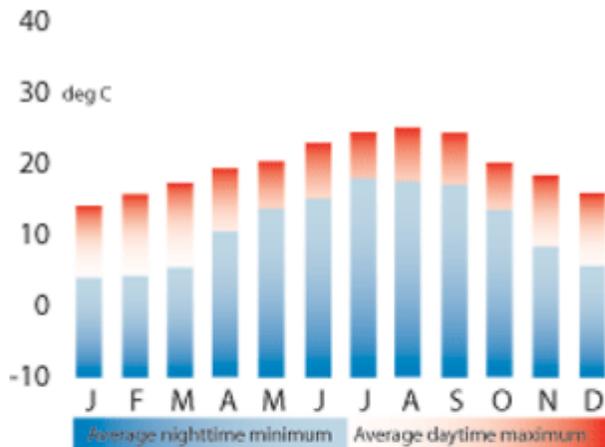
We have included transfers after breakfast on the first three walking days, after which you'll walk all the way to Santiago.

Weather & Seasonality

Weather Information

In April and October expect temperatures in the 40-60°F/5-15°C with high chance of rain showers though it could also be simply partly cloudy and more temperate. Temperatures in May, June and September tend to be about 10°F/5°C warmer than April and October. Expect a combination of sun, showers and clouds. July and August are typically sunny and warm (60-80°F/15-25°C). Occasionally in summer there can be hot days so it is always important to make sure you have enough water.

Weather Charts



Joining Instructions

The tour itself normally begins at the start hotel in Leon on the afternoon of Day 1 of the itinerary, however a rail ticket from Madrid Chamartin to Leon is included in the price of the tour for all clients (land only and flight inclusive) at the times below. Arrival transfers from Leon train station and departure transfers to Santiago Airport are not included, however these journeys are only a short taxi ride (paid locally).

Standard Rail Times:

Rail from Madrid Chamartin to Leon departs 14:40 arrives 17:40.

Your train tickets (or ticket collection reference) will be sent to you as part of your Final Joining Instructions.

Full joining instructions including local emergency numbers will be sent to you as part of our Final Joining Instructions. If you do not receive these at least a week before departure, or require them earlier please contact our office or your travel agent.

Transfers Details

Rail ticket Madrid Chamartin to Leon included, taxi to hotel paid locally. Taxi from end hotel in Santiago to Santiago airport also paid locally.

Location start: Leon

Location end: Santiago de Compostela

What to Take

Essential Equipment

Light walking boots (good walking trainers will suffice)

Small daypack for camera, guidebook, etc.

Water bottle to use when walking and sightseeing (2 litre)

Sun cream

Hat

Sunglasses

Waterproofs

Warm clothes

Optional Equipment

Walking poles

Swimwear

Reading List

Rough Guide to Spain

The Road to Santiago, A pilgrim's Practical Guide.



Practical Information

Passport

Spain

All nationalities require a full passport that must be valid beyond the intended length of stay. It is your responsibility to have the correct personal documents and to obtain your own visa, if one is necessary, in accordance with the regulations of the country you are to visit. The information offered below is to help you with that process. We are not responsible for the actions of local immigration and customs officials, whether at points of entry or otherwise, and any subsequent effects.

Visa

Spain

No visa required for North American passport holders.

Visa regulations can change without notice: please check the current regulations in good time to obtain a visa if one is required.

Vaccination

Spain

There are no specific health risks.

Travel health can often be something people forget about before going away, but a little preparation and knowledge can go a long way to help you stay fit and healthy while abroad.

The above information can change at short notice; as we are not qualified to answer all your questions about travel health we strongly recommend you contact your Medical Professional or a Travel Health Clinic at least 8 weeks prior to departure for up-to-date information. Please note: vaccinations that are routinely recommended to residents of North America or Australasia are not considered to form part of the travel health advice, and you should ensure these are kept up to date where necessary.

Insurance - are you adequately covered?

It is a condition of joining any of our holidays that you must be fully insured against medical and personal accident risks (to include repatriation costs and air ambulance or helicopter rescue services where appropriate). On arrival in destination for your trip, you will be asked to present details to your leader or local representative of your policy.

If you are resident in the US we recommend the Travelex travel insurance policy, this is specifically designed to cover all activities on your trip. If arranging your own policy please ensure that you are covered for all activities that are part of the trip, optional activities that you intend to take part in and/or on high altitude itineraries, that you are covered up to the maximum altitude of the trip.

Local Time

Spain's Timezone: Europe/Madrid CEST (GMT +02:00)

Electricity

Spain's Electricity: European plug - 2 round pins. 230 Volts AC.

Money

Spain's Currency

The national currency of Spain is the Euro (EUR), with an exchange rate at the time of publication (October 2017) of approximately 0.84 to the USD, 0.67 to the CAD, 0.66 to the AUD and 0.59 to the NZD.

ATM Availability

ATMs are widely available and usually the most convenient way of obtaining Euros. Travellers cheques are accepted in banks. Credit cards are widely used.

Extra Expenses & Spending Money

Lunch is not included in the itinerary and some dinners are left open where there are good restaurant choices, please allow some spending money for this. We recommend approximately €5-15 (US\$4.50-13) per lunch and €20-30 (US\$18-27) for dinner.



Important Information

On all guided trips

Although our leaders are well trained to deal with different capabilities, if they have any concerns about someone's ability to safely partake in an activity, or their impact on other people's enjoyment, we authorize them to take necessary action which, in some circumstances, may involve asking someone to miss that activity.

Although rarely enforced, by booking this trip you agree to section 5 Of our Booking Conditions which clearly states that our leaders have the authority to do this. In these circumstances we will ensure anyone sitting out is safely provided for and offered alternative options where possible. Refunds will not be provided for activities missed and customers may be liable for additional costs incurred.

On all trips

In booking this trip you should be confident in your ability to participate in all activities described in these Trip Notes. If you have any doubt about your suitability you should call the Breakaway office and ask to speak to one of the experts on this itinerary.

In an emergency, please contact our 24 hour out of hours service on +44 (0) 844 326 7041.

Every time that you travel abroad you should take the time to read the warnings in the essential information in the brochure.

Full joining instructions including local emergency numbers, and details of how to reach the start point, will be sent to you approximately 2 to 3 weeks prior to departure. If you do not receive these at least a week before departure, or require them earlier please contact our office or your travel agent.

The information in these Trip Notes is given in good faith. Where differences exist between the Trip Notes and our current brochure or website, the Trip Notes supersede the brochure and website. All holidays can be subject to unexpected changes; in order to enjoy them you should be prepared to be flexible where necessary. Occasionally, as stated in our brochure, it may not be possible to follow the itinerary as planned. This may be for a variety of reasons - climatic, political, physical or other. In these circumstances we will make the best possible alternative arrangements that maintain the integrity of the original itinerary.

TRAVEL AWARE -STAY SAFE & HEALTHY ABROAD

The U.S. State Department has up-to-date advice on staying safe and healthy abroad. For more on security, local laws, plus passport and visa information, see <https://www.state.gov/travelers/>

Keep informed of current travel health news by visiting Centers for Disease Control C.D.C at <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/>

travelAdvice can change so check regularly for updates.

For all latest travel information about your holiday, please visit our Travel Safety Advice page.



Breakaway Adventures on Tel: 1-800-567-6286; International Tel: +1-843-856-9771.

<https://www.breakaway-adventures.com>