



Camino de Santiago



Arz

Santiago de Compostela

- * It is one of the oldest cities in Spain and one of the most important religious and cultural centres in the country.
- * The cathedral is a World Heritage Site. It combines three styles: Romanesque, Gothic and Baroque.
- * Its university is one of the most prestigious in Spain and its lively atmosphere attracts thousands of students. It is also famous for its tuna, a group of university students who play traditional instruments and sing senerades. Originally, their objective was to earn money or get food. Nowadays, they play just for fun.
- * Don't forget your umbrella when you visit Santiago. It is known for its frequent rains.
- * Take time to explore the historical centre with its narrow streets. There, you will find lots of hidden squares with beautiful statues and fountains. There are also lots of cafés and restaurants where you can sit down to enjoy some Spanish tapas and watch the world go by.

Arzúa

- * Arzúa-Ulloa Cheese is a cow's milk cheese made from raw milk. It is similar in flavor to its cousin cheese, Tetilla.
- * The Fiesta del Queso takes place in March. It is an event in which there are a lot of activities related to the Galician gastronomy. Also, there are amazing rock and folk concerts.
- * Ana Kiro, a Galician singer and TV presenter, was born in Arzúa. She was the only Galician singer who was a candidate to participate in the Eurovision festival.

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Palas de Rei

Palas de Rei

This village was named after a king's castle which was called "pallatium regis". This man ruled the place between the years 702-710.

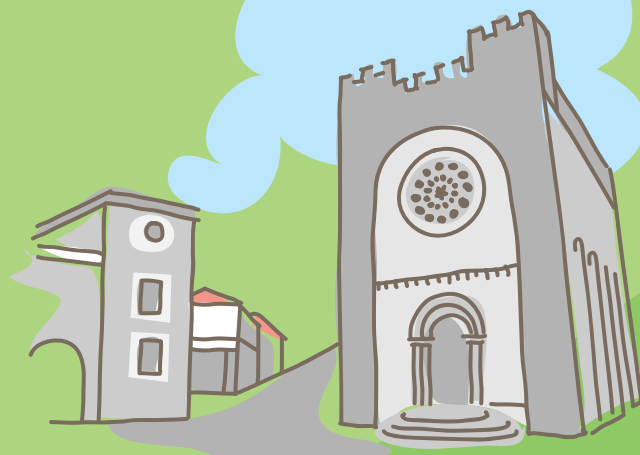
* Pambre Castle is located by the river Pambre and it is the only fortified construction which survived a conflict called "Revoltas Irmandiñas" in which the popular classes fought against the abuses of the upper classes.

Portomarín

The hill-fort of Castromaior, a typical Celtic construction, is one of the most typical sites along this stage. It dates back to the Iron Age.

* Saint Nicholas Church is a fortified construction which was dismantled, moved and rebuilt brick by brick after a terrible flood.

* Gonzar is a nearby village that is surrounded by forests and mountains and provides a quiet and peaceful atmosphere for the pilgrims. There are specific hostels where they can stay and have a rest.



Portomarín

Sarria

In Sarria, you can try a kind of biscuit called "Santito". It is made of flour, eggs, milk, sugar and cream. You can only buy it on All Souls' Eve.

* In this village there are a lot of raised granaries. They are constructions made of stone and wood, raised above the ground and used to store crops. They are unique of rural Galician architecture.

* In Campo da Feira, every month, there is a traditional cattle market. You can also try one of the most popular Galician dishes: octopus.



Sarria



Triacastela

The village was founded by Alfonso IX in 1228, according to the Codex Calixtinus, a document which is a guide for all the Pilgrims because it contains traditions, sermons and religious texts.

* Santiago de Triacastela is the most popular church in this village. It combines Baroque and Romanesque styles and it is entirely dedicated to the Apostle Saint James.

* Cruceiros are religious monuments made of stone which represent a crucified Jesus Christ. It is believed that Cruceiros were "cemeteries" for the children who were not baptized.

Triacaste



© Cebreiro

In O Cebreiro you can find thatched stone roundhouses. These ancient houses are known as pallozas, built by the Celts.

* According to the legend, the grail you can see in O Cebreiro is the Holy Grail, the one used by Jesus Christ in the Last Supper.

* There, you can enjoy typical Galician dishes such as caldo gallego (a stew made from cabbage, potatoes, white beans, beef, sausage and chorizo).

* It is believed that around the year 1300, a man named Juan Santin was a devout Christian who never missed mass. A famous legend goes that during a terrible stormy day, the priest was surprised to see Juan Santin and made fun of him because he thought that he just wanted a little bread and wine. The legend continues that to punish the priest for his words and lack of faith, God turned the bread and wine into real flesh and blood.

Ponferrada

- * Ponferrada comes from the Latin Pons Ferrata, Iron Bridge.
- * The River Sil passes through Ponferrada.
- * The Basilica de la Encina is an important church built in the Renaissance style in 1573.
- * It is possible to visit many wineries in the area to try the local wines and food, or simply visit the vineyards.



Ponferrada



Astorga



Astorga

The Roman city was founded in 14 BC and called Asturica Augusta by Emperor Octavian.

* Vía de la Plata (Silver Way) is an ancient commercial and pilgrimage path that connects Astorga to Mérida. It was a trade route for the exploitation of gold.

* Mantecada de Astorga is a muffin-sized cake similar to French madeleine cakes.

* The Episcopal Palace of Astorga is a building by Spanish Catalan architect Antoni Gaudí. It was built between 1889 and 1913.



León

*The Leonese language derives directly from Latin and developed in the Middle Ages. Leonese is considered a seriously endangered language by UNESCO.

* Holy Week processions in León are very popular. The most solemn and famous one is "Procession of the Meeting", which acts out the meeting of three groups representing Saint John, the Virgin Mary and Christ.

* Another important one is the procession called "The Burial of Genarín". Genarín was an alcoholic beggar who was hit by and killed by the first garbage truck in the city of León in the year 1929.

* The San Juan and San Pedro festivities are also remarkable, celebrated during the last week of June to celebrate the beginning of the summer.

Burgos

- * Burgos is located in the autonomous community of Castile and León. It was founded in 884 by Diego Rodríguez Porcelos.
- * The city began to be called Caput Castellae ("Head of Castile").
- * The three most important monuments are the cathedral, with its chapel of the Condestables de Castilla (Lords Constable of Castile), the monastery of Las Huelgas and the Carthusian monastery of Miraflores.
- * Construction on Burgos' Gothic Cathedral began in 1221 and spanned from the 13th to 15th centuries.
- * Morcilla de Burgos is a pig's-blood sausage, spiced with onions, herbs and rice.



Burgos



Logroño

Logroño

- * La Rioja area is famous for its wine. The first wineries were planted by the Romans.
- * Logroño is crossed by the longest river in Spain, the Ebro River.
- * Pilgrims enter Logroño through the Stone Bridge, built after the old bridge collapsed in 1871 because of a flood.

A stylized map showing the Camino de Santiago route. A white line winds from Pamplona in the bottom left, through green hills, to Roncesvalles in the top right. A red banner with the name 'Roncesvalles' is placed above the route. A blue banner with the name 'Pamplona' is placed below the route. On the left, there is an illustration of the Guggenheim Museum Pamplona with fireworks exploding above it. On the right, there is an illustration of a small village with white houses and red roofs.

Roncesvalles

Pamplona

Pamplona

- * Pamplona was founded by the Roman general Pompey.
- * The Running of the Bulls is its most famous tourist attraction, a bull running over an 875-meter course in front of six fighting bulls and six tamed oxen that lead the bulls through the narrow streets of Pamplona to the bullring.
- * The patron saint is San Fermín, who was tied to a bull by his feet and dragged to his death.
- * Pamplona is famous for its txistorra, a type of thick sausage.
- * A pintxo is a small snack you can traditionally eat in bars or taverns.



Camino de Santiago

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What you need to know.

Many pilgrims walk the Camino to “find themselves” spiritually, others consider it a personal challenge and others just an opportunity to get some breathing and thinking space.

Originally, the reason was to pay respect to St. James, one of the Twelve Apostles of Jesus Christ and who is thought to be buried in the Cathedral of Santiago.

There are many Camino routes. The most popular one is the French Way which totals over 790km. Scallop shells and yellow arrows mark the routes.

In order to prepare for the route, you will need to walk around 25km each day for a whole month.

Before you start, don't forget to pack a pair of hiking shoes as the route might get difficult at times. During the course of your day your clothes are going to get sweaty, damp, and possibly muddy. You can wash your clothes in the accommodation facilities. Due to the popularity of the route, there are many accommodation options for those following the Camino. The cheapest options are the so-called albergues (pilgrim hostels), which only cost five or six Euros for a bed.

As regards food, the Camino can provide everything from a tapa of crispy and creamy croquettes (around €3) to Menú del día (menu of the day), which generally costs between €8 and €12, and includes a starter, a main course and a dessert. Don't forget to try the typical Tarta de Santiago, a delicious almond cake!

When they arrive in Santiago de Compostela, many pilgrims head straight to the Pilgrim's Office in order to get their compostelana, the document that certifies that a pilgrim has completed the Camino de Santiago. In order to obtain it you should complete at least the last 100km on foot or the last 200km on bike, and get your pilgrim passport sealed at every stage.

To complete the journey, pilgrims usually attend the Pilgrim's Mass at the Cathedral, where the Botafumeiro (a huge thurible that weighs 50 kilograms and is one and a half metres tall) swings across the Cathedral's naves and over the crowd, emitting incense over all.

Inside the cathedral, pilgrims enjoy the Pórtico de la Gloria, which consists of three semicircular arches held by pillars decorated with fantastic animals, Apostles and representations of Old Testament. Also, one of the main things that all pilgrims do is embrace the apostle's statue and visit Saint James's tomb.