

CYCLING THE WAY OF ST JAMES – THE CAMINO DE SANTIAGO

7-days / 6-nights GUIDED, supported cycle touring from Burgos or León to Santiago de Compostela



The Way of St James or Camino de Santiago is as popular today as it has ever been. Many thousands walk or ride the pilgrim's routes each year but increasingly cyclists are following the route to the burial place of the apostle, the third most holy Christian city, Santiago de Compostela in the northwest corner of Spain. Without doubt this is the best cycling tour in Spain for anyone who wants to experience the tradition and history of this ancient land and the important pilgrimage cities along the route plus a varied itinerary with flat plains, undulation and with some challenging hills.

Travelling in small groups this itinerary offers great cycling and delightful scenery dotted with historic monuments, pilgrims' hospitals, sanctuaries and shrines. Our route runs through the north of Spain with breathtaking landscapes, staying in typical and traditional towns or villages each night. We offer a choice of accommodation staying in comfortable 4- or 5-star inns and hotels or exquisite and historical Paradors, including the famed Hostal dos Reis Católicos, the 5-star Parador in Santiago, located on Obradoira Square near the Cathedral. We savour a rich Spanish gastronomy of traditional regional cuisine and excellent wines.

With expert guides, mini-bus support and carefully chosen bicycles the route offers moderate cycling suitable for reasonably fit riders with some experience.

Departs: Burgos or León Departures on Sundays

Subject to minimum numbers. Extra departure dates available for a minimum of six participants – at any time of year, please ask for details.

Cost León to Santiago: from **\$5650** per person (twin share) Single room supplement from \$960

Cost Burgos to Santiago: from **\$5870** per person (twin share) Single room supplement from \$960

Includes: 6 nights' accommodation in 4 and 5-star hotels and Paradors, 6 buffet breakfasts, 6 dinners (with wine), 5 picnic/restaurant lunches, English speaking cycle guide, support vehicle with trailer and driver, multi-gear hybrid touring bike, helmet if required.

Not included: Meals not mentioned, drinks, personal expenses or gratuities. Standard transfers to/from Madrid if required (extra cost – ask for details).

Bike hire: a touring bike is included in tour cost – you can upgrade to aluminium road bike, carbon road bike, or **E-bikes are available** for a supplement - ask when making a booking for details and costs.

Call OUTDOOR TRAVEL on 1800 331 582 for details or reservations



Suggested itinerary – From Burgos to Santiago:

Day 1 Arrive Burgos

Make your way to Burgos, or alternatively join the bus transfer from Madrid (about 2½ hours). Tonight stay in Burgos with time in the afternoon to relax and select your bicycle for the ride ahead. Take a stroll around the city and have supper at restaurant serving typical Castilian cuisine, and a glass of good regional wine. Burgos was built in the year 884 AD and houses one of the most famed pilgrims' hospitals on the route to Santiago. The Burgos cathedral is a Gothic period gem.

Day 2 Burgos to Carrión de los Condes

cycling @ 55km of flat & rolling terrain

After breakfast, transfer from Burgos to Castrojeriz to begin today's cycling. Cross the famous 12th Century bridge of Fitero over the river Pisuerga. Then it's on to Frómista, with its Spanish Romanesque church dedicated to San Martin. Pass through more charming villages before arriving in Carrión. Here we spend the night and have supper in the Hotel Real Monasterio de San Zoilo, associated with the order of Cluny. Carrión has three national monuments and one of the best Romanesque facades. The monastery cloister is a Renaissance jewel.

Day 3 Carrión de los Condes to León

cycling @ 50km of flat & rolling terrain

After breakfast we head for Sahagún, stopping en route at some of the typical small villages. After lunch, travel by minibus to the amazing Parador of León. There is time to visit the city and its splendid cathedral. León was founded in 68BC and is unique in Spain for its historical and cultural heritage, its monuments, streets and its people. Stay at the luxurious Parador, once a convent and a pilgrims' hospital.

Day 4 León to Villafranca del Bierzo

cycling @ 60km with uphill & descent

Leave by bus to Astorga to visit the cathedral, the pilgrim's hospital and Gaudí's Episcopal Palace. From here we cycle up the gradual climb and long descent towards del Bierzo, a region abundant with fruit orchards. After a visit to Ponferrada and its Knights Templar castle, proceed to Villafranca del Bierzo, a historical and artistic monument, created to give refuge and sanctuary to pilgrims before their pilgrimage route through the mountains.

Day 5 Villafranca del Bierzo to Monforte

cycling @ 40km long descent & rolling terrain

Today we take the bus up the steep climb to O Cebreiro to visit the restored village and its chapel (with astounding views into Galicia), then the 23km descent by bicycle into Triacastela. Ride through (and visit) the Monastery of Saint Julian in Samos, and follow back country roads through pine and eucalyptus forests through to Sarria, where we stop for lunch. Here we are collected by the minibus and taken to the Parador de Monforte de Lemos, formerly a monastery and the palace of the Condes of Lemos.

Day 6 Monforte to Santiago de Compostela

cycling @ 35km with rolling terrain

Travel by bus to Arzúa. Cycle the last 30+kms, the hardest kilometres to ride as much is uphill before arriving at the "Façade of Glory" – Santiago's Pórtico de la Gloria – and the Plaza de Obradoiro. Here we can pay homage to St James and join the pilgrims in their joy and celebration. There is nowhere finer to stay than on the square of the Obradoiro at the Parador de Santiago – a grand hotel for those choosing this option – you will usually dine here. Santiago was without any doubt the most important Christian city in Spain during the Middle Ages. It is still the destination of thousands of travellers each year who come on pilgrimage or simply to view its treasures. The Parador, once a pilgrim's hospital, was built by the Catholic Kings in 1501 and is just next to the Cathedral.

Day 7 Depart Santiago

For those who prefer arrangements end in Santiago after breakfast.

If you wish to travel back to Madrid the bus departs after breakfast. The journey takes about 7 hours; we stop for lunch on the way (not included) and usually arrive into Madrid in the early evening.



Suggested itinerary – From León to Santiago:

Day 1 Arrive León

Make your way to León, or join the bus transfer from Madrid. In the afternoon we visit the historic cathedral and perhaps enjoy tapas in the bars of the Barrio Humedo (within the walled old city of León). Bike fitting and receive your pilgrim's credentials. Stay in the luxurious Parador de León, once a convent and pilgrims' hostel.

Day 2 León to Astorga

cycling @ 56km on gently rolling terrain

We cycle westwards cycling through small towns whose economies, for centuries, were dependent on pilgrims, and across the western plains of Castile towards the mountains that mark the border with Galicia. Our hotel is in Astorga, famous for its Cathedral, Gaudí's Archbishops' Palace, and delicious chocolate.

Day 3 Astorga to Villafranca

cycling @ 60km gradual ascent & long descent

We ride the rolling hills of Castile to the mountains and the highest point on the Camino, a gradual ascent of 800m, followed by a 12km descent to Ponferrada. We visit the castle of the Knights Templar and transfer by van to Villafranca del Bierzo, where we stay in the Parador, which features both indoor and outdoor swimming pools

Day 4 Villafranca to Monforte de Lemos

cycling @ 59km with challenging ascents & long descent

A choice today of either the steepest climb on the Camino to O Cebreiro (considered the most challenging stage of the Camino), or take the support bus and enjoy the 25km descent. We ride to the hamlet of Triacastela and visit the Monastery of Saint Julian in Samos. Backcountry roads take us through pine and eucalypt forests, away from the main Camino route, to Sarria. Transfer from Sarria to the Parador at Monforte de Lemos.

Day 5 Monforte de Lemos to Arzúa

cycling @ 42km on rolling terrain

Central Galicia is carpeted in dense forests and woodlands, which provide shade as we pass through the hamlets spread along the Camino. Off the beaten path on Galicia's country lanes there are ruins of castles, fabulous views and a rural tranquillity. We visit the grounds of the Palace of Ulloa (made famous by Emilia Pardo Bazán, the doyenne of Galician literature) and stay overnight in Arzúa.

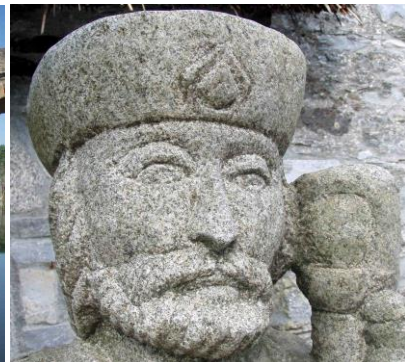
Day 6 Arzúa to Santiago de Compostela

cycling @ 36km on rolling terrain

We ride over rolling hills, past Lavacolla Hill to Monte do Gozo and our first glimpse of the cathedral of Santiago. We ride into to the centre of Santiago, with its narrow, winding streets, to Praza do Obradoiro and the Parador, the former Palace of the Catholic Kings. A farewell dinner tonight is followed by a walk along the lamp-lit streets of the city with the many pilgrims.

Day 7 Depart Santiago

Tour ends in Santiago after breakfast. Those returning to Madrid by our minibus will arrive in the evening.



Contact Outdoor Travel for more details and reservations

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