

SPAIN - SARRIA TO SANTIAGO ON THE WAY OF SAINT JAMES

8-days / 7-nights **SELF-GUIDED** walk from Sarria to Santiago **INCLUDES SHORTER DAILY DISTANCES**



The Camino de Santiago, Chemin St Jacques or Way of St James – the route to the shrine of St James the Apostle in the city of Santiago de Compostela in northwest Spain – has attracted pilgrims from all over Europe since the 12th Century. As part of one of the major pilgrimage routes starting in France from Le Puy, crossing the Pyrenees at the Roncesvalles Pass, joining other trails at Puente la Reina in Navarra (near Pamplona) it forms a single path across northern Spain to the shrine at Santiago de Compostela. The Spanish part of *El Camino de Santiago* runs some 800km from the Roncesvalles Pass through Puente la Reina, La Rioja, Burgos, Leon and finally crossing Galicia to Santiago.

The last section from Sarria to Santiago is the last 100 kilometres of the Camino Frances, and it is these last 100 kilometres that qualify you as a true pilgrim to receive the *Compostela* when you reach Santiago's great cathedral. It is challenging walking, so we have added an extra walking day to the traditional route to shorten some of the longer stretches and to make it more manageable.

Today, it is possible to experience the same route as the medieval travellers, walking the route on a self-guided 'inn to inn' walk – staying mostly in simple but comfortable 1, 2 or 3-star hotels or guest houses usually with your own bathroom / toilet – and with your baggage transferred each day. Today you can still share in the sheer scale, the mystery and the history of this great medieval pilgrimage phenomenon. To take a journey where you can imagine the hardships, the pleasures and interests of those early pilgrims following varied paths and wooded trails and mountains tracks that link cities and villages, fine churches and ancient monuments, through traditional Spanish countryside to the magnificent city of Santiago de Compostela.

Departs: Daily from May to October 2027

Cost from: **\$1925** per person twin share

Single room (in group) supplement: **\$680**
Solo Traveller supplement*: **\$775**

* Solo travellers should check for dates when this charge may be reduced by sharing the transfers with others.

Includes: 7 nights' accommodation in 1, 2 or 3-star hotels, breakfast daily, 6 dinners, luggage transfers (1 bag per person, max 20kg), route notes and maps (one set per room), transfers as per itinerary, emergency telephone assistance.

Not included: Lunches, 1 dinner, personal expenses (including entrance fees). Extra bags may be transferred for additional cost, ask for details.

Call OUTDOOR TRAVEL on (03) 5750 1441 for details or reservations

Suggested itinerary: *Extra nights or rest days can be added anywhere at the time you make your reservation.*

Day 1: Arrive Sarria

Plan to arrive Sarria mid-afternoon. Bus services to Sarria from Santiago and León are limited, so you may like to arrange a taxi transfer. This can be pre-booked at extra cost, please ask when making your booking.

Day 2: Sarria – Portomarín

walking @ 23km

Start your walking on quiet country roads, through shady oak forests and pretty villages, as you join the many pilgrims making their way to Santiago. Visit the beautiful Romanesque church at Barbedelo and continue through hamlets and villages across rolling countryside to Portomarín, a village rebuilt stone by stone after the old village was flooded by the construction of a nearby dam. Overnight in a 3-star hotel and in the evening relax on one of the numerous terrace cafes on the main plaza.

Day 3: Portomarín – Palas de Rei

walking @ 25km

Cross the river Mino and ascend steadily through Gonzar then Castromaior, which has a Romanesque church and the ruins of a *castro* or hill fort. The landscape here is dotted with charms, stone crosses, meadows, hedges, standing stones and calvaries typical of a Celtic landscape. A visit to the Galician Cemetery in Ligonde is well worthwhile. In Eirexe, the Romanesque portal of the church features a sculpture of Daniel and animals and has a statue of Santiago de Peregrino inside. Continue across undulating terrain to Palas de Rei, where the accommodation is usually in a typical 3-star hotel.

Day 4: Palas de Rei – Melide

walking @ 15km

Typically this would be a long stage for pilgrims, some 29km, so we have added an extra day for a more relaxing walk. The Camino route continues over undulating countryside, trending slightly downhill, and passes through many villages. Just before arriving in Melide, cross the medieval bridge at Furelos. The *Camino Primitivo*, the original route thought to have been taken by those carrying the relics of St James to Santiago across northern Spain (the route further south was deemed too dangerous) joins our route, the *Camino Frances*, at Melide. Accommodation is in a 2-star hotel this evening.

Day 5: Melide – Arzúa

walking @ 14km

Walk on a forest track and cross several streams to the village of Boente with its church of Santiago, then the medieval village of Ribadiso, and to Arzúa, a small town with two churches worth visiting: Santa María and La Magdalena. Arzúa is known locally for its cheese: a smooth, creamy, mild *queso* made from milk of local cows. Tonight's accommodation is in a 2-star hotel.

Day 6: Arzúa – Rua

walking @ 19km

This shaded section of the Camino passes through forests, alongside streams and through sleepy villages. In Rua there is the chance to visit the ancient church of San Verisimo and the 18th Century chapel at Santa Irene. Our hotel in Rua is a simple 1-star hotel.

Day 7: Rua - Santiago de Compostela

walking @ 20km

From Rua walk to Lavacolla where traditionally pilgrims washed themselves in the village stream before making their final approach to Santiago. Tall eucalyptus trees line our way to Monte del Gozo and from the “*Mount of Joy*” you can see your goal – the Cathedral of Santiago. Descend into the city through the Porta de Camino and make your way to the cathedral and square. This is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and a mass for pilgrims is celebrated at noon each day.

Dinner tonight is at your own arrangements and there are many choices. Walking through the narrow streets and squares of Santiago you can feel the unique and electric atmosphere created by the joy of pilgrims as they celebrate after their journey from many corners of the world.

Parador: *There is an opportunity to upgrade (at extra cost) to the 5-star Parador hotel in Santiago, in the former Hostal de los Reyes Catolicos, on the main square near the Cathedral – ask about cost and availability.*

Day 8: Santiago

Tour arrangements end after breakfast – ask about additional nights of accommodation or transfers.

Outdoor Travel offers walking holidays, guided in small groups or self-guided with inn-to-inn luggage transfers and meals in many parts of Europe including the spectacular **Pyrenees to the Mediterranean Sea** or through the Alpujarras, Andalucia or Sierra Nevada in Spain or **Via Francigena**, the pilgrim's Road to Rome in Italy.

Contact Outdoor Travel for more itinerary details and reservations:

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