Saint James Way Small Group Walking Tour (The Camino)- Spain
09 Jun 20 to 27 Jun 20

Small Group Walking Tour of the Camino.

The Camino Real, Camino de santiago, Saint James way. Walking the Camino is a small group walking tour in primarily Northern Spain and Portugal. Taking the active senior traveller through some of the most pleasant sections of this historic walk in Spain and Portugal, embracing history and culture. Over a 19 day period experience
breathtaking scenery and picturesque sections of the Way of Saint James while following the pilgrim path along some of its most beautiful landscapes. This walk takes in Cape Finisterre the symbolic end for many who have been walking the Camino.

Odyssey has selected relevant sections so that you experience Saint James Way, eventually reaching the historic destination Santiago de Compostela. Not since the Middle Ages has this adventure for body and mind been more popular as a pilgrimage or just a great walk.

There are alternative routes such as the Camino Del Norte or del norte (Northern Way) is the Camino route taking pilgrims along the Northern coast, from the Basque Country, across Cantabria, Asturias and on to Santiago de Compostela, in Galicia.

The history of Saint James way or Camino de Santiago

The Camino de Santiago, also known as the way of St James is the ancient Catholic pilgrimage route to the cathedral in Santiago de Compostela in Galicia in northern Spain. Legend has it that the bones of the apostle St James were brought by boat from Jerusalem to northern Spain and are buried under the site of what is now the city of Santiago de Compostela.

Saint James way has been considered to be an important Christian pilgrimage route more 1000 years. It was considered by the church to be one of the three pilgrimage routes on which sins could be forgiven. There are many routes to Santiago de Compostela, starting from a variety of points, from as far away as Belgium to as close as
100km from Santiago.

What you will experience on this small group tour:

The Saint James Way Small Group Walking Tour is escorted by an Odyssey program leader. Odyssey's local guides also share with you their knowledge of the medieval pilgrims and the route walked to Santiago de Compostela.

The tour is designed to be as demanding as you choose. You or your partner may elect to enjoy a slower day during the tour. Or you might decide to walk the appointed section that day. Odyssey has a fitness program designed to bring you up to a comfortable activity level prior to the tour that we circulate to all participants.

Other Highlights on the Camino:

During this tour we also discover the artistic highlights and rich history of Northern Spain and Northern Portugal. You can also expect to enjoy the local wines and exquisite food selected by our local guide as we travel through Basque country. We take some breaks from our walking tour, stopping in at the impressive Guggenheim art temple in Bilbao. We will also familiarise ourselves with the centuries-old tradition of choir singing, still practised in the convents along our route.

The Saint James way small group tour is structured for the senior or mature couple or solo traveller. It is a tour that ultimately allows you decide how much activity you wish to enjoy. It also allows your travelling companion to participate in the walk whilst you enjoy
yourself prior to meeting up again in the evenings. Of course the coach and program leader arranges all the luggage transfers freeing you up to enjoy the journey. We include a few days to enjoy a short tour of Portugal, that includes Porto, but not Lisbon. Odyssey has other programs that discover Portugal in greater depth with stories of the history and culture to be enjoyed.

The Saint James Way small group walking tour is one of some 10 walking programs that Odyssey Traveller offers. These active tours are designed for the mature traveller to enjoy in a small group holiday and learning environment.

For more details, click the ‘Top 5’ or ‘Itinerary’ buttons above! If you’re keen to experience this tour, please call or send an email. Or, to book, simply fill in the form on the right hand side of this page.

Here are some recently published blogs that may assist in planning this tour with Odyssey:

Tips for preparing for a walking tour

Clothing and Footwear

Travel tips for mature travellers part one

Travel tips for mature travelers part two

Tour Notes

• A reasonable level of underlying fitness is required for this tour.
• Group size is limited to a maximum of 18 participants.

Top 5

1. Be amazed in Burgos with the history of El Cid & the Cathedral
2. Spoil the hedonist in you with La Rioja wine tasting in a bodega.
3. Familiarize yourself with the century old choir singing which is still practiced in the convents along our route.
4. Immerse yourself in the impressive Guggenheim art temple in Bilbao.
5. View the vast Castilian plains and mountain passes on the Way of St. James.

Itinerary

Day 1

Locations: Bilbao

Overview: Upon arrival in Bilbao we will come to the hotel individually. We will enjoy a welcome dinner in Bilbao.

Accommodation: 2 nights at Hotel Abando or similar.

Day 2

Locations: Bilbao

Overview: We will spend the day discovering this lively city, which was a centre of the Spanish industrial revolution in the 19th century. It rose out of post industrial decay by repositioning itself as a cultural hub with the stunning Guggenheim Museum at its heart.

Accommodation: Hotel Abando or similar.
Day 3

Locations: Bilbao to Leyre

Overview: From the hustle and bustle of Bilbao we go straight to the middle ages. We will have the perfect introduction to a pilgrim's life overnight in a convent. In the evening we might witness the Monks rehearse in choir.

Accommodation: 1 night at Hospederia de Leyre or similar.

Day 4

Locations: Leyre to Pamplona

Overview: We put our walking shoes on, leave our luggage to our coach driver to assist us with arrival and departure each day and begin. Today we walk from the Old Monastery to the Balcon de Pirineos (roughly one hour), across an impressive landscape to the convent of San Juan de la Pena. Behind those thick walls, once, according to legend, the holy grail was kept. We continue to Pamplona.

Accommodation: 2 nights at NH Iruna Park Hotel or similar.

Day 5

Locations: Pamplona

Overview: In the morning we have a city tour in Pamplona, and in the afternoon we walk the trail of Ernest Hemingway, who ran the bulls in this town. We will see the capital of Navarre also. From there, we take another walk across fields and forests (roughly 3km, taking around 40 minutes), where we certainly will encounter pilgrims with whom we can talk about their reason to do The Way. We will end
the day with a visit to the convent of Roncesvalles.

**Accommodation:** NH Iruna Park Hotel or similar.

### Day 6

**Locations:** Pamplona to Laguardia

**Overview:** Today we walk in Navarra and see the octagonal Church of Eunate, built by the Templars. We cross the ancient pilgrim’s bridge Puente de la Reina. From here, we walk to Maneru (roughly 5kms, taking around an hour). Pilgrims and wine go together, so this evening, we enjoy a wine tasting in a bodega.

**Accommodation:** 1 night at Hotel Villa de Laguardia or similar.

### Day 7

**Locations:** Laguardia to Burgos

**Overview:** Today we hear about the legend of the fowl in the Cathedral of Santiago de la Calzada. From here, we walk the Way to Villafranca Montes de Oca (roughly 6kms, taking around an hour).

**Accommodation:** 2 nights at Hotel Silken Gran Teatro or similar.

### Day 8

**Locations:** Burgos

**Overview:** Today, we enjoy a self-guided visit of the Miraflores Convent, which shimmers with gold from the new world. We’ll enjoy some free time to explore on our own before transferring to Covarrubias where nearby start our walk amidst oak trees to San Pedro de Arlanza (approx 1.5hrs / 6.7kms). We then take a scenic walk from Hortiguela to Mambrillas de Lara (approx 1hr / 4.6kms).
From there, we drive back to Burgos and have dinner at the hotel.

**Accommodation:** Hotel Silken Gran Teatro or similar.

### Day 9

**Locations:** Burgos to Leon

**Overview:** Today, we walk 6kms (roughly 1.2 hours) over the Castillian plains, from Boadilla del Camino to Fromista. We have a picnic on the way. We continue on to Leon.

**Accommodation:** 2 nights at Parador de Leon.

### Day 10

**Locations:** Leon

**Overview:** Today we enjoy a guided Tour of Leon, capital of Asturias from the 10th century and the centre of Christian Spain. It is now a lively university town.

**Accommodation:** Parador de Leon.

### Day 11

**Locations:** Leon to Villafranca

**Overview:** This morning, we walk 2km from Leon to Manjarin (roughly half an hour). We stop for a refreshment break in El Acebo de San Miguel. Later in the day, we walk to Moliaseca via Riego de Ambros (8kms, taking roughly two hours), stopping for a picnic lunch en route. In the evening, we enjoy a three-course dinner in our hotel.

**Accommodation:** 1 night at Parador de Villafranca or similar.
**Day 12**

**Locations:** Villafranca to Sarria

**Overview:** Once driven over the Cebreiro pass, we discover the green side of Spain, with storks on the chimneys. We take a 45-minute walk (3kms) from O Cebreiro to Linares. After a bus ride to Pasanta, we then walk the 2kms to Traicastela (taking around half an hour). After stopping for a picnic lunch, there is an option to walk the 22kms (roughly four hours) to Sarria, or alternatively, to ride the bus. For many taking the Camino it is the Sarria to Santiago section of some 100 kilometers that represents the pinnacle of the walk to pay homage on this religious walk. For those on this tour, we take in some of the sections but save ourselves for following day.

**Accommodation:** 1 night at Hotel Carris Alfonso IX or similar.

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**Day 13**

**Locations:** Sarria to Santiago

**Overview:** This morning, we take a 1.5 hour walk (roughly 6kms) in Galicia to reach our ultimate destination: praza do obradoiro and the famous Santiago Cathedral. We experience the emotional scenes of pilgrims arriving at their long-awaited destination. At noon we attend the pilgrims mass at the Cathedral.

**Accommodation:** 3 nights at Hotel Gelmirez or similar.

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**Day 14**

**Locations:** Santiago de Compostela

**Overview:** This morning we explore the local market and sample its produce and enjoy a guided tour of Santiago de Compostela. The
afternoon is free to explore the city further on your own.

**Accommodation:** Hotel Gelmirez or similar.

**Day 15**

**Locations:** Santiago de Compostela

**Overview:** Today we take a full day excursion as we drive to Cape Finisterre “end of the world” and contemplate the agitated Atlantic. This at one time in history was the end of the world! Later we drive south and explore the beautiful coastal Rias Bajas area.

**Accommodation:** Hotel Gelmirez or similar.

**Day 16**

**Locations:** Santiago de Compostela - Braga

**Overview:** Today we start a short tour of Portugal. The group visits several destinations in Portugal that have contributed to the history of Portugal. We start with a drive to Braga via the Portuguese leg of the Way, Ponte de Lima, winding through woodlands, farmlands, villages, and towns. According to legend, St. James named the first bishop of Braga in the 4th century. Since then, Braga is the capital of Catholic Portugal.

**Accommodation:** 1 night at Hotel do Parque or similar.

**Day 17**

**Locations:** Braga - Oporto

**Overview:** We start the morning exploring Braga, a traditional Portuguese city. In the city center, medieval Braga Cathedral is home to a sacred art museum and the Gothic-style Kings’ Chapel. At the Bom Jesus do Monte complex a neoclassical church sits atop an
elaborate 17-flight stairway. The courageous amongst us start the endless stairs to the top of Portugal’s most spectacular sanctuary. Fortunately, for the others there is the funicular railway. We later depart for the city of Porto.

**Accommodation:** 2 nights at HF Fenix Porto or similar.

**Day 18**

**Locations:** Oporto

**Overview:** Today we spend the day in Porto, where you can discover Portugal. The entire historic town centre is a Unesco World Heritage site. An expert guide explains us the birth of Portugal. In the afternoon we enjoy a visit and tasting to a Port Cellar.

**Accommodation:** HF Fenix Porto or similar.

**Day 19**

**Locations:** Oporto

**Overview:** After breakfast marks the end of our services. We suggest flights back to Madrid or Barcelona from Oporto’s International Airport.

**Accommodation:**

**Inclusions / Exclusions**

**What’s included in our Tour**
- 18 nights of accommodation.
- 18 breakfasts, 7 lunches, and 13 dinners.
- Services of a Tour Leader for the duration of tour.
- Applicable entry fees and services of local guides.
- Gratuities and necessary tips.
- Detailed tour information booklet.

What's not included in our Tour

- International flights and departure taxes.
- Comprehensive travel insurance.
- Items of a personal nature such as telephone calls and laundry.

Please do not hesitate to contact us with any requests for further information about this tour or any others offered by Odyssey Travel.