

EXPLORE!

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10% OFF

Walking the Camino de Santiago

SPAIN - TRIP CODE CDS

WALKING AND TREKKING

Why book this trip?

Follow in the footsteps of countless pilgrims, walking the legendary Camino Frances (French Way) from Leon to Santiago de Compostela. Walk through beautiful scenery and historic towns along the best parts of the route to claim a pilgrim's certificate.

- **Cruz de Ferro** - The famous Iron Cross at the highest point of the Camino
- **O Cebreiro** - Charming mountain village with cobbled streets, round stone thatched houses and picturesque valley views
- **Santiago De Compostela** - Lively historic town, mix with other pilgrims and feel a real sense of comradery
- **Holy year** - As All Saints Day falls on 25th July, 2021 is a considered a celebratory year and an extra

special time to complete this iconic walk



INCLUDED MEALS
Breakfast: 11



TRIP STAFF
Explore Tour
Leader
Driver(s)



TRANSPORT
Bus



ACCOMMODATION
11 nights
comfortable hotel



WALKING GRADE:
Moderate



GROUP SIZE:
10 - 16

Itinerary

Itineraries on some departure dates may differ, please select the itinerary that you wish to explore.

DAY 1 - Join trip in Madrid

Arrive in Madrid, the Capital of Spain home to elegant boulevards, manicured parks, cultural museums and fantastic markets.

For those arriving on time our Leader plans to meet you in the hotel reception at 7pm for the welcome meeting and for those that wish, there is the chance to go out for dinner. There are no activities planned today, so you are free to arrive in Madrid at any time. If you would like to receive a complimentary airport transfer today, you'll need to arrive at Madrid-Barajas Adolfo Suárez Airport (MAD) which is around 20 minutes' drive from the hotel. Should you miss the meeting, your leader will inform you of any essential information as soon as you catch up.

If your flight arrives earlier in the day, perhaps you might choose to explore the city, wandering the back streets in search of tucked away tapas bars. There vast 19th century El Retiro Park is good place for a leisurely walk, past rose gardens and statues to the boating lake.



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Rincon de Granvia (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel





SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: NONE

DAY 2 - Walking tour of Leon

We will travel together as a group to Leon, a three-and-a-half hour drive. Leon is a great city with a wonderful sense of history reflected in its architecture. It is also an important waypoint on the famous Camino de Santiago.

After settling into our hotel we'll have a walking tour of this interesting city. The city's main attractions are its beautiful Gothic cathedral with its unique stained glass windows and the Romanesque San Isidoro church. However there is lots more to discover, including the picturesque old quarter and the brass scallop shells set in the pavement that mark the route of the Camino de Santiago through the city.



ACCOMMODATION:
Hostal Albany (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 3 - Walk from Hospital de Orbigo to Astorga

Today, after ensuring we have our Pilgrim Passports we drive to Hospital de Orbigo, famous for its 13th century bridge. We commence our trek from here, with a walk on the Meseta (the Castilian high plateau) to Astorga, home to the magnificent Bishop's Palace designed by Antoni Gaudi.

Our first walk covers 16 kilometres over approximately four hours. The terrain is gently undulating with a total ascent and descent of 200 metres.



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Gaudi (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 4 - Ascend to the Iron Cross (1,482 m); descend to Molinaseca

We leave the high plateau of the Meseta behind us as we drive a short distance into the mountains to the near- abandoned village of Foncebadon. From here we walk, following the scallop shell markings, up to the famous Cruz de Ferro (Iron Cross), the highest point of the Camino at 1,482m. This is one of the most significant points on the route, for centuries pilgrims have left a stone brought from home, an offering they hope will give them protection for the rest of the pilgrimage. From here we can see the mountains of Galicia in the distance. The rest of our day is spent descending (steep in places) and we finally arrive in the small village of Molinaseca with its impressive Roman bridge. Here we meet our bus and transfer the short distance to our hotel in Villafranca del Bierzo. Villafranca del Bierzo was once an important medieval town and is home to some spectacular churches, including the Romanesque Church of Santiago.

Today's 19 kilometre walk is expected to take around five hours with 100 metres of ascent and 930 metres of descent. We ascend to 1,482 metres then gently descend along mountain trails.



ACCOMMODATION:
Hostal Casa Mendez (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 5 - Walk to the pretty mountain village of O Cebreiro

After a short drive to the start of today's walk we continue along the Camino, following the course of the Valcarce River through the valley. This has been the route between Galicia and Castile since ancient times, passing through the small hamlets of Las Herrerias and Ruitelan to the border between Galicia and Leon. Here we come to one of the highlights of our walk, the unusual village of O Cebreiro, a tiny wind battered settlement of stone houses set high above a patchwork quilt of green valleys. The village is famous for its 'pallozas' - traditional circular, thatch-roofed houses. Once in O Cebreiro we have time to

relax and explore the village before meeting our bus for the drive to Sarria. En route there is the option to visit Samos Monastery, still an active retreat, and a landmark of the Camino.

Today's nine kilometre walk is expected to take around three hours with 750 metres of ascent and descent. Walking on unmade mountain path gradually uphill for most of the day and far from road access.



ACCOMMODATION:

Hotel Oca Villa de Sarria (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 6 - Pass the famous 100 km landmark

From Sarria we continue on foot through Galicia, traversing a terrain of undulating hills in the most verdant of Spain's regions. Passing the hamlet of Ferreiros we reach the famous 100km landmark, for so long a magical moment for weary pilgrims. It is here that they can re-gather their strength, knowing that it was now only another three or four days to go to Santiago. Nowadays this waypoint marks the limit from where one has to walk continuously to Santiago in order to get the 'Compostela', the official pilgrim's certificate. This afternoon we reach Portomarin, once a splendid medieval village, which was relocated by Franco to make way for a reservoir. Remnants of the town's more prosperous days can still be seen amongst its narrow streets, such as the attractive Romanesque San Pedro church.

Today's 22 kilometre walk is expected to take around five-and-a-half hours with 640 metres of ascent and 300 metres of descent. The terrain is mainly unmade paths through hilly countryside.



ACCOMMODATION:

Hotel Villajardin (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



DAY 7 - Descend to Palas de Rei

Today we start by crossing part of the reservoir on a disused railway bridge. Then the trail continues gradually uphill, passing the 80km mark near Castromaior village. In the vicinity is Casa Carneiro, in medieval times a night stop for 'VIP' pilgrims such as Charles V the emperor who stayed here in 1520 on his way to his coronation, and King Philipp II a few years later on his way to marry Mary Tudor in England. We reach our last high pass (722m) just before Ligonde, and continue on through undulating hills, Eucalyptus trees and Cruceiros (the stone crosses typical of Galicia), to gently descend to our night stop at Palas de Rei, an important pilgrim town.

Today's 22 kilometre walk is expected to take around six hours with 410 metres of ascent and 300 metres of descent. We ascend up to the pass (722 m) and then continuing on unmade paths through gently undulating hills.



ACCOMMODATION:
Pension Arenas Palas (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 8 - Hike through rural Galicia; cross the medieval bridge near Melide

Leaving the town behind, the Camino now takes us through idyllic rural Galicia, passing farmland and beautiful countryside. We walk through an oak grove to A Coruna, and cross a medieval bridge with four arches to reach Melide. Today is a good day for trying some traditional Galician dishes, specifically the famous 'pulpo a la Gallega octopus' for which the village of Melide is renowned, and maybe some of the excellent local white wine from the Riberas Baixas region near Pontevedra. Tonight we stay in a typical Galician farmhouse, where dinner can be taken.

Today's 22.5 kilometre walk is expected to take around six hours with 350 metres of ascent and 450 metres of descent. The terrain is rural paths through farmland and gently undulating hillsides.



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Pazo de Sedor (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 9 - Walk through local villages en route to El Amenal

Santiago is getting closer! Today you will pass many 'horreos', typical barns of the region that dot this beautiful countryside. We will also start to see more signs that we are nearing Santiago, including many pilgrim villages. Crossing the River Iso we arrive to Arzua where the Camino Frances (French Way) that we have been following, and Camino del Norte (North Way or Camino Primitivo) meet - Arzua is also known in the region for its local soft cheese. Today we pass many pilgrim sites including pilgrim Guillermo Watt's memorial; he died here whilst on the pilgrimage and his shoes can be found in the stone wall. We can also stop at Santa Irene chapel to see statues of Saint James. We arrive to the small village of El Amenal and our hotel for the night.

Today's 27.5 kilometre walk is expected to take around seven-and-a-half hours with 400 metres of ascent and 480 metres of descent. The terrain is rural paths and local village roads.



ACCOMMODATION:
Amenal Hotel (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 10 - Arrive in Santiago de Compostela

Today we complete our pilgrimage. We pass through the village of Lavacolla, where traditionally pilgrims would wash and change into their best clothes for the final stretch of the walk. From here we ascend the final hill to Monte Gozo, from where we finally see Santiago Cathedral in the distance. We are now just five kilometres from Santiago's historic centre and the end of our pilgrimage. As we walk the last hour of the trail we share the emotions and sense of achievement of thousands of pilgrims, ancient and modern

from all over the world, as we complete the trail and claim our 'Compostela', our pilgrim's certificate.

Our last walk covers 17.5 kilometres and is expected to take around five hours with 180 metres of ascent and 230 metres of descent. The terrain is unmade paths and roads.



ACCOMMODATION:
Rosa Rosae (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 11 - Morning guided walking tour of Santiago; free afternoon

This morning we take a guided walking tour of Santiago including a visit to the magnificent cathedral, a stunning architectural landmark with Romanesque, Gothic and Baroque features. We also visit the important local squares, churches and buildings around the cathedral.

Please note that the Cathedral in Santiago is currently undergoing a major renovation until at least 2021. We will still visit the interior of the Cathedral, the museum, cloister and the tomb of the Apostle however it is not possible to take a tour of the rooftops. The mass have been moved to the nearby San Francisco church. The Portal of Glory has recently been re-opened and can be visited, paying a separate entrance fee (please discuss with your Explore leader if you would like to book this in advance).

The afternoon is free to wander the city's narrow streets discovering some of the city's other architectural treasures, and enjoy the local food and wine. It is also possible to take an optional excursion to Cape Finisterre, however this is a full day excursion so you would have to miss the city tour.



ACCOMMODATION:
Rosa Rosae (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE





MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 12 - Trip ends in Santiago

The trip ends after breakfast at our hotel in Santiago de Compostela.

There are no activities planned today, so you are free to depart from Santiago at any time. If your flight is departing later in the day luggage storage facilities are available at our hotel. If you would like to receive a complimentary airport transfer today, you need to depart from Santiago de Compostela Airport (SCQ) which is around 15 minutes' drive from the hotel.



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

Trip information

Climate and country information

Spain

Climate

Overall, spring, early summer and autumn are ideal times for a Spanish trip - though the weather varies enormously from region to region. The high central plains suffer from fierce extremes, stiflingly hot in summer, bitterly cold and swept by freezing winds in winter. The Atlantic coast, in contrast, has a tendency to damp and mist, and a relatively brief, humid summer. The Mediterranean south is warm virtually all year round. Spain's Islands the Canaries and Balaerics experience very mild winters and warm summers making them ideal year round destinations.

Time difference to GMT	Plugs	Religion
+1	2 Pin Round	Roman Catholic

Language

Castilian Spanish, Catalan, Galician, Basque

Budgeting and packing

Optional activities

The following excursions and/or activities are usually available and may be arranged locally. Estimated costs are provided below for guidance only, are on a per person basis unless shown otherwise, and may depend on the number of participants. Prices quoted are correct as of the date these tour notes were

originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations. Please note: These activities are booked and paid for direct with the supplier and do not form part of your Explore holiday contract.

Sarria - Visit to Samos Monastery €10

Leon - Cathedral & San Isidoro entrance €11

Santiago - Individual Admission Pórtico de la Gloria €10, Individual Admission Combined Pórtico + Museum €12

Visit to Cape Finisterre €30 - 50

Clothing

Bring light and comfortable clothing that can be layered according to the temperature. It can become cool, especially at night, so bring warmer layers. Tops made from wicking materials which keep you drier, a warmer fleece is recommended as a mid layer, and walking trousers are preferable to trousers of heavier material such as jeans.

- Breathable wind and waterproof jacket (you may also wish to bring waterproof trousers)
- T-shirts
- Long sleeved tops
- Sunhat
- Long trousers
- Shorts (if you prefer to walk in them)
- Swimwear and towel
- Midlayer Fleece/pullover
- Socks (liner and thicker pair)
- Insulated jacket

Footwear

We recommend you bring walking boots with ankle support- leather or fabric are both fine. Make sure that your boots are worn-in and comfortable before the start of the trip. Also trainers or sandals for relaxing and general wear. We suggest that on international flights you either carry your walking boots in your hand luggage or wear them - should your luggage be lost or delayed, your own boots are the one thing that will be irreplaceable.

Luggage

20Kg

Luggage: On tour

Bring one main piece of luggage and a 20-30 litre day sack is recommended. You will need to carry what you need for the day which may include a raincoat, jumper, camera, sun-cream, water and picnic lunch. On hot days you will carry fewer clothes but more drinking water. Main baggage will be transported between nightstops.

Equipment

- Sunglasses
- Sun cream
- Small Torch (with spare batteries and bulb)
- Camera
- Walking poles (if you usually use them)
- Gaiters (if you usually use them)
- Personal toiletries
- Personal first aid kit - On each walk a first aid kit is carried but you should have your own blister kit, supply of plasters, aspirin and other essentials.
- Insect repellent
- Small waterproof dry bag (for items such as your mobile phone)
- Reusable water bottle (minimum 1 litre) - Get 15% discount on a Water-to-Go bottle www.explore.co.uk/about-us/responsible-travel/water-to-go-discount-with-explore
- Lunch bag/Tupperware (for packed lunches)
- Binoculars

Tipping

Explore leader

Tipping isn't compulsory, and we work hard to ensure that our leaders all receive a fair wage. You may however, want to recognise a leader that has done a great job or really added to your trip by giving them a tip. We're often asked about the recommended amount. It is a tricky one, and down to personal preference, but we would recommend £15 to £20 per person per week as a guideline.

Local crew

Although voluntary, tipping is a recognised part of life in this region of the world. Some local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. Accordingly, you should allow approximately £20 of local currency for tipping. In order to make things easier for you, the Explore Leader may organise a group's tips kitty and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the trip. 10% is recommended at meal times.

Spain

Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Lunch price	Dinner price	Beer price
£8.00 - 12.00	£16.00 - 20.00	£1.50 - 3.50 (depending on the region/area in Spain)

Water price
£1.4

Foreign Exchange

Local currency Recommended Currency For Exchange

Euros We recommend you take the majority of your spending money in Euros cash.

Where To Exchange

We recommend that you change any currency into Euros prior to arrival. Bureau de Change are generally only found in major cities and large airports.

ATM Availability

In cities and most major towns.

Credit Card Acceptance

Visa and Mastercard are generally accepted in larger restaurants and some shops.

Travellers Cheques

Not recommended.

Transport, Accommodation & Meals

Transport Information

Bus

Accommodation notes

Accommodation and service levels in Spain are generally very good. On this trip we stay in smaller, family-run hotels and pensions that might not offer the same luxuries as larger chain-style hotels, but they do provide a warm welcome, a comfortable place to stay and the chance to gain a better understanding of local life. One thing to be aware of in Spain is that breakfast tends to be a smaller affair, often just fruit juice or coffee and a pastry. Dinners in the pensions and rural houses will be a typical set menu that includes wine, these range in price from €15 to €25.

Essential Information

Government Travel Safety Advice

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK citizens, check the latest Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office advice.

Please refer to our COVID-19 entry requirements page for any country-specific conditions of entry. Whilst we strive to update this on a regular basis we recommend you also check the FCDO website for the latest advice on entry requirements in this fast-evolving situation. Information can change at any

time.

Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

Price Guarantee

Once your booking has been confirmed we guarantee the price will not increase, whatever the circumstances. Before booking please ensure you have read our important tour pricing information. [Booking Conditions](#)

Visa and Passport Information

Spain: Visas are not required by UK, Australian, New Zealand, US and Canadian citizens. Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may be able to apply through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See www.travcour.com to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, with the correct validity for your chosen destination.

Booking conditions

Before booking your Explore trip, please ensure that you read both our Essential Information and [Booking Conditions](#).

Transfers

Find out more about [Trip Transfer Terms and Conditions](#) before you book.

Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found below in the dates and prices information.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The complimentary transfers will be arranged from the Explore designated airport or train station to your trips joining point, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. Generally the airport or station that Explore have selected will be the one that is closest to the town or city where the trip starts, or the one nearest to the joining point. It will be either an airport or train station but not both.

The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Polar, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer [click here](#)

Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. The cost of many of our Polar Voyages will exceed the capped amount covered by standard insurance premiums and you will be required to pay an additional premium to cover the full value of your trip. Please ensure that you are covered for the full amount of your holiday cost, as insufficient cover could invalidate a claim under the policy. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

Read more information about what travel insurance is required.

Flight information

Explore offers a wide range of flexible flying options to make joining and leaving our trips easy. Read more about them [here](#).

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

Spain

Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory but Tetanus is usually recommended as a precaution. Please check the latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. The above is not an exhaustive list.

Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at Explore Travel Health and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before travelling.

Walking and Trekking information

DAILY DISTANCES		
Day 3	16km	4hrs
Day 4	19km	5hrs
Day 5	9km	3hrs
Day 6	22km	5.5hrs
Day 7	22km	6hrs
Day 8	22.5km	6hrs
Day 9	27.5km	7.5hrs
Day 10	17.5km	5hrs

Walking grade

Moderate

Trek details

8-day point-to-point trek walking, between 3 and 7.5 hours a day following the well-defined Camino Frances, reaching a maximum altitude of 1,482m. There are longer and shorter days, the gradient on the the longer days is gradual and gently undulating. There is the option to take a taxi (at own expense) if you wish to shorten the day or have a day of not walking.

Additional Information



Reviews



 <p>AWARD WINNING EXPLORE LEADERS</p>	 <p>PRICE GUARANTEE PROMISE</p>	 <p>AIRPORT TRANSFERS</p>
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