



fresco
TOURS

The Camino de Santiago Tour

- an adventure from our backyard -



2012 Camino de Santiago Tour

10 days / 9 nights

The crown jewel of Spanish walking trails, the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela began as an act of faith as Europeans crossed Spain to visit the sacred tomb of Saint James. One thousand years later, the Camino continues to draw the spiritual as well as the traveler looking to enjoy the beauty of the green rolling hills and small hamlets of northwestern Spain's Galicia. Come be part of this magical route that is very special for us - it is on the Camino where the idea for Fresco Tours was first born in 1999.

	<h3>Camino de Santiago Tour Dates 2012</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> April 3 - 12, 2012 April 17 - 26, 2012 May 1 - 10, 2012 May 15 - 24, 2012 May 29 - June 7, 2012 June 12 - 21, 2012 July 10 - 19, 2012 July 24 - Aug 2, 2012 Aug 28 - Sept 6, 2012 Sept 11 - 20, 2012 Sept 25 - Oct 4, 2012 Oct 14 - 23, 2012
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Day 1: Leon to Valcarce Valley

In the afternoon, we meet the group in the town of Leon, whose Gothic Cathedral's magnificent stain glass windows have led people to say that it is made more of glass than stone! After a quick Orientation Meeting to discuss our week ahead on the Camino de Santiago, we hop in the van and drive west following the trail. Before dinner, we stretch our legs a bit and do a short walk through the green Valcarce river valley.

Sleep: Valcarce / Walking: 5 KMs or 3 miles

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Day 2: O'Cebreiro to Triacastela

With our boots and scallop shells on, we get our first glimpse of the green Galician countryside. Our day starts with a steady climb to the Alto do Poio, the highest point of the Camino de Santiago in Galicia. After a stamp and a coffee, we start our decent down to the town of Triacastela, named after the 3 castles that once stood watch over the village. With our first full day of walking in the books, we hop in the van to shuttle to our accommodations for the evening.

Sleep: Sarria / Walking: 21 KMs or 12 miles

Day 3: Triacastela to Sarria

Today is the day of the difficult decision! What to do? The Camino de Santiago has 2 paths to reach Sarria - take the high road through San Xil and enjoy the beautiful views from atop the ridge or visit the ancient monastery of Samos along the river valley? Traditionally, pilgrims would have to choose one or the other. We, however, get to do both! By day we walk along the hills of San Xil, and in the evening we'll take the van to visit one of Spain's oldest monasteries! Afterwards, we finish our day with a fine meal of traditional Galician cuisine!

Sleep: Sarria / Walking: 19 KMs or 11 miles



Day 4: Sarria to Portomarin

Leaving Sarria, we should take in the views from atop the city and keep an eye out for the ruins of Celtic castros hiding in the vegetation along the Camino de Santiago. On our way to Portomarin, we walk by the 100km marker, a milestone (or kmstone!) for the millions of pilgrims who have traversed this same spot during the last millennium. As we approach Portomarin, we see the 12th-century Church of San Juan, an interesting fortified church that stands guard over the banks of the River Miño.

Sleep: Palas de Rei / Walking: 22 KMs or 13 miles

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Day 5: Portomarin to Palas de Rei

We start our day with a gentle climb out of the river valley and pass through typical Galician villages, decorated with their raised corncribs and the occasional carved granite cross that marks the way to Santiago. Continuing west, we walk through the first of many eucalyptus forests along the Camino de Santiago and work our way into Palas de Rei. What better way to reward ourselves from our day's walk than a glass of Galicia's light Albariño white wine!

Sleep: Palas de Rei / Walking: 21 KMs or 12 miles

Day 6: Palas de Rei to Melide

Following the now very familiar yellow arrows, we ramble up and down gentle rolling hills along quiet footpaths. Little has changed in this quiet corner of Spain, and the peaceful rural environment of local farmers tending to their lazy cattle in stone houses accompany us back to another time. We quickly arrive back to the present in the bustling market town of Melide, where tender octopus, pulpo, is still boiled in large copper kettles on the street.

Sleep: Melide / Walking: 18 KMs or 11 miles

Day 7: Melide to Arzua

Half way to our destination, we leave Melide and on small country roads we wind our way across the Galician countryside. Along the way, our journey is filled with tiny churches dating back to the 12th and 14th-century dedicated to Santiago and Santa Maria. Once in Arzua, we should take advantage to try some of the famous local cow cheese or perhaps a bit of empanada, a light crusty pastry filled with either beef or tuna.

Sleep: Melide / Walking: 15 KMs or 9 miles

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Day 8: Arzua to Arca

Today we continue to enjoy the wonderful scenery of the Galician countryside and charming atmosphere of tiny 3-house villages. Get a feel for the people and greet a local villager with a “Buenos dias” or “Hola”. You'll see how these quiet and reserved people, quickly wish you well on your journey to Santiago. On this trek, you are no longer a tourist but a pilgrim on the Camino de Santiago! Almost there...

Sleep: Arca / Walking: 19 KMs or 11 miles

Day 9: Arca to Santiago

9 days, 160 kilometers, and we have arrived to Santiago de Compostela. Congratulations! You are going to love this magical city filled with fantastic monuments and with a lively buzz from the international pilgrims and university students that fill its medieval streets. After performing the traditional pilgrim rituals in the Cathedral, we head to our hotel and get ready for our evening celebratory dinner!

Sleep: Santiago / Walking: 20 KMs or 12 miles

Day 10: Santiago de Compostela

After breakfast, our local historian gives us a closer look at the amazing Cathedral that has seen so many transformations since the original chapel built in the 9th-century. After the tour, we sadly say our last “buen camino” as we leave you at the Cathedral in time for the pilgrims' mass at noon.



The Compostelana & the Camino de Santiago Tour

This itinerary gives you the **opportunity** to walk the last 100KM into Santiago. This is a requirement needed to request the compostelana, the certificate granted by the church of Santiago upon the completion of the pilgrimage. It is not mandatory, however, to walk 100km (60 miles) to participate in this Fresco Tour. As with all our trips, your walk is accompanied by a support van and shorter walk options are available on a daily basis.

** Please note, this itinerary is subject to slight modifications due to hotel availability, weather, festivals & other occurrences.*



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WHAT TO EXPECT:

Expect to have a wonderful time! We've designed each trip to enjoy the stunning beauty of the Spanish landscape, while giving you a true sense of the soul and magic of these exciting people and their culture. We love to share this magnificent country and want you to feel a part of it.

WHAT'S INCLUDED:

Guides: Our greatest resource! We know Spain, because it is our home. All our guides are experienced professionals that are either Spanish or live in Spain year round – no hired out college grads! In Santiago, we will be joined by a local art historian, who will bring the Cathedral to life!

Meals: Food speaks volumes about a culture and we love to eat! During our walk days, when possible, we prepare gourmet picnics using the freshest of local ingredients and selecting the tastiest recipes of the region. All breakfast, lunches and dinners (minus one lunch and dinner, where we encourage you to sample the local cuisine on your own) are included. We are proud to cater to vegetarians and those with food allergies – milk, egg, wheat, etc... as well!

Accommodations: Fresco Tours selects a combination of 3-4 star hotels and restored country manors that offer the best in hospitality, comfort and location. In Galicia, these are known as Pazos (Palaces) and are very unique and special - some date back to the 15th century! All rooms have their in-suite baths. Tour prices are based on double occupancy.

Limited Group Sizes: Fresco Tours are in small groups to ensure that you receive the individual attention that you deserve. We want to be able to treat each of our clients with a personal touch and we limit the groups to a maximum of 14 participants. We also recognize that each person's Camino is their own personal experience and if you wish, we encourage you to walk on your own – with the assurance that we are there for you!

Support Vehicle: Your walks will be accompanied by a support vehicle that will be there to provide assistance when needed. You will have access to the van every couple of hours, so you won't need to carry a heavy backpack. In addition, the possibility of shorter routes and pick-up options will be offered and explained on a daily basis.

Ground transportation: All ground transportation between our meeting point in Leon, Spain and the Cathedral in Santiago de Compostela is provided on your Fresco Tour. We will help facilitate information for your travel arrangements prior to and after the tour start and finish.

Luggage transfers: Your luggage will be transported between hotels. You do the walking, we'll do the lifting!