

# Follow the Camino





# WELCOME

To assist you on your Camino, we've created this helpful e-book to give you all the information you need to get started.

In these pages, you'll find some straight forward information on what exactly the Camino de Santiago is, why so many pilgrims walk The Way, and what options there are to travel it.

Buen Camino!



If you still have questions,  
remember that you can email us on  
**[info@followthecamino.com](mailto:info@followthecamino.com)**

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# WHAT IS THE CAMINO DE SANTIAGO?

Camino de Santiago or The Way of St. James is an ancient pilgrimage that dates back to the 9th, when a young shepherd in Spain was lead by the stars of the Milky Way to buried remains in a field.

The local bishop of the time declared the remains those of St. James The Greater, Apostle to Jesus Christ, and with this the Camino de Santiago was born.

The bishop ordered a church to be built on the site to house the remains of St. James (or Sant Iago) . As word spread, pilgrims started walking from all across Europe and even further afield to visit the sacred burial site of one of the Apostles of Jesus Christ.

Over the years, that small church grew in to the epic Catedral de Santiago de Compostela that it is today.

Once it was confirmed by King Alphonso II of Asturias that the remains were that of the Apostle, many pilgrims began walking the Camino to the resting place of St. James, taking different routes from their homes to reach Santiago de Compostela.

In modern times the Camino has seen a massive resurgence in popularity with people walking for a variety - some walk for spiritual reasons, others for a personal challenge or to raise money for charity.

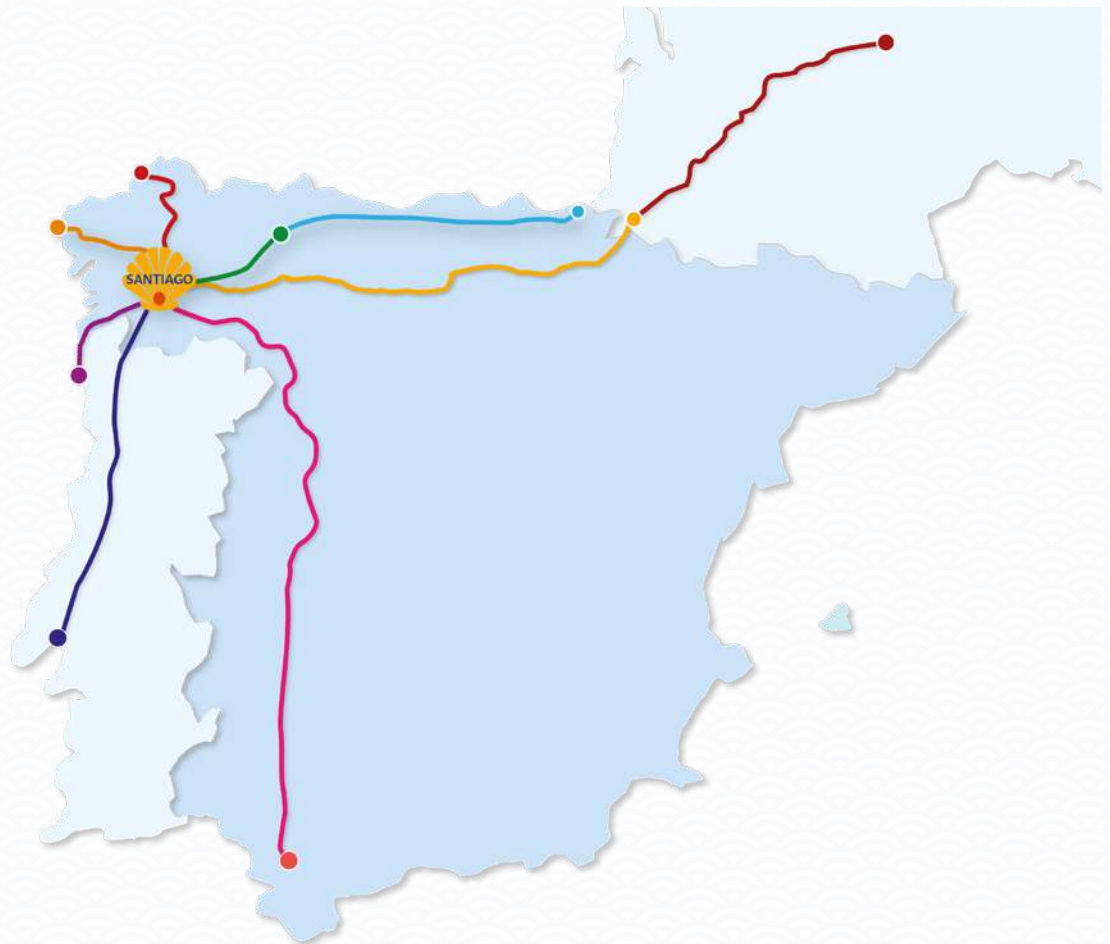


**Consider your own reason  
and embrace it.**

# THE ROUTES

The modern Camino de Santiago is made up of nine main routes - all of varying lengths, terrain, culture and natural beauty. Each of these trails has something wonderful to offer, and it's deciding factors for choosing a route are primarily down to the pilgrims' personal preference and fitness level.

All complete routes lead to Santiago de Compostela, except for the Finisterre Way, which starts in Santiago and leads out to 'World's End', Cape Finisterre. You also have the option to complete sections of each Camino, such as the last 100KM. Or, you can complete your preferred route over several holidays by doing one section at a time





# THE MOST POPULAR ROUTES ALONG CAMINO DE SANTIAGO



- > Camino Frances (63%)
- > Camino Portugues (19%)
- > Camino Portugues Coastal
- > Camino del Norte (6%)
- > Le Puy Route  
(doesn't finish in Santiago)
- > Finisterre  
(doesn't finish in Santiago)
- > Via de la Plata (3%)
- > Camino Primitivo (4%)
- > Camino Ingles (3%)

# WHICH ROUTE IS FOR YOU?

People choose their Camino de Santiago routes based on various criteria such as ease of access, weather, landscape or how busy it is. There's a lot to consider when choosing the Camino for you, which is why our team of expert Camino Planners are on hand to guide you through the process.

## Camino Frances

Starting in St Jean Pied de Port is the most travelled by far with over 60% of the people on the Camino using it, and by far the most famous, thanks to the film 'The Way' starring Martin Sheen.

The Camino Frances is a remarkable journey, traversing both mountainous and flat terrain. This Camino tour passes through some of the most beautiful parts of Spain, including great cities like Pamplona, Leon and Burgos. It also goes through many very important pilgrimage towns, such as Saint Jean Pied de Port, Logrono and Sarria.



## Camino Portugues

Has in recent years become the second most popular route leading to Santiago de Compostela with close to 10% of pilgrims. Boasting stunning coastlines and fantastic cities like Lisbon, Porto and Pontevedra. Some of the most beautiful, sandy beaches in the world can be found whilst walking the Camino Portuguese. If you are looking...





## Camino del Norte

Northern Way is also referred to as the «Ruta de la Costa». This Camino was used for centuries by Spanish pilgrims making their way along the magnificent coasts of the Basque region and Asturias. This Camino walk crosses some of the most spectacular scenery of the Northern Coast of Spain with superb cities like San Sebastian, Bilbao, Santander and Oviedo. This is definitely one for the foodies!



## Camino Primitivo

Original Way is one of the most beautiful, challenging, and rewarding routes to Santiago. It crosses a mountain range at 1100m above sea level where you will witness spectacular views of the Embalse de Salime (artificial lake), the River Navia and of course the surrounding mountains. The Camino Primitivo is considered to be the very first of the pilgrimage routes to Compostela.



## Via de la Plata

The Silver Way starts in Seville, the capital of southern Spain's Andalusia region, and passes through the regions of Extremadura and Castilla y Leon before finishing at Santiago de Compostela. This is the longest Camino route and although it's easier in terms of terrain than the French Way, it is quieter and has less facilities. It's perfect for those who love solitude.





## Via Podiensis

Le Puy Route is one of the four main pilgrimage routes through France, and is perhaps the most popular in the country. *The Le Puy Route* is stunning and boasts spectacular views of volcanic landscapes and beautiful countryside. In terms of scenery, it is known for being one of the most interesting particularly to nature lovers.



## Camino Finisterre

Muxia Way unlike the other Ways on the Camino the Camino Finisterre is the only route that starts in Santiago and has its final destination at Cape Finisterre, just over 3km outside of Fisterra or alternatively the fishing town of Muxía, or both!



## Camino Ingles

The English Way following the shoreline for the first few days, the route then turns inland ascending into the lush, wooded mountains to reach Santiago de Compostela. This route gives you an unparalleled scenic feast from coastal to mountainous to city, allowing you many opportunities along the way to really get a flavour For this area of Galicia.



# THE FAMOUS LAST 100 KM



Most pilgrims choose to walk the famous last 100km of the French Way from Sarria to Santiago.

Anyone who completes the last 100km of any main route into Santiago is entitled to get their Pilgrim certificate or Compostela as proof and souvenir of your pilgrimage along the famous Camino de Santiago.

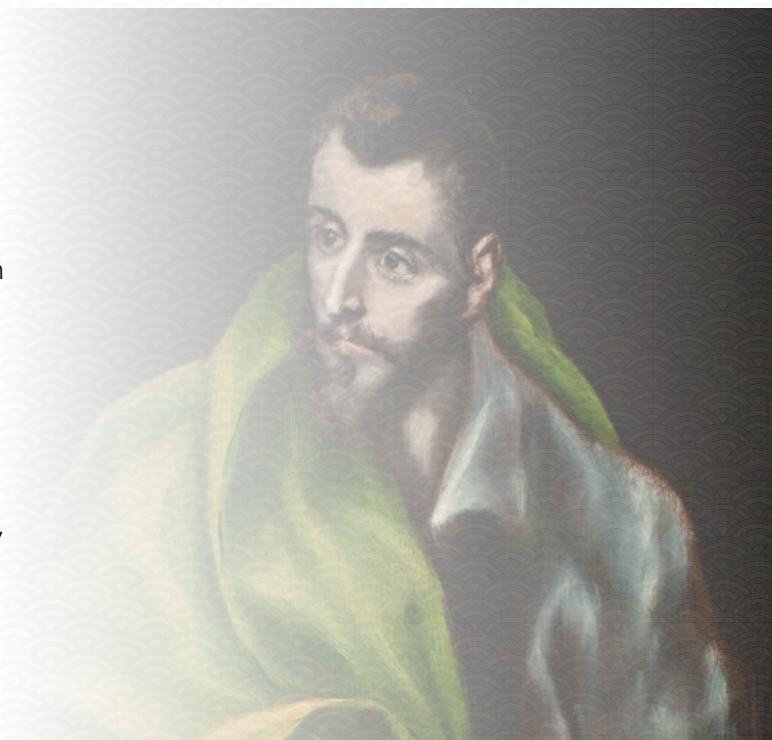
Although the Camino de Santiago has been traditionally a religious pilgrimage there are many people who choose it as a walking holiday for many other reasons. Some walk The Way for fitness or as a goal to achieve along their journey to better physical health. Others walk for the mental benefits of unplugging from their daily lives. Allowing time simply for peace or self-development, or for some it is a chance to clear their head or to feel a connection with nature. Although walking for your own personal betterment is why many do the pilgrimage, others take a more philanthropic approach and use it as an opportunity to fund-raise for charity groups. The one thing we will promise you is that whatever your reason, everyone gains and grows from walking the Camino de Santiago.



# THE STORY OF ST. JAMES THE GREATER

St. James the Greater was one of the disciples of Jesus Christ, and one of the most prominent. He was James, the son of Zebedee, who was the «greater» (in size) the other disciple called James.

James is thought to be a cousin of Jesus, by the sister of the Virgin Mary. He worked as a fisherman with his brother John, until Jesus called on them to be followers. Before Jesus's crucifixion, James the Greater was chosen to be one of the twelve apostles and was given the mission to spread the gospel of Jesus. He made a pilgrimage to Spain to spread the gospel, but when he returned to Judea, he was beheaded by King Herod Agrippa I in the year 44. The remains, or relics, of St. James the Greater were then transported by his followers to the Iberian Peninsula and are said to be buried in Santiago de Compostela in Galicia (Spain).



## QUICK FACTS ABOUT ST JAMES THE APOSTLE

He is the Patron saint of Pilgrims and Spain

Feast Day: July 25th

Named by Jesus as one of the 'Sons of Thunder'

Death: St. James the Greater died in A.D. 44

Cause of Death: Beheaded

# SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SCALLOP SHELL



St. James is often depicted wearing a scallop shell in Christian art. The scallop-shell is the recognized symbol of all pilgrims on the Camino, as it is found on the shores of Galicia. Centuries ago, when returning to their own countries, pilgrims displayed the scallop-shell in their hats to show that they had carried out their pious intentions.

Today, the scallop shell is an ever-present symbol on the Camino de Santiago. It's seen everywhere including churches, signs, pavements, shop fronts, distance markers, jewellery and backpacks. The scallop shell, with its many lines starting along its edges and converging at a central point, symbolises the many paths that pilgrims walk to reach Santiago de Compostela

The scallop shell was historically used for gathering water and drinking and as a bowl for collecting gifts of food and for eating with. While no longer used in these ways, it does make a meaningful wine glass when visiting the wine fountain at Irache, just outside Estella on the French Way.

Filled with wine, it can be raised in a toast to St. James and the millions who have walked this path before us over the millennia. Salud!



# HISTORY OF THE COMPOSTELA (CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION)

Badges in the shape of scallop shells formed the first accreditation of pilgrims arriving in Santiago. However, these were easily forged and were soon being sold at the entrances to the city. To curb this trade, the Pope threatened to excommunicate the forgers. The prelates of Compostela then developed and began issuing a more secure form of accreditation. This consisted of a "Cartas Probatoria" or evidentiary letter. These were being issued by the 13th century and were the direct forerunners of the modern Compostela.

## The New Compostela

Though hugely popular during the Middle ages, numbers on the pilgrimage to Santiago began to decline from the 16th Century onward.

When the Camino experienced a revival in the late 20th century, the Catedral de Santiago de Compostela once again re-evaluated the accreditation process.



Now, you have to cover a minimum distance of 100KM if walking, or 200KM if cycling, and collect stamps along your journey in a 'pilgrim passport' to prove it.

## HOW TO GET YOUR COMPOSTELA

- The pilgrimage must be undertaken for religious or spiritual reasons or in “an attitude of search”.
- A pilgrim must collect “sellos» or stamps on a “Credencial del Peregrinos” which is issued by the Cathedral de Santiago or a body authorised by the Cathedral (Follow The Camino supplies this as a part of your pilgrim pack!).
- The stamps must be collected twice per day if the pilgrim is travelling only the last 100 km by foot or the last 200 on km bike. If travelling for longer distances, one stamp per day is adequate.
- The Camino can be undertaken in stages of any length in order to earn a Compostela. It is not uncommon for pilgrims to walk consecutive stages over many years in order to reach Santiago. This is perfectly acceptable as long as the stages are completed in proper chronological and geographical order. The pilgrim must also get a stamp with the date at completion point of each stage and again at the same point when they resume their pilgrimage.



# THE CAMINO TODAY

On the Camino, there are many amenities dotted along The Way. For instance, on the Camino France, pilgrims have plenty of facilities that offer home comforts, as well as places to stop for coffee, chats and a bite to eat.

On other less-travelled routes, you may have to walk further before your next stop. The Camino de Santiago is walked each year by people of all ages and fitness levels so you don't have to be an expert trekker in order to take such a holiday. The terrain is very manageable and some even walk it in regular sports shoes. Some days are more hilly than others however you will never be climbing up mountains so a decent 20km day is very doable for a person of average fitness.



# WHO ARE WE?

Follow the Camino ( a part of One Foot Abroad LTD) is the first ever Tour Operator in Ireland to operate the Camino de Santiago in Spain.

For over a decade, we've been helping would-be pilgrims experience the magic of the Camino! Our Camino experts are just that, experts! We've walked every inch of the Camino and know all the lesser known Camino gems. We work closely with you to assess your needs and organise the perfect Camino adventure that will leave you with memories to last a life time.

## Our tours include:

- Luggage Transfers
- Accommodation
- Airport Transfers
- Walking notes/Maps

## Call now:

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# BUEN CAMINO

Follow us on

