



INSIDER'S TRAVEL

St. George's Episcopal Church walks the Camino

*From Sarria to Santiago de Compostela, Spain
23rd September- 2nd October 2023*

We are to embark on the Camino de Santiago. Christian pilgrims in the Middle Ages walked this spectacular path to be inspired spiritually for centuries. There are three historic Christian pilgrimage sites in the



world: Rome, Jerusalem and Santiago de Compostela. Santiago became a destination point for pilgrims because since the 12th century, the cathedral was said to house the remains of St. James. We are about to follow in the footsteps of these pilgrims.

There are many routes to Santiago de Compostela, one of the most popular being the *Camino francés*, the French Way, which originates in Saint Jean Pied de Port in France. This pilgrimage takes us through different landscapes and places on our journey. We start in Madrid and finish in Santiago de Compostela with five walking days covering the 73 miles of the French Way with the opportunity to walk as much or as little of the way as you would like.



Saturday 23rd September

Welcome dinner in a private dining room hosted by Bishop Carlos López Lozano, Bishop of the Spanish Episcopal Church, with a talk by *Ghosts of Spain* writer, Giles Tremlett who gives us an overview of the history of Spain, its diversity and contradictions.

Hotel: [NH Collection Paseo del Prado](#) a 5 star hotel, situated opposite the Prado Museum, in close walking distance to the Plaza Santa Ana and the Plaza Mayor.

Sunday 24th September

Guided tour with art historians to see collection highlights of the Prado Museum: Velázquez *Las Meninas*, Van de Weyden's *Descent from the Cross*, *The Garden of Earthly Delights* by Bosch, Goya and his *pintura negras*. Panoramic tour of the city.

Visit to the Catedral del Redentor, where guests receive the Pilgrim's blessing, their Passport, and the Concha Shell blessed by Bishop Carlos López Lozano. A light lunch at the Cathedral.

Evening: A private guided visit followed by dinner at Botin, the world's oldest restaurant. Flamenco show at Las Carboneras tablao.

Hotel: [NH Collection Paseo del Prado](#)

Monday 25th September

We leave Madrid for the 11th century walled city of Avila, the highest provincial capital city in Spain, home to the 16th century mystic and Roman Catholic Saint, Teresa of Avila and to Saint John of the Cross. During our visit, we understand why the work of these two saints was so important in Spain. We take a guided walk along the city walls, the Cathedral and the monastery of Incarnation to see the drawing of the

crucifix by St John of the Cross. Lunch at the converted 16th century Palace, Hotel La Velada. We take the drive to Portomarín, the journey from Avila is approximately five hours, not including comfort stops.

Hotels: [Hotel Vistalegre](#) / [Hotel Ferramenteiro](#), [Hotel Berberetoros](#)
Portomarín

Tuesday 26th September

A short drive to the start of the Camino in Sarria for our first day's walk to Portomarín.

STAGE SARRIA-PORTOMARÍN (22,75 Kms/14 miles)

Difficulty: Easy **Approx. Duration:** 5h 30'

This stage is known for its beauty and also because we pass the **100 Km marker** of this ancient route, which is the minimum distance to be traveled on foot to receive the Compostela certificate. We pass through the towns of Barbadelo and Ferreiros, admiring their romanesque churches en route, before arriving at Portomarín for our second night's stay here.

This stage is not very difficult. The ground is soft and wavy, taking us through clusters of chestnut and oak trees, meadows, and farmland.

On approaching the town of Portomarín we cross the bridge over the Belesar reservoir, and the Miño river and take our coach to our accommodation for the next two nights for dinner and a well-deserved rest.

Hotel: [Hotel Parada Das Bestas](#)/[Hotel Torres Da Hermida](#)

Wednesday 27th September

STAGE PORTOMARÍN-PALAS DE REI (25 Kms/15 miles)

Difficulty: Easy **Approx. Duration:** 6h 15'

We return to Portomarín by coach for our second day of walking. We leave Portomarín through the Belesar reservoir passing through the towns of Ligonde and Vilachá. En route, we see the famous *Cruceiros*

(stone crosses) including the **Cruceiro of Lameiros** and the **Monastery of San Savador de Villar de Donas**.

We arrive at **Palas de Rei**, stamp our Passports, and take a short bus ride to our country hotel for the night where we enjoy our evening dinner.

Hotel: [Hotel Parada Das Bestas/Hotel Torres Da Hermida](#)

Thursday 28th September

STAGE PALAS DE REI-ARZUA (29,7 Kms Kms/18 miles)

Difficulty: Medium Approx. Duration: 7h 30'

Today is a longer day in which we cross the border that divides the provinces of Lugo and La Coruña. The route takes us across medieval bridges in *Leboreiro*, *Furelos*, and *Ribadiso do baixo* and through eucalyptus and pine forests. We also walk through Melide, known for its *pulpo* (octopus dishes). For those who wish to only walk a part of this route, the bus, as usual, will be available to take pilgrims to their accommodation early. Some pilgrims might consider walking either from Palas de Rei to Melide which is 15.2 km – 9.5 miles or from Melide to Arzua which is 14.5km - 9 miles.

We arrive at Arzúa where, opening times permitting, we visit the **Chapel of La Magdalena**. Our accommodation for the next two nights is located on the Botana family estate, located just outside Arzúa.

Hotels: [Pazo Apainza](#)

Friday 29th September

STAGE ARZÚA-PEDROUZO

(19,2 Kms/11 Miles)

Difficulty: Easy Approx. Duration: 4h 40'

This is a gentle, pretty route stage which takes us through meadows, and woods of oak and eucalyptus trees and small villages. En route to Pedrouzo we pass through *Boente*, with its beautiful **statue of Santiago the pilgrim**.

On arrival at **Pedrouzo**, we take the bus back to Arzua for our second night here. Pilgrim's mass for our group in a small chapel followed by an aperitivo style dinner and music with an opera Singer singing the Pilgrim's hymn and music related to the Galician culture.

Hotels: [Pazo Apainza](#)

Saturday 30th September

STAGE PEDROUZO-SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA (19,9 Kms/12 Miles)

Difficulty: Easy **Approx. Duration:** 5h

The way passes next to the airport and starts the gentle descent towards A Lavacolla. A Lavacolla is located very close to the Monte do Gozo (**Mount of Joy**), a hill from where the pilgrims catch their first glimpse of Santiago's cathedral. While the last miles take us through more urban terrain, these are also significant miles for every pilgrim that walks them as Santiago de Compostela approaches. Both the pilgrims who are walking the entire 12 miles that day and the pilgrims who prefer to walk part way will come together to walk our last 1 mile walk to the Obradoiro square to the Cathedral. Our hotel, the Parador, stands just next door.

Arrival into **Santiago**. End of the Camino

We check into the Parador and meet at 6.45pm in reception to walk over to the Pilgrims' Mass at the Cathedral which starts at 7.30pm. We will arrange for the group to witness the Bote Fumeiro during the Mass. (**Please note:** Anglicans are not invited to take Communion at the Pilgrims' Mass.)

After the Pilgrim's Mass, we enjoy local dinner in a favourite Galician taberna for the whole group. The Parador is known as the oldest hotel in Spain, built by the Catholic Monarchs as a hospital to cure and save the lives of pilgrims as they arrived in need of medical attention at the end of their long and arduous pilgrimage.

Hotel: [Parador in Santiago de Compostela](#), the Hostal dos Reis Católicos.

Sunday 1st October

Guided visit of the Cathedral, its museum and a walk through Santiago ending at the 13th century Santa Susana Church for our own Pilgrim's mass and Communion officiated by Mother Anna Noon and St George's Clergy.

Free time for lunch and to explore Santiago de Compostela.

Farewell Dinner in a private room at the Parador overlooking the Cathedral and the Obradoiro square.

Hotel: [Parador in Santiago de Compostela](#), the Hostal dos Reis Católicos.

Monday 2nd October

Breakfast. End of trip.

Pilgrims may fly directly from the Santiago de Compostela airport, or may choose to stay longer in Spain.

Pricing:

4,250 USD, single supplement: 1000 USD

Price includes:

Accommodation: 5* hotel in Madrid and good quality, comfortable accommodation throughout the Pilgrimage including the Parador de Santiago.

One lunch, all breakfasts and dinners with wine.

Giles Tremlett talk, opera singer, piper, Bote Fumeiro and all guided visits where mentioned and their respective entrance fees, flamenco show.

Comfortable private coach from Madrid to Santiago de Compostela.

Three camino guides, Insider's Travel tour host.

200 USD donation to the Friends of the Anglican Centre in Santiago.

Sales tax included.

Not included: Flights, airport transfers, travel insurance and guide /driver tips.

Notes : luggage will be transported from hotel to hotel

Transport options will be available for those who would like to walk just a small part each day.