

# The Portuguese Camino. Porto to Santiago.

A 10-night trip covering the last 100km of the Portuguese Way. Suitable for walkers and non-walkers alike.

*September 23-October 3, 2023*

We follow in the footsteps of Portuguese royalty, noblemen and high clerics, through nine centuries of history on a 10-night journey along one of the oldest pilgrimages in the Iberian Peninsula.

## What to expect

Beginning at UNESCO's World Heritage site Porto, we visit the Sé Cathedral to learn of the history and importance of the Portuguese Way and just how the Jacobean culture influenced this route over the centuries.

We cross from Portugal to Spain, setting out from one of the true gems of military architecture, the fortress of Valença do Minho, to tread in the lush green corridor of Rías Baixas, home of the famous white grape varietal Albariño.

Our journey will follow parts of the 1st century Roman road Via XIX linking Braga, in northern Portugal to Astoria in Leon, where we will discover contrasts of rural life with natural landscapes, hot springs, forests, paths, medieval bridges, Roman milestones, crossroads, rivers and oak groves.

We walk through towns with fascinating history such as Tui, Pontevedra, Caldas de Reis and Padrón and finish our journey in Santiago de Compostela.

*This route facilitates for those who want to walk the whole 100km but also for those who wish to walk just a small part each day and enjoy time at the beautiful hotels in the itinerary.*

## Highlights

- Guided visit of the 12th century Sé Cathedral, Porto
- Private visit to Symingtons Port House for tasting visit and dinner
- Visit the legendary parish church of Padrón with an altar of Roman origin, not far from the arrival point of the maritime transfer of the body of St. James
- Walk along some of the original Via XIX Roman road
- Immerse in the local food culture paired with wines from the region
- Dinner at Pepe Vieira's Ultramar restaurant with wine pairing, Pontevedra
- Guided tour of the city of Santiago de Compostela
- The Pilgrims' mass at the Santiago Cathedral with the Botafumeiro
- Farewell dinner in the 15th century Parador de Santiago de Compostela
- Optional private mass in the Santa Susana Church for our pilgrims
- Receive "Compostela" certificate for completion of last 100 kms

# Trip Itinerary

## Day 1. Saturday 23rd September

Guests arrive independently & check into our hotel, the 5-star Lodge Hotel on the banks of Vila Nova de Gaia looking across to the picturesque view of Porto.

This afternoon we follow in the footsteps of medieval pilgrims walking up narrow cobbled streets to reach the 12th century Sé Cathedral on top of the hill with views out over the city and the Douro River. Our guide will give us an in-depth tour of this magnificent Romanesque building whilst immersing us in the history of the Portuguese Way. It is here that we are handed our 'Credential' or Pilgrim's Passport and Scallop Shell to carry along on our journey. We drive by bus back across the river to visit the renowned Graham's 1890 Lodge with its spectacular views across Porto. Here, we enjoy a tour of the Caves followed by a port tasting and dinner.

## Day 2. Sunday 24th September

After breakfast, we travel to Valença do Minho on the Portuguese-Spanish border where the Minho River divides the two countries. We arrive mid-morning for an early free lunch and time to explore a little of the fortress with its 800 year history.

The first stage of the walk begins here in Valença where we cross to Tui via the old centenary railroad bridge. Tui was considered one of the seven capitals of the ancient Kingdom of Galicia. We visit Tui's 12th century Cathedral standing at the top of a hill at the summit of the town and dedicated to Santa Maria with both Romanesque and Gothic elements.

Our walk continues to follow the Minho River before changing to forests and vineyards where our way is clearly sign posted with the yellow and blue scallop shell.

Our destination is Ribadelouro which has a first historical reference from a document dating back to 1112 in which this parish is mentioned by the name of its titular saint, Santa Comba.

We return to Portugal by coach and check in to the charming Pousada de Valença. Dinner at a local favourite restaurant in Valença.

## Day 3. Monday 25th September - 15 KMS

After breakfast we travel to Ribadelouro for the second stage of the Camino to A Rúa.

Walking through pine and eucalyptus woods leading to the Vigo Estuary, we come to our halfway point O Porriño which has origins closely linked to the Way of St. James. We walk along the river, circumventing the outside of the town.

From O Porriño, our route takes us to the small Angustias Chapel from where we take an alternative route hearing the rushing waters of the Louro River which is hidden from view.

Our destination is A Rúa in Mos with its 16th century Church of Santa Baia de Mos before a 40 minute drive by coach to Baiona in the southern Rías Baixas region.

Baiona is protected from the open sea by its lovely bay where the Monterreal Peninsula stands. It is here that we overnight at the magnificent Parador de Baiona built into the fortress where the first ships returning from the Americas made their landfall.

Dinner is at the Parador overlooking the Bay of Vigo and Cíes Islands.

## Day 4. Tuesday 26th September - 17 KMS

After breakfast we travel to A Rúa in Mos to begin the third stage of the Camino to Arcade.

A stone cross with the inscription 'Camino de Santiago' marks the start of Os Cabaleiros street, which leads to a cross monument of the same name. At O Enxertado, with the valley to the east, there is a slight climb up to the Santiaguíño de Anta Chapel, a simple monument surrounded by a lovely oak wood.

A Roman milestone (1 Roman mile = 1,480 metres) which once formed part of Via XIX, linking Braga and Astorga, guides the way to the municipality of Redondela surrounded by pine and eucalyptus woods, an important feature of this stretch of the route. We finish at the legendary Chan das Pipas where it is said that a man pushed barrels of wines downhill in an attempt to delay the advance of Napoleon's troops!

We reach Redondela passing by the Vilavella Convent dating back to 1501, now serving as a pilgrim's hostel. From here we enter the parish of Cesantes where we view the spectacular Ria (estuary) of Vigo and the islands of San Simón and San Antón where beneath these waters lie the remains of the galleons of the Battle of Rande (1702). In the background, the panoramic view is completed by the Rande Bridge, a cable-stayed bridge that rises above the mussel farmers' rafts.

We follow the route until we reach the historic, medieval, 10 arcades Sampaio Bridge with beautiful views of the Peneda del Viso and the estuary of the Verdugo river. It was here, during the Napoleonic wars, that a famous battle took place against the French in June 1809.

The municipality of Pontevedra begins at the bridge's halfway point. The route runs through the town of Ponte Sampaio and continues along ancient, evocative stone paths, including sections of the Roman Via XIX.

We finish in the village of Arcade with its old stone houses clinging to green hills that plunge into tranquil bays, ancient Roman bridges, cobblestone streets and narrow lanes that pass up and down through old time neighbourhoods with traditional stone granaries at almost every home.

We take a short drive to our hotel Galicia Palace in Pontevedra where we shall stay for the next two nights. Dinner at a favourite local restaurant.

## Day 5. Wednesday 27th Sept. - 17 KMS

After breakfast we take a 15 minute drive to Arcade to begin the fourth stage of the Camino to Alba via Pontevedra.

The route approaches Pontevedra where along the way we find the unexpected and small 1617 Santa Marta Chapel by the roadside to stamp our Credential.

As we enter Pontevedra we see the beautiful scallop-shaped Church of the Pilgrim Virgin dating back to 1778 and considered to be one of the most symbolic and important buildings in the city. The church is dedicated to the Virgin who, according to tradition, guided pilgrims from Baiona in the south-west of the province of Pontevedra to Santiago de Compostela.

In the evening we enjoy dinner at Pepe Vieira's Ultramar restaurant with paired wines.

We spend our second night at Galicia Palace.

## Day 6. Thursday 28th Sept. - 18 KMS

After breakfast: We check out and begin the fifth stage of the Camino to Caldas de Reis. On leaving Pontevedra, we cross the Lérez River on Burgo Bridge which runs beside a large wetland known as A Xunqueira de Alba.

After crossing the bridge over the Areal River, our route leads us into Valbón amidst large stone houses. Three interesting stone crosses line the way, one of them near Amonisa House whilst another boasts a carving of St. James the Pilgrim looking north, towards Compostela, on its shaft. A third cross, the solitary Soutelo, completes the triad of these genuine sculptures created to mark crossroads.

The route alternates between short sections of trail, dirt tracks and paved paths where we come to the lovely Tivo, almost on the doorstep of Caldas de Reis. After passing the Santa María Church, our route takes us into the beautiful thermal town of Caldas de Reis, crossed by the river Umia and known for its high mineral hot springs and Romanesque architecture.

We take a five minute drive to our hotel, the pretty Torre do Río, set against a backdrop natural beauty by the Umaia river.

## Day 7. Friday 29th September - 15 KMS

After breakfast we travel to Caldas de Reis to begin the sixth stage of the Camino to Pontecesures via San Miguel de Valga.

The route takes us through Casal de Eirigo where on April 27th 1809, the Battle of Casal de Eirigo took place between the Galician army and local villagers against the Napoleonic army. From here we come to Mount Castelo giving way to dense woods washed by the waters of the Valga River and dotted with old stone mills.

Crossing the Fontelo River we pass through small villages to reach the Pino Manso viewpoint which offers us a magnificent view out over the Ulla River valley and the town of Pontecesures.

Day 7 continued:

With an impressive history linked to Roman emperors, Pontecesures is also noted for its 12th century shipyard, where three ships were built destined to fight the Berber pirates that caused damage to English ships brimming with pilgrims on their way to Santiago.

We take a 10 minute drive to our hotel for the next two nights: Pazo de Lestrove, a renovated former mansion house outside the town of Padrón. Dinner at the hotel.

## Day 8. Saturday 30th Sept. - 15 KMS

After breakfast we travel to Pontecesures to begin the seventh stage of the Camino to Rúa Francos via Padrón.

As we leave Pontecesures, we cross the Roman bridge over the Ulla River separating the provinces of Pontevedra and A Coruña. We follow our route to Padrón, to the Santiago church, home of the Jacobean tradition, located at the estuary of the Ulla and Sar rivers. For those who wish, you can visit the beautiful 10th century Padrón Church, best representing the history of the Camino.

Not far from here is Iria Flavia which is considered the arrival point of the maritime transfer of the body of St. James and the starting point of its overland transfer to Compostela.

Free time to enjoy the famous small green Padrón peppers lightly fried in olive oil and sprinkled with sea salt along with other specialities of the region. On leaving Padrón, we visit the Santa María Collegiate Church cemetery where the tomb of Spanish Nobel Prize Literature winner, Camilo José Cela is located.

From here our walk takes us to the beautiful church of the Sanctuary of A Escravitude highlighting the fountain that is under its impressive stairway.

We have time to take in the view of the valleys of Padrón and surrounding lands of Amaía before descending to A Angueira de Suso and then climbing to Rúa de Francos.

We return to Pazo Le Strove for our second night here and dinner.

## Day 9. Sunday 1st October - 13 KMS

After breakfast we travel to Rúa Francos to begin the eighth stage of the Camino to Santiago Compostela

In Milladoiro, we catch sight of the Santiago Cathedral for the first time and a sense of excitement is in the air.

We descend to A Rocha Vella on the Sar River crossing the old bridge before reaching Vigo Square and the old quarter. We pass through the mythical streets of Santiago de Compostela to reach our destination of the famed Praza de Obradoiro in front of the Cathedral.

This evening we stay at the impressive 15th century Parador in Santiago de Compostela.

We meet in the Parador at 7pm to attend the Pilgrim's Mass held inside the cathedral with a chance to see the impressive botafumeiro incense burner in full motion operated by no less than 8 tiraboleiros pulling the ropes.

Dinner at a favourite, buzzing local restaurant with excellent produce and local Galician specialities.

## Day 10. Monday 2nd October

After breakfast we meet for a private walking tour to learn of the history of Santiago and its cathedral passing through the well-known main streets and squares. We finish for Communion at the Church of Santa Susana.

Free time for lunch.

8.30pm We have our farewell dinner this evening at the Parador where we will enjoy fine dining paired with Spanish wines in the private dining room overlooking the Obradoiro Square.

## Day 11. Wednesday 3rd October

Breakfast.

End of tour

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Price per person: 4645€ / \$4995 USD / 4200 GBP

Single Room Supplement: 1115€ / 1200 USD / 1010 GBP

Deposit: 550€ / \$600 USD / 495 GBP

## Included

- 1 night at the Lodge Hotel, Vila Nova de Gaia, Porto 5\*
- 1 night at the Pousada de Valença, Valença do Minho 4\*
- 1 night at the Parador de Baiona, Baiona 4\*
- 2 nights at the Galicia Palace, Pontevedra 4\*
- 1 night at the Torre do Río, Caldas del Reis 3\*
- 2 nights at the Pazo Le Strove, Padrón 4\*
- 2 nights at the Parador Santiago de Compostela 5\*
  
- Private transport by luxury coach
- Tour host
- Breakfast daily; 10 dinners with wine (all lunches at own expense along the way)
- Visits & activities as specified
- A 200 USD donation to the Friends of the Anglican Centre in Santiago de Compostela
- All applicable taxes
- Flights, tips and holiday insurance are not included.

To book your place please fill out this booking form:

<https://share.hsforms.com/1wnKKgU6CQ6OkK9p4X5PxUQ3zf5i>

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