A QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE TO THE

Camino de Santiago



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LEFT: The Camino is a well marked route.

"The Camino changed my life"

y first step along the Camino was not on Spanish soil, it was writing to an author whose inspiring account of his journey along 'The Way' I had just read. The very personal, detailed and encouraging response I received from a complete stranger - instantly made me feel part of a special community.

It's like I was let in on a secret, but one that people didn't mind sharing. I was hooked. I quit my job, and three weeks later I was walking the full length of the Camino Francés.

There's something very unique about walking the Camino. Even if you hike it yourself, you are never alone. Whether you



All routes lead to the Santiago de Compostela Cathedral

do it for religious reasons or not, the sense of community on the trail is like no other walk on earth. The overwhelming feeling of acceptance by everyone you meet along the trail makes it very hard not to tap into some sort of spiritual guidance.

While the roots of the Camino lie in religious beginnings, today the vast majority of those who undertake a section of 'The Way' do it for non-religious reasons. I've spoken to many prospective peregrinos at my free Camino information evenings around the globe, and most of you have similar questions when planning your first step.

The French Way of St James is considered the most scenic

What exactly is the Camino? Why are there so many routes? Which one should I do? When should I go? Have you got any tips? This quick reference guide aims to filter through the mountain of information out there to help answer these basic questions and provide you with a clear understanding of this iconic journey.

Whether you have only five days or 42; prefer France, Spain or Portugal; or walking over cycling, there is a Camino experience waiting for you. You don't need to be a pilgrim to explore it your way, a self guided journey can help you achieve just that.

I'm now firmly part of the community that wants to inspire others to find their own path along the Camino. I hope this booklet helps you find your way.

Buen Camino

Jaclyn Lofts

UTracks Sales Manager

Camino de Santiago. The Way of St James. The Compostela Trail. What does it all mean?

Camino: This Spanish word simply means a path of travel, or route. When written as 'el camino' it translates to 'the way'.

Santiago: The name Santiago is linked to the apostle James (Saint James meaning Santiago). He travelled to the most north-western part of Spain to preach and convert people to Christianity.

The Way of St James: The origins of the Camino began in the 9th century when the tomb of the apostle St James was unearthed in the city of Santiago de Compostela. Early Christian pilgrims to Santiago began their 'Camino de Santiago' (Spanish name), or 'Way of St James' (English name), from their front door.

Santiago de Compostela: Also known as Saint James of Compostela. It's the capital of the region of Galicia in Spain and home to the famous cathedral where the relics of St James were said to have been unearthed.

The Compostela: The official accreditation proving one's pilgrimage to the tomb of St James in the 9th and 10th centuries. It was originally provided in the form of a scallop shell badge which proved easy to forge and was eventually replaced by the Compostela certificate.

Compostela certificate:

A document one receives from the Pilgrims Reception Office in Santiago. To receive the certificate you must make the pilgrimage for pious reasons (or at least have an attitude of search), walk (or ride on horseback) the last 100km or cycle the last 200km, and collect stamps in the Credencial del Peregrino from places you pass through.

Certificate of distance:

Document on parchment paper certifying the numbers of kilometres walked. A small payment is required to receive this certificate.

The Credencial del

Peregrino: In the Middle Ages the document was provided to pilgrims as a safeguard. Also referred to as the Camino passport, today the document can be collected from various authorised places and is used to collect stamps along the way so one can prove their journey when collecting their Compostela certificate. We provide this on Spanish sections as part of your Camino package.

Find your Camino



French Way of St James: Via Podiensis

Le Puy-en-Velay - St Jean Pied de Port, 740km

Of the four main pilgrimage routes in France to St Jean Pied de Port, where pilgrims would connect with the Camino Francés, the Via Podiensis, also known as The Way of Le Puy or more simply, the French Way of Saint James, is by far the most popular.

Once the word had spread across Europe that the apostle of St James' relics had been discovered in Santiago, a pilgrimage to the site became a rite of passage. The journey at times rivalled a trip to Jerusalem or Rome, and pilgrims from as far as Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Poland and the Czech Republic made their way through France to St Jean Pied de Port.

While the earliest recordings of pilgrims on this way dates back to 950AD, the popularity of the Via Podiensis today can be traced back to more recent times when the long distance GR65 hiking route was created in the 1970s. As more modern day travellers began to seek ways to Santiago, the French Way of St James stood out as the most spectacular, taking in some of the most scenic parts of France. The Via Podiensis begins in Le Puy-en-Velay and travels across the high plateaus of the Massif Central, the volcanic highlands of Velay, through rustic villages, past impressive castles, quaint villages, a myriad of monuments and through picturesque French countryside. For today's travellers, the Via Podiensis provides one of the most beautiful of all the ways. Unlike the Camino Francés, it avoids major cities and towns.



Route: Le Puy to Aumont

Highlight: I travelled in October and enjoyed the spectacular autumn colours of the Central Massif virtually to myself.

Meal Highlight: Being in France the food is wonderful – from the Puy lentils dishes specific to the region to the impressive gourmet meal in the small town of Saugues.

Training/Fitness Tip: Start at least three months in advance, and aim for three 1-hour sessions a week. A month before

Why the French Way of St James

- Enjoy walking through wild French countryside; volcanic highlands, mountains, forests, and picturesque rural valleys
- Discover beautiful UNESCO listed medieval towns such as Conques, Espalion and Estaing
- Experience the grandeur of stunning towns such as Figeac, Cahors and Moissac.
- Nourish yourself with fabulous French cuisine
- Walk without the crowds on a less trodden Camino experience

your trip – even earlier if you can - put a day walk each weekend into the mix to build the endurance you'll need for this walk.

Gear Tip: On the flat sections, you can transfer from boots to runners, so have enough room in or on your daypack to attach/pack your boots.

Camino Portuguese

Lisbon - Porto - Santiago, 613km

For many pilgrims, the Portuguese Way is more spiritually connected to the Camino than any other way. The Camino is all about the apostle St James, and Portugal, it is said, is where he was known to have first preached. It is also believed that his final journey to Santiago was via Portugal when his bones were brought back from Jerusalem following his beheading.

The Portuguese Way was first used by Queen Isabel of Portugal in the 13th century when she made her pilgrimage to Santiago. The Portuguese Way extends from the capital, Lisbon, across the border to Santiago, although the majority of today's travellers begin from the city of Porto since this section has more way marks and auberges to assist true pilgrims.

The Portuguese coast drips in history. It is along this coastline that Christopher Columbus returned to announce his discovery of America and the architecture of Porto and the University of Coimbra showcase an exciting and vibrant period that once existed in Portugal.

This way is second only to the Camino Francés in popularity, with an average of 16% of all modern day travellers and pilgrims choosing to undertake this Camino to Santiago.

Compostela SPAIN Tui Porto Coimbra Lisbon PORTUGAL

Santiago de



Self guided cyclists on the Porto to Santiago section

The Scallop Shell is the most iconic symbol of the Camino. Along with yellow arrows, the shell guides the way to Santiago, adorning churches, distance markers, shops and even on pilgrims' backpacks. There are many mythological meanings attached to the scallop shell and why it became synonymous with the Camino. Some of the more practical reasons include that one could collect it from the shores of Finisterre, the real end of the Camino, as proof they completed their pilgrimage. It was also the perfect shape for eating or drinking from. The scallop also represents many lines converging to a single point, just like the Camino.

Why the Camino Portuguese

- Superb coastal views with opportunities for swimming
- Cooler breezes during the summer make it more pleasant for walking
- Even though it is the second most popular Camino, the trails are much quieter than the Camino Francés
- Tantalise your tastebuds with superb Portuguese food and wine
- Experience the delightful cities of Lisbon & Porto
- Soak in the stories of Portugal's extensive maritime history

Pat Rochon

North American Sales Manager

Route: Portuguese Way Cycle: Porto to Santiago

Highlight: The city of Porto, along with the tranquil Portuguese countryside while cycling.

Meal Highlight: In Arcos, lamb chops with roasted potatoes, vegetables, homemade soup and free Vino Verde Wine! The owner kept bringing more wine!

Accommodation Highlight: In Arcos, an old 18th century vineyard huge stone house (6 rooms only) with two swimming pools as well as in Padron, a 400 year old monastery again built with huge stones (10 rooms only). Incredible places.

Gear Tip: Weather in Portugal changes by the minute in spring and autumn. Pack cycling gear for all seasons (rain gear, bike shoe covers in case of heavy rain, poncho) during the day. Wind can be an issue as well, so warm merino wool under garments are recommended as well as full fingered gloves during cooler months.



The impressive city of Porto

Training/Fitness Tip: There are plenty of large hills; the trip is graded moderate to challenging for good reason. Cyclists must understand mountain bike gearing even though you will not always be on rough terrain. Key for this trip is to settle into your comfortable cadence each day and stick with it, even if you are slow... you will get there eventually.

Camino Francés

St Jean Pied de Port - Santiago, 790km

Pilgrims walking across the Pyrenees from France, or beyond, typically followed a route similar to what is today known as the Camino Francés, or the French Way.

While a pilgrimage officially began from one's front door, and pilgrims came from all over Europe, it made sense for many to follow the same path once they reached France for safety reasons as well as camaraderie. The Camino Francés followed an old Roman trade route and ultimately became the preferred way to Santiago.

It is by far the most popular route. On average, over 60% of all people who walk along a section on any of the seven main Camino pilgrimage routes follow this path to Santiago.

These numbers are bolstered by the fact that the most popular starting point for today's travellers is the delightful town of Sarria, which conveniently sits 115km from Santiago, just enough for people to earn their official Compostela certificate and complete within a week.

Subsequently, the Camino Francés has the best infrastructure for pilgrims, with more hotels, restaurants and organised walks found along this route than any other. It is also the best waymarked.

The Camino Francés offers pilgrims and walkers a tougher challenge and a more complete Camino experience, passing by a multitude of churches and famous towns, such as Pamplona, Logroño, Burgos and Leon, as well as a variety of landscapes from the mountains of the Pyrenees to the Rioja vineyards, the vast meseta and the rolling green hills of Galicia.

Leon

Sarria



Pilgrims on the Camino Francés near Rioja

FRANCE

St Jean Pied de Port

Roncesvalles

Pamplona

Logroño

SPAIN

Burgos

Santiago de Compostela

Why the Camino Francés

- Walk the full length from St Jean Pied de Port in France to Santiago to experience the contrasts of Northern Spain
- If you're short on time, start from Sarria to cover the minimum distance required to earn your Compostela
- Experience the real essence of the Camino pilgrim journey as you meet many other travellers from around the world
- Discover the cities of Logroño, Burgos and Leon
- Sample delicious local cuisine which changes as you cross different provinces



Route: The first section from St Jean Pied de Port to Logrono

Highlight: I really loved Estella, a great town with lively squares and great food, and the hotel opposite the old church was amazing. The walk from St Jean was an exercise in contrasts. from serene lush valleys to dramatic barren peaks - with accompanying mountain weather. Pamplona offered a uniquely Spanish experience, from bustling town squares and the old town fortress to the 'running of the bulls' heritage, through to a truly vibrant night life of bars with diverse pintxos. The walking from Pamplona right through Puente la Reina to Estella is really interesting through vineyards, over ridges lined with wind turbines and overlooking a valley of the towns to which you are headed. These are just some of the highlights in this section



Gear Tip: Variable cover is essential: thermals and waterproof coats for the mountains and zip off trekking pants for the lower warmer sections. Good sun protection. Well worn in boots with a second lighter pair of trekking shoes for variation and town wear.

Training/Fitness Tip: Get your feet well walked in and do some hills. It's not massively hilly but the fitter you are, the better; blisters could occur if your feet aren't attuned to your boots and hardened for walking for some hours at a time.

Camino Primitivo

Oviedo - Lugo - Melide - Santiago, 320km

The Camino Primitivo is thought to have been the very first pilgrimage route to Santiago, hence it is also known as the Original Way.

On hearing that the bones of the Apostle James were miraculously unearthed in Santiago, King Alphonse II of the Asturias made the treacherous journey in the 9th century from Oviedo via Lugo to Santiago and eventually was accredited with confirming the relics.

This pilgrimage path has always been considered more challenging, crossing mountains and passing through dark woods.

Today, the Camino Primitivo links the Northern Way with the French Way, joining it in Melide. The path offers a quieter trail through beautiful natural settings and gorgeous rural farmland, passing through the authentically friendly villages of northern Spain.

Ferrol

Melide

Lugo

Why the Camino Primitivo

- Ideal for those seeking a more challenging walk
- Avoid the crowds on one of the less busy trails
- Walk the first ever recognised Camino to Santiago

Santander

Oviedo

Santiago de Compostela Bilbao

Irun

SPAIN

San Sebastian

Andreas Holland

Route: Food Lover's Spanish Camino (combines highlights of Camino Francés, Primitivo & Norte)

Meal Highlight: I would have to say the 10 course dinner at the Michelin starred Casa Marcial in Asturias, although the food in A Tafona in Santiago de Compostela was also sublime and I wouldn't be surprised if this restaurant earned a Michelin star soon.



Muxia

Finisterre

10

Camino del Norte

San Sebastian - Santiago, 804km

The Northern Way follows the northern coast of Spain through dynamic cities such as San Sebastian, Santander and Bilbao. This Camino travels to Santiago via the towns of Gijón and Ribadeo, however many early pilgrims preferred to connect with the Camino Primitivo in Oviedo thanks to King Alphonso II making it a safer and more well known path.

Given its coastal route, this Camino is also referred to as the "Ruta de la Costa", and it became an important way for Christian pilgrims when the Camino Francés became dangerous due to the Moorish invasion of the Iberian Peninsula. Following the coast was also deemed easier than trying to traverse the Cantabrian Mountains and it provided a cooler option in summer.

Why the Camino del Norte

- Cooler coastal option in summer with swimming opportunities
- Sample the food scene of San Sebastian, home to more Michelin Star restaurants than any other city
- Visit the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao
- Experience the lush vegetation and sea views of the Basque Country
- Challenge yourself to the longest and toughest Camino to Santiago

The English Way

Ferrol - Santiago, 110km

The Camino Ingles, or English Way, came about in the 12th century when boats of pilgrims from England and the Nordic countries arrived in the north of Spain to embark on their pilgrimage to Santiago. Those who came via the 'seafaring way' would land at A Coruna, which is the shortest and most direct route to Santiago (96km). This is not long enough for today's pilgrims to earn their Compostela hence most begin from Ferrol, which is 110km from Santiago.

The Camino Ingles is the least travelled at an average of only 4% of all pilgrims taking this route. There are no major cities along the route, just tiny villages where locals often speak Galician over Spanish.

Why the Camino Ingles?

- Avoid the crowds, traffic and cities and enjoy a Camino in real solitude.
- Discover an unexpected side of Spain, with weather more akin to Ireland

Camino Finisterre

Santiago - Muxia - Finisterre - Santiago, 114km

The Camino's `kilometre zero' is not Santiago - it actually lies on the Galician Coast, which was considered the 'end of the world' in the Middle Ages. The name Finisterre derives from Latin, `finis terrae' translating to `end of the earth'.

Many early pilgrims would continue the extra 90km from Santiago to collect the scallop shell to prove their successful pilgrimage. Today's pilgrims head there to burn their clothes and boots to symbolise their complete pilgrimage and a new beginning. Traditionally, the Camino Finisterre concludes at Cape Finisterre, however many who choose this option hike the extra 6km along the coast to Muxia to enjoy the wild Atlantic coastal views.

Why the Camino Finisterre

- Finish at the real end point of the Camino for early pilgrims
- Walk the only Camino that begins in Santiago
- Collect a scallop shell from the Galician coast like early pilgrims did
- It's quiet, less than 1% of all Camino travellers complete this section

Ready to go? Find your Camino trip

Booking Tip: If you plan to join an organised walk our advice is to book as soon as you know you want to walk the Camino. This will not only ensure

that your hotels and luggage transfers are confirmed early, it also sets you a goal for your training. Here are some of your options with UTracks.



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FRENCH WAY OF ST JAMES	CODE	DAYS	START/END	GRADING	CERTIFICATE
The Way of St James - Le Puy to Aumont	CT1	5	Le Puy-en-Velay / Aumont	●●● 00	
The Way of St James - Aumont to Conques	CT4	8	Aumont-Aubrac / Conques	●●● 00	
The Way of St James - Conques to Cahors	FC3	8	Conques / Cahors	●●● 00	
The Way of St James - Conques to Cahors via Rocamadour	FC7	9	Conques / Cahors	●●● 00	
The Way of St James - Cahors to Lectoure	FC4	7	Cahors / Lectoure	●●● 00	
The Way of St James - Lectoure to Aire sur l'Adour	FC5	7	Lectoure / Aire sur l'Adour	●●● 00	
The Way of St James - Aire sur l'Adour to the Pyrenees	FC6	9	Aire sur l'Adour / St Jean Pied de Port	●●● 00	
The Way of St James by Bike	WSJ	15	Le Puy-en-Velay / St Jean Pied de Port	•••••	
The Full French Way of St James	FC1	40	Le Puy-en-Velay / St Jean Pied de Port	00000	
CAMINO PORTUGUESE	CODE	DAYS	START/END	GRADING	
CAMINO PORTUGUESE The Portuguese Road - Lisbon to Coimbra	CODE PC1	DAYS	START/END Lisbon / Coimbra	GRADING	
		1			
The Portuguese Road - Lisbon to Coimbra	PC1	11	Lisbon / Coimbra	●●● ○○	
The Portuguese Road - Lisbon to Coimbra The Portuguese Road - Coimbra to Porto	PC1 PC2	11 8	Lisbon / Coimbra Coimbra / Porto	•••00 •••00	YES
The Portuguese Road - Lisbon to Coimbra The Portuguese Road - Coimbra to Porto The Portuguese Road - Porto to Tui	PC1 PC2 PTT	11 8 8	Lisbon / Coimbra Coimbra / Porto Porto / Tui		YES
The Portuguese Road - Lisbon to Coimbra The Portuguese Road - Coimbra to Porto The Portuguese Road - Porto to Tui The Portuguese Road - Tui to Santiago	PC1 PC2 PTT PTS	11 8 8 8	Lisbon / Coimbra Coimbra / Porto Porto / Tui Tui / Santiago	 ••••00 •••00 •••00 •••00 	
The Portuguese Road - Lisbon to Coimbra The Portuguese Road - Coimbra to Porto The Portuguese Road - Porto to Tui The Portuguese Road - Tui to Santiago The Portuguese Road - Porto to Santiago	PC1 PC2 PTT PTS PC3	11 8 8 8 14	Lisbon / Coimbra Coimbra / Porto Porto / Tui Tui / Santiago Porto / Santiago	 ••••00 •••00 •••00 •••00 •••00 	
The Portuguese Road - Lisbon to Coimbra The Portuguese Road - Coimbra to Porto The Portuguese Road - Porto to Tui The Portuguese Road - Tui to Santiago The Portuguese Road - Porto to Santiago Portuguese Way Cycle - Lisbon to Porto	PC1 PC2 PTT PTS PC3 ULP	11 8 8 8 14 10	Lisbon / Coimbra Coimbra / Porto Porto / Tui Tui / Santiago Porto / Santiago Lisbon / Porto	••••○○ ••••○○ ••••○○ ••••○○ ••••○○	YES

CAMINO FRANCÉS	CODE	DAYS	START/END	GRADING	CERTIFICATE
Camino - Pyrenees	CT3	10	St Jean Pied de Port / Logrono	●●● 00	
Camino - Pamplona to Logroño	CTL	6	Pamplona / Logroño	•••00	
Camino - Logroño to Burgos	CT7	7	Logroño / Burgos	•••00	
Camino - Burgos to Leon	CTB	11	Burgos / Leon	•••00	
Camino - Leon to Santiago	CT2	17	Leon / Santiago	•••00	YES
Guided Camino Walk - Sarria to Santiago	CM1	8	Sarria / Santiago	•••00	YES
Camino - Sarria to Santiago	CT6	8	Sarria / Santiago	•••00	YES
Camino - Sarria to Santiago Rambler	CSC	11	Sarria / Santiago	••000	YES
Spanish Camino by Bike: Stage 1	CMB	10	Roncesvalles / Leon		
Spanish Camino by Bike: Stage 2	UHC	8	Leon / Santiago		YES
Best of the Camino	BCT	13	Bilbao / Santiago	•••00	
Food Lover's Spanish Camino	CCT	15	Bilbao / Santiago	••000	
The Full Spanish Camino	SC1	36	St Jean Pied de Port / Santiago	•••00	YES
CAMINO PRIMITIVO	CODE	DAYS	START/END	GRADING	
Highlights of the Camino Primitivo	UPV	0			
	UPV	9	Oviedo / Lugo	$\bullet \bullet \bullet \circ \circ \circ$	
Best of the Camino	BCT	9 13	Oviedo / Lugo Bilbao / Santiago	●●● 00	
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Best of the Camino	BCT	13	Bilbao / Santiago	•••00	
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Best of the Camino Food Lover's Spanish Camino CAMINO DEL NORTE Camino Norte - San Sebastian to Bilbao Camino Norte - Bilbao to Santander Camino Norte - Coast to Santiago	BCT CCT CODE CMN BIL CNR	13 15 DAYS 8 6 11	Bilbao / Santiago Bilbao / Santiago START/END San Sebastian / Bilbao Bilbao / Santander Ribadeo / Santiago	•••00 ••000 GRADING •••00 •••00	YES
Best of the Camino Food Lover's Spanish Camino CAMINO DEL NORTE Camino Norte - San Sebastian to Bilbao Camino Norte - Bilbao to Santander Camino Norte - Coast to Santiago Food Lover's Spanish Camino	BCT CCT CODE CMN BIL CNR CCT	13 15 DAYS 8 6 11 15	Bilbao / Santiago Bilbao / Santiago START/END San Sebastian / Bilbao Bilbao / Santander Ribadeo / Santiago Bilbao / Santiago	 •••••• ••••• ••••• ••••• ••••• ••••• ••••• ••••• •••• ••• •• ••	
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Best of the Camino Food Lover's Spanish Camino CAMINO DEL NORTE Camino Norte - San Sebastian to Bilbao Camino Norte - Bilbao to Santander Camino Norte - Coast to Santiago Food Lover's Spanish Camino The Full Camino Norte THE ENGLISH WAY	BCT CCT CODE CMN BIL CNR CCT CCT CNF CODE	13 15 DAYS 8 6 11 15 42 DAYS	Bilbao / Santiago Bilbao / Santiago START/END San Sebastian / Bilbao Bilbao / Santander Ribadeo / Santiago Bilbao / Santiago San Sebastian / Santiago START/END		YES

Frequently asked questions?

Independent or organised?

Self guided trips offer all the advantages of independent travel, such as the flexibility to travel at your own pace, along with the benefits of an organised group, like pre-booked hotels, luggage transfers, detailed route information, all necessary bike equipment on cycling trips, someone to talk to before you depart and a 24 hour support line when on the trip.

What if I can't carry all my gear?

This is only a real concern for independent travellers. If you join an organised trip, whether it is guided or self guided, walking or cycling, we assist by providing luggage transfers between your pre-booked hotels. This way, you only need to worry about the gear you want to carry in your daypack or pannier.

How fit do I have to be?

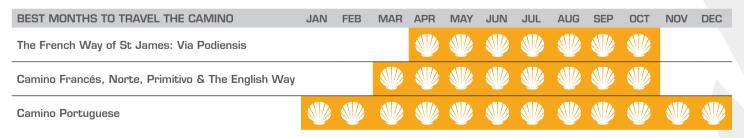
For any type of active trip, the general rule is always the fitter you are the more you will enjoy it. If you exercise regularly, and are in good health, you should consider a walk along the Camino. Every walk presents a different physical challenge based on the distance and terrain covered. All our Camino walking & cycling trips are graded from 1 to 5, so you can match your physical capability against the walks offered and their respective grading. We always encourage you to talk to our experienced team if you have questions concerning your fitness or the section you are considering.

When is the best time to go?

For some this question refers to weather. For others, it means when it is less, or more, busy. Weather wise, the best time to walk the Camino in France and Spain is outside the winter months. During winter, many services along certain sections of the trail, such as hotels and restaurants, are closed. During summer it can get quite hot, so walking along the coast, or in Galicia alone, provides pleasant walking conditions. The northern sections of the Camino Portuguese can be enjoyed year round.

Which section is the prettiest?

As the saying goes, beauty is in the eye of the beholder. We believe every Camino offers something special, but ultimately it comes down to your personal preferences. It is hard to deny however that the trails through central and southern France's varied landscapes offer some of the most beautiful walking opportunities.



Which sections don't have roads?

The Camino typically travels on quiet paths but many sections of the various trails also follow roads, particularly when entering or exiting villages. After all, the Camino is an ancient way which modern life has sprung up around. The quietest trails, away from busy roads, are along the English Way.

Is it safe for single females to walk along the Camino?

If you have concerns about safety the wisest thing to do is to join an organised group and travel with an experienced guide. If you prefer to walk the Camino on an organised self guided trip then choose a busier period, such as between July and September, and undertake the more popular trails.

How long does it take to walk 25km?

On a flat surface, a person of reasonable fitness can walk around 4kms an hour carrying a small daypack weighing up to 8kg. An idea of reasonable fitness is the ability to walk over rough ground with a daypack for six to seven hours and requiring only short stops. When hills, undulating terrain or inclement weather is involved, that pace slows down to between 2 and 3kms an hour. Your pace is also determined by your attitude towards the journey. Are you planning to enjoy the day by stopping frequently to take pictures and soak in the scenery, or is the end goal to move as quickly as possible to get to the next destination?

What gear must I take?

On a walking trip, looking after your feet is of the utmost importance. Well worn in walking boots, or even trail hiking shoes for flatter/dry terrain, should be your first focus. On the trail, regardless of the time of year you travel, always prepare for all seasons by carrying adequate protection from the elements (sun, wind and rain). Nature is unpredictable - there is no such thing as bad weather, just bad clothing. We provide a detailed gear list for all our travellers.

How do I take care of my feet?

The importance of good footwear cannot be stressed enough. A blister can ruin an experience, so take appropriate protection, such as compeed or blister socks, and avoid rigid boots on flat terrain. Shoes are a personal choice and the terrain you will cover will help determine your needs. Lightweight mid level boots which are waterproof, breathable and offer ankle support are good for most of the Camino's. As the Camino is a well maintained trail, many people prefer to walk in trail hiking shoes. It is advisable to visit your local outdoor gear shop, not a sports store, to talk to someone about the right shoes for you.





Whether you prefer cycling or walking, 2-star or 4-star, small groups or self guided, Spain, France or Portugal – experience the Camino exactly the way you want with UTracks, the active European holiday specialists. **utracks.com**

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