



fresco
TOURS

A Fresco Start, Portuguese Camino 2018
Your Self-Guided Walk to Santiago

- an adventure from our backyard -



A Fresco Start Camino Portuguese 118KM

8 days / 7 nights

The Last 118 KMs to Santiago

I first walked the Camino de Santiago in 1999 and since then I've led over 90 groups along the Way. Over the years, I've seen many pilgrims walk, cycle, horseback and a few wheelchairs on their way to Santiago de Compostela. While we are very proud of our high-quality, full-service, guided cultural walking tours of the Camino de Santiago, we also recognize that some people would rather not have 2 guides with them and there are others that just do not like "group tours", despite the fabulous gourmet picnics we prepare!



In addition, we also understand that people do want to walk the Camino, BUT....

- ➔ Would rather not sleep in *albergues*, the communal dormitories available along the trail. Some pilgrims enjoy having their own bedrooms with a door, an en-suite bathroom, and plenty of hot water!
- ➔ Do not want or cannot carry all their belongings with them. In fact, they enjoy being able to add some extra weight to their load and have some creature comforts, such as that iPad!
- ➔ Are nervous and scared! Coming to a foreign country to walk for a couple weeks is daunting no matter how many books and web forums you've read. You want more than just an Orientation Packet sent to you in the mail - you want a LIVE person to answer your questions and help you take those first steps on your journey.
- ➔ Don't want to eat alone. Independence can be great when traveling, but it is also nice to have some occasional companions to share those tales from the trail and a meal or two!

With these thoughts in mind, we created "A Fresco Start – Self-Guided Walk to Santiago". On this journey, you will cover the last 118KM of the trail on foot as you start from the town of Tui (in Spain). This will allow you to request the Compostela certificate for having walked the Camino. We will take care of your hotel arrangements, breakfasts, and luggage transfers as you go along the trail. All walking will be from inn to inn, so no need for shuttles in taxis or regrouping points at the end of the day.

A Fresco Start Camino has set departure date, which ensures that our favorite hotels have already been booked. It also means that you will coincide with other pilgrims of the "group" (max 15 pilgrims on each departure date) that you can interact with and have that glass of *tinto*, if you wish.

Lastly, but most important, A Fresco Start means just that – a Fresco Tours guide will meet you at the Start! On the first evening in Tui, we will personally meet you to give you an Orientation Meeting, hand out your Welcome Packet that includes the Pilgrim's Passport, and take you out for a fine meal of local cuisine! On the very next morning, your guide will be on hand to answer any questions that may have popped up overnight and walk with you out of town to help get your "feet wet" and introduce you to the symbols and markers of the Camino! Just a bit of experienced guidance, before you head out to Santiago on your own!



A Fresco Start for the Portuguese Camino 118KM

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Day 1: Tui

In the evening (6:00PM), we meet the group in the riverside border town of Tui, where many pilgrims doing the Portuguese Camino begin their journey to Compostela. Your Fresco Tours guide will hand out your Orientation Packets and review all the materials to get you ready for your Pilgrimage on the Camino de Santiago! Afterwards, we'll take you to get your first stamp in your Pilgrim's Passport before enjoying a traditional Galician meal. (D)

Day 2: Tui to O Porriño

15 KMs / 9.3 Miles

With our boots and scallop shells on, your Fresco Tours guide escorts you out of town indicating the various Camino markers and the famous yellow arrows. As we leave Tui, your guide will navigate you in and out of the historic medieval town where you will be able to admire the 12th century Santa María Cathedral, the Jewish Quarter and past your first medieval bridge spanning the River Louro. Here we bid you a last "*Buen Camino*" as you continue on your own along the Way to Santiago! You stroll through the forested countryside on a combination of backroads and country footpaths as you make your way north through the Louro River Valley to O Porriño, an important trading town and stop for pilgrims since the 14th century. (B)

Day 3: O Porriño to Arcade

22 KMs / 13.7 Miles

Leaving O Porriño, the walk begins with a light climb through typical southern Galician villages surrounded by vineyards. Look out for the occasional carved granite cross that marks the way to Santiago and the Roman milestones that marked the Roman Road *Vía XIX*. Before reaching the beachside town of Arcade, you will walk through the fascinating town of Redondela with its two 19th century rail viaducts that cross the town's sky. Finish the day with the local specialties of oysters and mussels that are farmed along the estuary and the Albariño white wine. (B)

Day 4: Arcade to Pontevedra

13 KMs / 8 Miles

Following the Camino, you cross the bridge of *Ponte Sampaio*, where a group of locals defeated Napoleon's troops in 1809. You then cross one last hill with views of the Vigo Estuary before descending into Pontevedra. The town is best known for being the home to the Church of *La Peregrina* (The Lady Pilgrim) with its iconic scallop shell floor plan shape. *La Peregrina* is also the patron saint of the Portuguese Camino and is devoutly venerated by locals and foreigners alike. Today's stage is shorter than the rest allowing you time to explore Pontevedra at your leisure. (B)

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Day 5: Pontevedra to Caldas de Reis

22 KMs / 13.7 Miles

The Camino takes you out of town and before you realize it, into the quiet forested countryside, along trails and small country lanes all the way to Caldas de Reis. You can even make a short detour and admire some spectacular waterfalls halfway through the stage. Your stage ends in Caldas de Reis, which roughly translates as *the kings' thermal* waters, and like a king or queen you will feel when you dip your tired feet into the soothing natural thermal springs in town. (B)

Day 6: Caldas de Reis to Padrón

18 KMs / 11.2 Miles

The day starts with an enticing walk through wooded vales, vineyards and small villages before you gain the last major hill on your Camino. The descent takes you into the Ulla River valley that separates the province of Pontevedra, which you have just crossed south to north, from the province of A Coruña, where Santiago de Compostela is. The stage ends in the historic town of Padrón (or pedrón – Galician for big stone), which pays homage to the famous rock where the boat that contained Saint James was moored to upon its arrival from Jerusalem after he had been martyred. Or in other words, this is where the Santiago story *began* and where you will literally be walking in the footsteps of the apostle! Padrón is also famous in culinary circles for its little green peppers, some which are hot and others that are not.

Day 7: Padrón to Santiago de Compostela

25kms / 15.5 Miles

7 days, 118 kilometers, and you have arrived to Santiago de Compostela. Congratulations! Head to the Pilgrims' Office for your last stamp in your Passport and request that well-deserved certificate, the *Compostela*, for having walked to Santiago. You are going to love this magical city filled with fantastic monuments and a lively buzz from the international pilgrims and university students that fill its medieval streets. (B)

Day 8: Santiago de Compostela. Itinerary Ends

After your breakfast our local historian gives you a closer look at the amazing Cathedral that has seen so many transformations since the original chapel built in the 9th-century. Its age seems almost impossible when looking at the Baroque façade that graces the entryway. Afterwards, make sure you give your well-earned hug to St. James! Alas, your itinerary has come to a finish. (B)

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



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2018 Departure Dates

May 10 - 17, 2018

June 7 - 14, 2018

June 21 - 28, 2018

August 2 - 9, 2018

August 23 - 30, 2018

September 13 - 20, 2018

October 11 - 18, 2018

A Fresco Start Camino 115KM Price:

900€ per person

200€ Single Supplement

WHAT'S INCLUDED:

Orientation Meeting: A Fresco Tour guide will hand deliver your Orientation Packet and give you a detailed meeting on the first night in Tui. Your Welcome Packet is filled with all the materials you'll need to transform into a pilgrim: Your credentials (Pilgrim's Passport), a scallop shell, daily maps of the route, a guide book with historical information of the towns that you will pass through, and a few other goodies for the trail! We'll answer any questions that you have before starting your journey to Santiago and on the next morning, lead you out on The Way!

Accommodations: 7 nights in a combination of 3 & 4 star hotels, restored manor homes, and small pensions / inns located on the Camino. All rooms have their own bathrooms. We've chosen places for their hospitality, comfort, and location. *Keep in mind that as you will be walking through rural countryside, the availability of 3 & 4 star hotels all along the route is not possible.

Meals: All breakfasts are included with your hotels. We have arranged that they will be supplemented from the standard Spanish breakfast of coffee & toast. The first night of the itinerary, our guide will take you for dinner at one of our favorite places in Tui - wine and beer included. Afterwards, we will provide you with a list of places along the Camino with food recommendations. Let us know if you have any dietary restrictions and we can ask our hotels to accommodate for those as well!

Limited Group Size: Although this tour is Self-Guided, we've limited the size of each departure to 15 passengers. Availability is on a first come, first serve basis.

Luggage Transport: We will arrange for the transfer of 1 suitcase / piece of luggage (51 lbs) per person between your hotels on your walk along the Camino. If you require more than 1 bag, please contact us for details.

Guided Visit: In Santiago, our local art historian will provide you with a guided visit of the Cathedral and the surrounding squares. A minimum of 5 people is necessary for this service to be provided.

Pre / During / Post Service: We are here to help! Need assistance with hotels prior to or after your trip? Train tickets? Returning from Santiago? Questions about what to wear? Need a taxi while on the trail? Based in Spain, we are here to make sure that your trip runs smooth as can be – please don't hesitate to ask for our help!