



fresco  
TOURS

## The Camino de Santiago Tour 2018

- an adventure from our backyard -





# Camino de Santiago Tour 2018

11 days & 10 nights : The Last 151 KMs to Santiago

The crown jewel of Spanish walking trails, the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela began as an act of faith as Europeans crossed Spain to visit the sacred tomb of Saint James. One thousand years later, the Camino continues to draw the spiritual as well as the traveler looking to enjoy the beauty of the green rolling hills and small hamlets of northwestern Spain's Galicia. Come be part of this magical route that is very special for us - it is on the Camino where the idea for Fresco Tours was first born in 1999.

| <b>2018 Camino de Santiago Tour Dates</b><br>11 days / 10 nights                   | <b>Price</b><br>2,800€ (Double Occupancy)<br>Single Supplement: 400€   |  |
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|  | Apr 23- May 3, 2018<br>May 7 - 17, 2018<br>May 16 - 26, 2018<br>May 21 - 31, 2018<br>Jun 4 - 14, 2018<br>Jun 18 - 28, 2018<br>Jul 2 - 12, 2018 | Jul 30 - Aug 9, 2018<br>Aug 27 - Sep 6, 2018<br>Sep 10 - 20, 2018<br>Sep 19 - 29, 2018<br>Sep 24 - Oct 4, 2018<br>Oct 8 - 18, 2018 |

## Day 1: León

In the afternoon, your Fresco Tour guides meet and greet you at your Orientation Meeting. Afterwards, our local guide takes us on visit of León's magnificent Gothic Cathedral, whose stained glass windows have led people to say that it is made of more glass than stone. We finish our evening with a meal fit for the kings!

Accommodations: León (D)

*\*We are happy to provide assistance in arranging your transportation from Madrid to León.*

## Day 2: León to Iron Cross to Bierzo Valley

After breakfast, we hop in the van and stretch our legs with a climb to the Iron Cross or *Cruz de Ferro*! Here you can participate in the long-standing pilgrim tradition of leaving a stone at the foot of the cross in order to ask for protection on your journey. We finish in the town of Villafranca del Bierzo, home of the 12<sup>th</sup> century Romanesque church of Santiago, which would welcome and care for any pilgrims that fell sick along the Way.

Accommodations: Bierzo Valley (B,L,D) / Walking: 15 KMs or 10 miles

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## Day 3: O Cebreiro to Triacastela

With our boots and scallop shells on, we get our first glimpse of the green Galician countryside. Our day starts with a steady climb to the Alto do Poio, the highest point of the Camino de Santiago in Galicia. After a stamp and a coffee, we start our descent down to the town of Triacastela, named after the three castles that once stood watch over the village. Our first full day of walking behind us, we can hop in the van to shuttle to our accommodations for an evening of relaxation.

Accommodations: Sarria (B,L,D) / Walking: 21 KMs or 13 miles



## Day 4: Triacastela to Sarria

Today is the day of the difficult decision! What to do? The Camino de Santiago has two paths to reach Sarria - take the high road through San Xil and enjoy the beautiful views from atop the ridge or visit the ancient monastery of Samos along the river valley. Traditionally, pilgrims would have to choose one or the other. We, however, get to do both! By day, we walk along the hills of San Xil and in the evening, we'll take the van to visit one of Spain's oldest monasteries!

Accommodations: Sarria (B,L,D) / Walking: 17 KMs or 11 miles

## Day 5: Sarria to Portomarín

Leaving Sarria, we should take in the views from atop the city and keep an eye out for the ruins of Celtic *castros* hiding in the vegetation along the Camino. On our way to Portomarín, we walk by the 100km marker, a milestone (or kmstone!) for the millions of pilgrims who have traversed this same spot during the last millennium. As we approach Portomarín, where the 12th-century Church of San Juan, once stood guard over the banks of the River Miño before it was moved, stone by stone, to the new center of town – your Fresco Tour guide will tell you more about that!

Accommodations: Palas de Rei (B,L,D) / Walking: 23 KMs or 14 miles

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### Day 6: Portomarín to Palas de Rei

We start our day with a light climb out of the river valley and pass through typical Galician villages, decorated with their raised corncribs and the occasional carved granite cross that marks the way to Santiago. Continuing west, we walk through the first of many eucalyptus forests along the Camino de Santiago and work our way into Palas de Rei. What better way to reward ourselves for our efforts than a glass of Galicia's light Albariño white wine!

Accommodations: Palas de Rei (B,L,D) / Walking: 25 KMs or 15 miles



### Day 7: Palas de Rei to Melide

Following the now very familiar yellow arrows, we ramble up and down gentle rolling hills along quiet footpaths. Little has changed in this serene corner of Spain. The peaceful rural environment of local farmers tending to their lazy cattle which graze near old stone houses creates a scene from another time. We quickly arrive back to the present in the bustling market town of Melide, where tender octopus, or *pulpo*, is still boiled in large copper kettles on the street.

Accommodations: Melide (B,L,D) / Walking: 15 KMs or 9 miles

### Day 8: Melide to Arzúa

We leave Melide early morning and wind our way across the Galician countryside. Our journey is filled with tiny churches dating back to the 12th and 14th-century dedicated to Santiago and Santa Maria. Arzúa is the ideal opportunity to set out in search of their famous local cow cheese or perhaps a bit of *empanada*, a light crusty pastry filled with either beef or tuna.

Accommodations: Melide (B,L,D) / Walking: 14 KMs or 9 miles

### Day 9: Arzúa to Arca

Today we continue to enjoy expansive and verdant landscapes, occasionally embellished by the charming atmosphere of tiny three-house villages. Get a feel for the people by greeting a local villager with a "*Buenos días*" or "*Hola*". You'll see how these quiet and reserved people will quickly wish you well on your journey to Santiago. On this trek, you are no longer a tourist, but a pilgrim on the Camino de Santiago!

Accommodations: Arca (B,L,D) / Walking: 21 KMs or 14 miles



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## Day 10: Arca to Santiago

9 days, 151 kilometers, and we have finally arrived to Santiago de Compostela. Congratulations! 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. After requesting our Compostela certificates at the Pilgrims' Office, we head to our hotel and get ready for our evening celebratory dinner!

Accommodations: Santiago (B,L,D) / Walking: 16 KMs or 10 miles

## Day 11: Santiago de Compostela / Itinerary Ends

After breakfast, our local historian gives us a closer look at the amazing Cathedral that has seen so many transformations since the original chapel built in the 9th-century. After the tour, we sadly say our last "¡Buen Camino!" as we leave you at the Cathedral in time for the pilgrims' mass at noon. (B)

## The Compostela & the Camino de Santiago Tour

This itinerary gives you the opportunity to walk the last 100KM into Santiago. This is a requirement needed to request the Compostela, the certificate granted by the church of Santiago upon the completion of the pilgrimage. It is not mandatory, however, to walk 100km (60 miles) to participate in this Fresco Tour. As with all our trips, your walk is accompanied by a support van and shorter walk options are available on a daily basis.



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



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## **WHAT TO EXPECT:**

Expect to have a wonderful time! We've designed each trip to enjoy the stunning beauty of the Spanish landscape, while giving you a true sense of the soul and magic of these exciting people and their culture. We love to share this magnificent country and want you to feel a part of it.

## **WHAT'S INCLUDED:**

**2 Guides:** Our greatest resource! We know Spain, because it is our home. Both of your guides are experienced professionals that are either Spanish or live in Spain year round – no hired out summer help! In León and Santiago, we will be joined by local art historians, who will bring the monuments and cities to life! \* Groups of 3 - 6 pax are accompanied by only 1 guide.

**Meals:** Food speaks volumes about a culture and we love to eat! During our walk days, when possible, we prepare gourmet picnics using the freshest of local ingredients and selecting the tastiest recipes of the region. All breakfast, lunches and dinners are included. We are proud to cater to vegetarians and those with food allergies – milk, egg, wheat, etc... as well!

**Accommodation:** Fresco Tours selects a combination of 3-4 star hotels and restored country manors that offer the best in hospitality, comfort and location. In Galicia, these are known as *Pazos* (Palaces) and are very unique and special - some date back to the 15<sup>th</sup> century! All rooms have in-suite baths. Tour prices are based on double occupancy.

**Limited Group Sizes:** Fresco Tours are in small groups to ensure that you receive the individual attention that you deserve. We want to be able to treat each of our clients with a personal touch and we limit the groups to a maximum of 15 participants. We also recognize that each person's Camino is their own personal experience and if you wish, we encourage you to walk on your own – with the assurance that we will be there for you!

**Support Vehicles:** Your walks will be accompanied by 2 support vehicles (minimum 6 pax) that are there to provide assistance when needed. You will have access to the bus every couple of hours, so you won't need to carry a heavy backpack. In addition, the possibility of shorter routes and pick-up options will be offered and explained on a daily basis.

**Ground transportation:** All ground transportation between our meeting point in León, Spain and the Cathedral in Santiago de Compostela is provided on your Fresco Tour.

**Luggage transfers:** Your luggage will be transported between hotels. You do the walking, we'll do the lifting!

**Pre-Tour Assistance:** We will help with your travel arrangements prior to and after the tour start and finish of your Fresco Tour, including assistance with hotel reservations and train tickets.