

A Fresco Start Coastal Camino Portugués Tour

- an adventure from our backyard -

15 days / 14 nights. The Last 260 km on the Camino Portugués



I first walked the Camino de Santiago in 1999 and since then I've led over 100 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....

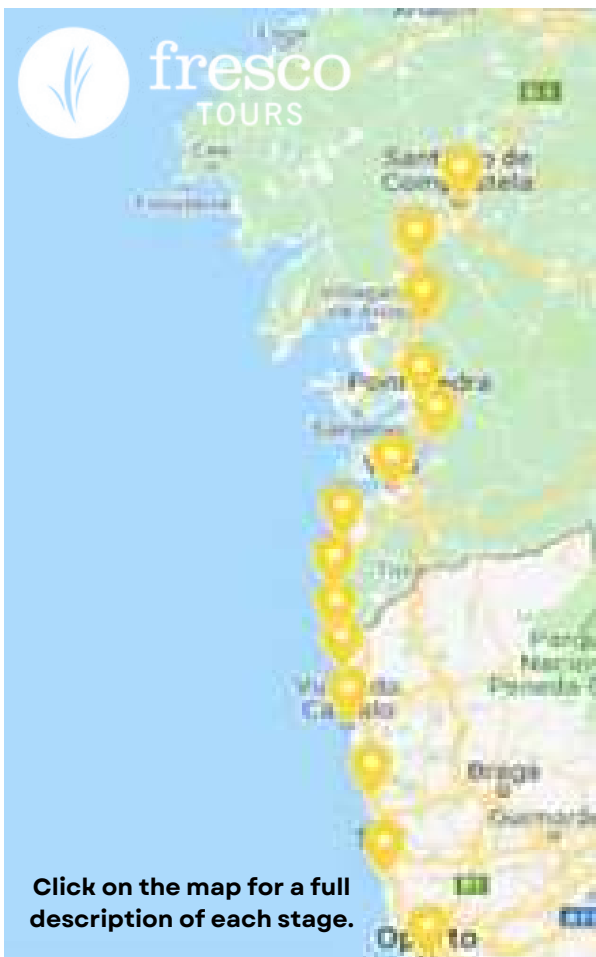
- Would rather not sleep in albergues, the communal dormitories available along the trail. Some pilgrims enjoy having their own bedrooms with a door, an en-suite bathroom, and plenty of hot water!
- Do not want or cannot carry all their belongings with them. In fact, they enjoy being able to add some 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 of weeks is daunting, no matter how many books and web forums you have 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!

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With these thoughts in mind, we created “A Fresco Start Camino Portugués Tour – Self-Guided Walk to Santiago”. On this journey, you will cover the last 260 km of the trail on foot as you start from the town of Oporto. 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.



Remember, A Fresco Start Camino means just that – a Fresco Tours guide will meet you at the Start! On the first evening in Oporto, 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! The next morning, a driver will be waiting to transfer you to the beginning of your Camino.



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Day 1 : Oporto

We welcome the group in the afternoon in Porto, which sits on the banks of the “River of Gold”, the Rio Douro. Your Fresco Tours representative will hand out your Orientation Packets and review all the materials to get you ready for your Pilgrimage on the Coastal Camino Português! Afterwards, we'll take you to get your first stamp in your Pilgrim's Passport before enjoying a traditional Portuguese meal.

Accommodation: Porto. Dinner included



Day 2: Porto (Matosinhos) to Vila do Conde

After breakfast, you transfer to Matosinhos, where you begin the Coastal Camino Português. You embark on the coastal trail along roads and wooden boardwalks, that take you through sandy beaches and quaint fishing villages. You end the day in the resort town of Vila do Conde, historically known for ship building and fishing.

Accommodation: Vila do Conde. Breakfast included
/ Walking: 21 km or 13 mi



Day 3: Vila do Conde to Esposende

This morning you continue along the coast, passing sand dunes and fields of flowers. You arrive to Esposende, further inland, and near the Cávado estuary. End the day with a traditional dish of the area, polve de Esposende, a stew made with octopus, cabbage and potatoes. Bom proveito!

Accommodation: Esposende. Breakfast included
/ Walking: 25 km or 15 mi



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Day 4: Esposende to Viana do Castelo

Today you leave the coast behind and pass through several villages and forests. The long Eiffel bridge into Viana do Castelo, a lovely town known for its combination of old and contemporary architecture, also gives us a wonderful view over the Lima valley.

Accommodation: Viana do Castelo. Breakfast included
/ Walking: 24 km or 14 mi

Day 5: Viana do Castelo to Vila Praia de Ancora

The walk today is mainly inland, with some coastal views from small villages. You make your way through a eucalyptus forest as you continue uphill before your descent into the beachside resort town of Vila Praia de Âncora.

Accommodation: Vila Praia de Ancora. Breakfast included
/ Walking: 20 km or 12 mi



Day 6: Vila Praia de Ancora to A Guarda

A coastal path connects Âncora with Moleda and then takes you to the quaint town of Caminha. If you have time, take a detour through the pine forest along the beach before catching the ferry across the River Minho to the quiet fishing town of A Guarda in Spain.

Accommodation: A Guarda. Breakfast included
/ Walking: 14 km or 9 m

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Day 7: A Guarda to Oia

If you can, visit the Santa Tegra Celtic settlement before leaving A Guarda – the views are stunning! Continue along the Camino through the center of town and out towards the rugged coastline. Walking along coastal and wooded paths, as well as asphalt roads, you reach the beachfront village of Oia, whose 12th century monastery is worth visiting.

Accommodation: Oia. Breakfast included
/ Walking: 14 km or 9 mi



Day 8: Oia to Baiona

This morning you pass small fields, a few villages and some scattered houses along the coast before the scenery and terrain change and you cut across the mountains. Today you have a final descent into the medieval center of Baiona, where you can visit the Museum of the Pinta, one of the three ships that sailed to America on Columbus' expedition.

Accommodation: Baiona. Breakfast included
/ Walking: 18 km or 11 mi



Day 9: Baiona to Vigo

Leaving Baiona, you are once again surrounded by the countryside, with its small villages and forests. After a brief section along the road, you return to small hamlets before entering Vigo, considered the largest city in Galicia.

Accommodation: Vigo. Breakfast included.
/ Walking: 26 km or 16 m



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Day 10: Vigo to Arcade

This morning you walk along the main shopping street in Vigo and then out into the countryside along a long road that connects several peaceful hillside villages with views across the city and port. 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.

Accommodation: Arcade. Breakfast included
/ Walking: 22 km or 11 mi



Day 11: Arcade to Pontevedra

Following the Camino, you cross the bridge of Ponte Sampaio, where a group of locals defeated Napoleon's troops in 1809. Pontevedra 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.

Accommodation: Pontevedra. Breakfast included
/ Walking: 13 km or 8 mi

Day 12: Pontevedra to Caldas de Reis

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.

Accommodation: Caldas de Reis. Breakfast included
/ Walking: 22 km or 14 m



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Day 13: Caldas de Reis to Padrón

The day starts with a walk through wooded vales, vineyards and small villages until the descent that takes you into the Ulla River valley that separates the province of Pontevedra from the province of A Coruña. The stage ends in the historic town of Padrón 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!

Accommodation: Padrón. Breakfast included

/ Walking: 19 km or 12 mi



Day 14: Padrón to Santiago

Fourteen days, 260 kilometers, and you have arrived at 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.

Accommodation: Santiago. Breakfast included

/ Walking: 23 km or 14 mi

Day 15: Santiago

After 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.

Accommodation: Santiago. Breakfast included.

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



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WHAT'S INCLUDED?

Orientation Meeting:

A Fresco Tours representative will hand deliver your Orientation Packet and give you a detailed meeting on the first night in Porto. Your Welcome Packet is filled with all the materials you'll need to transform into a pilgrim: Your credential (Pilgrim's Passport), a scallop shell, a guidebook with maps and 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. Minimum of 3 people for this service to be provided.



Accommodations:

Seven nights in a combination of 3 & 4- star hotels, restored manor homes, and small inns located on the Camino. All rooms have their own bathrooms. We have 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 Oporto – 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!



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WHAT'S INCLUDED?



Limited Group Size:

Although this tour is Self- Guided, we have 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 (45 lb) 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 to Tui? 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 as smoothly as can be – please don't hesitate to ask for our help!



DATES AND PRICING



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