

Chapter 3 – The Camino de Santiago

- an adventure from our backyard -

15 days & 14 nights: The 3rd stage of your Camino



Our journey continues as we start our 3rd leg towards Santiago. Having left El Cid's Burgos, we head to the VII Legion of the Roman Empire, present day León. Afterwards, we reach the highest point along the Camino de Santiago at Mount Irago (1517 m) – higher than the Pyrenees! The last pages of this chapter finish in O Cebreiro, the doorway into Galicia and the closing Chapter of our Codex.

Don't forget to bring your Pilgrim Credential from Chapters 1 & 2, as you will continue collecting stamps. Buen Camino!

B=Breakfast, L=Lunch & D=Dinner

Day 1: Carrión de los Condes

We meet the group in the afternoon in Burgos for our transfer to the town of Carrión de los Condes, which for centuries belonged to the Kingdom of León. We have a short Orientation Meeting followed up by a short walk around this medieval town, with a visit to the 12th century Church of Santa María del Camino. We then return to our hotel where you can enjoy the cloisters before a nice dinner to celebrate the beginning of Chapter 3!

Accommodation: Carrión de los Condes (D)

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



Day 2: Carrión de los Condes to Calzadilla de la Cueva

With boots on, we get back on the trail and begin our journey towards Santiago. Today we walk on part of the Vía Aquitana or Roman road, more than 2,000 years old! We end the day in the small village of Calzada de la Cueva, where we re-group and return to our hotel for the evening.

Accommodation: Carrión de los Condes / Walking: 17 km (B, L, D)

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Day 3: Calzadilla de la Cueva to Sahagún

Today we walk through Terradillos de los Templarios, once a stronghold for the Knights Templar, and where you are technically mid-way between St. Jean and Santiago! You also cross into the Leon Province with its flat plains and adobe villages. We finish in Sahagún, whose name is derived from Saint Facundo, who was martyred here. His remains lie in the 17th century Church of San Juan.

Accommodation: Carrión de los Condes / Walking: 22 km
(B, L, D)



Day 4: Sahagún to El Burgo Ranero

This morning we walk out the door and continue our walk, crossing a historic stone bridge, Puente Canto, over the Cea River. We pass through small villages and end the day in El Burgo Ranero before we head to our accommodations for the evening.

Accommodation: Sahagún / Walking: 18 km (B, L, D)



Day 5: El Burgo Ranero to Mansilla de Mulas

Today you make your way past Mansilla de las Mulas, the meeting place for two routes, the French Camino and the Via Romana. This town, located on the edge of the River Esla, which has welcomed pilgrims for centuries, is protected by its 12th century medieval wall.

Accommodation: León / Walking: 19 km (B, L, D)



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Day 6: Mansilla de Mulas to León

After breakfast, we continue our journey to reach León. Here, we will visit the magnificent Gothic Cathedral, whose stained-glass windows have led people to say that it is made more of glass than stone, as well as the Basilica of San Isidoro, where the Pantheon of the Kings is located.

Accommodation: León / Walking: 19 km (B, D)

Day 7: León to Villar de Mazarife

Leaving León, we cross the San Marcos Bridge over the Bernesga River. Make sure to have a look at the Sanctuary of the Virgin's facade in Virgen del Camino, exceptional with its 13 sculptures of the Apostles & the Virgin. To reach Villar we will be crossing the paramo leonés. Páramo means "bleak plateau or high moor," which is the typical terrain of this area.

Accommodation: León / Walking: 22 km (B, L)



Day 8: Villar de Mazarife to Santibáñez de Valdeiglesias

After breakfast, we pass through some small villages and then cross the magnificent bridge into Hospital de Órbigo. Built in the 13th century, this bridge is one of the best-preserved medieval bridges in Spain. We walk on a bit farther and finish the day in Santibáñez de Valdeiglesias before heading to Astorga for a good night's rest.

Accommodation: Astorga / Walking: 20 km (B, L, D)



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Day 9: Santibáñez de Valdeiglesias to Murias de Rechivaldo

Today you continue walking along the meseta, famous for wheat and grain – the breadbasket of Spain. We pass through Astorga, a Roman settlement that guarded precious mines and is now home to Antonio Gaudí's Bishops' Palace, where you can visit the Museum of Los Caminos. Also, be sure to sample some of Astorga's chocolate, before finishing the day in Murias de Rechivaldo.

Accommodation: Astorga / Walking: 17 km (B, L, D)



Day 10: Murias de Rechivaldo to Foncebadón

This morning, we take a detour and visit Castrillo Polvazares, an extraordinary example of town located within the comarca de la Maragatería (county of merchants that pulled donkey-drawn carriages). Next, heading toward Rabanal del Camino, we'll pass the "Ecce Homo" Hermitage, and when we reach the village of El Ganso, you'll notice the landscape is densely populated by oak trees.

Accommodation: Astorga / Walking: 21 km (B, L)

Day 11: Foncebadón to Molinaseca

Today we ascend toward the Iron Cross, where pilgrims leave a stone to ask for protection while on their journey. We later arrive at one of the highest points on the Camino (1504 meters!), where we make an easy descent towards El Acebo. Get your camera ready as this portion has breathtaking views! In Molinaseca, we cross over the Romanesque bridge to enter the town. Fancy a dip in the river's natural swimming pool?

Accommodation: Ponferrada / Walking: 20 km (B, L, D)



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Day 12: Molinaseca to Cacabelos

This morning we continue to Ponferrada, derived from the Latin “Pons Ferrata” or Iron Bridge, built over the river to allow the safe crossing of pilgrims. Upon our arrival, we can enjoy the Knights Templars castle located in the enchanting old quarter. On our way out of Ponferrada, we pass through the town of Compostilla, with its unique industrial history. We end today’s walk in Cacabelos and the vineyards of this up-and-coming wine region.

Accommodation: Ponferrada / Walking: 22 km (B, L, D)

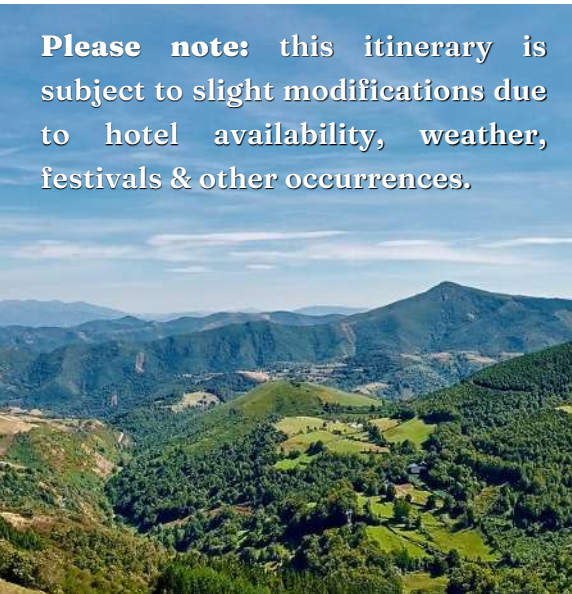
Day 13: Cacabelos to Portela

We continue our journey from Cacabelos, passing through the town of Villafranca del Bierzo, where we can visit the 12th century Romanesque church dedicated to Santiago. We push further along the trail, inching closer to Galicia and O Cebreiro. We return to our accommodations for the evening and a good night’s rest to write the last page of Chapter 3 tomorrow morning.

Accommodation: Villafranca del Bierzo / Walking: 22 km (B, L, D)



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



Day 14: Portela to O Cebreiro

Have an extra coffee at breakfast, as today we walk up to O Cebreiro! Afterwards, we shuttle you to Santiago for our last night and dinner together.

Accommodation: Santiago de Compostela. Walking: 15 km (B, L, D)

Day 15: Santiago de Compostela

Tour End (B)

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WHAT'S INCLUDED?

2 Guides:

Our greatest resource! We know Spain because it is our home. Both of your Fresco guides are experienced professionals that are either Spanish or live in Spain year-round – no hired out summer help!

When specified, local art historians will join us to provide further insights of the specific monument / museum that we visit.

Groups of up to 6 people will be accompanied by 1 guide, groups of 7 -10 people will be accompanied by 1 guide and 1 minibus driver, and groups of 11 or more people will be accompanied by 2 guides and 1 minibus driver.



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 breakfasts, lunches and dinners are included – except for 1 lunch and 2 dinners where we encourage you to try the local cuisine on your own. We are proud to cater to vegetarians and those with food allergies – milk, egg, wheat, etc.

Accommodation:

FrescoTours selects a combination of 3 & 4-star hotels and B&B's that offer the best in hospitality, comfort and location.

All rooms have in-suite baths. Tour prices are based on double occupancy.

Ground transportation:

All ground transportation between the start and the end of the tour is included.



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WHAT'S INCLUDED?



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 16 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 7 pax) that are there to provide assistance when needed and look out for your safety. 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.



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 your Fresco Tour, including assistance with hotel reservations and private transfers.

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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.

