

THE PILGRIM'S ROAD TO SANTIAGO

7 nights / 9 days



Galicia, the mysterious and beautiful land northwest of Spain has been for ages the destination of many pilgrimages coming from the North of Europe. Much before the discovery of the remains of the Apostle Saint James, people used to make this route which finalizes in *Finisterre* (The End of the Land) just to see the sun being extinguished in the Atlantic Ocean.

Later on, the Apostle Saint James was beheaded in Palestine in 42 AD and he miraculously arrived in Galicia. The tradition says that his disciples stole the master's corpse and put it on board a ship that seven days after landed in Galicia. Saint James was buried in the place that later would become Santiago de Compostela.



Day 1: UNITED STATES - MADRID - PAMPLONA

Depart from the United States on an overnight flight; arrive the next day to Spain.

Day 2: PAMPLONA: Hotel NH Iruña Park****

Arrive in Pamplona, the first city you encounter on the Road to Santiago, which enters Spain across the Pyrenees and enters the city via the Burlada Way. Pick up vehicle at the airport and drive to the hotel, situated in the city center, next to the Old Quarter. Visit the 15th century medieval bridge on the River Arga at the foot of the city walls, at the northern entrance to the city arriving from France, because this is the symbolic "starting point" in Spain of the Road. So, from now on, it is important not to forget to have your certificate stamped at every hotel, lodge or Parador on the Road, so that the Religious Authority in Santiago will grant you "The Forgiveness of Sins".

Day 3: PAMPLONA - S. DOMINGO DE LA CALZADA:

Parador of Santo Domingo****

Breakfast. Drive to Olite, still in Navarre, and then head for Santo Domingo de la Calzada (3 hours' drive), in the famous wine region of La Rioja, still following The Pilgrim's Road. There you will find the Parador, a 12th century former hospital that was built in the center of town to give shelter to the travelers on the Road to Santiago. Santo Domingo de La Calzada, half way along the Road (Calzada means "Road" in Spanish), grew precisely around that religious fervor that has drawn believers to Santiago to visit the tomb of the Apostle for centuries. Today it is still possible to experience a kind

of peaceful atmosphere and spiritual harmony on its streets, still anchored in the era of the splendor of the Road. The Cathedral and the Convent of San Francisco are not to be missed.

Day 4: S. DOMINGO - CARRIÓN DE LOS CONDES:

Hotel Real Monasterio de San Zoilo***

Breakfast. Drive along the Road for the next stage of the journey. This time, a 10th century monastery full of history, today converted into a comfortable hotel, awaits. This hotel-monastery has preserved the Renaissance-era cloister, sacristy, choir and the sepulchers where the Princes and Counts of Carrión are buried. The town was of great importance in the old days of pilgrimages to Santiago de Compostela. Its medieval origins can be seen in some of the historic buildings and especially in the old town. Situated in the middle of a religious route of such importance, it is no surprise that many of the buildings are also of extraordinary religious and architectural relevance.

Day 5: CARRIÓN DE LOS CONDES - LEÓN:

Parador Hostel of San Marcos****GL

Breakfast. Driving the Road on this 5th day will deliver you to León, former capital of the ancient Kingdom of León. Again, another monastery, this time belonging to the Order of Knights of Santiago, famous crusaders in the defense of Christianity and the Sacred Lands during the Middle Ages. The Parador transmits the majestic serenity of the past, and era of stronger convictions and beliefs, as if to suggest to the traveler that he is not far from the end of his Road. The city of León is magnificent, with its many monuments and buildings. Talk about a glorious past! The spectacular Gothic Cathedral, the noble houses and squares, the Jewish and Roman legacies...

Day 6: LEÓN - VILLAFRANCA DEL BIERZO:

Parador of Villafranca***

Breakfast. Following the Road, this stage will lead to Villafranca, still in the lands of the former Kingdom of León approaching the Galician border. The Parador is located at the entrance of the town, in the upper part, with a well-kept and spacious

entrance from the Road, which continues across the village in direction of Santiago. The city center of Villafranca, whose name means "Village of the French" due to the many French pilgrims that decided to stay and begin a new life here, was declared a Historical-Artistic Ensemble of National Interest site because of the many historic and well-preserved buildings from the 10th to 19th centuries. Many noble houses, churches of different architectural styles, former pilgrims' hospitals, palaces and convents stand as testimony to its past importance.

Day 7: VILLAFRANCA - SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA:

Parador Los Reyes Católicos****GL

Breakfast. Drive to the end of the Road: the splendid Santiago, where the remains of the Apostle are said to rest. As a ritual, many curious tourists, believers, travelers or simply anyone fascinated by the charm of this place, visit the breathtaking Cathedral, the tomb and the historic town. Even without the Parador, an attraction in itself, the environment is captivating. Behind us are the many marvels that The Road has shown us, encouraging us at every corner to reach our final destination, to arrive in the Holy City. Many believe that the real End of the Road is in fact a bit further along, amid the rough cliffs of the Galician Coast, where that piece of land sits that the Romans called Finisterre, Latin for the End of The Earth.

Day 8: SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA:

Parador of Los Reyes Católicos****GL

Breakfast. Free day to enjoy the fascinating city or to visit the small villages of the Galician Coast (Rías Baixas), whose air is constantly purified by the refreshing breeze that comes in from the Atlantic.

Day 9: SANTIAGO - MADRID - UNITED STATES

Breakfast. Drop off the vehicle at the airport and return to the United States via Madrid.

