



## THE PILGRIM'S WAY

### FOLLOWING THE CAMINO DE SANTIAGO FROM BILBAO TO SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA

**MAY 30<sup>TH</sup> - JUNE 8<sup>TH</sup> 2023**

In AD 1095, when a pilgrimage to Jerusalem became impossible during the First Crusade, the best alternative to guarantee a remission of half your time in purgatory was a trip to Santiago de Compostela in northwest Spain. This route became known as the Pilgrim's Way or the Way of St. James.

Chaucer's Wife of Bath went there and obviously enjoyed the experience as she then chose to go on a second pilgrimage to Canterbury. But it wasn't just a reduction of time in purgatory that made people take to the road on pilgrimages: social fashion, adventure, the opportunity to find a partner in marriage, or just company and good food (and sometimes even crime), were all lures which attracted people to set off. In fact, many of these are the same attractions and reasons why people go on tours today!

In more recent times, it has again become very popular to trace the ancient caminos (trails) to Santiago either by foot, horseback, pedal power or if none of those appeal, by motorized transport. Discover Europe's Gavin Miller has designed a tour following one of the east-west caminos, which we join just east of Burgos in northern Spain. Along the way we will have the opportunity to see some of the most exquisite medieval architecture ever built, both religious and secular. The stained glass windows in Leon cathedral are a must-see for any traveler.

Join us this spring for an opportunity to walk the section of the camino just before our arrival in Santiago. As always each day will reveal hidden treasures and unexpected adventures, set against a backdrop of stunning landscapes. With any luck, we will see some fabulous wildlife too.



SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA CATHEDRAL



SANTO DOMINGO DE SILOS

#### THE COST OF THIS ITINERARY, PER PERSON, DOUBLE OCCUPANCY IS:

LAND ONLY (NO AIRFARE INCLUDED):      \$ 3980  
SINGLE SUPPLEMENT:                              \$ 690

*Airfares are available from most U.S. departure cities. Please call for details.*

#### THE FOLLOWING SERVICES ARE INCLUDED:

- HOTELS:** 8 nights' accommodation in first-class hotels including all hotel taxes and service charges
- COACHING:** All ground transportation as detailed in the itinerary
- MEALS:** Breakfast daily, 7 dinners
- GUIDES:** Discover Europe tour director, Gavin Miller, throughout
- BAGGAGE:** Porterage of one large suitcase per person
- ENTRANCES:** Entrance fees to all sites included in the itinerary

*Please note that travel insurance is not included on this tour.  
Insurance information will be mailed to each registration on receipt of deposit.*





**TUESDAY, MAY 30<sup>TH</sup>** - Evening departure from your U.S. gateway city.  
**OVERNIGHT: PLANE**

**WEDNESDAY, MAY 31<sup>ST</sup>** - You will be met on your arrival at Bilbao Airport and transferred to our country hotel outside the city. There will be time to unpack and relax before a welcome dinner at the hotel this evening. **(D) OVERNIGHT: BILBAO**

**THURSDAY, JUNE 1<sup>ST</sup>** - This morning we head east to the 800 year old village of St Jean Pie de Port, just across the French border in the Pyrenean foothills and the starting point of the pilgrimage for the majority of pilgrims. Along the way, we will visit Guernica, the town annihilated by Hitler's Condor Legion during the Spanish Civil War. Continuing along the rugged Biscay coast, we will stop for lunch in San Sebastián. In St Jean, there will time to stroll the Rue D'Espagne and mingle with the pilgrims as they rest and

prepare for the 500 mile trek to Santiago de Compostela. We return to our hotel for dinner. **(B, D) OVERNIGHT: BILBAO**

**FRIDAY, JUNE 2<sup>ND</sup>** - A full morning in the centre of Bilbao to enjoy Frank Gehry's stunning Guggenheim Museum and admire the miraculous transformation of what used to be the industrial heartland of the Basque Lands - the quayside of the Nervion river. After lunch, we will head south through the Rioja wine region. Before entering the medieval city of Burgos, we will join the Camino for the first of our short walks, San Juan de Ortega to Ages, approximately 4 kilometers. We will dine tonight in the Plaza Rey San Fernando, next to the Cathedral. **(B, D) OVERNIGHT: BURGOS**

**SATURDAY, JUNE 3<sup>RD</sup>** - Today's excursion takes us southeast of Burgos. Our first stop is at Covarrubias, a superbly preserved medieval town. The streets are lined with half timbered houses, with shady arcades and the remnants of medieval fortifications, including a tenth-century tower. We continue on to the Benedictine Abbey of Santo Domingo de Silos, one of Spain's greatest Christian monuments. The jewel of the complex is the two story, 11<sup>th</sup>-century, Romanesque cloister, with pillars decorated with life size reliefs, including Christ on the road to Emmaus, dressed as a pilgrim to Santiago. After lunch we'll visit the Gorges of Yecla. We'll take a short walk along this dramatic gorge and have a chance to see the circling birds of prey high above us. If time permits, we'll also stop in Quintanilla to visit the incredible 8<sup>th</sup>-century, Visigothic hermitage of Santa Maria. The evening is free in Burgos. **(B) OVERNIGHT: BURGOS**



ASTORGA, THE BISHOP'S PALACE

**SUNDAY, JUNE 4<sup>TH</sup>** - Leaving Burgos, we continue along the line of the Camino, stopping at Villacazar de Sirga to visit a Knights Templar Church. The Templars originally came into existence to guard and protect the pilgrimage routes all over the Mediterranean. On arrival in Leon, we will explore the center of town; the Casa Botines, built by Antoni Gaudi, and of course the cathedral with its beautiful stained glass windows, Romanesque wall paintings, and historic Royal Pantheon. Tonight we will stay at the Posada del Marques just outside Leon. The posada is a converted pilgrim's hospital with a delightful garden reminiscent of an English rectory! Dinner is included at the hotel this evening. **(B, D) OVERNIGHT: CARRIZO DE LA RIBERA**

**MONDAY, JUNE 5<sup>TH</sup>** - This morning, there will be an excursion to Astorga. Astorga was originally settled by the Romans, sacked by the Moors, and then rebuilt as a pilgrim town in the Middle Ages. It is now a provincial capital boasting an excellent museum of the Camino. The museum offers all sorts of curios and sidelights on the story of the pilgrimage. A visit to the cathedral and Bishop's Palace will be followed by an early return to the Posada del Marques for free time to relax and enjoy the gardens before dinner. **(B, D) OVERNIGHT: CARRIZO DE LA RIBERA**

**TUESDAY, JUNE 6<sup>TH</sup>** - We leave the province of Leon this morning and head into Galicia. Not only is Galicia often compared to Ireland for its scenery and climate, but its culture is set deep in its Celtic past. First, a stop at Ponferrada, an old mining town with an exquisite old town center dominated by a Templar castle. Lunch will be in the picturesque village of Cebreiro; a wonderful example of a traditional Galician mountain settlement with its pallozas (thatched houses) surrounding a 9<sup>th</sup>-century church. This afternoon, we will visit the Monasterio de Samos, famous in the Middle Ages for its exceptional library, and we'll arrive in the late afternoon at our rural pazo just outside Santiago. Dinner is at the hotel this evening. **(B, D) OVERNIGHT: PAZO CIBRÁN**



BURGOS CATHEDRAL

**WEDNESDAY, JUNE 7<sup>TH</sup>** - To complete our journey we head to Lavacolla - and walk (optional) the penultimate leg of the pilgrimage. It is three miles from Lavacolla to Monte de Gozo (Mount of Joy), where the pilgrims were once rewarded with their first view of the cathedral spires of Santiago de Compostela. Lavacolla was where the pilgrims washed themselves in the river to prepare for their arrival at the cathedral. For many it was the first proper wash in months! The rest of the day will be spent in the heart of the old town of Santiago. A visit to the cathedral will be followed by free time to explore the surrounding district with its museums and warren of medieval squares and alleys. This evening we'll gather for a farewell dinner. **(B, D) OVERNIGHT: PAZO CIBRÁN**

**THURSDAY, JUNE 8<sup>TH</sup>** - Morning transfer to Santiago Airport for returning flights to the US. **(B)**

Key to included meals: B - breakfast, D - dinner