

SPAIN: CAMINO DE SANTIAGO

# Guest Handbook

A Self-Guided Walking Adventure





# Table of Contents

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Daily Itinerary .....	4
Tour Facts at a Glance.....	13
Traveling To and From Your Tour .....	17
Information & Policies .....	22
Spain at a Glance.....	26
Packing List .....	31

## Travel Style

Our Self-Guided Walking Adventures are ideal for travelers with an independent spirit who enjoy exploring at their own pace. We provide authentic accommodations, luggage transfers, and some meals, along with comprehensive Route Notes, detailed maps, and 24-hour emergency assistance. This gives you the freedom to focus on the things that matter to you—no group, no guide, and no set schedule to stand in the way of enjoying your adventure, your way.



## Overview

This unique itinerary was carefully crafted to walk the highlights of the Camino de Santiago—the Way of St. James—the ancient pilgrims’ route to the city of Santiago de Compostela in Spain’s northwestern corner. From all over Europe, a network of pathways led to the medieval “ends of the earth” where the remains of St. James were brought, one of Christianity’s earliest and most important pilgrimages. Your route is a condensed version of the Camino Francés—the French Way that traces 500 miles from the Pyrenees on the border of France and Spain through seven Spanish provinces. Each footstep touches history on this legendary trail—including medieval monasteries and the UNESCO World Heritage sites of the cathedrals of Burgos and Santiago—and traverses diverse landscapes of Basque mountain villages, the vineyards of Rioja, hilltop towns of Castile and León, and the lush pastures of Galicia. Spanish hospitality, always gracious, is heightened by camaraderie along the Way—inviting inns, a resort, and boutique hotels are combined in a deluxe inn-to-inn experience, along with some of Spain’s freshest local food and wine.



## Daily Itinerary

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### DAY 1

Arrival in Pamplona. Transfer to Roncesvalles. Orientation meeting en route to or upon arrival at your hotel

You are met in Pamplona by a representative who transports you northwest to the tiny town of Roncesvalles, nestled just under the Ibañeta Pass, the crossing of the Pyrenees between France and Spain. A feeling of anticipation and excitement is palpable in this hamlet that was purpose-built as a waypoint on the Camino: this is the first stop in Spain for those pilgrims, *peregrinos* in Spanish, who began the Camino Francés in St. Jean Pied de Port, France. Surrounded by tranquil forest, the route actually passes through your historic hotel complex, a former ecclesiastical residence. In addition to its significance with the Camino, Roncesvalles was also the site of the battle between Charlemagne and the Basque tribes who defeated him and killed the legendary Roland in 778.

### Overnight in Roncesvalles



## DAY 2

Roncesvalles to Bizkarreta; 7.2 miles, easy to moderate, 450-ft. elevation gain and 900-ft. elevation loss

After a copious buffet breakfast, your first steps on the Camino de Santiago literally start at your hotel and lead out through the hamlet of Roncesvalles.

With the Pyrenees and the French–Spanish border at your back, the walk descends gradually throughout the day from its starting elevation of 3,000 feet to the town of Bizkarreta, the walk's end at about 2,500 feet. Passing through a mixed forest and by a Gothic pilgrim's cross, in a few miles you emerge at the tiny town of Burguete, one main street of Basque-influenced sturdy beamed houses. This is the trout fishing area that Hemingway described in *The Sun Also Rises*. Although you are officially in the Navarra region of Spain, the heavy stone architecture, traditions, and language are strongly influenced by the Basque region to the north and west. You finally come to the town of Bizkarreta, which in the 12th century had a pilgrims' hostel and was a Camino stopping point, before a 30-minute transfer to your night's lodging in the vibrant city of Pamplona. With an intriguing old quarter, lovely parks, and main square, the capital of Navarra is of course best known for the running of the bulls through its historic center, which takes place during the San Fermín festival in mid-July.

## Overnight in Pamplona

## DAY 3

Uterga to Cirauqui; 9.2 miles, easy to moderate, 700-ft. elevation gain and loss

A 20-minute transfer takes you to the start of the day's walk in the town of Uterga. You're still not far from the Pyrenees, but you have passed from an Atlantic-influenced geography to a more Mediterranean feel of open vistas with olive groves and vineyards. The peaceful small towns you walk through today are built of the region's golden stone, in the late summer matching the hue of the grain fields nearby. From Uterga you come into the village of Muruzábal with its Baroque-era palace, now a wine cellar. Crossing some quiet roads, you enter Puente La Reina, the day's recommended lunch spot, with its 11th-century Romanesque six-arched bridge, built specifically for pilgrims to cross the Arga





River. The route departs the town past the 13th-century Santiago church and follows along the right bank of the Arga. After the wine town of Mañeru, one of the Camino's most picturesque views opens up—a trail winding up through vineyards to the hilltop medieval town of Cirauqui. A short and steep ascent leads to the ancient walls surrounding the town and you make your way the San

Román church. In Cirauqui, a peaceful, authentic place, there is time for refreshment, perhaps at a small bar, as you await your transfer toward the wine-producing region of La Rioja.

### **Overnight in Briñas, Villabuena de Álava, Ábalos, or Santo Domingo de la Calzada**

#### **DAY 4**

Ermita de Valdefuentes to Ages; 6.3 miles, easy to moderate, 160-ft. elevation gain and 250-ft. elevation loss

This morning an hour transfer brings you to start of the day's walk at a hermitage just off the main Camino path. A gentle climb on a gravel trail soon transitions to a wide, packed forest road. In the past, this remote and isolated wooded plateau was one of the Camino's most dangerous sections—now this forest of pine and oak, habitat of deer, wild boar, and raptors, is a tranquil haven. The route continues past the 11th-century monastery complex of San Juan de Ortega, and then into a forest before arriving at the traditional town of Agés. Nearby is the archaeological site of Atapuerca, recently designated a UNESCO World Heritage site, containing evidence—fossils and stone tools—of the earliest known Hominins in Western Europe, dating to an estimated 1.2 million years ago, and predating the French site of Lascaux. There is time to learn more about this site tomorrow. A short transfer takes you to the medieval historic heart of Burgos, where you refresh at your hotel before strolling out to choose from the city's many dining options and sample the traditional cuisine of the Castile and León region.

## Overnight in Burgos

### DAY 5

Castrojeriz to Itero de la Vega; 6.9 miles, easy to moderate, 450-ft. elevation gain and 500-ft. elevation loss

This morning you are free to explore the culturally rich city of Burgos, integral to many key events in Spanish history.

Most of the city's sites can be reached easily on foot from your hotel in the picturesque old quarter. Serving for five centuries as the capital of the joint kingdom of Castile and León, Burgos was long an important stop on the Camino and is also home to one of the jewels of Spanish Gothic art, the Cathedral of Santa María, also a World Heritage site and well worth visiting. Another Gothic architectural gem is the Palace of the Constables of Castile—or, in Spanish, *Casa del Cordón*—where Columbus was received by the king after his second voyage to the Americas. A visit to the Museum of Human Evolution is a must (closed on Monday), especially to learn more about the nearby prehistoric archaeological finds of Atapuerca through fascinating state-of-the-art exhibits (in English). Burgos is also the home town of “El Cid,” the 11th-century warrior and Spanish national hero, who is memorialized on a mounted statue. After this morning's explorations and lunch, you transfer 45 minutes farther along the Camino, where you begin the day's walk at Castrojeriz. This last town in Burgos province was also an important waypoint along the Camino, and once the site of several pilgrim hostels; its hilltop castle ruins attest to its long history. The route this afternoon involves a moderate climb and descent, and features wide-open scenery, with windmills on the far horizon. You make your way to the hamlet of Itero de la Vega, where you are met and transferred about 30 minutes to your home for the evening.

## Overnight in Villoldo or Fromista

### DAY 6

Villares de Orbigo to Astorga; 9.2 miles, easy to moderate, 650-ft. elevation gain and 550-ft. elevation loss

A delicious breakfast of homemade baked goods and jams fuels the day—which begins with a 75-90-minute transfer to the trailhead—and the picnic lunch from





the kitchen of your last hotel will also be a treat. You enter yet another one of the varied regions on the itinerary—the terrain here has a more Mediterranean feel, with an underlying geology of red stone that supports vineyards and forests of conifers and oak. The oak translates into delicious local hams, as acorns are the preferred diet of pigs. Setting off from the village of Villares de Orbigo,

your route leads you through agricultural land to the village of Santibañez. A rolling path ensues through oak and chestnut forest, leading you to the flat top of the range where you are rewarded with views to the north as far as the Cantabrian range. Passing the house of one of the Camino’s modern “hermits,” you soon reach the cross of Saint Turibius, the region’s 5th-century bishop, before descending toward San Justo de la Vega and making your way toward the city of Astorga. In addition to Roman ruins and a fine cathedral, Astorga is perhaps best known for containing one of only three buildings designed by Catalan architect Antoni Gaudí outside Catalonia. The Episcopal Palace was built between 1889 and 1913 and is an example of Gaudí’s distinctive Catalan Modernism style.

### Overnight in Luyego de Somoza or Astorga

#### DAY 7

Las Herrerías to O Cebreiro; 5.3 miles, moderate, 2,000-ft. elevation gain

A transfer of about two hours brings you west again today to the walk’s start in the hamlet of Las Herrerías, and just past it the Barrio de Hospital, which housed a medieval hospital for English pilgrims. As you move toward Galicia, the landscape takes on a more “Celtic” feel; leaving behind Mediterranean vegetation, you are entering countryside that evokes the British Isles—verdant pastures and ancient stones of gray granite. Most of the day’s walk is a long uphill, a challenging but important stage for all pilgrims as it leads to the long-awaited for province of Galicia. You are able to warm up on the paved flat terrain of the lush valley alongside a bubbling stream, before beginning the steady ascent. Camaraderie and excitement also grow steadily amongst walkers on this wooded path bordered by moss-covered stone walls and shaded by chestnut trees. After the village of La Faba, where you may choose to have lunch



or a drink, the wooded area transitions to wide-open vistas of the forests along the Atlantic coast. The ascent eases up as you reach the village of Laguna de Castilla, also with a bar and hotel, and soon after, you cross the border from the province of León into Galicia. You are rewarded at the conclusion of the walk at the town of O Cebreiro with wonderful open views over Galicia, as well as the Royal Saint Mary's Church, built on the foundations of a pre-Romanesque church. Predating the Camino was a Roman road, and even earlier than that, the *pallozas*—prehistoric stone homes—you see nearby. Your drive down from O Cebreiro toward your next accommodation provides stunning views of the mountains of León, which, depending on the season, might be snowcapped.



## Overnight in Lugo or Sarria

### DAY 8

Sarria to Ferreiros; 8.1 miles, easy to moderate, 1,000-ft. elevation gain and 150-ft. elevation loss

Although it's your final stage on the Camino de Santiago, for many pilgrims this is their first. From the day's starting point in Sarria, it is 100 kilometers to Santiago de Compostela—the minimum distance completed consecutively to achieve the “Compostela,” the official certification of completion of the pilgrimage. Pilgrims have their Camino “passports” stamped along the way at the major local churches or official hostels. You're likely to meet many walkers and pilgrims today—people from around the globe sharing this long walk and truly creating a unique camaraderie. You begin on the main street and encounter steep stairs that bring you to the town center and the hilltop Convent of Magdalena, dating from the 15th to 18th centuries. The Way then descends to the Rio Pequeño, which you cross over via the medieval Ponte Áspera bridge, and continues through fertile pasture and small vegetable plots. Depending on the season, in Peruscallo you may be able to buy fresh berries from nearby small farms. Your driver meets you in the town of Ferreiros, allowing you to avoid outlying neighborhoods and bringing you into the final stage just at the edge of the city of Santiago de Compostela. You are dropped off at your hotel, where



you can refresh before setting off again to find the trail of scallop shells embedded in the cobbled streets, flanked by stone archways, until you arrive at the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela—a breathtaking sight both in its grandeur and in the sense of overwhelming accomplishment it inspires in the walkers and pilgrims who have arrived here from the many Camino routes. The *peregrinos'*

final steps lead to the statue of Saint James at the cathedral entrance. You may choose to attend an evening pilgrim mass, although the famous *botafumeiro*—a Galician term for the large incensory suspended from the ceiling—is only used on special occasions. Construction of this cathedral, a UNESCO World Heritage site, began in 1075 over the remains of a pre-Romanesque church. Expansion and embellishment continued from the 16th through the 18th centuries as the cathedral gained importance as an Episcopal see and place of pilgrimage—the third-most-important destination for Christians after Rome and Jerusalem. After the excitement, you might be ready to retire at your hotel in a quiet neighborhood of the historic district. A celebratory drink is in order—the final punctuation to completing a truly fascinating walk through living and ancient history. You can step out later for dinner in Santiago, exploring its intriguing medieval streets and enticing restaurants.

## Overnight in Santiago de Compostela

### DAY 9

#### Departure from Santiago de Compostela

After breakfast at your hotel, you can depart at your leisure; however it is highly recommended that you spend an additional day or two in this fabulous city. If your schedule permits, you may want to explore the cathedral museum, the open-air market, or join the 12:00 p.m. pilgrim mass (arrive early!). You might complete your journey with another exclusive experience by joining a guided tour of the cathedral rooftops.

## ITINERARY CHANGES

Please bear in mind that this is a typical itinerary, and the actual activities, sites, and accommodations may vary due to season, special events, weather, or transportation schedules. We reserve the right to alter the itinerary, since tour arrangements are made up to a year in advance and unforeseen circumstances may arise that mandate change. Itinerary changes are made to improve the tour and your experience.

## A NOTE ABOUT TRANSFERS

The Camino de Santiago itinerary has been designed to capture the highlights of this well-known pilgrimage route that in total extends over 500 miles in northern Spain. In order to cover this distance over seven diverse regions, focus on the key cultural and historic locales, and stay in perfectly paired accommodations, daily transfers have been integrated to transport you to each walk's start and from each walk's end. Ranging from 20 minutes to two hours, the scheduled transfers allow you time to see even more of the countryside and—combined with Spain's long days—still permit a very relaxed schedule. Please note that our local drivers may only have a limited command of English. While they are friendly and professional, they are by no means intended to be your guides. Country Walkers assures you that the tour logistics have been carefully crafted to bring you a unique experience, achieving a balance between prime walking, accommodation, and dining and a minimum of driving as well as ample free time over the entire length of this historic route. Therefore, the transfers, which are scheduled well in advance, cannot be changed while on tour.

## A NOTE ABOUT THE “COMPOSTELA”

According to the pilgrim's office, the requirements to be eligible for the “Compostela,” the official certification of completion of the pilgrimage, is to walk (or ride a horse) the last 100 km (or bike the last 200 km) of the pilgrimage route, continuously. In other words, one must complete stages 27 through 31 from around Sarria to Santiago de Compostela on foot, which takes approximately 5 days. A system of passport and stamps is in place to assist pilgrims in finding affordable accommodations: being in possession of a passport with stamps allows pilgrims to get preferential rates at the *albergues* along the way and some *albergues* only host pilgrims with a passport. The passport and stamps are also a way for pilgrims to track their journey and show the passport officials that they have met the requirements to obtain the “Compostela” when arriving in Santiago. Pilgrims can obtain a passport at the

passport office next door to the hotel in Roncesvalles; however, given the true purpose of the passport and stamps, they are not freely given to any visitor to the region. Stamps are collected along the way, in churches, police stations or hostels. When getting closer to Santiago, stamps are given in more locations with less strict requirements. **Please note that the Country Walkers itinerary offers an immersive perspective on this fascinating route but does not meet the requirements, and cannot be altered, to obtain either the passport, stamps, or the “Compostela.”**

## RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL

Country Walkers is a leader in active travel with responsible tourism an integral part of our core values. Our tours reflect our dedication to best travel practices—and to the preservation of indigenous cultures and the environment. Country Walkers has made a donation on behalf of every traveler to the CW Travelers Fund, which supports designated projects in the communities and habitats in which we travel. We invite you to learn more about our efforts and initiatives for giving back at [countrywalkers.com/sustainable-travel](https://countrywalkers.com/sustainable-travel).

Here’s just one example that highlights our sustainable practices:

**Assisting Pilgrims on The Way:** Every year, over 200,000 pilgrims walk the various routes of the Camino de Santiago. Coming from all corners of the world—with diverse needs, expectations, and reasons for walking—these travelers require lots of care from their host country. The Federación Española de Asociaciones de Amigos del Camino de Santiago (Spanish Federation of Associations of Friends of the Camino de Santiago) coordinates a vast national network of hostels, volunteers, parishes, churches, and shelters in an effort to keep pilgrims safe, healthy, and informed about their journey. Along with organizing and managing shelters along the many routes, they train volunteers, petition for the upkeep of sections of the path, and produce publications relating to The Way. Country Walkers is proud to support the Burgos Association of Friends of the Camino de Santiago and their efforts on behalf of every Camino de Santiago guest.

# Tour Facts at a Glance

## TOUR LENGTH

9 days, 8 nights

## DEPARTURES

This tour is available daily, on request, from April 1 through June 30 and from September 1 through October 31, 2019. Please note that the tiered tour price is based on a guarantee of a specified number of guests—should your group decrease in size, we reserve the right to alter the per person price if necessary as reflected in the Tour Price table. Please also note that the tour price includes one arrival transfer from Pamplona to Hotel Roncesvalles on Day 1 of the tour. If traveling in a group of two or more with separate arrival times, additional charges will apply for multiple transfers. Please note that the Museum of Human Evolution (including the Atapuerca Exhibit) in Burgos is closed on Mondays. Please request a non-Thursday departure date should you wish to visit this museum.

## TOUR PRICE

2019 departures	Per person 2 guests	Per person 3–5 guests	Per person 6+ guests	Single+	Solo Surcharge
Apr 1– Apr 30	\$4,298	\$3,798	\$3,598	\$750	\$1,830
May 1– Jun 30	\$4,498	\$3,998	\$3,798	\$750	\$1,830
Sep 1– Sep 30	\$4,498	\$3,998	\$3,798	\$750	\$1,830
Oct 1– Oct 31	\$4,298	\$3,798	\$3,598	\$750	\$1,830



## STARTING POINT

**Pamplona, Spain** (Pamplona Train Station, Pamplona Airport, or city hotel)  
**Based upon individual arrival times**

## ENDING POINT

**Santiago de Compostela, Spain** (Night 8 hotel)  
**After breakfast**

## ACTIVITY LEVEL

This tour is one of our Self-Guided Walking Adventures, rated easy to moderate, with an average of 5 to 9 miles per day and no options. The terrain includes minimal elevation gains and losses, except for three days, with 700-, 1,000-, and 2,000-foot ascents. Walks are on extremely well-maintained, wide trails, sometimes paved, but most often on packed dirt or gravel paths, with occasional loose rocks. From the French border to Santiago de Compostela, the diverse inn-to-inn itinerary selects highlights of the entire “Camino Francés” of the St. James Way, including seven separate Spanish provinces with widely varying scenery: the Pyrenees, Atlantic-influenced forests, limestone-capped vineyards of the Rioja region, the open plains of Castile and León, and the verdant pastures and gray stone of Galicia. Thanks to daily transfers ranging from 30 minutes to 2 hours, this tour is a literal walk through history with a unique camaraderie shared by fellow pilgrims. Each step reveals medieval towns, cities, churches, monuments, and UNESCO World Heritage sites such as the cathedrals in Burgos and Santiago and the prehistoric site of Atapuerca. Additionally, Spain’s long days allow ample time for exploration as well as relaxation. **Remember: preparation is the key to ensuring your tour readiness; the more you walk or participate in aerobic exercise prior to your trip, the more you will enjoy your experience!**

## INCLUSIONS

- » Breakfast daily, three lunches (days 2, 4, 6), and four dinners (days 1, 3, 5, and 6); beverages not included
- » All accommodations while on tour
- » Local transfers as noted in the itinerary
- » Luggage transfers between the hotels
- » Detailed water- and tear-resistant Route Notes and maps
- » 24-hour tour-related support provided by Country Walkers’ local partner

- » 24-hour travel-related support provided by One Call International Emergency Hotline and Travel Assistance
- » Orientation meeting with a Country Walkers representative
- » The unbeatable and cumulative experience of the Country Walkers staff

## **LET THE JOURNEY BEGIN**

Prior to your adventure you will receive:

### **Within 24 hours of reservation confirmation:**

A Confirmation Email with a link to our online guest portal, My Account, which allows you to view important information and manage parts of your account online. Similar to other web-based portals you may already use for online banking or shopping, My Account will let you:

- a. View your active reservations.
- b. Make a payment.
- c. Access the latest version of your reservation invoice.
- d. Access your guest profile where you'll be able to update essential information and preferences (passport information, important dietary considerations, allergies, etc.).
- e. Ensure that your contact information is the most up to date (name, address, phone number, email).
- f. Provide us with your tour arrival and departure details so that we may arrange any included arrival and departure transfers and/or orientation meetings.

### **One day following reservation confirmation:**

An Online Participation Agreement Form to sign and submit (emailed).

### **Within one week of reservation confirmation:**

- a. Your reservation invoice (emailed).
- b. Welcome Documents including your specific dated Hotel Itinerary and this Guest Handbook (emailed).

### **Approximately one month prior to departure:**

Your Travel Documents including the following items (mailed):

- a. Printed water- and tear-resistant Route Notes (day-to-day walking directions and maps; emergency contact information; detailed daily itinerary; information regarding included meals, transfers, and daily logistics; restaurant recommendations for non-included meals;

town maps; and information regarding optional activities and transportation).

- b. Printed Travel Documents (your specific dated Hotel Itinerary, Daily Itinerary Overview, and—if included—Arrival & Departure Transfers Overview).
- c. Luggage tags.

## **GRATUITIES**

Standard gratuities for all hotels, meals, and services that are included in your tour price will be paid by Country Walkers; however additional tips are always welcomed, especially by your driver(s); 5–10 euros per day / per couple would be appropriate. Should you wish to tip for meals or services not included in the cost of the tour, please do so at your discretion; further information is provided in the Tour Facts at a Glance section of this itinerary. Local currency is preferred.

# Traveling To and From Your Tour

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## STARTING POINT

**Pamplona, Spain** (Pamplona Train Station, Pamplona Airport, or city hotel)

### **Based upon individual arrival times**

A tour representative will meet you at the Pamplona train station, airport, or a city hotel (holding a sign with Country Walkers and/or your name on it) and transfer you 45 minutes to the first hotel in Roncesvalles. The tour representative will provide an orientation, ensure you are comfortably settled, and answer any questions you may have.

**In order to arrange your arrival transfer and orientation meeting, please provide us with your arrival and departure details at least 45 days prior to departure through our online portal, My Account. (A Confirmation Email with a link to My Account will be sent to you within 24 hours of reservation confirmation.)**

Please note that the tour price includes one arrival transfer from Pamplona to Hotel Roncesvalles on Day 1 of the tour. If traveling in a group of two or more with separate arrival times, additional charges will apply for multiple transfers.

## MOST CONVENIENT AIRPORTS

Pamplona Airport (PNA), Pamplona, Spain *(no direct flights from the U.S.)*

**[aena.es/csee/Satellite/Aeropuerto-Pamplona/en/](https://aena.es/csee/Satellite/Aeropuerto-Pamplona/en/)**

Or Madrid Airport Barajas (MAD), Madrid, Spain

**[madrid-airport.info](https://madrid-airport.info) or [aena.es/csee/Satellite/Aeropuerto-Madrid-Barajas/en/](https://aena.es/csee/Satellite/Aeropuerto-Madrid-Barajas/en/)**

Or Barcelona-El Prat Airport (BCN), Barcelona, Spain

**[barcelona-airport.com](https://barcelona-airport.com) or [aena.es/csee/Satellite/Aeropuerto-Barcelona/en/](https://aena.es/csee/Satellite/Aeropuerto-Barcelona/en/)**

## GETTING TO THE STARTING POINT

Direct flights from the U.S. to Barcelona or Madrid are available on several major airlines. From these airports, the most convenient way to travel to the tour starting point is by train.

### From Madrid:

If arriving at Madrid Airport Barajas, you may either take a taxi (approximately 30 minutes) or take the local train (approximately 25 minutes) from Terminal 4 (T4) to Puerta de Atocha train station, where trains to Pamplona depart several times per day. The journey to Pamplona takes 3 to 4 hours.

### From Barcelona:

If arriving at Barcelona-El Prat Airport, take the airport shuttle to Terminal 2 (T2) and follow the signs for RENFE. The journey by train to Barcelona Sants station takes approximately 25 minutes. Or you may take a taxi (approximately 20-30 minutes; available just outside the arrivals terminal) to Barcelona Sants, where direct trains depart regularly to Pamplona depart every 2 to 3 hours. The journey to Pamplona takes just under 4 hours.

If you plan on spending pre-tour time in Barcelona, you may take the Aerobus from Terminal 1 or 2, which departs every 5 minutes for the city center (Plaça Catalunya). The bus stops at the most strategic points in Barcelona: Plaça Espanya, Gran Via-Urgell, Plaça Universidad and runs every day of the year. The journey takes 35 minutes. Please visit [aerobusbcn.com](http://aerobusbcn.com) for more information or to buy tickets online.

## RAIL INFORMATION

We recommend making train reservations in advance for major train routes. In Spain, train tickets usually go on sale at least three months before the date of travel. For further rail information, including reservations, up-to-date schedules, and fares, please visit one of the following websites:

**RENFE (Spanish Rail official site): [renfe.es](http://renfe.es).** While Spanish trains in general are a pleasure to ride and most travelers encounter few problems once actually on them, the national train company's own website has proven difficult to use for foreign travelers, including past CW guests. Foreign credit cards are declined on a random basis, the site is incompletely translated, and there are plenty of error messages and failures that may force you to restart your search.



**Trainline: [trainline.eu](https://www.trainline.eu).** This sharply designed powerhouse is a staff favorite for buying train tickets for Spain—and perhaps most importantly it offers exactly the same prices as when purchasing from the official Renfe site. Trainline is easy to use: the site is in English, it accepts foreign credit cards, is smooth and functional, and offers quality customer support, easy cancellations, and preference of seats and class. With Trainline, you print your tickets at home (recommended) or else in the station itself at a ticket kiosk using your booking reference.

**RailEurope: [raileurope.com](https://www.raileurope.com).** This U.S.-based retailer with award-winning localized customer care also offers an easy, user-friendly way for North Americans to purchase tickets for train travel in Europe. With RailEurope, you can have physical tickets mailed to you before your trip but you also have the option (in some, *but not all* cases) to print your own tickets, print an e-ticket at the self-service kiosk in the train station, or have an e-ticket sent to your phone. Please note; however, that RailEurope charges steep fees and doesn't always list all the available rail journeys.

## PRE-TOUR ACCOMMODATIONS

We suggest arriving in Spain at least one day early in order to recover from jet lag and feel more refreshed by the time of the tour start. You may want to stay in Barcelona or Madrid and explore these fascinating cities. For hotel, restaurant, and sightseeing suggestions, please visit the following websites:

**[barcelonaturisme.com](https://www.barcelonaturisme.com) or [turismomadrid.es/en/](https://turismomadrid.es/en/).**

Should you wish to spend a pre-tour night in Pamplona, you may wish to stay at Palacio Guendulain, our standard hotel for the second night of the tour. Country Walkers would be happy to make a reservation here on your behalf. Please contact us to request this service as soon as possible to ensure availability. The cost of \$220 USD per double-for-single use room (subject to change) or \$260 USD per double or twin room (subject to change), including tax and breakfast, is payable directly to Country Walkers and is due with your final payment 90 days prior to departure. Our normal cancellation policy applies. These rooms are reserved as a service for you and include a service charge. Better rates may be available online; however, please note that if you make your reservation directly with the hotel, you may not be able to secure the same room as assigned to you for the night on tour (Country Walkers uses Classic Rooms).

## ENDING POINT

**Santiago de Compostela, Spain** (Night 8 hotel)

### After breakfast

There are no walks scheduled for the last day of the tour. You may depart the final hotel after breakfast and prior to the hotel's checkout time of 12:00 p.m. The hotel staff can assist with any taxi transfers you may require.

Depending upon your destination, it may not be possible to depart for the U.S. on the last day of the tour. Please check airline schedules carefully. If you plan to schedule return flights immediately following the tour's conclusion, please call your airline directly for specific check-in requirements.

## MOST CONVENIENT AIRPORT

Labacolla Airport (SCQ), Santiago de Compostela, Spain

[aena.es/csee/Satellite/Aeropuerto-Santiago/en/](http://aena.es/csee/Satellite/Aeropuerto-Santiago/en/)

## LEAVING THE TOUR

There are no direct flights from Santiago de Compostela to the U.S. Most connect via Madrid and are operated by Iberia. Other options via other major European cities are mostly on low-cost or local carriers.

Labacolla Airport is located 16 miles from Santiago de Compostela. Empresa Freire Buses depart every 30 minutes from various locations in the city center. The journey takes 25 minutes. Visit [empresafreire.com](http://empresafreire.com) for more information. Or, taxis offer a flat fare of 21 euros from the city center to the airport.

## POST-TOUR ACCOMMODATIONS

There is a multitude of hotels in Santiago de Compostela to choose from; however, you may wish to stay at the Altaïr Hotel, our standard hotel for the final night of the tour. Country Walkers would be happy to make a reservation here on your behalf. Please contact us to request this service as soon as possible to ensure availability. The cost of \$180 USD per double-for-single use room (subject to change) or \$220 USD per double or twin room (subject to change), including tax and breakfast, is payable directly to Country Walkers and is due with your final payment 90 days prior to departure. Our normal cancellation policy applies. These rooms are reserved as a service for you and include a service charge. Better rates may be available online; however, please note that if you make your reservation directly with the hotel, you may not be able to secure

the same room as assigned to you for the night on tour (Country Walkers uses Standard Rooms).

# Information & Policies

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## GUARANTEED DEPARTURES

Country Walkers guarantees the departure of every tour\*, which gives peace of mind for every guest. From the moment your reservation is confirmed, you can start preparing for your adventure. We take care of all the details to ensure a seamless Self-Guided experience. For best availability, reserve your trip early.

*\*except in cases of force majeure*

## RESERVATIONS

Please note that the method by which Self-Guided Adventures are reserved differs in important ways from typical scheduled tours. We encourage all guests to refrain from purchasing plane tickets or making contingent plans until they receive confirmation from us. Here's how the process works:

1. **Reservation Request.** The process begins when you make a reservation request for this tour, either online at [countrywalkers.com](https://countrywalkers.com) or by calling Country Walkers at 800.464.9255. Please note the online form does not on its own constitute a final reservation or a guarantee of tour space. If you use the form, one of our Tour Consultants will call within one business day. Outside of 90 days prior to the tour start date, a \$350 per person deposit is required at the time of the reservation request. Within 90 days prior to the tour start date, your final tour cost is required. If we are unable to accommodate you on your preferred dates/tour (or an alternative of your choice), this payment is fully refunded.
2. **Reservation Request Receipt.** Upon receipt of your deposit and preferred tour start dates, you will be provided with an emailed reservation request receipt, stating your reservation number and reconfirming the details of your reservation request (tour name, departure date, and tour price), while we get working on securing availability with all the hotels.
3. **Confirmation.** Our goal is to confirm your reservation request within five business days; however, this may take longer for a variety of reasons. All of our accommodations are available on a request basis; we do not hold blocks of rooms and, therefore, must confirm availability at the time of your request. If possible, we recommend you provide a

range of back-up tour start dates at the time of your initial request. Once your reservation is confirmed, a Tour Consultant will contact you. Once you have received our official confirmation, you can make flight reservations.

4. **Final Payment.** Final tour payment is due 90 days prior to tour departure date. As pricing is determined over a year in advance, we may be forced to change our listed price over time. However, please note that once your reservation is confirmed, we will always honor the price quoted when you booked.

## TOUR ACCOMMODATIONS

**Hotel Availability:** Since we typically use small, boutique properties for Self-Guided tours, securing availability can sometimes prove challenging, especially on short notice. (Again, we encourage guests to book early and be flexible.) On some tours, if our standard property is not available, we may have alternate hotels of equivalent quality that we have approved. We'll book one of these alternates if the standard property is not available. If the hotel or room type requires a surcharge, we will contact you prior to reserving it. We will not reserve non-approved properties.

**Room Category:** We typically book standard rooms. If you are interested in upgrading your room type, please contact a Tour Consultant. Please bear in mind that upgrades are not available at every hotel; surcharges will be determined once we know what's available. Triple rooms (or rooms with two beds) can be a rarity. Should you desire such an accommodation, we may need to offer two rooms—supplements may apply. Please allow us extra time to sort the options out.

## ORIENTATION MEETING & TRANSFERS

Though Self-Guided tours are a predominantly private experience, there are occasions where you may be in contact with others. Because guests are allowed to pick their own start dates, there may be other Country Walkers travelers staying in the same properties as you or even starting on the same date. For this reason, we may need to combine your orientation meeting with that of other guests or ask you to share on-tour transfers. This does not mean you need to walk together.



## **GUEST RESPONSIBILITIES**

Each guest has the responsibility to select a trip appropriate to his/her abilities and interests and to prepare for the trip by carefully reading the confirmation materials. To join this trip, you must be in good health and capable of completing activities as described in the day-to-day itinerary. Our in-house experts welcome the opportunity to discuss the tour in more detail. In order to meet your needs, we ask that you please share any relevant physical limitations or health conditions when you make your reservation. Prior to your adventure you will be asked to sign a Participation Agreement to accept your responsibilities.

## **CHANGES IN PLANS**

After booking, you may change your reservation's destination, departure date, departure city, or Tour Extensions for a \$100-per-person administrative fee. We will waive this fee for changes made within the first two weeks of booking. Any cancellation charges or applicable fees imposed by hotels or operators will be passed along to the guest. We encourage you to consult our cancel policy for the particular trip you have booked. All changes are subject to availability and cannot be guaranteed. Please note that tours with seasonal pricing may involve a higher price point. Please note: This change policy does not apply to Special Departures. Please notify us in writing.

## **CANCELLATIONS AND REFUNDS**

Cancellations must be made in writing and fees are applied as noted. Cancellation refunds will be calculated as of the date we receive your written cancellation. All payments for travel services not provided to the guest will be refunded in accordance with these Terms and Conditions and in accordance with Country Walkers' cancellation policy. Exceptions to this cancellation policy cannot be made for any reason, including personal emergencies, illness, or weather. Please note that the tiered tour price is based on a guarantee of a specified number of guests—should your group decrease in size, we reserve the right to alter the per person price if necessary as reflected in the Tour Price table.

### **Self-Guided Adventures**

- » Cancellations received on or before 91 days prior to the start of the trip: \$150 per person
- » Cancellations received 90 to 61 days prior to the start of the trip: 25 percent loss of trip price

» Cancellations received 60 or fewer days prior to the start of the trip: 100 percent loss of trip price

### **TRAVEL PROTECTION PLAN**

We offer guests the opportunity to purchase a Travel Protection Plan. Please contact us for details.

### **SELF-GUIDED FLIGHT CONCIERGE**

Our knowledgeable team will happily find flight itineraries that sync perfectly with your international Self-Guided Adventure. Simply request a price quote at the time of booking and, once your reservation is confirmed, we will contact you with available options. Please note that you are under no obligation to purchase the quoted flight itinerary.

Learn more about the Self-Guided Flight Concierge—including our complete policies—on our website at: <https://www.countrywalkers.com/self-guided-air-terms-and-conditions/>.

Other travel arrangements not included in the price of your trip (such as local train tickets or post-tour excursions) can be purchased through your local travel agent, or Better Travel, a Vermont-based agency (800.331.6996 or [bettertravel@madriver.com](mailto:bettertravel@madriver.com)).

# Spain at a Glance

## ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

**U.S. citizens:** Passports are required. To minimize any inconveniences during travel, the State Department recommends that passports be valid for at least six months following your scheduled return. Visas are not required for stays of up to 90 days. For more information, see [travel.state.gov](http://travel.state.gov).



### Travel Tip

Have a variety of options to start your trip: ATM card(s), credit card(s), some dollars to exchange, and some euros in small denominations.

## CURRENCY

Spain uses the euro (EUR). For current exchange rates, visit [oanda.com](http://oanda.com).

Many businesses in Europe will no longer accept credit cards without PIN numbers (chip and pin cards). Always contact your bank or your credit-card company for details on fees and card use when traveling.

## TIME ZONE

Spain is in the Central European Time Zone, Eastern Standard Time plus six hours. For more information on worldwide time zones, see [worldtimezone.com](http://worldtimezone.com).

## PHONE & INTERNET

Spain country code: +34

Cell phone coverage throughout Spain is extensive, but cannot be guaranteed to be accessible on all American mobile carriers or to function at all times while on the trail or in remote areas.

For more information regarding international phone use, please refer to [countrywalkers.com/phones](http://countrywalkers.com/phones).

Internet access is generally very good in towns and villages; however, it is not guaranteed at all of the hotels used on the tour. For more details regarding Wi-Fi availability, please refer to the Itinerary Overview.



## LANGUAGE

The official language of Spain is Spanish.

While knowledge of the local language is not necessary, you may want to learn some fun and useful phrases; see [bbc.co.uk/languages/Spanish](http://bbc.co.uk/languages/Spanish).

## ELECTRICITY

Alternating current of 220V and 50Hz is used in Spain. Plugs have two round pins. For a full listing of electrical outlets worldwide, see [electricaloutlet.org](http://electricaloutlet.org).

## WEATHER

One of Europe's warmest and sunniest countries, Spain has a predominantly warm Mediterranean climate, with dry summers and pleasant temperature ranges in spring and fall. Spain does have a variety of climates and zones because of its considerable geographical diversity. In Catalonia, the combination of Mediterranean and slightly mountainous climate results in temperatures from the low 60s to mid-80s (and 90s midday in August and September). In southern Spain's Andalusia, spring and fall are dry and sunny, with temperatures ranging from the 60s to the 80s.

For up-to-date forecasts, see [qwikcast.com](http://qwikcast.com). For historical average temperatures and rainfall, see [weatherbase.com](http://weatherbase.com).

## FOOD & DRINK



Thoroughly Mediterranean, the foundation of Spanish cuisine is olive oil, garlic, and local and seasonal produce, meat, and fish. Spanish food varies by region, in the same way that there is great variety in Spain's geography and climate; however, some dishes can be found throughout the country—a range of *tapas* (more on the next page), paella, gazpacho, excellent cured ham, chorizo, meatballs, salads, good bread, fresh fruit, cheeses, and for dessert, flan (vanilla custard). Surrounded as Spain is on three sides by water, seafood dishes are plentiful throughout, including shrimp with garlic, calamari, octopus, porgy, or monkfish, all with regional variations.

### Travel Tip

- Bringing your own hair dryer or other electrical device? You'll need a travel converter, available at most hardware, travel, or consumer electronic stores.
- For laptops or an electronic device with a dual voltage switch, you'll need the adapter plug but not a converter.

Equally steeped in Mediterranean culture, wine has been produced in Spain since the time of the Romans, and the country is third in European wine production after France and Italy. Grown almost throughout Spain (except near Santiago de Compostela), quality red and white wines can be found in all regions, with the majority from the central Castilla-La Mancha region, with Catalonia second. A crisp and bubbly before-dinner drink is the Catalonia's sparkling wine, *cava*, named after the cellars in which it is produced.

### Travel Tip

#### ¿Tapas?

Tapas, or *pinxtos* as they are known in the Basque country, are perhaps Spain's most well-known culinary export, with tapas bars and restaurants popping up worldwide. Part of Spanish life, they can be eaten with a drink as appetizers before a meal, or as a meal in themselves. There is even a verb in the Spanish language—*tapear*—meaning to eat tapas! These small savory dishes can be as simple as a plate of olives, slices of Manchego cheese, or chorizo, to prepared dishes such as grilled eggplant in tomato vinaigrette or slices of *tortilla española* (a dense potato and onion omelet). In Catalonia, a favorite is *Pan Catalan* or in Catalan, *pa amb tomàquet*, lightly toasted bread with chopped tomatoes and drizzled with olive oil.

#### Here are a few others Spanish favorites:

*Patatas bravas*: spicy potatoes with a hot sauce.

*Croquetas*: a range of small fried croquettes that can be stuffed with Serrano ham, salt cod, hard-boiled egg, cheese, or vegetables.

*Champiñones al ajillo*: mushrooms, dripping with olive oil, garlic and dry Spanish sherry.

*Morcilla frita*: bite-size pieces of spicy blood sausage flavored with garlic and oregano.

## LIFE IN SPAIN

### Shopping and banking hours

Shops and stores are generally open Monday to Saturday from 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., and from 4:30 to 8:00 p.m.; most department stores and some supermarkets are open all day, every day of the week, from 10:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.



Banks are open from 8:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., Monday to Saturday (except from June to September when they are closed on Saturday).

### Meal times

Breakfast is served at hotels from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. In restaurants, lunch is served from 1:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. and dinner is served from 8:30 p.m. to 11:00 p.m.

## Tipping

Tipping in restaurants and bars is included in the total bill, but it is customary to leave an additional 5 to 10 percent of the total. Taxi drivers also receive 5 to 10 percent of the total, or you could round up the total, letting the driver keep the change. For luggage assistance, a small tip of one to three euros is appropriate.

## TRAVEL RESOURCES

### National Spanish tourist board official sites

**spain.info**

### Public holidays

To assist in travel planning, it may be helpful to be aware of Spanish public holidays: **spain.info/en\_US/informacion-practica/consejos-viaje/consejos-practicos/horarios-festivos/**. Visit the Spanish tourist board's website, navigating to **spain.info/en\_US/que-quieres/agenda/** for a list of festivals and events, and an event finder.



## TRAVEL IN SPAIN

### Airlines

The Spanish Airports and Aerial Navigation website, **aena.es**, has information on all airports and domestic flights. The Spanish national airline is Iberia, **iberia.com**.

### Trains

**Renfe: renfe.com**, the national railway company, has an extensive network, including high-speed routes (AVE) from Madrid.

**Raileurope: raileurope.com** or 800.622.8600: a U.S.-based company that provides schedules, reservations, and ticketing for all European train networks (their multi-day/-week/-month passes in one country or combinations of countries may be an economical and convenient choice for European train travel).

### Other local transportation

In addition to rail and airline networks, Spain also has many regional bus lines that can be found at: **movelia.es**. Most major car rental agencies are available at airports and train stations. Taxis are available at all major airports, train stations, and in smaller towns, and can be reserved in advance (your hotel can usually

provide assistance). For more information go to [spain.info](http://spain.info), and click on “Practical information” then “Transport.”



# Packing List

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## PACKING TIPS

Pack light! Keep in mind most hotels are small and family-run and may not provide luggage assistance from the reception area to the room so there will be times you may have to carry your own luggage short distances. **Due to space constraints on pre-arranged transfers, we require you to limit your luggage to one backpack (that you carry with you on the trail) and one medium piece (approximately 18x15x29 inches or 8,000 cu. in.) not exceeding 44 lbs (20 kg) per person. Additional charges will apply should you exceed this limit; please contact Country Walkers in advance if this is necessary so that we may reserve an appropriate-sized vehicle.** Please also note that due to health and safety reasons, our local representatives are not permitted to carry (individual) bags that exceed 44 lbs (20 kg). We recommend packing any personal necessities, medications, your hotel itinerary/emergency contact information, your hiking boots (or shoes), and extra clothes in your carry-on luggage in the event that your baggage is delayed. We suggest leaving valuable jewelry at home. A copy of your passport or other important documents should be kept in a separate area of your luggage. Always be alert when carrying a purse, camera, money belt, or backpack in busy cities, airports, and train stations.

## FOOTWEAR

- » Hiking boots or shoes. There are many brands to choose from. Proper fit is crucial, so try on new boots or shoes while wearing socks you plan to use on tour. Be sure to break in new footwear well before your tour begins. If you are bringing a favorite pair of older boots, please check that soles and seams are in good shape before you depart! By the time you're ready to join your walking tour, you should be able to complete 5-9 miles of walking without discomfort. We require lightweight boots or shoes with proper ankle support and good tread to ensure stability on all types of terrain. Waterproof footwear keeps feet dry in heavy rain and water resistant footwear keeps feet dry in heavy dew.
- » Comfortable shoes for evening strolls
- » Synthetic, moisture-wicking socks (cotton socks are not recommended for walking as they will quickly cause blisters)
- » Blister remedy

## CLOTHING

- » Lightweight, wash-and-wear long pants
- » Long-sleeved, wash-and-wear shirt
- » T-shirts and shorts
- » Polar fleece or light wool pullover (it will keep you warm even when wet)
- » Dinner attire: dress is smart casual

## OUTERWEAR

- » Waterproof rain gear: jacket, pants, hat, or hood
- » Windbreaker with hood (your rain gear may be suitable)
- » Hat with a broad brim or visor

## EQUIPMENT

- » Cell phone (an International cell phone or your own cell phone with an International calling plan): for both practical and safety reasons, **we strongly advise that you carry a cell phone while traveling and at all times while you are out walking.** (Please note you may encounter intermittent coverage while on the trail or in remote areas.)
- » Travel adapter/s (connectors that change the plug shape to match the electrical outlet, thereby allowing a dual-voltage appliance or a converter from one country to be plugged into the wall outlet of another country) and converter/s (only if bringing electric appliances, such as a hair dryer, iron, or any appliance that has a mechanical motor. If the appliance is electronic, which contains a computer chip, a converter is usually not required.)
- » Pack (minimum size of 25L): large enough to carry water, extra clothing, rain gear, lunch, and personal items (camera, etc.)
- » Waterproof cover for pack
- » Water bottle, canteen, or CamelBak-type water reservoir or hydration pack to carry your own water while walking (equivalent of one liter)
- » Sunblock and lip balm
- » Insect repellent
- » Sunglasses

- » Toilet kit for when facilities are not available on the walks. Include zip-lock baggies, tissues, and moist towelettes, which can be disposed of upon return to the hotel
- » Personal first-aid kit including any medications you ordinarily take (in their original container)

## OPTIONAL

- » Telescopic walking sticks (Please note that while telescopic walking sticks ***are recommended*** for this tour, they are not provided by Country Walkers; therefore, please plan on bringing your own should you wish to use them.)
- » Binoculars
- » Bathing suit for optional use of hotel pools or spas
- » Flip flops or water sandals
- » Camera and charger and/or extra batteries
- » Zip-lock bags (to keep camera and valuables dry)
- » Small notebook and pen
- » Field guides
- » Folding umbrella
- » Waterproof poncho (in addition to aforementioned rain gear, especially if expecting wet weather): while the aforementioned rain gear may suffice, a poncho offers the advantage of being lightweight, compact, big enough to cover both you and your backpack, long enough to allow for sitting on wet surfaces or act as a shelter, cool enough to wear during summer rains, and is cheap!
- » Bandana
- » Washcloth (many European hotels do not provide them), shampoo, and conditioner
- » Hand sanitizer and/or moist towelettes
- » Motion sickness bracelets or other non-sleep-inducing remedy if prone to motion sickness on car rides
- » Alarm clock

## ONLINE STORE

To help you prepare for your trip, we've carefully selected a range of comfortable, easy-packing travel apparel and accessories from leading brands such as Eagle Creek, Craghoppers, Patagonia, Tilley, and others. Whether you're traveling to Vietnam, walking in Canada, or exploring the hills of Ireland, our Travel Shop is here to ensure you're ready to enjoy your adventure to the fullest.

**Visit the CW Travel Shop at [cw.newheadings.com](http://cw.newheadings.com).**