

A Walker's World

CAMINO PORTUGUES 2019

SELF-GUIDED PILGRIMS ROUTE BY BIKE

Oporto to Santiago de Compostela via the Atlantic Coast
8 Days/7 Nights



The Portuguese Road, or Camino Portugués, is considered by many as the most spiritually connected pilgrimage route. Following the path St James' body took to its resting place at the site of Santiago de Compostela in Spain, the often overlooked, and hence much quieter, Portuguese path offers a wealth of history and delightful landscapes to discover.

The Atlantic Portuguese Way is a hybrid cycling route programme that links the major city of Oporto to Santiago de Compostela in Galicia Spain along the beautiful coastline of Portugal and Galicia. The border of the Atlantic Ocean offers stunning coastal views and the crosses several small towns and cities along the way rich in culture, churches, monuments, old crosses that tell the history of this

less trodden route. At the conclusion enter the medieval city of Santiago, as pilgrims have done for a thousand years before you, seeking the shrine that is the climax to this legendary journey.

Santiago de Compostela's 11th century cathedral is reputedly built over the tomb of Sant lago el Mayor (St James the Great), patron saint of Spain. Legend says the remains of the apostle were carried by boat from Jerusalem to this burial place.

A noon mass is held for pilgrims, a feature of which is the huge, swinging, smoking botafumeiro; a 200 pound incense burner hauled by a pole by eight red-robed priests.

ITINERARY

Day 1 ARRIVE PORTO

On arrival you will be met at the airport or train station and transferred to your hotel. If you have the time you are free to roam the city. We might suggest a riverside walk, fresh fish dinner or a visit



to the Port wine cellars in Vila Nova de Gaia. Porto is a fantastic city full of life and culture. Take time to visit the Bolhão Market, just a few hundred meters from your hotel. Walk along the pedestrian avenue of Santa Catarina for shopping. Or take a leap into medieval time visiting the UNESCO world site of the Ribeira by the river. Do not forget to cross the Dom Luis bridge on both levels as the sights change from one another. Climb the hundreds of steps up to the Clerigo's Tower for the views, and of course don't miss out on a visit to Porto's intriguing Old Town. Designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site the Old Town clings to the

steep north bank of the great River Douro, its jumbled streets seemingly all leading down to the quayside.

Day 2 PORTO - VILA DO CONDE, 35 kms, +230m, -280m

Today begin your cycle journey from the main cathedral of Porto. Cross through the medieval old quarters of the city alongside the Douro River. Head north towards Matosinhos and follow the Leca River until you reach the seaside town of Vila do Conde.

Day 3 VILA DO CONDE - VIANA DO CASTELA, 53kms, +320m, -320m

Cycle again with the ocean as today's scenery, then turn inland crossing rural land where vegetables are grown that feed the north of Portugal. At Ofir the path enters the Natural Park of Litoral Norte, a reserve to protect sea birds and the eco system. Esposende is by the delta of Cavado River and is a wonderful place to have a break. Enroute to Viana do Castelo, the path veers inland through the hills. The old city of Viana do Castelo still plays an important role, and is an important place in the pilgrimage path for the Atlantic Way. Nowadays it is a modern city which has managed to maintain the atmosphere of its' Old Town and little shops along the old streets. For a picture postcard view of Viana take a cable car to the top of the hill.

Day 4 VIANA DO CASTELA – BAIONA, 65kms, +520m, -530m

The 'camino' travels along the shoreline to Caminha crossing several villages and towns. The scenery is stunning and there are no crowds. Enjoy the Medieval atmosphere of Caminha then cross the border to Spain by ferry, crossing the Minho River to arrive A Guarda. This little port offers all manner of fresh fish so a good stop for lunch. Follow the coast on a relatively flat route to Oia,



with its ancient monastery of the Cistercian order which named this part of the St James Path, the Monacal Path. From Oia onwards, the route travels near cliffs until Cape Sillero where it picks up the ancient Vereda Real, the old medieval road. Old Castles and towns feature along the way until you reach Baiona.

Day 5 BAIONA – PONTEVEDRA, 61kms, +890m, -830m

Today cycle from Baiona to Vigo along the sea front then enter Vigo through the city parks and gardens to avoid the busy part of Vigo. Leave the city by a dirt road that will bring you to Redondela to join the Monacal Path once again. In Redondela we leave the Ria of Vigo estuary to head inland, crossing several rivers over medieval bridges. Once inland it is hilly and more demanding as you pedal towards the historic city of Pontevedra, where you will overnight. In Pontevedra there are some interesting sites to be explored including the Santuario da Peregrin chapel and the Convento de San Francisco. The medieval town centre is a maze of cobbled laneways with tapas bars and cafes.



Day 6 PONTEVEDRA – PADRON, 40kms, +410m, -430m

Pedal through chestnut groves, pine and eucalyptus forest. You will pass through the hamlet of Tivo and the village of Caldas de Reis, before crossing the River Umia and gradually climbing to the village of Santa Marina. Your destination for today is Padron, where the body of Saint James is said to have first landed, when it was brought to Santiago.

Day 7 PADRON – SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA, 26kms, +410m, -160m

The final day takes you again through pine, oak and eucalyptus wood before climbing up to reach Santiago. You will pass a number of small villages en route, before spotting the spires of Santiago's Cathedral in the distance. If you time your arrival well you will be able to attend the midday Pilgrim's Mass in Santiago. This afternoon you are free to discover the many interesting sites of Santiago's charming old town.

Day 8 SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA

Arrangements end after breakfast. Vehicle transfer is included to return to Porto, and either to hotel, airport or train station – the journey will take 2.5 hours. If you do not wish to return to Portugal then the tour will end after breakfast in Santiago de Compostela.

IMPORTANT NOTE: The tour itineraries may vary slightly dependent on the location of the Comfort and Superior accommodation – this will affect some distances cycled each day.

GRADE / TERRAIN

Moderate– daily distances by bike of 27 – 65 km over diverse terrain from flat to hilly. A mixture of smooth dirt roads and tarmac with the occasional rocky path. Some ascent last two days arriving into Santiago.

2019 SCHEDULE

Any day 02 January – 23 December

2019 COSTS PER PERSON

Season 1: 02 January-29 March and 01 November-23 December

	<u>Comfort</u> <u>1*, 2* & 3* Hotels</u>	<u>Superior</u> <u>3* & 4* Hotels</u>
Double /Share twin	€1067	€1240
Single supplement	€ 114	€ 288

Season 2: 30 March-14 April, 22 April-31 May, 1-31 October

Double /Share twin	€1089	€1320
Single supplement	€ 128	€ 348

Season 3: 15-21 April, 01 June-30 September

Double /Share twin	€1199	€1375
Single supplement	€ 185	€ 369

Solo Traveller Supplements on request

2019 COST BIKE

Bike €120

E Bike from €150

Includes helmet, handlebar bag, small rear bag, pump, extra inner tube, toolkit and locks

2019 COST INCLUDES:

- 7 nights in hotels on a double/twin share basis with ensuite facilities.
- Breakfast daily
- Arrival and departure transfers
- Arrival briefing - information pack including route notes, maps and guidebook per room booked.
- GPS
- Luggage transfer (max 1 piece of 15kgs per person).
- Emergency hotline.



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