



Insider's

C A M I N O

Walk the Camino de Santiago along the French Way

A 10-night trip covering the last 115km of the French Way
Suitable for walkers of all abilities

October 18th-28th 2026



Introduction

We are to embark on the Camino de Santiago. Christian pilgrims in the Middle Ages walked this path to be inspired spiritually for centuries. There are three prominent Christian pilgrimage sites in the world; Rome, Jerusalem and Santiago de Compostela. Santiago became a destination point for pilgrims because since the 12th century, the cathedral was said to house the remains of St James.

We are about to follow in the footsteps of these pilgrims. There are many routes to Santiago de Compostela, one of the most popular being the Camino Francés, the French Way, which originates in Saint Jean Pied de Port in France. This pilgrimage takes us through different landscapes and places on our journey. We start in Madrid and finish in Santiago de Compostela with six walking days covering the 73 miles of the French Way with the opportunity to walk as much or as little of the way as you would like.

Highlights

- Welcome dinner in Madrid hosted by Insider's Camino
- A talk by award-winning Ghosts of Spain writer, Giles Tremlett who gives us an overview of the history of Spain, its diversity and contradictions
- Guided tour with an art historian to see the collection highlights of Madrid's Prado Museum
- Visit to the Catedral del Redentor, where guests receive the Pilgrim's blessing, their passport and the concha shell
- A private guided visit followed by dinner at Botín, the world's oldest restaurant
- Flamenco show at a local tablao flamenco club
- Private tour of the medieval town of Astorga, its cathedral and the bishop's palace designed by Gaudí
- Pilgrim's mass for our group in a chapel on the trail followed by dinner and music
- Holy Communion in the 12th century San Fiz de Solovio Church for our pilgrims.
- Guided visit of the Cathedral in Santiago de Compostela, its museum and a walk through Santiago
- Farewell dinner in a private room at the Parador overlooking the Cathedral and the Obradoiro square

Your Insider's Camino Host

Here are two of our experienced Insider's Camino hosts and guides.



GEORGIE WINGFIELD-HAYES

Georgie is a British biologist and writer who lives in Spain, a country for which she has had a lifelong love: from its language, people and culture; to its history, landscapes and nature. When she's not leading pilgrimages on the Camino de Santiago, you can find her in the mountains of Sanabria, in northwestern Spain, an area famous for its wild landscapes and resident wolf population. From there she writes about human-nature relations. Georgie first walked the Camino in 2006, which was also the year she first guided groups along the trail. She never tires of the privilege of accompanying pilgrims on their own special journey.

Your Insider's Camino Guide



MARY KAY MAAS

Originally from Wisconsin, USA, Mary Kay walked her first Camino 20 years ago with her mom, the year she studied abroad in Spain. She fell in love that year and has been living in Oviedo, Spain ever since. She has been guiding Spanish youth groups to the US for over 10 years and started guiding on the Camino in 2023. When she's not guiding, she can be found teaching English online, writing and singing songs, and driving her 16 and 18-year-old sons to soccer practice.

Contributing experts

BISHOP CARLOS LÓPEZ LOZANO

He is the Episcopal Bishop of Spain, an indigenous national church and proud member of the Anglican Communion. Bishop Carlos studied theology at the United Evangelical Theological Seminary in Madrid & recently published an article on the history of the church in Spain with the Sorbonne. He has been the Episcopal Bishop of Spain since 1995 & was consecrated by the Archbishop of Canterbury. The Bishop is also a wonderful architectural historian, flamencologist and gourmet cook.



GILES TREMLETT

A British historian, author, and journalist based in Madrid, Spain, known for his writing on Spanish history and politics. He has been a correspondent for The Guardian and The Economist, and his books, which include "Ghosts of Spain" and historical biographies of Isabella of Castile and Catherine of Aragon, have sold hundreds of thousands of copies worldwide. He graduated from Oxford University and has a deep knowledge of Spain, which he shares through his books, articles, and media commentary.



Trip Itinerary

Day 1. Sunday, October 18th

We meet in Madrid.

Welcome dinner, hosted by Insider's Camino. Over dinner, writer and journalist, Giles Tremlett, gives us an overview of the history of Spain, its diversity, and its contradictions.

Hotel: 5* NH Collection Suecia, Madrid, Spain



We meet in the Spanish capital of Madrid

Day 2. Monday, October 19th

Our guide meets us in the hotel reception for a short walk to the Prado Museum. Here we are given a guided tour of the collection highlights. These include Velázquez's *Las Meninas*, Van der Weyden's *Descent from the Cross*, *The Garden of Earthly Delights* by Bosch and works by Goya including his *Black Paintings*, *Las Pinturas Negras*.

We then take a panoramic bus tour of the centre of Madrid, finishing at the Anglican Cathedral of the Redeemer, where guests receive the Pilgrim blessing, their Pilgrim's Passport, and the Concha Shell. Lunch will be a light, finger buffet lunch at the Cathedral.

Dinner is at Restaurante Botín, the world's oldest restaurant. Here, we take a privately guided visit before the restaurant opens.

Flamenco show at Las Carboneras flamenco tablao, located just across from Restaurante Botín.

Hotel: 5* NH Collection Suecia for a second night



Las Meninas by Diego Velázquez at the Prado Museum

Day 3. Tuesday, October 20th

We leave Madrid for a 3.5 hour drive to the 11th-century walled city of Astorga, at the crossroads of the Camino de Santiago and the Roman Silver Road. We visit the 15th-century Cathedral of St Mary and the 19th-century Episcopal Palace designed by Antoni Gaudí.

We enjoy a light lunch at a local restaurant, close to the Cathedral. We continue our journey to Portomarín. Travel time is approximately two hours, not including comfort stops.

Dinner close to the hotel.

Hotel: Vistalegre Hotel-Spa, Portomarín in Lugo, Spain



19th-century Episcopal Palace by Gaudí

Day 4. Wednesday, October 21st

22.3 km / 13.85 mi: Sarria to Portomarín

After breakfast we take a short drive to Sarria for our first day's walk to Portomarín.

This stage is known for its beauty. It is also where we pass the 100 km marker of this ancient route. This is the minimum distance to be traveled on foot to receive the Compostela certificate. We pass through the villages of Barbadelo and Ferreiros, admiring their Romanesque churches en route, before arriving at Portomarín.

This is a gentle stage. The ground is soft and wavy, taking us through clusters of chestnut and oak trees, meadows, and farmland.

On approaching the town of Portomarín, we cross the bridge over the Belesar Reservoir, and the Miño River and into the town.

We meet in the hotel reception for a short walk to our restaurant for dinner.

Hotel: Vistalegre Hotel-Spa for a second night



Santiago church in Barbadelo

Day 5. Thursday, October 22nd

17.3 km / 10.75 mi: Portomarín to Airexe

After breakfast, we leave Portomarín and cross the Belesar Reservoir, starting with a steady, comfortable climb through the forest. The climb can be demanding at times, but it rewards walkers with sweeping views of the Galician countryside. The path winds through peaceful hamlets like Gonzar and Ventas de Narón, where cafés offer rest and refreshment.

En route, we see the famous Cruceiro stone crosses, including the Cruceiro of Lameiros dating back to the 17th century.

As you approach Airexe, the trail levels out, making for a pleasant finish.

We arrive at the village of Airexe, stamp our passports, and take a short bus ride to the Hotel, Parada das Bestas a renovated 18th-century country house in a rural setting where we spend two nights. Tonight we meet for dinner in the hotel dining room.

Hotel: Parada das Bestas



Leaving the village of Airexe

Day 6. Friday, October 23rd

16.1 km / 10 mi: Airexe to O Coto

This beautiful stretch of the Camino Francés winds from Airexe through rolling Galician countryside, quiet hamlets, and tree-lined paths before reaching Palas de Rei, a lively town with cafés, shops, and a lovely Romanesque church for a well-earned rest stop.

As more pilgrims join the route, you'll notice the trail becomes more social, continuing through oak and eucalyptus woods, small creeks, and the rural villages of San Xulián and Casanova. With gentle ups and downs and consistently charming scenery, the walk to O Coto feels peaceful and rewarding. From there, we take the bus back to the hotel.

Hotel: Parada das Bestas, for a second night



Walking through the rural village of San Xulián

Day 7. Saturday, October 24th

20.5 km / 13.74 mi: O Coto to Arzúa

We return to O Coto and walk to Arzúa, following a lively stretch of the Camino that leads through Melide, famous for its pulpería octopus restaurants, and a perfect stop for lunch.

After Melide, the flow of pilgrims grows as the Camino Primitivo joins the Francés, guiding us over a medieval bridge at Ribadiso da Baixo and past the granite stepping stone at O Rañado, known for its unique artisan stamp.

Reaching Arzúa, early arrivals can taste the creamy local cheese the town is known for. We then take a quick bus ride to our accommodation for the next two nights on the Botana family estate, at A Paínza.

Hotel: A Paínza, A Coruña, Spain

Day 8. Sunday, October 25th

19.2 km / 11.9 mi: Arzúa to O Pedrouzo

This is a gentle, pretty stage which takes us through meadows and woods of oak and eucalyptus trees and small villages. En route to Pedrouzo, we pass through Boente, with its beautiful statue of Santiago the pilgrim. The villages of Calzada, Salceda, and A Rúa add charm to the journey, with their stone houses and small chapels.

With Santiago now within reach, many pilgrims walk this stage with a mix of anticipation and nostalgia, savoring the final full day on the trail.

On arrival in Pedrouzo, we take the bus back to Arzúa for our second night here. Pilgrim's mass for our group in a small chapel followed by an aperitivo style dinner and music with an opera singer singing the Pilgrim's hymn and music related to the Galician culture.

Hotel: A Paínza for a second night



A plate of the famous pulpo, octopus, served in the pulperías in Melide



Arzúa-Ulloa cheese



Today's gentle, pretty stage



Opera singer & Spanish guitarist

Day 9. Monday, October 26th

19.3 km / 12 mi - O Pedrouzo to Santiago de Compostela

After breakfast, we travel back to O Pedrouzo to begin the eighth stage of the Camino to Santiago de Compostela.

The Way passes next to the airport and starts the gentle descent towards Lavacolla. Lavacolla is located very close to the Monte do Gozo, a hill from where pilgrims catch their first glimpse of Santiago's Cathedral. While the last miles take us through more urban terrain, these are also significant miles for every pilgrim who walks them as Santiago de Compostela approaches. Both the pilgrims who are walking the entire 12 miles today and the pilgrims who prefer to walk part way will come together to walk our last mile to the Obradoiro Square to the Cathedral.

This evening, we walk over to the 12th-century church San Fiz de Solovio for our Holy Communion. From here, we walk to dinner at a favorite local restaurant, serving Galician specialities with a modern twist.

Hotel: for the next two nights, we stay at the impressive 15th-century, 5* Parador in Santiago de Compostela.



Entering into the Obradoiro Square, together as a group



Jumping for joy, we did it!

Day 10. Tuesday, October 27th

After breakfast, we gather for a private walking tour of Santiago, exploring its historic streets, main squares, and the cathedral's rich past, with a special stop at the Anglican Pilgrim's Centre, which your pilgrimage helps support. The tour concludes at the Cathedral for the Pilgrims' Mass. Subject to the cathedral's schedule, there is a chance to witness the impressive "botafumeiro" in motion. (Note that non-Catholics may receive a blessing instead of Communion).

After Mass, the afternoon is yours to enjoy Santiago at your own pace. In the evening, we come together for a farewell dinner at the Parador, savoring fine dining and Spanish wines in a private room overlooking Obradoiro Square, before spending our second night there.

Hotel: Parador Santiago de Compostela 5* for a second & final night.



Botafumeiro, giant incense for the Pilgrim's Mass

Day 11. Wednesday, October 28th

Breakfast & we say our goodbyes. End of tour.



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Included in package:

- ♥ Accommodation: 5* hotel in Madrid, 5* hotel in Santiago & good quality, comfortable accommodation throughout the Pilgrimage
- ♥ One lunch, all breakfasts and dinners with wine
- ♥ All guided visits where mentioned & their respective entrance fees
- ♥ Flamenco show
- ♥ Comfortable private coach from Madrid to Santiago de Compostela
- ♥ Insider's Camino tour host & one Camino guide
- ♥ \$200 USD donation to the Friends of the Anglican Centre in Santiago
- ♥ Sales tax included

Not included: Guides and driver tips

Notes:

- Luggage will be transported from hotel to hotel
- For those who feel that they are not able to complete full walking days, we split the day's walk into stages and the support bus can transport you between the stages that you wish to "sit out".

For pricing information, contact Faith Journeys
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