

Cycling Safaris

Camino de Santiago 2023 León to Santiago - Self guided Tour 297 km | 6 nights / 7 days, medium to advanced tour



Listed as the main European Cultural Itinerary, dotted with delightful monuments such as old pilgrim's hospitals and sanctuaries, this route reminds us constantly to be the oldest, most celebrated and frequented route in Europe. Running through two of Spain's northern regions - Castile and Galicia - the Camino gives way to breath-taking landscapes, unique monuments and typical villages in this part of our country. You will savour the rich Spanish gastronomy, offering traditional regional cuisine with excellent wines.

This "do it yourself"-tour gives you the flexibility to enjoy this historic pilgrimage at your own pace and brings the experience down to its essence: an individual challenge to reach Santiago...!

TOUR ITINERARY

DAY 1, Sunday **Arrive in León**

On arrival in León you will find the information required for your journey at the hotel: a complete package including hotel vouchers, your touring bike with all accessories, detailed documentation with maps and a road book. *Founded in 884 AD, León has abundant gastronomic and architectural riches - dinner is best enjoyed by having tapas in the atmospheric bars located along the narrow streets of the Barrio Húmedo. The cathedral is a gem from the Gothic period.*

DAY 2, Monday León to Astorga**48 km, +431m elevation**

Today's route takes us through classic Castilian landscapes, complete with holm oaks, golden wheat fields and gentle ups and downs. It's hard to get lost: the route never stays far from the N120 highway. The landscape in the first half of the route is relatively dry, but gets greener the further west you get; you'll cross fields full of diverse crops, such as wheat, corn, hops and wine grapes. Wildlife isn't a big feature of this first part of the trip, though you will see geckoes, birds of prey and lot of dairy cows!

Astorga is home to three national monuments and one of the best Romanesque facades.

DAY 3, Tuesday Astorga to Villafranca
+1142m elevation**79 km,**

From Astorga, the Camino starts to climb gently until it meets the first mountain on the way. Once you've reached the top of Foncebadón, take it easy and enjoy the sweeping downhill ride and the gorgeous views on the ride through vineyards to Villafranca. You will stay in the renovated Parador of Villafranca.

The town of Villafranca del Bierzo is a historical and artistic monument, was created to give refuge and sanctuary to the pilgrims before initiating the most difficult part of their pilgrimage. The monastery cloister is a Renaissance jewel.

DAY 4, Wednesday Villafranca to Portomarín**98 km, +739m (with taxi) /****+2156m (without taxi), most difficult day**

Get ready for the most challenging day. From Villafranca you ride slowly towards the mythical O'Cebreiro pass, the most demanding peak along the western section of the Camino. With a little patience it's more than possible to reach the top, but in any case, a taxi is there to avoid it. Then it's downhill all the way to Sarria, and onward via a rolling route to Portomarín.

The older neighborhoods once belonged to the Order of Saint John of Jerusalem, but now lie submerged, covered by the waters of the Miño River dam.

DAY 5, Thursday Portomarín to Arzua
+1012m elevation**54 km,**

Even though we're out of the mountains, doesn't mean that the going gets easier. Today's riding follows the Camino for 55 kilometers (with an optional side trip to a 700-year-old castle) through some of Galicia's prettiest countryside. Even though we're gradually losing altitude, the rolling Galician hillside might make you think otherwise. The route shows pilgrims the Celtic heart of Spain in one of the most un-Spanish places you've ever seen. Take your time and enjoy the sights!

You will be cycling side by side with other pilgrims and locals while enjoying the deep inside Galician landscapes. At some points, you will have the chance to choose between cycling on minor roads next to pilgrims or on nice trails. You will cycle through Palas de Rei and Melide, this last one it's well known for its tasty Galician octopus recipe, don't miss it!



DAY 6, Friday Arzua to Santiago Compostela +647m elevation

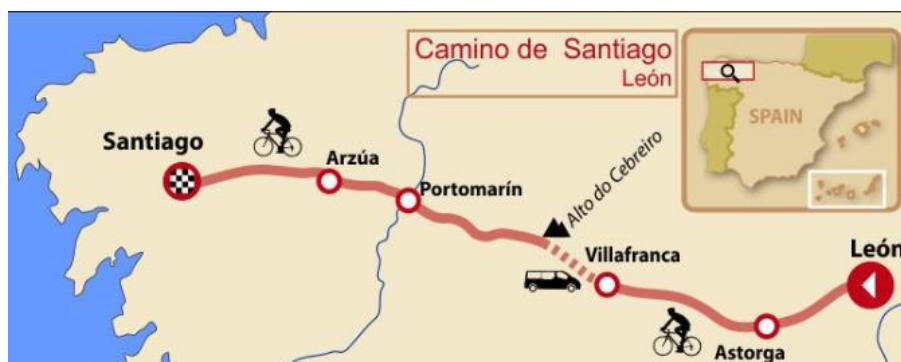
40 km.

Don't let the short length fool you; the final stage is short, but kind of demanding! After approximately four hours of riding, cyclists become pilgrims upon arriving at the Pórtico de la Gloria ("The Façade of Glory") at the Cathedral of Santiago. After taking a breath (and celebrating with others arriving by foot and on horseback!), you can visit the Pilgrims Office where you can obtain the "Compostela", the document certifying you as an official pilgrim (good for John Wayne jokes in the future!). Accommodation is centrally located, giving you the opportunity to explore the streets and bars of the atmospheric historic centre after dark.

This city, without any doubt, is the most important of the Christian Middle Ages. It is worldwide renowned and each year thousands of travelers come to visit its treasures.

Day 7 End of the trip

Rest your weary legs and bask in the glory to reflect on a truly memorable journey. This is the finish of the tour.



DATES AND PRICES 2023

€1380 per person sharing

€1840 single room (if you are travelling with others)

Tour dates: Any dates up to 31st October

Note that in 2023 bike rental is not included in the tour price.

WHAT THE TOUR PRICE INCLUDES

- 6 nights hotel accommodation in 3-4 & 5* renovated historic hotels with buffet breakfasts
- Luggage transfer each day (one piece of luggage per person)
- Detailed road book and maps
- Service helpline
- Optional Taxi transfer from Villafranca to O'Cebreiro on day 4

Optional

Bike rental: Hybrid bike (Specialized SIRRUS0) €240

Road Carbon (Specialized TARMAC) €340

E-Bike (Specialized VADO): €440

Extra piece of luggage: €80 (one piece of luggage per person is included in tour price)

ACCOMMODATION

(*) Spanish Paradores are luxury hotel accommodation, maintained by the state, in converted Castles, Palaces, Convents, Monasteries, Fortresses and other historic buildings. The building is often part of the heritage of Spain although there are some modern hotels in spectacular locations.



Parador de León GL San Marcos

The convent of San Marcos is one of the greatest architectural gems of the Spanish town of Leon, together with the Cathedral, the San Isidoro Basilica or the Casa Botines. It has now become a Parador and is one of the most important monuments of the Spanish Renaissance.

[+ More Info](#)



Hotel Via de la Plata

This modern hotel was built in 2011, over the stones of the convent of San Francisco.

The hotels design gave priority to the space in the rooms, the furniture and the welcoming contemporary decoration. It offers the rest you deserve while enjoying the best location in the historic district.

[+ More Info](#)



Parador de Villafranca del Bierzo

Villafranca del Bierzo is a town full of churches, monasteries and convents. Right at the town entrance stands this converted historical building, known as a Parador in Spain.

The leading tourist accommodation in the fascinating El Bierzo district. It is surrounded by mountains covered with cherry and fig trees, slopes dotted with chestnuts, poplars and small farms.

[+ More Info](#)



Vistalegre Hotel Spa

Recently renovated, Vistalegre Portomarín opened its doors in June 2018 to host guests who look for rest and relaxation.

This hotel offers free WiFi and views to the garden. Every room is equipped with flat TV screen, en-suite bathroom, A/C and a desk. They serve buffet breakfast.

[+ More Info](#)



Hotel Pazo Santa María

This elegant hotel dates back to the first half of the eighteenth century.

The Pazo Santa Maria complex comprises of various historical buildings which in themselves amount to a small village. Pazo Santa María has 16 lovely bedrooms located either in the main building or in the small individual annex cottages.

[+ More Info](#)



Parador de Santiago – Hostal Reis Catolicos

The Parador de Santiago is a blend of history, art and tradition. It is the emblem of the city and the perfect nights rest for pilgrims

The hotel is located in Obradoiro Square near the cathedral, creating an area of spectacular beauty in one of the most visited provincial capitals of the world. A stay at this Parador means a visit to a truly unique and exclusive location.

[+ More Info](#)

WHAT TO BRING

Specialized cycle clothing may be handy but not strictly necessary. What you do need (among other things) is following:

- shorts/ long trousers/ track suit/ legging/ shirts/ sweater/ rain clothing / good shoes
- gloves (only when you book a tour in April. It can be chilly in the morning that time of year!)
- sunglasses/ cap/ swimming costume / insect repellent

HOW TO GET THERE

To Leon: Approximately 3 hours by train from Madrid www.renfe.es

From Santiago de Compostela: International flights from Santiago Airport

Madrid – León private transfer: €490 (1-6 people)