



THE PILGRIM'S WAY

FOLLOWING THE CAMINO DE SANTIAGO FROM BILBAO TO SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA

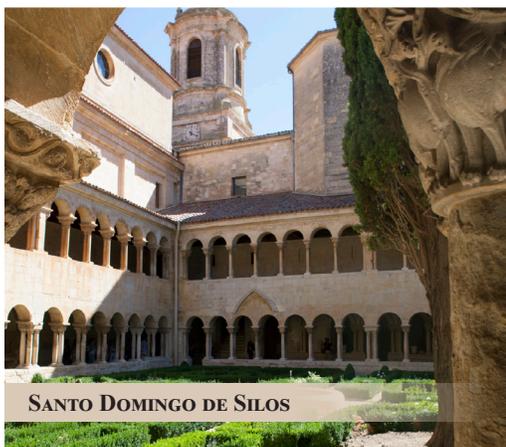
JUNE 6TH - 15TH 2019

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 north-west 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.



SANTO DOMINGO DE SILOS



SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA CATHEDRAL

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

LAND ONLY (NO AIRFARE INCLUDED): \$ 3680
SINGLE SUPPLEMENT: \$ 660

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.*



THURSDAY, JUNE 6th - Evening departure from your U.S. gateway city. **OVERNIGHT: PLANE**

FRIDAY, JUNE 7th - 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**

SATURDAY, JUNE 8th - Our day begins with a visit to the spectacular Guggenheim Museum. We continue along the coast to the resort town of San Sebastián. Destroyed by fire in 1813, the town was largely rebuilt in the Belle Epoch style and has become a playground for the rich and famous with sweeping sand beaches and a reputation for the best Basque cuisine. We'll have time for lunch and to explore before we return to our hotel for dinner. **(B, D) OVERNIGHT: BILBAO**

SUNDAY, JUNE 9th - Heading south we follow the Nervion River inland to Haro, the capital of La Rioja wine production. We'll see the Renaissance church of San Tomás, with its wedding-cake tower, and the enchanting Plaza de la Paz (Square of Peace), a glass-balconied square whose mansions overlook an archaic bandstand. Afterward, we'll join the Camino de Santiago and head into Burgos. This afternoon we'll visit the Gothic cathedral, one of the greatest in all Spain, famous for its filigree of spires and pinnacles which are among the most extraordinary achievements of Gothic architecture. Dinner is at the hotel this evening. **(B, D) OVERNIGHT: BURGOS**



MONDAY, JUNE 10th - 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, 11th-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 8th-century, Visigothic hermitage of Santa Maria. The evening is free in Burgos. **(B) OVERNIGHT: BURGOS**

TUESDAY, JUNE 11th - 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**

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 12th - 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**

THURSDAY, JUNE 13th - 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 9th-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**

FRIDAY, JUNE 14th - 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**

SATURDAY, JUNE 15th - Morning transfer to Santiago Airport for returning flights to the US. **(B)**



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