



Welcoming pilgrims into Santiago



covers 800 kms; while the full Camino Portugues is 600 kms long) over the course of several years, often bumping into fellow pilgrims along the way.

"I met a Canadian woman who was walking with a French man that she met over 8 years ago. They had a great rapport and decided that every year they would take two weeks out of their normal routines to walk the Camino Frances together. This year they were walking their final section. They were elated and sad all at once to be completing this epic journey but I am sure they will remain lifelong friends," adds Lisa.

The Camino is a special journey filled with both physical and emotional challenges. People from all around the world set out to walk the trails each year. They 'do the Camino' for many personal reasons: as a challenge, to get away from their routine, to get some space, for spiritual reasons, to be closer to nature, to allow yourself time to think, to connect with others, to meet new people or simply experience the colourful Spanish culture at a different pace.

Walking on The Camino

The Camino de Santiago is often a destination to be ticked off the bucket list. This ancient medieval pilgrim route is probably the most famous long-distance trail in the world.

More than a pilgrimage, the Camino is today a very special, rich and unique cultural experience and a journey like no other. Thousands from all over the globe walk or cycle to Santiago de Compostela each year; over 260,000 pilgrims arrived in the city in 2015 alone.

There are many Camino routes stretching thousands of kms across Europe. While the Camino Frances is the most known and popular, featuring in movies such as *The Way*, as well as countless books, each way has its own appeal, landscapes and, of course, culture and gastronomy.

Lisa Gibbons from CaminoWays.com walked the Portuguese Coastal Way earlier this year from Baiona to Santiago.

"Taking time out of our busy lives is becoming harder and harder. We all

seem to find excuses to make ourselves even busier than before. Getting outdoors, back to nature and visiting new places is a welcome break. Simply waking up every morning with one objective: walking from one town to the next was a treat. Whatever you like to call it—an escape, an adventure, a challenge, all of it... it is time to turn down the noise of distractions," she explains.

"You are embarking on an adventure. Unlike most vacations, you will see several towns, small villages and small streets that otherwise would go unnoticed."

Most pilgrims choose to walk at least the last 100kms into Santiago as this is the minimum distance required to receive the Compostela pilgrim certificate issued by the Pilgrims Office in Santiago.

Many choose to walk the full route (the Camino Frances for instance





On the way to Santiago

"In the mornings, you will rise early to get on the road. You will want to reach the next town at a reasonable hour, giving you time to explore but also, depending on the time of year, to avoid the hotter parts of the day.

On average, your daily walk is between 20 – 25 kms, taking you from the coastal promenades to lush green landscapes, stopping in quaint villages along the way. Each day you can look forward to seeing new places, meeting fellow walkers and admiring the stunning scenery.

In the evenings, you will be tired, hungry and filled with a sense of achievement. Drop by a tapas bar to enjoy some of the fresh local produce and the best wines. Calamares,



paella and pulpo are just three of many must-try dishes in Galicia. It is worth every step," she adds.

CaminoWays.com is a Dublin-based Camino de Santiago specialist. Visit caminoways.com or contact the team on 015252886 for information.

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