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Camino de Santiago Challenge 2027 - Open Event

Sep 19, 2027 - Sep 26, 2027

The Camino de Santiago (or the Way of St James) is Europe's most popular pilgrimage route, and one that travellers are increasingly adding to their bucket lists. What few people know is that the Camino (path) is actually made up of multiple routes. They all lead to the same point — the cathedral in Santiago de Compostela, capital of Galicia in northern Spain, the alleged resting place of the apostle St James.

From the Middle Ages onwards, the devout would set off from their own doorsteps and make their way across Europe to the city to purge themselves of a lifetime of sins. Nowadays, there is a network of nine routes of varying lengths to choose from, with starting points in [Spain](#), [France](#) and [Portugal](#). most undertake it for reasons of faith, adventure, personal reflection and culture.

As you walk, you'll come across charming churches, chapels, and historical landmarks. The trail will also lead you along roads through towns and villages, forests, vineyards, and open fields, providing a variety of scenery.

September 19 - Day 1 - UK to Portugal (Sunday)



Route: UK → Porto → TUI

Walking Distance: None (travel day)

- Schedule
- **Morning:** Early flight from London to Porto (TBC)
- **Afternoon:** Taxi transfer to TUI (approx. 1.5 hours)
- **Evening:** Check-in and settle into accommodation
- **Accommodation:** TUI Hotel Colon Tuy or similar

September 20 - Day 2 (Monday)



TUI - Porinno (Day 1 Walking)

Walking Distance: 16 km

Estimated Walking Time: 4 hours

Schedule

- **08:00** - Breakfast at hotel
- **09:00** - Depart TUI, begin walking
- **10:30** - Arrive Porinno
- **11:00** - Check into accommodation
- **Afternoon** - Rest and explore Porinno
- **17:00** - Walk to cathedral to collect Credencial (pilgrim record cards)
- **19:00** - Dinner

Route Description

Terrain & Elevation: A gentle introduction to the Camino with minimal elevation gain (approx. 50m ascent). The route follows mostly flat terrain along paved roads and well-maintained paths through the border town of TUI.

The Walk: Depart from TUI crossing into Spain, following the Miño river valley. The path winds through the historic old town before emerging into open countryside. Gentle rolling terrain with good underfoot conditions on a mix of tarmac and compacted earth paths.

Views & Scenery: River views along the Miño, medieval architecture of TUI including city walls and bridges. The landscape opens to reveal Galician countryside with eucalyptus groves and small agricultural plots. On clear days, distant views of the surrounding green hills.

Highlights: Crossing from Portugal into Spain, TUI's cathedral with its captivating architecture. This evening's briefing at the cathedral to collect Credencial cards - an important pilgrim tradition marking the official start of your Camino journey. Routines established tonight for swift morning departures.

What's Included: Breakfast, Credencial

Accommodation: PORINNO - Alojamentos Central or similar

September 21 - Day 3 (Tuesday)



O PORINNO-CESANTES (Day 2 Walking)

Walking Distance: 19km

Estimated Walking Time: 5-6 hours

Schedule

- **07:00** - Breakfast
- **08:00** - Depart Porinno
- **11:00** - Arrive Redondella (lunch stop)
- **12:00** - Continue walking
- **13:30** - Divert to coast for ocean paddle (foot soak)
- **14:30** - Arrive Cesantes
- **19:00** - Dinner

Route Description

Terrain & Elevation: Moderate terrain with 280m total ascent and 250m descent. The route includes several rolling hills through eucalyptus forests and open countryside before descending toward the coast.

The Walk: Depart Porinno heading northwest through typical Galician landscape. The path climbs gradually through shaded eucalyptus groves and pine forests on well-maintained trails. Mid-morning, the route opens to reveal agricultural land with traditional stone walls and small villages. Descent into Redondella (11km mark) offers welcome lunch options - the town is well-served with supermarkets and pharmacies.

After Redondella, continue on a mix of forest paths and quiet country lanes. We divert from the traditional Camino route for a few kilometres to reach the coast, giving tired feet the therapeutic opportunity to paddle in the Atlantic Ocean. The final approach follows coastal paths with improving views.

Views & Scenery: Morning offers green hillside vistas dotted with traditional Galician hórreos (raised granaries). From higher points, glimpses of the Vigo estuary appear in the distance. Redondella sits in a valley with views to surrounding hills. The coastal diversion reveals expansive ocean views across the Vigo estuary. Cesantes itself offers stunning waterside scenery with fishing boats and tidal mudflats.

Highlights: First proper Camino walking day, eucalyptus forest canopy, ocean paddle for foot care, coastal village atmosphere, views across Vigo estuary toward the Atlantic.

What's Included: Breakfast

Accommodation: CESANTES - Hostal Antolin or similar

September 22 - Day 4 (Wednesday)



CESANTES-PONTEVEDRA (Day 3 Walking)

Walking Distance: 16km

Estimated Walking Time: 4-5 hours

Schedule

- **07:00** - Breakfast
- **08:00** - Depart Cesantes
- **10:00** - Cross Ponte Sampaio (medieval bridge)
- **12:30** - Arrive Pontevedra
- **Afternoon** - Explore historic centre, visit Church of Santa Maria la Mayor, or rest/do laundry
- **19:00** - Dinner

Route Description

Terrain & Elevation: Gentle terrain with 180m total ascent and 190m descent. Mostly undulating countryside with one moderate climb before Ponte Sampaio, followed by easy descent into Pontevedra.

The Walk: Leave the coastal setting of Cesantes and head inland, climbing gradually through woodland and rural farmland. The path follows old Roman roads and country lanes lined with stone walls and traditional Galician architecture. Around 8km, you'll reach the highlight of the day - the spectacular medieval bridge at Ponte Sampaio, scene of a famous 1809 battle during the Peninsular War.

Cross the ancient stone bridge over the Río Verdugo, then continue on gentle terrain through vineyards and small hamlets. The final 5km is an easy descent following the river valley into the historic heart of Pontevedra.

Views & Scenery: Morning views across farmland and wooded valleys. The medieval Ponte Sampaio bridge is a photographic highlight with its graceful arches spanning the river. Afternoon walking offers vineyard scenery and traditional rural Galician life. Approaching Pontevedra, the landscape becomes more urban, but the historic old town's church spires and medieval architecture provide a beautiful welcome.

Highlights: Ponte Sampaio medieval bridge, Río Verdugo valley, arrival in historic Pontevedra with its stunning Church of Santa Maria la Mayor (Galician Romanesque architecture), pedestrian-friendly old town with charming squares and narrow alleys. Perfect rest day opportunity - explore, do laundry, recuperate.

What's Included: Breakfast

Accommodation: PONTEVEDRA Hotel Room Pontevedra or similar

September 23 - Day 5 (Thursday)



PONTEVEDRA-CALDAS DE REIS (Day 4 Walking)

Walking Distance: 21km

Estimated Walking Time: 5.5-6.5 hours

Schedule

- **07:00** - Breakfast
- **08:00** - Depart Pontevedra
- **10:30** - Visit Parroquia (Brother Carlos for pilgrim blessing - optional)
- **13:00** - Natural Park of Rio Barosa Waterfalls (optional detour)
- **14:30** - Arrive Caldas de Reis
- **Afternoon** - Relax, explore thermal springs and roman bridge
- **19:00** - Dinner

Route Description

Terrain & Elevation: Moderate to challenging terrain with 320m total ascent and 280m descent. Several sustained climbs through forested areas, followed by descents into valley settlements. Longest walking day so far.

The Walk: Exit Pontevedra heading northeast, initially on suburban paths before climbing into rural countryside. The route ascends through oak and eucalyptus woodland on ancient pathways, with several moderate climbs and descents as you traverse a series of ridges and valleys. Around 10km, opportunity to visit Parroquia for Brother Carlos' pilgrim blessing - a moving spiritual moment for many pilgrims.

Mid-route, the Camino passes close to the Natural Park of Rio Barosa with its spectacular waterfalls - an optional 1.5km detour well worth the extra effort. The path follows cascading streams through lush forest. Final approach to Caldas de Reis involves a gradual descent through agricultural land and vineyards, following the Río Umia valley.

Views & Scenery: Morning reveals expansive vistas across Pontevedra's countryside from elevated forest paths. Descents offer glimpses into green valleys dotted with stone cottages and hórreos. The Rio Barosa waterfalls provide dramatic natural beauty with crystal-clear water tumbling over moss-covered rocks through ancient woodland. Final descent reveals the thermal steam rising from Caldas de Reis' famous hot springs and the impressive Roman bridge spanning the river.

Highlights: Brother Carlos' pilgrim blessing at Parroquia (deeply meaningful), Rio Barosa Waterfalls Natural Park (stunning), arrival at Caldas de Reis with its therapeutic thermal springs (perfect for tired legs), impressive Roman bridge, evening tapas and traditional Galician Octopus (Polpo). Option to extend to Monasterio de Herbon for tomorrow's stage.

What's Included: Breakfast

Accommodation: CALDAS DE REIS - Belnario Acuna or similar

September 24 - Day 6 (Friday)



CALDAS DE REIS - PADRON (Day 5 Walking)

Walking Distance: 18km

Estimated Walking Time: 4.5-5.5 hours

Schedule

- **07:00** - Breakfast
- **08:00** - Depart Caldas de Reis
- **13:00** - Arrive Padrón
- **Afternoon** - Visit Church of Santiago and other historical pilgrimage sites
- **19:00** - Dinner

Route Description

Terrain & Elevation: Gentle to moderate terrain with 240m total ascent and 220m descent. Mostly rolling countryside with one sustained climb mid-route, followed by easy riverside walking into Padrón.

The Walk: Depart Caldas de Reis following the Río Umia valley on peaceful country lanes and forest tracks. The first 6km is relatively flat, passing through small hamlets and agricultural land. Around the hamlet of Pontecesures, cross the river and begin a moderate climb through oak and chestnut woodland - the main ascent of the day (approximately 120m elevation gain over 2km).

Crest the ridge and descend through the historic Monasterio de Herbón area, where some pilgrims may have stayed overnight. The final 7km follows gentle terrain alongside the Río Sar, with good path surfaces and shade from riverside trees. Approach Padrón through its outskirts, arriving in the historic town centre rich in Camino legend.

Views & Scenery: Morning offers pastoral scenes of the Umia valley with traditional farmsteads and cultivated fields. From the mid-route ridge, panoramic views extend across the Galician countryside toward distant hills. Descent through Herbón reveals its beautiful monastery nestled in greenery. Riverside approach to Padrón provides tranquil walking with reflections on the water and glimpses of the town's church spires ahead.

Highlights: Río Umia valley landscapes, Monasterio de Herbón (historical religious site), riverside walking on the Río Sar, arrival in Padrón - deeply connected to St. James legend (where his body allegedly arrived by boat). Visit Church of Santiago and see the "pedrón" (mooring stone). Padrón is famous for its pimientos de Padrón peppers and connection to poet Rosalía de Castro.

What's Included: Breakfast, Evening Meal (restaurant)

Accommodation: PADRON - Hotel Corona de Padrón or similar

September 25 - Day 7 (Saturday)



PADRON-SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELLA (Day 6 Walking)

Walking Distance: 23km

Estimated Walking Time: 6-7 hours

Schedule

- **06:30** - Early breakfast
- **07:00** - Depart (early start essential - longest day)
- **13:30** - Arrive Santiago de Compostela
- **14:00** - Plaza del Obradoiro - share the moment with fellow pilgrims
- **Afternoon** - Rest, explore the square and cathedral exterior
- **19:00** - Celebratory evening meal at restaurant

Route Description

Terrain & Elevation: The longest and most challenging day with 380m total ascent and 320m descent. Gradual but sustained climbing through the first half, with the final approach involving a notable ascent to Santiago's elevated old town.

The Walk: Early 07:00 departure essential. Begin from Monasterio de Herbón or Padrón, following the iconic yellow arrows and scallop shell waymarkers northward. The first 10km climbs steadily through eucalyptus forests and rural farmland on a mix of dirt tracks, forest paths and quiet country lanes. Terrain is undulating with several moderate ascents.

Mid-route (around Teo), the landscape opens to reveal distant views toward Santiago. The path continues through a patchwork of fields, small hamlets, and woodland groves. Around 18km, the climb intensifies as you approach Santiago's outskirts - this is the "final push" felt by every pilgrim.

The last 5km passes through increasingly urban terrain - modern suburbs give way to historic streets. As you enter the medieval quarter, excitement builds with every step. The path winds through narrow cobbled streets, past ancient stone buildings, until suddenly - the magnificent cathedral's baroque towers appear above the rooftops. Final approach descends into the **Plaza del Obradoiro** where all Camino routes converge.

Views & Scenery: Morning reveals green rolling hills bathed in early light, with distant mountain ranges on clear days. Mid-route offers expansive agricultural vistas with traditional Galician architecture dotting the landscape. The approach to Santiago provides glimpses of the city's spires rising on the horizon - an emotional sight for pilgrims. Final descent through medieval streets creates an atmospheric arrival, culminating in the breathtaking moment of emerging into the vast Plaza del Obradoiro facing the cathedral's ornate western façade.

Highlights: The final stage of your pilgrimage journey - emotionally powerful. Watching Santiago's cathedral spires appear in the distance. Walking the ancient cobbled streets. The unforgettable moment of arrival in Plaza del Obradoiro where thousands of pilgrims have stood before you. Sharing tears, hugs, and celebration with fellow pilgrims from around the world. The sense of achievement after 116 km walked. Cathedral bells ringing. The culmination of your Camino journey.

What's Included: Breakfast

Accommodation: SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELLA Hotel Compostela or similar

September 26 - Day 8 Fly Home to UK (Sunday)



SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELLA

Walking Distance: None (departure day)

Schedule

- **08:00** - Breakfast
- **09:30** - Visit Pilgrims office to get final Credential stamp and certification
- **11:30** - Special mass/blessing for pilgrims at cathedral (optional)
- **Afternoon** - Visit museum or explore medieval streets and arcades
- **TBC** - Public bus to Santiago Airport (60 mins)
- **TBC** - Flight to UK

Activities

Special mass/blessing for pilgrims at cathedral at 11:30am daily. Visit Pilgrims office nearby to get final stamp in Credencial and have it certified. Museum worth a visit, or spend the day walking medieval streets and arcades of Santiago de Compostella.

Information & Documents



Highlights of the Camino

- Raising money for chosen charity
- Connecting with others on the 'Camino', both in your groups and the wider community
- Adventure-Beautiful scenery, rural life and vibrant medieval towns of Galicia
- Understanding the history and culture of the region
- You will be a pilgrim, not a tourist!



WHAT'S INCLUDED

- SBA UK leaders - Paul and TBC
- Pre-trip zoom briefing
- Participant Whats App group
- Free Training Day in Reading area
- Pilgrim Passes for last 100km walkers
- Daily luggage transfers between accommodation
- First and Last day celebratory evening meals
- All other meals on a Bed and Breakfast basis
- All National Park fees



WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

- International flights (We can provide help and advice on selecting flights)
- Airport Transfers
- Alcoholic drinks
- Travel insurance
- Items of a personal nature
- Single supplement
- Lunch and Evening Meal (unless specified in itinerary)



Fitness

Participants will be walking 18km/day for multiple days. A 'reasonable' level of fitness is required (but you don't need to be an athlete!) It's much more important that participants can manage their routines, (ie getting up and out quickly in the morning!, self-care, food, hydration, hygiene and feet care) I would expect as the week goes on, that participants will naturally fall into different groups as everyone walks at a different pace. Pre-existing medical conditions and or recurring injuries are very likely to resurface during 6 days of walking.



Technical skill

The Camino is well signposted, so expert skill in navigation is not necessary. It is a relatively achievable and safe entry point for those who are new to this type of adventure. Walking poles are recommended and practice walks are encouraged prior to departure.

Preparation/Training

I would recommend a training event and a training plan for those taking part

Fast and light packing

Foot Care/ Footwear

Use of walking poles

Sleeping well on the Camino (-;

Accommodation

Accommodation Standard Summary

Your group will stay in **carefully selected mid-range to superior hotels** throughout the Camino route, offering comfort and quality after each day's walk.

What to expect:

- **Room types:** Twin-share rooms as standard, with single room supplements available (€30–60 per night depending on property)
- **Facilities:** En-suite bathrooms, comfortable beds, and breakfast facilities
- **Location:** Hotels situated in or near town centres, within easy walking distance of restaurants and local amenities
- **Quality range:** Comfortable 3-star hotels throughout the route, with a spa hotel (Balneario Acuña) in Caldas de Reis on night 5

Nightly accommodation overview:

Nights 1–3 (Tui → Redondela)

Comfortable 3-star hotels including Hotel Colón in Tui and Hotel Antolín in Redondela

Nights 4–5 (Pontevedra → Caldas)

Quality hotels including Hotel Room Pontevedra and the spa hotel Balneario Acuña in Caldas de Reis

Nights 6–7 (Padrón → Santiago)

Comfortable hotels including Hotel Corona de Padrón and Hotel Compostela in Santiago

All accommodation includes **breakfast** served on-site. The entire group will where possible, stay together at the same property each night.

Note: Final 2027 pricing is being confirmed with selected properties. All rates shown are per room (twin share) including breakfast and VAT.

Food

We recommend a Bed and Breakfast plan (7 days) which leaves participants free to organise their own lunches and evening meals. There are many choices of café's and supermarkets each day. Where accommodation does not provide early breakfast, there are kitchen facilities and a continental 'grab and go' style breakfast can be supplied by the guide. Evening meals can be organised with either Hotels or local restaurants.

Contingency/Emergency planning

The start and end points of each day are achievable. There is contingency to break the last day into 2 shorter legs although the additional arrangements and cost for accommodation could be met by the participant if that occurs. The route is well served with public transport if required. (Although all are required to declare that they have walked 100km+ if they are to receive their Certificate). There are regional Hospitals at both Santiago and Vigo. Most towns have a private clinic (€40 per consultation) and pharmacies are everywhere on route.

Flights

We recommend booking flights from UK to Porto on the outward journey. On your return you will be flying out from Santiago to UK