

SAINT JAMES OF COMPOSTELA PILGRIMAGE ROUTE

CAMINO DEL NORTE

From Hendaye to Bilbao

With the land on one side and the sea on the other, the Camino del Norte takes you all the way to Santiago de Compostela. Your constant companion on this dayney is the Atlantic Ocean. You set off among fishing villages and small sandy beaches, but you also see beautiful towns such as Hendaye, San Sebastian and Bilbao. Exploring the lovely Cantabrian coastline on foot brings with it many agreeable surprises. You make your way through some magnificent countryside. The first week of this long walk, which takes you as far as Bilbao, starts with a footpath overlooking the ocean. After that the route continues into the Basque country, to explore Markina and Gernika...

This week's walking ends at Bilbao, a town famous for its museum, the Guggenheim, which is very well worth a visit...

PROGRAMME

JL054

8 days - 7 nights - 6 days' walking

DAY 1: HENDAYE (or IRUN)

Arrive at Hendaye (or Irun), and check in at the hotel.

DAY 2: HENDAYE (or IRUN) - SAN SEBASTIAN

From Hendaye, you soon get into Spain. You can either cross the Bidasoa in a boat or start the day by walking from Hendaye itself. This beautiful first day's walk takes you to San Sebastian, through an area of fishing ports and river inlets. **The evening meal is not included.**

Walking time: ≈ 7h, distance 27 km (from Hendaye) or 25 km (from Irun)

DAY 3: SAN SEBASTIAN - ZARAUTZ

You leave San Sebastian and go along the beautiful beach of *la Concha*. Along the way you get splendid views of the sea and the high cliffs that tower over the Atlantic. The night is spent in half-board accommodation.

Walking time: ≈ 5h15, distance 21 km.

DAY 4: ZARAUTZ - DEBA

This day's walk takes you first to Getaria and its fishing port. After that you continue by crossing the terraced vineyards of Txakoli. As you approach Deba, the coastline becomes wild and beautiful. You spend the night in half-board accommodation at Deba or nearby.

Walking time: ≈ 5h45, distance 23 km.

DAY 5: DEBA - MARKINA



This stage takes you into the Basque hinterland. You leave the coast and go deeper into the countryside as you cross the valley of Olatz. The night is in half-board accommodation.

Walking time: ≈ 7h30, distance 28 km.

DAY 6: MARKINA - GERNIKA (Guernica)

This is a pleasant day's walk through rolling, unspoiled countryside. On the way you see the 11th century church of s. de Bolibar, the monastery at Cenarruza and then the Ermita Santiago before you arrive in Gernika. The night is in half-board accommodation.

Walking time: ≈ 7h, distance 27 km.

DAY 7: GERNIKA - LEZAMA (then a night at BILBAO)

This day's walk takes you into Bilbao. To shorten the walk itself, and to avoid walking through the suburbs, we suggest you take the train into the town from Lezama (at your own expense). Dinner is not included.

Walking time: ≈ 6h, distance 25 km.

DAY 8: BILBAO

The holiday ends after breakfast.

DATES

You can start this holiday on any day of the week between 1 April and 31 October. Book early if you want a holiday in July or August.

Please show on your booking form any alternative dates which would suit you equally well (for example if you are able to start or finish the holiday a few days earlier or later than your ideal date). This is very useful if one or more of the hotels or other places of accommodation are fully booked for your first choice date.)

We also ask you to **book as early as possible**. We do not keep permanent reservations, and some places can be booked up several months in advance.

Extra charge in the high season (July/August and Holy Week (Easter): from 20/03 to 26/03/15):

THE PRICE COVERS

- Nights of half-board accommodation (excluding evening meals on Day 2 and Day 7)
- Transport of luggage
- A Travel information pack with a guide book (1 set of documents for 1 to 2 people)

THE PRICE DOES NOT COVER

- Midday meals
- Dinner (evening meal) on Days 2 and 7
- The small boat crossing of Pasajes on Day 2
- The train journey on Day 7
- Drinks
- Insurance.
- Booking fees
- Extra charge for postage outside France.



ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

Beginning of the holiday:

Arrive and check into your hotel at Hendaye at the end of the afternoon on the day before your first day's walking.

End of the holiday:

At Bilbao after breakfast, the morning after your last day's walking.

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY

Average walking time of 6h to 7h per day for about 25Km over fairly hilly countryside; some ascents and descents of 300 to 400m (1000 to 1300 feet). No special difficulties but the walking is quite strenuous as you go up and down the hills behind the coast. The tracks are well marked and signposted.

ACCOMMODATION

Hotels, inns and bed-and-breakfasts.

MIDDAY MEALS

Midday meals and packed lunches are not included in the price of the holiday.

TRANSPORT OF LUGGAGE

Your bags will be transported for you during each day's walk.

ATTENTION: We ask you to leave your luggage in the entrance of each place of accommodation in the morning. YOU MUST HAVE ONLY ONE BAG PER PERSON, AND THE WEIGHT OF THAT BAG MUST NOT BE MORE THAN 14KG. If the number (one bag) and the weight (14kg) is exceeded, the carrier may charge you extra at the end of the holiday. Alternatively, the carrier may refuse to transport your luggage at all if it is too heavy or awkward.

We strongly advise you to have a small rucksack for carrying the things you will need with you during the daytime.

If you are part of a group, please show clearly on your luggage labels the name of the person who is responsible for your group (i.e. the person who booked the holiday).

ACCESS

*GETTING THERE

- Train : Get the train from Paris (via Bordeaux) or Toulouse, to Hendaye.

For further information about train prices and timetables, telephone 36 35 (if you are in France) or look at the SNCF (French railways) English language website.

- Plane : The nearest French airport is that of Bayonne-Biarritz. From there you can get a taxi to Hendaye. There are flights from Britain to Bilbao and Biarritz.

- Car : From Bordeaux, take the N10 to Hendaye, and go towards the train station (gare SNCF). From Toulouse, either follow the A64 to Bayonne and then the A63 to Hendaye, or the N117 to Bayonne and then the N10 to Hendaye and Irun station (gare d'Irun).

There is no secure car parking by the station; the only secure car park is more than 1km from the station, towards the centre of town (centre ville).



Boat: There are ferry services from England to Santander. Ask the agency (La Pèlerine) for advice about how to get to Bilbao or Hendaye.

* **GETTING HOME**

- Train: You can travel from Bilbao à Irun. However, we advise you to take the bus.

- Bus: The ALSA bus company runs a regular service, all the days of the week, between Bilbao and Irun. There are departures nearly every hour during the day. The journey takes between 1 hour 30 and 2 hours. Visit their website: www.alsa.es.

- Car: Take the bus to Irun or Hendaye to get back to your vehicle.

HOLIDAY INFORMATION PACK

In the month before your holiday, but after we have received your payment, we will send you an information pack containing all the papers and information you need for your holiday to go smoothly. This will include guide-books, maps, luggage labels/stickers, a guide on the transport of yourself and your luggage, the addresses of the places where you stay and some administrative/legal documents such as your receipt and your insurance contract and details. In the guide-book you will find a full description of your walking route (the entire route is way-marked) and descriptions of the villages and sights that you will see. A full set of these holiday documents will be sent to every 1-4 walkers on the holiday.

THINGS TO TAKE WITH YOU

- A soft travelling bag; avoid suitcases, which are more awkward to deal with, and try to keep the weight of your belongings to 10kg maximum.
 - A small rucksack (30 litres minimum) for your packed lunch and any other things you want to carry with you.
 - A small personal first aid kit (plasters, new-skin, eosine [disinfectant for small wounds, insect bites or blisters], alcohol, painkillers, earplugs etc).
 - A pair of walking boots or shoes. Make sure you test them before you go, so you know they are comfortable.
 - 1 waterproof, breathable jacket (type gore-tex)
 - 1 fleece or 1 pullover
 - 1 rain cape (poncho)
 - 1 pair of walking trousers (loose fit – e.g. jogging bottoms)
 - 1 pair of thin gloves
 - 1 woolly hat
 - 1 pair of shorts
 - 1 swimming trunks/costume and towel
 - several pairs of socks (not too thick)
 - underwear
 - 1 pair plimsolls or equivalent
 - 1 overcoat or similar garment for evening wear
 - sun-glasses, sun-cream, lip-salve
 - 1 hat
 - 1 water bottle (plan to drink 2 to 3 litres of water per day in summer)
 - 1 plastic bowl of the Tupperware type for picnics and knife, fork and spoon.
 - camera and anything else you might want, e.g. a novel to read or watercolour paints...
 - official documents – see the section below: **FORMALITIES**
- Also bring with you your good humour and your curiosity!

INSURANCE

Our insurances, Contrat Assistance Plus (Assistance étendue) and Contrat Sérénité (Premium) are individual and optional. If you sign up for them it must be **AT THE LATEST, 14 WORKING DAYS** after booking the



holiday, and the insurance cannot take effect until after you have paid the full cost of the holiday. Anybody can take out one of our insurances, whatever their country of residence.

The total cost of the Contrat Assistance Plus (insurance for Assistance/Rapatiation) is set at 1.70% of the cost of the holiday. It takes into account only the cost of the holiday.

The total cost of the Contrat Sérénité (insurance for Assistance/Repatriation, cancellation and interruption of the holiday) is set at 3.6 % of the price of the holiday. It takes into account the cost of the holiday and the extra charges (for individual bedrooms, for a single holidaymaker, extra nights and possible extra transportation etc).

If you cancel the holiday yourself, if you haven't taken out our insurance for cancellation, the cancellation fees will be retained by us.

The size of the cancellation fee depends on the date of cancellation:

- 1) more than 30 days before the planned departure: 50 € of administration fees per person.
- 2) between 30 days and 22 days before departure: 25% of the total cost of the holiday.
- 3) between 21 days and 15 days before departure: 50% of the total cost of the holiday.
- 4) between 14 days and 8 days before departure: 75% of the total cost of the holiday.
- 5) between 7 days and 2 days before departure: 90% of the total cost of the holiday.
- 6) less than two days before the departure date: 100% of the total cost of the holiday.

In all cases of cancellation, even if it is more than 30 days before the planned starting date of the holiday, a fee of 50 € per person will be retained by us to cover administration costs.

➤➤ If the person with whom you planned to share a bedroom cancels their holiday, you will be billed for the individual supplement for that bedroom.

If you have to cancel your holiday **before you set off**, contact La Pèlerine on +33 (0)4 71 74 47 40, and we will do whatever is necessary.

During your holiday, your first action in such a situation should be either to contact **ASSISTANCE MUTUAIDE** on +33 (0)1 45 16 43 47 (if you have taken out the insurance contrat assistance plus) or **SERVICE SINISTRE ASSURANCE** on +33 (0)5 32 09 21 81 (if you have taken out the insurance contrat sérénité).

If you have any questions about your insurance contract, please contact the Hot Line on **05 32 09 21 81**.

Not turning up at the beginning of the holiday, or abandoning the holiday after you have begun it with no explanation, will disqualify you from reimbursement.

An example of an insurance contract, detailing the guarantees it gives you and the procedures you have to follow to make a claim, will be sent to you either at the time you make your booking – or at any other time if you ask for it.

**CHANGING YOUR BOOKING:
ATTENTION!**

Administration fees (50 €) will be kept by us for **any change you make in a booking already made** (e.g. for type of bedroom, departure dates, number of people etc).

If you want to book **extra nights** at the beginning or the end of your holiday this **must** be done **at the time of booking** and be specified on the booking confirmation sheet. Once bookings have been confirmed, if you want to arrange extra nights this must be done directly with the establishments concerned, and paid for at the time.

