

THE PORTUGUESE WAY OF SAINT JAMES
VIA LUSITANA
FROM PONTE DE LIMA TO SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA



Less well-known than the French Way of Saint James, the Portuguese Way (Via Lusitana) is no less rich in the history and traditions of pilgrimage. The Portuguese Way offers an alternative full of magic and adventure, and brings you to Santiago de Compostela by way of Portugal and Spain (Galicia). Your starting point is Ponte de Lima, which is not only the oldest town in Portugal, but also the meeting point of historic pilgrimage routes coming from southern and central Portugal.

The Lusitana offers you a wide variety of interesting walking, with beautiful paths, pretty villages and luxuriant vegetation. Most of your walking is done on footpaths or narrow roads. The countryside around you features forests of eucalyptus, pine and oak and many vineyards. The paths you follow range from sandy tracks through ancient Roman roads, farm tracks and small country roads. Your holiday will combine history and tradition with beautiful rolling countryside, unspoilt woodland and luscious bunches of grapes if the season is right. Apart from the first Spanish section of the walk, every aspect of the journey to Santiago is pure pleasure.

PROGRAMME

JL043

9 days - 8 nights - 7 days' walking

DAY 1: PORTO - PONTE DE LIMA

On this day you arrive in Porto. Transfer from Porto to Ponte de Lima (2-hour bus drive) **Night and half-board accommodation.**

DAY 2: PONTE DE LIMA - SÃO ROQUE (RUBIÃES): 17,5 km. 5h30 walking.

One of the most strenuous days on this part of the Way, but also one of the most beautiful. For half the day you walk along the banks of the rio Labruja. There is very little in the way of tarred roads: most of the walking is along Roman roads and country footpaths. You pass by the Cruz dos Mortos, also known as the Frenchmen's Cross, because it was here that the rearguard of Napoleon's army was wiped out in 1809. A final push brings you to Portela Grande from where there is a marvellous view. You then go down to Cabanas and afterwards, São Roque, by a Roman road. Your accommodation is on the ridge at San Roque, so there is no need to go down into the village of Rubiaes.

DAY 3: SÃO ROQUE (RUBIÃES) - VALENÇA: 19 km. 5h walking

After walking 5 kilometres, you come to the sanctuary of São Bento da Porta Aberta which represents the only slightly difficult part of the day's walk. Next you come to the Capela do Senhor dos Aflitos at Fontoura. From here, you head for Valença and pass through the doors of its fortifications. This is a day when you will see, among other things, Roman bridges, Roman roads and beautiful footpaths which you will wish could go on forever.

DAY 4: VALENÇA - REDONDELA: 34,5 km. 8 h walking. It is possible to split this stage into two days' walking.

Today you leave Valença and Portugal before crossing the bridge, which has spanned the rio Minho since 1884 and was built under the direction of Gustave Eiffel. You will see the cathedral of Santa Maria de Tuy which has been a pilgrimage destination since the 12th and 13th centuries.



This day is the longest day's walk on the pilgrimage route. You are now in Galicia and from now on you will see signs indicating the number of kilometres remaining before you reach Santiago. After passing the Chapelle de la Vierge du Chemin (Chapel of the Virgin on the Way) you reach the Ponte das Febres (Bridge of Fevers) where San Telmo was found, dying of malaria. This is roughly the half-way point of a long day's walk. You now head for the historic town of Redondela and its Santiago church, where you can have a well-earned rest overlooking the magnificent estuary of Vigo.

If you wish we can organise a taxi in the morning to take you the 10km to Poriño, for this is a long day's walk and the taxi ride will enable you to avoid the industrial area between Valença and Poriño.

You can split your day's walk at Poriño, a town situated in the valley of the Louriña. Standing on the rio Louro, O Poriño is a very industrialised town. It is here that you find the biggest quarries in Spain, from which are extracted a kind of pink granite which is sold all over the world. If you wish to shorten the day's walk without splitting it into two days, you can take a service bus in the morning from Valença which will save you several kilometres.

DAY 5: REDONDELA - PONTEVEDRA: 21 km. 5h30 walking.

This is a short day's walk which will give you a chance to recover from the previous day. You walk along some quiet roads and follow some forest tracks and Roman roads. This is a day passed in a rich and varied natural setting. The track leading to Arcade is magnificent.

Since the 12th century, Pontevedra has been one of Galicia's most important ports. Its heyday lasted until the end of the 17th century. If your legs can stand it, you should try to visit the sanctuary of the Virgin of the Peregrina and the basilica of Santa Maria A Grande – among others. Pontevedra is a most interesting town, and all parts of its historic centre are well worth visiting.

DAY 6: PONTEVEDRA - CALDAS DE REIS: 23 km. 6h walking.

You now leave the beautiful Pontevedra and go to Caldas de Reis. This is a delightful stretch of the Portuguese Way of Saint James. It features country tracks, vineyards and Roman roads. Half way through the day's walk you reach San Mauro; then you move on gently down to the rio Agra to Caldas de Reis and its hot springs. Caldas de Reis is famous for its spas and its hot springs. There are many Roman remains in this place of archaeological interest. Caldas was a bishopric up to the date of 569, after which the episcopal headquarters were moved to Padron (Iria Flavia). Since the middle ages this has been the obligatory route for pilgrims approaching Compostela from the south.

DAY 7: CALDAS DE REIS - PADRON: 20 km. 5h30 walking.

It will be with a happy heart that you set out on this penultimate day's walk. You are surrounded on all sides by beautiful green countryside, and a sense of the munificence of nature. The paths you walk along are places of peace and tranquillity. When you arrive at Padron, you will be able to visit the Santiago church. Beneath its altar is preserved 'el pedron', the stone to which, it is said, the boat bringing the body of the apostle James from Jerusalem was moored on arrival in Galicia. According to tradition, it was in this village that Saint James preached for the first time during his initial stay in Spain. After his martyrdom, it was believed that two of disciples, using a stone boat without sails or rudder, brought his body here from Jerusalem. Padron became the seat of the bishopric and remained as such until the discovery of the tomb of Saint James at Santiago de Compostela.

DAY 8: PADRON - SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA: 23 km. 5h30 walking

This is the day of arrival – the last day's walk before arriving at your destination of Santiago de Compostela! These twenty-odd kilometres bring your long journey to a close. After walking ten kilometres or so through countryside and eucalyptus forest you reach the outskirts of Santiago and, finally, the Sanctuary!

DAY 9: Your holiday ends after breakfast.

You can also start this holiday at Porto.

If you wish, you can continue your walk to Fisterra (+ 4 days' walking) or Muxia (+ 5 days' walking).





- A warm and friendly welcome in Portugal and Galicia.
- An opportunity to explore Porto and/or Santiago de Compostela at your leisure.
- A walk through an unspoilt region, taking in woodland, agricultural countryside, and towns and villages rich in history.

DATES

There is no fixed departure date. It is for you to choose, any time between mid-April and the beginning of November (All Saints' Day) subject to the availability of accommodation.

Please indicate on the booking form any alternative dates which might suit you (for example if you would be able to book the holiday for a period of time shortly before or after your preferred date). This may be useful if one or more hotels are already booked on the preferred date.

For similar reasons we ask you to **make your reservation as soon as possible**. We do not keep places reserved in the hotels and some of them can fill up with bookings several months in advance.

THE PRICE INCLUDES

- Half board accommodation in all the hotels
- The carriage of luggage
- A guidebook (one guidebook for 1-2 people)

THE PRICE DOES NOT INCLUDE

- The cost of getting from your home to the starting point, or getting home again after the holiday
- Any transport costs from the airport to Ponte de Lima.
- Any taxis or shuttles taking you back to your car; any extra transport for shortening sections of the walk
- Packed lunch/ midday meal
- Insurance, drinks; personal spending
- Parking fees.
- Visits
- Booking fees
- Extra charge for postage outside France

BEGINNING AND END OF HOLIDAY

Reception for holiday participants takes place in the hotel at the end of the afternoon before your first day's walk.

Your holiday finishes at Santiago de Compostela after breakfast.

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY

You need to be in good physical condition, and have some experience in doing long walks.

The paths themselves are not difficult at all, and there is only one long day's walk (two, if you start from Porto).

ACCOMMODATION

Good quality Hotels * and **.

TRANSPORT OF BAGGAGE

From Ponte de Lima to Santiago de Compostela, your luggage will be carried for you from hotel to hotel, by a company specialising in this work (weigh no more than 14 Kg)



GETTING THERE

*GOING

By plane: Porto airport. You can fly by Easyjet or Ryanair from 130€ depending on the period.

By bus: From Porto airport, you can take the Metro to Porto bus station 2€. Then take a 'Zone 4' ticket and get off at Campo 24 station. The Rede Expresso bus station is located on the street Campo 24 de Agosto. Take a bus from the bus station to Ponte de Lima. There is one every day of the week at 17h –Arrival at 19h (cost: about 12€).

By taxi: We can book you a taxi from Porto airport if you wish. Please ask us about this.

*RETURNING

By plane: Companies: Vueling, Iberia

There are direct flights with Vueling : Santiago- Paris CDG from 100€.

There are cheap flights from Santiago de Compostela to London.

Returning from Santiago to Porto airport of the centre of Porto:

By Bus: 31€ (2 h15 journey time). Depart 10h – Arrive at Porto: 12h15 with the company Alsa.

As soon as you are in a town (Valença or Pontevedra), it might be wise to buy a return ticket Santiago-Porto, at the ALSA ticket office, which does not accept bank cards, either at the ticket office or on the internet.

By train: 35€ (3h30 journey time).

Santiago 05h45 - 07h27 Vigo

Vigo 7h46 - 9h45 Porto

Santiago 17h36 - 19h03 Vigo

Vigo 19h37 - 21h46 Porto Campania

By taxi: We can, if you wish, order you a taxi from Santiago de Compostella to Porto (town or airport). Please contact us about it.

DOCUMENTATION

A guidebook will be sent to you on receipt of your holiday payment (**1 guidebook for 1 to 2 people**). In it you will find a description of your route (all the tracks are way-marked). You will also find information on villages, features of interest etc. In addition we will send you a travel wallet for all the documents you will need on your walking holiday: luggage labels, information about organisation and other practicalities and the addresses of hotels.

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 12kg 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

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- 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!

EXAMPLES OF EQUIPMENT WHICH CAN BE BOUGHT FROM OUR PARTNER COMPANY, VERTICAL

FOR CARRYING THINGS:

-**Rucksack Aventure 40L**, has an excellent capacity for taking on long walks. It holds enough for those who want to walk in reasonable comfort, and is made of light but strong material.

OR

-**Rucksack 5L Polyvalent (for general use)**: This small general purpose rucksack is useful for taking with you on a day's walk.

-**Walker's bag carried in front**. This attaches easily to braces etc on the front of your body, and enables you to carry things both in front and behind, for greater comfort and better balance.



EXAMPLES OF CLOTHING FROM VERTICAL TREKLIGHT:

Think of comfort, but also breathability

-**Chemise AUBRAC (shirt)**, slightly shaped, with long sleeves made of recycled polyester. It is comfortable, fit-for-purpose and weighs only 300g.

-**Lightweight over-garment ANTARA** : 295 grams ! Warm, stretchy and very light. The inside is textured and the outside smooth for good wind-proofing.

-**Rain-cape** : Minimum weight and encumbrance yet a true rain-cape. The fabric is Membrane MP+ of Vertical which makes it waterproof and yet breathable. It has a built-in zip which can be opened all the way in hot weather.

Special advantage: the extension in the back allows you to adapt your cape so that it can enclose the volume of your rucksack, up to a size of 60-70L. This cape comes with a bag for stuffing it into when it is not in use.

-**Pantalon (trousers) CoolTrek** : These are very comfortable thanks to their elasticity and reinforcements in places where they are needed. This is one of the classic products of Vertical. With four pockets these trousers these trousers have a very convenient design, yet they are extremely light, weighing only 380g.

-**Casquette + Rabat (Cap with extension)** : It is essential to have something to cover your head.

Special advantage: The detachable sun-protection enables the cap to be adapted according to the weather conditions.

-**Bâtons Alu Trek Light (walking poles)**: 280 grams (weight of one). A great help for long-distance walking. Their screw-down system of adjustment means that you can always get maximum benefit from them.

(Similar products are available from British or other suppliers.)

INSURANCES

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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.

