

## Camino de Santiago, Spring 2024



### Provisional Itinerary

- Apr 2 Depart Washington
- Apr 3 Arrive Orbigo
- Apr 4 Camino to Astorga 19 km
- Apr 5 Camino to Rabanal del Camino 19 km
- Apr 6 Camino to El Acebo 17 km
- Apr 7 Camino to Molinaseca 7 km (drive to Villafranca)
- Apr 8 Camino to Cebreiro 30 km
- Apr 9 Camino to Triacastela 22 km
- Apr 10 Camino to Sarria 18.5 km (drive to Portomarin)
- Apr 11 Camino to Palas de Rey 25 km
- Apr 12 Camino to Arzua 29.5 km
- Apr 13 Camino to Pedrouzo 20 km
- Apr 14 Camino to Santiago 20 km
- Apr 15 in Santiago
- Apr 16 Depart Madrid
- Apr 17 Arrive Washington

**Estimated cost:** \$3400 covers all travel, lodging, support car, programming, guide service, breakfast and lunch

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Spiritual pilgrimage is a journey across space and through time that makes people more vulnerable to the spirit of God than the certainties of every-day experience allow. Pilgrimage replaces the burden of pursuing what we want with the blessing of receiving what we need.

One of the holiest pilgrimage sites in Christendom is the tomb of St. James, in Santiago de Compostela. It was sanctified in 813, and pilgrims have been walking to Santiago ever since. It's a long road. The most common route begins in the mountains that separate Spain from France and proceeds to the Atlantic coast, from town to town and church to church, a distance of some 875 kilometers. Spain's most glorious cathedrals and oldest Romanesque chapels stand along the road to Santiago; so do villages notable only for cold water and kind people.

We plan to walk the final quarter of that road, from the ancient town of Orbigo to Santiago. We'll walk about 20 kilometers, or 13 miles, each day, and we'll engage a program of spiritual practices, including centering prayer, liturgical prayer, mindfulness meditation, and impromptu worship services, both in open country and in ancient chapels. The goal of those practices, like the goal of pilgrimage itself, is to help us perceive and embrace God's presence and action in our lives.

We'll spend for five or six hours every day walking on forest trails, gravel roads, and city streets, pausing frequently for rest and nourishment, both physical and spiritual. We'll set out each morning at around 8:00, take a long lunch break in the middle of the day, and reach our destination around 4:00 in the afternoon. We'll spend our nights in small hotels and eat our evening meals in little restaurants.

Our pilgrimage will include features designed to help older people handle a physical challenge that might seem otherwise beyond their reach. We'll engage a support car to carry our gear and provide on-call relief. We'll offer a preparatory training program, with advice on exercise and equipment. And once we're on the road, the group will afford each individual a kind of strength that none of us can muster alone, in any circumstance. Relying on that strength is part of what it means to embrace God's presence in our lives.