



11 interesting facts about The Camino de Santiago

Thousands from all over the world, head to the Camino de Santiago each year, setting off on their own personal journey to the city of Santiago de Compostela, in Galicia. More than just a pilgrimage, the Camino is today a unique cultural experience, a walking trip like no other. The Camino in 11 interesting facts:

1 – The Camino is in reality, the 'Caminos', as there are many different Camino de Santiago routes, all heading to Santiago and starting in different parts of Europe. They are the 'Ways of St James'.

2 – Santiago de Compostela means Saint James Santiago of the field of stars.

3 – The most famous Camino route is the Camino Frances (French Way), starting in the French town of St Jean Pied de Port in the Pyrenees. The route is 800kms long and takes just over a month to complete but walkers can also walk different stages. This is the route featuring in movies such as Martin Sheen's *The Way*.

4 – Sarria, a market town in Galicia, is the most popular Camino starting point. It is here where the last stage of the French Way starts, just over 100kms away from Santiago.

5 – Pilgrims need to walk at least the last 100kms of any Camino route to Santiago in order to receive their 'Compostela' pilgrim certificate. You will need to cycle the last 200kms.



6 – In 2015, over 260,000 Compostela certificates were issued by the Pilgrims Office in Santiago. Over 5,000 of them to walkers from Ireland. Many thousands more walk or cycle other Camino sections across France, Spain and Portugal each year.

7 – To get your certificate, you will need to stamp your pilgrim passport known as 'Crecencial' along the way, to proof that you have walked or cycled the required distance.

8 – Traditionally pilgrims used to start the Camino from their own homes. Irish medieval pilgrims would have taken a boat from one of Ireland's ports to the Northern ports of Galicia, such as Ferrol.

9 – The yellow scallop shell and yellow arrows mark the way to Santiago. But careful: the scallop might be facing different ways depending on the regions.

10 – Buen Camino! (safe journey) is the greeting shared by pilgrims and locals along the way.

11 – Santiago de Compostela old town is a UNESCO-listed heritage site since 1985 and its University dates back to 1495. The Council of Europe named the Camino de Santiago as the first European Cultural itinerary in 1987 for its important role encouraging cultural exchanges across Europe since the Middle Ages.

CaminoWays.com is a walking and cycling specialist on the Camino de Santiago, organising guided and self-guided tours; as well as group tours on the many different Camino routes in Spain, Portugal and France.

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