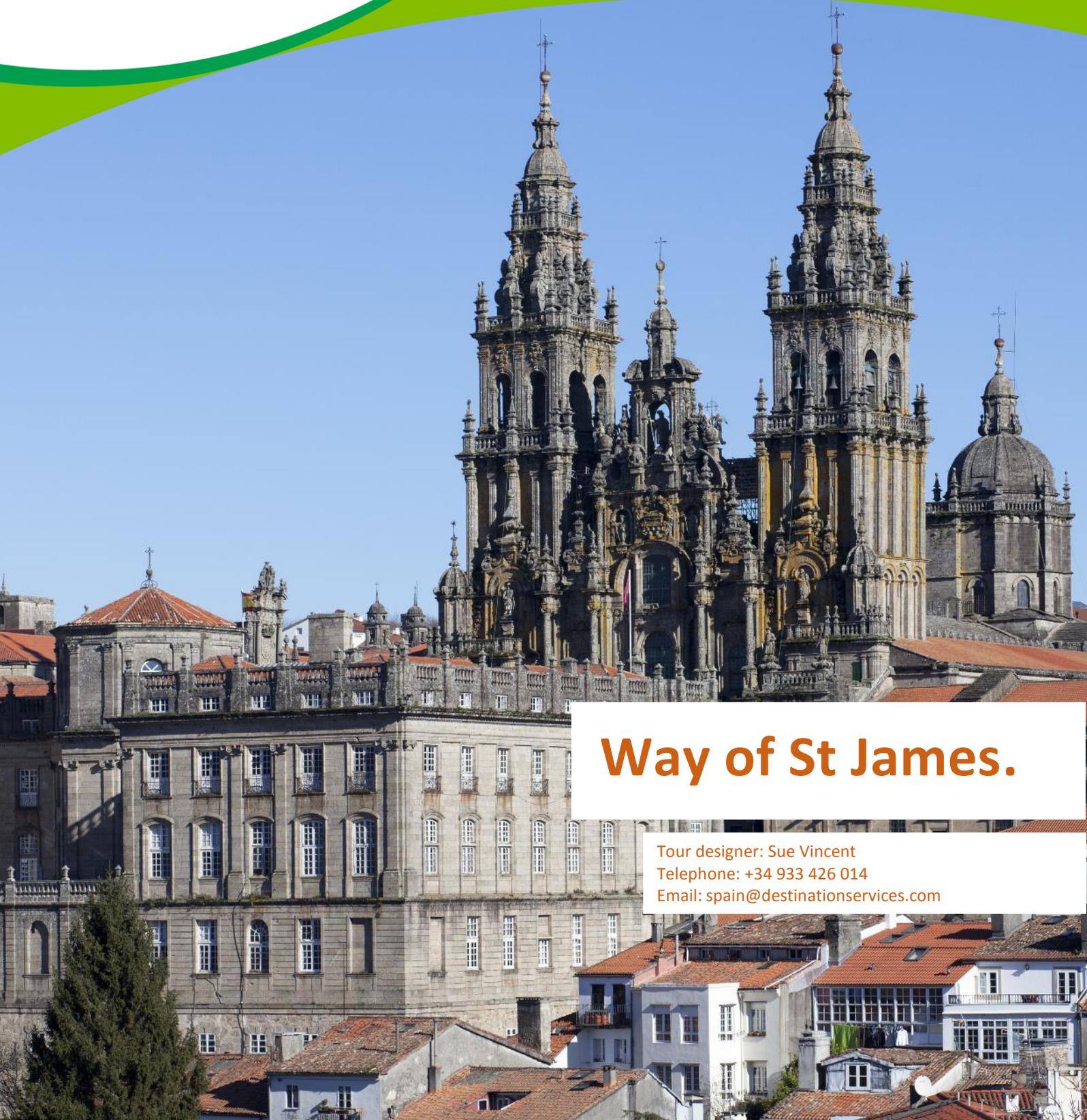




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Way of St James.

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SPAIN | 8DAYS / 7NIGHTS

Route: Round trip from Bilbao to Santiago de Compostela

Type of tour: Culture

TOUR OVERVIEW

Follow in the footsteps of medieval pilgrims along the legendary Way of St James and discover spectacular landscapes, a wealth of history and the vibrant culture of the stunningly beautiful north and northwest of Spain. Explore cities such as Bilbao, Pamplona, Burgos and Leon, discover remote monasteries and romantic hamlets and visit some of Spain's greatest cultural monuments over eight fascinating days. To undertake the Camino is a more than a scenic tour – it is an unforgettable spiritual journey.

TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

DURATION: 8 days / 7 nights



Spain

Start & finish destination

1. Bilbao	6. Santiago de Compostela
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Destinations

2. Pamplona	4. Burgos
3. Logroño	5. Leon

Bilbao: Enjoy a panoramic tour of the Basque city, seeing the famous Guggenheim Museum and other sights and attractions

Pamplona: See the capital of Navarre with a city tour and visit the neo-classical cathedral before exploring outlying towns on the pilgrim's route such as Muruzabal, Puente la Reina and Estella

Logroño: Explore the capital of La Rioja and visit the Romanesque cathedral in the nearby town of Santo Domingo de la Calzada

Burgos: Guided tour of the old town with visits to the imposing Gothic cathedral and the magnificent Miraflores Carthusian Monastery. Visit also the hamlet of Fromista and the Mozarabic Monastery of San Miguel de Escalada

Leon: Walking tour of the old town of this medieval former capital with visits to the Gothic cathedral and cloister as well as the Basilica of San Isidoro followed by a tour of the nearby medieval city of Astorga

Santiago de Compostela: Discover quaint hamlets on the Camino route such as O Cebreiro and Samos en route to the holy city of St James and enjoy a walking tour of the old town with a visit to the spellbinding Gothic cathedral and the museum

DAY BY DAY

DAY 1 | BILBAO AIRPORT – PAMPLONA (160km – 2 hrs)

Arrive at Bilbao Airport (based on daytime 08:00 to 20:00 hrs) where a tour escort awaits before boarding a long-distance touring coach to begin the adventure. Head into central Bilbao for a panoramic city tour of the main sights and attractions with a photo stop at the Guggenheim Museum. Afterwards, transfer to Pamplona with check-in on arrival.

- Dinner and overnight in 4* hotel in Pamplona on a half-board basis.

DAY 2 | PAMPLONA – MURUZABAL – PUENTE LA REINA – ESTELLA – LOGROÑO – SANTO DOMINGO DE LA CALZADA – BURGOS (215km – 4 hrs)

Enjoy breakfast at the hotel before exploring **Pamplona** with a two-hour walking tour in the old quarter including a visit to the elegant neo-classical **Cathedral of Royal Saint Mary** (museum is not included). Transfer to **Muruzabal**, a picturesque hamlet half-an-hour's drive to the south. Muruzabal is on the 'French route' to Santiago de Compostela and has been hosting pilgrims for hundreds of years – and looks much the same today as it would have to the pilgrims of yesteryear. Visit the 12th century **Romanesque Church of Santa Maria de Eunate** in the outskirts of the town before continuing to **Puente la Reina**, a 10-minute drive away. This town is famed for the six-arched Romanesque bridge that has spanned the River Arga since the 11th century. Continue to Estella, whose strategic location along the Way of St James has bequeathed it a wealth of Romanesque architecture. Head to Logroño, the capital of the wine-producing region of La Rioja. Free time for lunch on arrival. **Guided tour of the old quarter of Logroño** after lunch. Transfer in the afternoon to

Santo Domingo de la Calzada, which is still partially surrounded by defensive walls built in the Middle Ages. Visit the **Cathedral of Santo Domingo de la Calzada** (closed holidays, e-tickets included) which commemorates the medieval saint who built this town to cater for the pilgrims passing through. Santo Domingo de la Calzada is famous for the number of miracles that affected pilgrims staying in the town. Transfer to Burgos for check-in.

- Dinner and overnight in 4* hotel in Burgos on a half-board basis.

DAY 3 | BURGOS – SANTO DOMINGO DE SILOS – BURGOS (120km – 2 hrs)

Breakfast at the hotel is followed by a three-hour **city tour of Burgos** with a local guide. Learn about the city's history as you stroll through the winding streets and alleys of the old quarter, which lies the shadow of a hilltop castle, and visit the stunning Gothic cathedral (e-tickets included) which is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Continue to the **Miraflores Charterhouse** in the city's eastern outskirts and visit this wonderfully preserved Gothic Carthusian order monastery, which boasts a priceless collection of religious artefacts. Free time for lunch. Head to the rustic hamlet of Santo Domingo de Silos, which almost seems to be collapsing under the weight of history, to visit **the Monastery of Santo Domingo de Silos** (open afternoons from 16/16:30hrs to 18:00hrs). More recently, the monastery has become famous for the Gregorian chants of its monks but the beautiful two-level Romanesque cloister still remains the star attraction. Return to Burgos.

- Dinner and overnight in 4* hotel in Burgos on a half-board basis.



DAY 4 | BURGOS – FROMISTA – SAN MIGUEL DE ESCALADA – LEON (240km – 4 hrs)

Bid farewell to Burgos after breakfast at the hotel, departing for the small town of **Fromista** to admire the immaculately preserved Romanesque Church of St Martin of Tours, which dates from the 11th century. Continue to the **Monastery of San Miguel de Escalada**, a prime example of Mozarabic religious architecture, which originated in Spain due to contact with Muslim civilisations. The monastery is as off the beaten track as can be, some 10km from the Camino, and is surrounded by fields and hills just like it would have been 1,000 years ago. Continue to Leon, the beautiful capital of the former medieval kingdom of the same name, and enjoy the rest of the day free at leisure.

- Dinner and overnight in 4* hotel in Leon on a half-board basis.

DAY 5 | LEON – ASTORGA – LEON (100km – 1.5 hrs)

Enjoy breakfast at the hotel before exploring the historic core of Leon with a three-hour tour in the company of a local guide. Stroll through the old quarter, admiring monuments such as the Guzman Palace and Gaudi's **Casa de los Botines**, and visit the awe-inspiring **Gothic cathedral and cloister** (e-tickets included) and the **Romanesque Basilica of San Isidoro** (closed Sunday afternoons; e-tickets included) which is the final resting place of the medieval kings of Leon. Free time for lunch before heading in the afternoon to **Astorga** to explore its rich heritage, which dates from Roman times. The ruins of the old walls, the eclectic Cathedral with Gothic, Romanesque and baroque elements, and the fairytale-like Episcopal Palace are just some of the attractions of this historic town. Return transfer to Leon.

- Dinner and overnight in 4* hotel in Leon on a half-board basis.

DAY 6 | LEON – O CEBREIRO – SAMOS – SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA (350km – 6 hrs)

Depart Leon after breakfast at the hotel, heading for O **Cebreiro** in Galicia. This mountain village set atop a pass through lush verdant hills is home to the restored **Romanesque Church of St Mary** and to dwellings known as pallozas, whose design has remained unchanged since Roman times. Continue to Samos, just an hour away, where the **Monastery of San Xulián** is found in a hamlet by the banks of the River Sarria. This place of serene beauty is the final visit before reaching **Santiago de Compostela**. Free time for lunch en route before arriving in Santiago in the afternoon with rest of day free at leisure. End of tour escort and long distance touring coach services.

- Dinner and overnight in 4* hotel in Santiago de Compostela on a half-board basis.

DAY 7 | SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA

Breakfast at the hotel is followed by a three-hour **walking tour of Santiago** with a local guide. The Galician capital's old town is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and it differs from other Spanish cities along the Way of St James in that it largely built from granite rather than limestone, thus giving it a greyer appearance. Explore the narrow medieval backstreets of the Galician capital, which all seem to lead to the breathtaking **Praza do Obradoiro**, where the magnificent **Gothic Cathedral** towers over the city. Visit the cathedral and museum (e-tickets included; booking required). Free time for lunch with the rest of day free at leisure.

- **Dinner and overnight in 4* hotel in Santiago de Compostela on a half-board basis.**

DAY 8 | DEPARTURE

Hotel check-out latest 12:00hrs. Transfer to Santiago Airport (20-30 minutes) in time for check-in two hours prior to flight departure (no assistant is included). Breakfast included.

END OF SERVICES

INCLUDED

TOUR GUIDE:

- Portuguese tour escort during touring portion (days 1-6)
- Official Portuguese or Spanish/English-speaking guides for all visits according programme

ACCOMMODATION:

- Seven nights on a half-board basis in four-star hotels

MEALS:

- Breakfast and dinner included daily

TRANSPORT:

- Bus transportation according to the programme

ENTRANCE FEES AND ACTIVITIES:

- Panoramic city tour in Bilbao; walking tour and cathedral visit in Pamplona; Church of Santa Maria de Eunate in Muruzabal; city tour in Logroño; visit to Santo Domingo de la Calzada Cathedral; walking tour, cathedral visit and Miraflores Monastery visit in Burgos; Monastery of Santo Domingo de Silos visit; Romanesque church in Fromista; Monastery of San Miguel de la Escalada; walking tour, cathedral visit and Basilica of San Isidoro visit in Leon; tour of Astorga; O Cebreiro and Samos visits; and walking tour with cathedral visit in Santiago de Compostela

NOT INCLUDED

- International flights
- Luggage handling (airports, hotels etc)
- Lunches
- Drinks with dinners
- Tips

RECOMMENDATIONS

Comfortable and light clothing is the most suitable for travelling in northern Spain. Chilly temperatures and rain are frequent so a jumper and rain jacket are advisable. Visitors should not wear sleeveless shirts, shorts, short skirts or skimpy clothing when visiting temples, religious or official buildings. Sun protection, sun glasses, a hat and mosquito repellent can be very useful during your stay