

PORTUGUESE COASTAL CAMINO

PORTO (PORTUGAL) TO SANTIAGO (SPAIN)

ITINERARY: 18 DAYS

Day 1

ARRIVE PORTO

Start your journey towards Camino de Santiago in Porto, one of the most ancient cities in Europe. Home to 240,000 people, Porto charms visitors with many architectural highlights, the picturesque Ribeira river front and UNESCO heritage listed colourful historic old town. You can easily spend a few days here. There's a mix of the old and the new with churches, colourful markets, wine bars, port cellars and a lively atmosphere to soak up and enjoy. Be sure to visit the Porto Cathedral before tomorrow's walk and obtain your first stamp (*carimbos* in Portuguese and *sello* in Spanish).

The Coastal Camino from Porto is well marked with the blue-and-yellow or rusty steel signs with the familiar scallop shell and the words *Caminho Portugues da Costa*, and a variety of yellow arrows and scallop shell signs.

On this Camino you have the option of using a mixture of the Senda Litoral (Seashore Path) and Coastal Way; the latter is often slightly inland of the Seashore Path. (Both routes often converge and share the same path.) The Seashore Path is less well waymarked, often without any signs.

Day 2

DAY AT LEISURE IN PORTO

Wake up in Porto with a full day to explore the culinary and architectural delights of this colourful city with its many port cellars and riverside cafes.

Meals: B



Day 3

METRO FROM PORTO TO MATOSINHOS / WALK TO PÓVOA DE VARZIM (22KM)

The day begins by taking the Metro light rail to Matosinhos to avoid the outskirts of Porto and reach the coast to start your walk on the Portuguese Seashore Path (or instead you may prefer to take a 15-minute taxi ride to Matosinhos). If taking the Metro, get off at the 'Mercado' stop, 30 minutes from the Trindade Metro station in Porto. Cross the bridge and turn left towards the coast.

Today's walking is flat and easy. You will be accompanied by many kilometres of golden sandy Atlantic beach, which will be your guide to the town of Vila do Conde. The route along the coast from Matosinhos is well marked. Your walk will be close to the coast, on the pedestrian pavement, the cycle track and wooden walkways, passing fishing villages, chapels, monuments and beautiful popular sandy beaches. Ignore any yellow Camino arrows directing you to the right to the Coastal Way further inland. Keep to the shore and cross the bridge over the River Ave to enter the medieval shipyard town of Vila do Conde with its pretty harbour and imposing Convent of Santa Clara.

Take time to visit the Museum of Naval Construction with a replica Portuguese carrack, the *Nau Quinhentista*, floating in the dock. Also, the Igreja Matriz church with the large aqueduct behind it and the Convent of Santa Clara.

Leaving Vila do Conde, with the beach once again on your left, walk along the coastal path to Póvoa de Varzim, a popular resort and holiday town.

Note: The alternative Coastal Way travels up to 5km inland after leaving Porto, through soulless stretches of industrial built-up areas, along busy roads and passing the airport runway until after some 20km, finally enters rural areas near Labruge, 10km before Vila do Conde.

Meals: B

Day 4

PÓVOA DE VARZIM TO ESPOSENDE (20KM)

Continue on your way to the old fishing village of Esposende with the Seashore Path and Coastal Way sharing much of the route. Follow the coast passing through the villages of Agucadoura and Areia, then cross through the Coastal Natural Park (Parque Natural do Litoral Norte). At the church in Apulia you have a choice. The Coastal Way forges straight ahead through the pine and eucalypt forest before Fao, while the Seashore Path turns left to follow the coast. Both routes re-joining to cross the River Cavado on the spectacular bridge before arriving at Esposende, a popular resort and fishing town on the estuary.

Meals: B



Day 5

ESPOSENDE TO VIANA DO CASTELO (26KM)

Today there is a choice of walking the traditional Coastal Way along quiet roads that continue slightly inland from the coast via the villages of Marinhas, Belinho, Santiago and Chafe to Viana do Castelo, which is reached after crossing the River Lima on Eiffel's old iron bridge. The alternate route is to take the Seashore Path along the coastal roads, walkways and the beach. Both paths converge at the Ponte Sebastiao Bridge over the River Neiva, about half way between Esposende and Viana do Castelo, before diverging again. So if you prefer, you can mix your day between the quiet rural Seashore Path and the more undulating Coastal Way through the many interesting local communities. While the Coastal Way is well marked, the Seashore Path is not.

Classified as a mecca of architecture, Viana do Castelo is famous for its monuments in and around the city, and the surrounding natural beauty of its beaches and seafront. Visit the 15th-century cathedral and take the funicular to the Basilica de Santa Lucia on the hill above the town for some of the best views of the West Atlantic coast.

Meals: B

Day 6

VIANA DO CASTELO TO VILA PRAIA DE ÂNCORA (20KM)

Today's walk will continue along the wild Atlantic coastline following the official route of the Coastal Way, which is a little inland, passing a world of old farms and quaint villages on narrow cobblestone roads offering beautiful views over the hills and coastline. It's also possible to walk the Seashore Path along quiet roads, the beach and boardwalks above the dunes, but you will not have the benefit of any way marking. Both routes converge at the old fishing village of Vila Praia de Âncora, your stop for the night. The town has a great beach and is popular with tourists.

Meals: B

Day 7

VILA PRAIA DE ÂNCORA TO A GUARDA (15KM)

Today depart Âncora along the coast following the Caminho Portugues da Costa waymarks along the wide concrete walkway and cycle path. Pass the small chapel of Santo Isidoro following the concrete path around to the left and continuing along the shore towards Caminha. Remain on the Seashore Path next to the rocky than sandy coastline; ignore the crossing to the right under the railway line and continue past Moleda beach all the way into Caminha by walking along the path along the Minho estuary. Interesting sites to explore in Caminha are the Torre do Relogio clock tower, the gothic Igreja Matriz church and the Praça do Conselheiro Silva Torres main square.

When ready, take the ferry across the river Minho to A Pasaxe in Galicia. There are about 10 crossings per day from Caminha to A Pasaxe (the schedule varies depending on the



season). If the ferry is not running due to low tide, maintenance or being a Monday you can arrange a boat across using Taximar from the ferry terminal (prices will depend on number of passengers. Once across the estuary in Spain, don't forget to put your watch forward 1 hour. As an option, on leaving the ferry, instead of walking directly to A Guarda, consider the scenic walk around the peninsular to enjoy an alternative way to enter the town – this will add an extra 3km but the scenery makes it worthwhile.

The fishing port of A Guarda with its pretty harbour is home to Galicia's most impressive ancient Celtic settlements: the Santa Tecla on the hill above the town – an authentic archaeological gem with breathtaking views of the Atlantic Ocean.

Meals: B

Day 8

A GUARDA TO OIA (13KM)

Enjoy a leisurely morning exploring A Guarda before departing by walking past the harbour to the small fort near the breakwater and continue north on the path on the coast. After several kilometres, the route joins a wide pedestrian and cycle path above the rocky shoreline along the side of the main road, PO-552, most of the way into Oia. This section is flat with very little shade. As you approach Oia you will be rewarded with the spectacular view of the 12th-century Monastery of Santa Maria de Oia cross the small harbour. Oia is a small pretty town with several restaurants; you may find some locals engaged in an impromptu sing-along with bagpipes playing typical Galician tunes.

Meals: B

Day 9

OIA TO BAIONA (18KM)

Start the day by taking the path alongside the dramatic coast where after several kilometres it once again joins alongside the busy PO-552. Just before reaching As Marinos, 11.5km from Oia, the Coastal Way crosses the main road to the right and heads inland and upwards towards Baredo along the old Roman 'Royal Path'. Look for a small granite Camino sign on the right-hand side of the road near some houses where there will also be a large blue sign. Go through a gate and up the hill; soon you will be rewarded with spectacular views over the coast, the lighthouse and the rocky hill known as Monte de Baredo. Note the prominent wheel ruts worn into the granite rocks as this ancient path goes through the forest and over the pass.

After passing a sports ground, the path enters the village of Baredo and then O'Sinal where you will soon be rewarded with views of the Cíes Islands out of the Bay of Vigo. Follow the yellow arrows to Baiona and enter the town making your way to the main esplanade along the sea where the imposing walls of the old fortress containing the Parador Hotel can be seen on the small promontory. Baiona is the most popular seaside tourist town in southern Galicia and has a well preserved old town and



numerous important monuments. It was here in 1493 that the *Caravel La Pinta* returned with news of the discovery of America by Columbus. A replica is moored in the harbour.

Meals: B

Day 10

REST DAY IN BAIONA

A full day at leisure to relax and recover in this popular coastal town. The medieval fortress, Monte Real, was originally intended to deter pirates from this stretch of coast; in 1585 it repelled an English raid led by Sir Francis Drake. Baiona itself has many great cafes and restaurants and a wonderful atmosphere with an interesting old quarter worth exploring. The tourist office is located in the Baiona Parador which has the most amazing views over the Atlantic Ocean and Vigo Bay. If energy levels permit you may like to use this free day to travel to the nearby historic town of Tui with its cathedral, a highlight of the inland Central Camino, or even take a day trip to visit the beautiful Cies Islands located a short distance off the coast.

Meals: B

Day 11

BAIONA TO VIGO (24KM)

Today the best option out of Baiona is to follow the Senda Litoral Seashore Path and cross the medieval Ponte Ramallosa bridge over the Rio Minor. At this point you can decide to continue along the coast on the Seashore Path or follow the inland route through the hills on the Coastal Way. The Seashore Path follows coastal roads, promenades, wooden walkways and beaches to the Rio Lagares where it enters the Bay. Here, either continue along the coast into Vigo Baja past the port and docks or take the path along the river joining up with the inland Coastal Way and continuing to Vigo Alto.

From Ponte Ramallosa the Coastal Way goes over the hills with the PO-552 to the left, on back roads and some forest; the path becomes more urbanised closer to the large busy and cosmopolitan city of Vigo. Follow the yellow arrows. There are several Camino routes into Vigo, so you may also encounter green arrows. Make your way to your accommodation in Vigo Baja down the busy and straight Rua de Urzaiz. Vigo is a huge industrial city, so when walking in here expect industrial areas, highways and busy roads; navigating your way may become difficult.

There is an option to have a rest day in Vigo and from here you can take a ferry trip out to the Cíes Islands, which are known as the Caribbean of Spain and are a beautiful protected national park (the ferry runs from June to September and on weekends in May). However, visitor numbers to the islands are controlled, so a visit must be booked in advance.

Meals: B



Day 12

VIGO TO REDONDELA (16KM)

There are two ways to depart Vigo: the Seashore Path leaves the old town along the coast past the Vigo Guixar railway station along Rua do Areal and Rua de Garcia Barbon and Sanjurio Badia (the PO-323), before turning right (4km from the railway station), on to Camina Trapa where it joins the Coastal Way.

The alternative is to make your way from the old town along the Rua do Principe mall continuing along the Rua de Urzaiz where it intersects with Avenida do Alcalde Gregorio Espino. This is where you pick up the Camino Coastal Way and the yellow arrows. Follow the pedestrian mall then turn to the left just before the ends on Rua Toledo, then along quiet back streets with the Bay of Vigo on the left where the British sunk many galleons in the 1702 battle of Vigo Bay.

The Camino to Redondela is a pleasant walk with great views of the Vigo estuary as the walk continues through a string of hillside villages and patches of woodland. Your stop for the night is the town of Redondela, known as the 'Village of Viaducts', where the Coastal and Senda Litoral Caminos join with the inland Central Portuguese Camino to Santiago de Compostela.

Meals: B

Day 13

REDONDELA TO PONTEVEDRA (20KM)

Today is a beautiful day of walking. As you walk on the Camino Portuguese you will notice many more pilgrims who have joined from the Central Way from Porto via Tui. Several kilometres out of Redondela the path leads up to the Alto de Lomba through the forest after which there is a short section on the busy N-550 to the village of Arcade famous for the best oysters in Galicia. Cross the long medieval bridge of Ponte Sampaio over the River Verdugo where Napoleon's army was defeated by the Spanish in 1809 during the War of Independence. Then walk up through the forest and enjoy one of the most beautiful stretches of the Camino following the ancient narrow stone paths as they climb up the slope. The path widens amongst fields and vineyards, arriving at Pontevedra with its pretty historic centre, the 13th-century church of Santa Maria, and the famous Pilgrim Virgin's church (Santuário da Peregrina), which although appears round, is actually in the shape of a scallop shell.

An alternative scenic and peaceful way to enter the town is via the Rio Gafos. Turn left shortly after the chapel da Santa Marta and before a play area, not waymarked.

Pontevedra is another good rest day option as it has a wonderful atmosphere to soak up and enjoy with its pedestrianised streets and plazas.

Meals: B



Day 14

PONTEVEDRA TO CALDAS DE REIS (22KM)

Today the Camino Portuguese will take you over the Rio Lerez via the pretty stone Ponte do Burgo bridge decorated with scallop shells and through chestnut groves and pine and eucalyptus trees to the village of San Amaro. Emerging from the woods near Valbon, at the Cruceiro de Amonisa, a statue of Saint James with his walking stick points the way to Santiago. You will pass the pretty village of Tivo with its lovely fountain and public washing area. Continue on through rural fields and vineyards to the Roman-influenced town of Caldas de Reis, known otherwise as 'the hot waters of the Kings', where you will find the thermal springs after crossing the river Umia around to the left outside the Hotel Davila. You may wish to soak your feet in the hot thermal water upon your arrival into the town.

Meals: B

Day 15

CALDAS DE REIS TO PADRON (19KM)

Today's walk is one of the most beautiful of the whole route. The path once again takes you through pine forests and rural areas through the Bermana and Verga valleys to today's destination across the Ulla River, the town of Padron. Padron, the starting point for Saint James ministry in the Iberian Peninsula, was also said to be where his body first reached land when it returned by boat after being martyred in Jerusalem. The parish church has the legendary Pedron, the stone where St James' boat was moored. You can find the Pedron under the altar in the Igrexia de Santiago with a replica Pedron over the bridge on the west bank of the Rio Sar.

Meals: B

Day 16

PADRON TO MILLADOIRO (19KM)

The path today will take you through a variety of woodland trails and increasingly busier roads. After making your way to the historic sanctuary of A Escravitude, continue to Faramello and the Chapel of San Martino where you can see one of the oldest wayside crosses (*cruceiro*) in Galicia. Continuing on you will arrive in Milladoiro, Santiago's largest suburb.

Meals: B

Day 17

MILLADOIRO TO SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA (7KM)

Your final walking day on the Camino Portuguese will be through busier suburban streets to your final destination Santiago de Compostela. After departing Milladoiro and the tiny town of Agro dos Monteiros, but before passing under the motorway, pilgrims now for the first time will have a view of the spires of the Cathedral of Santiago de



Compostela. After crossing the Sar River, take the left waymarked option and continue through the streets of the city via Rua de Porto Faxeira, the old entrance of the Portuguese Way into Santiago de Compostela. Make your way via Rua Franco to Praza do Obradoiro and the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela.

Meals: B

Day 18

DEPART SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA

You are free to check out of your hotel any time before 10am. If you would like to explore Santiago further you are able to leave your bags with reception.

Meals: B

