

CAMINO PRIMITIVO (SPAIN)

ITINERARY: FULL LENGTH (18 DAYS)

Day 1

ARRIVE OVIEDO

Begin your journey in Oviedo, the official starting point of the Camino Primitivo and the capital of the Asturias region. Oviedo features stunning architecture, innovative gastronomy, extensive museums, and historical sites, including three UNESCO-recognised pre-Romanesque churches. After checking into your accommodation, explore the city by wandering down historic cobblestone streets, admiring beautiful buildings dating back hundreds of years, and hopping between charming cafes and restaurants sampling the best of Asturian cuisine

Overnight: Oviedo

Day 2

OVIEDO TO GRADO (25KM)

After breakfast, follow the small bronze shells from Oviedo, marking the beginning of your Camino Primitivo journey starting from the steps of the Cathedral of El Salvador. Heading west out of town towards Grado, the route initially passes through several kilometers of paved roads and urban sprawl before transitioning to tranquil rural landscapes sprinkled with farmhouses, livestock, and meadows, finally reaching the River Nalon. The trail leads to the charming town of Grado, where two histories intersect with the meeting of two ancient trails: the Camino Primitivo and the Camín Real de la Mesa, an ancient Roman road. In addition to being a stopping point on the Primitivo, Grado's famous weekly markets, held on Wednesdays and Sundays since the early Middle Ages, attract travellers from all over who come to sample local delicacies sold at the market stalls.

Overnight: Grado

Meals: B



Day 3

GRADO TO SALAS (22KM)

Make sure to start your day with a hearty breakfast because your hike begins with a challenging 5km climb through the spectacular Cantabrian Mountains to Alto del Fresnu. The trail winds through undulating tracks, passing small villages and hilly farmland as you head towards Salas. Don't forget to visit the 11th-century San Salvador Monastery en route, an important historical site for many pilgrims. Continuing beyond Cornellana, you'll encounter several 'hórreos', traditional granaries in the Asturias region, before a gentle descent into Salas. Salas, a charming town nestled amidst rolling hills, is known for coal-mining and agriculture, and boasts landmarks like Cornellana Monastery and Valdéz-Salas Palace.

Overnight: Salas

Meals: B

Day 4

SALAS TO TINEO (19KM)

Get ready this morning as you embark on your journey towards Tineo, passing through notable towns Bodenaya and La Espina, both historical pilgrim stops offering much-needed coffee breaks or rests along your route. You will appreciate these stops all the more as you conquer the majority of the uphill climb in the first part of the day, easing into the afternoon's trek. Today's route shares a short section of the national road before leading you onto a more tranquil path along quiet country roads and forested footpaths. You finish your walk in the town of Tineo, known for its 14th-century Convento de San Francisco, which houses the Museum of Sacred Art featuring a collection of historical artefacts dating back hundreds of years. Make sure to congratulate yourself with the locally made cider, known as sidra, for which Tineo is renowned.

Overnight: Tineo

Meals: B

Day 5

TINEO TO POLA DE ALLENDE (29KM)

From Tineo, continue uphill along the gravel track, making sure to make short stops to take in the scenic views of the town as you depart. Today's walk on the Camino Primitivo features challenging, hilly terrain, with an optional 1km detour to the 8th-century Santa Maria de Obona Monastery, once a required stop for pilgrims. The towns of Campiello and Borres offer convenient rest stops during your ascent for a snack or refreshing drink. The final stretch to Pola de Allende involves a steep 300m descent. Pola de Allende is a charming town dating back to the 13th century, nestled amidst the Cantabrian mountains with the Nison River running through its centre. As you make your way to your accommodation, be sure to look up at 15th-century Castle Palace of



Cienfuegos de Peñalba, a longstanding symbol of the city, perched on a hill overlooking the town.

Overnight: Pola de Allande

Meals: B

Day 6

POLA DE ALLENDE TO BERDUCEDO (17KM)

The path from Pola de Allande undulates with challenging climbs and descents, alternating between dirt paths and major roads. As you ascend to Puerto del Palo, you will meet up with the Ruta de los Hospitales. Further undulations will take you through the towns of Montefurado and Lago, both home to ancient chapels designated for passing pilgrims. Your day will conclude in the tiny village of Berducedo.

Overnight: Berducedo

Meals: B

Day 7

BERDUCEDO TO GRANDAS DE SALIME (23KM)

Today's hike features a gentle ascent to Grandes de Salime, treating hikers to superb views that make the initial kilometres pass by effortlessly. The trail presents frequent changes in elevation, alternating between path and road walking, which can be challenging for tired knees. However, the stunning panoramic views and shimmering Rio Navia make the effort worthwhile. With limited supply options available along today's route, hikers should consider stopping in La Mesa for coffee or snacks as it's the only option before Salime. Conclude with a gentle uphill walk to Grandas de Salime, a historic town known for its gold mining history.

Overnight: Grandes de Salime

Meals: B

Day 8

GRANDAS DE SALIME TO A FONSGRADA (25KM)

Your journey unfolds towards the province of Galicia, bidding farewell to Austeras and the captivating views of the Cantabrian Mountains. Passing through towns like Cereixeira, Venta del Acebo, Barbeitos, and Castro, each with its own charm and history, you traverse a landscape where Celtic and Roman remnants intertwine at the archaeological site of Chao Sanmartin in Castro. The day's path offers a diverse mix of hilltops adorned with windmills, tranquil forests, and quiet roads. Climbing towards your final destination for the night, A Fonsagrada, steeped in legend as the site of one of Saint James's miracles

Overnight: A Fonsagrada

Meals: B



Day 9

A FONSGRADA TO O CADAVO BALEIRA (24KM)

Today's walk presents diverse terrain, ranging from small roads to footpaths, with some steep sections, weaving through rural Galician mountain villages. Along the route, you'll encounter traditional "Palloza" Galician thatched-roofed houses scattered across the countryside and the charming village of Montouto nestled into the mountainside. Here, remnants of a pilgrim's hospital dating back to the 14th century can be spotted. Several towns will break up your hike, offering ample opportunities for coffee breaks or snacks. The final leg of your journey signifies the last stretch of high-elevation walking before descending into O Cadavo. Your night's rest awaits in the picturesque village of O Cadavo Baleira, tucked away in the Galician countryside.

Overnight: O Cadavo Baleira

Meals: B

Day 10

O CADAVO BALEIRA TO LUGO (31KM)

After a brief climb out of O Cadavo Baleira, you'll encounter mostly flat terrain, with the exception of steep descents between Alto da Vacariza and Vilabade. In Vilabade, Castroverde, and Santa Maria de Gondar, you'll find opportunities to restock supplies or pause for a cafe and admire the villages. Today's paths offer a blend of verdant Galician countryside and quiet country roads. As you approach Lugo, you'll enter the walled city, renowned for its UNESCO-listed Roman walls. Lugo is believed to have been established by the Celts, with "Lug" meaning 'sun god' or 'sacred forest'. Upon checking into your accommodation, it's time to celebrate the epic adventure you've just had. We recommend a leisurely stroll along Lugo's splendid streets, particularly Calle de Los Vinos near the cathedral. Don't miss out, especially on weekends when several bars offer free tapas with drink orders.

Overnight: Lugo

Meals: B

Day 11

LUGO AT LEISURE

Today you have time to look around the old centre of Lugo. Visit ancient Roman remains such as the walls, bridge, baths or mosaics that made Lugo a significant centre for the Romans. There is a network of unique museums such as the Domus de Mitreo (ancient temple dedicated to the oriental god Mitra), the House of Mosaics or the Provincial Museum, and the Castro de Viladonga archaeological site outside the city; The Lugo Cathedral is one of the most beautiful in Galicia and of historical significance for Pilgrims on the Primitivo route.



Overnight: Lugo

Meals: B

Day 12

LUGO TO FERREIRA (26KM)

Leave Lugo by the oldest gate in the wall, down to the Roman bridge, which spans the Miño River. Moving further away from Lugo, we come to San Vicente do Burgo, where there was once a pilgrim hospital. This section of the stage offers striking panoramic views of the city receding in the distance. The route continues through San Pedro de Mera and San Romao da Retorta that offers delightful examples of the Romanesque style. and where there is a Roman milestone – evidence that the Primitive Route follows the path of an ancient road. From here onwards, the trail follows ancient paths that are still much in use and connect an endless of small rural villages. In Ferreira, apart from the medieval bridge, there is also a Romanesque church dating from the late 12th century, which was part of Vilar de Donas.

Overnight: Ferreira

Meals: B

Day 13

FERREIRA TO MELIDE (28KM)

The walk today takes you through beautiful farmland and forest, passing small villages and crossing lovely arched stone bridges. The route continues on to Aguas Santas with its curative springs, As Seixas, and the border between the provinces of Lugo and A Coruña. Cross the Careón Mountains, an area of great ecological value where flora and fauna that have grown scarce in Galicia have been preserved. The highest peak, O Careón, rises to 798m. Continue through Vilouriz to Vilamor.

The Primitive Route converges with the French Route at the historic town of Melide, a busy town founded in the 13th century which has many historic buildings and churches including the Capilla de San Pedro and San Roque next to which stands a 14th century stone cross said to be the oldest in Galicia. The museum and the buildings around the Plaza de Convento are well worth a visit. Melide is also famous for Pulpo Gallego, octopus cooked Galician style and reputed to be the best in Spain. From here you join the Camino Frances, now the most popular route to Santiago.

Overnight: Melide

Meals: B

Day 14

MELIDE TO ARZUA (14KM)

Melide is a busy town founded in the 13th century and has many historic buildings and churches including the Capilla de San Pedro and San Roque next to which stands a 14th century stone cross said to be the oldest in Galicia. The museum and the buildings



around the Plaza de Convento are well worth a visit. Melide is also famous for Pulpo Gallego, octopus cooked Galician style and reputed to be the best in Spain. Much of the path after Melide winds through woodlands of oak, pine and eucalypt, passing over several valleys through Boente, Castañeda and then Ribadiso from where you can see the Hospital San Anton, one of the oldest pilgrim hospitals in existence.

From Melide you will notice the path is much busier, filled with pilgrims on the Camino Frances. The path winds through woodlands of oak, pine and eucalypt, passing over several valleys through Boente, Castañeda and then Ribadiso from where you can see the Hospital San Anton, one of the oldest pilgrim hospitals in existence. From Ribadiso follow the country road on a steep uphill climb and through the outer suburbs before entering Arzua.

Arzua with a population of around 7000 is the last large town before you reach Santiago. The 14th-century Capilla de la Magdalena is the town's main monument. Arzua is most famous for its local cheese, Queixo, a smooth creamy cheese made from cow's milk which most restaurants feature in some way and is definitely worth trying. The town also celebrates its cheese with a Queixo Cheese festival every March.

Overnight: Arzua

Meals: B

Day 15

ARZUA TO O PEDROUZO (21KM)

The majority of today's walk to O Pedrouzo is through wonderful pine and eucalyptus scented woodland. The path is mostly level, passing through three shallow river valleys with a gradual climb up to Alto de Santa Irene at 404m. The country lanes and woodland paths pass through many small hamlets. The final section climbs steeply to a main road, into eucalyptus woodland and onto A Rua and the village to O Pedrouzo. O Pedrouzo /Arco do Pino is a small but busy town with plenty of shops, restaurants and bars and the staging point for the last section of the Camino before entering Santiago de Compostela.

Overnight: O Pedrouzo

Meals: B

Day 16

O PEDROUZO TO SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA (20KM)

Today's route will likely be busier as pilgrims begin the last stage of their walk into Santiago, filled with excitement and anticipation. The pilgrims mass at Santiago Cathedral begins at midday so you will need to leave early to arrive on time. The first section of today's route passes through eucalypt forests with most of the route on quiet roads and pathways before the final kilometres and a climb to Mount Gozo before



descending into the suburbs of Santiago. The path runs alongside the airport and you will see many crosses of twigs and branches used by pilgrims to decorate the fence.

Lavacolla village is where pilgrims traditionally washed to purify themselves before entering Santiago and Lavacolla literally means to wash your tail. At Monte Gozo, Mount of Joy, you will first sight the stunning Catedral de Santiago spires.

The final section is well signposted into the old quarter with its wonderful historical buildings and narrow shop filled alleyways, until you finally reach the Praza Obradoiro in the heart of Santiago de Compostela, and the wonderful ancient Cathedral.

Overnight: Santiago de Compostela

Meals: B

Day 17

SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA AT LEISURE

Today you have the whole day to enjoy and explore historic Santiago de Compostela with its many enticing tapas bars and restaurants. You can attend the midday pilgrims mass and look around the famous Cathedral of St James which forms the city's heart and watch the steady stream of pilgrims arriving into the square as they finish their epic journey. Alternatively you may like to take a day trip out to visit Finisterre, the 'end of the world' or a shorter rooftop tour of Santiago, both of which can easily be arranged locally.

Overnight: Santiago de Compostela

Meals: B

Day 18

DEPART SANTIAGO

You are free to check out of your hotel any time before 10 am. If you'd like to explore Santiago further, you can leave your bags with reception. Interested in more walking options from Santiago? Consider extending your journey with our captivating 6-day Camino de Finisterre for an epic journey to 'The World's End'.

Meals: B

