



A Taste of the Camino: Porto to Bilbao 2025

Carve your own pilgrimage of discovery along the Camino de Santiago and beyond, as you savour the taste of local sizzling seafood, uncover centuries-old history and feast your eyes on cinematic mountain landscapes. On this evocative journey from Portugal to northern Spain, following in the footsteps of hundreds of thousands of pilgrims, a captivating travel tale that's uniquely yours awaits. What memories will etch their way into your story?





About your tour notes

These tour notes contain everything you need to know before your tour departs – from where to meet your fellow guests and local guide to what essentials to pack for your journey. We recommend you print this document out and bring it with you on your tour. Give a copy to loved ones at home so they can follow your adventure, too.

Important: please refresh this document as close to your departure as possible to ensure you're equipped with the latest information available.

Hotel Royal Porto Bridges @ 18:00

R. de Sá da Bandeira 53, Porto, 4000-433

Hotel Catalonia Bilbao @ 14:00

Gran Vía de Don Diego López de Haro, 73, Bilbao, 48011



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Tour highlights

- ✓ Feel the palpable energy of centuries past in the UNESCO World Heritage-listed Old Town of Santiago de Compostela
- ✓ Indulge in a wine tasting and locally prepared lunch in the heart of Spain's Castile & León region
- ✓ Gaze in awe at the majestic mountains of the soul-stirring Picos de Europa National Park

More inclusions

- ✓ 6 breakfasts, 2 lunches, 2 dinners
- ✓ 6 nights in thoughtfully selected accommodation
- ✓ Luxury minicoach

Currencies you'll use

- Portugal - EUR
- Spain - EUR



Included meals

Breakfast (B) is included daily.

Some of your lunches and dinners are also included, either in hotels or local restaurants. These are indicated by (L) and (D) in the itinerary.

Please note that drinks will not always be included.

We will do our best to accommodate any specific dietary requirements you may have. Please ensure to make these clear to us before your tour begins so we can communicate them to our hotels, restaurants and suppliers.

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Your itinerary

Day 1 | Porto (Portugal)

World-famous port wine, an iconic iron bridge and knots of medieval alleys – our journey along the Camino will begin in postcard-perfect Porto. You could spend a day (or two!) getting acquainted with this captivating city before meeting our small group for a welcome dinner at a local restaurant this evening.

So, how will your story unfold in Porto? Perhaps you'll uncover hidden courtyards and say *olá* to friendly café owners as you meander up the Ribeira district to the city's hilltop cathedral. From the cathedral's terrace, you can watch the sun light up terracotta roofs and catch a glimpse of the mighty Douro River before exploring the vast cathedral complex itself. Be sure to look out for traditional blue and white *azulejos* (hand-painted tiles) that adorn facades as you go. Or, you could simply stroll along Porto's vibrant riverfront, soaking up the cosy chatter from restaurants that spill onto the path as traditional rabelo boats float on by. All best enjoyed with a *pastel de nata* (a classic, Portuguese egg custard pastry) in hand, of course!

Included today



Accommodation

Hotel Royal Porto Bridges (or similar)



Meals

+ Dinner

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Day 2 | Porto – Viana do Castelo and Ponte de Lima – Santiago de Compostela (Spain)

Legends of Roman soldiers and a mythical river await – our journey north kicks off with a visit to Viana do Castelo. Step off our luxury minicoach and take in your surroundings, from the dazzling white Gil Eannes ship to the sparkling harbour. Have you spotted the neo-Byzantine Santuário de Santa Luzia in the distance? We'll make our way up to this hilltop church to admire its impressive rose window and vast domed roof (adorned with 16 painted angels, no less!). Perched up here, the views over the Atlantic Ocean are truly spectacular – spot the River Lima flowing into the sea, and notice waves caressing the nearby golden shores like layers of tulle.

Then, we're off to Ponte de Lima, one of the oldest towns in Portugal. We'll admire its ancient bridge, first constructed by the Romans in 1 AD (yes, really!) and enjoy some free time exploring the historic centre dotted with quaint cafés, vibrant flower gardens and sunny plazas. Don't forget to ask your in-the-know Tour Leader for the best local seafood options for lunch.

Having crossed the border into Spain, we'll arrive at Santiago de Compostela – our home for the next two nights and the final stop on the fabled Camino de Santiago pilgrimage. More on that tomorrow... Tonight, you could start your chapter in this sacred city by uncovering hole-in-the-wall bars along its narrow streets or simply spend the evening relaxing at our hand-picked hotel. Decisions, decisions...

Included today



Accommodation

Hotel Compostela (or similar)



Meals

+ Breakfast



Day 3 | Santiago de Compostela

Santiago de Compostela is believed to be the burial site of Saint James (one of Jesus' 12 apostles), and so hundreds of thousands of pilgrims make the journey to this fabled city every year. While we may not be trekking the Camino de Santiago ourselves, this morning we'll meet a friendly local guide who will help us delve deeper on a walking tour. Discover why the Camino's symbol is a scallop shell, seek out the perfect *Tarta de Santiago* (a traditional almond cake, typically decorated with the Cross of Saint James) in the Old Town's medieval, arcaded streets and admire the Cathedral's cascading spires and intricate Baroque details as you wander.

With free time this afternoon to slow down and explore, be sure to visit the cathedral's magnificent interior. Feel the enduring spirit of pilgrims who have visited over the centuries, hear the gentle hum of Mass echo from the barrel-vaulted, Romanesque nave, and smell the smoky fragrance of burning incense as you take it all in.

Dinner's yours for the taking this evening, so why not seek out a local restaurant and dive into traditional Galician cuisine? The *Pulpo a la Gallega* (boiled octopus seasoned to perfection with sea salt, paprika and olive oil) or *Empanada Gallega* (a savoury pie filled with meat or seafood plus onions, peppers, and tomatoes) are a delicious place to start. Bellies and hearts full, we'll sleep well tonight!

Included today



Accommodation

Hotel Compostela (or similar)



Meals

+ Breakfast

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Day 4 | Santiago de Compostela – Ponferrada – León

Follow in the footsteps of the Knights Templar – a visit to the impressive Castillo de los Templarios awaits. Cross the drawbridge, feel the cool touch of ancient stone under your fingertips and travel back in time as we wander the mighty walls of this giant fortress, imagining stories of what life might have been like in medieval times. Built in 1178 to protect the pilgrims on their road to Santiago de Compostela, it's a fitting start to our day's journey.

Continuing our route into northern Castilla, we'll arrive at León. And, tonight, dinner is yours for the taking. Why not head out and hunt down some local tapas? Typically enjoyed alongside a drink (or two!), tucking into tapas is a social affair. So, you could team up with others from our small group and feast on a plethora of flavours together as the sun sets on another wonderful day. Our favourites? Look out for *Pimientos de Padrón* (green peppers, fried in olive oil and sprinkled with sea salt), *Tortilla de Patata* (Spanish omelette), *Gambas al Ajillo* (shrimps cooked sizzling in garlic) and *Jamón Ibérico* (cured Iberian ham) for a delicious initiation into Spanish cuisine.

Tonight, we'll settle into our accommodation – an 11th-century monastery-turned-hotel that's nestled right in the heart of León's historic centre. Spot the original features like oak floors and stone walls that give each room its unique charm, then get some well earned shut-eye ahead of more adventures tomorrow. **(B)**

Included today



Accommodation

Hotel Real Colegiata de San Isidoro (or similar)



Meals

+ Breakfast



Day 5 | León

Wake up to the sound of the cathedral's chiming bells, fuel up on a *café con leche* (coffee with milk) and get ready to set out for the day. We'll meet our expert local guide to kick things off with a walking tour. With the city's origins dating back to Roman times, it's only fitting that we start at the Roman walls before taking in the splendour of the Romanesque Basilica de San Isidoro and the Casa de los Botines (designed by none other than Antoni Gaudí). Then, it's onto the striking cathedral where we'll discover why this Gothic jewel is often called the 'House of Light' – the 1,800 square metres of kaleidoscopic stained-glass windows might just have something to do with it...

All this exploring is thirsty work, so we'll set a course to a local winery to indulge in a couple of glasses of the region's finest. As we stroll through the vineyards, spot the sun-kissed Prieto Picudo and White Albarin grape varieties, and take a moment to pause... listen to the breeze rustle through the lush vines like a hushed whisper. We won't blame you for buying a bottle (or three) after our visit to take home! Compare tasting notes over a generous group lunch (in a wine cellar, no less) before we head back to León. *¡Buen provecho!*

Tonight, you're free to shape your own path in León. Your knowledgeable Tour Leader is bound to have a few suggestions up their sleeve for where to spend a memorable evening.

Included today



Accommodation

Hotel Real Colegiata de San Isidoro (or similar)



Meals

+ Breakfast
+ Lunch

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Day 6 | León – Picos de Europa – Cantabria Region

Limestone peaks graze the sky like mythical towers emerging from the earth, gorges carve deep into the ground as if created from the hand of a giant sculptor and vibrant wildflowers pepper the emerald green pastures like nature's confetti – we're leaving the metropolis behind and journeying to the mesmerising Picos de Europa National Park. Relax in the minicoach and drink in the stunning views as we thread our way slowly through this cinematic landscape, with plenty of photo opportunities along the way.

Once at Parador de Fuente Dé, we'll tuck into a hearty lunch together. With traditional recipes from the Cantabrian region of Liébana on the menu such as *cocido lebaniego* (a nourishing chickpea and meat stew), we'll be fuelled up and ready to take on the remainder of the day.

Take to the skies with a thrilling cable car ride to the soul-stirring Aliva viewpoint – brace yourself for the spectacular views over the verdant Liebana Valley and surrounding jagged peaks as we ascend an impressive 753 metres. Once at the top, linger for a moment... take a deep, cleansing breath of crisp mountain air and feel the immense power of the majestic mountains around you.

We'll end our day in the Cantabria region. Make yourself at home in our thoughtfully-selected accommodation and unwind before our final group meal together. Perhaps a dip in the pool has your name on it? Over dinner, we'll raise a toast to the moments we've shared over the past week – which has been your favourite?

Included today



Accommodation

Abba Comillas Hotel (or similar)



Meals

- + Breakfast
- + Lunch
- + Dinner

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Day 7 | Cantabria Region – Santander – Bilbao

Gaze out over the Cantabrian Sea's bright blue water and cast your eyes over the lilted waves for sea lions and seals – the Magdalena Peninsula beckons! We'll hop on the peninsula's little train to admire the scenery and get a close-up view of the Palacio de la Magdalena (one of the most prominent examples of civil architecture in northern Spain) before immersing ourselves in Santander's charm and seeking out a local haunt for lunch. With its golden, crescent-shaped bays and fresh seafood at every turn, it's easy to fall in love with this historic port city.

We'll wind up our day in bustling Bilbao to say our goodbyes. And while this may be the final page of your Camino adventure, your taste of the region's spirit is sure to leave a lasting impression.

Included today

Meals

+ Breakfast



Travel advice

Finances

Changing money

Cash: Foreign money can be changed at banks, airports, some railway and tube stations, and at major hotels (though at a less favourable rate).

Credit cards: Visa and MasterCard are widely accepted. American Express is only accepted in some larger establishments.

Cash machines: ATMS are widely available.

Tipping

Tipping is entirely at your discretion. If you feel you have received exceptional service, it is recommended that you tip £1-2/€ per day for Drivers and £4- 5/€ per day for Tour Leaders.

Insurance

Before travelling with Back-Roads Touring, it is compulsory for all guests to take out comprehensive travel insurance. Please ensure your insurance covers medical expenses (including repatriation), cancellation cover, loss or damage to baggage and personal effects, money and personal liability.

We recommend you carry your insurance details with you at all times. You may be asked to provide details of your medical insurance or a payment guarantee in some countries before medical assistance can be provided.

For more information, please see our [FAQ page](#).

If you have any further questions, please don't hesitate to contact our friendly Customer Service team [here](#).

Passports and visas

Please ensure your passport is valid for at least six months after the last day of your tour. Some countries will refuse entry if you do not have at least six months validity remaining on your passport after your departure date. Depending on your nationality, you may require a visa to enter certain



countries.

It is your responsibility to obtain visas prior to your tour's departure. To determine which visas you'll need, you can consult either your own government's website or the government websites of the countries in which you will be travelling.

Please note: Some visas can take up to six weeks to acquire, so don't leave it until the last minute. Also, bear in mind that the validity of a visa often runs from its date of issue rather than the date of entry into the country. Please check with the appropriate embassy/embassies prior to departure as requirements do change periodically.

We advise you to either carry a photocopy of your passport (and visa, if applicable) with you while abroad, or to ensure that you leave a copy with relatives back at home. This will enable the local embassy or high commission to arrange a replacement if the original should be lost or stolen. If you do take copies with you on your tour, please ensure that you keep these separate from your original documents.

Medication and mobility

Whilst on your tour, we want you to have the smoothest journey possible which requires x mobility conditions:

- You must be fit enough to get on and off the vehicle on a regular basis, and to walk around towns and villages or to attractions.
- You must be able to walk up and down stairs and use a shower over the bath.

Please note that, unfortunately, we are unable to accommodate mobility scooter or wheelchair users as we frequently stay in traditional-style hotels and the majority do not have lifts or ground-floor rooms.

If you take medicine for certain conditions, such as diabetes or heart problems, please carry it with you at all times.

Please declare any medical conditions you may have in advance of your tour. If you are in any doubt as to whether our tours are suitable for you, please contact our friendly Customer Service team [here](#).



Mental health and wellbeing

Culture shock, homesickness and periods of feeling down happen regardless of age. Be rest assured that if you're feeling low, your Tour Leader and Driver will do their utmost to make you smile.

Measures you can take to look after your mental health and wellbeing while on the road with us are:

- Call loved ones. Hearing a familiar voice whilst in an unfamiliar destination can help ground you and remind you you're not alone.
- Eat well. Nobody feels their best when they're hungry. There are plenty of nutritious culinary delights to be savoured along the road!
- Integrate with your fellow guests. The more you socialise with the group, the less likely you'll feel homesick.

Transport

We travel in premium mini-coaches equipped with comfortable seats, air conditioning and large windows for enjoying the view.

With far more flexibility than a standard-size coach, we're able to take the scenic route – winding through beautiful countryside to the heart of tiny villages and coastal towns.

Will I have regular access to Wi-Fi?

Most accommodation we stay in will offer free Wi-Fi as well as many restaurants and cafes you may visit. If you would like more regular internet access without large roaming fees, you can purchase a Back-Roads Touring eSIM [here](#).



What to Pack

Based on our experience, the following items are essential.

Please note, this is a general packing list for Back-Roads Touring tours. What you pack will depend on the countries you're visiting as well as the time of year you plan to travel.

Clothing

- | | | |
|---------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| ✓ Sun hat | ✓ Long-sleeved tops | ✓ Light jacket |
| ✓ Sunglasses | ✓ Short-sleeved tops | ✓ Waterproof jacket |
| ✓ Sleepwear | ✓ Shorts/skirts | ✓ Trousers |
| ✓ Warm jacket | ✓ Socks | ✓ Swimwear |
| ✓ Underwear | ✓ Smart casual evening wear | ✓ Walking/comfortable shoes |

Other essentials

- | | | |
|---------------------------|--|--------------------|
| ✓ Multi-use adapter plug | ✓ Toiletries | ✓ Camera |
| ✓ Batteries | ✓ Sunscreen | ✓ Towel |
| ✓ Umbrella | ✓ Reusable water bottle | ✓ Insect repellent |
| ✓ Any personal medication | ✓ Basic medical kit (paracetamol, aspirin, plasters etc) | |

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How much luggage can I bring

As we travel in mini-coaches, luggage space is limited. Here's what you can take with you on tour:



1 x suitcase



1 x small carry-on bag
(backpack or handbag)

If you have more luggage, please make arrangements to store it prior to joining the tour. **We are unable to carry extra luggage on the mini-coach.**

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FAQs

Which type of hotels will we stay in?

Our thoughtfully selected accommodation is full of charm and historic details – expect elegant country inns, grand town centre hotels and even the odd castle! For this reason, rooms vary in size, and most hotels don't have lifts – meaning you'll likely need to access your room via stairs. Porterage will be included wherever possible.

Although air conditioning is mostly unavailable in historic buildings, fans will be provided during hot spells. Most hotels have bathtubs with overhead showers (rather than walk-in showers), so you'll be able to enjoy a soak at the end of the day.

What's the weather like?

The weather in Spain and Portugal varies depending on the time of year. Generally, summers are hot and dry (slightly cooler as you go further north), and from mid-June to the end of August temperatures can reach 45°C (113°F). Sun hats and sunscreen are essential!

Because of the summer heat, Spanish culture includes *siestas* where most businesses close their doors during the afternoon – something to embrace during this journey.

Do many places in Spain still enjoy siestas?

The tradition of taking a break or having a nap during the hottest part of the day still lives on in many parts of Spain, so you might find shops and restaurants closed in some smaller towns during the afternoons.

That's everything!

We can't wait to welcome you on tour.

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