

## **THE CELTIC WAY TO SANTIAGO - INCLUSIONS AND FAQ'S:**

### **What is included?**

- \*13 nights accommodation in privately owned hotels or rural farmhouses, all with private facilities
- \*Taxes and gratuities for all hotels
- \*Baggage handling and transportation by private vehicle
- \*Scallop Shell and Pilgrim Passport
- \*All meals except one lunch and one dinner
- \*Experienced Bilingual Spanish guide for the full duration
- \*All Entrance fees and tips for local guides at cathedrals as specified in the itinerary

### **What is not included?**

- \*Airfares and taxes
- \*Alcoholic beverages unless it is included in the set menu at certain Hotels that we stay
- \*Insurance (compulsory...please talk to a lifestyle journeys representative re the options)
- \*Spanish Tour Guide Gratuities (optional)

### **How many kms do we walk per day and how fit do we have to**

**be?** You will be walking between 15-25 kms per day. The first few days we start out light so as you can adjust your walking feet and get into your own natural rhythm. The trails are marked by either yellow painted arrows or scallop shell tiles attached to stone markers, so it is not that easy to get lost! There are some climbs that are graded medium with the rest of the track being graded as easy. An average fitness level is sufficient – though “average” may vary depending on your age and general activity levels. You’ll enjoy it so much more if you’re well prepared. As you are on your feet for 5-6 hours per day, having some walking experience behind you really helps. If you are a gym member we recommend you speak to your trainer about the trip. Tell them that you expect to cover 115ks over a five day period, plus some shorter walks at the start of the trip. They’ll be able to help you prepare. Otherwise, do as much walking as you can fit into your schedule, preferably every day or at least every second day in the weeks before departure. Ensure that before you leave home you have done a few long walks with a day pack, taking rest breaks as you need them and stopping for lunch, as we’ll do on the Camino.

**What standard of accommodation can we expect?** We stay in either 2-3 star small privately owned hotels or beautiful old country farmhouses that are full of antiques and character. One of the absolute highlights of the tour is the wonderful array of accommodation we experience all with a personal touch and the comfort of home away from home.

**What meals are included?** All meals are included except for one lunch and one dinner as on these days you have free time to explore the larger cities. Due to us staying in either private hotels or country farmhouses most of the meals are home cooked consisting of organic produce locally grown. Many times our tour participants are overheard saying “there

is just too much food” – what a wonderful complaint to have! Breakfast generally consists of fresh fruit, toast, yoghurt/cheese and coffee/tea. Lunch will either be one of our famous gourmet picnics where local produce is purchased fresh from the market and prepared along the trail or a three course hot lunch in one of the many restaurants. Dinner is usually a three course home cooked meal by our accommodation host. There is of course the glass of vino tinto or blanco served with lunch or dinner, which is indeed optional however it does not take long to adjust into the Spanish way of life!

**What sort of spiritual preparation is suggested for the Lifestyle Journeys walk along the Camino de Santiago?** We suggest you establish or strengthen daily meditation practice leading up to the journey. In your prayers you might ask the spirit of those that have walked the trail before you to help you connect even before you arrive. Most important is to be open to new teachings, embracing and honouring this pilgrimage as very precious time you have given your soul for greater learning and remembering. Set your intentions with your higher self as to what you wish to achieve out of the pilgrimage for both spiritual and personal growth. Be open to change and listening to your intuition as answers will be given to you as you walk this ancient pilgrimage trail.

**Does the group walk as a group?** You can please yourself. Sometimes friends or couples like to walk together – others prefer to walk on their own to soak up the sights and sounds and get lost in their own thoughts along the way. Everyone has their own purpose in taking the pilgrimage. For some it's a spiritual experience. Others are there just to enjoy walking or for cultural/historical learning. For others it's about relishing Spanish food and wine. On the trail the important thing is to go easy on yourself and walk at your own pace. There's no need to match another person's stride. Every group has its fastest and slowest members – and whatever pace you like to walk at is perfectly fine. We gather for meals along the way and at night to enjoy companionship and story-sharing. NB the Spanish eat very late in the evening (by our standards), with nine or ten being regarded as normal. On some nights we will eat a little earlier but late dining is all part of experiencing the Spanish way of life.

**What is the average age of a tour participant?** The Camino is open to all ages and this is exactly what you see as you walk. Generally on our tours the average age is between 40-60 years. Fit older people have no trouble with the walk, with 70 year olds sometimes covering the ground faster than people many years their junior. The Camino is an experience, not a race, so everyone can do it at a pace, which suits them best.

**Minimum number of passengers required for the tour to go ahead:** 6

**Maximum number of passengers we take on any walking tour:** 12

**What mode of transport is provided?** We have a private coach that seats up to 25 passengers. We have chosen to have a maximum of 12 participants and two guides with the rest of the space being available for luggage.

## **What should I allow for a daily budget to cover the additional expenses?**

Very little is required as almost all expenses are covered in the tour cost.

There is a day where you have free time to explore the larger city so you will need to budget for your lunch and dinner. We would recommend approx. 15.00 – 20.00 euros for lunch and 25.00 euros for dinner. This would be for a three course menu of the day including the house wine. The only other incidentals will be beverages ie: coffee/tea, juice, beer or wine and any souvenirs that you might like such as t-shirts, postcards, stick pins, music etc.

There is a selection of ATM machines along the way to withdraw your cash as you need it. The best currency to travel with is the Euro while in Spain.

## **What is a typical day like?**

In Spain no one moves until about 8.30 am so for those who wish to depart early they can do so but they would miss out on breakfast and have to purchase it further down the track!! A typical day consists of us meeting to enjoy a lovely breakfast together from say 8.30 am – 9.30 am where Ricardo our Guide goes over the walk for the day providing relevant information on what the day would entail by way of sights, distances travelled, where we will be stopping for lunch, where a great coffee stop might be etc. Most days you can step outside the door of your accommodation and be right on the trail... picking it up from where you left it the day before it does not take long to fall into your stride amongst the other pilgrims. We walk for approximately 5-6 hours a day with plenty of stops enroute. Each day is different depending on the terrain, the people you meet along the way, the culinary delights that await and off course the weather! There is no hurry to get anywhere and you most certainly can walk at your own pace. Lunch is one of the highlights of the day where we stop for a couple of hours, soak up the ambience of where we are and listen to the tales of the day shared by the rest of the group. Around 5.00 or 6.00 pm we arrive at our accommodation for the night. Showers are had, journals are written, a glass of vino or a gin poured as we enjoy the gardens or beautiful surroundings of the farmhouse that we are in. The group then joins together for a night of laughter, wonderful food and wine and plenty of stories to be shared by our Spanish guide.

From a spiritual perspective walking this ancient pilgrims route is very much an internal journey whereby you are participating in all of the daily activities however there is a lot of time for contemplation as you walk, as you sit at the beginning or end of the day or as you take special time out to meditate if you wish. A time to reconnect with past, be in the present and maybe contemplate your future direction.

**What will the Weather be like?:** For your walking comfort Lifestyle Journeys does not run Camino tours in the hottest part of the year. However, please be prepared for changeable weather conditions which can offer up hot sun or chilly rain, and everything in between. Spain's north-west corner, where we'll be walking is very green. This area, which is close to the Atlantic, experiences maritime conditions and can range from damp and cool (under 20 deg C) to dry and warm (high 20s or 30 deg). Please see the "What do I need to pack list" for suggested items of clothing to accommodate the changeable weather conditions.

**Pre and Post Tour Arrangements:** Lifestyle Journeys would be very happy to make recommendations and assist regarding your pre and post travel opportunities. We can guide you with our own personal and professional experience.

**Is tipping compulsory or optional and if so what is the recommended amount to tip?** It is not compulsory however we highly recommend you budget approx. 5.00 euro per day as a tip for the guide. This work is seasonal and they do rely on the tips as part of their overall earning capacity. Our guide is so wonderful you will be very happy to reward him and support him in this way we are sure.

**Can a single traveller have the option of paying share twin cost?** We will endeavor to match those tour participants who wish to share a room however this is subject to availability. If there is no match possible the single supplement will need to be collected.

**What do you need to pack?** See equipment list