

On the Camino: A Pilgrimage to Remember, Release, and Reimagine
July 17 – 26, 2022

Frequently Asked Questions

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Q: *Why should I walk the Camino with Shalem?*

A: Many organizations offer pilgrimages on the Camino, and many individuals make the trek on their own. Shalem's pilgrimage is intentionally contemplative, rooted in silent prayer and holy listening in small groups. Shalem's experienced pilgrimage leaders also will offer seminars on three themes: remember, release, and reimagine. Combined, this experience offers spiritual enrichment and connection through individual reflection and the pilgrim community that will form. The pilgrimage leaders have also taken care of many logistical details to make your pilgrimage experience more spiritually centered.

Q: *How should I prepare physically for the pilgrimage?*

A: Unlike other pilgrimages offered by Shalem, walking the Camino involves moving to different locations on foot each day. For seven consecutive days, we will walk 15 to 28 kilometers each day. This is a significant distance, and it is recommended that pilgrims train their bodies at least three to four months in advance for the journey. Additionally, pilgrims must train using the boots they will wear on the journey. You do not want to break in new boots during your pilgrimage experience! Here are three training guides that offer suggestions for preparing your body for the walk.

- [VeryWellFit: https://www.verywellfit.com/how-to-train-to-walk-the-camino-de-santiago-3434979](https://www.verywellfit.com/how-to-train-to-walk-the-camino-de-santiago-3434979)
- [Follow the Camino: https://followthecamino.com/en/blog/your-camino-training-plan/](https://followthecamino.com/en/blog/your-camino-training-plan/)
- [Camino Ways: https://caminoways.com/how-do-i-train-for-the-camino-de-santiago](https://caminoways.com/how-do-i-train-for-the-camino-de-santiago)

Q: *Where does the pilgrimage begin? How do I get there?*

A: We will meet at a hotel in Viladesuso-Oia, Spain, in the late afternoon on July 17, 2022. We will provide the exact address and further details as we get closer to the start of the pilgrimage. Viladesuso-Oia is a tiny town. Pilgrims will likely fly into nearby larger cities, such as Madrid, Lisbon, A Coruna, Vigo, or Santiago. If you don't fly directly into Vigo, it's possible to take a train there. In Vigo, you can catch a bus or take a taxi to Viladesuso-Oia. This website provides information on ground transportation routes from Vigo to Viladesuso-Oia: <https://moovitapp.com/vigo-3841/poi/en>.

We are meeting on Sunday, July 17, and pilgrims should fly from North America to Europe on Friday, July 15 to allow ample time to make the ground journey to Viladesuso-Oia. Pilgrimage leaders are willing to discuss ways to get to the starting location in more detail with pilgrims. We will share travel details of the group in advance, and discuss arrival options during a pre-pilgrimage virtual meeting.

Q: *Where does the pilgrimage end? How do I get home?*

A: The pilgrimage ends on the morning of Tuesday, July 26, 2022, in Santiago de Compostela, Spain. Pilgrims should either make travel arrangements to fly home from

Santiago anytime that day or continue their travels. We will likely be asked to be out of our hotel by 10:00 AM local time (will provide exact timing as we get closer to the pilgrimage). There will be no formal programming on this day, so pilgrims should make their travel arrangements as they so desire.

Q: *How much walking is it?*

A: We will be walking 15-28 kilometers (9-17 miles) per day for seven consecutive days. We will begin walking in silence each morning between 7:00 and 8:00 AM. Pilgrims are not expected to walk as a group for each day's journey, and different pilgrims may have different walking paces. Generally, pilgrims will arrive in the next lodging location before 3:00 PM (including a lunch stop). Pilgrims are advised to wear hiking socks (can be purchased at a sports store) to avoid blisters and to carry anti-blisters pads and gels. If pilgrims experience difficulty and pain, they are welcome to make their own ground transportation arrangements to the next lodging location.

Q: *Do I have to carry all my things with me each day?*

A: No. The cost of the pilgrimage includes a service that will transport our baggage from lodging site to lodging site each day. Therefore, you only need to carry in your pack anything you would like to have during the day's walk (water, snacks, journal, ID, cash, sunscreen, first aid supplies).

Q: *What about meals?*

A: Breakfast and dinner are included in the cost of the pilgrimage and will be held as a group each day. Some of the hotels may include breakfast. Some likely will not, so we will stop within the first hour of the walk at a café. Dinner in Spain happens later than many North Americans are accustomed to. We will likely have dinner right when restaurants open for the evening at about 8:30 PM. Depending on the size of our group and the seating available, we may have to divide our group between two restaurant locations. Pilgrims can have lunch on their own. The path goes near many restaurant options during the day, many of which have special "pilgrim lunch" options. The whole group will not stop or meet together for lunch each day.

Q: *Ok. So, remind me again, what's the daily schedule like?*

A: We will follow a general daily rhythm (see below). It's important to remember that exact timing will vary somewhat day-to-day and depend on factors that are hard to predict or plan on in advance. Pilgrimage leaders ask for flexibility from pilgrims and invite you to embrace the Spanish notion: *Tiempo es relativo* (time is relative) ;-)

General Daily Rhythm

- 6:00-6:30 AM: Suggested time to wake up
- 7:00 AM: Simple Presence (a morning prayer time, in the lobby or right outside the lodging location)
- 7:15 – 8:30 AM: Breakfast and depart for the day in silence (either at the lodging location or a café early on the walk, baggage must be at the front desk of the lodging location by 7:30 AM each day for courier pickup)

- 8:30 AM-Noon: Group walks the path in silence. You may walk by yourself or with others at your own pace.
- Noon – Pilgrims are invited to break the silence and have lunch somewhere along the path.
- 1:00 – 3:00 PM: Pilgrims likely will arrive at the next night’s lodging location in this timeframe.
- 3:00 – 6:00 PM: Free time. Pilgrims should get settled in the night’s lodging location and feel free to explore the town or take a nap.
- 6:00 – 8:15 PM: Some days, this time will be set aside for seminars and listening circles. Some days this will be extended free time. Pilgrimage leaders will provide the exact details during the pilgrimage.
- 8:15 PM: Group meets at the lodging location to walk to dinner.
- 10:30 PM: Dinner will likely be over by this time, and pilgrims are free to explore the town some more or head to bed.

Q: *What do I need to bring?*

A: The most important item you will bring is your boots or shoes. You must, must, must break these in well before the pilgrimage. You may want to bring a pair of sandals or flip-flops to put on in the evening. They will feel good on your feet after the day’s walk. Also, bring clothes that are comfortable to walk in. We recommend pants/shorts made of light water-resistant, wicking fabric. Do not wear cotton or denim – you will get hot and uncomfortable. We recommend hiking socks (bring extras), made of soft material that will not rub against your feet/toes and cause blisters.

Also, bring:

- Hat
- Rain poncho (good to be prepared)
- Sunglasses
- Backpack
- Water bottle
- Sunscreen & bug spray
- Journal and writing utensil
- Snacks
- ID (passport)
- Cash
- First Aid – consider bringing your own small anti-blister kit
- Toiletries
- Phone & Camera
- Hiking poles (some people find these help alleviate joint pain)
- Earplugs & snoring aids

Q: *What are the COVID-19 requirements?*

A: Shalem requires all pilgrims to be vaccinated against COVID-19. Pilgrims must provide proof of vaccination (send a photocopy of your vaccination card to registrar Chris Jeffrey at chris@shalem.org) at the time you register. If and when booster shots become available, Shalem will ask affected pilgrims to demonstrate proof accordingly.

Further, the United States, Spain, and various airlines have different COVID travel requirements. At the time of this writing (August 2021), travelers from the United States to Spain do not need to provide proof of vaccination or a negative COVID test to travel. However, these requirements have changed frequently throughout the pandemic and may continue to fluctuate. You can find up-to-date information on the COVID travel requirements from the US to Spain at the US Embassy's website: <https://es.usembassy.gov/covid-19-information/>. Pilgrims should also determine if their airline has separate requirements and take appropriate action one week before flying.