



Palas de Rei



Ribadesella



Oviedo Cathedral



Hondarribia



Santillana del Mar Collegiate Church



Guggenheim Bilbao



The Camino de Santiago pilgrimage route crosses the Iberian Peninsula from Roncesvalles in the Pyrenees to the city of Santiago de Compostela, where the tomb of Saint James the Apostle is situated, in the region known as the Atlantic Finis Terrae. This spiritual and cultural route has been created by the men and women who have been thronging to the tomb ever since the 10th century. The Camino de Santiago makes pilgrims and travellers feel calmly reassured, awakening the five senses and providing a space where discoveries can be made and friendships forged. The journey involves spiritual awareness, being part of something and building bridges between cultures.



Santo Domingo de la Calzada



Melide



MUSAC. León



Santiago Church. Carrión de los Condes



Jaca Cathedral



Puente la Reina



5 reasons to undertake the Santiago pilgrimage route

WAY^{THE}



- 1 To see World Heritage Sites.
- 2 For the variety of outdoor activities.
- 3 To enjoy extraordinary food and wine.
- 4 For the chance to stay in restored historic buildings, rural houses, modern hotels, spas with medicinal thermal waters, paradors, youth hostels and camping sites.
- 5 To meet people from different creeds and gain personal enlightenment along the way.

OF SAINT-JAMES



Travellers following the Santiago pilgrimage route become submerged in an ecosystem of great diversity and beauty. On the northern route, the landscape is constantly changing along the rugged coast and through the green valleys of the Basque Country, Cantabria, Asturias and Galicia. On the French route, pilgrims cross the fertile plains of Navarre and Aragón, the vivid vineyards of La Rioja, the striking open countryside of Castilla and León and the leafy forests of Galicia. There are also several nature parks and officially-designated Biosphere Reserves along the Santiago pilgrimage routes, making all those who follow them feel at one with the environment. Pilgrims undertaking this journey often find they are overcome with emotion. The route is a symbol of European identity which has shaped the character of the lands it crosses. Along the way, you come across countless places where the local crafts, festivals, ancestral rituals and

Eunate, the Pantheon of San Isidoro in León and Santiago; Gothic architecture in Burgos and León; the Renaissance San Marcos in León and Hostal Real in Santiago, and the Baroque tower of Santo Domingo de la Calzada, as well as examples of the characteristic Galician Baroque, and also neo-Classical and Art Nouveau structures (Astorga). There are also 21st-century buildings featuring the latest architectural tendencies, such as the Guggenheim in Bilbao on the northern route; the MUSAC contemporary art museum in León on the French route, and the CGAC contemporary art centre and the Ciudad de la Cultura in Santiago de Compostela itself, where the most cutting-edge artistic trends are on display. The cultural scene also includes the San Sebastián Film Festival, classical music performed at the Santander Festival, the Vía Stellae in



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ancient legends have been preserved. The myth of Saint James the Apostle and a religious way of life form an essential part of the rich history of these towns and villages, where travellers are constantly surprised by the things they come across along the way, whether the pride in vernacular architecture or sporting activities, or even the avantgarde work of local designers. Both the French and northern routes are testament to the development of Western civilisation. The northern route includes cromlechs in Oiartzun in the Basque Country; prehistoric caves in Altamira in Cantabria and Tito Bustillo in Asturias, and pre-Romanesque art in Oviedo. The French route, which is a designated World Heritage Site and First European Cultural Route, features the Sierra de Atapuerca archaeological site; Romanesque art in Jaca,

Galicia, the San Sebastián Fortnight and during the opera season in Oviedo, and the modern dance contest in Burgos. There is also a plethora of folklore festivals and folk, jazz or rock concerts. The cuisines of the northern and French routes are very different and varied, and give us an insight into how local produce is enjoyed as well as ingredients introduced in the Middle Ages by the religious orders that settled along the length of the two routes. The cider and magnificent wines produced along the French route are matched with cheeses, asparagus, traditional dishes and desserts, as well as with the more daring flavours and textures of nouvelle cuisine, which accentuates the natural flavours of the local seafood, fish, meat from indigenous livestock and the huge variety of fruit and vegetables.

