

Santiago

your pilgrims

ENGLISH

ARIELLE MANIRAKIZA 30, BUJUMBURA BURUNDI

I wanted to get out of my daily life, my routines, my work and my worries. To connect with God, to get away from it all, to have time to pray and talk to God. To let Him speak to my heart, to tell me who I am and to show me who I have become.

The best moment was when I went to Mass in Viana do Castelo. When I arrived at the Shrine, the Mass had just begun. I decided to stay and participate in the Mass because it was the feast of the Immaculate Heart of Mother Mary. The special moment came during Communion. After I received the Sacred Host, the choir began to sing a song. I had already sung the song "Le Seigneur Nous a Aime comme on a jamais aime" in kindergarten.

In that moment, Jesus told me (the 30-year-old me and the little 5-year-old from my childhood) how much God loves and cares for me. It made me cry. This song was sung almost every time I attended Mass during the Camino.

Hans-Jürgen Rosenberg 75, Berlin Deutschland

My wife and I walked the Camino Francais from Roncesvalle to Santiago in 2015. At that time I considered it a sporting challenge and now I wanted to test if I was still physically able to walk the 280 km at the age of 75. Unlike in 2015, it was an easy exercise and despite the 16 kilos on my back, I was able to enjoy the pilgrimage as a vacation.

The most beautiful moment was certainly arriving at the cathedral of Santiago de Compostela with hundreds of other pilgrims. What moved us the most was the following experience. We were in the cathedral on time for Mass, the cantor had already raised his voice, when an elderly pilgrim, visibly exhausted, entered the cathedral and crouched down exhausted at the foot of one of the columns. Suddenly his cell phone rang, and we were a little indignant that he hadn't put it on silent. Anyway, he answered the call, but was only able to speak one sentence into his cell phone. Then his emotions got the better of him and he burst into tears and cried and cried and cried. He held a piece of paper in front of his face and cried throughout the entire service. This touched us very much and we also cried. Our friend met the old pilgrim in town an hour later, but didn't dare speak to him. Since he probably didn't speak German and our friend didn't speak Spanish, they wouldn't have been able to communicate. Suddenly, a white flower fell at our friend's feet. She bent down, picked up the flower, and handed it to him.

Calston Harris 56, Bristol United Kingdom

The Camino de Santiago is a challenging and transformative journey that I undertook for spiritual reasons. My profound faith in Jesus Christ has had a profound impact on my life, leading to my recovery from mental illness and alcohol addiction several years ago.

This is my third time walking the Camino, and my intentions are to seek solitude, deepen my connection with God, and offer assistance and prayers for others along the way.

Kim Harrison 65, St. Augustine FL USA

Hi, I'm Kim Harrison I currently live in St Augustine, FL. I am the adaptive athlete that rolled the 500-mile Camino in with my adaptive GRIT Freedom wheelchair. I am 65 and live in an aged community with my husband of 38 years Brian.

I contracted Transverse Myelitis in 2004 while on a business trip, to Dallas TX. I woke up and my right foot was asleep and tingling. I kept taping it to get it to wake up and get feeling back and by noon I was paralyzed from my waist down. I was diagnosed with a spinal cord disorder called Transverse Myelitis. It left me with fully paralyzed on my right side from my waist down and partial on my left.

I did a 100k Camino from Porto, to Santiago in 2022 with I'll Push You. Justin and Patrick with I'll Push You opened the opportunity for others with disabilities to challenge themselves with completing a small portion of the Camino with the assistance of 45 push assist volunteers. After finishing with I'll Push You I got the Camino fever and wanted to challenge myself to do the complete 500-mile Camino from St. Jean to Santiago.

With a team of five push assist friends we started on May 8th, 2024, in St Jean and finished June 11, 2024. The Camino was challenging to say the least in a wheelchair. The terrain was very rough and at time almost impassable. I fell out of my chair seven times due to rough terrain.

We went thru rain and mud that got stuck in the wheels causing them to freeze up and not turn, leaving us to find sticks to dig it out for us to continue. Most Albergue's were not accessible and required I climb stairs to access the room. I practiced climbing stairs at the lighthouse in our hometown so once I was in Spain, I could maneuver by myself to get to the rooms. One of the push assist friends John was instrumental in helping push/pull and assist me in completing the 500-mile Camino safely.

One of the other reasons to complete the 500-mile journey was to show others that someone with a disability can do it but it's not easy and took a lot of planning to complete it. Some Albergue's would not let us stay there with me being a wheelchair user due to their fear of me getting hurt and it's my hope that other see that with training and planning we can complete the journey safely. Some area's that were impassible with my wheelchair I had to get out and crawl or be piggybacked.

During the 500 mile Camino de Santiago I carried a retractable sign that said "Out Enjoying Life" and my famous "TM Will Not Win" and it helped bring awareness to Transverse Myelitis and gave me the opportunity to educate others on my spinal cord disorder Transverse Myelitis.

Arnold & Aida Guloy 64, Pearland TX USA

Walking the Camino for many hours a day, along rugged coastal trails and boardwalks, cobblestone and paved roads, wooded and picturesque paths, and passing through (in prayer) beautiful churches and simple chapels, with our three dear friends was an unforgettably meaningful and life-learning experience for my wife and I.

We discovered magical places with stunning natural and man-made beauty; received unexpected acts of kindness from many strangers that lifted our spirits; realized the 'cleansing' power of walking in solitude. We did the Camino for personal and deeply religious reasons, and for our ailing son - he (with his favorite shoe in my backpack) was always with us in spirit and in thought. The Camino gives many signs, and you only need to be open to them. We willingly took everything the Camino offered and were very glad and thankful we did. Bom Caminho! Buen Camino!

God bless everyone!

Eliot 17 & Cian 18, Dublin Irland

To be truthful our main reason was to experience the unknown. We needed and wanted an adventure in our lives and the camino was the best option.

Our favorite moment was after walking 40km in the heat when we arrived at the hotel, the feeling couldn't be beaten! Upon arrival in Santiago, i feel like a new person, open to new experiences and adventures and hungry for the next adventure.

Grace 68, Stanley 73 & Janet 72, New Jersey USA

Grace DeSantis

I decided to walk the Camino de Santiago in order to challenge myself. I had never been out of the US before, so I also wanted to see Spain and Portugal.

In terms of my favorite parts – I enjoyed meeting people from all over the world. A special moment was when we finally reached the Cathedral in Santiago.

Stanley Greenberg

I had walked the Camino Portuguese Central Route several years ago. Now, at 72 years old, it was a greater physical challenge. It was wonderful talking with people from all over the world. The hospitality of the people along the way was amazing.

The best part for me was the last four or five miles. It was exciting to see the numbers of the remaining kilometers get smaller and smaller and to realize that after all our effort we would be finally reaching our destination!

Janet Korsgaard

I had walked the Camino in the years 2000, 2013, and 2018. I was very ill since the last time, so completing this Camino was a wonderful way to celebrate a return to good health. There is something so empowering about traveling such a long distance on foot.

There wasn't a single moment; it was the entire experience. Not knowing - What was around the next corner or the top of the hill? Who we would be talking to next and from where? Would I get a coveted lower bunk at the next albergue?! I loved the fabulous uncertainty of it all!

Jan 73 & Perdita Rabe 65, Fisherhaven South Africa

The Camino has been calling us for years. For us the pilgrimage offered a challenge and an adventure.

We set ourselves the intent of clarifying what we would like to do next in our lives. We loved the whole experience and the great sense of achievement after walking 450 kms in 25 days .

Alexandra Bagi 26, Budapest Hungary

To be honest, my motivation was to spend a week in the presence of God. To pray and to get to know Him better. Before my trip, I realized that I mostly seek God when I want something from Him, when I want to accomplish something, or when I want His blessings and gifts. This really made me think. What would my life be like if I only contacted my parents and talked to them when I needed something from them? I love my parents and I want to spend time with them because I love them, so I felt it should be the same with God. So yes, my motivation was just to spend time with God in His presence. He was really there, he was talking to me from day one. I could feel His presence and He was with me all the time. He really appreciates when we spend time just with Him. He answers prayers, He gives guidance and He gives His peace. He also blessed me with many people during my Camino, I met wonderful people with amazing stories and lives.

I really enjoyed walking along the sea and through small villages. I also enjoyed being in nature, bathing in the rain and then being burnt by the sun. The best moments were when I really felt that I was not alone, that God was with me, and that I was safe and blessed. I don't want to forget to mention the wonderful people I met from Poland and South Africa. I am very thankful for them and wish God to bless their lives.

Jose Daniel Pioner 66, Bolzano Itatia

I always thought of myself as a determined fighter, someone who never gives up. Maybe time has "softened" me?

Some of my friends have asked me why? I don't know, maybe I have something to prove to myself. To lose myself on foreign roads and find myself again. I have to learn to slow down after many years of hard work.

It is easy to close the emptiness in front of you, but difficult to block something that is going on inside you.

The melancholy in me always gave me a positive feeling and triggered sweet moments full of emotion. I wanted to find these emotions in the street.

From Vila Praia de Ancora in Portugal to Oia in Spain was the most beautiful part of the Camino. The Portuguese section to the mouth of the Rio Miño was also impressive.

There are beautiful views along the coastal passages to Vila Praia de Ancora, which leads through a green pine forest and ends at a beach with impressive waves. From Caminha, I took a boat taxi to Galicia for 6 euros.

Once I arrived in the fishing village of A Guarda, I walked along the entire coast. The Atlantic waves breaking on the basalt, a typical rock of the area, was just beautiful.

Finally I arrived in Oia, a small village with a beautiful Romanesque church in the middle of a beautiful landscape!

Gianluca 53 & Lorena 48, Bergamo Italia

Gianluca

My friend Lorena is a very important part of my life. She asked me to go with her to Santiago. And I did. Without a second thought.

For me, the Camino is a snapshot. One moment. One moment. I love every detail of those moments. I'll tell you one thing, believe me. Walk the Camino and you will long to walk the Camino again.

Lorena

I have a big family, 3 dogs and a wish I've had for years: to walk the Camino de Santiago with one of my dogs.

And the time has come, with Maya (3 years old golden retriever) and Gianluca, my faithful friend and companion of many adventures and conversations. La Senda Litoral was an explosion of impressions, scents, views, unexpected and incredible encounters. Needless to say, I will be back on the Camino.

Kyra van Ras 24 , 's-Hertogenbosch Netherlands

What does freedom mean to you?

Back in Porto. The Camino is over. Yesterday I felt empty, mad and alone. I longed for acquaintances, for stimulation, for something other than stagnation. No wonder, because I've only made progress in the last few weeks. Every day a new path, every day new people, every day new stories and every day new material to think about.

And now? Now I see the rain falling outside, I see my feet getting some rest, and I see the sparkle in my eyes. My answer is in that sparkle.

In that sparkle is my answer. The answer to the question I shared with many on the Camino, "What does freedom mean to you?" My freedom is greater, more magical, and more serene than I previously thought. Freedom is not about going as far as you can or needing someone else to do it for you. No, true freedom is within you. Dare to dance like a butterfly, be in the here and now, live in the moment. See the world through the eyes of a child and start playing again. Free yourself from the bubble of routine and boundaries. Take the time to see how beautiful the world has always been. Let go of what you no longer need. Do things that make you truly happy. Know that your soul mate can be found in so much more than one person.

Say "yes" when you know you want to. Say "no" when you feel it clearly. Say "maybe" to give yourself a little more time.

All freedom is within you. I take that sparkle and let it shine. Thank you, Camino, for giving me time, space and freedom. Step by step I take the time to see what new adventures, people and ideas await me.

Let your intuition guide you, feel every emotion and be curious about life.

Gabriel Valderama 67, Cali Colombia

Of course! As a truck driver, it was exciting to travel the roads of the world, but unfortunately I wasn't able to enjoy those trips to the fullest.

During my Camino, I discovered a new way of enjoying and exploring everything at my own pace.

I found out that even small moments can be meaningful and that they all add up to something big and wonderful.

Janet 38, Diane 38 & Jennifer 38, Belfast Northern Ireland

We are three friends from Northern Ireland. We love to travel and particularly enjoy exploring new places and getting outdoors in scenic surroundings. In this regard, walking a Camino sounded perfect and we chose the Portuguese route with the beautiful coast in mind. We were not disappointed.

The scenery was beautiful and the weather perfect. We found the physical challenge rewarding and enjoyed the luxury of time spent in each other's company and the 'adventure' of staying in a different town and accommodation each night.

However, what we will most remember is the people we met along the way. It was a joy to meet pilgrims from around the world. People of all ages and with varied life stories and all encouraging each other as we headed in the same direction!

Buen camino!

Federica Siervo 44, Roma Itatia

I walked the Portuguese coastal path from Oporto to Santiago, mainly because I felt the need for time and space for myself. In an environment of total simplicity and freedom. I found this feeling only on trails, far away from certain external influences and expectations. Free from the obligations of everyday life and always available and able to perform.

I wanted to slow down, focus on the essentials, make a real connection with the people I meet and the places I pass through. Laughter, conversations, whether light or deep, and also silence when it wasn't necessary to fill it with words.

On the Camino all this is possible and happens because there is no script! You are in the here and now, where every step counts and you don't have to worry about who or what you are looking for. The Camino guides you; sooner or later you will understand what you really need. Maybe it's something you just couldn't see before. In short, the Camino gives.

I also walked this Camino to better understand how important it is to let go of people, situations or things. Sometimes they take a different path than the usual one, with all the consequences that entails. It is not easy, but it is necessary, even vital.

I did this Camino because I love to walk. It makes me feel light, happy and ALIVE.

Ingo Stahr 42, Dessau-Roßlau Deutschland

I started this trip because I've always liked hiking. I don't do it as professionally as others, with perfect equipment and all that. For me, it's more about walking and taking in the surroundings. For me, the pilgrimage wasn't necessarily about religious enlightenment or deep spiritual experiences.

Of course you feel within yourself. What is this doing to me right now, and how does it feel to be out and about in so many churches? For me, however, I was able to feel the landscape more clearly. The ocean that looked different every day, the air filled with so many aromas, the earth and rocks with their changing constancy, and the forests with their sublime silence.

I found it very fascinating how different the people I met were, and how different they were in their being, along the way. There were all kinds of characters, from radiant to broken, sometimes slightly crazy, incredibly funny, but also very thoughtful and calm people. My companions and I had some truly wonderful encounters.

The bottom line is that I learned that my perception of people and places is always very accurate, which, to be honest, was very reassuring. Before the trip, I had serious doubts that something was wrong with my gut. The last 3 years before the trip had not always been easy in terms of interpersonal relationships. I have to say that I work in a hospice and you have to rely a lot on your gut feeling when dealing with guests. Looking back, I realize that dealing with guests has never been my problem. I am grateful that on this trip I learned to pay attention to my inner compass again and to be more in touch with myself. Even though I didn't have the absolute religious revelation, the relationship between me and the higher, divine was significantly strengthened. I learned again that stopping and enjoying moments can recharge your batteries.

What more could you ask for?

Eimear, Vicky & Margot

Eimear 57 (Irland)

I'm at a very happy place in life right now and when a friend suggested a 10 day Camino adventure I jumped at the chance to join. I deliberately came with zero expectations but also with an eagerness to see what would unfold along "The Way". What I experienced was mental and physical strength, resilience, exhaustion, blisters, spending vast amounts of money in pharmacies, lots of laughter, joy, wonder and awe, but above all and most importantly I made beautiful connections with beautiful people that I will cherish for the rest of my life.

Vicky 58 (Schottland – lives in Germany)

Only when we understand what we are looking for, do we begin to see it. The chance to do the Camino appeared out of the blue, and as a keen hiker who has been held back by an injury, I saw the sign, recognised the opportunity and jumped at the chance!

Walking the Camino is connecting with nature, revitalising all your senses, breathing fresh sea air, listening to the birds, feeling the soft ground underfoot. Its looking for signs and following guidance if you want or finding your own way. My path was a mixture of both. What I left behind were soft footprints ... and what I have taken away are wonderful memories, stronger legs and new friendships. Reaching Santiago de Compostela was not the end, it was only the beginning of everything that is yet to come.

Margot (Australien)

Annually I choose a word to live by. This year it was a hashtag #fyohfn ie Fuck Yes or a Hard Fuck No! A commitment to making major decisions with uncompromising edges. To transformation. Relationships. Work. Life.

As Mary Oliver once wrote... '

"Tell me, what else should I have done?

Doesn't everything die at last, and too soon?

Tell me, what is it you plan to do

With your one wild and precious life?"

My Camino gift? A shift in worldview, people and stories and these two amazing women in my life.

Ewa 38 & Iwona 41, Krakow Poland

They were days of sun and rain, conversation and silence, joy and sadness. A path in the truest sense of the word that we will walk for the rest of our lives. The best moments were when the sun came out after the storm.

Francesca Brigida 54 & Maurizio Mattia 70, Castelfranco Veneto Italia

We are two Italians and one of our dreams was to walk the Camino de Santiago.

We chose the Senda Litoral of the Portuguese Way because it follows the sea for much of the way. Just the thought of having the sea as our travel companion made us feel better.

Our goal was to see new landscapes, meet people of different nationalities, and learn about different habits and customs. We wanted to put ourselves to the test, because walking several kilometers for many days with a heavy backpack on your shoulder is not exactly a walk in the park.

Despite some difficulties, we were determined and with our tenacity we made it! Arriving in Santiago, in front of the cathedral, we were rewarded for all our efforts.

There were many beautiful moments, the emotion of seeing the tomb of St. James and attending the pilgrim mass was incredible. We can hardly wait to go to Santiago again!

Our dream has come true and in the name of love it was beautiful to reach the goal, each with the other half! Francesca and Maurizio

Hanelore 74 & Meggi 75 , Heilbad Heiligenstadt Deutschland

Hanelore

The fact that the Camino is something very special has been talked about a lot since "Hape's Pilgrimage" and I was interested. After some very sad events in our family, a loved one approached me and suggested that we make a pilgrimage together along the Portuguese coastal path from Porto to Santiago.

We had the desire to do it on our own. Today, a few weeks after our return, I still can't believe how many wonderful things we experienced along the way.

Being in harmony with nature: sea, wind, storm, rain, sun and much more. The like-minded pilgrims, the encounters, the conversations - laughter, tears very close together. We are a tiny part of all this. Gratitude "they would be so good for all of us".

Therefore: Thank you, dear Meggi, and you, who bring a smile to my face when I think of you. Thank you from the bottom of my heart to all my loved ones who "make up" my life!

Thank you Camino!

Meggi

My Way of St. James

It had been on my mind for 10 years. I didn't really believe it until I met Hanelore and told her about my dream. And then the time had come. Our Camino together and it has given us so much....

You ask why? Maybe to find myself? I don't know exactly, but I know one thing, it was the best way I have ever been on, the conversations, the nature, the people. The part of the path with you, dear Manuel, was also a "chance" meeting...?

And the best part?

Arriving at kilometer 0 and the joy and gratitude of having made it on my own. The experience and the path with all its facets will probably stay with me for the rest of my life.

Haldane Kelsey-Sexton 38, Auckland New Zealand

What an incredible adventure! Hiking over 1300km with my mother is a remarkable feat, and I'm sure it was a wonderful way to reconnect and create memories together.

From the stunning landscapes to the vibrant culture and delicious food. The magic of Fistera was especially special, I felt a sense of freedom and motivation. It's amazing how nature can have such a profound impact on our well-being and perspective.

Hector Diaz 45, Palma de Mallorca España

The reason for going alone was to get away from my everyday life, which is quite stressful and has a lot of unfinished business waiting to be resolved. To teach myself what I am capable of, both physically and mentally. With the intention of finding inner peace within myself. To recharge my batteries so that I am stronger and able to face my unresolved issues.

The path taught me that I was on a good level physically, but not mentally. I wanted to be alone with myself and found it difficult to accept myself. I also found it difficult to connect with the people I met along the way. I often found the situation uncomfortable. Nevertheless, it helped me to connect with myself and with nature.

The best day for me was when I left Armenteira very early in the morning, heading towards Villanueva de Arosa. There is a small route called "Ruta da Pedra e da Auga" (I did the spiritual route). On this small route you are in a forest with a small stream. The murmuring of the water, the chirping of the birds, the picturesque surroundings and the stone path with the well preserved, though disused, hydraulic sawmill. It was an indescribable feeling, I abstracted from all the reality and negative thoughts I had, this beauty was simply awe-inspiring. I would like to go there every day to marvel at it.

David Korn 39, Trhový Štěpánov Česká Republika

My wife Lucia told me about the pilgrimage to Santiago. A year later, she gave me the trip as a gift for my 40th birthday. The Oporto/Santiago route was the best for the two weeks I had planned for the trip.

During the preparations, my friend Honza joined me and we finally flew to Porto on April 10, 2024.

After about twenty years of work and at most one week of vacation. Despite the great effort, it was a long and wonderful rest.

Of the original 240 km, we ended up covering 360 km. We spent two wonderful weeks along the coast, in eucalyptus forests, historic town centers with great food, drinks and generally nice people everywhere.

Somewhere in my head I already have a plan for another and longer trip to Santiago. I highly recommend it to anyone.

David Korn

Jamie 60, Jennifer 49 & Sherry 66

Jamie Myers Joplin, Missouri

While I never truly imagined I would actually DO a Camino, it was in the back of my mind for maybe ten years? In the past 6-8 months I began to think it could be done. I found two friends who were crazier than me; they were willing to go on my recommendation only! I had no expectations, didn't want to be disappointed by thinking something incredible would happen. It was nothing like I thought it would be. It was harder than I imagined. My response whenever anyone asked if I was training was, "It's just walking." That was an understatement! God showed up in some incredible and some rather mundane ways, but always when we needed His help or the help of those He sent along the way (and you were certainly one of them, Manuel!). Even though it didn't seem like it at the time, it truly was a gift. I now know I can do hard things, things I may not even want to do, and I am grateful for the opportunity the three of us had to have this grand adventure of a lifetime!

Jennifer Stone Joplin, Missouri

I am all about adventure and challenging myself. When I saw Jamie's Facebook post asking who would be interested in walking the Camino I pretty much knew right away that I would be going. I can not pin down one specific favorite. I was consistently overwhelmed by God's beauty all around me. Getting to see new country, culture, and meeting people from all over the world was pretty amazing.

Sherry Albright Kansas

While Jamie was my motivation/inspiration for the Camino I was praying for direction in this final chapter of life- a place to serve/witness where God transplanted me in AR.

It was a challenge physically and I can't imagine doing it with anyone else than Jamie and Jennifer! Now the really hard part WAITING for God to light my new path.

Jan Jackson 36, Brno Česká Republika

The motivation was the already familiar feeling of freedom from the previous Camino (Camino Primitivo in 2022), from which I returned with a previously unknown experience. I still remember the morning when, sometime in the middle of the journey, an endorphin rush came over me and I almost didn't recognize myself in that moment, how little was enough for me to be happy. It felt like I was coming back to myself.

On this year's second Camino, I experienced this feeling from the first day. So the purpose of the trip was perfectly fulfilled!

It's very difficult to choose the best moment. But if I had to choose one moment, it would be when I met a person from Guatemala halfway through the route, with whom I more or less made it to Santiago. I think we were very close as people and our presence was very enriching for each of us. This randomness, spontaneity and the knowledge that anything can happen to you... that's what I love the most.

Maria 66, Salzburg Austria

I love to walk far - at my own pace and rhythm. When I walk, I come to rest and am in motion at the same time. I am with myself and open to what I encounter. Walking along the coast in particular opens my soul.

I remember feeling connected to the elements, feeling the wind, hearing the sound of the sea, and seeing a beautiful rainbow one morning.

Lena 60 & Larry Puno 56, Mandaluyong/Quezon-Philippines

The Portuguese Coastal route wasn't just our second Camino, it was a profound return. Each step held prayerful reflection, a chance to deepen my connection with God and express gratitude for all I've been blessed with. As the kilometers of walking unfolded, I unexpectedly discovered a powerful calm – a sense that by letting go and trusting the path, things would work out as they should.

This newfound patience became my most treasured souvenir, a reminder to be a better man for my family and for others, one peaceful and humbling step at a time."

Anna 68 & Maciej 47, Lodz Polska

Anna

I traveled to Santiago de Compostela because I wanted to escape the hustle and bustle of everyday life, the real and exaggerated worries, the dozens of distractions and crowds of thoughts. I wanted to experience the real here and now. In this special silence I wanted to be with myself and with God, in me and around me. In 2024 I decided to walk the Camino, not knowing when and with whom.

I already had the best moment without leaving the house when my grown-up son decided to go with me. In my wildest dreams I never thought that this could happen, but it did. It's not just a slogan, everything is possible in life.

After walking about 260 kilometers, at the Mass for pilgrims in the Cathedral of Santiago and in front of the tomb of St. James, I felt a great sense of connection with all those present. Pilgrims from all over the world, different yet similar, people in search of something more.

Maciej

In the beginning, my willingness to help my mother, who had no one to accompany her, was limited. Unfortunately, the friend she had planned to go with got sick.

Then I thought it would be a good time to rebuild my relationship with my mother and spend more time with her. Apart from my relationship with my mother, I also wanted to give thanks for the gift of being free from my burdens.

The best moment of the trip was the conversation I had with my mother at the airport in Madrid before I returned to Poland. It was thanks to the Camino that I had the courage to have that conversation.

Robert 55, Laura 36, Anna 7, Mees 9 & Cato 4, Geel België

We, Robert and Laura, have both walked the Camino twice. Last year, Robert walked alone for almost three months from our hometown in Belgium to Santiago. Me and the kids experienced it very intensively from home.

Once you have walked the Camino, you want to do it again. It remains part of your life.

Why not go with the children? The children were immediately enthusiastic. The Portuguese Way along the coast was the most obvious option.

We enjoyed the simplicity of walking. The adventurous paths over sand and rocks are also unforgettable. The many breakfasts with coffee and croissants at the bakery in small fishing villages. The happy faces of the people when they saw our brave children and, of course, the many nights spent in inns and hostels where we could rest and the children could play and sometimes even swim.

It became a way of reconnecting, reaffirming the relationship and giving us the confidence that we could travel together, literally and figuratively. It brought us even closer together as a family.

Perhaps the most important takeaway is that deep down, we are travelers. The children say they have learned that you always have to make your own way, that you have to be very brave and courageous to walk the Camino, and that you are capable of more than you think.

Walking with the sea to our left was a wonderful experience.

Ashley Hyeyoon Kang, Seoul South Korea

First of all, I am grateful to my God for leading me to this Camino and giving me unforgettable memories. As I took each step, I came to appreciate the preciousness of the present moment. The more I emptied myself while walking, the more my heart filled with gratitude. There were steep, challenging paths and days when my legs ached more than usual. Yet, every moment was infused with happiness. My heart swelled with joy, and everything I saw made me smile continuously. On some days, I was so overwhelmed with happiness that it brought tears to my eyes.

Walking the Portuguese Coastal Camino was a truly unique and enriching experience. The serene coastal landscapes, the sound of waves crashing against the shore, the friendly encounters with fellow pilgrims, and two daily glasses of the best orange juice made the journey even more special. The moments I accumulated on the Camino have become a wellspring of strength and comfort for my future. This journey taught me the value of simplicity and the profound joy found in each step. I look forward to seeing how these experiences will continue to uplift and guide me in life. Here's to my journey

ahead—Buen Camino!

Mattia „Pirat“ Taolin 22, Venzia Italia

All I wanted (and still want) is to escape from society, to be free.

Far away from the world and its mentality that surrounds us. That's why I decided to become a pirate, a pirate of society.

The best experience was the first night, sleeping outdoors among the rocks, a few meters from the waves. The sunset over the sea and then sleeping alone with a sleeping bag, protected by the starry sky. Unforgettable.

Point Break:

41°16'48.5"N 8°43'48.3"W

Ksenia & Sofia Petrova 29/49, Russia living now in Kazakhstan & Greece

When you no longer have a home, you have to leave.

We were sedentary city dwellers and became nomads.

We cross rivers, climb hills, until one day we realize that we can be at home anywhere.

Micheal Osebold 64, Friedberg (Hessen)Deutschland

I saw my Camino de Santiago as a challenge...to walk every day in all kinds of weather...to have everything I need in my backpack and to be surprised by what the day brings and by the people I meet and get to know.

As a "solo pilgrim" I was always happy to walk part of the way with other pilgrims or even to share a meal with them in the evening.

The best experiences, however, were arriving in Santiago on the square in front of the cathedral and finishing at the end of the world (Cape Finisterre) with a glass of red wine and very nice people I met along the way.

Maja 55 & Senad 59, Radovljica Slovenia

We set out on the Camino to lose ourselves in the arms of nature and escape the worries of everyday life.

With harmonious steps, we discovered the hidden corners of our hearts and the world and connected with them on a deeper level.

If we can walk the Camino, we can walk anything that comes our way in life. We are travelers ready to overcome all obstacles with love and perseverance.

All this is the Camino.

Christoph & Markus, Tirol Österreich

My "little" brother Markus and I are now back home and look back fondly on the hike along the Caminho Portugues da Costa from Porto to Santiago, which was exhausting in parts, but extremely impressive. 296.14 km and 5452 meters of elevation in 10 days, according to my "Garmin Instinct Solar". The longest stage (Vigo to Pontevedra) was 37.87 km and we had to climb 913 meters.

The most beautiful part of the route for us "mountain people" (we live in Tyrol, in the middle of the Alps), where we always had dry weather, was probably the part along the coast in Portugal and Spain. (I already walked the route with my neighbor in 2022 at exactly the same time, and because of the great impressions along the coast, I really wanted to walk the Portuguese part of the Camino de Santiago again, which I did this year with my brother).

But also the inland section is unique and offers many scenic highlights. Unfortunately, the weather didn't cooperate. We had four days of rain, sometimes alternating with sunshine several times a day. On the last stage, from Patrón to Santiago, we walked for six and a half hours in the rain. That's what the Camino de Santiago is all about, because you can't choose the weather. Surprisingly, you get used to the adverse weather conditions so quickly that you don't mind the rain at all. It was great to meet people from all over the world (Colombia, USA, Sri Lanka, Poland, Germany, Holland, Austria, etc., just to name a few) who had the same goal in mind: to reach Santiago de Compostela on foot along one of the many Camino de Santiago trails.

Finally, we took the bus to Finisterra, where we spent almost two great days in beautiful weather with short hikes to Cape Finisterra and on the beach near the town.

Danielle Hallary 66, Landos France

To Gérard, my husband of 32 years, who died on June 3, 2017 (Saturday of Pentecost) at the age of 60.

So many signs manifested themselves on this wonderful road to Compostela that you wanted me to realize.

When I was lost in the forest of Aubrac in 2019, after the death of my mother, I met a magnificent stag (symbol of Christ) who guided me along the way, and now, at the beginning of spring 2024, between Marcilhac and Cabrerets, two young stags joined my walk, as if you were accompanying me on this pilgrimage to Santiago.

In Concots, at the Gîte de la logette, I spent an evening with Jacqueline and Jean Marie, the mayor of the village, whose concerns reminded me of your commitment as an elected representative of our village for so many years.

My neighbor at the table, who had already walked the path, gave me a little card that read: "I follow the Way, the Truth and the Life," and I was close to tears.

A few days later, like a sign from Frida, your dog, who had left me on December 31. A white Patou dog named "TSAVO" watched over me for miles.

From Maslacq to Navarrenx. After Aire sur Adour, the sentence written by a pilgrim on a road sign: "You never know how strong you are until the day when being strong is the only option" (B. Marley) confirmed that I was on the right path to survive your death.

In the hostel of Arroue, on an evening when I could finally express my years of grief, I admired the commitment of Pierre (educator like you), who is on the road with Enzo (15 years old), doing an educational measure required by the court... you would have liked it.

After crossing the Pyrenees in the fog to reach Spain, Daniel (also an educator), whom I met in the beautiful shelter of the Abbey of Roncesvalles, encouraged me to join the French Way, saying, "You are strong and reassuring.

On Pentecost Sunday, when I arrived in the square of Burgos, near the cathedral, a group of three people were singing Cohen's Hallelujah (sung by my choir at your funeral) in a divine way.

Next I met Adam, who also chose the name Frida for his daughter. We had a kind of friendship; it seemed to me that I was walking beside you, in a warm bond that took care of me. I was overwhelmed by his beautiful gaze, as blue as yours. So I can still feel the joy of loving you.

Seven years after your death, a monumental ordeal, I placed my stone at the Cruz de Ferro. Loaded with all my sorrow and regret.

On June 3rd, while I was photographing storks and their young (a symbol of peace, happiness, fertility and rebirth), an old and sick man in the village of Camponaraya (between Molinaseca and Villafranca) gave me a rose. The next day I found this note in my shoe, like the ones I sometimes put in my bowl in the morning before work: Every day it gets easier, the hard part is to do it every day, but every day it gets easier. BUEN CAMINO!

During these two and a half months of walking alone, meditating, sometimes crying, looking at the beautiful surroundings that you have tried so hard to preserve, praying, sharing with the pilgrims their sorrows, their questions, and their gratitude.

I made friends with Lise, Monica, Martine, Christian, Solène and Manuel and their children, Blandine, Katia, Astrid, Jennifer, Laurence, Kate and her sister, Alain, Dany, Daniel, Sabine, Emma, Anne, Guillaume, Norbera, Sigui, Christel, Scintia, Fabienne, Stephanie, Géraldine, Fanélie, Patricia, Bernadette, the girls from Lille, Karine, Claude Maria, Karin, Gilles, Jean Pierre, Claudine, Dominique, Stéphane, Marianna, Jean Luc, Andréa, Andrew, Lily, Jamie, Marie and André, Gai, Deborah, Alex, Clara and her mother, Beauty, Yuri, Aya, Marinthe, Guillaume, Gilbert, Michel, Roseline, Catherine, Jason, Joseph, Jean Marie. .. So many beautiful encounters every day with all of humanity. Who, like me, are searching for the meaning of life.

I thank God for all that I have received. For the support of friends and family who have sent me loving messages. Especially my friends Odile, Sylvie and Valérie, my guardian angels. For walking without physical pain, attending Masses and pilgrim blessings in fraternal community. The meeting with Father Paul in Sahagun: "It is more blessed to give than to receive. The warm welcome along the way and in the hostels. Sharing meals in conviviality. Sleep in dormitories with people from all over the world. To discover an extraordinary cultural heritage and beautiful landscapes. Grateful to have arrived on June 13th. We also went through the rain and wind to Fisterra, where the sun came out to say goodbye! On to Muxia to begin a new life with renewed joy and hope.

Dany (June 28, 2024)

Ulla & Matthias 70, Neustadt am Rübenberge Deutschland

Why did we walk the Camino for the third time? Walking brings us inner peace, gives us time to think about many things, without time limits and without the distractions of everyday life.

In the evenings we share with other pilgrims, sometimes in depth and sometimes just socially. After three Caminos, we feel the changes within us; the next one is planned for 2025. In this spirit, Buen Camino.

Manuel Luibrand 30, Stuttgart Deutschland

For me, the Camino de la Costa was a path full of emotions, challenges, encounters, surprises and incredibly beautiful landscapes. The deep contacts, but also the very lonely sections, have left a lasting impression on my nervous system and have had various aftereffects.

The arrival and the time in Santiago were particularly intense, as were some unforgettable stretches of coastline and sea views, as well as exceptional accommodation.

Being in the moment as a daily challenge kept me going.

Lisa Foresta 66, Düsseldorf Deutschland

I did the Camino to come to terms with myself and for my mother, who couldn't find peace in her life. I took her heart with me. Many things kept me busy for a long time. I met people on this Camino who changed something in me and I will never forget them. In the end, it wasn't just the impressions that touched me, but the conversations with my friend and the people I met.

They made the Camino an unforgettable experience.

Mateusz Mieczysław Ciszczon 27, Nowy Sącz, Poland

I did my first Camino with my girlfriend. The idea had been in my head for several years, but it was only now that I felt it was the right time - a way to deepen our relationship.

But over the course of several months of preparation, it slowly became clear that this would be the path of our separation.

Praise the Lord, because I believe that this process could not have gone better than this experience on the way from Porto to Santiago de Compostela.

In the end, I believe that our whole life is an existential extension of what the Camino de Santiago is: a constant journey in which we go step by step, leaving behind miles and national borders unnoticed.

We meet all kinds of people, some of whom we quickly feel sympathy for, but we know that they are all just one-day miracles on this journey. We may go our separate ways the next day and never see each other again. The Camino has taught me to accept whatever happens with ease and gratitude.

Chantal Schutte 43, Zwolle Nederland

Hello readers,

I wanted to walk the Camino once in my life. When my job ended unexpectedly, I thought: This is an opportunity I can use to fulfill this wish. Which route should I take? I did some research online and came across the Portuguese route, which follows the coast from Porto to Santiago de Compostela. Partly a practical choice, as this route is not that long and quite flat.

And I followed my feelings. The sea, the beaches, the wind and the dunes automatically bring me to Zen... I love it! So 1 and 1 make 3. Besides the challenge of walking for many days in a row, which I had never done before, I thought it would be fun to talk to other pilgrims.

I like the adventure. Not knowing in advance who and what you're going to meet and where you're going to sleep that night. It's very exciting for me and I'm having a lot of fun.

I really enjoyed the moments alone. I enjoyed eating lunch in the sun on a beautiful beach and experiencing the silence. Walking with the music and being in the flow of the landscape around me. I also enjoyed the encounters on the Camino.

I met a Dutchman at a crossroads in a forest in Portugal, we walked together for a while and had funny and profound conversations until we parted ways. Later that day I saw him again in a supermarket in the village where I was staying. It turned out that he was staying in the same village. We even saw each other for the third time that day in the same supermarket. We had a few drinks together. Unfortunately, I didn't see him again the next day. That's part of the Camino and life, people come and go.

A special moment that I will always remember was the crossing by boat taxi in the pouring rain. Alone with the boat driver through the river and across the border. When I arrived in Spain, I ran to a hotel to take shelter from the weather before continuing along the sea and the sun came out again. Then I saw a beautiful village appear in the distance; A Guarda. It was magical!

After this experience, I can say that I am proud of myself. I am a doer and a strong woman who accomplished this feat alone.

It was truly a fantastic experience that I will never forget... It makes me want to do more. Maybe next year I will walk (part of) the Camino del Norte in Spain.

Dalibor Katic 32, Zrenjanin Serbia

The Camino de Santiago is one of the most extraordinary and unforgettable experiences I have ever had. It all began in Porto, a city in northern Portugal known for its old buildings, narrow streets and beautiful views of the Douro River. I felt excited and a little nervous because I knew I had a long journey ahead of me, but also many discoveries and adventures.

The first day of the trip started early in the morning. I left Porto, leaving the hustle and bustle of city life behind me, and headed to the picturesque landscapes of the Portuguese coast. The first few days of walking were filled with encounters with fellow walkers, smiling passersby, and other pilgrims.

The path took me through small villages and vineyards, where I had the opportunity to taste local specialties and wines. I was particularly fascinated by the part of the road that ran directly along the coast.

I walked along the endless sandy beaches, listening to the sound of the waves and breathing in the fresh sea air. The view of the Atlantic was enchanting and the feeling of freedom and infinity was priceless.

I spent my nights in small coastal towns, enjoying fresh fish and seafood and the hospitality of the local people. As the days passed, the landscape changed. I crossed green hills, dense forests, and beautiful valleys.

Each step brought me closer to inner peace and a sense of freedom. The encounters with other travelers became more intense, we shared experiences, laughter and in difficult moments we all supported each other. We knew that we were all on the same journey, each with our own burdens and dreams.

I would like to highlight some beautiful and unforgettable moments, such as crossing the Lima River in the city of Viana do Castelo. The Eiffel Bridge that connected the two banks offered a spectacular view of the river and the sea, and the city full of history and culture.

Then the sunset in the small coastal town of Oia. Oia is known for its ancient monastery dating back to the 12th century. Sitting on the rock next to the monastery, I watched the sun slowly sink into the Atlantic Ocean. The sky was painted in shades of orange, pink and purple, creating a spectacle of color that reflected the calm surface of the sea.

Vigo, the largest city in Galicia and the most important port on the Atlantic coast, has beautiful beaches such as Playa de Samil and Playa de Calzoa, a true paradise for lovers of the sea and the sun. The beaches were beautiful, with golden sand and clear, turquoise sea.

In some places I stopped to refresh myself in the cold water, while the waves lapped the shore, making a soothing sound that accompanied me at every turn.

The deeper the road took me into Galicia, the more beautiful the nature became. I walked through fragrant eucalyptus forests, over old bridges and along crystal clear streams. Each day brought new challenges, but also new joys.

One of the most memorable encounters during my trip was with an elderly man we called the "Forest Druid" because of his unusual appearance. His appearance immediately caught my attention. He wore simple clothes that seemed to be an integral part of the forest.

His gray beard and hair blended harmoniously with his surroundings, and his eyes radiated wisdom and kindness. What caught my eye was his cane, which he called Santino. Santino was no ordinary cane. It was perfectly shaped, made of smooth wood with engraved symbols and shell markings that seemed to tell a centuries-old story. The stick was more than a tool - it was a work of art, a symbiosis of nature and skill. The forest druid told me about the importance of connecting with nature and listening to its rhythm, his words were simple but profound. He said that every path, every stone and every plant has its own story and that the true path is the one where we learn to listen to these stories.

This meeting was one of those moments that showed me that true richness is not in the destination, but in the journey itself, in the people we meet, and in the wisdom we gain along the way.

The last few days of the trip were filled with a mixture of fatigue and excitement. Finally, after 12 days of walking, I saw the roofs of Santiago de Compostela.

It was an emotional moment - a sense of accomplishment, joy, and relief washed over me as I entered the city. Arriving at the Cathedral of St. James was the highlight of the trip. We entered the huge church and felt the presence of all those who had walked the same path before us. The Camino de Santiago is not only a physical journey, but also a spiritual one. It taught me patience, the power of togetherness and the importance of small moments.

I left Porto as a single man and arrived in Santiago as someone who had found a new sense of purpose and peace.

Celina 49 & Tomasz 51, Bolechowko Poland

Our motivation for the pilgrimage to Santiago was complex: religious as well as personal. Religious, because in our daily rosary and in our daily prayers we ask for all the intentions that are important to us through the intercession of St. James. The personal motivation was the desire to be close to each other 24 hours a day after 25 years of marriage.

Walking 280 km together was something special.

The best moments of our journey are the encounters along the way and the conversations with people from all over the world who are pursuing the same goal, but for very different reasons.

Corine van Huystee 55, Huis ter Heide Netherlands

I went on this journey because I had been working in the same place for eight years and was ready to do something different. I also wanted to have time to think about the future.

I left Den Bosch in the Netherlands on March 3, 2024 and arrived in Santiago de Compostela on May 19. What a beautiful, intense and inspiring journey. I walked alone for hours through forests and fields, braving wind and weather, climbing up and down many hills and mountains, enjoying the views, enjoying the company of the people I met along the way, who offered me shelter and often something to eat.

The most memorable experience of this trip was when a woman on the road in northern Spain suddenly gave me 50 euros. She pulled up next to me in her car and said it was for the Camino. I was stunned and touched. I then decided to share this money with the people I would meet along the way. I was able to pay for breakfast for a pilgrim who had spent the night in an unoccupied house because it had gotten dark while she was still walking. I will never forget that.

Ave Ojala 49, Tallinn Estonia

My motivation to go on the pilgrimage was the need to be with myself, away from all habits and to accept myself as I am. My intuition seemed to tell me that I would be able to deal with everything in this life if I completed the journey.

The best moments of the Camino were the beautiful views of nature and the people who shared their deep wounds and thoughts with me.

But above all, it was the feeling of limitless freedom and the small realizations about myself that I experienced every day and that I will always remember.

Aurelia 31 & Ionela 35, Bucharest Romania

I went on this trip with my childhood friend. I was in the mood for adventure, to get out of my comfort zone, and most of all, to share an experience that would strengthen our bond in a way that everyday life rarely allows. This trip tested and strengthened our resilience, adaptability and mental toughness.

The Camino de Santiago offers many opportunities for spontaneous acts of kindness. It is not a solitary journey, but a communal experience. Along the way, the community is enriched by the encouragement, generosity and empathy that highlight the beauty of simple and authentic human interactions. This collective spirit makes the Camino not just a physical journey, but a transformative experience that lasts long after the last few miles have been walked.

Ana Sofia Goncalves 40, Braganca Portugal

Hello, my name is Ana Sofia Gonçalves, I'm 40 years old and I'm from Bragança. I'm doing the Camino for the third time and I decided to take the coastal route to Santiago.

The Way of St. James is not just a long walk or a great physical challenge. It is a journey of discovery, of strength, but above all of inexplicable peace. It is something so intense that it cannot be expressed in words. The Camino is simply about being content with your backpack and with yourself.

Every day is a new lesson, every difficulty disappears and is seen as an opportunity to learn. I did the Camino to try to get out of the routine, to get away from the hustle and bustle of everyday life, and to gather strength for another year.

What fascinated me most about the Camino was the feeling of equality, friendship, faith, solidarity between people, the culture, the beautiful landscapes, but above all a mysticism that only pilgrims feel. It was undoubtedly a spectacular vacation, impossible not to remember Santiago with a smile on my face.

Ana Vieira 43, Tondela Portugal

The path is my guide! I have time to cry all the tears I didn't have time for during the year. I am thankful for all the good things. I think about all the mistakes I've made and what I've learned from them. I swallow the frogs that are stuck in my throat, but that need to be swallowed in order to live with calm and faith. I make important decisions for the future and bury the past that is not good for me. I grieve for the things and people I have lost. I miss myself!

Olivier Devin 56, Amiens France

I just went because I was convinced that I would be happy there. I have no explanation, the path cannot be explained, nor the motives that call us, nor what we experience on the paths. I can't name a single moment, simply because it is a feeling of fullness when I walk.

Happiness is wherever you want to see it, sometimes a simple ray of sunshine that breaks through a gray sky, sometimes a bad wine that becomes nectar when shared, sometimes a cloud of pollen that escapes from a flower, the calm power of the ocean breaking on a rocky shore, the tears of happiness of the pilgrim who arrives in Santiago for the first time. The Way does not give answers, but it gives peace of mind and sometimes peace of soul. For me, it is the safest, easiest and most effective way to find inner peace. To know what you want, and perhaps more importantly, what you no longer want.

„Katka“ Svabova 47, Trpin Ceska Reublika

I came back from the Camino yesterday and my journey is still resonating with me. I feel so light. How long will this feeling last?

I had the impression that everyone who walks the Camino has an important reason and a goal. And me? I don't know exactly, but to be honest, I've wanted to do the Camino for 3 years and now the time has finally come! It was a big step out of my comfort zone. I'd never been anywhere on my own before, and I'd never had such a long vacation - 14 days in a row. But my body desperately needed it, so the time was right. On the plane I realized that I didn't have to worry about being alone, because the plane was full of people who also wanted to do the Camino.

When I met Manuel a few days later and he asked me the reason for my Camino, I didn't know what to say. I just didn't know. Until then, I had nothing to do but suffer from blisters, sore feet and back pain. But since that meeting with Manuel, his question kept coming back to me.

Why had I set out on a 290 km journey with a heavy backpack on my back? Sure - I crave exercise, as someone who sits in front of a computer every day for a living, I love the outdoors...

I long for forgiveness, but from whom, what have I done to whom? Then it came to me: Forgiveness for myself. For taking so long to like myself, despite all my flaws and imperfections that everyone has...

My body has been telling me for a long time that something is wrong. I had cancer 12 years ago and since then I have slowly learned to love myself, to listen to myself. It was hard and slow. So my Camino was to teach me to forgive myself, to be compassionate with myself and to accept that things are the way they are. And of course I'm looking forward to the next one....

An old, wise lady in an adobe said something that I really liked: "This is my Camino and no one else's. And it's up to me how I go about it....."

Joao Borges 37, Lamego Portugal

This adventure began in April 2023 with two friends, out of curiosity and a thirst for adventure, and after that we met whenever possible. Today I know that the Camino de Santiago has much more to offer, because at the time of this photo I was already on my third pilgrimage.

Every beginning of a journey is an overflow of good feelings, but the end of the journey is "nostalgia". Of good times and incredible moments spent in great landscapes, with fantastic people. In the end, we leave much richer as people, wondering when the next one will be.

Walking is life, and the Way of St. James is life;

"Do not let the small stones of life cause blisters on your feet! If they do, then walk with pain! Pain will make you stronger and wiser than you think. Believe in yourself".

Agrita 34 & Krisjanis 37, Riga Latvia

Agrita Geidāne

Since this was my second Camino de Santiago, I wanted to do it with my husband.

The best moment of the trip? The whole journey was the best moment. I am grateful that we are healthy, that we had the strength, the time and the opportunity to experience this journey.

Krišjānis Geidāns

My motivation was to experience Santiago and to spend time with my wife.

My best moment on the Camino was an encounter with a dog. On a path at the edge of the forest, we met a dog that was barking aggressively - he wouldn't come any closer, but he wouldn't let us go any further. Should we turn around and walk around it? But our legs hurt. Maybe he was scared? It turned out that the dog was as scared as we were. A friendly call was enough to make him wag his tail and let us pass.

Here we saw a parallel to life. Fear is the first survival instinct that comes to mind, but that would only be a defense or counterattack that excludes any possibility of cooperation. Sometimes it's difficult to overcome this counter-attack strategy, you just want to respond immediately. But maybe the dog is barking aggressively because it is afraid. And a friendly response is all the world needs.

Gaetano Renzulli 61, Avellino Italia

This is my third Camino, this time from Porto to Santiago, and I don't think it will be my last.

I walk this Camino because I believe that everyone needs to spend some time with themselves, giving up the everyday things they are used to in order to "center" themselves. The tiredness, the renunciation of the modern life, the thoughts, the projects, the changes and the loneliness. All this, in contact with the beauty of nature, serves to reflect on ourselves and the life around us to "elevate" ourselves. To be able to admire it as an "outsider" and to try to intervene in order to return to the being we would be if we were not exposed to external influences.

On the way back, the main effects of the journey become clearer and the conditioning that has been triggered is better recognized. Of course, after a while, when we are back on the path mapped out for us, some things will be lost, but many things will remain!

P.s. I do the Camino because it is well organized, relatively inexpensive, and well attended.

Anastasia Krus 25, Krivoy Rog Ukraine

People!

I started my journey alone, but already a few kilometers before Santiago I noticed familiar and smiling faces at every step.

People speaking different languages, walkers who were close to each other, adventurers with incredible stories in their backpacks; open, helpful, friendly.

The path connects us, makes us stronger and more enduring. We overcome obstacles, feel the pain, plan the next days of our journey, and oh, how happy we are to see familiar faces again! Because when we say goodbye, we don't expect to see anyone again.

Dear Camino, you have given me back an incredible feeling since my childhood, the feeling of a summer camp where everything was still in order.

I will definitely do it again, I will be back on the Way of St. James.

Elly & Jenni, Pinelands Cape Town South Africa

Walking the Camino for me is a "rebooting" pilgrimage for inside my head and my heart. It is a wonderful opportunity to catch up and reconnect with your walking partner if you have one, this is priceless. While I walk, I drink in the beautiful landscapes, the sounds of the sea and love the loud singing of the birds in the forest areas. I love the smell of the damp forest walks and gentle sound of streams we cross. I appreciate the kindness and interest of the people I meet. Being exposed to different surrounds and interesting food options constantly is stimulating. It is so liberating waking up every day knowing you are about to have an awesome day. As you walk the world slows down and peace creeps in and everything becomes calmer and falls into place. While walking I take time to rearrange the spaces in my brain intent on improving the version of myself..

Joaquim Martinho 30, Lisboa Portugal

The most important and beautiful thing about the Camino, besides the breathtaking landscapes, is without a doubt the journey itself.

The people you meet, the hostels you stay in, the obstacles you have to overcome - that's what makes the Camino so special and unique in my opinion.

Martin 62 & Una 57, Dublin Ireland

After a very difficult period of loss and change in our lives, the Portuguese Coastal Camino was the perfect way to reset our lives and restore our spirits. Or as the saying in Irish (Gaelic) goes, it was a "Turas don anam" / "Journey for the soul"

Magda Obreplaksa 36, Warsaw Poland

I wanted to spend time with God, with myself, and with the people I would meet in this special way of traveling away from the daily routine of a big city.

I often hike alone, but this type of hike was a new challenge for my moderately strong body and my control-oriented mind. I was curious to see what the trail would bring - and it brought more than I could have ever dreamed.

I especially remember the first evening and the sunset on the Atlantic beach, when the stress had faded and I was left with pure enthusiasm and gratitude.

The thoughts that night about God's love, as powerful and unfathomable as the ocean, became a kind of refrain of my journey.

Other favorite moments were the encounters along the way - each one unique, just as the people were unique and unrepeatable.

And the best feeling on the Camino:

Being extremely tired and exhausted and yet absolutely happy.

Tobias Frevert 56, Berlin Deutschland

I wanted to do something completely inefficient and not plan the day, but see what it would bring.

The climb to the viewpoint at A Guarda was the most beautiful. A little off the signposted pilgrimage route, I was on my own early in the morning on an adventurous route with breathtaking views of the sea and the Rio Mino.

Marie Nehybova 24, Dacice Ceska Republika

Il made the pilgrimage to Santiago for several reasons.

The first was that I like to go. Another was a kind of bet with my father-in-law. The last reason was a kind of transition to the next stage of my life, when I will celebrate my 25th birthday.

Since it is still too early for me to have a baby, I have decided to buy my first horse when I get home.

A NEW PHASE OF LIFE - A NEW RESPONSIBILITY.

And the most beautiful experience for me was the constant presence of the sea.

Thomas Kelly 68, Dublin Irland

So many top moments on the Camino, i now understand why people write so many Camino experience books. If i select one, it was the moment close to Santiago where Mike and I decided to cook and within minutes, a group of 3 Portugese travelling together said they would make a salad [we were doing shasika], a young German girl said she would make her favourite fruit salad, an American pilgrim (Harley Fan!) volunteered to chop veg, a young Portugese couple disappearef and came back with some exquisite Portugese sweet, and a German church Minister said he would like to join in anyway as did our hostel manager. It was a .marvellous marvellous moment. Miracle of the loaves and fishes. We had a wonderful and so civilized and precious evening together. And there were many more high moments Why Camino, friends who had already done it had reporter on t he experience. I retired some one and a half years ago, and i fest the slow spiritual nature of the Camino might help me organise my thoughts somewhat. I was not disappointed.

Тетяна Дяченко 49, Кіев Ukraine

I first heard about the Camino from a friend, became curious and agreed to accompany her. COVID became an obstacle, then the war... and all plans became short-term and dreams long-term.

I decided not to postpone my dream, but to make it come true. Unfortunately, my girlfriend, who had put the idea in my head, couldn't come with me for family reasons.

The best moment was my first encounter with the sea. The friendliness of the people and my stay in Alberque at Herbon Agacs, where I got to know the real life on the Camino de Santiago.

Takaesu 高江洲功 70, Naha Japan

The trip was a physical challenge for me, but also a time of spiritual growth, joy and success in Santiago. If you want to do something big, you have to do something small first.

Sarah Callinan 42, Bunbeg Irland (Owner of the guesthouse „The old boathouse“ Bunbeg Hatbuur)

Want to see the coast of Portugal on foot leaving from Porto. The allure of some sun, sea and wonderful seafood was the added bonus after a long hard cold Irish Winter! The coastal part between La Guardia and Baiona was my favourite part of the Camino! It had every kind of terrain and showcased beautiful flora and fauna.

Sandra 46 & Mario 50, Witten Deutschland

It was a wonderful trip on our way to Compostela and on to Cape Finisterre and Muxia. For us, it was more of a long walk than a pilgrimage. But who says you have to be a believer to do the Camino?

It's a great route for anyone who just wants to get away from it all and get out of their comfort zone. There are beautiful landscapes, great people, helpful people, lots of culture and even more culinary delights to experience.

These are great reasons to embark on our journey, which began in 2019. We started on our doorstep in Witten, a small town in the Ruhr area. We continued via Aachen to Trier, Saarbrücken, Wissembourg and Strasbourg. Via Roanne we reached Le Puy en Velay. We took the Via Podiensis to Saint Jean Pied de Port and the Camino Frances to Compostela. Usually two or three weeks of vacation.

But in 2024, we had three months to walk from Aubrac to our desired destination. Walking more than 1500 kilometers in one go is something very special. We experienced so much, met so many great people and discovered so many beautiful places and landscapes.

There were bad days, aches and wet feet, but keeping our eyes on the prize helped us make it. Please take your time for this journey, it deserves it! In total, we have now walked over 3300 kilometers and many, many days, weeks and months on the road. But arriving in Compostela was worth it.

Although I have to say that the route was the goal and not the place at the cathedral. A beautiful place, no question, but what we experienced along the way was simply wonderful. Now we are back home, back to "normal" life. But we will never forget it!

Sandra and Mario P.S.

If you want to know much more about our trip www.draussenraus.de

Sandee krause 70, B.C. Canada Author & Owner of Krause berry farms

When my son Tanner died suddenly in 2018, I didn't know how I would be able to live.

I heard his voice telling me to put 1 foot in front of the other and I would get where I needed to be AND he would help me every step of the way.

We have been doing just that together ever since, by walking a different Camino for a month each year. Some years, my husband, children and grandchildren join us for a section along the way.

I wear Tanner's favorite ball cap on each walk. It has an embroidered gold "T" for Tanner on the left side and I continue to add the initial of the people who walk with us .

I feel blessed to know about the Camino walks, they are a safe place for me to walk with my pain while balancing my joys.

Sybren 46, Hengelo Netherland

In 2016 I walked part of the Camino de Santiago. I met great people, understood myself better and learned a lot about spirituality and culture.

I didn't go as far as Finisterre that time, but I wanted to do another Camino and then walk from Santiago to the end of the world. This time I started in Porto because I wanted to walk part of the way along the coast. The route is easy to walk. I think it's good that you can choose between different paths on a large part of the route. It gives you the feeling that you can choose your own route.

Sometimes I just went my own way and didn't follow the signs. I walk this Camino to leave things behind and to reconnect with myself. I choose where I sleep and where I don't. This helps me to get back in touch with myself. It's not so important how I walk and how long it takes. What is important is the journey itself.

The walk to Muxia was a magical moment. It was the longest part of my pilgrimage. I felt a strong energy that drew me to this place. The church on the coast near Muxia was a very spiritual place for me. In that place I was simply myself and part of the environment.

But the encounters along the way with people I would never have met otherwise were also very special to me. I also spent the night at the Armenteira Monastery on the Spiritual Route. It has a beautiful garden just for pilgrims.

The Camino offers everything. Sometimes you spontaneously jump into a river when it's hot. Or you walk and find the right way again. Or there is a resting place that comes when you need it. These experiences always bring me back to the moment. I have learned to trust that everything will be there when I need it. I don't have to think about home when I'm on the road. That was the best part of the pilgrimage.

Simone Cabrito 34, Tondla Portugal

I'm taking this trip to overcome a challenge and push myself beyond my limits. This vacation is like a break from everyday life for me. I can switch off and come back refreshed.

There are so many experiences along the way that it is impossible to highlight just one. The community of pilgrims and the Spanish hospitality are great experiences. Entering the Plaza del Obradoiro is magical, emotional and indescribable.

I cry, overwhelmed with happiness and pain. With the happiness comes an emptiness that is only filled by the knowledge that I'm going home, but I'll be back soon!

Josef Krupkowski 67, Szczecin Poland

I've been to Santiago de Compostela several times. Each time it's a different journey because you don't know the people you meet. The magic is always the same. People are friendly, understanding, respectful and happy when they reach their destination. The journey is the most important thing, not the destination. I go to Santiago because I feel free. Santiago is my life!

There are as many beautiful moments as there are meetings! You can't say it in two words. No one pretends here, everyone is lost in their own thoughts and, above all, expresses self-respect. This time alone with yourself, with your weaknesses, your dreams, your feelings. And later, when we meet someone and open our hearts and minds without prejudice, we accept our weaknesses.

We enjoy each moment together. That's what makes the best moments. The fact that you never know what will happen next and that you feel fulfilled in Santiago.

Martin Aeschlimann 29, Thun Schweiz

I wanted to take stock of my last few turbulent years. A friend told me about the Camino and I decided that it was the right thing for me. To get in touch with myself and my thoughts.

I had an incredible 12 days behind me. Scenery, people, adventure and the realization that life can be lived with less. Although I started the trip alone, I was rarely alone. I often felt alone at home. I go home with the realization that I just need to "get out". Leave the comfort zone and new perspectives await. One step at a time and anything is possible.

Buen Camino Martin

Rudolf Luksa 53, Žilina Slovakia

I decided to take the coastal route from Porto to Santiago to mentally relax, clear my head and get moving after many years of sedentary work. I was looking forward to bringing more movement back into my life and discovering something new at the same time. I had no specific plans, just the desire to walk this route and explore the countryside of Portugal and Spain. I just wanted to disconnect from the outside world for two weeks, experience something new or unexpected, and be alone with myself in the present, without any other responsibilities. I was quite enchanted by the architecture that gradually changed from Porto to Santiago. The landscape was really beautiful and sometimes I felt like I was in Slovakia.

I was happy to walk through a coniferous forest with rose bushes and white calla lilies, which often grow wild there. I felt safe all the way and met wonderful and friendly people, both locals and pilgrims. Special thanks to Frank, Pargol, Natalia and Livka, Leonie and Kathy.

My back was tired for the first few days because my backpack was quite heavy because I had packed some things I didn't really need :-)

But then I met a young mother who was carrying her backpack in front of her and her three-year-old child on her back. Then I thought: I'll make it! And this mother in particular is a heroine who deserves my greatest admiration for the way she did it. It was a wonderful moment on this trip.

Marina Prodanovic 47, Belgrade Serbia

When the Camino calls, you must go! In May 2024, the Camino called me and I went. I walked for 12 days and covered more than 280 km. 280 km is the official distance, but you can walk more if you get lost. The Camino always shows you the way. I experienced a lot and I can talk about it for a long time.

This journey is very special. You experience the past, the present and the future. The way is full of positive energy. It comes from nature and from the other pilgrims. You are never alone. Do you need to prepare for the Camino? You just need to pay attention to your path and listen to your body.

It's not about competing with others. We all end up in the same place, no matter how fast we walk. Standing in front of the cathedral is a special feeling. Many pilgrims say they want to walk the Camino again and again. My Camino experience has just begun.

Relax and try to walk your Camino!

Rob, Megan, Raphy & Maddox, Unidted Kindom

My mom told me that she wanted to do the Camino at the very start of her retirement. She lives in South Africa, my kids and I in the United Kingdom. We came up with the idea that we would join her for the first week of her Camino during the half-term school holidays.

The trip felt to me like a celebration of my mom and the stable, enduring and positive presence that she has been in my life. There were so many great moments. One of them was when we saw our first Iberian emerald lizard; they are beautiful and a lot of fun to try and spot!

Renata Marsikova 58, Brno Ceská Republika

I've been back home for a few days now and I have to say that I already miss the Camino very much. It was my first Camino, but certainly not my last. It's addictive, like a drug, and I'm already looking forward to my next Camino. I'm already planning the next one full of anticipation! And why did I choose this wonderful pilgrimage?

I've been single for five years, but my life is far from over! I'm taking on different challenges and doing things I didn't have time for before, and I'm very happy about it. Now I can finally follow my dreams. My three children are grown up and I am very happy that I am now completely free to plan how I spend my time.

It's really fantastic. I'm experiencing so many new and exciting things, new countries and new people. It's really wonderful to walk along the long beaches of Portugal, to sleep in a sleeping bag when you set off in the morning and don't know where you're going to end up that day, where you're going to sleep the next night. That's the adventure, that's the adrenaline I need!

And then that wonderful feeling when you've made it and you've reached your destination - Santiago! I was so proud of myself! It's not for everyone to go on such a journey, but I did it and it was a good decision.

Sebastain Duadey 55, Lyon France

It had been my dream to walk this path for years. I just wanted to have some time to myself and just focus on moving forward every day and discovering new places and people. this first trip was a very special experience for me. I realized that reality is often much more impressive than a dream.

My head is full of wonderful memories and powerful moments that I was able to experience during these two and a half months. I also took a lot of pictures, maybe too many, but they make me more aware of the world around me, which is wonderful.

I really loved it.

Raquel Salmeron 34, Cadiz España

There is one word that always comes to mind when I think about my experience on the Way of St. James. Special. It is a special experience. It's special because it changes you. There is a before and an after. It's special because you connect with yourself, with others, with what surrounds you, and also with what your eyes can't see.

My best moment was on the last stage of the Camino. The sun was burning, I could not see the trees, the sea or the animals, but somehow I knew they were there.

Now I was walking through the city, surrounded by people living their lives and occupying a small but important place in the universe, in my universe.

Suddenly a shower of thoughts that had been with me. During the Camino they appeared in the form of an answer that I felt deep inside. It was just something special. And at my side, walking with me, my unknown but suddenly best companion. A very special monument in my memory that will always give me peace, love and a smile.

Buen Camino!

Rafael 50 & Larry 65, California USA

My name is Rafael Brito and I am 50 years old and I am american-brazilian. I invited my good friend Larry from California to visit Porto, Portugal, a place very dear to my heart. Although Larry and I are not religious, we took the four days and 300 kilometers of bike ride to Santiago Compostela to reflect on our lives, our love for our families and be conscious of how to become better human beings on our day-by-day behavior.

Rahel Franiczek 19, Frankfurt Deutschland

I wanted to get to know nature, people and myself in a new way (without the distraction of digital devices).

The best thing for me was to run into the cold sea after a long, hot day of hiking and feel complete freedom and bliss.

Matej Peternel 31, Škofja Loka Slovenia

For me, the Camino de Santiago was an experience of searching for a moment of peace in the midst of a life full of noise. And I found it.

The most beautiful moment of my trip was when, late in the evening, a few kilometers before my destination, walking slowly and with unbearable pain in my knees, I met an old man named José who was working alone in his field. He put down his tools, came to the path and spoke to me, all the time in Spanish, but I spoke English. Neither of us understood what the other was saying, but I fondly remember the laughter and joy of those five minutes of conversation, waving at each other and laughing at the words. The absurdity of this chance international meeting. To this day, neither of us knows what we actually said that day.

But sometimes all you need is a smile and honest contact with someone who stops and takes time for you when you are going through a difficult time. If we could do that every day, life would be a little more fulfilling and peaceful, even if we weren't on the Camino de Santiago.

Ahora! If my knee wasn't so sore from an old sports injury, I would have walked much faster that day and never met José.

Matej Peternel

Phil 32 & Teresa 30, Daegu South Korea

We live in a time when we are materially richer and spiritually poorer than ever before. We pray for happiness in our own families, we pray for peace in the world and an end to war.

Petret Guy 70, Bassussarry France

Hello, I'm Guy Petret. I turned 70 this year and decided to take on the adventure of the Camino de Santiago.

I wanted to challenge myself a little, but I also wanted to escape from this violent and increasingly aggressive world and its increasingly pessimistic news. Along the way, I discovered that there are still many good people.

I will never forget the story of the malicious pilgrim who stole my hiking boots at the San Juan de Ortega refuge (the boots were found two days later thanks to the solidarity of the pilgrims), but above all I will always remember the great exchange with pilgrims from all over the world and the joy of hiking in this beautiful nature with its impressive landscapes.

Paulino 59, São Luís Brasil

I experienced a lot during my pilgrimage on the Camino de Santiago. I walked many miles, faced physical and mental challenges, met people from different parts of the world, and reflected on my own journey.

Along the way, I connected with myself, broke down barriers, and was inspired with every step I took toward Santiago de Compostela.

"You may go faster alone, but you're sure to go further with others."

I hope this Brazilian proverb accompanies you on your journey and reminds you of the importance of sharing experiences, support and friendship along life's path.

Rachel Nieborg 54, Loosdrecht Netherlands

It was in my system for some years to go for a long walk. This year I got the call to reconnect with myself and so I went for the journey of the Camino Santiago.

For me the Camino was about the act of faith, going with the flow and listen to my body. So I do not know if it was the best, though I love the choice. Walking along this beautiful coast and continuously drawn to jump into this powerful Atlantic Ocean. One spot I noticed a nude beach, first past by and then walked back, took of all my gear and cloth walked into the ocean. It was so good and refreshing.

Pedro Cordeiro 39, Leira Portugal

This was my first Camino.

For me, the Camino is a combination of the good things like the contact with nature, the people we meet, the stories we hear, the memories we create... combined with the moments of loneliness and tiredness when we have to learn to find the strength to carry on.

Above all, the stories have taught me to put my problems into perspective. I also learned an important lesson about humility!

Pauline Scoble 65, Phillip Island Australia

In my 65 years I have spent very little time alone and have never travelled on my own. I wanted to challenge myself physically and mentally but more importantly, emotionally. I spent two glorious weeks, walking, thinking, and living in the moment.

My best moment was finding my way to the municipal Albergue in Labruge after my first full day of walking and thinking, 'I am going to be just fine!'

Marius Schäfer 23, Heidelberg Deutschland

Before my pilgrimage on the Camino de Santiago in 2023, we had a difficult relationship. Between 2018 and 2021 we had no contact at all. The Camino de Santiago gave us the opportunity to get to know each other again. I have a very good relationship with my father now and I am very grateful. We walked the Camino de Santiago together to deepen our relationship.

For me, the most beautiful moments on the Camino de Santiago were the moments when we went our own way by the sea. Away from civilization, in nature and working together, we made our way to Santiago de Compostela. At one point we walked along the beach and passed some streams that flowed into the sea.

Together we built bridges out of driftwood to get to the other side without getting our feet wet. This was my absolute highlight.

Raffaele 63 & Lorenzo 64, Bologna Italia

Raffaele

The idea for this walk came from Lorenzo. I agreed because I wanted to do something different with my friend.

The result was really great: I found more serenity, nature inspired me more and we are even better friends now.

Lorenzo

I did the Camino to take a break from everyday life and focus on the important things. I think I did that quite well, and I would like the positive effects of my efforts to continue for a long time to come. But of course I also know that this won't be the case.

There were many wonderful moments: walks in the dunes by the sea or in the forest when it was raining, relaxing after a hard day, meeting people on the road and last but not least friendship.

The best part was not reaching Santiago, but everything we experienced along the way. Beautiful, beautiful, beautiful!

Olena Kuchmenko 45, Sumy Ukraine

It's a strange thing to come back from the Camino de Santiago. You just have to come to terms with the fact that you are now living in a different reality! The first time I heard about the Camino was when I was 21. At that time it was just an unattainable dream.

Then the present buried that dream in me. For me, the Camino is the fulfillment of a dream I had as a young person.

What was the most impressive moment for you? Everything about the Camino is great! An amazing journey, from beginning to end.

With gratitude, Olena Kuchmenko

Micky G 69, Munich Germany

My motivation for the pilgrimage was a bit of a mixture, I suppose..The idea was in the air and ...Having retired just a couple of years ago it's been quite a search for orientation and sense in what I do.I had the time and then an old mate in a similar situation turned up.

The highlights on the path: Just so many valuable, enriching encounters! – On top of that – discovering und valuing unknown cultures, esp. the Portuguese and differentiating my view on the US.... and getting to know my body better was well worth it !.

Friedrich 69 & Angela 68, Wien Österreich

I thought long and hard about whether I could come up with a highlight for the tour and came to the conclusion that it was basically really nice. It's a real shame that we didn't make it all the way because Angela was at the end of her tether. Unfortunately we missed about 50 km. I didn't really have any special expectations and just went along so that my lovely hiking partner wouldn't have to go alone. It was a completely new experience for me that I had never had before. The first three days were very exhausting, but as you know, you get used to everything. It's been a while since I was in the army, 45 years to be exact. :-) Towards the end of our tour I was really proud of my physical condition. The 14 days really helped me personally. Even though we didn't quite make it to Santiago, I am convinced that the Camino is something very personal and that we have reached "our" goal. If the opportunity arises again in the foreseeable future, I will do it again.

Fritz Vock

Nikola Krizkowska 45, Opava Ceska Republika

I walked the wonderful Way of St. James from Porto alone in the spring of 2024 and it was one of the best experiences I have ever had. It was a wonderful experience to enjoy the luxury of living "here and now" for the first time.

The Camino is a very special experience that is shaped by the people you meet along the way, and I was very lucky to meet so many wonderful and interesting people. The motto that accompanied me on my journey was: "You are never alone". During the journey I felt an incredible sense of peace and a deep inner certainty that I was in the right place at the right time. If you are thinking about making this journey, I can only recommend that you just do it.

Go alone!

Pavel 20 & Veronica 27, Plzen Česká republika

We embarked on the wonderful adventure of the Camino together. We both love to travel, but each in our own way. We were curious to see if we would get along.

We were going to spend three weeks under a tent in a foreign country, just the two of us, in all kinds of weather and with aching feet.

Our biggest challenge was not to walk the 280 km to Santiago, but to make it, with all our moods and worries, and to be there for each other as partners.

There were so many beautiful moments along the way that we couldn't choose just one. So many wonderful things happened that we will never forget.

We saw the ocean, went surfing for the first time, tasted port wine for the first time, swam under a waterfall, and watched beautiful sunsets. We survived a natural disaster together and celebrated the end of our trip with an excellent paella. The cathedral in Santiago is beautiful, and we spent the last few days on Finistère.

But the best thing about the whole Camino for us was the realization that we did it all together, much better and easier than we could have ever imagined.

We got along better than ever and didn't have a single fight. We have become even closer and love each other even more than before.

Verónica Altamira 55 , Córdoba Argentina

I want to tell you about one of the best things I've done recently.

It was a great challenge that I gladly accepted: physically, because I had prepared myself for a year. It was also a great experience for my soul, because I finally got in touch with myself. It was a big wish of mine, and I did it!

And in my heart, because all the time I was thinking about the important people in my life who mean so much to me. And spiritually, it was a very special experience because I was fortunate enough to see St. Joseph and Our Lady of Fatima on the way.

They were on beautiful majolica tiles, in enchanting pictures, and on holy cards. I felt that they were lovingly guiding me.

It was an incredible experience that I will never forget. I learned that you should go through life with no expectations. That way you can be surprised by the smallest things. And it's so beautiful to be surprised by life!

Thank you Jesus for giving me so much! Vero

Markus 42 & Vanessa 34, Rosbach Deutschland

10 years have passed and we are back on the Camino, because we have developed a special relationship with it. Our journey actually ended about 20 km into the first stage from Lisboa to Verdelha de Baixo.

Vanessa just couldn't go any further, her hip wouldn't allow her to take another step and she couldn't put any more pressure on her leg. Normally that would have been the end for us, but we didn't have to go back to Germany, we could take the train to Porto and from there drive to Barcelos. Maybe it was fate, or maybe it just wasn't meant that we should follow the arrows of the Camino further south! When we passed through Barcelos on our way to Santiago 10 years ago, we both knew we wanted to live in this town.

Barcelos has now become our second home and as life goes, not only do we live in this beautiful town, but our apartment is right on the Camino...coincidence?

After 4 days, Vanessa's leg was fully recovered and we set off for Esposende to join the Coastal Camino. This change of route brought us directly to the sea and we followed the sea and the wind to the north. Apart from that, there were countless beautiful moments, nice people, miles of paths through the dunes, over wooden footbridges, barefoot stages in the sand and sunsets on the beach. It's hard to put into words what you feel and experience during this time. The Camino, with its minimalist and flexible way of traveling and living, is what makes the trip so unforgettable.

Zdenka Stehlíková 43, Kladno Ceska Reublika

The Camino begins with the wonderful decision to walk. Anticipation, excitement, preparation, packing - the anticipation of the journey is huge!

The Camino itself was just the culmination of a wonderful story that touched me deeply. The wonderful people I met on the Camino will always be in my heart!

Zilla 55, Woudrichem Netherlands

My Camino is about the power of absence. That's where I started walking.

I miss my sister. She lives in Portugal. We're inseparable, but we rarely see each other. That makes me sad.

But how nice it is to go to Portugal and see each other again. I know that beautiful country quite well now. To enjoy your sweet children. To have our moments together. Would I want it any other way? Should she return to the Netherlands? No, that's fine. Stay in beautiful Ponte de Lima and I'll be back as soon as I can!

Meeting my best friend Corine on the Camino was also a highlight, and we spent a few days together.

Oksana Kapkova 34, Lisbon Portugal from Moscow/ Russia

I just wanted to see if I could walk that far. I could! And I realized that I really can walk a lot. I walked a total of 276 kilometers in just 10 days, which really impressed me.

It was a challenge, but I did it and I'm very proud of myself. I love hiking and this hike is probably the most famous one in Europe. I also love to travel. I am glad I chose the Camino.

One of the best moments was when I arrived in Viana on the third day (the day I met Manuel). I had fallen the night before and my knee was very painful. I wasn't sure if I would make it, but I did! It's really beautiful up there.

When the rain finally stopped (it had been raining for the first five days), I was able to make up the time I had lost. When I ran from the border (Tui) to Pontevedra in just two days, I realized that I was going to reach my goal and I was overjoyed! Despite my knee problems and the swollen ankles that had been bothering me since the fourth day, I made it!

Dominika Sosnowska 28, Warszawa Poland

I am a person who likes new experiences, meeting new people, enjoying small things and making my dreams come true. I first heard about Camino at a wonderful travel lecture that is regularly organized in Warsaw.

I was excited and looking forward to getting to know life on the road. I wanted to talk to other pilgrims, listen to the soothing sound of the sea, admire the juicy lemons on the trees, listen to my heart and see what wonderful thoughts it would lead me to. At the same time, I wanted to experience traveling alone, because although I love people and have many wonderful souls in my life, I felt that it could be a different, very special dimension of traveling.

Before I could open up to my loved ones and admit my fears, I had already bought the tickets. I wasn't wrong - it was really worth it and I'm very grateful.

There were certainly many such wonderful moments. On the way, I met a wonderful middle-aged Romanian woman with travel experience, with whom I got along very well.

She didn't speak English, but as it turns out, there's more to it than language - little gestures, sharing sweets, smiles, looking into each other's eyes, and being there when your legs give out. It was so nice to see how much she was enjoying the trip.

The Camino is a bit like life - sometimes you need to push yourself a little harder, but sometimes you need to know when to let go. I felt great taking the next steps and watching my path evolve.

I enjoyed the quiet life in the Portuguese countryside with its lemon trees and laundry drying in the sun.

I thought about how I would never again put my dreams aside in the waiting room. I would always cherish the encounters with people, their warmth and their help, even if they were only temporary meetings.

One of these wonderful encounters inspired me to write these words.

Micheal Wiegand 72, Neustadt Deutschland

In 2023 I walked the Napoleon route, which was a wonderful experience for me! The Camino can be addictive, so in 2024 I walked the Portuguese route. A slowing down of time and a very beautiful path along the Atlantic. A path that touched my emotions.

I am very happy that I was able to get to know both paths and I would like many people to take the time to walk a Camino.
