Camino
Trail Trip

TRIP DURATION:
12 days, 11 nights

GRADE:
Moderate (long walking distances and hills)

START LOCATION:
Hotel Temple Ponferrada

MEETING DATE:
Thursday 17th September 2020

MEETING PLACE:
Ponferrada Avenida Portugal 2. In the heart of Ponferrada, Hotel Temple Ponferrada is close to Castillo de los Templarios and Museo de la Radio. This 4-star hotel is within close proximity of Basilica de la Encina and Museo del Bierzo.

FINISH DATE:
Monday 28th September 2020

FINISH LOCATION:
Santiago

ACCOMMODATION:
Single supplement (6 nights) - Twin share (3 nights) - Group share (2 nights)

INCLUDED:
All meals and accommodation itemised in itinerary

GROUP SIZE:
Ten women and two female leaders

TOTAL DISTANCE:
170km

CLIMATE/COUNTRY:
Temperature range in September is 11 – 25 degrees C

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SUMMARY

Our Women Want Adventure experience will be an authentic Pilgrimage.

We will set off early each day, and on average we will walk 25kms daily. On our first day, in Ponferrada, we will register as pilgrims, collect our Scallop shell (which identifies us as Pilgrims) and our Credencial del Peregrino (which must be stamped at least daily to identify us as valid Pilgrims).

On the last day of our walk, at Santiago, we will apply for our Compostela. This is the ancient certificate we receive (in Latin) which proves our Pilgrimage. We will also attend the Mass in Santiago (optional). Both these experiences are high points of our trip.

WHY TRAVEL WITH WOMEN WANT ADVENTURE?

Women Want Adventure trips are a unique experience specifically tailored for women with a community focus.

All our leaders are qualified and experienced to ensure your trip is safe and enjoyable. Our services provide more than a travel holiday. Women Want Adventure trips connect like-minded women who want to try new things, push personal boundaries, make lasting friendships and have fun!

We make sure trip numbers are suitable for the terrain and all women feel welcome and comfortable on every outdoor encounter.

THE TRIP

The Camino de Santiago is known in English as the Way of Saint James. It is a pilgrimage to the shrine of the apostle Saint James in the cathedral of Santiago de Compostela in north western Spain, where legend has it that the remains of Saint James are buried. For over a thousand years pilgrims have followed its routes as a form of spiritual path or retreat for their spiritual growth.

In recent years there has been a resurgence of interest in walking "The Way". For the modern day Pilgrim walking offers the chance to slow down from the hectic pace of modern life, and revert to a gentler, more reflective rhythm.

Walking often gives rise to insights, as distractions are less and you have time to explore and notice the landscapes in more detail. Walking is also an intimate activity, and conversation tends to flow easily with any walking companions.

The camaraderie amongst walkers is many people's favourite experience of their Camino, not to mention the simplicity of the daily routines and leaving behind outside worries.

TRIP HIGHLIGHTS:

- The experience of walking an ancient and revered pilgrimage
- Receiving your Compostela
- Walking with a group of like-minded women
- Celebrating your amazing achievement in Santiago
- Village to village walking on enchanting sections of the pilgrimage trail

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INCLUDED

- 11 Breakfasts, 2 lunches and 11 dinners
- 11 nights accommodation - single supplement (6 nights), twin share (3 nights) and group pilgrim share (2 nights)
- Two female Women Want Adventure leaders
- Daily maps and trail information
- First aid
- Women Want Adventure Ice-breaker t-shirt
- Pilgrim passport
- Baggage transfer between hotels
- Private transport car

NOT INCLUDED

- Airfares
- Items of personal nature, such as laundry and postage
- Transport of 'additional' larger luggage to hotels (roughly 10E)
- Day packs
- Alcoholic beverages
- Travel insurance (compulsory) you will need to provide your policy number to us prior to departure
- Telephone charges back home
- Meals not mentioned in itinerary
- Additional activities

GRADING: Moderate

Trips with Women Want Adventure allow you to experience the Camino Trail close up, not from the windows of a tour bus. You will travel on foot with the option to walk half days if needed.

Walking around villages, farms and towns is an integral element of this trip. You'll need to be active and happy to tackle stairs, hills and longer walking distances of up to 7 hours. But there's no need to carry your main luggage on this trip– send it ahead by our private car and carry just a daypack with you.

There will be dirt trails, lots of forested paths, quiet roads and some busy roads. The distances are long, however it is easy walking. Women should feel comfortable walking distances of up to 25km.

If you do not exercise regularly, then you should undertake a program of walking to prepare and get the most out of your trip. Start by doing walks of two to three hours from about three to six months before your trip begins.

If you have hiking boots, wear them in so they are comfortable and will not cause you blisters. Use the day pack you will wear on the Camino trail in your practice walks and enjoy your pre-training with friends.

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DAY 1
Ponferrada: Thursday 17th September

Meeting accommodation: Hotel Temple Ponferrada

Address: Avenida Portugal, 2, 24400 Ponferrada, Spain

Meeting time: 5pm in the hotel lobby

How to Get to Ponferrada from Madrid: The average journey time between Madrid and Ponferrada is **4 hours and 44 minutes** and the fastest journey time is **4 hours and 3 minutes**. On an average weekday, there are 3 trains per day travelling from Madrid to Ponferrada and many buses. The first train from Madrid to Ponferrada departs at **10:15**. The last train from Madrid to Ponferrada departs at **17:30**. Trains that depart in the early morning hours or very late evening may be sleeper services. Travel time is about 41/2 Hours

Go to: https://www.trainline.eu/train-times/madrid-to-ponferrada

About: Tonight we come together as a group for a welcome dinner and trip briefing. Your leaders will run you through the following days itinerary, starting times and what to expect. Get to know your fellow women walkers on this day and rest in your own room before walking the following day. In addition we will collect our Credencial. In order to receive your Compostela at Santiago you must have your Credencial stamped at least twice a day. Stamps are available at churches, coffee shops and at our accommodation.

DAY 2
Friday 18th September

Walking: From Villafranca del Bierzo to O' Cebreiro

Distance: Up to 28.9km . However, you can choose a shorter option.

Accommodation: As Miguiñas do Cebreiro

About: Today we will leave Ponferrada early to travel to Villafrance del Bierzo by taxi (about 25 km). This first day is very beautiful, with stunning views along the Valcarce valley, but quite a strenuous walk, particularly at the end, which is very steep, so the group will split according to preference. Those who want a more strenuous 28.9 km uphill walk will start from Villafranca. Those who would prefer a shorter 19km walk will meet the group at Trabadello, and those who want just a short walk of 10km will start at Ruitelan. We have options for everyone with the support of our transport car.

DAY 3
Saturday 19th September

Walking: From O'Cebreiro to Triacastella

Distance: 20.7km

Accommodation: Complex Xacabeo Albergue

About: Don Elias, the priest who invented the famous yellow arrow which guides us daily on our Pilgrimage comes from this ancient Galician hamlet. Be sure you take a stroll around to see the "Pallozas" which are small circular houses with thatched of slated roofs. You will think you're in Ireland! That is because the Galicians and the Irish share a past Celtish history.

We start our walk today on a delightful forest track, which winds around the mountain. Prepare yourselves for stunning views or mist and rain, as we are at the highest point of the Camino. Certainly have your raincoat at the top of your pack!

We will pass through many tiny hamlets on our way down the mountain today, and see farmers following ancient traditions as you walk past their barns.

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DAY 4
Sunday 20th September

Walking: Triacastela to Sarria

Distance: 18.7 km

Accommodation: Hotel Alfonso

About: Today we will have a climb to Alto Riocabo at the beginning of the day followed by a mainly downhill walk on natural pathways. Look out for the rather unusual Scallop motive at the rest area just 2 km out of Triacastela.

With its Celtic origins Sarria was a major medieval centre. The ancient atmosphere can still be felt in the Old Quarterof Sarria which has some lovely churches, shops and taverns to visit . To get there walk from your accommodation straight across the river, past the outdoor shop, and up the steps.

DAY 5
Monday 21st September

Walking: Sarria to Portomarin

Distance: 22.7 km

Accommodation: Casona da Ponte

About: The majority of today's stage is on lovely woodland paths and gravel tracks with plenty of pretty little hamlets and several cafes on the way.

You will notice an increase in Pilgrims today because we are now only 100 km from Santiago. You will see the 100km marker about 10km along our walk today. You might like to take a photo of yourself at this marker so keep a lookout for it. (The minimum distance one can walk to receive a Compostela is 100km).

In Portomarin we overlook the river in our brand new accommodation. Tonight we will sample the local specialty Pulpo.

DAY 6
Tuesday 22nd September

Walking: Portomarin to Portos

Distance: 20km

Accommodation: A Pasa de Formiga (in English... the Ants Way). Tonight we are staying at a tiny hamlet called Portos. Our accommodation only holds 12 people so the owners, husband and wife Pilar and Jesus are turning the whole hostel over to us. You will be staying in bunk beds tonight so you will need to do "paper rock scissors" to decide who gets the top bun**ks!**

About: This is a day of varied terrain as we start climbing up a peaceful woodland path. At Castromeier we will pause to view the ruins of an ancient 4th Century Roman town and at Airexe we will pass by a lovely 17th Century wayside cross in the ancient hamlet of Lameiro.

DAY 7
Wednesday 23rd September

Walking: Portos to Melide

Distance: 19km plus 5km early morning side trip to Vilar de Donas

Accommodation: A Lua do Camino

About: Before leaving the Ants Way at Portos we will have an early breakfast before heading to Vilar de Donas. This is a national monument and the ancient seat of the Knights of Santiago. The church's origins go back the formation of a nunnery here in the 10th Century and the stone effigies and unique frescoes are hauntingly expressive.

On our return and a short coffee break we will continue on through the busy town of Palas de Rei. You may wish to sample the local cheese, called Ulloa . Continue on the path to the town of Melide. Be sure to visit the church and museum in the the ancient centre of town before continuing to our accommodation at A Lua do Camino, which has a swimming pool and pool table, so pack your swimmers!

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DAY 8
Thursday 24th September

Walking: Melide to Ribadiso

Distance: 10km

Accommodation: Pension Ribadiso

About: We are only walking 10km today to this idyllic location. Manolo the owner only built this pension last yearand it is in a lovely location right beside the River Iso. You can soak your feet and legs in the cool stream when you arrive (great for recovery of tired and aching feet and legs!) and then relax in the sun chairs outside the Pension.

If you're feeling energetic you may like to take a 2km walk up the hill to Arzua which is known for its local cheeses. The noisy central square has a variety of bars, cafes and restaurants and the modern parish church is dedicated to St James with images of him as both Moorslayer and pilgrim.

DAY 9
Friday 25th September

Walking: Ribadiso to O Pedrouzo

Distance: 23km

Accommodation: Pension 23

About: Over half of this stage is on natural pathways with good shade offered by the ubiquitous eucalyptus. We start with a steep climb up into Arzua and end with a gentle climb around the Alto de Santa Irene. In between we have a largely level path with just three shallow river valleys.

DAY 10
Saturday 26th September

Walking: O Pedrouzo to Santiago

Distance: 20km

Accommodation: Denike B&B

About: The first part of this final stage is through the dense and ever-present eucalyptus. Make the most of their shade and the peace they exude. As we get nearer the city, asphalt and crowds begin to take over. Try to keep together for this last section so we can walk in to the Cathedral together.

What a great feeling to be there! We will queue to get our Compostela (Certificate of Completion), visit the square, take photos and have a celebration drink at Costa Vella followed by dinner.

DAY 11
Sunday 27th September

Santiago!

Accommodation: Denike B & B

About: After a late start and buffet breakfast we will attend Midday Mass. After that there is time to explore the city, visit the pilgrim museum, take a taxi of bus to Finistere (the end of the earth), go shopping for gifts or have an afternoon siesta. We will have our farewell dinner in the evening.

DAY 12
Monday 28th September

Santiago

Buffet Breakfast

End of the tour and travel home

Accommodation: Denike B & B

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MEETING PLACE

We will meet in Ponferrada. We will meet Hotel Temple Ponferrada at 5 pm on the 17th September. You must make your own way to the hotel in Ponferrada.

Meeting Place: Ponferrada in Northern Spain

Hotel: Hotel Temple Ponferrada

Address: Avenida Portugal, 2, 24400 Ponferrada, Spain

PACKING

When packing for your trip please make sure you have all items on the packing list provided. There is limited space in our transport car so you will need to pack: 1x duffle or overnight pack + 1x daypack. Please DO NOT pack a hard shell suitcase. Aim for 15kg or less for this trip. We will ask you to place your bag into the transport car each day for it to be transported to your next hotel accommodation. If you have a bag you are travelling with after your trip, you must orgnaise to leave this at a hotel or pay for individual transfer. We strictly do not transfer or pay for personal travel bags that are not for your Women Want Adventure trip.

A DAY ON THE CAMINO TRAIL

Your leader will be working with you each day to discuss the best times to start walking on the trail. Each day will start with breakfast and a briefing about the day, where we walk and meet. Each day will be different. However, usually we cover around 25km. We stop for morning tea and lunch at local cafes and villages while taking the walk slowly to soak in the atmosphere. We usually get to our hotel in the mid afternoon to rest our legs, before having a group dinner.

On some days, the transport car will meet the group to provide a light bite to eat if there are no local cafes nearby. We will also meet you each day at halfway points if you do not wish to walk the rest of the day.

WHAT YOU CARRY

You will be required to carry a daypack with personal items such as water, sunscreen, medication, camera, jackets etc. Another packing bag (maximum 15kg) can contain your additional clothing and is transported to your accommodation.

DIETARY

When making a booking, please advise us in as much detail of your dietary requirements such as vegetarian, lactose free or allergies and intolerances. Please make sure you communicate with us well in advance so we can best choose the restaurants to dine at night. Food is carefully selected to stick with traditional Spanish dishes. Please note that options may be limited in some towns for eating out, however there are many side of the road stalls with fresh fruits and options to eat. On this trip we will advise women to bring or buy some personal snacks to carry in their daypacks.

VISAS

You do not need a Visa for Spain if you are visiting for less than 90 days.

HOW TO BOOK

Please carefully read through the trip itinerary, grading and requirements before making a deposit. Your booking will be secure only once a deposit has been received. The deposit is payable via credit card or direct deposit on our website booking page for Camino. Please see our terms and conditions for all cancellation questions.

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FAQS

How fit do I need to be to attend?
You need to be fit enough to walk 25km carrying a 5kg pack. There is no need to walk quickly, and there will be regular stops at coffee shops during the day. Note: If you are tired or sick there will be a car to transport you to the next accommodation.

Do women attending individually or do I need to book with a friend?
Most women attend individually and sometimes we have women who book with a friend. There is a range of single supplement rooms, twin share and group share. Please let us know when booking if you would like to be in the same room as another woman.

What are the age ranges of women attending?
Between 30-65 years.

What if I get sick on the trip?
You will be able to travel by car and our lovely driver will look after your every need.

Do I need to bring a sleeping bag?
There is no need to bring any bedding.

Who do I contact with questions about this trip?
Please contact our office on 0403 918 346 or email womenwantadventure@outlook.com

What are the best flights to catch?
Best to fly to Madrid, then train or bus to Ponferrada

Can I bring hiking poles?
Definitely! They can support your knees. Train with them too if you can to get used to the poles.

How do I get from the bus station in Ponferrada to the meeting hotel for day 1?
You can walk, get a cab, or we might be able to pick you up.

What if I book and cannot attend? Is there a cancellation policy?
Yes. Please refer to the terms and conditions sent with your deposit booking. Cancellation fees apply. The trip deposit is non refundable.